New GENEVA STUDY BIBLE

Bringing the Light of
the Reformation to Scripture

New King James Version

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"Providence," p. 957: quotation from L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* 2d rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1941), p. 168.

"One and Three: The Trinity," p. 1102: quotation from Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, *Biblical and Theological Studies*, edited by Samuel G. Craig (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1968), p. 36.

"Higher Criticism," p. 2044: quotation from H. H. Rowley, *The Growth of the Old Testament* (London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1950), p. 46.

Title page logo: The triquetra (from a Latin word meaning "three-cornered") is an ancient symbol for the Trinity. It comprises three interwoven arcs, distinct yet equal and inseparable, symbolizing that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three distinct yet equal Persons and indivisibly One God.

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Introduction

New Geneva Study Bible

R. C. Sproul

The Bible is a *book.* It may be called a collection of books compiled together into one majestic volume. As a book it is designed to be read. In this respect it is like all other books. But the Bible is not like any other book. It is the Book of Books. We customarily call this book the *Holy* Bible. Its holiness is found in its "otherness." It is a sacred book because it transcends and stands apart from, above, every other book. It is holy because its ultimate Author is holy. It is holy because its message is holy. It is holy because its content is designed to make us holy.

The Bible is an *inspired* book, that is, "breathed out" by God. Inspiration reaches far beyond the scope of the inspiration of human artists as commonly understood. The Bible offers more than brilliant insight, more than human sagacity. It is called "inspired" not because of its supernatural mode of *transmission* via human authors, but because of its *origin.* It is not merely a book *about* God; it is a book *from* God. Therefore the church confesses its trust and confidence that the Bible is the *vox Dei,* the veritable "voice of God."

The Bible is a *normative* book. The church has declared that the Bible is the "Norm of norms, and without norm." A norm is a standard, a measuring rod by which things are judged. We may use many lesser standards to regulate our lives, but all such regulations must be subordinate to Scripture. To be the "Norm of norms" is to be the superlative norm, the standard by which all other norms are measured. The Bible is not simply "first among equals"—it has no parity with other standards. As Jesus is exalted to be Lord of lords and King of kings, so we submit to His Word as the Norm of norms, the standard of truth and the one rule for the people of God.

God is the Lord of heaven and earth, and He alone is able to impose absolute obligation upon His creatures. He does this through the written word. The reformers of the sixteenth century recognized this unique authority of the Bible, expressing it in the watchword *Sola Scriptura,* "the Scripture alone." The reformers did not despise other authorities, or deny the value of tradition and the creeds, but they distinguished the singular authority of the Bible, "the only infallible rule of faith and practice."

God calls every Christian to pursue righteousness. Our trust is to be childlike, but our understanding must be mature. Such trust and understanding require study of God's word. The authentic disciple meditates on it day and night, continuing and remaining in it. Our goal is more than knowledge; it is wisdom and the fruit of inward and outward obedience.

The *New Geneva Study Bible* is so called because it stands in the tradition of the original Geneva Bible. In modern Geneva, Switzerland, a memorial wall has been built and dedicated to the sixteenth century Reformation. This Reformation Monument is adorned with statues of the great leaders, Calvin, Beza, Farel, and Knox. Surrounding these figures is the phrase, *Post Tenebras Lux*—"After darkness, light."

The light of the Reformation was the light of the Bible. Luther translated the Latin Bible that could be read only by professionals into everyday German that could be read by the people. In England, Wycliffe and then William Tyndale had translated the Bible into English. Yet there was substantial opposition to these efforts. Tyndale was burned at the stake in 1536. During the reign of Mary Tudor (1553–1558) the Reformation was suppressed. The Roman Catholic mass had to be celebrated, services could not be conducted in English, and priests were forbidden to marry. Two hundred eighty-eight persons were burned, including the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer.

These persecutions drove exiles from Britain to Europe. The most capable scholars among them came to Geneva, Switzerland. There they undertook the task of preparing a new translation of the Bible in English. The Geneva Bible was published in 1560, carefully designed to be accurate and understandable. It was the first English Bible to use verse divisions, as "most profitable for memory" and for finding and comparing other passages. It was provided with marginal notes based on Reformed principles.

The Geneva Bible dominated the English-speaking world for a hundred years. It was the Bible used by Shakespeare. The King James Bible was published in 1611 but did not supplant the Geneva Bible until fifty years later. The Pilgrims and Puritans carried the Geneva Bible to the shores of the New World. American colonists were reared on the Geneva Bible. They read it, studied it, and sought to live by its light.

Since that time a multitude of English translations and study Bibles have appeared. None of these study Bibles has incorporated a summary of Reformed theology. The *New Geneva Study Bible* contains a modern restatement of Reformation truth in its comments and theological notes. Its purpose is to present the light of the Reformation afresh.

The Reformed accept the Christian faith as expressed in the ecumenical creeds and believed by Christians everywhere. The distinctive ideas of the Reformed are the result of accepting the Bible as the supreme authority for faith and practice. The words of the Bible are true and its message is powerful. It conveys the infallible promise of God, its Author, that it will not return to Him empty, but will certainly accomplish His intended purpose. □

Contributors

The production of the *New Geneva Study Bible* has involved the joint efforts of the contributors and editors. The process has been similar to that of Bible translation in which each person has a creative function.

The Old and New Testament contributors wrote introductions, outlines, and annotations for specific books of the Bible. The annotations in particular were edited and revised at length by the editorial staff. The contributors then responded concerning all editorial changes and revisions. Thus, the final form of the study material represents the combined work of contributors and editors. The result is the most comprehensive set of helps in study Bible format for Christians interested in the Reformed tradition.

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The Side Reference Column

The unequaled accuracy, beauty, and completeness of the New King James Version makes it a most suitable translation for Bible study. The text of the *New Geneva Study Bible* is separated into paragraphs, as well as verses, allowing the reader to quickly group scriptures according to content. Subject headings further organize the Bible text, summarizing the essential content and religious significance of major sections of the Bible.

sion on you." [20] And he departed and began to [k]proclaim in [5]Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all [l]marveled.

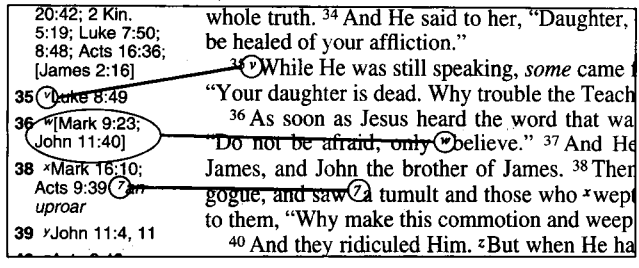
A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed

[21] [m]Now when Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, a great multitude gathered to Him; and He was by the sea. [22] [n]And behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name. And when he saw Him, he fell at His feet [23] and begged Him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and [o]lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live." [24] So *Jesus* went with him, and a great multitude followed Him and thronged Him.

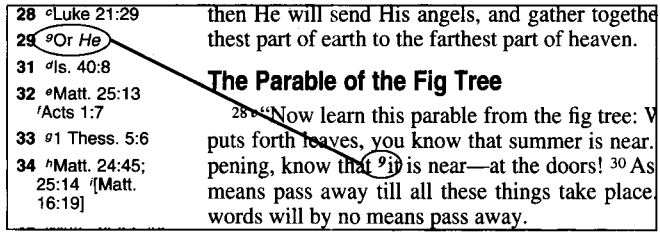
Study of the Bible text is enhanced by information in the side reference column that is keyed to specific words and phrases:

A *superior letter* (usually preceding the referenced word or phrase in the text) indicates a cross-reference. *Square brackets* around a cross-reference mark it as a conceptual cross-reference, which identifies a passage similar in *concept* to the referenced passage in the text.

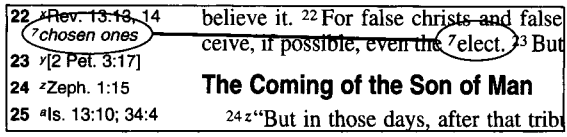
A *superior numeral* indicates an alternate translation, equivalent translation, literal translation, explanatory note, language note, or textual note.



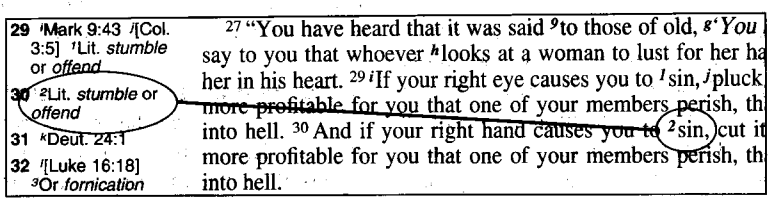
An *Alternate Translation* is *different* in meaning from the words in the text, but is justified by the original languages. That is, the translators could have understood the original word or phrase this way, although they felt their choice was more appropriate.



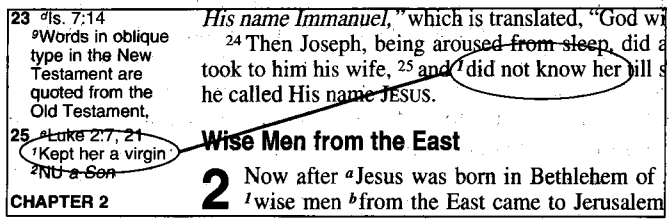
An *Equivalent Translation* is *similar* in meaning to the translation in the text. It helps you understand the text by showing you a synonym.



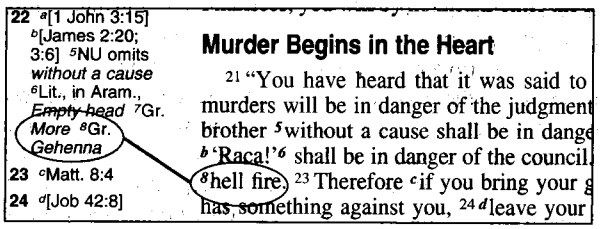
A *Literal Translation* gives the literal meaning of the word or phrase.



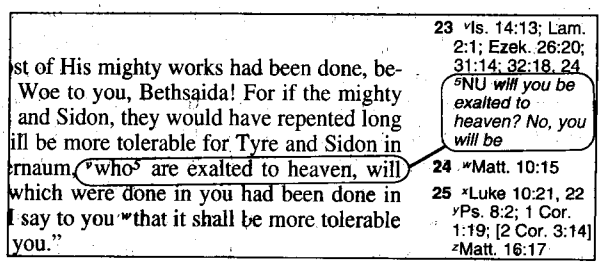
An *Explanatory Note* explains the word or phrase in the text. Words set in roman type in translation notes are explanatory only and are not translated from the original languages.



A *Language Note* gives the Hebrew, Greek, or Aramaic word or phrase that underlies the English translation.



A *Textual Note* points out one or more significant textual variants. The sources of the variant readings are identified by abbreviations listed on page xiv. (See also Preface, "Side-Column Notes.")



PREFACE

Purpose

In the preface to the 1611 edition, the translators of the Authorized Version, known popularly as the King James Bible, state that it was not their purpose "to make a new translation . . . but to make a good one better." Indebted to the earlier work of William Tyndale and others, they saw their best contribution to consist in revising and enhancing the excellence of the English versions which had sprung from the Reformation of the sixteenth century. In harmony with the purpose of the King James scholars, the translators and editors of the present work have not pursued a goal of innovation. They have perceived the Holy Bible, New King James Version, as a continuation of the labors of the earlier translators, thus unlocking for today's readers the spiritual treasures found especially in the Authorized Version of the Holy Scriptures.

A Living Legacy

For nearly four hundred years, and throughout several revisions of its English form, the King James Bible has been deeply revered among the English-speaking peoples of the world. The precision of translation for which it is historically renowned, and its majesty of style, have enabled that monumental version of the Word of God to become the mainspring of the religion, language, and legal foundations of our civilization.

Although the Elizabethan period and our own era share in zeal for technical advance, the former period was more aggressively devoted to classical learning. Along with this awakened concern for the classics came a flourishing companion interest in the Scriptures, an interest that was enlivened by the conviction that the manuscripts were providentially handed down and were a trustworthy record of the inspired Word of God. The King James translators were committed to producing an English Bible that would be a precise translation, and by no means a paraphrase or a broadly approximate rendering. On the one hand, the scholars were almost as familiar with the original languages of the Bible as with their native English. On the other hand, their reverence for the divine Author and His Word assured a translation of the Scriptures in which only a principle of utmost accuracy could be accepted. Therefore, while seeking to unveil the excellent *form* of the traditional English Bible, special care has also been taken in the present edition to preserve the work of *precision* which is the legacy of the 1611 translators.

Complete Equivalence in Translation

Where new translation has been necessary in the New King James Version, the most complete representation of the original has been rendered by considering the history of usage and etymology of words in their contexts. This principle of complete equivalence seeks to preserve *all* of the information in the text, while presenting it in good literary form. Dynamic equivalence, a recent procedure in Bible translation, commonly results in paraphrasing where a more literal rendering is needed to reflect a specific and vital sense. For example, complete equivalence truly renders the original text in expressions such as "lifted her voice and wept" (Gen. 21:16); "I gave you cleanness of teeth" (Amos 4:6); "Jesus met them, saying, 'Rejoice!' " (Matt. 28:9); and " 'Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me?' " (John 2:4). Complete equivalence translates fully, in order to provide an English text that is both accurate and readable.

In keeping with the principle of complete equivalence, it is the policy to translate interjections which are commonly omitted in modern language renderings of the Bible. As an example, the interjection *behold,* in the older King James editions, continues to have a place in English usage, especially in dramatically calling attention to a spectacular scene, or an event of profound importance such as the Immanuel prophecy of Isaiah 7:14. Consequently, *behold* is retained for these occasions in the present edition. However, the Hebrew and Greek originals for this word can be translated variously, depending on the circumstances in the passage. Therefore, in addition to *behold,* words such as *indeed, look, see,* and *surely* are also rendered to convey the appropriate sense suggested by the context in each case.

In faithfulness to God and to our readers, it was deemed appropriate that all participating scholars sign a statement affirming their belief in the verbal and plenary inspiration of Scripture, and in the inerrancy of the original autographs.

The Style

Students of the Bible applaud the timeless devotional character of our historic Bible. Yet it is also universally understood that our language, like all living languages, has undergone profound change since 1611. Subsequent revisions of the

King James Bible have sought to keep abreast of changes in English speech. The present work is a further step toward this objective. Where obsolescence and other reading difficulties exist, present-day vocabulary, punctuation, and grammar have been carefully integrated. Words representing ancient objects, such as *chariot* and *phylactery,* have no modern substitutes and are therefore retained.

In the discipline of translating biblical and other ancient languages, a standard method of transliteration, that is, the English spelling of untranslated words, such as names of persons and places, has never been commonly adopted. In keeping with the design of the present work, the King James spelling of untranslated words is retained, although made uniform throughout. For example, instead of the spellings *Isaiah* and *Elijah* in the Old Testament, and *Esaias* and *Elias* in the New Testament, *Isaiah* and *Elijah* now appear in both Testaments.

King James doctrinal and theological terms, for example, *propitiation, justification,* and *sanctification,* are generally familiar to English-speaking peoples. Such terms have been retained except where the original language indicates need for a more precise translation.

Readers of the Authorized Version will immediately be struck by the absence of several pronouns: *thee, thou,* and *ye* are replaced by the simple *you,* while *your* and *yours* are substituted for *thy* and *thine* as applicable. *Thee, thou, thy,* and *thine* were once forms of address to express a special relationship to human as well as divine persons. These pronouns are no longer part of our language. However, reverence for God in the present work is preserved by capitalizing pronouns, including *You, Your,* and *Yours,* which refer to Him. Additionally, capitalization of these pronouns benefits the reader by clearly distinguishing divine and human persons referred to in a passage. Without such capitalization the distinction is often obscure, because the antecedent of a pronoun is not always clear in the English translation.

In addition to the pronoun usages of the seventeenth century, the *-eth* and *-est* verb endings are now obsolete. Contemporary English usage has been substituted for the previous verb endings.

The real character of the Authorized Version does not reside in its archaic pronouns or verbs or other grammatical forms of the seventeenth century, but rather in the care taken by its scholars to impart the letter and spirit of the original text in a majestic and reverent style.

The Format

The format of the New King James Version is designed to enhance the vividness and devotional quality of the Holy Scriptures:

- Subject headings assist the reader to identify topics and transitions in the biblical content.
- Words or phrases in *italics* indicate expressions in the original language which require clarification by additional English words, as also done throughout the history of the King James Bible.
- Verse numbers within a paragraph are easily distinguishable.
- *Oblique type* in the New Testament indicates a quotation from the Old Testament.
- Prose is divided into paragraphs to indicate the structure of thought.
- Poetry is structured as contemporary verse to reflect the poetic form and beauty of the passage in the original language.
- The covenant name of God was usually translated from the Hebrew as "LORD" or "GOD" (using capital letters as shown) in the King James Old Testament. This tradition is maintained. In the present edition the name is so capitalized whenever the covenant name is quoted in the New Testament from a passage in the Old Testament.

The Old Testament Text

The Hebrew Bible has come down to us through the scrupulous care of ancient scribes who copied the original text in successive generations. By the sixth century A.D. the scribes were succeeded by a group known as the Masoretes, who continued to preserve the sacred Scriptures for another five hundred years in a form known as the Masoretic Text. Babylonia, Palestine, and Tiberias were the main centers of Masoretic activity; but by the tenth century A.D. the Masoretes of Tiberias, led by the family of ben Asher, gained the ascendancy. Through subsequent editions, the ben Asher text became in the twelfth century the only recognized form of the Hebrew Scriptures.

Daniel Bomberg printed the first Rabbinic Bible in 1516–17; that work was followed in 1524–25 by a second edition prepared by Jacob ben Chayyim and also published by Bomberg. The text of ben Chayyim was adopted in most subsequent Hebrew Bibles, including those used by the

King James translators. The ben Chayyim text was also used for the first two editions of Rudolph Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica* of 1906 and 1912. In 1937 Paul Kahle published a third edition of *Biblia Hebraica.* This edition was based on the oldest dated manuscript of the ben Asher text, the Leningrad Manuscript B19a (A.D. 1008), which Kahle regarded as superior to that used by ben Chayyim.

For the New King James Version the text used was the 1967/1977 Stuttgart edition of the *Biblia Hebraica,* with frequent comparisons being made with the Bomberg edition of 1524–25. The Septuagint (Greek) Version of the Old Testament and the Latin Vulgate also were consulted. In addition to referring to a variety of ancient versions of the Hebrew Scriptures, the New King James Version draws on the resources of relevant manuscripts from the Dea Sea caves. In the few places where the Hebrew was so obscure that the 1611 King James was compelled to follow one of the versions, but where information is now available to resolve the problems, the New King James Version follows the Hebrew text. Significant variations are recorded in the side reference column.

The New Testament Text

There is more manuscript support for the New Testament than for any other body of ancient literature. Over five thousand Greek, eight thousand Latin, and many more manuscripts in other languages attest the integrity of the New Testament. There is only one basic New Testament used by Protestants, Roman Catholics, and Orthodox, by conservatives and liberals. Minor variations in hand copying have appeared through the centuries, before mechanical printing began about A.D. 1450.

Some variations exist in the spelling of Greek words, in word order, and in similar details. These ordinarily do not show up in translation and do not affect the sense of the text in any way.

Other manuscript differences such as omission or inclusion of a word or a clause, and two paragraphs in the Gospels, should not overshadow the overwhelming degree of *agreement* which exists among the ancient records. Bible readers may be assured that the most important differences in English New Testaments of today are due, not to manuscript divergence, but to the way in which translators view the task of translation: How literally should the text be rendered? How does the translator view the matter of biblical inspiration? Does the translator adopt a paraphrase when a literal rendering would be quite clear and more to the point? The New King James Version follows the historic precedent of the Authorized Version in maintaining a literal approach to translation, except where the idiom of the original language cannot be translated directly into our tongue.

The King James New Testament was based on the traditional text of the Greek-speaking churches, first published in 1516, and later called the Textus Receptus or Received Text. Although based on the relatively few available manuscripts, these were representative of many more which existed at the time but only became known later. In the late nineteenth century, B. Westcott and F. Hort taught that this text had been officially edited by the fourth-century church, but a total lack of historical evidence for this event has forced a revision of the theory. It is now widely held that the Byzantine Text that largely supports the Textus Receptus has as much right as the Alexandrian or any other tradition to be weighed in determining the text of the New Testament. Those readings in the Textus Receptus which have weak support are indicated in the side reference column as being opposed by both Critical and Majority Texts (see "Side-Column Notes").

Since the 1880s most contemporary translations of the New Testament have relied upon a relatively few manuscripts discovered chiefly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Such translations depend primarily on two manuscripts, Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus, because of their greater age. The Greek text obtained by using these sources and the related papyri (our most ancient manuscripts) is known as the Alexandrian Text. However, some scholars have grounds for doubting the faithfulness of Vaticanus and Sinaiticus, since they often disagree with one another, and Sinaiticus exhibits excessive omission.

A third viewpoint of New Testament scholarship holds that the best text is based on the consensus of the majority of existing Greek manuscripts. This text is called the Majority Text. Most of these manuscripts are in substantial agreement. Even though many are late, and none is earlier than the fifth century, usually their readings are verified by papyri, ancient versions, quotations from the early church fathers, or a combination of these. The Majority Text is similar to the Textus Receptus, but it corrects those readings which have little or no support in the Greek manuscript tradition.

Today, scholars agree that the science of New Testament textual criticism is in a state of flux. Very few scholars still favor the Textus Receptus

as such, and then often for its historical prestige as the text of Luther, Calvin, Tyndale, and the King James Version. For about a century most have followed a Critical Text (so called because it is edited according to specific principles of textual criticism) which depends heavily upon the Alexandrian type of text. More recently many have abandoned this Critical Text (which is quite similar to the one edited by Westcott and Hort) for one that is more eclectic. Finally, a small but growing number of scholars prefer the Majority Text, which is close to the traditional text except in the Revelation.

In light of these facts, and also because the New King James Version is the fifth revision of a historic document translated from specific Greek texts, the editors decided to retain the traditional text in the body of the New Testament and to indicate major Critical and Majority Text variant readings in the side reference column. Although these variations are duly indicated in the side-column notes of the present edition, it is most important to emphasize that fully eighty-five percent of the New Testament text is the same in the Textus Receptus, the Alexandrian Text, and the Majority Text.

Side-Column Notes

Significant explanatory notes, alternate translations, and cross-references, as well as New Testament citations of Old Testament passages, are supplied in the side reference column.

Important textual variants in the Old Testament are identified in a standard form.

The textual notes in the present edition of the New Testament make no evaluation of readings, but do clearly indicate the manuscript sources of readings. They objectively present the facts without such tendentious remarks as "the best manuscripts omit" or "the most reliable manuscripts read." Such notes are value judgments that differ according to varying viewpoints on the text. By giving a clearly defined set of variants the New King James Version benefits readers of all textual persuasions.

Where significant variations occur in the New Testament Greek manuscripts, textual notes are classified as follows:

1. NU-Text
   These variations from the traditional text generally represent the Alexandrian or Egyptian type of text described previously in "The New Testament Text." They are found in the Critical Text published in the twenty-seventh edition of the Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament (N) and in the United Bible Societies' fourth edition (U), hence the acronym, "NU-Text."

2. M-Text
   This symbol indicates points of variation in the Majority Text from the traditional text, as also previously discussed in "The New Testament Text." It should be noted that M stands for whatever reading is printed in the published *Greek New Testament According to the Majority Text,* whether supported by overwhelming, strong, or only a divided majority textual tradition.

The textual notes reflect the scholarship of the past 150 years and will assist the reader to observe the variations between the different manuscript traditions of the New Testament. Such information is generally not available in English translations of the New Testament. □

Special Abbreviations

Arab.	Arabic
Aram.	Aramaic
Bg.	the 1524–25 edition of the Hebrew Old Testament published by Daniel Bomberg (see Preface, "The Old Testament Text")
cf.	compare
ch., chs.	chapter, chapters
DSS	Dead Sea Scrolls
e.g.	for example
et al.	and others
etc.	and so forth
fem.	feminine
f., ff.	following verse, following verses
Gr.	Greek
Heb.	Hebrew
i.e.	that is
Kt.	Kethib (literally, in Aramaic, "written")—the written words of the Hebrew Old Testament preserved by the Masoretes (see "Qr.")
Lat.	Latin
lit.	literally
LXX	Septuagint—an ancient translation of the Old Testament into Greek
M	Majority Text (see Preface, "The New Testament Text")
ms., mss.	manuscript, manuscripts
masc.	masculine
MT	Masoretic Text—the traditional Hebrew Old Testament (see Preface, "The Old Testament Text")
NU	the most prominent modern Critical Text of the Greek New Testament, published in the twenty-seventh edition of the *N*estle-Aland Greek New Testament and in the fourth edition of the *U*nited Bible Societies' Greek New Testament (see Preface, "The New Testament Text")
pl.	plural
Qr.	Qere (literally, in Aramaic, "read")—certain words read aloud, differing from the written words, in the Masoretic tradition of the Hebrew Old Testament (see "Kt.")
Sam.	Samaritan Pentateuch—a variant Hebrew edition of the books of Moses, used by the Samaritan community
sing.	singular
Syr.	Syriac
Tg.	Targum—an Aramaic paraphrase of the Old Testament
TR	Textus Receptus or Received Text (see Preface, "The New Testament Text")
v., vv.	verse, verses
vss.	versions—ancient translations of the Bible
Vg.	Vulgate—an ancient translation of the Bible into Latin, translated and edited by Jerome

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2 Thessalonians
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1 Timothy
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2 Timothy
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Hebrews
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1 Peter
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Numbers	Num.	190	Jeremiah	Jer.	1144
Deuteronomy	Deut.	239	Lamentations	Lam.	1240
Joshua	Josh.	294	Ezekiel	Ezek.	1256
Judges	Judg.	331	Daniel	Dan.	1328
Ruth	Ruth	366	Hosea	Hos.	1357
1 Samuel	1 Sam.	374	Joel	Joel	1382
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1 Kings	1 Kin.	467	Obadiah	Obad.	1412
2 Kings	2 Kin.	516	Jonah	Jon.	1416
1 Chronicles	1 Chr.	560	Micah	Mic.	1422
2 Chronicles	2 Chr.	601	Nahum	Nah.	1435
Ezra	Ezra	646	Habakkuk	Hab.	1442
Nehemiah	Neh.	663	Zephaniah	Zeph.	1451
Esther	Esth.	686	Haggai	Hag.	1459
Job	Job	698	Zechariah	Zech.	1464
Psalms	Ps.	753	Malachi	Mal.	1485
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Matthew	Matt.	1503	1 Timothy	1 Tim.	1906
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Luke	Luke	1599	Titus	Titus	1925
John	John	1656	Philemon	Philem.	1930
Acts	Acts	1708	Hebrews	Heb.	1932
Romans	Rom.	1764	James	James	1958
1 Corinthians	1 Cor.	1797	1 Peter	1 Pet.	1967
2 Corinthians	2 Cor.	1826	2 Peter	2 Pet.	1978
Galatians	Gal.	1845	1 John	1 John	1985
Ephesians	Eph.	1859	2 John	2 John	1994
Philippians	Phil.	1873	3 John	3 John	1997
Colossians	Col.	1883	Jude	Jude	1999
1 Thessalonians	1 Thess.	1893	Revelation	Rev.	2004
2 Thessalonians	2 Thess.	1901			

THE
OLD TESTAMENT

Introduction to the

PENTATEUCH

The first five books of the Bible (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy), commonly called "the Law" or "the Pentateuch" (Greek *pentateuchos,* "five volume [book]"), are the first and most important section of the Old Testament in both Jewish and Christian Bibles. The threefold division of the Hebrew Bible into Law, Prophets, and Writings can be traced as far back as the New Testament (Luke 24:44) and the prologue to Sirach (c. 180 B.C.). The arrangement of the Old Testament in Christian Bibles, based on the Greek Old Testament (the Septuagint; c. 150 B.C.), also gives the Pentateuch such primacy.

Author and Date. References to the Pentateuch by such terms as "the Book of Moses" (Neh. 13:1; 2 Chr. 25:4), "the Book of the Law of Moses" (Neh. 8:1), "the Law of the LORD" (1 Chr. 16:40; Ezra 7:10), and "the Book of the Law of God" (Neh. 8:18) are largely restricted to writings following the Babylonian exile of the Jews in the sixth century B.C. It is uncertain whether references to "the law" in earlier books refer to the Pentateuch or to parts of it (e.g., Josh. 1:8; 8:34; 2 Kin. 14:6; 22:8). The New Testament uses similar designations for the Pentateuch (Matt. 12:5; Mark 12:26; Luke 16:16; John 7:19; Gal. 3:10). These various headings underscore the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch and its binding authority. That is, Israel's divine King caused His commands to be written down through Moses (c. 1400 B.C.).

Besides these titles indicating Moses' authorship, Jesus said, "Moses . . . wrote about Me" (John 5:46), and He explained to His disciples on the road to Emmaus what the Scriptures said about Him "beginning at Moses" (Luke 24:27). The Pentateuch itself tells of Moses' decisive contribution to it: he wrote the great legal code, the Book of the Covenant (Ex. 24:3–7), and the exposition of the law recorded in Deuteronomy (Deut. 31:24–26).

During the past two centuries, however, most scholars who do not accept the Bible's own witness about its authorship have held that it was composed by editors in the period following the Babylonian exile of the sixth century B.C. Such scholars maintain that the editors creatively pieced together at least four earlier literary documents. The theory is based on the following observations: the distribution of divine names, especially "Elohim" and "Yahweh"; variations of vocabulary, such as the different Hebrew words for "maidservant"; similar stories (e.g., Gen. 12:10–20; 20:1–19; 26:1–11); the repetition of laws, such as those for the Passover (Ex. 12:1–20, 21–23; Deut. 16:1–8); and supposedly varying theologies. They regard the Pentateuch as a composite of works by the "Yahwist," the "Elohist," the "Deuteronomist," and the "Priestly" writer. The corresponding documents, conventionally abbreviated "J," "E," "P," and "D," are assigned approximate dates of 950, 850, 600, and 500 B.C.

More recently the consensus of the scholars following this view has been significantly modified. On the basis of literary forms and archaeological evidence it has become clear that the alleged documents contain older material, some of which might even go back to Moses. Today it is thought that the writers of "J," "E," "P," and "D" were themselves editors who collected and arranged earlier materials. The goals and methods that led to the original specification of diverse sources for the Pentateuch have been subject to continuing discussion. At the same time, there is increasing admiration for the unified structure of the Pentateuch.

In conformity with known practices in the ancient Near East, Moses probably used literary sources. Sometimes these are clearly identified (e.g., Gen. 5:1; Num. 21:14); in other places they may be inferred by distinctive literary styles (cf. Gen. 1:1—2:3 and Gen. 2:4–25). Then too, prophets of later times who succeeded Moses in mediating God's authoritative word (cf. Deut. 18:15–20) kept the text up-to-date linguistically and historically, adding some material such as 36:31 and Moses' obituary (Deut. 34:1–12).

Unity. The Pentateuch is both a composite document of individual books and also a seamless narrative of a complete story from creation to the death of Moses. Both aspects are important.

In the first place, each of the books has its own interest and unity. Genesis reveals its literary structure by repeating ten times the formula, "this is the history" or "this is the genealogy" of what follows. Exodus reveals itself to be a unity in a number of ways. For example, the law promulgated in chs. 19—40 is based on the narrative of Israel's exodus from Egypt (chs. 1—18; Ex. 19:3–6). Without the narrative, the law has no historical foundation. God confirmed His call to Moses by leading the nation out of Egypt back to Mount Horeb, the mountain where Moses was commissioned in the first place (Ex. 3:1, 12). Leviticus is a liturgical manual for priests. Numbers recounts Israel's march from the wilderness of Sinai to Canaan. As the Exodus from Egypt memorialized by the Passover prefigures the salvation of the new Israel from sin through the sacrifice of Christ, so the history in Numbers dramatizes the spiritual march of all God's children through a wilderness on their way to the Promised Land, warning them not to lose faith. Finally, Deuteronomy records Moses' exposition of the law he received at Mount Sinai.

At the same time, the five books of the Pentateuch are linked together as a continuous narrative. Exodus continues the story begun in Genesis of the Israelites who had gone to Egypt (Gen. 46:26, 27; Ex. 1:1). Moses

fulfills Joseph's deathbed oath to carry up his bones out of Egypt (Gen. 50:25; Ex. 13:19). Leviticus 1—9 explains the rituals of the tabernacle, as a kind of supplement to the instructions for building it found in Ex. 25—40. Leviticus also shows how the service for ordaining priests, outlined in Exodus 29, was carried out. Numbers shares many connections with Exodus and Leviticus; large portions of all three books take place in the wilderness of Sinai and share similar ceremonial regulations and concerns. In his first address in Deuteronomy, Moses summarizes Israel's history from Sinai to Moab as recorded in Numbers. In his second address he makes frequent allusions to Exodus, repeating with slight modification the Ten Commandments and Israel's response to them (Ex. 20 and Deut. 5).

Theme. The Pentateuch is a mixture of history and law. These are not unrelated: the narrative history explains the laws. For example, the law about circumcision is given in the narrative about God's covenant with Abraham and Sarah (Gen. 17:9–14), and breaking the Sabbath is made a capital offense in the story about gathering sticks on the Sabbath (Num. 15:32–36). But as noted above, the Pentateuch's main interest is God's covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, His deliverance of their descendants from Egypt, and their obligation to keep the laws of God given to them in the Sinai desert.

God's purpose in bringing Israel out of Egypt is that they would worship Him, and become a holy nation for Him. Through them, His blessing would reach all the nations of the world. According to Galatians, this gracious promise announced to Abraham is the same gospel preached by Jesus Christ and realized through His death and resurrection (Gal. 3:8, 14). The enduring power of the Pentateuch is not a mystery, but a consequence of its inspiration by the Spirit of God. □

The First Book of Moses Called

GENESIS

Author Because this anonymous book is part of the unified Pentateuch, establishing its authorship and date cannot be separated from the composition of that "Five-Volumed Book" ("Introduction to the Pentateuch"). Evidence relating to Genesis itself, however, suggests that, like the remainder of the Pentateuch, Moses gave the book its essential substance and later editors supplemented it, all by the Holy Spirit's inspiration.

It would be arbitrary to exclude Genesis from the New Testament testimony that Moses (fifteenth century B.C.) authored the Pentateuch. More specifically, our Lord said that "Moses therefore gave you circumcision" (John 7:22; Acts 15:1), which is uniquely given in Gen. 17. It is not surprising that the founder of Israel's theocracy gave this masterful foundation to the Law. Its historical narrative furnished the theological and ethical underpinnings of the Torah: Israel's unique covenantal relationship with God (Deut. 9:5) and its singular laws (e.g., the Sabbath, 7:2 note). Moreover, since creation myths are basic to pagan religions, it is natural that Moses would have included a creation account opposing the pagan myths. This account is, in addition, foundational to the Law Moses mediated (1:1—2:3 notes).

This Bible's own witness to Moses' authorship is supported by extrabiblical data. The first eleven chapters of Genesis share many parallels and conscious dissimilarities with ancient Near Eastern myths that preceded the time of Moses and were known to him (Mesopotamian creation accounts such as the *Enuma Elish,* and flood accounts such as those included in the *Atrahasis Epic* and the eleventh tablet of the *Gilgamesh Epic*). Names and customs in the narratives about the patriarchs (chs. 12—50) accurately reflect their era, suggesting an early author with reliable documents. The Ebla texts (twenty-fourth century B.C.) mention Ebrium, possibly the Eber of Gen. 10:21, and the Mari texts (eighteenth century B.C.) attest to names such as "Abraham," "Jacob," and "Amorite." The practice of granting a birthright (i.e., additional privileges to the eldest son, 25:5–6, 32–34; 39:3–4; 43:33; 49:3) was widespread in the ancient Near East, and the sale of an inheritance (25:29–34) is documented at different periods in this area. The adoption of one's own slave (15:1–3) is found in a Larsa letter from Old Babylonia, and the adoption of Ephraim and Manasseh by their grandfather (48:5) may be compared with a similar adoption of a grandson at Ugarit (fourteenth century B.C.). The gift of a female slave as part of a dowry and her presentation to her husband by an infertile wife (16:1–6; 30:1–3 and notes) are attested in the laws of Hammurabi (c. 1750 B.C.). These and similar facts corroborate the historical reliability of the narrative.

Date and Occasion Given the biblical and extrabiblical evidence linking Genesis and its contents to Moses and his era, we may reasonably conclude that the book dates from the fifteenth century B.C. Certainly, for example, since David (c. 1000 B.C.) set the creation account of Gen. 1 to music (Ps. 8), a date of composition in the second millennium is indicated for Gen. 1. Readers should be aware, however, that, although occasionally words known only from the middle of the second millennium appear in the text, the grammar of the Pentateuch was updated at some point, as were some place-names (14:14 note). Also, the list of kings in 36:31–43 was apparently added after the time of Saul.

Like its authorship and date, the purpose of Genesis cannot be considered apart from its place within the Pentateuch as a whole ("Introduction to the Pentateuch"). The Pentateuch is a unique combination of history and law, a history that explains the origins of its laws. For example, the narratives in Genesis explain the rite of circumcision (17:9–14), the prohibition against eating the sciatic tendon (32:32), and Sabbath observance (2:2, 3). More importantly, its narrative recounts God's election of Israel to a unique covenant relationship with Him, in order to bless a fallen world. That covenant relationship consists of God's commitment to the patriarchs to make of their elect offspring a great nation and the chosen nation's commitment to obey Him and so to become a light to the Gentiles. Genesis recounts the origins of this redemptive nation, reaching back to the beginnings of mankind and the world and of the conflict between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan in which the nation was to play a crucial role.

The Hebrew title, following the ancient custom of naming books by their first word(s), is *bereshith,* "in the beginning." The Greek title, based on the book's content, is *genesis,* "origin." Both titles are appropriate since the book is about the origin of history.

Interpretive Difficulties The tension between Genesis and modern science about the origins of the universe and of living species is largely resolved when it is recognized that they are speaking from different perspectives. Genesis is concerned about who created and why, not about how and when. Science cannot answer the former questions, and Genesis is largely mute about the latter (1:2, 5, 6, 11 and notes).

For the past century scholars holding to the "documentary hypothesis" have contended that Genesis is composed of conflicting documents: *J* (for Jahweh/Yahweh, "the LORD"), *E* (for Elohim, "God"), *D* (for Deuteronomist), and *P* (for priestly writer). While this scheme is still widely accepted, few believe any longer that these documents can be used to reconstruct a history of Israel's religion because all the alleged documents contain what are thought to be "early" and "late" materials. In other words, the alleged four documents actually share elements and characteristics that were supposed to belong in only *one* of these hypothetical sources (e.g., *J* contains material that would be expected to occur only in *E*). To be sure, documents were composed in the ancient Near East by combining earlier written sources, but Moses himself probably used them (5:1 note). Moreover, many scholars today question the criteria used for identifying these alleged sources and emphasize instead the unity of the text as we have it. For example, the Flood story, once thought to be a classic example of the documentary hypothesis, is now conceded to have remarkable integrity (6:9—9:29 note). See "Introduction to the Pentateuch."

Characteristics and Themes

A study of the literary structure of Genesis discloses the following highlights. After the prologue Genesis is divided into ten parts marked out by the formula: "This is the genealogy [or 'history'] of." This heading is followed by a genealogy of the person named or by stories involving his notable descendants. The first three accounts pertain to the pre-Flood world and the last seven to the post-Flood period. Accounts one through three and four through six parallel one another: (a) stories about the developments of mankind universally at the creation and at the recreation after the Flood (accounts one and four respectively); (b) the genealogy of the redemptive lines through Seth and Shem (accounts two and five); and (c) the stories of the epochal covenant transactions with Noah and Abraham (accounts three and six). The final two pairs of accounts expand the Abrahamic line, contrasting his rejected offspring, Ishmael and Esau (accounts seven and nine), with stories about the elect, Isaac and Jacob respectively (accounts eight and ten).

The key to the stories is often given in an opening revelation: e.g., the promise to Abraham (12:1–3), the prenatal sign of the rivalry between Jacob and Esau (25:22, 23), and Joseph's dreams (37:1–11). A transitional section is found at the end of the accounts (e.g., 4:25, 26; 6:1–8; 9:18–29; 11:10–26; Outline).

The closing section of the last account contains strong links with Exodus, concluding with an oath Joseph elicited from his brothers to take his embalmed body with them when God came to their aid and returned them to Canaan (50:24, 25; Ex. 13:19).

The book's focus on the origins of Israel unfolds against a backdrop of matters affecting the world. Moses tells us that prior to God's election of the patriarchs, the fathers of Israel (chs. 12—50), mankind asserted its independence from God by striving to know good and evil apart from God and in defiance of His command (chs. 2; 3). Humans proved their depravity by token religion, fratricide, and unrestrained vengeance (Cain, ch. 4); by tyranny, harems, and thinking evil continually (the pre-Flood kings, 6:1–8); and by erecting an anti-kingdom against God (Nimrod and the infamous tower, 10:8–12; 11:1–9 note). God's verdict about mankind stands: "the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth" (8:21).

Just as miraculously and surely as God sovereignly transformed the dark, empty void at earth's origin (1:2) into a glorious habitat for mankind and brought it to rest (1:3—2:3), so also God sovereignly elected His covenant people in Christ to conquer Satan (3:15) and to bless the depraved world (12:1–3). Unconditionally He elected the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, promising to make of their elect descendants the nation destined to bless the earth, a promise entailing an eternal seed, land, and king (12:1–3, 7; 13:14–17; 17:1–8; 26:2–6; 28:10–15). Before Jacob was born and had done either good or evil, God chose Jacob, not Esau, his older twin brother (25:21–23). He chose Jacob, even though he cheated his brother, deceived his father, and blasphemed God (ch. 27). God even used Judah's scandalous wrongs against Tamar, and her daring ruse as well, to advance the messianic line (ch. 38). The heavenly King displayed His glorious rule by miraculously preserving the matriarchs in pagan harems (12:10–20; ch. 20) and opening their barren wombs (17:15–22; 18:1–15; 21:1–7; 25:21; 29:31; 30:22). He overrode man's ways and customs by time and again choosing the younger, not the older, to inherit the blessing (25:23 note). Blatant prophecies and subtle types are sterling witnesses that God directs history. For example, Noah prophesied Shem's subjugation of Canaan (9:24–26), and the greater Exodus led by Moses was prefigured when God delivered Abraham and Sarah from the oppression of Egypt with wealth (12:10–20 note).

God inclined the heart of His elect to trust His promises and to obey His commands. Against all hope, Abraham counted on God to give him an innumerable offspring, and the lawgiver says that God credited that as righteousness (15:6). Confident of God's sure promises, Abraham gave up his rights to the land (ch. 13); and Jacob, renamed "Israel" and clinging only to God (ch. 22), symbolically gave back the birthright to Esau (ch. 33). At the beginning of the Joseph story, Judah sold Joseph as a slave (37:26, 27), but at its end the former slave trader was willing to become a slave in the place of his brother (44:33, 34). Secure in the truth that God's gracious design had brought good out of sins as heinous as murder

and slave trading, Joseph forgave his brothers without recrimination (45:4–8; 50:24).

What was begun in Genesis is fulfilled in Christ. The genealogy begun in ch. 5, and advanced in ch. 11, is completed with the birth of Jesus Christ (Matt. 1; Luke 3:23–27). He is the ultimate offspring promised to Abraham (12:1–3; Gal. 3:16). The elect are blessed in Him because He alone, by His active and passive obedience, satisfied the law's demands and died in their stead. All who are baptized into Christ and united with Him by faith are Abraham's descendants (Gal. 3:26–29). The bold prophecies and subtle types in Genesis show that God is writing a history leading to a rest in Christ. On the threshold of biblical prophecy Noah predicted that the Japhethites would find salvation through the Semites, a prophecy fulfilled in the New Testament (9:27 and note), and God Himself proclaimed that the woman's Seed would destroy Satan (3:15). That Seed is Christ and His church (Rom. 16:20). The gift of the bride to Adam prefigures the gift of the church to Christ (2:18–25; Eph. 5:22–32); Melchizedek's priesthood is like the Son of God's (14:18–20; Heb. 7); and as Israel redeemed out of bondage in Egypt found rest, resources, and refuge in the Promised Land, the church redeemed out of the cursed world finds that life in Christ (13:15 note). The paradise lost by the first Adam is restored by the Last Adam. This marvelously unified sacred history certifies that the focus of Genesis is Christ. □

Outline of Genesis

I. Prologue: Creation of Heaven and Earth (1:1—2:3)
II. Account of Heavens and Earth (2:4—4:26)
  A. Adam and Eve on Probation in Paradise (2:4–25)
  B. The Fall and Its Consequences (ch. 3)
  C. Escalation of Sin in the Line of Cain (4:1–24)
  D. A Godly Remnant (4:25, 26)
III. Account of Adam (5:1—6:8)
  A. The Covenant Line of Seth (ch. 5)
  B. Escalation of Sin Before the Flood (6:1–8)
IV. Account of Noah (6:9—9:29)
  A. Preparation for the Flood (6:9—7:10)
  B. The Flood and Salvation (7:11—8:19)
  C. God's Covenant Not to Destroy the Earth (8:20—9:17)
  D. Prophecies About Noah's Sons (9:18–29)
V. Account of Shem, Ham, and Japheth (10:1—11:9)
  A. Table of Nations (ch. 10)
  B. Escalation of Evil in Babylon (11:1–9)
VI. Account of Shem (11:10–26)
VII. Account of Terah (11:27—25:11)
  A. Genealogy (11:27–32)
  B. The Abrahamic Covenant: His Land and People (12:1—22:19)
    1. Migration to the Promised Land (12:1–9)
    2. Deliverance from Egypt (12:10–20)
    3. Lot's Separation from the Land (ch. 13)
    4. Victory over the Eastern Kings (ch. 14)
    5. God's Covenant Ratified (ch. 15)
    6. Hagar and Ishmael Rejected (ch. 16)
    7. God's Covenant Confirmed (ch. 17)
    8. Sarah to Have a Son (18:1–15)
    9. Lot's Rescue from Sodom (18:16—19:38)
    10. Protection from the Philistines (ch. 20)
    11. Birth of Isaac and Blessing in the Land (ch. 21)
    12. God's Oath to Bless the World Through Abraham's Offspring (22:1–19)
  C. Transition to Isaac (22:20—25:11)
    1. Rebekah's Family Background (22:20–24)
    2. Death of Sarah (ch. 23)
    3. Isaac's Marriage to Rebekah (ch. 24)

4. Isaac the Sole Heir (25:1–6)
5. Death of Abraham (25:7–11)
VIII. Account of Ishmael (25:12–18)
IX. Account of Isaac (25:19—35:29)
A. Rivalry in the Family (25:19–34)
B. Covenant Blessings on Isaac (ch. 26)
C. Jacob's Theft of Esau's Blessing (27:1–40)
D. Covenant Blessings on Jacob and His Exile (27:41—32:32)
1. Jacob Sent to Laban (27:41—28:9)
2. Encounter with the Angel at Bethel (28:10–22)
3. Conflict with Laban (29:1–30)
4. Birth of Tribal Fathers (29:31—30:24)
5. Jacob's Prosperity and Flight from Laban (30:25—31:55)
6. Encounter with Angels at Mahanaim and Penuel (ch. 32)
E. Esau's Reconciliation with Jacob (33:1–17)
F. Transition to Jacob: Itinerary and Deaths from Shechem to Mamre (33:18—35:29)
X. Account of Esau (36:1—37:1)
XI. Account of Jacob (37:2—50:26)
A. Joseph's Dream of Rulership (37:2–11)
B. The Sins of Jacob's Family (37:12—38:30)
C. Joseph's Rise to Rulership over Egypt (chs. 39—41)
D. Joseph's Ruse and the Reconciliation of the Covenant Family (chs. 42—45)
E. Transition to Exodus (chs. 46—50)
1. Migration to Egypt (46:1–27)
2. Preservation in Goshen (46:28—47:31)
3. Jacob's Blessings on the Twelve Tribes (48:1—49:28)
4. Jacob's Death and Burial in Canaan (49:29—50:14)
5. Joseph's Death in Egypt with the Promise of Canaan (50:15–26)

CHAPTER 1

The History of Creation

1 [a]In the [b]beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was [c]without form, and void; and darkness *[1]was* on the face of the deep. [d]And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

[a] [John 1:1–3]
[b] Acts 17:24
[c] Jer. 4:23
[d] Is. 40:13, 14

[1] Words in italic type have been added for clarity. They are not found in the original Hebrew or Aramaic.

■ **1:1—2:25** See "God the Creator" at Ps. 148:5.

■ **1:1—2:3** This account of creation lays the foundation of Israel's world view about God, human beings, creation, and the laws that pertain to mankind (e.g., to worship no other gods, to keep the Sabbath, and to take no innocent life).

■ **1:1 In the beginning God.** The Hebrew word for "God," the first subject of Genesis and the Bible, is plural to denote His majesty. There is no other god (Deut. 4:39; Is. 40:21, 28; 43:10; John 1:1; Col. 1:17). He is truth, the basis for all sound knowledge (John 14:6). God is personal; He speaks and acts.

created. This translates a Hebrew word reserved for God's creative activity alone. Linguistically possible, though less likely, is the translation "When God began to create the heavens and the earth, the earth was without form and void." God's creative activity was not merely the ordering of preexistent matter (like an artisan fashioning a product), however, for other passages clearly teach that the universe was created *ex nihilo* (i.e., out of nothing, John 1:3; Heb. 11:3; 2 Pet. 3:5) and that only God is eternal and transcendent (e.g., Ps. 102:25–27; Prov. 8:22–31). Not even the darkness exists apart from God's creative word (Is. 45:7). While the narrative here is fully consistent with the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo,* the emphasis falls on God's progressive ordering of a formless and empty world (v. 2 note).

the heavens and the earth. This compound of opposites signifies the organized universe.

■ **1:2 The earth . . . deep.** The primordial earth is lightless and landless. Neither the origins of darkness and the abyss nor the origin of Satan (3:1–6) is explained in Genesis. Their beginnings are a mystery, but only God is eternal (Ps. 90:2; Prov. 8:22–31). In the new heaven and new earth there will be no sea or darkness (Rev. 21:1, 25).

earth was without form, and void. This description signifies the as yet unordered or unfilled creation. Some view it as a negative threat of chaos that is overcome by God's creative power.

Some suggest that vv. 1 and 2 refer to two separate creative acts separated by a span of time. They argue that the initial creation fell into a desolate condition (perhaps because of the fall of Satan), and that the Hebrew word here translated "was" should be rendered "became." This view is very doubtful, however, because the proposed translation "became" is unlikely in this context, and because the description "without form, and void" refers more naturally to a creation yet to be formed and filled, rather than to one that had fallen into disrepair.

Spirit of God. God's Spirit gives life to all; when He withdraws His Spirit, life ceases. He continues to give life and to withdraw life (Job 33:4; Ps. 104:30; Eccl. 12:7; Luke 23:46). The Spirit also builds "temples": the cosmos (Ps. 104:1–4); the tabernacle (Ex. 28:3; 35:31); Christ (Luke 1:35;

3 [e]Then God said, [f]"Let there be [g]light"; and there was light. 4 And God saw the light, that *it was* good; and God divided the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light Day, and the [h]darkness He called Night. [2]So the evening and the morning were the first day.

6 Then God said, [i]"Let there be a [3]firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters." 7 Thus God made the firmament, [j]and divided the waters which *were* under the firmament from the waters which *were* [k]above the firmament; and it was so. 8 And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day.

9 Then God said, [l]"Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and [m]let the dry *land* appear"; and it was so. 10 And God called the dry *land* Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas. And God saw that *it was* good.

11 Then God said, "Let the earth [n]bring forth grass, the herb *that* yields seed, *and* the [o]fruit tree *that* yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed *is* in itself, on the earth"; and it was so. 12 And the earth brought forth grass, the herb *that* yields seed according to its kind, and the tree *that* yields fruit, whose seed *is* in itself according to its kind. And God saw that *it was* good. 13 So the evening and the morning were the third day.

14 Then God said, "Let there be [p]lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and [q]seasons, and for days and years; 15 and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth"; and it was so. 16 Then God

3 [e]Ps. 33:6, 9 [f]2 Cor. 4:6 [g][Heb. 11:3]

5 [h]Ps. 19:2; 33:6; 74:16; 104:20; 136:5 [2]Lit. *And evening was, and morning was, a day, one.*

6 [i]Jer. 10:12 [3]*expanse*

7 [j]Prov. 8;27–29 [k]Ps. 148:4

9 [l]Job 26:10 [m]Ps. 24:1, 2; 33:7; 95:5

11 [n]Heb. 6:7 [o]2 Sam. 16:1

14 [p]Ps. 74:16; 136:5–9 [q]Ps. 104:19

cf. John 2:19); the church (1 Cor. 3:16; Eph. 2:22). See "The Holy Spirit" at John 14:26.

hovering over the . . . waters. Hovering eagle-like over the primordial abyss, the almighty Spirit makes the earth into a habitation for human beings.

■ **1:3–31** The creation progresses over two triads of days looking back respectively to "without form, and void" of v. 2:

Day 1—Light (v. 3)
Day 4—Luminaries (v. 14)
Day 2—Sky/water (v. 6)
Day 5—Fish/fowl (v. 21)
Day 3—Land, vegetation (vv. 9–11)
Day 6—Animals and humans (vv. 24–30)

In the first triad God gives the earth form by separating the light of day from the darkness of night, the sea below from the clouds above, and the dry land with vegetation from the sea; in the second He fills these realms. Each triad, moving from sky to earth, progresses from a single creative act (vv. 3–5, 14–19) to one creative act with two aspects (vv. 6–8, 20–23), to two separate creative acts, each culminating in the earth bringing forth (vv. 9–13, 24–31). The pattern of each day is similar: an announcement ("God said"); a command ("let there be"); a report ("and it was so"); an evaluation ("it was good"); and a chronological framework (e.g., "the first day").

■ **1:3 God said.** God's free act of creation through the divine Word (Ps. 33:6, 9; cf. John 1:1, 3) signifies that the universe is not an emanation or part of the divine being, thus ruling out all forms of pantheism. Though creation is not part of God's being, all creation is utterly dependent on God for its existence, for He creates and sustains all that is by the power of His own being.

Let there be. God's will is irresistible. It is carried out by divine imperative.

■ **1:4 light.** God is the ultimate source of the daylight that alternates with darkness; the sun is later introduced as the immediate cause (vv. 14–18; v. 5 and note). Light symbolizes life and blessing (Ps. 4:7; 56:13; Is. 9:2; John 1:4, 5).

good. Brought within God's constraints, even the darkness and watery deep (vv. 2, 10) are now "good," serving God's benevolent purposes (Ps. 104:19–26). The creation bears witness to God's handiwork (Ps. 19:1–6).

divided. The Hebrew here is also translated "set apart." Separation is fundamental both to creation and to Israel's existence (3:15; 4:1–17; 12:1; Lev. 20:24, 25; Num. 8:14).

■ **1:5 called.** God shows He is ruler of the cosmos by naming its spheres (17:5; cf. Num. 32:38; 2 Kin. 23:34; 24:17). By His creative commands and designations, God gave existence and meaning to everything according to His eternal counsel. For God Himself there are no mysteries, and all creation has coherence and meaning within His will. For man, the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the all-wise God (Prov. 1:7).

first day. This presentation of the creation week enables God's covenant people to imitate the Creator in their weekly pattern of work and rest (Ex. 20:11; 31:13, 17).

Reformed scholars have proposed several interpretations of the creative "day." Some view these as literal, sequential, 24-hour days. This interpretation usually entails the view that the earth is relatively "young" (c. 10,000 years old or less). Other scholars, noting that the Hebrew word for "day" (*yom*) can refer to periods of time (e.g., 2:4), have proposed the "day-age theory," that the creative "days" refer to extended ages or epochs of time. Still others suggest that literal, 24-hour days are intended, but that these days were separated by extended periods of time. Finally, some scholars argue that the "days" of creation constitute a literary framework (vv. 3–31 note) designed to teach that God alone is the creator of an orderly universe, and to call upon human beings made in the image of the creator God to reflect God's creative activity in their own pattern of labor (2:2; Ex. 31:17). This "framework hypothesis" views the days of creation as God's gracious accommodation to the limitations of human knowledge—an expression of the infinite Creator's work in terms understandable to finite and frail human beings. This last group of scholars observes that the universe gives the appearance of great antiquity, that the phrase "morning and evening" seems inconsistent with the "day-age" theory, and that the notion of intervening ages between isolated 24-hour days is not apparent from the text.

■ **1:6–8** During the second and third creative days, the watery deep is structured into a benevolent system of rain clouds, springs, and rivers.

■ **1:6 firmament.** Describing the sky in terms of how it appears from the earth, the Hebrew suggests something flat and hard (Job 37:18; Is. 40:22). In vv. 6–8 it refers ambiguously to the atmosphere or sky (or both). Here it separates rain clouds from rivers and seas.

■ **1:10 Earth.** The word connotes that which is benevolently ordered by God's sovereignty in the interests of human life and security (Ps. 24:1, 2; cf. Prov. 2:21, 22).

■ **1:11 according to its kind.** There are no species of life apart from God's design and creative acts. He intended the vegetation to serve as food for higher forms of life (vv. 29, 30).

■ **1:14 in . . . the heavens.** The description is phenomenological (i.e., as things appear to the eye).

■ **1:16 two great lights.** The sun and moon, principal deities in ancient Near Eastern pagan pantheons, are not even named, effectively demoting them and emphasizing that they serve mankind according to God's design.

rule. The moving forms of the second triad of days seem to rule over the spheres that house and shelter them (1:3–31 note): the luminaries over the day and night (Ps. 136:7–9), the birds and fish over the sky and sea respectively, and animals over the land and its vegetation with man over both.

made two great [4]lights: the [r]greater light to rule the day, and the [s]lesser light to rule the night. *He made* [t]the stars also. [17] God set them in the firmament of the [u]heavens to give light on the earth, [18] and to [v]rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that *it was* good. [19] So the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

[20] Then God said, "Let the waters abound with an abundance of living [5]creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the [6]firmament of the heavens." [21] So [w]God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves, with which the waters abounded, according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that *it was* good. [22] And God blessed them, saying, [x]"Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." [23] So the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

[24] Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind: cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth, *each* according to its kind"; and it was so. [25] And God made the beast of the earth according to its kind, cattle according to its kind, and everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind. And God saw that *it was* good.

[26] Then God said, [y]"Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; [z]let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over [7]all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." [27] So God created man [a]in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; [b]male and female He created them. [28] Then God blessed them, and God said to them, [c]"Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and [d]subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that [8]moves on the earth."

[29] And God said, "See, I have given you every herb *that* yields seed which *is* on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; [e]to you it shall be for food. [30] Also, to [f]every beast of the earth, to every [g]bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which *there is* [9]life, *I have given* every green herb for food"; and it was so. [31] Then [h]God saw everything that He had made, and indeed *it was* very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

CHAPTER 2

2 Thus the heavens and the earth, and [a]all the host of them, were finished. [2] [b]And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from

16 [r]Ps. 136:8 [s]Ps. 8:3 [t]Job 38:7 [4]*luminaries*

17 [u]Gen. 15:5

18 [v]Jer. 31:35

20 [5]*souls* [6]*expanse*

21 [w]Ps. 104:25–28

22 [x]Gen. 8:17

26 [y][Eph. 4:24] [z]Gen. 9:2 [7]Syr. *all the wild animals of*

27 [a]Gen. 5:2 [b]Matt. 19:4

28 [c]Gen. 9:1, 7 [d]1 Cor. 9:27 [8]*moves about on*

29 [e]Gen. 9:3

30 [f]Ps. 145:15 [g]Job 38:41 [9]*a living soul*

31 [h][Ps. 104:24]

1 [a]Ps. 33:6

2 [b]Ex. 20:9–11; 31:17

the stars also. Pagans often credited the stars (which were numbered among their gods) with controlling human destiny. Here they are mentioned almost in passing.

■ **1:21 created.** See v. 1.

great sea creatures. In Old Testament poetry these are the dreaded sea-dragons associated with ancient mythology, thought by pagans to rival the creating gods (Ps. 74:13; Is. 27:1; 51:9; Jer. 51:34). By adapting and modifying this pagan imagery, the Hebrew writers subverted the pagan theology—the goodness of creation and the subservience of the aquatic animals is stressed.

■ **1:22 Be fruitful and multiply.** This entails the notion of multiplication so as to rule (cf. v. 28). The birds and fish rule their realms through multiplication. The Lord Jesus blessed His disciples to multiply spiritually (Matt. 28:18–20; Luke 24:50, 51).

■ **1:24 cattle . . . beast of the earth.** The contrast between wild and domesticated animals differentiates carnivores from cattle (the Hebrew here for "beast of the earth" is the same as that in Job 5:22; Ps. 79:2; Ezek. 29:5; 32:4; 34:28).

■ **1:26 Let Us . . . Our . . .** The use of the plural here is variously interpreted. Some view this as an indication of plurality within the divine unity, hinting at the later New Testament revelation of the one God as Father, Son, and Spirit. Others explain this usage grammatically—either as a plural of majesty (cf. v. 1 note) or as a deliberative plural (in which God directs the statement to Himself). Finally, some argue that God and His heavenly angelic court are in view (Is. 6:8 note).

image . . . likeness. Humans in their whole being—body and soul—adequately and faithfully represent God (Ps. 94:10), possess life from Him and therefore potential intimacy with Him (2:7 and note), and serve on earth as His administrators (Ps. 8). The image is passed on to every human, giving each person dignity (5:3; 9:6; Prov. 22:2 and notes).

Medieval theologians strongly distinguished "image" and "likeness," with "image" viewed as a reference to natural reason, and "likeness" as a reference to the original righteousness lost in the Fall. More recent scholarship notes that the two Hebrew terms are used synonymously in Scripture (v. 27; 5:1, 3; 9:6).

have dominion. God gave humans the cultural mandate to rule the creation as benevolent kings (9:2; Ps. 8:5–8; Heb. 2:5–9). Natural man can rule the animal (v. 28) and plant (v. 29) kingdoms, but he cannot rule the heavenly powers, especially Satan (ch. 3; Eph. 6:10–12). Only the Last Adam, the very image of God's Person (Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3) and those united with Him can do that (3:15; Matt. 4:1–11; Col. 3:10).

■ **1:27** See theological note "The Image of God."

created. See note on v. 1. These apparently poetic lines (the verb "create" is used three times) celebrate the creation of man.

male and female. See "Body and Soul, Male and Female" at 2:7.

■ **1:28 blessed.** See v. 22; 9:1 and notes. The genealogies of chs. 5; 9; 11; 25; 36; and 46 bear witness to the fulfillment of this blessing.

have dominion . . . earth. Under divine blessing, humans accomplish the cultural mandate (v. 26 and note) by naming the creation (v. 5; 2:19, 20). This activity expresses their bearing the image of the Creator-King. Fallen man, however, distorts this activity into self-deification and abuse of the creation.

■ **1:29 herb . . . tree.** In Mesopotamian myths man was created to provide the gods with food; here God creates food for man. The human and animal (v. 30) diets were originally vegetarian, a situation altered after the Flood (9:3 note).

■ **2:1** The concluding summary statement underscores that the Creator perfectly executed His will (v. 31).

■ **2:2 God ended . . . He rested.** The creation cycle was completed on the sixth day and God rested on the seventh, providing man with a model for the cycle of labor and rest. No mention is made of "evening and morning," perhaps because the Sabbath ordinance continues and man is exhorted to participate in it (Ex. 31:17), and to look forward to the eternal redemptive sabbath rest (Heb. 4:3–10).

all His work which He had done. 3 Then God [c]blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

4 [d]This *is* the [f]history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, 5 before any [e]plant of the field was in the earth and before any herb of the field had grown. For the LORD God had not [g]caused it to rain on the earth, and *there was* no man [g]to till the ground; 6 but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground.

7 And the LORD God formed man *of* the [h]dust of the ground, and [i]breathed into his [j]nostrils the breath of life; and [k]man became a living being.

3 [c]Is. 58:13]
4 [d]Gen. 1:1 [f]Heb. *toledoth;* lit. *generations*
5 [e]Gen. 1:11, 12 [g]Gen. 7:4 [g]Gen. 3:23
7 [h]Gen. 3:19, 23 [i]Job 33:4 [j]Gen. 7:22 [k]1 Cor. 15:45

The Image of God

Scripture teaches (Gen. 1:26, 27, echoed in 5:1; 9:6; 1 Cor. 11:7; James 3:9) that God made man and woman in His own image, so that human beings are like God as no other earthly creatures are. The special dignity of being human is that as men and women we may reflect and reproduce at our own creaturely level the holy ways of God. Human beings were made for this purpose, and in one sense we are truly human to the extent that we fulfill it.

The scope of God's image in humanity is not specified in Gen. 1:26, 27, but the context of the passage helps to define it. Genesis 1:1–25 sets forth God as personal, rational (having intelligence and will), creative, ruling over the world He has made, and morally admirable (in that all He creates is good). Plainly, God's image will reflect these qualities. Verses 26–30 show God blessing the newly created humans and setting them to rule creation as His representatives and deputies. The human capacity for communication and relationship with both God and other humans appears as a further facet of the image.

God's image in humanity at creation, then, consisted in: (a) existence as a "soul" or "spirit" (Gen. 2:7), that is, as personal and self-conscious, with a God-like capacity for knowledge, thought, and action; (b) being morally upright, a quality lost at the Fall but now being progressively restored in Christ (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10); (c) dominion over the environment; (d) the human body as the means through which we experience reality, express ourselves, and exercise dominion; and (e) the God-given capacity for eternal life.

The Fall diminished God's image, not only in Adam and Eve, but in all their descendants, the whole human race. We retain the image structurally, in the sense that we remain human beings, but not functionally, for we are now slaves to sin, unable to use our powers to mirror God's holiness. Regeneration begins the process of restoring God's moral image in our lives. But not until we are fully sanctified and glorified shall we reflect God perfectly in thought and action as we were made to do and as the incarnate Son of God in His humanity actually did (John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 8:29, 46). □

■ **2:3 sanctified it.** The seventh day is the first thing in the Torah to which God imparts His holiness and so sets apart to Himself (Ex. 20:11). It summons mankind to imitate the pattern of the King and so to confess God's lordship and their consecration to Him. This sign of a covenant with God (Ex. 31:13, 17) and type of Christ (Col. 2:16, 17) gives promise of divine rest both now and forever (Matt. 11:28).

■ **2:4—4:26** Moses' narration moves from the prologue concerning the creation of heaven and earth to the account (2:4 note and text note) of heaven and earth. Moses treats the creation and probation of Adam and Eve in Paradise (2:4–25), their fall into sin and its consequences (ch. 3), the escalation of sin in the ungodly line of Cain (4:1–24), and the preservation of a godly remnant in the line of Seth (4:25, 26).

■ **2:4—3:24** This story presents the fall of Adam and Eve from innocence into sin. Though historical persons (1 Chr. 1:1; Matt. 19:5; Luke 3:23–38; Rom. 5:12–14; 1 Cor. 15:45), Adam and Eve also represent every man and woman (2:24; 3:16–19; Matt. 19:4–6). The chief actor throughout is God: He forms the man (v. 7; Job 10:8–12), plants the garden (Ps. 87:1; Matt. 16:18), sovereignly places man in it (v. 15; Eph. 1:3–14), orders his life (vv. 16, 17; Ps. 31:15), gives him his wife (vv. 18–25; Matt. 19:6), judges the first parents for their sin, and restores them (ch. 3; Heb. 9:27, 28).

■ **2:4 the history of.** This Hebrew word (*toledoth*), sometimes rendered "the generations of" or "the genealogy of," introduces major new developments in the Genesis narrative (5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10, 27; 25:12, 19; 36:1, 9; 37:2). This "history of the heavens and the earth" pertains to what follows—to what the universe generated—rather than to the preceding account of the generation or creation of the earth.

LORD God. Normally these names for God are isolated: "God" to represent Him as sovereign Creator of all, and "LORD" to signify His unique covenant commitment to Israel (Ex. 3:14, 15). Here they are combined to stress that the Creator is also Israel's covenant God.

■ **2:5 any plant . . . any herb of the field.** Inedible growth, such as thorns (3:18) and cultivated grains (3:17), respectively. Because of the crucial role played by the garden, trees, and the cursed ground, this introduction to the Fall narrative focuses on plants, not animals.

■ **2:7** See theological note "Body and Soul, Male and Female."

formed. This figure from pottery making represents God's activity in shaping each person (Job 10:8–12).

man . . . of the ground. The wordplay in Hebrew, "man" (Hebrew *'adam*) and "ground" (Hebrew *'adamah*), shows man's close connection with the ground (2:5, 15; 3:19), and underlies Paul's later teaching that

8 [l]Is. 51:3 [m]Gen. 3:23, 24 [n]Gen. 4:16
9 [o]Ezek. 31:8

Life in God's Garden

8 The LORD God planted [l]a garden [m]eastward in [n]Eden, and there He put the man whom He had formed. 9 And out of the ground the LORD God made [o]every tree grow that is pleasant to the

Body and Soul, Male and Female

Each human being in this world consists of a material body animated by an immaterial personal self. Scripture calls this self a "soul" or "spirit." "Soul" emphasizes the distinctness of a person's conscious selfhood; "spirit" carries the nuances of the self's derivation from God, dependence on Him, and distinctness from the body as such.

Biblical usage leads us to say that we have and are both souls and spirits, but it is a mistake to think that soul and spirit are two different things; a "trichotomous" view of man as body, soul, and spirit is incorrect. The common idea that the soul is an organ of this-worldly awareness only, while the spirit is a distinct organ of communion with God, brought to life in regeneration, is out of step with biblical teaching. Moreover, such a view leads to a crippling anti-intellectualism whereby spiritual insight and theological reflection are separated to the impoverishment of both—theology being regarded as "soulish" and unspiritual, while spiritual perception is viewed as unrelated to the work of teaching and learning God's revealed truth.

The embodiment of the soul is integral to God's design for humanity. Through the body we experience our environment, enjoy and control things around us, and relate to other people. There was nothing evil or corruptible about the body as God first made it. If sin had not occurred, the physical aging and decline that leads to death as we know it would have been no part of human experience (Gen. 2:17; 3:19, 22; Rom. 5:12). Now, however, all people are corrupt throughout their psychophysical being, as the disordered desires of mind and body, warring against each other as well as against the rules of wisdom and righteousness, clearly show.

At death the soul leaves the body behind, but this is not the happy release that Greek philosophers and some cults have imagined. The Christian hope is not redemption *from* the body but redemption *of* the body. We look forward to having a part of Christ's resurrection in and through the resurrection of our bodies. Though the exact composition of our future glorified bodies is presently unknown, we know that there will be a continuity with our present bodies (1 Cor. 15:35–49; Phil. 3:20, 21; Col. 3:4).

The two genders, male and female, belong to the creation pattern. Men and women are equally image-bearers of God (Gen. 1:27), and their dignity is equal in consequence. The complementary nature of the genders is meant to lead to enriching cooperation (see Gen. 2:18–23), not only in marriage, procreation, and family life, but in life's wider activities also. Perception of the difference between a person of the other gender and oneself is meant to be a school for learning the practice and joy of appreciation, openness, honor, service, and fidelity. □

the first Adam was fashioned in a natural body for an earthly existence. The heavenly Son of Man (Dan. 7:13) shared in this earthly state in order to secure for fallen man a spiritual body of imperishable glory in the resurrection of the redeemed (1 Cor. 15:42–49).

breathed. This figure represents the Spirit's creative activity (Ps. 104:30; Ezek. 37:1–10, 14).

living being. The Hebrew here is translated "living creature" in 2:19. Note that it does not say "a living being became man"—man is not formed from preexistent life. Man is differentiated from the animals by bearing the image of God (1:26 and notes), and he shows his authority over the animals by naming them (vv. 19, 20).

■ **2:8–17** The account of man's probation begins with his creation (v. 7). The stage for this drama was the paradisal Garden of Eden (vv. 8–14), while the plot consisted of the events during that probation that tested man's obedience to the covenant obligation (vv. 15–17). In this covenant arrangement God graciously offers life to humankind, but He demands obedience to His command. The first Adam, representing all mankind, failed to obey and brought death upon all. The active obedience of the Last Adam, Christ, representing the elect, satisfies God's demands and earns for them eternal life (Rom. 5:12–19; 1 Cor. 15:45–49).

■ **2:8–14** The Creator, by providing man with every blessing, pressed upon him the claims of God's love and made his rebellion inexcusable (Rom. 1:20). Mankind was meant for fellowship with God in the garden; his expulsion from that paradise is unnatural.

■ **2:8 garden.** A sanctuary where God invites humanity to enjoy fellowship and peace with Him. Cherubim protect the garden's sanctity (3:24 and note; Ex. 26:1; 2 Chr. 3:7) so that sin and death will be excluded (3:23; Rev. 21:8). Faith and obedience are prerequisites for living in this place of special communion with God.

eastward. In biblical times the east, where the sun rises, represented life and light (3:24 note).

Eden. The origin of the term "Eden" is disputed; it may derive from an Accadian term meaning "plain" or "prairie," or from the Hebrew term meaning "pleasure" or "delight" (from which the association of Eden with the term "paradise" derives). Eden was apparently the region in which the garden was located (v. 10). The mention of Assyria and the Tigris and Euphrates rivers (v. 14 and text note) indicates a location east of Palestine in Mesopotamia.

■ **2:9 every tree . . . food.** Life in the garden is represented as a banquet table.

sight and good for food. [p]The tree of life *was* also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and [q]evil.

10 Now a river went out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it parted and became four riverheads. 11 The name of the first *is* Pishon; it *is* the one which skirts [r]the whole land of Havilah, where *there is* gold. 12 And the gold of that land *is* good. [s]Bdellium and the onyx stone *are* there. 13 The name of the second river *is* Gihon; it *is* the one which goes around the whole land of Cush. 14 The name of the third river *is* [t]Hiddekel;[2] it *is* the one which goes toward the east of [3]Assyria. The fourth river *is* the Euphrates.

15 Then the LORD God took [4]the man and put him in the garden of Eden to [5]tend and keep it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil [u]you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it [v]you[6] shall surely [w]die."

18 And the LORD God said, "*It is* not good that man should be alone; [x]I will make him a helper comparable to him." 19 [y]Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and [z]brought *them* to [7]Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that *was* its name. 20 So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.

21 And the LORD God caused a [a]deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. 22 Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He [8]made into a woman, [b]and He [c]brought her to the man.

23 And Adam said:

"This *is* now [d]bone of my bones
And flesh of my flesh;
She shall be called [9]Woman,
Because she was [e]taken out of [1]Man."

9 [p][Gen. 3:22] [q][Deut. 1:39]
11 [r]Gen. 25:18
12 [s]Num. 11:7
14 [t]Dan. 10:4 [2]Or *Tigris* [3]Heb. *Ashshur*
15 [4]Or *Adam* [5]*cultivate*
17 [u]Gen. 3:1, 3, 11, 17 [v]Gen. 3:3, 19 [w]Rom. 5:12 [6]Lit. *dying you shall die*
18 [x]1 Cor. 11:8, 9
19 [y]Gen. 1:20, 24 [z]Ps. 8:6 [7]Or *the man*
21 [a]1 Sam. 26:12
22 [b]1 Tim. 2:13 [c]Heb. 13:4 [8]Lit. *built*
23 [d]Gen. 29:14 [e]1 Cor. 11:8, 9 [9]Heb. *Ishshah* [1]Heb. *Ish*

tree of life. This tree represents life in its highest potency—eternal life. It is available only to those who reenter the garden through the Second Adam (3:22; Rev. 22:14). The New Testament counterpart of this tree's life-giving fruit is found in partaking of the life-giving Christ (John 6:53–56).

tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Good and evil, a compound of opposites like heaven and earth (1:1), is a figure for potentially unlimited knowledge. It is a good tree (3:22), but man must not seize it. The illicit taking of this fruit involved the assertion of human autonomy, the attempt to know all apart from God. Man must live by faith in God's word and not by a professed self-sufficiency of knowledge (Deut. 8:3; Ezek. 28:6, 15–17). The law makes wise the simple (Ps. 19:7–9).

■ **2:10 a river.** The location of this river is now unknown. The Tigris and Euphrates do not have a single source, but some translate this verse as indicating a river formed by the confluence of four rivers (rather than branching into four).

This river reminds us of the spring of living water, the spiritual source of life, that issues from the throne of the living God (Ps. 36:8; Jer. 17:13; Ezek. 47:1–12; Rev. 22:1). Jesus also used the symbol of "living water" in describing the blessings of salvation (John 4:14; 7:37–39).

■ **2:11–13** The identity of the Pishon and Gihon rivers is uncertain.

■ **2:11 Havilah.** Probably located in Arabia (10:7, 29; 25:18; 1 Sam. 15:7).

■ **2:15 tend and keep it.** Man was to find fulfillment, not in idleness, but in a life of rewarding labor in obedience to God's command. The Hebrew behind the latter term (translated "guard" in 3:24) also entails the notion of protecting it against enemies.

■ **2:16 commanded.** God's first words to man assume his ability to choose and his moral capacity and responsibility.

■ **2:17 you shall not eat.** This unique exclusion, an exception to man's dominion over the creation (1:29), confronted him with the Creator's rule over him.

■ **2:18–25** The gift of the first bride presents marriage before the Fall, and so provides the foundation for the laws against adultery (Ex. 20:14; Heb. 13:4), a model for marriage, the basis for government in the home and church (1 Cor. 11:3–12; 1 Tim. 2:12, 13), as well as a type of Christ's relationship to His church (Eph. 5:22–32). The focus in 1:26, 27 is on their sexuality as male and female; here, their social relationship as husband and wife. See "Body and Soul, Male and Female" at 2:7.

■ **2:18 not good.** See 1:4 and note. Man needs companionship on earth. In the Old Testament the most holy person, the high priest, marries (Lev. 21:13), and the Nazirite, uniquely set apart to God, is not celibate (Num. 6:1–4). Abstention from lawful marriage is never commanded in Scripture (cf. 1 Tim. 4:3), although some are given the gift of celibacy for service (1 Cor. 7:7).

helper. Man was first formed, giving him social priority, and the woman was later given to him as a helper (1 Cor. 11:3–12; 1 Tim. 2:10). The word "helper" entails his inadequacy, not her inferiority, for elsewhere it is often used of God.

comparable to him. The expression assumes a complementary relationship; what he lacked she supplied and vice versa. Both share the image of God (1:26, 27).

■ **2:19, 20** Adam is being prepared for God's gift of Eve by becoming aware of his loneliness and lack of companionship.

■ **2:19 called.** See 1:5 and note. The image-bearer now carries out the cultural mandate (1:26 and note). The place of humans is a little lower than heavenly beings and higher than the animals (Ps. 8:5).

■ **2:20–25** See "Marriage and Divorce" at Mal. 2:16.

■ **2:21 one of his ribs.** Or, "from his side." The woman derives from the man, giving him priority within the institution of marriage (1 Cor. 11:3, 8) and pointing to the harmony and intimacy that should characterize the marriage relationship (v. 22; Eph. 5:28).

■ **2:23 This . . . Man.** Man's first poem, his only recorded statement prior to the Fall, celebrates his wife's kinship and companionship with him.

called. His twofold naming of her entails his authority in the home (3:20; cf. Num. 30:6–8). In ancient times the authority to name implied authority to govern (v. 19; 1:5 and notes).

24 [f]Matt. 19:5 [g]Mark 10:6–8 [2]Lit. *cling*

25 [h]Gen. 3:7, 10 [i]Is. 47:3

CHAPTER 3

1 [a]1 Chr. 21:1 [b]2 Cor. 11:3

2 [c]Gen. 2:16, 17

3 [d]Ex. 19:12, 13

4 [e][2 Cor. 11:3]

6 [f]1 John 2:16 [g]1 Tim. 2:14 [1]Lit. *a desirable thing*

7 [h]Gen. 2:25 [2]*girding coverings*

8 [i]Job 38:1 [j]Job 31:33 [3]Or *voice* [4]Or *wind, breeze*

10 [k]Gen. 2:25

[24] [f]Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and [g]be[2] joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

[25] [h]And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not [i]ashamed.

The Temptation and Fall of Man

3 Now [a]the serpent was [b]more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?"

[2] And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the [c]fruit of the trees of the garden; [3] but of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, nor shall you [d]touch it, lest you die.' "

[4] [e]Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. [5] For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

[6] So when the woman [f]saw that the tree *was* good for food, that it *was* [1]pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make *one* wise, she took of its fruit [g]and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. [7] Then the eyes of both of them were opened, [h]and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves [2]coverings.

[8] And they heard [i]the [3]sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the [4]cool of the day, and Adam and his wife [j]hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

[9] Then the LORD God called to Adam and said to him, "Where *are* you?"

[10] So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, [k]and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself."

[11] And He said, "Who told you that you *were* naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you that you should not eat?"

■ **2:24 leave.** At marriage a man's priorities change. Obligations to his wife take precedence.

be joined to. This is the language of covenant commitment. Humans are never more like the covenant-keeping God than when they pledge themselves in covenant to one another. Marriage pictures God's relationship to His people (Hos. 2:14–23; Eph. 5:22–32).

one flesh. A phrase pointing to the profound solidarity of the marriage relationship. The singular and total commitment involved implies that God intended marriage to be monogamous.

■ **2:25 not ashamed.** This statement does not idealize nudity, but shows why humans must wear clothes. With the Fall came a tragic loss of innocence (together with the resulting shame). When people's minds are enlightened by the gospel, they understand their moral frailty and practice customs of dress that shield them against sexual temptation.

■ **3:1–24** The guardians of the sanctuary (2:15 note) are now tested for fidelity to their King. The test is administered under a covenant of works: obedience entitles them to life with God; disobedience brings death. Their failure points to their need for justification and sanctification through Christ's fulfillment of the covenant of grace.

■ **3:1 the serpent.** In the biblical world snakes were variously symbolic of life, wisdom, and chaos; the god of chaos is sometimes likened to one (Job 26:12, 13; Is. 27:1). This serpent is an incarnation of Satan, the Adversary. See v. 15 note; "Satan" at Job 1:6.

more cunning. Satan's choice of embodiment was a fitting instrument for his own malevolent brilliance (cf. 2 Cor. 11:13–15). His words must be carefully scrutinized. He can only be withstood with the help of God's splendid armor (Matt. 4:1–11; Eph. 6:10–20).

woman. Satan subverts the marriage institution by bypassing the man, tempting the woman to usurp his authority (1 Tim. 2:12, 14). Nevertheless, the husband is held accountable for obeying her (vv. 9, 17).

■ **3:2–5** The serpent tempts Eve by: emphasizing God's prohibition, not His provision; reducing God's command to a question; casting doubt upon God's sincerity and defaming His motives; and denying the truthfulness of His threat. The woman gradually yields to Satan's denials and half-truths by disparaging her privileges in adding to the prohibition ("nor shall you touch it," v. 3), and minimizing the threat (v. 6).

■ **3:5 good and evil.** See 2:9 and note.

■ **3:6** Sin is essentially man's failure to trust in God, an act or state of unbelief, an assertion of autonomy (2:9 note). True religion consists of communion with God based on trust and issuing into obedience (John 14:15). See theological note "The Fall."

tree . . . wise. Her decision was based on practical values, aesthetic appreciation, and intellectual gratification.

took of its fruit. By this act she sealed an alliance with the prince of death and darkness. God's loving election and plan of redemption are her only hope (v. 15 and notes).

he ate. Man becomes a rebel: surrounded with sufficient motives to trust and obey God, he chooses disobedience against God (6:5; 8:21). Salvation depends entirely upon the Lord, not the rebel. By God's appointment Adam represented the race as its federal head and brought death upon all (Rom. 5:12–19). He also represents, as a model and prototype, mankind's hostility against God (2:4—3:24 note).

■ **3:7–11** Their spiritual death (2:17 and note) is shown by their alienation from one another, symbolized by the sewing of fig leaves together for clothing, and separation from God, signified by their hiding among the trees.

■ **3:7 naked.** Nakedness in the Old Testament suggests weakness, need, and humiliation (Deut. 28:48; Job 1:21; Is. 58:7). The Hebrew word for "naked" sounds like the Hebrew for "cunning" in 3:1. The intimacy of marriage is shattered (cf. 2:21, 24 and notes); trust is replaced by distrust. The first experience of guilt was expressed in terms of an awareness of nakedness. Redemption is linked to God's providing a covering for human sin (v. 21 and notes; cf. Ex. 25:17 note).

■ **3:8 hid themselves.** Their consciences condemning them, they shrank from the intimacy with God they formerly enjoyed in the garden (Rom. 2:12–16). Their expulsion from it matches their attitudes and actions.

■ **3:9 Where.** Though omniscient, God accommodates His speech to human limitations. Here the question induces them to come to Him (cf. 4:9; 11:5).

■ **3:10 I heard Your voice.** Ironically, the word translated "heard" is also a Hebrew idiom for "obeyed"—precisely what Adam did not do.

■ **3:11 Who.** See note on 11:5. The questions (v. 13) prod them to confess their guilt. God asks Satan no questions, simply consigning him to judgment (v. 14).

[12] Then the man said, [l]"The woman whom You gave *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate."
[13] And the LORD God said to the woman, "What *is* this you have done?"
The woman said, [m]"The serpent deceived me, and I ate."
[14] So the LORD God said to the serpent:

"Because you have done this,
You *are* cursed more than all cattle,

12 [l][Prov. 28:13]
13 [m]Gen. 3:4; 2 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 2:14

The Fall

In Romans, Paul affirms that all mankind is naturally under the guilt and power of sin, the reign of death, and the inescapable wrath of God (Rom. 1:18, 19; 3:9, 19; 5:17, 21). He traces this back to the sin of the one man Adam, whom he describes as our common ancestor (Acts 17:26; Rom. 5:12–14; cf. 1 Cor. 15:22). Paul as an apostle has given this authoritative interpretation of the history recorded in Gen. 3, where we find the account of the Fall, the original human lapse from God and godliness into sin and lostness. The main points in that history, as seen through the lens of Paul's interpretation, are:

1. God made the first man the representative for all his posterity, just as He was to make Jesus Christ the representative for all God's elect (Rom. 5:15–19; cf. 8:29, 30; 9:22–26). In each case the representative involved those whom he represented in the fruits of his personal action, whether it was for their wealth or their woe. This divinely chosen arrangement, whereby Adam determined the destiny of his descendants, has been called the "covenant of works," though this precise phrase does not occur in Scripture.

2. God placed Adam in a state of happiness and promised permanently to establish him and his posterity in it if he showed fidelity by obeying God's command not to eat from a tree described as "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (Gen. 2:17). Apparently the issue was whether Adam would let God determine what was good and bad, or would seek to decide that for himself, in disregard of what God had said.

3. Adam, led by Eve who was herself led by the serpent (Satan in disguise; 2 Cor. 11:3, 14; Rev. 12:9), defied God by eating the forbidden fruit. As a result, first of all, the anti-God, self-aggrandizing mindset expressed in Adam's sin became part of him, and of the moral nature that he passed on to his descendants (Gen. 6:5; Rom. 3:9–20). Second, Adam and Eve were gripped by a sense of pollution and guilt that made them ashamed and fearful before God—with good reason. Third, they were cursed with expectations of pain and death, and expelled from Eden. At the same time, however, God began to show them saving mercy. He made them garments to cover their nakedness, and He promised that the woman's Seed would one day break the serpent's head. This promise foreshadowed Christ.

Though the story is recounted in a somewhat figurative style, Genesis asks us to read it as history. In Genesis, Adam is linked to the patriarchs and through them to the rest of the human race by genealogy (chs. 5; 10; 11), making him as much a part of history as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. All the book's main characters after Adam, except Joseph, are clearly shown to be sinners in one way or another, and the death of Joseph, like the death of almost everyone else in the story, is carefully recorded (Gen. 50:22–26). Paul's statement, "in Adam all die" (1 Cor. 15:22), only makes explicit what Genesis already clearly implies.

It may fairly be claimed that the Fall narrative alone gives any convincing explanation of the perversity of human nature. Pascal said that the doctrine of original sin seems an offense to reason, but once accepted it makes total sense of the human condition. He was right; and the same thing may and should be said of the Fall narrative itself. □

■ **3:12, 13** They show their allegiance to Satan by distorting the truth, accusing one another, and ultimately accusing God (cf. James 1:13). Their efforts to conceal their sin only expose it.

■ **3:13 deceived.** *This word underlies Paul's teaching in 1 Tim. 2:12, 14.*

■ **3:14–20** God's weighty judgments against Satan (vv. 14–15), the woman (v. 16), and the man (vv. 17–19) nevertheless include the *promise of salvation for God's people (v. 15).*

■ **3:14, 15** The language has a double reference, referring both to the serpent and Satan.

■ **3:14 cursed.** Cursed, the opposite of blessed (1:22 and note), denotes a breaking of the serpent's powers.

eat dust All the days. Dust is the symbol of abject humiliation (Ps. 44:25; 72:9), an indignity lasting forever. Satan's final defeat under the heel of the Messiah (v. 15) is delayed so that God's program of redemption through the promised Seed of the woman may be accomplished.

And more than every beast of the field;
On your belly you shall go,
And [n]you shall eat dust
All the days of your life.
15 And I will put enmity
Between you and the woman,
And between [o]your seed and [p]her Seed;
[q]He shall bruise your head,
And you shall bruise His heel."

16 To the woman He said:

"I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception;
[r]In pain you shall bring forth children;
[s]Your desire *shall be* [5]for your husband,
And he shall [t]rule over you."

17 Then to Adam He said, [u]"Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree [v]of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it':

[w]"Cursed *is* the ground for your sake;
[x]In toil you shall eat *of* it
All the days of your life.
18 Both thorns and thistles it shall [6]bring forth for you,
And [y]you shall eat the herb of the field.
19 [z]In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread
Till you return to the ground,
For out of it you were taken;
[a]For dust you *are,*
And [b]to dust you shall return."

20 And Adam called his wife's name [c]Eve,[7] because she was the mother of all living.
21 Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.
22 Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and

14 [n]Deut. 28:15–20; Is. 65:25; Mic. 7:17

15 [o]John 8:44; Acts 13:10; 1 John 3:8 [p]Is. 7:14; Luke 1:31, 34, 35; Gal. 4:4 [q]Rom. 16:20; [Rev. 12:7, 17]

16 [r]Is. 13:8; John 16:21 [s]Gen. 4:7 [t]1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:22; 1 Tim. 2:12, 15 [5]Lit. *toward*

17 [u]1 Sam. 15:23 [v]Gen. 2:17 [w]Gen. 5:29; Rom. 8:20–22; Heb. 6:8 [x]Job 5:7; 14:1; Eccl. 2:23

18 [y]Ps. 104:14 [6]*cause to grow*

19 [z]2 Thess. 3:10 [a]Gen. 2:7; 5:5 [b]Job 21:26; Eccl. 3:20

20 [c]2 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 2:13 [7]Lit. *Life* or *Living*

■ **3:15 I will put enmity.** God graciously converts the depraved woman's affections from Satan to Himself.

your seed and her Seed. Humanity is now divided into two communities: the redeemed, who love God, and the reprobate, who love self (John 8:33, 44; 1 John 3:8). The division finds immediate expression in the hostility of Cain against Abel (ch. 4). This prophecy finds ultimate fulfillment in the triumph of the Second Adam, and the community united with Him, over the forces of sin, death, and the devil (Dan. 7:13, 14; Rom. 5:12–19; 16:20; 1 Cor. 15:45–49; Heb. 2:14, 15).

bruise . . . bruise. Before His glorious victory, the woman's Seed must suffer to win the new community from the serpent's dominion (Is. 53:12; Luke 24:26, 46; 2 Cor. 1:5–7; Col. 1:24; 1 Pet. 1:11).

head . . . heel. The suffering Christ is victorious. He has already won the victory at the Cross by providing an atonement for the saints (Col. 2:13–15) and will consummate it at His Second Coming (2 Thess. 1:5–10).

■ **3:16–19** The woman is frustrated in her natural relationships within the home: painful labor in bearing children and subordination toward her husband. The man is frustrated in his activity to provide food. Each experiences pain by these reversals.

■ **3:16 pain . . . bring forth children.** Pain is experienced even at a point of great fulfillment for the woman. Nevertheless, in her role of bearing and raising children of promise in Jesus Christ, the woman is privileged to participate in God's plan to create a people for Himself (v. 15; cf. 1 Tim. 2:15).

desire. The phrase "he shall rule over you" and the parallel wording in 4:7 suggests that her desire is to dominate. The marriage ordinance continues, but is frustrated by the battle of the sexes.

rule over you. The harmony, intimacy, and complementarity of the pre-Fall marriage relationship (2:21–24 and notes) are corrupted by sin, and marred by domination and enforced submission. The restoration of these relationships takes place through new life in Christ (Eph. 5:22–33).

■ **3:17 ground.** Man's natural relationship to the ground, to rule over it, is reversed; instead of submitting to him, it resists and eventually swallows him (2:7 and note). The earth, frustrated by the Creator's assignment to disharmony, longs for restoration (Rom. 8:20–22).

In toil. Labor itself is a blessing because man's work reflects the activity of the working God (2:2 note). But the object of man's labor, the ground, is cursed and becomes a source of frustration.

■ **3:19 dust you are.** Man's earthly body makes physical death possible.

to dust you shall return. Physical death is both a judgment and a blessing. It renders all activity vain, but delivers the redeemed from earthly frustration and opens the way to an eternal salvation that outlasts the grave (Ps. 73:24; Prov. 14:32).

■ **3:20 called.** See 1:5; 2:23 and notes.

mother of all living. Adam's choice of the name Eve demonstrates his faith in God's promise that the woman would bear children, including the Seed who would defeat Satan.

■ **3:21 tunics of skin.** The fig-leaf "coverings" of v. 7 were loincloths. God's durable "tunics" contrast with the inadequate attempt by Adam and Eve to cover their shame. His provision also entailed killing an animal, perhaps suggesting a sacrifice for sin (3:7 note; Lev. 17:11).

■ **3:22 Us.** See note on 1:26.

live forever. Adam and Eve are protected from an eternal bondage to sin and misery that would result if they ate of the tree of life (v. 19 note).

evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"— 23 therefore the LORD God sent him out of the garden of Eden [d]to till the ground from which he was taken. 24 So [e]He drove out the man; and He placed [f]cherubim [g]at the east of the garden of Eden, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of [h]life.

Cain Murders Abel

4 Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore [1]Cain, and said, "I have acquired a man from the LORD." 2 Then she bore again, this time his brother [2]Abel. Now [a]Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. 3 And [3]in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit [b]of the ground to the LORD. 4 Abel also brought of [c]the firstborn of his flock and of [d]their fat. And the LORD [e]respected Abel and his offering, 5 but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.

6 So the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? 7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire *is* [4]for you, but you should rule over it."

8 Now Cain [5]talked with Abel his [6]brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and [f]killed him.

9 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where *is* Abel your brother?"

He said, [g]"I do not know. *Am* I [h]my brother's keeper?"

10 And He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood [i]cries out to Me from the ground. 11 So now [j]you *are* cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to

23 [d]Gen. 4:2; 9:20

24 [e]Ezek. 31:3, 11 [f]Ps. 104:4 [g]Gen. 2:8 [h]Gen. 2:9

CHAPTER 4

1 [1]Lit. *Acquire*

2 [a]Luke 11:50, 51 [2]Lit. *Breath* or *Nothing*

3 [b]Num. 18:12 [3]Lit. *at the end of days*

4 [c]Num. 18:17 [d]Lev. 3:16 [e]Heb. 11:4

7 [4]Lit. *toward*

8 [f][1 John 3:12–15] [5]Lit. *said to* [6]Sam., LXX, Syr., Vg. add *"Let us go out to the field."*

9 [g]John 8:44 [h]1 Cor. 8:11–13

10 [i]Heb. 12:24

11 [j]Gen. 3:14

■ **3:23 sent him out.** God cleanses His temple-garden (2:8 note; cf. Luke 10:18; John 2:12–17; Rev. 21:27).

■ **3:24 east.** See 2:8 and note. Israel's tabernacle and temple, like the medieval cathedrals, faced toward the east.

cherubim. These heavenly beings protect God's holiness, prohibiting sinners' access to Him (Ex. 25:18; 2 Chr. 3:7).

to guard. The coming heavenly Adam, who bears the curse of toil, sweat, thorns, conflict, death on a tree, and descent into dust, will regain the garden, tearing apart the veil of the temple on which the cherubim were sewn (2:8 and note; Ex. 26:1; Matt. 27:51; Heb. 6:19; 9:3; Rev. 22:1–3, 14). The flaming sword is the first weapon of government or law-enforcement.

■ **4:1–26** The prophesied hostility between the seed of the serpent and the Seed of the woman (cf. 3:15) takes shape immediately in the hostility of ungodly Cain against godly Abel (vv. 1–16), and in the contrast of Cain's ungodly offspring versus the godly line of Seth (4:17—5:32). There is a horrendous escalation of sin from Cain to Lamech.

■ **4:1–16** The focus is on Cain, the archetype of Satan's followers. Cain displays his kinship with the devil by his hostility against God and his murder of a good man (v. 8; Matt. 23:35; Heb. 11:4), together with his lies (v. 9; John 8:44; 1 John 3:12).

■ **4:1 Adam knew Eve.** The Hebrew word for "know" is used to denote the sexual intimacy of the marriage relationship.

a man from the LORD. Humans, both originally (1:26, 27) and presently, owe their existence to God. Woman originally came from the man, now man comes forth from the woman. The sexes are dependent on one another, and both are dependent on God (1 Cor. 11:8–12).

■ **4:2 Abel.** The name means "breath," "vapor," or "nothing" (text note) with the connotation of "perishable," a somber prophecy of what follows.

sheep . . . ground. In spite of Adam's Fall, humans still carry out the cultural mandate to manage the earth's resources (1:26, 28).

■ **4:4, 5 offering.** The Hebrew here is the common word for "tribute," the gift of an inferior to a superior (1 Sam. 10:27; 1 Kin. 4:21). Each brother brought a gift appropriate to his vocation (cf. Gen. 32:13–21).

■ **4:4 firstborn.** As the Author and Owner of life, God was entitled to the first share produced by plants (firstfruits, Deut. 26:1–11) and by animals and man (firstborn, Ex. 13:2, 12; 34:19), and to the best of what a worshiper had to offer (fat, Lev. 3:14–16). Abel brought both the first and the best; Cain brought neither. Many also point out that Abel brought a blood sacrifice, while Cain did not.

the LORD respected. God sees the heart (cf. 1 Sam. 16:7).

Abel and his offering. The worshiper and his offering are inseparable: by faith Abel was commended as a righteous man when God spoke well of his offerings; without faith neither Cain nor his offerings were pleasing to God (Heb. 11:4, 6).

■ **4:5 Cain was very angry.** Cain's failure in worship, and his subsequent angry response, were basic to his unethical behavior. The elect and non-elect are differentiated by their basic attitudes toward God.

■ **4:6 Why.** God's question introduces the admonition in v. 7 (3:9 note).

■ **4:7 lies at the door.** The Hebrew suggests a threatening demon crouching outside the door of a house. Perhaps there is also an allusion to the serpent lying in wait to strike the heel (3:15; cf. 1 Pet. 5:8).

desire. See note on 3:16.

rule over it. Knowing Cain's heart, God warns him not to submit to the murderous temptation of the devil (cf. 1 John 3:12). Although unregenerate humans can rule over the ground and flocks, they cannot finally master sin (1:26 note; Ps. 53:3; Rom. 8:7).

■ **4:8 talked with Abel.** Ignoring God and His warning, Cain's subsequent actions reveal his answer. Abel is mentioned only for his birth, offering, and death.

killed him. The fracturing of family ties by sin, begun in ch. 3, quickly reaches the extreme of murder. Seeking autonomy from God like his parents (3:6 note), Cain usurps divine sovereignty over life.

■ **4:9 Where is Abel.** See note on 11:5.

Am I my brother's keeper. The sarcastic hypocrite had already killed his brother.

■ **4:10–14** Cain the murderer, alienated both from the ground and from society, has no rest.

■ **4:10 What have you done.** The question registers God's outrage.

cries out. Whereas Abel's blood cried out for vengeance (Is. 26:21; Matt. 23:35; Rev. 6:10), Christ's blood cries out for forgiveness (Heb. 12:24).

■ **4:11 cursed.** God's curse now links Cain with Satan (3:14; 1 John 3:12). His time of grace ended, he is consigned to judgment (Heb. 9:27; 10:27). Whereas in 3:17–19 the ground is cursed so as not to yield its produce without frustrating labor, now Cain is cursed to become a fugitive without a permanent place and security.

receive your brother's blood from your hand. 12 When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth."

13 And Cain said to the LORD, "My [7]punishment *is* greater than I can bear! 14 Surely You have driven me out this day from the face of the ground; [k]I shall be [l]hidden from Your face; I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, and it will happen *that* [m]anyone who finds me will kill me."

15 And the LORD said to him, [8]"Therefore, whoever kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him [n]sevenfold." And the LORD set a [o]mark on Cain, lest anyone finding him should kill him.

The Family of Cain

16 Then Cain [p]went out from the [q]presence of the LORD and dwelt in the land of [9]Nod on the east of Eden. 17 And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. And he built a city, [r]and called the name of the city after the name of his son—Enoch. 18 To Enoch was born Irad; and Irad begot Mehujael, and Mehujael begot Methushael, and Methushael begot Lamech.

19 Then Lamech took for himself [s]two wives: the name of one *was* Adah, and the name of the second *was* Zillah. 20 And Adah bore Jabal. He was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. 21 His brother's name *was* Jubal. He was the father of all those who play the harp and [t]flute. 22 And as for Zillah, she also bore Tubal-Cain, an instructor of every craftsman in bronze and iron. And the sister of Tubal-Cain *was* Naamah.

23 Then Lamech said to his wives:

"Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;
Wives of Lamech, listen to my speech!
For I have [2]killed a man for wounding me,
Even a young man [3]for hurting me.
24 [u]If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold,
Then Lamech seventy-sevenfold."

A New Son

25 And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and [v]named him [4]Seth, "For God has appointed another seed for me instead of Abel, whom Cain killed." 26 And as for Seth, [w]to him also a son was born; and he named him [5]Enosh. Then *men* began [x]to call on the name of the LORD.

13 [7]*iniquity*

14 [k]Ps. 51:11 [l]Deut. 31:18; Is. 1:15 [m]Gen. 9:6; Num. 35:19, 21, 27

15 [n]Gen. 4:24; Ps. 79:12 [o]Gen. 9:6; Ezek. 9:4, 6 [8]So with MT, Tg.; LXX, Syr., Vg. *Not so;*

16 [p]2 Kin. 13:23; 24:20; Jer. 23:39; 52:3 [q]Jon. 1:3 [9]Lit. *Wandering*

17 [r]Ps. 49:11

19 [s]Gen. 2:24; 16:3; 1 Tim. 3:2

21 [t]*pipe*

23 [2]*slain a man for my wound* [3]*for my hurt*

24 [u]Gen. 4:15

25 [v]Gen. 5:3 [4]Lit. *Appointed*

26 [w]Gen. 5:6 [x]Gen. 12:8; 26:25; 1 Kin. 18:24; Ps. 116:17; Joel 2:32; Zeph. 3:9; 1 Cor. 1:2 [5]Gr. *Enos,* Luke 3:38

■ **4:13 greater than I can bear.** Cain responds with self-pity instead of repenting for his sin against God and man. He fears physical and social exposure but not the God who made him.

■ **4:14 anyone who finds me.** The story up to now has focused on Cain, not on Adam's other descendants (v. 17; 5:4). Ironically, after murdering his brother, Cain now fears vengeance from his own family (cf. Num. 35:19).

kill me. Cain anticipates the violent behavior of his descendants (6:5, 11).

■ **4:15 mark.** This may have been a protective tattoo identifying Cain as one under God's protection.

■ **4:17–24** The ambivalence of godless human culture is portrayed by advances in civilization, including the first city, with a parallel increase in violence.

■ **4:17, 18 Cain . . . Enoch . . . Irad . . . Mehujael . . . Methushael . . . Lamech.** The names are similar to those in ch. 5, not because they represent variations of the same source, but to parallel and contrast the two offspring of Adam. The seventh from Adam through Cain and Seth, respectively the ungodly Lamech (vv. 19–24) and the godly Enoch (5:24), stand in sharp contrast to one another. The former inflicted death; the latter did not die.

■ **4:17 knew his wife . . . bore Enoch.** See note on v. 1. In God's common grace, family life is enjoyed by unbelievers as well as by believers.

he built a city. In seeking the security of a city, it appears that sinful Cain both defied the divine judgment that he should be a vagabond (v. 12) and showed his lack of faith in the protection provided by God's mark (v. 15). The earthly city provides both civilization and protection, but culminates in the building of a city that challenges God's supremacy (11:4). The faithful by contrast look for a heavenly city (Phil. 3:20; Col. 3:1–4; Heb. 11:10, 16; 12:22; 13:14).

■ **4:19–24 Lamech.** Lamech represents both a progressive hardening in sin—polygamy (cf. 2:24; Matt. 19:5, 6) and a grossly unjust vendetta—and the extension of the cultural mandate from animal husbandry (v. 20) to the arts (v. 21) and sciences (v. 22). Lamech expresses, indeed celebrates, his deepening depravity by his song (vv. 23, 24).

■ **4:19 two wives.** Bigamy is an abuse of the marriage institution that God intended to be monogamous (2:24 note).

■ **4:24 seventy-sevenfold.** Cain's violence and vindictiveness are greatly magnified in his descendant. The depth of Lamech's depravity is evident in his arrogant assurance and self-reliance (in contrast to Cain's fear, v. 14).

■ **4:25, 26** This episode provides a transition between the two accounts begun in 2:4 and 5:1 (cf. 6:1–8; 9:18–29).

■ **4:25 knew his wife.** See note on v. 1. The comparison and contrast with vv. 1, 17 signal the transition to the line of the godly offspring predicted in 3:15.

Seth. His name, derived from the Hebrew verb translated "appointed" (text note), expresses Eve's faith that God would continue the covenant family in spite of death (3:15; cf. 3:20 note).

■ **4:26 call on the name of the LORD.** The covenant family, making its petition and praise in the name of the Lord, glorifies God, not man (cf. vv. 23, 24).

The Family of Adam

5 This is the book of the [a]genealogy of Adam. In the day that God created man, He made him in [b]the likeness of God. [2] He created them [c]male and female, and [d]blessed them and called them Mankind in the day they were created. [3] And Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, and begot *a son* [e]in his own likeness, after his image, and [f]named him Seth. [4] After he begot Seth, [g]the days of Adam were eight hundred years; [h]and he had sons and daughters. [5] So all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years; [i]and he died.

4 [g]Luke 3:36–38 [h]Gen. 1:28; 4:25 5 [i][Heb. 9:27]

CHAPTER 5

1 [a]Gen. 2:4; 6:9 [b]Gen. 1:26; 9:6
2 [c]Mark 10:6 [d]Gen. 1:28; 9:1
3 [e]1 Cor. 15:48, 49 [f]Gen. 4:25

■ **5:1—6:8** In this account of Adam's genealogy, Moses focuses on the covenant line of Seth (ch. 5) and then summarizes the escalation of sin on the earth before the Flood (6:1–8).

■ **5:1–3** The godly line of Seth, in contrast with that of Cain (4:17–24), is begun by linking it with the original creation: vv. 1–2 summarize 1:1—2:3, especially 1:27, 28. Verse 3b echoes both 1:27, 26 and 4:25 (11:10–26). God's intention for creation will be realized through Seth, not Cain.

■ **5:1 This is the book of the genealogy.** A new section of the Book of Genesis begins (2:4 note). The mention of a "book" or "document" indicates that the author used sources (11:10–26).

■ **5:2 blessed.** The creation blessing is reiterated (1:28; 9:1 note).

called. See 1:5 and note.

■ **5:3–32** These verses contain ten paragraphs, each written in the same form, with one paragraph for each generation in Adam's line through Seth. There are some similarities, as well as significant differences, between this material and the Sumerian King List (written c. 2000 B.C.), which mentions eight antediluvian (pre-Flood) kings who reigned for exceptionally long periods (up to 72,000 years). Following the Sumerian flood account (cf. chs. 6—9), there is another list of shorter-lived postdiluvians (cf. ch. 11).

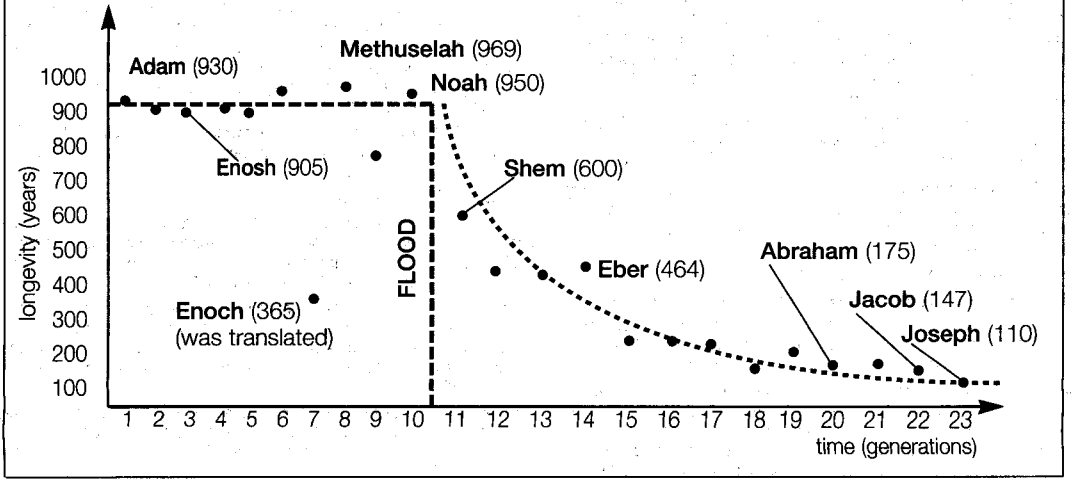
More significant are the formal similarities and material differences between this Sethite genealogy and the Cainite genealogy in ch. 4. Both are initially linear, focusing on one individual in each generation, and both conclude by dividing the line among three sons (4:20–22; 5:32; the same is true in 11:10–26). But the central themes of these genealogies contrast sharply. Cain's line dies in the Flood; Seth's lives through it. Whereas the former presents the curse-laden line of Cain that concludes with murderer begetting murderer (4:17–24), the latter links the founder of humanity, Adam, with its re-founder, Noah (4:25, 26 note). The Enoch and Lamech in Seth's line cannot be confused with the first and last descendants bearing these names in Cain's line. Enoch, the seventh in the line of Seth, "walked with God" and "God took him" (v. 24); and the Sethite Lamech names his son Noah, hoping the Lord will "comfort us" (cf. v. 29).

Because the Hebrew word translated "begot" often means "became the ancestor of," and because some of the numbers appear to be symbolic, many scholars argue that there are gaps in these genealogies, and that they therefore cannot be used to compute a precise chronology. The significant seventh generation of each genealogy marks a high point—the height of wickedness in the Cainite Lamech (4:18–24), and the height of godliness in the Sethite Enoch (vv. 18–24; cf. vv. 21–24 note). The figure of ten generations from Seth to Noah (vv. 3–32) matches the ten generations from Shem to Abram in 11:10–26 (this latter genealogy appears to contain gaps, 11:10–26 note; cf. Matt. 1:17 note). Also, the ages of some antediluvians may be symbolic, and are perhaps related to astronomical periods known to the ancient Near Eastern peoples (e.g., the three hundred sixty-five years of Enoch's life, vv. 21–24 note).

■ **5:5 he died.** See 3:19 and notes. Through Adam's transgression death had come upon all (Rom. 5:12–14). On the other hand, in spite of this judgment God's grace preserves the messianic line (3:15 and note) even while sin abounds in the earth (4:17–24).

Ages of the Patriarchs (5:5)

In the genealogy of Gen. 5 the patriarchs who lived before the Flood had an average life span of about 900 years. This contrasts with the genealogy of Gen. 11:10–26 where the ages of post-Flood patriarchs dropped rapidly and gradually leveled off.



6 [j]Gen. 4:26
9 [l]Heb. *Qenan*
18 [k]Jude 14, 15
22 [l]Gen. 6:9; 17:1; 24:40; 48:15; 2 Kin. 20:3; Ps. 16:8; [Mic. 6:8]; Mal. 2:6; 1 Thess. 2:12; [Heb. 11:39]
24 [m]2 Kin. 2:11; Jude 14 [n]2 Kin. 2:10; Ps. 49:15; 73:24; Heb. 11:5
29 [o]Luke 3:36; Heb. 11:7; 1 Pet. 3:20 [p]Gen. 3:17–19; 4:11 [2]Lit. *Rest*
32 [q]Gen. 6:10; 7:13 [r]Gen. 10:21

CHAPTER 6

1 [a]Gen. 1:28
2 [b]Deut. 7:3, 4
3 [c]Gen. 41:38; [Gal. 5:16, 17]; 1 Pet. 3:19, 20 [d]2 Thess. 2:7 [e]Ps. 78:39 [f]LXX, Syr., Tg., Vg. *abide*
4 [2]Heb. *nephilim, fallen* or *mighty ones*

6 Seth lived one hundred and five years, and begot [j]Enosh. 7 After he begot Enosh, Seth lived eight hundred and seven years, and had sons and daughters. 8 So all the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years; and he died.

9 Enosh lived ninety years, and begot [l]Cainan. 10 After he begot Cainan, Enosh lived eight hundred and fifteen years, and had sons and daughters. 11 So all the days of Enosh were nine hundred and five years; and he died.

12 Cainan lived seventy years, and begot Mahalalel. 13 After he begot Mahalalel, Cainan lived eight hundred and forty years, and had sons and daughters. 14 So all the days of Cainan were nine hundred and ten years; and he died.

15 Mahalalel lived sixty-five years, and begot Jared. 16 After he begot Jared, Mahalalel lived eight hundred and thirty years, and had sons and daughters. 17 So all the days of Mahalalel were eight hundred and ninety-five years; and he died.

18 Jared lived one hundred and sixty-two years, and begot [k]Enoch. 19 After he begot Enoch, Jared lived eight hundred years, and had sons and daughters. 20 So all the days of Jared were nine hundred and sixty-two years; and he died.

21 Enoch lived sixty-five years, and begot Methuselah. 22 After he begot Methuselah, Enoch [l]walked with God three hundred years, and had sons and daughters. 23 So all the days of Enoch were three hundred and sixty-five years. 24 And [m]Enoch walked with God; and he *was* not, for God [n]took him.

25 Methuselah lived one hundred and eighty-seven years, and begot Lamech. 26 After he begot Lamech, Methuselah lived seven hundred and eighty-two years, and had sons and daughters. 27 So all the days of Methuselah were nine hundred and sixty-nine years; and he died.

28 Lamech lived one hundred and eighty-two years, and had a son. 29 And he called his name [o]Noah,[2] saying, "This *one* will comfort us concerning our work and the toil of our hands, because of the ground [p]which the LORD has cursed." 30 After he begot Noah, Lamech lived five hundred and ninety-five years, and had sons and daughters. 31 So all the days of Lamech were seven hundred and seventy-seven years; and he died.

32 And Noah was five hundred years old, and Noah begot [q]Shem, Ham, [r]and Japheth.

The Wickedness and Judgment of Man

6 Now it came to pass, [a]when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born to them, 2 that the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they *were* beautiful; and they [b]took wives for themselves of all whom they chose.

3 And the LORD said, [c]"My Spirit shall not [d]strive[f] with man forever, [e]for he *is* indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years." 4 There were [2]giants on the earth in those

■ **5:21–24** The number seven (or multiples of it) is often significant in biblical genealogies (5:3–32 note; Matt. 1:17 note; Jude 14).

■ **5:22 walked with God.** The expression, repeated twice (here and v. 24), signifies intimate fellowship (3:8; 6:9), including special revelation.

■ **5:23 three hundred and sixty-five years.** Perhaps a symbolic number corresponding to the days of the solar year and signifying a life of special privilege. Although longevity is often a sign of divine blessing and favor (Ps. 91:16), the blessed Enoch's relatively short life span, especially compared to his son Methuselah, shows that being in God's presence is an even greater privilege (John 17:24).

■ **5:24 was not, for God took him.** Of all recorded Old Testament saints, only Enoch and Elijah did not experience physical death (2 Kin. 2:1–12; Heb. 11:5).

■ **5:29 This one will comfort us.** Whereas the Cainite Lamech sought to redress wrong through revenge (4:24), the Sethite Lamech looked in hope to the Lord to provide the seed through whom would come deliverance from the curse.

■ **5:32 five hundred.** See 6:3 and note.

Shem, Ham, and Japheth. See 9:18 where their story is resumed.

■ **6:1–8** This section, by the mention of Noah (5:32; 6:8, 9), signals the transition from the godly line of Seth to the flood story (6:9—9:17) and recalls the ominous situation at the end of the Cainite lineage (4:17–24).

■ **6:2 sons of God.** These have been identified as Sethites (the traditional Christian interpretation), as angels (the earliest Jewish interpretation; cf. Job 1:6), and as royal tyrannical successors to Lamech who gathered harems (proposed by rabbis of the second-century A.D.). All three interpretations can be defended linguistically. On the surface, the first interpretation best fits the immediate preceding context (a contrast of the curse-laden line of Cain with the godly line of Seth), but it fails to explain adequately how "daughters of men" refers specifically to Cainite women. The second view has ancient support, but seems to contradict Jesus' statement that angels do not marry (Mark 12:25) and does not explain why the focus is on mortals (v. 3) and the judgment on them (vv. 5–7). The third interpretation best explains the phrase "of all whom they chose" (12:10–20; 20:1; 1 Sam. 11) but lacks as much ancient support. The best solution is probably a combination of the last two. These human offspring are also the spiritual offspring of Satan (3:15), empowered by demons (cf. Deut. 32:17).

saw . . . beautiful . . . took. The Hebrew term here translated "beautiful" is often rendered "good." Their sin repeats the pattern ("saw . . . good . . . took") of the original sin in 3:6.

■ **6:3 My Spirit.** See note on 1:2.

strive. The Hebrew word is difficult to translate. Some scholars relate it to a term meaning "rule" or "judge," while ancient translators understood it to mean "remain" or "abide" (text note). Either way, the sentence points to the withdrawal of God's life-giving Spirit (1:2 note).

one hundred and twenty years. Probably the span of time between this proclamation and the Flood (5:32; 7:6). It may refer to an individual's life span, but that interpretation seems contradicted by the age of the postdiluvians who at first lived much longer (Gen. 11) and then much less (Ps. 90:10).

■ **6:4 giants.** See text note. These giant-like "mighty men," the offspring of the demonic tyrants (v. 2 note), filled the earth with violence (v. 11; Num. 13:32). The Hebrew root means "to fall," and may suggest their fate (Ezek. 32:20–28).

[j]days, and also afterward, when the sons of God came in to the daughters of men and they bore *children* to them. Those *were* the mighty men who *were* of old, men of renown.

5 Then [3]the LORD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every [g]intent[4] of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil [5]continually. 6 And [h]the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and [i]He was grieved in His [j]heart. 7 So the LORD said, "I will [k]destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them." 8 But Noah [l]found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

Noah Pleases God

9 This is the genealogy of Noah. [m]Noah was a just man, [6]perfect in his generations. Noah [n]walked with God. 10 And Noah begot three sons: [o]Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

11 The earth also was corrupt [p]before God, and the earth was [q]filled with violence. 12 So God [r]looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for [s]all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.

The Ark Prepared

13 And God said to Noah, [t]"The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; [u]and behold, [v]I will destroy them with the earth. 14 Make yourself an ark of gopherwood; make [7]rooms in the ark, and cover it inside and outside with pitch. 15 And this is how you shall make it: The length of the ark *shall be* three hundred [8]cubits, its width fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits. 16 You shall make a window for the ark, and you shall finish it to a cubit from above; and set the door of the ark in its side. You shall make it *with* lower, second, and third *decks*. 17 [w]And behold, I Myself am bringing [x]floodwaters on the earth, to destroy

4 [f]Num. 13:32, 33; Luke 17:27
5 [g]Gen. 8:21 [3]So with MT, Tg.; Vg. *God;* LXX *LORD God* [4]*thought* [5]*all the day*
6 [h]1 Sam. 15:11, 29 [i]Is. 63:10 [j]Mark 3:5
7 [k]Gen. 7:4, 23
8 [l]Gen. 19:19
9 [m]2 Pet. 2:5 [n]Gen. 5:22, 24 [6]*blameless* or *having integrity*
10 [o]Gen. 5:32; 7:13
11 [p]Rom. 2:13 [q]Ezek. 8:17
12 [r]Ps. 14:2; 53:2, 3 [s]Ps. 14:1–3
13 [t]1 Pet. 4:7 [u]Gen. 6:17 [v]2 Pet. 2:4–10
14 [7]Lit. *compartments* or *nests*
15 [8]A cubit is about 18 inches.
17 [w]2 Pet. 2:5 [x]2 Pet. 3:6

and also afterward. This parenthetical remark reminds the book's original audience that the same kind of horrible people existed after the Flood (Num. 13:32).

mighty men. The Hebrew here is also used for Nimrod and his bestial kingdom (10:8–11).

■ **6:5 every intent . . . of his heart.** A vivid portrayal of the depth and comprehensiveness of human depravity (cf. 8:21).

■ **6:6 was sorry.** Here a reference to a change of attitudes and actions. There is no contradiction between this verse and passages teaching the changelessness (immutability) of God (Mal. 3:6; James 1:17) and that God does not change His mind (Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29; Ps. 33:11; Is. 46:10). Remembering that this description is anthropopathic (God is depicted in terms of the human experience of knowledge and emotion), we must also recognize that the immutable and sovereign God deals appropriately with changes in human behavior. When they sin or repent of sin, He "changes His mind" with regard to the blessing or punishment appropriate to the situation (Ex. 32:12, 14; 1 Sam. 15:11; 2 Sam. 24:16; Jer. 18:11; Amos 7:3, 6)—all in accordance with His sovereign and eternal purposes. Because God is changeless in His being, and eternally loyal to His covenant promises, we can have firm confidence in Him who is "the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Heb. 13:8 and note).

grieved in His heart. The Hebrew here means "indignant rage" (cf. 34:7). Christ's sacrifice pacifies God's bitter indignation against sin (8:21).

■ **6:7 I will destroy.** In this story the first created order is destroyed by a flood and the second inaugurated, a scenario constituting a prophetic model of the present order to be destroyed by fire and replaced by the third and perfect one (2 Pet. 3:3–13). Jesus also uses this model as a type of the Day of the Lord (Matt. 24:37–39).

beast . . . air. As the ground endured the consequences of its rulers' sin, so also must the animals.

■ **6:8 But Noah.** See Rom. 11:3–6.

found grace. See text note on v. 9. God's "grace" is always His unmerited favor, and Noah's integrity could not earn God's acceptance (Rom. 3:10–12). God saved Noah, as He saves us, as an unconditional gift, which Christ would later purchase with His own blood. Even so, Noah seems to be a type of Christ: just as Noah represented his family, so Christ represents the whole family of God.

■ **6:9—9:29** Although stories of a great flood are found in many cultures all over the world, none are so strikingly similar to this account as those of ancient Mesopotamia (e.g., the Gilgamesh Epic and the Atrahasis Epic). There are crucial differences, however. In the Mesopotamian tales, the petty pagan gods bring about a flood to control overpopulation or to quiet the annoying noise of people, and once it comes they are frightened by it. In contrast, the true God sovereignly brings the Flood because of man's wickedness, and in response to Noah's sacrifices He pledges never again to destroy the earth. See note on 6:22.

■ **6:9–22** This section depicts the covenant relationship: Noah was righteous (v. 9), obeying God's commands, and God confirmed the covenant with him to preserve creation (v. 18). Corresponding to the creation account of ch. 1, God's commands (vv. 13–21) are followed by obedience (v. 22).

■ **6:9 This is the genealogy of.** See note on 2:4.

just. The word presupposes a covenant in which those who are joined to the Lord by faith (15:6) follow His moral standards. These standards were revealed to Noah in conscience (3:8 and note) and special revelation (5:22 note).

perfect. Not that Noah never sinned (text note; cf. 9:20–23), but that his devotion to God and His commandments was unchallenged (cf. 2 Sam. 22:24).

walked with God. See note on 5:22.

■ **6:13 destroy.** The same Hebrew word lies behind "corrupt" and "corrupted" in vv. 11, 12. The punishment matches the crime: as man ruined the good earth, so God will ruin the earth against man.

■ **6:14 ark . . . pitch.** The same Hebrew terms are used in Ex. 2:3 for the ark (of bulrushes) that protected Moses, whom God also used to bring forth a new humanity from a world under judgment.

■ **6:15 this is how.** The Lord uniquely specified the design for the building of the ark, the Exodus tabernacle, and Solomon's temple. The ark preserved Noah's covenant family through chaotic water; the latter structures would sustain the later covenant people among the chaotic nations.

three hundred cubits . . . thirty cubits. See text note. The dimensions (450 by 75 by 45 feet) indicate a stable and seaworthy vessel similar in size to a modern battleship. By contrast the ark in the Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic, though pitched within and without, is an unstable 180-foot cube, about four times larger in volume than Noah's ark (7:4 and note).

■ **6:17 I Myself . . . floodwaters.** God sovereignly rules over the Flood (Ps. 29:10).

from under heaven all flesh in which *is* the breath of life; everything that *is* on the earth shall [y]die. 18 But I will establish My [z]covenant with you; and [a]you shall go into the ark—you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you. 19 And of every living thing of all flesh you shall bring [b]two of every *sort* into the ark, to keep *them* alive with you; they shall be male and female. 20 Of the birds after their kind, of animals after their kind, and of every creeping thing of the earth after its kind, two of every *kind* [c]will come to you to keep *them* alive. 21 And you shall take for yourself of all food that is eaten, and you shall gather *it* to yourself; and it shall be food for you and for them."

22 [d]Thus Noah did; [e]according to all that [f]God commanded him, so he did.

The Great Flood

7 Then the [a]LORD said to Noah, [b]"Come into the ark, you and all your household, because I have seen *that* [c]you *are* righteous before Me in this generation. 2 You shall take with you seven each of every [d]clean animal, a male and his female; [e]two each of animals that *are* unclean, a male and his female; 3 also seven each of birds of the air, male and female, to keep [f]the species alive on the face of all the earth. 4 For after [g]seven more days I will cause it to rain on the earth [g]forty days and forty nights, and I will [z]destroy from the face of the earth all living things that I have made." 5 [h]And Noah did according to all that the LORD commanded him. 6 Noah *was* [i]six hundred years old when the floodwaters were on the earth.

7 [j]So Noah, with his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives, went into the ark because of the waters of the flood. 8 Of clean animals, of animals that *are* unclean, of birds, and of everything that creeps on the earth, 9 two by two they went into the ark to Noah, male and female, as God had commanded Noah. 10 And it came to pass after seven days that the waters of the flood were on the earth. 11 In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, on [k]that day all [l]the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the [m]windows of heaven were opened. 12 [n]And the rain was on the earth forty days and forty nights.

13 On the very same day Noah and Noah's sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and Noah's wife

17 [y]Luke 16:22

18 [z]Gen. 8:20—9:17; 17:7 [a]Gen. 7:1, 7, 13

19 [b]Gen. 7:2, 8, 9, 14–16

20 [c]Gen. 7:9, 15

22 [d]Gen. 7:5; 12:4, 5 [e]Gen. 7:5, 9, 16 [f][1 John 5:3]

CHAPTER 7

1 [a]Matt. 11:28 [b]Matt. 24:38 [c]Gen. 6:9

2 [d]Lev. 11 [e]Lev. 10:10

3 [f]Lit. *seed*

4 [g]Gen. 7:10 [g]Gen. 7:12, 17 [z]Lit. *blot out*

5 [h]Gen. 6:22

6 [i]Gen. 5:4, 32

7 [j]Matt. 24:38

11 [k]Matt. 24:39 [l]Gen. 8:2 [m]Ps. 78:23

12 [n]Gen. 7:4, 17

earth . . . all flesh. A worldwide flood seems to be in view (7:19–23; 8:21; 9:11,15; 2 Pet. 3:5–7). But comprehensive language can also be used for limited situations (Dan. 2:38; 4:22; 5:19).

■ **6:18–20** God preserved His creation in miniature: humans (v. 18), animals (v. 19), vegetables (v. 20). In that some of every sort were preserved, God's work here was a type of Christ's work of definite redemption (e.g., Rev. 5:9, where Christ is said to have purchased not all, but some from "every tribe and tongue and people and nation").

■ **6:18 establish My covenant.** The first occurrence in Genesis of the Hebrew term for "covenant" (*berith*), though the concept itself and related terms are present earlier. See notes on 2:4; 2:8–17; 2:24; 3:1–24. The Hebrew here denotes not the initiation of a completely new covenant, but the confirmation to Noah of a covenant already in existence. Noah's salvation from the waters of the Flood is an example of God's covenant grace and mercy. See "God's Covenant of Grace" at 12:1.

your sons . . . with you. This refrain (7:7, 13; 8:16, 18; cf. 7:1) emphasizes that God preserves humanity in its basic family structure and that God often deals savingly with the entire family unit, including the children. Here physical salvation is secured in the midst of floodwater, a type of Christian baptism (1 Pet. 3:20, 21).

■ **6:20 will come to you.** God's power can be discerned in the animals' coming to Noah.

■ **6:22** The ancient Mesopotamian flood stories focused on human heroes or mighty men such as Utnapishtim, the only survivor of the flood in the Gilgamesh Epic (6:9—9:29 note). By contrast, the Genesis account focuses on God and mentions only Noah's obedience (7:5, 9, 16).

■ **7:1–10** See note on 6:9—9:29. The gathering and preservation of this remnant is a prototype of God's salvation of His elect in the Day of the Lord (Matt. 3:12; 24:31; 2 Thess. 2:1). This remnant from the Flood, however, will prove itself a mixture of elect and non-elect (9:20–27 and notes).

■ **7:1 all your household.** See note on 6:18.

righteous. See notes on 6:9.

■ **7:2, 3** These precise directives clarify, rather than contradict, those of 6:19, 20.

■ **7:2 seven.** Probably seven pairs. The additional clean animals were needed for sacrificial purposes (8:20) and for food (9:3).

every . . . animal. See 6:19, 20 and note.

clean. Noah would have known of the distinction between clean and unclean through special revelation (5:22 note). Fundamental institutions of the Law—the Sabbath (2:1–3), the ideal sanctuary (2:8 note), and sacrifice (3:21; 4:3–5)—reach back to the pre-Flood creation order; others, such as tithing (14:20) and circumcision (17:9–14), to at least the time of the patriarchs. Earth's future depended on these sacrificial animals (8:20–22 and notes; Lev. 11:1–47 note).

■ **7:4 seven more days.** A hundred and twenty years were needed to build the ark (6:3 and note) and one week to fill it. A Babylonian flood account imagines seven days to build a ship much bigger than Noah's and a flood lasting seven days (6:15 note).

forty. Forty is a conventional number for a long time and signals the introduction of a new age: by Noah, Moses (Ex. 24:18); Elijah (1 Kin. 19:8); Christ (Acts 1:3). The forty days are part of the 150 total days (8:4).

■ **7:5 commanded.** See note on 6:22.

■ **7:6 six hundred.** See 6:3 and note. The precise day is given in v. 11.

■ **7:7 sons.** See 6:18 and note.

■ **7:9 went.** See note on 6:20.

■ **7:10 waters . . . were on the earth.** See note on 6:17.

■ **7:11 fountains . . . windows.** Poetic expressions for the unrestrained release of water (Ps. 78:23; Is. 24:18; Amos 8:4; Mal. 3:10). The earth is being returned to its primordial condition by the release of the bounded waters above and by the upsurge of the subterranean waters (1:2, 6–9; 8:2–5 note).

deep. See note on 1:2.

■ **7:13–16** See note on 6:18–20. The full roll call, with the phrase "after its kind," echoes the creation account (e.g., 1:21, 24, 25).

and the three wives of his sons with them, entered the ark— 14 [o]they and every beast after its kind, all cattle after their kind, every creeping thing that creeps on the earth after its kind, and every bird after its kind, every bird of every [p]sort. 15 And they [q]went into the ark to Noah, two by two, of all flesh in which *is* the breath of life. 16 So those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in [r]as God had commanded him; and the LORD shut him in.

17 [s]Now the flood was on the earth forty days. The waters increased and lifted up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. 18 The waters prevailed and greatly increased on the earth, [t]and the ark moved about on the surface of the waters. 19 And the waters prevailed exceedingly on the earth, and all the high hills under the whole heaven were covered. 20 The waters prevailed fifteen cubits upward, and the mountains were covered. 21 [u]And all flesh died that moved on [3]the earth: birds and cattle and beasts and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every man. 22 All in [v]whose nostrils *was* the breath [4]of the spirit of life, all that *was* on the dry *land,* died. 23 So He destroyed all living things which were on the face of the ground: both man and cattle, creeping thing and bird of the air. They were destroyed from the earth. Only [w]Noah and those who *were* with him in the ark remained *alive.* 24 [x]And the waters prevailed on the earth one hundred and fifty days.

Noah's Deliverance

8 Then God [a]remembered Noah, and every living thing, and all the animals that *were* with him in the ark. [b]And God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters subsided. 2 [c]The fountains of the deep and the windows of heaven were also [d]stopped, and [e]the rain from heaven was restrained. 3 And the waters receded continually from the earth. At the end [f]of the hundred and fifty days the waters decreased. 4 Then the ark rested in the seventh month, the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat. 5 And the waters decreased continually until the tenth month. In the tenth *month,* on the first *day* of the month, the tops of the mountains were seen.

6 So it came to pass, at the end of forty days, that Noah opened [g]the window of the ark which he had made. 7 Then he sent out a raven, which kept going to and fro until the waters had dried up from the earth. 8 He also sent out from himself a dove, to see if the waters had receded from the face of the ground. 9 But the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot, and she returned into the ark to him, for the waters *were* on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her, and drew her into the ark to himself. 10 And he waited yet another seven days, and again he sent the dove out from the ark. 11 Then the dove came to him in the evening, and behold, a freshly plucked olive leaf *was* in her mouth; and Noah knew that the waters had

14 [o]Gen. 6:19 [p]Gen. 1:21

15 [q]Gen. 6:19, 20; 7:9

16 [r]Gen. 7:2, 3

17 [s]Gen. 7:4, 12; 8:6

18 [t]Ps. 104:26

21 [u]Gen. 6:7, 13, 17; 7:4 [3]*the land*

22 [v]Gen. 2:7 [4]LXX, Vg. omit *of the spirit*

23 [w]Matt. 24:38, 39; Luke 17:26, 27; Heb. 11:7; 1 Pet. 3:20; 2 Pet. 2:5

24 [x]Gen. 8:3, 4

CHAPTER 8

1 [a]Gen. 19:29; Ex. 2:24; 1 Sam. 1:19; Ps. 105:42; 106:4 [b]Ex. 14:21; 15:10; Job 12:15; Ps. 29:10; Is. 44:27; Nah. 1:4

2 [c]Gen. 7:11 [d]Deut. 11:17 [e]Gen. 7:4, 12; Job 38:37

3 [f]Gen. 7:24

6 [g]Gen. 6:16

■ **7:13 On the very same day.** This phrase suggests a memorable occasion (17:23, 26; Ex. 12:41, 51; Deut. 32:48).

■ **7:16 the LORD shut.** God's works of grace are both sovereign and particular. In a Babylonian flood account the hero shuts the door; God is the chief actor throughout the biblical account. In shutting the door, God also distinguishes between the righteous and the wicked (6:18–20 note). Elsewhere in Scripture doors provide safety for God's people in times of judgment. Behind closed doors while God rained judgment on the wicked, Lot (19:10), Israel (Ex. 12:23), and Rahab (Josh. 2:19) found safety. Jesus uses this symbol of separation in describing the safety of the righteous in the day of the Lord's coming (Matt. 25:10–13).

■ **7:17–24** In this climactic section the churning waters multiply and triumph, destroying the creation. Contrast this scene with the blessing of 1:22.

■ **7:17 forty.** See note on v. 4.

■ **7:18 prevailed.** The Hebrew word, repeated in vv. 19, 20, is a military term for triumph in battle.

■ **7:20 fifteen cubits upward.** The mountains were submerged to a depth of fifteen cubits (22.5 feet), a depth sufficient to keep the ark from grounding.

■ **7:21** The creatures are listed in the order of their creation (1:20–25).

all flesh died. See note on 6:17.

■ **7:23 Only Noah . . . remained alive.** See note on 6:18. The Flood was God's means for punishing the old world and purifying humanity for the new one.

■ **8:1—12:9** The account of post-Flood history mirrors the pre-Flood period: the creation out of dark waters (1:1—2:3; cf. 8:1—9:16), the depraved condition of the human founders, Adam and Noah (3:1–14; cf. 9:18–23); the division of the founder's sons into elect and reprobate lines (ch. 4; cf. 9:24–27); the tyrannical non-elect building a city and making a name for themselves, Cain and Nimrod (4:17–24; cf. 10:8–12; 11:1–9); the preservation of a godly line (5:1–32; cf. 11:10–26) and of a faithful agent of blessing in the fallen world (6:1–9; cf. 11:27—12:9). The parallel judgment on the reprobate (6:9—7:24) will come with the fiery judgment and the introduction of the new heavens and the new earth (2 Pet. 3:13–17; Rev. 21:1).

■ **8:1 God remembered Noah.** The Hebrew expression indicates action based on a previous commitment (9:15; 19:29; 30:22; Ex. 2:24; 6:5; Luke 1:72,73), not merely mental recall.

wind. The Hebrew word here is the same one for "Spirit" in 1:2, recalling the original creation account and introducing God's first re-creative act renewing the earth out of the waters (8:1—12:9 note). Successive re-creative acts mirroring the original creation follow: the gathering of the waters (vv. 2–5; cf. 1:6–9), the placing of birds in the heavens (vv. 6–12; cf. 1:20–23), the establishment of dry ground (v. 13; cf. 1:9–12), the emergence of animals and humans upon the earth to multiply (vv. 16–19; cf. 1:24–27), and the divine blessing (9:1–3; cf. 1:28–30).

■ **8:4 mountains of Ararat.** In the area of ancient Urartu (2 Kin. 19:37), now part of northeastern Turkey and Armenia.

■ **8:6 forty.** See note on 7:4.

receded from the earth. 12 So he waited yet another seven days and sent out the dove, which did not return again to him anymore.

13 And it came to pass in the six hundred and first year, in the first *month,* the first *day* of the month, that the waters were dried up from the earth; and Noah removed the covering of the ark and looked, and indeed the surface of the ground was dry. 14 And in the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dried.

15 Then God spoke to Noah, saying, 16 "Go out of the ark, [h]you and your wife, and your sons and your sons' wives with you. 17 Bring out with you every living thing of all flesh that *is* with you: birds and cattle and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, so that they may abound on the earth, and [i]be fruitful and multiply on the earth." 18 So Noah went out, and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives with him. 19 Every animal, every creeping thing, every bird, *and* whatever creeps on the earth, according to their families, went out of the ark.

God's Covenant with Creation

20 Then Noah built an [j]altar to the LORD, and took of [k]every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered [l]burnt offerings on the altar. 21 And the LORD smelled [m]a soothing aroma. Then the LORD said in His heart, "I will never again [n]curse the ground for man's sake, although the [o]imagination[1] of man's heart *is* evil from his youth; [p]nor will I again destroy every living thing as I have done.

22 "While the earth [q]remains,
Seedtime and harvest,
Cold and heat,
Winter and summer,
And [r]day and night
Shall not cease."

9 So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: [a]"Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. 2 [b]And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move *on* the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand. 3 [c]Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you [d]all things, even as the [e]green herbs. 4 [f]But you shall not eat flesh with its life, *that is,* its blood.

16 [n]Gen. 7:13
17 [i]Gen. 1:22, 28; 9:1, 7
20 [j]Gen. 12:7 [k]Lev. 11 [l]Ex. 10:25
21 [m]Ex. 29:18, 25 [n]Gen. 3:17; 6:7, 13, 17 [o]Gen. 6:5; 11:6 [p]Gen. 9:11, 15 [1]*intent* or *thought*
22 [q]Is. 54:9 [r]Jer. 33:20, 25

CHAPTER 9

1 [a]Gen. 1:28, 29; 8:17; 9:7, 19; 10:32
2 [b]Ps. 8:6
3 [c]Deut. 12:15; 14:3, 9, 11 [d]Rom. 14:14, 20 [e]Gen. 1:29
4 [f]1 Sam. 14:33, 34

■ **8:16 Go out.** Since the Flood was a type of Christian baptism (1 Pet. 3:20, 21), the coming of Noah and his family out of the ark may be thought of as their emerging out of the waters of death into a new life (cf. John 5:28, 29; 11:43; Rom. 6:3–6). They prefigure the new humanity who prevail over evil (Rev. 21:7).

your sons. See 6:18 and note.

■ **8:18 So Noah went out.** See note on 6:22.

■ **8:20—9:17** The Noahic covenant is established. Although Noah was already in covenant relationship with God (6:18 note), the Lord graciously promises with a solemn covenant oath never again to destroy the earth by flood. As with other biblical covenants, the covenant promise (8:21, 22; 9:11) is accompanied by covenant mandates or stipulations (9:1–7) and the giving of a covenant sign (9:12–17).

■ **8:20 altar . . . burnt offerings.** Significantly, Noah's first act after emerging from the ark was to worship God. Though mentioned here for the first time, these aspects of the sacrificial system are presupposed (7:2 note). The burnt offering signified dedication to God and propitiation for sin (v. 21 note; Lev. 1:4; 6:8–13).

clean. See note on 7:2.

■ **8:21 soothing.** A play on words results from the similarity between this Hebrew word and Noah's name. This reference to the divine sense of smell anthropomorphically portrays the pleasure God takes in the worship of His people (Ezek. 20:41; Eph. 5:2; cf. 2 Cor. 2:15, 16). As a propitiatory sacrifice, Noah's burnt offering soothed God's indignation against sin (6:6) and prefigured the death of Christ (Is. 53:10). Pleased with the sacrifice of His servant Noah (cf. 4:4), God resolves never again to send a flood (cf. 6:6 note).

curse the ground. God is not lifting the curse of 3:17 but promising not to destroy the earth again by flood (9:11).

although. The gracious character of the Noahic covenant is underscored by the divine promise, despite the continuing presence of human sin deserving judgment, never again to send a deluge. Such grace also underlies God's preservation of Israel (Ex. 33:3; 34:9).

nor will I again destroy. God's grace toward Noah is extended to mankind in general (6:8; 9:12).

■ **8:22 While the earth remains.** This qualifies "nor will I again" in v. 21. God will preserve the earth until the final judgment (2 Pet. 3:7,13); the earthly order will not end prematurely.

■ **9:1 blessed.** The third time God blessed humans (1:28; 5:2) and commanded them to be fruitful (1:28; 8:17). God's blessing on Noah, to be fruitful and have dominion, constitutes the climactic act in God's renewal of creation (8:1 note).

■ **9:2 fear of you.** The reference to "fear" underscores the changes from the pre-Fall situation, where man was vegetarian (v. 3 note). Now human dominion over creation includes the exploitation of the animal kingdom for food.

■ **9:3 Every moving thing . . . all.** The human diet is expanded to include meat (1:29 note), though the consumption of carrion (Lev. 11:40; Deut. 14:21) and blood (v. 4; Lev. 17:10) is forbidden. Rather than initiating the practice of meat-eating, this divine injunction may simply permit what sinful humanity had earlier practiced. No distinction is made between clean and unclean, a situation restored under the new covenant (Mark 7:19; Acts 10:9–16; 1 Tim. 4:3–5).

■ **9:4 not eat . . . blood.** This law points to the symbolic connection between blood and life, a concept also basic to the sacrificial system (Lev. 17:11) and the atoning work of Christ (Heb. 9:14, 22). See Lev. 3:17; 7:27; 19:26; Deut. 12:16; 1 Sam. 14:32–34.

5 Surely for your lifeblood I will demand *a reckoning;* [g]from the hand of every beast I will require it, and [h]from the hand of man. From the hand of every [i]man's brother I will require the life of man.

6 "Whoever [j]sheds man's blood,
By man his blood shall be shed;
[k]For in the image of God
He made man.
7 And as for you, [l]be fruitful and multiply;
Bring forth abundantly in the earth
And multiply in it."

8 Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying: 9 "And as for Me, [m]behold, I establish [n]My covenant with you and with your [l]descendants after you, 10 [o]and with every living creature that *is* with you: the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, of all that go out of the ark, every beast of the earth. 11 Thus [p]I establish My covenant with you: Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth."

12 And God said: [q]"This *is* the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living creature that *is* with you, for perpetual generations: 13 I set [r]My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. 14 It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud; 15 and [s]I will remember My covenant which *is* between Me and you and every living creature of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. 16 The rainbow shall be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember [t]the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that *is* on the earth." 17 And God said to Noah, "This *is* the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that *is* on the earth."

Noah and His Sons

18 Now the sons of Noah who went out of the ark were Shem, Ham, and Japheth. [u]And Ham *was* the father of Canaan. 19 [v]These three *were* the sons of Noah, [w]and from these the whole earth was populated.

20 And Noah began *to be* [x]a farmer, and he planted a vineyard. 21 Then he drank of the wine

5 [g]Ex. 21:28 [h]Gen. 4:9, 10; Ps. 9:12 [i]Acts 17:26

6 [j]Ex. 21:12–14; Lev. 24:17; Num. 35:33; Matt. 26:52 [k]Gen. 1:26, 27

7 [l]Gen. 9:1, 19

9 [m]Gen. 6:18 [n]Is. 54:9 [l]Lit. *seed*

10 [o]Ps. 145:9

11 [p]Gen. 8:21; Is. 54:9

12 [q]Gen. 9:13, 17; 17:11

13 [r]Ezek. 1:28; Rev. 4:3

15 [s]Lev. 26:42, 45; Deut. 7:9; Ezek. 16:60

16 [t]Gen. 17:13, 19; 2 Sam. 23:5; Is. 55:3; Jer. 32:40; Heb. 13:20

18 [u]Gen. 9:25–27; 10:6

19 [v]Gen. 5:32 [w]Gen. 9:1, 7; 10:32; 1 Chr. 1:4

20 [x]Gen. 3:19, 23; 4:2; Prov. 12:11; Jer. 31:24

■ **9:5 I will demand . . . require . . . require.** This threefold usage of the same Hebrew verb underscores the principle—human life in the image of God (v. 6) is so valuable that God demands as compensation nothing less than the life of the murderer. Ultimately, the Lord is the Vindicator of life (Ps. 9:12; 2 Kin. 9:26). Murder burdens the guilty with its pollution (Num. 35:33; Ps. 106:38) and is expiated by the death of the murderer (v. 6; 1 Kin. 2:31, 32) or through atonement when the murderer is unknown (Deut. 21:7–9). If these measures were not used, it brought the Lord's judgment on the land (2 Sam. 21; Deut. 19:13; 1 Kin. 2:9, 31–33).

of every beast. See Ex. 21:28, 29.

■ **9:6 By man.** See v. 5; 4:16 and notes. God's endowment of humans with this judicial authority shows they stand in God's stead as rulers (1:26), and lays the foundation for government by the state (Rom. 13:1–7).

Image. Though distorted by sin, the image of God continues in man (1:26 and note; 8:21). This explains why homicidal blood, in contrast to animal blood, must be compensated for. See "The Image of God" at 1:27.

■ **9:9 I establish My covenant.** See notes on 6:9–22; 8:20—9:17. God's promise to preserve the earth (8:20–22) is now confirmed by a covenant (cf. 12:1–3; ch. 15). In 6:18 the covenant relationship was exclusively with Noah (6:18 note); now it is extended to his descendants and to all creation (v. 12). See "God's Covenant of Grace" at 12:1.

In a sense, God mediated His mercy through Noah for the created order, and later through Moses for Israel. So Noah and Moses were subordinate types of the true Mediator to come, Jesus Christ (Heb. 3:1–6).

■ **9:12 sign.** Biblical covenants are usually certified by visual symbols; these include circumcision for the Abrahamic covenant (17:11), the Sabbath for the Mosaic (Ex. 31:13, 17), and the Lord's Supper for the new covenant (Luke 22:20). The Davidic covenant required none since David's offspring were its visible token (2 Sam. 7:11–16). Often these signs were already in existence (e.g., the Sabbath and circumcision), but were given new significance.

■ **9:15 remember.** See 8:1 and note.

■ **9:16 everlasting.** See note on 8:22.

■ **9:18–29** This transitional section links the Noahic covenant with the Table of Nations in ch. 10 by focusing on Noah's three sons (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes).

■ **9:21 drank of the wine.** Scripture both looks favorably on wine (Num. 15:5–10; Deut. 14:26; Ps. 104:15; John 2:1–11) and soberly warns of its dangers (Is. 5:22; Prov. 21:17; 23:20, 21, 29–35; Is. 28:7), particularly the moral laxity exemplified by self-exposure (Lam. 4:21; Hab. 2:15). Nazirites (Num. 6:3, 4), officiating priests (Lev. 10:9), and rulers making decisions (Prov. 31:4, 5) were to abstain from it.

was drunk. Just as Adam, the original head of the human race, sinned through eating (3:6), so Noah, the head of the human race after the Flood, sinned through drinking. The striking parallels between Adam and Noah (8:1 note), and the contrast between saintly Noah before the Flood (6:8, 9) and the drunken sinner after it, direct the reader to God, not man, for salvation.

became uncovered. Self-exposure is both publicly demeaning (2 Sam. 6:16) and incompatible with living in God's presence (Ex. 20:26; cf. Deut. 23:12–14).

21 [y]Prov. 20:1; Eph. 5:18

23 [z]Ex. 20:12; Gal. 6:1 [2]Lit. *backwards*

25 [a]Deut. 27:16; Josh. 9:23, 27 [b]Josh. 9:23; 1 Kin. 9:20, 21

26 [c]Gen. 14:20; 24:27; Ps. 144:15; Heb. 11:16

27 [d]Gen. 10:2–5; 39:3; Is. 66:19 [e]Luke 3:36; John 1:14; Eph. 2:13, 14; 3:6

CHAPTER 10

1 [a]Gen. 9:1, 7, 19

2 [b]1 Chr. 1:5–7

[y]and was drunk, and became uncovered in his tent. 22 And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. 23 [z]But Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid *it* on both their shoulders, and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces *were* [2]turned away, and they did not see their father's nakedness.

24 So Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done to him. 25 Then he said:

[a]"Cursed *be* Canaan;
A [b]servant of servants
He shall be to his brethren."

26 And he said:

[c]"Blessed *be* the LORD,
The God of Shem,
And may Canaan be his servant.
27 May God [d]enlarge Japheth,
[e]And may he dwell in the tents of Shem;
And may Canaan be his servant."

28 And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years. 29 So all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years; and he died.

Nations Descended from Noah

10 Now this *is* the genealogy of the sons of Noah: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. [a]And sons were born to them after the flood.

2 [b]The sons of Japheth *were* Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. 3 The

■ **9:22 saw the nakedness of his father.** Gazing at another's nakedness, either in lust or scorn, is morally wrong. See notes on 2:25; 3:7. Ham's scornful leering at the father whom he should have revered was particularly reprehensible (Ex. 21:15, 17; Deut. 21:18–21; Mark 7:10).

told. If it is wrong to publicize another's sin (Prov. 10:12b; 17:9), how much more a father's. The story further condemns the failure to respect one's parents.

■ **9:24–27** This division of humanity parallels ch. 4 (8:1—12:9 note).

■ **9:25 Cursed.** The Canaanites succeed the Cainites as the curse-laden people (4:11 and note).

Canaan. Since the curses and blessings on the three sons had their descendants in view, it is not strange that the curse was on his son, not on Ham himself (vv. 18, 22), especially since God had already blessed Ham (9:1). As Ham, the youngest son of Noah, wronged his father, so the curse will fall on Ham's youngest son (v. 24), who shares his moral decadence (Lev. 18:3; Deut. 9:3). Nevertheless, Ham's descendants include, in addition to the Canaanites, the names of Israel's most dreaded enemies: Egypt, Philistia, Assyria, and Babylon (10:6–13).

servant of servants. Noah prophetically alludes to the coming subjugation of Canaan's offspring by the offspring of Shem (e.g., Israel) and Japheth (the Sea Peoples, 10:2–5) on the other. Because this curse of servitude falls upon Canaan, a Caucasian, there is no basis for the racist view that African peoples are cursed.

■ **9:26 Blessed . . . God of Shem.** With this doxological blessing Noah acknowledges God as the Author of life and extends the blessing to Shem (1:22 and note; 14:19). The line of messianic promise is now narrowed to Shem's offspring (cf. 3:15; 4:26 and notes), and it will be further specified in Genesis as through Abraham (12:1–3), Isaac (21:8–12), Jacob (25:23; 27:28, 29), and Judah (49:10). With the coming of the Messiah and the new covenant, the covenant promise is extended to all who believe (Acts 10:34, 35; Gal. 3:29).

■ **9:27 dwell in the tents.** Perhaps a reference to tribal conquests or to the future victories of Greece and Rome. Alternatively, Japheth may be a guest, drawn to Shem and to God—a promise finding final fulfillment in the New Testament (10:5 note; Acts 14:27; Eph. 2:11–22; 3:6).

■ **9:28, 29** The genealogy begun in 5:32 is now completed according to the pattern of ch. 5.

■ **10:1—11:9** The "account" or "genealogy" of Noah's family (2:4 note) consists of the Table of Nations (ch. 10) and the Tower of Babel narrative (11:1–9). Chronologically, the Tower of Babel precedes the Table of Nations, for the table presupposes the confusion of languages (10:5, 17, 20, 31). Two different yet complementary perspectives are present within this account: the Table of Nations presents the nations as of one blood, multiplying under God's blessing (9:1), while the Tower of Babel narrative presents the nations as confused due to divine judgment (11:1–9).

■ **10:1–32** The tripartite arrangement of the Table of Nations (vv. 2–5, 6–20, 21–31) reflects the threefold division of humanity. Seventy (representing a large and complete number, cf. Judg. 8:30; 2 Kin. 10:1) nations are given: fourteen from Japheth, thirty from Ham, and twenty-six from Shem. The Japhethites migrated westward, the Hamites, south by southwest, and the Semites, south by southeast.

This selective list is not always racial; "sons of" or "begot" may refer to political, geographical, social, or linguistic relationships (4:20, 21; 10:31). Some names are personal (e.g., Japheth, Nimrod); others are place-names (e.g., Sidon, Sheba) or names of peoples (e.g., Ludim, Caphtorim). Some belong to more than one family because of early mixtures.

■ **10:1 this is the genealogy.** See note on 2:4.

■ **10:2 Gomer.** The Cimmerians, a nomadic people to the north of the Black Sea. They later migrated into Asia Minor. See Ezek. 38:6.

Magog. See Ezek. 38:2; 39:6; its identity is disputed.

Madai. The Medes. See 2 Kin. 17:6; Jer. 51:11; Dan. 5:28.

Javan. The Greeks.

Tubal, Meshech. Located in central and eastern Asia Minor.

Tiras. One of the Sea Peoples from the region of the Aegean Sea. Perhaps to be identified as the Etruscans, who eventually settled in Italy.

■ **10:3 Ashkenaz.** Probably the Scythians, later derided by the Greeks as uncivilized (Col. 3:11 note).

Riphath. See text note. Located in Asia Minor.

Togarmah. Possibly the area west of the upper Euphrates.

sons of Gomer *were* Ashkenaz, [f]Riphath, and Togarmah. [4] The sons of Javan *were* Elishah, Tarshish, Kittim, and [2]Dodanim. [5] From these [c]the coastland *peoples* of the Gentiles were separated into their lands, everyone according to his language, according to their families, into their nations.

[6] [d]The sons of Ham *were* Cush, Mizraim, [3]Put, and Canaan. [7] The sons of Cush *were* Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah, and Sabtechah; and the sons of Raamah *were* Sheba and Dedan.

[8] Cush begot [e]Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one on the earth. [9] He was a mighty [f]hunter [g]before the LORD; therefore it is said, "Like Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD." [10] [h]And the beginning of his kingdom was [i]Babel, Erech, Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.

3 [f]*Diphath,* 1 Chr. 1:6

4 [2]Sam. *Rodanim* and 1 Chr. 1:7

5 [c]Ps. 72:10

6 [d]1 Chr. 1:8–16 [3]Or *Phut*

8 [e]Mic. 5:6

9 [f]Jer. 16:16 [g]Gen. 21:20

10 [h]Mic. 5:6 [i]Gen. 11:9

■ **10:4 Elishah.** Often identified as part of Cyprus (cf. Ezek. 27:7).

Tarshish. Usually identified with Tartessus in southern Spain.

Kittim. Inhabitants of Cyprus.

Dodanim. Possibly north of Tyre. If "Rodanim" (text note) is preferred, the reference is probably to the Greek island of Rhodes.

■ **10:5 coastland peoples.** The Hebrew here is rendered "coastlands" in Is. 41:5; 42:4. Isaiah, perhaps reaching back to Gen. 9:27 and 10:2, presents them as coming to salvation in the messianic age (9:27 note).

separated . . . language. An anticipation of 11:1–9.

■ **10:6–20** The Egyptians, Babylonians, and Canaanites, Israel's most bitter and influential neighbors, are mentioned in this list (9:25 note).

■ **10:6 Cush.** The area south of Egypt.

Mizraim. Egypt.

Put. Traditionally identified as Libya.

■ **10:7 sons of Cush.** These nations were probably all located in Arabia.

Havilah. Probably in Arabia. Its relation to the locations mentioned in v. 29 and 2:11 is uncertain.

■ **10:8–12** This break in the genealogy is of prime importance to Israel's history: it explains the racial and spiritual origins of Assyria and Babylon who later conquered them.

■ **10:8 Nimrod.** His name means "we shall rebel"; later Jewish tradition identifies him as the builder of the Tower of Babel (11:1–9). This hunter and warrior is an archetype of Mesopotamian ideals of kingship.

began to be. This and similar phrases are used to mark important historical developments (4:26; 6:1; 9:20; 11:6).

mighty one. This title may link him with the tyrants in 6:4.

■ **10:10 beginning of his kingdom.** See note on 8:1—12:9. Nimrod, the prototypical city and kingdom builder, marks the beginning of man's post-Flood quest for domination and autonomy over against God (4:17 note; 11:4–6).

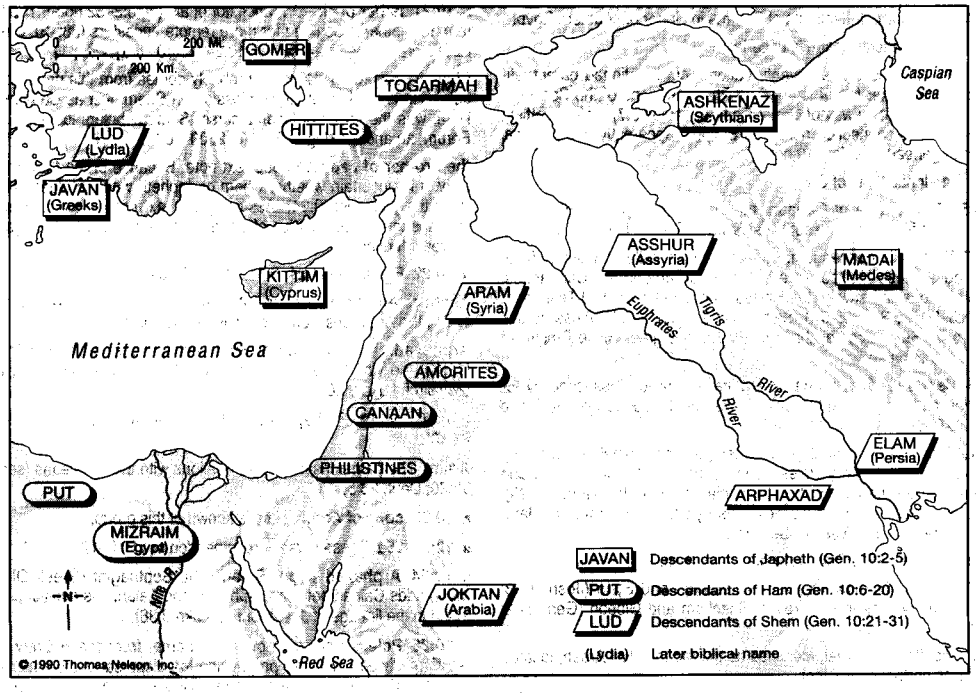
Babel. The Babylonians, infamous destroyers of Judah.

Erech. One of the oldest known cities, Erech (or Uruk; modern Warka) was an important city on the Euphrates River. Inhabitants of this area were later deported to Samaria by the Assyrians (Ezra 4:9, 10).

Accad. Though the home of the famous King Sargon of Accad (c. 2350–2295 B.C.), it has not been located.

Calneh. Not the Calneh of Amos 6:2; this site has not been identified.

Shinar. The region of Babylonia.



The Nations of Genesis 10

11 /Mic. 5:6
14 k1 Chr. 1:12
15 lGen. 23:3
16 mGen. 14:7; 15:19–21
19 nNum. 34:2–12
21 4Or *the older brother of Japheth*
22 o1 Chr. 1:17–28 pLuke 3:36
23 5LXX *Meshech* and 1 Chr. 1:17
24 qGen. 11:12

11 From that land he went /to Assyria and built Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir, Calah, 12 and Resen between Nineveh and Calah (that *is* the principal city).

13 Mizraim begot Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim, 14 Pathrusim, and Casluhim k(from whom came the Philistines and Caphtorim).

15 Canaan begot Sidon his firstborn, and lHeth; 16 mthe Jebusite, the Amorite, and the Girgashite; 17 the Hivite, the Arkite, and the Sinite; 18 the Arvadite, the Zemarite, and the Hamathite. Afterward the families of the Canaanites were dispersed. 19 nAnd the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon as you go toward Gerar, as far as Gaza; then as you go toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha. 20 These *were* the sons of Ham, according to their families, according to their languages, in their lands *and* in their nations.

21 And *children* were born also to Shem, the father of all the children of Eber, 4the brother of Japheth the elder. 22 The osons of Shem *were* Elam, Asshur, pArphaxad, Lud, and Aram. 23 The sons of Aram *were* Uz, Hul, Gether, and 5Mash. 24 6Arphaxad begot qSalah, and Salah begot Eber. 25 rTo Eber were born two sons: the name of one *was* 7Peleg, for in his days the earth was

6So with MT, Vg., Tg.; LXX *Arphaxad begot Cainan, and Cainan begot Salah* (cf. Luke 3:35, 36) **25** r1 Chr. 1:19 7Lit. *Division*

■ **10:11 Assyria.** One of the cruelest nations of ancient history, Assyria was the infamous destroyer of Israel's northern kingdom (cf. Mic. 5:5, 6).

Calah. Located on the site of the modern Nimrud, where the Tigris and Zab rivers meet.

■ **10:12 Resen.** The location is uncertain.

the principal city. Probably Nineveh (Jon. 3:2, 3).

■ **10:13 Mizraim.** Egypt, the infamous place of Israel's slavery.

Ludim. The Ludim probably lived near Egypt. See v. 22.

Anamim. These descendants of Egypt have not been precisely identified.

Lehabim. Generally regarded as variant of "Lubim," the Libyans.

Naphtuhim. Probably inhabitants of the Nile Delta region of Lower Egypt.

■ **10:14 Pathrusim.** Inhabitants of Pathros in Upper or southern Egypt.

Casluhim. Their identification is uncertain.

Philistines. Not one of the seventy nations, but mentioned parenthetically as another bitter foe of Israel. The Philistines, one of the Sea Peoples, came to Egypt by way of Crete (Caphtor, Amos 9:7), before settling in Palestine. The connection here with Egypt is apparently geographical rather than genealogical (ch. 10 note).

Caphtorim. Inhabitants of Crete.

■ **10:15–19** The area of Canaan, the curse-laden people (9:25 and note), extends from modern southwest Syria to Gaza (Num. 34).

■ **10:15 Heth.** His descendants are sometimes called "Hittites." As is evident here, these Hittites were reckoned as among the Canaanites, and the relationship between the Hittites mentioned in the Old Testament (e.g., 23:3–20; 26:34; 27:46; 1 Sam. 26:6; 2 Sam. 11:3), whose names appear to be Semitic rather than Hittite, and the great Hittite Empire of Asia Minor is debated.

■ **10:16 Jebusite.** One of the Canaanite nations dispossessed by Israel. Their city was Jerusalem, which was finally conquered by David (2 Sam. 5:6–9).

Amorite. The Old Testament uses the term loosely, sometimes referring to the pagan inhabitants of Palestine in general (15:16; Josh. 10:5) and sometimes to the people of the Palestinian hill country (Num. 13:29). Some of the most famous dynasties of Babylon, including that of Hammurabi, came from this Western Semitic group.

Girgashite. See 15:21; Deut. 7:1 note; Josh. 3:10.

■ **10:17 Hivite.** The Hivites lived in Lebanon and Syria (Josh. 11:3; Judg. 3:3), as well as in the area of Shechem and Gibeon (Gen. 34:2; Josh. 9:1, 7).

Arkite. Inhabitants of Arqat, identified as the modern Tell Arqah, located twelve miles northeast of Tripoli.

Sinite. Inhabitants of a Phoenician coastal town near Arqa.

■ **10:18 Arvadite.** This group lived on an island now called Ruad, fifty miles north of Byblos (Gebal).

Zemarite. This group has not been identified.

Hamathite. Inhabitants of the city of Hamath (modern Hama), located on the Orontes River (Num. 34:8; Josh. 13:5; 2 Sam. 8:9, 10).

dispersed. See note on 10:1—11:9.

■ **10:19 Gerar.** Modern Tell Abu Hureira, eleven miles southeast of Gaza. See chs. 20; 21; 26.

Sodom . . . Zeboiim. See chs. 13; 14; 18; 19.

Lasha. Its identity is uncertain.

■ **10:21–31** The elect line of Shem is presented last (9:26 note) and overlaps with the more specific lineage of the elect Eber (v. 21) in 11:10–26.

■ **10:21 father of all.** Or, "ancestor of all" (cf. 5:3–32 note). The Hebrew term for "father" was used for more remote ancestors (28:13). Shem was Eber's great-great-grandfather (10:24; 11:10–14).

Eber. The word for "Hebrew" probably comes from this name (cf. 14:13 note). He is the heir of God's blessing on Shem, just as Canaan, son of Ham, was the target of Noah's curse. Some scholars identify Eber with Ebrum, an ancient king of Ebla (c. 2300 B.C.).

the brother of Japheth. See text note. Because of the translation difficulty, it is uncertain whether Shem or Japheth was the oldest. Ham was likely the youngest (9:24). Assuming the text note reading, Moses here stresses the firstborn status of Shem, despite the fact that his genealogy is presented last.

■ **10:22 Elam.** See 14:1, 9; Is. 11:11; Ezra 4:9.

Asshur. An ancestor of the Assyrians. Though a mixed people (cf. v. 11), the Assyrians were predominantly Semitic.

Arphaxad. The third son of Shem and the first born after the Flood (11:10), he was the ancestor of many Semitic tribes, including the Hebrews (cf. Luke 3:36).

Lud. Cf. v. 13. Perhaps the Lydians of Asia Minor (Is. 66:19; Ezek. 27:10).

Aram. The patriarchs had close relations with the Arameans (see 25:20; 31:20; Deut. 26:5).

■ **10:23 sons of Aram.** Little is known of this group.

■ **10:24, 25a** These verses are expanded in 11:12–17.

■ **10:24 Arphaxad begot Salah.** The Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) adds Cainan between Arphaxad and Salah; this additional name is found in the lineage of Jesus Christ (Luke 3:36).

■ **10:25 Peleg.** See text note. This name, from the Hebrew term for "split" or "divide," probably prophesied the dispersal of the nations at Babel. See Ps. 55:9, where the same Hebrew term is employed in the phrase "divide their tongues."

divided; and his brother's name *was* Joktan. 26 Joktan begot Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, 27 Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, 28 [8]Obal, Abimael, Sheba, 29 Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All these *were* the sons of Joktan. 30 And their dwelling place was from Mesha as you go toward Sephar, the mountain of the east. 31 These *were* the sons of Shem, according to their families, according to their languages, in their lands, according to their nations.

32 [s]These *were* the families of the sons of Noah, according to their generations, in their nations; [t]and from these the nations were divided on the earth after the flood.

The Tower of Babel

11 Now the whole earth had one language and one [1]speech. 2 And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land [a]of Shinar, and they dwelt there. 3 Then they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks and [2]bake *them* thoroughly." They had brick for stone, and they had asphalt for mortar. 4 And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower [b]whose top *is* in the heavens; let us make a [c]name for ourselves, lest we [d]be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth."

5 [e]But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. 6 And the LORD said, "Indeed [f]the people *are* one and they all have [g]one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they [h]propose to do will be withheld from them. 7 Come, [i]let Us go down and there [j]confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." 8 So [k]the LORD scattered them abroad from there [l]over the face of all the earth, and they ceased building the city. 9 Therefore its name is called [3]Babel, [m]because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth; and from there the LORD scattered them abroad over the face of all the earth.

Shem's Descendants

10 [n]This *is* the genealogy of Shem: Shem *was* one hundred years old, and begot Arphaxad two years after the flood. 11 After he begot Arphaxad, Shem lived five hundred years, and begot sons and daughters.

12 Arphaxad lived thirty-five years, [o]and begot Salah. 13 After he begot Salah, Arphaxad lived four hundred and three years, and begot sons and daughters.

14 Salah lived thirty years, and begot Eber. 15 After he begot Eber, Salah lived four hundred and three years, and begot sons and daughters.

28 [8]*Ebal,* 1 Chr. 1:22

32 [s]Gen. 10:1 [t]Gen. 9:19; 11:8

CHAPTER 11

1 [1]Lit. *lip*

2 [a]Gen. 10:10; 14:1; Dan. 1:2

3 [2]Lit. *burn*

4 [b]Deut. 1:28; 9:1; Ps. 107:26 [c]Gen. 6:4; 2 Sam. 8:13 [d]Deut. 4:27

5 [e]Gen. 18:21; Ex. 3:8; 19:11, 18, 20

6 [f]Gen. 9:19; Acts 17:26 [g]Gen. 11:1 [h]Deut. 31:21; Ps. 2:1

7 [i]Gen. 1:26 [j]Gen. 42:23; Ex. 4:11; Deut. 28:49; Is. 33:19; Jer. 5:15

8 [k]Gen. 11:4; Deut. 32:8; Ps. 92:9; [Luke 1:51] [l]Gen. 10:25, 32

9 [m]1 Cor. 14:23 [3]Lit. *Confusion,* Babylon

10 [n]Gen. 10:22–25; 1 Chr. 1:17

12 [o]Luke 3:35

■ **10:29 Ophir.** A region, perhaps in Arabia, known for its pure gold (1 Kin. 9:28; Job 22:24).

Havilah. See note on v. 7.

■ **10:30 from Mesha . . . toward Sephar.** Though these locations are unidentified, the names of the sons of Joktan point to a location in southern Arabia.

■ **11:1–9** See note on 10:1—11:9. Some scholars identify the tower in this narrative as the three-hundred-foot high temple ziggurat of Marduk at Babylon. The same arrogant pride that inspired rebellious Eve and Adam to rival God's knowledge (3:5) and the ungodly Cain to build his city (4:17), now inspired "the whole earth" (v. 4). The mention of "Shinar" (v. 2; cf. 10:10) and "Babel" (v. 9; cf. 10:10) recall Nimrod's rebellious kingdom (10:8–12 and notes).

■ **11:1 whole earth.** See note on 10:1—11:9.

■ **11:4 city.** See notes on 4:17; 8:1—12:9; and 10:10.

tower . . . in the heavens. This description suggests a monumental effort motivated by pride (cf. Is. 2:15–17). Human beings—this time in a titanic attempt at corporate self-assertion—again sacrilegiously challenge God (3:6 note).

make a name for ourselves. Since "name" connotes fame and progeny, these city builders were attempting to find significance and immortality in their own achievements. But only God gives an everlasting name (12:2) to those who magnify His name (4:26; 12:8; Is. 63:12,14).

lest we be scattered. Like Cain in their isolation from God, these proud sinners feared dislocation, and perhaps one another as well (4:14). Also like Cain, they found their solution in an abiding city rivaling God—a strategy that involved disobeying God's command to "fill the earth" (9:1).

■ **11:5 the LORD came down to see.** Divine investigation prior to judgment is frequently depicted in Genesis (3:11–13; 4:9, 10; 18:21). Rather than conflict with the doctrine of divine omniscience (cf. 6:6 note), this anthropomorphic description of God's activity serves to emphasize that divine judgment is always according to truth. The Mesopotamian ziggurat towers were built as descending stairways for the gods. But God comes down in judgment on this tower of human pride.

■ **11:6 they begin to do.** See note on 10:8.

■ **11:7 let Us go down.** See note on 1:26.

■ **11:8 scattered.** Ironically, instead of attaining significance and immortality they achieved alienation and dispersal. Expulsion was the earlier fates of Adam and Eve (3:23) and of Cain (4:12). This judgment was also an act of grace; in isolation the peoples were more likely to turn to God (12:3; Acts 17:26, 27).

■ **11:9 Babel.** An ironic etymology derived from the Hebrew word meaning "confuse." To the Babylonians, Babel meant "gate of god."

■ **11:10–26** See note on 5:3–32. This genealogy of the elect, like 5:3–32, is first linear and at the end segmented into three sons (8:1 note). It overlaps with 10:21–31 and forms a transition from primeval history to the account of Abraham (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes).

As is common in ancient genealogies, it is apparent that this genealogy contains gaps. If it were precisely sequential, the events of chs. 9—11 would cover less than three centuries, all of Abraham's ancestors would have been still living when he was born, and Shem would outlive Abraham by fourteen years. The purpose of this genealogy is to record the advances of the messianic line (Introduction: Date and Occasion).

■ **11:10 This is the genealogy of.** See note on 2:4.

■ **11:12** In the Sumerian flood story the ages of the kings also are reduced after the flood (5:3–32 note).

■ **11:14 Eber.** See note on 10:21.

16 [p]1 Chr. 1:19 [q]Luke 3:35
20 [r]Luke 3:35
24 [s]Gen. 11:31; Josh. 24:2; Luke 3:34
26 [t]Josh. 24:2; 1 Chr. 1:26 [4]*Abraham,* Gen. 17:5
27 [u]Gen. 11:31; 17:5
29 [v]Gen. 17:15; 20:12 [w]Gen. 22:20, 23; 24:15 [5]*Sarah,* Gen. 17:15
30 [x]Gen. 16:1, 2; Luke 1:36
31 [y]Gen. 12:1 [z]Gen. 15:7; Neh. 9:7; Acts 7:4 [a]Gen. 10:19

16 [p]Eber lived thirty-four years, and begot [q]Peleg. 17 After he begot Peleg, Eber lived four hundred and thirty years, and begot sons and daughters.

18 Peleg lived thirty years, and begot Reu. 19 After he begot Reu, Peleg lived two hundred and nine years, and begot sons and daughters.

20 Reu lived thirty-two years, and begot [r]Serug. 21 After he begot Serug, Reu lived two hundred and seven years, and begot sons and daughters.

22 Serug lived thirty years, and begot Nahor. 23 After he begot Nahor, Serug lived two hundred years, and begot sons and daughters.

24 Nahor lived twenty-nine years, and begot [s]Terah. 25 After he begot Terah, Nahor lived one hundred and nineteen years, and begot sons and daughters.

26 Now Terah lived seventy years, and [t]begot [4]Abram, Nahor, and Haran.

Terah's Descendants

27 This *is* the genealogy of Terah: Terah begot [u]Abram, Nahor, and Haran. Haran begot Lot. 28 And Haran died before his father Terah in his native land, in Ur of the Chaldeans. 29 Then Abram and Nahor took wives: the name of Abram's wife *was* [v]Sarai,[5] and the name of Nahor's wife, [w]Milcah, the daughter of Haran the father of Milcah and the father of Iscah. 30 But [x]Sarai was barren; she had no child.

31 And Terah [y]took his son Abram and his grandson Lot, the son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, his son Abram's wife, and they went out with them from [z]Ur of the Chaldeans to go to [a]the land of Canaan; and they came to Haran and dwelt there. 32 So the days of Terah were two hundred and five years, and Terah died in Haran.

■ **11:16 Peleg.** See note on 10:25.

■ **11:26 Abram.** See notes on 17:5.

■ **11:27–32** This introduction to the Abraham story identifies the main characters in Abraham's life: father, brother, wife, sister-in-law, and nephew.

■ **11:27 This is the genealogy of Terah.** See note on 2:4. Terah, the father of the principal figure, Abraham, gives his name to the family history, since the family involved in this story descends from him (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes). After this introduction he is not mentioned again, probably because he did not share Abraham's faith. The family may have been involved in moon worship, since Ur and Haran were important centers for worship of the Mesopotamian moon gods Nanna and Sin.

Nahor. See 22:20–24.

■ **11:28 Haran died.** Haran's premature death explains the fate of his children in this closely knit family. Abraham adopted Lot, Haran's son (v. 31; 12:4), and Nahor married Milcah, Haran's daughter.

Ur of the Chaldeans. Probably the important city in southern Mesopotamia on the Euphrates River (flourished c. 3000–1900 B.C.), though some scholars suggest that Urfa (Edessa) in northern Mesopotamia may be intended. Because the Chaldeans did not reach southern Mesopotamia until after the time of Moses (and almost a millennium after Abraham), this description of Ur may represent an updating of the text after the time of Moses (Introduction: Date and Occasion).

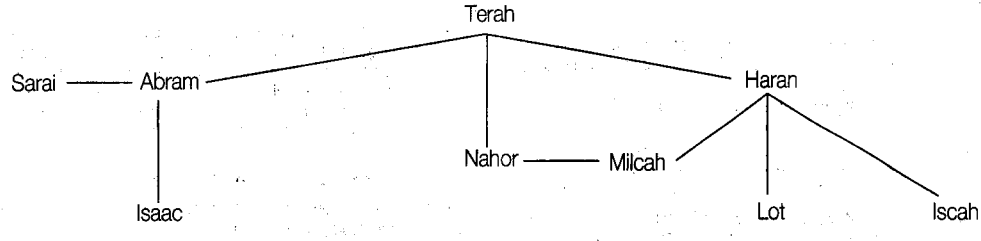
■ **11:29 Sarai.** She was the daughter of Terah by a different mother than Abraham's (20:2). The prohibition against such a marriage was unknown in patriarchal times (cf. Lev. 18:9; 20:17; Deut. 27:22).

Nahor's wife . . . daughter of Haran. The later Mosaic law did not prohibit marriage to one's niece.

■ **11:30 barren.** This mention of childlessness anticipates the miraculous provision of offspring to continue the covenant line of promise (18:1–15; 21:1–12).

■ **11:32 two hundred and five years.** If Abram was born when Terah was seventy years old (v. 26) and if Abram departed Haran when he was seventy-five years old (12:4) after the death of his father Terah (Acts 7:4), Terah would have been only 145 years old at his death. Several possible solutions to this apparent difficulty have been advanced. Some suggest that Stephen in Acts 7:4 relies on a different Hebrew textual tradition (the Samaritan Pentateuch text of this passage reads "145 years"). Others propose that the Hebrew word rendered "begot" in v. 26 means "began to beget" and that Abram was not the firstborn.

Abraham's Family (11:27–29)



Promises to Abram

12 Now the [a]LORD had said to Abram:

"Get [b]out of your country,
From your family
And from your father's house,
To a land that I will show you.
2 [c]I will make you a great nation;
[d]I will bless you
And make your name great;
[e]And you shall be a blessing.
3 [f]I will bless those who bless you,

CHAPTER 12

1 [a]Gen. 15:7; Acts 7:2, 3; [Heb. 11:8] [b]Gen. 13:9

2 [c][Gen. 17:4–6]; 18:18; 46:3; Deut. 26:5; 1 Kin. 3:8 [d]Gen. 22:17; 24:35 [e]Gen. 28:4; Zech. 8:13; Gal. 3:14

3 [f]Gen. 24:35; 27:29; Ex. 23:22; Num. 24:9

■ **12:1—22:19** God's division of the world into nations (11:1–9) provided a backdrop against which Moses now begins to display God's distinguishing grace in election. With Abram commences the story of God's creation of Israel, a story in which He will reveal His freedom in being merciful to Israel, His holiness in judging them, His faithfulness in restoring them, and His absolute sovereignty over human history. Abram's story begins with his departure from a city of man (Ur) in search of the city "whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10).

■ **12:1–9** Abraham's call as an agent of redemptive grace parallels Noah's as the mediator of a covenant to all creation (8:1—12:9 note). The form of God's call to Abraham also resembles His pattern in creation (1:3–31 note): announcement, command (v. 1), and report (vv. 4–9), but the pattern is broken by the divine promise (vv. 2–3), highlighting Abraham's faith and believing obedience (vv. 4–9; cf. 22:1–19; Rom. 4:3; Heb. 11:8–12).

■ **12:1–3** The covenant structure is apparent (17:2 note). God sovereignly obligated Himself to Abraham (vv. 2, 3) while assigning him a task (v. 1). God's commands were fulfilled through Abraham's obedient faith in God's promise (6:9–22 note).

These verses mark a pivotal point in Genesis and in the history of redemption as God begins to establish a covenant people for Himself. The progress of God's redemptive plan is evident in His setting Abraham apart (v. 1) and making Israel into a great nation (v. 2; 46:3). It climaxes in Jesus Christ, the true Seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:16), who brings salvation to the world (v. 3). The call to Abraham is passed on to the next two patriarchs, Isaac (26:2–4) and Jacob (28:14). The nation will be formed from Jacob's twelve sons (ch. 49). See theological note "God's Covenant of Grace."

■ **12:1 had said.** The call came to Abraham in Ur before his father died, not in Haran (15:7).

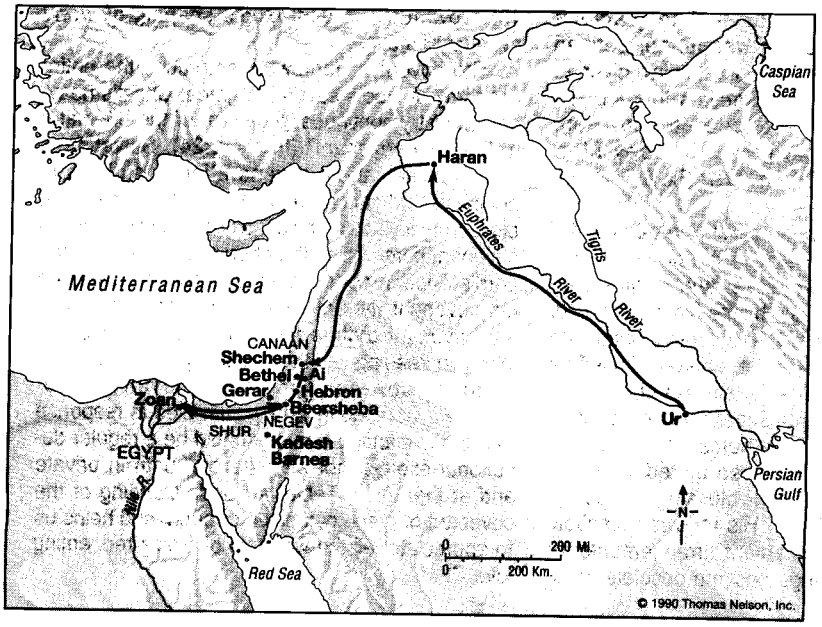
a land. The scope of this land grant will be progressively defined (12:7; 13:14–17; 15:18–21).

■ **12:2 bless.** Crucial elements of divine blessing and promise in Genesis—fruitfulness and dominion—are evident here and are further spelled out in 22:17 (9:1 note).

make your name great. What the city builders at Babel sought in their own strength (11:4 note), God gave in sovereign grace. Subsequent history confirmed God's promise—the great names of Abraham and David (2 Sam. 7:9) prefigured that of Jesus Christ (Phil. 2:9–11).

you shall be a blessing. This last occurrence of the verb "to bless" is an imperative. Abraham will not only be blessed, but is to be a blessing to others (v. 3).

■ **12:3 bless those . . . curse him.** The extent of God's merciful and gracious intention is indicated in the Hebrew by a switch from the plural object of blessing to the singular object of cursing. Many are to receive God's blessing through the Seed of Abraham (18:18; Gal. 3:8; Rev. 7:9, 10).



Abraham's Journey of Faith. Abraham's 1,500-mile journey was fueled by faith. "And he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, . . . for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:8–10).

God's Covenant of Grace

Covenants in Scripture are solemn agreements, negotiated or unilaterally imposed, that bind the parties to each other in permanent defined relationships, with specific promises, claims, and obligations on both sides (e.g., the marriage covenant, Mal. 2:14).

When God makes a covenant with His creatures, He alone establishes its terms, as His covenant with Noah and every living creature shows (Gen. 9:9). When Adam and Eve failed to obey the terms of the covenant of works (see Gen. 3:6 and theological note "The Fall"), God did not destroy them, but revealed His covenant of grace by promising a Savior (Gen. 3:15). God's covenant rests on His promise, as is clear from His covenant with Abraham. He called Abraham to go to the land that He would give him, and promised to bless him and all the families of the earth through him (Gen. 12:1–3). Abraham heeded God's call because he believed God's promise; it was his faith in the promise that was credited to him for righteousness (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:18–22). God's covenant with Israel at Sinai is in the form of the ancient Near Eastern suzerainty treaties. These are covenants imposed unilaterally by a powerful king on a vassal king and a servant people.

Although the covenant at Sinai required obedience to God's laws under the threat of His curse, it was a continuation of the covenant of grace (Ex. 3:15; Deut. 7:7, 8; 9:5, 6). God gave the commandments to a people He had already redeemed and claimed (Ex. 19:4; 20:2). The gracious promise of God's covenant was further defined through the types and shadows of the law given to Moses. The failure of the Israelites to keep His covenant showed the need for a new covenant that would bestow the power to obey (Jer. 31:31–34; 32:38–40; cf. Gen. 17:7; Ex. 6:7; 29:45, 46; Lev. 11:44, 45; 26:12).

God's covenant with Israel was preparation for the coming of God Himself, in the person of His Son, to fulfill all His promises, and to give substance to the shadows cast by the types (Is. 40:10; Mal. 3:1; John 1:14; Heb. 7—10). Jesus Christ, the Mediator of the new covenant, offered Himself as the true and final sacrifice for sin. He obeyed the law perfectly, and as the Second Adam (second representative head of the human race) He became the inheritor, with those united with Him by faith, of all the covenant blessings of peace and fellowship with God in His renewed creation. The temporary Old Testament arrangements for imparting those blessings became obsolete when what they anticipated was realized.

As Heb. 7—10 explains, through Christ God inaugurated a better version of His one eternal covenant with sinners (Heb. 13:20)—a better covenant with better promises (Heb. 8:6), based on a better sacrifice (Heb. 9:23) offered by a better high priest in a better sanctuary (Heb. 7:26—8:6, 11, 13, 14). This better covenant guarantees a better hope than had ever been made explicit by the former version of the covenant—glory with God in "a better, that is, a heavenly country" (Heb. 11:16; cf. v. 40).

The fulfillment of the old covenant in Christ opens the door of faith to the Gentiles. The "seed of Abraham," the community with which the covenant was made, was redefined in Christ—the final and definitive Seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:16). Gentiles and Jews who are united to Christ by faith become Abraham's seed in Him (Gal. 3:26–29), while no one outside of Christ can be in a saving covenant relationship with God (Rom. 4:9–17; 11:13–24).

The goal of God's covenantal dealings is, as it has always been, the gathering and sanctifying of the covenant people "of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues" (Rev. 7:9), who will one day inhabit the New Jerusalem in a renewed world order (Rev. 21:1, 2). Here the covenant relationship will find its fullest expression—"they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God" (Rev. 21:3; cf. Gen. 17:7 note; Ex. 29:45, 46). Towards this goal God's shaping of world events still moves.

The covenant framework embraces the entire economy of God's sovereign grace. Christ's heavenly ministry continues to be that of the "Mediator of the new covenant" (Heb. 12:24). Salvation is covenant salvation: regeneration, justification, adoption, and sanctification are covenant mercies; election was God's choice of the members of His covenant community, the church. Baptism and the Lord's Supper, corresponding to and replacing the old covenant rites of circumcision and Passover, are covenant ordinances. God's law is covenant law, and keeping it is the truest expression of gratitude for covenant grace and loyalty to our covenant God. Covenanting with God in response to His covenanting with us should be a regular devotional exercise for all believers, both in private and at the Lord's Table. An understanding of the covenant of grace guides us through, and helps us to appreciate, all the wonders of God's redeeming love. □

I will curse him who curses you;
And in [g]you all the families of the earth shall be [h]blessed."

4 So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram *was* seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. 5 Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and [i]the [j]people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they [k]departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan. 6 Abram [l]passed through the land to the place of Shechem, [m]as far as [2]the terebinth tree of Moreh. [n]And the Canaanites *were* then in the land.

7 [o]Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, [p]"To your [3]descendants I will give this land." And there he built an [q]altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. 8 And he moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent *with* Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; *there he* built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD. 9 So Abram journeyed, [s]going on still toward the [4]South.

Abram in Egypt

10 Now there was [t]a famine in the land, and Abram [u]went down to Egypt to dwell there, for the famine *was* [v]severe in the land. 11 And it came to pass, when he was close to entering Egypt, that he said to Sarai his wife, "Indeed I know that you *are* [w]a woman of beautiful countenance. 12 Therefore it will happen, when the Egyptians see you, that they will say, 'This *is* his wife'; and they [x]will kill me, but they will let you live. 13 [y]Please say you *are* my [z]sister, that it may be well with me for your sake, and that [5]I may live because of you."

14 So it was, when Abram came into Egypt, that the Egyptians saw the woman, that she *was* very beautiful. 15 The princes of Pharaoh also saw her and commended her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken to Pharaoh's house. 16 He [a]treated Abram well for her sake. He [b]had sheep, oxen, male donkeys, male and female servants, female donkeys, and camels.

17 But the LORD [c]plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai, Abram's wife. 18 And Pharaoh called Abram and said, [d]"What *is* this you have done to me? Why did you not tell me that she *was* your wife? 19 Why did you say, 'She *is* my sister'? I might have taken her as my wife. Now therefore, here is your wife; take *her* and go your way." 20 [e]So Pharaoh commanded *his* men concerning him; and they sent him away, with his wife and all that he had.

3 [g]Acts 3:25 [h]Is. 41:27

5 [i]Gen. 14:14 [j]Gen. 11:31 [k]Gen. 13:18 [l]Lit. *souls*

6 [l]Heb. 11:9 [m]Deut. 11:30 [n]Gen. 10:18, 19 [2]Heb. *Alon Moreh*

7 [o]Gen. 17:1; 18:1 [p]Gen. 13:15; 15:18; 17:8 [q]Gen. 13:4, 18; 22:9 [3]Lit. *seed*

8 [r]Gen. 4:26; 13:4; 21:33

9 [s]Gen. 13:1, 3; 20:1; 24:62 [4]Heb. *Negev*

10 [t]Gen. 26:1 [u]Ps. 105:13 [v]Gen. 43:1

11 [w]Gen. 12:14; 26:7; 29:17

12 [x]Gen. 20:11; 26:7

13 [y]Gen. 20:1–18; 26:6–11 [z]Gen. 20:12 [5]Lit. *my soul*

16 [a]Gen. 20:14 [b]Gen. 13:2

17 [c]1 Chr. 16:21

18 [d]Gen. 20:9, 10; 26:10

20 [e][Prov. 21:1]

those who bless. Those who acknowledge Abraham and his offspring as God's agent of blessing.

curse him who curses you. The Hebrew words here translated "curse(s)" differ: the second means "to disdain"; the first often has the sense of "to weaken" (3:14). God will be an effective adversary of those who curse Abraham and his seed.

in you. In Jesus Christ, the Seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:16), and in the spiritual Israel of all ages united with Him (Gal. 3:29; Phil. 3:3 note), rather than in unbelieving ethnic Israel (John 8:39; Rom. 9:6–8).

shall be blessed. Some have argued that the Hebrew verb should be translated reflexively: "shall bless themselves" (i.e., will desire the blessing of Abraham). While grammatically possible, this proposed reading hardly does justice to the context of this divine promise, and the passive translation here ("be blessed") presents no real linguistic difficulties. In addition, the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) rendered it as passive. We are fully justified in viewing this promise as a reference to God's plan for the salvation of the world.

■ **12:4 seventy-five.** See note on 11:32.

■ **12:6 Shechem.** See 33:18—34:31; 48:22; 50:25 and notes.

terebinth tree of Moreh. Probably an oak tree, whose greater height made it a preferred place of worship (13:18; 18:1; 21:33). Although pagans worshiped fertility deities under such trees, Abraham, who looked for a heavenly city (Heb. 11:10), worshiped only the true God (v. 8). The name "Moreh" means "teacher." This was probably a pagan site for oracles; the Lord sanctified it by appearing to Abraham (v. 7).

the Canaanites . . . in the land. Two obstacles stood in the way of God's promise: Sarah's barrenness (11:30) and the Canaanites who prevented him from settling in the land.

■ **12:7 appeared.** The sojourning patriarchs were prophets (15:1, 4; 17:1; 18:1; 20:7; 26:2, 24; 28:10–15; 31:3; 35:9; 48:3; cf. Ps. 105:12–15).

descendants. Grammatically, the Hebrew for "descendants" is a collective singular noun. Paul declares that it pertains uniquely to Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:16) and to all those who share Abraham's faith in God (Rom. 4:16, 23–24; Gal. 3:26–29).

built an altar. By this act the father of the new nation consecrates the Promised Land to God (Ex. 20:24; Josh. 22:19). See v. 8; 13:18; 22:9; 26:25; 35:7.

■ **12:8 called on the name of the LORD.** See 4:26 and note.

■ **12:9 the South.** See text note. The desert region southwest of the Dead Sea. Covering an area of about 4,500 square miles, its rainfall is too low to sustain cultivated grain.

■ **12:10–20** The matriarch Sarah is also endangered in chs. 20 and 26. Abraham's exodus from Egypt typifies the nation's later exodus: God sent a famine (v. 10; 47:4), the Egyptians afflicted them (vv. 12–15; Ex. 1:11–14); God plagued the Egyptians (v. 17; Ex. 8—11); the Egyptians let them go with great wealth (vv. 16, 20; Ex. 12:33–36); they return to the land by stages through the wilderness (13:3; Ex. 17:1); and finally arrive back in the land where they worship the Lord (13:3; Ex. 15:17). See Ps. 105:14, 15; 1 Cor. 10:1–4.

■ **12:12 Egyptians . . . will kill me.** Although hospitality to strangers was a duty in the ancient Near East (18:2–5; Deut. 10:18, 19), strangers were vulnerable (cf. 19:3–11). Abraham was not necessarily selling Sarah's honor to save himself, for this ruse had been planned long before (20:13), perhaps to stall for time in dangerous circumstances (cf. 24:55; 34:13–17).

■ **12:13 sister.** See note on 11:29.

■ **12:15 was taken.** The Hebrew here does not necessarily imply sexual intercourse (cf. 20:2, 4, 6); the text does not add "and violated her" (34:2) or "and went in to her" (38:2).

CHAPTER 13

1 [a]Gen. 12:4; 14:12, 16 [b]Gen. 12:9 [1]Heb. *Negev*

2 [c]Gen. 24:35; 26:14

3 [d]Gen. 12:8, 9

4 [e]Gen. 12:7, 8; 21:33 [f]Ps. 116:17

6 [g]Gen. 36:7 [2]Lit. *bear*

7 [h]Gen. 26:20 [i]Gen. 12:6; 15:20, 21

8 [j]1 Cor. 6:7

9 [k]Gen. 20:15; 34:10 [l]Gen. 13:11, 14 [m][Rom. 12:18]

10 [n]Gen. 19:17–29 [o]Gen. 19:24 [p]Gen. 2:8, 10 [q]Deut. 34:3

12 [r]Gen. 19:24, 25, 29 [s]Gen. 14:12; 19:1

13 [t]Gen. 18:20, 21 [u]Gen. 6:11; 39:9

Abram Inherits Canaan

13 Then Abram went up from Egypt, he and his wife and all that he had, and [a]Lot with him, [b]to the [1]South. 2 [c]Abram *was* very rich in livestock, in silver, and in gold. 3 And he went on his journey [d]from the South as far as Bethel, to the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Ai, 4 to the [e]place of the altar which he had made there at first. And there Abram [f]called on the name of the LORD.

5 Lot also, who went with Abram, had flocks and herds and tents. 6 Now [g]the land was not able to [2]support them, that they might dwell together, for their possessions were so great that they could not dwell together. 7 And there was [h]strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock. [i]The Canaanites and the Perizzites then dwelt in the land.

8 So Abram said to Lot, [j]"Please let there be no strife between you and me, and between my herdsmen and your herdsmen; for we *are* brethren. 9 [k]*Is* not the whole land before you? Please [l]separate from me. [m]If *you take* the left, then I will go to the right; or, if *you go* to the right, then I will go to the left."

10 And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all [n]the plain of Jordan, that it *was* well watered everywhere (before the LORD [o]destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) [p]like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go toward [q]Zoar. 11 Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other. 12 Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot [r]dwelt in the cities of the plain and [s]pitched *his* tent even as far as Sodom. 13 But the men of Sodom [t]*were* exceedingly wicked and [u]sinful against the LORD.

14 And the LORD said to Abram, after Lot [v]had separated from him: "Lift your eyes now and look from the place where you are—[w]northward, southward, eastward, and westward; 15 for all the land which you see [x]I give to you and [y]your [3]descendants forever. 16 And [z]I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, *then* your descendants also could be numbered. 17 Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you."

14 [v]Gen. 13:11 [w]Gen. 28:14 15 [x]Acts 7:5 [y]2 Chr. 20:7 [3]Lit. *seed* 16 [z]Gen. 22:17

■ **13:1–18** Lot's separation from Abraham alienated him from blessing. He turned his back on his uncle and ignored the dangers of Sodom. But "even as he thought he was living in heaven, he had already sunk almost into hell" (Calvin, *Commentary* on Gen. 13:10). In contrast to Lot, Abraham trusted God and by faith inherited "all the land . . . forever" (v. 15) and "descendants as the dust" (v. 16).

■ **13:2 rich.** The Hebrew word here is translated "severe" in 12:10, inviting a contrast in Abraham's situation before and after he went to Egypt (12:10–20 note).

■ **13:6 possessions were so great.** Paradoxically, God's blessing, not famine, provoked the problem (v. 10 note).

■ **13:8–17** Lot and Abraham are compared and contrasted: both looked around (vv. 10, 14), were offered land (vv. 9, 15–17), and traveled to their allotted portion (vv. 11–12, 18). But Lot, who chose by sight, will escape twice by the skin of his teeth (14:12, 16; 19:1–29), while by faith Abraham will be enriched forever.

■ **13:9 If you . . . then I.** Faith in God's sovereignty gave Abraham the freedom to be generous (cf. 14:19, 20). His generosity typified that of Israel to Moab and Ammon, Lot's descendants (Deut. 2:8–19). God applauds generosity and peacemakers (Lev. 19:18; Ps. 133; Matt. 5:43–48; James 3:17, 18).

■ **13:10 plain of Jordan.** The edge of the Promised Land or just beyond it (Num. 34:2–12); this area is contrasted with Canaan in v. 12.

like the garden of the LORD. Man's environment is not the cause of sin—human depravity is. In the ideal environment of Eden sin originated, and sin now abounded in this rich territory (v. 13; 18:16—19:29).

■ **13:12 pitched his tent.** See note on 14:12.

■ **13:14 look . . . westward.** The Lord invited Moses to a similar panoramic overview of the land (Deut. 34:1–4). In each case, the invitation was given to confirm the promise to one who himself would not participate in dispossessing the Canaanites.

■ **13:15 land . . . forever.** See 12:1 and note. The promises of land were fulfilled several times but never consummated. God fulfilled the promise through Joshua (Josh. 21:43–45), but not completely (Josh. 13:1–7); even more so through David and Solomon (1 Kin. 4:20–25; Neh. 9:8), but still not completely (Ps. 95:11; Heb. 4:6–8; 11:39, 40). As Israel's Exodus from Egypt through the Passover (Ex. 12:1) is a type of the church's exodus from the condemned world through Christ (1 Cor. 5:7; 10:1–4), so also old Israel's life in the land is a type of New Israel's life in Christ. Both are a gift (15:7, 18; Deut. 1:8; Rom. 6:23), are received by faith (Num. 14:26–44; Josh. 7 and John 3:16). Both uniquely possess the blessed presence, life, and rest of God (Ex. 23:20–31; Deut. 11:12; 12:9,10; 28:1–14; John 1:51; 14:9; Matt. 11:28), and demand persevering faith (Deut. 28:15–19; Heb. 6). The land promises are consummated forever in the new heaven and new earth (Heb. 11:39, 40; Rev. 21:1—22:6).

■ **13:16 as the dust.** See 32:12. The promise of offspring also finds fulfillment in old Israel (Num. 23:10; 1 Kin. 4:20; 2 Chr. 1:9) and consummation in the New Israel, composed of Jew and Gentile (12:3 and note; Rom. 4:16–18; Gal. 3:29; Rev. 7:9).

■ **13:17 Arise, walk.** According to ancient custom, a property transfer was finalized by the new owner's visit to the tract. God commands Abraham to lay symbolic claim to the Promised Land (12:7 and note; Josh. 1:3; 18:4; 24:3).

18 [a]Then Abram moved *his* tent, and went and [b]dwelt by [4]the terebinth trees of Mamre, [c]which *are* in Hebron, and built an [d]altar there to the LORD.

Lot's Captivity and Rescue

14 And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king [a]of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of [b]Elam, and Tidal king of [1]nations, 2 *that* they made war with Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of [c]Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, [d]Zoar). 3 All these joined together in the Valley of Siddim [e](that is, the Salt Sea). 4 Twelve years [f]they served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled.

5 In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings that *were* with him came and attacked [g]the Rephaim in Ashteroth Karnaim, [h]the Zuzim in Ham, [i]the Emim in Shaveh Kiriathaim, 6 [j]and the Horites in their mountain of Seir, as far as El Paran, which *is* by the wilderness. 7 Then they turned back and came to En Mishpat (that *is,* Kadesh), and attacked all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites who dwelt [k]in Hazezon Tamar.

8 And the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that *is,* Zoar) went out and joined together in battle in the Valley of Siddim 9 against Chedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of [2]nations, Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar—four kings against five. 10 Now the Valley of Siddim *was full of* [l]asphalt pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled; *some* fell there, and the remainder fled [m]to the mountains. 11 Then they took [n]all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way. 12 They also took Lot, Abram's [o]brother's son [p]who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.

13 Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the [q]Hebrew, for [r]he dwelt by [3]the terebinth trees of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and brother of Aner; [s]and they *were* allies with Abram. 14 Now [t]when Abram heard that [u]his brother was taken captive, he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained *servants* who were [v]born in his own house, and went in pursuit [w]as far as Dan. 15 He divided his forces against them by night, and he and his servants [x]attacked them and pursued them as far as Hobah, which *is* [4]north of Damascus. 16 So he [y]brought back all the goods, and also brought back his brother Lot and his goods, as well as the women and the people.

17 And the king of Sodom [z]went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that *is,* the [a]King's Valley), [b]after his return from [5]the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who *were* with him.

18 [a]Gen. 26:17 [b]Gen. 14:13 [c]Gen. 23:2; 35:27 [d]Gen. 8:20; 22:8, 9 [4]Heb. *Alon Mamre*

CHAPTER 14

1 [a]Gen. 10:10; 11:2 [b]Is. 11:11; 21:2 [1]Heb. *goyim*

2 [c]Deut. 29:23 [d]Gen. 13:10; 19:22

3 [e]Num. 34:12

4 [f]Gen. 9:26

5 [g]Gen. 15:20 [h]Deut. 2:20 [i]Deut. 2:10

6 [j]Deut. 2:12, 22

7 [k]2 Chr. 20:2

9 [2]Heb. *goyim*

10 [l]Gen. 11:3 [m]Gen. 19:17, 30

11 [n]Gen. 14:16, 21

12 [o]Gen. 11:27; 12:5 [p]Gen. 13:12

13 [q]Gen. 39:14; 40:15 [r]Gen. 13:18 [s]Gen. 14:24; 21:27, 32 [3]Heb. *Alon Mamre*

14 [t]Gen. 19:29 [u]Gen. 13:8; 14:12 [v]Gen. 12:5; 15:3; 17:27 [w]Deut. 34:1

15 [x]Is. 41:2, 3 [4]Lit. *on the left hand of* [5]Lit. *striking* **16** [y]Gen. 31:18 **17** [z]1 Sam. 18:6 [a]2 Sam. 18:18 [b]Heb. 7:1

■ **13:18 terebinth trees.** See note on 12:6.

Mamre. An Amorite who sought security in an alliance with Abraham (14:13). He will be blessed through Abraham (14:24).

built an altar. See 12:7 and note.

■ **14:1–24** Abraham displayed obedient faith by risking war to deliver his nephew, Lot. His victory is astonishing since the plundering confederacy of five kings had just conquered many Canaanites and a confederacy of five Dead Sea kings. See note on v. 4.

■ **14:1, 2** None of these kings has been definitely identified in extra-biblical sources. One comes from Elam (part of modern Iran); one from Babylon (part of modern Iraq), and two probably from the region of modern Turkey.

■ **14:1 Shinar.** See note on 10:10.

■ **14:4 they served.** They were subject as vassals to the king of Elam with the obligation to pay tribute.

■ **14:5 Rephaim ... Zuzim ... Emim.** See note on Deut. 2:10–12. Zuzim is probably an alternate term for the Zamzummim (Deut. 2:20). The mention of these defeated giants further emphasizes the impressiveness of Abraham's victory.

■ **14:6 Horites.** See note on Deut. 2:10–12.

■ **14:12 dwelt in Sodom.** Note the progressive identification of Lot with Sodom: camping near it (13:12), living in it, and residing as a respected citizen in it (19:1, 6; cf. Ps. 1:1).

■ **14:13 the Hebrew.** Probably an ethnic identification designating Abraham as a descendant of Eber (10:21 note). However, some contend that the term derives from *habiru,* a disparaging word used to designate a widely dispersed social class of semi-nomads in the ancient Near East of the second millennium B.C.

terebinth trees of Mamre. See note on 12:6.

Amorite. Sometimes a blanket term for the earlier inhabitants of Palestine (48:22; Deut. 1:44; Josh. 2:10). Mamre the Amorite, an ally of Abraham who accompanied him in battle, found blessing through his identification with Abraham (v. 24; 12:3).

■ **14:14 brother.** The term explains the character of Abraham's action: the godly display loving loyalty toward their brethren.

trained servants. Servants trained in the use of weapons. A fighting force of three hundred men was a sizable army in Abraham's time.

Dan. This place-name was updated from Laish after the time of Moses (Introduction: Date and Occasion; Judg. 18:29).

18 [c]Heb. 7:1–10 [d]Gen. 18:5 [e]Ps. 110:4 [f]Acts 16:17

19 [g]Ruth 3:10 [h]Gen. 14:22

20 [i]Gen. 24:27 [j]Heb. 7:4 [6]*one-tenth*

21 [7]Lit. *souls*

22 [k]Gen. 14:2, 8, 10 [l]Dan. 12:7 [m]Gen. 14:19

23 [n]2 Kin. 5:16

CHAPTER 15

1 [a]Dan. 10:1 [b]Gen. 21:17; 26:24 [c]Deut. 33:29 [d]Prov. 11:18 [f]Or *your reward shall be very great*

2 [e]Gen. 17:18 [f]Acts 7:5 [2]*am childless*

3 [g]Gen. 14:14 [3]*a servant*

4 [h]2 Sam. 7:12

5 [i]Ps. 147:4 [j]Jer. 33:22 [k]Ex. 32:13 [l]Gen. 17:19

6 [m]Rom. 4:3, 9, 22 [n]Ps. 32:2; 106:31

Abram and Melchizedek

18 Then [c]Melchizedek king of Salem brought out [d]bread and wine; he *was* [e]the priest of [f]God Most High. 19 And he blessed him and said:

[g]"Blessed be Abram of God Most High,
[h]Possessor of heaven and earth;
20 And [i]blessed be God Most High,
Who has delivered your enemies into your hand."

And he [j]gave him [6]a tithe of all.

21 Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the [7]persons, and take the goods for yourself."

22 But Abram [k]said to the king of Sodom, "I [l]have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High, [m]the Possessor of heaven and earth, 23 that [n]I *will take* nothing, from a thread to a sandal strap, and that I will not take anything that *is* yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich'— 24 except only what the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men who went with me: Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion."

God's Covenant with Abram

15 After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram [a]in a vision, saying, [b]"Do not be afraid, Abram. I *am* your [c]shield, [l]your exceedingly [d]great reward."

2 [e]But Abram said, "Lord GOD, what will You give me, [f]seeing I [2]go childless, and the heir of my house *is* Eliezer of Damascus?" 3 Then Abram said, "Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed [g]one[3] born in my house is my heir!"

4 And behold, the word of the LORD *came* to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who [h]will come from your own body shall be your heir." 5 Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and [i]count the [j]stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, [k]"So shall your [l]descendants be."

6 And he [m]believed in the LORD, and He [n]accounted it to him for righteousness.

■ **14:18 Melchizedek.** Lit. "king of righteousness." The Hebrew word *melech* means "king," and *zedek* means "righteousness." See Introduction: Characteristics and Themes; Heb. 7:1–3 and notes.

king of Salem . . . priest of God. The introduction of Melchizedek emphasizes that he was a king as well as a priest. As such he is a type of Christ, who is our Prophet, Priest, and King. Salem was apparently an ancient name for Jerusalem (Ps. 76:2).

bread and wine. The combination means a full dinner, a banquet.

■ **14:19 blessed him.** That Melchizedek blessed Abraham is understood by the author of Hebrews to indicate that Melchizedek was greater than Abraham (Heb. 7:7).

God Most High. Hebrew *El Elyon.* El, the supreme god in the Canaanite pantheon at the time of Abraham, had similar titles (e.g., *El Olam,* "Everlasting God"). The patriarchs used these titles for the LORD, the true God, Creator of heaven and earth. Abraham interpreted Melchizedek's praise in this way, repeating the same titles but adding the covenantal divine name LORD (Yahweh) in v. 22. Though a Canaanite, Melchizedek had come to know the true God—a pagan priest could not meaningfully have "blessed" Abraham, nor would Abraham, who was consecrating the land to the LORD (12:7 note), have given "a tithe" to the priest of the depraved Canaanite god El.

■ **14:20 tithe.** A tenth. The practice of paying a tenth to a king or to a god was widespread in the ancient Near East, and predates the Mosaic law (28:22; Lev. 27:30–33; Num. 18:21–32). Abraham's gift to Melchizedek was probably not the payment of the "king's tithe" (cf. 1 Sam. 8:15, 17), but rather was an offering that reflected Abraham's regard for Melchizedek as a priest of the true God.

all. The booty.

■ **14:22 LORD.** See note on v. 19.

■ **14:23 I will take nothing.** In contrast to his dealings with Melchizedek, from whom he accepted bread and wine (v. 18) and to whom he gave a tithe (v. 20), Abraham wanted nothing to do with the wicked king of Sodom.

■ **14:24 of the men . . . with me.** The spoil was their rightful share. This disposition of the goods emphasizes Abraham's fairness and generosity.

■ **15:1–19** After Abraham's expression of faith in God's reward (14:22, 23), God certified His promise of offspring (vv. 1–6) and land (12:7 and note) by making a covenant (Neh. 9:8). The two night scenes (vv. 5, 17) parallel each other: the Lord promises a reward (vv. 1, 7); Abraham questions the sovereign Lord about the inheritance (vv. 2–3, 8); and the Lord responds with a visual act (vv. 4–5, 9–21). Abraham's faith was accounted to him as righteousness (v. 6).

■ **15:1 word of the LORD came.** This phrase typically introduces a revelation to a prophet (12:7 note; 20:7; Jer. 18:1; Ezek. 6:1; Hos. 1:1).

vision. Visions were an ancient mode of revelation (Num. 12:6), and often occurred at night (v. 5; 1 Sam. 3:1–3; Job 33:14–16).

reward. See note on 14:23.

■ **15:2, 3** God's people would not come by natural generation. As Adam and Noah were founders of the fallen race, Abraham was the father of the new race, symbolically raised from the dead (17:5).

■ **15:2 go childless.** This Hebrew metaphor may mean either "to live childless" or "to die childless." Abraham was perplexed, perhaps in part because childlessness was seen as a sign of divine judgment (Lev. 20:20, 21; 1 Sam. 1:11; Jer. 22:30).

■ **15:3 one . . . is my heir.** The practice of a childless couple adopting a slave as heir is attested in the Nuzi texts (c. 1500 B.C.), a collection of over four thousand clay tablets found near Kirkuk in modern Iraq.

■ **15:5 descendants.** See 12:7; 13:16 and notes.

■ **15:6** This verse provides the early core doctrine of justification by faith, not by works (Gal. 3:6–14). Abraham believed the promise of the

7 Then He said to him, "I *am* the LORD, who [o]brought you out of [p]Ur of the Chaldeans, [q]to give you this land to inherit it."

8 And he said, "Lord GOD, [r]how shall I know that I will inherit it?"

9 So He said to him, "Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." 10 Then he brought all these to Him and [s]cut them in two, down the middle, and placed each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut [t]the birds in two. 11 And when the vultures came down on the carcasses, Abram drove them away.

12 Now when the sun was going down, [u]a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror *and* great darkness fell upon him. 13 Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly [v]that your descendants will be strangers in a land *that is* not theirs, and will serve them, and [w]they will afflict them four hundred years. 14 And also the nation whom they serve [x]I will judge; afterward [y]they shall come out with great possessions. 15 Now as for you, [z]you shall [a]go [a]to your fathers in peace; [b]you shall be buried at a good old age. 16 But [c]in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity [d]of the Amorites [e]*is* not yet complete."

17 And it came to pass, when the sun went down and it was dark, that behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a burning torch that [f]passed between those pieces. 18 On the same day the LORD [g]made a covenant with Abram, saying:

[h]"To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the River Euphrates— 19 the Kenites, the Kenezzites, the Kadmonites, 20 the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, 21 the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites."

Hagar and Ishmael

16 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, [a]had borne him no *children.* And she had [b]an Egyptian maidservant whose name was [c]Hagar. 2 [d]So Sarai said to Abram, "See now, the LORD [e]has restrained me from bearing *children.* Please, [f]go in to my maid; perhaps I shall [l]obtain children by her." And Abram [g]heeded the voice of Sarai. 3 Then Sarai, Abram's wife, took Hagar her maid, the Egyptian, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife, after Abram [h]had

7 [o]Gen. 12:1 [p]Gen. 11:28, 31 [q]Ps. 105:42, 44

8 [r]Luke 1:18

10 [s]Jer. 34:18 [t]Lev. 1:17

12 [u]Gen. 2:21; 28:11

13 [v]Ex. 1:11 [w]Ex. 12:40

14 [x]Ex. 6:6 [y]Ex. 12:36

15 [z]Job 5:26 [a]Gen. 25:8; 47:30 [b]Gen. 25:8 [a]Die and join your ancestors

16 [c]Ex. 12:41 [d]1 Kin. 21:26 [e]Matt. 23:32

17 [f]Jer. 34:18, 19

18 [g]Gen. 24:7 [h]Gen. 12:7; 17:8

CHAPTER 16

1 [a]Gen. 11:30; 15:2, 3 [b]Gen. 12:16; 21:9 [c]Gal. 4:24

2 [d]Gen. 30:3 [e]Gen. 20:18 [f]Gen. 30:3, 9 [g]Gen. 3:17 [l]Lit. *be built up from*

3 [h]Gen. 12:4, 5

birth of an heir from the dead (Rom. 4:17–21; Heb. 11:11, 12), and God counted Abraham to be righteous, to be meeting His covenant demand. Abraham's justification by faith is a model of our faith in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, God's sacrifice for sin, and God's crediting His righteousness to us by faith (Rom. 4:22–25).

believed. Abraham is father of all who believe (Rom. 4:11), and all who believe are children of Abraham (Gal. 3:7).

righteousness. See 6:9 and note; Heb. 11:6–12.

■ **15:7 I am the LORD, who brought you out.** A portent of God's self-identification after the Exodus (Ex. 20:2).

land. See note on 13:15.

■ **15:8 how shall I know.** His request for a sign is motivated by faith (v. 6; cf. Is. 7:10–14).

■ **15:9 heifer . . . pigeon.** All the species that were suitable for sacrifice.

■ **15:11 vultures.** Symbolic of the unclean nations seeking to destroy the descendants of Abraham.

drove them away. Abraham symbolically defends his promised inheritance against foreign attackers.

■ **15:12–14** Israel must inherit Canaan through God's supernatural act of redemption from slavery.

■ **15:13 four hundred years.** A round number for the period spent in Egypt (cf. Ex. 12:40, 41).

■ **15:15 good old age.** See 25:8.

■ **15:16 Amorites.** See note on 14:13.

■ **15:17 smoking oven and a burning torch.** Symbols of God's presence with Israel on their way to the Promised Land (Ex. 13:21; 19:18; 20:18).

passed between those pieces. As other ancient Near Eastern texts and Jer. 34:18 indicate, by passing between the torn animals (signifying the punishment due those who break the covenant) God invokes a self-maledictory oath or curse upon Himself should He fail to keep His covenant. Because He can swear by no higher authority, God swears by Himself to keep the covenantal terms. See 22:16, 17; Heb. 6:13 note.

■ **15:18 covenant.** God's covenant with Abraham closely parallels ancient Near Eastern royal land grants made by kings to loyal servants and their descendants in perpetuity.

from the river . . . Euphrates. Delineation of borders was an important part of the ancient royal land grants.

river of Egypt. It is debated whether the brook of Egypt, the Wadi el Arish in northeastern Sinai (Num. 34:5), or the eastern branch of the Nile delta is in view. See 1 Kin. 4:21.

■ **15:19–21** In addition to its geographical boundaries the land is defined by its occupants. See 10:15–18.

■ **16:1–15** In her impatience, Sarah tried to fulfill the divine promise through her own initiative by means of her maidservant, Hagar. The immediate result is strife in the home, and its long-term consequence is the mixed blessing of numerous progeny who will inherit Hagar's defiant spirit (v. 12). This natural generation did not bring peace; only the greater Seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:16), the Son of the God of peace, can do that.

■ **16:1 maidservant.** The Hebrew term denotes a personal servant of the wife, not a slave girl (cf. 21:10 note). Her relationship to Sarah resembled Eliezer's to Abraham (15:2).

■ **16:2 obtain children by her.** In this custom, attested so far in the Code of Hammurabi and in texts from Nuzi and Nimrud, the authority over the children resulting from this union belonged to the chief wife, not the slave-wife (Introduction: Author).

■ **16:3 ten years.** See 12:4.

dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan. [4] So he went in to Hagar, and she conceived. And when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress became [i]despised in her [2]eyes.

[5] Then Sarai said to Abram, [3]"My wrong *be* upon you! I gave my maid into your embrace; and when she saw that she had conceived, I became despised in her eyes. [j]The LORD judge between you and me."

[6] [k]So Abram said to Sarai, "Indeed your maid *is* in your hand; do to her as you please." And when Sarai dealt harshly with her, [l]she fled from her presence.

[7] Now the [m]Angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, [n]by the spring on the way to [o]Shur. [8] And He said, "Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from, and where are you going?"

She said, "I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai."

[9] The Angel of the LORD said to her, "Return to your mistress, and [p]submit yourself under her hand." [10] Then the Angel of the LORD said to her, [q]"I will multiply your descendants exceedingly, so that they shall not be counted for multitude." [11] And the Angel of the LORD said to her:

"Behold, you *are* with child,
[r]And you shall bear a son.
You shall call his name [4]Ishmael,
Because the LORD has heard your affliction.
12 [s]He shall be a wild man;
His hand *shall be* against every man,
And every man's hand against him.
[t]And he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren."

[13] Then she called the name of the LORD who spoke to her, You-Are-[5]the-God-Who-Sees; for she said, "Have I also here [6]seen Him [u]who sees me?" [14] Therefore the well was called [v]Beer Lahai Roi;[7] observe, *it is* [w]between Kadesh and Bered.

[15] So [x]Hagar bore Abram a son; and Abram named his son, whom Hagar bore, Ishmael. [16] Abram *was* eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram.

The Sign of the Covenant

17 When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD [a]appeared to Abram and said to him, [b]"I *am* [1]Almighty God; [c]walk before Me and be [d]blameless. [2] And I will make My [e]covenant between Me and you, and [f]will multiply you exceedingly." [3] Then Abram fell on his

4 [i][Prov. 30:21, 23] [2]*sight*
5 [j]Gen. 31:53 [3]*The wrong done to me be*
6 [k]1 Pet. 3:7 [l]Ex. 2:15
7 [m]Gen. 21:17, 18; 22:11, 15; 31:11 [n]Gen. 20:1; 25:18 [o]Ex. 15:22
9 [p][Titus 2:9]
10 [q]Gen. 17:20
11 [r]Luke 1:13, 31 [4]Lit. *God Hears*
12 [s]Gen. 21:20 [t]Gen. 25:18
13 [u]Gen. 31:42 [5]Heb. *El Roi* [6]Seen the back of
14 [v]Gen. 24:62 [w]Num. 13:26 [7]Lit. *Well of the One Who Lives and Sees Me*
15 [x]Gal. 4:22

CHAPTER 17

1 [a]Gen. 12:7; 18:1 [b]Gen. 28:3; 35:11 [c]2 Kin. 20:3 [d]Deut. 18:13 [1]Heb. *El Shaddai*
2 [e]Gen. 15:18 [f]Gen. 12:2; 13:16; 15:5; 18:18

■ **16:4 despised.** The Hebrew word here is translated "curse" in 12:3 (12:3 note; cf. Prov. 30:23). Because she treated Sarah with disdain, Hagar was alienated from the family of blessing.

■ **16:5 My wrong be upon you.** Sarah lays responsibility for the situation upon Abraham. Only he has the judicial authority to effect a change and up to now has not acted to protect their marriage.

The LORD judge. She appeals to a still higher court (31:53; Ex. 5:21; 1 Sam. 24:12, 15).

■ **16:6 as you please.** According to the Code of Hammurabi, the despised mistress in this situation could not sell her maidservant, but she could mark her with the slave mark and count her among the slaves.

dealt harshly ... fled. The intractable Ishmael is the unruly son of a mother who chose the freedom of the wilderness over submitting to the yoke of her mistress (v. 9).

■ **16:7 Angel of the LORD.** The identity of the angel of the Lord is debated. According to some, although the "angel of the Lord" sometimes may be distinguished from God (e.g., 21:17; 2 Sam. 24:16; 2 Kin. 19:35), in other instances the angel of the Lord appears to be a theophany, a visual manifestation of God Himself (e.g., 18:1–33; 22:11–18; 32:24–30; Ex. 3:2–6). Others, however, note that "angel" means "messenger." They argue that as secular messengers are fully equated with their senders (Judg. 11:13; 2 Sam. 3:12, 13; 1 Kin. 20:2–4), so God's angel is identified with Him (see also Gen. 21:17; 31:11; Ex. 14:9; 23:20; 32:34).

Shur. The name means "wall," a reference to the Egyptian border forts. Hagar apparently fled toward her home in Egypt (cf. v. 1).

■ **16:8 where.** See notes on 3:9 and 11:5.

■ **16:10 multiply your descendants.** Abraham fathers many descendants, both elect (13:16 note) and non-elect. It is not the mere natural children who finally inherit the promise (Rom. 9:8). Even the physical offspring of Abraham may persecute the sons of promise (21:9; Gal. 4:29, 30).

■ **16:12 against every man.** The fierce, aggressive ways of the Ishmaelites will leave a legacy of conflict.

■ **16:13 You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees.** This divine name is not attested elsewhere. It expresses the deep significance to Hagar of God's gracious revelation to her. Even while she was lost in the wilderness, God had seen her and revealed Himself to her.

■ **16:14 observe, it is ... Bered.** Today the site is uncertain.

■ **16:15 a son.** The genealogy is given in 25:12–18.

■ **17:1 Almighty God.** See text note. This divine name may signify God's universal dominion. It occurs frequently in Job, and in the patriarchal narratives, often when the covenant promise of progeny is stressed (28:3; 35:11; 43:14; 48:3; 49:25).

walk before Me and be blameless. These phrases denote the service due a king. Even Israel's kings were commanded to "walk before" their greater Sovereign, the Lord Himself (1 Kin. 9:4; 2 Kin. 20:3). The covenantal arrangement again surfaces: God's gracious promises call for the obedient response of Abraham.

■ **17:2 My covenant.** The covenant relationship between God and Abraham includes both promises obligating God to Abraham ("As for Me," vv. 4–8, 16), and commands obligating Abraham and Sarah to God ("As for you," vv. 9–15). This pattern of mutual obligation is not a relationship of equal parties (as in a human contract), however, for God sover-

face, and God talked with him, saying: 4 "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be [g]a father of [2]many nations. 5 No longer shall [h]your name be called [3]Abram, but your name shall be [4]Abraham; [i]for I have made you a father of [5]many nations. 6 I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make [j]nations of you, and [k]kings shall come from you. 7 And I will [l]establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, [m]to be God to you and [n]your descendants after you. 8 Also [o]I give to you and your descendants after you the land [p]in[6] which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and [q]I will be their God."

9 And God said to Abraham: "As for you, [r]you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. 10 This *is* My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: [s]Every male child among you shall be circumcised; 11 and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be [t]a sign of the covenant between Me and you. 12 He who is eight days old among you [u]shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendant. 13 He who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money must be circumcised, and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. 14 And the uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person [v]shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant."

15 Then God said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her name Sarai, but [7]Sarah *shall be* her name. 16 And I will bless her [w]and also give you a son by her; then I will bless her, and she shall be *a mother* [x]*of* nations; [y]kings of peoples shall be from her."

17 Then Abraham fell on his face [z]and laughed, and said in his heart, "Shall *a child* be born to a man who is one hundred years old? And shall Sarah, who is ninety years old, bear *a child?*" 18 And Abraham [a]said to God, "Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!"

17 [z]Gen. 17:3; 18:12; 21:6 **18** [a]Gen. 18:23

4 [g][Rom. 4:11, 12, 16] [2]Lit. *a multitude of nations*

5 [h]Neh. 9:7 [i]Rom. 4:17 [3]Lit. *Exalted Father* [4]Lit. *Father of a Multitude* [5]*a multitude of*

6 [j]Gen. 17:16; 35:11 [k]Matt. 1:6

7 [l][Gal. 3:17] [m]Gen. 26:24; 28:13 [n]Rom. 9:8

8 [o]Acts 7:5 [p]Gen. 23:4; 28:4 [q]Lev. 26:12 [6]Lit. *of your sojournings*

9 [r]Ex. 19:5

10 [s]Acts 7:8

11 [t]Ex. 12:13, 48

12 [u]Lev. 12:3

14 [v]Ex. 4:24–26

15 [7]Lit. *Princess*

16 [w]Gen. 18:10 [x]Gen. 35:11 [y]Gen. 17:6; 36:31

eignly bestows the covenant, gives the grace of faith and obedience to man, and graciously provides the remedy for human disobedience (28:20 note). The history of the covenant in the Old Testament is largely one of human failure fully to obey the covenantal requirements. Nevertheless, the gracious covenant God remains faithful to His promises, even when human beings are faithless (v. 7 note; Lev. 26:44, 45; Deut. 4:30, 31; 2 Tim. 2:13 and note).

■ **17:5 Abram . . . Abraham.** Abram, an ancient West Semitic name, means "exalted father," perhaps originally a reference to Abraham's father Terah. "Abraham" sounds like a Hebrew expression meaning "father of a multitude of nations." His old name spoke of his aristocratic ancestry; the new speaks of his many offspring.

your name shall be. The name changes of the patriarch and matriarch show they are under God's rule (1:5 note) and are called to a new destiny and mission.

father of many nations. Abraham was the physical father of many nations—ethnic Israel through the promised son Isaac, Ishmaelites (v. 20; 21:13; 25:12–18), Edomites (25:23; 36:1–43), and his descendants through Keturah (25:1–4). But this promise finds final fulfillment in the multitude from every tribe, language, and nation who share the faith of Abraham and are baptized into Jesus Christ (Rom. 4:16, 17; 15:8–12; Gal. 3:29; Rev. 7:9).

■ **17:7 your descendants.** The descendants of Abraham through the child of promise, Isaac (Rom. 4:19; 9:6–9). Gentile believers participate in this covenant promise through spiritual incorporation into Israel (Eph. 2:11–13; 1 Pet. 2:10 note) by union with Christ, the great Seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:16, 26–29).

everlasting. The unilateral and gracious nature of God's covenant with Abraham is underscored by its *eternal* character (v. 2 note). God's covenant endures forever because He does not change and Jesus Christ fulfills every condition (2 Cor. 1:20; Eph. 2:12, 13).

to be God to you. Although there is a legal dimension to the covenant (v. 2 note), God's covenant relationship with His people is first and foremost one of divine-human communion and fellowship (Ex. 6:7; Deut. 29:13). God graciously dwells with His people, and they gratefully respond in faith, love, and obedience.

■ **17:8 land of Canaan . . . everlasting possession.** See 13:15 and note.

■ **17:10 circumcised.** By this ritual the organ of procreation was consecrated to God (cf. Lev. 19:23). More important, God wanted the heart and ear consecrated to Him (Deut. 10:16; 30:6; Jer. 4:4; 6:10; Ezek. 44:7, 9). Mere circumcision in the flesh is inadequate to please God (17:11–14 notes; Jer. 9:25, 26).

■ **17:11 sign of the covenant.** See note on 9:12.

■ **17:12 eight days old.** See Luke 1:59; 2:21; Phil. 3:5. Some ancient Near Eastern cultures circumcised their children at puberty as a rite of passage from childhood to manhood. God employed the sign for infants to show that the children of believing parents are "holy" (they are separated from the profane world and belong to the covenant community, Rom. 11:16; 1 Cor. 7:14). God continues to use the family institution (Acts 16:31). The initiation rite into the covenant community today is baptism. In Christ there is no longer male or female, Jew or Gentile, so all may come (Gal. 3:26–29; Col. 2:11, 12). See theological note "Infant Baptism."

■ **17:13 born . . . bought.** The covenant promises were extended to all within the household of faith. Even in the Old Testament, the scope of the covenant community was not exclusively determined by ancestry—a foreshadowing of the expansion of the covenant to a multitude from every tribe and nation. See notes on vv. 6, 7.

in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. See note on v. 7. The covenant of grace between God and His people is indeed an eternal covenant, although the mode of administration changes with the transition from Israel to the church (e.g., circumcision is replaced by baptism, v. 12 note). See "The Sacraments" at Matt. 28:19.

■ **17:15 Sarai . . . Sarah.** See text note. Both names seem to be variants meaning "princess." Her birth name probably looked back on her noble descent, whereas her covenant name looks ahead to her noble descendants (v. 5 and note).

■ **17:16 bless.** See note on 12:2.

■ **17:17 laughed.** See note on 21:3.

19 [b]Gen. 18:10; 21:2 [c]Gen. 22:16

19 Then God said: "No, [b]Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; I will establish My [c]covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, *and* with his descendants after him. 20 And as for Ishmael, I have heard you. Behold, I have blessed him, and will

Infant Baptism

Baptizing the infant children of believers (sometimes called "paedobaptism"), in the belief that this accords with God's revealed will, has been the historic practice of most churches. However, the worldwide Baptist community, which includes distinguished Reformed thinkers, disputes this practice.

Baptists insist that membership in local congregations is only for those who have publicly professed a personal faith. The argument often includes the claim that Christ instituted baptism primarily as a public profession of faith, and that this profession is part of the definition of baptism, with the result that infant baptism is not really baptism at all. On this ground Baptist churches rebaptize persons baptized in infancy who have come to faith—from the Baptist standpoint they have never been baptized. Historic Reformed theology contests the view that only adult, believer's baptism is true baptism, and it rejects the exclusion of believers' children from the visible community of faith. These differences regarding the nature of the visible church form the background for all discussions of infant baptism.

The practice of infant baptism is neither prescribed nor forbidden in the New Testament, nor is it explicitly illustrated (though some argue that the New Testament practice of household baptisms probably included infants and small children). Rather, the scriptural case for baptizing believers' infants rests on the parallel between Old Testament circumcision and New Testament baptism as signs and seals of the covenant of grace (Gen. 17:11; Rom. 4:11; Col. 2:11, 12), and on the claim that the principle of family solidarity in the covenant community (the church, as it is now called) was not affected by the transition from the "old" to the "new" form of God's covenant brought about by the coming of Christ. Infant children of believers have the status of covenant children and therefore should be baptized, just as Jewish male infants had previously been circumcised. The Old Testament precedent requires it and there are no divine instructions explicitly revoking this principle.

Further evidence that the principle of family solidarity continues in the New Testament period is found in 1 Cor. 7:14, where Paul notes that even the children of but one Christian parent are relationally and covenantally "holy" (that is, set apart to God together with the one Christian parent). So the principle of parent-child solidarity still stands, as Peter also indicated in his Pentecost sermon (Acts 2:39). And if infants are deemed members of the visible covenant community with their parent, it is fitting to give them the sign of covenant status and of their place in the covenant community; in fact, it would be unfitting for the church to withhold it. This fitness is demonstrated in that when circumcision was the sign of covenant status and community inclusion, God commanded it to be done (Gen. 17:9–14).

Against these arguments, Baptists allege that first, circumcision was primarily a sign of Jewish ethnic identity, so the parallel between it and Christian baptism is mistaken; second, that under the new covenant the requirement of personal faith before baptism is absolute; and third, that practices not explicitly recognized and approved in Scripture must not be brought into church life.

Certainly, all adult church members must profess faith personally before the church. Communions that baptize infants provide for this in confirmation or the equivalent. The Christian nurture of Baptist and paedobaptist children will be similar: They will be dedicated to God in infancy, either by baptism or by a rite of dedication; they will be brought up to live for the Lord and led to the point of publicly professing faith, in confirmation or baptism. After this they will enjoy full communicant status. The ongoing debate is not about nurture, but about God's way of defining the church.

It is sometimes said that infant baptism leads to a false presumption that the rite by itself guarantees the child's salvation. In the absence of biblical instruction on its meaning, this unfortunate misconception is possible. But it should be remembered that such a misunderstanding is equally possible in the case of adult, believer's baptism. See the warning in "Baptism" at Rom. 6:3. □

■ **17:20 twelve princes.** See 25:12–16.

make him fruitful, and [d]will multiply him exceedingly. He shall beget [e]twelve princes, [f]and I will make him a great nation. 21 But My [g]covenant I will establish with Isaac, [h]whom Sarah shall bear to you at this [i]set time next year." 22 Then He finished talking with him, and God went up from Abraham.

23 So Abraham took Ishmael his son, all who were born in his house and all who were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house, and circumcised the flesh of their foreskins that very same day, as God had said to him. 24 Abraham *was* ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. 25 And Ishmael his son *was* thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. 26 That very same day Abraham was circumcised, and his son Ishmael; 27 and [j]all the men of his house, born in the house or bought with money from a foreigner, were circumcised with him.

The Son of Promise

18 Then the LORD appeared to him by [l]the [a]terebinth trees of Mamre, as he was sitting in the tent door in the heat of the day. 2 [b]So he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing by him; [c]and when he saw *them,* he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the ground, 3 and said, "My Lord, if I have now found favor in Your sight, do not pass on by Your servant. 4 Please let [d]a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. 5 And [e]I will bring a morsel of bread, that [f]you may refresh your hearts. After that you may pass by, [g]inasmuch as you have come to your servant."

They said, "Do as you have said."

6 So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah and said, "Quickly, make ready three measures of fine meal; knead *it* and make cakes." 7 And Abraham ran to the herd, took a tender and good calf, gave *it* to a young man, and he hastened to prepare it. 8 So [h]he took butter and milk and the calf which he had prepared, and set *it* before them; and he stood by them under the tree as they ate.

9 Then they said to him, "Where *is* Sarah your wife?"

So he said, "Here, [i]in the tent."

10 And He said, "I will certainly return to you [j]according to the time of life, and behold, [k]Sarah your wife shall have a son."

(Sarah was listening in the tent door which *was* behind him.) 11 Now [l]Abraham and Sarah were old, well advanced in age; *and* [2]Sarah [m]had passed the age of childbearing. 12 Therefore Sarah [n]laughed within herself, saying, [o]"After I have grown old, shall I have pleasure, my [p]lord being old also?"

13 And the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Shall I surely bear *a child,* since I am old?' 14 [q]Is anything too hard for the LORD? [r]At the appointed time I will return to you, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son."

15 But Sarah denied *it,* saying, "I did not laugh," for she was afraid.

And He said, "No, but you did laugh!"

Abraham Intercedes for Sodom

16 Then the men rose from there and looked toward Sodom, and Abraham went with them [s]to send them on the way. 17 And the LORD said, [t]"Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing,

20 [d]Gen. 16:10 [e]Gen. 25:12–16 [f]Gen. 21:13, 18

21 [g]Gen. 26:2–5 [h]Gen. 21:2 [i]Gen. 18:14

27 [j]Gen. 18:19

CHAPTER 18

1 [a]Gen. 13:18; 14:13 [l]Heb. *Alon Mamre*

2 [b]Gen. 18:16, 22; 32:24; Josh. 5:13; Judg. 13:6–11; Heb. 13:2 [c]Gen. 19:1; 1 Pet. 4:9

4 [d]Gen. 19:2; 24:32; 43:24

5 [e]Judg. 6:18, 19; 13:15, 16 [f]Judg. 19:5; Ps. 104:15 [g]Gen. 19:8; 33:10

8 [h]Gen. 19:3

9 [i]Gen. 24:67

10 [j]2 Kin. 4:16 [k]Gen. 17:19, 21; 21:2; Rom. 9:9

11 [l]Gen. 17:17; Luke 1:18; Rom. 4:19; Heb. 11:11, 12, 19 [m]Gen. 31:35 [2]Lit. *the manner of women had ceased to be with Sarah*

12 [n]Gen. 17:17 [o]Luke 1:18 [p]1 Pet. 3:6

14 [q]Num. 11:23; Jer. 32:17; Zech. 8:6; Matt. 3:9; 19:26; Luke 1:37; Rom. 4:21 [r]Gen. 17:21; 18:10; 2 Kin. 4:16

16 [s]Acts 15:3; Rom. 15:24

17 [t]Gen. 18:22, 26, 33; Ps. 25:14; Amos 3:7; [John 15:15]

■ **17:21 with Isaac.** By His own sovereign counsel the Lord elected Isaac, not Ishmael (Introduction: Date and Occasion). Isaac's miraculous birth signifies that the people of God result, not from mere natural generation, but from the promise and the supernatural grace of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 4:17; Gal. 4:21–31).

■ **17:23 that very same day.** Abraham demonstrated his faith in God's gracious covenant by his obedience (v. 1 note; Rom. 4:9–12).

■ **18:1 appeared.** See note on 12:7.

terebinth trees of Mamre. See note on 12:6.

heat of the day. The time when travelers seek shade and rest.

■ **18:2 three men.** The Lord and two angels (vv. 1, 13; 19:1). The New Testament admonition to show hospitality in Heb. 13:2 is based on the incidents in chs. 18 and 19.

ran. Observing the ancient Near Eastern custom of hospitality, Abraham typifies the gracious host and is completely at the service of his guests. His behavior contrasts with the immorality of the Sodomites (19:4, 5).

■ **18:3 My Lord.** This Hebrew term unequivocally refers to God.

■ **18:9 Where.** See notes on 3:9 and 11:5.

■ **18:10 Sarah . . . son.** See 11:30; 15:2–4; 16:11; 17:15, 16; Rom. 9:9.

■ **18:11 had passed the age of childbearing.** Lit. "Sarah no longer experienced the cycle of women." Her body was no longer able to conceive (Heb. 11:11, 12; Rom. 4:19).

■ **18:14 too hard.** Despite her initial skepticism, Sarah too came to believe the promise (Heb. 11:11), and joined her husband in faith (Rom. 4:13–25).

■ **18:15 you did laugh.** See note on 21:3.

■ **18:16–33** The Lord's promise of a miraculous offspring anticipated that Abraham would become a great and powerful nation to bless the earth. Such a nation had to learn justice, beginning with its father, Abraham (vv. 17–19). The Lord demonstrated His justice to Abraham in the judgment upon the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (vv. 20–33). God investigated the accusations thoroughly (vv. 20–21; 11:5 note); even if there had been ten righteous people He would have spared the cities (v. 32).

■ **18:17 Shall I hide.** See note on 12:7. God so esteemed His servants,

18 [u][Acts 3:25, 26]
19 [v][Deut. 4:9, 10; 6:6, 7]
20 [w]Gen. 4:10; 19:13 [x]Gen. 13:13
21 [y]Gen. 11:5 [z]Deut. 8:2; 13:3
22 [a]Gen. 18:16; 19:1
23 [b][Heb. 10:22] [c]Num. 16:22 [d]Job 9:22 [e]Gen. 20:4
25 [f]Is. 3:10, 11 [g]Deut. 1:16, 17; 32:4
26 [h]Jer. 5:1
27 [i][Gen. 3:19]
32 [j]Judg. 6:39 [k]James 5:16

CHAPTER 19

1 [a]Gen. 18:2, 16, 22 [b]Gen. 18:1–5
2 [c][Heb. 13:2] [d]Gen. 18:4; 24:32

18 since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be [u]blessed in him? 19 For I have known him, in order [v]that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him." 20 And the LORD said, "Because [w]the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their [x]sin is very grave, 21 [y]I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry against it that has come to Me; and if not, [z]I will know."

22 Then the men turned away from there [a]and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD. 23 And Abraham [b]came near and said, [c]"Would You also [d]destroy the [e]righteous with the wicked? 24 Suppose there were fifty righteous within the city; would You also destroy the place and not spare *it* for the fifty righteous that were in it? 25 Far be it from You to do such a thing as this, to slay the righteous with the wicked, so [f]that the righteous should be as the wicked; far be it from You! [g]Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

26 So the LORD said, [h]"If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes."

27 Then Abraham answered and said, "Indeed now, I who *am* [i]*but* dust and ashes have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord: 28 Suppose there were five less than the fifty righteous; would You destroy all of the city for *lack of* five?"

So He said, "If I find there forty-five, I will not destroy *it.*"

29 And he spoke to Him yet again and said, "Suppose there should be forty found there?"

So He said, "I will not do *it* for the sake of forty."

30 Then he said, "Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak: Suppose thirty should be found there?"

So He said, "I will not do *it* if I find thirty there."

31 And he said, "Indeed now, I have taken it upon myself to speak to the Lord: Suppose twenty should be found there?"

So He said, "I will not destroy *it* for the sake of twenty."

32 Then he said, [j]"Let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak but once more: Suppose ten should be found there?"

[k]And He said, "I will not destroy *it* for the sake of ten." 33 So the LORD went His way as soon as He had finished speaking with Abraham; and Abraham returned to his place.

Sodom's Depravity

19 Now [a]the two angels came to Sodom in the evening, and [b]Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw *them,* he rose to meet them, and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground. 2 And he said, "Here now, my lords, please [c]turn in to your servant's house and spend the night, and [d]wash your feet; then you may rise early and go on your way."

the prophets, that He revealed His plans to them (20:7; Amos 3:7; cf. John 15:15). As a prophet, Abraham also interceded (cf. Jer. 15:1; 27:18).

■ **18:19 I have known him, in order that.** The Hebrew word translated "known" here means "chosen in love." The purpose of God's sovereign and gracious election is that His people might be holy and righteous in His sight (Eph. 1:4).

that the LORD . . . what He has spoken. Those promises claimed by Abraham in faith must be claimed by his descendants as well. Their hope in God's covenant will be demonstrated by their covenant obedience. God's plan will be realized through the covenant faithfulness of His people (22:18; 26:4, 5). See note on 17:2.

■ **18:20 outcry.** All cries of wrongdoing come to the attention of the "Judge of all the earth" (v. 25; cf. 4:10). Despite the mercy shown to Sodom through Abraham (ch. 14), Sodom had not repented of its sin.

their sin. The sinfulness of Sodom was both proverbial and extensive (13:13; Jer. 23:14). It involved extreme displays of sexual depravity (particularly homosexuality, 19:5; Jude 7), arrogance and abuse of the poor (Ezek. 16:49, 50), and a failure to show hospitality (19:8).

■ **18:21 go down . . . and see.** See note on 11:5.

■ **18:23 Would You also destroy the righteous.** Clearly, no one would escape the massive destruction intended for the cities, so Abraham petitions God on behalf of the righteous who might reside there. The series of questions and answers that follow serve to establish beyond doubt the justice of God's judgment.

■ **18:32 ten.** God's mercy is evident in His willingness to spare the sinful majority for the sake of even ten righteous. Fewer than ten could be saved individually, as happens in ch. 19. In cases of special punishment inflicted upon cities and nations, righteous individuals were sometimes singled out for preservation (Josh. 6:25; cf. Ezek. 14:14, 16, 18, 20). See "The Spiritual Nature of God" at Is. 66:1.

■ **19:1–29** Just as God had rescued righteous Noah from the sinful pre-Flood world (chs. 6—8), so also He rescues Lot from Sodom. Ultimately, Lot was saved because of God's mercy to him (v. 16) and because of God's covenantal commitment to Abraham (v. 29). The destruction of Sodom becomes a paradigm of God's judgment on sin (Is. 1:9, 10; Ezek. 16:46–49; Amos 4:11; Rom. 9:29; 2 Pet. 2:5, 6).

■ **19:1–11** See the similar episode recorded in Judg. 19:15–25.

■ **19:1 two angels.** See note on 18:2 and "Angels" at Zech. 1:9. The two angels continue on to Sodom, but the Lord Himself does not appear after 18:33; He will rain down the judgment from heaven (v. 24).

sitting in the gate. See 14:12 and note. That Lot was sitting in the city gate indicates his status as a respected member of the community. Legal matters were decided at the city gate by community elders such as Lot (Deut. 21:18–21; Amos 5:15).

bowed himself. Throughout the story Lot demonstrated his righteousness by his hospitality to strangers (18:2 and notes; cf. 2 Pet. 2:6, 7).

And they said, [e]"No, but we will spend the night in the open square."

3 But he insisted strongly; so they turned in to him and entered his house. [f]Then he made them a feast, and baked [g]unleavened bread, and they ate.

4 Now before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both old and young, all the people from every quarter, surrounded the house. 5 [h]And they called to Lot and said to him, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? [i]Bring them out to us that we [j]may know them *carnally.*"

6 So [k]Lot went out to them through the doorway, shut the door behind him, 7 and said, "Please, my brethren, do not do so wickedly! 8 [l]See now, I have two daughters who have not known a man; please, let me bring them out to you, and you may do to them as you wish; only do nothing to these men, [m]since this is the reason they have come under the shadow of my roof."

9 And they said, "Stand back!" Then they said, "This one [n]came in to [l]stay *here,* [o]and he keeps acting as a judge; now we will deal worse with you than with them." So they pressed hard against the man Lot, and came near to break down the door. 10 But the men reached out their hands and pulled Lot into the house with them, and shut the door. 11 And they [p]struck the men who *were* at the doorway of the house with blindness, both small and great, so that they became weary *trying* to find the door.

Sodom and Gomorrah Destroyed

12 Then the men said to Lot, "Have you anyone else here? Son-in-law, your sons, your daughters, and whomever you have in the city—[q]take *them* out of this place! 13 For we will destroy this place, because the [r]outcry against them has grown great before the face of the LORD, and [s]the LORD has sent us to destroy it."

14 So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, [t]who had married his daughters, and said, [u]"Get up, get out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city!" [v]But to his sons-in-law he seemed to be joking.

15 When the morning dawned, the angels urged Lot to hurry, saying, [w]"Arise, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be consumed in the punishment of the city." 16 And while he lingered, the men [x]took hold of his hand, his wife's hand, and the hands of his two daughters, the [y]LORD being merciful to him, [z]and they brought him out and set him outside the city. 17 So it came to pass, when they had brought them outside, that [2]he said, [a]"Escape for your life! [b]Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape [c]to the mountains, lest you be [3]destroyed."

18 Then Lot said to them, "Please, [d]no, my lords! 19 Indeed now, your servant has found favor in your sight, and you have increased your mercy which you have shown me by saving my life; but I cannot escape to the mountains, lest some evil overtake me and I die. 20 See now, this city *is* near *enough* to flee to, and it *is* a little one; please let me escape there (*is* it not a little one?) and my soul shall live."

21 And he said to him, "See, [e]I have favored you concerning this thing also, in that I will not overthrow this city for which you have spoken. 22 Hurry, escape there. For [f]I cannot do anything until you arrive there."

Therefore [g]the name of the city was called [4]Zoar.

23 The sun had risen upon the earth when Lot entered Zoar. 24 Then the LORD rained [h]brimstone and [i]fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the LORD out of the heavens. 25 So He [5]overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and [j]what grew on the ground.

2 [e]Luke 24:28

3 [f]Gen. 18:6–8 [g]Ex. 12:8

5 [h]Is. 3:9 [i]Judg. 19:22 [j]Gen. 4:1

6 [k]Judg. 19:23

8 [l]Judg. 19:24 [m]Gen. 18:5

9 [n]2 Pet. 2:7, 8 [o]Ex. 2:14 [1]As a resident alien

11 [p]Gen. 20:17, 18

12 [q]2 Pet. 2:7, 9

13 [r]Gen. 18:20 [s]1 Chr. 21:15

14 [t]Matt. 1:18 [u]Num. 16:21, 24, 26, 45 [v]Ex. 9:21

15 [w]Rev. 18:4

16 [x]2 Pet. 2:7 [y]Luke 18:13 [z]Ps. 34:22

17 [a]Jer. 48:6 [b]Matt. 24:16–18 [c]Gen. 14:10 [2]LXX, Syr., Vg. *they* [3]Lit. *swept away*

18 [d]Acts 10:14

21 [e]Job 42:8, 9

22 [f]Ex. 32:10 [g]Gen. 13:10; 14:2 [4]Lit. *Little* or *Insignificant*

24 [h]Deut. 29:23 [i]Lev. 10:2

25 [j]Ps. 107:34 [5]*devastated*

■ **19:4 old and young . . . every quarter.** These details are necessary to show that everyone destroyed was wicked (18:23 note). See also 6:5; 8:21; Rom. 1:26–32.

■ **19:7 so wickedly.** The character of Lot's appeal demonstrates his righteousness (2 Pet. 2:6, 7).

■ **19:8** See notes on 18:2 and 19:1. As one bound by the ancient Near Eastern code of hospitality, which required the protection of guests, Lot was willing to risk danger to his own family rather than allow harm to come to his guests.

■ **19:10 shut the door.** See note on 7:16.

■ **19:15 wife . . . daughters.** The family is saved from the city's destruction as a unit, but this family, like Noah's, will prove to be a mixture of those who persevere (Lot) and those who do not (Lot's wife and daughters, vv. 26, 30–38).

■ **19:16 he lingered.** Lot's status in the city was probably due to his great wealth (13:6) and to his uncle Abraham's rescue of the city (ch. 14). Now, having to flee with virtually nothing from the comforts of the city (vv. 18–21), Lot hesitates.

■ **19:24 the LORD rained brimstone.** A detailed explanation of the inferno that engulfed the cities remains difficult; the Bible is concerned with the final divine Cause, rather than secondary causes. The term "brimstone" refers to combustible sulfur, deposits of which are found near the Dead Sea. Some suggest that an earthquake caused a mixture of brimstone, asphalt (also abundant in this area, 14:10), and gasses from the earth to ignite (cf. Is. 34:9, 10).

26 [k]Luke 17:32
27 [l]Gen. 18:22
28 [m]Rev. 9:2; 18:9
29 [n]Gen. 8:1; 18:23
30 [o]Gen. 19:17, 19
31 [p]Gen. 16:2, 4; 38:8, 9
32 [q][Mark 12:19] [6]Lit. *seed*
34 [7]Lit. *seed*
37 [r]Deut. 2:9
38 [s]Deut. 2:19

CHAPTER 20

1 [a]Gen. 18:1 [b]Gen. 12:9; 16:7, 14 [c]Gen. 26:1, 6
2 [d]Gen. 12:11–13; 26:7 [e]Gen. 12:15
3 [f]Ps. 105:14 [g]Job 33:15 [h]Gen. 20:7 [i]Lit. *married to a husband*
4 [j]Gen. 18:23–25
5 [k]2 Kin. 20:3 [2]*innocence*

26 But his wife looked back behind him, and she became [k]a pillar of salt.

27 And Abraham went early in the morning to the place where [l]he had stood before the LORD. 28 Then he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain; and he saw, and behold, [m]the smoke of the land which went up like the smoke of a furnace. 29 And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God [n]remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot had dwelt.

The Descendants of Lot

30 Then Lot went up out of Zoar and [o]dwelt in the mountains, and his two daughters were with him; for he was afraid to dwell in Zoar. And he and his two daughters dwelt in a cave. 31 Now the firstborn said to the younger, "Our father *is* old, and *there is* no man on the earth [p]to come in to us as is the custom of all the earth. 32 Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we [q]may preserve the [6]lineage of our father." 33 So they made their father drink wine that night. And the firstborn went in and lay with her father, and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose.

34 It happened on the next day that the firstborn said to the younger, "Indeed I lay with my father last night; let us make him drink wine tonight also, and you go in *and* lie with him, that we may preserve the [7]lineage of our father." 35 Then they made their father drink wine that night also. And the younger arose and lay with him, and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose.

36 Thus both the daughters of Lot were with child by their father. 37 The firstborn bore a son and called his name Moab; [r]he *is* the father of the Moabites to this day. 38 And the younger, she also bore a son and called his name Ben-Ammi; [s]he *is* the father of the people of Ammon to this day.

Abraham and Abimelech

20 And Abraham journeyed from [a]there to the South, and dwelt between [b]Kadesh and Shur, and [c]stayed in Gerar. 2 Now Abraham said of Sarah his wife, [d]"She *is* my sister." And Abimelech king of Gerar sent and [e]took Sarah.

3 But [f]God came to Abimelech [g]in a dream by night, and said to him, [h]"Indeed you *are* a dead man because of the woman whom you have taken, for she *is* [i]a man's wife."

4 But Abimelech had not come near her; and he said, "Lord, [j]will You slay a righteous nation also? 5 Did he not say to me, 'She *is* my sister'? And she, even she herself said, 'He *is* my brother.' [k]In the [2]integrity of my heart and innocence of my hands I have done this."

6 And God said to him in a dream, "Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart.

■ **19:26 his wife looked back.** Lot's wife is a sobering lesson against vacillation when God's judgment is at hand (Luke 17:28–37).

■ **19:29 remembered.** See note on 8:1. Twice Lot was saved because of faithful Abraham (14:1–16; 19:1–29).

■ **19:30–38** The desperate act by Lot's daughters to preserve seed from their drunken father brings to a conclusion the tragic account of Lot that began with his separation from Abraham in 13:11. In spite of Lot's affiliation with Sodom and the unbelief of his family, the Lord protected his lineage and land because of his faith and his relationship to Abraham (Deut. 2:16–19).

■ **19:30 afraid to dwell in Zoar.** See note on v. 16. Ironically, while Lot had sought to live in Zoar because of his fear of the mountains (v. 19), he now lives in the mountains for fear of Zoar. Note the contrast with Lot's prosperity and prospect in 13:1–13.

■ **19:31 old.** He was too old to remarry and unlikely to father further descendants.

■ **19:32 drink wine . . . lie with him.** See note on 9:21. The daughters' initiative contrasts with Lot, who apparently had made no effort to find spouses for his daughters. Their sexual immorality anticipates their descendants' seduction of Israel's men (Num. 25).

■ **19:37, 38** This genealogical conclusion (vv. 37, 38) begins the story of the bitter animosity of Moab and Ammon against Israel (Num. 23—25; 2 Kin. 3). The Moabites and Ammonites were rejected by God, not because of their questionable lineage, but because they mistreated Israel (Deut. 23:3–6; Neh. 13:1, 2). Ruth, an ancestor of Jesus Christ, was a Moabite (Ruth 4:18–22; Matt. 1:5), but through her faith she was eventually counted in the tribe of Judah.

■ **20:1–18** Again Abraham fails to trust God for protection, and resorts instead to deception (cf. 12:10–20). Despite Abraham's failure, God preserves the covenant line of promise, just as He had in Egypt.

■ **20:1 the South.** See note on 12:9.

■ **20:2 my sister.** See v. 11 and note on 11:29.

Abimelech. Lit. "my father is king" or "father of a king." This Abimelech was probably the father or grandfather of the Abimelech encountered by Isaac (26:1). A ruler of Tyre (c. 1375 B.C.) had this name, which may have been a royal title (Ps. 34; cf. 1 Sam. 27:2).

sent and took Sarah. See 12:15 and note. On the brink of Isaac's conception (18:10–14; 21:1, 2), the program of redemption through the seed of Abraham was placed in jeopardy. Salvation finally depends on the faithful Lord, not on unfaithful humans, and here God protected the purity of Sarah (vv. 4, 6).

■ **20:3 in a dream.** God often communicated with His people through dreams in the Old Testament (28:12; 37:5–9; Num. 12:6). Sometimes such dreams were given to those outside the covenant community (31:24; 40:5; 41:1; Num. 22:9, 20; Dan. 2:1–45).

■ **20:4 will You slay a righteous nation.** See 18:23, 32 and notes.

■ **20:5 integrity of my heart.** God judges people without the written law by their consciences (3:8; 6:9; Rom. 2:14 and notes).

For [k]I also withheld you from sinning [l]against Me; therefore I did not let you touch her. 7 Now therefore, restore the man's wife; [m]for he *is* a prophet, and he will pray for you and you shall live. But if you do not restore *her,* [n]know that you shall surely die, you [o]and all who *are* yours."

8 So Abimelech rose early in the morning, called all his servants, and told all these things in their hearing; and the men were very much afraid. 9 And Abimelech called Abraham and said to him, "What have you done to us? How have I [3]offended you, [p]that you have brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? You have done deeds to me [q]that ought not to be done." 10 Then Abimelech said to Abraham, "What did you have in view, that you have done this thing?"

11 And Abraham said, "Because I thought, surely [r]the fear of God *is* not in this place; and [s]they will kill me on account of my wife. 12 But indeed [t]*she is* truly my sister. She *is* the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife. 13 And it came to pass, when [u]God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said to her, 'This *is* your kindness that you should do for me: in every place, wherever we go, [v]say of me, "He *is* my brother." ' "

14 Then Abimelech [w]took sheep, oxen, and male and female servants, and gave *them* to Abraham; and he restored Sarah his wife to him. 15 And Abimelech said, "See, [x]my land *is* before you; dwell where it pleases you." 16 Then to Sarah he said, "Behold, I have given your brother a thousand *pieces* of silver; [y]indeed this [4]vindicates you [z]before all who *are* with you and before everybody." Thus she was [5]rebuked.

17 So Abraham [a]prayed to God; and God [b]healed Abimelech, his wife, and his female servants. Then they bore *children;* 18 for the LORD [c]had closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech because of Sarah, Abraham's wife.

Isaac Is Born

21 And the LORD [a]visited Sarah as He had said, and the LORD did for Sarah [b]as He had spoken. 2 For Sarah [c]conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, [d]at the set time of which God had spoken to him. 3 And Abraham called the name of his son who was born to him—whom Sarah bore to him—[e]Isaac.[1] 4 Then Abraham [f]circumcised his son Isaac when he was eight days old, [g]as God had commanded him. 5 Now [h]Abraham was one hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him. 6 And Sarah said, [i]"God has [2]made me laugh, *and* all who hear [j]will laugh with me." 7 She also said, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? [k]For I have borne *him* a son in his old age."

Hagar and Ishmael Depart

8 So the child grew and was weaned. And Abraham made a great feast on the same day that Isaac was weaned.

6 [k]1 Sam. 25:26, 34 [l]Gen. 39:9

7 [m]1 Sam. 7:5 [n]Gen. 2:17 [o]Num. 16:32, 33

9 [p]Gen. 26:10; 39:9 [q]Gen. 34:7 [3]*sinned against*

11 [r]Prov. 16:6 [s]Gen. 12:12; 26:7

12 [t]Gen. 11:29

13 [u]Gen. 12:1–9, 11 [v]Gen. 12:13; 20:5

14 [w]Gen. 12:16

15 [x]Gen. 13:9; 34:10; 47:6

16 [y]Gen. 26:11 [z]Mal. 2:9 [4]Lit. *is a covering of the eyes for you to all* [5]Or *justified*

17 [a]Job 42:9 [b]Gen. 21:2

18 [c]Gen. 12:17

CHAPTER 21

1 [a]1 Sam. 2:21 [b][Gal. 4:23, 28]

2 [c]Heb. 11:11, 12 [d]Gen. 17:21; 18:10, 14

3 [e]Gen. 17:19, 21 [1]Lit. *Laughter*

4 [f]Acts 7:8 [g]Gen. 17:10, 12

5 [h]Gen. 17:1, 17

6 [i]Is. 54:1 [j]Luke 1:58 [2]Lit. *made laughter for me*

7 [k]Gen. 18:11, 12

■ **20:7 prophet.** The first use of this term in the Bible. Abraham was a man of God who received revelations and interceded for others (12:7; 15:1; 18:17 and notes).

■ **20:9 great sin.** Adultery was considered a great sin by the peoples of the ancient Near East. Many ancient law codes, including that of Hammurabi, contained provisions for dealing with adultery (cf. 26:10; 39:9). See note on Ex. 20:14.

■ **20:11 the fear of God.** Though this term often denotes the proper worship, reverence, and obedience of the true God (e.g., 22:12), here (and in 42:18) the expression probably means adherence (out of fear of divine judgment) to moral standards known through conscience.

■ **20:12 my sister.** See notes on 11:29 and 12:12.

■ **20:14–16** Abimelech gave gifts to Abraham (vv. 14, 15) and Sarah (v. 16) to honor God and their special relationship to Him, not to compensate for his guilt (v. 16 note; cf. 12:19, 20). God not only delivered His chosen servants out of dreadful peril but rewarded them with unexpected riches.

■ **20:16 given your brother.** Social convention demanded that the gift to Sarah be given through the male head of the family.

a thousand pieces of silver. A very large amount.

this vindicates you before all. Abimelech was guiltless and under no obligation to Abraham and Sarah (v. 6). Out of regard for the God of Abraham, however, Abimelech seeks to restore the honor that Sarah may have lost in the eyes of others.

rebuked. The text note reading (meaning "vindicated") better fits the context.

■ **20:17 Abraham prayed to God.** See note on v. 7.

■ **21:1–7** The report of Isaac's birth concludes the story of Sarah's barrenness begun in 11:27–32. The covenantal arrangement is underscored: God keeps His promise to give Abraham a son by Sarah (vv. 1–2; 17:1–6, 15–16; 18:1–15), and Abraham responds in obedience by naming him Isaac (v. 3; 17:19) and circumcising him (vv. 4, 5; 17:9–14), while Sarah responds with praise (vv. 6, 7).

■ **21:1 visited.** See 50:24 and note for this same expression of God's gracious intervention.

■ **21:2 in his old age, at the set time.** See 17:17, 24; 18:11–14. Abraham's greater Offspring also came at the appointed time (Gal. 4:4).

■ **21:3 Isaac.** See text note. Both Abraham and Sarah at first laughed in disbelief (17:17; 18:12), but when Isaac was born Sarah laughed for joy at the supernatural work of grace (v. 6).

■ **21:4 circumcised.** See note on 17:12.

■ **21:6 will laugh.** See note on v. 3.

■ **21:8–11** The expulsion of Hagar and Ishmael removed any threat to Isaac's inheritance. The accounts of the birth of Isaac and the removal of Ishmael are linked by another reference to laughter, Ishmael's "scoffing" at Isaac (v. 9 text note).

■ **21:8 weaned.** This rite of passage from the dangerous stage of infancy to childhood occurred at about three years of age. Here the occasion is celebrated by a feast.

9 [l]Gen. 16:1, 4, 15 [m][Gal. 4:29] [3]Lit. *laughing*

10 [n]Gal. 3:18; 4:30

11 [o]Gen. 17:18 [4]*distressing*

12 [p][Rom. 9:7, 8]

13 [q]Gen. 16:10; 17:20; 21:18; 25:12–18 [5]*descendant*

14 [r]John 8:35 [6]A water bottle made of skins

17 [s]Ex. 3:7 [t]Gen. 22:11

18 [u]Gen. 16:10; 21:13; 25:12–16

19 [v]Num. 22:31

20 [w]Gen. 28:15; 39:2, 3, 21 [x]Gen. 16:12

21 [y]Gen. 24:4

22 [z]Gen. 20:2, 14; 26:26 [a]Gen. 26:28

23 [b]Josh. 2:12 [7]*take an oath*

25 [c]Gen. 26:15, 18, 20–22

27 [d]Gen. 26:31; 31:44 [8]*treaty*

29 [e]Gen. 33:8

30 [f]Gen. 31:48, 52

31 [g]Gen. 21:14; 26:33 [9]Lit. *Well of the Oath* or *Well of the Seven*

9 And Sarah saw the son of Hagar [l]the Egyptian, whom she had borne to Abraham, [m]scoffing.[3] 10 Therefore she said to Abraham. [n]"Cast out this bondwoman and her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, *namely* with Isaac." 11 And the matter was very [4]displeasing in Abraham's sight [o]because of his son.

12 But God said to Abraham, "Do not let it be displeasing in your sight because of the lad or because of your bondwoman. Whatever Sarah has said to you, listen to her voice; for [p]in Isaac your seed shall be called. 13 Yet I will also make [q]a nation of the son of the bondwoman, because he *is* your [5]seed."

14 So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and [6]a skin of water; and putting *it* on her shoulder, he gave *it* and the boy to Hagar, and [r]sent her away. Then she departed and wandered in the Wilderness of Beersheba. 15 And the water in the skin was used up, and she placed the boy under one of the shrubs. 16 Then she went and sat down across from *him* at a distance of about a bowshot; for she said to herself, "Let me not see the death of the boy." So she sat opposite *him,* and lifted her voice and wept.

17 And [s]God heard the voice of the lad. Then the [t]angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said to her, "What ails you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he *is.* 18 Arise, lift up the lad and hold him with your hand, for [u]I will make him a great nation."

19 Then [v]God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water. And she went and filled the skin with water, and gave the lad a drink. 20 So God [w]was with the lad; and he grew and dwelt in the wilderness, [x]and became an archer. 21 He dwelt in the Wilderness of Paran; and his mother [y]took a wife for him from the land of Egypt.

A Covenant with Abimelech

22 And it came to pass at that time that [z]Abimelech and Phichol, the commander of his army, spoke to Abraham, saying, [a]"God *is* with you in all that you do. 23 Now therefore, [b]swear[7] to me by God that you will not deal falsely with me, with my offspring, or with my posterity; but that according to the kindness that I have done to you, you will do to me and to the land in which you have dwelt."

24 And Abraham said, "I will swear."

25 Then Abraham rebuked Abimelech because of a well of water which Abimelech's servants [c]had seized. 26 And Abimelech said, "I do not know who has done this thing; you did not tell me, nor had I heard *of it* until today." 27 So Abraham took sheep and oxen and gave them to Abimelech, and the two of them [d]made a [8]covenant. 28 And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves.

29 Then Abimelech asked Abraham, [e]"What *is the meaning of* these seven ewe lambs which you have set by themselves?"

30 And he said, "You will take *these* seven ewe lambs from my hand, that [f]they may be my witness that I have dug this well." 31 Therefore he [g]called that place [9]Beersheba, because the two of them swore an oath there.

■ **21:9 Sarah saw.** From her experience with Hagar (ch. 16) Sarah perceived the significance of Ishmael's disdain for Isaac and his threat to her son's inheritance.

scoffing. The Hebrew root means "to laugh," but the form here signifies "to laugh at" or "make sport of" (text note). The son of the slave woman persecuted the son of the free (Gal. 4:29).

■ **21:10 Cast out.** So as to disinherit (cf. 25:5, 6).

bondwoman. The Hebrew word here differs from the one translated "maidservant" in 16:1 (16:1 note). In her anger Sarah stresses Hagar's servile status—an indication of the animosity between these two rivals.

■ **21:11 displeasing.** As a father, Abraham felt genuine love and affection for Ishmael (17:18). In addition, there may have been customs prohibiting the expulsion of Hagar and her son (16:6 note).

■ **21:12 your seed shall be called.** God's promises will reach their fulfillment through the miraculous offspring, Isaac, not through the natural (Rom. 9:7, 8). See note on 17:7.

■ **21:13 nation.** See v. 18. Because of God's great love for Abraham, even his natural children were blessed on earth, though they were not part of the line of covenant promise (17:6 and note).

■ **21:21 Wilderness of Paran.** A region in the east-central portion of the Sinai peninsula. Ishmael's departure from the covenant family seals his destiny; he will not inherit the divine promises of offspring and land.

Egypt. See 16:1.

■ **21:22–34** Through divine blessing, Abraham and his household had become a formidable presence in the land (14:13; 23:6). That a Philistine king and his commander would seek a permanent non-aggression pact with Abraham and his descendants provides concrete evidence of God's rich covenant blessing on Abraham.

■ **21:22 Abimelech.** See note on 20:2. Abraham's first encounter with Abimelech pertained to seed (ch. 20); this one, to land.

Phichol. Probably a title, rather than a personal name, for the Philistine army commander (26:26).

■ **21:23 by God.** The oaths were in God's name (vv. 31, 33; Deut. 6:13 note).

my posterity. While this treaty was intended to endure, tensions surfaced as early as the next generation (26:23–31).

■ **21:30 take . . . seven ewe lambs.** By accepting the gift, Abimelech was obliged to acknowledge Abraham's right to the well. The covenant had to be ratified by witnesses and oaths (v. 31).

■ **21:31 swore.** A verbal agreement to the covenant terms was not enough (v. 23). It had to be ratified by an oath (v. 31).

32 Thus they made a covenant at Beersheba. So Abimelech rose with Phichol, the commander of his army, and they returned to the land of the Philistines. 33 Then *Abraham* planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and [h]there called on the name of the LORD, [i]the Everlasting God. 34 And Abraham stayed in the land of the Philistines many days.

Abraham's Faith Confirmed

22 Now it came to pass after these things that [a]God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!"

And he said, "Here I am."

2 Then He said, "Take now your son, [b]your only *son* Isaac, whom you [c]love, and go [d]to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a [e]burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."

3 So Abraham rose early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son; and he split the wood for the burnt offering, and arose and went to the place of which God had told him. 4 Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and saw the place afar off. 5 And Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; the [f]lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will [f]come back to you."

6 So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and [g]laid *it* on Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife, and the two of them went together. 7 But Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, "My father!"

And he said, "Here I am, my son."

Then he said, "Look, the fire and the wood, but where *is* the [2]lamb for a burnt offering?"

8 And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide for Himself the [h]lamb for a [i]burnt offering." So the two of them went together.

9 Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order; and he bound Isaac his son and [j]laid him on the altar, upon the wood. 10 And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.

11 But the [k]Angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!"

So he said, "Here I am."

12 And He said, [l]"Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for [m]now I know that you fear God, since you have not [n]withheld your son, your only *son*, from Me."

13 Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind *him was* a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering

33 [h]Gen. 4:26; 12:8; 13:4; 26:25 [i]Gen. 35:11; Ex. 15:18; Deut. 32:40; 33:27; Ps. 90:2; 93:2; Is. 40:28; Jer. 10:10; Hab. 1:12; Heb. 13:8

CHAPTER 22

1 [a]Deut. 8:2, 16; 1 Cor. 10:13; Heb. 11:17; [James 1:12–14; 1 Pet. 1:7]

2 [b]Gen. 22:12, 16; John 3:16; Heb. 11:17; 1 John 4:9 [c]John 5:20 [d]2 Chr. 3:1 [e]Gen. 8:20; 31:54

5 [f][Heb. 11:19] [f]Or *young man*

6 [g]John 19:17

7 [2]Or *goat*

8 [h]John 1:29, 36 [i]Ex. 12:3–6

9 [j][Heb. 11:17–19; James 2:21]

11 [k]Gen. 16:7–11; 21:17, 18; 31:11

12 [l]1 Sam. 15:22 [m]Gen. 26:5; James 2:21, 22 [n]Gen. 22:2, 16; John 3:16

■ **21:33 tamarisk tree.** The planting of this small tree in the Negev probably served as a landmark of God's grace, a pledge that Abraham would stay in the land, and perhaps as a symbol of God's shading presence.

Everlasting God. Hebrew *El Olam.* See note on 14:19.

■ **21:34 stayed.** The Hebrew term here may be translated "sojourn" or "stay for a while." It denotes a resident alien (Ex. 6:4 text note; Heb. 11:9, 13).

■ **22:1–19** Having already graciously committed Himself to Abraham, God tested Abraham's obedience. In his obedience, Abraham displayed his full commitment to the Lord, symbolically receiving Isaac, the child of promise, back from death (vv. 1–12). God's provision of the ram typifies the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who died instead of the elect so that they would live (vv. 13–14). In taking an oath to bless Abraham and all nations through him, God guaranteed the promise to Abraham's offspring (vv. 15–19). See note on Heb. 11:17–19.

■ **22:1 tested.** God tests His saints to prove the quality of their faith and obedience, often through adversity or hardship (Ex. 20:20; Deut. 8:2; 2 Chr. 32:31). The Hebrew here does not mean "enticed to do wrong." People, however, must not put God to the test (Ex. 17:2, 7; Deut. 6:16).

Here I am. So also Moses (Ex. 3:4), Samuel (1 Sam. 3:4), and Isaiah (Is. 6:8). See also Christ's own words to the same effect (Heb. 10:7; cf. Ps. 40:7, 8).

■ **22:2 your only son . . . whom you love.** Isaac is the beloved son, the only son of the promise (25:1–18 note). Ishmael had been disinherited and sent away (21:10, 14), leaving Isaac as Abraham's only son. These terms are applied to Christ in the New Testament (Matt. 3:17; 17:5; John 3:16; Eph. 1:6; 2 Pet. 1:17).

land of Moriah. Later the site of Israel's temple in Jerusalem (2 Chr. 3:1).

offer him. This command is perplexing at first. Without knowing what God really had in mind (cf. Ex. 13:11–13; 22:29; 34:19, 20), the command seems to contradict the sixth commandment (Ex. 20:13). As the narrative unfolds, however, it is evident that the test was whether Abraham would proceed with the preparations for sacrifice while holding steadfastly to the promise of 21:12, "In Isaac your seed shall be called." Abraham knew that God was obliged to keep His promise, and he knew that a dead Isaac could not continue the covenant line. Heb. 11:19 unveils Abraham's secret: he concluded "that God was able to raise [Isaac] up, even from the dead."

burnt offering. See note on 8:20.

■ **22:3 early in the morning.** Another example of Abraham's prompt obedience (17:23 and note).

■ **22:8 provide . . . the lamb.** A type of Jesus Christ (John 1:29, 36).

■ **22:11 Angel of the LORD.** See note on 16:7.

■ **22:12 you have not withheld.** Abraham's faith was confirmed by his obedience (Gal. 5:6; Heb. 11:17; James 2:21 note).

■ **22:13 instead of his son.** The substitutionary purpose of the sacrifice is evident, and points forward to the sacrifice of Christ who died in our stead (Mark 10:45; Rom. 8:32; 2 Cor. 5:21; Titus 2:14).

14 [3]Heb. *YHWH Yireh*

16 [o]Ps. 105:9

17 [p]Gen. 17:16; 26:3, 24 [q]Gen. 15:5; 26:4 [r]Gen. 13:16; 32:12 [s]Gen. 24:60

18 [t]Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 26:4 [u]Gen. 18:19; 22:3, 10; 26:5

19 [v]Gen. 21:31

20 [w]Gen. 11:29; 24:15

21 [x]Job 1:1 [y]Job 32:2

23 [z]Gen. 24:15 [4]*Rebecca,* Rom. 9:10

instead of his son. [14] And Abraham called the name of the place, [3]The-LORD-Will-Provide; as it is said *to* this day, "In the Mount of the LORD it shall be provided."

[15] Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, [16] and said: [o]"By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only *son*— [17] blessing I will [p]bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants [q]as the stars of the heaven [r]and as the sand which *is* on the seashore; and [s]your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. [18] [t]In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, [u]because you have obeyed My voice." [19] So Abraham returned to his young men, and they rose and went together to [v]Beersheba; and Abraham dwelt at Beersheba.

The Family of Nahor

[20] Now it came to pass after these things that it was told Abraham, saying, "Indeed [w]Milcah also has borne children to your brother Nahor: [21] [x]Huz his firstborn, Buz his brother, Kemuel the father [y]of Aram, [22] Chesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel." [23] And [z]Bethuel begot [4]Rebekah. These eight Milcah bore to Nahor, Abraham's brother. [24] His concubine, whose name was Reumah, also bore Tebah, Gaham, Thahash, and Maachah.

■ **22:14 The-LORD-Will-Provide.** The Hebrew word here translated "provide" means "see," or "see to it" (used in vv. 4, 8, 13, 14). The name by which Abraham commemorates the event shows that he perceives God's revelation of His saving purpose.

■ **22:16 By Myself I have sworn.** God reinforces the surety of His infallible promise by an oath (15:8–21; 22:17; cf. Heb. 6:13–18). While sinful and fallible human beings swear by an authority higher than themselves, God, the supreme Being and Authority, swears by Himself (Heb. 6:13 note).

not withheld . . . your only son. Abraham's action points forward to God's provision of "His only begotten Son" as the final sacrifice for sin (John 3:16; Rom. 8:32).

■ **22:18 because you have obeyed My voice.** See notes on 17:2 and 18:19.

■ **22:20—25:11** This final section of the account of Terah provides a transition from the patriarchal headship of Abraham to that of Isaac (2:4 note; Introduction: Outline). It narrates Sarah's death (ch. 23), Isaac's marriage to Rebekah (ch. 24), the dismissal of Abraham's other children, leaving Isaac as the sole heir (25:1–6), and Abraham's death (25:7–11).

■ **22:20–24** The twelve children of Nahor (eight by the wife and four from the concubine) parallel the twelve tribes of Israel (30:1–24; 35:16–18; 49:28).

■ **22:23 Rebekah.** Isaac's future wife is introduced (ch. 24). Her father Bethuel was the son of Milcah, the daughter of Haran and wife of Nahor, Abraham's brothers (11:28 note).

The Abrahamic Covenant (22:15–18)

Genesis 12:1–3	God initiated His covenant with Abram when he was living in Ur of the Chaldeans, promising a land, descendants and blessing.
Genesis 12:4, 5	Abram went with his family to Haran, lived there for a time, and left at the age of 75.
Genesis 13:14–17	After Lot separated from Abram, God again promised the land to him and his descendants.
Genesis 15:1–21	This covenant was ratified when God passed between the sacrificial animals Abram laid before God.
Genesis 17:1–27	When Abram was 99, God renewed His covenant, changing Abram's name to Abraham ("Father of a Multitude"). Sign of the covenant: circumcision.
Genesis 22:15–18	Confirmation of the covenant because of Abraham's obedience.

The Abrahamic covenant was foundational to other covenants:
- The promise of land in the Palestinian covenant (Deut. 30:1–10)
- The promise of kingly descendants in the Davidic covenant (2 Sam. 7:12–16)
- The promise of blessing in the "old" and "new" covenants (Ex. 19:3–6; Jer. 31:31–40)

Sarah's Death and Burial

23 Sarah lived one hundred and twenty-seven years; *these were* the years of the life of Sarah. 2 So Sarah died in [a]Kirjath Arba (that *is,* [b]Hebron) in the land of Canaan, and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah and to weep for her.

3 Then Abraham stood up from before his dead, and spoke to the sons of [c]Heth, saying, 4 [d]"I *am* a foreigner and a visitor among you. [e]Give me property for a burial place among you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight."

5 And the sons of Heth answered Abraham, saying to him, 6 "Hear us, my lord: You *are* [f]a [g]mighty prince among us; bury your dead in the choicest of our burial places. None of us will withhold from you his burial place, that you may bury your dead."

7 Then Abraham stood up and bowed himself to the people of the land, the sons of Heth. 8 And he spoke with them, saying, "If it is your wish that I bury my dead out of my sight, hear me, and [z]meet with Ephron the son of Zohar for me, 9 that he may give me the cave of [g]Machpelah which he has, which *is* at the end of his field. Let him give it to me at the full price, as property for a burial place among you."

10 Now Ephron dwelt among the sons of Heth; and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the presence of the sons of Heth, all who [h]entered at the gate of his city, saying, 11 [i]"No, my lord, hear me: I give you the field and the cave that *is* in it; I give it to you in the presence of the sons of my people. I give it to you. Bury your dead!"

12 Then Abraham bowed himself down before the people of the land; 13 and he spoke to Ephron in the hearing of the people of the land, saying, "If you *will give it,* please hear me. I will give you money for the field; take *it* from me and I will bury my dead there."

14 And Ephron answered Abraham, saying to him, 15 "My lord, listen to me; the land *is worth* four hundred [j]shekels of silver. What *is* that between you and me? So bury your dead." 16 And Abraham listened to Ephron; and Abraham [k]weighed out the silver for Ephron which he had named in the hearing of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, currency of the merchants.

17 So [l]the field of Ephron which *was* in Machpelah, which *was* before Mamre, the field and the cave which *was* in it, and all the trees that *were* in the field, which *were* within all the surrounding borders, were deeded 18 to Abraham as a possession in the presence of the sons of Heth, before all who went in at the gate of his city.

19 And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah, before Mamre (that *is,* Hebron) in the land of Canaan. 20 So the field and the cave that *is* in it [m]were deeded to Abraham by the sons of Heth as property for a burial place.

A Bride for Isaac

24 Now Abraham [a]was old, well advanced in age; and the LORD [b]had blessed Abraham in all things. 2 So Abraham said [c]to the oldest servant of his house, who [d]ruled over all that he had, "Please, [e]put your hand under my thigh, 3 and I will make you [f]swear[l] by the LORD, the

CHAPTER 23

2 [a]Josh. 14:15; 15:13; 21:11 [b]Gen. 13:18; 23:19

3 [c]Gen. 10:15; 15:20

4 [d][Gen. 17:8] [e]Acts 7:5, 16

6 [f]Gen. 13:2; 14:14; 24:35 [g]Lit. *prince of God*

8 [z]*entreat*

9 [g]Gen. 25:9

10 [h]Gen. 23:18; 34:20, 24

11 [i]2 Sam. 24:21–24

15 [j]Ex. 30:13

16 [k]Jer. 32:9, 10

17 [l]Gen. 25:9; 49:29–32; 50:13

20 [m]Jer. 32:10, 11

CHAPTER 24

1 [a]Gen. 18:11; 21:5 [b]Gen. 12:2; 13:2; 24:35

2 [c]Gen. 15:2 [d]Gen. 24:10; 39:4–6 [e]Gen. 47:29

3 [f]Gen. 14:19, 22 [l]*take an oath*

■ **23:3–18** The extensive description of the negotiation and sale of the cave demonstrates that Abraham secured an impeccable legal claim to the field in Machpelah. Anticipating the greater fulfillment of the land grant promise (13:15 note), Abraham now became legal heir to a small plot in the Promised Land.

■ **23:3 sons of Heth.** The Hittites (10:15 note).

■ **23:4 a foreigner and a visitor.** Though Abraham lived in the Promised Land as a sojourner (21:34 note; Heb. 11:9, 13), he demonstrated his faith in the covenant promises by buying his first piece of property in the Promised Land—a cave to serve as a burial site.

■ **23:6 mighty prince.** Or, "a prince of God" (text note). Though some suggest that this was merely respectful flattery, it is likely that the citizens of Hebron had discerned God's blessing on Abraham (cf. 21:22).

■ **23:10 gate.** Legal transactions took place at the gates of ancient Near Eastern cities (19:1 note; Ruth 4:1, 2).

■ **23:11 I give.** As the excessive price requested (v. 15 note) and Abraham's offer of money (v. 13) indicate, Ephron's offer to give the cave and field was part of the Near Eastern bargaining ritual. The seeming generosity of the offer was probably intended either to obligate Abraham to respond with a gift of even greater value (if accepted) or to discourage Abraham from lengthy negotiation over the price.

■ **23:15 four hundred shekels.** A high price, especially when compared with the field that Jeremiah bought for seventeen shekels (Jer. 32:9) and with the hill of Samaria that Omri purchased for two talents of silver (six thousand shekels, 1 Kin. 16:24).

■ **23:16 Abraham weighed out.** Abraham was willing to pay an excessive price in return for an unimpeachable sale.

■ **23:19 buried . . . in the cave.** In faithful expectation that God would fulfill the covenant promise of land (13:15 and note), Abraham sought to anchor his descendants in the Promised Land (24:6–9; 25:9; 49:30; 50:13).

■ **24:1–9** See "Honest Speech, Oaths, and Vows" at Neh. 5:12.

■ **24:2 oldest servant.** Abraham assigned this important mission only to his most trusted manager, perhaps Eliezer of Damascus (15:2, 3).

put your hand under my thigh. The loins were viewed as the source of vital and procreative power (Deut. 33:11; Job 40:16; Heb. 7:10). Such an oath was inviolable, even after the death of the one to whom it was sworn (47:29–31).

■ **24:3 the LORD . . . of the earth.** See 14:22.

not . . . from the daughters of the Canaanites. Abraham sets an example for his descendants to secure wives from the blessed Semites, not the cursed Canaanites (9:24–27; Deut. 7:1–4).

God of heaven and the God of the earth, that [g]you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell; 4 [h]but you shall go [i]to my country and to my family, and take a wife for my son Isaac."

5 And the servant said to him, "Perhaps the woman will not be willing to follow me to this land. Must I take your son back to the land from which you came?"

6 But Abraham said to him, "Beware that you do not take my son back there. 7 The LORD God of heaven, who [j]took me from my father's house and from the land of my family, and who spoke to me and swore to me, saying, [k]'To your [2]descendants I give this land,' [l]He will send His angel before you, and you shall take a wife for my son from there. 8 And if the woman is not willing to follow you, then [m]you will be released from this oath; only do not take my son back there." 9 So the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and swore to him concerning this matter.

10 Then the servant took ten of his master's camels and departed, [n]for all his master's goods *were in* his hand. And he arose and went to Mesopotamia, to [o]the city of Nahor. 11 And he made his camels kneel down outside the city by a well of water at evening time, the time [p]when women go out to draw *water.* 12 Then he [q]said, "O LORD God of my master Abraham, please [r]give me success this day, and show kindness to my master Abraham. 13 Behold, *here* [s]I stand by the well of water, and [t]the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water. 14 Now let it be that the young woman to whom I say, 'Please let down your pitcher that I may drink,' and she says, 'Drink, and I will also give your camels a drink'—*let* her *be the one* You have appointed for Your servant Isaac. And [u]by this I will know that You have shown kindness to my master."

15 And it happened, [v]before he had finished speaking, that behold, [w]Rebekah,[3] who was born to Bethuel, son of [x]Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, came out with her pitcher on her shoulder. 16 Now the young woman [y]*was* very beautiful to behold, a virgin; no man had known her. And she went down to the well, filled her pitcher, and came up. 17 And the servant ran to meet her and said, "Please let me drink a little water from your pitcher."

18 [z]So she said, "Drink, my lord." Then she quickly let her pitcher down to her hand, and gave him a drink. 19 And when she had finished giving him a drink, she said, "I will draw *water* for your camels also, until they have finished drinking." 20 Then she quickly emptied her pitcher into the trough, ran back to the well to draw *water,* and drew for all his camels. 21 And the man, wondering at her, remained silent so as to know whether [a]the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not.

22 So it was, when the camels had finished drinking, that the man took a golden [b]nose ring weighing half a shekel, and two bracelets for her wrists weighing ten *shekels* of gold, 23 and said, "Whose daughter *are* you? Tell me, please, is there room *in* your father's house for us [4]to lodge?"

24 So she said to him, [c]"I *am* the daughter of Bethuel, Milcah's son, whom she bore to Nahor." 25 Moreover she said to him, "We have both straw and feed enough, and room to lodge."

26 Then the man [d]bowed down his head and worshiped the LORD. 27 And he said, [e]"Blessed *be* the LORD God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken [f]His mercy and His truth toward my master. As for me, being on the way, the LORD [g]led me to the house of my master's brethren." 28 So the young woman ran and told her mother's household these things.

29 Now Rebekah had a brother whose name *was* [h]Laban, and Laban ran out to the man by the well. 30 So it came to pass, when he saw the nose ring, and the bracelets on his sister's wrists, and when he heard the words of his sister Rebekah, saying, "Thus the man spoke to me," that he went to the man. And there he stood by the camels at the well. 31 And he said, "Come in, [i]O

3 [g]Deut. 7:3
4 [h]Gen. 28:2 [i]Gen. 12:1
7 [j]Gen. 12:1; 24:3 [k]Gen. 12:7; 13:15; 15:18; 17:8 [l]Ex. 23:20, 23; 33:2 [2]Lit. *seed*
8 [m]Josh. 2:17–20
10 [n]Gen. 24:2, 22 [o]Gen. 11:31, 32; 22:20; 27:43; 29:5
11 [p]Ex. 2:16
12 [q]Ex. 3:6, 15 [r]Neh. 1:11
13 [s]Gen. 24:43 [t]Ex. 2:16
14 [u]Judg. 6:17, 37
15 [v]Is. 65:24 [w]Gen. 24:45; 25:20 [x]Gen. 22:20, 23 [3]*Rebecca,* Rom. 9:10
16 [y]Gen. 12:11; 26:7; 29:17
18 [z][1 Pet. 3:8, 9]
21 [a]Gen. 24:12–14, 27, 52
22 [b]Ex. 32:2, 3
23 [4]*to spend the night*
24 [c]Gen. 22:23; 24:15
26 [d]Ex. 4:31
27 [e]Ex. 18:10 [f]Gen. 32:10 [g]Gen. 24:21, 48
29 [h]Gen. 29:5, 13
31 [i]Judg. 17:2

■ **24:6 do not take my son back there.** See note on 23:19.

■ **24:7 I give . . . He will send.** Claiming God's covenant promise (12:7), Abraham looks forward to God's continuing guidance and provision. Abraham had learned from his experience with Hagar not to trust the flesh to secure the promise but to rely on God's supernatural provision (ch. 16).

■ **24:12 O LORD God.** The meeting of Abraham's servant and Rebekah was framed in prayer (vv. 26, 27).

kindness. The Hebrew word (*hesed*) means loyalty to a covenant relationship (Ex. 15:13 note).

■ **24:14 by this I will know.** A request for a sign was appropriate in connection with the servant's mission to advance the messianic line (cf. Is. 7:10–14).

■ **24:15 Rebekah.** See note on 22:23.

■ **24:16 a virgin.** Her virginity was important to ensure that the offspring would be Isaac's.

■ **24:27 the LORD led me.** God guides His saints through providential acts (cf. 50:20). Later in the Pentateuch the expression is used for God's special guidance of His people through the wilderness to the Promised Land (Ex. 13:17, 21; 15:13).

■ **24:29 Laban.** Laban took responsibility for the family, probably because Bethuel was incapacitated (v. 50 and note).

blessed of the LORD! Why do you stand outside? For I have prepared the house, and a place for the camels."

32 Then the man came to the house. And he unloaded the camels, and [j]provided straw and feed for the camels, and water to [k]wash his feet and the feet of the men who *were* with him. 33 *Food* was set before him to eat, but he said, [l]"I will not eat until I have told about my errand."

And he said, "Speak on."

34 So he said, "I *am* Abraham's servant. 35 The LORD [m]has blessed my master greatly, and he has become great; and He has given him flocks and herds, silver and gold, male and female servants, and camels and donkeys. 36 And Sarah my master's wife [n]bore a son to my master when she was old; and [o]to him he has given all that he has. 37 Now my master [p]made me swear, saying, 'You shall not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell; 38 [q]but you shall go to my father's house and to my family, and take a wife for my son.' 39 [r]And I said to my master, 'Perhaps the woman will not follow me.' 40 [s]But he said to me, 'The LORD, [t]before whom I walk, will send His angel with you and [5]prosper your way; and you shall take a wife for my son from my family and from my father's house. 41 [u]You will be clear from this oath when you arrive among my family; for if they will not give *her* to you, then you will be released from my oath.'

42 "And this day I came to the well and said, [v]'O LORD God of my master Abraham, if You will now prosper the way in which I go, 43 [w]behold, I stand by the well of water; and it shall come to pass that when the virgin comes out to draw *water,* and I say to her, "Please give me a little water from your pitcher to drink," 44 and she says to me, "Drink, and I will draw for your camels also,"—*let* her *be* the woman whom the LORD has appointed for my master's son.'

45 [x]"But before I had finished [y]speaking in my heart, there was Rebekah, coming out with her pitcher on her shoulder; and she went down to the well and drew *water.* And I said to her, 'Please let me drink.' 46 And she made haste and let her pitcher down from her *shoulder,* and said, 'Drink, and I will give your camels a drink also.' So I drank, and she gave the camels a drink also. 47 Then I asked her, and said, 'Whose daughter *are* you?' And she said, 'The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bore to him.' So I put the nose ring on her nose and the bracelets on her wrists. 48 [z]And I bowed my head and worshiped the LORD, and blessed the LORD God of my master Abraham, who had led me in the way of truth to [a]take the daughter of my master's brother for his son. 49 Now if you will [b]deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me. And if not, tell me, that I may turn to the right hand or to the left."

50 Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, [c]"The thing comes from the LORD; we cannot [d]speak to you either bad or good. 51 [e]Here *is* Rebekah before you; take *her* and go, and let her be your master's son's wife, as the LORD has spoken."

52 And it came to pass, when Abraham's servant heard their words, that [f]he worshiped the LORD, *bowing himself* to the earth. 53 Then the servant brought out [g]jewelry of silver, jewelry of gold, and clothing, and gave *them* to Rebekah. He also gave [h]precious things to her brother and to her mother.

54 And he and the men who *were* with him ate and drank and stayed all night. Then they arose in the morning, and he said, [i]"Send me away to my master."

55 But her brother and her mother said, "Let the young woman stay with us *a few* days, at least ten; after that she may go."

56 And he said to them, "Do not [6]hinder me, since the LORD has prospered my way; send me away so that I may go to my master."

57 So they said, "We will call the young woman and ask her personally." 58 Then they called Rebekah and said to her, "Will you go with this man?"

And she said, "I will go."

59 So they sent away Rebekah their sister [j]and her nurse, and Abraham's servant and his men. 60 And they blessed Rebekah and said to her:

"Our sister, *may* you *become*
[k]*The mother of* thousands of ten thousands;

32 [j]Gen. 43:24; Judg. 19:21 [k]Gen. 19:2; John 13:5, 13–15

33 [l]Job 23:12; John 4:34; Eph. 6:5–7

35 [m]Gen. 13:2; 24:1

36 [n]Gen. 21:1–7 [o]Gen. 21:10; 25:5

37 [p]Gen. 24:2–4

38 [q]Gen. 24:4

39 [r]Gen. 24:5

40 [s]Gen. 24:7 [t]Gen. 5:22, 24; 17:1; 1 Kin. 8:23 [5]*make your way successful*

41 [u]Gen. 24:8

42 [v]Gen. 24:12

43 [w]Gen. 24:13

45 [x]Gen. 24:15 [y]1 Sam. 1:13

48 [z]Gen. 24:26, 52 [a]Gen. 22:23; 24:27; Ps. 32:8; 48:14; Is. 48:17

49 [b]Gen. 47:29; Josh. 2:14

50 [c]Ps. 118:23; Matt. 21:42; Mark 12:11 [d]Gen. 31:24, 29

51 [e]Gen. 20:15

52 [f]Gen. 24:26, 48

53 [g]Gen. 24:10, 22; Ex. 3:22; 11:2; 12:35 [h]2 Chr. 21:3; Ezra 1:6

54 [i]Gen. 24:56, 59; 30:25

56 [6]*delay*

59 [j]Gen. 35:8

60 [k]Gen. 17:16

■ **24:33 not eat until I have told.** The servant recounts the story (vv. 34–48) in detail so that Rebekah and her family will acknowledge the hand of the Lord (v. 50).

■ **24:36 he has given all that he has.** An important detail, considering Abraham's considerable wealth (cf. 25:5, 6).

■ **24:50 Laban and Bethuel.** The irregular sequence of mentioning the son before the father suggests that Bethuel was incapacitated. In v. 55 only the brother and mother are mentioned (cf. v. 28).

The thing comes from the LORD. They acknowledged God's providence in the matter.

■ **24:60 mother of thousands . . . possess The gates.** See 13:16; 15:5; 22:17.

60 [l]Gen. 22:17; 28:14
62 [m]Gen. 16:14; 25:11
63 [n]Josh. 1:8; Ps. 1:2; 77:12; 119:15, 27, 48; 143:5; 145:5
64 [o]Josh. 15:18
67 [p]Gen. 25:20; 29:20; Prov. 18:22 [q]Gen. 23:1, 2; 38:12

CHAPTER 25

1 [a]1 Chr. 1:32, 33
2 [b]1 Chr. 1:32, 33
5 [c]Gen. 24:35, 36
6 [d]Gen. 21:14 [e]Judg. 6:3
8 [f]Gen. 15:15; 47:8, 9 [g]Gen. 25:17; 35:29; 49:29, 33
9 [h]Gen. 35:29; 50:13 [i]Gen. 23:9, 17; 49:30
10 [j]Gen. 23:3–16 [k]Gen. 49:31
11 [l]Gen. 16:14
12 [m]Gen. 11:10, 27; 16:15
13 [n]1 Chr. 1:29–31
15 [1]MT *Hadad*
16 [2]*camps*

[l]And may your descendants possess
The gates of those who hate them."

61 Then Rebekah and her maids arose, and they rode on the camels and followed the man. So the servant took Rebekah and departed.

62 Now Isaac came from the way of [m]Beer Lahai Roi, for he dwelt in the South. 63 And Isaac went out [n]to meditate in the field in the evening; and he lifted his eyes and looked, and there, the camels *were* coming. 64 Then Rebekah lifted her eyes, and when she saw Isaac [o]she dismounted from her camel; 65 for she had said to the servant, "Who *is* this man walking in the field to meet us?"

The servant said, "It *is* my master." So she took a veil and covered herself.

66 And the servant told Isaac all the things that he had done. 67 Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent; and he [p]took Rebekah and she became his wife, and he loved her. So Isaac [q]was comforted after his mother's *death.*

Abraham and Keturah

25 Abraham again took a wife, and her name *was* [a]Keturah. 2 And [b]she bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. 3 Jokshan begot Sheba and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, Letushim, and Leummim. 4 And the sons of Midian *were* Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abidah, and Eldaah. All these *were* the children of Keturah.

5 And [c]Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac. 6 But Abraham gave gifts to the sons of the concubines which Abraham had; and while he was still living he [d]sent them eastward, away from Isaac his son, to [e]the country of the east.

Abraham's Death and Burial

7 This *is* the sum of the years of Abraham's life which he lived: one hundred and seventy-five years. 8 Then Abraham breathed his last and [f]died in a good old age, an old man and full *of years,* and [g]was gathered to his people. 9 And [h]his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of [i]Machpelah, which *is* before Mamre, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, 10 [j]the field which Abraham purchased from the sons of Heth. [k]There Abraham was buried, and Sarah his wife. 11 And it came to pass, after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac. And Isaac dwelt at [l]Beer Lahai Roi.

The Families of Ishmael and Isaac

12 Now this *is* the [m]genealogy of Ishmael, Abraham's son, whom Hagar the Egyptian, Sarah's maidservant, bore to Abraham. 13 And [n]these *were* the names of the sons of Ishmael, by their names, according to their generations: The firstborn of Ishmael, Nebajoth; then Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, 14 Mishma, Dumah, Massa, 15 [1]Hadar, Tema, Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. 16 These *were* the sons of Ishmael and these *were* their names, by their towns and their [2]settlements,

■ **24:64, 65** Rebekah dismounted as a sign of respect for her new husband (cf. 1 Sam. 25:23). The customary bridal veil shielded the bride's face from the husband until the consummation of the marriage (cf. Song 4:1).

■ **24:66 told Isaac.** Abraham lived another 35 years after Isaac's marriage (21:5; 25:7, 9, 20). As the attention shifts to Isaac, the narrative omits the servant's report to Abraham and goes directly to the future patriarch.

■ **24:67 brought . . . took . . . loved her.** God granted complete success to the journey. In obedience to God both Isaac and Rebekah found fulfillment.

his mother Sarah's tent. Rebekah replaced Sarah as matriarch of the family.

■ **25:1–18** The genealogies that precede (vv. 1–4) and follow (vv. 12–18) the account of Abraham's death (vv. 7–11) are of Abraham's natural sons. They highlight that the offspring through Sarah is miraculous, that Abraham's many natural offspring in no way disadvantage Isaac's inheritance in the land (vv. 5–6), and that the elect one has a blood relation, but not a spiritual bond, with the natural offspring. Isaac was Abraham's "only son" of promise (22:2 and note).

■ **25:1 again took a wife.** Keturah was a concubine (v. 6; 1 Chr. 1:32). No attempt is made to date this secondary offspring of Abraham.

■ **25:2–4** Some of these names are associated with Syria and Arabia.

■ **25:5 gave all that he had to Isaac.** See 24:36. Abraham dispossessed his children by Keturah as he had dispossessed Ishmael, the son of Hagar (21:10 and note).

■ **25:6 while he was still living.** Abraham himself legally secured Isaac's inheritance in the land.

■ **25:8 died.** Abraham died in faith, seeing the promises afar off (Heb. 11:13–16).

in a good old age. In fulfillment of the divine promise in 15:15.

was gathered to his people. A Hebrew idiom meaning that the deceased had entered the realm of death to join his ancestors (v. 17; 35:29 and text note; 49:29, 33; Deut. 32:50).

■ **25:9 in the cave.** See ch. 23; 35:27–29; 49:29–32.

■ **25:12–18** The genealogy of Ishmael demonstrates God's faithfulness in keeping His promise to Abraham (17:20).

■ **25:12 this is the genealogy.** See note on 2:4.

■ **25:13–15** Some of these names are Arabic, and others are attested in extrabiblical texts as northwest Arabian tribes.

■ **25:16 twelve princes.** See 17:20.

[o]twelve princes according to their nations. [17] These *were* the years of the life of Ishmael: one hundred and thirty-seven years; and [p]he breathed his last and died, and was gathered to his people. [18] [q](They dwelt from Havilah as far as Shur, which *is* east of Egypt as you go toward Assyria.) He [3]died [r]in the presence of all his brethren.

[19] This *is* the [s]genealogy of Isaac, Abraham's son. [t]Abraham begot Isaac. [20] Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah as wife, [u]the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan Aram, [v]the sister of Laban the Syrian. [21] Now Isaac pleaded with the LORD for his wife, because she *was* barren; [w]and the LORD granted his plea, [x]and Rebekah his wife conceived. [22] But the children struggled together within her; and she said, "If *all is* well, why *am I like* this?" [y]So she went to inquire of the LORD.

[23] And the LORD said to her:

[z]"Two nations *are* in your womb,
Two peoples shall be separated from your body;
One people shall be stronger than [a]the other,
[b]And the older shall serve the younger."

[24] So when her days were fulfilled *for her* to give birth, indeed *there were* twins in her womb. [25] And the first came out red. *He was* [c]like a hairy garment all over; so they called his name [4]Esau. [26] Afterward his brother came out, and [d]his hand took hold of Esau's heel; so [e]his name was called [5]Jacob. Isaac *was* sixty years old when she bore them.

[27] So the boys grew. And Esau was [f]a skillful hunter, a man of the field; but Jacob was [g]a [6]mild man, [h]dwelling in tents. [28] And Isaac loved Esau because he [i]ate *of his* game, [j]but Rebekah loved Jacob.

Esau Sells His Birthright

[29] Now Jacob cooked a stew; and Esau came in from the field, and he *was* weary. [30] And Esau said to Jacob, "Please feed me with that same red *stew,* for I *am* weary." Therefore his name was called [7]Edom.

16 [o]Gen. 17:20

17 [p]Gen. 25:8; 49:33

18 [q]1 Sam. 15:7 [r]Gen. 16:12 [3]*fell*

19 [s]Gen. 36:1, 9 [t]Matt. 1:2

20 [u]Gen. 22:23; 24:15, 29, 67 [v]Gen. 24:29

21 [w]1 Chr. 5:20 [x]Rom. 9:10–13

22 [y]1 Sam. 1:15; 9:9; 10:22

23 [z]Gen. 17:4–6, 16; 24:60 [a]2 Sam. 8:14 [b]Rom. 9:12

25 [c]Gen. 27:11, 16, 23 [4]Lit. *Hairy*

26 [d]Hos. 12:3 [e]Gen. 27:36 [5]*Supplanter* or *Deceitful,* lit. *One Who Takes the Heel*

27 [f]Gen. 27:3, 5 [g]Job 1:1, 8 [h]Heb. 11:9 [6]Lit. *complete*

28 [i]Gen. 27:4, 19, 25, 31 [j]Gen. 27:6–10

30 [7]Lit. *Red*

■ **25:18 died in the presence of all his brethren.** The Hebrew of this phrase is difficult to render. It could also mean that he settled down in the presence of his brethren, or that he lived in hostility against his brethren (cf. 16:20).

■ **25:19—35:29** The account of Isaac is one of conflict between Isaac and Rebekah (v. 28; ch. 27), Jacob and Esau (25:19–34; chs. 27; 32; 33), Jacob and Laban (chs. 29—31), Leah and Rachel (29:31—30:24), and finally and decisively between Jacob and the Angel of the Lord (32:22–32; cf. 16:7 note). At the story's core is the promise to Abraham (24:7), passed on to Isaac and Jacob (28:3, 4, 13–15; 35:11–12). The promise is elaborated to include God's protective presence (28:15; 31:42; 32:9, 12; 35:3). Overarching the entire story is God's sovereign good pleasure (Rom. 9:10–12). He opened Rebekah's barren womb, established the supremacy of Jacob over Esau, contravened human customs regarding firstborn rights, and overrode Isaac's patriarchal authority, Laban's social position, and Esau's military might.

■ **25:19–26** The struggle for supremacy between Jacob and Esau in the womb and the Lord's sovereign choice of Jacob form a fitting introduction to this account and sets its tone (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes).

■ **25:19 the genealogy of Isaac.** Or, "the account of Isaac" (2:4 note). This account (25:19—35:29) covers the period from Isaac's marriage to his death. Much of the story, however, features Jacob (Introduction: Outline). After Isaac tries to thwart God's blessing on Jacob (ch. 27), he is not heard from again until his death (35:27–29).

■ **25:20 Padan Aram.** The region surrounding the city of Haran in northern Mesopotamia (24:10; 28:2).

■ **25:21 pleaded . . . barren.** The next generation also had to learn that the seed of promise is a gift of God's grace (11:30; 17:15, 16; 18:1–15; 21:1–7), and sovereignly chosen by Him (v. 23). Both Isaac's wife and offspring were secured through prayer (24:12).

■ **25:23 the LORD said.** God often displayed His sovereign control through prophecies given on the threshold of new historical eras: Adam and Eve (3:15); Noah's descendants (9:25–27); Abraham (12:1–3); Jacob and Esau (27:27–29, 39, 40); and Joseph and his brothers (37:1–11). See Introduction: Characteristics and Themes.

older shall serve the younger. Jacob owed his supremacy to sovereign election, not natural rights (cf. Deut. 21:15–17). The prophecy found fulfillment as Esau's descendants, the Edomites, were often subjugated by Israel, and at last were included in the Jewish state during the intertestamental period (1 Sam. 14:47; 2 Sam. 8:13, 14; 2 Kin. 14:7).

God's choice of Jacob (the younger) over Esau (the older) is a paradigmatic example of divine sovereign election (Rom. 9:9–13, 18–23). God deals justly with all, but He has mercy on some (Matt. 20:1–16).

■ **25:25 hairy.** The Hebrew word sounds like "Seir," where Esau later lived (36:8).

■ **25:26 Jacob.** See text note. Though destined to supplant his brother, Jacob tarnished his name to mean "deceitful" through cunning efforts to gain his brother's privilege (25:29–34; 27:1–40).

■ **25:27–34** Esau was a profane, rough-and-ready man of the field who shortsightedly gratified his appetite and despised the family's future inheritance. Despite his dishonesty, Jacob had farsightedness to value the inheritance.

■ **25:27 mild.** See text note. The Hebrew here suggests a civilized man.

■ **25:28 Isaac loved . . . Rebekah loved.** Parental favoritism further set the family at loggerheads. God's sovereign choice had to prevail over Isaac's appetite (27:18–27), for Isaac had the legal authority to pass on the family's inheritance and blessing (24:36; 25:5).

■ **25:30 Please feed me.** The Hebrew indicates the impulsive and hurried request of one who lived for the moment. Esau's impulsiveness is further revealed in v. 32.

that same red stew. Lit. "the red stuff, that red stuff." Esau's clumsy repetition of the Hebrew word for "red" (*'adom*) recalls v. 25, and explains the name by which his descendants were known (Hebrew *'edom*).

31 But Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright as of this day."
32 And Esau said, "Look, I *am* about to die; so [k]what *is* this birthright to me?"
33 Then Jacob said, [s]"Swear to me as of this day."
So he swore to him, and [t]sold his birthright to Jacob. 34 And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; then [m]he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau [n]despised *his* birthright.

Isaac and Abimelech

26 There was a famine in the land, besides [a]the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to [b]Abimelech king of the Philistines, in Gerar.
2 Then the LORD appeared to him and said: [c]"Do not go down to Egypt; live in [d]the land of which I shall tell you. 3 [e]Dwell in this land, and [f]I will be with you and [g]bless you; for to you and your descendants [h]I give all these lands, and I will perform [i]the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. 4 And [j]I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; [k]and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed; 5 [l]because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws."
6 So Isaac dwelt in Gerar. 7 And the men of the place asked about his wife. And [m]he said, "She *is* my sister"; for [n]he was afraid to say, "*She is* my wife," *because he thought,* "lest the men of the place kill me for Rebekah, because she *is* [o]beautiful to behold." 8 Now it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked through a window, and saw, and there was Isaac, [t]showing endearment to Rebekah his wife. 9 Then Abimelech called Isaac and said, "Quite obviously she *is* your wife; so how could you say, 'She *is* my sister'?"
Isaac said to him, "Because I said, 'Lest I die on account of her.' "
10 And Abimelech said, "What *is* this you have done to us? One of the people might soon have lain with your wife, and [p]you would have brought guilt on us." 11 So Abimelech charged all *his* people, saying, "He who [q]touches this man or his wife shall surely be put to death."
12 Then Isaac sowed in that land, and reaped in the same year [r]a hundredfold; and the LORD [s]blessed him. 13 The man [t]began to prosper, and continued prospering until he became very prosperous; 14 for he had possessions of flocks and possessions of herds and a great number of ser-

32 [k]Mark 8:36, 37
33 [l]Heb. 12:16
[s]*Take an oath*
34 [m]Eccl. 8:15
[n]Heb. 12:16, 17

CHAPTER 26

1 [a]Gen. 12:10
[b]Gen. 20:1, 2
2 [c]Gen. 12:7; 17:1; 18:1; 35:9 [d]Gen. 12:1
3 [e]Heb. 11:9 [f]Gen. 28:13, 15 [g]Gen. 12:2 [h]Gen. 12:7; 13:15; 15:18 [i]Gen. 22:16
4 [j]Gen. 15:5; 22:17 [k]Gen. 12:3; 22:18
5 [l]Gen. 22:16, 18
7 [m]Gen. 12:13; 20:2, 12, 13 [n]Prov. 29:25 [o]Gen. 12:11; 24:16; 29:17
8 [t]*caressing*
10 [p]Gen. 20:9
11 [q]Ps. 105:15
12 [r]Matt. 13:8, 23 [s]Gen. 24:1; 25:8, 11; 26:3
13 [t][Prov. 10:22]

■ **25:31 Sell me.** Jacob took advantage of his brother's weakness. His behavior contrasts sharply with Abraham's treatment of Lot (13:8, 9) and will be corrected (33:1–17).

birthright. The firstborn had the right to be the principal heir of the family's fortunes (27:33; Deut. 21:17; 1 Chr. 5:1, 2). In the covenant family, this fortune included the substance of the Abrahamic blessing of offspring and land (12:2, 3, 7).

■ **25:34 ate and drank, arose, and went his way.** The staccato style of the Hebrew narrative implies that Esau himself was as crude and unreflective as his speech.

despised his birthright. By despising his birthright, Esau held God's promises in contempt (Heb. 12:16, 17).

■ **26:1–33** After the introduction to the account of Isaac (25:19–34), Isaac is linked with the covenant promises (ch. 26). There are two revelations of covenantal promises (vv. 2–6, 24). Also, the extensive parallels between Isaac's experience in ch. 26 and Abraham's in chs. 12; 13; 20; 21—famine (v. 1; cf. 12:10), deception involving the marital status of the matriarch (v. 7; cf. 12:13; 20:2), material prosperity (vv. 13, 14; cf. 12:16; 13:6), conflict over land (vv. 20, 21; cf. 13:7), and the covenant with the Philistines at Beersheba (vv. 26–33; cf. 21:22–34)—are included to show that Isaac was indeed the recipient of the covenant promises made to Abraham. Although they remained sojourners (v. 3 note), the patriarchs had a foretaste of life in the land.

■ **26:2–6** The form and content of the Lord's command and promise to Isaac, and Isaac's obedience, are linked with Abraham (12:1–4 and notes).

■ **26:3 Dwell in this land.** The Hebrew word translated "dwell" indicates a "sojourner" or resident alien (21:34 note; Heb. 11:9, 13). Isaac is to remain there as a "stranger" who does not yet have the land in possession.

bless. See note on 12:2.

give all these lands. See note on 13:15.

perform the oath. See 15:18; 17:21; and especially 22:16–18 and notes. The promise to Abraham is secure, but Isaac's participation in the covenant blessings requires his obedience.

■ **26:4 stars of heaven.** See 15:5.

seed. See notes on 12:3, 7.

■ **26:5 because.** See 22:18; notes on 17:2; 18:19.

My charge, My commandments, My statutes . . . laws. Abraham's obedience is described in terms that recall Israel's requirement to keep the law of Moses (cf. Deut. 11:1). Abraham is a type of Christ, who by His obedience fulfilled the righteous requirements of the law and secured its blessings for His seed (Matt. 5:17, 18).

■ **26:6 So Isaac dwelt.** Like his father Abraham, Isaac responds obediently to God's promise (12:4; 17:23; 22:3 and notes).

■ **26:7–11** This narrative of deception and peril to Rebekah closely parallels those involving Sarah (12:10–20; ch. 20), but the significant differences in the accounts indicate that they are not merely the same event retold. Though father and son made the same mistake, they are protected.

■ **26:7 sister.** See 12:13; 20:2.

■ **26:8 looked through a window.** Whereas Abraham was spared by a special revelation to Abimelech (20:3), Isaac is spared by providence.

showing endearment. The Hebrew here means "play" and is from the same Hebrew root as the name Isaac.

■ **26:9 Abimelech.** See note on 20:2.

■ **26:10 have brought guilt.** See note on 20:9.

■ **26:12 sowed.** Isaac became more stationary than his nomadic father. His success depended on rain from heaven.

hundredfold. His obedience during the famine was rewarded (vv. 2–6). God's blessing is as evident upon Isaac, the chosen successor to God's promises, as upon his father Abraham (21:22).

vants. So the Philistines [u]envied him. 15 Now the Philistines had stopped up all the wells [v]which his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham his father, and they had filled them with earth. 16 And Abimelech said to Isaac, "Go away from us, for [w]you are much mightier than we."

17 Then Isaac departed from there and [2]pitched his tent in the Valley of Gerar, and dwelt there. 18 And Isaac dug again the wells of water which they had dug in the days of Abraham his father, for the Philistines had stopped them up after the death of Abraham. [x]He called them by the names which his father had called them.

19 Also Isaac's servants dug in the valley, and found a well of running water there. 20 But the herdsmen of Gerar [y]quarreled with Isaac's herdsmen, saying, "The water *is* ours." So he called the name of the well [3]Esek, because they quarreled with him. 21 Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over that *one* also. So he called its name [4]Sitnah. 22 And he moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it. So he called its name [5]Rehoboth, because he said, "For now the LORD has made room for us, and we shall [z]be fruitful in the land."

23 Then he went up from there to Beersheba. 24 And the LORD [a]appeared to him the same night and said, [b]"I *am* the God of your father Abraham; [c]do not fear, for [d]I *am* with you. I will bless you and multiply your descendants for My servant Abraham's sake." 25 So he [e]built an altar there and [f]called on the name of the LORD, and he pitched his tent there; and there Isaac's servants dug a well.

26 Then Abimelech came to him from Gerar with Ahuzzath, one of his friends, [g]and Phichol the commander of his army. 27 And Isaac said to them, "Why have you come to me, [h]since you hate me and have [i]sent me away from you?"

28 But they said, "We have certainly seen that the LORD [j]is with you. So we said, 'Let there now be an oath between us, between you and us; and let us make a [6]covenant with you, 29 that you will do us no harm, since we have not touched you, and since we have done nothing to you but good and have sent you away in peace. [k]You *are* now the blessed of the LORD.' "

30 [l]So he made them a feast, and they ate and drank. 31 Then they arose early in the morning and [m]swore an oath with one another; and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in peace.

32 It came to pass the same day that Isaac's servants came and told him about the well which they had dug, and said to him, "We have found water." 33 So he called it [7]Shebah. [n]Therefore the name of the city *is* [8]Beersheba to this day.

34 [o]When Esau was forty years old, he took as wives Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite. 35 And [p]they were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebekah.

14 [u]Gen. 37:11

15 [v]Gen. 21:25, 30

16 [w]Ex. 1:9

17 [2]*camped*

18 [x]Gen. 21:31

20 [y]Gen. 21:25
[3]Lit. *Quarrel*

21 [4]Lit. *Enmity*

22 [z]Gen. 17:6; 28:3; 41:52 [5]Lit. *Spaciousness*

24 [a]Gen. 26:2 [b]Gen. 17:7, 8; 24:12 [c]Gen. 15:1 [d]Gen. 26:3, 4

25 [e]Gen. 12:7, 8; 13:4, 18; 22:9; 33:20 [f]Ps. 116:17

26 [g]Gen. 21:22

27 [h]Judg. 11:7 [i]Gen. 26:16

28 [j]Gen. 21:22, 23 [6]*treaty*

29 [k]Gen. 24:31

30 [l]Gen. 19:3

31 [m]Gen. 21:31

33 [n]Gen. 21:31; 28:10 [7]Lit. *Oath* or *Seven* [8]Lit. *Well of the Oath* or *Well of the Seven*

34 [o]Gen. 28:8; 36:2

35 [p]Gen. 27:46; 28:1, 8

■ **26:15 Philistines had stopped . . . wells.** With Abraham gone, the Philistines effectively negated their non-aggression pact (21:22–34 note). They had no genuine faith in Abraham's God.

■ **26:16 much mightier than we.** See 21:22, 23; Ex. 1:9.

■ **26:17–22** The wealthy Isaac retreated from the fertile land into the Valley of Gerar, depending on wells originally dug by Abraham (v. 18). None of the patriarchs rashly risked war for the Promised Land. They trusted God to give their descendants the land at the right time (15:13, 14). The names of the wells commemorate God's provision and protection.

■ **26:21 Sitnah.** See text note. This word is from the same Hebrew root as the name "Satan."

■ **26:22 the LORD has made room for us.** God's protection of Isaac during this rivalry over wells recalls His reward to Abraham during the controversy with Lot (13:6–18).

■ **26:23 Beersheba.** The site of the original non-aggression pact with the Philistines (21:32).

■ **26:24** The form and content of God's blessing to Isaac again underscores the theme of continuity with the Abrahamic covenant promises (vv. 2–5; 15:1; 17:7).

■ **26:25 built an altar.** Like his father, Isaac built an altar in response to God's revelation (12:7, 8).

■ **26:26 Abimelech.** See note on 20:2.

Phichol. See note on 21:22.

■ **26:28 We have certainly seen . . . LORD is with you.** Their statement bore unintended witness to the Lord's promise in vv. 3–4 (21:22; cf. 1 Kin. 10:9).

an oath . . . a covenant. See 21:23 and notes.

■ **26:33 name of the city is Beersheba.** See text note. The Lord's protection of Abraham at Beersheba is now extended to Isaac (21:32).

■ **26:34—27:46** The theme of family conflict, between the parents and between the twins, now becomes full-blown in pursuit of the patriarch's blessing. Isaac depended on his fallible senses rather than divine guidance (27:4; cf. 25:23), and Rebekah used deception (27:6–17). Esau broke his oath (27:5 note) and Jacob blasphemously lied (27:19, 20). Though the blessing is passed on according to God's good pleasure, the divine verdict on their actions is pronounced in the disastrous consequences: Esau resolved to murder Jacob (27:41; cf. 4:8) and Jacob fled the land. Rebekah died without memorial (35:8 and note), and Isaac lived on without significance (35:28 and note).

Implicit here is a contrast between Abraham, who in faith provided for Isaac's future according to God's elective purposes (ch. 24), and Isaac, who seems to have made no attempt to find suitable wives for his sons (cf. 24:2–4), and who tried to thwart the divine election (27:1–4; cf. 25:23).

■ **26:34, 35** The story of the stolen blessing is framed by references to Esau's marriage to Hittite women, and his parents' resulting displeasure (27:46). Profane Esau showed his disregard for the covenant blessings by marrying daughters of the land (24:3–4; 31:50 and notes). By intermarrying with the Canaanites, and so vexing his parents (27:46), he effectively sealed himself off from the sacred inheritance (21:21; 25:6).

■ **26:34 Hittite.** See note on 10:15.

CHAPTER 27

1 [a]Gen. 35:28 [b]Gen. 48:10; 1 Sam. 3:2
2 [c][Prov. 27:1; James 4:14]
3 [d]Gen. 25:27, 28
4 [e]Gen. 27:19, 25, 27, 31; 48:9, 15, 16; 49:28; Deut. 33:1; Heb. 11:20 [1]*tasty*
7 [2]*tasty*
8 [f]Gen. 27:13, 43
9 [g]Gen. 27:4
10 [h]Gen. 27:4; 48:16
11 [i]Gen. 25:25
12 [j]Gen. 27:21, 22 [k]Gen. 9:25; Deut. 27:18
13 [l]Gen. 43:9; 1 Sam. 25:24; 2 Sam. 14:9; Matt. 27:25
14 [m]Prov. 23:3; Luke 21:34 [3]*tasty*
15 [n]Gen. 27:27
19 [o]Gen. 27:4
21 [p]Gen. 27:12
23 [q]Gen. 27:16
25 [r]Gen. 27:4, 10, 19, 31
27 [s]Gen. 29:13

Isaac Blesses Jacob

27 Now it came to pass, when Isaac was [a]old and [b]his eyes were so dim that he could not see, that he called Esau his older son and said to him, "My son."

And he answered him, "Here I am."

2 Then he said, "Behold now, I am old. I [c]do not know the day of my death. 3 [d]Now therefore, please take your weapons, your quiver and your bow, and go out to the field and hunt game for me. 4 And make me [1]savory food, such as I love, and bring *it* to me that I may eat, that my soul [e]may bless you before I die."

5 Now Rebekah was listening when Isaac spoke to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt game and to bring *it.* 6 So Rebekah spoke to Jacob her son, saying, "Indeed I heard your father speak to Esau your brother, saying, 7 'Bring me game and make [2]savory food for me, that I may eat it and bless you in the presence of the LORD before my death.' 8 Now therefore, my son, [f]obey my voice according to what I command you. 9 Go now to the flock and bring me from there two choice kids of the goats, and I will make [g]savory food from them for your father, such as he loves. 10 Then you shall take *it* to your father, that he may eat *it,* and that he [h]may bless you before his death."

11 And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, "Look, [i]Esau my brother *is* a hairy man, and I *am* a smooth-*skinned* man. 12 Perhaps my father will [j]feel me, and I shall seem to be a deceiver to him; and I shall bring [k]a curse on myself and not a blessing."

13 But his mother said to him, [l]"*Let* your curse *be* on me, my son; only obey my voice, and go, get *them* for me." 14 And he went and got *them* and brought *them* to his mother, and his mother [m]made [3]savory food, such as his father loved. 15 Then Rebekah took [n]the choice clothes of her elder son Esau, which *were* with her in the house, and put them on Jacob her younger son. 16 And she put the skins of the kids of the goats on his hands and on the smooth part of his neck. 17 Then she gave the savory food and the bread, which she had prepared, into the hand of her son Jacob.

18 So he went to his father and said, "My father."

And he said, "Here I am. Who *are* you, my son?"

19 Jacob said to his father, "I *am* Esau your firstborn; I have done just as you told me; please arise, sit and eat of my game, [o]that your soul may bless me."

20 But Isaac said to his son, "How *is it* that you have found *it* so quickly, my son?"

And he said, "Because the LORD your God brought *it* to me."

21 Isaac said to Jacob, "Please come near, that I [p]may feel you, my son, whether you *are* really my son Esau or not." 22 So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, and he felt him and said, "The voice *is* Jacob's voice, but the hands *are* the hands of Esau." 23 And he did not recognize him, because [q]his hands were hairy like his brother Esau's hands; so he blessed him.

24 Then he said, "*Are* you really my son Esau?"

He said, "I *am.*"

25 He said, "Bring *it* near to me, and I will eat of my son's game, so [r]that my soul may bless you." So he brought *it* near to him, and he ate; and he brought him wine, and he drank. 26 Then his father Isaac said to him, "Come near now and kiss me, my son." 27 And he came near and [s]kissed him; and he smelled the smell of his clothing, and blessed him and said:

■ **27:4 savory food, such as I love.** Isaac's sensuality was at the root of this conflict (vv. 18–27 note; 25:27, 28).

■ **27:5–17** Rebekah is the chief figure here. Though her method was deplorable (cf. 2 Cor. 4:2), her spiritual values were sound (25:23; 26:35; 27:46).

■ **27:5 Rebekah was listening.** Isaac neither provided spiritual leadership in the home nor listened to his wife's counsel—factors that strongly contributed to his family difficulties. Isaac's behavior contrasts with that of Abraham (21:8–14).

Esau went. Though birthright and blessing were not identical, they were related because both pertained to the inheritance. Esau reneged on the oath he had made with Jacob (24:33), but the original act of unbelief in selling his inheritance was decisive (Heb. 12:16, 17).

■ **27:7 bless you.** In patriarchal times, a solemn family blessing was given at departures (24:60; 28:1–5) or when death was imminent. It could be given to only one person and could not be altered. The patriarchal blessings of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had spiritual significance because the Lord used the social customs of those times to communicate His sovereign purposes. While God initially mediated His covenant blessing through the patriarchs, after the Mosaic law was given, God's blessing was mediated to all His people through the priest (Num. 6:22–27).

■ **27:11, 12** Jacob had no qualms about the morality of the plan, only about its feasibility.

■ **27:15 clothes.** Jacob too was later deceived by clothing (37:31–33).

■ **27:18–27** Isaac failed because he depended on his fallible senses—touch (v. 22), taste (v. 25), and smell (v. 27)—rather than upon spiritual understanding (v. 4 note; cf. 13:8–17 note).

■ **27:20 the LORD your God.** Jacob compounded his guilt by taking the Lord's name in vain (Ex. 20:7 note). Here Jacob regards the Lord as the God of his father. Later the Lord will reveal Himself as the God of Jacob (28:13–15, 20–22; 33:20 text note).

■ **27:26 kiss.** This physical contact was part of the blessing ritual (48:1 note).

"Surely, [t]the smell of my son
Is like the smell of a field
Which the LORD has blessed.
28 Therefore may [u]God give you
Of [v]the dew of heaven,
Of [w]the fatness of the earth,
And [x]plenty of grain and wine.
29 [y]Let peoples serve you,
And nations bow down to you.
Be master over your brethren,
And [z]let your mother's sons bow down to you.
[a]Cursed *be* everyone who curses you,
And blessed *be* those who bless you!"

Esau's Lost Hope

30 Now it happened, as soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, and Jacob had scarcely gone out from the presence of Isaac his father, that Esau his brother came in from his hunting. 31 He also had made [4]savory food, and brought it to his father, and said to his father, "Let my father arise and [b]eat of his son's game, that your soul may bless me."

32 And his father Isaac said to him, "Who *are* you?"

So he said, "I *am* your son, your firstborn, Esau."

33 Then Isaac trembled exceedingly, and said, "Who? Where *is* the one who hunted game and brought *it* to me? I ate all *of it* before you came, and I have blessed him—[c]*and* indeed he shall be blessed."

34 When Esau heard the words of his father, [d]he cried with an exceedingly great and bitter cry, and said to his father, "Bless me—me also, O my father!"

35 But he said, "Your brother came with deceit and has taken away your blessing."

36 And *Esau* said, [e]"Is he not rightly named [5]Jacob? For he has supplanted me these two times. He took away my birthright, and now look, he has taken away my blessing!" And he said, "Have you not reserved a blessing for me?"

37 Then Isaac answered and said to Esau, [f]"Indeed I have made him your master, and all his brethren I have given to him as servants; with [g]grain and wine I have [6]sustained him. What shall I do now for you, my son?"

38 And Esau said to his father, "Have you only one blessing, my father? Bless me—me also, O my father!" And Esau lifted up his voice [h]and wept.

39 Then Isaac his father answered and said to him:

"Behold, [i]your dwelling shall be of the [7]fatness of the earth,
And of the dew of heaven from above.
40 By your sword you shall live,
And [j]you shall serve your brother;
And [k]it shall come to pass, when you become restless,
That you shall break his yoke from your neck."

Jacob Escapes from Esau

41 So Esau [l]hated Jacob because of the blessing with which his father blessed him, and Esau said in his heart, [m]"The days of mourning for my father [8]are at hand; [n]then I will kill my brother Jacob."

27 [t]Song 4:11; Hos. 14:6

28 [u]Heb. 11:20 [v]Gen. 27:39; Deut. 33:13, 28; 2 Sam. 1:21; Ps. 133:3; Prov. 3:20; Mic. 5:7; Zech. 8:12 [w]Gen. 45:18; Num. 18:12 [x]Deut. 7:13; 33:28

29 [y]Gen. 9:25; 25:23; Is. 45:14; 49:7; 60:12, 14 [z]Gen. 37:7, 10; 49:8 [a]Gen. 12:2, 3; Zeph. 2:8, 9

31 [b]Gen. 27:4 [4]*tasty*

33 [c]Gen. 25:23; 28:3, 4; Num. 23:20; Rom. 11:29

34 [d][Heb. 12:17]

36 [e]Gen. 25:26, 32–34 [5]*Supplanter* or *Deceitful,* lit. *One Who Takes the Heel*

37 [f]2 Sam. 8:14 [g]Gen. 27:28, 29 [6]*provided support for*

38 [h]Heb. 12:17

39 [i]Gen. 27:28; Heb. 11:20 [7]*fertility*

40 [j]Gen. 25:23; 27:29; 2 Sam. 8:14; [Obad. 18–20] [k]2 Kin. 8:20–22

41 [l]Gen. 26:27; 32:3–11; 37:4, 5, 8 [m]Gen. 50:2–4, 10 [n]Obad. 10 [8]*are soon here*

■ **27:28, 29** What Isaac perceived through the sense of smell (v. 27) gave form to the blessing, which pertained to the land's fertility (v. 28), and to dominion (v. 29). The blessing's similarity to the prenatal oracle (25:23) points to the Lord's sovereign rule of history.

■ **27:28 dew . . . fatness . . . plenty.** These terms anticipate the blessing on the nation of Israel when settled in the Promised Land (Deut. 7:13; 33:28).

■ **27:29 Cursed be everyone who curses.** See 12:3.

■ **27:34 great and bitter cry.** See Heb. 12:16, 17 and notes.

■ **27:36 Jacob.** See text note; note on 25:26.

■ **27:37 What shall I do now for you.** Though Isaac knew God had elected Jacob, he had intended to give everything to Esau (26:34—27:46 note).

■ **27:39 of the fatness . . . of the dew.** The Hebrew wording is similar to Jacob's blessing, but with a very different meaning. While God was to give to Jacob "of the dew" and "of the fatness" (v. 28), Esau was to dwell "of" (lit. "from" or "away from") "the fatness of the earth" and away from "the dew of heaven." This blessing found fulfillment as Esau's descendants, the Edomites, settled in the arid region south of the Dead Sea. Esau inherited an anti-blessing: he was denied the earth's fertility and dominion over his brother (cf. vv. 28, 29).

■ **27:40 break his yoke.** See note on 25:23. From time to time Edom was able to break free of Israelite domination (2 Kin. 8:20–22). In addition, Herod the Great was a descendant of Esau.

42 [o]Ps. 64:5

43 [p]Gen. 11:31; 25:20; 28:2, 5

44 [q]Gen. 31:41

46 [r]Gen. 26:34, 35; 28:8 [s]Gen. 24:3

CHAPTER 28

1 [a]Gen. 27:33 [b]Gen. 24:3 [1]*commanded*

2 [c]Hos. 12:12 [d]Gen. 25:20 [e]Gen. 22:23 [f]Gen. 24:29; 27:43; 29:5

3 [g]Gen. 17:16; 35:11; 48:3 [h]Gen. 26:4, 24

4 [i]Gen. 12:2, 3; 22:17; Gal. 3:8 [j]Gen. 17:8; 23:4; 36:7; 1 Chr. 29:15; Ps. 39:12 [2]Lit. *Of your sojournings*

8 [k]Gen. 24:3; 26:34, 35; 27:46

9 [l]Gen. 26:34, 35 [m]Gen. 36:2, 3 [n]Gen. 25:13

10 [o]Gen. 26:23; 46:1; Hos. 12:12 [p]Gen. 12:4, 5; 27:43; 29:4; 2 Kin. 19:12; Acts 7:2

12 [q]Gen. 31:10; 41:1; Num. 12:6

42 And the words of Esau her older son were told to Rebekah. So she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said to him, "Surely your brother Esau [o]comforts himself concerning you *by intending* to kill you. 43 Now therefore, my son, obey my voice: arise, flee to my brother Laban [p]in Haran. 44 And stay with him a [q]few days, until your brother's fury turns away, 45 until your brother's anger turns away from you, and he forgets what you have done to him; then I will send and bring you from there. Why should I be bereaved also of you both in one day?"

46 And Rebekah said to Isaac, [r]"I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth; [s]if Jacob takes a wife of the daughters of Heth, like these *who are* the daughters of the land, what good will my life be to me?"

28 Then Isaac called Jacob and [a]blessed him, and [1]charged him, and said to him: [b]"You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan. 2 [c]Arise, go to [d]Padan Aram, to the house of [e]Bethuel your mother's father; and take yourself a wife from there of the daughters of [f]Laban your mother's brother.

3 "May [g]God Almighty bless you,
And make you [h]fruitful and multiply you,
That you may be an assembly of peoples;
4 And give you [i]the blessing of Abraham,
To you and your descendants with you,
That you may inherit the land
[j]In[2] which you are a stranger,
Which God gave to Abraham."

5 So Isaac sent Jacob away, and he went to Padan Aram, to Laban the son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, the mother of Jacob and Esau.

Esau Marries Mahalath

6 Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob and sent him away to Padan Aram to take himself a wife from there, *and that* as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, "You shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan," 7 and that Jacob had obeyed his father and his mother and had gone to Padan Aram. 8 Also Esau saw [k]that the daughters of Canaan did not please his father Isaac. 9 So Esau went to Ishmael and [l]took [m]Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael, Abraham's son, [n]the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife in addition to the wives he had.

Jacob's Vow at Bethel

10 Now Jacob [o]went out from Beersheba and went toward [p]Haran. 11 So he came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep. 12 Then he [q]dreamed, and be-

■ **27:45 I will send.** Jacob was to be absent for twenty years (31:38); Rebekah never saw her son again (35:8 note).

bereaved . . . of you both in one day. Both would be lost if Jacob was killed by his brother Esau, and Esau then by an avenger of blood (9:6; Num. 35:19–21).

■ **27:46** This transitional verse provides a conclusion to 26:34—27:46 (26:34, 35 note) and an introduction to 27:46—28:9.

Rebekah said. As Sarah took initiative to provide for Isaac (21:10), here Rebekah acted for Jacob.

the daughters of Heth. See 26:34 and note on 10:15.

■ **28:1, 2** The negative and positive commands correspond to those of Abraham (24:3–4).

■ **28:1 blessed.** See note on 27:7. The first blessing (27:27–29) determined the patriarchal succession; this one explicitly linked Jacob with the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant (17:1–8).

■ **28:2 Padan Aram.** See note on 25:20.

■ **28:3 God Almighty.** See note on 17:1.

an assembly of peoples. See 17:5 and note; 35:11.

■ **28:4 inherit.** The Hebrew verb here can mean "taking possession by force," perhaps anticipating the concept of holy war against the Canaanites (15:16; Ex. 23:22–33).

■ **28:6–9** Acting out of rivalry with his brother (v. 6) and a desire to please his father (v. 8), Esau sought another wife from among his relatives, the family of Ishmael (v. 9). Even in this effort Esau lacked spiritual perception, for Ishmael was the rejected natural offspring of Abraham (17:18–21; 21:12, 13).

■ **28:10–22** The Lord appeared to Jacob and gave him promises at critical points in his life: during his flight to Padan Aram (28:10–22), on his return to confront Esau (32:1, 2, 22–32), and when Jacob faced threats from Laban's sons (31:1–3) and the Canaanites (35:1–15).

■ **28:11 at his head.** The Hebrew term here is translated "by his head" in 1 Sam. 26:7. Instead of serving as a pillow, the rock may have protected his head.

■ **28:12 a ladder.** Probably a vast stone ramp with steps. The phrase "top reached to heaven" recalls the description of the tower of Babel (11:4). Jacob may have seen a ziggurat. See notes on 11:1–9 and 11:5.

earth . . . heaven . . . ascending and descending. Jacob's dream of a meeting place between heaven and earth points forward to Jesus Christ, the God-Man who reunites heaven and earth (John 1:51 and note). Through Christ, the only "Mediator between God and men" (1 Tim. 2:5), we have access to the Father (Eph. 2:18).

angels of God. See "Angels" at Zech. 1:9.

hold, a ladder *was* set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there [r]the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.

13 [s]And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: [t]"I *am* the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; [u]the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. 14 Also your [v]descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad [w]to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and [x]in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. 15 Behold, [y]I *am* with you and will [z]keep[3] you wherever you go, and will [a]bring you back to this land; for [b]I will not leave you [c]until I have done what I have spoken to you."

16 Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in [d]this place, and I did not know *it.*" 17 And he was afraid and said, "How awesome *is* this place! This *is* none other than the house of God, and this *is* the gate of heaven!"

18 Then Jacob rose early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put at his head, [e]set it up as a pillar, [f]and poured oil on top of it. 19 And he called the name of [g]that place [4]Bethel; but the name of that city had been Luz previously. 20 [h]Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If [i]God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me [j]bread to eat and clothing to put on, 21 so that [k]I come back to my father's house in peace, [l]then the LORD shall be my God. 22 And this stone which I have set as a pillar [m]shall be God's house, [n]and of all that You give me I will surely give a [5]tenth to You."

Jacob Meets Rachel

29 So Jacob went on his journey [a]and came to the land of the people of the East. 2 And he looked, and saw a [b]well in the field; and behold, there *were* three flocks of sheep lying by it; for out of that well they watered the flocks. A large stone *was* on the well's mouth. 3 Now all the flocks would be gathered there; and they would roll the stone from the well's mouth, water the sheep, and put the stone back in its place on the well's mouth.

4 And Jacob said to them, "My brethren, where *are* you from?"

And they said, "We *are* from [c]Haran."

5 Then he said to them, "Do you know [d]Laban the son of Nahor?"

And they said, "We know him."

6 So he said to them, [e]"Is he well?"

And they said, "*He is* well. And look, his daughter Rachel [f]is coming with the sheep."

7 Then he said, "Look, *it is* still [7]high day; *it is* not time for the cattle to be gathered together. Water the sheep, and go and feed *them.*"

8 But they said, "We cannot until all the flocks are gathered together, and they have rolled the stone from the well's mouth; then we water the sheep."

9 Now while he was still speaking with them, [g]Rachel came with her father's sheep, for she was a shepherdess. 10 And it came to pass, when Jacob saw Rachel the daughter of Laban his

12 [r]John 1:51

13 [s]Gen. 35:1; 48:3 [t]Gen. 26:24 [u]Gen. 13:15, 17; 26:3; 35:12

14 [v]Gen. 13:16; 22:17 [w]Gen. 13:14, 15 [x]Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4

15 [y]Gen. 26:3, 24; 31:3 [z]Gen. 48:16 [a]Gen. 35:6; 48:21 [b]Deut. 7:9; 31:6, 8 [c]Num. 23:19 [3]*protect*

16 [d]Ex. 3:5

18 [e]Gen. 31:13, 45 [f]Lev. 8:10–12

19 [g]Judg. 1:23, 26 [4]Lit. *House of God*

20 [h]Judg. 11:30 [i]Gen. 28:15 [j]1 Tim. 6:8

21 [k]Judg. 11:31 [l]Deut. 26:17

22 [m]Gen. 35:7, 14 [n]Gen. 14:20 [5]*tithe*

CHAPTER 29

1 [a]Num. 23:7

2 [b]Gen. 24:10, 11

4 [c]Gen. 11:31; 28:10

5 [d]Gen. 24:24, 29; 28:2

6 [e]Gen. 43:27 [f]Ex. 2:16, 17

7 [7]*early in the day*

9 [g]Ex. 2:16

■ **28:13 the LORD stood above it.** Or, "the LORD stood beside him." If this second reading is preferred (note Jacob's response in v. 16: "Surely the LORD is in this place"), then God came down the stairway. He did not stand above the stairway, but over a sleeping Jacob.

I am the LORD. See note on 27:20.

land on which you lie. God's promise was adapted to the immediate situation.

descendants. The Hebrew term here may be translated "seed" or "offspring" (12:7 note and text note; 13:15 text note). The language of vv. 13–15 vividly recalls God's promises to Abraham (cf. 12:3; 13:14–16).

■ **28:14 shall be blessed.** See note on 12:3; 18:18; 22:18.

■ **28:15 I am with you.** See 26:3; Ex. 3:12; Ps. 23; 46; Heb. 13:5. The promises of this verse pertained to Jacob's own lifetime.

wherever you go. In contrast to pagan deities, whose powers were thought to be tied to particular localities.

until I have done. The Hebrew here signifies only that the promise will be completed, not that it will be changed after its fulfillment.

■ **28:17 he was afraid.** Worshipful fear in God's presence is appropriate (Ex. 3:6; 19:16; Ps. 2:11).

■ **28:18 a pillar.** A witness and monument drawing attention to the importance of the place (cf. 31:45–59).

poured oil. An act of consecration (35:14; Ex. 40:9; 2 Sam. 1:21).

■ **28:20–22** The longest vow recorded in the Old Testament.

■ **28:20 If God will be with me.** Jacob's reaction contrasts strikingly Abraham's (15:6). Though Jacob's journey of faith had begun, he still had far to go. Note that God's unconditional promises of vv. 13–15 are here transformed into a conditional bargain: if God does His part then Jacob will acknowledge Him as God (v. 21). God had sovereignly chosen Jacob in the womb (25:23 and note), and now He graciously bestows the patriarchal promise quite apart from Jacob's faith; that too must be the gift of God (17:2 note).

■ **28:22 give a tenth.** See note on 14:20.

■ **29:1–30** Jacob experienced the blessings of divine providence in meeting Rachel (vv. 1–14), and in a bitter irony the deceiver became the deceived (vv. 15–29). Behind the two scenes the gracious and just hand of the sovereign God, who works all things according to His own purpose and who promised to be with Jacob (28:15), can be discerned.

■ **29:2 well.** The similarity of this meeting at the well with the meeting in 24:11–33 suggests the benevolence of divine providence, but also highlights the contrast between the prayerful servant and the prayerless patriarch.

■ **29:4 My brethren.** The greeting was a gesture of goodwill.

■ **29:10 rolled the stone.** The stone was large (v. 2). Earlier the gold jewelry of Abraham's servant had attracted Laban's attention (24:30); now Jacob's feat of strength impressed him with the kind of service Jacob could render.

mother's brother, and the sheep of Laban his mother's brother, that Jacob went near and [h]rolled the stone from the well's mouth, and watered the flock of Laban his mother's brother. 11 Then Jacob [i]kissed Rachel, and lifted up his voice and wept. 12 And Jacob told Rachel that he *was* [j]her father's relative and that he *was* Rebekah's son. [k]So she ran and told her father.

13 Then it came to pass, when Laban heard the report about Jacob his sister's son, that [l]he ran to meet him, and embraced him and kissed him, and brought him to his house. So he told Laban all these things. 14 And Laban said to him, [m]"Surely you *are* my bone and my flesh." And he stayed with him for a month.

Jacob Marries Leah and Rachel

15 Then Laban said to Jacob, "Because you *are* my relative, should you therefore serve me for nothing? Tell me, [n]what *should* your wages *be?*" 16 Now Laban had two daughters: the name of the elder *was* Leah, and the name of the younger *was* Rachel. 17 Leah's eyes *were* [2]delicate, but Rachel was [o]beautiful of form and appearance.

18 Now Jacob loved Rachel; so he said, [p]"I will serve you seven years for Rachel your younger daughter."

19 And Laban said, "*It is* better that I give her to you than that I should give her to another man. Stay with me." 20 So Jacob [q]served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed *only* a few days to him because of the love he had for her.

21 Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give *me* my wife, for my days are fulfilled, that I may [r]go in to her." 22 And Laban gathered together all the men of the place and [s]made a feast. 23 Now it came to pass in the evening, that he took Leah his daughter and brought her to Jacob; and he went in to her. 24 And Laban gave his maid [t]Zilpah to his daughter Leah *as* a maid. 25 So it came to pass in the morning, that behold, it *was* Leah. And he said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? Was it not for Rachel that I served you? Why then have you [u]deceived me?"

26 And Laban said, "It must not be done so in our [3]country, to give the younger before the firstborn. 27 [v]Fulfill her week, and we will give you this one also for the service which you will serve with me still another seven years."

28 Then Jacob did so and fulfilled her week. So he gave him his daughter Rachel as wife also. 29 And Laban gave his maid [w]Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as a maid. 30 Then *Jacob* also went in to Rachel, and he also [x]loved Rachel more than Leah. And he served with Laban [y]still another seven years.

The Children of Jacob

31 When the LORD [z]saw that Leah *was* [4]unloved, He [a]opened her womb; but Rachel *was* barren. 32 So Leah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name [5]Reuben; for she said, "The LORD has surely [b]looked on my affliction. Now therefore, my husband will love me." 33 Then she conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Because the LORD has heard that I *am* [6]unloved, He has therefore given me this *son* also." And she called his name [7]Simeon. 34 She conceived again and bore a son, and said, "Now this time my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons." Therefore his name was called [8]Levi. 35 And she conceived again

10 [h]Ex. 2:17
11 [i]Gen. 33:4; 45:14, 15
12 [j]Gen. 13:8; 14:14, 16; 28:5 [k]Gen. 24:28
13 [l]Gen. 24:29–31; Luke 15:20
14 [m]Gen. 2:23; 37:27; Judg. 9:2; 2 Sam. 5:1; 19:12, 13
15 [n]Gen. 30:28; 31:41
17 [o]Gen. 12:11, 14; 26:7 [2]Or *weak*
18 [p]Gen. 31:41; 2 Sam. 3:14; Hos. 12:12
20 [q]Gen. 30:26; Hos. 12:12
21 [r]Judg. 15:1
22 [s]Judg. 14:10; John 2:1, 2
24 [t]Gen. 30:9, 10
25 [u]Gen. 27:35; 31:7; 1 Sam. 28:12
26 [3]Lit. *place*
27 [v]Gen. 31:41; Judg. 14:2
29 [w]Gen. 30:3–5
30 [x]Gen. 29:17–20; Deut. 21:15–17 [y]Gen. 30:26; 31:41; Hos. 12:12
31 [z]Ps. 127:3 [a]Gen. 30:1 [4]Lit. *hated*
32 [b]Gen. 16:11; 31:42; Ex. 3:7; 4:31; Deut. 26:7; Ps. 25:18 [5]Lit. *See, a Son*
33 [6]Lit. *hated* [7]Lit. *Heard*
34 [8]Lit. *Attached*

■ **29:11 kissed.** A customary greeting among relatives (v. 14; 31:55).

■ **29:16 Leah . . . Rachel.** The name Rachel means "ewe," while Leah perhaps means "wild cow" or "wild ox."

■ **29:23 evening.** As Jacob took advantage of his father's blindness to deceive him, so Laban used the cover of night to outwit Jacob.

he took Leah his daughter. The custom of veiling the bride (24:64, 65 note) and of marrying off the elder daughter first (v. 26) served Laban's selfish intentions. He shamelessly used his unloved daughter and introduced a source of continuing discord into Jacob's family (30:1, 2; 31:15). Laban's daughters were not deceived by his unscrupulous behavior (31:14–16).

■ **29:25 deceived me.** See 27:35.

■ **29:26 the younger before the firstborn.** This statement underscores the irony of Jacob's situation. Jacob had stolen the blessing customarily reserved for the firstborn (ch. 27), and here Laban deceives Jacob in order to uphold a similar custom.

■ **29:27 Fulfill her week.** The week of bridal feasting. The extended feast (v. 22) celebrated Laban's cleverness and Jacob's humiliation, turning what should have been a joyous occasion into a bad joke.

■ **29:31—30:24** God blessed Jacob with twelve sons in spite of his prayerlessness and the rivalry of Rachel and Leah, who competed for his affections by bearing him sons (25:19—35:29 note). The names the mother's gave these children reflect this struggle and also their recognition of God's assistance to them in their unloved or childless states. God graciously built up Israel by championing the needy (e.g., Hannah in 1 Sam. 1), but the spiritual failures of Jacob's family later resulted in rivalries among Israelite tribes.

■ **29:31–35** God graciously gave Leah, the unloved wife, half of Jacob's sons, including the priestly line of Levi (v. 34) and the messianic line of Judah (v. 35; 49:10). The first and last of the children born in Padan Aram are given by the Lord to compensate disgraced wives, first Leah (v. 32), and then Rachel (30:23, 24).

■ **29:31 opened.** See 16:2; 20:17, 18.

barren. See 25:21.

■ **29:35 Judah.** The name means "praised," here of the Lord, and in 49:8 of Judah himself.

and bore a son, and said, "Now I will praise the LORD." Therefore she called his name [c]Judah.[g] Then she stopped bearing.

30 Now when Rachel saw that [a]she bore Jacob no children, Rachel [b]envied her sister, and said to Jacob, "Give me children, [c]or else I die!"

2 And Jacob's anger was aroused against Rachel, and he said, [d]"*Am* I in the place of God, who has withheld from you the fruit of the womb?"

3 So she said, "Here is [e]my maid Bilhah; go in to her, [f]and she will bear *a child* on my knees, [g]that I also may [f]have children by her." 4 Then she gave him Bilhah her maid [h]as wife, and Jacob went in to her. 5 And Bilhah conceived and bore Jacob a son. 6 Then Rachel said, "God has [i]judged my case; and He has also heard my voice and given me a son." Therefore she called his name [z]Dan. 7 And Rachel's maid Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. 8 Then Rachel said, "With [3]great wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister, *and* indeed I have prevailed." So she called his name [4]Naphtali.

9 When Leah saw that she had stopped bearing, she took Zilpah her maid and [j]gave her to Jacob as wife. 10 And Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a son. 11 Then Leah said, [5]"A troop comes!" So she called his name [6]Gad. 12 And Leah's maid Zilpah bore Jacob a second son. 13 Then Leah said, "I am happy, for the daughters [k]will call me blessed." So she called his name [7]Asher.

14 Now Reuben went in the days of wheat harvest and found mandrakes in the field, and brought them to his mother Leah. Then Rachel said to Leah, [l]"Please give me *some* of your son's mandrakes."

15 But she said to her, [m]"*Is it* a small matter that you have taken away my husband? Would you take away my son's mandrakes also?"

And Rachel said, "Therefore he will lie with you tonight for your son's mandrakes."

16 When Jacob came out of the field in the evening, Leah went out to meet him and said, "You must come in to me, for I have surely hired you with my son's mandrakes." And he lay with her that night.

17 And God listened to Leah, and she conceived and bore Jacob a fifth son. 18 Leah said, "God has given me my wages, because I have given my maid to my husband." So she called his name [8]Issachar. 19 Then Leah conceived again and bore Jacob a sixth son. 20 And Leah said, "God has endowed me *with* a good endowment; now my husband will dwell with me, because I have borne him six sons." So she called his name [9]Zebulun. 21 Afterward she bore a [n]daughter, and called her name [t]Dinah.

22 Then God [o]remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and [p]opened her womb. 23 And she conceived and bore a son, and said, "God has taken away [q]my reproach." 24 So she called his name [2]Joseph, and said, [r]"The LORD shall add to me another son."

Jacob's Agreement with Laban

25 And it came to pass, when Rachel had borne Joseph, that Jacob said to Laban, [s]"Send me away, that I may go to [t]my own place and to my country. 26 Give *me* my wives and my children [u]for whom I have served you, and let me go; for you know my service which I have done for you."

27 And Laban said to him, "Please *stay,* if I have found favor in your eyes, *for* [v]I have learned

35 [c]Matt. 1:2 [g]Lit. *Praise*

CHAPTER 30

1 [a]Gen. 16:1, 2; 29:31 [b]Gen. 37:11 [c][Job 5:2]

2 [d]1 Sam. 1:5

3 [e]Gen. 16:2 [f]Gen. 50:23 [g]Gen. 16:2, 3 [z]Lit. *be built up by her*

4 [h]Gen. 16:3, 4

6 [i]Lam. 3:59 [2]Lit. *Judge*

8 [3]Lit. *wrestlings of God* [4]Lit. *My Wrestling*

9 [j]Gen. 30:4

11 [5]So with Qr., Syr., Tg.; Kt., LXX, Vg. *in fortune* [6]Lit. *Troop* or *Fortune*

13 [k]Luke 1:48 [7]Lit. *Happy*

14 [l]Gen. 25:30

15 [m][Num. 16:9, 13]

18 [8]Lit. *Wages*

20 [9]Lit. *Dwelling*

21 [n]Gen. 34:1 [t]Lit. *Judgment*

22 [o]1 Sam. 1:19, 20 [p]Gen. 29:31

23 [q]Luke 1:25

24 [r]Gen. 35:16–18 [2]Lit. *He Will Add*

25 [s]Gen. 24:54, 56 [t]Gen. 18:33

26 [u]Gen. 29:18–20, 27, 30

27 [v]Gen. 26:24; 39:3

■ **30:1 else I die.** A hyperbolic expression of her extreme distress (25:32; 27:46). Ironically, she later died in childbirth (35:16–18).

■ **30:2 Am I in the place of God.** Jacob's angry retort contrasts sharply with the fervent prayer of Isaac for his childless wife (25:21).

■ **30:3 Here is . . . Bilhah.** See 16:1, 2 and notes.

on my knees. The knee was symbolic of parental care (50:23; Job 3:12). According to ancient Near Eastern custom, the delivery of the concubine's child upon the knees of the wife symbolized the adoption of the child by the wife.

■ **30:14 mandrakes.** Sometimes called "love apples," the roots of the mandrake plant were considered an aphrodisiac by the ancients, and used to promote sexual activity and conception (cf. Song 7:13).

■ **30:20 endowment.** A dowry.

■ **30:21 Dinah.** Dinah is the only daughter of Jacob whose name is given (cf. 46:7) because she figures prominently in ch. 34.

■ **30:22 Then God remembered.** See note on 8:1. This verse is the climax of 29:31—30:24. Rachel credited the birth of Joseph, not to the aphrodisiac (v. 14 note), but to God (v. 23).

■ **30:25–43** God sovereignly blessed Jacob's flocks at Laban's expense in spite of the inexcusable cunning of both men. Jacob appears to outwit Laban, repaying Laban's trickery, but he obtained his family and wealth entirely by God's grace (29:31—30:24; 31:9).

■ **30:27 if I have found favor.** A formula of courtesy in negotiations.

learned by experience. Or, "learned by divination." Many ancient extrabiblical texts from Mesopotamia pertain to the practice of occult divination, something forbidden in Israel (Deut. 18:10, 14). Noting Jacob's good fortune, the pagan Laban had attempted to discover the reason through divination (31:19 and note).

blessed me for your sake. Once again, those outside the covenant are blessed through their association with the patriarchs (12:2, 3; 13:5, 6; 14:13 and note).

by experience that the LORD has blessed me for your sake." 28 Then he said, [w]"Name me your wages, and I will give *it.*"

29 So *Jacob* said to him, [x]"You know how I have served you and how your livestock has been with me. 30 For what you had before I *came was* little, and it has increased to a great amount; the LORD has blessed you [3]since my coming. And now, when shall I also [y]provide for my own house?"

31 So he said, "What shall I give you?"

And Jacob said, "You shall not give me anything. If you will do this thing for me, I will again feed and keep your flocks: 32 Let me pass through all your flock today, removing from there all the speckled and spotted sheep, and all the brown ones among the lambs, and the spotted and speckled among the goats; and [z]*these* shall be my wages. 33 So my [a]righteousness will answer for me in time to come, when the subject of my wages comes before you: every one that *is* not speckled and spotted among the goats, and brown among the lambs, will be considered stolen, if *it is* with me."

34 And Laban said, "Oh, that it were according to your word!" 35 So he removed that day the male goats that were [b]speckled and spotted, all the female goats that were speckled and spotted, every one that had *some* white in it, and all the brown ones among the lambs, and gave *them* into the hand of his sons. 36 Then he put three days' journey between himself and Jacob, and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks.

37 Now [c]Jacob took for himself rods of green poplar and of the almond and chestnut trees, peeled white strips in them, and exposed the white which *was* in the rods. 38 And the rods which he had peeled, he set before the flocks in the gutters, in the watering troughs where the flocks came to drink, so that they should conceive when they came to drink. 39 So the flocks conceived before the rods, and the flocks brought forth streaked, speckled, and spotted. 40 Then Jacob separated the lambs, and made the flocks face toward the streaked and all the brown in the flock of Laban; but he put his own flocks by themselves and did not put them with Laban's flock.

41 And it came to pass, whenever the stronger livestock conceived, that Jacob placed the rods before the eyes of the livestock in the gutters, that they might conceive among the rods. 42 But when the flocks were feeble, he did not put *them* in; so the feebler were Laban's and the stronger Jacob's. 43 Thus the man [d]became exceedingly prosperous, and [e]had large flocks, female and male servants, and camels and donkeys.

28 [w]Gen. 29:15; 31:7, 41
29 [x]Gen. 31:6, 38–40; Matt. 24:45; Titus 2:10
30 [y][1 Tim. 5:8] [3]Lit. *at my foot*
32 [z]Gen. 31:8
33 [a]Ps. 37:6
35 [b]Gen. 31:9–12
37 [c]Gen. 31:9–12
43 [d]Gen. 12:16; 30:30 [e]Gen. 13:2; 24:35; 26:13, 14

CHAPTER 31

1 [a]Ps. 49:16
2 [b]Gen. 4:5 [c]Deut. 28:54
3 [d]Gen. 28:15, 20, 21; 32:9 [e]Gen. 46:4
5 [f]Gen. 31:2, 3 [g]Gen. 21:22; 28:13, 15; 31:29, 42, 53; Is. 41:10; Heb. 13:5 [1]Lit. *face*
6 [h]Gen. 30:29; 31:38–41

Jacob Flees from Laban

31 Now *Jacob* heard the words of Laban's sons, saying, "Jacob has taken away all that was our father's, and from what was our father's he has acquired all this [a]wealth." 2 And Jacob saw the [b]countenance of Laban, and indeed it *was* not [c]*favorable* toward him as before. 3 Then the LORD said to Jacob, [d]"Return to the land of your fathers and to your family, and I will [e]be with you."

4 So Jacob sent and called Rachel and Leah to the field, to his flock, 5 and said to them, [f]"I see your father's [1]countenance, that it *is* not *favorable* toward me as before; but the God of my father [g]has been with me. 6 And [h]you know that with all my might I have served your father.

■ **30:28 Name me your wages.** The opportunistic Laban wanted to manipulate the Lord through Jacob to serve his own greed. Thus he hoped to receive God's blessing.

■ **30:31–34** In the ancient Near East, most lambs were white and most goats black or dark brown. Thinking the agreement posed little risk to himself, Laban eagerly granted Jacob's request for the unusually colored animals (v. 34). Jacob's proposal depended upon the faulty notion that vivid visual impressions during the act of reproduction determined the traits of the offspring. He thought that placing alternating colors in front of mating animals would result in unusually colored offspring (vv. 37, 38, 41, 42). Even though Jacob's scheming would deny God His rightful praise, God's intention to bless Jacob was not thwarted (31:11, 12).

■ **30:35 he removed that day.** The unscrupulous Laban immediately cheated. According to the agreement the unusually colored animals should have been Jacob's starting flock (v. 32). Jacob began with none of these, a fact highlighting the supernatural blessing on him.

■ **30:39 flocks brought forth.** Jacob's success was due to God's grace (31:9–12), not to his ill-founded theory of animal husbandry.

■ **30:43 became exceedingly prosperous.** God did abundantly more than Jacob had asked (28:20).

■ **31:1–55** In fulfillment of His promise in 28:15, the Lord led a chastened Jacob back to the Promised Land with great wealth at Laban's expense, and over Laban's opposition (v. 42). God remained faithful to His promises despite Jacob's scheming and the pagan idolatry in his household (v. 19 and note; 28:20 note).

■ **31:3 Return to the land.** Jacob's departure with his sons from Padan Aram foreshadows the later Exodus of the twelve tribes of Israel from Egypt: they go in response to God's call to worship in the land of Canaan (vv. 3, 13; cf. Ex. 3:13–18); they spoil the enemy of his wealth (v. 9; cf. Ex. 12:35, 36); they are pursued by superior forces and delivered by divine intervention (vv. 21–42; cf. Ex. 14:5–31). These Old Testament examples in turn point forward to the pilgrimage of the New Israel, the church (1 Cor. 10:1–4).

I will be with you. See 28:15 and notes.

■ **31:4 So Jacob sent and called.** Jacob finally began to respond to God in prompt obedience (cf. 12:4; 17:23; 22:3).

■ **31:5 God of my father has been with me.** Acknowledging the Lord's faithfulness, Jacob was ready to pay his vow (v. 13; 28:20–22 and notes).

■ **31:6 with all my might.** See note on 29:10.

7 Yet your father has deceived me and [i]changed my wages [j]ten times, but God [k]did not allow him to hurt me. 8 If he said thus: [l]'The speckled shall be your wages,' then all the flocks bore speckled. And if he said thus: 'The streaked shall be your wages,' then all the flocks bore streaked. 9 So God has [m]taken away the livestock of your father and given *them* to me.

10 "And it happened, at the time when the flocks conceived, that I lifted my eyes and saw in a dream, and behold, the rams which leaped upon the flocks *were* streaked, speckled, and gray-spotted. 11 Then [n]the Angel of God spoke to me in a dream, saying, 'Jacob.' And I said, 'Here I am.' 12 And He said, 'Lift your eyes now and see, all the rams which leap on the flocks *are* streaked, speckled, and gray-spotted; for [o]I have seen all that Laban is doing to you. 13 I *am* the God of Bethel, [p]where you anointed the pillar *and* where you made a vow to Me. Now [q]arise, get out of this land, and return to the land of your family.' "

14 Then Rachel and Leah answered and said to him, [r]"Is there still any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house? 15 Are we not considered strangers by him? For [s]he has sold us, and also completely consumed our money. 16 For all these riches which God has taken from our father are *really* ours and our children's; now then, whatever God has said to you, do it."

17 Then Jacob rose and set his sons and his wives on camels. 18 And he carried away all his livestock and all his possessions which he had gained, his acquired livestock which he had gained in Padan Aram, to go to his father Isaac in the land of [t]Canaan. 19 Now Laban had gone to shear his sheep, and Rachel had stolen the [u]household[2] idols that were her father's. 20 And Jacob stole away, unknown to Laban the Syrian, in that he did not tell him that he intended to flee. 21 So he fled with all that he had. He arose and crossed the river, and [v]headed[3] toward the mountains of Gilead.

Laban Pursues Jacob

22 And Laban was told on the third day that Jacob had fled. 23 Then he took [w]his brethren with him and pursued him for seven days' journey, and he overtook him in the mountains of Gilead. 24 But God [x]had come to Laban the Syrian in a dream by night, and said to him, "Be careful that you [y]speak to Jacob neither good nor bad."

25 So Laban overtook Jacob. Now Jacob had pitched his tent in the mountains, and Laban with his brethren pitched in the mountains of Gilead.

26 And Laban said to Jacob: "What have you done, that you have stolen away unknown to me, and [z]carried away my daughters like captives *taken* with the sword? 27 Why did you flee away secretly, and steal away from me, and not tell me; for I might have sent you away with joy and songs, with timbrel and harp? 28 And you did not allow me [a]to kiss my sons and my daughters. Now [b]you have done foolishly in *so* doing. 29 It is in my power to do you harm, but the [c]God of your father spoke to me [d]last night, saying, 'Be careful that you speak to Jacob neither good nor bad.' 30 And now you have surely gone because you greatly long for your father's house, *but* why did you [e]steal my gods?"

31 Then Jacob answered and said to Laban, "Because I was [f]afraid, for I said, 'Perhaps you would take your daughters from me by force.' 32 With whomever you find your gods, [g]do not let him live. In the presence of our brethren, identify what I have of yours and take *it* with you." For Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen them.

33 And Laban went into Jacob's tent, into Leah's tent, and into the two maids' tents, but he did

7 [f]Gen. 29:25; 31:41 [j]Num. 14:22 [k]Job 1:10
8 [l]Gen. 30:32
9 [m]Gen. 31:1, 16
11 [n]Gen. 16:7–11; 22:11, 15; 31:13; 48:16
12 [o]Ex. 3:7
13 [p]Gen. 28:16–22; 35:1, 6, 15 [q]Gen. 31:3; 32:9
14 [r]Gen. 2:24
15 [s]Gen. 29:15, 20, 23, 27
18 [t]Gen. 17:8; 33:18; 35:27
19 [u]Judg. 17:5 [2]Heb. *teraphim*
21 [v]2 Kin. 12:17 [3]Lit. *set his face toward*
23 [w]Gen. 13:8
24 [x]Gen. 20:3; 31:29; 46:2–4 [y]Gen. 24:50; 31:7, 29
26 [z]1 Sam. 30:2
28 [a]Gen. 31:55 [b]1 Sam. 13:13
29 [c]Gen. 28:13; 31:5, 24, 42, 53 [d]Gen. 31:24
30 [e]Judg. 17:5; 18:24
31 [f]Gen. 26:7; 32:7, 11
32 [g]Gen. 44:9

■ **31:7 ten times.** The number ten signified completeness; Jacob here is perhaps deploring the magnitude of Laban's dishonesty.

God did not allow him. In spite of his own schemes, Jacob recognized that the Lord had blessed him.

■ **31:8 speckled . . . streaked.** See note on 30:31–34.

■ **31:9 So God has taken away.** Through his dishonest behavior toward Jacob, Laban subjected himself to covenantal curses (12:3; 27:29).

■ **31:11 Angel of God.** See note on 16:7.

■ **31:14–16** In bitterness against their dishonest father (vv. 14–15) and in recognition of God's providence (v. 16), Leah and Rachel decided to follow Jacob.

■ **31:15 he has sold us.** They resented their "bought marriages." The price paid was Jacob's labor (29:18, 27).

completely consumed our money. This phrase occurs in similar social contexts in Mesopotamian texts from Nuzi (c. 1500 B.C.). Legally, at least part of the compensation received by a father in return for giving his daughter in marriage was to be given to the daughter.

■ **31:18 Padan Aram.** See note on 25:20.

■ **31:19 the household idols.** Small household gods, or *teraphim,* were thought to provide protection and were used in divination (30:27 note; Ezek. 21:21; Zech. 10:2). Unlike Sarah and Rebekah, Rachel had not given up her pagan idols or ethics (vv. 34, 35; 35:2).

■ **31:23 his brethren.** Laban had military superiority (v. 29).

■ **31:24 God had come.** God sovereignly protected Jacob as He had Abraham (12:17; 20:3) and Isaac (26:8 and note).

■ **31:27 joy . . . harp.** Again Laban appealed to custom (cf. 29:26), this time complaining that the conventional departure ritual had not been followed (cf. 24:60).

■ **31:29 It is in my power to . . . harm.** See v. 23 and note.

not find *them.* Then he went out of Leah's tent and entered Rachel's tent. 34 Now Rachel had taken the [4]household idols, put them in the camel's saddle, and sat on them. And Laban [5]searched all about the tent but did not find *them.* 35 And she said to her father, "Let it not displease my lord that I cannot [h]rise before you, for the manner of women *is* with me." And he searched but did not find the [6]household idols.

36 Then Jacob was angry and rebuked Laban, and Jacob answered and said to Laban: "What *is* my [7]trespass? What *is* my sin, that you have so hotly pursued me? 37 Although you have searched all my things, what part of your household things have you found? Set *it* here before my brethren and your brethren, that they may judge between us both! 38 These twenty years I *have been* with you; your ewes and your female goats have not miscarried their young, and I have not eaten the rams of your flock. 39 [i]That which was torn *by beasts* I did not bring to you; I bore the loss of it. [j]You required it from my hand, *whether* stolen by day or stolen by night. 40 *There* I was! In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night, and my sleep departed from my eyes. 41 Thus I have been in your house twenty years; I [k]served you fourteen years for your two daughters, and six years for your flock, and [l]you have changed my wages ten times. 42 [m]Unless the God of my father, the God of Abraham and [n]the Fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely now you would have sent me away empty-handed. [o]God has seen my affliction and the labor of my hands, and [p]rebuked *you* last night."

Laban's Covenant with Jacob

43 And Laban answered and said to Jacob, "*These* daughters *are* my daughters, and *these* children *are* my children, and *this* flock *is* my flock; all that you see *is* mine. But what can I do this day to these my daughters or to their children whom they have borne? 44 Now therefore, come, [q]let us make a [8]covenant, [r]you and I, and let it be a witness between you and me."

45 So Jacob [s]took a stone and set it up *as* a pillar. 46 Then Jacob said to his brethren, "Gather stones." And they took stones and made a heap, and they ate there on the heap. 47 Laban called it [9]Jegar Sahadutha, but Jacob called it [t]Galeed. 48 And Laban said, [t]"This heap *is* a witness between you and me this day." Therefore its name was called Galeed, 49 also [u]Mizpah,[2] because he said, "May the LORD watch between you and me when we are absent one from another. 50 If you afflict my daughters, or if you take *other* wives besides my daughters, *although* no man *is* with us—see, God *is* witness between you and me!"

51 Then Laban said to Jacob, "Here is this heap and here is *this* pillar, which I have placed between you and me. 52 This heap *is* a witness, and *this* pillar *is* a witness, that I will not pass beyond this heap to you, and you will not pass beyond this heap and this pillar to me, for harm. 53 The God of Abraham, the God of Nahor, and the God of their father [v]judge between us." And Jacob [w]swore by [x]the [3]Fear of his father Isaac. 54 Then Jacob offered a sacrifice on the mountain, and called his brethren to eat bread. And they ate bread and stayed all night on the mountain. 55 And early in the morning Laban arose, and [y]kissed his sons and daughters and [z]blessed them. Then Laban departed and [a]returned to his place.

34 [4]Heb. *teraphim* [5]Lit. *felt*
35 [h]Ex. 20:12; Lev. 19:32 [6]Heb. *teraphim*
36 [7]*transgression*
39 [i]Ex. 22:10 [j]Ex. 22:10–13
41 [k]Gen. 29:20, 27–30 [l]Gen. 31:7
42 [m]Gen. 31:5, 29, 53; Ps. 124:1, 2 [n]Gen. 31:53; Is. 8:13 [o]Gen. 29:32; Ex. 3:7 [p]Gen. 31:24, 29; 1 Chr. 12:17
44 [q]Gen. 21:27, 32; 26:28 [r]Josh. 24:27 [8]*treaty*
45 [s]Gen. 28:18; 35:14; Josh. 24:26, 27
47 [9]Lit., in Aram., *Heap of Witness* [t]Lit., in Heb., *Heap of Witness*
48 [t]Josh. 24:27
49 [u]Judg. 10:17; 11:29; 1 Sam. 7:5, 6 [2]Lit. *Watch*
53 [v]Gen. 16:5 [w]Gen. 21:23 [x]Gen. 31:42 [3]A reference to God
55 [y]Gen. 29:11, 13; 31:28, 43 [z]Gen. 28:1 [a]Gen. 18:33; 30:25; Num. 24:25

■ **31:34 Rachel . . . sat on them.** The narrative ridicules the false gods—here the powerless idols were sat on by a menstruating woman (v. 35 note; Lev. 15:19–24).

searched. See text note. The same Hebrew word (also in v. 37) is translated "felt" in 27:22. Trusting in their senses, neither Isaac nor Laban discovered the truth (27:18–27 note).

■ **31:35 the manner of women.** The time of her menstrual period. The Mosaic law later specified that women were ceremonially unclean at this time (Lev. 15:19–24). As in ch. 27, the younger child deceived the father.

■ **31:39 I bore the loss.** According to ancient laws specifying the responsibilities of shepherds, such as those in the Code of Hammurabi (c. 1750 B.C.), Jacob should not have been liable for the loss.

■ **31:42 Unless the God . . . had been with me.** See 28:15, 20 and notes.

the Fear of Isaac. Or, "the Awesome One of Isaac." See v. 53 and note.

sent me away empty-handed. An allusion to one of Laban's more conspicuous faults—his failure to pay workers their just wages (29:25; 31:7, 41).

■ **31:43 all that you see is mine.** Laban's claim shows that Jacob's fears had been justified (v. 31).

■ **31:44 make a covenant.** This covenant, or "treaty" (text note), was like the nonaggression treaties Abraham and Isaac made with the Philistines (21:27; 26:28), but unlike the covenant God made with Abraham (15:8).

■ **31:50 other wives besides my daughters.** Terah's family valued the family structure, in contrast to the Canaanites (24:3, 4; 26:34, 35; 27:46; 28:9 and notes). This prohibition was found commonly in marriage contracts from the ancient Near East.

■ **31:52 a witness.** It was assumed that the terms of the treaty would be passed on faithfully through generations.

■ **31:53 The God of Abraham . . . Nahor . . . father.** The pagan Laban apparently regarded the God of Abraham as one of the gods of his family. Terah, the father of Abraham and Nahor, had probably been a moon-worshiper in Ur (11:27 note; Josh. 24:14).

Fear of his father Isaac. Not equating the God of Abraham with the God of Nahor, Jacob swore by the "Fear of his father Isaac" (v. 42 note), another name for the God of Abraham.

■ **31:55 blessed.** See 24:60; 27:7; 28:1 and notes.

Esau Comes to Meet Jacob

32 So Jacob went on his way, and [a]the angels of God met him. 2 When Jacob saw them, he said, "This *is* God's [b]camp." And he called the name of that place [1]Mahanaim.

3 Then Jacob sent messengers before him to Esau his brother [c]in the land of Seir, [d]the [2]country of Edom. 4 And he commanded them, saying, [e]"Speak thus to my lord Esau, 'Thus your servant Jacob says: "I have dwelt with Laban and stayed there until now. 5 [f]I have oxen, donkeys, flocks, and male and female servants; and I have sent to tell my lord, that [g]I may find favor in your sight." ' "

6 Then the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, "We came to your brother Esau, and [h]he also is coming to meet you, and four hundred men *are* with him." 7 So Jacob was greatly afraid and [i]distressed; and he divided the people that *were* with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two companies. 8 And he said, "If Esau comes to the one company and [3]attacks it, then the other company which is left will escape."

9 [j]Then Jacob said, [k]"O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, the LORD [l]who said to me, 'Return to your country and to your family, and I will deal well with you': 10 I am not worthy of the least of all the [m]mercies and of all the truth which You have shown Your servant; for I crossed over this Jordan with [n]my staff, and now I have become two companies. 11 [o]Deliver me, I pray, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he come and [4]attack me *and* [p]the mother with the children. 12 For [q]You said, 'I will surely treat you well, and make your descendants as the [r]sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.' "

13 So he lodged there that same night, and took what [5]came to his hand as [s]a present for Esau his brother: 14 two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, 15 thirty milk camels with their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten foals. 16 Then he delivered *them* to the hand of his servants, every drove by itself, and said to his servants, "Pass over before me, and put some distance between successive droves." 17 And he commanded the first one, saying, "When Esau my brother meets you and asks you, saying, 'To whom do you belong, and where are you going? Whose *are* these in front of you?' 18 then you shall say, 'They *are* your servant Jacob's. It *is* a present sent to my lord Esau; and behold, he also *is* behind us.' " 19 So he commanded the second, the third, and all who followed the droves, saying, "In this manner you shall speak to Esau when you find him; 20 and also say, 'Behold, your servant Jacob *is* behind us.' " For he said, "I will [t]appease him with the present that goes before me, and afterward I will see his face; perhaps he will accept me." 21 So the present went on over before him, but he himself lodged that night in the camp.

Wrestling with God

22 And he arose that night and took his two wives, his two female servants, and his eleven sons, [u]and crossed over the ford of Jabbok. 23 He took them, sent them [6]over the brook, and sent

CHAPTER 32

1 [a]Num. 22:31; 2 Kin. 6:16, 17; [Ps. 34:7; 91:1; Heb. 1:14]

2 [b]Josh. 5:14; Ps. 103:21; 148:2; Luke 2:13 [1]Lit. *Double Camp*

3 [c]Gen. 14:6; 33:14, 16 [d]Gen. 25:30; 36:6–9; Deut. 2:5; Josh. 24:4 [2]Lit. *field*

4 [e]Prov. 15:1

5 [f]Gen. 30:43 [g]Gen. 33:8, 15

6 [h]Gen. 33:1

7 [i]Gen. 32:11; 35:3

8 [3]Lit. *strikes*

9 [j][Ps. 50:15] [k]Gen. 28:13; 31:42 [l]Gen. 31:3, 13

10 [m]Gen. 24:27 [n]Job 8:7

11 [o]Ps. 59:1, 2 [p]Hos. 10:14 [4]Lit. *strike*

12 [q]Gen. 28:13–15 [r]Gen. 22:17

13 [s]Gen. 43:11 [5]*he had received*

20 [t][Prov. 21:14]

22 [u]Num. 21:24; Deut. 3:16; Josh. 12:2

23 [6]*across*

■ **32:1 angels of God.** Jacob again encountered the angels of God whom he met at Bethel (28:12). These angelic encounters upon leaving and returning to the Promised Land frame Jacob's experiences with Laban (28:10–22 note) and attest to God's promise to be with and protect Jacob wherever he went (28:15).

Faithful to His promise, God had been with Jacob—not only protecting him, but also remaking his character. The formerly prayerless and ambitiously deceptive Jacob was now a humble man of prayer (vv. 9–12).

■ **32:2 Mahanaim.** See text note. Jacob may have had in mind both his camp and God's camp, a heavenly shield and escort. As Bethel was the house of God and the gate of heaven (28:17), Mahanaim was God's camp on earth. Mahanaim later served as a capital for Saul's son Ishbosheth (2 Sam. 2:8) and as a refuge for David during Absalom's rebellion (2 Sam. 17:24). Mahanaim was situated east of the Jordan River near the River Jabbok, but its precise location is uncertain.

■ **32:3 Seir.** See 25:25 and note.

■ **32:4, 5** Jacob's humble manner of address toward his brother and former rival suggests that his character change was real (v. 1 note). Like Abraham with Lot (13:8, 9), Jacob did not insist on his covenantal privileges but left the matter in God's hands.

■ **32:6 four hundred men.** Jacob had reason to fear (14:14; 27:40, 41), yet he had survived Laban's stronger forces with God's help (31:29 and note).

■ **32:9 Jacob said.** Jacob's first recorded prayer (vv. 9–12) stands between the two presents to Esau (vv. 3–8, 13–21). This structure suggests that he trusted God to prosper his two gifts.

■ **32:10 I am not worthy.** A spiritual transformation had taken place in Jacob: he submitted to Esau and recognized his unworthiness before God.

mercies . . . truth. Words often used to describe God's loyalty and faithfulness to His covenant promises (24:27; Ex. 15:13 note; Ps. 40:11; 61:7). Jacob now identified himself fully with God's covenant to Abraham and Isaac, and his faith rested firmly on God's covenant promises.

■ **32:12 make your descendants as the sand.** In faith Jacob applied to himself the language of the covenantal promise to Abraham (22:17; cf. 28:14).

■ **32:13 a present.** The Hebrew here connotes tribute, a gift expressing loyalty to a superior. See notes on 33:3, 4 and 33:11.

■ **32:14, 15** Five hundred fifty animals was an extravagant gift.

■ **32:20 appease him.** Lit. "cover his face," an expression meaning the covering over of guilt. Jacob was painfully aware that he had sinned against his brother.

■ **32:22–32** In wrestling with Jacob, God appeared in human form and deprived Jacob of his natural strength, but Jacob emerged the victor by clinging to God for blessing.

24 [v]Hos. 12:2–4
[7]dawn
25 [w]2 Cor. 12:7
[8]struck
26 [x]Luke 24:28
[y]Hos. 12:4
28 [z]Gen. 35:10
[a]Hos. 12:3, 4
[b]Gen. 25:31; 27:33 [9]Lit. *Prince with God*
29 [c]Judg. 13:17, 18
[d]Gen. 35:9
30 [e]Gen. 16:13
[1]Lit. *Face of God*
31 [2]Lit. *Face of God;* same as *Peniel,* v. 30
32 [3]*struck*

CHAPTER 33

1 [a]Gen. 32:6
3 [b]Gen. 18:2; 42:6
4 [c]Gen. 32:28
[d]Gen. 45:14, 15

over what he had. 24 Then Jacob was left alone; and [v]a Man wrestled with him until the [7]breaking of day. 25 Now when He saw that He did not prevail against him, He [8]touched the socket of his hip; and [w]the socket of Jacob's hip was out of joint as He wrestled with him. 26 And [x]He said, "Let Me go, for the day breaks."

But he said, [y]"I will not let You go unless You bless me!"

27 So He said to him, "What *is* your name?"

He said, "Jacob."

28 And He said, [z]"Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but [9]Israel; for you have [a]struggled with God and [b]with men, and have prevailed."

29 Then Jacob asked, saying, "Tell *me* Your name, I pray."

And He said, [c]"Why *is* it *that* you ask about My name?" And He [d]blessed him there.

30 So Jacob called the name of the place [1]Peniel: "For [e]I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." 31 Just as he crossed over [2]Penuel the sun rose on him, and he limped on his hip. 32 Therefore to this day the children of Israel do not eat the muscle that shrank, which *is* on the hip socket, because He [3]touched the socket of Jacob's hip in the muscle that shrank.

Jacob and Esau Meet

33 Now Jacob lifted his eyes and looked, and there, [a]Esau was coming, and with him were four hundred men. So he divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and the two maidservants. 2 And he put the maidservants and their children in front, Leah and her children behind, and Rachel and Joseph last. 3 Then he crossed over before them and [b]bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother.

4 [c]But Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, [d]and fell on his neck and kissed him, and

■ **32:24 a Man wrestled with him.** This mysterious Man was a theophany, a visible (and in this case tangible) manifestation of the God who is intrinsically invisible, the Angel of the Lord (16:7 note; Hos. 12:4). The Lord unexpectedly initiated the match.

■ **32:25 He did not prevail.** Though Jacob was apparently a man of considerable strength (29:2, 10), the Angel of the Lord accommodated His strength to Jacob's.

touched. See text note. God dislocated Jacob's hip, the wrestler's pivot of strength (v. 31). Having previously depended upon his wits and strength, Jacob's natural powers were now crippled. Every step he would take in the future would remind him of his dependence upon divine grace.

■ **32:27 What is your name.** See note on 3:9.

■ **32:28 Your name.** See note on 17:6.

Israel. See text note. The new name indicates that the elect patriarch had matured in his faith.

struggled with God. The "Man" is implicitly identified as God Himself (v. 30).

■ **32:29 Why is it that you ask.** In ancient times, a name was thought to express essential nature as well as identity. The divine name partakes of the sacredness of God's being (Judg. 13:18), and was to be reverenced (Ex. 20:7). The pagans believed that knowing the name of a god imparted ability to invoke that deity's power. Here, however, the divine name is withheld (cf. 28:13; Hos. 12:5), showing that the Lord's revelation of His name is a gracious act of divine initiative, not a response to human effort to invoke and control God.

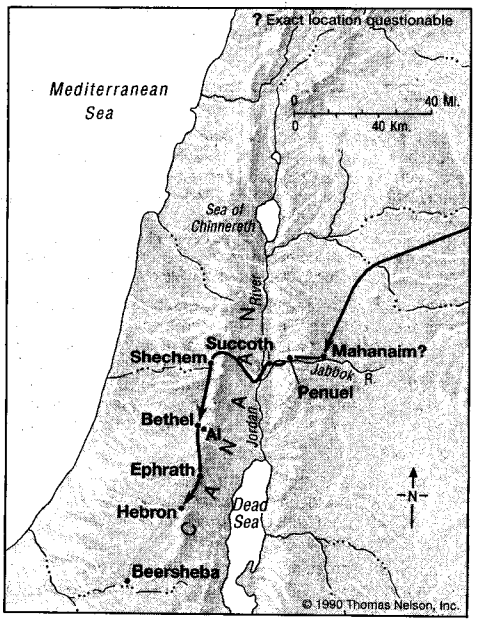
■ **32:30 Peniel.** See text notes on vv. 30, 31. Penuel was located on the River Jabbok near the modern Tulul edh-Dhahab. The town was destroyed by Gideon (Judg. 8:8) and later fortified by Jeroboam I (1 Kin. 12:25).

preserved. Jacob's preservation during his "face-to-face" meeting with the almighty God confirmed his preservation during his imminent encounter with Esau, a mere human being (cf. v. 11).

■ **32:32 to this day.** The restriction against eating the sciatic tendon, mentioned elsewhere only in extrabiblical Jewish literature, commemorated this foundational event in the nation's history.

■ **33:1 four hundred men.** See note on 32:6.

■ **33:3, 4** Jacob greeted Esau as a vassal greets his patron in the ceremony of a royal court, with the deference appropriate to a superior—note the sevenfold obeisance (common practice in ancient Near Eastern court protocol, v. 3), the submissive address of a "servant" (v. 5) to his "lord" (vv. 8, 13), and the presentation of gifts of homage (vv. 10, 11). In contrast, Esau greeted Jacob as one brother greets another after a long separation (vv. 4, 9).



Jacob Returns to Canaan. After 20 years in Padan Aram, located in Northern Mesopotamia, Jacob returned to Canaan. He met the angels of God at Mahanaim. At Penuel he wrestled with a messenger of the Lord and prevailed.

they wept. 5 And he lifted his eyes and saw the women and children, and said, "Who *are* these with you?"

So he said, "The children [e]whom God has graciously given your servant." 6 Then the maidservants came near, they and their children, and bowed down. 7 And Leah also came near with her children, and they bowed down. Afterward Joseph and Rachel came near, and they bowed down.

8 Then Esau said, "What *do* you *mean by* [f]all this company which I met?"

And he said, "*These are* [g]to find favor in the sight of my lord."

9 But Esau said, "I have enough, my brother; keep what you have for yourself."

10 And Jacob said, "No, please, if I have now found favor in your sight, then receive my present from my hand, inasmuch as I [h]have seen your face as though I had seen the face of God, and you were pleased with me. 11 Please, take [i]my blessing that is brought to you, because God has dealt [j]graciously with me, and because I have [l]enough." [k]So he urged him, and he took *it.*

12 Then Esau said, "Let us take our journey; let us go, and I will go before you."

13 But Jacob said to him, "My lord knows that the children *are* weak, and the flocks and herds which are nursing *are* with me. And if the men should drive them hard one day, all the flock will die. 14 Please let my lord go on ahead before his servant. I will lead on slowly at a pace which the livestock that go before me, and the children, [2]are able to endure, until I come to my lord [l]in Seir."

15 And Esau said, "Now let me leave with you *some* of the people who *are* with me."

But he said, "What need is there? [m]Let me find favor in the sight of my lord." 16 So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir. 17 And Jacob journeyed to [n]Succoth, built himself a house, and made [3]booths for his livestock. Therefore the name of the place is called [4]Succoth.

Jacob Comes to Canaan

18 Then Jacob came [5]safely to [o]the city of [p]Shechem, which *is* in the land of Canaan, when he came from Padan Aram; and he pitched his tent before the city. 19 And [q]he bought the parcel of [6]land, where he had pitched his tent, from the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for one hundred pieces of money. 20 Then he erected an altar there and called it [r]El[7] Elohe Israel.

The Dinah Incident

34 Now [a]Dinah the daughter of Leah, whom she had borne to Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land. 2 And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he [b]took her and lay with her, and violated her. 3 His soul [1]was strongly attracted to Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the young woman and spoke [2]kindly to the young woman. 4 So Shechem [c]spoke to his father Hamor, saying, "Get me this young woman as a wife."

5 And Jacob heard that he had defiled Dinah his daughter. Now his sons were with his livestock in the field; so Jacob [d]held[3] his peace until they came. 6 Then Hamor the father of Shechem went out to Jacob to speak with him. 7 And the sons of Jacob came in from the field when they heard *it;* and the men were grieved and very angry, because he [e]had done a disgraceful

5 [e]Gen. 48:9; [Ps. 127:3]; Is. 8:18

8 [f]Gen. 32:13–16 [g]Gen. 32:5

10 [h]Gen. 43:3; 2 Sam. 3:13; 14:24, 28, 32

11 [i]Judg. 1:15; 1 Sam. 25:27; 30:26 [j]Gen. 30:43; Ex. 33:19 [k]2 Kin. 5:23 [l]Lit. *all*

14 [l]Gen. 32:3; 36:8 [2]*can stand*

15 [m]Gen. 34:11; 47:25; Ruth 2:13

17 [n]Josh. 13:27; Judg. 8:5; Ps. 60:6 [3]*shelters* [4]Lit. *Booths*

18 [o]John 3:23 [p]Gen. 12:6; 35:4; Josh. 24:1; Judg. 9:1; Ps. 60:6 [5]Or *to Shalem, a city of*

19 [q]Josh. 24:32; John 4:5 [6]Lit. *the field*

20 [r]Gen. 35:7 [7]Lit. *God, the God of Israel*

CHAPTER 34

1 [a]Gen. 30:21

2 [b]Gen. 20:2

3 [1]Lit. *clung to* [2]*tenderly*

4 [c]Judg. 14:2

5 [d]2 Sam. 13:22 [3]*kept silent*

7 [e]Deut. 22:20–30; Josh. 7:15; Judg. 20:6

■ **33:5 graciously given.** As Jacob remembered his troubled history, he confessed God's unmerited kindness in giving him children (29:31—30:24) and prosperity (30:25—31:55).

■ **33:10 present.** See 32:13 and note.

as though . . . the face of God. As at Peniel, when Jacob saw God's face by theophany and his life was graciously spared (32:30), so also now he saw the dreaded face of Esau and was graciously received.

■ **33:11 my blessing.** Jacob's statement recalls his earlier theft of the paternal blessing in ch. 27. Jacob here offered recompense out of the many blessings God had given him.

urged . . . took. The reconciliation was sealed by accepting the gift.

■ **33:14 until I come to . . . Seir.** Given his intention to travel to Succoth (v. 17), Jacob may have been speaking deceptively, but more probably Esau knew that this was Jacob's polite way of not contradicting him (cf. 23:11 note). Though reconciled, the brothers would live apart.

■ **33:18—35:29** This final section of "the account of Isaac" (Introduction: Outline), like the closing section in "the account of Abraham" (22:20—25:11), records the transition of patriarchies. It is structured according to Jacob's itinerary back in the land, featuring deaths at various sites (which mark the passage of Isaac's generation), and important episodes in the "account" such as the sins of Reuben, Simeon, and Levi.

■ **33:20 he erected an altar there.** Jacob built his altar at Shechem where Abraham built his first altar in the Promised Land (see 12:6, 7). See also 28:20–22.

■ **34:1–31** The threat to the covenant community at Shechem was severe. Hamor's proposal would have meant the assimilation of Jacob's family into the surrounding peoples (vv. 8–10; Num. 25:1–3 note).

The transition from Jacob's act of worship (33:20) to the depraved behavior of ch. 34 is striking. Instead of residing at Shechem (33:18, 19), perhaps Jacob should have fulfilled his vow at Bethel (28:22; 31:13; 35:1). There is no mention of God in this chapter and no separation from idolatry (35:1–5), a sad commentary on Jacob's spiritual leadership (35:4 note).

■ **34:2 Hivite.** See 9:25; 10:15, 17 and notes.

saw . . . took . . . violated. This was forcible rape; Dinah did not consent. The Hebrew word translated "violated" is rendered "force" in 2 Sam. 13:12, 14, 22, 32. The sequence "saw . . . took" recalls 3:6 and 6:2.

■ **34:7 in Israel.** The nation of Israel. This description assumes the later development of the nation from the sons of Israel (cf. 49:28).

thing in Israel by lying with Jacob's daughter, [f]a thing which ought not to be done. 8 But Hamor spoke with them, saying, "The soul of my son Shechem longs for your daughter. Please give her to him as a wife. 9 And make marriages with us; give your daughters to us, and take our daughters to yourselves. 10 So you shall dwell with us, and the land shall be before you. Dwell and trade in it, and acquire possessions for yourselves in it."

11 Then Shechem said to her father and her brothers, "Let me find favor in your eyes, and whatever you say to me I will give. 12 Ask me ever so much [g]dowry[4] and gift, and I will give according to what you say to me; but give me the young woman as a wife."

13 But the sons of Jacob answered Shechem and Hamor his father, and spoke [h]deceitfully, because he had defiled Dinah their sister. 14 And they said to them, "We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one who is [i]uncircumcised, for [j]that *would be* a reproach to us. 15 But on this *condition* we will consent to you: If you will become as we *are,* if every male of you is circumcised, 16 then we will give our daughters to you, and we will take your daughters to us; and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people. 17 But if you will not heed us and be circumcised, then we will take our daughter and be gone."

18 And their words pleased Hamor and Shechem, Hamor's son. 19 So the young man did not delay to do the thing, because he delighted in Jacob's daughter. He *was* [k]more honorable than all the household of his father.

20 And Hamor and Shechem his son came to the [l]gate of their city, and spoke with the men of their city, saying: 21 "These men *are* at peace with us. Therefore let them dwell in the land and trade in it. For indeed the land *is* large enough for them. Let us take their daughters to us as wives, and let us give them our daughters. 22 Only on this *condition* will the men consent to dwell with us, to be one people: if every male among us is circumcised as they *are* circumcised. 23 *Will* not their livestock, their property, and every animal of theirs *be* ours? Only let us consent to them, and they will dwell with us." 24 And all who went out of the gate of his city heeded Hamor and Shechem his son; every male was circumcised, all who [m]went out of the gate of his city.

25 Now it came to pass on the third day, when they were in pain, that two of the sons of Jacob, [n]Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, each took his sword and came boldly upon the city and killed all the males. 26 And they [o]killed Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah from Shechem's house, and went out. 27 The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and plundered the city, because their sister had been defiled. 28 They took their sheep, their oxen, and their donkeys, what *was* in the city and what *was* in the field, 29 and all their wealth. All their little ones and their wives they took captive; and they plundered even all that *was* in the houses.

30 Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, [p]"You have [q]troubled me [r]by making me obnoxious among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites; [s]and since I *am* few in number, they will gather themselves together against me and kill me. I shall be destroyed, my household and I."

31 But they said, "Should he treat our sister like a harlot?"

Jacob's Return to Bethel

35 Then God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to [a]Bethel and dwell there; and make an altar there to God, [b]who appeared to you [c]when you fled from the face of Esau your brother."

7 [f]Deut. 23:17; 2 Sam. 13:12

12 [g]Ex. 22:16, 17; Deut. 22:29 [4]*bride-price*

13 [h]Gen. 31:7; Ex. 8:29

14 [i]Ex. 12:48 [j]Josh. 5:2–9

19 [k]1 Chr. 4:9

20 [l]Gen. 19:1; 23:10; Ruth 4:1, 11; 2 Sam. 15:2

24 [m]Gen. 23:10, 18

25 [n]Gen. 29:33, 34; 42:24; 49:5–7

26 [o]Gen. 49:5, 6

30 [p]Gen. 49:6 [q]Josh. 7:25 [r]Ex. 5:21; 1 Sam. 13:4; 2 Sam. 10:6 [s]Gen. 46:26, 27; Deut. 4:27; 1 Chr. 16:19; Ps. 105:12

CHAPTER 35

1 [a]Gen. 28:19; 31:13 [b]Gen. 28:13 [c]Gen. 27:43

■ **34:9 make marriages.** See note on ch. 34.

■ **34:12 dowry.** This was not the dowry given by the bride's family to the groom, but rather the "bride-price" (text note), a reciprocal gift given by the groom to the bride's father (24:53; 1 Sam. 18:25).

■ **34:13 sons of Jacob . . . spoke deceitfully.** Jacob reaped the whirlwind; his sons copied his deception (27:35, 36), but killing was their goal.

■ **34:15 every male . . . circumcised.** Jacob's sons sacrilegiously emptied the holy covenant sign of its religious significance (17:10, 11 and notes) and abused it for the purpose of inflicting vengeance.

■ **34:20 gate.** See note on 23:10.

■ **34:24 all . . . heeded Hamor.** The Shechemites probably neither knew nor cared about the religious significance of the rite; they agreed only to advance their own interests (v. 23).

■ **34:25 killed all the males.** Under the Mosaic law, Shechem's sin against Dinah would not have earned such excessive punishment (Deut. 22:28, 29). The action of Simeon and Levi prematurely (and illegitimately) anticipated the holy war that Israel was to wage against the inhabitants of the land (15:16; Ex. 23:27–31; Deut. 20:16–20).

■ **34:27 plundered.** By their unbridled, faithless, and rash revenge Simeon and Levi lost leadership and land in Israel (49:5–7).

■ **34:30 I shall be destroyed.** Jacob here displayed fear, not obedient faith (cf. 35:5).

■ **35:1–29** Jacob's journey through time, as indicated by births (vv. 16–18), deaths (vv. 8, 19, 20), and genealogies (vv. 23–26), and through space, as indicated by itineraries (vv. 6, 16, 21, 27), is brought to completion because God was with him (v. 3). He returns to pay his vow at Bethel (vv. 1–8), is confirmed as the successor to God's Abrahamic promises (vv. 9–15), sees the twelve tribes of Israel safely settled in the Promised Land (vv. 16–26), and is reunited with his father and brother (vv. 27–29).

■ **35:1 go up to Bethel.** Jacob had a vow to fulfill (28:20–22; 34:1–31 note). God's revelation at Bethel (vv. 9–13) reiterates the covenant promises to Abraham, who himself had earlier worshiped at Bethel (12:8; 13:3, 4).

2 And Jacob said to his [d]household and to all who *were* with him, "Put away [e]the foreign gods that *are* among you, [f]purify yourselves, and change your garments. 3 Then let us arise and go up to Bethel; and I will make an altar there to God, [g]who answered me in the day of my distress [h]and has been with me in the way which I have gone." 4 So they gave Jacob all the foreign [i]gods which *were* in their hands, and the [j]earrings which *were* in their ears; and Jacob hid them under [j]the terebinth tree which *was* by Shechem.

5 And they journeyed, and [k]the terror of God was upon the cities that *were* all around them, and they did not pursue the sons of Jacob. 6 So Jacob came to [l]Luz (that *is,* Bethel), which *is* in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who *were* with him. 7 And he [m]built an altar there and called the place [2]El Bethel, because [n]there God appeared to him when he fled from the face of his brother.

8 Now [o]Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died, and she was buried below Bethel under the terebinth tree. So the name of it was called [3]Allon Bachuth.

9 Then [p]God appeared to Jacob again, when he came from Padan Aram, and [q]blessed him. 10 And God said to him, "Your name *is* Jacob; [r]your name shall not be called Jacob anymore, [s]but Israel shall be your name." So He called his name Israel. 11 Also God said to him: [t]"I *am* God Almighty. [u]Be fruitful and multiply; [v]a nation and a company of nations shall proceed from you, and kings shall come from your body. 12 The [w]land which I gave Abraham and Isaac I give to you; and to your descendants after you I give this land." 13 Then God [x]went[4] up from him in the place where He talked with him. 14 So Jacob [y]set up a pillar in the place where He talked with him, a pillar of stone; and he poured a drink offering on it, and he poured oil on it. 15 And Jacob called the name of the place where God spoke with him, [z]Bethel.

Death of Rachel

16 Then they journeyed from Bethel. And when there was but a little distance to go to Ephrath, Rachel labored *in childbirth,* and she had hard labor. 17 Now it came to pass, when she was in hard labor, that the midwife said to her, "Do not fear; [a]you will have this son also." 18 And so it was, as her soul was departing (for she died), that she called his name [5]Ben-Oni; but his father called him [6]Benjamin. 19 So [b]Rachel died and was buried on the way to [c]Ephrath (that *is,* Bethlehem). 20 And Jacob set a pillar on her grave, which *is* the pillar of Rachel's grave [d]to this day.

21 Then Israel journeyed and pitched his tent beyond [e]the tower of Eder. 22 And it happened, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and [f]lay with Bilhah his father's concubine; and Israel heard *about it.*

19 [b]Gen. 48:7 [c]Mic. 5:2 **20** [d]1 Sam. 10:2 **21** [e]Mic. 4:8 **22** [f]Gen. 49:4

2 [d]Josh. 24:15 [e]Josh. 24:2, 14, 23 [f]Ex. 19:10, 14

3 [g]Gen. 32:7, 24 [h]Gen. 28:15, 20; 31:3, 42

4 [i]Hos. 2:13 [j]Josh. 24:26 [1]*idols*

5 [k]Ex. 15:16; 23:27

6 [l]Gen. 28:19, 22; 48:3

7 [m]Eccl. 5:4 [n]Gen. 28:13 [2]Lit. *God of the House of God*

8 [o]Gen. 24:59 [3]Lit. *Terebinth of Weeping*

9 [p]Josh. 5:13 [q]Gen. 32:29

10 [r]Gen. 17:5 [s]Gen. 32:28

11 [t]Ex. 6:3 [u]Gen. 9:1, 7 [v]Gen. 17:5, 6, 16; 28:3; 48:4

12 [w]Gen. 12:7; 13:15; 26:3, 4; 28:13; 48:4

13 [x]Gen. 17:22; 18:33 [4]*departed*

14 [y]Gen. 28:18, 19; 31:45

15 [z]Gen. 28:19

17 [a]Gen. 30:24

18 [5]Lit. *Son of My Sorrow* [6]Lit. *Son of the Right Hand*

■ **35:2 Put away.** Repentance involves renouncing whatever hinders or tarnishes the worship and service of God. The covenant's primary requirement is exclusive allegiance to the Lord (Ex. 20:3–5; Josh. 24:14; Judg. 10:16).

foreign gods. See note on 31:19; Josh. 24:23.

■ **35:4 they gave Jacob.** Jacob recovered his spiritual leadership of the family (30:2 note; 34:1–31 note).

earrings. These were amulets associated with pagan worship (cf. v. 2).

terebinth tree . . . by Shechem. Probably the sacred tree associated with Abraham (12:6 and note).

■ **35:5 terror of God.** God's protection of Jacob's family by divinely induced panic (cf. Ex. 23:27; Josh. 2:9) was necessary because their reputation had changed from that of peaceful shepherds (34:21) to rapacious warriors (34:30).

■ **35:7 built an altar.** Jacob finally fulfilled his vow to the Lord (28:20–22). By such altar building, the patriarchal family acknowledged the covenant promises and consecrated the Promised Land. Regular worship was crucial if they were to maintain their religious separation from the surrounding Canaanites (ch. 34; Num. 25:1–3 and notes). See 12:7 and note; 13:18; 22:9; 33:20.

■ **35:8 Rebekah's nurse.** Scripture memorializes the death of the aged, faithful nurse of Rebekah, rather than the matriarch herself, probably because of Rebekah's deception (ch. 27).

■ **35:9–15** God's revelation to Jacob after his return from Padan Aram to Bethel confirmed the earlier promises of 28:13, 14. Using language that closely parallels the Abrahamic promises of nations, royalty, and land (17:5–8), God confirms His promises to Israel, the transformed Jacob (32:28), and indirectly to his twelve sons.

■ **35:9 Padan Aram.** See note on 25:20.

■ **35:11 Be fruitful.** God's gracious blessing on all mankind (1:28; 9:1, 7) was focused particularly on the covenant community (28:3; cf. 47:27; Ex. 1:7).

■ **35:12 land . . . descendants.** See notes on 12:7; 13:15.

■ **35:13 God went up from him.** This recalls Jacob's first meeting with the Lord at Bethel (28:13 note).

■ **35:16–20** Near Ephrath, Rachel died giving birth to Jacob's twelfth son (30:1 note). The birth of Benjamin completed the patriarchal roster of the twelve tribes of Israel.

■ **35:17 this son also.** Rachel's prayer was answered (30:24).

■ **35:18 Ben-Oni.** See text note. Rachel's weeping for her child portended an anguished future for the nation (Jer. 31:15–17; Matt. 2:17, 18).

Benjamin. See text note. The Hebrew word *yamin* can refer both to the right hand and to the south (the Hebrews often described directions in terms of a person facing the east—the right hand thus pointed to the south). Jacob's other sons were born in Padan Aram, northeast of Canaan.

■ **35:22 Reuben . . . lay with Bilhah.** To gratify his lusts and perhaps to certify his leadership as firstborn over the next generation (cf. 2 Sam. 16:15–23; 1 Kin. 2:22). For his sin Reuben was deprived of his status as firstborn (48:1 note) and of his leadership (49:3, 4; Deut. 22:30), which Judah, Leah's fourth son, would assume instead (49:8–10).

23 [g]Gen. 29:31–35; 30:18–20; 46:8; Ex. 1:1–4

27 [h]Gen. 13:18; 18:1; 23:19 [i]Josh. 14:15 [7]Lit. *Town* or *City of Arba*

29 [j]Gen. 15:15; 25:8; 49:33 [k]Gen. 25:9; 49:31 [8]Joined his ancestors

CHAPTER 36

1 [a]Gen. 25:30

2 [b]Gen. 26:34; 28:9 [c]2 Kin. 7:6 [d]Gen. 36:25 [1]Or *Oholibamah*

3 [e]Gen. 28:9

4 [f]1 Chr. 1:35

5 [2]Or *Oholibamah*

7 [g]Gen. 13:6, 11 [h]Gen. 17:8; 28:4; Heb. 11:9

8 [i]Gen. 32:3; Deut. 2:5; Josh. 24:4 [j]Gen. 36:1, 19

10 [k]1 Chr. 1:35

11 [3]*Zephi,* 1 Chr. 1:36

12 [l]Ex. 17:8–16; Num. 24:20; Deut. 25:17–19; 1 Sam. 15:2, 3

14 [4]Or *Oholibamah*

16 [5]Sam. omits *Chief Korah*

Jacob's Twelve Sons

Now the sons of Jacob were twelve: [23] the sons of Leah *were* [g]Reuben, Jacob's firstborn, and Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun; [24] the sons of Rachel *were* Joseph and Benjamin; [25] the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maidservant, *were* Dan and Naphtali; [26] and the sons of Zilpah, Leah's maidservant, *were* Gad and Asher. These *were* the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Padan Aram.

Death of Isaac

[27] Then Jacob came to his father Isaac at [h]Mamre, or [i]Kirjath Arba[7] (that *is,* Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac had dwelt. [28] Now the days of Isaac were one hundred and eighty years. [29] So Isaac breathed his last and died, and [j]was [8]gathered to his people, *being* old and full of days. And [k]his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

The Family of Esau

36 Now this *is* the genealogy of Esau, [a]who is Edom. [2] [b]Esau took his wives from the daughters of Canaan: Adah the daughter of Elon the [c]Hittite; [d]Aholibamah[1] the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite; [3] and [e]Basemath, Ishmael's daughter, sister of Nebajoth. [4] Now [f]Adah bore Eliphaz to Esau, and Basemath bore Reuel. [5] And [2]Aholibamah bore Jeush, Jaalam, and Korah. These *were* the sons of Esau who were born to him in the land of Canaan.

[6] Then Esau took his wives, his sons, his daughters, and all the persons of his household, his cattle and all his animals, and all his goods which he had gained in the land of Canaan, and went to a country away from the presence of his brother Jacob. [7] [g]For their possessions were too great for them to dwell together, and [h]the land where they were strangers could not support them because of their livestock. [8] So Esau dwelt in [i]Mount Seir. [j]Esau *is* Edom.

[9] And this *is* the genealogy of Esau the father of the Edomites in Mount Seir. [10] These *were* the names of Esau's sons: [k]Eliphaz the son of Adah the wife of Esau, and Reuel the son of Basemath the wife of Esau. [11] And the sons of Eliphaz were Teman, Omar, [3]Zepho, Gatam, and Kenaz.

[12] Now Timna was the concubine of Eliphaz, Esau's son, and she bore [l]Amalek to Eliphaz. These *were* the sons of Adah, Esau's wife.

[13] These *were* the sons of Reuel: Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah. These were the sons of Basemath, Esau's wife.

[14] These were the sons of [4]Aholibamah, Esau's wife, the daughter of Anah, the daughter of Zibeon. And she bore to Esau: Jeush, Jaalam, and Korah.

The Chiefs of Edom

[15] These *were* the chiefs of the sons of Esau. The sons of Eliphaz, the firstborn *son* of Esau, were Chief Teman, Chief Omar, Chief Zepho, Chief Kenaz, [16] [5]Chief Korah, Chief Gatam, *and* Chief Amalek. These *were* the chiefs of Eliphaz in the land of Edom. They *were* the sons of Adah.

[17] These *were* the sons of Reuel, Esau's son: Chief Nahath, Chief Zerah, Chief Shammah, and

■ **35:26 sons . . . born . . . in Padan Aram.** Benjamin was not actually born in Padan Aram, but after the return to Canaan (vv. 16–18). The statement must be taken as an informal review of the sons born to Jacob during this general period of his sojourn in Padan Aram and the immediate aftermath (46:8–27 note). This association of the twelve sons with Padan Aram perhaps underscores the similarities of Jacob's "exodus" from Padan Aram and the Exodus of the twelve tribes from Egypt (31:3 note).

■ **35:27–29** Isaac again appears in the narrative (28:5). His journey ended with a full length of years, but God passed him by after he tried to thwart God's purpose in the blessing (25:19 note).

■ **36:1 genealogy.** With this genealogy, or account, of Esau, a new section of Genesis begins (2:4 note).

Esau, who is Edom. "Edom," derived from the Hebrew word for "red," was another name for Esau (25:25; 25:30 and note). The term was also appropriate for the land of Edom, with its red sandstone formations and soil.

■ **36:2–8** This genealogy focuses on Esau's Canaanite wives and the children born in Canaan prior to his migration to Mount Seir.

■ **36:2 took his wives.** See 26:34; 27:46 and notes.

Canaan. See 9:25; 10:15–19. The word broadly covers the tribes in the land.

Adah. The names of Esau's wives here differ from those in 26:34; 28:9. The use of alternate names may account for some of the variation.

■ **36:6 went to a country.** Jacob's return to Mamre clinched Esau's decision to move permanently to Edom. Separated in spirit, Jacob and Esau were to be separated by geography as well (cf. 33:14 note).

■ **36:9–14** This genealogy focuses on Esau's twelve sons (vv. 2–8), not counting Amalek, the son of Eliphaz's concubine, Timna (v. 12).

■ **36:15–19** This list shows the transition of Esau's descendants from a family to a tribal structure.

Chief Mizzah. These *were* the chiefs of Reuel in the land of Edom. These *were* the sons of Basemath, Esau's wife.

18 And these *were* the sons of [6]Aholibamah, Esau's wife: Chief Jeush, Chief Jaalam, and Chief Korah. These *were* the chiefs *who descended* from Aholibamah, Esau's wife, the daughter of Anah. 19 These *were* the sons of Esau, who is Edom, and these *were* their chiefs.

The Sons of Seir

20 [m]These *were* the sons of Seir [n]the Horite who inhabited the land: Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, 21 Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. These *were* the chiefs of the Horites, the sons of Seir, in the land of Edom.

22 And the sons of Lotan were Hori and [7]Hemam. Lotan's sister *was* Timna.

23 These *were* the sons of Shobal: [8]Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, [9]Shepho, and Onam.

24 These *were* the sons of Zibeon: both Ajah and Anah. This *was the* Anah who found the [l]water in the wilderness as he pastured [o]the donkeys of his father Zibeon. 25 These *were* the children of Anah: Dishon and [2]Aholibamah the daughter of Anah.

26 These *were* the sons of [3]Dishon: [4]Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran, and Cheran. 27 These *were* the sons of Ezer: Bilhan, Zaavan, and [5]Akan. 28 These *were* the sons of Dishan: [p]Uz and Aran.

29 These *were* the chiefs of the Horites: Chief Lotan, Chief Shobal, Chief Zibeon, Chief Anah, 30 Chief Dishon, Chief Ezer, and Chief Dishan. These *were* the chiefs of the Horites, according to their chiefs in the land of Seir.

The Kings of Edom

31 [q]Now these *were* the kings who reigned in the land of Edom before any king reigned over the children of Israel: 32 Bela the son of Beor reigned in Edom, and the name of his city *was* Dinhabah. 33 And when Bela died, Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned in his place. 34 When Jobab died, Husham of the land of the Temanites reigned in his place. 35 And when Husham died, Hadad the son of Bedad, who attacked Midian in the field of Moab, reigned in his place. And the name of his city *was* Avith. 36 When Hadad died, Samlah of Masrekah reigned in his place. 37 And when Samlah died, Saul of [r]Rehoboth-*by*-the-River reigned in his place. 38 When Saul died, Baal-Hanan the son of Achbor reigned in his place. 39 And when Baal-Hanan the son of Achbor died, [6]Hadar reigned in his place; and the name of his city *was* [7]Pau. His wife's name *was* Mehetabel, the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezahab.

The Chiefs of Esau

40 And these *were* the names of the chiefs of Esau, according to their families and their places, by their names: Chief Timnah, Chief [8]Alvah, Chief Jetheth, 41 Chief [9]Aholibamah, Chief Elah, Chief Pinon, 42 Chief Kenaz, Chief Teman, Chief Mibzar, 43 Chief Magdiel, and Chief Iram. These *were* the chiefs of Edom, according to their dwelling places in the land of their possession. Esau *was* the father of [l]the Edomites.

Joseph Dreams of Greatness

37 Now Jacob dwelt in the land [a]where his father was a [l]stranger, in the land of Canaan.
2 This *is* the history of Jacob.

Joseph, *being* seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brothers. And the lad *was* with the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought [b]a bad report of them to his father.

18 [6]Or *Oholibamah*

20 [m]1 Chr. 1:38–42 [n]Gen. 14:6; Deut. 2:12, 22

22 [7]*Homam,* 1 Chr. 1:39

23 [8]*Alian,* 1 Chr. 1:40 [9]*Shephi,* 1 Chr. 1:40

24 [o]Lev. 19:19 [l]So with MT, Vg. (*hot springs*); LXX *Jamin;* Tg. *mighty men;* Talmud *mules*

25 [2]Or *Oholibamah*

26 [3]Heb. *Dishan* [4]*Hamran,* 1 Chr. 1:41

27 [5]*Jaakan,* 1 Chr. 1:42

28 [p]Job 1:1

31 [q]Gen. 17:6, 16; 35:11; 1 Chr. 1:43

37 [r]Gen. 10:11

39 [6]Sam., Syr. *Hadad* and 1 Chr. 1:50 [7]*Pai,* 1 Chr. 1:50

40 [8]*Aliah,* 1 Chr. 1:51

41 [9]Or *Oholibamah*

43 [l]Heb. *Edom*

CHAPTER 37

1 [a]Gen. 17:8; 23:4; 28:4; 36:7; Heb. 11:9 [l]*sojourner,* temporary resident

2 [b]Gen. 35:25, 26; 1 Sam. 2:22–24

■ **36:20–30** This genealogy presents the aboriginal inhabitants of Mount Seir whom the sons of Esau destroyed (Deut. 2:22) and, in other cases, married (vv. 22, 25).

■ **36:31–39** The list shows Edom's transition from tribal structure to designated kingship.

■ **36:31 before any king reigned over . . . Israel.** See Introduction: Date and Occasion.

■ **37:2—50:26** The final section of Genesis, "the history of Jacob," begins. It starts on a negative note with the shattering of the covenant family's peace (ch. 37) and their intermarriage with the Canaanites (ch. 38), but concludes with the family's reconciliation and preservation in Egypt.

Just as Jacob figured prominently in the "account of Isaac," so also does Joseph in this "history of Jacob." God used Joseph, the rejected, godly brother, to save and reconcile the covenant family (45:5–8; 50:24). Though the striking parallels are not developed in the New Testament, the Christian church has traditionally viewed Joseph as a type of Christ. Godly Joseph, beloved by his father (37:3; cf. Mark 1:11), was sent to his brothers, but was then sold for twenty pieces of silver (37:28; cf. Matt. 26:15). After suffering persecution and temptation (37:18–36; 39:7–20; cf. Matt. 4:1–11), righteous Joseph was exalted as lord over his brothers (37:5–11; 41:37–45; 42:6; cf. Phil. 2:9, 10).

■ **37:2 the history of Jacob.** See note on 2:4.

sons of Bilhah and . . . Zilpah. Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher (30:4–13).

3 [c]Gen. 44:20 [d]Gen. 37:23, 32; Judg. 5:30; 1 Sam. 2:19
4 [e]Gen. 27:41; 49:23; 1 Sam. 17:28; John 15:18–20
7 [f]Gen. 42:6, 9; 43:26; 44:14
9 [g]Gen. 46:29; 47:25
10 [h]Gen. 27:29
11 [i]Matt. 27:17, 18; Acts 7:9 [j]Dan. 7:28; Luke 2:19, 51
12 [k]Gen. 33:18–20
14 [l]Gen. 13:18; 23:2, 19; 35:27; Josh. 14:14, 15; Judg. 1:10
16 [m]Song 1:7
17 [n]2 Kin. 6:13

3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he *was* [c]the son of his old age. Also he [d]made him a tunic of *many* colors. 4 But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they [e]hated him and could not speak peaceably to him.

5 Now Joseph had a dream, and he told *it* to his brothers; and they hated him even more. 6 So he said to them, "Please hear this dream which I have dreamed: 7 [f]There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Then behold, my sheaf arose and also stood upright; and indeed your sheaves stood all around and bowed down to my sheaf."

8 And his brothers said to him, "Shall you indeed reign over us? Or shall you indeed have dominion over us?" So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words.

9 Then he dreamed still another dream and told it to his brothers, and said, "Look, I have dreamed another dream. And this time, [g]the sun, the moon, and the eleven stars bowed down to me."

10 So he told *it* to his father and his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, "What *is* this dream that you have dreamed? Shall your mother and I and [h]your brothers indeed come to bow down to the earth before you?" 11 And [i]his brothers envied him, but his father [j]kept the matter *in mind.*

Joseph Sold by His Brothers

12 Then his brothers went to feed their father's flock in [k]Shechem. 13 And Israel said to Joseph, "Are not your brothers feeding *the flock* in Shechem? Come, I will send you to them."

So he said to him, "Here I am."

14 Then he said to him, "Please go and see if it is well with your brothers and well with the flocks, and bring back word to me." So he sent him out of the Valley of [l]Hebron, and he went to Shechem.

15 Now a certain man found him, and there he was, wandering in the field. And the man asked him, saying, "What are you seeking?"

16 So he said, "I am seeking my brothers. [m]Please tell me where they are feeding *their flocks.*"

17 And the man said, "They have departed from here, for I heard them say, 'Let us go to Dothan.' " So Joseph went after his brothers and found them in [n]Dothan.

■ **37:3 loved.** Parental favoritism again promoted family discord, deception, and the disappearance of the preferred son, but God graciously used it to achieve His good purpose (cf. 25:28).

old age. See 30:22–24.

tunic of many colors. A sign of Joseph's preferential status (cf. 2 Sam. 13:18), and a galling reminder to Joseph's brothers of their father's favoritism. The exact nature of the coat is uncertain. The rendering "of many colors" reflects the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) translation. Some suggest that the Hebrew means a "long coat with sleeves."

■ **37:4 could not speak peaceably to him.** Or, "could not greet him with peace." The greeting, or salutation, was a crucial element of ancient etiquette (cf. 1 Sam. 25:6). Such a failure to extend the greeting indicated the depth of their animosity.

■ **37:5 dream.** As in certain other Genesis narratives, the key to the Joseph story is given in an opening revelation (cf. 12:1–3; 25:22, 23). This prophetic dream shows that God's sovereign purpose lay behind all the events of the narrative (45:5–8). See note on 20:3.

■ **37:7 bowed down.** See 42:6; 43:26; 44:14.

■ **37:8 reign.** Their rhetorical question was later answered when Joseph came to rule "over all the land of Egypt" (41:43) and then over the covenant family living in Egypt. Joseph's status as head of the covenant family was confirmed when he received "the birthright" from his father Jacob (1 Chr. 5:2; cf. Deut. 33:16).

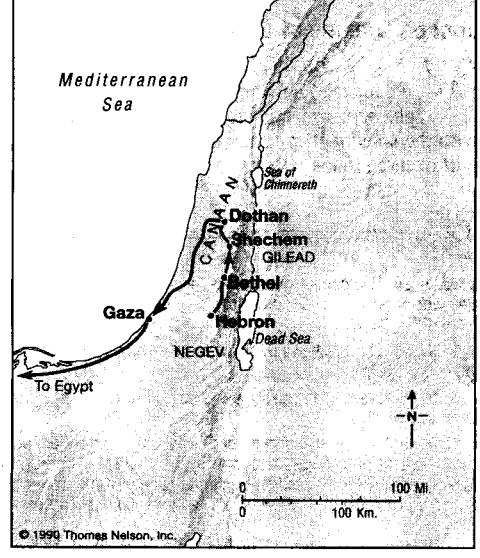
■ **37:9 another dream.** The reiteration of the theme in Joseph's second dream, like the similar repetition in Pharaoh's dreams (41:1–7), shows that the matter was determined by God and would quickly come to pass (41:32).

■ **37:10 mother.** Probably a reference to Joseph's stepmother Leah; his mother Rachel had earlier died in childbirth (35:16–20).

Joseph Becomes a Slave in Egypt. Joseph followed his shepherd brothers from Hebron to Dothan, where they sold him to a caravan of Ishmaelites en route to Egypt.

■ **37:11 kept the matter in mind.** This statement perhaps anticipates Jacob's later decision to give Joseph the birthright and double portion (v. 8 note; 48:5, 6).

■ **37:15 wandering in the field.** Because of this divinely ordained delay the Ishmaelites arrived at just the right time (vv. 21–28).



18 Now when they saw him afar off, even before he came near them, [o]they conspired against
him to kill him. 19 Then they said to one another, "Look, this [2]dreamer is coming! 20 [p]Come
therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit; and we shall say, 'Some wild beast has
devoured him.' We shall see what will become of his dreams!"
21 But [q]Reuben heard *it,* and he delivered him out of their hands, and said, "Let us not kill
him." 22 And Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood, *but* cast him into this pit which *is* in the
wilderness, and do not lay a hand on him"—that he might deliver him out of their hands, and
bring him back to his father.
23 So it came to pass, when Joseph had come to his brothers, that they [r]stripped Joseph *of* his
tunic, the tunic of *many* colors that *was* on him. 24 Then they took him and cast him into a pit.
And the pit *was* empty; *there was* no water in it.
25 [s]And they sat down to eat a meal. Then they lifted their eyes and looked, and there was a
company of [t]Ishmaelites, coming from Gilead with their camels, bearing spices, [u]balm, and
myrrh, on their way to carry *them* down to Egypt. 26 So Judah said to his brothers, "What profit
is there if we kill our brother and [v]conceal his blood? 27 Come and let us sell him to the Ishmael-
ites, and [w]let not our hand be upon him, for he *is* [x]our brother *and* [y]our flesh." And his brothers
listened. 28 Then [z]Midianite traders passed by; so *the brothers* pulled Joseph up and lifted him
out of the pit, [a]and sold him to the Ishmaelites for [b]twenty *shekels* of silver. And they took Jo-
seph to Egypt.
29 Then Reuben returned to the pit, and indeed Joseph *was* not in the pit; and he [c]tore his
clothes. 30 And he returned to his brothers and said, "The lad [d]*is* no *more;* and I, where shall I
go?"
31 So they took [e]Joseph's tunic, killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the tunic in the blood.
32 Then they sent the tunic of *many* colors, and they brought *it* to their father and said, "We have
found this. Do you know whether it *is* your son's tunic or not?"
33 And he recognized it and said, "*It is* my son's tunic. A [f]wild beast has devoured him. With-
out doubt Joseph is torn to pieces." 34 Then Jacob [g]tore his clothes, put sackcloth on his waist,
and [h]mourned for his son many days. 35 And all his sons and all his daughters [i]arose to comfort
him; but he refused to be comforted, and he said, "For [j]I shall go down into the grave to my son
in mourning." Thus his father wept for him.
36 Now [k]the [3]Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh *and* captain
of the guard.

Judah and Tamar

38 It came to pass at that time that Judah departed from his brothers, and [a]visited a certain
Adullamite whose name *was* Hirah. 2 And Judah [b]saw there a daughter of a certain Ca-
naanite whose name *was* [c]Shua, and he married her and went in to her. 3 So she conceived and
bore a son, and he called his name [d]Er. 4 She conceived again and bore a son, and she called his
name [e]Onan. 5 And she conceived yet again and bore a son, and called his name [f]Shelah. He was
at Chezib when she bore him.
6 Then Judah [g]took a wife for Er his firstborn, and her name *was* [h]Tamar. 7 But [i]Er, Judah's

18 [o]Mark 14:1
19 [2]Lit. *master of dreams*
20 [p]Prov. 1:11
21 [q]Gen. 42:22
23 [r]Matt. 27:28
25 [s]Prov. 30:20 [t]Gen. 16:11, 12; 37:28, 36; 39:1 [u]Jer. 8:22
26 [v]Gen. 37:20
27 [w]1 Sam. 18:17 [x]Gen. 42:21 [y]Gen. 29:14
28 [z]Judg. 6:1–3; 8:22, 24 [a]Ps. 105:17 [b]Matt. 27:9
29 [c]Job 1:20
30 [d]Gen. 42:13, 36
31 [e]Gen. 37:3, 23
33 [f]Gen. 37:20
34 [g]2 Sam. 3:31 [h]Gen. 50:10
35 [i]2 Sam. 12:17 [j]Gen. 25:8; 35:29; 42:38; 44:29, 31
36 [k]Gen. 39:1 [3]MT *Medanites*

CHAPTER 38

1 [a]2 Kin. 4:8
2 [b]Gen. 34:2 [c]1 Chr. 2:3
3 [d]Gen. 46:12
4 [e]Num. 26:19
5 [f]Num. 26:20
6 [g]Gen. 21:21 [h]Ruth 4:12
7 [i]Gen. 46:12

■ **37:21 Reuben . . . delivered him.** As the eldest brother (29:32), Reuben assumed leadership in Jacob's absence and was responsible for the safety of his brothers (vv. 29, 30).

■ **37:25 they sat down to eat a meal.** The brothers later acknowledged the heartlessness of their behavior (42:21).

Ishmaelites. These traders are also identified as Midianites (v. 28) and Medanites (v. 36 text note). All three groups were descended from Abraham and had no doubt intermarried (25:2, 12).

■ **37:27 sell him.** Note the later prohibition in the Mosaic law against kidnapping (Ex. 21:16; Deut. 24:7).

■ **37:28 twenty shekels.** See Lev. 27:5.

■ **37:30 where shall I go.** Under such circumstances, Reuben dreaded returning to his father, to whom he must give an account (v. 21 note).

■ **37:31–33** Note the irony of these verses. Having deceived his father Isaac with goat skins (27:9) and with Esau's clothing (27:27), Jacob here is deceived by goat's blood on his son's clothes.

■ **37:36 Potiphar.** This Egyptian name means, "he whom [the sun god] Ra has given."

■ **38:1–30** The shattered covenant family began to intermarry with the cursed Canaanites and risked the loss of their distinctive identity (34:1–31 note). God met this threat by sending Joseph ahead of them into Egypt where they were to be segregated (43:32; 46:34). There He preserved them until they had become a great nation and the iniquity of the Amorite was full (15:13–16). That the bizarre episode of Judah and Tamar should contribute to the genealogy of Jesus Christ is a vivid demonstration of God's grace (Matt. 1:3–16 note).

■ **38:1 Judah departed.** Lit. "Judah went down" (i.e., from Hebron in the hill country to the lowlands, 35:27). The family further degenerates by disloyalty.

Adullamite. An inhabitant of the royal Canaanite city of Adullam (Josh. 12:15).

■ **38:2 Canaanite.** See 9:25, 26 and notes.

married. See 24:3; 26:34, 35 and notes.

■ **38:5 Chezib.** A town near Adullam (v. 1 note). The mention of this Canaanite town, the name of which means "deceptive," underscores the theme of deception in the story of Jacob and his family.

firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD, [j]and the LORD killed him. 8 And Judah said to Onan, "Go in to [k]your brother's wife and marry her, and raise up an heir to your brother." 9 But Onan knew that the heir would not be [l]his; and it came to pass, when he went in to his brother's wife, that he emitted on the ground, lest he should give an heir to his brother. 10 And the thing which he did [l]displeased the LORD; therefore He killed [m]him also.

11 Then Judah said to Tamar his daughter-in-law, [n]"Remain a widow in your father's house till my son Shelah is grown." For he said, "Lest he also die like his brothers." And Tamar went and dwelt [o]in her father's house.

12 Now in the process of time the daughter of Shua, Judah's wife, died; and Judah [p]was comforted, and went up to his sheepshearers at Timnah, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite. 13 And it was told Tamar, saying, "Look, your father-in-law is going up [q]to Timnah to shear his sheep." 14 So she took off her widow's garments, covered *herself* with a veil and wrapped herself, and [r]sat in an open place which *was* on the way to Timnah; for she saw [s]that Shelah was grown, and she was not given to him as a wife. 15 When Judah saw her, he thought she *was* a harlot, because she had covered her face. 16 Then he turned to her by the way, and said, "Please let me come in to you"; for he did not know that she *was* his daughter-in-law.

So she said, "What will you give me, that you may come in to me?"

17 And he said, [t]"I will send a young goat from the flock."

So she said, [u]"Will you give *me* a pledge till you send *it*?"

18 Then he said, "What pledge shall I give you?"

So she said, [v]"Your signet and cord, and your staff that *is* in your hand." Then he gave *them* to her, and went in to her, and she conceived by him. 19 So she arose and went away, and [w]laid aside her veil and put on the garments of her widowhood.

20 And Judah sent the young goat by the hand of his friend the Adullamite, to receive *his* pledge from the woman's hand, but he did not find her. 21 Then he asked the men of that place, saying, "Where is the harlot who *was* [2]openly by the roadside?"

And they said, "There was no harlot in this *place*."

22 So he returned to Judah and said, "I cannot find her. Also, the men of the place said there was no harlot in this *place*."

23 Then Judah said, "Let her take *them* for herself, lest we be shamed; for I sent this young goat and you have not found her."

24 And it came to pass, about three months after, that Judah was told, saying, "Tamar your daughter-in-law has [x]played the harlot; furthermore she *is* [3]with child by harlotry."

So Judah said, "Bring her out [y]and let her be burned!"

25 When she *was* brought out, she sent to her father-in-law, saying, "By the man to whom these belong, I *am* with child." And she said, [z]"Please determine whose these *are*—the signet and cord, and staff."

26 So Judah [a]acknowledged *them* and said, [b]"She has been more righteous than I, because [c]I did not give her to Shelah my son." And he [d]never knew her again.

27 Now it came to pass, at the time for giving birth, that behold, twins *were* in her womb.

7 [j]1 Chr. 2:3

8 [k]Deut. 25:5, 6; Matt. 22:24

9 [l]Deut. 25:6

10 [m]Gen. 46:12; Num. 26:19 [l]Lit. *was evil in the eyes of*

11 [n]Ruth 1:12, 13 [o]Lev. 22:13

12 [p]2 Sam. 13:39

13 [q]Josh. 15:10, 57; Judg. 14:1

14 [r]Prov. 7:12 [s]Gen. 38:11, 26

17 [t]Judg. 15:1; Ezek. 16:33 [u]Gen. 38:20

18 [v]Gen. 38:25; 41:42

19 [w]Gen. 38:14

21 [2]*in full view*

24 [x]Judg. 19:2 [y]Lev. 20:14; 21:9; Deut. 22:21 [3]*pregnant*

25 [z]Gen. 37:32; 38:18

26 [a]Gen. 37:33 [b]1 Sam. 24:17 [c]Gen. 38:14 [d]Job 34:31, 32

■ **38:8 raise up an heir to your brother.** The first reference in Scripture to the widespread ancient custom of levirate marriage, whereby the brother of a deceased man (who lacked a heir) was expected to marry the widow. The offspring were considered children and heirs of the deceased. See note on Deut. 25:5.

■ **38:9 lest he should give an heir to his brother.** Because the deceased Er was the firstborn, his heir would have inherited his position of family leadership and double portion (37:11 note). Desiring the place of firstborn for himself, second-born Onan (v. 4) had intercourse with Tamar but prevented conception of a child. In so doing he was unfair to both his deceased brother and Tamar.

■ **38:11 For he said.** Failing to perceive God's judgment on his folly and on his wicked sons, Judah superstitiously regarded Tamar as a wife who brings misfortune. Because Judah was not about to risk the life of his third son, Tamar's future (which depended on having offspring) was bleak.

■ **38:13 to shear his sheep.** Judah departed with his Canaanite friend Hirah (v. 1) to attend the sheep-shearing, an event marked by a great feast. This provided Tamar with an opportunity to effect her plan.

■ **38:14 garments.** Once again clothing plays a part in deception (37:31–33 note).

■ **38:18 Your signet and cord.** A cylinder seal, worn on a cord around the neck, was the insignia of a prominent man. He signed contracts by rolling the seal over the clay on which the contract was etched.

■ **38:21 harlot.** Out of deference to Judah, his friend here used a more respectable term meaning "shrine prostitute" (a different Hebrew word is translated "harlot" in v. 15). Cultic prostitution was integral to the Canaanite fertility religions, and was later a persistent snare to Israel (Deut. 23:17; 1 Kin. 14:24 text note; 2 Kin. 23:7 text note).

■ **38:24 burned.** A punishment later codified in the Mosaic law for a priest's daughter who prostituted herself (Lev. 21:9; cf. Deut. 22:21).

■ **38:26 more righteous than I.** Though she played on Judah's vice, Tamar was commended for her daring ruse to redress Judah's wrong and build up her family. Thus she became a heroine in Israel (Ruth 4:12).

never knew her again. To do so would have made him guilty of incest.

■ **38:27–30** Another notable birth of twins where the identity of the firstborn is crucial to the story (cf. 25:21–34). Having identified one child as the firstborn with a thread, the midwife is surprised when the other twin is born first.

28 And so it was, when she was giving birth, that *the one* put out *his* hand; and the midwife took a scarlet *thread* and bound it on his hand, saying, "This one came out first." 29 Then it happened, as he drew back his hand, that his brother came out unexpectedly; and she said, "How did you break through? *This* breach *be* upon you!" Therefore his name was called [e]Perez.[4] 30 Afterward his brother came out who had the scarlet *thread* on his hand. And his name was called [f]Zerah.

Joseph a Slave in Egypt

39 Now Joseph had been taken [a]down to Egypt. And [b]Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh, captain of the guard, an Egyptian, [c]bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him down there. 2 [d]The LORD was with Joseph, and he was a successful man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. 3 And his master saw that the LORD *was* with him and that the LORD [e]made all he did [1]to prosper in his hand. 4 So Joseph [f]found favor in his sight, and served him. Then he made him [g]overseer of his house, and all *that* he had he put [2]under his authority. 5 So it was, from the time *that* he had made him overseer of his house and all that he had, that [h]the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was on all that he had in the house and in the field. 6 Thus he left all that he had in Joseph's [3]hand, and he did not know what he had except for the [4]bread which he ate.

Now Joseph [i]was handsome in form and appearance.

7 And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife [5]cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, [j]"Lie with me."

8 But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Look, my master does not know what *is* with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand. 9 *There is* no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you *are* his wife. [k]How then can I do this great wickedness, and [l]sin against God?"

10 So it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he [m]did not heed her, to lie with her *or* to be with her.

11 But it happened about this time, when Joseph went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the house *was* inside, 12 that she [n]caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left his garment in her hand, and fled and ran outside. 13 And so it was, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and fled outside, 14 that she called to the men of her house and spoke to them, saying, "See, he has brought in to us a [o]Hebrew to [6]mock us. He came in to me to lie with me, and I cried out with a loud voice. 15 And it happened, when he heard that I lifted my voice and cried out, that he left his garment with me, and fled and went outside."

16 So she kept his garment with her until his master came home. 17 Then she [p]spoke to him with words like these, saying, "The Hebrew servant whom you brought to us came in to me to mock me; 18 so it happened, as I lifted my voice and cried out, that he left his garment with me and fled outside."

19 So it was, when his master heard the words which his wife spoke to him, saying, "Your servant did to me after this manner," that his [q]anger was aroused. 20 Then Joseph's master took him and [r]put him into the [s]prison, a place where the king's prisoners *were* confined. And he was there in the prison. 21 But the LORD was with Joseph and showed him mercy, and He [t]gave[7] him favor in the sight of the keeper of the prison. 22 And the keeper of the prison [u]committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners who *were* in the prison; whatever they did there, it was his doing.

29 [e]Gen. 46:12 [4]Lit. *Breach* or *Breakthrough*

30 [f]1 Chr. 2:4

CHAPTER 39

1 [a]Gen. 12:10; 43:15 [b]Gen. 37:36 [c]Gen. 37:28; 45:4

2 [d]Acts 7:9

3 [e]Ps. 1:3 [1]*to be a success*

4 [f]Gen. 18:3; 19:19; 39:21 [g]Gen. 24:2, 10; 39:8, 22; 41:40 [2]Lit. *in his hand*

5 [h]Gen. 18:26; 30:27

6 [i]1 Sam. 16:12 [3]Care [4]Food

7 [j]2 Sam. 13:11 [5]Lit. *lifted up her eyes toward*

9 [k]Prov. 6:29, 32 [l]Ps. 51:4

10 [m]Prov. 1:10

12 [n]Prov. 7:13

14 [o]Gen. 14:13; 41:12 [6]*laugh at*

17 [p]Ex. 23:1

19 [q]Prov. 6:34, 35

20 [r]Ps. 105:18 [s]Gen. 40:3, 15; 41:14

21 [t]Acts 7:9, 10 [7]Caused him to be viewed with favor by

22 [u]Gen. 39:4; 40:3, 4

■ **38:29 Perez.** Named for the circumstance of his unusual birth (text note), Perez becomes part of the messianic line (Ruth 4:18–22; Matt. 1:1–6; Luke 3:33).

■ **39:1–23** The narrative returns to Joseph in Egypt, where he survives a succession of injustices and is advanced because "the LORD was with him" (vv. 2, 23). God orchestrates an astonishing chain of events that move unerringly to save His people (Ps. 105:16–22). Joseph's initial privilege in Potiphar's house (vv. 2–6; cf. 47:6), his affliction and imprisonment (v. 20; cf. Ex. 1:8–14), and his deliverance (v. 21; 41:37–45; cf. Ex. 3:21; 12:31–42) prefigure the later experience of Israel as a whole in Egypt. See note on 37:2—50:26.

■ **39:1 Potiphar.** See note on 37:36.

Ishmaelites. See note on 37:25.

■ **39:2 The LORD was with Joseph.** This repeated formula provides the theological theme of the story (vv. 3, 21, 23), and the link between Joseph and the patriarchs (28:15; cf. Acts 7:9). God's beneficent presence was experienced even in slavery, outside the land of blessing.

■ **39:5 the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house.** Once again the elect line is a means of blessing to those outside the covenant (12:3 note; 14:13, 24 and notes).

■ **39:6 the bread which he ate.** Probably a figure of speech for his private affairs.

■ **39:9 sin against God.** Adultery was considered a great sin in the ancient Near East (20:9 and note), but Joseph was particularly conscious that he lived in the presence of God (cf. 2 Sam. 12:13; Ps. 51:4).

■ **39:14 a Hebrew.** See note on 14:13; 41:12; 43:32.

■ **39:19, 20** Though Potiphar's anger may have initially been directed at Joseph, his subsequent action indicates that he doubted his wife's accusation. Attempted rape of the master's wife by a slave would probably have earned a death sentence, but Joseph's punishment (confinement with the king's prisoners) was relatively mild.

■ **39:21 gave him favor.** See text note. God similarly commended the Israelites to the Egyptians before the Exodus (Ex. 3:21; 11:3; 12:36).

23 [v]Gen. 39:2, 3 [8]Lit. *his hand*

CHAPTER 40

1 [a]Neh. 1:11
2 [b]Prov. 16:14
3 [c]Gen. 39:1, 20, 23; 41:10
5 [d]Gen. 37:5; 41:1
6 [1]*dejected*
7 [e]Neh. 2:2
8 [f]Gen. 41:15 [g][Dan. 2:11, 20–22, 27, 28, 47]
12 [h]Dan. 2:36; 4:18, 19 [i]Gen. 40:18; 42:17
13 [j]2 Kin. 25:27 [2]*position*
14 [k]Luke 23:42 [l]Josh. 2:12
15 [m]Gen. 37:26–28 [n]Gen. 39:20
16 [3]Or *baskets of white bread*
18 [o]Gen. 40:12
19 [p]Gen. 40:13 [q]Deut. 21:22 [4]Lit. *up*
20 [r]Matt. 14:6–10 [s]Mark 6:21 [t]Gen. 40:13, 19
21 [u]Gen. 40:13 [v]Neh. 2:1
22 [w]Gen. 40:19
23 [x]Eccl. 9:15, 16

CHAPTER 41

1 [a]Gen. 40:5

23 The keeper of the prison did not look into anything *that was* under [8]*Joseph's* authority, because [v]the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the LORD made *it* prosper.

The Prisoners' Dreams

40 It came to pass after these things *that* the [a]butler and the baker of the king of Egypt offended their lord, the king of Egypt. 2 And Pharaoh was [b]angry with his two officers, the chief butler and the chief baker. 3 [c]So he put them in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, in the prison, the place where Joseph *was* confined. 4 And the captain of the guard charged Joseph with them, and he served them; so they were in custody for a while.

5 Then the butler and the baker of the king of Egypt, who *were* confined in the prison, [d]had a dream, both of them, each man's dream in one night *and* each man's dream with its *own* interpretation. 6 And Joseph came in to them in the morning and looked at them, and saw that they *were* [1]sad. 7 So he asked Pharaoh's officers who *were* with him in the custody of his lord's house, saying, [e]"Why do you look *so* sad today?"

8 And they said to him, [f]"We each have had a dream, and *there is* no interpreter of it."

So Joseph said to them, [g]"Do not interpretations belong to God? Tell *them* to me, please."

9 Then the chief butler told his dream to Joseph, and said to him, "Behold, in my dream a vine *was* before me, 10 and in the vine *were* three branches; it *was* as though it budded, its blossoms shot forth, and its clusters brought forth ripe grapes. 11 Then Pharaoh's cup *was* in my hand; and I took the grapes and pressed them into Pharaoh's cup, and placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand."

12 And Joseph said to him, [h]"This *is* the interpretation of it: The three branches [i]*are* three days. 13 Now within three days Pharaoh will [j]lift up your head and restore you to your [2]place, and you will put Pharaoh's cup in his hand according to the former manner, when you were his butler. 14 But [k]remember me when it is well with you, and [l]please show kindness to me; make mention of me to Pharaoh, and get me out of this house. 15 For indeed I was [m]stolen away from the land of the Hebrews; [n]and also I have done nothing here that they should put me into the dungeon."

16 When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good, he said to Joseph, "I also *was* in my dream, and there *were* three [3]white baskets on my head. 17 In the uppermost basket *were* all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh, and the birds ate them out of the basket on my head."

18 So Joseph answered and said, [o]"This *is* the interpretation of it: The three baskets *are* three days. 19 [p]Within three days Pharaoh will lift [4]off your head from you and [q]hang you on a tree; and the birds will eat your flesh from you."

20 Now it came to pass on the third day, *which was* Pharaoh's [r]birthday, that he [s]made a feast for all his servants; and he [t]lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants. 21 Then he [u]restored the chief butler to his butlership again, and [v]he placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand. 22 But he [w]hanged the chief baker, as Joseph had interpreted to them. 23 Yet the chief butler did not remember Joseph, but [x]forgot him.

Pharaoh's Dreams

41 Then it came to pass, at the end of two full years, that [a]Pharaoh had a dream; and behold, he stood by the river. 2 Suddenly there came up out of the river seven cows, fine

■ **40:3 custody.** They were awaiting Pharaoh's sentence.

■ **40:8 dream.** See notes on 20:3 and 37:9. The three sets of dreams, to Joseph (37:5–11), to the cupbearer and baker (ch. 40), and to Pharaoh (ch. 41), show God's sovereign control (41:28).

no interpreter. Dreams were valued in the ancient Near East as a means of discerning the future; professional dream interpreters were often employed by royal courts.

interpretations belong to God. Joseph corrects the pagan beliefs of the Egyptian prisoners by acknowledging that God alone is the source of reliable interpretation, and that He bestows the gift of interpretation as He pleases (41:16; Dan. 2:24–49).

Tell them to me. Joseph recognized himself as a prophet (37:5–11).

■ **40:13 lift up your head.** A Hebrew idiom often meaning "restore to honor" or "release" (2 Kin. 25:27; Ps. 24:7). Here it may refer more particularly to a ritual audience with Pharaoh in which the servant is singled out for special attention (v. 20). Note the pun in v. 19, where a slight variation in the Hebrew gives the meaning "lift off your head" (perhaps a reference to execution by decapitation).

■ **40:15 the dungeon.** An exaggerated description reflecting the frustrated prisoner's point of view—the same Hebrew word is translated "pit" in 37:24. Joseph's place of confinement with the king's prisoners was not excessively miserable (39:19–23 and notes).

■ **40:16 on my head.** Ancient Egyptian art portrayed a baker carrying a basket on his head.

■ **40:20 lifted up the head.** See note on v. 13.

■ **40:22 he hanged the chief baker.** Not a reference to hanging as a method of execution, but to the public display of the corpse after death (v. 13 note; Deut. 21:22 note).

■ **41:1–57** God exalted faithful Joseph over all Egypt by giving him supernatural wisdom: the ability to interpret dreams (v. 16) and skill in political economy and statesmanship (vv. 33, 38). Joseph prefigured Moses at the founding of Israel, and Daniel at the end of Israel's monarchy. All three were oppressed captives who came to power in a hostile land by pitting God's wisdom against the wise of this world, displaying the superiority of God's wisdom and His rule over the nations. They prefigure Jesus

looking and fat; and they fed in the meadow. 3 Then behold, seven other cows came up after them out of the river, ugly and gaunt, and stood by the *other* cows on the bank of the river. 4 And the ugly and gaunt cows ate up the seven fine looking and fat cows. So Pharaoh awoke. 5 He slept and dreamed a second time; and suddenly seven heads of grain came up on one stalk, plump and good. 6 Then behold, seven thin heads, blighted by the [b]east wind, sprang up after them. 7 And the seven thin heads devoured the seven plump and full heads. So Pharaoh awoke, and indeed, *it was* a dream. 8 Now it came to pass in the morning [c]that his spirit was troubled, and he sent and called for all [d]the magicians of Egypt and all its [e]wise men. And Pharaoh told them his dreams, but *there was* no one who could interpret them for Pharaoh.

9 Then the [f]chief butler spoke to Pharaoh, saying: "I remember my faults this day. 10 When Pharaoh was [g]angry with his servants, [h]and put me in custody in the house of the captain of the guard, *both* me and the chief baker, 11 [i]we each had a dream in one night, he and I, Each of us dreamed according to the interpretation of his *own* dream. 12 Now there *was* a young [j]Hebrew man with us there, a [k]servant of the captain of the guard. And we told him, and he [l]interpreted our dreams for us; to each man he interpreted according to his *own* dream. 13 And it came to pass, just [m]as he interpreted for us, so it happened. He restored me to my office, and he hanged him."

14 [n]Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph, and they [o]brought him quickly [p]out of the dungeon; and he shaved, [q]changed his clothing, and came to Pharaoh. 15 And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I have had a dream, and *there is* no one who can interpret it. [r]But I have heard it said of you *that* you can understand a dream, to interpret it."

16 So Joseph answered Pharaoh, saying, [s]"*It is* not in me; [t]God will give Pharaoh an answer of peace."

17 Then Pharaoh said to Joseph: "Behold, [u]in my dream I stood on the bank of the river. 18 Suddenly seven cows came up out of the river, fine looking and fat; and they fed in the meadow. 19 Then behold, seven other cows came up after them, poor and very ugly and gaunt, such ugliness as I have never seen in all the land of Egypt. 20 And the gaunt and ugly cows ate up the first seven, the fat cows. 21 When they had eaten them up, no one would have known that they had eaten them, for they *were* just as ugly as at the beginning. So I awoke. 22 Also I saw in my dream, and suddenly seven [l]heads came up on one stalk, full and good. 23 Then behold, seven heads, withered, thin, *and* blighted by the east wind, sprang up after them. 24 And the thin heads devoured the seven good heads. So [v]I told *this* to the magicians, but *there was* no one who could explain *it* to me."

25 Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, "The dreams of Pharaoh *are* one; [w]God has shown Pharaoh what He *is* about to do: 26 The seven good cows *are* seven years, and the seven good [z]heads *are* seven years; the dreams *are* one. 27 And the seven thin and ugly cows which came up after them *are* seven years, and the seven empty heads blighted by the east wind are [x]seven years of famine. 28 [y]This *is* the thing which I have spoken to Pharaoh. God has shown Pharaoh what He *is* about to do. 29 Indeed [z]seven years of great plenty will come throughout all the land of Egypt; 30 but after them seven years of famine will [a]arise, and all the plenty will be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine [b]will deplete the land. 31 So the plenty will not be known in the land because of the famine following, for it *will be* very severe. 32 And the dream was repeated to Pharaoh twice because the [c]thing *is* established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.

33 "Now therefore, let Pharaoh select a discerning and wise man, and set him over the land of Egypt. 34 Let Pharaoh do *this,* and let him appoint [3]officers over the land, [d]to collect one-fifth *of the produce* of the land of Egypt in the seven plentiful years. 35 And [e]let them gather all the food of those good years that are coming, and store up grain under the [4]authority of Pharaoh, and let

6 [b]Ex. 10:13

8 [c]Dan. 2:1, 3; 4:5, 19 [d]Ex. 7:11, 22 [e]Matt. 2:1

9 [f]Gen. 40:1, 14, 23

10 [g]Gen. 40:2, 3 [h]Gen. 39:20

11 [i]Gen. 40:5

12 [j]Gen. 39:14; 43:32 [k]Gen. 37:36 [l]Gen. 40:12

13 [m]Gen. 40:21, 22

14 [n]Ps. 105:20 [o]Dan. 2:25 [p][1 Sam. 2:8] [q]2 Kin. 25:27–29

15 [r]Dan. 5:16

16 [s]Dan. 2:30 [t]Dan. 2:22, 28, 47

17 [u]Gen. 41:1

22 [l]Heads of grain

24 [v]Is. 8:19

25 [w]Dan. 2:28, 29, 45

26 [z]Heads of grain

27 [x]2 Kin. 8:1

28 [y][Gen. 41:25, 32]

29 [z]Gen. 41:47

30 [a]Gen. 41:54, 56 [b]Gen. 47:13

32 [c]Num. 23:19

34 [d][Prov. 6:6–8] [3]*overseers*

35 [e]Gen. 41:48 [4]Lit. *hand*

Christ, the incarnate Wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:30; Col. 2:3), who was raised from the dead to rule the world (1 Cor. 1:18—2:16; Rev. 12:1–5).

■ **41:1 dream.** People of the ancient Near East typically viewed kings as chosen representatives of the gods. Royal dreams were seen as particularly significant (40:8 and notes).

river. The Nile, the source of Egypt's fertility.

■ **41:8 magicians.** Like many other ancient rulers, the Egyptian pharaohs retained sorcerers, dream interpreters, and wise men (40:8 note; Ex. 7:11; Dan. 2:2) for counsel in important matters.

no one who could interpret. See 40:8 and note.

■ **41:12 Hebrew.** See 14:13 and note; 39:14; 43:32.

■ **41:14 shaved, changed his clothing.** Unlike most ancient Near Eastern men (including the Hebrews), Egyptians were normally clean shaven. It would have been inappropriate for Joseph to appear before the king in prison rags (cf. 2 Kin. 25:29).

■ **41:16 It is not in me; God will give.** See note on 40:8; cf. 2 Cor. 3:5.

■ **41:25 God has shown Pharaoh.** Both the dream and its interpretation were from God (40:8 and note). Joseph was inspired by God; he did not act as a magician. Neither Pharaoh nor his officials were in control; God and His servant were in charge, as they would be centuries later in the time of Moses (Ex. 7:1–5).

■ **41:32 dream was repeated.** See note on 37:9.

them keep food in the cities. 36 Then that food shall be as a [5]reserve for the land for the seven years of famine which shall be in the land of Egypt, that the land [j]may not [6]perish during the famine."

Joseph's Rise to Power

37 So [g]the advice was good in the eyes of Pharaoh and in the eyes of all his servants. 38 And Pharaoh said to his servants, "Can we find *such a one* as this, a man [h]in whom *is* the Spirit of God?"

39 Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Inasmuch as God has shown you all this, *there is* no one as discerning and wise as you. 40 [i]You shall be [7]over my house, and all my people shall be ruled according to your word; only in regard to the throne will I be greater than you." 41 And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "See, I have [j]set you over all the land of Egypt."

42 Then Pharaoh [k]took his signet ring off his hand and put it on Joseph's hand; and he [l]clothed him in garments of fine linen [m]and put a gold chain around his neck. 43 And he had him ride in the second [n]chariot which he had; [o]and they cried out before him, "Bow the knee!" So he set him [p]over all the land of Egypt. 44 Pharaoh also said to Joseph, "I *am* Pharaoh, and without your consent no man may lift his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt." 45 And Pharaoh called Joseph's name [8]Zaphnath-Paaneah. And he gave him as a wife [q]Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On. So Joseph went out over *all* the land of Egypt.

46 Joseph was thirty years old when he [r]stood before Pharaoh king of Egypt. And Joseph went out from the presence of Pharaoh, and went throughout all the land of Egypt. 47 Now in the seven plentiful years the ground brought forth [9]abundantly. 48 So he gathered up all the food of the seven years which were in the land of Egypt, and laid up the food in the cities; he laid up in every city the food of the fields which surrounded them. 49 Joseph gathered very much grain, [s]as the sand of the sea, until he stopped counting, for *it was* immeasurable.

50 [t]And to Joseph were born two sons before the years of famine came, whom Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On, bore to him. 51 Joseph called the name of the firstborn [1]Manasseh: "For God has made me forget all my toil and all my [u]father's house." 52 And the name of the second he called [2]Ephraim: "For God has caused me to be [v]fruitful in the land of my affliction."

53 Then the seven years of plenty which were in the land of Egypt ended, 54 [w]and the seven years of famine began to come, [x]as Joseph had said. The famine was in all lands, but in all the land of Egypt there was bread. 55 So when all the land of Egypt was famished, the people cried to Pharaoh for bread. Then Pharaoh said to all the Egyptians, "Go to Joseph; [y]whatever he says to you, do." 56 The famine was over all the face of the earth, and Joseph opened [3]all the storehouses and [z]sold to the Egyptians. And the famine became severe in the land of Egypt. 57 [a]So all countries came to Joseph in Egypt to [b]buy *grain,* because the famine was severe in all lands.

Joseph's Brothers Go to Egypt

42 When [a]Jacob saw that there was grain in Egypt, Jacob said to his sons, "Why do you look at one another?" 2 And he said, "Indeed I have heard that there is grain in Egypt; go down to that place and buy for us there, that we may [b]live and not die."

36 [f]Gen. 47:15, 19 [5]Lit. *supply* [6]*be cut off*
37 [g]Acts 7:10
38 [h]Num. 27:18
40 [i]Ps. 105:21 [7]In charge of
41 [j]Dan. 6:3
42 [k]Esth. 3:10 [l]Esth. 8:2, 15 [m]Dan. 5:7, 16, 29
43 [n]Gen. 46:29 [o]Esth. 6:9 [p]Gen. 42:6
45 [q]Gen. 46:20 [8]Probably Egyptian for *God Speaks and He Lives*
46 [r]1 Sam. 16:21
47 [9]Lit. *by handfuls*
49 [s]Gen. 22:17
50 [t]Gen. 46:20; 48:5
51 [u]Ps. 45:10 [1]Lit. *Making Forgetful*
52 [v]Gen. 17:6; 28:3; 49:22 [2]Lit. *Fruitfulness*
54 [w]Acts 7:11 [x]Gen. 41:30
55 [y]John 2:5
56 [z]Gen. 42:6 [3]Lit. *all that was in them*
57 [a]Ezek. 29:12 [b]Gen. 27:28, 37; 42:3

CHAPTER 42

1 [a]Acts 7:12
2 [b]Gen. 43:8

■ **41:38 Spirit of God.** Joseph pointed to God's action in giving the dream (v. 16), and Pharaoh acknowledged God's power at work in Joseph (41:1–57 note).

■ **41:39 no one as discerning and wise as you.** Joseph had just defeated Egypt's best wise men (cf. Ex. 8:18; Dan. 2:10, 27, 28).

■ **41:41–46** Joseph's installation as viceroy over Egypt consisted of a public act of installation (vv. 41–44), the conferring of a new name (v. 45), and the elevation to nobility by marriage (v. 46).

■ **41:41 set you over all the land.** Joseph, who had been faithful in little (39:4, 22), was put in charge of much (cf. Luke 16:10; 19:17).

■ **41:45 Zaphnath-Paaneah.** See text note. Joseph's role in Egypt was like that of Daniel in Babylon: both accepted pagan names without embracing pagan religion (Dan. 1:7).

Asenath. Her name means "belongs to [the goddess] Neit."

Poti-Phera. Probably a variant spelling of Potiphar (37:36 note).

On. Called Heliopolis in Greek, this city was a center for the worship of the sun god Ra (Jer. 43:13 text note); its high priest was one of the most prominent in ancient Egypt.

■ **41:46 thirty years.** Joseph had risen from slavery to become the king's second-in-command in a mere thirteen years (37:2).

■ **41:51, 52** See text notes. As the names of his sons indicate, Joseph was ever mindful of God's hand upon him. The first commemorates God's preservation through great hardship (v. 51), the second memorializes the divine favor with echoes of the Abrahamic blessing (v. 52; cf. 17:6, 20; 28:3; 48:4; cf. Ps. 105:23, 24).

■ **41:57 all countries.** The temporal salvation (from starvation) of the known world depended on one descendant of the patriarchs (12:3; 39:5 and notes). In mediating this blessing, Joseph prefigures the work of Christ (1 John 2:2). See note on 37:2—50:26.

■ **42:1–38** Joseph used the providential famine and his authority to help reconcile the shattered family. By confronting them with life and death (vv. 18, 20) he awakened their consciences to confess their guilt (vv. 21–24) and to protect Benjamin from harm (v. 37; 43:8, 9; 44:18–34). See note on chs. 43—45.

■ **42:1 grain in Egypt.** See 12:10; 26:1, 2.

3 So Joseph's ten brothers went down to buy grain in Egypt. 4 But Jacob did not send Joseph's brother Benjamin with his brothers, for he said, [c]"Lest some calamity befall him." 5 And the sons of Israel went to buy *grain* among those who journeyed, for the famine was [d]in the land of Canaan.

6 Now Joseph *was* governor [e]over the land; and it was he who sold to all the people of the land. And Joseph's brothers came and [f]bowed down before him with *their* faces to the earth. 7 Joseph saw his brothers and recognized them, but he acted as [g]a stranger to them and spoke [1]roughly to them. Then he said to them, "Where do you come from?"

And they said, "From the land of Canaan to buy food."

8 So Joseph recognized his brothers, but they did not recognize him. 9 Then Joseph [h]remembered the dreams which he had dreamed about them, and said to them, "You *are* spies! You have come to see the [2]nakedness of the land!"

10 And they said to him, "No, my lord, but your servants have come to buy food. 11 We *are* all one man's sons; we *are* honest *men;* your servants are not spies."

12 But he said to them, "No, but you have come to see the nakedness of the land."

13 And they said, "Your servants *are* twelve brothers, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and in fact, the youngest *is* with our father today, and one [i]*is* no more."

14 But Joseph said to them, "It *is* as I spoke to you, saying, 'You *are* spies!' 15 In this *manner* you shall be tested: [j]By the life of Pharaoh, you shall not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here. 16 Send one of you, and let him bring your brother; and you shall be [3]kept in prison, that your words may be tested to see whether *there is* any truth in you; or else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely you *are* spies!" 17 So he [4]put them all together in prison [k]three days.

18 Then Joseph said to them the third day, "Do this and live, [l]*for* I fear God: 19 If you *are* honest *men,* let one of your brothers be confined to your prison house; but you, go and carry grain for the famine of your houses. 20 And [m]bring your youngest brother to me; so your words will be verified, and you shall not die."

And they did so. 21 Then they said to one another, [n]"We *are* truly guilty concerning our brother, for we saw the anguish of his soul when he pleaded with us, and we would not hear; [o]therefore this distress has come upon us."

22 And Reuben answered them, saying, [p]"Did I not speak to you, saying, 'Do not sin against the boy'; and you would not listen? Therefore behold, his blood is now [q]required of us." 23 But they did not know that Joseph understood *them,* for he spoke to them through an interpreter. 24 And he turned himself away from them and [r]wept. Then he returned to them again, and talked with them. And he took [s]Simeon from them and bound him before their eyes.

The Brothers Return to Canaan

25 Then Joseph [t]gave a command to fill their sacks with grain, to [u]restore every man's money to his sack, and to give them provisions for the journey. [v]Thus he did for them. 26 So they loaded their donkeys with the grain and departed from there. 27 But as [w]one *of them* opened his sack to give his donkey feed at the encampment, he saw his money; and there it was, in the mouth of his sack. 28 So he said to his brothers, "My money has been restored, and there it is, in my sack!"

4 [c]Gen. 42:38

5 [d]Gen. 12:10; 26:1; 41:57; Acts 7:11

6 [e]Gen. 41:41, 55 [f]Gen. 37:7–10; 41:43; Is. 60:14

7 [g]Gen. 45:1, 2 [1]*harshly*

9 [h]Gen. 37:5–9 [2]Exposed parts

13 [i]Gen. 37:30; 42:32; 44:20; Lam. 5:7

15 [j]1 Sam. 1:26; 17:55

16 [3]Lit. *bound*

17 [k]Gen. 40:4, 7, 12 [4]Lit. *gathered*

18 [l]Gen. 22:12; 39:9; Ex. 1:17; Lev. 25:43; Neh. 5:15; Prov. 1:7; 9:10

20 [m]Gen. 42:34; 43:5; 44:23

21 [n]Gen. 37:26–28; 44:16; 45:3; Job 36:8, 9; Hos. 5:15 [o]Prov. 21:13; Matt. 7:2

22 [p]Gen. 37:21, 22, 29 [q]Gen. 9:5, 6; 1 Kin. 2:32; 2 Chr. 24:22; Ps. 9:12; Luke 11:50, 51

24 [r]Gen. 43:30; 45:14, 15 [s]Gen. 34:25, 30; 43:14, 23

25 [t]Gen. 44:1 [u]Gen. 43:12 [v][Matt. 5:44; Rom. 12:17, 20, 21; 1 Pet. 3:9]

27 [w]Gen. 43:21, 22

- **42:4 did not send . . . Benjamin.** Joseph's full brother had taken his place in his father's affections (37:3 and notes). The brothers' treatment of him and of their father would indicate whether there had been a spiritual change in them.
- **42:6 bowed down.** To preserve their lives they unwittingly fulfilled Joseph's dream (37:5 and note).
- **42:7 acted as a stranger . . . spoke roughly.** As the rest of the narrative shows, Joseph was acting to ascertain his brothers' attitudes and to heal the breach between him and his brothers. A quick pardon would not have led to true repentance and spiritual healing within the family.
- **42:8 they did not recognize him.** Joseph had grown from a boy of seventeen to a man of almost forty (41:46, 47, 54; 45:6 note). He had the appearance of an august Egyptian official (41:14, 41–43) and used an interpreter (v. 23).
- **42:11 one man's sons.** They were a family unit, not spies of a nation bent on war (cf. Num. 13:2).
- **42:12 you have come to see.** This interrogation, with its repeated accusations (cf. v. 9), was necessary for the ruse and to extract information out of them so that Joseph could take his next step (43:7).
- **42:13 they said.** The brothers no doubt thought the added details strengthened their credibility.
- **42:15 By the life of Pharaoh.** The ancients swore solemn oaths by the life of the king or name of a deity (2 Sam. 15:21; Deut. 6:13 note).
- **42:18–20** Joseph's presentation of a choice—life or death—had the desired effect (v. 21).
- **42:18 I fear God.** Joseph assured the brothers that he would deal honestly with them (20:11 note).
- **42:21 We are truly guilty.** Though falsely accused of spying, they saw the Egyptian as the tool of God's higher justice, matching their punishment with their real crime against Joseph.

we would not hear. Their consciences awakened, the brothers' heartless behavior came back to haunt them (37:25 and note).

- **42:24 he . . . wept.** With their confession of guilt, reconciliation was possible.
- **42:28 God has done.** The first explicit mention of God by the brothers; they saw the hand of God at work behind their frightful circumstances (vv. 21, 22).

28 [5]sank
30 [x]Gen. 42:7 [6]harshly
33 [y]Gen. 42:15, 19, 20
34 [z]Gen. 42:20; 43:3, 5 [a]Gen. 34:10
35 [b]Gen. 43:12, 15, 21
36 [c]Gen. 43:14 [d]Gen. 35:18; [Rom. 8:28, 31]
38 [e]Gen. 37:22; 42:13; 44:20, 28 [f]Gen. 42:4; 44:29 [g]Gen. 37:35; 44:31

CHAPTER 43

1 [a]Gen. 41:54, 57; 42:5; 45:6, 11
2 [b]Gen. 42:2; 44:25
3 [c]Gen. 42:20; 43:5; 44:23
6 [f]Lit. *wickedly*
8 [d]Gen. 42:2; 47:19
9 [e]Gen. 42:37; 44:32; Philem. 18, 19
11 [f]Gen. 32:20; 33:10; 43:25, 26; [Prov. 18:16] [g]Gen. 37:25; Jer. 8:22; Ezek. 27:17
12 [h]Gen. 42:25, 35; 43:21, 22
14 [i]Gen. 17:1; 28:3; 35:11; 48:3 [j]Gen. 39:21; Ps. 106:46 [k]Gen. 42:36; Esth. 4:16

Then their hearts [5]failed *them* and they were afraid, saying to one another, "What *is* this *that* God has done to us?"

29 Then they went to Jacob their father in the land of Canaan and told him all that had happened to them, saying: 30 "The man *who is* lord of the land [x]spoke [6]roughly to us, and took us for spies of the country. 31 But we said to him, 'We *are* honest *men;* we are not spies. 32 We *are* twelve brothers, sons of our father; one *is* no *more,* and the youngest *is* with our father this day in the land of Canaan.' 33 Then the man, the lord of the country, said to us, [y]'By this I will know that you *are* honest *men:* Leave one of your brothers *here* with me, take *food for* the famine of your households, and be gone. 34 And bring your [z]youngest brother to me; so I shall know that you *are* not spies, but *that* you *are* honest *men.* I will grant your brother to you, and you may [a]trade in the land.' "

35 Then it happened as they emptied their sacks, that surprisingly [b]each man's bundle of money *was* in his sack; and when they and their father saw the bundles of money, they were afraid. 36 And Jacob their father said to them, "You have [c]bereaved me: Joseph is no *more,* Simeon is no *more,* and you want to take [d]Benjamin. All these things are against me."

37 Then Reuben spoke to his father, saying, "Kill my two sons if I do not bring him *back* to you; put him in my hands, and I will bring him back to you."

38 But he said, "My son shall not go down with you, for [e]his brother is dead, and he is left alone. [f]If any calamity should befall him along the way in which you go, then you would [g]bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave."

Joseph's Brothers Return with Benjamin

43 Now the famine *was* [a]severe in the land. 2 And it came to pass, when they had eaten up the grain which they had brought from Egypt, that their father said to them, "Go [b]back, buy us a little food."

3 But Judah spoke to him, saying, "The man solemnly warned us, saying, 'You shall not see my face unless your [c]brother *is* with you.' 4 If you send our brother with us, we will go down and buy you food. 5 But if you will not send *him,* we will not go down; for the man said to us, 'You shall not see my face unless your brother *is* with you.' "

6 And Israel said, "Why did you deal *so* [f]wrongfully with me *as* to tell the man whether you had still *another* brother?"

7 But they said, "The man asked us pointedly about ourselves and our family, saying, '*Is* your father still alive? Have you *another* brother?' And we told him according to these words. Could we possibly have known that he would say, 'Bring your brother down'?"

8 Then Judah said to Israel his father, "Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go, that we may [d]live and not die, both we and you *and* also our little ones. 9 I myself will be surety for him; from my hand you shall require him. [e]If I do not bring him *back* to you and set him before you, then let me bear the blame forever. 10 For if we had not lingered, surely by now we would have returned this second time."

11 And their father Israel said to them, "If *it must be* so, then do this: Take some of the best fruits of the land in your vessels and [f]carry down a present for the man—a little [g]balm and a little honey, spices and myrrh, pistachio nuts and almonds. 12 Take double money in your hand, and take back in your hand the money [h]that was returned in the mouth of your sacks; perhaps it was an oversight. 13 Take your brother also, and arise, go back to the man. 14 And may God [i]Almighty [j]give you mercy before the man, that he may release your other brother and Benjamin. [k]If I am bereaved, I am bereaved!"

15 So the men took that present and Benjamin, and they took double money in their hand, and

■ **42:34 you may trade in the land.** In order not to distress their aged father further, they changed Joseph's threat of death (vv. 18, 20) to a promise of economic opportunity.

■ **42:37 Kill my two sons.** Jacob did not accept Reuben's ill-considered proposal. Only the threat of starvation coupled with Judah's assurances would change his mind (43:1–14).

■ **43:1—45:28** Joseph's ruse had already begun to move his brothers from indifference to integrity and loyalty toward one another (42:21, 22). This change is further manifested in Judah's offer of himself as surety (43:9) and in his offer to sacrifice himself in Benjamin's stead (44:33). Finally, Joseph makes himself known to his brothers and, seeing their sins in the light of God's purpose, he forgives them (ch. 45).

■ **43:1–34** Through Joseph, the merciful (v. 14), providing (v. 23), and gracious (v. 29) God of the fathers begins to bring peace to the shattered family (vv. 23, 26–28). See note on ch. 42.

■ **43:3 Judah.** Another brother had to step forward after Jacob's definitive refusal to Reuben (42:37, 38; cf. 49:3, 4). With his leadership rebuffed, Reuben is henceforth eclipsed by Joseph (who assumes the firstborn's privileges, 37:8 note) and by Judah (who here takes Reuben's place of responsibility for the eleven brothers and whose royal tribe was to produce the Messiah, vv. 8, 9; 49:10).

■ **43:8 live and not die.** A reference to the severe famine (v. 1) that also recalls Joseph's threat (42:18–20, 34 and note).

■ **43:11 a present.** See note on 32:13.

■ **43:14 God Almighty.** See note on 17:1.

arose and went [l]down to Egypt; and they stood before Joseph. 16 When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the [m]steward of his house, "Take *these* men to my home, and slaughter [2]an animal and make ready; for *these* men will dine with me at noon." 17 Then the man did as Joseph ordered, and the man brought the men into Joseph's house.

18 Now the men were [n]afraid because they were brought into Joseph's house; and they said, "*It is* because of the money, which was returned in our sacks the first time, that we are brought in, so that he may [3]make a case against us and seize us, to take us as slaves with our donkeys."

19 When they drew near to the steward of Joseph's house, they talked with him at the door of the house, 20 and said, "O sir, [o]we indeed came down the first time to buy food; 21 but [p]it happened, when we came to the encampment, that we opened our sacks, and there, *each* man's money *was* in the mouth of his sack, our money in full weight; so we have brought it back in our hand. 22 And we have brought down other money in our hands to buy food. We do not know who put our money in our sacks."

23 But he said, "Peace *be* with you, do not be afraid. Your God and the God of your father has given you treasure in your sacks; I had your money." Then he brought [q]Simeon out to them.

24 So the man brought the men into Joseph's house and [r]gave *them* water, and they washed their feet; and he gave their donkeys feed. 25 Then they made the present ready for Joseph's coming at noon, for they heard that they would eat bread there.

26 And when Joseph came home, they brought him the present which *was* in their hand into the house, and [s]bowed down before him to the earth. 27 Then he asked them about *their* well-being, and said, "*Is* your father well, the old man [t]of whom you spoke? *Is* he still alive?"

28 And they answered, "Your servant our father *is* in good health; he *is* still alive." [u]And they bowed their heads down and prostrated themselves.

29 Then he lifted his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, [v]his mother's son, and said, "*Is* this your younger brother [w]of whom you spoke to me?" And he said, "God be gracious to you, my son." 30 Now [x]his heart yearned for his brother; so Joseph made haste and sought *somewhere* to weep. And he went into *his* chamber and [y]wept there. 31 Then he washed his face and came out; and he restrained himself, and said, "Serve the [z]bread."

32 So they set him a place by himself, and them by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves; because the Egyptians could not eat food with the [a]Hebrews; for that *is* [b]an abomination to the Egyptians. 33 And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his [c]birthright and the youngest according to his youth; and the men looked in astonishment at one another. 34 Then he took servings to them from before him, but Benjamin's serving was [d]five times as much as any of theirs. So they drank and were merry with him.

Joseph's Cup

44 And he commanded [l]the [a]steward of his house, saying, [b]"Fill the men's sacks with food, as much as they can carry, and put each man's money in the mouth of his sack. 2 Also put my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the sack of the youngest, and his grain money." So he did according to the word that Joseph had spoken. 3 As soon as the morning dawned, the men were sent away, they and their donkeys. 4 When they had gone out of the city, *and* were not *yet* far off, Joseph said to his steward, "Get up, follow the men; and when you overtake them, say to them, 'Why have you [c]repaid evil for good? 5 *Is* not this *the one* from which my lord drinks, and with which he indeed practices divination? You have done evil in so doing.' "

15 [l]Gen. 39:1; 46:3, 6

16 [m]Gen. 24:2; 39:4; 44:1 [2]Lit. *a slaughter*

18 [n]Gen. 42:28 [3]Lit. *roll himself upon us*

20 [o]Gen. 42:3, 10

21 [p]Gen. 42:27, 35

23 [q]Gen. 42:24

24 [r]Gen. 18:4; 19:2; 24:32

26 [s]Gen. 37:7, 10; 42:6; 44:14

27 [t]Gen. 29:6; 42:11, 13; 43:7; 45:3; 2 Kin. 4:26

28 [u]Gen. 37:7, 10

29 [v]Gen. 35:17, 18 [w]Gen. 42:13

30 [x]1 Kin. 3:26 [y]Gen. 42:24; 45:2, 14, 15; 46:29

31 [z]Gen. 43:25

32 [a]Gen. 41:12; Ex. 1:15 [b]Gen. 46:34; Ex. 8:26

33 [c]Gen. 27:36; 42:7; Deut. 21:16, 17

34 [d]Gen. 35:24; 45:22

CHAPTER 44

1 [a]Gen. 43:16 [b]Gen. 42:25 [l]Lit. *the one over*

4 [c]1 Sam. 25:21

■ **43:26 bowed down.** See 37:5–11. At their first meeting they bowed in submission (42:6); here they bowed in homage with tribute in hand (v. 28; cf. Matt. 2:11).

■ **43:29 God be gracious.** Joseph reserved a special greeting for his beloved full-brother Benjamin (cf. Num. 6:25; Rom. 1:7).

■ **43:32 Hebrews.** See 14:13 and note; 39:14; 41:12.

an abomination to the Egyptians. As Palestinian shepherds, the Hebrews followed different dietary practices and slaughtered for food animals that were sacred to the Egyptians (46:34 and note). Such customs served the divine purpose by isolating the Israelites in the land of Goshen and preventing their assimilation into the pagan Egyptian culture (38:1–30 note).

■ **43:33 astonishment.** The assigned seating of the brothers (in order of their birth) understandably amazed them.

■ **43:34 Benjamin's . . . five times as much.** This display of favoritism toward Benjamin (v. 29 note; cf. 37:3–11) was designed to test the brothers for jealousy. Their behavior ("they drank and were merry") indicated that their change of heart was real.

■ **44:2 put my cup.** Joseph was putting the brothers to the final test of family fidelity.

sack of the youngest. The original crime pertained to Joseph, Rachel's son and Jacob's favorite, and the brothers selling him into slavery in Egypt. To test the brothers, Joseph brilliantly created a situation where Rachel's other son (and Jacob's favorite), Benjamin, was also threatened with slavery in Egypt.

■ **44:5 practices divination.** Hydromancy, a form of ancient Near Eastern divination, made use of vessels of water. Objects or liquids put in the water generated patterns that were thought to reveal the future. This description and Joseph's statement in v. 15 do not indicate that he actually practiced pagan divination; this description was necessary to the ruse and identified the silver cup as a treasured possession (cf. 42:7, 12). Joseph received revelation from God alone (40:8 and note; 41:16).

8 [d]Gen. 43:21
9 [e]Gen. 31:32
12 [2]*finished with*
13 [f]Gen. 37:29, 34; Num. 14:6; 2 Sam. 1:11
14 [g]Gen. 37:7, 10
16 [h][Num. 32:23] [i]Gen. 44:9
17 [j]Prov. 17:15
18 [k]Gen. 18:30, 32; Ex. 32:22
20 [l]Gen. 37:3; 43:8; 44:30 [m]Gen. 42:38 [n]Gen. 46:19 [o]Gen. 42:4
21 [p]Gen. 42:15, 20
23 [q]Gen. 43:3, 5
25 [r]Gen. 43:2
27 [s]Gen. 30:22–24; 35:16–18; 46:19
28 [t]Gen. 37:31–35
29 [u]Gen. 42:36, 38; 44:31
30 [v][1 Sam. 18:1; 25:29]
32 [w]Gen. 43:9
33 [x]Ex. 32:32
34 [3]Lit. *find*

CHAPTER 45

1 [a]Acts 7:13

6 So he overtook them, and he spoke to them these same words. 7 And they said to him, "Why does my lord say these words? Far be it from us that your servants should do such a thing. 8 Look, we brought back to you from the land of Canaan [d]the money which we found in the mouth of our sacks. How then could we steal silver or gold from your lord's house? 9 With whomever of your servants it is found, [e]let him die, and we also will be my lord's slaves."

10 And he said, "Now also *let* it *be* according to your words; he with whom it is found shall be my slave, and you shall be blameless." 11 Then each man speedily let down his sack to the ground, and each opened his sack. 12 So he searched. He began with the oldest and [2]left off with the youngest; and the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. 13 Then they [f]tore their clothes, and each man loaded his donkey and returned to the city.

14 So Judah and his brothers came to Joseph's house, and he *was* still there; and they [g]fell before him on the ground. 15 And Joseph said to them, "What deed *is* this you have done? Did you not know that such a man as I can certainly practice divination?"

16 Then Judah said, "What shall we say to my lord? What shall we speak? Or how shall we clear ourselves? God has [h]found out the iniquity of your servants; here [i]we are, my lord's slaves, both we and *he* also with whom the cup was found."

17 But he said, [j]"Far be it from me that I should do so; the man in whose hand the cup was found, he shall be my slave. And as for you, go up in peace to your father."

Judah Intercedes for Benjamin

18 Then Judah came near to him and said: "O my lord, please let your servant speak a word in my lord's hearing, and [k]do not let your anger burn against your servant; for you *are* even like Pharaoh. 19 My lord asked his servants, saying, 'Have you a father or a brother?' 20 And we said to my lord, 'We have a father, an old man, and [l]a child of *his* old age, *who is* young; his brother is [m]dead, and he [n]alone is left of his mother's children, and his [o]father loves him.' 21 Then you said to your servants, [p]'Bring him down to me, that I may set my eyes on him.' 22 And we said to my lord, 'The lad cannot leave his father, for *if* he should leave his father, *his father* would die.' 23 But you said to your servants, [q]'Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you shall see my face no more.'

24 "So it was, when we went up to your servant my father, that we told him the words of my lord. 25 And [r]our father said, 'Go back *and* buy us a little food.' 26 But we said, 'We cannot go down; if our youngest brother is with us, then we will go down; for we may not see the man's face unless our youngest brother *is* with us.' 27 Then your servant my father said to us, [s]'You know that [s]my wife bore me two sons; 28 and the one went out from me, and I said, [t]"Surely he is torn to pieces"; and I have not seen him since. 29 But if you [u]take this one also from me, and calamity befalls him, you shall bring down my gray hair with sorrow to the grave.'

30 "Now therefore, when I come to your servant my father, and the lad *is* not with us, since [v]his life is bound up in the lad's life, 31 it will happen, when he sees that the lad *is* not *with us,* that he will die. So your servants will bring down the gray hair of your servant our father with sorrow to the grave. 32 For your servant became surety for the lad to my father, saying, [w]'If I do not bring him *back* to you, then I shall bear the blame before my father forever.' 33 Now therefore, please [x]let your servant remain instead of the lad as a slave to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brothers. 34 For how shall I go up to my father if the lad *is* not with me, lest perhaps I see the evil that would [3]come upon my father?"

Joseph Revealed to His Brothers

45 Then Joseph could not restrain himself before all those who stood by him, and he cried out, "Make everyone go out from me!" So no one stood with him [a]while Joseph made

■ **44:10 shall be my slave.** Joseph's modification of the brothers' offer (v. 9) was necessary: he was testing their attitude toward making Benjamin a slave (v. 17 and note).

■ **44:13 they tore their clothes.** This display of extreme distress demonstrated their affection for both father and brother.

■ **44:14 fell before him.** Now they bowed before Joseph asking for mercy (43:26 note).

■ **44:15 divination.** See note on v. 5.

■ **44:16 found out the iniquity of your servants.** Judah saw the impending penalty as punishment for their treatment of Joseph (42:21 and note).

■ **44:17 man . . . shall be my slave.** The stage for the great test was set (v. 2 note). Would they show compassion on their father and loyalty to Joseph's brother?

■ **44:18 Judah.** Representing the brothers (43:3 note).

■ **44:33 instead of the lad.** Here is a Judah very different from the one who sold his brother into slavery (37:26, 27). Judah's self-sacrificing love prefigures the vicarious atonement of Christ who by His voluntary suffering healed the breach between God and humans.

■ **44:34 see the evil.** See 37:34, 35.

■ **45:1–28** In this narrative of forgiveness and reconciliation, Joseph presents a model of submission to God's eternal and benevolent purpose

himself known to his brothers. 2 And he [b]wept aloud, and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard *it.*

3 Then Joseph said to his brothers, [c]"I *am* Joseph; does my father still live?" But his brothers could not answer him, for they were dismayed in his presence. 4 And Joseph said to his brothers, "Please come near to me." So they came near. Then he said: "I *am* Joseph your brother, [d]whom you sold into Egypt. 5 But now, do not therefore be grieved or angry with yourselves because you sold me here; [e]for God sent me before you to preserve life. 6 For these two years the [f]famine *has been* in the land, and *there are* still five years in which *there will be* neither plowing nor harvesting. 7 And God [g]sent me before you to preserve a [1]posterity for you in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. 8 So now *it was* not you *who* sent me here, but [h]God; and He has made me [i]a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a [j]ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

9 "Hurry and go up to my father, and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph: "God has made me lord of all Egypt; come down to me, do not [2]tarry. 10 [k]You shall dwell in the land of Goshen, and you shall be near to me, you and your children, your children's children, your flocks and your herds, and all that you have. 11 There I will [l]provide for you, lest you and your household, and all that you have, come to poverty; for *there are* still five years of famine."'

12 "And behold, your eyes and the eyes of my brother Benjamin see that *it is* [m]my mouth that speaks to you. 13 So you shall tell my father of all my glory in Egypt, and of all that you have seen; and you shall hurry and [n]bring my father down here."

14 Then he fell on his brother Benjamin's neck and wept, and Benjamin wept on his neck. 15 Moreover he [o]kissed all his brothers and wept over them, and after that his brothers talked with him.

16 Now the report of it was heard in Pharaoh's house, saying, "Joseph's brothers have come." So it pleased Pharaoh and his servants well. 17 And Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Say to your brothers, 'Do this: Load your animals and depart; go to the land of Canaan. 18 Bring your father and your households and come to me; I will give you the best of the land of Egypt, and you will eat [p]the [3]fat of the land. 19 Now you are commanded—do this: Take carts out of the land of Egypt for your little ones and your wives; bring your father and come. 20 Also do not be concerned about your goods, for the best of all the land of Egypt *is* yours.' "

21 Then the sons of Israel did so; and Joseph gave them [q]carts,[4] according to the command of Pharaoh, and he gave them provisions for the journey. 22 He gave to all of them, to each man, [r]changes of garments; but to Benjamin he gave three hundred *pieces* of silver and [s]five changes of garments. 23 And he sent to his father these *things:* ten donkeys loaded with the good things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain, bread, and food for his father for the journey. 24 So he sent his brothers away, and they departed; and he said to them, "See that you do not become troubled along the way."

25 Then they went up out of Egypt, and came to the land of Canaan to Jacob their father. 26 And they told him, saying, "Joseph *is* still alive, and he *is* governor over all the land of Egypt." [t]And Jacob's heart stood still, because he did not believe them. 27 But when they told him all the words which Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit [u]of Jacob their father revived. 28 Then Israel said, "*It is* enough. Joseph my son *is* still alive. I will go and see him before I die."

2 [b]Gen. 43:30; 46:29

3 [c]Gen. 43:27; Acts 7:13

4 [d]Gen. 37:28; 39:1; Ps. 105:17

5 [e]Gen. 45:7, 8; 50:20; Ps. 105:16, 17

6 [f]Gen. 43:1; 47:4, 13

7 [g]Gen. 45:5; 50:20 [1]*remnant*

8 [h][Rom. 8:28] [i]Judg. 17:10; Is. 22:21 [j]Gen. 41:43; 42:6

9 [2]*delay*

10 [k]Gen. 46:28, 34; 47:1, 6; Ex. 9:26

11 [l]Gen. 47:12

12 [m]Gen. 42:23

13 [n]Gen. 46:6–28; Acts 7:14

15 [o]Gen. 48:10

18 [p]Gen. 27:28; 47:6; Deut. 32:9–14 [3]The choicest produce

21 [q]Gen. 45:19; 46:5 [4]*wagons*

22 [r]2 Kin. 5:5 [s]Gen. 43:34

26 [t]Job 29:24; Ps. 126:1; Luke 24:11, 41

27 [u]Judg. 15:19; Is. 40:29

(vv. 5–8). All the evil done to him by his brothers was only part of God's secret plan designed for the good, not only of Joseph, but of his wicked brothers as well. We learn that "all things work together" to accomplish God's excellent purpose (Rom. 8:28), not only for us who presently "love God," but for the "great multitude" that will comprise the everlasting city (Rev. 7:9).

■ **45:5–8** These verses, with Joseph's repeated affirmation "God sent me" (vv. 5, 7, 8), form the theological heart of the Joseph narrative (cf. 50:19–21; Acts 7:9–14). God oversees the course of human action to achieve His good and set purpose (Acts 2:23; 4:28).

■ **45:5 do not . . . angry with yourselves.** Joseph directed their gaze away from their sins to God's grace (50:19).

■ **45:6 For these two years.** Joseph was thirty-nine years old at this time (41:46; 42:8 note).

■ **45:7 posterity.** Or, "remnant" (text note). Joseph's use of this term indicates his strong faith, tested by hard experience, in the faithfulness of God to His covenant promises. Out of this small endangered group a great nation would be built (12:1–3; 17:7). The prophets would later use this term in affirming that even in trying circumstances God would always preserve a people for Himself (Is. 10:20; 37:30–32; Mic. 2:12, 13).

■ **45:8 it was not you . . . but God.** Without excusing their sin, for which repentance was necessary (42:4 note), Joseph encourages the now contrite sinners to rejoice in God's sovereign and gracious overruling of their evil intentions.

■ **45:10 land of Goshen.** A region in northeastern Egypt near the Wadi Tumilat in the Nile Delta. This fertile region provided ample grazing for their flocks (v. 18; 47:4, 6).

■ **45:22 changes of garments.** In striking contrast to when the brothers stripped Joseph of his tunic (37:23).

■ **45:24 do not become troubled.** The brothers were not to quarrel among one another, particularly over responsibility for their crime against Joseph, and how to explain it to their father.

CHAPTER 46

1 [a]Gen. 21:31, 33; 26:32, 33; 28:10 [b]Gen. 26:24, 25; 28:13; 31:42; 32:9

2 [c]Gen. 15:1; 22:11; 31:11

3 [d]Gen. 17:1; 28:13 [e]Deut. 26:5

4 [f]Gen. 28:15; 31:3; 48:21 [g]Gen. 15:16; 50:12, 24, 25 [h]Gen. 50:1 [i]Will close your eyes when you die

5 [j]Acts 7:15 [k]Gen. 45:19–21 [2]*wagons*

6 [k]Deut. 26:5

8 [l]Ex. 1:1–4 [m]Num. 26:4, 5

9 [n]Ex. 6:14

10 [o]Ex. 6:15 [3]*Nemuel,* 1 Chr. 4:24 [4]*Jarib,* 1 Chr. 4:24 [5]*Zerah,* 1 Chr. 4:24

11 [p]1 Chr. 6:1, 16

12 [q]1 Chr. 2:3; 4:21 [r]Gen. 38:3, 7, 10 [s]Gen. 38:29

13 [6]*Puah,* Num. 26:23; 1 Chr. 7:1 [7]*Jashub,* Num. 26:24; 1 Chr. 7:1

14 [t]Num. 26:26

Jacob's Journey to Egypt

46 So Israel took his journey with all that he had, and came to [a]Beersheba, and offered sacrifices [b]to the God of his father Isaac. 2 Then God spoke to Israel [c]in the visions of the night, and said, "Jacob, Jacob!"

And he said, "Here I am."

3 So He said, "I *am* God, [d]the God of your father; do not fear to go down to Egypt, for I will [e]make of you a great nation there. 4 [f]I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely [g]bring you up *again;* and [h]Joseph [i]will put his hand on your eyes."

5 Then [j]Jacob arose from Beersheba; and the sons of Israel carried their father Jacob, their little ones, and their wives, in the [2]carts [k]which Pharaoh had sent to carry him. 6 So they took their livestock and their goods, which they had acquired in the land of Canaan, and went to Egypt, [k]Jacob and all his descendants with him. 7 His sons and his sons' sons, his daughters and his sons' daughters, and all his descendants he brought with him to Egypt.

8 Now [l]these *were* the names of the children of Israel, Jacob and his sons, who went to Egypt: [m]Reuben *was* Jacob's firstborn. 9 The [n]sons of Reuben *were* Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi. 10 [o]The sons of Simeon *were* [3]Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, [4]Jachin, [5]Zohar, and Shaul, the son of a Canaanite woman. 11 The sons of [p]Levi *were* Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. 12 The sons of [q]Judah *were* [r]Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez, and Zerah (but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan). [s]The sons of Perez were Hezron and Hamul. 13 The sons of Issachar *were* Tola, [6]Puvah, [7]Job, and Shimron. 14 The [t]sons of Zebulun *were* Sered, Elon, and Jahleel. 15 These *were* the [u]sons of Leah, whom she bore to Jacob in Padan Aram, with his daughter Dinah. All the persons, his sons and his daughters, *were* thirty-three.

16 The sons of Gad *were* [8]Ziphion, Haggi, Shuni, [9]Ezbon, Eri, [1]Arodi, and Areli. 17 [v]The sons of Asher *were* Jimnah, Ishuah, Isui, Beriah, and Serah, their sister. And the sons of Beriah *were* Heber and Malchiel. 18 [w]These *were* the sons of Zilpah, [x]whom Laban gave to Leah his daughter; and these she bore to Jacob: sixteen persons.

19 The [y]sons of Rachel, [z]Jacob's wife, *were* Joseph and Benjamin. 20 [a]And to Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and Ephraim, whom Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On, bore to him. 21 [b]The sons of Benjamin *were* Belah, Becher, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, [c]Ehi, Rosh, [d]Muppim, [2]Huppim, and Ard. 22 These *were* the sons of Rachel, who were born to Jacob: fourteen persons in all.

23 The son of Dan *was* [3]Hushim. 24 [e]The sons of Naphtali *were* [4]Jahzeel, Guni, Jezer, and [5]Shillem. 25 [f]These *were* the sons of Bilhah, [g]whom Laban gave to Rachel his daughter, and she bore these to Jacob: seven persons in all.

15 [u]Gen. 35:23; 49:31 16 [8]Sam., LXX *Zephon* and Num. 26:15 [9]*Ozni,* Num. 26:16 [1]*Arod,* Num. 26:17 17 [v]1 Chr. 7:30 18 [w]Gen. 30:10; 37:2 [x]Gen. 29:24 19 [y]Gen. 35:24 [z]Gen. 44:27 20 [a]Gen. 41:45, 50–52; 48:1 21 [b]1 Chr. 7:6; 8:1 [c]Num. 26:38 [d]Num. 26:39 [2]*Hupham,* Num. 26:39 23 [3]*Shuham,* Num. 26:42 24 [e]Num. 26:48 [4]*Jahziel,* 1 Chr. 7:13 [5]*Shallum,* 1 Chr. 7:13 25 [f]Gen. 30:5, 7 [g]Gen. 29:29

■ **46:1—50:26** This closing section of the "history of Jacob" (37:2) provides a transition to the Book of Exodus (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes).

■ **46:1 offered sacrifices.** Beersheba was the place of worship for Abraham (21:32, 33), Isaac (26:23–25), and Jacob (28:10–15).

■ **46:2 God spoke.** Once again, upon Jacob's departure from the Promised Land, God repeated His promise to be with him and to bring the people back (28:15).

visions of the night. The patriarchs functioned from time to time as prophets (12:7; 15:1; 18:17; 20:7 and notes). No visions to Jacob's twelve sons regarding the covenant promises of seed and land are recorded.

■ **46:3 I am . . . the God.** God repeated His assuring promises to Isaac (26:24) and Jacob (28:13–15).

I will make of you a great nation there. An elaboration of the covenant promise to Abraham (12:2; 15:13, 14; 18:18; cf. Ex. 1:7).

■ **46:4 put his hand on your eyes.** See text note. A word of comfort for the aged Jacob; he would die peacefully in Joseph's presence (50:1; cf. 15:15).

■ **46:8–27** This catalog of sons closes the patriarchal period in Canaan and forms a transition to the Exodus from Egypt (Ex. 1:1–7). The list includes the sons and grandsons of Jacob (some of whom were born in Egypt) through his various wives and concubines, although his daughters, except for Dinah (v. 15) and Serah (v. 17), are omitted. Thus the list is designed to culminate in the significant number seventy (v. 27 note) to show both God's blessing on the family and to anticipate their further expansion into a great nation.

■ **46:8 who went to Egypt.** This list includes the sons of Benjamin, who were probably born in Egypt (vv. 21, 27), just as the catalog of those born in Padan Aram (35:23–26) included Benjamin, who was obviously born in Canaan (35:26 note). The offspring were viewed as present in their parents (cf. Heb. 7:9, 10).

■ **46:10 Ohad.** Perhaps an inadvertent scribal addition, this name is omitted in Num. 26:12 and 1 Chr. 4:24.

■ **46:15 Padan Aram.** See note on 25:20.

thirty-three. The total of Jacob and his offspring through Leah—six sons, twenty-five grandsons, two great-grandsons, and daughter Dinah—comes to thirty-five. The figure thirty-three may reflect the omission of Er and Onan (v. 12), or perhaps of Ohad (v. 10 note) and Jacob.

26 [h]All the persons who went with Jacob to Egypt, who came from his body, [i]besides Jacob's sons' wives, *were* sixty-six persons in all. 27 And the sons of Joseph who were born to him in Egypt *were* two persons. [j]All the persons of the house of Jacob who went to Egypt were seventy.

Jacob Settles in Goshen

28 Then he sent Judah before him to Joseph, [k]to point out before him *the way* to Goshen. And they came [l]to the land of Goshen. 29 So Joseph made ready his [m]chariot and went up to Goshen to meet his father Israel; and he presented himself to him, and [n]fell on his neck and wept on his neck a good while.

30 And Israel said to Joseph, [o]"Now let me die, since I have seen your face, because you *are* still alive."

31 Then Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's household, [p]"I will go up and tell Pharaoh, and say to him, 'My brothers and those of my father's house, who *were* in the land of Canaan, have come to me. 32 And the men *are* [q]shepherds, for their occupation has been to feed livestock; and they have brought their flocks, their herds, and all that they have.' 33 So it shall be, when Pharaoh calls you and says, [r]'What is your occupation?' 34 that you shall say, [s]'Your servants' [s]occupation has been with livestock [t]from our youth even till now, both we *and* also our fathers,' that you may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd *is* [u]an[6] abomination to the Egyptians."

47 Then Joseph [a]went and told Pharaoh, and said, "My father and my brothers, their flocks and their herds and all that they possess, have come from the land of Canaan; and indeed they *are* in [b]the land of Goshen." 2 And he took five men from among his brothers and [c]presented them to Pharaoh. 3 Then Pharaoh said to his brothers, [d]"What *is* your occupation?"

And they said to Pharaoh, [e]"Your servants *are* shepherds, both we *and* also our fathers." 4 And they said to Pharaoh, [f]"We have come to dwell in the land, because your servants have no pasture for their flocks, [g]for the famine *is* severe in the land of Canaan. Now therefore, please let your servants [h]dwell in the land of Goshen."

5 Then Pharaoh spoke to Joseph, saying, "Your father and your brothers have come to you. 6 [i]The land of Egypt *is* before you. Have your father and brothers dwell in the best of the land; let them dwell [j]in the land of Goshen. And if you know *any* competent men among them, then make them chief herdsmen over my livestock."

7 Then Joseph brought in his father Jacob and set him before Pharaoh; and Jacob [k]blessed Pharaoh. 8 Pharaoh said to Jacob, "How old *are* you?"

9 And Jacob said to Pharaoh, [l]"The days of the years of my [j]pilgrimage *are* [m]one hundred and thirty years; [n]few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and [o]they have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage." 10 So Jacob [p]blessed Pharaoh, and went out from before Pharaoh.

11 And Joseph situated his father and his brothers, and gave them a possession in the land of

26 [h]Ex. 1:5 [i]Gen. 35:11
27 [j]Deut. 10:22
28 [k]Gen. 31:21 [l]Gen. 47:1
29 [m]Gen. 41:43 [n]Gen. 45:14, 15
30 [o]Luke 2:29, 30
31 [p]Gen. 47:1
32 [q]Gen. 47:3
33 [r]Gen. 47:2, 3
34 [s]Gen. 47:3 [t]Gen. 30:35; 34:5; 37:17 [u]Gen. 43:32 [6]*loathsome*

CHAPTER 47

1 [a]Gen. 46:31 [b]Gen. 45:10; 46:28; 50:8
2 [c]Acts 7:13
3 [d]Gen. 46:33 [e]Gen. 46:32, 34
4 [f]Deut. 26:5 [g]Gen. 43:1 [h]Gen. 46:34
6 [i]Gen. 20:15; 45:10, 18; 47:11 [j]Gen. 47:4
7 [k]Gen. 47:10; 48:15, 20
9 [l][Heb. 11:9, 13] [m]Gen. 47:28 [n][Job 14:1] [o]Gen. 5:5; 11:10, 11; 25:7, 8; 35:28 [j]Lit. *sojourning*
10 [p]Gen. 47:7

■ **46:26 sixty-six.** The total of thirty-three (v. 15 and note), sixteen (v. 18), fourteen (v. 22), and seven (v. 25) comes to seventy. The figure of sixty-six persons probably reflects the omission of Er and Onan (v. 12) and Ephraim and Manasseh (vv. 20, 27).

■ **46:27 seventy.** The covenant family is represented by the symbolic number seventy (vv. 8–27 note), signifying a large and complete number (cf. ch. 10 note; Ex. 24:1; Ps. 90:10). In this group of seventy, the emerging nation of Israel was comprehended.

The Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) adds five sons and grandsons of Manasseh and Ephraim at v. 20 and gives a total of seventy-five, a reading followed by Stephen in Acts 7:14. Such variations occasionally occur in the Greek Old Testament, and we don't always have the information necessary to explain them.

■ **46:28—47:31** Through Joseph's wisdom God preserved Israel in Goshen, both physically, by providing food and land (45:10 note), and spiritually, by providing for their isolation from the pagan Egyptians until the Exodus (43:32; Num. 25:1–3 and notes). Under Jacob's blessing on Pharaoh (47:7, 10; cf. 12:2) and Pharaoh's honoring of Israel (45:17–20; 47:6; cf. 12:3) everyone prospered. Pharaoh gained control of all the property and people in Egypt (47:19–21), the Egyptians hailed Joseph as a savior (47:25), and Israel prospered even more than the Egyptians (47:27; Ex. 1:7). This mutual blessing and prosperity contrasts with the situation four hundred years later when another pharaoh cursed Israel and was cursed (Ex. 1:8–14).

■ **46:32 shepherds.** Their identity as shepherds would assure Pharaoh that they entertained no social or political ambitions under their brother's auspices, and would help insulate them from intermarriage with the pagan Egyptians (v. 34; 43:32 and notes). The latter threat increased when they possessed property in Egypt (v. 11).

■ **46:34 every shepherd is an abomination.** The Egyptians too kept animals (47:6; Ex. 9:3, 4); this probably refers to foreign shepherds (43:32 note).

■ **47:7–10** In this remarkable audience with mighty Pharaoh—the greater typically blesses the lesser (14:19 and note)—the aged shepherd patriarch demonstrated his dignity. His blessing was fulfilled in vv. 13–25.

■ **47:9 pilgrimage.** See text note. The Hebrew term denotes a temporary abode, the condition of a resident alien. Jacob described his own life, and that of his fathers, as a sojourn (21:34; 24:3; 26:3 and notes). Though awaiting the fulfillment of the divine covenant promise of land, their hope extended beyond Canaan to a heavenly and eternal country, to a "city . . . whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10). See notes on 13:15 and Heb. 11:8–10.

few and evil. Jacob did not glory in the number of his years. Though blessed by God and a blessing to others, he had his share of human failings and afflictions.

■ **47:11 land of Rameses.** Assuming an early date for the Exodus from Egypt (Introduction to Exodus: Interpretive Difficulties), this designation of

Egypt, in the best of the land, in the land of [q]Rameses, [r]as Pharaoh had commanded. 12 Then Joseph provided [s]his father, his brothers, and all his father's household with bread, according to the number in *their* families.

Joseph Deals with the Famine

13 Now *there was* no bread in all the land; for the famine *was* very severe, [t]so that the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan languished because of the famine. 14 [u]And Joseph gathered up all the money that was found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, for the grain which they bought; and Joseph brought the money into Pharaoh's house.

15 So when the money failed in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan, all the Egyptians came to Joseph and said, "Give us bread, for [v]why should we die in your presence? For the money has failed."

16 Then Joseph said, "Give your livestock, and I will give you *bread* for your livestock, if the money is gone." 17 So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and Joseph gave them bread *in exchange* for the horses, the flocks, the cattle of the herds, and for the donkeys. Thus he [2]fed them with bread *in exchange* for all their livestock that year.

18 When that year had ended, they came to him the next year and said to him, "We will not hide from my lord that our money is gone; my lord also has our herds of livestock. There is nothing left in the sight of my lord but our bodies and our lands. 19 Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants of Pharaoh; give *us* seed, that we may [w]live and not die, that the land may not be desolate."

20 Then Joseph [x]bought all the land of Egypt for Pharaoh; for every man of the Egyptians sold his field, because the famine was severe upon them. So the land became Pharaoh's. 21 And as for the people, he [3]moved them into the cities, from *one* end of the borders of Egypt to the *other* end. 22 [y]Only the land of the [z]priests he did not buy; for the priests had rations *allotted to them* by Pharaoh, and they ate their rations which Pharaoh gave them; therefore they did not sell their lands.

23 Then Joseph said to the people, "Indeed I have bought you and your land this day for Pharaoh. Look, *here is* seed for you, and you shall sow the land. 24 And it shall come to pass in the harvest that you shall give one-fifth to Pharaoh. Four-fifths shall be your own, as seed for the field and for your food, for those of your households and as food for your little ones."

25 So they said, "You have saved [a]our lives; let us find favor in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants." 26 And Joseph made it a law over the land of Egypt to this day, *that* Pharaoh should have one-fifth, [b]except for the land of the priests only, *which* did not become Pharaoh's.

Joseph's Vow to Jacob

27 So Israel [c]dwelt in the land of Egypt, in the country of Goshen; and they had possessions there and [d]grew and multiplied exceedingly. 28 And Jacob lived in the land of Egypt seventeen years. So the length of Jacob's life was one hundred and forty-seven years. 29 When the time [e]drew near that Israel must die, he called his son Joseph and said to him, "Now if I have found favor in your sight, please [f]put your hand under my thigh, and [g]deal kindly and truly with me. [h]Please do not bury me in Egypt, 30 but [i]let me lie with my fathers; you shall carry me out of Egypt and [j]bury me in their burial place."

And he said, "I will do as you have said."

11 [q]Ex. 1:11; 12:37 [r]Gen. 47:6, 27
12 [s]Gen. 45:11; 50:21
13 [t]Gen. 41:30; Acts 7:11
14 [u]Gen. 41:56; 42:6
15 [v]Gen. 47:19
17 [2]*supplied*
19 [w]Gen. 43:8
20 [x]Jer. 32:43
21 [3]So with MT, Tg.; Sam., LXX, Vg. *made the people virtual slaves*
22 [y]Lev. 25:34; Ezra 7:24 [z]Gen. 41:45
25 [a]Gen. 33:15
26 [b]Gen. 47:22
27 [c]Gen. 47:11 [d]Gen. 17:6; 26:4; 35:11; 46:3; Ex. 1:7; Deut. 26:5; Acts 7:17
29 [e]Deut. 31:14; 1 Kin. 2:1 [f]Gen. 24:2–4 [g]Gen. 24:49; Josh. 2:14 [h]Gen. 50:25
30 [i]2 Sam. 19:37 [j]Gen. 49:29; 50:5–13; Heb. 11:21

the land of Goshen, after Pharaoh Rameses II (c. 1304–1236 B.C.), indicates that the place-name was updated after the time of Moses (14:14 note; Introduction: Date and Occasion).

■ **47:13–26** Joseph brought all the money, land, and people under Pharaoh in exchange for food, and preserved the Egyptians.

■ **47:21 moved them into the cities.** The Hebrew is uncertain. This reading indicates that the starving farmers were moved to the cities, probably to be nearer the grain stores. Alternatively, the text note reading describes the result of Joseph's policies—servitude for the people. The people, however, viewed Joseph not as a tyrant but as a savior (v. 25; cf. 45:7).

■ **47:27–31** Having witnessed God's faithfulness, by faith Jacob looked beyond his death in Egypt to his burial in the Promised Land.

■ **47:27 had possessions . . . grew and multiplied.** In fulfillment of the divine promise (46:3 and notes). The independence and prosperity of the Israelites contrasts with the fate of the Egyptians (vv. 13–26 note). This description also provides a link with Ex. 1:7.

■ **47:29 Joseph.** Jacob later repeated the command to all his sons in 49:29–32, but Joseph was in charge (48:1 note).

put your hand under my thigh. See note on 24:2.

■ **47:30 in their burial place.** By faith Israel saw his destiny in the Promised Land, not in an embalmed body in the best land of Egypt (v. 11; 50:2).

31 Then he said, "Swear to me." And he swore to him. So [k]Israel bowed himself on the head of the bed.

Jacob Blesses Joseph's Sons

48 Now it came to pass after these things that Joseph was told, "Indeed your father *is* sick"; and he took with him his two sons, [a]Manasseh and Ephraim. 2 And Jacob was told, "Look, your son Joseph is coming to you"; and Israel [l]strengthened himself and sat up on the bed. 3 Then Jacob said to Joseph: "God [b]Almighty appeared to me at [c]Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me, 4 and said to me, 'Behold, I will [d]make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will make of you a multitude of people, and [e]give this land to your descendants after you [f]as an everlasting possession.' 5 And now your [g]two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, who were born to you in the land of Egypt before I came to you in Egypt, *are* mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine. 6 Your [2]offspring [3]whom you beget after them shall be yours; they will be called by the name of their brothers in their inheritance. 7 But as for me, when I came from Padan, [h]Rachel died beside me in the land of Canaan on the way, when *there was* but a little distance to go to Ephrath; and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem)."

8 Then Israel saw Joseph's sons, and said, "Who *are* these?"

9 Joseph said to his father, "They *are* my sons, whom God has given me in this *place*."

And he said, "Please bring them to me, and [i]I will bless them." 10 Now [j]the eyes of Israel were dim with age, *so that* he could not see. Then Joseph brought them near him, and he [k]kissed them and embraced them. 11 And Israel said to Joseph, [l]"I had not thought to see your face; but in fact, God has also shown me your offspring!"

12 So Joseph brought them from beside his knees, and he bowed down with his face to the earth. 13 And Joseph took them both, Ephraim with his right hand toward Israel's left hand, and Manasseh with his left hand toward Israel's right hand, and brought *them* near him. 14 Then Israel stretched out his right hand and [m]laid *it* on Ephraim's head, who *was* the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh's head, [n]guiding his hands knowingly, for Manasseh *was* the [o]firstborn. 15 And [p]he blessed Joseph, and said:

31 [k]1 Kin. 1:47

CHAPTER 48

1 [a]Gen. 41:51, 56; 46:20; 50:23

2 [l]Collected his strength

3 [b]Gen. 43:14; 49:25 [c]Gen. 28:13, 19; 35:6, 9

4 [d]Gen. 46:3 [e]Ex. 6:8 [f]Gen. 17:8

5 [g]Josh. 13:7; 14:4

6 [2]*children* [3]Who are born to you

7 [h]Gen. 35:9, 16, 19, 20

9 [i]Gen. 27:4; 47:15

10 [j]Gen. 27:1 [k]Gen. 27:27; 45:15; 50:1

11 [l]Gen. 45:26

14 [m]Matt. 19:15 [n]Gen. 48:19 [o]Josh. 17:1

15 [p][Heb. 11:21]

■ **47:31 Swear to me.** Jacob asked that Joseph confirm his promise (v. 30) with a solemn oath. Likewise, God underscores the surety of His gracious covenant promise with an oath (15:8–21; 22:17; Heb. 6:13, 14 note). For Joseph's fulfillment of his oath see 50:1–14.

bowed himself. An expression of reverent thanksgiving to God that his last wish would be fulfilled (cf. 1 Kin. 1:47, 48).

■ **48:1 Manasseh and Ephraim.** Joseph received the rights of firstborn and the double portion through Jacob's adoption and elevation of his two sons to the status of founding fathers among Israel's twelve tribes (37:8; 43:3; 1 Chr. 5:2 and notes). The adoption ritual included Jacob's statements of authority (vv. 3, 4) and intent to adopt Ephraim and Manasseh (vv. 5–7), legal gestures (vv. 8–12), and words of blessing (vv. 15–16). An ancient text from the city of Ugarit (Ras Shamra) describes a similar adoption of a grandson (c. 1500 B.C.).

■ **48:3 God Almighty.** See note on 17:1.

appeared . . . blessed me. God's direct revelation of the covenant blessing to Jacob empowered him to legitimate Joseph's two sons as numbered among the twelve (v. 5) and to bless the twelve tribes (48:5—49:28). This preference for Joseph, giving him the double portion, reasserted God's sovereign prerogative to do as He pleased with Israel (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes).

at Luz. See 28:19.

■ **48:4 fruitful . . . multitude . . . land.** Jacob briefly summarizes the content of the covenant promises to the patriarchs (12:1–3, 7; 13:14–17; 15:12–21; 17:4–8; 22:15–18; 28:3, 4, 13–15).

■ **48:5 Ephraim and Manasseh.** The younger (Ephraim) is again preferred before the older (vv. 17–20; 25:23 and note).

Reuben and Simeon. The first two sons of Leah are mentioned because they are bypassed to give the double portion to Joseph, Rachel's firstborn. Reuben lost his rights as firstborn because he defiled his father's marriage bed (35:22; 43:3 note; 49:3, 4).

■ **48:6 shall be yours . . . name of their brothers.** Joseph's other sons were not adopted by Jacob, but would be embraced within the clans of Ephraim and Manasseh. These younger sons of Joseph are probably included in Num. 26:28–37; 1 Chr. 7:14–29.

■ **48:7 Padan.** See note on 25:20.

Rachel. Though Leah was buried in the family grave (49:31; cf. 35:16–20), Rachel is honored and memorialized in the double portion given her firstborn.

■ **48:8 Who are these.** Identification of the beneficiaries was part of the blessing ritual (v. 1 note). The nearly sightless Jacob (cf. 27:1) carefully identified the recipients of the irrevocable blessing (27:7 note).

■ **48:9 whom God has given.** Joseph, who shared his father's faith, gave the same answer as Jacob gave Esau to a similar question (33:5; cf. 41:51, 52 and note).

■ **48:10 kissed them and embraced them.** Part of the blessing ritual (27:26 and note).

■ **48:11–16** In the blessing, Jacob's perspective shifts from thanksgiving for God's covenant faithfulness and miraculous provision (v. 15) to anticipation of God's faithfulness and blessing on future generations (v. 16).

■ **48:12 Joseph . . . bowed down.** The one second only to Pharaoh (41:40) humbled himself before the patriarch who mediated God's promises.

from beside his knees. In the ancient Near East, the knee was symbolic of parental care and, by extension, of adoption (30:3 note).

■ **48:14 right hand.** In the ancient Near East oral statements were accompanied by the correct placement of the right hand, an action that functioned as a legal safeguard. This is also the first instance in Scripture where a blessing is accompanied by the laying on of hands (cf. Ps. 139:5; Matt. 19:13–15).

■ **48:15 he blessed Joseph.** Joseph was represented in his two sons. Joseph was later blessed without distinguishing his two sons (49:22–26). See note on 27:7.

before whom my fathers . . . walked. See note on 17:1.

15 [q]Gen. 17:1; 24:40; 2 Kin. 20:3

16 [r]Gen. 22:11, 15–18; 28:13–15; 31:11; [Ps. 34:22; 121:7] [s]Amos 9:12; Acts 15:17 [t]Num. 26:34, 37

17 [u]Gen. 48:14

19 [v]Gen. 48:14 [w]Num. 1:33, 35; Deut. 33:17

20 [x]Ruth 4:11, 12

21 [y]Gen. 28:15; 46:4; 50:24

22 [z]Gen. 14:7; Josh. 24:32; John 4:5 [a]Gen. 34:28 [4]Lit. *shoulder*

"God, [q]before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked,
The God who has fed me all my life long to this day,
16 The Angel [r]who has redeemed me from all evil,
Bless the lads;
Let [s]my name be named upon them,
And the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac;
And let them [t]grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."

17 Now when Joseph saw that his father [u]laid his right hand on the head of Ephraim, it displeased him; so he took hold of his father's hand to remove it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. 18 And Joseph said to his father, "Not so, my father, for this *one is* the firstborn; put your right hand on his head."

19 But his father refused and said, [v]"I know, my son, I know. He also shall become a people, and he also shall be great; but truly [w]his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his descendants shall become a multitude of nations."

20 So he blessed them that day, saying, [x]"By you Israel will bless, saying, 'May God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh!' " And thus he set Ephraim before Manasseh.

21 Then Israel said to Joseph, "Behold, I am dying, but [y]God will be with you and bring you back to the land of your fathers. 22 Moreover [z]I have given to you one [4]portion above your brothers, which I took from the hand [a]of the Amorite with my sword and my bow."

Jacob's Last Words to His Sons

CHAPTER 49

1 [a]Deut. 33:1, 6–25; [Amos 3:7] [b]Num. 24:14; [Deut. 4:30]; Is. 2:2; 39:6; Jer. 23:20; Heb. 1:2

3 [c]Gen. 29:32

4 [d]Gen. 35:22; Deut. 27:20; 1 Chr. 5:1

5 [1]*violence*

49 And Jacob called his sons and said, "Gather together, that I may [a]tell you what shall befall you [b]in the last days:

2 "Gather together and hear, you sons of Jacob,
And listen to Israel your father.

3 "Reuben, you are [c]my firstborn,
My might and the beginning of my strength,
The excellency of dignity and the excellency of power.
4 Unstable as water, you shall not excel,
Because you [d]went up to your father's bed;
Then you defiled *it*—
He went up to my couch.

5 "Simeon and Levi *are* brothers;
Instruments of [1]cruelty *are in* their dwelling place.

■ **48:16 The Angel.** See note on 16:7; 28:12; 31:11; 32:1, 22–32.

■ **48:17–20** An explanatory notice appended here to the ritual so as not to interrupt the narrative (v. 1 note).

younger brother shall be greater. Against social convention, the younger is blessed, as in the divine choices of Isaac over Ishmael (17:18, 19), Jacob over Esau (25:23), and Joseph over Reuben (v. 1 note). God's sovereign choice overrode the natural ways of men (cf. Is. 55:8, 9).

■ **48:20 Ephraim before Manasseh.** Jacob's prophetic blessing was fulfilled after the Exodus as Ephraim became the dominant Israelite tribe in the northern part of the Promised Land (Deut. 33:17 note).

■ **48:22 one portion above your brothers.** The Hebrew word translated "portion" (*shechem*) often means "shoulder" or "ridge" (text note), and is identical to the place-name "Shechem" (33:19). Some see here a reference to the double portion in the Promised Land that Joseph received through Ephraim and Manasseh (v. 1 note). Others infer that Jacob bequeathed the area of Shechem, where Jacob purchased a tract of land (33:18, 19) and which his sons later conquered (34:25–31), to Joseph's descendants (Josh. 24:32).

■ **49:1–28** The blessings of the inspired patriarch prophesied the fate of the twelve tribes descended from his sons, mostly by means of wordplays on their names or comparisons to animals. The names and actions (good or bad) of the twelve sons portended the destiny of the tribe. These prophetic blessings at the end of the patriarchal era are arranged according to the mothers—Leah's six sons (vv. 3–15), the handmaids' four (vv. 16–21); and Rachel's two (vv. 22–27)—and exhibit God's sovereignty over the nation. They will be expanded in the parallel "Blessings of Moses" (Deut. 33), given on the threshold of Israel's conquest of the land.

■ **49:1 the last days.** Jacob's prophecies embrace the entire history of Israel from the conquest and distribution of the land to the reign of the Messiah, Jesus Christ (v. 10 and note). See Num. 24:14; Deut. 31:28, 29; Is. 2:2.

■ **49:3–7** The prophecies about Leah's first three sons, Reuben, Simeon and Levi, pronounce punishment for crimes and do not use animal comparisons. The sins of the fathers are visited upon the children (Ex. 20:5).

■ **49:3 Reuben.** See 29:32; 35:22 and note. A son's inheritance in the ancient Near East could not be altered by a father's arbitrary decision, but such changes could be made after serious sexual offenses by the son against the family.

■ **49:4 Unstable.** Reuben's behavior was reckless and destructive. The Hebrew here connotes pride and presumption (cf. Judg. 9:4; 1 Chr. 5:1, 2).

■ **49:5 Simeon and Levi.** See 29:33, 34; 34:25 and note.

6 [e]Let not my soul enter their council;
Let not my honor be united [f]to their assembly;
[g]For in their anger they slew a man,
And in their self-will they [2]hamstrung an ox.
7 Cursed *be* their anger, for *it is* fierce;
And their wrath, for it is cruel!
[h]I will divide them in Jacob
And scatter them in Israel.

8 "Judah,[i] you *are he* whom your brothers shall praise;
[j]Your hand *shall be* on the neck of your enemies;
[k]Your father's children shall bow down before you.
9 Judah *is* [l]a lion's whelp;
From the prey, my son, you have gone up.
[m]He [3]bows down, he lies down as a lion;
And as a lion, who shall rouse him?
10 [n]The [4]scepter shall not depart from Judah,
Nor [o]a lawgiver from between his feet,
[p]Until Shiloh comes;
[q]And to Him *shall be* the obedience of the people.
11 Binding his donkey to the vine,
And his donkey's colt to the choice vine,
He washed his garments in wine,
And his clothes in the blood of grapes.
12 His eyes *are* darker than wine,
And his teeth whiter than milk.

13 "Zebulun[r] shall dwell by the haven of the sea;
He *shall become* a haven for ships,
And his border shall [s]adjoin Sidon.

14 "Issachar[t] is a strong donkey,
Lying down between two burdens;
15 He saw that rest *was* good,
And that the land *was* pleasant;
He bowed [u]his shoulder to bear *a burden,*
And became a band of slaves.

16 "Dan[v] shall judge his people
As one of the tribes of Israel.

6 [e]Ps. 64:2; Prov. 1:15, 16 [f]Ps. 26:9; Eph. 5:11 [g]Gen. 34:26 [2]*lamed*

7 [h]Num. 18:24; Josh. 19:1, 9; 21:1–42; 1 Chr. 4:24–27

8 [i]Deut. 33:7; Rev. 5:5 [j]Ps. 18:40 [k]Gen. 27:29; 1 Chr. 5:2

9 [l]Deut. 33:22; Ezek. 19:5–7; Mic. 5:8; [Rev. 5:5] [m]Num. 23:24; 24:9 [3]*couches*

10 [n]Num. 24:17; Jer. 30:21; Matt. 1:3; 2:6; Luke 3:33; Rev. 5:5 [o]Ps. 60:7 [p]Is. 11:1; [Matt. 21:9] [q]Deut. 18:15; Ps. 2:6–9; 72:8–11; Is. 42:1, 4; 49:6; 60:1–5; [Luke 2:30–32] [4]A symbol of kingship

13 [r]Deut. 33:18, 19; Josh. 19:10, 11 [s]Gen. 10:19; Josh. 11:8

14 [t]1 Chr. 12:32

15 [u]1 Sam. 10:9

16 [v]Gen. 30:6; Deut. 33:22; Judg. 18:26, 27

■ **49:7 divide . . . scatter.** Sharing an inclination toward destructive anger and cruelty, Simeon and Levi posed a threat to peace (34:25–31). After the Exodus from Egypt, the tribe of Simeon declined in importance and was not mentioned in Moses' blessing (Deut. 33). Simeon received no separate inheritance in the Promised Land, but was allotted cities within the inheritance of Judah (Josh. 19:1–9). Similarly, the priestly tribe of Levi was allotted cities throughout the land (Josh. 21:1–42).

■ **49:8 Judah.** See 29:35; 43:3 and notes.

Your father's children shall bow. The tribes bowed down to Judah's descendant David because of his heroic deeds (2 Sam. 5:1–3).

■ **49:9 lion's whelp.** Signifying strength, courage, and boldness (Judg. 14:18; Prov. 28:1), the lion was an apt symbol of the warrior kings of Judah's Davidic line—a royal line culminating in the conquering Messiah, Jesus Christ (Rev. 5:5).

■ **49:10 scepter shall not depart.** A prophecy further elaborated and confirmed by the Davidic covenant (2 Sam. 7:16).

Until Shiloh comes. The precise meaning of this phrase is debated. Some understand "Shiloh" as a place-name ("until Judah's leadership comes to Shiloh," cf. Josh. 18:1) or as a reference to tribute ("until tribute is brought to Judah"). More plausibly (and consistent with the ancient translations), others see this as a reference to a coming Judahite ruler: "until he comes to whom it belongs" (cf. Ezek. 21:27) or "until Shiloh [possibly a messianic term] comes." The subsequent mention of dominion over "people" (or "peoples," the Hebrew noun is plural) points to the final realization of this prophecy in the universal messianic reign of Christ (1 Cor. 15:24–28; Rev. 5:5). God's plan for mankind to rule and have dominion (1:26–28) is concentrated in Him.

■ **49:11, 12** The blessedness of the messianic ruler is represented by wine (a symbol of prosperity, 27:28) and by his beauty (Ps. 45:2–9).

■ **49:11 donkey's colt.** See Zech. 9:9; Matt. 21:7.

■ **49:13 Zebulun.** See 30:20; Deut. 33:19, 20; Josh. 19:10–16.

■ **49:14 Issachar.** See 30:18.

burdens. Some translate this Hebrew term "sheepfolds" (cf. Judg. 5:16).

■ **49:15 band of slaves.** Failing to drive the Canaanites out of its territory, the tribe of Issachar was apparently willing to trade its liberty for forced labor (cf. Judg. 1:28, 30). Issachar threw off the Canaanite yoke under the leadership of Deborah and Barak (Judg. 5:15).

■ **49:16 judge his people.** Or, provide justice for them. See 30:6.

17 [w]Dan shall be a serpent by the way,
A viper by the path,
That bites the horse's heels
So that its rider shall fall backward.
18 [x]I have waited for your salvation, O LORD!

19 "Gad,[y5] a troop shall [6]tramp upon him,
But he shall [6]triumph at last.

20 "Bread from [z]Asher *shall be* rich,
And he shall yield royal dainties.

21 "Naphtali[a] *is* a deer let loose;
He uses beautiful words.

22 "Joseph *is* a fruitful bough,
A fruitful bough by a well;
His branches run over the wall.
23 The archers have [b]bitterly grieved him,
Shot *at him* and hated him.
24 But his [c]bow remained in strength,
And the arms of his hands were [7]made strong
By the hands of [d]the Mighty *God* of Jacob
[e](From there [f]*is* the Shepherd, [g]the Stone of Israel),
25 [h]By the God of your father who will help you,
[i]And by the Almighty [j]who will bless you
With blessings of heaven above,
Blessings of the deep that lies beneath,
Blessings of the breasts and of the womb.
26 The blessings of your father
Have excelled the blessings of my ancestors,
[k]Up to the utmost bound of the everlasting hills.
[l]They shall be on the head of Joseph,
And on the crown of the head of him who was separate from his brothers.

27 "Benjamin is a [m]ravenous wolf;
In the morning he shall devour the prey,
[n]And at night he shall divide the spoil."

28 All these *are* the twelve tribes of Israel, and this *is* what their father spoke to them. And he blessed them; he blessed each one according to his own blessing.

Jacob's Death and Burial

29 Then he charged them and said to them: "I [o]am to be gathered to my people; [p]bury me with my fathers [q]in the cave that *is* in the field of Ephron the Hittite, 30 in the cave that *is* in the field

17 [w]Judg. 18:27
18 [x]Ex. 15:2; Ps. 25:5; 40:1–3; 119:166, 174; Is. 25:9; Mic. 7:7
19 [y]Gen. 30:11; Deut. 33:20; 1 Chr. 5:18 [5]Lit. *Troop* [6]Lit. *raid*
20 [z]Deut. 33:24; Josh. 19:24–31
21 [a]Deut. 33:23
23 [b]Gen. 37:4, 24; Ps. 118:13
24 [c]Job 29:20; Ps. 37:15 [d]Ps. 132:2, 5; Is. 1:24; 49:26 [e]Gen. 45:11; 47:12 [f][Ps. 23:1; 80:1] [g][Ps. 118:22]; Is. 28:16; [1 Pet. 2:6–8] [7]Or *supple*
25 [h]Gen. 28:13; 32:9; 35:3; 43:23; 50:17 [i]Gen. 17:1; 35:11 [j]Deut. 33:13
26 [k]Deut. 33:15; Hab. 3:6 [l]Deut. 33:16
27 [m]Judg. 20:21, 25 [n]Num. 23:24; Esth. 8:11; Ezek. 39:10; Zech. 14:1
29 [o]Gen. 15:15; 25:8; 35:29 [p]Gen. 47:30; 2 Sam. 19:37 [q]Gen. 23:16–20; 50:13

■ **49:17 a serpent.** Though small, Dan was dangerous and struck unexpectedly to overthrow larger foes (Judg. 18). The Danite Samson single-handedly struck the Philistines (Judg. 13—16).

■ **49:18** A brief prayer stands in the middle of the oracles.

■ **49:19 Gad.** This verse consists of a play on words (four of the six Hebrew words sound like "Gad") pointing to the constant danger to Gad from its southern and eastern neighbors (Ammon and Moab).

■ **49:20 Bread . . . dainties.** A reference to its fertile land (Deut. 33:24; Josh. 19:24–31). See 30:13.

■ **49:21 Naphtali.** See 30:8; Josh. 19:32–38.

■ **49:22 Joseph.** See 30:24; 48:15–20.

fruitful. Barren Rachel would produce the most fruitful tribe (30:2, 22; 41:52).

run over the wall. The children of Joseph later sought to increase their territory (Josh. 17:14–18).

■ **49:24, 25** Note the striking multiplication of divine names.

■ **49:24 Stone.** Israel's sure defense (Deut. 32:4 note).

■ **49:25 Almighty.** See note on 17:1.

bless. The Hebrew root for "bless" is used six times in this verse. These blessings were fertility of land fed by water from heaven above and earth below (1:6–8 and note) and fertility of body ("breasts and . . . womb"; 1:22; cf. Num. 24:5–7). Blessings given mankind at creation were concentrated on Joseph.

■ **49:26 separate.** See note on Deut. 33:16.

■ **49:27 Benjamin . . . wolf.** See 35:18. This tribe was later to have a fierce reputation (Judg. 20:14–25).

■ **49:29—50:26** Believing in God's promises to Abraham and Isaac about the Promised Land (13:15 and note), Jacob arranged for his burial with them in Canaan (49:29–32; cf. 47:29–31). Joseph also instructed his family to bury him in the Promised Land after the Exodus (50:24–26; cf. Josh. 24:32). The burial of Jacob in the ancestral cave and Joseph's de-

of Machpelah, which *is* before Mamre in the land of Canaan, [r]which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite as a possession for a burial place. 31 [s]There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife, [t]there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife, and there I buried Leah. 32 The field and the cave that *is* there *were* purchased from the sons of Heth." 33 And when Jacob had finished commanding his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed and breathed his last, and was gathered to his people.

50 Then Joseph [a]fell on his father's face and [b]wept over him, and kissed him. 2 And Joseph commanded his servants the physicians to [c]embalm his father. So the physicians embalmed Israel. 3 Forty days were required for him, for such are the days required for those who are embalmed; and the Egyptians [d]mourned[1] for him seventy days.

4 Now when the days of his mourning were past, Joseph spoke to [e]the household of Pharaoh, saying, "If now I have found favor in your eyes, please speak in the hearing of Pharaoh, saying, 5 [f]'My father made me swear, saying, "Behold, I am dying; in my grave [g]which I dug for myself in the land of Canaan, there you shall bury me." Now therefore, please let me go up and bury my father, and I will come back.' "

6 And Pharaoh said, "Go up and bury your father, as he made you swear."

7 So Joseph went up to bury his father; and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt, 8 as well as all the house of Joseph, his brothers, and his father's house. Only their little ones, their flocks, and their herds they left in the land of Goshen. 9 And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen, and it was a very great gathering.

10 Then they came to the threshing floor of Atad, which *is* beyond the Jordan, and they [h]mourned there with a great and very solemn lamentation. [i]He observed seven days of mourning for his father. 11 And when the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, saw the mourning at the threshing floor of Atad, they said, "This *is* a deep mourning of the Egyptians." Therefore its name was called [2]Abel Mizraim, which *is* beyond the Jordan.

12 So his sons did for him just as he had commanded them. 13 For [j]his sons carried him to the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah, before Mamre, which Abraham [k]bought with the field from Ephron the Hittite as property for a burial place. 14 And after he had buried his father, Joseph returned to Egypt, he and his brothers and all who went up with him to bury his father.

Joseph Reassures His Brothers

15 When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, [l]they said, "Perhaps Joseph will hate us, and may [3]actually repay us for all the evil which we did to him." 16 So they sent *messengers* to Joseph, saying, "Before your father died he commanded, saying, 17 'Thus you shall say to Joseph: "I beg you, please forgive the trespass of your brothers and their sin; [m]for they did evil to you." ' Now, please, forgive the trespass of the servants of [n]the God of your father." And Joseph wept when they spoke to him.

18 Then his brothers also went and [o]fell down before his face, and they said, "Behold, we *are* your servants."

19 Joseph said to them, [p]"Do not be afraid, [q]for *am* I in the place of God? 20 [r]But as for you, you meant evil against me; *but* [s]God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as *it is* this day, to save many people alive. 21 Now therefore, do not be afraid; [t]I will provide for you and your little ones." And he comforted them and spoke [4]kindly to them.

30 [r]Gen. 23:3–20

31 [s]Gen. 23:19, 20; 25:9 [t]Gen. 35:29; 50:13

CHAPTER 50

1 [a]Gen. 46:4, 29 [b]2 Kin. 13:14

2 [c]Gen. 50:26; 2 Chr. 16:14; Matt. 26:12; Mark 16:1; Luke 24:1; John 19:39, 40

3 [d]Gen. 37:34; Num. 20:29; Deut. 34:8 [1]Lit. *wept*

4 [e]Esth. 4:2

5 [f]Gen. 47:29–31 [g]2 Chr. 16:14; Is. 22:16; Matt. 27:60

10 [h]Acts 8:2 [i]1 Sam. 31:13; Job 2:13

11 [2]Lit. *Mourning of Egypt*

13 [j]Gen. 49:29–31; Acts 7:16 [k]Gen. 23:16–20

15 [l][Job 15:21] [3]*fully*

17 [m][Prov. 28:13] [n]Gen. 49:25

18 [o]Gen. 37:7–10; 41:43; 44:14

19 [p]Gen. 45:5 [q]Gen. 30:2; 2 Kin. 5:7

20 [r]Gen. 45:5, 7; Ps. 56:5 [s][Acts 3:13–15]

21 [t][Matt. 5:44] [4]Lit. *to their hearts*

termination to be buried in Canaan underscore the covenant family's solidarity and point forward to the Exodus from Egypt. The unity of the family is further emphasized by Joseph's kind words and provisions for his offending brothers (50:15–21).

- **49:29 in the cave.** See ch. 23; 25:9 and notes.
- **50:2 to embalm.** An Egyptian practice designed to preserve the body after death and so to maintain personal identity in the afterlife; embalming was not practiced in Israel. Here the embalming preserved the body for transport back to Canaan.
- **50:4 spoke to the household of Pharaoh.** Having just mourned his father's death (Deut. 34:8 note), Joseph's appearance was probably unsuitable for an appearance before Pharaoh (cf. 41:14).
- **50:5 I dug for myself.** The Hebrew verb translated "dug" can also mean "purchased" (cf. ch. 23). If the text reading is followed, Joseph simply expressed Jacob's instructions in words Pharaoh understood.
- **50:9 chariots and horsemen.** The protection given the burial party by Egyptian arms contrasts with the threat of Egyptian chariots during the Mosaic exodus (Ex. 14:9; 15:4, 5).
- **50:16 he commanded.** It is unclear whether Jacob had actually said this or the fearful brothers simply invented it. In any case, they based their plea for forgiveness on their worship of the same God (v. 17).
- **50:19 am I in the place of God.** Joseph recognized that his captivity had been part of God's gracious plan to save the covenant family (45:5–8); it was not his place to question God's wisdom.
- **50:20 you meant evil . . . God meant it for good.** A classic statement of God's sovereign overruling of human history to accomplish His gracious purposes (24:27; 45:5, 7, 8 and notes). See "Providence" at Prov. 16:33.

to save many people alive. In Egypt, Canaan, and elsewhere (41:57).

23 [u]Job 42:16 [v]Num. 26:29; 32:39 [w]Gen. 30:3

24 [x]Ex. 3:16, 17 [y]Gen. 26:3; 35:12; 46:4

25 [z]Ex. 13:19 [a]Deut. 1:8; 30:1–8 [b]Ex. 13:19 [5]*give attention to*

Death of Joseph

22 So Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he and his father's household. And Joseph lived one hundred and ten years. 23 Joseph saw Ephraim's children [u]to the third *generation.* [v]The children of Machir, the son of Manasseh, [w]were also brought up on Joseph's knees.

24 And Joseph said to his brethren, "I am dying; but [x]God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land to the land [y]of which He swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." 25 Then [z]Joseph took an oath from the children of Israel, saying, "God will surely [5]visit you, and [a]you shall carry up my [b]bones from here." 26 So Joseph died, *being* one hundred and ten years old; and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

■ **50:23 on Joseph's knees.** See notes on 30:3 and 48:12. Joseph apparently adopted these great-grandchildren.

■ **50:24 God will surely visit you.** Like his father Jacob on his deathbed (48:21), Joseph expressed firm confidence in God's covenant promises and His gracious visitation. The Hebrew verb translated "visit" denotes a divine encounter that will change one's fortunes for good or ill. For other instances of God's gracious "visitation" see 21:1 (Abraham and Sarah); Ex. 3:16 and 4:31 (the Exodus); Luke 1:68, 78 (the birth of Jesus); and Acts 15:14 (the extension of the gospel to the Gentiles).

Abraham . . . Isaac . . . Jacob. For the first time the three patriarchs are mentioned together; that era passed, but not its hope (Ex. 3:6; Deut. 30:20; 1 Kin. 18:36; 2 Chr. 30:6).

■ **50:25 carry up my bones.** Joseph's bones were taken from Egypt by Moses (Ex. 13:19), and later buried at Shechem (Josh. 24:32).

The Second Book of Moses Called

EXODUS

Author In the New Testament Jesus calls Exodus "the book of Moses" (Mark 12:26; cf. 7:10), and there are no compelling reasons to deny the Mosaic authorship of the book (Introduction to the Pentateuch: Author and Date).

The title of the book, "Exodus," is derived from the Greek word *exodos* (Luke 9:31), which means "exit" or "departure." The book takes its name from the central event of Israel's departure from Egypt, recorded in the book's first fifteen chapters.

Date and Occasion Given Moses' authorship of Exodus, we should date the book after the exodus event (c. 1450–1440 B.C.) and before his death about 1406 B.C. According to the dating below, Moses' birth would have just fallen within the reign of Thutmose I. Hatshepsut, the widowed queen of Thutmose II, assumed male titles and even a beard as she reigned from 1504–1483 B.C. Perhaps she was the Pharaoh upon whose death Moses returned to Egypt from Midian.

Exodus carries forward the story of God's fulfillment of His promise to Abraham to bless him and make of him a great nation (Gen. 12:2). It begins by referring to the descent of Israel into Egypt (1:1–7); this connects through Gen. 46:8–27 with the Genesis narratives. The book concludes with Israel at Sinai where the tabernacle is completed. The events covered in the book may be placed against their historical background as follows.

Joseph's rise to power (1:5) is best set in the favorable conditions for Jacob's family created by the rule over Egypt of the Semitic Hyksos (c. 1700–1550 B.C.). The reference at 1:8 to a new king "who did not know Joseph" likely refers to the expulsion of the Hyksos by the eighteenth dynasty founder Ahmosis I (1570–1546 B.C.). If the Exodus is dated c. 1450–1440 B.C. (Interpretive Difficulties below), the Pharaoh of the oppression was probably Thutmose I (1526–1512 B.C.), while the Pharaoh of the Exodus was Thutmose III (1504–1450 B.C.) or Amenhotep II (1450–1425 B.C.). This dating would allow a possible identification of the incoming Israelites with the Habiru, a group mentioned in the Tell el-Amarna letters (correspondence between Egypt and its Syro-Palestinian vassals during the fourteenth century B.C.). The Habiru were a social or occupational class commonly attested in texts from 2000 B.C. onwards. They were political outcasts in Palestine (Gen. 14:13 note).

The written preservation of the words of God's covenant has central importance for the theology of the Book of Exodus. God not only speaks His words to His assembled people at Sinai, He also gives them His Ten Commandments in writing, "written with the finger of God" on tablets of stone (31:18; cf. 32:15, 16; 34:1, 28). The terms of the covenant were further specified by the so-called "Book of the Covenant" (20:22—23:19), the words of God written down by Moses, the mediator of God's covenant (24:4, 7; 34:27).

The Sinai covenant (19:1—20:21; ch. 24) resembles in both form and content the state treaty form of the second millennium B.C., particularly the Hittite state treaties. These treaties included a preamble (20:2), stipulations (20:3–17), ratification (24:1–11), and blessings and curses. A copy of the treaty was often preserved at the sanctuaries of the parties (e.g., the two tablets of 31:18). Also, the similarity of the content of the case laws of chs. 21—23 to ancient Near Eastern codes (particularly the Code of Hammurabi of Babylon, c. 1750 B.C.) has often been noted.

Interpretive Difficulties The date and route of the Exodus have been subjects of considerable debate. Biblical chronology dates the exodus event at 480 years before the reign of Solomon (1 Kin. 6:1). This would place the event at about 1440 B.C. This early date is consistent with Judg. 11:26, which declares that three hundred years had elapsed since Israel entered Canaan. The c. 1440 B.C. date is also supported by 12:40, 41, where 430 years is the duration of Israel's stay in Egypt. The Pharaoh of the Exodus would then be Thutmose III or Amenhotep II.

Advocates of a much later date appeal to the name "Raamses" (or "Rameses," Gen. 47:11) as one of the store cities built with Israelite labor (1:11). Rameses II (1304–1236 B.C.) is taken to be the Pharaoh of the Exodus, and the approximate date set at 1270 B.C. This is held to be more consistent with the archaeology of cities destroyed in Palestine and with the lack of earlier settlement in Transjordan (the region east of the Jordan River and the Dead Sea). However, more recent discoveries in Transjordan and a new evaluation of the destruction of Jericho have weakened the case for the late date.

The route of the Exodus began at Rameses. Its exact location is the subject of considerable debate,

though modern Qantir is the site most favored (Tell el-Daba). From there the Hebrews journeyed south to Succoth (13:20). Here, apparently unable to move on, the Hebrews turned northward (14:2). Three sites are mentioned, Baal Zephon, Migdol, and Pi Hahiroth. Baal Zephon is associated with Tahpanhes, bordering Lake Menzaleh, one of the salt lakes between the Mediterranean and Gulf of Suez. There were three possible routes of Israelite escape. The "way of the land of the Philistines" (13:17) connected Egypt with Canaan by the heavily fortified coastal route. A second route, the way of Shur, began near the Wadi Tumilat in the Delta area, crossed to Kadesh Barnea, and branched off to Canaan. The Egyptian boundary wall of Shur may have been a major obstacle to this route. In leading the people south to southern Sinai, the Lord not only brought them to the mountain He had designated to Moses, but distanced them from further contact with the Egyptians. The deliverance through the sea may have been on a southern extension of Lake Menzaleh.

The Sinai peninsula is a triangle of land measuring approximately 150 miles across at the top and 260 miles along the sides. Two arms of the Red Sea, the Gulf of Suez and the Gulf of Aqaba, flank it. The Hebrews proceeded south along the west coast of the Sinai. The bitter waters of Marah (15:22–25) are usually identified with Ain Hawarah (some forty-five to fifty miles south of the tip of the Gulf of Suez), but Ain Musa may be the correct location. Elim with its many springs and trees has been identified as Wadi Gharandel, the encampment by the Red Sea (Num. 33:10), about seven miles south of Ain Hawarah. The wilderness of Sin would best be identified with Debbet er-Ramleh, a sandy plain along the edge of the Sinai Plateau. If the traditional location of Mount Sinai as Jebel Musa is correct, Israel would have then turned inland by a series of valleys to Jebel Musa, traveling through the desert of Rephidim, where they fought against the Amalekites (17:8–16). Rephidim was the last encampment in the wilderness of Sinai before the sacred mountain. Then they proceeded to Mount Sinai (ch. 19) where they received the law.

Characteristics and Themes

Several major themes are evident in the Book of Exodus. First, it tells how the Lord liberated Israel from Egypt to fulfill His covenant with the fathers. A second major element of the book is the covenant revelation at Sinai, which specified the terms of relationship between the holy God and His people. The third theme issues from the first two and is their consummation: the reestablishment of God's dwelling with man. Each of these themes involves a triumph of divine grace: God's mighty rescue of His people from slavery in Egypt, His thunderous self-revelation at Sinai, and His gracious condescension to dwell with His erring people in the tabernacle. The unfolding of these themes also reveals the Lord's holiness and grace in His covenant law and in the ceremonial symbolism of Israel's life and worship.

Crucial to the narrative is Moses' role as mediator between God and man. As God's chosen servant, Moses is the mediator of judgment against Egypt, and is the one through whom God delivers Israel. Through Moses God gives His revelation at Sinai. Moses also shepherds the people through the wilderness to the Promised Land. He pleads for the people, and he is the one through whom the Lord provides food and water. But Moses' role in the history of redemption prepares pointedly for Christ, the Mediator of the new covenant (Deut. 18:15). The revelation that Moses receives of God's name "abounding in goodness and truth" (34:6) justifies the building of the tabernacle, but that description of the Lord points forward to the coming of the true tabernacle, the incarnate Christ, the greater Servant of the Lord (John 1:14, 17; Heb. 3:1–6).

God's law reveals His holy nature and requires holiness of the people among whom God will dwell. The ceremonial regulations for Israel's life and worship (chs. 25—31; 35—40) mark out the separation of Israel as the people among whom God lives and rules, demonstrating His kingdom before the nations.

In addition to its description of the historical events by which Israel was delivered to become God's people, Exodus also presents a major illustration of God's saving work throughout history. The savior God redeems His chosen people from the powers of evil, judges those powers, and claims His people as His firstborn son, a holy nation of priests among whom He dwells by His Spirit. The pattern of divine victory over enemies, followed by the establishment of the divine dwelling place, is repeated in Christ's first and second advents (e.g., Eph. 2:14–22; Rev. 20:11—22:5).

The symbolism found in Exodus becomes reality in the new covenant (Jer. 31:31–34; Col. 2:17; Heb. 10:1). The sprinkled blood of animal sacrifice is now replaced by the blood of Christ (24:8; Matt. 26:27, 28; Heb. 12:24; 1 Pet. 1:2). The symbolic substitution of the Passover lamb is fulfilled in Christ, the Lamb of God, our Passover sacrifice (John 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:7). His "exodus" at Jerusalem (Luke 9:31) accomplishes the salvation of the true people of God. God's new covenant people are joined to Jesus Christ, in whom the Gentiles become the people of God, members of the commonwealth of Israel and fellow citizens with the Old Testament saints (19:5, 6; Eph. 2:11–19). The full meaning of the description of Israel in Exodus may now therefore be applied to the churches of the Gentiles (1 Pet. 2:9, 10). □

Outline of Exodus

I. God Delivers His People: The Exodus (1:1—15:21)
- A. God in Faithfulness Remembers Israel (chs. 1; 2)
- B. God Calls Moses to Deliver Israel (3:1—4:26)
- C. Pharaoh Rejects God's Demand (4:27—7:13)
- D. God's Judgment Against Egypt (7:14—10:29)
- E. God Delivers Israel from Egypt (11:1—13:16)
- F. God Saves Israel at the Red Sea (13:17—15:21)

II. God Leads His People: The Wilderness Testing (15:22—18:27)
- A. Marah to Elim: God Brings Healing (15:22–27)
- B. Wilderness of Sin: God Provides Food (ch. 16)
- C. Rephidim: God Provides Water (17:1–7)
- D. Rephidim: God Provides Protection (17:8–16)
- E. Mountain of God: God Provides Organization (ch. 18)

III. God and Israel Enter into Covenant (chs. 19—24)
- A. Preparations for the Covenant (ch. 19)
- B. God Proclaims the Covenant (chs. 20—23)
- C. Israel Ratifies the Covenant (ch. 24)

IV. God Reveals the Pattern of the Tabernacle and Its Ministry (chs. 25—31)
- A. The Tabernacle, Courts, and Furnishings (chs. 25—27)
- B. The Priestly Ministry (chs. 28—30)
- C. Artisans for the Tabernacle Construction (31:1–11)
- D. Sign of the Covenant and the Tablets (31:12–18)

V. Israel's Rebellion, Judgment, and Restoration (32:1—34:35)
- A. Israel's Idolatrous Worship (32:1–6)
- B. Israel Judged for Idolatry (32:7–29)
- C. God Threatens to Withdraw His Presence from Israel (32:30—34:9)
- D. God Renews His Covenant (34:10–35)

VI. Israel's Artisans Prepare the Tabernacle (chs. 35—39)
- A. Israel Admonished to Remember the Sabbath (35:1–3)
- B. Freewill Offerings for the Tabernacle (35:4–29)
- C. Craftsmen Called to Begin the Work (35:30—36:17)
- D. The Curtains, Boards, and Veils are Made (36:8–38)
- E. The Furnishings are Fashioned (37:1—38:8)
- F. The Courtyard is Made (38:9–20)
- G. Summary: Treasurer's Report (38:21–31)
- H. The Priestly Garments Are Sewn (39:1–31)
- I. The Work Completed (39:32–43)

VII. Israel's Artisans Erect the Tabernacle (ch. 40)
- A. Instructions for the Tabernacle Erection (40:1–16)
- B. Moses Supervises the Raising of the Tabernacle (40:17–33)
- C. God's Glory Fills the Tabernacle (40:34–38)

CHAPTER 1

1 [a]Gen. 46:8–27

5 [b]Gen. 46:26, 27 [1]Lit. *who came from the loins of* [2]DSS, LXX *seventy-five;* cf. Acts 7:14

6 [c]Gen. 50:26

7 [d]Acts 7:17 [3]*became very numerous*

8 [e]Acts 7:18, 19

9 [f]Gen. 26:16

10 [g]Ps. 83:3, 4 [h]Acts 7:19

11 [i]Ex. 3:7; 5:6 [j]Ex. 1:14; 2:11; 5:4–9; 6:6 [k]1 Kin. 9:19 [l]Gen. 47:11

13 [m]Gen. 15:13 [4]*harshness*

14 [n]Num. 20:15 [o]Ps. 81:6

15 [p]Ex. 2:6

16 [q]Acts 7:19

17 [r]Prov. 16:6 [s]Dan. 3:16, 18

19 [t]Josh. 2:4 [5]*have vigor of life,* bear quickly, easily

20 [u][Prov. 11:18] [6]*became very numerous*

21 [v]1 Sam. 2:35 [7]*gave them families*

22 [w]Acts 7:19 [8]Sam., LXX, Tg. add *to the Hebrews*

Israel's Suffering in Egypt

NOW [a]these *are* the names of the children of Israel who came to Egypt; each man and his household came with Jacob: [2] Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah; [3] Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin; [4] Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher. [5] All those [1]who were descendants of Jacob were [b]seventy[2] persons (for Joseph was in Egypt *already*). [6] And [c]Joseph died, all his brothers, and all that generation. [7] [d]But the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, multiplied and [3]grew exceedingly mighty; and the land was filled with them.

[8] Now there arose a new king over Egypt, [e]who did not know Joseph. [9] And he said to his people, "Look, the people of the children of Israel *are* more and [f]mightier than we; [10] [g]come, let us [h]deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and it happen, in the event of war, that they also join our enemies and fight against us, and *so* go up out of the land." [11] Therefore they set taskmasters over them [i]to afflict them with their [j]burdens. And they built for Pharaoh [k]supply cities, Pithom [l]and Raamses. [12] But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. And they were in dread of the children of Israel. [13] So the Egyptians made the children of Israel [m]serve with [4]rigor. [14] And they [n]made their lives bitter with hard bondage—[o]in mortar, in brick, and in all manner of service in the field. All their service in which they made them serve *was* with rigor.

[15] Then the king of Egypt spoke to the [p]Hebrew midwives, of whom the name of one *was* Shiphrah and the name of the other Puah; [16] and he said, "When you do the duties of a midwife for the Hebrew women, and see *them* on the birthstools, if it *is* a [q]son, then you shall kill him; but if it *is* a daughter, then she shall live." [17] But the midwives [r]feared God, and did not do [s]as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the male children alive. [18] So the king of Egypt called for the midwives and said to them, "Why have you done this thing, and saved the male children alive?"

[19] And [t]the midwives said to Pharaoh, "Because the Hebrew women *are* not like the Egyptian women; for they [5]*are* lively and give birth before the midwives come to them."

[20] [u]Therefore God dealt well with the midwives, and the people multiplied and [6]grew very mighty. [21] And so it was, because the midwives feared God, [v]that He [7]provided households for them.

[22] So Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, [w]"Every son who is [8]born you shall cast into the river, and every daughter you shall save alive."

Moses Is Born

2 And [a]a man of the house of Levi went and took *as wife* a daughter of Levi. [2] So the woman conceived and bore a son. And [b]when she saw that he *was* a beautiful *child,* she hid him

CHAPTER 2 1 [a]Ex. 6:16–20 2 [b]Acts 7:20

■ **1:1–4** Exodus and Genesis are linked by this introduction (Gen. 46:8–27). God's promise to Abraham is fulfilled by Israel's fruitfulness (Gen. 12:2).

■ **1:5 seventy.** See notes on Gen. 46:15–27. The number going into Egypt is sometimes given as seventy-five (text note; Acts 7:14), with the difference due to who is counted. The Septuagint text (the Greek Old Testament) adds five of Joseph's further male descendants, yielding a total of seventy-five. With women and children the total number was over 150.

■ **1:7 multiplied . . . exceedingly.** The terms "fruitful," "multiplied," and "the land was filled" remind us of Gen. 1:26–28. Israel fulfills the mandate given to humankind in Gen. 1. The land was probably the land of Goshen in northeastern Egypt, in the Wadi Tumilat in the Delta, a valley 30 to 40 miles long (cf. Gen. 47:4).

■ **1:8–22** God's multiplication of Israel leads to their oppression by the Egyptians.

■ **1:8 a new king.** The beginning of a new era is marked off by the advent of a new Pharaoh. This Pharaoh may have been Ahmosis I (1570–1546 B.C.) of the eighteenth dynasty, who expelled the Hyksos, the Semitic rulers of Egypt from about 1700–1550 B.C. (Introduction: Date and Occasion; Acts 7:18 note).

■ **1:11 Pithom and Raamses.** These cities for storing agricultural provisions and military supplies were located in the strategic Nile Delta region. Pithom was probably located at modern Tell er-Ratabah or Tell el Maskhutah, and Raamses is identified as modern Qantir. This item comes too early in the oppression cycle to be identified as the work of Rameses II (1304–1236 B.C.) who is often identified as the Pharaoh of the Exodus (Introduction: Interpretive Difficulties; Gen. 47:11 note). The only other Pharaoh with the necessary forty years' reign was Thutmose III (1504–1450 B.C.). By the nineteenth dynasty the term "Pharaoh" (Egyptian for "great house") became a royal title. Earlier it was a synonym for governmental authority.

■ **1:14 bitter.** The bitter oppression of Egypt was later commemorated by the bitter herbs of the Passover meal (12:8).

■ **1:15 Hebrew.** See note on Gen. 14:13.

midwives. Two midwives to serve such a large population seem far too few; they may have been guild leaders. Their names are Semitic and v. 15 identifies them as Israelite.

■ **1:16 birthstools.** These consisted of two stones upon which women in labor squatted.

■ **2:1 a man.** The fate of Israel hangs on one family member. Moses has an older sister (v. 4) and brother (7:7). His parents, Amram and Jochebed, were nephew and aunt (6:20).

■ **2:2 beautiful child.** Moses was a healthy child and likely to survive. Jesus Christ, antitype of Moses and founder of the new Israel, was also

three months. 3 But when she could no longer hide him, she took an ark of [c]bulrushes for him, daubed it with [d]asphalt and [e]pitch, put the child in it, and laid *it* in the reeds [f]by the river's bank. 4 [g]And his sister stood afar off, to know what would be done to him.

5 Then the [h]daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river. And her maidens walked along the riverside; and when she saw the ark among the reeds, she sent her maid to get it. 6 And when she opened *it,* she saw the child, and behold, the baby wept. So she had compassion on him, and said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children."

7 Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call a nurse for you from the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for you?"

8 And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Go." So the maiden went and called the child's mother. 9 Then Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give *you* your wages." So the woman took the child and nursed him. 10 And the child grew, and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became [i]her son. So she called his name [j]Moses, saying, "Because I drew him out of the water."

Moses Flees to Midian

11 Now it came to pass in those days, [k]when Moses was grown, that he went out to his brethren and looked at their burdens. And he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. 12 So he looked this way and that way, and when he saw no one, he [l]killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. 13 And [k]when he went out the second day, behold, two Hebrew men [m]were fighting, and he said to the one who did the wrong, "Why are you striking your companion?"

14 Then he said, [n]"Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?"

So Moses [o]feared and said, "Surely this thing is known!" 15 When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he sought to kill Moses. But [p]Moses fled from [z]the face of Pharaoh and dwelt in the land of [q]Midian; and he sat down by [r]a well.

16 [s]Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters. [t]And they came and drew water, and they filled the [u]troughs to water their father's flock. 17 Then the [v]shepherds came and [w]drove them away; but Moses stood up and helped them, and [x]watered their flock.

18 When they came to [y]Reuel[3] their father, [z]he said, "How *is it that* you have come so soon today?"

19 And they said, "An Egyptian delivered us from the hand of the shepherds, and he also drew enough water for us and watered the flock."

20 So he said to his daughters, "And where *is* he? Why *is* it *that* you have left the man? Call him, that he may [a]eat bread."

21 Then Moses was content to live with the man, and he gave [b]Zipporah his daughter to Moses. 22 And she bore *him* a son. He called his name [c]Gershom,[4] for he said, "I have been [d]a [5]stranger in a foreign land."

23 Now it happened [e]in the process of time that the king of Egypt died. Then the children of Israel [f]groaned because of the bondage, and they cried out; and [g]their cry came up to God

3 [c]Is. 18:2 [d]Gen. 14:10 [e]Gen. 6:14 [f]Is. 19:6

4 [g]Num. 26:59

5 [h]Acts 7:21

10 [i]Acts 7:21 [j]Heb. *Mosheh,* lit. *Drawn Out*

11 [k]Heb. 11:24–26

12 [l]Acts 7:24, 25

13 [k]Acts 7:26–28 [m]Prov. 25:8

14 [n]Acts 7:27, 28 [o]Judg. 6:27

15 [p]Acts 7:29 [q]Ex. 3:1 [r]Gen. 24:11; 29:2 [z]*the presence of Pharaoh*

16 [s]Ex. 3:1; 4:18; 18:12 [t]Gen. 24:11, 13, 19; 29:6–10 [u]Gen. 30:38

17 [v]Gen. 47:3 [w]Gen. 26:19–21 [x]Gen. 29:3, 10

18 [y]Num. 10:29 [z]Ex. 3:1; 4:18 [3]*Jethro,* Ex. 3:1

20 [a]Gen. 31:54; 43:25

21 [b]Ex. 4:25; 18:2

22 [c]Ex. 4:20; 18:3, 4 [d]Acts 7:29 [4]Lit. *Stranger There* [5]*sojourner,* temporary resident

23 [e]Acts 7:34 [f]Deut. 26:7 [g]James 5:4

born under an edict of death and miraculously spared in Egypt (Matt. 2:13–23).

■ **2:3 ark of bulrushes.** A box of woven papyrus reeds, daubed with tar to make it watertight (cf. Job 9:26 text note; Is. 18:2). Moses is perhaps depicted as a second Noah—the Hebrew term translated ark is used for Noah's craft in Gen. 7—9. Sargon of Accad (c. 2350 B.C.) was said to have been exposed in a similar chest and left to float in the Euphrates.

■ **2:5 daughter of Pharaoh.** Some suppose that this princess became the famous Hatshepsut, the queen of Thutmose II who ruled Egypt after his death (1504–1483 B.C.).

■ **2:10 Moses.** This name is Semitic (text note), though perhaps it was compatible with Egyptian *Mose* meaning "is born" (e.g., *Thutmose,* meaning "Thut is born"). There is evidence that Semitic names were not uncommon in the royal court, and it is possible that the child was given a Semitic name by the princess. He was educated in the Egyptian court as a promising young noble (Acts 7:22).

■ **2:11–15** Now forty years old (Acts 7:23), Moses identifies himself with God's people (Heb. 11:24–27). His effort to deliver an Israelite from oppression proves vain when he seeks to be a judge of Israel (v. 14).

■ **2:15 Midian.** Probably the name of an early tribal confederacy operating in the Arabian desert. The nomadic Midianites were descendants of Abraham and Keturah (Gen. 25:1–6; Num. 10:29–32; Judg. 6).

■ **2:16 drew water.** The women did the difficult task and then were driven off.

■ **2:17 helped them.** This was Moses' third intervention in defense of the weak. Nomadic strife over water rights was common.

■ **2:18 Reuel.** The name means "Friend of God." Moses' father-in-law was known by two names: Reuel and Jethro (3:1; 4:18). Jethro and Reuel may be variant names, or Reuel a clan name.

■ **2:22 Gershom.** See text note. Moses had not forgotten his Egyptian home. Yet he will lead Israel from Egypt to the homeland of the people of God.

■ **2:23 groaned . . . cried out . . . came up.** Israel's anguished cry is balanced by a fourfold description of God's response. God "heard . . . remembered . . . looked upon . . . acknowledged" (vv. 24, 25). This summary prepares for the call of Moses and underscores the book's theme of divine faithfulness to the covenant promises.

24 [h]Ex. 6:5 [i]Gen. 15:13; 22:16–18; 26:2–5; 28:13–15 [j]Gen. 12:1–3; 15:14; 17:1–14
25 [k]Ex. 4:31 [l]Ex. 3:7

because of the bondage. 24 So God [h]heard their groaning, and God [i]remembered His [j]covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. 25 And God [k]looked upon the children of Israel, and God [l]acknowledged *them.*

Moses at the Burning Bush

CHAPTER 3

1 [a]Ex. 4:18 [b]Ex. 2:16 [c]Ex. 17:6 [d]Ex. 18:5
2 [e]Deut. 33:16
3 [f]Acts 7:31
4 [g]Deut. 33:16
5 [h]Josh. 5:15
6 [i][Matt. 22:32] [j]1 Kin. 19:13
7 [k]Ex. 2:23–25 [l]Ex. 1:11 [m]Ex. 2:25 [l]*pain*
8 [n]Gen. 15:13–16; 46:4; 50:24, 25

3 Now Moses was tending the flock of [a]Jethro his father-in-law, [b]the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to [c]Horeb, [d]the mountain of God. 2 And [e]the Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush *was* not consumed. 3 Then Moses said, "I will now turn aside and see this [f]great sight, why the bush does not burn."

4 So when the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called [g]to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!"

And he said, "Here I am."

5 Then He said, "Do not draw near this place. [h]Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand *is* holy ground." 6 Moreover He said, "[i]I *am* the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for [j]he was afraid to look upon God.

7 And the LORD said: [k]"I have surely seen the oppression of My people who *are* in Egypt, and have heard their cry [l]because of their taskmasters, [m]for I know their [l]sorrows. 8 So [n]I have come

■ **3:1 desert.** An uncultivated area but capable of sustaining grazing. According to 34:3 and Num. 10:11, the desert of Sinai sustained Israel's flocks for a year. Horeb and Sinai are terms that possibly distinguish Horeb as an entire range from Mt. Sinai (19:18, 20; cf. Deut. 4:15).

mountain of God. This term describes the mountain as a sanctuary, a designation that anticipates ch. 19. Moses is now eighty years old (7:7) and has been in Midian forty years.

■ **3:2 Angel of the LORD.** This was a theophany, a visible manifestation of God (v. 4). See note on Gen. 16:7.

fire. A frequent biblical symbol for God's presence (13:21; 19:18; Gen. 3:24; 1 Kin. 18:24, 38); it particularly expresses His all-consuming holiness (Heb. 12:29).

■ **3:3 bush.** A real bush was illumined with supernatural fire. God is transcendent, but reveals Himself in the bush to call Moses.

■ **3:5 holy.** The spot was made sacred by God's presence. See 19:23; 24:2. The question of how to approach the holy God is central for Exodus. It is resolved in the symbolism of the tabernacle.

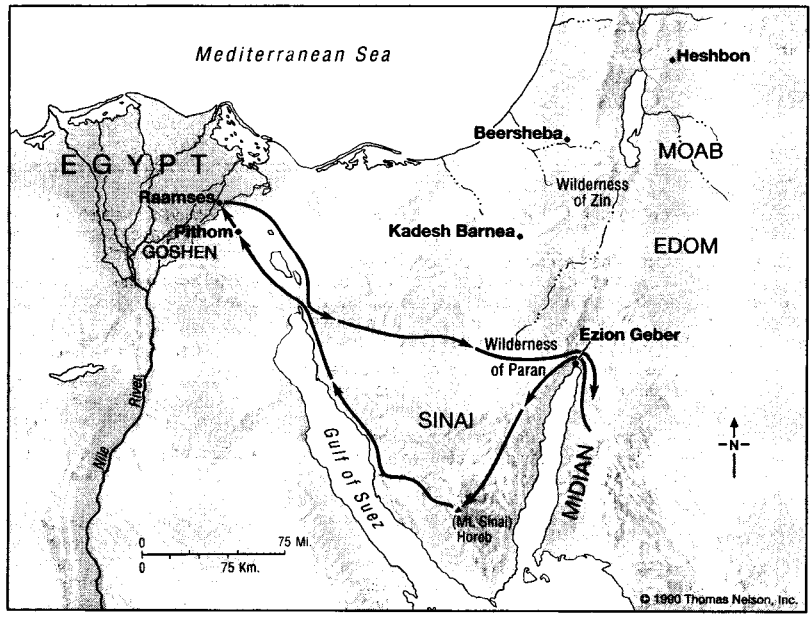
■ **3:6 God of your father.** God remembers His covenant promises to the patriarchs and identifies Himself as their God. See Gen. 26:24; 28:13; 31:42; 32:9.

■ **3:8 Canaanites.** The inhabitants of the Syro-Palestinian coastland.

Hittites. See note on Gen. 10:15.

Amorites. See note on Gen. 10:16.

Moses' Flight and Return to Egypt. Being sought by Pharaoh for the slaying of an Egyptian, Moses fled through the Sinai desert and settled in the land of Midian. In the vicinity of Horeb, located by tradition in the Sinaitic Peninsula, Moses was tending the flocks of Jethro, his father-in-law. Here God revealed Himself in the burning bush and called Moses to go back to Egypt. Returning to Jethro in Midian, Moses gathered his family and began the journey to Egypt. He met Aaron at Horeb, and together they returned to Pharaoh's court in Raamses.



down to [o]deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land [p]to a good and large land, to a land [q]flowing with milk and honey, to the place of [r]the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites. [9] Now therefore, behold, [s]the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the [t]oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. [10] [u]Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."

[11] But Moses said to God, [v]"Who *am* I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?"

[12] So He said, [w]"I will certainly be with you. And this *shall be* a [x]sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain."

[13] Then Moses said to God, "Indeed, *when* I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What *is* His name?' what shall I say to them?"

[14] And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, [y]'I AM has sent me to you.' " [15] Moreover God said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This *is* [z]My name forever, and this *is* My memorial to all generations.' [16] Go and [a]gather the elders of Israel together, and say to them, 'The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared to me, saying, [b]"I have surely visited you and *seen* what is done to you in Egypt; [17] and I have said [c]I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, to a land flowing with milk and honey." ' [18] Then [d]they will heed your voice; and [e]you shall come, you and the elders of Israel, to the king of Egypt; and you shall say to him, 'The LORD God of the Hebrews has [f]met with us; and now, please, let us go three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.' [19] But I am sure that the king of Egypt [g]will not let you go, no, not even by a mighty hand. [20] So I will [h]stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with [i]all My wonders which I will do in its midst; and [j]after that he will let you go. [21] And [k]I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall be, when you go, that you shall not go empty-handed. [22] [l]But every woman shall ask of her neighbor, namely, of her who dwells near her house, [m]articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing; and you shall put *them* on your sons and on your daughters. So [n]you shall plunder the Egyptians."

8 [o]Ex. 6:6–8; 12:51 [p]Deut. 1:25; 8:7–9 [q]Jer. 11:5 [r]Gen. 15:19–21

9 [s]Ex. 2:23 [t]Ex. 1:11, 13, 14

10 [u][Mic. 6:4]

11 [v]Ex. 4:10; 6:12

12 [w]Gen. 31:3 [x]Ex. 4:8; 19:3

14 [y][John 8:24, 28, 58]

15 [z]Ps. 30:4; 97:12; 102:12; 135:13

16 [a]Ex. 4:29 [b]Ex. 2:25; 4:31

17 [c]Gen. 15:13–21; 46:4; 50:24, 25

18 [d]Ex. 4:31 [e]Ex. 5:1, 3 [f]Num. 23:3, 4, 15, 16

19 [g]Ex. 5:2

20 [h]Ex. 6:6; 9:15 [i]Deut. 6:22 [j]Ex. 11:1; 12:31–37

21 [k]Ex. 11:3; 12:36

22 [l]Ex. 11:2 [m]Ex. 33:6 [n]Job 27:17

Miraculous Signs for Pharaoh

4 Then Moses answered and said, "But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, 'The LORD has not appeared to you.' "

Perizzites. Possibly the peasantry located in central Palestine (Josh. 17:15).

Hivites. See note on Gen. 10:17.

Jebusites. The original occupants of Jerusalem, later dispossessed by David (Gen. 10:16 note; 2 Sam. 5:6–9).

■ **3:10 Pharaoh.** Probably Thutmose III (1504–1450 B.C.). See Introduction: Date and Occasion.

■ **3:11 Who am I.** Moses felt inadequate for the task, as did Gideon (Judg. 6:15) and Jeremiah (Jer. 1:6). This is the first of his four objections (v. 14; 4:1, 10).

■ **3:12 sign.** God's call will be confirmed by His future action. God will be with Moses to bring him back to worship ("serve God") on this same mountain. Having served the Egyptians, Israel will become God's servants in covenant worship.

■ **3:13 What is His name.** Moses anticipates a question from the people that is also his own. Already Moses seeks God's revelation of Himself. If God's deliverance was to be fully appreciated and assured, He who would be worshiped at this mountain must be known (33:12 and note). A personal name was not merely a form of address but a description of character and personality (Ps. 9:10; cf. 1 Sam. 25:25).

■ **3:14 I AM WHO I AM.** The Lord is not defined or determined by any other than Himself. As the self-existent One, His promise is sure; He will reveal Himself in His saving deeds.

■ **3:15 The LORD.** The Hebrew is *Yahweh,* probably derived from the Hebrew verb for "to be" (thus meaning "he is" or "he will be"). The corresponding first person is *'ehyeh,* "I am." Note the parallels: "I Am has sent me" (v. 14) and "The LORD [Yahweh] . . . has sent me" (v. 15). See theological note " 'This Is My Name': God's Self-disclosure."

My memorial to all generations. Yahweh, the divine name particularly associated with God's covenant relationship with Israel, was henceforth to be used in worship. English versions of the Old Testament usually render this Hebrew name as "the LORD," following the practice of the New Testament, and of the Jews in the intertestamental period. The Jews thought the name too holy to pronounce, and when reading the text substituted *'adonay* ("my Lord"). The vowel signs for *'adonay* were later added to the Hebrew consonants of *Yahweh* as a pronunciation reminder, and this hybrid form was rendered "Jehovah" by William Tyndale's English translation (A.D. 1530). In the New Testament, LORD (Yahweh) is applied to Jesus (Rom. 10:13, citing Joel 2:32).

■ **3:16 elders.** Lit. "bearded ones." These are family heads who would represent Israel. They will be assembled to hear of God's faithfulness (4:30, 31).

■ **3:17 milk and honey.** The usual biblical description of Canaan.

■ **3:18 three days' journey.** Possibly an expression for a short period of time.

■ **3:20 wonders.** This mention of extraordinary deeds anticipates the plagues (7:14—12:30).

■ **3:21 not go empty-handed.** As He promised (Gen. 15:14), God would see that their years of bondage were recompensed.

■ **4:1–9** See "Miracles" at 1 Kin. 17:22.

CHAPTER 4

5 [a]Ex. 4:31; 19:9 [b]Gen. 28:13; 48:15; Ex. 3:6, 15

6 [c]Num. 12:10; 2 Kin. 5:27

7 [d]Num. 12:13–15; Deut. 32:39

2 So the LORD said to him, "What *is* that in your hand?"
He said, "A rod."
3 And He said, "Cast it on the ground." So he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it. 4 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Reach out your hand and take *it* by the tail" (and he reached out his hand and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand), 5 "that they may [a]believe that the [b]LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you."
6 Furthermore the LORD said to him, "Now put your hand in your bosom." And he put his hand in his bosom, and when he took it out, behold, his hand *was* leprous, [c]like snow. 7 And He said, "Put your hand in your bosom again." So he put his hand in his bosom again, and drew it out of his bosom, and behold, [d]it was restored like his *other* flesh. 8 "Then it will be, if they do

"This Is My Name": God's Self-disclosure

In the modern world, a person's name can be merely an identifying label; it does not reveal anything about the person. Biblical names, however, have their background in the widespread tradition that the personal name gives significant information about the one who bears it. The Old Testament constantly celebrates God's making His name known to Israel, and the psalms again and again direct praise to God's name (Ps. 8:1; 113:1–3; 145:1, 2; 148:5, 13). "Name" here means God Himself as He has revealed Himself by word and deed. At the heart of this self-revelation is the name by which He authorized Israel to invoke him—commonly rendered "the LORD" (for the Hebrew *Yahweh*, as modern scholars pronounce it; or "Jehovah," as it is sometimes written).

God declared this name to Moses when He spoke to him out of the bush that burned steadily without being burned up. God first identified Himself as the God who had committed Himself in covenant to the patriarchs (Gen. 17:1–14); then, when Moses asked Him what he could tell the people who asked what God's name was (the ancients assumed that prayer would only be heard if its addressee was named correctly), God answered first "I AM WHO I AM," then shortened it to "I AM." The name "Yahweh" ("the LORD") sounds like "I am" in Hebrew, and God finally called Himself "the LORD God of your fathers" (Ex. 3:15, 16). The name in all its forms proclaims His eternal, self-sustaining, self-determining, sovereign reality—the supernatural mode of existence that the sign of the burning bush had signified (Ex. 3:2). The bush that was not consumed was God's illustration of His own inexhaustible life. In designating "Yahweh" as "My name forever" (Ex. 3:15), God indicated that His people should always think of Him as the living, reigning, powerful King that the burning bush showed Him to be.

Later Moses asked to see God's "glory." In reply, God proclaimed "the name": "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty" (Ex. 34:6, 7). At the burning bush, God had addressed the question of the manner of His existence. Here, He answered the question, How can we describe His actions? This foundational announcement of His moral character is often echoed in later passages of Scripture (Neh. 9:17; Ps. 86:15; Joel 2:13; Jon. 4:2). These revelations are all part of His "name," His disclosure of His nature, for which He is to be revered and glorified forever.

In the New Testament, the words and acts of Jesus, the incarnate Son of God, are a full revelation of the mind, character, and purposes of God the Father (John 14:9–11; cf. 1:18). "Hallowed be Your name" in the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:9) expresses the desire that God will be revered and praised as the splendor of His entire self-disclosure deserves. □

■ **4:1 But suppose.** Moses' third objection (3:11 note). Israel must be persuaded. This would be the difficult task, but God had purposed to see that Israel would believe (3:18). Nothing is said about convincing Pharaoh (cf. 6:12).

■ **4:2 hand.** The Hebrew word for "hand" often connotes power. Against the oppressing hand of Egypt (3:8; 14:30; 18:10), the mighty hand of God will be stretched out (3:19–20). God will use the hand of Moses to show His power. Moses' staff will become the staff of God (v. 20).

■ **4:6 leprous.** Not what is today called Hansen's Disease, but a common skin disease of the time. God shows His power to judge and to heal.

not believe you, nor heed the message of the [e]first sign, that they may believe the message of the latter sign. [9] And it shall be, if they do not believe even these two signs, or listen to your voice, that you shall take water from [1]the river and pour *it* on the dry *land.* [f]The water which you take from the river will become blood on the dry *land.*"

[10] Then Moses said to the LORD, "O my Lord, I *am* not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but [g]I *am* slow of speech and [2]slow of tongue."

[11] So the LORD said to him, [h]"Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? *Have* not I, the LORD? [12] Now therefore, go, and I will be [i]with your mouth and teach you what you shall say."

[13] But he said, "O my Lord, [j]please send by the hand of whomever *else* You may send."

[14] So [k]the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and He said: "Is not Aaron the Levite your [l]brother? I know that he can speak well. And look, [m]he is also coming out to meet you. When he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. [15] Now [n]you shall speak to him and [o]put the words in his mouth. And I will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and [p]I will teach you what you shall do. [16] So he shall be your spokesman to the people. And he himself shall be as a mouth for you, and [q]you shall be to him as God. [17] And you shall take this rod in your hand, with which you shall do the signs."

Moses Goes to Egypt

[18] So Moses went and returned to [r]Jethro his father-in-law, and said to him, "Please let me go and return to my brethren who *are* in Egypt, and see whether they are still alive."

And Jethro said to Moses, [s]"Go in peace."

[19] Now the LORD said to Moses in [t]Midian, "Go, return to [u]Egypt; for [v]all the men who sought your life are dead." [20] Then Moses [w]took his wife and his sons and set them on a donkey, and he returned to the land of Egypt. And Moses took [x]the rod of God in his hand.

[21] And the LORD said to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt, see that you do all those [y]wonders before Pharaoh which I have put in your hand. But [z]I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go. [22] Then you shall [a]say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD: [b]"Israel *is* My son, [c]My firstborn. [23] So I say to you, let My son go that he may serve Me. But if you refuse to let him go, indeed [d]I will kill your son, your firstborn." ' "

[24] And it came to pass on the way, at the [e]encampment, that the LORD [f]met him and sought to [g]kill him. [25] Then [h]Zipporah took [i]a sharp stone and cut off the foreskin of her son and [3]cast *it* at [4]*Moses'* feet, and said, "Surely you *are* a husband of blood to me!" [26] So He let him go. Then she said, "*You are* a [5]husband of blood!"—because of the circumcision.

[27] And the LORD said to Aaron, "Go into the wilderness [j]to meet Moses." So he went and met him on [k]the mountain of God, and kissed him. [28] So Moses [l]told Aaron all the words of the LORD

8 [e]Ex. 7:6–13

9 [f]Ex. 7:19, 20 [1]The Nile

10 [g]Ex. 3:11; 4:1; 6:12 [2]*heavy* or *dull of tongue;* cannot talk very well

11 [h]Ps. 94:9; 146:8

12 [i]Is. 50:4

13 [j]Jon. 1:3

14 [k]Num. 11:1, 33 [l]Num. 26:59 [m]Ex. 4:27

15 [n]Ex. 4:12, 30; 7:1, 2 [o]Num. 23:5, 12 [p]Deut. 5:31

16 [q]Ex. 7:1, 2

18 [r]Ex. 2:21; 3:1; 4:18 [s]Judg. 18:6

19 [t]Ex. 3:1; 18:1 [u]Gen. 46:3, 6 [v]Ex. 2:15, 23

20 [w]Ex. 18:2–5 [x]Num. 20:8, 9, 11

21 [y]Ex. 3:20; 11:9, 10 [z]John 12:40

22 [a]Ex. 5:1 [b]Hos. 11:1 [c]Jer. 31:9

23 [d]Ex. 11:5; 12:29

24 [e]Gen. 42:27 [f]Num. 22:22 [g]Gen. 17:14

25 [h]Ex. 2:21; 18:2 [i]Josh. 5:2, 3 [3]Lit. *made it touch* [4]Lit. *his*

26 [5]*bridegroom*

27 [j]Ex. 4:14 [k]Ex. 3:1; 18:5; 24:13

28 [l]Ex. 4:15, 16

■ **4:9 the river.** See text note. This specific sign was not needed by Moses and was not used, though its force appears in the first plague (7:20). The Nile was revered as a god and was the source of Egypt's life. This sign would have meant the potential death of the Nile and thus of Egypt.

■ **4:10 slow of speech.** The fourth objection. Moses is not fluent, but God equips whom He calls (Jer. 1:9). God was teaching Moses and his successors to depend on Him for their gifts. If God made the mouth (v. 11), He can enable man to use it.

■ **4:13–16** Left without excuse, Moses still tries to decline his commission. But the Lord has already summoned his brother Aaron. The relation of Moses to Aaron sheds light on the nature of prophecy: Aaron will be a mouthpiece for Moses just as a prophet is for God (v. 16). See also 6:30; 7:1.

■ **4:17 signs.** The plagues are again anticipated (3:20 note). These miraculous deeds will be performed with this same staff.

■ **4:19 all the men . . . dead.** Including the Egyptian Pharaoh (Introduction: Date and Occasion).

■ **4:20 sons.** Gershom (2:22) and Eliezer (18:4).

■ **4:21 I will harden his heart.** The Lord's hardening of Pharaoh's heart is a sovereign divine judgment on Pharaoh, who is also said to harden his own heart (8:15; Rom. 9:17, 18). God purposes to display His power over the stubborn hostility of the king so that His people might know that He is the Lord their deliverer (6:6–8).

■ **4:22 Israel is My son, My firstborn.** The Lord puts His claim upon Israel as His firstborn son, His beloved, a title ultimately realized in Jesus Christ (Mark 1:11). God's claim is the reason for God's deliverance and the covenant to be sealed at Sinai ("that he may serve Me," v. 23). This claim issues in God's threat against Pharaoh's firstborn (i.e., the firstborn of Egypt).

■ **4:24 kill him.** The Hebrew is unclear. These words echo v. 23 and may refer to Moses' firstborn, Gershom, not to Moses. Alternatively, the attack may have been directed against Moses himself, perhaps because of his failure to circumcise his son.

■ **4:25 sharp stone.** Presumably, a ceremonial instrument. Zipporah intervenes to circumcise her son.

Moses' feet. Lit. "his feet"; the word "Moses' " is supplied (cf. 24 note). The connection of Zipporah's action with the "husband of blood" is uncertain. Circumcision, no less than the Passover, requires the shedding of blood for cleansing and protection. The Lord, the God of the fathers, requires the sign He gave to Abraham (Gen. 17:10). Other examples of divine confrontation at the beginning of a mission include Gen. 32:24 and Josh. 5:13.

■ **4:27 to meet Moses.** In Hebrew narrative style, this statement takes the reader back in time to explain Aaron's meeting with Moses before Moses left Sinai.

who had sent him, and all the [m]signs which He had commanded him. 29 Then Moses and Aaron [n]went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel. 30 [o]And Aaron spoke all the words which the LORD had spoken to Moses. Then he did the signs in the sight of the people. 31 So the people [p]believed; and when they heard that the LORD had [q]visited the children of Israel and that He [r]had looked on their affliction, then [s]they bowed their heads and worshiped.

First Encounter with Pharaoh

5 Afterward Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharaoh, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Let My people go, that they may [1]hold [a]a feast to Me in the wilderness.' "

2 And Pharaoh said, [b]"Who *is* the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, [c]nor will I let Israel go."

3 So they said, [d]"The God of the Hebrews has [e]met with us. Please, let us go three days' journey into the desert and sacrifice to the LORD our God, lest He fall upon us with [f]pestilence or with the sword."

4 Then the king of Egypt said to them, "Moses and Aaron, why do you take the people from their work? Get *back* to your [g]labor." 5 And Pharaoh said, "Look, the people of the land *are* [h]many now, and you make them rest from their labor!"

6 So the same day Pharaoh commanded the [i]taskmasters of the people and their officers, saying, 7 "You shall no longer give the people straw to make [j]brick as before. Let them go and gather straw for themselves. 8 And you shall lay on them the quota of bricks which they made before. You shall not reduce it. For they are idle; therefore they cry out, saying, 'Let us go *and* sacrifice to our God.' 9 Let more work be laid on the men, that they may labor in it, and let them not regard false words."

10 And the taskmasters of the people and their officers went out and spoke to the people, saying, "Thus says Pharaoh: 'I will not give you straw. 11 Go, get yourselves straw where you can find it; yet none of your work will be reduced.' " 12 So the people were scattered abroad throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble instead of straw. 13 And the taskmasters forced *them* to hurry, saying, "Fulfill your work, *your* daily quota, as when there was straw." 14 Also the [k]officers of the children of Israel, whom Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them, were [l]beaten *and* were asked, "Why have you not fulfilled your task in making brick both yesterday and today, as before?"

15 Then the officers of the children of Israel came and cried out to Pharaoh, saying, "Why are you dealing thus with your servants? 16 There is no straw given to your servants, and they say to us, 'Make brick!' And indeed your servants *are* beaten, but the fault *is* in your *own* people."

17 But he said, "You *are* idle! Idle! Therefore you say, 'Let us go *and* sacrifice to the LORD.' 18 Therefore go now *and* work; for no straw shall be given you, yet you shall deliver the quota of bricks." 19 And the officers of the children of Israel saw *that* they *were* in trouble after it was said, "You shall not reduce *any* bricks from your daily quota."

20 Then, as they came out from Pharaoh, they met Moses and Aaron who stood there to meet them. 21 [m]And they said to them, "Let the LORD look on you and judge, because you have made [2]us abhorrent in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants, to put a sword in their hand to kill us."

28 [m]Ex. 4:8, 9
29 [n]Ex. 3:16; 12:21
30 [o]Ex. 4:15, 16
31 [p]Ex. 3:18; 4:8, 9; 19:9 [q]Gen. 50:24; Ex. 3:16 [r]Ex. 2:25; 3:7 [s]Gen. 24:26; Ex. 12:27; 1 Chr. 29:20

CHAPTER 5

1 [a]Ex. 3:18; 7:16; 10:9 [1]*keep a pilgrim-feast*
2 [b]2 Kin. 18:35; 2 Chr. 32:14; Job 21:15 [c]Ex. 3:19; 7:14
3 [d]Ex. 3:18; 7:16 [e]Ex. 4:24; Num. 23:3 [f]Ex. 9:15
4 [g]Ex. 1:11; 2:11; 6:6
5 [h]Ex. 1:7, 9
6 [i]Ex. 1:11; 3:7; 5:10, 13, 14
7 [j]Ex. 1:14
14 [k]Ex. 5:6 [l]Is. 10:24
21 [m]Ex. 6:9; 14:11; 15:24; 16:2 [2]Lit. *our scent to stink before*

■ **4:30 Aaron.** Aaron will now function as Moses' spokesman (vv. 13–16 note).

■ **4:31 believed.** Israel now believes as God had said that they would (3:18). They worship, praising God for His care.

■ **5:1 Let My people go.** The confrontation with Pharaoh begins with God's demand. The people are His, not Pharaoh's.

hold a feast. See text note. This was a pilgrimage to a shrine where a festival would be held (3:18).

■ **5:2 Who is the LORD.** Pharaoh's question will be answered by the plagues.

■ **5:3** After presenting God's demand, Moses and Aaron seek to reason with Pharaoh. The Lord is the God of the Hebrews; the distance would be only a three-day journey; disobedience to God's command could seriously reduce Pharaoh's work force.

■ **5:5 people of the land.** Later this term came to mean the responsible landowners in Israel (2 Kin. 11:18–20; Jer. 34:19), but here it means peasant workers attached to the land.

■ **5:7 straw.** The bricks of the time were much larger than modern bricks; they were molded of Nile mud with straw to increase their strength.

■ **5:10 taskmasters.** The slave masters and section leaders pass the order down through the ranks. During the events of vv. 6–19 Moses and Aaron do not intervene. This crushing reply of Pharaoh shows his human supremacy.

■ **5:15–21** Israel appeals to Pharaoh for relief and complains to Moses and Aaron about their plight.

■ **5:21 the LORD . . . judge.** Not for the last time, leaders of Israel would curse Moses for obeying the command of the Lord.

Israel's Deliverance Assured

22 So Moses returned to the LORD and said, "Lord, why have You brought trouble on this people? Why *is* it You have sent me? 23 For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done evil to this people; neither have You delivered Your people at all."

6 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh. For [a]with a strong hand he will let them go, and with a strong hand [b]he will drive them out of his land."

2 And God spoke to Moses and said to him: "I *am* [1]the LORD. 3 [c]I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as [d]God Almighty, but *by* My name [e]LORD[2] I was not known to them. 4 [f]I have also [3]established My covenant with them, [g]to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their [4]pilgrimage, [h]in which they were [5]strangers. 5 And [i]I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel whom the Egyptians keep in bondage, and I have remembered My covenant. 6 Therefore say to the children of Israel: [j]'I *am* the LORD; [k]I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, I will [l]rescue you from their bondage, and I will redeem you with [6]an outstretched arm and with great judgments. 7 I will [m]take you as My people, and [n]I will be your God. Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD your God who brings you out [o]from under the burdens of the Egyptians. 8 And I will bring you into the land which I [p]swore[7] to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you *as* a heritage: I *am* the LORD.' " 9 So Moses spoke thus to the children of Israel; [q]but they did not heed Moses, because of [r]anguish[8] of spirit and cruel bondage.

10 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 11 "Go in, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the children of Israel go out of his land."

12 And Moses spoke before the LORD, saying, "The children of Israel have not heeded me. How then shall Pharaoh heed me, for [s]I *am* [9]of uncircumcised lips?"

13 Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, and gave them a [t]command[1] for the children of Israel and for Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt.

The Family of Moses and Aaron

14 These *are* the heads of their fathers' houses: [u]The sons of Reuben, the firstborn of Israel, *were* Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi. These are the families of Reuben. 15 [v]And the sons of Simeon *were* [2]Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanite woman. These *are* the families of Simeon. 16 These *are* the names of [w]the sons of Levi according to their generations: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. And the years of the life of Levi *were* one hundred

13 [t]Deut. 31:14 [1]*charge* **14** [u]Gen. 46:9 **15** [v]Gen. 46:10 [2]*Nemuel,* Num. 26:12 **16** [w]Gen. 46:11

CHAPTER 6

1 [a]Ex. 3:19 [b]Ex. 12:31, 33, 39

2 [1]Heb. *YHWH*

3 [c]Gen. 17:1; 35:9; 48:3 [d]Gen. 28:3; 35:11 [e]Ps. 68:4; 83:18 [2]Heb. *YHWH,* traditionally *Jehovah*

4 [f]Gen. 12:7; 15:18; 17:4, 7, 8; 26:3; 28:4, 13 [g]Lev. 25:23 [h]Gen. 28:4 [3]*made* or *ratified* [4]*sojournings* [5]*sojourners,* temporary residents

5 [i]Ex. 2:24

6 [j]Deut. 6:12 [k]Deut. 26:8 [l]Deut. 7:8 [6]Mighty power

7 [m]2 Sam. 7:24 [n]Ex. 29:45, 46 [o]Ex. 5:4, 5

8 [p]Gen. 15:18; 26:3 [7]*promised,* lit. *lifted up My hand*

9 [q]Ex. 5:21 [r]Ex. 2:23 [8]Lit. *shortness*

12 [s]Jer. 1:6 [9]One who does not speak well

■ **5:22 Moses . . . said.** As a mediator, Moses speaks God's Word to the people, and pleads the plight of the people to God. This pattern is repeated throughout Exodus. God's reply (ch. 6) gives assurance that the hopeless situation will be the occasion for His mighty action.

■ **6:1 drive.** The Lord's power will more than prevail. Pharaoh will not only let them go, he will *drive* Israel out.

■ **6:2–8** Note the repeated use of the revelation (authority) formula, "I am the LORD," in these verses (vv. 2, 6–8). The use of God's covenant name underscores the surety of His covenant promises and faithfulness (3:15 and notes).

■ **6:3 God Almighty.** God had revealed Himself to the patriarchs as God Almighty (Hebrew *El-Shaddai,* Gen. 17:1; 28:3; 35:11). In Genesis, however, the name *Yahweh* is much more commonly used, perhaps only to identify the God of the fathers as Yahweh, the LORD. Nevertheless, while some passages seem to imply the use of *Yahweh* from the earliest time (Gen. 4:26; 9:26; 12:8; 24:12), it is not found as an element in personal names (*Ja-* or *Jo-*) before the time of Moses, with the possible exception of Jochebed (6:20). In any case, God identifies Himself as El Shaddai, the God of the patriarchs, but reveals Himself afresh as Yahweh, the covenant God who claims and redeems Israel according to His gracious purpose.

■ **6:4 My covenant.** Yahweh is also El Shaddai, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. His covenant promise to these earlier patriarchs is His purpose for Israel. The continuity of the covenant is affirmed in vv. 4, 5.

■ **6:5 remembered My covenant.** When used of God, "remembered" means that He is prepared to act on His promises, not simply recall them. This narrative affirms the inclusion in the Abrahamic covenant of all Israel.

■ **6:6 bring you out . . . redeem.** God's reply to Moses' complaint of 5:22–23. This is the central core of the section, a solemn assurance of redemption and of covenant reaffirmation.

redeem. This term normally refers to the restoration of rights to a disadvantaged family member by the payment of a price or a ransom; such redemption was normally effected by the next of kin (Lev. 25:25; cf. Ruth 4). Israel, as Yahweh's son (4:22), was redeemed from Egypt to be God's own people. Rescue, redemption, and covenant relation are the keys to the passage. The heart of the covenant is God's claim on His people and the reciprocal claim that He allows them to make on Him.

■ **6:7 My people.** This anticipates 19:5–6.

■ **6:9–13** God renews His demand for Israel's release. The discouragement of Israel and Moses shows that the deliverance must be God's work completely. In spite of God's renewed promise, the people will not hear, and even Moses has difficulty believing that his mission will be effective.

■ **6:14–27** In this transitional section, Moses and Aaron are formally identified, and the story of their work is reviewed and resumed in preparation for the description of the ten plagues. The formal identification is accomplished through a genealogy that begins with Reuben, Israel's oldest son, then proceeds to Simeon, the second son, and finally to Levi. Levi's genealogy establishes the link to Moses and Aaron. Among the Levites Amram is singled out, then Aaron and Moses. The subsequent names constitute the priestly line for Israel (Num. 25:10–13; 26:57–62). For Korah, see Num. 16:1–35.

and thirty-seven. 17 [x]The sons of Gershon *were* Libni and Shimi according to their families. 18 And [y]the sons of Kohath *were* Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. And the years of the life of Kohath *were* one hundred and thirty-three. 19 [z]The sons of Merari *were* Mahli and Mushi. These *are* the families of Levi according to their generations.

20 Now [a]Amram took for himself [b]Jochebed, his father's sister, as wife; and she bore him [c]Aaron and Moses. And the years of the life of Amram *were* one hundred and thirty-seven. 21 [d]The sons of Izhar *were* Korah, Nepheg, and Zichri. 22 And [e]the sons of Uzziel *were* Mishael, Elzaphan, and Zithri. 23 Aaron took to himself Elisheba, daughter of [f]Amminadab, sister of Nahshon, as wife; and she bore him [g]Nadab, Abihu, [h]Eleazar, and Ithamar. 24 And [i]the sons of Korah *were* Assir, Elkanah, and Abiasaph. These are the families of the Korahites. 25 Eleazar, Aaron's son, took for himself one of the daughters of Putiel as wife; and [j]she bore him Phinehas. These *are* the heads of the fathers' houses of the Levites according to their families.

26 These *are the same* Aaron and Moses to whom the LORD said, "Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their [k]armies."[3] 27 These *are* the ones who spoke to Pharaoh king of Egypt, [l]to bring out the children of Israel from Egypt. These *are the same* Moses and Aaron.

Aaron Is Moses' Spokesman

28 And it came to pass, on the day the LORD spoke to Moses in the land of Egypt, 29 that the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "I *am* the LORD. [m]Speak to Pharaoh king of Egypt all that I say to you."

30 But Moses said before the LORD, "Behold, [n]I *am* [4]of uncircumcised lips, and how shall Pharaoh heed me?"

7 So the LORD said to Moses: "See, I have made you [a]*as* God to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother shall be [b]your prophet. 2 You [c]shall speak all that I command you. And Aaron your brother shall tell Pharaoh to send the children of Israel out of his land. 3 And [d]I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and [e]multiply My [f]signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt. 4 But [g]Pharaoh will not heed you, so [h]that I may lay My hand on Egypt and bring My [i]armies *and* My people, the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt [j]by great judgments. 5 And the Egyptians [j]shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I [k]stretch out My hand on Egypt and [l]bring out the children of Israel from among them."

6 Then Moses and Aaron [m]did *so;* just as the LORD commanded them, so they did. 7 And Moses *was* [n]eighty years old and [o]Aaron eighty-three years old when they spoke to Pharaoh.

Aaron's Miraculous Rod

8 Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 9 "When Pharaoh speaks to you, saying, [p]'Show a miracle for yourselves,' then you shall say to Aaron, [q]'Take your rod and cast *it* before Pharaoh, *and* let it become a serpent.' " 10 So Moses and Aaron went in to Pharaoh, and they did so, just [r]as the LORD commanded. And Aaron cast down his rod before Pharaoh and before his servants, and it [s]became a serpent.

17 [x]1 Chr. 6:17
18 [y]1 Chr. 6:2, 18
19 [z]1 Chr. 6:19; 23:21
20 [a]Ex. 2:1, 2 [b]Num. 26:59 [c]Num. 26:59
21 [d]1 Chr. 6:37, 38
22 [e]Lev. 10:4
23 [f]Ruth 4:19, 20 [g]Lev. 10:1 [h]Ex. 28:1
24 [i]Num. 26:11
25 [j]Num. 25:7, 11
26 [k]Ex. 7:4; 12:17, 51 [3]*hosts*
27 [l]Ps. 77:20
29 [m]Ex. 6:11; 7:2
30 [n]Ex. 4:10; 6:12 [4]One who does not speak well

CHAPTER 7

1 [a]Ex. 4:16 [b]Ex. 4:15, 16
2 [c]Ex. 4:15
3 [d]Ex. 4:21; 9:12 [e]Ex. 11:9 [f]Deut. 4:34
4 [g]Ex. 3:19, 20; 10:1; 11:9 [h]Ex. 9:14 [i]Ex. 6:6; 12:12 [j]*hosts*
5 [j]Ps. 9:16 [k]Ex. 9:15 [l]Ex. 3:20; 6:6; 12:51
6 [m]Ex. 7:2
7 [n]Deut. 29:5; 31:2; 34:7 [o]Num. 33:39
9 [p]Is. 7:11 [q]Ex. 4:2, 3, 17
10 [r]Ex. 7:9 [s]Ex. 4:3

■ **6:20** The record of the marriage of Amram to his paternal aunt would be most unlikely in a fictitious genealogy. Such a marriage was later forbidden in the Mosaic Law (Lev. 18:12). Three women are mentioned in tracing the line: Jochebed, Elisheba, and a daughter of Putiel.

■ **6:23 bore him.** No descendant of Moses is named, but those of Aaron continue for the next two generations to establish priestly succession from Aaron through his successor Eleazar. The genealogy spans only four generations for the sojourn in Egypt and is clearly selective (Gen. 5:3–32 note).

■ **6:25 Putiel . . . Phinehas.** Like "Merari" in v. 16, these are probably Egyptian names, which occurred frequently among Levites.

■ **6:28—7:7** This section reviews and restates Moses' commission after his hesitation (6:12, 30). The real demand now appears: not a temporary absence, but a definitive exodus from Egypt.

■ **7:1 prophet.** The origin of the Hebrew term for "prophet" is disputed, but perhaps it means "one who is called." The function of Aaron in relation to Moses demonstrates the function of a true prophet in relation to God (4:13–16 note).

■ **7:2–5** The theological explanation of the plagues is given in the first five plagues. Pharaoh's obstinacy is self-motivated (7:22; 8:15, 32; 9:7). God is said to have hardened Pharaoh's heart in plagues seven, eight, and nine (10:1, 20, 27). In the sixth plague, the obstinacy stems from Pharaoh himself (9:35), but God also claims to have hardened Pharaoh (10:1). God's purpose is not simply judgment on Pharaoh, but manifesting His power to save His people so that His name might be proclaimed in all the earth (9:16; Rom. 9:17, 18).

■ **7:3 heart.** The Hebrew is a broad term describing the center of feeling, thinking, and willing. The Lord causes Pharaoh's heart to become hard (lit. "difficult"), not by implanting evil in it, but by giving it over to its evil direction without restraint (Rom. 1:24, 26, 28). Paul contrasts hardening with showing mercy (Rom. 9:18). God's judgment on Pharaoh issued in mercy to Israel, Egypt, and the nations as they saw His power to save.

will . . . multiply. Or, "in order that I might multiply."

My signs and My wonders. These are the nine plagues and ten miracles of 7:9—11:10, culminating in the death plague of 12:29–30.

■ **7:9 serpent.** The Hebrew word here (different from the word for "serpent" in 4:3) often refers to a sea reptile or river monster (Gen. 1:21; Ezek. 29:3; 32:2), but can refer to any large reptile. A large snake is probably in view.

11 But Pharaoh also [t]called the wise men and [u]the [2]sorcerers; so the magicians of Egypt, they also [v]did in like manner with their [3]enchantments. 12 For every man threw down his rod, and they became serpents. But Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods. 13 And Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, as the LORD had said.

The First Plague: Waters Become Blood

14 So the LORD said to Moses: [w]"Pharaoh's heart *is* hard; he refuses to let the people go. 15 Go to Pharaoh in the morning, when he goes out to the [x]water, and you shall stand by the river's bank to meet him; and [y]the rod which was turned to a serpent you shall take in your hand. 16 And you shall say to him, [z]'The LORD God of the Hebrews has sent me to you, saying, "Let My people go, [a]that they may [4]serve Me in the wilderness"; but indeed, until now you would not hear! 17 Thus says the LORD: "By this [b]you shall know that I *am* the LORD. Behold, I will strike the waters which *are* in the river with the rod that *is* in my hand, and [c]they shall be turned [d]to blood. 18 And the fish that *are* in the river shall die, the river shall stink, and the Egyptians will [e]loathe[5] to drink the water of the river." ' "

19 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Take your rod and [f]stretch out your hand

11 [t]Gen. 41:8 [u]2 Tim. 3:8 [v]Ex. 7:22; 8:7, 18 [2]*soothsayers* [3]*secret arts*

14 [w]Ex. 8:15; 10:1, 20, 27

15 [x]Ex. 2:5; 8:20 [y]Ex. 4:2, 3; 7:10

16 [z]Ex. 3:13, 18; 4:22 [a]Ex. 3:12, 18; 4:23; 5:1, 3; 8:1 [4]*worship*

17 [b]Ex. 5:2; 7:5; 10:2 [c]Ex. 4:9; 7:20 [d]Rev. 11:6; 16:4, 6

18 [e]Ex. 7:24 [5]*be weary of drinking*

19 [f]Ex. 8:5, 6, 16; 9:22; 10:12, 21; 14:21, 26

■ **7:11 magicians.** The Hebrew term indicates an engraver or writer, a learned person. The Egyptian magicians relied on the familiar tricks of magic, Aaron on divine power. See note on 9:11.

■ **7:13 as the LORD had said.** See 4:21; 7:3, 22; 8:15, 19.

■ **7:14—10:29** A theory of natural causes for the plagues does not do justice to the clear statements of the text (7:17; 9:5 notes). A particular order would be essential for an explanation of the plagues as normal events associated with the overflow of the Nile, but neither the narrative here, nor the plague lists in Ps. 78:44–51; 105:28–36, suggest such an order.

The plagues are arranged in three groups of three (7:14—8:19; 8:20—9:12; 9:13—10:29); the tenth is climactic. The first two plagues in each sequence are preceded by a divine warning, but the third comes unheralded. In the first plague of each series Moses contacts Pharaoh in the morning; no time indication is given for the other two. The plagues are the answer to Pharaoh's challenge (5:2; cf. 7:5), and the description of the first plague of each triplet announces the theme of the triplet and gives its purpose. In plagues one through three the theme is the absolute superiority of the Lord (and His agents) over Pharaoh and the Egyptian gods (7:16, 17).

■ **7:14 hard.** Pharaoh's hardening was the necessary prerequisite for the display of divine power (4:21 note).

■ **7:17** The use of the rod with the first three and the last three plagues shows that Yahweh is the real author.

I will strike. Aaron will strike (vv. 19, 20), but the Lord will perform the miracle. The striking is by God's hand, by His rod. The deed of Aaron is owned by God no less than the word that God gave him through Moses.

blood. In Hebrew the word never denotes its red color, but always blood as a substance. The red clay that comes down at the time of flooding from the Ethiopian highlands (coloring the Nile water) is not in view.

■ **7:19 waters.** All the natural waters of Egypt were involved, including the natural arms of the Nile, the irrigation canals, and the pools formed by river flooding. The Nile River, the source of Egypt's agricultural life, was revered as a god. Beginning with this plague the Lord's superiority over the Egyptian pantheon of gods is demonstrated.

The Ten Plagues on Egypt (7:3, 5)

The Plague	The Effect
1. Blood (7:20)	Pharaoh hardened (7:22)
2. Frogs (8:6)	Pharaoh begs relief, promises freedom (8:8), but is hardened (8:15)
3. Lice (8:17)	Pharaoh hardened (8:19)
4. Flies (8:24)	Pharaoh bargains (8:28), but is hardened (8:32)
5. Livestock diseased (9:6)	Pharaoh hardened (9:7)
6. Boils (9:10)	Pharaoh hardened (9:12)
7. Hail (9:23)	Pharaoh begs relief (9:27), promises freedom (9:28), but is hardened (9:35)
8. Locusts (10:13)	Pharaoh bargains (10:11), begs relief (10:17), but is hardened (10:20)
9. Darkness (10:22)	Pharaoh bargains (10:24), but is hardened (10:27)
10. Death of firstborn (12:29)	Pharaoh and Egyptians beg Israel to leave Egypt (12:31–33)

God multiplied His signs and wonders in the land of Egypt that the Egyptians might know that He is the LORD.

over the waters of Egypt, over their streams, over their rivers, over their ponds, and over all their pools of water, that they may become blood. And there shall be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in *buckets of* wood and *pitchers of* stone.' " 20 And Moses and Aaron did so, just as the LORD commanded. So he [g]lifted up the rod and struck the waters that *were* in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants. And all the [h]waters that *were* in the river were turned to blood. 21 The fish that *were* in the river died, the river stank, and the Egyptians [i]could not drink the water of the river. So there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt.

22 [j]Then the magicians of Egypt did [k]so with their [6]enchantments; and Pharaoh's heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, [l]as the LORD had said. 23 And Pharaoh turned and went into his house. Neither was his heart moved by this. 24 So all the Egyptians dug all around the river for water to drink, because they could not drink the water of the river. 25 And seven days passed after the LORD had struck the river.

The Second Plague: Frogs

8 And the LORD spoke to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD: "Let My people go, [a]that they may serve Me. 2 But if you [b]refuse to let *them* go, behold, I will smite all your territory with [c]frogs. 3 So the river shall bring forth frogs abundantly, which shall go up and come into your house, into your [d]bedroom, on your bed, into the houses of your servants, on your people, into your ovens, and into your kneading bowls. 4 And the frogs shall come up on you, on your people, and on all your servants." ' "

5 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, "Say to Aaron, [e]'Stretch out your hand with your rod over the streams, over the rivers, and over the ponds, and cause frogs to come up on the land of Egypt.' " 6 So Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt, and [f]the frogs came up and covered the land of Egypt. 7 [g]And the magicians did so with their [l]enchantments, and brought up frogs on the land of Egypt.

8 Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, [h]"Entreat[2] the LORD that He may take away the frogs from me and from my people; and I will let the people [i]go, that they may sacrifice to the LORD."

9 And Moses said to Pharaoh, "Accept the honor of saying when I shall intercede for you, for your servants, and for your people, to destroy the frogs from you and your houses, *that* they may remain in the river only."

10 So he said, "Tomorrow." And he said, "*Let it be* according to your word, that you may know that [j]*there is* no one like the LORD our God. 11 And the frogs shall depart from you, from your houses, from your servants, and from your people. They shall remain in the river only."

12 Then Moses and Aaron went out from Pharaoh. And Moses [k]cried out to the LORD concerning the frogs which He had brought against Pharaoh. 13 So the LORD did according to the word of Moses. And the frogs died out of the houses, out of the courtyards, and out of the fields. 14 They gathered them together in heaps, and the land stank. 15 But when Pharaoh saw that there was [l]relief, [m]he hardened his heart and did not heed them, as the LORD had said.

The Third Plague: Lice

16 So the LORD said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Stretch out your rod, and strike the dust of the land, so that it may become [3]lice throughout all the land of Egypt.' " 17 And they did so. For Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod and struck the dust of the earth, and [n]it became lice on man and beast. All the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt.

18 Now [o]the magicians so worked with their [4]enchantments to bring forth lice, but they [p]could not. So there were lice on man and beast. 19 Then the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This *is* [q]the[5] finger of God." But Pharaoh's [r]heart grew hard, and he did not heed them, just as the LORD had said.

20 [g]Ex. 17:5 [h]Ps. 78:44; 105:29, 30

21 [i]Ex. 7:18

22 [j]Ex. 7:11 [k]Ex. 8:7 [l]Ex. 3:19; 7:3 [6]*secret arts*

CHAPTER 8

1 [a]Ex. 3:12, 18; 4:23; 5:1, 3

2 [b]Ex. 7:14; 9:2 [c]Rev. 16:13

3 [d]Ps. 105:30

5 [e]Ex. 7:19

6 [f]Ps. 78:45; 105:30

7 [g]Ex. 7:11, 22 [l]*secret arts*

8 [h]Ex. 8:28; 9:28; 10:17; Num. 21:7; 1 Kin. 13:6 [i]Ex. 10:8, 24 [2]*Pray to, Make supplication to*

10 [j]Ex. 9:14; 15:11; Deut. 4:35, 39; 33:26; 2 Sam. 7:22; 1 Chr. 17:20; Ps. 86:8; Is. 46:9; [Jer. 10:6, 7]

12 [k]Ex. 8:30; 9:33; 10:18; 32:11; [James 5:16–18]

15 [l]Eccl. 8:11 [m]Ex. 7:14, 22; 9:34; 1 Sam. 6:6

16 [3]*gnats*

17 [n]Ps. 105:31

18 [o]Ex. 7:11, 12; 8:7 [p]Dan. 5:8; 2 Tim. 3:8, 9 [4]*secret arts*

19 [q]Ex. 7:5; 10:7; 1 Sam. 6:3, 9; Ps. 8:3; Luke 11:20 [r]Ex. 8:15 [5]*An act of God*

- **7:22 magicians.** See notes on 7:11; 9:11.
- **8:3 river shall bring forth frogs.** Frogs represented the primordial goddess Heket in Egyptian religious life. Here the allegedly divine river and frogs bring misery on the Egyptians—another demonstration of the Lord's supremacy.
- **8:7 brought up frogs.** The magicians can only add to the distress (9:11 note).
- **8:8 I will let the people go.** Pharaoh, personally affected, made his first concession. The plagues were not intended, however, to soften his resistance (7:3), but to magnify Yahweh's power and cause Israel to believe. Pharaoh was tough and shrewd (vv. 15, 25).
- **8:16–19** God raises His rod against the dust, turning it into a plague of gnats (v. 16 text note).
- **8:19 finger of God.** The magicians now admit that a divine intervention was directly involved (cf. 31:18; Ps. 8:3), but Pharaoh was not persuaded.

The Fourth Plague: Flies

20 And the LORD said to Moses, [s]"Rise early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh as he comes out to the water. Then say to him, 'Thus says the LORD: [t]"Let My people go, that they may serve Me. 21 Or else, if you will not let My people go, behold, I will send swarms *of flies* on you and your servants, on your people and into your houses. The houses of the Egyptians shall be full of swarms *of flies*, and also the ground on which they *stand*. 22 And in that day [u]I will set apart the land of [v]Goshen, in which My people dwell, that no swarms *of flies* shall be there, in order that you may [w]know that I *am* the LORD in the midst of the [x]land. 23 I will [6]make a difference between My people and your people. Tomorrow this [y]sign shall be."' " 24 And the LORD did so. [z]Thick swarms *of flies* came into the house of Pharaoh and his servants' houses, and into all the land of Egypt. The land was corrupted because of the swarms *of flies*.

25 Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, "Go, sacrifice to your God in the land."

26 And Moses said, "It is not right to do so, for we would be sacrificing [a]the abomination of the Egyptians to the LORD our God. If we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, then will they not [7]stone us? 27 We will go [three days'] journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to the LORD our God as [b]He will command us."

28 So Pharaoh said, "I will let you go, that you may sacrifice to the LORD your God in the wilderness; only you shall not go very far away. [c]Intercede for me."

29 Then Moses said, "Indeed I am going out from you, and I will entreat the LORD, that the swarms *of flies* may depart tomorrow from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people. But let Pharaoh not [d]deal deceitfully anymore in not letting the people go to sacrifice to the LORD."

30 So Moses went out from Pharaoh and [e]entreated the LORD. 31 And the LORD did according to the word of Moses; He removed the swarms *of flies* from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people. Not one remained. 32 But Pharaoh [f]hardened his heart at this time also, neither would he let the people go.

The Fifth Plague: Livestock Diseased

9 Then the LORD said to Moses, [a]"Go in to Pharaoh and tell him, 'Thus says the LORD God of the Hebrews: "Let My people go, that they may [b]serve Me. 2 For if you [c]refuse to let *them* go, and still hold them, 3 behold, the [d]hand of the LORD will be on your cattle in the field, on the horses, on the donkeys, on the camels, on the oxen, and on the sheep—a very severe [e]pestilence. 4 And the LORD will make a difference between the livestock of Israel and the livestock of Egypt. So nothing shall die of all *that* belongs to the children of Israel." ' " 5 Then the LORD appointed a set time, saying, 'Tomorrow the LORD will do this thing in the land.' "

6 So the LORD did this thing on the next day, and [f]all the livestock of Egypt died; but of the livestock of the children of Israel, not one died. 7 Then Pharaoh sent, and indeed, not even one of the livestock of the Israelites was dead. But the heart of Pharaoh became hard, and he did not let the people go.

20 [s]Ex. 7:15; 9:13
[t]Ex. 3:18; 4:23; 5:1, 3; 8:1

22 [u]Ex. 9:4, 6, 26; 10:23; 11:6, 7; 12:13 [v]Gen. 50:8 [w]Ex. 7:5, 17; 10:2; 14:4 [x]Ex. 9:29

23 [y]Ex. 4:8 [6]Lit. *set a ransom*, Ex. 9:4; 11:7

24 [z]Ps. 78:45; 105:31

26 [a]Gen. 43:32; 46:34; [Deut. 7:25, 26; 12:31] [7]Put us to death; by stoning

27 [b]Ex. 3:18; 5:3 [c]Ex. 3:12

28 [c]Ex. 8:8, 15, 29, 32; 9:28; 1 Kin. 13:6

29 [d]Ex. 8:8, 15

30 [e]Ex. 8:12

32 [f]Ex. 4:21; 8:8, 15; Ps. 52:2

CHAPTER 9

1 [a]Ex. 4:23; 8:1 [b]Ex. 7:16

2 [c]Ex. 8:2

3 [d]Ex. 7:4; 1 Sam. 5:6; Ps. 39:10; Acts 13:11 [e]Ex. 8:22

4 [f]Ex. 9:19, 20, 25; Ps. 78:48, 50

7 [g]Ex. 7:14; 8:32

■ **8:20 water.** This first plague of the second sequence again finds Pharaoh at the Nile (cf. 7:15).

■ **8:21 swarms.** The Hebrew word occurs only here and at Ps. 78:45; 105:31.

■ **8:23 make a difference.** See text note. In the second set of three plagues God distinguishes between Goshen and the rest of Egypt. He shows His favor toward His own people. Pharaoh later investigates this (9:7).

■ **8:25** During the swarms of flies, Pharaoh offers to negotiate by agreeing to less than the Lord demands. Moses regularly refuses to compromise: he will neither worship in the land nor go less than a three days' journey (v. 28); neither will he leave behind the women and children (10:9–11) nor leave the flocks and herds (10:24). At last after Pharaoh repeatedly broke faith, God's liberation is total. Israel not only goes out to worship at Sinai but leaves Egypt for Canaan.

■ **8:26 abomination.** Egyptians deified the animals customarily sacrificed by the Israelites.

■ **9:3 horses.** The horse was brought into Egypt by the Hyksos [illegible] sporadically used during this period (cf. Gen. 12:16), widespread use of the camel in Egypt only came much later. Perhaps camels [illegible] from Arabia and elsewhere are referred to here.

■ **9:5 at a set time.** The plague has [illegible] coincidence. The biblical account gives no room for naturalistic explanation (such as an epidemic [illegible] from dead frogs).

Tomorrow. The day [illegible] that God provided time for [illegible] repentance [illegible] all the Egyptian livestock in a place of shelter (cf. vv. 18–19). For all the Egyptian livestock [illegible] succumbed to this plague (vv. 9, 19).

■ **9:6 all the livestock.** Since the next plague [illegible] affects livestock also, this phrase must designate either [illegible] kinds of livestock or all the livestock in the field (v. 3 note; cf. vv. 18–19).

■ **9:7** See 8:23 and note.

9 [h]Rev. 16:2
10 [i]Deut. 28:27
11 [j][Ex. 8:18, 19] [k]Job 2:7
12 [l]Ex. 7:13 [m]Ex. 4:21
13 [n]Ex. 8:20 [o]Ex. 9:1
14 [p]Ex. 8:10
15 [q]Ex. 3:20; 7:5 [r]Ex. 5:3
16 [s][Rom. 9:17, 18] [t]Ex. 7:4, 5; 10:1; 11:9; 14:17 [u]1 Kin. 8:43
20 [v][Prov. 13:13] [w]Ex. 8:19; 10:7
22 [x]Rev. 16:21
23 [y]Josh. 10:11
25 [z]Ps. 78:47, 48; 105:32, 33
26 [a]Ex. 8:22, 23; 9:4, 6; 10:23; 11:7; 12:13
27 [b]Ex. 9:8 [c]Ex. 9:34; 10:16, 17 [d]2 Chr. 12:6
28 [e]Ex. 8:8, 28; 10:17 [f]Ex. 8:25; 10:8, 24 [g]*Pray to, Make supplication to* [h]*Lit. voices of God or sounderol God*
29 [i]Is. 1:15 [j]Ps. 24:1
30 [k][Is. 26:10]

The Sixth Plague: Boils

8 So the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Take for yourselves handfuls of ashes from a furnace, and let Moses scatter it toward the heavens in the sight of Pharaoh. 9 And it will become fine dust in all the land of Egypt, and it will cause [h]boils that break out in sores on man and beast throughout all the land of Egypt." 10 Then they took ashes from the furnace and stood before Pharaoh, and Moses scattered *them* toward heaven. And *they* caused [i]boils that break out in sores on man and beast. 11 And the [j]magicians could not stand before Moses because of the [k]boils, for the boils were on the magicians and on all the Egyptians. 12 But the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh; and he [l]did not heed them, just [m]as the LORD had spoken to Moses.

The Seventh Plague: Hail

13 Then the LORD said to Moses, [n]"Rise early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh, and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD God of the Hebrews: "Let My people go, that they may [o]serve Me, 14 for at this time I will send all My plagues to your very heart, and on your servants and on your people, [p]that you may know that *there is* none like Me in all the earth. 15 Now if I had [q]stretched out My hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, then you would have been cut off from the earth. 16 But indeed for [r]this *purpose* I have raised you up, that I may [s]show My power *in* you, and that My [t]name may be declared in all the earth. 17 As yet you exalt yourself against My people in that you will not let them go. 18 Behold, tomorrow about this time I will cause very heavy hail to rain down, such as has not been in Egypt since its founding until now. 19 Therefore send now *and* gather your livestock and all that you have in the field, for the hail shall come down on every man and every animal which is found in the field and is not brought home; and they shall die."' "

20 He who [v]feared the word of the LORD among the [w]servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his livestock flee to the houses. 21 But he who did not regard the word of the LORD left his servants and his livestock in the field.

22 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be [x]hail in all the land of Egypt—on man, on beast, and on every herb of the field, throughout the land of Egypt." 23 And Moses stretched out his rod toward heaven; and [y]the LORD sent thunder and hail, and fire darted to the ground. And the LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt. 24 So there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, so very heavy that there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation. 25 And the [z]hail struck throughout the whole land of Egypt, all that *was* in the field, both man and beast; and the hail struck every herb of the field and broke every tree of the field. 26 [a]Only in the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel *were*, there was no hail.

27 And Pharaoh sent and [b]called for Moses and Aaron, and said to them, [c]"I have sinned this time. [d]The LORD *is* righteous, and my people and I *are* wicked. 28 [e]Entreat[g] the LORD, that there may be no *more* [h]mighty thundering and hail, for *it is* enough. I will let you [f]go, and you shall stay no longer."

29 So Moses said to him, "As soon as I have gone out of the city, I will [i]spread out my hands to the LORD; the thunder will cease, and there will be no more hail, that you may know that the [j]earth *is* the LORD's. 30 But as for you and your servants, [k]I know that you will not yet fear the LORD God."

■ **9:8 handfuls.** This was done before Pharaoh to underscore that the event was supernatural.

■ **9:11 magicians.** The defeat of the magicians was clear from the start, when Aaron's staff became serpent swallowed up the magicians' they produced (7:12). They were able to imitate turning water to blood and producing frogs, but they could only add to, and not reverse, these plagues (7:22; 8:7). When they could not imitate the production of lice, they told Pharaoh the plagues were divine judgments, not magic (8:18, 19). Finally, the magicians are struck with boils and retreat in discomfort and disgrace (9:11).

■ **9:14** These plagues (lit. "blows" or "strokes") show the power of God's hand in smiting Egypt (3:20; 7:25; 12:13). The last three plagues fall when the staff of the Lord is stretched out toward heaven, earth, and heaven (9:22; 10:13, 21).

■ **9:15, 16** God's judgments are tempered by mercy. He withholds total destruction so that the Egyptians might know His power and repent (v. 15). Further, God's judgments against Pharaoh will cause God's name to be proclaimed to the nations.

■ **9:20, 21** Some Egyptians learned to fear God's word (10:7).

■ **9:23 thunder.** Lit. "voices." This was no earthly hailstorm as the thunderous "voice" of God (signifying His sovereignty over all creation) spoke in judgment (Ps. 29:3–9).

■ **9:23 broke every tree.** See Ps. 29:5.

■ **9:27 I have sinned.** Pharaoh confesses his guilt for the first time, but the phrase "this time" points to the superficiality of his confession. Though not believing him, Moses nevertheless shows God's power over the earth by stopping the hail.

31 Now the flax and the barley were struck, [j]for the barley *was* in the head and the flax *was* in bud, 32 But the wheat and the spelt were not struck, for they *are* [3]late crops.

33 So Moses went out of the city from Pharaoh and [k]spread out his hands to the LORD; then the thunder and the hail ceased, and the rain was not poured on the earth. 34 And when Pharaoh saw that the rain, the hail, and the thunder had ceased, he sinned yet more; and he hardened his heart, he and his servants. 35 So [l]the heart of Pharaoh was hard; neither would he let the children of Israel go, as the LORD had spoken by Moses.

The Eighth Plague: Locusts

10 Now the LORD said to Moses, "Go in to Pharaoh; [a]for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his servants, [b]that I may show these signs of Mine before him, 2 and that [c]you may tell in the hearing of your son and your son's son the mighty things I have done in Egypt, and My signs which I have done among them, that you may [d]know that I *am* the LORD."

3 So Moses and Aaron came in to Pharaoh and said to him, "Thus says the LORD God of the Hebrews: 'How long will you refuse to [e]humble yourself before Me? Let My people go, that they may [f]serve Me. 4 Or else, if you refuse to let My people go, behold, tomorrow I will bring [g]locusts into your territory. 5 And they shall cover the face of the earth, so that no one will be able to see the earth; and [h]they shall eat the residue of what is left, which remains to you from the hail, and they shall eat every tree which grows up for you out of the field. 6 They shall [i]fill your houses, the houses of all your servants, and the houses of all the Egyptians—which neither your fathers nor your fathers' fathers have seen, since the day that they were on the earth to this day.'" And he turned and went out from Pharaoh.

7 Then Pharaoh's [j]servants said to him, "How long shall this man be [k]a snare to us? Let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God. Do you not yet know that Egypt is destroyed?"

8 So Moses and Aaron were brought again to Pharaoh, and he said to them, "Go, serve the LORD your God. Who *are* the ones that are going?"

9 And Moses said, "We will go with our young and our old; with our sons and our daughters, with our flocks and our herds we will go, for [l]we must hold a feast to the LORD."

10 Then he said to them, "The LORD had better be with you when I let you and your little ones go! Beware, for evil is ahead of you. 11 Not so! Go now, you *who are* men, and serve the LORD, for that is what you desired." And they were driven [m]out from Pharaoh's presence.

12 Then the LORD said to Moses, [n]"Stretch out your hand over the land of Egypt for the locusts, that they may come upon the land of Egypt, and [o]eat every herb of the land—all that the hail has left." 13 So Moses stretched out his rod over the land of Egypt, and the LORD brought an east wind on the land all that day and all *that* night. When it was morning, the east wind brought the locusts. 14 And [p]the locusts went up over all the land of Egypt and rested on all the territory of Egypt. *They were* very severe; [q]previously there had been no such locusts as they, nor shall there be such after them. 15 For they [r]covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they [s]ate every herb of the land and all the fruit of the trees which the hail had left. So there remained nothing green on the trees or on the plants of the field throughout all the land of Egypt.

16 Then Pharaoh called [t]for Moses and Aaron in haste, and said, [u]"I have sinned against the LORD your God and against you. 17 Now therefore, please forgive my sin only this once, and [v]entreat[t] the LORD your God, that He may take away from me this death only." 18 So he [w]went out from Pharaoh and entreated the LORD. 19 And the LORD turned a very strong west wind, which took the locusts away and blew them [x]into the Red Sea. There remained not one locust in all the territory of Egypt. 20 But the LORD [y]hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the children of Israel go.

31 [j]Ruth 1:22; 2:23
32 [3]Lit. *darkened*
33 [k]Ex. 8:12; 9:29
35 [l]Ex. 4:21

CHAPTER 10

1 [a]Ex. 4:21; 7:14; 9:12; 10:27; 11:10; 14:4; Josh. 11:20; John 12:40; Rom. 9:18 [b]Ex. 7:4; 9:16
2 [c]Ex. 12:26; 13:8, 14; Deut. 4:9; 6:7; 11:19; Ps. 44:1; 78:5; Joel 1:3 [d]Ex. 7:5, 17; 8:22
3 [e][1 Kin. 21:29; 2 Chr. 34:27]; Job 42:6; [James 4:10; 1 Pet. 5:6] [f]Ex. 4:23; 8:1; 9:1
4 [g]Prov. 30:27; Rev. 9:3
5 [h]Ex. 9:32; Joel 1:4; 2:25
6 [i]Ex. 8:3, 21
7 [j]Ex. 7:5; 8:19; 9:20; 12:33 [k]Ex. 23:33; Josh. 23:13; 1 Sam. 18:21; Eccl. 7:26; 1 Cor. 7:35
9 [l]Ex. 5:1; 7:16
11 [m]Ex. 10:28
12 [n]Ex. 7:19 [o]Ex. 10:5, 15
14 [p]Deut. 28:38; Ps. 78:46; 105:34 [q]Joel 1:4, 7; 2:1–11; Rev. 9:3
15 [r]Ex. 10:5 [s]Ps. 105:35
16 [t]Ex. 8:8 [u]Ex. 9:27
17 [v]Ex. 8:8, 28; 9:28; 1 Kin. 13:6 [t]*make supplication to*
18 [w]Ex. 8:30
19 [x]Joel 2:20
20 [y]Ex. 4:21; 10:1; 11:10

■ **9:31, 32 in bud . . . late crops.** See text note on v. 32. This information seems to set the time in January-February, a time when hailstorms are frequent in Egypt. Flax was in the bud in January, and barley was in the ear at that time; it would have been harvested in February.

■ **10:1 hardened his heart.** Pharaoh's will is reversed four times in this one narrative: vv. 8, 10–11, 16–17, 20.

■ **10:2 tell . . . the mighty things.** A clear statement of the divine plan involving Pharaoh. The plagues were to teach Israel and to leave an indelible impression on their posterity (Deut. 6:20–25).

■ **10:9 feast.** Moses demands that Israel's permission to worship be unqualified and total. See note on 8:25.

■ **10:11 you who are men.** Adult males only were necessary at Israel's later festivals (23:17; 34:23). Note the sarcasm of v. 10.

■ **10:12–15** Goshen was presumably exempt.

■ **10:16 in haste.** The speed of Pharaoh's action and his confession of sin underscore Egypt's peril. Severe famine threatened ("there remained nothing green," v. 15).

21 [z]Ex. 9:22 [2]Lit. *that one may feel the darkness*

22 [a]Ps. 105:28 [b]Ex. 3:18

23 [c]Ex. 8:22, 23

24 [d]Ex. 8:8, 25; 10:8 [e]Ex. 10:10

25 [3]Lit. *into our hands*

26 [f]Ex. 10:9

27 [g]Ex. 4:21; 10:1, 20; 14:4, 8

28 [h]Ex. 10:11

29 [i]Heb. 11:27

CHAPTER 11

1 [a]Ex. 12:31, 33, 39 [b]Ex. 6:1; 12:39

2 [c]Ex. 3:22; 12:35, 36

3 [d]Ex. 3:21; 12:36 [e]Deut. 34:10–12

4 [f]Ex. 12:12, 23, 29

5 [g]Ex. 4:23; 12:12, 29

6 [h]Ex. 12:30 [i]Ex. 10:14

7 [j]Ex. 8:22 [k]Josh. 10:21 [l]*sharpen*

8 [l]Ex. 12:31–33 [m]Heb. 11:27

9 [n]Ex. 3:19; 7:4; 10:1 [o]Ex. 7:3; 9:16

10 [p]Rom. 2:5

CHAPTER 12

2 [a]Deut. 16:1

3 [b]Josh. 4:19

5 [c][1 Pet. 1:19] [1]*perfect* or *sound* [2]*a year old*

The Ninth Plague: Darkness

21 Then the LORD said to Moses, [z]"Stretch out your hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt, [2]darkness *which* may even be felt." 22 So Moses stretched out his hand toward heaven, and there was [a]thick darkness in all the land of Egypt [b]three days. 23 They did not see one another; nor did anyone rise from his place for three days. [c]But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings.

24 Then Pharaoh called to Moses and [d]said, "Go, serve the LORD; only let your flocks and your herds be kept back. Let your [e]little ones also go with you."

25 But Moses said, "You must also give [3]us sacrifices and burnt offerings, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God. 26 Our [f]livestock also shall go with us; not a hoof shall be left behind. For we must take some of them to serve the LORD our God, and even we do not know with what we must serve the LORD until we arrive there."

27 But the LORD [g]hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let them go. 28 Then Pharaoh said to him, [h]"Get away from me! Take heed to yourself and see my face no more! For in the day you see my face you shall die!"

29 So Moses said, "You have spoken well. [i]I will never see your face again."

Death of the Firstborn Announced

11 And the LORD said to Moses, "I will bring one more plague on Pharaoh and on Egypt. [a]Afterward he will let you go from here. [b]When he lets *you* go, he will surely drive you out of here altogether. 2 Speak now in the hearing of the people, and let every man ask from his neighbor and every woman from her neighbor, [c]articles of silver and articles of gold." 3 [d]And the LORD gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover the man [e]Moses *was* very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants and in the sight of the people.

4 Then Moses said, "Thus says the LORD: [f]'About midnight I will go out into the midst of Egypt; 5 and [g]all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the female servant who *is* behind the handmill, and all the firstborn of the animals. 6 [h]Then there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, [i]such as was not like it *before,* nor shall be like it again. 7 [j]But against none of the children of Israel [k]shall a dog [l]move its tongue, against man or beast, that you may know that the LORD does make a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.' 8 And [l]all these your servants shall come down to me and bow down to me, saying, 'Get out, and all the people who follow you!' After that I will go out." [m]Then he went out from Pharaoh in great anger.

9 But the LORD said to Moses, [n]"Pharaoh will not heed you, so that [o]My wonders may be multiplied in the land of Egypt." 10 So Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh; [p]and the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the children of Israel go out of his land.

The Passover Instituted

12 Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, 2 [a]"This month *shall be* your beginning of months; it *shall be* the first month of the year to you. 3 Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying: 'On the [b]tenth of this month every man shall take for himself a lamb, according to the house of *his* father, a lamb for a household. 4 And if the household is too small for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next to his house take *it* according to the number of the persons; according to each man's need you shall make your count for the lamb. 5 Your lamb shall be [c]without [1]blemish, a male [2]of the first year. You may take *it* from the sheep

■ **10:22 thick darkness.** This darkness was clearly more than a blinding sandstorm or an eclipse of the sun. It was an unnatural darkness, like that associated with the day of the Lord (Is. 8:22; 58:10; Joel 2:2; Amos 5:20; Zeph. 1:15; cf. Deut. 28:29). The Egyptians typically celebrated the morning light when the sun god Ra was thought to overcome the dreaded serpent of hostile chaos and darkness. This supernatural darkness was further demonstration of the Lord's superiority over the Egyptian pantheon (7:19; 8:3 notes).

■ **11:1 plague.** A different Hebrew word for "plague" (cf. 9:14 note) is used to emphasize the climactic act of divine judgment—the death of the firstborn.

■ **11:3 gave . . . favor.** All four references to this event (3:21–22; 11:2–3; 12:35–36; Ps. 105:36–38) emphasize that Egypt gave gladly because of the Lord's intervention.

■ **11:5 handmill.** The grinding of corn was menial work done by slaves and prisoners of war.

■ **12:2** The first month of the Hebrew year was Abib (March/April). This verse appears to report the institution of this new religious calendar, in commemoration of the Exodus. An autumn calendar is attested at 23:16; 34:22, though these passages may reflect an unofficial agricultural calendar. In the later Babylonian (spring) calendar the month of Abib is called Nisan (Neh. 2:1; Esth. 3:7).

■ **12:5 without blemish.** See text note. Like the sacrifices of Israel (e.g., Lev. 1:3), the Passover lamb was to be without flaw. The idea of substitution is evident—the lamb died in place of the firstborn. Jesus, whose death was prefigured by the Passover sacrifice, is called the Lamb of God (John 1:29, 36; 1 Pet. 1:19; Rev. 5:6).

or from the goats. 6 Now you shall keep it until the [d]fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. 7 And they shall take *some* of the blood and put *it* on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it. 8 Then they shall eat the flesh on that [e]night; [f]roasted in fire, with [g]unleavened bread *and* with bitter *herbs* they shall eat it. 9 [h]Do not eat it raw, nor boiled at all with water, but [h]roasted in fire—its head with its legs and its entrails. 10 [i]You shall let none of it remain until morning, and what remains of it until morning you shall burn with fire. 11 And thus you shall eat it: [j]*with* a belt on your waist, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. So you shall eat it in haste. *It is* the LORD'S Passover.

12 'For I [k]will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and [l]against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: [m]I *am* the LORD. 13 Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you *are*. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy *you* when I strike the land of Egypt.

14 'So this day shall be to you [n]a memorial; and you shall keep it as a [o]feast to the LORD throughout your generations. You shall keep it as a feast [p]by an everlasting ordinance. 15 [q]Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, [r]that [s]person shall be [t]cut off from Israel. 16 On the first day *there shall be* [u]a holy convocation, and on the seventh day there shall be a holy convocation for you. No manner of work shall be done on them; but *that* which everyone must eat—that only may be prepared by you. 17 So you shall observe *the Feast of* Unleavened Bread, for [v]on this same day I will have brought your [w]armies [x]out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day throughout your generations as an everlasting ordinance. 18 [y]In the first *month,* on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. 19 For [w]seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses, since whoever eats what is leavened, that same person shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether *he is* a stranger or a native of the land. 20 You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your dwellings you shall eat unleavened bread.' "

21 Then [x]Moses called for all the [y]elders of Israel and said to them, [z]"Pick out and take lambs for yourselves according to your families, and kill the Passover *lamb.* 22 [a]And you shall take a bunch of hyssop, dip *it* in the blood that *is* in the basin, and [b]strike the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that *is* in the basin. And none of you shall go out of the door of his house until morning. 23 [c]For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians; and when He sees the [d]blood on the [7]lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and [e]not allow [f]the destroyer to come into your houses to strike *you.* 24 And you shall [g]observe this thing as an ordinance for you and your sons forever. 25 It will come to pass when you come to the land which the LORD will give you, [h]just as He promised, that you shall keep this service. 26 [i]And it

6 [d]Lev. 23:5
8 [e]Num. 9:12 [f]Deut. 16:7 [g]1 Cor. 5:8
9 [h]Deut. 16:7
10 [i]Ex. 16:19; 23:18; 34:25
11 [j]Ex. 12:13, 21, 27, 43 [3]Made ready to travel
12 [k]Ex. 11:4, 5 [l]Num. 33:4 [m]Ex. 6:2
14 [n]Ex. 13:9 [o]Lev. 23:4, 5 [p]Ex. 12:17, 24; 13:10
15 [q]Lev. 23:6 [r]Gen. 17:14 [4]*soul* [5]Put to death
16 [s]Lev. 23:2, 7, 8
17 [t]Ex. 12:14; 13:3, 10 [u]Num. 33:1 [6]*hosts*
18 [v]Lev. 23:5–8
19 [w]Ex. 12:15; 23:15; 34:18
21 [x][Heb. 11:28] [y]Ex. 3:16 [z]Num. 9:4
22 [a]Heb. 11:28 [b]Ex. 12:7
23 [c]Ex. 11:4; 12:12, 13 [d]Ex. 24:8 [e]Rev. 7:3; 9:4 [f]Heb. 11:28 [7]Crosspiece at top of door
24 [g]Ex. 12:14, 17; 13:5, 10
25 [h]Ex. 3:8, 17
26 [i]Ex. 10:2; 13:8, 14, 15

■ **12:6** The slaughter occurred at sunset (Deut. 16:6). The act marked the beginning of the Passover.

■ **12:7 blood.** Blood symbolizes the life of a victim (Lev. 17:11).

■ **12:8, 9** The Passover meal was to be eaten as if in haste—the lamb roasted whole and accompanied by unleavened bread. The bitter herbs recalled the bitter suffering of slavery in Egypt (1:14).

■ **12:11 LORD'S Passover.** The Hebrew word for "Passover" is of uncertain etymology. The meaning "pass over" is attested here and probably in Is. 31:5. Some suggest a connection with the verb meaning "to limp, hobble," and others propose a derivation from an Accadian word meaning "appease."

The Passover observance is the oldest of the Jewish festivals and was celebrated at twilight on the fourteenth day of the first month (12:6) and for the seven succeeding days (fifteenth through twenty-first). Later participants were garbed for travel to celebrate the exit of Israel from Egypt in haste and anxiety. The practice of ritual questions posed by the children during the Passover celebration is a later development rooted in vv. 26, 27.

Provision was later made for a second or minor Passover one month later for members of the community who missed the initial feast (Num. 9:1–14). The New Testament establishes a direct redemptive connection between the Passover and the death of Jesus, the supreme Passover Lamb, who was sacrificed for us (1 Cor. 5:7).

■ **12:12 firstborn.** The firstborn, in whom the hopes of each family were invested, had the right of inheritance. No epidemic or accident could have been so selective.

against all the gods of Egypt . . . judgment. The death of firstborn humans and animals also constituted judgment on the Egyptian pantheon in that many of the sacred animals (which symbolized the gods) were killed. Furthermore, the impotence of Egypt's deities to protect the land's inhabitants was vividly demonstrated to all.

■ **12:15 leaven.** Yeast (or leaven) as a product of the previous year's harvest was regarded as a symbol of corruption. No Israelite sacrifice contained leaven.

■ **12:19 cut off from the congregation of Israel.** See note on Lev. 7:20. Resident aliens and native-born non-Israelites were expected to observe this law.

■ **12:22 hyssop.** Hyssop was a species of marjoram used for purification (Lev. 14:4–6; Num. 19:6,18; Ps. 51:7). The richly textured branches and leaves held enough blood to perform the required act.

■ **12:24** See "The Sacraments" at Matt. 28:19.

■ **12:26 your children say to you.** See note on v. 11. In Jewish Passover celebrations today, the youngest child asks the ritual question and the father then recites the story of the Exodus (cf. 13:8).

shall be, when your children say to you, 'What do you mean by this service?' [27] that you shall say, [j]'It *is* the Passover sacrifice of the LORD, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt when He struck the Egyptians and delivered our households.' " So the people [k]bowed their heads and worshiped. [28] Then the children of Israel went away and [l]did *so;* just as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.

The Tenth Plague: Death of the Firstborn

[29] [m]And it came to pass at midnight that [n]the LORD struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who *was* [s]in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of [o]livestock. [30] So Pharaoh rose in the night, he, all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for *there was* not a house where *there was* not one dead.

The Exodus

[31] Then he [p]called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, "Rise, go out from among my people, [q]both you and the children of Israel. And go, serve the LORD as you have [r]said. [32] [s]Also take your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone; and bless me also."

[33] [t]And the Egyptians [u]urged the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste. For they said, "We *shall* all *be* dead." [34] So the people took their dough before it was leavened, having their kneading bowls bound up in their clothes on their shoulders. [35] Now the children of Israel had done according to the word of Moses, and they had asked from the Egyptians [v]articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing. [36] [w]And the LORD had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they granted them *what they requested.* Thus [x]they plundered the Egyptians.

[37] Then [y]the children of Israel journeyed from [z]Rameses to Succoth, about [a]six hundred thousand men on foot, besides children. [38] A [b]mixed multitude went up with them also, and flocks and herds—a great deal of [c]livestock. [39] And they baked unleavened cakes of the dough which they had brought out of Egypt; for it was not leavened, because [d]they were driven out of Egypt and could not wait, nor had they prepared provisions for themselves.

[40] Now the [g]sojourn of the children of Israel who lived in [f]Egypt *was* [e]four hundred and thirty years. [41] And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years—on that very same day—it came to pass that [f]all the armies of the LORD went out from the land of Egypt. [42] It *is* [g]a [z]night of solemn observance to the LORD for bringing them out of the land of Egypt. This *is* that night of the LORD, a solemn observance for all the children of Israel throughout their generations.

Passover Regulations

[43] And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "This *is* [h]the ordinance of the Passover: No foreigner shall eat it. [44] But every man's servant who is bought for money, when you have [i]circumcised him, then he may eat it. [45] [j]A sojourner and a hired servant shall not eat it. [46] In one house it shall be eaten; you shall not carry any of the flesh outside the house, [k]nor shall you break one of its bones. [47] [l]All the congregation of Israel shall keep it. [48] And [m]when a stranger [3]dwells with you *and wants* to keep the Passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as a native of the land. For no uncircumcised person

27 [j]Ex. 12:11 [k]Ex. 4:31
28 [l][Heb. 11:28]
29 [m]Ex. 11:4, 5 [n]Num. 8:17; 33:4 [o]Ex. 9:6 [s]*in prison*
31 [p]Ex. 10:28, 29 [q]Ex. 8:25; 11:1 [r]Ex. 10:9
32 [s]Ex. 10:9, 26
33 [t]Ex. 10:7 [u]Ps. 105:38
35 [v]Ex. 3:21, 22; 11:2, 3
36 [w]Ex. 3:21 [x]Gen. 15:14
37 [y]Num. 33:3, 5 [z]Gen. 47:11 [a]Ex. 38:26
38 [b]Num. 11:4 [c]Deut. 3:19
39 [d]Ex. 6:1; 11:1; 12:31–33
40 [e]Acts 7:6 [g]Length of the stay [f]Sam., LXX *Egypt and Canaan*
41 [f]Ex. 3:8, 10; 6:6; 7:4
42 [g]Deut. 16:1, 6 [z]*night of vigil*
43 [h]Num. 9:14
44 [i]Gen. 17:12, 13
45 [j]Lev. 22:10
46 [k][John 19:33, 36]
47 [l]Ex. 12:6
48 [m]Num. 9:14 [3]As a resident alien

■ **12:31 Rise, go out . . . serve.** The threefold command underscores Pharaoh's urgency. He admits defeat.

■ **12:32 bless me also.** The blessing sought is presumably to countermand the dreadful curse that had gone through the land.

■ **12:36 given . . . favor.** These actions confirm the statement in 11:3.

■ **12:37 Rameses to Succoth:** See note on 1:11. Succoth cannot be precisely located but must have been in the eastern Delta, possibly at Tell El Maskhutah in the Wadi Tumilat. The coastal routes to Canaan (13:17) were shorter but well-guarded.

six hundred thousand men on foot. Males of military age (v. 41 note; cf. Num. 11:21; 26:51). This number has been thought too large, but four centuries could well produce such numbers (1:7). As is often suggested, the Hebrew word for "thousand" could also be taken as meaning "family" or some subsection of a tribe.

■ **12:38 mixed multitude.** Perhaps persecuted minorities or other slaves came with them, as well as other Semites. Egyptians who had intermarried with the Hebrews, and even God-fearing Egyptians, were doubtless also included (cf. 9:19; 12:48; Is. 56:3).

■ **12:40 four hundred and thirty years.** See Gen. 15:13; Acts 7:6 note.

■ **12:41 armies.** The Hebrew term denotes military organization (v. 37 note).

■ **12:43–49** This added explanation of the Passover regulations, focusing on the restriction of the ceremony to the covenant community, was occasioned by the mention of non-Israelites leaving Egypt with Israel (v. 38). Only circumcised covenant members were eligible to participate.

■ **12:46 In one house.** None of the meat was to be taken outside of the house where non-covenant members could have access to it.

bones. No bones of the animals were to be broken, perhaps as a symbol of covenant unity. As with the Passover lamb, and contrary to Roman custom, no bones of Jesus were broken at His crucifixion (John 19:36; cf. 1 Cor. 5:7).

shall eat it. 49 [n]One law shall be for the native-born and for the stranger who dwells among you."
50 Thus all the children of Israel did; as the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.
51 [o]And it came to pass, on that very same day, that the LORD brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt [p]according to their armies.

The Firstborn Consecrated

13 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 [a]"Consecrate[1] to Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, *both* of man and beast; it is Mine."

The Feast of Unleavened Bread

3 And Moses said to the people: [b]"Remember this day in which you went out of Egypt, out of the house of [2]bondage; for [c]by strength of hand the LORD brought you out of this *place.* [d]No leavened bread shall be eaten. 4 [e]On this day you are going out, in the month Abib. 5 And it shall be, when the LORD [f]brings you into the [g]land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, which He [h]swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, [i]that you shall keep this service in this month. 6 [j]Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day *there shall be* a feast to the LORD. 7 Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days. And [k]no leavened bread shall be seen among you, nor shall leaven be seen among you in all your quarters. 8 And you shall [l]tell your son in that day, saying, '*This is done* because of what the LORD did for me when I came up from Egypt.' 9 It shall be as [m]a sign to you on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the LORD's law may be in your mouth; for with a strong hand the LORD has brought you out of Egypt. 10 [n]You shall therefore keep this [3]ordinance in its season from year to year.

The Law of the Firstborn

11 "And it shall be, when the LORD [o]brings you into the land of the [p]Canaanites, as He swore to you and your fathers, and gives it to you, 12 [q]that you shall [4]set apart to the LORD all that open the womb, that is, every firstborn that comes from an animal which you have; the males *shall be* the LORD's. 13 But [r]every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb; and if you will not redeem *it,* then you shall break its neck. And all the firstborn of man among your sons [s]you shall redeem. 14 [t]So it shall be, when your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What *is* this?' that you shall say to him, [u]'By strength of hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 15 And it came to pass, when Pharaoh was stubborn about letting us go, that [v]the LORD killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of beast. Therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all males that open the womb, but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem.' 16 It shall be as [w]a sign on your hand and as frontlets between your eyes, for by strength of hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt."

The Wilderness Way

17 Then it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God did not lead them *by* way of the land of the Philistines, although that *was* near; for God said, "Lest perhaps the people

49 [n]Num. 15:15, 16
51 [o]Ex. 12:41; 20:2 [p]Ex. 6:26

CHAPTER 13

2 [a]Luke 2:23 [1]*Set apart*
3 [b]Deut. 16:3 [c]Ex. 3:20; 6:1 [d]Ex. 12:8, 19 [2]Lit. *slaves*
4 [e]Ex. 12:2; 23:15; 34:18
5 [f]Ex. 3:8, 17 [g]Gen. 17:8 [h]Ex. 6:8 [i]Ex. 12:25, 26
6 [j]Ex. 12:15–20
7 [k]Ex. 12:19
8 [l]Ex. 10:2; 12:26; 13:14
9 [m]Deut. 6:8; 11:18
10 [n]Ex. 12:14, 24 [3]*regulation*
11 [o]Ex. 13:5 [p]Num. 21:3
12 [q]Lev. 27:26 [4]Lit. *cause to pass over*
13 [r]Ex. 34:20 [s]Num. 3:46, 47; 18:15, 16
14 [t]Deut. 6:20 [u]Ex. 13:3, 9
15 [v]Ex. 12:29
16 [w]Ex. 13:9

■ **13:2 all the firstborn.** Firstborn of humans and cattle were sacred to the Lord. Like the firstfruits of the harvest, the firstborn from the womb represented God's claim on all. The principle is enunciated here and the details are given at 13:12–16; 22:29, 30; 34:19, 20. Jesus was so presented as Mary's firstborn (Luke 2:22–23).

■ **13:8 tell your son.** See note on 12:26.

■ **13:9 sign . . . memorial.** Interpreting this figurative expression literally, Jews later put brief passages of the Law (13:1–10, 11–16; Deut. 6:4–9; 11:13–21) in small boxes and attached them to the left arm and forehead. These are the *tephillim,* the phylacteries (protections) of later Judaism, to which Jesus referred in criticizing the Pharisees' ostentatious displays of piety (Matt. 23:5).

■ **13:12 set apart.** See text note. An animal from the herd or flock could be given to the Lord as a whole burnt offering. The firstborn son was always to be redeemed (v. 13; cf. the pagan use of the firstborn as an offering at 2 Kin. 16:3).

firstborn . . . males. See note on v. 2.

■ **13:13 break its neck.** This did not involve the shedding of blood and was not a sacrifice.

■ **13:14 What is this.** Like the Passover ritual (12:26, 27; 13:8), the redemption of the firstborn was to remind Israel of her redemption from Egypt.

■ **13:15** The Lord's judgment on the firstborn in Egypt is the explanation for His claim on the firstborn in Israel, a claim made both as Creator and as Judge. Israel was not exempted from the death sentence on the firstborn in Egypt. The firstborn were spared only through the blood of the Passover lamb. Subsequent generations must also be redeemed, either through the life consecration of the Levites, chosen by God in place of the firstborn (Num. 3:11–13), or through the redemption price of five shekels (Num. 3:46–51).

■ **13:17 way of the Philistines.** The strongly fortified caravan route that ran parallel to the Mediterranean coast (Introduction: Interpretive Difficulties). The Philistines were not in Palestine in considerable numbers until the twelfth century, but undoubtedly there were coastal pockets of Philistine (Minoan) trading colonies there earlier.

17 [x]Ex. 14:11 [y]Deut. 17:16
18 [z]Num. 33:6
19 [a]Gen. 50:24, 25 [b]Ex. 1:6; Deut. 33:13–17 [c]Ex. 4:31 [5]*give attention to*
20 [d]Num. 33:6–8 [e]Ex. 12:37
21 [f]Deut. 1:33

[x]change their minds when they see war, and [y]return to Egypt." 18 So God [z]led the people around *by* way of the wilderness of the Red Sea. And the children of Israel went up in orderly ranks out of the land of Egypt.

19 And Moses took the [a]bones of [b]Joseph with him, for he had placed the children of Israel under solemn oath, saying, [c]"God will surely [5]visit you, and you shall carry up my bones from here with you."

20 So [d]they took their journey from [e]Succoth and camped in Etham at the edge of the wilderness. 21 And [f]the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night. 22 He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night *from* before the people.

CHAPTER 14

2 [a]Ex. 13:18 [b]Num. 33:7 [c]Jer. 44:1
3 [d]Ps. 71:11

The Red Sea Crossing

14 Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, [a]that they turn and camp before [b]Pi Hahiroth, between [c]Migdol and the sea, opposite Baal Zephon; you shall camp before it by the sea. 3 For Pharaoh will say of the children of Israel, [d]'They *are* bewil-

■ **13:18 Red Sea.** The Hebrew term (*yam suf*) is used to designate the Gulf of Aqaba (23:31), the Gulf of Suez (10:19; Num. 33:10), as well as the body of water crossed in the Exodus. Scholars suggest that the term may mean "sea of reeds" or "sea of the end." The "Red Sea" of the Exodus was probably one of the Bitter Lakes north of the Gulf of Suez. Perhaps it was the southern extension of the present Lake Menzaleh. Archeological evidence suggests that the Bitter Lakes were at one time joined to the Gulf of Suez, and that shallows existed in them.

in orderly ranks. Israel went out in military formation, disciplined and prepared (12:37 note).

■ **13:19 bones of Joseph.** See Gen. 50:25; Josh. 24:32.

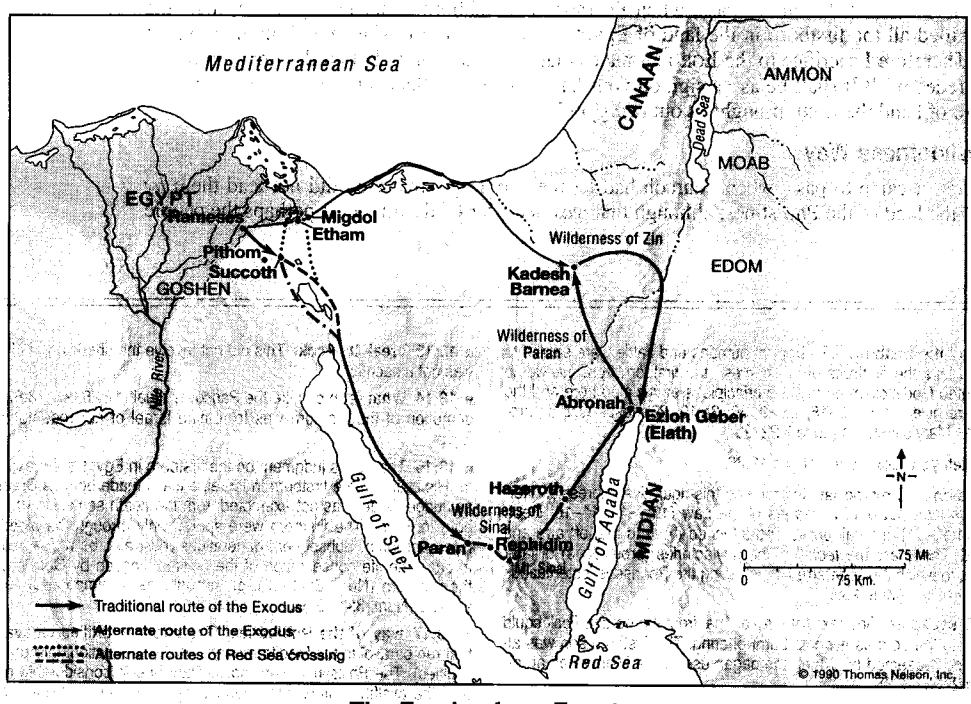
■ **13:20 Etham.** Israel camped on the edge of the wilderness near what may have been an Egyptian fortress at Etham (since the name seems Egyptian) where they understandably turned back (14:2).

■ **13:21 cloud . . . fire.** Customary symbols of the immediate presence of God (3:2 note; 33:9–10; 40:34–38; Num. 9:15–22; 11:25; Ps. 99:7; 105:39). God is not only present; He guides Israel day and night by His presence.

■ **14:2 Pi Hahiroth.** By divine command, Israel turned back and camped at Pi Hahiroth, reputedly in the vicinity of Rameses (Qantir). This invited Pharaoh's pursuit (v. 4 note).

Migdol. A general word for "fortification"; its location is presently unknown.

Baal Zephon. This site ("Baal of the North") was reputed to be in the vicinity of Tahpanhes, near Lake Menzaleh, about twenty miles east of Rameses.



The Exodus from Egypt

dered by the land; the wilderness has closed them in.' [4] Then [e]I will harden Pharaoh's heart, so that he will pursue them; and I [f]will gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, [g]that the Egyptians may know that I *am* the LORD." And they did so.

[5] Now it was told the king of Egypt that the people had fled, and [h]the heart of Pharaoh and his servants was turned against the people; and they said, "Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?" [6] So he [i]made ready his chariot and took his people with him. [7] Also, he took [j]six hundred choice chariots, and all the chariots of Egypt with captains over every one of them. [8] And the LORD [l]hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued the children of Israel; and [k]the children of Israel went out with boldness. [9] So the [l]Egyptians pursued them, all the horses *and* chariots of Pharaoh, his horsemen and his army, and overtook them camping by the sea beside Pi Hahiroth, before Baal Zephon.

[10] And when Pharaoh drew near, the children of Israel lifted their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians marched after them. So they were very afraid, and the children of Israel [m]cried out to the LORD. [11] [n]Then they said to Moses, "Because *there were* no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? [12] [o]*Is* this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, 'Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For *it would have been* better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness."

[13] And Moses said to the people, [p]"Do not be afraid. [q]Stand still, and see the [r]salvation[2] of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall [s]see again no more forever. [14] [t]The LORD will fight for you, and you shall [u]hold[3] your peace."

[15] And the LORD said to Moses, "Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward. [16] But [v]lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it. And the children of Israel shall go on dry *ground* through the midst of the sea. [17] And I indeed will [w]harden the hearts of the Egyptians, and they shall follow them. So I will [x]gain honor over Pharaoh and over all his army, his chariots, and his horsemen. [18] Then the Egyptians shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have gained honor for Myself over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen."

[19] And the Angel of God, [y]who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud went from before them and stood behind them. [20] So it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel. Thus it was a cloud and darkness *to the one,* and it gave light by night *to the other,* so that the one did not come near the other all that night.

[21] Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go *back* by a strong east wind all that night, and [z]made the sea into dry *land,* and the waters were [a]divided. [22] So [b]the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea on the dry *ground,* and the waters *were* [c]a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. [23] And the Egyptians pursued and went after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen.

[24] Now it came to pass, in the morning [d]watch, that [e]the LORD looked down upon the army of the Egyptians through the pillar of fire and cloud, and He [f]troubled the army of the Egyptians. [25] And He [5]took off their chariot wheels, so that they drove them with difficulty; and the

4 [e]Ex. 4:21; 7:3; 14:17 [f]Ex. 9:16; 14:17, 18, 23 [g]Ex. 7:5; 14:25

5 [h]Ps. 105:25

6 [i]*harnessed*

7 [j]Ex. 15:4

8 [l]Ex. 14:4 [k]Num. 33:3

9 [l]Josh. 24:6

10 [m]Neh. 9:9

11 [n]Ps. 106:7, 8

12 [o]Ex. 5:21; 6:9

13 [p]2 Chr. 20:15, 17 [q]Ps. 46:10, 11 [r]Ex. 14:30; 15:2 [s]Deut. 28:68 [2]*deliverance*

14 [t]Deut. 1:30; 3:22 [u][Is. 30:15] [3]Lit. *be quiet*

16 [v]Num. 20:8, 9, 11

17 [w]Ex. 14:8 [x]Ex. 14:4

19 [y][Is. 63:9]

21 [z]Ps. 66:6; 106:9; 136:13, 14 [a]Is. 63:12, 13

22 [b]Ex. 15:19 [c]Ex. 14:29; 15:8

24 [d]Judg. 7:19 [e]Ex. 13:21 [4]*confused*

25 [5]Sam., LXX, Syr. *bound*

■ **14:4** Pharaoh's pursuit of his escaping slaves takes place under God's sovereign direction.

■ **14:6 made ready his chariot.** Pharaoh was in earnest since his elite chariot force was deployed. The horse and chariot seem to have been introduced into Egypt by the Hyksos (c. 1700 B.C.). The Egyptian chariot carried three men.

■ **14:11 they said to Moses.** Israel's rebellious complaints against God's leading are a continuing theme in Exodus (5:21; 15:24; 16:3; 17:2; 32:1).

■ **14:13 Do not be afraid.** At the crucial point of Israel's deliverance they must see that their salvation is entirely God's work. His judgments on Egypt, His hardening of Pharaoh's heart, His leading Israel to this hopeless impasse, pinned between Pharaoh's chariots and the sea—all prepare for the climactic display of His saving power. The Lord will fight for them; they need only be still. He will gain the glory (14:18).

■ **14:14 The LORD will fight.** This phrase indicates the origin of the theme of the Lord as "divine Warrior," celebrated in ch. 15. War in the ancient world was viewed as a sacred undertaking in which the honor of the deity was at stake. In Israel, God was the "God of the armies of Israel" (1 Sam. 17:45), but also the "Lord of Hosts" (i.e., the Lord of the armies of heaven, the architect of Israel's victories and the inflicter of Israel's defeats). An early account of Israel's conquests under the Lord's leadership was called "the Book of the Wars of the LORD" (Num. 21:14). The theology of Holy War, which arose as a result, finds expression throughout both the Old and New Testament.

■ **14:15 cry.** A prayer of Moses is to be understood.

■ **14:16 lift up your rod.** The rod of Moses, used in bringing God's judgments on Egypt, will now bring salvation to His people.

■ **14:19 Angel . . . cloud.** The Angel of the Lord is identified with God's own presence in the cloud (23:20–22). See note on Gen. 16:7.

■ **14:21 east wind.** God sends the wind to accomplish His purpose, but further supernatural power was needed to maintain the water on either side of the escape route, then return it with sufficient force to destroy Pharaoh's army.

■ **14:24 morning watch.** The night was divided into three watches of four hours, the last of which (the morning watch) was from 2:00 to 6:00 A.M., often the time for surprise attack (1 Sam. 11:11). The Lord Himself threw the Egyptian army into confusion.

■ **14:25 The LORD fights.** Egypt recognized the victory as God's (cf. v. 14).

Egyptians said, "Let us flee from the face of Israel, for the LORD [f]fights for them against the Egyptians."

26 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the waters may come back upon the Egyptians, on their chariots, and on their horsemen." 27 And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and when the morning appeared, the sea [g]returned to its full depth, while the Egyptians were fleeing into it. So the LORD [h]overthrew[6] the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. 28 Then [i]the waters returned and covered the chariots, the horsemen, *and* all the army of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them. Not so much as one of them remained. 29 But [j]the children of Israel had walked on dry *land* in the midst of the sea, and the waters *were* a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

30 So the LORD [k]saved[7] Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel [l]saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. 31 Thus Israel saw the great [g]work which the LORD had done in Egypt; so the people feared the LORD, and [m]believed the LORD and His servant Moses.

The Song of Moses

15 Then [a]Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the LORD, and spoke, saying:

"I will [b]sing to the LORD,
For He has triumphed gloriously!
The horse and its rider
He has thrown into the sea!
2 The LORD *is* my strength and [c]song,
And He has become my salvation;
He *is* my God, and [d]I will praise Him;
My [e]father's God, and I [f]will exalt Him.
3 The LORD *is* a man of [g]war;
The LORD *is* His [h]name.
4 [i]Pharaoh's chariots and his army He has cast into the sea;
[j]His chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea.
5 The depths have covered them;
[k]They sank to the bottom like a stone.

6 "Your [l]right hand, O LORD, has become glorious in power;
Your right hand, O LORD, has dashed the enemy in pieces.
7 And in the greatness of Your [m]excellence
You have overthrown those who rose against You;
You sent forth [n]Your wrath;
It [o]consumed them [p]like stubble.
8 And [q]with the blast of Your nostrils
The waters were gathered together;
[r]The floods stood upright like a heap;
The depths [l]congealed in the heart of the sea.
9 [s]The enemy said, 'I will pursue,

25 [f]Ex. 7:5; 14:4, 14, 18
27 [g]Josh. 4:18 [h]Ex. 15:1, 7 [6]Lit. *shook off*
28 [i]Ps. 78:53; 106:11
29 [j]Ps. 66:6; 78:52, 53
30 [k]Ps. 106:8, 10 [l]Ps. 58:10; 59:10 [7]*delivered*
31 [m]John 2:11; 11:45 [g]Lit. *hand with which the LORD worked*

CHAPTER 15

1 [a]Ps. 106:12 [b]Is. 12:1–6
2 [c]Is. 12:2 [d]Gen. 28:21, 22 [e]Ex. 3:6, 15, 16 [f]Is. 25:1
3 [g]Rev. 19:11 [h]Ps. 24:8; 83:18
4 [i]Ex. 14:28 [j]Ex. 14:7
5 [k]Neh. 9:11
6 [l]Ps. 17:7; 118:15
7 [m]Deut. 33:26 [n]Ps. 78:49, 50 [o]Ps. 59:13 [p]Is. 5:24
8 [q]Ex. 14:21, 22, 29 [r]Ps. 78:13 [l]*became firm*
9 [s]Judg. 5:30

■ **14:27** The outstretched hand and staff of Moses are the instruments of destruction for the pursuing army, and bring about Israel's deliverance.

■ **14:30 the LORD saved Israel.** Verses 30, 31 summarize God's saving deed and its effect on Israel.

■ **14:31 feared . . . believed the LORD and His servant Moses.** At this point, Israel is a community that professes faith. Later, in the wilderness, they will apostatize and come under God's wrath (Num. 14; Ps. 95). The church, as a professing community, should avoid this example (Heb. 3; 4).

■ **15:1–21** Moses and Israel sing of deliverance and hope. The poem of vv. 1–18, unique in the Old Testament, is a victory song expressed in the first person singular as a song of Moses. It celebrates the Lord's majestic power in saving Israel at the sea (vv. 1–12) and claims His power in planting Israel in the land (vv. 13–18). The song's many archaic expressions point to its origin in the Mosaic period.

■ **15:1 I will sing.** The Lord has shown His glory as He promised, and it is the privilege of His people, led by His servant Moses, to praise the God of their salvation. This Song of Moses becomes Israel's song as well. It is echoed elsewhere in the Old Testament (Ps. 118:14; Is. 12:2), and is sung by the saints in Rev. 15:3.

■ **15:3** The theme of Yahweh as the Divine Warrior is emphasized. See Is. 59:16–18.

■ **15:5 depths.** The chaotic waters of the deep, ordered by God at creation (Gen. 1:2), are unleashed by God on the enemy.

■ **15:6 Your right hand.** A symbol of power. In Canaanite art the god Baal was sometimes depicted with mace upheld in the right hand. Here, the symbol of divine power was the outstretched hand of Moses holding the rod of the Lord.

■ **15:8 floods stood upright.** Through the threatening waters of death God brought His people to Himself. The waters were an instrument of judgment for Egypt, and a means of deliverance for Israel. Paul, with some support from Jewish tradition, understood the Red Sea crossing as Israel's "baptism" (1 Cor. 10:2; cf. 1 Pet. 3:21 note).

■ **15:9 I . . . I . . . I . . . I.** The staccato repetition of these first person claims reveals an arrogance that is soon silenced.

I will overtake,
I will [f]divide the spoil;
My desire shall be satisfied on them.
I will draw my sword,
My hand shall destroy them.'
10 You blew with Your wind,
The sea covered them;
They sank like lead in the mighty waters.

11 "Who[u] *is* like You, O LORD, among the [2]gods?
Who *is* like You, [v]glorious in holiness,
Fearful in [w]praises, [x]doing wonders?
12 You stretched out Your right hand;
The earth swallowed them.
13 You in Your mercy have [y]led forth
The people whom You have redeemed;
You have guided *them* in Your strength
To [z]Your holy habitation.

14 "The [a]people will hear *and* be afraid;
[b]Sorrow[3] will take hold of the inhabitants of Philistia.
15 [c]Then [d]the chiefs of Edom will be dismayed;
[e]The mighty men of Moab,
Trembling will take hold of them;
[f]All the inhabitants of Canaan will [g]melt away.
16 [h]Fear and dread will fall on them;
By the greatness of Your arm
They will be [i]*as* still as a stone,
Till Your people pass over, O LORD,
Till the people pass over
[j]Whom You have purchased.
17 You will bring them in and [k]plant them
In the [l]mountain of Your inheritance,
In the place, O LORD, *which* You have made
For Your own dwelling,
The [m]sanctuary, O LORD, *which* Your hands have established.

18 "The[n] LORD shall reign forever and ever."

19 For the [o]horses of Pharaoh went with his chariots and his horsemen into the sea, and [p]the LORD brought back the waters of the sea upon them. But the children of Israel went on dry *land* in the midst of the sea.

9 [f]Is. 53:12

11 [u]Ex. 8:10; 9:14; Deut. 3:24; 2 Sam. 7:22; 1 Kin. 8:23; Ps. 71:19; 86:8; Mic. 7:18 [v]Ps. 68:35; Is. 6:3; Rev. 4:8 [w]1 Chr. 16:25 [x]Ex. 3:20; Ps. 77:11, 14 [2]*mighty ones*

13 [y]Neh. 9:12; [Ps. 77:20] [z]Ex. 15:17; Deut. 12:5; Ps. 78:54

14 [a]Josh. 2:9 [b]Ps. 48:6 [3]*Anguish*

15 [c]Gen. 36:15, 40 [d]Deut. 2:4 [e]Num. 22:3, 4 [f]Josh. 5:1 [g]Josh. 2:9–11, 24

16 [h]Ex. 23:27; Deut. 2:25; Josh. 2:9 [i]1 Sam. 25:37 [j]Ex. 15:13; Ps. 74:2; Is. 43:1; Jer. 31:11; [Titus 2:14]; 2 Pet. 2:1

17 [k]Ps. 44:2; 80:8, 15 [l]Ps. 2:6; 78:54, 68 [m]Ps. 68:16; 76:2; 132:13, 14

18 [n]2 Sam. 7:16; Ps. 10:16; 29:10; Is. 57:15

19 [o]Ex. 14:23 [p]Ex. 14:28

■ **15:11 Who is like You.** The comparison is rhetorical in this threefold presentation of God's nature and power.

■ **15:12 earth swallowed them.** An expression for their reception into the underworld, thought to be the abode of the dead (Ps. 63:9; 71:20).

■ **15:13 mercy.** This translates the Hebrew word *hesed*, the precise sense of which is difficult to render in English. Here it refers to God's loyalty and devotion to His people, a loyalty created by the bond of God's covenant with His people. Though we might expect it to be used for the devotion of God's people to Him, its overwhelming use is as a description of God's devotion to His people. Since God reveals Himself in devotion to His own, there is no stronger term to express the free and faithful grace of His love (34:6, "abounding in love"; Ps. 136, "His mercy endures forever"). God's abiding covenant love and mercy find particular illustration in the Book of Hosea (Hos. 2:19).

■ **15:14 be afraid.** The extraordinary, divinely induced fear of the inhabitants of Canaan is here depicted (Deut. 2:25 note). The peoples are mentioned in the approximate order they were encountered by Israel during the journey to the Promised Land.

■ **15:17** A brief summary of the aims of the Exodus. The purpose was the settlement of Israel as God's special people in the Promised Land, the sanctuary of God's dwelling.

the mountain of Your inheritance. The point of contact between heaven and earth will be here. Deities in the ancient world were thought to inhabit mountains, and Israel took over this concept poetically. Here the whole of Palestine is viewed as the place of revelation (Deut. 3:25; Ps. 78:54; Is. 11:9).

sanctuary. The land would become such by God's indwelling presence, reminding readers that the goal of the Exodus was the worship of God in the land. Apart from God's gracious presence, there was no point in going to the land (33:15).

■ **15:18 The LORD shall reign.** There are at least two other references to God's kingship in the Pentateuch (Num. 23:21; Deut. 33:5). The concept of divine covenant with Israel involved a recognition of God's kingship (1 Sam. 8:6–9).

20 [q]Judg. 4:4 [r]Num. 26:59 [s]1 Sam. 18:6 [t]Judg. 11:34; 21:21

21 [u]1 Sam. 18:7 [v]Ex. 15:1

22 [w]Gen. 16:7; 20:1; 25:18 [x]Num. 20:2

23 [y]Num. 33:8 [4]Lit. *Bitter*

24 [z]Ex. 14:11; 16:2

25 [a]2 Kin. 2:21 [b]Josh. 24:25 [c]Deut. 8:2, 16 [5]*regulation*

26 [d]Deut. 7:12, 15 [e]Deut. 28:27, 58, 60 [f]Ex. 23:25

27 [g]Num. 33:9

CHAPTER 16

1 [a]Num. 33:10, 11 [b]Ex. 12:6, 51; 19:1

2 [c]1 Cor. 10:10

3 [d]Lam. 4:9 [e]Num. 11:4, 5

4 [f][John 6:31–35] [g]Deut. 8:2, 16 [h]Judg. 2:22 [i]Lit. *the portion of a day in its day*

5 [j]Lev. 25:21

The Song of Miriam

20 Then Miriam [q]the prophetess, [r]the sister of Aaron, [s]took the timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her [t]with timbrels and with dances. 21 And Miriam [u]answered them:

[v]"Sing to the LORD,
For He has triumphed gloriously!
The horse and its rider
He has thrown into the sea!"

Bitter Waters Made Sweet

22 So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea; then they went out into the Wilderness of [w]Shur. And they went three days in the wilderness and found no [x]water. 23 Now when they came to [y]Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they *were* bitter. Therefore the name of it was called [4]Marah. 24 And the people [z]complained against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" 25 So he cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a tree. [a]When he cast *it* into the waters, the waters were made sweet.

There He [b]made a statute and an [5]ordinance for them, and there [c]He tested them, 26 and said, [d]"If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the [e]diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I *am* the LORD [f]who heals you."

27 [g]Then they came to Elim, where there *were* twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees; so they camped there by the waters.

Bread from Heaven

16 And they [a]journeyed from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came to the Wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and [b]Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they departed from the land of Egypt. 2 Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel [c]complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. 3 And the children of Israel said to them, [d]"Oh, that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, [e]when we sat by the pots of meat *and* when we ate bread to the full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

4 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I will rain [f]bread from heaven for you. And the people shall go out and gather [i]a certain quota every day, that I may [g]test them, whether they will [h]walk in My law or not. 5 And it shall be on the sixth day that they shall prepare what they bring in, and [j]it shall be twice as much as they gather daily."

■ **15:22—17:16** As the Lord leads His people into the desert, He tests and delivers them in ways that reveal His purposes. He heals bitter water to show Himself as the Healer (15:22–27), gives manna and quail to show Himself as Provider and the One who establishes rest (Sabbath) for His people (16:1–26), and gives the water of life (17:1–7). Finally, in military victory, it is the Lord Himself who is the ensign of His people (17:15).

■ **15:22 Wilderness of Shur.** Israel travels in the Sinai peninsula (about 260 miles long and 150 miles wide). The word "wilderness" refers here to grazing land as opposed to cultivated land. Shur was located northeast of the Sinai Peninsula, between Egypt and Palestine (Gen. 16:7; 20:1; 25:18).

■ **15:23 Marah.** The word means "bitterness." The location is suggested to be modern Ain Hawarah, inland and 50 miles south of the northern end of Suez. Apparently Israel went down the west coast of Sinai until they turned east toward Sinai.

■ **15:24 complained.** The first instance of Israel's wilderness complaint—behavior that typifies Israel's unbelief in the wilderness. The situation was critical. After nine days the water skins were empty, and death from dehydration was an immediate threat. Further, their hopes were dashed—they had located water, but found it undrinkable (v. 23).

■ **15:25 he cried out.** The complaint of the people directed to Moses was really against God. Since Moses led at God's command (17:1), he appealed to the Lord.

showed. God instructs Moses by showing him a tree. The general term for God's law (Hebrew *torah*) is a form of the verb "showed." God's revelation in this event is a "statute and an ordinance," preparing for the statutes and ordinances to be given at Sinai. God's Word instructs Israel as He leads and proves them (cf. Jesus' use of Deut. 8:3 in Matt. 4:4). The tree is a sign of healing and sweetness (Judg. 9:11; Jer. 8:22; Gen. 2:9; Ezek. 47:7, 8).

■ **15:26 diseases . . . I have brought.** See Deut. 28:26, 60–62; 7:15. Diseases mark the effects of divine curse.

I am the LORD who heals you. God has the power (Deut. 32:39) and the mercy to heal (Ps. 103:3). He alone can heal in the peace of His salvation (2 Chr. 16:12; Is. 38:17). To the prayer of anguish (Jer. 17:14), God responds (Jer. 30:17; 33:6). Healing from the damage inflicted by sin and death will come through the Lord's Anointed, by whose wounds we are healed (Is. 53:5; 61:1,2; Matt. 8:17).

■ **15:27 Elim.** The site is probably the Wadi Gharandel seven miles south of Ain Hawarah. The Lord, who healed the water of Marah (v. 23), leads His people to a place of rest and refreshment.

■ **16:1–36** Israel arrives in time to observe the Sabbath and a theophany occurs in response to the people's complaints (16:9–13). The chapter draws to a close with a rest on the following Sabbath (16:27–30). Israel's keeping of the Sabbath prior to the revelation at Sinai is highlighted, as is God's continued testing of Israel (v. 4; cf. 15:25; 17:2).

■ **16:1 Wilderness of Sin.** Situated in the southwest of Sinai, this is perhaps the modern region Debbet er-Ramleh.

■ **16:4 bread.** The people cried for bread and meat (v. 3), and God will give both (v. 8). Manna is called the "angels' food" (Ps. 78:25). In John 6:26–58, Jesus calls Himself the true manna ("bread of life") of which this provision in the desert was a symbol and type.

6 Then Moses and Aaron said to all the children of Israel, [j]"At evening you shall know that
the LORD has brought you out of the land of Egypt. 7 And in the morning you shall see [k]the glory
of the LORD; for He [l]hears your complaints against the LORD. But [m]what *are* we, that you com-
plain against us?" 8 Also Moses said, "*This shall be seen* when the LORD gives you meat to eat in
the evening, and in the morning bread to the full; for the LORD hears your complaints which you
make against Him. And what *are* we? Your complaints *are* not against us but [n]against the
LORD."

9 Then Moses spoke to Aaron, "Say to all the congregation of the children of Israel, [o]'Come
near before the LORD, for He has heard your complaints.' " 10 Now it came to pass, as Aaron
spoke to the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilder-
ness, and behold, the glory of the LORD [p]appeared in the cloud.

11 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 12[q]"I have heard the complaints of the children of
Israel. Speak to them, saying, [r]'At twilight you shall eat meat, and [s]in the morning you shall be
filled with bread. And you shall know that I *am* the LORD your God.' "

13 So it was that [t]quails came up at evening and covered the camp, and in the morning [u]the
dew lay all around the camp. 14 And when the layer of dew lifted, there, on the surface of the
wilderness, was [v]a small round [w]substance, *as* fine as frost on the ground. 15 So when the chil-
dren of Israel saw *it,* they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it *was.*

And Moses said to them, [x]"This *is* the bread which the LORD has given you to eat. 16 This is
the thing which the LORD has commanded: 'Let every man gather it [y]according to each one's
need, one [z]omer for each person, *according to the* number of persons; let every man take for
those who *are* in his tent.' "

17 Then the children of Israel did so and gathered, some more, some less. 18 So when they
measured *it* by omers, [a]he who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little
had no lack. Every man had gathered according to each one's need. 19 And Moses said, "Let no
one [b]leave any of it till morning." 20 Notwithstanding they did not [z]heed Moses. But some of
them left part of it until morning, and it bred worms and stank. And Moses was angry with them.
21 So they gathered it every morning, every man according to his need. And when the sun be-
came hot, it melted.

22 And so it was, on the sixth day, *that* they gathered twice as much bread, two omers for each
one. And all the rulers of the congregation came and told Moses. 23 Then he said to them, "This
is what the LORD has said: 'Tomorrow *is* [c]a Sabbath rest, a holy Sabbath to the LORD. Bake what
you will bake *today,* and boil what you will boil; and lay up for yourselves all that remains, to be
kept until morning.' " 24 So they laid it up till morning, as Moses commanded; and it did not
[d]stink, nor were there any worms in it. 25 Then Moses said, "Eat that today, for today *is* a Sab-
bath to the LORD; today you will not find it in the field. 26 [e]Six days you shall gather it, but on the
seventh day, the Sabbath, there will be none."

27 Now it happened *that some* of the people went out on the seventh day to gather, but they
found none. 28 And the LORD said to Moses, "How long [f]do you refuse to keep My command-
ments and My laws? 29 See! For the LORD has given you the Sabbath; therefore He gives you on
the sixth day bread for two days. Let every man remain in his place; let no man go out of his
place on the seventh day." 30 So the people rested on the seventh day.

31 And the house of Israel called its name [3]Manna. And [g]it *was* like white coriander seed, and
the taste of it *was* like wafers *made* with honey.

32 Then Moses said, "This *is* the thing which the LORD has commanded: 'Fill an omer with it,
to be kept for your generations, that they may see the bread with which I fed you in the wilder-
ness, when I brought you out of the land of Egypt.' " 33 And Moses said to Aaron, [h]"Take a pot
and put an omer of manna in it, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations."

6 [j]Ex. 6:7

7 [k]Ex. 16:10, 12; Is. 35:2; 40:5; John 11:4, 40 [l]Num. 14:27; 17:5 [m]Num. 16:11

8 [n]1 Sam. 8:7; Luke 10:16; [Rom. 13:2]; 1 Thess. 4:8

9 [o]Num. 16:16

10 [p]Ex. 13:21; 16:7; Num. 16:19; 1 Kin. 8:10

12 [q]Ex. 16:8; Num. 14:27 [r]Ex. 16:6 [s]Ex. 16:7; 1 Kin. 20:28; Joel 3:17

13 [t]Num. 11:31; Ps. 78:27–29; 105:40 [u]Num. 11:9

14 [v]Ex. 16:31; Num. 11:7, 8; Deut. 8:3; Neh. 9:15; Ps. 78:24; 105:40 [w]Ps. 147:16

15 [x]Ex. 16:4; Neh. 9:15; Ps. 78:24; [John 6:31, 49, 58]; 1 Cor. 10:3

16 [y]Ex. 12:4 [z]Ex. 16:32, 36

18 [a]2 Cor. 8:15

19 [b]Ex. 12:10; 16:23; 23:18

20 [z]*listen to*

23 [c]Gen. 2:3; Ex. 20:8–11; 23:12; 31:15; 35:2; Lev. 23:3; Neh. 9:13, 14

24 [d]Ex. 16:20

26 [e]Ex. 20:9, 10

28 [f]2 Kin. 17:14; Ps. 78:10; 106:13

31 [g]Num. 11:7–9; Deut. 8:3, 16 [3]Lit. *What?* Ex. 16:15

33 [h]Heb. 9:4; Rev. 2:17

■ **16:7 glory.** The word normally refers to the manifested presence of God. Here, the Lord's gracious provision of the manna is in view.

■ **16:13 quails.** These small migratory game birds of the partridge family come from their winter habitat in Africa in the spring. They sometimes rest on the ground exhausted by flight. On a second occasion they are brought by a strong east wind (Num. 11).

■ **16:14 small round substance.** The manna seems to have been similar to a honey-like secretion of insects that infested the tamarisk plants of the area (called "manna" by the Arabs). It solidifies in the cold desert nights, but must be gathered early. If this is the manna, the miracle would be God's control of the amount. The amount gathered is an omer per man, about two quarts, though a related Arabic word means a cupful, and perhaps this is the meaning here.

■ **16:23 holy Sabbath.** An elevated term normally reserved for holy festivals. The implication is that the weekly Sabbath was normally kept by Israel before Sinai. The Sabbath ordinance in the Ten Commandments was a codification of Sabbath observance, not its inauguration.

■ **16:31 coriander.** This seed is small, globular, grayish, and aromatic, tasting like honey cakes.

■ **16:33 pot.** The manna is set aside in what is called "the golden urn" in Heb. 9:4.

34 [i]Num. 17:10

35 [j]Deut. 8:3, 16 [k]Num. 33:38 [l]Josh. 5:12

CHAPTER 17

1 [a]Ex. 16:1 [b]Num. 33:11–15 [c]Ex. 15:22

2 [d]Num. 20:2, 3, 13 [e][Deut. 6:16]

3 [f]Ex. 16:2, 3 [g]Ex. 12:38

4 [h]Ex. 14:15 [i]John 8:59; 10:31 [j]Put me to death by stoning

5 [j]Ezek. 2:6 [k]Num. 20:8

6 [l]Num. 20:10, 11

7 [m]Num. 20:13, 24; 27:14 [2]Lit. *Tempted* [3]Lit. *Contention* [4]*tested*

8 [n]Gen. 36:12

9 [o]Ex. 4:20

11 [p][James 5:16]

12 [5]Weary of being held up

34 As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up [i]before the Testimony, to be kept. 35 And the children of Israel [j]ate manna [k]forty years, [l]until they came to an inhabited land; they ate manna until they came to the border of the land of Canaan. 36 Now an omer *is* one-tenth of an ephah.

Water from the Rock

17 Then [a]all the congregation of the children of Israel set out on their journey from the Wilderness of [b]Sin, according to the commandment of the LORD, and camped in Rephidim; but *there was* no water for the people to [c]drink. 2 [d]Therefore the people contended with Moses, and said, "Give us water, that we may drink."

So Moses said to them, "Why do you contend with me? Why do you [e]tempt the LORD?"

3 And the people thirsted there for water, and the people [f]complained against Moses, and said, "Why *is* it you have brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our [g]livestock with thirst?"

4 So Moses [h]cried out to the LORD, saying, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to [i]stone[j] me!"

5 And the LORD said to Moses, [j]"Go on before the people, and take with you some of the elders of Israel. Also take in your hand your rod with which [k]you struck the river, and go. 6 [l]Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink."

And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. 7 So he called the name of the place [m]Massah[2] and [3]Meribah, because of the contention of the children of Israel, and because they [4]tempted the LORD, saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?"

Victory over the Amalekites

8 [n]Now Amalek came and fought with Israel in Rephidim. 9 And Moses said to Joshua, "Choose us some men and go out, fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with [o]the rod of God in my hand." 10 So Joshua did as Moses said to him, and fought with Amalek. And Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. 11 And so it was, when Moses [p]held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. 12 But Moses' hands *became* [5]heavy; so they took a stone and put *it* under him, and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; and

■ **16:35 forty years.** The manna continued until they came to Canaan (Josh. 5:10–12). When they reached the Transjordanian country they had fields, vineyards, and wells of water (Num. 21:22), but the manna seems to have continued.

■ **17:1 Rephidim.** This region, generally identified with the modern Wadi Refayid, about eight miles south of Jebel Musa, was the last stop before Sinai.

■ **17:2 contended.** This translates the Hebrew word *rib*, which appears in the name "Meribah" (v. 7). *Rib* is often used in legal contexts with the meaning "to bring suit" (e.g., "plead your case," Mic. 6:1). The move to stone Moses (v. 4) is the execution of judicial sentence for treason. The verdict is threatened if Moses does not provide water.

tempt the LORD. It is not Moses who is being put on trial, but God. Tempting, or testing (v. 7 text note), in this setting takes on a judicial meaning. God is being accused of abandoning Israel to die of thirst in the desert.

■ **17:5 Go on before the people.** The people want a trial. God, the just Judge, will give them one. Moses is to pass on before the people, taking in his hand his rod, and accompanied by elders of Israel. The rod of God is identified by the sentence of judgment meted out on Egypt: "with which you struck the river," turning it to blood (cf. Is. 30:31, 32). The elders are summoned as representative witnesses (cf. v. 6).

■ **17:6 I will stand before you.** An astonishing statement. Man stands before God, not God before man (Deut. 19:17; 25:1–3; 17:8–13). In this trial God takes the place of the accused, standing in the dock.

on the rock. God stands on the rock and is identified with it. God is called the "Rock" in the song of Moses (Deut. 32:4, 15, 18, 31) and in the psalms that speak of this event (Ps. 78:35; 95:1).

strike the rock. Moses lifts the rod of judgment and strikes the rock on which God stands and with which He is symbolically identified. God is not guilty, but He bears the judgment. The fearful solemnity of Moses' blow appears when he later strikes the rock in disobedience, thereby dishonoring the holiness of God (Num. 20:9–12). The rock at Massah, struck for God's people, is a type of Christ, the incarnate and blameless Son of God, who endured the punishment for sin (1 Cor. 10:4).

water. The ultimate reference is to the water of life that flows from the throne of God (Zech. 13:1; 14:8; Ezek. 47:1–12). Jesus offers this water where it was symbolically poured out in the temple at the feast (John 7:37), and John notes the water that flowed from His pierced side on the Cross (John 19:34; cf. 7:38).

■ **17:8 Amalek.** The Amalekites, a nomadic group based in southern Palestine, were descendants of Esau (Gen. 36:12–16), indicating the origin of the enmity. The Amalekites attacked from the rear (Deut. 25:18). God had provided mannah from heaven and water from the rock; now He provides deliverance from enemies.

■ **17:9 Joshua.** Joshua, an Ephraimite previously known as Hoshea ("salvation"), was called Joshua ("Yahweh saves") at Kadesh, possibly as a result of this victory (Num. 13:8, 16).

I will stand . . . with the rod. Joshua will choose men to fight, but they will do so under the uplifted staff, the sign of the Lord's victory.

■ **17:10 Joshua . . . fought.** Joshua prevailed in this holy war only when Moses held up to heaven the staff symbolizing the Lord's presence that had brought the plagues on Egypt (4:2; 9:23) and had dried up the sea (14:16).

Hur. Hur, attested in later tradition as the husband of Miriam, Moses' sister, was possibly the grandfather of the famous artisan of the tabernacle, Bezalel (1 Chr. 2:19–20).

his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. 13 So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.

14 Then the LORD said to Moses, [q]"Write this *for* a memorial in the book and recount *it* in the hearing of Joshua, that [r]I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." 15 And Moses built an altar and called its name, [6]The-LORD-Is-My-Banner; 16 for he said, "Because [7]the LORD has [s]sworn: the LORD *will have* war with Amalek from generation to generation."

Jethro's Advice

18 And [a]Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard of all that [b]God had done for Moses and for Israel His people—that the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt. 2 Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took [c]Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her back, 3 with her [d]two sons, of whom the name of one *was* [1]Gershom (for he said, [e]"I have been a [2]stranger in a foreign land") 4 and the name of the other *was* [3]Eliezer (for *he said,* "The God of my father *was* my [f]help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh"); 5 and Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came with his sons and his wife to Moses in the wilderness, where he was encamped at [g]the mountain of God. 6 Now he had said to Moses, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons with her."

7 So Moses [h]went out to meet his father-in-law, bowed down, and [i]kissed him. And they asked each other about *their* well-being, and they went into the tent. 8 And Moses told his father-in-law all that the LORD had done to Pharaoh and to the Egyptians for Israel's sake, all the hardship that had come upon them on the way, and *how* the LORD had [j]delivered them. 9 Then Jethro rejoiced for all the [k]good which the LORD had done for Israel, whom He had delivered out of the hand of the Egyptians. 10 And Jethro said, [l]"Blessed *be* the LORD, who has delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of Pharaoh, *and* who has delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. 11 Now I know that the LORD *is* [m]greater than all the gods; [n]for in the very thing in which they [4]behaved [o]proudly, *He was* above them." 12 Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, [5]took a burnt [p]offering and *other* sacrifices *to offer* to God. And Aaron came with all the elders of Israel [q]to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God.

13 And so it was, on the next day, that Moses [r]sat to judge the people; and the people stood before Moses from morning until evening. 14 So when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he did for the people, he said, "What *is* this thing that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone [6]sit, and all the people stand before you from morning until evening?"

15 And Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because [s]the people come to me to inquire of God.

14 [6]Sit as judge 15 [s]Lev. 24:12

14 [q]Ex. 24:4; 34:27 [r]1 Sam. 15:3

15 [6]Heb. *YHWH Nissi*

16 [s]Gen. 22:14–16 [7]Lit. *a hand is upon the throne of the* LORD

CHAPTER 18

1 [a]Ex. 2:16, 18; 3:1 [b][Ps. 106:2, 8]

2 [c]Ex. 2:21; 4:20–26

3 [d]Acts 7:29 [e]Ex. 2:22 [1]Lit. *Stranger There* [2]*sojourner,* temporary resident

4 [f]Gen. 49:25 [3]Lit. *My God Is Help*

5 [g]Ex. 3:1, 12; 4:27; 24:13

7 [h]Gen. 18:2 [i]Ex. 4:27

8 [j]Ex. 15:6, 16

9 [k][Is. 63:7–14]

10 [l]Gen. 14:20

11 [m]2 Chr. 2:5 [n]Ex. 1:10, 16, 22; 5:2, 7 [o]Luke 1:51 [4]*acted presumptuously*

12 [p]Ex. 24:5 [q]Deut. 12:7 [5]So with MT, LXX; Syr., Tg., Vg. *offered*

13 [r]Matt. 23:2

■ **17:14 Write this.** One of the few references to writing in the Old Testament, though it was widespread at the time. It is linked with oral recitation here. The account was perhaps written in the Book of the Wars of the LORD, mentioned in Num. 21:14.

■ **17:15 The-LORD-Is-My-Banner.** See text note. The Hebrew word translated "banner" underlies "staff" in v. 9 and is used for the "pole" on which the bronze serpent was later placed (Num. 21:8). Since "banner" suggests cloth to us, this connection is lost. A spear could serve as a standard in battle, with or without bits of cloth tied to it. Later, a staff might have a device on it to mark the rallying point for troops. In the ancient world, these were sometimes images or signs of the gods. Moses' staff is the ensign to which Joshua's army could look and that symbolized God's saving power. Moses declares that God Himself is the Standard, the Ensign of His people.

■ **17:16 the LORD has sworn.** The Hebrew is difficult to translate and interpret (cf. text note). The central message is nevertheless clear: God gives Israel the victory, and the continuing warfare between Israel and Amalek is the Lord's. On the historic enmity between Israel and Amalek, see Num. 24:20; Deut. 25:17; 1 Sam. 15:2–33; 27:8, 9; 30:1–20; 2 Sam. 8:11, 12; 1 Chr. 4:42, 43; Esth. 3:1 note.

■ **18:1—24:18** The Lord liberated His people from Egypt to bring them to Himself, to make them His special possession among all peoples. In order to enjoy this blessing, however, they were to obey Him and keep His covenant. The revelation at Sinai manifested the holy character of the covenant God and defined the character and behavior appropriate for God's covenant people.

The Sinai covenant also underscores the special role of the mediator. The Lord declared His intention to descend and speak directly to Moses so the people might hear and trust Moses forever (19:9). However, the face-to-face revelation so terrified the people that they pleaded with Moses to go up to God and receive the commands, then return and report to them (20:18–21). Moses was to represent the people before God (19:8), and represent the Lord to the people (19:7).

Another crucial lesson of the theophany and revelation at Sinai is the importance of separation in preparation for the coming of God. Even Moses objected to the stringent preparations (19:23). The ceremonial law given at Sinai was the Lord's gracious training of the people, a protective measure for a people unaccustomed to the holy presence of God (Gen. 34 note).

■ **18:1–27** Before he narrates the events at Sinai, Moses pauses to report on his visit with Jethro, the priest of Midian and his father-in-law. The focus of Jethro's counsel was Israel's governmental organization.

■ **18:2 sent her back.** Moses apparently sent Zipporah and his family back to Jethro some time after the incident of 4:24–26. It may have been after the Exodus from Egypt.

■ **18:11 Now I know.** This formula could indicate either the beginning of Jethro's faith (2 Kin. 5:15) or its strengthening (1 Kin. 17:24). In any event, Jethro offered sacrifices and shared the communion meal as a leader, not as a supplicant.

■ **18:12 burnt offering.** The whole burnt offering as a dedication sacrifice came first. Fellowship sacrifices, shared by the worshipers, followed. Provisions in Leviticus for sin and guilt offerings would later complete the sacrificial system.

16 [f]Ex. 24:14
[7]dispute
18 [u]Num. 11:14, 17
19 [v]Ex. 4:16; 20:19
[w]Num. 9:8; 27:5
[8]advice
20 [x]Deut. 5:1
[y]Deut. 1:18
21 [z]Acts 6:3
[a]2 Sam. 23:3
[b]Ezek. 18:8
[c]Deut. 16:19
22 [d]Deut. 1:17
[e]Num. 11:17
23 [f]Ex. 16:29
25 [g]Deut. 1:15
26 [h]Job 29:16
[9]difficult matters
27 [i]Num. 10:29, 30

CHAPTER 19

1 [a]Num. 33:15
2 [b]Ex. 17:1 [c]Ex. 3:1, 12; 18:5
3 [d]Acts 7:38 [e]Ex. 3:4
4 [f]Deut. 29:2 [g]Is. 63:9 [t]sustained
5 [h]Ex. 15:26; 23:22 [i]Deut. 5:2 [j]Ps. 135:4 [k]Ex. 9:29
6 [l][1 Pet. 2:5, 9] [m]Deut. 7:6; 14:21; 26:19
7 [n]Ex. 4:29, 30
[2]set
8 [o]Deut. 5:27; 26:17
9 [p]Ex. 19:16; 20:21; 24:15 [q]Deut. 4:12, 36
10 [r]Lev. 11:44, 45

16 When they have [f]a [7]difficulty, they come to me, and I judge between one and another; and I make known the statutes of God and His laws."

17 So Moses' father-in-law said to him, "The thing that you do *is* not good. 18 Both you and these people who *are* with you will surely wear yourselves out. For this thing *is* too much for you; [u]you are not able to perform it by yourself. 19 Listen now to my voice; I will give you [8]counsel, and God will be with you: Stand [v]before God for the people, so that you may [w]bring the difficulties to God. 20 And you shall [x]teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way in which they must walk and [y]the work they must do. 21 Moreover you shall select from all the people [z]able men, such as [a]fear God, [b]men of truth, [c]hating covetousness; and place *such* over them *to be* rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. 22 And let them judge the people at all times. [d]Then it will be *that* every great matter they shall bring to you, but every small matter they themselves shall judge. So it will be easier for you, for [e]they will bear *the burden* with you. 23 If you do this thing, and God *so* commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all this people will also go to their [f]place in peace."

24 So Moses heeded the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said. 25 And [g]Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people: rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. 26 So they judged the people at all times; the [h]hard[9] cases they brought to Moses, but they judged every small case themselves.

27 Then Moses let his father-in-law depart, and [i]he went his way to his own land.

Israel at Mount Sinai

19 In the third month after the children of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on the same day, [a]they came *to* the Wilderness of Sinai. 2 For they had departed from [b]Rephidim, had come *to* the Wilderness of Sinai, and camped in the wilderness. So Israel camped there before [c]the mountain.

3 And [d]Moses went up to God, and the LORD [e]called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: 4 [f]'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and *how* [g]I [t]bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. 5 Now [h]therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and [i]keep My covenant, then [j]you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth *is* [k]Mine. 6 And you shall be to Me a [l]kingdom of priests and a [m]holy nation.' These *are* the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."

7 So Moses came and called for the [n]elders of the people, and [2]laid before them all these words which the LORD commanded him. 8 Then [o]all the people answered together and said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do." So Moses brought back the words of the people to the LORD. 9 And the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I come to you [p]in the thick cloud, [q]that the people may hear when I speak with you, and believe you forever."

So Moses told the words of the people to the LORD.

10 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to the people and [r]consecrate them today and tomorrow,

■ **18:16 statutes . . . laws.** "Statutes" perhaps suggests standing regulations and "laws" case decisions. They will be codified later.

■ **18:21 select . . . able men.** Delegation is often difficult for an able leader. Men were chosen here on moral rather than intellectual grounds to deal with simple matters. Difficult cases, perhaps those without precedent, were brought to Moses. This is how Israel's legal system would later function. No difference is made between the sacred and the secular. The entire law was God's gift, and obedience to it amounted to obedience to God.

■ **19:1 came to . . . Sinai.** The desert of Sinai lay in the southeast region of the Sinai peninsula. Mount Sinai is traditionally identified as Jebel Musa, a mountain with a broad plain at its base that seems to fit the biblical evidence (v. 2; cf. Deut. 9:21 note). Israel would remain at Sinai for eleven months (Num. 10:11).

■ **19:3–6** God's words begin (v. 3) and end (v. 6) with an instruction of God to Moses. What lies in between is a summary of God's covenant faithfulness and Israel's covenant responsibilities.

■ **19:4 brought you to Myself.** God's deliverance from slavery was not just liberation, but adoption. He brought them out and carried them through the wilderness to bring them to Himself, to make them His (Gen. 17:7 note).

■ **19:5 obey My voice and keep My covenant.** Terms summarizing the proper human response to God's gracious covenant (Gen. 17:2 note). The latter phrase (Gen. 17:9, 10; 1 Kin. 11:11; Ps. 78:10; 103:18; 132:12; Ezek. 17:14) always refers to fidelity to a previously revealed covenant. Since 6:4 has referred to the Exodus as the fulfillment of the patriarchal covenant, the revelation at Sinai must also be seen as an extension of the Abrahamic covenant.

special treasure. As the following clause shows, God means that Israel will be His personal treasure within what is more generally owned (1 Chr. 29:3). Israel is separated by God's election from the world that belongs to Him.

■ **19:6 kingdom of priests and a holy nation.** Israel is to be a priestly royalty, a holy nation set apart from the world as a priest was set apart in ancient society. The emphasis here falls on Israel's relation to God rather than on any priestly ministry to the nations, yet Israel's relation to the Lord also bears witness to the world. Verses 4–6a reflect the Abrahamic covenant of Gen. 12:1–3. What this passage prescribes for Israel, the new covenant makes a reality for believers (1 Pet. 2:9–10; Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6).

and let them wash their clothes. 11 And let them be ready for the third day. For on the third day the LORD will come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. 12 You shall set bounds for the people all around, saying, 'Take heed to yourselves *that* you do *not* go up to the mountain or touch its base. [s]Whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death. 13 Not a hand shall touch him, but he shall surely be stoned or shot *with an arrow;* whether man or beast, he shall not live.' When the trumpet sounds long, they shall come near the mountain."

14 So Moses went down from the mountain to the people and sanctified the people, and they washed their clothes. 15 And he said to the people, "Be ready for the third day; [t]do not come near *your* wives."

16 Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were [u]thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who *were* in the camp [v]trembled. 17 And [w]Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. 18 Now [x]Mount Sinai *was* completely in smoke, because the LORD descended upon [y]it in fire. [z]Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and [3]the [a]whole mountain quaked greatly. 19 And when the blast of the trumpet sounded long and became louder and louder, [b]Moses spoke, and [c]God answered him by voice. 20 Then the LORD came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain. And the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.

21 And the LORD said to Moses, "Go down and warn the people, lest they break through [d]to gaze at the LORD, and many of them perish. 22 Also let the [e]priests who come near the LORD [f]consecrate themselves, lest the LORD [g]break out against them."

23 But Moses said to the LORD, "The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai; for You warned us, saying, [h]'Set bounds around the mountain and consecrate it.' "

24 Then the LORD said to him, "Away! Get down and then come up, you and Aaron with you. But do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the LORD, lest He break out against them." 25 So Moses went down to the people and spoke to them.

The Ten Commandments

20 And God spoke [a]all these words, saying:

2 [b]"I *am* the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, [c]out of the house of [1]bondage.

3 [d]"You shall have no other gods before Me.

4 [e]"You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness *of anything* that *is* in

12 [s]Ex. 34:3; Heb. 12:20

15 [t][1 Cor. 7:5]

16 [u]Heb. 12:18, 19 [v]Heb. 12:21

17 [w]Deut. 4:10

18 [x]Deut. 4:11; Judg. 5:5; Ps. 104:32; 144:5 [y]Ex. 3:2; 24:17; Deut. 5:4; 2 Chr. 7:1–3; Heb. 12:18 [z]Gen. 15:17; 19:28; Rev. 15:8 [a]Ps. 68:8; 1 Kin. 19:12; Jer. 4:24; [Heb. 12:26] [3]LXX *all the people*

19 [b]Heb. 12:21 [c]Neh. 9:13; Ps. 81:7

21 [d]1 Sam. 6:19

22 [e]Ex. 19:24; 24:5 [f]Lev. 10:3; 21:6–8 [g]2 Sam. 6:7, 8

23 [h]Ex. 19:12

CHAPTER 20

1 [a]Deut. 5:22

2 [b]Hos. 13:4 [c]Ex. 13:3; Deut. 7:8 [1]*slaves*

3 [d]Deut. 6:14; 2 Kin. 17:35; Jer. 25:6; 35:15

4 [e]Lev. 19:4; 26:1; Deut. 4:15–19; 27:15

■ **19:11 be ready for the third day.** Arrangements to ensure ritual purity (washing clothes, v. 10; abstention from sexual intercourse, v. 15; Lev. 15:18; 1 Sam. 21:4) and to safeguard the holiness of the mountain (vv. 12, 13) were commanded in preparation for the theophany, a special visual manifestation of divine presence.

come down upon Mount Sinai. The mountain was the LORD's place of meeting with His people, not His residence. The tabernacle was soon to be His earthly dwelling place.

■ **19:16 on the third day, in the morning.** God comes as promised on the morning of the third day. No natural explanation of vv. 16–19a (e.g., a volcanic eruption) is sufficient. This was a divine manifestation by storm and fire.

sound of the trumpet was very loud. Later, special occasions of worship were signaled by the blast of the horn (Num. 10:10).

■ **19:24 priests.** This may refer to those who discharged the duties of priesthood prior to the establishment of the Levitical priesthood.

■ **20:1–17** The Ten Commandments, or "Ten Words" of the covenant. These are expressions of the eternal law of God that transcend the Old and New Testaments. As God had created order in the heavens and earth with ten words (Gen. 1:3–29), so He creates order in society with ten words. The first four commandments describe how the people are to relate to God, while the remainder describe how God's people are to relate to each other (Deut. 4:13 note). See "The Three Purposes of the Law" at Deut. 13:10.

■ **20:1** See theological note "The Law of God."

God spoke all these words. God spoke only these commandments directly to the people (vv. 18–20 and notes; 19:9; Deut. 4:10–14; 5:22–27; 9:10; Neh. 9:13). What are called "words" here are elsewhere called "commandments" (34:28; Deut. 4:13; 10:4). The Hebrew for "word" (*dabar*) was the term for stipulations in the political treaties of the time.

The Decalogue (from the Greek term meaning "ten words") itself reflects the ancient treaty framework (Introduction: Date and Occasion). First comes the treaty preamble ("I am the LORD your God," v. 2), then the historical prologue ("who brought you out of the land of Egypt"). The commandments themselves are the treaty stipulations. God is Israel's Suzerain-King, to whom the people owe complete allegiance. The absence of penalties indicates that Decalogue is not a legal code but rather a foundational covenant document. These covenant principles are then applied in the "Covenant Code," a set of laws with penalties attached, which follows (20:22—23:19).

■ **20:2 your God.** God's claim comes first. Israel is His by right of creation and redemption. The Lord's covenant commands are given to those whom He has already brought to Himself from enslavement to Egypt (19:4), though not from enslavement to sin (chs. 32—34).

■ **20:3 before Me.** Lit. "before My face" or "in My presence." The Lord is a jealous God who already claims Israel as His (v. 5 note).

■ **20:4 carved image.** The term means something hewn from wood or stone. The prohibited image may be that of the Lord, since other deities have been excluded by v. 2, though the qualifying words "any likeness of anything" suggest that pagan idols are in view. Israel was to be distinguished from the nations by her imageless worship. Images are forbidden, not because there could be none, since God made mankind in His own image (Gen. 1:26, 27), but because God must reveal Himself, not be subject to human imagination. In His own time, God did provide His own image—Jesus Christ is the true image of the Godhead in bodily form (Col. 1:15; 2:19). See "Syncretism and Idolatry" at Hos. 2:13.

heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth;
5 [f]you shall not bow down to them nor [2]serve them. [g]For I, the LORD your God, *am* a
jealous God, [h]visiting[3] the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and
fourth *generations* of those who hate Me, 6 but [i]showing mercy to thousands, to those
who love Me and keep My commandments.

5 [f]Is. 44:15, 19
[g]Deut. 4:24
[h]Num. 14:18, 33
[2]*worship*
[3]*punishing*
6 [i]Deut. 7:9

The Law of God

Human beings were not created autonomous (that is, free to be a law to themselves) but theonomous—subject to the law of God. This was not a hardship, because God had created man in such a way that grateful obedience would bring him the highest happiness. Duty and delight would have coincided, as they did in Jesus (John 4:34; cf. Ps. 112:1; 119:14, 16, 47, 48, 97–113, 127, 128, 163–167). The fallen human heart hates God's law, both because it is a law and because it comes from God. Those who know Christ, however, find not only that they love the law and want to keep it, both to please God and out of gratitude for grace (Rom. 7:18–22; 12:1, 2), but also that the Holy Spirit leads them into a degree of obedience that was never theirs before (Rom. 7:6; 8:4–6; Heb. 10:16).

God's moral law is abundantly set forth in Scripture, in the Decalogue (the Ten Commandments), other statutes of Moses, sermons by the prophets, the teaching of Jesus, and the New Testament letters. The law reflects God's holy character and His purposes for created human beings. God commands the behavior that pleases Him and forbids what offends Him. Jesus summarizes the moral law in the two great commandments, to love God and to love your neighbor (Matt. 22:37–40). He says that on these two depend all the Old Testament moral instructions. The moral teaching of Christ and His apostles is the old law deepened and reapplied to new circumstances—life in the kingdom of God, where the Savior reigns, and in the post-Pentecost era of the Spirit, when God's people are called to live sanctified lives in the midst of a hostile world (John 17:6–19).

Biblical law is of various sorts. Moral laws command the personal and community behavior that is always our duty. The political laws of the Old Testament applied principles of the moral law to Israel's national situation when Israel was a theocracy, God's people on earth. The Old Testament laws about ceremonial purity, diet, and sacrifice were temporary enactments for purposes of instruction. They were canceled by the New Testament because their symbolic meaning had been fulfilled (Matt. 15:20; Mark 7:15–19; Acts 10:9–16; Heb. 10:1–14, 13:9, 10).

The mingling of moral, judicial, and ritual law in the Mosaic books carried the message that life under God is to be seen and lived, not compartmentally, but as a many-sided unity, and also that God's authority as legislator gave equal force to the entire code. However, the laws were of different kinds, with different purposes. The political and ceremonial laws were of limited application, while it seems clear both from the immediate context and from the rest of His teaching that Jesus' affirmation of the unchanging universal force of God's law relates to the moral law as such (Matt. 5:17–19; cf. Luke 16:16, 17).

God requires the total obedience of each person to all the implications of His law. As the *Westminster Larger Catechism,* Q. 99, says, the law binds "the whole man . . . unto obedience forever"; "it is spiritual, and so reacheth the understanding, will, affections, and all other powers of the soul as well as the words, works, and gestures." In other words, desires as well as actions must be right; Jesus condemns the hypocrisy that tries to hide inner corruption with an outward show (Matt. 15:7, 8, 23:25–28). Furthermore, the corollaries of the law are part of its content: "where a duty is commanded, the contrary sin is forbidden; and, where a sin is forbidden, the contrary duty is commanded." □

■ **20:5 jealous.** When used of God, this word describes His passion for His holy name, a zeal that demands the exclusive devotion of His people. It is employed when that claim is threatened by other deities (Deut. 6:15; Josh. 24:19).

third and fourth generations. The longest span of generations represented in a given household at any one time. The severity of God's judgment on subsequent generations warns those who love their children's children of the terrible consequences of their sin.

■ **20:6 showing mercy.** God's covenant mercy, or lovingkindness (Hebrew *hesed*) is His devotion to His people (15:13 note).

7 *j*"You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD *k*will not hold *him* guiltless who takes His name in vain.

8 *l*"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 *m*Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the *n*seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God. *In it* you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, *o*nor your stranger who *is* within your gates. 11 For *p*in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

12 *q*"Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be *r*long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you.

13 *s*"You shall not murder.

14 *t*"You shall not commit *u*adultery.

15 *v*"You shall not steal.

16 *w*"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

17 *x*"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; *y*you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that *is* your neighbor's."

The People Afraid of God's Presence

18 Now *z*all the people *a*witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain *b*smoking; and when the people saw *it,* they trembled and stood afar off. 19 Then they said to Moses, *c*"You speak with us, and we will hear; but *d*let not God speak with us, lest we die."

20 And Moses said to the people, *e*"Do not fear; *f*for God has come to test you, and *g*that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin." 21 So the people stood afar off, but Moses drew near *h*the thick darkness where God *was.*

The Law of the Altar

22 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'You have seen that I have talked with you *i*from heaven. 23 You shall not make *anything to be j*with Me—gods of silver or gods of gold you shall not make for yourselves. 24 An altar of *k*earth you shall make for Me, and you shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, *l*your sheep and your oxen. In every *m*place where I *4*record My name I will come to you, and I will *n*bless you. 25 And *o*if you make Me an altar of stone, you shall not build it of hewn stone; for if you

7 *j*Lev. 19:12 *k*Mic. 6:11

8 *l*Lev. 26:2

9 *m*Luke 13:14

10 *n*Gen. 2:2, 3 *o*Neh. 13:16–19

11 *p*Ex. 31:17

12 *q*Lev. 19:3 *r*Deut. 5:16, 33; 6:2; 11:8, 9

13 *s*Rom. 13:9

14 *t*Matt. 5:27 *u*Deut. 5:18

15 *v*Lev. 19:11, 13

16 *w*Deut. 5:20

17 *x*[Eph. 5:3, 5] *y*[Matt. 5:28]

18 *z*Heb. 12:18, 19 *a*Rev. 1:10, 12 *b*Ex. 19:16, 18

19 *c*Heb. 12:19 *d*Deut. 5:5, 23–27

20 *e*[Is. 41:10, 13] *f*[Deut. 13:3] *g*Is. 8:13

21 *h*Ex. 19:16

22 *i*Deut. 4:36; 5:24, 26

23 *j*Ex. 32:1, 2, 4

24 *k*Ex. 20:25; 27:1–8 *l*Ex. 24:5 *m*2 Chr. 6:6 *n*Gen. 12:2 *4cause My name to be remembered*

25 *o*Deut. 27:5

■ **20:7 takes His name in vain.** God's name was a gift of grace to Israel. Not through an idol, but in the name, Israel had access to God in worship. God's name is therefore to be revered. This command forbids the use of God's name in false worship, for incantations or divination, as well as for attesting falsehood or speaking blasphemy (Deut. 28:58). Jesus taught His disciples to pray that God would hallow His name, and Jesus hallowed the Father's name on the Cross (Matt. 6:9; John 12:27, 28).

■ **20:8 Sabbath.** The Hebrew word (*shabbat*) apparently derives from the verb meaning "to cease"—the Sabbath being the day that regular labor ceased. Exodus cites God's work of creation as the basis for the command (v. 11), while Deuteronomy bases the Sabbath ordinance on the deliverance from Egypt (Deut. 5:12 and note). The Sabbath ordinance is rooted in both the orders of creation and of redemption—it looks backward to God's good creation (Gen. 2:2, 3) and forward to the final redemptive Sabbath rest for God's people (Heb. 4:1–11). Just as circumcision was the sign of the Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 17), so the Sabbath becomes the sign of the Sinai covenant (31:13), reminding God's people of their place within God's purposes for creation and of their salvation from physical bondage in Egypt. Ultimately, the Sabbath points to Christ, our Creator and Redeemer, who brings rest to the people of God (Matt. 11:28; Col. 2:16, 17).

■ **20:10 do no work.** The Sabbath is not designed as a burden, but as a blessed release from hard labor (Mark 2:27). The holiness of the day separates it to the Lord so that it is enjoyed by sharing His rest, celebrating His work of creation and redemption (Deut. 5:15).

■ **20:12 your father and your mother.** With this fifth commandment, the Decalogue turns to human relations, beginning with the family. Honor toward parents anchors society, and binds children to parents in the community of faith. The promise and implied warning of this commandment are unique in this series. Disrespect for parents was a serious matter, for it also dishonored the Lord.

■ **20:13 murder.** The law distinguishes between manslaughter and premeditated murder. The verb here is never applied to Israel at war, and capital punishment was already authorized (Gen. 9:6; cf. Lev. 24:17; Num. 35:30–34). Human life is sacred because man bears God's image (Gen. 9:5, 6 and notes).

■ **20:14 adultery.** See "Marriage and Divorce" at Mal. 2:16.

■ **20:16** See "Honest Speech, Oaths, and Vows" at Neh. 5:12.

■ **20:18 they trembled.** The awe that recognizes God's power and glory deters sin (v. 20).

■ **20:19 You speak with us.** Moses' authority as God's mediator is acknowledged. That God actually did speak distinguishes Him from the false gods who could not (vv. 22, 23).

■ **20:24 burnt offerings . . . peace offerings.** See notes on Lev. 1:3–17 and 3:1. Only two types of sacrifices are briefly mentioned here; the list of sacrifices will be expanded in Lev. 1—7.

■ **20:25 tool . . . profaned.** The reasons for this prohibition are no longer clear. Some suggest that this provision was designed to prevent the Israelites from using the altars of Canaanite holy places, which typically were constructed of cut stones. The altar of burnt offering for the tabernacle was of wood, covered with bronze, but was hollow and filled with earth or uncut stones (27:8). See note on Deut. 27:5.

25 [p]Josh. 8:30, 31
26 [q]Ex. 28:42, 43

CHAPTER 21

1 [a]Ex. 24:3, 4; Deut. 4:14; 6:1 [1]*ordinances*
2 [b]Lev. 25:39–43; Deut. 15:12–18; Jer. 34:14
5 [c]Deut. 15:16, 17
6 [d]Ex. 12:12; 22:8, 9
7 [e]Neh. 5:5
8 [2]Lit. *is evil in the eyes of*
10 [f][1 Cor. 7:3, 5]
12 [g]Gen. 9:6; Lev. 24:17; Num. 35:30; [Matt. 26:52]
13 [h]Deut. 19:4, 5 [i]1 Sam. 24:4, 10, 18 [j]Num. 35:11; Deut. 19:3; Josh. 20:2
14 [k]Deut. 19:11, 12; [Heb. 10:26] [l]1 Kin. 2:28–34
16 [m]Deut. 24:7 [n]Gen. 37:28 [o]Ex. 22:4
17 [p]Lev. 20:9; Prov. 20:20; Matt. 15:4; Mark 7:10
19 [q]2 Sam. 3:29 [3]*exempt from punishment*
21 [r]Lev. 25:44–46
22 [4]*struggle* [5]Lit. *her children come out*

[p]use your tool on it, you have profaned it. 26 Nor shall you go up by steps to My altar, that your [q]nakedness may not be exposed on it.'

The Law Concerning Servants

21 "Now these *are* the [1]judgments which you shall [a]set before them: 2 [b]If you buy a Hebrew servant, he shall serve six years; and in the seventh he shall go out free and pay nothing. 3 If he comes in by himself, he shall go out by himself; if he *comes in* married, then his wife shall go out with him. 4 If his master has given him a wife, and she has borne him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master's, and he shall go out by himself. 5 [c]But if the servant plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,' 6 then his master shall bring him to the [d]judges. He shall also bring him to the door, or to the doorpost, and his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him forever.

7 "And if a man [e]sells his daughter to be a female slave, she shall not go out as the male slaves do. 8 If she [2]does not please her master, who has betrothed her to himself, then he shall let her be redeemed. He shall have no right to sell her to a foreign people, since he has dealt deceitfully with her. 9 And if he has betrothed her to his son, he shall deal with her according to the custom of daughters. 10 If he takes another *wife,* he shall not diminish her food, her clothing, [f]and her marriage rights. 11 And if he does not do these three for her, then she shall go out free, without *paying* money.

The Law Concerning Violence

12 [g]"He who strikes a man so that he dies shall surely be put to death. 13 However, [h]if he did not lie in wait, but God [i]delivered *him* into his hand, then [j]I will appoint for you a place where he may flee.

14 "But if a man acts with [k]premeditation against his neighbor, to kill him by treachery, [l]you shall take him from My altar, that he may die.

15 "And he who strikes his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.

16 [m]"He who kidnaps a man and [n]sells him, or if he is [o]found in his hand, shall surely be put to death.

17 "And [p]he who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.

18 "If men contend with each other, and one strikes the other with a stone or with *his* fist, and he does not die but is confined to *his* bed, 19 if he rises again and walks about outside [q]with his staff, then he who struck *him* shall be [3]acquitted. He shall only pay *for* the loss of his time, and shall provide *for him* to be thoroughly healed.

20 "And if a man beats his male or female servant with a rod, so that he dies under his hand, he shall surely be punished. 21 Notwithstanding, if he remains alive a day or two, he shall not be punished; for he *is* his [r]property.

22 "If men [4]fight, and hurt a woman with child, so that [5]she gives birth prematurely, yet no

■ **20:26** See note on 28:42.

■ **21:1—23:33** The Lord sets forth the ordinances of His covenant. Civil and penal laws are presented at 21:1—22:15; laws controlling morality at 22:16–27; 23:1–9; laws of worship at 20:22–26; 22:28–30; 23:10–19. Through 22:17 the statutes are in the form of case law ("If . . . then," with appropriate penalties); afterwards laws of the unconditionally imperative type ("you shall not") predominate. The purpose of these social codes was to regulate Israelite life in the Promised Land.

■ **21:1 judgments.** The Hebrew word here means "precedents," or guiding principles determined by case decisions. These laws apply the foundational Decalogue (20:1–17) to society.

■ **21:2 buy a Hebrew servant.** The case law appropriately commences with laws regulating slavery, for that had been Israel's position in Egypt. A person could sell himself or his wife into slavery because of poverty or debt (2 Kin. 4:1; Neh. 5:1–5; Amos 2:6), and an Israelite could also be sold by his father into slavery (v. 7). Though the Mosaic law allowed the practice of indentured servitude, abuses were carefully limited (Deut. 15:12 note)—such servitude was limited to six years (v. 2) and the rights of slaves were underscored. See note on 1 Pet. 2:18.

■ **21:6 to the judges.** The judges probably held court at God's sanctuary. Whether the door or doorpost is at the sanctuary or the home is not specified here, but Deut. 15:17 favors the latter. The piercing of the ear was a public indication of permanent slavery.

■ **21:7–11** The sale of a woman as a slave-wife seems intended, hence the protection.

■ **21:13 not lie in wait.** An instance of unintentional manslaughter is in view. See note on Deut. 19:4.

■ **21:15 strikes his father.** Such actions transgress the fifth commandment (20:12).

■ **21:16 kidnaps.** See note on 24:7.

■ **21:17 curses.** A further transgression of the fifth commandment. The Hebrew word for "curses" may denote other forms of overt dishonor to parents in addition to spoken curses.

■ **21:19 walks about outside with his staff.** Evidence that he is recovering from his injury.

■ **21:20 servant.** That the servant did not die immediately was taken as evidence the master did not intend to kill.

■ **21:21 his property.** While indentured slavery was accepted in the Old Testament, the clear implications of the Christian gospel led to its removal (1 Pet. 2:18 note). The laws governing Israel's life should be interpreted in light of their cultural and social setting. They restrained exploitation and oppression in recognition of man's "hardness of heart" (cf. Matt. 19:8).

■ **21:22 she gives birth prematurely.** Lit. "her children come out." The usual Hebrew word for "child" is used (as in v. 4 and 1:17, 18). The

harm follows, he shall surely be punished accordingly as the woman's husband imposes on him; and he shall [s]pay as the judges *determine.* 23 But if *any* harm follows, then you shall give life for life, 24 [t]eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, 25 burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

26 "If a man strikes the eye of his male or female servant, and destroys it, he shall let him go free for the sake of his eye. 27 And if he knocks out the tooth of his male or female servant, he shall let him go free for the sake of his tooth.

Animal Control Laws

28 "If an ox gores a man or a woman to death, then [u]the ox shall surely be stoned, and its flesh shall not be eaten; but the owner of the ox *shall be* [6]acquitted. 29 But if the ox [7]tended to thrust with its horn in times past, and it has been made known to his owner, and he has not kept it confined, so that it has killed a man or a woman, the ox shall be stoned and its owner also shall be put to death. 30 If there is imposed on him a sum of money, then he shall pay [v]to redeem his life, whatever is imposed on him. 31 Whether it has gored a son or gored a daughter, according to this judgment it shall be done to him. 32 If the ox gores a male or female servant, he shall give to their master [w]thirty shekels of silver, and the [x]ox shall be stoned.

33 "And if a man opens a pit, or if a man digs a pit and does not cover it, and an ox or a donkey falls in it, 34 the owner of the pit shall make *it* good; he shall give money to their owner, but the dead *animal* shall be his.

35 "If one man's ox hurts another's, so that it dies, then they shall sell the live ox and divide the money from it; and the dead *ox* they shall also divide. 36 Or if it was known that the ox tended to thrust in time past, and its owner has not kept it confined, he shall surely pay ox for ox, and the dead animal shall be his own.

Responsibility for Property

22 "If a man steals an ox or a sheep, and slaughters it or sells it, he shall [a]restore five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep. 2 If the thief is found [b]breaking in, and he is struck so that he dies, *there shall be* [c]no guilt for his bloodshed. 3 If the sun has risen on him, *there shall be* guilt for his bloodshed. He should make full restitution; if he has nothing, then he shall be [d]sold[1] for his theft. 4 If the theft is certainly [e]found alive in his hand, whether it is an ox or donkey or sheep, he shall [f]restore double.

5 "If a man causes a field or vineyard to be grazed, and lets loose his animal, and it feeds in another man's field, he shall make restitution from the best of his own field and the best of his own vineyard.

6 "If fire breaks out and catches in thorns, so that stacked grain, standing grain, or the field is consumed, he who kindled the fire shall surely make restitution.

7 "If a man [g]delivers to his neighbor money or articles to keep, and it is stolen out of the man's house, [h]if the thief is found, he shall pay double. 8 If the thief is not found, then the master of the house shall be brought to the [i]judges *to see* whether he has put his hand into his neighbor's goods.

9 "For any kind of trespass, *whether it concerns* an ox, a donkey, a sheep, or clothing, *or* for any kind of lost thing which *another* claims to be his, the [j]cause of both parties shall come

22 [s]Ex. 18:21, 22; 21:30; Deut. 22:18

24 [t]Lev. 24:20; Deut. 19:21; [Matt. 5:38–44; 1 Pet. 2:19–21]

28 [u]Gen. 9:5 [6]*exempt from punishment*

29 [7]*was inclined*

30 [v]Ex. 21:22; Num. 35:31

32 [w]Zech. 11:12, 13; Matt. 26:15; 27:3, 9 [x]Ex. 21:28

CHAPTER 22

1 [a]2 Sam. 12:6; Prov. 6:31; Luke 19:8

2 [b]Job 24:16; Matt. 6:19; 24:43; 1 Pet. 4:15 [c]Num. 35:27

3 [d]Ex. 21:2; Matt. 18:25 [1]Sold as a slave

4 [e]Ex. 21:16 [f]Prov. 6:31

7 [g]Lev. 6:1–7 [h]Ex. 22:4

8 [i]Ex. 21:6, 22; 22:28; Deut. 17:8, 9; 19:17

9 [j]Deut. 25:1; 2 Chr. 19:10

Hebrew verb describes the emergence of a child in Gen. 25:26; 38:28–30. There is no reason to limit the "harm" spoken of to the mother. If there is no lasting harm either to the mother or the child, compensation for the hurt inflicted is to be paid to the husband, fixed by a third party. Otherwise, the penalty is proportionate to the injury to the mother or child, even to "life for life." Although the harm to the woman or child was not intentional, there was culpable negligence in disregarding the welfare of the pregnant woman.

■ **21:24 eye for eye.** The fundamental principle is that punishment should fit the crime (Lev. 24:19, 20; Deut. 19:21). Similar statements are found in the laws of Hammurabi (c. 1750 B.C.). It seems that "eye for eye" was idiomatic for the principle of proportional justice, and that such penalties were not literally imposed (Deut. 19:21 note).

■ **21:28 If an ox gores.** Harm done by animals is the responsibility of the careless owner, and appropriate compensation must be paid. Since the ox had been involved in blood guilt, its flesh was not to be eaten.

■ **21:32 thirty shekels of silver.** The value of a slave's life was less than that of a freeman and was the betrayal value of Jesus (Matt. 26:15; cf. Zech. 11:12).

■ **22:1 restore.** Thieves who compounded their guilt by profiting from and disposing the stolen animals were to restore four or fivefold (cf. v. 4). More compensation was required in the case of oxen, which took longer to raise.

■ **22:3 If the sun has risen.** The killing of an unknown nighttime burglar did not incur bloodguilt, since confronting the burglar could endanger the homeowner's life. The daytime thief was readily identifiable and killing was not justified.

■ **22:4 double.** See note on v. 1.

■ **22:6 in thorns.** Thorns were used as hedges to keep animals out of fields (Mic. 7:4); they were also flammable and used for fuel (Ps. 58:9).

■ **22:8 to the judges.** If the thief was not found, the entrustee was brought to the sanctuary (21:6 note), where an oath of innocence was presumably sworn.

before the judges; *and* whomever the judges condemn shall pay double to his neighbor. [10] If a man delivers to his neighbor a donkey, an ox, a sheep, or any animal to keep, and it dies, is hurt, or driven away, no one seeing *it,* [11] *then* an [k]oath of the LORD shall be between them both, that he has not put his hand into his neighbor's goods; and the owner of it shall accept *that,* and he shall not make *it* good. [12] But [l]if, in fact, it is stolen from him, he shall make restitution to the owner of it. [13] If it is [m]torn to pieces *by a beast, then* he shall bring it as evidence, *and* he shall not make good what was torn.

[14] "And if a man borrows *anything* from his neighbor, and it becomes injured or dies, the owner of it not *being* with it, he shall surely make *it* good. [15] If its owner *was* with it, he shall not make *it* good; if it *was* hired, it came for its hire.

Moral and Ceremonial Principles

[16] [n]"If a man entices a virgin who is not betrothed, and lies with her, he shall surely pay the bride-price for her *to be* his wife. [17] If her father utterly refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money according to the [o]bride-price of virgins.

[18] [p]"You shall not permit a sorceress to live.

[19] [q]"Whoever lies with an animal shall surely be put to death.

[20] [r]"He who sacrifices to *any* god, except to the LORD only, he shall be utterly destroyed.

[21] [s]"You shall neither mistreat a [2]stranger nor oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

[22] [t]"You shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child. [23] If you afflict them in any way, *and* they [u]cry at all to Me, I will surely [v]hear their cry; [24] and My [w]wrath will become hot, and I will kill you with the sword; [x]your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless.

[25] [y]"If you lend money to *any of* My people *who are* poor among you, you shall not be like a moneylender to him; you shall not charge him [z]interest. [26] [a]If you ever take your neighbor's garment as a pledge, you shall return it to him before the sun goes down. [27] For that *is* his only covering, it *is* his garment for his skin. What will he sleep in? And it will be that when he cries to Me, I will hear, for I *am* [b]gracious.

[28] [c]"You shall not revile God, nor curse a [d]ruler of your people.

[29] "You shall not delay *to offer* [e]the first of your ripe produce and your juices. [f]The firstborn of your sons you shall give to Me. [30] [g]Likewise you shall do with your oxen *and* your sheep. It shall be with its mother [h]seven days; on the eighth day you shall give it to Me.

[31] "And you shall be [i]holy men to Me: [j]you shall not eat meat torn *by beasts* in the field; you shall throw it to the dogs.

Justice for All

23 "You [a]shall not circulate a false report. Do not put your hand with the wicked to be an [b]unrighteous witness. [2] [c]You shall not follow a crowd to do evil; [d]nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after many to pervert *justice.* [3] You shall not show partiality to a [e]poor man in his dispute.

[4] [f]"If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, you shall surely bring it back to

11 [k]Heb. 6:16
12 [l]Gen. 31:39
13 [m]Gen. 31:39
16 [n]Deut. 22:28, 29
17 [o]Gen. 34:12
18 [p]1 Sam. 28:3–10
19 [q]Lev. 18:23; 20:15, 16
20 [r]Ex. 32:8; 34:15
21 [s]Deut. 10:19 [2]*sojourner*
22 [t][James 1:27]
23 [u][Luke 18:7] [v]Ps. 18:6
24 [w]Ps. 69:24 [x]Ps. 109:9
25 [y]Lev. 25:35–37 [z]Ps. 15:5
26 [a]Deut. 24:6, 10–13
27 [b]Ex. 34:6, 7
28 [c]Eccl. 10:20 [d]Acts 23:5
29 [e]Ex. 23:16, 19 [f]Ex. 13:2, 12, 15
30 [g]Deut. 15:19 [h]Lev. 22:27
31 [i]Lev. 11:44; 19:2 [j]Ezek. 4:14

CHAPTER 23

1 [a]Ps. 101:5 [b]Deut. 19:16–21
2 [c]Gen. 7:1 [d]Lev. 19:15
3 [e]Deut. 1:17; 16:19
4 [f][Rom. 12:20]

■ **22:12 is stolen.** The entrustee was presumed to have been negligent.

■ **22:14 make it good.** In the owner's absence, the onus of proof fell on the borrower.

■ **22:15 came for its hire.** The cost of renting the animal was to cover the possibility of loss.

■ **22:16 If a man entices.** Laws on premarital intercourse required full responsibility from the male for consequences. The exploited person must be protected. See note on Deut. 22:22–29.

■ **22:18 sorceress.** Sorcery, the attempt to determine and influence the future through occult means, was strongly condemned (Deut. 18:9–13; 2 Kin. 21:6; Jer. 27:9–10; Mic. 5:12; Nah. 3:4). The future lay in God's hands alone (Deut. 18:9 note).

■ **22:20 destroyed.** Lit. "devoted to sacred use" or "put to the ban" (Deut. 20:17 note). If a sacred use was impossible the item was destroyed, as here. In Israel's holy war—by which God's judgment was executed against the Canaanites—the spoils were under the ban, devoted to God (Num. 21:2, 3; Josh. 7:11).

■ **22:21 stranger.** These individuals were temporary dwellers without family support, much as Israel had been in Egypt. Note that the laws in vv. 21–27 are absolutely stated, in contrast to case law (21:1 note).

■ **22:22 You shall not afflict.** Widows and orphans, who might lack family defenders, are God's special concern. He will hear their cry and avenge them.

■ **22:25 not charge him interest.** See note on Deut. 23:19.

■ **22:26 pledge.** See note on Deut. 24:6. A pledge was to be returned before hardship was caused by its absence (Deut. 24:10, 11; Amos 2:8).

■ **22:28 revile God.** This text is cited by Paul at Acts 23:5. To question duly appointed authority amounted to questioning God's authority (Rom. 13:1, 2). Neither God nor the ruler whose authority comes from Him were to be reviled.

■ **22:29 You shall not delay.** Because the firstfruits were symbolic of God's claim on all, Israelites were not to hold back this offering (13:2 note).

■ **22:31 torn by beasts.** Since the blood would not have been properly drained (Lev. 3:17; 7:22–27).

■ **23:4 your enemy's ox.** The covenant member is not to take advantage of an enemy's misfortune (perhaps a legal opponent here). See Matt. 5:43–48; Rom. 12:20, 21.

him again. 5 [g]If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying under its burden, and you would refrain from helping it, you shall surely help him with it.

6 [h]"You shall not pervert the judgment of your poor in his dispute. 7 [i]Keep yourself far from a false matter; [j]do not kill the innocent and righteous. For [k]I will not justify the wicked. 8 And [l]you shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the discerning and perverts the words of the righteous.

9 "Also [m]you shall not oppress a [1]stranger, for you know the heart of a stranger, because you were strangers in the land of Egypt.

The Law of Sabbaths

10 [n]"Six years you shall sow your land and gather in its produce, 11 but the seventh *year* you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave, the beasts of the field may eat. In like manner you shall do with your vineyard *and* your [2]olive grove. 12 [o]Six days you shall do your work, and on the seventh day you shall rest, that your ox and your donkey may rest, and the son of your female servant and the stranger may be refreshed.

13 "And in all that I have said to you, [p]be circumspect and [q]make no mention of the name of other gods, nor let it be heard from your mouth.

Three Annual Feasts

14 [r]"Three times you shall keep a feast to Me in the year: 15 [s]You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread (you shall eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded you, at the time appointed in the month of Abib; for in it you came out of Egypt; [t]none shall appear before Me empty); 16 [u]and the Feast of Harvest, the firstfruits of your labors which you have sown in the field; and [v]the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you have gathered in *the fruit of* your labors from the field.

17 [w]"Three times in the year all your males shall appear before the Lord [3]GOD.

18 [x]"You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened [y]bread; nor shall the fat of My [4]sacrifice remain until morning. 19 [z]The first of the firstfruits of your land you shall bring into the house of the LORD your God. [a]You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.

The Angel and the Promises

20 [b]"Behold, I send an Angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. 21 Beware of Him and obey His voice; [c]do not provoke Him, for He will [d]not pardon your transgressions; for [e]My name *is* in Him. 22 But if you indeed obey His voice and do all that I speak, then [f]I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries. 23 [g]For My Angel will go before you and [h]bring you in to the Amorites and the Hittites and the Perizzites and the Canaanites and the Hivites and the Jebusites; and I will [5]cut them

5 [g]Deut. 22:4

6 [h]Eccl. 5:8

7 [i]Eph. 4:25 [j]Matt. 27:4 [k]Rom. 1:18

8 [l]Prov. 15:27; 17:8, 23

9 [m]Ex. 22:21 [1]*sojourner*

10 [n]Lev.25:1–7

11 [2]*olive yards*

12 [o]Luke 13:14

13 [p]1 Tim. 4:16 [q]Josh. 23:7

14 [r]Ex. 23:17; 34:22–24

15 [s]Ex. 12:14–20 [t]Ex. 22:29; 34:20

16 [u]Ex. 34:22 [v]Deut. 16:13

17 [w]Deut. 16:16 [3]Heb. *YHWH*, usually translated LORD

18 [x]Ex. 34:25 [y]Deut. 16:4 [4]*feast*

19 [z]Deut. 26:2, 10 [a]Deut. 14:21

20 [b]Ex. 3:2; 13:15; 14:19

21 [c]Ps. 78:40, 56 [d]Deut. 18:19 [e]Is. 9:6

22 [f]Deut. 30:7

23 [g]Ex. 23:20 [h]Josh. 24:8, 11 [5]*annihilate them*

■ **23:9 stranger.** The substance of 22:21 is repeated; the legal context here (vv. 6–8) indicates that the stranger was not to be judicially victimized.

■ **23:11 seventh year.** Like the weekly Sabbath, on which it was patterned, the sabbatical year was intended for the good of man and of creation (20:8–11 and notes). It reminded Israel that God, the true owner of the land, had entrusted it to them (Lev. 25:2). The land was to lie fallow, and what grew of itself was reserved for the poor, who would not have been able to save sufficient food resources. Leviticus 26:34–35 suggests that the sabbatical year was not always observed, but it is clearly in place at Neh. 10:31.

■ **23:14 Three times . . . in the year.** Israel's three religious festivals were connected with the nation's agricultural cycle. The Feast of Unleavened Bread occurred in April or May in celebration of the early barley harvest. Seven weeks later came the Feast of Weeks, celebrating the harvest of other cereal crops such as wheat. Finally, the Feast of Tabernacles celebrated the final harvest and end of the agricultural season in the autumn (September).

■ **23:15 Feast of Unleavened Bread.** Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were closely associated—the Feast began the day after Passover. Some have argued that the Feast of Unleavened Bread was simply an agricultural festival, but its commemoration of the Exodus is clear here. See note on Deut. 16:9–12.

■ **23:16 The Feast of Harvest.** See v. 14; Deut. 16:9–12 and notes. Also known as the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost, by New Testament times this feast was associated with the giving of the law at Sinai. The new covenant counterpart is the gift of the Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2:1–39; cf. Rom. 8:23).

Feast of Ingathering. Also called the Feast of Tabernacles. See v. 14; Deut. 16:13–17 and notes.

end of the year. See note on 12:2.

■ **23:18 You shall not offer.** Though some argue that the details of this verse applied only to the Passover celebration (cf. 12:10), it is better understood as applying to all offerings. Fat portions kept overnight would not be fresh and were unworthy for offering. Leaven, representing the old harvest, was considered an impurity.

■ **23:19 firstfruits.** See notes on 13:2; 1 Cor. 15:20.

You shall not boil. See note on Deut. 14:21.

■ **23:20 an Angel.** The Angel of God's presence is mysteriously distinguished from God and yet identified with Him (v. 21; Gen. 16:7 note). The cloud that symbolized God's presence also marked the presence of the Angel (14:19).

■ **23:21** See "'This Is My Name': God's Self-disclosure" at 3:15.

■ **23:22 if you indeed obey.** The assurances of this verse resemble the protection clauses in the ancient Near Eastern suzerainty treaties (Introduction: Date and Occasion). See note on 20:1.

off. 24 You shall not [i]bow down to their gods, nor serve them, [j]nor do according to their works; [k]but you shall utterly overthrow them and completely break down their *sacred* pillars.

25 "So you shall [l]serve the LORD your God, and [m]He will bless your bread and your water. And [n]I will take sickness away from the midst of you. 26 [o]No one shall suffer miscarriage or be barren in your land; I will [p]fulfill the number of your days.

27 "I will send [q]My fear before you, I will [r]cause confusion among all the people to whom you come, and will make all your enemies turn *their* backs to you. 28 And [s]I will send hornets before you, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite from before you. 29 [t]I will not drive them out from before you in one year, lest the land become desolate and the beasts of the field become too numerous for you. 30 Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased, and you inherit the land. 31 And [u]I will set your [6]bounds from the Red Sea to the sea, Philistia, and from the desert to the [7]River. For I will [v]deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you shall drive them out before you. 32 [w]You shall make no [8]covenant with them, nor with their gods. 33 They shall not dwell in your land, lest they make you sin against Me. For *if* you serve their gods, [x]it will surely be a snare to you."

Israel Affirms the Covenant

24 Now He said to Moses, "Come up to the LORD, you and Aaron, [a]Nadab and Abihu, [b]and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship from afar. 2 And Moses alone shall come near the LORD, but they shall not come near; nor shall the people go up with him."

3 So Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the [1]judgments. And all the people answered with one voice and said, [c]"All the words which the LORD has said we will do." 4 And Moses [d]wrote all the words of the LORD. And he rose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve [e]pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel. 5 Then he sent young men of the children of Israel, who offered [f]burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD. 6 And Moses [g]took half the blood and put *it* in basins, and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar. 7 Then he [h]took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient." 8 And Moses took the blood, sprinkled *it* on the people, and said, "This is [i]the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you according to all these words."

On the Mountain with God

9 Then Moses went up, also Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, 10 and they [j]saw the God of Israel. And *there was* under His feet as it were a paved work of [k]sap-

CHAPTER 24

24 [i]Ex. 20:5; 23:13, 33 [j]Deut. 12:30, 31 [k]Num. 33:52

25 [l]Deut. 6:13 [m]Deut. 28:5 [n]Ex. 15:26

26 [o]Deut. 7:14; 28:4 [p]1 Chr. 23:1

27 [q]Ex. 15:16 [r]Deut. 7:23

28 [s]Josh. 24:12

29 [t]Deut. 7:22

31 [u]Gen. 15:18 [v]Josh. 21:44 [6]*boundaries* [7]Heb. *Nahar*, the Euphrates

32 [w]Ex. 34:12, 15 [8]*treaty*

33 [x]Ps. 106:36

1 [a]Lev. 10:1, 2 [b]Num. 11:16

3 [c]Ex. 19:8; 24:7 [1]*ordinances*

4 [d]Deut. 31:9 [e]Gen. 28:18

5 [f]Ex. 18:12; 20:24

6 [g]Heb. 9:18

7 [h]Heb. 9:19

8 [i][Luke 22:20]

10 [j][John 1:18; 6:46] [k]Ezek. 1:26

■ **23:24 sacred pillars.** These were stone pillars connected with Canaanite shrines. Though such monuments were earlier used in the worship of the Lord (Gen. 28:18), they were now forbidden.

■ **23:25 He will bless.** For a longer list of blessings, see Deut. 28:1–14.

■ **23:27 My fear.** See note on 15:14.

■ **23:28 hornets.** See note on Deut. 7:20.

■ **23:29 I will not drive them out.** The coming conquest would be gradual. The Israelites would not assume responsibility for the whole land until they were able to defend and care for it.

■ **23:31 bounds.** See note on Gen. 13:15.

Red Sea. Apparently a reference to the gulf of Aqaba on the southeast (13:18 note).

■ **23:32 make no covenant.** Israel was quick to disobey this command (Josh. 9). The collection of covenant laws ends as it had begun—with an emphasis upon the keeping of the first two commandments (20:1–4, 22).

■ **24:1–18** The terms of the covenant having been stipulated, the people ratified the covenant by agreeing to abide by its conditions (v. 3, 7; cf. 19:8).

■ **24:1 Now He said to Moses.** The Sinai narrative, which left off at 20:21, is resumed here. The mention of Aaron and his two sons speaks for the authenticity of the narrative, for the sons were later killed for an offence against God (Lev. 10:1–2).

■ **24:3 the words.** The Ten Commandments (20:1 note).

judgments. Presumably the Covenant Code (20:22—23:19). This may mark Moses' delivery of the Covenant Code, since all Israel had heard the Decalogue (20:1 note).

■ **24:4 Moses wrote.** See note on Deut. 31:9.

■ **24:5 young men.** There was no appointed priesthood as yet. The offerings sealed the covenant, indicating that God's acceptance of Israel was on the basis of blood atonement for sin.

■ **24:7 Book of the Covenant.** Usually this phrase is applied to the Covenant Code of 20:22—23:19 (20:1 note). Here it must also include the Ten Commandments (20:2–17) and perhaps other passages such as 19:5, 6.

■ **24:8 sprinkled it on the people.** The people are sprinkled with "the blood of the covenant," the blood that puts the covenant into effect (Heb. 9:16–22 and notes). The blood signified cleansing from sin so that the people might enter the covenant relation, and it underscored that the ultimate penalty for breaking the covenant was death. Jesus proclaimed the fulfillment of the symbolism at the Last Supper when He offered the cup: "This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26:28).

■ **24:10 they saw the God of Israel.** They saw a visible manifestation of the Lord, but not the fullness of His glory and power. Moses was later privileged to view the "goodness" and the "back" of God (33:19–23 and notes), though the limited character of the manifestation is emphasized.

feet. The description concentrates only on God's feet, an indication of the partial character of the divine manifestation.

paved work. Perhaps the vault of the sky under the throne (cf. Ezek. 1:26).

sapphire. The area beneath God's feet is compared to a pavement of blue lapis lazuli. This semiprecious stone was available in a natural form from Cyprus and Scythia, and in artificial form from Egypt.

phire stone, and it was like the [1]very[2] heavens in *its* clarity. [11] But on the nobles of the children of Israel He [m]did not [3]lay His hand. So [n]they saw God, and they [o]ate and drank.

[12] Then the LORD said to Moses, [p]"Come up to Me on the mountain and be there; and I will give you [q]tablets of stone, and the law and commandments which I have written, that you may teach them."

[13] So Moses arose with [r]his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up to the mountain of God. [14] And he said to the elders, "Wait here for us until we come back to you. Indeed, Aaron and [s]Hur *are* with you. If any man has a difficulty, let him go to them." [15] Then Moses went up into the mountain, and [t]a cloud covered the mountain.

[16] Now [u]the glory of the LORD rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. [17] The sight of the glory of the LORD *was* like [v]a consuming fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel. [18] So Moses went into the midst of the cloud and went up into the mountain. And [w]Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

Offerings for the Sanctuary

25 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: [2] "Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring Me an [1]offering. [a]From everyone who gives it willingly with his heart you shall take My offering. [3] And this *is* the offering which you shall take from them: gold, silver, and bronze; [4] blue, purple, and scarlet *thread*, fine linen, and goats' *hair*; [5] ram skins dyed red, [2]badger skins, and acacia wood; [6] [b]oil for the light, and [c]spices for the anointing oil and for the sweet incense; [7] onyx stones, and stones to be set in the [d]ephod and in the breastplate. [8] And let them make Me a [e]sanctuary,[3] that [f]I may dwell among them. [9] According to all that I show you, *that is*, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make *it*.

The Ark of the Testimony

[10] [g]"And they shall make an ark of acacia wood; two and a half cubits *shall be* its length, a cubit and a half its width, and a cubit and a half its height. [11] And you shall overlay it with pure gold, inside and out you shall overlay it, and shall make on it a molding of [h]gold all around. [12] You shall cast four rings of gold for it, and put *them* in its four corners; two rings *shall be* on

10 [l]Matt. 17:2 [2]Lit. *substance of heaven*

11 [m]Ex. 19:21 [n]Gen. 32:30 [o]1 Cor. 10:18 [3]*stretch out His*

12 [p]Ex. 24:2, 15 [q]Ex. 31:18; 32:15

13 [r]Ex. 32:17

14 [s]Ex. 17:10, 12

15 [t]Ex. 19:9

16 [u]Ex. 16:10; 33:18

17 [v]Deut. 4:26, 36; 9:3

18 [w]Ex. 34:28

CHAPTER 25

2 [a]Ex. 35:4–9, 21 [1]*heave offering*

5 [2]Or *dolphin*

6 [b]Ex. 27:20 [c]Ex. 30:23

7 [d]Ex. 28:4, 6–14

8 [e]Heb. 9:1, 2 [f][2 Cor. 6:16] [3]*sacred place*

10 [g]Ex. 37:1–9

11 [h]Ex. 37:2

■ **24:11 His hand.** His power (4:2 note). Not only did they see God, they ate and drank before Him. Similar meals in celebration of the conclusion of a covenant are recorded at Gen. 31:46; Ex. 18:12; Matt. 26:28.

■ **24:12–18** Moses ascends Mount Sinai to receive the covenant tablets and further instructions regarding Israel's worship and the tabernacle.

■ **24:14 Wait here for us.** This sets the scene for the golden calf incident in ch. 32.

■ **24:16 glory.** The term is used for a manifestation of the divine presence. The remainder of Exodus deals with the terms and conditions of God's dwelling with His people.

■ **25:1—31:8** This section goes into great detail regarding the divine pattern for the place where the Lord Himself would dwell among His people. The tabernacle and its ministry are the two central features—details of the tabernacle construction, and the precise elements, manner, and persons to be employed in God's service are carefully specified. The inauguration of the covenant had established God's kingship over Israel. That kingship was now to be appropriately recognized by the building of a residence for God as a symbol of His royal authority over Israel.

■ **25:1** The materials were to be gathered as freewill offerings from the treasures of the people (12:35; 36). Ironically, while these instructions were being given, the people were contributing gold for an idol at the foot of the mountain (32:1–4).

■ **25:3 gold, silver, and bronze.** The nearer the divine presence, the finer the material required. Metals and colored yarns are listed in descending order of value.

■ **25:4 blue.** Or, violet. Violet and purple dyes were obtained from shellfish; scarlet from an insect of the cochineal type. These colors were precious because of the cost of the dye. The blue of the tabernacle came to be particularly associated with the Lord (Num. 15:38).

fine linen. The fine linen was probably Egyptian.

goats' hair. The goat hair was undyed. It was to be used as a first covering for the tabernacle, and over it other skins would be placed (26:14).

■ **25:5 ram skins.** The ram skin leather was tanned or dyed, perhaps both.

badger. The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. Dolphin (text note) and sea cow skin are also possible. Such leather may have been cured only, in which case there may be a descending order of value in the skins selected.

acacia wood. A hard, long-lasting wood suitable for carving and overlay.

■ **25:6 spices.** See 30:23–25, 34–38.

■ **25:7 onyx stones.** The stones set in the two shoulder pieces of the ephod were of an engravable substance such as carnelian, onyx, or lapis lazuli (24:10 note; 28:9–12; 39:6–7).

■ **25:8 sanctuary.** See text note. This is a broader term than "tabernacle" and refers to any place of God's visible self-revelation, or theophany (15:17; Josh. 24:26; Ezek. 11:16).

■ **25:9 tabernacle.** The term means "dwelling place," designating a divine palace or temple. This tabernacle foreshadowed the dwelling of God with man in the Person of Jesus Christ (John 1:14 note).

pattern. The pattern shown to Moses was a model or plan of the tabernacle to be built (cf. the plan of the temple revealed to David in 1 Chr. 28:19). At the same time, it reflected the heavenly reality (Heb. 9:24). See Ezek. 43:10, 11.

■ **25:10 ark.** The revelation of the pattern for the earthly sanctuary begins with the plans for the ark of the covenant, the most holy object in the tabernacle. This ornate chest contained the Ten Commandments, the pot of manna, and Aaron's rod (16:33; 25:16; Num. 17:10; Deut. 10:1–5; Heb. 9:4). The cover of the ark was perhaps viewed as a footstool or throne for the Lord (vv. 18, 22 and notes).

cubit. A cubit was roughly the distance from the tip of the middle finger to the elbow—about eighteen inches.

one side, and two rings on the other side. 13 And you shall make poles *of* acacia wood, and overlay them with gold. 14 You shall put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark, that the ark may be carried by them. 15 [i]The poles shall be in the rings of the ark; they shall not be taken from it. 16 And you shall put into the ark [j]the Testimony which I will give you.

17 [k]"You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold; two and a half cubits *shall be* its length and a cubit and a half its width. 18 And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work you shall make them at the two ends of the mercy seat. 19 Make one cherub at one end, and the other cherub at the other end; you shall make the cherubim at the two ends of it *of one piece* with the mercy seat. 20 And [l]the cherubim shall stretch out *their* wings above, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and they shall face one another; the faces of the cherubim *shall be* toward the mercy seat. 21 [m]You shall put the mercy seat on top of the ark, and [n]in the ark you shall put the Testimony that I will give you. 22 And [o]there I will meet with you, and I will speak with you from above the mercy seat, from [p]between the two cherubim which *are* on the ark of the Testimony, about everything which I will give you in commandment to the children of Israel.

The Table for the Showbread

23 [q]"You shall also make a table of acacia wood; two cubits *shall be* its length, a cubit its width, and a cubit and a half its height. 24 And you shall overlay it with pure gold, and make a molding of gold all around. 25 You shall make for it a frame of a handbreadth all around, and you shall make a gold molding for the frame all around. 26 And you shall make for it four rings of gold, and put the rings on the four corners that *are* at its four legs. 27 The rings shall be close to the frame, as holders for the poles to bear the table. 28 And you shall make the poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold, that the table may be carried with them. 29 You shall make [r]its dishes, its pans, its pitchers, and its bowls for pouring. You shall make them of pure gold. 30 And you shall set the [s]showbread on the table before Me always.

The Gold Lampstand

31 [t]"You shall also make a lampstand of pure gold; the lampstand shall be of hammered work. Its shaft, its branches, its bowls, its *ornamental* knobs, and flowers shall be *of one piece.* 32 And six branches shall come out of its sides: three branches of the lampstand out of one side, and three branches of the lampstand out of the other side. 33 [u]Three bowls *shall be* made like almond *blossoms* on one branch, *with* an *ornamental* knob and a flower, and three bowls made like almond *blossoms* on the other branch, *with* an *ornamental* knob and a flower—and so for the six

15 [h]Num. 4:6; 1 Kin. 8:8

16 [i]Ex. 16:34; 31:18; Deut. 10:2; 31:26; 1 Kin. 8:9; Heb. 9:4

17 [k]Ex. 37:6; Heb. 9:5

20 [l]1 Kin. 8:7; 1 Chr. 28:18; Heb. 9:5

21 [m]Ex. 26:34; 40:20 [n]Ex. 25:16

22 [o]Ex. 29:42, 43; 30:6, 36; Lev. 16:2; Num. 17:4 [p]Num. 7:89; 1 Sam. 4:4; 2 Sam. 6:2; 2 Kin. 19:15; Ps. 80:1; Is. 37:16

23 [q]Ex. 37:10–16; 1 Kin. 7:48; 2 Chr. 4:8; Heb. 9:2

29 [r]Ex. 37:16; Num. 4:7

30 [s]Ex. 39:36; 40:23; Lev. 24:5–9

31 [t]Ex. 37:17–24; 1 Kin. 7:49; Zech. 4:2; Heb. 9:2; Rev. 1:12

33 [u]Ex. 37:19

■ **25:13 make poles.** So that the ark could be moved without being touched (cf. 2 Sam. 6:6, 7). Its holiness and portability are stressed.

■ **25:16 Testimony.** The stone tablets of the Sinai covenant. God's written word is His witness to the terms of His covenant. Scripture is not a fallible human witness to God, but God's infallible witness to man.

■ **25:17 mercy seat.** Lit. the "atonement covering," a place at which estranged parties were reconciled. "Atonement" is the normal English translation for the Hebrew root that means "to wipe away" or perhaps "to cover" the guilt of sin from God's eyes so that believers may be reconciled with God. Propitiation (i.e., turning away divine wrath and satisfying the claims of divine justice) is effected by blood sacrifice in the Old Testament (Lev. 17:11). This shedding of blood dramatizes the cost of forgiveness, and points forward to the sacrificial death of Christ on the Cross, where the symbolism of the Day of Atonement was fulfilled. Paul declares that Jesus has been made the propitiation for our sins (Rom. 3:25; cf. 1 John 2:2).

The "mercy seat" was the ark cover, which is sometimes mentioned in distinction from the ark as the place where God was propitiated. In the Septuagint (the Greek Old Testament), the Greek term for "mercy seat" (*hilasterion*) lit. means "place of propitiation" (also in Heb. 9:5).

■ **25:18 cherubim.** The cherubs were usually associated with the throne of the Lord as guardians or bearers of the throne (1 Sam. 4:4; Is. 37:16). In the pagan world cherubs were minor deities protective of palaces and temples; here they symbolize angelic guardians (Gen. 3:24). They were perhaps depicted as winged sphinxes (winged lions with human heads).

■ **25:22 I will meet.** The Lord is "the One who dwells between the cherubim" (1 Sam. 4:4; 2 Sam. 6:2; 2 Kin. 19:15; Ps. 80:1; 99:1; Is. 37:16). The mercy seat becomes the focal point for God's meeting with His people. The purpose of the Exodus was this meeting of God with man (29:45, 46).

■ **25:23–40** The revelation of the earthly sanctuary pattern continues with the plans for objects to be housed in the holy place—the table of showbread, its dishes, and the golden lampstand. Instructions for the altar of incense, also housed in the holy place, are given in 30:1–10.

■ **25:23 make a table.** Called "table of showbread" (Num. 4:7) and the "pure gold table" (Lev. 24:6, 2 Chr. 13:11), on which the showbread was arranged (1 Kin. 7:48). It stood on the north side of the holy place (40:22).

■ **25:29 make its dishes.** These dishes, all of pure gold, included a plate on which the showbread was placed, a small pan for the frankincense, a pitcher for the wine libation or drink offering, and a bowl into which this was poured (37:16; Lev. 24:7; Num. 4:7).

■ **25:30 showbread.** Lit. "bread of the presence," this bread could only be eaten by the priests (Lev. 24:8, 9). The careful placement of the twelve loaves (probably symbolizing the twelve tribes of Israel) before the Lord, and the eating of the loaves by the people's religious representatives (the priests) reminded Israel of its constant dependence on God's life-giving presence.

■ **25:31 lampstand.** The lampstand, which stood opposite the table in the holy place, was constructed of a talent (about seventy-five pounds) of hammered gold and patterned to suggest a growing almond tree. Perhaps symbolic of new life, the almond tree blossomed in late January, before other trees.

■ **25:32 six branches.** The pedestal and main upright represented the trunk of the tree, out of which grew three branches on either side. The six branches probably rose to the height of the central shaft, with seven lamps (the number signifying completeness) resting on the topmost ornaments of the shaft and branches (v. 37).

branches that come out of the lampstand. 34 [y]On the lampstand itself four bowls *shall be* made like almond *blossoms, each with* its *ornamental* knob and flower. 35 And *there shall be* a knob under the *first* two branches of the same, a knob under the *second* two branches of the same, and a knob under the *third* two branches of the same, according to the six branches that extend from the lampstand. 36 Their knobs and their branches *shall be of one piece;* all of it *shall be* one hammered piece of pure gold. 37 You shall make seven lamps for it, and [w]they shall arrange its lamps so that they [x]give light in front of it. 38 And its wick-trimmers and their trays *shall be* of pure gold. 39 It shall be made of a talent of pure gold, with all these utensils. 40 And [y]see to it that you make *them* according to the pattern which was shown you on the mountain.

34 [y]Ex. 37:20–22

37 [w]Ex. 27:21; 30:8; Lev. 24:3, 4; 2 Chr. 13:11 [x]Num. 8:2

40 [y]Ex. 25:9; 26:30; Num. 8:4; 1 Chr. 28:11, 19; Acts 7:44; [Heb. 8:5].

The Tabernacle

CHAPTER 26

26 "Moreover [a]you shall make the tabernacle *with* ten curtains *of* fine woven linen and blue, purple, and scarlet *thread;* with artistic designs of cherubim you shall weave them. 2 The

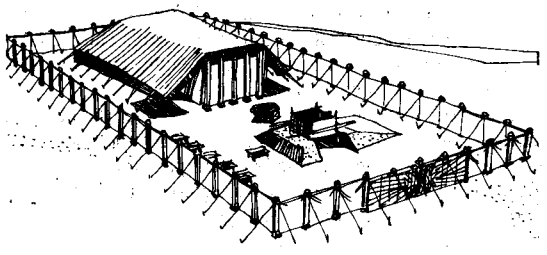
1 [a]Ex. 36:8–19

■ **26:1–37** God reveals the pattern for the tabernacle proper. The tabernacle, God's holy dwelling in the midst of His sinful people, served a double function. On the one hand, it protected the people from the dangers of unauthorized intrusion—the curtains of the Most Holy Place, of the holy place, and even of the courtyard stood between the people and the threat of God's consuming holy presence. On the other hand, the tabernacle provided a way of approach to the Lord. Worshipers entered the outer court to pray and offer sacrifices; the priests carried the people's petitions into the holy place; and once a year on the Day of Atonement the high priest entered the Most Holy Place, the very throne-room of the Almighty, with a blood atonement to meet the Lord at the mercy seat.

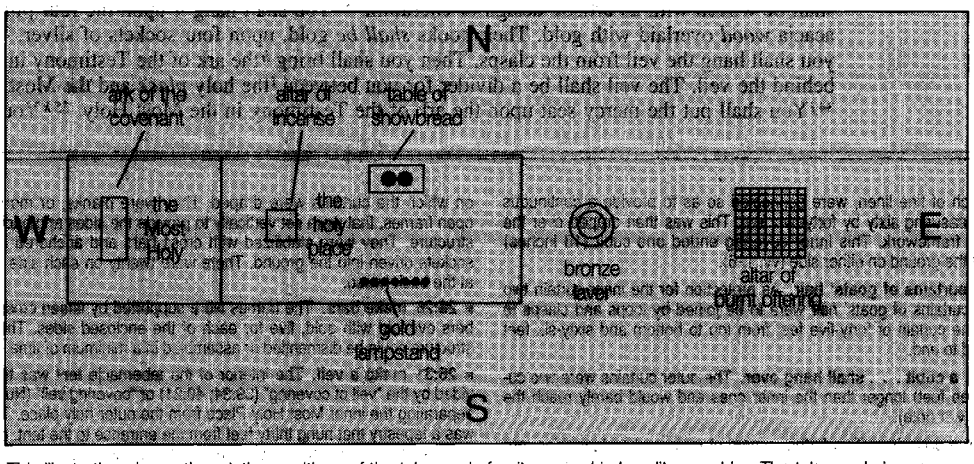
Nevertheless, the tabernacle was a provisional symbol, rather than the full reality, of God's dwelling with man. It symbolized the heavenly temple of God (Heb. 8:1–6; 9:1–15), and pointed forward to the dwelling of God with man in Jesus Christ, God incarnate in human flesh (John 1:14 note). As the author of Hebrews makes clear, the tabernacle and its ministry were insufficient in themselves (Heb. 10:1–4). Rather, they foreshadowed the final and completely sufficient priestly work of Christ (Heb. 10:11–18).

■ **26:1 tabernacle.** The tabernacle itself, which housed the holy and Most Holy places, was forty-five feet long, fifteen feet wide, and fifteen feet high. It was covered with ten curtains woven of expensive fabrics adorned with cherubim. Two sets of five curtains, forty-two feet by six

The Plan of the Tabernacle (26:1)



The tabernacle was to provide a place where God might dwell among His people. The term *tabernacle* sometimes refers to the tent, including the holy place and the Most Holy, which was covered with embroidered curtains. But in other places it refers to the entire complex, including the curtained court in which the tent stood.



This illustration shows the relative positions of the tabernacle furniture used in Israelite worship. The tabernacle is enlarged for clarity.

length of each curtain *shall be* twenty-eight cubits, and the width of each curtain four cubits. And every one of the curtains shall have [1]the same measurements. 3 Five curtains shall be coupled to one another, and *the other* five curtains *shall be* coupled to one another. 4 And you shall make loops of blue *yarn* on the edge of the curtain on the selvedge of *one* set, and likewise you shall do on the outer edge of *the other* curtain of the second set. 5 Fifty loops you shall make in the one curtain, and fifty loops you shall make on the edge of the curtain that *is* on the end of the second set, that the loops may be clasped to one another. 6 And you shall make fifty clasps of gold, and couple the curtains together with the clasps, so that it may be one tabernacle.

7 [b]"You shall also make curtains of goats' *hair,* to be a tent over the tabernacle. You shall make eleven curtains. 8 The length of each curtain *shall be* thirty cubits, and the width of each curtain four cubits; and the eleven curtains shall all have the same measurements. 9 And you shall couple five curtains by themselves and six curtains by themselves, and you shall double over the sixth curtain at the forefront of the tent. 10 You shall make fifty loops on the edge of the curtain that is outermost in *one* set, and fifty loops on the edge of the curtain of the second set. 11 And you shall make fifty bronze clasps, put the clasps into the loops, and couple the tent together, that it may be one. 12 The remnant that remains of the curtains of the tent, the half curtain that remains, shall hang over the back of the tabernacle. 13 And a cubit on one side and a cubit on the other side, of what remains of the length of the curtains of the tent, shall hang over the sides of the tabernacle, on this side and on that side, to cover it.

14 [c]"You shall also make a covering of ram skins dyed red for the tent, and a covering of badger skins above that.

15 "And for the tabernacle you shall [d]make the boards of acacia wood, standing upright. 16 Ten cubits *shall be* the length of a board, and a cubit and a half *shall be* the width of each board. 17 Two [2]tenons *shall be* in each board for binding one to another. Thus you shall make for all the boards of the tabernacle. 18 And you shall make the boards for the tabernacle, twenty boards for the south side. 19 You shall make forty sockets of silver under the twenty boards: two sockets under each of the boards for its two tenons. 20 And for the second side of the tabernacle, the north side, *there shall be* twenty boards 21 and their forty sockets of silver: two sockets under each of the boards. 22 For the far side of the tabernacle, westward, you shall make six boards. 23 And you shall also make two boards for the two back corners of the tabernacle. 24 They shall be [3]coupled together at the bottom and they shall be coupled together at the top by one ring. Thus it shall be for both of them. They shall be for the two corners. 25 So there shall be eight boards with their sockets of silver—sixteen sockets—two sockets under each of the boards.

26 "And you shall make bars of acacia wood: five for the boards on one side of the tabernacle, 27 five bars for the boards on the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the side of the tabernacle, for the far side westward. 28 The [e]middle bar shall pass through the midst of the boards from end to end. 29 You shall overlay the boards with gold, make their rings of gold *as* holders for the bars, and overlay the bars with gold. 30 And you shall raise up the tabernacle [f]according to its pattern which you were shown on the mountain.

31 [g]"You shall make a veil woven of blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* and fine woven linen. It shall be woven with an artistic design of cherubim. 32 You shall hang it upon the four pillars of acacia *wood* overlaid with gold. Their hooks *shall be* gold, upon four sockets of silver. 33 And you shall hang the veil from the clasps. Then you shall bring [h]the ark of the Testimony in there, behind the veil. The veil shall be a divider for you between [i]the holy *place* and the Most Holy. 34 [j]You shall put the mercy seat upon the ark of the Testimony in the Most Holy. 35 [k]You shall

2 [1]Lit. *one measure*

7 [b]Ex. 36:14

14 [c]Ex. 35:7, 23; 36:19

15 [d]Ex. 36:20–34

17 [2]Projections for joining, lit. *hands*

24 [3]Lit. *doubled*

28 [e]Ex. 36:33

30 [f]Ex. 25:9, 40; 27:8; 39:32; Num. 8:4; Acts 7:44; [Heb. 8:2, 5]

31 [g]Ex. 27:21; 36:35–38; Lev. 16:2; 2 Chr. 3:14; Matt. 27:51; Heb. 9:3; 10:20

33 [h]Ex. 25:10–16; 40:21 [i]Lev. 16:2; Heb. 9:2, 3

34 [j]Ex. 25:17–22; 40:20; Heb. 9:5

35 [k]Ex. 40:22; Heb. 9:2

feet, each of fine linen, were connected so as to provide a continuous piece measuring sixty by forty-two feet. This was then draped over the wooden framework. This inner covering ended one cubit (18 inches) short of the ground on either side (vv. 1–6).

■ **26:7 curtains of goats' hair.** As protection for the inner curtain two sets of curtains of goats' hair were to be joined by loops and clasps to make one curtain of forty-five feet from top to bottom and sixty-six feet from end to end.

■ **26:13 a cubit . . . shall hang over.** The outer curtains were two cubits (three feet) longer than the inner ones and would barely reach the ground (v. 1 note).

■ **26:14 a covering.** Two further covers of rams and badger skins, apparently arranged in that sequence, were made to protect the two inner sets.

■ **26:15 boards . . . standing upright.** These provided the framework on which the curtains were draped. They were planks, or more likely open frames, that were set vertically to provide the sides and back of the structure. They were stabilized with cross bars and anchored in silver sockets driven into the ground. There were twenty on each side and six at the back (west).

■ **26:26 make bars.** The frames were supported by fifteen cross members overlaid with gold, five for each of the enclosed sides. The entire structure could be dismantled or assembled in a minimum of time.

■ **26:31 make a veil.** The interior of the tabernacle tent was to be divided by the "veil of covering" (39:34; 40:21) or "covering veil" (Num. 4:5), separating the inner Most Holy Place from the outer holy place. This veil was a tapestry that hung thirty feet from the entrance to the tent, creating an inner cube fifteen feet square where the ark was kept. This was the Most Holy Place, the throne room where the Lord would meet with Israel's high priest on the Day of Atonement. The holy place, a royal antechamber, extended thirty feet from the veil to the tent entrance.

set the table outside the veil, and [l]the lampstand across from the table on the side of the tabernacle toward the south; and you shall put the table on the north side.

36 [m]"You shall make a screen for the door of the tabernacle, *woven of* blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* and fine woven linen, made by a weaver. 37 And you shall make for the screen [n]five pillars of acacia *wood,* and overlay them with gold; their hooks *shall be* gold, and you shall cast five sockets of bronze for them.

The Altar of Burnt Offering

27 "You shall make [a]an altar of acacia wood, five cubits long and five cubits wide—the altar shall be square—and its height *shall be* three cubits. 2 You shall make its horns on its four corners; its horns shall be of one piece with it. And you shall overlay it with bronze. 3 Also you shall make its pans to receive its ashes, and its shovels and its basins and its forks and its firepans; you shall make all its utensils of bronze. 4 You shall make a grate for it, a network of bronze; and on the network you shall make four bronze rings at its four corners. 5 You shall put it under the rim of the altar beneath, that the network may be midway up the altar. 6 And you shall make poles for the altar, poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with bronze. 7 The poles shall be put in the rings, and the poles shall be on the two sides of the altar to bear it. 8 You shall make it hollow with boards; [b]as it was shown you on the mountain, so shall they make *it.*

The Court of the Tabernacle

9 [c]"You shall also make the court of the tabernacle. For the south side *there shall be* hangings for the court *made of* fine woven linen, one hundred cubits long for one side. 10 And its twenty pillars and their twenty sockets *shall be* bronze. The hooks of the pillars and their bands *shall be* silver. 11 Likewise along the length of the north side *there shall be* hangings one hundred *cubits* long, with its twenty pillars and their twenty sockets of bronze, and the hooks of the pillars and their bands of silver.

12 "And along the width of the court on the west side *shall be* hangings of fifty cubits, with their ten pillars and their ten sockets. 13 The width of the court on the east side *shall be* fifty cubits. 14 The hangings on *one* side *of the gate shall be* fifteen cubits, *with* their three pillars and their three sockets. 15 And on the other side *shall be* hangings of fifteen *cubits, with* their three pillars and their three sockets.

16 "For the gate of the court *there shall be* a screen twenty cubits long, *woven of* blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* and fine woven linen, made by a weaver. It *shall have* four pillars and four sockets. 17 All the pillars around the court shall have bands of silver; their [d]hooks *shall be* of silver and their sockets of bronze. 18 The length of the court *shall be* one hundred cubits, the width fifty throughout, and the height five cubits, *made of* fine woven linen, and its sockets of bronze. 19 All the utensils of the tabernacle for all its service, all its pegs, and all the pegs of the court, *shall be* of bronze.

The Care of the Lampstand

20 "And [e]you shall command the children of Israel that they bring you pure oil of pressed olives for the light, to cause the lamp to [f]burn continually. 21 In the tabernacle of meeting,

35 [l]Ex. 40:24
36 [m]Ex. 36:37
37 [n]Ex. 36:38

CHAPTER 27

1 [a]Ex. 38:1; Ezek. 43:13
8 [b]Ex. 25:40; 26:30; Acts 7:44; [Heb. 8:5]
9 [c]Ex. 38:9–20
17 [d]Ex. 38:19
20 [e]Ex. 35:8, 28; Lev. 24:1–4 [f]Lit. *ascend*

■ **26:36 for the door.** The gate at the east end was covered by a screen supported by acacia pillars set in bronze sockets. The screen was made of the same material as the inner curtains and the veil, but was of embroidery rather than tapestry since it was further from the Most Holy Place.

■ **27:1 altar.** The altar of burnt offering was made of acacia wood overlaid with bronze. The horns at the four corners were important in the ritual and were smeared with blood at the consecration of priests (29:12), in the sin offering (Lev. 4:25, 30), and on the Day of the Atonement (Lev. 16:18). They gave sanctuary to anyone who laid hold of them (1 Kin. 1:50). The altar was hollow and was filled with earth or uncut stones (20:24).

■ **27:3 its utensils.** Accessories, being outside of the tabernacle proper, were all of bronze.

■ **27:4 make a grate.** The grate details and its function are obscure. It was placed halfway down the altar running from below the ledge of the altar to the ground. Perhaps it was for ventilation of the altar fire. The "rim" of v. 5 was apparently for priests to stand on when offering sacrifice.

■ **27:9 make the court.** The court was a rectangle of 150 by 75 feet enclosed by white linen hangings seven and one-half feet high separating it from the surrounding camp of Israel (v. 18).

■ **27:16 For the gate.** A thirty-foot opening on the east side was covered by a screen (v. 16). Fifty-six pillars (twenty on the north and south sides, ten on the west, and three on either side of the entrance on the east) in bronze sockets held up the linen hangings. Another four pillars supported the screen. Their arrangement is not specified; neither is the placement of the tabernacle within the courtyard. The pillars may have been held in place by pegs and guy ropes (35:18).

■ **27:18 length of the court.** The court apparently consisted of two equal seventy-five foot squares containing the tabernacle proper and the open space before it. The ark and the altar of burnt offering were the respective central objects. The eastern, open half of the court provided public space for sacrifices and the gathering of worshipers.

■ **27:20 pure oil . . . for the light.** Pure olive oil, which provided a virtually smoke-free light. The lamp was the golden lampstand that stood on the south side of the holy place (Lev. 24:1–4).

■ **27:21 tabernacle of meeting.** The tabernacle was so named because God and Israel's priestly representatives met there as determined

21 [f]Ex. 26:31, 33 [g]Ex. 30:8; 1 Sam. 3:3; 2 Chr. 13:11 [h]Ex. 28:43; 29:9; Lev. 3:17; 16:34; Num. 18:23; 19:21; 1 Sam. 30:25

CHAPTER 28

1 [a]Num. 3:10; 18:7 [b]Ps. 99:6; Heb. 5:4 [c]Ex. 24:1, 9; Lev. 10:1 [d]Ex. 6:23; Lev. 10:6, 16

2 [e]Ex. 29:5, 29; 31:10; 39:1–31; Lev. 8:7–9, 30 [f]*sacred*

3 [f]Ex. 31:6; 36:1 [g]Ex. 31:3; 35:30, 31; Is. 11:2; Eph. 1:17

4 [h]Ex. 28:15 [i]Ex. 28:6 [j]Ex. 28:31 [k]Ex. 28:39 [l]Lev. 8:7 [2]Ornamented vest

6 [m]Ex. 39:2–7; Lev. 8:7

8 [3]*ingenious work of*

9 [n]Ex. 35:27

10 [o]Gen. 29:31—30:24; 35:16–18

11 [p]Ex. 35:35

12 [q]Ex. 28:29, 30; 39:6, 7 [r]Lev. 24:7; Num. 31:54; Josh. 4:7; Zech. 6:14; 1 Cor. 11:24

15 [s]Ex. 39:8–21

17 [t]Ex. 39:10 [4]Or *ruby*

19 [5]Or *amber*

20 [6]Or *yellow jasper* [7]Or *carnelian*

[f]outside the veil which *is* before the Testimony, [g]Aaron and his sons shall tend it from evening until morning before the LORD. [h]*It shall be* a statute forever to their generations on behalf of the children of Israel.

Garments for the Priesthood

28 "Now take [a]Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister to Me as [b]priest, Aaron *and* Aaron's sons: [c]Nadab, Abihu, [d]Eleazar, and Ithamar. 2 And [e]you shall make [l]holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty. 3 So [f]you shall speak to all *who are* gifted artisans, [g]whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they may make Aaron's garments, to consecrate him, that he may minister to Me as priest. 4 And these *are* the garments which they shall make: [h]a breastplate, [i]an [2]ephod, [j]a robe, [k]a skillfully woven tunic, a turban, and [l]a sash. So they shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother and his sons, that he may minister to Me as priest.

The Ephod

5 "They shall take the gold, blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* and the fine linen, 6 [m]and they shall make the ephod of gold, blue, purple, *and* scarlet *thread,* and fine woven linen, artistically worked. 7 It shall have two shoulder straps joined at its two edges, and *so* it shall be joined together. 8 And the [3]intricately woven band of the ephod, which *is* on it, shall be of the same workmanship, *made of* gold, blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* and fine woven linen.

9 "Then you shall take two onyx [n]stones and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel: 10 six of their names on one stone and six names on the other stone, in order of their [o]birth. 11 With the work of an [p]engraver in stone, *like* the engravings of a signet, you shall engrave the two stones with the names of the sons of Israel. You shall set them in settings of gold. 12 And you shall put the two stones on the shoulders of the ephod *as* memorial stones for the sons of Israel. So [q]Aaron shall bear their names before the LORD on his two shoulders [r]as a memorial. 13 You shall also make settings of gold, 14 and you shall make two chains of pure gold like braided cords, and fasten the braided chains to the settings.

The Breastplate

15 [s]"You shall make the breastplate of judgment. Artistically woven according to the workmanship of the ephod you shall make it: of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* and fine woven linen, you shall make it. 16 It shall be doubled into a square: a span *shall be* its length, and a span *shall be* its width. 17 [t]And you shall put settings of stones in it, four rows of stones: *The first* row *shall be* a [4]sardius, a topaz, and an emerald; *this shall be* the first row; 18 the second row *shall be* a turquoise, a sapphire, and a diamond; 19 the third row, a [5]jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; 20 and the fourth row, a [6]beryl, an [7]onyx, and a jasper. They shall be set in gold settings. 21 And the stones shall have the names of the sons of Israel, twelve according to their names, *like* the engravings of a signet, each one with its own name; they shall be according to the twelve tribes.

22 "You shall make chains for the breastplate at the end, like braided cords of pure gold. 23 And you shall make two rings of gold for the breastplate, and put the two rings on the two ends of the breastplate. 24 Then you shall put the two braided *chains* of gold in the two rings which are on the ends of the breastplate; 25 and the *other* two ends of the two braided *chains* you shall fasten to the two settings, and put them on the shoulder straps of the ephod in the front.

by liturgical regulation. It is not identical with the tabernacle of meeting outside the camp where God met Moses (33:7 note; Num. 12:4).

■ **28:1—30:3** Having revealed the pattern of the earthly sanctuary (25:1—27:21), God now reveals the regulations for the priestly ministry of the sanctuary.

■ **28:1 minister to Me as priest.** First and foremost, the priests were to serve as mediators between God and man. As priests and representatives of a holy God, Aaron and his sons participated in the holiness of the tabernacle and were held to strict standards of ritual purity (Lev. 21:1—22:16). In addition to their ceremonial duties, such as offering sacrifices and caring for the place of worship, they acted as judges (Deut. 17:8–13), dispensed blessings (Num. 6:22–27), gave oracles (Num. 27:21), and taught God's law to the people (Deut. 33:10).

Nadab, Abihu. These two sons of Aaron were killed for unlawful activity (Lev. 10:1–2). Aaron was succeeded by Eleazar (Deut. 10:6).

■ **28:2 make holy garments.** The vestments of God's holy high priest were of paramount importance. They were designed for beauty and made of the same expensive materials as the tabernacle.

■ **28:6 the ephod.** This sleeveless linen garment decorated with colored thread was made from costly materials and reached from the breast down to the hips. It had shoulder straps with two onyx stones engraved with the names of the tribes, and a waistband (39:2–7). The breastplate that contained the Urim and Thummim was fastened to the ephod (v. 27; 1 Sam. 23:9–10).

■ **28:15 the breastplate.** This was a single piece of fabric, folded double to form a square pouch with gemstones bearing the names of the twelve tribes on its front (v. 21) and the Urim and Thummim inside (v. 30).

■ **28:22 chains.** Ropes of twisted gold thread connected the breast piece to the shoulder straps of the ephod.

26 "You shall make two rings of gold, and put them on the two ends of the breastplate, on the edge of it, which is on the inner side of the ephod. 27 And two *other* rings of gold you shall make, and put them on the two shoulder straps, underneath the ephod toward its front, right at the seam above the [s]intricately woven band of the ephod. 28 They shall bind the breastplate by means of its rings to the rings of the ephod, using a blue cord, so that it is above the intricately woven band of the ephod, and so that the breastplate does not come loose from the ephod.

29 "So Aaron shall [u]bear the names of the sons of Israel on the breastplate of judgment over his heart, when he goes into the holy *place,* as a memorial before the LORD continually. 30 And [v]you shall put in the breastplate of judgment the [g]Urim and the Thummim, and they shall be over Aaron's heart when he goes in before the LORD. So Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel over his heart before the LORD continually.

Other Priestly Garments

31 [w]"You shall make the robe of the ephod all of blue. 32 There shall be an opening for his head in the middle of it; it shall have a woven binding all around its opening, like the opening in a coat of mail, so that it does not tear. 33 And upon its hem you shall make pomegranates of blue, purple, and scarlet, all around its hem, and bells of gold between them all around: 34 a golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the hem of the robe all around. 35 And it shall be upon Aaron when he ministers, and its sound will be heard when he goes into the holy *place* before the LORD and when he comes out, that he may not die.

36 [x]"You shall also make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it, *like* the engraving of a signet:

HOLINESS TO THE LORD.

37 And you shall put it on a blue cord, that it may be on the turban; it shall be on the front of the turban. 38 So it shall be on Aaron's forehead, that Aaron may [y]bear the iniquity of the holy things which the children of Israel hallow in all their [i]holy gifts; and it shall always be on his forehead, that they may be [z]accepted before the LORD.

39 "You shall [a]skillfully weave the tunic of fine linen *thread,* you shall make the turban of fine linen, and you shall make the sash of woven work.

40 [b]"For Aaron's sons you shall make tunics, and you shall make sashes for them. And you shall make [2]hats for them, for glory and [c]beauty. 41 So you shall put them on Aaron your brother and on his sons with him. You shall [d]anoint them, [e]consecrate them, and [3]sanctify them, that they may minister to Me as priests. 42 And you shall make [f]for them linen trousers to cover their [4]nakedness; they shall [5]reach from the waist to the thighs. 43 They shall be on Aaron and on his sons when they come into the tabernacle of meeting, or when they come near [g]the altar to minister in the holy *place,* that they [h]do not incur [6]iniquity and die. [i]*It shall be* a statute forever to him and his descendants after him.

Aaron and His Sons Consecrated

29 "And this is what you shall do to them to hallow them for ministering to Me as priests: [a]Take one young bull and two rams without blemish, 2 and [b]unleavened bread, unleavened cakes mixed with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil (you shall make them of wheat flour). 3 You shall put them in one basket and bring them in the basket, with the bull and the two rams.

27 [s]*ingenious work of*

29 [u]Ex. 28:12

30 [v]Lev. 8:8; Num. 27:21; Deut. 33:8; 1 Sam. 28:6; Ezra 2:63; Neh. 7:65 [g]Lit. *Lights and the Perfections*

31 [w]Ex. 39:22–26

36 [x]Ex. 39:30, 31; Lev. 8:9; Zech. 14:20

38 [y]Ex. 28:43; Lev. 10:17; 22:9, 16; Num. 18:1; [Is. 53:11]; Ezek. 4:4–6; [John 1:29; Heb. 9:28; 1 Pet. 2:24] [z]Lev. 1:4; 22:27; 23:11; Is. 56:7 [i]*sacred*

39 [a]Ex. 35:35; 39:27–29

40 [b]Ex. 28:4; 39:27–29, 41; Ezek. 44:17, 18 [c]Ex. 28:2 [2]*headpieces* or *turbans*

41 [d]Ex. 29:7–9; 30:30; 40:15; Lev. 10:7 [e]Ex. 29:9; Lev. 8; Heb. 7:28 [3]*set them apart*

42 [f]Ex. 39:28; Lev. 6:10; 16:4; Ezek. 44:18 [4]*bare flesh* [5]Lit. *be*

43 [g]Ex. 20:26 [h]Lev. 5:1, 17; 20:19, 20; 22:9; Num. 9:13; 18:22 [i]Ex. 27:21; Lev. 17:7 [6]*guilt*

CHAPTER 29

1 [a]Lev. 8; [Heb. 7:26–28]

2 [b]Lev. 2:4; 6:19–23

■ **28:29 names of the sons of Israel.** Aaron carried this reminder of the nation he represented when he entered the holy place.

■ **28:30 the Urim and the Thummim.** Lit. "lights and perfections." These two Hebrew words begin with the first and last letters of the alphabet (cf. the "Alpha and Omega" of Rev. 1:18). There is no hint of how they functioned or what they were—perhaps stones of different colors, or two small objects engraved with symbols or letters of the alphabet. Whatever the Urim and Thummim were, they were used to receive oracles from God (Num. 27:21; Deut. 33:8; 1 Sam. 23:6–13; 28:6; Ezra 2:63).

■ **28:31 robe of the ephod.** This blue robe with bells was worn under the breast piece and ephod to identify and protect the priest when he entered an area of special sanctity.

■ **28:36 HOLINESS TO THE LORD.** On the turban of Aaron was fastened a plate or diadem. The same object is called a crown (29:6; 39:30; Lev. 8:9) and worn by kings (2 Sam. 1:10; 2 Kin. 11:12; Ps. 89:39). The engraved plate was of pure gold, and identified Aaron as set apart to the Lord and as Israel's representative.

■ **28:40 make tunics . . . sashes . . . hats.** The other priestly garments are only briefly described. The tunic seems to have been a long shift-like garment worn under the robe. These priestly garments were to be worn in God's presence (v. 43). Ordinary priests wore plain tunics, a less ornate sash, and a headdress different from the high priest's.

■ **28:42 linen trousers.** The undergarment was worn so as not to violate the command of 20:26. Ritual nakedness, so common in other ancient religions, was forbidden in Israel.

■ **29:1 hallow.** Or, "make them holy," set them apart from their fellow Israelites for God's service.

■ **29:2 bread . . . cakes . . . wafers.** Three kinds of grain offering were to be presented (cf. Lev. 2:4–10).

4 [c]Ex. 40:12
5 [d]Ex. 28:2 [e]Ex. 28:8
6 [f]Lev. 8:9
7 [g]Ex. 25:6; 30:25–31
8 [h]Ex. 28:39, 40
9 [i]Num. 3:10; 18:7; 25:13 [j]Ex. 28:41
10 [k]Lev. 1:4; 8:14
12 [l]Lev. 8:15 [m]Ex. 27:2; 30:2
13 [n]Lev. 1:8; 3:3, 4
14 [o]Lev. 4:11, 12, 21
15 [p]Lev. 8:18 [q]Lev. 1:4–9
16 [r]Ex. 24:6
18 [s]Ex. 20:24
19 [t]Lev. 8:22
21 [u]Ex. 30:25, 31 [v][Heb. 9:22]
23 [w]Lev. 8:26
24 [x]Lev. 7:30; 10:14
25 [y]Lev. 8:28
26 [z]Lev. 7:31, 34; 8:29
27 [a]Num. 18:11, 18
28 [b]Lev. 10:15 [c]Lev. 3:1; 7:34
29 [d]Ex. 28:2 [e]Num. 20:26, 28 [f]Num. 18:8
30 [g]Num. 20:28 [h]Lev. 8:35 [i]*sanctuary*
31 [j]Lev. 8:31

4 "And Aaron and his sons you shall bring to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, [c]and you shall wash them with water. 5 [d]Then you shall take the garments, put the tunic on Aaron, and the robe of the ephod, the ephod, and the breastplate, and gird him with [e]the intricately woven band of the ephod. 6 [f]You shall put the turban on his head, and put the holy crown on the turban. 7 And you shall take the anointing [g]oil, pour *it* on his head, and anoint him. 8 Then [h]you shall bring his sons and put tunics on them. 9 And you shall gird them with sashes, Aaron and his sons, and put the hats on them. [i]The priesthood shall be theirs for a perpetual statute. So you shall [j]consecrate Aaron and his sons.

10 "You shall also have the bull brought before the tabernacle of meeting, and [k]Aaron and his sons shall put their hands on the head of the bull. 11 Then you shall kill the bull before the LORD, *by* the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 12 You shall take *some* of the blood of the bull and put *it* on [l]the horns of the altar with your finger, and [m]pour all the blood beside the base of the altar. 13 And [n]you shall take all the fat that covers the entrails, the fatty lobe *attached* to the liver, and the two kidneys and the fat that *is* on them, and burn *them* on the altar. 14 But [o]the flesh of the bull, with its skin and its offal, you shall burn with fire outside the camp. It *is* a sin offering.

15 [p]"You shall also take one ram, and Aaron and his sons shall [q]put their hands on the head of the ram; 16 and you shall kill the ram, and you shall take its blood and [r]sprinkle *it* all around on the altar. 17 Then you shall cut the ram in pieces, wash its entrails and its legs, and put *them* with its pieces and with its head. 18 And you shall burn the whole ram on the altar. It *is* a [s]burnt offering to the LORD; it *is* a sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the LORD.

19 [t]"You shall also take the other ram, and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands on the head of the ram. 20 Then you shall kill the ram, and take some of its blood and put *it* on the tip of the right ear of Aaron and on the tip of the right ear of his sons, on the thumb of their right hand and on the big toe of their right foot, and sprinkle the blood all around on the altar. 21 And you shall take some of the blood that is on the altar, and some of [u]the anointing oil, and sprinkle *it* on Aaron and on his garments, on his sons and on the garments of his sons with him; and [v]he and his garments shall be hallowed, and his sons and his sons' garments with him.

22 "Also you shall take the fat of the ram, the fat tail, the fat that covers the entrails, the fatty lobe *attached to* the liver, the two kidneys and the fat on them, the right thigh (for it *is* a ram of consecration), 23 [w]one loaf of bread, one cake *made with* oil, and one wafer from the basket of the unleavened bread that *is* before the LORD; 24 and you shall put all these in the hands of Aaron and in the hands of his sons, and you shall [x]wave them *as* a wave offering before the LORD. 25 [y]You shall receive them back from their hands and burn *them* on the altar as a burnt offering, as a sweet aroma before the LORD. It *is* an offering made by fire to the LORD.

26 "Then you shall take [z]the breast of the ram of Aaron's consecration and wave it *as* a wave offering before the LORD; and it shall be your portion. 27 And from the ram of the consecration you shall consecrate [a]the breast of the wave offering which is waved, and the thigh of the heave offering which is raised, of *that* which *is* for Aaron and of *that* which is for his sons. 28 It shall be from the children of Israel *for* Aaron and his sons [b]by a statute forever. For it is a heave offering; [c]it shall be a heave offering from the children of Israel from the sacrifices of their peace offerings, *that is,* their heave offering to the LORD.

29 "And the [d]holy garments of Aaron [e]shall be his sons' after him, [f]to be anointed in them and to be consecrated in them. 30 [g]That son who becomes priest in his place shall put them on for [h]seven days, when he enters the tabernacle of meeting to minister in the [i]holy *place.*

31 "And you shall take the ram of the consecration and [j]boil its flesh in the holy place. 32 Then

■ **29:4 wash them with water.** Aaron and his sons could not enter the tabernacle until they had been ceremonially cleansed by washing and sacrifice had been made for them (cf. Heb. 7:26–28).

■ **29:5 take the garments.** Aaron and his sons were to be clothed with sacred garments symbolic of their office. Only Aaron is anointed (and thereby authorized to act as chief priest).

■ **29:9 consecrate.** Lit. "fill the hand," a Hebrew idiom for induction into office.

■ **29:10 have the bull brought.** Priests laid their hands on the bull calf to symbolize personal identification and substitution in this sin offering. Blood was smeared on the horns of the altar of burnt offering as for laymen, since Aaron and his sons were still unconsecrated (Lev. 4:25, 30; cf. Lev. 4:7). The remainder of the blood was poured at the bottom of the altar as for a sin offering. Certain parts were to be burned on the altar (v. 13), but the remainder was to be burned outside the camp as unclean (v. 14).

■ **29:15 one ram.** This ram was offered as a dedicatory burnt offering (Lev. 1:3–17 note).

■ **29:19 take the other ram.** The other ram was offered as a peace offering (Lev. 3:1 note).

■ **29:20 put it on the tip.** The ear, hands, and feet of the priests (extremities as parts for the whole) were cleansed from impurities to consecrate for service.

■ **29:22 the right thigh.** Normally part of the priest's portion (Lev. 7:32), this was also burned in this sacrifice for the priests.

■ **29:24 wave them.** The ceremonial waving symbolized their dedication as gifts to God.

■ **29:26 your portion.** Moses, since he was acting as priest, received the breast and the thigh of the ram as his portion; thereafter the priests were to receive these (Lev. 7:31–32).

Aaron and his sons shall eat the flesh of the ram, and the [j]bread that *is* in the basket, *by* the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 33 [k]They shall eat those things with which the atonement was made, to consecrate *and* to sanctify them; [l]but an outsider shall not eat *them,* because they *are* holy. 34 And if any of the flesh of the consecration offerings, or of the bread, remains until the morning, then [m]you shall burn the remainder with fire. It shall not be eaten, because it *is* holy.

35 "Thus you shall do to Aaron and his sons, according to all that I have commanded you. [n]Seven days you shall consecrate them. 36 And you [o]shall offer a bull every day *as* a sin offering for atonement. [p]You shall cleanse the altar when you make atonement for it, and you shall anoint it to sanctify it. 37 Seven days you shall make atonement for the altar and sanctify it. And the altar shall be most holy. [q]Whatever touches the altar must be holy.

The Daily Offerings

38 "Now this *is* what you shall offer on the altar: [r]two lambs of the first year, [s]day by day continually. 39 One lamb you shall offer [t]in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer [2]at twilight. 40 With the one lamb shall be one-tenth *of an ephah* of flour mixed with one-fourth of a hin of pressed oil, and one-fourth of a hin of wine *as* a drink offering. 41 And the other lamb you shall [u]offer [3]at twilight; and you shall offer with it the grain offering and the drink offering, as in the morning, for a sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the LORD. 42 *This shall be* [v]a continual burnt offering throughout your generations *at* the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the LORD, [w]where I will meet you to speak with you. 43 And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and *the tabernacle* [x]shall be sanctified by My glory. 44 So I will consecrate the tabernacle of meeting and the altar. I will also [y]consecrate both Aaron and his sons to minister to Me as priests. 45 [z]I will dwell among the children of Israel and will [a]be their God. 46 And they shall know that [b]I *am* the LORD their God, who [c]brought them up out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them. I *am* the LORD their God.

The Altar of Incense

30 "You shall make [a]an altar to burn incense on; you shall make it of acacia wood. 2 A cubit *shall be* its length and a cubit its width—it shall be square—and two cubits *shall be* its height. Its horns *shall be* of one piece with it. 3 And you shall overlay its top, its sides all around, and its horns with pure gold; and you shall make for it a [1]molding of gold all around. 4 Two gold rings you shall make for it, under the molding on both its sides. You shall place *them* on its two sides, and they will be holders for the poles with which to bear it. 5 You shall make the poles of acacia wood, and overlay them with gold. 6 And you shall put it before the [b]veil that *is* before the ark of the Testimony, before the [c]mercy seat that *is* over the Testimony, where I will meet with you.

7 "Aaron shall burn on it [d]sweet incense every morning; when [e]he tends the lamps, he shall burn incense on it. 8 And when Aaron lights the lamps [2]at twilight, he shall burn incense on it, a perpetual incense before the LORD throughout your generations. 9 You shall not offer [f]strange incense on it, or a burnt offering, or a grain offering; nor shall you pour a drink offering on it. 10 And [g]Aaron shall make atonement upon its horns once a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonement; once a year he shall make atonement upon it throughout your generations. It *is* most holy to the LORD."

The Ransom Money

11 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 12 [h]"When you take the census of the children of Israel for their number, then every man shall give [i]a[3] ransom for himself to the LORD, when you number them, that there may be no [j]plague among them when *you* number them. 13 [k]This is what

32 [j]Matt. 12:4

33 [k]Lev. 10:14, 15, 17 [l]Lev. 22:10

34 [m]Lev. 7:18; 8:32

35 [n]Lev. 8:33–35

36 [o]Heb. 10:11 [p]Ex. 30:26–29; 40:10, 11

37 [q]Num. 4:15; Hag. 2:11–13; Matt. 23:19

38 [r]Num. 28:3–31; 29:6–38 [s]Dan. 12:11

39 [t]Ezek. 46:13–15 [2]Lit. *between the two evenings*

41 [u]2 Kin. 16:15 [3]Lit. *between the two evenings*

42 [v]Ex. 30:8 [w]Ex. 25:22; 33:7, 9

43 [x]1 Kin. 8:11

44 [y]Lev. 21:15

45 [z][Rev. 21:3] [a]Gen. 17:8

46 [b]Ex. 16:12; 20:2 [c]Lev. 11:45

CHAPTER 30

1 [a]Ex. 37:25–29

3 [1]*border*

6 [b]Ex. 26:31–35 [c]Ex. 25:21, 22

7 [d]1 Sam. 2:28 [e]Ex. 27:20, 21

8 [2]Lit. *between the two evenings*

9 [f]Lev. 10:1

10 [g]Lev. 16:3–34

12 [h]Num. 1:2; 26:2 [i][1 Pet. 1:18, 19] [j]2 Sam. 24:15 [3]*the price of a life*

13 [k]Matt. 17:24

■ **29:38 day by day continually.** The requirements for the daily priestly offerings are reviewed (vv. 38–46). The author of Hebrews contrasts these daily sacrifices for sin (whose repetition pointed to their insufficiency) with the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ (Heb. 10:11–14).

■ **29:42–46** This passage states the goal of the Exodus (and of the book). God "brought them up out of the land of Egypt" that He might "dwell among them" (v. 46). The covenant relationship between God and His people is fundamentally one of communion between God and man (Gen. 17:7; Ex. 6:7).

■ **30:1 an altar to burn incense.** The altar was in front of the veil at the entrance to the Most Holy Place (v. 6). It was lit by the high priest morning and evening. The smoke that then covered the mercy seat protected the high priest from the divine presence (Lev. 16:13).

■ **30:12 take the census.** The half-shekel atonement money that accompanied each census witnessed to Israel's dependence on the Lord's mercy. Their lives were forfeit because of sin, and must be redeemed. The lesson of the Passover and the redemption of the firstborn is applied to all Israel (13:15; 22:29; Num. 3:40–51).

ransom. Lit. "atonement." The payment served as an act of individual atonement and was an assertion of God's rights over Israel.

■ **30:13 half a shekel.** In difficult times the amount was apparently reduced (Neh. 10:32).

everyone among those who are numbered shall give: half a shekel according to the shekel of the sanctuary [l](a shekel *is* twenty gerahs). [m]The half-shekel *shall be* an offering to the LORD. 14 Everyone included among those who are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an [4]offering to the LORD. 15 The [n]rich shall not give more and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel, when *you* give an offering to the LORD, to make atonement for yourselves. 16 And you shall take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and [o]shall [5]appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of meeting, that it may be [p]a memorial for the children of Israel before the LORD, to make atonement for yourselves."

The Bronze Laver

17 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 18 [q]"You shall also make a [6]laver of bronze, with its base also of bronze, for washing. You shall [r]put it between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar. And you shall put water in it, 19 for Aaron and his sons [s]shall wash their hands and their feet in water from it. 20 When they go into the tabernacle of meeting, or when they come near the altar to minister, to burn an offering made by fire to the LORD, they shall wash with water, lest they die. 21 So they shall wash their hands and their feet, lest they die. And [t]it shall be a [7]statute forever to them—to him and his descendants throughout their generations."

The Holy Anointing Oil

22 Moreover the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 23 "Also take for yourself [u]quality spices—five hundred *shekels* of liquid [v]myrrh, half as much sweet-smelling cinnamon (two hundred and fifty *shekels*), two hundred and fifty *shekels* of sweet-smelling [w]cane, 24 five hundred *shekels* of [x]cassia, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, and a [y]hin of olive oil. 25 And you shall make from these a holy anointing oil, an ointment compounded according to the art of the perfumer. It shall be [z]a holy anointing oil. 26 [a]With it you shall anoint the tabernacle of meeting and the ark of the Testimony; 27 the table and all its utensils, the lampstand and its utensils, and the altar of incense; 28 the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the laver and its base. 29 You shall consecrate them, that they may be most holy; [b]whatever touches them must be holy. 30 [c]And you shall anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that *they* may minister to Me as priests.

31 "And you shall speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'This shall be a holy anointing oil to Me throughout your generations. 32 It shall not be poured on man's flesh; nor shall you make *any other* like it, according to its composition. [d]It *is* holy, *and* it shall be holy to you. 33 [e]Whoever [8]compounds *any* like it, or whoever puts *any* of it on an outsider, [f]shall be [9]cut off from his people.' "

The Incense

34 And the LORD said to Moses: [g]"Take sweet spices, stacte and onycha and galbanum, and pure frankincense with *these* sweet spices; there shall be equal amounts of each. 35 You shall make of these an incense, a compound [h]according to the art of the perfumer, salted, pure, *and* holy. 36 And you shall beat *some* of it very fine, and put some of it before the Testimony in the tabernacle of meeting [i]where I will meet with you. [j]It shall be most holy to you. 37 But *as for* the incense which you shall make, [k]you shall not make any for yourselves, according to its [l]composition. It shall be to you holy for the LORD. 38 [l]Whoever makes *any* like it, to smell it, he shall be cut off from his people."

Artisans for Building the Tabernacle

31 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2 [a]"See, I have called by name Bezalel the [b]son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah. 3 And I have [c]filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all *manner of* workmanship, 4 to design artistic works, to work in gold, in silver, in bronze, 5 in cutting jewels for setting, in carving wood, and to work in all *manner of* workmanship.

6 "And I, indeed I, have appointed with him [d]Aholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of

13 [l]Lev. 27:25; Num. 3:47; Ezek. 45:12 [m]Ex. 38:26

14 [4]*contribution*

15 [n]Job 34:19; Prov. 22:2; [Eph. 6:9]

16 [o]Ex. 38:25–31 [p]Num. 16:40 [5]*give*

18 [q]Ex. 38:8; 1 Kin. 7:38 [r]Ex. 40:30 [6]*basin*

19 [s]Ex. 40:31, 32; Ps. 26:6; Is. 52:11; John 13:8, 10; Heb. 10:22

21 [t]Ex. 28:43 [7]*requirement*

23 [u]Song 4:14; Ezek. 27:22 [v]Ps. 45:8; Prov. 7:17 [w]Song 4:14; Jer. 6:20

24 [x]Ps. 45:8 [y]Ex. 29:40

25 [z]Ex. 37:29; 40:9; Lev. 8:10; Num. 35:25; Ps. 89:20; 133:2

26 [a]Ex. 40:9; Lev. 8:10; Num. 7:1

29 [b]Ex. 29:37; Num. 4:15; Hag. 2:11–13

30 [c]Ex. 29:7; Lev. 8:12

32 [d]Ex. 30:25, 37

33 [e]Ex. 30:38 [f]Gen. 17:14; Ex. 12:15; Lev. 7:20, 21 [8]*mixes* [9]Put to death

34 [g]Ex. 25:6; 37:29

35 [h]Ex. 30:25

36 [i]Ex. 29:42; Lev. 16:2 [j][Ex. 29:37; 30:32]; Lev. 2:3

37 [k]Ex. 30:32 [l]Lit. *proportion*

38 [l]Ex. 30:33

CHAPTER 31

2 [a]Ex. 35:30—36:1 [b]1 Chr. 2:20

3 [c]Ex. 28:3; 35:31; 1 Kin. 7:14; Eph. 1:17

6 [d]Ex. 35:34

■ **30:17–21** The priests washed their hands and feet when they approached the altar or entered the tabernacle for ministry. No dimensions are given for the basin, though Solomon's temple basins were massive (1 Kin. 7:38). Neglecting to wash might cause death—the holy God was not to be approached casually (vv. 20, 21).

■ **31:1–11** The tabernacle was to be constructed according to the divine design by gifted men who were supernaturally enabled by the Holy Spirit to do all the tasks required (vv. 3–6, 11). All the work was described to Moses by God and little room was left for creative variation (25:9).

■ **31:2 Bezalel.** The name is archaic and means "in El's [God's] shadow" (cf. 17:10 note).

■ **31:6 Aholiab.** Bezalel's assistant. His name means "the father is my tent."

Dan; and I have put wisdom in the hearts of all the [e]gifted artisans, that they may make all that I have commanded you: 7 [f]the tabernacle of meeting, [g]the ark of the Testimony and [h]the mercy seat that *is* on it, and all the furniture of the tabernacle— 8 [i]the table and its utensils, [j]the pure *gold* lampstand with all its utensils, the altar of incense, 9 [k]the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and [l]the laver and its base— 10 [m]the [l]garments of ministry, the holy garments for Aaron the priest and the garments of his sons, to minister as priests, 11 [n]and the anointing oil and [o]sweet incense for the holy *place*. According to all that I have commanded you they shall do."

The Sabbath Law

12 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 13 "Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: [p]'Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it *is* a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that *you* may know that I *am* the LORD who [q]sanctifies[2] you. 14 [r]You shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for *it is* holy to you. Everyone who [3]profanes it shall surely be put to death; for [s]whoever does *any* work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people. 15 Work shall be done for [t]six days, but the [u]seventh *is* the Sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does *any* work on the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. 16 Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations *as* a perpetual covenant. 17 It *is* [v]a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for [w]*in* six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.' "

18 And when He had made an end of speaking with him on Mount Sinai, He gave Moses [x]two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God.

The Gold Calf

32 Now when the people saw that Moses [a]delayed coming down from the mountain, the people [b]gathered together to Aaron, and said to him, [c]"Come, make us [l]gods that shall [d]go before us; for *as for* this Moses, the man who [e]brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him."

2 And Aaron said to them, "Break off the [f]golden earrings which *are* in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring *them* to me." 3 So all the people broke off the golden earrings which *were* in their ears, and brought *them* to Aaron. 4 [g]And he received *the gold* from their hand, and he fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molded calf.

Then they said, "This *is* your god, O Israel, that [h]brought you out of the land of Egypt!"

5 So when Aaron saw *it,* he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a [i]proclamation and said, "Tomorrow *is* a feast to the LORD." 6 Then they rose early on the next day, offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people [j]sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

6 [e]Ex. 28:3; 35:10, 35; 36:1

7 [f]Ex. 36:8 [g]Ex. 37:1–5 [h]Ex. 37:6–9

8 [i]Ex. 37:10–16 [j]Ex. 37:17–24

9 [k]Ex. 38:1–7 [l]Ex. 38:8

10 [m]Ex. 39:1, 41 [l]Or *woven garments*

11 [n]Ex. 30:23–33 [o]Ex. 30:34–38

13 [p]Ezek. 20:12, 20 [q]Lev. 20:8 [2]*consecrates*

14 [r]Ex. 20:8 [s]Num. 15:32–36 [3]*defiles*

15 [t]Ex. 20:9–11 [u]Gen. 2:2

17 [v]Ex. 31:13 [w]Gen. 1:31; 2:2, 3

18 [x][Ex. 24:12; 32:15, 16]

CHAPTER 32

1 [a]Ex. 24:18; Deut. 9:9–12 [b]Ex. 17:1–3 [c]Acts 7:40 [d]Ex. 13:21 [e]Ex. 32:8 [l]Or *a god*

2 [f]Ex. 11:2; 35:22

4 [g]Ex. 20:3, 4, 23 [h]Ex. 29:45, 46

5 [i]2 Kin. 10:20

6 [j]Ex. 32:17–19; Num. 25:2; 1 Cor. 10:7

■ **31:12–17** The Sabbath commandment is reiterated and designated as the covenant sign of the Mosaic covenant (Gen. 9:12 note). To keep God's Sabbath is to keep the covenant since the Sabbath is a sign of the special relationship between God and Israel. To disregard God's Sabbath was to disregard God's purposes for creation through His redemption of Israel.

■ **31:18 two tablets of the Testimony.** See note on Deut. 5:22. Some suggest that these were two identical copies. Consistent with ancient Near Eastern suzerainty treaties, one copy belonged to each treaty partner and the copies were housed in the respective sanctuaries. The ark was both the focal point of Israel's sanctuary and the special dwelling place of God. Hence, both copies were placed in the ark.

finger of God. See 8:19.

■ **32:1—34:35** God's continued mercy shown to the people of Israel in these chapters is striking indeed. Even after His mighty Exodus deliverance and miraculous provisions for them in the desert, they responded with complaints, recriminations, and the idolatrous worship of the golden calf (16:2, 3; 17:1–3; 32:1–6). We should note, however, that this section displays not only the treachery of Israel and the kindness of their God, but also the central role of Moses the mediator. Because the Lord was pleased with the mediator, He did not cast off the people and start anew to make a great nation out of Moses (32:10–14).

We should not conclude that Israel's continuing in God's favor was due solely to the merit of Moses as God's mediator. Rather, the ground of Moses' plea for mercy was his concern for God's glory and his appeal to the gracious covenant promises God had made to the patriarchs (32:11–14). The crisis of Israel's disloyalty, and the Lord's threat to destroy them, is resolved in the faithfulness of God revealed through the successful appeal of the man Moses, who knew and reached the heart of God.

■ **32:1 gathered together.** The phrase is ominous (used of the rebellion of Korah at Num. 16:3; 20:2). The problem is not with Moses' past leadership, but with his absence.

■ **32:4 calf.** The bull as a symbol of deity was common in the ancient world. Perhaps a symbol of Apis, the Egyptian fertility bull-god, was meant. Aaron himself may have presented the calf as a symbol of the true God, and he apparently attempted to blunt the apostasy by building an altar and announcing a festival to the Lord (v. 5). Noting that the Hebrew term translated "gods" and "god" in vv. 1 and 4 (*'elohim*) can be rendered as singular or plural (v. 1 text note), some have argued that the people were worshiping the calf as a symbol of the Lord (they would still have been guilty of idolatry, 20:4 note). But the shout of the people is reported here using the plural verb ("brought . . . out") with *'elohim*. The singular form is always used with this noun when it refers to the true God. The people were turning to the bull-god to lead them, in gross violation of 20:2 (cf. Acts 7:39–41).

■ **32:5 feast.** The first, second, third, and probably the seventh commandments were violated in this festival (v. 6 note; 20:2–7, 14).

■ **32:6 rose up to play.** They rose from their meal to engage in what was probably a fertility cult orgy (the bull-god Apis was the Egyptian god of fertility). That this festival involved sexual immorality is further indicated by the later reference to shameful lack of restraint (v. 25).

7 [k]Deut. 9:8–21; Dan. 9:14 [l]Gen. 6:11, 12

8 [m]Ex. 20:3, 4, 23; Deut. 32:17 [n]1 Kin. 12:28

9 [o]Ex. 33:3, 5; 34:9; Deut. 9:6; 2 Chr. 30:8; Is. 48:4; [Acts 7:51] [2]*stubborn*

10 [p]Deut. 9:14, 19 [q]Ex. 22:24 [r]Num. 14:12 [3]*destroy*

11 [s]Deut. 9:18, 26–29 [4]Lit. *the face of the* LORD

12 [t]Num. 14:13–19; Deut. 9:28; Josh. 7:9 [u]Ex. 32:14

13 [v]Gen. 22:16–18; [Heb. 6:13] [w]Gen. 12:7; 13:15; 15:7, 18; 22:17; 26:4; 35:11, 12; Ex. 13:5, 11; 33:1

14 [x]2 Sam. 24:16

15 [y]Deut. 9:15

16 [z]Ex. 31:18

19 [a]Deut. 9:16, 17

20 [b]Num. 5:17, 24; Deut. 9:21

21 [c]Gen. 26:10

22 [d]Ex. 14:11; Deut. 9:24

25 [e]Ex. 33:4, 5 [f]2 Chr. 28:19

7 And the LORD said to Moses, [k]"Go, get down! For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt [l]have corrupted *themselves.* 8 They have turned aside quickly out of the way which [m]I commanded them. They have made themselves a molded calf, and worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, [n]'This *is* your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!' " 9 And the LORD said to Moses, [o]"I have seen this people, and indeed it *is* a [2]stiff-necked people! 10 Now therefore, [p]let Me alone, that [q]My wrath may burn hot against them and I may [3]consume them. And [r]I will make of you a great nation."

11 [s]Then Moses pleaded with [4]the LORD his God, and said: "LORD, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? 12 [t]Why should the Egyptians speak, and say, 'He brought them out to harm them, to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from Your fierce wrath, and [u]relent from this harm to Your people. 13 Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You [v]swore by Your own self, and said to them, [w]'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of I give to your descendants, and they shall inherit *it* forever.' " 14 So the LORD [x]relented from the harm which He said He would do to His people.

15 And [y]Moses turned and went down from the mountain, and the two tablets of the Testimony *were* in his hand. The tablets *were* written on both sides; on the one *side* and on the other they were written. 16 Now the [z]tablets *were* the work of God, and the writing *was* the writing of God engraved on the tablets.

17 And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, "*There is* a noise of war in the camp."

18 But he said:

"*It is* not the noise of the shout of victory,
Nor the noise of the cry of defeat,
But the sound of singing I hear."

19 So it was, as soon as he came near the camp, that [a]he saw the calf *and* the dancing. So Moses' anger became hot, and he cast the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain. 20 [b]Then he took the calf which they had made, burned *it* in the fire, and ground *it* to powder; and he scattered *it* on the water and made the children of Israel drink *it.* 21 And Moses said to Aaron, [c]"What did this people do to you that you have brought *so* great a sin upon them?"

22 So Aaron said, "Do not let the anger of my lord become hot. [d]You know the people, that they *are set* on evil. 23 For they said to me, 'Make us gods that shall go before us; *as for* this Moses, the man who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.' 24 And I said to them, 'Whoever has any gold, let them break *it* off.' So they gave *it* to me, and I cast it into the fire, and this calf came out."

25 Now when Moses saw that the people *were* [e]unrestrained (for Aaron [f]had not restrained

■ **32:7 your people.** In righteous anger against their idolatry, God does not acknowledge the people as His own. Instead, He designates them to Moses as "your people."

■ **32:10 let Me alone.** Anticipating the intercession of Moses, God proposes to destroy the stiff-necked apostates and to make a new nation of Moses. If He were to do so, God would be setting aside His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Gen. 12:2; 26:4; 28:14).

■ **32:11** Moses rejects God's offer of v. 10. Instead, arguing on the basis of the honor of God's name (v. 12) and appealing to God's faithfulness to the covenant promises made to the patriarchs (v. 13), Moses pleads that God would continue to acknowledge Israel as His people.

■ **32:13 Israel.** The normal sequence would require "Jacob" (cf. 2:24; 3:6; Deut. 1:8), but the substitution is made by Moses to suit the occasion.

■ **32:14 the LORD relented.** See note on Gen. 6:6. Moses' intercessory prayer itself was also part of God's will and purpose to show His grace. But the effectiveness of Moses' intercession can only be described by characterizing the Lord in human terms: He relents and withholds the total judgment He had threatened. See "The Spiritual Nature of God" at Is. 66:1.

■ **32:16 work of God . . . writing of God.** Attention is emphatically drawn to the divine origin of the tablets to be smashed. See theological note "The Word of God: Scripture as Revelation."

■ **32:18 singing.** Moses replies in a short graphic poem with a threefold use of the word for "singing," which lit. reads: "Not the sound of singing victory, not the sound of singing defeat, but the sound of singing I hear."

■ **32:19 broke them.** The broken tablets of the covenant law powerfully picture the broken covenant (20:1 note).

■ **32:20 burned it.** Perhaps the calf was wooden with a golden overlay. Israel was forced to drink this symbol of their sin to demonstrate that they would bear the responsibility for it (cf. the water of bitterness that later was to be drunk by an adulteress, Num. 5:18–22).

■ **32:21–24** In Aaron's pathetic defense he blames the people for his own unfaithfulness, and even suggests a miraculous origin for the calf (v. 24). Aaron's conduct throughout this episode suggests that the Levitical priesthood was destined for failure from its inception (Heb. 5:2, 3; 9:7). Divine judgment upon Aaron was averted only by Moses' intercession (Deut. 9:20; 10:6–9 and note on 10:6).

them, to *their* shame among their enemies), [26] then Moses stood in the entrance of the camp, and said, "Whoever *is* on the LORD's side—*come* to me!" And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together to him. [27] And he said to them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Let every man put his sword on his side, and go in and out from entrance to entrance throughout the camp, and [g]let every man kill his brother, every man his companion, and every man his neighbor.' " [28] So the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And about three thousand men of the people fell that day. [29] [h]Then Moses said, [5]"Consecrate yourselves today to the LORD, that He may bestow on you a blessing this day, for every man has opposed his son and his brother."

27 [g]Num. 25:5–13
29 [h]Ex. 28:41; 1 Sam. 15:18, 22; Prov. 21:3; Zech. 13:3 [5]Lit. *Fill your hand*

The Word of God: Scripture as Revelation

Christianity is the true worship and service of the true God, mankind's Creator and Redeemer. It is a religion that rests on revelation: nobody would know the truth about God, nor be able to relate to Him in a personal way, had God not first acted to make Himself known. But God has so acted, and the sixty-six books of the Bible, thirty-nine written before Christ came and twenty-seven after, are together the record, interpretation, and expression of His self-disclosure. God and godliness are the Bible's uniting themes.

From one standpoint, the Scriptures ("scripture" means "writing") are the faithful testimony of the godly to the God whom they loved and served; from another standpoint, because they were composed through a unique exercise of divine superintendence, called "inspiration," they are God's own testimony and teaching in human language. The church calls these writings the Word of God because their authorship and contents are both of divine origin.

Decisive assurance that Scripture is from God and consists entirely of His wisdom and truth comes from Jesus Christ and His apostles, who taught in His name. Jesus, God incarnate, viewed His Bible (our Old Testament) as His heavenly Father's written instruction, which He no less than others must obey (Matt. 4:4, 7, 10; 5:17–20; 19:4–6; 26:31, 52–54; Luke 4:16–21; 16:17; 18:31–33; 22:37; 24:25–27, 45–47; John 10:35), and which He came to fulfill (Matt. 26:24; John 5:46). Paul described the Old Testament as entirely inspired or "God-breathed"—a product of God's Spirit, as is the whole creation also (Ps. 33:6; Gen. 1:2)—and written for our instruction (Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11; 2 Tim. 3:15–17). Peter affirms the divine origin of biblical teaching in 2 Pet. 1:21 and 1 Pet. 1:10–12, and so also by his manner of quoting does the writer to the Hebrews (Heb. 1:5–13; 3:7; 4:3; 10:5–7, 15–17; cf. Acts 4:25; 28:25–27).

Since the apostles' teaching about Christ is itself revealed truth in God-taught words (1 Cor. 2:12, 13), the church regards the New Testament, which records the apostolic witness, as completing the Scriptures. During the New Testament period itself Peter refers to Paul's letters as Scripture (2 Pet. 3:15, 16), and Paul apparently calls Luke's Gospel Scripture in 1 Tim. 5:18 (cf. Luke 10:7).

The idea of written directives from God Himself as a basis for godly living goes back to God's inscribing the Ten Commandments on stone tablets and prompting Moses to write His laws and the history of His dealings with His people (Ex. 32:15, 16; 34:1, 27, 28; Num. 33:2; Deut. 31:9). Digesting and living by this material was always central to true devotion for both leaders and others in Israel (Josh. 1:7, 8; 2 Kin. 17:13; 22:8–13; 1 Chr. 22:12, 13; Neh. 8; Ps. 119), and the principle that all must be governed by the Scriptures has passed into Christianity.

What Scripture says, God says; for, in a manner comparable only to the deeper mystery of the Incarnation, the Bible is both fully human and fully divine. So all its manifold contents—histories, prophecies, poems, songs, wisdom writings, sermons, statistics, letters, and whatever else—should be received as from God, and all that biblical writers teach should be revered as God's authoritative instruction. Christians should be grateful to God for the gift of His written Word, and conscientious in basing their faith and life entirely and exclusively upon it. □

■ **32:26 Whoever is on the LORD's side.** Only the Levites, Moses' own tribe, answered his call to arms to put down the rebellion. They were prepared to use God's sword of judgment against neighbors or even family members (v. 29; cf. Num. 25:1–9).

■ **32:29 Consecrate.** See note on 29:9.

30 [i]1 Sam. 12:20, 23 [j]2 Sam. 16:12 [k]Num. 25:13
31 [l]Deut. 9:18 [m]Ex. 20:23
32 [n]Ps. 69:28 [o]Dan. 12:1
33 [p][Ezek. 18:4; 33:2, 14, 15] [q]Ex. 17:14
34 [r]Ex. 3:17 [s]Ex. 23:20 [t]Deut. 32:35 [u]Ps. 89:32
35 [v]Neh. 9:18

CHAPTER 33

1 [a]Ex. 32:1, 7, 13 [b]Gen. 12:7
2 [c]Ex. 32:34 [d]Josh. 24:11
3 [e]Ex. 3:8 [f]Num. 16:21, 45 [g]Ex. 32:9; 33:5 [1]*destroy* [2]*stubborn*
4 [h]Num. 14:1, 39 [i]Ezra 9:3
5 [j][Ps. 139:23] [3]*jewelry*
7 [k]Ex. 29:42, 43 [l]Deut. 4:29
8 [m]Num. 16:27
9 [n]Ps. 99:7
10 [o]Ex. 4:31
11 [p]Num. 12:8 [q]Ex. 24:13

30 Now it came to pass on the next day that Moses said to the people, [i]"You have committed a great sin. So now I will go up to the LORD; [j]perhaps I can [k]make atonement for your sin." 31 Then Moses [l]returned to the LORD and said, "Oh, these people have committed a great sin, and have [m]made for themselves a god of gold! 32 Yet now, if You will forgive their sin—but if not, I pray, [n]blot me [o]out of Your book which You have written."

33 And the LORD said to Moses, [p]"Whoever has sinned against Me, I will [q]blot him out of My book. 34 Now therefore, go, lead the people to *the place* of which I have [r]spoken to you. [s]Behold, My Angel shall go before you. Nevertheless, [t]in the day when I [u]visit for punishment, I will visit punishment upon them for their sin."

35 So the LORD plagued the people because of [v]what they did with the calf which Aaron made.

The Command to Leave Sinai

33 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Depart *and* go up from here, you [a]and the people whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, [b]'To your descendants I will give it.' 2 [c]And I will send *My* Angel before you, [d]and I will drive out the Canaanite and the Amorite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite. 3 *Go up* [e]to a land flowing with milk and honey; for I will not go up in your midst, lest [f]I [1]consume you on the way, for you *are* a [g]stiff-necked[2] people."

4 And when the people heard this bad news, [h]they mourned, [i]and no one put on his ornaments. 5 For the LORD had said to Moses, "Say to the children of Israel, 'You *are* a stiff-necked people. I could come up into your midst in one moment and consume you. Now therefore, take off your [3]ornaments, that I may [j]know what to do to you.' " 6 So the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by Mount Horeb.

Moses Meets with the LORD

7 Moses took his tent and pitched it outside the camp, far from the camp, and [k]called it the tabernacle of meeting. And it came to pass *that* everyone who [l]sought the LORD went out to the tabernacle of meeting which *was* outside the camp. 8 So it was, whenever Moses went out to the tabernacle, *that* all the people rose, and each man stood [m]*at* his tent door and watched Moses until he had gone into the tabernacle. 9 And it came to pass, when Moses entered the tabernacle, that the pillar of cloud descended and stood *at* the door of the tabernacle, and *the* LORD [n]talked with Moses. 10 All the people saw the pillar of cloud standing *at* the tabernacle door, and all the people rose and [o]worshiped, each man *in* his tent door. 11 So [p]the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but [q]his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle.

■ **32:30 I will go up to the LORD.** Although the rebellion had been put down, Israel's guilt before God still loomed. Moses again had to leave Israel and climb the mountain to meet the Lord.

■ **32:32 blot me out of Your book.** As there was a register of Israel (cf. Num. 1—4), so God Himself has a register of His people (Ps. 56:8; Is. 4:3; Mal. 3:16). If God did not forgive His people, Moses asked to be disinherited with them (cf. vv. 10, 11). Note the similar attitude of Paul in Rom. 9:3.

■ **32:33 Whoever has sinned.** Moses' intercession is partially successful: God does not finally reject His people, but the sinful individuals will be judged. The limitations of Moses' mediatorial office and ministry point to the need for a greater Mediator who will present a full and efficacious atonement for sin (Heb. 3:1–6; 10:11–18). See "Christ the Mediator" at 1 Tim. 2:5.

■ **32:34 I will visit punishment.** Israel's punishment is presented as certain but undefined. Apparently, a plague was soon added as a temporary punishment (v. 35). Finally, that whole generation, except for a small remnant, died in the wilderness (Num. 14:27–34).

■ **33:1 you have brought out.** "You" suggests that God absolves Himself of responsibility for Israel since the covenant was broken (32:7 note).

■ **33:2 I will send My Angel before you.** There is no real contrast between the Lord and the Angel here, for the Angel who was to go before Israel had already been identified with the Lord (23:20–23; Gen. 16:7 and notes). The key to understanding God's proposal is found in v. 3 ("I will not go up in your midst"). At issue was God's gracious dwelling in the midst of the people (29:44–46). If God did not dwell in Israel's midst, then there would be no point in building the tabernacle; indeed, Israel could "depart" immediately without constructing it (v. 1). Instead, another arrangement, already in operation (described in vv. 7–11), would be continued. God would meet with Moses and with inquiring Israelites at a tent "outside the camp, far from the camp" (v. 7). This new "tabernacle of meeting" was not God's dwelling; Joshua lived there (v. 11). God only came from time to time to the entrance of the tent in the pillar of cloud to speak with Moses (vv. 9, 10).

■ **33:4 they mourned.** One might think that Israel would rejoice at the prospect of receiving their inheritance in the land without the threat of God's immediate presence. Instead, they mourned, for no longer would Israel be a nation of priests, enjoying immediate fellowship with God (19:3–6; 29:45, 46). This episode is one of the great crises of the Exodus story.

■ **33:5 take off your ornaments.** They stripped off the festive dress associated with idolatry (cf. Gen. 35:4) and assumed the posture of mourners. But this was remorse, not true repentance. They were and would continue to be a stiff-necked people. Still, there was a note of hope in God's words, "that I may know what to do to you."

■ **33:7 took . . . pitched.** The Hebrew verbal forms used here indicate this was the customary practice during the period at Sinai. This "tabernacle of meeting" was a temporary structure that served as a meeting place for God and Moses until the tabernacle proper could be built (v. 2 note).

outside . . . far from. The absence of God's presence from the camp is emphasized.

The Promise of God's Presence

12 Then Moses said to the LORD, "See, [r]You say to me, 'Bring up this people.' But You have not let me know whom You will send with me. Yet You have said, [s]'I know you by name, and you have also found grace in My sight.' 13 Now therefore, I pray, [t]if I have found grace in Your sight, [u]show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight. And consider that this nation *is* [v]Your people."

14 And He said, [w]"My Presence will go *with you,* and I will give you [x]rest."

15 Then he said to Him, [y]"If Your Presence does not go *with us,* do not bring us up from here. 16 For how then will it be known that Your people and I have found grace in Your sight, [z]except You go with us? So we [a]shall be separate, Your people and I, from all the people who *are* upon the face of the earth."

17 So the LORD said to Moses, [b]"I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name."

18 And he said, "Please, show me [c]Your glory."

19 Then He said, "I will make all My [d]goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. [e]I will be gracious to whom I will be [f]gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." 20 But He said, "You cannot see My face; for [g]no man shall see Me, and live." 21 And the LORD said, "Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. 22 So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you [h]in the cleft of the rock, and will [i]cover you with My hand while I pass by. 23 Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall [j]not be seen."

Moses Makes New Tablets

34 And the LORD said to Moses, [a]"Cut two tablets of stone like the first *ones,* and [b]I will write on *these* tablets the words that were on the first tablets which you broke. 2 So be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and present yourself to Me there [c]on the top of the mountain. 3 And no man shall [d]come up with you, and let no man be seen throughout all the mountain; let neither flocks nor herds feed before that mountain."

4 So he cut two tablets of stone like the first *ones.* Then Moses rose early in the morning and went up Mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him; and he took in his hand the two tablets of stone.

12 [r]Ex. 3:10; 32:34 [s]Ex. 33:17

13 [t]Ex. 34:9 [u]Ps. 25:4; 27:11; 86:11; 119:33 [v]Deut. 9:26, 29

14 [w]Is. 63:9 [x]Josh. 21:44; 22:4

15 [y]Ex. 33:3

16 [z]Num. 14:14 [a]Ex. 34:10

17 [b][James 5:16]

18 [c][1 Tim. 6:16]

19 [d]Ex. 34:6, 7 [e][Rom. 9:15, 16, 18] [f][Rom. 4:4, 16]

20 [g][Gen. 32:30]

22 [h]Is. 2:21 [i]Ps. 91:1, 4

23 [j][John 1:18]

CHAPTER 34

1 [a][Ex. 24:12; 31:18; 32:15, 16, 19] [b]Deut. 10:2, 4

2 [c]Ex. 19:11, 18, 20

3 [d]Ex. 19:12, 13; 24:9–11

■ **33:12 Moses said to the LORD.** Moses responds to the dismaying threat of vv. 1–3. He could not argue that Israel was not stiff-necked, or that the golden calf was an uncharacteristic aberration. He could only plead God's grace and covenant mercy. He did so by repeatedly asking for precisely what the Lord was threatening to withdraw: the revelation of His own Presence (vv. 13–18). Moses' faithful persistence in intercession was grounded in God's covenant promise of divine-human communion (6:7; 19:5, 6; Gen. 17:7 note), and reminds us of Jacob's persistent struggle with God in quest of divine blessing (Gen. 32:24–30).

whom You will send with me. Moses expresses his objection to the occasional presence of the Angel of the Lord (a mysterious and temporary form of divine manifestation, Gen. 16:7 note; 32:29; Judg. 13:17, 18) acting as a substitute for the immediate presence of God's glory in the midst of the camp (v. 2 note), a relationship epitomized by God's revelation of His covenant Name (3:15 note).

I know you by name. God had declared His electing knowledge of Moses (32:10; 33:11) and would repeat that assurance expressly (v. 17). Because the Lord knew Moses by name personally and intimately, Moses would know the Lord (Num. 12:6–8).

■ **33:13 Your way.** Moses would know the Lord Himself and His purposes for Israel.

■ **33:14 Presence.** Lit. "face." God Himself would go with Moses.

give you rest. Use of the singular pronoun "you" means that the promise of 3:13–15 for all Israel is now repeated for Moses alone.

■ **33:15 with us.** Moses prays for the Presence to go with "us," linking Israel with himself. If God chose not to go with His people by dwelling among them, it would be useless to go to the Promised Land. The goal was not just milk and honey in Canaan, but a holy land where God would dwell with His people.

■ **33:16 separate.** Israel's distinctness was grounded in the gracious presence of God Himself.

■ **33:17 found grace in My sight.** God includes Israel for Moses' sake; Israel was dependent upon Moses as mediator. Moses' intercession is a type of Christ's work as the new covenant Mediator (cf. Heb. 3; 9:16–22).

■ **33:18 show me Your glory.** The Lord had sealed His covenant with Israel by revealing Himself (24:9–11), and Moses now seeks a further revelation of God in His glory. His only hope for God's continuing mercy to Israel lay in God Himself. Tasting God's mercy, Moses yearned for a full disclosure. See "The Transfiguration of Jesus" at Mark 9:2.

■ **33:19 My goodness . . . proclaim the name.** Though the visible magnificence of this theophany is apparent from the text, the emphasis falls on a revelation to Moses of God's sovereign, gracious, and compassionate nature (cf. 34:5–7). In Jesus Christ, the glory of the gracious and compassionate God that was withheld even from Moses is displayed to believers through the Spirit (John 1:14; 2 Cor. 3:18).

on whom . . . to whom. The Lord is sovereign in His purposes of mercy (Rom. 9:14–16). See "The Purpose of God: Predestination and Foreknowledge" at Mal. 1:2.

■ **33:22** See "The Glory of God" at Ezek. 1:28.

■ **33:23 My back.** The Lord's goodness withheld what Moses could not bear and revealed all that he could bear.

■ **34:1 two tablets of stone.** The replacement of the tablets signals the renewal of the covenant (20:1 note).

■ **34:2, 3** The uniqueness of Moses' mediatorial office is emphasized. The encounter of ch. 19 is to be repeated, but this time with Moses only (cf. 19:24; 24:9).

5 [e]Ex. 19:9 [f]Ex. 33:19

6 [g]Neh. 9:17 [h]Rom. 2:4 [i]Ps. 108:4

7 [j]Ex. 20:6 [k]Ps. 103:3, 4 [l]Job 10:14

8 [m]Ex. 4:31

9 [n]Ex. 33:12–16 [o]Ex. 33:3 [p]Ps. 33:12; 94:14 [1]*stubborn*

10 [q]Deut. 5:2 [r]Ps. 77:14 [s]Ps. 145:6 [2]*wonderful acts*

11 [t]Deut. 6:25 [u]Ex. 23:20–33; 33:2

12 [v]Ex. 23:32, 33

13 [w]Deut. 12:3 [x]2 Kin. 18:4

14 [y][Ex. 20:3–5] [z][Is. 9:6; 57:15] [a][Deut. 4:24]

15 [b]Judg. 2:17 [c]Num. 25:1, 2 [d]1 Cor. 8:4, 7, 10

16 [e]Gen. 28:1 [f]Num. 25:1, 2

17 [g]Ex. 20:4, 23; 32:8

18 [h]Ex. 12:15, 16 [i]Ex. 12:2; 13:4

19 [j]Ex. 13:2; 22:29 [3]*the firstborn*

20 [k]Ex. 13:13 [l]Ex. 22:29; 23:15

21 [m]Ex. 20:9; 23:12; 31:15; 35:2

23 [n]Ex. 23:14–17

24 [o][Ex. 33:2]

25 [p]Ex. 12:10

5 Now the LORD descended in the [e]cloud and stood with him there, and [f]proclaimed the name of the LORD. 6 And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD [g]God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in [h]goodness and [i]truth, 7 [j]keeping mercy for thousands, [k]forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, [l]by no means clearing *the guilty,* visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation."

8 So Moses made haste and [m]bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped. 9 Then he said, "If now I have found grace in Your sight, O Lord, [n]let my Lord, I pray, go among us, even though we *are* a [o]stiff-necked[1] people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us as [p]Your inheritance."

The Covenant Renewed

10 And He said: "Behold, [q]I make a covenant. Before all your people I will [r]do [2]marvels such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation; and all the people among whom you *are* shall see the work of the LORD. For it *is* [s]an awesome thing that I will do with you. 11 [t]Observe what I command you this day. Behold, [u]I am driving out from before you the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite. 12 [v]Take heed to yourself, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land where you are going, lest it be a snare in your midst. 13 But you shall [w]destroy their altars, break their *sacred* pillars, and [x]cut down their wooden images 14 (for you shall worship [y]no other god, for the LORD, whose [z]name *is* Jealous, *is* a [a]jealous God), 15 lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they [b]play the harlot with their gods and make sacrifice to their gods, and *one of them* [c]invites you and you [d]eat of his sacrifice, 16 and you take of [e]his daughters for your sons, and his daughters [f]play the harlot with their gods and make your sons play the harlot with their gods.

17 [g]"You shall make no molded gods for yourselves.

18 "The Feast of [h]Unleavened Bread you shall keep. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, in the appointed time of the month of Abib; for in the [i]month of Abib you came out from Egypt.

19 [j]"All [3]that open the womb *are* Mine, and every male firstborn among your livestock, *whether* ox or sheep. 20 But [k]the firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb. And if you will not redeem *him,* then you shall break his neck. All the firstborn of your sons you shall redeem.

"And none shall appear before Me [l]empty-handed.

21 [m]"Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest; in plowing time and in harvest you shall rest.

22 "And you shall observe the Feast of Weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the Feast of Ingathering at the year's end.

23 [n]"Three times in the year all your men shall appear before the Lord, the LORD God of Israel. 24 For I will [o]cast out the nations before you and enlarge your borders; neither will any man covet your land when you go up to appear before the LORD your God three times in the year.

25 "You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leaven, [p]nor shall the sacrifice of the Feast of the Passover be left until morning.

■ **34:5–7** See " 'This Is My Name': God's Self-disclosure" at 3:15.

■ **34:5 the LORD descended.** The revelation promised in 33:19–23: Yahweh passed by and proclaimed His name. Moses received an overwhelming answer to his prayer (33:19 note).

■ **34:6, 7** This description of God is foundational for later Israelite piety (Num. 14:18; Neh. 9:17; Ps. 86:15; 103:8; 145:8; Joel 2:13; Jon. 4:2; Nah. 1:3). God's mercy is still proclaimed toward Israel despite her dismal failure (Hos. 11:8).

■ **34:6 abounding in goodness and truth.** "Goodness" here translates the Hebrew term (*hesed*) denoting God's covenant faithfulness and devotion to His people (15:13 note). Because of God's love and faithfulness, He will not abandon His people, but dwell among them in His tabernacle.

■ **34:9 go among us.** This is what the Lord said He would not do, because the people were too sinful, too "stiff-necked" (33:3, 5). Now Moses cites their sin as the very reason for the Presence of God. In effect, he is asking that the compassionate and merciful Lord of grace would dwell in His tabernacle among His people, and forgive their sin. Then comes the amazing request: "take us as Your inheritance." Moses does not say "give us our inheritance in the land" (cf. 33:2, 3), but "take us as Your special treasure in Your faithful love" (the thought contained in 19:5).

■ **34:11–16** God warns against apostate practices. The selection of cultic laws points to the area where Israel has sinned or is weak. Singular pronouns are used almost totally throughout, for God is making His covenant with Moses and with Israel through him (v. 27).

■ **34:13 wooden images.** Lit. "Asherah poles." These were cultic objects that represented the Canaanite goddess of fertility (Asherah), sacred trees or poles that stood beside the Baal altars (cf. Judg. 6:25). Israel must not be compromised by adopting the pagan practices of peoples in the land.

■ **34:14–16 no other god.** The theme continues with allusions to the first (vv. 14–16) and second commandments (v. 17). God has begun at the point of Israel's sin and with the Decalogue that was violated.

■ **34:18–26** This section parallels the laws in the Book of the Covenant (23:14–19).

26 [q]"The first of the firstfruits of your land you shall bring to the house of the LORD your God. You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk."

27 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write [r]these words, for according to the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel." 28 [s]So he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he neither ate bread nor drank water. And [t]He wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the [4]Ten Commandments.

The Shining Face of Moses

29 Now it was so, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai (and the [u]two tablets of the Testimony *were* in Moses' hand when he came down from the mountain), that Moses did not know that [v]the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him. 30 So when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him. 31 Then Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned to him; and Moses talked with them. 32 Afterward all the children of Israel came near, [w]and he gave them as commandments all that the LORD had spoken with him on Mount Sinai. 33 And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put [x]a veil on his face. 34 But [y]whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with Him, he would take the veil off until he came out; and he would come out and speak to the children of Israel whatever he had been commanded. 35 And whenever the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone, then Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with Him.

Sabbath Regulations

35 Then Moses gathered all the congregation of the children of Israel together, and said to them, [a]"These *are* the words which the LORD has commanded *you* to do: 2 Work shall be done for [b]six days, but the seventh day shall be a holy day for you, a Sabbath of rest to the LORD. Whoever does any work on it shall be put to [c]death. 3 [d]You shall kindle no fire throughout your dwellings on the Sabbath day."

Offerings for the Tabernacle

4 And Moses spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying, [e]"This *is* the thing which the LORD commanded, saying: 5 'Take from among you an offering to the LORD. [f]Whoever *is* of a willing heart, let him bring it as an offering to the LORD: [g]gold, silver, and bronze; 6 [h]blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* fine linen, and [i]goats' *hair;* 7 ram skins dyed red, badger skins, and acacia wood; 8 oil for the light, [j]and spices for the anointing oil and for the sweet incense; 9 onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod and in the breastplate.

Articles of the Tabernacle

10 [k]'All *who are* gifted artisans among you shall come and make all that the LORD has commanded: 11 [l]the tabernacle, its tent, its covering, its clasps, its boards, its bars, its pillars, and its sockets; 12 [m]the ark and its poles, *with* the mercy seat, and the veil of the covering; 13 the [n]table and its poles, all its utensils, [o]and the showbread; 14 also [p]the lampstand for the light, its utensils, its lamps, and the oil for the light; 15 [q]the incense altar, its poles, [r]the anointing oil, [s]the sweet incense, and the screen for the door at the entrance of the tabernacle; 16 [t]the altar of burnt offering with its bronze grating, its poles, all its utensils, *and* the laver and its base; 17 [u]the hangings of

26 [q]Ex. 23:19; Deut. 26:2

27 [r]Ex. 17:14; 24:4; Deut. 31:9

28 [s]Ex. 24:18 [t]Ex. 34:1, 4; Deut. 4:31; 10:2, 4 [4]Lit. *Ten Words*

29 [u]Ex. 32:15 [v]Matt. 17:2; 2 Cor. 3:7

32 [w]Ex. 24:3

33 [x][2 Cor. 3:13, 14]

34 [y][2 Cor. 3:13–16]

CHAPTER 35

1 [a]Ex. 34:32

2 [b]Ex. 20:9, 10; Lev. 23:3; Deut. 5:13 [c]Num. 15:32–36

3 [d]Ex. 12:16; 16:23

4 [e]Ex. 25:1, 2

5 [f]Ex. 25:2; 1 Chr. 29:14; Mark 12:41–44; 2 Cor. 8:10–12; 9:7 [g]Ex. 38:24

6 [h]Ex. 36:8 [i]Ex. 36:14

8 [j]Ex. 25:6; 30:23–25

10 [k]Ex. 31:2–6; 36:1, 2

11 [l]Ex. 26:1, 2; 36:14

12 [m]Ex. 25:10–22

13 [n]Ex. 25:23 [o]Ex. 25:30; Lev. 24:5, 6

14 [p]Ex. 25:31

15 [q]Ex. 30:1 [r]Ex. 30:25 [s]Ex. 30:34–38

16 [t]Ex. 27:1–8

17 [u]Ex. 27:9–18

■ **34:27 these words.** The commands of vv. 12–26.

■ **34:28 He wrote . . . the words of the covenant.** The Lord Himself wrote the Ten Commandments on the tablets (v. 1; 20:1 note).

■ **34:29 shone.** Lit. "sent out horns." Although the Hebrew root usually refers to horns, it would seem that rays of light are in view here (cf. Hab. 3:4). Moses' leadership was confirmed by the reflected light of God's glory.

■ **34:30 they were afraid to come near him.** The reaction of fear suggests the events of chs. 19; 20. Only when they drew near and conversed without harm were they reassured.

■ **34:33 put a veil on his face.** The purpose of the veil was not to calm the anxiety of the people, for Moses put on the veil only after the people had come near and after he had finished declaring the law to the people (vv. 31, 32). Rather, as Paul in 2 Cor. 3:13 makes clear, the veil was to keep the Israelites from seeing that the glory was fading away. According to Paul, this fading glory shows the temporary and inadequate character of the old Mosaic covenant and points to the need for a greater covenant Mediator—Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 3:12—4:6).

■ **35:1–3** The work on the tabernacle starts with an admonition to keep the Sabbath, just as the instructions for the work had concluded with such a reminder (31:12–18).

■ **35:4—39:43** This entire section is based on chs. 25—31 but follows a different order. While chs. 25—31 gave the instructions for the tabernacle, this section describes its construction. Beginning with the reiteration of instructions for the gathering of offerings and artisans (35:4–19), the narrative then moves logically to the gathering of materials and the recognition of artisans (35:20—36:7), the construction of the tabernacle parts and contents (36:8—38:31), the preparation of sacred vestments (39:1–31), the erection of the tabernacle (39:32—40:33), and finally to the climactic arrival of the glory of the Lord in the tabernacle (40:34–38).

the court, its pillars, their sockets, and the screen for the gate of the court; 18 the pegs of the tabernacle, the pegs of the court, and their cords; 19 [v]the [1]garments of ministry, for ministering in the holy *place*—the holy garments for Aaron the priest and the garments of his sons, to minister as priests.' "

The Tabernacle Offerings Presented

20 And all the congregation of the children of Israel departed from the presence of Moses. 21 Then everyone came [w]whose heart [2]was stirred, and everyone whose spirit was willing, *and* they [x]brought the LORD's offering for the work of the tabernacle of meeting, for all its service, and for the holy garments. 22 They came, both men and women, as many as had a willing heart, *and* brought [y]earrings and nose rings, rings and necklaces, all [z]jewelry of gold, that is, every man who *made* an offering of gold to the LORD. 23 And [a]every man, with whom was found blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* fine linen, goats' *hair,* red skins of rams, and [3]badger skins, brought *them.* 24 Everyone who offered an offering of silver or bronze brought the LORD's offering. And everyone with whom was found acacia wood for any work of the service, brought *it.* 25 All the women *who were* [b]gifted artisans spun yarn with their hands, and brought what they had spun, of blue, purple, *and* scarlet, and fine linen. 26 And all the women whose hearts [4]stirred with wisdom spun yarn of goats' *hair.* 27 [c]The rulers brought onyx stones, and the stones to be set in the ephod and in the breastplate, 28 and [d]spices and oil for the light, for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense. 29 The children of Israel brought a [e]freewill offering to the LORD, all the men and women whose hearts were willing to bring *material* for all kinds of work which the LORD, by the hand of Moses, had commanded to be done.

The Artisans Called by God

30 And Moses said to the children of Israel, "See, [f]the LORD has called by name Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; 31 and He has filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom and understanding, in knowledge and all manner of workmanship, 32 to design artistic works, to work in gold and silver and bronze, 33 in cutting jewels for setting, in carving wood, and to work in all manner of artistic workmanship.

34 "And He has put in his heart the ability to teach, *in* him and [g]Aholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan. 35 He has [h]filled them with skill to do all manner of work of the engraver and the designer and the tapestry maker, in blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* and fine linen, and of the weaver—those who do every work and those who design artistic works.

36 "And Bezalel and Aholiab, and every [a]gifted artisan in whom the LORD has put wisdom and understanding, to know how to do all manner of work for the service of the [b]sanctuary,[1] shall do according to all that the LORD has commanded."

The People Give More than Enough

2 Then Moses called Bezalel and Aholiab, and every gifted artisan in whose heart the LORD had put wisdom, everyone [c]whose heart [2]was stirred, to come and do the work. 3 And they received from Moses all the [d]offering which the children of Israel [e]had brought for the work of the service of making the sanctuary. So they continued bringing to him freewill offerings every morning. 4 Then all the craftsmen who were doing all the work of the sanctuary came, each from the work he was doing, 5 and they spoke to Moses, saying, [f]"The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work which the LORD commanded *us* to do."

6 So Moses gave a commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, "Let neither man nor woman do any more work for the offering of the sanctuary." And the people were restrained from bringing, 7 for the material they had was sufficient for all the work to be done—indeed too [g]much.

Building the Tabernacle

8 [h]Then all the gifted artisans among them who worked on the tabernacle made ten curtains woven of fine linen, and of blue, purple, and scarlet thread; *with* artistic designs of cherubim they made them. 9 The length of each curtain *was* twenty-eight cubits, and the width of each curtain four cubits; the curtains *were* all the same size. 10 And he coupled five curtains to one an-

19 [v]Ex. 31:10; 39:1, 41 [1]Or *woven garments*

21 [w]Ex. 25:2; 35:5, 22, 26, 29; 36:2 [x]Ex. 35:24 [2]Lit. *lifted him up*

22 [y]Ex. 32:2, 3 [z]Ex. 11:2

23 [a]1 Chr. 29:8 [3]Or *dolphin*

25 [b]Ex. 28:3; 31:6; 36:1

26 [4]Lit. *lifted them up*

27 [c]1 Chr. 29:6; Ezra 2:68

28 [d]Ex. 30:23

29 [e]Ex. 35:5, 21; 36:3; 1 Chr. 29:9

30 [f]Ex. 31:1–6

34 [g]Ex. 31:6

35 [h]Ex. 31:3, 6; 35:31; 1 Kin. 7:14; 2 Chr. 2:14; Is. 28:26

CHAPTER 36

1 [a]Ex. 28:3; 31:6; 35:10, 35 [b]Ex. 25:8 [1]*holy place*

2 [c]Ex. 35:21, 26; 1 Chr. 29:5, 9, 17 [2]*lifted him up*

3 [d]Ex. 35:5 [e]Ex. 35:27

5 [f]2 Chr. 24:14; 31:6–10; [2 Cor. 8:2, 3]

7 [g]1 Kin. 8:64

8 [h]Ex. 26:1–14

■ **35:22 women.** Women are mentioned for the first time. Their involvement both in the donation and preparation of the materials was significant (vv. 25, 26, 29).

■ **36:8—39:43** The work of Bezalel, Aholiab, and their crew of skilled laborers is recounted. The detail of the account underscores the attention paid by the builders to the word of the Lord (39:42–43).

other, and *the other* five curtains he coupled to one another. 11 He made loops of blue *yarn* on the edge of the curtain on the selvedge of one set; likewise he did on the outer edge of *the other* curtain of the second set. 12 [i]Fifty loops he made on one curtain, and fifty loops he made on the edge of the curtain on the end of the second set; the loops held one *curtain* to another. 13 And he made fifty clasps of gold, and coupled the curtains to one another with the clasps, that it might be one tabernacle.

14 [j]He made curtains of goats' *hair* for the tent over the tabernacle; he made eleven curtains. 15 The length of each curtain *was* thirty cubits, and the width of each curtain four cubits; the eleven curtains *were* the same size. 16 He coupled five curtains by themselves and six curtains by themselves. 17 And he made fifty loops on the edge of the curtain that is outermost in one set, and fifty loops he made on the edge of the curtain of the second set. 18 He also made fifty bronze clasps to couple the tent together, that it might be one. 19 [k]Then he made a covering for the tent of ram skins dyed red, and a covering of [3]badger skins above *that.*

20 For the tabernacle [l]he made boards of acacia wood, standing upright. 21 The length of each board *was* ten cubits, and the width of each board a cubit and a half. 22 Each board had two [4]tenons [m]for binding one to another. Thus he made for all the boards of the tabernacle. 23 And he made boards for the tabernacle, twenty boards for the south side. 24 Forty sockets of silver he made to go under the twenty boards: two sockets under each of the boards for its two tenons. 25 And for the other side of the tabernacle, the north side, he made twenty boards 26 and their forty sockets of silver: two sockets under each of the boards. 27 For the west side of the tabernacle he made six boards. 28 He also made two boards for the two back corners of the tabernacle. 29 And they were coupled at the bottom and [5]coupled together at the top by one ring. Thus he made both of them for the two corners. 30 So there were eight boards and their sockets—sixteen sockets of silver—two sockets under each of the boards.

31 And he made [n]bars of acacia wood: five for the boards on one side of the tabernacle, 32 five bars for the boards on the other side of the tabernacle, and five bars for the boards of the tabernacle on the far side westward. 33 And he made the middle bar to pass through the boards from one end to the other. 34 He overlaid the boards with gold, made their rings of gold *to be* holders for the bars, and overlaid the bars with gold.

35 And he made [o]a veil of blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* and fine woven linen; it was worked *with* an artistic design of cherubim. 36 He made for it four pillars of acacia *wood,* and overlaid them with gold, with their hooks of gold; and he cast four sockets of silver for them.

37 He also made a [p]screen for the tabernacle door, of blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* and fine woven linen, made by a [6]weaver, 38 and its five pillars with their hooks. And he overlaid their capitals and their rings with gold, but their five sockets *were* bronze.

Making the Ark of the Testimony

37 Then [a]Bezalel made [b]the ark of acacia wood; two and a half cubits *was* its length, a cubit and a half its width, and a cubit and a half its height. 2 He overlaid it with pure gold inside and outside, and made a molding of gold all around it. 3 And he cast for it four rings of gold *to be set* in its four corners: two rings on one side, and two rings on the other side of it. 4 He made poles of acacia wood, and overlaid them with gold. 5 And he put the poles into the rings at the sides of the ark, to bear the ark. 6 He also made the [c]mercy seat of pure gold; two and a half cubits *was* its length and a cubit and a half its width. 7 He made two cherubim of beaten gold; he made them of one piece at the two ends of the mercy seat: 8 one cherub at one end on this side, and the other cherub at the *other* end on that side. He made the cherubim at the two ends *of one piece* with the mercy seat. 9 The cherubim spread out *their* wings above, *and* covered the [d]mercy seat with their wings. They faced one another; the faces of the cherubim were toward the mercy seat.

Making the Table for the Showbread

10 He made [e]the table of acacia wood; two cubits *was* its length, a cubit its width, and a cubit and a half its height. 11 And he overlaid it with pure gold, and made a molding of gold all around it. 12 Also he made a frame of a handbreadth all around it, and made a molding of gold for the frame all around it. 13 And he cast for it four rings of gold, and put the rings on the four corners that *were* at its four legs. 14 The rings were close to the frame, as holders for the poles to bear the table. 15 And he made the poles of acacia wood to bear the table, and overlaid them with gold. 16 He made of pure gold the utensils which were on the table: its [f]dishes, its cups, its bowls, and its pitchers for pouring.

12 [i]Ex. 26:5
14 [j]Ex. 26:7
19 [k]Ex. 26:14 [3]Or *dolphin*
20 [l]Ex. 26:15–29
22 [m]Ex. 26:17 [4]Projections for joining, lit. *hands*
29 [5]Lit. *doubled*
31 [n]Ex. 26:26–29
35 [o]Ex. 26:31–37
37 [p]Ex. 26:36 [6]Lit. *variegator,* a weaver in colors

CHAPTER 37

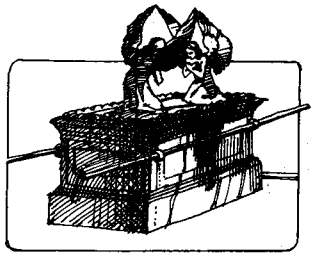
1 [a]Ex. 35:30; 36:1 [b]Ex. 25:10–20
6 [c]Ex. 25:17
9 [d]Ex. 25:20
10 [e]Ex. 25:23–29
16 [f]Ex. 25:29

17 [g]Ex. 25:31–39
23 [h]Num. 4:9

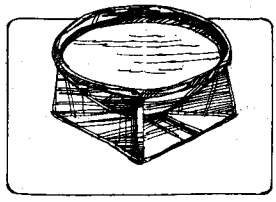
Making the Gold Lampstand

17 He also made the [g]lampstand of pure gold; of hammered work he made the lampstand. Its
shaft, its branches, its bowls, its *ornamental* knobs, and its flowers were of the same piece.
18 And six branches came out of its sides: three branches of the lampstand out of one side, and
three branches of the lampstand out of the other side. 19 There were three bowls made like al-
mond *blossoms* on one branch, with an *ornamental* knob and a flower, and three bowls made
like almond *blossoms* on the other branch, with an *ornamental* knob and a flower—and so for
the six branches coming out of the lampstand. 20 And on the lampstand itself *were* four bowls
made like almond *blossoms, each with* its *ornamental* knob and flower. 21 *There was* a knob un-
der the *first* two branches of the same, a knob under the *second* two branches of the same, and a
knob under the *third* two branches of the same, according to the six branches extending from it.
22 Their knobs and their branches were of one piece; all of it *was* one hammered piece of pure
gold. 23 And he made its seven lamps, its [h]wick-trimmers, and its trays of pure gold. 24 Of a tal-
ent of pure gold he made it, with all its utensils.

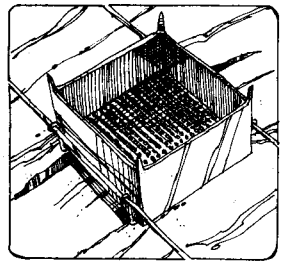
The Furniture of the Tabernacle (37:1)



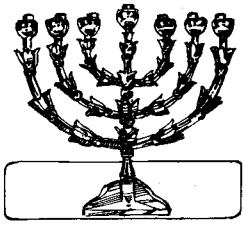
Ark of the Covenant
(Ex. 25:10–22)
The ark was most sacred of all the furniture in the tabernacle. Here the Hebrews kept a copy of the Ten Commandments which summarized the whole covenant.



Bronze Laver
(Ex. 30:17–21)
It was to the laver of bronze that the priests would come for cleansing. They must be pure to enter the presence of God.



Altar of Burnt Offering
(Ex. 27:1–8)
Animal sacrifices were offered on this altar, located in the court in front of the tabernacle. The blood of the sacrifice was sprinkled on the four horns of the altar.



Gold Lampstand
(Ex. 25:31–40)
The gold lampstand stood in the holy place, opposite the table of showbread. It held seven lamps, flat bowls in which a wick lay with one end in the oil of the bowl and the lighted end hanging out.

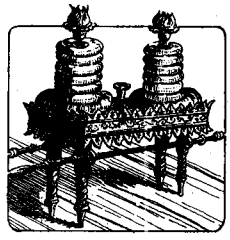
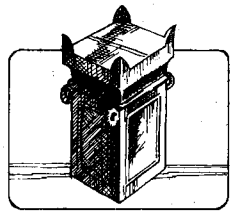


Table of Showbread
(Ex. 25:23–30)
The table of showbread was a stand on which the offerings were placed. Always in God's presence on the table were the 12 loaves of bread representing the 12 tribes.



Altar of Incense
(Ex. 30:1–10)
The altar of incense inside the tabernacle was much smaller than the altar of burnt offering outside. The incense burned on the altar was a perfume of a sweet-smelling aroma.

...ng the Altar of Incense

25 [i]He made the incense altar of acacia wood. Its length *was* a cubit and its width a cubit—*it was* square—and two cubits *was* its height. Its horns were *of one piece* with it. 26 And he overlaid it with pure gold: its top, its sides all around, and its horns. He also made for it a molding of gold all around it. 27 He made two rings of gold for it under its molding, by its two corners on both sides, as holders for the poles with which to bear it. 28 And he [j]made the poles of acacia wood, and overlaid them with gold.

Making the Anointing Oil and the Incense

29 He also made [k]the holy anointing oil and the pure incense of sweet spices, according to the work of the perfumer.

Making the Altar of Burnt Offering

38 He made [a]the altar of burnt offering of acacia wood; five cubits *was* its length and five cubits its width—*it was* square—and its height *was* three cubits. 2 He made its horns on its four corners; the horns were *of one piece* with it. And he overlaid it with bronze. 3 He made all the utensils for the altar: the pans, the shovels, the basins, the forks, and the firepans; all its utensils he made of bronze. 4 And he made a grate of bronze network for the altar, under its rim, midway from the bottom. 5 He cast four rings for the four corners of the bronze grating, *as* holders for the poles. 6 And he made the poles of acacia wood, and overlaid them with bronze. 7 Then he put the poles into the rings on the sides of the altar, with which to bear it. He made the altar hollow with boards.

Making the Bronze Laver

8 He made [b]the laver of bronze and its base of bronze, from the bronze mirrors of the serving women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

Making the Court of the Tabernacle

9 Then he made [c]the court on the south side; the hangings of the court *were of* fine woven linen, one hundred cubits long. 10 There *were* twenty pillars for them, with twenty bronze sockets. The hooks of the pillars and their bands *were* silver. 11 On the north side *the hangings were* one hundred cubits *long,* with twenty pillars and their twenty bronze sockets. The hooks of the pillars and their bands *were* silver. 12 And on the west side *there were* hangings of fifty cubits, with ten pillars and their ten sockets. The hooks of the pillars and their bands *were* silver. 13 For the east side *the hangings were* fifty cubits. 14 The hangings of one side *of the gate were* fifteen cubits *long, with* their three pillars and their three sockets, 15 and the same for the other side of the court gate; on this side and that *were* hangings of fifteen cubits, *with* their three pillars and their three sockets. 16 All the hangings of the court all around *were of* fine woven linen. 17 The sockets for the pillars *were* bronze, the hooks of the pillars and their bands *were* silver, and the overlay of their capitals *was* silver; and all the pillars of the court had bands of silver. 18 The screen for the gate of the court *was* woven of blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* and of fine woven linen. The length *was* twenty cubits, and the height along its width *was* five cubits, corresponding to the hangings of the court. 19 And *there were* four pillars *with* their four sockets of bronze; their hooks *were* silver, and the overlay of their capitals and their bands *was* silver. 20 All the [d]pegs of the tabernacle, and of the court all around, *were* bronze.

Materials of the Tabernacle

21 [l]This is the inventory of the tabernacle, [e]the tabernacle of the Testimony, which was counted according to the commandment of Moses, for the service of the Levites, [f]by the hand of [g]Ithamar, son of Aaron the priest.

22 [h]Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, made all that the LORD had commanded Moses. 23 And with him *was* [i]Aholiab the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan, an engraver and [2]designer, a weaver of blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* and of fine linen.

24 All the gold that was used in all the work of the holy *place,* that is, the gold of the [j]offering, was twenty-nine talents and seven hundred and thirty shekels, according to [k]the shekel of the sanctuary. 25 And the silver from those who were [l]numbered of the congregation *was* one hun-

25 [i]Ex. 30:1–5
28 [j]Ex. 30:5
29 [k]Ex. 30:23–25

CHAPTER 38

1 [a]Ex. 27:1–8
8 [b]Ex. 30:18
9 [c]Ex. 27:9–19
20 [d]Ex. 27:19
21 [e]Num. 1:50, 53; 9:15; 10:11; 17:7, 8; 2 Chr. 24:6; Acts 7:44 [f]Num. 4:28, 33 [g]Ex. 28:1; Lev. 10:6, 16 [1]Lit. *These are the things appointed for*
22 [h]Ex. 31:2, 6; 1 Chr. 2:18–20
23 [i]Ex. 31:6; 36:1 [2]*skillful workman*
24 [j]Ex. 35:5, 22 [k]Ex. 30:13, 24; Lev. 5:15; 27:3, 25; Num. 3:47; 18:16
25 [l]Ex. 30:11–16; Num. 1:2

■ **38:25 talents . . . shekels.** At the recognized ratio of three thousand shekels to the talent (a talent was roughly 75 pounds), there were 2193 pounds of gold, 7544 of silver, and 5310 of copper. The amount of silver, a total of 301,175 shekels, is linked to the head count of the Israelites: half a shekel from all males over the age of twenty (603,550 men of military age, Num. 1:46). See note on 30:12.

dred talents and one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary: 26 [m]a bekah for [3]each man (*that is,* half a shekel, according to the shekel of the sanctuary), for everyone included in the numbering from twenty years old and above, for [n]six hundred and three thousand, five hundred and fifty *men.* 27 And from the hundred talents of silver were cast [o]the sockets of the sanctuary and the bases of the veil: one hundred sockets from the hundred talents, one talent for each socket. 28 Then from the one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five *shekels* he made hooks for the pillars, overlaid their capitals, and [p]made bands for them.

29 The offering of bronze *was* seventy talents and two thousand four hundred shekels. 30 And with it he made the sockets for the door of the tabernacle of meeting, the bronze altar, the bronze grating for it, and all the utensils for the altar, 31 the sockets for the court all around, the bases for the court gate, all the pegs for the tabernacle, and all the pegs for the court all around.

Making the Garments of the Priesthood

39 Of the [a]blue, purple, and scarlet *thread* they made [b]garments[1] of ministry, for ministering in the [2]holy *place,* and made the holy garments for Aaron, [c]as the LORD had commanded Moses.

Making the Ephod

2 [d]He made the [e]ephod of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* and of fine woven linen. 3 And they beat the gold into thin sheets and cut *it into* threads, to work *it* in *with* the blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* and the fine linen, *into* artistic designs. 4 They made shoulder straps for it to couple *it* together; it was coupled together at its two edges. 5 And the intricately woven band of his ephod that *was* on it *was* of the same workmanship, *woven of* gold, blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* and of fine woven linen, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

6 [f]And they set onyx stones, enclosed in [3]settings of gold; they were engraved, as signets are engraved, with the names of the sons of Israel. 7 He put them on the shoulders of the ephod *as* [g]memorial stones for the sons of Israel, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

Making the Breastplate

8 [h]And he made the breastplate, artistically woven like the workmanship of the ephod, of gold, blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* and of fine woven linen. 9 They made the breastplate square by doubling it; a span *was* its length and a span its width when doubled. 10 [i]And they set in it four rows of stones: a row with a sardius, a topaz, and an emerald was the first row; 11 the second row, a turquoise, a sapphire, and a diamond; 12 the third row, a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst; 13 the fourth row, a beryl, an onyx, and a jasper. *They were* enclosed in settings of gold in their mountings. 14 *There were* [j]twelve stones according to the names of the sons of Israel: according to their names, *engraved like* a signet, each one with its own name according to the twelve tribes. 15 And they made chains for the breastplate at the ends, like braided cords of pure gold. 16 They also made two settings of gold and two gold rings, and put the two rings on the two ends of the breastplate. 17 And they put the two braided *chains* of gold in the two rings on the ends of the breastplate. 18 The two ends of the two braided *chains* they fastened in the two settings, and put them on the shoulder straps of the ephod in the front. 19 And they made two rings of gold and put *them* on the two ends of the breastplate, on the edge of it, which *was* on the inward side of the ephod. 20 They made two *other* gold rings and put them on the two shoulder straps, underneath the ephod toward its front, right at the seam above the intricately woven band of the ephod. 21 And they bound the breastplate by means of its rings to the rings of the ephod with a blue cord, so that it would be above the intricately woven band of the ephod, and that the breastplate would not come loose from the ephod, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

Making the Other Priestly Garments

22 [k]He made the [l]robe of the ephod of woven work, all of blue. 23 And *there was* an opening in the middle of the robe, like the opening in a coat of mail, *with* a woven binding all around the opening, so that it would not tear. 24 They made on the hem of the robe pomegranates of blue, purple, and scarlet, and of fine woven *linen.* 25 And they made [m]bells of pure gold, and put the bells between the pomegranates on the hem of the robe all around between the pomegranates: 26 a bell and a pomegranate, a bell and a pomegranate, all around the hem of the robe to [4]minister in, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

27 [n]They made tunics, artistically woven of fine linen, for Aaron and his sons, 28 [o]a turban of fine linen, exquisite hats of fine linen, [p]short trousers of fine woven linen, 29 [q]and a sash of fine

26 [m]Ex. 30:13, 15 [n]Ex. 12:37; Num. 1:46; 26:51 [3]Lit. *a head*

27 [o]Ex. 26:19, 21, 25, 32

28 [p]Ex. 27:17

CHAPTER 39

1 [a]Ex. 25:4; 35:23 [b]Ex. 31:10; 35:19 [c]Ex. 28:4 [1]Or *woven garments* [2]*sanctuary*

2 [d]Ex. 28:6–14 [e]Lev. 8:7

6 [f]Ex. 28:9–11 [3]*plaited work*

7 [g]Ex. 28:12, 29; Josh. 4:7

8 [h]Ex. 28:15–30

10 [i]Ex. 28:17

14 [j]Rev. 21:12

22 [k]Ex. 28:31–35 [l]Ex. 29:5; Lev. 8:7

25 [m]Ex. 28:33

26 [4]*serve*

27 [n]Ex. 28:39, 40

28 [o]Ex. 28:4, 39; Lev. 8:9; Ezek. 44:18 [p]Ex. 28:42; Lev. 6:10

29 [q]Ex. 28:39

woven linen with blue, purple, and scarlet *thread,* made by a weaver, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

30 [r]Then they made the plate of the holy crown of pure gold, and wrote on it an inscription *like* the engraving of a signet:

[s]HOLINESS TO THE LORD.

31 And they tied to it a blue cord, to fasten *it* above on the turban, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

The Work Completed

32 Thus all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting was [t]finished. And the children of Israel did [u]according to all that the LORD had commanded Moses; so they did. 33 And they brought the tabernacle to Moses, the tent and all its furnishings: its clasps, its boards, its bars, its pillars, and its sockets; 34 the covering of ram skins dyed red, the covering of badger skins, and the veil of the covering; 35 the ark of the Testimony with its poles, and the mercy seat; 36 the table, all its utensils, and the [v]showbread; 37 the pure *gold* lampstand with its lamps (the lamps set in order), all its utensils, and the oil for light; 38 the gold altar, the anointing oil, and the sweet incense; the screen for the tabernacle door; 39 the bronze altar, its grate of bronze, its poles, and all its utensils; the laver with its base; 40 the hangings of the court, its pillars and its sockets, the screen for the court gate, its cords, and its pegs; all the utensils for the service of the tabernacle, for the tent of meeting; 41 and the [5]garments of ministry, to [6]minister in the holy *place:* the holy garments for Aaron the priest, and his sons' garments, to minister as priests.

42 According to all that the LORD had commanded Moses, so the children of Israel [w]did all the work. 43 Then Moses looked over all the work, and indeed they had done it; as the LORD had commanded, just so they had done it. And Moses [x]blessed them.

The Tabernacle Erected and Arranged

40 Then the LORD [a]spoke to Moses, saying: 2 "On the first day of the [b]first month you shall set up [c]the tabernacle of the tent of meeting. 3 [d]You shall put in it the ark of the Testimony, and [1]partition off the ark with the veil. 4 [e]You shall bring in the table and [f]arrange the things that are to be set in order on it; [g]and you shall bring in the lampstand and [2]light its lamps. 5 [h]You shall also set the altar of gold for the incense before the ark of the Testimony, and put up the screen for the door of the tabernacle. 6 Then you shall set the [i]altar of the burnt offering before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting. 7 And [j]you shall set the laver between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar, and put water in it. 8 You shall set up the court all around, and hang up the screen at the court gate.

9 "And you shall take the anointing oil, and [k]anoint the tabernacle and all that *is* in it; and you shall hallow it and all its utensils, and it shall be holy. 10 You shall [l]anoint the altar of the burnt offering and all its utensils, and consecrate the altar. [m]The altar shall be most holy. 11 And you shall anoint the laver and its base, and consecrate it.

12 [n]"Then you shall bring Aaron and his sons to the door of the tabernacle of meeting and wash them with water. 13 You shall put the holy [o]garments on Aaron, [p]and anoint him and consecrate him, that he may minister to Me as priest. 14 And you shall bring his sons and clothe them with tunics. 15 You shall anoint them, as you anointed their father, that they may minister to Me as priests; for their anointing shall surely be [q]an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations."

16 Thus Moses did; according to all that the LORD had commanded him, so he did.

17 And it came to pass in the first month of the second year, on the first *day* of the month, *that* the [r]tabernacle was [3]raised up. 18 So Moses raised up the tabernacle, fastened its sockets, set up its boards, put in its bars, and raised up its pillars. 19 And he spread out the tent over the tabernacle and put the covering of the tent on top of it, as the LORD had commanded Moses. 20 He took [s]the Testimony and put *it* into the ark, inserted the poles through the rings of the ark, and put the

30 [r]Ex. 28:36, 37 [s]Zech. 14:20

32 [t]Ex. 40:17 [u]Ex. 25:40; 39:42, 43

36 [v]Ex. 25:23–30

41 [5]Or *woven garments* [6]*serve*

42 [w]Ex. 35:10

43 [x]Lev. 9:22, 23; Num. 6:23–26; Josh. 22:6; 2 Sam. 6:18; 1 Kin. 8:14; 2 Chr. 30:27

CHAPTER 40

1 [a]Ex. 25:1—31:18

2 [b]Ex. 12:2; 13:4 [c]Ex. 26:1, 30; 40:17

3 [d]Ex. 26:33; 40:21; Lev. 16:2; Num. 4:5 [1]*screen*

4 [e]Ex. 26:35; 40:22 [f]Ex. 25:30; 40:23 [g]Ex. 40:24, 25 [2]*set up*

5 [h]Ex. 40:26

6 [i]Ex. 39:39

7 [j]Ex. 30:18; 40:30

9 [k]Ex. 30:26; Lev. 8:10

10 [l]Ex. 30:26–30 [m]Ex. 29:36, 37

12 [n]Ex. 29:4–9; Lev. 8:1–13

13 [o]Ex. 29:5; 39:1, 41 [p][Ex. 28:41]; Lev. 8:12

15 [q]Ex. 29:9; Num. 25:13

17 [r]Ex. 40:2; Num. 7:1 [3]*erected*

20 [s]Ex. 25:16; Deut. 10:5; 1 Kin. 8:9; 2 Chr. 5:10; Heb. 9:4

■ **39:33 they brought . . . to Moses.** The finished components were brought to Moses for inspection. Moses had received the instructions from the Lord (chs. 25—31), and only Moses could determine the fitness of what had been made.

■ **40:1–33** The Lord's detailed instructions to Moses regarding the erection of the tabernacle and the consecration of tabernacle and priests (vv. 1–15) and the subsequent narrative of Moses' obedience (vv. 16–33) emphasize that the tabernacle was completed and its ministry inaugurated in precise obedience to the divine commands.

■ **40:2 set up the tabernacle.** The tabernacle is set up about nine months (v. 17; 12:2, 6) after the arrival at Sinai.

mercy seat on top of the ark. 21 And he brought the ark into the tabernacle, [f]hung up the veil of the covering, and partitioned off the ark of the Testimony, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

22 [u]He put the table in the tabernacle of meeting, on the north side of the tabernacle, outside the veil; 23 [v]and he set the bread in order upon it before the LORD, as the LORD had commanded Moses. 24 [w]He put the lampstand in the tabernacle of meeting, across from the table, on the south side of the tabernacle; 25 and [x]he lit the lamps before the LORD, as the LORD had commanded Moses. 26 [y]He put the gold altar in the tabernacle of meeting in front of the veil; 27 [z]and he burned sweet incense on it, as the LORD had commanded Moses. 28 [a]He hung up the screen *at* the door of the tabernacle. 29 [b]And he put the altar of burnt offering *before* the door of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, and [c]offered upon it the burnt offering and the grain offering, as the LORD had commanded Moses. 30 [d]He set the laver between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar, and put water there for washing; 31 and Moses, Aaron, and his sons would [e]wash their hands and their feet *with water* from it. 32 Whenever they went into the tabernacle of meeting, and when they came near the altar, they washed, [f]as the LORD had commanded Moses. 33 [g]And he raised up the court all around the tabernacle and the altar, and hung up the screen of the court gate. So Moses [h]finished the work.

The Cloud and the Glory

34 [i]Then the [j]cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the [k]glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. 35 And Moses [l]was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. 36 [m]Whenever the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle, the children of Israel would [4]go onward in all their journeys. 37 But [n]if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not journey till the day that it was taken up. 38 For [o]the cloud of the LORD *was* above the tabernacle by day, and fire was over it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.

21 [f]Ex. 26:33
22 [u]Ex. 26:35
23 [v]Ex. 40:4
24 [w]Ex. 26:35
25 [x]Ex. 25:37; 30:7, 8; 40:4
26 [y]Ex. 30:1, 6; 40:5
27 [z]Ex. 30:7
28 [a]Ex. 26:36; 40:5
29 [b]Ex. 40:6 [c]Ex. 29:38–42
30 [d]Ex. 30:18; 40:7
31 [e]Ex. 30:19, 20
32 [f]Ex. 30:19
33 [g]Ex. 27:9–18; 40:8 [h][Heb. 3:2–5]
34 [i]Num. 9:15 [j]1 Kin. 8:10, 11 [k]Lev. 9:6, 23
35 [l]1 Kin. 8:11
36 [m]Num. 9:17 [4]*journey*
37 [n]Num. 9:19–22
38 [o]Ex. 13:21

■ **40:31 wash their hands and their feet.** Following the placement of the laver, Moses and Aaron complied with the law of priestly washing (30:19–21).

■ **40:34–38** The glory of the Lord filling the tabernacle brings the Book of Exodus to a climax. God, who had brought Israel out of Egypt, has made and renewed His covenant with them and made His dwelling in their midst. A careful recapitulation of the primary theme of the book—the reestablishment of God's dwelling with man—is given in vv. 34–38. This passage also indicates that Israel has begun corporate worship. The history of God's guidance to the Promised Land will follow in the remainder of the Pentateuch.

■ **40:36 in all their journeys.** Israel's journeys are linked to the guiding Presence. The covenant God dwells among His people at last and will lead the nation to the land He promised them.

The Third Book of Moses Called

LEVITICUS

Author The conclusion that Moses wrote Leviticus derives from the internal character of Leviticus itself and of the Pentateuch as a whole, as well as from Old and New Testament references to Moses as the author of the Pentateuch. For a more complete discussion of issues relating to Mosaic authorship, see "Introduction to the Pentateuch."

Date and Occasion Leviticus everywhere reports the words of God to Moses and his brother Aaron, but it never states when and how these words were written down. The precise date Leviticus was committed to writing remains somewhat uncertain, though it doubtless occurred during the wilderness wandering prior to Moses' death (c. 1406 B.C.). The majority of critical scholars place the writing of Leviticus in the postexilic era (c. the sixth century B.C.), many centuries after Moses. This view is improbable, however, because the content of Leviticus does not fit such a late period: the worship of the second temple differed significantly from that enjoined in Leviticus, and Leviticus is presupposed or quoted by earlier books such as Deuteronomy, Amos, and, most obviously, Ezekiel. Other arguments against the origin of Leviticus in Moses' time are also unconvincing. The book reflects the ideals of worship and holiness that were accepted in Israel from the time of Moses to the fall of Jerusalem in 587/86 B.C.

Characteristics and Themes No book in the Old Testament presents a greater challenge to the modern reader than Leviticus, and imagination is required to picture the ceremonies and rites that form the bulk of the book. However, it is important to try to understand the rituals in Leviticus for two reasons. First, rituals enshrine, express, and teach those values and ideas that a society holds most dear. By analyzing the ceremonies described in Leviticus, we can learn about what was most important to the Old Testament Israelites. Second, these same ideas are foundational for the New Testament writers. Particularly the concepts of sin, sacrifice, and atonement found in Leviticus are used in the New Testament to interpret the death of Christ.

Precisely because the rituals of Leviticus are so central to Old Testament thinking, they are often obscure to us, because the writers did not need to explain them to their contemporaries. Every Israelite knew why a particular sacrifice was offered on a specific occasion and what a certain gesture meant. For ourselves, every hint in the text must be grasped to understand these things, and a judicious reading between the lines is sometimes required.

Leviticus is part of the covenant law given at Sinai. The ideas that inform the whole Sinaitic covenant, including God's sovereign grace in choosing Israel and His moral demands, are also presupposed here. Certain themes are especially prominent in Leviticus. First, God is present with His people. Second, because God is holy, His people must also be holy (11:45). Since man is sinful, he cannot dwell with the holy God. Contact between the sinner and the divine holiness may result in death. Hence, atonement for sin through the offering of sacrifice is of paramount importance. These themes may be elaborated as follows.

1. The Divine Presence. Every act of worship is performed "to the LORD" (e.g., 1:2), who dwells with His people in the tabernacle of meeting. Because God is present in the Most Holy Place, entry is barred to all but the high priest once a year on the Day of Atonement (16:17). Though God's presence is usually invisible, He may manifest His glory on special occasions such as the ordination of the priests (9:23, 24). The greatest of God's gifts is that He deigns to dwell with His people (26:12).

2. Holiness. The aims of Leviticus are summarized in 11:45: "You shall therefore be holy; for I am holy." Man is meant to be like God in his character. That involves imitating God in daily life. The holiness of God involves His being the source of perfect life in its physical, spiritual, and moral dimensions. Animals offered to Him in sacrifice must be free of blemish (1:3), and priests who represent God to man and man to God must be free of physical handicaps (21:17–23). Those who suffer discharges, particularly of blood, or who have disfiguring skin diseases are barred from worship until they are cured (chs. 12—15). Physical health is seen to symbolize the perfection of divine life. But holiness is also an inward matter of attitudes issuing in moral behavior. The theme of holiness is especially emphasized in chs. 17—25, which are chiefly concerned with personal ethical conduct, summed up in 19:18 as "you shall love your neighbor as yourself."

3. Atonement Through Sacrifice. Since man failed to live up to God's righteous requirements, a means of atonement was essential so that both his moral lapses and his physical failings could be pardoned. To this end Leviticus gives the most extensive descriptions of the sacrificial system (chs. 1—7), the role of the priests (chs. 8—10, 21—22), and the great national festivals (chs. 16; 23; 25) found in the Old Testament. These great ceremonies were designed to make possible the coexistence of the holy God with His sinful people.

Through the symbols and rites it describes, Leviticus paints a picture of God's character that is presupposed and deepened in the New Testament. Leviticus teaches that God is the source of perfect life, that He loves His people, and that He desires to dwell among them. In this we see a foreshadowing of the Incarnation, when "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). Leviticus also shows clearly man's sinfulness: no sooner are Aaron's sons ordained than they profane their office and die in a fearful display of divine judgment (ch. 10). Those suffering from skin disease or bodily discharge, as well as those guilty of grave moral sins, are barred from worship because their imperfections are incompatible with a holy and perfect God (chs. 12—15). The symbols of Leviticus teach the universality of human sin, a doctrine endorsed by Jesus (Mark 7:21–23) and Paul (Rom. 3:23). Caught between divine holiness and human sinfulness, man's paramount need is for atonement. It is here that Leviticus has the most to teach the Christian, for its ideas are taken up and developed by the New Testament in describing the atoning work of Christ. He is the perfect sacrificial Lamb, who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). His death is the ransom for many (Mark 10:45). His blood cleanses us from all sin (1 John 1:7). Above all, Jesus is the perfect High Priest who enters not the earthly tabernacle once a year on the Day of Atonement (ch. 16), but has ascended to the heavenly tabernacle forever, because He has not offered merely a goat for the sins of His people, but His own life (Heb. 9; 10). The rending of the temple veil when Jesus was crucified was a visible demonstration that His death opened up the way to God for all believers (Matt. 27:51; Heb. 10:19, 20). Furthermore, Leviticus restricts salvation to the old covenant community of Israel. The food laws (ch. 11) and the prohibitions on mixtures (19:19) reminded Jews of their unique status. But the New Testament opens the kingdom to all nations and abrogates the food laws (Mark 7:14–23; Acts 10), while at the same time insisting on the separation of the church from the world (John 17:16; 2 Cor. 6:14—7:1). And while the Old Testament sufferer had to wait for God to heal him (ch. 14), in the Gospels God in Christ drew near and healed both lepers and those with discharges (Luke 8:43–48; 17:12–19). The God of Leviticus, whose essential character is shown to be holy life, is shown in the Gospels to be present in Christ and His redemptive work.

Leviticus, the Latin form of the Greek title of the book, means "about Levites." The Levites were the tribe of Israel from which the priests were drawn; they were responsible for maintaining Israel's worship facilities and practices. The title is apt, because the book is primarily about worship and fitness for worship. However it is not addressed solely to priests or Levites, but also to lay Israelites, telling them how to offer sacrifices and to enter the presence of God in worship. Leviticus speaks to humanity in every age, reminding us of the depth of our sin, but also pointing us to the sacrifice of Him whose blood is far more effective than the blood of bulls and goats. □

Outline of Leviticus

I. Laws on Sacrifice (chs. 1—7)
  A. Instructions for the Laity (1:1—6:7)
    1. The Burnt Offering (ch. 1)
    2. The Grain Offering (ch. 2)
    3. The Peace Offering (ch. 3)
    4. The Sin Offering (4:1—5:13)
    5. The Trespass Offering (5:14—6:7)
  B. Instructions for the Priests (6:8—7:38)
    1. The Burnt Offering (6:8–13)
    2. The Grain Offering (6:14–23)
    3. The Sin Offering (6:24–30)
    4. The Trespass Offering (7:1–10)
    5. The Peace Offering (7:11–36)
    6. Summary (7:37, 38)
II. Institution of Priesthood (chs. 8—10)
  A. Consecration of Aaron and His Sons (ch. 8)
  B. Aaron's First Sacrifices (ch. 9)
  C. Judgment on Aaron's Sons (ch. 10)

III. Uncleanness and Its Treatment (chs. 11—16)
A. Unclean Animals (ch. 11)
B. Childbirth (ch. 12)
C. Skin Disease (chs. 13; 14)
D. Discharges (ch. 15)
E. The Day of Atonement (ch. 16)
IV. The Practice of Holiness (chs. 17—27)
A. Sacrifice and Food (ch. 17)
B. Sexual Behavior (ch. 18)
C. Principles of Good Neighborliness (ch. 19)
D. Capital Crimes (ch. 20)
E. Disqualifications for Priests (ch. 21)
F. Rules on Sacrifice (ch. 22)
G. Feasts (ch. 23)
H. The Tabernacle Lamps and Loaves (24:1–9)
I. Blasphemy (24:10–23)
J. Years of Release (ch. 25)
K. The Blessing and Curse (ch. 26)
L. Rules on Vows and Tithes (ch. 27)

The Burnt Offering

CHAPTER 1

NOW the LORD [a]called to Moses, and spoke to him [b]from the tabernacle of meeting, saying,
2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: [c]'When any one of you brings an offering to the LORD, you shall bring your offering of the livestock—of the herd and of the flock.
3 'If his offering *is* a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male [d]without blemish; he shall offer it of his own free will at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the LORD. 4 [e]Then he shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be [f]accepted on his behalf [g]to make atonement for him. 5 He shall kill the [h]bull before the LORD; [i]and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood [j]and sprinkle the blood all around on the altar that *is by* the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 6 And he shall [k]skin the burnt offering and cut it into its pieces. 7 The sons

1 [a]Ex. 19:3; 25:22 [b]Ex. 40:34
2 [c]Lev. 22:18, 19
3 [d]Eph. 5:27
4 [e]Lev. 3:2, 8, 13; 4:15 [f][Rom. 12:1] [g]2 Chr. 29:23, 24
5 [h]Mic. 6:6 [i]2 Chr. 35:11 [j][Heb. 12:24]
6 [k]Lev. 7:8

■ **1:1–2** Moses begins this manual on worship at the tabernacle by recording the laws of sacrifice. The laws are subdivided into sections addressed to the laity (1:1—6:7) and to the priests (6:8—7:38). Sacrifice in Israel involved the offering of selected domestic animals, grain, oil, and wine. All these products symbolized the worshiping Israelite, who, through the act of sacrifice, was giving himself back to God in some way. In every animal offering the worshiper placed his hand on the victim's head, thereby identifying himself with the animal, saying in effect, "This animal represents me." The animal sacrifices involved the animal's death, and so the sacrifices had atoning symbolism: the animal dying in the sinful worshiper's place represented redemption from the death he deserved. There is then a common core of meaning and significance shared by all the sacrifices. But each sacrifice also had its own distinctive ritual features and religious emphases. This is indicated by the different names of the sacrifices, which sometimes highlight the ritual distinctiveness ("*burnt* offering,") and sometimes the theologically distinctive feature ("*peace* offering, *trespass* offering").

Although the Lord, in response to Moses' intercession (Ex. 32), had rescinded His verdict to judge the people for their idolatrous worship of the golden calf, the removal of their sin remained an unresolved problem. These sacrifices provided an atonement for them and for Aaron, their priest, who led them into that sin (ch. 9). In contrast to Aaron, Jesus Christ, the High Priest of the new Israel, is without sin and never tempts His people to sin (Heb. 9:6–15).

■ **1:1 tabernacle of meeting.** The tent shrine or tabernacle described in Ex. 26.

■ **1:2 you shall bring.** Israel must obey this manual of instruction on how to be fit to live in the presence of God. God, not humans, prescribes the way His people must live with Him.

of the livestock. Only unblemished (v. 3) domesticated animals could be offered. Wild animals, which cost nothing, could not be offered.

■ **1:3–17** The burnt offering begins the list of sacrifices because it was the sacrifice offered most frequently. Its distinctive feature was that the whole animal, except for the skin, was burned on the altar. This symbolized the total consecration of the worshiper to God's service, and served to cover the sins of the worshiper (v. 4 and note). The regulations begin by specifying the most expensive kind of animal that could be offered, the bull (vv. 2–9), and end with the cheapest, the young pigeon (vv. 14–17).

■ **1:3 he shall offer it.** The layman offering the sacrifice (vv. 4–6, 9) was to kill, skin, cut up, and wash the animal, whereas the priest brings it to God by putting the blood and flesh on the altar.

door of the tabernacle. The screened-off courtyard surrounding the tabernacle of meeting. The great altar and a laver for washing the sacrifices stood in the courtyard (v. 9).

■ **1:4 make atonement.** Lit. "to cover over." The death of the animal in place of the sinner "covers over" or shields the worshiper from the holy wrath of God.

of Aaron the priest shall put [l]fire on the altar, and [m]lay the wood in order on the fire. 8 Then the priests, Aaron's sons, shall lay the parts, the head, and the fat in order on the wood that *is* on the fire upon the altar; 9 but he shall wash its entrails and its legs with water. And the priest shall burn all on the altar as a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, a [n]sweet[1] aroma to the LORD.

10 'If his offering *is* of the flocks—of the sheep or of the goats—as a burnt sacrifice, he shall bring a male [o]without blemish. 11 [p]He shall kill it on the north side of the altar before the LORD; and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall sprinkle its blood all around on the altar. 12 And he shall cut it into its pieces, with its head and its fat; and the priest shall lay them in order on the wood that *is* on the fire upon the altar; 13 but he shall wash the entrails and the legs with water. Then the priest shall bring *it* all and burn *it* on the altar; it *is* a burnt sacrifice, an [q]offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD.

14 'And if the burnt sacrifice of his offering to the LORD *is* of birds, then he shall bring his offering of [r]turtledoves or young pigeons. 15 The priest shall bring it to the altar, [2]wring off its head, and burn *it* on the altar; its blood shall be drained out at the side of the altar. 16 And he shall remove its crop with its feathers and cast it [s]beside the altar on the east side, into the place for ashes. 17 Then he shall split it at its wings, *but* [t]shall not divide *it* completely; and the priest shall burn it on the altar, on the wood that *is* on the fire. [u]It *is* a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, a [3]sweet aroma to the LORD.

The Grain Offering

2 'When anyone offers [a]a grain offering to the LORD, his offering shall be *of* fine flour. And he shall pour oil on it, and put [b]frankincense on it. 2 He shall bring it to Aaron's sons, the priests, one of whom shall take from it his handful of fine flour and oil with all the frankincense. And the priest shall burn [c]*it as* a memorial on the altar, an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD. 3 [d]The rest of the grain offering *shall be* Aaron's and his [e]sons'. [f]*It is* most holy of the offerings to the LORD made by fire.

4 'And if you bring as an offering a grain offering baked in the oven, *it shall be* unleavened cakes of fine flour mixed with oil, or unleavened wafers [g]anointed[1] with oil. 5 But if your offering *is* a grain offering *baked* in a [2]pan, *it shall be of* fine flour, unleavened, mixed with oil. 6 You shall break it in pieces and pour oil on it; it *is* a grain offering.

7 'If your offering *is* a grain offering *baked* in a [h]covered pan, it shall be made *of* fine flour with oil. 8 You shall bring the grain offering that is made of these things to the LORD. And when it is presented to the priest, he shall bring it to the altar. 9 Then the priest shall take from the grain offering [i]a memorial portion, and burn *it* on the altar. *It is* an [j]offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD. 10 And [k]what is left of the grain offering *shall be* Aaron's and his sons'. *It is* most holy of the offerings to the LORD made by fire.

11 'No grain offering which you bring to the LORD shall be made with [l]leaven, for you shall burn no leaven nor any honey in any offering to the LORD made by fire. 12 [m]As for the offering of the firstfruits, you shall offer them to the LORD, but they shall not be burned on the altar for a sweet aroma. 13 And every offering of your grain offering [n]you shall season with salt; you shall not allow [o]the salt of the covenant of your God to be lacking from your grain offering. [p]With all your offerings you shall offer salt.

14 'If you offer a grain offering of your firstfruits to the LORD, [q]you shall offer for the grain offering of your firstfruits green heads of grain roasted on the fire, grain beaten from [r]full heads. 15 And [s]you shall put oil on it, and lay frankincense on it. It *is* a grain offering. 16 Then the priest shall burn [t]the memorial portion: *part* of its beaten grain and *part* of its oil, with all the frankincense, as an offering made by fire to the LORD.

7 [l]Mal. 1:10 [m]Gen. 22:9
9 [n]Gen. 8:21 [1]*soothing* or *pleasing aroma*
10 [o]Lev. 1:3
11 [p]Lev. 1:5
13 [q]Num. 15:4–7; 28:12–14
14 [r]Lev. 5:7, 11; 12:8
15 [2]Lit. *nip* or *chop off*
16 [s]Lev. 6:10
17 [t]Gen. 15:10 [u]Lev. 1:9, 13 [3]*soothing* or *pleasing aroma*

CHAPTER 2

1 [a]Num. 15:4 [b]Lev. 5:11
2 [c]Lev. 2:9; 5:12; 6:15; 24:7
3 [d]Lev. 7:9 [e]Lev. 6:6; 10:12, 13 [f]Num. 18:9
4 [g]Ex. 29:2 [1]*spread*
5 [2]*flat plate* or *griddle*
7 [h]Lev. 7:9
9 [i]Lev. 2:2, 16; 5:12; 6:15 [j]Ex. 29:18
10 [k]Lev. 2:3; 6:16
11 [l]Lev. 6:16, 17
12 [m]Lev. 23:10, 11, 17, 18
13 [n][Col. 4:6] [o]Num. 18:19 [p]Ezek. 43:24
14 [q]Lev. 23:10, 14 [r]2 Kin. 4:42
15 [s]Lev. 2:1
16 [t]Lev. 2:2

■ **1:9 sweet aroma to the LORD.** The meaning of this phrase is seen most clearly in Gen. 8:21. Sacrifices averted God's anger, causing Him to look benevolently on the worshiper. The New Testament speaks of the death of Christ in similar language (Eph. 5:2).

■ **1:10–13** Sheep and goats were sacrificed in the same way as bulls vv. 3–9.

■ **1:14–17** A simpler procedure was prescribed for doves or pigeons, the offering of the poor. The priest carried out the whole ceremony.

■ **2:1 grain offering.** Usually offered in conjunction with an animal sacrifice, it consisted of wheat flour mixed with olive oil, incense, and salt. The mixture was baked, fried, or cooked. Like the other sacrifices, the grain offering symbolized the worshiper's dedication of himself to God.

■ **2:2 memorial.** Only a handful of the grain offering was burned; the rest went to the priest (v. 3). Such offerings constituted an important part of a priest's income.

■ **2:11 leaven nor any honey.** Possibly omitted because they cause fermentation, which suggests corruption.

■ **2:13 salt.** Probably because it is indestructible by fire, salt symbolizes the enduring covenant between God and Israel (Num. 18:19 note).

■ **2:14 firstfruits.** See 23:9–14; Deut. 26:1–11. The Israelite was expected to give the first of his harvest to God, and on this occasion the grain offering was prepared differently.

The Peace Offering

3 'When his offering *is* a [a]sacrifice of a peace offering, if he offers *it* of the herd, whether male or female, he shall offer it [b]without [f]blemish before the LORD. 2 And [c]he shall lay his hand on the head of his offering, and kill it *at* the door of the tabernacle of meeting; and Aaron's sons, the priests, shall [d]sprinkle the blood all around on the altar. 3 Then he shall offer from the sacrifice of the peace offering an offering made by fire to the LORD. [e]The fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that *is* on the entrails, 4 the two kidneys and the fat that *is* on them by the flanks, and the fatty lobe *attached* to the liver above the kidneys, he shall remove; 5 and Aaron's sons [f]shall burn it on the altar upon the [g]burnt sacrifice, which *is* on the wood that *is* on the fire, *as* an [h]offering made by fire, a [i]sweet aroma to the LORD.

6 'If his offering as a sacrifice of a peace offering to the LORD *is* of the flock, *whether* male or female, [j]he shall offer it without blemish. 7 If he offers a [k]lamb as his offering, then he shall [l]offer it [m]before the LORD. 8 And he shall lay his hand on the head of his offering, and kill it before the tabernacle of meeting; and Aaron's sons shall sprinkle its blood all around on the altar.

9 'Then he shall offer from the sacrifice of the peace offering, as an offering made by fire to the LORD, its fat *and* the whole fat tail which he shall remove close to the backbone. And the fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that *is* on the entrails, 10 the two kidneys and the fat that *is* on them by the flanks, and the fatty lobe *attached* to the liver above the kidneys, he shall remove; 11 and the priest shall burn *them* on the altar *as* [n]food, an offering made by fire to the LORD.

12 'And if his [o]offering *is* a goat, then [p]he shall offer it before the LORD. 13 He shall lay his hand on its head and kill it before the tabernacle of meeting; and the sons of Aaron shall sprinkle its blood all around on the altar. 14 Then he shall offer from it his offering, as an offering made by fire to the LORD. The fat that covers the entrails and all the fat that *is* on the entrails, 15 the two kidneys and the fat that *is* on them by the flanks, and the fatty lobe *attached* to the liver above the kidneys, he shall remove; 16 and the priest shall burn them on the altar *as* food, an offering made by fire for a sweet aroma; [q]all the fat *is* the LORD's.

17 '*This shall be* a [r]perpetual[2] statute throughout your generations in all your dwellings: you shall eat neither fat nor [s]blood.' "

The Sin Offering

4 Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: [a]'If a person sins [t]unintentionally against any of the commandments of the LORD *in anything* which ought not to be done, and does any of them, 3 [b]if the anointed priest sins, bringing guilt on the people, then let him offer to the LORD for his sin which he has sinned [c]a young bull without blemish as a [d]sin offering. 4 He shall bring the bull [e]to the door of the tabernacle of meeting

CHAPTER 3

1 [a]Lev. 7:11, 29 [b]Lev. 1:3; 22:20–24 [f]*imperfection* or *defect*

2 [c]Lev. 1:4, 5; 16:21 [d]Lev. 1:5

3 [e]Lev. 1:8; 3:16; 4:8, 9

5 [f]Ex. 29:13 [g]2 Chr. 35:14 [h]Num. 28:3–10 [i]Num. 15:8–10

6 [j]Lev. 3:1; 22:20–24

7 [k]Num. 15:4, 5 [l]1 Kin. 8:62 [m]Lev. 17:8, 9

11 [n]Num. 28:2

12 [o]Num. 15:6–11 [p]Lev. 3:1, 7

16 [q]Lev. 7:23–25

17 [r]Lev. 6:18; 7:36; 17:7; 23:14 [s]Lev. 7:23, 26; 17:10, 14 [2]*everlasting* or *never-ending*

CHAPTER 4

2 [a]Lev. 5:15–18 [t]*through error*

3 [b]Lev. 8:12 [c]Lev. 3:1; 9:2 [d]Lev. 9:7

4 [e]Lev. 1:3, 4; 4:15

■ **3:1 peace offering.** Also called the "fellowship" or "covenant" offering. The Hebrew term used is related to the word *shalom,* meaning "peace, well-being." This sacrifice was unique in that the worshiper and his family could eat much of the meat, only a part being given to the priests or burned on the altar. It was a sacrifice brought when someone was seeking God's blessing or celebrating blessings received. It was offered to underline a solemn prayer (such as a vow), or when such a prayer was answered, or out of simple gratitude (7:16). Eating meat was a rare luxury in ancient times and was usually something of a celebration. Moses prescribed that every animal killed for food must be offered in sacrifice first (17:3 note), so at least during the wilderness period every meal involving meat was preceded by a peace offering.

■ **3:3, 4** The choicest parts of the carcass were symbolically given to God by being burned. The kidneys symbolized the seat of the emotions (Jer. 17:10 text note).

■ **3:11 as food.** The Old Testament insists that God supplies man with food, not vice versa (Gen. 1:29; Ps. 50:12–14). Therefore this comment must be understood figuratively, that God is pleased with the sacrifice offered in faith (cf. Heb. 11:4), just as human beings enjoy food.

■ **3:17 neither fat nor blood.** Fat from sacrificial animals belonged to God (v. 3). Eating blood means eating meat from which the blood has not been drained (1 Sam. 14:33). The theological reason for this ban is given in 17:11 (Gen. 9:4 and note).

■ **4:1—5:13** With the words "If a person sins" (4:2), Moses introduces his instruction to the laity regarding the sin offering. While all sacrifices make atonement for sin to some extent, atonement is the dominant concern of the sin offering. Sin and uncleanness make a person unfit to be in God's presence and also pollute the sanctuary, making it impossible for God to dwell there. The sin offering is designed to cope with this aspect of sin by purifying both the sinner and the sanctuary. The distinctive feature of the sin offering is the use to which the sacrificial blood is put. In other sacrifices the animal's blood is splashed over the side of the altar, but in the case of the sin offering it could be applied to the horned corners of the altar, or sprinkled inside the tabernacle tent (on the incense altar or veil), or even inside the Most Holy Place. Because the tabernacle and its furniture were closely associated with the people who met God there (Heb. 9:22 note), the people's sin defiled the tabernacle as well as themselves. Such pollution required cleansing.

■ **4:2–35** These verses deal with four cases where persons of various ranks do something sinful "unintentionally" (v. 2 text note): the high priest (vv. 3–12), the congregation (vv. 13–21), a ruler (vv. 22–26), a common person (vv. 27–35).

■ **4:3 anointed priest.** The high priest. His sin has the direct consequence of "bringing guilt on the people" and requires the most expensive atonement, a bull.

let him offer. The sin and guilt offerings were compulsory after committing certain sins, whereas the other offerings could sometimes be offered voluntarily when the worshiper felt so inclined.

before the LORD, lay his hand on the bull's head, and kill the bull before the LORD. 5 Then the anointed priest [f]shall take some of the bull's blood and bring it to the tabernacle of meeting. 6 The priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle some of the blood seven times before the LORD, in front of the [g]veil of the sanctuary. 7 And the priest shall [h]put some of the blood on the horns of the altar of sweet incense before the LORD, which is in the tabernacle of meeting; and he shall pour [i]the remaining blood of the bull at the base of the altar of the burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 8 He shall take from it all the fat of the bull as the sin offering. The fat that covers the entrails and all the fat which *is* on the entrails, 9 the two kidneys and the fat that *is* on them by the flanks, and the fatty lobe *attached* to the liver above the kidneys, he shall remove, 10 [j]as it was taken from the bull of the sacrifice of the peace offering; and the priest shall burn them on the altar of the burnt offering. 11 [k]But the bull's hide and all its flesh, with its head and legs, its entrails and offal— 12 the whole bull he shall carry outside the camp to a clean place, [l]where the ashes are poured out, and [m]burn it on wood with fire; where the ashes are poured out it shall be burned.

13 'Now [n]if the whole congregation of Israel sins unintentionally, [o]and the thing is hidden from the eyes of the assembly, and they have done *something against* any of the commandments of the LORD *in anything* which should not be done, and are guilty; 14 when the sin which they have committed becomes known, then the assembly shall offer a young bull for the sin, and bring it before the tabernacle of meeting. 15 And the elders of the congregation [p]shall lay their hands on the head of the bull before the LORD. Then the bull shall be killed before the LORD. 16 [q]The anointed priest shall bring some of the bull's blood to the tabernacle of meeting. 17 Then the priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle *it* seven times before the LORD, in front of the veil. 18 And he shall put *some* of the blood on the horns of the altar which *is* before the LORD, which *is* in the tabernacle of meeting; and he shall pour the remaining blood at the base of the altar of burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 19 He shall take all the fat from it and burn *it* on the altar. 20 And he shall do [r]with the bull as he did with the bull as a sin offering; thus he shall do with it. [s]So the priest shall make [2]atonement for them, and it shall be forgiven them. 21 Then he shall carry the bull outside the camp, and burn it as he burned the first bull. It *is* a sin offering for the assembly.

22 'When a [3]ruler has sinned, and [t]done *something* unintentionally *against* any of the commandments of the LORD his God *in anything* which should not be done, and is guilty, 23 or [u]if his sin which he has committed [4]comes to his knowledge, he shall bring as his offering a kid of the goats, a male without blemish. 24 And [v]he shall lay his hand on the head of the goat, and kill it at the place where they kill the burnt offering before the LORD. It *is* a sin offering. 25 [w]The priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger, put *it* on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and pour its blood at the base of the altar of burnt offering. 26 And he shall burn all its fat on the altar, like [x]the fat of the sacrifice of the peace offering. [y]So the priest shall make [5]atonement for him concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven him.

27 [z]'If [6]anyone of the [7]common people sins unintentionally by doing *something against* any of the commandments of the LORD *in anything* which ought not to be done, and is guilty, 28 or [a]if his sin which he has committed comes to his knowledge, then he shall bring as his offering a kid of the goats, a female without blemish, for his sin which he has committed. 29 [b]And he shall lay his hand on the head of the sin offering, and kill the sin offering at the place of the burnt offering. 30 Then the priest shall take *some* of its blood with his finger, put *it* on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and pour all *the remaining* blood at the base of the altar. 31 [c]He shall remove all its fat, [d]as fat is removed from the sacrifice of the peace offering; and the priest shall burn it on the altar for a [e]sweet aroma to the LORD. [f]So the priest shall make atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him.

5 [f]Lev. 16:14; Num. 19:4
6 [g]Ex. 40:21, 26
7 [h]Lev. 4:18, 25, 30, 34; 8:15; 9:9; 16:18 [i]Ex. 40:5, 6; Lev. 5:9
10 [j]Lev. 3:3–5
11 [k]Ex. 29:14; Lev. 9:11; Num. 19:5
12 [l]Lev. 4:21; 6:10, 11; 16:27 [m][Heb. 13:11, 12]
13 [n]Num. 15:24–26; Josh. 7:11 [o]Lev. 5:2–4, 17
15 [p]Lev. 1:3, 4
16 [q]Lev. 4:5; [Heb. 9:12–14]
20 [r]Lev. 4:3 [s]Lev. 1:4; Num. 15:25 [2]Lit. *covering*
22 [t]Lev. 4:2, 13, 27 [3]*leader*
23 [u]Lev. 4:14; 5:4 [4]*is made known to him*
24 [v]Lev. 4:4; [Is. 53:6]
25 [w]Lev. 4:7, 18, 30, 34
26 [x]Lev. 3:3–5 [y]Lev. 4:20; Num. 15:28 [5]Lit. *covering*
27 [z]Lev. 4:2; Num. 15:27 [6]Lit. *any soul* [7]Lit. *people of the land*
28 [a]Lev. 4:23
29 [b]Lev. 1:4; 4:4, 24
31 [c]Lev. 3:14 [d]Lev. 3:3, 4 [e]Gen. 8:21; Ex. 29:18; Lev. 1:9, 13; 2:2, 9, 12 [f]Lev. 4:26

■ **4:6** The serious effects of high priestly sin are shown by the need to purify "the veil of the sanctuary" (the veil separating the Most Holy Place from the Holy Place, Ex. 26:31–35).

■ **4:7 the altar of sweet incense.** This piece of sacred furniture stood in front of the curtain leading into the Most Holy Place. It was cleansed by sprinkling with blood, the holy cleansing agent, making it possible for God to dwell in the tent. At the same time the high priest, who personified the nation, was cleansed.

■ **4:12 outside the camp.** See Heb. 13:11–13 and notes.

a clean place. Many places outside the camp contained impurity that would make the priest unfit to officiate in worship. He was to avoid these, and put the ashes left from the burnt offering in a designated clean place, where the remainder of the sacrificial bull was burned.

■ **4:13–21** For sin involving the congregation as a whole, a procedure like that in vv. 3–12 is prescribed, with the community elders representing the people at the altar (v. 15).

■ **4:22–26** A sin by a leader of a tribe or clan was not as serious a threat to the nation's holiness as the first two cases (vv. 3–21). This is reflected in that he was required to offer only a male goat (v. 23), whose blood was applied, not within the tent but outside, to the altar of burnt offering (v. 25).

■ **4:27–35** Unintentional sins by ordinary Israelites were treated similarly to those of leaders. However they could offer a female goat instead of a male goat, and if they were poor, birds or grain (5:7–13).

32 'If he brings a lamb as his sin offering, [g]he shall bring a female without blemish. 33 Then he shall [h]lay his hand on the head of the sin offering, and kill it as a sin offering at the place where they kill the burnt offering. 34 The priest shall take *some* of the blood of the sin offering with his finger, put *it* on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and pour all *the remaining* blood at the base of the altar. 35 He shall remove all its fat, as the fat of the lamb is removed from the sacrifice of the peace offering. Then the priest shall burn it on the altar, [i]according to the offerings made by fire to the LORD. [j]So the priest shall make atonement for his sin that he has committed, and it shall be forgiven him.

The Trespass Offering

5 'If a person sins in [a]hearing the utterance of an oath, and *is* a witness, whether he has seen or known *of the matter*—if he does not tell *it,* he [b]bears [1]guilt.

2 'Or [c]if a person touches any unclean thing, whether *it is* the carcass of an unclean beast, or the carcass of unclean livestock, or the carcass of unclean creeping things, and he is unaware of it, he also shall be unclean and [d]guilty. 3 Or if he touches [e]human uncleanness—whatever uncleanness with which a man may be defiled, and he is unaware of it—when he realizes *it,* then he shall be guilty.

4 'Or if a person [2]swears, speaking thoughtlessly with *his* lips [f]to do evil or [g]to do good, whatever *it is* that a man may pronounce by an oath, and he is unaware of it—when he realizes *it,* then he shall be guilty in any of these *matters.*

5 'And it shall be, when he is guilty in any of these *matters,* that he shall [h]confess that he has sinned in that *thing;* 6 and he shall bring his trespass offering to the LORD for his sin which he has committed, a female from the flock, a lamb or a kid of the goats as a sin offering. So the priest shall make atonement for him concerning his sin.

7 [i]'If he is not able to bring a lamb, then he shall bring to the LORD, for his trespass which he has committed, two [j]turtledoves or two young pigeons: one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering. 8 And he shall bring them to the priest, who shall offer *that* which *is* for the sin offering first, and [k]wring off its head from its neck, but shall not divide *it* [3]completely. 9 Then he shall sprinkle *some* of the blood of the sin offering on the side of the altar, and the [l]rest of the blood shall be drained out at the base of the altar. It *is* a sin offering. 10 And he shall offer the second *as* a burnt offering according to the [m]prescribed manner. So [n]the priest shall make atonement on his behalf for his sin which he has committed, and it shall be forgiven him.

11 'But if he is [o]not able to bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons, then he who sinned shall bring for his offering one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour as a sin offering. [p]He shall put no oil on it, nor shall he put frankincense on it, for it *is* a sin offering. 12 Then he shall bring it to the priest, and the priest shall take his handful of it [q]as a memorial portion, and burn *it* on the altar [r]according to the offerings made by fire to the LORD. It *is* a sin offering. 13 [s]The priest shall make atonement for him, [4]for his sin that he has committed in any of these matters; and it shall be forgiven him. [t]*The rest* shall be the priest's as a grain offering.' "

Offerings with Restitution

14 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 15 [u]"If a person commits a trespass, and sins unintentionally in regard to the holy things of the LORD, then [v]he shall bring to the LORD as his trespass offering a ram without blemish from the flocks, with your valuation in shekels of silver according to [w]the shekel of the sanctuary, as a trespass offering. 16 And he shall make restitution

32 [g]Lev. 4:28

33 [h]Lev. 1:4; Num. 8:12

35 [i]Lev. 3:5 [j]Lev. 4:26, 31

CHAPTER 5

1 [a]Prov. 29:24; [Jer. 23:10] [b]Lev. 5:17; 7:18; 17:16; 19:8; 20:17; Num. 9:13 [1]*his iniquity*

2 [c]Lev. 11:24, 28, 31, 39; Num. 19:11–16; Deut. 14:8 [d]Lev. 5:17

3 [e]Lev. 5:12, 13, 15

4 [f]1 Sam. 25:22; Acts 23:12 [g][Matt. 5:33–37]; Mark 6:23; [James 5:12] [2]*vows*

5 [h]Lev. 16:21; 26:40; Num. 5:7; Ezra 10:11, 12; Ps. 32:5; Prov. 28:13

7 [i]Lev. 12:6, 8; 14:21 [j]Lev. 1:14

8 [k]Lev. 1:15–17 [3]Lit. *apart*

9 [l]Lev. 4:7, 18, 30, 34

10 [m]Lev. 1:14–17 [n]Lev. 4:20, 26; 5:13, 16

11 [o]Lev. 14:21–32 [p]Lev. 2:1, 2; 6:15; Num. 5:15

12 [q]Lev. 2:2 [r]Lev. 4:35

13 [s]Lev. 4:26 [t]Lev. 2:3; 6:17, 26 [4]*concerning his sin*

15 [u]Lev. 4:2; 22:14; Num. 5:5–8 [v]Ezra 10:19 [w]Ex. 30:13; Lev. 27:25

■ **5:1–13** It is debated whether this section belongs with what precedes (the sin offering, ch. 4) or with what follows (the trespass offering, 5:14—6:7). Because of the similarity of 4:1 and 5:14, and the occurrence of the Hebrew term for "sin offering" throughout 4:1—5:13, many argue that the description of the trespass offering begins at 5:14. Alternatively, the occurrence of the Hebrew word *'asham* (meaning "trespass," or "trespass offering") in 5:6, 7 has led some to conclude that the discussion of the trespass offering begins in 5:1.

■ **5:1–6** These verses treat sins of omission, inadvertence, or rashness. The cases in view are (a) the sin of withholding evidence (v. 1); (b) the sin of contact with anything unclean (vv. 2, 3); and (c) the sin of careless oath-taking (v. 4).

■ **5:2 unclean.** See note on chs. 11—16.

■ **5:5** These sins require confession to God in the presence of a priest and a sin offering for the forgiveness of the sinner (cf. 1 John 1:7, 9).

■ **5:7–10** The poor man's sin offering is like the humblest burnt offering (1:14–17), except for the sprinkling of the blood (5:9; cf. 1:15).

■ **5:10** See "The Atonement" at Rom. 3:25.

■ **5:11–13** The items brought here as sin offerings resemble those of the grain offering of ch. 2, but no oil or incense is included.

■ **5:14—6:7** Moses gives instructions to the laity regarding the trespass offering. While the focus of the sin offering was upon the purification of the sinner, the trespass offering was concerned with restitution or reparation. Three types of sins requiring trespass offerings are mentioned: misuse of "the holy things of the LORD" (5:15, 16), supposed sin involving things "forbidden" (5:17–19), and trespass against a neighbor's rights and property (6:2–7).

■ **5:16 holy thing.** A reference to tithes and offerings, as well as property dedicated to God (22:7, 10, 14; 27:28).

add one-fifth. In cases where a trespass offering was required, misappropriated property also had to be restored plus a fifth (cf. 6:5).

for the harm that he has done in regard to the holy thing, [x]and shall add one-fifth to it and give it to the priest. [y]So the priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering, and it shall be forgiven him.

17 "If a person sins, and commits any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the LORD, [z]though he does not know *it,* yet he is [a]guilty and shall bear his [5]iniquity. 18 [b]And he shall bring to the priest a ram without blemish from the flock, with your valuation, as a trespass offering. So the priest shall make atonement for him regarding his ignorance in which he erred and did not know *it,* and it shall be forgiven him. 19 It is a trespass offering; [c]he has certainly trespassed against the LORD."

6 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2 "If a person sins and [a]commits a trespass against the LORD by [b]lying[1] to his neighbor about [c]what was delivered to him for safekeeping, or about [2]a pledge, or about a robbery, or if he has [d]extorted from his neighbor, 3 or if he [e]has found what was lost and lies concerning it, and [f]swears falsely—in any one of these things that a man may do in which he sins: 4 then it shall be, because he has sinned and is guilty, that he shall [3]restore [g]what he has stolen, or the thing which he has extorted, or what was delivered to him for safekeeping, or the lost thing which he found, 5 or all that about which he has sworn falsely. He shall [h]restore its full value, add one-fifth more to it, *and* give it to whomever it belongs, on the day of his trespass offering. 6 And he shall bring his trespass offering to the LORD, [i]a ram without blemish from the flock, with your [4]valuation, as a trespass offering, to the priest. 7 [j]So the priest shall make atonement for him before the LORD, and he shall be forgiven for any one of these things that he may have done in which he trespasses."

The Law of the Burnt Offering

8 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 9 "Command Aaron and his sons, saying, 'This *is* the [k]law of the burnt offering: The burnt offering *shall be* on the hearth upon the altar all night until morning, and the fire of the altar shall be kept burning on it. 10 [l]And the priest shall put on his linen garment, and his linen trousers he shall put on his body, and take up the ashes of the burnt offering which the fire has consumed on the altar, and he shall put them [m]beside the altar. 11 Then [n]he shall take off his garments, put on other garments, and carry the ashes outside the camp [o]to a clean place. 12 And the fire on the altar shall be kept burning on it; it shall not be put out. And the priest shall burn wood on it every morning, and lay the burnt offering in order on it; and he shall burn on it [p]the fat of the peace offerings. 13 A fire shall always be burning on the [q]altar; it shall never go out.

The Law of the Grain Offering

14 'This *is* the law of the grain offering: The sons of Aaron shall offer it on the altar before the LORD. 15 He shall take from it his handful of the fine flour of the grain offering, with its oil, and all the frankincense which *is* on the grain offering, and shall burn *it* on the altar *for* a sweet aroma, as a memorial to the LORD. 16 And the remainder of it Aaron and his sons shall eat; with unleavened bread it shall be eaten in a holy place; in the court of the tabernacle of meeting they shall eat it. 17 It shall not be baked with leaven. I have given it *as* their [5]portion of My offerings made by fire; it *is* most holy, like the sin offering and the [r]trespass offering. 18 [s]All the males among the children of Aaron may eat it. [t]*It shall be* a statute forever in your generations concerning the offerings made by fire to the LORD. [u]Everyone who touches them must be holy.' "

19 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 20 [v]"This *is* the offering of Aaron and his sons, which they shall offer to the LORD, *beginning* on the day when he is anointed: one-tenth of an

16 [x]Lev. 6:5; 22:14; 27:13, 15, 27, 31; Num. 5:7 [y]Lev. 4:26

17 [z]Lev. 4:2, 13, 22, 27 [a]Lev. 5:1, 2 [5]*punishment*

18 [b]Lev. 5:15

19 [c]Ezra 10:2

CHAPTER 6

2 [a]Num. 5:6 [b]Lev. 19:11; Acts 5:4; Col. 3:9 [c]Ex. 22:7, 10 [d]Prov. 24:28 [1]*deceiving his associate* [2]*an entrusted security*

3 [e]Ex. 23:4; Deut. 22:1–4 [f]Ex. 22:11; Lev. 19:12; Jer. 7:9; Zech. 5:4

4 [g]Lev. 24:18, 21 [3]*return*

5 [h]Lev. 5:16; Num. 5:7, 8; 2 Sam. 12:6

6 [i]Lev. 1:3; 5:15 [4]*appraisal*

7 [j]Lev. 4:26

9 [k]Ex. 29:38–42; Num. 28:3–10

10 [l]Ex. 28:39–43; Lev. 16:4; Ezek. 44:17, 18 [m]Lev. 1:16

11 [n]Ezek. 44:19 [o]Lev. 4:12

12 [p]Lev. 3:3, 5, 9, 14

13 [q]Lev. 1:7

17 [r]Lev. 7:7 [5]*share*

18 [s]Lev. 6:29; 7:6; Num. 18:10; 1 Cor. 9:13 [t]Lev. 3:17 [u]Ex. 29:37; Lev. 22:3–7; Num. 4:15; Hag. 2:11–13

20 [v]Ex. 29:2

■ **5:17–19** As the phrase "though he does not know it" (v. 17) indicates, these verses concern the person who suspects he has transgressed against divine law or another person but is not sure. Sacrificial remedy is provided for those with an uneasy conscience. In this instance, there is no demand for reparation because the nature of the offense is uncertain.

■ **6:1–7** Trespasses against a neighbor require restoration of the loss plus "one-fifth more" (v. 5), and the offering of sacrifice to God (cf. Matt. 5:24).

■ **6:8—7:36** Having addressed the laity concerning the laws of sacrifice, Moses now addresses the priests, especially about their entitlement to a share in the sacrifices.

■ **6:9 burnt offering.** See note on 1:3–17. Christ, the High Priest of the new covenant, offered the final burnt offering in His body: He was wholly consecrated to God, suffering death for sin and bringing about the believer's death to sin (Rom. 6:2–7).

■ **6:10 linen garment.** Being white, this apparel probably symbolized purity. These garments were to cover their private parts (Ex. 20:26; 28:42 note; cf. Gen. 3:7, 21).

■ **6:12 fire . . . shall be kept burning.** This action was perhaps prescribed as a reminder of God's continual presence and the people's need for continual atonement. The first burnt offering at the tabernacle was consumed by fire from God Himself (9:24).

■ **6:14 grain offering.** See ch. 2. As the grain offering represented the fruits of obedience, it foreshadowed Christ's life of perfect obedience and thanksgiving to God.

■ **6:18 must be holy.** Or, "shall become holy." This is a warning to laity not to touch food consecrated to God in sacrifice. Contact with the sacred food would render a person ritually holy (v. 27 text note; Ex. 29:37). Those who incurred such holiness probably were temporarily placed under restrictions like those governing the activity of priests (21:1–8).

[w]ephah of fine flour as a daily grain offering, half of it in the morning and half of it at night. 21 It shall be made in a [x]pan with oil. *When it is* mixed, you shall bring it in. The baked pieces of the grain offering you shall offer *for* a [6]sweet aroma to the LORD. 22 The priest from among his sons, [y]who is anointed in his place, shall offer it. *It is* a statute forever to the LORD. [z]It shall be [7]wholly burned. 23 For every grain offering for the priest shall be wholly burned. It shall not be eaten."

The Law of the Sin Offering

24 Also the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 25 "Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, 'This *is* the law of the sin offering: [a]In the place where the burnt offering is killed, the sin offering shall be killed before the LORD. It *is* most holy. 26 [b]The priest who offers it for sin shall eat it. In a holy place it shall be eaten, in the court of the tabernacle of meeting. 27 [c]Everyone who touches its flesh [8]must be holy. And when its blood is sprinkled on any garment, you shall wash that on which it was sprinkled, in a holy place. 28 But the earthen vessel in which it is boiled [d]shall be broken. And if it is boiled in a bronze pot, it shall be both scoured and rinsed in water. 29 All the males among the priests may eat it. It *is* most holy. 30 [e]But no sin offering from which *any* of the blood is brought into the tabernacle of meeting, to make atonement in [9]the holy [f]*place,* shall be [g]eaten. It shall be [h]burned in the fire.

The Law of the Trespass Offering

7 'Likewise [a]this *is* the law of the trespass offering (it *is* most holy): 2 In the place where they kill the burnt offering they shall kill the trespass offering. And its blood he shall sprinkle all around on the altar. 3 And he shall offer from it all its fat. The fat tail and the fat that covers the entrails, 4 the two kidneys and the fat that *is* on them by the flanks, and the fatty lobe *attached* to the liver above the kidneys, he shall remove; 5 and the priest shall burn them on the altar *as* an offering made by fire to the LORD. It *is* a trespass offering. 6 [b]Every male among the priests may eat it. It shall be eaten in a holy place. [c]It *is* most holy. 7 [d]The trespass offering *is* like the sin offering; *there is* one law for them both: the priest who makes atonement with it shall have *it.* 8 And the priest who offers anyone's burnt offering, that priest shall have for himself the skin of the burnt offering which he has offered. 9 Also [e]every grain offering that is baked in the oven and all that is prepared in the covered pan, or [f]in a pan, shall be the priest's who offers it. 10 Every grain offering, *whether* mixed with oil or dry, shall belong to all the sons of Aaron, to one *as much* as the other.

The Law of Peace Offerings

11 [f]'This *is* the law of the sacrifice of peace offerings which he shall offer to the LORD: 12 If he offers it for a thanksgiving, then he shall offer, with the sacrifice of thanksgiving, unleavened cakes mixed with oil, unleavened wafers [g]anointed with oil, or cakes of blended flour mixed with oil. 13 Besides the cakes, *as* his offering he shall offer [h]leavened bread with the sacrifice of thanksgiving of his peace offering. 14 And from it he shall offer one cake from each offering *as* a heave offering to the LORD. [i]It shall belong to the priest who sprinkles the blood of the peace offering.

15 [j]'The flesh of the sacrifice of his peace offering for thanksgiving shall be eaten the same day it is offered. He shall not leave any of it until morning. 16 But [k]if the sacrifice of his offering *is* a vow or a voluntary offering, it shall be eaten the same day that he offers his sacrifice; but on the next day the remainder of it also may be eaten; 17 the remainder of the flesh of the sacrifice on the third day must be burned with fire. 18 And if *any* of the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace

20 [w]Ex. 16:36

21 [x]Lev. 2:5; 7:9 [6]*pleasing*

22 [y]Lev. 4:3 [z]Ex. 29:25 [7]*completely*

25 [a]Lev. 1:1, 3, 5, 11

26 [b][Lev. 10:17, 18]; Num. 18:9, 10; [Ezek. 44:28, 29]

27 [c]Ex. 29:37; Num. 4:15; Hag. 2:11–13 [8]Lit. *shall*

28 [d]Lev. 11:33; 15:12

30 [e]Lev. 4:7, 11, 12, 18, 21; 10:18; 16:27; [Heb. 13:11, 12] [f]Ex. 26:33 [g]Lev. 6:16, 23, 26 [h]Lev. 16:27 [9]The Most Holy Place when capitalized

CHAPTER 7

1 [a]Lev. 5:14—6:7

6 [b]Lev. 6:16–18, 29; Num. 18:9 [c]Lev. 2:3

7 [d]Lev. 6:24–30; 14:13

9 [e]Lev. 2:3, 10; Num. 18:9; Ezek. 44:29 [f]*on a griddle*

11 [f]Lev. 3:1; 22:18, 21; Ezek. 45:15

12 [g]Lev. 2:4; Num. 6:15

13 [h]Lev. 2:12; 23:17, 18; Amos 4:5

14 [i]Num. 18:8, 11, 19

15 [j]Lev. 22:29, 30

16 [k]Lev. 19:5–8

■ **6:19–23** The priest's grain offering, mentioned here for the first time, had to be offered daily (6:20). Unlike these daily sacrifices, Christ our great High Priest offered Himself "once for all" (Heb. 7:27).

■ **6:22 priest . . . who is anointed.** The high priest.

■ **6:24–30 sin offering.** See 4:1—5:13. Christ, the new covenant High Priest, offered the final sin offering, as He bore the punishment for the believer's sins (1 Pet. 2:24; Is. 53:5).

■ **7:1–10 trespass offering.** See 5:14—6:7.

■ **7:11–36 peace offering.** See note on 3:1. Here rules are given about the grain offerings that must accompany peace offerings, and how the meat must be eaten (vv. 15, 16). Christ now spiritually offers believers His flesh to eat (John 6:54–58). In His flesh and blood believers find eternal life and have communion with the Father. Through that communion, believers are transformed more and more into Christ's image (2 Cor. 3:18).

■ **7:12 sacrifice of thanksgiving.** The Hebrew word here translated "thanksgiving" can also mean "confession" (of sin or of faith in response to God's goodness and mercy). The sacrifice served to underline prayers for forgiveness and healing or as an expression of gratitude for prayers answered.

■ **7:16 vow.** People in dire straits might make vows promising something to God if He would answer their prayers (Gen. 28:20–22; 1 Sam. 1:11; 2:21). Such vows were usually accompanied by a peace offering when first made and then again when fulfilled.

voluntary offering. This spontaneous offering showed gratitude to God.

offering is eaten at all on the third day, it shall not be accepted, nor shall it be [l]imputed to him; it shall be an [m]abomination *to* him who offers it, and the person who eats of it shall bear [2]guilt.

19 'The flesh that touches any unclean thing shall not be eaten. It shall be burned with fire. And as for the *clean* flesh, all who are [3]clean may eat of it. 20 But the person who eats the flesh of the sacrifice of the peace offering that *belongs* to the [n]LORD, [o]while he is unclean, that person [p]shall be cut off from his people. 21 Moreover the person who touches any unclean thing, *such as* [q]human uncleanness, *an* [r]unclean animal, or any [s]abominable[4] unclean thing, and who eats the flesh of the sacrifice of the peace offering that *belongs* to the LORD, that person [t]shall be cut off from his people.' "

Fat and Blood May Not Be Eaten

22 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 23 "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: [u]'You shall not eat any fat, of ox or sheep or goat. 24 And the fat of an animal that dies *naturally,* and the fat of what is torn by wild beasts, may be used in any other way; but you shall by no means eat it. 25 For whoever eats the fat of the animal of which men offer an offering made by fire to the LORD, the person who eats *it* shall be cut off from his people. 26 [v]Moreover you shall not eat any blood in any of your dwellings, *whether* of bird or beast. 27 Whoever eats any blood, that person shall be cut off from his people.' "

The Portion of Aaron and His Sons

28 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 29 "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: [w]'He who offers the sacrifice of his peace offering to the LORD shall bring his offering to the LORD from the sacrifice of his peace offering. 30 [x]His own hands shall bring the offerings made by fire to the LORD. The fat with the breast he shall bring, that the [y]breast may be waved *as* a wave offering before the LORD. 31 [z]And the priest shall burn the fat on the altar, but the [a]breast shall be Aaron's and his sons'. 32 [b]Also the right thigh you shall give to the priest *as* a heave offering from the sacrifices of your peace offerings. 33 He among the sons of Aaron, who offers the blood of the peace offering and the fat, shall have the right thigh for *his* part. 34 For [c]the breast of the wave offering and the thigh of the heave offering I have taken from the children of Israel, from the sacrifices of their peace offerings, and I have given them to Aaron the priest and to his sons from the children of Israel by a statute forever.' "

35 This *is* the consecrated portion for Aaron and his sons, from the offerings made by fire to the LORD, on the day when *Moses* presented them to [5]minister to the LORD as priests. 36 The LORD commanded this to be given to them by the children of Israel, [d]on the day that He anointed them, *by* a statute forever throughout their generations.

37 This *is* the law [e]of the burnt offering, [f]the grain offering, [g]the sin offering, [h]the trespass offering, [i]the consecrations, and [j]the sacrifice of the peace offering, 38 which the LORD commanded Moses on Mount Sinai, on the day when He commanded the children of Israel [k]to offer their offerings to the LORD in the Wilderness of Sinai.

Aaron and His Sons Consecrated

8 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2 [a]"Take Aaron and his sons with him, and [b]the garments, [c]the anointing oil, a [d]bull as the sin offering, two [e]rams, and a basket of unleavened bread; 3 and gather all the congregation together at the door of the tabernacle of meeting."

4 So Moses did as the LORD commanded him. And the congregation was gathered together at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 5 And Moses said to the congregation, "This *is* what the LORD commanded to be done."

6 Then Moses brought Aaron and his sons and [f]washed them with water. 7 And he [g]put the tunic on him, girded him with the sash, clothed him with the robe, and put the ephod on him; and he girded him with the intricately woven band of the ephod, and with it tied *the ephod* on him.

18 [l]Num. 18:27 [m]Lev. 11:10, 11, 41; 19:7 [2]*his iniquity*

19 [3]*pure*

20 [n][Heb. 2:17] [o]Num. 19:13 [p]Gen. 17:14

21 [q]Lev. 5:2, 3, 5 [r]Lev. 11:24, 28 [s]Ezek. 4:14 [t]Lev. 7:20 [4]So with MT, LXX, Vg.; Sam., Syr., Tg. *swarming thing* (cf. 5:2)

23 [u]Lev. 3:17; 17:10–15

26 [v]Acts 15:20, 29

29 [w]Lev. 3:1; 22:21

30 [x]Lev. 3:3, 4, 9, 14 [y]Ex. 29:24, 27

31 [z]Lev. 3:5, 11, 16 [a]Deut. 18:3

32 [b]Num. 6:20

34 [c]Lev. 10:14, 15

35 [5]*serve*

36 [d]Lev. 8:12, 30

37 [e]Lev. 6:9 [f]Lev. 6:14 [g]Lev. 6:25 [h]Lev. 7:1 [i]Ex. 29:1 [j]Lev. 7:11

38 [k]Lev. 1:1, 2

CHAPTER 8

2 [a]Ex. 29:1–3 [b]Ex. 28:2, 4 [c]Ex. 30:24, 25 [d]Ex. 29:10 [e]Ex. 29:15, 19

6 [f]Heb. 10:22

7 [g]Ex. 39:1–31

■ **7:20 unclean.** See note on chs. 11—16.

be cut off. This language is a general expression for coming under God's curse, the exact meaning of which is determined by the context of Scripture. It may mean the penalty of execution (e.g., Ex. 31:14–15) or of death without children (18:14, 29; cf. 20:20). In any event, God put the offender to death, with or without human agency.

■ **7:25 fat.** See 3:3, 17.

■ **7:26 eat any blood.** This phrase refers to eating meat from which the blood has not been drained (1 Sam. 14:33). The reason for this ban is given in 17:11 and Gen. 9:4.

■ **8:1—10:20** The Lord instructs Moses regarding the institution of the priesthood. The narrative moves from their installation (ch. 8), through their first sacrifices (ch. 9), to God's judgment of two priests (ch. 10).

■ **8:1–36** The instructions for the Levites' consecration (Ex. 29) are carried out. The repetition and elaborateness of the sacrifices (Ex. 29:35–37), and the splendor of Aaron's apparel (vv. 7–9) all point to the importance of the high priesthood. He represented Israel before God.

■ **8:3 at the door of the tabernacle.** See note on 1:3.

■ **8:7 ephod.** See note on Ex. 28:6.

8 Then he put the breastplate on him, and he [h]put the [1]Urim and the Thummim in the breastplate.
9 [i]And he put the turban on his head. Also on the turban, on its front, he put the golden plate, the holy crown, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

10 [j]Also Moses took the anointing oil, and anointed the tabernacle and all that *was* in it, and consecrated them. 11 He sprinkled some of it on the altar seven times, anointed the altar and all its utensils, and the laver and its base, to [2]consecrate them. 12 And he [k]poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron's head and anointed him, to consecrate him.

13 [l]Then Moses brought Aaron's sons and put tunics on them, girded them with sashes, and put [3]hats on them, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

14 [m]And he brought the bull for the sin offering. Then Aaron and his sons [n]laid their hands on the head of the bull for the sin offering, 15 and Moses killed *it.* [o]Then he took the blood, and put *some* on the horns of the altar all around with his finger, and purified the altar. And he poured the blood at the base of the altar, and consecrated it, to make [4]atonement for it. 16 [p]Then he took all the fat that *was* on the entrails, the fatty lobe *attached to* the liver, and the two kidneys with their fat, and Moses burned *them* on the altar. 17 But the bull, its hide, its flesh, and its offal, he burned with fire outside the camp, as the LORD [q]had commanded Moses.

18 [r]Then he brought the ram as the burnt offering. And Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the ram, 19 and Moses killed *it.* Then he sprinkled the blood all around on the altar. 20 And he cut the ram into pieces; and Moses [s]burned the head, the pieces, and the fat. 21 Then he washed the entrails and the legs in water. And Moses burned the whole ram on the altar. It *was* a burnt sacrifice for a [5]sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the LORD, [t]as the LORD had commanded Moses.

22 And [u]he brought the second ram, the ram of consecration. Then Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the ram, 23 and Moses killed *it.* Also he took *some* of [v]its blood and put it on the tip of Aaron's right ear, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot. 24 Then he brought Aaron's sons. And Moses put *some* of the [w]blood on the tips of their right ears, on the thumbs of their right hands, and on the big toes of their right feet. And Moses sprinkled the blood all around on the altar. 25 [x]Then he took the fat and the fat tail, all the fat that *was* on the entrails, the fatty lobe *attached to* the liver, the two kidneys and their fat, and the right thigh; 26 [y]and from the basket of unleavened bread that was before the LORD he took one unleavened cake, a cake of bread *anointed with* oil, and one wafer, and put *them* on the fat and on the right thigh; 27 and he put all *these* [z]in Aaron's hands and in his sons' hands, and waved them *as* a wave offering before the LORD. 28 [a]Then Moses took them from their hands and burned *them* on the altar, on the burnt offering. They *were* consecration offerings for a sweet aroma. That *was* an offering made by fire to the LORD. 29 And [b]Moses took the [c]breast and waved it *as* a wave offering before the LORD. It was Moses' [d]part of the ram of consecration, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

30 Then [e]Moses took some of the anointing oil and some of the blood which *was* on the altar, and sprinkled *it* on Aaron, on his garments, on his sons, and on the garments of his sons with him; and he consecrated Aaron, his garments, his sons, and the garments of his sons with him.

31 And Moses said to Aaron and his sons, [f]"Boil the flesh *at* the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and eat it there with the bread that *is* in the basket of consecration offerings, as I commanded, saying, 'Aaron and his sons shall eat it.' 32 [g]What remains of the flesh and of the bread you shall burn with fire. 33 And you shall not go outside the door of the tabernacle of meeting *for* seven days, until the days of your consecration are ended. For [h]seven days he shall consecrate you. 34 [i]As he has done this day, *so* the LORD has commanded to do, to make atonement for you. 35 Therefore you shall stay *at* the door of the tabernacle of meeting day and night for seven days, and [j]keep the [6]charge of the LORD, so that you may not die; for so I have been commanded." 36 So Aaron and his sons did all the things that the LORD had commanded by the hand of Moses.

The Priestly Ministry Begins

9 It came to pass on the [a]eighth day that Moses called Aaron and his sons and the elders of Israel. 2 And he said to Aaron, "Take for yourself a young [b]bull as a sin offering and a ram as a burnt offering, without blemish, and offer *them* before the LORD. 3 And to the children of Israel you shall speak, saying, [c]'Take a kid of the goats as a sin offering, and a calf and a lamb, *both* of

8 [h]Ex. 28:30 [1]Lit. *Lights and the Perfections,* Ex. 28:30
9 [i]Ex. 28:36, 37; 29:6
10 [j]Ex. 30:26–29; 40:10, 11
11 [2]*set them apart* for the LORD
12 [k]Ps. 133:2
13 [l]Ex. 29:8, 9 [3]*headpieces*
14 [m]Ezek. 43:19 [n]Lev. 4:4
15 [o]Lev. 4:7 [4]Lit. *covering*
16 [p]Ex. 29:13
17 [q]Lev. 4:11, 12
18 [r]Ex. 29:15
20 [s]Lev. 1:8
21 [t]Ex. 29:18 [5]*pleasing*
22 [u]Ex. 29:19, 31
23 [v]Lev. 14:14
24 [w][Heb. 9:13, 14, 18–23]
25 [x]Ex. 29:22
26 [y]Ex. 29:23
27 [z]Ex. 29:24
28 [a]Ex. 29:25
29 [b]Ps. 99:6 [c]Ex. 29:27 [d]Ex. 29:26
30 [e]Ex. 29:21; 30:30
31 [f]Ex. 29:31, 32
32 [g]Ex. 29:34
33 [h]Ex. 29:30, 35
34 [i][Heb. 7:16]
35 [j]Deut. 11:1 [6]*office*

CHAPTER 9

1 [a]Ezek. 43:27
2 [b]Lev. 4:1–12
3 [c]Lev. 4:23, 28

■ **8:8 Urim and the Thummim.** See note on Ex. 28:30.
■ **8:23** Applying the blood to the different parts of Aaron's body symbolized his entire consecration to God (Ex. 29:20 note).
■ **9:1–24** The consecration of Aaron and his sons took eight days and culminated in the offering of his first sacrifices and the appearance of God's glory (9:23–24).

the first year, without blemish, as a burnt offering, 4 also a bull and a ram as peace offerings, to sacrifice before the LORD, and [d]a grain offering mixed with oil; for [e]today the LORD will appear to you.' "

5 So they brought what Moses commanded before the tabernacle of meeting. And all the congregation drew near and stood [f]before the LORD. 6 Then Moses said, "This *is* the thing which the LORD commanded you to do, and the glory of the LORD will appear to you." 7 And Moses said to Aaron, "Go to the altar, [f]offer your sin offering and your burnt offering, and make atonement for yourself and for the people. [g]Offer the offering of the people, and make atonement for them, as the LORD commanded."

8 Aaron therefore went to the altar and killed the calf of the sin offering, which *was* for himself. 9 Then the sons of Aaron brought the blood to him. And he dipped his finger in the blood, put *it* on the horns of the altar, and poured the blood at the base of the altar. 10 [h]But the fat, the kidneys, and the fatty lobe from the liver of the sin offering he burned on the altar, as the LORD had commanded Moses. 11 [i]The flesh and the hide he burned with fire outside the camp.

12 And he killed the burnt offering; and Aaron's sons presented to him the blood, [j]which he sprinkled all around on the altar. 13 [k]Then they presented the burnt offering to him, with its pieces and head, and he burned *them* on the altar. 14 [l]And he washed the entrails and the legs, and burned *them* with the burnt offering on the altar.

15 [m]Then he brought the people's offering, and took the goat, which *was* the sin offering for the people, and killed it and offered it for sin, like the first one. 16 And he brought the burnt offering and offered it [n]according to the [2]prescribed manner. 17 Then he brought the grain offering, took a handful of it, and burned *it* on the altar, [o]besides the burnt sacrifice of the morning.

18 He also killed the bull and the ram *as* [p]sacrifices of peace offerings, which *were* for the people. And Aaron's sons presented to him the blood, which he sprinkled all around on the altar, 19 and the fat from the bull and the ram—the fatty tail, what covers *the entrails* and the kidneys, and the fatty lobe *attached to* the liver; 20 and they put the fat on the breasts. [q]Then he burned the fat on the altar; 21 but the breasts and the right thigh Aaron waved [r]*as* a wave offering before the LORD, as Moses had commanded.

22 Then Aaron lifted his hand toward the people, [s]blessed them, and came down from offering the sin offering, the burnt offering, and peace offerings. 23 And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of meeting, and came out and blessed the people. Then the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people, 24 and [t]fire came out from before the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the fat on the altar. When all the people saw *it,* they [u]shouted and fell on their [v]faces.

The Profane Fire of Nadab and Abihu

10 Then [a]Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, [b]each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered [c]profane fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. 2 So [d]fire went out from the LORD and devoured them, and they died before the LORD. 3 And Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD spoke, saying:

'By those [e]who come near Me
I must be regarded as holy;
And before all the people
I must be glorified.' "

4 [d]Lev. 2:4 [e]Ex. 29:43; Lev. 9:6, 23

5 [1]*in the presence of*

7 [f]Lev. 4:3; 1 Sam. 3:14; [Heb. 5:3–5; 7:27] [g]Lev. 4:16, 20; Heb. 5:1

10 [h]Ex. 23:18; Lev. 8:16

11 [i]Lev. 4:11, 12; 8:17

12 [j]Lev. 1:5; 8:19

13 [k]Lev. 8:20

14 [l]Lev. 8:21

15 [m][Is. 53:10; Heb. 2:17; 5:3]

16 [n]Lev. 1:1–13 [2]*ordinance*

17 [o]Ex. 29:38, 39

18 [p]Lev. 3:1–11

20 [q]Lev. 3:5, 16

21 [r]Ex. 29:24, 26, 27; Lev. 7:30–34

22 [s]Num. 6:22–26; Deut. 21:5; Luke 24:50

24 [t]Gen. 4:4; Judg. 6:21; 2 Chr. 7:1; Ps. 20:3 [u]Ezra 3:11 [v]1 Kin. 18:38, 39

CHAPTER 10

1 [a]Ex. 24:1, 9; Num. 3:2–4; 1 Chr. 24:2 [b]Lev. 16:12 [c]Ex. 30:9; 1 Sam. 2:17

2 [d]Gen. 19:24; Num. 11:1; 16:35; Rev. 20:9

3 [e]Ex. 19:22; Lev. 21:6; Is. 52:11; Ezek. 20:41

■ **9:7** Note that Aaron had to make atonement for himself first and then for the people (cf. Heb. 5:3).

■ **9:22 blessed.** The traditional priestly blessing is found in Num. 6:23–26.

■ **9:23 the glory of the LORD.** God's appearance signaled His approval of the first sacrifices offered by the newly consecrated priests. The fire that then consumed the offering (v. 24) confirmed God's acceptance of Aaron's ministry (cf. 1 Kin. 18:38; Heb. 12:28–29).

■ **10:1–20** The Lord, who accepted Aaron's sacrifice (9:23, 24), now rejects the ministry of his sons Nadab and Abihu. His sons Eleazar and Ithamar, though sincere, fail in their first ministrations as well (vv. 16–20). These first halting steps of the Levites would characterize their history and lead to Malachi's prophecy of a purified priesthood (Mal. 3:1–5).

■ **10:1 censer.** A vessel for burning incense.

profane fire. Lit. "strange fire." Apparently the instructions for offering incense were not properly followed, perhaps by using coals from elsewhere than the altar (Lev. 16:12; cf. Ex. 30:1–9). Some interpreters suggest that the two men were also drunk (cf. v. 9).

■ **10:2 fire went out from the LORD.** The Old Testament frequently warned against approaching God in an unfit state (Ex. 19:12, 21); this principle is also evident in the New Testament (Acts 5:1–10; 1 Cor. 11:29, 30). Eating sacrificial food while unclean (7:21) or entering the Most Holy Place without divine approval might lead to death (16:2). The same divine fire that ignited the inaugural sacrifice, providing atonement for the people (9:24), now engulfed those who encroached upon His altar in an unauthorized fashion. So also the same divine wrath against sin that fell upon Christ in His vicarious sacrifice for His people will blaze against those who reject that sacrifice and yet attempt to approach God in their sin (Heb. 10:26–31).

So Aaron held his peace.

4 Then Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Uzziel the uncle of Aaron, and said to them, "Come near, [f]carry your brethren from [1]before the sanctuary out of the camp." 5 So they went near and carried them by their tunics out of the camp, as Moses had said.

6 And Moses said to Aaron, and to Eleazar and Ithamar, his sons, "Do not [2]uncover your heads nor tear your clothes, lest you die, and [g]wrath come upon all the people. But let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, [3]bewail the burning which the LORD has kindled. 7 [h]You shall not go out from the door of the tabernacle of meeting, lest you die, [i]for the anointing oil of the LORD *is* upon you." And they did according to the word of Moses.

Conduct Prescribed for Priests

8 Then the LORD spoke to Aaron, saying: 9 [j]"Do not drink wine or intoxicating drink, you, nor your sons with you, when you go into the tabernacle of meeting, lest you die. *It shall be* a statute forever throughout your generations, 10 that you may [k]distinguish between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean, 11 [l]and that you may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD has spoken to them by the hand of Moses."

12 And Moses spoke to Aaron, and to Eleazar and Ithamar, his sons who were left: [m]"Take the grain offering that remains of the offerings made by fire to the LORD, and eat it without leaven beside the altar; [n]for it *is* most holy. 13 You shall eat it in a [o]holy place, because it *is* your [4]due and your sons' due, of the sacrifices made by fire to the LORD; for [p]so I have been commanded. 14 [q]The breast of the wave offering and the thigh of the heave offering you shall eat in a clean place, you, your sons, and your [r]daughters with you; for *they are* your due and your sons' [s]due, *which* are given from the sacrifices of peace offerings of the children of Israel. 15 [t]The thigh of the heave offering and the breast of the wave offering they shall bring with the offerings of fat made by fire, to offer *as* a wave offering before the LORD. And it shall be yours and your sons' with you, by a statute forever, as the LORD has commanded."

16 Then Moses made careful inquiry about [u]the goat of the sin offering, and there it was—burned up. And he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, the sons of Aaron *who were* left, saying, 17 [v]"Why have you not eaten the sin offering in a holy place, since it *is* most holy, and *God* has given it to you to bear [w]the guilt of the congregation, to make atonement for them before the LORD? 18 See! [x]Its blood was not brought inside [5]the holy *place;* indeed you should have eaten it in a holy *place,* [y]as I commanded."

19 And Aaron said to Moses, "Look, [z]this day they have offered their sin offering and their burnt offering before the LORD, and such things have befallen me! *If* I had eaten the sin offering today, [a]would it have been accepted in the sight of the LORD?" 20 So when Moses heard *that,* he was content.

Foods Permitted and Forbidden

11 Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying to them, 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, saying, [a]'These *are* the animals which you may eat among all the animals that *are*

4 [f]Acts 5:6, 10 [1]*in front of*

6 [g]2 Sam. 24:1 [2]An act of mourning [3]*weep bitterly*

7 [h]Lev. 8:33; 21:12 [i]Lev. 8:30

9 [j]Ezek. 44:21

10 [k]Ezek. 22:26; 44:23

11 [l]Deut. 24:8

12 [m]Num. 18:9 [n]Lev. 21:22

13 [o]Num. 18:10 [p]Lev. 2:3; 6:16 [4]*portion*

14 [q]Num. 18:11 [r]Lev. 22:13 [s]Num. 18:10

15 [t]Lev. 7:29, 30, 34

16 [u]Lev. 9:3, 15

17 [v]Lev. 6:24–30 [w]Ex. 28:38

18 [x]Lev. 6:30 [y]Lev. 6:26, 30 [5]The Most Holy Place when capitalized

19 [z]Lev. 9:8, 12 [a][Is. 1:11–15]

CHAPTER 11

2 [a]Deut. 14:4

■ **10:6 uncover . . . tear.** These were signs of mourning (13:45). The high priests were forbidden to mourn even their closest relatives (21:10–12), since total consecration to God meant complete separation from death.

■ **10:10 distinguish between holy and unholy.** The priest's job was to teach the people these basic religious distinctions. "Holy" applies to what belongs to God, "clean" to what is fit for Him. Things "unholy" and "unclean" are unfit for God's presence. See note on chs. 11—16.

■ **10:17–20** Aaron and his sons had offered two sin offerings (v. 19; cf. 9:8–17): one for Aaron, the blood of which was sprinkled in the holy place and the remainder burned (4:6, 12), and one for the people, the blood of which was sprinkled on the altar of burnt offering in the courtyard and which was then to be eaten by the priests (6:25, 26). Normally he and his sons should have eaten the meat of the people's sin offering to complete the atonement process, but they had not.

■ **10:19 such things have befallen me.** Probably a reference to the terrifying events of vv. 1–7. After the display of God's consuming judgment, Aaron was apparently frightened to eat the sacrificial meat, which was holy (6:26–29).

■ **10:20 Moses . . . was content.** He realized that the mistake of Aaron and his sons was not motivated by rebellion or by a disregard for the holiness of God.

■ **11:1—16:34** In these chapters, Moses explains the difference between the ceremonially clean and unclean. "Clean" means "fit for God's presence"; "unclean" means "unfit for God's presence." Anyone who was unclean or who had come in contact with uncleanness was to abstain from public worship until he was cleansed. The basic idea is that God is perfect life, while the essence of uncleanness is death. Normal, healthy creatures were clean, but abnormal or unhealthy creatures, and particularly corpses, were unclean. Abnormalities that suggested or that could lead to death were marks of uncleanness. Life and death were not to be mixed, so the unclean was never to enter God's presence. Ultimately, it is Christ, the great Mediator and High Priest, who triumphs over death and corruption on behalf of those who trust in Him (1 Cor. 15:20–28, 50–57).

■ **11:1–47** Moses instructs the Israelites regarding the principles of cleanness, showing them that, though all corpses are unclean (vv. 24, 27, 31–40), some perfectly healthy creatures are also stated to be unclean in a milder sense and therefore must not be eaten. Although some of the forbidden animals posed a possible health threat (e.g., pigs as carriers of trichinosis), this classification is not based simply on health

on the earth: 3 Among the animals, whatever divides the hoof, having cloven hooves *and* chewing the cud—that you may eat. 4 Nevertheless these you shall [b]not eat among those that chew the cud or those that have cloven hooves: the camel, because it chews the cud but does not have cloven hooves, is [1]unclean to you; 5 the [2]rock hyrax, because it chews the cud but does not have cloven hooves, *is* [3]unclean to you; 6 the hare, because it chews the cud but does not have cloven hooves, *is* unclean to you; 7 and the swine, though it divides the hoof, having cloven hooves, yet does not chew the cud, [c]*is* unclean to you. 8 Their flesh you shall not eat, and their carcasses you shall not touch. [d]They *are* unclean to you.

9 [e]'These you may eat of all that *are* in the water: whatever in the water has fins and scales, whether in the seas or in the rivers—that you may eat. 10 But all in the seas or in the rivers that do not have fins and scales, all that move in the water or any living thing which *is* in the water, they *are* [4]an [f]abomination to you. 11 They shall be an abomination to you; you shall not eat their flesh, but you shall regard their carcasses as an abomination. 12 Whatever in the water does not have fins or scales—that *shall be* an abomination to you.

13 [g]'And these you shall regard as an abomination among the birds; they shall not be eaten, they *are* an abomination: the eagle, the vulture, the buzzard, 14 the kite, and the falcon after its kind; 15 every raven after its kind, 16 the ostrich, the short-eared owl, the sea gull, and the hawk after its kind; 17 the little owl, the fisher owl, and the screech owl; 18 the white owl, the jackdaw, and the carrion vulture; 19 the stork, the heron after its kind, the hoopoe, and the bat.

20 'All flying insects that creep on *all* fours *shall be* an abomination to you. 21 Yet these you may eat of every flying insect that creeps on *all* fours: those which have jointed legs above their feet with which to leap on the earth. 22 These you may eat: [h]the locust after its kind, the destroying locust after its kind, the cricket after its kind, and the grasshopper after its kind. 23 But all *other* flying insects which have four feet *shall be* an abomination to you.

Unclean Animals

24 'By these you shall become [5]unclean; whoever touches the carcass of any of them shall be unclean until evening; 25 whoever carries part of the carcass of any of them [i]shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening: 26 *The carcass* of any animal which divides the foot, but is not cloven-hoofed or does not chew the cud, *is* unclean to you. Everyone who touches it shall be unclean. 27 And whatever goes on its paws, among all kinds of animals that go on *all* fours, those *are* unclean to you. Whoever touches any such carcass shall be unclean until evening. 28 Whoever carries *any such* carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening. It *is* unclean to you.

29 'These also *shall be* unclean to you among the creeping things that creep on the earth: the mole, [j]the mouse, and the large lizard after its kind; 30 the gecko, the monitor lizard, the sand reptile, the sand lizard, and the chameleon. 31 These *are* unclean to you among all that creep. Whoever [k]touches them when they are dead shall be unclean until evening. 32 Anything on which *any* of them falls, when they are dead shall be [6]unclean, whether *it is* any item of wood or clothing or skin or sack, whatever item *it is,* in which *any* work is done, [l]it must be put in water. And it shall be unclean until evening; then it shall be clean. 33 Any [m]earthen vessel into which *any* of them falls [n]you shall break; and whatever *is* in it shall be unclean: 34 in such a vessel, any edible food upon which water falls becomes unclean, and any drink that may be drunk from it becomes unclean. 35 And everything on which *a part* of *any such* carcass falls shall be unclean; *whether it is* an oven or cooking stove, it shall be broken down; *for* they *are* unclean, and shall be unclean to you. 36 Nevertheless a spring or a cistern, *in which there is* plenty of water, shall be clean, but whatever touches any such carcass becomes unclean. 37 And if a part of *any such* carcass falls on any planting seed which is to be sown, it *remains* clean. 38 But if water is put on the seed, and if *a part* of *any such* carcass falls on it, it *becomes* [7]unclean to you.

39 'And if any animal which you may eat dies, he who touches its carcass shall be [o]unclean

4 [b]Acts 10:14 [1]*impure*
5 [2]*rock badger* [3]*impure*
7 [c]Is. 65:4; 66:3, 17; Mark 5:1–17
8 [d]Is. 52:11; [Mark 7:2, 15, 18]; Acts 10:14, 15; 15:29
9 [e]Deut. 14:9
10 [f]Lev. 7:18, 21; Deut. 14:3 [4]*detestable*
13 [g]Deut. 14:12–19; Is. 66:17
22 [h]Matt. 3:4; Mark 1:6
24 [5]*impure*
25 [i]Lev. 14:8; 15:5; Num. 19:10, 21, 22; 31:24; Zech. 13:1; [Heb. 9:10; 10:22; Rev. 7:14]
29 [j]Is. 66:17
31 [k]Hag. 2:13
32 [l]Lev. 15:12 [6]*impure*
33 [m]Lev. 6:28 [n]Lev. 15:12; Ps. 2:9; Jer. 48:38; [2 Tim. 2:21]; Rev. 2:27
38 [7]*impure*
39 [o]Hag. 2:11–13

grounds. Rather, the principle teaches basic moral and spiritual truths. Carnivorous animals and birds of prey eat flesh with blood in it, something forbidden to human beings (7:26). Such animals also contact corpses, which are unclean. The clean creatures here symbolize Israelites, while unclean animals symbolize Gentiles. Only domesticated clean animals may be offered in sacrifice, for the sacrificial animal represents the offerer. In restricting his diet to clean animals, the Israelite was reminded that God had chosen Israel alone among the nations. Only when the new covenant admitted Gentiles to the community of God were the food laws abrogated (Mark 7:19; Acts 10:15).

- **11:2–8** Cud-chewing, cloven-hoofed land animals were clean and so could be eaten. Other animals were unclean.
- **11:9–12** Only ordinary fish with fins and scales were clean. Other water creatures were unclean and therefore inedible.
- **11:13–19** Birds of prey were unclean, but others were clean.
- **11:20–23** Insects that hop might be eaten (v. 21), but not others.

until evening. 40 [p]He who eats of its carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening. He also who carries its carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until evening.

41 'And every creeping thing that creeps on the earth *shall be* [s]an abomination. It shall not be eaten. 42 Whatever crawls on its belly, whatever goes on *all* fours, or whatever has many feet among all creeping things that creep on the earth—these you shall not eat, for they *are* an abomination. 43 [q]You shall not make [t]yourselves [u]abominable with any creeping thing that creeps; nor shall you make yourselves unclean with them, lest you be defiled by them. 44 For I *am* the LORD your [r]God. You shall therefore consecrate yourselves, and [s]you shall be holy; for I *am* holy. Neither shall you defile yourselves with any creeping thing that creeps on the earth. 45 [t]For I *am* the LORD who brings you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God. [u]You shall therefore be holy, for I *am* holy.

46 'This *is* the law [v]of the animals and the birds and every living creature that moves in the waters, and of every creature that creeps on the earth, 47 [w]to distinguish between the unclean and the clean, and between the animal that may be eaten and the animal that may not be eaten.' "

40 [p]Lev. 17:15; 22:8

41 [s]*detestable*

43 [q]Lev. 20:25 [t]Lit. *your souls* [u]*impure*

44 [r]Ex. 6:7 [s]1 Pet. 1:15, 16

45 [t]Ex. 6:7; 20:2 [u]Lev. 11:44

46 [v]*concerning*

47 [w]Ezek. 44:23

God Is Light: Divine Holiness and Justice

When Scripture calls God, or individual Persons of the Godhead, "holy" (as it often does: Lev. 11:44, 45; Josh. 24:19; 1 Sam. 2:2; Ps. 99:9; Is. 1:4; 6:3; 41:14, 16, 20; 57:15; Ezek. 39:7; Amos 4:2; John 17:11; Acts 5:3, 4, 32; Rev. 15:4), the word signifies everything about God that sets Him apart from us and makes Him an object of awe, adoration, and dread to us. It covers all aspects of His transcendent greatness and moral perfection, and is characteristic of all His attributes, pointing to the "God-ness" of God at every point. The core of this truth, however, is God's purity that cannot tolerate any form of sin (Hab. 1:13), and calls sinners to constant self-abasement in His presence (Is. 6:5).

Justice, which means doing in all circumstances things that are right, is one expression of God's holiness. God displays His justice as Lawgiver and Judge, and also as Promise-keeper and Pardoner of sin. His moral law, requiring behavior that matches His own, is "holy and just and good" (Rom. 7:12). He judges justly, according to actual desert (Gen. 18:25; Ps. 7:11; 96:13; Acts 17:31). His wrath, His active judicial hostility to sin, is wholly just in its manifestations (Rom. 2:5–16), and His particular judgments (retributive punishments) are glorious and praiseworthy (Rev. 16:5, 7; 19:1–4). Whenever God fulfills His covenant commitment by acting to save His people, it is an act of His righteousness, or justice (Is. 51:5, 6; 56:1; 63:1; 1 John 1:9). When God justifies sinners through faith in Christ, He does so on the basis of justice done—the punishment of our sins in the Person of Christ our substitute. The form taken by His justifying mercy shows Him to be utterly and totally just (Rom. 3:25, 26), and our justification itself is shown to be judicially justified.

When John says that God is "light," with no darkness in Him at all, the imagery affirms God's holy purity, which makes fellowship between Him and the willfully unholy impossible, and requires that the pursuit of holiness and righteousness of life be a central concern for Christian people (1 John 1:5—2:1; 2 Cor. 6:14—7:1; Heb. 12:10–17). The summons to believers, regenerate and forgiven as they are, to practice a holiness that will match God's own, and so please Him, is constant in the New Testament, as indeed it was in the Old (Deut. 30:1–10; Eph. 4:17—5:14; 1 Pet. 1:13–22). □

■ **11:44** See theological note "God Is Light: Divine Holiness and Justice."

■ **11:45 be holy.** The word "holy" means "separate" or "set apart." Only God is intrinsically holy. He is by nature majestic, awesome, and pure. He demonstrated His transcendent holiness by His creation of the world (Gen. 1:1, 3 and notes), by His great acts in history such as redeeming His people from Egypt, and by His perfect laws. Israel's holiness derived from her unique covenant relationship with the only true and living God. His covenant provided, among other things, moral and judicial laws that reflected God's own righteous standards, and the sacrificial system to cleanse them from sin. The immediate background for this designation of Israel as a "holy nation" is the Lord's appearance on Mount Sinai: they washed their clothes, avoided contact with the mountain, and abstained from sexual intercourse in preparation for that unique event (Ex. 19:10–15, 21–24; Heb. 12:18–21).

Jesus Christ, the Mediator of the new covenant (Heb. 8:6; 9:15; 12:24), also demands perfection (Matt. 5:48). But He provides the new Israel with holiness by His perfect sacrifice, which removed the sins of His people forever (Heb. 9; 10), and by His Holy Spirit, who inscribes God's moral law on their hearts (2 Cor. 3:3; cf. Jer. 31:31–34). Without that holiness no one will see God (Heb. 12:14).

CHAPTER 12

2 [a]Lev. 15:19; [Job 14:4; Ps. 51:5] [b]Ex. 22:30; Lev. 8:33; 13:4; Luke 2:22 [c]Lev. 18:19 [1]*impure*

3 [d]Gen. 17:12; Luke 1:59; 2:21; John 7:22, 23; Gal. 5:3

4 [2]*consecrated*

6 [e]Luke 2:22 [f][John 1:29; 1 Pet. 1:18, 19] [g]Lev. 5:7 [3]Lit. *a son of his year*

7 [4]Lit. *covering*

8 [h]Lev. 5:7; Luke 2:22–24 [i]Lev. 4:26 [5]*pure*

CHAPTER 13

2 [a]Deut. 28:27; Is. 3:17 [b]Deut. 17:8, 9; 24:8; Mal. 2:7; Luke 17:14 [1]Heb. *saraath,* disfiguring skin diseases, including leprosy, and so in vv. 2–46 and 14:2–32

3 [2]*defiled*

4 [c]Lev. 14:8

6 [d]Lev. 11:25; 14:8; [John 13:8, 10]

8 [3]*defiled*

10 [e]Num. 12:10, 12; 2 Kin. 5:27; 2 Chr. 26:19, 20

11 [4]*defiled*

13 [f]Ex. 4:6

The Ritual After Childbirth

12 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'If a [a]woman has conceived, and borne a male child, then [b]she shall be [1]unclean seven days; [c]as in the days of her customary impurity she shall be unclean. 3 And on the [d]eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. 4 She shall then continue in the blood of *her* purification thirty-three days. She shall not touch any [2]hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary until the days of her purification are fulfilled.

5 'But if she bears a female child, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her customary impurity, and she shall continue in the blood of *her* purification sixty-six days.

6 [e]'When the days of her purification are fulfilled, whether for a son or a daughter, she shall bring to the priest a [f]lamb [3]of the first year as a burnt offering, and a young pigeon or a turtledove as a [g]sin offering, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 7 Then he shall offer it before the LORD, and make [4]atonement for her. And she shall be clean from the flow of her blood. This *is* the law for her who has borne a male or a female.

8 [h]'And if she is not able to bring a lamb, then she may bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons—one as a burnt offering and the other as a sin offering. [i]So the priest shall make atonement for her, and she will be [5]clean.' "

The Law Concerning Leprosy

13 And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: 2 "When a man has on the skin of his body a swelling, [a]a scab, or a bright spot, and it becomes on the skin of his body *like* a [1]leprous sore, [b]then he shall be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons the priests. 3 The priest shall examine the sore on the skin of the body; and if the hair on the sore has turned white, and the sore appears *to be* deeper than the skin of his body, it *is* a leprous sore. Then the priest shall examine him, and pronounce him [2]unclean. 4 But if the bright spot *is* white on the skin of his body, and does not appear *to be* deeper than the skin, and its hair has not turned white, then the priest shall isolate *the one who has* the sore [c]seven days. 5 And the priest shall examine him on the seventh day; and indeed *if* the sore appears to be as it was, *and* the sore has not spread on the skin, then the priest shall isolate him another seven days. 6 Then the priest shall examine him again on the seventh day; and indeed *if* the sore has faded, *and* the sore has not spread on the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him clean; it *is only* a scab, and he [d]shall wash his clothes and be clean. 7 But if the scab should at all spread over the skin, after he has been seen by the priest for his cleansing, he shall be seen by the priest again. 8 And *if* the priest sees that the scab has indeed spread on the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him [3]unclean. It *is* leprosy.

9 "When the leprous sore is on a person, then he shall be brought to the priest. 10 [e]And the priest shall examine *him;* and indeed *if* the swelling on the skin *is* white, and it has turned the hair white, and *there is* a spot of raw flesh in the swelling, 11 it *is* an old leprosy on the skin of his body. The priest shall pronounce him [4]unclean, and shall not isolate him, for he *is* unclean.

12 "And if leprosy breaks out all over the skin, and the leprosy covers all the skin of *the one who has* the sore, from his head to his foot, wherever the priest looks, 13 then the priest shall consider; and indeed *if* the leprosy has covered all his body, he shall pronounce *him* clean *who has* the sore. It has all turned [f]white. He *is* clean. 14 But when raw flesh appears on him, he shall be unclean. 15 And the priest shall examine the raw flesh and pronounce him to be unclean; *for* the raw flesh *is* unclean. It *is* leprosy. 16 Or if the raw flesh changes and turns white again, he shall come to the priest. 17 And the priest shall examine him; and indeed *if* the sore has turned white, then the priest shall pronounce *him* clean *who has* the sore. He *is* clean.

■ **12:2 unclean.** The flow of blood after childbirth made a mother unclean (vv. 4, 5, 7). Loss of blood could lead to death, thus illustrating the equation of uncleanness with death or the threat thereof (chs. 11—16 note).

■ **12:5 sixty-six days.** The text does not explain why the birth of a daughter made a mother unclean for twice as long as the birth of a son. Perhaps a daughter, as a potential mother, was subject to uncleanness in a way a son was not.

■ **12:8 burnt offering . . . sin offering.** These sacrifices for purification were offered after the birth of Jesus (Luke 2:24).

■ **13:1—14:57** These chapters contain God's laws concerning unclean skin diseases referred to as "like a leprous sore" (13:2) or "leprosy" (13:8). Modern physicians recognize here the symptoms of various modern complaints, but we should remember that the biblical classification is based primarily on spiritual rather than hygienic or medical considerations. The key principle in identifying a skin disease as "unclean" was whether the skin seemed to be rotting away, suggesting the spiritual principle of death. Patchy complaints amounted to uncleanness (vv. 9, 10), but a complaint affecting the whole body did not (vv. 12, 13). Stable conditions were clean, but deteriorating ones were unclean (vv. 5–8, 18–37). Similar principles applied to the diagnosis of uncleanness in clothing: progressive mildews were unclean (vv. 47–52), but stable ones were clean (vv. 53–58). The close association of uncleanness with death is shown in 13:45. The person afflicted with a serious skin disease behaved as a mourner (21:10). He was excluded from the camp, not to protect the health of Israel, but because God was in the camp and uncleanness (death) had to be separated from the presence of God (life). See Num. 5:1–4; 12:14–15.

18 "If the body develops a [g]boil in the skin, and it is healed, 19 and in the place of the boil there comes a white swelling or a bright spot, reddish-white, then it shall be shown to the priest; 20 and *if,* when the priest sees it, it indeed *appears* deeper than the skin, and its hair has turned white, the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It *is* a leprous sore which has broken out of the boil. 21 But if the priest examines it, and indeed *there are* no white hairs in it, and it *is* not deeper than the skin, but has faded, then the priest shall isolate him seven days; 22 and if it should at all spread over the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It *is* a [5]leprous sore. 23 But if the bright spot stays in one place, *and* has not spread, it *is* the scar of the boil; and the priest shall pronounce him clean.

24 "Or if the body receives a [h]burn on its skin by fire, and the raw *flesh* of the burn becomes a bright spot, reddish-white or white, 25 then the priest shall examine it; and indeed *if* the hair of the bright spot has turned white, and it appears deeper than the skin, it *is* leprosy broken out in the burn. Therefore the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It *is* a leprous sore. 26 But if the priest examines it, and indeed *there are* no white hairs in the bright spot, and it *is* not deeper than the skin, but has faded, then the priest shall isolate him seven days. 27 And the priest shall examine him on the seventh day. If it has at all spread over the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It *is* a leprous sore. 28 But if the bright spot stays in one place, *and* has not spread on the skin, but has faded, it *is* a swelling from the burn. The priest shall pronounce him clean, for it *is* the scar from the burn.

29 "If a man or woman has a sore on the head or the beard, 30 then the priest shall examine the sore; and indeed if it appears deeper than the skin, *and there is* in it thin yellow hair, then the priest shall pronounce him unclean. It *is* a scaly leprosy of the head or beard. 31 But if the priest examines the scaly sore, and indeed it does not appear deeper than the skin, and *there is* no black hair in it, then the priest shall isolate *the one who has* the scale seven days. 32 And on the seventh day the priest shall examine the sore; and indeed *if* the scale has not spread, and there is no yellow hair in it, and the scale does not appear deeper than the skin, 33 he shall shave himself, but the scale he shall not shave. And the priest shall isolate *the one who has* the scale another seven days. 34 On the seventh day the priest shall examine the scale; and indeed *if* the scale has not spread over the skin, and does not appear deeper than the skin, then the priest shall pronounce him clean. He shall wash his clothes and be clean. 35 But if the scale should at all spread over the skin after his cleansing, 36 then the priest shall examine him; and indeed *if* the scale has spread over the skin, the priest need not seek for yellow hair. He *is* unclean. 37 But if the scale appears to be at a standstill, and there is black hair grown up in it, the scale has healed. He *is* clean, and the priest shall pronounce him clean.

38 "If a man or a woman has bright spots on the skin of the body, *specifically* white bright spots, 39 then the priest shall look; and indeed *if* the bright spots on the skin of the body *are* dull white, it *is* a white spot *that* grows on the skin. He *is* clean.

40 "As for the man whose hair has fallen from his head, he *is* bald, *but* he *is* clean. 41 He whose hair has fallen from his forehead, he *is* bald on the forehead, *but* he *is* clean. 42 And if there is on the bald head or bald [i]forehead a reddish-white sore, it *is* leprosy breaking out on his bald head or his bald forehead. 43 Then the priest shall examine it; and indeed *if* the swelling of the sore *is* reddish-white on his bald head or on his bald forehead, as the appearance of leprosy on the skin of the body, 44 he is a leprous man. He *is* unclean. The priest shall surely pronounce him [6]unclean; his sore *is* on his [j]head.

45 "Now the leper on whom the sore *is,* his clothes shall be torn and his head [k]bare; and he shall [l]cover his mustache, and cry, [m]'Unclean! Unclean!' 46 He shall be unclean. All the days he has the sore he shall be unclean. He *is* unclean, and he shall [7]dwell alone; his dwelling *shall be* [n]outside the camp.

The Law Concerning Leprous Garments

47 "Also, if a garment has a [8]leprous plague in it, *whether it is* a woolen garment or a linen garment, 48 whether *it is* in the warp or woof of linen or wool, whether in leather or in anything made of leather, 49 and if the plague is greenish or reddish in the garment or in the leather, whether in the warp or in the woof, or in anything made of leather, it *is* a leprous [9]plague and shall be shown to the priest. 50 The priest shall examine the plague and isolate *that which has* the plague seven days. 51 And he shall examine the plague on the seventh day. If the plague has spread in the garment, either in the warp or in the woof, in the leather *or* in anything made of leather, the plague *is* [o]an active leprosy. It *is* unclean. 52 He shall therefore burn that garment in which is the plague, whether warp or woof, in wool or in linen, or anything of leather, for it *is* an active leprosy; *the garment* shall be burned in the fire.

53 "But if the priest examines *it,* and indeed the plague has not spread in the garment, either in

18 [g]Ex. 9:9; 15:26

22 [5]*infection*

24 [h]Is. 3:24

42 [i]2 Chr. 26:19

44 [j]Is. 1:5 [6]*altogether defiled*

45 [k]Lev. 10:6; 21:10 [l]Ezek. 24:17, 22; Mic. 3:7 [m]Is. 6:5; 64:6; Lam. 4:15; Luke 5:8

46 [n]Num. 5:1–4; 12:14; 2 Kin. 7:3; 15:5; 2 Chr. 26:21; Ps. 38:11; Luke 17:12 [7]*live alone*

47 [8]A mold, fungus, or similar infestation, and so in vv. 47–59

49 [9]*mark*

51 [o]Lev. 14:44

the warp or in the woof, or in anything made of leather, [54] then the priest shall command that they wash *the thing* in which *is* the plague; and he shall isolate it another seven days. [55] Then the priest shall examine the plague after it has been washed; and indeed *if* the plague has not changed its color, though the plague has not spread, it *is* unclean, and you shall burn it in the fire; it continues eating away, *whether* the damage *is* outside or inside. [56] If the priest examines *it,* and indeed the plague has faded after washing it, then he shall tear it out of the garment, whether out of the warp or out of the woof, or out of the leather. [57] But if it appears again in the garment, either in the warp or in the woof, or in anything made of leather, it *is* a spreading *plague;* you shall burn with fire that in which is the plague. [58] And if you wash the garment, either warp or woof, or whatever is made of leather, if the plague has disappeared from it, then it shall be washed a second time, and shall be clean.

[59] "This *is* the law of the leprous plague in a garment of wool or linen, either in the warp or woof, or in anything made of leather, to pronounce it clean or to pronounce it unclean."

The Ritual for Cleansing Healed Lepers

14 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [2] "This shall be the law of the [1]leper for the day of his cleansing: He [a]shall be brought to the priest. [3] And the priest shall go out of the camp, and the priest shall examine *him;* and indeed, *if* the [2]leprosy is healed in the leper, [4] then the priest shall command to take for him who is to be cleansed two living *and* clean birds, [b]cedar wood, [c]scarlet, and [d]hyssop. [5] And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water. [6] As for the living bird, he shall take it, the cedar wood and the scarlet and the hyssop, and dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird *that was* killed over the running water. [7] And he shall [e]sprinkle it [f]seven times on him who is to be cleansed from the leprosy, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose in the open field. [8] He who is to be cleansed [g]shall wash his clothes, shave off all his hair, and [h]wash himself in water, that he may be clean. After that he shall come into the camp, and [i]shall stay outside his tent seven days. [9] But on the [j]seventh day he shall shave all the hair off his head and his beard and his eyebrows—all his hair he shall shave off. He shall wash his clothes and wash his body in water, and he shall be clean.

[10] "And on the eighth day [k]he shall take two male lambs without blemish, one ewe lamb of the first year without blemish, three-tenths *of an ephah* of fine flour mixed with oil as [l]a grain offering, and one log of oil. [11] Then the priest who makes *him* clean shall present the man who is to be made clean, and those things, before the LORD, *at* the door of the tabernacle of meeting. [12] And the priest shall take one male lamb and [m]offer it as a trespass offering, and the log of oil, and [n]wave them *as* a wave offering before the LORD. [13] Then he shall kill the lamb [o]in the place where he kills the sin offering and the burnt offering, in a holy place; for [p]as the sin offering *is* the priest's, so *is* the trespass offering. [q]It *is* most holy. [14] The priest shall take *some* of the blood of the trespass offering, and the priest shall put *it* [r]on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot. [15] And the priest shall take *some* of the log of oil, and pour *it* into the palm of his own left hand. [16] Then the priest shall dip his right finger in the oil that *is* in his left hand, and shall [s]sprinkle some of the oil with his finger seven times before the LORD. [17] And of the rest of the oil in his hand, the priest shall put *some* on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot, on the blood of the trespass offering. [18] The rest of the oil that *is* in the priest's hand he shall put on the head of him who is to be cleansed. [t]So the priest shall make [3]atonement for him before the LORD.

[19] "Then the priest shall offer [u]the sin offering, and make atonement for him who is to be cleansed from his uncleanness. Afterward he shall kill the burnt offering. [20] And the priest shall offer the burnt offering and the grain offering on the altar. So the priest shall make atonement for him, and he shall be [v]clean.

CHAPTER 14

2 [a]Matt. 8:2, 4; Mark 1:40, 44; Luke 5:12, 14; 17:14 [1]See note at 13:2

3 [2]Heb. *saraath,* disfiguring skin diseases, including leprosy, and so in vv. 2–32

4 [b]Lev. 14:6, 49, 51, 52; Num. 19:6; Heb. 9:19 [c]Ex. 25:4 [d]Ex. 12:22; Ps. 51:7

7 [e]Num. 19:18, 19; [Heb. 9:13, 21; 12:24] [f]2 Kin. 5:10, 14; Ps. 51:2

8 [g]Lev. 11:25; 13:6; Num. 8:7 [h]Lev. 11:25; [Eph. 5:26; Heb. 10:22; Rev. 1:5, 6] [i]Lev. 13:5; Num. 5:2, 3; 12:14, 15; 2 Chr. 26:21

9 [j]Num. 19:19

10 [k]Matt. 8:4; Mark 1:44; Luke 5:14 [l]Lev. 2:1; Num. 15:4

12 [m]Lev. 5:6, 18; 6:6; 14:19 [n]Ex. 29:22–24, 26

13 [o]Ex. 29:11; Lev. 1:5, 11; 4:4, 24 [p]Lev. 6:24–30; 7:7 [q]Lev. 2:3; 7:6; 21:22

14 [r]Ex. 29:20; Lev. 8:23, 24

16 [s]Lev. 4:6

18 [t]Lev. 4:26; 5:6; Num. 15:28; [Heb. 2:17] [3]Lit. *covering*

19 [u]Lev. 5:1, 6; 12:7; [2 Cor. 5:21]

20 [v]Lev. 14:8, 9

■ **14:2 cleansing.** These ceremonies conducted by the priest did not cure skin disease. A diseased person came to the priest after he had been healed (Luke 5:14). The task of the priest was to make the person who had been excluded from the camp, from his people, and from God, ceremonially clean. Through these ceremonial cleansings, which took place in two stages a week apart, the diseased individual was restored to fellowship with God and with His people.

■ **14:3–8** The first stage of cleansing took place outside the camp. The man washed himself and his clothes, and shaved. Two birds were taken. The blood of one was used to purify the man. The death of that bird portrayed the end of the man's old life outside the camp, and the flight to freedom of the other pictured his liberation from the effects of the disease. Then the man might enter the camp again.

■ **14:9–20** In the second cleansing stage, the Israelite was brought back into full communion with God. The ceremonies here resemble the consecration of the priest (ch. 8). The Israelite was daubed with blood and anointed with oil, being linked to the altar, the symbol of God's presence. A variation on this restoration procedure is prescribed for the poor in vv. 21–31.

21 "But [w]if he *is* poor and cannot afford it, then he shall take one male lamb *as* a trespass offering to be waved, to make atonement for him, [q]one-tenth *of an ephah* of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering, a log of oil, 22 [x]and two turtledoves or two young pigeons, such as he is able to afford: one shall be a sin offering and the other a burnt offering. 23 [y]He shall bring them to the priest on the eighth day for his cleansing, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, before the LORD. 24 [z]And the priest shall take the lamb of the trespass offering and the log of oil, and the priest shall wave them *as* a wave offering before the LORD. 25 Then he shall kill the lamb of the trespass offering, [a]and the priest shall take *some* of the blood of the trespass offering and put *it* on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot. 26 And the priest shall pour some of the oil into the palm of his own left hand. 27 Then the priest shall sprinkle with his right finger *some* of the oil that *is* in his left hand seven times before the LORD. 28 And the priest shall put *some* of the oil that *is* in his hand on the tip of the right ear of him who is to be cleansed, on the thumb of the right hand, and on the big toe of his right foot, on the place of the blood of the trespass offering. 29 The rest of the oil that *is* in the priest's hand he shall put on the head of him who is to be cleansed, to make atonement for him before the LORD. 30 And he shall offer one of [b]the turtledoves or young pigeons, such as he can afford— 31 such as he is able to afford, the one *as* a sin offering and the other *as* a burnt offering, with the grain offering. So the priest shall make atonement for him who is to be cleansed before the LORD. 32 This *is* the law *for one* who had a leprous sore, who cannot afford [c]the usual cleansing."

The Law Concerning Leprous Houses

33 And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: 34 [d]"When you have come into the land of Canaan, which I give you as a possession, and [e]I put the [5]leprous plague in a house in the land of your possession, 35 and he who owns the house comes and tells the priest, saying, 'It seems to me that *there is* [f]some plague in the house,' 36 then the priest shall command that they empty the house, before the priest goes *into it* to examine the plague, that all that *is* in the house may not be made unclean; and afterward the priest shall go in to examine the house. 37 And he shall examine the plague; and indeed *if* the plague *is* on the walls of the house with ingrained streaks, greenish or reddish, which appear to be [6]deep in the wall, 38 then the priest shall go out of the house, to the door of the house, and [7]shut up the house seven days. 39 And the priest shall come again on the seventh day and look; and indeed *if* the plague has spread on the walls of the house, 40 then the priest shall command that they take away the stones in which *is* the plague, and they shall cast them into an unclean place outside the city. 41 And he shall cause the house to be scraped inside, all around, and the dust that they scrape off they shall pour out in an unclean place outside the city. 42 Then they shall take other stones and put *them* in the place of *those* stones, and he shall take other mortar and plaster the house.

43 "Now if the plague comes back and breaks out in the house, after he has taken away the stones, after he has scraped the house, and after it is plastered, 44 then the priest shall come and look; and indeed *if* the plague has spread in the house, it *is* [g]an active leprosy in the house. It *is* unclean. 45 And he shall break down the house, its stones, its timber, and all the plaster of the house, and he shall carry *them* outside the city to an unclean place. 46 Moreover he who goes into the house at all while it is shut up shall be [8]unclean [h]until evening. 47 And he who lies down in the house shall [i]wash his clothes, and he who eats in the house shall wash his clothes.

48 "But if the priest comes in and examines *it,* and indeed the plague has not spread in the house after the house was plastered, then the priest shall pronounce the house clean, because the plague is healed. 49 And [j]he shall take, to cleanse the house, two birds, cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop. 50 Then he shall kill one of the birds in an earthen vessel over running water; 51 and he shall take the cedar wood, the hyssop, the scarlet, and the living bird, and dip them in the blood of the slain bird and in the running water, and sprinkle the house seven times. 52 And he shall [9]cleanse the house with the blood of the bird and the running water and the living bird, with the cedar wood, the hyssop, and the scarlet. 53 Then he shall let the living bird loose outside the city in the open field, and [k]make atonement for the house, and it shall be clean.

54 "This *is* the law for any [l]leprous sore and scale, 55 for the [m]leprosy of a garment [n]and of a house, 56 [o]for a swelling and a scab and a bright spot, 57 to [p]teach when *it is* unclean and when *it is* clean. This *is* the law of leprosy."

21 [w]Lev. 5:7, 11; 12:8; 27:8 [q]Approximately two dry quarts
22 [x]Lev. 12:8; 15:14, 15
23 [y]Lev. 14:10, 11
24 [z]Lev. 14:12
25 [a]Lev. 14:14, 17
30 [b]Lev. 14:22; 15:14, 15
32 [c]Lev. 14:10
34 [d]Gen. 12:7; 13:17; 17:8; Num. 32:22; Deut. 7:1; 32:49 [e][Prov. 3:33] [5]Decomposition by mildew, mold, dry rot, etc., and so in vv. 34–53
35 [f][Ps. 91:9, 10; Prov. 3:33; Zech. 5:4]
37 [6]Lit. *lower than the wall*
38 [7]*quarantine*
44 [g]Lev. 13:51; [Zech. 5:4]
46 [h]Lev. 11:24; 15:5 [8]*defiled*
47 [i]Lev. 14:8
49 [j]Lev. 14:4
52 [9]*ceremonially cleanse*
53 [k]Lev. 14:20
54 [l]Lev. 13:30; 26:21
55 [m]Lev. 13:47–52 [n]Lev. 14:34
56 [o]Lev. 13:2
57 [p]Lev. 11:47; 20:25; Deut. 24:8; Ezek. 44:23

■ **14:34–57** This passage adapts principles of diagnosis (13:47–58) and cleansing (14:1–7) to the problem of "plague" (mildew or dry rot) in houses. This problem would have arisen after the settlement in Canaan (v. 34).

CHAPTER 15

2 [a]Lev. 22:4; Num. 5:2; 2 Sam. 3:29

4 [1]*defiled*

5 [b]Lev. 5:2; 14:46 [c]Lev. 14:8, 47 [d]Lev. 11:25; 17:15

6 [e]Lev. 15:10; Deut. 23:10

8 [f]Num. 12:14

12 [g]Lev. 6:28; 11:32, 33

13 [h]Lev. 14:8; 15:28; Num. 19:11, 12

14 [i]Lev. 14:22, 23, 30, 31

15 [j]Lev. 14:30, 31 [k]Lev. 14:19, 31 [2]Lit. *covering*

16 [l]Lev. 22:4; Deut. 23:10, 11

18 [m][Ex. 19:15; 1 Sam. 21:4; 1 Cor. 6:18]

19 [n]Lev. 12:2 [3]Lit. *in her impurity*

24 [o]Lev. 18:19; 20:18 [4]*defiled*

25 [p]Matt. 9:20; Mark 5:25; Luke 8:43

28 [q]Lev. 15:13–15

30 [r]Lev. 5:7

31 [s]Lev. 11:47; 14:57; 22:2; Deut. 24:8; Ezek. 44:23; [Heb. 12:15] [t]Lev. 20:3; Num. 5:3; 19:13, 20; Ezek. 5:11; 23:38; 36:17

32 [u]Lev. 15:2

The Law Concerning Bodily Discharges

15 And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: [a]'When any man has a discharge from his body, his discharge *is* unclean. 3 And this shall be his uncleanness in regard to his discharge—whether his body runs with his discharge, or his body is stopped up by his discharge, it *is* his uncleanness. 4 Every bed is [1]unclean on which he who has the discharge lies, and everything on which he sits shall be unclean. 5 And whoever [b]touches his bed shall [c]wash his clothes and [d]bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. 6 He who sits on anything on which he who has the [e]discharge sat shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. 7 And he who touches the body of him who has the discharge shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. 8 If he who has the discharge [f]spits on him who is clean, then he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. 9 Any saddle on which he who has the discharge rides shall be unclean. 10 Whoever touches anything that was under him shall be unclean until evening. He who carries *any of* those things shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. 11 And whomever the one who has the discharge touches, and has not rinsed his hands in water, he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. 12 The [g]vessel of earth that he who has the discharge touches shall be broken, and every vessel of wood shall be rinsed in water.

13 'And when he who has a discharge is cleansed of his discharge, then [h]he shall count for himself seven days for his cleansing, wash his clothes, and bathe his body in running water; then he shall be clean. 14 On the eighth day he shall take for himself [i]two turtledoves or two young pigeons, and come before the LORD, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and give them to the priest. 15 Then the priest shall offer them, [j]the one *as* a sin offering and the other *as* a burnt offering. [k]So the priest shall make [2]atonement for him before the LORD because of his discharge.

16 [l]'If any man has an emission of semen, then he shall wash all his body in water, and be unclean until evening. 17 And any garment and any leather on which there is semen, it shall be washed with water, and be unclean until evening. 18 Also, when a woman lies with a man, and *there is* an emission of semen, they shall bathe in water, and [m]be unclean until evening.

19 [n]'If a woman has a discharge, *and* the discharge from her body is blood, she shall be [3]set apart seven days; and whoever touches her shall be unclean until evening. 20 Everything that she lies on during her impurity shall be unclean; also everything that she sits on shall be unclean. 21 Whoever touches her bed shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. 22 And whoever touches anything that she sat on shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. 23 If *anything* is on *her* bed or on anything on which she sits, when he touches it, he shall be unclean until evening. 24 And [o]if any man lies with her at all, so that her impurity is on him, he shall be [4]unclean seven days; and every bed on which he lies shall be unclean.

25 'If [p]a woman has a discharge of blood for many days, other than at the time of her *customary* impurity, or if it runs beyond her *usual time of* impurity, all the days of her unclean discharge shall be as the days of her *customary* impurity. She *shall be* unclean. 26 Every bed on which she lies all the days of her discharge shall be to her as the bed of her impurity; and whatever she sits on shall be unclean, as the uncleanness of her impurity. 27 Whoever touches those things shall be unclean; he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water, and be unclean until evening.

28 'But [q]if she is cleansed of her discharge, then she shall count for herself seven days, and after that she shall be clean. 29 And on the eighth day she shall take for herself two turtledoves or two young pigeons, and bring them to the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 30 Then the priest shall offer the one *as* a sin offering and the other *as* a [r]burnt offering, and the priest shall make atonement for her before the LORD for the discharge of her uncleanness.

31 'Thus you shall [s]separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness, lest they die in their uncleanness when they [t]defile My tabernacle that *is* among them. 32 [u]This *is* the law for one who

■ **15:1–33** This chapter deals with the uncleanness caused by discharges from the sexual organs: (a) long-term male discharge (e.g., gonorrhea; vv. 2–15); (b) short-term male discharges (vv. 16–18); (c) short-term female discharge (menstruation, vv. 19–24); and (d) long-term female discharges (vv. 25–30). That perfectly natural processes like sexual intercourse (v. 18) or menstruation should make someone unclean (i.e., unfit to worship) is surprising. But all these cases involve the loss of bodily fluids (blood or semen), and any loss of a "life fluid" suggested death and was incompatible with the presence of God, who is perfect life.

The New Testament shows God, the giver of perfect life, incarnate in Jesus Christ, healing those who suffered exclusion from His presence under these Old Testament rules (Matt. 9:20–22). The divine program of redemption was historically progressive. The old covenant arrangements that seem so strange to us were early object lessons, a "tutor" pointing forward to the full redemption accomplished in Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:24, 25).

has a discharge, [v]and *for him* who emits semen and is unclean thereby, 33 [w]and for her who is indisposed because of her *customary* impurity, and for one who has a discharge, either man [x]or woman, [y]and for him who lies with her who is unclean.' "

The Day of Atonement

16 Now the LORD spoke to Moses after [a]the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they offered *profane fire* before the LORD, and died; 2 and the LORD said to Moses: "Tell Aaron your brother [b]not to come at *just* any time into the Holy *Place* inside the veil, before the mercy seat which *is* on the ark, lest he die; for [c]I will appear in the cloud above the mercy seat.

3 *I* "Thus Aaron shall [d]come into the Holy *Place:* [e]with *the blood of* a young bull as a sin offering, and *of* a ram as a burnt offering. 4 He shall put the [f]holy linen tunic and the linen trousers on his body; he shall be girded with a linen sash, and with the linen turban he shall be attired. These *are* holy garments. Therefore [g]he shall wash his body in water, and put them on. 5 And he shall take from [h]the congregation of the children of Israel two kids of the goats as a sin offering, and one ram as a burnt offering.

6 "Aaron shall offer the bull as a sin offering, which *is* for himself, and [i]make atonement for himself and for his house. 7 He shall take the two goats and present them before the LORD *at* the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 8 Then Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats: one lot for the LORD and the other lot for the scapegoat. 9 And Aaron shall bring the goat on which the LORD's lot fell, and offer it *as* a sin offering. 10 But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make [j]atonement upon it, *and* to let it go as the scapegoat into the wilderness.

11 "And Aaron shall bring the bull of the sin offering, which is for [k]himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house, and shall kill the bull as the sin offering which *is* for himself. 12 Then he shall take [l]a censer full of burning coals of fire from the altar before the LORD, with his hands full of [m]sweet incense beaten fine, and bring *it* inside the veil. 13 [n]And he shall put the incense on the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of incense may cover the [o]mercy seat that *is* on the Testimony, lest he [p]die. 14 [q]He shall take some of the blood of the bull and [r]sprinkle *it*

32 [v]Lev. 15:16

33 [w]Lev. 15:19 [x]Lev. 15:25 [y]Lev. 15:24

CHAPTER 16

1 [a]Lev. 10:1, 2

2 [b]Ex. 30:10 [c]Ex. 25:21, 22; 40:34

3 [d][Heb. 9:7, 12, 24, 25] [e]Lev. 4:3 [f]Lit. *With this*

4 [f]Ex. 28:39, 42, 43 [g]Ex. 30:20

5 [h]Lev. 4:14

6 [i][Heb. 5:3; 7:27, 28; 9:7]

10 [j][1 John 2:2]

11 [k][Heb. 7:27; 9:7]

12 [l]Lev. 10:1 [m]Ex. 30:34–38

13 [n]Ex. 30:7, 8 [o]Ex. 25:21 [p]Ex. 28:43

14 [q][Heb. 9:25; 10:4] [r]Lev. 4:6, 17

■ **16:1–34** The Day of Atonement, when annual atonement was made for the sins of the nation, was the holiest day in the Old Testament calendar. It fell in the Hebrew seventh month (October) and involved the offering of various sacrifices, the entry of the high priest into the Most Holy Place (in this chapter referred to simply as the "Holy Place" or "Holy Sanctuary"), and the dispatch of a goat into the wilderness carrying the people's sins. For a summary of the sacrifices see notes on chs. 1; 4; and 5. A summary of the rites is given in vv. 6–10 and fuller details in vv. 11–28. The Day of Atonement proceeded according to the following steps: (a) The high priest washed and dressed (v. 4); (b) he sacrificed a bull as a sin offering for himself (v. 6; cf. v. 11); (c) he entered the Most Holy Place and sprinkled the ark with blood (vv. 12–14); (d) he took two goats and by lot chose one to be the scapegoat, the other to be a sin offering (vv. 7–8); (e) he sacrificed one goat as a sin offering (vv. 9, 15); (f) he entered the Most Holy Place and sprinkled the ark with blood (v. 15); (g) he went out to the outer part of the tabernacle of meeting and sprinkled the blood (v. 16); (h) he went out into the courtyard of the tabernacle and sprinkled the main altar with blood (vv. 18–19); (i) he confessed the sins of the Israelites as he laid his hands on the scapegoat's head (v. 21); (j) he sent the scapegoat into the desert (vv. 21–22); (k) the scapegoat gone, the high priest changed into his regular garments and washed (vv. 23–24); and (l) finally, he offered burnt offerings for himself and for the people (vv. 24–25).

For the high priest, the most important aspects of the ceremony were his entry into the Most Holy Place with the blood of the sin offerings and the dispatch of the scapegoat into the desert. These actions atoned for the sins of repentant Israelites (vv. 16, 19, 21–22). All sin offerings served to cleanse both the earthly sanctuary and the worshipers, but on other occasions the high priest did not enter the (inner) Most Holy Place, but only the anteroom before the separating veil (usually called the "holy place"), the chamber containing the altar of incense, the gold lampstand, and the table of showbread. Because the ark of the covenant, the focal point of God's presence in the tabernacle (v. 2 note; Ex. 25:17–22 and notes), was housed in the Most Holy Place, entry to the Most Holy Place was rare and dangerous (v. 2). That the high priest entered the inner chamber only on this one day of the year indicated the depth of atonement being made.

The scapegoat ceremony was also unique to this day. By placing his hands on the goat's head and confessing the nation's sins, the high priest transferred those sins to the goat. The goat then symbolically carried the people's sins away into the desert. Christians have long regarded the scapegoat as a type of Christ. The New Testament makes many comparisons between the Day of Atonement and the death of Christ (Heb. 9:6–28; 13:11–13). That Christ was delivered to the Gentiles and killed outside the walls of Jerusalem indicated that He was sent "outside the camp" like the scapegoat of old.

■ **16:1 death of the two sons of Aaron.** See 10:1–3.

■ **16:2 mercy seat.** Lit. "atonement covering" or "place of atonement" (Ex. 25:17 note). This slab of pure gold served as a lid for the ark and as a base for the two golden cherubim. The divine presence appeared above the lid of the ark (Ex. 25:22; Ps. 99:1), and Aaron sprinkled the mercy seat with blood on the Day of Atonement. God symbolically revealed the gospel through this cover on the ark. The ark contained the two stone tablets of the law inscribed by the finger of God Himself, representing the eternal moral law of God (Deut. 10:1–5). Since all humans have violated this law, the righteousness of God demands death (Ezek. 18:20; Rom. 6:23). God provided the only means of atonement for His chosen people and for their reconciliation to Him—the atoning blood on the ark's cover. That blood-drenched cover was the meeting point of the holy God with His unholy people. It symbolized the heavenly sanctuary where Christ has entered with His own blood (Heb. 9:12), blood that is efficacious for all the sins of His people, past, present, and future (Rom. 3:21–26; Heb. 9:15).

■ **16:3** Aaron was to offer a bull as a sin-offering and a ram as a burnt offering for himself and his family, before offering a goat for the people (v. 5). By contrast, Jesus Christ, the Mediator of the eternal new covenant, was without sin and therefore offered sacrifice for His people only (Heb. 7:26, 27).

■ **16:8 one lot for the LORD.** One to be sacrificed.

■ **16:12 take a censer.** The smoke from the incense served as a screen between the mercy seat and the high priest, probably to prevent the high priest from seeing the divine presence (v. 13; cf. Ex. 33:20). It also may have served to avert God's wrath (Num. 16:46–50).

with his finger on the mercy seat on the east *side;* and before the mercy seat he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times.

15 [s]"Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering, which *is* for the people, bring its blood [t]inside the veil, do with that blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it on the mercy seat and before the mercy seat. 16 So he shall [u]make atonement for the Holy *Place,* because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions, for all their sins; and so he shall do for the tabernacle of meeting which remains among them in the midst of their uncleanness. 17 There shall be [v]no man in the tabernacle of meeting when he goes in to make atonement in the Holy *Place,* until he comes out, that he may make atonement for himself, for his household, and for all the assembly of Israel. 18 And he shall go out to the altar that *is* before the LORD, and make atonement for [w]it, and shall take some of the blood of the bull and some of the blood of the goat, and put it on the horns of the altar all around. 19 Then he shall sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times, cleanse it, and [x]consecrate[2] it from the [3]uncleanness of the children of Israel.

20 "And when he has made an end of atoning for the Holy *Place,* the tabernacle of meeting, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat. 21 Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, [y]confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, [z]putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send *it* away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man. 22 The goat [4]shall [a]bear on itself all their iniquities to an [5]uninhabited land; and he shall [b]release the goat in the wilderness.

23 "Then Aaron shall come into the tabernacle of meeting, [c]shall take off the linen garments which he put on when he went into the Holy *Place,* and shall leave them there. 24 And he shall wash his body with water in a holy place, put on his garments, come out and offer his burnt offering and the burnt offering of the people, and make [6]atonement for himself and for the people. 25 [d]The fat of the sin offering he shall burn on the altar. 26 And he who released the goat as the scapegoat shall wash his clothes [e]and bathe his body in water, and afterward he may come into the camp. 27 [f]The bull *for* the sin offering and the goat *for* the sin offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the Holy *Place,* shall be carried outside the camp. And they shall burn in the fire their skins, their flesh, and their offal. 28 Then he who burns them shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, and afterward he may come into the camp.

29 "*This* shall be a statute forever for you: [g]In the seventh month, on the tenth *day* of the month, you shall [7]afflict your souls, and do no work at all, *whether* a native of your own country or a stranger who [8]dwells among you. 30 For on that day *the priest* shall make [9]atonement for you, to [h]cleanse you, *that* you may be clean from all your sins before the LORD. 31 [i]It *is* a sabbath of solemn rest for you, and you shall afflict your souls. *It is* a statute forever. 32 [j]And the priest, who is anointed and [k]consecrated to minister as priest in his father's place, shall make atonement, and put on the linen clothes, the holy garments; 33 then he shall make [l]atonement for [2]the Holy Sanctuary, and he shall make atonement for the tabernacle of meeting and for the altar, and he shall make atonement for the priests and for all the people of the assembly. 34 [l]This shall be an everlasting statute for you, to make atonement for the children of Israel, for all their sins, [m]once a year." And he did as the LORD commanded Moses.

The Sanctity of Blood

17 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to Aaron, to his sons, and to all the children of Israel, and say to them, 'This *is* the thing which the LORD has commanded, saying: 3 "Whatever man of the house of Israel who [a]kills an ox or lamb or goat in the camp, or who

15 [s][Heb. 2:17] [t][Heb. 6:19; 7:27; 9:3, 7, 12]

16 [u]Ex. 29:36; 30:10

17 [v]Luke 1:10

18 [w]Ex. 29:36

19 [x]Ezek. 43:20 [2]*set it apart* [3]*impurity*

21 [y]Lev. 5:5; 26:40 [z][Is. 53:6]

22 [a][Is. 53:6, 11, 12] [b]Lev. 14:7 [4]*shall carry* [5]*solitary land*

23 [c]Ezek. 42:14; 44:19

24 [6]Lit. *covering*

25 [d]Lev. 1:8; 4:10

26 [e]Lev. 15:5

27 [f]Heb. 13:11

29 [g]Lev. 23:27–32 [7]*humble yourselves* [8]As a resident alien

30 [h]Jer. 33:8 [9]Lit. *covering*

31 [i]Lev. 23:27, 32

32 [j]Lev. 4:3, 5, 16; 21:10 [k]Ex. 29:29, 30

33 [l]Lit. *covering* [2]The Most Holy Place

34 [l]Lev. 23:31 [m][Heb. 9:7, 25, 28]

CHAPTER 17

3 [a]Deut. 12:5, 15, 21

■ **16:16 the Holy Place.** Here the term denotes the Most Holy Place, or inner sanctuary. The object of the sacrificial ritual was not only the people but the sanctuary itself, which was defiled by their sins. The earthly sanctuary was a representation of the heavenly sanctuary that the blood of Christ also cleansed (Heb. 9:23, 24).

which remains among them. Lit. "which camps among them." The verb connotes impermanence. God's presence is not finalized in this arrangement. His tent dwelling foreshadowed His dwelling among His people through Christ's Incarnation (John 1:14). Today He has sent His Spirit upon His new covenant people, the church (Acts 2), and His Spirit indwells believers, making them the temples of God (1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19). His final dwelling with His people will occur in the new heavens and the new earth (Rev. 21:1–4).

■ **16:29 afflict your souls.** See text note. The ordinary Israelites were to show penitence for their sins by not working, by fasting, and possibly by wearing sackcloth (Ps. 69:10, 11). Failing to observe the Day of Atonement could entail death (23:28–30). This is the only holy day to which this threat is attached.

■ **16:34 once a year.** By contrast, Jesus Christ offered the final and complete sacrifice for sin (Heb. 9:23–28).

■ **17:1—27:34** In these chapters, the Lord's demands for holiness clearly reach into every aspect of Israel's life. In a discussion on topics as diverse as sexual behavior and the Year of Jubilee, capital crimes and the tabernacle loaves, the Lord teaches that Israel must reflect His holiness in their behavior.

■ **17:3–8** In the wilderness period animals could be killed only at the tabernacle, even for ordinary meals. This was to prevent secret sacrifices

kills *it* outside the camp, 4 and does not bring it to the door of the tabernacle of meeting to offer an offering to the LORD before the tabernacle of the LORD, the guilt of bloodshed shall be [b]imputed to that man. He has shed blood; and that man shall be [1]cut off from among his people, 5 to the end that the children of Israel may bring their sacrifices [c]which they offer in the open field, that they may bring them to the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, to the priest, and offer them *as* peace offerings to the LORD. 6 And the priest [d]shall sprinkle the blood on the altar of the LORD *at* the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and [e]burn the fat for a sweet aroma to the LORD. 7 They shall no more offer their sacrifices [f]to [2]demons, after whom they [g]have played the harlot. This shall be a statute forever for them throughout their generations." '

8 "Also you shall say to them: 'Whatever man of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, [h]who offers a burnt offering or sacrifice, 9 and does not [i]bring it to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, to offer it to the LORD, that man shall be [3]cut off from among his people.

10 [j]'And whatever man of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, who eats any blood, [k]I will set My face against that person who eats blood, and will cut him off from among his people. 11 For the [l]life of the flesh *is* in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar [m]to make atonement for your souls; for [n]it *is* the blood *that* makes atonement for the soul.' 12 Therefore I said to the children of Israel, 'No one among you shall eat blood, nor shall any stranger who dwells among you eat blood.'

13 "Whatever man of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, who [o]hunts and catches any animal or bird that may be eaten, he shall [p]pour out its blood and [q]cover it with dust; 14 [r]for *it is* the life of all flesh. Its blood sustains its life. Therefore I said to the children of Israel, 'You shall not eat the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is its blood. Whoever eats it shall be cut off.'

15 [s]"And every person who eats what died *naturally* or what was torn *by beasts, whether he is* a native of your own country or a stranger, [t]he shall both wash his clothes and [u]bathe in water, and be unclean until evening. Then he shall be clean. 16 But if he does not wash *them* or bathe his body, then [v]he shall bear his [4]guilt."

Laws of Sexual Morality

18 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: [a]'I am the LORD your God. 3 [b]According to [1]the doings of the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, you shall not do; and [c]according to the doings of the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you, you shall not do; nor shall you walk in their [2]ordinances. 4 [d]You shall observe My judgments and keep My ordinances, to walk in them: I *am* the LORD your God. 5 You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I *am* the LORD.

6 'None of you shall approach anyone who is near of kin to him, to uncover his nakedness: I *am* the LORD. 7 The nakedness of your father or the nakedness of your mother you shall not uncover. She *is* your mother; you shall not uncover her nakedness. 8 The nakedness of your [e]father's wife you shall not uncover; it *is* your father's nakedness. 9 [f]The nakedness of your sister,

4 [b]Rom. 5:13 [1]Put to death

5 [c]Deut. 12:1–27

6 [d]Lev. 3:2 [e]Num. 18:17

7 [f]Deut. 32:17 [g]Ezek. 23:8 [2]Having the form of a goat or satyr

8 [h]Lev. 1:2, 3; 18:26

9 [i]Lev. 14:23 [3]Put to death

10 [j]Gen. 9:4 [k]Lev. 20:3, 5, 6

11 [l]Gen. 9:4 [m][Matt. 26:28] [n][Heb. 9:22]

13 [o]Lev. 7:26 [p]Deut. 12:16, 24 [q]Ezek. 24:7

14 [r]Gen. 9:4

15 [s]Ex. 22:31 [t]Lev. 11:25 [u]Lev. 15:5

16 [v]Lev. 5:1 [4]*iniquity*

CHAPTER 18

2 [a]Ex. 6:7

3 [b]Ezek. 20:7, 8 [c]Lev. 18:24–30; 20:23 [1]*what is done in* [2]*statutes*

4 [d]Ezek. 20:19

8 [e]Gen. 35:22

9 [f]Deut. 27:22

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to idols (v. 7). After entering Canaan this rule was relaxed (Deut. 12:15–16).

■ **17:4 has shed blood.** Or, has committed a transgression as grievous as any involving bloodshed.

cut off. See note on 7:20.

■ **17:11** One of the most important theological statements in Leviticus. Life is sacred because it belongs to God. As a mark of respect for life and for its Creator, no Israelite could eat meat with blood in it "for the life of the flesh is in the blood" (cf. Gen. 9:4–6). A second reason is that "it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul." The blood of animals shed in sacrifice took the place of, and symbolically redeemed, the life of the worshiper. Because animal blood was the sign of salvation, man must not consume it. These ideas are both assumed and transformed in the New Testament. Christ's shed blood actually atoned for sin (Heb. 9:14, 22; 1 John 1:7), and those who spiritually drink that blood have eternal life (John 6:54).

have given it to you. The sacrificial system of the Old Testament was God's gracious gift to His people. In anticipation of the final and perfect blood sacrifice offered by Christ, God Himself ordained the procedures whereby His righteous wrath might be averted and His people reconciled to Him.

■ **18:1–30** Moses instructs Israel concerning unlawful practices linked to sex and family, including incest (vv. 6–20), child sacrifice (v. 21), homosexuality (v. 22), and bestiality (v. 23). Israel's neighbors were much less restrained in their sexual attitudes and behavior (v. 3). They permitted closer intermarriage than allowed here; they allowed homosexuality (cf. v. 22), and even some types of bestiality (cf. v. 23). The laws in this chapter presuppose that an Israelite would normally marry another Israelite. However, unions between blood relatives of the first degree (brother-sister, father-daughter) and the second degree (father-granddaughter, nephew-aunt) were prohibited. Marriage between close relatives by marriage was also banned.

■ **18:8 your father's wife.** Not one's own mother (cf. v. 7), but the father's second wife (cf. 1 Cor. 5:1). The phrase "it is your father's nakedness" recalls the teaching in Gen. 2:24 that the married couple "become one flesh."

■ **18:9 your sister.** A full sister or half sister.

12 [g]Lev. 20:19
14 [h]Lev. 20:20
17 [i]Lev. 20:14
18 [j]1 Sam. 1:6, 8
19 [k]Ezek. 18:6
[l]Lev. 15:24; 20:18
20 [m][Prov. 6:25–33]
[n]Lev. 20:10
21 [o]Lev. 20:2–5
[p]2 Kin. 16:3
[q]1 Kin. 11:7, 33
22 [r]Lev. 20:13
23 [s]Ex. 22:19
24 [t]Matt. 15:18–20
[u]Deut. 18:12
25 [v]Num. 35:33, 34
[w]Jer. 5:9 [x]Lev. 18:28; 20:22
[3]*bring judgment for*
26 [y]Lev. 18:5, 30
[4]*obey*
28 [z]Jer. 9:19
29 [5]Put to death
30 [a]Lev. 18:3; 22:9
[b]Lev. 18:2
[6]*charge*

CHAPTER 19

2 [a]Lev. 11:44; 20:7, 26
3 [b]Ex. 20:12 [c]Ex. 16:23; 20:8; 31:13
4 [d]Ex. 20:4 [e]Ex. 34:17 [f]*molten*
5 [f]Lev. 7:16

the daughter of your father, or the daughter of your mother, *whether* born at home or elsewhere, their nakedness you shall not uncover. 10 The nakedness of your son's daughter or your daughter's daughter, their nakedness you shall not uncover; for theirs *is* your own nakedness. 11 The nakedness of your father's wife's daughter, begotten by your father—she *is* your sister—you shall not uncover her nakedness. 12 [g]You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's sister; she *is* near of kin to your father. 13 You shall not uncover the nakedness of your mother's sister, for she *is* near of kin to your mother. 14 [h]You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's brother. You shall not approach his wife; she *is* your aunt. 15 You shall not uncover the nakedness of your daughter-in-law—she *is* your son's wife—you shall not uncover her nakedness. 16 You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother's wife; it *is* your brother's nakedness. 17 You shall not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her [i]daughter, nor shall you take her son's daughter or her daughter's daughter, to uncover her nakedness. They *are* near of kin to her. It *is* wickedness. 18 Nor shall you take a woman [j]as a rival to her sister, to uncover her nakedness while the other is alive.

19 'Also you shall not approach a woman to uncover her nakedness as [k]long as she is in her [l]*customary* impurity. 20 [m]Moreover you shall not lie carnally with your [n]neighbor's wife, to defile yourself with her. 21 And you shall not let any of your descendants [o]pass through [p]*the fire* to [q]Molech, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I *am* the LORD. 22 You shall not lie with [r]a male as with a woman. It *is* an abomination. 23 Nor shall you mate with any [s]animal, to defile yourself with it. Nor shall any woman stand before an animal to mate with it. It *is* perversion.

24 [t]'Do not defile yourselves with any of these things; [u]for by all these the nations are defiled, which I am casting out before you. 25 For [v]the land is defiled; therefore I [w]visit[3] the punishment of its iniquity upon it, and the land [x]vomits out its inhabitants. 26 [y]You shall therefore [4]keep My statutes and My judgments, and shall not commit *any* of these abominations, *either* any of your own nation or any stranger who dwells among you 27 (for all these abominations the men of the land have done, who *were* before you, and thus the land is defiled), 28 lest [z]the land vomit you out also when you defile it, as it vomited out the nations that *were* before you. 29 For whoever commits any of these abominations, the persons who commit *them* shall be [5]cut off from among their people.

30 'Therefore you shall keep My [6]ordinance, so [a]that *you* do not commit *any* of these abominable customs which were committed before you, and that you do not defile yourselves by them: [b]I *am* the LORD your God.' "

Moral and Ceremonial Laws

19 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: [a]'You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God *am* holy.

3 [b]'Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father, and [c]keep My Sabbaths: I *am* the LORD your God.

4 [d]'Do not turn to idols, [e]nor make for yourselves [f]molded gods: I *am* the LORD your God.

5 'And [f]if you offer a sacrifice of a peace offering to the LORD, you shall offer it of your own free will. 6 It shall be eaten the same day you offer *it,* and on the next day. And if any remains until the third day, it shall be burned in the fire. 7 And if it is eaten at all on the third day, it *is* an abomination. It shall not be accepted. 8 Therefore *everyone* who eats it shall bear his iniquity, because he has profaned the hallowed *offering* of the LORD; and that person shall be cut off from his people.

■ **18:11 your sister.** A stepsister.

■ **18:16** The law of levirate marriage (Deut. 25:5 note) encouraged a man to marry his widowed sister-in-law if her first marriage was childless. This provision shows the importance of preserving the family inheritance by perpetuating the family line in Old Testament society (Num. 27:1–11 note).

■ **18:17 her daughter.** The daughter of the woman would be the man's step-daughter or step-granddaughter.

■ **18:18** The sad example of Jacob's marriage to Leah and Rachel illustrates the compassionate wisdom of this law (Gen. 29:23—30:24).

■ **18:19** See note on ch. 15.

■ **18:21 through the fire to Molech.** The custom of sacrificing children was practiced among the ancient Phoenicians and pagan inhabitants of Canaan (Deut. 12:31 note). The cult of Molech, a god of the Ammonites, was a temptation to the Israelites (1 Kin. 11:7; 2 Kin. 23:10).

■ **18:25 the land is defiled.** Uncleanness and sin were contagious: all and everything that came in contact with it was infected, including the sanctuary (16:16 note) and the land.

vomits. This personification of the land underscores the poisonous contagion of uncleanness and sin.

■ **18:29 cut off.** See note on 7:20.

■ **19:1–37** The theme of holiness is elaborated as God instructs the people on principles of good neighborliness. The chapter illustrates what holiness meant in daily life. See Introduction: Characteristics and Themes (cf. Matt. 5:48; 1 Cor. 11:1; 1 Pet. 1:16).

■ **19:2** See "God Is Light: Divine Holiness and Justice" at 11:44.

■ **19:5 peace offering.** See note on 3:1; cf. 7:16–18.

9 [g]'When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. 10 And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather *every* grape of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I *am* the LORD your God.

11 [h]'You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, [i]nor lie to one another. 12 And you shall not [j]swear by My name falsely, [k]nor shall you profane the name of your God: I *am* the LORD.

13 [l]'You shall not cheat your neighbor, nor rob *him.* [m]The wages of him who is hired shall not remain with you all night until morning. 14 You shall not curse the deaf, [n]nor put a stumbling block before the blind, but shall fear your God: I *am* the LORD.

15 'You shall do no injustice in [o]judgment. You shall not [p]be partial to the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty. In righteousness you shall judge your neighbor. 16 You shall not go about *as* a [q]talebearer among your people; nor shall you [r]take a stand against the life of your neighbor: I *am* the LORD.

17 [s]'You shall not hate your brother in your heart. [t]You shall surely [2]rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him. 18 [u]You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, [v]but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I *am* the LORD.

19 'You shall keep My statutes. You shall not let your livestock breed with another kind. You shall not sow your field with mixed seed. Nor shall a garment of mixed linen and wool come upon you.

20 'Whoever lies carnally with a woman who *is* [w]betrothed to a man as a concubine, and who has not at all been redeemed nor given her freedom, for this there shall be [3]scourging; *but* they shall not be put to death, because she was not free. 21 And he shall bring his trespass offering to the LORD, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, a ram as a trespass offering. 22 The priest shall make [4]atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering before the LORD for his sin which he has committed. And the sin which he has committed shall be forgiven him.

23 'When you come into the land, and have planted all kinds of trees for food, then you shall count their fruit as [5]uncircumcised. Three years it shall be as uncircumcised to you. *It* shall not be eaten. 24 But in the fourth year all its fruit shall be holy, a praise to the LORD. 25 And in the fifth year you may eat its fruit, that it may yield to you its increase: I *am* the LORD your God.

26 'You shall not eat *anything* with the blood, nor shall you practice divination or soothsaying. 27 You shall not shave around the sides of your head, nor shall you disfigure the edges of your beard. 28 You shall not [x]make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor tattoo any marks on you: I *am* the LORD.

29 [y]'Do not prostitute your daughter, to cause her to be a harlot, lest the land fall into harlotry, and the land become full of wickedness.

30 'You shall [6]keep My Sabbaths and [z]reverence My sanctuary: I *am* the LORD.

31 'Give no regard to mediums and familiar spirits; do not seek after [a]them, to be defiled by them: I *am* the LORD your God.

32 [b]'You shall [7]rise before the gray headed and honor the presence of an old man, and [c]fear your God: I *am* the LORD.

33 'And [d]if a stranger dwells with you in your land, you shall not mistreat him. 34 [e]The stranger who dwells among you shall be to you as [8]one born among you, and [f]you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I *am* the LORD your God.

35 'You shall do no injustice in judgment, in measurement of length, weight, or volume. 36 You shall have [g]honest scales, honest weights, an honest ephah, and an honest hin: I *am* the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt.

37 [h]'Therefore you shall observe all My statutes and all My judgments, and perform them: I *am* the LORD.' "

9 [g]Deut. 24:19–22

11 [h]Ex. 20:15, 16 [i]Eph. 4:25

12 [j]Deut. 5:11 [k]Lev. 18:21

13 [l]Ex. 22:7–15, 21–27 [m]Deut. 24:15

14 [n]Deut. 27:18

15 [o]Deut. 16:19 [p]Ex. 23:3, 6

16 [q]Prov. 11:13; 18:8; 20:19 [r]1 Kin. 21:7–19

17 [s][1 John 2:9, 11; 3:15] [t]Matt. 18:15 [2]*reprove*

18 [u][Deut. 32:35] [v]Mark 12:31

20 [w]Deut. 22:23–27 [3]*punishment*

22 [4]Lit. *covering*

23 [5]*unclean*

28 [x]Jer. 16:6

29 [y]Deut. 22:21; 23:17, 18

30 [z]Lev. 26:2 [6]*observe*

31 [a]Lev. 20:6, 27

32 [b]1 Tim. 5:1 [c]Lev. 19:14 [7]*rise to give honor*

33 [d]Ex. 22:21

34 [e]Ex. 12:48 [f]Deut. 10:19 [8]*native among you*

36 [g]Deut. 25:13–15

37 [h]Lev. 18:4, 5

■ **19:9, 10** See Ruth 2:2–23.

■ **19:13 wages of him who is hired.** See Deut. 24:14, 15.

■ **19:17 surely rebuke . . . because of him.** A candid yet tactful reproof of the wrongdoer is better than storing up destructive hatred against that neighbor and so causing oneself to sin as well (Prov. 27:5; Matt. 18:15; Gal. 6:1).

■ **19:18 love your neighbor.** A "neighbor" was anyone with whom there was contact, whether Israelite (v. 17) or alien (v. 34; cf. Matt. 22:39, 40; Rom. 13:9).

■ **19:19** Respecting boundaries and distinctions was an aspect of holiness.

■ **19:21 trespass offering.** See note on 5:14—6:7.

■ **19:24** Firstfruits, like first-born livestock and children, were to be given to God (Ex. 22:29, 30; 23:19), for Israel was God's firstborn and so was consecrated to Him (Ex. 4:22).

■ **19:28** Mutilation of the body created by God was incompatible with holiness, for the holy God is perfect life (Deut. 14:1 note).

CHAPTER 20

2 [a]Lev. 18:2 [b]Lev. 18:21 [c]Deut. 17:2–5 [1]As resident aliens

3 [d]Lev. 17:10 [2]Put him to death

4 [3]*disregard*

6 [e]Lev. 19:31

7 [f]Lev. 19:2 [4]*Set yourselves apart* for the LORD

8 [g]Lev. 19:19, 37 [h]Ex. 31:13 [5]*sets you apart*

9 [i]Ex. 21:17 [j]2 Sam. 1:16

10 [k]Ex. 20:14

11 [l]Lev. 18:7, 8

12 [m]Lev. 18:15

13 [n]Lev. 18:22

14 [o]Lev. 18:17

15 [p]Lev. 18:23

17 [q]Lev. 18:9 [6]Put to death [7]*iniquity*

18 [r]Lev. 15:24; 18:19 [8]Or *customary impurity* [9]Lit. *made bare* [t]Put to death

19 [s]Lev. 18:13 [t]Lev. 18:12

20 [u]Lev. 18:14

21 [v]Lev. 18:16 [z]*indecent, impure*

22 [w]Lev. 18:26; 19:37 [x]Lev. 18:25, 28

23 [y]Lev. 18:3, 24 [z]Deut. 9:5

24 [a]Ex. 3:17; 6:8; 13:5; 33:1–3 [b]Ex. 19:5; 33:16

25 [c]Lev. 10:10; 11:1–47 [d]Lev. 11:43 [3]*detestable* or *loathsome* [4]*defiled*

26 [e]Lev. 19:2

27 [f]Lev. 19:31

Penalties for Breaking the Law

20 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 [a]"Again, you shall say to the children of Israel: [b]'Whoever of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who [1]dwell in Israel, who gives *any* of his descendants to Molech, he shall surely be put to death. The people of the land shall [c]stone him with stones. 3 [d]I will set My face against that man, and will [2]cut him off from his people, because he has given *some* of his descendants to Molech, to defile My sanctuary and profane My holy name. 4 And if the people of the land should in any way [3]hide their eyes from the man, when he gives *some* of his descendants to Molech, and they do not kill him, 5 then I will set My face against that man and against his family; and I will cut him off from his people, and all who prostitute themselves with him to commit harlotry with Molech.

6 'And [e]the person who turns to mediums and familiar spirits, to prostitute himself with them, I will set My face against that person and cut him off from his people. 7 [f]Consecrate[4] yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I *am* the LORD your God. 8 And you shall keep [g]My statutes, and perform them: [h]I *am* the LORD who [5]sanctifies you.

9 'For [i]everyone who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. He has cursed his father or his mother. [j]His blood *shall be* upon him.

10 [k]'The man who commits adultery with *another* man's wife, *he* who commits adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress, shall surely be put to death. 11 The man who lies with his [l]father's wife has uncovered his father's nakedness; both of them shall surely be put to death. Their blood *shall be* upon them. 12 If a man lies with his [m]daughter-in-law, both of them shall surely be put to death. They have committed perversion. Their blood *shall be* upon them. 13 [n]If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood *shall be* upon them. 14 If a man marries a woman and her [o]mother, it *is* wickedness. They shall be burned with fire, both he and they, that there may be no wickedness among you. 15 If a man mates with an [p]animal, he shall surely be put to death, and you shall kill the animal. 16 If a woman approaches any animal and mates with it, you shall kill the woman and the animal. They shall surely be put to death. Their blood *is* upon them.

17 'If a man takes his [q]sister, his father's daughter or his mother's daughter, and sees her nakedness and she sees his nakedness, it *is* a wicked thing. And they shall be [6]cut off in the sight of their people. He has uncovered his sister's nakedness. He shall bear his [7]guilt. 18 [r]If a man lies with a woman during her [8]sickness and uncovers her nakedness, he has [9]exposed her flow, and she has uncovered the flow of her blood. Both of them shall be [t]cut off from their people.

19 'You shall not uncover the nakedness of your [s]mother's sister nor of your [t]father's sister, for that would uncover his near of kin. They shall bear their guilt. 20 If a man lies with his [u]uncle's wife, he has uncovered his uncle's nakedness. They shall bear their sin; they shall die childless. 21 If a man takes his [v]brother's wife, it *is* an [z]unclean thing. He has uncovered his brother's nakedness. They shall be childless.

22 'You shall therefore keep all My [w]statutes and all My judgments, and perform them, that the land where I am bringing you to dwell [x]may not vomit you out. 23 [y]And you shall not walk in the statutes of the nation which I am casting out before you; for they commit all these things, and [z]therefore I abhor them. 24 But [a]I have said to you, "You shall inherit their land, and I will give it to you to possess, a land flowing with milk and honey." I *am* the LORD your God, [b]who has separated you from the peoples. 25 [c]You shall therefore distinguish between clean animals and unclean, between unclean birds and clean, [d]and you shall not make yourselves [3]abominable by beast or by bird, or by any kind of living thing that creeps on the ground, which I have separated from you as [4]unclean. 26 And you shall be holy to Me, [e]for I the LORD *am* holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be Mine.

27 [f]'A man or a woman who is a medium, or who has familiar spirits, shall surely be put to death; they shall stone them with stones. Their blood *shall be* upon them.' "

■ **20:1–27** The instruction here repeats many of the same points of chs. 18; 19 (for parallel verses, consult the cross-references), but with the addition of prescribed penalties. The death penalty is indicated for many offenses, pointing to the horror with which God viewed them (cf. Rom. 1:18–32). In other cases divine penalties, such as cutting off (7:20 note), are mentioned; these cover situations where detection might be difficult (v. 18) or family solidarity might make the head of the family reluctant to punish (v. 17).

■ **20:6** See Deut. 18:10, 11; 1 Sam. 28:9.

■ **20:9** Jesus quoted this text in Mark 7:10.

■ **20:25** See notes on ch. 11.

■ **20:27** See note on v. 6.

Regulations for Conduct of Priests

21 And the LORD said to Moses, "Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say to them: [a]'None shall defile himself for the dead among his people, [2] except for his relatives who are nearest to him: his mother, his father, his son, his daughter, and his brother; [3] also his virgin sister who is near to him, who has had no husband, for her he may defile himself. [4] *Otherwise* he shall not defile himself, *being* a [1]chief man among his people, to profane himself.

[5] [b]'They shall not make any bald *place* on their heads, nor shall they shave the edges of their beards nor make any cuttings in their flesh. [6] They shall be [c]holy to their God and not profane the name of their God, for they offer the offerings of the LORD made by fire, *and* the [d]bread of their God; [e]therefore they shall be holy. [7] [f]They shall not take a wife *who is* a harlot or a defiled woman, nor shall they take a woman [g]divorced from her husband; for [2]*the priest* is holy to his God. [8] Therefore you shall [3]consecrate him, for he offers the bread of your God. He shall be holy to you, for [h]I the LORD, who [i]sanctify you, *am* holy. [9] The daughter of any priest, if she profanes herself by playing the harlot, she profanes her father. She shall be [j]burned with fire.

[10] '*He who is* the high priest among his brethren, on whose head the anointing oil was [k]poured and who is consecrated to wear the garments, shall not [l]uncover[4] his head nor tear his clothes; [11] nor shall he go [m]near any dead body, nor defile himself for his father or his mother; [12] [n]nor shall he go out of the sanctuary, nor profane the sanctuary of his God; for the [o]consecration of the anointing oil of his God *is* upon him: I *am* the LORD. [13] And he shall take a wife in her virginity. [14] A widow or a divorced woman or a defiled woman *or* a harlot—these he shall not marry; but he shall take a virgin of his own people as wife. [15] Nor shall he profane his posterity among his people, for I the LORD sanctify him.' "

[16] And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [17] "Speak to Aaron, saying: 'No man of your descendants in *succeeding* generations, who has *any* defect, may approach to offer the bread of his God. [18] For any man who has a [p]defect shall not approach: a man blind or lame, who has a marred *face* or any *limb* [q]too long, [19] a man who has a broken foot or broken hand, [20] or is a hunchback or a dwarf, or *a man* who has a defect in his eye, or eczema or scab, or is a eunuch. [21] No man of the descendants of Aaron the priest, who has a defect, shall come near to offer the offerings made by fire to the LORD. He has a defect; he shall not come near to offer the bread of his God. [22] He may eat the bread of his God, *both* the most holy and the holy; [23] only he shall not go near the [r]veil or approach the altar, because he has a defect, lest [s]he profane My sanctuaries; for I the LORD sanctify them.' "

[24] And Moses told *it* to Aaron and his sons, and to all the children of Israel.

22 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [2] "Speak to Aaron and his sons, that they [a]separate[1] themselves from the holy things of the children of Israel, and that they [b]do not profane My holy name *by* what they [c]dedicate to Me: I *am* the LORD. [3] Say to them: 'Whoever of all your descendants throughout your generations, who goes near the holy things which the children of Israel dedicate to the LORD, [d]while he has [2]uncleanness upon him, that person shall be cut off from My presence: I *am* the LORD.

[4] 'Whatever man of the descendants of Aaron, who *is* a [e]leper or has [f]a discharge, shall not eat the holy offerings [g]until he is clean. And [h]whoever touches anything made unclean *by* a corpse, or [i]a man who has had an emission of semen, [5] or [j]whoever touches any creeping thing by which he would be made unclean, or [k]any person by whom he would become unclean, whatever his uncleanness may be— [6] the person who has touched any such thing shall be unclean until evening, and shall not eat the holy *offerings* unless he [l]washes his body with water. [7] And when the sun goes down he shall be clean; and afterward he may eat the holy *offerings,* because [m]it *is* his food. [8] [n]Whatever dies *naturally* or is torn *by beasts* he shall not eat, to defile himself with it: I *am* the LORD.

CHAPTER 21

1 [a]Ezek. 44:25
4 [1]Lit. *master* or *husband*
5 [b]Deut. 14:1
6 [c]Ex. 22:31 [d]Lev. 3:11 [e]Is. 52:11
7 [f]Ezek. 44:22 [g]Deut. 24:1, 2 [2]Lit. *he*
8 [h]Lev. 11:44, 45 [i]Lev. 8:12, 30 [3]*set him apart*
9 [j]Deut. 22:21
10 [k]Lev. 8:12 [l]Lev. 10:6, 7 [4]In mourning
11 [m]Num. 19:14
12 [n]Lev. 10:7 [o]Ex. 29:6, 7
18 [p]Lev. 22:19–25 [q]Lev. 22:23
23 [r]Lev. 16:2 [s]Lev. 21:12

CHAPTER 22

2 [a]Num. 6:3 [b]Lev. 18:21 [c]Ex. 28:38 [1]*keep themselves apart from*
3 [d]Lev. 7:20, 21 [2]*defilement*
4 [e]Num. 5:2 [f]Lev. 15:2 [g]Lev. 14:2; 15:13 [h]Num. 19:11 [i]Lev. 15:16, 17
5 [j]Lev. 11:23–28 [k]Lev. 15:7, 19
6 [l]Lev. 15:5
7 [m]Num. 18:11, 13
8 [n]Lev. 7:24; 11:39, 40; 17:15

■ **21:1–24** Ceremonial cleanliness regulations specific to the priests are recorded. These deal with priests in general (vv. 1–9), the high priest (vv. 10–15), and priests suffering from defects (vv. 16–24). All priests represented man as restored to the image of God and therefore had to show God's holiness in their character and in their bodies. Holiness in restored man ultimately involves his perfection and health (fullness of life; freedom from mortality, perishableness, decay), so priests with certain handicaps were forbidden to offer sacrifice (vv. 17–21). But handicapped priests still enjoyed a full share of priestly dues (v. 22).

■ **21:1** Holiness (life) and death are incompatible; therefore priests could not mourn for any save their closest relatives (vv. 2–3).

■ **21:5** Mourning customs involving disfigurement of the body were also banned, for priests as holy men had to have whole bodies (Deut. 14:1 note).

■ **21:10–12** The high priest, representing man restored to fellowship with God, was obliged to avoid all contact with death (cf. 10:6, 7).

■ **22:3** For any unclean person to eat holy food from a sacrifice was to risk death (7:20–21). Uncleanness (death) and holiness (life) were not to mix.

9 [o]Lev. 18:30 [p]Ex. 28:43; Lev. 22:16; Num. 18:22 [3]*charge*

10 [q]Ex. 29:33; Lev. 22:13; Num. 3:10 [4]As a visitor

11 [r]Ex. 12:44

15 [s]Num. 18:32

18 [t]Lev. 1:2, 3, 10 [5]*brings his offering*

19 [u]Lev. 1:3; Deut. 15:21

20 [v]Deut. 15:21; 17:1; Mal. 1:8, 14; [Eph. 5:27; Heb. 9:14; 1 Pet. 1:19]

21 [w]Lev. 3:1, 6 [x]Num. 15:3, 8; Ps. 61:8; 65:1; Eccl. 5:4, 5

22 [y]Lev. 22:20; Mal. 1:8 [z]Lev. 1:9, 13; 3:3, 5 [6]*running sore*

23 [a]Lev. 21:18

25 [b]Num. 15:15, 16 [c]Lev. 21:6, 17 [d]Mal. 1:14

27 [e]Ex. 22:30

28 [f]Deut. 22:6, 7

29 [g]Lev. 7:12; Ps. 107:22; 116:17; Amos 4:5

30 [h]Lev. 7:15

31 [i]Lev. 19:37; Num. 15:40; Deut. 4:40

32 [j]Lev. 18:21 [k]Lev. 10:3; Matt. 6:9; Luke 11:2 [l]Lev. 20:8 [7]*treated as holy*

33 [m]Lev. 19:36, 37; Num. 15:40; Deut. 4:40

CHAPTER 23

2 [a]Ex. 12:16

3 [b]Ex. 20:9; 23:12; 31:15; Lev. 19:3; Deut. 5:13, 14; Luke 13:14

9 'They shall therefore keep [o]My [3]ordinance, [p]lest they bear sin for it and die thereby, if they profane it: I the LORD sanctify them.

10 [q]'No outsider shall eat the holy *offering;* one who [4]dwells with the priest, or a hired servant, shall not eat the holy thing. 11 But if the priest [r]buys a person with his money, he may eat it; and one who is born in his house may eat his food. 12 If the priest's daughter is married to an outsider, she may not eat of the holy offerings. 13 But if the priest's daughter is a widow or divorced, and has no child, and has returned to her father's house as in her youth, she may eat her father's food; but no outsider shall eat it.

14 'And if a man eats the holy *offering* unintentionally, then he shall restore a holy *offering* to the priest, and add one-fifth to it. 15 They shall not profane the [s]holy *offerings* of the children of Israel, which they offer to the LORD, 16 or allow them to bear the guilt of trespass when they eat their holy *offerings;* for I the LORD sanctify them.' "

Offerings Accepted and Not Accepted

17 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 18 "Speak to Aaron and his sons, and to all the children of Israel, and say to them: [t]'Whatever man of the house of Israel, or of the strangers in Israel, who [5]offers his sacrifice for any of his vows or for any of his freewill offerings, which they offer to the LORD as a burnt offering— 19 [u]*you shall offer* of your own free will a male without blemish from the cattle, from the sheep, or from the goats. 20 [v]Whatever has a defect, you shall not offer, for it shall not be acceptable on your behalf. 21 And [w]whoever offers a sacrifice of a peace offering to the LORD, [x]to fulfill *his* vow, or a freewill offering from the cattle or the sheep, it must be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no defect in it. 22 [y]Those *that are* blind or broken or maimed, or have an [6]ulcer or eczema or scabs, you shall not offer to the LORD, nor make [z]an offering by fire of them on the altar to the LORD. 23 Either a bull or a lamb that has any limb [a]too long or too short you may offer *as* a freewill offering, but for a vow it shall not be accepted.

24 'You shall not offer to the LORD what is bruised or crushed, or torn or cut; nor shall you make *any offering of them* in your land. 25 Nor [b]from a foreigner's hand shall you offer any of these as [c]the bread of your God, because their [d]corruption *is* in them, *and* defects *are* in them. They shall not be accepted on your behalf.' "

26 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 27 [e]"When a bull or a sheep or a goat is born, it shall be seven days with its mother; and from the eighth day and thereafter it shall be accepted as an offering made by fire to the LORD. 28 *Whether it is* a cow or ewe, do not kill both her [f]and her young on the same day. 29 And when you [g]offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the LORD, offer *it* of your own free will. 30 On the same day it shall be eaten; you shall leave [h]none of it until morning: I *am* the LORD.

31 [i]"Therefore you shall keep My commandments, and perform them: I *am* the LORD. 32 [j]You shall not profane My holy name, but [k]I will be [7]hallowed among the children of Israel. I *am* the LORD who [l]sanctifies you, 33 [m]who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I *am* the LORD."

Feasts of the LORD

23 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'The feasts of the LORD, which you shall proclaim *to be* [a]holy convocations, these *are* My feasts.

The Sabbath

3 [b]'Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day *is* a Sabbath of solemn rest, a holy convocation. You shall do no work *on it;* it *is* the Sabbath of the LORD in all your dwellings.

■ **22:10–13** These verses define which dependents of the priests were allowed to eat sacrificial food.

■ **22:14** A penalty of restitution was prescribed for non-priests who ate the priestly portions of the sacrifices (cf. 5:14–16).

■ **22:17–25** Only blemish-free animals were to be sacrificed. This was partly because God was not to be given anything but the best (Mal. 1:8), and partly because the holiness of sacrifices was symbolized by a perfect physical body (cf. 21:17–21).

■ **22:23** In the case of the optional freewill offering, a kind of peace offering (ch. 3), minor blemishes could be tolerated.

■ **22:27, 28** Killing an animal soon after birth showed little respect for life and therefore was incompatible with holiness. So, too, did killing an animal and its young on the same day (cf. Deut. 14:21; 22:6, 7).

■ **23:1–44** Attention turns to the calendar of holy days, with specific instructions for the laity (cf. Num. 28, 29, where instructions are given to the priests specifying sacrifices on the different days).

The Passover and Unleavened Bread

4 [c]"These *are* the feasts of the LORD, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at their appointed times. 5 [d]On the fourteenth *day* of the first month at twilight *is* the LORD's Passover. 6 And on the fifteenth day of the same month *is* the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the LORD; seven days you must eat unleavened bread. 7 [e]On the first day you shall have a holy convocation; you shall do no [f]customary work on it. 8 But you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD for seven days. The seventh day *shall be* a holy convocation; you shall do no customary work *on it.*' "

The Feast of Firstfruits

9 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 10 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: [f]'When you come into the land which I give to you, and reap its harvest, then you shall bring a sheaf of [g]the firstfruits of your harvest to the priest. 11 He shall [h]wave the sheaf before the LORD, to be accepted on your behalf; on the day after the Sabbath the priest shall wave it. 12 And you shall offer on that day, when you wave the sheaf, a male lamb of the first year, without blemish, as a burnt offering to the LORD. 13 Its grain offering *shall be* two-tenths *of an ephah* of fine flour mixed with oil, an offering made by fire to the LORD, for a [2]sweet aroma; and its drink offering *shall be* of wine, one-fourth of a hin. 14 You shall eat neither bread nor parched grain nor fresh grain until the same day that you have brought an offering to your God; *it shall be* a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings.

The Feast of Weeks

15 'And you shall count for yourselves from the day after the Sabbath, from the day that you brought the sheaf of the wave offering: seven Sabbaths shall be completed. 16 Count [i]fifty days to the day after the seventh Sabbath; then you shall offer [j]a new grain offering to the LORD. 17 You shall bring from your dwellings two wave *loaves* of two-tenths *of an ephah.* They shall be of fine flour; they shall be baked with leaven. *They are* [k]the firstfruits to the LORD. 18 And you shall offer with the bread seven lambs of the first year, without blemish, one young bull, and two rams. They shall be *as* a burnt offering to the LORD, with their grain offering and their drink offerings, an offering made by fire for a sweet aroma to the LORD. 19 Then you shall sacrifice [l]one kid of the goats as a sin offering, and two male lambs of the first year as a sacrifice of a [m]peace offering. 20 The priest shall wave them with the bread of the firstfruits *as* a wave offering before the LORD, with the two lambs. [n]They shall be holy to the LORD for the priest. 21 And you shall proclaim on the same day *that* it is a holy convocation to you. You shall do no customary work *on it. It shall be* a statute forever in all your dwellings throughout your generations.

22 [o]'When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field when you reap, nor shall you gather any gleaning from your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the stranger: I *am* the LORD your God.' "

The Feast of Trumpets

23 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 24 "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'In the [p]seventh month, on the first *day* of the month, you shall have a sabbath-*rest,* [q]a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation. 25 You shall do no customary work *on it;* and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD.' "

The Day of Atonement

26 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 27 [r]"Also the tenth *day* of this seventh month *shall be* the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. 28 And you shall do no work on that same day, for it *is* the Day of Atonement, [s]to make atonement for you before the LORD your God. 29 For any person who is not [t]afflicted *in soul* on that same day [u]shall be cut off from his people. 30 And any person who does any work on that same day, [v]that person I will destroy from among his people. 31 You shall do no manner of work; *it shall be* a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings. 32 It *shall be* to you a sabbath of *solemn* rest, and you shall [3]afflict your souls; on the ninth *day* of the month at evening, from evening to evening, you shall [4]celebrate your sabbath."

4 [c]Ex. 23:14–16; Lev. 23:2, 37

5 [d]Ex. 12:1–28; Num. 9:1–5; 28:16–25; Deut. 16:1–8; Josh. 5:10

7 [e]Ex. 12:16; Num. 28:18, 25 [f]*occupational*

10 [f]Ex. 23:19; 34:26 [g][Rom. 11:16]; James 1:18; Rev. 14:4

11 [h]Ex. 29:24

13 [2]*pleasing*

16 [i]Acts 2:1 [j]Num. 28:26

17 [k]Ex. 23:16, 19; Num. 15:17–21

19 [l]Lev. 4:23, 28; Num. 28:30; [2 Cor. 5:21] [m]Lev. 3:1

20 [n]Lev. 14:13; Num. 18:12; Deut. 18:4

22 [o]Lev. 19:9, 10; Deut. 24:19–22; Ruth 2:2, 15

24 [p]Num. 29:1 [q]Lev. 25:9

27 [r]Lev. 16:1–34; 25:9; Num. 29:7

28 [s]Lev. 16:34

29 [t]Is. 22:12; Jer. 31:9; Ezek. 7:16 [u]Gen. 17:14; Lev. 13:46; Num. 5:2

30 [v]Lev. 20:3–6

32 [3]*humble yourselves* [4]*observe your sabbath*

■ **23:4–8** See Ex. 12; 13.

■ **23:26–32** See 16:2–34.

34 [w]Num. 29:12

36 [x]Num. 29:12–34 [y]Num. 29:35–38 [z]Deut. 16:8 [5]*solemn*

37 [a]Lev. 23:2, 4

38 [b]Num. 29:39

39 [c]Ex. 23:16

40 [d]Neh. 8:15 [e]Deut. 12:7; 16:14, 15 [6]*foliage*

41 [f]Num. 29:12

42 [g][Is. 4:6] [h]Neh. 8:14–16 [7]*tabernacles;* shelters made of boughs

43 [i]Deut. 31:13 [j]Ex. 10:2 [k]Lev. 22:33

44 [l]Lev. 23:2

The Feast of Tabernacles

33 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 34 "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: [w] 'The fifteenth day of this seventh month *shall be* the Feast of Tabernacles *for* seven days to the LORD. 35 On the first day *there shall be* a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work *on it.* 36 *For* seven days you shall offer an [x]offering made by fire to the LORD. [y]On the eighth day you shall have a holy convocation, and you shall offer an offering made by fire to the LORD. It *is* a [z]sacred[5] assembly, *and* you shall do no customary work *on it.*

37 [a] 'These *are* the feasts of the LORD which you shall proclaim *to be* holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire to the LORD, a burnt offering and a grain offering, a sacrifice and drink offerings, everything on its day— 38 [b]besides the Sabbaths of the LORD, besides your gifts, besides all your vows, and besides all your freewill offerings which you give to the LORD.

39 'Also on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have [c]gathered in the fruit of the land, you shall keep the feast of the LORD *for* seven days; on the first day *there shall be* a sabbath-*rest,* and on the eighth day a sabbath-*rest.* 40 And [d]you shall take for yourselves on the first day the [6]fruit of beautiful trees, branches of palm trees, the boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook; [e]and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days. 41 [f]You shall keep it as a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. *It shall be* a statute forever in your generations. You shall celebrate it in the seventh month. 42 [g]You shall dwell in [7]booths for seven days. [h]All who are native Israelites shall dwell in booths, 43 [i]that your generations may [j]know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when [k]I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I *am* the LORD your God.' "

44 So Moses [l]declared to the children of Israel the feasts of the LORD.

■ **23:33–43** See Deut. 16:13–17.

Israel's Annual Feasts (23:44)

Feast	Month of Sacred Year	Day	Corresponding Month
Passover	1 (Abib)	14	Mar.-Apr.
Ex. 12:1–14; Lev. 23:5; Num. 9:1–14; 28:16; Deut. 16:1–7			
***Unleavened Bread**	1 (Abib)	15–21	Mar.-Apr.
Ex. 12:15–20; 13:3–10; Lev. 23:6–8; Num. 28:17–25; Deut. 16:3, 4, 8			
Firstfruits	1 (Abib) and	16	Mar.-Apr.
	3 (Sivan)	6	May-June
Lev. 23:9–14; Num. 28:26			
***Weeks**	3 (Sivan)	6 (50 days after	May-June
(Harvest or Pentecost)		barley harvest)	
Ex. 23:16; 34:22; Lev. 23:15–21; Num. 28:26–31; Deut. 16:9–12			
Trumpets	7 (Tishri)	1	Sept.-Oct.
Rosh Hashanah			
Lev. 23:23–25; Num. 29:1–6			
Day of Atonement	7 (Tishri)	10	Sept.-Oct.
Yom Kippur			
Lev. 16; 23:26–32; Num. 29:7–11			
***Tabernacles**	7 (Tishri)	15–22	Sept.-Oct.
(Booths or Ingathering)			
Ex. 23:16; 34:22; Lev. 23:33–36, 39–43; Num. 29:12–38; Deut. 16:13–15			

*The three major feasts for which all males of Israel were required to travel to the temple in Jerusalem (Ex. 23:14–19).

Care of the Tabernacle Lamps

24 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2 [a]"Command the children of Israel that they bring to you pure oil of pressed olives for the light, to make the lamps burn continually. 3 Outside the veil of the Testimony, in the tabernacle of meeting, Aaron shall be in charge of it from evening until morning before the LORD continually; *it shall be* a statute forever in your generations. 4 He shall [1][b]be in charge of the lamps on [b]the pure *gold* lampstand before the LORD continually.

The Bread of the Tabernacle

5 "And you shall take fine flour and bake twelve [c]cakes with it. Two-tenths *of an ephah* shall be in each cake. 6 You shall set them in two rows, six in a row, [d]on the pure *gold* table before the LORD. 7 And you shall put pure frankincense on *each* row, that it may be on the bread for a [e]memorial, an offering made by fire to the LORD. 8 [f]Every Sabbath he shall set it in order before the LORD continually, *being taken* from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant. 9 And [g]it shall be for Aaron and his sons, [h]and they shall eat it in a holy place; for it *is* most holy to him from the offerings of the LORD made by fire, by a perpetual statute."

The Penalty for Blasphemy

10 Now the son of an Israelite woman, whose father *was* an Egyptian, went out among the children of Israel; and this Israelite *woman's* son and a man of Israel fought each other in the camp. 11 And the Israelite woman's son [i]blasphemed the name *of the LORD* and [j]cursed; and so they [k]brought him to Moses. (His mother's name *was* Shelomith the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan.) 12 Then they [l]put him [2]in custody, [m]that [3]the mind of the LORD might be shown to them.

13 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 14 "Take outside the camp him who has cursed; then let all who heard *him* [n]lay their hands on his head, and let all the congregation stone him.

15 "Then you shall speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'Whoever curses his God [o]shall [4]bear his sin. 16 And whoever [p]blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall certainly stone him, the stranger as well as him who is born in the land. When he blasphemes the name *of the LORD,* he shall be put to death.

17 [q]'Whoever kills any man shall surely be put to death. 18 [r]Whoever kills an animal shall make it good, animal for animal.

19 'If a man causes disfigurement of his neighbor, as [s]he has done, so shall it be done to him— 20 fracture for [t]fracture, [u]eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he has caused disfigurement of a man, so shall it be done to him. 21 And whoever kills an animal shall restore it; but whoever kills a man shall be put to death. 22 You shall have [v]the[5] same law for the stranger and for one from your own country; for I *am* the LORD your God.' "

23 Then Moses spoke to the children of Israel; and they took outside the camp him who had cursed, and stoned him with stones. So the children of Israel did as the LORD commanded Moses.

The Sabbath of the Seventh Year

25 And the LORD spoke to Moses on Mount [a]Sinai, saying, 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you come into the land which I give you, then the land shall [b]keep a sabbath to the LORD. 3 Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather its fruit; 4 but in the [c]seventh year there shall be a sabbath of

CHAPTER 24

2 [a]Ex. 27:20, 21
4 [b]Ex. 25:31; 31:8; 37:17 [1]*arrange or set in order*
5 [c]Ex. 25:30; 39:36; 40:23
6 [d]1 Kin. 7:48
7 [e]Lev. 2:2, 9, 16
8 [f]1 Chr. 9:32
9 [g]Matt. 12:4 [h]Ex. 29:33
11 [i]Ex. 22:28 [j]Is. 8:21 [k]Ex. 18:22, 26
12 [l]Num. 15:34 [m]Num. 27:5 [2]*under guard* [3]Lit. *it might be declared to them from the mouth of the LORD*
14 [n]Deut. 13:9; 17:7
15 [o]Lev. 20:17 [4]*be responsible for*
16 [p][Mark 3:28, 29]
17 [q]Ex. 21:12
18 [r]Lev. 24:21
19 [s]Ex. 21:24
20 [t]Ex. 21:23 [u][Matt. 5:38, 39]
22 [v]Ex. 12:49 [5]*one standard of judgment*

CHAPTER 25

1 [a]Lev. 26:46
2 [b]Lev. 26:34, 35
4 [c]Deut. 15:1

■ **24:2 the lamps.** See Ex. 25:31–40 and notes. These formed part of the lampstand that stood in the holy place. Shaped to resemble an almond tree in bloom, the lampstand symbolized the life-giving and light-giving power of God.

■ **24:5** See Ex. 25:23–30 and notes.

■ **24:10 father was an Egyptian.** After many years of slavery in Egypt cases of intermarriage were no doubt common. See note on Ex. 12:38.

■ **24:11 blasphemed.** See Ex. 20:7; 22:28.

■ **24:14 lay their hands on his head.** This action was taken to rid themselves of the guilt they had contracted by hearing his blasphemy.

■ **24:20 eye for eye, tooth for tooth.** Designed to curb exaggerated revenge (cf. Gen. 4:24), this formula vividly expressed the principle that punishment should be proportionate to the offense. It seems not to have been enforced literally (Ex. 21:26, 27; Deut. 19:21 note). Jesus' opposition to the misuse of this phrase (Matt. 5:38) involved, not an abrogation of this principle of equivalence, but a call to temper its application in light of the love commandment (19:18; cf. Matt. 7:12), in the interests of the kingdom (Matt. 5:10–12), and in the knowledge of God's coming wrath (Rom. 12:17–21; cf. Deut. 32:35).

■ **25:1–55** The Lord demonstrates His ownership of the Promised Land through laws preventing the exploitation of the land and its tenants (v. 23 note).

■ **25:1–7** Just as man needed a day of rest, land without fertilizers needed to lie fallow for a time. See the similar regulations in Ex. 23:10, 11.

4 [d][Heb. 4:9]
5 [e]2 Kin. 19:29
9 [f]Lev. 23:24, 27
10 [g]Is. 61:2; 63:4; Jer. 34:8, 15, 17; [Luke 4:19] [h]Lev. 25:13, 28, 54; Num. 36:4
11 [i]Lev. 25:5
12 [j]Lev. 25:6, 7
13 [k]Lev. 25:10; 27:24; Num. 36:4
14 [l]Lev. 19:13
15 [m]Lev. 27:18, 23
17 [n]Lev. 25:14; Prov. 14:31; 22:22; Jer. 7:5, 6; 1 Thess. 4:6 [o]Lev. 19:14, 32; 25:43 [l]*mistreat*

solemn [d]rest for the land, a sabbath to the LORD. You shall neither sow your field nor prune your vineyard. 5 [e]What grows of its own accord of your harvest you shall not reap, nor gather the grapes of your untended vine, *for* it is a year of rest for the land. 6 And the sabbath *produce* of the land shall be food for you: for you, your male and female servants, your hired man, and the stranger who dwells with you, 7 for your livestock and the beasts that *are* in your land—all its produce shall be for food.

The Year of Jubilee

8 'And you shall count seven sabbaths of years for yourself, seven times seven years; and the time of the seven sabbaths of years shall be to you forty-nine years. 9 Then you shall cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the tenth *day* of the seventh month; [f]on the Day of Atonement you shall make the trumpet to sound throughout all your land. 10 And you shall consecrate the fiftieth year, and [g]proclaim liberty throughout *all* the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for you; [h]and each of you shall return to his possession, and each of you shall return to his family. 11 That fiftieth year shall be a Jubilee to you; in it [i]you shall neither sow nor reap what grows of its own accord, nor gather *the grapes* of your untended vine. 12 For it *is* the Jubilee; it shall be holy to you; [j]you shall eat its produce from the field.

13 [k]'In this Year of Jubilee, each of you shall return to his possession. 14 And if you sell anything to your neighbor or buy from your neighbor's hand, you shall not [l]oppress one another. 15 [m]According to the number of years after the Jubilee you shall buy from your neighbor, and according to the number of years of crops he shall sell to you. 16 According to the multitude of years you shall increase its price, and according to the fewer number of years you shall diminish its price; for he sells to you *according* to the number *of the years* of the crops. 17 Therefore [n]you shall not [l]oppress one another, [o]but you shall fear your God; for I *am* the LORD your God.

■ **25:10 Jubilee.** More than a fallow year, it was a year in which all the poor who had fallen into debt were given a fresh start. Loans were written off. Land that had been sold was returned to its original owner, and slaves were released (v. 40).

■ **25:13 return to his possession.** God protected His gift to each family within the covenant community. In this way He protected the family structure, provided life in perpetuity for them, and prevented commercial exploitation of His gift.

Israel's Other Sacred Times (25:1)	
Sabbath Ex. 20:8–11; 31:12–17; Lev. 23:3; Deut. 5:12–15	Every seventh day was a solemn rest from all work.
Sabbath Year Ex. 23:10, 11; Lev. 25:1–7	Every seventh year was designated a "year of release" to allow the land to lie fallow.
Year of Jubilee Lev. 25:8–55; 27:17–24; Ezek. 46:17	The 50th year, which followed seven Sabbath years, was to proclaim liberty to those who were servants because of debt, and to return lands to their former owners.
The New Moon Num. 28:11–15; Ps. 81:3	The first day of the Hebrew 29- or 30-day month was a day of rest, special sacrifices, and the blowing of trumpets.
Dedication (Lights or *Hanukkah*) John 10:22	An eight-day feast in the ninth month (Chislev) commemorating the cleansing of the temple from defilement by Syria, and its rededication.
Purim (Lots) Esth. 9:18–32	A feast on the 14th and 15th of the 12th month (Adar). The name comes from Babylonian *Pur*, meaning "lot."

Provisions for the Seventh Year

18 [p]'So you shall observe My statutes and keep My judgments, and perform them; [q]and you will dwell in the land in safety. 19 Then the land will yield its fruit, and [r]you will eat your fill, and dwell there in safety.

20 'And if you say, [s]"What shall we eat in the seventh year, since [t]we shall not sow nor gather in our produce?" 21 Then I will [u]command My blessing on you in the [v]sixth year, and it will bring forth produce enough for three years. 22 [w]And you shall sow in the eighth year, and eat [x]old produce until the ninth year; until its produce comes in, you shall eat *of* the old *harvest.*

Redemption of Property

23 'The land shall not be sold permanently, for [y]the land *is* Mine; for you *are* [z]strangers and sojourners with Me. 24 And in all the land of your possession you shall grant redemption of the land.

25 [a]'If one of your brethren becomes poor, and has sold *some* of his possession, and if [b]his redeeming relative comes to redeem it, then he may redeem what his brother sold. 26 Or if the man has no one to redeem it, but he himself becomes able to redeem it, 27 then [c]let him count the years since its sale, and restore the remainder to the man to whom he sold it, that he may return to his possession. 28 But if he is not able to have *it* restored to himself, then what was sold shall remain in the hand of him who bought it until the Year of Jubilee; [d]and in the Jubilee it shall be released, and he shall return to his possession.

29 'If a man sells a house in a walled city, then he may redeem it within a whole year after it is sold; *within* a full year he may redeem it. 30 But if it is not redeemed within the space of a full year, then the house in the walled city shall belong permanently to him who bought it, throughout his generations. It shall not be released in the Jubilee. 31 However the houses of villages which have no wall around them shall be counted as the fields of the country. They may be redeemed, and they shall be released in the Jubilee. 32 Nevertheless [e]the cities of the Levites, *and* the houses in the cities of their possession, the Levites may redeem at any time. 33 And if a man purchases a house from the Levites, then the house that was sold in the city of his possession shall be released in the Jubilee; for the houses in the cities of the Levites *are* their possession among the children of Israel. 34 But [f]the field of the common-land of their cities may not be [g]sold, for it *is* their perpetual possession.

Lending to the Poor

35 'If one of your brethren becomes poor, and [z]falls into poverty among you, then you shall [h]help him, like a stranger or a sojourner, that he may live with you. 36 [i]Take no usury or interest from him; but [j]fear your God, that your brother may live with you. 37 You shall not lend him your money for usury, nor lend him your food at a profit. 38 [k]I *am* the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan *and* to be your God.

The Law Concerning Slavery

39 'And if *one of* your brethren *who dwells* by you becomes poor, and sells himself to you, you shall not compel him to serve as a slave. 40 As a hired servant *and* a sojourner he shall be with you, *and* shall serve you until the Year of Jubilee. 41 And *then* he shall depart from you—he and his children [l]with him—and shall return to his own family. He shall return to the possession of his fathers. 42 For they *are* [m]My servants, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt; they shall not be sold as slaves. 43 [n]You shall not rule over him [o]with [3]rigor, but you [p]shall fear your God. 44 And as for your male and female slaves whom you may have—from the nations that are around you, from them you may buy male and female slaves. 45 Moreover you may buy [q]the

18 [p]Lev. 19:37 [q]Lev. 26:5; Deut. 12:10; Ps. 4:8; Jer. 23:6

19 [r]Lev. 26:5; Ezek. 34:25

20 [s]Matt. 6:25, 31 [t]Lev. 25:4, 5

21 [u]Deut. 28:8 [v]Ex. 16:29

22 [w]2 Kin. 19:29 [x]Lev. 26:10; Josh. 5:11

23 [y]Ex. 19:5; 2 Chr. 7:20 [z]Gen. 23:4; Ex. 6:4; 1 Chr. 29:15; Ps. 39:12; Heb. 11:13; 1 Pet. 2:11

25 [a]Ruth 2:20; 4:4, 6 [b]Num. 5:8; Ruth 3:2, 9, 12; [Job 19:25]; Jer. 32:7, 8

27 [c]Lev. 25:50–52

28 [d]Lev. 25:10, 13

32 [e]Num. 35:1–8; Josh. 21:2

34 [f]Num. 35:2–5 [g]Acts 4:36, 37

35 [h]Deut. 15:7–11; 24:14, 15; Luke 6:35; 1 John 3:17 [z]Lit. *his hand fails*

36 [i]Ex. 22:25; Deut. 23:19, 20 [j]Neh. 5:9

38 [k]Lev. 11:45; 22:32, 33

41 [l]Ex. 21:3

42 [m]Lev. 25:55; [Rom. 6:22; 1 Cor. 7:22, 23]

43 [n]Eph. 6:9; Col. 4:1 [o]Ex. 1:13, 14; Lev. 25:46, 53; Ezek. 34:4 [p]Ex. 1:17; Deut. 25:18; Mal. 3:5 [3]*severity*

45 [q][Is. 56:3, 6, 7]

■ **25:23 land is Mine.** Although God gave Israel the land as one of His good gifts to them to be enjoyed (Deut. 6:10–12; 8:10–13), He still retained final ownership and so might terminate the lease should the people prove undesirable tenants. They did not possess the land as an inalienable right but within the structures of a covenantal relationship with God. The land was not private property to be bought and sold. It symbolized life with God.

■ **25:25** All the sales described here took place because of hardship. Land was not to be permanently sold from one family to another.

■ **25:26** It was hoped that a relative would buy a poor man's land and return it to him. In any event, he or his family would receive it back in the Year of Jubilee.

■ **25:29, 30** In contrast to agricultural land, houses within cities had to be redeemed within a year or the sale was permanent.

■ **25:36** See note on Deut. 23:19 (Ps. 15:5).

■ **25:39** If a man sold a son or a daughter into slavery because of debt, the servant was released after seven years (Ex. 21:2–11; Deut. 15:12–18). This text deals with an even worse debt where, presumably having sold his land, a man and his whole family were sold as slaves (v. 41). In this case they were released in the Year of Jubilee.

46 [r]Is. 14:2
50 [s]Job 7:1; Is. 16:14

children of the strangers who dwell among you, and their families who are with you, which they beget in your land; and they shall become your property. 46 And [r]you may take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit *them as* a possession; they shall be your permanent slaves. But regarding your brethren, the children of Israel, you shall not rule over one another with rigor.

47 'Now if a sojourner or stranger close to you becomes rich, and *one of* your brethren *who dwells* by him becomes poor, and sells himself to the stranger *or* sojourner close to you, or to a member of the stranger's family, 48 after he is sold he may be redeemed again. One of his brothers may redeem him; 49 or his uncle or his uncle's son may redeem him; or *anyone* who is near of kin to him in his family may redeem him; or if he is able he may redeem himself. 50 Thus he shall reckon with him who bought him: The price of his release shall be according to the number of years, from the year that he was sold to him until the Year of Jubilee; *it shall be* [s]according to the time of a hired servant for him. 51 If *there are* still many years *remaining,* according to them he shall repay the price of his redemption from the money with which he was bought. 52 And if there remain but a few years until the Year of Jubilee, then he shall reckon with him, *and* according to his years he shall repay him the price of his redemption. 53 He shall be with him as a yearly hired servant, and he shall not rule with rigor over him in your sight. 54 And if he is not redeemed in these *years,* then he shall be released in the Year of Jubilee—he and his children with him. 55 For the children of Israel *are* servants to Me; they *are* My servants whom I brought out of the land of Egypt: I *am* the LORD your God.

CHAPTER 26

1 [a]Ex. 20:4, 5; Deut. 4:15–18; 5:8
2 [b]Lev. 19:30 [1]*observe*
3 [c]Deut. 28:1–14
4 [d]Is. 30:23 [e]Ps. 67:6
5 [f]Deut. 11:15; Joel 2:19, 26; Amos 9:13 [g]Lev. 25:18, 19; Ezek. 34:25
6 [h]Is. 45:7 [i]Job 11:19; Ps. 4:8; Zeph. 3:13 [j]2 Kin. 17:25; Hos. 2:18 [k]Ezek. 14:17 [2]*wild beasts*
8 [l]Deut. 32:30; Judg. 7:7–12
9 [m]Ex. 2:25; 2 Kin. 13:23 [n]Gen. 17:6, 7; Ps. 107:38 [o]Gen. 17:1–7
10 [p]Lev. 25:22
11 [q]Ex. 25:8; 29:45, 46; Josh. 22:19; Ps. 76:2; Ezek. 37:26; Rev. 21:3 [3]*dwelling place*
12 [r]Deut. 23:14; [2 Cor. 6:16]
13 [s]Gen. 27:40 [4]*erect*

Promise of Blessing and Retribution

26 'You shall [a]not make idols for yourselves;
neither a carved image nor a *sacred* pillar shall you rear up for yourselves;
nor shall you set up an engraved stone in your land, to bow down to it;
for I *am* the LORD your God.
2 [b]You shall [1]keep My Sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary:
I *am* the LORD.

3 [c]'If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments, and perform them,
4 [d]then I will give you rain in its season, [e]the land shall yield its produce, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit.
5 [f]Your threshing shall last till the time of vintage, and the vintage shall last till the time of sowing;
you shall eat your bread to the full, and [g]dwell in your land safely.
6 [h]I will give peace in the land, and [i]you shall lie down, and none will make *you* afraid;
I will rid the land of [j]evil[2] beasts,
and [k]the sword will not go through your land.
7 You will chase your enemies, and they shall fall by the sword before you.
8 [l]Five of you shall chase a hundred, and a hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight;
your enemies shall fall by the sword before you.

9 'For I will [m]look on you favorably and [n]make you fruitful, multiply you and confirm My [o]covenant with you.
10 You shall eat the [p]old harvest, and clear out the old because of the new.
11 [q]I will set My [3]tabernacle among you, and My soul shall not abhor you.
12 [r]I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people.
13 I *am* the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that *you* should not be their slaves;
I have broken the bands of your [s]yoke and made you walk [4]upright.

14 'But if you do not obey Me, and do not observe all these commandments,
15 and if you despise My statutes, or if your soul abhors My judgments, so that you do not perform all My commandments, *but* break My covenant,

■ **26:1–46** The Lord's instruction to the Israelites culminates in promises of blessings for obedience (vv. 3–13) and of curses for disobedience (vv. 14–39).

■ **26:11** Israel's obedience to the covenant requirements would be rewarded with blessing (Ex. 20:12; Deut. 28:1–14; cf. Matt. 6:4), culminating in the greatest of all blessings—the presence of God with His people (Ex. 29:42–46 and note).

■ **26:14–39** Disobedience to God brings suffering (Ex. 20:7; Deut. 28:15–68). Many prophetic passages echo Lev. 26 and Deut. 28, as the prophets argued that the people were suffering, or were about to suffer, God's anger for their sins.

16 I also will do this to you:
I will even appoint terror over you, [t]wasting disease and fever which shall [u]consume the eyes and [v]cause sorrow of heart.
And [w]you shall sow your seed [5]in vain, for your enemies shall eat it.
17 I will [6]set [x]My face against you, and [y]you shall be defeated by your enemies.
[z]Those who hate you shall reign over you, and you shall [a]flee when no one pursues you.
18 'And after all this, if you do not obey Me, then I will punish you [b]seven times more for your sins.
19 I will [c]break the pride of your power;
I [d]will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze.
20 And your [e]strength shall be spent in vain;
for your [f]land shall not yield its produce, nor shall the trees of the land yield their fruit.
21 'Then, if you walk contrary to Me, and are not willing to obey Me, I will bring on you seven times more plagues, according to your sins.
22 [g]I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, destroy your livestock, and make you few in number;
and [h]your highways shall be desolate.
23 'And if [i]by these things you are not reformed by Me, but walk contrary to Me,
24 [j]then I also will walk contrary to you, and I will punish you yet seven times for your sins.
25 And [k]I will bring a sword against you that will execute the vengeance of the covenant;
when you are gathered together within your cities [l]I will send pestilence among you;
and you shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy.
26 [m]When I have cut off your supply of bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall bring back your bread by weight, [n]and you shall eat and not be satisfied.
27 'And after all this, if you do not obey Me, but walk contrary to Me,
28 then I also will walk contrary to you in fury;
and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins.
29 [o]You[7] shall eat the flesh of your sons, and you shall eat the flesh of your daughters.
30 [p]I will destroy your high places, cut down your incense altars, and cast your carcasses on the lifeless forms of your idols;
and My soul shall abhor you.
31 I will lay your [q]cities waste and [r]bring your sanctuaries to desolation, and I will not [s]smell the fragrance of your [8]sweet aromas.
32 [t]I will bring the land to desolation, and your enemies who dwell in it shall be astonished at it.
33 [u]I will scatter you among the nations and draw out a sword after you;
your land shall be desolate and your cities waste.
34 [v]Then the land shall enjoy its sabbaths as long as it lies desolate and you *are* in your enemies' land;
then the land shall rest and enjoy its sabbaths.
35 As long as *it* lies desolate it shall rest—
for the time it did not rest on your [w]sabbaths when you dwelt in it.
36 'And as for those of you who are left, I will send [x]faintness[9] into their hearts in the lands of their enemies;
the sound of a shaken leaf shall cause them to flee;
they shall flee as though fleeing from a sword, and they shall fall when no one pursues.
37 [y]They shall stumble over one another, as it were before a sword, when no one pursues;
and [z]you shall have no *power* to stand before your enemies.
38 You shall [a]perish among the nations, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up.
39 And those of you who are left [b]shall [l]waste away in their iniquity in your enemies' lands;
also in their [c]fathers' iniquities, which are with them, they shall waste away.
40 '*But* [d]if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers, with their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to Me, and that they also have walked contrary to Me,

16 [t]Deut. 28:22 [u]1 Sam. 2:33 [v]Ezek. 24:23; 33:10 [w]Judg. 6:3–6 [5]*without profit*
17 [x]Ps. 34:16 [y]Deut. 28:25 [z]Ps. 106:41 [a]Prov. 28:1 [6]*oppose you*
18 [b]1 Sam. 2:5
19 [c]Is. 25:11 [d]Deut. 28:23
20 [e]Ps. 127:1 [f]Gen. 4:12
22 [g]Deut. 32:24 [h]Judg. 5:6
23 [i]Amos 4:6–12
24 [j]Lev. 26:28, 41
25 [k]Ezek. 5:17 [l]Deut. 28:21
26 [m]Ps. 105:16 [n]Mic. 6:14
29 [o]2 Kin. 6:28, 29 [7]In time of famine
30 [p]2 Chr. 34:3
31 [q]2 Kin. 25:4, 10 [r]Ps. 74:7 [s]Is. 1:11–15 [8]*pleasing*
32 [t]Jer. 9:11; 18:16
33 [u]Deut. 4:27
34 [v]2 Chr. 36:21
35 [w]Lev. 25:2
36 [x]Ezek. 21:7, 12, 15 [9]*fear*
37 [y]1 Sam. 14:15, 16 [z]Josh. 7:12, 13
38 [a]Deut. 4:26
39 [b]Ezek. 4:17; 33:10 [c]Ex. 34:7 [l]*rot away*
40 [d]Neh. 9:2

■ **26:40** Even in judgment there was always hope (Deut. 30:1–10). Punishment did not mean an end to the covenant (vv. 44, 45; Gen. 17:2 note; Rom. 11:1–29). God's judgments on His people proved He still cared about them (Heb. 12:5, 6).

41 and *that* I also have walked contrary to them and have brought them into the land of their enemies;
if their [e]uncircumcised hearts are [f]humbled, and they [g]accept their guilt—
42 then I will [h]remember My covenant with Jacob, and My covenant with Isaac and My covenant with Abraham I will remember;
I will [i]remember the land.
43 [j]The land also shall be left empty by them, and will enjoy its sabbaths while it lies desolate without them;
they will accept their guilt, because they [k]despised My judgments and because their soul abhorred My statutes.
44 Yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, [l]I will not cast them away, nor shall I abhor them, to utterly destroy them and break My covenant with them;
for I *am* the LORD their God.
45 But [m]for their sake I will remember the covenant of their ancestors, [n]whom I brought out of the land of Egypt [o]in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God:
I *am* the LORD.' "

46 [p]These *are* the statutes and judgments and laws which the LORD made between Himself and the children of Israel [q]on Mount Sinai by the hand of Moses.

41 [e]Acts 7:51; Rom. 2:29 [f]2 Chr. 12:6, 7, 12; 1 Pet. 5:5, 6 [g]Ps. 39:9; 51:3, 4; Dan. 9:7
42 [h]Ex. 2:24; 6:5; Ps. 106:45; Ezek. 16:60 [i]Ps. 136:23
43 [j]Lev. 26:34, 35 [k]Lev. 26:15
44 [l]Deut. 4:31; 2 Kin. 13:23; Jer. 30:11; [Rom. 11:1–36]
45 [m][Rom. 11:28] [n]Lev. 22:33; 25:38 [o]Ps. 98:2; Ezek. 20:9, 14, 22
46 [p]Lev. 27:34; Deut. 6:1; 12:1; [John 1:17] [q]Lev. 25:1

Redeeming Persons and Property Dedicated to God

CHAPTER 27

27 Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: [a]'When a man [1]consecrates by a vow certain persons to the LORD, according to your [2]valuation, 3 if your valuation is of a male from twenty years old up to sixty years old, then your valuation shall be fifty shekels of silver, [b]according to the shekel of the sanctuary. 4 If it *is* a female, then your valuation shall be thirty shekels; 5 and if from five years old up to twenty years old, then your valuation for a male shall be twenty shekels, and for a female ten shekels; 6 and if from a month old up to five years old, then your valuation for a male shall be five shekels of silver, and for a female your valuation shall be three shekels of silver; 7 and if from sixty years old and above, if *it is* a male, then your valuation shall be fifteen shekels, and for a female ten shekels.

8 'But if he is too poor to pay your valuation, then he shall present himself before the priest, and the priest shall set a value for [c]him; according to the ability of him who vowed, the priest shall value him.

9 'If *it is* an animal that men may bring as an offering to the LORD, all that *anyone* gives to the LORD shall be holy. 10 He shall not substitute it or exchange it, good for bad or bad for good; and if he at all exchanges animal for animal, then both it and the one exchanged for it shall be [d]holy. 11 If *it is* an unclean animal which they do not offer as a sacrifice to the LORD, then he shall present the animal before the priest; 12 and the priest shall set a value for it, whether it is good or bad; as you, the priest, value it, so it shall be. 13 [e]But if he *wants* at all *to* redeem it, then he must add one-fifth to your valuation.

14 'And when a man [3]dedicates his house *to be* holy to the LORD, then the priest shall set a value for it, whether it is good or bad; as the priest values it, so it shall stand. 15 If he who dedicated it *wants to* [4]redeem his house, then he must add one-fifth of the money of your valuation to it, and it shall be his.

16 'If a man [5]dedicates to the LORD *part* of a field of his possession, then your valuation shall be according to the seed for it. A homer of barley seed *shall be valued* at fifty shekels of silver. 17 If he dedicates his field from the Year of Jubilee, according to your valuation it shall stand. 18 But if he dedicates his field after the Jubilee, then the priest shall [f]reckon to him the money due according to the years that remain till the Year of Jubilee, and it shall be deducted from your valuation. 19 And if he who dedicates the field ever wishes to redeem it, then he must add one-fifth of the money of your valuation to it, and it shall belong to him. 20 But if he does not want to

CHAPTER 27
2 [a]Lev. 7:16; Num. 6:2; Deut. 23:21–23; Judg. 11:30, 31, 39 [1]Or *makes a difficult* or *extraordinary vow* [2]*appraisal*
3 [b]Ex. 30:13; Lev. 27:25; Num. 3:47; 18:16
8 [c]Lev. 5:11; 14:21–24
10 [d]Lev. 27:33
13 [e]Lev. 6:5; 22:14; 27:15, 19
14 [3]*sets apart*
15 [4]*buy back*
16 [5]*sets apart*
18 [f]Lev. 25:15, 16, 28

■ **26:46** A summary conclusion to the legal material in chs. 1—26.

■ **27:1–34** The final chapter of divine instruction to Israel deals with gifts promised to God, probably by Israelites in dire distress when they made a vow. Later, they might wish to take back the property vowed. The provisions of this chapter showed when and how this could be done.

■ **27:2 persons.** It was possible to offer oneself or a member of one's family to the full-time service of God in the temple (1 Sam. 1:11). But only Levites could serve God in this way; other vowed persons had to be redeemed according to the tariff described in vv. 3–8.

■ **27:9–10** Sacrificial animals could not be withdrawn once vowed.

■ **27:11–13** Non-sacrificial animals had to be redeemed.

redeem the field, or if he has sold the field to another man, it shall not be redeemed anymore; 21 but the field, [g]when it is released in the Jubilee, shall be holy to the LORD, as a [h]devoted field; it shall be [i]the possession of the priest.

22 'And if a man dedicates to the LORD a field which he has bought, which is not the field of [j]his possession, 23 then the priest shall reckon to him the worth of your valuation, up to the Year of Jubilee, and he shall give your valuation on that day *as* a holy *offering* to the LORD. 24 [k]In the Year of Jubilee the field shall return to him from whom it was bought, to the one who *owned* the land as a possession. 25 And all your valuations shall be according to the shekel of the sanctuary: [l]twenty gerahs to the shekel.

26 'But the [m]firstborn of the animals, which should be the LORD's firstborn, no man shall dedicate; whether *it is* an ox or sheep, it *is* the LORD's. 27 And if *it is* an unclean animal, then he shall redeem *it* according to your valuation, and [n]shall add one-fifth to it; or if it is not redeemed, then it shall be sold according to your valuation.

28 [o]'Nevertheless no [6]devoted *offering* that a man may devote to the LORD of all that he has, *both* man and beast, or the field of his possession, shall be sold or redeemed; every devoted *offering is* most holy to the LORD. 29 [p]No person under the ban, who may become doomed to destruction among men, shall be redeemed, *but* shall surely be put to death. 30 And [q]all the tithe of the land, *whether* of the seed of the land *or* of the fruit of the tree, *is* the LORD's. It *is* holy to the LORD. 31 [r]If a man wants at all to redeem *any* of his tithes, he shall add one-fifth to it. 32 And concerning the tithe of the herd or the flock, of whatever [s]passes under the rod, the tenth one shall be holy to the LORD. 33 He shall not inquire whether it is good or bad, [t]nor shall he exchange it; and if he exchanges it at all, then both it and the one exchanged for it shall be holy; it shall not be redeemed.' "

34 [u]These *are* the commandments which the LORD commanded Moses for the children of Israel on Mount [v]Sinai.

21 [g]Lev. 25:10, 28, 31 [h]Lev. 27:28 [i]Num. 18:14
22 [j]Lev. 25:10, 25
24 [k]Lev. 25:10–13, 28
25 [l]Ex. 30:13
26 [m]Ex. 13:2, 12; 22:30
27 [n]Lev. 27:11, 12
28 [o]Josh. 6:17–19 [6]Given exclusively and irrevocably
29 [p]Num. 21:2
30 [q]Gen. 28:22
31 [r]Lev. 27:13
32 [s]Jer. 33:13
33 [t]Lev. 27:10
34 [u]Lev. 26:46 [v][Heb. 12:18–29]

■ **27:28 devoted.** See text note. Property and persons devoted to God (i.e., placed under the ban) were irrevocably to be placed in the service of God (v. 28), or utterly destroyed (v. 29). This solemn vow was probably pronounced by national leaders, often in time of war (Num. 21:2; 1 Sam. 15) or against those practicing idolatry (Deut. 13:16; 20:17 note).

■ **27:30 tithe.** A tenth of all agricultural produce was given to God (i.e., to the priestly tribe of Levi, Num. 18:21–29; Deut. 12:6–18; 14:22–29 and notes).

The Fourth Book of Moses Called

NUMBERS

Author Together with the rest of the Pentateuch, Numbers has traditionally been ascribed to Moses. This conclusion is based upon the unitary character of the Pentateuch and upon the clear witness of both the Old and New Testaments ascribing these books to Moses (Introduction to the Pentateuch: Author and Date). It is further supported by the obvious antiquity of the materials contained in the Pentateuch. The Book of Numbers itself refers to Moses' activity chronicling the events described in the book (33:2). That much of the book comes from Moses' hand does not rule out the possibility of later editorial activity and the likelihood that some portions were added after Moses' death (e.g., 12:3; and Moses' obituary in Deut. 34).

Date and Occasion We may reasonably date the composition of the book to the period after the wilderness wandering (which followed the Exodus) and before the death of Moses in about 1406 B.C. The book begins with the preparations for the march across the desert, tells of experiences along the way, describes the failure of faith that led the exodus generation of Israelites to refuse to undertake the conquest of the Promised Land, tells of the forty years of waiting until a whole generation would die, and ends with the preparation for entering Canaan. Given its content, Numbers was evidently written as a warning to the generation of Israelites born in the desert, that they should persevere in faith and obedience where their parents had not. For future generations of God's people, the book would speak a similar message.

In the Hebrew Bible it was customary to designate each of the five books of Moses by the word with which it began. For Numbers, this practice was modified by using the fifth Hebrew word as a title. This word, translated "in the desert," is an apt description of the book's content, since it describes the nation's experience during forty years in the desert.

When the Bible was translated into Greek, its books were given Greek names. In the case of Numbers, the Greek translation abandoned the excellent Hebrew name, and used a Greek word meaning "numbers" (*arithmoi*) that actually describes only a few of its chapters. This somewhat inappropriate Greek title was carried over by translation into the English Bible tradition.

Characteristics and Themes

Two themes—the gracious faithfulness and the sovereign power of Israel's covenant God—are vital to the message of Numbers. The events of Numbers vividly portray the faithfulness of the covenant God despite the failures of an erring humanity. God directs His people as they prepare for their journey through the wilderness, comforts them in difficulties, deals with their fears and failures, and rebukes or punishes them when necessary.

This portrayal of God's covenant faithfulness is in sharp contrast with the book's repeated depiction of human faithlessness, the utter failure of humanity to meet God's standards by its own strength. Human failures are clearly portrayed and contrasted with the wise measures of the ever-faithful covenant God. Even Moses, the greatest leader of all, sinned and was not permitted to enter the Promised Land, although he saw it from a distance (20:9–11 note; 27:12–14). This shows that even the best of persons are still sinners and are saved only through the merits of Christ—salvation comes only through the grace of God.

A second major theme of Numbers is the sovereign power of God in history. Despite imposing obstacles, great dangers, and the failures of His people, God brings them safely through the wilderness. His sovereign power is sufficient for every eventuality.

Throughout the narrative, Numbers pictures the progress of God's people in redemption, pointing forward to Christ who is the true Water that makes life possible and the true Rock that provides safety. The work of Christ is foreshadowed by the typology of the red heifer (19:2–10; Heb. 9:13), the rock that provided water (20:11; 1 Cor. 10:4), and the raised serpent that brought life out of death (21:4–9; John 3:14, 15). The specific prophecy of the conquests of David, the coming one who would defeat Israel's enemies (24:15–19), foreshadows the time when Christ, who is the consummate fulfillment of the Davidic covenant, will universally be recognized as the greatest King of all. □

Outline of Numbers

I. Preparation for the Journey Through the Desert (1:1—10:10)
- A. The Men of War Numbered (ch. 1)
- B. Positions for the Camp and March Assigned (ch. 2)
- C. The Levites Numbered and Their Duties Described (chs. 3; 4)
- D. Removal of Defilement from the Camp (ch. 5)
- E. A Special Type of Separation—the Nazirite Vow (6:1–21)
- F. Arrangements for the Religious Life of the Camp (6:22—9:14)
- G. God's Provision for Direction and Guidance (9:15—10:10)

II. From Sinai to the Plains of Moab (10:11—22:1)
- A. The First Stage of the Journey (10:11–36)
- B. Rebellion and Disaffection (chs. 11; 12)
- C. The Crisis at Kadesh Barnea (chs. 13; 14)
- D. Laws After the Crisis (ch. 15)
- E. The Great Rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (ch. 16)
- F. The Budding of Aaron's Rod (ch. 17)
- G. Duties and Privileges of Priests and Levites (ch. 18)
- H. Arrangements for Cleansing (ch. 19)
- I. Moses' Sin at Meribah (20:1–13)
- J. Events on the Way to the Plains of Moab (20:14—22:1)

III. The Balaam Incident (22:2—25:18)
- A. The Summoning of Balaam (22:2–40)
- B. Balaam's Prophecies (22:41—24:24)
- C. The Aftermath of the Balaam Incident (24:25—25:18)

IV. Preparations for Entering Canaan (chs. 26—36)
- A. The New Census (ch. 26)
- B. The Problem of Zelophehad's Daughters (27:1–11)
- C. Appointment of a Successor for Moses (27:12–23)
- D. Rules for Offerings and Special Feasts (chs. 28; 29)
- E. Rules About Vows (ch. 30)
- F. Vengeance on the Midianites (ch. 31)
- G. The Apportionment of Transjordan (ch. 32)
- H. A Summary of Journeys from Egypt to the Plains of Moab (33:1–49)
- I. Plans for Division of Canaan (33:50—34:29)
- J. Levite Towns and Cities of Refuge (ch. 35)
- K. The Second Problem of Zelophehad's Daughters (ch. 36)

CHAPTER 1

The First Census of Israel

NOW the LORD spoke to Moses [a]in the Wilderness of Sinai, [b]in the tabernacle of meeting, on the [c]first *day* of the second month, in the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying: [2] [d]"Take a census of all the congregation of the children of Israel, by their families, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of names, every male [e]individually, [3] from [f]twenty years old and above—all who *are able to* go to war in Israel. You and Aaron shall number them by their armies. [4] And with you there shall be a man from every tribe, each one the head of his father's house.

[5] "These are the names of the men who shall stand with you: from Reuben, Elizur the son of Shedeur; [6] from Simeon, Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai; [7] from Judah, Nahshon the son of Amminadab; [8] from Issachar, Nethanel the son of Zuar; [9] from Zebulun, Eliab the son of Helon; [10] from the sons of Joseph: from Ephraim, Elishama the son of Ammihud; from Manasseh, Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur; [11] from Benjamin, Abidan the son of Gideoni; [12] from Dan, Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai; [13] from Asher, Pagiel the son of Ocran; [14] from Gad, Eliasaph the son of [g]Deuel;[1] [15] from Naphtali, Ahira the son of Enan." [16] [h]These *were* [i]chosen[2] from the congregation, leaders of their fathers' tribes, [j]heads of the divisions in Israel.

[17] Then Moses and Aaron took these men who had been [3]mentioned [k]by name, [18] and they assembled all the congregation together on the first *day* of the second month; and they recited their [l]ancestry by families, by their fathers' houses, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and above, each one individually. [19] As the LORD commanded Moses, so he numbered them in the Wilderness of Sinai.

[20] Now the [m]children of Reuben, Israel's oldest son, their genealogies by their families, by their fathers' house, according to the number of names, every male individually, from twenty years old and above, all who *were able to* go to war: [21] those who were numbered of the tribe of Reuben *were* forty-six thousand five hundred.

[22] From the [n]children of Simeon, their genealogies by their families, by their fathers' house, of those who were numbered, according to the number of names, every male individually, from twenty years old and above, all who *were able to* go to war: [23] those who were numbered of the tribe of Simeon *were* fifty-nine thousand three hundred.

[24] From the [o]children of Gad, their genealogies by their families, by their fathers' house, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and above, all who *were able to* go to war: [25] those who were numbered of the tribe of Gad *were* forty-five thousand six hundred and fifty.

[26] From the [p]children of Judah, their genealogies by their families, by their fathers' house, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and above, all who *were able to* go to war: [27] those who were numbered of the tribe of Judah *were* [q]seventy-four thousand six hundred.

[28] From the [r]children of Issachar, their genealogies by their families, by their fathers' house, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and above, all who *were able to* go to war: [29] those who were numbered of the tribe of Issachar *were* fifty-four thousand four hundred.

[30] From the [s]children of Zebulun, their genealogies by their families, by their fathers' house, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and above, all who *were able to* go to war: [31] those who were numbered of the tribe of Zebulun *were* fifty-seven thousand four hundred.

[32] From the sons of Joseph, the [t]children of Ephraim, their genealogies by their families, by

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1 [a]Ex. 19:1; Num. 10:11, 12 [b]Ex. 25:22 [c]Ex. 40:2, 17; Num. 9:1; 10:11

2 [d]Ex. 30:12; Num. 26:2, 63, 64; 2 Sam. 24:2; 1 Chr. 21:2 [e]Ex. 30:12, 13; 38:26

3 [f]Ex. 30:14; 38:26

14 [g]Num. 7:42 [1]*Reuel,* Num. 2:14

16 [h]Ex. 18:21; Num. 7:2; 1 Chr. 27:16–22 [i]Num. 16:2 [j]Ex. 18:21, 25; Jer. 5:5; Mic. 3:1, 9; 5:2 [2]*called*

17 [k]Is. 43:1 [3]*designated*

18 [l]Ezra 2:59; Heb. 7:3

20 [m]Num. 2:10, 11; 26:5–11; 32:6, 15, 21, 29

22 [n]Num. 2:12, 13; 26:12–14

24 [o]Gen. 30:11; Num. 26:15–18; Josh. 4:12; Jer. 49:1

26 [p]Gen. 29:35; Num. 26:19–22; 2 Sam. 24:9; Ps. 78:68; Matt. 1:2

27 [q]2 Chr. 17:14

28 [r]Num. 2:5, 6

30 [s]Num. 2:7, 8; 26:26, 27

32 [t]Gen. 48:1–22; Num. 26:28–37; Deut. 33:13–17; Jer. 7:15; Obad. 19

■ **1:1—10:10** With the completion of the tabernacle (Ex. 35:4—40:38) the Lord continues to prepare His people to occupy the Promised Land. A census of fighting men is taken (ch. 1). Then measures to ensure the order and purity of the camp are related—the organization of the camp, the commissioning of the Levites and their ministry, and various provisions for ceremonial purity and religious observance. Finally, provisions are made for direction and guidance of the community (9:15—10:10).

■ **1:1–46** In preparation for the conquest of the land, God commands that a census of the fighting men of Israel be taken. At the end of the book, another census will be taken to establish military strength (26:2). In the ancient Near East, a census could be taken for military, forced labor, or taxation purposes.

■ **1:1 the LORD spoke to Moses.** Such statements occur dozens of times in Numbers. Moses was the preeminent prophet. God spoke to the prophets in visions and dreams, but with Moses he spoke face to face (12:8), giving him greater authority. Of all who have lived on earth, only Christ has greater authority than Moses.

the tabernacle of meeting. The tent shrine where God spoke to Moses (Ex. 29:42; 40:34, 35). This term occurs frequently in the Pentateuch and occasionally in later books.

in the second year. Numbers begins thirteen months after the Exodus and relates events that occurred during the next 39 years.

■ **1:5–16** The heads of all the tribes, except the Levites (who had been set apart for the service of the tabernacle), are listed here and also in chs. 2; 7; and 10. The two tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh are listed under Joseph (v. 10), preserving the number of twelve tribes without counting the Levites.

■ **1:20–43** These verses list the number of fighting men in each tribe. Except for the differences in the numbers, these verses follow a strict formula. The tribes are listed in the same order as in vv. 1–15, except that the tribe of Gad is now mentioned third instead of eleventh (vv. 24, 25).

their fathers' house, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and above, all who *were able to* go to war: 33 those who were numbered of the tribe of Ephraim *were* forty thousand five hundred.

34 From the [u]children of Manasseh, their genealogies by their families, by their fathers' house, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and above, all who *were able to* go to war: 35 those who were numbered of the tribe of Manasseh *were* thirty-two thousand two hundred.

36 From the [v]children of Benjamin, their genealogies by their families, by their fathers' house, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and above, all who *were able to* go to war: 37 those who were numbered of the tribe of Benjamin *were* thirty-five thousand four hundred.

38 From the [w]children of Dan, their genealogies by their families, by their fathers' house, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and above, all who *were able to* go to war: 39 those who were numbered of the tribe of Dan *were* sixty-two thousand seven hundred.

40 From the [x]children of Asher, their genealogies by their families, by their fathers' house, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and above, all who *were able to* go to war: 41 those who were numbered of the tribe of Asher *were* forty-one thousand five hundred.

42 From the children of Naphtali, their genealogies by their families, by their fathers' house, according to the number of names, from twenty years old and above, all who *were able to* go to war: 43 those who were numbered of the tribe of Naphtali *were* fifty-three thousand four hundred.

44 [y]These are the ones who were numbered, whom Moses and Aaron numbered, with the leaders of Israel, twelve men, each one representing his father's house. 45 So all who were numbered of the children of Israel, by their fathers' houses, from twenty years old and above, all who *were able to* go to war in Israel— 46 all who were numbered were [z]six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty.

47 But [a]the Levites were not numbered among them by their fathers' tribe; 48 for the LORD had spoken to Moses, saying: 49 [b]"Only the tribe of Levi you shall not number, nor take a census of them among the children of Israel; 50 [c]but you shall appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of the Testimony, over all its furnishings, and over all things that belong to it; they shall carry the tabernacle and all its furnishings; they shall attend to it [d]and camp around the tabernacle. 51 [e]And when the tabernacle is to go forward, the Levites shall take it down; and when the tabernacle is to be set up, the Levites shall set it [f]up. [g]The outsider who comes near shall be put to death. 52 The children of Israel shall pitch their tents, [h]everyone by his own camp, everyone by his own standard, according to their armies; 53 [i]but the Levites shall camp around the tabernacle of the Testimony, that there may be no [j]wrath on the congregation of the children of Israel; and the Levites shall [k]keep [d]charge of the tabernacle of the Testimony."

54 Thus the children of Israel did; according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so they did.

The Tribes and Leaders by Armies

2 And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: 2 [a]"Everyone of the children of Israel shall camp by his own [f]standard, beside the emblems of his father's house; they shall camp [b]some distance from the tabernacle of meeting. 3 On the [c]east side, toward the rising of the sun, those of the standard of the forces with Judah shall camp according to their armies; and [d]Nahshon the son of Amminadab *shall be* the leader of the children of Judah." 4 And his army was numbered at seventy-four thousand six hundred.

5 "Those who camp next to him *shall be* the tribe of Issachar, and Nethanel the son of Zuar *shall be* the leader of the children of Issachar." 6 And his army was numbered at fifty-four thousand four hundred.

7 "Then *comes* the tribe of Zebulun, and Eliab the son of Helon *shall be* the leader of the children of Zebulun." 8 And his army was numbered at fifty-seven thousand four hundred. 9 "All

34 [u]Num. 2:20, 21; 26:28–34

36 [v]Gen. 49:27; Num. 26:38–41; 2 Chr. 17:17; Rev. 7:8

38 [w]Gen. 30:6; 46:23; Num. 2:25, 26; 26:42, 43

40 [x]Num. 2:27, 28; 26:44–47

44 [y]Num. 26:64

46 [z]Ex. 12:37; 38:26; Num. 2:32; 26:51, 63; Heb. 11:12; Rev. 7:4–8

47 [a]Num. 2:33; 3:14–22; 26:57–62; 1 Chr. 6:1–47; 21:6

49 [b]Num. 2:33; 26:62

50 [c]Ex. 38:21; Num. 3:7, 8; 4:15, 25–27, 33 [d]Num. 3:23, 29, 35, 38

51 [e]Num. 4:5–15; 10:17, 21 [f]Num. 10:21 [g]Num. 3:10, 38; 4:15, 19, 20; 18:22

52 [h]Num. 2:2, 34; 24:2

53 [i]Num. 1:50 [j]Lev. 10:6; Num. 8:19; 16:46; 18:5; 1 Sam. 6:19 [k]Num. 8:24; 18:2–4; 1 Chr. 23:32 [d]*have in their care*

CHAPTER 2

2 [a]Num. 1:52; 24:2 [b]Josh. 3:4 [f]*banner*

3 [c]Num. 10:5 [d]Num. 1:7; 7:12; 10:14; Ruth 4:20; 1 Chr. 2:10; Matt. 1:4; Luke 3:32, 33

■ **1:45, 46** These two verses give a total for the census.

■ **1:47–54** The Levites were not counted with the others, since they were set apart to care for the tabernacle and were exempt from military service. Their inheritance was also set apart among the Israelites (ch. 3).

■ **2:1–34** Regulations for the placing of the various tribes in the camp and for their order on the march are given. The people were divided into four camps, of three tribes each, located some distance from the tabernacle on the north, south, east, and west. The Levites camped around the tabernacle (1:53). On the march, the tribes are to follow one another in the same order in which they were mentioned. Compare this arrangement with the four-square city of Rev. 21:16, the final dwelling place of God with man.

who were numbered according to their armies of the forces with Judah, one hundred and eighty-six thousand four hundred—[e]these shall [2]break camp first.

10 "On the [f]south side *shall be* the standard of the forces with Reuben according to their armies, and the leader of the children of Reuben *shall be* Elizur the son of Shedeur." 11 And his army was numbered at forty-six thousand five hundred.

12 "Those who camp next to him *shall be* the tribe of Simeon, and the leader of the children of Simeon *shall be* Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai." 13 And his army was numbered at fifty-nine thousand three hundred.

14 "Then *comes* the tribe of Gad, and the leader of the children of Gad *shall be* Eliasaph the son of [3]Reuel." 15 And his army was numbered at forty-five thousand six hundred and fifty.

16 "All who were numbered according to their armies of the forces with Reuben, one hundred and fifty-one thousand four hundred and fifty—[g]they shall [4]be the second to break camp.

17 [h]"And the tabernacle of meeting shall move out with the [5]camp of the Levites [i]in the middle of the [6]camps; as they camp, so they shall move out, everyone in his place, by their [7]standards.

18 "On the west side *shall be* the standard of the forces with Ephraim according to their armies, and the leader of the children of Ephraim *shall be* Elishama the son of Ammihud." 19 And his army was numbered at forty thousand five hundred.

20 "Next to him *comes* the tribe of Manasseh, and the leader of the children of Manasseh *shall be* Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur." 21 And his army was numbered at thirty-two thousand two hundred.

9 [e]Num. 10:14 [2]Lit. *set forth*

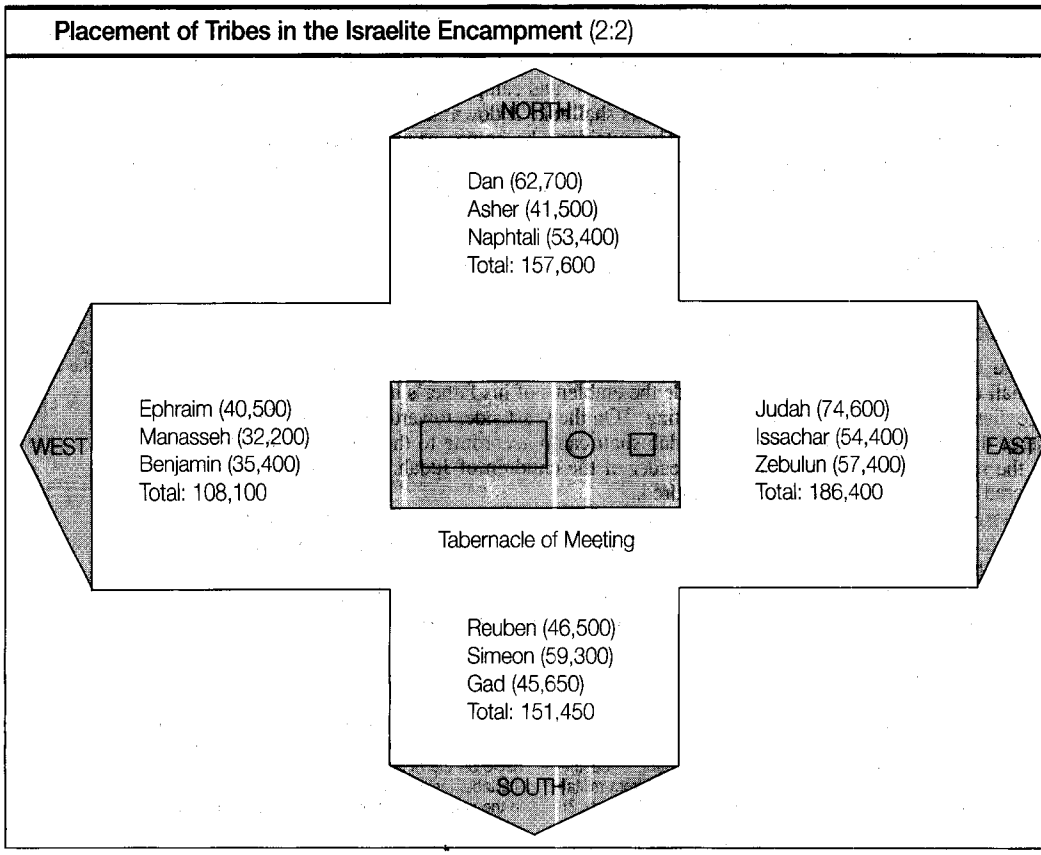
10 [f]Num. 10:6

14 [3]*Deuel,* Num. 1:14; 7:42

16 [g]Num. 10:18 [4]Lit. *set forth second*

17 [h]Num. 10:17, 21 [i]Num. 1:53 [5]*company* [6]*whole company* [7]*banners*

■ **2:14 Reuel.** See text note. Some Hebrew manuscripts have "Deuel." The misspelling "Reuel" is due to the similarity of *R* and *D* in Hebrew writing. It is traditional to note the correction rather than to alter the text.



22 "Then *comes* the tribe of Benjamin, and the leader of the children of Benjamin *shall be* Abidan the son of Gideoni." 23 And his army was numbered at thirty-five thousand four hundred. 24 "All who were numbered according to their armies of the forces with Ephraim, one hundred and eight thousand one hundred—[j]they shall [8]be the third to break camp.

25 "The [9]standard of the forces with Dan *shall be* on the north side according to their armies, and the leader of the children of Dan *shall be* Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai." 26 And his army was numbered at sixty-two thousand seven hundred.

27 "Those who camp next to him *shall be* the tribe of Asher, and the leader of the children of Asher *shall be* Pagiel the son of Ocran." 28 And his army was numbered at forty-one thousand five hundred.

29 "Then *comes* the tribe of Naphtali, and the leader of the children of Naphtali *shall be* Ahira the son of Enan." 30 And his army was numbered at fifty-three thousand four hundred. 31 "All who were numbered of the forces with Dan, one hundred and fifty-seven thousand six hundred—[k]they shall [l]break camp last, with their [2]standards."

32 These *are* the ones who were numbered of the children of Israel by their fathers' houses. [l]All who were numbered according to their armies of the forces *were* six hundred and three thousand five hundred and fifty. 33 But [m]the Levites were not numbered among the children of Israel, just as the LORD commanded Moses.

34 Thus the children of Israel [n]did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses; [o]so they camped by their [3]standards and so they broke camp, each one by his family, according to their fathers' houses.

The Sons of Aaron

3 Now these *are* the [a]records[l] of Aaron and Moses when the LORD spoke with Moses on Mount Sinai. 2 And these *are* the names of the sons of Aaron: Nadab, the [b]firstborn, and [c]Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. 3 These *are* the names of the sons of Aaron, [d]the anointed priests, [2]whom he consecrated to minister as priests. 4 [e]Nadab and Abihu had died before the LORD when they offered profane fire before the LORD in the Wilderness of Sinai; and they had no children. So Eleazar and Ithamar ministered as priests in the presence of Aaron their father.

The Levites Serve in the Tabernacle

5 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 6 [f]"Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may serve him. 7 And they shall attend to his needs and the needs of the whole congregation before the tabernacle of meeting, to do [g]the work of the tabernacle. 8 Also they shall attend to all the furnishings of the tabernacle of meeting, and to the needs of the children of Israel, to do the work of the tabernacle. 9 And [h]you shall give the Levites to Aaron and his sons; they *are* given entirely to [3]him from among the children of Israel. 10 So you shall appoint Aaron and his sons, [i]and they shall attend to their priesthood; [j]but the outsider who comes near shall be put to death."

11 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 12 "Now behold, [k]I Myself have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of every firstborn who opens the womb among the children of Israel. Therefore the Levites shall be [l]Mine, 13 because [m]all the firstborn *are* Mine. [n]On the day that I struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I sanctified to Myself all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast. They shall be Mine: I *am* the LORD."

Census of the Levites Commanded

14 Then the LORD spoke to Moses in the Wilderness of Sinai, saying: 15 "Number the children of Levi by their fathers' houses, by their families; you shall number [o]every male from a month old and above."

16 So Moses numbered them according to the [4]word of the LORD, as he was commanded. 17 [p]These were the sons of Levi by their names: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. 18 And these *are*

24 [i]Num. 10:22 [8]Lit. *set forth third*

25 [9]*banner*

31 [k]Num. 10:25 [l]Lit. *set forth last* [2]*banners*

32 [l]Ex. 38:26; Num. 1:46; 11:21

33 [m]Num. 1:47; 26:57–62

34 [n]Num. 1:54 [o]Num. 24:2, 5, 6 [3]*banners*

CHAPTER 3

1 [a]Ex. 6:16–27 [l]Lit. *generations*

2 [b]Ex. 6:23 [c]Lev. 10:1, 2; Num. 26:60, 61; 1 Chr. 24:2

3 [d]Ex. 28:41; Lev. 8 [2]Lit. *whose hands he filled*

4 [e]Lev. 10:1, 2; Num. 26:61; 1 Chr. 24:2

6 [f]Num. 8:6–22; 18:1–7; Deut. 10:8; 33:8–11

7 [g]Num. 1:50; 8:11, 15, 24, 26

9 [h]Num. 8:19; 18:6, 7 [3]Sam., LXX *Me*

10 [i]Ex. 29:9; Num. 18:7 [j]Num. 1:51; 3:38; 16:40

12 [k]Num. 3:41; 8:16; 18:6 [l]Ex. 13:2; Num. 3:45; 8:14

13 [m]Ex. 13:2; Lev. 27:26; Num. 8:16, 17; Neh. 10:36; Luke 2:23 [n]Ex. 13:12, 15; Num. 8:17

15 [o]Num. 3:39; 26:62

16 [4]Lit. *mouth*

17 [p]Gen. 46:11; Ex. 6:16–22; Num. 26:57; 1 Chr. 6:1, 16; 23:6

■ **3:1 Aaron and Moses.** Aaron is mentioned first because his family is the subject of the chapter.

■ **3:3 anointed priests.** The anointing of Aaron and his sons as priests of the Lord is described in Ex. 29.

■ **3:4 Nadab and Abihu.** The serious misdeed and resulting death of Aaron's older sons was described in Lev. 10:1–3. Similar divine judgments occurred at other important points in salvation history (Josh. 7:13–26; 2 Sam. 6:7; 2 Chr. 26:16–21; Acts 5:1–11).

■ **3:11–13** The Levites were taken by God in place of the firstborn Israelite males (vv. 40–51; Ex. 13:15 note).

■ **3:14–37** The Levite clans are identified and their various duties prescribed: the Gershonites were to care for the large structures of the tabernacle (vv. 21–26), the Kohathites for its interior furnishings (vv. 27–32), and the Merarites for the smaller parts of the structure (vv. 33–37).

the names of the sons of [q]Gershon by their families: [r]Libni and Shimei. 19 And the sons of [s]Kohath by their families: [t]Amram, Izehar, Hebron, and Uzziel. 20 [u]And the sons of Merari by their families: Mahli and Mushi. These *are* the families of the Levites by their fathers' houses.

21 From Gershon *came* the family of the Libnites and the family of the Shimites; these *were* the families of the Gershonites. 22 Those who were numbered, according to the number of all the males from a month old and above—of those who were numbered *there were* seven thousand five hundred. 23 [v]The families of the Gershonites were to camp behind the tabernacle westward. 24 And the leader of the father's house of the Gershonites *was* Eliasaph the son of Lael. 25 [w]The duties of the children of Gershon in the tabernacle of meeting *included* [x]the tabernacle, [y]the tent with [z]its covering, [a]the screen for the door of the tabernacle of meeting, 26 [b]the screen for the door of the court, [c]the hangings of the court which *are* around the tabernacle and the altar, and [d]their cords, according to all the work relating to them.

27 [e]From Kohath *came* the family of the Amramites, the family of the Izharites, the family of the Hebronites, and the family of the Uzzielites; these *were* the families of the Kohathites. 28 According to the number of all the males, from a month old and above, *there were* eight thousand [5]six hundred [6]keeping charge of the sanctuary. 29 [f]The families of the children of Kohath were to camp on the south side of the tabernacle. 30 And the leader of the fathers' house of the families of the Kohathites *was* Elizaphan the son of [g]Uzziel. 31 [h]Their duty *included* [i]the ark, [j]the table, [k]the lampstand, [l]the altars, the utensils of the sanctuary with which they ministered, [m]the screen, and all the work relating to them.

32 And Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest *was to be* chief over the leaders of the Levites, *with* oversight of those who kept charge of the sanctuary.

33 From Merari *came* the family of the Mahlites and the family of the Mushites; these *were* the families of Merari. 34 And those who were numbered, according to the number of all the males from a month old and above, *were* six thousand two hundred. 35 The leader of the fathers' house of the families of Merari *was* Zuriel the son of Abihail. [n]These *were* to camp on the north side of the tabernacle. 36 And [o]the appointed duty of the children of Merari *included* the boards of the tabernacle, its bars, its pillars, its sockets, its utensils, all the work relating to them, 37 and the pillars of the court all around, with their sockets, their pegs, and their cords.

38 [p]Moreover those who were to camp before the tabernacle on the east, before the tabernacle of meeting, *were* Moses, Aaron, and his sons, [q]keeping charge of the sanctuary, [r]to meet the needs of the children of Israel; but [s]the outsider who came near was to be put to death. 39 [t]All who were numbered of the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron numbered at the commandment of the LORD, by their families, all the males from a month old and above, *were* twenty-two thousand.

Levites Dedicated Instead of the Firstborn

40 Then the LORD said to Moses: [u]"Number[7] all the firstborn males of the children of Israel from a month old and above, and take the number of their names. 41 [v]And you shall take the Levites for Me—I *am* the LORD—instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel, and the livestock of the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the livestock of the children of Israel." 42 So Moses numbered all the firstborn among the children of Israel, as the LORD commanded him. 43 And all the firstborn males, according to the number of names from a month old and above, of those who were numbered of them, were twenty-two thousand two hundred and seventy-three.

44 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 45 [w]"Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the children of Israel, and the livestock of the Levites instead of their livestock. The Levites shall be Mine: I *am* the LORD. 46 And for [x]the redemption of the two hundred and seventy-three of the firstborn of the children of Israel, [y]who are more than the number of the Levites, 47 you shall take [z]five shekels for each one [a]individually; you shall take *them* in the currency of the shekel of the sanctuary, [b]the shekel of twenty gerahs. 48 And you shall give the money, with which the excess number of them is redeemed, to Aaron and his sons."

49 So Moses took the redemption money from those who were over and above those who were redeemed by the Levites. 50 From the firstborn of the children of Israel he took the money, [c]one

18 [q]Num. 4:38–41 [r]Ex. 6:17
19 [s]Num. 4:34–37 [t]Ex. 6:18
20 [u]Ex. 6:19; Num. 4:42–45
23 [v]Num. 1:53
25 [w]Num. 4:24–26 [x]Ex. 25:9 [y]Ex. 26:1 [z]Ex. 26:7, 14 [a]Ex. 26:36
26 [b]Ex. 27:9, 12, 14, 15 [c]Ex. 27:16 [d]Ex. 35:18
27 [e]1 Chr. 26:23
28 [5]Some LXX mss. *three* [6]*taking care of*
29 [f]Ex. 6:18; Num. 1:53
30 [g]Lev. 10:4
31 [h]Num. 4:15 [i]Ex. 25:10 [j]Ex. 25:23 [k]Ex. 25:31 [l]Ex. 27:1; 30:1 [m]Ex. 26:31–33
35 [n]Num. 1:53; 2:25
36 [o]Num. 4:31, 32
38 [p]Num. 1:53 [q]Num. 18:5 [r]Num. 3:7, 8 [s]Num. 3:10
39 [t]Num. 3:43; 4:48; 26:62
40 [u]Num. 3:15 [7]*Take a census of*
41 [v]Num. 3:12, 45
45 [w]Num. 3:12, 41
46 [x]Ex. 13:13, 15; Num. 18:15, 16 [y]Num. 3:39, 43
47 [z]Lev. 27:6; Num. 18:16 [a]Num. 1:2, 18, 20 [b]Ex. 30:13
50 [c]Num. 3:46, 47

■ **3:38** Moses and Aaron were to camp in front of the tabernacle of meeting, and to have exclusive approach to the sanctuary.

■ **3:39–49** Firstborn Israelite males were to be redeemed by devoting the Levites to God's service. Money was given for the excess number of firstborn males (vv. 46–49).

thousand three hundred and sixty-five *shekels,* according to the shekel of the sanctuary. 51 And Moses [d]gave their redemption money to Aaron and his sons, according to the word of the LORD, as the LORD commanded Moses.

Duties of the Sons of Kohath

4 Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: 2 "Take a census of the sons of [a]Kohath from among the children of Levi, by their families, by their fathers' house, 3 [b]from thirty years old and above, even to fifty years old, all who enter the service to do the work in the tabernacle of meeting.

4 [c]"This *is* the service of the sons of Kohath in the tabernacle of meeting, *relating to* [d]the most holy things: 5 When the camp prepares to journey, Aaron and his sons shall come, and they shall take down [e]the covering veil and cover the [f]ark of the Testimony with it. 6 Then they shall put on it a covering of badger skins, and spread over *that* a cloth entirely of [g]blue; and they shall insert [h]its poles.

7 "On the [i]table of showbread they shall spread a blue cloth, and put on it the dishes, the pans, the bowls, and the [j]pitchers for pouring; and the [j]showbread[2] shall be on it. 8 They shall spread over them a scarlet cloth, and cover the same with a covering of badger skins; and they shall insert its poles. 9 And they shall take a blue cloth and cover the [k]lampstand of the light, [l]with its lamps, its wick-trimmers, its trays, and all its oil vessels, with which they service it. 10 Then they shall put it with all its utensils in a covering of badger skins, and put *it* on a carrying beam.

11 "Over [m]the golden altar they shall spread a blue cloth, and cover it with a covering of badger skins; and they shall insert its poles. 12 Then they shall take all the [n]utensils of service with which they minister in the sanctuary, put *them* in a blue cloth, cover them with a covering of badger skins, and put *them* on a carrying beam. 13 Also they shall take away the ashes from the altar, and spread a purple cloth over it. 14 They shall put on it all its implements with which they minister there—the firepans, the forks, the shovels, the [3]basins, and all the utensils of the altar—and they shall spread on it a covering of badger skins, and insert its poles. 15 And when Aaron and his sons have finished covering the sanctuary and all the furnishings of the sanctuary, when the camp is set to go, then [o]the sons of Kohath shall come to carry *them;* [p]but they shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die.

[q]"These *are* the things in the tabernacle of meeting which the sons of Kohath are to carry.

16 "The appointed duty of Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest *is* [r]the oil for the light, the [s]sweet incense, [t]the daily grain offering, the [u]anointing oil, the oversight of all the tabernacle, of all that *is* in it, with the sanctuary and its furnishings."

17 Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: 18 "Do not cut off the tribe of the families of the Kohathites from among the Levites; 19 but do this in regard to them, that they may live and not die when they approach [v]the most holy things: Aaron and his sons shall go in and [4]appoint each of them to his service and his task. 20 [w]But they shall not go in to watch while the holy things are being covered, lest they die."

Duties of the Sons of Gershon

21 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 22 "Also take a census of the sons of [x]Gershon, by their fathers' house, by their families. 23 [y]From thirty years old and above, even to fifty years old, you shall number them, all who enter to perform the service, to do the work in the tabernacle of meeting. 24 This *is* the [z]service of the families of the Gershonites, in serving and carrying: 25 [a]They shall carry the [b]curtains of the tabernacle and the tabernacle of meeting *with* its covering, the covering of [c]badger skins that *is* on it, the screen for the door of the tabernacle of meeting, 26 the screen for the door of the gate of the court, the hangings of the court which *are* around the tabernacle and altar, and their cords, all the furnishings for their service and all that is made for these things: so shall they serve.

27 "Aaron and his sons shall [5]assign all the service of the sons of the Gershonites, all their tasks and all their service. And you shall [6]appoint to them all their tasks as their duty. 28 This *is* the service of the families of the sons of Gershon in the tabernacle of meeting. And their duties *shall be* [d]under the [7]authority of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest.

51 [d]Num. 3:48

CHAPTER 4

2 [a]Num. 3:27–32

3 [b]Num. 4:23, 30, 35; 8:24; 1 Chr. 23:3, 24, 27; Ezra 3:8

4 [c]Num. 4:15 [d]Num. 4:19

5 [e]Ex. 26:31; Heb. 9:3 [f]Ex. 25:10, 16

6 [g]Ex. 39:1 [h]Ex. 25:13; 1 Kin. 8:7, 8

7 [i]Ex. 25:23, 29, 30 [j]Lev. 24:5–9 [1]*jars for the drink offering* [2]Lit. *continual bread*

9 [k]Ex. 25:31 [l]Ex. 25:37, 38

11 [m]Ex. 30:1–5

12 [n]Ex. 25:9; 1 Chr. 9:29

14 [3]*bowls*

15 [o]Num. 7:9; 10:21; Deut. 31:9; Josh. 4:10; 2 Sam. 6:13; 1 Chr. 15:2, 15 [p]2 Sam. 6:6, 7; 1 Chr. 13:9, 10 [q]Num. 3:31

16 [r]Ex. 25:6; Lev. 24:2 [s]Ex. 30:34 [t]Ex. 29:38 [u]Ex. 30:23–25

19 [v]Num. 4:4 [4]*assign*

20 [w]Ex. 19:21; 1 Sam. 6:19

22 [x]Num. 3:22

23 [y]Num. 4:3; 1 Chr. 23:3, 24, 27

24 [z]Num. 7:7

25 [a]Num. 3:25, 26 [b]Ex. 36:8 [c]Ex. 26:14

27 [5]*command* [6]*assign*

28 [d]Num. 4:33 [7]Lit. *hand*

■ **4:1–33** The work of the Levitical families—the Kohathites (vv. 1–15), the Gershonites (vv. 21–28), and the Merarites (vv. 29–33)—is further explained. In vv. 16–20, Aaron's son Eleazar is assigned supervision of the entire tabernacle. But all Kohathites, except the descendants of Aaron, were forbidden direct access to the holy things.

29 [e]Num. 3:33–37
30 [f]Num. 4:3; 8:24–26
31 [g]Num. 3:36, 37 [h]Num. 7:8 [i]Ex. 26:15
32 [j]Ex. 25:9; 38:21
33 [g]Lit. *hand*
34 [k]Num. 4:2
35 [l]Num. 4:47
41 [m]Num. 4:22
42 [g]*household*
45 [n]Num. 4:29
46 [o]Num. 3:39; 26:57–62; 1 Chr. 23:3–23
47 [p]Num. 4:3, 23, 30
49 [q]Num. 4:15, 24, 31 [r]Num. 4:1, 21

CHAPTER 5

2 [a]Lev. 13:3, 8, 46; Num. 12:10, 14, 15 [b]Lev. 15:2 [c]Lev. 21:1; Num. 9:6, 10; 19:11, 13; 31:19 [t]*by contact with*
3 [d]Lev. 26:11, 12; Num. 35:34; [2 Cor. 6:16]
6 [e]Lev. 5:14—6:7
7 [f]Lev. 5:5; 26:40, 41; Josh. 7:19; Ps. 32:5; 1 John 1:9 [g]Lev. 6:4, 5
8 [h]Lev. 5:15; 6:6, 7; 7:7 [z]*redeemer,* Heb. *goel*

Duties of the Sons of Merari

29 "*As for* the sons of [e]Merari, you shall number them by their families and by their fathers' house. 30 [f]From thirty years old and above, even to fifty years old, you shall number them, everyone who enters the service to do the work of the tabernacle of meeting. 31 And [g]this *is* [h]what they must carry as all their service for the tabernacle of meeting: [i]the boards of the tabernacle, its bars, its pillars, its sockets, 32 and the pillars around the court with their sockets, pegs, and cords, with all their furnishings and all their service; and you shall [j]assign *to each man* by name the items he must carry. 33 This *is* the service of the families of the sons of Merari, as all their service for the tabernacle of meeting, under the [g]authority of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest."

Census of the Levites

34 [k]And Moses, Aaron, and the leaders of the congregation numbered the sons of the Kohathites by their families and by their fathers' house, 35 from thirty [l]years old and above, even to fifty years old, everyone who entered the service for work in the tabernacle of meeting; 36 and those who were numbered by their families were two thousand seven hundred and fifty. 37 These *were* the ones who were numbered of the families of the Kohathites, all who might serve in the tabernacle of meeting, whom Moses and Aaron numbered according to the commandment of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

38 And those who were numbered of the sons of Gershon, by their families and by their fathers' house, 39 from thirty years old and above, even to fifty years old, everyone who entered the service for work in the tabernacle of meeting— 40 those who were numbered by their families, by their fathers' house, were two thousand six hundred and thirty. 41 [m]These *are* the ones who were numbered of the families of the sons of Gershon, of all who might serve in the tabernacle of meeting, whom Moses and Aaron numbered according to the commandment of the LORD.

42 Those of the families of the sons of Merari who were numbered, by their families, by their fathers' [g]house, 43 from thirty years old and above, even to fifty years old, everyone who entered the service for work in the tabernacle of meeting— 44 those who were numbered by their families were three thousand two hundred. 45 These *are* the ones who were numbered of the families of the sons of Merari, whom Moses and Aaron numbered [n]according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

46 All who were [o]numbered of the Levites, whom Moses, Aaron, and the leaders of Israel numbered, by their families and by their fathers' houses, 47 [p]from thirty years old and above, even to fifty years old, everyone who came to do the work of service and the work of bearing burdens in the tabernacle of meeting— 48 those who were numbered were eight thousand five hundred and eighty.

49 According to the commandment of the LORD they were numbered by the hand of Moses, [q]each according to his service and according to his task; thus were they numbered by him, [r]as the LORD commanded Moses.

Ceremonially Unclean Persons Isolated

5 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2 "Command the children of Israel that they put out of the camp every [a]leper, everyone who has a [b]discharge, and whoever becomes [c]defiled [t]by a corpse. 3 You shall put out both male and female; you shall put them outside the camp, that they may not defile their camps [d]in the midst of which I dwell." 4 And the children of Israel did so, and put them outside the camp; as the LORD spoke to Moses, so the children of Israel did.

Confession and Restitution

5 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 6 "Speak to the children of Israel: [e]'When a man or woman commits any sin that men commit in unfaithfulness against the LORD, and that person is guilty, 7 [f]then he shall confess the sin which he has committed. He shall make restitution for his trespass [g]in full, plus one-fifth of it, and give *it* to the one he has wronged. 8 But if the man has no [z]relative to whom restitution may be made for the wrong, the restitution for the wrong *must go* to the LORD for the priest, in addition to [h]the ram of the atonement with which atonement is

■ **5:1–4** Persons physically or ceremonially unclean were sent outside the camp. This action was taken because, as a nation of priests, the Israelites were to represent man restored in the image of God. See note on Lev. 13; 14.

■ **5:5–10** When someone wronged another, restitution had to be made, plus an additional fifth (Lev. 5:14—6:7). If the wronged person was not available, and had no relative to whom restitution could be made, it was to be given to the priest, as representing the Lord.

made for him. 9 Every [i]offering[j] of all the holy things of the children of Israel, which they bring to the priest, shall be [j]his. 10 And every man's [k]holy things shall be his; whatever any man gives the priest shall be [k]his.' "

Concerning Unfaithful Wives

11 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 12 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'If any man's wife goes astray and behaves unfaithfully toward him, 13 and a man [l]lies with her carnally, and it is hidden from the eyes of her husband, and it is concealed that she has defiled herself, and *there was* no witness against her, nor was she [m]caught— 14 if the spirit of jealousy comes upon him and he becomes [n]jealous of his wife, who has defiled herself; or if the spirit of jealousy comes upon him and he becomes jealous of his wife, although she has not defiled herself— 15 then the man shall bring his wife to the priest. He shall [o]bring the offering required for her, one-tenth of an ephah of barley meal; he shall pour no oil on it and put no frankincense on it, because it *is* a grain offering of jealousy, an offering for remembering, for [p]bringing iniquity to remembrance.

16 'And the priest shall bring her near, and set her before the LORD. 17 The priest shall take holy water in an earthen vessel, and take some of the dust that is on the floor of the tabernacle and put *it* into the water. 18 Then the priest shall stand the woman before the [q]LORD, uncover the woman's head, and put the offering for remembering in her hands, which *is* the grain offering of jealousy. And the priest shall have in his hand the bitter water that brings a curse. 19 And the priest shall put her under oath, and say to the woman, "If no man has lain with you, and if you have not gone astray to uncleanness *while* under your husband's *authority,* be free from this bitter water that brings a curse. 20 But if you have gone astray *while* under your husband's *authority,* and if you have defiled yourself and some man other than your husband has lain with you"— 21 then the priest shall [r]put the woman under the oath of the curse, and he shall say to the woman—[s]"the LORD make you a curse and an oath among your people, when the LORD makes your thigh [s]rot and your belly swell; 22 and may this water that causes the curse [t]go into your stomach, and make *your* belly swell and *your* thigh rot."

[u]"Then the woman shall say, "Amen, so be it."

23 'Then the priest shall write these curses in a book, and he shall scrape *them* off into the bitter water. 24 And he shall make the woman drink the bitter water that brings a curse, and the water that brings the curse shall enter her *to become* bitter. 25 [v]Then the priest shall take the grain offering of jealousy from the woman's hand, shall [w]wave the offering before the LORD, and bring it to the altar; 26 and the priest shall take a handful of the offering, [x]as its memorial portion, burn *it* on the altar, and afterward make the woman drink the water. 27 When he has made her drink the water, then it shall be, if she has defiled herself and behaved unfaithfully toward her husband, that the water that brings a [y]curse will enter her *and become* bitter, and her belly will swell, her thigh will rot, and the woman [z]will become a curse among her people. 28 But if the woman has not defiled herself, and is clean, then she shall be free and may conceive children.

29 'This *is* the law of jealousy, when a wife, *while* under her husband's *authority,* [a]goes astray and defiles herself, 30 or when the spirit of jealousy comes upon a man, and he becomes jealous of his wife; then he shall stand the woman before the LORD, and the priest shall execute all this law upon her. 31 Then the man shall be free from [6]iniquity, but that woman [b]shall bear her [7]guilt.' "

The Law of the Nazirite

6 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When either a man or woman [l]consecrates an offering to take the vow of a Nazirite, [a]to separate himself to the LORD, 3 [b]he shall separate himself from wine and *similar* drink; he shall drink neither vinegar made from wine nor vinegar made from *similar* drink; neither shall he

9 [i]Ex. 29:28; Lev. 6:17, 18, 26; 7:6–14 [j]Lev. 7:32–34; 10:14, 15 [3]*heave offering*

10 [k]Lev. 10:13 [4]*consecrated*

13 [l]Lev. 18:20; 20:10 [m]John 8:4

14 [n]Prov. 6:34; Song 8:6

15 [o]Lev. 5:11 [p]1 Kin. 17:18; Ezek. 29:16; Heb. 10:3

18 [q]Heb. 13:4

21 [r]Josh. 6:26; 1 Sam. 14:24; Neh. 10:29 [s]Jer. 29:22 [5]Lit. *fall away*

22 [t]Ps. 109:18 [u]Deut. 27:15–26

25 [v]Lev. 8:27 [w]Lev. 2:2, 9

26 [x]Lev. 2:2, 9

27 [y]Deut. 28:37; Is. 65:15; Jer. 24:9; 29:18, 22; 42:18 [z]Num. 5:21

29 [a]Num. 5:19

31 [b]Lev. 20:17, 19, 20 [6]*guilt* [7]*iniquity*

CHAPTER 6

2 [a]Lev. 27:2; Judg. 13:5; [Lam. 4:7; Amos 2:11, 12]; Acts 21:23; Rom. 1:1 [1]Or *makes a difficult vow*

3 [b]Lev. 10:9; Amos 2:12; Luke 1:15

■ **5:11–31** A procedure is described by which the priest could determine whether a woman accused of unfaithfulness by her husband was guilty or innocent. If she was guilty, God would make her sick and unable to bear children (v. 27); if innocent, she would be able to bear children (v. 28).

■ **6:1–21** The Nazirite vow was a special type of voluntary devotion. A person could take a special vow of separation for a limited period of time, during which they were not to eat or drink anything that came from the grapevine, and were not to cut their hair or beard. The grapevine was a source of physical pleasure, and abstention from it represented a life given over to God. Allowing the hair to grow signified abstention from human adornment.

During the period for which the vow was taken, the Nazirite was to be careful to avoid becoming ceremonially unclean for any reason (v. 7). If someone should die suddenly in the presence of one who had taken a Nazirite vow, it would be necessary to make certain prescribed offerings (vv. 9–12), shave one's head, and start the period of separation all over again (v. 12). A special ceremony ending the period of Nazirite separation is described (vv. 13–21).

drink any grape juice, nor eat fresh grapes or raisins. 4 All the days of his [2]separation he shall eat nothing that is produced by the grapevine, from seed to skin.

5 'All the days of the vow of his separation no [c]razor shall come upon his head; until the days are fulfilled for which he separated himself to the LORD, he shall be holy. *Then* he shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow. 6 All the days that he separates himself to the LORD [d]he shall not go near a dead body. 7 [e]He shall not [3]make himself unclean even for his father or his mother, for his brother or his sister, when they die, because his separation to God *is* on his head. 8 [f]All the days of his separation he shall be holy to the LORD.

9 'And if anyone dies very suddenly beside him, and he defiles his consecrated head, then he shall [g]shave his head on the day of his cleansing; on the seventh day he shall shave it. 10 Then [h]on the eighth day he shall bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons to the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting; 11 and the priest shall offer one as a sin offering and *the* other as a burnt offering, and make atonement for him, because he sinned in regard to the corpse; and he shall sanctify his head that same day. 12 He shall consecrate to the LORD the days of his separation, and bring a male lamb in its first year [i]as a trespass offering; but the former days shall be [4]lost, because his separation was defiled.

13 'Now this *is* the law of the Nazirite: [j]When the days of his separation are fulfilled, he shall be brought to the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 14 And he shall present his offering to the LORD: one male lamb in its first year without blemish as a burnt offering, one ewe lamb in its first year without blemish [k]as a sin offering, one ram without blemish [l]as a peace offering, 15 a basket of unleavened bread, [m]cakes of fine flour mixed with oil, unleavened wafers [n]anointed with oil, and their grain offering with their [o]drink offerings.

16 'Then the priest shall bring *them* before the LORD and offer his sin offering and his burnt offering; 17 and he shall offer the ram as a sacrifice of a peace offering to the LORD, with the basket of unleavened bread; the priest shall also offer its grain offering and its drink offering. 18 [p]Then the Nazirite shall shave his consecrated head *at* the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and shall take the hair from his consecrated head and put *it* on the fire which is under the sacrifice of the peace offering.

19 'And the priest shall take the [q]boiled shoulder of the ram, one [r]unleavened cake from the basket, and one unleavened wafer, and [s]put *them* upon the hands of the Nazirite after he has shaved his consecrated *hair,* 20 and the priest shall wave them as a wave offering before the LORD; [t]they *are* holy for the priest, together with the breast of the wave offering and the thigh of the heave offering. After that the Nazirite may drink wine.'

21 "This is the law of the Nazirite who vows to the LORD the offering for his separation, and besides that, whatever else his hand is able to provide; according to the vow which he takes, so he must do according to the law of his separation."

The Priestly Blessing

22 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 23 "Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, 'This is the way you shall bless the children of Israel. Say to them:

24 "The LORD [u]bless you and [v]keep you;
25 The LORD [w]make His face shine upon you,
And [x]be gracious to you;
26 [y]The LORD [5]lift up His countenance upon you,
And [z]give you peace." '

27 [a]"So they shall [6]put My name on the children of Israel, and [b]I will bless them."

Offerings of the Leaders

7 Now it came to pass, when Moses had finished [a]setting up the tabernacle, that he [b]anointed it and consecrated it and all its furnishings, and the altar and all its utensils; so he anointed them and consecrated them. 2 Then [c]the leaders of Israel, the heads of their fathers' houses, who

4 [2]Separation as a Nazirite
5 [c]Judg. 13:5; 16:17; 1 Sam. 1:11
6 [d]Lev. 21:1–3, 11; Num. 19:11–22
7 [e]Lev. 21:1, 2, 11; Num. 9:6 [3]By touching a dead body
8 [f][2 Cor. 6:17, 18]
9 [g]Lev. 14:8, 9; Acts 18:18; 21:24
10 [h]Lev. 5:7; 14:22; 15:14, 29
12 [i]Lev. 5:6 [4]*void*
13 [j]Acts 21:26
14 [k]Lev. 4:2, 27, 32 [l]Lev. 3:6
15 [m]Lev. 2:4 [n]Ex. 29:2 [o]Num. 15:5, 7, 10
18 [p]Num. 6:9; Acts 21:23, 24
19 [q]1 Sam. 2:15 [r]Ex. 29:23, 24 [s]Lev. 7:30
20 [t]Ex. 29:27, 28
24 [u]Deut. 28:3–6 [v]Ps. 121:7; John 7:11
25 [w]Ps. 31:16; 67:1; 80:3, 7, 19; 119:135; Dan. 9:17 [x]Gen. 43:29; Ex. 33:19; Mal. 1:9
26 [y]Ps. 4:6; 89:15 [z]Lev. 26:6; Is. 26:3, 12; John 14:27; Phil. 4:7 [5]Look upon you with favor
27 [a]Deut. 28:10; 2 Sam. 7:23; 2 Chr. 7:14; Is. 43:7; Dan. 9:18, 19 [b]Ex. 20:24; Num. 23:20; Ps. 5:12; 67:7; 115:12, 13; Eph. 1:3 [6]*invoke*

CHAPTER 7

1 [a]Ex. 40:17–33 [b]Lev. 8:10, 11
2 [c]Num. 1:4

■ **6:24–26** This threefold, divinely inspired blessing was pronounced by the priest with uplifted hands (Lev. 9:22). It moves from a general blessing (v. 24), to an invocation of God's favor and presence (v. 25), and finally to a climactic mention of the peace that comes only with God's gracious presence (v. 26). The pronouncement of this blessing placed God's covenant name LORD (Yahweh) on the people (v. 27).

■ **6:25 make His face shine upon you.** Here is a vivid figure for God looking favorably upon His worshipers. The closer one's access to the face of God, the greater the blessing.

■ **7:1–88** Offerings made at the dedication of the tabernacle are listed. Each of the twelve tribal leaders had a day in which he brought a number of expensive gifts and specified offerings. These gifts and offerings are

were the leaders of the tribes [1]and over those who were numbered, made an offering. [3] And they brought their offering before the LORD, six covered carts and twelve oxen, a cart for *every* two of the leaders, and for each one an ox; and they presented them before the tabernacle.

[4] Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [5] "Accept *these* from them, that they may be used in doing the work of the tabernacle of meeting; and you shall give them to the Levites, *to* every man according to his service." [6] So Moses took the carts and the oxen, and gave them to the Levites. [7] Two carts and four oxen [d]he gave to the sons of Gershon, according to their service; [8] [e]and four carts and eight oxen he gave to the sons of Merari, according to their service, under the [2]authority of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest. [9] But to the sons of Kohath he gave none, because theirs *was* [f]the service of the holy things, [g]*which* they carried on their shoulders.

[10] Now the leaders offered [h]the dedication *offering* for the altar when it was anointed; so the leaders offered their offering before the altar. [11] For the LORD said to Moses, "They shall offer their offering, one leader each day, for the dedication of the altar."

[12] And the one who offered his offering on the first day *was* [i]Nahshon the son of Amminadab, from the tribe of Judah. [13] His offering *was* one silver platter, the weight of which *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels,* and one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to [j]the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a [k]grain offering; [14] one gold pan of ten *shekels,* full of [l]incense; [15] [m]one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb [n]in its first year, as a burnt offering; [16] one kid of the goats as a [o]sin offering; [17] and for [p]the sacrifice of peace offerings: two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs in their first year. This *was* the offering of Nahshon the son of Amminadab.

[18] On the second day Nethanel the son of Zuar, leader of Issachar, presented *an offering.* [19] *For* his offering he offered one silver platter, the weight of which *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels,* and one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; [20] one gold pan of ten *shekels,* full of incense; [21] one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year, as a burnt offering; [22] one kid of the goats as a sin offering; [23] and as the sacrifice of peace offerings: two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs in their first year. This *was* the offering of Nethanel the son of Zuar.

[24] On the third day Eliab the son of Helon, leader of the children of Zebulun, *presented an offering.* [25] His offering *was* one silver platter, the weight of which *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels,* and one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; [26] one gold pan of ten *shekels,* full of incense; [27] one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year, as a burnt offering; [28] one kid of the goats as a sin offering; [29] and for the sacrifice of peace offerings: two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs in their first year. This *was* the offering of Eliab the son of Helon.

[30] On the fourth day [q]Elizur the son of Shedeur, leader of the children of Reuben, *presented an offering.* [31] His offering *was* one silver platter, the weight of which *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels,* and one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; [32] one gold pan of ten *shekels,* full of incense; [33] one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year, as a burnt offering; [34] one kid of the goats as a sin offering; [35] and as the sacrifice of peace offerings: two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs in their first year. This *was* the offering of Elizur the son of Shedeur.

[36] On the fifth day [r]Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai, leader of the children of Simeon, *presented an offering.* [37] His offering *was* one silver platter, the weight of which *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels,* and one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; [38] one gold pan of ten *shekels,* full of incense; [39] one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year, as a burnt offering; [40] one kid of the goats as a sin offering; [41] and as the sacrifice of peace offerings: two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs in their first year. This *was* the offering of Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai.

[42] On the sixth day [s]Eliasaph the son of [3]Deuel, leader of the children of Gad, *presented an*

2 [1]Lit. *who stood over*

7 [d]Num. 4:24–28

8 [e]Num. 4:29–33 [2]Lit. *hand*

9 [f]Num. 4:15 [g]Num. 4:6–14

10 [h]Num. 7:1; Deut. 20:5; 1 Kin. 8:63; 2 Chr. 7:5, 9; Ezra 6:16; Neh. 12:27

12 [i]Num. 2:3

13 [j]Ex. 30:13 [k]Lev. 2:1

14 [l]Ex. 30:34, 35

15 [m]Lev. 1:2 [n]Ex. 12:5

16 [o]Lev. 4:23

17 [p]Lev. 3:1

30 [q]Num. 1:5; 2:10

36 [r]Num. 1:6; 2:12; 7:41

42 [s]Num. 1:14; 2:14; 10:20 [3]*Reuel,* Num. 2:14

mentioned in precise detail in each case, even though all the lists are identical—a vivid reminder that God is interested in every part of the spiritual service rendered by His people.

■ **7:1–9** The carts and the oxen were presented. The tribal leaders joined together to provide carts, and oxen to pull them, for the use of two of the Levitical clans in carrying the parts of the tabernacle that had been assigned to them (3:21–26, 33–37; 4:21–33). No cart was given to the Kohathites; they were expected to carry the holy things on their shoulders (v. 9).

45 [t]Ps. 40:6
48 [u]Num. 1:10; 2:18; 1 Chr. 7:26
54 [v]Num. 1:10; 2:20
60 [w]Num. 1:11; 2:22
66 [x]Num. 1:12; 2:25
72 [y]Num. 1:13; 2:27
78 [z]Num. 1:15; 2:29
84 [a]Num. 7:10

offering. 43 His offering *was* one silver platter, the weight of which *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels,* and one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; 44 one gold pan of ten *shekels,* full of incense; 45 one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year, as [t]a burnt offering; 46 one kid of the goats as a sin offering; 47 and as the sacrifice of peace offerings: two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs in their first year. This *was* the offering of Eliasaph the son of Deuel.

48 On the seventh day [u]Elishama the son of Ammihud, leader of the children of Ephraim, *presented an offering.* 49 His offering *was* one silver platter, the weight of which *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels,* and one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; 50 one gold pan of ten *shekels,* full of incense; 51 one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year, as a burnt offering; 52 one kid of the goats as a sin offering; 53 and as the sacrifice of peace offerings: two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs in their first year. This *was* the offering of Elishama the son of Ammihud.

54 On the eighth day [v]Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur, leader of the children of Manasseh, *presented an offering.* 55 His offering *was* one silver platter, the weight of which *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels,* and one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; 56 one gold pan of ten *shekels,* full of incense; 57 one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year, as a burnt offering; 58 one kid of the goats as a sin offering; 59 and as the sacrifice of peace offerings: two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs in their first year. This *was* the offering of Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur.

60 On the ninth day [w]Abidan the son of Gideoni, leader of the children of Benjamin, *presented an offering.* 61 His offering *was* one silver platter, the weight of which *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels,* and one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; 62 one gold pan of ten *shekels,* full of incense; 63 one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year, as a burnt offering; 64 one kid of the goats as a sin offering; 65 and as the sacrifice of peace offerings: two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs in their first year. This *was* the offering of Abidan the son of Gideoni.

66 On the tenth day [x]Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai, leader of the children of Dan, *presented an offering.* 67 His offering *was* one silver platter, the weight of which *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels,* and one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; 68 one gold pan of ten *shekels,* full of incense; 69 one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year, as a burnt offering; 70 one kid of the goats as a sin offering; 71 and as the sacrifice of peace offerings: two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs in their first year. This *was* the offering of Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai.

72 On the eleventh day [y]Pagiel the son of Ocran, leader of the children of Asher, *presented an offering.* 73 His offering *was* one silver platter, the weight of which *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels,* and one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; 74 one gold pan of ten *shekels,* full of incense; 75 one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year, as a burnt offering; 76 one kid of the goats as a sin offering; 77 and as the sacrifice of peace offerings: two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs in their first year. This *was* the offering of Pagiel the son of Ocran.

78 On the twelfth day [z]Ahira the son of Enan, leader of the children of Naphtali, *presented an offering.* 79 His offering *was* one silver platter, the weight of which *was* one hundred and thirty *shekels,* and one silver bowl of seventy shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, both of them full of fine flour mixed with oil as a grain offering; 80 one gold pan of ten *shekels,* full of incense; 81 one young bull, one ram, and one male lamb in its first year, as a burnt offering; 82 one kid of the goats as a sin offering; 83 and as the sacrifice of peace offerings: two oxen, five rams, five male goats, and five male lambs in their first year. This *was* the offering of Ahira the son of Enan.

84 This *was* [a]the dedication *offering* for the altar from the leaders of Israel, when it was anointed: twelve silver platters, twelve silver bowls, and twelve gold pans. 85 Each silver platter *weighed* one hundred and thirty *shekels* and each bowl seventy *shekels.* All the silver of the vessels *weighed* two thousand four hundred *shekels,* according to the shekel of the sanctuary. 86 The twelve gold pans full of incense *weighed* ten *shekels* apiece, according to the shekel of the sanctuary; all the gold of the pans *weighed* one hundred and twenty *shekels.* 87 All the oxen for the

burnt offering *were* twelve young bulls, the rams twelve, the male lambs in their first year twelve, with their grain offering, and the kids of the goats as a sin offering twelve. 88 And all the oxen for the sacrifice of peace offerings were twenty-four bulls, the rams sixty, the male goats sixty, and the lambs in their first year sixty. This *was* the dedication *offering* for the altar after it was [b]anointed.

89 Now when Moses went into the tabernacle of meeting [c]to speak with Him, he heard [d]the voice of One speaking to him from above the mercy seat that *was* on the ark of the Testimony, from [e]between the two cherubim; thus He spoke to him.

Arrangement of the Lamps

8 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2 "Speak to Aaron, and say to him, 'When you [a]arrange the lamps, the seven [b]lamps shall give light in front of the lampstand.' " 3 And Aaron did so; he arranged the lamps to face toward the front of the lampstand, as the LORD commanded Moses. 4 [c]Now this workmanship of the lampstand *was* hammered gold; from its shaft to its flowers it *was* [d]hammered work. [e]According to the pattern which the LORD had shown Moses, so he made the lampstand.

Cleansing and Dedication of the Levites

5 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 6 "Take the Levites from among the children of Israel and cleanse them *ceremonially.* 7 Thus you shall do to them to cleanse them: Sprinkle [f]water of purification on them, and [g]let[1] them shave all their body, and let them wash their clothes, and *so* make themselves clean. 8 Then let them take a young bull with [h]its grain offering of fine flour mixed with oil, and you shall take another young bull as a sin offering. 9 [i]And you shall bring the Levites before the tabernacle of meeting, [j]and you shall gather together the whole congregation of the children of Israel. 10 So you shall bring the Levites before the LORD, and the children of Israel [k]shall lay their hands on the Levites; 11 and Aaron shall [2]offer the Levites before the LORD *like* a [l]wave offering from the children of Israel, that they may perform the work of the LORD. 12 [m]Then the Levites shall lay their hands on the heads of the young bulls, and you shall offer one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering to the LORD, to make atonement for the Levites.

13 "And you shall stand the Levites before Aaron and his sons, and then offer them *like* a wave offering to the LORD. 14 Thus you shall [n]separate the Levites from among the children of Israel, and the Levites shall be [o]Mine. 15 After that the Levites shall go in to service the tabernacle of meeting. So you shall cleanse them and [p]offer them *like* a wave offering. 16 For they *are* [q]wholly given to Me from among the children of Israel; I have taken them for Myself [r]instead of all who open the womb, the firstborn of all the children of Israel. 17 [s]For all the firstborn among the children of Israel *are* Mine, *both* man and beast; on the day that I struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I [3]sanctified them to Myself. 18 I have taken the Levites instead of all the firstborn of the children of Israel. 19 And [t]I have given the Levites as a gift to Aaron and his sons from among the children of Israel, to do the work for the children of Israel in the tabernacle of meeting, and to make atonement for the children of Israel, [u]that there be no plague among the children of Israel when the children of Israel come near the sanctuary."

20 Thus Moses and Aaron and all the congregation of the children of Israel did to the Levites; according to all that the LORD commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so the children of Israel did to them. 21 [v]And the Levites purified themselves and washed their clothes; then Aaron presented them *like* a wave offering before the LORD, and Aaron made atonement for them to cleanse them. 22 [w]After that the Levites went in to do their work in the tabernacle of meeting before Aaron and his sons; [x]as the LORD commanded Moses concerning the Levites, so they did to them.

23 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 24 "This *is* what *pertains* to the Levites: [y]From

88 [b]Num. 7:1, 10

89 [c][Ex. 33:9, 11]; Num. 12:8 [d]Ex. 25:21, 22 [e]Ps. 80:1; 99:1

CHAPTER 8

2 [a]Lev. 24:2–4 [b]Ex. 25:37; 40:25

4 [c]Ex. 25:31 [d]Ex. 25:18 [e]Ex. 25:40; Acts 7:44

7 [f]Num. 19:9, 13, 17, 20; Ps. 51:2, 7; [Heb. 9:13, 14] [g]Lev. 14:8, 9 [1]Heb. *let them cause a razor to pass over*

8 [h]Lev. 2:1; Num. 15:8–10

9 [i]Ex. 29:4; 40:12 [j]Lev. 8:3

10 [k]Lev. 1:4

11 [l]Num. 18:6 [2]*present*

12 [m]Ex. 29:10

14 [n]Num. 16:9 [o]Num. 3:12, 45; 16:9

15 [p]Num. 8:11, 13

16 [q]Num. 3:9 [r]Ex. 13:2; Num. 3:12, 45

17 [s]Ex. 12:2, 12, 13, 15; Num. 3:13; Luke 2:23 [3]*set them apart*

19 [t]Num. 3:9 [u]Num. 1:53; 16:46; 18:5; 2 Chr. 26:16

21 [v]Num. 8:7

22 [w]Num. 8:15 [x]Num. 8:5

24 [y]Num. 4:3; 1 Chr. 23:3, 24, 27

■ **7:89 the mercy seat.** This designation of the ornate cover of the ark represents one Hebrew word (lit. "atonement covering" or "place of atonement"). The mercy seat is mentioned twenty-five times in the Pentateuch, but only once in later books (1 Chr. 28:11). See notes on Ex. 25:17 and Lev. 16:2.

■ **8:5–22** This ceremony, which set apart the Levites for service to the Lord, differs significantly from the consecration ceremony of the priests (Ex. 29:1–37; Lev. 8). Key terms in the ordination of Aaron and his sons as priests are "hallow" and "consecrate" (Ex. 29:1, 9 and notes); the Levites were "cleansed" (vv. 6, 15, 21). The priests received new garments; the Levites shaved the hair on their bodies and washed their clothes (Ex. 29:5–9).

■ **8:18 instead of all the firstborn.** See note on 3:11–13.

■ **8:24 twenty-five years old.** In 4:3, the term of service is listed as from 30 to 50 years old. Rabbinic sources suggest that a five-year ap-

twenty-five years old and above one may enter to perform service in the work of the tabernacle of meeting; [25] and at the age of fifty years they must cease performing this work, and shall work no more. [26] They may minister with their brethren in the tabernacle of meeting, [z]to attend to needs, but they *themselves* shall do no work. Thus you shall do to the Levites regarding their duties."

The Second Passover

9 Now the LORD spoke to Moses in the Wilderness of Sinai, in the first month of the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying: [2] "Let the children of Israel keep [a]the Passover at its appointed [b]time. [3] On the fourteenth day of this month, [f]at twilight, you shall [2]keep it at its appointed time. According to all its [3]rites and ceremonies you shall keep it." [4] So Moses told the children of Israel that they should keep the Passover. [5] And [c]they kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the first month, at twilight, in the Wilderness of Sinai; according to all that the LORD commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did.

[6] Now there were *certain* men who were [d]defiled by a human corpse, so that they could not keep the Passover on that day; [e]and they came before Moses and Aaron that day. [7] And those men said to him, "We *became* defiled by a human corpse. Why are we kept from presenting the offering of the LORD at its appointed time among the children of Israel?"

[8] And Moses said to them, "Stand still, that I may hear what the LORD will command concerning you."

[9] Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, [10] "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'If anyone of you or your [4]posterity is unclean because of a corpse, or *is* far away on a journey, he may still keep the LORD's Passover. [11] On [g]the fourteenth day of the second month, at twilight, they may keep it. They shall [h]eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. [12] [i]They shall leave none of it until morning, [j]nor break one of its bones. [k]According to all the [5]ordinances of the Passover they shall keep it. [13] But the man who *is* clean and is not on a journey, and ceases to keep the Passover, that same person [l]shall be cut off from among his people, because he [m]did not bring the offering of the LORD at its appointed time; that man shall [n]bear his sin.

[14] 'And if a stranger [6]dwells among you, and would keep the LORD's Passover, he must do so according to the rite of the Passover and according to its ceremony; [o]you shall have one [7]ordinance, both for the stranger and the native of the land.' "

The Cloud and the Fire

[15] Now [p]on the day that the tabernacle was raised up, the cloud [q]covered the tabernacle, the tent of the Testimony; [r]from evening until morning it was above the tabernacle like the appearance of fire. [16] So it was always: the cloud covered it *by day,* and the appearance of fire by night. [17] Whenever the cloud [s]was [8]taken up from above the tabernacle, after that the children of Israel would journey; and in the place where the cloud settled, there the children of Israel would pitch their tents. [18] At the [9]command of the LORD the children of Israel would journey, and at the command of the LORD they would camp; [t]as long as the cloud stayed above the tabernacle they remained encamped. [19] Even when the cloud continued long, many days above the tabernacle, the children of Israel [u]kept the charge of the LORD and did not journey. [20] So it was, when the cloud was above the tabernacle a few days: according to the command of the LORD they would remain encamped, and according to the command of the LORD they would journey. [21] So it was, when the cloud remained only from evening until morning: when the cloud was taken up in the morning, then they would journey; whether by day or by night, whenever the cloud was taken up, they would journey. [22] *Whether it was* two days, a month, or a year that the cloud remained above the tabernacle, the children of Israel [v]would remain encamped and not journey; but when it was taken up, they would journey. [23] At the command of the LORD they remained encamped,

CHAPTER 9

26 [z]Num. 1:53

2 [a]Ex. 12:1–16; Lev. 23:5; Num. 28:16; Deut. 16:1, 2 [b]2 Chr. 30:1–15; Luke 22:7; [1 Cor. 5:7, 8]

3 [f]Lit. *between the evenings* [2]*observe* [3]*statutes*

5 [c]Josh. 5:10

6 [d]Num. 5:2; 19:11–22; John 18:28 [e]Ex. 18:15, 19, 26; Num. 27:2

8 [f]Ex. 18:22; Num. 27:5

10 [4]*descendants*

11 [g]2 Chr. 30:2, 15 [h]Ex. 12:8

12 [i]Ex. 12:10 [j]Ex. 12:46; [John 19:36] [k]Ex. 12:43 [5]*statutes*

13 [l]Gen. 17:14; Ex. 12:15, 47 [m]Num. 9:7 [n]Num. 5:31

14 [o]Ex. 12:49; Lev. 24:22; Num. 15:15, 16, 29 [6]As a resident alien [7]*statute*

15 [p]Ex. 40:33, 34; Neh. 9:12, 19; Ps. 78:14 [q]Is. 4:5 [r]Ex. 13:21, 22; 40:38

17 [s]Ex. 40:36–38; Num. 10:11, 12, 33, 34; Ps. 80:1 [8]*lifted up*

18 [t]1 Cor. 10:1 [9]Lit. *mouth*

19 [u]Num. 1:53; 3:8

22 [v]Ex. 40:36, 37

prenticeship was served prior to full service. Alternatively, 4:3 may designate the time when complete responsibility for transporting the tabernacle was undertaken, with lighter duties being assumed at age 25. In 1 Chr. 23:24–26 David lowered the age of Levitical service to 20 because transportation of the tabernacle was no longer necessary.

■ **9:6–13** A special problem is identified and God's answer is given: a person who is unclean or on a journey at the regular time may celebrate Passover exactly one month later. No others may postpone its observance.

■ **9:14** As a covenant rite, the Passover was to be celebrated only by members of the covenant community. Male strangers who wished to participate were to accept the terms of the covenant by being circumcised (Ex. 12:48).

■ **9:15—10:6** Two kinds of guidance were arranged for the march: supernatural guidance by the cloud (9:15–23) and orders from Moses given by trumpet (10:1–6).

and at the command of the LORD they journeyed; they [w]kept the charge of the LORD, at the command of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

Two Silver Trumpets

10 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: [2] "Make two silver trumpets for yourself; you shall make them of hammered work; you shall use them for [a]calling the congregation and for directing the movement of the camps. [3] When [b]they blow both of them, all the congregation shall gather before you at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. [4] But if they blow *only* one, then the leaders, the [c]heads of the divisions of Israel, shall gather to you. [5] When you sound the [d]advance, [e]the camps that lie on the east side shall then begin their journey. [6] When you sound the advance the second time, then the camps that lie [f]on the south side shall begin their journey; they shall sound the call for them to begin their journeys. [7] And when the assembly is to be gathered together, [g]you shall blow, but not [h]sound the advance. [8] [i]The sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow the trumpets; and these shall be to you as an [j]ordinance forever throughout your generations.

[9] [j]"When you go to war in your land against the enemy who [k]oppresses you, then you shall sound an alarm with the trumpets, and you will be [l]remembered before the LORD your God, and you will be saved from your enemies. [10] Also [m]in the day of your gladness, in your appointed feasts, and at the beginning of your months, you shall blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings; and they shall be [n]a memorial for you before your God: I *am* the LORD your God."

Departure from Sinai

[11] Now it came to pass on the twentieth *day* of the second month, in the second year, that the cloud [o]was taken up from above the tabernacle of the Testimony. [12] And the children of Israel set out from the [p]Wilderness of Sinai on [q]their journeys; then the cloud settled down in the [r]Wilderness of Paran. [13] So they started out for the first time [s]according to the command of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

[14] The [2]standard of the camp of the children of Judah [t]set out first according to their armies; over their army was [u]Nahshon the son of Amminadab. [15] Over the army of the tribe of the children of Issachar *was* Nethanel the son of Zuar. [16] And over the army of the tribe of the children of Zebulun *was* Eliab the son of Helon.

[17] Then [v]the tabernacle was taken down; and the sons of Gershon and the sons of Merari set out, [w]carrying the tabernacle.

[18] And [x]the standard of the camp of Reuben set out according to their armies; over their army *was* Elizur the son of Shedeur. [19] Over the army of the tribe of the children of Simeon *was* Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai. [20] And over the army of the tribe of the children of Gad *was* Eliasaph the son of Deuel.

[21] Then the Kohathites set out, carrying the [y]holy things. (The tabernacle would be [3]prepared for their arrival.)

[22] And [z]the standard of the camp of the children of Ephraim set out according to their armies; over their army *was* Elishama the son of Ammihud. [23] Over the army of the tribe of the children of Manasseh *was* Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur. [24] And over the army of the tribe of the children of Benjamin *was* Abidan the son of Gideoni.

[25] Then [a]the standard of the camp of the children of Dan (the rear guard of all the camps) set out according to their armies; over their army *was* Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai. [26] Over the

23 [w]Num. 9:19

CHAPTER 10

2 [a]Is. 1:13

3 [b]Jer. 4:5; Joel 2:15

4 [c]Ex. 18:21; Num. 1:16; 7:2

5 [d]Joel 2:1 [e]Num. 2:3

6 [f]Num. 2:10

7 [g]Num. 10:3 [h]Joel 2:1

8 [i]Num. 31:6; Josh. 6:4; 1 Chr. 15:24; 2 Chr. 13:12 [j]*statute*

9 [j]Num. 31:6; Josh. 6:5; 2 Chr. 13:14 [k]Judg. 2:18; 4:3; 6:9; 10:8, 12 [l]Gen. 8:1; Ps. 106:4

10 [m]Lev. 23:24; Num. 29:1; 1 Chr. 15:24; 2 Chr. 5:12; Ps. 81:3 [n]Lev. 23:24; Num. 10:9

11 [o]Num. 9:17

12 [p]Ex. 19:1; Num. 1:1; 9:5 [q]Ex. 40:36 [r]Gen. 21:21; Num. 12:16; Deut. 1:1

13 [s]Num. 10:5, 6

14 [t]Num. 2:3–9 [u]Num. 1:7 [2]*banner*

17 [v]Num. 1:51 [w]Num. 4:21–32; 7:7–9

18 [x]Num. 2:10–16

21 [y]Num. 4:4–20; 7:9 [3]Prepared by the Gershonites and the Merarites

22 [z]Num. 2:18–24

25 [a]Num. 2:25–31; Josh. 6:9

■ **10:11—22:1** This section begins with the Lord's guidance of the people immediately to the area of Kadesh in the Wilderness of Paran (10:12; 12:16; 13:3, 26), the camp from which they would begin the conquest. Instead of the promised victory, the spies' gloomy report created a rebellion that affected the entire nation, except for Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and Caleb. The Lord pronounced judgment on the whole first generation who were counted in the census, and told them to leave Kadesh and turn back toward Sinai.

In view of this judgment, the laws and results of the meager history following in chs. 15—19 are striking for two reasons: (a) after the judgment the Lord immediately told Israel how to serve Him in the Land of Promise (ch. 15), a clear indication that they would eventually go there as promised; and (b) for the whole period of the wilderness judgment we are given only two events (which were actually one connected incident): Korah's rebellion and the budding of Aaron's rod.

The events in chs. 20; 21 are clearly transitional, beginning with the return to Kadesh, a hint that the conquest was on again. The victory over the king of Arad also signaled the change as the place of victory was named "Hormah," "Utter Destruction" (21:3), in contrast to the tragic defeat in ch. 14.

■ **10:11 day . . . month . . . year.** Almost fourteen months after the Exodus from Egypt and eleven months after the arrival at Sinai (Ex. 19:1).

■ **10:14–28** The order of march follows the prescription of ch. 2, though more detail about the Levites is given here (vv. 17, 21).

army of the tribe of the children of Asher *was* Pagiel the son of Ocran. 27 And over the army of the tribe of the children of Naphtali *was* Ahira the son of Enan.

28 [b]Thus *was* the order of march of the children of Israel, according to their armies, when they began their journey.

29 Now Moses said to [c]Hobab the son of [d]Reuel[4] the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, "We are setting out for the place of which the LORD said, [e]'I will give it to you.' Come with us, and [f]we will treat you well; for [g]the LORD has promised good things to Israel."

30 And he said to him, "I will not go, but I will depart to my *own* land and to my relatives."

31 So *Moses* said, "Please do not leave, inasmuch as you know how we are to camp in the wilderness, and you can [5]be our [h]eyes. 32 And it shall be, if you go with us—indeed it shall be—that [i]whatever good the LORD will do to us, the same we will do to you."

33 So they departed from [j]the mountain of the LORD on a journey of three days; and the ark of the covenant of the LORD [k]went before them for the three days' journey, to search out a resting place for them. 34 And [l]the cloud of the LORD *was* above them by day when they went out from the camp.

35 So it was, whenever the ark set out, that Moses said:

[m]"Rise up, O LORD!
Let Your enemies be scattered,
And let those who hate You flee before You."

36 And when it rested, he said:

"Return, O LORD,
To the many thousands of Israel."

The People Complain

11 Now [a]*when* the people complained, it displeased the LORD; [b]for the LORD heard *it,* and His anger was aroused. So the [c]fire of the LORD burned among them, and consumed *some* in the outskirts of the camp. 2 Then the people [d]cried out to Moses, and when Moses [e]prayed to the LORD, the fire was [1]quenched. 3 So he called the name of the place [2]Taberah, because the fire of the LORD had burned among them.

4 Now the [f]mixed multitude who were among them [3]yielded to [g]intense craving; so the children of Israel also wept again and said: [h]"Who will give us meat to eat? 5 [i]We remember the fish which we ate freely in Egypt, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic; 6 but now [j]our whole being *is* dried up; *there is* nothing at all except this manna *before* our eyes!"

7 Now [k]the manna *was* like coriander seed, and its color like the color of bdellium. 8 The people went about and gathered *it,* ground *it* on millstones or beat *it* in the mortar, cooked *it* in pans, and made cakes of it; and [l]its taste was like the taste of pastry prepared with oil. 9 And [m]when the dew fell on the camp in the night, the manna fell on it.

10 Then Moses heard the people weeping throughout their families, everyone at the door of his tent; and [n]the anger of the LORD was greatly aroused; Moses also was displeased. 11 [o]So Moses said to the LORD, "Why have You afflicted Your servant? And why have I not found favor in Your sight, that You have laid the [4]burden of all these people on me? 12 Did I conceive all these people? Did I beget them, that You should say to me, [p]'Carry them in your bosom, as a [q]guardian carries a nursing child,' to the land which You [r]swore[5] to their fathers? 13 [s]Where am I to get meat to give to all these people? For they weep all over me, saying, 'Give us meat, that we may eat.' 14 [t]I am not able to bear all these people alone, because the burden *is* too heavy for me. 15 If You treat me like this, please kill me here and now—if I have found favor in Your sight—and [u]do not let me see my wretchedness!"

28 [b]Num. 2:34

29 [c]Judg. 4:11 [d]Ex. 2:18; 3:1; 18:12 [e]Gen. 12:7; Ex. 6:4–8 [f]Judg. 1:16 [g]Gen. 32:12; Ex. 3:8 [4]*Jethro,* Ex. 3:1; LXX *Raguel*

31 [h]Job 29:15 [5]Act as our guide

32 [i]Ex. 18:9; Lev. 19:34; Judg. 1:16

33 [j]Ex. 3:1; Deut. 1:6 [k]Deut. 1:33; Josh. 3:3–6; Ezek. 20:6

34 [l]Ex. 13:21; Neh. 9:12, 19

35 [m]Ps. 68:1, 2; 132:8; Is. 17:12–14

CHAPTER 11

1 [a]Num. 14:2; 16:11; 17:5; Deut. 9:22 [b]Ps. 78:21 [c]Lev. 10:2; 2 Kin. 1:12

2 [d]Num. 12:11, 13; 21:7 [e][James 5:16] [1]*extinguished*

3 [2]Lit. *Burning*

4 [f]Ex. 12:38 [g]1 Cor. 10:6 [h][Ps. 78:18] [3]Lit. *lusted intensely*

5 [i]Ex. 16:3

6 [j]Num. 21:5

7 [k]Ex. 16:14, 31

8 [l]Ex. 16:31

9 [m]Ex. 16:13, 14

10 [n]Ps. 78:21

11 [o]Ex. 5:22; Deut. 1:12 [4]*responsibility*

12 [p]Is. 40:11 [q]Is. 49:23; 1 Thess. 2:7 [r]Gen. 26:3 [5]*solemnly promised*

13 [s]Matt. 15:33; Mark 8:4

14 [t]Ex. 18:18; Deut. 1:12

15 [u]Rev. 3:17

■ **10:29 Hobab.** Yet another element of guidance is found. Moses asked his Midianite brother-in-law, a man familiar with the desert, for assistance (Ex. 2:16—3:1; Judg. 1:16).

■ **10:35–36** Moses was intensely conscious of God's mighty presence with His people. These prayers honor the Lord as the divine Warrior who goes before the host of the people (v. 35), and as the source of divine protection for the camp (v. 36).

■ **11:4 the mixed multitude.** These were non-Israelites who came out from Egypt with the Israelites (Ex. 12:38 note).

■ **11:7 manna.** See note on Ex. 16:14.

The Seventy Elders

16 So the LORD said to Moses: "Gather to Me [v]seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and [w]officers over them; bring them to the tabernacle of meeting, that they may stand there with you. 17 Then I will come down and talk with you there. [x]I will take of the Spirit that *is* upon you and will put *the same* upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, that you may not bear *it* yourself alone. 18 Then you shall say to the people, [6]'Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow, and you shall eat meat; for you have wept [y]in the hearing of the LORD, saying, "Who will give us meat to eat? For *it was* well with us in Egypt." Therefore the LORD will give you meat, and you shall eat. 19 You shall eat, not one day, nor two days, nor five days, nor ten days, nor twenty days, 20 [z]but *for* a whole month, until it comes out of your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you, because you have [a]despised the LORD who is among you, and have wept before Him, saying, [b]"Why did we ever come up out of Egypt?" ' "

21 And Moses said, [c]"The people whom I *am* among *are* six hundred thousand men on foot; yet You have said, 'I will give them meat, that they may eat *for* a whole month.' 22 [d]Shall flocks and herds be slaughtered for them, to provide enough for them? Or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them, to provide enough for them?"

23 And the LORD said to Moses, [e]"Has[7] the LORD's arm been shortened? Now you shall see whether [f]what I say will happen to you or not."

24 So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD, and he [g]gathered the seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tabernacle. 25 Then the LORD came down in the cloud, and spoke to him, and took of the Spirit that *was* upon him, and placed *the same* upon the seventy elders; and it happened, [h]when the Spirit rested upon them, that [i]they prophesied, [8]although they never did *so* again.

26 But two men had remained in the camp: the name of one *was* Eldad, and the name of the other Medad. And the Spirit rested upon them. Now they *were* among those listed, but who [j]had not gone out to the tabernacle; yet they prophesied in the camp. 27 And a young man ran and told Moses, and said, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp."

28 So Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' assistant, *one* of his choice men, answered and said, "Moses my lord, [k]forbid them!"

29 Then Moses said to him, "Are you [9]zealous for my sake? [l]Oh, that all the LORD's people were prophets *and* that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!" 30 And Moses returned to the camp, he and the elders of Israel.

The LORD Sends Quail

31 Now a [m]wind went out from the LORD, and it brought quail from the sea and left *them* fluttering near the camp, about a day's journey on this side and about a day's journey on the other side, all around the camp, and about two cubits above the surface of the ground. 32 And the people stayed up all that day, all night, and all the next day, and gathered the quail (he who gathered least gathered ten [n]homers); and they spread *them* out for themselves all around the camp. 33 But while the [o]meat *was* still between their teeth, before it was chewed, the wrath of the LORD was aroused against the people, and the LORD struck the people with a very great plague. 34 So he called the name of that place [l]Kibroth Hattaavah, because there they buried the people who had yielded to craving.

35 [p]From Kibroth Hattaavah the people moved to Hazeroth, and camped at Hazeroth.

Dissension of Aaron and Miriam

12 Then [a]Miriam and Aaron [1]spoke [b]against Moses because of the [2]Ethiopian woman whom he had married; for [c]he had married an Ethiopian woman. 2 So they said, "Has the LORD indeed spoken only through [d]Moses? [e]Has He not spoken through us also?" And the LORD

16 [v]Ex. 18:25; 24:1, 9 [w]Deut. 16:18

17 [x]1 Sam. 10:6; 2 Kin. 2:15; [Joel 2:28]

18 [y]Ex. 16:7 [6]*Set yourselves apart*

20 [z]Ps. 78:29; 106:15 [a]1 Sam. 10:19 [b]Num. 21:5

21 [c]Gen. 12:2; Ex. 12:37; Num. 1:46; 2:32

22 [d]2 Kin. 7:2

23 [e]Is. 50:2; 59:1 [f]Num. 23:19 [7]Is the LORD's power limited?

24 [g]Num. 11:16

25 [h]2 Kin. 2:15 [i]1 Sam. 10:5, 6, 10; Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17, 18; 1 Cor. 14:1 [8]Tg., Vg. *and they did not cease*

26 [j]Jer. 36:5

28 [k][Mark 9:38–40; Luke 9:49]

29 [l]1 Cor. 14:5 [9]*jealous*

31 [m]Ex. 16:13; Ps. 78:26–28; 105:40

32 [n]Ex. 16:36; Ezek. 45:11

33 [o]Ps. 78:29–31; 106:15

34 [l]Lit. *Graves of Craving*

35 [p]Num. 33:17

CHAPTER 12

1 [a]Ex. 15:20, 21; Num. 20:1 [b]Num. 11:1 [c]Ex. 2:21 [1]*criticized* [2]*Cushite*

2 [d]Num. 16:3 [e]Ex. 15:20; Mic. 6:4

■ **11:25 prophesied.** An instance of divinely inspired ecstatic utterance by the elders (cf. 1 Sam. 10:10; 19:24). This apparently temporary phenomenon (cf. text note) served to authenticate the leadership of the elders.

■ **11:31 about two cubits above the . . . ground.** The quail were not piled to this depth, but flying blindly at a level of about three feet, where they were easily seized or struck down. See note on Ex. 16:13.

■ **12:1 Ethiopian.** Or "Cushite" (text note). Cush is the region south of Egypt. Zipporah the Midianite (Ex. 2:16–21) might have been referred to as "an Ethiopian," but the directness of the explanation that Moses "had married an Ethiopian [or Cushite] woman" suggests that Zipporah had died and Moses had married again.

■ **12:2 spoken only through Moses.** The real reason for the criticism comes to view—jealousy of Moses. Miriam and Aaron had important places in God's plan for Israel (cf. Mic. 6:4), but their jealousy of Moses, if not corrected, could greatly injure the work of God.

2 [f]Gen. 29:33; Num. 11:1; 2 Kin. 19:4; Is. 37:4; Ezek. 35:12, 13
4 [g]Ps. 76:9
5 [h]Ex. 19:9; 34:5
6 [i]Gen. 46:2 [j]Gen. 31:10
7 [k]Josh. 1:1 [l]Heb. 3:2, 5 [m]1 Tim. 1:12
8 [n]Deut. 34:10 [o][1 Cor. 13:12] [p]Ex. 33:19–23 [q]2 Pet. 2:10 [3]*appearing* [4]*riddles*
10 [r]Deut. 24:9 [s]2 Kin. 5:27; 15:5
11 [t]2 Sam. 19:19; 24:10 [5]*the penalty for this*
12 [u]Ps. 88:4
13 [v]Ps. 103:3
14 [w]Deut. 25:9 [x]Lev. 13:46 [6]*exiled*
15 [y]Deut. 24:9
16 [z]Num. 11:35; 33:17, 18

CHAPTER 13

2 [a]Deut. 1:22; 9:23
3 [b]Num. 12:16; 32:8

[j]heard *it.* 3 (Now the man Moses *was* very humble, more than all men who *were* on the face of the earth.)

4 [g]Suddenly the LORD said to Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, "Come out, you three, to the tabernacle of meeting!" So the three came out. 5 [h]Then the LORD came down in the pillar of cloud and stood *in* the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam. And they both went forward. 6 Then He said,

"Hear now My words:
If there is a prophet among you,
I, the LORD, make Myself known to him [i]in a vision;
I speak to him [j]in a dream.
7 Not so with [k]My servant Moses;
[l]He *is* faithful in all [m]My house.
8 I speak with him [n]face to face,
Even [o]plainly,[3] and not in [4]dark sayings;
And he sees [p]the form of the LORD.
Why then [q]were you not afraid
To speak against My servant Moses?"

9 So the anger of the LORD was aroused against them, and He departed. 10 And when the cloud departed from above the tabernacle, [r]suddenly Miriam *became* [s]leprous, as *white as* snow. Then Aaron turned toward Miriam, and there she was, a leper. 11 So Aaron said to Moses, "Oh, my lord! Please [t]do not lay [5]*this* sin on us, in which we have done foolishly and in which we have sinned. 12 Please [u]do not let her be as one dead, whose flesh is half consumed when he comes out of his mother's womb!"

13 So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, "Please [v]heal her, O God, I pray!"

14 Then the LORD said to Moses, "If her father had but [w]spit in her face, would she not be shamed seven days? Let her be [x]shut[6] out of the camp seven days, and afterward she may be received *again.*" 15 [y]So Miriam was shut out of the camp seven days, and the people did not journey till Miriam was brought in *again.* 16 And afterward the people moved from [z]Hazeroth and camped in the Wilderness of Paran.

Spies Sent into Canaan

13 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 [a]"Send men to spy out the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the children of Israel; from each tribe of their fathers you shall send a man, every one a leader among them."

3 So Moses sent them [b]from the Wilderness of Paran according to the command of the LORD,

■ **12:3** Many suggest that this statement about Moses was added by someone other than Moses, though the Mosaic origin of this verse is not impossible (a unique feature of Scripture is its accurate representation of both the good and bad qualities of its characters, cf. Neh. 13:14, 22; 1 Cor. 4:16, 17). The statement establishes that Moses did not wrongly provoke the complaint of Miriam and Aaron, and explains God's swift defense of His prophet.

■ **12:5 came down.** This phrase is often used in Scripture to indicate a special act of God in dealing with earthly events (e.g., Is. 64:1).

■ **12:6–8** The Lord summoned Moses and his two accusers to the tabernacle of meeting. There He rebuked Aaron and Miriam for their arrogant lack of fear in opposing Moses. In light of the clarity and directness of God's self-revelation to Moses, they should have accepted their subordination to his unique status and supported him. See "Prophets" at Deut. 18:18.

■ **12:7 My servant Moses.** The New Testament contrasts the great honor of Moses referred to here with the even greater honor of Jesus Christ—Moses was a faithful servant in God's house, but Christ is "a Son over His own house" (Heb. 3:6).

■ **12:8 face to face.** Contrast the way God revealed His will even to Elijah (cf. 1 Kin. 19:9–18). No other Old Testament figure had as intimate a relation to God as Moses, and this description in turn highlights the greater privilege of the Christian—in Jesus Christ, the glory of God's goodness and mercy that was withheld even from Moses is displayed to believers through the Spirit (Ex. 33:19, 20; John 1:14; 2 Cor. 3:18). But the believer also looks forward to a yet greater *visio dei* (vision of God)—seeing Christ "face to face" (1 Cor. 13:12; Rev. 22:4).

plainly, and not in dark sayings. With respect to the clarity of divine revelation given to him, Moses stands above all other Old Testament prophets (cf. v. 6). The characterization of prophetic revelation as "dark speech" or "riddles" (text note) implies that prophetic materials in Scripture are sometimes to be understood figuratively rather than literally.

■ **12:10 leprous.** The Hebrew word can refer to various skin diseases. It was clear to anyone who saw Miriam that God had condemned her attitude. Aaron shared the humiliation, for it was evident to all that he too was being chastened for joining her in claiming that they were as great as Moses. God did not make Aaron leprous, however, since his position as high priest (second in importance only to that of Moses) needed to be safeguarded (cf. Num. 16:6—17:11). Later, Uzziah, a beloved king of Judah, was stricken with leprosy when he tried to assume the prerogatives of the high priest (2 Chr. 26:16–21).

■ **12:16 Wilderness of Paran.** The region southwest of the Promised Land in the east-central portion of the Sinai peninsula (Gen. 21:21).

■ **13:1 the LORD spoke to Moses.** God told Moses to send spies apparently in response to an earlier petition of the people, since Deut. 1:22, 23 indicates that they had asked for this. God used the spies to show that the people as a whole were not yet ready to enter the Promised Land.

■ **13:3 heads of the children of Israel.** The names of vv. 4–15 are not found in the earlier lists of leaders and heads of houses (chs. 1; 2; 7; 10).

all of them men who *were* heads of the children of Israel. 4 Now these *were* their names: from the tribe of Reuben, Shammua the son of Zaccur; 5 from the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat the son of Hori; 6 [c]from the tribe of Judah, [d]Caleb the son of Jephunneh; 7 from the tribe of Issachar, Igal the son of Joseph; 8 from the tribe of Ephraim, [f]Hoshea the son of Nun; 9 from the tribe of Benjamin, Palti the son of Raphu; 10 from the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel the son of Sodi; 11 from the tribe of Joseph, *that is,* from the tribe of Manasseh, Gaddi the son of Susi; 12 from the tribe of Dan, Ammiel the son of Gemalli; 13 from the tribe of Asher, Sethur the son of Michael; 14 from the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi the son of Vophsi; 15 from the tribe of Gad, Geuel the son of Machi.

16 These *are* the names of the men whom Moses sent to [2]spy out the land. And Moses called [e]Hoshea[3] the son of Nun, Joshua.

17 Then Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said to them, "Go up this *way* into the South, and go up to [j]the mountains, 18 and see what the land is like: whether the people who dwell in it *are* strong or weak, few or many; 19 whether the land they dwell in *is* good or bad; whether the cities they inhabit *are* like camps or strongholds; 20 whether the land *is* [4]rich or poor; and whether there are forests there or not. [g]Be of good courage. And bring some of the fruit of the land." Now the time *was* the season of the first ripe grapes.

21 So they went up and spied out the land [h]from the Wilderness of Zin as far as [i]Rehob, near the entrance of [j]Hamath. 22 And they went up through the South and came to [k]Hebron; Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, the descendants of [l]Anak, *were* there. (Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.) 23 [m]Then they came to the [5]Valley of Eshcol, and there cut down a branch with one cluster of grapes; they carried it between two of them on a pole. *They* also *brought* some of the pomegranates and figs. 24 The place was called the Valley of [6]Eshcol, because of the cluster which the men of Israel cut down there. 25 And they returned from spying out the land after forty days.

26 Now they departed and came back to Moses and Aaron and all the congregation of the children of Israel in the Wilderness of Paran, at [n]Kadesh; they brought back word to them and to all the congregation, and showed them the fruit of the land. 27 Then they told him, and said: "We went to the land where you sent us. It truly [7]flows with [o]milk and honey, [p]and this *is* its fruit. 28 Nevertheless the [q]people who dwell in the land *are* strong; the cities *are* fortified *and* very large; moreover we saw the descendants of [r]Anak there. 29 [s]The Amalekites dwell in the land of the South; the Hittites, the Jebusites, and the Amorites dwell in the mountains; and the Canaanites dwell by the sea and along the banks of the Jordan."

30 Then [t]Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, "Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it."

31 [u]But the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they *are* stronger than we." 32 And they [v]gave the children of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, "The land through which we have gone as spies *is* a land that devours its inhabitants, and [w]all the people whom we saw in it *are* men of *great* stature. 33 There we saw the [8]giants ([x]the descendants of Anak came from the giants); and we were [y]like[9] grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were [z]in their sight."

Israel Refuses to Enter Canaan

14 So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people [a]wept that night. 2 [b]And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness! 3 Why has the LORD brought us to this land to [1]fall by the sword, that our wives and [c]children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?" 4 So they said to one another, [d]"Let us select a leader and [e]return to Egypt."

6 [c]Num. 34:19 [d]Josh. 14:6, 7

8 [f]LXX, Vg. *Oshea*

16 [e]Ex. 17:9 [2]*secretly search* [3]LXX, Vg. *Oshea*

17 [j]Judg. 1:9

20 [g]Deut. 31:6, 7, 23 [4]*fertile or barren*

21 [h]Num. 20:1; 27:14; 33:36 [i]Josh. 19:28 [j]Josh. 13:5

22 [k]Josh. 15:13, 14 [l]Josh. 11:21, 22

23 [m]Deut. 1:24, 25 [5]*Wadi*

24 [6]Lit. *Cluster*

26 [n]Deut. 1:19

27 [o]Ex. 3:8, 17; 13:5; 33:3 [p]Deut. 1:25 [7]Has an abundance of food

28 [q]Deut. 1:28; 9:1, 2 [r]Josh. 11:21, 22

29 [s]Judg. 6:3

30 [t]Num. 14:6, 24

31 [u]Deut. 1:28; 9:1–3

32 [v]Num. 14:36, 37 [w]Amos 2:9

33 [x]Deut. 1:28; 9:2 [y]Is. 40:22 [z]1 Sam. 17:42 [8]Heb. *nephilim* [9]As mere insects

CHAPTER 14

1 [a]Deut. 1:45

2 [b]Ex. 16:2; 17:3

3 [c]Deut. 1:39 [1]*be killed in battle*

4 [d]Neh. 9:17 [e]Acts 7:39

The spies are a separate group of persons specially chosen for the dangerous task of reconnaissance.

■ **13:16 Hoshea . . . Joshua.** The first name simply means "salvation"; the new one means "the LORD saves." It was appropriate that the man succeeding Moses as leader should bear a name that pointed to the Lord as the One from whom the nation's salvation must come.

■ **13:22 Hebron.** Hebron was well-known as the location of the graves of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Gen. 13:18; 49:29–33; 50:13). The Zoan which was built seven years after Hebron is the city of Tanis in Egypt, founded about 1430 B.C. Another name for Hebron is Kirjath Arba, and it was associated with the Anakim or descendents of Anak, a clan of large and intimidating fighters (Josh. 14:15). In later history, David occupied Hebron and was anointed there, first as king of Judah and then as king of Israel and Judah (2 Sam. 2:1–3; 5:1–5).

■ **13:33 giants.** See text note; note on Gen. 6:4. The Hebrew term is used in Gen. 6:4 for a group of strong and wicked men who lived in the earth before the Flood. The spies' exaggerated and cowardly report disheartened the people and brought God's judgment on the spies themselves (14:36, 37).

■ **14:1–45** The Exodus generation provided an example of apostasy that the psalmist (Ps. 95:7–11) and New Testament authors (1 Cor. 10:5; Heb. 3:12—4:13) used to warn later generations of God's people.

5 Then Moses and Aaron [2]fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel.

6 But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, *who were* among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes; 7 and they spoke to all the congregation of the children of Israel, saying: [f]"The land we passed through to spy out *is* an exceedingly good land. 8 If the LORD [g]delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, [h]'a land which flows with milk and honey.' 9 Only [i]do not rebel against the LORD, [j]nor fear the people of the land, for [k]they[3] *are* our bread; their protection has departed from them, [l]and the LORD *is* with us. Do not fear them."

10 [m]And all the congregation said to stone them with stones. Now [n]the glory of the LORD appeared in the tabernacle of meeting before all the children of Israel.

Moses Intercedes for the People

11 Then the LORD said to Moses: "How long will these people [o]reject[4] Me? And how long will they not [p]believe Me, with all the [5]signs which I have performed among them? 12 I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and I will [q]make of you a nation greater and mightier than they."

13 And [r]Moses said to the LORD: [s]"Then the Egyptians will hear *it,* for by Your might You brought these people up from among them, 14 and they will tell *it* to the inhabitants of this land. They have [t]heard that You, LORD, *are* among these people; that You, LORD, are seen face to face and Your cloud stands above them, and You go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. 15 Now *if* You kill these people as one man, then the nations which have heard of Your fame will speak, saying, 16 'Because the LORD was not [u]able to bring this people to the land which He swore to give them, therefore He killed them in the wilderness.' 17 And now, I pray, let the power of my Lord be great, just as You have spoken, saying, 18 [v]'The LORD is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He by no means clears *the guilty,* [w]visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth *generation.*' 19 [x]Pardon the iniquity of this people, I pray, [y]according to the greatness of Your mercy, just [z]as You have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now."

20 Then the LORD said: "I have pardoned, [a]according to your word; 21 but truly, as I live, [b]all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the LORD— 22 [c]because all these men who have seen My glory and the signs which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have put Me to the test now [d]these ten times, and have not heeded My voice, 23 they certainly shall not [e]see the land of which I [6]swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who rejected Me see it. 24 But My servant [f]Caleb, because he has a different spirit in him and [g]has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land where he went, and his descendants shall inherit it. 25 Now the Amalekites and the Canaanites dwell in the valley; tomorrow turn and [h]move out into the wilderness by the Way of the Red Sea."

Death Sentence on the Rebels

26 And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 27 [i]"How long *shall I bear with* this evil congregation who complain against Me? [j]I have heard the complaints which the children of Israel make against Me. 28 Say to them, [k]'As I live,' says the LORD, 'just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you: 29 The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, [l]all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above. 30 [m]Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun, you shall by no means enter the land which I [7]swore I would make you dwell in. 31 [n]But your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring in, and they shall [8]know the land which [o]you have despised. 32 But *as for* you, [p]your[9] carcasses shall fall in this wilderness. 33 And your sons shall [q]be [l]shepherds in the wilderness [r]forty years, and [s]bear the brunt of your infidelity, until your carcasses are consumed in the wilderness. 34 [t]According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, [u]forty days, for each day you shall bear your [2]guilt one year, *namely* forty years, [v]and you shall know My [3]rejection. 35 [w]I the LORD have spoken this. I will surely do so to all [x]this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.' "

36 Now the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land, who returned and made all the congregation complain against him by bringing a bad report of the land, 37 those very men who brought the evil report about the land, [y]died by the plague before the LORD. 38 [z]But Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh remained alive, of the men who went to spy out the land.

5 [2]*prostrated themselves*
7 [f]Num. 13:27
8 [g]Deut. 10:15 [h]Num. 13:27
9 [i]Deut. 1:26; 9:7, 23, 24 [j]Deut. 7:18 [k]Num. 24:8 [l]Deut. 20:1, 3, 4; 31:6–8 [3]They shall be as food for our consumption.
10 [m]Ex. 17:4 [n]Ex. 16:10
11 [o]Heb. 3:8 [p]Deut. 9:23 [4]*despise* [5]*miraculous signs*
12 [q]Ex. 32:10
13 [r]Ps. 106:23 [s]Ex. 32:12
14 [t]Deut. 2:25
16 [u]Deut. 9:28
18 [v]Ex. 34:6, 7 [w]Ex. 20:5
19 [x]Ex. 32:32; 34:9 [y]Ps. 51:1; 106:45 [z]Ps. 78:38
20 [a]Mic. 7:18–20
21 [b]Ps. 72:19
22 [c]Deut. 1:35 [d]Gen. 31:7
23 [e]Num. 26:65; 32:11 [6]*solemnly promised*
24 [f]Josh. 14:6, 8, 9 [g]Num. 32:12
25 [h]Deut. 1:40
27 [i]Ex. 16:28 [j]Ex. 16:12
28 [k]Heb. 3:16–19
29 [l]Num. 1:45, 46; 26:64
30 [m]Deut. 1:36–38 [7]*solemnly promised*
31 [n]Deut. 1:39 [o]Ps. 106:24 [8]*be acquainted with*
32 [p]Num. 26:64, 65; 32:13 [9]You shall die.
33 [q]Ps. 107:40 [r]Deut. 2:14 [s]Ezek. 23:35 [t]Vg. *wanderers*
34 [t]Num. 13:25 [u]Ezek. 4:6 [v][Heb. 4:1] [2]*iniquity* [3]*opposition*
35 [w]Num. 23:19 [x]1 Cor. 10:5
37 [y][1 Cor. 10:10]
38 [z]Josh. 14:6, 10

...ile Invasion Attempt

39 Then Moses told these words to all the children of Israel, [a]and the people mourned greatly.
40 And they rose early in the morning and went up to the top of the mountain, saying, [b]"Here we are, and we will go up to the place which the LORD has promised, for we have sinned!"

41 And Moses said, "Now why do you [d]transgress the command of the LORD? For this will not succeed. 42 [e]Do not go up, lest you be defeated by your enemies, for the LORD *is* not among you.
43 For the Amalekites and the Canaanites *are* there before you, and you shall fall by the sword; [d]because you have turned away from the LORD, the LORD will not be with you."

44 [e]But they presumed to go up to the mountaintop. Nevertheless, neither the ark of the covenant of the LORD nor Moses departed from the camp. 45 Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who dwelt in that mountain came down and attacked them, and drove them back as far as [f]Hormah.

Laws of Grain and Drink Offerings

15 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 [a]"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you have come into the land you are to inhabit, which I am giving to you,
3 and you [b]make an offering by fire to the LORD, a burnt offering or a sacrifice, [c]to fulfill a vow or as a freewill offering or [d]in your appointed feasts, to make a [e]sweet[I] aroma to the LORD, from the herd or the flock, 4 then [f]he who presents his offering to the LORD shall bring [g]a grain offering of one-tenth *of an ephah* of fine flour mixed [h]with one-fourth of a hin of oil; 5 [i]and one-fourth of a hin of wine as a drink offering you shall prepare with the burnt offering or the sacrifice, for each [j]lamb. 6 [k]Or for a ram you shall prepare as a grain offering two-tenths *of an ephah* of fine flour mixed with one-third of a hin of oil; 7 and as a drink offering you shall offer one-third of a hin of wine as a sweet aroma to the LORD. 8 And when you prepare a young bull as a burnt offering, or as a sacrifice to fulfill a vow, or as a [l]peace offering to the LORD, 9 then shall be offered [m]with the young bull a grain offering of three-tenths *of an ephah* of fine flour mixed with half a hin of oil; 10 and you shall bring as the drink offering half a hin of wine as an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD.

11 [n]'Thus it shall be done for each young bull, for each ram, or for each lamb or young goat.
12 According to the number that you prepare, so you shall do with everyone according to their number. 13 All who are native-born shall do these things in this manner, in presenting an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD. 14 And if a stranger [z]dwells with you, or whoever *is* among you throughout your generations, and would present an offering made by fire, a sweet aroma to the LORD, just as you do, so shall he do. 15 [o]One [3]ordinance *shall be* for you of the assembly and for the stranger who dwells *with you,* an ordinance forever throughout your generations; as you are, so shall the stranger be before the LORD. 16 One law and one custom shall be for you and for the stranger who dwells with you.' "

17 Again the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 18 [p]"Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you come into the land to which I bring you, 19 then it will be, when you eat of [q]the bread of the land, that you shall offer up a heave offering to the LORD. 20 [r]You shall offer up a cake of the first of your ground meal *as* a heave offering; as [s]a heave offering of the threshing floor, so shall you offer it up. 21 Of the first of your ground meal you shall give to the LORD a heave offering throughout your generations.

Laws Concerning Unintentional Sin

22 [t]'If you sin unintentionally, and do not observe all these commandments which the LORD has spoken to Moses— 23 all that the LORD has commanded you by the hand of Moses, from the day the LORD gave commandment and onward throughout your generations— 24 then it will be, [u]if it is unintentionally committed, [4]without the knowledge of the congregation, that the whole congregation shall offer one young bull as a burnt offering, as a sweet aroma to the LORD, [v]with its grain offering and its drink offering, according to the ordinance, and [w]one kid of the goats as

39 [a]Ex. 33:4
40 [b]Deut. 1:41–44
41 [4]*overstep*
42 [c]Deut. 1:42; 31:17
43 [d]2 Chr. 15:2
44 [e]Deut. 1:43
45 [f]Num. 21:3

CHAPTER 15

2 [a]Lev. 23:10
3 [b]Lev. 1:2, 3 [c]Lev. 7:16; 22:18, 21 [d]Lev. 23:2, 8, 12, 38 [e]Ex. 29:18 [I]*pleasing*
4 [f]Lev. 2:1; 6:14 [g]Ex. 29:40 [h]Num. 28:5
5 [i]Num. 28:7, 14 [j]Lev. 1:10; 3:6
6 [k]Num. 28:12, 14
8 [l]Lev. 7:11
9 [m]Num. 28:12, 14
11 [n]Num. 28
14 [z]As a resident alien
15 [o]Num. 9:14; 15:29 [3]*statute*
18 [p]Deut. 26:1
19 [q]Josh. 5:11, 12
20 [r]Lev. 23:10, 14, 17 [s]Lev. 2:14; 23:10, 16
22 [t]Lev. 4:2
24 [u]Lev. 4:13 [v]Num. 15:8–10 [w]Lev. 4:23 [4]Lit. *away from the eyes*

■ **14:39–45** The Israelites make a futile attempt to conquer Canaan. Despite Moses' opposition, the disappointed people try to enter the Promised Land, and are driven back.

■ **14:45 Hormah.** A place of some importance in later history (21:1–3; Josh. 15:30; 19:4; Judg. 1:17; 1 Sam. 30:26–30).

■ **15:1–41** The location of the material in this chapter—between the disastrous defeat at the hands of the Amalekites and Canaanites (14:39–45) and Korah's rebellion (ch. 16)—is significant. In giving this chapter of laws for their behavior in the land (v. 2) God assured Israel that, despite their failures and rebellions, He still planned to give Canaan to them.

■ **15:1 When you have come into the land . . . I am giving to you.** This expectation is a key to the chapter.

■ **15:22–29** Sacrifices of atonement for unintentional sins are prescribed. The whole community (v. 24–26) or an individual alone (v. 27) could be responsible for such transgressions, e.g., of ritual commandments like those given in vv. 1–21.

a sin offering. 25 [x]So the priest shall make atonement for the whole congregation of the children of Israel, and it shall be forgiven them, for it was unintentional; they shall bring their offering, an offering made by fire to the LORD, and their sin offering before the LORD, for their unintended sin. 26 It shall be forgiven the whole congregation of the children of Israel and the stranger who dwells among them, because all the people *did it* unintentionally.

27 'And [y]if a person sins unintentionally, then he shall bring a female goat in its first year as a sin offering. 28 [z]So the priest shall make atonement for the person who sins unintentionally, when he sins unintentionally before the LORD, to make atonement for him; and it shall be forgiven him. 29 [a]You shall have one law for him who sins unintentionally, *for* him who is native-born among the children of Israel and for the stranger who dwells among them.

Law Concerning Presumptuous Sin

30 [b]'But the person who does *anything* [5]presumptuously, *whether he is* native-born or a stranger, that one [6]brings reproach on the LORD, and he shall be [7]cut off from among his people. 31 Because he has [c]despised the word of the LORD, and has broken His commandment, that person shall be completely cut off; his [8]guilt *shall be* upon him.' "

Penalty for Violating the Sabbath

32 Now while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, [d]they found a man gathering sticks on the Sabbath day. 33 And those who found him gathering sticks brought him to Moses and Aaron, and to all the congregation. 34 They put him [e]under guard, because it had not been explained what should be done to him.

35 Then the LORD said to Moses, [f]"The man must surely be put to death; all the congregation shall [g]stone him with stones outside the camp." 36 So, as the LORD commanded Moses, all the congregation brought him outside the camp and stoned him with stones, and he died.

Tassels on Garments

37 Again the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 38 "Speak to the children of Israel: Tell [h]them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a blue thread in the tassels of the corners. 39 And you shall have the tassel, that you may look upon it and [i]remember all the commandments of the LORD and do them, and that you [j]*may* not [k]follow the harlotry to which your own heart and your own eyes are inclined, 40 and that you may remember and do all My commandments, and be [l]holy for your God. 41 I *am* the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I *am* the LORD your God."

Rebellion Against Moses and Aaron

16 Now [a]Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with [b]Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took *men;* 2 and they rose up before Moses with some of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation, [c]representatives of the congregation, men of renown. 3 [d]They gathered together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "*You* [1]*take* too much upon yourselves, for [e]all the congregation *is* holy, every one of them, [f]and the LORD *is* among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?"

4 So when Moses heard *it,* he [g]fell on his face; 5 and he spoke to Korah and all his company, saying, "Tomorrow morning the LORD will show who *is* [h]His and *who is* [i]holy,[2] and will cause *him* to come near to Him. That one whom He chooses He will cause to [j]come near to Him. 6 Do this: Take censers, Korah and all your company; 7 put fire in them and put incense in them before the LORD tomorrow, and it shall be *that* the man whom the LORD chooses *is* the holy one. *You take* too much upon yourselves, you sons of Levi!"

8 Then Moses said to Korah, "Hear now, you sons of Levi: 9 *Is it* [k]a small thing to you that the God of Israel has [l]separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to Himself, to

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25 [x]Lev. 4:20; [Heb. 2:17]

27 [y]Lev. 4:27–31

28 [z]Lev. 4:35

29 [a]Num. 15:15

30 [b]Num. 14:40–44; Deut. 1:43; 17:12; Ps. 19:13; Heb. 10:26 [5]*defiantly,* lit. *with a high hand* [6]*blasphemes* [7]Put to death

31 [c]2 Sam. 12:9; Prov. 13:13 [8]*iniquity*

32 [d]Ex. 31:14, 15; 35:2, 3

34 [e]Lev. 24:12

35 [f]Ex. 31:14, 15 [g]Lev. 24:14; Deut. 21:21; 1 Kin. 21:13; Acts 7:58

38 [h]Deut. 22:12; Matt. 23:5

39 [i]Ps. 103:18 [j]Deut. 29:19 [k]Ps. 73:27; 106:39; James 4:4

40 [l][Lev. 11:44, 45; Rom. 12:1; Col. 1:22; 1 Pet. 1:15, 16]

CHAPTER 16

1 [a]Ex. 6:21 [b]Num. 26:9; Deut. 11:6

2 [c]Num. 1:16; 26:9

3 [d]Num. 12:2; 14:2; Ps. 106:16 [e]Ex. 19:6 [f]Ex. 29:45 [1]*assume too much for*

4 [g]Num. 14:5; 20:6

5 [h][2 Tim. 2:19] [i]Lev. 21:6–8, 12 [j]Ezek. 40:46; 44:15, 16 [2]*set aside* for His use only

9 [k]1 Sam. 18:23; Is. 7:13 [l]Num. 3:41, 45; 8:13–16; Deut. 10:8

■ **15:30 does anything presumptuously.** See text note. The treatment of an individual who sins defiantly is laid down: first the rule (vv. 30, 31) and then the illustration of the sabbath-breaker (vv. 32–36).

cut off. See note on Lev. 7:20.

■ **15:37–41** Tassels with blue threads were to be affixed to garments as reminders to be holy and to keep God's commands (v. 40).

■ **16:1–3** This chapter describes a complicated series of events in which two separate movements combined forces to oppose Moses and Aaron. One group, led by Dathan, Abiram, and On from the tribe of Reuben, was jealous of the leadership that God had established, and propagandized against Moses and Aaron. The other disaffected group consisted of Kohathites (Levites), the very group to which Moses and Aaron belonged.

■ **16:4–11** Moses dealt first with the Levite opposition, which had access to the tabernacle. Moses' proposal in vv. 6, 7 set the stage for divine judgment in v. 35.

do the work of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to serve them; 10 and that He has brought you near *to Himself,* you and all your brethren, the sons of Levi, with you? And are you seeking the priesthood also? 11 Therefore you and all your company *are* gathered together against the LORD. [m]And what *is* Aaron that you complain against him?"

12 And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, but they said, "We will not come up! 13 *Is it* a small thing that you have brought us up out of [n]a land flowing with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, that you should [o]keep acting like a prince over us? 14 Moreover [p]you have not brought us into [q]a land flowing with milk and honey, nor given us inheritance of fields and vineyards. Will you put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up!"

15 Then Moses was very angry, and said to the LORD, [r]"Do not [3]respect their offering. [s]I have not taken one donkey from them, nor have I hurt one of them."

16 And Moses said to Korah, "Tomorrow, you and all your company be present [t]before the LORD—you and they, as well as Aaron. 17 Let each take his censer and put incense in it, and each of you bring his censer before the LORD, two hundred and fifty censers; both you and Aaron, each *with* his censer." 18 So every man took his censer, put fire in it, laid incense on it, and stood at the door of the tabernacle of meeting with Moses and Aaron. 19 And Korah gathered all the congregation against them at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Then [u]the glory of the LORD appeared to all the congregation.

20 And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 21 [v]"Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may [w]consume them in a moment."

22 Then they [x]fell[4] on their faces, and said, "O God, [y]the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and You be angry with all the [z]congregation?"

23 So the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 24 "Speak to the congregation, saying, 'Get away from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.' "

25 Then Moses rose and went to Dathan and Abiram, and the elders of Israel followed him. 26 And he spoke to the congregation, saying, [a]"Depart now from the tents of these wicked men! Touch nothing of theirs, lest you be consumed in all their sins." 27 So they got away from around the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram; and Dathan and Abiram came out and stood at the door of their tents, with their wives, their sons, and their little [b]children.

28 And Moses said: [c]"By this you shall know that the LORD has sent me to do all these works, for *I have* not *done them* [d]of my own will. 29 If these men die naturally like all men, or if they are [e]visited by the common fate of all men, *then* the LORD has not sent me. 30 But if the LORD creates [f]a new thing, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they [g]go down alive into the pit, then you will understand that these men have rejected the LORD."

31 [h]Now it came to pass, as he finished speaking all these words, that the ground split apart under them, 32 and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and [i]all the men with Korah, with all *their* goods. 33 So they and all those with them went down alive into the pit; the earth closed over them, and they perished from among the assembly. 34 Then all Israel who *were* around them fled at their cry, for they said, "Lest the earth swallow us up *also!*"

35 And [j]a fire came out from the LORD and consumed the two hundred and fifty men who were offering incense.

36 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 37 "Tell Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, to pick up the censers out of the blaze, for [k]they are holy, and scatter the fire some distance away. 38 The censers of [l]these men who sinned [5]against their own souls, let them be made into hammered plates as a covering for the altar. Because they presented them before the LORD, therefore they are holy; [m]and they shall be a sign to the children of Israel." 39 So Eleazar the priest took the bronze censers, which those who were burned up had presented, and they were hammered out as a covering on the altar, 40 *to be* a [6]memorial to the children of Israel [n]that no outsider, who *is* not a descendant of Aaron, should come near to offer incense before the LORD, that he might not become like Korah and his companions, just as the LORD had said to him through Moses.

11 [m]Ex. 16:7, 8

13 [n]Ex. 16:3; Num. 11:4–6 [o]Ex. 2:14; Acts 7:27, 35

14 [p]Num. 14:1–4 [q]Ex. 3:8; Lev. 20:24

15 [r]Gen. 4:4, 5 [s]1 Sam. 12:3; Acts 20:33 [3]*graciously regard*

16 [t]1 Sam. 12:3, 7

19 [u]Ex. 16:7, 10; Lev. 9:6, 23; Num. 14:10

21 [v]Gen. 19:17; Jer. 51:6 [w]Ex. 32:10; 33:5

22 [x]Num. 14:5 [y]Num. 27:16; Job 12:10; Eccl. 12:7; Heb. 12:9 [z]Gen. 18:23–32; 20:4 [4]*prostrated themselves*

26 [a]Gen. 19:12, 14, 15, 17

27 [b]Ex. 20:5; Num. 26:11

28 [c]Ex. 3:12; John 5:36 [d]Num. 24:13; John 5:30

29 [e]Ex. 20:5; Job 35:15; Is. 10:3

30 [f]Job 31:3; Is. 28:21 [g][Ps. 55:15]

31 [h]Num. 26:10; Ps. 106:17

32 [i]Num. 26:11; 1 Chr. 6:22, 37

35 [j]Lev. 10:2; Num. 11:1–3; 26:10; Ps. 106:18

37 [k]Lev. 27:28

38 [l]Prov. 20:2; Hab. 2:10 [m]Num. 17:10; Ezek. 14:8 [5]*Or at the cost of their own lives*

40 [n]Num. 3:10; 2 Chr. 26:18 [6]*reminder*

■ **16:12–14** Moses then dealt with the Reubenites, Dathan and Abiram. After refusing to leave their tents, they were destroyed with their families (vv. 31–33).

■ **16:22** Again Moses acts as an intercessor together with Aaron for the assembly (11:2; 12:13; 14:13–19; and 16:45–48). See notes on Ex. 32–34 and 33:17.

■ **16:28–30** Moses depended on God for his defense (cf. 12:3), relying on divine provision of an irrefutable sign ("a new thing").

■ **16:32 households and all the men with Korah.** The children of Korah survived (26:11; cf. 1 Chr. 9:19).

■ **16:36–40** The metal censers were removed from the ashes and made into sheets to cover the altar, as a permanent reminder that none but Aaron's descendants were to serve as priests.

41 [c]Num. 14:2; Ps. 106:25

42 [p]Ex. 40:34

46 [q]Lev. 10:6; Num. 18:5 [7]Lit. *covering*

48 [r]Num. 25:8; Ps. 106:30

CHAPTER 17

4 [a]Ex. 25:16 [b]Ex. 25:22; 29:42, 43; 30:36; Num. 17:7

5 [c]Num. 16:5 [d]Num. 16:11

7 [e]Ex. 38:21; Num. 1:50, 51; 9:15; 18:2; Acts 7:44

8 [f][Ezek. 17:24]; Heb. 9:4

10 [g]Heb. 9:4 [h]Num. 16:38; Deut. 9:7, 24 [i]Num. 17:5

13 [j]Num. 1:51, 53; 18:4, 7

CHAPTER 18

1 [a]Num. 17:13 [b]Ex. 28:38; Lev. 10:17; 22:16 [1]*guilt*

2 [c]Gen. 29:34; Num. 1:47 [d]Num. 3:5–10 [2]*testimony*

3 [e]Num. 3:25, 31, 36 [f]Num. 16:40 [3]*service*

Complaints of the People

41 On the next day [c]all the congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, saying, "You have killed the people of the LORD." 42 Now it happened, when the congregation had gathered against Moses and Aaron, that they turned toward the tabernacle of meeting; and suddenly [p]the cloud covered it, and the glory of the LORD appeared. 43 Then Moses and Aaron came before the tabernacle of meeting.

44 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 45 "Get away from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment."

And they fell on their faces.

46 So Moses said to Aaron, "Take a censer and put fire in it from the altar, put incense *on it,* and take it quickly to the congregation and make [7]atonement for them; [q]for wrath has gone out from the LORD. The plague has begun." 47 Then Aaron took *it* as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the assembly; and already the plague had begun among the people. So he put in the incense and made atonement for the people. 48 And he stood between the dead and the living; so [r]the plague was stopped. 49 Now those who died in the plague were fourteen thousand seven hundred, besides those who died in the Korah incident. 50 So Aaron returned to Moses at the door of the tabernacle of meeting, for the plague had stopped.

The Budding of Aaron's Rod

17 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and get from them a rod from each father's house, all their leaders according to their fathers' houses—twelve rods. Write each man's name on his rod. 3 And you shall write Aaron's name on the rod of Levi. For there shall be one rod for the head of *each* father's house. 4 Then you shall place them in the tabernacle of meeting before [a]the Testimony, [b]where I meet with you. 5 And it shall be *that* the rod of the man [c]whom I choose will blossom; thus I will rid Myself of the complaints of the children of Israel, [d]which they make against you."

6 So Moses spoke to the children of Israel, and each of their leaders gave him a rod apiece, for each leader according to their fathers' houses, twelve rods; and the rod of Aaron *was* among their rods. 7 And Moses placed the rods before the LORD in [e]the tabernacle of witness.

8 Now it came to pass on the next day that Moses went into the tabernacle of witness, and behold, the [f]rod of Aaron, of the house of Levi, had sprouted and put forth buds, had produced blossoms and yielded ripe almonds. 9 Then Moses brought out all the rods from before the LORD to all the children of Israel; and they looked, and each man took his rod.

10 And the LORD said to Moses, "Bring [g]Aaron's rod back before the Testimony, to be kept [h]as a sign against the rebels, [i]that you may put their complaints away from Me, lest they die." 11 Thus did Moses; just as the LORD had commanded him, so he did.

12 So the children of Israel spoke to Moses, saying, "Surely we die, we perish, we all perish! 13 [j]Whoever even comes near the tabernacle of the LORD must die. Shall we all utterly die?"

Duties of Priests and Levites

18 Then the LORD said to Aaron: [a]"You and your sons and your father's house with you shall [b]bear the [1]iniquity *related to* the sanctuary, and you and your sons with you shall bear the iniquity *associated with* your priesthood. 2 Also bring with you your brethren of the [c]tribe of Levi, the tribe of your father, that they may be [d]joined with you and serve you while you and your sons *are* with you before the tabernacle of [2]witness. 3 They shall attend to your [3]needs and [e]all the needs of the tabernacle; [f]but they shall not come near the articles of the sanc-

■ **16:45b–48** Moses and Aaron again act as intercessors for the sinful people (v. 22 note).

■ **17:1–11** Further evidence of Aaron's unique priesthood is given by God. The blossoms of Aaron's rod taught the leaders of Israel that God had chosen Aaron and his descendants as priests. Aaron's rod was kept permanently in front of the ark as a witness (v. 10).

■ **17:4 before the Testimony.** In front of the ark in the Most Holy Place (cf. vv. 8, 10).

■ **17:13 Whoever even comes near the tabernacle.** This terror of approaching God's dwelling highlights the importance of the mediatorial ministry of the priests and Levites described in ch. 18.

■ **18:1–24** The duties and support of the priests and Levites are detailed. Only Aaron and his family could go near the furnishings of the sanctuary or the altar; the other Levites answered to the priests and were to do all the work at the tabernacle of meeting (vv. 1–7). The males of Aaron's family were to receive the parts of the most holy offerings that were kept from the fire (vv. 8–10). All members of this family who were ceremonially clean were to share the wave offerings (v. 11; Ex. 29:24–27; Lev. 7:30–34) and the firstfruits (vv. 12, 13; Ex. 23:16–19; 34:22–26; Lev. 23:20; Deut. 18:4; 26:10). Support for the Levites came from the tithes offered by the people (Deut. 13:22–29 and notes).

■ **18:1 bear the iniquity.** See text note. Aaron and his sons were responsible for offenses against the holiness of the sanctuary and for violations of the rules of the priesthood. The imperfection of their priesthood was indicated by their having to make sacrifices for their own sins, as well as for the sins of others (Ex. 29:38; Heb. 9:7). This imperfection pointed forward to a greater, perfect Priest who did not need to offer sacrifices for His own sin (Heb. 10:11–14).

tuary and the altar, [g]lest they die—they and you also. 4 They shall be joined with you and attend to the needs of the tabernacle of meeting, for all the work of the tabernacle; [h]but an outsider shall not come near you. 5 And you shall attend to [i]the duties of the sanctuary and the duties of the altar; [j]that there *may* be no more wrath on the children of Israel. 6 Behold, I Myself have [k]taken your brethren the Levites from among the children of Israel; [l]*they are* a gift to you, given by the LORD, to do the work of the tabernacle of meeting. 7 Therefore [m]you and your sons with you shall attend to your priesthood for everything at the altar and [n]behind the veil; and you shall serve. I give your priesthood *to you* as a [o]gift for service, but the outsider who comes near shall be put to death."

Offerings for Support of the Priests

8 And the LORD spoke to Aaron: "Here, [p]I Myself have also given you [4]charge of My heave offerings, all the holy gifts of the children of Israel; I have given them [q]as a portion to you and your sons, as an ordinance forever. 9 This shall be yours of the most holy things *reserved* from the fire: every offering of theirs, every [r]grain offering and every [s]sin offering and every [t]trespass offering which they render to Me, *shall be* most holy for you and your sons. 10 [u]In a most holy *place* you shall eat it; every male shall eat it. It shall be holy to you.

11 "This also *is* yours: [v]the heave offering of their gift, with all the wave offerings of the children of Israel; I have given them to you, and your sons and daughters with you, as an ordinance forever. [w]Everyone who is [5]clean in your house may eat it.

12 [x]"All the [6]best of the oil, all the best of the new wine and the grain, [y]their firstfruits which they offer to the LORD, I have given them to you. 13 Whatever first ripe fruit is in their land, [z]which they bring to the LORD, shall be yours. Everyone who is clean in your house may eat it.

14 [a]"Every [7]devoted thing in Israel shall be yours.

15 "Everything that first opens [b]the womb of all flesh, which they bring to the LORD, whether man or beast, shall be yours; nevertheless [c]the firstborn of man you shall surely redeem, and the firstborn of unclean animals you shall redeem. 16 And those redeemed of the devoted things you shall redeem when one month old, [d]according to your valuation, for five shekels of silver, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, which *is* [e]twenty gerahs. 17 [f]But the firstborn of a cow, the firstborn of a sheep, or the firstborn of a goat you shall not redeem; they *are* holy. [8]You shall sprinkle their blood on the altar, and burn their fat *as* an offering made by fire for a sweet aroma to the LORD. 18 And their flesh shall be yours, just as the [h]wave[8] breast and the right thigh are yours.

19 "All the heave offerings of the holy things, which the children of Israel offer to the LORD, I have given to you and your sons and daughters with you as an ordinance forever; [i]it *is* a covenant of salt forever before the LORD with you and your descendants with you."

20 Then the LORD said to Aaron: "You shall have [j]no inheritance in their land, nor shall you have any portion among them; [k]I *am* your portion and your inheritance among the children of Israel.

Tithes for Support of the Levites

21 "Behold, [l]I have given the children of Levi all the tithes in Israel as [9]an inheritance in return for the work which they perform, [m]the work of the tabernacle of meeting. 22 [n]Hereafter the children of Israel shall not come near the tabernacle of meeting, [o]lest they bear sin and die. 23 But the Levites shall perform the work of the tabernacle of meeting, and they shall bear their iniquity; *it shall be* a statute forever, throughout your generations, that among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance. 24 For the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer up *as* a heave offering to the LORD, I have given to the Levites [1]as an inheritance; therefore I have said to them, 'Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance.' "

The Tithe of the Levites

25 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 26 "Speak thus to the Levites, and say to them: 'When you take from the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them as your inheritance, then you shall offer up a heave offering of it to the LORD, [p]a tenth of the tithe.

3 [g]Num. 4:15
4 [h]Num. 3:10
5 [i]Lev. 24:3 [j]Num. 8:19; 16:46
6 [k]Num. 3:12, 45 [l]Num. 3:9
7 [m]Num. 3:10; 18:5 [n]Heb. 9:3, 6 [o]1 Pet. 5:2, 3
8 [p]Lev. 6:16, 18; 7:28–34 [q]Ex. 29:29; 40:13, 15 [4]*custody*
9 [r]Lev. 2:2, 3; 10:12, 13 [s]Lev. 6:25, 26 [t]Lev. 7:7
10 [u]Lev. 6:16, 26
11 [v]Deut. 18:3–5 [w]Lev. 22:1–16 [5]*purified*
12 [x]Ex. 23:19 [y]Ex. 22:29 [6]Lit. *fat*
13 [z]Ex. 22:29; 23:19; 34:26
14 [a]Lev. 27:1–33 [7]*consecrated*
15 [b]Ex. 13:2 [c]Ex. 13:12–15
16 [d]Lev. 27:6 [e]Ex. 30:13
17 [f]Deut. 15:19 [g]Lev. 3:2, 5
18 [h]Ex. 29:26–28 [8]*breast of the wave offering*
19 [i]2 Chr. 13:5
20 [j]Josh. 13:14, 33 [k]Ezek. 44:28
21 [l]Lev. 27:30–33 [m]Num. 3:7, 8 [9]*a possession*
22 [n]Num. 1:51 [o]Lev. 22:9
24 [1]*for a possession*
26 [p]Neh. 10:38

■ **18:19 a covenant of salt forever.** This phrase indicates the permanent nature of God's promise, based on the apparent indestructibility of salt, which does not burn. The priests had no inheritance in the land. Rather, through the tithes and offerings presented to the Lord by the people, the Lord Himself was to be the Levites' portion (vv. 20, 21).

■ **18:25–32** From the tithes they received from the people, the Levites too were to give a tenth to the priests. It had to be taken from the best and holiest parts (vv. 29–32).

27 [q]Num. 15:20; [2 Cor. 8:12]

29 [2]Lit. *fat*

31 [r][Matt. 10:10; Luke 10:7]; 1 Cor. 9:13; [1 Tim. 5:18] [3]*wages*

32 [s]Lev. 19:8; 22:16; Ezek. 22:26 [t]Lev. 22:2, 15

CHAPTER 19

2 [a]Lev. 22:20–25 [b]Deut. 21:3; 1 Sam. 6:7 [1]*statute* [2]*defect*

3 [c]Lev. 4:12, 21; Num. 19:9; Heb. 13:11

4 [d]Lev. 4:6; Heb. 9:13

5 [e]Ex. 29:14; Lev. 4:11, 12; 9:11

6 [f]Lev. 14:4, 6, 49 [g]Ex. 12:22; 1 Kin. 4:33

7 [h]Lev. 11:25; 15:5; 16:26, 28

9 [i][Heb. 9:13, 14] [j]Num. 19:13, 20, 21 [3]Lit. *impurity*

11 [k]Lev. 21:1, 11; Num. 5:2; 6:6; 9:6, 10; 31:19; Lam. 4:14; Hag. 2:13 [4]Lit. *soul of man*

12 [l]Num. 19:19; 31:19

13 [m]Lev. 22:3–7 [n]Lev. 15:31 [o]Num. 8:7; 19:9 [p]Lev. 7:20; 22:3

15 [q]Lev. 11:32; Num. 31:20

16 [r]Num. 19:11; 31:19

17 [s]Num. 19:9 [5]Lit. *living*

18 [t]Ps. 51:7

19 [u]Lev. 14:9

20 [v]Num. 19:13

27 And your heave offering shall be reckoned to you as though *it were* the grain of the [q]threshing floor and as the fullness of the winepress. 28 Thus you shall also offer a heave offering to the LORD from all your tithes which you receive from the children of Israel, and you shall give the LORD's heave offering from it to Aaron the priest. 29 Of all your gifts you shall offer up every heave offering due to the LORD, from all the [2]best of them, the consecrated part of them.' 30 Therefore you shall say to them: 'When you have lifted up the best of it, then *the rest* shall be accounted to the Levites as the produce of the threshing floor and as the produce of the winepress. 31 You may eat it in any place, you and your households, for it *is* [r]your [3]reward for your work in the tabernacle of meeting. 32 And you shall [s]bear no sin because of it, when you have lifted up the best of it. But you shall not [t]profane the holy gifts of the children of Israel, lest you die.' "

Laws of Purification

19 Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 2 "This *is* the [1]ordinance of the law which the LORD has commanded, saying: 'Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring you a red heifer without [2]blemish, in which there *is* no [a]defect [b]*and* on which a yoke has never come. 3 You shall give it to Eleazar the priest, that he may take it [c]outside the camp, and it shall be slaughtered before him; 4 and Eleazar the priest shall take some of its blood with his finger, and [d]sprinkle some of its blood seven times directly in front of the tabernacle of meeting. 5 Then the heifer shall be burned in his sight: [e]its hide, its flesh, its blood, and its offal shall be burned. 6 And the priest shall take [f]cedar wood and [g]hyssop and scarlet, and cast *them* into the midst of the fire burning the heifer. 7 [h]Then the priest shall wash his clothes, he shall bathe in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp; the priest shall be unclean until evening. 8 And the one who burns it shall wash his clothes in water, bathe in water, and shall be unclean until evening. 9 Then a man *who is* clean shall gather up [i]the ashes of the heifer, and store *them* outside the camp in a clean place; and they shall be kept for the congregation of the children of Israel [j]for the water of [3]purification; it *is* for purifying from sin. 10 And the one who gathers the ashes of the heifer shall wash his clothes, and be unclean until evening. It shall be a statute forever to the children of Israel and to the stranger who dwells among them.

11 [k]'He who touches the dead [4]body of anyone shall be unclean seven days. 12 [l]He shall purify himself with the water on the third day and on the seventh day; *then* he will be clean. But if he does not purify himself on the third day and on the seventh day, he will not be clean. 13 Whoever touches the body of anyone who has died, and [m]does not purify himself, [n]defiles the tabernacle of the LORD. That person shall be cut off from Israel. He shall be unclean, because [o]the water of purification was not sprinkled on him; [p]his uncleanness *is* still on him.

14 'This *is* the law when a man dies in a tent: All who come into the tent and all who *are* in the tent shall be unclean seven days; 15 and every [q]open vessel, which has no cover fastened on it, *is* unclean. 16 [r]Whoever in the open field touches one who is slain by a sword or who has died, or a bone of a man, or a grave, shall be unclean seven days.

17 'And for an unclean *person* they shall take some of the [s]ashes of the heifer burnt for purification from sin, and [5]running water shall be put on them in a vessel. 18 A clean person shall take [t]hyssop and dip *it* in the water, sprinkle *it* on the tent, on all the vessels, on the persons who were there, or on the one who touched a bone, the slain, the dead, or a grave. 19 The clean *person* shall sprinkle the unclean on the third day and on the seventh day; [u]and on the seventh day he shall purify himself, wash his clothes, and bathe in water; and at evening he shall be clean.

20 'But the man who is unclean and does not purify himself, that person shall be cut off from among the assembly, because he has [v]defiled the sanctuary of the LORD. The water of purification has not been sprinkled on him; he *is* unclean. 21 It shall be a perpetual statute for them. He who sprinkles the water of purification shall wash his clothes; and he who touches the water of

■ **19:1–22** Arrangements for cleansing those ceremonially unclean are presented. Under the direction of Eleazar the priest, a red heifer without blemish (v. 2) is taken outside the camp and killed (v. 3). The priest performs a prescribed ceremony (v. 4) and the heifer is burned (v. 5–6; cf. Heb. 9:11–13). Then the ashes are gathered up and put in a clean place outside the camp, to be kept for use in the water of cleansing (vv. 9–10). Situations of uncleanness requiring ceremonial cleansing are discussed in vv. 11–16, followed by the procedures for use of the water of cleansing (vv. 17–22).

■ **19:9 outside the camp.** Christ, "that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate" (Heb. 13:11–13). The ceremonies for cleansing and purification prefigured His death.

■ **19:20 cut off from among the assembly.** This exact phrase occurs nowhere else in the Bible. "Cut off from Israel" occurs twice (Ex. 12:15; Num. 19:13). Similar expressions occur in Lev. 17:10; 20:3, 5, 6; 23:29; Num. 9:13; 15:30; Ezek. 14:8. On the meaning of "cut off," see note on Lev. 7:20.

purification shall be unclean until evening. 22 [w]Whatever the unclean *person* touches shall be unclean; and [x]the person who touches *it* shall be unclean until evening.' "

Moses' Error at Kadesh

20 Then[a] the children of Israel, the whole congregation, came into the Wilderness of Zin in the first month, and the people stayed in [b]Kadesh; and [c]Miriam died there and was buried there.

2 [d]Now there was no water for the congregation; [e]so they gathered together against Moses and Aaron. 3 And the people [f]contended with Moses and spoke, saying: "If only we had died [g]when our brethren died before the LORD! 4 [h]Why have you brought up the assembly of the LORD into this wilderness, that we and our animals should die here? 5 And why have you made us come up out of Egypt, to bring us to this evil place? It *is* not a place of grain or figs or vines or pomegranates; nor *is* there any water to drink." 6 So Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly to the door of the tabernacle of meeting, and [i]they [j]fell on their faces. And [j]the glory of the LORD appeared to them.

7 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 8 [k]"Take the rod; you and your brother Aaron gather the congregation together. Speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will yield its water; thus [l]you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and give drink to the congregation and their animals." 9 So Moses took the rod [m]from before the LORD as He commanded him.

10 And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock; and he said to them, [n]"Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?" 11 Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; [o]and water came out abundantly, and the congregation and their animals drank.

12 Then the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, "Because [p]you did not believe Me, to [q]hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them."

13 [r]This *was* the water of [2]Meribah, because the children of Israel contended with the LORD, and He was hallowed among them.

Passage Through Edom Refused

14 [s]Now Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of [t]Edom, [u]"Thus says your brother Israel: 'You know all the hardship that has befallen us, 15 [v]how our fathers went down to Egypt, [w]and we dwelt in Egypt a long time, [x]and the Egyptians [3]afflicted us and our fathers. 16 [y]When we cried out to the LORD, He heard our voice and [z]sent the Angel and brought us up out of Egypt; now here we are in Kadesh, a city on the edge of your border. 17 Please [a]let us pass through your country. We will not pass through fields or vineyards, nor will we drink water from wells; we will go along the King's Highway; we will not turn aside to the right hand or to the left until we have passed through your territory.' "

18 Then [b]Edom said to him, "You shall not pass through my *land,* lest I come out against you with the sword."

22 [w]Hag. 2:11–13 [x]Lev. 15:5

CHAPTER 20

1 [a]Num. 13:21; 33:36 [b]Num. 13:26 [c]Ex. 15:20

2 [d]Ex. 17:1 [e]Num. 16:19, 42

3 [f]Ex. 17:2 [g]Num. 11:1, 33; 14:37; 16:31–35, 49

4 [h]Ex. 17:3

6 [i]Num. 14:5; 16:4, 22, 45 [j]Num. 14:10 [1]*prostrated themselves*

8 [k]Ex. 4:17, 20; 17:5, 6 [l]Neh. 9:15

9 [m]Num. 17:10

10 [n]Ps. 106:33

11 [o][1 Cor. 10:4]

12 [p]Deut. 1:37; 3:26, 27; 34:5 [q]Lev. 10:3

13 [r]Deut. 33:8 [2]Lit. *Contention*

14 [s]Judg. 11:16, 17 [t]Gen. 36:31–39 [u]Deut. 2:4

15 [v]Gen. 46:6 [w]Ex. 12:40 [x]Deut. 26:6 [3]*did evil to*

16 [y]Ex. 2:23; 3:7 [z]Ex. 3:2; 14:19

17 [a]Num. 21:22

18 [b]Num. 24:18

■ **20:1–13** In his exasperation with Israel, Moses acted presumptuously and failed to honor the holiness of God (vv. 9–11 note; Ex. 17:6 notes). The seriousness of Moses' sin is evident from the resulting judgment—he was not allowed to enter the Promised Land (v. 12).

■ **20:1 the first month.** This would be at the end of the 40 years of wandering decreed in 14:32–34. The period of wandering in the desert was nearing its end. Everyone under 40 or even 50 was in effect from a new generation, about to begin the next part of God's plan—entrance into Canaan and conquest of the Promised Land.

Miriam died. Moses' sister was a godly woman. When Moses was a baby she had helped preserve him from destruction (Ex. 2:4–10). After the deliverance at the Red Sea she had led the victory celebration (Ex. 15:20, 21). Yet 12:5–15 shows her serious sin and the resulting punishment.

■ **20:2 no water.** Water was the greatest need in desert travel (cf. Gen. 21:14–19; Ex. 17:1–7).

■ **20:2–5** The people complain again—an echo of previous complaints (Ex. 15:24; 16:2; 17:3; Num. 11:1; 14:2).

■ **20:9–11** After years of constant service and unparalleled patience Moses fell at his strongest point (12:3): (a) he spoke in anger; (b) he usurped the place of God, saying, "Must we bring water for you out of this rock?" and (c) he acted violently, striking the rock twice, when God had told him only to speak to it. On the symbolism of the rock, see notes on Ex. 17:6.

■ **20:12** God's word of judgment is directed to both Moses and Aaron, for Aaron had accompanied Moses and was implicated in the rashness of his brother's action. Their ministry was coming to an end.

■ **20:13 Meribah.** See text note. Together with "Massah" ("Trial"), this name was used at the first incident of striking water from a rock (Ex. 17:7; Ps. 95:8 and text notes).

■ **20:14–20** The Edomites, descendants of Jacob's brother Esau (Gen. 25:25–34; 27:1–42; 28:5–9; 32:3–33:16; 35:29; 36:1–43), show an unbrotherly attitude toward Israel. Moses made a courteous request of the Edomites, asking permission to go peacefully through their territory, paying the Edomites for anything the travelers might need on the way. Since Israel was not given this permission, and they did not want to fight their way through, they could not reach the Promised Land without first making a long march through a particularly unpleasant part of the desert.

■ **20:14 your brother Israel.** Jacob (later called Israel; Gen. 32:28) and his brother Esau had quarreled in their youth, but they were reconciled in later years (Gen. 33:9–16; 35:29).

19 [c]Deut. 2:6, 28
20 [d]Judg. 11:17
21 [e]Deut. 2:27, 30 [f]Deut. 2:8; Judg. 11:18
22 [g]Num. 33:37 [h]Num. 21:4
24 [i]Gen. 25:8; Deut. 32:50 [4]Die and join his ancestors
25 [j]Num. 33:38; Deut. 32:50
28 [k]Ex. 29:29, 30; Deut. 10:6 [l]Num. 33:38
29 [m]Gen. 50:3, 10; Deut. 34:8

CHAPTER 21

1 [a]Num. 33:40; Josh. 12:14; Judg. 1:16
2 [b]Gen. 28:20; Judg. 11:30 [c]Deut. 2:34
3 [1]Lit. *Utter Destruction*
4 [d]Judg. 11:18 [2]*impatient*
5 [e]Num. 20:4, 5 [3]*detests*
6 [f]1 Cor. 10:9 [g]Deut. 8:15
7 [h]Num. 11:2; Ps. 78:34; Is. 26:16; Hos. 5:15 [i]Lev. 26:40 [j]Ex. 8:8; 1 Sam. 12:19; 1 Kin. 13:6; Acts 8:24
8 [k][John 3:14, 15] [l]Is. 14:29; 30:6
9 [m]2 Kin. 18:4; John 3:14, 15
10 [n]Num. 33:43, 44
11 [4]Lit. *The Heaps of Abarim*
12 [o]Deut. 2:13
13 [p]Num. 22:36; Judg. 11:18

19 So the children of Israel said to him, "We will go by the Highway, and if I or my livestock drink any of your water, [c]then I will pay for it; let me only pass through on foot, nothing *more.*"

20 Then he said, [d]"You shall not pass through." So Edom came out against them with many men and with a strong hand. 21 Thus Edom [e]refused to give Israel passage through his territory; so Israel [f]turned away from him.

Death of Aaron

22 Now the children of Israel, the whole congregation, journeyed from [g]Kadesh [h]and came to Mount Hor. 23 And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron in Mount Hor by the border of the land of Edom, saying: 24 "Aaron shall [4]be [i]gathered to his people, for he shall not enter the land which I have given to the children of Israel, because you rebelled against My word at the water of Meribah. 25 [j]Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up to Mount Hor; 26 and strip Aaron of his garments and put them on Eleazar his son; for Aaron shall be gathered *to his people* and die there." 27 So Moses did just as the LORD commanded, and they went up to Mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation. 28 [k]Moses stripped Aaron of his garments and put them on Eleazar his son; and [l]Aaron died there on the top of the mountain. Then Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain. 29 Now when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, all the house of Israel mourned for Aaron [m]thirty days.

Canaanites Defeated at Hormah

21 The [a]king of Arad, the Canaanite, who dwelt in the South, heard that Israel was coming on the road to Atharim. Then he fought against Israel and took *some* of them prisoners. 2 [b]So Israel made a vow to the LORD, and said, "If You will indeed deliver this people into my hand, then [c]I will utterly destroy their cities." 3 And the LORD listened to the voice of Israel and delivered up the Canaanites, and they utterly destroyed them and their cities. So the name of that place was called [1]Hormah.

The Bronze Serpent

4 Then they journeyed from Mount Hor by the Way of the Red Sea, to [d]go around the land of Edom; and the soul of the people became very [2]discouraged on the way. 5 And the people [e]spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For *there is* no food and no water, and our soul [3]loathes this worthless bread." 6 So [f]the LORD sent [g]fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died.

7 [h]Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, "We have [i]sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you; [j]pray to the LORD that He take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people.

8 Then the LORD said to Moses, [k]"Make a [l]fiery *serpent,* and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live." 9 So [m]Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived.

From Mount Hor to Moab

10 Now the children of Israel moved on and [n]camped in Oboth. 11 And they journeyed from Oboth and camped at [4]Ije Abarim, in the wilderness which *is* east of Moab, toward the sunrise. 12 [o]From there they moved and camped in the Valley of Zered. 13 From there they moved and camped on the other side of the Arnon, which *is* in the wilderness that extends from the border of the Amorites; for [p]the Arnon *is* the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites. 14 Therefore it is said in the Book of the Wars of the LORD:

■ **20:22–29** Eleazar succeeds his father as high priest. Aaron had the joy of seeing his work carried on by a son; Moses, whose ministry as mediator of the Sinai covenant was unique (12:8 note; Ex. 18:1—24:18 note), did not.

■ **20:29 mourned . . . thirty days.** See note on Deut. 34:8.

■ **21:1–3** The Israelites' first victory against the Canaanites was over Arad at Hormah, where Israel had suffered stinging defeat many years before (14:45). This victory marks a shift in focus from the Exodus generation condemned to die in the desert (14:29–35) to the generation born in the desert.

■ **21:4–9** This event typifies both the sacrifice of Christ and the faith of His people. Just as the bronze representation of the poisonous serpent was lifted up, so Christ, as one born "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. 8:3), was lifted up (John 3:14). The afflicted Israelites had no other means of rescue than to look at the bronze snake, just as sinners have no hope for salvation except faith in the crucified Christ (John 3:15, 16). Unfortunately, this bronze serpent later became the object of idolatrous worship (2 Kin. 18:4).

■ **21:14 the Book of the Wars of the LORD.** This is the only biblical reference to an uninspired book of victory songs that was apparently current

5"Waheb in Suphah,
The brooks of the Arnon,
15 And the slope of the brooks
That reaches to the dwelling of [q]Ar,
And lies on the border of Moab."

16 From there *they went* [r]to Beer, which *is* the well where the LORD said to Moses, "Gather the people together, and I will give them water." 17 [s]Then Israel sang this song:

"Spring up, O well!
All of you sing to it—
18 The well the leaders sank,
Dug by the nation's nobles,
By the [t]lawgiver, with their staves."

And from the wilderness *they went* to Mattanah, 19 from Mattanah to Nahaliel, from Nahaliel to Bamoth, 20 and from Bamoth, *in* the valley that *is* in the [6]country of Moab, to the top of Pisgah which looks [u]down on the [7]wasteland.

King Sihon Defeated

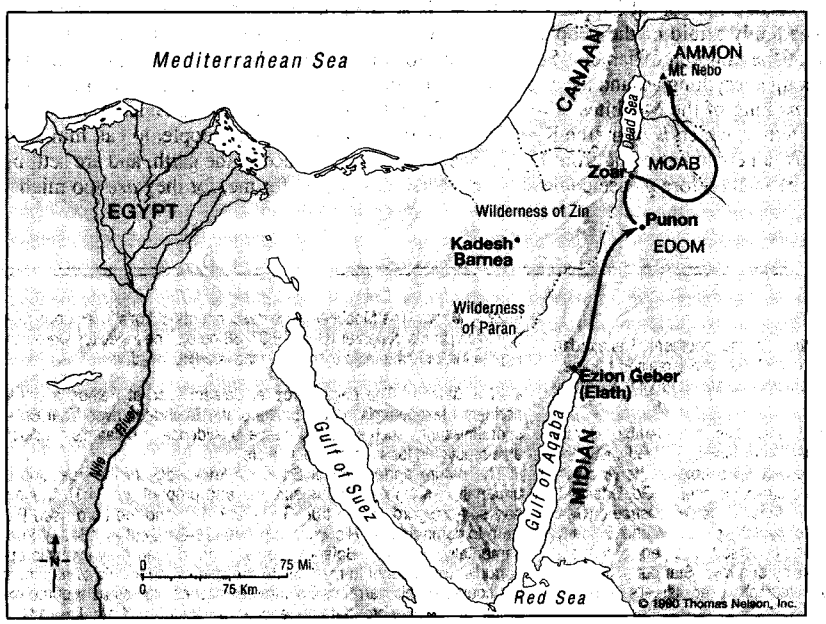
21 Then [v]Israel sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorites, saying, 22 [w]"Let me pass through your land. We will not turn aside into fields or vineyards; we will not drink water from wells. We will go by the King's Highway until we have passed through your territory." 23 [x]But Sihon would not allow Israel to pass through his territory. So Sihon gathered all his people together and [8]went out against Israel in the wilderness, [y]and he came to Jahaz and fought against Israel. 24 Then [z]Israel defeated him with the edge of the sword, and took possession of his land from the Arnon to the Jabbok, as far as the people of Ammon; for the border of the people of Ammon *was* fortified. 25 So Israel took all these cities, and Israel [a]dwelt in all the cities of the

14 [5]Ancient unknown places; Vg. *What He did in the Red Sea*
15 [q]Num. 21:28; Deut. 2:9, 18, 29
16 [r]Judg. 9:21
17 [s]Ex. 15:1
18 [t]Is. 33:22
20 [u]Num. 23:28 [6]Lit. *field* [7]Heb. *Jeshimon*
21 [v]Num. 32:33; Deut. 2:26–37; Judg. 11:19
22 [w]Num. 20:16, 17
23 [x]Deut. 29:7 [y]Deut. 2:32; Judg. 11:20 [8]*attacked*
24 [z]Deut. 2:33; Josh. 12:1; Neh. 9:22; Ps. 135:10; 136:19; Amos 2:9
25 [a]Amos 2:10

in the land of Israel at the time of David or before. A similar work, the Book of Jasher, is quoted in Josh. 10:12, 13 and 2 Sam. 1:19–27.

Arnon. This perennial stream flowed into the Dead Sea from the east, through a deep ravine. It formed the border between the territory of Moab and the Amorite kingdom of Sihon (21:21–31).

■ **21:21–35** Moses narrates Israel's conquest of Heshbon and Bashan. Both of these kingdoms were in eastern Palestine, across the Jordan from Canaan (the Transjordan).



From the Wilderness to Canaan. The attempt forty years earlier to move from Kadesh Barnea north into Canaan had been rebuffed. This time Moses wanted to go east through Edom and north through Moab toward Canaan. However, the Hebrews were refused passage through both territories despite kinship with the peoples. Instead, Moses went south to Elath, then north and east, bypassing Edom and Moab. North of the Arnon River, they defeated the Amorites and were poised to cross the Jordan from the east to enter Canaan.

Amorites, in Heshbon and in all its villages. 26 For Heshbon *was* the city of Sihon king of the Amorites, who had fought against the former king of Moab, and had taken all his land from his hand as far as the Arnon. 27 Therefore those who speak in [g]proverbs say:

"Come to Heshbon, let it be built;
Let the city of Sihon be repaired.

28 "For [b]fire went out from Heshbon,
A flame from the city of Sihon;
It consumed [c]Ar of Moab,
The lords of the [d]heights of the Arnon.
29 Woe to you, [e]Moab!
You have perished, O people of [f]Chemosh!
He has given his [g]sons as fugitives,
And his [h]daughters into captivity,
To Sihon king of the Amorites.

30 "But we have shot at them;
Heshbon has perished [i]as far as Dibon.
Then we laid waste as far as Nophah,
Which *reaches* to [j]Medeba."

31 Thus Israel dwelt in the land of the Amorites. 32 Then Moses sent to [l]spy out [k]Jazer; and they took its villages and drove out the Amorites who *were* there.

King Og Defeated

33 [l]And they turned and went up by the way to [m]Bashan. So Og king of Bashan went out against them, he and all his people, to battle [n]at Edrei. 34 Then the LORD said to Moses, [o]"Do not fear him, for I have [2]delivered him into your hand, with all his people and his land; and [p]you shall do to him as you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon." 35 [q]So they defeated him, his sons, and all his people, until there was no survivor left him; and they took possession of his land.

Balak Sends for Balaam

22 Then [a]the children of Israel moved, and camped in the plains of Moab on the side of the Jordan *across from* Jericho.

2 Now [b]Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. 3 And [c]Moab was exceedingly afraid of the people because they *were* many, and Moab was sick with dread because of the children of Israel. 4 So Moab said to [d]the elders of Midian, "Now this company will [l]lick up everything around us, as an ox licks up the grass of the field." And Balak the son of Zippor *was* king of the Moabites at that time. 5 Then [e]he sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor at [f]Pethor, which *is* near [2]the River in the land of [3]the sons of his people, to call him, saying: "Look, a people has come from Egypt. See, they cover the face of the earth, and are settling next to me! 6 [g]Therefore please come at once, [h]curse this people for me, for they *are* too mighty

27 [g]*parables*
28 [b]Jer. 48:45, 46 [c]Deut. 2:9, 18; Is. 15:1 [d]Num. 22:41; 33:52
29 [e]Jer. 48:46 [f]Judg. 11:24; 1 Kin. 11:33; 2 Kin. 23:13 [g]Is. 15:2, 5 [h]Is. 16:2
30 [i]Num. 32:3, 34; Jer. 48:18, 22 [j]Is. 15:2
32 [k]Num. 32:1, 3, 35; Jer. 48:32 [l]*secretly search*
33 [l]Deut. 29:7 [m]Deut. 3:1 [n]Josh. 13:12
34 [o]Deut. 3:2 [p]Num. 21:24; Ps. 135:10; 136:20 [2]*given you victory over him*
35 [q]Deut. 3:3, 4; 29:7; Josh. 13:12

CHAPTER 22

1 [a]Num. 33:48, 49
2 [b]Josh. 24:9; Judg. 11:25; Mic. 6:5; Rev. 2:14
3 [c]Ex. 15:15
4 [d]Num. 25:15–18; 31:1–3; Josh. 13:21 [l]*consume*
5 [e]Num. 31:8, 16; Deut. 23:4; Josh. 13:22; 24:9; Neh. 13:1, 2; Mic. 6:5; 2 Pet. 2:15; Jude 11; Rev. 2:14 [f]Deut. 23:4 [2]The Euphrates [3]Or *the people of Amau*
6 [g]Num. 22:17; 23:7, 8 [h]Num. 22:12; 24:9

■ **21:33 Bashan.** See note on Deut. 3:1.

■ **22:1** After the conquest of Heshbon in the southern Transjordan (21:21–26) and Bashan in the north (21:33–35), the Israelites returned south to the area across the Jordan from Jericho and north of the territory of Moab.

■ **22:2—24:25** Though the narrative itself has considerable literary charm (22:28 note), the Balaam incident must also be viewed within the context of God's covenant relationship with His people. In the vivid portrayal of divine opposition to those who curse His people, God's faithfulness to the covenant promises made to Abraham is demonstrated (Gen. 12:3 and note). Ironically, the Lord also used the pagan prophet Balaam, who had been hired by the Moabite king to curse God's people, to bless them instead, and to prophesy the coming of a royal Star out of Jacob—the Messiah Himself—who would triumph over Israel's enemies (24:17–19).

■ **22:4 Moab.** The Moabites were descendants of Lot's incestuous relationship with his daughter (Gen. 19:37, 38 note). The Moabites were asking the Midianites to help them resist the Israelite invaders.

■ **22:5 Balaam.** The pagan prophet Balaam lived at Pethor, a city in northern Mesopotamia on the banks of the Euphrates river. That Balak sent emissaries such a great distance is evidence of Balaam's considerable reputation for supernatural powers.

The nature and extent of Balaam's knowledge of the true God is uncertain. Though a famous sorcerer and prophet (cf. 24:1), Balaam had some regard for the true God (22:8, 18), and the Lord used Balaam to communicate His word (23:7–10, 18–24; 24:3–9, 15–24). Fundamentally, however, Balaam seems to have been a syncretistic opportunist who sought to manipulate the spirit world for his own gain. In the course of this narrative Balaam establishes himself as a prime example of the false prophet and teacher (31:16; 2 Pet. 2:15; Jude 11).

for me. Perhaps I shall be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land, for I know that he whom you bless *is* blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed."

7 So the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with [i]the diviner's fee in their hand, and they came to Balaam and spoke to him the words of Balak. 8 And he said to them, [j]"Lodge here tonight, and I will bring back word to you, as the LORD speaks to me." So the princes of Moab stayed with Balaam.

9 [k]Then God came to Balaam and said, "Who *are* these men with you?"

10 So Balaam said to God, "Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, has sent to me, *saying,* 11 'Look, a people has come out of Egypt, and they cover the face of the earth. Come now, curse them for me; perhaps I shall be able to overpower them and drive them out.' "

12 And God said to Balaam, "You shall not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for [l]they *are* blessed."

13 So Balaam rose in the morning and said to the princes of Balak, "Go back to your land, for the LORD has refused to give me permission to go with you."

14 And the princes of Moab rose and went to Balak, and said, "Balaam refuses to come with us."

15 Then Balak again sent princes, more numerous and more [4]honorable than they. 16 And they came to Balaam and said to him, "Thus says Balak the son of Zippor: 'Please let nothing hinder you from coming to me; 17 for I will certainly [m]honor you greatly, and I will do whatever you say to me. [n]Therefore please come, curse this people for me.' "

18 Then Balaam answered and said to the servants of Balak, [o]"Though Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, [p]I could not go beyond the word of the LORD my God, to do less or more. 19 Now therefore, please, you also [q]stay here tonight, that I may know what more the LORD will say to me."

20 [r]And God came to Balaam at night and said to him, "If the men come to call you, rise *and* go with them; but [s]only the word which I speak to you—that you shall do." 21 So Balaam rose in the morning, saddled his donkey, and went with the princes of Moab.

Balaam, the Donkey, and the Angel

22 Then God's anger was aroused because he went, [t]and the Angel of the LORD took His stand in the way as an adversary against him. And he was riding on his donkey, and his two servants *were* with him. 23 Now [u]the donkey saw the Angel of the LORD standing in the way with His drawn sword in His hand, and the donkey turned aside out of the way and went into the field. So Balaam struck the donkey to turn her back onto the road. 24 Then the Angel of the LORD stood in a narrow path between the vineyards, *with* a wall on this side and a wall on that side. 25 And when the donkey saw the Angel of the LORD, she pushed herself against the wall and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall; so he struck her again. 26 Then the Angel of the LORD went further, and stood in a narrow place where there *was* no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left. 27 And when the donkey saw the Angel of the LORD, she lay down under Balaam; so Balaam's anger was aroused, and he struck the donkey with his staff.

28 Then the LORD [v]opened the mouth of the donkey, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you, that you have struck me these three times?"

29 And Balaam said to the donkey, "Because you have [5]abused me. I wish there were a sword in my hand, [w]for now I would kill you!"

30 [x]So the donkey said to Balaam, "*Am* I not your donkey on which you have ridden, ever since *I became* yours, to this day? Was I ever [6]disposed to do this to you?"

And he said, "No."

31 Then the LORD [y]opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the Angel of the LORD standing in the way with His drawn sword in His hand; and he bowed his head and fell flat on his face. 32 And the Angel of the LORD said to him, "Why have you struck your donkey these three times? Behold, I have come out [7]to stand against you, because *your* way is [z]perverse[8] before Me. 33 The

7 [i]1 Sam. 9:7, 8
8 [j]Num. 22:19
9 [k]Gen. 20:3
12 [l]Num. 23:20; [Rom. 11:28]
15 [4]*distinguished*
17 [m]Num. 24:11 [n]Num. 22:6
18 [o]Num. 22:38; 24:13 [p]1 Kin. 22:14; 2 Chr. 18:13
19 [q]Num. 22:8
20 [r]Num. 22:9 [s]Num. 22:35; 23:5, 12, 16, 26; 24:13
22 [t]Ex. 4:24
23 [u]Josh. 5:13; 2 Kin. 6:17; Dan. 10:7; Acts 22:9
28 [v]2 Pet. 2:16
29 [w][Prov. 12:10; Matt. 15:19] [5]*mocked*
30 [x]2 Pet. 2:16 [6]*accustomed*
31 [y]Gen. 21:19; 2 Kin. 6:17; Luke 24:16, 31
32 [z][2 Pet. 2:14, 15] [7]*as an adversary* [8]*contrary*

■ **22:22 because he went.** In light of God's earlier permission to travel (v. 20), the Lord's response is perhaps surprising. The narrative as a whole indicates, however, that Balaam's trip was perversely motivated and that he certainly hoped to curse Israel (v. 32). God used this confrontation between Balaam and the Angel of the Lord to underscore His command to say nothing except what He might direct (v. 35).

the Angel of the LORD. See note on Gen. 16:7; "Angels" at Zech. 1:9.

■ **22:28 the mouth of the donkey.** The story of Balaam abounds in comic irony. The donkey was able to see the path better than the diviner, and then tell him about it (2 Pet. 2:16).

■ **22:29 I wish there were a sword.** Balaam was calling for a sword, without knowing that he was about to see one pointed at him.

34 [a]1 Sam. 15:24, 30; 26:21; 2 Sam. 12:13 [g]Lit. *is evil in your eyes*

35 [b]Num. 22:20

36 [c]Gen. 14:17 [d]Num. 21:13

37 [e]Num. 22:17; 24:11

38 [f]Num. 23:26; 24:13; 1 Kin. 22:14; 2 Chr. 18:13

41 [g]Num. 21:28; Deut. 12:2 [1]*the farthest extent*

CHAPTER 23

1 [a]Num. 23:29

2 [b]Num. 23:14, 30

3 [c]Num. 23:15 [d]Num. 23:4, 16

4 [e]Num. 23:16

5 [f]Num. 22:20, 35, 38; 23:16; Deut. 18:18; Jer. 1:9

7 [g]Deut. 23:4; Job 27:1; 29:1; Ps. 78:2 [h]Num. 22:6, 11, 17 [i]1 Sam. 17:10 [1]*prophetic discourse*

8 [j]Num. 22:12

9 [k]Deut. 32:8; 33:28; Josh. 11:23 [l]Ex. 33:16; Ezra 9:2; [Eph. 2:14]

10 [m]Gen. 13:16; 22:17; 28:14; 2 Chr. 1:9 [n]Ps.116:15 [2]Or *dust cloud*

11 [o]Num. 22:11

12 [p]Num. 22:38

donkey saw Me and turned aside from Me these three times. If she had not turned aside from Me, surely I would also have killed you by now, and let her live."

34 And Balaam said to the Angel of the LORD, [a]"I have sinned, for I did not know You stood in the way against me. Now therefore, if it [g]displeases You, I will turn back."

35 Then the Angel of the LORD said to Balaam, "Go with the men, [b]but only the word that I speak to you, that you shall speak." So Balaam went with the princes of Balak.

36 Now when Balak heard that Balaam was coming, [c]he went out to meet him at the city of Moab, [d]which *is* on the border at the Arnon, the boundary of the territory. 37 Then Balak said to Balaam, "Did I not earnestly send to you, calling for you? Why did you not come to me? Am I not able [e]to honor you?"

38 And Balaam said to Balak, "Look, I have come to you! Now, have I any power at all to say anything? [f]The word that God puts in my mouth, that I must speak." 39 So Balaam went with Balak, and they came to Kirjath Huzoth. 40 Then Balak offered oxen and sheep, and he sent *some* to Balaam and to the princes who *were* with him.

Balaam's First Prophecy

41 So it was, the next day, that Balak took Balaam and brought him up to the [g]high places of Baal, that from there he might observe [1]the extent of the people.

23 Then Balaam said to Balak, [a]"Build seven altars for me here, and prepare for me here seven bulls and seven rams."

2 And Balak did just as Balaam had spoken, and Balak and Balaam [b]offered a bull and a ram on *each* altar. 3 Then Balaam said to Balak, [c]"Stand by your burnt offering, and I will go; perhaps the LORD will come [d]to meet me, and whatever He shows me I will tell you." So he went to a desolate height. 4 [e]And God met Balaam, and he said to Him, "I have prepared the seven altars, and I have offered on *each* altar a bull and a ram."

5 Then the LORD [f]put a word in Balaam's mouth, and said, "Return to Balak, and thus you shall speak." 6 So he returned to him, and there he was, standing by his burnt offering, he and all the princes of Moab.

7 And he [g]took up his [1]oracle and said:

"Balak the king of Moab has brought me from Aram,
From the mountains of the east.
[h]'Come, curse Jacob for me,
And come, [i]denounce Israel!'

8 "How[j] shall I curse whom God has not cursed?
And how shall I denounce *whom* the LORD has not denounced?
9 For from the top of the rocks I see him,
And from the hills I behold him;
There! [k]A people dwelling alone,
[l]Not reckoning itself among the nations.

10 "Who[m] can count the [2]dust of Jacob,
Or number one-fourth of Israel?
Let me die [n]the death of the righteous,
And let my end be like his!"

11 Then Balak said to Balaam, "What have you done to me? [o]I took you to curse my enemies, and look, you have blessed *them* bountifully!"

12 So he answered and said, [p]"Must I not take heed to speak what the LORD has put in my mouth?"

Balaam's Second Prophecy

13 Then Balak said to him, "Please come with me to another place from which you may see them; you shall see only the outer part of them, and shall not see them all; curse them for me

■ **22:40 sent some to Balaam . . . princes.** Because Balaam and the princes received the meat, this was probably a sacrificial meal, though some suggest a reference to the pagan use of animal entrails for divination (cf. 24:1).

■ **23:1 seven . . . seven . . . seven.** The number seven was of profound symbolic significance in the ancient Near East. The sum of the sacred numbers three and four, it often appears in a ritual context (Gen. 21:28; 33:3; Ex. 12:15; 29:35–37).

from there." 14 So he brought him to the field of Zophim, to the top of Pisgah, [q]and built seven altars, and offered a bull and a ram on *each* altar.

15 And he said to Balak, "Stand here by your burnt offering while I [3]meet *the* LORD over there."

16 Then the LORD met Balaam, and [r]put a word in his mouth, and said, "Go back to Balak, and thus you shall speak." 17 So he came to him, and there he was, standing by his burnt offering, and the princes of Moab were with him. And Balak said to him, "What has the LORD spoken?"

18 Then he took up his oracle and said:

[s]"Rise up, Balak, and hear!
Listen to me, son of Zippor!

19 "God[t] *is* not a man, that He should lie,
Nor a son of man, that He should repent.
Has He [u]said, and will He not do?
Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?
20 Behold, I have received *a command* to bless;
[v]He has blessed, and I cannot reverse it.

21 "He[w] has not observed iniquity in Jacob,
Nor has He seen [4]wickedness in Israel.
The LORD his God *is* with him,
[x]And the shout of a King *is* among them.
22 [y]God brings them out of Egypt;
He has [z]strength like a wild ox.

23 "For *there is* no [5]sorcery against Jacob,
Nor any [6]divination against Israel.
It now must be said of Jacob
And of Israel, 'Oh, [a]what God has done!'
24 Look, a people rises [b]like a lioness,
And lifts itself up like a lion;
[c]It shall not lie down until it devours the prey,
And drinks the blood of the slain."

25 Then Balak said to Balaam, "Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all!"

26 So Balaam answered and said to Balak, "Did I not tell you, saying, [d]'All that the LORD speaks, that I must do'?"

Balaam's Third Prophecy

27 Then Balak said to Balaam, "Please come, I will take you to another place; perhaps it will please God that you may curse them for me from there." 28 So Balak took Balaam to the top of Peor, that [e]overlooks the [7]wasteland. 29 Then Balaam said to Balak, "Build for me here seven altars, and prepare for me here seven bulls and seven rams." 30 And Balak did as Balaam had said, and offered a bull and a ram on *every* altar.

24 Now when Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, he did not go as at [a]other times, to seek to use [1]sorcery, but he set his face toward the wilderness. 2 And Balaam raised his eyes, and saw Israel [b]encamped according to their tribes; and [c]the Spirit of God came upon him.

3 [d]Then he took up his oracle and said:

"The utterance of Balaam the son of Beor,
The utterance of the man whose eyes are opened,

14 [q]Num. 23:1, 2

15 [3]So with MT, Tg., Vg.; Syr. *call;* LXX *go and ask God*

16 [r]Num. 22:35; 23:5

18 [s]Judg. 3:20

19 [t]1 Sam. 15:29; Mal. 3:6; James 1:17 [u]Num. 11:23; 1 Kin. 8:56

20 [v]Gen. 12:2; 22:17; Num. 22:12

21 [w]Ps. 32:2; [Rom. 4:7, 8] [x]Ps. 89:15–18 [4]*trouble*

22 [y]Num. 24:8 [z]Deut. 33:17; Job 39:10

23 [a]Ps. 31:19; 44:1 [5]*enchantment* [6]*fortune-telling*

24 [b]Gen. 49:9 [c]Gen. 49:27; Josh. 11:23

26 [d]Num. 22:38

28 [e]Num. 21:20 [7]Heb. *Jeshimon*

CHAPTER 24

1 [a]Num. 23:3, 15 [1]*enchantments*

2 [b]Num. 2:2, 34 [c]Num. 11:25; 1 Sam. 10:10; 19:20, 23; 2 Chr. 15:1

3 [d]Num. 23:7, 18

■ **23:18–24** Balaam's second oracle reaffirms God's determination to bless Israel by giving them victory over the Moabites. Verse 21 is surprising, in view of the sins described in the Book of Numbers. Despite their failings, God regards His people as righteous for the sake of His covenant promises, and He provides the means of their forgiveness (Gen. 17:2 note).

■ **23:27–30** Balak superstitiously decides to see whether another location or additional sacrifices can bring a more favorable result.

■ **24:1–9** Balaam's third oracle pictures the blessings that God plans for Israel, ending with a curse from the Abrahamic promise against those who curse her (v. 9; Gen. 12:3).

4 The utterance of him who hears the words of God,
Who sees the vision of the Almighty,
Who [e]falls down, with eyes wide open:

5 "How lovely are your tents, O Jacob!
Your dwellings, O Israel!
6 Like valleys that stretch out,
Like gardens by the riverside,
[f]Like aloes [g]planted by the LORD,
Like cedars beside the waters.
7 He shall pour water from his buckets,
And his seed *shall be* [h]in many waters.

"His king shall be higher than [i]Agag,
And his [j]kingdom shall be exalted.

8 "God[k] brings him out of Egypt;
He has strength like a wild ox;
He shall [l]consume the nations, his enemies;
He shall [m]break their bones
And [n]pierce *them* with his arrows.
9 'He[o] bows down, he lies down as a lion;
And as a lion, who shall rouse him?'

[p]"Blessed *is* he who blesses you,
And cursed *is* he who curses you."

10 Then Balak's anger was aroused against Balaam, and he [q]struck his hands together; and Balak said to Balaam, [r]"I called you to curse my enemies, and look, you have bountifully blessed *them* these three times! 11 Now therefore, flee to your place. [s]I said I would greatly honor you, but in fact, the LORD has kept you back from honor."

12 So Balaam said to Balak, "Did I not also speak to your messengers whom you sent to me, saying, 13 'If Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not go beyond the word of the LORD, to do good or bad of my own will. What the LORD says, that I must speak'? 14 And now, indeed, I am going to my people. Come, [t]I will advise you what this people will do to your people in the [u]latter days."

Balaam's Fourth Prophecy

15 So he took up his oracle and said:

"The utterance of Balaam the son of Beor,
And the utterance of the man whose eyes are opened;
16 The utterance of him who hears the words of God,
And has the knowledge of the Most High,
Who sees the vision of the Almighty,
Who falls down, with eyes wide open:

17 "I[v] see Him, but not now;
I behold Him, but not near;
[w]A Star shall come out of Jacob;

4 [e]Ezek. 1:28
6 [f]Ps. 1:3; Jer. 17:8 [g]Ps. 104:16
7 [h]Jer. 51:13; Rev. 17:1, 15 [i]1 Sam. 15:8, 9 [j]2 Sam. 5:12; 1 Chr. 14:2
8 [k]Num. 23:22 [l]Num. 14:9; 23:24 [m]Ps. 2:9; Jer. 50:17 [n]Ps. 45:5
9 [o]Gen. 49:9; Num. 23:24 [p]Gen. 12:3; 27:29
10 [q]Ezek. 21:14, 17 [r]Num. 23:11; Neh. 13:2
11 [s]Num. 22:17, 37
14 [t][Mic. 6:5] [u]Gen. 49:1; Deut. 4:30; Dan. 2:28
17 [v]Rev. 1:7; Matt. 1:2; Luke 3:34 [w]Matt. 2:2

■ **24:4 the vision of the Almighty.** The word translated "Almighty" (also in v. 16) is the Hebrew word *Shaddai,* a divine name associated with the patriarchal narratives (Gen. 17:1; 28:3; 35:11; 43:14; 48:3; 49:25) that also occurs frequently in Job.

■ **24:7 Agag.** First Samuel 15:32, 33 recounts the death of an Amalekite king who bore this name. Here Balaam may refer to an earlier prominent king of the Amalekites bearing the same personal name. It is also possible that "Agag" was a title, just as the title "Pharaoh" was used by many Egyptian rulers.

■ **24:10, 11** Balak refuses to pay the hired prophet his "wages of unrighteousness"—the "honor" he was expecting (22:7; 2 Pet. 2:15).

■ **24:15–19** In his fourth oracle, Balaam predicts the future advent of a royal conqueror who would triumph over Moab and Edom. An initial fulfillment of these predictions is found in 2 Sam. 8:2–14, which describes David's victory over the Moabites and Edomites. But his accomplishments prefigure the greater conquests of Christ (e.g., Col. 2:15; 1 Cor. 15:25, 26; Rev. 20:10, 14).

[x] A Scepter shall rise out of Israel,
And [2] batter the brow of Moab,
And destroy all the sons of [3] tumult.

18 "And [y] Edom shall be a possession;
Seir also, his enemies, shall be a possession,
While Israel does [4] valiantly.
19 [z] Out of Jacob One [5] shall have dominion,
And destroy the remains of the city."

20 Then he looked on Amalek, and he took up his oracle and said:

"Amalek *was* first among the nations,
But *shall be* last until he perishes."

21 Then he looked on the Kenites, and he took up his oracle and said:

"Firm is your dwelling place,
And your nest is set in the rock;
22 Nevertheless Kain shall be burned.
How long until Asshur carries you away captive?"

23 Then he took up his oracle and said:

"Alas! Who shall live when God does this?
24 But ships *shall come* from the coasts of [a] Cyprus,[6]
And they shall afflict Asshur and afflict [b] Eber,
And so shall [7] *Amalek*, until he perishes."

25 So Balaam rose and departed and [c] returned to his place; Balak also went his way.

Israel's Harlotry in Moab

25 Now Israel remained in [a] Acacia Grove,[1] and the [b] people began to commit harlotry with the women of Moab. 2 [c] They invited the people to [d] the sacrifices of their gods, and the people ate and [e] bowed down to their gods. 3 So Israel was joined to Baal of Peor, and [f] the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel.

4 Then the LORD said to Moses, [g] "Take all the leaders of the people and hang the offenders before the LORD, out in the sun, [h] that the fierce anger of the LORD may turn away from Israel."

5 So Moses said to [i] the judges of Israel, [j] "Every one of you kill his men who were joined to Baal of Peor."

6 And indeed, one of the children of Israel came and presented to his brethren a Midianite woman in the sight of Moses and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, [k] who *were* weeping at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 7 Now [l] when Phinehas [m] the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, saw *it,* he rose from among the congregation and took a

17 [x] Gen. 49:10 [2] *shatter the forehead* [3] Heb. *Sheth,* Jer. 48:45

18 [y] 2 Sam. 8:14 [4] *mightily*

19 [z] Gen. 49:10; Amos 9:11, 12 [5] *shall rule*

24 [a] Gen. 10:4; Ezek. 27:6; Dan. 11:30 [b] Gen. 10:21, 25 [6] Heb. *Kittim* [7] Lit. *he* or *that one*

25 [c] Num. 22:5; 31:8

CHAPTER 25

1 [a] Num. 33:49; Josh. 2:1 [b] Rev. 2:14 [1] Heb. *Shittim*

2 [c] Josh. 22:17; Hos. 9:10 [d] Ex. 34:15; Deut. 32:38; 1 Cor. 10:20 [e] Ex. 20:5

3 [f] Ps. 106:28, 29

4 [g] Deut. 4:3 [h] Num. 25:11; Deut. 13:17

5 [i] Ex. 18:21 [j] Deut. 13:6, 9

6 [k] Joel 2:17

7 [l] Ps. 106:30 [m] Ex. 6:25

■ **24:20–25** In his final oracles, Balaam predicts the downfall of the other nations in the area.

■ **24:20 Amelek.** See notes on Ex. 17:8, 16.

■ **24:21 Kenites.** A nomadic tribe of metalworkers found in Palestine from the Patriarchal period onward (Gen. 15:19). Moses' father-in-law is identified as both a Midianite and a Kenite (Ex. 2:16; Judg. 1:16). The Rechabites of Jer. 35 are thought to be descendants of the Kenites (1 Chr. 2:55; Neh. 3:14).

■ **24:22 Asshur.** The Assyrians of northern Mesopotamia were already an important military power, but their greatest conquests would be made centuries later (cf. Is. 36).

■ **24:24 Cyprus.** See text note. The Hebrew name for Cyprus came to represent the Mediterranean region to the west of Palestine. In Dan. 11:30, this word is used to predict the effects of Roman naval power.

■ **25:1–3** Fearing to attack the vast throng of Israelites (22:3) and having failed to thwart them through by means of Balaam, the Moabites and Midianites (at Balaam's instigation, 31:16) then sought to subvert and assimilate Israel through idolatry and immorality. When the world cannot eliminate the witness of the elect through direct conflict it often tries to neutralize that witness by absorbing the elect into the world. Old Testament Israel was to survive in physical separation from her neighbors (Lev. 18:24; Deut. 7:3; Josh. 23:12, 13), trusting in God's promises of land and the Messiah.

This incident at the Baal of Peor was later seen as a prime example of the temptations to which the covenant people were exposed by the surrounding peoples (Deut. 4:3; Josh. 22:17; Ps. 106:28; Hos. 9:10).

■ **25:1 Acacia Grove.** This Hebrew word (text note) identifies the region across the Jordan from Jericho (cf. Josh. 2:1). Here worship of the local fertility god was joined with ritual prostitution (vv. 1–3, 6).

■ **25:3 joined to Baal of Peor.** In gross defiance of the covenant between the Lord and Israel, the Israelites yoked themselves to the false god through their idolatrous worship.

■ **25:4 hang the offenders.** See note on Deut. 21:22.

javelin in his hand; [8] and he went after the man of Israel into the tent and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her body. So [n]the plague was [o]stopped among the children of Israel. [9] And [p]those who died in the plague were twenty-four thousand.

[10] Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: [11] [q]"Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, has turned back My wrath from the children of Israel, because he was zealous with My zeal among them, so that I did not consume the children of Israel in [r]My zeal. [12] Therefore say, [s]'Behold, I give to him My [t]covenant of peace; [13] and it shall be to him and [u]his descendants after him a covenant of [v]an everlasting priesthood, because he was [w]zealous for his God, and [x]made [2]atonement for the children of Israel.' "

[14] Now the name of the Israelite who was killed, who was killed with the Midianite woman, *was* Zimri the son of Salu, a leader of a father's house among the Simeonites. [15] And the name of the Midianite woman who was killed *was* Cozbi the daughter of [y]Zur; he *was* head of the people of a father's house in Midian.

[16] Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: [17] [z]"Harass the Midianites, and [3]attack them; [18] for they harassed you with their [a]schemes[4] by which they seduced you in the matter of Peor and in the matter of Cozbi, the daughter of a leader of Midian, their sister, who was killed in the day of the plague because of Peor."

The Second Census of Israel

26 And it came to pass, after the [a]plague, that the LORD spoke to Moses and Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, saying: [2] [b]"Take a census of all the congregation of the children of Israel [c]from twenty years old and above, by their fathers' houses, all who are able to go to war in Israel." [3] So Moses and Eleazar the priest spoke with them [d]in the plains of Moab by the Jordan, *across from* Jericho, saying: [4] "*Take a census of the people* from twenty years old and above, just as the LORD [e]commanded Moses and the children of Israel who came out of the land of Egypt."

[5] [f]Reuben *was* the firstborn of Israel. The children of Reuben *were: of* Hanoch, the family of the Hanochites; *of* Pallu, the family of the Palluites; [6] *of* Hezron, the family of the Hezronites; *of* Carmi, the family of the Carmites. [7] These *are* the families of the Reubenites: those who were numbered of them were forty-three thousand seven hundred and thirty. [8] And the son of Pallu *was* Eliab. [9] The sons of Eliab *were* Nemuel, Dathan, and Abiram. These *are* the Dathan and Abiram, [g]representatives of the congregation, who contended against Moses and Aaron in the company of Korah, when they contended against the LORD; [10] [h]and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up together with Korah when that company died, when the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men; [i]and they became a sign. [11] Nevertheless [j]the children of Korah did not die.

[12] The sons of Simeon according to their families *were: of* [1]Nemuel, the family of the Nemuelites; *of* Jamin, the family of the Jaminites; *of* [2]Jachin, the family of the Jachinites; [13] *of* [3]Zerah, the family of the Zarhites; *of* Shaul, the family of the Shaulites. [14] These *are* the families of the Simeonites: twenty-two thousand two hundred.

[15] The sons of Gad according to their families *were: of* [4]Zephon, the family of the Zephonites; *of* Haggi, the family of the Haggites; *of* Shuni, the family of the Shunites; [16] *of* [5]Ozni, the family of the Oznites; *of* Eri, the family of the Erites; [17] *of* [6]Arod, the family of the Arodites; *of* Areli, the family of the Arelites. [18] These *are* the families of the sons of Gad according to those who were numbered of them: forty thousand five hundred.

[19] [k]The sons of Judah *were* Er and Onan; and Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan. [20] And

8 [n]Ps. 106:30 [o]Num. 16:46–48
9 [p]Deut. 4:3
11 [q]Ps. 106:30 [r][Ex. 20:5]
12 [s][Mal. 2:4, 5; 3:1] [t]Is. 54:10
13 [u]1 Chr. 6:4–15 [v]Ex. 40:15 [w]Acts 22:3 [x][Heb. 2:17] [2]Lit. *covering*
15 [y]Num. 31:8
17 [z]Num. 31:1–3 [3]*be hostile toward*
18 [a]Rev. 2:14 [4]*tricks*

CHAPTER 26

1 [a]Num. 25:9
2 [b]Num. 1:2; 14:29 [c]Num. 1:3
3 [d]Num. 22:1; 31:12; 33:48; 35:1
4 [e]Num. 1:1
5 [f]Ex. 6:14
9 [g]Num. 1:16; 16:1, 2
10 [h]Num. 16:32–35 [i]Num. 16:38–40
11 [j]Ex. 6:24
12 [1]*Jemuel,* Gen. 46:10; Ex. 6:15 [2]*Jarib,* 1 Chr. 4:24
13 [3]*Zohar,* Gen. 46:10
15 [4]*Ziphion,* Gen. 46:16
16 [5]*Ezbon,* Gen. 46:16
17 [6]Sam., Syr. *Arodi* and Gen. 46:16
19 [k]Gen. 38:2; 46:12

■ **25:11 zealous with My zeal.** Note the stress on Phinehas as embodying God's own zeal for the purity of His people. Such zeal earned Phinehas divine commendation and the promise of a perpetual priesthood (v. 13). Later in Jewish history, Phinehas became a symbol of uncompromising loyalty to God's law (Ps. 106:30, 31).

■ **26:1—36:13** The final major section of Numbers concerns preparations for entering the Promised Land, with particular attention paid to matters relevant to life in the land.

■ **26:1–51** Like the census taken 38 years earlier (ch. 1), this second census counted only males, aged twenty or older, and able to serve in the army (v. 2). It records only the total number for each tribe, though in each case the names of the tribe's subdivisions are included. Overall, there was a decline of nearly two thousand in the total number of fighting men.

■ **26:5–11** The tribe of Jacob's eldest son, Reuben, is listed first. Although it had suffered losses because of the rebellion of Dathan and Abiram (vv. 8–10), it had recovered sufficiently to be almost as numerous as at the first census. Korah (of the tribe of Levi) is mentioned here because of his association with Dathan and Abiram, and it is observed that his line did not die out (v. 11).

■ **26:12–14** Simeon's numbers had declined far more than those of any other tribe (from nearly 60,000 to a little over 22,000), probably indicating that the Simeonite leader killed during the Midianite seduction shortly before this census was taken (25:14) was but one of thousands of Simeonites involved in the Midianite seduction (25:1–9). See note on Gen. 49:7.

■ **26:19 Er and Onan.** See Gen. 38:1–10 and notes.

[l]the sons of Judah according to their families were: *of* Shelah, the family of the Shelanites; *of* Perez, the family of the Parzites; *of* Zerah, the family of the Zarhites. 21 And the sons of Perez were: *of* Hezron, the family of the Hezronites; *of* Hamul, the family of the Hamulites. 22 These *are* the families of Judah according to those who were numbered of them: seventy-six thousand five hundred.

23 The sons of Issachar according to their families *were: of* Tola, the family of the Tolaites; of [7]Puah, the family of the [8]Punites; 24 of [9]Jashub, the family of the Jashubites; of Shimron, the family of the Shimronites. 25 These *are* the families of Issachar according to those who were numbered of them: sixty-four thousand three hundred.

26 [m]The sons of Zebulun according to their families *were:* of Sered, the family of the Sardites; of Elon, the family of the Elonites; of Jahleel, the family of the Jahleelites. 27 These *are* the families of the Zebulunites according to those who were numbered of them: sixty thousand five hundred.

28 [n]The sons of Joseph according to their families, by Manasseh and Ephraim, *were:* 29 The sons of [o]Manasseh: of [p]Machir, the family of the Machirites; and Machir begot Gilead; of Gilead, the family of the Gileadites. 30 These *are* the sons of Gilead: *of* [1]Jeezer, the family of the Jeezerites; of Helek, the family of the Helekites; 31 *of* Asriel, the family of the Asrielites; *of* Shechem, the family of the Shechemites; 32 *of* Shemida, the family of the Shemidaites; *of* Hepher, the family of the Hepherites. 33 Now [q]Zelophehad the son of Hepher had no sons, but daughters; and the names of the daughters of Zelophehad *were* Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. 34 These *are* the families of Manasseh; and those who were numbered of them *were* fifty-two thousand seven hundred.

35 These *are* the sons of Ephraim according to their families: of Shuthelah, the family of the Shuthalhites; of [2]Becher, the family of the Bachrites; of Tahan, the family of the Tahanites. 36 And these *are* the sons of Shuthelah: of Eran, the family of the Eranites. 37 These *are* the families of the sons of Ephraim according to those who were numbered of them: thirty-two thousand five hundred.

These *are* the sons of Joseph according to their families.

38 [r]The sons of Benjamin according to their families were: of Bela, the family of the Belaites; of Ashbel, the family of the Ashbelites; of [s]Ahiram, the family of the Ahiramites; 39 of [t]Shupham,[3] the family of the Shuphamites; of [4]Hupham, the family of the Huphamites. 40 And the sons of Bela were [5]Ard and Naaman: [u]*of Ard,* the family of the Ardites; of Naaman, the family of the Naamites. 41 These *are* the sons of Benjamin according to their families; and those who were numbered of them *were* forty-five thousand six hundred.

42 These *are* the sons of Dan according to their families: of [6]Shuham, the family of the Shuhamites. These *are* the families of Dan according to their families. 43 All the families of the Shuhamites, according to those who were numbered of them, *were* sixty-four thousand four hundred.

44 [v]The sons of Asher according to their families *were:* of Jimna, the family of the Jimnites; of Jesui, the family of the Jesuites; of Beriah, the family of the Beriites. 45 Of the sons of Beriah: of Heber, the family of the Heberites; of Malchiel, the family of the Malchielites. 46 And the name of the daughter of Asher *was* Serah. 47 These *are* the families of the sons of Asher according to those who were numbered of them: fifty-three thousand four hundred.

48 [w]The sons of Naphtali according to their families *were:* of [7]Jahzeel, the family of the Jahzeelites; of Guni, the family of the Gunites; 49 of Jezer, the family of the Jezerites; of [x]Shillem, the family of the Shillemites. 50 These *are* the families of Naphtali according to their families; and those who were numbered of them *were* forty-five thousand four hundred.

51 [y]These *are* those who were numbered of the children of Israel: six hundred and one thousand seven hundred and thirty.

52 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 53 [z]"To these the land shall be [a]divided as an inheritance, according to the number of names. 54 [b]To a large *tribe* you shall give a larger inheritance, and to a small *tribe* you shall give a smaller inheritance. Each shall be given its inheritance according to those who were numbered of them. 55 But the land shall be [c]divided by lot; they shall inherit according to the names of the tribes of their fathers. 56 According to the lot their inheritance shall be divided between the larger and the smaller."

20 [l]1 Chr. 2:3

23 [7]So with Sam., LXX, Syr., Vg.; Heb. *Puvah,* Gen. 46:13; 1 Chr. 7:1 [8]Sam., LXX, Syr., Vg. *Puaites*

24 [9]*Job,* Gen. 46:13

26 [m]Gen. 46:14

28 [n]Gen. 46:20; Deut. 33:16

29 [o]Josh. 17:1 [p]1 Chr. 7:14, 15

30 [1]*Abiezer,* Josh. 17:2

33 [q]Num. 27:1; 36:11

35 [2]*Bered,* 1 Chr. 7:20

38 [r]Gen. 46:21; 1 Chr. 7:6 [s]Gen. 46:21; 1 Chr. 8:1, 2

39 [t]1 Chr. 7:12 [3]MT *Shephupham; Shephuphan,* 1 Chr. 8:5 [4]*Huppim,* Gen. 46:21

40 [u]1 Chr. 8:3 [5]*Addar,* 1 Chr. 8:3

42 [6]*Hushim,* Gen. 46:23

44 [v]Gen. 46:17; 1 Chr. 7:30

48 [w]Gen. 46:24; 1 Chr. 7:13 [7]*Jahziel,* 1 Chr. 7:13

49 [x]1 Chr. 7:13

51 [y]Ex. 12:37; 38:26; Num. 1:46; 11:21

53 [z]Josh. 11:23; 14:1 [a]Num. 33:54

54 [b]Num. 33:54

55 [c]Num. 33:54; 34:13; Josh. 11:23; 14:2

■ **26:33 Zelophehad.** See 27:1–11; 36:1–12.

■ **26:52–56** The Promised Land was to be divided in proportion to the size of each group, with locations decided by lot.

57 [d]And these *are* those who were numbered of the Levites according to their families: of Gershon, the family of the Gershonites; of Kohath, the family of the Kohathites; of Merari, the family of the Merarites. 58 These *are* the families of the Levites: the family of the Libnites, the family of the Hebronites, the family of the Mahlites, the family of the Mushites, and the family of the Korathites. And Kohath begot Amram. 59 The name of Amram's wife *was* [e]Jochebed the daughter of Levi, who was born to Levi in Egypt; and to Amram she bore Aaron and Moses and their sister Miriam. 60 [f]To Aaron were born Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. 61 And [g]Nadab and Abihu died when they offered profane fire before the LORD.

62 [h]Now those who were numbered of them were twenty-three thousand, every male from a month old and above; [i]for they were not numbered among the other children of Israel, because there was [j]no inheritance given to them among the children of Israel.

63 These *are* those who were numbered by Moses and Eleazar the priest, who numbered the children of Israel [k]in the plains of Moab by the Jordan, *across from* Jericho. 64 [l]But among these there was not a man of those who were numbered by Moses and Aaron the priest when they numbered the children of Israel in the [m]Wilderness of Sinai. 65 For the LORD had said of them, "They [n]shall surely die in the wilderness." So there was not left a man of them, [o]except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun.

Inheritance Laws

27 Then came the daughters of [a]Zelophehad the son of Hepher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, from the families of Manasseh the son of Joseph; and these *were* the names of his daughters: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. 2 And they stood before Moses, before Eleazar the priest, and before the leaders and all the congregation, *by* the doorway of the tabernacle of meeting, saying: 3 "Our father [b]died in the wilderness; but he was not in the company of those who gathered together against the LORD, [c]in company with Korah, but he died in his own sin; and he had no sons. 4 Why should the name of our father be [d]removed[1] from among his family because he had no son? [e]Give us a [2]possession among our father's brothers."

5 So Moses [f]brought their case before the LORD.

6 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 7 "The daughters of Zelophehad speak *what is* right; [g]you shall surely give them a possession of inheritance among their father's brothers, and cause the inheritance of their father to pass to them. 8 And you shall speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'If a man dies and has no son, then you shall cause his inheritance to pass to his daughter. 9 If he has no daughter, then you shall give his inheritance to his brothers. 10 If he has no brothers, then you shall give his inheritance to his father's brothers. 11 And if his father has no brothers, then you shall give his inheritance to the relative closest to him in his family, and he shall possess it.' " And it shall be to the children of Israel [h]a statute of judgment, just as the LORD commanded Moses.

Joshua the Next Leader of Israel

12 Now the LORD said to Moses: [i]"Go up into this Mount Abarim, and see the land which I have given to the children of Israel. 13 And when you have seen it, you also [j]shall [3]be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother was gathered. 14 For in the Wilderness of Zin, during the strife of the congregation, you [k]rebelled against My command to hallow Me at the waters before their eyes." (These *are* the [l]waters of Meribah, at Kadesh in the Wilderness of Zin.)

15 Then Moses spoke to the LORD, saying: 16 "Let the LORD, [m]the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, 17 [n]who may go out before them and go in before them, who may lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the LORD may not be [o]like sheep which have no shepherd."

57 [d]Gen. 46:11; Ex. 6:16–19; Num. 3:15; 1 Chr. 6:1, 16

59 [e]Ex. 2:1, 2; 6:20

60 [f]Num. 3:2

61 [g]Lev. 10:1, 2; Num. 3:3, 4; 1 Chr. 24:2

62 [h]Num. 3:39 [i]Num. 1:49 [j]Num. 18:20, 23, 24

63 [k]Num. 26:3

64 [l]Num. 14:29–35; Deut. 2:14–16; Heb. 3:17 [m]Num. 1:1–46

65 [n]Num. 14:26–35; [1 Cor. 10:5, 6] [o]Num. 14:30

CHAPTER 27

1 [a]Num. 26:33; 36:1, 11; Josh. 17:3

3 [b]Num. 14:35; 26:64, 65 [c]Num. 16:1, 2

4 [d]Deut. 25:6 [e]Josh. 17:4 [1]*withdrawn* [2]*inheritance*

5 [f]Ex. 18:13–26

7 [g]Num. 36:2; Josh. 17:4

11 [h]Num. 35:29

12 [i]Num. 33:47; Deut. 3:23–27; 32:48–52; 34:1–4

13 [j]Num. 20:12, 24, 28; 31:2; Deut. 10:6; 34:5, 6 [3]Die and join your ancestors

14 [k]Num. 20:12, 24; Deut. 1:37; 32:51; Ps. 106:32, 33 [l]Ex. 17:7

16 [m]Num. 16:22; Heb. 12:9

17 [n]Deut. 31:2; 1 Sam. 8:20; 18:13; 2 Chr. 1:10 [o]1 Kin. 22:17; Zech. 10:2; Matt. 9:36; Mark 6:34

■ **27:1–11** Rules for inheritance of land, which notably permit women to inherit, are explained after the account of Zelophehad's daughters. Zelophehad had died without leaving a male heir, and his daughters petitioned Moses and the leaders to allow the daughters to inherit their father's portion in the land, and not to let his name be cut off. The names of all five daughters are recorded in v. 1.

In ch. 36 a related question was raised by the tribal leaders: if the daughters of Zelophehad married men of a different tribe, would their father's inheritance be transferred to that tribe? In response to both questions, the Lord answered that the family and tribal legacies should be protected (27:7; 36:6). These protections, as well as the prohibition against permanent transfer of land from one family to another, were rooted in God's ultimate ownership of the Promised Land (Lev. 25:23), and that He had entrusted it to all His people as a good gift and permanent possession to be enjoyed (Lev. 25:34; Deut. 6:10–12; 8:10–13). The land was not simply private property to be transferred on the basis of human convention and agreement. Rather, it symbolized life with God.

■ **27:12–14** Moses was not permitted to enter the Promised Land, but only to see it from a distance. This was punishment for his failure at Meribah (20:9–13 and notes).

18 And the LORD said to Moses: "Take Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man [p]in whom *is* the Spirit, and [q]lay your hand on him; 19 set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation, and [r]inaugurate[4] him in their sight. 20 And [s]you shall give *some* of your authority to him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel [t]may be obedient. 21 [u]He shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall inquire before the LORD for him [v]by the judgment of the Urim. [w]At his word they shall go out, and at his word they shall come in, he and all the children of Israel with him—all the congregation."

22 So Moses did as the LORD commanded him. He took Joshua and set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation. 23 And he laid his hands on him [x]and [5]inaugurated him, just as the LORD commanded by the hand of Moses.

Daily Offerings

28 Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Command the children of Israel, and say to them, 'My offering, [a]My food for My offerings made by fire as a sweet aroma to Me, you shall be careful to offer to Me at their appointed time.'

3 "And you shall say to them, [b]'This *is* the offering made by fire which you shall offer to the LORD: two male lambs in their first year without blemish, day by day, as a regular burnt offering. 4 The one lamb you shall offer in the morning, the other lamb you shall offer in the evening, 5 and [c]one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour as a [d]grain offering mixed with one-fourth of a hin of pressed oil. 6 *It is* [e]a regular burnt offering which was ordained at Mount Sinai for a sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the LORD. 7 And its drink offering *shall be* one-fourth of a hin for each lamb; [f]in a holy *place* you shall pour out the drink to the LORD as an offering. 8 The other lamb you shall offer in the evening; as the morning grain offering and its drink offering, you shall offer *it* as an offering made by fire, a [1]sweet aroma to the LORD.

Sabbath Offerings

9 'And on the Sabbath day two lambs in their first year, without blemish, and two-tenths *of an ephah* of fine flour as a grain offering, mixed with oil, with its drink offering— 10 *this is* [g]the burnt offering for every Sabbath, besides the regular burnt offering with its drink offering.

Monthly Offerings

11 [h]'At the beginnings of your months you shall present a burnt offering to the LORD: two young bulls, one ram, and seven lambs in their first year, without blemish; 12 [i]three-tenths *of an ephah* of fine flour as a grain offering, mixed with oil, for each bull; two-tenths *of an ephah* of fine flour as a grain offering, mixed with oil, for the one ram; 13 and one-tenth *of an ephah* of fine flour, mixed with oil, as a grain offering for each lamb, as a burnt offering of sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the LORD. 14 Their drink offering shall be half a hin of wine for a bull, one-third of a hin for a ram, and one-fourth of a hin for a lamb; this *is* the burnt offering for each month throughout the months of the year. 15 Also [j]one kid of the goats as a sin offering to the LORD shall be offered, besides the regular burnt offering and its drink offering.

Offerings at Passover

16 [k]'On the fourteenth day of the first month *is* the Passover of the LORD. 17 [l]And on the fifteenth day of this month *is* the feast; unleavened bread shall be eaten for seven days. 18 On the [m]first day *you shall have* a holy [2]convocation. You shall do no [3]customary work. 19 And you shall present an offering made by fire as a burnt offering to the LORD: two young bulls, one ram, and seven lambs in their first year. [n]Be sure they are without blemish. 20 Their grain offering shall be of fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths *of an ephah* you shall offer for a bull, and two-tenths for a ram; 21 you shall offer one-tenth *of an ephah* for each of the seven lambs; 22 also [o]one goat *as* a sin offering, to make [4]atonement for you. 23 You shall offer these besides the burnt offering of the morning, which *is* for a regular burnt offering. 24 In this manner you shall offer the food of the offering made by fire daily for seven days, as a sweet aroma to the LORD; it

18 [p]Gen. 41:38; Judg. 3:10; 1 Sam. 16:13, 18 [q]Deut. 34:9

19 [r]Deut. 3:28; 31:3, 7, 8, 23 [4]*commission*

20 [s]Num. 11:17 [t]Josh. 1:16–18

21 [u]Judg. 20:18, 23, 26; 1 Sam. 23:9; 30:7 [v]Ex. 28:30; 1 Sam. 28:6 [w]Josh. 9:14; 1 Sam. 22:10

23 [x]Deut. 3:28; 31:7, 8 [5]*commissioned*

CHAPTER 28

2 [a]Lev. 3:11; 21:6, 8; [Mal. 1:7, 12]

3 [b]Ex. 29:38–42

5 [c]Ex. 16:36; Num. 15:4 [d]Lev. 2:1

6 [e]Ex. 29:42; Amos 5:25

7 [f]Ex. 29:42

8 [1]*pleasing*

10 [g]Ezek. 46:4

11 [h]Num. 10:10; 1 Sam. 20:5; 1 Chr. 23:31; 2 Chr. 2:4; Ezra 3:5; Neh. 10:33; Is. 1:13, 14; Ezek. 45:17; 46:6, 7; Hos. 2:11; Col. 2:16

12 [i]Num. 15:4–12

15 [j]Num. 15:24; 28:3, 22

16 [k]Ex. 12:1–20; Lev. 23:5–8; Num. 9:2–5; Deut. 16:1–8; Ezek. 45:21

17 [l]Lev. 23:6

18 [m]Ex. 12:16; Lev. 23:7 [2]*assembly or gathering* [3]*occupational*

19 [n]Lev. 22:20; Num. 28:31; 29:8; Deut. 15:21

22 [o]Num. 28:15 [4]Lit. *covering*

■ **27:18 lay your hand on him.** See note on Deut. 34:9.

■ **27:20 give some of your authority.** Moses' office and ministry were unique (20:22–29 note), but a portion of his honor and authority would be imparted to Joshua.

■ **28:1—29:40** In preparation for entry into the land, the laws of regular sacrifice and celebration already presented earlier (consult cross references) are summarized. Beginning with daily (28:1–8), Sabbath (28:9, 10), and monthly offerings (28:11–15), and then the celebration of annual feasts (28:16—29:40), the summary shows clearly how Israelite life in the land was to revolve around the worship and service of the Lord.

shall be offered besides the regular burnt offering and its drink offering. 25 And [p]on the seventh day you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work.

Offerings at the Feast of Weeks

26 'Also [q]on the day of the firstfruits. when you bring a new grain offering to the LORD at your *Feast of* Weeks, you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work. 27 You shall present a burnt offering as a sweet aroma to the LORD: [r]two young bulls, one ram, and seven lambs in their first year, 28 with their grain offering of fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths *of an ephah* for each bull, two-tenths for the one ram, 29 and one-tenth for each of the seven lambs; 30 *also* one kid of the goats, to make [s]atonement for you. 31 [s]Be sure they are without [6]blemish. You shall present *them* with their drink offerings, besides the regular burnt offering with its grain offering.

Offerings at the Feast of Trumpets

29 'And in the seventh month, on the first *day* of the month, you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work. For you [a]it is a day of blowing the trumpets. 2 You shall offer a burnt offering as a sweet aroma to the LORD: one young bull, one ram, *and* seven lambs in their first year, without blemish. 3 Their grain offering *shall be* fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths *of an ephah* for the bull, two-tenths for the ram, 4 and one-tenth for each of the seven lambs; 5 also one kid of the goats *as* a sin offering, to make atonement for you; 6 besides [b]the burnt offering with its grain offering for the New Moon, [c]the regular burnt offering with its grain offering, and their drink offerings, [d]according to their ordinance, as a sweet aroma, an offering made by fire to the LORD.

Offerings on the Day of Atonement

7 [e]'On the tenth *day* of this seventh month you shall have a holy convocation. You shall [f]afflict your souls; you shall not do any work. 8 You shall present a burnt offering to the LORD *as* a sweet aroma: one young bull, one ram, *and* seven lambs in their first year. [g]Be sure they are without blemish. 9 Their grain offering *shall be of* fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths *of an ephah* for the bull, two-tenths for the one ram, 10 and one-tenth for each of the seven lambs; 11 also one kid of the goats *as* a sin offering, besides [h]the sin offering for atonement, the regular burnt offering with its grain offering, and their drink offerings.

Offerings at the Feast of Tabernacles

12 [i]'On the fifteenth day of the seventh month you shall have a holy convocation. You shall do no customary work, and you shall keep a feast to the LORD seven days. 13 [j]You shall present a burnt offering, an offering made by fire as a sweet aroma to the LORD: thirteen young bulls, two rams, *and* fourteen lambs in their first year. They shall be without blemish. 14 Their grain offering *shall be of* fine flour mixed with oil: three-tenths *of an ephah* for each of the thirteen bulls, two-tenths for each of the two rams, 15 and one-tenth for each of the fourteen lambs; 16 also one kid of the goats *as* a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering.

17 'On the [k]second day *present* twelve young bulls, two rams, fourteen lambs in their first year without blemish, 18 and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, by their number, [l]according to the ordinance; 19 also one kid of the goats *as* a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering with its grain offering, and their drink offerings.

20 'On the third day *present* eleven bulls, two rams, fourteen lambs in their first year without blemish, 21 and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, by their number, [m]according to the ordinance; 22 also one goat *as* a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering.

23 'On the fourth day *present* ten bulls. two rams, *and* fourteen lambs in their first year, without blemish, 24 and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, by their number, according to the ordinance; 25 also one kid of the goats *as* a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering.

26 'On the fifth day *present* nine bulls, two rams, *and* fourteen lambs in their first year without blemish, 27 and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, by their number, according to the ordinance; 28 also one goat *as* a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering.

29 'On the sixth day *present* eight bulls, two rams, *and* fourteen lambs in their first year without blemish, 30 and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and

25 [p]Ex. 12:16; 13:6; Lev. 23:8

26 [q]Ex. 23:16; 34:22; Lev. 23:10–21; Deut. 16:9–12; Acts 2:1

27 [r]Lev. 23:18, 19

30 [s]Lit. *covering*

31 [s]Num. 28:3, 19 [6]*defect*

CHAPTER 29

1 [a]Ex. 23:16; 34:22; Lev. 23:23–25

6 [b]Num. 28:11–15 [c]Num. 28:3 [d]Num. 15:11, 12

7 [e]Lev. 16:29–34; 23:26–32 [f]Ps. 35:13; Is. 58:5

8 [g]Num. 28:19

11 [h]Lev. 16:3, 5

12 [i]Lev. 23:33–35; Deut. 16:13–15; Ezek. 45:25

13 [j]Ezra 3:4

17 [k]Lev. 23:36

18 [l]Num. 15:12; 28:7, 14; 29:3, 4, 9, 10

21 [m]Num. 29:18

for the lambs, by their number, according to the ordinance; 31 also one goat *as* a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering.

32 'On the seventh day *present* seven bulls, two rams, *and* fourteen lambs in their first year without blemish, 33 and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bulls, for the rams, and for the lambs, by their number, according to the ordinance; 34 also one goat *as* a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering.

35 'On the eighth day you shall have a [n]sacred[1] assembly. You shall do no customary work. 36 You shall present a burnt offering, an offering made by fire as a sweet aroma to the LORD: one bull, one ram, seven lambs in their first year without blemish, 37 and their grain offering and their drink offerings for the bull, for the ram, and for the lambs, by their number, according to the ordinance; 38 also one goat *as* a sin offering, besides the regular burnt offering, its grain offering, and its drink offering.

39 'These you shall present to the LORD at your [o]appointed feasts (besides your [p]vowed offerings and your freewill offerings) as your burnt offerings and your grain offerings, as your drink offerings and your peace offerings.' "

40 So Moses told the children of Israel everything, just as the LORD commanded Moses.

The Law Concerning Vows

30 Then Moses spoke to [a]the heads of the tribes concerning the children of Israel, saying, "This *is* the thing which the LORD has commanded: 2 [b]If a man makes a vow to the LORD, or [c]swears an oath to bind himself by some agreement, he shall not break his word; he shall [d]do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.

3 "Or if a woman makes a vow to the LORD, and binds *herself* by some agreement while in her father's house in her youth, 4 and her father hears her vow and the agreement by which she has bound herself, and her father [1]holds his peace, then all her vows shall stand, and every agreement with which she has bound herself shall stand. 5 But if her father overrules her on the day that he hears, then none of her vows nor her agreements by which she has bound herself shall stand; and the LORD will release her, because her father overruled her.

6 "If indeed she takes a husband, while bound by her vows or by a rash utterance from her lips by which she bound herself, 7 and her husband hears *it,* and makes no response to her on the day that he hears, then her vows shall stand, and her agreements by which she bound herself shall stand. 8 But if her husband [e]overrules her on the day that he hears *it,* he shall make void her vow which she took and what she uttered with her lips, by which she bound herself, and the LORD will release her.

9 "Also any vow of a widow or a divorced woman, by which she has bound herself, shall stand against her.

10 "If she vowed in her husband's house, or bound herself by an agreement with an oath, 11 and her husband heard *it,* and made no response to her *and* did not overrule her, then all her vows shall stand, and every agreement by which she bound herself shall stand. 12 But if her husband truly made them void on the day he heard *them,* then whatever proceeded from her lips concerning her vows or concerning the agreement binding her, it shall not stand; her husband has made them [2]void, and the LORD will release her. 13 Every vow and every binding oath to afflict her soul, her husband may confirm it, or her husband may make it void. 14 Now if her husband makes no response whatever to her from day to day, then he confirms all her vows or all the agreements that bind her; he confirms them, because he made no response to her on the day that he heard *them.* 15 But if he does make them void after he has heard *them,* then he shall bear her guilt."

16 These *are* the statutes which the LORD commanded Moses, between a man and his wife, and between a father and his daughter in her youth in her father's house.

Vengeance on the Midianites

31 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 2 [a]"Take vengeance on the Midianites for the children of Israel. Afterward you shall [b]be gathered to your people."

35 [n]Lev. 23:36
[1]*solemn*

39 [o]Lev. 23:1–44; 1 Chr. 23:31; 2 Chr. 31:3; Ezra 3:5; Neh. 10:33; Is. 1:14 [p]Lev. 7:16; 22:18, 21, 23; 23:38

CHAPTER 30

1 [a]Num. 1:4, 16; 7:2

2 [b]Lev. 27:2; Deut. 23:21–23; Judg. 11:30, 31, 35; Eccl. 5:4 [c]Lev. 5:4; Matt. 14:9; Acts 23:14 [d]Job 22:27; Ps. 22:25; 50:14; 66:13, 14; Nah. 1:15

4 [1]*says nothing* to interfere

8 [e][Gen. 3:16]

12 [2]*annulled* or *invalidated*

CHAPTER 31

2 [a]Num. 25:17 [b]Num. 27:12, 13

■ **30:1–16** Ordinarily, people were obliged to fulfill any vow or obligation they had made, including even a rash promise (v. 6). However, the vow of a subordinate member of a household could be cancelled by the head of the house (vv. 5, 8, 12–13, 15). Moses urged the people not to make rash vows, but declared that if made they must be fulfilled (Deut. 23:21–23; cf. Prov. 20:25). For a terrible instance of a rash vow, see Judg. 11:30–40 and notes.

■ **31:1–54** Vengeance against the Midianites for their efforts to seduce the Israelites into idol worship and sexual immorality (ch. 25) is under-

3 [c]Josh. 13:21
6 [d]Num. 10:9
7 [e]Deut. 20:13; Judg. 21:11; 1 Sam. 27:9; 1 Kin. 11:15, 16 [f]Gen. 34:25
8 [g]Josh. 13:21 [h]Num. 25:15 [i]Num. 31:16; Josh. 13:22
11 [j]Deut. 20:14
15 [k]Deut. 20:14
16 [l]Num. 25:2 [m]Num. 24:14; 2 Pet. 2:15; Rev. 2:14 [n]Num. 25:9
17 [o]Deut. 7:2; 20:16–18; Judg. 21:11
18 [p]Deut. 21:10–14
19 [q]Num. 5:2 [r]Num. 19:11–22
21 [1]*statute*
23 [s]Num. 19:9, 17
24 [t]Lev. 11:25
26 [2]*captured*
27 [u]Josh. 22:8; 1 Sam. 30:24
28 [v]Num. 31:30, 47 [3]*tax*
29 [w]Deut. 18:1–5
30 [x]Num. 31:42–47 [y]Num. 3:7, 8, 25, 31, 36; 18:3, 4 [4]*perform the service*

3 So Moses spoke to the people, saying, "Arm some of yourselves for war, and let them go against the Midianites to take vengeance for the LORD on [c]Midian. 4 A thousand from each tribe of all the tribes of Israel you shall send to the war."

5 So there were recruited from the divisions of Israel one thousand from *each* tribe, twelve thousand armed for war. 6 Then Moses sent them to the war, one thousand from *each* tribe; he sent them to the war with Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, with the holy articles and [d]the signal trumpets in his hand. 7 And they warred against the Midianites, just as the LORD commanded Moses, and [e]they killed all the [f]males. 8 They killed the kings of Midian with *the rest of* those who were killed—[g]Evi, Rekem, [h]Zur, Hur, and Reba, the five kings of Midian. [i]Balaam the son of Beor they also killed with the sword.

9 And the children of Israel took the women of Midian captive, with their little ones, and took as spoil all their cattle, all their flocks, and all their goods. 10 They also burned with fire all the cities where they dwelt, and all their forts. 11 And [j]they took all the spoil and all the booty—of man and beast.

Return from the War

12 Then they brought the captives, the booty, and the spoil to Moses, to Eleazar the priest, and to the congregation of the children of Israel, to the camp in the plains of Moab by the Jordan, *across from* Jericho. 13 And Moses, Eleazar the priest, and all the leaders of the congregation, went to meet them outside the camp. 14 But Moses was angry with the officers of the army, *with* the captains over thousands and captains over hundreds, who had come from the battle.

15 And Moses said to them: "Have you kept [k]all the women alive? 16 Look, [l]these *women* caused the children of Israel, through the [m]counsel of Balaam, to trespass against the LORD in the incident of Peor, and [n]there was a plague among the congregation of the LORD. 17 Now therefore, [o]kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman who has known a man intimately. 18 But keep alive [p]for yourselves all the young girls who have not known a man intimately. 19 And as for you, [q]remain outside the camp seven days; whoever has killed any person, and [r]whoever has touched any slain, purify yourselves and your captives on the third day and on the seventh day. 20 Purify every garment, everything made of leather, everything woven of goats' *hair,* and everything made of wood."

21 Then Eleazar the priest said to the men of war who had gone to the battle, "This *is* the [1]ordinance of the law which the LORD commanded Moses: 22 "Only the gold, the silver, the bronze, the iron, the tin, and the lead, 23 everything that can endure fire, you shall put through the fire, and it shall be clean; and it shall be purified [s]with the water of purification. But all that cannot endure fire you shall put through water. 24 [t]And you shall wash your clothes on the seventh day and be clean, and afterward you may come into the camp."

Division of the Plunder

25 Now the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 26 "Count up the plunder that was [2]taken—of man and beast—you and Eleazar the priest and the chief fathers of the congregation; 27 and [u]divide the plunder into two parts, between those who took part in the war, who went out to battle, and all the congregation. 28 And levy a [3]tribute for the LORD on the men of war who went out to battle: [v]one of every five hundred of the persons, the cattle, the donkeys, and the sheep; 29 take *it* from their half, and [w]give *it* to Eleazar the priest as a heave offering to the LORD. 30 And from the children of Israel's half you shall take [x]one of every fifty, drawn from the persons, the cattle, the donkeys, and the sheep, from all the livestock, and give them to the Levites [y]who [4]keep charge of the tabernacle of the LORD." 31 So Moses and Eleazar the priest did as the LORD commanded Moses.

32 The booty remaining from the plunder, which the men of war had taken, was six hundred and seventy-five thousand sheep, 33 seventy-two thousand cattle, 34 sixty-one thousand donkeys,

taken. This narrative deals particularly with details concerning the plunder taken from the Midianites. Because the plunder of war had to be handled in a fashion that preserved the holiness of God and of the people, the principles stated here helped prepare the Israelites for the coming conquest of the land.

■ **31:6 Phinehas.** See note on 25:11.

■ **31:8 Balaam.** See note on 22:5.

■ **31:13–18** Moses' command that all the women who were not virgins must be killed was due to the immorality at Peor. All males were killed, including children, probably to prevent any resurgence of the Midianite clans (cf. v. 7).

■ **31:16 the counsel of Balaam.** See Deut. 23:4, 5; Josh. 13:22; 24:9, 10; Neh. 13:2; Mic. 6:5; 2 Pet. 2:15; Jude 11; Rev. 2:14.

■ **31:25–47** Israel divides the Midianite spoils: half to the soldiers and half to the community (vv. 25–27). As a tribute to the Lord, one out of every five hundred from the soldier's half, and one out of every fifty from the community's half was to be given to the Levites (vv. 28–31, 41). A detailed enumeration of the portions is given (vv. 32–47).

[35] and thirty-two thousand persons in all, of women who had not known a man intimately. [36] And the half, the portion for those who had gone out to war, was in number three hundred and thirty-seven thousand five hundred sheep; [37] and the LORD's [5]tribute of the sheep was six hundred and seventy-five. [38] The cattle *were* thirty-six thousand, of which the LORD's tribute *was* seventy-two. [39] The donkeys *were* thirty thousand five hundred, of which the LORD's tribute *was* sixty-one. [40] The persons *were* sixteen thousand, of which the LORD's tribute *was* thirty-two persons. [41] So Moses gave the tribute *which was* the LORD's heave offering to Eleazar the priest, [z]as the LORD commanded Moses.

[42] And from the children of Israel's half, which Moses separated from the men who fought— [43] now the half belonging to the congregation was three hundred and thirty-seven thousand five hundred sheep, [44] thirty-six thousand cattle, [45] thirty thousand five hundred donkeys, [46] and sixteen thousand persons— [47] and [a]from the children of Israel's half Moses took one of every fifty, drawn from man and beast, and gave them to the Levites, who kept charge of the tabernacle of the LORD, as the LORD commanded Moses.

[48] Then the officers who *were* over thousands of the army, the captains of thousands and captains of hundreds, came near to Moses; [49] and they said to Moses, "Your servants have taken a count of the men of war who *are* under our command, and not a man of us is missing. [50] Therefore we have brought an offering for the LORD, what every man found of ornaments of gold: armlets and bracelets and signet rings and earrings and necklaces, [b]to make [6]atonement for ourselves before the LORD." [51] So Moses and Eleazar the priest received the gold from them, all the fashioned ornaments. [52] And all the gold of the offering that they offered to the LORD, from the captains of thousands and captains of hundreds, was sixteen thousand seven hundred and fifty shekels. [53] [c](The men of war had taken spoil, every man for himself.) [54] And Moses and Eleazar the priest received the gold from the captains of thousands and of hundreds, and brought it into the tabernacle of meeting [d]as a memorial for the children of Israel before the LORD.

The Tribes Settling East of the Jordan

32 Now the children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of livestock; and when they saw the land of [a]Jazer and the land of [b]Gilead, that indeed the region *was* a place for livestock, [2] the children of Gad and the children of Reuben came and spoke to Moses, to Eleazar the priest, and to the leaders of the congregation, saying, [3] "Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, [c]Nimrah, [d]Heshbon, Elealeh, [e]Shebam, Nebo, and [f]Beon, [4] the country [g]which the LORD defeated before the congregation of Israel, *is* a land for livestock, and your servants have livestock." [5] Therefore they said, "If we have found favor in your sight, let this land be given to your servants as a possession. Do not take us over the Jordan."

[6] And Moses said to the children of Gad and to the children of Reuben: "Shall your brethren go to war while you sit here? [7] Now why will you [h]discourage the heart of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the LORD has given them? [8] Thus your fathers did [i]when I sent them away from Kadesh Barnea [j]to see the land. [9] For [k]when they went up to the Valley of Eshcol and saw the land, they discouraged the heart of the children of Israel, so that they did not go into the land which the LORD had given them. [10] [l]So the LORD's anger was aroused on that day, and He swore an oath, saying, [11] 'Surely none of the men who came up from Egypt, [m]from twenty years old and above, shall see the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, because [n]they have not wholly followed Me, [12] except Caleb the son of Jephunneh, the Kenizzite, and Joshua the son of Nun, [o]for they have wholly followed the LORD.' [13] So the LORD's anger was aroused against Israel, and He made them [p]wander in the wilderness forty years, until [q]all the generation that had done evil in the sight of the LORD was gone. [14] And look! You have risen in your fathers' place, a brood of sinful men, to increase still more the [r]fierce anger of the LORD against Israel. [15] For if you [s]turn away from following Him, He will once again leave them in the wilderness, and you will destroy all these people."

[16] Then they came near to him and said: "We will build sheepfolds here for our livestock, and cities for our little ones, [17] but [t]we ourselves will be armed, ready *to go* before the children of Israel until we have brought them to their place; and our little ones will dwell in the fortified cities because of the inhabitants of the land. [18] [u]We will not return to our homes until every one of the

37 [5]*tax*

41 [z]Num. 5:9, 10; 18:8, 19

47 [a]Num. 31:30

50 [b]Ex. 30:12–16
[6]Lit. *covering*

53 [c]Num. 31:32; Deut. 20:14

54 [d]Ex. 30:16

CHAPTER 32

1 [a]Num. 21:32; Josh. 13:25; 2 Sam. 24:5
[b]Deut. 3:13

3 [c]Num. 32:36
[d]Josh. 13:17, 26
[e]Num. 32:38
[f]Num. 32:38

4 [g]Num. 21:24, 34, 35

7 [h]Num. 13:27—14:4

8 [i]Num. 13:3, 26
[j]Deut. 1:19–25

9 [k]Num. 13:24, 31; Deut. 1:24, 28

10 [l]Num. 14:11; Deut. 1:34–36

11 [m]Num. 14:28, 29; 26:63–65; Deut. 1:35 [n]Num. 14:24, 30

12 [o]Num. 14:6–9, 24, 30; Deut. 1:36; Josh. 14:8, 9

13 [p]Num. 14:33–35
[q]Num. 26:64, 65

14 [r]Num. 11:1; Deut. 1:34

15 [s]Deut. 30:17, 18; Josh. 22:16–18; 2 Chr. 7:19; 15:2

17 [t]Josh. 4:12, 13

18 [u]Josh. 22:1–4

■ **32:1–42** The tribes of Reuben and Gad, possessors of much livestock, requested permission to settle in the Transjordan territory (the region east of the Jordan River and the Dead Sea) already conquered (vv. 1–5; cf. 21:24–26, 31–35). Because all of Israel was to participate in the conquest and because their departure would dishearten the other tribes, Moses sternly warned them against the sin of the Exodus generation (vv. 6–15). His admonition includes a classic recognition of God's sovereign dominion as judge: "be sure your sin will find you out" (v. 23).

children of Israel has [j]received his inheritance. 19 For we will not inherit with them on the other side of the Jordan and beyond, [v]because our inheritance has fallen to us on this eastern side of the Jordan."

20 Then [w]Moses said to them: "If you do this thing, if you arm yourselves before the LORD for the war, 21 and all your armed men cross over the Jordan before the LORD until He has driven out His enemies from before Him, 22 and [x]the land is subdued before the LORD, then afterward [y]you may return and be blameless before the LORD and before Israel; and [z]this land shall be your possession before the LORD. 23 But if you do not do so, then take note, you have sinned against the LORD; and be sure [a]your sin will find you out. 24 [b]Build cities for your little ones and folds for your sheep, and do [2]what has proceeded out of your mouth."

25 And the children of Gad and the children of Reuben spoke to Moses, saying: "Your servants will do as my lord commands. 26 [c]Our little ones, our wives, our flocks, and all our livestock will be there in the cities of Gilead; 27 [d]but your servants will cross over, every man armed for war, before the LORD to battle, just as my lord says."

28 So Moses gave command [e]concerning them to Eleazar the priest, to Joshua the son of Nun, and to the chief fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel. 29 And Moses said to them: "If the children of Gad and the children of Reuben cross over the Jordan with you, every man armed for battle before the LORD, and the land is subdued before you, then you shall give them the land of Gilead as a possession. 30 But if they do not cross over armed with you, they shall have possessions among you in the land of Canaan."

31 Then the children of Gad and the children of Reuben answered, saying: "As the LORD has said to your servants, so we will do. 32 We will cross over armed before the LORD into the land of Canaan, but the possession of our inheritance *shall remain* with us on this side of the Jordan."

33 So [f]Moses gave to the children of Gad, to the children of Reuben, and to half the tribe of Manasseh the son of Joseph, [g]the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites and the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, the land with its cities within the borders, the cities of the surrounding country. 34 And the children of Gad built [h]Dibon and Ataroth and [i]Aroer, 35 Atroth and Shophan and [j]Jazer and Jogbehah, 36 [k]Beth Nimrah and Beth Haran, [l]fortified cities, and folds for sheep. 37 And the children of Reuben built [m]Heshbon and Elealeh and Kirjathaim, 38 [n]Nebo and [o]Baal Meon [p](*their* names being changed) and Shibmah; and they gave *other* names to the cities which they built.

39 And the children of [q]Machir the son of Manasseh went to Gilead and took it, and [3]dispossessed the Amorites who *were* in it. 40 So Moses [r]gave Gilead to Machir the son of Manasseh, and he dwelt in it. 41 Also [s]Jair the son of Manasseh went and took its small towns, and called them [t]Havoth Jair.[4] 42 Then Nobah went and took Kenath and its villages, and he called it Nobah, after his own name.

Israel's Journey from Egypt Reviewed

33 These *are* the journeys of the children of Israel, who went out of the land of Egypt by their armies under the [a]hand of Moses and Aaron. 2 Now Moses wrote down the starting points of their journeys at the command of the LORD. And these *are* their journeys according to their starting points:

3 They [b]departed from Rameses in [c]the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the day after the Passover the children of Israel went out [d]with boldness in the sight of all the Egyptians. 4 For the Egyptians were burying all *their* firstborn, [e]whom the LORD had killed among them. Also [f]on their gods the LORD had executed judgments.

5 [g]Then the children of Israel moved from Rameses and camped at Succoth. 6 They departed from [h]Succoth and camped at Etham, which *is* on the edge of the wilderness. 7 [i]They moved from Etham and turned back to Pi Hahiroth, which *is* east of Baal Zephon; and they camped near Migdol. 8 They departed [l]from before Hahiroth and [j]passed through the midst of the sea into the wilderness, went three days' journey in the Wilderness of Etham, and camped at Marah. 9 They

18 [l]*possessed*
19 [v]Josh. 12:1; 13:8
20 [w]Deut. 3:18
22 [x]Deut. 3:20 [y]Josh. 22:4 [z]Deut. 3:12, 15, 16, 18
23 [a]Is. 59:12
24 [b]Num. 32:16 [2]*what you said you would do*
26 [c]Josh. 1:14
27 [d]Josh. 4:12
28 [e]Josh. 1:13
33 [f]Deut. 3:8–17; 29:8 [g]Num. 21:24, 33, 35
34 [h]Num. 33:45, 46 [i]Deut. 2:36
35 [j]Num. 32:1, 3
36 [k]Num. 32:3 [l]Num. 32:24
37 [m]Num. 21:27
38 [n]Is. 46:1 [o]Ezek. 25:9 [p]Ex. 23:13
39 [q]Gen. 50:23 [3]*drove out*
40 [r]Deut. 3:12, 13, 15
41 [s]Deut. 3:14 [t]Judg. 10:4 [4]Lit. *Towns of Jair*

CHAPTER 33

1 [a]Ps. 77:20
3 [b]Ex. 12:37 [c]Ex. 12:2; 13:4 [d]Ex. 14:8
4 [e]Ex. 12:29 [f]Is. 19:1
5 [g]Ex. 12:37
6 [h]Ex. 13:20
7 [i]Ex. 14:1, 2, 9
8 [j]Ex. 14:22; 15:22, 23 [l]Many Heb. mss., Sam., Syr., Tg., Vg. *from Pi Hahiroth;* cf. Num. 33:7

■ **32:33 half the tribe of Manasseh.** Apparently, many from this tribe had joined Reuben and Gad in wishing to live east of the Jordan. During the time in the wilderness Manasseh had increased from 32,200 to 52,700 (cf. 1:35 and 26:34). Reuben and Gad settled territory already conquered (vv. 33–38), but the half-tribe of Manasseh went further north and made new conquests (vv. 39–42).

■ **33:3, 4** These verses give a vivid summary of the Israelites' departure from Egypt.

■ **33:4 all their firstborn.** See Ex. 12:29–33.

on their gods . . . judgment. See note on Ex. 12:12.

■ **33:5–48** Many of the names in this list may represent desert camps that have since disappeared. For other mention of some locations, see the cross references.

moved from Marah and [k]came to Elim. At Elim *were* twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees; so they camped there.

10 They moved from Elim and camped by the Red Sea. 11 They moved from the Red Sea and camped in the [l]Wilderness of Sin. 12 They journeyed from the Wilderness of Sin and camped at Dophkah. 13 They departed from Dophkah and camped at Alush. 14 They moved from Alush and camped at [m]Rephidim, where there was no water for the people to drink.

15 They departed from Rephidim and camped in the [n]Wilderness of Sinai. 16 They moved from the Wilderness of Sinai and camped [o]at [2]Kibroth Hattaavah. 17 They departed from Kibroth Hattaavah and [p]camped at Hazeroth. 18 They departed from Hazeroth and camped at [q]Rithmah. 19 They departed from Rithmah and camped at Rimmon Perez. 20 They departed from Rimmon Perez and camped at Libnah. 21 They moved from Libnah and camped at Rissah. 22 They journeyed from Rissah and camped at Kehelathah. 23 They went from Kehelathah and camped at Mount Shepher. 24 They moved from Mount Shepher and camped at Haradah. 25 They moved from Haradah and camped at Makheloth. 26 They moved from Makheloth and camped at Tahath. 27 They departed from Tahath and camped at Terah. 28 They moved from Terah and camped at Mithkah. 29 They went from Mithkah and camped at Hashmonah. 30 They departed from Hashmonah and [r]camped at Moseroth. 31 They departed from Moseroth and camped at Bene Jaakan. 32 They moved from [s]Bene Jaakan and [t]camped at Hor Hagidgad. 33 They went from Hor Hagidgad and camped at Jotbathah. 34 They moved from Jotbathah and camped at Abronah. 35 They departed from Abronah [u]and camped at Ezion Geber. 36 They moved from Ezion Geber and camped in the [v]Wilderness of Zin, which *is* Kadesh. 37 They moved from [w]Kadesh and camped at Mount Hor, on the boundary of the land of Edom.

38 Then [x]Aaron the priest went up to Mount Hor at the command of the LORD, and died there in the fortieth year after the children of Israel had come out of the land of Egypt, on the first *day* of the fifth month. 39 Aaron *was* one hundred and twenty-three years old when he died on Mount Hor.

40 Now [y]the king of Arad, the Canaanite, who dwelt in the South in the land of Canaan, heard of the coming of the children of Israel.

41 So they departed from Mount Hor and camped at Zalmonah. 42 They departed from Zalmonah and camped at Punon. 43 They departed from Punon and [z]camped at Oboth. 44 [a]They departed from Oboth and camped at Ije Abarim, at the border of Moab. 45 They departed from [3]Ijim and camped [b]at Dibon Gad. 46 They moved from Dibon Gad and camped at [c]Almon Diblathaim. 47 They moved from Almon Diblathaim [d]and camped in the mountains of Abarim, before Nebo. 48 They departed from the mountains of Abarim and [e]camped in the plains of Moab by the Jordan, *across from* Jericho. 49 They camped by the Jordan, from Beth Jesimoth as far as the [f]Abel Acacia Grove[4] in the plains of Moab.

Instructions for the Conquest of Canaan

50 Now the LORD spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab by the Jordan, *across from* Jericho, saying, 51 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: [g]'When you have crossed the Jordan into the land of Canaan, 52 [h]then you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, destroy all their engraved stones, destroy all their molded images, and demolish all their [5]high places; 53 you shall dispossess *the inhabitants of* the land and dwell in it, for I have given you the land to [i]possess. 54 And [j]you shall divide the land by lot as an inheritance among your families; to the larger you shall give a larger inheritance, and to the smaller you shall give a smaller inheritance; there everyone's *inheritance* shall be whatever falls to him by lot. You shall inherit according to the tribes of your fathers. 55 But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall be that those whom you let remain *shall be* [k]irritants in your eyes and thorns in your sides, and they shall harass you in the land where you dwell. 56 Moreover it shall be *that* I will do to you as I thought to do to them.' "

The Appointed Boundaries of Canaan

34 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Command the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When you come into [a]the land of Canaan, this *is* the land that shall fall to you as

9 [k]Ex. 15:27

11 [l]Ex. 16:1

14 [m]Ex. 17:1; 19:2

15 [n]Ex. 16:1; 19:1, 2

16 [o]Num. 11:34 [2]Lit. *Graves of Craving*

17 [p]Num. 11:35

18 [q]Num. 12:16

30 [r]Deut. 10:6

32 [s]Deut. 10:6 [t]Deut. 10:7

35 [u]Deut. 2:8; 1 Kin. 9:26; 22:48

36 [v]Num. 20:1; 27:14

37 [w]Num. 20:22, 23; 21:4

38 [x]Num. 20:25, 28; Deut. 10:6; 32:50

40 [y]Num. 21:1

43 [z]Num. 21:10

44 [a]Num. 21:11

45 [b]Num. 32:34 [3]Same as *Ije Abarim*, v. 44

46 [c]Jer. 48:22; Ezek. 6:14

47 [d]Num. 21:20; Deut. 32:49

48 [e]Num. 22:1; 31:12; 35:1

49 [f]Num. 25:1; Josh. 2:1 [4]Heb. *Abel Shittim*

51 [g]Deut. 7:1, 2; 9:1; Josh. 3:17

52 [h]Ex. 23:24, 33; 34:13; Deut. 7:2, 5; 12:3; Judg. 2:2; Ps. 106:34–36 [5]Places for pagan worship

53 [i]Deut. 11:31; Josh. 21:43

54 [j]Num. 26:53–56

55 [k]Josh. 23:13; Judg. 2:3

CHAPTER 34

2 [a]Gen. 17:8; Deut. 1:7, 8; Ps. 78:54, 55; 105:11

- **33:31 Bene Jaakan.** See Deut. 10:6.
- **33:36 Wilderness of Zin.** See 13:21.
- **33:44 Ije Abarim.** See 27:12.
- **33:52 drive out all the inhabitants.** God orders the complete extermination of the Canaanites and the destruction of all marks of idolatry, as had been done to the Midianites (ch. 31).
- **33:53 dwell in it.** God sets forth rules for settlement, summarizing the directions in 26:52–56.
- **34:1–15** These boundaries of Canaan do not include the territory

an inheritance—the land of Canaan to its boundaries. 3 [b]Your southern border shall be from the Wilderness of Zin along the border of Edom; then your southern border shall extend eastward to the end of [c]the Salt Sea; 4 your border shall turn from the southern side of [d]the Ascent of Akrabbim, continue to Zin, and be on the south of [e]Kadesh Barnea; then it shall go on to [f]Hazar Addar, and continue to Azmon; 5 the border shall turn from Azmon [g]to the Brook of Egypt, and it shall end at the Sea.

6 'As for the [h]western border, you shall have the Great Sea for a border; this shall be your western border.

7 'And this shall be your northern border: From the Great Sea you shall mark out your *border* line to [i]Mount Hor; 8 from Mount Hor you shall mark out *your border* [j]to the entrance of Hamath; then the direction of the border shall be toward [k]Zedad; 9 the border shall proceed to Ziphron, and it shall end at [l]Hazar Enan. This shall be your northern border.

10 'You shall mark out your eastern border from Hazar Enan to Shepham; 11 the border shall go down from Shepham [m]to Riblah on the east side of Ain; the border shall go down and reach to the eastern [l]side of the Sea [n]of Chinnereth; 12 the border shall go down along the Jordan, and it shall end at [o]the Salt Sea. This shall be your land with its surrounding boundaries.' "

13 Then Moses commanded the children of Israel, saying: [p]"This *is* the land which you shall inherit by lot, which the LORD has commanded to give to the nine tribes and to the half-tribe. 14 [q]For the tribe of the children of Reuben according to the house of their fathers, and the tribe of the children of Gad according to the house of their fathers, have received *their inheritance;* and the half-tribe of Manasseh has received its inheritance. 15 The two tribes and the half-tribe have received their inheritance on this side of the Jordan, *across from* Jericho eastward, toward the sunrise."

The Leaders Appointed to Divide the Land

16 And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 17 "These *are* the names of the men who shall divide the land among you as an inheritance: [r]Eleazar the priest and Joshua the son of Nun. 18 And you shall take one [s]leader of every tribe to divide the land for the inheritance. 19 These *are* the names of the men: from the tribe of Judah, Caleb the son of Jephunneh; 20 from the tribe of the children of Simeon, Shemuel the son of Ammihud; 21 from the tribe of Benjamin, Elidad the son of Chislon; 22 a leader from the tribe of the children of Dan, Bukki the son of Jogli; 23 from the sons of Joseph: a leader from the tribe of the children of Manasseh, Hanniel the son of Ephod, 24 and a leader from the tribe of the children of Ephraim, Kemuel the son of Shiphtan; 25 a leader from the tribe of the children of Zebulun, Elizaphan the son of Parnach; 26 a leader from the tribe of the children of Issachar, Paltiel the son of Azzan; 27 a leader from the tribe of the children of Asher, Ahihud the son of Shelomi; 28 and a leader from the tribe of the children of Naphtali, Pedahel the son of Ammihud."

29 These *are* the ones the LORD commanded to [z]divide the inheritance among the children of Israel in the land of Canaan.

Cities for the Levites

35 And the LORD spoke to Moses in [a]the plains of Moab by the Jordan *across from* Jericho, saying: 2 [b]"Command the children of Israel that they give the Levites cities to dwell in from the inheritance of their possession, and you shall *also* give the Levites [c]common-land around the cities. 3 They shall have the cities to dwell in; and their common-land shall be for their cattle, for their herds, and for all their animals. 4 The common-land of the cities which you will give the Levites *shall extend* from the wall of the city outward a thousand cubits all around. 5 And you shall measure outside the city on the east side two thousand cubits, on the south side two thousand cubits, on the west side two thousand cubits, and on the north side two thousand cubits. The city *shall be* in the middle. This shall belong to them as common-land for the cities.

6 "Now among the cities which you will give to the Levites *you shall appoint* [d]six cities of refuge, to which a manslayer may flee. And to these you shall add forty-two cities. 7 So all the cities you will give to the Levites *shall be* [e]forty-eight; these *you shall give* with their common-

3 [b]Josh. 15:1–3; Ezek. 47:13, 19 [c]Gen. 14:3; Josh. 15:2
4 [d]Josh. 15:3 [e]Num. 13:26; 32:8 [f]Josh. 15:3, 4
5 [g]Gen. 15:18; Josh. 15:4, 47; 1 Kin. 8:65; Is. 27:12
6 [h]Ex. 23:31; Josh. 15:12; Ezek. 47:20
7 [i]Num. 33:37
8 [j]Num. 13:21; Josh. 13:5; 2 Kin. 14:25 [k]Ezek. 47:15
9 [l]Ezek. 47:17
11 [m]2 Kin. 23:33; Jer. 39:5, 6 [n]Deut. 3:17; Josh. 11:2; 12:3; 13:27; 19:35; Matt. 14:34; Luke 5:1 [l]Lit. *shoulder*
12 [o]Num. 34:3
13 [p]Gen. 15:18; Num. 26:52–56; Deut. 11:24; Josh. 14:1–5
14 [q]Num. 32:33
17 [r]Josh. 14:1, 2; 19:51
18 [s]Num. 1:4, 16
29 [z]*apportion*

CHAPTER 35

1 [a]Num. 33:50
2 [b]Josh. 14:3, 4; 21:2, 3; Ezek. 45:1; 48:10–20 [c]Lev. 25:32–34
6 [d]Deut. 4:41; Josh. 20:2, 7, 8; 21:3, 13
7 [e]Josh. 21:41

already assigned in Transjordan, east of the Jordan River (vv. 13–15). See ch. 32.

■ **34:16–29** The Lord designates men to assign the portions of the land of Canaan: Eleazar the priest (Num. 20:25–26) and Joshua the commander (Num. 27:18–23) were to be in charge, together with a leader from each of the ten tribes that had not yet been given their inheritance. None of these ten names are included in earlier lists of leaders (Num. 1:5–15; 2:3–29; 7:12–78), nor is any one of them the son of a man included in those lists.

■ **35:1–8** Because the Levites were not given a tribal land inheritance (18:20), they were instead assigned forty-eight towns with surrounding pastureland, including six "cities of refuge."

land. 8 And the cities which you will give *shall be* [f]from the possession of the children of Israel; [g]from the larger *tribe* you shall give many, from the smaller you shall give few. Each shall give some of its cities to the Levites, in proportion to the inheritance that each receives."

Cities of Refuge

9 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 10 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: [h]'When you cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan, 11 then [i]you shall appoint cities to be cities of refuge for you, that the manslayer who kills any person accidentally may flee there. 12 [j]They shall be cities of refuge for you from the avenger, that the manslayer may not die until he stands before the congregation in judgment. 13 And of the cities which you give, you shall have [k]six cities of refuge. 14 [l]You shall appoint three cities on this side of the Jordan, and three cities you shall appoint in the land of Canaan, *which* will be cities of refuge. 15 These six cities shall be for refuge for the children of Israel, [m]for the stranger, and for the sojourner among them, that anyone who kills a person accidentally may flee there.

16 [n]'But if he strikes him with an iron implement, so that he dies, he *is* a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death. 17 And if he strikes him with a stone in the hand, by which one could die, and he does die, he *is* a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death. 18 Or *if* he strikes him with a wooden hand weapon, by which one could die, and he does die, he *is* a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death. 19 [o]The [t] avenger of blood himself shall put the murderer to death; when he meets him, he shall put him to death. 20 [p]If he pushes him out of hatred or, [q]while lying in wait, hurls something at him so that he dies, 21 or in enmity he strikes him with his hand so that he dies, the one who struck *him* shall surely be put to death. He *is* a murderer. The avenger of blood shall put the murderer to death when he meets him.

22 'However, if he pushes him suddenly [r]without enmity, or throws anything at him without lying in wait, 23 or uses a stone, by which a man could die, throwing *it* at him without seeing *him,* so that he dies, while he was not his enemy or seeking his harm, 24 then [s]the congregation shall judge between the manslayer and the avenger of blood according to these judgments. 25 So the congregation shall deliver the manslayer from the hand of the avenger of blood, and the congregation shall return him to the city of refuge where he had fled, and [t]he shall remain there until the death of the high priest [u]who was anointed with the holy oil. 26 But if the manslayer at any time goes outside the limits of the city of refuge where he fled, 27 and the avenger of blood finds him outside the limits of his city of refuge, and the avenger of blood kills the manslayer, he shall not be guilty of [2]blood, 28 because he should have remained in his city of refuge until the death of the high priest. But after the death of the high priest the manslayer may return to the land of his possession.

29 'And these *things* shall be [v]a statute of judgment to you throughout your generations in all your dwellings. 30 Whoever kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death on the [w]testimony of witnesses; but one witness is not *sufficient* testimony against a person for the death *penalty.* 31 Moreover you shall take no ransom for the life of a murderer who *is* guilty of death, but he shall surely be put to death. 32 And you shall take no ransom for him who has fled to his city of refuge, that he may return to dwell in the land before the death of the priest. 33 So you shall not pollute the land where you *are;* for blood [x]defiles the land, and no [3]atonement can be made for the land, for the blood that is shed on it, except [y]by the blood of him who shed it. 34 Therefore [z]do not defile the land which you inhabit, in the midst of which I dwell; for [a]I the LORD dwell among the children of Israel.' "

Marriage of Female Heirs

36 Now the chief fathers of the families of the [a]children of Gilead the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, of the families of the sons of Joseph, came near and [b]spoke before Moses and before the leaders, the chief fathers of the children of Israel. 2 And they said: [c]"The LORD commanded my lord *Moses* to give the land as an inheritance by lot to the children of

8 [f]Josh. 21:3 [g]Num. 26:54; 33:54

10 [h]Deut. 19:2; Josh. 20:1–9

11 [i]Ex. 21:13; Num. 35:22–25; Deut. 19:1–13

12 [j]Deut. 19:6; Josh. 20:3, 5, 6

13 [k]Num. 35:6

14 [l]Deut. 4:41; Josh. 20:8

15 [m]Num. 15:16

16 [n]Ex. 21:12, 14; Lev. 24:17; Deut. 19:11, 12

19 [o]Num. 35:21, 24, 27; Deut. 19:6, 12 [t]A family member who is to avenge the victim

20 [p]Gen. 4:8; 2 Sam. 3:27; 20:10; 1 Kin. 2:31, 32 [q]Ex. 21:14; Deut. 19:11, 12

22 [r]Ex. 21:13

24 [s]Num. 35:12; Josh. 20:6

25 [t]Josh. 20:6 [u]Ex. 29:7; Lev. 4:3; 21:10

27 [2]Murder

29 [v]Num. 27:11

30 [w]Deut. 17:6; 19:15; Matt. 18:16; John 7:51; 8:17, 18; 2 Cor. 13:1; Heb. 10:28

33 [x]Deut. 21:7, 8; Ps. 106:38 [y]Gen. 9:6 [3]Lit. *covering*

34 [z]Lev. 18:24, 25; Deut. 21:23 [a]Ex. 29:45, 46

CHAPTER 36

1 [a]Num. 26:29 [b]Num. 27:1–11

2 [c]Num. 26:55; 33:54; Josh. 17:4

■ **35:9–33** Six cities of refuge were to be established for those who had accidentally killed someone. See note on Deut. 4:41–43.

■ **35:12 the avenger.** A member of the victim's family was customarily designated to avenge the victim's death by killing the manslayer.

■ **35:25 until the death of the high priest.** See also v. 28. The death of the high priest brought a change in the legal status of a manslayer—the guilty one was no longer liable to the penalty for manslaughter.

■ **35:30** No one was to be put to death on the evidence of only one witness.

■ **35:31, 32** Accepting a ransom payment was forbidden in cases of murder and manslaughter. This provision emphasizes the value God places on human life.

■ **35:33, 34** Pollution of the land by bloodshed could be removed only by shedding the blood of the murderer (Gen. 9:5, 6 and notes).

■ **36:1–11** See note on 27:1–11.

Israel, and [d]my lord was commanded by the LORD to give the inheritance of our brother Zelophehad to his daughters. [3] Now if they are married to any of the sons of the *other* tribes of the children of Israel, then their inheritance will be [e]taken from the inheritance of our fathers, and it will be added to the inheritance of the tribe into which they marry; so it will be taken from the lot of our inheritance. [4] And when [f]the Jubilee of the children of Israel comes, then their inheritance will be added to the inheritance of the tribe into which they marry; so their inheritance will be taken away from the inheritance of the tribe of our fathers."

[5] Then Moses commanded the children of Israel according to the word of the LORD, saying: [g]"What the tribe of the sons of Joseph speaks is right. [6] This *is* what the LORD commands concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, saying, 'Let them [l]marry whom they think best, [h]but they may marry only within the family of their father's tribe.' [7] So the inheritance of the children of Israel shall not change hands from tribe to tribe, for every one of the children of Israel shall [i]keep the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers. [8] And [j]every daughter who possesses an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Israel shall be the wife of one of the family of her father's tribe, so that the children of Israel each may possess the inheritance of his fathers. [9] Thus no inheritance shall change hands from *one* tribe to another, but every tribe of the children of Israel shall keep its own inheritance."

[10] Just as the LORD commanded Moses, so did the daughters of Zelophehad; [11] [k]for Mahlah, Tirzah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Noah, the daughters of Zelophehad, were married to the sons of their father's brothers. [12] They were married into the families of the children of Manasseh the son of Joseph, and their inheritance remained in the tribe of their father's family.

[13] These *are* the commandments and the judgments which the LORD commanded the children of Israel by the hand of Moses [l]in the plains of Moab by the Jordan, *across from* Jericho.

2 [d]Num. 27:1, 5–7
3 [e]Num. 27:4
4 [f]Lev. 25:10
5 [g]Num. 27:7
6 [h]Num. 36:11, 12
[l]Lit. *be wives to*
7 [i]1 Kin. 21:3
8 [j]1 Chr. 23:22
11 [k]Num. 26:33; 27:1
13 [l]Num. 26:3; 33:50

■ **36:4 the Jubilee.** In the Jubilee Year, all property would revert to its original owner or heir (Lev. 25:8–17). In the case of the daughters of Zelophehad it had been established that women could inherit land (27:1–11). If a daughter inheriting property were to marry outside her tribe, it appeared that the Law of Jubilee would cause the land to be transfered to the tribe of the new husband. Moses rules that a woman with property may not marry outside her tribe. In agreement with this, the daughters of Zelophehad married relatives in Manasseh.

The Fifth Book of Moses Called

DEUTERONOMY

Author By its own testimony (1:1, 5; 31:22), Deuteronomy is the work of Moses. Mosaic authorship is affirmed many times elsewhere in the Old Testament (e.g. 2 Kin. 14:6), in ancient Jewish sources (e.g., Josephus), and in the New Testament. This view was almost universally held until the rise of rationalistic criticism in modern times (Introduction to the Pentateuch: Author and Date).

Critics correctly point out that the last chapter could not have been written by Moses. It is widely agreed that ch. 34 is an addendum, perhaps appended by Joshua. In the same way, the Book of Joshua ends with the death of Joshua, this record clearly having been supplied by the author of the Book of Judges, who appended verses from Judges to the end of Joshua (Judg. 2:7–9; cf. Josh. 24:29–31). Likewise, the first verses of Ezra are copied and appended to the last chapter of Chronicles (Chronicles ends in the middle of a sentence). This way of linking a subsequent book to the preceding one (or variations of this practice) was common in antiquity and was intended to show the proper sequence of scrolls or clay tablets. It is probable that Joshua added the note on Moses' death and Israel's acceptance of Joshua in order to link his own book to Moses' great production. Such obvious additions do not, however, negate the general authorship of Moses.

More controversially, some critics have alleged that the language of 1:1, 5 indicates that the writer of the book must have been located on the west side of the Jordan River, i.e., in Canaan (the Hebrew phrase here translated "this side of the Jordan" is often translated "the other side of the Jordan" or "beyond the Jordan"). Such a description, they argue, belies the credibility of Deuteronomy as a work of Moses, since Moses never crossed the Jordan. This argument assumes that the Hebrew phrase in question must always refer to the region east of the Jordan. It is evident, however, that the precise meaning of the phrase must be determined by the context, and that it can refer either to Transjordan (the region to the east of the Jordan and the Dead Sea, 1:1–5; 3:8; 4:41, 47, 49) or to Canaan itself (3:20, 25; 11:30; Josh. 9:1, 10). Here it clearly means the region east of the Jordan, as the geographical descriptions indicate (1:1, 5).

Date and Occasion In the nineteenth century, biblical critics contended that Deuteronomy was written about 620 B.C., as part of the religious reform of King Josiah, in which he insisted that worship be centered in Jerusalem. The law of the central sanctuary (ch. 12) was said by these critics to have been the invention of a writer in the time of Josiah. Since the early twentieth century, however, this view has received less favor. Some have dated Deuteronomy as early as Samuel, others as late as the Exile. Many critics still date the book in the seventh century B.C., which is the period of Josiah. But these scholars also question the unity of the book. If some parts seem "early" (from Moses' time), they ascribe those parts to an old tradition that has conveniently been preserved. If other parts seem "late" (during or after the time of Josiah), they are called "later editions" or due to "late editing." Such elastic, subjective, and speculative methods cannot be conclusively disproved without a copy from Moses' own time, which no one possesses. No concrete evidence rules out the composition of Deuteronomy at the time of Moses, making reasonable allowances for additions by someone like Joshua, who appended Moses' obituary to the book, and for some later updating of Hebrew grammar and place names.

The background and setting of the book reflect conditions prior to the conquest of Canaan under Joshua. There is no mention of a king in Judah or of the city of Jerusalem, which is mentioned over one hundred times by the prophet Jeremiah (who wrote in Josiah's day). It is unlikely that a sixth-century author would make no allusion whatever to that capital city or its temple. The twelve tribes are represented as one nation (instead of, as in Josiah's period, the kingdoms of Judah and Israel). The Transjordan cities of refuge are named, while those in Canaan (which were named later by Joshua) are not. The Babylonian names of months are not used, and there are no Persian loan words in the vocabulary, even though such words would be expected to appear in a work supposedly written during a period when these empires were dominant. Moses, Aaron, and Joshua are named, but no later persons or later historical incidents are mentioned. It is unlikely that a later author, even one well-versed in the lore of the past, could so completely avoid the use of later terms and the mention of persons and events of his own period.

Perhaps most significant is the general conformity of Deuteronomy's structure to the covenant or treaty form of the mid-second millennium B.C. (the approximate time of Moses). We find the following treaty elements in Deuteronomy: (a) a preamble identifying the covenant mediator (1:1–5); (b) a historical prologue reviewing previous covenant history (1:6—4:40); (c) stipulations expounding the covenant way of life (4:44—11:32; 12—26); (d) a declaration of sanctions stating the blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience of the covenant (chs. 27—30); and (e) a provision for the administration of the covenant after the death of the inaugural mediator (chs. 31—34). The main divisions from

the covenant documents of Moses' lifetime, then, are discernible in the fifth book of the Pentateuch, Deuteronomy.

We conclude, therefore, that Deuteronomy was written by Moses, Israel's lawgiver, before his death in 1406 B.C.

Characteristics and Themes

Deuteronomy has been much used both by Christians and ancient Jews. It is quoted in the New Testament over fifty times, a number exceeded only by Psalms and Isaiah. The book contains much exhortation. The detailed legal material (chs. 14—26), much of which parallels Leviticus, is not as familiar or as much used as the rest, although it has importance for special purposes.

The book is a repetition of the law and history of Israel. It consists mainly of three great speeches and a legal compendium given by Moses at the end of his life, while the people were encamped in the plains of Moab, just before Joshua took command and led the people in the conquest of Canaan. The conquest of Transjordan had been successfully concluded, and Moses challenged the people in these farewell addresses.

As Moses' farewell messages to his people, the book combines exhortation and commandments, and serves as an example of how the Law should be taught. The opening address (1:5—4:40) recounts the experiences of Israel under Moses' leadership. Deuteronomy does not speak of how Moses confronted Pharaoh and how the miracles of the ten plagues forced Pharaoh to let the people go, but it alludes to the Exodus repeatedly (five times in the first address: 1:20, 34; 4:20, 34, 37). Moses recounts God's providential and miraculous care for the people during the journey from Egypt to Sinai. Then he details their defeat both spiritually and militarily at Kadesh Barnea. There are references here to events recorded in Numbers, but like the record in Numbers, almost nothing is said about events of the forty years of wilderness wandering. The journey around Edom toward Transjordan is mentioned, and the defeat of the kings Sihon and Og is recorded in fuller detail than in Numbers. Then comes the allocation of land in Transjordan for the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh (as in Num. 32), and the narrative ends with reference to Moses' plea for himself to enter Canaan, which God disallows (as in Num. 27:12–23). Moses concludes the address with exhortations to be loyal to the Lord.

The second address (4:44—11:32) is composed of exhortations. Some consider this address as continuing to 26:19 with inclusion of the laws and regulations of chs. 12—26. The speech begins with the Ten Commandments, almost exactly like the wording in Ex. 20, aside from the fourth commandment (5:12–15 note). The terror of the theophany (a visible self-revelation of God) is recalled with the call to obedience. Only the Ten Commandments are given directly by the voice of God; the rest of the law is mediated through Moses (5:22 note). The famous *Shema,* "Hear, O Israel: The LORD Our God, the LORD is one," is given in 6:4, with the exhortation to teach, remember, and obey. The following chapters are sprinkled with examples of God's care and judgments since leaving Egypt—all allusions to material in Exodus and Numbers. These examples serve to warn Israel to trust the Lord and not themselves. This leads to a promise of success in the coming wars of Canaan.

The laws (chs. 12—26) include regulations for worship, clean foods, slaves and debts, annual feasts, judges, cities of refuge, and various matters of conduct. Most of these have some parallel to material found in the previous books of the Pentateuch, which will be noted at the appropriate places.

The third address (chs. 27—30) is a powerful exhortation to obey the laws of the Lord. It includes the solemn ceremony to be held in the valley between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, near Shechem, after Israel had secured a foothold in Canaan—a ceremony reminiscent of the covenant ceremony of Ex. 20:1—24:8, and duly carried out by Joshua (Josh. 8:30–35). These laws and exhortations were given by Moses with emphasis on Israel's obligation before God to hear and obey the law of the Lord.

The final sections of the book are equally important and powerful (31:1—34:2). They include the installation of Joshua as Moses' successor, the great Song of Moses celebrating the greatness of God and His care for His covenant people (ch. 32), Moses' song of blessing of the twelve tribes after the fashion of Jacob's blessing of his twelve sons in Gen. 49 (ch. 33), and finally, the addendum describing the death of Moses (ch. 34).

Through types and prophecy this book also points us to Christ. He is the Passover Lamb (16:1 note) and the coming Prophet (18:15–19 note). Moses, the founder of Israel's theocracy, mediated the old covenant, but Jesus Christ, the Son of God, mediated the new covenant (Jer. 31:31–34). The substance of the covenants is the same, but their manner of administration differs significantly. Whereas the old covenant was written on tablets of stone, Christ writes the new covenant through the Spirit of the living God on the tablets of human hearts (2 Cor. 3:3). The old covenant was ratified with Israel's promise, "we will hear and do" (5:27; cf. Ex. 19:8; 20:19). But the new covenant depends on God's better promise, "I will . . . write it on their hearts" (Jer. 31:33; Heb. 8:7). The old covenant called for shedding the blood of animals; the everlasting new covenant was instituted once and for all by the blood of Christ (Jer. 32:40; Heb. 9:11–28). The old covenant calls for a heart religion, but it failed through human weakness and became obsolete after its fulfillment at Calvary (Rom. 8:3; Heb. 7:12; 8:13).

The Book of Deuteronomy, the fifth book of Moses, receives its title from the Septuagint, which called it *Deuteronomion,* meaning the "Second Law," or the "Repetition of the Law." □

Outline of Deuteronomy

I. Introduction (1:1–5)
II. Moses' First Address (1:6—4:40)
  A. The Travel from Horeb to the Arnon River (1:6—2:23)
  B. The Transjordan Campaign and Settlement (2:24—3:29)
  C. Exhortation to Obey God's Law (4:1–14)
  D. Warning Against Idolatry (4:15–40)
III. Interlude: Cities of Refuge in Transjordan (4:41–43)
IV. Moses' Second Address (4:44—11:32)
  A. Preface and the Ten Commandments (4:44—5:22)
  B. Mediation of the Rest of the Law by Moses (5:23–33)
  C. Love and Obedience to the One True God (ch. 6)
  D. Promise of Victory and Call to Separation (7:1—10:5)
  E. Parenthesis: The Levites Set Apart for Service (10:6–9)
  F. The Charge to Love and Obey the Great and True God (10:10—11:25)
  G. First Mention of Ebal-Gerizim Liturgy (11:26–32)
V. Reiteration of Laws for Israel's Worship and Conduct (chs. 12—26)
  A. One Place of Sacrifice, Penalty for Idolatry (chs. 12; 13)
  B. Laws of Worship: Cleanness, Judges, King, Priesthood, Prophet (chs. 14—18)
  C. Laws of Conduct: Cities of Refuge, War, Purity, Honesty (chs. 19—25)
  D. Firstfruits and Tithes, Concluding Exhortations (ch. 26)
VI. Moses' Third Address: The Covenant and Ebal-Gerizim Liturgy (chs. 27—30)
  A. The Cursings and Blessings at Ebal and Gerizim (chs. 27; 28)
  B. The Moab Covenant (chs. 29; 30)
VII. The Conclusion of Moses' Ministry (chs. 31—34)
  A. Transfer of Leadership to Joshua (31:1–29)
  B. The Song of Moses (31:30—32:52)
  C. Moses' Blessing on the Twelve Tribes (ch. 33)
  D. Addendum: The Death of Moses and Eulogy for Him (ch. 34)

The Previous Command to Enter Canaan

CHAPTER 1

THESE *are* the words which Moses spoke to all Israel [a]on this side of the Jordan in the wilderness, in the [1]plain opposite [2]Suph, between Paran, Tophel, Laban, Hazeroth, and Dizahab. [2] *It is* eleven days' *journey* from Horeb by way of Mount Seir [b]to Kadesh Barnea. [3] Now it came to pass [c]in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first *day* of the month, *that* Moses spoke to the children of Israel according to all that the LORD had given him as commandments to them, [4] [d]after he had killed Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, who dwelt at Ashtaroth [e]in[3] Edrei.

1 [a]Deut. 4:44–46 [1]Heb. *arabah* [2]One LXX ms., Tg., Vg. *Red Sea*
2 [b]Num. 13:26; 32:8
3 [c]Num. 33:38
4 [d]Num. 21:23, 24, 33–35 [e]Josh. 13:12 [3]LXX, Syr., Vg. *and;* cf. Josh. 12:4

■ **1:1–5** These introductory verses give us the author, Moses, and the circumstances of his addresses to the people just before he died and the people crossed the Jordan.

■ **1:1 this side of the Jordan.** See Introduction: Author.

the plain opposite Suph. The exact location is uncertain, but taken as a whole, the description points to the region of Moab. This "plain" or *arabah* (text note) extends along the eastern edge of Palestine from the Sea of Galilee south to the Gulf of Aqaba. Suph, meaning "reeds," may refer to a location in Moab near the Arnon River. The names Paran and Hazeroth are mentioned during Israel's travels in the Sinai peninsula (Num. 10:12; 11:35; 12:16; 33:17), but it is unclear whether they are the same places as mentioned here. Tophel, Laban, and Dizahab are mentioned only here.

■ **1:2 eleven days' journey.** The distance between Horeb and Kadesh Barnea is about 150 miles. The Israelites went by way of the Mount Seir road, which probably means they traveled part of the time along the valley north of Ezion Geber, a journey of 175 miles or more. They made good time if the whole nation arrived in eleven days. But the "eleven days' journey" could be a conventional expression for the distance involved, rather than the time taken on this particular journey.

■ **1:3 the fortieth year.** This date (forty years since the Exodus from Egypt) serves to fix the time for the book as a whole. The years of divine judgment have ended (Num. 14:33, 34), and Israel prepares to enter the Promised Land. This forty-year period included thirty-eight years in the wilderness, followed by two years for the conquest of Transjordan (2:14).

■ **1:4 Sihon . . . Og.** The conquest of Transjordan is detailed in 2:24—3:11.

6 [f]Ex. 3:1, 12 [g]Ex. 19:1, 2

7 [4]Heb. *arabah*

8 [h]Gen. 12:7; 15:5; 22:17; 26:3; 28:13; Ex. 33:1; Num. 14:23; 32:11 [5]*promised*

9 [i]Ex. 18:18, 24; Num. 11:14, 24 [6]*am not able to bear you by myself*

10 [j]Gen. 15:5; 22:17; Ex. 32:13; Deut. 7:7; 10:22; 26:5; 28:62

11 [k]2 Sam. 24:3 [l]Gen. 15:5

12 [m]1 Kin. 3:8, 9

13 [7]*rulers*

15 [n]Ex. 18:25 [8]*appointed*

16 [o]Deut. 16:18; John 7:24 [p]Lev. 24:22

17 [q]Lev. 19:15; Deut. 10:17; 16:19; 24:17; 1 Sam. 16:7; Prov. 24:23–26; Acts 10:34; James 2:1, 9 [r]2 Chr. 19:6 [s]Ex. 18:22, 26

19 [t]Num. 10:12; Deut. 2:7; 8:15; 32:10; Jer. 2:6 [u]Num. 13:26

21 [v]Josh. 1:6, 9

23 [w]Num. 13:2, 3

24 [x]Num. 13:21–25

[5] On this side of the Jordan in the land of Moab, Moses began to explain this law, saying,
[6] "The LORD our God spoke to us [f]in Horeb, saying: 'You have dwelt long [g]enough at this mountain. [7] Turn and take your journey, and go to the mountains of the Amorites, to all the neighboring *places* in the [4]plain, in the mountains and in the lowland, in the South and on the seacoast, to the land of the Canaanites and to Lebanon, as far as the great river, the River Euphrates. [8] See, I have set the land before you; go in and possess the land which the LORD [5]swore to your fathers—to [h]Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—to give to them and their descendants after them.'

Tribal Leaders Appointed

[9] "And [i]I spoke to you at that time, saying: 'I [6]alone am not able to bear you. [10] The LORD your God has multiplied you, [j]and here you *are* today, as the stars of heaven in multitude. [11] [k]May the LORD God of your fathers make you a thousand times more numerous than you are, and bless you [l]as He has promised you! [12] [m]How can I alone bear your problems and your burdens and your complaints? [13] Choose wise, understanding, and knowledgeable men from among your tribes, and I will make them [7]heads over you.' [14] And you answered me and said, 'The thing which you have told *us* to do *is* good.' [15] So I took [n]the heads of your tribes, wise and knowledgeable men, and [8]made them heads over you, leaders of thousands, leaders of hundreds, leaders of fifties, leaders of tens, and officers for your tribes.

[16] "Then I commanded your judges at that time, saying, 'Hear *the cases* between your brethren, and [o]judge righteously between a man and his [p]brother or the stranger who is with him. [17] [q]You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small as well as the great; you shall not be afraid in any man's presence, for [r]the judgment *is* God's. The case that is too hard for you, [s]bring to me, and I will hear it.' [18] And I commanded you at that time all the things which you should do.

Israel's Refusal to Enter the Land

[19] "So we departed from Horeb, [t]and went through all that great and terrible wilderness which you saw on the way to the mountains of the Amorites, as the LORD our God had commanded us. Then [u]we came to Kadesh Barnea. [20] And I said to you, 'You have come to the mountains of the Amorites, which the LORD our God is giving us. [21] Look, the LORD your God has set the land before you; go up *and* possess *it,* as the LORD God of your fathers has spoken to you; [v]do not fear or be discouraged.'

[22] "And every one of you came near to me and said, 'Let us send men before us, and let them search out the land for us, and bring back word to us of the way by which we should go up, and of the cities into which we shall come.'

[23] "The plan pleased me well; so [w]I took twelve of your men, one man from *each* tribe. [24] [x]And they departed and went up into the mountains, and came to the Valley of Eshcol, and spied it out. [25] They also took *some* of the fruit of the land in their hands and brought *it* down to

Heshbon. The name has been preserved in the modern Tell Hesban, located in Transjordan some thirty-five miles east of Jerusalem. Extensive excavations have discovered no remains at Hesban from Moses' time (i.e., from the fourteenth century B.C.). It is possible that a nearby mound that does contain fourteenth-century remains is the Heshbon in Moses' day.

Edrei. The name is probably preserved in the town-name of modern Der'a on the border between Syria and Jordan, which does have ruins of this period.

■ **1:5 in the land of Moab.** The Israelites are said to have camped in the plains of Moab (e.g., Num. 22:1; 26:3, 63) or in the land of Moab (e.g., Deut. 29:1; 32:49), but Israel was encamped north of the Arnon River, the northern border of Moab. The solution is that Moab earlier had held the northern territory but had been driven south of the Arnon by Sihon the Amorite (Num. 21:26). Jephthah rehearses this history in Judg. 11:14–27.

■ **1:6—4:40** Following the introduction of himself as the covenant mediator (vv. 1–5), Moses turns to a review of the history of Israel prior to this covenant ratification occasion. He provides a travelogue of the nation's movements from the Sinai region to Hormah, on to the Arnon, and into the Transjordan area. This segment of the book concludes with an overview of the covenant now to be renewed with the generation born in the wilderness.

■ **1:6 Horeb.** Another name for Sinai, apparently for the area around Mount Sinai. The name Sinai nearly always has the designation "Mount" or "Desert." Horeb only once has the designation "Mount" (Ex. 33:6).

■ **1:7 the land of the Canaanites.** These borders of the Promised Land were given to Abraham in Gen. 15:18, 19. The promise included driving out the Canaanites and the other nations.

■ **1:8 the LORD swore.** God's solemn oath to give the land to Abraham's descendants is mentioned at least six times in Genesis, and is found at least twenty-five times in Deuteronomy (it is also mentioned in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers).

■ **1:13 Choose wise . . . men.** A reference to Ex. 18:24–26 where Moses took the good advice of Jethro, his father-in-law. During the year at Mount Sinai, Moses, under God, organized the nation's judicial system, military power, and worship. Regarding the judges, see 16:18; 17:8; 19:17.

■ **1:19 Kadesh Barnea.** The place was called simply Kadesh in Num. 13:26. Kadesh means "holy place" and the name was doubtless given by the original inhabitants to many supposedly sacred places. This place was called Kadesh Barnea to distinguish it from other such places (e.g., in Naphtali, Judg. 4:6; in Judah, Josh. 15:23).

us; and they brought back word to us, saying, '*It is* a [y]good land which the LORD our God is giving us.'

[26] [z]"Nevertheless you would not go up, but rebelled against the command of the LORD your God; [27] and you [a]complained in your tents, and said, 'Because the LORD [b]hates us, He has brought us out of the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us. [28] Where can we go up? Our brethren have [g]discouraged our hearts, saying, [c]"The people *are* greater and taller than we; the cities *are* great and fortified up to heaven; moreover we have seen the sons of the [d]Anakim there." '

[29] "Then I said to you, 'Do not be terrified, [e]or afraid of them. [30] [f]The LORD your God, who goes before you, He will fight for you, according to all He did for you in Egypt before your eyes, [31] and in the wilderness where you saw how the LORD your God carried you, as a [g]man carries his son, in all the way that you went until you came to this place.' [32] Yet, for all that, [h]you did not believe the LORD your God, [33] [i]who went in the way before you [j]to search out a place for you to pitch your tents, to show you the way you should go, in the fire by night and in the cloud by day.

The Penalty for Israel's Rebellion

[34] "And the LORD heard the sound of your words, and was angry, [k]and took an oath, saying, [35] [l]'Surely not one of these men of this evil generation shall see that good land of which I [l]swore to give to your fathers, [36] [m]except Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him and his children I am giving the land on which he walked, because [n]he [2]wholly followed the LORD.' [37] [o]The LORD was also angry with me for your sakes, saying, 'Even you shall not go in there. [38] [p]Joshua the son of Nun, [q]who stands before you, he shall go in there. [r]Encourage him, for he shall cause Israel to inherit it.

[39] [s]'Moreover your little ones and your children, who [t]you say will be victims, who today [u]have no knowledge of good and evil, they shall go in there; to them I will give it, and they shall possess it. [40] [v]But *as for* you, turn and take your journey into the wilderness by the Way of the Red Sea.'

[41] "Then you answered and said to me, [w]'We have sinned against the LORD; we will go up and fight, just as the LORD our God commanded us.' And when everyone of you had girded on his weapons of war, you were ready to go up into the mountain.

[42] "And the LORD said to me, 'Tell them, [x]"Do not go up nor fight, for I *am* not among you; lest you be defeated before your enemies." ' [43] So I spoke to you; yet you would not listen, but [y]rebelled against the command of the LORD, and [z]presumptuously[3] went up into the mountain. [44] And the Amorites who dwelt in that mountain came out against you and chased you [a]as bees do, and drove you back from Seir to Hormah. [45] Then you returned and wept before the LORD, but the LORD would not listen to your voice nor give ear to you.

[46] [b]"So you remained in Kadesh many days, according to the days that you spent *there.*

The Desert Years

2 "Then we turned and [a]journeyed into the wilderness of the Way of the Red Sea, [b]as the LORD spoke to me, and we [1]skirted Mount Seir for many days.

[2] "And the LORD spoke to me, saying: [3] 'You have skirted this mountain [c]long enough; turn northward. [4] And command the people, saying, [d]"You *are about to* pass through the territory of

25 [y]Num. 13:27
26 [z]Num. 14:1–4
27 [a]Ps. 106:25 [b]Deut. 9:28
28 [c]Deut. 9:1, 2 [d]Num. 13:28 [g]Lit. *melted*
29 [e]Num. 14:9
30 [f]Ex. 14:14
31 [g]Is. 46:3, 4; 63:9
32 [h]Jude 5
33 [i]Ex. 13:21 [j]Num. 10:33
34 [k]Deut. 2:14, 15
35 [l]Num. 14:22, 23 [1]*promised*
36 [m][Josh. 14:9] [n]Num. 32:11, 12 [2]*fully*
37 [o]Deut. 3:26; 4:21; 34:4
38 [p]Num. 14:30 [q]1 Sam. 16:22 [r]Deut. 31:7, 23
39 [s]Num. 14:31 [t]Num. 14:3 [u]Is. 7:15, 16
40 [v]Num. 14:25
41 [w]Num. 14:40
42 [x]Num. 14:41–43
43 [y]Num. 14:44 [z]Deut. 17:12, 13 [3]*willfully*
44 [a]Ps. 118:12
46 [b]Deut. 2:7, 14

CHAPTER 2

1 [a]Deut. 1:40 [b]Num. 14:25 [1]*circled around*
3 [c]Deut. 2:7, 14
4 [d]Num. 20:14–21

■ **1:26 but rebelled.** This account of the people's failure at Kadesh parallels extensively the account in Num. 13.

■ **1:28 the Anakim.** The name Anak appears in Egyptian texts of the early second millennium as the name of a ruler in Palestine. It probably is related to the biblical Anak whose descendants lived in Hebron (Num. 13:22). They were taller than the Israelites and were feared for their military prowess. Joshua conquered them, and their remnants merged with the Philistines (Josh. 12:21, 22).

■ **1:33 in the fire by night.** The mention of the pillar of fire and the cloud refers to Ex. 13:21, where the pillar guided them out of Egypt, and especially to Num. 9:15–23, which tells of the Lord's guidance through the whole wilderness journey.

■ **1:37 LORD was also angry with me.** Mention of the doom of the lost generation recalls that God was also displeased with Moses and refused to allow him to enter Canaan (32:51; Num. 20:9–11 note; 27:14). Joshua, a faithful spy, would carry on as leader (Num. 27:12–23).

■ **1:46 in Kadesh many days.** Little is said in Numbers or Deuteronomy about the forty years of lost time. Numbers gives examples of the people's rebellions against Moses (Num. 16; 17). It is likely that the list of the wanderings in Num. 33:18–49, after they left Hazeroth and the Wilderness of Paran, indicates where the tabernacle was set up and the core of the people stayed. As for the rebellious majority, they may have fanned out over the peninsula of Sinai with their flocks in order to find forage.

■ **2:1 Way of the Red Sea.** Because the term "Red Sea" could include the Gulf of Aqaba (Ex. 13:18 note), this was likely the desert road to the gulf.

skirted Mount Seir. Or, "we circled around Mount Seir" (text note). The Israelites lived a nomadic life. Moses and those with him continued faithfully in the worship of God.

■ **2:4 your brethren, the descendants of Esau.** As explained in v. 8 and in Num. 20:14–21, the Edomites refused peaceful passage, so Israel

4 [e]Deut. 23:7
5 [f]Gen. 36:8
7 [g]Deut. 8:2–4 [2]Lit. *goings*
8 [h]Judg. 11:18 [i]Num. 21:4
9 [j]Deut. 2:18, 29 [k]Gen. 19:36–38
10 [l]Gen. 14:5 [m]Deut. 9:2
11 [3]Heb. *rephaim*
12 [n]Deut. 2:22 [4]*stead*
13 [o]Num. 21:12 [5]*Wadi* or *Brook*
14 [p]Num. 13:26 [q]Deut. 1:34, 35 [r]Num. 14:35 [6]*perished*
15 [7]*perished*
19 [s]Gen. 19:38
20 [t]Gen. 14:5 [8]Heb. *rephaim*
21 [u]Deut. 2:10
22 [v]Gen. 36:8 [w]Gen. 14:6; 36:20–30
23 [x]Josh. 13:3 [y]Gen. 10:14
24 [z]Judg. 11:18 [a]Deut. 1:4 [9]*to take possession*
25 [b]Ex. 23:27 [1]*everywhere under the heavens*

[e]your brethren, the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir; and they will be afraid of you. Therefore watch yourselves carefully. 5 Do not meddle with them, for I will not give you *any* of their land, no, not so much as one footstep, [f]because I have given Mount Seir to Esau *as* a possession. 6 You shall buy food from them with money, that you may eat; and you shall also buy water from them with money, that you may drink.

7 "For the LORD your God has blessed you in all the work of your hand. He knows your [2]trudging through this great wilderness. [g]These forty years the LORD your God *has been* with you; you have lacked nothing." '

8 "And when we passed beyond our brethren, the descendants of Esau who dwell in Seir, away from the road of the plain, away from [h]Elath and Ezion Geber, we [i]turned and passed by way of the Wilderness of Moab. 9 Then the LORD said to me, 'Do not harass Moab, nor contend with them in battle, for I will not give you *any* of their land *as* a possession, because I have given [j]Ar to [k]the descendants of Lot *as* a possession.' "

10 [l](The Emim had dwelt there in times past, a people as great and numerous and tall as [m]the Anakim. 11 They were also regarded as [3]giants, like the Anakim, but the Moabites call them Emim. 12 [n]The Horites formerly dwelt in Seir, but the descendants of Esau dispossessed them and destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their [4]place, just as Israel did to the land of their possession which the LORD gave them.)

13 " 'Now rise and cross over [o]the [5]Valley of the Zered.' So we crossed over the Valley of the Zered. 14 And the time we took to come [p]from Kadesh Barnea until we crossed over the Valley of the Zered *was* thirty-eight years, [q]until all the generation of the men of war [6]was consumed from the midst of the camp, [r]just as the LORD had sworn to them. 15 For indeed the hand of the LORD was against them, to destroy them from the midst of the camp until they [7]were consumed.

16 "So it was, when all the men of war had finally perished from among the people, 17 that the LORD spoke to me, saying: 18 'This day you are to cross over at Ar, the boundary of Moab. 19 And *when* you come near the people of Ammon, do not harass them or meddle with them, for I will not give you *any* of the land of the people of Ammon *as* a possession, because I have given it to [s]the descendants of Lot *as* a possession.' "

20 (That was also regarded as a land of [8]giants; giants formerly dwelt there. But the Ammonites call them [t]Zamzummim, 21 [u]a people as great and numerous and tall as the Anakim. But the LORD destroyed them before them, and they dispossessed them and dwelt in their place, 22 just as He had done for the descendants of Esau, [v]who dwelt in Seir, when He destroyed [w]the Horites from before them. They dispossessed them and dwelt in their place, even to this day. 23 And [x]the Avim, who dwelt in villages as far as Gaza—[y]the Caphtorim, who came from Caphtor, destroyed them and dwelt in their place.)

24 " 'Rise, take your journey, and [z]cross over the River Arnon. Look, I have given into your hand [a]Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land. Begin [9]to possess *it,* and engage him in battle. 25 [b]This day I will begin to put the dread and fear of you upon the nations [1]under the

went around their territory. Deuteronomy adds to the Numbers account that this was the Lord's command. In Moses' day, the Edomites, according to archaeological study, were apparently not living in fixed locations. They were brothers to Israel in nomadic life as well as in ancestry (Gen. 25:25, 26).

■ **2:8 from Elath and Ezion Geber.** Stops at Punon, Oboth, and Ije Abarim are mentioned at Num. 33:43, 44. Punon is probably modern Feinan, in the valley south of the Dead Sea, where there is a good spring. Israel was bypassing Edom and Moab and would attack Canaan from the eastern gateway.

■ **2:10–12 The Emim . . . Horites.** We know little about these former inhabitants of Transjordan, but their names occur in Gen. 14, the report of the raid of eastern kings throughout this area in the days of Abraham. The Emim, also called Rephaim (or "giants," text note on v. 11), lived where Moab later lived; the Zamzummim, also called Rephaim, lived where the Ammonites later lived; and the Horites preceded the Edomites (vv. 10–12, 20–23). The remark that the Emim and Zamzummim were tall like the Anakim (but had nevertheless been conquered) would help the morale of Israel who had yet to conquer the Anakim (the *im* ending of such names is the Hebrew plural suffix). The identity of the Horites is puzzling. An important early people in Mesopotamia were called Hurrians (an equivalent of the Hebrew term translated "Horite"). Some Horites in Canaan seem to have Hurrian names, but their relationship to the Hurrians is unclear.

■ **2:12 possession which the LORD gave them.** This phrase might seem to be a later insertion after Israel conquered Canaan, but this could as easily have been spoken by Moses after the significant conquest of Transjordan and settlement of the two-and-a-half tribes there.

■ **2:14 thirty-eight years.** See note on v. 3.

as the LORD had sworn. Another clear reference to Numbers, where God swore that the faithless generation would die in the wilderness (Num. 14:21–23).

■ **2:19 the people of Ammon.** The kinship with Ammon, as with Moab and Edom, had long been remembered (Gen. 19:37, 38).

■ **2:23 the Avim.** We know nothing of these people. If the Gaza mentioned is the same as the Gaza in southeastern Canaan, then Moses mentions it here only as part of his survey of earlier dislocations of peoples.

the Caphtorim. If Caphtor means Crete, as is usual, then the reference would be to an early and probably local Philistine community (before the later, great Philistine invasion of c. 1200 B.C.), of which the Abimelech in Gen. 20 was perhaps a member (cf. Jer. 47:4).

■ **2:25 fear of you.** Israel now is to begin its conquest, but the people are to remember that it is God who goes before. This was to be the emphasis of God's people ever after (cf. Ps. 44:3).

whole heaven, who shall hear the report of you, and shall [c]tremble and be in anguish because of you.'

King Sihon Defeated

[26] "And I [d]sent messengers from the Wilderness of Kedemoth to Sihon king of Heshbon, [e]with words of peace, saying, [27] [f]'Let me pass through your land; I will keep strictly to the road, and I will turn neither to the right nor to the left. [28] You shall sell me food for money, that I may eat, and give me water for money, that I may drink; [g]only let me pass through on foot, [29] [h]just as the descendants of Esau who dwell in Seir and the Moabites who dwell in Ar did for me, until I cross the Jordan to the land which the LORD our God is giving us.'

[30] [i]"But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass through, for [j]the LORD your God [k]hardened his spirit and made his heart obstinate, that He might deliver him into your hand, as *it is* this day.

[31] "And the LORD said to me, 'See, I have begun to [l]give Sihon and his land over to you. Begin to possess *it,* that you may inherit his land.' [32] [m]Then Sihon and all his people came out against us to fight at Jahaz. [33] And [n]the LORD our God delivered him [2]over to us; so [o]we defeated him, his sons, and all his people. [34] We took all his cities at that time, and we [p]utterly destroyed the men, women, and little ones of every city; we left none remaining. [35] We took only the livestock as plunder for ourselves, with the spoil of the cities which we took. [36] [q]From Aroer, which *is* on the bank of the River Arnon, and *from* [r]the city that *is* in the ravine, as far as Gilead, there was not one city too strong for us; [s]the LORD our God delivered all to us. [37] Only you did not go near the land of the people of Ammon—anywhere along the River [t]Jabbok, or to the cities of the mountains, or [u]wherever the LORD our God had forbidden us.

King Og Defeated

3 "Then we turned and went up the road to Bashan; and [a]Og king of Bashan came out against us, he and all his people, to battle [b]at Edrei. [2] And the LORD said to me, 'Do not fear him, for I have delivered him and all his people and his land into your hand; you shall do to him as you did to [c]Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon.'

[3] "So the LORD our God also delivered into our hands Og king of Bashan, with all his people, and we [l]attacked him until he had no survivors remaining. [4] And we took all his cities at that time; there was not a city which we did not take from them: sixty cities, [d]all the region of Argob, the kingdom of Og in Bashan. [5] All these cities *were* fortified with high walls, gates, and bars, besides a great many rural towns. [6] And we utterly destroyed them, as we did to Sihon king [e]of Heshbon, utterly destroying the men, women, and children of every city. [7] But all the livestock and the spoil of the cities we took as booty for ourselves.

[8] "And at that time we took the [f]land from the hand of the two kings of the Amorites who *were* on this side of the Jordan, from the River Arnon to Mount [g]Hermon [9] (the Sidonians call [h]Hermon Sirion, and the Amorites call it Senir), [10] [i]all the cities of the plain, all Gilead, and [j]all Bashan, as far as Salcah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan.

[11] [k]"For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of [l]the [2]giants. Indeed his bedstead *was* an iron bedstead. (*Is* it not in [m]Rabbah of the people of Ammon?) Nine cubits *is* its length and four cubits its width, according to the standard cubit.

25 [c]Ex. 15:14–16

26 [d]Num. 21:21–32 [e]Deut. 20:10

27 [f]Judg. 11:19

28 [g]Num. 20:19

29 [h]Deut. 23:3, 4

30 [i]Num. 21:23 [j]Josh. 11:20 [k]Ex. 4:21

31 [l]Deut. 1:3, 8

32 [m]Num. 21:23

33 [n]Deut. 7:2 [o]Num. 21:24 [2]Lit. *before us*

34 [p]Lev. 27:28

36 [q]Deut. 3:12; 4:48 [r]Josh. 13:9, 16 [s]Ps. 44:3

37 [t]Gen. 32:22 [u]Deut. 2:5, 9, 19

CHAPTER 3

1 [a]Num. 21:33–35 [b]Deut. 1:4

2 [c]Num. 21:34

3 [1]*struck*

4 [d]Deut. 3:13, 14

6 [e]Deut. 2:24, 34, 35

8 [f]Josh. 12:6; 13:8–12 [g]1 Chr. 5:23

9 [h]1 Chr. 5:23

10 [i]Deut. 4:49 [j]Josh. 12:5; 13:11

11 [k]Amos 2:9 [l]Deut. 2:11, 20 [m]Jer. 49:2 [2]Heb. *rephaim*

■ **2:27 Let me pass through.** The same offer as was given to Edom and Moab. Here, however, it was God's will for Israel to conquer the territory. Sihon refused Moses' offer, but God was in sovereign control as He had been with Pharaoh (Ex. 4:21). Sihon's resistance became Israel's opportunity.

■ **2:32 at Jahaz.** About seven miles south of Heshbon, Sihon was beaten and his territory conquered. The cities were put under the ban (i.e., Israel left no survivors, v. 34; Lev. 27:28 note). The calculated effect of the ban in ancient times was to make the inhabitants of an area flee without putting up resistance. Israel was commanded not to use this procedure except in their conquest of Canaan and Transjordan (20:10–15), where the holy nation would be corrupted by the influence of the remaining pagan culture (Ps. 106:34–39).

■ **3:1 Og king of Bashan.** Bashan was a fertile region located east of the Jordan and the Sea of Galilee, and extending from the Yarmuk River in the south to Mount Hermon in the north. It is wheat country today and in ancient time was famous for its cattle and flocks (Ps. 22:12; Deut. 32:14). The spoil of this area must have seemed a treasure to the nomadic Israelites.

■ **3:8 this side of the Jordan.** The east side of the river. This territory was in extent more than half as large as Canaan proper. From the Arnon River to Mount Hermon is about 150 miles.

■ **3:9 Sirion . . . Senir.** Both terms for Mount Hermon are witnessed in ancient Canaanite and Mesopotamian texts.

■ **3:11 an iron bedstead.** Og's bedstead, thirteen feet long, suggests he was a giant and that his people, the Rephaim, were also giants (2:10–12 note). The "bedstead" may actually have been a sarcophagus; the word translated "bedstead" is rare and could here be a euphemism for a sarcophagus, which would be large enough also to hold tomb objects. The reference to "iron" may only mean that it was joined or trimmed with iron, a new material at this date (before the beginning of the Iron Age c. 1200 B.C.). See note on 8:9.

The Land East of the Jordan Divided

12 "And this [n]land, *which* we possessed at that time, [o]from Aroer, which *is* by the River Arnon, and half the mountains of Gilead and [p]its cities, I gave to the Reubenites and the Gadites. 13 [q]The rest of Gilead, and all Bashan, the kingdom of Og, I gave to half the tribe of Manasseh. (All the region of Argob, with all Bashan, was called the land of the [3]giants. 14 [r]Jair the son of Manasseh took all the region of Argob, [s]as far as the border of the Geshurites and the Maachathites, and [t]called Bashan after his own name, [4]Havoth Jair, to this day.)

15 "Also I gave [u]Gilead to Machir. 16 And to the Reubenites [v]and the Gadites I gave from Gilead as far as the River Arnon, the middle of the river as *the* border, as far as the River Jabbok, [w]the border of the people of Ammon; 17 the plain also, with the Jordan as *the* border, from Chinnereth [x]as far as the east side of the Sea of the Arabah [y](the Salt Sea), below the slopes of Pisgah.

18 "Then I commanded you at that time, saying: 'The LORD your God has given you this land to possess. [z]All you men of valor shall cross over armed before your brethren, the children of Israel. 19 But your wives, your little ones, and your livestock (I know that you have much livestock) shall stay in your cities which I have given you, 20 until the LORD has given [a]rest to your brethren as to you, and they also possess the land which the LORD your God is giving them beyond the Jordan. Then each of you may [b]return to his possession which I have given you.'

21 "And [c]I commanded Joshua at that time, saying, 'Your eyes have seen all that the LORD your God has done to these two kings; so will the LORD do to all the kingdoms through which you pass. 22 You must not fear them, for [d]the LORD your God Himself fights for you.'

Moses Forbidden to Enter the Land

23 "Then [e]I pleaded with the LORD at that time, saying: 24 'O Lord GOD, You have begun to show Your servant [f]Your greatness and Your [5]mighty hand, for [g]what god *is there* in heaven or on earth who can do *anything* like Your works and Your mighty *deeds?* 25 I pray, let me cross over and see [h]the good land beyond the Jordan, those pleasant mountains, and Lebanon.'

26 "But the LORD [i]was angry with me on your account, and would not listen to me. So the LORD said to me: 'Enough of that! Speak no more to Me of this matter. 27 [j]Go up to the top of Pisgah, and lift your eyes toward the west, the north, the south, and the east; behold *it* with your eyes, for you shall not cross over this Jordan. 28 But [k]command[6] Joshua, and encourage him and strengthen him; for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which you will see.'

29 "So we stayed in [l]the valley opposite Beth Peor.

Moses Commands Obedience

4 "Now, O Israel, listen to [a]the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe, that you may live, and go in and [1]possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers is giving you. 2 [b]You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you. 3 Your eyes have seen what the LORD did at [c]Baal Peor; for the LORD your God has destroyed from among you all the men who followed Baal of Peor. 4 But you who held fast to the LORD your God *are* alive today, every one of you.

5 "Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should act according *to them* in the land which you go to possess. 6 Therefore be careful

12 [n]Num. 32:33 [o]Deut. 2:36 [p]Num. 34:14
13 [q]Josh. 13:29–31; 17:1 [3]Heb. *rephaim*
14 [r]1 Chr. 2:22 [s]Josh. 13:13 [t]Num. 32:41 [4]Lit. *Towns of Jair*
15 [u]Num. 32:39, 40
16 [v]2 Sam. 24:5 [w]Num. 21:24
17 [x]Num. 34:11, 12 [y]Gen. 14:3
18 [z]Num. 32:20
20 [a]Deut. 12:9, 10 [b]Josh. 22:4
21 [c][Num. 27:22, 23]
22 [d]Ex. 14:14
23 [e][2 Cor. 12:8, 9]
24 [f]Deut. 5:24; 11:2 [g]2 Sam. 7:22 [5]*strong*
25 [h]Deut. 4:22
26 [i]Num. 20:12; 27:14
27 [j]Num. 23:14; 27:12
28 [k]Num. 27:18, 23 [6]*charge*
29 [l]Deut. 4:46; 34:6

CHAPTER 4

1 [a][Rom. 10:5] [1]*take possession of*
2 [b]Prov. 30:6
3 [c]Num. 25:1–9

■ **3:12 the Reubenites and the Gadites.** These tribes received the southern part of the conquered Transjordan area. Sparsely populated in the modern period, it was more thickly settled in ancient times. Recent excavations have shown a surprising number of Christian churches here before and even after the Muslim conquest.

■ **3:13 half the tribe of Manasseh.** The north half of Gilead, beginning near Zarethan, and all of Bashan went to this half-tribe.

■ **3:14 Jair the son of Manasseh.** Or, "the descendant of." Manasseh had but one son, Machir, and he had one son, Gilead (Num. 26:29–34). Jair's conquest is mentioned in Num. 32:41.

■ **3:18 All you men of valor shall cross.** Note the required unity. None could settle until all had conquered. Details are given in Num. 32. See the fulfillment of the pledge in Josh. 22.

■ **3:22 the LORD your God Himself fights for you.** As Moses passed the command to Joshua, he emphasized the promise: the Lord will give victory.

■ **3:23–28** Moses' prayer in vv. 24, 25 is instructive. He knew of the Lord's anger because of his sin at Meribah (Num. 20:12), but he also knew that God does not "keep His anger forever" (cf. Ps. 103:9). Moses recognized God's great sovereign power and asked for great mercy.

■ **4:2 You shall not add.** The word of God to Moses was to be treated as sacred and kept inviolate (12:32). See the similar certification in Rev. 22:18, 19, quite possibly modeled on this prohibition in Deuteronomy.

■ **4:3 Baal Peor.** A dreadful warning. The reference is to Num. 25, which details the idolatry at Baal Peor that God judged by killing twenty-four thousand people.

■ **4:6 the peoples.** Israel's fidelity would be a testimony to the world that God was near His people and that His laws were righteous.

to observe *them;* for this *is* [d]your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation *is* a wise and understanding people.'

7 "For [e]what great nation *is there* that has [f]God[2] *so* near to it, as the LORD our God *is* to us, for whatever *reason* we may call upon Him? 8 And what great nation *is there* that has *such* statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before you this day? 9 Only take heed to yourself, and diligently [g]keep yourself, lest you [h]forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. And [i]teach them to your children and your grandchildren, 10 *especially concerning* [j]the day you stood before the LORD your God in Horeb, when the LORD said to me, 'Gather the people to Me, and I will let them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and *that* they may teach their children.'

11 "Then you came near and stood at the foot of the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire to the midst of heaven, with darkness, cloud, and thick darkness. 12 [k]And the LORD spoke to you out of the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of the words, but saw no [3]form; [l]*you* only *heard* a voice. 13 [m]So He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, [n]the Ten Commandments; and [o]He wrote them on two tablets of stone. 14 And [p]the LORD commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that you might [4]observe them in the land which you cross over to possess.

Beware of Idolatry

15 [q]"Take careful heed to yourselves, for you saw no [r]form when the LORD spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, 16 lest you [s]act corruptly and [t]make for yourselves a carved image in the [5]form of any figure: [u]the likeness of male or female, 17 the likeness of any animal that *is* on the earth or the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air, 18 the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground or the likeness of any fish that *is* in the water beneath the earth. 19 And *take heed,* lest you [v]lift your eyes to heaven, and *when* you see the sun, the moon, and the stars, [w]all the host of heaven, you feel driven to [x]worship them and serve them, which the LORD your God has [6]given to all the peoples under the whole heaven as a heritage. 20 But the LORD has taken you and [y]brought you out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be [z]His people, an inheritance, as you are this day. 21 Furthermore [a]the LORD was angry with me for your sakes, and swore that [b]I would not cross over the Jordan, and that I would not enter the good land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance. 22 But [c]I must die in this land, [d]I must not cross over the Jordan; but you shall cross over and [7]possess [e]that good land. 23 Take heed to yourselves, lest you forget the covenant of the LORD your God which He made with you, [f]and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of anything which the LORD your God has forbidden you. 24 For [g]the LORD your God *is* a consuming fire, [h]a jealous God.

25 "When you beget children and grandchildren and have grown old in the land, and act corruptly and make a carved image in the form of anything, and [i]do evil in the sight of the LORD your God to provoke Him to anger, 26 [j]I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that you will soon utterly perish from the land which you cross over the Jordan to possess; you will not [8]prolong *your* days in it, but will be utterly destroyed. 27 And the LORD [k]will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the LORD will

6 [d][2 Tim. 3:15]

7 [e][2 Sam. 7:23] [f][Is. 55:6] [2]*Or a god*

9 [g]Prov. 4:23 [h]Deut. 29:2–8 [i]Gen. 18:19

10 [j]Ex. 19:9, 16, 17

12 [k]Deut. 5:4, 22 [l]1 Kin. 19:11–18 [3]*similitude*

13 [m]Deut. 9:9, 11 [n]Ex. 34:28 [o]Ex. 24:12

14 [p]Ex. 21:1 [4]*do* or *perform*

15 [q]Josh. 23:11 [r]Is. 40:18

16 [s]Deut. 9:12; 31:29 [t]Ex. 20:4, 5 [u]Rom. 1:23 [5]*similitude*

19 [v]Deut. 17:3 [w]2 Kin. 21:3 [x][Rom. 1:25] [6]*divided*

20 [y]Jer. 11:4 [z]Deut. 7:6; 27:9

21 [a]Num. 20:12 [b]Num. 27:13, 14

22 [c]2 Pet. 1:13–15 [d]Deut. 3:27 [e]Deut. 3:25 [7]*take possession of*

23 [f]Deut. 4:16

24 [g]Deut. 9:3 [h]Ex. 20:5; 34:14

25 [i]2 Kin. 17:17

26 [j]Deut. 30:18, 19 [8]*live long on it*

27 [k]Deut. 28:62

■ **4:9 teach them to your children.** Deuteronomy stresses the covenant responsibility of parents for their children (6:7; 11:19). This covenant concern for children continues in the New Testament (Matt. 19:14 note; Acts 2:39).

■ **4:10 especially concerning the day.** A reference to the great theophany (visible self-revelation of God) at Mount Sinai recorded in Ex. 19:9—20:19. It was a never-to-be-forgotten experience.

■ **4:13 the Ten Commandments.** This title is used also in 10:4 and Ex. 34:28. Protestants usually divide them into four commandments dealing with duty to God and six that give our duty to man. Roman Catholics unite the first and second and divide the tenth resulting in a division of three and seven. The command regarding the Sabbath is pivotal: it has reference to God and also is for the benefit of both men and animals (Mark 2:27); the first three commandments concern God exclusively, the last six deal with humans.

■ **4:15 you saw no form.** God is transcendent Spirit (John 4:24), which rules out any idolatrous representation of God in the form of animate objects (vv. 16–18), and any worship of the created order (v. 19).

■ **4:20 the iron furnace.** A hot furnace used to smelt iron, a vivid metaphor for a place of great suffering (8:9 note).

■ **4:21 the LORD was angry with me.** See 1:37; 3:26; Num. 20:12.

■ **4:24 a jealous God.** See note on Ex. 20:5.

■ **4:25–29** Here in brief form is found the warning embodied in the curses of 28:15–68. But here also is a promise to the repentant.

■ **4:27 the LORD will scatter you.** Such passages have been taken by some as indication that Deuteronomy was not written by Moses, but by someone in the sixth century B.C. during the Jewish exile in Babylon. However, the warning is general, and there is no mention of captivity in Babylon or of conditions in that later period.

drive you. 28 And [l]there you will serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, [m]which neither see nor hear nor eat nor smell. 29 [n]But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find *Him* if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul. 30 When you are in [o]distress, and all these things come upon you in the [o]latter days, when you [p]turn to the LORD your God and obey His voice 31 (for the LORD your God *is* a merciful God), He will not forsake you nor [q]destroy you, nor forget the covenant of your fathers which He swore to them.

32 "For [r]ask now concerning the days that are past, which were before you, since the day that God created man on the earth, and *ask* [s]from one end of heaven to the other, whether *any* great *thing* like this has happened, or *anything* like it has been heard. 33 [t]Did *any* people *ever* hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as you have heard, and live? 34 Or did God *ever* try to go *and* take for Himself a nation from the midst of *another* nation, [u]by trials, [v]by signs, by wonders, by war, [w]by a mighty hand and [x]an outstretched arm, [y]and by great [z]terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes? 35 To you it was shown, that you might know that the LORD Himself *is* God; [z]*there is* none other besides Him. 36 [a]Out of heaven He let you hear His voice, that He might instruct you; on earth He showed you His great fire, and you heard His words out of the midst of the fire. 37 And because [b]He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their [2]descendants after them; and [c]He brought you out of Egypt with His Presence, with His mighty power, 38 [d]driving out from before you nations greater and mightier than you, to bring you in, to give you their land *as* an inheritance, as *it is* this day. 39 Therefore know this day, and consider *it* in your heart, that [e]the LORD Himself *is* God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; *there is* no other. 40 [f]You shall therefore keep His statutes and His commandments which I command you today, that [3]it may go well with you and with your children after you, and that you may [4]prolong *your* days in the land which the LORD your God is giving you for all time."

Cities of Refuge East of the Jordan

41 Then Moses [g]set apart three cities on this side of the Jordan, toward the rising of the sun, 42 [h]that the manslayer might flee there, who kills his neighbor unintentionally, without having hated him in time past, and that by fleeing to one of these cities he might live: 43 [i]Bezer in the wilderness on the plateau for the Reubenites, Ramoth in Gilead for the Gadites, and Golan in Bashan for the Manassites.

Introduction to God's Law

44 Now this *is* the law which Moses set before the children of Israel. 45 These *are* the testimonies, the statutes, and the judgments which Moses spoke to the children of Israel after they came out of Egypt, 46 on this side of the Jordan, [j]in the valley opposite Beth Peor, in the land of Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon, whom Moses and the children of Israel [k]defeated[5] after they came out of Egypt. 47 And they took possession of his land and the land [l]of Og king of Bashan, two kings of the Amorites, who *were* on this side of the Jordan, toward the [6]rising of the sun, 48 [m]from Aroer, which *is* on the bank of the River Arnon, even to Mount [7]Sion

28 [l]Jer. 16:13 [m]Ps. 115:4–7; 135:15–17
29 [n][2 Chr. 15:4]
30 [o]Hos. 3:5 [p]Joel 2:12 [q]*tribulation*
31 [q]Jer. 30:11
32 [r]Job 8:8 [s]Matt. 24:31
33 [t]Deut. 5:24–26
34 [u]Deut. 7:19 [v]Ex. 7:3 [w]Ex. 13:3 [x]Ex. 6:6 [y]Deut. 26:8 [z]*calamities*
35 [z]Mark 12:32
36 [a]Heb. 12:19, 25
37 [b]Deut. 7:7, 8; 10:15; 33:3 [c]Ex. 13:3, 9, 14 [2]Lit. *seed*
38 [d]Deut. 7:1
39 [e]Josh. 2:11
40 [f]Lev. 22:31 [3]*you may prosper* [4]*live long*
41 [g]Num. 35:6
42 [h]Deut. 19:4
43 [i]Josh. 20:8
46 [j]Deut. 3:29 [k]Num. 21:24 [5]*struck*
47 [l]Num. 21:33–35 [6]*east*
48 [m]Deut. 2:36; 3:12 [7]Syr. *Sirion*

■ **4:30 the latter days.** This phrase, repeated in 31:29, refers to any general future time of apostasy and renewal (cf. Num. 24:14).

■ **4:31 a merciful God.** This description may allude to the name of God given in Ex. 34:6 ("the LORD God, merciful"). The theme of God's love for His people is highlighted in Deuteronomy (7:7–9, 13; 10:15, 18; 23:5; 33:3), anticipating the more complete revelation of God's love in the New Testament (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8; Eph. 2:4, 5; 1 John 3:1).

the covenant of your fathers. See 1:8.

■ **4:32 the day that God created man.** Except for the creation account in the early chapters of Genesis, this is the only mention of the creation of man in the Pentateuch.

■ **4:34 in Egypt.** A reference to the deliverance from Egypt, a topic repeatedly mentioned in Deuteronomy.

■ **4:37 His Presence.** See Ex. 33:14.

■ **4:41–43** This parenthetical section, in narrative style, marks the close of the first great speech. Moses names the cities of refuge for Transjordan. The principle of having cities of refuge was given in Ex. 21:13; that there should be six was stated in Num. 35:6. This section names the three for Transjordan, while 19:1–13 specifies that three should be designated for Canaan itself. Finally, all six cities are named in Josh. 20:7, 8. This progressive unfolding is consistent with Mosaic authorship and an indication that Deuteronomy was not written after the conquest of Canaan.

■ **4:44—11:32** In this his second address (and in the section to follow, chs. 12—26), Moses expounds the way of life in the covenant. The exposition focuses on love for the Lord, love that issues in obedience and consecration, as exemplified among the Levites set apart for service to the Lord. The sermon closes with a preview of the solemn declaration of covenant obligations elaborated in chs. 27—30.

■ **4:45 testimonies . . . statutes . . . judgments.** Note the use of covenantal language. This portion of Deuteronomy, with its listing of covenantal requirements, resembles the stipulation sections of ancient treaties, especially those of the second millennium B.C. (Introduction: Date and Occasion).

■ **4:48 Mount Sion.** Not to be confused with Mount Zion in Jerusalem. The name "Sion" is not mentioned elsewhere; it may be a copying mistake for "Sirion," a similar term (and alternate name for Mount Hermon, 3:9) found in the Syriac translation of this verse (text note).

(that is, [n]Hermon), [49] and all the plain on the east side of the Jordan as far as the Sea of the Arabah, below the [o]slopes of Pisgah.

The Ten Commandments Reviewed

5 And Moses called all Israel, and said to them: "Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your hearing today, that you may learn them and be careful to observe them. [2] [a]The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. [3] The LORD [b]did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, those who *are* here today, all of us who *are* alive. [4] [c]The LORD talked with you face to face on the mountain from the midst of the fire. [5] [d]I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the LORD; for [e]you were afraid because of the fire, and you did not go up the mountain. *He* said:

6 [f]'I *am* the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of [1]bondage.

7 [g]'You shall have no other gods [2]before Me.

8 [h]'You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness *of anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth; [9] you shall not [i]bow[3] down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, *am* a jealous God, [4]visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth *generations* of those who hate Me, [10] [j]but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and [5]keep My commandments.

11 [k]'You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold *him* [6]guiltless who takes His name in vain.

12 [l]'Observe the Sabbath day, to [7]keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you. [13] [m]Six days you shall labor and do all your work, [14] but the seventh day *is* the [n]Sabbath of the LORD your God. *In it* you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your ox, nor your donkey, nor any of your cattle, nor your stranger who *is* within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. [15] [o]And remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there [p]by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.

16 [q]'Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, [r]that your days may be long, and that it may be well with [s]you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

17 [t]'You shall not murder.

18 [u]'You shall not commit adultery.

19 [v]'You shall not steal.

20 [w]'You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

21 [x]'You shall not covet your neighbor's wife; and you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field, his male servant, his female servant, his ox, his donkey, or anything that *is* your neighbor's.'

22 "These words the LORD spoke to all your assembly, in the mountain from the midst of the

48 [n]Deut. 3:9
49 [o]Deut. 3:17

CHAPTER 5

2 [a]Ex. 19:5
3 [b]Heb. 8:9
4 [c]Ex. 19:9
5 [d]Gal. 3:19 [e]Ex. 19:16
6 [f]Ex. 20:2–17 [1]*slavery*
7 [g]Hos. 13:4 [2]*besides*
8 [h]Ex. 20:4
9 [i]Ex. 34:7, 14–16 [3]*worship them* [4]*punishing*
10 [j]Dan. 9:4 [5]*observe*
11 [k]Ex. 20:7 [6]*innocent*
12 [l]Ex. 20:8 [7]*sanctify it*
13 [m]Ex. 23:12; 35:2
14 [n][Heb. 4:4]
15 [o]Deut. 15:15 [p]Deut. 4:34, 37
16 [q]Lev. 19:3 [r]Deut. 6:2 [s]Deut. 4:40
17 [t]Matt. 5:21
18 [u]Ex. 20:14
19 [v][Rom. 13:9]
20 [w]Ex. 20:16; 23:1
21 [x]Ex. 20:17

■ **4:49 the slopes of Pisgah.** See the similar area description in 3:17.

■ **5:1 Hear, O Israel.** This solemn form of address to Israel is only found in Deuteronomy: first here, then in the great *Shema* of 6:4, and finally in the exhortation of 9:1–3. Here the foundational covenant at Mount Sinai in Horeb is recalled.

■ **5:3 not . . . with our fathers.** Moses is differentiating the Sinai covenant from the promise of the land made to the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It was not the patriarchs who stood before God at Sinai, but the Israelites of Moses' day (11:2 note).

■ **5:6–21** See Ex. 20:2–17 and notes.

■ **5:7 no other gods.** The exalted monotheism of this commandment and of the whole Old Testament was unique in ancient times. There are no other gods (4:39), and the worship of anything other than God Himself is forbidden.

■ **5:8 a carved image.** See 4:15; note on Ex. 20:4.

■ **5:10 to thousands.** Whereas God's anger extends only to the third and fourth generation, His love extends to a thousand generations (7:9).

■ **5:12–15** See "God's Pattern for Worship" at 1 Chr. 16:29.

■ **5:12 Observe the Sabbath day.** Most of the commandments in Deuteronomy parallel almost verbatim those in Exodus, with obvious interdependence. Deuteronomy bases this command on the deliverance from the bondage of Egypt, whereas Exodus cites God's work of creation as a basis. The continuing sabbatical principle commands a weekly day of rest. The change from the seventh day to the first day or Lord's Day by the New Testament church (Rev. 1:10), in celebration of Christ's resurrection, points to the inauguration of the new creation (1 Cor. 15:45–49; 2 Cor. 5:17; cf. Ex. 20:11), and to the believer's redemption from bondage to sin through the death and resurrection of Christ.

■ **5:16 that your days may be long.** Other passages suggest that this clause may primarily be a promise of settled conditions and long peace for the people in the land, which would also include freedom from early death in war and revolution (5:33; 30:18, 20; cf. 25:15).

■ **5:22 and He added no more.** Lit. "and He did not add," perhaps an idiom meaning that He spoke no more. This would fit the statement in Exodus, that the people in their fear asked that God speak no more to them directly, but only through Moses (Ex. 20:19).

two tablets of stone. The tablets are mentioned in Ex. 31:18, where they are called the "two tablets of the Testimony . . . written with the

22 [y]Deut. 4:13
23 [z]Ex. 20:18, 19
24 [a]Ex. 19:19 [b]Deut. 4:33
25 [c]Deut. 18:16
26 [d]Deut. 4:33
27 [e]Ex. 20:19
28 [f]Deut. 18:17
29 [g]Ps. 81:13 [h]Deut. 11:1 [i]Deut. 4:40
31 [j][Gal. 3:19]
32 [k]Deut. 17:20; 28:14 [8]*observe*
33 [l]Deut. 10:12 [m]Deut. 4:40

CHAPTER 6

1 [a]Deut. 12:1
2 [b][Eccl. 12:13] [c]Deut. 4:40
3 [d]Deut. 7:13 [e]Gen. 22:17 [f]Ex. 3:8, 17 [7]Lit. *observe to do*
4 [g][1 Cor. 8:4, 6] [2]Or *The* LORD is our God, the LORD *alone*, i.e., the only one
5 [h]Matt. 22:37 [i]2 Kin. 23:25
6 [j]Deut. 11:18–20
7 [k]Deut. 4:9; 11:19
8 [l]Prov. 3:3; 6:21; 7:3
9 [m]Deut. 11:20
10 [n]Josh. 24:13 [3]*promised*

fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness, with a loud voice; and He added no more. And [y]He wrote them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me.

The People Afraid of God's Presence

23 [z]"So it was, when you heard the voice from the midst of the darkness, while the mountain was burning with fire, that you came near to me, all the heads of your tribes and your elders. 24 And you said: 'Surely the LORD our God has shown us His glory and His greatness, and [a]we have heard His voice from the midst of the fire. We have seen this day that God speaks with man; yet he [b]*still* lives. 25 Now therefore, why should we die? For this great fire will consume us; [c]if we hear the voice of the LORD our God anymore, then we shall die. 26 [d]For who *is there* of all flesh who has heard the voice of the living God speaking from the midst of the fire, as we *have*, and lived? 27 You go near and hear all that the LORD our God may say, and [e]tell us all that the LORD our God says to you, and we will hear and do *it*.'

28 "Then the LORD heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me, and the LORD said to me: 'I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you. [f]They are right *in* all that they have spoken. 29 [g]Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and [h]always keep all My commandments, [i]that it might be well with them and with their children forever! 30 Go and say to them, "Return to your tents." 31 But as for you, stand here by Me, [j]and I will speak to you all the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments which you shall teach them, that they may observe *them* in the land which I am giving them to possess.'

32 "Therefore you shall [8]be careful to do as the LORD your God has commanded you; [k]you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. 33 You shall walk in [l]all the ways which the LORD your God has commanded you, that you may live [m]and *that it may be* well with you, and *that* you may prolong *your* days in the land which you shall possess.

The Greatest Commandment

6 "Now this *is* [a]the commandment, *and these are* the statutes and judgments which the LORD your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe *them* in the land which you are crossing over to possess, 2 [b]that you may fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, [c]and that your days may be prolonged. 3 Therefore hear, O Israel, and [l]be careful to observe *it*, that it may be well with you, and that you may [d]multiply greatly [e]as the LORD God of your fathers has promised you—[f]'a land flowing with milk and honey.'

4 [g]"Hear, O Israel: [2]The LORD our God, the LORD *is* one! 5 [h]You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, [i]with all your soul, and with all your strength.

6 "And [j]these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. 7 [k]You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. 8 [l]You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 [m]You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Caution Against Disobedience

10 "So it shall be, when the LORD your God brings you into the land of which He [3]swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you large and beautiful cities [n]which you did

finger of God." In addition, the tablets were inscribed on both sides (Ex. 32:15). These tablets were broken (Ex. 32:19), but new ones were made (Ex. 34:1–4, 27). Called "the Testimony," the tablets were placed in the ark of the Testimony (Ex. 25:16; 40:20), also called the "ark of the covenant" (Num. 10:33). The "Testimony" was the written record attesting the terms of the covenant (Ex. 25:16 note).

■ **6:2 days . . . prolonged.** These words translate the same Hebrew phrase as in 5:33. Here also we may understand the meaning as "long life in the land."

■ **6:4 Hear, O Israel.** Often called the *Shema*, from the initial Hebrew word meaning "Hear," this verse became the great confession of Israel's monotheistic faith, and is recited morning and evening by Jews (cf. Mark 12:29). See note on 5:1.

The LORD . . . LORD is one. Though the Hebrew may be translated several ways (text note), it is best to understand the verse as affirming both God's uniqueness and unity or singularity—the only God is "one" (Mark 12:29). As the Old Testament implies and the New Testament explicitly teaches, however, there is differentiation of Persons within the unity of the Godhead. See "One and Three: The Trinity" at Is. 44:6.

■ **6:5 all your strength.** The Hebrew expresses totality. For this reason the New Testament sometimes renders it with "mind and strength" (Mark 12:30). This is the language of devotion. God does not demand mere outward obedience to a law, but the heartfelt love and commitment of the whole person (Prov. 23:26).

■ **6:7 children.** See "The Christian Family" at Eph. 5:22.

■ **6:8 frontlets between your eyes.** The phrases in this section are multiplied to emphasize the overall importance of God's law. Jews since the time of Christ have taken these verses literally and tie little boxes containing these verses on their arms and foreheads, and fasten them on their doorposts (cf. Matt. 23:5).

■ **6:10 the land . . . He swore to your fathers.** See text note and 5:3. This is one of many references in Deuteronomy to God's solemn promise to the patriarchs.

not build, [11] houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, hewn-out wells which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant—[o]when you have eaten and are full— [12] *then* beware, lest you forget the [p]LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. [13] You shall [q]fear the LORD your God and serve Him, and [r]shall take oaths in His name. [14] You shall not go after other gods, [s]the gods of the peoples who *are* all around you [15] (for [t]the LORD your God *is* a jealous God [u]among you), lest the anger of the LORD your God be aroused against you and destroy you from the face of the earth.

[16] [v]"You shall not [4]tempt the LORD your God [w]as you [5]tempted *Him* in Massah. [17] You shall [x]diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, His testimonies, and His statutes which He has commanded you. [18] And you [y]shall do *what is* right and good in the sight of the LORD, that it may be well with you, and that you may go in and possess the good land of which the LORD swore to your fathers, [19] [z]to cast out all your enemies from before you, as the LORD has spoken.

[20] [a]"When your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What *is the meaning of* the testimonies, the statutes, and the judgments which the LORD our God has commanded you?' [21] then you shall say to your son: 'We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, and the LORD brought us out of Egypt [b]with a mighty hand; [22] and the LORD showed signs and wonders before our eyes, great and severe, against Egypt, Pharaoh, and all his household. [23] Then He brought us out from there, that He might bring us in, to give us the land of which He [6]swore to our fathers. [24] And the LORD commanded us to [7]observe all these [8]statutes, [c]to fear the LORD our God, [d]for our good always, that [e]He might preserve us alive, as *it is* [9]this day. [25] Then [f]it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to observe all these commandments before the LORD our God, as He has commanded us.'

A Chosen People

7 "When the LORD your God brings you into the land which you go to [a]possess, and has cast out many [b]nations before you, [c]the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you, [2] and when the LORD your God delivers [d]them over to you, you shall conquer them *and* utterly destroy them. [e]You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them. [3] [f]Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son. [4] For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; [g]so the anger of the LORD will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly. [5] But thus you shall deal with them: you shall [h]destroy their altars, and break down their *sacred* pillars, and cut down their [i]wooden images, and burn their carved images with fire.

[6] "For you *are* a [2]holy people to the LORD your God; [i]the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. [7] The LORD did not set His [j]love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were [k]the least of all peoples; [8] but [l]because the LORD loves you, and

11 [o]Deut. 8:10; 11:15; 14:29

12 [p]Deut. 8:11–18

13 [q]Matt. 4:10 [r]Deut. 5:11

14 [s]Deut. 13:7

15 [t]Ex. 20:5 [u]Ex. 33:3

16 [v]Luke 4:12 [w][1 Cor. 10:9] [4]*test* [5]*tested*

17 [x]Deut. 11:22

18 [y]Ex. 15:26

19 [z]Num. 33:52, 53

20 [a]Ex. 13:8, 14

21 [b]Ex. 13:3

23 [6]*promised*

24 [c]Deut. 6:2 [d]Jer. 32:39 [e]Deut. 4:1 [7]*do* [8]*ordinances* [9]*today*

25 [f][Rom. 10:3, 5]

CHAPTER 7

1 [a]Deut. 6:10 [b]Gen. 15:19–21 [c]Ex. 33:2

2 [d]Num. 31:17 [e]Josh. 2:14

3 [f]1 Kin. 11:2

4 [g]Deut. 6:15

5 [h]Ex. 23:24; 34:13 [i]Heb. *Asherim*, Canaanite deities

6 [i]Ex. 19:5, 6 [2]*set-apart*

7 [j]Deut. 4:37 [k]Deut. 10:22

8 [l]Deut. 10:15

■ **6:13 take oaths in His name.** The third commandment does not forbid taking an oath on the name of God (cf. Judg. 8:19), but forbids a false oath. Because swearing by the name of a god implied the recognition and worship of that god, the Israelites were not to swear by other gods (cf. Jer. 5:7; Zeph. 1:5).

■ **6:15 a jealous God.** See note on Ex. 20:5.

■ **6:16 Massah.** This word means "testing" (Ex. 17:7). Later in Old Testament history, King Ahaz of Judah cited this verse insincerely (Is. 7:12).

■ **6:20–24** See note on 4:9.

■ **6:24 to observe . . . to fear the LORD.** Cf. John 14:23.

■ **7:1 cast out.** See note on 2:32. Here the Israelites were specifically promised that the Lord would drive out the inhabitants.

seven nations. These seven nations are difficult to identify. In 20:17 only six nations are mentioned (as also in Ex. 3:8, 17; 13:5; 33:2; 34:11), and the Girgashites are omitted. The Jebusites inhabited Jebus, another name for Jerusalem, and there is some indication that they were Hurrians (2:10–12). Amorites are known from ancient Mesopotamia. The ancient lawgiver Hammurabi (1792–1750 B.C.) was an Amorite, as were Og and Sihon, kings of Transjordan. The word "Canaanite" sometimes seems to include them all.

■ **7:2 utterly destroy them.** See note on 2:32. Some think that the God of the Old Testament was harsh and vengeful to decree the destruction of the Canaanites, but this is to forget that God is just. The sins of the land's inhabitants were extreme, and the time for judgment had come (cf. Gen. 15:16). God used Israel to punish the Canaanites, but warned that if Israel committed apostasy, leaving the God who had graciously revealed Himself to them, they too would perish (28:15–68).

■ **7:3 Nor . . . make marriages.** Marriage is the closest of human ties and its sacredness was guarded in Old Testament law. The corollary is that marriage must not be contracted with unbelievers, a principle repeated in the New Testament (1 Cor. 7:39). Israel did not maintain her spiritual purity and suffered for it (Ps. 106:37–39).

■ **7:5 destroy their altars.** Israel was chosen to be a holy people (v. 6), and God would not tolerate pagan religion. Although the means of separation have changed, believers today were chosen for holiness (Eph. 1:4) and are called to separate from false worship (2 Cor. 6:15–18).

■ **7:8 loves you . . . keep the oath.** The election of Israel as a holy nation set apart for God (vv. 6, 7) was grounded, not in any merit or intrinsic goodness in Israel, but in God's love and in His faithfulness to the covenant promises made to the patriarchs (6:10). God's election of the church is based on His oath to Jesus, the son of Abraham, the Son of God (Ps. 110:4; John 17:6). See "God's Covenant of Grace" at Gen. 12:1.

because He would keep [m]the oath which He swore to your fathers, [n]the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of [3]bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

9 "Therefore know that the LORD your God, He *is* God, [o]the faithful God [p]who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments; 10 and He repays those who hate Him to their face, to destroy them. He will not [4]be [q]slack with him who hates Him; He will repay him to his face. 11 Therefore you shall keep the commandment, the statutes, and the judgments which I command you today, to observe them.

Blessings of Obedience

12 "Then it shall come to pass, because you listen to these judgments, and keep and do them, that the LORD your God will keep with you the covenant and the mercy which He swore to your fathers. 13 And He will [r]love you and bless you and [5]multiply you; [s]He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your land, your grain and your new wine and your oil, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flock, in the land of which He [6]swore to your fathers to give you. 14 You shall be blessed above all peoples; there shall not be a male or female [t]barren among you or among your livestock. 15 And the LORD will take away from you all sickness, and will afflict you with none of the [u]terrible diseases of Egypt which you have known, but will lay *them* on all those who hate you. 16 Also you shall [7]destroy all the peoples whom the LORD your God delivers over to you; your eye shall have no pity on them; nor shall you serve their gods, for that *will* [v]*be* a snare to you.

17 "If you should say in your heart, 'These nations are greater than I; how can I dispossess them?'— 18 you shall not be afraid of them, *but* you shall [w]remember well what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt: 19 [x]the great trials which your eyes saw, the signs and the wonders, the mighty hand and the outstretched arm, by which the LORD your God brought you out. So shall the LORD your God do to all the peoples of whom you are afraid. 20 [y]Moreover the LORD your God will send the hornet among them until those who are left, who hide themselves from you, are destroyed. 21 You shall not be terrified of them; for the LORD your God, the great and awesome God, *is* among you. 22 And the LORD your God will drive out those nations before you [z]little by little; you will be unable to [8]destroy them at once, lest the beasts of the field become *too* numerous for you. 23 But the LORD your God will deliver them over to you, and will inflict defeat upon them until they are destroyed. 24 And [a]He will deliver their kings into your hand, and you will destroy their name from under heaven; [b]no one shall be able to stand [9]against you until you have destroyed them. 25 You shall burn the carved images of their gods with fire; you shall not [c]covet[1] the silver or gold *that is* on them, nor take *it* for yourselves, lest you be snared by it; for it *is* an abomination to the LORD your God. 26 Nor shall you bring an abomination into your house, lest you be doomed to destruction like it. You shall utterly detest it and utterly abhor it, [d]for it *is* an [2]accursed thing.

Remember the LORD Your God

8 "Every commandment which I command you today [a]you must [1]be careful to observe, that you may live and [b]multiply,[2] and go in and possess the land of which the LORD [3]swore to your fathers. 2 And you shall remember that the LORD your God [c]led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you *and* [d]test you, [e]to know what *was* in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. 3 So He humbled you, [f]allowed you to hunger, and

8 [m]Luke 1:55, 72, 73 [n]Ex. 13:3, 14 [3]*slavery*

9 [o]1 Cor. 1:9; 2 Thess. 3:3; 2 Tim. 2:13 [p]Ex. 20:6; Deut. 5:10; Neh. 1:5; Dan. 9:4

10 [q][2 Pet. 3:9, 10] [4]*delay*

13 [r]Ps. 146:8; Prov. 15:9; John 14:21 [s]Deut. 28:4 [5]*cause you to increase* [6]*promised*

14 [t]Ex. 23:26

15 [u]Ex. 9:14; 15:26; Deut. 28:27, 60

16 [v]Ex. 23:33; Judg. 8:27; Ps. 106:36 [7]*consume*

18 [w]Ps. 105:5

19 [x]Deut. 4:34; 29:3

20 [y]Ex. 23:28; Josh. 24:12

22 [z]Ex. 23:29, 30 [8]*consume*

24 [a]Josh. 10:24, 42; 12:1–24 [b]Josh. 23:9 [9]*before*

25 [c]Prov. 23:6 [1]*desire*

26 [d]Deut. 13:17 [2]*devoted* or *banned*

CHAPTER 8

1 [a]Deut. 4:1; 6:24 [b]Deut. 30:16 [1]*observe to do* [2]*increase in number* [3]*promised*

2 [c]Deut. 1:3; 2:7; 29:5; Ps. 136:16; Amos 2:10 [d]Ex. 16:4 [e][John 2:25]

3 [f]Ex. 16:2, 3

■ **7:9 a thousand generations.** See 5:10 and note.

■ **7:13 He will also bless the fruit of your womb.** See 28:4, where a similar verse is included in a liturgy of blessings.

grain . . . new wine . . . oil. The three staples of the ancient agricultural economy, here symbolic of prosperity (11:14; 14:23; 18:4). "New wine" here is not the aged and fermented product, but the grape juice as it came fresh from the presses (Prov. 3:10); the "oil" is the olive oil used in cooking and lamps.

■ **7:15 the terrible diseases of Egypt.** The same promise of health is given in Ex. 15:26, and the converse is given as a curse in Deut. 28:60. The dietary laws provided Israel with some protection against common parasites that were rife in Egypt.

■ **7:19 your eyes saw.** See note on 5:3.

■ **7:20 God will send the hornet.** The Hebrew word for "hornet" is from the same root as "leprosy" or "skin disease" (Lev. 14:3 text note). Here it may mean "God will send distress." But the figure of stinging insects chasing the enemy is used elsewhere (1:44; Is. 7:18), and the metaphor of a hornet is quite appropriate (Ex. 23:28 note). God promises to fight for His people with the same power He manifested in the Exodus (v. 18).

■ **7:21 great and awesome.** See "The Greatness of God" at 1 Chr. 29:11.

■ **7:26 it is an accursed thing.** See text note; note on 20:17. Another call for utter hatred of pagan idolatry. But the idols were often made of gold and were valuable. The precious metal was under the ban (Hebrew *herem*); the idols were to be destroyed, and what could pass through the fire was to be given to the Lord (Josh. 6:18, 19).

■ **8:3 manna which you did not know.** The initial giving of manna is mentioned in Ex. 16:15, its cessation in Josh. 5:12. God chose to sustain His people in the desert by a means previously unknown to them.

[g]fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall [h]not live by bread alone; but man lives by every *word* that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD. 4 [i]Your garments did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years. 5 [j]You should [4]know in your heart that as a man chastens his son, *so* the LORD your God chastens you.

6 "Therefore you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God, [k]to walk in His ways and to fear Him. 7 For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, [l]a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, that flow out of valleys and hills; 8 a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; 9 a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing; a land whose stones *are* iron and out of whose hills you can dig copper. 10 [m]When you have eaten and are full, then you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you.

11 "Beware that you do not forget the LORD your God by not keeping His commandments, His judgments, and His statutes which I command you today, 12 [n]lest—*when* you have eaten and are [5]full, and have built beautiful houses and dwell *in them;* 13 and *when* your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold are [6]multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied; 14 [o]when your heart [7]is lifted up, and you [p]forget the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; 15 who [q]led you through that great and terrible wilderness, [r]*in which were* fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty land where there was no water; [s]who brought water for you out of the flinty rock; 16 who fed you in the wilderness with [t]manna, which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, [u]to do you good in the end— 17 then you say in your heart, 'My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth.'

18 "And you shall remember the LORD your God, [v]for *it is* He who gives you power to get wealth, [w]that He may [8]establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as *it is* this day. 19 Then it shall be, if you by any means forget the LORD your God, and follow other gods, and serve them and worship them, [x]I testify against you this day that you shall surely perish. 20 As the nations which the LORD destroys before you, [y]so you shall perish, because you would not be obedient to the voice of the LORD your God.

Israel's Rebellions Reviewed

9 "Hear, O Israel: You *are* to cross over the Jordan today, and go in to dispossess nations greater and mightier than yourself, cities great and fortified up to heaven, 2 a people great and tall, the [a]descendants of the Anakim, whom you know, and *of whom* you heard *it said,* 'Who can stand before the descendants of Anak?' 3 Therefore understand today that the LORD your God *is* He who [b]goes over before you *as* a [c]consuming fire. [d]He will destroy them and bring them down before you; [e]so you shall drive them out and destroy them quickly, as the LORD has said to you.

4 [f]"Do not think in your heart, after the LORD your God has cast them out before you, saying,

3 [g]Ex. 16:12, 14, 35 [h]Matt. 4:4

4 [i]Neh. 9:21

5 [j]2 Sam. 7:14 [4]*consider*

6 [k][Deut. 5:33]

7 [l]Deut. 11:9–12

10 [m]Deut. 6:11, 12

12 [n]Hos. 13:6 [5]*satisfied*

13 [6]*increased*

14 [o]1 Cor. 4:7 [p]Ps. 106:21 [7]*becomes proud*

15 [q]Is. 63:12–14 [r]Num. 21:6 [s]Num. 20:11

16 [t]Ex. 16:15 [u][Heb. 12:11]

18 [v]Hos. 2:8 [w]Deut. 7:8, 12 [8]*confirm*

19 [x]Deut. 4:26; 30:18

20 [y][Dan. 9:11, 12]

CHAPTER 9

2 [a]Num. 13:22, 28, 33

3 [b]Josh. 3:11; 5:14 [c]Deut. 4:24 [d]Deut. 7:24 [e]Ex. 23:31

4 [f]Deut. 8:17

Through this miraculous provision God humbled the people (by challenging their self-sufficiency) and tested their obedience (v. 16; cf. Ex. 16:16–30).

man shall not live by bread alone. See Matt. 4:4; Luke 4:4.

every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD. Even more basic to life than physical food is the sustaining word of God (Heb. 1:3).

■ **8:4 Your garments did not wear out.** This miraculous preservation is mentioned also in 29:5, but not elsewhere.

■ **8:5 as a man chastens his son.** God let them hunger that He might show them His supply (v. 3). Discipline usually includes initial difficulty followed by blessing (Prov. 3:11, 12; Heb. 12:5, 6).

■ **8:7–9 a good land . . . iron . . . copper.** The description is more extensive than the familiar "flowing with milk and honey" found in Exodus, Leviticus, and frequently in Deuteronomy. Palestine certainly had more variety and more rainfall than the flat land of Goshen, but today much of the land is arid. The climate may have been different then, for a small difference in rainfall can significantly affect productivity. The land today has suffered from years of mismanagement—modern hills that were forested within recent memory are now barren. In Assyrian reliefs from about 800 B.C., Israel is depicted with lush vines and grapes, and there is no reason to deny the characterization of the land as pleasant (11:9–12).

■ **8:9 whose stones are iron.** The Iron Age (c. 1200–300 B.C.) came to Palestine after Moses died (c. 1406 B.C.), but iron was known before that. Inventories in ancient Ugarit (c. 1400 B.C.) mention two talents of iron. The copper mines of the Sinai Peninsula and the area of south Transjordan were a valuable resource in antiquity, and probably were a source of Solomon's wealth.

■ **8:19 if you by any means forget.** Continuing fidelity is the requirement for blessing. Israel without God was no better than the pagans. But God will keep His covenant with the fathers and save a remnant chosen by grace (v. 18; Rom. 11:28, 29).

■ **9:1 Hear, O Israel.** See note on 5:1. In this long section of exhortation (9:1—11:32), Moses turns toward the future. In the forthcoming conquest of Canaan, God will go before them (v. 3).

■ **9:2 the Anakim.** See 1:28; 2:21. The Anakim had frightened the faithless spies forty years earlier (Num. 13:22, 28).

■ **9:4 Because of my righteousness.** Note the threefold emphasis in this section (vv. 4–6) that the victory was not because of Israel's goodness, but was entirely the work of God's grace. Repetition was characteristic of Hebrew literature, and aided learning and memorization. Genesis 21:1 is a prime example of this characteristic, misunderstood by critics who insist that ancient Near Eastern literature should resemble the crisp economy that ideally characterizes modern Western journalism. This

'Because of my righteousness the LORD has brought me in to possess this land'; but *it is* [g]because of the wickedness of these nations *that* the LORD is driving them out from before you. 5 [h]*It is* not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart *that* you go in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations *that* the LORD your God drives them out from before you, and that He may [i]fulfill the [j]word which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. 6 Therefore understand that the LORD your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you *are* a [k]stiff-necked[2] people.

7 "Remember! Do not forget how you [l]provoked the LORD your God to wrath in the wilderness. [m]From the day that you departed from the land of Egypt until you came to this place, you have been rebellious against the LORD. 8 Also [n]in Horeb you provoked the LORD to wrath, so that the LORD was angry *enough* with you to have destroyed you. 9 [o]When I went up into the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant which the LORD made with you, then I stayed on the mountain forty days and [p]forty nights. I neither ate bread nor drank water. 10 [q]Then the LORD delivered to me two tablets of stone written with the finger of God, and on them *were* all the words which the LORD had spoken to you on the mountain from the midst of the fire [r]in[3] the day of the assembly. 11 And it came to pass, at the end of forty days and forty nights, *that* the LORD gave me the two tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant.

12 "Then the LORD said to me, [s]'Arise, go down quickly from here, for your people whom you brought out of Egypt have acted corruptly; they have [t]quickly turned aside from the way which I commanded them; they have made themselves a molded image.'

13 "Furthermore [u]the LORD spoke to me, saying, 'I have seen this people, and indeed [v]they are a [w]stiff-necked people. 14 [x]Let Me alone, that I may destroy them and [y]blot out their name from under heaven; [z]and I will make of you a nation mightier and greater than they.'

15 [a]"So I turned and came down from the mountain, and [b]the mountain burned with fire; and the two tablets of the covenant *were* in my two hands. 16 And [c]I looked, and behold, you had sinned against the LORD your God—had made for yourselves a molded calf! You had turned aside quickly from the way which the LORD had commanded you. 17 Then I took the two tablets and threw them out of my two hands and [d]broke them before your eyes. 18 And I [e]fell[5] down before the LORD, as at the first, forty days and forty nights; I neither ate bread nor drank water, because of all your sin which you committed in doing wickedly in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger. 19 [f]For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure with which the LORD was angry with you, to destroy you. [g]But the LORD listened to me at that time also. 20 And the LORD was very angry with Aaron *and* would have destroyed him; so I prayed for Aaron also at the same time. 21 Then I took your sin, the calf which you had made, and burned it with fire and crushed it *and* ground *it* very small, until it was as fine as dust; and I [h]threw its dust into the brook that descended from the mountain.

22 "Also at [i]Taberah and [j]Massah and [k]Kibroth Hattaavah you [l]provoked the LORD to wrath. 23 Likewise, [m]when the LORD sent you from Kadesh Barnea, saying, 'Go up and possess the land which I have given you,' then you rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God, and [n]you did not believe Him nor obey His voice. 24 [o]You have been rebellious against the LORD from the day that I knew you.

25 [p]"Thus I [7]prostrated myself before the LORD; forty days and forty nights I kept prostrating myself, because the LORD had said He would destroy you. 26 Therefore I prayed to the LORD, and said: 'O Lord GOD, do not destroy Your people and [q]Your inheritance whom You have redeemed through Your greatness, whom You have brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand. 27 Remember Your servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; do not look on the stubbornness of this people, or on their wickedness or their sin, 28 lest the land from which You brought us should say, "Because the LORD was not able to bring them to the land which He promised them, and because He hated them, He has brought them out to kill them in the wilderness." 29 Yet they *are* Your people and Your inheritance, whom You brought out by Your mighty power and by Your outstretched arm.'

4 [g]Gen. 15:16; Lev. 18:3, 24–30; Deut. 12:31; 18:9–14

5 [h][Titus 3:5] [i]Gen. 50:24 [1]*perform*

6 [j]Ex. 34:9; Deut. 31:27 [2]*stubborn or rebellious*

7 [k]Num. 14:22 [l]Ex. 14:11

8 [m]Ex. 32:1–8; Ps. 106:19

9 [n]Ex. 24:12, 15; Deut. 5:2–22 [o]Ex. 24:18

10 [p]Ex. 31:18; Deut. 4:13 [q]Ex. 19:17 [3]*when you were all gathered together*

12 [r]Ex. 32:7, 8 [s]Deut. 31:29

13 [t]Ex. 32:9 [u]Deut. 9:6 [4]*stubborn or rebellious*

14 [v]Ex. 32:10 [w]Deut. 29:20 [x]Num. 14:12

15 [y]Ex. 32:15–19 [z]Ex. 19:18

16 [a]Ex. 32:19

17 [b]Ex. 32:19

18 [c]Ex. 34:28; Ps. 106:23 [5]*prostrated myself*

19 [d]Ex. 32:10, 11; Heb. 12:21 [e]Ex. 32:14

21 [f]Ex. 32:20

22 [g]Num. 11:1, 3 [h]Ex. 17:7 [i]Num. 11:4, 34 [6]*caused the LORD to be angry*

23 [j]Num. 13:3 [k]Ps. 106:24, 25

24 [l]Deut. 9:7; 31:27

25 [m]Deut. 9:18 [7]*fell down*

26 [n]Deut. 32:9

prejudice has led to the unwarranted conclusion that the Pentateuch must be the product of "cutting and pasting" documents from different authors.

■ **9:9 I went up into the mountain.** Moses retells the story given in Exodus (Ex. 24:12, 18; 32:7–10, 15–20).

■ **9:21 the brook that descended from the mountain.** Today no stream flows down from Jebel Musa, the peak often identified as Mount Sinai (Ex. 16:1 note). The ground has some moisture, and low bushes grow, but the mention of a stream implies that in Moses' time there was more rainfall than now (8:7–9 note).

■ **9:22 Taberah.** See Num. 11:3. On Massah, see 6:16 and Ex. 17:7. On Kibroth Hattaavah, see Num. 11:34.

■ **9:23 you rebelled.** The sheer persistence in rebellion by the Israelites (v. 24) points to the importance of Moses' intercession (vv. 25–28; Ex. 32:11–13) and to the gracious power of God, who remains faithful to His covenant despite the failings of the people (v. 29).

The Second Pair of Tablets

10 "At that time the LORD said to me, [1] 'Hew for yourself two tablets of stone like the first, and come up to Me on the mountain and make yourself an [a]ark of wood. [2] And I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke; and [b]you shall put them in the ark.'

[3] "So I made an ark of acacia wood, hewed two tablets of stone like the first, and went up the mountain, having the two tablets in my hand. [4] And He wrote on the tablets according to the first writing, the Ten [2]Commandments, [c]which the LORD had spoken to you in the mountain from the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly; and the LORD gave them to me. [5] Then I turned and [d]came down from the mountain, and [e]put the tablets in the ark which I had made; [f]and there they are, just as the LORD commanded me."

[6] (Now the children of Israel journeyed from the wells of Bene Jaakan to Moserah, where Aaron [g]died, and where he was buried; and Eleazar his son ministered as priest in his [3]stead. [7] [h]From there they journeyed to Gudgodah, and from Gudgodah to Jotbathah, a land of [4]rivers of water. [8] At that time [i]the LORD [5]separated the tribe of Levi [j]to bear the ark of the covenant of the LORD, [k]to stand before the LORD to minister to Him and [l]to bless in His name, to this day. [9] [m]Therefore Levi has no portion nor inheritance with his brethren; the LORD *is* his inheritance, just as the LORD your God promised him.)

[10] "As at the first time, [n]I stayed in the mountain forty days and forty nights; [o]the LORD also heard me at that time, *and* the LORD chose not to destroy you. [11] [p]Then the LORD said to me, 'Arise, begin *your* journey before the people, that they may go in and possess the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.'

The Essence of the Law

[12] "And now, Israel, [q]what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to [r]love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, [13] *and* to keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today [s]for your [6]good? [14] Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to the [t]LORD your God, *also* the earth with all that *is* in it. [15] The LORD delighted only in your fathers, to love them; and He chose their [7]descendants after them, you above all peoples, as *it is* this day. [16] Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your [u]heart, and be [v]stiff-necked[8] no longer. [17] For the LORD your God *is* [w]God of gods and [x]Lord of lords, the great God, [y]mighty and awesome, who [z]shows no partiality nor takes a bribe. [18] [a]He administers justice for the fatherless and the

CHAPTER 10

1 [a]Ex. 25:10 [1]*Cut out*
2 [b]Ex. 25:16, 21
4 [c]Ex. 20:1; 34:28 [2]Lit. *Words*
5 [d]Ex. 34:29 [e]Ex. 40:20 [f]1 Kin. 8:9
6 [g]Num. 20:25–28; 33:38 [3]*place*
7 [h]Num. 33:32–34 [4]*brooks*
8 [i]Num. 3:6 [j]Num. 4:5, 15; 10:21 [k]Deut. 18:5 [l]Num. 6:23 [5]*set apart*
9 [m]Deut. 18:1, 2
10 [n]Deut. 9:18 [o]Ex. 32:14
11 [p]Ex. 33:1
12 [q]Mic. 6:8 [r]Deut. 6:5
13 [s]Deut. 6:24 [6]*benefit* or *welfare*
14 [t][Neh. 9:6]
15 [7]Lit. *seed*
16 [u]Jer. 4:4 [v]Deut. 9:6, 13 [8]*rebellious*
17 [w]Dan. 2:47 [x]Rev. 19:16 [y]Deut. 7:21 [z]Acts 10:34
18 [a]Ps. 68:5; 146:9

■ **10:1–5** Summarizing the material in Ex. 34:1–4 and 40:20, Moses here telescopes the receiving of the commandments and the building of the ark. Moses was twice on the Mount. He received the directions for the tabernacle the first time. It and its furniture were built after Moses came down the second time. The tablets were put in the ark when the tabernacle was set up, as mentioned in Ex. 40:20.

■ **10:1 two tablets of stone.** It has generally been assumed that the law was written once, the material taking up two tablets or a double tablet. More recently, some have suggested that there were two tablets, each a separate copy of the law. This would reflect the ancient practice of providing each treaty partner with a copy of the agreement. Because the ark was both the place of God's presence with His people, and the focal point of Israel's worship, it was appropriate for both copies of the covenantal terms to be housed in the ark. See note on Ex. 31:18.

■ **10:4 the Ten Commandments.** See note on 4:13.

■ **10:6–9** Some have suggested that this parenthetical section breaks the narrative and is, therefore, a later insertion. It is evident, however, that this section serves to tie together a number of themes from the preceding context: Aaron's role in the golden calf incident, for which he was threatened with death that was averted only by Moses' intercession (9:20); the impending possession of the land (9:1–4), in which the Levites would not participate because the Lord was their inheritance (v. 9; cf. 9:29); and the ark (vv. 1–5), which the Levites were to tend (v. 8).

The journeys in vv. 6, 7 appear to correspond to Num. 33:31–33. These movements are difficult to interpret because we can identify only a few of the places mentioned.

■ **10:6 Moserah, where Aaron died.** This mention of Aaron's death underscores the effectiveness of Moses' intercession (9:20). Aaron was not killed at Sinai, but lived until the fortieth year after the Exodus (Num. 33:38).

■ **10:8 At that time.** This does not refer to the time of Aaron's death (v. 6) or to the events of v. 7, but to the time of the revelation at Sinai (Ex. 28; 29).

■ **10:11 to their fathers.** To the patriarchs (9:5; Ex. 33:1).

■ **10:12 what does the LORD your God require of you.** This rhetorical question resembles the much-quoted Mic. 6:8, which calls us to justice, mercy, and humility in our walk with God (cf. Matt. 23:23). To walk with God requires that we love Him with all our being and keep His commandments—love and obedience go together (John 14:23). To love God with our whole being is the greatest commandment (Deut. 6:5; Mark 12:29–34).

■ **10:15 you above all.** The contrast is a noble one, between God's sovereignty over and common grace to all creation (v. 14), and His special electing love for the patriarchs and the nation (v. 15).

■ **10:16 Therefore circumcise . . . your heart.** This verse (along with Deut. 30:6 and Jer. 4:4) is an effective answer to those who imagine that the Old Testament teaches merely a religion of outward form. Circumcision was a *symbol*, a *sacrament*, an *outward sign* of an *inward grace*. Apart from this, as Paul indicates, circumcision was of no saving significance. True circumcision is "of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter" (Rom. 2:29).

■ **10:18 He administers justice.** The Lord of surpassing greatness and sovereignty ("God of gods and Lord of lords," v. 17) is also revealed to be the supremely compassionate God, with deep concern for the least in human society: the fatherless, the widow, and the alien. In this He is our example (v. 19).

widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing. [19] Therefore love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. [20] [b]You shall fear the LORD your God; you shall serve Him, and to Him you shall hold fast, and take oaths in His name. [21] He *is* your praise, and He *is* your God, who has done for you these great and awesome things which your eyes have seen. [22] Your fathers went down to Egypt with seventy persons, and now the LORD your God has made you as the stars of heaven in multitude.

Love and Obedience Rewarded

11 "Therefore you shall love the LORD your God, and keep His charge, His statutes, His judgments, and His commandments always. [2] Know today that *I do* not *speak* with your children, who have not known and who have not seen the [1]chastening of the LORD your God, His greatness and His mighty hand and His outstretched arm— [3] His signs and His acts which He did in the midst of Egypt, to Pharaoh king of Egypt, and to all his land; [4] what He did to the army of Egypt, to their horses and their chariots: [a]how He made the waters of the Red Sea overflow them as they pursued you, and *how* the LORD has destroyed them to this day; [5] what He did for you in the wilderness until you came to this place; [6] and [b]what He did to Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, the son of Reuben: how the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, their households, their tents, and all the substance that *was* [2]in their possession, in the midst of all Israel— [7] but your eyes have [c]seen every great [3]act of the LORD which He did.

[8] "Therefore you shall keep every commandment which I command you today, that you may [d]be strong, and go in and possess the land which you cross over to possess, [9] and [e]that you may prolong *your* days in the land [f]which the LORD [4]swore to give your fathers, to them and their descendants, [g]'a land flowing with milk and honey.' [10] For the land which you go to possess *is* not like the land of Egypt from which you have come, where you sowed your seed and watered *it* by foot, as a vegetable garden; [11] [h]but the land which you cross over to possess *is* a land of hills and valleys, which drinks water from the rain of heaven, [12] a land for which the LORD your God cares; [i]the eyes of the LORD your God *are* always on it, from the beginning of the year to the very end of the year.

[13] 'And it shall be that if you earnestly [5]obey My commandments which I command you today, to love the LORD your God and serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul, [14] then [j][6]I will give *you* the rain for your land in its season, [k]the early rain and the latter rain, that you may gather in your grain, your new wine, and your oil. [15] [l]And I will send grass in your fields for your livestock, that you may [m]eat and be [7]filled.' [16] Take heed to yourselves, [n]lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and [o]serve other gods and worship them, [17] lest [p]the LORD's anger be aroused against you, and He [q]shut up the heavens so that there be no rain, and the land yield no produce, and [r]you perish quickly from the good land which the LORD is giving you.

[18] "Therefore [s]you shall [8]lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your [t]soul, and [u]bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. [19] [v]You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. [20] [w]And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, [21] that [x]your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers to give them, like [y]the days of the heavens above the earth.

20 [b]Matt. 4:10

CHAPTER 11

2 [1]*discipline*

4 [a]Ps. 106:11

6 [b]Ps. 106:16–18 [2]*at their feet*

7 [c]Deut. 10:21; 29:2 [3]*work*

8 [d]Josh. 1:6, 7

9 [e]Deut. 4:40; 5:16, 33; 6:2 [f]Deut. 9:5 [g]Ex. 3:8 [4]*promised*

11 [h]Deut. 8:7

12 [i]1 Kin. 9:3

13 [5]Lit. *listen to*

14 [j]Deut. 28:12 [k]Joel 2:23 [6]So with MT, Tg.; Sam., LXX, Vg. *He*

15 [l]Ps. 104:14 [m]Deut. 6:11 [7]*satisfied*

16 [n]Job 31:27 [o]Deut. 8:19

17 [p]Deut. 6:15; 9:19 [q]2 Chr. 6:26; 7:13 [r]Deut. 4:26

18 [s]Deut. 6:6–9 [t]Ps. 119:2, 34 [u]Deut. 6:8 [8]Lit. *put*

19 [v]Deut. 4:9, 10; 6:7

20 [w]Deut. 6:9

21 [x]Deut. 4:40 [y]Ps. 72:5; 89:29

■ **10:22 seventy.** See note on Ex. 1:5. Mention of the number who went into Egypt emphasizes God's great love in increasing Israel's population to nearly two million.

■ **11:2 your children.** Since the people had seen God's wonderful deliverance (v. 8), they should therefore obey God's commands all the more faithfully. In his mention of "children," it does not seem that Moses distinguishes the adults over age forty in his audience, who had seen the Exodus, from the youths who had not. The younger generation also had seen God's preserving care and discipline in the desert (vv. 5, 6). Probably, therefore, Moses is distinguishing the current generation to which he was speaking from their children yet to be born.

■ **11:6 Dathan and Abiram.** Moses distinguishes Dathan and Abiram from Korah. Likewise, Ps. 106:17 does not include Korah with those buried alive. This distinction is not because the information about Korah belongs to a later time of writing, as some have held; rather, this distinction by Moses is precise. Closer reading of the record in Num. 16:16–35 shows that Korah was at the tabernacle among the two hundred fifty men with censers. Dathan and Abiram, who were not Levites, were in front of their tents with their families when the earth swallowed them up, and Korah's family with them. But Korah himself perished with the two hundred fifty in the fire from the Lord.

■ **11:9 prolong your days in the land.** See note on 5:16.

■ **11:10 watered it by foot.** The precise detail of this allusion is unclear. It may refer to the sluice gates of irrigation canals (which were often opened by the gardener's foot), or to the burdensome practice of carrying water by bucket. In contrast to the Promised Land, which had sufficient rainfall for agriculture (vv. 9, 11), arid Egypt depended heavily upon irrigation for farming.

■ **11:13 with all your heart.** The command to love the Lord "with all your heart" (6:5) is echoed in Deuteronomy at least six times.

■ **11:14 grain . . . new wine . . . oil.** See note on 7:13.

■ **11:19 teach them to your children.** See note on 4:9, and the similar exhortations and metaphors in 6:6–9.

22 "For if [z]you carefully keep all these commandments which I command you to do—to love
the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways, and [a]to hold fast to Him— 23 then the LORD will
[b]drive out all these nations from before you, and you will [c]dispossess greater and mightier na-
tions than yourselves. 24 [d]Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours: [e]from
the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the River Euphrates, even to the [g]Western Sea, shall
be your territory. 25 No man shall be able to [f]stand [1]against you; the LORD your God will put the
[g]dread of you and the fear of you upon all the land where you tread, just as He has said to you.
26 [h]"Behold, I set before you today a blessing and a curse: 27 [i]the blessing, if you obey the
commandments of the LORD your God which I command you today; 28 and the [j]curse, if you do
not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside from the way which I com-
mand you today, to go after other gods which you have not known. 29 Now it shall be, when the
LORD your God has brought you into the land which you go to possess, that you shall put the
[k]blessing on Mount Gerizim and the [l]curse on Mount Ebal. 30 *Are* they not on the other side of
the Jordan, toward the setting sun, in the land of the Canaanites who dwell in the plain opposite
Gilgal, [m]beside the terebinth trees of Moreh? 31 For you will cross over the Jordan and go in to
possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you, and you will possess it and dwell in it.
32 And you shall be careful to observe all the statutes and judgments which I set before you to-
day.

A Prescribed Place of Worship

12 "These [a]*are* the statutes and judgments which you shall be careful to observe in the land
which the LORD God of your fathers is giving you to possess, [b]all[1] the days that you live
on the earth. 2 [c]You shall utterly destroy all the places where the nations which you shall dispos-
sess served their gods, [d]on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree. 3 And
[e]you shall destroy their altars, break their *sacred* pillars, and burn their [2]wooden images with
fire; you shall cut down the carved images of their gods and destroy their names from that place.
4 You shall not [f]worship the LORD your God *with* such *things.*
5 "But you shall seek the [g]place where the LORD your God chooses, out of all your tribes, to
put His name for His [h]dwelling[3] place; and there you shall go. 6 [i]There you shall take your burnt
offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the heave offerings of your hand, your vowed offerings,
your freewill offerings, and the [j]firstborn of your herds and flocks. 7 And [k]there you shall eat be-
fore the LORD your God, and [l]you shall rejoice in [4]all to which you have put your hand, you and
your households, in which the LORD your God has blessed you.
8 "You shall not at all do as we are doing here today—[m]every man doing whatever *is* right in
his own eyes— 9 for as yet you have not come to the [n]rest[5] and the inheritance which the LORD
your God is giving you. 10 But *when* you cross over the Jordan and dwell in the land which the
LORD your God is giving you to inherit, and He gives you [o]rest from all your enemies round
about, so that you dwell in safety, 11 then there will be the place where the LORD your God
chooses to make His name abide. There you shall bring all that I command you: your burnt

22 [z]Deut. 11:1 [a]Deut. 10:20
23 [b]Deut. 4:38 [c]Deut. 9:1
24 [d]Josh. 1:3; 14:9 [e]Gen. 15:18 [g]Mediterranean
25 [f]Deut. 7:24 [g]Deut. 2:25 [1]*before*
26 [h]Deut. 30:1, 15, 19
27 [i]Deut. 28:1–14
28 [j]Deut. 28:15–68
29 [k]Josh. 8:33 [l]Deut. 27:13–26
30 [m]Gen. 12:6

CHAPTER 12

1 [a]Deut. 6:1 [b]Deut. 4:9, 10 [1]As long as
2 [c]Ex. 34:13 [d]2 Kin. 16:4; 17:10, 11
3 [e]Num. 33:52 [2]Heb. *Asherim*
4 [f]Deut. 12:31
5 [g]Ex. 20:24 [h]Ex. 15:13 [3]*home*
6 [i]Lev. 17:3, 4 [j]Deut. 14:23
7 [k]Deut. 14:26 [l]Deut. 12:12, 18 [4]*all that you undertake*
8 [m]Judg. 17:6; 21:25
9 [n]Deut. 3:20; 25:19 [5]Or *place of rest*
10 [o]Josh. 11:23

■ **11:24 Every place . . . your foot treads.** The same expression and the same boundaries of Canaan are repeated in Josh. 1:3–5. Because the boundaries need to include a southern limit, "wilderness" probably means the Sinai Desert. The boundaries include all of modern Israel and Lebanon, together with part of Syria.

■ **11:26 a blessing and a curse.** This introduction to the ceremony of blessing and cursing that was to take place at Ebal and Gerizim is reiterated in Deut. 30:19 at the end of Moses' speech. Under divine inspiration, Moses emphasizes the people's obligation to love God and obey His commands.

■ **11:29 Mount Gerizim . . . Mount Ebal.** The details of this ceremony are provided in chs. 27; 28; the ceremony itself was performed according to Moses' direction by Joshua (Josh. 8:30–35). The phrases "on the other side of the Jordan, toward the setting sun" (v. 30) point to a location in Canaan (i.e., west of the Jordan). According to Gen. 12:6, the "terebinth trees of Moreh" are near Shechem. The precise location of Gilgal is uncertain, but it seems to have been near Jericho (Josh. 4:19). The Canaanites inhabited this whole territory, and there is no reason to doubt the usual identification of these mountains as the two mountains near Shechem astride the main north-south road.

■ **12:1—26:19** Moses continues to expound the covenant way of life, reiterating laws governing Israel's worship and conduct. The laws pertain to topics from idolatry to tithes, from priests to divorce, from nations to the individual. The section concludes with exhortations to obey the Lord, who is both Redeemer and King.

■ **12:5 the place where the LORD your God chooses.** This passage has been used to argue that Deuteronomy was written in the sixth century B.C. so as to support Josiah's centralization of worship at Jerusalem in that period (Introduction: Date and Occasion). But that view, which presupposes an evolutionary theory of the development of Israelite religion, misreads this verse. The reference here to "the place" certainly need not imply that the location of the temple in Jerusalem was known when this text was written. In the course of Israel's history, worship of the Lord was successively centered in several places: Shiloh (Josh. 18:1) and Gibeon (1 Chr. 16:39), as well as later in Jerusalem. The stress here is on the contrast between "the place . . . the LORD your God chooses" and "the places where the nations . . . served their gods" (v. 2). Purity of worship in obedience to divine command, rather than centralization, is primarily in view.

■ **12:7 eat . . . rejoice.** Some sacrifices were shared by priests and worshipers. The worship of Israel was holy, reverent, and joyful. The worship of a holy God involved repentance and cleansing, but the redeemed heart was full of joy and praise. The Book of Psalms frequently expresses such joyful devotion.

offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the heave offerings of your hand, and all your choice offerings which you vow to the LORD. 12 And [p]you shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you and your sons and your daughters, your male and female servants, and the [q]Levite who *is* within your gates, since he has no portion nor inheritance with you. 13 Take heed to yourself that you do not offer your burnt offerings in every place that you see; 14 but in the place which the LORD chooses, in one of your tribes, there you shall offer your burnt offerings, and there you shall do all that I command you.

15 "However, [r]you may slaughter and eat meat within all your gates, whatever your heart desires, according to the blessing of the LORD your God which He has given you; [s]the unclean and the clean may eat of it, [t]of the gazelle and the deer alike. 16 [u]Only you shall not eat the blood; you shall pour it on the earth like water. 17 You may not eat within your gates the tithe of your grain or your new wine or your oil, of the firstborn of your herd or your flock, of any of your offerings which you vow, of your freewill offerings, or of the [6]heave offering of your hand. 18 But you must eat them before the LORD your God in the place which the LORD your God chooses, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, and the Levite who *is* within your gates; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God in [7]all to which you put your hands. 19 [8]Take heed to yourself that you do not forsake the Levite as long as you live in your land.

20 "When the LORD your God [v]enlarges your border as He has promised you, and you say, 'Let me eat meat,' because you long to eat meat, you may eat as much meat as your heart desires. 21 If the place where the LORD your God chooses to put His name is too far from [w]you, then you may slaughter from your herd and from your flock which the LORD has given you, just as I have commanded you, and you may eat within your gates as much as your heart desires. 22 Just as the gazelle and the deer are eaten, so you may eat them; the unclean and the clean alike may eat them. 23 Only be sure that you do not eat the blood, [x]for the blood *is* the life; you may not eat the life with the meat. 24 You shall not eat it; you shall pour it on the earth like water. 25 You shall not eat it, [y]that it may go well with you and your children after you, [z]when you do *what is* right in the sight of the LORD. 26 Only the [a]holy things which you have, and your vowed offerings, you shall take and go to the place which the LORD chooses. 27 And [b]you shall offer your burnt offerings, the meat and the blood, on the altar of the LORD your God; and the blood of your sacrifices shall be poured out on the altar of the LORD your God, and you shall eat the meat. 28 Observe and obey all these words which I command you, [c]that it may go well with you and your children after you forever, when you do *what is* good and right in the sight of the LORD your God.

Beware of False Gods

29 "When [d]the LORD your God cuts off from before you the nations which you go to dispossess, and you displace them and dwell in their land, 30 take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.' 31 [e]You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way; for every [9]abomination to the LORD which He hates they have done to their gods; for [f]they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods.

32 "Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; [g]you shall not add to it nor take away from it.

12 [p]Deut. 12:18; 26:11 [q]Deut. 10:9; 14:29

15 [r]Deut. 12:21 [s]Deut. 12:22 [t]Deut. 14:5

16 [u]Gen. 9:4; Lev. 7:26; 17:10–12; 1 Sam. 14:33; Acts 15:20, 29

17 [6]*contribution*

18 [7]all your undertakings

19 [8]*Be careful*

20 [v]Gen. 15:18; Ex. 34:24; Deut. 11:24; 19:8

21 [w]Deut. 14:24

23 [x]Gen. 9:4; Lev. 17:10–14; Deut. 12:16

25 [y]Deut. 4:40; 6:18; Is. 3:10 [z]Ex. 15:26; 1 Kin. 11:38

26 [a]Num. 5:9, 10; 18:19

27 [b]Lev. 1:5, 9, 13, 17

28 [c]Deut. 12:25

29 [d]Ex. 23:23; Deut. 19:1; Josh. 23:4

31 [e]Lev. 18:3, 26, 30; 20:1, 2 [f]Deut. 18:10; Ps. 106:37; Jer. 32:35 [9]*detestable action*

32 [g]Deut. 4:2; 13:18; Josh. 1:7; Prov. 30:6; Rev. 22:18, 19

■ **12:12 no . . . inheritance.** The gifts of the worshipers were, in part, to support the priests and Levites, who were allotted no farmland of their own (10:6–9).

■ **12:15 slaughter . . . within all your gates.** The same rule is given in vv. 20, 21. They could slaughter for meat anywhere, but sacrificial meat and foodstuffs devoted to God could only be eaten at the central place of worship. See note on Lev. 17:3.

■ **12:21 If the place . . . is too far.** See 14:24–26.

■ **12:23 the blood is the life.** The same principle is given in Gen. 9:4 and Lev. 17:10–14. The treatment of the blood in the sacrificial system shows that it stood for the life of the animal. When the blood is gone, the life is gone. When blood was sprinkled on the altar, innocent life was shed for a guilty sinner. The Old Testament sacrifices show a theology of substitution of the innocent for the guilty. This theology was incomplete, because an animal, no matter how perfect, is by no means as valuable as the human soul (Mic. 6:6, 7). The resolution is found most clearly in Is. 53:10 where the innocent Servant of the Lord dies as a sin offering (cf. John 1:29).

■ **12:31 they burn even their sons and daughters.** Child sacrifice was common in ancient times, especially in the Phoenician colony of Carthage in North Africa. In ancient pagan cultures, children were sometimes sacrificed in times of great need as an expression of devotion to a god (2 Kin. 3:27). Even some Israelites at times engaged in this detestable practice (Judg. 11:30–40; Ps. 106:34–39; Jer. 7:31).

■ **12:32 you shall not add.** See 4:2.

Punishment of Apostates

13 "If there arises among you a prophet or a [a]dreamer of dreams, [b]and he gives you a sign
or a wonder, [2] and [c]the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods'—which you have not known—'and let us serve them,' [3] you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the LORD your God [d]is testing you to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. [4] You shall [e]walk[1] after the LORD your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice; you shall serve Him and [f]hold fast to Him. [5] But [g]that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death, because he has spoken in order to turn *you* away from the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of bondage, to entice you from the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk. [h]So you shall [2]put away the evil from your midst.

[6] [i]"If your brother, the son of your mother, your son or your daughter, [j]the wife [3]of your bosom, or your friend [k]who is as your own soul, secretly entices you, saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods,' which you have not known, neither you nor your fathers, [7] of the gods of the people which *are* all around you, near to you or far off from you, from *one* end of the earth to the *other* end of the earth, [8] you shall [l]not [4]consent to him or listen to him, nor shall your eye pity him, nor shall you spare him or conceal him; [9] but you shall surely kill him; your hand shall be first against him to put him to [m]death, and afterward the hand of all the people. [10] And you shall stone him with stones until he dies, because he sought to entice you away from the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. [11] So all Israel shall hear and [n]fear, and not again do such wickedness as this among you.

CHAPTER 13

1 [a]Zech. 10:2 [b]Matt. 24:24
2 [c]Deut. 18:22
3 [d]Deut. 8:2, 16
4 [e]2 Kin. 23:3 [f]Deut. 30:20 [1]*follow the* LORD
5 [g]Jer. 14:15 [h]Deut. 17:5, 7 [2]*exterminate*
6 [i]Deut. 17:2 [j]Gen. 16:5 [k]1 Sam. 18:1, 3 [3]Whom you cherish
8 [l]Prov. 1:10 [4]*yield*
9 [m]Deut. 17:7
11 [n]Deut. 17:13

The Three Purposes of the Law

Scripture shows that God intends His law to function in three ways, which Calvin crystallized in classic form for the church's benefit as the law's threefold use.

Its first function is to be a mirror reflecting to us both the perfect righteousness of God and our own sinfulness and shortcomings. As Augustine wrote, "the law bids us, as we try to fulfill its requirements, and become wearied in our weakness under it, to know how to ask the help of grace." The law is meant to give knowledge of sin (Rom. 3:20; 4:15; 5:13; 7:7–11), and by showing us our need of pardon and our danger of damnation to lead us in repentance and faith to Christ (Gal. 3:19–24).

A second function, the "civil use," is to restrain evil. Though the law cannot change the heart, it can to some extent inhibit lawlessness by its threats of judgment, especially when backed by a civil code that administers punishment for proven offenses (Deut. 13:6–11; 19:16–21; Rom. 13:3, 4). Thus it secures civil order, and serves to protect the righteous from the unjust.

Its third function is to guide the regenerate into the good works that God has planned for them (Eph. 2:10). The law tells God's children what will please their heavenly Father. It could be called their family code. Christ was speaking of this third use of the law when He said that those who become His disciples must be taught to do all that He had commanded (Matt. 28:20), and that obedience to His commands will prove the reality of one's love for Him (John 14:15). The Christian is free from the law as a system of salvation (Rom. 6:14; 7:4, 6; 1 Cor. 9:20; Gal. 2:15–19; 3:25), but is "under law toward Christ" as a rule of life (1 Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:2). □

■ **13:1–18** Moses issues warnings against apostasy in ch. 13. The first (vv. 1–5) concerns false prophets. The other sections warn against a near relative who tempts to apostasy (vv. 6–11) and the apostasy of a whole town (vv. 12–18). In each case, the penalty is death.

■ **13:1–5** The caution against a false prophet is given to emphasize that even though a prophet seems to carry impressive credentials, the theological test is still crucial. No true prophet could possibly advance a false religion, since Israel's God is the true and only God. All other gods are the creations of men. Those who follow them and worship them must be destroyed from Israel.

■ **13:6–11** Attention turns to the second instance of seduction to apostasy.

■ **13:6 your brother . . . friend.** The closest ties on earth do not dissolve the obligation to remain faithful to the true and only God (cf. 21:18–21).

■ **13:10** See theological note "The Three Purposes of the Law."

12 [o]Judg. 20:1–48
13 [5]Lit. *Sons of Belial*
14 [6]*detestable action*
16 [p]Josh. 6:24 [q]Josh. 8:28; Is. 17:1; 25:2; Jer. 49:2 [7]Or *as a whole offering* [8]Lit. *mound* or *ruin*
17 [r]Josh. 6:18 [s]Josh. 7:26 [9]*increase*
18 [t]Deut. 12:25, 28, 32

12 [o]"If you hear someone in one of your cities, which the LORD your God gives you to dwell in, saying, 13 [5]'Corrupt men have gone out from among you and enticed the inhabitants of their city, saying, "Let us go and serve other gods" '—which you have not known— 14 then you shall inquire, search out, and ask diligently. And *if it is* indeed true *and* certain *that* such an [6]abomination was committed among you, 15 you shall surely strike the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying it, all that is in it and its livestock—with the edge of the sword. 16 And you shall gather all its plunder into the middle of the street, and [7]completely [p]burn with fire the city and all its plunder, for the LORD your God. It shall be [q]a [8]heap forever; it shall not be built again. 17 [r]So none of the accursed things shall remain in your hand, that the LORD may [s]turn from the fierceness of His anger and show you mercy, have compassion on you and [9]multiply you, just as He swore to your fathers, 18 because you have listened to the voice of the LORD your God, [t]to keep all His commandments which I command you today, to do *what is* right in the eyes of the LORD your God.

CHAPTER 14

1 [a][Rom. 8:16; Gal. 3:26] [b]Lev. 19:28; 21:1–5 [1]*make any baldness between your eyes*
2 [c]Lev. 20:26; Deut. 7:6; [Rom. 12:1]
3 [d]Ezek. 4:14 [2]*abominable*
4 [e]Lev. 11:2–45
5 [3]Or *addax*
8 [f]Lev. 11:26, 27
9 [g]Lev. 11:9
12 [h]Lev. 11:13
19 [i]Lev. 11:20 [j]Lev. 11:23 [4]*swarming*
21 [k]Lev. 17:15; 22:8; Ezek. 4:14; 44:31

Improper Mourning

14 "You *are* [a]the children of the LORD your God; [b]you shall not cut yourselves nor [1]shave the front of your head for the dead. 2 [c]For you *are* a holy people to the LORD your God, and the LORD has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples who *are* on the face of the earth.

Clean and Unclean Meat

3 [d]"You shall not eat any [2]detestable thing. 4 [e]These *are* the animals which you may eat: the ox, the sheep, the goat, 5 the deer, the gazelle, the roe deer, the wild goat, the [3]mountain goat, the antelope, and the mountain sheep. 6 And you may eat every animal with cloven hooves, having the hoof split into two parts, *and that* chews the cud, among the animals. 7 Nevertheless, of those that chew the cud or have cloven hooves, you shall not eat, *such as* these: the camel, the hare, and the rock hyrax; for they chew the cud but do not have cloven hooves; they *are* unclean for you. 8 Also the swine is unclean for you, because it has cloven hooves, yet *does* not *chew* the cud; you shall not eat their flesh [f]or touch their dead carcasses.

9 [g]"These you may eat of all that *are* in the waters: you may eat all that have fins and scales. 10 And whatever does not have fins and scales you shall not eat; it *is* unclean for you.

11 "All clean birds you may eat. 12 [h]But these you shall not eat: the eagle, the vulture, the buzzard, 13 the red kite, the falcon, and the kite after their kinds; 14 every raven after its kind; 15 the ostrich, the short-eared owl, the sea gull, and the hawk after their kinds; 16 the little owl, the screech owl, the white owl, 17 the jackdaw, the carrion vulture, the fisher owl, 18 the stork, the heron after its kind, and the hoopoe and the bat.

19 "Also [i]every [4]creeping thing that flies is unclean for you; [j]they shall not be eaten.

20 "You may eat all clean birds.

21 [k]"You shall not eat anything that dies *of itself;* you may give it to the alien who *is* within

■ **13:12–18** In the third instance of apostasy the case of a whole town is considered. First, investigation is undertaken (vv. 12–14). If the thing is true, the town must be destroyed (vv. 14–15). Note that the plunder of the town is not to be taken for private gain (vv. 16–18). The thought of gain might cloud the judgment of those who investigated. The Hebrew for "heap" is *tel,* the word now used by archaeologists for the mounds comprising the ruins of successive generations of the buried cities they excavate.

■ **14:1 you shall not cut yourselves . . . for the dead.** See Lev. 19:27, 28, where the same rules are given. Details of this custom are unclear, but it doubtless involved practices associated with ancestor worship and pagan ritual mourning. Because Israel was chosen by God as His special possession (v. 2; 26:18), Israel was to be different and was to reject all pagan religion and associated rituals.

■ **14:3–21** This section and Num. 5:1–4 are the main references to the clean-and-unclean legislation outside of Lev. 11—15. The only ground given for the prohibitions is that Israel is to be holy to the Lord. Several reasons, ranging from religious to medical, have been suggested for these laws. In many cases the prohibitions require what would be good public health procedure, but the distinction of clean and unclean was not entirely a matter of health. Rather, it teaches an important moral and spiritual truth: separation from the specified foods and diseases portrayed the holiness of God and of His people. See notes on Lev. 11—15.

■ **14:11 All clean birds.** No easy formula is given to identify clean birds. In general the scavenger birds are unclean, probably because of their frequent contact with carrion. Such birds might pose a health risk as well. Some of the birds listed in vv. 12–18 can no longer be precisely identified.

■ **14:19 every creeping thing that flies.** See text note. But there were exceptions: Lev. 11:22 explicitly mentions the locust, destroying locust, cricket, and grasshopper as clean.

■ **14:21 a young goat in its mother's milk.** This prohibition is not fully explained. Appearing also in Ex. 23:19 and 34:26, it is the basis of the practice among orthodox Jews of not eating milk and meat products together. The prohibition may be similar to 22:6, which forbids taking the mother bird with its young. There, the idea is to preserve the mother and nest so as to have more birds for the future. Some have also suggested that cooking a goat in milk may have been a Canaanite practice with pagan religious implications, but the evidence is not clear.

your gates, that he may eat it, or you may sell it to a foreigner; [l]for you *are* a holy people to the LORD your God.

[m]"You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.

Tithing Principles

22 [n]"You shall truly tithe all the increase of your grain that the field produces year by year. 23 [o]And you shall eat before the LORD your God, in the place where He chooses to make His name abide, the tithe of your grain and your new wine and your oil, of [p]the firstborn of your herds and your flocks, that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always. 24 But if the journey is too long for you, so that you are not able to carry *the tithe, or* [q]if the place where the LORD your God chooses to put His name is too far from you, when the LORD your God has blessed you, 25 then you shall exchange *it* for money, take the money in your hand, and go to the place which the LORD your God chooses. 26 And you shall spend that money for whatever your heart desires: for oxen or sheep, for wine or similar drink, for whatever your heart desires; you shall eat there before the LORD your God, and you shall [r]rejoice, you and your household. 27 You shall not [s]forsake the [s]Levite who *is* within your gates, for he has no part nor inheritance with you.

28 [t]"At the end of *every* third year you shall bring out the [u]tithe of your produce of that year and store *it* up within your gates. 29 And the Levite, because he has no portion nor inheritance with you, and the stranger and the fatherless and the widow who *are* within your gates, may come and eat and be satisfied, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do.

Debts Canceled Every Seven Years

15 "At the end of [a]*every* seven years you shall grant a [1]release *of debts.* 2 And this *is* the form of the release: Every creditor who has lent *anything* to his neighbor shall [2]release *it;* he shall not [3]require *it* of his neighbor or his brother, because it is called the LORD's release. 3 Of a foreigner you may require *it;* but you shall give up your claim to what is owed by your brother, 4 except when there may be no poor among you; for the LORD will greatly [b]bless you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess *as* an inheritance— 5 only if you carefully obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe with care all these commandments which I command you today. 6 For the LORD your God will bless you just as He promised you; [c]you shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow; you shall reign over many nations, but they shall not reign over you.

Generosity to the Poor

7 "If there is among you a poor man of your brethren, within any of the [4]gates in your land which the LORD your God is giving you, [d]you shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your poor brother, 8 but [e]you shall [5]open your hand wide to him and willingly lend him sufficient for his need, whatever he needs. 9 Beware lest there be a wicked thought in your heart, saying, 'The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand,' and your [f]eye be evil against your poor brother and you give him nothing, and [g]he cry out to the LORD against you, and [h]it become sin among you. 10 You shall surely give to him, and [i]your heart should not be grieved when you give to him, because [j]for this thing the LORD your God will bless you in all your works and in all

21 [l]Deut. 14:2 [m]Ex. 23:19; 34:26

22 [n]Lev. 27:30; Deut. 12:6, 17; Neh. 10:37

23 [o]Deut. 12:5–7 [p]Deut. 15:19, 20

24 [q]Deut. 12:5, 21

26 [r]Deut. 12:7

27 [s]Deut. 12:12 [5]*neglect*

28 [t]Deut. 26:12; Amos 4:4 [u]Num. 18:21–24

CHAPTER 15

1 [a]Ex. 21:2; 23:10, 11; Lev. 25:4; Jer. 34:14 [1]*remission*

2 [2]*cancel the debt* [3]*exact it*

4 [b]Deut. 7:13

6 [c]Deut. 28:12, 44

7 [d]Ex. 23:6; Lev. 25:35–37; Deut. 24:12–14; [1 John 3:17] [4]*towns*

8 [e]Matt. 5:42; Gal. 2:10 [5]*freely open*

9 [f]Deut. 28:54, 56 [g]Ex. 22:23; Deut. 24:15; Job 34:28; Ps. 12:5; James 5:4 [h][Matt. 25:41, 42]

10 [i]2 Cor. 9:5, 7 [j]Deut. 14:29; Ps. 41:1; Prov. 22:9

■ **14:22 tithe.** A tenth. The law of the tithe was expressed as early as the time of the patriarchs (Gen. 14:20; 28:22). Leviticus 27:32 specifies that the tithe of animals must not be selected, but must be "whatever passes under the rod" of the shepherd.

■ **14:23 eat before the LORD.** The tithe was to be taken to the sanctuary (12:17), where the worshipers were to eat a portion in happy fellowship with the priests, Levites, and the poor. Far from being a burdensome requirement, the giving of the tithe was to be an occasion of joyous celebration and worship (12:7 note; cf. 2 Cor. 9:7).

■ **14:24 if the journey is too long.** Travel was not easy, and the transportation of agricultural products was harder still. A practical solution was allowed—they could convert the goods to money and carry the money (v. 25).

■ **14:28 At the end of every third year.** The third-year tithe is mentioned again only in 26:12, and the precise details are unclear. Because it was a special gift for the Levites and the poor, and because the Levitical cities were scattered throughout Israel (Josh. 21), it would have been impractical to take all the tithes at one time to the central place of worship. Thus, these tithe offerings were to be stored in the towns of Israel and used to provide for the needy.

■ **15:1 every seven years . . . grant a release of debts.** The sabbatical year was established and described in Ex. 23:10, 11 and Lev. 25:1–7, which require that the land should lie fallow during the seventh year. This passage (15:1–11) adds the provision that debts should be forgiven in that year. Since a loan might be arranged shortly before the sabbatical year, it could amount to a gift. For this reason vv. 7–11 warn against refusing to lend to the poor under these circumstances.

■ **15:4 except when there may be no poor.** The forgiveness of personal loans to the poor is apparently in view here. God desired to bless His people materially in the Land of Promise so that borrowing would be unnecessary (vv. 5, 6). Although full obedience would have resulted in the eradication of poverty from Israel, Moses realistically recognized that some poverty would remain (v. 11; cf. Matt. 26:11). The sabbatical year and the Jubilee provisions (Lev. 25:8–34) were God's gracious provision to minimize the oppression of the poor.

to which you put your hand. 11 For [k]the poor will never cease from the land; therefore I command you, saying, 'You shall [6]open your hand wide to your brother, to your poor and your needy, in your land.'

The Law Concerning Bondservants

12 [l]"If your brother, a Hebrew man, or a Hebrew woman, is [m]sold to you and serves you six years, then in the seventh year you shall let him go free from you. 13 And when you [7]send him away free from you, you shall not let him go away empty-handed; 14 you shall supply him liberally from your flock, from your threshing floor, and from your winepress. *From what* the LORD has [n]blessed you with, you shall give to him. 15 [o]You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you; therefore I command you this thing today. 16 And [p]if it happens that he says to you, 'I will not go away from you,' because he loves you and your house, since he prospers with you, 17 then you shall take an awl and thrust *it* through his ear to the door, and he shall be your servant forever. Also to your female servant you shall do likewise. 18 It shall not seem hard to you when you send him away free from you; for he has been worth [q]a double hired servant in serving you six years. Then the LORD your God will bless you in all that you do.

The Law Concerning Firstborn Animals

19 [r]"All the firstborn males that come from your herd and your flock you shall [8]sanctify to the LORD your God; you shall do no work with the firstborn of your herd, nor shear the firstborn of your flock. 20 [s]You and your household shall eat *it* before the LORD your God year by year in the place which the LORD chooses. 21 [t]But if there is a defect in it, *if it is* lame or blind *or has* any serious defect, you shall not sacrifice it to the LORD your God. 22 You may eat it within your gates; [u]the unclean and the clean *person* alike *may eat it,* as *if it were* a gazelle or a deer. 23 Only you shall not eat its blood; you shall pour it on the ground like water.

The Passover Reviewed

16 "Observe the [a]month of Abib, and keep the Passover to the LORD your God, for [b]in the month of Abib the LORD your God brought you out of Egypt by night. 2 Therefore you shall sacrifice the Passover to the LORD your God, from the flock and [c]the herd, in the [d]place where the LORD chooses to put His name. 3 You shall eat no leavened bread with it; [e]seven days you shall eat unleavened bread with it, *that is,* the bread of affliction (for you came out of the land of Egypt in haste), that you may [f]remember the day in which you came out of the land of Egypt all the days of your life. 4 [g]And no leaven shall be seen among you in all your territory for seven days, nor shall *any* of the meat which you sacrifice the first day at twilight remain overnight until [h]morning.

5 "You may not sacrifice the Passover within any of your gates which the LORD your God gives you; 6 but at the place where the LORD your God chooses to make His name abide, there

11 [k]Matt. 26:11; Mark 14:7; John 12:8 [6]*freely open*

12 [l]Ex. 21:2–6; Jer. 34:14 [m]Lev. 25:39–46

13 [7]*set him free*

14 [n]Prov. 10:22

15 [o]Deut. 5:15

16 [p]Ex. 21:5, 6

18 [q]Is. 16:14

19 [r]Ex. 13:2, 12 [8]*set apart* or *consecrate*

20 [s]Lev. 7:15–18; Deut. 12:5; 14:23

21 [t]Lev. 22:19–25; Deut. 17:1

22 [u]Deut. 12:15, 16, 22

CHAPTER 16

1 [a]Ex. 12:2 [b]Ex. 13:4

2 [c]Num. 28:19 [d]Deut. 12:5, 26; 15:20

3 [e]Num. 29:12 [f]Ex. 13:3; Deut. 4:9

4 [g]Ex. 13:7 [h]Num. 9:12

■ **15:12 If your brother . . . is sold.** Because this law of servitude is similar to the sabbatical year regulation, it might be thought that the sabbatical year freed all slaves. But that is not stated. Rather, the period of servitude was six years for every Hebrew slave and in the seventh year he went free.

Recalling the nation's experience of servitude in Egypt (v. 15), Israel was to be merciful to slaves. The slave in ancient Israel had rights (Ex. 21:1–11, 20), and the redemption provisions here are generous—the freed slave must be given something with which to start fresh (v. 13, 14; cf. Ex. 12:35, 36). The law of servitude described does not contradict the provision for freedom in the Year of Jubilee (Lev. 25:39–43). That provision probably refers to the special case of an impoverished servant whose ancestral property was gone and who therefore had nowhere to go if freed. When the Year of Jubilee came, his home was restored and he went to it.

■ **15:19 All the firstborn . . . sanctify.** See 12:17; 15:19 text note.

nor shear. The firstborn ox was not to be worked nor the firstborn sheep shorn, because they were to be given to the Lord while still young.

■ **15:21 a defect.** See 17:1.

■ **16:1–17** Most of ch. 16 deals with the three pilgrimage festivals, so called because they required all grown males to celebrate them at the sanctuary. These feasts are mentioned briefly in Ex. 23:14–17, ending with the same charge given in similar language at Deut. 16:16: Every man must bring his offering. The feasts are listed again in Ex. 34:18–23, where the Passover is simply included with the closely associated Feast of Unleavened Bread (Ex. 23:15 note). All five major feasts are listed more fully in Lev. 23, and they are listed with their offerings in Num. 28 and 29.

■ **16:1 the month of Abib.** In Exodus, the Passover (Ex. 12:1–14) and the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Ex. 12:15–20) were instituted in the "first month" (Ex. 12:2, 18), also called the month of Abib, one of the Canaanite month names (Ex. 13:4; 23:15). The Babylonian name of the first month is Nisan, and Babylonian month names appear in Old Testament books of the exilic and postexilic periods (e.g., Esth. 3:7).

keep the Passover. See notes on Ex. 12:1–26. The Passover clearly symbolizes substitution, since the lamb is slain in place of the firstborn. Although the blood of animals could not, in itself, redeem human beings, the Passover lamb was a sacramental symbol pointing forward to the effectual sacrifice of Christ (Heb. 10:1–10). So Paul is fully justified in saying, "Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us" (1 Cor. 5:7).

■ **16:6 at the place . . . God chooses.** At the location of the sanctuary. See note on 12:5.

you shall sacrifice the Passover [i]at twilight, at the going down of the sun, at the time you came out of Egypt. [7] And you shall roast and eat *it* [j]in the place which the LORD your God chooses, and in the morning you shall turn and go to your tents. [8] Six days you shall eat unleavened bread, and [k]on the seventh day there *shall be* a [l]sacred assembly to the LORD your God. You shall do no work *on it.*

The Feast of Weeks Reviewed

[9] "You shall count seven weeks for yourself; begin to count the seven weeks from *the time* you begin *to put* the sickle to the grain. [10] Then you shall keep the [l]Feast of Weeks to the LORD your God with the tribute of a freewill offering from your hand, which you shall give [m]as the LORD your God blesses you. [11] [n]You shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, the Levite who *is* within your gates, the stranger and the fatherless and the widow who *are* among you, at the place where the LORD your God chooses to make His name abide. [12] [o]And you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and you shall be careful to observe these statutes.

The Feast of Tabernacles Reviewed

[13] [p]"You shall observe the Feast of Tabernacles seven days, when you have gathered from your threshing floor and from your winepress. [14] And [q]you shall rejoice in your feast, you and

6 [i]Ex. 12:7–10
7 [j]2 Kin. 23:23
8 [k]Ex. 12:16; 13:6; Lev. 23:8, 36 [l]Lit. *restraint*
10 [l]Ex. 34:22; Lev. 23:15, 16; Num. 28:26 [m]1 Cor. 16:2
11 [n]Deut. 16:14
12 [o]Deut. 15:15
13 [p]Ex. 23:16
14 [q]Neh. 8:9

■ **16:7 in the morning . . . go to your tents.** The lamb or goat was to be slaughtered at the sanctuary at sundown, roasted in that area for several hours, and then eaten at midnight. Following the celebration, the people would return to their tents in the morning. After their settlement in Canaan, when they assembled at the central sanctuary, the majority surely lived in tents again. In modern times the Samaritan Passover on Mount Gerizim is performed precisely in this way.

■ **16:9–12** The Passover was always celebrated on the fourteenth day of the first month (corresponding to the modern March-April). The Israelites used the lunar month, so the Passover was always on a full moon. Associated with Passover was the presentation of the first ripe sheaf of grain (Lev. 23:9). On the day following the seventh Sabbath after that presentation (Lev. 23:15, 16) was the one-day "Feast of Weeks" (v. 10), called "Pentecost" in the New Testament because of this fifty-day calculation.

■ **16:13–17** The "Feast of Tabernacles" (v. 13) is called by Jews the Feast of Sukkoth (Booths), because for a week they were to gather at the sanctuary and live in temporary structures. It begins on the fifteenth day

The Jewish Calendar (16:1)

The Jews used two kinds of calendars:
Civil Calendar—official calendar of kings, childbirth, and contracts.
Sacred Calendar—from which festivals were computed.

Names of Months	Corresponds with	No. of Days	Month of Civil Year	Month of Sacred Year
Tishri	Sept.-Oct.	30	1st	7th
Heshvan	Oct.-Nov.	29 or 30	2nd	8th
Chislev	Nov.-Dec.	29 or 30	3rd	9th
Tebeth	Dec.-Jan.	29	4th	10th
Shebat	Jan.-Feb.	30	5th	11th
Adar	Feb.-Mar.	29 or 30	6th	12th
Nisan	Mar.-Apr.	30	7th	1st
Iyar	Apr.-May	29	8th	2nd
Sivan	May-June	30	9th	3rd
Tammuz	June-July	29	10th	4th
Ab	July-Aug.	30	11th	5th
*Elul	Aug.-Sept.	29	12th	6th

*Hebrew months were alternately 30 and 29 days long. Their year, shorter than ours, had 354 days. Therefore, about every 3 years (7 times in 19 years) an extra 29-day month, Veadar, was added between Adar and Nisan.

your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant and the Levite, the stranger and the fatherless and the widow, who *are* within your [2]gates. 15 [r]Seven days you shall keep a sacred feast to the LORD your God in the place which the LORD chooses, because the LORD your God will bless you in all your produce and in all the work of your hands, so that you surely rejoice.

16 [s]"Three times a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God in the place which He chooses: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Tabernacles; and [t]they shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed. 17 Every man *shall give* as he is able, [u]according to the blessing of the LORD your God which He has given you.

Justice Must Be Administered

18 "You shall appoint [v]judges and officers in all your [3]gates, which the LORD your God gives you, according to your tribes, and they shall judge the people with just judgment. 19 [w]You shall not pervert justice; [x]you shall not [4]show partiality, [y]nor take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and [5]twists the words of the righteous. 20 You shall follow what is altogether just, that you may [z]live and inherit the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

21 [a]"You shall not plant for yourself any tree, as a [6]wooden image, near the altar which you build for yourself to the LORD your God. 22 [b]You shall not set up a sacred pillar, which the LORD your God hates.

17 "You [a]shall not sacrifice to the LORD your God a bull or sheep which has any [1]blemish *or* defect, for that *is* an [2]abomination to the LORD your God.

2 [b]"If there is found among you, within any of your [3]gates which the LORD your God gives you, a man or a woman who has been wicked in the sight of the LORD your God, [c]in transgressing His covenant, 3 who has gone and served other gods and worshiped them, either [d]the sun or moon or any of the host of heaven, [e]which I have not commanded, 4 [f]and it is told you, and you hear *of it,* then you shall inquire diligently. And if *it is* indeed true *and* certain that such an [4]abomination has been committed in Israel, 5 then you shall bring out to your gates that man or woman who has committed that wicked thing, and [g]shall stone [h]to death that man or woman with stones. 6 Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three [i]witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness. 7 The hands of the witnesses shall be the first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So you shall put away the evil from among [j]you.

8 [k]"If a matter arises which is too hard for you to judge, between degrees of guilt for bloodshed, between one judgment or another, or between one punishment or another, matters of controversy within your gates, then you shall arise and go up to the [l]place which the LORD your God chooses. 9 And [m]you shall come to the priests, the Levites, and [n]to the judge *there* in those days, and inquire *of them;* [o]they shall pronounce upon you the sentence of judgment. 10 You shall do according to the sentence which they pronounce upon you in that place which the LORD chooses. And you shall be careful to do according to all that they order you. 11 According to the sentence of the law in which they instruct you, according to the judgment which they tell you, you shall

14 [2]*towns*

15 [r]Lev. 23:39–41

16 [s]Ex. 23:14–17; 34:22–24 [t]Ex. 23:15

17 [u]Lev. 14:30, 31; Deut. 16:10

18 [v]Ex. 23:1–8; Deut. 1:16, 17; John 7:24 [3]*towns*

19 [w]Ex. 23:2, 6 [x]Deut. 1:17 [y]Ex. 23:8 [4]Lit. *regard faces* [5]*perverts*

20 [z]Ezek. 18:5–9

21 [a]Ex. 34:13 [6]Or *Asherah*

22 [b]Lev. 26:1

CHAPTER 17

1 [a]Deut. 15:21; Mal. 1:8, 13 [1]Lit. *evil thing* [2]*detestable thing*

2 [b]Deut. 13:6 [c]Josh. 7:11 [3]*towns*

3 [d]Deut. 4:19 [e]Jer. 7:22

4 [f]Deut. 13:12, 14 [4]*detestable thing*

5 [g]Lev. 24:14–16; Josh. 7:25 [h]Deut. 13:6–18

6 [i]Num. 35:30; Deut. 19:15; Matt. 18:16; John 8:17; 2 Cor. 13:1; 1 Tim. 5:19; Heb. 10:28

7 [j]Deut. 13:5; 19:19; 1 Cor. 5:13

8 [k]Deut. 1:17; 2 Chr. 19:10 [l]Deut. 12:5; 16:2

9 [m]Jer. 18:18 [n]Deut. 19:17–19 [o]Ezek. 44:24

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of the seventh lunar month (modern September-October), at the end of the agricultural season after the grain was threshed and the grapes harvested. Naturally, the tithe of the harvest was to be brought at this feast, which was also to memorialize Israel's pilgrim experience in leaving Egypt (Lev. 23:43). In addition, this feast was to be a time of reading the law (31:10–13; Neh. 8).

■ **16:18 appoint judges and officers.** Moses had appointed leaders at Sinai (1:13), and this section specifies that such an organization should continue. Moreover, the high ideal of justice, and justice alone, was to guide their conduct (19:15–21 note).

■ **16:19 a bribe blinds.** This fact is often emphasized (Ex. 23:8; Prov. 17:23).

■ **16:21 wooden image.** A reference to the wooden poles, images, or trees that represented the Canaanite goddess Asherah (text note). There was to be no compromise with pagan idolatry (17:2–7). Despite such warnings, these pagan Asherah shrines later became a snare to the Israelites (Judg. 3:7, 8; 2 Kin. 13:6; 17:10).

■ **17:1 any . . . defect.** It was repeatedly commanded that any flaw or defect would make an animal unsuitable for sacrifice (15:21; Lev. 22:19–25; Num. 19:2). Also, Lev. 21:16–23 specifies that any priest with a physical deformity could not officiate. The symbolism is clear: God is holy (Lev. 21:23), and He demands perfection. As symbols of the coming perfect Savior and His worthy sacrifice, the sacrificial animals were to be without defect.

■ **17:2–7** The sin of idolatry is in view, the seriousness of which is indicated by the consistently prescribed death penalty (v. 5; ch. 13). In such instances, the judicial goal was not rehabilitation or restitution, but to purge Israel of the abomination of idolatry (vv. 4, 7).

■ **17:6 two or three witnesses.** Condemnation does not take place on the basis of hearsay. Two or three witnesses must agree (v. 6; 19:15–19; Num. 35:30), and must be sufficiently convinced and sincere to take part in the stoning, knowing that the penalty for false witness to a crime was the same as for the crime itself (19:19). There was no torture for confession or torture of witnesses.

■ **17:8 a matter . . . too hard for you to judge.** We do not know the precise details of the Israelite judicial system (19:15–21 note). There were graded courts to take care of difficult cases (Ex. 18:21–26), with priests who judged and also other judges. This passage stresses that the judicial office is divinely ordained, and that verdicts were to be accepted on pain of death (v. 12).

do; you shall not turn aside *to* the right hand or *to* the left from the sentence which they pronounce upon you. 12 Now [p]the man who acts presumptuously and will not heed the priest who stands to minister there before the LORD your God, or the judge, that man shall die. So you shall put away the evil from Israel. 13 [q]And all the people shall hear and fear, and no longer act presumptuously.

Principles Governing Kings

14 "When you come to the land which the LORD your God is giving you, and possess it and dwell in it, and say, 'I will set a king over me like all the nations that *are* around me,' 15 you shall surely set a king over you [s]whom the LORD your God chooses; *one* [t]from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not set a foreigner over you, who *is* not your brother. 16 But he shall not multiply [u]horses for himself, nor cause the people [v]to return to Egypt to multiply horses, for [w]the LORD has said to you, [x]'You shall not return that way again.' 17 Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and [y]gold for himself.

18 "Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from *the one* [z]before the priests, the Levites. 19 And [a]it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes, 20 that his heart may not [5]be lifted above his brethren, that he [b]may not turn aside from the commandment *to* the right hand or *to* the left, and that he may [6]prolong *his* days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel.

The Portion of the Priests and Levites

18 "The priests, the Levites—all the tribe of Levi—shall have [1]no part nor [a]inheritance with Israel; they shall eat the offerings of the LORD made by fire, and His portion. 2 Therefore they shall have no inheritance among their brethren; the LORD is their inheritance, as He said to them.

3 "And this shall be the priest's [b]due[2] from the people, from those who offer a sacrifice, whether *it is* bull or sheep: they shall give to the priest the shoulder, the cheeks, and the stomach. 4 [c]The firstfruits of your grain and your new wine and your oil, and the first of the fleece of your sheep, you shall give him. 5 For [d]the LORD your God has chosen him out of all your tribes [e]to stand to minister in the name of the LORD, him and his sons forever.

6 "So if a Levite comes from any of your [3]gates, from where he [f]dwells among all Israel, and comes with all the desire of his mind [g]to the place which the LORD chooses, 7 then he may serve in the name of the LORD his God [h]as all his brethren the Levites *do*, who stand there before the LORD. 8 They shall have equal [i]portions to eat, besides what comes from the sale of his inheritance.

Avoid Wicked Customs

9 "When you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you, [j]you shall not learn to follow the [4]abominations of those nations. 10 There shall not be found among you *anyone* who makes his son or his daughter [k]pass[5] through the fire, [l]*or one* who practices witchcraft, *or* a

12 [p]Num. 15:30

13 [q]Deut. 13:11

14 [r]1 Sam. 8:5, 19, 20; 10:19

15 [s]1 Sam. 9:15, 16; 10:24; 16:12, 13 [t]Jer. 30:21

16 [u]1 Kin. 4:26; 10:26–29 [v]Ezek. 17:15 [w]Ex. 13:17, 18 [x]Deut. 28:68

17 [y]1 Kin. 10:14

18 [z]Deut. 31:24–26

19 [a]Ps. 119:97, 98

20 [b]Deut. 5:32 [5]*become proud* [6]*continue long in his kingdom*

CHAPTER 18

1 [a]Deut. 10:9 [1]*no portion*

3 [b]Lev. 7:32–34; 1 Sam. 2:13–16, 29 [2]*right*

4 [c]Ex. 22:29

5 [d]Ex. 28:1 [e]Deut. 10:8

6 [f]Num. 35:2 [g]Deut. 12:5; 14:23 [3]*towns*

7 [h]2 Chr. 31:2

8 [i]2 Chr. 31:4

9 [j]Deut. 12:29, 30; 20:16–18 [4]*detestable acts*

10 [k]Deut. 12:31 [l]Is. 8:19 [5]Be burned as an offering to an idol

■ **17:14–17** The reference to "a king" (v. 14) is conditional, and need not imply that the text was written when a king ruled Israel, although critics have argued that with its reference to horses, wives, and wealth, the section refers to Solomon and was written long after him by one of his detractors. There was no king in Moses' time, but the future possibility of such a ruler was obvious, since every known ancient nation had a king, and an Israelite king was even predicted in Gen. 49:10. That Israel might have a king was never denied, although it was stated most emphatically that God was their King (33:5). In addition, v. 15 warns against choosing a foreign king, a stipulation that cannot be directed against Solomon and his successors, who were native Israelites.

■ **17:18 write . . . a copy of this law.** The phrase "this law" may refer to the Book of Deuteronomy as a whole, or perhaps to the Book of the Covenant (Ex. 24:7) or to the other parts of the Pentateuch. As a covenant nation, Israel was to be governed according to the covenant laws.

■ **18:1 all the tribe of Levi.** Not only the priests, but the whole tribe of Levi, numbering twenty-three thousand, was to receive no inheritance (Num. 18:20; 26:62; Deut. 10:9). This tribe would have no farms for livelihood, but would depend on the tithes and offerings of the people (vv. 3–5). Moses specifically allotted them forty-two cities, six of which would be cities of refuge (Num. 35:2–8). In due time these cities were allocated by Joshua (Josh. 21).

■ **18:3 priest's due.** See text note. In place of a land inheritance, and in recognition of their priestly duties, the priests had a right to specific portions of the animals offered for sacrifice. Later, this practice was sometimes abused by corrupt priests (1 Sam. 2:12–17).

■ **18:9 the abominations of those nations.** Anticipating the instructions regarding true and false prophecy in vv. 19–22, Moses forbids all attempts to discern the future through occult, pagan means, as well as resorting to sorcery and witchcraft. The detestable character of these practices is underscored and cited as a reason for divine judgment upon the Canaanites (vv. 9, 12).

soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, 11 [m]or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or [n]one who calls up the dead. 12 For all who do these things *are* [o]an abomination to the LORD, and [o]because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you. 13 You shall be [7]blameless before the LORD your God. 14 For these nations which you will dispossess listened to soothsayers and diviners; but as for you, the LORD your God has not [8]appointed such for you.

A New Prophet Like Moses

15 [p]"The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear, 16 according to all you desired of the LORD your God in Horeb [q]in the day of the assembly, saying, [r]'Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, nor let me see this great fire anymore, lest I die.'

17 "And the LORD said to me: [s]'What they have spoken is good. 18 [t]I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and [u]will put My words in His mouth, [v]and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. 19 [w]And it shall be *that* whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require *it* of him. 20 But [x]the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or [y]who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.' 21 And if you say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?'— 22 [z]when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD,

11 [m]Lev. 20:27 [n]1 Sam. 28:7
12 [o]Lev. 18:24 [6]*detestable*
13 [7]Lit. *perfect*
14 [8]*allowed you to do so*
15 [p]Acts 3:22
16 [q]Deut. 5:23–27 [r]Ex. 20:18, 19
17 [s]Deut. 5:28
18 [t]John 1:45 [u]Is. 49:2; 51:16 [v][John 4:25; 8:28]
19 [w][Heb. 12:25]
20 [x]Jer. 14:14, 15 [y]Jer. 2:8
22 [z]Jer. 28:9

Prophets

The canonical prophets, whose books make up over a quarter of the Old Testament, were called by God to be channels of revelation. They were men of God who stood in His council (Jer. 23:22), knew His mind, and were enabled to declare it. God the Holy Spirit spoke in and through them (2 Pet. 1:19–21; Is. 61:1; Mic. 3:8; Acts 28:25–27; 1 Pet. 1:10–12). They knew He was doing so; hence they dared to begin proclamations with "Thus says the LORD," presenting Yahweh Himself as the speaker of what they were saying.

Prophecy involved prediction (foretelling), but usually this was done in a context of declaring God's warnings and exhortations to His covenant people (forthtelling). The prophets looked forward to the coming of the messianic King and His kingdom after purging judgments, but often their chief concern was exhortation to repentance, in hope that impending judgments might be averted. The prophets were primarily reformers, enforcing God's law and recalling God's people to the covenant faithfulness from which they had lapsed.

Along with their preaching to the nation went prayer for the nation—they talked to God about men just as earnestly as they talked to men about God. They fulfilled a unique ministry as intercessors (Ex. 32:30–32; 1 Sam. 7:5–9; 12:19–23; 2 Kin. 19:4; cf. Jer. 7:16; 11:14; 14:11).

False prophets were a bane to Israel. Professionally linked with Israel's organized worship, they said what people wanted to hear and spoke their own dreams and opinions rather than words of God (1 Kin. 22:1–28; Jer. 23:9–40; Ezek. 13).

In the New Testament, one book (Revelation) announces itself as a true and trustworthy prophecy, received directly from God (from God the Father through Jesus Christ, Rev. 1:1–3; 22:12–20). The ministry of the apostles brought instruction directly from God to His people, just as the Old Testament prophetic ministry had done, though the form of presentation was different. The prophets of the New Testament period were linked with the apostles in the foundation of the church (Eph. 2:20; 3:5) as expositors of the fulfillment in Christ of Old Testament prophecy (Rom. 16:25–27). □

■ **18:18** Moses, the preeminent prophet of the Old Testament period, introduces the topic of Israelite prophecy. God would communicate His word to Israel through a succession of prophets. As mediators of God's word to the people, the other Old Testament prophets would function in ways similar to Moses (v. 16). But none would be the initial mediators of a covenant, and none would equal Moses' intimacy with God or receive divine revelations as clear as those given to him (Num. 12:6–8; Deut. 34:10). This passage, then, finds final fulfillment in the Prophet who is equal to, indeed greater than, the prophet Moses—Jesus Christ (Acts 3:22–26; 7:37; cf. John 5:45–47; Heb. 3:2–6). Like Moses, Christ is the Mediator of a covenant between God and His people (Luke 22:20; Heb. 8:7–13). See theological note "Prophets."

■ **18:20–22** Two means of discerning false prophets from true are given in Deuteronomy. The first is theological integrity—a true prophet will not teach error or lead the people astray (v. 20; 13:1–5). The second is that his prophetic predictions of the future would come true (v. 22). See "The Authentication of Scripture" at 2 Cor. 4:6.

[a]if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that *is* the thing which the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it [b]presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.

Three Cities of Refuge

19 "When the LORD your God [a]has cut off the nations whose land the LORD your God is giving you, and you dispossess them and dwell in their cities and in their houses, 2 [b]you shall separate three cities for yourself in the midst of your land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess. 3 You shall prepare roads for yourself, and divide into three parts the territory of your land which the LORD your God is giving you to inherit, that any manslayer may flee there.

4 "And [c]this *is* the case of the manslayer who flees there, that he may live: Whoever kills his neighbor [f]unintentionally, not having hated him in time past— 5 as when *a man* goes to the woods with his neighbor to cut timber, and his hand swings a stroke with the ax to cut down the tree, and the head slips from the handle and strikes his neighbor so that he dies—he shall flee to one of these cities and live; 6 [d]lest the avenger of blood, while his anger is hot, pursue the manslayer and overtake him, because the way is long, and kill him, though he *was* not deserving of death, since he had not hated the victim in time past. 7 Therefore I command you, saying, 'You shall separate three cities for yourself.'

8 "Now if the LORD your God [e]enlarges your territory, as He swore to [f]your fathers, and gives you the land which He promised to give to your fathers, 9 and if you keep all these commandments and do them, which I command you today, to love the LORD your God and to walk always in His ways, [g]then you shall add three more cities for yourself besides these three, 10 [h]lest innocent blood be shed in the midst of your land which the LORD your God is giving you *as* an inheritance, and *thus* guilt of bloodshed be upon you.

11 "But [i]if anyone hates his neighbor, lies in wait for him, rises against him and strikes him mortally, so that he dies, and he flees to one of these cities, 12 then the elders of his city shall send and bring him from there, and deliver him over to the hand of the avenger of blood, that he may die. 13 [j]Your eye shall not pity him, [k]but you shall [2]put away *the guilt of* innocent blood from Israel, that it may go well with you.

Property Boundaries

14 [l]"You shall not remove your neighbor's landmark, which the men of old have set, in your inheritance which you will inherit in the land that the LORD your God is giving you to possess.

The Law Concerning Witnesses

15 [m]"One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established. 16 If a false witness [n]rises against any man to testify against him of wrongdoing, 17 then both men in the controversy shall stand before the LORD, [o]before the priests and the judges who serve in those days. 18 And the judges shall make careful inquiry, and indeed, *if* the witness *is* a false witness, who has testified falsely against his brother, 19 [p]then you shall do to him as he thought to have done to his brother; so [q]you shall put away the evil from among you. 20 [r]And those who remain shall hear and fear, and hereafter they shall not again commit such evil among you. 21 [s]Your eye shall not pity: [t]life *shall be* for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

22 [a]Deut. 13:2 [b]Deut. 18:20

CHAPTER 19

1 [a]Deut. 12:29

2 [b]Ex. 21:13; Num. 35:10–15; Deut. 4:41; Josh. 20:2

4 [c]Num. 35:9–34; Deut. 4:42 [f]*ignorantly,* lit. *without knowledge*

6 [d]Num. 35:12

8 [e]Deut. 12:20 [f]Gen. 15:18–21

9 [g]Josh. 20:7–9

10 [h]Num. 35:33; Deut. 21:1–9

11 [i]Num. 35:16, 24; Deut. 27:24; [1 John 3:15]

13 [j]Deut. 13:8 [k]Num. 35:33, 34; 1 Kin. 2:31 [2]*purge the blood of the innocent*

14 [l]Deut. 27:17; Job 24:2; Prov. 22:28; Hos. 5:10

15 [m]Num. 35:30; Deut. 17:6; Matt. 18:16; John 8:17; 2 Cor. 13:1; 1 Tim. 5:19; Heb. 10:28

16 [n]Ex. 23:1; Ps. 27:12; 35:11

17 [o]Deut. 17:8–11; 21:5

19 [p]Prov. 19:5; Dan. 6:24 [q]Deut. 13:5; 17:7; 21:21; 22:21

20 [r]Deut. 17:13; 21:21

21 [s]Deut. 19:13 [t]Ex. 21:23, 24; Lev. 24:20; Matt. 5:38, 39

■ **19:2 three cities.** These cities of refuge were to be set aside in Canaan. The three cities of refuge for Transjordan had already been named and set aside. See 4:41–43 for the sequence of establishing these cities.

■ **19:4 Whoever kills his neighbor unintentionally.** The law of manslaughter is given first in Ex. 21:13, then more fully in Num. 35:6–28. This passage repeats some matters given in Numbers. Other regulations are added, such as the provision for building access roads to the cities of refuge. Also, this passage specifies three extra cities in Canaan if the nation's territory is greatly enlarged. But it is plain in both Numbers and Deuteronomy that a man guilty of premeditated murder must die. The death penalty is grounded, not in disrespect for life, but in intense respect for the life of the innocent victim, made in the image of God (Gen. 9:6).

■ **19:9 to love . . . walk always in His ways.** See 6:4.

■ **19:14 your neighbor's landmark.** Though this verse has sometimes been misinterpreted to urge respect for ancient customs and beliefs, the term "landmark" actually refers to stones that served as boundary markers. This law was essential to prevent encroachment and theft of land (27:17; Prov. 22:28; 23:20).

■ **19:15–21** The general principle was that a conviction was not to be based on the testimony of a single witness (v. 15). When false testimony was detected, the false witness was to receive the same punishment that the falsely accused person would have received (vv. 19–21).

In the jurisprudence of the ancient Near East, much responsibility was given to the judge. He did not simply compare an offense to a particular law and pronounce a verdict. Rather, he compared a case with the principles of the law and with typical cases and gave a decision in accordance with justice and equity (1:13; 16:18; 17:8).

■ **19:15 One witness.** See 17:6.

■ **19:20 fear.** See "The Three Purposes of the Law" at 13:10.

■ **19:21 eye for eye.** Much argument has revolved about this verse. Some contend it is brutal and opposed to New Testament ideas of love and mercy. The phrase "eye for eye" occurs twice more in the

CHAPTER 20

1 [a]Ps. 20:7; Is. 31:1 [b]Deut. 7:18 [c]Num. 23:21; Deut. 5:6; 31:6, 8; 2 Chr. 13:12; 32:7, 8; Ps. 23:4; Is. 41:10

4 [d]Deut. 1:30; 3:22; Josh. 23:10

5 [e]Neh. 12:27

7 [f]Deut. 24:5

8 [g]Judg. 7:3 [1]So with MT, Tg.; Sam., LXX, Syr., Vg. *lest he make his brother's heart faint*

10 [h]2 Sam. 10:19

13 [i]Num. 31:7

14 [j]Josh. 8:2 [k]1 Sam. 14:30

16 [l]Ex. 23:31–33; Num. 21:2, 3; Deut. 7:1–5; Josh. 11:14

18 [m]Ex. 34:12–16; Deut. 7:4; 12:30; 18:9 [n]Ex. 23:33; 2 Kin. 21:3–15; Ps. 106:34–41 [2]*detestable things*

Principles Governing Warfare

20 "When you go out to battle against your enemies, and see [a]horses and chariots *and* people more numerous than you, do not be [b]afraid of them; for the LORD your God *is* [c]with you, who brought you up from the land of Egypt. 2 So it shall be, when you are on the verge of battle, that the priest shall approach and speak to the people. 3 And he shall say to them, 'Hear, O Israel: Today you are on the verge of battle with your enemies. Do not let your heart faint, do not be afraid, and do not tremble or be terrified because of them; 4 for the LORD your God *is* He who goes with you, [d]to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.'

5 "Then the officers shall speak to the people, saying: 'What man *is there* who has built a new house and has not [e]dedicated it? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man dedicate it. 6 Also what man *is there* who has planted a vineyard and has not eaten of it? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man eat of it. 7 [f]And what man *is there* who is betrothed to a woman and has not married her? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man marry her.'

8 "The officers shall speak further to the people, and say, [g]'What man *is there who is* fearful and fainthearted? Let him go and return to his house, [1]lest the heart of his brethren faint like his heart.' 9 And so it shall be, when the officers have finished speaking to the people, that they shall make captains of the armies to lead the people.

10 "When you go near a city to fight against it, [h]then proclaim an offer of peace to it. 11 And it shall be that if they accept your offer of peace, and open to you, then all the people *who are* found in it shall be placed under tribute to you, and serve you. 12 Now if *the city* will not make peace with you, but war against you, then you shall besiege it. 13 And when the LORD your God delivers it into your hands, [i]you shall strike every male in it with the edge of the sword. 14 But the women, the little ones, [j]the livestock, and all that is in the city, all its spoil, you shall plunder for yourself; and [k]you shall eat the enemies' plunder which the LORD your God gives you. 15 Thus you shall do to all the cities *which are* very far from you, which *are* not of the cities of these nations.

16 "But [l]of the cities of these peoples which the LORD your God gives you *as* an inheritance, you shall let nothing that breathes remain alive, 17 but you shall utterly destroy them: the Hittite and the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, just as the LORD your God has commanded you, 18 lest [m]they teach you to do according to all their [2]abominations which they have done for their gods, and you [n]sin against the LORD your God.

19 "When you besiege a city for a long time, while making war against it to take it, you shall not destroy its trees by wielding an ax against them; if you can eat of them, do not cut them down to use in the siege, for the tree of the field *is* man's *food.* 20 Only the trees which you know *are* not trees for food you may destroy and cut down, to build siegeworks against the city that makes war with you, until it is subdued.

The Law Concerning Unsolved Murder

21 "If *anyone* is found slain, lying in the field in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess, *and* it is not known who killed him, 2 then your elders and your judges shall go out and measure *the distance* from the slain man to the surrounding cities. 3 And it shall be *that* the elders of the city nearest to the slain man will take a heifer which has not been

Pentateuch (Ex. 21:24; Lev. 24:20). In each case, the verse is in a legal context; it is a principle of public justice—the penalty must fit the crime. There are indications that the term was not taken literally (Ex. 21:18, 26, 27). The only physical penalty mentioned in the law is flogging, and that limited to forty strokes (Deut. 25:3). Christ opposed those who used this verse as an excuse for personal vengeance (Matt. 5:38 note). See notes on Ex. 21:24 and Lev. 24:20.

■ **20:1 do not be afraid.** Morale in the army, particularly the importance of single-minded reliance upon God, is the subject of vv. 1–9. The exemptions cited illustrate the principle that anyone whose heart was not in the fight should not be there (vv. 5–8). The power of God, rather than numerical superiority, would guarantee Israel's victory (v. 4; cf. 32:30 note; Judg. 7:1–8). One result of such an attitude would be high morale, which would itself contribute to victory.

■ **20:10 an offer of peace.** Ancient walled cities could withstand attack for some time, and attackers wanted to avoid the trouble of a lengthy siege. An offer of peace in exchange for vassal tribute (v. 11), coupled with the threat of death for the defending soldiers, could be attractive to both sides. These warfare provisions (comparatively humane for that period) were applied to enemies outside the Promised Land (v. 15).

■ **20:17 utterly destroy.** The Hebrew word for this practice is *herem,* which means "to put under the ban" (i.e., to devote everything to the Lord), as occurred at Jericho during the conquest (Josh. 6:17–19). See notes on Lev. 27:28; Deut. 7:26.

■ **20:19 you shall not destroy its trees.** The reference is clearly to fruit trees (v. 20). One of Israel's covenant blessings was to enjoy the fruit of the land God had given them (7:12, 13).

■ **21:1 If anyone is found slain.** In the case of an unsolved murder, the elders from the nearest town were to take an oath of innocence and ignorance. The symbolism of the heifer, killed while the oath was taken, is clear: it dies as a symbol of the murderer who ought to die. The land was to be purged of serious guilt. The vicarious death of the heifer points to the death of Christ as a satisfaction for the sins, known and unknown, of His people.

worked *and* which has not pulled with a [a]yoke. 4 The elders of that city shall bring the heifer down to a valley with flowing water, which is neither plowed nor sown, and they shall break the heifer's neck there in the valley. 5 Then the priests, the sons of Levi, shall come near, for [b]the LORD your God has chosen them to minister to Him and to bless in the name of the LORD; [c]by their word every controversy and every [f]assault shall be *settled.* 6 And all the elders of that city nearest to the slain *man* [d]shall wash their hands over the heifer whose neck was broken in the valley. 7 Then they shall answer and say, 'Our hands have not shed this blood, nor have our eyes seen *it.* 8 Provide atonement, O LORD, for Your people Israel, whom You have redeemed, [e]and do not lay innocent blood to the charge of Your people Israel.' And atonement shall be provided on their behalf for the blood. 9 So [f]you shall put away the *guilt of* innocent blood from among you when you do *what is* right in the sight of the LORD.

Female Captives

10 "When you go out to war against your enemies, and the LORD your God delivers them into your hand, and you take them captive, 11 and you see among the captives a beautiful woman, and desire her and would take her for your [g]wife, 12 then you shall bring her home to your house, and she shall [h]shave her head and trim her nails. 13 She shall put off the clothes of her captivity, remain in your house, and [i]mourn her father and her mother a full month; after that you may go in to her and be her husband, and she shall be your wife. 14 And it shall be, if you have no delight in her, then you shall set her free, but you certainly shall not sell her for money; you shall not treat her brutally, because you have [j]humbled her.

Firstborn Inheritance Rights

15 "If a man has two wives, one loved [k]and the other unloved, and they have borne him children, *both* the loved and the unloved, and *if* the firstborn son is of her who is unloved, 16 then it shall be, [l]on the day he bequeaths his possessions to his sons, *that* he must not bestow firstborn status on the son of the loved wife in preference to the son of the unloved, the *true* firstborn. 17 But he shall acknowledge the son of the unloved wife *as* the firstborn [m]by giving him a double portion of all that he has, for he [n]*is* the beginning of his strength; [o]the right of the firstborn *is* his.

The Rebellious Son

18 "If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and *who,* when they have chastened him, will not heed them, 19 then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city, to the gate of his city. 20 And they shall say to the elders of his city, 'This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard.' 21 Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death with stones; [p]so you shall put away the evil from among you, [q]and all Israel shall hear and fear.

Miscellaneous Laws

22 "If a man has committed a sin [r]deserving of death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, 23 [s]his body shall not remain overnight on the tree, but you shall surely bury him that day, so that [t]you do not defile the land which the LORD your God is giving you *as* an inheritance; for [u]he who is hanged *is* accursed of God.

22 "You [a]shall not see your brother's ox or his sheep going astray, and [l]hide yourself from them; you shall certainly bring them back to your brother. 2 And if your brother *is* not

CHAPTER 21

3 [a]Num. 19:2

5 [b]Deut. 10:8; 1 Chr. 23:13 [c]Deut. 17:8, 9 [f]Lit. *stroke*

6 [d]Ps. 19:12; 26:6; Matt. 27:24

8 [e]Deut. 19:10, 13; Jon. 1:14

9 [f]Deut. 19:13

11 [g]Num. 31:18

12 [h]Lev. 14:8, 9; Num. 6:9

13 [i]Ps. 45:10

14 [j]Gen. 34:2; Deut. 22:29; Judg. 19:24

15 [k]Gen. 29:33

16 [l]1 Chr. 5:2; 26:10

17 [m]2 Kin. 2:9 [n]Gen. 49:3 [o]Gen. 25:31, 33

21 [p]Deut. 13:5; 19:19, 20; 22:21, 24 [q]Deut. 13:11

22 [r]Deut. 22:26; Matt. 26:66; Mark 14:64; Acts 23:29

23 [s]Josh. 8:29; 10:26, 27; John 19:31 [t]Lev. 18:25; Num. 35:34 [u]Gal. 3:13

CHAPTER 22

1 [a]Ex. 23:4 [l]*ignore them*

■ **21:11 among the captives a beautiful woman.** The law preserved the sanctity of marriage. An Israelite man might take a captive woman, but he had to wait a month. She was to be given a chance to adjust and to grieve for her lost family. She was a wife, not chattel, and if the husband divorced her, he could not sell her as a slave.

■ **21:15 two wives.** Just as divorce was allowed "because of the hardness of . . . hearts" (Matt. 19:8), so polygamy was permitted, but its harsher evils were mitigated. The unloved wife had her rights, and the firstborn son of an unloved wife could not be dispossessed.

■ **21:18 a stubborn and rebellious son.** In view here is not the petty disobedience of children, but a long-term pattern of rebellion and deep sin. Although "stubborn and rebellious" is not precisely defined, in v. 20 the son is called "a glutton and a drunkard" (cf. Prov. 23:21). In such cases, even the parents were not to shield their offspring (cf. Zech. 13:2, 3).

■ **21:22 hang him on a tree.** Hanging as a method of execution is not mentioned in the Old Testament. The practice in view here is the exposure of the corpse of a criminal or an enemy (1 Sam. 31:10–13). Such gruesome exposure, symbolizing divine curse (v. 23), was not to be continued more than a day. This verse motivated the Pharisees' request to have the body of Jesus taken off the cross before nightfall (John 19:31). The point of Gal. 3:13 is that Christ, though innocent, died a criminal's death, taking the curse that we deserved (cf. Acts 5:30).

■ **22:1 bring them back.** Note the emphasis on the rightful ownership of private property (cf. Ex. 23:4). The law concerning lost property requires that an effort be made to find the owner of strayed or lost property and return the property to him. If the owner cannot be found, the property is to be kept for him until he is found.

near you, or if you do not know him, then you shall bring it to your own house, and it shall remain with you until your brother seeks it; then you shall restore it to him. 3 You shall do the same with his donkey, and so shall you do with his garment; with any lost thing of your brother's, which he has lost and you have found, you shall do likewise; you [2]must not hide yourself.

4 [b]"You shall not see your brother's donkey or his ox fall down along the road, and hide yourself from them; you shall surely help him lift *them* up again.

5 "A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all who do so *are* [3]an abomination to the LORD your God.

6 "If a bird's nest happens to be before you along the way, in any tree or on the ground, with young ones or eggs, with the mother sitting on the young or on the eggs, [c]you shall not take the mother with the young; 7 you shall surely let the mother go, and take the young for yourself, [d]that it may be well with you and *that* you may prolong *your* days.

8 "When you build a new house, then you shall make a parapet for your roof, that you may not bring guilt of bloodshed on your household if anyone falls from it.

9 [e]"You shall not sow your vineyard with different kinds of seed, lest the yield of the seed which you have sown and the fruit of your vineyard be defiled.

10 [f]"You shall not plow with an ox and a donkey together.

11 [g]"You shall not wear a garment of different sorts, *such as* wool and linen mixed together.

12 "You shall make [h]tassels on the four corners of the clothing with which you cover *yourself.*

Laws of Sexual Morality

13 "If any man takes a wife, and goes in to her, and [i]detests her, 14 and charges her with shameful conduct, and brings a bad name on her, and says, 'I took this woman, and when I came to her I found she *was* not a virgin,' 15 then the father and mother of the young woman shall take and bring out *the evidence of* the young woman's virginity to the elders of the city at the gate. 16 And the young woman's father shall say to the elders, 'I gave my daughter to this man as wife, and he detests her. 17 Now he has charged her with shameful conduct, saying, "I found your daughter *was* not a virgin," and yet these *are the evidences of* my daughter's virginity.' And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city. 18 Then the elders of that city shall take that man and punish him; 19 and they shall fine him one hundred *shekels* of silver and give *them* to the father of the young woman, because he has brought a bad name on a virgin of Israel. And she shall be his wife; he cannot divorce her all his days.

20 "But if the thing is true, *and evidences of* virginity are not found for the young woman, 21 then they shall bring out the young woman to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her to death with [j]stones, because she has [k]done a disgraceful thing in Israel, to play the harlot in her father's house. [l]So you shall [4]put away the evil from among you.

22 [m]"If a man is found lying with a woman married to a husband, then both of them shall

3 [2]*may not avoid responsibility*
4 [b]Ex. 23:5
5 [3]*detestable*
6 [c]Lev. 22:28
7 [d]Deut. 4:40
9 [e]Lev. 19:19
10 [f][2 Cor. 6:14–16]
11 [g]Lev. 19:19
12 [h]Num. 15:37–41; Matt. 23:5
13 [i]Deut. 21:15; 24:3
21 [j]Deut. 21:21 [k]Gen. 34:7; Judg. 20:5–10; 2 Sam. 13:12, 13 [l]Deut. 13:5 [4]*purge the evil person*
22 [m]Lev. 20:10; Num. 5:22–27; Ezek. 16:38; [Matt. 5:27, 28]; John 8:5; [1 Cor. 6:9; Heb. 13:4]

■ **22:4 his ox fall down.** Again, accidental loss of private property is to be prevented if possible (cf. Ex. 23:5). Jesus quoted this verse to justify healing a man on the Sabbath. The Pharisees allowed the law of helping a fallen animal to supersede their rules for Sabbath keeping, but had no pity on a man in serious need (Luke 14:5).

■ **22:5 anything that pertains to a man . . . woman's garment.** Women were not to adopt the accoutrements of the male (e.g., carrying weapons), and men were not to dress as women. The symbols of gender difference were to be respected, and while such symbols vary over time and from culture to culture, the principle of gender distinction remains (Gen. 1:27; cf. 1 Tim. 2:13). Violations of the creation order, such as homosexuality and bestiality (Lev. 18:22, 23; 20:13; 1 Cor. 6:9; 1 Tim. 1:10), are an "abomination." It has also been suggested that the interchange of clothing was a part of pagan religious practice.

■ **22:8 parapet for your roof.** This is a law against criminal negligence. Roofs in ancient Israel were flat and often reached by an outside stairway. The roof was used for work (Josh. 2:6) or leisure. To prevent accidental injury or death from falling, a parapet or fence was specified.

■ **22:9–11** Similar prohibitions of mixtures are found in Lev. 19:19. Reasons for these regulations are no longer clear. Various suggestions have been made: that these verses teach the importance of creation-order distinctions, that they remind Israel of her call to purity and separation from the surrounding nations (v. 11 note), or that practical considerations were involved (e.g., the mixture of seed as harmful for agriculture).

■ **22:10 an ox and a donkey together.** The reason for this may be the impracticality both of making a donkey pull an ox's load and of making an ox go at the faster donkey's pace. Or, the contrast between clean animals (the ox) and unclean (the donkey, 14:1–8) may have served to remind Israel of her call to purity. Paul cites this verse in 2 Cor. 6:14, forbidding the fellowship of believers and unbelievers.

■ **22:11 garment . . . wool and linen.** Some suggest that such material would shrink unevenly and therefore not wash well. Others argue that through eating pure food (14:3–21) and not mixing their seeds (Deut. 22:9), their draft animals (22:10), or the materials of their garments, Israel was reminded that they were to be a pure people (7:2–5 and notes).

■ **22:12 make tassels.** These tassels were to remind Israel of the Lord's commandments and the nation's responsibility to be holy before God (Num. 15:38–40).

■ **22:14–21** These verses provide for judging a husband's complaint that his wife was not a virgin when they married. Such an accusation, when made by a man who wished to be rid of a wife who displeased him, could be disproved by the wife's parents presenting visible "evidence of . . . virginity," presumably the stained bed clothes of the wedding night (v. 15).

■ **22:22–29** The implications of the seventh commandment are developed (5:18; Ex. 20:14), here with respect to instances of adultery and rape. Particular care is given to guarding the sanctity of the marriage covenant: adultery with a married or betrothed woman is punishable by

die—the man that lay with the woman, and the woman; so you shall put away the evil from Israel.

23 "If a young woman *who is* a virgin is [n]betrothed to a husband, and a man finds her in the city and lies with her, 24 then you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city, and you shall stone them to death with stones, the young woman because she did not cry out in the city, and the man because he [o]humbled his neighbor's wife; [p]so you shall put away the evil from among you.

25 "But if a man finds a betrothed young woman in the countryside, and the man forces her and lies with her, then only the man who lay with her shall die. 26 But you shall do nothing to the young woman; *there is* in the young woman no sin *deserving* of death, for just as when a man rises against his neighbor and kills him, even so *is* this matter. 27 For he found her in the countryside, *and* the betrothed young woman cried out, but *there was* no one to save her.

28 [q]"If a man finds a young woman *who is* a virgin, who is not betrothed, and he seizes her and lies with her, and they are found out, 29 then the man who lay with her shall give to the young woman's father [r]fifty *shekels* of silver, and she shall be his wife [s]because he has humbled her; he shall not be permitted to divorce her all his days.

30 [t]"A man shall not take his father's wife, nor [u]uncover his father's bed.

Those Excluded from the Congregation

23 "He who is emasculated by crushing or mutilation shall [a]not enter the assembly of the LORD.

2 "One of illegitimate birth shall not enter the assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation none of his *descendants* shall enter the assembly of the LORD.

3 [b]"An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter the assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation none of his *descendants* shall enter the assembly of the LORD forever, 4 [c]because they did not meet you with bread and water on the road when you came out of Egypt, and [d]because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of [f]Mesopotamia, to curse you. 5 Nevertheless the LORD your God would not listen to Balaam, but the LORD your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the LORD your God [e]loves you. 6 [f]You shall not seek their peace nor their prosperity all your days forever.

7 "You shall not abhor an Edomite, [g]for he *is* your brother. You shall not abhor an Egyptian, because [h]you were an alien in his land. 8 The children of the third generation born to them may enter the assembly of the LORD.

Cleanliness of the Camp Site

9 "When the army goes out against your enemies, then keep yourself from every wicked thing. 10 [i]If there is any man among you who becomes unclean by some occurrence in the night, then he shall go outside the camp; he shall not come inside the camp. 11 But it shall be, when evening comes, that [j]he shall wash with water; and when the sun sets, he may come into the camp.

12 "Also you shall have a place outside the camp, where you may go out; 13 and you shall have an implement among your equipment, and when you sit down outside, you shall dig with it and turn and cover your refuse. 14 For the LORD your God [k]walks in the midst of your camp, to deliver you and give your enemies over to you; therefore your camp shall be holy, that He may see no unclean thing among you, and turn away from you.

23 [n]Lev. 19:20–22; Matt. 1:18, 19

24 [o]Deut. 21:14 [p]Deut. 22:21, 22; 1 Cor. 5:2, 13

28 [q]Ex. 22:16, 17

29 [r]Ex. 22:16, 17 [s]Deut. 22:24

30 [t]Lev. 18:8; 20:11; Deut. 27:20; 1 Cor. 5:1 [u]Ruth 3:9; Ezek. 16:8

CHAPTER 23

1 [a]Lev. 21:20; 22:24

3 [b]Neh. 13:1, 2

4 [c]Deut. 2:27–30 [d]Num. 22:5, 6; 23:7; Josh. 24:9; 2 Pet. 2:15; Jude 11 [f]Heb. *Aram Naharaim*

5 [e]Deut. 4:37

6 [f]Ezra 9:12

7 [g]Gen. 25:24–26; Deut. 2:4, 8; Amos 1:11; Obad. 10, 12 [h]Ex. 22:21; 23:9; Lev. 19:34; Deut. 10:19

10 [i]Lev. 15:16

11 [j]Lev. 15:5

14 [k]Lev. 26:12; Deut. 7:21

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the death of both consenting parties (vv. 22–24), while lesser penalties are prescribed for a sexual relationship with an unmarried woman (vv. 28, 29). Women depended on their marriage relationship for protection and status in ancient Near Eastern society, and the law provides important protections for women. The penalty for forcible rape of a married woman was the death of the offending man (vv. 25–27). The man who violated the honor of a virgin was compelled to marry her, and could not later divorce her (v. 29).

■ **22:30 A man shall not take his father's wife.** Sexual relations with a stepmother are probably in view (Lev. 18:7, 8; 20:11).

■ **23:1 the assembly of the LORD.** This phrase refers to the worshiping community gathered before the presence of God, rather than to Israel's population as a whole (Neh. 13:1–3). The Hebrew word for "assembly" (*qahal*) is usually rendered *ekklesia* in the Septuagint (the Greek Old Testament). This is also the term used in the Greek New Testament for "church."

■ **23:3 Ammonite or Moabite . . . the tenth generation.** As the word "forever" in this verse indicates, "tenth generation" is probably an idiom denoting permanent exclusion from the worshiping community of Israel (cf. Neh. 13:1). This special exclusion of Ammonites and Moabites was due, not to their incestuous origin (Gen. 19:30–38), but to their stubborn opposition to Israel (v. 4; Neh. 13:2). The Old Testament also looks forward to a new covenant in which the exclusions of this passage are transcended (Is. 56:3–8), an event prefigured by Ruth, the Moabite who became the ancestor of David and of the Messiah (Ruth 1:4; 4:17; Matt. 1:5).

■ **23:4 Balaam.** Note the clear reference to details in Num. 22—24.

■ **23:9–14** Because the camp of Israelite soldiers was a place of God's presence as divine Warrior (v. 14; 20:4), the camp was to be kept pure of unclean things. In view here are occurrences that were both hygienically and ceremonially unclean: instances of urination or perhaps nocturnal emission (v. 10; cf. Lev. 15:16), and defecation in the camp (v. 13).

15 [l]1 Sam. 30:15

16 [m]Ex. 22:21; Prov. 22:22 [2]*pleases him best*

17 [n]Lev. 19:29; Deut. 22:21 [o]Gen. 19:5; 2 Kin. 23:7 [3]Heb. *qedeshah*, fem. of *qadesh* (note 2) [4]Heb. *qadesh*, one practicing sodomy and prostitution in religious rituals

18 [5]*detestable*

19 [p]Ex. 22:25; Lev. 25:35–37; Neh. 5:2–7; Ps. 15:5

20 [q]Deut. 15:3 [r]Deut. 15:10

21 [s]Num. 30:1, 2; Job 22:27; Ps. 61:8; Eccl. 5:4, 5; Matt. 5:33

23 [t]Num. 30:2; Ps. 66:13, 14

25 [u]Matt. 12:1; Mark 2:23; Luke 6:1

CHAPTER 24

1 [a][Matt. 5:31; 19:7; Mark 10:4] [b][Jer. 3:8] [1]*indecency*, lit. *nakedness of a thing*

4 [c][Jer. 3:1] [2]*a detestable thing*

5 [d]Deut. 20:7 [e]Prov. 5:18

6 [3]*life*

7 [f]Ex. 21:16 [4]Lit. *stealing*

Miscellaneous Laws

15 [l]"You shall not give back to his master the slave who has escaped from his master to you. 16 He may dwell with you in your midst, in the place which he chooses within one of your gates, where it [2]seems best to him; [m]you shall not oppress him.

17 "There shall be no *ritual* [3]harlot [n]of the daughters of Israel, or a [o]perverted[4] one of the sons of Israel. 18 You shall not bring the wages of a harlot or the price of a dog to the house of the LORD your God for any vowed offering, for both of these *are* [5]an abomination to the LORD your God.

19 [p]"You shall not charge interest to your brother—interest on money *or* food *or* anything that is lent out at interest. 20 [q]To a foreigner you may charge interest, but to your brother you shall not charge interest, [r]that the LORD your God may bless you in all to which you set your hand in the land which you are entering to possess.

21 [s]"When you make a vow to the LORD your God, you shall not delay to pay it; for the LORD your God will surely require it of you, and it would be sin to you. 22 But if you abstain from vowing, it shall not be sin to you. 23 [t]That which has gone from your lips you shall keep and perform, for you voluntarily vowed to the LORD your God what you have promised with your mouth.

24 "When you come into your neighbor's vineyard, you may eat your fill of grapes at your pleasure, but you shall not put *any* in your container. 25 When you come into your neighbor's standing grain, [u]you may pluck the heads with your hand, but you shall not use a sickle on your neighbor's standing grain.

Law Concerning Divorce

24 "When a [a]man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some [1]uncleanness in her, and he writes her a [b]certificate of divorce, puts *it* in her hand, and sends her out of his house, 2 when she has departed from his house, and goes and becomes another man's *wife*, 3 *if* the latter husband detests her and writes her a certificate of divorce, puts *it* in her hand, and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies who took her as his wife, 4 [c]*then* her former husband who divorced her must not take her back to be his wife after she has been defiled; for that *is* [2]an abomination before the LORD, and you shall not bring sin on the land which the LORD your God is giving you *as* an inheritance.

Miscellaneous Laws

5 [d]"When a man has taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war or be charged with any business; he shall be free at home one year, and [e]bring happiness to his wife whom he has taken.

6 "No man shall take the lower or the upper millstone in pledge, for he takes [3]*one's* living in pledge.

7 "If a man is [f]found [4]kidnapping any of his brethren of the children of Israel, and mistreats

■ **23:15 slave who has escaped.** Slavery in Israel was carefully regulated and its abuses limited (15:12 note). In view here is an escaped slave from another country who takes refuge in Israel.

■ **23:17 ritual harlot . . . perverted one.** See text notes. Ritual prostitution, involving both male and female prostitutes, was characteristic of the Canaanite fertility religions.

■ **23:19 interest.** The agricultural economy of ancient Israel was very different from the commercial economy of today, and borrowing was usually due to poverty. God desired to bless an obedient Israel so that borrowing would be unnecessary (15:4 note), and those whom the Lord had blessed materially were to assist fellow Israelites in distress by not charging interest. This regulation did not apply to those outside the covenant (the "foreigner," v. 20).

■ **23:21 a vow to the LORD.** Such a vow was given voluntarily (v. 22). It was a serious matter, and if a valid vow, must be kept. The law of vows is given fully in Lev. 27 and Num. 30.

■ **24:1–4** See "Marriage and Divorce" at Mal. 2:16. The situation described (vv. 1–3) is followed by the legal prescription (v. 4). Divorce was permitted in the Mosaic law, as Jesus later said, "because of the hardness of your hearts" (Matt. 19:8). The restriction on remarriage of a divorced couple after an intervening marriage (v. 4) served to discourage casual divorces.

■ **24:1 some uncleanness.** The Hebrew of this phrase is the same as "unclean thing" in 23:14, and is rather general. Adultery is apparently not in view, for adultery was punishable by death (22:22). The fact of divorce for a variety of reasons is recognized, but not necessarily condoned (vv. 1–3 are descriptive, not prescriptive).

■ **24:5 taken a new wife.** A one-year exemption for the newly married would not only strengthen the marriage relationship and benefit the home, but would also help the morale of the army (20:1 note).

■ **24:6 take . . . in pledge.** Because loans were typically given to relieve the economic hardship of the borrower (23:19 note), the material given "in pledge" was likely not collateral property of value equal to the amount of the loan, but a personal possession given as a token of the promise to pay. In keeping with the purpose of the loan, the lender was not to cause further hardship to the borrower by confiscating essential items such as household millstones or outer garments (vv. 10–13, 17). Other references to Old Testament borrowing practices include Ex. 22:26, 27; Job 22:6; 24:3, 9; Amos 2:8.

■ **24:7 kidnapping . . . his brethren.** The chief purpose of kidnapping was the enslavement of others for profit. To sell fellow Israelites into slavery in other countries was forbidden on pain of death, probably because such slaves were cut off from the life of the covenant community (itself a form of "death," Ex. 12:19 and Lev. 7:20 notes). Indentured slavery was allowed within Israel, but was tempered in several important ways (15:12 note). Paul condemns slave traders ("kidnappers") together with other violators of the Ten Commandments (1 Tim. 1:10, 10).

him or sells him, then that kidnapper shall die; [g]and you shall put away the evil from among you.

8 "Take heed in [h]an outbreak of leprosy, that you carefully observe and do according to all that the priests, the Levites, shall teach you; just as I commanded them, *so* you shall be careful to do. 9 [i]Remember what the LORD your God did [j]to Miriam on the way when you came out of Egypt!

10 "When you [k]lend your brother anything, you shall not go into his house to get his pledge. 11 You shall stand outside, and the man to whom you lend shall bring the pledge out to you. 12 And if the man *is* poor, you shall not [l]keep his pledge overnight. 13 [m]You shall in any case return the pledge to him again when the sun goes down, that he may sleep in his own garment and [m]bless you; and [n]it shall be righteousness to you before the LORD your God.

14 "You shall not [o]oppress a hired servant *who is* poor and needy, *whether* one of your brethren or one of the aliens who *is* in your land within your gates. 15 Each day [p]you shall give *him* his wages, and not let the sun go down on it, for he *is* poor and has set his heart on it; [q]lest he cry out against you to the LORD, and it be sin to you.

16 [r]"Fathers shall not be put to death for *their* children, nor shall children be put to death for *their* fathers; a person shall be put to death for his own sin.

17 [s]"You shall not pervert justice due the stranger or the fatherless, [t]nor take a widow's garment as a pledge. 18 But [u]you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you from there; therefore I command you to do this thing.

19 [v]"When you reap your harvest in your field, and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that the LORD your God may [w]bless you in all the work of your hands. 20 When you beat your olive trees, you shall not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. 21 When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not glean *it* afterward; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. 22 And you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I command you to do this thing.

25 "If there is a [a]dispute between men, and they come to [1]court, that *the judges* may judge them, and they [b]justify the righteous and condemn the wicked, 2 then it shall be, if the wicked man [c]deserves to be beaten, that the judge will cause him to lie down [d]and be beaten in his presence, according to his guilt, with a certain number of blows. 3 [e]Forty blows he may give him *and* no more, lest he should exceed this and beat him with many blows above these, and your brother [f]be humiliated in your sight.

4 [g]"You shall not muzzle an ox while it [2]treads out *the grain.*

Marriage Duty of the Surviving Brother

5 [h]"If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the widow of the dead man shall not be *married* to a stranger outside *the family;* her husband's brother shall go in to her, take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. 6 And it shall be *that* the firstborn son which she bears [i]will succeed to the name of his dead brother, that [j]his name may not be blotted out of Israel. 7 But if the man does not want to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the [k]gate to the elders, and say, 'My husband's brother refuses to raise up a name to his brother in Israel; he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother.' 8 Then the elders of his city shall call him and speak to him. But *if* he stands firm and says, [l]'I do not want to take her,' 9 then his brother's wife shall come to him in the presence of the elders, [m]remove his sandal from his foot, spit in his face, and answer and say, 'So shall it be

7 [g]Deut. 19:19

8 [h]Lev. 13:2; 14:2

9 [i][1 Cor. 10:6] [j]Num. 12:10

10 [k]Matt. 5:42

12 [l]Lit. *sleep with his pledge*

13 [m]Ex. 22:26; Ezek. 18:7 [m]Job 29:11; 2 Tim. 1:18 [n]Deut. 6:25; Ps. 106:31; Dan. 4:27

14 [o]Lev. 19:13; Deut. 15:7–18; [Prov. 14:31]; Amos 4:1; [Mal. 3:5; 1 Tim. 5:18]

15 [p]Lev. 19:13; Jer. 22:13 [q]Ex. 22:23; Deut. 15:9; Job 35:9; James 5:4

16 [r]2 Kin. 14:6; 2 Chr. 25:4; Jer. 31:29, 30; Ezek. 18:20

17 [s]Ex. 23:6 [t]Ex. 22:26

18 [u]Deut. 24:22

19 [v]Lev. 19:9, 10 [w]Deut. 15:10; Ps. 41:1; Prov. 19:17

CHAPTER 25

1 [a]Deut. 17:8–13; 19:17; Ezek. 44:24 [b]Prov. 17:15 [1]Lit. *the judgment*

2 [c]Prov. 19:29; Luke 12:48 [d]Matt. 10:17

3 [e]2 Cor. 11:24 [f]Job 18:3

4 [g][Prov. 12:10; 1 Cor. 9:9; 1 Tim. 5:18] [2]*threshes*

5 [h]Matt. 22:24; Mark 12:19; Luke 20:28

6 [i]Gen. 38:9 [j]Ruth 4:5, 10

7 [k]Ruth 4:1, 2

8 [l]Ruth 4:6

9 [m]Ruth 4:7, 8

■ **24:8 leprosy.** See note on Lev. 13; 14.

■ **24:14 a hired servant who is poor.** God's concern for the poor and oppressed is emphasized in this passage (Ps. 9:18 note).

■ **24:16 Fathers shall not be put to death for their children.** This interesting and just law is quoted in 2 Kin. 14:6 and 2 Chr. 25:4, where it is cited as from the "Book of the Law of Moses" or the "Law in the Book of Moses."

■ **24:19 When you reap your harvest.** The compassionate intention of this law is realized in Ruth 2:2–23 (cf. Lev. 19:9, 10; 23:22).

■ **25:3 Forty blows.** This is the background of the Jewish practice of giving "forty stripes minus one" (2 Cor. 11:24). The intent was to guard against any possible miscount by erring on the side of mercy.

■ **25:4 You shall not muzzle an ox.** According to Paul, this provision for oxen points to the more general principle that those who labor, particularly Christian ministers, deserve fair remuneration for their work (1 Cor. 9:9–12; 1 Tim. 5:18).

■ **25:5 her husband's brother.** The law of levirate marriage (from the Latin word *levir,* meaning "husband's brother") is given only here. The limitation to brothers "living together" may indicate that it applied to an unmarried brother, but it is doubtful that this limitation held in practice. The obvious purpose of the arrangement was to maintain the property rights of the deceased's family line. The levirate custom dates to patriarchal times and is mentioned in Gen. 38:8–11; Ruth 3:1—4:12; Matt. 22:23–28; Mark 12:18–23; and Luke 20:27–33.

done to the man who will not [m]build up his brother's house.' [10] And his name shall be called in Israel, 'The house of him who had his sandal removed.'

Miscellaneous Laws

[11] "If *two* men fight together, and the wife of one draws near to rescue her husband from the hand of the one attacking him, and puts out her hand and seizes him by the genitals, [12] then you shall cut off her hand; [o]your eye shall not pity *her*.

[13] [p]"You shall not have in your bag differing weights, a heavy and a light. [14] You shall not have in your house differing measures, a large and a small. [15] You shall have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure, [q]that your days may be lengthened in the land which the LORD your God is giving you. [16] For [r]all who do such things, all who behave unrighteously, *are* [3]an abomination to the LORD your God.

Destroy the Amalekites

[17] [s]"Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you were coming out of Egypt, [18] how he met you on the way and attacked your rear ranks, all the stragglers at your rear, when you *were* tired and weary; and he [t]did not fear God. [19] Therefore it shall be, [u]when the LORD your God has given you rest from your enemies all around, in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess *as* an inheritance, *that* you will [v]blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. You shall not forget.

Offerings of Firstfruits and Tithes

26 "And it shall be, when you come into the land which the LORD your God is giving you *as* an inheritance, and you possess it and dwell in it, [2] [a]that you shall take some of the first of all the produce of the ground, which you shall bring from your land that the LORD your God is giving you, and put *it* in a basket and [b]go to the place where the LORD your God chooses to make His name abide. [3] And you shall go to the one who is priest in those days, and say to him, 'I declare today to the LORD [1]your God that I have come to the country which the LORD swore to our fathers to give us.'

[4] "Then the priest shall take the basket out of your hand and set it down before the altar of the LORD your God. [5] And you shall answer and say before the LORD your God: 'My father *was* [c]a [2]Syrian, [d]about to perish, and [e]he went down to Egypt and [3]dwelt there, [f]few in number; and there he became a nation, [g]great, mighty, and populous. [6] But the [h]Egyptians mistreated us, afflicted us, and laid hard bondage on us. [7] [i]Then we cried out to the LORD God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our voice and looked on our affliction and our labor and our oppression. [8] So [j]the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm, [k]with great terror and with signs and wonders. [9] He has brought us to this place and has given us this land, [l]"a land flowing with milk and honey"; [10] and now, behold, I have brought the firstfruits of the land which you, O LORD, have given me.'

"Then you shall set it before the LORD your God, and worship before the LORD your God. [11] So [m]you shall rejoice in every good *thing* which the LORD your God has given to you and your house, you and the Levite and the stranger who *is* among you.

[12] "When you have finished laying aside all the [n]tithe of your increase in the third year—[o]the year of tithing—and have given *it* to the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, so that they may eat within your gates and be filled, [13] then you shall say before the LORD your God: 'I have removed the [4]holy *tithe* from *my* house, and also have given them to the Levite, the

9 [n]Ruth 4:11

12 [o]Deut. 7:2; 19:13

13 [p]Lev. 19:35–37; Prov. 11:1; 20:23; Ezek. 45:10; Mic. 6:11

15 [q]Ex. 20:12

16 [r]Prov. 11:1; [1 Thess. 4:6] [3]*detestable*

17 [s]Ex. 17:8–16; 1 Sam. 15:1–3

18 [t][Ps. 36:1]; Rom. 3:18

19 [u]1 Sam. 15:3 [v]Ex. 17:14

CHAPTER 26

2 [a]Ex. 22:29; 23:16, 19; Num. 18:13; Deut. 16:10; Prov. 3:9 [b]Deut. 12:5

3 [1]LXX *my*

5 [c]Gen. 25:20; Hos. 12:12 [d]Gen. 43:1, 2; 45:7, 11 [e]Gen. 46:1, 6; Acts 7:15 [f]Gen. 46:27; Deut. 10:22 [g]Deut. 1:10 [2]Or *Aramean* [3]As a resident alien

6 [h]Ex. 1:8–11, 14

7 [i]Ex. 2:23–25; 3:9; 4:31

8 [j]Ex. 12:37, 51; 13:3, 14, 16; Deut. 5:15 [k]Deut. 4:34; 34:11, 12

9 [l]Ex. 3:8, 17

11 [m]Deut. 12:7; 16:11; Eccl. 3:12, 13; 5:18–20

12 [n]Lev. 27:30; Num. 18:24 [o]Deut. 14:28, 29

13 [4]*hallowed things*

■ **25:13 differing weights.** God's displeasure at dishonest business dealing is stressed (Lev. 19:35, 36; Prov. 11:1; 16:21; 20:10, 23; and Mic. 6:11).

■ **25:17–19** On the historic conflict between Israel and Amalek, see Ex. 17:16 and note.

■ **26:2 first of all the produce.** Many scholars suggest that vv. 1–11 refer to a special firstfruits offering that Israel was to bring when they took possession of the land (v. 4), although some relate the ceremony described in these verses to the perpetual firstfruits offering (Lev. 23:9–14). Either way, it is probable that the words of the ceremony reciting God's mighty acts on Israel's behalf (vv. 3–10) continued to be used in Israelite worship.

place . . . God chooses. See note on 12:5.

■ **26:5 Syrian, about to perish.** The Hebrew here translated "about to perish" is sometimes rendered "wandering." This verse may refer either to the advanced age of Jacob when he went down to Egypt (Gen. 47:9; cf. 46:30), or to Jacob's changing circumstances and travels to Aram, back to Canaan, throughout Canaan, and finally to Egypt (Gen. 28:2–5; 29:1; 31:20, 21; 33:18; 35:1, 16, 21; 46:1–28).

■ **26:12 the tithe.** Regarding the tithe and third year tithe, see notes on 14:22 and 14:28.

■ **26:13 holy tithe.** As holy things (things set apart for God) the tithes were not to have been put to any unclean or idolatrous use (v. 14). The phrase "given . . . for the dead" (v. 14) may refer to idolatrous practices (14:1 note).

stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, according to all Your commandments which You have commanded me; I have not transgressed Your commandments, [p]nor have I forgotten *them.* [14] [q]I have not eaten any of it [5]when in mourning, nor have I removed *any* of it [6]for an unclean *use,* nor given *any* of it for the dead. I have obeyed the voice of the LORD my God, and have done according to all that You have commanded me. [15] [r]Look down from Your holy [7]habitation, from heaven, and bless Your people Israel and the land which You have given us, just as You swore to our fathers, [s]"a land flowing with milk and honey." '

A Special People of God

[16] "This day the LORD your God commands you to observe these statutes and judgments; therefore you shall be careful to observe them with all your heart and with all your soul. [17] Today you have [t]proclaimed the LORD to be your God, and that you will walk in His ways and keep His statutes, His commandments, and His judgments, and that you will [u]obey His voice. [18] Also today [v]the LORD has proclaimed you to be His special people, just as He promised you, that *you* should keep all His commandments, [19] and that He will set you [w]high above all nations which He has made, in praise, in name, and in honor, and that you may be [x]a [8]holy people to the LORD your God, just as He has spoken."

The Law Inscribed on Stones

27 Now Moses, with the elders of Israel, commanded the people, saying: "Keep all the commandments which I command you today. [2] And it shall be, on the day [a]when you cross over the Jordan to the land which the LORD your God is giving you, that [b]you shall set up for yourselves large stones, and whitewash them with lime. [3] You shall write on them all the words of this law, when you have crossed over, that you may enter the land which the LORD your God is giving you, [c]'a land flowing with milk and honey,' just as the LORD God of your fathers promised you. [4] Therefore it shall be, when you have crossed over the Jordan, *that* [d]on Mount Ebal you shall set up these stones, which I command you today, and you shall whitewash them with lime. [5] And there you shall build an altar to the LORD your God, an altar of stones; [e]you shall not use an iron *tool* on them. [6] You shall build with [f]whole stones the altar of the LORD your God, and offer burnt offerings on it to the LORD your God. [7] You shall offer peace offerings, and shall eat there, and [g]rejoice before the LORD your God. [8] And you shall [h]write very plainly on the stones all the words of this law."

[9] Then Moses and the priests, the Levites, spoke to all Israel, saying, "Take heed and listen, O Israel: [h]This day you have become the people of the LORD your God. [10] Therefore you shall obey the voice of the LORD your God, and observe His commandments and His statutes which I command you today."

Curses Pronounced from Mount Ebal

[11] And Moses commanded the people on the same day, saying, [12] "These shall stand [i]on Mount Gerizim to bless the people, when you have crossed over the Jordan: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin; [13] and [j]these shall stand on Mount Ebal to curse: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali.

13 [p]Ps. 119:141, 153, 176

14 [q]Lev. 7:20; Jer. 16:7; Hos. 9:4 [5]Lit. *in my mourning* [6]Or *while I was unclean*

15 [r]Ps. 80:14; Is. 63:15; Zech. 2:13 [s]Ex. 3:8 [7]*home*

17 [t]Ex. 20:19 [u]Deut. 15:5

18 [v]Ex. 6:7; 19:5; Deut. 7:6; 14:2; 28:9; [Titus 2:14; 1 Pet. 2:9]

19 [w]Deut. 4:7, 8; 28:1 [x]Ex. 19:6; Deut. 7:6; 28:9; Is. 62:12; [1 Pet. 2:9] [8]*consecrated*

CHAPTER 27

2 [a]Josh. 4:1 [b]Josh. 8:32

3 [c]Ex. 3:8

4 [d]Deut. 11:29; Josh. 8:30, 31

5 [e]Ex. 20:25; Josh. 8:31

6 [f]*uncut*

7 [g]Deut. 26:11

8 [g]Josh. 8:32

9 [h]Deut. 26:18

12 [i]Deut. 11:29; Josh. 8:33; Judg. 9:7

13 [j]Deut. 11:29; Josh. 8:33

■ **26:15 Look down from . . . heaven.** This phrase was adapted by Solomon in his great prayer at the dedication of the temple (1 Kin. 8:30).

■ **26:16–19** These verses conclude the covenant stipulations section that begins at 12:1. Here the people accepted the terms of God's covenant by their pledge of obedience to the covenant stipulations (v. 17; cf. Ex. 24:7), and the two parties of the covenant (God and the people) "proclaimed" loyalty to the other (vv. 17, 18).

■ **27:1—30:20** Moses continues his book of farewells with a third address devoted especially to the sanctions by which the covenant requirements will be enforced. After summoning the people to covenant oath in light of their rebelliousness, and prophesying covenant renewal in the future, Moses calls for the people to "choose life" according to the promise given to their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

■ **27:1 Moses . . . commanded.** Moses and the elders specify a ceremony of dedication to be held after the Israelites entered the land. The laws would be published; the ceremony would be impressive; the people would add their "Amen," and a liturgy of promised blessings and curses would follow.

■ **27:2 whitewash them with lime.** Moses provides for the publication of the law at the covenant renewal ceremony on Mount Ebal (vv. 3, 8). Large stones were to be whitewashed and the words of the law written on them. This technique of writing upon a whitewashed surface is typically Egyptian (the Canaanite and Mesopotamian practice was to inscribe words into stone surfaces). Because Moses was intimately familiar with Egypt and its practices, these verses provide another indication that the text of Deuteronomy dates to the Mosaic era.

■ **27:5 not use an iron tool.** The stones were to be uncut or "whole stones" (Josh. 8:31; cf. Ex. 20:25). Because iron was used in the building of Solomon's temple (1 Chr. 22:3, 14), we need not conclude that it was a taboo metal forbidden for religious worship. See note on 8:9.

■ **27:12 These . . . on Mount Gerizim to bless.** There is no apparent reason for the precise tribal assignments. Here Levi is included among the regular tribes (even among the six that pronounced the blessings); although some of the Levites were to recite the curses the people would answer. The tribe of Joseph united Manasseh and Ephraim, so the enumeration follows the names of the twelve patriarchs rather than the later tribal divisions.

14 [k]Deut. 33:10

15 [l]Ex. 20:4, 23; 34:17 [m]Num. 5:22 [2]*a detestable thing*

16 [n]Ezek. 22:7

17 [o]Deut. 19:14

18 [p]Lev. 19:14

19 [q]Ex. 22:21, 22; 23:9

20 [r]Deut. 22:30

21 [s]Lev. 18:23; 20:15, 16

22 [t]Lev. 18:9

23 [u]Lev. 18:17; 20:14

24 [v]Ex. 20:13; 21:12

25 [w]Ex. 23:7

26 [x]Gal. 3:10

CHAPTER 28

1 [a]Ex. 15:26 [b]Deut. 26:19

2 [c]Deut. 28:15

3 [d]Ps. 128:1, 4 [e]Gen. 39:5

4 [f]Gen. 22:17 [1]*offspring*

14 "And [k]the Levites shall speak with a loud voice and say to all the men of Israel: 15 [l]'Cursed *is* the one who makes a carved or molded image, [2]an abomination to the LORD, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and sets *it* up in secret.'

[m]"And all the people shall answer and say, 'Amen!'

16 [n]'Cursed *is* the one who treats his father or his mother with contempt.'

"And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

17 [o]'Cursed *is* the one who moves his neighbor's landmark.'

"And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

18 [p]'Cursed *is* the one who makes the blind to wander off the road.'

"And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

19 [q]'Cursed *is* the one who perverts the justice due the stranger, the fatherless, and widow.'

"And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

20 [r]'Cursed *is* the one who lies with his father's wife, because he has uncovered his father's bed.'

"And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

21 [s]'Cursed *is* the one who lies with any kind of animal.'

"And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

22 [t]'Cursed *is* the one who lies with his sister, the daughter of his father or the daughter of his mother.'

"And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

23 [u]'Cursed *is* the one who lies with his mother-in-law.'

"And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

24 [v]'Cursed *is* the one who attacks his neighbor secretly.'

"And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

25 [w]'Cursed *is* the one who takes a bribe to slay an innocent person.'

"And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

26 [x]'Cursed *is* the one who does not confirm *all* the words of this law.'

"And all the people shall say, 'Amen!' "

Blessings on Obedience

28 "Now it shall come to pass, [a]if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God [b]will set you high above all nations of the earth. 2 And all these blessings shall come upon you and [c]overtake you, because you obey the voice of the LORD your God:

3 [d]"Blessed *shall* you *be* in the city, and blessed *shall* you *be* [e]in the country.

4 "Blessed *shall be* [f]the [1]fruit of your body, the produce of your ground and the increase of your herds, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks.

■ **27:15–26** This list of offenses subject to curse is not exhaustive. These offenses may have been chosen as representative of the sorts of sins that might escape detection and so remain secret (cf. vv. 15, 24). Even secret sins would affect Israel's covenant relationship with God (cf. Josh. 7:10–26).

■ **27:15 one who makes a carved . . . image.** The first curse concerns idolatry (5:7–9).

Amen. The Hebrew word means "so be it," as it is translated in Num. 5:22.

■ **27:16 treats his father or his mother with contempt.** The second curse concerns the fifth commandment (5:16).

■ **27:17 landmark.** See note on 19:14.

■ **27:18 makes the blind to wander.** Leviticus 19:14 commands care for the disabled.

■ **27:19 perverts the justice.** God upholds the cause of the helpless (10:18).

■ **27:20 lies with his father's wife.** See note on 22:30.

■ **27:21 lies with any kind of animal.** The penalty for this perversion was death (Ex. 22:19; Lev. 18:23; 20:15).

■ **27:22 lies with his sister.** This curse concerns both a full sister and a half sister (having the same father but a different mother). See Lev. 18:11; 20:17.

■ **27:23 lies with his mother-in-law.** The penalty was death (Lev. 18:17; 20:14).

■ **27:24, 25** Both the secret attacker and the hired assassin fall under divine curse, even though both might expect to avoid detection (vv. 15–26 note).

■ **27:26 does not confirm all the words of this law.** The final curse covers all the rest of God's commandments. Paul quotes this verse to underscore the stringency of law's demands and the impossibility of meriting salvation by works (Gal. 3:10). Measured by God's standards, all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). But this does not remove the obligation of the believer to obey the moral laws of God by the enabling of the Holy Spirit.

■ **28:1–68** After recording the liturgy for the covenant ritual at Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim (ch. 27), Moses calls on the congregation at Moab to obey the commands of God, setting forth God's promised blessings for obedience and His curses for disobedience. The blessings are briefer and come first. The curses are, in some cases, the exact reverse of the blessings, and they continue with awesome emphasis before climaxing on a note of doom (v. 68).

■ **28:4 fruit . . . produce . . . increase.** Their children, crops, and herds will be blessed. For an agricultural people, these were the crucial elements of physical life.

5 "Blessed *shall be* your basket and your kneading bowl.
6 [g]"Blessed *shall* you *be* when you come in, and blessed *shall* you *be* when you go out.
7 "The LORD [h]will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before your face; they shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways.
8 "The LORD will [i]command the blessing on you in your storehouses and in all to which you [j]set your hand, and He will bless you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you.
9 [k]"The LORD will establish you as a holy people to Himself, just as He has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the LORD your God and walk in His ways. 10 Then all peoples of the earth shall see that you are [l]called by the name of the LORD, and they shall be [m]afraid of you.
11 And [n]the LORD will grant you plenty of goods, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your ground, in the land of which the LORD [2]swore to your fathers to give you. 12 The LORD will open to you His good [3]treasure, the heavens, [o]to give the rain to your land in its season, and [p]to bless all the work of your hand. [q]You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow. 13 And the LORD will make [r]you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only, and not be beneath, if you [4]heed the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today, and are careful to observe *them.* 14 [s]So you shall not turn aside from any of the words which I command you this day, *to* the right or the left, to go after other gods to serve them.

Curses on Disobedience

15 "But it shall come to pass, [t]if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you:
16 "Cursed *shall* you *be* in the city, and cursed *shall* you *be* in the country.
17 "Cursed *shall be* your basket and your kneading bowl.
18 "Cursed *shall be* the [5]fruit of your body and the produce of your land, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks.
19 "Cursed *shall* you *be* when you come in, and cursed *shall* you *be* when you go out.
20 "The LORD will send on you [u]cursing, [v]confusion, and [w]rebuke in all that you set your hand to do, until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly, because of the wickedness of your doings in which you have forsaken Me. 21 The LORD will make the [6]plague cling to you until He has consumed you from the land which you are going to possess. 22 [x]The LORD will strike you with consumption, with fever, with inflammation, with severe burning fever, with the sword, with [y]scorching,[7] and with mildew; they shall pursue you until you perish. 23 And [z]your heavens which *are* over your head shall be bronze, and the earth which is under you *shall be* iron. 24 The LORD will change the rain of your land to powder and dust; from the heaven it shall come down on you until you are destroyed.
25 [a]"The LORD will cause you to be defeated before your enemies; you shall go out one way against them and flee seven ways before them; and you shall become [8]troublesome to all the kingdoms of the earth. 26 [b]Your carcasses shall be food for all the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and no one shall frighten *them* away. 27 The LORD will strike you with [c]the boils of Egypt, with [d]tumors, with the scab, and with the itch, from which you cannot be healed. 28 The LORD will strike you with madness and blindness and [e]confusion of heart. 29 And you shall [f]grope at noonday, as a blind man gropes in darkness; you shall not prosper in your ways; you shall be only oppressed and plundered continually, and no one shall save *you.*
30 [g]"You shall betroth a wife, but another man shall lie with her; [h]you shall build a house, but

6 [g]Ps. 121:8
7 [h]Lev. 26:7, 8
8 [i]Lev. 25:21 [j]Deut. 15:10
9 [k]Ex. 19:5, 6
10 [l]Núm. 6:27; 2 Chr. 7:14; Is. 63:19; Dan. 9:18, 19 [m]Deut. 11:25
11 [n]Deut. 30:9 [2]*promised*
12 [o]Lev. 26:4; Deut. 11:14 [p]Deut. 14:29 [q]Deut. 15:6 [3]*storehouse*
13 [r][Is. 9:14, 15] [4]*listen to*
14 [s]Deut. 5:32; Josh. 1:7
15 [t]Lev. 26:14–39; Josh. 23:15; Dan. 9:10–14; Mal. 2:2
18 [5]*offspring*
20 [u]Mal. 2:2 [v]Is. 65:14 [w]Ps. 80:16; Is. 30:17
21 [6]*pestilence*
22 [x]Lev. 26:16 [y]Amos 4:9 [7]*blight*
23 [z]Lev. 26:19
25 [a]Deut. 32:30 [8]*a terror*
26 [b]1 Sam. 17:44; Ps. 79:2
27 [c]Ex. 15:26 [d]1 Sam. 5:6
28 [e]Jer. 4:9
29 [f]Job 5:14
30 [g]2 Sam. 12:11; Job 31:10; Jer. 8:10 [h]Amos 5:11; Zeph. 1:13

■ **28:5 your basket and your kneading bowl.** Household endeavors would be blessed.

■ **28:6 come in . . . go out.** This idiom referring to normal, everyday activities underscores the comprehensiveness of divine blessing (cf. 31:2). God will bless an obedient people in every way.

■ **28:10** See "This Is My Name': God's Self-disclosure" at Ex. 3:15.

■ **28:11 in the land.** The blessings detailed above will be realized in the Land of Promise—itself a major part of the blessing.

■ **28:12 His good treasure, the heavens.** This idiom expresses the conviction that the rainfall so crucial to Israel's agricultural prosperity was a gift of God (11:11–17; Ps. 104:13). Here is an implicit warning against the Canaanite fertility religions which ascribed the rainfall to the pagan god Baal.

■ **28:16–19** The curses here negatively mirror the blessings of vv. 3–6.

■ **28:23 bronze . . . iron.** These metaphors of rainless sky and barren land would be frightful to an agricultural people so dependent on rain and soil (cf. Lev. 26:19).

■ **28:25 defeated before your enemies.** The expression is the reverse of the blessing in v. 7, with the added horror that their corpses would be exposed with no one to give them decent burial (v. 26).

■ **28:27** The various diseases mentioned here cannot be precisely identified. They may be included in the "diseases of Egypt" (v. 60), from which God had promised to deliver them (7:15; Ex. 15:26) if they would obey His laws. Egyptians suffered from a variety of tropical diseases and parasites. (cf. 14:3–21 note).

you shall not dwell in it; [i]you shall plant a vineyard, but shall not gather its grapes. 31 Your ox *shall be* slaughtered before your eyes, but you shall not eat of it; your donkey *shall be* violently taken away from before you, and shall not be restored to you; your sheep *shall be* given to your enemies, and you shall have no one to rescue *them.* 32 Your sons and your daughters *shall be* given to [j]another people, and your eyes shall look and [k]fail *with longing* for them all day long; and *there shall be* [g]no strength in your [l]hand. 33 A nation whom you have not known shall eat [m]the fruit of your land and the produce of your labor, and you shall be only oppressed and crushed continually. 34 So you shall be driven mad because of the sight which your eyes see. 35 The LORD will strike you in the knees and on the legs with severe boils which cannot be healed, and from the sole of your foot to the top of your head.

36 "The LORD will [n]bring you and the king whom you set over you to a nation which neither you nor your fathers have known, and [o]there you shall serve other gods—wood and stone. 37 And you shall become [p]an[l] astonishment, a proverb, [q]and a byword among all nations where the LORD will drive you.

38 [r]"You shall carry much seed out to the field but gather little in, for [s]the locust shall [2]consume it. 39 You shall plant vineyards and tend *them,* but you shall neither drink *of* the [t]wine nor gather the *grapes;* for the worms shall eat them. 40 You shall have olive trees throughout all your territory, but you shall not anoint *yourself* with the oil; for your olives shall drop off. 41 You shall beget sons and daughters, but they shall not be yours; for [u]they shall go into captivity. 42 Locusts shall [3]consume all your trees and the produce of your land.

43 "The alien who *is* among you shall rise higher and higher above you, and you shall come down lower and lower. 44 He shall lend to you, but you shall not lend to him; he shall be the head, and you shall be the tail.

45 "Moreover all these curses shall come upon you and pursue and overtake you, until you are destroyed, because you [4]did not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which He commanded you. 46 And they shall be upon [v]you for a sign and a wonder, and on your descendants forever.

47 [w]"Because you did not serve the LORD your God with joy and gladness of heart, [x]for the abundance of everything, 48 therefore you shall serve your enemies, whom the LORD will send against you, in [y]hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in need of everything; and He [z]will put a yoke of iron on your neck until He has destroyed you. 49 [a]The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, [b]*as swift* as the eagle flies, a nation whose language you will not understand, 50 a nation of fierce countenance, [c]which does not respect the elderly nor show favor to the young. 51 And they shall eat the increase of your livestock and the produce of your land, until you are destroyed; they shall not leave you grain or new wine or oil, *or* the increase of your cattle or the offspring of your flocks, until they have destroyed you.

52 "They shall [d]besiege you at all your gates until your high and fortified walls, in which you trust, come down throughout all your land; and they shall besiege you at all your gates throughout all your land which the LORD your God has given you. 53 [e]You shall eat the [5]fruit of your own body, the flesh of your sons and your daughters whom the LORD your God has given you, in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you. 54 The [6]sensitive and very refined man among you [f]will[7] be hostile toward his brother, toward [g]the wife of his bosom, and toward the rest of his children whom he leaves behind, 55 so that he will not give any of them the flesh of his children whom he will eat, because he has nothing left in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you at all your gates. 56 The [8]tender and [9]delicate woman among you, who would not venture to set the sole of her foot on the ground because of her delicateness and sensitivity, [l]will refuse to the husband of her bosom, and to her son and her daughter, 57 her [2]placenta which comes out [h]from between her feet and her children whom she bears; for she will eat them secretly for lack of everything in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you at all your gates.

30 [i]Deut. 20:6; Job 31:8; Jer. 12:13; Mic. 6:15

32 [j]2 Chr. 29:9 [k]Ps. 119:82 [l]Neh. 5:5 [g]*nothing you can do*

33 [m]Lev. 26:16; Jer. 5:15, 17

36 [n]2 Kin. 17:4, 6; 24:12, 14; 25:7, 11; 2 Chr. 36:1–21; Jer. 39:1–9 [o]Deut. 4:28; Jer. 16:13

37 [p]1 Kin. 9:7, 8; Jer. 24:9; 25:9 [q]Ps. 44:14 [l]*a thing of horror*

38 [r]Mic. 6:15; Hag. 1:6 [s]Ex. 10:4; Joel 1:4 [2]*devour*

39 [t]Zeph. 1:13

41 [u]Lam. 1:5

42 [3]*possess*

45 [4]*did not listen to*

46 [v]Num. 26:10; Is. 8:18; Ezek. 14:8

47 [w]Deut. 12:7; Neh. 9:35–37 [x]Deut. 32:15

48 [y]Lam. 4:4–6 [z]Jer. 28:13, 14

49 [a]Is. 5:26–30; 7:18–20; Jer. 5:15 [b]Jer. 48:40; 49:22; Lam. 4:19; Hos. 8:1

50 [c]2 Chr. 36:17

52 [d]2 Kin. 25:1, 2, 4

53 [e]Lev. 26:29; 2 Kin. 6:28, 29; Jer. 19:9; Lam. 2:20; 4:10 [5]*offspring*

54 [f]Deut. 15:9 [g]Deut. 13:6 [6]Lit. *tender* [7]Lit. *his eye shall be evil toward*

56 [8]*sensitive* [9]*refined* [1]Lit. *her eye shall be evil toward*

57 [h]Gen. 49:10 [2]*afterbirth*

■ **28:35 sole of your foot . . . head.** A description of great torment, also used to describe Job's boils (Job 2:7).

■ **28:36, 37** The covenantal curse of captivity and exile mentioned here becomes an important element of the prophetic covenant lawsuits against disobedient Israel later in the Old Testament (e.g., Is. 5:13; Jer. 13:19; 29:17–19).

■ **28:36 the king whom you set over you.** See 17:14–17 for another mention of possible future kingship in Israel.

■ **28:44 He shall lend to you.** This curse, like several in this section, is the reverse of an earlier blessing (vv. 12, 13; 23:19 note).

■ **28:49 the end of the earth.** This expression for extreme distance is based on how the eye perceives the earth to end where horizon and sky meet; it is equivalent to "from afar" (cf. 13:7).

■ **28:53 eat the fruit of your own body.** Cannibalism was a dreadful accompaniment of ancient sieges, when a city's food supply would be cut off for lengthy periods. This curse found frightful fulfillment during the sieges of Samaria and Jerusalem (2 Kin. 6:28, 29; Jer. 19:9; Lam. 2:20; 4:10).

58 "If you do not carefully observe all the words of this law that are written in this book, that you may fear [i]this glorious and awesome name, THE LORD YOUR GOD, 59 then the LORD will bring upon you and your descendants [j]extraordinary plagues—great and prolonged plagues—and serious and prolonged sicknesses. 60 Moreover He will bring back on you all [k]the diseases of Egypt, of which you were afraid, and they shall cling to you. 61 Also every sickness and every plague, which *is* not written in this Book of the Law, will the LORD bring upon you until you are destroyed. 62 You [l]shall be left few in number, whereas you were [m]as the stars of heaven in multitude, because you would not obey the voice of the LORD your God. 63 And it shall be, *that* just as the LORD [n]rejoiced over you to do you good and multiply you, so the LORD [o]will rejoice over you to destroy you and bring you to nothing; and you shall be [p]plucked[3] from off the land which you go to possess.

64 "Then the LORD [q]will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other, and [r]there you shall serve other gods, which neither you nor your fathers have known—wood and stone. 65 And [s]among those nations you shall find no rest, nor shall the sole of your foot have a resting place; [t]but there the LORD will give you a [4]trembling heart, failing eyes, and [u]anguish of soul. 66 Your life shall hang in doubt before you; you shall fear day and night, and have no assurance of life. 67 [v]In the morning you shall say, 'Oh, that it were evening!' And at evening you shall say, 'Oh, that it were morning!' because of the fear which terrifies your heart, and [w]because of the sight which your eyes see.

68 "And the LORD [x]will take you back to Egypt in ships, by the way of which I said to you, [y]'You shall never see it again.' And there you shall be offered for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves, but no one will buy *you*."

The Covenant Renewed in Moab

29 These *are* the words of the covenant which the LORD commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the [a]covenant which He made with them in Horeb.

2 Now Moses called all Israel and said to them: [b]"You have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land— 3 [c]the great trials which your eyes have seen, the signs, and those great wonders. 4 Yet [d]the LORD has not given you a heart to [1]perceive and eyes to see and ears to hear, to this *very* day. 5 [e]And I have led you forty years in the wilderness. [f]Your clothes have not worn out on you, and your sandals have not worn out on your feet. 6 [g]You have not eaten bread, nor have you drunk wine or *similar* drink, that you may know that I *am* the LORD your God. 7 And when you came to this place, [h]Sihon king of Heshbon and Og king of Bashan came out against us to battle, and we conquered them. 8 We took their land and [i]gave it as an inheritance to the Reubenites, to the Gadites, and to half the tribe of Manasseh. 9 Therefore [j]keep the words of this covenant, and do them, that you may [k]prosper in all that you do.

10 "All of you stand today before the LORD your God: your leaders and your tribes and your elders and your officers, all the men of Israel, 11 your little ones and your wives—also the stranger who *is* in your camp, from [l]the one who cuts your wood to the one who draws your

58 [i]Ex. 6:3
59 [j]Dan. 9:12
60 [k]Deut. 7:15
62 [l]Deut. 4:27 [m]Neh. 9:23
63 [n]Jer. 32:41 [o]Prov. 1:26 [p]Jer. 12:14; 45:4 [3]*torn*
64 [q]Jer. 16:13 [r]Deut. 28:36
65 [s]Amos 9:4 [t]Lev. 26:36 [u]Lev. 26:16 [4]*anxious*
67 [v]Job 7:4 [w]Deut. 28:34
68 [x]Hos. 8:13 [y]Deut. 17:16

CHAPTER 29

1 [a]Deut. 5:2, 3
2 [b]Ex. 19:4
3 [c]Deut. 4:34; 7:19
4 [d][Acts 28:26, 27] [1]*understand* or *know*
5 [e]Deut. 1:3; 8:2 [f]Deut. 8:4
6 [g]Deut. 8:3
7 [h]Num. 21:23, 24
8 [i]Deut. 3:12, 13
9 [j]Deut. 4:6 [k]Josh. 1:7
11 [l]Josh. 9:21, 23, 27

■ **28:58 this glorious and awesome name.** See "'This Is My Name': God's Self-disclosure" at Ex. 3:15.

■ **28:61 this Book of the Law.** The written record documenting the terms of a covenant had legal status and was a crucial part of the ancient Near Eastern treaty (Introduction: Date and Occasion). Deuteronomy as such is the record of God's covenant with His people (v. 58; 31:24–26).

■ **28:64 will scatter you.** Some argue that these threats of exile indicate that portions of Deuteronomy were written during or after the Babylonian exile (sixth century B.C.). This argument is rooted in the view that supernatural predictive prophecy is impossible. But in fact, this covenant curse is couched in more general terms than would apply to the Babylonian exile. It threatens a widespread dispersion "from one end of the earth to the other." It may find fulfillment in the Assyrian and Babylonian exiles, as well as in the dispersion of the Jews after the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

■ **28:68 but no one will buy you.** This theme of abandonment echoes v. 29. The aggregation of curses here is overwhelming. This chapter should be compared with the similar but shorter Lev. 26, which ends with the possibility of confession, repentance, and restoration. Here, the theme of possible restoration is left for ch. 30.

■ **29:1 the covenant . . . in the land of Moab.** Scholars debate whether v. 1 concludes what precedes or introduces what follows. The latter, as reflected in the NKJV text division, is more likely. This "covenant . . . in the land of Moab" is a renewal of the Sinai covenant ("the covenant . . . in Horeb"). As usual, Moses recites the history of God's mighty acts on Israel's behalf in the Exodus from Egypt and in the wilderness (cf. Moses' speech in 1:6—4:38). There follows a warning against departing from the Lord, a promise of restoration upon repentance, and a solemn charge to obey.

Horeb. See note on 1:6.

■ **29:2 in the land of Egypt.** The deliverance from Egypt, which occupies a third of the Book of Exodus, is mentioned many times in Deuteronomy (e.g., 1:30; 4:20, 34; 5:6; 11:2–7).

■ **29:4 the LORD has not given . . . eyes to see.** Paul combines this verse with Is. 29:10, and applies both verses to the Jews of his day (Rom. 11:8).

■ **29:5 forty years.** The special preservation of clothes was mentioned in 8:4. The additional fact given here is that they drank no wine or other fermented drink, since there were no grapes in the desert. They also had no bread, but God supplied them with manna.

12 [m]Neh. 10:29
13 [n]Deut. 28:9 [o]Ex. 6:7 [p]Gen. 17:7, 8
14 [q][Jer. 31:31]
15 [r]Acts 2:39
17 [2]*detestable things*
18 [s]Deut. 11:16 [t]Heb. 12:15 [u]Deut. 32:32
19 [v]Jer. 3:17; 7:24 [w]Is. 30:1 [3]*walk in the stubbornness* or *imagination*
20 [x]Ezek. 14:7 [y]Ps. 74:1 [z]Ps. 79:5 [a]Deut. 9:14
21 [b][Matt. 24:51] [c]Deut. 30:10
22 [d]Jer. 19:8; 49:17; 50:13
23 [e]Zeph. 2:9 [f]Gen. 19:24, 25
24 [g]1 Kin. 9:8
27 [h]Dan. 9:11
28 [i]1 Kin. 14:15

CHAPTER 30

1 [a]Lev. 26:40 [b]Deut. 28:2 [c]Deut. 28:15–45 [d]Deut. 4:29, 30 [1]Lit. *cause them to return to your heart*
2 [e]Neh. 1:9

water— [12] that you may enter into covenant with the LORD your God, and [m]into His oath, which the LORD your God makes with you today, [13] that He may [n]establish you today as a people for Himself, and *that* He may be God to you, [o]just as He has spoken to you, and [p]just as He has sworn to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

[14] "I make this covenant and this oath, [q]not with you alone, [15] but with *him* who stands here with us today before the LORD our God, [r]as well as with *him* who *is* not here with us today [16] (for you know that we dwelt in the land of Egypt and that we came through the nations which you passed by, [17] and you saw their [2]abominations and their idols which *were* among them—wood and stone and silver and gold); [18] so that there may not be among you man or woman or family or tribe, [s]whose heart turns away today from the LORD our God, to go *and* serve the gods of these nations, [t]and that there may not be among you a root bearing [u]bitterness or wormwood; [19] and so it may not happen, when he hears the words of this curse, that he blesses himself in his heart, saying, 'I shall have peace, even though I [3]follow the [v]dictates of my heart'—[w]as though the drunkard could be included with the sober.

[20] [x]"The LORD would not spare him; for then [y]the anger of the LORD and [z]His jealousy would burn against that man, and every curse that is written in this book would settle on him, and the LORD [a]would blot out his name from under heaven. [21] And the LORD [b]would separate him from all the tribes of Israel for adversity, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this Book of the [c]Law, [22] so that the coming generation of your children who rise up after you, and the foreigner who comes from a far land, would say, when they [d]see the plagues of that land and the sicknesses which the LORD has laid on it:

[23] 'The whole land *is* brimstone, [e]salt, and burning; it is not sown, nor does it bear, nor does any grass grow there, [f]like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, which the LORD overthrew in His anger and His wrath.' [24] All nations would say, [g]'Why has the LORD done so to this land? What does the heat of this great anger mean?' [25] Then *people* would say: 'Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD God of their fathers, which He made with them when He brought them out of the land of Egypt; [26] for they went and served other gods and worshiped them, gods that they did not know and that He had not given to them. [27] Then the anger of the LORD was aroused against this land, [h]to bring on it every curse that is written in this book. [28] And the LORD [i]uprooted them from their land in anger, in wrath, and in great indignation, and cast them into another land, as *it is* this day.'

[29] "The secret *things belong* to the LORD our God, but those *things which are* revealed *belong* to us and to our children forever, that *we* may do all the words of this law.

The Blessing of Returning to God

30 "Now [a]it shall come to pass, when [b]all these things come upon you, the blessing and the [c]curse which I have set before you, and [d]you [1]call *them* to mind among all the nations where the LORD your God drives you, [2] and you [e]return to the LORD your God and obey His

■ **29:12 enter into covenant.** In terming this a renewal of the Sinai covenant, we should remember that the covenant was the same, but the people were not. All those over twenty at Sinai had perished in the wilderness. Many of the people under twenty then, now between forty and sixty, had seen the great events but had not taken part. Now they too were to affirm the covenant.

■ **29:19 as though the drunkard . . . included with the sober.** The Hebrew of this phrase (apparently an ancient proverb) is difficult to translate. The word here rendered "included" can be translated "add" or, alternatively, have the sense of "sweep" or "destroy." Similarly, the terms here rendered "drunkard" and "sober" are sometimes translated "watered land" and "dry land." The entire phrase as translated here means that the sinner will not escape judgment by hiding undetected in the company of the righteous (cf. v. 21). Another possibility is to render the phrase "so that the well-watered land is destroyed along with dry land" or "so that the drunkard is destroyed along with the thirsty," indicating that the sin of one brings disaster on many (cf. vv. 22–25). A third possible translation is "to add drunkenness to thirst," meaning that the sinful man compounds his guilt by sinking further into sin.

■ **29:21 this Book of the Law.** See note on 28:61 (cf. Josh. 1:7, 8).

■ **29:23 Sodom.** The four cities of the plain that were destroyed in Abraham's day are named. In Gen. 14 five cities of the plain are mentioned, but not their destruction. In Gen. 19 Sodom and Gomorrah are mentioned and the whole area is said to be destroyed, but Zoar is spared. Deuteronomy puts the two records together and lists the four destroyed cities. The judgment of Sodom was a prophetic model of divine wrath. Like Moses, Isaiah compares the judgment of Israel to that of Sodom (Is. 1:10). Jesus also compares the judgment at His Second Advent to that of Sodom (Luke 17:28–35), as does Peter (2 Pet. 2:6).

■ **29:29** The meaning of the latter part of this verse is apparent: God's revealed law is of vital importance, and the Israelites and their children must follow this revealed law. The reference to "secret things" may suggest that Moses faces the uncertain future of the nation, remembering their waywardness and how they turned to the golden calf at Horeb (Ex. 32). In this uncertainty Moses trusts the hidden future to his trustworthy God.

■ **30:1–10** Anticipating the real possibility of judgment and exile for Israel, Moses looks beyond the time of judgment to Israel's future repentance, restoration, and divine blessing. Significantly, this future blessing will include deliverance from slavery to sin. Moses' reference to the circumcision of the "heart" (v. 6; cf. 10:16) is foundational for the later prophetic expectation (Jer. 31:31–34; Ezek. 36:25–27), and finds fulfillment in the New Testament (Rom. 2:29).

■ **30:2 with all your heart and with all your soul.** Moses refers again to the great commandment of 6:5, holding out the hope of repentance even where there had been apostasy and judgment.

voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul, 3 *f*that the LORD your God will bring you back from captivity, and have compassion on you, and *g*gather you again from all the nations where the LORD your God has scattered you. 4 *h*If *any* of you are driven out to the farthest *parts* under heaven, from there the LORD your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you. 5 Then the LORD your God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers. 6 And *i*the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.

7 "Also the LORD your God will put all these *j*curses on your enemies and on those who hate you, who persecuted you. 8 And you will *k*again obey the voice of the LORD and do all His commandments which I command you today. 9 *l*The LORD your God will make you abound in all the work of your hand, in the [2]fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your land for good. For the LORD will again *m*rejoice over you for good as He rejoiced over your fathers, 10 if you obey the voice of the LORD your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this Book of the Law, *and* if you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

The Choice of Life or Death

11 "For this commandment which I command you today *n*[3]*is* not *too* mysterious for you, nor *is* it far off. 12 *o*It *is* not in heaven, that you should say, 'Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' 13 Nor *is* it beyond the sea, that you should say, 'Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?' 14 But the word *is* very near you, *p*in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.

15 "See, *q*I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, 16 in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the LORD your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess. 17 But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, 18 *r*I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong *your* days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess. 19 *s*I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, *that* *t*I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; 20 that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He *is* your *u*life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."

3 *f*Ps. 106:45; Jer. 29:14; Lam. 3:22, 32 *g*Ps. 147:2; Jer. 32:37; Ezek. 34:13

4 *h*Deut. 28:64; Neh. 1:9; Is. 62:11

6 *i*Deut. 10:16; Jer. 32:39; Ezek. 11:19

7 *j*Is. 54:15–17; Jer. 30:16, 20

8 *k*Zeph. 3:20

9 *l*Deut. 28:11 *m*Deut. 28:63; Jer. 32:41 [2]*offspring*

11 *n*Is. 45:19 [3]*not hidden from*

12 *o*Prov. 30:4; Rom. 10:6–8

14 *p*Rom. 10:8

15 *q*Deut. 30:1, 19

18 *r*Deut. 4:26; 8:19

19 *s*Deut. 4:26 *t*Deut. 30:15

20 *u*Ps. 27:1; [John 11:25; 14:6; Col. 3:4]

■ **30:4, 5** The measure of God's compassion in restoration will equal or exceed the measure of His wrath in judgment and exile.

■ **30:6 the LORD . . . will circumcise your heart.** See notes on vv. 1–10 and 10:16. The promised restoration and renewal will result from a sovereign work of God in the hearts of His elect. By circumcising (transforming) their hearts, He will replace their total inability and stubbornness (5:29; 10:16; 29:4) with the humility and repentance they need (cf. vv. 1, 2), purifying for Himself a people who will love and obey Him. See "Legalism" at Matt. 23:4.

■ **30:7 on your enemies.** The future restoration will bring a fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham and his seed: "I will curse him who curses you" (Gen. 12:3). Moses links the restoration pictured in vv. 3–10 to another judgment by God against the enemies of His people.

■ **30:10** The blessings of the renewed covenant will be inseparable from, but not based on, the obedience of the restored remnant of the people to their Lord's commandments (cf., e.g., Matt. 7:21). The obedience of Christ, which is the victory over sin in which the remnant by faith will share, is the only meritorious basis of such blessings.

■ **30:11–14** Recalling his words in 6:6, Moses maintains that the commandment God revealed through him and the righteousness it required were readily accessible to and attainable by Israel (v. 11). He anticipates, however, that those with uncircumcised hearts and ears will raise questions denying these truths, and will seek to establish a righteousness of their own (vv. 12, 13). Moses rebukes such stubbornness, insisting that the word of righteousness is found "in your mouth and in your heart" (v. 14)—in the mouth and heart that speak not in the unbelief and rebellion of their own righteousness, but in the faith and humility of the Lord's righteousness. This righteousness the Lord demonstrated in the works of salvation and judgment, by which He confirmed His oath to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (cf. 8:17, 18; 9:4–6; 30:1–7; especially 1:29–33; 9:23). The commandment that Moses proclaimed here was a word calling for faith, and the righteousness it reveals is a righteousness attained by faith (cf. v. 10 note). Paul alludes to these verses in Rom. 10:6–8, updating Moses' admonition in view of the revelation of God's righteousness in the Person and work of Christ. Paul preaches the word that calls for faith where Moses had to leave off, insisting that Israel (and the Gentiles, Rom. 10:12, 13) must now confess with their mouths that Jesus is Lord (cf. Deut. 6:4), and believe with their hearts that God raised Him from the dead (Rom. 10:9). God's work in Jesus Christ yet again reveals His righteousness (Rom. 3:21–26), and confirms His oath to the fathers (cf. Rom. 4:18–25; Gal. 3). See "The Word of God: Scripture as Revelation" at Ex. 32:16.

■ **30:15 I have set before you.** Moses calls for a decision. There are two ways: life or death, God's blessing or sure judgment. Joshua presented the same alternatives (Josh. 24:15), and Jesus, who is greater than Moses or Joshua, calls His disciples to take the narrow path that leads to life (Matt. 7:13, 14).

■ **30:19 heaven and earth as witnesses.** The mention of witnesses recalls the form of ancient Near Eastern treaty documents, which have a list of witnesses at the end, often the names of pagan gods. In the biblical covenant, God's creation is called to witness against His people.

CHAPTER 31

2 [a]Deut. 34:7 [b]1 Kin. 3:7 [c]Num. 20:12
3 [d]Deut. 9:3 [e]Num. 27:18 [f]Num. 27:21
4 [g]Deut. 3:21 [h]Num. 21:24, 33
5 [i]Deut. 7:2; 20:10–20
6 [j]Josh. 10:25 [k]Deut. 1:29 [l]Deut. 20:4 [m]Heb. 13:5
7 [n]Deut. 31:23
8 [o]Ex. 13:21 [p]Josh. 1:5
9 [q]Deut. 17:18; 31:25, 26 [r]Josh. 3:3
10 [s]Deut. 15:1, 2 [t]Lev. 23:34
11 [u]Deut. 16:16 [v]Deut. 12:5 [w]Josh. 8:34
12 [x]Deut. 4:10
13 [y]Deut. 11:2 [z]Ps. 78:6, 7
14 [a]Num. 27:13 [b]Deut. 3:28 [t]*commission*
15 [c]Ex. 33:9

Joshua the New Leader of Israel

31 Then Moses went and spoke these words to all Israel. 2 And he said to them: "I [a]*am* one hundred and twenty years old today. I can no longer [b]go out and come in. Also the LORD has said to me, [c]'You shall not cross over this Jordan.' 3 The LORD your God [d]Himself crosses over before you; He will destroy these nations from before you, and you shall dispossess them. [e]Joshua himself crosses over before you, just [f]as the LORD has said. 4 [g]And the LORD will do to them [h]as He did to Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites and their land, when He destroyed them. 5 [i]The LORD will give them over to you, that you may do to them according to every commandment which I have commanded you. 6 [j]Be strong and of good courage, [k]do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, [l]He *is* the One who goes with you. [m]He will not leave you nor forsake you."

7 Then Moses called Joshua and said to him in the sight of all Israel, [n]"Be strong and of good courage, for you must go with this people to the land which the LORD has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall cause them to inherit it. 8 And the LORD, [o]He *is* the One who goes before you. [p]He will be with you, He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear nor be dismayed."

The Law to Be Read Every Seven Years

9 So Moses wrote this law [q]and delivered it to the priests, the sons of Levi, [r]who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and to all the elders of Israel. 10 And Moses commanded them, saying: "At the end of *every* seven years, at the appointed time in the [s]year of release, [t]at the Feast of Tabernacles, 11 when all Israel comes to [u]appear before the LORD your God in the [v]place which He chooses, [w]you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing. 12 [x]Gather the people together, men and women and little ones, and the stranger who *is* within your gates, that they may hear and that they may learn to fear the LORD your God and carefully observe all the words of this law, 13 and *that* their children, [y]who have not known it, [z]may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God as long as you live in the land which you cross the Jordan to possess."

Prediction of Israel's Rebellion

14 Then the LORD said to Moses, [a]"Behold, the days approach when you must die; call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tabernacle of meeting, that [b]I may [t]inaugurate him."

So Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves in the tabernacle of meeting. 15 Now [c]the LORD appeared at the tabernacle in a pillar of cloud, and the pillar of cloud stood above the door of the tabernacle.

■ **31:1—34:12** In this final section of his work, Moses provides for a smooth transition in covenant administration after his death. Also included are the Song of Moses and Moses' blessing of the twelve tribes. The book concludes with an obituary for Moses.

■ **31:1 Moses went and spoke.** This brief exhortation (vv. 1–8) can hardly be called another address, but is part of Moses' arrangement of his final affairs and the transfer of authority to Joshua, his successor (Introduction: Outline).

■ **31:2 one hundred and twenty years old.** Acts 7:30 tells us that Moses had spent forty years in Midian tending sheep. This time was not wasted, as he learned the geography and climate of the Sinai peninsula in preparation for leading the Israelites in that area for another forty years. The humiliation of being reduced from a prince in Egypt to being a hired tender of sheep also accomplished the divine disciplinary purpose of preparing Moses for his greater role as shepherd of God's people. This leaves forty years for Moses' youth and training in Egypt. So God ensured that Moses was prepared for his great task.

can no longer go out and come in. A reference to limitations on Moses' daily activities as leader of the vast company of Israelites (28:6 note). The statement in 34:7 that Moses' "eyes were not dim nor his natural vigor diminished" need not mean that he felt no effects of his advanced age. Moses' many-faceted role as Israel's leader was coming to an end.

■ **31:3 Joshua himself crosses over.** See notes on 1:37 and 3:23. Though the aged Moses was still active (34:7), the conquest of Canaan would require some years, and it was time for the younger man to take charge. Most importantly, the Lord Himself would lead as He had done with Moses (Ex. 33:14, 15).

■ **31:6 Be strong and of good courage.** These and the following words resemble the encouragement God gave Joshua after Moses died (Josh. 1:9).

■ **31:7 Moses called Joshua.** The transfer of political power is often a delicate matter. Moses wisely, and at God's command, elevated Joshua in the presence of the people.

■ **31:9 Moses wrote this law.** The conclusion of Moses' covenant ministry is marked by the completion of the law (vv. 24–26; 28:61 note). Repeatedly in Deuteronomy and Exodus, Moses is said to have written down the law or laws of the Lord. In Leviticus most of the chapters begin with the words, "The LORD spoke to Moses." God used Moses preeminently to speak and write His word for Israel (18:15–19 note).

■ **31:10–13** Moses provides for regular instruction of the people and their children in the covenant law by the priests, at a point in the year when the people had ample time to learn. The Feast of Tabernacles came in the fall and lasted a week (16:13–17 note). During the sabbatical year the land was to lie fallow, and the people would not have been burdened with agricultural duties (15:1 note). This practice of reading the law at regular intervals was characteristic of the suzerainty treaties among nations of Moses' time, which typically provided for the regular publication of the covenantal terms of agreement (Introduction: Date and Occasion).

■ **31:14 the tabernacle of meeting.** Joshua's legitimacy and authority as Moses' successor are underscored by his commission at the tabernacle of meeting, accompanied by God's appearance in the pillar of cloud (cf. Num. 12:4–12).

16 And the LORD said to Moses: "Behold, you will [2]rest with your fathers; and this people will [d]rise and [e]play the harlot with the gods of the foreigners of the land, where they go *to be* among them, and they will [f]forsake Me and [g]break My covenant which I have made with them. 17 Then My anger shall be [h]aroused against them in that day, and [i]I will forsake them, and I will [j]hide My face from them, and they shall be [3]devoured. And many evils and troubles shall befall them, so that they will say in that day, [k]'Have not these evils come upon us because our God *is* [l]not among us?' 18 And [m]I will surely hide My face in that day because of all the evil which they have done, in that they have turned to other gods.

19 "Now therefore, write down this song for yourselves, and teach it to the children of Israel; put it in their mouths, that this song may be [n]a witness for Me against the children of Israel. 20 When I have brought them to the land flowing with milk and honey, of which I swore to their fathers, and they have eaten and filled themselves [o]and grown fat, [p]then they will turn to other gods and serve them; and they will provoke Me and break My covenant. 21 Then it shall be, [q]when many evils and troubles have come upon them, that this song will testify against them as a witness; for it will not be forgotten in the mouths of their descendants, for [r]I know the inclination [s]of their behavior today, even before I have brought them to the land of which I swore *to give them.*"

22 Therefore Moses wrote this song the same day, and taught it to the children of Israel. 23 [t]Then He inaugurated Joshua the son of Nun, and said, [u]"Be strong and of good courage; for you shall bring the children of Israel into the land of which I swore to them, and I will be with you."

24 So it was, when Moses had completed writing the words of this law in a book, when they were finished, 25 that Moses commanded the Levites, who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying: 26 "Take this Book of the Law, [v]and put it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there [w]as a witness against you; 27 [x]for I know your rebellion and your [y]stiff neck. *If* today, while I am yet alive with you, you have been rebellious against the LORD, then how much more after my death? 28 Gather to me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, that I may speak these words in their hearing [z]and call heaven and earth to witness against them. 29 For I know that after my death you will [a]become utterly corrupt, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you. And [b]evil will befall you [c]in the latter days, because you will do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger through the work of your hands."

The Song of Moses

30 Then Moses spoke in the hearing of all the assembly of Israel the words of this song until they were ended:

32 "Give [a]ear, O heavens, and I will speak;
And hear, O [b]earth, the words of my mouth.
2 Let [c]my [1]teaching drop as the rain,
My speech distill as the dew,
[d]As raindrops on the tender herb,
And as showers on the grass.
3 For I proclaim the [e]name of the LORD:
[f]Ascribe greatness to our God.
4 *He is* [g]the Rock, [h]His work *is* perfect;
For all His ways *are* justice,
[i]A God of truth and [j]without injustice;
Righteous and upright *is* He.

16 [d]Deut. 29:22 [e]Ex. 34:15; Deut. 4:25–28; Judg. 2:11, 12, 17 [f]Deut. 32:15 [g]Judg. 2:20 [2]Die and join your ancestors

17 [h]Judg. 2:14; 6:13 [i]2 Chr. 15:2 [j]Deut. 32:20 [k]Judg. 6:13 [l]Num. 14:42 [3]*consumed*

18 [m]Deut. 31:17; [Is. 1:15, 16]

19 [n]Deut. 31:22, 26

20 [o]Deut. 32:15–17 [p]Deut. 31:16

21 [q]Deut. 31:17 [r]Hos. 5:3 [s]Amos 5:25, 26

23 [t]Num. 27:23; Deut. 31:14 [u]Deut. 31:7

26 [v]2 Kin. 22:8 [w]Deut. 31:19

27 [x]Deut. 9:7, 24 [y]Ex. 32:9; Deut. 9:6, 13

28 [z]Deut. 30:19

29 [a]Deut. 32:5; Judg. 2:19; [Acts 20:29, 30] [b]Deut. 28:15 [c]Gen. 49:1; Deut. 4:30

CHAPTER 32

1 [a]Deut. 4:26; Ps. 50:4; Is. 1:2 [b]Jer. 6:19

2 [c]Is. 55:10, 11 [d]Ps. 72:6 [1]*doctrine*

3 [e]Deut. 28:58 [f]1 Chr. 29:11

4 [g]Deut. 32:15, 18, 30; Ps. 18:2 [h]2 Sam. 22:31 [i]Deut. 7:9; Is. 65:16; Jer. 10:10 [j]Job 34:10

■ **31:19 write down this song for yourselves.** Knowing the people's inclination to be unfaithful (v. 21), and realizing the power of song in worship and in memory, the Lord commands Moses to write a song that would serve as a testimony in future days. Other examples of Moses' poetry include Ex. 15:1–18; 32:18; Num. 10:35, 36; and Ps. 90.

■ **32:1 O heavens . . . O earth.** Moses had called heaven and earth as witnesses at the end of the covenant renewal in 30:19.

■ **32:3 proclaim the name of the LORD.** This song was to witness in future days to the Lord, His goodness, and His saving work for Israel (31:19).

■ **32:4 Rock.** This chapter provides the first instances in Scripture of "Rock" as a name for God (vv. 15, 18, 30; there is a similar image in Gen. 49:24 using a different Hebrew word). Suggesting God's steadfast faithfulness and permanence, the term is common in the Psalms and other poetic passages (Ps. 95:1; Is. 44:8).

5 [k]Deut. 4:25; 31:29 [l]Phil. 2:15

6 [m]Ps. 116:12 [n]Ex. 4:22; Deut. 1:31; Is. 63:16 [o]Ps. 74:2 [p]Deut. 32:15 [2]*repay the*

7 [q]Ps. 44:1 [r]Ex. 12:26; 13:14; Ps. 78:5–8

8 [s]Acts 17:26 [t]Gen. 11:8 [3]LXX, DSS *angels of God;* Symmachus, Lat. *sons of God*

9 [u]Ex. 19:5

10 [v]Jer. 2:6; Hos. 13:5 [w]Ps. 17:8; Prov. 7:2; Zech. 2:8 [4]*pupil*

11 [x]Is. 31:5

13 [y]Is. 58:14

14 [z]Ps. 81:16 [a]Gen. 49:11

15 [b]Deut. 31:20 [c]Is. 1:4 [d]Is. 51:13 [e]Ps. 95:1

16 [f]Ps. 78:58; 1 Cor. 10:22 [5]*detestable acts*

17 [g]Rev. 9:20

5 "They[k] have corrupted themselves;
They are not His children,
Because of their blemish:
A [l]perverse and crooked generation.
6 Do you thus [m]deal[2] with the LORD,
O foolish and unwise people?
Is He not [n]your Father, *who* [o]bought you?
Has He not [p]made you and established you?

7 "Remember[q] the days of old,
Consider the years of many generations.
[r]Ask your father, and he will show you;
Your elders, and they will tell you:
8 When the Most High [s]divided their inheritance to the nations,
When He [t]separated the sons of Adam,
He set the boundaries of the peoples
According to the number of the [3]children of Israel.
9 For [u]the LORD's portion *is* His people;
Jacob *is* the place of His inheritance.

10 "He found him [v]in a desert land
And in the wasteland, a howling wilderness;
He encircled him, He instructed him,
He [w]kept him as the [4]apple of His eye.
11 [x]As an eagle stirs up its nest,
Hovers over its young,
Spreading out its wings, taking them up,
Carrying them on its wings,
12 *So* the LORD alone led him,
And *there was* no foreign god with him.

13 "He[y] made him ride in the heights of the earth,
That he might eat the produce of the fields;
He made him draw honey from the rock,
And oil from the flinty rock;
14 Curds from the cattle, and milk of the flock,
[z]With fat of lambs;
And rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats,
With the choicest wheat;
And you drank wine, the [a]blood of the grapes.

15 "But Jeshurun grew fat and kicked;
[b]You grew fat, you grew thick,
You are obese!
Then he [c]forsook God *who* [d]made him,
And scornfully esteemed the [e]Rock of his salvation.
16 [f]They provoked Him to jealousy with foreign *gods;*
With [5]abominations they provoked Him to anger.
17 [g]They sacrificed to demons, not to God,

■ **32:5 Because of their blemish.** Note the sharp contrast between the steadfast, righteous God (v. 4) and the corrupt nation (v. 5).

■ **32:8 their inheritance.** The meaning here is that God by decree gave the Promised Land to Israel. It was an ancient grant to the patriarchs (v. 7).

According to . . . the children of Israel. God is sovereign over all of world history, but world history itself is ordered in the interests of God's plan of redemption for His chosen people Israel (Gen. 12:3).

■ **32:10 as the apple of His eye.** A reference to the pupil of the eye (text note). Just as the pupil of the eye is closely guarded against harm, so God protects Israel.

■ **32:11 Hovers over its young.** The image is of an eagle teaching its young to fly. The poetic figures of the Song of Moses are powerful expressions of God's dealings with His people. See also Gen. 1:2 and note.

■ **32:14 rams of . . . Bashan.** See note at 3:1.

■ **32:15 Jeshurun.** From the Hebrew term for "upright" *(yashar).* Often used to represent Israel as the upright people of a holy and righteous God (33:5, 26; Is. 44:2), here the term is used ironically.

grew fat and kicked. Israel is described with the telling figure of a well-fed ox.

■ **32:17** See theological note "Demons."

To gods they did not know,
To new *gods*, new arrivals
That your fathers did not fear.
18 [h]Of the Rock *who* begot you, you are unmindful,
And have [i]forgotten the God who fathered you.

19 "And[j] when the LORD saw *it*, He spurned *them*,
Because of the provocation of His sons and His daughters.
20 And He said: 'I will hide My face from them,
I will see what their end *will be*,
For they *are* a perverse generation,
[k]Children in whom *is* no faith.
21 [l]They have provoked Me to jealousy by *what* is not God;
They have moved Me to anger [m]by their [6]foolish idols.
But [n]I will provoke them to jealousy by *those who are* not a nation;
I will move them to anger by a foolish nation.
22 For [o]a fire is kindled in My anger,

18 [h]Is. 17:10 [i]Jer. 2:32
19 [j]Judg. 2:14
20 [k]Matt. 17:17
21 [l]Ps. 78:58 [m]Ps. 31:6 [n]Rom. 10:19 [6]*foolishness*, lit. *vanities*
22 [o]Num. 16:33–35; Ps. 18:7, 8; Lam. 4:11

Demons

"Demon," or "devil" (as some translations render the words), is from the Greek *daimon* and *daimonion*, the regular terms in the Gospels for the spiritual beings, corrupt and hostile to both God and man, whom Jesus exorcised from their victims during His earthly ministry. The demons are fallen angels, deathless creatures serving Satan (Jesus equated Beelzebub, their reputed ruler, with Satan, Matt. 12:24–29). Having joined Satan's rebellion, they were cast out of heaven to await final judgment (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6). Their minds are permanently opposed to God, goodness, truth, the kingdom of Christ, and the welfare of human beings. They have real but limited power and freedom of movement, though in Calvin's picturesque phrase they "drag their chains wherever they go," and can never hope to overcome God.

The level and intensity of demonic manifestations in people during Christ's ministry was unique, having no parallel in Old Testament times or since; it was doubtless part of Satan's desperate battle for his kingdom against Christ's attack on it (Matt. 12:29). Demons have both knowledge and strength (Mark 1:24; 9:17–27). They inflicted or exploited physical and mental maladies (Mark 5:1–15; 9:17, 18; Luke 11:14). They recognized and feared Christ, to whose authority they were subject (Mark 1:25; 3:11, 12; 9:25), though He said that it required effort in prayer to expel them (Mark 9:29).

Christ authorized and equipped the twelve and the seventy to cast out demons in His name (that is, by His power, Luke 9:1; 10:17), and the ministry of exorcism continues to be an occasional pastoral necessity. The sixteenth-century Lutheran church abolished exorcism, believing that Christ's victory over Satan had suppressed demonic invasion forever, but this was premature.

Satan's army of demons uses subtler strategies also—deception and discouragement in many forms. To oppose these is the task of spiritual warfare (Eph. 6:10–18). Though demons can cause trouble of different kinds for regenerate persons in whom the Holy Spirit dwells, they cannot deter God's final purpose of saving His elect, any more than they can escape their own eternal torment. As the devil is God's devil (as Luther put it), so the demons are God's demons, defeated enemies (Col. 2:15) whose limited power is only permitted for the advancement of God's glory as His people contend with them. □

■ **32:21 not a nation.** Just as Israel provoked God by worshiping that which was "not God," so God would provoke them by means of "those who are not a nation" (people outside the sphere of the Mosaic covenant). This prophecy is partly fulfilled in the Old Testament as Israel is defeated by God's instruments of judgment, the Assyrians and Babylonians (Is. 10:5; Jer. 21:4–10). In the New Testament, Paul finds further fulfillment of this verse in the extension of the gospel to the Gentiles (Rom. 10:19; 11:11).

■ **32:22 a fire is kindled . . . to the lowest hell.** For the figure of God's anger as a consuming fire, see Ps. 21:9; Jer. 15:14; 17:4. The poetic figure here represents God's wrath as an all-devouring fire that burns to the deepest grave, consumes the surface of the earth, and reaches to the roots of the mountains.

And shall burn to the [7]lowest [8]hell;
It shall consume the earth with her increase,
And set on fire the foundations of the mountains.

23 'I will [p]heap disasters on them;
[q]I will spend My arrows on them.
24 *They shall be* wasted with hunger,
Devoured by pestilence and bitter destruction;
I will also send against them the [r]teeth of beasts,
With the poison of serpents of the dust.
25 The sword shall destroy outside;
There shall be terror within
For the young man and virgin,
The nursing child with the man of gray hairs.
26 [s]I would have said, "I will dash them in pieces,
I will make the memory of them to cease from among men,"
27 Had I not feared the wrath of the enemy,
Lest their adversaries should misunderstand,
Lest they should say, [t]"Our hand *is* high;
And it is not the LORD who has done all this." '

28 "For they *are* a nation void of counsel,
Nor *is there any* understanding in them.
29 [u]Oh, that they were wise, *that* they understood this,
That they would consider their [v]latter end!
30 How could one chase a thousand,
And two put ten thousand to flight,
Unless their Rock [w]had sold them,
And the LORD had surrendered them?
31 For their rock *is* not like our Rock,
[x]Even our enemies themselves *being* judges.
32 For [y]their vine *is* of the vine of Sodom
And of the fields of Gomorrah;
Their grapes *are* grapes of gall,
Their clusters *are* bitter.
33 Their wine *is* [z]the poison of serpents,
And the cruel [a]venom of cobras.

34 'Is this not [b]laid up in store with Me,
Sealed up among My treasures?
35 [c]Vengeance is Mine, and recompense;
Their foot shall slip in *due* time;
[d]For the day of their calamity *is* at hand,
And the things to come hasten upon them.'

36 "For[e] the LORD will judge His people
[f]And have compassion on His servants,
When He sees that *their* power is gone,

22 [7]*lowest part of* [8]Or *Sheol*
23 [p]Ex. 32:12; Deut. 29:21, 24 [q]Ps. 7:12, 13
24 [r]Lev. 26:22
26 [s]Ezek. 20:23
27 [t]Is. 10:12–15
29 [u]Ps. 81:13; [Luke 19:42] [v]Deut. 31:29
30 [w]Judg. 2:14; Ps. 44:12
31 [x][1 Sam. 4:7, 8; Jer. 40:2, 3]
32 [y]Is. 1:8–10
33 [z]Ps. 58:4 [a]Rom. 3:13
34 [b][Jer. 2:22]
35 [c]Ps. 94:1; Rom. 12:19; Heb. 10:30 [d]2 Pet. 2:3
36 [e]Ps. 135:14; Heb. 10:30 [f]Ps. 106:45; Jer. 31:20

■ **32:27 Lest their adversaries should misunderstand.** Though Israel deserves utter destruction because of her disobedience (v. 26), the Lord preserves a remnant of the people, lest the Gentiles take credit for their victory over Israel and fail to see God's hand in history. Assyria and Babylon were later judged for their arrogant misunderstanding (Is. 10:12–19; 47:6–8).

■ **32:30 one chase a thousand.** Numbers are of no consequence when the Lord intervenes. Israel with God's help would put to flight vast numbers of adversaries (Lev. 26:8), while a numerous but disobedient Israel would be defeated by a few, even fleeing when no one pursued (Lev. 26:17).

■ **32:32 the vine of Sodom.** False gods bring evil deeds and poisonous fruit. Sodom was a symbol of awful destruction (29:23 note).

■ **32:35 Vengeance is Mine, and recompense.** The New Testament quotes this verse twice, using a slightly different wording (Rom. 12:19; Heb. 10:30).

■ **32:36 judge . . . have compassion.** The relationship of these terms suggests that "judge" here means "vindicate" (cf. v. 43). Still, Israel must see that they have no help apart from the one true God.

And [g]*there is* no one *remaining,* bond or free.
37 He will say: [h]'Where *are* their gods,
The rock in which they sought refuge?
38 Who ate the fat of their sacrifices,
And drank the wine of their drink offering?
Let them rise and help you,
And be your refuge.

39 'Now see that [i]I, *even* I, *am* He,
And [j]*there is* no God besides Me;
[k]I kill and I make alive;
I wound and I heal;
Nor *is there any* who can deliver from My hand.
40 For I raise My hand to heaven,
And say, "*As* I live forever,
41 [l]If I [g]whet My glittering sword,
And My hand takes hold on judgment,
I will render vengeance to My enemies,
And repay those who hate Me.
42 I will make My arrows drunk with blood,
And My sword shall devour flesh,
With the blood of the slain and the captives,
From the heads of the leaders of the enemy." '

43 "Rejoice,[m] O Gentiles, *with* His [1]people;
For He will [n]avenge the blood of His servants,
And render vengeance to His adversaries;
He [o]will provide atonement for His land *and* His people."

44 So Moses came with [2]Joshua the son of Nun and spoke all the words of this song in the hearing of the people. 45 Moses finished speaking all these words to all Israel, 46 and he said to them: [p]"Set your hearts on all the words which I testify among you today, which you shall command your [q]children to be careful to observe—all the words of this law. 47 For it *is* not a [3]futile thing for you, because it *is* your [r]life, and by this word you shall prolong *your* days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to possess."

Moses to Die on Mount Nebo

48 Then the LORD spoke to Moses that very same day, saying: 49 [s]"Go up this mountain of the Abarim, Mount Nebo, which *is* in the land of Moab, across from Jericho; view the land of Canaan, which I give to the children of Israel as a possession; 50 and die on the mountain which you ascend, and be [4]gathered to your people, just as [t]Aaron your brother died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his people; 51 because [u]you trespassed against Me among the children of Israel at the waters of [5]Meribah Kadesh, in the Wilderness of Zin, because you [v]did not hallow Me in the midst of the children of Israel. 52 [w]Yet you shall see the land before *you,* though you shall not go there, into the land which I am giving to the children of Israel."

Moses' Final Blessing on Israel

33 Now this *is* [a]the blessing with which Moses [b]the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death. 2 And he said:

36 [g]2 Kin. 14:26

37 [h]Judg. 10:14; Jer. 2:28

39 [i]Is. 41:4; 43:10 [j]Deut. 32:12; Is. 45:5 [k]1 Sam. 2:6; Ps. 68:20

41 [l]Is. 1:24; 66:16; Jer. 50:28–32 [g]*sharpen*

43 [m]Rom. 15:10 [n]2 Kin. 9:7; Rev. 6:10; 19:2 [o]Ps. 65:3; 79:9; 85:1 [1]DSS fragment adds *And let all the gods (angels) worship Him;* cf. LXX and Heb. 1:6

44 [2]Heb. *Hoshea,* Num. 13:8, 16

46 [p]Ezek. 40:4; 44:5 [q]Deut. 11:19

47 [r]Deut. 8:3; 30:15–20 [3]*vain*

49 [s]Num. 27:12–14; Deut. 3:27

50 [t]Num. 20:25, 28; 33:38 [4]Join your ancestors

51 [u]Num. 20:11–13 [v]Lev. 10:3 [5]Lit. *Contention at Kadesh*

52 [w]Num. 27:12; Deut. 34:1–5

CHAPTER 33

1 [a]Gen. 49:28 [b]Ps. 90

■ **32:39 I, even I, am He.** The Hebrew emphasizes by repetition. This whole stanza is a towering expression of the uniqueness of God in His being, power, providence, and justice. Because God is both infinitely just and all-powerful, we can be sure that evil will at last be destroyed (Rev. 19:1, 2).

■ **32:43 Rejoice . . . people.** The Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) and one of the Dead Sea Scrolls contain a longer version of this phrase (text note). This longer version is quoted in Heb. 1:6.

He will avenge the blood of His servants. This triumphal Song of Moses is echoed at the consummation of human history (Rev. 19:2).

■ **32:47 it is your life.** Moses emphasizes again that obedience to God's commands, from the heart, is a matter of life—eternal life—and death (30:19, 20).

■ **32:49 Mount Nebo.** Usually identified as the modern Jebel Neba, a mountain twelve miles east of the Jordan River's point of entry into the Dead Sea. Rising over four thousand feet above the Dead Sea, Mount Nebo provided Moses a vantage point from which to view the Promised Land.

■ **33:1–29** In Gen. 49, Leah's children are listed first, followed by those of the handmaidens and Rachel. Here the order is different. Reuben, the

[c]"The LORD came from Sinai,
And dawned on them from [d]Seir;
He shone forth from [e]Mount Paran,
And He came with [f]ten thousands of saints;
From His right hand
Came a fiery law for them.
3 Yes, [g]He loves the people;
[h]All His saints *are* in Your hand;
They [i]sit down at Your feet;
Everyone [j]receives Your words.
4 [k]Moses [l]commanded a law for us,
[l]A heritage of the congregation of Jacob.
5 And He was [m]King in [n]Jeshurun,
When the leaders of the people were gathered,
All the tribes of Israel together.

6 "Let [o]Reuben live, and not die,
Nor let his men be few."

7 And this he said of [p]Judah:

"Hear, LORD, the voice of Judah,
And bring him to his people;
[q]Let his hands be sufficient for him,
And may You be [r]a help against his enemies."

8 And of [s]Levi he said:

[t]"*Let* Your [2]Thummim and Your Urim *be* with Your holy one,
[u]Whom You tested at Massah,
And with whom You contended at the waters of Meribah,
9 [v]Who says of his father and mother,
'I have not [w]seen them';
[x]Nor did he acknowledge his brothers,
Or know his own children;
For [y]they have observed Your word
And kept Your covenant.
10 [z]They shall teach Jacob Your judgments,
And Israel Your law.
They shall put incense before You,
[a]And a whole burnt sacrifice on Your altar.
11 Bless his substance, LORD,
And [b]accept the work of his hands;

2 [c]Ex. 19:18, 20; Ps. 68:8, 17; Hab. 3:3 [d]Deut. 2:1, 4 [e]Num. 10:12 [f]Dan. 7:10; Acts 7:53; Rev. 5:11

3 [g]Ps. 47:4; Hos. 11:1 [h]1 Sam. 2:9 [i][Luke 10:39] [j]Prov. 2:1

4 [k]Deut. 4:2; John 1:17; 7:19 [l]Ps. 119:111 [l]*charged us with*

5 [m]Ex. 15:18 [n]Deut. 32:15

6 [o]Gen. 49:3, 4

7 [p]Gen. 49:8–12 [q]Gen. 49:8 [r]Ps. 146:5

8 [s]Gen. 49:5 [t]Ex. 28:30; Lev. 8:8 [u]Num. 20:2–13; Deut. 6:2, 3, 16; Ps. 81:7 [2]Lit. *Perfections and Your Lights*

9 [v][Num. 25:5–8; Matt. 10:37; 19:29] [w][Gen. 29:32] [x]Ex. 32:26–28 [y]Mal. 2:5, 6

10 [z]Lev. 10:11; Deut. 31:9–13; Mal. 2:7 [a]Lev. 1:9; Ps. 51:19

11 [b]2 Sam. 24:23; Ezek. 20:40

firstborn, is mentioned first (v. 6), followed by the royal tribe of Judah (v. 7; cf. Gen. 49:10) and the priestly tribe of Levi (vv. 8–11). The tribes descending from Rachel's sons are next (vv. 12–17), followed by two remaining sons of Leah, Zebulun and Issachar (vv. 18, 19). Finally, the handmaidens' children are listed (vv. 20–24). The tribe of Simeon is omitted, perhaps to retain the number twelve, although Jacob's blessing had predicted that Simeon would be scattered throughout Israel (Gen. 49:7).

■ **33:1 the man of God.** This expression is used customarily for prophets (1 Sam. 9:6; 1 Kin. 13:1; 17:18; 2 Kin. 4:7), but is applied to Moses only here and in the title of Ps. 90.

■ **33:2 The LORD came from Sinai.** The defining event of Moses' ministry, the revelation at Sinai, is recalled in terms describing the theophany on the mountain (Ex. 19:18; cf. Hab. 3:3).

saints. Lit. "holy ones." This is likely a reference to the angels of the heavenly host surrounding God's throne (cf. 1 Kin. 22:19; Dan. 7:9, 10). The New Testament also mentions the role of angels in giving the Mosaic law (Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19; Heb. 2:2 and note).

■ **33:5 He was King in Jeshurun.** A reference to the Lord as king over His people (cf. 1 Sam. 12:12; Ps. 10:16). Moses was never called a king. On "Jeshurun," see note on 32:15.

■ **33:6 Nor let.** The Hebrew can also be translated "but let." This alternate reading could reflect the curse on Reuben in Gen. 49:3, 4.

■ **33:7 Judah.** This blessing hints at the warrior role of the Davidic kings, descendants of Judah, in leading Israel into battle. But the blessing on Judah is extremely brief in view of the promise of rulership to Judah in Gen. 49:8–12, and in view of Judah's large part in later history. Because a later writer might have wanted to give Judah more prominence, the brevity of this blessing points to a date for Deuteronomy during Moses' lifetime.

■ **33:8 Levi.** The blessing on Levi reflects their fidelity at the time of the golden calf, when Levi rallied to Moses' side and acted in judgment against their sinful brethren (Ex. 32:27–29).

Thummim . . . Urim. See note on Ex. 28:30.

Strike the loins of those who rise against him,
And of those who hate him, that they rise not again."

12 Of Benjamin he said:

"The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by Him,
Who shelters him all the day long;
And he shall dwell between His shoulders."

13 And of Joseph he said:

[c]"Blessed of the LORD *is* his land,
With the precious things of heaven, with the [d]dew,
And the deep lying beneath,
14 With the precious fruits of the sun,
With the precious produce of the months,
15 With the best things of [e]the ancient mountains,
With the precious things [f]of the everlasting hills,
16 With the precious things of the earth and its fullness,
And the favor of [g]Him who dwelt in the bush.
Let *the blessing* come [h]'on the head of Joseph,
And on the crown of the head of him *who was* separate from his brothers.'
17 His glory *is like* a [i]firstborn bull,
And his horns *like* the [j]horns of the wild ox;
Together with them
[k]He shall push the peoples
To the ends of the earth;
[l]They *are* the ten thousands of Ephraim,
And they *are* the thousands of Manasseh."

18 And of Zebulun he said:

[m]"Rejoice, Zebulun, in your going out,
And Issachar in your tents!
19 They shall [n]call the peoples *to* the mountain;
There [o]they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness;
For they shall partake *of* the abundance of the seas
And *of* treasures hidden in the sand."

20 And of Gad he said:

"Blessed *is* he who [p]enlarges Gad;
He dwells as a lion,
And tears the arm and the crown of his head.
21 [q]He provided the first *part* for himself,
Because a lawgiver's portion was reserved there.
[r]He came *with* the heads of the people;
He administered the justice of the LORD,
And His judgments with Israel."

22 And of Dan he said:

13 [c]Gen. 49:22–26 [d]Gen. 27:28
15 [e]Gen. 49:26 [f]Hab. 3:6
16 [g]Ex. 3:2–4; Acts 7:30–35 [h]Gen. 49:26
17 [i]1 Chr. 5:1 [j]Num. 23:22 [k]1 Kin. 22:11; Ps. 44:5 [l]Gen. 48:19
18 [m]Gen. 49:13–15
19 [n]Ex. 15:17; Ps. 2:6; Is. 2:3 [o]Ps. 4:5; 51:19
20 [p]1 Chr. 12:8
21 [q]Num. 32:16, 17 [r]Josh. 4:12

■ **33:16 who dwelt in the bush.** Moses alludes to Ex. 3:4.

separate from his brothers. The Hebrew word translated "separate from" is sometimes used for those set apart by the Nazirite vow (cf. Num. 6:1–21 note). This term can also mean "prince." It is applied to Joseph in Gen. 49:26 with similar blessings. Because of the blessings mentioned, the meaning "prince" may be preferred.

■ **33:17 ten thousands . . . thousands.** During this period, Ephraim was smaller than Manasseh (Num. 26:34, 37), but Ephraim was to become more numerous and important (cf. Gen. 48:17–20). Because of the tribe's importance, the name "Ephraim" later was applied to the ten tribes making up the northern kingdom of Israel (2 Chr. 25:7; Hos. 5:3, 11–14).

■ **33:22 Bashan.** See note on 3:1. This blessing may refer to the north-

"Dan *is* a lion's whelp;
[s]He shall leap from Bashan."

23 And of Naphtali he said:

"O Naphtali, [t]satisfied with favor,
And full of the blessing of the LORD,
[u]Possess the west and the south."

24 And of Asher he said:

[v]"Asher *is* most blessed of sons;
Let him be favored by his brothers,
And let him [w]dip his foot in oil.
25 Your sandals *shall be* [x]iron and bronze;
As your days, *so shall* your strength *be.*

26 "*There is* [y]no one like the God of [z]Jeshurun,
[a]*Who* rides the heavens to help you,
And in His excellency on the clouds.
27 The eternal God *is your* [b]refuge,
And underneath *are* the everlasting arms;
[c]He will thrust out the enemy from before you,
And will say, 'Destroy!'
28 Then [d]Israel shall dwell in safety,
[e]The fountain of Jacob [f]alone,
In a land of grain and new wine;
His [g]heavens shall also drop dew.
29 [h]Happy *are* you, O Israel!
[i]Who *is* like you, a people saved by the LORD,
[j]The shield of your help
And the sword of your majesty!
Your enemies [k]shall submit to you,
And [l]you shall tread down their [3]high places."

Moses Dies on Mount Nebo

34 Then Moses went up from the plains of Moab [a]to Mount Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, which is across from Jericho. And the LORD showed him all the land of Gilead as far as Dan, 2 all Naphtali and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the [l]Western Sea, 3 the South, and the plain of the Valley of Jericho, [b]the city of palm trees, as far as Zoar. 4 Then the LORD said to him, [c]"This *is* the land of which I swore to give Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'I will give it to your descendants.' [d]I have caused you to see *it* with your eyes, but you shall not cross over there."

5 [e]So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD. 6 And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth Peor; but [f]no one knows his grave to this day. 7 [g]Moses *was* one hundred and twenty years old when he died. [h]His [2]eyes were not dim nor his natural vigor [3]diminished. 8 And the children of Israel wept for Mo-

22 [s]Gen. 49:16, 17; Josh. 19:47
23 [t]Gen. 49:21 [u]Josh. 19:32
24 [v]Gen. 49:20 [w]Job 29:6
25 [x]Deut. 8:9
26 [y]Ex. 15:11; Deut. 4:35; Ps. 86:8; Jer. 10:6 [z]Deut. 32:15 [a]Deut. 10:14; Ps. 68:3, 33, 34; 104:3
27 [b][Ps. 90:1; 91:2, 9] [c]Deut. 9:3–5
28 [d]Deut. 33:12; Jer. 23:6; 33:16 [e]Deut. 8:7, 8 [f]Num. 23:9 [g]Gen. 27:28
29 [h]Ps. 144:15 [i]Deut. 4:32–34; 2 Sam. 7:23 [j]Gen. 15:1; Ps. 115:9 [k]Ps. 18:44; 66:3 [l]Num. 33:52 [3]Places for pagan worship

CHAPTER 34

1 [a]Num. 27:12; Deut. 32:49
2 [l]Mediterranean
3 [b]2 Chr. 28:15
4 [c]Gen. 12:7 [d]Deut. 3:27
5 [e]Num. 20:12; Deut. 32:50; Josh. 1:1, 2
6 [f]Jude 9
7 [g]Deut. 31:2 [h]Gen. 27:1; 48:10 [2]*eyesight was not weakened* [3]*reduced*

ern settlement of Dan, located near Bashan (Judg. 18:27–29). More likely, a comparison of Dan to the strength and ferocity of the lions inhabiting the forests of Bashan may be in view.

■ **33:24 dip his foot in oil.** Olive oil, valuable for food and also as fuel for lamps, is here symbolic of the tribe's material prosperity (Gen. 49:20; cf. Job 29:6).

■ **33:26–29** This final stanza has blessed the hearts of God's people through the ages. He is the majestic God (v. 26), the eternal God (v. 27), the protecting and providing God (v. 28). The great blessing of Israel was that He was their God. Such a splendid hymn of praise is perhaps only matched by passages in the New Testament such as "the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb" in Rev. 15:3, 4.

■ **33:26 the God of Jeshurun.** See 32:15 and note.

■ **34:1–12** This chapter is a supplement, probably added by the author of the Book of Joshua in order to connect his work with the books of Moses (Introduction: Author).

■ **34:1 Gilead as far as Dan.** The descriptions here and in v. 2 name the areas in terms of the tribal areas as designated in the Book of Joshua (Josh. 13—19).

■ **34:7 not dim . . . diminished.** See note on 31:2.

■ **34:8 thirty days.** The same period of mourning as for Aaron (Num. 20:29; cf. Gen. 50:3, 10; 2 Sam. 1:12). Ritual displays of mourning in the Old Testament included weeping, fasting, tearing of clothing, wearing

ses in the plains of Moab [i]thirty days. So the days of weeping *and* mourning for Moses ended.

[9] Now Joshua the son of Nun was full of the [j]spirit of wisdom, for [k]Moses had laid his hands on him; so the children of Israel heeded him, and did as the LORD had commanded Moses.

[10] But since then there [l]has not arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses, [m]whom the LORD knew face to face, [11] in all [n]the signs and wonders which the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt, before Pharaoh, before all his servants, and in all his land, [12] and by all that mighty power and all the great terror which Moses performed in the sight of all Israel.

8 [i]Gen. 50:3, 10

9 [j]Is. 11:2 [k]Num. 27:18, 23

10 [l]Deut. 18:15, 18 [m]Ex. 33:11; Num. 12:8; Deut. 5:4

11 [n]Deut. 7:19

sackcloth, and throwing dust on the head (Gen. 37:34, 35; Ps. 35:13; Lam. 2:10). Certain mourning practices were forbidden to Israel (14:1 note).

■ **34:9 spirit of wisdom . . . laid his hands on him.** Moses had previously put his hand on Joshua to symbolize the transfer of divinely ordained leadership (Num. 27:18). God empowers those whom He chooses and ordains for service.

■ **34:10–12** See note on 18:15–19; "Prophets" at 18:18.

■ **34:10 since then.** Because no length of time is specified, these words need not imply that many generations had passed since Moses' death. Joshua took Moses' place, but he realized that Moses' miracles and access to God had been unique (18:15–19 note; Num. 12:6–8).

■ **34:11 signs and wonders.** Jesus arose as a prophet like Moses, yet superior to him. He did miracles, signs, and wonders before the kings and rulers of the people, and in the sight of all Israel (Matt. 4:23–25; Acts 2:22; 3:22–26).

Introduction to the

HISTORICAL BOOKS

The collection of books in the Protestant Old Testament known as the "historical books" extends from Joshua through Esther. It relates the history of ancient Israel from the conquest of Canaan under Joshua, through the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah, the fall of the two kingdoms to Assyria and Babylonia, and the restoration of Judah from exile in the sixth century B.C. Each of these twelve books narrates important events in God's dealings with His covenant people.

The books of the Old Testament were first recorded on scrolls and continued to be transmitted in this form through several centuries of use. It was not until the development of the "codex" (the book format first popularized by Christians in the production of the New Testament books) that the order in which the individual books of the Old Testament were to be arranged became an issue. The chronological arrangement of the twelve historical books familiar in Protestant Bibles derives from the order found in the great Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) codices produced by Christians in the first four centuries A.D.

The historical books are arranged quite differently in Hebrew Bibles. The books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings are grouped together as the "former prophets" and constitute the first half of the second division of the Jewish canon, the "Prophets." The second half of the division, the "latter prophets," consists of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve "Minor Prophets." The books of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah are found in the third division of the Jewish canon, known as the "Writings." Finally, Ruth and Esther are contained in a special subset of five books within the "Writings" known as the "Festival Scrolls," since Jewish tradition required them to be read on certain religious feast days (Ruth at Pentecost, Esther at Purim; the other "scrolls" are Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, and Lamentations).

The arrangement of the historical books in the Jewish canon helps us to recognize two important blocks of material within the historical books. Each group of books was completed at a specific time in Israel's history and has particular theological interests and emphases. Scholars now recognize that the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings (the "former prophets") are a carefully constructed history of Israel completed during the Babylonian exile (the component books were actually begun much earlier; see their respective introductions). Similarly, the books of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah form a second major block of material completed during Judah's restoration from exile. Although there is disagreement among scholars regarding whether they are the work of a single author, these books do share certain theological interests related to their later historical setting.

The books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings are referred to by scholars as the "Deuteronomistic History" since the Book of Deuteronomy serves as their historical and theological preamble. Building on Moses' narration of God's saving acts for His people from Abraham through the arrival of the Israelites at the border of the Promised Land, the Deuteronomistic History continues the story from the conquest of that land under Joshua to Jehoiachin, the last surviving Davidic king (2 Kin. 25:27–30). A brief concluding note that Jehoiachin was released from prison to live at the Babylonian court sets the date of the completion of the Deuteronomistic History in the uncertain years of the Babylonian exile. The collection is a serious attempt to write an accurate history of Israel and Judah using the conventions of ancient Near Eastern historiography.

The concerns of these books are not, however, of merely antiquarian interest. This history reiterates from Deuteronomy both such specific issues for the life of the covenant community as the "law of the king" (Deut. 17:14–20; cf. 1 Sam. 8:10–18) and such fundamental theological concepts as blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience (Deut. 28). Indeed, the dominant theological theme of the Deuteronomistic History may be summed up in the statement, "Sin brings punishment; repentance brings restoration" (see especially the repeated cycles of sin, oppression, repentance, and deliverance in the Book of Judges). The repeated sins of idolatry and injustice throughout the histories of Israel and Judah culminated in the ultimate punishment of exile from the Promised Land (Deut. 28:47–68; 2 Kin. 17:7–23; 23:26, 27). The final author of the Deuteronomistic History sees in Jehoiachin's release from prison a glimmer of hope that repentance will again bring restoration; but it remains for him only a hope.

The books of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah return to telling the story of God's people once that hope has become a reality. Ezra-Nehemiah (originally a single book) extends the history of Judah from the proclamation of Cyrus allowing the first of the Judean exiles to return to Palestine (c. 538 B.C.) through the final resettlement of Jerusalem (c. 400 B.C.). It recounts the rebuilding of the temple under Zerubbabel, the repair of Jerusalem's walls under Nehemiah, and the reconstitution of religious life under Ezra. Chronicles retells the story of the chosen people from Adam (in its genealogies) to Cyrus's proclamation, focusing on the history of Judah under the rule of David and his descendants. Approximately half of Chronicles is taken word for word from the books of Samuel and Kings.

These books are deeply concerned with how God's people should respond to His gracious act of restoring Judah. Since the Babylonian exile had been a punishment for failure to maintain full covenant loyalty to the

Lord, the writers of these books were chiefly concerned with the lessons to be drawn from Israel's older and recent history for maintaining the religious purity of the people. Ezra-Nehemiah looks upon God's actions in making a new beginning for His people and emphasizes the need of the newly constituted community to maintain separation from other peoples so as not to fall back into the sin of idolatry. The theological emphases in Chronicles in this regard are twofold. First, Chronicles stresses the importance of the temple, its worship, and its officials in directing the religious life of God's people. Second, it focuses attention on the central role of the Davidic house in the proper administration of the temple and in the religious life of the people.

As the years passed, it became clear that the hopes of the restored community for the resumption of rule by a descendant of David as king over Judah would not be realized. The people continued to read in Chronicles about the glorious history of David's rule and how David and his descendants (most notably Solomon) preserved true worship in Jerusalem. As they reflected on this history, their hopes were directed toward the future Son of David, the Messiah, who would be the perfect leader of the community's religious life. The history of God's saving acts for His people was not to end with Esther's role of rescuing them from destruction by the Persians, or even Ezra and Nehemiah's work of reestablishing them in the Promised Land. □

The Book of

JOSHUA

Author The author of the Book of Joshua is unknown, and our knowledge of the time it was written depends on the interpretation of certain clues within the book. Theories range from the view that the book was largely composed by Joshua himself (the tradition of the Talmud) to the hypothesis that it was written by someone long after the Jews returned from the exile in Babylon. From the standpoint of the final form of the book, it is probable that a man or group committed to the theological framework of the Book of Deuteronomy gave Joshua its canonical form. See "Date and Occasion" below and "Introduction to the Historical Books."

Date and Occasion The precise time the Book of Joshua was composed is not clear. Comments within the book itself, such as notices that something is true "to this day," suggest that many of its sources came from a time between the death of Joshua (24:29–31) and the time of Samuel (c. 1050 B.C.). Because Sidon is still reckoned as Phoenicia's leading city (11:8; 19:28), some would date the book no later than 1200 B.C.; after that time Tyre gained the ascendancy. Jerusalem is as yet unconquered (15:63), a feat accomplished by David (2 Sam. 5:6–10), and Gezer is not as yet under Solomon's rule (16:10; 1 Kin. 9:16).

Many scholars today date the final form of the book from its relationship to the Pentateuch and the rest of the Former Prophets (Characteristics and Themes below). The introduction of Joshua overlaps with the conclusion of Deuteronomy. Josh. 1:1 matches Deut. 34:1–12, especially v. 5, where Moses is called "the servant of the LORD" for the first time. The conclusion of Joshua (24:29–31) is repeated as part of the introduction to Judges (Judg. 2:6–9).

On balance it appears that the book was written after Joshua's death but before Saul (c. 1050 B.C.) and his successors. The author wrote doubtless to recount the astounding fulfillment of the Lord's promises under Joshua. At the same time, recognizing the need to consolidate the conquest of the land, the author wrote in hope of the rise of another faithful servant who, like Joshua, could lead the Israelites to victory over every enemy still in the land.

Interpretive Difficulties Any attempt to relate the accounts of the Book of Joshua to data gained from archaeological investigations must reckon with the nature of both the biblical record and the archaeological evidence. All historical writing is selective in what it records and interpretive in the manner in which it presents its material. Biblical history has a particular interest in the purposes of God. Archaeological evidence is often ambiguous and illustrative rather than specific in the information it yields.

The task of correlating archaeological data and the biblical record is well illustrated by the debate over the Book of Joshua. Among those who accept the biblical representation of a violent conquest of the land, there are basically two schools of thought. One believes there is persuasive archaeological evidence (such as the destruction of Canaanite cities and occupation patterns) for a violent and successful Israelite invasion of Canaan around 1250 B.C. The other argues that archaeological evidence (such as that at Jericho) together with texts like 1 Kin. 6:1, Judg. 11:26, and Ex. 12:40, indicates that the conquest should be dated earlier, around 1400 B.C. The difficulties arise from uncertainties about the identification of modern sites with biblical locations, disputes over the dating of materials, biblical chronology, and how certain data should be interpreted.

Characteristics and Themes The main theological idea in the Book of Joshua is the promise of God to give the land of Canaan to the descendants of Abraham, the people of Israel (Gen. 12:7). This one aspect of the promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Gen. 12:1–3) has dominated the contents of Genesis through Deuteronomy. Joshua testifies to God's faithfulness to this promise by recounting the successful entry of the Israelites into the land (2:1—5:12), the dispossession of its inhabitants (5:13—12:24; cf. Gen. 15:13–16 and notes), and the allocation of the territory to the twelve tribes (chs. 13—21). The closing sentence of the main body of the book (21:45) summarizes the theme of the book: "Not a word failed of any good thing which the Lord had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass" (21:45; see 23:14). This bold assertion of God's complete faithfulness is accompanied by the recognition that much of what was promised was still unrealized (e.g., 13:1; 23:5; Gen. 13:5 and note), and that the enjoyment of the fulfilled promise was always conditional upon the people's obedience (e.g., 23:12, 13, 15, 16). The full extent of the Promised Land would not be occupied until the reigns of David and Solomon.

Joshua should be understood in relation to the Pentateuch, or Genesis through Deuteronomy in the Hebrew Bible, also called "the Law" (1:7, 8 and notes). The content of these books is summarized in 24:2–10. These verses recount the history of the descendants of Abra-

ham, Isaac, and Jacob from the time the promise was first given to Abraham (Gen. 12:1–3) to the death of Moses (Deut. 34), who had led the Israelites from Egypt to the land promised to them by God. But the Pentateuch ends with the people still outside the Promised Land. Furthermore, the generation of Israelites who came out of Egypt had fallen under God's judgment because of their rebellion in the desert (Num. 13; 14; Deut. 1:26–36), and even the death of Moses is understood in these terms (Deut. 1:37; 32:48–52). In this context Joshua speaks of the faithfulness of the Lord to His promises made to the patriarchs, despite the rebellion of the earlier generation of Israelites and the judgment that had fallen on them.

Joshua should also be understood in relation to the history of Israel in the land, recorded in Joshua and the following books, through 2 Kings. The story is a tragic one as far as Israel is concerned. The nation failed to follow the Lord wholeheartedly, and was all but destroyed by God's judgment in the form of the successive assaults by the Assyrians in the eighth century B.C. (2 Kin. 17) and the Babylonians in the sixth century (2 Kin. 25). The Book of Joshua confirms from the outset that the demise of Israel cannot be blamed on the failure of the power or the faithfulness of God.

The New Testament provides a third perspective from which the Book of Joshua should be understood. The promise of God, to which the Book of Joshua points, is the gospel preached "to Abraham beforehand" (Gal. 3:8; Gen. 12:1–3). This promise was kept by God through the time of Joshua and was ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ (Acts 13:32, 33; Heb. 4:8–11). The faithfulness of God proclaimed in the Book of Joshua is His faithfulness to the gospel of Christ. Israel's entrance into and occupation of the land prefigures the Christian's life in Christ (Gen. 13:15 and note). □

Outline of Joshua

I. Prologue: The Promise and Its Consequences (ch. 1)
II. Entering the Land (2:1—5:12)
  A. The Promise and a Canaanite Harlot (ch. 2)
  B. The Promise and the Crossing of the Jordan (chs. 3; 4)
  C. The Promise Remembered in the Land (5:1–12)
III. Conquering the Land (5:13—12:24)
  A. The Commander of the Lord's Army (5:13–15)
  B. Perishing and Surviving Under the Promise: Jericho and Rahab (ch. 6)
  C. Presuming on the Promise: Achan (ch. 7)
  D. Promised Victory: Ai (8:1–29)
  E. The People of the Promise (8:30–35)
  F. Canaanite Fear and Israelite Failure: Gibeon's Treaty and Curse (ch. 9)
  G. The Conquest of the South (ch. 10)
  H. The Conquest of the North (ch. 11)
  I. List of Defeated Kings and Conquered Territory (ch. 12)
IV. Receiving the Promised Land (13:1—21:45)
  A. The Command to Allocate the Land (13:1–7)
  B. East of the Jordan: The Land Given to Reuben, Gad, and Half-tribe of Manasseh (13:8–33)
  C. West of the Jordan (14:1—19:51)
    1. Introduction (14:1–5)
    2. Caleb: Example of Faithful Obedience (14:6–15)
    3. Judah (ch. 15)
    4. Ephraim and Manasseh (16:1—17:18)
    5. The Other Tribes and Joshua (18:1—19:51)
  D. Justice in the Promised Land: Cities of Refuge (20:1–9)
  E. Cities for the Levites (21:1–42)
    1. The Levites' Request (21:1–3)
    2. The Allocation of Cities (21:4–8)
    3. Lists of Cities (21:9–40)
      a. Cities for the Kohathites (21:9–26)
      b. Cities for the Gershonites (21:27–33)
      c. Cities for the Merarites (21:34–40)

4. Total of Cities for the Levities (21:41, 42)
F. Concluding summary (21:43–45)
V. Epilogue: (22:1—24:33)
A. Unity of Israel: Its Basis and Its Vulnerability (ch. 22)
B. The Demands of God's Faithfulness (ch. 23)
C. Decision: Israel's Choice at Shechem (24:1–28)
D. The End of an Era: The Deaths of Joshua and Eleazar (24:29–33)

CHAPTER 1

1 [a]Ex. 24:13
2 [b]Deut. 34:5
3 [c]Deut. 11:24
4 [d]Gen. 15:18
5 [e]Deut. 7:24 [f]Ex. 3:12 [g]Deut. 31:8, 23 [h]Deut. 31:6, 7
6 [i]Deut. 31:7, 23
[1]*give as a possession*

God's Commission to Joshua

AFTER the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, it came to pass that the LORD spoke to Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' [a]assistant, saying: 2 [b]"Moses My servant is dead. Now therefore, arise, go over this Jordan, you and all this people, to the land which I am giving to them—the children of Israel. 3 [c]Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. 4 [d]From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory. 5 [e]No man shall *be able to* stand before you all the days of your life; [f]as I was with Moses, *so* [g]I will be with you. [h]I will not leave you nor forsake you. 6 [i]Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall [1]divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. 7 Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do ac-

■ **1:1–18** The opening words indicate both the historical starting point of the book and the theological crisis with which it deals. Moses' death concludes the judgment of God on the generation that came out of Egypt (5:4–6; Deut. 1:35; 32:51). What is to be said when Moses had died and the people of Israel had fallen under God's judgment? Ch. 1 introduces the answer to this question, namely, that even "after the death of Moses" the Lord was faithful to His promises. See Introduction: Characteristics and Themes. This reality and its consequences are spelled out by God to Joshua (vv. 1–9), and then by Joshua to the people in general (vv. 10, 11) and the two-and-a-half tribes in particular (vv. 12–15). Finally, the people's response is recorded (vv. 16–18).

■ **1:1 the servant of the LORD.** This title of honor suggests the special role of Moses in God's purposes (vv. 1, 2, 7, 13, 15; cf. Is. 42:1). It was also given to Abraham (Gen. 26:24) and will be applied to Joshua on his death (24:29).

Joshua. Joshua's name was changed from "Hoshea" ("salvation") to "Joshua" ("the LORD is salvation") by Moses (Num. 13:16). Joshua appears as Moses' assistant as early as Ex. 17. He was one of the men sent from Kadesh Barnea to explore the land (Num. 13:8), and he joined Caleb in calling on the Israelites to trust the Lord and not to rebel against Him (Num. 14:6–9). Like Caleb (Deut. 1:36), he escaped the judgment that fell on that generation because of its refusal to obey God at Kadesh Barnea. Joshua is presented as the successor to Moses, as was anticipated before Moses' death (Num. 27:12–23; Deut. 3:28; 31:1–8). Joshua's role, however, continues to be subordinate to that of Moses. This is expressed in his submission to the "Book of the Law" (1:8 note) and his obedience to the commands of Moses, something repeatedly emphasized throughout the book (e.g., 1:7; 8:31; 11:12, 15; 14:2, 5; 20:2). In the transition from Moses to Joshua there is continuity because the purpose of God for Israel persists, but there is discontinuity too, because the era of Moses was unique and is the standard of comparison for future generations. There is a similar continuity and discontinuity in the New Testament transition from the Gospels to the Book of Acts.

■ **1:2 go over this Jordan.** The people are east of the river (Deut. 1:1), which has a deep valley and forms a formidable boundary between them and the land God has promised to the west. See also 3:15.

to the land. The land is God's gift to the Israelites, in faithfulness to His promise to Abraham (see vv. 3, 6). This is the dominant theme of the book: note the elaboration of this idea in 24:13, echoing Deut. 6:10, 11. The land is an expression of what the New Testament calls "grace" (Eph. 2:8). See note on 21:43.

■ **1:3 your foot.** "Your" and "you" are plural, indicating the promise is addressed to all Israel.

■ **1:4** The extent of the land promised here exceeds what was actually received in the days of Joshua and corresponds to the dimensions of David's and Solomon's kingdom (1 Kin. 4:21). Despite the emphasis on fulfillment in Joshua (21:45 note), the book sees the promise as still pointing to the future (13:1 note; 23:5, 12–13).

■ **1:5–9** These promises are addressed to Joshua individually, as the successor to Moses. The section begins and ends with God's promise to be with him. Second and second-to-last in order is the exhortation to be strong and courageous. In the middle is the commandment to keep the law together with the promise of success if he does. In ch. 23 Joshua applies these ideas to the whole people of Israel in the light of the faithfulness of God that the whole book proclaims.

■ **1:5 I will be with you.** See Gen. 26:3 and notes; Ex. 3:12. The divine presence is not a general concept here, or a mystical experience, but the presence of God to fulfill His promises. Compare the promise of Jesus in Matt. 28:20.

■ **1:6 Be strong and of good courage.** Confidence based on the promises of God is the essence of biblical faith (vv. 9, 18; 8:1; 10:8, 25; 11:6).

inheritance. The idea that the land was an inheritance is important in this book. An inheritance is something handed down from the past, as the land was given in the promise made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Second, what is inherited brings responsibilities. See 1 Pet. 1:4.

■ **1:7 to do.** The essential relationship between faith and obedience is illustrated here. Faith is confidence based on God's promise (v. 6), and such faith issues in obedience (v. 7).

the law. The Hebrew word is broader in meaning than the English word "law." It may include both promises and commands, as well as records of God's activity. See "The Word of God: Scripture as Revelation" at Ex. 32:16.

prosper. Success is understood in terms of what God has promised. Such success cannot be understood simply as a reward earned by obedience, because the promise was issued before any obedience. It would be more accurate to understand the promised success as something that can be forfeited by disobedience.

cording to all the law [j]which Moses My servant commanded you; [k]do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may [2]prosper wherever you go. [8][l]This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but [m]you[3] shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. [9][n]Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; [o]do not be afraid, nor be dismayed; for the LORD your God *is* with you wherever you go."

The Order to Cross the Jordan

[10] Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, saying, [11] "Pass through the camp and command the people, saying, 'Prepare provisions for yourselves, for [p]within three days you will cross over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the LORD your God is giving you to possess.'"

[12] And to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh Joshua spoke, saying, [13] "Remember [q]the word which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, saying, 'The LORD your God is giving you rest and is giving you this land.' [14] Your wives, your little ones, and your livestock shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side of the Jordan. But you shall [4]pass before your brethren armed, all your mighty men of valor, and help them, [15] until the LORD has given your brethren rest, as He *gave* you, and they also have taken possession of the land which the LORD your God is giving them. [r]Then you shall return to the land of your possession and enjoy it, which Moses the LORD's servant gave you on this side of the Jordan toward the sunrise."

[16] So they answered Joshua, saying, "All that you command us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. [17] Just as we heeded Moses in all things, so we will heed you. Only the LORD your God [s]be with you, as He was with Moses. [18] Whoever rebels against your command and does not heed your words, in all that you command him, shall be put to death. Only be strong and of good courage."

Rahab Hides the Spies

2 Now Joshua the son of Nun sent out two men [a]from [1]Acacia Grove to spy secretly, saying, "Go, view the land, especially Jericho."

So they went, and [b]came to the house of a harlot named [c]Rahab, and [2]lodged there. [2] And [d]it

7 [j]Num. 27:23; Deut. 31:7; Josh. 11:15 [k]Deut. 5:32 [2]*have success* or *act wisely*

8 [l]Deut. 17:18, 19; 31:24, 26; Josh. 8:34 [m]Deut. 29:9; Ps. 1:1–3 [3]*you shall be constantly in*

9 [n]Deut. 31:7 [o]Ps. 27:1

11 [p]Deut. 9:1; Josh. 3:17

13 [q]Num. 32:20–28

14 [4]*cross over ahead of*

15 [r]Josh. 22:1–4

17 [s]1 Sam. 20:13; 1 Kin. 1:37

CHAPTER 2

1 [a]Num. 25:1; Josh. 3:1 [b]Heb. 11:31; James 2:25 [c]Matt. 1:5 [1]Heb. *Shittim* [2]Lit. *lay down*

2 [d]Josh. 2:22

■ **1:8 Book of the Law.** See 8:34–35; 23:6; 24:26; Deut. 31:24–26.

meditate. Cf. Ps. 1:2. From meditation on the Book of the Law flow all the consequences of the promise already seen in vv. 6, 7: obedience and success (v. 8), faith and the presence of God (v. 9). See "Understanding the Word of God" at Ps. 119:34.

■ **1:11 three days.** The narrative of Joshua is not arranged in a strictly chronological order (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes). It is possible that the command of v. 11 was spoken after 3:1, but is recorded here to indicate Joshua's role as the people's leader by divine appointment. It is also possible that "three days" is not a precise expression and means "a few days."

to possess. The promise that God has given (v. 2) demands the human act of taking possession, an act of obedient faith (vv. 6; 18:3; and notes).

■ **1:12–15** Num. 32 shows how the Reubenites, Gadites, and half-tribe of Manasseh (13:8 note) had already received their portion of land east of the Jordan. It was understood that they would also join in Israel's conquest of the western portion of the Promised Land (Num. 32:16–32; Deut. 3:18–20). All Israel must participate in taking possession of the land as a whole. There is a dramatic sequel in ch. 22. See notes on 12:1; 13:8–33.

■ **1:13 rest.** See also v. 15. The goal of God's gift of the land is often referred to as "rest" (11:23; 21:44; 22:4; 23:1), a condition or state that links the land with God's purposes in creation (Gen. 2:2, 3). For the New Testament extension of the idea see Heb. 3:7—4:11.

■ **1:16–18** The people's obedient response to Joshua, and therefore to God, will be echoed and elaborated at the end of the book (24:16–24). The essential connection between faith and obedience is implicit here: the obedience of the people is unambiguous evidence that they believe the promise. The necessary qualities for Joshua's leadership are that God be with him (v. 5 note) and that he be a man of faith (v. 6 note).

■ **2:1—5:12** The first major section of the book recounts the movement of the Israelites from Acacia Grove (2:1), across the Jordan River (chs. 3; 4; cf. 1:2), and into the land of Canaan. This movement marks the end of one era (5:9) and the beginning of the new life in the Land of Promise (5:12). It represents the first main testimony of the book to the faithfulness of God to His promises.

■ **2:1–24** Before the expected sequel to ch. 1 (namely, 3:1) there is the surprising story of the spies who return to Joshua proclaiming the promise of God (v. 24; cf. 1:2–5). Although the Book of Joshua describes in graphic detail the destruction of the Canaanites (chs. 6—12), it gives a prominent place to Rahab, a Canaanite harlot, (Lev. 18:24 in context). It is from her lips that the spies hear testimony to the promise and the power of God (vv. 9–11), in the light of which she seeks and finds "kindness" (v. 12). She will be spared from the coming judgment (6:22, 23) and find a place among the people of God (6:25). The chapter testifies to the grace of God in bringing such a woman to seek and find His mercy. The story of Rahab supplies an important perspective on the judgments of God that will occupy much of this book.

■ **2:1 Acacia Grove.** The site is a reminder of a time when Israel was guilty of harlotry (both physical and spiritual; Num. 25:1–3), a time not forgotten in this book (22:17).

to spy. The role of these spies is as unusual as the conquest that is to follow. Both their role and the conquest are shaped by the promise of God. See their report in v. 24. Cf. Num. 13:17–20.

harlot named Rahab. The narrative does not say why they chose Rahab's house. She is remembered in the New Testament as an ancestor of Christ (Matt. 1:5), and as an example of faith (Heb. 11:31) and good works (James 2:25).

■ **2:2 king of Jericho.** Canaan was made up of city-states, each with its own king.

was told the king of Jericho, saying, "Behold, men have come here tonight from the children of Israel to search out the country."

3 So the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, saying, "Bring out the men who have come to you, who have entered your house, for they have come to search out all the country."

4 [e]Then the woman took the two men and hid them. So she said, "Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they *were* from. 5 And it happened as the gate was being shut, when it was dark, that the men went out. Where the men went I do not know; pursue them quickly, for you may overtake them." 6 (But [f]she had brought them up to the roof and hidden them with the stalks of flax, which she had laid in order on the roof.) 7 Then the men pursued them by the road to the Jordan, to the fords. And as soon as those who pursued them had gone out, they shut the gate.

8 Now before they lay down, she came up to them on the roof, 9 and said to the men: [g]"I know that the LORD has given you the land, that [h]the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land [i]are fainthearted because of you. 10 For we have heard how the LORD [j]dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and [k]what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who *were* on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you [l]utterly destroyed. 11 And as soon as we [m]heard *these things,* [n]our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for [o]the LORD your God, He *is* God in heaven above and on earth beneath. 12 Now therefore, I beg you, [p]swear to me by the LORD, since I have shown you kindness, that you also will show kindness to [q]my father's house, and [r]give me [3]a true token, 13 and [s]spare my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death."

14 So the men answered her, "Our lives for yours, if none of you tell this business of ours. And it shall be, when the LORD has given us the land, that [t]we will deal kindly and truly with you."

15 Then she [u]let them down by a rope through the window, for her house *was* on the city wall; she dwelt on the wall. 16 And she said to them, "Get to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you. Hide there three days, until the pursuers have returned. Afterward you may go your way."

17 So the men said to her: "We *will be* [v]blameless[4] of this oath of yours which you have made us swear, 18 [w]unless, *when* we come into the land, you bind this line of scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, [x]and unless you [5]bring your father, your mother, your brothers, and all your father's household to your own home. 19 So it shall be *that* whoever goes outside the doors of your house into the street, his blood *shall be* on his own head, and we *will be* [6]guiltless. And whoever is with you in the house, [y]his [7]blood *shall be* on our head if a hand is laid on him. 20 And if you tell this business of ours, then we will be [8]free from your oath which you made us swear."

21 Then she said, "According to your words, so *be* it." And she sent them away, and they departed. And she bound the scarlet cord in the window.

22 They departed and went to the mountain, and stayed there three days until the pursuers re-

4 [e]2 Sam. 17:19, 20
6 [f]Ex. 1:17; 2 Sam. 17:19
9 [g]Deut. 1:8 [h]Gen. 35:5; Ex. 23:27; Deut. 2:25; 11:25; Josh. 9:9, 10 [i]Ex. 15:15; Josh. 5:1
10 [j]Ex. 14:21; Josh. 4:23 [k]Num. 21:21–35 [l]Deut. 20:17; Josh. 6:21
11 [m]Ex. 15:14, 15 [n]Josh. 5:1; 7:5; Ps. 22:14; Is. 13:7 [o]Deut. 4:39
12 [p]1 Sam. 20:14, 15, 17 [q]1 Tim. 5:8 [r]Ex. 12:13; Josh. 2:18 [3]*a pledge of truth*
13 [s]Josh. 6:23–25
14 [t]Gen. 47:29; Judg. 1:24; [Matt. 5:7]
15 [u]Acts 9:25
17 [v]Ex. 20:7 [4]*free from obligation to this oath*
18 [w]Josh. 2:12 [x]Josh. 6:23 [5]Lit. *gather*
19 [y]1 Kin. 2:32; Matt. 27:25 [6]*free from obligation* [7]*guilt of bloodshed*
20 [8]*free from obligation to*

■ **2:3** The skillfully narrated story creates a moment of tension before telling the reader that the men have been hidden (v. 4).

■ **2:4 I did not know.** She did know (v. 9). The writer of Joshua does not justify or condemn Rahab for lying, but James approves her action (James 2:25). Deception is a necessary tactic in war. The main point is why Rahab protects the foreign spies (vv. 9–11).

■ **2:6 she had brought them.** Note the narrative style in which information is given out of chronological sequence. See Introduction: Characteristics and Themes.

■ **2:7 they shut the gate.** The suspense of the narrative increases, since the spies now seem to be trapped.

■ **2:9 I know.** Rahab knows what God wants Israel to know (3:10), that the promise of God is true.

terror. This is the inevitable response to finding oneself on the wrong side of what God has promised to do. Contrast 1:6. In holy war panic is incited among God's enemies by the approach of His army (5:1; 9:24; 10:2; Ex. 15:14–16; Deut. 2:25).

■ **2:10 we have heard.** The cause of Rahab's knowledge, and the Canaanites' terror, was the news of what God had already done for Israel in faithfulness to His promises. See note on 9:3.

Amorites. The term is flexible, sometimes applying to all the peoples of Canaan (e.g., 24:15), sometimes more specifically to people in the hill country (e.g., 5:1), especially as distinct from the Jebusites who also occupied the hill country (e.g., 3:10).

Sihon and Og. See note on 12:2–5.

utterly destroyed. See notes on 6:17, 18.

■ **2:11 the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.** The acknowledgment of God required in Israel (Deut. 4:39) is made by Rahab.

■ **2:12 kindness.** The Hebrew word often refers to God's mercy to Israel in accordance with His promises.

a true token. Probably the oath (v. 14).

■ **2:13 deliver our lives from death.** The mercy sought presupposes the certainty of the promise of God. It is no less than deliverance from the coming wrath (cf. 1 Thess. 1:10).

■ **2:14 when the LORD has given us the land.** The certainty of the promise is again assumed.

■ **2:15 she let them down . . . the city wall.** The suspense created in vv. 2, 3, 7 is resolved.

■ **2:18 scarlet cord.** The cord is not mentioned in ch. 6. It is unlikely that symbolic significance should be seen in the color, although it can be associated with the blood of the Passover lamb and the blood of Christ.

turned. The pursuers sought *them* all along the way, but did not find *them.* [23] So the two men returned, descended from the mountain, and crossed over; and they came to Joshua the son of Nun, and told him all that had befallen them. [24] And they said to Joshua, "Truly [z]the LORD has delivered all the land into our hands, for indeed all the inhabitants of the country are fainthearted because of us."

Israel Crosses the Jordan

3 Then Joshua rose early in the morning; and they set out [a]from [1]Acacia Grove and came to the Jordan, he and all the children of Israel, and lodged there before they crossed over. [2] So it was, [b]after three days, that the officers went through the camp; [3] and they commanded the people, saying, [c]"When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, [d]and the priests, the Levites, [2]bearing it, then you shall set out from your place and go after it. [4] [e]Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure. Do not come near it, that you may know the way by which you must go, for you have not passed *this* way before."

[5] And Joshua said to the people, [f]"Sanctify[3] yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do wonders among you." [6] Then Joshua spoke to the priests, saying, [g]"Take up the ark of the covenant and cross over before the people."

So they took up the ark of the covenant and went before the people.

[7] And the LORD said to Joshua, "This day I will begin to [h]exalt[4] you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, [i]as I was with Moses, *so* I will be with you. [8] You shall command [j]the priests who bear the ark of the covenant, saying, 'When you have come to the edge of the water of the Jordan, [k]you shall stand in the Jordan.' "

[9] So Joshua said to the children of Israel, "Come here, and hear the words of the LORD your God." [10] And Joshua said, "By this you shall know that [l]the living God *is* among you, and *that* He will without fail [m]drive out from before you the [n]Canaanites and the Hittites and the Hivites and the Perizzites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Jebusites: [11] Behold, the ark of the covenant of [o]the Lord of all the earth is crossing over before you into the Jordan. [12] Now therefore, [p]take for yourselves twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one man from every tribe. [13] And it shall come to pass, [q]as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests who bear the ark of the LORD, [r]the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of the Jordan, *that* the waters of the

24 [z]Ex. 23:31

CHAPTER 3

1 [a]Josh. 2:1 [1]Heb. *Shittim*

2 [b]Josh. 1:10, 11

3 [c]Num. 10:33 [d]Deut. 31:9, 25 [2]*carrying*

4 [e]Ex. 19:12

5 [f]Josh. 7:13 [3]*Consecrate*

6 [g]Num. 4:15

7 [h]Josh. 4:14 [i]Josh. 1:5, 9 [4]*make you great*

8 [j]Josh. 3:3 [k]Josh. 3:17

10 [l]1 Thess. 1:9 [m]Ex. 33:2 [n]Acts 13:19

11 [o]Zech. 4:14; 6:5

12 [p]Josh. 4:2, 4

13 [q]Josh. 3:15, 16 [r]Josh. 3:11

■ **2:24 the LORD has delivered.** These spies return with the news that the promise of God is indeed certain (1:2), news they have learned from Rahab.

■ **3:1—4:24** The crossing of the Jordan River, the river marking the boundary of the Promised Land, was an occasion of wonders comparable to the crossing of the Red Sea (4:23; cf. 3:7; 4:14). The great significance of these wonders is indicated in 4:24. They were to remain a testimony for all peoples and for all time that the hand of the Lord is powerful. The prominence of the ark of the covenant (3:3 note) relates the power of God, to the promises of God that are at the heart of the covenant. Ch. 3 gives the events in order; ch. 4 returns to and elaborates on several points, especially the memorial of stones at Gilgal.

■ **3:2 three days.** See note on 1:11.

■ **3:3 the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God.** See Ex. 25:10–22; Deut. 10:5. The ark plays a prominent role in chs. 3; 4; 6; and 8. It signifies not only the presence of the Lord (Num. 10:33–36), but specifically His covenant, which means His commitment to His promises as well as the consequent obligations of Israel. See notes on 1:5; 24:25.

the priests, the Levites. See Deut. 10:8.

■ **3:4 a space between you and it.** The purpose of the separation may be to ensure that the ark will be visible to the maximum number of people. See 4:11.

■ **3:5 Sanctify yourselves.** "Sanctify" means "to make holy" (5:15 note), and probably refers to physical actions like washing that symbolize the holiness of the people. There was a similar requirement when God came down to the people at Mount Sinai (Ex. 19:10, 14, 15).

wonders. The same word is used of the plagues in Egypt (Ex. 3:20; Judg. 6:13; Ps. 78:11; Mic. 7:15) and the conquest of Canaan (Ex. 34:10; 1 Chr. 16:9–24; cf. Jer. 21:2).

■ **3:7 I will begin to exalt you.** The Lord validated Joshua's leadership by repeating the wonders He did at the Red Sea through Moses. The God of Joshua is the God of Moses. See note on 4:14.

that they may know. God's acts are often said to have the purpose of bringing about knowledge (Ex. 8:10; Deut. 4:35; 2 Kin. 19:19; Is. 45:6). Such knowledge is never merely intellectual. It is, however, attainable through hearing the news of God's acts, as well as by seeing them (2:9, 10; 4:24). Here the object of knowledge is the presence of God with Joshua (1:5 note; cf. Ex. 14:31), which the people will experience through the faithfulness of God to His promises. See notes on v. 10; 4:24.

■ **3:9 hear the words of the LORD.** This is a fundamental duty of the people of God. See 1:8; 24:2.

■ **3:10 By this.** The reference is probably to the whole miracle of the crossing, but attention is focused on the role of the ark (v. 11).

know. That is, "know by experience." Cf. v. 7. What they will know is the presence of God with Israel to bring His promise to certain fulfillment. Remarkably, this knowledge was already attained by Rahab in 2:9.

the living God. Israel's God is opposed to and contrasted with lifeless idols (Deut. 32:21).

Canaanites . . . Jebusites. This is one of several ways of listing the inhabitants of Canaan (Gen. 15:18–21; Deut. 7:1). See note on 2:10.

■ **3:11 the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth.** Lit. "the ark of the covenant, the Lord of all the earth." Not only the symbol of the covenant, but the Lord Himself will go ahead of His people. The reminder that He is Lord of all the earth suggests that the events that follow will have a purpose which reaches beyond Israel (4:24; cf. 2:11; Gen. 12:3; Ex. 19:5, 6).

■ **3:12 twelve men.** This anticipates the main subject of ch. 4; see 4:2.

■ **3:13 stand as a heap.** The language has similarities to Ex. 15:8 and Ps. 78:13, which describe the crossing of the Red Sea (4:23). The God of the Exodus is the God of the conquest.

Jordan shall be cut off, the waters that come down from upstream, and they [s]shall stand as a heap."

[14] So it was, when the people set out from their camp to cross over the Jordan, with the priests bearing the [t]ark of the covenant before the people, [15] and as those who bore the ark came to the Jordan, and [u]the feet of the priests who bore the ark dipped in the edge of the water (for the [v]Jordan overflows all its banks [w]during the whole time of harvest), [16] that the waters which came down from upstream stood *still, and* rose in a heap very far away [5]at Adam, the city that *is* beside [x]Zaretan. So the waters that went down [y]into the Sea of the Arabah, [z]the Salt Sea, failed, *and* were cut off; and the people crossed over opposite Jericho. [17] Then the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan; [a]and all Israel crossed over on dry ground, until all the people had crossed completely over the Jordan.

The Memorial Stones

4 And it came to pass, when all the people had completely crossed [a]over the Jordan, that the LORD spoke to Joshua, saying: [2] [b]"Take for yourselves twelve men from the people, one man from every tribe, [3] and command them, saying, 'Take for yourselves twelve stones from here, out of the midst of the Jordan, from the place where [c]the priests' feet stood firm. You shall carry them over with you and leave them in [d]the lodging place where you lodge tonight.' "

[4] Then Joshua called the twelve men whom he had appointed from the children of Israel, one man from every tribe; [5] and Joshua said to them: "Cross over before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of the Jordan, and each one of you take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, [6] that this may be [e]a sign among you [f]when your children ask in time to come, saying, 'What do these stones *mean* to you?' [7] Then you shall answer them that [g]the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it crossed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. And these stones shall be for [h]a memorial to the children of Israel forever."

[8] And the children of Israel did so, just as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones from the midst of the Jordan, as the LORD had spoken to Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, and carried them over with them to the place where they lodged, and laid them down there. [9] Then Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of the Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests who bore the ark of the covenant stood; and they are there to this day.

[10] So the priests who bore the ark stood in the midst of the Jordan until everything was finished that the LORD had commanded Joshua to speak to the people, according to all that Moses had commanded Joshua; and the people hurried and crossed over. [11] Then it came to pass, when all the people had completely crossed over, that the [i]ark of the LORD and the priests crossed over in the presence of the people. [12] And [j]the men of Reuben, the men of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh crossed over armed before the children of Israel, as Moses had spoken to them. [13] About forty thousand [l]prepared for war crossed over before the LORD for battle, to the plains of Jericho. [14] On that day the LORD [k]exalted[2] Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him, as they had feared Moses, all the days of his life.

[15] Then the LORD spoke to Joshua, saying, [16] "Command the priests who bear [l]the ark of the

13 [s]Ps. 78:13; 114:3

14 [t]Ps. 132:8; Acts 7:44, 45

15 [u]Josh. 3:13 [v]1 Chr. 12:15; Jer. 12:5; 49:19 [w]Josh. 4:18; 5:10, 12

16 [x]1 Kin. 4:12; 7:46 [y]Deut. 3:17 [z]Gen. 14:3; Num. 34:3 [5]Qr., many mss. and vss. *from Adam*

17 [a]Gen. 50:24; Ex. 3:8; 6:1–8; 14:21, 22, 29; 33:1; Deut. 6:10; Heb. 11:29

CHAPTER 4

1 [a]Deut. 27:2; Josh. 3:17

2 [b]Josh. 3:12

3 [c]Josh. 3:13 [d]Josh. 4:19, 20

6 [e]Deut. 27:2; Ps. 103:2 [f]Ex. 12:26; 13:14; Deut. 6:20

7 [g]Josh. 3:13, 16 [h]Ex. 12:14; Num. 16:40

11 [i]Josh. 3:11; 6:11

12 [j]Num. 32:17, 20, 27, 28; Josh. 1:14

13 [l]*equipped*

14 [k]Josh. 3:7; 1 Chr. 29:25 [2]*made Joshua great*

16 [l]Ex. 25:16, 22

■ **3:14 the people set out.** This verse picks up the action from v. 6.

■ **3:15 the Jordan overflows . . . during . . . harvest.** This vital piece of information takes the reader by surprise. The crossing will be even more remarkable than v. 13 indicated.

■ **3:17 the ark.** As instrumental in the miracle, the ark conveys the powerful message of God's faithfulness to His covenant promises.

people. The Hebrew word used here is not usually applied to Israel; perhaps it is meant to recall Gen. 12:2 and Ex. 19:6, where it is also found.

■ **4:2 twelve.** All Israel is to be represented (1:12–15).

■ **4:6 sign.** This testimony for future generations of God's faithfulness is the first of several in Joshua (7:26; 8:29). See note on v. 9.

What do these stones mean. Ex. 12:26, 27; Deut. 6:20–25.

■ **4:7 the ark.** As the ark is prominent in ch. 3, so is it central to the retelling of the story to future generations. See notes on 3:3, 17.

memorial. The purpose of the "sign" (v. 6) and telling about it is for future generations to remember the wonderful faithfulness of God to His promises. On the importance of such remembering for Israel, see Deut. 8:1–20; 1 Cor. 11:25; 2 Tim. 2:8.

■ **4:9 to this day.** That is, the day of the narrator. This expression occurs frequently in the Book of Joshua (5:9; 6:25; 7:26; 8:28, 29; 9:27; 10:27; 13:13; 14:14; 15:63; 16:10), pointing to evidence for the truth and relevance of the narrative.

■ **4:12 Reuben . . . Gad . . . Manasseh.** See 1:12–15.

■ **4:13 About forty thousand.** Some scholars suggest the word translated "thousand" means a military unit of unspecified size, a "contingent."

■ **4:14 the LORD exalted Joshua . . . and they feared him.** Joshua's exaltation is in fulfillment of 3:7. See Ex. 14:31. God's powerful faithfulness to His promises has the effect of exalting the one whose leadership is based on those promises.

■ **4:15–18** The conclusion of the miracle is described, with the focus still on the ark.

■ **4:16 the ark of the Testimony.** Also called the ark of the covenant (Ex. 25:16, 21, 22; 31:18; 32:15; 40:20). The Ten Commandments were

Testimony to come up from the Jordan." [17] Joshua therefore commanded the priests, saying, "Come up from the Jordan." [18] And it came to pass, when the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD had come from the midst of the Jordan, *and* the soles of the priests' feet touched the dry land, that the waters of the Jordan returned to their place [m] and overflowed all its banks as before.

[19] Now the people came up from the Jordan on the tenth *day* of the first month, and they camped [n] in Gilgal on the east border of Jericho. [20] And [o] those twelve stones which they took out of the Jordan, Joshua set up in Gilgal. [21] Then he spoke to the children of Israel, saying: [p] "When your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, 'What *are* these stones?' [22] then you shall let your children know, saying, [q] 'Israel crossed over this Jordan on [r] dry land'; [23] for the LORD your God dried up the waters of the Jordan before you until you had crossed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red Sea, [s] which He dried up before us until we had crossed over, [24] [t] that all the peoples of the earth may know the hand of the LORD, that it *is* [u] mighty, that you may [v] fear the LORD your God [3] forever."

The Second Generation Circumcised

5 So it was, when all the kings of the Amorites who *were* on the west side of the Jordan, and all the kings of the Canaanites [a] who *were* by the sea, [b] heard that the LORD had dried up the waters of the Jordan from before the children of Israel until [1] we had crossed over, that [2] their heart melted; [c] and there was no spirit in them any longer because of the children of Israel.

[2] At that time the LORD said to Joshua, "Make [d] flint knives for yourself, and circumcise the sons of Israel again the second time." [3] So Joshua made flint knives for himself, and circumcised the sons of Israel at [3] the hill of the foreskins. [4] And this *is* the reason why Joshua circumcised them: [e] All the people who came out of Egypt *who were* males, all the men of war, had died in the wilderness on the way, after they had come out of Egypt. [5] For all the people who came out had been circumcised, but all the people born in the wilderness, on the way as they came out of Egypt, had not been circumcised. [6] For the children of Israel walked [f] forty years in the wilderness, till all the people *who were* men of war, who came out of Egypt, were [4] consumed, because they did not obey the voice of the LORD—to whom the LORD swore that [g] He would not show them the land which the LORD had sworn to their fathers that He would give us, [h] "a land flowing with milk and honey." [7] Then Joshua circumcised [i] their sons *whom* He raised up in their place; for they were uncircumcised, because they had not been circumcised on the way.

[8] So it was, when they had finished circumcising all the people, that they stayed in their places in the camp [j] till they were healed. [9] Then the LORD said to Joshua, "This day I have rolled away [k] the reproach of Egypt from you." Therefore the name of the place is called [l] Gilgal [5] to this day.

[10] Now the children of Israel camped in Gilgal, and kept the Passover [m] on the fourteenth day

18 [m] Josh. 3:15
19 [n] Josh. 5:9
20 [o] Josh. 4:3; 5:9, 10
21 [p] Josh. 4:6
22 [q] Deut. 26:5–9 [r] Josh. 3:17
23 [s] Ex. 14:21
24 [t] 1 Kin. 8:42 [u] 1 Chr. 29:12 [v] Jer. 10:7 [3] Lit. *all days*

CHAPTER 5

1 [a] Num. 13:29 [b] Ex. 15:14, 15 [c] Josh. 2:10, 11; 9:9 [1] So with Kt.; Qr., some Heb. mss. and editions, LXX, Syr., Tg., Vg. *they* [2] *their courage failed*
2 [d] Ex. 4:25
3 [3] Heb. *Gibeath Haaraloth*
4 [e] Deut. 2:14–16
6 [f] Num. 14:33 [g] Heb. 3:11 [h] Ex. 3:8 [4] *destroyed*
7 [i] Deut. 1:39
8 [j] Gen. 34:25
9 [k] Gen. 34:14 [l] Josh. 4:19 [5] Lit. *Rolling*
10 [m] Ex. 12:6

deposited in the ark as a testimony to the agreement God made with Israel.

■ **4:19 the tenth day of the first month.** This is the day the Passover lamb was to be chosen (Ex. 12:3), underlining the connection between the crossing and the Exodus. See v. 23 and 5:10.

■ **4:23, 24** The pronoun "you" in vv. 23, 24 identifies the later generations with the earlier great acts of God, as Moses did in Deut. 4:9–24; 5:2–5, and as Joshua will do in Josh. 24:5–10 (24:7 note).

■ **4:24 all the peoples of the earth.** The wonders of chs. 3 and 4 will have effects far beyond the immediate generation and far beyond the Israelite people (2:10; 5:1; cf. Gen. 12:3). The wonderful works of God in the Bible are expected to affect those who hear about them as powerfully as those who see them (Ex. 10:2; and supremely John 20:30, 31). See notes on 2:9, 10.

know. The knowledge of God and His purposes has been the objective of these wonders (3:7, 10 notes). This goal is now shown to apply to all peoples. This knowledge does not necessarily imply salvation (Ex. 14:18).

fear the LORD. A common Old Testament expression for true faith (Ps. 128:1). See 24:14 note.

■ **5:1–12** A significant moment (v. 9), with the desert behind them and the new life in the Land of Promise before them (vv. 11, 12), is marked by two symbolic actions: circumcision (vv. 2–8) and the Passover (v. 10). Circumcision was the sign of the covenant with Abraham (Gen. 17:9–14 notes), and was required for participation in the Passover (Ex. 12:48). Circumcision marked the people of the promise; the Passover celebrated their redemption from Egypt. Both the promise to Abraham and the redemption from Egypt looked forward to this day (Gen. 17:8; Ex. 3:8).

■ **5:1 when all the kings . . . heard.** See 4:24; note on 2:9.

Amorites. See note on 2:10.

■ **5:2 circumcise . . . again.** See v. 5.

■ **5:4–7** This circumcision was necessary because the generation that came out of Egypt had fallen under God's judgment. In his grace God was raising up a new generation for Himself (v. 7). Physical circumcision had its spiritual counterpart in circumcised hearts (Deut. 10:16; 30:6 and notes).

■ **5:6 they did not obey . . . the LORD.** This is the simplest description of the behavior that brought judgment. The reference is to Num. 14 (Deut. 1:32, 43).

the LORD swore. The promise of God can be a negative one.

■ **5:7 sons . . . in their place.** These people were, in effect, a "new Israel."

■ **5:9 This day I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt.** These words indicate the great significance of this moment. The redemption from Egypt is complete only with the entry into the Promised Land. See the promise of the Exodus and its goal in Ex. 3:8. Had that goal not been reached, the reproach or scorn of Egypt would have remained (Deut. 9:28).

to this day. See note on 4:9.

of the month at twilight on the plains of Jericho. 11 And they ate of the produce of the land on the day after the Passover, unleavened bread and [6]parched grain, on the very same day. 12 Then [n]the manna ceased on the day after they had eaten the produce of the land; and the children of Israel no longer had manna, but they ate the food of the land of Canaan that year.

The Commander of the Army of the LORD

13 And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, [o]a Man stood opposite him [p]with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, "*Are* You for us or for our adversaries?"

14 So He said, "No, but *as* Commander of the army of the LORD I have now come."

And Joshua [q]fell on his face to the earth and [r]worshiped, and said to Him, "What does my Lord say to His servant?"

15 Then the Commander of the LORD's army said to Joshua, [s]"Take your sandal off your foot, for the place where you stand *is* holy." And Joshua did so.

The Destruction of Jericho

6 Now [a]Jericho was securely shut up because of the children of Israel; none went out, and none came in. 2 And the LORD said to Joshua: "See! [b]I have given Jericho into your hand, its [c]king, *and* the mighty men of valor. 3 You shall march around the city, all *you* men of war; you shall go all around the city once. This you shall do six days. 4 And seven priests shall bear seven [d]trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. But the seventh day you shall march around the city [e]seven times, and [f]the priests shall blow the trumpets. 5 It shall come to pass, when they make a long *blast* with the ram's horn, *and* when you hear the sound of the trumpet, that all the people shall shout with a great shout; then the wall of the city will fall down flat. And the people shall go up every man straight before him."

6 Then Joshua the son of Nun called the priests and said to them, "Take up the ark of the covenant, and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD."

11 [6]*roasted*

12 [n]Ex. 16:35

13 [o]Gen. 18:1, 2; 32:24, 30; Ex. 23:23; Num. 22:31; Zech. 1:8; Acts 1:10 [p]Num. 22:23; 1 Chr. 21:16

14 [q]Gen. 17:3; Num. 20:6 [r]Ex. 34:8

15 [s]Ex. 3:5; Acts 7:33

CHAPTER 6

1 [a]Josh. 2:1

2 [b]Josh. 2:9, 24; 8:1 [c]Deut. 7:24

4 [d]Lev. 25:9; Judg. 7:16, 22 [e]1 Kin. 18:43; 2 Kin. 4:35; 5:10 [f]Num. 10:8

■ **5:12 the manna ceased.** This is another indication that a new era has begun and that the first major section of the book is concluded; see Introduction: Outline. On manna and its significance, see Ex. 16; Deut. 8:3.

■ **5:13—12:24** The second major section of the book tells how the Israelites conquered Canaan. The shocking violence and terrible destruction in these chapters trouble many readers. Yet the text seems to ring with praise to God. This is so because the destruction is the true and just judgment of God on sinners (Gen. 15:16; cf. Lev. 18:24–27; Deut. 9:4, 5), through which He fulfilled His gracious promises to Israel (note the connection between salvation and judgment in Ex. 14:13, 14 and Rev. 19:1, 2). These accounts of destruction, no less than anything else in the book, testify to God's faithfulness to His promises (cf. the curse in the promise in Gen. 12:3) and prefigure His final judgment on those who reject His grace (Matt. 25:46; Heb. 9:27; 10:26–31).

■ **5:13–15** The account of the conquest begins with the appearance of "the Commander of the LORD's army." This shows first, that God's sovereignty is free; second, that He and not Joshua controls the ensuing action; and third, that Joshua is the servant of the same God that appeared to Moses in the burning bush (Ex. 3:5).

■ **5:14 No.** The Commander of the Lord's army encourages Joshua, but He is not under Joshua's command. God is bound neither to destroy all Canaanites nor to deliver all Israelites, as is powerfully illustrated in the subsequent chapters in the experiences of Rahab (6:25) and Achan (ch. 7). See note on 6:17, 18.

Commander of the army of the LORD. The Commander is evidently an appearance of the pre-incarnate Son of God (1:5 and note; Gen. 16:7). The Divine Warrior and His army are prepared for war.

■ **5:15 Take your sandal.** This command is like that of Ex. 3:5, establishing a continuity between what began with Moses and what follows under Joshua. Joshua is the successor to Moses. "Holiness" is fundamentally a quality of God. People (3:5 note) or things are described as holy when they belong to God in some special way.

■ **6:1–27** The essential elements for a theological understanding of the conquest are indicated in this account of Jericho, the first city to be destroyed. The destruction of the Canaanites, no less than the crossing of the Jordan, is the powerful work of God in faithfulness to the covenant, (note the role of the ark of the covenant in chs. 6 and 3—4, and see notes on 3:3, 11, 14, 17; 4:16). The fearful judgment of God is working to bring about the promised deliverance of His people is an important biblical theme (e.g., Ex. 14:13–14; Rev. 19:1–2). Furthermore, that the grace of God is not restricted to Israel (Gen. 12:3) is evidenced by the experience of Rahab and her household (v. 25). God is not simply anti-Canaanite (see note on 5:14).

■ **6:1 Jericho.** Its name probably means "Moon City," a center for worship (Gen. 11:27—25:11 note).

■ **6:2 the LORD.** Although this is sometimes taken to refer to the "Commander of the army of the LORD" (5:13–15), the verses are more likely a separate episode introducing the whole of the conquest.

See! I have given. A striking paradox, since all that had been "seen" according to v. 1 was Jericho's shut gates. The promise of God creates possibilities not inherent in the present situation. A similar contrast between present circumstances and what God promises is found often in the Bible, as in the present experience of believers (Gen. 15:2–5; Is. 65:17; Rom. 8:18).

■ **6:4 seven.** See note on Gen. 4:16.

the seventh day. The number suggests a parallel to the work of creation. Just as the work of creation reached its goal in the seventh day (Gen. 2:1–3), so the work of redemption from Egypt reaches its goal with possession of the Promised Land. Sabbath rest is related to both creation and redemption (Ex. 20:8–11 and Deut. 5:12–15; Josh. 1:13 note). In Heb. 3:7—4:11 "rest" refers to the ultimate goal of God's people.

■ **6:5 straight before him.** The collapse of the wall will allow access from every direction.

■ **6:6 the ark of the covenant.** See note on 3:3. The procession, with the ark at its center, applied the covenant promises of God symbolically to Jericho. For Jericho the covenant promises will mean judgment. The parallel between the role of the ark in crossing the Jordan (chs. 3—4) and the conquest of Canaan is illuminated by Ex. 15:1–18, where the crossing of the Red Sea and the conquest are described in similar terms. All of these events are powerful acts of God in accordance with His covenant, directed to the goal of bringing His people to their promised rest.

7 And he said to the people, "Proceed, and march around the city, and let him who is armed advance before the ark of the LORD."

8 So it was, when Joshua had spoken to the people, that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns before the LORD advanced and blew the trumpets, and the ark of the covenant of the LORD followed them. 9 The armed men went before the priests who blew the trumpets, [g]and the rear guard came after the ark, while *the priests* continued blowing the trumpets. 10 Now Joshua had commanded the people, saying, "You shall not shout or make any noise with your voice, nor shall a word proceed out of your mouth, until the day I say to you, 'Shout!' Then you shall shout." 11 So he had [h]the ark of the LORD circle the city, going around *it* once. Then they came into the camp and [i]lodged in the camp.

12 And Joshua rose early in the morning, [i]and the priests took up the ark of the LORD. 13 Then seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the LORD went on continually and blew with the trumpets. And the armed men went before them. But the rear guard came after the ark of the LORD, while *the priests* continued blowing the trumpets. 14 And the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. So they did six days.

15 But it came to pass on the seventh day that they rose early, about the dawning of the day, and marched around the city seven times in the same manner. On that day only they marched around the city seven times. 16 And the seventh time it happened, when the priests blew the trumpets, that Joshua said to the people: "Shout, for the LORD has given you the city! 17 Now the city shall be [j]doomed by the LORD to destruction, it and all who *are* in it. Only [k]Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all who *are* with her in the house, because [l]she hid the messengers that we sent. 18 And you, [m]by all means abstain from the accursed things, lest you become accursed when you take of the accursed things, and make the camp of Israel a curse, [n]and trouble it. 19 But all the silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, *are* [2]consecrated to the LORD; they [3]shall come into the treasury of the LORD."

20 So the people shouted when *the priests* blew the trumpets. And it happened when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout, that [o]the wall fell down flat. Then the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city. 21 And they [p]utterly destroyed all that *was* in the city, both man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey, with the edge of the sword.

22 But Joshua had said to the two men who had spied out the country, "Go into the harlot's house, and from there bring out the woman and all that she has, [q]as you swore to her." 23 And the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab, [r]her father, her mother, her brothers, and all that she had. So they brought out all her relatives and left them outside the camp of Israel. 24 But they burned the city and all that *was* in it with fire. Only the silver and gold, and the vessels of bronze and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the LORD. 25 And Joshua spared Rahab the harlot, her father's household, and all that she had. So [s]she dwells in Israel to this day, because she hid the messengers whom Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

26 Then Joshua [4]charged *them* at that time, saying, [t]"Cursed *be* the man before the LORD who rises up and builds this city Jericho; he shall lay its foundation with his firstborn, and with his youngest he shall set up its gates."

27 So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame spread throughout all the country.

9 [g]Num. 10:25

11 [h]Josh. 4:11
[i]*spent the night*

12 [i]Deut. 31:25

17 [j]Deut. 13:17; Josh. 7:1 [k]Josh. 2:1; Matt. 1:5 [l]Josh. 2:4, 6

18 [m]Deut. 7:26 [n]Josh. 7:1, 12, 25; 1 Kin. 18:17, 18; [Jon. 1:12]

19 [2]*set apart* [3]*shall go*

20 [o]Heb. 11:30

21 [p]Deut. 7:2; 20:16, 17

22 [q]Josh. 2:12–19; Heb. 11:31

23 [r]Josh. 2:13

25 [s][Matt. 1:5]

26 [t]1 Kin. 16:34
[4]*warned*

■ **6:8 before the LORD.** As in 3:11 (note), the presence of the ark is identified with the presence of the Lord Himself. See note on 1:5.

■ **6:11 he had the ark . . . circle.** The whole procession can be summed up by referring only to the ark.

in the camp. At Gilgal (5:10).

■ **6:15–19** The description of the seventh day is expanded with a report of Joshua's speech. In accordance with the narrative style noted elsewhere (1:11; 2:6 and notes), the words of vv. 17–19 may have been spoken earlier but are recorded here for dramatic effect.

■ **6:17 doomed . . . to destruction.** The same Hebrew word is translated "utterly destroyed" in 2:10; see note on 1 Sam. 15:3. In the holy war the city was reserved for God. The consequence is seen in v. 21, the awful reality of God's judgment on Jericho, as also on the whole of Canaan (11:11–12, 14, 20; Lev. 27:28–29; Deut. 13:16; 20:10–18).

Only Rahab . . . and all who are with her. Judgment does not exclude grace. The mercy she sought in 2:12 will be extended to her.

■ **6:18 accursed.** The same Hebrew term (translated "doomed" in v. 17) occurs three times here, warning Israel not to fall into the same judgment as the Canaanites. Ch. 7 shows the need for this warning.

■ **6:19 consecrated.** Or "holy." See text note and note on 5:15.

■ **6:20, 21** The fall of Jericho is briefly described. Further details may be deduced from v. 24; 8:2; 10:1; 24:11.

■ **6:23 outside the camp.** This phrase can describe a temporary state of affairs (v. 25) due to ceremonial uncleanness (e.g., Lev. 13:46).

■ **6:24 the house of the LORD.** See note on 9:23.

■ **6:25 she dwells in Israel.** Rahab is included in the people of God. See Matt. 1:5; Heb. 11:31; James 2:25.

to this day. See note on 4:9.

■ **6:26 Cursed . . . who rises up and builds.** Jericho was to remain under God's curse, presumably as a sign of the judgment of God that had fallen on the Canaanites and that could fall on Israel. See 1 Kin. 16:34.

■ **6:27 the LORD was with Joshua.** See note on 4:14.

CHAPTER 7

1 [a]Josh. 7:20, 21 [b]Josh. 6:17–19 [c]Josh. 22:20 [1]acted unfaithfully [2]devoted [3]Zimri, 1 Chr. 2:6

4 [d]Lev. 26:17; Deut. 28:25

5 [e]Lev. 26:36; Josh. 2:9, 11 [4]the people's courage failed

6 [f]Gen. 37:29, 34 [g]1 Sam. 4:12

7 [h]Ex. 17:3; Num. 21:5 [5]Heb. YHWH, LORD

8 [6]Lit. neck

9 [i]Deut. 32:26 [j]Ex. 32:12; Num. 14:13

11 [k]Josh. 6:17–19 [l]Acts 5:1, 2 [7]devoted

12 [m]Judg. 2:14 [n]Deut. 7:26; [Hag. 2:13, 14]

13 [o]Ex. 19:10 [p]Josh. 3:5 [8]set apart

Defeat at Ai

7 But the children of Israel [1]committed a [a]trespass regarding the [b]accursed[2] things, for [c]Achan the son of Carmi, the son of [3]Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed things; so the anger of the LORD burned against the children of Israel.

2 Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which *is* beside Beth Aven, on the east side of Bethel, and spoke to them, saying, "Go up and spy out the country." So the men went up and spied out Ai. 3 And they returned to Joshua and said to him, "Do not let all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up and attack Ai. Do not weary all the people there, for *the people of Ai are* few." 4 So about three thousand men went up there from the people, [d]but they fled before the men of Ai. 5 And the men of Ai struck down about thirty-six men, for they chased them *from* before the gate as far as Shebarim, and struck them down on the descent; therefore [e]the[4] hearts of the people melted and became like water.

6 Then Joshua [f]tore his clothes, and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the LORD until evening, he and the elders of Israel; and they [g]put dust on their heads. 7 And Joshua said, "Alas, Lord [5]GOD, [h]why have You brought this people over the Jordan at all—to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? Oh, that we had been content, and dwelt on the other side of the Jordan! 8 O Lord, what shall I say when Israel turns its [6]back before its enemies? 9 For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear *it,* and surround us, and [i]cut off our name from the earth. Then [j]what will You do for Your great name?"

The Sin of Achan

10 So the LORD said to Joshua: "Get up! Why do you lie thus on your face? 11 Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. [k]For they have even taken some of the [7]accursed things, and have both stolen and [l]deceived; and they have also put *it* among their own stuff. 12 [m]Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, *but* turned *their* backs before their enemies, because [n]they have become doomed to destruction. Neither will I be with you anymore, unless you destroy the accursed from among you. 13 Get up, [o]sanctify[8] the people, and say, [p]'Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow, because thus says

■ **7:1–26** If Rahab, the Canaanite who found mercy, is a story of God's grace in the midst of judgment (6:25), Achan's story is a reminder of the holiness of God, on which no one may presume (24:19; Num. 17:11–13; Heb. 10:30–31). Ch. 7 recounts the first instance of disobedience in the Promised Land, an ominous event in light of the history that will follow (2 Kin. 17:7–20) and an occasion reminiscent of Gen. 3 (v. 21 note). The incident and its lesson for Israel are recalled in 22:18–20.

■ **7:1 the children of Israel.** Although the offense was committed by one man, all Israel is involved and affected (see v. 11; 22:18). The facts stated in v. 1 only gradually became known to the Israelites.

accursed things. See 6:18; note on 6:17.

the anger of the LORD. The anger of God is His personal righteous hostility to evil. Unlike ancient pagan conceptions of divine wrath, in the Bible God's anger is never arbitrary or capricious. It is as much a part of the New Testament message as of the Old (Matt. 3:7; John 3:36; Rom. 1:18; Col. 3:6; 1 Thess. 1:10; Heb. 10:26–31; Rev. 6:16).

■ **7:2–5** In contrast to the stories of the spies (ch. 2), and the conquest of Jericho (ch. 6), Israel is now under God's anger, and the outcome will be different.

■ **7:2 from Jericho to Ai.** The movement is westwards and up into the central hill country.

Beth Aven. The name means "house of nothingness" or "house of wickedness." The name may be used disparagingly for Bethel (as in Hos. 4:15; 10:5).

■ **7:3 Do not let all the people go up.** Contrast the report of the spies in 2:24.

■ **7:5 thirty-six.** The number of casualties is not great. The fear and dismay of the people were due more to the Lord's anger than to the human scale of the defeat.

the hearts of the people melted. Disobedience in Israel has brought about a great reversal. The Israelites now find themselves in the situation of the Canaanites in 2:11; 5:1.

■ **7:6 tore his clothes . . . put dust on their heads.** These are conventional expressions of grief (Job 1:20; 2:12). The cause of grief is the apparent failure of the covenant promises, the symbol of which is the ark. See notes on 3:3, 17; 4:16. Joshua's prayer (vv. 7–9) will appeal to those promises. See note on 10:6.

■ **7:7–9** Joshua prays for Israel as Moses had done in similar circumstances (cf. Num. 14:13–19).

■ **7:7 why.** This question comes to the lips of those who find their experience contradicting their understanding of the promises of God. It can be a rebellious question (as in Num. 14:3), but it can also express a true faith perplexed by circumstances (cf. Ps. 22:1).

Amorites. See note on 2:10.

■ **7:9 will hear.** See note on 9:3.

our name. The promise to Abraham included a "great name" (Gen. 12:2). Joshua's prayer is based on the promises of God.

Your great name. God's reputation is at stake (Ex. 32:12; Num. 14:13–16; Ezek. 36:16–23).

■ **7:11 Israel.** The corporate unity of Israel is stressed throughout the chapter. The sin of one man (v. 15) brought guilt on his community (22:18).

transgressed My covenant. This is a further indication of the nature of the sin. The concept of God's covenant includes His commitment to His promises, and the consequent obligations on the people who received the promises. See note on 3:3. It is God's covenant because He has set its terms.

accursed things. See 6:18; note on 6:17.

■ **7:12 doomed to destruction.** The cause of Israel's defeat at Ai was not a failure of God's promises (7:6 note) but disobedience.

Neither will I be with you anymore. This terrible reversal of 1:5 brings the first half of ch. 7 to a climax; the second half will elaborate the words "unless you destroy the accursed from among you."

■ **7:13 Sanctify.** See note on 3:5. In contrast to ch. 3, this is preparation to meet God's judgment.

the LORD God of Israel: "*There is* an accursed thing in your midst, O Israel; you cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the accursed thing from among you." 14 In the morning therefore you shall be brought according to your tribes. And it shall be *that* the tribe which [q]the LORD takes shall come according to families; and the family which the LORD takes shall come by households; and the household which the LORD takes shall come man by man. 15 [r]Then it shall be *that* he who is taken with the accursed thing shall be burned with fire, he and all that he has, because he has [s]transgressed[9] the covenant of the LORD, and because he [t]has done a disgraceful thing in Israel.' "

16 So Joshua rose early in the morning and brought Israel by their tribes, and the tribe of Judah was taken. 17 He brought the clan of Judah, and he took the family of the Zarhites; and he brought the family of the Zarhites man by man, and Zabdi was taken. 18 Then he brought his household man by man, and Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, [u]was taken.

19 Now Joshua said to Achan, "My son, I beg you, [v]give glory to the LORD God of Israel, [w]and make confession to Him, and [x]tell me now what you have done; do not hide *it* from me."

20 And Achan answered Joshua and said, "Indeed [y]I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and this is what I have done: 21 When I saw among the spoils a beautiful Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I [1]coveted them and took them. And there they are, hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent, with the silver under it."

22 So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and there it was, hidden in his tent, with the silver under it. 23 And they took them from the midst of the tent, brought them to Joshua and to all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the LORD. 24 Then Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the garment, the wedge of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent, and [z]all that he had, and they brought them to [a]the Valley of Achor. 25 And Joshua said, [b]"Why have you troubled us? The LORD will trouble you this day." [c]So all Israel stoned him with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones.

26 Then they [d]raised over him a great heap of stones, still there to this day. So [e]the LORD turned from the fierceness of His anger. Therefore the name of that place has been called [f]the Valley of [2]Achor to this day.

The Fall of Ai

8 Now the LORD said to Joshua: [a]"Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed; take all the people of war with you, and arise, go up to Ai. See, [b]I have given into your hand the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his land. 2 And you shall do to Ai and its king as you did to [c]Jericho and its king. Only [d]its spoil and its cattle you shall take as booty for yourselves. Lay an ambush for the city behind it."

3 So Joshua arose, and all the people of war, to go up against Ai; and Joshua chose thirty thousand mighty men of valor and sent them away by night. 4 And he commanded them, saying: "Behold, [e]you shall lie in ambush against the city, behind the city. Do not go very far from the city, but all of you be ready. 5 Then I and all the people who *are* with me will approach the city; and it will come about, when they come out against us as at the first, that [f]we shall flee before

14 [q][Prov. 16:33]

15 [r]1 Sam. 14:38, 39 [s]Josh. 7:11 [t]Gen. 34:7; Judg. 20:6 [9]*overstepped*

18 [u]1 Sam. 14:42

19 [v]1 Sam. 6:5; Jer. 13:16; John 9:24 [w]Num. 5:6, 7; 2 Chr. 30:22; Ezra 10:10, 11; Ps. 32:5; Prov. 28:13; Jer. 3:12, 13; Dan. 9:4 [x]1 Sam. 14:43

20 [y]Num. 22:34; 1 Sam. 15:24

21 [1]*desired*

24 [z]Num. 16:32, 33; Dan. 6:24 [a]Josh. 7:26; 15:7

25 [b]Josh. 6:18; 1 Chr. 2:7; [Gal. 5:12] [c]Deut. 17:5

26 [d]Josh. 8:29; 2 Sam. 18:17; Lam. 3:53 [e]Deut. 13:17 [f]Josh. 7:24; Is. 65:10; Hos. 2:15 [2]Lit. *Trouble*

CHAPTER 8

1 [a]Deut. 1:21; 7:18; 31:8; Josh. 1:9; 10:8 [b]Josh. 6:2

2 [c]Josh. 6:21 [d]Deut. 20:14; Josh. 8:27

4 [e]Judg. 20:29

5 [f]Josh. 7:5; Judg. 20:32

■ **7:14 which the LORD takes.** The actual procedure may have been by the Urim and Thummim (Ex. 28:30 note).

■ **7:15 a disgraceful thing in Israel.** Such an act is contrary to the nature of Israel as the covenant people, and therefore an act of folly. Elsewhere this expression is used of sexual perversions prohibited in Israel (Gen. 34:7; Deut. 22:21; Judg. 20:6, 10; 2 Sam. 13:12; Jer. 29:23).

■ **7:20 sinned.** See note on v. 11.

■ **7:21 saw . . . coveted . . . took.** There may be an allusion here to Gen. 3:6, where these three verbs occur in the same order. The pattern of the Garden of Eden has been repeated in the Promised Land: no sooner was the gift of God given than the recipients desired what was forbidden, and took it.

■ **7:23 before the LORD.** That is, presumably before the ark. See note on 6:8.

■ **7:24 all that he had.** God's mercy to Rahab extended to her family (6:23), and the punishment of Achan reached his family.

■ **7:26 from the fierceness of His anger.** God's wrath, being righteous, ceases when sin has been dealt with. This is fundamental to the New Testament teaching that the death of Christ is an atoning or propitiatory sacrifice (Rom. 3:25, 26).

■ **8:1 Do not be afraid.** Compare 7:5. This call to faith (1:9; 1:6 note) is based on the promises of God despite visible circumstances. It is a common expression of God's favor (Gen. 15:1). It confirms that the Lord's anger has ceased towards Israel.

all the people of war. Contrast 7:3.

given. The promise of 1:2, 3 (notes) is applied to Ai.

■ **8:2 as you did to Jericho.** See 6:21; note on 6:17.

take as booty. Just as there was an exception to the total destruction of Jericho (6:17), so God makes another exception to that requirement here.

■ **8:3 thirty thousand.** See note on 4:13.

■ **8:5 as at the first.** See 7:5.

8 g2 Sam. 13:28
11 hJosh. 8:5
12 iAi
14 jJudg. 20:34; Eccl. 9:12
15 jJudg. 20:36
22 kDeut. 7:2
26 lJosh. 6:21
27 mNum. 31:22, 26 nJosh. 8:2
28 oDeut. 13:16
29 pJosh. 10:26 qDeut. 21:22, 23; Josh. 10:27 rJosh. 7:26; 10:27
30 sDeut. 27:4–8
31 tEx. 20:25; Deut. 27:5, 6 uEx. 20:24

them. 6 For they will come out after us till we have drawn them from the city, for they will say, 'They *are* fleeing before us as at the first.' Therefore we will flee before them. 7 Then you shall rise from the ambush and seize the city, for the LORD your God will deliver it into your hand. 8 And it will be, when you have taken the city, *that* you shall set the city on fire. According to the commandment of the LORD you shall do. g See, I have commanded you."

9 Joshua therefore sent them out; and they went to lie in ambush, and stayed between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of Ai; but Joshua lodged that night among the people. 10 Then Joshua rose up early in the morning and mustered the people, and went up, he and the elders of Israel, before the people to Ai. 11 h And all the people of war who *were* with him went up and drew near; and they came before the city and camped on the north side of Ai. Now a valley *lay* between them and Ai. 12 So he took about five thousand men and set them in ambush between Bethel and Ai, on the west side of i the city. 13 And when they had set the people, all the army that *was* on the north of the city, and its rear guard on the west of the city, Joshua went that night into the midst of the valley.

14 Now it happened, when the king of Ai saw *it,* that the men of the city hurried and rose early and went out against Israel to battle, he and all his people, at an appointed place before the plain. But he j did not know that *there was* an ambush against him behind the city. 15 And Joshua and all Israel j made as if they were beaten before them, and fled by the way of the wilderness. 16 So all the people who *were* in Ai were called together to pursue them. And they pursued Joshua and were drawn away from the city. 17 There was not a man left in Ai or Bethel who did not go out after Israel. So they left the city open and pursued Israel.

18 Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Stretch out the spear that *is* in your hand toward Ai, for I will give it into your hand." And Joshua stretched out the spear that *was* in his hand toward the city. 19 So *those in* ambush arose quickly out of their place; they ran as soon as he had stretched out his hand, and they entered the city and took it, and hurried to set the city on fire. 20 And when the men of Ai looked behind them, they saw, and behold, the smoke of the city ascended to heaven. So they had no power to flee this way or that way, and the people who had fled to the wilderness turned back on the pursuers.

21 Now when Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had taken the city and that the smoke of the city ascended, they turned back and struck down the men of Ai. 22 Then the others came out of the city against them; so they were *caught* in the midst of Israel, some on this side and some on that side. And they struck them down, so that they k let none of them remain or escape. 23 But the king of Ai they took alive, and brought him to Joshua.

24 And it came to pass when Israel had made an end of slaying all the inhabitants of Ai in the field, in the wilderness where they pursued them, and when they all had fallen by the edge of the sword until they were consumed, that all the Israelites returned to Ai and struck it with the edge of the sword. 25 So it was *that* all who fell that day, both men and women, *were* twelve thousand—all the people of Ai. 26 For Joshua did not draw back his hand, with which he stretched out the spear, until he had l utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai. 27 m Only the livestock and the spoil of that city Israel took as booty for themselves, according to the word of the LORD which He had n commanded Joshua. 28 So Joshua burned Ai and made it o a heap forever, a desolation to this day. 29 p And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until evening. q And as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his corpse down from the tree, cast it at the entrance of the gate of the city, and r raise over it a great heap of stones *that remains* to this day.

Joshua Renews the Covenant

30 Now Joshua built an altar to the LORD God of Israel s in Mount Ebal, 31 as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the Book of the Law of Moses: t "an altar of whole stones over which no man has wielded an iron *tool.*" And u they offered

■ **8:12 five thousand.** The number differing from the "thirty thousand" in v. 3 may indicate that there were two units assigned to different aspects of the ambush.

■ **8:14 the plain.** The Jordan Valley.

■ **8:15 the wilderness.** Uncultivated land to the east of Ai, not the desert on the other side of the Jordan Valley (v. 24).

■ **8:17 or Bethel.** The sudden inclusion of Bethel is not explained, but see 12:9, 16.

■ **8:18 the spear.** Compare Moses' action in Ex. 14:16; 17:9.

■ **8:28, 29 to this day.** See note on 4:9.

■ **8:29 hanged on a tree.** This action is a sign of the curse of God (21:22, 23; cf. Gal. 3:13).

■ **8:30–35** The first phase of the account of the conquest (6:1—8:35) concludes with the assembly of the people at Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim to hear God's promise of blessing and His warning of curse. This assembly was commanded by Moses (Deut. 11:29; 27:1–13); it shows

on it burnt offerings to the LORD, and sacrificed peace offerings. 32 And there, in the presence of the children of Israel, [v]he wrote on the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he had written. 33 Then all Israel, with their elders and officers and judges, stood on either side of the ark before the priests, the Levites, [w]who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, [x]the stranger as well as he who was born among them. Half of them *were* in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, [y]as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel. 34 And afterward [z]he read all the words of the law, [a]the blessings and the cursings, according to all that is written in the [b]Book of the Law. 35 There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel, [c]with the women, the little ones, [d]and the strangers who were living among them.

32 [v]Deut. 27:2, 3, 8
33 [w]Deut. 31:9, 25 [x]Deut. 31:12 [y]Deut. 11:29; 27:12
34 [z]Neh. 8:3 [a]Deut. 28:2, 15, 45; 29:20, 21; 30:19 [b]Josh. 1:8
35 [c]Deut. 31:12 [d]Josh. 8:33

The Treaty with the Gibeonites

CHAPTER 9

9 And it came to pass when [a]all the kings who *were* on this side of the Jordan, in the hills and in the lowland and in all the coasts of [b]the Great Sea toward Lebanon—[c]the Hittite, the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite—heard *about it,* 2 that they [d]gathered together to fight with Joshua and Israel with one [1]accord.

3 But when the inhabitants of [e]Gibeon [f]heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, 4 they

1 [a]Josh. 3:10 [b]Num. 34:6 [c]Ex. 3:17; 23:23
2 [d]Ps. 83:3, 5 [1]Lit. *mouth*
3 [e]Josh. 9:17, 22; 10:2; 21:17 [f]Josh. 6:27

that the life of Israel, including entry into the Promised Land, is established by the covenant and must be lived under the words of God (v. 34).

■ **8:30 Mount Ebal.** Just north of Shechem, where Abraham heard God's promise to give the land to his descendants, and where he built an altar to God (Gen. 12:6, 7). Joshua's altar built in the same location many years later accompanied the repetition and renewal of the covenant promises.

■ **8:31 Moses the servant of the LORD.** See note on 1:1.

the Book of the Law of Moses. See note on 1:8. Here the reference is to Deut. 27:5 (cf. Ex. 20:25).

whole stones. These were used to show it belonged to the Lord (Ex. 20:25 note).

burnt offerings. Offerings were essential for the establishment of the covenant with God. See Gen. 15:9, 10; Ex. 20:24.

■ **8:32 in the presence of the children of Israel . . . the law of Moses.** The Word of God is set before the people.

stones. These could be the stones of the altar, but Deut. 27:1–8 indicates that special stones could be set up as writing surfaces.

■ **8:33 the ark.** At the center of the assembly of Israel is the symbol of the covenant that makes them the people of God and according to which they have received the land (3:3; 6:4; 7:6 and notes).

bless the people of Israel. Although blessings and curses will be read (v. 34), blessing has priority in the purpose of God. In Gen. 12:1–3, blessing sums up the good that God promised Abraham (14:13; 22:6).

■ **8:34 the blessings and the cursings.** Both sides of the covenant of God have already been experienced in the land: blessing in ch. 6 and 8:1–29, cursing in ch. 7. See Deut. 27—28.

■ **8:35 assembly.** This gathering of the people of God to hear this word continues in the time of the New Testament church (cf. Deut. 9:10).

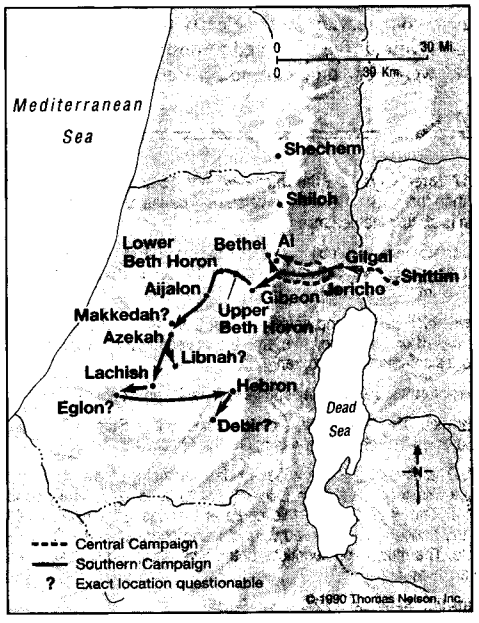
■ **9:1, 2** These verses form the background to chs. 9—12. The fear of the Israelites that immobilized the Canaanites in 5:1 here unites them against Joshua and Israel. There is an anticipation of Ps. 2:1–3, the opposition to God and His rule that culminated in the crucifixion of Jesus (Acts 4:25–27). The impotence of the rulers in Ps. 2 is amply illustrated by the list of defeated kings in Josh. 12.

Hittite . . . Jebusite. See note on 3:10.

■ **9:3 Gibeon.** The action of the people of Gibeon (eight miles north of Jerusalem) is in contrast to the general pattern throughout Canaan (vv. 1, 2).

heard. The effect of the news of God's powerful faithfulness to His promises is an important theme in the account of the conquest (2:10, 11; 5:1; 9:1, 9; 10:1; 11:1; cf. 7:9). For the Canaanites this news was terrifying, for it meant that the God of heaven and earth (2:11) would destroy them (5:13—12:24 note).

■ **9:4 worked craftily.** This deception will bring a curse on the Gibeonites (v. 23) and is a contrast to Rahab's action towards the representatives of Israel in ch. 2.



The Conquest of Canaan (Central and Southern Campaigns). From the camp at Gilgal Joshua launched two campaigns. The central campaign conquered Jericho, Bethel and Ai. The southern campaign defeated a coalition of Canaanite kings, pushing as far as Debir.

worked craftily, and went and [2]pretended to be ambassadors. And they took old sacks on their donkeys, old wineskins torn and [3]mended, [5] old and patched sandals on their feet, and old garments on themselves; and all the bread of their provision was dry *and* moldy. [6] And they went to Joshua, [g]to the camp at Gilgal, and said to him and to the men of Israel, "We have come from a far country; now therefore, make a [4]covenant with us."

[7] Then the men of Israel said to the [h]Hivites, "Perhaps you dwell among us; so [i]how can we make a covenant with you?"

[8] But they said to Joshua, [j]"We *are* your servants."

And Joshua said to them, "Who *are* you, and where do you come from?"

[9] So they said to him: [k]"From a very far country your servants have come, because of the name of the LORD your God; for we have [l]heard of His fame, and all that He did in Egypt, [10] and [m]all that He did to the two kings of the Amorites who *were* beyond the Jordan—to Sihon king of Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, who was at Ashtaroth. [11] Therefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spoke to us, saying, 'Take provisions with you for the journey, and go to meet them, and say to them, "We *are* your servants; now therefore, make a covenant with us." ' [12] This bread of ours we took hot *for* our provision from our houses on the day we departed to come to you. But now look, it is dry and moldy. [13] And these wineskins which we filled *were* new, and see, they are torn; and these our garments and our sandals have become old because of the very long journey."

[14] Then the men of Israel took some of their provisions; [n]but they [5]did not ask counsel of the LORD. [15] So Joshua [o]made peace with them, and made a covenant with them to let them live; and the rulers of the congregation swore to them.

[16] And it happened at the end of three days, after they had made a covenant with them, that they heard that they *were* their neighbors who dwelt near them. [17] Then the children of Israel journeyed and came to their cities on the third day. Now their cities *were* [p]Gibeon, Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kirjath Jearim. [18] But the children of Israel did not [6]attack them, [q]because the rulers of the congregation had sworn to them by the LORD God of Israel. And all the congregation complained against the rulers.

[19] Then all the rulers said to all the congregation, "We have sworn to them by the LORD God of Israel; now therefore, we may not touch them. [20] This we will do to them: We will let them live, lest [r]wrath be upon us because of the oath which we swore to them." [21] And the rulers said to them, "Let them live, but let them be [s]woodcutters and water carriers for all the congregation, as the rulers had [t]promised them."

[22] Then Joshua called for them, and he spoke to them, saying, "Why have you deceived us, saying, [u]'We *are* very far from you,' when [v]you dwell near us? [23] Now therefore, you *are* [w]cursed, and none of you shall be freed from being slaves—woodcutters and water carriers for the house of my God."

[24] So they answered Joshua and said, "Because your servants were clearly told that the LORD your God [x]commanded His servant Moses to give you all the land, and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you; therefore [y]we were very much afraid for our lives because of

4 [2]*acted as envoys* [3]Lit. *tied up*
6 [g]Josh. 5:10 [4]*treaty*
7 [h]Josh. 9:1; 11:19 [i]Ex. 23:32; Deut. 7:2
8 [j]Deut. 20:11; 2 Kin. 10:5
9 [k]Deut. 20:15 [l]Ex. 15:14; Josh. 2:9, 10; 5:1
10 [m]Num. 21:24, 33
14 [n]Num. 27:21; Is. 30:1 [5]Lit. *did not inquire at the mouth of*
15 [o]2 Sam. 21:2
17 [p]Josh. 18:25
18 [q]Ps. 15:4 [6]*strike*
20 [r]2 Sam. 21:1, 2, 6; Ezek. 17:13, 15
21 [s]Deut. 29:11 [t]Josh. 9:15
22 [u]Josh. 9:6, 9 [v]Josh. 9:16
23 [w]Gen. 9:25
24 [x]Ex. 23:31–33; Deut. 7:1, 2 [y]Ex. 15:14

■ **9:6 We have come from a far country.** The Gibeonites pretend that they live outside Israel's potential zone of interest. The Israelites were prepared to make a treaty with them because of the provisions of Deut. 20:10–18.

covenant. A covenant is a treaty relationship. This covenant would commit Israel to spare the Gibeonites.

■ **9:7 Hivites.** This ethnic group, to which the Gibeonites belonged, was one of those God had promised to drive out of Canaan (3:10).

■ **9:9 name.** See note on 7:9.

heard. See note on v. 3.

■ **9:10 all that He did.** The news the Gibeonites had heard is the same as that confessed by Rahab (2:10 note). Their reaction was quite different from hers.

Amorites. See note on 2:10.

■ **9:14 did not ask counsel of the LORD.** How they should have sought counsel is not specified, but as in 5:6, Israel's failure is a failure to obey God.

■ **9:15 made peace.** The sense is explained by the following phrase "to let them live."

■ **9:16, 17 three days . . . the third day.** If v. 16 anticipates the result of v. 17, then the three days in each verse may be the same. From Gilgal to Gibeon is about nineteen miles.

■ **9:18 complained.** Grumbling (against Moses, Aaron, and ultimately the Lord) was a common activity of Israel in the desert (Ex. 15:24; 16:2, 7–9; 17:3; Num. 14:2, 27, 36).

■ **9:20 wrath.** See 7:11 and note. Contrast this oath, kept scrupulously although based on a Gibeonite lie, and the covenant of ch. 7:11, based on the Lord's command, but broken.

■ **9:21 woodcutters and water carriers.** That is, household slaves.

■ **9:23 house.** The tabernacle is called a house in 1 Sam. 1:7. At the time of Solomon the tabernacle was at Gibeon (2 Chr. 1:3, 5).

my God. The danger posed by Canaanites remaining in the land was that they would turn Israel from following the Lord to serve other gods (Deut. 7:4). The implication of this curse is that the Gibeonites would serve in the house of Israel's God without being counted as members of His people. The rituals and sacrifices of the tabernacle required supplies of wood and water.

■ **9:24 afraid.** See note on 2:9.

you, and have done this thing. 25 And now, here we are, [z]in your hands; do with us as it seems good and right to do to us." 26 So he did to them, and delivered them out of the hand of the children of Israel, so that they did not kill them. 27 And that day Joshua made them [a]woodcutters and water carriers for the congregation and for the altar of the LORD, [b]in the place which He would choose, even to this day.

The Sun Stands Still

10 Now it came to pass when Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem [a]heard how Joshua had taken [b]Ai and had utterly destroyed it—[c]as he had done to Jericho and its king, so he had done to [d]Ai and its king—and [e]how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel and were among them, 2 that they [f]feared greatly, because Gibeon *was* a great city, like one of the royal cities, and because it *was* greater than Ai, and all its men *were* mighty. 3 Therefore Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem sent to Hoham king of Hebron, Piram king of Jarmuth, Japhia king of Lachish, and Debir king of Eglon, saying, 4 "Come up to me and help me, that we may attack Gibeon, for [g]it has made peace with Joshua and with the children of Israel." 5 Therefore the five kings of the [h]Amorites, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, *and* the king of Eglon, [i]gathered together and went up, they and all their armies, and camped before Gibeon and made war against it.

6 And the men of Gibeon sent to Joshua at the camp [j]at Gilgal, saying, "Do not forsake your servants; come up to us quickly, save us and help us, for all the kings of the Amorites who dwell in the mountains have gathered together against us."

7 So Joshua ascended from Gilgal, he and [k]all the people of war with him, and all the mighty men of valor. 8 And the LORD said to Joshua, [l]"Do not fear them, for I have delivered them into your hand; [m]not a man of them shall [n]stand before you." 9 Joshua therefore came upon them suddenly, having marched all night from Gilgal. 10 So the LORD [o]routed them before Israel, killed them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, chased them along the road that goes [p]to Beth Horon, and struck them down as far as [q]Azekah and Makkedah. 11 And it happened, as they fled before Israel *and* were on the descent of Beth Horon, [r]that the LORD cast down large hailstones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died. *There were* more who died from the hailstones than the children of Israel killed with the sword.

12 Then Joshua spoke to the LORD in the day when the LORD delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel:

[s]"Sun, stand still over Gibeon;
And Moon, in the Valley of [t]Aijalon."
13 So the sun stood still,

25 [z]Gen. 16:6

27 [a]Josh. 9:21, 23 [b]Deut. 12:5

CHAPTER 10

1 [a]Josh. 9:1 [b]Josh. 8:1 [c]Josh. 6:21 [d]Josh. 8:22, 26, 28 [e]Josh. 9:15

2 [f]Ex. 15:14–16; Deut. 11:25; 1 Chr. 14:17

4 [g]Josh. 9:15; 10:1

5 [h]Num. 13:29 [i]Josh. 9:2

6 [j]Josh. 5:10; 9:6

7 [k]Josh. 8:1

8 [l]Josh. 11:6; Judg. 4:14 [m]Josh. 1:5, 9 [n]Josh. 21:44

10 [o]Judg. 4:15; 1 Sam. 7:10, 12; Is. 28:21 [p]Josh. 16:3, 5 [q]Josh. 15:35

11 [r]Is. 30:30; Rev. 16:21

12 [s]Is. 28:21; Hab. 3:11 [t]Judg. 12:12

■ **9:27 the place which He would choose.** See Deut. 12; cf. Ex. 20:24.

to this day. See note on 4:9.

■ **10:1–43** The hostility anticipated in 9:1, 2 begins to emerge; in ch. 10 the hostile nations to the south are overthrown by remarkable divine intervention. The scheming of the five kings (v. 4) and their destruction (v. 26, 40–42) is like what is described in Ps. 2 (9:1, 2 note), and demonstrates the great power of God to fulfill His promises. This is the kind of battle described in Deut. 20, not ultimately fought by Israel but by God (v. 14 and Deut. 20:4).

■ **10:1 Adoni-Zedek.** His name means "my Lord is righteous." Compare the name of Melchizedek, who was king in Salem (or Jerusalem); see Gen. 14:18 note.

Jerusalem. This is the first time this form of the city's name occurs in the Bible; in Gen. 14:18 it is referred to as "Salem."

utterly destroyed. See notes on 6:17, 18.

peace. See 9:15.

■ **10:2 feared.** See note on 2:9.

a great city, like one of the royal cities. Gibeon did not have a king (9:11) but was as important as the Canaanite city-states with kings.

■ **10:3 Hoham . . . Debir.** These were the kings of five southern Canaanite cities.

■ **10:5 Amorites.** See note on 2:10.

■ **10:6 save us and help us.** The treaty relationship between Gibeon and Israel (9:15) allowed Gibeon to appeal for help from Israel, the stronger of the treaty partners. This aspect of a human covenant illustrates an aspect of the covenant between God and Israel.

■ **10:8 Do not fear . . . I have delivered them.** The particular actions in this chapter take place under the promises of God introduced in ch. 1. See 1:2, 3, 5–9; 8:1 and notes.

■ **10:9 all night.** Gilgal was at the bottom of the Jordan Valley and Gibeon was on top of a mountain twenty miles to the west.

■ **10:10 routed them.** The same expression is often used in descriptions of battles where the Lord is the Divine Warrior (2:9 note; Ex. 14:24; 23:27; Judg. 4:15; 1 Sam. 7:10; 2 Sam. 22:15; cf. Jer. 51:34).

■ **10:11 more who died from the hailstones.** This emphasizes that the victory was a gift to Israel. Experiences like this illuminate the use of storm phenomena in poetic descriptions of God's judgment (Ps. 18:7–16; Is. 30:30).

■ **10:12 in the day.** This account may be a flashback; the chronological order of events is hard to discern.

"Sun . . . Moon." These rhetorical words addressed to the sun and moon are in reality a prayer to the Lord.

■ **10:13 the sun stood still.** The words describe what happened in everyday language that does not explain the nature of the miracle.

the Book of Jasher. A literary work now lost, possibly a celebration of the lives of Israelite heroes (2 Sam. 1:18). The quotation from the Book

13 [u] 2 Sam. 1:18

14 [v] Is. 38:7, 8 [w] Ex. 14:14; Deut. 1:30; 20:4; Josh. 10:42; 23:3

15 [x] Josh. 10:43

21 [y] Ex. 11:7 [1] *criticized,* lit. *sharpened his tongue*

24 [z] Ps. 107:40; Is. 26:5, 6; Mal. 4:3

25 [a] Deut. 31:6–8; Josh. 1:9 [b] Deut. 3:21; 7:19 [2] The captains

26 [c] Josh. 8:29; 2 Sam. 21:9 [3] The kings

27 [d] Deut. 21:22, 23; Josh. 8:29

28 [e] Deut. 7:2, 16 [f] Josh. 6:21 [4] So with MT and most authorities; many Heb. mss., some LXX mss., and some Tg. mss. *it*

29 [g] Josh. 15:42; 21:13; 2 Kin. 8:22; 19:8

And the moon stopped,
Till the people had revenge
Upon their enemies.

[u] *Is* this not written in the Book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and did not hasten to go *down* for about a whole day. [14] And there has been [v] no day like that, before it or after it, that the LORD heeded the voice of a man; for [w] the LORD fought for Israel.

[15] [x] Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal.

The Amorite Kings Executed

[16] But these five kings had fled and hidden themselves in a cave at Makkedah. [17] And it was told Joshua, saying, "The five kings have been found hidden in the cave at Makkedah."

[18] So Joshua said, "Roll large stones against the mouth of the cave, and set men by it to guard them. [19] And do not stay *there* yourselves, *but* pursue your enemies, and attack their rear *guard.* Do not allow them to enter their cities, for the LORD your God has delivered them into your hand." [20] Then it happened, while Joshua and the children of Israel made an end of slaying them with a very great slaughter, till they had finished, that those who escaped entered fortified cities. [21] And all the people returned to the camp, to Joshua at Makkedah, in peace.

[y] No one [1] moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel.

[22] Then Joshua said, "Open the mouth of the cave, and bring out those five kings to me from the cave." [23] And they did so, and brought out those five kings to him from the cave: the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, *and* the king of Eglon.

[24] So it was, when they brought out those kings to Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said to the captains of the men of war who went with him, "Come near, put your feet on the necks of these kings." And they drew near and [z] put their feet on their necks. [25] Then Joshua said to [2] them, [a] "Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed; be strong and of good courage, for [b] thus the LORD will do to all your enemies against whom you fight." [26] And afterward Joshua struck [3] them and killed them, and hanged them on five trees; and they [c] were hanging on the trees until evening. [27] So it was at the time of the going down of the sun *that* Joshua commanded, and they [d] took them down from the trees, cast them into the cave where they had been hidden, and laid large stones against the cave's mouth, *which remain* until this very day.

Conquest of the Southland

[28] On that day Joshua took Makkedah, and struck it and its king with the edge of the sword. He utterly [e] destroyed [4] them—all the people who *were* in it. He let none remain. He also did to the king of Makkedah [f] as he had done to the king of Jericho.

[29] Then Joshua passed from Makkedah, and all Israel with him, to [g] Libnah; and they fought against Libnah. [30] And the LORD also delivered it and its king into the hand of Israel; he struck it and all the people who *were* in it with the edge of the sword. He let none remain in it, but did to its king as he had done to the king of Jericho.

[31] Then Joshua passed from Libnah, and all Israel with him, to Lachish; and they encamped against it and fought against it. [32] And the LORD delivered Lachish into the hand of Israel, who took it on the second day, and struck it and all the people who *were* in it with the edge of the sword, according to all that he had done to Libnah. [33] Then Horam king of Gezer came up to help Lachish; and Joshua struck him and his people, until he left him none remaining.

[34] From Lachish Joshua passed to Eglon, and all Israel with him; and they encamped against it and fought against it. [35] They took it on that day and struck it with the edge of the sword; all the people who *were* in it he utterly destroyed that day, according to all that he had done to Lachish.

of Jasher may extend as far as the end of v. 15. The biblical writers often use written sources (Luke 1:1–4).

■ **10:14 the LORD fought for Israel.** See Deut. 20, especially v. 4; cf. Ex. 14:14.

■ **10:16–27** The narrative returns to the events of v. 10 to finish the story of the five kings introduced in v. 5.

■ **10:19 the LORD . . . has delivered.** The action of God, in terms of His promise, still dominates the account. See vv. 8, 10, 14.

■ **10:21 No one moved his tongue.** Not even a word, let alone a weapon, could be raised against God's army.

■ **10:24 your feet on the necks.** This is a vivid, symbolic ritual of victory. Defeated enemies are often said to be "under the feet" of the victor (1 Kin. 5:3; Ps. 110:1; 1 Cor. 15:25), and Egyptian royal footstools depict the Pharaoh's feet on his enemies' necks.

■ **10:26 hanged them on five trees.** See note on 8:29.

■ **10:27 until this very day.** See note on 4:9.

■ **10:28–39** These verses are a summary account of victories over cities in southern Canaan. The account emphasizes the complete destruction of the towns according to the judgment of God (vv. 28—39; 6:17, 18 and notes). Another emphasis is the unity of Israel (1:12–15) under Joshua's leadership (1:1–9).

36 So Joshua went up from Eglon, and all Israel with him, to [h]Hebron; and they fought against it. 37 And they took it and struck it with the edge of the sword—its king, all its cities, and all the people who *were* in it; he left none remaining, according to all that he had done to Eglon, but utterly destroyed it and all the people who *were* in it.

38 Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to [i]Debir; and they fought against it. 39 And he took it and its king and all its cities; they struck them with the edge of the sword and utterly destroyed all the people who *were* in it. He left none remaining; as he had done to Hebron, so he did to Debir and its king, as he had done also to Libnah and its king.

40 So Joshua conquered all the land: the [j]mountain country and the [5]South and the lowland and the wilderness slopes, and [k]all their kings; he left none remaining, but [l]utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the LORD God of Israel had commanded. 41 And Joshua conquered them from [m]Kadesh Barnea as far as [n]Gaza, [o]and all the country of Goshen, even as far as Gibeon. 42 All these kings and their land Joshua took at one time, [p]because the LORD God of Israel fought for Israel. 43 Then Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to the camp at Gilgal.

The Northern Conquest

11 And it came to pass, when Jabin king of Hazor heard *these things,* that he [a]sent to Jobab king of Madon, to the king [b]of Shimron, to the king of Achshaph, 2 and to the kings who *were* from the north, in the mountains, in the plain south of [c]Chinneroth, in the lowland, and in the heights [d]of Dor on the west, 3 to the Canaanites in the east and in the west, the [e]Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Jebusite in the mountains, [f]and the Hivite below [g]Hermon [h]in the land of Mizpah. 4 So they went out, they and all their armies with them, *as* many people [i]*as* the sand that *is* on the seashore in multitude, with very many horses and chariots. 5 And when all these kings had [1]met together, they came and camped together at the waters of Merom to fight against Israel.

6 But the LORD said to Joshua, [j]"Do not be afraid because of them, for tomorrow about this time I will deliver all of them slain before Israel. You shall [k]hamstring their horses and burn their chariots with fire." 7 So Joshua and all the people of war with him came against them suddenly by the waters of Merom, and they attacked them. 8 And the LORD delivered them into the hand of Israel, who defeated them and chased them to [2]Greater [l]Sidon, to the [3]Brook

36 [h]Josh. 14:13–15; 15:13

38 [i]Josh. 15:15

40 [j]Deut. 1:7 [k]Deut. 7:24 [l]Deut. 20:16, 17 [5]Heb. *Negev,* and so throughout the book

41 [m]Deut. 9:23 [n]Gen. 10:19 [o]Josh. 11:16; 15:51

42 [p]Josh. 10:14

CHAPTER 11

1 [a]Josh. 10:3 [b]Josh. 19:15

2 [c]Num. 34:11 [d]Josh. 17:11

3 [e]Josh. 9:1 [f]Judg. 3:3, 5 [g]Josh. 11:17; 13:5, 11 [h]Gen. 31:49

4 [i]Judg. 7:12

5 [1]Lit. *assembled by appointment*

6 [j]Josh. 10:8 [k]2 Sam. 8:4

8 [l]Gen. 49:13 [2]Heb. *Sidon Rabbah* [3]Heb. *Misrephoth Maim,* lit. *Burnings of Water*

■ **11:1–23** The account of the conquest of the northern region of Palestine is similar in its emphases to the report of the southern victories in ch. 10 (10:1–43 note), and brings the book's record of Israel's taking of the land to a conclusion.

■ **11:1–5** Compare the reaction of the Canaanite kings in 10:1–5.

■ **11:1 Jabin king of Hazor.** Hazor was an important city in northern Palestine (v. 10). Jabin was possibly an inherited title (Judg. 4:2).

heard. See note on 9:3.

■ **11:2 Chinneroth.** Probably near the Sea of Galilee (12:3).

the lowland. The Jordan Valley.

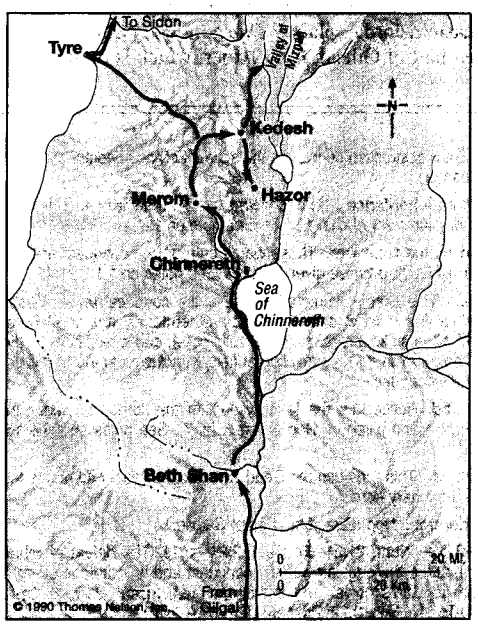
Dor. On the Mediterranean coast.

■ **11:4 many people.** The enormous threat posed by the Canaanites is vividly presented as the background to the promise in v. 6.

■ **11:6 Do not be afraid.** The promise of God (1:2, 3, 9), against the background of vv. 4, 5, again creates a possibility not inherent in the situation. See notes on 6:2; 8:1; 10:8.

I will deliver. The Hebrew wording is emphatic and identical to "I am giving" in 1:2.

hamstring their horses and burn their chariots. This is a promise that God will prevail over the most advanced weapons of the time (Ps. 20:7).



The Conquest of Canaan (Northern Campaign). A coalition of kings, including Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, and Hivites, fought against Joshua at the waters of Merom. Joshua's armies pursued some of them toward Tyre and Sidon and others toward Kedesh, while also turning aside to destroy Hazor.

8 [m]Josh. 13:6
11 [n]Deut. 20:16 [o]Josh. 10:40
12 [p]Num. 33:50–56
13 [q]Heb. *tel,* a heap of successive city ruins
14 [q]Deut. 20:14–18
15 [r]Ex. 34:10–17 [s]Deut. 31:7, 8 [t]Josh. 1:7 [5]Lit. *He turned aside from nothing*
16 [u]Josh. 12:8 [v]Josh. 10:40, 41 [6]Heb. *arabah*
17 [w]Josh. 12:7 [x]Deut. 7:24 [7]Lit. *The Smooth* or *Bald Mountain*
19 [y]Josh. 9:3–7
20 [z]Deut. 2:30 [a]Deut. 20:16, 17 [8]Lit. *to make strong*
21 [b]Num. 13:22, 33
22 [c]1 Sam. 17:4 [d]Josh. 15:46
23 [e]Num. 34:2–15 [f]Num. 26:53 [g]Deut. 12:9, 10; 25:19

CHAPTER 12

1 [a]Num. 21:24 [b]Deut. 3:8
2 [c]Deut. 2:24–27

[m]Misrephoth, and to the Valley of Mizpah eastward; they attacked them until they left none of them remaining. 9 So Joshua did to them as the LORD had told him: he hamstrung their horses and burned their chariots with fire.

10 Joshua turned back at that time and took Hazor, and struck its king with the sword; for Hazor was formerly the head of all those kingdoms. 11 And they struck all the people who *were* in it with the edge of the sword, [n]utterly destroying *them.* There was none left [o]breathing. Then he burned Hazor with fire.

12 So all the cities of those kings, and all their kings, Joshua took and struck with the edge of the sword. He utterly destroyed them, [p]as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded. 13 But *as for* the cities that stood on their [4]mounds, Israel burned none of them, except Hazor only, *which* Joshua burned. 14 And all the [q]spoil of these cities and the livestock, the children of Israel took as booty for themselves; but they struck every man with the edge of the sword until they had destroyed them, and they left none breathing. 15 [r]As the LORD had commanded Moses his servant, so [s]Moses commanded Joshua, and [t]so Joshua did. [5]He left nothing undone of all that the LORD had commanded Moses.

Summary of Joshua's Conquests

16 Thus Joshua took all this land: [u]the mountain country, all the South, [v]all the land of Goshen, the lowland, and the Jordan [6]plain—the mountains of Israel and its lowlands, 17 [w]from [7]Mount Halak and the ascent to Seir, even as far as Baal Gad in the Valley of Lebanon below Mount Hermon. He captured [x]all their kings, and struck them down and killed them. 18 Joshua made war a long time with all those kings. 19 There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, except [y]the Hivites, the inhabitants of Gibeon. All *the others* they took in battle. 20 For [z]it was of the LORD [8]to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that He might utterly destroy them, *and* that they might receive no mercy, but that He might destroy them, [a]as the LORD had commanded Moses.

21 And at that time Joshua came and cut off [b]the Anakim from the mountains: from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, from all the mountains of Judah, and from all the mountains of Israel; Joshua utterly destroyed them with their cities. 22 None of the Anakim were left in the land of the children of Israel; they remained only [c]in Gaza, in Gath, [d]and in Ashdod.

23 So Joshua took the whole land, [e]according to all that the LORD had said to Moses; and Joshua gave it as an inheritance to Israel [f]according to their divisions by their tribes. Then the land [g]rested from war.

The Kings Conquered by Moses

12 These *are* the kings of the land whom the children of Israel defeated, and whose land they possessed on the other side of the Jordan toward the rising of the sun, [a]from the River Arnon [b]to Mount Hermon, and all the eastern Jordan plain: 2 *One king was* [c]Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon *and* ruled half of Gilead, from Aroer, which is on the bank

■ **11:11 utterly destroying.** The same term occurs in vv. 12, 20, 21. See note on 6:17.

■ **11:12 as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded.** The success of the conquest is emphatically portrayed in terms of obedience to the commands of God given through Moses (1:1–18; 1:1, 3; 5:15 and notes). The writer makes the closest possible connection between the promises of God (v. 6 note) and His commands. Faith and obedience cannot be separated. See note on 1:7.

■ **11:16 all this land.** In principle the whole land now belonged to the Israelites, although there was "very much land yet to be possessed" (13:1).

■ **11:18 a long time.** This is an indication that the preceding chapters present a greatly condensed account.

■ **11:19 made peace.** See 9:6, 15.

■ **11:20 it was of the LORD to harden.** The relationship between divine sovereignty and human responsibility is seen in the divine hardening of hearts to achieve His purposes. God's sovereign act does not overthrow either His justice or human responsibility (Ex. 10:1, 2; Rom. 9:14–29).

■ **11:21, 22 Anakim.** These people were the fearful inhabitants of Canaan who had frightened the Israelites into disobedience a generation earlier (Num. 13:26–33; Deut. 1:28; 2:10–12 and notes; Josh. 14:12; 15:14). Their destruction concludes the account of the obedient conquest under Joshua.

■ **11:23 an inheritance . . . according to . . . their tribes.** This is an anticipatory summary of chs. 13—21. See note on 1:6.

the land rested from war. These words sum up the conquest and the fulfillment of God's promise given in 1:2–5. See notes on 1:13; 21:45.

■ **12:1–24** This chapter summarizes the entire conquest under Moses and Joshua with a list of defeated kings and territories. It is an elaboration of 11:17, a striking resolution to 9:1, 2 (note), and a testimony to the truth of the promise in 1:5, providing a fitting conclusion to the whole account of the conquest.

■ **12:1 land.** Notice that the territory east of the Jordan is clearly included in the land given by God to Israel (v. 7). See notes on 1:12–15; 13:8–33.

River Arnon. This runs into the Dead Sea from the east and marks the southern boundary here.

Mount Hermon. Northeast of the Sea of Galilee.

■ **12:2–5** See Num. 21:21–35; Deut. 2:24—3:11. The defeat of Sihon and Og marked the beginning of the conquest and is remembered as a testimony to God's power and faithfulness (e.g., Deut. 29:7, 8; 31:4; Josh. 2:10; 9:10; Neh. 9:22; Ps. 135:11; 136:19, 20).

of the River Arnon, from the middle of that river, even as far as the River Jabbok, *which is* the border of the Ammonites, 3 and [d]the eastern Jordan plain from the [f]Sea of Chinneroth as far as the [2]Sea of the Arabah (the Salt Sea), [e]the road to Beth Jeshimoth, and [3]southward below [f]the[4] slopes of Pisgah. 4 [g]*The other king was* Og king of Bashan and his territory, *who was* of [h]the remnant of the giants, [i]who dwelt at Ashtaroth and at Edrei, 5 and reigned over [j]Mount Hermon, [k]over Salcah, over all Bashan, [l]as far as the border of the Geshurites and the Maachathites, and over half of Gilead *to* the border of Sihon king of Heshbon.

6 [m]These Moses the servant of the LORD and the children of Israel had conquered; and [n]Moses the servant of the LORD had given it *as* a possession to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh.

The Kings Conquered by Joshua

7 And these *are* the kings of the country [o]which Joshua and the children of Israel conquered on this side of the Jordan, on the west, from Baal Gad in the Valley of Lebanon as far as [5]Mount Halak and the ascent to [p]Seir, which Joshua [q]gave to the tribes of Israel *as* a possession according to their divisions, 8 [r]in the mountain country, in the lowlands, in the *Jordan* plain, in the slopes, in the wilderness, and in the South—[s]the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites: 9 [t]the king of Jericho, one; [u]the king of Ai, which *is* beside Bethel, one; 10 [v]the king of Jerusalem, one; the king of Hebron, one; 11 the king of Jarmuth, one; the king of Lachish, one; 12 the king of Eglon, one; [w]the king of Gezer, one; 13 [x]the king of Debir, one; the king of Geder, one; 14 the king of Hormah, one; the king of Arad, one; 15 [y]the king of Libnah, one; the king of Adullam, one; 16 [z]the king of Makkedah, one; [a]the king of Bethel, one; 17 the king of Tappuah, one; [b]the king of Hepher, one; 18 the king of Aphek, one; the king of [6]Lasharon, one; 19 the king of Madon, one; [c]the king of Hazor, one; 20 the king of [d]Shimron Meron, one; the king of Achshaph, one; 21 the king of Taanach, one; the king of Megiddo, one; 22 [e]the king of Kedesh, one; the king of Jokneam in Carmel, one; 23 the king of Dor in the [f]heights of Dor, one; the king of [g]the people of Gilgal, one; 24 the king of Tirzah, one—[h]all the kings, thirty-one.

Remaining Land to Be Conquered

13 Now Joshua [a]was old, advanced in years. And the LORD said to him: "You are old, advanced in years, and there remains very much land yet to be possessed. 2 [b]This is the land that yet remains: [c]all the territory of the Philistines and all [d]*that of* the Geshurites, 3 [e]from Sihor, which *is* east of Egypt, as far as the border of Ekron northward (*which* is counted as Canaanite); the [f]five lords of the Philistines—the Gazites, the Ashdodites, the Ashkelonites, the Gittites, and the Ekronites; also [g]the Avites; 4 from the south, all the land of the Canaanites, and Mearah that belongs to the Sidonians [h]as far as Aphek, to the border of [i]the Amorites; 5 the land of [j]the [1]Gebalites, and all Lebanon, toward the sunrise, [k]from Baal Gad below Mount Hermon as far as the entrance to Hamath; 6 all the inhabitants of the mountains from Lebanon as far as [l]the [2]Brook Misrephoth, *and* all the Sidonians—them [m]I will drive out from before the children of Israel; only [n]divide[3] it by lot to Israel as an inheritance, as I have commanded you. 7 Now therefore, divide this land as an inheritance to the nine tribes and half the tribe of Manasseh."

2 [b]Judg. 3:1–3 [c]Joel 3:4 [d]2 Sam. 3:3 **3** [e]Jer. 2:18 [f]Judg. 3:3 [g]Deut. 2:23 **4** [h]Josh. 12:18; 19:30 [i]Judg. 1:34 **5** [j]1 Kin. 5:18; Ezek. 27:9 [k]Josh. 12:7 [1]Or *Giblites* **6** [l]Josh. 11:8 [m]Josh. 23:13 [n]Josh. 14:1, 2 [2]Heb. *Misrephoth Maim,* lit. *Burnings of Water* [3]apportion

3 [d]Deut. 3:17 [e]Josh. 13:20 [f]Deut. 3:17; 4:49 [1]Sea of Galilee [2]Lit. *Sea of the Plain,* the Dead Sea [3]Or *Teman* [4]Or *Ashdoth Pisgah*

4 [g]Num. 21:33 [h]Deut. 3:11 [i]Deut. 1:4

5 [j]Deut. 3:8 [k]Deut. 3:10 [l]Deut. 3:14

6 [m]Num. 21:24, 35 [n]Num. 32:29–33

7 [o]Josh. 11:17 [p]Gen. 14:6; 32:3 [q]Josh. 11:23 [5]Lit. *The Bald Mountain*

8 [r]Josh. 10:40; 11:16 [s]Ex. 3:8; 23:23

9 [t]Josh. 6:2 [u]Josh. 8:29

10 [v]Josh. 10:23

12 [w]Josh. 10:33

13 [x]Josh. 10:38, 39

15 [y]Josh. 10:29, 30

16 [z]Josh. 10:28 [a]Judg. 1:22

17 [b]1 Kin. 4:10

18 [6]Or *Sharon*

19 [c]Josh. 11:10

20 [d]Josh. 11:1; 19:15

22 [e]Josh. 19:37; 20:7; 21:32

23 [f]Josh. 11:2 [g]Is. 9:1

24 [h]Deut. 7:24

CHAPTER 13

1 [a]Josh. 14:10; 23:1, 2

■ **12:6 Moses the servant of the LORD.** See note on 1:1.

■ **12:7–24** This summary of the conquest under Joshua approximates the account so far given, but with additions, indicating the incomplete and representative nature of the preceding account.

■ **13:1—21:45** The third major section of the book details the division of the land among the tribes. The significance of these chapters is made explicit in 21:43–45. The lists of boundaries and towns represent the objective content of the promises of God. Although many of the places are no longer known, and although their allotment here did not in all cases mean that the designated tribe actually occupied them (23:13), they nevertheless are an elaborate testimony to the faithfulness of the Lord.

■ **13:1 Joshua was old.** The implication is that further conquest will not take place under him.

very much land yet. The Book of Joshua speaks of both the complete fulfillment of God's promises (11:23; 21:45) and the incompleteness of the actual possession of the land (e.g., 13:1; 23:4–5). Compare the New Testament perspective of the completeness of what has been given in Christ, and the future expectation that still remains (e.g., Eph. 1:3, 14). While the Book of Joshua testifies to Israel's experience of the Lord's complete faithfulness, the promise remained, pointing to the future. See notes on 1:4; 21:45; Gen. 13:15.

■ **13:3 counted as Canaanite.** The Philistines were not strictly speaking Canaanites, but their territory was in Canaan and was included in God's promise to Israel.

■ **13:4 Amorites.** See note on 2:10.

■ **13:6 divide it by lot.** See 14:2; 15:1 note; 18:6; 19:51.

inheritance. See note on 1:6.

■ **13:7 Manasseh.** The older of Joseph's two sons. See Gen. 48 and notes.

8 [o]Num. 32:33
[p]Josh. 12:1–6
9 [q]Num. 21:30
10 [r]Num. 21:24, 25
11 [s]Josh. 12:5

The Land Divided East of the Jordan

8 With the other half-tribe the Reubenites and the Gadites received their inheritance, [o]which Moses had given them, [p]beyond the Jordan eastward, as Moses the servant of the LORD had given them: 9 [q]from Aroer which *is* on the bank of the River Arnon, and the town that *is* in the midst of the ravine, and all the plain of Medeba as far as Dibon; 10 [r]all the cities of Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon, as far as the border of the children of Ammon; 11 [s]Gilead, and the border of the Geshurites and Maachathites, all Mount Hermon, and all Bashan as far

■ **13:8–33** As the summary of the conquest in ch. 12 began with the kings and their territory east of the Jordan (12:1–6; cf. 1:12–15), so the account of the distribution of the land begins with the allocation of this territory to the tribes of Reuben (vv. 15–23), Gad (vv. 24–28), and the half-tribe of Manasseh (vv. 29–31) in the days of Moses. In this way what Joshua does is seen as the completion of what Moses began, and the unity of all Israel is affirmed, despite the geographical boundary of the Jordan (22:25) and the lapse of time between the work of Moses and Joshua. See ch. 22.

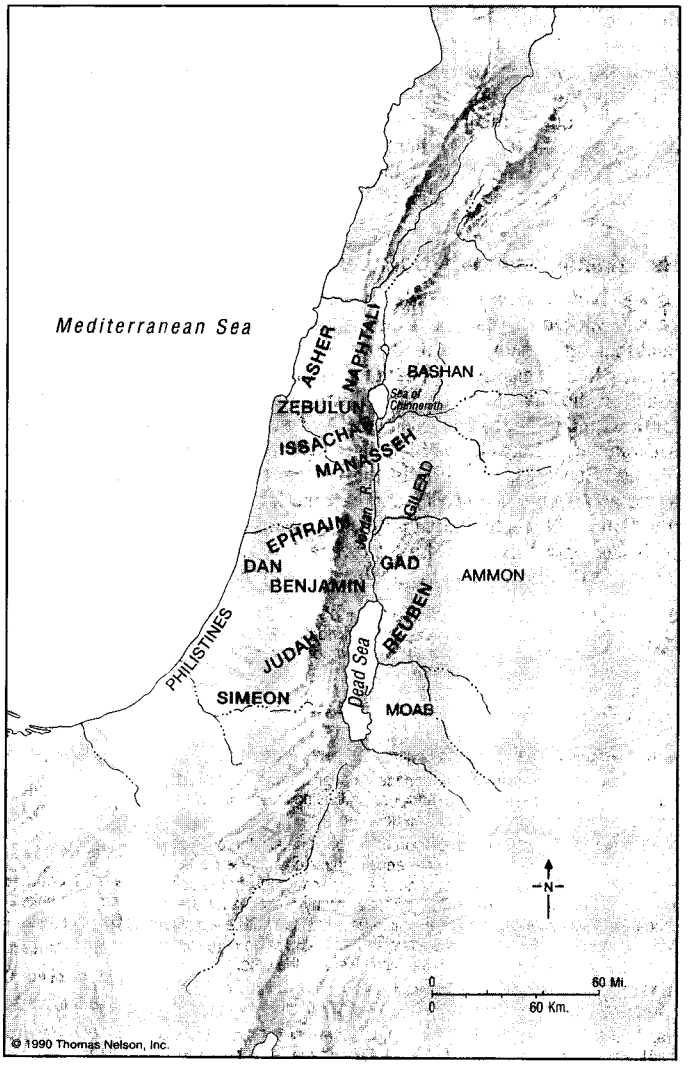
■ **13:8 Reubenites.** Reuben was Jacob's oldest son, born to Leah (Gen. 29:32; 35:22; 49:3, 4 and notes).

Gadites. Gad was Jacob's seventh son, his first from Zilpah (Gen. 30:9–11; 49:19 and note).

Division of Land Among the Twelve Tribes. When Joshua grew old, God commanded him to divide the land among the tribes in the manner that Moses had promised them, even though the total conquest of the Promised Land was not yet complete.

The tribe of Levi was given no land inheritance. The inheritance of the Levites was to be the Lord God of Israel Himself. However, the tribe of Joseph was divided into the two tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh; thus, there were still twelve tribal areas assigned.

The tribes of Gad and Reuben, as well as the half-tribe of Manasseh, were given land on the eastern side of the Jordan, to which they returned when the battles of conquest under Joshua had been concluded.



as Salcah; 12 all the kingdom of Og in Bashan, who reigned in Ashtaroth and Edrei, who remained of [t]the remnant of the giants; [u]for Moses had [4]defeated and [5]cast out these.

13 Nevertheless the children of Israel [v]did not drive out the Geshurites or the Maachathites, but the Geshurites and the Maachathites dwell among the Israelites until this day.

14 [w]Only to the tribe of Levi he had given [6]no inheritance; the sacrifices of the LORD God of Israel made by fire *are* their inheritance, [x]as He said to them.

The Land of Reuben

15 [y]And Moses had given to the tribe of the children of Reuben *an inheritance* according to their families. 16 Their territory was [z]from Aroer, which *is* on the bank of the River Arnon, [a]and the city that *is* in the midst of the ravine, [b]and all the plain by Medeba; 17 [c]Heshbon and all its cities that *are* in the plain: Dibon, Bamoth Baal, Beth Baal Meon, 18 [d]Jahaza, Kedemoth, Mephaath, 19 [e]Kirjathaim, [f]Sibmah, Zereth Shahar on the mountain of the valley, 20 Beth Peor, [g]the slopes of Pisgah, and Beth Jeshimoth— 21 [h]all the cities of the plain and all the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon, [i]whom Moses had struck [j]with the princes of Midian: Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur, and Reba, who *were* princes of Sihon dwelling in the country. 22 The children of Israel also killed with the sword [k]Balaam the son of Beor, the [7]soothsayer, among those who were killed by them. 23 And the border of the children of Reuben was the bank of the Jordan. This *was* the inheritance of the children of Reuben according to their families, the cities and their villages.

The Land of Gad

24 [l]Moses also had given *an inheritance* to the tribe of Gad, to the children of Gad according to their families. 25 [m]Their territory was Jazer, and all the cities of Gilead, [n]and half the land of the Ammonites as far as Aroer, which *is* before [o]Rabbah, 26 and from Heshbon to Ramath Mizpah and Betonim, and from Mahanaim to the border of Debir, 27 and in the valley [p]Beth Haram, Beth Nimrah, [q]Succoth, and Zaphon, the rest of the kingdom of Sihon king of Heshbon, with the Jordan as *its* border, as far as the edge [r]of the [8]Sea of Chinnereth, on the other side of the Jordan eastward. 28 This *is* the inheritance of the children of Gad according to their families, the cities and their villages.

Half the Tribe of Manasseh (East)

29 [s]Moses also had given *an inheritance* to half the tribe of Manasseh; it was for half the tribe of the children of Manasseh according to their families: 30 Their territory was from Mahanaim, all Bashan, all the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, and [t]all the towns of Jair which are in Bashan, sixty cities; 31 half of Gilead, and [u]Ashtaroth and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan, *were* for the [v]children of Machir the son of Manasseh, for half of the children of Machir according to their families.

32 These *are the areas* which Moses had [9]distributed as an inheritance in the plains of Moab on the other side of the Jordan, by Jericho eastward. 33 [w]But to the tribe of Levi Moses had given no inheritance; the LORD God of Israel *was* their inheritance, [x]as He had said to them.

The Land Divided West of the Jordan

14 These *are the areas* which the children of Israel inherited in the land of Canaan, [a]which Eleazar the priest, Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the

12 [t]Deut. 3:11 [u]Num. 21:24, 34, 35 [4]Lit. *struck* [5]*dispossessed*

13 [v]Josh. 13:11

14 [w]Josh. 14:3, 4 [x]Josh. 13:33 [6]*no land as a possession*

15 [y]Num. 34:14

16 [z]Josh. 12:2 [a]Num. 21:28 [b]Num. 21:30

17 [c]Num. 21:28, 30

18 [d]Num. 21:23

19 [e]Num. 32:37 [f]Num. 32:38

20 [g]Deut. 3:17

21 [h]Deut. 3:10 [i]Num. 21:24 [j]Num. 31:8

22 [k]Num. 22:5; 31:8 [7]*diviner*

24 [l]Num. 34:14

25 [m]Num. 32:1, 35 [n]Judg. 11:13, 15 [o]Deut. 3:11

27 [p]Num. 32:36 [q]Gen. 33:17 [r]Num. 34:11 [8]Sea of Galilee

29 [s]Num. 34:14

30 [t]Num. 32:41

31 [u]Josh. 9:10; 12:4; 13:12 [v]Num. 32:39, 40

32 [9]*apportioned*

33 [w]Josh. 13:14; 18:7 [x]Num. 18:20

CHAPTER 14

1 [a]Num. 34:16–29

■ **13:13 did not drive out.** The significance of this failure of the Israelites will become clearer in the Book of Judges (Judg. 1:27–36; 2:20—3:6)

until this day. See note on 4:9.

■ **13:14 the tribe of Levi.** Levi was Jacob's third son, born to Leah (Gen. 29:34; 34:25; 49:5 and notes). That Levi received no allotment of land from either Moses or Joshua is explained here and in v. 33 (also 14:3, 4; 18:7). See Deut. 18:1–8. The twelve tribes of Israel are counted in various ways in the Old Testament. For the division into twelve territories the descendants of Joseph are counted as two tribes, Ephraim and Manasseh (14:4; Gen. 48:5).

■ **13:22 Balaam the son of Beor.** See Num. 31:8. Balaam was associated with "the incident of Peor" (Num. 31:16) referred to in Josh. 22:17. Balaam's evil influence was long remembered (2 Pet. 2:15; Rev. 2:14).

soothsayer. A soothsayer tries to attain knowledge by magical or occult means. This was a common practice among the pagans, but forbidden in Israel (Lev. 19:26; Deut. 18:9–14; 1 Sam. 15:23; 2 Kin. 17:17; 21:6; Is. 2:6; Ezek. 13:23).

■ **13:33 the tribe of Levi.** See note on v. 14.

■ **14:1–5** This introduces the territories west of the Jordan and relates them to those on the east, explaining again the exception of the Levites. The effect is to keep the reader's attention on the essential unity of all Israel. See note on 13:8–33.

■ **14:1 inherited.** See note on 1:6.

Canaan. Here this means the land west of the Jordan.

Eleazar the priest. Eleazar was the son of Aaron the high priest (Ex. 6:23). He is mentioned before Joshua, possibly because of the priest's role in casting lots (Ex. 28:30; 1 Sam. 2:28).

children of Israel distributed as an inheritance to them. 2 Their inheritance *was* [b]by lot, as the LORD had commanded by the hand of Moses, for the nine tribes and the half-tribe. 3 [c]For Moses had given the inheritance of the two tribes and the half-tribe on the other side of the Jordan; but to the Levites he had given no inheritance among them. 4 For [d]the children of Joseph were two tribes: Manasseh and Ephraim. And they gave no part to the Levites in the land, except [e]cities to dwell *in,* with their common-lands for their livestock and their property. 5 [f]As the LORD had commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did; and they divided the land.

Caleb Inherits Hebron

6 Then the children of Judah came to Joshua in Gilgal. And Caleb the son of Jephunneh the [g]Kenizzite said to him: "You know [h]the word which the LORD said to Moses the man of God concerning [i]you and me in Kadesh Barnea. 7 I *was* forty years old when Moses the servant of the LORD [j]sent me from Kadesh Barnea to spy out the land, and I brought back word to him as *it was* in my heart. 8 Nevertheless [k]my brethren who went up with me made the [l]heart of the people melt, but I wholly [l]followed the LORD my God. 9 So Moses swore on that day, saying, [m]'Surely the land [n]where your foot has trodden shall be your inheritance and your children's forever, because you have wholly followed the LORD my God.' 10 And now, behold, the LORD has kept me [o]alive, [p]as He said, these forty-five years, ever since the LORD spoke this word to Moses while Israel [2]wandered in the wilderness; and now, here I am this day, eighty-five years old. 11 [q]As yet I *am as* strong this day as on the day that Moses sent me; just as my strength *was* then, so now *is* my strength for war, both [r]for going out and for coming in. 12 Now therefore, give me this mountain of which the LORD spoke in that day; for you heard in that day how [s]the Anakim *were* there, and *that* the cities *were* great *and* fortified. [t]It may be that the LORD *will be* with me, and [u]I shall be able to drive them out as the LORD said."

13 And Joshua [v]blessed him, [w]and gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh as an inheritance. 14 [x]Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite to this day, because he [y]wholly followed the LORD God of Israel. 15 And [z]the name of Hebron formerly was Kirjath Arba (*Arba was* the greatest man among the Anakim).

[a]Then the land had rest from war.

The Land of Judah

15 So *this* was the [1]lot of the tribe of the children of Judah according to their families: [a]The border of Edom at the [b]Wilderness of Zin southward *was* the extreme southern boundary. 2 And their [c]southern border began at the shore of the Salt Sea, from the bay that faces southward. 3 Then it went out to the southern side of [d]the Ascent of Akrabbim, passed along to Zin, ascended on the south side of Kadesh Barnea, passed along to Hezron, went up to Adar, and went around to Karkaa. 4 *From there* it passed [e]toward Azmon and went out to the Brook of Egypt; and the border ended at the sea. This shall be your southern border.

5 The east border *was* the Salt Sea as far as the mouth of the Jordan.

And the [f]border on the northern quarter *began* at the bay of the sea at the mouth of the Jordan. 6 The border went up to [g]Beth Hoglah and passed north of Beth Arabah; and the border went up

2 [b]Num. 26:55; 33:54; 34:13
3 [c]Josh. 13:8, 32, 33
4 [d]2 Chr. 30:1 [e]Num. 35:2–8
5 [f]Josh. 21:2
6 [g]Num. 32:11, 12 [h]Num. 14:24, 30 [i]Num. 13:26
7 [j]Num. 13:6, 17; 14:6
8 [k]Num. 13:31, 32 [l]Num. 14:24 [1]*courage of the people fail*
9 [m]Num. 14:23, 24 [n]Deut. 1:36
10 [o]Num. 14:24, 30, 38 [p]Josh. 5:6 [2]Lit. *walked*
11 [q]Deut. 34:7 [r]Deut. 31:2
12 [s]Num. 13:28, 33 [t]Rom. 8:31 [u]Josh. 15:14
13 [v]Josh. 22:6 [w]Josh. 10:37; 15:13
14 [x]Josh. 21:12 [y]Josh. 14:8, 9
15 [z]Gen. 23:2 [a]Josh. 11:23

CHAPTER 15

1 [a]Num. 34:3 [b]Num. 33:36 [1]*allotment*
2 [c]Num. 34:3, 4
3 [d]Num. 34:4
4 [e]Num. 34:5
5 [f]Josh. 18:15–19
6 [g]Josh. 18:19, 21

■ **14:2 by lot.** See note on 15:1.

■ **14:3, 4 the Levites . . . Manasseh and Ephraim.** See note on 13:14.

■ **14:6–15** The story of Caleb's inheritance opens the account of the allotment of land under Joshua, while Joshua's inheritance comes at the end (19:49–50). This framework illustrates the principles of human faithfulness to God met by God's faithfulness to His promises. The story of Caleb is concluded in 15:13–19.

■ **14:6 Gilgal.** This is probably the same Gilgal as in 10:43, to the east of Jericho.

Caleb. He represented Judah among the twelve spies sent by Moses from Kadesh Barnea into the land (Num. 13:6). Caleb and Joshua represented Ephraim on the same mission (Num. 13:8) and were the only two on that occasion to believe the promise of God (Num. 13:30; 14:6–9, 24, 30, 38; Deut. 1:36).

■ **14:7 as it was in my heart.** Caleb's report had expressed his trust in God's promise. See Num. 14:6–9.

■ **14:8 I wholly followed the LORD.** Caleb's faith is exemplary.

■ **14:9 Moses swore.** This oath is not recorded in Num. 14 or Deut. 1.

■ **14:12 Anakim.** See note on 11:21, 22.

able to drive them out. Faith in God's promise is not expressed in human passivity, but in active obedience. See notes on 1:6, 7; 17:15.

■ **14:14 to this day.** See note on 4:9.

■ **14:15 the land had rest from war.** See note on 11:23.

■ **15:1–63** The first territory west of the Jordan to be described is Judah's, anticipating the importance of Judah in the later history of Israel as the tribe of David and finally of the Messiah to come (Is. 11:1; see also Gen. 49:8–12). The place names cannot all be identified. Also, the allocation was never followed completely or exactly. The promise was never fully realized in Israel's Old Testament experience. See Introduction: Characteristics and Themes.

■ **15:1 lot.** See 14:2; 18:6. The method of casting lots is not specified. The important point is that the land was not divided by human decision (Prov. 16:33; 18:18).

one of Bohan the son of Reuben. 7 Then the border went up toward [i]Debir from [j]the Valley of Achor, and it turned northward toward Gilgal, which *is* before the Ascent of Adummim, which *is* on the south side of the valley. The border continued toward the waters of En Shemesh and ended at [k]En Rogel. 8 And the border went up [l]by the Valley of the Son of Hinnom to the southern slope of the [m]Jebusite *city* (which *is* Jerusalem). The border went up to the top of the mountain that *lies* before the Valley of Hinnom westward, which *is* at the end of the Valley [n]of [2]Rephaim northward. 9 Then the border went around from the top of the hill to [o]the fountain of the water of Nephtoah, and extended to the cities of Mount Ephron. And the border went around [p]to Baalah (which *is* [q]Kirjath Jearim). 10 Then the border [3]turned westward from Baalah to Mount Seir, passed along to the side of Mount Jearim on the north (which *is* Chesalon), went down to Beth Shemesh, and passed on to [r]Timnah. 11 And the border went out to the side of [s]Ekron northward. Then the border went around to Shicron, passed along to Mount Baalah, and extended to Jabneel; and the border ended at the sea.

12 The west border *was* [t]the coastline of the Great Sea. This *is* the boundary of the children of Judah all around according to their families.

Caleb Occupies Hebron and Debir

13 [u]Now to Caleb the son of Jephunneh he gave a share among the children of [v]Judah, according to the commandment of the LORD to Joshua, *namely,* [w]Kirjath Arba, which *is* Hebron (*Arba was* the father of Anak). 14 Caleb drove out [x]the three sons of Anak from there: [y]Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai, the children of Anak. 15 Then [z]he went up from there to the inhabitants of Debir (formerly the name of Debir *was* Kirjath Sepher).

16 [a]And Caleb said, "He who [4]attacks Kirjath Sepher and takes it, to him I will give Achsah my daughter as wife." 17 So [b]Othniel the [c]son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it; and he gave him [d]Achsah his daughter as wife. 18 [e]Now it was so, when she came *to him,* that she persuaded him to ask her father for a field. So [f]she dismounted from *her* donkey, and Caleb said to her, "What do you wish?" 19 She answered, "Give me a [g]blessing; since you have given me land in the South, give me also springs of water." So he gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.

The Cities of Judah

20 This *was* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Judah according to their families:

21 The cities at the limits of the tribe of the children of Judah, toward the border of Edom in the South, were Kabzeel, [h]Eder, Jagur, 22 Kinah, Dimonah, Adadah, 23 Kedesh, Hazor, Ithnan, 24 [i]Ziph, Telem, Bealoth, 25 Hazor, Hadattah, Kerioth, Hezron (which *is* Hazor), 26 Amam, Shema, Moladah, 27 Hazar Gaddah, Heshmon, Beth Pelet, 28 Hazar Shual, [j]Beersheba, Bizjothjah, 29 Baalah, Ijim, Ezem, 30 Eltolad, Chesil, [k]Hormah, 31 [l]Ziklag, Madmannah, Sansannah, 32 Lebaoth, Shilhim, Ain, and [m]Rimmon: all the cities *are* twenty-nine, with their villages.

33 In the lowland: [n]Eshtaol, Zorah, Ashnah, 34 Zanoah, En Gannim, Tappuah, Enam, 35 Jarmuth, [o]Adullam, Socoh, Azekah, 36 Sharaim, Adithaim, Gederah, and Gederothaim: fourteen cities with their villages; 37 Zenan, Hadashah, Migdal Gad, 38 Dilean, Mizpah, [p]Joktheel, 39 [q]Lachish, Bozkath, [r]Eglon, 40 Cabbon, [5]Lahmas, Kithlish, 41 Gederoth, Beth Dagon, Naamah, and Makkedah: sixteen cities with their villages; 42 [s]Libnah, Ether, Ashan, 43 Jiphtah, Ashnah, Nezib, 44 Keilah, Achzib, and Mareshah: nine cities with their villages; 45 Ekron, with its towns and villages; 46 from Ekron to the sea, all that *lay* near [t]Ashdod, with their villages; 47 Ashdod with its towns and villages, Gaza with its towns and villages—as far as [u]the Brook of Egypt and [v]the Great Sea with *its* coastline.

48 And in the mountain country: Shamir, Jattir, Sochoh, 49 Dannah, Kirjath Sannah (which *is* Debir), 50 Anab, Eshtemoh, Anim, 51 [w]Goshen, Holon, and Giloh: eleven cities with their villages; 52 Arab, Dumah, Eshean, 53 Janum, Beth Tappuah, Aphekah, 54 Humtah, [x]Kirjath Arba (which *is* Hebron), and Zior: nine cities with their villages; 55 [y]Maon, Carmel, Ziph, Juttah, 56 Jezreel, Jokdeam, Zanoah, 57 Kain, Gibeah, and Timnah: ten cities with their villages; 58 Halhul, Beth Zur, Gedor, 59 Maarath, Beth Anoth, and Eltekon: six cities with their villages; 60 [z]Kirjath Baal (which *is* Kirjath Jearim) and Rabbah: two cities with their villages.

6 [n]Josh. 18:17
7 [i]Josh. 13:26 [j]Josh. 7:26 [k]2 Sam. 17:17
8 [l]Josh. 18:16 [m]Judg. 1:21; 19:10 [n]Josh. 18:16 [2]Lit. *Giants*
9 [o]Josh. 18:15 [p]1 Chr. 13:6 [q]Judg. 18:12
10 [r]Gen. 38:13 [3]*turned around*
11 [s]Josh. 19:43
12 [t]Num. 34:6, 7
13 [u]Josh. 14:13 [v]Num. 13:6 [w]Josh. 14:15
14 [x]Judg. 1:10, 20 [y]Num. 13:22
15 [z]Judg. 1:11
16 [a]Judg. 1:12 [4]Lit. *strikes*
17 [b]Judg. 1:13; 3:9 [c]Num. 32:12 [d]Judg. 1:12
18 [e]Judg. 1:14 [f]Gen. 24:64
19 [g]Gen. 33:11
21 [h]Gen. 35:21
24 [i]1 Sam. 23:14
28 [j]Gen. 21:31
30 [k]Josh. 19:4
31 [l]1 Sam. 27:6; 30:1
32 [m]Judg. 20:45, 47
33 [n]Judg. 13:25; 16:31
35 [o]1 Sam. 22:1
38 [p]2 Kin. 14:7
39 [q]2 Kin. 14:19 [r]Josh. 10:3
40 [5]Or *Lahmam*
42 [s]Josh. 21:13
46 [t]Josh. 11:22
47 [u]Josh. 15:4 [v]Num. 34:6
51 [w]Josh. 10:41; 11:16
54 [x]Josh. 14:15
55 [y]1 Sam. 23:24, 25
60 [z]Josh. 18:14

■ **15:8 Jerusalem.** Jerusalem lay outside Judah's territory until the city was finally captured by David (2 Sam. 5:7).

■ **15:14 sons of Anak.** See note on 11:21–22.

■ **15:17 Othniel.** See Judg. 3:7–11 for his later role as judge.

■ **15:20–62** These verses are a detailed list of towns allotted to Judah. Although many of them can no longer be identified, the extensive enumeration is a clear representation of the promise of God (21:45).

■ **15:20 inheritance.** See note on 1:6.

62 [a]1 Sam. 23:29

63 [b]2 Sam. 5:6 [c]Judg. 1:21

CHAPTER 16

1 [a]Josh. 8:15; 18:12 [1]Lit. *went out* [2]LXX *Bethel Luz*

2 [b]Josh. 18:13 [3]LXX *to Bethel,*

3 [c]2 Chr. 8:5 [d]1 Kin. 9:15 [4]Lit. *the goings out of it were at the sea*

4 [e]Josh. 17:14 [5]*possession*

5 [f]Judg. 1:29 [g]Josh. 18:13 [h]2 Chr. 8:5

6 [i]Josh. 17:7

7 [6]*Naaran,* 1 Chr. 7:28

8 [j]Josh. 17:8 [k]Josh. 17:9 [7]Lit. *the goings out of it were at the sea*

9 [l]Josh. 17:9

10 [m]Judg. 1:29

CHAPTER 17

1 [a]Gen. 41:51; 46:20; 48:18 [b]Gen. 50:23 [c]Deut. 3:15

2 [d]Num. 26:29–33 [e]1 Chr. 7:18 [f]Num. 26:31 [g]Num. 26:32 [1]*Jeezer,* Num. 26:30

3 [h]Num. 26:33; 27:1; 36:2

4 [i]Josh. 14:1 [j]Num. 27:2–11 [2]*possession*

5 [k]Josh. 22:7

7 [l]Josh. 16:6

8 [m]Josh. 16:8

9 [n]Josh. 16:9 [3]*boundary* [4]*Wadi*

61 In the wilderness: Beth Arabah, Middin, Secacah, 62 Nibshan, the City of Salt, and [a]En Gedi: six cities with their villages.

63 As for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, [b]the children of Judah could not drive them out; [c]but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem to this day.

Ephraim and West Manasseh

16 The lot [1]fell to the children of Joseph from the Jordan, by Jericho, to the waters of Jericho on the east, to the [a]wilderness that goes up from Jericho through the mountains to [2]Bethel, 2 then went out [3]from [b]Bethel to Luz, passed along to the border of the Archites at Ataroth, 3 and went down westward to the boundary of the Japhletites, [c]as far as the boundary of Lower Beth Horon to [d]Gezer; and [4]it ended at the sea.

4 [e]So the children of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim, took their [5]inheritance.

The Land of Ephraim

5 [f]The border of the children of Ephraim, according to their families, was *thus:* The border of their inheritance on the east side was [g]Ataroth Addar [h]as far as Upper Beth Horon.

6 And the border went out toward the sea on the north side of [i]Michmethath; then the border went around eastward to Taanath Shiloh, and passed by it on the east of Janohah. 7 Then it went down from Janohah to Ataroth and [6]Naarah, reached to Jericho, and came out at the Jordan.

8 The border went out from [j]Tappuah westward to the [k]Brook Kanah, and [7]it ended at the sea. This *was* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Ephraim according to their families. 9 [l]The separate cities for the children of Ephraim *were* among the inheritance of the children of Manasseh, all the cities with their villages.

10 [m]And they did not drive out the Canaanites who dwelt in Gezer; but the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites to this day and have become forced laborers.

The Other Half-Tribe of Manasseh (West)

17 There was also a lot for the tribe of Manasseh, for he *was* the [a]firstborn of Joseph: *namely* for [b]Machir the firstborn of Manasseh, the father of Gilead, because he was a man of war; therefore he was given [c]Gilead and Bashan. 2 And there was *a lot* for [d]the rest of the children of Manasseh according to their families: [e]for the children of [1]Abiezer, the children of Helek, [f]the children of Asriel, the children of Shechem, [g]the children of Hepher, and the children of Shemida; these *were* the male children of Manasseh the son of Joseph according to their families.

3 But [h]Zelophehad the son of Hepher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, had no sons, but only daughters. And these *are* the names of his daughters: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. 4 And they came near before [i]Eleazar the priest, before Joshua the son of Nun, and before the rulers, saying, [j]"The LORD commanded Moses to give us an [2]inheritance among our brothers." Therefore, according to the commandment of the LORD, he gave them an inheritance among their father's brothers. 5 Ten shares fell to [k]Manasseh, besides the land of Gilead and Bashan, which *were* on the other side of the Jordan, 6 because the daughters of Manasseh received an inheritance among his sons; and the rest of Manasseh's sons had the land of Gilead.

7 And the territory of Manasseh was from Asher to [l]Michmethath, that *lies* east of Shechem; and the border went along south to the inhabitants of En Tappuah. 8 Manasseh had the land of Tappuah, but [m]Tappuah on the border of Manasseh *belonged* to the children of Ephraim. 9 And the [3]border descended to the [4]Brook Kanah, southward to the brook. [n]These cities of Ephraim

■ **15:63 Judah could not drive them out.** This brief note on Judah's failure is a reminder that the fulfillment of God's promises was not complete. There still remained a "not yet" (21:45 and note). The victory over the Jebusites in Judg. 1:8 apparently was not permanent (cf. Judg. 1:21).

to this day. See note on 4:9.

■ **16:1—17:18** These two chapters describe the allotment of land to Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh (Gen. 41:50–52; Josh. 13:14 note). Half the tribe of Manasseh had already received their land east of the Jordan (17:1).

■ **16:1 The lot fell.** See note on 15:1.

■ **16:4 Manasseh and Ephraim.** Here they are mentioned in the order of birth (Gen. 48:12–20).

inheritance. See note on 1:6.

■ **16:5–10** Ephraim was Joseph's younger son (Gen. 41:52), but his territory is described before Manasseh's, probably because of the precedence given him in Gen. 48:12–20.

■ **16:10 they did not drive out.** See note on 15:63.

to this day. See note on 4:9.

■ **17:1 Manasseh.** Manasseh was the older of Joseph's two sons (Gen. 41:50–51; 48:12–20; Josh. 16:5–10 note).

the firstborn of Manasseh. See Gen. 50:23.

■ **17:3–6** It was a provision of the law of Moses that the daughters of a man with no son would inherit from him (Num. 27:1–11, especially v. 8).

are among the cities of Manasseh. The border of Manasseh *was* on the north side of the brook; and it ended at the sea.

10 Southward *it was* Ephraim's, northward *it was* Manasseh's, and the sea was its border. Manasseh's territory was adjoining Asher on the north and Issachar on the east. 11 And in Issachar and in Asher, [o]Manasseh had [p]Beth Shean and its towns, Ibleam and its towns, the inhabitants of Dor and its towns, the inhabitants of En Dor and its towns, the inhabitants of Taanach and its towns, and the inhabitants of Megiddo and its towns—three hilly regions. 12 Yet [q]the children of Manasseh could not drive out *the inhabitants of* those cities, but the Canaanites were determined to dwell in that land. 13 And it happened, when the children of Israel grew strong, that they put the Canaanites to [r]forced labor, but did not utterly drive them out.

More Land for Ephraim and Manasseh

14 [s]Then the children of Joseph spoke to Joshua, saying, "Why have you given us *only* [t]one [5]lot and one share to inherit, since we *are* [u]a great people, inasmuch as the LORD has blessed us until now?"

15 So Joshua answered them, "If you *are* a great people, *then* go up to the forest *country* and clear a place for yourself there in the land of the Perizzites and the giants, since the mountains of Ephraim are too confined for you."

16 But the children of Joseph said, "The mountain country is not enough for us; and all the Canaanites who dwell in the land of the valley have [v]chariots of iron, *both those* who *are* of Beth Shean and its towns and *those* who *are* [w]of the Valley of Jezreel."

17 And Joshua spoke to the house of Joseph—to Ephraim and Manasseh—saying, "You *are* a great people and have great power; you shall not have *only* one [6]lot, 18 but the mountain country shall be yours. Although it *is* wooded, you shall cut it down, and its [7]farthest extent shall be yours; for you shall drive out the Canaanites, [x]though they have iron chariots *and* are strong."

The Remainder of the Land Divided

18 Now the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together [a]at Shiloh, and [b]set up the tabernacle of meeting there. And the land was subdued before them. 2 But there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes which had not yet received their inheritance.

3 Then Joshua said to the children of Israel: [c]"How long will you neglect to go and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers has given you? 4 Pick out from among you three men for *each* tribe, and I will send them; they shall rise and go through the land, survey it according to their inheritance, and come *back* to me. 5 And they shall divide it into seven parts. [d]Judah shall remain in their territory on the south, and the [e]house of Joseph shall remain in their territory on the north. 6 You shall therefore [f]survey the land in seven parts and bring *the survey* here to me, [f]that I may cast lots for you here before the LORD our God. 7 [g]But the Levites have no part

11 [o]1 Chr. 7:29 [p]Judg. 1:27; 1 Sam. 31:10; 1 Kin. 4:12

12 [q]Judg. 1:19, 27, 28

13 [r]Josh. 16:10

14 [s]Josh. 16:4 [t]Gen. 48:22 [u]Gen. 48:19; Num. 26:34, 37 [5]*allotment*

16 [v]Josh. 17:18; Judg. 1:19; 4:3 [w]Josh. 19:18; 1 Kin. 4:12

17 [6]*allotment*

18 [x]Deut. 20:1 [7]Lit. *goings out*

CHAPTER 18

1 [a]Josh. 19:51; 21:2; 22:9; Jer. 7:12 [b]Judg. 18:31; 1 Sam. 1:3, 24; 4:3, 4

3 [c]Judg. 18:9

5 [d]Josh. 15:1 [e]Josh. 16:1—17:18

6 [f]Josh. 14:2; 18:10 [f]*describe in writing*

7 [g]Num. 18:7, 20; Josh. 13:33

■ **17:12, 13 could not drive out.** See notes on 15:63; 21:45.

■ **17:14–18** The complaining request of the people of Joseph (v. 14) and their fear of the Canaanites (v. 16) are in contrast to Caleb's faith and courage (14:6–12).

■ **17:14 one lot and one share.** The territory of Manasseh on both sides of the Jordan and of Ephraim is treated as a unit (16:1).

■ **17:15 go up . . . and clear a place for yourself.** Faith in the promise of God should be expressed in courageous, obedient action. See notes on 1:6, 7; 14:12.

■ **17:16 not enough . . . the Canaanites.** Their fear and unwillingness to obey are expressions of unbelief.

■ **17:18 you shall drive out.** Joshua answers the fears of the people of Joseph with an application of the promise of God (1:2–5).

■ **18:1 the whole congregation . . . assembled.** See 8:35 and note.

Shiloh. Located in Ephraim, the city of Shiloh has so far not been prominent in biblical history, but here it becomes what was called in Deut. 12 "the place the LORD your God chooses" (Deut. 12:5, 11, 18; cf. Jer. 7:12). In the days of David this role will be transferred to Jerusalem. For the role of Shiloh in Israel's history see 22:12; Judg. 18:31; 21:19; 1 Sam. 1:3, 24; 2:14; 3:21; 4:3; 14:3; 1 Kin. 2:27; 11:29; 14:2; Ps. 78:60; Jer. 7:12, 14; 26:6, 9.

tabernacle of meeting. This name is used for the tabernacle in the Book of Joshua only here and at 19:51 ("tabernacle" in 22:19, 29; "house" in 6:24; 9:23). The "meeting" is that of God with His people (1:5 note). The tabernacle contained the ark of the covenant, the wood and gold box containing the Ten Commandments (3:3; 4:16 and notes; Ex. 25:10–22). It was the place where the Old Testament sacrificial system for spiritual cleansing and communication with God was inaugurated, to continue in principle until the time of the New Testament.

■ **18:3 will you neglect.** Or "be slack" (the same Hebrew verb occurs in Prov. 18:9; 24:10).

possess. This means to occupy the land completely, something more than the initial conquest (1:11, 15; 13:1; 21:43). It is an act of obedient faith because it is based on the promise of God (1:11 note), hence the note of rebuke in Joshua's question.

the LORD God of your fathers. This is an allusion to the promises to the fathers (1:1–9 note).

has given. See notes on 1:2, 3, 11.

■ **18:6 before the LORD.** God's presence is represented by the tabernacle because He spoke to them "from between the two cherubim" (3:11; 7:23 notes; Ex. 25:22).

■ **18:7 the Levites have no part . . . Gad, Reuben, and . . . Manasseh have received.** The means of counting exactly twelve tribes in Israel is explained again. See notes on 13:8–33 and 13:14.

among you, for the priesthood of the LORD *is* their inheritance. [h]And Gad, Reuben, and half the tribe of Manasseh have received their inheritance beyond the Jordan on the east, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave them."

[8] Then the men arose to go away; and Joshua charged those who went to [2]survey the land, saying, "Go, walk [i]through the land, survey it, and come back to me, that I may cast lots for you here before the LORD in Shiloh." [9] So the men went, passed through the land, and [3]wrote the survey in a book in seven parts by cities; and they came to Joshua at the camp in Shiloh. [10] Then Joshua cast [j]lots for them in Shiloh before the LORD, and there [k]Joshua divided the land to the children of Israel according to their [4]divisions.

The Land of Benjamin

[11] [l]Now the lot of the tribe of the children of Benjamin came up according to their families, and the territory of their lot came out between the children of Judah and the children of Joseph. [12] [m]Their border on the north side began at the Jordan, and the border went up to the side of Jericho on the north, and went up through the mountains westward; it ended at the Wilderness of Beth Aven. [13] The border went over from there toward Luz, to the side of Luz [n](which *is* Bethel) southward; and the border descended to Ataroth Addar, near the hill that *lies* on the south side [o]of Lower Beth Horon.

[14] Then the border extended around the west side to the south, from the hill that *lies* before Beth Horon southward; and [5]it ended at [p]Kirjath Baal (which *is* Kirjath Jearim), a city of the children of Judah. This *was* the west side.

[15] The south side *began* at the end of Kirjath Jearim, and the border extended on the west and went out to [q]the spring of the waters of Nephtoah. [16] Then the border came down to the end of the mountain that *lies* before [r]the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, which *is* in the Valley of [6]Rephaim on the north, descended to the Valley of Hinnom, to the side of the Jebusite *city* on the south, and descended to [s]En Rogel. [17] And it went around from the north, went out to En Shemesh, and extended toward Geliloth, which is before the Ascent of Adummim, and descended to [t]the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben. [18] Then it passed along toward the north side of [7]Arabah, and went down to Arabah. [19] And the border passed along to the north side of Beth Hoglah; then [8]the border ended at the north bay at the [u]Salt Sea, at the south end of the Jordan. This *was* the southern boundary.

[20] The Jordan was its border on the east side. This *was* the inheritance of the children of Benjamin, according to its boundaries all around, according to their families.

[21] Now the cities of the tribe of the children of Benjamin, according to their families, were Jericho, Beth Hoglah, Emek Keziz, [22] Beth Arabah, Zemaraim, Bethel, [23] Avim, Parah, Ophrah, [24] Chephar Haammoni, Ophni, and Gaba: twelve cities with their villages; [25] [v]Gibeon, [w]Ramah, Beeroth, [26] Mizpah, Chephirah, Mozah, [27] Rekem, Irpeel, Taralah, [28] Zelah, Eleph, [x]Jebus (which *is* Jerusalem), Gibeath, *and* Kirjath: fourteen cities with their villages. This was the inheritance of the children of Benjamin according to their families.

Simeon's Inheritance with Judah

19 The [a]second lot came out for Simeon, for the tribe of the children of Simeon according to their families. [b]And their inheritance was within the inheritance of the children of Judah. [2] [c]They had in their inheritance Beersheba (Sheba), Moladah, [3] Hazar Shual, Balah, Ezem, [4] Eltolad, Bethul, Hormah, [5] Ziklag, Beth Marcaboth, Hazar Susah, [6] Beth Lebaoth, and Sharuhen: thirteen cities and their villages; [7] Ain, Rimmon, Ether, and Ashan: four cities and their villages; [8] and all the villages that *were* all around these cities as far as Baalath Beer, [d]Ramah of the South. This *was* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Simeon according to their families.

[9] The inheritance of the children of Simeon *was included* in the share of the children of Judah, for the share of the children of Judah was [1]too much for them. [e]Therefore the children of Simeon had *their* inheritance within the inheritance of [2]that people.

The Land of Zebulun

[10] The third lot came out for the children of Zebulun according to their families, and the border of their inheritance was as far as Sarid. [11] [f]Their border went toward the west and to Maralah, went to Dabbasheth, and extended along the brook that is [g]east of Jokneam. [12] Then from

7 [h]Josh. 13:8

8 [i]Gen. 13:17 [2]*describe in writing*

9 [3]*described it in writing*

10 [j]Acts 13:19 [k]Num. 34:16–29; Josh. 19:51 [4]*portions*

11 [l]Judg. 1:21

12 [m]Josh. 16:1

13 [n]Gen. 28:19; Josh. 16:2; Judg. 1:23 [o]Josh. 16:3

14 [p]Josh. 15:9 [5]Lit. *its goings out were*

15 [q]Josh. 15:9

16 [r]Josh. 15:8 [s]Josh. 15:7 [6]Lit. *Giants*

17 [t]Josh. 15:6

18 [7]*Beth Arabah,* Josh. 15:6; 18:22

19 [u]Josh. 15:2, 5 [8]Lit. *the goings out of the border were*

25 [v]Josh. 11:19; 21:17; 1 Kin. 3:4, 5 [w]Jer. 31:15

28 [x]Josh. 15:8, 63

CHAPTER 19

1 [a]Judg. 1:3 [b]Josh. 19:9

2 [c]1 Chr. 4:28

8 [d]1 Sam. 30:27

9 [e]Josh. 19:1 [1]*too large* [2]Lit. *them*

11 [f]Gen. 49:13 [g]Josh. 12:22

■ **19:1 within . . . Judah.** Simeon's allotment was inside the territory of Judah (Gen. 49:7). Judah and Simeon acted together in Judg. 1:3, 17. At some stage the tribe of Simeon seems to have lost its distinct identity.

■ **19:8, 9 inheritance.** See note on 1:6.

Sarid it went eastward toward the sunrise along the border of Chisloth Tabor, and went out toward [h]Daberath, bypassing Japhia. 13 And from there it passed along on the east of [i]Gath Hepher, toward Eth Kazin, and extended to Rimmon, which borders on Neah. 14 Then the border went around it on the north side of Hannathon, and [3]it ended in the Valley of Jiphthah El. 15 Included were Kattath, Nahallal, Shimron, Idalah, and Bethlehem: twelve cities with their villages. 16 This *was* the inheritance of the children of Zebulun according to their families, these cities with their villages.

The Land of Issachar

17 The fourth lot came out to Issachar, for the children of Issachar according to their families. 18 And their territory went to Jezreel, and *included* Chesulloth, Shunem, 19 Haphraim, Shion, Anaharath, 20 Rabbith, Kishion, Abez, 21 Remeth, En Gannim, En Haddah, and Beth Pazzez. 22 And the border reached to Tabor, Shahazimah, and [j]Beth Shemesh; their border ended at the Jordan: sixteen cities with their villages. 23 This *was* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Issachar according to their families, the cities and their villages.

The Land of Asher

24 [k]The fifth lot came out for the tribe of the children of Asher according to their families. 25 And their territory included Helkath, Hali, Beten, Achshaph, 26 Alammelech, Amad, and Mishal; it reached to [l]Mount Carmel westward, along *the Brook* Shihor Libnath. 27 It turned toward the sunrise to Beth Dagon; and it reached to Zebulun and to the Valley of Jiphthah El, then northward beyond Beth Emek and Neiel, bypassing [m]Cabul *which was* on the left, 28 including [4]Ebron, Rehob, Hammon, and Kanah, [n]as far as Greater Sidon. 29 And the border turned to Ramah and to the fortified city of Tyre; then the border turned to Hosah, and ended at the sea by the region of [o]Achzib. 30 Also Ummah, Aphek, and Rehob *were included:* twenty-two cities with their villages. 31 This *was* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Asher according to their families, these cities with their villages.

The Land of Naphtali

32 [p]The sixth lot came out to the children of Naphtali, for the children of Naphtali according to their families. 33 And their border began at Heleph, enclosing the territory from the terebinth tree in Zaanannim, Adami Nekeb, and Jabneel, as far as Lakkum; [5]it ended at the Jordan. 34 [q]From Heleph the border extended westward to Aznoth Tabor, and went out from there toward Hukkok; it adjoined Zebulun on the south side and Asher on the west side, and ended at Judah by the Jordan toward the sunrise. 35 And the fortified cities *are* Ziddim, Zer, Hammath, Rakkath, Chinnereth, 36 Adamah, Ramah, Hazor, 37 [r]Kedesh, Edrei, En Hazor, 38 Iron, Migdal El, Horem, Beth Anath, and Beth Shemesh: nineteen cities with their villages. 39 This *was* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Naphtali according to their families, the cities and their villages.

The Land of Dan

40 [s]The seventh lot came out for the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families. 41 And the territory of their inheritance was Zorah, [t]Eshtaol, Ir Shemesh; 42 [u]Shaalabbin, [v]Aijalon, Jethlah, 43 Elon, Timnah, [w]Ekron, 44 Eltekeh, Gibbethon, Baalath, 45 Jehud, Bene Berak, Gath Rimmon, 46 Me Jarkon, and Rakkon, with the region [6]near [7]Joppa. 47 And the [x]border of the children of Dan went beyond these, because the children of Dan went up to fight against Leshem and took it; and they struck it with the edge of the sword, took possession of it, and dwelt in it. They called Leshem, [y]Dan, after the name of Dan their father. 48 This *is* the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Dan according to their families, these cities with their villages.

Joshua's Inheritance

49 When they had [8]made an end of dividing the land as an inheritance according to their borders, the children of Israel gave an inheritance among them to Joshua the son of Nun.

12 [h]1 Chr. 6:72

13 [i]2 Kin. 14:25

14 [3]Lit. *the goings out of it were*

22 [j]Josh. 15:10; Judg. 1:33

24 [k]Judg. 1:31, 32

26 [l]1 Sam. 15:12; 1 Kin. 18:20; Is. 33:9; 35:2; Jer. 46:18

27 [m]1 Kin. 9:13

28 [n]Gen. 10:19; Josh. 11:8; Judg. 1:31; Acts 27:3 [4]So with MT, Tg., Vg.; a few Heb. mss. *Abdon* (cf. 21:30 and 1 Chr. 6:74)

29 [o]Judg. 1:31

32 [p]Josh. 19:32–39; Judg. 1:33

33 [5]Lit. *its goings out were*

34 [q]Deut. 33:23

37 [r]Josh. 20:7

40 [s]Josh. 19:40–48; Judg. 1:34–36

41 [t]Josh. 15:33

42 [u]Judg. 1:35; 1 Kin. 4:9 [v]Josh. 10:12; 21:24

43 [w]Josh. 15:11; Judg. 1:18

46 [6]*over against* [7]Heb. *Japho*

47 [x]Judg. 18 [y]Judg. 18:29

49 [8]*finished*

■ **19:15 twelve.** It is not clear which twelve cities are meant.

■ **19:30 twenty-two.** There are more than twenty-two towns mentioned, but some may be noted as points on the boundary.

■ **19:38 nineteen.** The list apparently is incomplete.

■ **19:47 Dan.** A fuller account of Dan and their conquest of Leshem is given in Judg. 18.

■ **19:49, 50** See notes on 14:6–15.

■ **19:50 the word of the LORD.** This divine command is not recorded elsewhere (cf. 14:9 note). See Num. 14:30.

Timnath Serah. Joshua would be buried here (24:30).

50 [z]Josh. 24:30
[a]1 Chr. 7:24
51 [b]Num. 34:17; Josh. 14:1 [c]Josh. 18:1, 10

50 According to the word of the LORD they gave him the city which he asked for, [z]Timnath [a]Serah in the mountains of Ephraim; and he built the city and dwelt in it.

51 [b]These *were* the inheritances which Eleazar the priest, Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel divided as an inheritance by lot [c]in Shiloh before the LORD, at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. So they made an end of dividing the country.

CHAPTER 20

2 [a]Ex. 21:13; Num. 35:6–34; Deut. 19:2, 9
[1]*Designate*

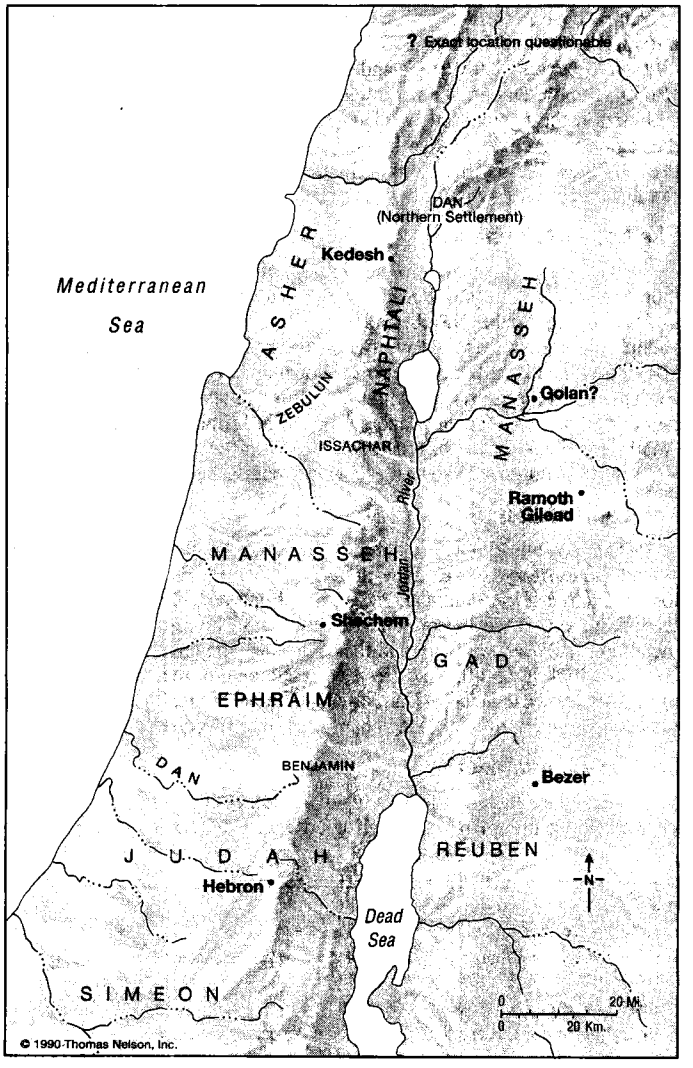
The Cities of Refuge

20 The LORD also spoke to Joshua, saying, 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: [a]'Appoint[1] for yourselves cities of refuge, of which I spoke to you through Moses, 3 that the

■ **19:51 Eleazar.** See note on 14:1.
Shiloh. See note on 18:1.
before the LORD. See note on 18:6.
tabernacle of meeting. See note on 18:1.
■ **20:1–9** The record of the division of the land is followed by a provision for basic justice in it, illustrating God's concern for justice and the preservation of life. The provision implies the idea of just retribution, while restraining the injustice that could flow from vengeance (Deut. 4:41–43).
■ **20:2 cities of refuge.** These were places where certain offenders could escape unjust vengeance and seek a fair trial. Similar cities will

Cities of Refuge. In biblical times tribal bonds were very strong. In the event a person from one tribe killed a member of another tribe, even if by accident, blood vengeance was to be taken by killing a member of the offender's tribe.

The cities of refuge were established at several strategic locations to provide a place of sanctuary for those who had killed someone unintentionally, regardless of tribal affiliation. There they could remain in safety until they had either been judged innocent by the congregation or until the death of the current high priest. At that time, they could return freely to their original home region without fear of reprisal.



who kills a person accidentally *or* unintentionally may flee there; and they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood. 4 And when he flees to one of those cities, and stands at the entrance of the gate of the city, and [2]declares his case in the hearing of the elders of that city, they shall take him into the city as one of them, and give him a place, that he may dwell among them. 5 [b]Then if the avenger of blood pursues him, they shall not deliver the slayer into his hand, because he struck his neighbor unintentionally, but did not hate him beforehand. 6 And he shall dwell in that city [c]until he stands before the congregation for judgment, *and* until the death of the one who is high priest in those days. Then the slayer may return and come to his own city and his own house, to the city from which he fled.' "

7 So they appointed [d]Kedesh in Galilee, in the mountains of Naphtali, [e]Shechem in the mountains of Ephraim, and [f]Kirjath Arba (which *is* Hebron) in [g]the mountains of Judah. 8 And on the other side of the Jordan, by Jericho eastward, they assigned [h]Bezer in the wilderness on the plain, from the tribe of Reuben, [i]Ramoth in Gilead, from the tribe of Gad, and [j]Golan in Bashan, from the tribe of Manasseh. 9 [k]These were the cities appointed for all the children of Israel and for the stranger who [3]dwelt among them, that whoever killed a person accidentally might flee there, and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood [l]until he stood before the congregation.

Cities of the Levites

21 Then the heads of the fathers' *houses* of the [a]Levites came near to [b]Eleazar the priest, to Joshua the son of Nun, and to the heads of the fathers' *houses* of the tribes of the children of Israel. 2 And they spoke to them at [c]Shiloh in the land of Canaan, saying, [d]"The LORD commanded through Moses to give us cities to dwell in, with their common-lands for our livestock." 3 So the children of Israel gave to the Levites from their inheritance, at the commandment of the LORD, these cities and their common-lands:

4 Now the lot came out for the families of the Kohathites. And [e]the children of Aaron the priest, *who were* of the Levites, [f]had thirteen cities by lot from the tribe of Judah, from the tribe of Simeon, and from the tribe of Benjamin. 5 [g]The rest of the children of Kohath had ten cities by lot from the families of the tribe of Ephraim, from the tribe of Dan, and from the half-tribe of Manasseh.

6 And [h]the children of Gershon had thirteen cities by lot from the families of the tribe of Issachar, from the tribe of Asher, from the tribe of Naphtali, and from the half-tribe of Manasseh in Bashan.

7 [i]The children of Merari according to their families had twelve cities from the tribe of Reuben, from the tribe of Gad, and from the tribe of Zebulun.

8 [j]And the children of Israel gave these cities with their common-lands by lot to the Levites, [k]as the LORD had commanded by the hand of Moses.

9 So they gave from the tribe of the children of Judah and from the tribe of the children of Simeon these cities which are [l]designated by name, 10 which were for the children of Aaron, one

4 [2]*states*

5 [b]Num. 35:12

6 [c]Num. 35:12, 24, 25

7 [d]Josh. 21:32; 1 Chr. 6:76 [e]Josh. 21:21; 2 Chr. 10:1 [f]Josh. 14:15; 21:11, 13 [g]Luke 1:39

8 [h]Deut. 4:43; Josh. 21:36; 1 Chr. 6:78 [i]Josh. 21:38; 1 Kin. 22:3 [j]Josh. 21:27

9 [k]Num. 35:15 [l]Josh. 20:6 [3]As a resident alien

CHAPTER 21

1 [a]Num. 35:1–8 [b]Num. 34:16–29; Josh. 14:1; 17:4

2 [c]Josh. 18:1 [d]Num. 35:2

4 [e]Josh. 21:8, 19 [f]Josh. 19:51

5 [g]Josh. 21:20

6 [h]Josh. 21:27

7 [i]Josh. 21:34

8 [j]Josh. 21:3 [k]Num. 35:2

9 [l]Lit. *called*

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also be given to the Levites (21:1–42; Num. 35:6), and by implication will be places where the law of God can be found.

through Moses. See Ex. 21:12–14; Num. 35:6–34; Deut. 19:1–13.

■ **20:3 accidentally or unintentionally.** Unintentional sin receives specific treatment in the law (Lev. 4:2, 13, 22, 27; 5:15, 18; Num. 15:22–29; 35:22; Deut. 4:42; 19:4; Ezek. 45:20; cf. Heb. 9:7).

avenger of blood. This would be the victim's nearest male relative or possibly an official of the city where the killing occurred (Num. 35:19–21).

■ **20:4 the gate of the city.** This was the usual place for legal transactions (Ruth 4:1–12).

elders. Apparently the elders held a preliminary hearing of the accused man's case.

■ **20:5 they shall not deliver.** There is a presumption in favor of the accused.

■ **20:6 death of the . . . high priest.** His death marked the end of an era and provided a convenient limitation to the provisions made here.

■ **20:7 appointed.** The Hebrew verb can also be translated "set apart" or "sanctified."

■ **20:8 the other side.** See Deut. 4:41–43.

■ **20:9 the stranger.** Concern for the foreigner in Israel was a regular feature of the law (e.g., Ex. 12:48–49; 20:10; 22:21; 23:9, 12).

■ **21:1–42** The last part of the division of the land is the assignment of towns to the Levites, whose lack of an inheritance in the land has been mentioned in 13:14 (note), 33; 14:3–4; 18:7. These towns continued to belong to the tribes to which they had been assigned, but were provided, along with adjoining common-lands (v. 8), for the Levites to live in.

■ **21:2 The LORD commanded through Moses.** Refers to Num. 35:1–8. The request of the Levites, like that of Caleb in 14:6–12, was an expression of faith in the promise of God.

■ **21:3 inheritance.** See note on 1:6.

■ **21:4 lot.** See note on 15:1.

Kohathites. Kohath was Levi's second son (Ex. 6:16; Num. 3:17), but his descendants have precedence because the priestly line through Aaron descended from him (Ex. 6:18, 20). Aaron and his sons were chosen by God to be priests (Ex. 28:1; Lev. 8:1–36).

Judah . . . Simeon . . . Benjamin. The towns allotted for these tribes were near Jerusalem, where the temple would later be built, although Jerusalem itself is not mentioned in this chapter.

■ **21:6 Gershon.** Levi's first son (Ex. 6:16; Num. 3:17).

■ **21:7 Merari.** Levi's third son (Ex. 6:16; Num. 3:17).

■ **21:10 first.** The precedence of the priestly line is emphasized (v. 4).

of the families of the Kohathites, *who were* of the children of Levi; for the lot was theirs first. 11 [l]And they gave them [2]Kirjath Arba (*Arba was* the father of [m]Anak), [n]which *is* Hebron, in the mountains of Judah, with the common-land surrounding it. 12 But [o]the fields of the city and its villages they gave to Caleb the son of Jephunneh as his possession.

13 Thus [p]to the children of Aaron the priest they gave [q]Hebron with its common-land (a city of refuge for the slayer), [r]Libnah with its common-land, 14 [s]Jattir with its common-land, [t]Eshtemoa with its common-land, 15 [u]Holon with its common-land, [v]Debir with its common-land, 16 [w]Ain with its common-land, [x]Juttah with its common-land, and [y]Beth Shemesh with its common-land: nine cities from those two tribes; 17 and from the tribe of Benjamin, [z]Gibeon with its common-land, [a]Geba with its common-land, 18 Anathoth with its common-land, and [b]Almon with its common-land: four cities. 19 All the cities of the children of Aaron, the priests, *were* thirteen cities with their common-lands.

20 [c]And the families of the children of Kohath, the Levites, the rest of the children of Kohath, even they had the cities of their [3]lot from the tribe of Ephraim. 21 For they gave them [d]Shechem with its common-land in the mountains of Ephraim (a city of refuge for the slayer), [e]Gezer with its common-land, 22 Kibzaim with its common-land, and Beth Horon with its common-land: four cities; 23 and from the tribe of Dan, Eltekeh with its common-land, Gibbethon with its common-land, 24 [f]Aijalon with its common-land, *and* Gath Rimmon with its common-land: four cities; 25 and from the half-tribe of Manasseh, Tanach with its common-land and Gath Rimmon with its common-land: two cities. 26 All the ten cities with their common-lands were for the rest of the families of the children of Kohath.

27 [g]Also to the children of Gershon, of the families of the Levites, from the *other* half-tribe of Manasseh, *they gave* [h]Golan in Bashan with its common-land (a city of refuge for the slayer), and Be Eshterah with its common-land: two cities; 28 and from the tribe of Issachar, Kishion with its common-land, Daberath with its common-land, 29 Jarmuth with its common-land, *and* En Gannim with its common-land: four cities; 30 and from the tribe of Asher, Mishal with its common-land, Abdon with its common-land, 31 Helkath with its common-land, and Rehob with its common-land: four cities; 32 and from the tribe of Naphtali, [i]Kedesh in Galilee with its common-land (a city of refuge for the slayer), Hammoth Dor with its common-land, and Kartan with its common-land: three cities. 33 All the cities of the Gershonites according to their families *were* thirteen cities with their common-lands.

34 [j]And to the families of the children of Merari, the rest of the Levites, from the tribe of Zebulun, Jokneam with its common-land, Kartah with its common-land, 35 Dimnah with its common-land, *and* Nahalal with its common-land: four cities; 36 [4]and from the tribe of Reuben, [k]Bezer with its common-land, Jahaz with its common-land, 37 Kedemoth with its common-land, and Mephaath with its common-land: four cities; 38 and from the tribe of Gad, [l]Ramoth in Gilead with its common-land (a city of refuge for the slayer), Mahanaim with its common-land, 39 Heshbon with its common-land, *and* Jazer with its common-land: four cities in all. 40 So all the cities for the children of Merari according to their families, the rest of the families of the Levites, were *by* their lot twelve cities.

41 [m]All the cities of the Levites within the possession of the children of Israel *were* forty-eight cities with their common-lands. 42 Every one of these cities had its common-land surrounding it; thus *were* all these cities.

The Promise Fulfilled

43 So the LORD gave to Israel [n]all the land of which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they [o]took possession of it and dwelt in it. 44 [p]The LORD gave them [q]rest all around, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers. And [r]not a man of all their enemies stood against them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand. 45 [s]Not a word failed of any good thing which the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass.

11 [l]Josh. 20:7; 1 Chr. 6:55 [m]Josh. 14:15; 15:13, 14 [n]Josh. 20:7; Luke 1:39 [2]Lit. *City of Arba*

12 [o]Josh. 14:14; 1 Chr. 6:56

13 [p]1 Chr. 6:57 [q]Josh. 15:54; 20:2, 7 [r]Josh. 15:42; 2 Kin. 8:22

14 [s]Josh. 15:48 [t]Josh. 15:50

15 [u]1 Chr. 6:58 [v]Josh. 15:49

16 [w]1 Chr. 6:59 [x]Josh. 15:55 [y]Josh. 15:10

17 [z]Josh. 18:25 [a]Josh. 18:24

18 [b]1 Chr. 6:60

20 [c]1 Chr. 6:66 [3]*allotment*

21 [d]Josh. 20:7 [e]Judg. 1:29

24 [f]Josh. 10:12

27 [g]Josh. 21:6; 1 Chr. 6:71 [h]Josh. 20:8

32 [i]Josh. 20:7

34 [j]Josh. 21:7; 1 Chr. 6:77–81

36 [k]Deut. 4:43; Josh. 20:8 [4]So with LXX, Vg. (cf. 1 Chr. 6:78, 79); MT, Bg., Tg. omit vv. 36, 37

38 [l]Josh. 20:8

41 [m]Num. 35:7

43 [n]Gen. 12:7; 26:3, 4; 28:4, 13, 14 [o]Num. 33:53; Josh. 1:11

44 [p]Deut. 7:23, 24; Josh. 11:23; 22:4 [q]Josh. 1:13, 15; 11:23 [r]Deut. 7:24

45 [s][Num. 23:19]; Josh. 23:14; 1 Kin. 8:56

■ **21:12 Caleb.** See note on 14:6.

■ **21:13 city of refuge.** See note on 20:2.

■ **21:17 Gibeon.** See note on 9:3. The Gibeonites had to serve in the house of God (9:23 and note).

■ **21:43–45** This summary reviews the whole book, not just chs. 13—21. The idea that dominates the entire book is the faithfulness of God to His promises (v. 45).

■ **21:43 sworn to give to their fathers.** The faithfulness of God attested in this book is His faithfulness to the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In the New Testament, these promises are identified as the gospel (Gal. 3:8; Introduction: Characteristics and Themes).

■ **21:44 not a man . . . stood.** This sums up chs. 1—12, fulfilling the promise of 1:5.

enemies. See note on 23:1.

■ **21:45 Not a word failed.** The writer speaks of the conquest as completed (vv. 43–45 note; 10:40–42; 11:23; 23:1, 14), while continuing to

Eastern Tribes Return to Their Lands

22 Then Joshua called the Reubenites, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh, 2 and said to them: "You have kept [a]all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, [b]and have obeyed my voice in all that I commanded you. 3 You have not [1]left your brethren these many days, up to this day, but have kept the charge of the commandment of the LORD your God. 4 And now the LORD your God has given [c]rest to your brethren, as He promised them; now therefore, return and go to your tents *and* to the land of your possession, [d]which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you on the other side of the Jordan. 5 But [e]take[2] careful heed to do the commandment and the law which Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, [f]to love the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, to keep His commandments, to hold fast to Him, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul." 6 So Joshua [g]blessed them and sent them away, and they went to their tents.

7 Now to half the tribe of Manasseh Moses had given a possession in Bashan, [h]but to the *other* half of it Joshua gave *a possession* among their brethren on this side of the Jordan, westward. And indeed, when Joshua sent them away to their tents, he blessed them, 8 and spoke to them, saying, "Return with much riches to your tents, with very much livestock, with silver, with gold, with bronze, with iron, and with very much clothing. [i]Divide the [3]spoil of your enemies with your brethren."

9 So the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh returned, and departed from the children of Israel at Shiloh, which *is* in the land of Canaan, to go to [j]the country of Gilead, to the land of their possession, which they had obtained according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses.

An Altar by the Jordan

10 And when they came to the region of the Jordan which *is* in the land of Canaan, the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh built an altar there by the Jordan—a great, impressive altar. 11 Now the children of Israel [k]heard *someone* say, "Behold, the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh have built an altar on the [4]frontier of the land of Canaan, in the region of the Jordan—on the children of Israel's side." 12 And when the children of Israel heard *of it,* [l]the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered together at Shiloh to go to war against them.

13 Then the children of Israel [m]sent [n]Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest to the children of Reuben, to the children of Gad, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, into the land of Gilead, 14 and with him ten rulers, one ruler each from the chief house of every tribe of Israel; and [o]each one *was* the head of the house of his father among the [5]divisions of Israel. 15 Then they came to the children of Reuben, to the children of Gad, and to half the tribe of Manasseh, to the land of Gilead, and they spoke with them, saying, 16 "Thus says the whole congregation of the LORD: 'What

CHAPTER 22

2 [a]Num. 32:20–22; Deut. 3:18 [b]Josh. 1:12–18

3 [1]*forsaken*

4 [c]Josh. 21:44 [d]Num. 32:33

5 [e]Deut. 6:6, 17; 11:22; Jer. 12:16 [f]Deut. 10:12; 11:13, 22 [2]*be very careful to do*

6 [g]Gen. 47:7; Ex. 39:43; Josh. 14:13; 2 Sam. 6:18; Luke 24:50

7 [h]Josh. 17:1–13

8 [i]Num. 31:27; 1 Sam. 30:24 [3]*plunder*

9 [j]Num. 32:1, 26, 29

11 [k]Deut. 13:12–18; Judg. 20:12, 13 [4]Lit. *front*

12 [l]Josh. 18:1; Judg. 20:1

13 [m]Deut. 13:14; Judg. 20:12 [n]Ex. 6:25; Num. 25:7, 11–13

14 [o]Num. 1:4 [5]Lit. *thousands*

describe the occupation as incomplete (13:1–7; 15:63; 17:12–13; 18:3; 23:5). A country may officially be defeated and occupied before every part of it ceases resistance.

the house of Israel. Israel is considered as a unity (1:12–15; 13:8–33 notes).

■ **22:1—24:33** The book closes with three chapters about Israel's faithfulness, following God's faithfulness that has been the main subject so far (21:43–45 and note). The human response demanded by God's remarkable grace is the recurring theme of the final chapters. Each chapter begins with Joshua summoning the people (22:1; 23:1–2; 24:1), and focuses on the faithfulness God now requires of them.

■ **22:1 Reubenites . . . Manasseh.** See note on 13:8–33.

■ **22:4 rest.** See 21:44; 1:13 and note.

■ **22:5 to do . . . to love . . . to walk.** The various expressions used to describe the proper human response to the grace of God are found in Deuteronomy (4:9, 29; 6:5; 10:12–13; 11:13 and notes). They portray a wholehearted and confident love and obedience (23:11 and note; John 14:23).

■ **22:6, 7 blessed.** See 8:33 note.

■ **22:8 Return.** Joshua's words of blessing are in the form of commands (like Gen. 1:28). To obey them is to receive the benefit.

■ **22:9 Shiloh.** See note on 18:1.

Gilead. Referring generally to the land east of the Jordan.

■ **22:10 a great, impressive altar.** It would serve as a monument (v. 27).

■ **22:12 the whole congregation.** See 8:35 and note.

to go to war. The reaction of the Israelites can be understood in light of the command to have no rival altars to the one at the central sanctuary (Lev. 17:8–9). The law demanded disciplinary action against apostasy (Deut. 13:12–18).

■ **22:13 Phinehas.** His action at Peor (v. 17; Num. 25:7–8) adds solemnity to his being chosen for this mission.

■ **22:16 the whole congregation.** The unity of Israel is emphasized throughout Joshua. Geographical boundaries and differences of experience are transcended by the one God, under whose promises all Israel is one people (13:8–33 note). The corollary is that apostasy and rebellion against God will destroy this unity.

turn away. Apostasy is turning away from the Lord; repentance is turning away from sin and toward the Lord (1 Kin. 8:33; Jer. 3:7; Hos. 6:1).

an altar, that you might rebel. The altar is understood by the rest of Israel in the light of such teaching as Lev. 17:8–9; Deut. 12. But the accusation is rash. The law requires careful investigation before taking action (Deut. 13:12–14).

16 [p]Deut. 12:5–14 [q]Lev. 17:8, 9 [6]*unfaithful act*

17 [r]Num. 25:1–9; Deut. 4:3

18 [s]Num. 16:22

19 [t]Josh. 18:1 [7]*However*

20 [u]Josh. 7:1–26 [8]*act unfaithfully* [9]*devoted thing*

21 [1]Lit. *thousands*

22 [v]Deut. 4:35; 10:17; Is. 44:8; 45:5; 46:9; [1 Cor. 8:5, 6] [w][Job 10:7; 23:10; Jer. 12:3; 2 Cor. 11:11, 31]

23 [x]Deut. 18:19; 1 Sam. 20:16

24 [2]Lit. *from fear*

27 [y]Gen. 31:48; Josh. 22:34; 24:27 [z]Deut. 12:5, 14 [3]*testimony*

29 [a]Deut. 12:13, 14

30 [4]Lit. *thousands*

31 [b]Ex. 25:8; Lev. 26:11, 12; 2 Chr. 15:2; Zech. 8:23

33 [c]1 Chr. 29:20; Neh. 8:6; Dan. 2:19; Luke 2:28

[p]treachery[6] *is* this that you have committed against the God of Israel, to turn away this day from following the LORD, in that you have built for yourselves an altar, [q]that you might rebel this day against the LORD? 17 *Is* the iniquity [r]of Peor not enough for us, from which we are not cleansed till this day, although there was a plague in the congregation of the LORD, 18 but that you must turn away this day from following the LORD? And it shall be, if you rebel today against the LORD, that tomorrow [s]He will be angry with the whole congregation of Israel. 19 [7]Nevertheless, if the land of your possession *is* unclean, *then* cross over to the land of the possession of the LORD, [t]where the LORD's tabernacle stands, and take possession among us; but do not rebel against the LORD, nor rebel against us, by building yourselves an altar besides the altar of the LORD our God. 20 [u]Did not Achan the son of Zerah [8]commit a trespass in the [9]accursed thing, and wrath fell on all the congregation of Israel? And that man did not perish alone in his iniquity.' "

21 Then the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh answered and said to the heads of the [1]divisions of Israel: 22 "The LORD [v]God of gods, the LORD God of gods, He [w]knows, and let Israel itself know—if *it is* in rebellion, or if in treachery against the LORD, do not save us this day. 23 If we have built ourselves an altar to turn from following the LORD, or if to offer on it burnt offerings or grain offerings, or if to offer peace offerings on it, let the LORD Himself [x]require *an account.* 24 But in fact we have done it [2]for fear, for a reason, saying, 'In time to come your descendants may speak to our descendants, saying, "What have you to do with the LORD God of Israel? 25 For the LORD has made the Jordan a border between you and us, *you* children of Reuben and children of Gad. You have no part in the LORD." So your descendants would make our descendants cease fearing the LORD.' 26 Therefore we said, 'Let us now prepare to build ourselves an altar, not for burnt offering nor for sacrifice, 27 but *that* it *may be* [y]a [3]witness between you and us and our generations after us, that we may [z]perform the service of the LORD before Him with our burnt offerings, with our sacrifices, and with our peace offerings; that your descendants may not say to our descendants in time to come, "You have no part in the LORD." ' 28 Therefore we said that it will be, when they say *this* to us or to our generations in time to come, that we may say, 'Here is the replica of the altar of the LORD which our fathers made, though not for burnt offerings nor for sacrifices; but it *is* a witness between you and us.' 29 Far be it from us that we should rebel against the LORD, and turn from following the LORD this day, [a]to build an altar for burnt offerings, for grain offerings, or for sacrifices, besides the altar of the LORD our God which *is* before His tabernacle."

30 Now when Phinehas the priest and the rulers of the congregation, the heads of the [4]divisions of Israel who *were* with him, heard the words that the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and the children of Manasseh spoke, it pleased them. 31 Then Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest said to the children of Reuben, the children of Gad, and the children of Manasseh, "This day we perceive that the LORD *is* [b]among us, because you have not committed this treachery against the LORD. Now you have delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of the LORD."

32 And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, and the rulers, returned from the children of Reuben and the children of Gad, from the land of Gilead to the land of Canaan, to the children of Israel, and brought back word to them. 33 So the thing pleased the children of Israel, and the children of Israel [c]blessed God; they spoke no more of going against them in battle, to destroy the land where the children of Reuben and Gad dwelt.

■ **22:17 the iniquity of Peor.** This was an occasion of great apostasy before entering Canaan (Num. 25; Josh. 2:1 note).

not cleansed. For cleansing see Lev. 11—16. An inner cleansing also is implied here. The Israelites are not yet rid of the tendency they displayed at Peor.

■ **22:18 angry.** See note on 7:1.

■ **22:19 if the land . . . is unclean.** That is, if the land is not made holy by God's presence. The land east of the Jordan was as much God's gift as the land on the west, despite the geographical separation (13:8–33 and note).

tabernacle. See note on 18:1.

against us. Apostasy offends not only God but His people also.

■ **22:23 If we have built.** Both groups accept the teaching of passages such as Lev. 17:8, 9 and Deut. 12 (v. 16 note).

offerings. See Lev. 1—3.

■ **22:25 a border between you and us.** The Book of Joshua has repeatedly rejected disunity (v. 16 note).

no part in the LORD. To deny that their land was God's land (v. 19) was to deny that they shared in God's promise.

■ **22:27 witness.** The altar was to function as a testimony (cf. the stones at Gilgal, 4:20–24), not a place of sacrifice.

■ **22:30 pleased.** Contrast Phinehas' reaction to actual apostasy in Num. 25:7–8.

■ **22:31 the LORD is among us.** The fears of v. 18 would not be realized because the suspected unfaithfulness had not occurred.

you have delivered. This is an unusual way of making an important point: by not turning from God they had saved Israel from God's wrath.

[34] The children of Reuben and the children of [5]Gad called the altar, *Witness,* "For *it is* a witness between us that the LORD *is* God."

Joshua's Farewell Address

23 Now it came to pass, a long time after the LORD [a]had given rest to Israel from all their enemies round about, that Joshua [b]was old, advanced in age. [2] And Joshua [c]called for all Israel, for their elders, for their heads, for their judges, and for their officers, and said to them:

"I am old, advanced in age. [3] You have seen all that the [d]LORD your God has done to all these nations because of you, for the [e]LORD your God *is* He who has fought for you. [4] See, [f]I have divided to you by lot these nations that remain, to be an inheritance for your tribes, from the Jordan, with all the nations that I have cut off, as far as the Great Sea westward. [5] And the LORD your God [g]will expel them from before you and drive them out of your sight. So you shall possess their land, [h]as the LORD your God promised you. [6] [i]Therefore be very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, [j]lest you turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left, [7] *and* lest you [k]go[l] among these nations, these who remain among you. You shall not [l]make mention of the name of their gods, nor cause *anyone* to [m]swear *by them;* you shall not [n]serve them nor bow down to them, [8] but you shall [o]hold fast to the LORD your God, as you have done to this day. [9] [p]For the LORD has [2]driven out from before you great and strong nations; but *as for* you, no one has been able to stand against you to this day. [10] [q]One man of you shall chase a thousand, for the LORD your God *is* He who fights for you, [r]as He promised you. [11] [s]Therefore take careful heed to yourselves, that you love the LORD your God. [12] Or else, if indeed you do [t]go back, and cling to the remnant of these nations—these that remain among you—and [u]make marriages with them, and go in to them and they to you, [13] know for certain that [v]the LORD your God will no longer drive out these nations from before you. [w]But they shall be snares and traps to you, and scourges on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land which the LORD your God has given you.

[14] "Behold, this day [x]I[3] *am* going the way of all the earth. And you know in all your hearts and in all your souls that [y]not one thing has failed of all the good things which the LORD your

34 [5]LXX adds *and half the tribe of Manasseh*

CHAPTER 23

1 [a]Josh. 21:44; 22:4 [b]Josh. 13:1; 24:29

2 [c]Deut. 31:28

3 [d]Ps. 44:3 [e]Deut. 1:30

4 [f]Josh. 13:2, 6; 18:10

5 [g]Ex. 23:30; 33:2 [h]Num. 33:53

6 [i]Josh. 1:7 [j]Deut. 5:32

7 [k]Deut. 7:2, 3 [l]Ex. 23:13 [m]Deut. 6:13; 10:20 [n]Ex. 20:5 [l]*associate with*

8 [o]Deut. 10:20

9 [p]Deut. 7:24; 11:23 [2]*dispossessed*

10 [q]Lev. 26:8 [r]Ex. 14:14

11 [s]Josh. 22:5

12 [t][2 Pet. 2:20, 21] [u]Deut. 7:3, 4

13 [v]Judg. 2:3 [w]Ex. 23:33; 34:12 **14** [x]1 Kin. 2:2 [y]Josh. 21:45 [3]I am going to die.

■ **22:34 Witness.** The altar witnessed (v. 27) to the one reality that united all Israel and, by implication, to the offense that could destroy Israel (v. 16).

■ **23:1–16** Joshua in his old age addresses all Israel, probably at Shiloh (18:1; 19:51; 21:2). Chs. 23 and 24 take up the exhortations of ch. 1 and apply them to Israel following the substantial fulfillment of God's promises. The beginning and end of the book (chs. 1 and 23—24) convey the purpose of the whole, namely, an exhortation to faithful obedience based on the complete faithfulness of God to His promises. Joshua's speech in ch. 23 expresses this three times over (vv. 3–8, 9–13, 14–16), with variations in emphasis.

■ **23:1 rest.** See note on 1:13. The experience of "rest . . . from all their enemies," here incompletely realized, will become part of Israel's hope (Deut. 12:10; 2 Sam. 7:11; 1 Chr. 22:9; cf. Mic. 5:9; Luke 1:71).

enemies. Israel represents God's kingship to the world (Ex. 19:5–6) and will ultimately bring blessing to the nations (Gen. 12:3). The nations' hostility to Israel is an expression of their hostility to God (cf. Gen. 3:15; Ex. 23:22 notes).

old. Joshua died at the age of 110 (24:29 note).

■ **23:2 all Israel.** He called representatives of every tribe.

■ **23:3–8** In these verses the call to obedience is introduced by a reminder of God's faithfulness (vv. 5, 9, 14).

■ **23:3 God . . . fought for you.** See note on 10:14.

■ **23:4 nations that remain.** Affirmation of the complete faithfulness of God to His promises and the incompleteness of the actual conquest stand side by side in this chapter (21:45 note)

inheritance. See note on 1:6.

■ **23:6 be very courageous.** The consequences of God's promises applied to Joshua in 1:6 (note) are now applied to all Israel.

and to do. See note on 1:7.

Book of the Law. See note on 1:8.

■ **23:7 lest you go among these nations.** The Hebrew makes a close connection between vv. 6 and 7. Faithful obedience to the Book of the Law will avoid religious association with the pagan nations.

■ **23:8 hold fast to.** See note on 22:5.

as you have done. The previous generation who rebelled in the wilderness and the generations to follow did not do as well (cf. 24:31).

■ **23:9 no one has been able to stand against you.** The promise to Joshua in 1:5 has been fulfilled for the Israelites (Deut. 7:24; 11:25).

■ **23:11 that you love the LORD your God.** In the Bible love can be commanded. This does not mean that such love lacks emotional depth. It is actually more than emotion. It is expressed in glad and willing obedience (22:5 note).

■ **23:12 go back.** See 22:16 and note.

make marriages with them. See notes on Gen. 26:34, 35; 34:1–31; 38:1–30.

■ **23:13 God will no longer drive out.** The validity of God's promise (v. 5) is not dependent on human cooperation. The history of Israel shows this, as does the rest of the Bible, culminating in the work of Christ. But the promise will not benefit those who reject the grace of God. This provision was part of the promise from the beginning (Gen. 12:3).

■ **23:14–16** See note on vv. 3–8. In this final section of Joshua's speech the exhortation is again based on a reminder of God's faithfulness, but consists entirely of warnings of the consequences of turning away from the Lord.

■ **23:14 know in all your hearts and in all your souls.** Knowledge of God's faithfulness can never be merely intellectual, but pervades and shapes every aspect of a person's life.

not one thing has failed. See note on 21:45.

God spoke concerning you. All have come to pass for you; not one word of them has failed.
15 [z]Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all the good things have come upon you which the LORD your God promised you, so the LORD will bring upon you [a]all harmful things, until He has destroyed you from this good land which the LORD your God has given you. 16 [d]When you have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which He commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed down to them, then the [b]anger of the LORD will burn against you, and you shall perish quickly from the good land which He has given you."

The Covenant at Shechem

24 Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to [a]Shechem and [b]called for the elders of Israel, for their heads, for their judges, and for their officers; and they [c]presented themselves before God. 2 And Joshua said to all the people, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: [d]'Your fathers, *including* Terah, the father of Abraham and the father of Nahor, dwelt on the other side of [1]the River in old times; and [e]they served other gods. 3 [f]Then I took your father Abraham from the other side of [2]the River, led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his [3]descendants and [g]gave him Isaac. 4 To Isaac I gave [h]Jacob and Esau. To [i]Esau I gave the mountains of Seir to possess, [j]but Jacob and his children went down to Egypt. 5 [k]Also I sent Moses and Aaron, and [l]I plagued Egypt, according to what I did among them. Afterward I brought you out.

6 'Then I [m]brought your fathers out of Egypt, and you came to the sea; and the Egyptians pursued your fathers with chariots and horsemen to the Red Sea. 7 So they cried out to the LORD; and He put [n]darkness between you and the Egyptians, brought the sea upon them, and covered them. And [o]your eyes saw what I did in Egypt. Then you dwelt in the wilderness [p]a long time. 8 And I brought you into the land of the Amorites, who dwelt on the other side of the Jordan, [q]and they fought with you. But I gave them into your hand, that you might possess their land, and I destroyed them from before you. 9 Then [r]Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab, arose to make war against Israel, and [s]sent and called Balaam the son of Beor to curse you. 10 [t]But I would not listen to Balaam; [u]therefore he continued to bless you. So I delivered you out of his

15 [z]Deut. 28:63 [a]Deut. 28:15–68
16 [b]Deut. 4:24–28 [4]Or *If ever*

CHAPTER 24

1 [a]Gen. 35:4 [b]Josh. 23:2 [c]1 Sam. 10:19
2 [d]Gen. 11:7–32 [e]Josh. 24:14 [1]The Euphrates
3 [f]Gen. 12:1; Acts 7:2, 3 [g][Ps. 127:3] [2]The Euphrates [3]Lit. *seed*
4 [h]Gen. 25:24–26 [i]Deut. 2:5 [j]Gen. 46:1, 3, 6
5 [k]Ex. 3:10 [l]Ex. 7—10
6 [m]Ex. 12:37, 51; 14:2–31
7 [n]Ex. 14:20 [o]Deut. 4:34 [p]Josh. 5:6
8 [q]Num. 21:21–35
9 [r]Judg. 11:25 [s]Num. 22:2–14
10 [t]Deut. 23:5 [u]Num. 23:11, 20; 24:10

■ **23:15 good things . . . harmful things.** There are two sides to God's faithfulness, because there are two sides to His covenant: promises and warnings. God can be trusted to enforce the warnings as fully as He can be trusted to keep His promises.

■ **23:16 transgressed the covenant.** See note on 7:11.

anger. See note on 7:1.

■ **24:1–28** At the end of his life, Joshua led Israel in a reaffirmation of the covenant, much as Moses did before he died (Deut. 32:46). As with Deuteronomy, there may be an analogy between this covenant renewal and the kind of treaties that were typically used to formalize relations between powerful sovereign nations and weaker client states (see Deuteronomy: Introduction). These treaties, called "suzerainty treaties," commonly included elements like those found in Josh. 24, such as a historical prologue reviewing the care given by the powerful party to the client (vv. 2–13); a prohibition of any outside alliance (vv. 14, 23); and provision for a written document (vv. 25, 26). There are also significant differences between such ancient treaties and Josh. 24.

■ **24:1 Joshua gathered all the tribes.** See 8:33–35; 23:2 and note.

Shechem. The very place where God had first promised the land to the descendants of Abraham (Gen. 12:6–7) is the place where the descendants assemble, having received the land. See note on 8:30.

before God. This does not necessarily imply the movement of the tabernacle from Shiloh (19:51) to Shechem for the occasion. The presence of God was not restricted to the tabernacle (cf. 1 Kin. 8:27), just as His presence was not guaranteed by physical possession of the ark (1 Sam. 4:3–11).

■ **24:2 Thus says the LORD.** Joshua speaks with the authority of Moses (Deut. 5:27) and of a prophet (Deut. 18:15–19).

the other side of the River. The reference is presumably to Ur (Gen. 11:28) or Haran (Gen. 11:31).

other gods. The pagan beginning underlines the grace of God to which this history testifies, and provides the background for the exhortation in v. 14.

■ **24:3–13** The word of God to the people on this occasion is not a new word. The books of Genesis (vv. 2–4), Exodus (vv. 5–7), Numbers (vv. 8–10), and Joshua (vv. 11–13) are reviewed by way of rehearsing God's dealings with the people since the time of Abraham, focusing on the gift of the land promised to Abraham and now received by his descendants. The review begins with a digest of Genesis from the promise to Abraham through the descent to Egypt (Gen. 11—50).

■ **24:3 Then I.** God is the dominant subject of the verbs in vv. 3–13.

multiplied his descendants. The promise of many descendants to Abraham is a preeminent concern in Genesis (Gen. 12:2; 15:5; 17:2 and notes), and is related to God's blessing on humanity in Gen. 1:26–18 (cf. Ex. 1:7 note).

■ **24:4 Jacob and Esau.** The principle of divine election was clear in the choice of Jacob over Esau (Gen. 25:23; Rom. 9:11 and note). So also is the reality that God's promises are often in apparent conflict with the immediate course of history. Jacob had to go to Egypt.

■ **24:5–7** Joshua's summary of Exodus is remarkable for its failure to mention the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai. The account concentrates on the actions leading directly to occupation of the Promised Land.

■ **24:6 Red Sea.** See note on Ex. 13:18.

■ **24:7 your eyes saw.** The people of Joshua's day are spoken of as having participated in the redemptive events of the past. This emphasizes that they must see the goodness of God towards them not only in their personal experience, but also in the larger history of their people. See note on 4:23, 24.

in the wilderness a long time. A few words summarize everything from the crossing of the sea to the arrival at the land. See note on vv. 5–7.

■ **24:8–10** Joshua's summary of Numbers does not mention the rebellions that took place in the desert (Num. 14; 25), probably because the emphasis of his review is on the deeds of God.

■ **24:8 Amorites.** See note on 2:10.

■ **24:9 Balaam.** See Num. 22—24; note on Josh. 13:22.

■ **24:10 therefore he continued to bless.** Balaam illustrates God's complete power over those who would bring harm to His people.

hand. 11 Then [v]you went over the Jordan and came to Jericho. And [w]the men of Jericho fought against you—*also* the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. But I delivered them into your hand. 12 [x]I sent the hornet before you which drove them out from before you, *also* the two kings of the Amorites, *but* [y]not with your sword or with your bow. 13 I have given you a land for which you did not labor, and [z]cities which you did not build, and you dwell in them; you eat of the vineyards and olive groves which you did not plant.'

14 [a]"Now therefore, fear the LORD, serve Him in [b]sincerity and in truth, and [c]put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of [4]the River and [d]in Egypt. Serve the LORD! 15 And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, [e]choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether [f]the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of [5]the River, or [g]the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. [h]But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

16 So the people answered and said: "Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods; 17 for the LORD our God *is* He who brought us and our fathers up out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, who did those great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way that we went and among all the people through whom we passed. 18 And the LORD drove out from before us all the people, including the Amorites who dwelt in the land. [i]We also will serve the LORD, for He *is* our God."

19 But Joshua said to the people, [j]"You cannot serve the LORD, for He *is* a [k]holy God. He *is* [l]a jealous God; [m]He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. 20 [n]If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, [o]then He will turn and do you harm and consume you, after He has done you good."

21 And the people said to Joshua, "No, but we will serve the LORD!"

22 So Joshua said to the people, "You *are* witnesses against yourselves that [p]you have chosen the LORD for yourselves, to serve Him."

And they said, "*We are* witnesses!"

23 "Now therefore," *he said,* [q]"put away the foreign gods which *are* among you, and [r]incline your heart to the LORD God of Israel."

24 And the people [s]said to Joshua, "The LORD our God we will serve, and His voice we will obey!"

25 So Joshua [t]made[6] a covenant with the people that day, and made for them a statute and an ordinance [u]in Shechem.

11 [v]Josh. 3:14, 17 [w]Josh. 6:1; 10:1

12 [x]Ex. 23:28 [y]Ps. 44:3

13 [z]Deut. 6:10, 11

14 [a]1 Sam. 12:24 [b]2 Cor. 1:12 [c]Ezek. 20:18 [d]Ezek. 20:7, 8 [4]The Euphrates

15 [e]1 Kin. 18:21 [f]Josh. 24:2 [g]Ex. 23:24, 32 [h]Gen. 18:19 [5]The Euphrates

18 [i]Ps. 116:16

19 [j]Matt. 6:24 [k]1 Sam. 6:20 [l]Ex. 20:5 [m]Ex. 23:21

20 [n]Ezra 8:22 [o]Deut. 4:24–26

22 [p]Ps. 119:173

23 [q]Gen. 35:2 [r]1 Kin. 8:57, 58

24 [s]Deut. 5:24–27

25 [t]Ex. 15:25 [u]Josh. 24:1 [6]Lit. *cut a covenant*

■ **24:11 Amorites . . . Jebusites.** See 3:10 and note.

■ **24:12 hornet.** This is possibly a metaphor for sudden panic (2:9; 5:1; Ex. 23:28; Deut. 7:20).

not with your sword. The Israelites received the land as a gift that must not be understood as based on their own achievement (1:2 note; cf. Eph. 2:8).

■ **24:14 fear the LORD.** See 4:24. This response is demanded by the history of God's faithfulness to His promises in vv. 2–13. The fear of God is associated with knowledge of His grace and is fully compatible with love for Him (Deut. 10:12, 13; Ps. 130:4). Contrast 2:9, where the Canaanites fear God because of His coming judgment; and 7:5, where the Israelites experience His anger.

put away the gods. This may refer literally to idols, or metaphorically to abandoning the gods they represent, or to both. The goodness of God to Israel (vv. 2–13) demands exclusive allegiance, summed up by the first commandment (Ex. 20:3).

the River. See note on v. 2.

and in Egypt. Israel's idolatry in Egypt will be remembered by Ezekiel (20:7–10; 23:3–8, 19–21, 27).

■ **24:15 choose . . . this day whom you will serve.** There is some irony in offering a kind of choice after the Lord is rejected. The choice is between the gods Abraham left behind (vv. 2, 3) and the gods of the dispossessed Amorites (vv. 12; 2:10 note).

me and my house. See 6:25; 7:24; Acts 16:15.

■ **24:16–18** In response to the call of v. 14, the people repudiate other gods (v. 16), acknowledge the Lord's goodness from the Exodus to the conquest, and conclude by promising obedience to the Lord.

■ **24:19 You cannot serve the LORD.** This paradoxical statement will all too soon be proved true (v. 31 note; 7:1–26 note; 23:12, 13 note; Judg. 2:7, 10–13; 2 Kin. 17:7–23; Deut. 31:16). It is based on the holiness of God, who cannot be approached casually (Ps. 15:1, 2; Eccl. 5:1, 2). Also, Joshua warns the people because he knows their rebelliousness himself (22:17 and note).

holy. Only a people separated from pagan ways (Lev. 18:3; 20:26) can serve the God who is holy, entirely separate from other gods (Lev. 19:2).

jealous. See Ex. 20:5 and note.

will not forgive. The transgressions in view here amount to the apostasy described in the following verse.

■ **24:20 He will turn.** God's dealing will change from grace to judgment (Gen. 6:7). In another sense God never changes (1 Sam. 15:29), since His promise has always included the threat of judgment (23:15; Gen. 6:6 and notes).

■ **24:21 we will serve the LORD.** The people reject the possibility envisaged or predicted in v. 20.

■ **24:22 witnesses against yourselves.** When they are accused of forsaking the Lord the case against them will be supported by their decision on this occasion.

■ **24:23 put away.** See note on v. 14.

■ **24:25 made a covenant.** Joshua formalized the relationship (cf. Gen. 15:18; Deut. 4:23; 29:1; see also notes on 3:3; 9:6).

a statute and an ordinance. These would specify the content of Israel's obedience to the Lord.

26 [v]Deut. 31:24 [w]Judg. 9:6 [x]Gen. 28:18 [y]Gen. 35:4
27 [z]Gen. 31:48 [a]Deut. 32:1
28 [b]Judg. 2:6, 7
29 [c]Judg. 2:8
30 [d]Josh. 19:50; Judg. 2:9
31 [e]Judg. 2:7 [f]Deut. 11:2
32 [g]Gen. 50:25; Ex. 13:19; Heb. 11:22 [h]Gen. 33:19; John 4:5 [i]Heb. *qesitah,* an unknown ancient measure of weight
33 [j]Ex. 28:1; Num. 20:28; Josh. 14:1 [k]Ex. 6:25

26 Then Joshua [v]wrote these words in the Book of the Law of God. And he took [w]a large stone, and [x]set it up there [y]under the oak that *was* by the sanctuary of the LORD. 27 And Joshua said to all the people, "Behold, this stone shall be [z]a witness to us, for [a]it has heard all the words of the LORD which He spoke to us. It shall therefore be a witness to you, lest you deny your God." 28 So [b]Joshua let the people depart, each to his own inheritance.

Death of Joshua and Eleazar

29 [c]Now it came to pass after these things that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, *being* one hundred and ten years old. 30 And they buried him within the border of his inheritance at [d]Timnath Serah, which *is* in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Mount Gaash.

31 [e]Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had [f]known all the works of the LORD which He had done for Israel.

32 [g]The bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel had brought up out of Egypt, they buried at Shechem, in the plot of ground [h]which Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for one hundred [i]pieces of silver, and which had become an inheritance of the children of Joseph.

33 And [j]Eleazar the son of Aaron died. They buried him in a hill *belonging to* [k]Phinehas his son, which was given to him in the mountains of Ephraim.

■ **24:26 Book of the Law of God.** This is probably to be identified with the Book of the Law in 1:8; 8:31; 23:6.

oak. Compare Gen. 12:6; 35:4; Judg. 9:6.

■ **24:27 witness.** Compare how the stones at Gilgal were to provide a testimony to what God had done (4:20–24 and note).

■ **24:28 each to his own inheritance.** These words are an appropriate concluding note to the book that tells of God's giving the promised inheritance to Israel. Similar words occur, after a considerably different period, at the end of the Book of Judges (Judg. 21:24). See note on 1:6.

■ **24:29–33** The deaths of Joshua and Eleazar mark the end of the period that has been the subject of this book. Their burials, along with the burial of the bones of Joseph, in the land that is now Israel's possession symbolizes God's faithful fulfillment of His promises to the patriarchs.

■ **24:29 servant of the LORD.** See note on 1:1.

one hundred and ten. This age is the same as Joseph's at his death (Gen. 50:22 and note). Such long lives signified God's blessing (cf. Deut. 34:7).

■ **24:30 his inheritance.** See 19:49–50. Unlike Abraham, who had to purchase land for a burial plot (Gen. 23:4; cf. Gen. 33:19), Joshua is buried in his own land.

■ **24:31 Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua.** The faithfulness of the generation of Joshua and the elders is testimony to the Lord's power in everything He had done for Israel. That such faithfulness would be so short-lived supports Joshua's assertion in vv. 19–20 (notes; Judg. 2:7, 10–13).

■ **24:32 The bones of Joseph.** The promise believed by Joseph (Gen. 50:24, 25 and notes) now comes to fulfillment.

Jacob had bought. See Gen. 33:19. The new situation of owning the land is again contrasted with the time of the patriarchs, who had only the promise of it.

■ **24:33 Eleazar.** See note on 14:1.

Phinehas. See note on 22:13.

The Book of JUDGES

Author The original author of Judges is unknown, though we may infer certain things about him from his work. He evidently supported David's kingship over that of Saul's son Ishbosheth, who was from the tribe of Benjamin. The author's loyalty to David and the tribe of Judah would indicate that he lived and wrote during the early period of David's reign at Hebron. The writer of Judges addresses the Israelites of his day from the same theological point of view as the Book of Deuteronomy. The final form of the Book of Judges is doubtless the work of a person or group that shared this perspective. See also "Characteristics and Themes," below, and "Introduction to the Historical Books."

Date and Occasion The subject matter of Judges suggests that the book was composed during a period when there was strong controversy about whether the king should be from the house of David and the tribe of Judah, or from the house of Saul and the tribe of Benjamin. There were rival kings from these tribes when David ruled in Hebron, and Ishbosheth, Saul's son, ruled in the north. Judges ends with events that severely compromise the reputation of the tribe of Benjamin.

The events narrated in Judges span about 350 years, from the conquest of Canaan (c. 1400 B.C.) until just before Samuel, who anointed the first king of Israel (c. 1050 B.C.). The first of the judges in the book, Othniel, appears during the generation following Joshua. Samson, the last judge in the book, was a contemporary of Samuel. During this period Israel was oppressed from within by the Canaanites and from without by the Arameans, Moabites, Midianites, Ammonites, Amalekites, Amorites, and Philistines.

Like the other historical books of the Old Testament, Judges might be treated as a sermon addressed to the covenant community at a time of crisis. The readers had not themselves experienced the events described in the book. Rather, the readers were of a later generation facing their own crisis in keeping the covenant. The stories of successes and failures either encouraged or sobered the later generation. Judges records a period of gross ignorance and sin. The people are depicted as unstable and easily led into idolatry. Extreme crimes are described in the book.

Gideon asks the question that is central to Judges: "if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us?" (6:13). There was warning in Deuteronomy that the result of turning away from God and serving idols would be the sort of suffering that took place during the period of the judges. God would seem to be absent and the land would be filled with sorrows (Deut. 31:16,17). Israel needed a king who could teach them how to keep their covenant with the Lord.

Characteristics and Themes Judges can be divided into three distinct sections (Introduction: Outline). Each section has its own internal style and consistency, containing lively narration of God's people and leaders in action. Occasionally humorous, sometimes tragic, but never dull, the individual stories within the sections are complete in themselves.

Each episode and section employs verbal repetition, historical comparison, and quotations from the Book of Joshua to emphasize the connections between people, places, and events. The reader is invited to search for the pattern and moral framework of the history.

The central section of Judges (3:7—16:31), the bulk of the book, makes an extensive use of repetition. The author describes a repeating sequence of events. The Israelites do evil in the eyes of the Lord, turning to serve other gods. God becomes angry and delivers them up to oppressors. They cry out for help, and God raises up a judge to deliver them. The judge brings peace, but the nation returns to sin as soon as the judge dies. The repeated phrasing describing this pattern reinforces the point that the Israelites were unrepentant. While each judge and the details of the deliverance he brought varies, the end was inevitable: the people again did evil in the eyes of the Lord.

Six major judges are described, interspersed with the mention of six lesser judges. The opening and closing sections of the book are like bookends, enclosing the cyclical narratives about the judges. The introduction (1:1—2:5) points out Israel's general failure to conquer the land according to the provisions of the covenant God had made with them. The cycles of the twelve judges show that the judges could not lead the people into faithfulness to the covenant. There was a downward spiral of increasing disobedience. The conclusion (chs. 17—21) recounts two especially grievous examples of covenant disobedience. The writer repeats the brief, tragic observation, "There was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes."

The writer of Judges, like the authors of the other historical books, calls the community of faith to obey the covenant, applying to their lives the teaching of Deuteronomy. He points to the successes and failures of previous generations, and challenges the people of David's time to be faithful to the covenant. He warns them prophetically about the dangers of the wrong kind of leadership.

According to Judges, Israel was falling away from the covenant and worshiping false gods as they forgot the Lord's acts of salvation in the past (2:10; 6:13). As in Deuteronomy, the sin of seeking other gods is the continuing pattern of covenant disobedience (Judg. 2:11, 12; 3:7, 12; 8:33; 10:6, 10; Deut. 4:23). The repeated cycles with the constant refrains, "the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD" (2:11; 3:7, 12; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6; 13:1) and "everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (17:6; 21:25; cf. Deut. 12:8; 31:16, 17), were a sharp warning to Israel in David's early kingship that they absolutely needed a king who could enable the nation to keep the terms of their covenant with God.

Beyond these immediate applications for the original audience of Judges, we should observe that later readers doubtless saw in the book the hope for a new David who would teach them to keep their covenant with the Lord. This would be especially true of those who read the book in the days of the divided monarchy or during and after the exile to Babylon. In New Testament days, the gospel of Jesus, the son of David (Matt. 1:1), answers the longing of the readers of Judges for the presence of a godly king, and heightens the church's expectation of His return in glory.

Title The title "Judges" refers to the twelve men God raised up prior to the time of Samuel to deliver Israel from their oppressors (2:11–19). The normal translation of the Hebrew noun and verb as "judge" and "to judge" can be misleading to modern readers, since the judges of Israel were military and political leaders rather than officials presiding over courts of law. Deborah is the only judge who is mentioned as having a judicial function in the usual sense (4:4, 5). The last judge, Samuel, was a priest and prophet. At one point God is called "the Judge" (11:27). □

Outline of Judges

I. Introduction: Questions of Leadership and Conquest Completion (1:1—2:5)
  A. The Promise to Judah (1:1, 2)
  B. Various Tribes in the Conquest (1:3–36)
    1. Judah's Successes (1:3–20)
    2. Benjamin's Failure to Take Jerusalem (1:21)
    3. Joseph's Success at Bethel (1:22–26)
    4. Failures in Conquest by the Rest of the Tribes (1:27–36)
  C. God's Judgment for Disobedience (2:1–5)
II. Cycles of the Judges (2:6—16:31)
  A. Pattern for All That Follows (2:6—3:6)
    1. Joshua and the Generation After Him (2:6–10)
    2. The Pattern of Israel's Covenant Obedience (2:11–19)
    3. God's Judgment for Covenant Disobedience (2:20—3:6)
      a. The Purpose in God's Judgment (2:20–23)
      b. The Instruments of God's Judgment (3:1–6)
  B. The Failure of Twelve Judges to Maintain Faithfulness to the Covenant (3:7—16:31)
    1. Othniel (3:7–11)
    2. Ehud (3:12–30)
    3. Shamgar (3:31)
    4. Deborah and Barak (chs. 4; 5)
    5. Gideon and His Son Abimelech (chs. 6—9)
      a. Gideon (6:1—8:32)
      b. Abimelech (8:33—9:57)
    6. Tola (10:1, 2)
    7. Jair (10:3–5)
    8. Jephthah (10:6—12:7)
    9. Ibzan (12:8–10)
    10. Elon (12:11, 12)
    11. Abdon (12:13–15)
    12. Samson (chs. 13—16)
III. Two Grievous Sins (chs. 17—21)
  A. The Danites and Idolatry (chs. 17; 18)
  B. Civil War: Israel Against Benjamin (chs. 19—21)

The Continuing Conquest of Canaan

NOW after the [a]death of Joshua it came to pass that the children of Israel [b]asked the LORD, saying, "Who shall be first to go up for us against the [c]Canaanites to fight against them?"

2 And the LORD said, [d]"Judah shall go up. Indeed I have delivered the land into his hand."

3 So Judah said to [e]Simeon his brother, "Come up with me to my allotted territory, that we may fight against the Canaanites; and [f]I will likewise go with you to your allotted territory." And Simeon went with him. 4 Then Judah went up, and the LORD delivered the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand; and they killed ten thousand men at [g]Bezek. 5 And they found Adoni-Bezek in Bezek, and fought against him; and they defeated the Canaanites and the Perizzites. 6 Then Adoni-Bezek fled, and they pursued him and caught him and cut off his thumbs and big toes. 7 And Adoni-Bezek said, "Seventy kings with their thumbs and big toes cut off used to gather *scraps* under my table; [h]as I have done, so God has repaid me." Then they brought him to Jerusalem, and there he died.

8 Now [i]the children of Judah fought against Jerusalem and took it; they struck it with the edge of the sword and set the city on fire. 9 [j]And afterward the children of Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites who dwelt in the mountains, in the [1]South, and in the lowland. 10 Then Judah [2]went against the Canaanites who dwelt in [k]Hebron. (Now the name of Hebron *was* formerly [l]Kirjath Arba.) And they killed Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai.

11 [m]From there they went against the inhabitants of Debir. (The name of Debir *was* formerly Kirjath Sepher.)

12 [n]Then Caleb said, "Whoever attacks Kirjath Sepher and takes it, to him I will give my daughter Achsah as wife." 13 And Othniel the son of Kenaz, [o]Caleb's younger brother, took it; so he gave him his daughter Achsah as wife. 14 [p]Now it happened, when she came *to him,* that [3]she urged him to ask her father for a field. And she dismounted from *her* donkey, and Caleb said to her, "What do you wish?" 15 So she said to him, [q]"Give me a blessing; since you have given me land in the South, give me also springs of water."

And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the lower springs.

16 [r]Now the children of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law, went up [s]from the City of Palms with the children of Judah into the Wilderness of Judah, which *lies* in the South *near* [t]Arad; [u]and they went and dwelt among the people. 17 [v]And Judah went with his brother Simeon, and they attacked the Canaanites who inhabited Zephath, and utterly destroyed it. So the name of the city was called [w]Hormah. 18 Also Judah took [x]Gaza with its territory, Ashkelon with its territory, and Ekron with its territory. 19 So the LORD was with Judah. And they drove out the mountaineers, but they could not drive out the inhabitants of the lowland, because they had [y]chariots of iron. 20 [z]And they gave Hebron to Caleb, as Moses had said. Then he [4]expelled from there the [a]three sons of Anak. 21 [b]But the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites who inhabited Jerusalem; so the Jebusites dwell with the children of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day.

CHAPTER 1

1 [a]Josh. 24:29 [b]Num. 27:21 [c]Josh. 17:12, 13

2 [d]Gen. 49:8, 9

3 [e]Josh. 19:1 [f]Judg. 1:17

4 [g]1 Sam. 11:8

7 [h]Lev. 24:19

8 [i]Josh. 15:63

9 [j]Josh. 10:36; 11:21; 15:13 [1]Heb. *Negev,* and so throughout the book

10 [k]Josh. 15:13–19 [l]Josh. 14:15 [2]*attacked*

11 [m]Josh. 15:15

12 [n]Josh. 15:16, 17

13 [o]Judg. 3:9

14 [p]Josh. 15:18, 19 [3]LXX, Vg. *he urged her*

15 [q]Gen. 33:11

16 [r]Num. 10:29–32 [s]Deut. 34:3 [t]Josh. 12:14 [u]1 Sam. 15:6

17 [v]Judg. 1:3 [w]Num. 21:3

18 [x]Josh. 11:22

19 [y]Josh. 17:16, 18

20 [z]Josh. 14:9, 14 [a]Josh. 15:14 [4]*drove out from there*

21 [b]Josh. 15:63

■ **1:1—2:5** This introduction to Judges, in which covenant keeping finds expression in dispossessing and destroying the Canaanites, raises the question of leadership for fighting them (v. 1). The covenant-keeping successes and failures of the various tribes, and God's judgment on Israel for the covenant failure of letting the Canaanites live in the land, are recounted (cf. Deut. 7:1–2; 20:16–20). The space and detail given to Judah's successes (vv. 3–20) contrast strongly with the brief accounts of the failures of the other tribes (vv. 21–36), although the house of Joseph is treated positively (vv. 22–26).

■ **1:1 after.** The Book of Joshua opens similarly: "After the death of Moses" (Josh. 1:1).

Who. The Israelites ask an almost identical question at the end of the book—"Which of us shall go up first to battle against the children of Benjamin?" (20:18). The choice of God is Judah. David and his heirs would come from this tribe.

Canaanites. The Canaanites were one of several groups inhabiting the land of Canaan. The Israelites were commanded to annihilate them (Deut. 7:1–2; 20:16–20), and whether they could obey these terms of the covenant will be the issue for this entire introductory section.

■ **1:8 sword.** Judah obeyed the covenant by destroying the inhabitants without mercy (Deut. 7:1–2; 20:16–20). Judah did not occupy Jerusalem at this point (v. 21).

■ **1:10–15** These verses describing the victories of Caleb and Othniel are quoted from Josh. 15:13–19.

■ **1:12 Caleb.** Caleb, though of Kenizzite ancestry (Gen. 15:19; Num. 32:12), was counted as belonging to the tribe of Judah. He represented Judah when the spies were sent into Canaan (Num. 13:6).

■ **1:13 Othniel . . . Caleb's younger brother.** See Josh. 15:17–19. Judg. 1:12–15 provides the only real picture of this first judge.

■ **1:19 the LORD was with Judah.** God kept His covenant promise (v. 2). With the exception of the house of Joseph, the writer deals briefly with the rest of the tribes, describing as failures their efforts at settlement (1:27–36 note).

chariots of iron. Such chariots, with their wooden wheels overlaid with iron, were powerful weapons, especially on the level plains. In effect, Judah is excused for failing to dislodge the Canaanites.

■ **1:20 Caleb.** Caleb, from the tribe of Judah, is an example of faithfulness to the covenant. In Deut. 1:36–37, Caleb is rewarded for his covenant obedience, an obedience flowing from faith in God's promise.

■ **1:21 Children of Benjamin.** The writer specifies that Benjamin, Saul's tribe, did not make a final conquest of Jerusalem. According to Joshua 15:63, the tribe of Judah also failed to drive the Jebusites out of Jerusalem. The city was on the border between the two tribes. The complete conquest of Jerusalem was left for David to accomplish (2 Sam. 5:7).

22 [c]Judg. 1:19
[5]family
23 [d]Josh. 2:1; 7:2
[e]Gen. 28:19
[6]family
24 [f]Josh. 2:12, 14
27 [g]Josh. 17:11–13
[h]Josh. 21:25
[i]Josh. 17:11
28 [7]to forced labor
29 [j]Josh. 16:10; 1 Kin. 9:16
30 [k]Josh. 19:10–16
[8]became forced laborers
31 [l]Josh. 19:24–31
32 [m]Ps. 106:34, 35
33 [n]Josh. 19:32–39
35 [o]Josh. 19:42
[9]Shaalabbin, Josh. 19:42
[t]became forced laborers
36 [p]Num. 34:4; Josh. 15:3

CHAPTER 2

1 [a]Ex. 20:2; Judg. 6:8, 9 [b]Deut. 1:8 [c]Gen. 17:7, 8; Lev. 26:42, 44; Deut. 7:9; Ps. 89:34
2 [d]Ex. 23:32; Deut. 7:2 [e]Ex. 34:12, 13; Deut. 12:3 [f]Ps. 106:34
[1]treaty
3 [g]Num. 33:55; Josh. 23:13 [h]Judg. 3:6 [i]Ex. 23:33; Deut. 7:16; Ps. 106:36 [2]LXX, Tg., Vg. enemies to you [3]entrap you

22 And the [5]house of Joseph also went up against Bethel, [c]and the LORD *was* with them. 23 So the [6]house of Joseph [d]sent men to spy out Bethel. (The name of the city *was* formerly [e]Luz.) 24 And when the spies saw a man coming out of the city, they said to him, "Please show us the entrance to the city, and [f]we will show you mercy." 25 So he showed them the entrance to the city, and they struck the city with the edge of the sword; but they let the man and all his family go. 26 And the man went to the land of the Hittites, built a city, and called its name Luz, which *is* its name to this day.

Incomplete Conquest of the Land

27 [g]However, Manasseh did not drive out *the inhabitants of* Beth Shean and its villages, or [h]Taanach and its villages, or the inhabitants of [i]Dor and its villages, or the inhabitants of Ibleam and its villages, or the inhabitants of Megiddo and its villages; for the Canaanites were determined to dwell in that land. 28 And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, that they put the Canaanites [7]under tribute, but did not completely drive them out.

29 [j]Nor did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites who dwelt in Gezer; so the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them.

30 Nor did [k]Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron or the inhabitants of Nahalol; so the Canaanites dwelt among them, and [8]were put under tribute.

31 [l]Nor did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Acco or the inhabitants of Sidon, or of Ahlab, Achzib, Helbah, Aphik, or Rehob. 32 So the Asherites [m]dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land; for they did not drive them out.

33 [n]Nor did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh or the inhabitants of Beth Anath; but they dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land. Nevertheless the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh and Beth Anath were put under tribute to them.

34 And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountains, for they would not allow them to come down to the valley; 35 and the Amorites were determined to dwell in Mount Heres, [o]in Aijalon, and in [9]Shaalbim; yet when the strength of the house of Joseph became greater, they [t]were put under tribute.

36 Now the boundary of the Amorites *was* [p]from the Ascent of Akrabbim, from Sela, and upward.

Israel's Disobedience

2 Then the Angel of the LORD came up from Gilgal to Bochim, and said: [a]"I led you up from Egypt and [b]brought you to the land of which I swore to your fathers; and [c]I said, 'I will never break My covenant with you. 2 And [d]you shall make no [1]covenant with the inhabitants of this land; [e]you shall tear down their altars.' [f]But you have not obeyed My voice. Why have you done this? 3 Therefore I also said, 'I will not drive them out before you; but they shall be [g]*thorns*[2] in your side, and [h]their gods shall [3]be a [i]snare to you.' " 4 So it was, when the Angel of the LORD spoke these words to all the children of Israel, that the people lifted up their voices and wept.

■ **1:22 the LORD was with them.** Besides Judah (v. 19), only with regard to the house of Joseph is it said that "the LORD was with them."

■ **1:27–36** Judah, Benjamin, and Joseph have already been mentioned. The shortcomings of the remaining tribes are briefly presented in outline fashion.

■ **1:34 children of Dan.** See chs. 17—18.

■ **2:1–5** This passage reviews the preceding chapter, and like 2:20—3:6, provides the background for the narrative that follows. The covenant was made between God and "your fathers"; these are the parties to the covenant. The covenant terms forbid treaties or mixed worship with the Canaanites. Failure to observe these requirements brought the judgment of the covenant on Israel (Deut. chs. 28—31).

■ **2:1 The Angel of the LORD.** A theophany, that is, a visible revelation of God. See 6:11–24; 13:2–23. The words of God's preeminent messenger (6:11–24; Ex. 3:1–17) are the words of the Lord Himself. The Angel of the Lord led Israel out of captivity in Egypt and fought for them (Ex. 14:19; 23:20–23; 33:2; Num. 20:16; Is. 63:9).

Gilgal. The ark of the covenant was at Gilgal (Josh. 5:1–12).

I led you up from Egypt. The Ten Commandments begin with the same statement (Ex. 20:2; Deut. 5:6), a reminder that the history of what God has done is linked to His commands. The Sovereign God who publishes the covenant identifies Himself as the Benefactor of His people.

and brought you to the land of which I swore. God kept His oath (Josh. 23:3–16). The chief difference here between God and His people is that God keeps His vow while the people break theirs.

I will never break My covenant. See Deut. 7:9.

■ **2:2 you shall tear down their altars.** Idolatry is taken as the leading, typical act of covenant breaking (v. 11; Ex. 34:13; Num. 33:52; Deut. 7:5; 12:3; Josh. 23:16).

you have not obeyed. Israel contracted marriages with the people of the land (3:5–6) and did not tear down their altars (6:25–32). The Canaanites could not be driven out because of Israel's sin.

■ **2:3 thorns . . . a snare.** Intermarriage and all other relationships with the Canaanites had been forbidden because such contact would lead to idolatry (Ex. 34:12; Num. 33:55; Deut. 7:16; Josh. 23:12–13). For disobeying the terms of the covenant, Israel would suffer what Canaan suffered, removal from the land (Num. 33:56; Josh. 23:13; 2 Kin. 17:5–8; 25:1–11).

they called the name of that place [4]Bochim; and they sacrificed there to the LORD.
5 And when [i]Joshua had dismissed the people, the children of Israel went each to his own inheritance to possess the land.

Death of Joshua

7 [k]So the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD which He had done for Israel.
8 Now [l]Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died *when he was* one hundred and ten years old. 9 [m]And they buried him within the border of his inheritance at [n]Timnath Heres, in the mountains of Ephraim, on the north side of Mount Gaash. 10 When all that generation had [5]been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who [o]did not know the LORD nor the work which He had done for Israel.

Israel's Unfaithfulness

11 Then the children of Israel did [p]evil in the sight of the LORD, and served the Baals; 12 and they [q]forsook the LORD God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt; and they followed [r]other gods from *among* the gods of the people who *were* all around them, and they [s]bowed down to them; and they provoked the LORD to anger. 13 They forsook the LORD [t]and served [6]Baal and the [7]Ashtoreths. 14 [u]And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel. So He [v]delivered them into the hands of plunderers who despoiled them; and [w]He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, so that they [x]could no longer stand before their enemies.
15 Wherever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for calamity, as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had [y]sworn to them. And they were greatly distressed.
16 Nevertheless, [z]the LORD raised up judges who delivered them out of the hand of those who plundered them. 17 Yet they would not listen to their judges, but they [a]played the harlot with other gods, and bowed down to them. They turned quickly from the way in which their fathers walked, in obeying the commandments of the LORD; they did not do so. 18 And when the LORD raised up judges for them, [b]the LORD was with the judge and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; [c]for the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who oppressed them and harassed them. 19 And it came to pass, [d]when the judge was dead, that they reverted and behaved more corruptly than their fathers, by following other gods, to serve them and bow down to them. They did not cease from their own doings nor from their stubborn way.
20 Then the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and He said, "Because this nation has [e]transgressed My covenant which I commanded their fathers, and has not heeded My voice, 21 I

5 [4]Lit. *Weeping*
6 [i]Josh. 22:6; 24:28–31
7 [k]Josh. 24:31
8 [l]Josh. 24:29
9 [m]Josh. 24:30 [n]Josh. 19:49, 50
10 [o]Ex. 5:2; 1 Sam. 2:12; Gal. 4:8; [Titus 1:16] [5]Died and joined their ancestors
11 [p]Judg. 3:7, 12; 4:1; 6:1
12 [q]Deut. 31:16; Judg. 8:33; 10:6 [r]Deut. 6:14 [s]Ex. 20:5
13 [t]Judg. 10:6; Ps. 106:36 [6]A Canaanite god [7]Canaanite goddesses
14 [u]Deut. 31:17; Judg. 3:8; Ps. 106:40–42 [v]2 Kin. 17:20 [w]Is. 50:1 [x]Lev. 26:37; Josh. 7:12, 13
15 [y]Lev. 26:14–26; Deut. 28:15–68
16 [z]Judg. 3:9, 10, 15; Ps. 106:43–45
17 [a]Ex. 34:15
18 [b]Josh. 1:5 [c]Gen. 6:6
19 [d]Judg. 3:12
20 [e][Josh. 23:16]

■ **2:6–10** This section, except for v. 10, is closely similar to Josh. 24:28–31 and introduces the pattern for the cycles of the judges that follows.

■ **2:6 when Joshua.** See 1:1; Introduction: Date and Occasion.

■ **2:7 the people served the LORD.** See Josh. 24:16–18, 21–22, 31. Covenant obedience led to blessing in the land for that generation.

had seen all the great works. See v. 10; Deut. 4:9; 6:22; 7:19; 11:2–7; Josh. 23:3.

■ **2:10 who did not know the LORD nor the work which He had done for Israel.** One generation was to declare God's wonders to the next (Deut. 4:9; 6:1–6). Later psalmists extol them (Ps. 44:1–3; 78:2–8). If God's people knew what He had done they would obey the commands of His covenant. But the leaders—heads of families, priests, and judges—failed to keep the covenant or to tell the next generation about God's mighty deeds.

■ **2:11–19** These verses give the pattern for chs. 3—16. They show the sovereignty of God in history as He executes the judgment of the covenant. It was He who sold the people and fought against them, and it was He also who raised up the judges to deliver them. Idolatry was the sin on account of which God punished Israel. Vv. 11–19 are elaborated in 1 Sam. 12:9–11 and Ps. 106:34–46.

■ **2:11 did evil.** This refrain occurs at 2:11; 3:7, 12; 4:1; 6:1; 10:6; 13:1.

served the Baals. Israel's evil is summed up in their worship of false gods (v. 2 note). They chose Baal, the Canaanite storm god, and rejected the Lord, who had brought them through the Red Sea and was the true Lord of the storm. "Baals" is plural because Baal was worshiped differently in each Canaanite locality.

■ **2:13 Ashtoreths.** These were the goddesses of fertility in the Canaanite pantheon.

■ **2:14 He delivered them.** See Deut. 28:48; 1 Sam. 12:9. Israel's enemies and oppressors had no power over God's people unless God allowed it. Israel's conquest is now reversed, as people from outside Canaan (Arameans, Moabites, Midianites, Amalekites, and Philistines) oppress Israel, the new inhabitants of the land (3:8–12; 4:2; 6:1; 10:7; 13:1).

■ **2:15 the hand of the LORD was against them.** The hand of the Lord was associated with the saving power of God (Ex. 3:20; 6:1; 13:3; Deut. 4:34). Now the same hand was turned against them in punishment. The Lord was faithful both to bless and to judge. When God rescues His people, He rescues them from their enemies as an act of grace. It is His own judgment that allows their enemies to prevail, and in rescuing them He must turn this judgment aside.

■ **2:16 judges.** The role of the judges was primarily to rescue the nation from its enemies (3:9, 15; 1 Sam. 12:11).

■ **2:17 played the harlot.** Since the covenant agreement can be compared to marriage, harlotry is a standard metaphor for faithlessness and disobedience (8:33; Deut. 31:16; the Book of Hosea).

■ **2:18 was moved to pity.** The people's groaning moved their God (Ex. 2:24; 6:5).

■ **2:19 They did not cease.** Neither their judges (v. 17) nor the memory of how they had been delivered was enough to make the people keep the covenant (v. 10).

21 [f]Josh. 23:4, 5, 13

22 [g]Judg. 3:1, 4 [h]Deut. 8:2, 16; 13:3

CHAPTER 3

1 [a]Judg. 1:1; 2:21, 22 [1]*experienced*

3 [b]Josh. 13:3

4 [2]*find out*

5 [c]Ps. 106:35

6 [d]Ex. 34:15, 16; Deut. 7:3, 4; Josh. 23:12

7 [e]Judg. 2:11 [f]Deut. 32:18 [3]Name or symbol for Canaanite goddesses

8 [g]Deut. 32:30; Judg. 2:14 [h]Hab. 3:7

9 [i]Judg. 3:15 [j]Judg. 2:16 [k]Judg. 1:13

10 [l]Num. 27:18; 1 Sam. 11:6; 2 Chr. 15:1

12 [m]Judg. 2:19 [n]1 Sam. 12:9

13 [o]Judg. 5:14 [p]Deut. 34:3; Judg. 1:16; 2 Chr. 28:15 [4]*struck*

14 [q]Deut. 28:48

15 [r]Ps. 78:34 [s]Judg. 20:16

also will no longer drive out before them any of the nations which Joshua [f]left when he died, 22 so [g]that through them I may [h]test Israel, whether they will keep the ways of the LORD, to walk in them as their fathers kept *them,* or not." 23 Therefore the LORD left those nations, without driving them out immediately; nor did He deliver them into the hand of Joshua.

The Nations Remaining in the Land

3 Now these *are* [a]the nations which the LORD left, that He might test Israel by them, *that is,* all who had not [1]known any of the wars in Canaan 2 (*this was* only so that the generations of the children of Israel might be taught to know war, at least those who had not formerly known it), 3 *namely,* [b]five lords of the Philistines, all the Canaanites, the Sidonians, and the Hivites who dwelt in Mount Lebanon, from Mount Baal Hermon to the entrance of Hamath. 4 And they were *left, that He might* test Israel by them, to [2]know whether they would obey the commandments of the LORD, which He had commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.

5 [c]Thus the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. 6 And [d]they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons; and they served their gods.

Othniel

7 So the children of Israel did [e]evil in the sight of the LORD. They [f]forgot the LORD their God, and served the Baals and [3]Asherahs. 8 Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and He [g]sold them into the hand of [h]Cushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia; and the children of Israel served Cushan-Rishathaim eight years. 9 When the children of Israel [i]cried out to the LORD, the LORD [j]raised up a deliverer for the children of Israel, who delivered them: [k]Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother. 10 [l]The Spirit of the LORD came upon him, and he judged Israel. He went out to war, and the LORD delivered Cushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia into his hand; and his hand prevailed over Cushan-Rishathaim. 11 So the land had rest for forty years. Then Othniel the son of Kenaz died.

Ehud

12 [m]And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD. So the LORD strengthened [n]Eglon king of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the LORD. 13 Then he gathered to himself the people of Ammon and [o]Amalek, went and [4]defeated Israel, and took possession of [p]the City of Palms. 14 So the children of Israel [q]served Eglon king of Moab eighteen years.

15 But when the children of Israel [r]cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer for them: Ehud the son of Gera, the Benjamite, a [s]left-handed man. By him the children of Israel sent tribute to Eglon king of Moab. 16 Now Ehud made himself a dagger (it was double-edged and a cubit in length) and fastened it under his clothes on his right thigh. 17 So he brought the tribute to Eglon king of Moab. (Now Eglon *was* a very fat man.) 18 And when he had finished

■ **2:23 left those nations.** See Deut. 7:22–23; Josh. 13:1–7. This explains why there were still Canaanites during a period when Israel had been faithful (vv. 6–9). Vv. 20–22 and 3:1–4 provide a new reason for God's leaving the Canaanites, to test the hearts of the people.

■ **3:1 not known.** See 2:10. Even God's judgment was not without grace. The testing was an opportunity for a generation who had not seen the Lord work on their behalf to exercise faith and see His might with their own eyes (v. 2).

■ **3:3 Philistines, all the Canaanites, the Sidonians, and the Hivites.** The Canaanites and the Hivites were to be utterly destroyed (1:1). David defeated or destroyed them.

■ **3:5 among the Canaanites . . . Jebusites.** All these were nations devoted to destruction (1:1). Israel violated the covenant by living among them and not destroying them.

■ **3:6 they took their daughters.** This had the effect of leading the Israelites into idolatry. The result of making covenants with the Canaanites rather than destroying that population is repeatedly explained in the following narrative cycles (2:2). It becomes clear that the people cared more about covenants with their pagan neighbors than their covenant with God.

■ **3:7 the Baals and Asherahs.** See 2:11, 13 and notes.

■ **3:9 Othniel.** See 1:13 note. The prominence of Judah in Israel is highlighted, since the first judge was from Judah and was the only judge without an explicit failure in his own covenant keeping. The success of Judah promotes David, who was from that tribe.

■ **3:10 Spirit of the LORD.** The Spirit is also mentioned in connection with Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson. By the gift of the Spirit the judge was empowered to deliver the people (6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14).

he judged Israel. This means he fought for Israel and delivered them. See Introduction: Title.

■ **3:11 the land had rest for forty years.** Though the pattern in 2:11–19 does not mention the time length of peace, the stories themselves end with a comment about peace or the lack of it (v. 30; 5:31; 8:28; 12:7; 15:20; 16:31).

■ **3:12–30** The story of Ehud humiliates the oppressor of God's people.

■ **3:12** See 2:11 note.

Eglon king of Moab. The Lord strengthened the pagan king to be used as His instrument of judgment.

■ **3:15 left-handed.** Lit. "with his right hand restricted." This is not the usual Hebrew word for "left-handed." It is used elsewhere only in 20:16, also for the men of Benjamin. "Benjamin" can be translated "son of the right hand," and the writer may be making a pun about a left-handed son of the right hand.

presenting the tribute, he sent away the people who had carried the tribute. 19 But he himself turned back [t]from the [5]stone images that *were* at Gilgal, and said, "I have a secret message for you, O king."

He said, "Keep silence!" And all who attended him went out from him.

20 So Ehud came to him (now he was sitting upstairs in his cool private chamber). Then Ehud said, "I have a message from God for you." So he arose from *his* seat. 21 Then Ehud reached with his left hand, took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly. 22 Even the [6]hilt went in after the blade, and the fat closed over the blade, for he did not draw the dagger out of his belly; and his entrails came out. 23 Then Ehud went out through the porch and shut the doors of the upper room behind him and locked them.

24 When he had gone out, [7]*Eglon's* servants came to look, and *to their* surprise, the doors of the upper room were locked. So they said, "He is probably [u]attending[8] to his needs in the cool chamber." 25 So they waited till they were [v]embarrassed, and still he had not opened the doors of the upper room. Therefore they took the key and opened *them.* And there was their master, fallen dead on the floor.

26 But Ehud had escaped while they delayed, and passed beyond the [9]stone images and escaped to Seirah. 27 And it happened, when he arrived, that [w]he blew the trumpet in the [x]mountains of Ephraim, and the children of Israel went down with him from the mountains; and [7]he led them. 28 Then he said to them, "Follow *me,* for [y]the LORD has delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hand." So they went down after him, seized the [z]fords of the Jordan leading to Moab, and did not allow anyone to cross over. 29 And at that time they killed about ten thousand men of Moab, all stout men of valor; not a man escaped. 30 So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And [a]the land had rest for eighty years.

Shamgar

31 After him was [b]Shamgar the son of Anath, who killed six hundred men of the Philistines [c]with an ox goad; [d]and he also delivered [e]Israel.

Deborah

4 When Ehud was dead, [a]the children of Israel again did [b]evil in the sight of the LORD. 2 So the LORD [c]sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in [d]Hazor. The commander of his army *was* [e]Sisera, who dwelt in [f]Harosheth Hagoyim. 3 And the children of Israel cried out to the LORD; for Jabin had nine hundred [g]chariots of iron, and for twenty years [h]he had harshly oppressed the children of Israel.

4 Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, was judging Israel at that time. 5 [i]And she would sit under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the mountains of Ephraim. And the children of Israel came up to her for judgment. 6 Then she sent and called for [j]Barak the son of Abinoam from [k]Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, "Has not the LORD God of Israel commanded, 'Go and [l]deploy *troops* at Mount [l]Tabor; take with you ten thousand men of the sons of Naphtali and of the sons of Zebulun; 7 and against you [m]I will deploy Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude at the [n]River Kishon; and I will [2]deliver him into your hand'?"

8 And Barak said to her, "If you will go with me, then I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go!"

19 [t]Josh. 4:20 [5]Tg. *quarries*

22 [6]*handle*

24 [u]1 Sam. 24:3 [7]Lit. *his* [8]Lit. *covering his feet*

25 [v]2 Kin. 2:17; 8:11

26 [9]Tg. *quarries*

27 [w]Judg. 6:34; 1 Sam. 13:3 [x]Josh. 17:15 [7]Lit. *he went before them*

28 [y]Judg. 7:9, 15; 1 Sam. 17:47 [z]Josh. 2:7; Judg. 12:5

30 [a]Judg. 3:11

31 [b]Judg. 5:6 [c]1 Sam. 17:47 [d]Judg. 2:16 [e]1 Sam. 4:1

CHAPTER 4

1 [a]Judg. 2:19 [b]Judg. 2:11

2 [c]Judg. 2:14 [d]Josh. 11:1, 10 [e]1 Sam. 12:9; Ps. 83:9 [f]Judg. 4:13, 16

3 [g]Deut. 20:1; Judg. 1:19 [h]Ps. 106:42

5 [i]Gen. 35:8

6 [j]Heb. 11:32 [k]Josh. 19:37; 21:32 [l]Judg. 8:18 [1]*march*

7 [m]Ex. 14:4 [n]Judg. 5:21; 1 Kin. 18:40; Ps. 83:9, 10 [2]Lit. *draw*

■ **3:20 I have a message from God for you.** The secret message of v. 19 here becomes a divine message. It was not a false word, but the true word of God working against the same rod raised up by God to punish His people (v. 12 note). Eglon was useful as a tool of God's wrath against Israel, but now that wrath comes back upon him.

■ **3:28 the LORD has delivered.** Each major judge except for Othniel verbally acknowledges God's control in Israel's victory (4:14; 7:15; 11:21–30; 15:18; 16:28).

■ **3:30 rest for eighty years.** See v. 11 note.

■ **3:31 Shamgar the son of Anath.** Shamgar is mentioned only here and in the song of Deborah (5:6). Since Anath was a Canaanite goddess of war, perhaps "son of Anath" was a war hero's nickname.

six hundred . . . with an ox goad. Samson slew one thousand Philistines with the jawbone of a donkey (15:15–17).

■ **4:2 Jabin.** This Jabin is a descendant of the Jabin mentioned in Josh. 11:1–9.

■ **4:4 Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth.** Lit. "a woman, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth." The emphasis is that a woman is the leader in Israel. Deborah, a prophetess, is introduced at the point where the narrator usually mentions the deliverer (6:8 note).

■ **4:5 sit . . . for judgment.** That is, she was a magistrate, handing down legal decisions.

■ **4:6 Mount Tabor.** This was a rounded hillock standing isolated on the north side of the plain in the Jezreel Valley.

■ **4:7 River Kishon.** The River Kishon was near the base of Mount Tabor and was virtually dry for much of the year (v. 15 note).

■ **4:8 If you will go.** Barak was asking Deborah to risk her life to verify the truth of her words, and he was also asking a woman to do what he had been assigned to do. From his point of view the mission was suicidal, since the exposed Mount Tabor could easily be surrounded by the chariots of Sisera, cutting off any escape. Barak's faith was not equal to this danger.

9 [o]Judg. 2:14

10 [p]Judg. 5:18 [q]Ex. 11:8; 1 Kin. 20:10 [3]Lit. *at his feet*

11 [r]Judg. 1:16 [s]Num. 10:29 [t]Judg. 4:6

14 [u]Deut. 9:3; 31:3; 2 Sam. 5:24; Ps. 68:7; Is. 52:12 [4]*Arise!*

16 [v]Ex. 14:28; Ps. 83:9

17 [w]Judg. 5:6

18 [5]*rug*

19 [x]Judg. 5:24–27

21 [y]Judg. 5:24–27

CHAPTER 5

1 [a]Ex. 15:1; Judg. 4:4

2 [b]Ps. 18:47 [c]2 Chr. 17:16 [1]Or *When locks are loosed* [2]*volunteer*

3 [d]Deut. 32:1, 3 [e]Ps. 27:6

4 [f]Deut. 33:2; Ps. 68:7 [g]Ps. 68:8

9 So she said, "I will surely go with you; nevertheless there will be no glory for you in the journey you are taking, for the LORD will [o]sell Sisera into the hand of a woman." Then Deborah arose and went with Barak to Kedesh. 10 And Barak called [p]Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; he went up with ten thousand men [q]under[3] his command, and Deborah went up with him.

11 Now Heber [r]the Kenite, of the children of [s]Hobab the father-in-law of Moses, had separated himself from the Kenites and pitched his tent near the terebinth tree at Zaanaim, [t]which *is* beside Kedesh.

12 And they reported to Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor. 13 So Sisera gathered together all his chariots, nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people who *were* with him, from Harosheth Hagoyim to the River Kishon.

14 Then Deborah said to Barak, [4]"Up! For this *is* the day in which the LORD has delivered Sisera into your hand. [u]Has not the LORD gone out before you?" So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand men following him. 15 And the LORD routed Sisera and all *his* chariots and all *his* army with the edge of the sword before Barak; and Sisera alighted from *his* chariot and fled away on foot. 16 But Barak pursued the chariots and the army as far as Harosheth Hagoyim, and all the army of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword; not a man was [v]left.

17 However, Sisera had fled away on foot to the tent of [w]Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite; for *there was* peace between Jabin king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite. 18 And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said to him, "Turn aside, my lord, turn aside to me; do not fear." And when he had turned aside with her into the tent, she covered him with a [5]blanket.

19 Then he said to her, "Please give me a little water to drink, for I am thirsty." So she opened [x]a jug of milk, gave him a drink, and covered him. 20 And he said to her, "Stand at the door of the tent, and if any man comes and inquires of you, and says, 'Is there any man here?' you shall say, 'No.' "

21 Then Jael, Heber's wife, [y]took a tent peg and took a hammer in her hand, and went softly to him and drove the peg into his temple, and it went down into the ground; for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died. 22 And then, as Barak pursued Sisera, Jael came out to meet him, and said to him, "Come, I will show you the man whom you seek." And when he went into her *tent,* there lay Sisera, dead with the peg in his temple.

23 So on that day God subdued Jabin king of Canaan in the presence of the children of Israel. 24 And the hand of the children of Israel grew stronger and stronger against Jabin king of Canaan, until they had destroyed Jabin king of Canaan.

The Song of Deborah

5 Then Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam [a]sang on that day, saying:

2 "When[1] leaders [b]lead in Israel,
[c]When the people [2]willingly offer themselves,
Bless the LORD!

3 "Hear,[d] O kings! Give ear, O princes!
I, *even* [e]I, will sing to the LORD;
I will sing praise to the LORD God of Israel.

4 "LORD, [f]when You went out from Seir,
When You marched from [g]the field of Edom,

■ **4:9 there will be no glory for you.** Barak was punished for doubting (v. 8).

for the LORD will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman. The enemy will not be delivered to Barak, but to a woman. As God would have it, Jael (v.17) will succeed where faithless Barak will fail (vv. 18–22).

■ **4:10 Zebulun and Naphtali.** See 5:13–18.

■ **4:13 River Kishon.** See vv. 7, 15.

■ **4:14 the LORD has delivered Sisera.** Deborah confirms her word from the Lord (v. 7).

■ **4:15 the LORD routed.** From Deborah's song we learn that the Lord sent rain that would cause flash floods, trapping the chariots.

■ **4:18–21** See 5:24–27 for the poetic account.

■ **4:21 drove the peg.** No motive is given for Jael's action. A woman killed Sisera, and the Lord's word to Barak was fulfilled (v. 9). Women were not normally warriors, and it was considered shameful to die at the hands of a woman (9:53–54).

■ **5:1–32** "The Song of Deborah" is famous for its age and for its outstanding literary quality.

■ **5:2 When leaders lead in Israel.** Leadership is a major theme in Judges.

■ **5:4 from Seir . . . from the field of Edom.** Mount Seir was the main mountain ridge running through Edom, Israel's point of departure for the battles of conquest (Deut. 33:2). God is pictured as the mighty Warrior going before His people.

■ **5:4, 5 The earth trembled . . . before the LORD.** God is pictured as a warrior who fights by means of the created elements. The portrayal of God as ruling the storm is doubly appropriate: by defeating Sisera with a cloudburst (v. 20) God refutes Baal's claim to be lord of the storm.

The earth trembled and the heavens poured,
The clouds also poured water;
5 [h]The mountains [3]gushed before the LORD,
[i]This Sinai, before the LORD God of Israel.

6 "In the days of [j]Shamgar, son of Anath,
In the days of [k]Jael,
[l]The highways were deserted,
And the travelers walked along the byways.
7 Village life ceased, it ceased in Israel,
Until I, Deborah, arose,
Arose a mother in Israel.
8 They chose [m]new gods;
Then *there was* war in the gates;
Not a shield or spear was seen among forty thousand in Israel.
9 My heart *is* with the rulers of Israel
Who offered themselves willingly with the people.
Bless the LORD!

10 "Speak, you who ride on white [n]donkeys,
Who sit in judges' attire,
And who walk along the road.
11 Far from the noise of the archers, among the watering places,
There they shall recount the righteous acts of the LORD,
The righteous acts *for* His villagers in Israel;
Then the people of the LORD shall go down to the gates.

12 "Awake,[o] awake, Deborah!
Awake, awake, sing a song!
Arise, Barak, and lead your captives away,
O son of Abinoam!

13 "Then the survivors came down, the people against the nobles;
The LORD came down for me against the mighty.
14 From Ephraim *were* those whose roots were in [p]Amalek.
After you, Benjamin, with your peoples,
From Machir rulers came down,
And from Zebulun those who bear the recruiter's staff.
15 And [4]the princes of Issachar *were* with Deborah;
As Issachar, so *was* Barak
Sent into the valley [5]under his command;
Among the divisions of Reuben
There were great resolves of heart.
16 Why did you sit among the sheepfolds,
To hear the pipings for the flocks?
The divisions of Reuben have great searchings of heart.
17 [q]Gilead stayed beyond the Jordan,
And why did Dan remain [6]on ships?

5 [h]Ps. 97:5 [i]Ex. 19:18 [3]*flowed*
6 [j]Judg. 3:31 [k]Judg. 4:17 [l]Is. 33:8
8 [m]Deut. 32:17
10 [n]Judg. 10:4; 12:14
12 [o]Ps. 57:8
14 [p]Judg. 3:13
15 [4]So with LXX, Syr., Tg., Vg.; MT *And my princes in Issachar* [5]Lit. *at his feet*
17 [q]Josh. 22:9 [6]Or *at ease*

■ **5:6, 7 The highways were deserted.** Israel's failed leadership had resulted in chaos and foreign domination. It was not like the days in which God had been the warrior at the front of Israel (vv. 4–5). The roads were abandoned because they were not safe for travel on account of the foreign oppressors and robbers. No one provided protection.

■ **5:7 a mother in Israel.** The princes would not lead (implied by v. 2), but a woman was raised up to lead Israel. Contrast this "mother in Israel" with the despairing mother of Sisera (v. 28).

■ **5:8 chose new gods; Then there was war in the gates.** This is a poetic representation of the cycle of sin and punishment (2:11–19). Idolatry brings suffering to the city.

■ **5:9 offered themselves.** Later in the song there is a pointed comparison of those who volunteered to fight and those who for some reason refused (v. 13–23).

■ **5:10 ride on white donkeys.** Donkeys were ridden by nobility; the song is addressed to the princes mentioned in vv. 2, 9.

■ **5:11 the righteous acts of the LORD.** The Lord's righteous acts are His intervention and defeat of His people's enemies. These are His judgments in the earth (cf. Rev. 15:4).

■ **5:15 great resolves.** The failure of Reuben, Gilead, Dan, and Asher (v. 17) to participate shows that Israel was not united.

17 [r]Josh. 19:29, 31
18 [s]Judg. 4:6, 10
19 [t]Judg. 1:27
21 [u]Judg. 4:7
23 [7]Or *Angel*
24 [v][Luke 1:28]
27 [w]Judg. 4:18–21
29 [8]*princesses*
[9]Lit. *repeats her words to herself*
31 [x]Ps. 92:9
[y]2 Sam. 23:4
[z]Ps. 37:6; 89:36, 37 [a]Ps. 19:5

CHAPTER 6

1 [a]Judg. 2:11
[b]Num. 22:4; 31:1–3

[r]Asher continued at the seashore,
And stayed by his inlets.
18 [s]Zebulun *is* a people *who* jeopardized their lives to the point of death,
Naphtali also, on the heights of the battlefield.

19 "The kings came *and* fought,
Then the kings of Canaan fought
In [t]Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo;
They took no spoils of silver.
20 They fought from the heavens;
The stars from their courses fought against Sisera.
21 [u]The torrent of Kishon swept them away,
That ancient torrent, the torrent of Kishon.
O my soul, march on in strength!
22 Then the horses' hooves pounded,
The galloping, galloping of his steeds.
23 'Curse Meroz,' said the [7]angel of the LORD,
'Curse its inhabitants bitterly,
Because they did not come to the help of the LORD,
To the help of the LORD against the mighty.'

24 "Most blessed among women is Jael,
The wife of Heber the Kenite;
[v]Blessed is she among women in tents.
25 He asked for water, she gave milk;
She brought out cream in a lordly bowl.
26 She stretched her hand to the tent peg,
Her right hand to the workmen's hammer;
She pounded Sisera, she pierced his head,
She split and struck through his temple.
27 At her feet he sank, he fell, he lay still;
At her feet he sank, he fell;
Where he sank, there he fell [w]dead.

28 "The mother of Sisera looked through the window,
And cried out through the lattice,
'Why is his chariot *so* long in coming?
Why tarries the clatter of his chariots?'
29 Her wisest [8]ladies answered her,
Yes, she [9]answered herself,
30 'Are they not finding and dividing the spoil:
To every man a girl *or* two;
For Sisera, plunder of dyed garments,
Plunder of garments embroidered and dyed,
Two pieces of dyed embroidery for the neck of the looter?'

31 "Thus let all Your enemies [x]perish, O LORD!
But *let* those who love Him *be* [y]like the [z]sun
When it comes out in full [a]strength."

So the land had rest for forty years.

Midianites Oppress Israel

6 Then the children of Israel did [a]evil in the sight of the LORD. So the LORD delivered them into the hand of [b]Midian for seven years, 2 and the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel.

■ **5:20 The stars . . . fought.** The participation of the heavens means that God was intervening, fighting as the divine Warrior from heaven. This text has been appealed to in history as biblical grounds for astrology, but this distorts the sense of the passage.

■ **5:23 Meroz.** A city of uncertain location.

■ **5:24–27** This section of the song closely parallels the narrative of 4:18–22.

■ **5:31 rest for forty years.** This standard conclusion ties Deborah's and Barak's song to ch. 4 (cf. 2:19; 3:11).

■ **6:1—8:32** Gideon was the greatest of the judges. The following facts

Because of the Midianites, the children of Israel made for themselves the dens, [c]the caves, and the strongholds which *are* in the mountains. [3] So it was, whenever Israel had sown, Midianites would come up; also Amalekites and the [d]people of the East would come up against them. [4] Then they would encamp against them and [e]destroy the produce of the earth as far as Gaza, and leave no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep nor ox nor [f]donkey. [5] For they would come up with their livestock and their tents, coming in as numerous as locusts; both they and their camels were [l]without number; and they would enter the land to destroy it. [6] So Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites, and the children of Israel [g]cried out to the LORD.

[7] And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried out to the LORD because of the Midianites, [8] that the LORD sent a prophet to the children of Israel, who said to them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I brought you up from Egypt and brought you out of the [h]house of [2]bondage; [9] and I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians and out of the hand of all who oppressed you, and [i]drove them out before you and gave you their land. [10] Also I said to you, "I *am* the LORD your God; [j]do not fear the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell." But you have not obeyed My [k]voice.' "

Gideon

[11] Now the Angel of the LORD came and sat under the terebinth tree which *was* in Ophrah, which *belonged* to Joash [l]the Abiezrite, while his son [m]Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress, in order to hide *it* from the Midianites. [12] And the [n]Angel of the LORD appeared to him, and said to him, "The LORD *is* [o]with you, you mighty man of valor!"

[13] Gideon said to Him, "O [3]my lord, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And [p]where *are* all His miracles [q]which our fathers told us about, saying, 'Did not the LORD

2 [c]1 Sam. 13:6; Heb. 11:38
3 [d]Judg. 7:12
4 [e]Lev. 26:16 [f]Deut. 28:31
5 [l]*innumerable*
6 [g]Ps. 50:15; Hos. 5:15
8 [h]Josh. 24:17 [2]*slavery*
9 [i]Ps. 44:2, 3
10 [j]2 Kin. 17:35, 37, 38; Jer. 10:2 [k]Judg. 2:1, 2
11 [l]Josh. 17:2; Judg. 6:15 [m]Judg. 7:1; Heb. 11:32
12 [n]Judg. 13:3; Luke 1:11, 28 [o]Josh. 1:5
13 [p][Is. 59:1] [q]Josh. 4:6, 21; Ps. 44:1 [3]Heb. *adoni*, used of man

bear out this judgment. (a) His story is the longest in the book. (b) The Lord is more visibly active in his story than in any of the others. (c) The Angel of the Lord appeared to him, but to no other judge (vv. 11–24). (d) Centuries later Isaiah remembers Gideon's defeat of Midian as a significant victory (Is. 9:4; 10:26). (e) He is listed first in Samuel's list of deliverers ("Jerubbaal," 1 Sam. 12:11). (f) He is paralleled with Moses (6:11–24 note). (g) The people sought to make him king (8:22–23). (h) He lived like a king (8:26–27, 30, 32). Yet for all this, Gideon failed badly at one point. Gideon made a gold ephod that drew him and others into sin (8:27). In his greatness and in his deficiency, Gideon pointed to the need for a better deliverer, a king who would truly keep the covenant. In this way he points to Christ.

■ **6:2 Midian prevailed.** None of the other stories in Judges devotes such attention to the details of the oppression as this one. Homes, crops, and livestock were subject to the covenant curse (Deut. 28:30–33, 38–42). The Midianite oppression was so great that Isaiah mentioned it centuries later (Is. 9:4; 10:26).

■ **6:6 was greatly impoverished.** Lit. "made small." The covenant curse was a reversal of God's promise to Abraham (Gen. 15:5; 22:17; Deut. 28:62; Ps. 107:38–39).

cried out. See 2:19; 3:9.

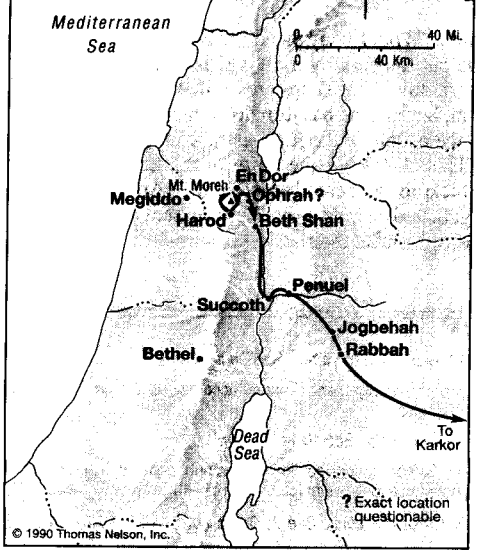
■ **6:8 a prophet.** The prophets constantly reminded the people of their covenant obligations. The words of this unnamed prophet (vv. 8–10) are virtually identical to the words of the Angel of the Lord in 2:1–3.

■ **6:8, 9 I brought . . . delivered . . . drove them . . . gave you.** Remembering these saving actions of God is the first part of covenant keeping. In Israel religious apostasy was linked to forgetting God's saving acts, and His law.

■ **6:11–24** This is the heart of the Gideon narrative. His call is similar to Moses' call (Ex. 3); he asks the question that is central to the book's message (v. 13); and his search for faith begins with signs (6:1—8:32 note). The search for and need for a covenant-keeping deliverer like the prophet Moses is the focus of Judges.

■ **6:11 Angel of the LORD came.** See 2:1; 13:3.

■ **6:13 why.** This question is central to the Book of Judges. The Angel did not answer the question, since the prophet had already answered it (vv. 8–10; Deut. 28:47–52; 29:24–27; 31:17–18). Some of the psalms ask a similar question (Ps. 44:20; 74:9–11).



Gideon's Campaign. With a force of 300 Israelites Gideon attacked the Midianites and Amalekites near Mt. Moreh. While in pursuit, he requested aid for his forces from Succoth and Penuel, but was denied. Nevertheless, Gideon's army was able to capture the remaining Midianite kings in Karkor.

bring us up from Egypt?' But now the LORD has [r]forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites."

14 Then the LORD turned to him and said, [s]"Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. [t]Have I not sent you?"

15 So he said to Him, "O [4]my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed [u]my clan *is* the weakest in Manasseh, and I *am* the least in my father's house."

16 And the LORD said to him, [v]"Surely I will be with you, and you shall [5]defeat the Midianites as one man."

17 Then he said to Him, "If now I have found favor in Your sight, then [w]show me a sign that it is You who talk with me. 18 [x]Do not depart from here, I pray, until I come to You and bring out my offering and set *it* before You."

And He said, "I will wait until you come back."

19 [y]So Gideon went in and prepared a young goat, and unleavened bread from an ephah of flour. The meat he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot; and he brought *them* out to Him under the terebinth tree and presented *them.* 20 The Angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened bread and [z]lay *them* on this rock, and [a]pour out the broth." And he did so.

21 Then the Angel of the LORD put out the end of the staff that *was* in His hand, and touched the meat and the unleavened bread; and [b]fire rose out of the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread. And the Angel of the LORD departed out of his sight.

22 Now Gideon [c]perceived that He *was* the Angel of the LORD. So Gideon said, "Alas, O Lord GOD! [d]For I have seen the Angel of the LORD face to face."

23 Then the LORD said to him, [e]"Peace *be* with you; do not fear, you shall not die." 24 So Gideon built an altar there to the LORD, and called it [6]The-LORD-*Is*-Peace. To this day it *is* still [f]in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

25 Now it came to pass the same night that the LORD said to him, "Take your father's young bull, the second bull of seven years old, and [g]tear down the altar of [h]Baal that your father has, and [i]cut down the [7]wooden image that *is* beside it; 26 and build an altar to the LORD your God on top of this [8]rock in the proper arrangement, and take the second bull and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the image which you shall cut down." 27 So Gideon took ten men from among his servants and did as the LORD had said to him. But because he feared his father's household and the men of the city too much to do *it* by day, he did *it* by night.

Gideon Destroys the Altar of Baal

28 And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, there was the altar of Baal, torn down; and the wooden image that *was* beside it was cut down, and the second bull was being offered on the altar *which had been* built. 29 So they said to one another, "Who has done this thing?" And when they had inquired and asked, they said, "Gideon the son of Joash has done this thing." 30 Then the men of the city said to Joash, "Bring out your son, that he may die, because he has torn down the altar of Baal, and because he has cut down the wooden image that *was* beside it."

31 But Joash said to all who stood against him, "Would you [9]plead for Baal? Would you save him? Let the one who would plead for him be put to death by morning! If he *is* a god, let him plead for himself, because his altar has been torn down!" 32 Therefore on that day he called him [j]Jerubbaal,[l] saying, "Let Baal plead against him, because he has torn down his altar."

33 Then all [k]the Midianites and Amalekites, the people of the East, gathered together; and they crossed over and encamped in [l]the Valley of Jezreel. 34 But [m]the Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon; then he [n]blew the trumpet, and the Abiezrites gathered behind him. 35 And he sent messengers throughout all Manasseh, who also gathered behind him. He also sent messengers to [o]Asher, [p]Zebulun, and Naphtali; and they came up to meet them.

13 [r]Deut. 31:17; 2 Chr. 15:2; Ps. 44:9–16

14 [s]1 Sam. 12:11 [t]Josh. 1:9

15 [u]1 Sam. 9:21 [4]Heb. *Adonai,* used of God

16 [v]Ex. 3:12; Josh. 1:5 [5]Lit. *strike*

17 [w]Judg. 6:36, 37; 2 Kin. 20:8; Ps. 86:17; Is. 7:11; 38:7, 8

18 [x]Gen. 18:3, 5

19 [y]Gen. 18:6–8

20 [z]Judg. 13:19 [a]1 Kin. 18:33, 34

21 [b]Lev. 9:24

22 [c]Gen. 32:30; Ex. 33:20; Judg. 13:21, 22 [d]Gen. 16:13

23 [e]Dan. 10:19

24 [f]Judg. 8:32 [6]Heb. *YHWH Shalom*

25 [g]Judg. 2:2 [h]Judg. 3:7 [i]Ex. 34:13; Deut. 7:5 [7]Heb. *Asherah,* a Canaanite goddess

26 [8]*stronghold*

31 [9]*contend*

32 [j]Judg. 7:1; 1 Sam. 12:11; 2 Sam. 11:21 [l]Lit. *Let Baal Plead*

33 [k]Judg. 6:3 [l]Josh. 17:16; Hos. 1:5

34 [m]Judg. 3:10; 1 Chr. 12:18; 2 Chr. 24:20 [n]Num. 10:3; Judg. 3:27

35 [o]Judg. 5:17; 7:23 [p]Judg. 4:6, 10; 5:18

■ **6:14 Go in this might of yours.** See v. 34; 7:2, 7. God would be his strength, though Gideon did not yet know it.

■ **6:15 weakest.** When asked about kingship, Saul used similar words (1 Sam. 9:21).

■ **6:22 I have seen . . . face.** See 13:22; Deut. 5:24; Is. 6:5; 1 Tim. 6:16.

■ **6:25–32** This episode in Gideon's life reveals how he came to be known as Jerubbaal. His immediate father's idolatry is tragic in light of what Gideon says about "our fathers" in v. 13.

■ **6:25, 26 tear down the altar.** See Deut. 12:3.

■ **6:26 proper arrangement.** That is, according to the prescriptions of the Law of Moses.

■ **6:31 If he is a god.** See 10:14.

■ **6:33–40** Gideon sought confidence through signs (v. 17), which the Lord did not refuse to give him (cf. Luke 1:18–20).

■ **6:34 Spirit of the LORD.** See 3:10 and note; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14.

The Sign of the Fleece

36 So Gideon said to God, "If You will save Israel by my hand as You have said— 37 [q]look, I shall put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor; if there is dew on the fleece only, and *it is* dry on all the ground, then I shall know that You will save Israel by my hand, as You have said." 38 And it was so. When he rose early the next morning and squeezed the fleece together, he wrung the dew out of the fleece, a bowlful of water. 39 Then Gideon said to God, [r]"Do not be angry with me, but let me speak just once more: Let me test, I pray, just once more with the fleece; let it now be dry only on the fleece, but on all the ground let there be dew." 40 And God did so that night. It was dry on the fleece only, but there was dew on all the ground.

Gideon's Valiant Three Hundred

7 Then [a]Jerubbaal (that *is,* Gideon) and all the people who *were* with him rose early and encamped beside the well of Harod, so that the camp of the Midianites was on the north side of them by the hill of Moreh in the valley.

2 And the LORD said to Gideon, "The people who *are* with you *are* too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel [b]claim glory for itself against Me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me.' 3 Now therefore, proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying, [c]'Whoever *is* fearful and afraid, let him turn and depart at once from Mount Gilead.' " And twenty-two thousand of the people returned, and ten thousand remained.

4 But the LORD said to Gideon, "The people *are* still *too* many; bring them down to the water, and I will test them for you there. Then it will be, *that* of whom I say to you, 'This one shall go with you,' the same shall go with you; and of whomever I say to you, 'This one shall not go with you,' the same shall not go." 5 So he brought the people down to the water. And the LORD said to Gideon, "Everyone who laps from the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set apart by himself; likewise everyone who gets down on his knees to drink." 6 And the number of those who lapped, *putting* their hand to their mouth, was three hundred men; but all the rest of the people got down on their knees to drink water. 7 Then the LORD said to Gideon, [d]"By the three hundred men who lapped I will save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand. Let all the *other* people go, every man to his [1]place." 8 So the people took provisions and their trumpets in their hands. And he sent away all *the rest of* Israel, every man to his tent, and retained those three hundred men. Now the camp of Midian was below him in the valley.

9 It happened on the same [e]night that the LORD said to him, "Arise, go down against the camp, for I have delivered it into your hand. 10 But if you are afraid to go down, go down to the camp with Purah your servant, 11 and you shall [f]hear what they say; and afterward [2]your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp." Then he went down with Purah his servant to the outpost of the armed men who *were* in the camp. 12 Now the Midianites and Amalekites, [g]all the people of the East, were lying in the valley [h]as numerous as locusts; and their camels *were* [3]without number, as the sand by the seashore in multitude.

13 And when Gideon had come, there was a man telling a dream to his companion. He said, "I have had a dream: *To my* surprise, a loaf of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian; it came to a tent and struck it so that it fell and overturned, and the tent collapsed."

14 Then his companion answered and said, "This *is* nothing else but the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel! Into his hand [i]God has delivered Midian and the whole camp."

15 And so it was, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, that he worshiped. He returned to the camp of Israel, and said, "Arise, for the LORD has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand." 16 Then he divided the three hundred men *into* three companies, and he put a trumpet into every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and torches inside the pitchers. 17 And he said to them, "Look at me and do likewise; watch, and when I come to the edge of the camp you shall do as I do: 18 When I blow the trumpet, I and all who *are* with me, then you also blow the trumpets on every side of the whole camp, and say, '*The sword of* the LORD and of Gideon!' "

19 So Gideon and the hundred men who *were* with him came to the outpost of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, just as they had posted the watch; and they blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers that *were* in their hands. 20 Then the three companies blew the trumpets

37 [q][Ex. 4:3–7]
39 [r]Gen. 18:32

CHAPTER 7

1 [a]Judg. 6:32
2 [b]Deut. 8:17; Is. 10:13
3 [c]Deut. 20:8
7 [d]1 Sam. 14:6
[1]*home*
9 [e]Gen. 46:2, 3; Judg. 6:25
11 [f]Gen. 24:14; 1 Sam. 14:9, 10
[2]*you shall be encouraged*
12 [g]Judg. 6:3, 33; 8:10 [h]Judg. 6:5
[3]*innumerable*
14 [i]Judg. 6:14, 16

■ **6:36 If you will save.** Even though the Spirit had come upon him, Gideon still struggled with faith (6:27 note).

■ **7:1–8** The drastic reduction of troops demonstrated God's power to save Israel and brought Him glory. It also challenged Gideon and encouraged Israel to trust him.

■ **7:17 Look at me.** These words are similar to those of Gideon's son Abimelech (9:48–49).

and broke the pitchers—they held the torches in their left hands and the trumpets in their right hands for blowing—and they cried, "The sword of the LORD and of Gideon!" 21 And *j*every man stood in his place all around the camp; *k*and the whole army ran and cried out and fled. 22 When the three hundred *l*blew the trumpets, *m*the LORD set *n*every man's sword against his companion throughout the whole camp; and the army fled to *o*Beth Acacia, toward Zererah, as far as the border of *p*Abel Meholah, by Tabbath.

23 And the men of Israel gathered together from *q*Naphtali, Asher, and all Manasseh, and pursued the Midianites.

24 Then Gideon sent messengers throughout all the *r*mountains of Ephraim, saying, "Come down against the Midianites, and seize from them the watering places as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan." Then all the men of Ephraim gathered together and *r*seized the watering places as far as *s*Beth Barah and the Jordan. 25 And they captured *t*two princes of the Midianites, *u*Oreb and Zeeb. They killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb they killed at the winepress of Zeeb. They pursued Midian and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the *v*other side of the Jordan.

Gideon Subdues the Midianites

8 Now *a*the men of Ephraim said to him, "Why have you done this to us by not calling us when you went to fight with the Midianites?" And they reprimanded him sharply.

2 So he said to them, "What have I done now in comparison with you? *Is* not the *1*gleaning *of the grapes* of Ephraim better than *2*the vintage of *b*Abiezer? 3 *c*God has delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb. And what was I able to do in comparison with you?" Then their *d*anger toward him subsided when he said that.

4 When Gideon came *e*to the Jordan, he and *f*the three hundred men who *were* with him crossed over, exhausted but still in pursuit. 5 Then he said to the men of *g*Succoth, "Please give loaves of bread to the people who follow me, for they are exhausted, and I am pursuing Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian."

6 And the leaders of Succoth said, *h*"*Are*[3] the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hand, that *i*we should give bread to your army?"

7 So Gideon said, "For this cause, when the LORD has delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand, *j*then I will tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness and with briers!" 8 Then he went up from there *k*to Penuel and spoke to them in the same way. And the men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had answered. 9 So he also spoke to the men of Penuel, saying, "When I *l*come back in peace, *m*I will tear down this tower!"

10 Now Zebah and Zalmunna *were* at Karkor, and their armies with them, about fifteen thousand, all who were left of *n*all the army of the people of the East; for *o*one hundred and twenty thousand men who drew the sword had fallen. 11 Then Gideon went up by the road of those who dwell in tents on the east of *p*Nobah and Jogbehah; and he *4*attacked the army while the camp felt *q*secure. 12 When Zebah and Zalmunna fled, he pursued them; and he *r*took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and routed the whole army.

13 Then Gideon the son of Joash returned from battle, from the Ascent of Heres. 14 And he caught a young man of the men of Succoth and interrogated him; and he wrote down for him the leaders of Succoth and its elders, seventy-seven men. 15 Then he came to the men of Succoth and said, "Here are Zebah and Zalmunna, about whom you *s*ridiculed me, saying, '*Are* the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in your hand, that we should give bread to your weary men?' " 16 *t*And he took the elders of the city, and thorns of the wilderness and briers, and with them he *5*taught the men of Succoth. 17 *u*Then he tore down the tower of *v*Penuel and killed the men of the city.

18 And he said to Zebah and Zalmunna, "What kind of men *were they* whom you killed at *w*Tabor?"

So they answered, "As you *are,* so *were* they; each one resembled the son of a king."

19 Then he said, "They *were* my brothers, the sons of my mother. *As* the LORD lives, if you had let them live, I would not kill you." 20 And he said to Jether his firstborn, "Rise, kill them!" But the youth would not draw his sword; for he was afraid, because he *was* still a youth.

21 /Ex. 14:13, 14; 2 Chr. 20:17 *k*2 Kin. 7:7

22 /Josh. 6:4, 16, 20 *m*Ps. 83:9; Is. 9:4 *n*1 Sam. 14:20; 2 Chr. 20:23 *o*1 Kin. 4:12 *4*Heb. *Beth Shittah*

23 *p*Judg. 6:35

24 *q*Judg. 3:27 *r*Judg. 3:28 *s*John 1:28

25 *t*Judg. 8:3 *u*Ps. 83:11; Is. 10:26 *v*Judg. 8:4

CHAPTER 8

1 *a*Judg. 12:1; 2 Sam. 19:41

2 *b*Judg. 6:11 *1*Few grapes left after the harvest *2*The whole harvest

3 *c*Judg. 7:24, 25 *d*Prov. 15:1

4 *e*Judg. 7:25 *f*Judg. 7:6

5 *g*Gen. 33:17; Ps. 60:6

6 *h*1 Kin. 20:11; Judg. 8:15 *i*1 Sam. 25:11 *3*Lit. *Is the palm*

7 *j*Judg. 8:16

8 *k*Gen. 32:30, 31; 1 Kin. 12:25

9 *l*1 Kin. 22:27 *m*Judg. 8:17

10 *n*Judg. 7:12 *o*Judg. 6:5

11 *p*Num. 32:35, 42 *q*Judg. 18:27; [1 Thess. 5:3] *4*Lit. *struck*

12 *r*Ps. 83:11

15 *s*Judg. 8:6

16 *t*Judg. 8:7 *5*disciplined

17 *u*Judg. 8:9 *v*1 Kin. 12:25

18 *w*Judg. 4:6; Ps. 89:12

■ **7:23—8:21** Israel's lack of unity is apparent in the difficulties between Gideon, Ephraim, Succoth, and Penuel.

■ **7:25 at the rock of Oreb.** See Is. 10:26.

■ **8:1–3** The conflict here between Ephraim and Gideon is similar to the conflict between Ephraim and Jephthah; see 12:1–6.

■ **8:4–21** Gideon has problems with the men of Succoth and Penuel and ultimately punished both for failing to help him in his pursuit of the Midianite leaders.

21 So Zebah and Zalmunna said, "Rise yourself, and kill us; for as a man *is, so is* his strength." So Gideon arose and [x]killed Zebah and Zalmunna, and took the crescent ornaments that *were* on their camels' necks.

Gideon's Ephod

22 Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, [y]"Rule over us, both you and your son, and your grandson also; for you have [z]delivered us from the hand of Midian."

23 But Gideon said to them, "I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; [a]the LORD shall rule over you." 24 Then Gideon said to them, "I would like to [6]make a request of you, that each of you would give me the earrings from his plunder." For they had golden earrings, [b]because they *were* Ishmaelites.

25 So they answered, "We will gladly give *them.*" And they spread out a garment, and each man threw into it the earrings from his plunder. 26 Now the weight of the gold earrings that he requested was one thousand seven hundred *shekels* of gold, besides the crescent ornaments, pendants, and purple robes which *were* on the kings of Midian, and besides the chains that *were* around their camels' necks. 27 Then Gideon [c]made it into an ephod and set it up in his city, [d]Ophrah. And all Israel [e]played the harlot with it there. It became [f]a snare to Gideon and to his house.

28 Thus Midian was subdued before the children of Israel, so that they lifted their heads no more. [g]And the country was quiet for forty years in the days of Gideon.

Death of Gideon

29 Then [h]Jerubbaal the son of Joash went and dwelt in his own house. 30 Gideon had [i]seventy sons who were his own offspring, for he had many wives. 31 [j]And his concubine who *was* in Shechem also bore him a son, whose name he called Abimelech. 32 Now Gideon the son of Joash died [k]at a good old age, and was buried in the tomb of Joash his father, [l]in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

33 So it was, [m]as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel again [n]played the harlot with the Baals, [o]and made Baal-Berith their god. 34 Thus the children of Israel [p]did not remember the LORD their God, who had delivered them from the hands of all their enemies on every side; 35 [q]nor did they show kindness to the house of Jerubbaal (Gideon) in accordance with the good he had done for Israel.

Abimelech's Conspiracy

9 Then Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem, to [a]his mother's brothers, and spoke with them and with all the family of the house of his mother's father, saying, 2 "Please speak in the hearing of all the men of Shechem: 'Which is better for you, that all [b]seventy of the sons of Jerubbaal reign over you, or that one reign over you?' Remember that I *am* your own flesh and [c]bone."

3 And his mother's brothers spoke all these words concerning him in the hearing of all the men of Shechem; and their heart was inclined to follow Abimelech, for they said, "He is our [d]brother." 4 So they gave him seventy *shekels* of silver from the temple of [e]Baal-Berith, with

21 [x]Ps. 83:11

22 [y][Judg. 9:8] [z]Judg. 3:9; 9:17

23 [a]1 Sam. 8:7; 10:19; 12:12; Ps. 10:16

24 [b]Gen. 37:25, 28 [6]Lit. *request a request*

27 [c]Judg. 17:5 [d]Judg. 6:11, 24 [e][Ps. 106:39] [f]Deut. 7:16

28 [g]Judg. 5:31

29 [h]Judg. 6:32; 7:1

30 [i]Judg. 9:2, 5

31 [j]Judg. 9:1

32 [k]Gen. 25:8; Job 5:26 [l]Judg. 6:24; 8:27

33 [m]Judg. 2:19 [n]Judg. 2:17 [o]Judg. 9:4, 46

34 [p]Deut. 4:9; Judg. 3:7; Ps. 78:11, 42; 106:13, 21

35 [q]Judg. 9:16–18

CHAPTER 9

1 [a]Judg. 8:31, 35

2 [b]Judg. 8:30; 9:5, 18 [c]Gen. 29:14

3 [d]Gen. 29:15

4 [e]Judg. 8:33

■ **8:22 Rule over us.** Gideon was such an outstanding judge that the people wished to make him king.

■ **8:23 the LORD shall rule.** This verse, like 1 Sam. 8:7–9, says that kingship in Israel was a mistake. Yet Judges demonstrates that it had become necessary. With no king, society disintegrated (21:25).

■ **8:24 give me the earrings.** Though Gideon rejected kingship, he acted like a king (v. 30).

■ **8:27 ephod.** The genuine ephod of the high priest was employed for seeking the Lord's will (1 Sam. 23:9–11; 30:7, 8).

played the harlot. Gideon, the greatest of the judges until Samuel, gave the people occasion to sin (2:17 and notes).

a snare to Gideon and to his house. Gideon's father had been an idolater (6:25), and now Gideon fell into the same sin.

■ **8:31 Abimelech.** Gideon names the son of his concubine "Abimelech" ("my father is king") notwithstanding all Gideon's claims to the contrary. See vv. 23, 24.

■ **8:33—9:57** The Abimelech story demonstrates the disaster the wrong kind of king could be. Abimelech was an anti-deliverer, an oppressor of the people, and a breaker of the covenant. His story raises the question of who should be king (9:2, 8–20, 28, 29). In light of this question, it is significant that Abimelech and Saul resemble each other in important ways (9:23 note; 9:54 note). This would imply that Saul was the same sort of king that Abimelech was. The message to the readers of Judges was that they should no more want Ishbosheth the son of Saul to be their king, than Israel had wanted Abimelech, the son of Gideon.

■ **8:33 Baal-Berith.** Lit. "Baal (lord) of the covenant." This god was a counterfeit of the God who truly was the Lord of the covenant. See 9:4 note.

■ **8:34 did not remember.** Remembering God and His works of salvation is a first step in covenant obedience (2:10 note).

■ **8:35 nor did they show kindness.** See 9:5, 16–19.

■ **9:1 Abimelech.** See 8:31 note.

■ **9:4 Baal-Berith.** See notes on v. 46; 8:33. The temple of Baal-Berith paid the wages of those who oppressed Israel under Abimelech.

which Abimelech hired [f]worthless and reckless men; and they followed him. 5 Then he went to his father's house [g]at Ophrah and [h]killed his brothers, the seventy sons of Jerubbaal, on one stone. But Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal was left, because he hid himself. 6 And all the men of Shechem gathered together, all of Beth Millo, and they went and made Abimelech king beside the terebinth tree at the pillar that *was* in Shechem.

The Parable of the Trees

7 Now when they told Jotham, he went and stood on top of [i]Mount Gerizim, and lifted his voice and cried out. And he said to them:

"Listen to me, you men of Shechem,
That God may listen to you!

8 "The[j] trees once went forth to anoint a king over them.
And they said to the olive tree,
[k]'Reign over us!'
9 But the olive tree said to them,
'Should I cease giving my oil,
[l]With which they honor God and men,
And go to sway over trees?'

10 "Then the trees said to the fig tree,
'You come *and* reign over us!'
11 But the fig tree said to them,
'Should I cease my sweetness and my good fruit,
And go to sway over trees?'

12 "Then the trees said to the vine,
'You come *and* reign over us!'
13 But the vine said to them,
'Should I cease my new wine,
[m]Which cheers *both* God and men,
And go to sway over trees?'

14 "Then all the trees said to the bramble,
'You come *and* reign over us!'
15 And the bramble said to the trees,
'If in truth you anoint me as king over you,
Then come *and* take shelter in my [n]shade;
But if not, [o]let fire come out of the bramble
And devour the [p]cedars of Lebanon!'

16 "Now therefore, if you have acted in truth and sincerity in making Abimelech king, and if you have dealt well with Jerubbaal and his house, and have done to him [q]as[r] he deserves— 17 for my [s]father fought for you, risked his life, and [t]delivered you out of the hand of Midian; 18 [u]but you have risen up against my father's house this day, and killed his seventy sons on one stone, and made Abimelech, the son of his [v]female servant, king over the men of Shechem, because he is your brother— 19 if then you have acted in truth and sincerity with Jerubbaal and with his house this day, *then* [w]rejoice in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in you. 20 But if not, [x]let fire come from Abimelech and devour the men of Shechem and Beth Millo; and let fire come from the men of Shechem and from Beth Millo and devour Abimelech!" 21 And Jotham ran away and fled; and he went to [y]Beer and dwelt there, for fear of Abimelech his brother.

4 [f]Judg. 11:3; 2 Chr. 13:7; Acts 17:5

5 [g]Judg. 6:24 [h]Judg. 8:30; 9:2, 18; 2 Kin. 11:1, 2

7 [i]Deut. 11:29; 27:12; Josh. 8:33; John 4:20

8 [j]2 Kin. 14:9 [k]Judg. 8:22, 23

9 [l][John 5:23]

13 [m]Ps. 104:15

15 [n]Is. 30:2; Dan. 4:12; Hos. 14:7 [o]Num. 21:28; Judg. 9:20; Ezek. 19:14 [p]2 Kin. 14:9; Is. 2:13; Ezek. 31:3

16 [q]Judg. 8:35 [r]Lit. *according to the doing of his hands*

17 [s]Judg. 7 [t]Judg. 8:22

18 [u]Judg. 8:30, 35; 9:2, 5, 6 [v]Judg. 8:31

19 [w]Is. 8:6; [Phil. 3:3]

20 [x]Judg. 9:15, 45, 56, 57

21 [y]Num. 21:16

■ **9:5 on one stone.** The men were in effect sacrificed to Baal-Berith (v. 53 note).

■ **9:7 Mount Gerizim.** The mount of blessing (Deut. 27:12) was used for a curse. This reversal highlights the reversal theme that permeates the Abimelech story (8:33—9:57 note).

■ **9:14 bramble.** The product of idolatry (v. 4), Abimelech's kingship would be a thorn to Israel (2:3 note).

■ **9:20 let fire.** Jotham's curse is fulfilled in vv. 45–52.

Downfall of Abimelech

22 After Abimelech had reigned over Israel three years, 23 [y]God sent a [z]spirit of ill will between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem [a]dealt treacherously with Abimelech, 24 [b]that the crime *done* to the seventy sons of Jerubbaal might be settled and their [c]blood be laid on Abimelech their brother, who killed them, and on the men of Shechem, who aided him in the killing of his brothers. 25 And the men of Shechem set [2]men in ambush against him on the tops of the mountains, and they robbed all who passed by them along that way; and it was told Abimelech.

26 Now Gaal the son of Ebed came with his brothers and went over to Shechem; and the men of Shechem put their confidence in him. 27 So they went out into the fields, and gathered *grapes* from their vineyards and trod *them,* and [3]made merry. And they went into [d]the house of their god, and ate and drank, and cursed Abimelech. 28 Then Gaal the son of Ebed said, [e]"Who *is* Abimelech, and who *is* Shechem, that we should serve him? *Is he* not the son of Jerubbaal, and *is not* Zebul his officer? Serve the men of [f]Hamor the father of Shechem; but why should we serve him? 29 [g]If only this people were under my [4]authority! Then I would remove Abimelech." So [5]he said to Abimelech, "Increase your army and come out!"

30 When Zebul, the ruler of the city, heard the words of Gaal the son of Ebed, his anger was aroused, 31 And he sent messengers to Abimelech secretly, saying, "Take note! Gaal the son of Ebed and his brothers have come to Shechem; and here they are, fortifying the city against you. 32 Now therefore, get up by night, you and the people who *are* with you, and [6]lie in wait in the field. 33 And it shall be, as soon as the sun is up in the morning, *that* you shall rise early and rush upon the city; and *when* he and the people who are with him come out against you, you may then do to them [7]as you find opportunity."

34 So Abimelech and all the people who *were* with him rose by night, and [8]lay in wait against Shechem in four companies. 35 When Gaal the son of Ebed went out and stood in the entrance to the city gate, Abimelech and the people who *were* with him rose from lying in wait. 36 And when Gaal saw the people, he said to Zebul, "Look, people are coming down from the tops of the mountains!"

But Zebul said to him, "You see the shadows of the mountains as *if they were* men."

37 So Gaal spoke again and said, "See, people are coming down from the center of the land, and another company is coming from the [9]Diviners' Terebinth Tree."

38 Then Zebul said to him, "Where indeed *is* your mouth now, with which you [h]said, 'Who is Abimelech, that we should serve him?' *Are* not these the people whom you despised? Go out, if you will, and fight with them now."

39 So Gaal went out, leading the men of Shechem, and fought with Abimelech. 40 And Abimelech chased him, and he fled from him; and many fell wounded, to the *very* entrance of the gate. 41 Then Abimelech dwelt at Arumah, and Zebul [1]drove out Gaal and his brothers, so that they would not dwell in Shechem.

42 And it came about on the next day that the people went out into the field, and they told Abimelech. 43 So he took his people, divided them into three companies, and lay in wait in the field. And he looked, and there were the people, coming out of the city; and he rose against them and [2]attacked them. 44 Then Abimelech and the company that *was* with him rushed forward and stood at the entrance of the gate of the city; and the *other* two companies rushed upon all who *were* in the fields and killed them. 45 So Abimelech fought against the city all that day; [i]he took the city and killed the people who *were* in it; and he [j]demolished the city and sowed it with salt.

46 Now when all the men of the tower of Shechem had heard *that,* they entered the [3]stronghold of the temple [k]of the god Berith. 47 And it was told Abimelech that all the men of the tower of Shechem were gathered together. 48 Then Abimelech went up to Mount [l]Zalmon, he and all the people who *were* with him. And Abimelech took an ax in his hand and cut down a bough from the trees, and took it and laid *it* on his shoulder; then he said to the people who were with

23 [y]1 Kin. 12:15; Is. 19:14 [z]1 Sam. 16:14; 18:9, 10; 1 Kin. 22:22; 2 Chr. 18:22 [a]Is. 33:1

24 [b]1 Kin. 2:32; Esth. 9:25; Matt. 23:35, 36 [c]Num. 35:33

25 [2]Lit. *liers-in-wait for*

27 [d]Judg. 9:4 [3]*rejoiced*

28 [e]1 Sam. 25:10; 1 Kin. 12:16 [f]Gen. 34:2, 6; Josh. 24:32

29 [g]2 Sam. 15:4 [4]Lit. *hand* [5]So with MT, Tg.; DSS *they;* LXX *I*

32 [6]Set up an ambush

33 [7]Lit. *as your hand can find*

34 [8]Set up an ambush

37 [9]Heb. *Meonenim*

38 [h]Judg. 9:28, 29

41 [1]*exiled*

43 [2]Lit. *struck*

45 [i]Judg. 9:20 [j]Deut. 29:23; 2 Kin. 3:25

46 [k]Judg. 8:33 [3]*fortified room*

48 [l]Ps. 68:14

■ **9:23 spirit of ill will.** The historical parallel with Saul is significant. Both Abimelech and Saul had an evil spirit come against them as they began to lose their kingdoms (1 Sam. 16:14). This is the first mention of God's direct action in the story of Abimelech.

■ **9:26 Gaal.** Gaal is another "Abimelech," a lost brother claiming the right to rule by right of his ancestry.

■ **9:28 Who is Abimelech.** Note the similar speech at v. 2, also delivered in Shechem.

■ **9:45 sowed it with salt.** This would ruin it for farming.

■ **9:46 the god Berith.** Lit. "god of the covenant." El was the father of the gods in the Canaanite pantheon. This was probably the same temple as the one mentioned at 9:4, which supplied Abimelech money. Now he returned to destroy it.

■ **9:48 do as I have done.** Abimelech's words, as he leads his men, resemble his father's (7:17).

him, "What you have seen me do, make haste *and* do as I *have done.*" 49 So each of the people likewise cut down his own bough and followed Abimelech, put *them* against the [4]stronghold, and set the stronghold on fire above them, so that all the people of the tower of Shechem died, about a thousand men and women.

50 Then Abimelech went to Thebez, and he [5]encamped against Thebez and took it. 51 But there was a strong tower in the city, and all the men and women—all the people of the city—fled there and shut themselves in; then they went up to the top of the tower. 52 So Abimelech came as far as the tower and fought against it; and he drew near the door of the tower to burn it with fire. 53 But a certain woman [m]dropped an upper millstone on Abimelech's head and crushed his skull. 54 Then [n]he called quickly to the young man, his armorbearer, and said to him, "Draw your sword and kill me, lest men say of me, 'A woman killed him.' " So his young man thrust him through, and he died. 55 And when the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead, they departed, every man to his [6]place.

56 [o]Thus God repaid the wickedness of Abimelech, which he had done to his father by killing his seventy brothers. 57 And all the evil of the men of Shechem God returned on their own heads, and on them came [p]the curse of Jotham the son of Jerubbaal.

Tola

10 After Abimelech there [a]arose to save Israel Tola the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar; and he dwelt in Shamir in the mountains of Ephraim. 2 He judged Israel twenty-three years; and he died and was buried in Shamir.

Jair

3 After him arose Jair, a Gileadite; and he judged Israel twenty-two years. 4 Now he had thirty sons who [b]rode on thirty donkeys; they also had thirty towns, [c]which are called [1]"Havoth Jair" to this day, which *are* in the land of Gilead. 5 And Jair died and was buried in Camon.

Israel Oppressed Again

6 Then [d]the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD, and [e]served the Baals and the Ashtoreths, [f]the gods of Syria, the gods of [g]Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the people of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines; and they forsook the LORD and did not serve Him. 7 So the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and He [h]sold them into the hands of the [i]Philistines and into the hands of the people of [j]Ammon. 8 From that year they [2]harassed and oppressed the children of Israel for eighteen years—all the children of Israel who *were* on the other side of the Jordan in the [k]land of the Amorites, in Gilead. 9 Moreover the people of Ammon crossed over the Jordan to fight against Judah also, against Benjamin, and against the house of Ephraim, so that Israel was severely distressed.

10 [l]And the children of Israel cried out to the LORD, saying, "We have [m]sinned against You, because we have both forsaken our God and served the Baals!"

49 [4]*fortified room*
50 [5]*besieged*
53 [m]2 Sam. 11:21
54 [n]1 Sam. 31:4
55 [6]*home*
56 [o]Judg. 9:24; Job 31:3; Prov. 5:22
57 [p]Judg. 9:20

CHAPTER 10

1 [a]Judg. 2:16
4 [b]Judg. 5:10; 12:14 [c]Deut. 3:14 [1]Lit. *Towns of Jair,* Num. 32:41; Deut. 3:14
6 [d]Judg. 2:11; 3:7; 6:1; 13:1 [e]Judg. 2:13 [f]Judg. 2:12 [g]1 Kin. 11:33; Ps. 106:36
7 [h]Judg. 2:14; 4:2; 1 Sam. 12:9 [i]Judg. 13:1 [j]Judg. 3:13
8 [k]Num. 32:33 [2]Lit. *shattered*
10 [l]Judg. 6:6; 1 Sam. 12:10 [m]Deut. 1:41

■ **9:49 set the stronghold on fire.** This fulfilled Jotham's curse (v. 20).

■ **9:53 an upper millstone.** A stone figured prominently in Abimelech's death, as it had in the murder of all his brothers (9:5 note).

■ **9:54 Draw your sword and kill me.** Like Saul (1 Sam. 31:4), Abimelech sought to die proudly. This incident, like the presence of an evil spirit from God (9:23 and note), is a strong point of resemblance between Saul and Abimelech.

A woman killed him. He had to share this indignity with Sisera (4:9).

■ **9:56 Thus God repaid.** God is not highly visible in this narrative (9:23 note). But He brought Abimelech to judgment.

■ **10:1–5** Two judges, Tola and Jair, are introduced with few details. Four other minor judges are described in similar fashion (3:31; 12:8–15).

■ **10:1 Tola.** Tola is mentioned only here in Scripture.

■ **10:3 Jair.** Like Tola, Jair is not mentioned anywhere else in the Bible.

■ **10:4 who rode on thirty donkeys.** Thirty sons, thirty donkeys, and the control of thirty towns indicate great wealth and power (5:10).

■ **10:6–12:7** Cf. 1 Sam. 12:11. The list of idols Israel followed (10:6) and the internal chaos of Israel became more pronounced (12:1–7). Jephthah brought only six years of peace (12:7) instead of peace for a generation (3:11, 30; 5:31; 8:28). Finally, Jephthah rashly and sinfully sacrificed his daughter (11:30–40 note).

Many things about Jephthah are reminiscent of Gideon, Abimelech, or Saul. Jephthah like Gideon was a "mighty man of valor" (6:12; 11:1). Both men made the Ephraimites angry by not calling them out to participate in battle (8:1–3; 12:1–6). Jephthah and Abimelech were both outcast sons, one born to a concubine and the other to a harlot. They gathered to themselves bands of adventurers (9:4; 11:3). Both Jephthah and Saul were made leaders in Mizpah (11:11; 1 Sam. 10:17). Both men faced Ammonites as their first adversaries (11:12–29; 1 Sam. 11:1–11). Jepthah and Saul each made an unwise vow that returned to threaten their firstborn, and each offered an unlawful sacrifice (11:30–40; 1 Sam. 13:8–14; 14:24–25).

■ **10:6 gods.** In previous accounts only the Baals and Ashtoreths were mentioned (2:11, 13; 3:7). This longer list of gods indicates a downward spiral in Israel's violations of the covenant. See also vv. 11–12 and note. The peoples mentioned surrounded Israel on its borders.

■ **10:10–16** This is the only account in the Book of Judges where Israel not only cries out to God, but also puts away their idols. Elsewhere, they simply cried out to the Lord and He delivered them (10:10; 2:19; 3:9). God saw through their superficial repentance but chose to deliver them anyway (cf. Deut. 32:15–38).

■ **10:10 forsaken our God and served the Baals.** The same language is used in their indictment in v. 6.

11 So the LORD said to the children of Israel, "*Did I* not *deliver you* [n]from the Egyptians and [o]from the Amorites and [p]from the people of Ammon and [q]from the Philistines? 12 Also [r]the Sidonians [s]and Amalekites and [3]Maonites [t]oppressed you; and you cried out to Me, and I delivered you from their hand. 13 [u]Yet you have forsaken Me and served other gods. Therefore I will deliver you no more. 14 Go and [v]cry out to the gods which you have chosen; let them deliver you in your time of distress."

15 And the children of Israel said to the LORD, "We have sinned! [w]Do to us whatever seems

11 [n]Ex. 14:30 [o]Num. 21:21, 24, 25 [p]Judg. 3:12, 13 [q]Judg. 3:31

12 [r]Judg. 1:31; 5:19 [s]Judg. 6:3; 7:12 [t]Ps. 106:42, 43 [3]LXX mss. *Midianites*

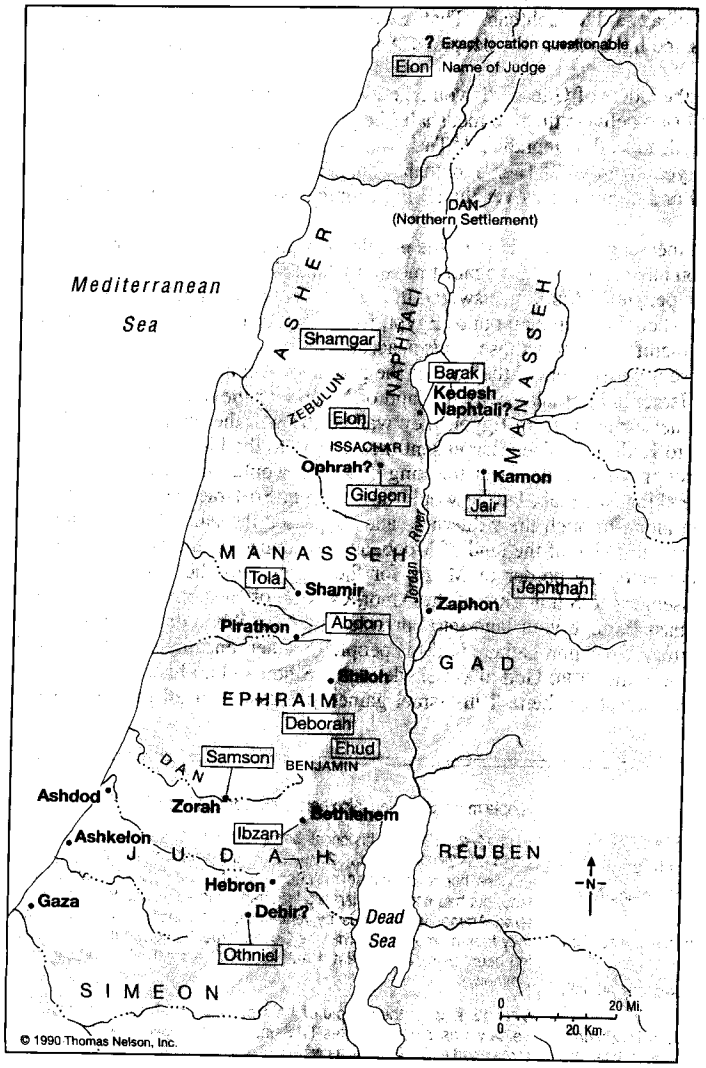
13 [u][Jer. 2:13] 14 [v]Deut. 32:37, 38 15 [w]1 Sam. 3:18

■ **10:12 oppressed you.** The list of gods in v. 6 coincides almost identically with the list of oppressing nations. Israel rejected the God who had saved them, and instead followed the compassionless gods of their oppressors.

■ **10:13 no more.** See Deut. 8:19–20; 31:16–17; Num. 33:55–56; Josh. 23:13; Judg. 2:3.

■ **10:14 cry out to the gods which you have chosen.** See Deut. 32:37–38. The same taunt is made in Jer. 2:28; 11:12–13.

■ **10:15 deliver us.** The desire to be delivered, rather than to serve the Lord, was Israel's true motive in repenting.



The Judges of Israel. The Book of Judges lists a total of twelve judges (Barak served as a military leader under the judgeship of Deborah and was not technically a judge himself) who served in a variety of roles during a 200-year era. While some of them are major figures about whom much is known, others are only minor figures, mentioned briefly without a geographical or tribal affiliation.

The significance of the era of the judges is that no one tribe or region seemed to dominate in producing these leaders. God called and equipped the necessary persons from throughout the land to lead Israel during this turbulent period.

best to You; only deliver us this day, we pray." 16 [x]So they put away the foreign gods from among them and served the LORD. And [y]His soul could no longer endure the misery of Israel.

17 Then the people of Ammon gathered together and encamped in Gilead. And the children of Israel assembled together and encamped in [z]Mizpah. 18 And the people, the leaders of Gilead, said to one another, "Who *is* the man who will begin the fight against the people of Ammon? He shall [a]be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead."

Jephthah

11 Now [a]Jephthah the Gileadite was [b]a mighty man of valor, but he *was* the son of a harlot; and Gilead begot Jephthah. 2 Gilead's wife bore sons; and when his wife's sons grew up, they drove Jephthah out, and said to him, "You shall have [c]no inheritance in our father's house, for you *are* the son of another woman." 3 Then Jephthah fled from his brothers and dwelt in the land of [d]Tob; and [e]worthless men banded together with Jephthah and went out *raiding* with him.

4 It came to pass after a time that the [f]people of Ammon made war against Israel. 5 And so it was, when the people of Ammon made war against Israel, that the elders of Gilead went to get Jephthah from the land of Tob. 6 Then they said to Jephthah, "Come and be our commander, that we may fight against the people of Ammon."

7 So Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, [g]"Did you not hate me, and expel me from my father's house? Why have you come to me now when you are in [1]distress?"

8 [h]And the elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, "That is why we have [i]turned[2] again to you now, that you may go with us and fight against the people of Ammon, and be [j]our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead."

9 So Jephthah said to the elders of Gilead, "If you take me back home to fight against the people of Ammon, and the LORD delivers them to me, shall I be your head?"

10 And the elders of Gilead said to Jephthah, [k]"The LORD will be a witness between us, if we do not do according to your words." 11 Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him [l]head and commander over them; and Jephthah spoke all his words [m]before the LORD in Mizpah.

12 Now Jephthah sent messengers to the king of the people of Ammon, saying, [n]"What do you have against me, that you have come to fight against me in my land?"

13 And the king of the people of Ammon answered the messengers of Jephthah, [o]"Because Israel took away my land when they came up out of Egypt, from [p]the Arnon as far as [q]the Jabbok, and to the Jordan. Now therefore, restore those *lands* peaceably."

14 So Jephthah again sent messengers to the king of the people of Ammon, 15 and said to him, "Thus says Jephthah: [r]'Israel did not take away the land of Moab, nor the land of the people of Ammon; 16 for when Israel came up from Egypt, they walked through the wilderness as far as the Red Sea and [s]came to Kadesh. 17 Then [t]Israel sent messengers to the king of Edom, saying, 'Please let me pass through your land.' [u]But the king of Edom would not heed. And in like manner they sent to the [v]king of Moab, but he would not *consent.* So Israel [w]remained in Kadesh. 18 And they [x]went along through the wilderness and [y]bypassed the land of Edom and the land of Moab, came to the east side of the land of Moab, and encamped on the other side of the Arnon. But they did not enter the border of Moab, for the Arnon *was* the border of Moab. 19 Then [z]Israel sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorites, king of Heshbon; and Israel said to him, 'Please [a]let us pass through your land into our place.'" 20 [b]But Sihon did not trust Israel to pass through his territory. So Sihon gathered all his people together, encamped in Jahaz, and fought against Israel. 21 And the LORD God of Israel [c]delivered Sihon and all his people into the hand of Israel, and they [d]defeated[3] them. Thus Israel gained possession of all the land of the

16 [x]2 Chr. 7:14; Jer. 18:7, 8 [y]Ps. 106:44, 45; Is. 63:9
17 [z]Gen. 31:49; Judg. 11:11, 29
18 [a]Judg. 11:8, 11

CHAPTER 11

1 [a]Heb. 11:32 [b]Judg. 6:12; 2 Kin. 5:1
2 [c]Gen. 21:10; Deut. 23:2
3 [d]2 Sam. 10:6, 8 [e]1 Sam. 22:2
4 [f]Judg. 10:9, 17
7 [g]Gen. 26:27 [1]*trouble*
8 [h]Judg. 10:18 [i][Luke 17:4] [j]Judg. 10:18 [2]*returned*
10 [k]Gen. 31:49, 50; Jer. 29:23; 42:5
11 [l]Judg. 11:8 [m]Judg. 10:17; 20:1; 1 Sam. 10:17
12 [n]2 Sam. 16:10
13 [o]Num. 21:24–26 [p]Josh. 13:9 [q]Gen. 32:22
15 [r]Deut. 2:9, 19
16 [s]Num. 13:26; 20:1
17 [t]Num. 20:14 [u]Num. 20:14–21 [v]Josh. 24:9 [w]Num. 20:1
18 [x]Deut. 2:9, 18, 19 [y]Num. 21:4
19 [z]Num. 21:21; Deut. 2:26–36 [a]Num. 21:22; Deut. 2:27
20 [b]Num. 21:23; Deut. 2:27
21 [c]Josh. 24:8 [d]Num. 21:24, 25 [3]Lit. *struck*

■ **10:17 Mizpah.** See 11:11; 20:1.

■ **11:1 a mighty man of valor.** This is what Gideon was called (6:12).

son of a harlot. Jephthah's heritage made him an outcast (v. 2).

■ **11:3 worthless men.** Another similarity between Jephthah and Abimelech was their followers (9:4).

■ **11:9 the LORD delivers.** Jephthah showed his faith that it was God who gave him victory.

■ **11:10 The LORD will be a witness.** The elders were swearing an oath in order to confirm a covenant.

■ **11:11 Jephthah spoke all his words before the LORD in Mizpah.** The covenant is confirmed before the Lord in Mizpah. Years later the people made Saul king, also before the Lord, at Mizpah (1 Sam. 10:17).

■ **11:12–29** For the historical background to this conflict, see Num. 20:14–21; 21:10–35; Deut. 2:16—3:11. At the time of Jephthah, the Ammonites hoped to extend their territory into what once had been their land, but had now been Israel's for three hundred years. Jephthah countered Ammonite demands by rehearsing this history and showing that they took no more than what the God of Israel had given them and, having been instructed by Him (Deut. 2:18–19), did not take anything from Ammon.

■ **11:12 king of the people of Ammon.** Like Saul, Jephthah's first adversary was the Ammonites (1 Sam. 11:1–11). Gilead was the region threatened in Saul's story as well.

Amorites, who inhabited that country. 22 They took possession of [e]all the territory of the Amorites, from the Arnon to the Jabbok and from the wilderness to the Jordan.

23 'And now the LORD God of Israel has [4]dispossessed the Amorites from before His people Israel; should you then possess it? 24 Will you not possess whatever [f]Chemosh your god gives you to possess? So whatever [g]the LORD our God takes possession of before us, we will possess. 25 And now, *are* you any better than [h]Balak the son of Zippor, king of Moab? Did he ever strive against Israel? Did he ever fight against them? 26 While Israel dwelt in [i]Heshbon and its villages, in [j]Aroer and its villages, and in all the cities along the banks of the Arnon, for three hundred years, why did you not recover *them* within that time? 27 Therefore I have not sinned against you, but you wronged me by fighting against me. May the LORD, [k]the Judge, [l]render judgment this day between the children of Israel and the people of Ammon.' " 28 However, the king of the people of Ammon did not heed the words which Jephthah sent him.

Jephthah's Vow and Victory

29 Then [m]the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jephthah, and he passed through Gilead and Manasseh, and passed through Mizpah of Gilead; and from Mizpah of Gilead he advanced *toward* the people of Ammon. 30 And Jephthah [n]made a vow to the LORD, and said, "If You will indeed deliver the people of Ammon into my hands, 31 then it will be that whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the people of Ammon, [o]shall surely be the LORD's, [p]and I will offer it up as a burnt offering."

32 So Jephthah advanced toward the people of Ammon to fight against them, and the LORD delivered them into his hands. 33 And he [5]defeated them from Aroer as far as [q]Minnith—twenty cities—and to [6]Abel Keramim, with a very great slaughter. Thus the people of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel.

Jephthah's Daughter

34 When Jephthah came to his house at [r]Mizpah, there was [s]his daughter, coming out to meet him with timbrels and dancing; and she *was his* only child. Besides her he had neither son nor daughter. 35 And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he [t]tore his clothes, and said, "Alas, my daughter! You have brought me very low! You are among those who trouble me! For I [u]have [7]given my word to the LORD, and [v]I cannot [8]go back on it."

36 So she said to him, "My father, *if* you have given your word to the LORD, [w]do to me according to what has gone out of your mouth, because [x]the LORD has avenged you of your enemies, the people of Ammon." 37 Then she said to her father, "Let this thing be done for me: let me alone for two months, that I may go and wander on the mountains and [9]bewail my virginity, my [1]friends and I."

38 So he said, "Go." And he sent her away *for* two months; and she went with her friends, and bewailed her virginity on the mountains. 39 And it was so at the end of two months that she returned to her father, and he [y]carried out his vow with her which he had vowed. She [2]knew no man.

And it became a custom in Israel 40 *that* the daughters of Israel went four days each year to [3]lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite.

22 [e]Deut. 2:36, 37

23 [4]*driven out*

24 [f]Num. 21:29; 1 Kin. 11:7; Jer. 48:7 [g][Deut. 9:4, 5; Josh. 3:10]

25 [h]Num. 22:2; Josh. 24:9; Mic. 6:5

26 [i]Num. 21:25, 26 [j]Deut. 2:36

27 [k]Gen. 18:25 [l]Gen. 16:5; 31:53; [1 Sam. 24:12, 15]

29 [m]Judg. 3:10

30 [n]Gen. 28:20; Num. 30:2; 1 Sam. 1:11

31 [o]Lev. 27:2, 3, 28; 1 Sam. 1:11 [p]Ps. 66:13

33 [q]Ezek. 27:17 [5]Lit. *struck* [6]Lit. *Plain of Vineyards*

34 [r]Judg. 10:17; 11:11 [s]Ex. 15:20; 1 Sam. 18:6; Ps. 68:25; Jer. 31:4

35 [t]Gen. 37:29, 34 [u]Eccl. 5:2, 4, 5 [v]Num. 30:2 [7]Lit. *opened my mouth* [8]Lit. *take it back*

36 [w]Num. 30:2 [x]2 Sam. 18:19, 31

37 [9]*lament* [1]*companions*

39 [y]Judg. 11:31 [2]Remained a virgin

40 [3]*commemorate*

■ **11:23 the LORD God of Israel.** Warfare was viewed as a battle between the gods of the opposing forces. If Israel won, it was because the God of Israel had done it, and no one could dispute the result (v. 24). See v. 21.

■ **11:27 May the LORD, the Judge, render judgment.** See vv. 21, 23. Jephthah declared that God was the Judge over all peoples and gods. Here the word is used in a legal sense, as in handing down a decision, although God would ultimately be a deliverer as well (vv. 32–33). The Book of Judges affirms that God is the true King (8:23) and true Judge, who alone could solve Israel's woes.

■ **11:29 Spirit of the LORD.** See 3:10 and note.

■ **11:30–40** Jephthah defeated the Ammonites, but in the process made a rash vow to the Lord and sacrificed his daughter as a burnt offering. God was not to be worshiped in the way the pagans worshiped their gods, namely, by human sacrifice (Deut. 12:31; 18:10; Ps. 106:37–38). As a deliverer, Jephthah did not show the people how to keep the covenant, despite giving evidence of his faith (vv. 10–11, 21, 23, 27). Like Jephthah, Saul also made a rash vow that turned out to be a threat to his own child (1 Sam. 14:24–45).

■ **11:35 tore his clothes.** This was the sign of mourning over death.

given my word. Although vows were sacred (Deut. 23:21–23), Jephthah's action was wrong. Human sacrifice was absolutely forbidden in Israel (v. 39 note). It is evil to keep an evil vow. Unlawful oaths and vows must not be made or, if made, not kept (cf. Matt. 14:1–12).

■ **11:36 do to me according to what has gone out of your mouth.** That is, "offer me as a sacrifice" (vv. 30–31).

■ **11:37 bewail my virginity.** This probably means to lament that she would never marry or have children. (vv. 38, 39).

■ **11:39 carried out his vow.** Though stated delicately, the text is clear: Jephthah sacrificed his daughter as a burnt offering. It is observed that she was a virgin, but this was not the content of the vow. Human sacrifice was sin, an imitation of pagan practice (11:30–40 note; Deut. 12:31; Ps. 106:38).

CHAPTER 12

1 [a]Judg. 8:1 [f]*were summoned*
3 [b]1 Sam. 19:5; 28:21; Job 13:14
4 [c]1 Sam. 25:10
5 [d]Josh. 22:11
6 [e]Ps. 69:2, 15 [2]Lit. *a flowing stream;* used as a test of dialect [3]Lit. *speak so*
14 [f]Judg. 5:10; 10:4
15 [g]Judg. 3:13, 27; 5:14

CHAPTER 13

1 [a]Judg. 2:11 [b]Judg. 10:7; 1 Sam. 12:9
2 [c]Josh. 19:41; Judg. 16:31

Jephthah's Conflict with Ephraim

12 Then [a]the men of Ephraim [f]gathered together, crossed over toward Zaphon, and said to Jephthah, "Why did you cross over to fight against the people of Ammon, and did not call us to go with you? We will burn your house down on you with fire!"

2 And Jephthah said to them, "My people and I were in a great struggle with the people of Ammon; and when I called you, you did not deliver me out of their hands. 3 So when I saw that you would not deliver *me,* I [b]took my life in my hands and crossed over against the people of Ammon; and the LORD delivered them into my hand. Why then have you come up to me this day to fight against me?" 4 Now Jephthah gathered together all the men of Gilead and fought against Ephraim. And the men of Gilead defeated Ephraim, because they said, "You Gileadites [c]*are* fugitives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites *and* among the Manassites." 5 The Gileadites seized the [d]fords of the Jordan before the Ephraimites *arrived.* And when *any* Ephraimite who escaped said, "Let me cross over," the men of Gilead would say to him, "*Are* you an Ephraimite?" If he said, "No," 6 then they would say to him, "Then say, [e]'Shibboleth'!"[2] And he would say, "Sibboleth," for he could not [3]pronounce *it* right. Then they would take him and kill him at the fords of the Jordan. There fell at that time forty-two thousand Ephraimites.

7 And Jephthah judged Israel six years. Then Jephthah the Gileadite died and was buried among the cities of Gilead.

Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon

8 After him, Ibzan of Bethlehem judged Israel. 9 He had thirty sons. And he gave away thirty daughters in marriage, and brought in thirty daughters from elsewhere for his sons. He judged Israel seven years. 10 Then Ibzan died and was buried at Bethlehem.

11 After him, Elon the Zebulunite judged Israel. He judged Israel ten years. 12 And Elon the Zebulunite died and was buried at Aijalon in the country of Zebulun.

13 After him, Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite judged Israel. 14 He had forty sons and thirty grandsons, who [f]rode on seventy young donkeys. He judged Israel eight years. 15 Then Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite died and was buried in Pirathon in the land of Ephraim, [g]in the mountains of the Amalekites.

The Birth of Samson

13 Again the children of Israel [a]did evil in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD delivered them [b]into the hand of the Philistines for forty years.

2 Now there was a certain man from [c]Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name *was*

■ **12:1–7** Following immediately on the sacrifice of his daughter (11:30–40), this story implies that Jephthah's struggle with Ephraim and his abbreviated judgeship (v. 7) were God's judgment on him for sacrificing his daughter. Ps. 78 (esp. vv. 9–11, 67) reflects on Ephraim's failure to fight and explains God's rejection of Ephraim as Israel's leader. Judah, the tribe of David, and not Ephraim would lead Israel (Ps. 78:68–72).

■ **12:1 men of Ephraim.** Like Gideon, Jephthah had trouble with Ephraim (8:1–5); unlike Gideon, they brought it to civil war. Unity was sorely lacking in Israel.

Why. See 8:1 for an almost identical question put to Gideon.

■ **12:4 among the Ephraimites and . . . Manassites.** The Gileadites were descended from Joseph, as were Ephraim and Manasseh.

■ **12:5 fords of the Jordan.** Gilead was on the east side of the Jordan, Ephraim on the west.

■ **12:6 Shibboleth . . . Sibboleth.** The Ephraimites could be recognized by the way certain words were pronounced in their dialect.

■ **12:7 Jephthah judged Israel six years.** Previous judges led for forty or eighty years, and peace lasted a generation or two. Jephthah's abbreviated rule, the increased number of gods being worshiped, and the civil war with Ephraim contribute to a picture of Israel's downward spiral.

■ **12:8–15** Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon are briefly mentioned (10:1–5 note). Nothing more is known about these men. They bring the total of judges mentioned in the Book of Judges to twelve.

■ **12:14 seventy young donkeys.** Abdon wielded virtually royal power and wealth (10:4).

■ **13:1—16:31** Samson's story is the last in the cycles of the judges. He had great promise. He was a Nazirite from the womb, and his birth was a supernatural gift to barren parents; like the great judge Gideon, the Angel of the Lord appeared at his calling; unlike any other judge, he was called from the womb; and more than any other judge, he experienced the Spirit coming upon him (13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14). Yet, of all the judges, Samson was most clearly a rogue. Having taken the vow to be a Nazirite (13:4–5, 7, 14; 16:17; Num. 6:1–21), he kept only the part about not cutting his hair. He repeatedly broke God's covenant and his vow by seeking foreign wives, sleeping with prostitutes, touching dead things, and drinking wine. He showed no interest in delivering Israel. The fanfare of his calling and the circumstances surrounding his birth and life only heighten the tragedy of his life and emphasize the depths to which Israel had descended. But God had raised him up to deliver Israel from the Philistines (v. 5), and He used even the sins of Samson as an occasion against them (14:4).

Samson was not like Gideon or Samuel. Though the Spirit came upon him repeatedly, this had no impact on his character. Like Saul, Samson lost the Spirit's empowerment as a result of God's judgment. Yet the account of the end of his life (16:25–31) reflects a renewal of his faith while a prisoner of his (and God's) enemies. Heb. 11:32 lists Samson on the honor roll of faith.

■ **13:1 Again the children of Israel did evil.** The usual introductory formula is especially abbreviated (cf. 2:11–19).

delivered . . . Philistines. See 2:14; 1 Sam. 12:9.

■ **13:2–25** Like Gideon (6:11–24), Samson's parents did not recognize the Angel of the Lord. They saw a miraculous fire, and then feared the

Manoah; and his wife *was* barren and had no children. 3 And the [d]Angel of the LORD appeared to the woman and said to her, "Indeed now, you are barren and have borne no children, but you shall conceive and bear a son. 4 Now therefore, please be careful [e]not to drink wine or *similar* drink, and not to eat anything unclean. 5 For behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. And no [f]razor shall come upon his head, for the child shall be [g]a Nazirite to God from the womb; and he shall [h]begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines."

6 So the woman came and told her husband, saying, [i]"A Man of God came to me, and His [j]countenance[l] *was* like the countenance of the Angel of God, very awesome; but I [k]did not ask Him where He *was* from, and He did not tell me His name. 7 And He said to me, 'Behold, you shall conceive and bear a son. Now drink no wine or *similar* drink, nor eat anything unclean, for the child shall be a Nazirite to God from the womb to the day of his death.' "

8 Then Manoah prayed to the LORD, and said, "O my Lord, please let the Man of God whom You sent come to us again and teach us what we shall do for the child who will be born."

9 And God listened to the voice of Manoah, and the Angel of God came to the woman again as she was sitting in the field; but Manoah her husband *was* not with her. 10 Then the woman ran in haste and told her husband, and said to him, "Look, the Man who came to me the *other* day has just now appeared to me!"

11 So Manoah arose and followed his wife. When he came to the Man, he said to Him, "Are You the Man who spoke to this woman?"

And He said, "I *am.*"

12 Manoah said, "Now let Your words come *to pass!* What will be the boy's rule of life, and his work?"

13 So the Angel of the LORD said to Manoah, "Of all that I said to the woman let her be careful. 14 She may not eat anything that comes from the vine, [l]nor may she drink wine or *similar* drink, nor eat anything unclean. All that I commanded her let her observe."

15 Then Manoah said to the Angel of the LORD, "Please [m]let us detain You, and we will prepare a young goat for You."

16 And the Angel of the LORD said to Manoah, "Though you detain Me, I will not eat your food. But if you offer a burnt offering, you must offer it to the LORD." (For Manoah did not know He *was* the Angel of the LORD.)

17 Then Manoah said to the Angel of the LORD, "What *is* Your name, that when Your words come *to pass* we may honor You?"

18 And the Angel of the LORD said to him, [n]"Why do you ask My name, seeing it *is* wonderful?"

19 So Manoah took the young goat with the grain offering, [o]and offered it upon the rock to the LORD. And He did a wondrous thing while Manoah and his wife looked on— 20 it happened as the flame went up toward heaven from the altar—the Angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar! When Manoah and his wife saw *this,* they [p]fell on their faces to the ground. 21 When the Angel of the LORD appeared no more to Manoah and his wife, [q]then Manoah knew that He *was* the Angel of the LORD.

22 And Manoah said to his wife, [r]"We shall surely die, because we have seen God!"

23 But his wife said to him, "If the LORD had desired to kill us, He would not have accepted a burnt offering and a grain offering from our hands, nor would He have shown us all these *things,* nor would He have told us *such things* as these at this time."

24 So the woman bore a son and called his name [s]Samson; and [t]the child grew, and the LORD blessed him. 25 [u]And the Spirit of the LORD began to move upon him at [z]Mahaneh Dan [v]between Zorah and [w]Eshtaol.

3 [d]Judg. 6:12

4 [e]Num. 6:2, 3, 20; Judg. 13:4; Luke 1:15

5 [f]Num. 6:5; 1 Sam. 1:11 [g]Num. 6:2 [h]1 Sam. 7:13; 2 Sam. 8:1; 1 Chr. 18:1

6 [i]Gen. 32:24–30 [j]Matt. 28:3; Luke 9:29; Acts 6:15 [k]Judg. 13:17, 18 [l]*appearance*

14 [l]Num. 6:3, 4; Judg. 13:4

15 [m]Gen. 18:5; Judg. 6:18

18 [n]Gen. 32:29

19 [o]Judg. 6:19–21

20 [p]Lev. 9:24; 1 Chr. 21:16; Ezek. 1:28; Matt. 17:6

21 [q]Judg. 6:22

22 [r]Gen. 32:30; Ex. 33:20; Deut. 5:26; Judg. 6:22, 23

24 [s]Heb. 11:32 [t]1 Sam. 3:19; Luke 1:80

25 [u]Judg. 3:10; 1 Sam. 11:6; Matt. 4:1 [v]Josh. 15:33; Judg. 18:11 [w]Judg. 16:31 [z]Lit. *Camp of Dan,* Judg. 18:12

consequences of having seen the Angel of the Lord. These strong parallels pose the question whether Samson might not become as great a judge as Gideon (13:1—16:31 note). Three times the Nazirite requirements are spelled out even before Samson is born (vv. 4–5, 7, 14). This repetition heightens their importance.

■ **13:2 barren.** Samson's mother was barren, like Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel (Gen. 16:1; 25:21; 29:31), and the mother of Samuel (1 Sam. 1:2, 5; Judg. 13:1—16:31 note).

■ **13:3 the Angel of the LORD.** See 2:1; 6:11–24; 13:1—16:31 note; "Angels" at Zech. 1:9.

■ **13:5 Nazirite . . . from the womb.** For background see Num. 6:1–21. Normally the Nazirite vow was taken for a set amount of time, and not from birth (13:1—16:31 note).

■ **13:6 like the countenance of the Angel of God.** She failed to recognize that it really was the Angel of the Lord (6:22; 13:16).

■ **13:15 prepare a young goat.** They repeated Gideon's hospitality (6:19).

■ **13:17 What is Your name.** Jacob asked the same question (Gen. 32:29).

■ **13:19–22** The incidents here parallel those in Gideon's life (6:20–22).

■ **13:24 the child grew, and the LORD blessed him.** In spite of God's blessing, Samson was weak in faith (13:1—16:31 note), in contrast to Samuel (1 Sam. 2:26; 3:19) or Jesus (Luke 2:52).

■ **13:25 the Spirit of the LORD.** See 3:10 note.

CHAPTER 14

1 [a]Gen. 38:13; Josh. 15:10, 57 [b]Gen. 34:2

2 [c]Gen. 21:21

3 [d]Gen. 24:3, 4 [e]Gen. 34:14; Ex. 34:16; Deut. 7:3 [f]Lit. *she is right in my eyes*

4 [g]Josh. 11:20; 1 Kin. 12:15; 2 Kin. 6:33; 2 Chr. 10:15 [h]Deut. 28:48; Judg. 13:1

6 [i]Judg. 3:10

9 [j]Lev. 11:27

12 [k]1 Kin. 10:1; Ezek. 17:2 [l]Gen. 29:27 [m]Gen. 45:22; 2 Kin. 5:22

13 [n]Ezek. 17:2

15 [o]Judg. 16:5 [p]Judg. 15:6 [q]So with MT, Tg., Vg.; LXX, Syr. *fourth*

16 [r]Judg. 16:15

Samson's Philistine Wife

14 Now Samson went down [a]to Timnah, and [b]saw a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines. 2 So he went up and told his father and mother, saying, "I have seen a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines; now therefore, [c]get her for me as a wife."

3 Then his father and mother said to him, "*Is there* no woman among the daughters of [d]your brethren, or among all my people, that you must go and get a wife from the [e]uncircumcised Philistines?"

And Samson said to his father, "Get her for me, for [f]she pleases me well."

4 But his father and mother did not know that it was [g]of the LORD—that He was seeking an occasion to move against the Philistines. For at that time [h]the Philistines had dominion over Israel.

5 So Samson went down to Timnah with his father and mother, and came to the vineyards of Timnah.

Now *to his* surprise, a young lion *came* roaring against him. 6 And [i]the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him, and he tore the lion apart as one would have torn apart a young goat, though *he had* nothing in his hand. But he did not tell his father or his mother what he had done.

7 Then he went down and talked with the woman; and she pleased Samson well. 8 After some time, when he returned to get her, he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion. And behold, a swarm of bees and honey *were* in the carcass of the lion. 9 He took some of it in his hands and went along, eating. When he came to his father and mother, he gave *some* to them, and they also ate. But he did not tell them that he had taken the honey out of the [j]carcass of the lion.

10 So his father went down to the woman. And Samson gave a feast there, for young men used to do so. 11 And it happened, when they saw him, that they brought thirty companions to be with him.

12 Then Samson said to them, "Let me [k]pose a riddle to you. If you can correctly solve and explain it to me [l]within the seven days of the feast, then I will give you thirty linen garments and thirty [m]changes of clothing. 13 But if you cannot explain *it* to me, then you shall give me thirty linen garments and thirty changes of clothing."

And they said to him, [n]"Pose your riddle, that we may hear it."

14 So he said to them:

"Out of the eater came something to eat,
And out of the strong came something sweet."

Now for three days they could not explain the riddle.

15 But it came to pass on the [q]seventh day that they said to Samson's wife, [o]"Entice your husband, that he may explain the riddle to us, [p]or else we will burn you and your father's house with fire. Have you invited us in order to take what is ours? *Is that* not *so?*"

16 Then Samson's wife wept on him, and said, [r]"You only hate me! You do not love me! You have posed a riddle to the sons of my people, but you have not explained *it* to me."

And he said to her, "Look, I have not explained *it* to my father or my mother; so should I explain *it* to you?" 17 Now she had wept on him the seven days while their feast lasted. And it happened on the seventh day that he told her, because she pressed him so much. Then she explained the riddle to the sons of her people. 18 So the men of the city said to him on the seventh day before the sun went down:

■ **14:1—15:20** Immediately after learning that the Lord was with Samson and that the Spirit began to stir in him (13:25), the reader is told that Samson sought a wife from among the Philistines (14:1–2). In this section, Samson's prodigious strength, poetic abilities, and intense pride and temper are revealed. The narrative revolves around the pursuit and loss of the Philistine wife and the consequences for both Philistia and Samson. In the course of these events, Samson broke the Nazirite vow by touching a dead thing (14:8–9) and by drinking wine (v. 10). All that remained was for him to cut his hair. Three times the Spirit of the Lord came on him and he killed his enemies. He led Israel for twenty years (15:20). Normally this would be the end of the narrative. But Samson continued to be distracted by foreign women, and the story concludes with the narrative of his consequent demise (ch. 16).

■ **14:2 a woman . . . of the Philistines.** Israelites must not marry foreign wives (3:1–6; 14:3; Deut. 7:3–4; 1 Kin. 11:1–6; Ezra 9—10).

■ **14:4 that it was of the LORD.** While Samson's desire was sinful, God used it for His own purposes to bring judgment on the Philistines.

■ **14:6 Spirit of the LORD.** See 3:10 note.

■ **14:8, 9 the carcass of the lion.** Part of the Nazirite vow was to avoid even approaching a dead body (Num. 6:6). Samson touched the carcass, which should have annulled his vow. He did not tell his parents. On the surface one is led to believe that he was silent for the sake of making his riddle, but he was also hiding the transgression of his vow.

■ **14:10 gave a feast.** At such a feast wine was usual. Yet as a Nazirite, Samson was forbidden to drink wine (13:1—16:31 note; 13:2–25 note).

"What *is* sweeter than honey?
And what *is* stronger than a lion?"

And he said to them:

"If you had not plowed with my heifer,
You would not have solved my riddle!"

19 Then [q]the Spirit of the LORD came upon him mightily, and he went down to Ashkelon and killed thirty of their men, took their apparel, and gave the changes *of clothing* to those who had explained the riddle. So his anger was aroused, and he went back up to his father's house. 20 And Samson's wife [r]was *given* to his companion, who had been [s]his best man.

Samson Defeats the Philistines

15 After a while, in the time of wheat harvest, it happened that Samson visited his wife with a [a]young goat. And he said, "Let me go in to my wife, into *her* room." But her father would not permit him to go in.

2 Her father said, "I really thought that you thoroughly [b]hated her; therefore I gave her to your companion. *Is* not her younger sister better than she? Please, take her instead."

3 And Samson said to them, "This time I shall be blameless regarding the Philistines if I harm them!" 4 Then Samson went and caught three hundred foxes; and he took torches, turned *the foxes* tail to tail, and put a torch between each pair of tails. 5 When he had set the torches on fire, he let *the foxes* go into the standing grain of the Philistines, and burned up both the shocks and the standing grain, as well as the vineyards *and* olive groves.

6 Then the Philistines said, "Who has done this?"

And they answered, "Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because he has taken his wife and given her to his companion." [c]So the Philistines came up and burned her and her father with fire.

7 Samson said to them, "Since you would do a thing like this, I will surely take revenge on you, and after that I will cease." 8 So he attacked them hip and thigh with a great slaughter; then he went down and dwelt in the cleft of the rock of [d]Etam.

9 Now the Philistines went up, encamped in Judah, and deployed themselves [e]against Lehi. 10 And the men of Judah said, "Why have you come up against us?"

So they answered, "We have come up to [f]arrest Samson, to do to him as he has done to us."

11 Then three thousand men of Judah went down to the cleft of the rock of Etam, and said to Samson, "Do you not know that the Philistines [f]rule over us? What *is* this you have done to us?"

And he said to them, "As they did to me, so I have done to them."

12 But they said to him, "We have come down to arrest you, that we may deliver you into the hand of the Philistines."

Then Samson said to them, "Swear to me that you will not kill me yourselves."

13 So they spoke to him, saying, "No, but we will tie you securely and deliver you into their hand; but we will surely not kill you." And they bound him with two [g]new ropes and brought him up from the rock.

14 When he came to Lehi, the Philistines came shouting against him. Then [h]the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him; and the ropes that *were* on his arms became like flax that is burned with fire, and his bonds [2]broke loose from his hands. 15 He found a fresh jawbone of a donkey, reached out his hand and took it, and [i]killed a thousand men with it. 16 Then Samson said:

19 [q]Judg. 3:10; 13:25
20 [r]Judg. 15:2 [s]John 3:29

CHAPTER 15

1 [a]Gen. 38:17
2 [b]Judg. 14:20
6 [c]Judg. 14:15
8 [d]2 Chr. 11:6
9 [e]Judg. 15:19
10 [f]Lit. *bind*
11 [f]Lev. 26:25; Deut. 28:43; Judg. 13:1; 14:4; Ps. 106:40–42
13 [g]Judg. 16:11, 12
14 [h]Judg. 3:10; 14:6 [2]Lit. *were melted*
15 [i]Lev. 26:8; Josh. 23:10; Judg. 3:31

■ **14:19 the Spirit of the LORD.** See 3:10 note.

■ **14:20 was given to his companion.** This was not a custom but an attempt by an embarrassed father to save face (15:1–2). Even the Philistines continued to refer to Samson as "the son-in-law of the Timnite" (15:6).

■ **15:1 in the time of wheat harvest.** This was a dry time when fields burned easily (vv. 4–5).

his wife. Legally she was Samson's wife.

■ **15:2 I gave her to your companion.** See 14:20 and note.

■ **15:6 the son-in-law of the Timnite.** See 14:20 and note.

■ **15:13 bound him with two new ropes.** See 16:11–12.

■ **15:14 the Spirit of the LORD.** See 3:10 note; 14:6, 19.

■ **15:15 a fresh jawbone . . . a thousand men.** See the parallel with Shamgar, son of Anath (3:31).

17 [3]Lit. *Jawbone Height*
18 [i]Ps. 3:7
19 [k]Gen. 45:27; Is. 40:29 [4]Lit. *Jawbone,* Judg. 15:14 [5]Lit. *Spring of the Caller*
20 [l]Judg. 10:2; 12:7–14 [m]Judg. 16:31 [n]Judg. 13:1

CHAPTER 16

1 [a]Josh. 15:47
2 [b]1 Sam. 23:26; Ps. 118:10–12
5 [c]Josh. 13:3 [d]Judg. 14:15
11 [e]Judg. 15:13 [f]Lit. *with which work has never been done*
15 [f]Judg. 14:16

"With the jawbone of a donkey,
Heaps upon heaps,
With the jawbone of a donkey
I have slain a thousand men!"

17 And so it was, when he had finished speaking, that he threw the jawbone from his hand, and called that place [3]Ramath Lehi.

18 Then he became very thirsty; so he cried out to the LORD and said, [i]"You have given this great deliverance by the hand of Your servant; and now shall I die of thirst and fall into the hand of the uncircumcised?" 19 So God split the hollow place that *is* in [4]Lehi, and water came out, and he drank; and [k]his spirit returned, and he revived. Therefore he called its name [5]En Hakkore, which is in Lehi to this day. 20 And [l]he judged Israel [m]twenty years [n]in the days of the Philistines.

Samson and Delilah

16 Now Samson went to [a]Gaza and saw a harlot there, and went in to her. 2 *When* the Gazites *were told,* "Samson has come here!" they [b]surrounded *the place* and lay in wait for him all night at the gate of the city. They were quiet all night, saying, "In the morning, when it is daylight, we will kill him." 3 And Samson lay *low* till midnight; then he arose at midnight, took hold of the doors of the gate of the city and the two gateposts, pulled them up, bar and all, put *them* on his shoulders, and carried them to the top of the hill that faces Hebron.

4 Afterward it happened that he loved a woman in the Valley of Sorek, whose name *was* Delilah. 5 And the [c]lords of the Philistines came up to her and said to her, [d]"Entice him, and find out where his great strength *lies,* and by what *means* we may overpower him, that we may bind him to afflict him; and every one of us will give you eleven hundred *pieces* of silver."

6 So Delilah said to Samson, "Please tell me where your great strength *lies,* and with what you may be bound to afflict you."

7 And Samson said to her, "If they bind me with seven fresh bowstrings, not yet dried, then I shall become weak, and be like any *other* man."

8 So the lords of the Philistines brought up to her seven fresh bowstrings, not yet dried, and she bound him with them. 9 Now *men were* lying in wait, staying with her in the room. And she said to him, "The Philistines *are* upon you, Samson!" But he broke the bowstrings as a strand of yarn breaks when it touches fire. So the secret of his strength was not known.

10 Then Delilah said to Samson, "Look, you have mocked me and told me lies. Now, please tell me what you may be bound with."

11 So he said to her, "If they bind me securely with [e]new ropes [f]that have never been used, then I shall become weak, and be like any *other* man."

12 Therefore Delilah took new ropes and bound him with them, and said to him, "The Philistines *are* upon you, Samson!" And *men were* lying in wait, staying in the room. But he broke them off his arms like a thread.

13 Delilah said to Samson, "Until now you have mocked me and told me lies. Tell me what you may be bound with."

And he said to her, "If you weave the seven locks of my head into the web of the loom"—

14 So she wove *it* tightly with the batten of the loom, and said to him, "The Philistines *are* upon you, Samson!" But he awoke from his sleep, and pulled out the batten and the web from the loom.

15 Then she said to him, [f]"How can you say, 'I love you,' when your heart *is* not with me?

■ **15:18 he cried out.** This is one of only two times that Samson is mentioned as having spoken to the Lord (16:28).

shall I die of thirst. Like the Israelites who experienced miracle upon miracle in the wilderness, Samson complained to God. The parallel is marked by the cry for water and the miraculous manner in which God supplied it (v. 19; Ex. 17:1–7; Num. 20:1–13). Both Israel and Samson were complaining to God, but God in His mercy and compassion met their need (Judg. 10:10–16).

■ **15:20 twenty years.** Normally this would signal the end of the story, but not so here (14:1—15:20 note). Like Jephthah (12:7), Samson did not lead Israel for a full generation (forty years), as had the earlier judges.

■ **16:1–22** This account contains two parallel stories showing Samson's desire for women, his prodigious strength, and the efforts the Philistines made to capture him. Samson's continual covenant breaking was judged by God; he was captured by the Philistines and blinded (vv. 21–22). Delilah's attempts to snare Samson reveal Samson to be a fool for remaining with her. It is even more strange that the Spirit of God leaves him only when his hair is cut, not at an earlier point of his covenant breaking. God was patient with Samson until the last sign of his vow was gone, and then God judged him.

■ **16:1 a harlot.** Samson once again broke the covenant (14:2).

■ **16:11 new ropes.** See 15:13.

■ **16:15 How can you say.** See 14:16–17.

You have mocked me these three times, and have not told me where your great strength *lies*."
16 And it came to pass, when she pestered him daily with her words and pressed him, *so* that his soul was [2]vexed to death, 17 that he [g]told her all his heart, and said to her, [h]"No razor has ever come upon my head, for I *have been* a Nazirite to God from my mother's womb. If I am shaven, then my strength will leave me, and I shall become weak, and be like any *other* man."

18 When Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, "Come up once more, for he has told me all his heart." So the lords of the Philistines came up to her and brought the money in their hand. 19 [i]Then she lulled him to sleep on her knees, and called for a man and had him shave off the seven locks of his head. Then [3]she began to torment him, and his strength left him. 20 And she said, "The Philistines *are* upon you, Samson!" So he awoke from his sleep, and said, "I will go out as before, at other times, and shake myself free!" But he did not know that the LORD [j]had departed from him.

21 Then the Philistines took him and [4]put out his [k]eyes, and brought him down to Gaza. They bound him with bronze fetters, and he became a grinder in the prison. 22 However, the hair of his head began to grow again after it had been shaven.

Samson Dies with the Philistines

23 Now the lords of the Philistines gathered together to offer a great sacrifice to [l]Dagon their god, and to rejoice. And they said:

"Our god has delivered into our hands
Samson our enemy!"

24 When the people saw him, they [m]praised their god; for they said:

"Our god has delivered into our hands our enemy,
The destroyer of our land,
And the one who multiplied our dead."

25 So it happened, when their hearts were [n]merry, that they said, "Call for Samson, that he may perform for us." So they called for Samson from the prison, and he performed for them. And they stationed him between the pillars. 26 Then Samson said to the lad who held him by the hand, "Let me feel the pillars which support the temple, so that I can lean on them." 27 Now the temple was full of men and women. All the lords of the Philistines *were* there—about three thousand men and women on the [o]roof watching while Samson performed.

28 Then Samson called to the LORD, saying, "O Lord GOD, [p]remember me, I pray! Strengthen me, I pray, just this once, O God, that I may with one *blow* take vengeance on the Philistines for my two eyes!" 29 And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars which supported the temple, and he braced himself against them, one on his right and the other on his left. 30 Then Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines!" And he pushed with *all his* might, and the temple fell on the lords and all the people who *were* in it. So the dead that he killed at his death were more than he had killed in his life.

31 And his brothers and all his father's household came down and took him, and brought *him* up and [q]buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of his father Manoah. He had judged Israel [r]twenty years.

Micah's Idolatry

17 Now there was a man from the mountains of Ephraim, whose name *was* [a]Micah. 2 And he said to his mother, "The eleven hundred *shekels* of silver that were taken from you,

16 [2]Lit. *impatient to the point of*
17 [g][Mic. 7:5] [h]Num. 6:5; Judg. 13:5
19 [i]Prov. 7:26, 27 [3]So with MT, Tg., Vg.; LXX *he began to be afflicted*,
20 [j]Num. 14:9, 42, 43; [Josh. 7:12]; 1 Sam. 16:14; 18:12; 28:15, 16; 2 Chr. 15:2
21 [k]2 Kin. 25:7 [4]Lit. *bored out*
23 [l]1 Sam. 5:2
24 [m]Dan. 5:4
25 [n]Judg. 9:27
27 [o]Deut. 22:8
28 [p]Jer. 15:15
31 [q]Judg. 13:25 [r]Judg. 15:20

CHAPTER 17

1 [a]Judg. 18:2

■ **16:17 from my mother's womb.** See 13:5.

If I am shaven. Samson had always ignored the other aspects of his vow (13:1—16:31 note). His true strength was the Spirit of the Lord (v. 20).

■ **16:20 the LORD had departed from him.** The Spirit of the Lord was not giving him strength (13:25; 14:6, 19; 15:14). Like Saul (cf. Js. 16:14 with 1 Sam. 15:23), Samson lost the power of the Spirit because he disobeyed. God was his power, not magic associated with long hair.

■ **16:23 Our god has delivered.** God is the Judge who allowed oppressors to mistreat His people on account of their sin (v. 20); it was not the power of the gods of the nations that enabled them to overcome Israel (2:14–15).

■ **16:28 O Lord GOD.** Samson's final plea is to take revenge for the loss of his sight. The writer does not comment on this motive. God in His grace answered the prayer and allowed Samson to kill the enemies of Israel (10:10–16; 15:18–19).

■ **16:30 more than he had killed in life.** See 13:1—16:31 note.

■ **16:31 He had judged . . . twenty years.** See 15:20 note.

■ **17:1—18:31** This section, recounting the Danite idolatry, is part of the conclusion to the Book of Judges. The phrases, "in those days there was

and on which you [b]put a curse, even saying it in my ears—here *is* the silver with me; I took it."

And his mother said, "[c]*May you be* blessed by the LORD, my son!" 3 So when he had returned the eleven hundred *shekels* of silver to his mother, his mother said, "I had wholly dedicated the silver from my hand to the LORD for my son, to [d]make a carved image and a molded image; now therefore, I will return it to you." 4 Thus he returned the silver to his mother. Then his mother [e]took two hundred *shekels* of silver and gave them to the silversmith, and he made it into a carved image and a molded image; and they were in the house of Micah.

5 The man Micah had a [f]shrine, and made an [g]ephod and [h]household [i]idols; and he consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest. 6 In those days *there was* no king in Israel; [j]everyone did *what was* right in his own eyes.

7 Now there was a young man from [k]Bethlehem in Judah, of the family of Judah; he *was* a Levite, and [l]was staying there. 8 The man departed from the city of Bethlehem in Judah to stay wherever he could find *a place*. Then he came to the mountains of Ephraim, to the house of Micah, as he journeyed. 9 And Micah said to him, "Where do you come from?"

So he said to him, "I *am* a Levite from Bethlehem in Judah, and I am on my way to find *a place* to stay."

10 Micah said to him, "Dwell with me, [m]and be a [n]father and a priest to me, and I will give

2 [b]Lev. 5:1 [c]Gen. 14:19
3 [d]Ex. 20:4, 23; 34:17
4 [e]Is. 46:6
5 [f]Judg. 18:24 [g]Judg. 8:27; 18:14, 17, 20; 31:19, 30 *teraphim*
6 [i]Judg. 18:1; 19:1 [j]Deut. 12:8
7 [k]Matt. 2:1, 5, 6 [l]Deut. 18:6
10 [m]Judg. 18:19 [n]Gen. 45:8

no king in Israel" (17:6; 18:1), and "everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (17:6) are repeated in the last section of the narrative cycles (19:1; 21:25). Without a king the people were miserable.

■ **17:2** The story starts abruptly with the return of stolen goods. The mother seems not to be surprised.

■ **17:3 dedicated . . . to the LORD . . . to make a carved image and a molded image.** This statement is highly ironic. However well-intentioned, consecrating this silver in this way violates the second commandment (Deut. 5:8), an indication of the Spiritual ignorance of the period.

■ **17:5 an ephod.** See 8:27 and note.

■ **17:6 In those days.** See 18:1; 19:1; 21:25. The refrain comments on the ignorance of Micah and his mother that was typical of the time. They made idols in the name of the Lord, and appointed their own priest.

■ **17:7 Levite.** The Levites' inheritance was to serve the Lord at His dwelling place, the tabernacle (Deut. 18:1–8; Josh. 13:14, 33; 14:3–4).

■ **17:10 be a father . . . to me.** That is, in a religious sense.

The Period of the Judges (16:31)

Events and Judges	Years
Israel serves Cushan-Rishathaim (3:7, 8)	8
Peace following Othniel's deliverance (3:7–11)	40
Israel serves Moab (3:12)	18
Peace follows Ehud's deliverance (3:12–30)	80
Shamgar delivers Israel from Philistines (3:31)	?
Israel serves Canaan (4:1–3)	20
Peace following deliverance by Deborah and Barak (4:1—5:31)	40
Israel serves Midian (6:1–6)	7
Peace following Gideon's deliverance (6:1—8:32)	40
Abimelech, king of Israel (9:1–57)	3
Tola's career (10:1, 2)	23
Jair's career (10:3–5)	22
Israel serves Ammon and Philistia (10:6–10)	18
Jephthah's career (10:6—12:7)	6
Ibzan's career (12:8–10)	7
Elon's career (12:11, 12)	10
Abdon's career (12:13–15)	8
Israel serves Philistia (13:1)	40
Samson's career (13:1—16:31)	20

you ten *shekels* of silver per year, a suit of clothes, and your sustenance." So the Levite went in. 11 Then the Levite was content to dwell with the man; and the young man became like one of his sons to him. 12 So Micah [o]consecrated[2] the Levite, and the young man [p]became his priest, and lived in the house of Micah. 13 Then Micah said, "Now I know that the LORD will be good to me, since I have a Levite as [q]priest!"

The Danites Adopt Micah's Idolatry

18 In [a]those days *there was* no king in Israel. And in those days [b]the tribe of the Danites was seeking an inheritance for itself to dwell in; for until that day *their* inheritance among the tribes of Israel had not fallen to them. 2 So the children of Dan sent five men of their family from their territory, men of valor from [c]Zorah and Eshtaol, [d]to spy out the land and search it. They said to them, "Go, search the land." So they went to the mountains of Ephraim, to the [e]house of Micah, and lodged there. 3 While they *were* at the house of Micah, they recognized the voice of the young Levite. They turned aside and said to him, "Who brought you here? What are you doing in this *place?* What do you have here?"

4 He said to them, "Thus and so Micah did for me. He has [f]hired me, and I have become his priest."

5 So they said to him, "Please [g]inquire [h]of God, that we may know whether the journey on which we go will be prosperous."

6 And the priest said to them, [i]"Go in peace. [j]The presence of the LORD *be* with you on your way."

7 So the five men departed and went to [k]Laish. They saw the people who *were* there, [l]how they dwelt safely, in the manner of the Sidonians, quiet and secure. *There were* no rulers in the land who might put *them* to shame for anything. They *were* far from the [m]Sidonians, and they had no ties [2]with anyone.

8 Then *the spies* came back to their brethren at [n]Zorah and Eshtaol, and their brethren said to them, "What *is* your *report?*"

9 So they said, [o]"Arise, let us go up against them. For we have seen the land, and indeed it *is* very good. *Would* you [p]*do* nothing? Do not hesitate to go, *and* enter to possess the land. 10 When you go, you will come to a [q]secure people and a large land. For God has given it into your hands, [r]a place where *there is* no lack of anything that *is* on the earth."

11 And six hundred men of the family of the Danites went from there, from Zorah and Eshtaol, armed with weapons of war. 12 Then they went up and encamped in [s]Kirjath Jearim in Judah. (Therefore they call that place [t]Mahaneh Dan[3] to this day. There *it is,* west of Kirjath Jearim.) 13 And they passed from there to the mountains of Ephraim, and came to [u]the house of Micah.

14 [v]Then the five men who had gone to spy out the country of Laish answered and said to their brethren, "Do you know that [w]there are in these houses an ephod, household idols, a carved image, and a molded image? Now therefore, consider what you should do." 15 So they turned aside there, and came to the house of the young Levite man—to the house of Micah—and greeted him. 16 The [x]six hundred men armed with their weapons of war, who *were* of the children of Dan, stood by the entrance of the gate. 17 Then [y]the five men who had gone to spy out the land

12 [o]Judg. 17:5 [p]Judg. 18:30 [2]Lit. *filled the hand of*

13 [q]Judg. 18:4

CHAPTER 18

1 [a]Judg. 17:6; 19:1; 21:25 [b]Josh. 19:40–48

2 [c]Judg. 13:25 [d]Num. 13:17; Josh. 2:1 [e]Judg. 17:1

4 [f]Judg. 17:10, 12

5 [g]1 Kin. 22:5; [Is. 30:1]; Hos. 4:12 [h]Judg. 1:1; 17:5; 18:14

6 [i]1 Kin. 22:6 [j]Lit. *The LORD is before the way in which you go*

7 [k]Josh. 19:47 [l]Judg. 18:27–29 [m]Judg. 10:12 [2]So with MT, Tg., Vg.; LXX *with Syria*

8 [n]Judg. 18:2

9 [o]Num. 13:30; Josh. 2:23, 24 [p]1 Kin. 22:3

10 [q]Judg. 18:7, 27 [r]Deut. 8:9

12 [s]Josh. 15:60 [t]Judg. 13:25 [3]Lit. *Camp of Dan*

13 [u]Judg. 18:2

14 [v]1 Sam. 14:28 [w]Judg. 17:5

16 [x]Judg. 18:11

17 [y]Judg. 18:2, 14

■ **17:11 like one of his sons.** That the Levite was "content" with the arrangement shows complete insensitivity to apostasy. An appointed officer of the tabernacle was serving an idol.

■ **17:13 good to me.** This is a foolish statement (v. 3 note; 17:1—18:31 note), further illustrating the darkened understanding of the time, descending to the level of superstition.

■ **18:1 In those days . . . in those days.** The repetition (see also 17:6) subtly indicates from the very outset of the narrative that the Danites were doing what was right in their own eyes.

no king in Israel. See 17:6 note.

their inheritance . . . had not fallen to them. The Danites had failed to conquer the portion assigned to them (1:34–36). They were in violation of the covenant.

■ **18:2 to spy out the land.** They were imitating their forefathers (Num. 13:2, 12).

■ **18:3 they recognized the voice.** That is, the distinctive accent of the young man from the south of Israel (cf. 12:6).

■ **18:5 inquire of God.** Priests apparently used an ephod to seek the will of the Lord (8:27 and note).

■ **18:6 The presence of the LORD be with you on your way.** The tragic irony of this story—the Levite ministering to idols, Micah's absurd confidence (17:13)—cancels the validity of such a benediction uttered by unholy lips.

■ **18:7 quiet and secure.** Their peaceful, defenseless nature is emphasized by repetition (vv. 10, 27–28).

■ **18:9 the land . . . is very good.** Unlike the original spies that entered Canaan, these spies brought back a good report. Conquest would be easy because the people were unsuspecting and peaceful (vv. 7, 10).

■ **18:14 an ephod, household idols, a carved image, and a molded image.** This whole list (17:5) is repeated three times in the next six verses (vv. 17, 18, 20) and is twice referred to more generally (vv. 27, 30–31).

■ **18:16 six hundred men armed . . . by the entrance.** The Danites' action is a kind of parody of the conquest of the land begun earlier under Joshua. They go in the strength of overwhelming numbers against a single household, rather than in the strength of the Lord against a fierce enemy. The armed men are mentioned twice as standing outside the door.

went up. Entering there, they took [y]the carved image, the ephod, the household idols, and the molded image. The priest stood at the entrance of the gate with the six hundred men *who were* armed with weapons of war.

18 When these went into Micah's house and took the carved image, the ephod, the household idols, and the molded image, the priest said to them, "What are you doing?"

19 And they said to him, "Be quiet, [z]put your hand over your mouth, and come with us; [a]be a father and a priest to us. *Is it* better for you to be a priest to the household of one man, or that you be a priest to a tribe and a family in Israel?" 20 So the priest's heart was glad; and he took the ephod, the household idols, and the carved image, and took his place among the people.

21 Then they turned and departed, and put the little ones, the livestock, and the goods in front of them. 22 When they were a good way from the house of Micah, the men who *were* in the houses near Micah's house gathered together and overtook the children of Dan. 23 And they called out to the children of Dan. So they turned around and said to Micah, [b]"What ails you, that you have gathered such a company?"

24 So he said, "You have [c]taken away my [4]gods which I made, and the priest, and you have gone away. Now what more do I have? How can you say to me, 'What ails you?' "

25 And the children of Dan said to him, "Do not let your voice be heard among us, lest [5]angry men fall upon you, and you lose your life, with the lives of your household!" 26 Then the children of Dan went their way. And when Micah saw that they *were* too strong for him, he turned and went back to his house.

Danites Settle in Laish

27 So they took *the things* Micah had made, and the priest who had belonged to him, and went to Laish, to a people quiet and secure; [d]and they struck them with the edge of the sword and burned the city with fire. 28 *There was* no deliverer, because it *was* [e]far from Sidon, and they had no ties with anyone. It was in the valley that belongs [f]to Beth Rehob. So they rebuilt the city and dwelt there. 29 And [g]they called the name of the city [h]Dan, after the name of Dan their father, who was born to Israel. However, the name of the city formerly *was* Laish.

30 Then the children of Dan set up for themselves the carved image; and Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of [6]Manasseh, and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan [i]until the day of the captivity of the land. 31 So they set up for themselves Micah's carved image which he made, [j]all the time that the house of God was in Shiloh.

The Levite's Concubine

19 And it came to pass in those days, [a]when *there was* no king in Israel, that there was a certain Levite staying in the remote mountains of Ephraim. He took for himself a concu-

17 [y]Judg. 17:4, 5

19 [z]Job 21:5; 29:9; 40:4; Mic. 7:16 [a]Judg. 17:10

23 [b]2 Kin. 6:28

24 [c]Gen. 31:30; Judg. 17:5 [4]*idols*

25 [5]Lit. *bitter of soul*

27 [d]Josh. 19:47

28 [e]Judg. 18:7 [f]Num. 13:21; 2 Sam. 10:6

29 [g]Josh. 19:47 [h]Judg. 20:1; 1 Kin. 12:29, 30; 15:20

30 [i]2 Kin. 15:29 [6]LXX, Vg. *Moses*

31 [j]Deut. 12:1–32; Josh. 18:1, 8; Judg. 19:18; 21:12

CHAPTER 19

1 [a]Judg. 17:6; 18:1; 21:25

■ **18:19 be a father and a priest.** See 17:10 note.

■ **18:20 So the priest's heart was glad.** He was happy for advancement.

he took the ephod . . . carved image. The priest was going to lead Dan in false worship as he had Micah's household.

■ **18:21 in front of them.** That is, to protect them from an attack from behind.

■ **18:24 How can you say.** Micah is a pathetic figure, believing that God would bless "obedience" in any way that he chose to offer it (17:13).

■ **18:27 they took the things Micah had made.** See v. 14.

a people quiet and secure. The Israelites were to destroy only the seven proscribed Canaanite nations (Deut. 7:1). To other peoples they were first to offer peace (Deut. 20:10–18). Dan did not ask who these people were (Josh. 9:1–27) and may have destroyed an innocent population. Moreover, this was not the land God had allotted them (Josh. 19:47).

■ **18:30 set up for themselves the carved image.** This is an example of what it meant for everyone to do what was right in his own eyes in the absence of a king (v. 14; 17:6).

Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh. This was the Levite Micah had hired (17:10, 13).

until the day. Since v. 31 specifies that Micah's idol was set up as long as "the house of God was in Shiloh," the captivity mentioned here would be the time of oppression that began with the Philistine victory near Shiloh, when the ark was removed from there (1 Sam. 4:4, 11). The captivity in Babylon occurred much later.

■ **18:31 house of God.** That is, the tabernacle, which was at Shiloh up to the time of Samuel (Josh. 18:1; 1 Sam. 3:21; 4:3). This was before David's reign. The ark was taken by Eli's sons from Shiloh into battle and lost to the Philistines (1 Sam. 4:4–11). After that the ark was never in Shiloh again.

■ **19:1—21:25** The situation in Israel had deteriorated so much that some of God's people behaved like the people of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:1–11). Civil war between the tribes was the result. This final story in the conclusion of Judges blames the misery of Israel on the lack of a king (19:1; 21:25; cf. 17:6; 18:1). Benjamin was the tribe that sinned. Even more, it was the men of Gibeah, Saul's hometown, that behaved like the people of Sodom. Saul's action in 1 Sam. 11:6–8 is clearly parallel to the Levites's desecration of his concubine (19:29 note). Finally, Judah, the tribe of David, was the Lord's choice to be the leader against Benjamin (note the similarity of wording between 1:1–2 and 20:18). The Benjamites had practically become Canaanites. No one was without fault, however. Each tribe was doing as it saw fit (21:25). The conclusion to be drawn is that a king was needed, a king from Judah and not Benjamin. David and not Saul would initially qualify. Yet, being a man, even David would prove unequal to the task, as later developments would show (2 Sam. 12:10, 11). The Lord whom the people had rejected (1 Sam. 8:7, 8) alone could be their true King (8:22, 23).

■ **19:1 Levite.** This man was from the tribe that served the Lord as His priests.

bine from [b]Bethlehem in Judah. [2] But his concubine played the harlot against him, and went away from him to her father's house at Bethlehem in Judah, and was there four whole months. [3] Then her husband arose and went after her, to [c]speak [1]kindly to her *and* bring her back, having his servant and a couple of donkeys with him. So she brought him into her father's house; and when the father of the young woman saw him, he was glad to meet him. [4] Now his father-in-law, the young woman's father, detained him; and he stayed with him three days. So they ate and drank and lodged there.

[5] Then it came to pass on the fourth day that they arose early in the morning, and he stood to depart; but the young woman's father said to his son-in-law, [d]"Refresh your heart with a morsel of bread, and afterward go your way."

[6] So they sat down, and the two of them ate and drank together. Then the young woman's father said to the man, "Please be content to stay all night, and let your heart be merry." [7] And when the man stood to depart, his father-in-law urged him; so he lodged there again. [8] Then he arose early in the morning on the fifth day to depart, but the young woman's father said, "Please refresh your heart." So they delayed until afternoon; and both of them ate.

[9] And when the man stood to depart—he and his concubine and his servant—his father-in-law, the young woman's father, said to him, "Look, the day is now drawing toward evening; please spend the night. See, the day is coming to an end; lodge here, that your heart may be merry. Tomorrow go your way early, so that you may get [2]home."

[10] However, the man was not willing to spend that night; so he rose and departed, and came opposite [e]Jebus (that *is,* Jerusalem). With him were the two saddled donkeys; his concubine *was* also with him. [11] They *were* near Jebus, and the day was far spent; and the servant said to his master, "Come, please, and let us turn aside into this city [f]of the Jebusites and lodge in it."

[12] But his master said to him, "We will not turn aside here into a city of foreigners, who *are* not of the children of Israel; we will go on [g]to Gibeah." [13] So he said to his servant, "Come, let us draw near to one of these places, and spend the night in Gibeah or in [h]Ramah." [14] And they passed by and went their way; and the sun went down on them near Gibeah, which belongs to Benjamin. [15] They turned aside there to go in to lodge in Gibeah. And when he went in, he sat down in the open square of the city, for no one would [i]take them into *his* house to spend the night.

[16] Just then an old man came in from [j]his work in the field at evening, who also *was* from the mountains of Ephraim; he was staying in Gibeah, whereas the men of the place *were* Benjamites. [17] And when he raised his eyes, he saw the traveler in the open square of the city; and the old man said, "Where are you going, and where do you come from?"

[18] So he said to him, "We *are* passing from Bethlehem in Judah toward the remote mountains of Ephraim; I *am* from there. I went to Bethlehem in Judah; *now* I am going to [k]the house of the LORD. But there *is* no one who will take me into his house, [19] although we have both straw and fodder for our donkeys, and bread and wine for myself, for your female servant, and for the young man *who is* with your servant; *there is* no lack of anything."

[20] And the old man said, [l]"Peace *be* with you! However, *let* all your needs *be* my responsibility; [m]only do not spend the night in the open square." [21] [n]So he brought him into his house, and gave fodder to the donkeys. [o]And they washed their feet, and ate and drank.

Gibeah's Crime

[22] As they were [p]enjoying themselves, suddenly [q]certain men of the city, [r]perverted[3] men, surrounded the house *and* beat on the door. They spoke to the master of the house, the old man, saying, [s]"Bring out the man who came to your house, that we may know him *carnally!*"

1 [b]Judg. 17:7; Ruth 1:1

3 [c]Gen. 34:3; 50:21 [1]Lit. *to her heart*

5 [d]Gen. 18:5; Judg. 19:8; Ps. 104:15

9 [2]Lit. *to your tent*

10 [e]Josh. 18:28; 1 Chr. 11:4, 5

11 [f]Josh. 15:8, 63; Judg. 1:21; 2 Sam. 5:6

12 [g]Josh. 18:28

13 [h]Josh. 18:25

15 [i]Matt. 25:43

16 [j]Ps. 104:23

18 [k]Josh. 18:1; Judg. 18:31; 20:18; 1 Sam. 1:3, 7

20 [l]Gen. 43:23; Judg. 6:23; 1 Sam. 25:6 [m]Gen. 19:2

21 [n]Gen. 24:32; 43:24 [o]Gen. 18:4; John 13:5

22 [p]Judg. 16:25; 19:6, 9 [q]Gen. 19:4, 5; Judg. 20:5; Hos. 9:9; 10:9 [r]Deut. 13:13; 1 Sam. 2:12; 1 Kin. 21:10; [2 Cor. 6:15] [s]Gen. 19:5; [Rom. 1:26, 27] [3]Lit. *sons of Belial*

concubine. A concubine was usually a slave and had a lower legal status than a wife (8:31; 9:18).

■ **19:2 played the harlot.** The law demanded the stoning of adulterers (Deut. 22:22), but the people were not following the law (17:6; 21:25).

■ **19:10 Jebus . . . Jerusalem.** See 1:21 and note.

■ **19:12 We will not turn aside here.** Ironically, they refuse to lodge with foreigners, only to find that their fellow Israelites are no better than Sodom and Gomorrah (19:1—21:25 note).

Gibeah. When the Book of Judges was written, Gibeah would have been well known as the home town of Saul (19:1—21:25 note).

■ **19:14—20:48** The story of what happened to the Levite in Gibeah is similar to the story of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:1–13). Gibeah's sin was like that of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the Benjamites were destroyed by the LORD's permission and assistance (20:18, 28, 35). Saul was from Benjamin, and it would not have helped him or his descendants for these events to be remembered.

■ **19:15 sat down in the open square.** In this manner the travelers advertised their need for hospitality (vv. 16–20).

■ **19:16 an old man . . . of Ephraim.** It took another "foreigner" from another generation to show hospitality.

■ **19:18 to the house of the Lord.** That is, to the tabernacle in Shiloh (18:31).

■ **19:22 Bring out the man.** See Gen. 19:5.

23 [t]Gen. 19:6, 7 [u]Gen. 34:7; Deut. 22:21; Judg. 20:6, 10; 2 Sam. 13:12
24 [v]Gen. 19:8 [w]Gen. 34:2; Deut. 21:14 [4]Lit. *his*
25 [x]Gen. 4:1
28 [y]Judg. 20:5
29 [z]Judg. 20:6; 1 Sam. 11:7 [5]Lit. *with her bones*
30 [a]Judg. 20:7; Prov. 13:10

CHAPTER 20

1 [a]Josh. 22:12; Judg. 20:11; 21:5 [b]Judg. 18:29; 1 Sam. 3:20; 2 Sam. 3:10; 24:2 [c]Josh. 19:2 [d]Judg. 10:17; 1 Sam. 7:5
2 [e]Judg. 8:10
4 [f]Judg. 19:15
5 [g]Judg. 19:22 [h]Judg. 19:25, 26
6 [i]Judg. 19:29 [j]Josh. 7:15
7 [k]Judg. 19:30
9 [l]Judg. 1:3
12 [m]Deut. 13:14; Josh. 22:13, 16
13 [n]Deut. 13:13; Judg. 19:22 [7]Lit. *sons of Belial*

23 But [t]the man, the master of the house, went out to them and said to them, "No, my brethren! I beg you, do not act *so* wickedly! Seeing this man has come into my house, [u]do not commit this outrage. 24 [v]Look, *here is* my virgin daughter and [4]*the man's* concubine; let me bring them out now. [w]Humble them, and do with them as you please; but to this man do not do such a vile thing!" 25 But the men would not heed him. So the man took his concubine and brought *her* out to them. And they [x]knew her and abused her all night until morning; and when the day began to break, they let her go.

26 Then the woman came as the day was dawning, and fell down at the door of the man's house where her master *was,* till it was light.

27 When her master arose in the morning, and opened the doors of the house and went out to go his way, there was his concubine, fallen *at* the door of the house with her hands on the threshold. 28 And he said to her, "Get up and let us be going." But [y]there was no answer. So the man lifted her onto the donkey; and the man got up and went to his place.

29 When he entered his house he took a knife, laid hold of his concubine, and [z]divided her into twelve pieces, [5]limb by limb, and sent her throughout all the territory of Israel. 30 And so it was that all who saw it said, "No such deed has been done or seen from the day that the children of Israel came up from the land of Egypt until this day. Consider it, [a]confer, and speak up!"

Israel's War with the Benjamites

20 So [a]all the children of Israel came out, from [b]Dan to [c]Beersheba, as well as from the land of Gilead, and the congregation gathered together as one man before the LORD [d]at Mizpah. 2 And the leaders of all the people, all the tribes of Israel, presented themselves in the assembly of the people of God, four hundred thousand foot soldiers [e]who drew the sword. 3 (Now the children of Benjamin heard that the children of Israel had gone up to Mizpah.)

Then the children of Israel said, "Tell *us,* how did this wicked deed happen?"

4 So the Levite, the husband of the woman who was murdered, answered and said, "My concubine and [f]I went into Gibeah, which belongs to Benjamin, to spend the night. 5 [g]And the men of Gibeah rose against me, and surrounded the house at night because of me. They intended to kill me, [h]but instead they ravished my concubine so that she died. 6 So [i]I took hold of my concubine, cut her in pieces, and sent her throughout all the territory of the inheritance of Israel, because they [j]committed lewdness and outrage in Israel. 7 Look! All of you *are* children of Israel; [k]give your advice and counsel here and now!"

8 So all the people arose as one man, saying, "None *of us* will go to his tent, nor will any turn back to his house; 9 but now this *is* the thing which we will do to Gibeah: *We will go up* [l]against it by lot. 10 We will take ten men out of *every* hundred throughout all the tribes of Israel, a hundred out of *every* thousand, and a thousand out of *every* ten thousand, to make provisions for the people, that when they come to Gibeah in Benjamin, they may repay all the vileness that they have done in Israel." 11 So all the men of Israel were gathered against the city, united together as one man.

12 [m]Then the tribes of Israel sent men through all the tribe of Benjamin, saying, "What *is* this wickedness that has occurred among you? 13 Now therefore, deliver up the men, [n]the [7]perverted

■ **19:23 do not commit this outrage.** Whatever else may be said, according to the customs of hospitality the host cannot contemplate surrendering his guest to violence. In the law, the sexual act contemplated is described as "abomination" (Lev. 18:22; 20:13).

■ **19:24 here is my virgin daughter.** As Lot offered his daughters to protect his guests (Gen. 19:8), the host offers his daughter to protect the Levite. The author does not comment on the morality of this offer, but the whole story is presented as a final illustration of the evil consequences of forsaking God's rule and doing what is right in one's own eyes.

■ **19:28 But there was no answer.** She was dead.

■ **19:29 twelve pieces.** The original audience of Judges would have been well aware of how Saul later cut up oxen into twelve parts in order to summon Israel to fight against the Ammonites (1 Sam. 11:6–8).

■ **19:30 No such deed.** This would be the grotesque use of the woman's body.

■ **20:1–48** The attack upon the Levite and his concubine resulted in civil war between all Israel and Benjamin (ch. 19). Repeated reference to Israel's oneness (vv. 1–2, 8, 11) makes an important point: Israel was united for the first time in the Book of Judges. Although their action was not unjust, it is sad that they were united only in order to punish one of their own number (v. 23). Judah was to lead against Benjamin as it had led against the Canaanites (v. 18; 1:1, 2 and notes).

■ **20:1 from Dan to Beersheba.** The extreme north and south of Israel.

together as one man. For the first time Israel was united, but the purpose was to wage war against their brothers.

before the LORD at Mizpah. See 11:11 note. Saul was later made king at Mizpah.

■ **20:2 in the assembly of the people of God.** After the repeated cycles of sin, judgment, and deliverance, it is an evidence of God's mercy that Israel was still called His people.

■ **20:5 they ravished my concubine.** The Levite omits the details of how the concubine had been offered (19:23–24).

■ **20:8 as one man.** See vv. 1, 11, and 20:1–48 note. The Israelites took an oath to see this through to the end.

■ **20:13 remove the evil.** The Israelites did not see the evil that pervaded their community.

men who *are* in Gibeah, that we may put them to death and [o]remove the evil from Israel!" But the children of Benjamin would not listen to the voice of their brethren, the children of Israel. 14 Instead, the children of Benjamin gathered together from their cities to Gibeah, to go to battle against the children of Israel. 15 And from their cities at that time [p]the children of Benjamin numbered twenty-six thousand men who drew the sword, besides the inhabitants of Gibeah, who numbered seven hundred select men. 16 Among all this people *were* seven hundred select men *who were* [q]left-handed; every one could sling a stone at a hair's *breadth* and not miss. 17 Now besides Benjamin, the men of Israel numbered four hundred thousand men who drew the sword; all of these *were* men of war.

18 Then the children of Israel arose and [r]went up to [2]the house of God to [s]inquire of God. They said, "Which of us shall go up first to battle against the children of Benjamin?"

The LORD said, [t]"Judah first!"

19 So the children of Israel rose in the morning and encamped against Gibeah. 20 And the men of Israel went out to battle against Benjamin, and the men of Israel put themselves in battle array to fight against them at Gibeah. 21 Then [u]the children of Benjamin came out of Gibeah, and on that day cut down to the ground twenty-two thousand men of the Israelites. 22 And the people, that is, the men of Israel, encouraged themselves and again formed the battle line at the place where they had put themselves in array on the first day. 23 [v]Then the children of Israel went up and wept before the LORD until evening, and asked counsel of the LORD, saying, "Shall I again draw near for battle against the children of my brother Benjamin?"

And the LORD said, "Go up against him."

24 So the children of Israel approached the children of Benjamin on the second day. 25 And [w]Benjamin went out against them from Gibeah on the second day, and cut down to the ground eighteen thousand more of the children of Israel; all these drew the sword.

26 Then all the children of Israel, that is, all the people, [x]went up and came to [3]the house of God and wept. They sat there before the LORD and fasted that day until evening; and they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD. 27 So the children of Israel inquired of the LORD ([y]the ark of the covenant of God *was* there in those days, 28 [z]and Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, [a]stood before it in those days), saying, "Shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of my brother Benjamin, or shall I cease?"

And the LORD said, "Go up, for tomorrow I will deliver them into your hand."

29 Then Israel [b]set men in ambush all around Gibeah. 30 And the children of Israel went up against the children of Benjamin on the third day, and put themselves in battle array against Gibeah as at the other times. 31 So the children of Benjamin went out against the people, *and* were drawn away from the city. They began to strike down *and* kill some of the people, as at the other times, in the highways [c](one of which goes up to Bethel and the other to Gibeah) and in the field, about thirty men of Israel. 32 And the children of Benjamin said, "They *are* defeated before us, as at first."

But the children of Israel said, "Let us flee and draw them away from the city to the highways." 33 So all the men of Israel rose from their place and put themselves in battle array at Baal Tamar. Then Israel's men in ambush burst forth from their position in the plain of Geba. 34 And ten thousand select men from all Israel came against Gibeah, and the battle was fierce. [d]But [4]*the Benjamites* did not know that disaster *was* upon them. 35 The LORD [5]defeated Benjamin before Israel. And the children of Israel destroyed that day twenty-five thousand one hundred Benjamites; all these drew the sword.

36 So the children of Benjamin saw that they were defeated. [e]The men of Israel had given ground to the Benjamites, because they relied on the men in ambush whom they had set against Gibeah. 37 [f]And the men in ambush quickly rushed upon Gibeah; the men in ambush spread out and struck the whole city with the edge of the sword. 38 Now the appointed signal between the men of Israel and the men in ambush was that they would make a great cloud of [g]smoke rise up from the city, 39 whereupon the men of Israel would turn in battle. Now Benjamin had begun [6]to strike *and* kill about thirty of the men of Israel. For they said, "Surely they are defeated before

13 [o]Deut. 17:12; 1 Cor. 5:13

15 [p]Num. 1:36, 37; 2:23; 26:41

16 [q]Judg. 3:15; 1 Chr. 12:2

18 [r]Judg. 20:23, 26 [s]Num. 27:21 [t]Judg. 1:1, 2 [2]Or *Bethel*

21 [u][Gen. 49:27]

23 [v]Judg. 20:26, 27

25 [w]Judg. 20:21

26 [x]Judg. 20:18, 23; 21:2 [3]Or *Bethel*

27 [y]Josh. 18:1; 1 Sam. 1:3; 3:3; 4:3, 4

28 [z]Num. 25:7, 13; Josh. 24:33 [a]Deut. 10:8; 18:5

29 [b]Josh. 8:4

31 [c]Judg. 21:19

34 [d]Josh. 8:14; Job 21:13; Is. 47:11 [4]Lit. *they*

35 [5]Lit. *struck*

36 [e]Josh. 8:15

37 [f]Josh. 8:19

38 [g]Josh. 8:20

39 [6]Lit. *to strike the slain ones*

■ **20:16 were left-handed.** See 3:15 note.

■ **20:18 to the house of God.** The ark of the Lord and the priest with the ephod were at Bethel at this time (v. 27).

Which of us shall go up first. This is the same language that is used at the beginning of Judges, where the question to be decided was who should lead against the Canaanites (1:1).

Judah. The Lord gave the same answer as in 1:2, but in a different situation.

■ **20:23 asked counsel of the LORD.** See vv. 18, 27–28; cf. 1 Sam. 28:6.

my brother Benjamin. Note how the Israelites now add the word "brother" to their inquiry (v. 18).

40 [h]Josh. 8:20
42 [7]*fled*
45 [i]Josh. 15:32; 1 Chr. 6:77; Zech. 14:10 [8]LXX *the rest*
46 [9]*valiant warriors*
47 [j]Judg. 21:13

CHAPTER 21

1 [a]Judg. 20:1
2 [b]Judg. 20:18, 26 [1]Or *Bethel*
4 [c]Deut. 12:5; 2 Sam. 24:25
5 [d]Judg. 20:1–3
8 [e]1 Sam. 11:1; 31:11
10 [f]Num. 31:17; Judg. 5:23; 1 Sam. 11:7
11 [g]Num. 31:17; Deut. 20:13, 14
12 [h]Josh. 18:1; Judg. 18:31
13 [i]Judg. 20:47
15 [j]Judg. 21:6
18 [k]Judg. 11:35; 21:1

us, as *in* the first battle." [40] But when the cloud began to rise from the city in a column of smoke, the Benjamites [h]looked behind them, and there was the whole city going up *in smoke* to heaven. [41] And when the men of Israel turned back, the men of Benjamin panicked, for they saw that disaster had come upon them. [42] Therefore they [7]turned *their backs* before the men of Israel in the direction of the wilderness; but the battle overtook them, and whoever *came* out of the cities they destroyed in their midst. [43] They surrounded the Benjamites, chased them, *and* easily trampled them down as far as the front of Gibeah toward the east. [44] And eighteen thousand men of Benjamin fell; all these *were* men of valor. [45] Then [8]they turned and fled toward the wilderness to the rock of [i]Rimmon; and they cut down five thousand of them on the highways. Then they pursued them relentlessly up to Gidom, and killed two thousand of them. [46] So all who fell of Benjamin that day were twenty-five thousand men who drew the sword; all these *were* [9]men of valor.

[47] [j]But six hundred men turned and fled toward the wilderness to the rock of Rimmon, and they stayed at the rock of Rimmon for four months. [48] And the men of Israel turned back against the children of Benjamin, and struck them down with the edge of the sword—from *every* city, men and beasts, all who were found. They also set fire to all the cities they came to.

Wives Provided for the Benjamites

21 Now [a]the men of Israel had sworn an oath at Mizpah, saying, "None of us shall give his daughter to Benjamin as a wife." [2] Then the people came [b]to [1]the house of God, and remained there before God till evening. They lifted up their voices and wept bitterly, [3] and said, "O LORD God of Israel, why has this come to pass in Israel, that today there should be one tribe *missing* in Israel?"

[4] So it was, on the next morning, that the people rose early and [c]built an altar there, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. [5] The children of Israel said, "Who *is there* among all the tribes of Israel who did not come up with the assembly to the LORD?" [d]For they had made a great oath concerning anyone who had not come up to the LORD at Mizpah, saying, "He shall surely be put to death." [6] And the children of Israel grieved for Benjamin their brother, and said, "One tribe is cut off from Israel today. [7] What shall we do for wives for those who remain, seeing we have sworn by the LORD that we will not give them our daughters as wives?"

[8] And they said, "What one *is there* from the tribes of Israel who did not come up to Mizpah to the LORD?" And, in fact, no one had come to the camp from [e]Jabesh Gilead to the assembly. [9] For when the people were counted, indeed, not one of the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead *was* there. [10] So the congregation sent out there twelve thousand of their most valiant men, and commanded them, saying, [f]"Go and strike the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead with the edge of the sword, including the women and children. [11] And this *is* the thing that you shall do: [g]You shall utterly destroy every male, and every woman who has known a man intimately." [12] So they found among the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead four hundred young virgins who had not known a man intimately; and they brought them to the camp at [h]Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan.

[13] Then the whole congregation sent *word* to the children of Benjamin [i]who *were* at the rock of Rimmon, and announced peace to them. [14] So Benjamin came back at that time, and they gave them the women whom they had saved alive of the women of Jabesh Gilead; and yet they had not found enough for them.

[15] And the people [j]grieved for Benjamin, because the LORD had made a void in the tribes of Israel.

[16] Then the elders of the congregation said, "What shall we do for wives for those who remain, since the women of Benjamin have been destroyed?" [17] And they said, "*There must be* an inheritance for the survivors of Benjamin, that a tribe may not be destroyed from Israel. [18] However, we cannot give them wives from our daughters, [k]for the children of Israel have sworn an oath, saying, 'Cursed *be* the one who gives a wife to Benjamin.' " [19] Then they said, "In fact,

■ **20:48 struck them down with the edge of the sword.** The Israelites treated the Benjamites like the Canaanites (1:8, 17). Moreover, the Benjamites' end was like that of the inhabitants of Sodom (19:14—20:48 note).

■ **21:1–25** The actions of Israel in this final episode of the book should be interpreted in light of the concluding comment: "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (v. 25). The Israelites wondered why this evil had come upon them (vv. 3, 15; 6:13 note). As with Gideon (6:13), no answer was given. Yet the book's larger context gives the clear answer that Israel had sinned and continued to sin in horrible ways.

■ **21:8 Jabesh Gilead.** Saul's first act as king was to defend Jabesh Gilead. Since he was a Benjamite from Gibeah, Saul may have descended from one of the women taken from Jabesh Gilead (v. 12).

■ **21:15 the LORD had made a void in the tribes of Israel.** God did this to punish the Benjamites for their sin.

■ **21:19–23** Israel's degeneracy was now so complete that they even

there is a yearly [l]feast of the LORD in [m]Shiloh, which *is* north of Bethel, on the east side of the [n]highway that goes up from Bethel to Shechem, and south of Lebonah."

20 Therefore they instructed the children of Benjamin, saying, "Go, lie in wait in the vineyards, 21 and watch; and just when the daughters of Shiloh come out [o]to perform their dances, then come out from the vineyards, and every man catch a wife for himself from the daughters of Shiloh; then go to the land of Benjamin. 22 Then it shall be, when their fathers or their brothers come to us to complain, that we will say to them, 'Be kind to them for our sakes, because we did not take a wife for any of them in the war; for *it is* not *as though* you have given the *women* to them at this time, making yourselves guilty of your oath.' "

23 And the children of Benjamin did so; they took enough wives for their number from those who danced, whom they caught. Then they went and returned to their inheritance, and they [p]rebuilt the cities and dwelt in them. 24 So the children of Israel departed from there at that time, every man to his tribe and family; they went out from there, every man to his inheritance.

25 [q]In those days *there was* no king in Israel; [r]everyone did *what was* right in his own eyes.

19 [l]Lev. 23:2 [m]Deut. 12:5; Josh. 18:1; Judg. 18:31; 1 Sam. 1:3 [n]Judg. 20:31

21 [o]Ex. 15:20; Judg. 11:34; 1 Sam. 18:6

23 [p]Judg. 20:48

25 [q]Judg. 17:6; 18:1; 19:1 [r]Deut. 12:8; Judg. 17:6

proposed and allowed the kidnapping of their own women to avoid breaking a rash vow. The nation was indeed acting, unchecked, in accord with their own sinful inclinations (v. 25; cf. 17:6).

■ **21:25 In those days.** While Israel's only hope was in allegiance to her divine King, the nation rather settled for a human monarchy (1 Sam. 8:7, 22), which inevitably would fail them.

The Book of

RUTH

Author The Book of Ruth, named after its principal character, is an anonymous short story. Rabbinic tradition held that the book, with Judges and Samuel, was written by the prophet Samuel. This is possible only if the book is dated early. Some would date Ruth as late as after the Jewish exile in Babylon, which took place during the sixth century B.C.

Date and Occasion The Book of Ruth can be dated in the time of Samuel (c. 1050 B.C., at the beginning of Israel's monarchy), the time of David (c. 1000 B.C.), or the century following the exile in Babylon (c. 450 B.C.). The reference to David in 4:17, the genealogy of 4:18–22, and the explanation of an apparently antiquated custom in 4:7 indicate a time after David had begun to reign. The book's portrayal of good relations between Moabites and Israelites suits best the early period of David's rule. All told, a time early in the monarchy may be affirmed as readily as any other.

This universally appealing narrative has evoked diverse conclusions concerning its purpose. Such a story does not need a moral to justify its popularity, but that it had a moral, or at least a theological purpose, is beyond doubt. Biblical interpreters have had no trouble finding a purpose; the challenge is to find a single, dominant theme.

Ruth has been understood to celebrate the following: (a) that a proselyte, even from Moab, can be faithful to the Lord and gain full membership in Israel; (b) that qualities of loyalty and covenant faithfulness in a foreigner can be a model for Israel's response to the Lord; (c) that the Lord as Redeemer will restore the exiled family of Israel to its land. In light of the epilogue (4:18–22), however, and assuming a date close to the time of David, the major purpose seems to include showing that David's kingship is legitimate. The primacy of the tribe of Judah (the father of Perez; 4:12, 18) had already been established in Israel, despite Tamar's strange act of desperation (Gen. 38). Now the primacy of David must be established, even though there is a Moabite in the line. Boaz is the model for the relative who redeems, while Ruth beautifully reflects God's faithful covenant-love, claiming refuge under the Lord's wings, and clinging to Naomi. If God has drawn together all these disparate strands so carefully to bless the line of David, is that not one more reason to affirm David's initially fragile claim to the throne?

Interpretive Difficulties The issues that have fascinated scholars arise directly from puzzling elements in the narrative. These may be divided into the following groups: (a) questions about purpose, related to difficulties in dating and origin; (b) questions about legal customs, especially the family obligations of a close relative of a deceased person; and (c) internal difficulties, such as the relationship between 4:12, 17 and the genealogy in 4:18–22. An abundant literature addresses each of these areas, with sometimes little agreement. It is one of the remarkable phenomena of biblical research that such debates leave unaffected the powerful impact this simple account has on every generation of readers.

Characteristics and Themes Though clearly an important historical document of its period, the narrative of Ruth is told with dramatic intensity and movement. The story moves quickly through its various stages, each part marked with elements of irony and suspense, all contributing to a symphony of divine providential fulfillment. The Lord inspires Naomi's return, Ruth's covenant faithfulness, and Boaz's righteous adherence to the law. The book closes with a genealogy of King David, the descendant of Boaz the Israelite and Ruth the Moabite, a young woman who took refuge under the Lord's wings (2:12) and was rewarded by God, who "gave her conception" (4:13).

Ruth and Boaz are part of a longer line that often shows God's grace combined with human frailty. One of David's ancestors was Perez (4:12, 18), son of an irregular union between Judah and his own daughter-in-law, Tamar, who was "more righteous" than the patriarch himself (Gen. 38:26). The closing few verses of Ruth (4:18–22) are commonly said to be a later addition to the book, but genealogies are not unusual in ancient narratives. Also, this genealogy underlines a particular value of Ruth, its revelation of the mixed ancestry of King David and through him, of Jesus Christ.

Looking beyond this witness to the legitimacy of David's kingship, we should note the significance of the book in the light of the gospel. Ruth follows the faith of Abraham, as she leaves home and family to go to a foreign land under the Lord's care. The universal scope of the gospel comes to light as Ruth the Moabite finds the blessing promised to all the nations in Abraham's descendants. Finally, Ruth becomes an ancestor of Christ, who in Himself will reconcile to God such different nations as Moab and Israel. □

Outline of Ruth

I. The Death of Elimelech and His Sons (1:1–5)
II. Naomi and Ruth Return to Bethlehem in Judah (1:6–22)
  A. Naomi and Her Daughter-in-law Leave Moab (1:6, 7)
  B. Naomi Urges Orpah to Go Back Home (1:8–14)
  C. Ruth's Solemn Promise (1:15–18)
  D. Naomi's Bitter Homecoming (1:19–22)
III. Ruth Gleans in the Fields of Boaz (ch. 2)
  A. Ruth Goes Out to Glean (2:1–3)
  B. Boaz Meets Ruth (2:4–16)
  C. Naomi's Assessment of Boaz (2:17–23)
IV. Ruth Visits Boaz at the Threshing Floor (ch. 3)
  A. Naomi's Plan (3:1–5)
  B. Boaz Discovers Ruth (3:6–13)
  C. Ruth Returns to Naomi (3:14–18)
V. Boaz Redeems Ruth (ch. 4)
  A. The Close Relative Excuses Himself (4:1–6)
  B. Ruth and Boaz Are Married Before Witnesses (4:7–12)
  C. The First Child Is Welcomed and Blessed (4:13–17)
  D. Genealogy from Perez to David (4:18–22)

Elimelech's Family Goes to Moab

CHAPTER 1

NOW it came to pass, in the days when [a]the judges [1]ruled, that there was [b]a famine in the land. And a certain man of [c]Bethlehem, Judah, went to [2]dwell in the country of [d]Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. 2 The name of the man *was* Elimelech, the name of his wife *was* Naomi, and the names of his two sons *were* Mahlon and Chilion—[e]Ephrathites of Bethlehem, Judah. And they went [f]to the country of Moab and remained there. 3 Then Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left, and her two sons. 4 Now they took wives of the women of Moab: the name of the one *was* Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth. And they [3]dwelt there about ten years. 5 Then both Mahlon and Chilion also died; so the woman survived her two sons and her husband.

1 [a]Judg. 2:16–18 [b]Gen. 12:10; 26:1; 2 Kin. 8:1 [c]Judg. 17:8; Mic. 5:2 [d]Gen. 19:37 [1]Lit. *judged* [2]As a resident alien
2 [e]Gen. 35:19; 1 Sam. 1:1; 1 Kin. 11:26 [f]Judg. 3:30
4 [3]*lived*
6 [g]Ex. 3:16; 4:31; Jer. 29:10; Zeph. 2:7; Luke 1:68 [h]Ps. 132:15; Matt. 6:11 [4]*attended to*

Naomi Returns with Ruth

6 Then she arose with her daughters-in-law that she might return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the LORD had [g]visited[4] His people by [h]giving them

■ **1:1–5** The preface moves quickly through the necessary background (time, place, and source of conflict), setting the stage for the scenes that follow.

■ **1:1 Now it came to pass, in the days.** In Hebrew this is a standard formula for opening a historical book. The period of the judges in Israel was infamous as a time of instability and apostasy.

a famine. Events in the Book of Ruth turn on the curse of famine, and its corresponding reversal in blessing. Famines were sometimes a sign of divine displeasure (1 Kin. 17:1). Naomi (1:21) bitterly acknowledges God's sovereign hand in her circumstances, and in any case, events are never outside His decree.

country of Moab. Lit. "fields of Moab." Moabites, who were related to Israel through Lot (Gen. 19:37), occupied parts of central Transjordan at various times. Although God protected them at first from the Israelite invaders (Deut. 2:9), the Moabites were subjugated by Saul (1 Sam. 14:47) and then by David (2 Sam. 8:2). See also Deut. 23:3. There were some periods of friendly relations, with considerable cultural and economic interchange, as shown by David's placement of his parents with the king of Moab while he was a fugitive (1 Sam. 22:3). Elimelech's sojourn in Moab takes place during one such period.

■ **1:2 Elimelech.** Although the story might have climaxed with God's provision of an immediate heir for the deceased Elimelech, the drama emphasizes the role of the women in the family (4:14, 16) and the passing significance of Elimelech as a remote ancestor of David (4:17–22).

Naomi. Lit. "pleasant" (v. 20–21). Naomi's story is told first.

■ **1:4 women of Moab.** This action was not forbidden, though Deut. 23:3–6 would prohibit the male descendants access to the temple. The irony is that an heir, and an ancestor of the great king David, would come through one of these foreigners.

■ **1:5 the woman survived.** Naomi was an old, barren woman, in a foreign country, with two alien and childless daughters-in-law. She seems an unlikely prospect for any role in the Lord's covenantal history of redemption.

■ **1:6, 7** These verses set the stage for vv. 8–18. The women must decide what factors will determine their paths: finding a husband and having

bread. 7 Therefore she went out from the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah. 8 And Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, [i]"Go, return each to her mother's house. [j]The LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt [k]with the dead and with me. 9 The LORD grant that you may find [l]rest, each in the house of her husband."

So she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept. 10 And they said to her, "Surely we will return with you to your people."

11 But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? *Are* there still sons in my womb, [m]that they may be your husbands? 12 Turn back, my daughters, go—for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, *if* I should have a husband tonight and should also bear sons, 13 would you wait for them till they were grown? Would you restrain yourselves from having husbands? No, my daughters; for it grieves me very much for your sakes that [n]the hand of the LORD has gone out against me!"

14 Then they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth [o]clung to her.

15 And she said, "Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to [p]her people and to her gods; [q]return after your sister-in-law."

16 But Ruth said:

[r]"Entreat[5] me not to leave you,
Or to turn back from following after you;
For wherever you go, I will go;
And wherever you lodge, I will lodge;
[s]Your people *shall be* my people,
And your God, my God.
17 Where you die, I will die,
And there will I be buried.
[t]The LORD do so to me, and more also,
If *anything but* death parts you and me."

8 [i]Josh. 24:15 [j]2 Tim. 1:16–18 [k]Ruth 2:20
9 [l]Ruth 3:1
11 [m]Gen. 38:11; Deut. 25:5
13 [n]Judg. 2:15; Job 19:21; Ps. 32:4; 38:2
14 [o][Prov. 17:17]
15 [p]Judg. 11:24 [q]Josh. 1:15
16 [r]2 Kin. 2:2, 4, 6 [s]Ruth 2:11, 12 [5]*Urge me not*
17 [t]1 Sam. 3:17; 2 Sam. 19:13; 2 Kin. 6:31

children, living in one's own country, being close to one's family, or finally, for Ruth, trusting in the Lord as sovereign God. Naomi's love for her daughters-in-law, and her reaction to bitter experiences at God's hand, dominate this scene. Ruth's decision, and her irrevocable vow of fidelity to Naomi's people and her God, says much about the impact of Naomi's character and faith on her daughter-in-law.

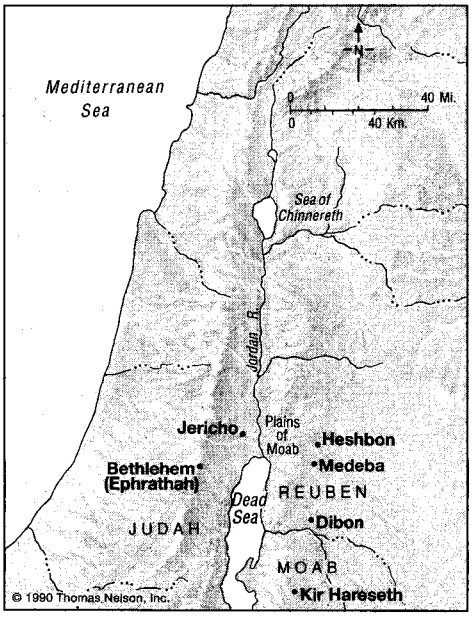
■ **1:6 the LORD had visited His people.** A note of hope is sounded. Ruth's story never loses sight of God, whose faithful love determines history.

■ **1:9, 10 we will return with you.** This initial declaration of both daughters heightens the dramatic tension.

■ **1:11 Are there still sons.** Naomi's talk of raising up sons to replace the missing husbands only exaggerates her loss. The idea itself may refer to the law of levirate marriage. According to this law, if a man died leaving a widow his brother was obliged to marry the widow, taking his place and preserving the family lines (Deut. 25:5,6). There was also a custom that when someone died a close relative (or "kinsman") was supposed to buy (or "redeem") the deceased's estate. Just how these customs functioned in the history of Ruth and Boaz is a matter of continuing debate (2:20 note).

■ **1:15 her gods.** A new element is introduced. Up to now it might have been assumed that the daughters had become worshipers of the Lord. Now it becomes clear that the choice of homeland is a choice for or against the true God. Against the background of Orpah's choice, the courage and beauty of Ruth's declaration (vv. 16–17) is all the more obvious.

From Outsider to Royal Ancestress. Elimelech, an Ephrathite from Bethlehem in Judah, took his wife Naomi and their two sons to Moab. Both sons married Moabite women, but after Elimelech and the sons had died, Naomi decided to return to Judah. Her Moabite daughter-in-law Ruth returned to Bethlehem with her. Ruth met and married Naomi's kinsman Boaz, eventually becoming the great-grandmother of David, king of Israel.



18 [u]When she saw that she [6]was determined to go with her, she stopped speaking to her.
19 Now the two of them went until they came to Bethlehem. And it happened, when they had come to Bethlehem, that [v]all the city was excited because of them; and the women said, [w]"*Is* this Naomi?"
20 But she said to them, "Do not call me [7]Naomi; call me [8]Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. 21 I went out full, [x]and the LORD has brought me home again empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the LORD has testified against me, and [9]the Almighty has afflicted me?"
22 So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. Now they came to Bethlehem [y]at the beginning of barley harvest.

18 [u]Acts 21:14 [6]Lit. *made herself strong to go*
19 [v]Matt. 21:10 [w]Is. 23:7; Lam. 2:15
20 [7]Lit. *Pleasant* [8]Lit. *Bitter*
21 [x]Job 1:21 [9]Heb. *Shaddai*
22 [y]Ruth 2:23; 2 Sam. 21:9

Ruth Meets Boaz

CHAPTER 2

2 There was a [a]relative of Naomi's husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of [b]Elimelech. His name *was* [c]Boaz. 2 So Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, "Please let me go to the [d]field, and glean heads of grain after *him* in whose sight I may find favor."
And she said to her, "Go, my daughter."
3 Then she left, and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers. And she happened to come to the part of the field *belonging* to Boaz, who *was* of the family of Elimelech.
4 Now behold, Boaz came from [e]Bethlehem, and said to the reapers, [f]"The LORD *be* with you!"
And they answered him, "The LORD bless you!"
5 Then Boaz said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose young woman *is* this?"
6 So the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered and said, "It *is* the young Moabite woman [g]who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab. 7 And she said, 'Please let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.' So she came and has continued from morning until now, though she rested a little in the house."
8 Then Boaz said to Ruth, "You will listen, my daughter, will you not? Do not go to glean in

1 [a]Ruth 3:2, 12 [b]Ruth 1:2 [c]Ruth 4:21
2 [d]Lev. 19:9, 10; 23:22; Deut. 24:19
4 [e]Ruth 1:1 [f]Ps. 129:7, 8; Luke 1:28; 2 Thess. 3:16
6 [g]Ruth 1:22

■ **1:19–21 Naomi . . . empty.** The women's question (v. 19) expresses their amazement that this woman, whose circumstances had once reflected her name ("pleasant"), should now have fallen upon such hard times. Naomi does not hesitate to say it was the Lord's doing. She does not give a reason, and the narrator does not suggest anything, about why she was suffering.

■ **1:22 Ruth the Moabitess.** She is not just any Ruth. For the story it is crucial that she be remembered as the foreigner (1:4; 2:2, 6, 21; 4:5, 10; especially 2:10). Also, the reader may be prompted to think of Ruth's ancestor, Lot's daughter, and the incestuous beginnings of the Moabite nation (Gen. 19:30–38). In both cases the problem is childlessness or lack of a male heir.

barley harvest. Early calendars, like the Gezer Calendar from the tenth century B.C., associated months with the agricultural cycle. Barley was the first of the cereals to be harvested, in April; wheat was the last. In later tradition the barley and wheat harvests came to be identified with the festivals of Passover and Pentecost. The season of harvest was a time of celebration, rejoicing together before God, and remembering the poor. The narrative development is tied to this scheme. The women return home at the barley harvest, a time of God's favor and the beginning of fruitful restoration for Naomi.

■ **2:1–23** Chapter two introduces the last main character, Boaz, and the major theme, that of the close relative, or redeemer, who has certain responsibilities for the family and property of a relative who dies (2:20 note). The narrator, who already knows what is ahead, gives only a hint with the description of Boaz as "a relative" in v. 1. Only after the natural kindness of Boaz, and the natural winsomeness of Ruth, have taken their course, does Naomi reveal the key to the entire story: Boaz is "one of our close relatives" (2:20 with text note). Even then, no claims are made; there is no appeal to custom. Events must wait their time, while Naomi schemes, Ruth serves quietly, and Boaz finishes the harvest. However, God had already provided an answer through the law (Lev. 25).

■ **2:1 relative.** Or "friend." The Hebrew text leaves the technical status of Boaz unclear, but the story unfolds as if he were the "redeeming relative" described in Lev. 25:25, whose responsibility relates primarily but not exclusively to the property of an impoverished relative (1:11; 2:20 and notes). Later on (e.g., 2:20; 3:9) Boaz will be identified as such a "redeeming relative," but at this point he is introduced to prepare the reader for the occurrence that places Ruth in his field.

of great wealth. The Hebrew usually means an outstanding fighter, but here it means someone powerful and important in society.

■ **2:2 let me go to the field.** Ruth's initiative, on the surface, is simply to keep herself and Naomi alive, according to a custom codified in Leviticus (19:9–10; 23:22) and Deuteronomy (24:19). As poor people, Ruth and Naomi would receive some help, but much more is about to come their way. A hint of this provision is given in Ruth's plaintive request that she might glean "after him in whose sight I may find favor."

■ **2:3 she happened to come.** It seems as if she came to the field of her relative by coincidence, yet God is causing the event.

■ **2:4 behold.** Boaz's arrival satisfies the expectations raised in vv. 1–3.

■ **2:6, 7** The servant's answer establishes Ruth's character. She is faithful, having come while still in her youth to a foreign country for the sake of her relative. She is modest, asking permission for what might have been considered a right. She is hardworking, having been busy since morning.

■ **2:7 among the sheaves.** Ruth's request seems not to go beyond what was her right as a widow (Deut. 24:19–21). But the response of Boaz will prove to go far beyond the legal requirement (v. 15).

has continued. This is usually taken to mean that she was working all morning, but it could mean that she had been waiting for her request to be granted by the owner of the field. It is more likely that it refers to work, since she interrupted the morning with a rest.

■ **2:8–12** Events unfold quickly as Boaz accedes to the request and offers his protection and provision (vv. 8–9). Ruth acknowledges his favor to her, an undeserving "foreigner" (v. 10). Only then (vv. 11–12) does the narrative give some inkling of God's providential working. Boaz has known already that Ruth is no ordinary foreigner. She has taken "refuge" under the "wings" of the Lord, and she will receive "a full reward" from Him (v. 12). Though a foreigner, Ruth's loyalty to God will become a key element in God's great plan of redemption. The plan will be worked out

another field, nor go from here, but stay close by my young women. 9 *Let* your eyes *be* on the field which they reap, and go after them. Have I not commanded the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink from what the young men have drawn."

10 So she [h]fell on her face, bowed down to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I found [i]favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I *am* a foreigner?"

11 And Boaz answered and said to her, "It has been fully reported to me, [j]all that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and *how* you have left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a people whom you did not know before. 12 [k]The LORD repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the LORD God of Israel, [l]under whose wings you have come for refuge."

13 Then she said, [m]"Let me find favor in your sight, my lord; for you have comforted me, and have spoken [l]kindly to your maidservant, [n]though I am not like one of your maidservants."

14 Now Boaz said to her at mealtime. "Come here, and eat of the bread, and dip your piece of bread in the vinegar." So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed parched *grain* to her; and she ate and [o]was satisfied, and kept some back. 15 And when she rose up to [2]glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not [3]reproach her. 16 Also let *grain* from the bundles fall purposely for her; leave *it* that she may glean, and do not rebuke her."

17 So she gleaned in the field until evening, and beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of [p]barley. 18 Then she took *it* up and went into the city, and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. So she brought out and gave to her [q]what she had kept back after she had been satisfied.

19 And her mother-in-law said to her, "Where have you gleaned today? And where did you work? Blessed be the one who [r]took notice of you."

So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked, and said, "The man's name with whom I worked today *is* Boaz."

20 Then Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, [s]"Blessed *be* he of the LORD, who [t]has not forsaken His kindness to the living and the dead!" And Naomi said to her, "This man *is* a relation of ours, [u]one of [4]our close relatives."

21 Ruth the Moabitess said, "He also said to me, 'You shall stay close by my young men until they have finished all my harvest.' "

22 And Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, "*It is* good, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, and that people do not [5]meet you in any other field." 23 So she stayed close by the young women of Boaz, to glean until the end of barley harvest and wheat harvest; and she dwelt with her mother-in-law.

Ruth's Redemption Assured

3 Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, [a]shall I not seek [b]security[1] for you, that it may be well with you? 2 Now Boaz, [c]whose young women you were with, *is he*

10 [h]1 Sam. 25:23 [i]1 Sam. 1:18

11 [j]Ruth 1:14–18

12 [k]1 Sam. 24:19; Ps. 58:11 [l]Ruth 1:16; Ps. 17:8; 36:7; 57:1; 61:4; 63:7; 91:4

13 [m]Gen. 33:15; 1 Sam. 1:18 [n]1 Sam. 25:41 [l]Lit. *to the heart of*

14 [o]Ruth 2:18

15 [2]Gather after the reapers [3]*rebuke*

17 [p]Ruth 1:22

18 [q]Ruth 2:14

19 [r]Ruth 2:10; [Ps. 41:1]

20 [s]Ruth 3:10; 2 Sam. 2:5 [t]Prov. 17:17 [u]Ruth 3:9; 4:4, 6 [4]*our redeemers,* Heb. *goalenu*

22 [5]*encounter*

CHAPTER 3

1 [a]1 Cor. 7:36; 1 Tim. 5:8 [b]Ruth 1:9 [1]Lit. *rest*

2 [c]Ruth 2:3, 8

through David, the covenant king, and through Christ, David's greater Son. The reward of Ruth's faith far transcends local time and circumstances.

■ **2:14–16** Boaz's permission is clearly extraordinary.

■ **2:14 vinegar.** This was a sour but refreshing drink or dip (cf. Num. 6:3).

■ **2:17 beat out . . . about an ephah.** Beating out the grain, or threshing it, separated the kernels from the husks, chaff, and stalks. An ephah was about half a bushel, a large amount to have gleaned.

■ **2:18 what she had kept back.** This would be what she had set aside from her noon meal (v. 14).

■ **2:20 who has not forsaken His kindness.** God's love is faithful, and He will not forget the ones He loves. The blessings He promised will pass from Boaz to Ruth to Naomi, and eventually to all the elect.

one of our close relatives. See text note, and Introduction: Interpretive Difficulties. The law of redemption now comes into view. According to this law, the nearest male blood relative had the duty of preserving the family name and property. This duty could entail (a) avenging the death of a family member (Num. 35:19–21); (b) buying back family property that had been sold to pay debts (Lev. 25:25); (c) buying back a relative who had sold himself into slavery to pay debts (Lev. 25:47–49); and (d) marrying the widow of a deceased relative (Deut. 25:5–10). Apparently these duties could be renounced or declined under certain circumstances (cf. Ruth 3:12; 4:1–8). Boaz was such a "redeeming relative" (or "kinsman-redeemer") to Ruth, and this fact now determines the course of action (see 1:11; 2:1 and notes). Ruth's destiny will proceed according to law, unlike her ancestor, Lot's daughter, who committed incest (Gen. 19:30–38).

■ **2:23 until the end of . . . harvest.** The two-month delay prepares for the threshing-floor incident (ch. 3).

■ **3:1–18** Now the narrative moves toward resolution. In a midnight visit, Ruth carries out and expands Naomi's plan, putting her own reputation and all her expectations at risk. She claims the protection of Boaz as a "close relative" (v. 9, text note). Her trust in his character is vindicated, and she is unharmed. God's activity behind the scenes continues without a break. But even at this moment, the engagement must be delayed; there is a closer relative (3:12), and Boaz, a man of outstanding honor, will not rest until this obstacle is removed.

■ **3:1** Like Lot's two daughters (Gen. 19:31–32), Naomi and Ruth had lost their husbands and children. Again, Naomi acted to preserve her family line, but in quite a different way from Lot's daughters.

not our relative? In fact, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. 3 Therefore wash yourself and [d]anoint yourself, put on your *best* garment and go down to the threshing floor; *but* do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. 4 Then it shall be, when he lies down, that you shall notice the place where he lies; and you shall go in, uncover his feet, and lie down; and he will tell you what you should do."

5 And she said to her, "All that you say to me I will do."

6 So she went down to the threshing floor and did according to all that her mother-in-law instructed her. 7 And after Boaz had eaten and drunk, and [e]his heart was cheerful, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain; and she came softly, uncovered his feet, and lay down.

8 Now it happened at midnight that the man was startled, and turned himself; and there, a woman was lying at his feet. 9 And he said, "Who *are* you?"

So she answered, "I *am* Ruth, your maidservant. [f]Take[2] your maidservant under your wing, for you are [g]a [3]close relative."

10 Then he said, [h]"Blessed *are* you of the LORD, my daughter! For you have shown more kindness at the end than [i]at the beginning, in that you did not go after young men, whether poor or rich. 11 And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you request, for all the people of my town know that you *are* [j]a virtuous woman. 12 Now it is true that I *am* a [k]close relative; however, [l]there is a relative closer than I. 13 Stay this night, and in the morning it shall be *that* if he will [m]perform the duty of a close relative for you—good; let him do it. But if he does not want to perform the duty for you, then I will perform the duty for you, [n]*as* the LORD lives! Lie down until morning."

14 So she lay at his feet until morning, and she arose before one could recognize another. Then he said, [o]"Do not let it be known that the woman came to the threshing floor." 15 Also he said, "Bring the [4]shawl that *is* on you and hold it." And when she held it, he measured six *ephahs* of barley, and laid *it* on her. Then [5]she went into the city.

16 When she came to her mother-in-law, she said, [6]"*Is* that you, my daughter?"

Then she told her all that the man had done for her. 17 And she said, "These six *ephahs* of barley he gave me; for he said to me, 'Do not go empty-handed to your mother-in-law.' "

18 Then she said, [p]"Sit still, my daughter, until you know how the matter will turn out; for the man will not rest until he has concluded the matter this day."

3 [d]2 Sam. 14:2

7 [e]Judg. 19:6, 9, 22

9 [f]Ezek. 16:8 [g]Ruth 2:20; 3:12 [2]Or *Spread the corner of your garment over your maidservant* [3]*redeemer,* Heb. *goel*

10 [h]Ruth 2:20 [i]Ruth 1:8

11 [j]Prov. 12:4; 31:10–31

12 [k]Ruth 3:9 [l]Ruth 4:1

13 [m]Deut. 25:5–10 [n]Jer. 4:2; 12:16

14 [o][1 Cor. 10:32]

15 [4]*cloak* [5]Many Heb. mss., Syr., Vg. *she;* MT, LXX, Tg. *he*

16 [6]Or *How are you,*

18 [p][Ps. 37:3, 5]

security for you. Lit. "rest." This means that Ruth should be married, a need that Naomi had taken to heart (1:9).

■ **3:3, 4** The instructions, presented to Ruth so precisely, have strong overtones of intrigue.

the threshing floor. This was a cleared area where grain was crushed or torn to separate the chaff, straw, and grains. The harvest was then winnowed, or thrown into the air for the wind to blow away the chaff and let the grains fall directly to the ground. All this took place in the spring at the time of the harvest festivals. The prophet Hosea refers to the threshing floor as a common site of sexual immorality (Hos. 9:1).

■ **3:4 uncover his feet.** A comparison of this scene with the history of Lot's daughters (Gen. 19:30–38) is instructive. At Naomi's suggestion, Ruth was approaching Boaz with some boldness. But her purpose was to become engaged. Her answer (v. 9) shows that she was not thinking of becoming pregnant outside wedlock.

lie down. Ruth lies patiently at Boaz's feet until he wakes (vv. 8–9); nothing unseemly happens between them during the night (v. 11).

■ **3:7 cheerful.** Boaz had been drinking, but was hardly drunk. After all the work and festivity of the day, Boaz went to "the far end of the heap of grain," a place where Ruth was able to meet him privately. God's providence was clearing a path for her.

■ **3:9 Take your maidservant under your wings.** See text note. Ezek. 16:8 explains the idiom. Ruth asks directly for the favor of marriage, although Naomi's instructions were not quite so bold (v. 4).

close relative. See text note. The law does not specify marriage as the responsibility of such a person, though an extension of Lev. 25 can readily be envisioned. Mahlon's name and property will be preserved (4:10), suggesting the levirate marriage, but it is difficult to see how Deut. 25:5–6 could be strictly applied. See Introduction: Interpretive Difficulties and note on 2:20. Again, Ruth goes far beyond Naomi's specified plan.

■ **3:10 more kindness.** Lit. "covenant love." Throughout the book, God's own covenant love (1:8; 2:20) is mirrored by that of Ruth (1:8, 16–17). Now her faithfulness is proved as (a) she invokes the duties of a close relative, and (b) she has declined to follow any of the young men. The "kindness" Boaz refers to is evidently Ruth's proposal to follow the custom that would provide an heir for Naomi.

at the beginning. That is, when she chose to accompany Naomi.

■ **3:11 a virtuous woman.** This is the feminine equivalent of the Hebrew phrase translated "man of great wealth" in 2:1. Ruth has risen from being a Moabite and servant to becoming attractive to Boaz as a possible marriage partner.

■ **3:12 relative closer than I.** Boaz suddenly mentions a complicating factor. If Naomi was thinking of a relative, why was this closer relative not introduced earlier? The custom of redemption seems to be leading to a solution, but now it creates a problem along the way. The engagement must be postponed.

■ **3:15 six ephahs of barley.** This gift of barley shows Boaz's magnanimity toward Ruth (v. 17), and is a symbol of Naomi's changed estate (1:21). Ruth receives grain from Boaz as an emblem of her future fruitfulness.

■ **3:16 Is that you.** The same Hebrew words are translated "Who are you?" in v. 9. Here the question seems to mean "How did it go with you?"

■ **3:18 Sit still.** This is an ironic touch, for the time to wait will be very short. Naomi does not expect a conclusion to be long in coming.

CHAPTER 4

1 [a]Ruth 3:12 [f]Heb. *peloni almoni,* lit. *so and so*

2 [b]1 Kin. 21:8

3 [c]Lev. 25:25

4 [d]Jer. 32:7, 8 [e]Gen. 23:18 [f]Lev. 25:25 [2]Lit. *uncover your ear* [3]So with many Heb. mss., LXX, Syr., Tg., Vg.; MT *he*

5 [g]Matt. 22:24 [4]Lit. *raise up*

6 [h]Ruth 3:12, 13

7 [i]Deut. 25:7–10

10 [j]Deut. 25:6 [5]Probably his civic office

11 [k]Ps. 127:3; 128:3 [l]Gen. 29:25–30 [m]Gen. 35:16–18 [n]Mic. 5:2

12 [o]Matt. 1:3 [p]Gen. 38:6–29 [q]1 Sam. 2:20

13 [r]Ruth 3:11 [s]Gen. 29:31; 33:5

14 [t]Luke 1:58 [6]*redeemer,* Heb. *goel*

15 [u]1 Sam. 1:8 [7]*sustainer*

Boaz Redeems Ruth

4 Now Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there; and behold, [a]the close relative of whom Boaz had spoken came by. So Boaz said, "Come aside, [1]friend, sit down here." So he came aside and sat down. 2 And he took ten men of [b]the elders of the city, and said, "Sit down here." So they sat down. 3 Then he said to the close relative, "Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, sold the piece of land [c]which *belonged* to our brother Elimelech. 4 And I thought to [2]inform you, saying, [d]'Buy *it* back [e]in the presence of the inhabitants and the elders of my people. If you will redeem *it,* redeem *it;* but if [3]you will not redeem *it, then* tell me, that I may know; [f]for *there is* no one but you to redeem *it,* and I *am* next after you.' "

And he said, "I will redeem *it.*"

5 Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also buy *it* from Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, [g]to [4]perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance."

6 [h]And the close relative said, "I cannot redeem *it* for myself, lest I ruin my own inheritance. You redeem my right of redemption for yourself, for I cannot redeem *it.*"

7 [i]Now this *was the custom* in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging, to confirm anything: one man took off his sandal and gave *it* to the other, and this *was* a confirmation in Israel.

8 Therefore the close relative said to Boaz, "Buy *it* for yourself." So he took off his sandal. 9 And Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You *are* witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that *was* Chilion's and Mahlon's, from the hand of Naomi. 10 Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, I have acquired as my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance, [j]that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from [5]his position at the gate. You *are* witnesses this day."

11 And all the people who *were* at the gate, and the elders, said, "*We are* witnesses. [k]The LORD make the woman who is coming to your house like Rachel and Leah, the two who [l]built the house of Israel; and may you prosper in [m]Ephrathah and be famous in [n]Bethlehem. 12 May your house be like the house of [o]Perez, [p]whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of [q]the offspring which the LORD will give you from this young woman."

Descendants of Boaz and Ruth

13 So Boaz [r]took Ruth and she became his wife; and when he went in to her, [s]the LORD gave her conception, and she bore a son. 14 Then [t]the women said to Naomi, "Blessed *be* the LORD, who has not left you this day without a [6]close relative; and may his name be famous in Israel! 15 And may he be to you a restorer of life and a [7]nourisher of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you, who is [u]better to you than seven sons, has borne him." 16 Then Naomi took

■ **4:1–17** The fourth chapter brings out the divine purpose behind Ruth's original decision to follow Naomi and Naomi's God. The necessary arrangements seem to turn on a combination of levirate marriage (Deut. 25:5–10) and the laws for a redeeming relative (Lev. 25). Ruth is taken as a wife, and ancient blessings for fruitfulness are invoked. Naomi's bitterness turns to joy, and her grandson is to become the grandfather of King David. In these events the Lord's hidden providence is revealed.

■ **4:1 the gate.** The entranceway to a city was a usual site of legal and commercial transactions.

friend. Boaz must have known the man's name. The narrator quotes Boaz with an indefinite phrase, something like the English expression "so and so." Perhaps he did not want to memorialize a selfish person in his story.

■ **4:2 took ten men.** There is no recorded legal requirement for a particular number of men. The later Jewish tradition by which ten men make up a quorum for worship may derive from this incident. In a rural culture, where the use of writing is limited, it is important for a contract to be made with a number of official witnesses.

■ **4:3 sold the piece of land.** This sale is a surprising new element, no hint of which has been given up to now. Details about the sale are not necessary for the story and are omitted.

■ **4:5 you must also buy it from Ruth.** This association of Ruth and Naomi under the laws about the property and family of a deceased relative is an unusual application of the laws. But an understanding of these details is not essential to the purpose of the narrative.

■ **4:7 took off his sandal.** Little is known about the symbolism of this custom. Its point clearly was to confirm the transaction legally. See Deut. 25:9–10 (a different setting) and Amos 8:6.

■ **4:10 to perpetuate the name of the dead.** The disappearance of one's name was considered to be an extreme misfortune (1 Sam. 24:21; 2 Sam. 14:7).

■ **4:11 like Rachel and Leah.** These are the two wives of Jacob (Israel), who were the mothers, either naturally or through their maids Zilpah and Bilhah, of all the sons of Israel, the heads of the twelve tribes.

Ephrathah . . . Bethlehem. As in 1:1–2, these place names, associated with David, are given special prominence.

■ **4:12 be like . . . Perez.** In a much earlier time, Judah had become the father of Perez because Onan refused to carry out his obligation as a close relative (Gen. 38:29). Perez became a symbol of the fruitful offspring. Now in the same way Boaz becomes the father of Obed (v. 21) because another person refused to carry out the levirate obligation. Despite human failures, the messianic line was preserved (Matt. 1:3,5,16).

■ **4:14–17** The women's praises celebrate the fulfillment of God's covenant love to Naomi. Her daughter-in-law Ruth is more to her than seven sons would be (v. 15). Moreover, Naomi in effect has a son in her grandson Obed (v. 17). He will become the grandfather of David.

■ **4:16 Naomi took the child.** Possibly this means that there was a formal adoption procedure. Whatever the case, this closing scene is the happy ending of what is truly "Naomi's Story." The sorrowful widow who

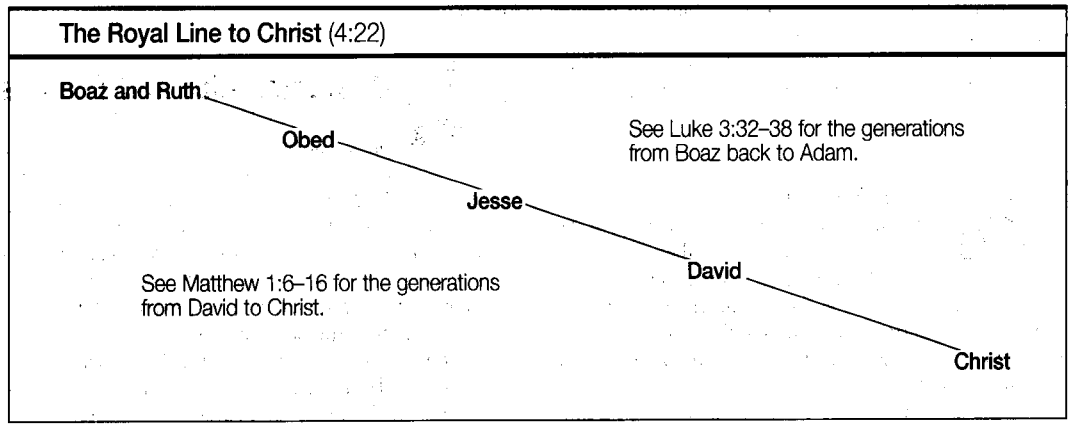
the child and laid him on her bosom, and became a nurse to him. 17 [v]Also the neighbor women gave him a name, saying, "There is a son born to Naomi." And they called his name Obed. He *is* the father of Jesse, the father of David.

18 [w]Now this *is* the genealogy of Perez: [x]Perez begot Hezron; 19 Hezron begot Ram, and Ram begot Amminadab; 20 Amminadab begot [y]Nahshon, and Nahshon begot [z]Salmon;[s] 21 Salmon begot Boaz, and Boaz begot Obed; 22 Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot [a]David.

17 [v]Luke 1:58
18 [w]1 Chr. 2:4, 5 [x]Num. 26:20, 21
20 [y]Num. 1:7 [z]Matt. 1:4 [s]Heb. *Salmah*
22 [a]Matt. 1:6

thought she had returned empty (1:21) has been filled beyond expectation (Ps. 126:5,6).

■ **4:18–22** The closing genealogy (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes) shifts the focus from Naomi back to Boaz, and fulfills a larger purpose of the narrative. The genealogy begins with Perez, someone who could "break through" (Gen. 38:29, text note), and whom the women in their blessing remembered as the vigorous son of Tamar (v. 12). Like Ruth, Tamar became an ancestor of David in an unexpected way. For New Testament readers, David is not the end of God's provisions for the people of His choice, His covenant bride. But for her own time, Ruth's journey had reached its divinely appointed goal.



The First Book of

SAMUEL

Author The books of Samuel do not directly name their author, and it seems likely that the association of Samuel's name with these books reflects the role he played in anointing Israel's first kings. Samuel is described as an old man in 8:1 and as having already died in 25:1, long before many of the events of 1 and 2 Samuel had even taken place. However, 1 Chr. 29:29 attaches the names of Samuel and his prophetic successors Nathan and Gad to certain written sources, portions of which may have been incorporated into the written history of Israel as it took shape. The books of Samuel were probably given their final form by someone deeply influenced by the theology of the Book of Deuteronomy ("Introduction to the Historical Books").

Date and Occasion As with authorship, the books of Samuel give no clear indication of the date they were written. Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings all clearly contain information from sources contemporary with the events narrated in them, but their final form was not set until the time of Judah's exile in Babylon (see "Introduction to the Historical Books").

In the latter half of the eleventh century B.C., a time when the international powers of the ancient Near East were preoccupied with internal conflicts, Israel was transformed from a loosely knit tribal confederation into a united monarchy. The institution of the monarchy was a new stage in the political and religious history of Israel, although the idea of kingship itself would have been known to Israel from the practice of its neighbors (Judg. 3:12; 4:2; 8:5). What is remarkable is not that Israel eventually installed a king, but that it resisted doing so for so long. One cause of Israel's reluctance is revealed in the words of Gideon, "I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; the LORD shall rule over you" (Judg. 8:23). A fundamental tenet of Israel's faith was that the Lord Himself (Yahweh) was Israel's Sovereign, their Great King (8:7; 12:12; Num. 23:21; Ps. 5:2; Mal. 1:14). Nevertheless, the opening books of the Bible contain indications that Israel, in accordance with the divine will, would one day have a human monarch (Gen. 49:10; Num. 24:7, 17–19; cf. Gen. 17:6, 16; 35:11). Moses anticipated a time when Israel would be settled in the Promised Land and would desire a king, and he gave instructions to regulate kingship when it came (Deut. 17:14–20; cf. 28:36). As 1 Samuel opens, that time has almost arrived.

It is difficult to attach firm dates to most of the events recounted in Samuel. Although definite figures are given for the duration of David's reign over Judah and Israel (2 Sam. 5:4, 5), there is no clear indication of how long Saul reigned (13:1 note). The specific years of David's and Saul's reigns have to be established by working back from the dates of events recorded in Kings, which have their own chronological difficulties (see Introduction to 1 Kings). There is broad consensus that David had consolidated his rule over both Judah and Israel shortly before 1000 B.C. (Judah, c. 1010 B.C.; Israel, c. 1003 B.C.). David's lifetime can be dated about 1040 to 970 B.C. Samuel could have been born about 1100 B.C.

Characteristics and Themes

The books of 1 and 2 Samuel are masterpieces of literature. Their basic purpose is to give a historical account of the emergence and early development of the Israelite monarchy under Saul and David. The history is selective, and the nature of the selections reveals the theological concerns of the books. Kingship in Israel came into being through the mediation of a prophet, and the written history of this change has a prophetic point of view.

The narratives of 1 and 2 Samuel are written in an economical style, using a variety of narrative techniques: keywords (2:29 note); comparative characterizations (Saul and Jonathan, David and Uriah; see 13:22 note, 14:6 note, and 2 Sam. 11); repetition and variation (Saul's two confessions in 15:24, 25, 30); and analogy (Nabal compared with Saul, ch. 25). Sensitivity to such literary features can open the door to theological and historical understanding, and to a sense of the unity of the text.

The basic plot of 1 Samuel is Saul's rise to power and subsequent rejection. As noted above, the books of Samuel focus on an important innovation in Israel's religious and political life—having an earthly king. The subject of 1 Samuel is largely the intersecting careers of three figures: Samuel, Saul, and David. The key issue is how a human king can be accommodated in the framework of the covenant relationship existing between God and Israel. How can Israel have a king without compromising God's kingship?

In the Hebrew Bible, 1 Samuel follows the Book of Judges, which ends with the doleful refrain, "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (21:25; cf. 17:6; 18:1; 19:1). This refrain can also describe the first chapters of 1 Samuel. As the book opens, Israel is without a human king, and the Israelites are unconcerned with honoring their divine King. Even the priests, the sons of Eli, simply do what is right in their own eyes (2:12–17).

The first unit relates the birth of Samuel and his call

to be a prophet (chs. 1—3). In a famous song, Hannah praises God for the birth of Samuel (2:1–10). Her song introduces basic theological themes of the books—the sovereignty and holiness of God, divine reversal of human fortune, divine deliverance, and the futility of trusting human strength. Kingship is anticipated in a reference to the Lord's "anointed," "His king" (2:10). The story of the downfall of the priestly house of Eli introduces the theme of divine rejection and its causes.

The section 4:1—7:1 is often called "the ark narrative." In these chapters the Lord demonstrates His power, first against Israel's attempt to exploit the ark as if it were a magical talisman, and second in a devastating march through the Philistine cities. In 7:2–17 God's power to deliver Israel and defeat Israel's enemies is displayed through God's man, Samuel. Against this backdrop, the sinfulness of the people's demand for a human ruler (ch. 8) is clearly seen. It is not that Israel is never to have a human monarch, for a king has long been anticipated. What is objectionable is for the people to want a king "like all the nations" (8:5), because this desire is a rejection of the greatest King, God Himself (8:7). In spite of the folly of the people's request, God will grant it, provided the people are warned about the potential abuses of monarchy, and provided the king himself is willing to submit to God's rule.

Israel's first king proves to be a disappointment. Saul is introduced in 9:2 as an impressive person of striking proportion, presumably what the people wanted. The prophet Samuel told Saul that he would rule Israel, and then anointed him in the Lord's name (9:26—10:1). Soon afterward the Spirit of God overcame Saul and he prophesied with a company of prophets. He gathered a force from all Israel and led them to victory over the Ammonites. He was approved by the people, and Samuel publicly anointed him king (10:24; 11:14, 15). Clearly the kingship in Israel is conceived of as requiring the special direction of God.

On two important occasions Saul fell short of what God required. When he was instructed to wait for Samuel, Saul's patience expired and he offered a sacrifice that Samuel should have performed (13:8–14). Secondly, when God issued a commandment to destroy the Amalekites, Saul followed only half-way (ch. 15). He preserved the life of the king and many of the animals. Samuel denounced him sternly and took sword in hand himself to cut down the king. At this time Samuel prophesied that Saul had been rejected and that God had given the kingdom to someone else (15:28). God's favor was removed from Saul (28:17).

The fall of Saul's dynasty is coincident with the rise of David. David, like Saul, was chosen by God to be king. But in his case God's choice was somehow deeper. David was not without faults, but ultimately God promised him that He would not reject him on that account (2 Sam. 7:8–16). He would punish him, but He would preserve him. David married Saul's daughter Michal and became the intimate friend of his son Jonathan, yet even as he did so Saul's jealousy and suspicion fell on him. Saul became deranged and tried to kill both David and Jonathan (18:11; 19:1; 20:33). David was forced to flee from the court and become a fugitive in his own country.

At the last Saul's original calling to deliver his people from the Philistines was reawakened in him, and he fought a disastrous battle at Gilboa. Unwilling to be captured, King Saul committed suicide, opening David's path to the throne.

In many ways David's career typifies that of his greater Son, Jesus Christ. Both were sanctioned by a prophet, David by Samuel (3:20; 16:13) and Jesus by John the Baptist (Matt. 14:5; John 1:29–31; 5:31–35). The Spirit of the Lord came upon both (16:13; Mark 1:9–11). Both were rejected by jealous kings (18:9; Matt. 2:16) and were warned to flee for their lives (ch. 20; Matt. 2:13–15). Rejected also by their own people without cause (23:12; John 19:15), both learned in exile to depend on God.

Title The books of Samuel have had various titles. The Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) and the Vulgate (a Latin translation of the whole Bible) group them with 1 and 2 Kings as First, Second, Third, and Fourth "Kingdoms" or "Kings." Jewish tradition distinguished Samuel and Kings, but did not divide Samuel into two books until the fifteenth century A.D. □

Outline of 1 Samuel

I. Before the Monarchy: God Rules and Rescues His People (chs. 1—7)
  A. God's Man: Samuel and Eli at Shiloh (chs. 1—3)
    1. Samuel's Birth and Hannah's Song of Thanksgiving (1:1—2:10)
    2. The Rejection of the House of Eli (2:11–36)
    3. The Initiation of Samuel as Prophet (ch. 3)
  B. God's Power: The Ark of God and Philistia (4:1—7:1)
    1. The Ark Is Captured by the Philistines (ch. 4)
    2. The Ark in Philistia (ch. 5)
    3. The Ark Is Returned to Israel (6:1—7:1)
  C. God's Victory: Samuel Versus the Philistines at Mizpah (7:2–17)
II. The Beginning of Monarchy: The People Demand a King (chs. 8—12)
  A. Samuel Hears and God Grants the People's Request (ch. 8)
  B. Saul's Rise: Designation by Samuel and Demonstration in Battle (chs. 9—12)
    1. Saul Anointed by Samuel (9:1—10:16)
    2. Saul Publicly Selected by Lot at Mizpah (10:17–27)
    3. Saul Rescues Jabesh Gilead from the Ammonites (ch. 11)
  C. Samuel Issues Warnings About Monarchy (ch. 12)
III. The People's Choice: The Reign and Rejection of King Saul (chs. 13—15)
  A. Saul Versus the Philistines: Saul's First Rejection (chs. 13; 14)
    1. Jonathan Attacks the Philistines; Saul Fails the Test (ch. 13)
    2. Jonathan Leads the People to Victory; Saul Becomes Isolated (ch. 14)
  B. Saul Versus the Amalekites: Saul Rejected (ch. 15)
IV. God's Choice: The Rise of David and Fall of Saul (chs. 16—31)
  A. David's Rise Delights All but Saul (chs. 16—18)
    1. David Anointed by Samuel and Introduced to Saul (ch. 16)
    2. David and Goliath (ch. 17)
    3. David and the House of Saul (ch. 18)
  B. Saul Seeks David's Life (chs. 19—23)
    1. Saul's Attempts to Kill David Are Thwarted (ch. 19)
    2. Jonathan Aids and Encourages David (ch. 20)
    3. David Deceives Ahimelech at Nob and Escapes to Gath (ch. 21)
    4. Saul Destroys the Priests of Nob; David Delivers the People of Keilah (22:1—23:6)
    5. Saul Pursues David but Is Thwarted by the Philistines (23:7–29)
  C. David Protects Saul's Life (chs. 24—26)
    1. David Spares Saul's Life in the Cave (ch. 24)
    2. Abigail Keeps David from Murder in His Dispute with Nabal (ch. 25)
    3. David Spares Saul's Life in the Camp (ch. 26)
  D. David Hides with the Philistines; Saul Takes His Own Life (chs. 27—31)
    1. David Flees to the Philistines (ch. 27)
    2. Saul and the Medium at En Dor (ch. 28)
    3. David Rejected by the Philistines (ch. 29)
    4. David Recovers What Had Been Taken by the Amalekites (ch. 30)
    5. Saul, Wounded on Mount Gilboa, Takes His Own Life (ch. 31)

The Family of Elkanah

NOW there was a certain man of Ramathaim Zophim, of the [a]mountains of Ephraim, and his name *was* [b]Elkanah the son of Jeroham, the son of [1]Elihu, the son of [2]Tohu, the son of Zuph, [c]an Ephraimite. 2 And he had [d]two wives: the name of one *was* Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children. 3 This man went up from his city [e]yearly [f]to worship and sacrifice to the LORD of hosts in [g]Shiloh. Also the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, the priests of the LORD, *were* there. 4 And whenever the time came for Elkanah to make an [h]offering, he would give portions to Peninnah his wife and to all her sons and daughters. 5 But to Hannah he would give a double portion, for he loved Hannah, [i]although the LORD had closed her womb. 6 And her rival also [j]provoked her severely, to make her miserable, because the LORD had closed her womb. 7 So it was, year by year, when she went up to the house of the LORD, that she provoked her; therefore she wept and did not eat.

Hannah's Vow

8 Then Elkanah her husband said to her, "Hannah, why do you weep? Why do you not eat? And why is your heart grieved? *Am* I not [k]better to you than ten sons?"

9 So Hannah arose after they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat by the doorpost of [l]the [3]tabernacle of the LORD. 10 [m]And she *was* in bitterness of soul, and prayed to the LORD and [4]wept in anguish. 11 Then she [n]made a vow and said, "O LORD of hosts, if You will indeed [o]look on the affliction of Your maidservant and [p]remember me, and not forget Your maidservant, but will give Your maidservant a male child, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and [q]no razor shall come upon his head."

12 And it happened, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli watched her mouth. 13 Now Hannah spoke in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard. Therefore

CHAPTER 1

1 [a]Josh. 17:17, 18; 24:33 [b]1 Chr. 6:27, 33–38 [c]Ruth 1:2 [1]*Eliel,* 1 Chr. 6:34 [2]*Toah,* 1 Chr. 6:34

2 [d]Deut. 21:15–17

3 [e]Luke 2:41 [f]Deut. 12:5–7; 16:16 [g]Josh. 18:1

4 [h]Deut. 12:17, 18

5 [i]Gen. 16:1; 30:1, 2

6 [j]Job 24:21

8 [k]Ruth 4:15

9 [l]1 Sam. 3:3 [3]*palace* or *temple,* Heb. *heykal*

10 [m]Job 7:11 [4]Lit. *wept greatly*

11 [n]Num. 30:6–11 [o]Ps. 25:18 [p]Gen. 8:1 [q]Num. 6:5

■ **1:1—7:17** God rules and delivers His people before the time of the monarchy. He does so by raising up Samuel (chs. 1—3), intervening directly against the Philistines (4:1—7:1), and giving Samuel victory over the Philistines (7:2–17).

■ **1:1 a certain man.** This expression and the accompanying genealogy suggest that Elkanah was a man of standing. The reference to a barren wife (v. 2) resembles the introduction to the birth of Samson (Judg. 13:2).

Ramathaim. Possibly meaning "twin heights," the name occurs only here in the Old Testament. It may be the same as the New Testament Arimathea (northwest of Bethel). Samuel's hometown is usually called Ramah, about five miles north of Jerusalem (1:19; 2:11; 7:17; 8:4; 15:34; 19:18; 25:1).

of Zuph. "Zuph" is both a personal name (1 Chr. 6:35) and a territory (9:5).

Ephraimite. Ephraim was the place he was from, not necessarily the tribe of his ancestry (1 Chr. 6:16–30, 33–37).

■ **1:2 two wives.** Polygamy is first mentioned in Gen. 4:19. It is recognized and regulated, though not endorsed, in Deut. 21:15–17.

no children. Hannah was childless and was provoked by her prolific rival (vv. 6, 7). A barren though favored wife who receives a special offspring from Yahweh is not uncommon in the Old Testament. See Gen. 18:1–15 (Sarah-Isaac); 25:21–26 (Rebekah-Esau and Jacob); 30:22–24 (Rachel-Joseph); Judg. 13:2–5 (Manoah's wife-Samson). In the New Testament see Luke 1:5–25 (Elizabeth-John).

■ **1:3 This man went up.** Perhaps he was observing "the annual festival of the LORD in Shiloh" (Judg. 21:19), or perhaps he went for a family ceremony (20:6). In the Pentateuch (the five books of Moses, or Torah) reference is made to three annual pilgrim-festivals (Ex. 23:14–17; 34:18–23; Deut. 16:1–17).

LORD of hosts. This title occurs here for the first time in the Old Testament. "LORD" represents "Yahweh" in Hebrew, the personal name of the God of Israel, as distinct from the general designation "God." "Hosts" or "armies" is the traditional translation of the other word. Depending on the context, it could include the hosts of Israel (17:45), the cosmic hosts or celestial bodies (Deut. 4:19), and the angelic hosts (Josh. 5:14). As a whole the title expresses the Lord's sovereignty over all earthly and heavenly powers.

Shiloh. Halfway between Shechem and Bethel, Shiloh (modern Seilun) was an important Israelite religious center in the period before the monarchy (Josh. 18:1; Judg. 21:19). At least the sanctuary there (Jer. 7:12) may have been destroyed by the Philistines after the battle of Aphek (4:1–11).

Eli. As with some other well-known people in the Old Testament (Joshua, Ex. 17:9; and Jonathan, 1 Sam. 13:2), Eli is first introduced by name only.

■ **1:5 double portion.** The Hebrew is difficult but has usually been interpreted as an especially honorable portion. Elkanah's attempts to lessen Hannah's sorrow by expressing his love for her (v. 8) were ineffective.

the LORD had closed her womb. Hannah's barrenness came not by chance nor as a form of punishment (2 Sam. 6:23), but was under the Lord's sovereign control.

■ **1:6 her rival.** See note on 1:2.

■ **1:7 did not eat.** Hannah refused to eat until the Lord answered her prayer; compare David's actions in 2 Sam. 12:16–20, and contrast Saul's in 1 Sam. 28:23–25. In the New Testament, fasting often accompanies serious dealings with the Lord (Acts 13:2–3; 14:23).

■ **1:9 tabernacle.** The mention of "doorposts" here and "doors" in 3:15, as well as sleeping quarters in 3:2, 3, may suggest a more permanent structure than the tent of Moses' time. Other designations for the structure in Samuel are "the house of the LORD" (v. 7; 3:15) and "the tabernacle of meeting" (2:22). From 2 Sam. 7:6 it is clear that before the time of David the tabernacle or temple was a tent and not a permanent structure.

■ **1:11 vow.** On the making of vows by married women, and the husbands' responsibility to confirm or nullify, see Num. 30:6–15.

remember me. Hannah asks not simply for the Lord to keep her in mind but for Him to do something special to help her.

no razor. Hannah's vow reflects elements of the Nazirite vow (Num. 6:1–21). Specifically, these are: abstaining from grapes or anything made from grapes, not cutting the hair, and avoiding all contact with anything dead. While such vows were generally made for a limited period of time, Hannah's was for "all the days" of her son's life (see Judg. 13:5 note).

■ **1:13 drunk.** Eli's conclusion that Hannah was drunk is an unsettling element in the narrative because it suggests that he was unfamiliar with fervency in prayer.

Eli thought she was drunk. 14 So Eli said to her, "How long will you be drunk? Put your wine away from you!"

15 But Hannah answered and said, "No, my lord, I *am* a woman of sorrowful spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor intoxicating drink, but have [r]poured out my soul before the LORD. 16 Do not consider your maidservant a [s]wicked[5] woman, for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief I have spoken until now."

17 Then Eli answered and said, [t]"Go in peace, and [u]the God of Israel grant your petition which you have asked of Him."

18 And she said, [v]"Let your maidservant find favor in your sight." So the woman [w]went her way and ate, and her face was no longer *sad.*

Samuel Is Born and Dedicated

19 Then they rose early in the morning and worshiped before the LORD, and returned and came to their house at Ramah. And Elkanah [x]knew Hannah his wife, and the LORD [y]remembered her. 20 So it came to pass in the process of time that Hannah conceived and bore a son, and called his name [6]Samuel, *saying,* "Because I have asked for him from the LORD."

21 Now the man Elkanah and all his house [z]went up to offer to the LORD the yearly sacrifice and his vow. 22 But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, "*Not* until the child is weaned; then I will [a]take him. that he may appear before the LORD and [b]remain there [c]forever."

23 So [d]Elkanah her husband said to her, "Do what seems best to you; wait until you have weaned him. Only let the LORD [7]establish [8]His word." Then the woman stayed and nursed her son until she had weaned him.

24 Now when she had weaned him, she [e]took him up with her, with [9]three bulls, one ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and brought him to [f]the house of the LORD in Shiloh. And the child *was* young. 25 Then they slaughtered a bull, and [g]brought the child to Eli. 26 And she said, "O my lord! [h]As your soul lives, my lord, I *am* the woman who stood by you here, praying to the LORD. 27 [i]For this child I prayed, and the LORD has granted me my petition which I asked of Him. 28 Therefore I also have lent him to the LORD; as long as he lives he shall be [j]lent to the LORD." So they [j]worshiped the LORD there.

Hannah's Prayer

2 And Hannah [a]prayed and said:

[b]"My heart rejoices in the LORD;
[c]My [1]horn is exalted in the LORD.
[2]I smile at my enemies,
Because I [d]rejoice in Your salvation.

15 [r]Ps. 42:4; 62:8
16 [s]Deut. 13:13 [5]Lit. *daughter of Belial*
17 [t]Mark 5:34 [u]Ps. 20:3–5
18 [v]Ruth 2:13 [w]Rom. 15:13
19 [x]Gen. 4:1 [y]Gen. 21:1; 30:22
20 [6]Lit. *Heard by God*
21 [z]1 Sam. 1:3
22 [a]Luke 2:22 [b]1 Sam. 1:11, 28 [c]Ex. 21:6
23 [d]Num. 30:7, 10, 11 [7]*confirm* [8]So with MT, Tg., Vg.; DSS, LXX, Syr. *your*
24 [e]Num. 15:9, 10 [f]Josh. 18:1 [9]DSS, LXX, Syr. *a three-year-old bull*
25 [g]Luke 2:22
26 [h]2 Kin. 2:2, 4, 6; 4:30
27 [i][Matt. 7:7]
28 [j]Gen. 24:26, 52 [1]*granted*

CHAPTER 2

1 [a]Phil. 4:6 [b]Luke 1:46–55 [c]Ps. 75:10; 89:17, 24; 92:10; 112:9 [d]Ps. 9:14; 13:5; 35:9 [1]Strength [2]Lit. *My mouth is enlarged*

■ **1:16 wicked.** See text note and 2:12.

■ **1:18 her face was no longer sad.** Hannah's actions in response to the benediction of v. 17 give evidence of her belief.

■ **1:20 Samuel.** Various meanings of the name "Samuel" have been suggested, including "heard by God" (text note), "he who is from God," "name of God," and even "son of God" (as one "given" or "promised" by God). "Saul" is from the Hebrew verb "to ask," which occurs often in this section.

■ **1:21 vow.** See Lev. 7:16 and note.

■ **1:22 weaned.** In the ancient Near East a child was weaned later than is often customary today (2 Macc. 7:27; "I carried you nine months in my womb, and nursed you for three years"). Weaning may also have been celebrated with a feast (Gen. 21:8).

■ **1:23 His word.** "Your word" (text note) is probably to be preferred here. Elkanah, as Hannah's husband (1:11 note), invokes the Lord's assistance in Hannah's fulfillment of her vow.

■ **1:24 three bulls . . . skin of wine.** According to Num. 15:8–10, the fulfillment of a vow was to be accompanied by an offering of a young bull, fine flour, and wine. Hannah brings all three, but in larger measure than required.

■ **2:1–10** Her prayer for a son having been answered, Hannah offers a jubilant song of thanksgiving. Focusing on the Lord's sovereignty and grace to the humble, Hannah anticipates the major themes of the books of Samuel. The same themes of sovereignty, grace, and deliverance are reiterated in David's song of thanksgiving near the end of 2 Samuel (ch. 22). The two songs provide a poetic frame for 1 and 2 Samuel. Mary's briefer song of praise (the Magnificat, Luke 1:46–55) seems to have been modeled on Hannah's. Both songs open with rejoicing in the Lord's deliverance (v. 1; Luke 1:46–48), extol the Lord's uniqueness and holiness (v. 2; Luke 1:49, 50), condemn proud boasting (v. 3; Luke 1:51), point to reversals of human fortune as the result of interventions by the sovereign Lord (vv. 4–8; Luke 1:52, 53), and express the Lord's faithful care for His own (v. 9; Luke 1:54, 55). Hannah's song concludes with the assertion that the Lord Himself will give strength to His king, His anointed (vv. 9–10).

■ **2:1 horn.** The word "horn" is used figuratively in the Old Testament to signify pride and strength. It is God who exalts the horns of the righteous but cuts off the horns of the wicked (Ps. 75:10). David extols the Lord as "my shield and the horn of my salvation" (v. 10 note; 2 Sam. 22:3).

2 "No[e] one is holy like the LORD,
For *there is* [f]none besides You,
Nor *is there* any [g]rock like our God.

3 "Talk no more so very proudly;
[h]Let no arrogance come from your mouth,
For the LORD *is* the God of [i]knowledge;
And by Him actions are weighed.

4 "The[j] bows of the mighty men *are* broken,
And those who stumbled are girded with strength.
5 *Those who were* full have hired themselves out for bread,
And the hungry have ceased *to hunger.*
Even [k]the barren has borne seven,
And [l]she who has many children has become feeble.

6 "The[m] LORD kills and makes alive;
He brings down to the grave and brings up.
7 The LORD [n]makes poor and makes rich;
[o]He brings low and lifts up.
8 [p]He raises the poor from the dust
And lifts the beggar from the ash heap,
[q]To set *them* among princes
And make them inherit the throne of glory.

[r]"For the pillars of the earth *are* the LORD's,
And He has set the world upon them.
9 [s]He will guard the feet of His saints,
But the [t]wicked shall be silent in darkness.

"For by strength no man shall prevail.
10 The adversaries of the LORD shall be [u]broken in pieces;
[v]From heaven He will thunder against them.
[w]The LORD will judge the ends of the earth.

[x]"He will give [y]strength to His king,
And [z]exalt the [3]horn of His anointed."

11 Then Elkanah went to his house at Ramah. But the child [4]ministered to the LORD before Eli the priest.

2 [e]Ex. 15:11; Ps. 86:8; Rev. 15:4 [f]Deut. 4:35 [g]Deut. 32:4, 30, 31; 2 Sam. 22:32; Ps. 18:2

3 [h]Ps. 94:4 [i]1 Sam. 16:7

4 [j]Ps. 37:15; 46:9

5 [k]Ps. 113:9 [l]Is. 54:1; Jer. 15:9

6 [m]Deut. 32:39; 2 Kin. 5:7; Job 5:18; [Rev. 1:18]

7 [n]Deut. 8:17, 18; Job 1:21 [o]Job 5:11; Ps. 75:7; James 4:10

8 [p]Job 42:10–12; Ps. 75:7; 113:7; Luke 1:52 [q]Job 36:7; Ps. 113:8 [r]Job 38:4–6; Ps. 75:3; 104:5

9 [s]Ps. 37:23, 24; 91:11, 12; 94:18; 121:3; Prov. 3:26; [1 Pet. 1:5] [t][Rom. 3:19]

10 [u]Ex. 15:6; Ps. 2:9 [v]1 Sam. 7:10; 2 Sam. 22:14, 15; Ps. 18:13, 14 [w]Ps. 96:13; 98:9; [Matt. 25:31, 32] [x][Matt. 28:18] [y]Ps. 21:1, 7 [z]Ps. 89:24 [3]Strength

11 [4]*served*

■ **2:2 rock.** As a metaphor for God, this term is concentrated in poetic passages such as the song of Moses in Deut. 32; the song of David in 2 Sam. 22; Psalms; and Isaiah. The metaphor suggests God's strength and sovereignty, and the security of those who trust in Him. Here the focus is on the uniqueness of the one true God as opposed to false sources of security (compare the contrast with false gods, also called "rock," in Deut. 32:31, 37; Is. 44:8).

■ **2:5 has borne seven.** The number seven represented ideal completeness (Ruth 4:15).

■ **2:9 For by strength no man shall prevail.** The subsequent narratives confirm that it is not physical prowess but God's presence that brings success. In the ark narrative of chs. 4—6, the Lord makes His hand felt by the Philistines without the assistance of human agents (5:6). Other such examples are the Lord's victory through Samuel in ch. 7; the contrasting successes of Saul and Jonathan in chs. 13 and 14; the choice of David, the youngest of Jesse's sons, in ch. 16; and David's victory over Goliath in ch. 17.

■ **2:10 His king.** The reference to the Lord's king here points forward to the central event of the books of Samuel, namely, the institution of a monarchy, and implies that the idea of kingship, properly conceived, is not wrong. That Israel would have a king is anticipated in various places in the Pentateuch (Gen. 49:10; Num. 24:7, 17–19; Deut. 17:14–20).

His anointed. Numerous objects and persons were subject to religious anointing in ancient Israel (Ex. 30:22–33), but it was the king ultimately who had the title of the "LORD's anointed" or simply "the anointed." Persons chosen for divine service were anointed to signify that this was their calling, that they were authorized to perform it, and that God would give them the help they needed. References to the king as the Lord's anointed are prevalent in the books of Samuel (v. 35; 12:3, 5; 16:6; 24:6) and Psalms (Ps. 2:2; 18:50). The present passage is the first reference to a king of Israel as God's "anointed," though the idea of anointing a king is found already in Jotham's fable (Judg. 9:8, 15). The English word "messiah" represents the Hebrew word meaning "anointed." In the New Testament, "Christ" represents the Greek word *Christos,* also meaning "anointed."

12 [a]Deut. 13:13 [b]Judg. 2:10; [Rom. 1:28] [5]Lit. *sons of Belial*

14 [c]1 Sam. 1:3

15 [d]Lev. 3:3–5, 16

17 [e]Gen. 6:11 [f][Mal. 2:7–9] [6]*despised*

18 [g]1 Sam. 2:11; 3:1 [h]Ex. 28:4

19 [i]1 Sam. 1:3, 21

20 [j]Gen. 14:19 [k]1 Sam. 1:11, 27, 28 [7]*gift*

21 [l]Gen. 21:1 [m]Judg. 13:24; 1 Sam. 2:26; 3:19–21; Luke 1:80; 2:40 [8]*attended to*

22 [n]Ex. 38:8 [9]So with MT, Tg., Vg.; DSS, LXX omit rest of verse

25 [o]Deut. 1:17; 25:1, 2 [p]Num. 15:30 [q]Josh. 11:20 [r]Tg. *the Judge*

26 [r]1 Sam. 2:21 [s]Prov. 3:4

The Wicked Sons of Eli

12 Now the sons of Eli *were* [a]corrupt;[5] [b]they did not know the LORD. 13 And the priests' custom with the people *was that* when any man offered a sacrifice, the priest's servant would come with a three-pronged fleshhook in his hand while the meat was boiling. 14 Then he would thrust *it* into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; and the priest would take for himself all that the fleshhook brought up. So they did in [c]Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there. 15 Also, before they [d]burned the fat, the priest's servant would come and say to the man who sacrificed, "Give meat for roasting to the priest, for he will not take boiled meat from you, but raw."

16 And *if* the man said to him, "They should really burn the fat first; *then* you may take *as much* as your heart desires," he would then answer him, "*No,* but you must give *it* now; and if not, I will take *it* by force."

17 Therefore the sin of the young men was very great [e]before the LORD, for men [f]abhorred[6] the offering of the LORD.

Samuel's Childhood Ministry

18 [g]But Samuel ministered before the LORD, *even as* a child, [h]wearing a linen ephod. 19 Moreover his mother used to make him a little robe, and bring *it* to him year by year when she [i]came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. 20 And Eli [j]would bless Elkanah and his wife, and say, "The LORD give you descendants from this woman for the [7]loan that was [k]given to the LORD." Then they would go to their own home.

21 And the LORD [l]visited[8] Hannah, so that she conceived and bore three sons and two daughters. Meanwhile the child Samuel [m]grew before the LORD.

Prophecy Against Eli's Household

22 Now Eli was very old; and he heard everything his sons did to all Israel, [9]and how they lay with [n]the women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. 23 So he said to them, "Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all the people. 24 No, my sons! For *it is* not a good report that I hear. You make the LORD's people transgress. 25 If one man sins against another, [o]God[1] will judge him. But if a man [p]sins against the LORD, who will intercede for him?" Nevertheless they did not heed the voice of their father, [q]because the LORD desired to kill them.

26 And the child Samuel [r]grew in stature, and [s]in favor both with the LORD and men.

■ **2:12 corrupt.** This Hebrew phrase (lit. "sons of Belial") connotes worthless and vile persons. It is used of those who incite to idolatry (Deut. 13:13) or insurrection (10:27; 2 Sam. 16:7; 20:1); who are sexually immoral (Judg. 19:22); or who are liars (1 Kin. 21:10, 13). Unfortunately the phrase could be applied to Eli's sons.

did not know. Use of the verb "know" here and in 3:7 sets up an ironic contrast between Eli's sons and Samuel (3:7 note).

■ **2:13 the priests' custom.** The practice described in vv. 13, 14 is different from the prescriptions of Lev. 7:28–36 and Deut. 18:3. The greed of the sons of Eli caused the people to "abhor the offering of the LORD" (v. 17).

■ **2:15 before they burned the fat.** Since the time of Abel's offering of the fat of the firstborn of his flock (Gen. 4:4), the fat portion was considered to be the best, and as such, to belong to the Lord. The priests had the duty of burning the fat on the altar as an offering to the Lord (Lev. 3:16; 7:31). Like blood, the fat was strictly forbidden for human consumption, and anyone who ate it would be expelled from the people (Lev. 3:17; 7:23–25).

■ **2:18 But Samuel.** The behavior of Samuel, who ministers faithfully before the Lord, and also of Eli, who regularly blesses Elkanah and his wife (v. 20), is in sharp contrast with the abuses of Eli's sons.

linen ephod. A short inner garment of some sort, and associated with priestly service (22:18), the linen ephod was worn also by King David when he brought the ark to Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6:14). See also 2:28, note.

■ **2:19 robe.** An outer garment to be worn over the linen ephod.

■ **2:20 loan that was given.** Eli's words recall those of Hannah in 1:27, 28. Both "loan" and "given" in Hebrew derive from the same word as the name "Saul" (1:20 note).

■ **2:21 before the LORD.** Or "with the LORD"; the same Hebrew expression is used in v. 26.

■ **2:22 Now Eli.** Again as at v. 12, the focus shifts from the boy Samuel to the house of Eli.

heard. Eli had to be told about what he should have already observed and controlled on his own. But his offenses run much deeper than mere inattentiveness (v. 29).

lay with the women. On the "tabernacle," see note on 1:9; on "the women assembled," see Ex. 38:8. Though explicitly condemned by the Law (Deut. 23:17, 18), religious prostitution was practiced by the Canaanites and posed a constant danger to the Israelites (1 Kin. 15:12; 2 Kin. 23:7; Hos. 4:14).

■ **2:25 God will judge.** Eli's point is that while there may be some mediation of disputes between people, when someone offends God there is no one who can intervene. Eli's sons sinned first and foremost against the Lord (v. 17), and they sealed their doom by refusing to hear Eli's warning.

the LORD desired to kill them. This clear statement of God's sovereignty over the destiny of the wicked does not diminish people's responsibility for their own actions. An example of the relation between divine sovereignty and human responsibility is found in the hardening of Pharaoh's heart in the early chapters of Exodus. About half the time Pharaoh is said to have hardened his own heart (Ex. 8:15); the rest of the time God is said to harden it (Ex. 4:21; Rom. 9:17, 18). God can punish persistent, willful sin by taking away the power to repent (Josh. 11:20; Rom. 1:24, 26, 28).

■ **2:26 in favor . . . with the LORD.** The gravity of Eli's sons' refusal to listen to man or God is emphasized by the striking contrast with Samuel, who grows in favor with God and men. The emphasis on Samuel's

27 Then a [f]man of God came to Eli and said to him, "Thus says the LORD: [u]'Did I not clearly reveal Myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house? 28 Did I not [v]choose him out of all the tribes of Israel *to be* My priest, to offer upon My altar, to burn incense, and to wear an ephod before Me? And [w]did I not give to the house of your father all the offerings of the children of Israel made by fire? 29 Why do you [x]kick at My sacrifice and My offering which I have commanded *in My* [y]dwelling place, and honor your sons more than [z]Me, to make yourselves fat with the best of all the offerings of Israel My people?' 30 Therefore the LORD God of Israel says: [a]'I said indeed *that* your house and the house of your father would walk before Me forever.' But now the LORD says: [b]'Far be it from Me; for those who honor Me I will honor, and [c]those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed. 31 Behold, [d]the days are coming that I will cut off your [2]arm and the arm of your father's house, so that there will not be an old man in your house. 32 And you will see an enemy *in My* dwelling place, *despite* all the good which God does for Israel. And there shall not be [e]an old man in your house forever. 33 But any of your men *whom* I do not cut off from My altar shall consume your eyes and grieve your heart. And all the descendants of your house shall die in the flower of their age. 34 Now this *shall be* [f]a sign to you that will come upon your two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas: [g]in one day they shall die, both of them. 35 Then [h]I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest *who* shall do according to what *is* in My heart and in My mind. [i]I will build him a sure house, and he shall walk before [j]My anointed forever. 36 [k]And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left in your house will come *and* bow down to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and say, "Please, [3]put me in one of the priestly positions, that I may eat a piece of bread." ' "

27 [f]1 Kin. 13:1 [u]Ex. 4:14–16; 12:1

28 [v]Ex. 28:1, 4 [w]Num. 5:9

29 [x]Deut. 32:15 [y]Deut. 12:5 [z]Matt. 10:37

30 [a]Ex. 29:9 [b]Jer. 18:9, 10 [c]Mal. 2:9–12

31 [d]1 Kin. 2:27, 35 [2]*strength*

32 [e]Zech. 8:4

34 [f]1 Kin. 13:3 [g]1 Sam. 4:11, 17

35 [h]1 Kin. 2:35 [i]1 Kin. 11:38 [j]Ps. 18:50

36 [k]1 Kin. 2:27 [3]*assign*

Samuel's First Prophecy

CHAPTER 3

3 Now [a]the boy Samuel ministered to the LORD before Eli. And [b]the word of the LORD was rare in those days; *there was* no widespread revelation. 2 And it came to pass at that time, while Eli *was* lying down in his place, and when his eyes had begun to grow [c]so dim that he could not see, 3 and before [d]the lamp of God went out in the [1]tabernacle of the LORD where the

1 [a]1 Sam. 2:11, 18 [b]Ps. 74:9

2 [c]1 Sam. 4:15

3 [d]Ex. 27:20, 21 [1]*palace* or *temple*

growth as more than merely physical foreshadows a theme that is later developed in contrasting portraits of Saul and David. The expression of v. 6 is used by Luke to describe the childhood of Jesus (Luke 2:52; see Prov. 3:4).

■ **2:27–36** The words of the man of God to Eli exhibit features typical of prophetic judgment speeches. There is an accusation (expressed here through accusing questions that emphasize the contrast between the Lord's grace and Eli's disobedience) and an announcement of judgment confirmed by a sign. Other examples of prophetic speeches of this type are found in chs. 13; 15; and 2 Sam. 12:7–12.

■ **2:27 man of God.** In the Old Testament this designation is often used interchangeably with "prophet" (9:8–11; 1 Kin. 13:15–18; 2 Kin. 5:8; 6:10–12).

house of your father . . . in Egypt. Although Eli's genealogy is nowhere recorded in the Old Testament, v. 28 implies that he was a descendant of Aaron. The assertion that the Lord revealed Himself and selected Eli's house as far back as the period of Israelite servitude in Egypt underscores the gross ingratitude of the house of Eli.

■ **2:28 wear an ephod.** Or perhaps "carry" an ephod. The ephod mentioned here is not the garment mentioned in v. 18, but the high-priestly ephod bearing the "breastplate of judgment" and the "Urim and Thummim," through which the Lord's will could be determined (Ex. 28:4–30).

did I not give . . . the offerings. Both in the Old Testament (Num. 18:8; Deut. 18:1) and in the New (1 Cor. 9:13, 14; 1 Tim. 5:17, 18) God provides for the support of those who are in His service.

■ **2:29 honor.** Though the offenses of his sons are more blatant, Eli himself does not escape blame. As father and high priest, he should have confronted his sons with more than words (vv. 23–25). His failure to take action amounts to honoring his sons above the Lord (v. 30). The Hebrew word for "honor" is a key word in the subsequent accounts of the fall of the family of Eli and the capture and return of the ark (chs. 4—7); see the notes on 4:21; 6:5, 6.

■ **2:30 forever.** That is, continually or indefinitely.

■ **2:31 will not be an old man in your house.** The decimation of Eli's house begins with the death of his sons (4:11) and himself (4:18). It is continued with Saul's massacre of the priests of Nob (22:17–19) and culminates in Solomon's removal of Abiathar from the priesthood (1 Kin. 2:26, 27).

■ **2:32 an enemy in My dwelling.** The Hebrew is difficult and parts of vv. 31, 32 are lacking in the Septuagint and the Dead Sea Scrolls. If the translation "an enemy in My dwelling" is correct, the verse alludes to the capture of the ark (4:1–11), the destruction of the Lord's dwelling in Shiloh (Jer. 7:12–14), and its relocation to Nob (21:1).

■ **2:34 sign.** Prophetic utterances were often confirmed by signs (2:27–36 note; cf. 10:7, 9; 1 Kin. 13:3, 5; 2 Kin. 19:29; 20:8, 9).

■ **2:35 faithful priest.** While the statement in 3:20 that Samuel was "established" as a prophet of the Lord suggests Samuel may have been the fulfillment of this prediction, the clearer fulfillment comes in the person of Zadok, who served as high priest alongside Abiathar under David (2 Sam. 8:17 note) and came to preeminence under Solomon (1 Kin. 2:35). The descendants of Zadok held the high priesthood from the time of Solomon to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes and the Maccabees (for details see Introduction to the Intertestamental Period).

My anointed. This is the second allusion to the coming king in this chapter (v. 10 note).

■ **2:36 eat a piece of bread.** Prophetic judgments were characterized by a correspondence of crime and punishment. The hunger threatened in this verse corresponds to the greedy satisfaction described in vv. 12–27 and 29.

■ **3:1 the word of the LORD was rare.** The Lord's withholding His word is a sign of His displeasure (14:37; Ps. 74:9; Lam. 2:9; Amos 8:11, 12). Conversely, His communication to Samuel is a sign of favor.

revelation. Literally "vision." The Hebrew word often denotes an auditory encounter rather than a visual one. Such revelations were necessary for the well-being of God's people (Prov. 29:18).

■ **3:3 before the lamp of God went out.** This notice may be simply a time reference (Ex. 27:20–21; Lev. 24:1–4). The use of "lamp" as a metaphor of hope and promise is very common (2 Sam. 21:17; 22:29; 1 Kin. 11:36; 15:4; Job 18:5; Ps. 132:17; Prov. 13:9), and is possible here. With Samuel on the scene, there is still a flicker of hope.

ark of God *was,* and while Samuel was lying down, 4 that the LORD called Samuel. And he answered, "Here I am!" 5 So he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am, for you called me."

And he said, "I did not call; lie down again." And he went and lay down.

6 Then the LORD called yet again, "Samuel!"

So Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." He answered, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." 7 (Now Samuel [e]did not yet know the LORD, nor was the word of the LORD yet revealed to him.)

8 And the LORD called Samuel again the third time. So he arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you did call me."

Then Eli perceived that the LORD had called the boy. 9 Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and it shall be, if He calls you, that you must say, [f]'Speak, LORD, for Your servant hears.' " So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10 Now the LORD came and stood and called as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!"

And Samuel answered, "Speak, for Your servant hears."

11 Then the LORD said to Samuel: "Behold, I will do something in Israel [g]at which both ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. 12 In that day I will perform against Eli [h]all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. 13 [i]For I have told him that I will [j]judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knows, because [k]his sons made themselves vile, and he [l]did not [2]restrain them. 14 And therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house [m]shall not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever."

15 So Samuel lay down until [3]morning, and opened the doors of the house of the LORD. And Samuel was afraid to tell Eli the vision. 16 Then Eli called Samuel and said, "Samuel, my son!"

He answered, "Here I am."

17 And he said, "What *is* the word that *the LORD* spoke to you? Please do not hide *it* from me. [n]God do so to you, and more also, if you hide anything from me of all the things that He said to you." 18 Then Samuel told him everything, and hid nothing from him. And he said, [o]"It *is* the LORD. Let Him do what seems good to Him."

19 So Samuel [p]grew, and [q]the LORD was with him [r]and let none of his words [4]fall to the ground. 20 And all Israel [s]from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel *had been* [5]established as a prophet of the LORD. 21 Then the LORD appeared again in Shiloh. For the LORD revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by [t]the word of the LORD.

4 And the word of Samuel came to all [1]Israel.

The Ark of God Captured

Now Israel went out to battle against the Philistines, and encamped beside [a]Ebenezer; and the

7 [e]1 Sam. 2:12
9 [f]1 Kin. 2:17
11 [g]2 Kin. 21:12
12 [h]1 Sam. 2:27–36
13 [i]1 Sam. 2:29–31 [j]1 Sam. 2:22 [k]1 Sam. 2:12, 17, 22 [l]1 Sam. 2:23, 25 [2]Lit. *rebuke*
14 [m]Num. 15:30, 31
15 [3]So with MT, Tg., Vg.; LXX adds *and he arose in the morning*
17 [n]Ruth 1:17
18 [o]Is. 39:8
19 [p]1 Sam. 2:21 [q]Gen. 21:22; 28:15; 39:2, 21, 23 [r]1 Sam. 9:6 [4]*fail*
20 [s]Judg. 20:1 [5]*confirmed*
21 [t]1 Sam. 3:1, 4

CHAPTER 4

1 [a]1 Sam. 7:12 [1]So with MT, Tg.; LXX, Vg. add *And it came to pass in those days that the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight;* LXX adds further *against Israel*

tabernacle. See note on 1:9.

ark of God. Elsewhere called "the ark of the Testimony" and "the ark of the covenant," this chest of acacia wood overlaid with gold is described in Ex. 25:10–22. The ark is important in chs. 4—6 and again in 2 Sam. 6.

■ **3:7 Samuel did not yet know the LORD.** The repetition of terminology from 2:12 about "knowing" God only emphasizes the contrast in meaning. Eli's sons "did not know the LORD" because they wickedly disregarded Him. Samuel was a child and no revelation had yet come to him.

■ **3:8 Then Eli perceived.** Eli's slowness to recognize that God was calling Samuel recalls earlier instances of misperception (1:12–16) and unawareness (2:22 note), contributing to the reader's impression of Eli as an aged priest whose eyes have grown dim (v. 2) in more ways than one.

■ **3:12 all that I have spoken.** See 2:27–36. The repetition to Samuel of the oracle against Eli confirms the oracle itself and establishes Samuel as a prophet of the Lord (v. 20).

■ **3:13 made themselves vile.** The Septuagint (the Greek Old Testament) reads "God" instead of "themselves." In the Hebrew text this represents a change of only one letter. If Eli's sons were cursing God they were committing an offense worthy of death (Lev. 24:15, 16).

did not restrain them. Eli, in view of his position as high priest, should have taken action to restrain his sons once verbal rebuke proved ineffective (2:29 note; 2 Sam. 13:21 note).

■ **3:14 not be atoned for by sacrifice or offering forever.** While there was provision to atone for unintentional priestly sins (Lev. 4:1–12), the sins of Eli's house were clearly acts of open defiance (Num. 15:30–31). They had scorned the normal means of atonement, that is, sacrifice and offering (2:17, 29).

■ **3:18 It is the LORD. Let Him do what seems good to Him.** Eli humbly accepts his rejection and confesses God's right to rule in the affairs of men. His words establish a benchmark by which later characters in the narrative should be judged: Saul (20:30, 31) and David (2 Sam. 15:25, 26).

■ **3:19 the LORD was with him.** From the perspective of the books of Samuel, it is God's presence with someone that makes the difference between success and failure (16:18; 18:12, 14, 28).

let none of his words fall to the ground. See 9:6. Samuel thus passed the test of a true prophet (Deut. 18:21, 22).

■ **3:20 Dan to Beersheba . . . prophet of the LORD.** While Samuel's responsibilities as judge would take him on a circuit of the central hill country (7:15–17), his reputation as a prophet spread throughout "all Israel" (2 Sam. 3:10; 17:11; 24:25; 1 Kin. 4:25).

■ **3:21 Shiloh.** See note on 1:3.

■ **4:1 the word of Samuel came to all Israel.** The episode that began with a notice of the rarity of the word of the Lord (3:1) concludes with a notice of the change brought by the selection of Samuel to be "a prophet of the LORD" (3:20 and note).

Philistines. The Philistines are one of the "Sea Peoples" named in Egyptian texts from the time of Rameses III. By the time of the judges (Judg. 3:31; 13–16), the Philistines had settled along the coastlands of southern Canaan in a league of five cities: Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron,

Philistines encamped in Aphek. 2 Then the [b]Philistines put themselves in battle array against Israel. And when they joined battle, Israel was [2]defeated by the Philistines, who killed about four thousand men of the army in the field. 3 And when the people had come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, "Why has the LORD defeated us today before the Philistines? [c]Let us bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD from Shiloh to us, that when it comes among us it may save us from the hand of our enemies." 4 So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from there the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, [d]who dwells *between* [e]the cherubim. And the [f]two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, *were* there with the ark of the covenant of God.

5 And when the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel shouted so loudly that the earth shook. 6 Now when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, "What *does* the sound of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews *mean?*" Then they understood that the ark of the LORD had come into the camp. 7 So the Philistines were afraid, for they said, "God has come into the camp!" And they said, [g]"Woe to us! For such a thing has never happened before. 8 Woe to us! Who will deliver us from the hand of these mighty gods? These *are* the gods who struck the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness. 9 [h]Be strong and conduct yourselves like men, you Philistines, that you do not become servants of the Hebrews, [i]as they have been to you. [3]Conduct yourselves like men, and fight!"

10 So the Philistines fought, and [j]Israel was [4]defeated, and every man fled to his tent. There was a very great slaughter, and there fell of Israel thirty thousand foot soldiers. 11 Also [k]the ark of God was captured; and [l]the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died.

Death of Eli

12 Then a man of Benjamin ran from the battle line the same day, and [m]came to Shiloh with his clothes torn and [n]dirt on his head. 13 Now when he came, there was Eli, sitting on [o]a seat [5]by the wayside watching, for his heart [6]trembled for the ark of God. And when the man came into the city and told *it,* all the city cried out. 14 When Eli heard the noise of the outcry, he said, "What *does* the sound of this tumult *mean?*" And the man came quickly and told Eli. 15 Eli was ninety-eight years old, and [p]his eyes were so [7]dim that he could not see.

16 Then the man said to Eli, "I *am* he who came from the battle. And I fled today from the battle line."

And he said, [q]"What happened, my son?"

17 So the messenger answered and said, "Israel has fled before the Philistines, and there has been a great slaughter among the people. Also your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead; and the ark of God has been captured."

18 Then it happened, when he made mention of the ark of God, that Eli fell off the seat backward by the side of the gate; and his neck was broken and he died, for the man was old and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years.

2 [b]1 Sam. 12:9
[2]Lit. *struck*

3 [c]Num. 10:35; Josh. 6:6–21

4 [d]Ex. 25:18–21; 1 Sam. 6:2; Ps. 80:1 [e]Num. 7:89 [f]1 Sam. 2:12

7 [g]Ex. 15:14

9 [h]1 Cor. 16:13 [i]Judg. 13:1; 1 Sam. 14:21
[3]Lit. *Be men*

10 [j]Lev. 26:17; Deut. 28:15, 25; 1 Sam. 4:2; 2 Sam. 18:17; 19:8; 2 Kin. 14:12; 2 Chr. 25:22 [4]Lit. *struck down*

11 [k]1 Sam. 2:32; Ps. 78:60, 61 [l]1 Sam. 2:34; Ps. 78:64

12 [m]2 Sam. 1:2 [n]Josh. 7:6; 2 Sam. 13:19; 15:32; Neh. 9:1; Job 2:12

13 [o]1 Sam. 1:9; 4:18 [5]So with MT, Vg.; LXX *beside the gate watching the road* [6]*trembled with anxiety*

15 [p]1 Sam. 3:2; 1 Kin. 14:4 [7]*fixed*

16 [q]2 Sam. 1:4

Gath, and Gaza (6:17; Judg. 3:3). The Philistines often tried to expand their territory, and in the time of Samuel and the early monarchy they were in direct conflict with the Israelites to the north and east.

Ebenezer. This may be an archaeological site about two miles east of Aphek (cf. v. 6). Ebenezer (meaning, "Stone of Help") is mentioned again in 5:1. The Ebenezer of 7:12 recalls these earlier references (7:12 note), but it is a different place, near Mizpah.

Aphek. Aphek was at the southern end of the plain of Sharon, about five miles inland from the Mediterranean, near the source of the Yarkon River (29:1). It was among the cities conquered by Joshua (Josh. 12:18).

■ **4:3 Why has the LORD defeated us.** The elders' question is appropriate insofar as it reflects the belief that "the battle is the LORD's" (17:47). They do not wait for an answer, however, but immediately take matters into their own hands.

Let us bring the ark. The elders' apparent conviction that the ark was a magical guarantee of the Lord's presence is similar to that of the Philistines (vv. 7–9). Salvation depends on God's free initiative and sovereign grace, not on human techniques or schemes (2 Sam. 15:25 and note).

■ **4:4 LORD of hosts.** See note on 1:3.

Hophni and Phinehas. With his two wicked sons (2:12–17, 27–36) in charge of the ark, it is not surprising that Eli's "heart trembled for the ark of God" (v. 13).

■ **4:6 Hebrews.** This word first occurs in Gen. 14:13 as a description of Abram. Extrabiblical documents of the second millennium B.C. mention a diverse and widespread people called "Habiru." This has caused considerable debate about whether the biblical Hebrews are the same as these people. The Habiru seem to have been a landless class of aliens or refugees, who survived either by hiring themselves out as soldiers or farmers, or by plundering.

■ **4:8 mighty gods . . . who struck the Egyptians.** The Philistines' cry of woe betrays their polytheistic perspective but nevertheless leaves little doubt of the impact that event had on surrounding nations (6:6; Josh. 2:9–11).

■ **4:10 thirty thousand.** Far from bringing relief, the Israelites' attempt to manipulate the Lord for their own ends resulted in even greater defeat (v. 2).

■ **4:11 the ark of God was captured.** An event as astonishing as it was disastrous, the loss of the ark must surely have made "both ears . . . tingle" (3:11).

Hophni and Phinehas, died. In fulfillment of 2:34 and 3:12.

■ **4:13 his heart trembled for the ark of God.** Earlier rebuked for honoring his sons more than the Lord (2:29), Eli now shows a concern for the ark of God that surpasses his concern for his own sons (vv. 17–18).

■ **4:18 mention of the ark.** Not the news of heavy losses suffered by the Israelites, nor the news of the death of his own sons (v. 17), but the

20 [r]Gen. 35:16–19 [s]*pay any attention to*

21 [s]1 Sam. 14:3 [t]Ps. 26:8; 78:61 [u]Lit. *Inglorious*

CHAPTER 5

1 [a]1 Sam. 4:1; 7:12

2 [b]1 Chr. 10:8–10 [f]A Philistine idol

3 [c]Is. 19:1; 46:1, 2 [d]Is. 46:7

4 [e]Mic. 1:7 [g]So with LXX, Syr., Tg., Vg.; MT *Dagon*

5 [f]Zeph. 1:9

6 [g]Ex. 9:3 [h]1 Sam. 6:5 [i]Deut. 28:27; Ps. 78:66 [j]Josh. 15:46, 47 [k]Probably bubonic plague. LXX, Vg. add *And in the midst of their land rats sprang up, and there was a great death panic in the city.*

7 [k]1 Sam. 6:5

Ichabod

19 Now his daughter-in-law, Phinehas' wife, was with child, *due* to be delivered; and when she heard the news that the ark of God was captured, and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she bowed herself and gave birth, for her labor pains came upon her. 20 And about the time of her death [r]the women who stood by her said to her, "Do not fear, for you have borne a son." But she did not answer, nor did she [s]regard *it.* 21 Then she named the child [t]Ichabod,[u] saying, [t]"The glory has departed from Israel!" because the ark of God had been captured and because of her father-in-law and her husband. 22 And she said, "The glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God has been captured."

The Philistines and the Ark

5 Then the Philistines took the ark of God and brought it [a]from Ebenezer to Ashdod. 2 When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it into the house of [b]Dagon[f] and set it by Dagon. 3 And when the people of Ashdod arose early in the morning, there was Dagon, [c]fallen on its face to the earth before the ark of the LORD. So they took Dagon and [d]set it in its place again. 4 And when they arose early the next morning, there was Dagon, fallen on its face to the ground before the ark of the LORD. [e]The head of Dagon and both the palms of its hands *were* broken off on the threshold; only [g]Dagon's torso was left of it. 5 Therefore neither the priests of Dagon nor any who come into Dagon's house [f]tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod to this day.

6 But the [g]hand of the LORD was heavy on the people of Ashdod, and He [h]ravaged them and struck them with [i]tumors,[k] *both* Ashdod and its [j]territory. 7 And when the men of Ashdod saw how *it was,* they said, "The ark of the [k]God of Israel must not remain with us, for His hand is harsh toward us and Dagon our god." 8 Therefore they sent and gathered to themselves all the [l]lords of the Philistines, and said, "What shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel?"

And they answered, "Let the ark of the God of Israel be carried away to [m]Gath." So they carried the ark of the God of Israel away. 9 So it was, after they had carried it away, that [n]the hand

8 [l]1 Sam. 6:4 [m]Josh. 11:22 9 [n]Deut. 2:15

announcement that the ark of God had been captured prompted the reaction that resulted in Eli's own death.

he had judged Israel. There is no necessary contradiction in Eli's being described as both priest and judge (Deut. 17:8–12; 19:17; 1 Chr. 23:2–4; 2 Chr. 19:8; Ezek. 44:24). "Judged" associates him with the leaders God raised up between the death of Joshua and the institution of kingship.

forty years. Eli's forty-year tenure of leadership would have overlapped the exploits of Samson (Judg. 13—16) and possibly also with the activity of the judges mentioned in Judg. 12:8–15.

■ **4:21 Ichabod . . . The glory has departed.** Phinehas's wife, as she dies, names their newborn son Ichabod, meaning either "No glory" or "Where is the glory?" (2:29 note). As v. 22 makes clear, the "glory" to which she refers is not primarily the house of Eli but the ark of God now lost. See also note on 14:3.

■ **5:1 Ebenezer.** See 4:1 note.

Ashdod. One of the five main Philistine cities (4:1), Ashdod is about thirty miles south of Ebenezer and three miles inland from the Mediterranean. Philistine occupation of Ashod is attested archaeologically for the twelfth and eleventh centuries B.C. In the New Testament period, the site was called Azotus (Acts 8:40).

■ **5:2 Dagon.** A prominent deity among the Philistines as well as in Mesopotamia, Syria, and Phoenicia from the middle of the third millennium B.C., Dagon was once thought to be a fish deity because of the similarity between the name Dagon and the Hebrew word for fish (*dag*). It now appears more likely that the name should be associated with the Hebrew word for grain (*dagan*), making Dagon an agricultural or fertility god. Dagon seems to have headed the Philistine pantheon (Judg. 16:23; 1 Chr. 10:10), which included the goddess Ashtoreth (31:8–10) and the god Baal-Zebul ("Baal the prince"). Baal-Zebul was worshiped at Ekron, and his name was intentionally distorted by the Israelites to Baal-Zebub ("lord of the flies"; 2 Kin. 1:1–6, 16). The worship of Dagon is attested as late as the Maccabean period (second century B.C.; 1 Macc. 10:83, 84).

set it by Dagon. In the ancient Near East the victorious army would carry off the gods of the vanquished and deposit them in the temple of their own gods as a sign of the inferiority and subordination of the captured gods. Though not an idol, the ark of God was treated that way by the Philistines.

■ **5:3 Dagon, fallen on its face.** The supposedly victorious deity lies on his face doing homage to the ostensibly vanquished one (v. 2 note).

■ **5:4 head . . . hands were broken off.** The specific damage to the idol is to be understood in light of the common practice in antiquity of removing the head and hands of the enemy dead (Judg. 7:25; 8:6; 1 Sam. 17:54; 31:9; 2 Sam. 4:12).

■ **5:5 tread on the threshold.** Thresholds are often invested with special significance, and the practice of not stepping on the threshold of a sacred place was known, if not approved, in Israel (Zeph. 1:9). Linking the custom of the priests of Dagon with this humiliating incident may be intended more to ridicule them than to convey information about their ritual practice.

to this day. This phrase suggests a significant interval of time between the event and the account of it (cf. 6:18).

■ **5:6 the hand of the LORD was heavy.** See v. 11 and notes on vv. 1, 4; 2:9. The Lord is not tamed by friend or foe. Refusing to be manipulated by Israel, God departed to the territory of Israel's enemies (4:21). There He demonstrated His sovereignty, causing the Philistines to feel the weight of His hand in judgment.

tumors. The most plausible explanation of the tumors is that they were symptoms of bubonic plague, transmitted by rodents.

■ **5:8 lords of the Philistines.** The reference is apparently to the rulers of the Philistine league (4:1 note), who could cooperate in times of emergency.

Gath. The location of Gath is debated, but the best candidate is Tell es-Safi, about twelve miles east of Ashdod. Possibly the Philistine plan was to move the ark to another town in the hope that the plague would not break out there, showing that it had been a coincidence that a plague had broken out in Ashdod. This hope was dramatically dashed (v. 9).

of the LORD was against the city with a very great destruction; and He struck the men of the city, both small and great, [d]and tumors broke out on them.

10 Therefore they sent the ark of God to Ekron. So it was, as the ark of God came to Ekron, that the Ekronites cried out, saying, "They have brought the ark of the God of Israel to us, to kill us and our people!" 11 So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines, and said, "Send away the ark of the God of Israel, and let it go back to its own place, so that it does not kill us and our people." For there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city; the hand of God was very heavy there. 12 And the men who did not die were stricken with the tumors, and the [o]cry of the city went up to heaven.

The Ark Returned to Israel

6 Now the ark of the LORD was in the country of the Philistines seven months. 2 And the Philistines [a]called for the priests and the diviners, saying, "What shall we do with the ark of the LORD? Tell us how we should send it to its place."

3 So they said, "If you send away the ark of the God of Israel, do not send it [b]empty; but by all means return *it* to Him *with* [c]a trespass offering. Then you will be healed, and it will be known to you why His hand is not removed from you."

4 Then they said, "What *is* the trespass offering which we shall return to Him?"

They answered, [d]"Five golden tumors and five golden rats, *according to* the number of the lords of the Philistines. For the same plague *was* on all of [f]you and on your lords. 5 Therefore you shall make images of your tumors and images of your rats that [e]ravage the land, and you shall [f]give glory to the God of Israel; perhaps He will [g]lighten[2] His hand from you, from [h]your gods, and from your land. 6 Why then do you harden your hearts [i]as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? When He did mighty things among them, [j]did they not let the people go, that they might depart? 7 Now therefore, make [k]a new cart, take two milk cows [l]which have never been yoked, and hitch the cows to the cart; and take their calves home, away from them. 8 Then take the ark of the LORD and set it on the cart; and put [m]the articles of gold which you are returning to Him *as* a trespass offering in a chest by its side. Then send it away, and let it go. 9 And watch: if it goes up the road to its own territory, to [n]Beth Shemesh, *then* He has done [3]us this great evil. But if not, then [o]we shall know that *it is* not His hand *that* struck us—it happened to us by chance."

10 Then the men did so; they took two milk cows and hitched them to the cart, and shut up their calves at home. 11 And they set the ark of the LORD on the cart, and the chest with the gold rats and the images of their tumors. 12 Then the cows headed straight for the road to Beth

9 [d]Vg. *and they had tumors in their secret parts*

12 [o]1 Sam. 9:16; Jer. 14:2

CHAPTER 6

2 [a]Gen. 41:8; Ex. 7:11; Is. 2:6; 47:13; Dan. 2:2; 5:7

3 [b]Ex. 23:15; Deut. 16:16 [c]Lev. 5:15, 16

4 [d]1 Sam. 5:6, 9, 12; 6:17 [f]Lit. *them*

5 [e]1 Sam. 5:6 [f]Josh. 7:19; 1 Chr. 16:28, 29; Is. 42:12; Jer. 13:16; Mal. 2:2; Rev. 14:7 [g]1 Sam. 5:6, 11; Ps. 39:10 [h]1 Sam. 5:3, 4, 7 [2]*ease*

6 [i]Ex. 7:13; 8:15; 9:34; 14:17 [j]Ex. 12:31

7 [k]2 Sam. 6:3 [l]Num. 19:2; Deut. 21:3, 4

8 [m]1 Sam. 6:4, 5

9 [n]Josh. 15:10; 21:16 [o]1 Sam. 6:3 [3]*this calamity to us*

■ **5:10 the Ekronites cried out.** After the failed experiment in Gath, the people of Ekron at least are no longer skeptical about the danger of keeping the ark (v. 8 note). Ekron was five miles due north of Gath and was the closest of the Philistines' major cities to Israelite territory.

■ **5:11 Send away the ark.** Unable to bear up under the heavy "hand of the LORD" (v. 6 note), the Ekronites now plead that the ark be returned "to its own place."

■ **6:1 seven months.** The events recorded in the previous chapter took place not in a matter of days but months. The number seven often signifies completeness.

■ **6:2 diviners.** Together with witchcraft and sorcery (Num. 23:23), divination was explicitly condemned in Israel (Deut. 18:10, 14; Jer. 27:9; Ezek. 13:23). It was practiced by some of Israel's neighbors (Num. 22:7; Ezek. 21:21).

What shall we do. They had the same problem faced by the people of Ashdod (5:8). Moving the ark from place to place inside Philistine territory had failed, making it clear that the only solution was to return the ark to Israel.

■ **6:3 trespass offering.** The offering is intended to acknowledge guilt and to compensate for the offense of taking the ark (v. 4).

■ **6:5 make images of your tumors.** The procedure adopted by the Philistines had several purposes. The gold used for the models was a kind of compensation for having taken the ark (v. 4), while the images of tumors and rats were probably a form of sympathetic magic. The Philistines' stated purpose, however, was to "give glory" to Israel's God. With this announcement, the ark narrative comes almost full circle. It was for Israel's failure to honor the Lord and handle the ark properly that God had removed it from them.

from your gods. The Lord's oppressive treatment of the gods of the Philistines is like His treatment of "the gods of Egypt" (Ex. 12:12). As the next verse indicates, this comparison was not lost on the Philistines themselves.

■ **6:6 Why then do you harden your hearts.** Forms of the Hebrew word translated "harden" in this sentence are encountered often in the story of the rejection of the priesthood of Eli's house and the loss of the ark. Elsewhere the word is translated "glory" (v. 5; 4:21), and "honor" (see 2:29 and note).

did mighty things among them. Or "toyed with them," "abused them." The same expression is used in 31:4; Ex. 10:2; Jer. 38:19.

■ **6:7–9** An ancient Hittite ritual text shows some parallels to the procedure described in these verses. In the Hittite ritual, relief from a plague thought to be caused by an enemy god is sought by ceremonially crowning a ram to pacify the enemy god, and then driving the ram down a road leading to enemy territory. In the Philistine version, the point of choosing cows that have never been yoked and of locking away their calves is apparently to make it certain that if the cows do head for Israel it will not be from natural causes nor by coincidence, but by the influence of Israel's God.

■ **6:9 Beth Shemesh.** Lit. "House of the Sun." One of several places in Israel with this name, this Beth Shemesh has been identified with Tell er-Rumeileh, seven miles east of Ekron (5:10 note). Beth Shemesh was a border city (v. 12; Josh. 15:10) frequently in dispute between the Philistines and Israelites (2 Chr. 28:18).

■ **6:12 lowing as they went.** Obviously not happy to be leaving their calves behind, the cows nevertheless do not deviate from their divinely directed path.

Shemesh, *and* went along the [p]highway, lowing as they went, and did not turn aside to the right hand or the left. And the lords of the Philistines went after them to the border of Beth Shemesh.

13 Now *the people of* Beth Shemesh *were* reaping their [q]wheat harvest in the valley; and they lifted their eyes and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see *it.* 14 Then the cart came into the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh, and stood there; a large stone *was* there. So they split the wood of the cart and offered the cows as a burnt offering to the LORD. 15 The Levites took down the ark of the LORD and the chest that *was* with it, in which *were* the articles of gold, and put *them* on the large stone. Then the men of Beth Shemesh offered burnt offerings and made sacrifices the same day to the LORD. 16 So when [r]the five lords of the Philistines had seen *it,* they returned to Ekron the same day.

17 [s]These *are* the golden tumors which the Philistines returned *as* a trespass offering to the LORD: one for Ashdod, one for Gaza, one for Ashkelon, one for [t]Gath, one for Ekron; 18 and the golden rats, *according to* the number of all the cities of the Philistines *belonging* to the five lords, *both* fortified cities and country villages, even as far as the large *stone of* Abel on which they set the ark of the LORD, *which stone remains* to this day in the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh.

19 Then [u]He struck the men of Beth Shemesh, because they had looked into the ark of the LORD. [4]He [v]struck fifty thousand and seventy men of the people, and the people lamented because the LORD had struck the people with a great slaughter.

The Ark at Kirjath Jearim

20 And the men of Beth Shemesh said, [w]"Who is able to stand before this holy LORD God? And to whom shall it go up from us?" 21 So they sent messengers to the inhabitants of [x]Kirjath Jearim, saying, "The Philistines have brought back the ark of the LORD; come down *and* take it up with you."

7 Then the men of [a]Kirjath Jearim came and took the ark of the LORD, and brought it into the house of [b]Abinadab on the hill, and [c]consecrated Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the LORD.

Samuel Judges Israel

2 So it was that the ark remained in Kirjath Jearim a long time; it was there twenty years. And all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD.

3 Then Samuel spoke to all the house of Israel, saying, "If you [d]return to the LORD with all your hearts, *then* [e]put away the foreign gods and the [f]Ashtoreths[1] from among you, and [g]prepare your hearts for the LORD, and [h]serve Him only; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines." 4 So the children of Israel put away the [i]Baals and the [2]Ashtoreths, and served the LORD only.

5 And Samuel said, [j]"Gather all Israel to Mizpah, and [k]I will pray to the LORD for you." 6 So

12 [p]Num. 20:19
13 [q]1 Sam. 12:17
16 [r]Josh. 13:3
17 [s]1 Sam. 6:4 [t]1 Sam. 5:8
19 [u]Ex. 19:21 [v]2 Sam. 6:7 [4]Or *He struck seventy men of the people and fifty oxen of a man*
20 [w]Mal. 3:2
21 [x]1 Chr. 13:5, 6

CHAPTER 7

1 [a]1 Sam. 6:21 [b]2 Sam. 6:3, 4 [c]Lev. 21:8
3 [d]Deut. 30:2–10 [e]Gen. 35:2 [f]Judg. 2:13 [g]Job 11:13 [h]Luke 4:8 [1]Images of Canaanite goddesses
4 [i]Judg. 2:11; 10:16 [2]Images of Canaanite goddesses
5 [j]Judg. 10:17; 20:1 [k]1 Sam. 12:17–19

■ **6:13 their wheat harvest.** See 12:17 note.

■ **6:14 Joshua of Beth Shemesh.** Although this Joshua is not mentioned elsewhere in the Bible, his field and the prominent rock located in it were apparently well known at the time the present account was written (v. 18).

burnt offering. See note on 10:8.

■ **6:15 Levites.** Beth Shemesh was assigned to the Levites, specifically, the descendants of Aaron (Josh. 21:16).

put them on the large stone. The large rock was used as a pedestal for the ark and the gold objects, not as an impromptu altar.

■ **6:18 to this day.** See note on v. 14.

■ **6:19 looked into the ark.** See Num. 4:5, 20. Presumptuous handling of the ark led to its capture, and a similar offense must now be purged on the occasion of its return. The problem of handling the ark improperly will arise again in 2 Sam. 6.

■ **6:20 Who is able to stand.** Cf. Ex. 9:11.

■ **6:21 Kirjath Jearim.** Located nine miles northeast of Beth Shemesh, Kirjath Jearim is also called Kirjath Baal (Josh. 15:60; 18:14), Baalah (Josh. 15:9), and Baale Judah (2 Sam. 6:2).

■ **7:2 twenty years . . . lamented after the LORD.** In light of Samuel's reference to "foreign gods" among the Israelites (v. 3), it seems that it was only at the close of these twenty years that Israel began to seek the Lord.

■ **7:3 prepare your hearts for the LORD . . . and He will deliver you.** The cycle of apostasy, oppression, repentance, and deliverance so typical of the Book of Judges (Judg. 3:7–9) is repeated in the events of this chapter.

■ **7:4 the Baals and the Ashtoreths.** See notes on 5:2; 31:10.

■ **7:5 Mizpah.** A town in Benjamin seven miles north of Jerusalem and eight miles northeast of Kirjath Jearim, Mizpah played a prominent role in Israel before the monarchy (10:17; Judg. 20:1; 21:1, 5, 8). It was one of the regular stops in Samuel's circuit (v. 16). The name, meaning something like "place of watching," implies a high vantage point and was given to a number of sites (e.g., 22:3).

■ **7:6 drew water, and poured it out before the LORD.** Although this action is not paralleled elsewhere in Scripture, it seems to signify sorrow and, along with fasting, a desire to seek God earnestly (cf. 1:15; Ps. 62:8; Lam. 2:19). David's action in 2 Sam. 23:16 occurs in a different context and has a different meaning.

We have sinned against the LORD. The words and actions (v. 4) of the Israelites give evidence of true repentance. The time is ripe for the Lord to deliver His people from their Philistine oppressors. The response of the Philistines to the convocation at Mizpah (v. 7) provides an opportunity for this deliverance.

they gathered together at Mizpah, [l]drew water, and poured *it* out before the LORD. And they [m]fasted that day, and said there, [n]"We have sinned against the LORD." And Samuel judged the children of Israel at Mizpah.

7 Now when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel had gathered together at Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard *of it,* they were afraid of the Philistines. 8 So the children of Israel said to Samuel, [o]"Do not cease to cry out to the LORD our God for us, that He may save us from the hand of the Philistines."

9 And Samuel took a [p]suckling lamb and offered *it as* a whole burnt offering to the LORD. Then [q]Samuel cried out to the LORD for Israel, and the LORD answered him. 10 Now as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel. [r]But the LORD thundered with a loud thunder upon the Philistines that day, and so confused them that they were overcome before Israel. 11 And the men of Israel went out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, and [3]drove them back as far as below Beth Car. 12 Then Samuel [s]took a stone and set *it* up between Mizpah and Shen, and called its name [4]Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far the LORD has helped us."

13 [t]So the Philistines were subdued, and they [u]did not come anymore into the territory of Israel. And the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. 14 Then the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron to Gath; and Israel recovered its territory from the hands of the Philistines. Also there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.

15 And Samuel [v]judged Israel all the days of his life. 16 He went from year to year on a circuit to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah, and judged Israel in all those places. 17 But [w]he always returned

6 [l]2 Sam. 14:14 [m]Judg. 20:26; Neh. 9:1, 2; Dan. 9:3–5; Joel 2:12 [n]Judg. 10:10; 1 Sam. 12:10; 1 Kin. 8:47; Ps. 106:6

8 [o]1 Sam. 12:19–24; Is. 37:4

9 [p]Lev. 22:27 [q]1 Sam. 12:18; Ps. 99:6; Jer. 15:1

10 [r]Josh. 10:10; 2 Sam. 22:14, 15; Ps. 18:13, 14

11 [3]*struck them down*

12 [s]Gen. 28:18; 35:14; Josh. 4:9; 24:26 [4]Lit. *Stone of Help*

13 [t]Judg. 13:1 [u]1 Sam. 13:5

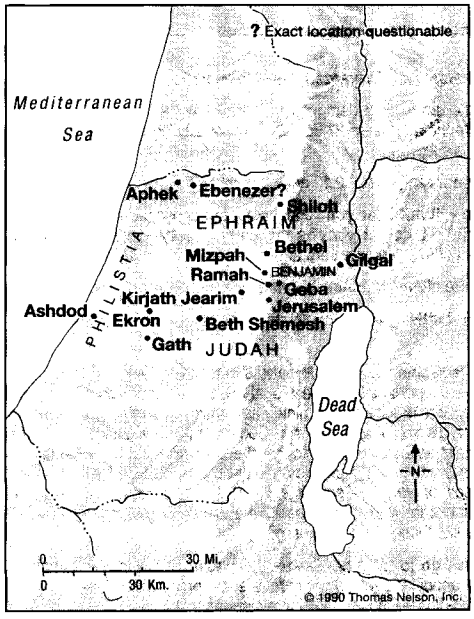
15 [v]1 Sam. 12:11

17 [w]1 Sam. 8:4

■ **7:8 cry out to the LORD.** In the Book of Judges, "crying out" to the Lord was answered through a deliverer whom the Lord would raise up (Judg. 3:9, 15). Here Samuel functions as intercessor and intermediary, while the victory is clearly the Lord's doing (v. 10).

■ **7:9 burnt offering.** See note on 10:8.

■ **7:10 the LORD thundered . . . upon the Philistines.** This statement dramatically recalls the earlier words of Hannah that "the adversaries . . . shall be broken in pieces; from heaven He will thunder against them" (2:10; cf. 2 Sam. 22:14). Hannah's words are immediately preceded by the statement that "by strength no man shall prevail" (2:9). Human strength is of little consequence when the Lord decides to act.



■ **7:11 Beth Car.** Location not known.

■ **7:12 Ebenezer.** A different site than that mentioned in 4:1 (note) and 5:1, this Ebenezer nevertheless recalls the earlier episode, when the Israelites tried to manipulate their God by carrying the ark into battle only to suffer a resounding defeat. Now God has given them a great victory over the same enemies. Samuel sets up a memorial stone with the name Ebenezer, "Stone of Help," not only to commemorate the victory but also as reminder of the different results brought about by presumption on the one hand and by repentance on the other.

Thus far the LORD has helped us. The saying means that the Lord had been with them all the way "to this place," or "to this hour."

■ **7:13 did not come anymore into the territory of Israel.** The reference is to the tactical situation and not to the continuing history of Israel. The Philistines were convincingly defeated and attempted no counterattack (compare 2 Sam. 2:28 with 3:1; also 2 Kin. 6:23 with 6:24), but this does not rule out subsequent Philistine aggression (9:16; 10:5; 13:3; 14:52).

the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines. What God had done during the tenure of the ark in Philistine territory (5:4, 6; 6:5 and notes), He now continues through the leadership of Samuel. Throughout Samuel's lifetime God continued to give Israel victory, though the fighting at times was fierce (14:52). The defeat recounted in ch. 31 came only after Samuel's death (25:1).

■ **7:16 Bethel.** Ten miles north of Jerusalem.

Gilgal. Gilgal was probably in the Jordan Valley near Jericho (Josh. 5:10).

Mizpah. See note on 7:5.

■ **7:17 Ramah.** See note on 1:1.

The Ministry of Samuel. At Shiloh God called Samuel to be His servant and prophet. As judge, Samuel visited Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpah yearly. Also at Gilgal Samuel renewed the kingdom covenant with Israel and established Saul as king.

17 [x]Judg. 21:4

to Ramah, for his home *was* there. There he judged Israel, and there he [x]built an altar to the LORD.

CHAPTER 8

Israel Demands a King

8 Now it came to pass when Samuel was [a]old that he [b]made his [c]sons judges over Israel.
2 The name of his firstborn was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; *they were* judges in Beersheba. 3 But his sons [d]did not walk in his ways; they turned aside [e]after dishonest gain, [f]took bribes, and perverted justice.

4 Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, 5 and said to him, "Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now [g]make us a king to judge us like all the nations."

6 But the thing [h]displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to judge us." So Samuel [i]prayed to the LORD. 7 And the LORD said to Samuel, "Heed the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for [j]they have not rejected you, but [k]they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them. 8 According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt, even to this day—with which they have forsaken Me and served other gods—so they are doing to you also. 9 Now therefore, heed their voice. However, you shall solemnly forewarn them, and [l]show them the behavior of the king who will reign over them."

10 So Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who asked him for a king. 11 And he said, [m]"This will be the behavior of the king who will reign over you: He will take your [n]sons and appoint *them* for his own [o]chariots and *to be* his horsemen, and *some* will run before his chariots. 12 He will [p]appoint captains over his thousands and captains over his fifties, *will set some* to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and *some* to make his weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. 13 He will take your daughters *to be* perfumers, cooks, and bakers. 14 And [q]he will take the best of your fields, your vineyards, and your olive groves, and give *them* to his servants. 15 He will take a tenth of your grain and your vintage, and give it to his officers and servants. 16 And he will take your male servants, your female servants, your finest [l]young men, and your donkeys, and put *them* to his work. 17 He will take a tenth of your sheep. And you will be his servants. 18 And you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, and the LORD [r]will not hear you in that day."

19 Nevertheless the people [s]refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, "No, but we will have a king over us, 20 that we also may be [t]like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles."

21 And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he repeated them in the hearing of the LORD. 22 So the LORD said to Samuel, [u]"Heed their voice, and make them a king."

And Samuel said to the men of Israel, "Every man go to his city."

1 [a]1 Sam. 12:2 [b]Deut. 16:18, 19; 2 Chr. 19:5 [c]Judg. 10:4
3 [d]Jer. 22:15–17 [e]Ex. 18:21 [f]Ex. 23:6–8; Deut. 16:19; 1 Sam. 12:3
5 [g]Deut. 17:14, 15; Hos. 13:10, 11; Acts 13:21
6 [h]1 Sam. 12:17 [i]1 Sam. 7:9
7 [j]Ex. 16:8 [k]1 Sam. 10:19
9 [l]1 Sam. 8:11–18
11 [m]Deut. 17:14–20 [n]1 Sam. 14:52 [o]2 Sam. 15:1
12 [p]1 Sam. 22:7
14 [q]1 Kin. 21:7; [Ezek. 46:18]
16 [r]LXX *cattle*
18 [r]Prov. 1:25–28; Is. 1:15; Mic. 3:4
19 [s]Is. 66:4; Jer. 44:16
20 [t]1 Sam. 8:5
22 [u]1 Sam. 8:7; Hos. 13:11

■ **8:5 Now make us a king.** The reasons given by the elders for wanting a king, though acceptable in themselves (as confirmed by the narrator in vv. 1–3), are really a pretext; what they really wanted was to become like "all the nations" (cf. v. 20).

■ **8:7 they have not rejected you.** Since the elders couch their request in terms of a "king to judge us" (v. 5 note), Samuel initially interprets their overture as an attack on his own leadership (v. 6). But the Lord points out to him that the affront is far graver than that.

they have rejected Me. The offense of the elders' request lies not in the concept of human kingship in itself, for kingship in Israel had long been anticipated (2:10 note), but in breaking their covenant relationship with God. Their sin was to reject God as their king and to take instead a human monarch (10:19; 12:12–20; and contrast Gideon's refusal in Judg. 8:23).

■ **8:10 who asked him for a king.** For the second time in 1 Samuel an individual is "asked for." The individual given in response to the first request was Samuel (1:20 note), and it is Saul (whose name is based on the Hebrew root meaning "ask for") who will be given in response to the second request.

■ **8:11 This will be the behavior of the king.** Israel's Canaanite neighbors and many of the Israelite kings were guilty of harsh practices like those described in vv. 11–17.

chariots. See 2 Sam. 8:4; 15:1; 1 Kin. 4:26; 10:26–29.

run before. Compare the actions of Absalom in 2 Sam. 15:1 with Adonijah in 1 Kin. 1:5.

■ **8:14 fields . . . vineyards.** See note on 22:7.

■ **8:15–17 tenth.** The demands of the king will either take from what belongs to the Lord (Lev. 27:30–32; Deut. 14:22, 28) or create a tax burden for his subjects.

■ **8:18 your king.** See 12:13 and contrast 16:1.

the LORD will not hear you. Judging by the consequences, Israel's rejection of the Lord in favor of a human king is the moral and religious equivalent of forsaking the Lord to serve other gods (Judg. 10:10–14).

■ **8:20 like all the nations.** See note on v. 5.

fight our battles. To be contrasted with "the LORD's battles" (18:17; 25:28).

■ **8:22 Heed their voice, and make them a king.** The Lord's concession to the people's sinful request is, at this point in the account, perplexing. If their desire for a king is sinful, amounting to a rejection of God as king (vv. 7, 18 and notes), how can God grant it? One answer lies in the standards of acceptable kingship that the Lord will establish. God is graciously willing to give the people a king and even to bless him, although not the sort of king they envisage (10:1, 7, 8 and notes). At the same time, because they adopted kingship in unbelief, they came to suffer under kings like those of the nations.

Every man go to his city. Samuel's dismissal of the men of Israel implies that appointing a king will require some preparation. The course of that preparation will be related in the chapters that follow.

Saul Chosen to Be King

CHAPTER 9

9 There was a man of Benjamin whose name *was* [a]Kish the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, a Benjamite, a mighty man of [1]power. 2 And he had a choice and handsome son whose name *was* Saul. *There was* not a more handsome person than he among the children of Israel. [b]From his shoulders upward *he was* taller than any of the people.

3 Now the donkeys of Kish, Saul's father, were lost. And Kish said to his son Saul, "Please take one of the servants with you, and arise, go and look for the donkeys." 4 So he passed through the mountains of Ephraim and through the land of [c]Shalisha, but they did not find *them.* Then they passed through the land of Shaalim, and *they were* not *there.* Then he passed through the land of the Benjamites, but they did not find *them.*

5 When they had come to the land of [d]Zuph, Saul said to his servant who *was* with him, "Come, let [e]us return, lest my father cease *caring* about the donkeys and become worried about us."

6 And he said to him, "Look now, *there is* in this city [f]a man of God, and *he is* an honorable man; [g]all that he says surely comes to pass. So let us go there; perhaps he can show us the way that we should go."

7 Then Saul said to his servant, "But look, *if* we go, [h]what shall we bring the man? For the bread in our vessels is all gone, and *there is* no present to bring to the man of God. What do we have?"

8 And the servant answered Saul again and said, "Look, I have here at hand one-fourth of a shekel of silver. I will give *that* to the man of God, to tell us our way." 9 (Formerly in Israel, when a man [i]went [2]to inquire of God, he spoke thus: "Come, let us go to the seer"; for *he who is* now *called* a prophet was formerly called [j]a seer.)

10 Then Saul said to his servant, [3]"Well said; come, let us go." So they went to the city where the man of God *was.*

11 As they went up the hill to the city, [k]they met some young women going out to draw water, and said to them, "Is the seer here?"

12 And they answered them and said, "Yes, there he is, just ahead of you. Hurry now; for today he came to this city, because [l]there is a sacrifice of the people today [m]on the high place. 13 As soon as you come into the city, you will surely find him before he goes up to the high place to eat. For the people will not eat until he comes, because he must bless the sacrifice; afterward those who are invited will eat. Now therefore, go up, for about this time you will find him." 14 So they went up to the city. As they were coming into the city, there was Samuel, coming out toward them on his way up to the high place.

15 [n]Now the LORD had told Samuel in his ear the day before Saul came, saying, 16 "Tomorrow about this time [o]I will send you a man from the land of Benjamin, [p]and you shall anoint him

1 [a]1 Sam. 14:51; 1 Chr. 8:33; 9:36–39 [1]*wealth*

2 [b]1 Sam. 10:23

4 [c]2 Kin. 4:42

5 [d]1 Sam. 1:1 [e]1 Sam. 10:2

6 [f]Deut. 33:1; 1 Kin. 13:1; 2 Kin. 5:8 [g]1 Sam. 3:19

7 [h]Judg. 6:18; 13:17; 1 Kin. 14:3; 2 Kin. 4:42; 8:8

9 [i]Gen. 25:22 [j]2 Sam. 24:11; 2 Kin. 17:13; 1 Chr. 26:28; 29:29; 2 Chr. 16:7, 10; Is. 30:10; Amos 7:12 [2]Lit. *to seek God*

10 [3]Lit. *Your word is good*

11 [k]Gen. 24:11, 15; 29:8, 9; Ex. 2:16

12 [l]Gen. 31:54; 1 Sam. 16:2 [m]1 Sam. 7:17; 10:5; 1 Kin. 3:2

15 [n]1 Sam. 15:1

16 [o]Deut. 17:15 [p]1 Sam. 10:1

■ **9:1 a mighty man of power.** The opening verse of the account of Saul's adventures is formally similar to the beginning of the birth narrative of Samuel (1:1). In both instances the father of the principal character is introduced with sufficient genealogical references to suggest a man of standing. In Samuel's introduction we are also told of the father's faithful religious observance (1:3–5), whereas in this account we are introduced immediately to Saul (v. 2), and the focus remains exclusively on external qualities.

■ **9:2 a choice and handsome son.** The emphasis of this description is Saul's physical stature and impressive appearance. Compare the description of Absalom in 2 Sam. 14:25, 26.

■ **9:6 there is in this city a man of God.** That Saul is unaware of the presence and reputation of the man of God or has not thought of consulting him reflects negatively on his judgment.

all that he says surely comes to pass. The man of God is Samuel, of whom it is said in 3:19 that the Lord "let none of his words fall to the ground."

■ **9:7 there is no present to bring to the man of God.** Josephus (*Antiquities* 6.4.1) interprets Saul's words as a sign that he was ignorant that a true prophet would accept no reward. Israel's writing prophets express disdain for those who prophesy for money (Mic. 3:5, 11), although there are various references to goods being offered in return for prophetic favors (e.g., 1 Kin. 14:3; 2 Kin. 4:42; 8:8). In two instances payment is explicitly refused (1 Kin. 13:7–9; 2 Kin. 5:15, 16), and in one instance where goods are accepted, the payment does not benefit the prophet personally but is distributed among the people (2 Kin. 4:42).

■ **9:9 a prophet was formerly called a seer.** The terms are synonymous.

■ **9:12 they answered.** In the Hebrew, vv. 12, 13 convey excitement and animation as the girls urge Saul to hurry up to the city, where he will be just in time to meet Samuel.

high place. Although it was recognized that such high places (often sites of Canaanite worship) posed a clear danger to the purity of Israelite worship (e.g., Lev. 26:30; Num. 33:52; Deut. 12:2, 3; Jer. 2:20), it is apparent from passages such as this that worship of Yahweh was sometimes conducted there, especially during the early monarchy (10:5; 1 Kin. 3:2–4). Such worship may have been made necessary by the loss of the sanctuary at Shiloh (1:3 note). After the division of the kingdom, worship at "high places" was a serious problem both in the north (1 Kin. 12:31, 32; 13:32–34) and in the south (1 Kin. 14:22–24). Removal of the "high places" was a major goal of reform movements under southern kings like Hezekiah (2 Kin. 18:4) and Josiah (2 Kin. 23:5).

■ **9:16 anoint him.** See note on 2:10.

16 [q]Ex. 2:23–25; 3:7, 9 [4]*prince* or *ruler*

17 [r]1 Sam. 16:12

20 [s]1 Sam. 9:3 [t]1 Sam. 8:5, 19; 12:13 [5]*for whom*

21 [u]1 Sam. 15:17 [v]Judg. 20:46–48 [w]Judg. 6:15 [6]Lit. *tribes*

24 [x]Lev. 7:32, 33

25 [y]Deut. 22:8 [7]So with MT, Tg.; LXX omits *He spoke with Saul on the top of the house;* LXX, Vg. afterward add *And he prepared a bed for Saul on the top of the house, and he slept.*

27 [8]*now*

CHAPTER 10

1 [a]2 Kin. 9:3, 6 [b]Ps. 2:12 [c]Acts 13:21 [d]Deut. 32:9 [1]So with MT, Tg., Vg.; LXX *people Israel; and you shall rule the people of the Lord;* LXX, Vg. add *And you shall deliver His people from the hands of their enemies all around them. And this shall be a sign to you, that God has anointed you to be a prince.*

2 [e]Gen. 35:16–20; 48:7 [f]Josh. 18:28 [g]1 Sam. 9:3–5

[4]commander over My people Israel, that he may save My people from the hand of the Philistines; for I have [q]looked upon My people, because their cry has come to Me."

17 So when Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said to him, [r]"There he is, the man of whom I spoke to you. This one shall reign over My people." 18 Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate, and said, "Please tell me, where *is* the seer's house?"

19 Samuel answered Saul and said, "I *am* the seer. Go up before me to the high place, for you shall eat with me today; and tomorrow I will let you go and will tell you all that *is* in your heart. 20 But as for [s]your donkeys that were lost three days ago, do not be anxious about them, for they have been found. And [5]on whom [t]*is* all the desire of Israel? *Is it* not on you and on all your father's house?"

21 And Saul answered and said, [u]"*Am* I not a Benjamite, of the [v]smallest of the tribes of Israel, and [w]my family the least of all the families of the [6]tribe of Benjamin? Why then do you speak like this to me?"

22 Now Samuel took Saul and his servant and brought them into the hall, and had them sit in the place of honor among those who were invited; there *were* about thirty persons. 23 And Samuel said to the cook, "Bring the portion which I gave you, of which I said to you, 'Set it apart.' " 24 So the cook took up [x]the thigh with its upper part and set *it* before Saul. And *Samuel* said, "Here it is, what was kept back. *It* was set apart for you. Eat; for until this time it has been kept for you, since I said I invited the people." So Saul ate with Samuel that day.

25 When they had come down from the high place into the city, [7]*Samuel* spoke with Saul on [y]the top of the house. 26 They arose early; and it was about the dawning of the day that Samuel called to Saul on the top of the house, saying, "Get up, that I may send you on your way." And Saul arose, and both of them went outside, he and Samuel.

Saul Anointed King

27 As they were going down to the outskirts of the city, Samuel said to Saul, "Tell the servant to go on ahead of us." And he went on. "But you stand here [8]awhile, that I may announce to you the word of God."

10 Then [a]Samuel took a flask of oil and poured *it* on his head, [b]and kissed him and said: "*Is it* not because [c]the LORD has anointed you commander over [d]His [1]inheritance? 2 When you have departed from me today, you will find two men by [e]Rachel's tomb in the territory of Benjamin [f]at Zelzah; and they will say to you, 'The donkeys which you went to look for have been found. And now your father has ceased caring about the donkeys and is worrying about [g]you, saying, "What shall I do about my son?" ' 3 Then you shall go on forward from there and come to the terebinth tree of Tabor. There three men going up [h]to God at Bethel will meet you, one carrying three young goats, another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a skin of wine. 4 And they will [2]greet you and give you two *loaves* of bread, which you shall receive from their hands. 5 After that you shall come to the hill of God [i]where the Philistine garrison *is*. And it will happen, when you have come there to the city, that you will meet a group of

3 [h]Gen. 28:22; 35:1, 3, 7 4 [2]*ask you about your welfare* 5 [i]1 Sam. 13:2, 3

commander. The word appears to be a title for "one designated to rule" (cf. its use with reference to Solomon as crown prince in 1 Kin. 1:35). Saul's assignment in the immediate context is to deliver Israel from the Philistines, and against the background of ch. 8 the logical assumption is that he will go on to become king.

Philistines. See note on 4:1.

■ **9:18 Saul drew near to Samuel.** Saul's failure to recognize Samuel is a troubling hint of spiritual insensitivity and inattentiveness that will increasingly characterize Saul as the narrative progresses.

■ **9:20 all the desire of Israel.** This expression may suggest that Saul is just the kind of king the people want in ch. 8.

■ **9:24 took up the thigh . . . set it before Saul.** The special treatment given Saul illustrates not only his newly elevated status but also Samuel's divinely enabled anticipation of his arrival (vv. 15, 16).

■ **10:1 anointed you commander.** See note on 9:16.

His inheritance. See 9:16 ("My people Israel"); 2 Sam. 20:19 and note; Deut. 32:9. The Lord's willingness to grant the people a human king does not mean that He forfeited His rule over His own people, Israel. The appointed king was always subordinate to God.

■ **10:2–6** Samuel's words will be confirmed to Saul as the sequence of events comes to pass in the order foretold. Finally, Saul will come under the power of the Spirit (vv. 5, 6).

■ **10:5 the Philistine garrison.** The mention of a "Philistine garrison" foreshadows the task ahead for the one designated to deliver the people of God from the Philistines (9:16). On the stationing of garrisons in subject territories, see David's practice in 2 Sam. 8:6.

group of prophets. Samuel is associated with a group of prophets in 19:20, where he is described as their leader. Note the similar association of Elisha with the "sons of the prophets" in 2 Kin. 2; 6:1; 9:1; etc. These prophetic guilds appear to have been made up of defenders of true religion in times of widespread apostasy and spiritual indifference.

prophesying. Prophecy in the Old Testament is often, though not exclusively, associated with the giving of a message (see Aaron's role as Moses' "prophet" or spokesman in Ex. 7:1; and compare Ezek. 21:9; Amos 3:8). God's prophets were His messengers (2 Sam. 7:1–5; 12:1; 24:11–12). In some places, prophecy is associated with music (Ex. 15:20, 21; 1 Chr. 25:1). The prophesying in view here seems to be praising God and exhorting the people with musical accompaniment.

prophets coming down [j]from the high place with a stringed instrument, a tambourine, a flute, and a harp before them; [k]and they will be prophesying. 6 Then [l]the Spirit of the LORD will come upon you, and [m]you will prophesy with them and be turned into another man. 7 And let it be, when these [n]signs come to you, *that* you do as the occasion demands; for [o]God *is* with you. 8 You shall go down before me [p]to Gilgal; and surely I will come down to you to offer burnt offerings *and* make sacrifices of peace offerings. [q]Seven days you shall wait, till I come to you and show you what you should do."

9 So it was, when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, that God [3]gave him another heart; and all those signs came to pass that day. 10 [r]When they came there to the hill, there was [s]a group of prophets to meet him; then the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them. 11 And it happened, when all who knew him formerly saw that he indeed prophesied among the prophets, that the people said to one another, "What *is* this *that* has come upon the son of Kish? [t]*Is* Saul also among the prophets?" 12 Then a man from there answered and said, "But [u]who *is* their father?" Therefore it became a proverb: "*Is* Saul also among the prophets?" 13 And when he had finished prophesying, he went to the high place.

14 Then Saul's [v]uncle said to him and his servant, "Where did you go?"

So he said, "To look for the donkeys. When we saw that *they were* nowhere *to be found,* we went to Samuel."

15 And Saul's uncle said, "Tell me, please, what Samuel said to you."

16 So Saul said to his uncle, "He told us plainly that the donkeys had been [w]found." But about the matter of the kingdom, he did not tell him what Samuel had said.

Saul Proclaimed King

17 Then Samuel called the people together [x]to the LORD [y]at Mizpah, 18 and said to the children of Israel, [z]"Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians *and* from the hand of all kingdoms and from those who oppressed you.' 19 [a]But you have today rejected your God, who Himself saved you from all your adversities and your tribulations; and you have said to Him, 'No, set a king over us!' Now therefore, present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and by your [4]clans."

20 And when Samuel had [b]caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was chosen. 21 When he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was chosen. And Saul the son of Kish was chosen. But when they sought him, he could not be found. 22 Therefore they [c]inquired of the LORD further, "Has the man come here yet?"

And the LORD answered, "There he is, hidden among the equipment."

5 [j]1 Sam. 19:12, 20; 2 Kin. 2:3, 5, 15 [k]Ex. 15:20, 21; 2 Kin. 3:15; 1 Chr. 25:1–6; 1 Cor. 14:1

6 [l]Num. 11:25, 29; Judg. 14:6; 1 Sam. 16:13 [m]1 Sam. 10:10; 19:23, 24

7 [n]Ex. 4:8; Luke 2:12 [o]Josh. 1:5; Judg. 6:12; 1 Sam. 3:19; [Heb. 13:5]

8 [p]1 Sam. 11:14, 15; 13:8 [q]1 Sam. 13:8–10

9 [3]*changed his heart*

10 [r]1 Sam. 10:5 [s]1 Sam. 19:20

11 [t]1 Sam. 19:24; Amos 7:14, 15; Matt. 13:54–57; John 7:15; Acts 4:13

12 [u]John 5:30, 36

14 [v]1 Sam. 14:50

16 [w]1 Sam. 9:20

17 [x]Judg. 20:1 [y]1 Sam. 7:5, 6

18 [z]Judg. 6:8, 9; 1 Sam. 8:8; 12:6, 8

19 [a]1 Sam. 8:7, 19; 12:12 [4]Lit. *thousands*

20 [b]Acts 1:24, 26

22 [c]1 Sam. 23:2, 4, 10, 11

■ **10:6 Spirit of the LORD will come upon you.** See v. 10; 11:6 note. The activity of the Spirit with Samson is expressed in identical terms (Judg. 14:6, 19; 15:14). Whereas the Spirit was ultimately withdrawn from Saul (cf. 16:14; 18:10), David's endowment with the Spirit was permanent (16:13). Frequently in the Old Testament the bestowal of the Spirit is an empowerment by God of an individual for a particular task. Conversely, God can send a lying spirit (1 Kin. 22:23) or an evil ("distressing") spirit (16:14–16, 23; 18:10; 19:9; Judg. 9:23).

■ **10:7 do as the occasion demands.** In the light of Saul's general commission to deliver Israel from the Philistines (9:16) and of Samuel's specific mention of a visible symbol of Philistine domination at the site of the third and final sign (v. 5), Samuel's words could be taken to imply that Saul should respond to his anointing by attacking the Philistine outpost. In the event, this possibility is not realized. Samuel's words can also be interpreted as an encouragement for Saul to submit to the prophetic influence mentioned in v. 6.

■ **10:8 go down before me to Gilgal.** When Saul has done "as the occasion demands," he is to meet Samuel in Gilgal, so the latter can offer sacrifices and give Saul further instructions.

burnt offerings. A full description of the ritual of the burnt offering can be found in Lev. 1:3–17. Burnt offerings are also mentioned in 6:14, 15; 7:9, 10; 13:9, 12; 15:22; 2 Sam. 6:17, 18; 24:22–25.

peace offerings. The fellowship offering is described in Lev. 3 and is first mentioned in Ex. 20:24. Other references in Samuel to fellowship offerings are 11:15; 13:9; 2 Sam. 6:17, 18; 24:25.

■ **10:9 God gave him another heart.** The language is similar to Ezek. 11:19; 36:26, if not John 3:3 (see also Jer. 31:31). But it is difficult to say what Saul's experience was precisely.

■ **10:11 Is Saul also among the prophets.** Or, "Is even Saul among the prophets?" The proverb (v. 12) expresses surprise at something very improbable. The onlookers who knew Saul are surprised to find him associating with religious enthusiasts.

■ **10:12 who is their father.** Since leaders of prophetic guilds were sometimes called "Father" (2 Kin. 2:12; 6:21), this question might be asking for the leader of this particular guild. If, on the other hand, the onlookers are contemptuous of prophecy, their surprise might be that a man like Saul, of good family and social standing, would associate with such "madmen" (cf. 2 Kin. 9:11), whose fathers were inferior to his. Still another possibility is that the question means that the "Father" or origin of the prophetic band does not follow normal rules, and Saul, unlikely as it may seem, has found a place with them. See "Prophets" at Deut. 18:18.

■ **10:14–16** The significance of this conversation has long puzzled commentators. Some have understood Saul's reluctance to mention the kingship (v. 16) as a sign of humility.

■ **10:17 Samuel called the people.** The Lord's choice of Saul is now made public at Mizpah, apparently through casting a lot or using the Urim and Thummim (v. 20 and note).

■ **10:20 Benjamin was chosen.** Casting lots was probably the method of selection (cf. Lev. 16:8–10; Num. 26:55), and it may have involved the Urim and Thummim (2:28; Ex. 28:30 note; Num. 27:21; Deut. 33:8).

■ **10:22 hidden among the equipment.** The Lord singles out Saul even though he is not immediately present. Something similar occurs with David (16:11).

23 [d] 1 Sam. 9:2

24 [e] 2 Sam. 21:6 [f] 1 Kin. 1:25, 39 [5] Lit. *May the king live*

25 [g] 1 Sam. 8:11–18

26 [h] Judg. 20:14

27 [i] 1 Sam. 11:12 [j] Deut. 13:13 [k] 1 Kin. 4:21; 10:25 [6] *kept silent*

CHAPTER 11

1 [a] 1 Sam. 12:12 [b] Judg. 21:8 [c] Gen. 26:28 [l] *besieged*

2 [d] Gen. 34:14

3 [2] *deliver*

4 [e] 1 Sam. 10:26; 15:34 [f] Judg. 2:4; 20:23, 26; 21:2

6 [g] Judg. 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6

7 [h] Judg. 19:29 [i] Judg. 21:5, 8, 10 [3] Lit. *as one man*

8 [j] Judg. 1:5 [k] 2 Sam. 24:9

11 [l] 1 Sam. 31:11 [m] Judg. 7:16, 20

23 So they ran and brought him from there; and when he stood among the people, [d]he was taller than any of the people from his shoulders upward. 24 And Samuel said to all the people, "Do you see him [e]whom the LORD has chosen, that *there is* no one like him among all the people?"

So all the people shouted and said, [f]"Long[5] live the king!"

25 Then Samuel explained to the people [g]the behavior of royalty, and wrote *it* in a book and laid *it* up before the LORD. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house. 26 And Saul also went home [h]to Gibeah; and valiant *men* went with him, whose hearts God had touched. 27 [i]But some [j]rebels said, "How can this man save us?" So they despised him, [k]and brought him no presents. But he [6]held his peace.

Saul Saves Jabesh Gilead

11 Then [a]Nahash the Ammonite came up and [l]encamped against [b]Jabesh Gilead; and all the men of Jabesh said to Nahash, [c]"Make a covenant with us, and we will serve you."

2 And Nahash the Ammonite answered them, "On this *condition* I will make *a covenant* with you, that I may put out all your right eyes, and bring [d]reproach on all Israel."

3 Then the elders of Jabesh said to him, "Hold off for seven days, that we may send messengers to all the territory of Israel. And then, if *there is* no one to [2]save us, we will come out to you."

4 So the messengers came [e]to Gibeah of Saul and told the news in the hearing of the people. And [f]all the people lifted up their voices and wept. 5 Now there was Saul, coming behind the herd from the field; and Saul said, "What *troubles* the people, that they weep?" And they told him the words of the men of Jabesh. 6 [g]Then the Spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard this news, and his anger was greatly aroused. 7 So he took a yoke of oxen and [h]cut them in pieces, and sent *them* throughout all the territory of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying, [i]"Whoever does not go out with Saul and Samuel to battle, so it shall be done to his oxen."

And the fear of the LORD fell on the people, and they came out [3]with one consent. 8 When he numbered them in [j]Bezek, the children [k]of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand. 9 And they said to the messengers who came, "Thus you shall say to the men of Jabesh Gilead: 'Tomorrow, by *the time* the sun is hot, you shall have help.' " Then the messengers came and reported *it* to the men of Jabesh, and they were glad. 10 Therefore the men of Jabesh said, "Tomorrow we will come out to you, and you may do with us whatever seems good to you."

11 So it was, on the next day, that [l]Saul put the people [m]in three companies; and they came into the midst of the camp in the morning watch, and killed Ammonites until the heat of the day.

■ **10:25 the behavior of royalty.** A similar expression in 8:9–11 refers to the negative consequences of having a king. Here it means the regulations that a king must follow (Deut. 17:14–20; 2 Kin. 11:12 note).

laid it up before the LORD. See Deut. 31:26; Josh. 24:26.

■ **10:27 How can this man save us.** Those who pose this question are "rebels" because they call into question the Lord's process of selection.

■ **11:1 Nahash the Ammonite.** Descended from Lot, the Ammonites were a Semitic people (Gen. 19:38; Deut. 2:19) whose kingdom was on the east side of the Jordan, south of the Jabbok River. While Ammon was sometimes on friendly terms with Israel (2 Sam. 10:2), the Ammonites often exerted pressure on Israel's eastern border (Judg. 3:13; 11:4–32), as the Philistines did on the west. According to the Dead Sea Scrolls and Josephus (*Antiquities* 6.5.1), the siege of Jabesh Gilead was part of a larger campaign by Nahash.

Jabesh Gilead. A principal city in what was probably the territory of Gad, Jabesh Gilead was east of the Jordan River, twenty-two miles south of the Sea of Chinnereth (Galilee).

■ **11:2 put out all your right eyes.** While the stated reason for such treatment is to "bring reproach on all Israel," Josephus (*Antiquities* 6.5.1) remarks that the loss of the right eye would have made military service impossible, since the sight of the left eye would be hindered by the shield.

■ **11:3 we will come out to you.** While the elders of Jabesh clearly intend Nahash to understand their words as a surrender, the Hebrew verb employed is often used in the sense of soldiers "going out" to battle (8:20; 18:30; 2 Sam. 18:2–4, 6). When in v. 10 the men of Jabesh again promise to "go out" to the Ammonites, it is with some irony, because the Ammonites are still thinking of "surrender," but the townspeople are planning to fight.

■ **11:6 Spirit of God came upon Saul.** The phrase recalls the activity of the Spirit with Samson (10:6 note), except that here (as in 10:10) "God" is used in place of the personal name "LORD."

■ **11:7 cut them in pieces.** Saul's action roughly parallels that of the Levite in Judg. 19. The Levite's sin was notorious and the comparison would not be at all complimentary.

and Samuel. See notes on 10:1, 7, 8.

■ **11:8 Bezek.** Located nine miles west of the Jordan River, opposite Jabesh Gilead.

children of Israel . . . men of Judah. Even before the division of the kingdom (1 Kin. 12), a distinction was often made between the northern and southern tribes (17:52; 18:16; 2 Sam. 2:10; 3:10; 5:5; 11:11; 12:8; 19:11, 40–43; 20:2; 21:2; 24:1, 9).

■ **11:10 we will come out to you.** See note on v. 3.

■ **11:11 three companies.** See 13:17; Judg. 7:16; 9:43; 2 Sam. 18:2.

in the morning watch. Between 2:00 and 6:00 A.M., taking advantage of the cover of darkness.

And it happened that those who survived were scattered, so that no two of them were left together.

12 Then the people said to Samuel, [n]"Who *is* he who said, 'Shall Saul reign over us?' [o]Bring the men, that we may put them to death."

13 But Saul said, [p]"Not a man shall be put to death this day, for today [q]the LORD has accomplished salvation in Israel."

14 Then Samuel said to the people, "Come, let us go [r]to Gilgal and renew the kingdom there."

15 So all the people went to Gilgal, and there they made Saul king [s]before the LORD in Gilgal. [t]There they made sacrifices of peace offerings before the LORD, and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly.

Samuel's Address at Saul's Coronation

12 Now Samuel said to all Israel: "Indeed I have [1]heeded [a]your voice in all that you said to me, and [b]have made a king over you. 2 And now here is the king, [c]walking before you; [d]and I am old and grayheaded, and look, my sons *are* with you. I have walked before you from my childhood to this day. 3 Here I am. Witness against me before the LORD and before [e]His anointed: [f]Whose ox have I taken, or whose donkey have I taken, or whom have I cheated? Whom have I oppressed, or from whose hand have I received *any* [g]bribe with which to [h]blind my eyes? I will restore *it* to you."

4 And they said, [i]"You have not cheated us or oppressed us, nor have you taken anything from any man's hand."

5 Then he said to them, "The LORD *is* witness against you, and His anointed *is* witness this day, [j]that you have not found anything [k]in my hand."

And they answered, "*He is* witness."

6 Then Samuel said to the people, [l]"*It is* the LORD who raised up Moses and Aaron, and who brought your fathers up from the land of Egypt. 7 Now therefore, stand still, that I may [m]reason with you before the LORD concerning all the [n]righteous acts of the LORD which He did to you and your fathers: 8 [o]When Jacob had gone into [2]Egypt, and your fathers [p]cried out to the LORD, then the LORD [q]sent Moses and Aaron, who brought your fathers out of Egypt and made them dwell in this place. 9 And when they [r]forgot the LORD their God, He sold them into the hand of [s]Sisera, commander of the army of Hazor, into the hand of the [t]Philistines, and into the hand of the king of [u]Moab; and they fought against them. 10 Then they cried out to the LORD, and said, [v]'We have sinned, because we have forsaken the LORD [w]and served the Baals and [3]Ashtoreths; but now deliver us from the hand of our enemies, and we will serve You.' 11 And the LORD sent

10 [v]Judg. 10:10 [w]Judg. 2:13; 3:7 [3]Images of Canaanite goddesses

12 [n]1 Sam. 10:27 [o]Luke 19:27

13 [p]2 Sam. 19:22 [q]Ex. 14:13, 30

14 [r]1 Sam. 7:16; 10:8

15 [s]1 Sam. 10:17 [t]1 Sam. 10:8

CHAPTER 12

1 [a]1 Sam. 8:5, 7, 9, 20, 22 [b]1 Sam. 10:24; 11:14, 15 [1]*listened to*

2 [c]Num. 27:17 [d]1 Sam. 8:1, 5

3 [e]1 Sam. 10:1; 24:6 [f]Num. 16:15 [g]Ex. 23:8 [h]Deut. 16:19

4 [i]Lev. 19:13

5 [j]Acts 23:9; 24:20 [k]Ex. 22:4

6 [l]Mic. 6:4

7 [m]Is. 1:18 [n]Judg. 5:11

8 [o]Gen. 46:5, 6 [p]Ex. 2:23–25 [q]Ex. 3:10; 4:14–16 [2]So with MT, Tg., Vg.; LXX adds *and the Egyptians afflicted them*

9 [r]Judg. 3:7 [s]Judg. 4:2 [t]Judg. 3:31; 10:7; 13:1 [u]Judg. 3:12–30

■ **11:12 Bring the men.** The reference includes, but may not be limited to, the "rebels" of 10:27.

■ **11:13 the LORD has accomplished salvation in Israel.** Saul interrupts a question directed to Samuel with a confession that marks a high point in his own life. His amnesty or pardon of those "rebels" (10:27) who rejected him can possibly be compared to his reluctance to kill Agag and the flocks of Amalek (15:9), if it is thought of as a failure to carry out the harsher aspects of a divine commission.

■ **11:14 let us go to Gilgal and renew the kingdom.** On one level it is the process of Saul's accession to the throne that can now be resumed (v. 15 note), but on a deeper level it is the continued reign of the Lord that must be renewed (ch. 12).

Gilgal. See note on 13:4.

■ **11:15 made Saul king.** A person's rise to leadership in ancient Israel can be analyzed as following a three-step process: (a) designation as the Lord's choice; (b) demonstration of valor and of having the Lord's power through performing a heroic feat; and (c) confirmation by the people. Saul was designated by Samuel, and he had a prophetic experience (ch. 10). Although he might immediately have attacked the Philistine garrison at Gibeah (10:5, 8), he soon after gains an important victory by delivering Jabesh Gilead (v. 13). He is then crowned at Gilgal.

peace offerings. See note on 10:8.

■ **12:1 have made a king over you.** The process of accession to the throne has been completed, and Samuel's speech in ch. 12 marks the end of the period of the judges.

■ **12:3–15** Samuel advances a three-pronged argument to compel the people to recognize their guilt for requesting a king. First, he invites agreement from the people that his leadership has been blameless (vv. 4, 5). Second, he points out that in the past it was always the Lord who appointed leaders (v. 6), and these proved fully adequate (vv. 7, 8). Third, he emphasizes that even when Israel "forgot the LORD their God," the Lord was gracious to them. Although He subjected them to enemy oppression (v. 9), He heard their confessions of sin and cries for deliverance (v. 10) and raised up judges, among them Samuel himself (v. 11). Against this background of the sufficiency of the Lord's provision, the people's demand to have a human king, even though the Lord was their king (v. 12), can be seen for what it is (8:7). Nevertheless, kingship can succeed, if both king and people "fear the LORD and serve Him and obey His voice" (v. 14).

■ **12:3 His anointed.** See note on 2:10. Saul's anointing is ordered in 9:16 and performed in 10:1.

Whose ox . . . whose donkey have I taken. Valuable possessions in biblical times, ox and donkey are mentioned in the tenth commandment as typical objects of covetousness (Ex. 20:17; Deut. 5:21).

■ **12:7 may reason with you.** Samuel has taken the stand himself as a defendant and been acquitted (vv. 3–5); now he takes the role of prosecutor and the people become the defendants. Their crime is having desired a king in total disregard of all the "righteous acts of the LORD" throughout the time of the Exodus and the judges (vv. 7–11).

11 [x]Judg. 11:1 [y]1 Sam. 7:13 [4]Gideon, cf. Judg. 6:25–32; Syr. *Deborah;* Tg. *Gideon* [5]LXX, Syr. *Barak;* Tg. *Simson* [6]Syr. *Simson*

12 [z]1 Sam. 11:1, 2 [a]1 Sam. 8:5, 19, 20 [b]Judg. 8:23

13 [c]1 Sam. 10:24 [d]1 Sam. 8:5; 12:17, 19 [e]Hos. 13:11

14 [f]Josh. 24:14

15 [g]Deut. 28:15 [h]Is. 1:20

16 [i]Ex. 14:13, 31

17 [j]Gen. 30:14 [k][James 5:16–18] [l]Ezra 10:9 [m]1 Sam. 8:7

18 [n]Ex. 14:31

19 [o]Ex. 9:28

20 [p]Deut. 11:16

21 [q]2 Chr. 25:15 [r]Is. 41:29

22 [s]Deut. 31:6 [t]Is. 43:21 [u]Jer. 14:21 [v]Deut. 7:6–11

23 [w]Rom. 1:9 [x]Ps. 34:11 [y]1 Kin. 8:36

24 [z]Eccl. 12:13 [a]Is. 5:12 [b]Deut. 10:21

[4]Jerubbaal, [5]Bedan, [x]Jephthah, and [y]Samuel,[6] and delivered you out of the hand of your enemies on every side; and you dwelt in safety. 12 And when you saw that [z]Nahash king of the Ammonites came against you, [a]you said to me, 'No, but a king shall reign over us,' when [b]the LORD your God *was* your king.

13 "Now therefore, [c]here is the king [d]whom you have chosen *and* whom you have desired. And take note, [e]the LORD has set a king over you. 14 If you [f]fear the LORD and serve Him and obey His voice, and do not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then both you and the king who reigns over you will continue following the LORD your God. 15 However, if you do [g]not obey the voice of the LORD, but [h]rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then the hand of the LORD will be against you, as *it was* against your fathers.

16 "Now therefore, [i]stand and see this great thing which the LORD will do before your eyes: 17 *Is* today not the [j]wheat harvest? [k]I will call to the LORD, and He will send thunder and [l]rain, that you may perceive and see that [m]your wickedness *is* great, which you have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking a king for yourselves."

18 So Samuel called to the LORD, and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day; and [n]all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel.

19 And all the people said to Samuel, [o]"Pray for your servants to the LORD your God, that we may not die; for we have added to all our sins the evil of asking a king for ourselves."

20 Then Samuel said to the people, "Do not fear. You have done all this wickedness; [p]yet do not turn aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart. 21 And [q]do not turn aside; [r]for *then you would go* after empty things which cannot profit or deliver, for they *are* nothing. 22 For [s]the LORD will not forsake [t]His people, [u]for His great name's sake, because [v]it has pleased the LORD to make you His people. 23 Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD [w]in ceasing to pray for you; but [x]I will teach you the [y]good and the right way. 24 [z]Only fear the LORD, and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for [a]consider what [b]great things He has done for you. 25 But if you still do wickedly, [c]you shall be swept away, [d]both you and your king."

Saul's Unlawful Sacrifice

13 Saul [1]reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel, 2 Saul chose for himself three thousand *men* of Israel. Two thousand were with Saul in [a]Michmash and in the mountains of Bethel, and a thousand were with [b]Jonathan in [c]Gibeah of Benjamin. The rest of the people he sent away, every man to his tent.

25 [c]Josh. 24:20 [d]Deut. 28:36 **CHAPTER 13** 1 [1]Heb. is difficult; cf. 2 Sam. 5:4; 2 Kin. 14:2; see also 2 Sam. 2:10; Acts 13:21 2 [a]1 Sam. 14:5, 31 [b]1 Sam. 14:1 [c]1 Sam. 10:26

■ **12:12 when you saw that Nahash king of the Ammonites came against you.** Though it is not explicitly mentioned in ch. 8, it is possible that the Ammonite threat was already a concern at that time (11:1 note). Alternatively, Samuel may simply be citing the Ammonite episode as the most recent example of the people's faithless tendency to seek help from men rather than God. Saul himself gave the Lord credit for the victory (11:13).

■ **12:13 the king whom you have chosen.** See 8:18 and contrast 16:1.

whom you have desired. See 8:10 note.

■ **12:14 fear the LORD.** A fundamental prerequisite for covenant blessing in Moses' day (Deut. 6:2, 24; 10:12; 31:12, 13), in Joshua's (Josh. 4:24; 24:14), and now in the new era of the monarchy, "fear of the LORD" means standing in awe of Him and giving Him the honor and obedience that is His due as God and gracious Father.

■ **12:16–19** Having made his case against the people in vv. 3–15, Samuel now invokes a dramatic sign to drive home the point of the people's guilt. The sign achieves the desired result, and the people repent for having "added to all our sins the evil of asking a king" (v. 19). On signs accompanying prophetic utterances, see 2:34 note.

■ **12:17 wheat harvest.** The wheat harvest probably took place in May and June, early in Israel's dry season.

■ **12:20–25** In response to the people's repentance, Samuel comforts them, "Do not fear," and challenges them to renewed commitment (v. 20).

■ **12:23 pray for you . . . teach you.** Samuel's responsibilities in the kingdom will include intercession and instruction (12:1 note; for other duties of Samuel see 10:8).

■ **12:24 fear the LORD.** See note on v. 14.

with all your heart. See v. 20; 16:7.

■ **13:1—14:52** Saul's reign officially begins. Compare the chronological notice of 13:1 with similar formulas in 2 Sam. 2:10; 5:4; 1 Kin. 14:21; 22:42). The narrative turns to Saul's first encounters with the Philistines, who were a continuing threat to Israel.

■ **13:1** The preservation of this verse in the manuscript tradition has some defect, since as it stands the Hebrew says that Saul was one year old when he began to rule. But Saul was already a soldier. Saul probably reigned about twenty years, and the number "forty" in Acts 13:21 would be a round figure meaning "a long time." See the chronology in Introduction: Date and Occasion.

■ **13:2 Michmash.** Some four miles southeast of Bethel on the north side of the Wadi Suwenet, a seasonal river valley used for travel between the Jordan Valley and the central hill country.

Gibeah of Benjamin. This may be the Gibeah three miles north of Jerusalem, or possibly it was a village facing Michmash from the south side of the Wadi Suwenet.

3 And Jonathan attacked [d]the garrison of the Philistines that *was* in [e]Geba, and the Philistines heard *of it.* Then Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, "Let the Hebrews hear!"
4 Now all Israel heard it said *that* Saul had attacked a garrison of the Philistines, and *that* Israel had also become [2]an abomination to the Philistines. And the people were called together to Saul at Gilgal.

5 Then the Philistines gathered together to fight with Israel, [3]thirty thousand chariots and six thousand horsemen, and people [f]as the sand which *is* on the seashore in multitude. And they came up and encamped in Michmash, to the east of [g]Beth Aven. 6 When the men of Israel saw that they were in danger (for the people were distressed), then the people [h]hid in caves, in thickets, in rocks, in holes, and in pits. 7 And *some of* the Hebrews crossed over the Jordan to the [i]land of Gad and Gilead.

As for Saul, he *was* still in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling. 8 [j]Then he waited seven days, according to the time set by Samuel. But Samuel did not come to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him. 9 So Saul said, "Bring a burnt offering and peace offerings here to me." And he offered the burnt offering. 10 Now it happened, as soon as he had finished presenting the burnt offering, that Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might [4]greet him.

11 And Samuel said, "What have you done?"

Saul said, "When I saw that the people were scattered from me, and *that* you did not come within the days appointed, and *that* the Philistines gathered together at Michmash, 12 then I said, 'The Philistines will now come down on me at Gilgal, and I have not made supplication to the LORD.' Therefore I felt compelled, and offered a burnt offering."

13 And Samuel said to Saul, [k]"You have done foolishly. [l]You have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God, which He commanded you. For now the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. 14 [m]But now your kingdom shall not continue. [n]The LORD has sought for Himself a man [o]after His own heart, and the LORD has commanded him *to be* commander over His people, because you have [p]not kept what the LORD commanded you."

15 Then Samuel arose and went up from Gilgal to Gibeah of [5]Benjamin. And Saul numbered the people present with him, [q]about six hundred men.

No Weapons for the Army

16 Saul, Jonathan his son, and the people present with them remained in [6]Gibeah of Benjamin. But the Philistines encamped in Michmash. 17 Then raiders came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies. One company turned onto the road to [r]Ophrah, to the land of Shual, 18 another company turned to the road *to* [s]Beth Horon, and another company turned *to* the road of the border that overlooks the Valley of [t]Zeboim toward the wilderness.

19 Now [u]there was no blacksmith to be found throughout all the land of Israel, for the Philis-

3 [d]1 Sam. 10:5 [e]2 Sam. 5:25
4 [2]*odious*
5 [f]Judg. 7:12 [g]Josh. 7:2 [3]So with MT, LXX, Tg., Vg.; Syr. and some mss. of LXX *three thousand*
6 [h]Judg. 6:2
7 [i]Num. 32:1–42
8 [j]1 Sam. 10:8
10 [4]Lit. *bless him*
13 [k]2 Chr. 16:9 [l]1 Sam. 15:11, 22, 28
14 [m]1 Sam. 15:28; 31:6 [n]1 Sam. 16:1 [o]Acts 7:46; 13:22 [p]1 Sam. 15:11, 19
15 [q]1 Sam. 13:2, 6, 7; 14:2 [5]So with MT, Tg.; LXX, Vg. add *And the rest of the people went up after Saul to meet the people who fought against them, going from Gilgal to Gibeah in the hill of Benjamin.*
16 [6]Heb. *Geba*
17 [r]Josh. 18:23
18 [s]Josh. 16:3; 18:13, 14 [t]Neh. 11:34
19 [u]Judg. 5:8

■ **13:3 Jonathan attacked the garrison . . . in Geba.** This could be the same garrison near where Saul prophesied.

blew the trumpet. Trumpets were used in war as a signaling device (2 Sam. 2:28; 18:16; 20:1).

Hebrews. See note on 4:6.

■ **13:4 Gilgal.** Saul responds to the crisis precipitated by Jonathan (v. 3), gathering the people at Gilgal in accordance with Samuel's instructions (10:8). Gilgal's situation in the Jordan Valley near Jericho placed it outside immediate Philistine control, making it a strategic site for a general muster. Gilgal had figured prominently in Israel's earlier history (Josh. 4:19, 20; 5:10; 9:6; 10:6–15, 43; 1 Sam. 7:16; 11:14).

■ **13:7 all the people.** These are the people summoned in v. 4, and not the troops already deployed in v. 2.

■ **13:8 the time set by Samuel.** Samuel had previously specified seven days (10:8).

■ **13:9 burnt offering . . . peace offerings.** See 10:8 note.

■ **13:11 What have you done.** See note on 2:27–36.

When I saw. From a purely human perspective Saul's excuses would seem to carry some weight. But they do not take into account the freedom of God to act on behalf of His people, as Jonathan's testimony in 14:6 confirms.

■ **13:13 You have done foolishly.** This Hebrew expression implies both intellectual and moral failure. For a similar confrontation between a prophet and a king, see 2 Chr. 16:7–9.

You have not kept the commandment. In this context, Saul had transgressed by offering sacrifices on his own authority.

■ **13:14 your kingdom shall not continue.** Saul's hopes of establishing a dynasty are dashed, though Saul himself will not yet be deposed (15:23).

a man after His own heart. The phrase might also be rendered "a man of His own choosing," placing the accent on the Lord's sovereign election. Nevertheless, in the light of passages such as 2:35 and 16:7, the text is also saying that the Lord's chosen one, David, was "after God's heart" in the sense of being committed to His will and purposes.

■ **13:15 Then Samuel arose.** Because of Saul's foolish action, Samuel apparently departed without giving Saul any further instructions (10:8). The longer reading of the Septuagint (the early Greek translation of the Old Testament; see text note) is probably correct, suggesting that after Samuel's departure Saul rejoined Jonathan at Geba (v. 2 note; v. 16 note).

■ **13:16 Gibeah.** See text note. "Geba" is the more likely reading (v. 2 note).

■ **13:17 raiders came out . . . in three companies.** Raiding parties would plunder and terrorize, as well as keep up military pressure by reconnoitering and controlling important routes.

■ **13:19–21** The Israelites were short of weapons and depended on the Philistines even for making their tools. Archaeological evidence suggests that the Philistines learned how to work iron earlier than their neighbors.

tines said, "Lest the Hebrews make swords or spears." 20 But all the Israelites would go down to the Philistines to sharpen each man's plowshare, his mattock, his ax, and his sickle; 21 and the charge for a sharpening was a [7]pim for the plowshares, the mattocks, the forks, and the axes, and to set the points of the goads. 22 So it came about, on the day of battle, that [v]there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people who *were* with Saul and Jonathan. But they were found with Saul and Jonathan his son.

23 [w]And the garrison of the Philistines went out to the pass of Michmash.

Jonathan Defeats the Philistines

14 Now it happened one day that Jonathan the son of Saul said to the young man who [1]bore his armor, "Come, let us go over to the Philistines' garrison that *is* on the other side." But he did not tell his father. 2 And Saul was sitting in the outskirts of [a]Gibeah under a pomegranate tree which *is* in Migron. The people who *were* with him *were* about six hundred men. 3 [b]Ahijah the son of Ahitub, [c]Ichabod's brother, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the LORD's priest in Shiloh, was [d]wearing an ephod. But the people did not know that Jonathan had gone.

4 Between the passes, by which Jonathan sought to go over [e]to the Philistines' garrison, *there was* a sharp rock on one side and a sharp rock on the other side. And the name of one *was* Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh. 5 The front of one faced northward opposite Michmash, and the other southward opposite Gibeah.

6 Then Jonathan said to the young man who bore his armor, "Come, let us go over to the garrison of these [f]uncircumcised; it may be that the LORD will work for us. For nothing restrains the LORD [g]from saving by many or by few."

7 So his armorbearer said to him, "Do all that is in your heart. Go then; here I am with you, according to your heart."

8 Then Jonathan said, "Very well, let us cross over to *these* men, and we will show ourselves to them. 9 If they say thus to us, 'Wait until we come to you,' then we will stand still in our place and not go up to them. 10 But if they say thus, 'Come up to us,' then we will go up. For the LORD has delivered them into our hand, and [h]this *will be* a sign to us."

11 So both of them showed themselves to the garrison of the Philistines. And the Philistines said, "Look, the Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they have [i]hidden." 12 Then the men of the garrison called to Jonathan and his armorbearer, and said, "Come up to us, and we will [2]show you something."

Jonathan said to his armorbearer, "Come up after me, for the LORD has delivered them into the hand of Israel." 13 And Jonathan climbed up on his hands and knees with his armorbearer after him; and they [j]fell before Jonathan. And as he came after him, his armorbearer killed them. 14 That first slaughter which Jonathan and his armorbearer made was about twenty men within about [3]half an acre of land.

15 And [k]there was [4]trembling in the camp, in the field, and among all the people. The garrison and [l]the raiders also trembled; and the earth quaked, so that it was [m]a very great trembling. 16 Now the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked, and *there* was the multitude, melting away; and they [n]went here and there. 17 Then Saul said to the people who *were* with him, "Now call the roll and see who has gone from us." And when they had called the roll, surpris-

21 [7]About two-thirds shekel weight

22 [v]Judg. 5:8

23 [w]1 Sam. 14:1, 4

CHAPTER 14

1 [1]*carried*

2 [a]1 Sam. 13:15, 16

3 [b]1 Sam. 22:9, 11, 20 [c]1 Sam. 4:21 [d]1 Sam. 2:28

4 [e]1 Sam. 13:23

6 [f]1 Sam. 17:26, 36; Jer. 9:25, 26 [g]Judg. 7:4, 7; 1 Sam. 17:46, 47; 2 Chr. 14:11; [Ps. 115:3; 135:6; Zech. 4:6; Matt. 19:26; Rom. 8:31]

10 [h]Gen. 24:14; Judg. 6:36–40

11 [i]1 Sam. 13:6; 14:22

12 [2]*teach*

13 [j]Lev. 26:8; Josh. 23:10

14 [3]Lit. *half the area plowed by a yoke* of oxen in a day

15 [k]Deut. 28:7; 2 Kin. 7:6, 7; Job 18:11 [l]1 Sam. 13:17 [m]Gen. 35:5 [4]*terror*

16 [n]1 Sam. 14:20

■ **13:22 with Saul and Jonathan his son.** This notice pins the hopes of Israel on two people in particular, and the following chapter compares them to the disadvantage of Saul.

■ **14:1 But he did not tell his father.** Jonathan's decision not to tell his father of his daring plan may imply a lack of confidence in him (cf. Abigail's similar action in response to her husband Nabal in 25:19).

■ **14:3 son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother.** The presence of a member of the rejected priestly house of Eli (2:30) in Saul's camp is a reminder of the recent rejection of Saul's own royal house (13:14).

wearing an ephod. The presence in Saul's camp of the ephod useful for seeking God's will (2:28 note) encourages the expectation that he will use it to ask the Lord's guidance, as David does later (23:9–12; 30:7–8). In this instance however, Saul leaves it to Jonathan to discover the Lord's will (v. 10 note). In v. 19 (note) Saul shows a lack of respect for the ephod; later he savagely turns against those whose task it is to oversee its care and use (22:18; cf. 21:9). In the end, Saul's efforts to discover the Lord's will are met with silence (28:6 note).

■ **14:4 Bozez . . . Seneh.** These names possibly mean "slippery" and "thorny" and so dramatize the challenge facing Jonathan.

■ **14:6 uncircumcised.** The uncircumcised were people like the Philistines, who stood outside God's covenant (Gen. 17:14; Ex. 12:48; Judg. 14:3; 15:18).

nothing restrains the LORD from saving. Compare David's confidence in 17:47. Although the narrator does not offer a criticism of Saul's excuse in 13:11 (that "the people were scattered," and so forth), Jonathan's bold confession makes an indirect commentary on the inadequacy of that excuse.

■ **14:10 a sign to us.** Jonathan is not willing to move ahead without the Lord's approval. In this regard he is more faithful than his father, who seems to show a declining commitment to obtaining divine guidance (13:8–15; 14:18, 19, 36 and notes).

■ **14:11 Hebrews.** See note on 4:6.

ingly, Jonathan and his armorbearer *were* not *there.* [18] And Saul said to Ahijah, "Bring the [s]ark of God here" (for at that time the [s]ark of God was with the children of Israel). [19] Now it happened, while Saul [o]talked to the priest, that the noise which *was* in the camp of the Philistines continued to increase; so Saul said to the priest, "Withdraw your hand." [20] Then Saul and all the people who *were* with him assembled, and they went to the battle; and indeed [p]every man's sword was against his neighbor, *and there was* very great confusion. [21] Moreover the Hebrews *who* were with the Philistines before that time, who went up with them into the camp *from the* surrounding *country,* they also joined the Israelites who *were* with Saul and Jonathan. [22] Likewise all the men of Israel who [q]had hidden in the mountains of Ephraim, *when* they heard that the Philistines fled, they also followed hard after them in the battle. [23] [r]So the LORD saved Israel that day, and the battle shifted [s]to Beth Aven.

Saul's Rash Oath

[24] And the men of Israel were distressed that day, for Saul had [t]placed the people under oath, saying, "Cursed *is* the man who eats *any* food until evening, before I have taken vengeance on my enemies." So none of the people tasted food. [25] [u]Now all *the people* of the land came to a forest; and there was [v]honey on the ground. [26] And when the people had come into the woods, there was the honey, dripping; but no one put his hand to his mouth, for the people feared the oath. [27] But Jonathan had not heard his father charge the people with the oath; therefore he stretched out the end of the rod that *was* in his hand and dipped it in a honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth; and his [6]countenance brightened. [28] Then one of the people said, "Your father strictly charged the people with an oath, saying, 'Cursed *is* the man who eats food this day.' " And the people were faint.

[29] But Jonathan said, "My father has troubled the land. Look now, how my countenance has brightened because I tasted a little of this honey. [30] How much better if the people had eaten freely today of the spoil of their enemies which they found! For now would there not have been a much greater slaughter among the Philistines?"

[31] Now they had [7]driven back the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon. So the people were very faint. [32] And the people rushed on the [8]spoil, and took sheep, oxen, and calves, and slaughtered *them* on the ground; and the people ate *them* [w]with the blood. [33] Then they told Saul, saying, "Look, the people are sinning against the LORD by eating with the blood!"

So he said, "You have dealt treacherously; roll a large stone to me this day." [34] Then Saul said, "Disperse yourselves among the people, and say to them, 'Bring me here every man's ox and every man's sheep, slaughter *them* here, and eat; and do not sin against the LORD by eating with the blood.' " So every one of the people brought his ox with him that night, and slaughtered *it* there. [35] Then Saul [x]built an altar to the LORD. This was the first altar that he built to the LORD.

[36] Now Saul said, "Let us go down after the Philistines by night, and plunder them until the morning light; and let us not leave a man of them."

And they said, "Do whatever seems good to you."

Then the priest said, "Let us draw near to God here."

[37] So Saul [y]asked counsel of God, "Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will You deliver

18 [s]So with MT, Tg., Vg.; LXX *ephod*

19 [o]Num. 27:21

20 [p]Judg. 7:22; 2 Chr. 20:23

22 [q]1 Sam. 13:6

23 [r]Ex. 14:30; 2 Chr. 32:22; Hos. 1:7 [s]1 Sam. 13:5

24 [t]Josh. 6:26

25 [u]Deut. 9:28; Matt. 3:5 [v]Ex. 3:8; Num. 13:27; Matt. 3:4

27 [6]Lit. *eyes*

31 [7]Lit. *struck*

32 [w]Gen. 9:4; Lev. 3:17; 17:10–14; 19:26; Deut. 12:16, 23, 24; Acts 15:20 [8]*plunder*

35 [x]1 Sam. 7:12, 17; 2 Sam. 24:25

37 [y]Judg. 20:18

■ **14:18 ark of God.** See text note. The Septuagint (early Greek translation of the Old Testament) reads "ephod" and is probably correct since the ephod was clearly present in Gibeah (v. 3 note) and was used to inquire of the Lord (2:28 note). The Hebrew reading, "ark," is doubtful because the ark was in Kirjath Jearim at this time (7:1, 2); the ark is never said to have been used as a means of divine omen; and to touch the ark (cf. v. 19) resulted in death (6:19; 2 Sam. 6:6, 7).

■ **14:19 Withdraw your hand.** In ordering the priest let go of the instrument by which the will of the Lord could have been determined, Saul takes matters back into his own hands (cf. 13:9).

■ **14:21 Hebrews.** See note on 4:6.

■ **14:24 were distressed that day.** This is an account of something that took place earlier the same day, that is, after Jonathan left to make an attack on the Philistines (vv. 13, 14) but before Saul joined the battle (v. 20).

for Saul. This can also be translated "so Saul," meaning that Saul placed the people under an oath as a response to their distress, and not by way of causing it.

■ **14:27 But Jonathan had not heard.** Probably Jonathan did not hear because he had left the camp before the oath was imposed (v. 24 note).

■ **14:29 My father has troubled the land.** The lack of confidence implicit in Jonathan's exclusion of his father from his plans (v. 1) now rises to an outright condemnation of his father's foolish action in binding the people under an oath. As in the case of Achan (Josh. 7:16–18, 25), a lot will be cast to uncover the guilty party, the "troubler" of the land. The lot reveals Jonathan as the one who violated the oath (v. 42), but the real troubler of Israel was Saul.

■ **14:31 Aijalon.** About fifteen miles west of Michmash in the Valley of Aijalon, the route the Philistines seem to have followed back to their homeland.

■ **14:33 eating with the blood.** Prohibitions against eating blood are recorded often in the Old Testament (Gen. 9:4; Lev. 3:17; 7:26, 27; 17:10, 12; 19:26; Deut. 15:23; Ezek. 33:25).

■ **14:35 the first altar.** This is also the only altar to be mentioned.

■ **14:36 Then the priest said.** It is unusual that the priest, probably Ahijah (v. 3), should take the initiative. But this agrees with the pattern of Saul's declining commitment to obtaining the Lord's guidance (v. 10 note).

them into the hand of Israel?" But [z]He did not answer him that day. 38 And Saul said, [a]"Come over here, all you chiefs of the people, and know and see what this sin was today. 39 For [b]*as* the LORD lives, who saves Israel, though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die." But not a man among all the people answered him. 40 Then he said to all Israel, "You be on one side, and my son Jonathan and I will be on the other side."

And the people said to Saul, "Do what seems good to you."

41 Therefore Saul said to the LORD God of Israel, [c]"Give[g] a perfect *lot.*" [d]So Saul and Jonathan were taken, but the people escaped. 42 And Saul said, "Cast *lots* between my son Jonathan and me." So Jonathan was taken. 43 Then Saul said to Jonathan, [e]"Tell me what you have done."

And Jonathan told him, and said, [f]"I only tasted a little honey with the end of the rod that *was* in my hand. So now I must die!"

44 Saul answered, [g]"God do so and more also; [h]for you shall surely die, Jonathan."

45 But the people said to Saul, "Shall Jonathan die, who has accomplished this great deliverance in Israel? Certainly not! [i]*As* the LORD lives, not one hair of his head shall fall to the ground, for he has worked [j]with God this day." So the people rescued Jonathan, and he did not die.

46 Then Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, and the Philistines went to their own place.

Saul's Continuing Wars

47 So Saul established his sovereignty over Israel, and fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, against the people of [k]Ammon, against Edom, against the kings of [l]Zobah, and against the Philistines. Wherever he turned, he [l]harassed *them.* 48 And he gathered an army and [m]attacked[2] the Amalekites, and delivered Israel from the hands of those who plundered them.

49 [n]The sons of Saul were Jonathan, [3]Jishui, and Malchishua. And the names of his two daughters *were these:* the name of the firstborn Merab, and the name of the younger [o]Michal. 50 The name of Saul's wife *was* Ahinoam the daughter of Ahimaaz. And the name of the commander of his army *was* Abner the son of Ner, Saul's [p]uncle. 51 [q]Kish *was* the father of Saul, and Ner the father of Abner *was* the son of Abiel.

52 Now there was fierce war with the Philistines all the days of Saul. And when Saul saw any strong man or any valiant man, [r]he took him for himself.

Saul Spares King Agag

15 Samuel also said to Saul, [a]"The LORD sent me to anoint you king over His people, over Israel. Now therefore, heed the voice of the words of the LORD. 2 Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'I will punish Amalek *for* what he did to Israel, [b]how he ambushed him on the way when he came up from Egypt. 3 Now go and [c]attack[1] Amalek, and [d]utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.' "

4 So Saul gathered the people together and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand

37 [z]1 Sam. 28:6

38 [a]Josh. 7:14

39 [b]2 Sam. 12:5

41 [c]Acts 1:24–26 [d]1 Sam. 10:20, 21 [g]So with MT, Tg.; LXX, Vg. *Why do You not answer Your servant today? If the injustice is with me or Jonathan my son, O* LORD *God of Israel, give proof; and if You say it is with Your people Israel, give holiness.*

43 [e]Josh. 7:19 [f]1 Sam. 14:27

44 [g]Ruth 1:17 [h]1 Sam. 14:39

45 [i]1 Kin. 1:52 [j][2 Cor. 6:1]

47 [k]1 Sam. 11:1–13 [l]2 Sam. 10:6 [l]LXX, Vg. *prospered*

48 [m]1 Sam. 15:3–7 [2]Lit. *struck*

49 [n]1 Sam. 31:2 [o]1 Sam. 18:17–20, 27; 19:12 [3]*Abinadab,* 1 Chr. 8:33; 9:39

50 [p]1 Sam. 10:14

51 [q]1 Sam. 9:1, 21

52 [r]1 Sam. 8:11

CHAPTER 15

1 [a]1 Sam. 9:16; 10:1

2 [b]Deut. 25:17–19

3 [c]Deut. 25:19 [d]Num. 24:20 [1]Lit. *strike*

■ **14:39 But not a man . . . answered him.** The people protected Jonathan.

■ **14:45 Certainly not.** When forced by Saul's hardness (vv. 39, 44) to choose between Saul and Jonathan, the people choose Jonathan, whom they clearly recognize as the one the Lord used in the battle that day. Saul's foolish behavior has alienated him from everyone around him, even his own people. His isolation is not permanent, however, for Jonathan becomes his confidant again later (20:2), and the people show signs of renewed loyalty (23:19; 24:1). Even Samuel has further dealings with him (ch. 15).

■ **14:47–51** This gives a summary of Saul's military accomplishments (vv. 47, 48) and details about his family and Abner's (vv. 49–51). A comparison of this section with the longer summary of David's victories and officers in 2 Sam. 8 reveals a number of similarities, but also a telling difference: nowhere in the summation of Saul is there anything akin to the statement repeated about David, that "the LORD preserved David wherever he went" (2 Sam. 8:6, 14).

■ **14:52 fierce war.** See notes on 7:13.

■ **15:1 The LORD sent me to anoint you.** Samuel mentions his role in anointing Saul to set the context for his continuing service as mediator of God's orders to Saul (10:1 note).

heed the voice of the words of the LORD. The Hebrew words translated "heed" and "voice" are repeated several times in this chapter, underscoring the central theme of obedience ("heed," "hear," "obey," and "voice," "bleating," "lowing" in vv. 1, 14, 19, 20, 22, 24).

■ **15:2 Amalek.** Descendants of Esau (according to Gen. 36:12, 16), the Amalekites were a nomadic desert people who lived in southern Judah and beyond, toward Egypt. They fought frequently with the Israelites. See side-column references; Judg. 3:13; 6:3–5, 33; 7:12; 10:12.

■ **15:3 utterly destroy.** Lit. "place them under the ban." This meant to devote persons or things completely to the Lord. In war it usually required the total destruction of properties and execution of people. The inclusion of animals in this verse is especially striking. The ban was an element of "holy war" and could not be decreed by anyone but God.

man and woman, infant and nursing child. See 22:19 and note.

■ **15:4 Telaim.** This is probably the Telem listed in Josh. 15:24 as one of the cities of Judah. The Septuagint (early Greek translation of the Old Testament) has Gilgal instead, which some have suggested was the site of Samuel's instructions to Saul (vv. 1–3).

foot soldiers and ten thousand men of Judah. 5 And Saul came to a city of Amalek, and lay in wait in the valley.

6 Then Saul said to [e]the Kenites, [f]"Go, depart, get down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them. For [g]you showed kindness to all the children of Israel when they came up out of Egypt." So the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites. 7 [h]And Saul attacked the Amalekites, from [i]Havilah all the way to [j]Shur, which is east of Egypt. 8 [k]He also took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and [l]utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword. 9 But Saul and the people [m]spared Agag and the best of the sheep, the oxen, the fatlings, the lambs, and all *that was* good, and were unwilling to utterly destroy them. But everything despised and worthless, that they utterly destroyed.

Saul Rejected as King

10 Now the word of the LORD came to Samuel, saying, 11 [n]"I greatly regret that I have set up Saul *as* king, for he has [o]turned back from following Me, [p]and has not performed My commandments." And it [q]grieved Samuel, and he cried out to the LORD all night. 12 So when Samuel rose early in the morning to meet Saul, it was told Samuel, saying, "Saul went to [r]Carmel, and indeed, he set up a monument for himself; and he has gone on around, passed by, and gone down to Gilgal." 13 Then Samuel went to Saul, and Saul said to him, [s]"Blessed *are* you of the LORD! I have performed the commandment of the LORD."

14 But Samuel said, "What then *is* this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?"

15 And Saul said, "They have brought them from the Amalekites; [t]for the people spared the best of the sheep and the oxen, to sacrifice to the LORD your God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed."

16 Then Samuel said to Saul, "Be quiet! And I will tell you what the LORD said to me last night."

And he said to him, "Speak on."

17 So Samuel said, [u]"When you *were* little in your own eyes, *were* you not head of the tribes of Israel? And did not the LORD anoint you king over Israel? 18 Now the LORD sent you on a mission, and said, 'Go, and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they are [2]consumed.' 19 Why then did you not obey the voice of the LORD? Why did you swoop down on the [3]spoil, and do evil in the sight of the LORD?"

20 And Saul said to Samuel, [v]"But I have obeyed the voice of the LORD, and gone on the mission on which the LORD sent me, and brought back Agag king of Amalek; I have utterly destroyed the Amalekites. 21 [w]But the people took of the plunder, sheep and oxen, the best of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice to the LORD your God in Gilgal."

6 [e]Num. 24:21; Judg. 1:16; 4:11–22; 1 Chr. 2:55 [f]Gen. 18:25; 19:12, 14; Rev. 18:4 [g]Ex. 18:10, 19; Num. 10:29, 32

7 [h]1 Sam. 14:48 [i]Gen. 2:11; 25:17, 18 [j]Gen. 16:7; Ex. 15:22; 1 Sam. 27:8

8 [k]1 Sam. 15:32, 33 [l]1 Sam. 27:8, 9

9 [m]1 Sam. 15:3, 15, 19

11 [n]Gen. 6:6, 7; 1 Sam. 15:35; 2 Sam. 24:16 [o]Josh. 22:16; 1 Kin. 9:6 [p]1 Sam. 13:13; 15:3, 9 [q]1 Sam. 15:35; 16:1

12 [r]Josh. 15:55; 1 Sam. 25:2

13 [s]Gen. 14:19; Judg. 17:2; Ruth 3:10; 2 Sam. 2:5

15 [t][Gen. 3:12, 13; Ex. 32:22, 23]; 1 Sam. 15:9, 21; [Prov. 28:13]

17 [u]1 Sam. 9:21; 10:22

18 [2]*exterminated*

19 [3]*plunder*

20 [v]1 Sam. 15:13; [Prov. 28:13]

21 [w]1 Sam. 15:15

■ **15:6 For you showed kindness.** Perhaps an allusion to the kindness of Moses' Kenite father-in-law (Judg. 1:16) recorded in Ex. 18.

■ **15:7 from Havilah . . . to Shur.** See Gen. 25:18. Shur is mentioned in 27:8 as lying at the frontiers of the territory of the Amalekites, near the eastern border of Egypt. The location of Havilah remains uncertain, but the general sense of the reference is that Saul's victory was extensive.

■ **15:8 Agag.** This is either a personal name or a title, like "Pharaoh"; see Num. 24:7; "Agagite" in Esth. 3:1.

all the people. This is not "all" without exception, but all who fell into Saul's hands (there are later references to Amalekites in 27:8; 30:1, 18). For this limited sense of "all," cf. 13:7; 31:6.

■ **15:9 Saul and the people spared.** They went against the Lord's command (v. 3). A desire to profit from the victory may underlie the unwillingness to destroy anything that was good. Achan kept back goods that were devoted to destruction, apparently because he was greedy (Josh. 7:1). The reader is not told Saul's motive for sparing Agag, whether political, like Ahab's mercy to Ben-Hadad (1 Kin. 20:30–34), or pride, a desire to parade his captive as a trophy of war. Saul did set up a victory monument "for himself" (v. 12).

■ **15:11 greatly regret.** See note on v. 29.

turned back. This is a serious indictment in view of 12:14, where obedience and following the Lord are named as the essential requirements for a successful reign.

grieved Samuel. Lit. "Samuel became angry." The same Hebrew expression is used in 18:8 and 2 Sam. 6:8.

he cried out to the LORD all night. Clearly Samuel takes no pleasure in Saul's rejection (v. 35; 16:1).

■ **15:12 Carmel.** About seven miles south of Hebron (25:2; Josh. 15:55). This is not the Mount Carmel in the north.

monument for himself. The closest parallel is in 2 Sam. 18:18, where Absalom erects "a pillar for himself" to commemorate his name.

■ **15:14–23** These verses display the standard features of a prophetic judgment speech to an individual (2:27–36 note), but in this instance the accused, Saul, vigorously contests the charges.

■ **15:15 They have brought them . . . to sacrifice.** In response to Samuel's accusation Saul offers two excuses: First, the people are responsible and not he; second, the animals will be killed as sacrifices. Samuel will answer these excuses.

■ **15:17 little in your own eyes.** Whatever ideas Saul had about his role as king, Samuel rejects his attempt to avoid personal responsibility for what had happened.

■ **15:19 swoop down on the spoil.** Samuel rejects Saul's claim that the animals were spared because they were needed for sacrifice. On the verb translated "swoop down," see 25:14 note.

■ **15:20, 21** Ignoring Samuel's refusal to accept his excuses, Saul repeats them adamantly.

22 [x][Is. 1:11–17] [y][Hos. 6:6]
23 [z]1 Sam. 13:14; 16:1 [4]*divination*
24 [a]Josh. 7:20 [b][Is. 51:12, 13]
26 [c]1 Sam. 2:30
27 [d]1 Kin. 11:30, 31
28 [e]1 Kin. 11:31
29 [f]Num. 23:19
30 [g][John 5:44; 12:43]
33 [h][Gen. 9:6]
34 [i]1 Sam. 7:17 [j]1 Sam. 11:4
35 [k]1 Sam. 19:24

CHAPTER 16

1 [a]1 Sam. 15:23, 35 [b]1 Sam. 9:16; 10:1 [c]Ruth 4:18–22 [d]Acts 13:22 [f]Lit. *seen*

22 So Samuel said:

[x]"Has the LORD *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices,
As in obeying the voice of the LORD?
Behold, [y]to obey is better than sacrifice,
And to heed than the fat of rams.
23 For rebellion *is as* the sin of [4]witchcraft,
And stubbornness *is as* iniquity and idolatry.
Because you have rejected the word of the LORD,
[z]He also has rejected you from *being* king."

24 [a]Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words, because I [b]feared the people and obeyed their voice. 25 Now therefore, please pardon my sin, and return with me, that I may worship the LORD."

26 But Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you, [c]for you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel."

27 And as Samuel turned around to go away, [d]*Saul* seized the edge of his robe, and it tore. 28 So Samuel said to him, [e]"The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today, and has given it to a neighbor of yours, *who is* better than you. 29 And also the Strength of Israel [f]will not lie nor relent. For He *is* not a man, that He should relent."

30 Then he said, "I have sinned; *yet* [g]honor me now, please, before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me, that I may worship the LORD your God." 31 So Samuel turned back after Saul, and Saul worshiped the LORD.

32 Then Samuel said, "Bring Agag king of the Amalekites here to me." So Agag came to him cautiously.

And Agag said, "Surely the bitterness of death is past."

33 But Samuel said, [h]"As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women." And Samuel hacked Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal.

34 Then Samuel went to [i]Ramah, and Saul went up to his house at [j]Gibeah of Saul. 35 And [k]Samuel went no more to see Saul until the day of his death. Nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul, and the LORD regretted that He had made Saul king over Israel.

David Anointed King

16 Now the LORD said to Samuel, [a]"How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? [b]Fill your horn with oil, and go; I am sending you to [c]Jesse the Bethlehemite. For [d]I have [f]provided Myself a king among his sons."

■ **15:22, 23** The poetic form of these two verses highlights their climactic importance in the episode.

■ **15:22 burnt offerings.** See note on 10:8.

to obey is better than sacrifice. Although Samuel clearly disbelieves Saul's excuse (v. 19 note), he accepts it for the sake of argument, and makes the point that ritual performance is worthless when not accompanied by a sincere and submissive spirit. For similar denunciations of empty ritual by Israel's later prophets, see Is. 1:10–17; Jer. 6:19, 20; 7:21–26; Hos. 6:6; Amos 5:21–24; Mic. 6:6–8; also Ps. 51:16, 17; Prov. 15:8; 21:3, 27.

■ **15:23 rebellion . . . witchcraft . . . idolatry.** Witchcraft and idolatry were especially serious sins.

Because you have rejected . . . He also has rejected. As Samuel comes to the announcement of judgment upon Saul, he expresses it in a manner that makes plain the justice of God's verdict. Offense and punishment correspond (2:27–36 note). While Saul's failure in ch. 13 meant the end of any hopes for his dynasty (13:14), his disobedience in the present context means the end of his personal right to be king. The next chapter recounts the anointing of David and the departure of the Spirit of the Lord from Saul (16:13, 14).

■ **15:24, 25** At last Saul begins to accept responsibility ("I have sinned"), though he still blames the people for initiating the unfortunate events ("I feared the people and obeyed their voice"). On the surface, Saul's confession sounds adequate, but against the background of Samuel's warnings in 12:14, 15, his admissions lead not so much to a possibility that there will be reconciliation as to the certainty that he will be "swept away" (12:25). Saul will offer a second, more candid confession in v. 30.

■ **15:26 I will not return with you.** Samuel's refusal to return with Saul suggests Samuel is not satisfied with the sincerity of the confession as a whole (v. 30 note).

■ **15:28 torn the kingdom.** Samuel seizes upon the tearing of the robe as a fitting symbol of the Lord's having "torn the kingdom" from Saul (cf. 24:4, 5; 1 Kin. 11:29–33).

■ **15:29 will not lie nor relent.** Saul's rejection is final, and no attempt to mitigate its consequences will avail. There is no contradiction between this statement and the notices in vv. 11 and 35 that the Lord "regretted" having made Saul king, even though "regretted" represents the same Hebrew word as "relent" in this verse. As in Num. 23:19, the point is that when the Lord makes a pronouncement intended to be final, He cannot be talked out of it.

■ **15:30 honor me.** Saul's real concern becomes clear in this his second confession (cf. vv. 24, 25 and note). As Samuel seems already to suspect (v. 26 note), Saul is less concerned with being reconciled to the Lord than with finding honor before the elders of "my people." In return for this honor, Saul offers to do obeisance before the Lord "your" God.

■ **15:31 Samuel turned back.** Several reasons for Samuel's reversal of his earlier decision (v. 26) may be suggested: (a) Saul has at last issued a candid confession; (b) there is no danger after vv. 28, 29 that Saul might interpret Samuel's actions as a retraction of his judgment; (c) Samuel must still deal with Agag.

■ **15:35 Samuel mourned for Saul.** See note on v. 11.

■ **16:1—31:13** These chapters narrate David's rise to power and Saul's

2 And Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears *it,* he will kill me."
But the LORD said, "Take a heifer with you, and say, [e]'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.'
3 Then invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do; you shall anoint for Me the one I name to you."
4 So Samuel did what the LORD said, and went to Bethlehem. And the elders of the town [f]trembled at his coming, and said, [g]"Do you come peaceably?"
5 And he said, "Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. [h]Sanctify[2] yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice." Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons, and invited them to the sacrifice.
6 So it was, when they came, that he looked at [i]Eliab and [j]said, "Surely the LORD's anointed *is* before Him!"
7 But the LORD said to Samuel, [k]"Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have [3]refused him. [l]For [4]*the LORD does* not *see* as man sees; for man [m]looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the [n]heart."
8 So Jesse called Abinadab, and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." 9 Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the LORD chosen this one." 10 Thus Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen these." 11 And Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all the young men here?" Then he said, "There remains yet the youngest, and there he is, keeping the [o]sheep."
And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and bring him. For we will not [5]sit down till he comes here."
12 So he sent and brought him in. Now he *was* [p]ruddy, [q]with [6]bright eyes, and good-looking.
[r]And the LORD said, "Arise, anoint him; for this *is* the one!" 13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers; and [s]the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel arose and went to Ramah.

A Distressing Spirit Troubles Saul

14 [t]But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and [u]a distressing spirit from the LORD troubled him. 15 And Saul's servants said to him, "Surely, a distressing spirit from God is troubling you. 16 Let our master now command your servants, *who are* before you, to seek out a man *who is* a skillful player on the harp. And it shall be that he will [v]play it with his hand when the [7]distressing spirit from God is upon you, and you shall be well."
17 So Saul said to his servants, [8]"Provide me now a man who can play well, and bring *him* to me."
18 Then one of the servants answered and said, "Look, I have seen a son of Jesse the

2 [e]1 Sam. 9:12
4 [f]1 Sam. 21:1 [g]1 Kin. 2:13
5 [h]Ex. 19:10 [2]*Consecrate*
6 [i]1 Sam. 17:13, 28 [j]1 Kin. 12:26
7 [k]Ps. 147:10 [l]Is. 55:8, 9 [m]2 Cor. 10:7 [n]1 Kin. 8:39 [3]*rejected* [4]LXX *For God does not see as man sees;* Tg. *It is not by the appearance of a man;* Vg. *Nor do I judge according to the looks of a man*
11 [o]2 Sam. 7:8 [5]So with LXX, Vg.; MT *turn around;* Tg., Syr. *turn away*
12 [p]1 Sam. 17:42 [q]Gen. 39:6 [r]1 Sam. 9:17 [6]Lit. *beautiful*
13 [s]Num. 27:18
14 [t]Judg. 16:20 [u]Judg. 9:23
16 [v]1 Sam. 18:10; 19:9 [7]Lit. *evil*
17 [8]Lit. *Look now for a man for me*

fall from power and his death. David's rise is marked by his anointing by Samuel and his time in Saul's service (chs. 16—18), his flight from Saul (chs. 19—23), his avoidance of bloodguilt (chs. 24—26), and his escape to the Philistines (chs. 27—31).

■ **16:1 Bethlehemite.** First mentioned in Gen. 35:19, Bethlehem is David's hometown (17:12, 15). On the significance of this site for the Messiah ("the anointed one"), see Mic. 5:2; Matt. 2:5, 6; John 7:42.

I have provided Myself. The selection of a king for "Myself" (the Lord)," contrasts with the choice of a king for "them" (the people) in 8:22 (8:18; 12:13).

■ **16:2 I have come to sacrifice.** While true insofar as it goes, this statement does not disclose the real reason for Samuel's journey to Bethlehem (v. 1). There may well be an ironic tone in the Lord's instruction to Samuel, coming as it does on the heels of Saul's claim to have spared animals only "to sacrifice" them (15:15, 21). Cases of deception like this one must be weighed in their particular circumstances (20:6; 21:2; 27:10; 2 Sam. 16:17–19; Josh. 2:4 and notes).

■ **16:3 anoint.** See note on 2:10.

■ **16:4 the elders of the town trembled.** See the similar response of Ahimelech upon David's arrival alone in Nob (21:1). No reason is given for the elders' trembling. It probably has to do with Samuel's prophetic function as an instrument of God's judgment.

■ **16:7 stature, because I have refused him.** The reference to "stature" as a false measure of an individual's qualification to be king, along with the notice that this son of Jesse is "refused," is reminiscent of Saul, who was notable for his height (9:2; 10:23) but was rejected (15:23, 26).

the LORD looks at the heart. It is an axiom that God's standards are inward, not outward (13:14 note; Rom. 2:28, 29). See "God Sees and Knows: Divine Omniscience" at Prov. 15:3.

■ **16:13 in the midst of his brothers.** It is likely that the elders also witnessed David's being anointed (vv. 4, 5). The emphasis on the brothers being present at the event may shed light on Eliab's behavior in 17:28.

Spirit of the LORD came upon David. See notes on 10:6; 11:6. David's endowment with the Spirit "from that day forward" sets him apart from Saul (and also Samson) upon whom the Spirit descended only sporadically.

■ **16:14 Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul.** The empowering and validating presence of God's Spirit must have been removed from Saul at his definitive rejection as king in ch. 15 (cf. also v. 1).

distressing spirit. Cf. 1 Kin. 22:21–23. The Hebrew word may describe something that is troubling, annoying, or harmful.

■ **16:18 man of war.** This speech may seem to conflict with Saul's statement in 17:33 that David, who is but a youth, will be no match for Goliath. In response one can say that the servant's recommendation of David is doubtless exaggerated, like a modern letter of reference. Saul for his part was comparing David to Goliath and was reluctant to take the risk of sending anyone against the Philistine giant.

the LORD is with him. This fact more than any human quality will account for David's persistent, if circuitous, rise to power, while Saul's increasing recognition that David is preferred to him will play no small part in his own psychological disintegration (3:19; 17:37; 18:12, 28, 29; 20:13; 2 Sam. 7:9 and notes).

Bethlehemite, *who is* skillful in playing, a mighty man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a handsome person; and [w]the LORD *is* with him."

19 Therefore Saul sent messengers to Jesse, and said, "Send me your son David, who *is* with the sheep." 20 And Jesse [x]took a donkey *loaded with* bread, a skin of wine, and a young goat, and sent *them* by his son David to Saul. 21 So David came to Saul and [y]stood before him. And he loved him greatly, and he became his armorbearer. 22 Then Saul sent to Jesse, saying, "Please let David stand before me, for he has found favor in my sight." 23 And so it was, whenever the spirit from God was upon Saul, that David would take a harp and play *it* with his hand. Then Saul would become refreshed and well, and the distressing spirit would depart from him.

David and Goliath

17 Now the Philistines gathered their armies together to battle, and were gathered at [a]Sochoh, which *belongs* to Judah; they encamped between Sochoh and Azekah, in Ephes Dammim. 2 And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and they encamped in the Valley of Elah, and drew up in battle array against the Philistines. 3 The Philistines stood on a mountain on one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side, with a valley between them.

4 And a champion went out from the camp of the Philistines, named [b]Goliath, from [c]Gath, whose height *was* six cubits and a span. 5 *He had* a bronze helmet on his head, and he *was* [f]armed with a coat of mail, and the weight of the coat *was* five thousand shekels of bronze. 6 And *he had* bronze armor on his legs and a bronze javelin between his shoulders. 7 Now the staff of his spear *was* like a weaver's beam, and his iron spearhead *weighed* six hundred shekels; and a shield-bearer went before him. 8 Then he stood and cried out to the armies of Israel, and said to them, "Why have you come out to line up for battle? *Am* I not a Philistine, and you the [d]servants of Saul? Choose a man for yourselves, and let him come down to me. 9 If he is able to fight with me and kill me, then we will be your servants. But if I prevail against him and kill him, then you shall be our servants and [e]serve us." 10 And the Philistine said, "I [f]defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together." 11 When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, they were dismayed and greatly afraid.

12 Now David *was* [g]the son of that [h]Ephrathite of Bethlehem Judah, whose name *was* Jesse, and who had [i]eight sons. And the man was old, advanced *in years,* in the days of Saul. 13 The three oldest sons of Jesse had gone to follow Saul to the battle. The [j]names of his three sons who went to the battle *were* Eliab the firstborn, next to him Abinadab, and the third Shammah. 14 David *was* the youngest. And the three oldest followed Saul. 15 But David occasionally went and returned from Saul [k]to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem.

16 And the Philistine drew near and presented himself forty days, morning and evening.

17 Then Jesse said to his son David, "Take now for your brothers an ephah of this dried *grain* and these ten loaves, and run to your brothers at the camp. 18 And carry these ten cheeses to the captain of *their* thousand, and [l]see how your brothers fare, and bring back news of them." 19 Now Saul and they and all the men of Israel *were* in the Valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.

20 So David rose early in the morning, left the sheep with a keeper, and took *the things* and went as Jesse had commanded him. And he came to the camp as the army was going out to the fight and shouting for the battle. 21 For Israel and the Philistines had drawn up in battle array,

18 [w]1 Sam. 3:19; 18:12, 14

20 [x]1 Sam. 10:4, 27; Prov. 18:16

21 [y]Gen. 41:46; Prov. 22:29

CHAPTER 17

1 [a]Josh. 15:35; 2 Chr. 28:18

4 [b]2 Sam. 21:19 [c]Josh. 11:21, 22

5 [f]*clothed with scaled body armor*

8 [d]1 Sam. 8:17

9 [e]1 Sam. 11:1

10 [f]1 Sam. 17:26, 36, 45; 2 Sam. 21:21

12 [g]Ruth 4:22; 1 Sam. 16:1, 18; 17:58 [h]Gen. 35:19 [i]1 Sam. 16:10, 11; 1 Chr. 2:13–15

13 [j]1 Sam. 16:6, 8, 9; 1 Chr. 2:13

15 [k]1 Sam. 16:11, 19; 2 Sam. 7:8

18 [l]Gen. 37:13, 14

■ **16:19 Send me your son David, who is with the sheep.** Saul unwittingly invites his eventual replacement to enter his court. David's rise to power is providentially directed, and is not the result of human effort or grasping for power.

■ **16:21 he loved him greatly.** It is unclear whether these words describe Saul's attitude toward David or David's toward Saul. Note Jonathan's response to David (18:1, 3; 20:17), as well as that of Michal (18:20, 28), the people (18:16), and possibly even Saul's other servants (18:22). The probable meaning is that "Saul loved David" (see v. 22).

■ **17:1 between Sochoh and Azekah, in Ephes Dammim.** Sochoh was fifteen miles west of Bethlehem, near the Philistine border, and Azekah was two miles northwest of Sochoh.

■ **17:2 Valley of Elah.** The valley descends from east to west, passing just north of Sochoh and Azekah.

■ **17:4 champion.** Trial by single combat, where the outcome of a fight to the death between two champions is taken as the will of the gods, is rare in the Old Testament (compare 2 Sam. 2:14–16). It is well attested, however, among some of Israel's neighbors.

six cubits and a span. That is, nine feet, nine inches. The Septuagint (Greek Old Testament translation), Dead Sea Scrolls, and Josephus (*Antiquities* 6.9.1) all have four cubits instead of six, making Goliath six and a half feet tall, still a remarkable height by ancient standards.

■ **17:5–7** The detailed description of Goliath's armor and weapons is striking. David does not have to trust in equipment (vv. 39, 50).

■ **17:11 Saul.** The Philistine challenge to the "servants of Saul" had been to "choose a man" (v. 8). The logical choice would have been Saul (9:2; 10:23, 24), but he was terrified like everyone else.

■ **17:12 Ephrathite.** See Gen. 35:19; 48:7; Ruth 1:2; 4:11; 1 Chr. 4:4; Mic. 5:2.

■ **17:15 David occasionally went and returned from Saul.** David's time was split between duties to his king (16:21–23) and to his father. David's whole family is introduced with him (vv. 12–14).

army against army. 22 And David left his supplies in the hand of the supply keeper, ran to the army, and came and greeted his brothers. 23 Then as he talked with them, there was the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, coming up from the armies of the Philistines; and he spoke [m]according to the same words. So David heard *them.* 24 And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him and were dreadfully afraid. 25 So the men of Israel said, "Have you seen this man who has come up? Surely he has come up to defy Israel; and it shall be *that* the man who kills him the king will enrich with great riches, [n]will give him his daughter, and give his father's house exemption *from taxes* in Israel."

26 Then David spoke to the men who stood by him, saying, "What shall be done for the man who kills this Philistine and takes away [o]the reproach from Israel? For who *is* this [p]uncircumcised Philistine, that he should [q]defy the armies of [r]the living God?"

27 And the people answered him in this manner, saying, [s]"So shall it be done for the man who kills him."

28 Now Eliab his oldest brother heard when he spoke to the men; and Eliab's [t]anger was aroused against David, and he said, "Why did you come down here? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your pride and the insolence of your heart, for you have come down to see the battle."

29 And David said, "What have I done now? [u]*Is*[2] *there* not a cause?" 30 Then he turned from him toward another and [v]said the same thing; and these people answered him as the first ones *did.*

31 Now when the words which David spoke were heard, they reported *them* to Saul; and he sent for him. 32 Then David said to Saul, [w]"Let no man's heart fail because of him; [x]your servant will go and fight with this Philistine."

33 And Saul said to David, [y]"You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you *are* a youth, and he a man of war from his youth."

34 But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep his father's sheep, and when a [z]lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, 35 I went out after it and struck it, and delivered *the lamb* from its mouth; and when it arose against me, I caught *it* by its beard, and struck and killed it. 36 Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God." 37 Moreover David said, [a]"The LORD, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine."

And Saul said to David, [b]"Go, and the LORD be with you!"

38 So Saul clothed David with his [3]armor, and he put a bronze helmet on his head; he also clothed him with a coat of mail. 39 David fastened his sword to his armor and tried to walk, for he had not tested *them.* And David said to Saul, "I cannot walk with these, for I have not tested *them.*" So David took them off.

40 Then he took his staff in his hand; and he chose for himself five smooth stones from the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag, in a pouch which he had, and his sling was in his hand. And he drew near to the Philistine. 41 So the Philistine came, and began drawing near to David, and the man who bore the shield *went* before him. 42 And when the Philistine looked about and saw David, he [c]disdained[4] him; for he was *only* a youth, [d]ruddy and good-looking. 43 So the Philistine [e]said to David, "*Am* I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed

23 [m]1 Sam. 17:8–10

25 [n]Josh. 15:16

26 [o]1 Sam. 11:2 [p]1 Sam. 14:6; 17:36; Jer. 9:25, 26 [q]1 Sam. 17:10 [r]Deut. 5:26; 2 Kin. 19:4; Jer. 10:10

27 [s]1 Sam. 17:25

28 [t]Gen. 37:4, 8–36; [Prov. 18:19; Matt. 10:36]

29 [u]1 Sam. 17:17 [2]Lit. *Is it not a word?* or *matter?*

30 [v]1 Sam. 17:26, 27

32 [w]Deut. 20:1–4 [x]1 Sam. 16:18

33 [y]Num. 13:31; Deut. 9:2

34 [z]Judg. 14:5

37 [a][2 Cor. 1:10; 2 Tim. 4:17, 18] [b]1 Sam. 20:13; 1 Chr. 22:11, 16

38 [3]Lit. *clothes*

42 [c][Ps. 123:4; Prov. 16:18; 1 Cor. 1:27, 28] [d]1 Sam. 16:12 [4]*belittled*

43 [e]1 Sam. 24:14; 2 Sam. 3:8; 9:8; 16:9; 2 Kin. 8:13

■ **17:25 give him his daughter.** See notes on 18:17–19, 20–27.

■ **17:26 uncircumcised Philistine.** See note on 14:6.

■ **17:28 Eliab's anger was aroused.** Eliab's sudden anger is the reaction of a man who was unable to meet a challenge and who resented being outdone by his little brother. David's having been anointed would only increase Eliab's jealousy. In Genesis 37, Joseph's older brothers react in the same way to the knowledge that he would one day be superior to them (Gen. 37:2–19).

with whom have you left those few sheep. Whatever his excitement about the battle, David had acted responsibly in regard to his more mundane duties (vv. 20, 22).

your pride. Or, "your presumptuousness," "your insolence."

the insolence of your heart. Contrast Eliab's judgment of David with God's, as indicated by statements like "a man after His own heart" (13:14), and "the LORD looks at the heart" (16:7).

■ **17:33–37** The conversation between Saul and David vividly illustrates the radical difference in perspective between them. Saul continues to think in terms of what is humanly possible ("You are not able," v. 33), while David is confident that "The LORD . . . will deliver me" (v. 37).

■ **17:36 uncircumcised Philistine.** See 14:6 note.

■ **17:37 the LORD be with you.** David's rise to power continues to be furthered, if unwittingly, by Saul. Having brought him into his court (16:19 note), Saul now sends him out to fight his battle. Most ironic of all, Saul invokes over David the benediction that most clearly distinguishes them and will account for David's ultimate success—"the LORD be with you" (16:18 and note).

■ **17:38, 39** David's rejection of Saul's armor and weapons supports the point of the narrative that "the LORD does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the LORD's" (v. 47).

David by his gods. 44 And the Philistine [f]said to David, "Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field!"

45 Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. [g]But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have [h]defied. 46 This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give [i]the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, [j]that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. 47 Then all this assembly shall know that the LORD [k]does not save with sword and spear; for [l]the battle *is* the LORD's, and He will give you into our hands."

48 So it was, when the Philistine arose and came and drew near to meet David, that David hurried and [m]ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. 49 Then David put his hand in his bag and took out a stone; and he slung *it* and struck the Philistine in his forehead, so that the stone sank into his forehead, and he fell on his face to the earth. 50 So David prevailed over the Philistine with a [n]sling and a stone, and struck the Philistine and killed him. But *there was* no sword in the hand of David. 51 Therefore David ran and stood over the Philistine, took his [o]sword and drew it out of its sheath and killed him, and cut off his head with it.

And when the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, [p]they fled. 52 Now the men of Israel and Judah arose and shouted, and pursued the Philistines as far as the entrance of [5]the valley and to the gates of Ekron. And the wounded of the Philistines fell along the road to [q]Shaaraim, even as far as Gath and Ekron. 53 Then the children of Israel returned from chasing the Philistines, and they plundered their tents. 54 And David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem, but he put his armor in his tent.

55 When Saul saw David going out against the Philistine, he said to [r]Abner, the commander of the army, "Abner, [s]whose son *is* this youth?"

And Abner said, "As your soul lives, O king, I do not know."

56 So the king said, "Inquire whose son this young man *is*."

57 Then, as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul [t]with the head of the Philistine in his hand. 58 And Saul said to him, "Whose son *are* you, young man?"

So David answered, [u]"*I am* the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite."

Saul Resents David

18 Now when he had finished speaking to Saul, [a]the [1]soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, [b]and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. 2 Saul took him that day, [c]and would not let him go home to his father's house anymore. 3 Then Jonathan and David made a [d]covenant, because he loved him as his own soul. 4 And Jonathan took off the robe that *was* on him and gave it to David, with his armor, even to his sword and his bow and his belt.

5 So David went out wherever Saul sent him, *and* [2]behaved wisely. And Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul's ser-

44 [f]1 Sam. 17:46; 1 Kin. 20:10, 11
45 [g]2 Sam. 22:33, 35; 2 Chr. 32:8; Ps. 124:8; [2 Cor. 10:4]; Heb. 11:33, 34 [h]1 Sam. 17:10
46 [i]Deut. 28:26 [j]Josh. 4:24; 1 Kin. 8:43; 18:36; 2 Kin. 19:19; Is. 52:10
47 [k]1 Sam. 14:6; 2 Chr. 14:11; 20:15; Ps. 44:6; Hos. 1:7; Zech. 4:6 [l]2 Chr. 20:15
48 [m]Ps. 27:3
50 [n]Judg. 3:31; 15:15; 20:16
51 [o]1 Sam. 21:9; 2 Sam. 23:21 [p]Heb. 11:34
52 [q]Josh. 15:36 [5]So with MT, Syr., Tg., Vg.; LXX *Gath*
55 [r]1 Sam. 14:50 [s]1 Sam. 16:21, 22
57 [t]1 Sam. 17:54
58 [u]1 Sam. 17:12

CHAPTER 18

1 [a]Gen. 44:30 [b]Deut. 13:6; 1 Sam. 20:17; 2 Sam. 1:26 [1]*life of Jonathan was bound up with the life of*
2 [c]1 Sam. 17:15
3 [d]1 Sam. 20:8–17
5 [2]Or *prospered*

■ **17:45 in the name of the LORD of hosts.** See note on 1:3. David comes "in the name" of God, that is, by the authority and power of God. On the significance of God's name as expressing His character, see, for example, Ex. 34:5–7.

■ **17:46 carcasses . . . of the Philistines.** David outdoes Goliath's threat (v. 44) by extending his counterthreat to encompass the entire Philistine army.

■ **17:47 battle is the LORD's.** See notes on vv. 38, 39; 14:6.

■ **17:50 killed.** That is, dealt him the mortal wound (v. 51) note.

there was no sword. This verse marks the climax of the contest between Goliath, who physically speaking had all the advantages, and David, who had God on his side, and was able to triumph even without a sword (cf. vv. 45–47).

■ **17:51 killed.** A different form of the Hebrew verb is used than in v. 50; the sense is "dispatched," as in 14:13.

■ **17:52 Gath and Ekron.** See notes on 4:1; 5:8, 10.

■ **17:54 brought it to Jerusalem.** Since Jerusalem was at this time in Jebusite hands (2 Sam. 5:6–9 and notes), this remark should be understood as referring to a later time.

■ **17:55 whose son is this youth.** Saul's question and Abner's response appear to conflict with the events described in 16:18–22. At the same time a chronological relationship between chs. 16 and 17 seems to be warranted (v.15 and 18:2). Saul's question may have been prompted by concerns about the social status of someone who might receive the position promised in 17:25, including marriage to his daughter. The intensity of Saul's interest may also reflect his knowledge that the kingdom will ultimately be given to "a neighbor of yours, who is better than you" (15:28). See 18:8 and note.

■ **18:2 would not let him go home.** See note on 17:15.

■ **18:3 covenant.** The nature of the covenant is not explicitly stated, but see the note on v. 4. Further references to the covenant between Jonathan and David include 20:8, 13–17, 42; 22:8; 23:18.

■ **18:4 Jonathan took off the robe.** As crown prince (20:31), Jonathan would have expected to succeed his father as king. In 13:22 Jonathan and Saul had been distinguished from the rest of the people by their possession of swords and spears. Here Jonathan's gifts of his robe and weapons to David not only signifies his loyalty but implies his recognition of David as God's choice for the next king. See Jonathan's explicit confession in 23:17; also 2 Sam. 1:10 note.

■ **18:5 Saul set him over the men of war.** Military success continues to be David's hallmark, and Saul gives David a rank in the army commensurate with his accomplishments.

vants. 6 Now it had happened as they were coming *home,* when David was returning from the slaughter of the 3Philistine, that [e]the women had come out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with joy, and with musical instruments. 7 So the women [f]sang as they danced, and said:

[g]"Saul has slain his thousands,
And David his ten thousands."

8 Then Saul was very angry, and the saying [h]displeased him; and he said, "They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed *only* thousands. Now *what* more can he have but [i]the kingdom?" 9 So Saul [4]eyed David from that day forward.

10 And it happened on the next day that [j]the distressing spirit from God came upon Saul, [k]and he prophesied inside the house. So David [l]played *music* with his hand, as at other times; [m]but *there was* a spear in Saul's hand. 11 And Saul [n]cast the spear, for he said, "I will pin David to the wall!" But David escaped his presence twice.

12 Now Saul was [o]afraid of David, because [p]the LORD was with him, but had [q]departed from Saul. 13 Therefore Saul removed him from [5]his presence, and made him his captain over a thousand; and [r]he went out and came in before the people. 14 And David behaved wisely in all his ways, and [s]the LORD *was* with him. 15 Therefore, when Saul saw that he behaved very wisely, he was afraid of him. 16 But [t]all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before them.

David Marries Michal

17 Then Saul said to David, "Here is my older daughter Merab; [u]I will give her to you as a wife. Only be valiant for me, and fight [v]the LORD's battles." For Saul thought, [w]"Let my hand not be against him, but let the hand of the Philistines be against him."

18 So David said to Saul, [x]"Who *am* I, and what *is* my life *or* my father's family in Israel, that I should be son-in-law to the king?" 19 But it happened at the time when Merab, Saul's daughter, should have been given to David, that she was given to [y]Adriel the [z]Meholathite as a wife.

20 [a]Now Michal, Saul's daughter, loved David. And they told Saul, and the thing pleased him. 21 So Saul said, "I will give her to him, that she may [6]be a snare to him, and that [b]the hand of the Philistines may be against him." Therefore Saul said to David a second time, [c]"You shall be my son-in-law today."

22 And Saul commanded his servants, "Communicate with David secretly, and say, 'Look, the king has delight in you, and all his servants love you. Now therefore, become the king's son-in-law.' "

23 So Saul's servants spoke those words in the hearing of David. And David said, "Does it seem to you *a* light *thing* to be a king's son-in-law, seeing I *am* a poor and lightly esteemed man?" 24 And the servants of Saul told him, saying, 7"In this manner David spoke."

25 Then Saul said, "Thus you shall say to David: 'The king does not desire any [d]dowry but one hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to take [e]vengeance on the king's enemies.' " But Saul [f]thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines. 26 So when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to become the king's son-in-law. Now [g]the days had not expired; 27 therefore David arose and went, he and [h]his men, and killed two hundred men of the

6 [e]Ex. 15:20, 21
[3]*Philistines*

7 [f]Ex. 15:21
[g]1 Sam. 21:11; 29:5

8 [h]Eccl. 4:4
[i]1 Sam. 15:28

9 [4]Viewed with suspicion

10 [j]1 Sam. 16:14
[k]1 Sam. 19:24
[l]1 Sam. 16:23
[m]1 Sam. 19:9, 10

11 [n]1 Sam. 19:10; 20:33

12 [o]1 Sam. 18:15, 29 [p]1 Sam. 16:13, 18
[q]1 Sam. 16:14; 28:15

13 [r]Num. 27:17
[5]Lit. *himself*

14 [s]Josh. 6:27

16 [t]1 Sam. 18:5

17 [u]1 Sam. 14:49; 17:25 [v]Num. 32:20, 27, 29
[w]1 Sam. 18:21, 25

18 [x]2 Sam. 7:18

19 [y]2 Sam. 21:8
[z]Judg. 7:22

20 [a]1 Sam. 18:28

21 [b]1 Sam. 18:17
[c]1 Sam. 18:26
[6]*be bait for*

24 [7]Lit. *According to these words*

25 [d]Ex. 22:17
[e]1 Sam. 14:24
[f]1 Sam. 18:17

26 [g]1 Sam. 18:21

27 [h]1 Sam. 18:13

■ **18:7 David his ten thousands.** See 21:11; 29:5. It is a common feature of Hebrew poetry for one or more terms in the first half of a verse to be increased or intensified in the second half. For the thousand—ten thousand parallelism, see Deut. 32:30; Ps. 91:7; 144:13; Mic. 6:7. Whether the women's song praises Saul and David as equals or implies that David is better than Saul, Saul certainly takes offense to it (v. 8).

■ **18:8 what more can he have but the kingdom.** Saul rightly senses that David may be the "neighbor" who will replace him (15:28; 17:55 note).

■ **18:10 distressing spirit.** See note on 16:14.

prophesied. Ecstatic experiences could be caused by God's Spirit (10:6, 15), but also by evil spirits or false prophets (1 Kin. 18:29).

■ **18:12 the LORD was with him.** See 16:18 and note.

had departed from Saul. See 16:14 and note.

■ **18:13–16** Saul's removal of David from the court, with an accompanying demotion in military rank, may be intended to decrease David's visibility and popularity, as well as to increase the risk of his dying in battle. The effect of Saul's scheming, however, is actually the reverse. David is brought into closer contact with the people, so that "all Israel and Judah loved David" (v. 16).

■ **18:17–19** In view of David's great popularity, Saul cannot continue to delay fulfilling his promise (17:25). Nevertheless, he adds a further condition, that David "fight the LORD's battles," in the hope that the Philistines would kill David for him (vv. 17, 21, 25). David says that he lacks the social standing to marry the king's daughter, a conventional protest in such circumstances (cf. 9:21). At the last minute, Saul reneges on his promise and gives Merab to someone else.

■ **18:20–27** When Saul's second daughter Michal falls in love with David, Saul offers David another chance to become his son-in-law (vv. 20, 21). He adds again to the conditions David must fulfill (v. 25). David wastes no time (v. 26) in meeting Saul's requirement twice over, and becomes the king's son-in-law (v. 27).

Philistines. And [h]David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full count to the king, that he might become the king's son-in-law. Then Saul gave him Michal his daughter as a wife.

28 Thus Saul saw and knew that the LORD *was* with David, and *that* Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him; 29 and Saul was still more afraid of David. So Saul became David's enemy [g]continually. 30 Then the princes of the Philistines [j]went out *to war.* And so it was, whenever they went out, *that* David [k]behaved more wisely than all the servants of Saul, so that his name became highly esteemed.

Saul Persecutes David

19 Now Saul spoke to Jonathan his son and to all his servants, that they should kill [a]David; but Jonathan, Saul's son, [b]delighted greatly in David. 2 So Jonathan told David, saying, "My father Saul seeks to kill you. Therefore please be on your guard until morning, and stay in a secret *place* and hide. 3 And I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where you *are,* and I will speak with my father about you. Then what I observe, I will tell [c]you."

4 Thus Jonathan [d]spoke well of David to Saul his father, and said to him, "Let not the king [e]sin against his servant, against David, because he has not sinned against you, and because his works *have been* very good toward you. 5 For he took his [f]life in his hands and [g]killed the Philistine, and [h]the LORD brought about a great deliverance for all Israel. You saw *it* and rejoiced. [i]Why then will you [j]sin against innocent blood, to kill David without a cause?"

6 So Saul heeded the voice of Jonathan, and Saul swore, "*As* the LORD lives, he shall not be killed." 7 Then Jonathan called David, and Jonathan told him all these things. So Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence [k]as in times past.

8 And there was war again; and David went out and fought with the Philistines, [l]and struck them with a mighty blow, and they fled from him.

9 Now [m]the distressing spirit from the LORD came upon Saul as he sat in his house with his spear in his hand. And David was playing *music* with *his* hand. 10 Then Saul sought to pin David to the wall with the spear, but he slipped away from Saul's presence; and he drove the spear into the wall. So David fled and escaped that night.

11 [n]Saul also sent messengers to David's house to watch him and to kill him in the morning. And Michal, David's wife, told him, saying, "If you do not save your life tonight, tomorrow you will be killed." 12 So Michal [o]let David down through a window. And he went and fled and escaped. 13 And Michal took [l]an image and laid *it* in the bed, put a cover of goats' *hair* for his head, and covered *it* with clothes. 14 So when Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, "He *is* sick."

15 Then Saul sent the messengers *back* to see David, saying, "Bring him up to me in the bed, that I may kill him." 16 And when the messengers had come in, there was the image in the bed, with a cover of goats' *hair* for his head. 17 Then Saul said to Michal, "Why have you deceived me like this, and sent my enemy away, so that he has escaped?"

And Michal answered Saul, "He said to me, 'Let me go! [p]Why should I kill you?' "

18 So David fled and escaped, and went to [q]Samuel at [r]Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and stayed in Naioth. 19 Now it was told Saul, saying, "Take note, David *is* at Naioth in Ramah!" 20 Then [s]Saul sent messengers to take David. [t]And

27 [i]2 Sam. 3:14
29 [g]*all the days*
30 [j]2 Sam. 11:1 [k]1 Sam. 18:5

CHAPTER 19

1 [a]1 Sam. 8:8, 9 [b]1 Sam. 18:1
3 [c]1 Sam. 20:8–13
4 [d]1 Sam. 20:32; [Prov. 31:8, 9] [e]Gen. 42:22; [Prov. 17:13]; Jer. 18:20
5 [f]Judg. 9:17; 12:3 [g]1 Sam. 17:49, 50 [h]1 Sam. 11:13; 1 Chr. 11:14 [i]1 Sam. 20:32 [j][Deut. 19:10–13]
7 [k]1 Sam. 16:21; 18:2, 10, 13
8 [l]1 Sam. 18:27; 23:5
9 [m]1 Sam. 16:14; 18:10, 11
11 [n]Judg. 16:2; Ps. 59:title
12 [o]Josh. 2:15; Acts 9:25; 2 Cor. 11:33
13 [l]*household idols,* Heb. *teraphim*
17 [p]2 Sam. 2:22
18 [q]1 Sam. 16:13 [r]1 Sam. 7:17
20 [s]1 Sam. 19:11, 14; John 7:32 [t]1 Sam. 10:5, 6, 10; [1 Cor. 14:3, 24, 25] [u]Num. 11:25; Joel 2:28

■ **18:28, 29 the LORD was with David.** Saul's increasing fear of David is well-founded, since the Lord is with David (vv. 12, 14). David's success would not have distressed Saul so much if, like Jonathan, Saul had been able to accept his rejection with equanimity.

■ **19:1 they should kill David.** Saul's covert attempts on David's life having come to nothing (ch. 18), he decides to take a direct approach.

■ **19:4 Jonathan spoke well of David.** Jonathan's magnanimity towards David stands in stark contrast to Saul's malevolence, continuing the unfavorable comparison of father and son noted earlier (13:22; 14:1, 6, 10, 29 and notes). It seems likely that Jonathan's loyalty to David stems not from ignorance of David's destiny, but from a willing acceptance of it (18:4 note; 23:17 note).

■ **19:9 distressing spirit.** See note on 16:14.

■ **19:10 Saul sought to pin David to the wall.** Perhaps again galled by David's military success (v. 8; 18:8), Saul resorts to one of his old tricks (18:10, 11).

■ **19:11 Michal, David's wife, told him.** As Saul's designs on David's life become increasingly intense and overt, David is warned first by Saul's son (v. 2) and then by his daughter.

■ **19:12 he . . . fled and escaped.** Henceforth, David will be on the run from Saul.

■ **19:13 an image.** The Hebrew same term is translated "household idols" in Gen. 31:19, 34, 35; Judg. 18:14. The Genesis references imply small objects, while the present reference suggests something larger.

■ **19:17 He said to me.** Michal's deception here has an element of self-preservation. In light of Saul's later behavior (20:32, 33), Michal had reason to be afraid of him (cf. 16:2).

■ **19:18 Ramah.** See note on 1:1.

Naioth. This word, which occurs only in this chapter, is associated with the place name Ramah. It is quite possibly not a proper noun at all, but a word meaning the "camps" in which the prophets at Ramah were active (compare the prophets' lodge in 2 Kin. 6:1, 2).

■ **19:20 group of prophets prophesying.** See note on 10:5.

when they saw the group of prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing *as* leader over them, the Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul, and they also [u]prophesied. 21 And when Saul was told, he sent other messengers, and they prophesied likewise. Then Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they prophesied also. 22 Then he also went to Ramah, and came to the great well that *is* at Sechu. So he asked, and said, "Where *are* Samuel and David?"

And *someone* said, "Indeed *they are* at Naioth in Ramah." 23 So he went there to Naioth in Ramah. Then [v]the Spirit of God was upon him also, and he went on and prophesied until he came to Naioth in Ramah. 24 [w]And he also stripped off his clothes and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down [x]naked all that day and all that night. Therefore they say, [y]"*Is* Saul also among the prophets?"

Jonathan's Loyalty to David

20 Then David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and went and said to Jonathan, "What have I done? What *is* my iniquity, and what *is* my sin before your father, that he seeks my life?"

2 So Jonathan said to him, "By no means! You shall not die! Indeed, my father will do nothing either great or small without first telling me. And why should my father hide this thing from me? It *is* not *so!*"

3 Then David took an oath again, and said, "Your father certainly knows that I have found favor in your eyes, and he has said, 'Do not let Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved.' But [a]truly, *as* the LORD lives and *as* your soul lives, *there is* but a step between me and death."

4 So Jonathan said to David, "Whatever you yourself desire, I will do *it* for you."

5 And David said to Jonathan, "Indeed tomorrow *is* the [b]New Moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king to eat. But let me go, that I may [c]hide in the field until the third *day* at evening. 6 If your father misses me at all, then say, 'David earnestly asked *permission* of me that he might run over [d]to Bethlehem, his city, for *there is* a yearly sacrifice there for all the family.' 7 [e]If he says thus: '*It is* well,' your servant will be safe. But if he is very angry, be sure that [f]evil is determined by him. 8 Therefore you shall [g]deal kindly with your servant, for [h]you have brought your servant into a covenant of the LORD with you. Nevertheless, [i]if there is iniquity in me, kill me yourself, for why should you bring me to your father?"

9 But Jonathan said, "Far be it from you! For if I knew certainly that evil was determined by my father to come upon you, then would I not tell you?"

10 Then David said to Jonathan, "Who will tell me, or what *if* your father answers you roughly?"

11 And Jonathan said to David, "Come, let us go out into the field." So both of them went out into the field. 12 Then Jonathan said to David: "The LORD God of Israel *is witness!* When I have [l]sounded out my father sometime tomorrow, *or* the third *day,* and indeed *there is* good toward David, and I do not send to you and tell you, 13 may [j]the LORD do so and much more to Jonathan. But if it pleases my father *to do* you evil, then I will report it to you and send you away, that you

23 [v]1 Sam. 10:10

24 [w]Is. 20:2 [x]Mic. 1:8 [y]1 Sam. 10:10–12

CHAPTER 20

3 [a]1 Sam. 27:1; 2 Kin. 2:6

5 [b]Num. 10:10; 28:11–15 [c]1 Sam. 19:2, 3

6 [d]1 Sam. 16:4; 17:12; John 7:42

7 [e]Deut. 1:23; 2 Sam. 17:4 [f]1 Sam. 25:17; Esth. 7:7

8 [g]Josh. 2:14 [h]1 Sam. 18:3; 20:16; 23:18 [i]2 Sam. 14:32

12 [l]*searched out*

13 [j]Ruth 1:17; 1 Sam. 3:17

■ **19:22 great well . . . at Sechu.** Sechu is unknown, but it may be a site about two miles north of Ramah. Some have suggested reconstructing the difficult Hebrew on the basis of Septuagint (the Old Testament Greek translation) to read "well of the threshing floor on the bare height." This could have been a familiar landmark, such as are mentioned more than once in Samuel (20:19; 2 Sam. 20:8).

■ **19:23 the Spirit of God was upon him.** Having set out to destroy David, Saul has been frustrated by Jonathan, Michal, Samuel, and now finally by God Himself.

■ **19:24 he also stripped off his clothes.** Robes in the books of Samuel often seem to have a symbolic significance, frequently pertaining to the kingship (15:28; 18:4; 24:4–6 and notes). While Jonathan's gift of his robe to David in 18:4 was voluntary, Saul's action here is under the compulsion of God's Spirit.

■ **20:1 Naioth.** See note on 19:18.

■ **20:2 By no means.** Apparently Jonathan is unaware of the most recent attempts on David's life (19:9–24) and assumes that the oath of 19:6 still stands.

■ **20:5 the New Moon.** This festival was a time of rejoicing at the beginning of each month. It was marked by the sounding of trumpets (Num. 10:10; Ps. 81:3) and special sacrifices (Num. 28:11–15). The festival is often mentioned in conjunction with the Sabbath (2 Kin. 4:23; 1 Chr. 23:31; Neh. 10:33; Is. 66:23; Ezek. 46:3) and may have been subject to similar regulations (Amos 8:5). The New Moon celebration is mentioned once in the New Testament (Col. 2:16).

■ **20:6 then say.** Jonathan goes along with David's pretext in vv. 28, 29. In evaluating the ethics of such actions, one might compare the Lord's instructions to Samuel in 16:2 (note), although in that context the excuse was a half-truth and not an outright untruth, as it seems to be here.

Bethlehem. See note on 16:1.

yearly sacrifice. See note on 1:3; cf. 1:21.

■ **20:7 your servant.** This address expresses humility and deference (1:11, 16; 3:10; 17:32; 22:15; 23:10; 25:24).

■ **20:8 covenant.** See 18:3, 4 and notes. Pledges of friendship and loyalty are reiterated in vv. 13–17, 42.

■ **20:13 the LORD be with you as He has been with my father.** This single reference to the Lord as being "with Saul" should be understood as referring to the kingship. Recognizing that David is now God's chosen king (18:4 note; 23:17 and note), Jonathan gives him allegiance over and above his allegiance to his own father (v. 16).

may go in safety. And [k]the LORD be with you as He has [l]been with my father. 14 And you shall not only show me the kindness of the LORD while I still live, that I may not die; 15 but [m]you shall not [2]cut off your kindness from my [3]house forever, no, not when the LORD has cut off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth." 16 So Jonathan made *a covenant* with the [4]house of David, *saying,* [n]"Let the LORD require *it* at the hand of David's enemies."

17 Now Jonathan again caused David to vow, because he loved him; [o]for he loved him as he loved his own soul. 18 Then Jonathan said to David, [p]"Tomorrow *is* the New Moon; and you will be missed, because your seat will be empty. 19 And *when* you have stayed three days, go down quickly and come to [q]the place where you hid on the day of the deed; and remain by the stone Ezel. 20 Then I will shoot three arrows to the side, as though I shot at a target; 21 and there I will send a lad, *saying,* 'Go, find the arrows.' If I expressly say to the lad, 'Look, the arrows *are* on this side of you; get them and come'—then, [r]as the LORD lives, *there is* safety for you and no harm. 22 But if I say thus to the young man, 'Look, the arrows *are* beyond you'—go your way, for the LORD has sent you away. 23 And as for [s]the matter which you and I have spoken of, indeed the LORD *be* between you and me forever."

24 Then David hid in the field. And when the New Moon had come, the king sat down to eat the feast. 25 Now the king sat on his seat, as at other times, on a seat by the wall. And [5]Jonathan arose, and Abner sat by Saul's side, but David's place was empty. 26 Nevertheless Saul did not say anything that day, for he thought, "Something has happened to him; he *is* unclean, surely he *is* [t]unclean." 27 And it happened the next day, the second *day* of the month, that David's place was empty. And Saul said to Jonathan his son, "Why has the son of Jesse not come to eat, either yesterday or today?"

28 So Jonathan [u]answered Saul, "David earnestly asked *permission* of me *to go* to Bethlehem. 29 And he said, 'Please let me go, for our family has a sacrifice in the city, and my brother has commanded me *to be there.* And now, if I have found favor in your eyes, please let me get away and see my brothers.' Therefore he has not come to the king's table."

30 Then Saul's anger was aroused against Jonathan, and he said to him, "You son of a perverse, rebellious *woman!* Do I not know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of your mother's nakedness? 31 For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, you shall not be established, nor your kingdom. Now therefore, send and bring him to me, for he [6]shall surely die."

32 And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said to him, [v]"Why should he be killed? What has he done?" 33 Then Saul [w]cast a spear at him to [7]kill him, [x]by which Jonathan knew that it was determined by his father to kill David.

34 So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and ate no food the second day of the month, for he was grieved for David, because his father had treated him shamefully.

35 And so it was, in the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, and a little lad *was* with him. 36 Then he said to his lad, "Now run, find the arrows which I shoot." As the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him. 37 When the lad had come to the place where the arrow was which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried out after the lad and said, "*Is* not the arrow beyond you?" 38 And Jonathan cried out after the lad, "Make haste, hurry, do not delay!" So Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows and came back to his master. 39 But the lad

13 [k]Josh. 1:5; 1 Sam. 17:37; 18:12; 1 Chr. 22:11, 16 [l]1 Sam. 10:7

15 [m]1 Sam. 24:21; 2 Sam. 9:1, 3, 7; 21:7 [2]*stop being kind* [3]*family*

16 [n]Deut. 23:21; 1 Sam. 25:22; 31:2; 2 Sam. 4:7; 21:8 [4]*family*

17 [o]1 Sam. 18:1

18 [p]1 Sam. 20:5, 24

19 [q]1 Sam. 19:2

21 [r]Jer. 4:2

23 [s]1 Sam. 20:14, 15

25 [5]So with MT, Syr., Tg., Vg.; LXX *he sat across from Jonathan*

26 [t]Lev. 7:20, 21; 15:5

28 [u]1 Sam. 20:6

31 [6]Lit. *is a son of death*

32 [v]Gen. 31:36; 1 Sam. 19:5; [Prov. 31:9]; Matt. 27:23; Luke 23:22

33 [w]1 Sam. 18:11; 19:10 [x]1 Sam. 20:7 [7]*strike him down*

■ **20:15 you shall not cut off your kindness.** For the fulfillment of this request, see 2 Sam. 9:1–8; 21:7.

■ **20:16 David's enemies.** See note on v. 13. Since it is David himself who will be accountable to keep covenant with Jonathan, "enemies" is probably a euphemistic reference to Saul, Jonathan's father (cf. 25:22; 2 Sam. 12:14).

■ **20:17 vow.** See note on v. 8.

■ **20:18 New Moon.** See note on v. 5.

■ **20:19 stone Ezel.** The site is otherwise unknown. The Hebrew may mean something like "Departure Stone." The stone was possibly a familiar landmark on the way out of town; for other such landmarks mentioned in Samuel, see 19:22; 2 Sam. 20:8 and notes.

■ **20:23 LORD be between you and me.** See Gen. 31:50, 53.

■ **20:24 New Moon.** See note on v. 5.

■ **20:25 Abner.** He was Saul's relative and military commander (14:50).

■ **20:26 unclean.** See especially Lev. 7:19–21. Laws of cleanliness are covered most fully in Lev. 11—15, though references to "clean" and "unclean" are frequent throughout the Pentateuch (Gen. 7:2; Lev. 5:2; Num. 5:2; Deut. 14:3–21; etc.). The point is not physical but ritual or religious uncleanness.

■ **20:28, 29** See note on v. 6.

■ **20:30 son of a perverse, rebellious woman.** As in similar modern expressions, the insult is meant for Jonathan and not necessarily his mother.

■ **20:31 you shall not be established, nor your kingdom.** Despite Samuel's words in 13:14, Saul still clings to hope for his dynasty (cf. 18:8 note). Contrast Jonathan's ready acceptance of the Lord's will (v. 13; 18:4; 23:17 and notes). It may be inferred from Saul's words that Jonathan was his firstborn and thus in line for the throne.

■ **20:33 Saul cast a spear at him.** Saul's and Jonathan's opposite reactions to David have driven a wedge between them. Saul's attempt on Jonathan's life matches his earlier attempts on David's (18:11; 19:10).

did not know anything. Only Jonathan and David knew of the matter. 40 Then Jonathan gave his [g]weapons to his lad, and said to him, "Go, carry *them* to the city."

41 As soon as the lad had gone, David arose from *a place* toward the south, fell on his face to the ground, and bowed down three times. And they kissed one another; and they wept together, but David more so. 42 Then Jonathan said to David, [y]"Go in peace, since we have both sworn in the name of the LORD, saying, 'May the LORD be between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants, forever.' " So he arose and departed, and Jonathan went into the city.

David and the Holy Bread

21 Now David came to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest. And [a]Ahimelech was [b]afraid when he met David, and said to him, "Why *are* you alone, and no one is with you?"

2 So David said to Ahimelech the priest, "The king has ordered me on some business, and said to me, 'Do not let anyone know anything about the business on which I send you, or what I have commanded you.' And I have directed *my* young men to such and such a place. 3 Now therefore, what have you on hand? Give *me* five *loaves of* bread in my hand, or whatever can be found."

4 And the priest answered David and said, "*There is* no [1]common bread on hand; but there is [c]holy[2] bread, [d]if the young men have at least kept themselves from women."

5 Then David answered the priest, and said to him, "Truly, women *have been* kept from us about three days since I came out. And [3]the [e]vessels of the young men are holy, and *the bread is* in effect common, even though it was consecrated [f]in the vessel this day."

6 So the priest [g]gave him holy *bread;* for there was no bread there but the showbread [h]which had been taken from before the LORD, in order to put hot bread *in its place* on the day when it was taken away.

7 Now a certain man of the servants of Saul *was* there that day, detained before the LORD. And his name *was* [i]Doeg, an Edomite, the chief of the herdsmen who *belonged* to Saul.

8 And David said to Ahimelech, "Is there not here on hand a spear or a sword? For I have brought neither my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste."

9 So the priest said, "The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in [j]the Valley of Elah, [k]there it is, wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod. If you will take that, take *it.* For *there is* no other except that one here."

And David said, "*There is* none like it; give it to me."

David Flees to Gath

10 Then David arose and fled that day from before Saul, and went to Achish the king of Gath. 11 And [l]the servants of Achish said to him, "*Is* this not David the king of the land? Did they not sing of him to one another in dances, saying:

> [m]'Saul has slain his thousands,
> And David his ten thousands'?"

12 Now David [n]took these words [4]to heart, and was very much afraid of Achish the king of Gath. 13 So [o]he changed his behavior before them, pretended [5]madness in their hands, [6]scratched

40 [g]*equipment*

42 [y]1 Sam. 1:17

CHAPTER 21

1 [a]1 Sam. 14:3; Mark 2:26 [b]1 Sam. 16:4

4 [c]Ex. 25:30; Lev. 24:5–9; Matt. 12:4 [d]Ex. 19:15 [1]*ordinary* [2]*consecrated*

5 [e]Ex. 19:14, 15; 1 Thess. 4:4 [f]Lev. 8:26 [3]The young men are ceremonially undefiled

6 [g]Matt. 12:3, 4; Mark 2:25, 26; Luke 6:3, 4 [h]Lev. 24:8, 9

7 [i]1 Sam. 14:47; 22:9; Ps. 52:title

9 [j]1 Sam. 17:2, 50 [k]1 Sam. 31:10

11 [l]Ps. 56:title [m]1 Sam. 18:6–8; 29:5

12 [n]Luke 2:19 [4]Lit. *in his heart*

13 [o]Ps. 34:title [5]*insanity* [6]*scribbled*

■ **20:42 sworn.** See note on v. 8.

■ **21:1 Nob.** Probably located less than two miles northeast of Jerusalem (Is. 10:32), Nob became "the city of the priests" (22:19) sometime after the disaster that came upon Shiloh (1:3 note; 2:32 note) at the hands of the Philistines (4:1–11).

Ahimelech. Either Ahijah's brother or simply another name for Ahijah (14:3), Ahimelech occupies the position of high priest once held by his great-grandfather Eli (1:9). See also Mark 2:26 and note.

■ **21:2 king has ordered me.** Having employed a pretext to good advantage not long before (20:6 note), David does so again, with disastrous results for Ahimelech and the priests at Nob (22:6–19).

■ **21:4 holy bread.** That is, "the showbread" (v. 6; Ex. 25:30; 35:13; Lev. 24:5–9; 1 Chr. 9:32). See Jesus' reference to this episode in Matt. 12:3, 4; Mark 2:25, 26; Luke 6:3, 4.

kept themselves from women. Ritual cleanliness was a part of consecration prior to battle or other important occasions (Ex. 19:15; Lev. 15:18; Deut. 23:9–14; Josh. 3:5; 2 Sam. 11:11–12).

■ **21:6 showbread.** See v. 4 and note.

■ **21:7 Doeg, an Edomite.** The presence of Doeg at these transactions arouses apprehensions in the reader as it did in David (22:22). These apprehensions prove well founded as the narrative progresses (22:9, 10, 18, 19). Doeg is also mentioned in the title of Ps. 52.

■ **21:9 sword of Goliath.** See 17:51, 54.

ephod. See 2:28 note.

■ **21:10 Achish.** See 27:2–12; 29:1–11; title to Ps. 34, where "Abimelech" may be a name for Philistine kings.

Gath. See notes on 4:1; 5:8.

■ **21:11 David, the king.** Outside as well as inside Israel, David's royal destiny seems to be recognized, even if the Philistines' statement is best understood as popular exaggeration.

David his ten thousands. See note on 18:7.

on the doors of the gate, and let his saliva fall down on his beard. 14 Then Achish said to his servants, "Look, you see the man is insane. Why have you brought him to me? 15 Have I need of madmen, that you have brought this *fellow* to play the madman in my presence? Shall this *fellow* come into my house?"

David's Four Hundred Men

22 David therefore departed from there and [a]escaped [b]to the cave of Adullam. So when his brothers and all his father's house heard *it,* they went down there to him. 2 [c]And everyone *who was* in distress, everyone who *was* in debt, and everyone *who was* [f]discontented gathered to him. So he became captain over them. And there were about [d]four hundred men with him.

3 Then David went from there to Mizpah of [e]Moab; and he said to the king of Moab, "Please let my father and mother come here with you, till I know what God will do for me." 4 So he brought them before the king of Moab, and they dwelt with him all the time that David was in the stronghold.

5 Now the prophet [f]Gad said to David, "Do not stay in the stronghold; depart, and go to the land of Judah." So David departed and went into the forest of Hereth.

Saul Murders the Priests

6 When Saul heard that David and the men who *were* with him had been discovered—now Saul was staying in [g]Gibeah under a tamarisk tree in Ramah, with his spear in his hand, and all his servants standing about him— 7 then Saul said to his servants who stood about him, "Hear now, you Benjamites! Will the son of Jesse [h]give every one of you fields and vineyards, *and* make you all captains of thousands and captains of hundreds? 8 All of you have conspired against me, and *there is* no one who reveals to me that [i]my son has made a covenant with the son of Jesse; and *there is* not one of you who is sorry for me or reveals to me that my son has stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as *it is* this day."

9 Then answered [j]Doeg the Edomite, who was set over the servants of Saul, and said, "I saw the son of Jesse going to Nob, to [k]Ahimelech the son of [l]Ahitub. 10 [m]And he inquired of the LORD for him, [n]gave him provisions, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine."

11 So the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's house, the priests who *were* in Nob. And they all came to the king. 12 And Saul said, "Hear now, son of Ahitub!"

He answered, "Here I am, my lord."

13 Then Saul said to him, "Why have you conspired against me, you and the son of Jesse, in that you have given him bread and a sword, and have inquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as it is this day?"

14 So Ahimelech answered the king and said, "And who among all your servants *is as* [o]faith-

CHAPTER 22

1 [a]Ps. 57:title; 142:title [b]Josh. 12:15; 15:35; 2 Sam. 23:13

2 [c]Judg. 11:3 [d]1 Sam. 25:13 [f]Lit. *bitter of soul*

3 [e]2 Sam. 8:2

5 [f]2 Sam. 24:11; 1 Chr. 21:9; 29:29; 2 Chr. 29:25

6 [g]1 Sam. 15:34

7 [h]1 Sam. 8:14

8 [i]1 Sam. 18:3; 20:16, 30

9 [j]1 Sam. 21:7; 22:22; Ps. 52:title [k]1 Sam. 21:1 [l]1 Sam. 14:3

10 [m]Num. 27:21; 1 Sam. 10:22 [n]1 Sam. 21:6, 9

14 [o]1 Sam. 19:4, 5; 20:32; 24:11

■ **22:1 cave of Adullam.** Adullam, which may mean "refuge," has been identified with a site seventeen miles southwest of Jerusalem, midway between Gath and Hebron. See also 2 Sam. 23:13; Josh. 12:15; titles to Ps. 57 and 142.

his father's house . . . went down there to him. The vehemence that drove Saul to attack even his own family (20:33) left David's family with little reason to feel secure.

■ **22:3 Mizpah of Moab.** The specific location of this city is unknown. On the name Mizpah ("watchtower"), see 7:5 note.

king of Moab. Moab had a king already in Judg. 3:12.

come here with you. David's decision to seek sanctuary in Moab may be based not only on the assumption that a nation at odds with Saul (14:47) might well wish to side with a rival, but also on David's family ties to the Moabites (Ruth 4:13–17).

what God will do for me. While taking whatever practical measures he can, David nevertheless sees God in sovereign control of his situation (2 Sam. 15:25, 26).

■ **22:4 the stronghold.** See note on 23:14.

■ **22:5 prophet Gad.** Later to serve as King David's seer (2 Sam. 24:11; 2 Chr. 29:25; cf. 1 Chr. 29:29), Gad's presence at this point is a reminder that David's destiny is divinely appointed and that he is under the Lord's protection. David will later be joined by a priest (vv. 20–23).

■ **22:6 spear in his hand.** The mention of Saul's spear here may be a reminder of Saul's violent temper (18:10, 11; 19:10; 20:33), which comes to full expression in this episode.

■ **22:7 you Benjamites.** Having apparently surrounded himself with members of his own tribe (9:1, 2; 10:21), Saul seeks to reinforce their loyalty with an appeal to self-interest: is David, of the tribe of Judah, likely to be fair to Benjamites?

fields and vineyards. The questions addressed by Saul to his officials suggest that he engaged in at least some of the abusive royal practices about which Samuel had warned (8:10–18).

■ **22:8 son has made a covenant.** See notes on 18:3, 4.

■ **22:9 Doeg the Edomite.** See 21:7 and note.

Ahimelech the son of Ahitub. See 21:1 and notes.

■ **22:13 conspired against me.** Saul's assumption that Ahimelech has plotted with David against the king is baseless; Ahimelech was simply misled by David (21:2 note).

rise against me, to lie in wait. Saul's assumption of hostile motives on David's part is as ill-founded as his assumption about Ahimelech.

■ **22:14 goes at your bidding.** Ahimelech may still think that David was doing covert work for Saul (21:2) when he came for help.

ful as David, who is the king's son-in-law, who goes at your bidding, and is honorable in your house? 15 Did I then begin to inquire of God for him? Far be it from me! Let not the king impute anything to his servant, *or* to any in the house of my father. For your servant knew nothing of all this, little or much."

16 And the king said, "You shall surely die, Ahimelech, you and all [p]your father's house!" 17 Then the king said to the guards who stood about him, "Turn and kill the priests of the LORD, because their hand also *is* with David, and because they knew when he fled and did not tell it to me." But the servants of the king [q]would not lift their hands to strike the priests of the LORD. 18 And the king said to Doeg, "You turn and kill the priests!" So Doeg the Edomite turned and [2]struck the priests, and [r]killed on that day eighty-five men who wore a linen ephod. 19 [s]Also

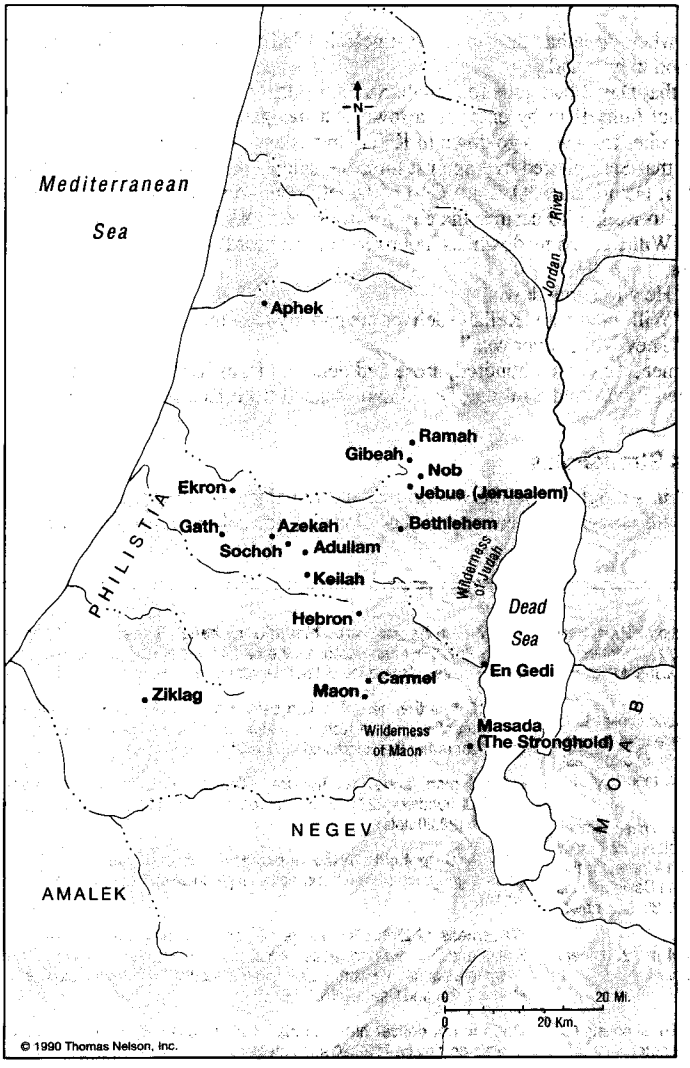
16 [p]Deut. 24:16
17 [q]Ex. 1:17
18 [r]1 Sam. 2:31
[2]*attacked*
19 [s]Josh. 21:1–45; 1 Sam. 22:9, 11

■ **22:17 would not . . . strike the priests.** Saul's command that the priests of the Lord be slaughtered is so evil and irrational that his own men refuse to carry it out. At least once before, Saul's men found it necessary to go against him (14:45 and note).

■ **22:18 killed . . . eighty-five men.** See note on 2:31.

linen ephod. See note on 2:18.

■ **22:19 men and women, children and nursing infants.** It is an irony



Before David Became King. Near Sochoh David defeated the giant Goliath (1 Sam. 17). Once Saul's wrath was kindled against the shepherd-soldier, David fled Saul's presence.

His journey went first to Nob, where he deceived the priest Ahimelech into giving him bread and Goliath's sword. He then sought refuge with the Philistine King Achish in Gath.

The suspicions of the Philistines forced David to continue his flight, now to the cave of Adullam, where he was joined by his family. After taking his family to the safety of Moab, he established camp at the stronghold (1 Sam. 22:4) now known as Masada.

Saul's pursuit, however, would not allow David to remain in one place. Other stops included Keilah, En Gedi, and finally Ziklag, David's camp until he moved to Hebron and became king of Judah.

Nob, the city of the priests, he struck with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and nursing infants, oxen and donkeys and sheep—with the edge of the sword.

20 [t]Now one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, [u]escaped and fled after David. 21 And Abiathar told David that Saul had killed the LORD's priests. 22 So David said to Abiathar, "I knew that day, when Doeg the Edomite *was* there, that he would surely tell Saul. I have caused *the death* of all the persons of your father's [3]house. 23 Stay with me; do not fear. [v]For he who seeks my life seeks your life, but with me you *shall be* safe."

David Saves the City of Keilah

23 Then they told David, saying, "Look, the Philistines are fighting against [a]Keilah, and they are robbing the threshing floors."

2 Therefore David [b]inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go and [1]attack these Philistines?"

And the LORD said to David, "Go and attack the Philistines, and save Keilah."

3 But David's men said to him, "Look, we are afraid here in Judah. How much more then if we go to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?" 4 Then David inquired of the LORD once again.

And the LORD answered him and said, "Arise, go down to Keilah. For I will deliver the Philistines into your hand." 5 And David and his men went to Keilah and [c]fought with the Philistines, struck them with a mighty blow, and took away their livestock. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah.

6 Now it happened, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech [d]fled to David at Keilah, *that* he went down *with* an ephod in his hand.

7 And Saul was told that David had gone to Keilah. So Saul said, "God has delivered him into my hand, for he has shut himself in by entering a town that has gates and bars." 8 Then Saul called all the people together for war, to go down to Keilah to besiege David and his men.

9 When David knew that Saul plotted evil against him, [e]he said to Abiathar the priest, "Bring the ephod here." 10 Then David said, "O LORD God of Israel, Your servant has certainly heard that Saul seeks to come to Keilah [f]to destroy the city for my sake. 11 Will the men of Keilah deliver me into his hand? Will Saul come down, as Your servant has heard? O LORD God of Israel, I pray, tell Your servant."

And the LORD said, "He will come down."

12 Then David said, "Will the men of Keilah [2]deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul?"

And the LORD said, "They will deliver *you.*"

13 So David and his men, [g]about six hundred, arose and departed from Keilah and went wherever they could go. Then it was told Saul that David had escaped from Keilah; so he halted the expedition.

David in Wilderness Strongholds

14 And David stayed in strongholds in the wilderness, and remained in [h]the mountains in the Wilderness of [i]Ziph. Saul [j]sought him every day, but God did not deliver him into his hand.

20 [t]1 Sam. 23:6, 9; 30:7; 1 Kin. 2:26, 27 [u]1 Sam. 2:33

22 [3]*family*

23 [v]1 Kin. 2:26

CHAPTER 23

1 [a]Josh. 15:44; Neh. 3:17, 18

2 [b]1 Sam. 22:10; 23:4, 6, 9; 28:6; 30:8; 2 Sam. 5:19, 23 [1]Lit. *strike*

5 [c]1 Sam. 19:8; 2 Sam. 5:20

6 [d]1 Sam. 22:20

9 [e]Num. 27:21; 1 Sam. 23:6; 30:7

10 [f]1 Sam. 22:19

12 [2]Lit. *shut up*

13 [g]1 Sam. 22:2; 25:13

14 [h]Ps. 11:1 [i]Josh. 15:55; 2 Chr. 11:8 [j]Ps. 32:7; 54:3, 4

extremely damaging to Saul's image that the description of the total slaughter of the inhabitants of Nob, "the city of the priests," matches almost verbatim the order that had been given for the slaughter of the Amalekites (15:3) that Saul failed to carry out.

■ **22:20 Abiathar . . . fled after David.** Support for David continues to build, chiefly as a result of Saul's own misguided attempts at self-preservation. David now has the support of both prophet (v. 5) and priest. Abiathar brings to David the ephod (23:6), which was a means of discerning the Lord's will (2:28 note; 14:3 note).

■ **22:22 I have caused.** It would be easy for David to excuse himself for the massacre at Nob by simply condemning Saul. Instead, he readily admits his own share of responsibility for the disaster (21:2 note). In this admission the reader glimpses a major difference between David and his predecessor, the quality of their repentance (15:24–26, 30 and notes; 2 Sam. 12:13 note).

■ **23:1 Keilah.** Located about three miles south of Adullam (22:1) near Philistine territory, Keilah is also mentioned in Josh. 15:44.

robbing the threshing floors. Cf. Judg. 6:3–6.

■ **23:6 ephod.** Not the "linen ephod" traditionally worn by all priests (cf. 22:18), but the ephod associated with divine inquiry (2:28 note).

■ **23:7 God has delivered him into my hand.** Saul's interpretation of events is without foundation, as the narrator's diametrically opposed assertion makes clear: "God did not deliver him into his hand" (v. 14).

■ **23:12 Will the men of Keilah deliver me.** In view of Saul's ruthless treatment of the city of Nob, the behavior of the Keilahites probably reflects fear rather than ingratitude to David.

■ **23:13 men, about six hundred.** The growth of David's company from four hundred (22:2) to six hundred is an indication of his increasing strength (22:20 note).

■ **23:14 strongholds in the wilderness.** The term "strongholds" suggests a geographical area and not a single location (22:4; 2 Sam. 5:17; 23:14).

Wilderness of Ziph. The village of Ziph is thirteen miles southeast of Keilah and five miles southeast of Hebron. The wilderness would be the desert area south of Hebron. Ziph is mentioned in Josh. 15:55, along with Maon (v. 24) and Carmel (15:12; 25:2).

God did not deliver him into his hand. God is in sovereign control of David's destiny (v. 7; 22:20 and notes).

15 So David saw that Saul had come out to seek his life. And David *was* in the Wilderness of Ziph [3]in a forest. 16 Then Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David in the woods and [4]strengthened his hand in God. 17 And he said to him, [k]"Do not fear, for the hand of Saul my father shall not find you. You shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to you. [l]Even my father Saul knows that." 18 So the two of them [m]made a covenant before the LORD. And David stayed in the woods, and Jonathan went to his own house.

19 Then the Ziphites [n]came up to Saul at Gibeah, saying, "Is David not hiding with us in strongholds in the woods, in the hill of Hachilah, which *is* on the south of Jeshimon? 20 Now therefore, O king, come down according to all the desire of your soul to come down; and [o]our part *shall be* to deliver him into the king's hand."

21 And Saul said, "Blessed *are* you of the LORD, for you have compassion on me. 22 Please go and find out for sure, and see the place where his hideout is, *and* who has seen him there. For I am told he is very crafty. 23 See therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking places where he hides; and come back to me with certainty, and I will go with you. And it shall be, if he is in the land, that I will search for him throughout all the [5]clans of Judah."

24 So they arose and went to Ziph before Saul. But David and his men *were* in the Wilderness [p]of Maon, in the plain on the south of Jeshimon. 25 When Saul and his men went to seek *him,* they told David. Therefore he went down [6]to the rock, and stayed in the Wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard *that,* he pursued David in the Wilderness of Maon. 26 Then Saul went on one side of the mountain, and David and his men on the other side of the mountain. [q]So David made haste to get away from Saul, for Saul and his men [r]were encircling David and his men to take them.

27 [s]But a messenger came to Saul, saying, "Hurry and come, for the Philistines have invaded the land!" 28 Therefore Saul returned from pursuing David, and went against the Philistines; so they called that place [7]the Rock of Escape. 29 Then David went up from there and dwelt in strongholds at [t]En Gedi.

David Spares Saul

24 Now it happened, [a]when Saul had returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, "Take note! David *is* in the Wilderness of En Gedi." 2 Then Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel, and [b]went to seek David and his men on the Rocks of the Wild Goats. 3 So he came to the sheepfolds by the road, where there *was* a cave; and [c]Saul went in to [d]attend to his needs. ([e]David and his men were staying in the recesses of the cave.) 4 [f]Then the men of David said to him, "This is the day of which the LORD said to you, 'Behold, I will deliver your enemy into your hand, that you may do to him as it seems good to you.' " And David arose and secretly cut off a corner of Saul's robe. 5 Now it happened afterward that [g]David's heart troubled him because he had cut Saul's *robe.* 6 And he said to his men, [h]"The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my master, the LORD's anointed, to stretch out my hand

15 [3]Or *in Horesh*

16 [4]*encouraged him*

17 [k][Ps. 27:1–3; Heb. 13:6] [l]1 Sam. 20:31; 24:20

18 [m]1 Sam. 18:3; 20:12–17, 42; 2 Sam. 9:1; 21:7

19 [n]1 Sam. 26:1; Ps. 54:title

20 [o]Ps. 54:3

23 [5]Lit. *thousands*

24 [p]Josh. 15:55; 1 Sam. 25:2

25 [6]Or *from the rock*

26 [q]Ps. 31:22 [r]Ps. 17:9

27 [s]2 Kin. 19:9

28 [7]Heb. *Sela Hammahlekoth*

29 [t]Josh. 15:62; 2 Chr. 20:2

CHAPTER 24

1 [a]1 Sam. 23:19, 28, 29

2 [b]1 Sam. 26:2; Ps. 38:12

3 [c]1 Sam. 24:10 [d]Judg. 3:24 [e]Ps. 57:title; 142:title

4 [f]1 Sam. 26:8–11

5 [g]2 Sam. 24:10

6 [h]1 Sam. 26:11

■ **23:16 Jonathan, Saul's son . . . strengthened his hand in God.** No longer ignorant of his father's malevolence toward David (contrast 20:2), Jonathan acts as a true friend by aiding David in finding strength where true strength can alone be found. See 30:6, where David once more "strengthened himself in the LORD his God."

■ **23:17 I shall be next to you.** Though Jonathan will not survive to serve David (31:2), his readiness to let go of personal ambition for the sake of God's chosen king (18:4; 20:13) is a foil to Saul's desperate efforts to hang on to a kingdom that is no longer his (15:23).

Saul knows that. See 20:30, 31. Saul's refusal to accept his rejection (compare Eli's response in 3:18) cannot be excused on the grounds that he does not know to whom the kingdom should go.

■ **23:18 covenant.** See notes on 18:3, 4.

■ **23:19 Ziphites.** See note on v. 14; 26:1.

Gibeah. This was Saul's hometown (10:26).

■ **23:24 Wilderness of Maon.** About eight miles south of Hebron, Maon is mentioned in 25:2 as the hometown of Nabal.

■ **23:27 Philistines having invaded the land.** The providential timing of this Philistine incursion is obvious.

■ **23:28 Saul returned from pursuing David.** Saul distinguishes himself by sacrificing personal concerns for the sake of national security.

■ **23:29 strongholds at En Gedi.** En Gedi was a large spring on the steep western shore of the Dead Sea. Its vicinity afforded David provisions and protection in his flight from Saul.

■ **24:1 Wilderness of En Gedi.** See note on 23:29.

■ **24:4 This is the day of which the LORD said to you.** While it is providential that Saul should enter the very cave where David and his men are hidden, there has been no hint that God wanted David to lift a hand against Saul (cf. v. 6). The suggestion by David's men that he do so would be a mistaken conclusion of their own.

cut off a corner of Saul's robe. David restricts himself to a symbolic act (v. 5 note).

■ **24:5 David's heart troubled him.** Although David later displays the corner of Saul's robe as evidence of his goodwill towards Saul (v. 11), his pangs of conscience (cf. 2 Sam. 24:10) suggest that a desire to secure such proof may not have been his only reason for going so close to Saul. In view of the royal significance of robes (15:28; 18:4; 19:24 and notes), David may have felt guilty of and an inappropriate grasping after the kingship and of an act of aggression against the Lord's anointed (v. 6). See theological note "Conscience and the Law."

■ **24:6 LORD's anointed.** David recognizes and safeguards the sanctity of the Lord's anointed (26:9; cf. 2:10 note), leaving judgment and vengeance to the Lord (v. 12).

against him, seeing he *is* the anointed of the LORD." 7 So David [i]restrained his servants with *these* words, and did not allow them to rise against Saul. And Saul got up from the cave and went on *his* way.

8 David also arose afterward, went out of the cave, and called out to Saul, saying, "My lord the king!" And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed down. 9 And David said to Saul: [j]"Why do you listen to the words of men who say, 'Indeed David seeks your harm'? 10 Look, this day your eyes have seen that the LORD delivered you today into my hand in the cave, and *someone* urged *me* to kill you. But *my eye* spared you, and I said, 'I will not stretch out my hand against my lord, for he *is* the LORD's anointed.' 11 Moreover, my father, see! Yes, see the corner of your robe in my hand! For in that I cut off the corner of your robe, and did not kill you, know and see that *there is* [k]neither evil nor rebellion in my hand, and I have not sinned against you. Yet you [l]hunt my life to take it. 12 [m]Let the LORD judge between you and me, and let the LORD avenge me on you. But my hand shall not be against you. 13 As the proverb of the ancients says, [n]'Wickedness proceeds from the wicked.' But my hand shall not be against you. 14 After whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom do you pursue? [o]A dead dog? [p]A flea? 15 [q]Therefore let the LORD be judge, and judge between you and me, and [r]see and [s]plead my case, and deliver me out of your hand."

16 So it was, when David had finished speaking these words to Saul, that Saul said, [t]"*Is* this your voice, my son David?" And Saul lifted up his voice and wept. 17 [u]Then he said to David: "You *are* [v]more righteous than I; for [w]you have rewarded me with good, whereas I have rewarded you with evil. 18 And you have shown this day how you have dealt well with me; for when [x]the LORD delivered me into your hand, you did not kill me. 19 For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him get away safely? Therefore may the LORD reward you with good for what you have done to me this day. 20 And now [y]I know indeed that you shall surely be king, and that

7 [i]Ps. 7:4; [Matt. 5:44; Rom. 12:17, 19]
9 [j]Ps. 141:6; [Prov. 16:28; 17:9]
11 [k]Judg. 11:27; Ps. 7:3; 35:7 [l]1 Sam. 26:20
12 [m]Gen. 16:5; Judg. 11:27; 1 Sam. 26:10–23; Job 5:8
13 [n][Matt. 7:16–20]
14 [o]1 Sam. 17:43; 2 Sam. 9:8 [p]1 Sam. 26:20
15 [q]1 Sam. 24:12 [r]2 Chr. 24:22 [s]Ps. 35:1; 43:1; 119:154; Mic. 7:9
16 [t]1 Sam. 26:17
17 [u]1 Sam. 26:21 [v]Gen. 38:26 [w][Matt. 5:44]
18 [x]1 Sam. 26:23
20 [y]1 Sam. 23:17

Conscience and the Law

Conscience is the built-in power of our minds to pass moral judgments on ourselves, approving or disapproving our actions, thoughts, and plans, and telling us, if what we have done is assessed as wrong, that we deserve to suffer for it. Conscience has in it two elements: an awareness of certain things as being right or wrong, and an ability to apply laws and rules to specific situations. Conscience insists on judging us, and insists on judging us by the highest standard we know. Hence we call it God's voice in the soul, and in a sense it is.

Paul says that God has written a certain knowledge of His law on every human heart (Rom. 2:14, 15), and experience confirms this. But conscience can be misinformed, or conditioned to regard evil as good, or become seared and dull through repeated sin (1 Tim. 4:2). The judgments of conscience are only to be received as God's voice when they match God's own truth and law in Scripture. The conscience must be educated to judge scripturally.

Superstition or scruple may lead a person to count as sinful an action that according to God's word is not sinful. But for such a "weak" conscience (Rom. 14:1, 2; 1 Cor. 8:7, 12) to go against itself and do what it mistakenly judges to be wrong would be sin (Rom. 14:23). Those whose conscience is "weak" should never be pressed or cajoled to do what destroys their good conscience.

The New Testament ideal is a conscience free from guilt and able to guide us in a holy direction. The conscience can only be freed from guilt by the power of Christ's blood. Once freed and protected in its freedom by the gift of justification, the conscience is able to grow through the teaching of Scripture and the means of grace in Christian life. □

■ **24:13 proverb.** David's point seems to be like Jesus' teaching, "By their fruits you will know them" (Matt. 7:16, 20). David is known by his restraint, but Saul is known from his efforts to harm David.

■ **24:14 A dead dog.** David abases himself before Saul, as Mephibosheth will later do before David (2 Sam. 9:8). The expression "dead dog" occurs only one other time in the Old Testament, 2 Sam. 16:9. "Dog" is usually an insult (17:43; 2 Sam. 3:8; 2 Kin. 8:13).

■ **24:17 You are more righteous than I.** Having just escaped with his life, Saul experiences a rare moment of remorse. His testimony to David's righteousness recognizes David's right to rule; even Saul acknowledges that David did not rise to power by illicit means.

■ **24:20 you shall surely be king.** Contrast Samuel's rebuke of Saul in 13:14, "But now your kingdom shall not continue." Yet in contrast to Jonathan's action in 18:4 (note), Saul gives no sign of being ready to give the throne to David (see 26:25 note).

the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand. 21 [z]Therefore swear now to me by the LORD [a]that you will not cut off my descendants after me, and that you will not destroy my name from my father's house."

22 So David swore to Saul. And Saul went home, but David and his men went up to [b]the stronghold.

Death of Samuel

25 Then [a]Samuel died; and the Israelites gathered together and [b]lamented for him, and buried him at his home in Ramah. And David arose and went down [c]to the Wilderness of [1]Paran.

David and the Wife of Nabal

2 Now *there was* a man [d]in Maon whose business *was* in [e]Carmel, and the man *was* very rich. He had three thousand sheep and a thousand goats. And he was shearing his sheep in Carmel. 3 The name of the man *was* Nabal, and the name of his wife Abigail. And *she was* a woman of good understanding and beautiful appearance; but the man *was* harsh and evil in *his* doings. He *was of the house of* [f]Caleb.

4 When David heard in the wilderness that Nabal was [g]shearing his sheep, 5 David sent ten young men; and David said to the young men, "Go up to Carmel, go to Nabal, and greet him in my name. 6 And thus you shall say to him who lives *in prosperity:* [h]'Peace *be* to you, peace to your house, and peace to all that you have! 7 Now I have heard that you have shearers. Your shepherds were with us, and we did not hurt them, [i]nor was there anything missing from them all the while they were in Carmel. 8 Ask your young men, and they will tell you. Therefore [2]let *my* young men find favor in your eyes, for we come on [j]a feast day. Please give whatever comes to your hand to your servants and to your son David.' "

9 So when David's young men came, they spoke to Nabal according to all these words in the name of David, and waited.

10 Then Nabal answered David's servants, and said, [k]"Who *is* David, and who *is* the son of Jesse? There are many servants nowadays who break away each one from his master. 11 [l]Shall I then take my bread and my water and my [3]meat that I have killed for my shearers, and give *it* to men when I do not know where they *are* from?"

12 So David's young men turned on their heels and went back; and they came and told him all these words. 13 Then David said to his men, "Every man gird on his sword." So every man girded on his sword, and David also girded on his sword. And about four hundred men went with David, and two hundred [m]stayed with the supplies.

14 Now one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife, saying, "Look, David sent messengers from the wilderness to greet our master; and he [4]reviled them. 15 But the men *were* very good to us, and [n]we were not hurt, nor did we miss anything as long as we accompanied them, when we were in the fields. 16 They were [o]a wall to us both by night and day, all the time we were with them keeping the sheep. 17 Now therefore, know and consider what you will do, for [p]harm is determined against our master and against all his household. For he *is such* a [q]scoundrel[5] that *one* cannot speak to him."

18 Then Abigail made haste and [r]took two hundred *loaves* of bread, two skins of wine, five sheep already dressed, five seahs of roasted *grain,* one hundred clusters of raisins, and two

21 [z]Gen. 21:23; 1 Sam. 20:14–17 [a]2 Sam. 21:6–8

22 [b]1 Sam. 23:29

CHAPTER 25

1 [a]1 Sam. 28:3 [b]Num. 20:29; Deut. 34:8 [c]Gen. 21:21; Num. 10:12; 13:3 [1]So with MT, Syr., Tg., Vg.; LXX *Maon*

2 [d]1 Sam. 23:24 [e]Josh. 15:55

3 [f]Josh. 15:13; 1 Sam. 30:14

4 [g]Gen. 38:13; 2 Sam. 13:23

6 [h]Judg. 19:20; 1 Chr. 12:18; Ps. 122:7; Luke 10:5

7 [i]1 Sam. 25:15, 21

8 [j]Neh. 8:10–12; Esth. 8:17; 9:19, 22 [2]*be gracious to the young men*

10 [k]Judg. 9:28

11 [l]Judg. 8:6, 15 [3]Lit. *slaughter*

13 [m]1 Sam. 30:24

14 [4]*scolded* or *scorned at*

15 [n]1 Sam. 25:7, 21

16 [o]Ex. 14:22; Job 1:10

17 [p]1 Sam. 20:7 [q]Deut. 13:13; Judg. 19:22 [5]Lit. *son of Belial*

18 [r]Gen. 32:13; [Prov. 18:16; 21:14]

■ **25:1 the Israelites . . . lamented for him.** The extent of mourning is a sign of Samuel's prominence as a leader. Compare the mourning that accompanied the deaths of Jacob (Gen. 50:10), Aaron (Num. 20:29), and Moses (Deut. 34:8).

Ramah. Samuel's hometown (1:1 note).

■ **25:2 Carmel.** The same Carmel where Saul erected a monument in his own honor (15:12 notes). The setting of this incident near Carmel is the first of many reminders of Saul in this chapter.

■ **25:3 Nabal.** In v. 25 Abigail explains the name as meaning "folly." If it seems unlikely that parents would name a child "fool," it may simply be that this is a disparaging play on a name which sounded like "fool."

the house of Caleb. On Caleb's tribal holdings, see Josh. 14:13; 15:13. The similarity of the name "Caleb" to the Hebrew word for "dog" (cf. 24:14 note) may account for the inclusion of this particular detail in the introduction of Nabal.

■ **25:8 your son David.** Compare the attitude of respect and deference adopted by David in addressing Saul as "my father" in 24:11.

■ **25:14 he reviled them.** Nabal's attack on David's messengers is vicious. The Hebrew verb translated "reviled" means "to shriek" or "to fly at" something and is closely related to the Hebrew noun for "birds of prey." The same verb is used of Saul in 15:19 to describe his unrestrained "swooping down" upon the Amalekite spoils (cf. 14:32).

■ **25:16 They were a wall to us.** Not only did David's men refrain from inflicting harm (v. 7), their presence also gave protection to the shepherds of Nabal (v. 21).

■ **25:17 he is such a scoundrel that one cannot speak to him.** Nabal's plight springs from his own wickedness. His lack of knowledge is a refusal to know.

hundred cakes of figs, and loaded *them* on donkeys. 19 And she said to her servants, [s]"Go on before me; see, I am coming after you." But she did not tell her husband Nabal.

20 So it was, *as* she rode on the donkey, that she went down under cover of the hill; and there were David and his men, coming down toward her, and she met them. 21 Now David had said, "Surely in vain I have protected all that this *fellow* has in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that *belongs* to him. And he has [t]repaid me evil for good. 22 [u]May God do so, and more also, to the enemies of David, if I [v]leave [w]one male of all who *belong* to him by morning light."

23 Now when Abigail saw David, she [x]dismounted quickly from the donkey, fell on her face before David, and bowed down to the ground. 24 So she fell at his feet and said: "On me, my lord, *on* me *let* this iniquity *be!* And please let your maidservant [6]speak in your ears, and hear the words of your maidservant. 25 Please, let not my lord [7]regard this scoundrel Nabal. For as his name *is,* so *is* he: [8]Nabal *is* his name, and folly *is* with him! But I, your maidservant, did not see the young men of my lord whom you sent. 26 Now therefore, my lord, [y]*as* the LORD lives and *as* your soul lives, since the LORD has [z]held you back from coming to bloodshed and from [a]avenging[9] yourself with your own hand, now then, [b]let your enemies and those who seek harm for my lord be as Nabal. 27 And now [c]this present which your maidservant has brought to my lord, let it be given to the young men who follow my lord. 28 Please forgive the trespass of your maidservant. For [d]the LORD will certainly make for my lord an enduring house, because my lord [e]fights the battles of the LORD, [f]and evil is not found in you throughout your days. 29 Yet a man has risen to pursue you and seek your life, but the life of my lord shall be [g]bound in the bundle of the living with the LORD your God; and the lives of your enemies He shall [h]sling out, *as from* the pocket of a sling. 30 And it shall come to pass, when the LORD has done for my lord according to all the good that He has spoken concerning you, and has appointed you [i]ruler over Israel, 31 that this will be no grief to you, nor offense of heart to my lord, either that you have shed blood without cause, or that my lord has avenged himself. But when the LORD has dealt well with my lord, then remember your maidservant."

32 Then David said to Abigail: [j]"Blessed *is* the LORD God of Israel, who sent you this day to meet me! 33 And blessed *is* your advice and blessed *are* you, because you have [k]kept me this day from coming to bloodshed and from avenging myself with my own hand. 34 For indeed, *as* the LORD God of Israel lives, who has [l]kept me back from hurting you, unless you had hurried and come to meet me, surely [m]by morning light no males would have been left to Nabal!" 35 So David received from her hand what she had brought him, and said to her, [n]"Go up in peace to your house. See, I have heeded your voice and [o]respected your person."

36 Now Abigail went to Nabal, and there he was, [p]holding a feast in his house, like the feast of a king. And Nabal's heart *was* merry within him, for he *was* very drunk; therefore she told him nothing, little or much, until morning light. 37 So it was, in the morning, when the wine had gone from Nabal, and his wife had told him these things, that his heart died within him, and he became *like* a stone. 38 Then it happened, *after* about ten days, that the LORD [q]struck Nabal, and he died.

39 So when David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, [r]"Blessed *be* the LORD, who has [s]pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal, and has [t]kept His servant from evil! For the LORD has [u]returned the wickedness of Nabal on his own head."

And David sent and proposed to Abigail, to take her as his wife. 40 When the servants of Da-

19 [s]Gen. 32:16, 20
21 [t]Ps. 109:5
22 [u]1 Sam. 3:17; 20:13, 16 [v]1 Sam. 25:34 [w]1 Kin. 14:10; 21:21
23 [x]Judg. 1:14
24 [6]*speak to you*
25 [7]*pay attention to* [8]Lit. *Fool*
26 [y]2 Kin. 2:2 [z]Gen. 20:6 [a][Rom. 12:19] [b]2 Sam. 18:32 [9]Lit. *saving yourself*
27 [c]Gen. 33:11
28 [d]2 Sam. 7:11–16, 27 [e]1 Sam. 18:17 [f]1 Sam. 24:11
29 [g][Col. 3:3] [h]Jer. 10:18
30 [i]1 Sam. 13:14; 15:28
32 [j]Luke 1:68
33 [k]1 Sam. 25:26
34 [l]1 Sam. 25:26 [m]1 Sam. 25:22
35 [n]2 Kin. 5:19 [o]Gen. 19:21
36 [p]2 Sam. 13:28
38 [q]1 Sam. 26:10
39 [r]1 Sam. 25:32 [s]Prov. 22:23 [t]1 Sam. 25:26, 34 [u]1 Kin. 2:44

■ **25:19 But she did not tell her husband Nabal.** In refusing to confide in her husband, Abigail shows her lack of confidence in him. In view of Abigail's insight into the Lord's choice of David (v. 28 and note), her decision to go against her husband's wishes seems to fall under the category of obeying God rather than men (Acts 5:29).

■ **25:22 if I leave one male . . . by morning.** Unrestrained by any special status of the man Nabal (contrast 24:9–12), David is intent upon exacting personal revenge.

■ **25:25 as his name is, so is he.** See note on v. 3.

■ **25:28 an enduring house.** Abigail's perception of David is as right as her husband's is wrong (vv. 10, 11; 2 Sam. 7:11–16).

fights the battles of the LORD. Abigail's words hint at the difference between David's proper military role and the personal vendetta he is now pursuing. Righteous engagement in conflict means standing boldly for God and leaving personal injuries to be dealt with by the Lord (24:12).

evil is not found in you. To have taken his own revenge on an enemy would have made David little better than Saul, and David later praises the Lord for sending Abigail to deter him from such a transgression (v. 32).

■ **25:29 bound . . . bundle . . . sling . . . sling.** Note the poetic repetition in Abigail's speech.

■ **25:36 like the feast of a king.** This phrase invites the thought that Nabal is somehow like another king, Saul.

■ **25:39 Blessed be the LORD.** It would have been wrong for David to take matters into his own hands, but not because Nabal was innocent. Having heard of Nabal's death, David thanks the Lord for keeping him from personal wrongdoing while at the same time upholding his cause.

■ **25:40–44 Abigail . . . Ahinoam . . . Michal.** David now has three wives: Michal, Saul's daughter, who has been given to someone else; Ahinoam; and Abigail. See also 2 Sam. 2:2; 3:2, 3.

vid had come to Abigail at Carmel, they spoke to her saying, "David sent us to you, to ask you to become his wife."

41 Then she arose, bowed her face to the earth, and said, "Here is your maidservant, a servant to [v]wash the feet of the servants of my lord." 42 So Abigail rose in haste and rode on a donkey, [l]attended by five of her maidens; and she followed the messengers of David, and became his wife. 43 David also took Ahinoam [w]of Jezreel, [x]and so both of them were his wives.

44 But Saul had given [y]Michal his daughter, David's wife, to [z]Palti the son of Laish, who *was* from [z]Gallim.

David Spares Saul a Second Time

26 Now the Ziphites came to Saul at Gibeah, saying, [a]"Is David not hiding in the hill of Hachilah, opposite Jeshimon?" 2 Then Saul arose and went down to the Wilderness of Ziph, having [b]three thousand chosen men of Israel with him, to seek David in the Wilderness of Ziph. 3 And Saul encamped in the hill of Hachilah, which *is* opposite Jeshimon, by the road. But David stayed in the wilderness, and he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness. 4 David therefore sent out spies, and understood that Saul had indeed come.

5 So David arose and came to the place where Saul had encamped. And David saw the place where Saul lay, and [c]Abner the son of Ner, the commander of his army. Now Saul lay within the camp, with the people encamped all around him. 6 Then David answered, and said to Ahimelech the Hittite and to Abishai [d]the son of Zeruiah, brother of [e]Joab, saying, "Who will [f]go down with me to Saul in the camp?"

And [g]Abishai said, "I will go down with you."

7 So David and Abishai came to the people by night; and there Saul lay sleeping within the camp, with his spear stuck in the ground by his head. And Abner and the people lay all around him. 8 Then Abishai said to David, [h]"God has delivered your enemy into your hand this day. Now therefore, please, let me strike him [l]at once with the spear, right to the earth; and I will not *have to strike* him a second time!"

9 But David said to Abishai, "Do not destroy him; [i]for who can stretch out his hand against the LORD's anointed, and be guiltless?" 10 David said furthermore, "*As* the LORD lives, [j]the LORD shall strike him, or [k]his day shall come to die, or he shall [l]go out to battle and perish. 11 [m]The LORD forbid that I should stretch out my hand against the LORD's anointed. But please, take now the spear and the jug of water that *are* by his head, and let us go." 12 So David took the spear and the jug of water *by* Saul's head, and they got away; and no man saw or knew *it* or awoke. For they *were* all asleep, because [n]a deep sleep from the LORD had fallen on them.

13 Now David went over to the other side, and stood on the top of a hill afar off, a great distance *being* between them. 14 And David called out to the people and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, "Do you not answer, Abner?"

Then Abner answered and said, "Who *are* you, calling out to the king?"

15 So David said to Abner, "*Are* you not a man? And who *is* like you in Israel? Why then have you not guarded your lord the king? For one of the people came in to destroy your lord the king. 16 This thing that you have done *is* not good. *As* the LORD lives, you deserve to die, because you have not guarded your master, the LORD's anointed. And now see where the king's spear *is,* and the jug of water that *was* by his head."

17 Then Saul knew David's voice, and said, [o]"*Is* that your voice, my son David?"

David said, "*It is* my voice, my lord, O king." 18 And he said, [p]"Why does my lord thus pursue his servant? For what have I done, or what evil *is* in my hand? 19 Now therefore, please, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant: If the LORD has [q]stirred you up against me, let Him accept an offering. But if *it is* the children of men, *may* they *be* cursed before the LORD, [r]for they have driven me out this day from sharing in the [s]inheritance of the LORD, saying, 'Go, serve

41 [v][Prov. 15:33]; Luke 7:38, 44

42 [l]Lit. *with five of her maidens at her feet*

43 [w]Josh. 15:56 [x]1 Sam. 27:3; 30:5

44 [y]1 Sam. 18:20; 2 Sam. 3:14 [z]Is. 10:30 [z]*Paltiel,* 2 Sam. 3:15

CHAPTER 26

1 [a]1 Sam. 23:19; Ps. 54:title

2 [b]1 Sam. 13:2; 24:2

5 [c]1 Sam. 14:50, 51; 17:55

6 [d]1 Chr. 2:16 [e]2 Sam. 2:13 [f]Judg. 7:10, 11 [g]2 Sam. 2:18, 24

8 [h]1 Sam. 24:4 [l]Or *one time*

9 [i]1 Sam. 24:6, 7; 2 Sam. 1:14, 16

10 [j][Deut. 32:35]; 1 Sam. 25:26, 38; [Luke 18:7; Rom. 12:19; Heb. 10:30] [k]Gen. 47:29; Deut. 31:14; [Job 7:1; 14:5]; Ps. 37:13 [l]1 Sam. 31:6

11 [m]1 Sam. 24:6–12; [Rom. 12:17, 19]

12 [n]Gen. 2:21; 15:12; Is. 29:10

17 [o]1 Sam. 24:16

18 [p]1 Sam. 24:9, 11–14

19 [q]2 Sam. 16:11; 24:1 [r]Deut. 4:27, 28 [s]2 Sam. 14:16; 20:19

■ **26:1 Ziphites came to Saul.** See note on 23:19.

■ **26:6 Abishai the son of Zeruiah.** See note on 2 Sam. 2:18.

■ **26:8 God has delivered your enemy.** See note on 24:4.

■ **26:9 against the LORD's anointed.** See 24:6 and note.

■ **26:10 the LORD shall strike him.** David's words express an assurance gained or at least reinforced by the Lord's recent dealings with Nabal (25:38, 39).

■ **26:12 a deep sleep from the LORD.** David's survival and ultimate success are divinely overseen and directed (see also 30:2, 19 and notes).

■ **26:19 the inheritance of the LORD.** See note on 2 Sam. 20:19.

Go, serve other gods. David means that he was expelled to live among aliens, away from the people of God.

20 [f]1 Sam. 24:14

21 [u]Ex. 9:27; 1 Sam. 15:24, 30; 24:17; 2 Sam. 12:13

23 [v]1 Sam. 24:19; Ps. 7:8; 18:20; 62:12 [w]2 Sam. 22:21

25 [x]Gen. 32:28; 1 Sam. 24:20

CHAPTER 27

1 [1]*despair of searching for*

2 [a]1 Sam. 25:13 [b]1 Sam. 21:10; 1 Kin. 2:39

3 [c]1 Sam. 25:42, 43

6 [d]Josh. 15:31; 19:5; 1 Chr. 12:1; Neh. 11:28

7 [e]1 Sam. 29:3 [2]Lit. *the number of days*

8 [f]Josh. 13:2, 13 [g]Josh. 16:10; Judg. 1:29 [h]Ex. 17:8, 16; 1 Sam. 15:7, 8 [i]Gen. 25:18; Ex. 15:22 [3]Or *Gezrites* [4]*ancient times*

9 [5]Lit. *struck*

10 [j]1 Chr. 2:9, 25 [k]Judg. 1:16

other gods.' [20] So now, do not let my blood fall to the earth before the face of the LORD. For the king of Israel has come out to seek [f]a flea, as when one hunts a partridge in the mountains."

[21] Then Saul said, [u]"I have sinned. Return, my son David. For I will harm you no more, because my life was precious in your eyes this day. Indeed I have played the fool and erred exceedingly."

[22] And David answered and said, "Here is the king's spear. Let one of the young men come over and get it. [23] [v]May the LORD [w]repay every man *for* his righteousness and his faithfulness; for the LORD delivered you into *my* hand today, but I would not stretch out my hand against the LORD's anointed. [24] And indeed, as your life was valued much this day in my eyes, so let my life be valued much in the eyes of the LORD, and let Him deliver me out of all tribulation."

[25] Then Saul said to David, "*May* you *be* blessed, my son David! You shall both do great things and also still [x]prevail."

So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place.

David Allied with the Philistines

27 And David said in his heart, "Now I shall perish someday by the hand of Saul. *There is* nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape to the land of the Philistines; and Saul will [1]despair of me, to seek me anymore in any part of Israel. So I shall escape out of his hand." [2] Then David arose [a]and went over with the six hundred men who *were* with him [b]to Achish the son of Maoch, king of Gath. [3] So David dwelt with Achish at Gath, he and his men, each man with his household, *and* David [c]with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the Carmelitess, Nabal's widow. [4] And it was told Saul that David had fled to Gath; so he sought him no more.

[5] Then David said to Achish, "If I have now found favor in your eyes, let them give me a place in some town in the country, that I may dwell there. For why should your servant dwell in the royal city with you?" [6] So Achish gave him Ziklag that day. Therefore [d]Ziklag has belonged to the kings of Judah to this day. [7] Now [2]the time that David [e]dwelt in the country of the Philistines was one full year and four months.

[8] And David and his men went up and raided [f]the Geshurites, [g]the [3]Girzites, and the [h]Amalekites. For those nations were the inhabitants of the land from [4]of old, [i]as you go to Shur, even as far as the land of Egypt. [9] Whenever David [5]attacked the land, he left neither man nor woman alive, but took away the sheep, the oxen, the donkeys, the camels, and the apparel, and returned and came to Achish. [10] Then Achish would say, "Where have you made a raid today?" And David would say, "Against the southern *area* of Judah, or against the southern *area* of [j]the Jerahmeelites, or against the southern *area* of [k]the Kenites." [11] David would save neither man nor

■ **26:20 a partridge.** The partridge, whose name in Hebrew means "caller," is a cleverly chosen name for David, who stands on the crest of a mountain and "calls" (vv. 13, 14).

■ **26:21 I have sinned. Return.** David's response to Saul's confession and invitation (v. 22) indicates he doubts Saul's sincerity; compare Samuel's response to a similar invitation by Saul in 15:24–26.

■ **26:25 May you be blessed, my son David.** Saul's behavior is erratic, and David trusts neither his confessions nor his blessings (27:1; see note on 24:20).

■ **27:1 someday by the hand of Saul.** Despite recently learned lessons of faith (26:10), David tires of being a fugitive in constant danger and gives in to the human fear that Saul will eventually succeed in destroying him. David's anxiety may be heightened since he and his men have their families with them (v. 3). For the second time (21:10), David seeks refuge among Israel's archenemies, the Philistines.

■ **27:2 Achish.** Now that the rift between David and Saul is conspicuous and indisputable, Achish readily accepts David's presence, doubtless hoping to benefit from David's allegiance in his own struggles against Saul (29:6).

■ **27:3 his two wives.** See note on 25:40–44.

■ **27:5 in the royal city with you.** While David's request to be assigned to "some town in the country" is ostensibly based on a desire not to burden the royal city, it promises him a greater freedom of action by removing him from the eyes of Achish (vv. 8–11).

■ **27:6 Ziklag.** Listed among the cities of Judah (Josh. 15:31; 19:5), ancient Ziklag may have been at Tell esh-Shariah, fifteen miles northwest of Beersheba. Once an Israelite possession, Ziklag was under Philistine control at this time.

kings of Judah. This expression is from the viewpoint of a time after the division of Israel into the northern and southern kingdoms (1 Kin. 12).

■ **27:8 Geshurites.** Neighbors of the Philistines (Josh. 13:2), these people are not the same as the Geshurites from east of the Jordan (Josh. 13:11; 2 Sam. 15:8; 1 Chr. 2:23). David's wife, Absalom's mother (2 Sam. 3:3), was from the Geshurites east of the Jordan.

Girzites. Not identifiable; Gezer (see text note) is quite distant.

Amalekites. See note on 15:2.

Shur. See note on 15:7.

■ **27:9 he left neither man nor woman alive.** David's practice would conceal his double-dealings from Achish (v. 11). Whether it was right is doubtful at best in the absence of any indication that the Lord had ordered his actions.

■ **27:10 David would say.** This is not the first time David thinks it necessary to deceive (20:6; 21:2 and notes; cf. 16:2 note).

the southern area of Judah. See 2 Sam. 24:7; 2 Chr. 28:18. The large southern region of Israel, the Negev, extended from Beersheba south to the Gulf of Aqaba.

Jerahmeelites. 1 Chr. 2:9–15 mentions Jerahmeel as a descendant of Judah through Hezron and as a brother of Ram, an ancestor of David.

Kenites. Kenites and Jerahmeelites are mentioned together in 30:29.

woman alive, to bring *news* to Gath, saying, "Lest they should inform on us, saying, 'Thus David did.' " And thus *was* his behavior all the time he dwelt in the country of the Philistines. 12 So Achish believed David, saying, "He has made his people Israel utterly abhor him; therefore he will be my servant forever."

28 Now [a]it happened in those days that the Philistines gathered their armies together for war, to fight with Israel. And Achish said to David, "You assuredly know that you will go out with me to battle, you and your men."

2 So David said to Achish, "Surely you know what your servant can do."

And Achish said to David, "Therefore I will make you one of my chief guardians forever."

Saul Consults a Medium

3 Now [b]Samuel had died, and all Israel had lamented for him and buried him in [c]Ramah, in his own city. And Saul had put [d]the mediums and the spiritists out of the land.

4 Then the Philistines gathered together, and came and encamped at [e]Shunem. So Saul gathered all Israel together, and they encamped at [f]Gilboa. 5 When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was [g]afraid, and his heart trembled greatly. 6 And when Saul inquired of the LORD, [h]the LORD did not answer him, either by [i]dreams or [j]by Urim or by the prophets.

7 Then Saul said to his servants, "Find me a woman who is a medium, [k]that I may go to her and inquire of her."

And his servants said to him, "In fact, *there is* a woman who is a medium at En Dor."

8 So Saul disguised himself and put on other clothes, and he went, and two men with him; and they came to the woman by night. And [l]he said, "Please conduct a séance for me, and bring up for me the one I shall name to you."

9 Then the woman said to him, "Look, you know what Saul has done, how he has [m]cut off the mediums and the spiritists from the land. Why then do you lay a snare for my life, to cause me to die?"

10 And Saul swore to her by the LORD, saying, "*As* the LORD lives, no punishment shall come upon you for this thing."

11 Then the woman said, "Whom shall I bring up for you?"

And he said, "Bring up Samuel for me."

12 When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out with a loud voice. And the woman spoke to Saul, saying, "Why have you deceived me? For you *are* Saul!"

13 And the king said to her, "Do not be afraid. What did you see?"

And the woman said to Saul, "I saw [n]a [l]spirit ascending out of the earth."

14 So he said to her, "What *is* his form?"

CHAPTER 28

1 [a]1 Sam. 29:1, 2

3 [b]1 Sam. 25:1 [c]1 Sam. 1:19 [d]Ex. 22:18; Lev. 19:31; 20:27; Deut. 18:10, 11; 1 Sam. 15:23; 28:9

4 [e]Josh. 19:18; 1 Sam. 28:4; 1 Kin. 1:3; 2 Kin. 4:8 [f]1 Sam. 31:1

5 [g]Job 18:11; [Is. 57:20]

6 [h]1 Sam. 14:37; Prov. 1:28; Lam. 2:9 [i]Num. 12:6; Joel 2:28 [j]Ex. 28:30; Num. 27:21; Deut. 33:8

7 [k]1 Chr. 10:13

8 [l]Deut. 18:10, 11; 1 Chr. 10:13; Is. 8:19

9 [m]1 Sam. 28:3

13 [n]Ex. 22:28; Ps. 138:1 [l]Heb. *elohim*

■ **27:12 Achish believed David.** Achish was deceived by David's pretense of raiding villages in Judah and its environs.

■ **28:1 You assuredly know.** Achish points out that his benevolence to David has certain strings attached. The same Hebrew phrase is used in Solomon's warning to Shimei in 1 Kin. 2:37, 42.

■ **28:2 what your servant can do.** The irony of David's ambiguous answer (will David fight for or against him?) has a counterpoint in the perhaps unconscious irony of Achish's reply.

one of my chief guardians forever. Presumably Achish's offer is contingent on David's performance in battle. The Hebrew term used by Achish for "chief guardian" means literally "keeper of my head," an unfortunate choice of words in view of David's treatment of Goliath (17:49–54).

■ **28:3 Samuel had died.** The death of Samuel signals the passing of an era.

mediums and spiritists. Although Saul's expulsion of mediums and spiritists is fully in keeping with Mosaic law (Lev. 19:31; 20:6, 27; Deut. 18:11), it is only a partial proof of zeal for the religion of Israel. Saul's consultation of a medium is a clear indication of unfaithfulness and disobedience (1 Chr. 10:13), while Lev. 20:6 says that such a person is to be "cut . . . off from his people."

■ **28:4 Shunem.** Located just southwest of the hill of Moreh and sixteen miles southwest of the Sea of Chinnereth (Galilee). Shunem was the site of the Philistine camp on the eve of the battle in which Saul died (ch. 31).

Gilboa. This is probably the mountain range that begins five miles south of Shunem and extends south along the eastern edge of the plain of Jezreel. It could also be a village located in the heart of the Gilboa range eleven miles south of Shunem. See 29:1 and note.

■ **28:5 his heart trembled greatly.** See 17:11 and note.

■ **28:6 the LORD did not answer him.** Saul's inquiry is prompted by anxiety (v. 5), not piety, and the Lord's refusal to answer is reminiscent of the threat of 8:18.

by dreams or by Urim or by the prophets. Saul rejected the Lord and as a consequence was rejected by the Lord (15:23 and note). This cut him off from the usual means of divine inquiry. Whereas David had the prophet Gad in his retinue (22:5), it is unlikely that a true prophet accompanied Saul. Moreover, the authentic ephod containing the Urim and Thummim (2:28 note) had come into David's possession through Abiathar (23:6).

■ **28:7 Find me a woman who is a medium.** His purge of the land notwithstanding (v. 3 note), Saul seems to have no doubt that a medium can be found, and his attendants can name one immediately.

En Dor. Josh. 17:11, 12 attests to a persistent Canaanite influence at En Dor, which was about five miles north of Shunem (v. 4 note). Saul's recourse to En Dor took him behind Philistine lines.

■ **28:12 the woman saw Samuel.** Probably this was Samuel, and not merely an apparition. The consternation of the medium shows that the figure was something outside her usual experience of magic arts. The narrator calls it simply "Samuel," and what the figure says is consistent with Samuel's pronouncements when alive (especially ch. 15). For some reason the Lord allowed Samuel to visit Saul. It is clear from the medium's reaction that she could not compel him to appear.

■ **28:14 Saul perceived that it was Samuel.** Apparently Saul

14 [o] 1 Sam. 15:27; 2 Kin. 2:8, 13

15 [p] Is. 14:9 [q] 1 Sam. 16:14; 18:12 [r] 1 Sam. 28:6

17 [s] 1 Sam. 15:28 [2] Or *him*, i.e., David

18 [t] 1 Sam. 13:9–13; 15:1–26; 1 Kin. 20:42; 1 Chr. 10:13; Jer. 48:10 [u] 1 Sam. 15:3–9

19 [v] 1 Sam. 31:1–6; Job 3:17–19

21 [w] Judg. 12:3; 1 Sam. 19:5; Job 13:14

CHAPTER 29

1 [a] 1 Sam. 28:1 [b] Josh. 12:18; 19:30; 1 Sam. 4:1; 1 Kin. 20:30

2 [c] 1 Sam. 6:4; 7:7 [d] 1 Sam. 28:1, 2 [1] *passed on in the rear*

3 [e] 1 Sam. 27:7 [f] 1 Sam. 27:1–6; 1 Chr. 12:19, 20; Dan. 6:5

4 [g] 1 Sam. 27:6 [h] 1 Sam. 14:21 [i] 1 Sam. 29:9 [j] 1 Chr. 12:19, 20

5 [k] 1 Sam. 21:11 [l] 1 Sam. 18:7

And she said, "An old man is coming up, and he *is* covered with [o]a mantle." And Saul perceived that it *was* Samuel, and he stooped with *his* face to the ground and bowed down.

15 Now Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you [p]disturbed me by bringing me up?"

And Saul answered, "I am deeply distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and [q]God has departed from me and [r]does not answer me anymore, neither by prophets nor by dreams. Therefore I have called you, that you may reveal to me what I should do."

16 Then Samuel said: "So why do you ask me, seeing the LORD has departed from you and has become your enemy? 17 And the LORD has done for [2]Himself [s]as He spoke by me. For the LORD has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, David. 18 [t]Because you did not obey the voice of the LORD nor execute His fierce wrath upon [u]Amalek, therefore the LORD has done this thing to you this day. 19 Moreover the LORD will also deliver Israel with you into the hand of the Philistines. And tomorrow you and your sons *will be* with [v]me. The LORD will also deliver the army of Israel into the hand of the Philistines."

20 Immediately Saul fell full length on the ground, and was dreadfully afraid because of the words of Samuel. And there was no strength in him, for he had eaten no food all day or all night.

21 And the woman came to Saul and saw that he was severely troubled, and said to him, "Look, your maidservant has obeyed your voice, and I have [w]put my life in my hands and heeded the words which you spoke to me. 22 Now therefore, please, heed also the voice of your maidservant, and let me set a piece of bread before you; and eat, that you may have strength when you go on *your* way."

23 But he refused and said, "I will not eat."

So his servants, together with the woman, urged him; and he heeded their voice. Then he arose from the ground and sat on the bed. 24 Now the woman had a fatted calf in the house, and she hastened to kill it. And she took flour and kneaded *it,* and baked unleavened bread from it. 25 So she brought *it* before Saul and his servants, and they ate. Then they rose and went away that night.

The Philistines Reject David

29 Then [a]the Philistines gathered together all their armies [b]at Aphek, and the Israelites encamped by a fountain which *is* in Jezreel. 2 And the [c]lords of the Philistines [1]passed in review by hundreds and by thousands, but [d]David and his men passed in review at the rear with Achish. 3 Then the princes of the Philistines said, "What *are* these Hebrews *doing here?*"

And Achish said to the princes of the Philistines, "*Is* this not David, the servant of Saul king of Israel, who has been with me [e]these days, or these years? And to this day I have [f]found no fault in him since he defected *to me.*"

4 But the princes of the Philistines were angry with him; so the princes of the Philistines said to him, [g]"Make this fellow return, that he may go back to the place which you have appointed for him, and do not let him go down with us to [h]battle, lest [i]in the battle he become our adversary. For with what could he reconcile himself to his master, if not with the heads of these [j]men? 5 *Is* this not David, [k]of whom they sang to one another in dances, saying:

[l]"Saul has slain his thousands,
And David his ten thousands'?"

recognized Samuel when the woman described his mantle. Robes have symbolized the fate of Saul's kingship in a variety of ways, and mention of Samuel's mantle recollects the devastating pronouncement of 15:28 (see also 18:4; 24:4–6).

■ **28:19 you and your sons will be with me.** That is, among the dead (31:2–4).

■ **28:23 I will not eat.** See note on 1:7.

■ **28:24 fatted calf.** Much has changed since Saul's first encounter with Samuel, when he was designated as the one to deliver Israel from the Philistines (9:16) and was treated to a festal meal by the prophet (9:22–24). Now in his last encounter with Samuel, on the eve of his own death and the crushing Philistine defeat of Israel, Saul is treated to a fatted calf by a medium.

■ **29:1 The Philistines gathered.** This notice resumes the account initiated in 28:1, 2 but suspended in order to relate Saul's visit with the medium (28:3–25).

Aphek. Probably the same Aphek mentioned in 4:1 (note), twenty-eight miles north of Gath. The Philistines assembled their forces at Aphek before continuing their northward march (v. 2).

Jezreel. North of Mount Gilboa, a few miles south of Shunem, and forty miles northeast of Aphek.

■ **29:3 Hebrews.** See note on 4:6.

I have found no fault in him. This judgment is a measure of Achish's gullibility, not David's sincerity (27:8–12).

■ **29:4 lest in the battle he become our adversary.** The other Philistine commanders are less gullible than Achish and perhaps still carry painful memories of mid-battle defection in an earlier war with Israel (14:21).

■ **29:5 Is this not David, of whom they sang.** See note on 18:7; 21:11.

6 Then Achish called David and said to him, "Surely, *as* the LORD lives, you have been upright, and [m]your going out and your coming in with me in the army *is* good in my sight. For to this day [n]I have not found evil in you since the day of your coming to me. Nevertheless the lords do not favor you. 7 Therefore return now, and go in peace, that you may not displease the lords of the Philistines."

8 So David said to Achish, "But what have I done? And to this day what have you found in your servant as long as I have been with you, that I may not go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king?"

9 Then Achish answered and said to David, "I know that you *are* as good in my sight [o]as an angel of God; nevertheless [p]the princes of the Philistines have said, 'He shall not go up with us to the battle.' 10 Now therefore, rise early in the morning with your master's servants [q]who have come with [2]you. And as soon as you are up early in the morning and have light, depart."

11 So David and his men rose early to depart in the morning, to return to the land of the Philistines. [r]And the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

David's Conflict with the Amalekites

30 Now it happened, when David and his men came to [a]Ziklag, on the third day, that the [b]Amalekites had invaded the South and Ziklag, attacked Ziklag and burned it with fire, 2 and had taken captive the [c]women and those who *were* there, from small to great; they did not kill anyone, but carried *them* away and went their way. 3 So David and his men came to the city, and there it was, burned with fire; and their wives, their sons, and their daughters had been taken captive. 4 Then David and the people who *were* with him lifted up their voices and wept, until they had no more power to weep. 5 And David's two [d]wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite, had been taken captive. 6 Now David was greatly distressed, for [e]the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was [1]grieved, every man for his sons and his daughters. [f]But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God.

7 [g]Then David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, "Please bring the ephod here to me." And [h]Abiathar brought the ephod to David. 8 [i]So David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I pursue this troop? Shall I overtake them?"

And He answered him, "Pursue, for you shall surely overtake *them* and without fail recover *all.*"

9 So David went, he and the six hundred men who *were* with him, and came to the Brook Besor, where those stayed who were left behind. 10 But David pursued, he and four hundred men; [j]for two hundred stayed *behind,* who were so weary that they could not cross the Brook Besor.

11 Then they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David; and they gave him bread and he ate, and they let him drink water. 12 And they gave him a piece of [k]a cake of figs and two clusters of raisins. So [l]when he had eaten, his strength came back to him; for he had eaten no bread nor drunk water for three days and three nights. 13 Then David said to him, "To whom do you *belong,* and where *are* you from?"

And he said, "I *am* a young man from Egypt, servant of an Amalekite; and my master left me behind, because three days ago I fell sick. 14 We made an invasion of the southern *area* of [m]the

6 [m]2 Sam. 3:25; 2 Kin. 19:27 [n]1 Sam. 29:3

9 [o]2 Sam. 14:17, 20; 19:27 [p]1 Sam. 29:4

10 [q]1 Chr. 12:19, 22 [2]So with MT, Tg., Vg.; LXX adds *and go to the place which I have selected for you there; and set no bothersome word in your heart, for you are good before me. And rise on your way*

11 [r]2 Sam. 4:4

CHAPTER 30

1 [a]1 Sam. 27:6 [b]1 Sam. 15:7; 27:8

2 [c]1 Sam. 27:2, 3

5 [d]1 Sam. 25:42, 43

6 [e]Ex. 17:4; John 8:59 [f]1 Sam. 23:16; Is. 25:4; Hab. 3:17–19 [1]Lit. *bitter*

7 [g]1 Sam. 23:2–9 [h]1 Sam. 23:6

8 [i]1 Sam. 23:2, 4; Ps. 50:15; 91:15

10 [j]1 Sam. 30:9, 21

12 [k]1 Sam. 25:18; 1 Kin. 20:7 [l]Judg. 15:19; 1 Sam. 14:27

14 [m]2 Sam. 8:18; 1 Kin. 1:38, 44; Ezek. 25:16; Zeph. 2:5

■ **29:8 But what have I done.** A protest of genuine innocence when spoken to Saul (26:18), the question is now no more than a ruse. David has indeed done much (27:8–12), if Achish only could see it.

that I may not go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king. As in 28:2, David again deals in ambiguities apparent to the reader, if not to Achish. The ambiguity here is the identity of "my lord the king." It could be Achish, Saul, or possibly God Himself.

■ **29:9 you are as good in my sight as an angel of God.** Achish's grossly misplaced confidence makes him appear practically a fool. On the expression "angel of God," see 2 Sam. 14:17, 20; 19:27.

■ **30:1 Ziklag.** See note on 27:6.

Amalekites had invaded. See notes on 15:2, 8. Having been the victims of David's forays (27:8), the Amalekites have taken the opportunity of David's absence from Ziklag to retaliate.

the South. See note on 27:10.

■ **30:2 they did not kill anyone.** A remarkable evidence of the Lord's providential protection of David (v. 19; 26:12), whose own practice had been quite different (27:9).

■ **30:3 their wives, their sons, and their daughters had been taken captive.** This turn of events is especially troubling, inasmuch as concern for the safety of their families may have motivated the retreat of David and his men to Philistine territory in the first place (27:1 note).

■ **30:6 David strengthened himself in the LORD his God.** See note on 23:16.

■ **30:7 Abiathar brought the ephod.** See note on 22:20.

■ **30:9 Brook Besor.** Seasonal rivers (or "wadis") from the vicinity of Beersheba and south converge to form the Brook Besor, which runs northwest to empty into the Mediterranean. David and his men would have come to the ravine some thirteen miles south of Ziklag.

■ **30:10 so weary.** Their exhaustion is not surprising after a march of over sixty miles from Aphek (29:1–11) to the Brook Besor.

■ **30:14 southern area of the Cherethites.** The Cherethites were probably from Crete. They are often mentioned alongside the Philistines (Ezek. 25:16; Zeph. 2:5). The "Cherethites and Pelethites" served under the command of Benaiah, son of Jehoiada, as professional troops loyal to David (2 Sam. 8:18; 15:18; 20:7, 23) and, for a short time at least, to

Cherethites, in the *territory* which *belongs* to Judah, and of the southern *area* [n]of Caleb; and we burned Ziklag with fire."

15 And David said to him, "Can you take me down to this troop?"

So he said, "Swear to me by God that you will neither kill me nor deliver me into the hands of my [o]master, and I will take you down to this troop."

16 And when he had brought him down, there they were, spread out over all the land, [p]eating and drinking and dancing, because of all the great spoil which they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from the land of Judah. 17 Then David attacked them from twilight until the evening of the next day. Not a man of them escaped, except four hundred young men who rode on camels and fled. 18 So David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away, and David rescued his two wives. 19 And nothing of theirs was lacking, either small or great, sons or daughters, spoil or anything which they had taken from them; [q]David recovered all. 20 Then David took all the flocks and herds they had driven before those *other* livestock, and said, "This *is* David's spoil."

21 Now David came to the [r]two hundred men who had been so weary that they could not follow David, whom they also had made to stay at the Brook Besor. So they went out to meet David and to meet the people who *were* with him. And when David came near the people, he [2]greeted them. 22 Then all the wicked and [s]worthless[3] men of those who went with David answered and said, "Because they did not go with us, we will not give them *any* of the spoil that we have recovered, except for every man's wife and children, that they may lead *them* away and depart."

23 But David said, "My brethren, you shall not do so with what the LORD has given us, who has preserved us and delivered into our hand the troop that came against us. 24 For who will heed you in this matter? But [t]as his part *is* who goes down to the battle, so *shall* his part *be* who stays by the supplies; they shall share alike." 25 So it was, from that day forward; he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel to this day.

26 Now when David came to Ziklag, he sent *some* of the [4]spoil to the elders of Judah, to his friends, saying, "Here is a present for you from the spoil of the enemies of the LORD"— 27 to *those* who *were* in Bethel, *those* who *were* in [u]Ramoth of the South, *those* who *were* in [v]Jattir, 28 *those* who *were* in [w]Aroer, *those* who *were* in [x]Siphmoth, *those* who *were* in [y]Eshtemoa, 29 *those* who *were* in Rachal, *those* who *were* in the cities of [z]the Jerahmeelites, *those* who *were* in the cities of the [a]Kenites, 30 *those* who *were* in [b]Hormah, *those* who *were* in [5]Chorashan, *those* who *were* in Athach, 31 *those* who *were* in [c]Hebron, and to all the places where David himself and his men were accustomed to [d]rove.

The Tragic End of Saul and His Sons

31 Now [a]the Philistines fought against Israel; and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell slain on Mount [b]Gilboa. 2 Then the Philistines followed hard after Saul and his sons. And the Philistines killed [c]Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua, Saul's sons. 3 [d]The battle became fierce against Saul. The archers [1]hit him, and he was severely wounded by the archers.

4 [e]Then Saul said to his armorbearer, "Draw your sword, and thrust me through with it, lest [f]these uncircumcised men come and thrust me through and [2]abuse me."

14 [n]Josh. 14:13; 15:13
15 [o]Deut. 23:15
16 [p]1 Thess. 5:3
19 [q]1 Sam. 30:8
21 [r]1 Sam. 30:10 [2]*asked them concerning their welfare*
22 [s]Deut. 13:13; Judg. 19:22 [3]Lit. *men of Belial*
24 [t]Num. 31:27; Josh. 22:8
26 [4]*booty*
27 [u]Josh. 19:8 [v]Josh. 15:48; 21:14
28 [w]Josh. 13:16 [x]1 Chr. 27:27 [y]Josh. 15:50
29 [z]1 Sam. 27:10 [a]Judg. 1:16; 1 Sam. 15:6; 27:10
30 [b]Num. 14:45; 21:3; Josh. 12:14; 15:30; 19:4; Judg. 1:17 [5]Or *Borashan*
31 [c]Num. 13:22; Josh. 14:13–15; 21:11–13; 2 Sam. 2:1 [d]1 Sam. 23:22

CHAPTER 31

1 [a]1 Chr. 10:1–12 [b]1 Sam. 28:4
2 [c]1 Sam. 14:49; 1 Chr. 8:33
3 [d]2 Sam. 1:6 [1]Lit. *found him*
4 [e]Judg. 9:54; 1 Chr. 10:4 [f]Judg. 14:3; 1 Sam. 14:6; 17:26, 36 [2]*torture*

Solomon (1 Kin. 1:44). They seem to have been the king's bodyguard (2 Sam. 23:20, 23).

southern area of Caleb. Caleb, son of Jephunneh, is first mentioned in Num. 13:6 as one of the spies chosen to scout out the land of Canaan. He is commended in Num. 14:24 as one who followed the Lord "fully" and who therefore would receive an inheritance in the Promised Land. His inheritance included Hebron (Josh. 14:13, 14; Judg. 1:20).

■ **30:19 nothing . . . was lacking.** This is further, striking evidence of the Lord's watchful care over David's affairs (v. 2 note).

■ **30:21 Brook Besor.** See note on v. 9.

■ **30:22 worthless men.** See note on 2:12, where the same Hebrew expression (see text note) is used.

■ **30:23 what the LORD has given us.** David recognizes that the successful rescue is not his doing, but the Lord's (vv. 2, 19 and notes). This leads him to reject the idea that the front line troops have a right to more spoil than those who stayed behind.

■ **30:26 spoil to the elders of Judah.** Probably he was thanking them for the help he received in escaping from Saul (v. 31), though it was also in this area that David's kingship was first officially recognized (2 Sam. 2:1–4).

■ **30:27–31** As v. 31 says, these cities were within the range of David's roamings as a fugitive. All of them are in the south of Judah. This Bethel (v. 27), for example, should not be confused with the more northern city of the same name (7:16 note).

■ **31:1 Mount Gilboa.** See note on 28:4.

■ **31:2 Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malchishua, Saul's sons.** See 14:49. For a listing of all four sons of Saul, see 1 Chr. 8:33. Chronicles gives the name Esh-Baal, which was probably altered later to Ishbosheth ("man of shame") to avoid any association with the Canaanite god Baal. Ishbosheth was the only son of Saul left alive after the defeat on Mount Gilboa.

■ **31:4 uncircumcised men.** See note on 14:6.

But his armorbearer would not, [g]for he was greatly afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword and [h]fell on it. 5 And when his armorbearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his sword, and died with him. 6 So Saul, his three sons, his armorbearer, and all his men died together that same day.

7 And when the men of Israel who *were* on the other side of the valley, and *those* who *were* on the other side of the Jordan, saw that the men of Israel had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook the cities and fled; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them. 8 So it happened the next day, when the Philistines came to strip the slain, that they found Saul and his three sons fallen on Mount Gilboa. 9 And they cut off his head and stripped off his armor, and sent *word* throughout the land of the Philistines, to [i]proclaim *it in* the temple of their idols and among the people. 10 [j]Then they put his armor in the temple of the [k]Ashtoreths, and [l]they fastened his body to the wall of [m]Beth[3] Shan.

11 [n]Now when the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, 12 [o]all the valiant men arose and traveled all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth Shan; and they came to Jabesh and [p]burned them there. 13 Then they took their bones and [q]buried *them* under the tamarisk tree at Jabesh, [r]and fasted seven days.

4 [g]2 Sam. 1:14 [h]2 Sam. 1:6, 10

9 [i]Judg. 16:23, 24; 2 Sam. 1:20

10 [j]1 Sam. 21:9 [k]Judg. 2:13; 1 Sam. 7:3 [l]2 Sam. 21:12 [m]Judg. 1:27 [3]*Beth Shean,* Josh. 17:11

11 [n]1 Sam. 11:1–13

12 [o]1 Sam. 11:1–11; 2 Sam. 2:4–7 [p]2 Chr. 16:14; Jer. 34:5; Amos 6:10

13 [q]2 Sam. 2:4, 5; 21:12–14 [r]Gen. 50:10

Saul took a sword and fell on it. While some praise Saul's action as worthy of a tragic hero, the tenor of the books of Samuel points in another direction. To be commended are those who like David in times of distress find strength in God (23:16; 30:6), and who like Jonathan yield fully to His will (18:4, 28, 29; 19:4; 20:31; 23:17 and notes).

■ **31:6 all his men died together.** On the qualified sense of "all," see the note on 15:8.

■ **31:10 the Ashtoreths.** These were the fertility goddesses of the Canaanites.

Beth Shan. Located in the Jordan Valley some sixteen miles south of the Sea of Chinnereth (Galilee), this border city of the territory of Manasseh is listed in Josh. 17:11, 16; Judg. 1:27 among those cities that resisted Israelite occupation and remained Canaanite and Philistine strongholds.

■ **31:11 Jabesh Gilead.** See note on 11:1.

■ **31:12 took the body of Saul . . . from the wall.** This courageous act of the "valiant men" of Jabesh Gilead is an expression of gratitude for their own rescue by Saul recounted in ch. 11. It was also regarded as extremely shameful for the dead to be unburied.

King Saul's Decline and Fall (31:6)

Causes	Results
A presumptuous sacrifice (13:7–14)	Loss of kingdom foretold (13:14)
A foolish curse (14:24–28)	Curse falls on Jonathan (14:43–45)
Spared Agag and flocks (15:7–9)	Loss of kingdom (15:27, 28)
Lost fellowship with God (28:16, 17)	Unanswered prayer (28:6)
Visits a medium (28:7, 8)	Doom predicted (28:19)
Takes his own life (31:4)	End of dynasty (31:4–6)

The Second Book of

SAMUEL

Author The author of 2 Samuel is unknown. Although some of the material recounted in 1 Samuel may have been derived from writings by the prophet Samuel (cf. 1 Chr. 29:29), all the events reported in 2 Samuel occurred after his lifetime.

Date and Occasion In their original form, 1 and 2 Samuel were a single book. This book was completed as part of the "Deuteronomic History" during the exile of Judah in Babylon (see "Introduction to the Historical Books"). The narratives are based on sources and traditions contemporary with the events themselves.

Characteristics and Themes With Saul now dead (1 Sam. 31), the way is open for David to take the throne without lifting his hand against "the LORD's anointed" (cf. 1 Sam. 24:5, 6). David became a king by stages, first over Judah and then over all Israel (1:1—5:5). Though his ascendancy over Judah proceeds smoothly, blood is spilled before he becomes king over the whole nation. The narratives emphasize that David is innocent of the deaths of Abner (Saul's former general) and Ishbosheth (Saul's only surviving son), as he was innocent of the deaths of Saul and Jonathan.

The attention of the narrative then shifts to the transactions, both political and theological, by which David's throne is established. David's acquisition of a capital city, his resounding defeat of the Philistines, and his transfer of the ark of God to his newly established capital, Jerusalem, are recounted in chs. 5 and 6. Then the Lord, after refusing David's offer to build a house for Him, makes a covenant with David that He will build a house or dynasty for David that will endure forever. This promise is the continuation and specification of the divine covenant with the patriarchs and is a major development of the messianic hope that will be fulfilled in Christ (7:4–17 note). David's principal achievements included his military victories (expanding Israel's borders to the limits promised to Abraham in Gen. 15:18) and his covenant faithfulness to Jonathan, which David expresses by showing kindness to Mephibosheth (chs. 6—8).

The Davidic covenant of ch. 7 establishes that the purposes of God for the house of David are sure. The promise does not make it impossible for David or his descendants to forfeit some of the temporal benefits of their privileged position if they should fall into sin. Domestic and political chaos followed David's sin against Uriah and Bathsheba (ch. 11). When confronted by Nathan (ch. 12), David's repentance is genuine, and God's forgiveness is immediate. Yet sin still has its consequences. With his ability to exercise proper authority impaired (perhaps by a sense of guilt), David witnesses his own sins replicated in the lives of his sons (13:21 note). Not until he has survived two rebellions, first by his own son Absalom and then by Sheba, son of Bichri (ch. 20), does David's reign regain a measure of equilibrium.

Thematic closure is provided for the books of Samuel by a kind of epilogue in chs. 21—24. The chapters are symmetrical in outline, and at the center are two poems celebrating the two fundamental reasons for David's blessedness. First, the Lord is his deliverer (22:2–51), and second, the Lord has made an "everlasting covenant" with him (23:1–7). Framing this poetic core are lists of David's champions (21:15–22; 23:8–39), the human agents of his success. Finally, the first and last sections are accounts of how David made atonement for Saul's sin against the Gibeonites (21:3), and then for his own sin of taking a census of the people (ch. 24). In the first case David averted a famine by handing over for death seven of Saul's family. In the second, he accepted the judgment of a plague upon the nation, but pleaded with God that it be cut short before Jerusalem was struck. David's prayer was heard. David was disqualified from building a temple because of the blood he had shed during his life (1 Chr. 22:8; 28:3), but these books reveal the fervency of his heart and how he valued his relationship with God above all else. □

Outline of 2 Samuel

I. God Enthrones David over Judah and Israel (1:1—5:5)
  A. David Becomes King over Judah (1:1—2:7)
    1. David Avenges and Laments the Deaths of Saul and Jonathan (ch. 1)
    2. David Anointed King over Judah (2:1–7)
  B. David Becomes King over Israel (2:8—5:5)
    1. Abner Makes Ishbosheth King over Israel, and There Is War Between the Houses of Saul and David (2:8–32)
    2. Abner Goes over to David and Is Murdered by Joab (ch. 3)
    3. Ishbosheth Is Assassinated, and David Becomes King over All Israel (4:1—5:5)
II. David Gains a City and a Promise of an Everlasting Dynasty (5:6—10:19)
  A. David Establishes His Capital in Jerusalem (5:6—6:23)
    1. David Captures Jerusalem and Defeats the Philistines (5:6–25)
    2. David Brings the Ark of God to Jerusalem (ch. 6)
  B. God Promises David an Everlasting Dynasty (ch. 7)
  C. David's Achievements as King (chs. 8—10)
    1. David's Victories and Officers (ch. 8)
    2. David's Kindness to Mephibosheth (ch. 9)
    3. David's Kindness to Hanun Is Rebuffed, and War with Ammon Ensues (ch. 10)
III. David Sins and Suffers the Consequences (chs. 11—20)
  A. David Sins and Finds Reconciliation (chs. 11; 12)
    1. Bathsheba and Uriah (ch. 11)
    2. David Repents, but His Sin Carries Consequences (ch. 12)
  B. David's Sons Sin, but Reconciliation Is Incomplete (chs. 13; 14)
    1. Amnon Commits Sexual Sin, and Absalom Commits Murder (ch. 13)
    2. Absalom Returns to Jerusalem but Is Not Fully Reconciled to David (ch. 14)
  C. Absalom Rebels and Dies (chs. 15—18)
    1. Absalom Revolts Against David and David Flees Jerusalem (ch. 15)
    2. Shimei Curses David (ch. 16)
    3. Hushai Confuses the War Council of Absalom (ch. 17)
    4. Absalom Is Killed by Joab and Mourned by David (ch. 18)
  D. God Restores David's Reign (chs. 19; 20)
    1. David Returns to Jerusalem (ch. 19)
    2. Sheba's Attempts to Secede (ch. 20)
IV. Epilogue: Last Words About David's Reign (chs. 21—24)
  A. A Famine Resulting from Saul's Sin Is Stopped (21:1–14)
  B. Human Agents of David's Success (21:15–22)
  C. David Sings the Praises of God (ch. 22)
  D. David's "Last Words" (23:1–7)
  E. More Human Agents of David's Success (23:8–39)
  F. A Plague Resulting from David's Sin Is Stopped (ch. 24)

CHAPTER 1

1 [a]1 Sam. 31:6 [b]1 Sam. 30:1, 17, 26

2 [c]2 Sam. 4:10 [d]1 Sam. 4:12 [e]1 Sam. 25:23 [f]To show grief

4 [f]1 Sam. 4:16; 31:3 [g]1 Sam. 31:2

6 [h]1 Sam. 31:1 [i]1 Sam. 31:2–4

9 [z]*agony*

10 [j]Judg. 9:54; 2 Kin. 11:12

11 [k]2 Sam. 3:31; 13:31

12 [l]2 Sam. 3:31 [m]1 Sam. 31:13 [n]2 Sam. 6:21

14 [o]Num. 12:8 [p]1 Sam. 31:4 [q]1 Sam. 24:6; 26:9

15 [r]2 Sam. 4:10, 12

16 [s]1 Sam. 26:9; 2 Sam. 3:28; 1 Kin. 2:32–37 [t]2 Sam. 1:10; Luke 19:22

18 [u]1 Sam. 31:3 [v]Josh. 10:13 [3]Lit. *of the Upright*

19 [w]2 Sam. 1:27

The Report of Saul's Death

NOW it came to pass after the [a]death of Saul, when David had returned from [b]the slaughter of the Amalekites, and David had stayed two days in Ziklag, [2] on the third day, behold, it happened that [c]a man came from Saul's camp [d]with his clothes [f]torn and dust on his head. So it was, when he came to David, that he [e]fell to the ground and prostrated himself.

[3] And David said to him, "Where have you come from?"

So he said to him, "I have escaped from the camp of Israel."

[4] Then David said to him, [f]"How did the matter go? Please tell me."

And he answered, "The people have fled from the battle, many of the people are fallen and dead, and Saul and [g]Jonathan his son are dead also."

[5] So David said to the young man who told him, "How do you know that Saul and Jonathan his son are dead?"

[6] Then the young man who told him said, "As I happened by chance *to be* on [h]Mount Gilboa, there was [i]Saul, leaning on his spear; and indeed the chariots and horsemen followed hard after him. [7] Now when he looked behind him, he saw me and called to me. And I answered, 'Here I am.' [8] And he said to me, 'Who *are* you?' So I answered him, 'I *am* an Amalekite.' [9] He said to me again, 'Please stand over me and kill me, for [z]anguish has come upon me, but my life still *remains* in me.' [10] So I stood over him and [j]killed him, because I was sure that he could not live after he had fallen. And I took the crown that *was* on his head and the bracelet that *was* on his arm, and have brought them here to my lord."

[11] Therefore David took hold of his own clothes and [k]tore them, and *so did* all the men who *were* with him. [12] And they [l]mourned and wept and [m]fasted until evening for Saul and for Jonathan his son, for the [n]people of the LORD and for the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword.

[13] Then David said to the young man who told him, "Where *are* you from?"

And he answered, "I *am* the son of an alien, an Amalekite."

[14] So David said to him, "How [o]was it you were not [p]afraid to [q]put forth your hand to destroy the LORD's anointed?" [15] Then [r]David called one of the young men and said, "Go near, *and* execute him!" And he struck him so that he died. [16] So David said to him, [s]"Your blood *is* on your own head, for [t]your own mouth has testified against you, saying, 'I have killed the LORD's anointed.' "

The Song of the Bow

[17] Then David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son, [18] [u]and he told *them* to teach the children of Judah *the Song of* the Bow; indeed *it is* written [v]in the Book [3]of Jasher:

[19] "The beauty of Israel is slain on your high places!
[w]How the mighty have fallen!

■ **1:1 Ziklag.** See 1 Sam. 30:1; note on 1 Sam. 27:6.

■ **1:2 clothes torn and dust on his head.** In the wake of Israel's devastating defeat (1 Sam. 31:1), the messenger apparently thinks it appropriate to take on the appearance of mourning (cf. Josh. 7:6; 1 Sam. 4:12). His claim to have had a hand in Saul's death (v. 10), however, shows that he expects at least this item of news to please David.

■ **1:6 chariots and horsemen followed hard after him.** Chariots often carried archers (cf. Saul's injury, 1 Sam. 31:3).

■ **1:10 I stood over him and killed him.** The Amalekite must have happened upon Saul's body before the Philistines (1 Sam. 31:8). In the hopes of receiving a reward from David he fabricated a part for himself in Saul's death.

crown . . . bracelet. The crown in view is presumably a lighter version of the heavy state crown. The way in which Saul's regalia came into David's possession is a stark contrast to Jonathan's voluntary surrender of his robe and weapons to David (1 Sam. 18:4 and note). This contrast epitomizes the radically different responses of Saul and Jonathan to the divine will with respect to David and the house of Saul (e.g., 1 Sam. 18:28, 29; 19:4; 20:30, 31; 23:17, 18).

■ **1:14 the LORD's anointed.** By not sharing David's conviction about the sacrosanct status of "the LORD's anointed" (1 Sam. 24:6; 26:9), the Amalekite signs his own death warrant (vv. 15, 16).

■ **1:15 Go near, and execute him.** David's severe reaction to the Amalekite's story provides evidence that he was not involved in Saul's death (cf. 4:10).

■ **1:17 David lamented.** The lament opens with an introduction presenting the refrain, "How the mighty have fallen!" The first section exhorts the people to mourn for Saul, and is marked by the references to "the daughters of the Philistines" (v. 20) and "the daughters of Israel" (v. 24). The second section (vv. 25, 26) expresses David's personal mourning for Jonathan. The lament closes with a final repetition of the mournful refrain.

■ **1:18 the Song of the Bow.** "Bow" serves as the title for the lament and may refer to Jonathan, whose bow is mentioned in v. 22. "Weapons of war" (v. 27) probably stands for Saul and Jonathan. Compare the designation of Elijah and Elisha as "the chariots of Israel and their horsemen" (2 Kin. 2:12; 13:14).

Book of Jasher. See note on Josh. 10:13.

■ **1:19 How the mighty have fallen.** This phrase, which refers to Saul and Jonathan (v. 17), is repeated as a refrain in vv. 25 and 27. "Mighty" occurs also in v. 21 in parallel to "Saul."

20 [x]Tell *it* not in Gath,
Proclaim *it* not in the streets of [y]Ashkelon—
Lest [z]the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,
Lest the daughters of [a]the uncircumcised triumph.

21 "O [b]mountains of Gilboa,
[c]*Let there be* no dew nor rain upon you,
Nor fields of offerings.
For the shield of the mighty is [d]cast away there!
The shield of Saul, not [d]anointed with oil.
22 From the blood of the slain,
From the fat of the mighty,
[e]The bow of Jonathan did not turn back,
And the sword of Saul did not return empty.

23 "Saul and Jonathan *were* beloved and pleasant in their lives,
And in their [f]death they were not divided;
They were swifter than eagles,
They were [g]stronger than lions.

24 "O daughters of Israel, weep over Saul,
Who clothed you in scarlet, with luxury;
Who put ornaments of gold on your apparel.

25 "How the mighty have fallen in the midst of the battle!
Jonathan *was* slain in your high places.
26 I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan;
You have been very pleasant to me;
[h]Your love to me was wonderful,
Surpassing the love of women.

27 "How[i] the mighty have fallen,
And the weapons of war perished!"

David Anointed King of Judah

2 It happened after this that David [a]inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go up to any of the cities of Judah?"
And the LORD said to him, "Go up."
David said, "Where shall I go up?"
And He said, "To [b]Hebron."
2 So David went up there, and his [c]two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite. 3 And David brought up [d]the men who *were* with him, every man with his household. So they dwelt in the cities of Hebron.

20 [x]1 Sam. 27:2; 31:8–13; Mic. 1:10 [y]1 Sam. 6:17; Jer. 25:20 [z]Ex. 15:20; Judg. 11:34; 1 Sam. 18:6 [a]1 Sam. 31:4

21 [b]1 Sam. 31:1 [c]Ezek. 31:15 [d]1 Sam. 10:1 [e]Lit. *defiled*

22 [g]Deut. 32:42; 1 Sam. 18:4

23 [f]1 Sam. 31:2–4 [g]Judg. 14:18

26 [h]1 Sam. 18:1–4; 19:2; 20:17

27 [i]2 Sam. 1:19, 25

CHAPTER 2

1 [a]Judg. 1:1; 1 Sam. 23:2, 4, 9; 30:7, 8 [b]1 Sam. 30:31; 2 Sam. 2:11; 5:1–3; 1 Kin. 2:11

2 [c]1 Sam. 25:42, 43; 30:5

3 [d]1 Sam. 27:2, 3; 30:1; 1 Chr. 12:1

■ **1:20 Tell it not in Gath.** David implores his listeners not to let the news be heard among the Philistine cities, lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice over Israel's defeat, as the daughters of Israel had earlier rejoiced over the defeat of the Philistines (1 Sam. 18:7).

■ **1:21 not anointed with oil.** It was customary to condition and preserve leather shields by rubbing them with oil (Is. 21:5). It may be more than coincidental that the particular wording is associated with royalty. Not only were kings "anointed" (1 Sam. 2:10 note) for their office, but the word "shield" is sometimes used in the Old Testament as a figure for "sovereign" or "chieftain" (text note on Ps. 7:10). Beneath the literal meaning of the words is perhaps the implication, "sovereign Saul, no longer anointed with oil."

■ **1:22 the sword of Saul did not return empty.** The intent of this line is to praise Saul's military prowess.

■ **1:26 Surpassing the love of women.** David's praise of Jonathan's love (cf. 1 Sam. 18:3) does not mean that love between friends is inherently superior to marital love. Rather, the point seems to be the astonishingly selfless quality of Jonathan's love for David. David was himself not selfless in his relations with women (3:2 note).

■ **2:1 David inquired of the LORD.** Though aware of his divine appointment to become Israel's next king, David seeks the Lord's guidance, as he has done so often before (e.g., 1 Sam. 23:2, 4, 9–12; 30:7, 8).

Hebron. Located nineteen miles southwest of Jerusalem, Hebron has the highest elevation of any town in Israel and was strategically well suited for the inauguration of David's rule over Judah. Hebron was a Canaanite royal city when the Israelites came from Egypt (Josh. 10:3), but its links with the people of God extend back to the patriarchs (e.g., Gen. 13:18; 23:2, 19; 35:27).

■ **2:2 Ahinoam . . . Abigail.** See 1 Sam. 25:40–44 note.

Jezreelites. Listed in Josh. 15:56 as one of the hill country villages south of Hebron, this Jezreel is not the better-known Jezreel in the north (v. 9).

Carmelite. See notes on 1 Sam. 15:12; 25:2.

4 [e]1 Sam. 30:26; 2 Sam. 2:11; 5:5; 19:14, 41–43 [f]1 Sam. 16:13; 2 Sam. 5:3 [g]1 Sam. 31:11–13

5 [h]Ruth 2:20; 3:10

6 [i]Ex. 34:6; 2 Tim. 1:16, 18

8 [j]1 Sam. 14:50; 2 Sam. 3:6 [k]Gen. 32:2; Josh. 21:38; 2 Sam. 17:24 [l]*Esh-Baal,* 1 Chr. 8:33; 9:39

9 [m]Josh. 22:9 [m]Judg. 1:32 [n]1 Sam. 29:1

11 [o]2 Sam. 5:5; 1 Kin. 2:11 [2]Lit. *number of days*

12 [p]Josh. 10:2–12; 18:25

13 [q]1 Sam. 26:6; 2 Sam. 8:16; 1 Chr. 2:16; 11:6 [r]Jer. 41:12

16 [3]Heb. *Helkath Hazzurim*

4 [e]Then the men of Judah came, and there they [f]anointed David king over the house of Judah.
And they told David, saying, [g]"The men of Jabesh Gilead *were the ones* who buried Saul." 5 So
David sent messengers to the men of Jabesh Gilead, and said to them, [h]"You *are* blessed of the
LORD, for you have shown this kindness to your lord, to Saul, and have buried him. 6 And now
may [i]the LORD show kindness and truth to you. I also will repay you this kindness, because you
have done this thing. 7 Now therefore, let your hands be strengthened, and be valiant; for your
master Saul is dead, and also the house of Judah has anointed me king over them."

Ishbosheth Made King of Israel

8 But [j]Abner the son of Ner, commander of Saul's army, took [l]Ishbosheth the son of Saul and
brought him over to [k]Mahanaim; 9 and he made him king over [l]Gilead, over the [m]Ashurites, over
[n]Jezreel, over Ephraim, over Benjamin, and over all Israel. 10 Ishbosheth, Saul's son, *was* forty
years old when he began to reign over Israel, and he reigned two years. Only the house of Judah
followed David. 11 And [o]the [2]time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was
seven years and six months.

Israel and Judah at War

12 Now Abner the son of Ner, and the servants of Ishbosheth the son of Saul, went out from
Mahanaim to [p]Gibeon. 13 And [q]Joab the son of Zeruiah, and the servants of David, went out and
met them by [r]the pool of Gibeon. So they sat down, one on one side of the pool and the other on
the other side of the pool. 14 Then Abner said to Joab, "Let the young men now arise and com-
pete before us."

And Joab said, "Let them arise."

15 So they arose and went over by number, twelve from Benjamin, *followers* of Ishbosheth the
son of Saul, and twelve from the servants of David. 16 And each one grasped his opponent by the
head and *thrust* his sword in his opponent's side; so they fell down together. Therefore that place
was called [3]the Field of Sharp Swords, which *is* in Gibeon. 17 So there was a very fierce battle
that day, and Abner and the men of Israel were beaten before the servants of David.

■ **2:4 anointed David king.** On anointing, see 1 Sam. 2:10 note. David had already been anointed by Samuel (1 Sam. 16:3, 12, 13) and is now anointed again, this time as king over Judah. He will be anointed a third time, as king over Israel (5:3).

■ **2:5 You are blessed of the LORD.** David's commendation of the Jabeshites for their kindness to Saul accomplishes two things. It shows he has no malice towards the now deceased king, and it sets the stage for his own bid for leadership over the Gileadites east of the Jordan River.

■ **2:8–32** Abner's installation of Saul's son Ishbosheth as king over Israel results in war between the houses of Saul and David.

■ **2:8 Ishbosheth.** See note on 1 Sam. 31:2. As will become apparent this last surviving son of Saul is little more than a pawn in the hand of Abner.

brought him over to Mahanaim. Abner brought Ishbosheth across the Jordan River, probably in an effort to escape Philistine pressure. Two sites near the Jabbok River have been suggested for Mahanaim, one seven miles and the other seventeen miles from the river.

■ **2:9 king over Gilead, . . . all Israel.** The way specific parts are listed suggests that Ishbosheth's control of these areas was more complete than his control of Israel as a whole.

■ **2:11 seven years and six months.** See note on 5:4, 5.

■ **2:12 Gibeon.** Gibeon was a Benjamite town, now called el-Jib, about five miles north of Jerusalem.

■ **2:13 Joab the son of Zeruiah.** See note on v. 18.

■ **2:14 Let the young men now arise and compete.** Abner suggests a form of representative combat similar to the contest between David and Goliath (1 Sam. 17:4 note). Large-scale bloodshed was not averted either time (vv. 17, 31).

David's Triumphs (2:4)

David was a man after God's own heart (1 Sam. 13:14), that is, his will was completely committed to the will of his Lord. As a dedicated servant of God, he was used by God to perform mighty acts for the sake of His chosen people Israel.

- King of Judah (2:4)
- King of Israel (5:3)
- Conquers Jerusalem (5:7)
- Returns ark (6:12)
- Davidic covenant (7:16)
- Defeats Philistines (8:1)
- Defeats Moab (8:2)
- Defeats Syria (8:6)
- Defeats Ammon (11:1)

18 Now the [s]three sons of Zeruiah were there: Joab and Abishai and Asahel. And Asahel *was* [t]*as* fleet of foot [u]as a wild gazelle. 19 So Asahel pursued Abner, and in going he did not turn to the right hand or to the left from following Abner.

20 Then Abner looked behind him and said, "*Are* you Asahel?"

He answered, "I *am.*"

21 And Abner said to him, "Turn aside to your right hand or to your left, and lay hold on one of the young men and take his armor for yourself." But Asahel would not turn aside from following him. 22 So Abner said again to Asahel, "Turn aside from following me. Why should I strike you to the ground? How then could I face your brother Joab?" 23 However, he refused to turn aside. Therefore Abner struck him [v]in the stomach with the blunt end of the spear, so that the spear came out of his back; and he fell down there and died on the spot. So it was *that* as many as came to the place where Asahel fell down and died, stood [w]still.

24 Joab and Abishai also pursued Abner. And the sun was going down when they came to the hill of Ammah, which *is* before Giah by the road to the Wilderness of Gibeon. 25 Now the children of Benjamin gathered together behind Abner and became [4]a unit, and took their stand on top of a hill. 26 Then Abner called to Joab and said, "Shall the sword devour forever? Do you not know that it will be bitter in the latter end? How long will it be then until you tell the people to return from pursuing their brethren?"

27 And Joab said, "*As* God lives, [5]unless [x]you had spoken, surely then by morning all the people would have given up pursuing their brethren." 28 So Joab blew a trumpet; and all the people stood still and did not pursue Israel anymore, nor did they fight anymore. 29 Then Abner and his men went on all that night through the plain, crossed over the Jordan, and went through all Bithron; and they came to Mahanaim.

30 So Joab returned from pursuing Abner. And when he had gathered all the people together, there were missing of David's servants nineteen men and Asahel. 31 But the servants of David had struck down, of Benjamin and Abner's men, three hundred and sixty men who died. 32 Then they took up Asahel and buried him in his father's tomb, which *was in* [y]Bethlehem. And Joab and his men went all night, and they came to Hebron at daybreak.

3 Now there was a long [a]war between the house of Saul and the house of David. But David grew stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker.

Sons of David

2 Sons were born [b]to David in Hebron: His firstborn was Amnon [c]by Ahinoam the Jezreelitess; 3 his second, [1]Chileab, by Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite; the third, [d]Absalom the son of Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, king [e]of Geshur; 4 the fourth, [f]Adonijah the son of Haggith; the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital; 5 and the sixth, Ithream, by David's wife Eglah. These were born to David in Hebron.

18 [s]1 Chr. 2:16 [t]1 Chr. 12:8; Hab. 3:19 [u]Ps. 18:33

23 [v]2 Sam. 3:27; 4:6; 20:10 [w]2 Sam. 20:12

25 [4]*one band*

27 [x]2 Sam. 2:14 [5]*if you had not spoken*

32 [y]1 Sam. 20:6

CHAPTER 3

1 [a]1 Kin. 14:30; [Ps. 46:9]

2 [b]1 Chr. 3:1–4 [c]1 Sam. 25:42, 43

3 [d]2 Sam. 15:1–10 [e]Josh. 13:13; 1 Sam. 27:8; 2 Sam. 13:37; 14:32; 15:8 [1]*Daniel,* 1 Chr. 3:1

4 [f]1 Kin. 1:5

■ **2:18 three sons of Zeruiah.** According to 1 Chr. 2:16, Zeruiah was one of David's two sisters, which would make her sons his nephews.

Joab. Joab played an important role throughout David's reign, serving as commander of David's forces (8:16). Though an ardent supporter of David, Joab at times proved to be uncontrollable (3:39), acting in his own interests (3:26, 27) and even defying David's orders (18:5, 9–14). Joab was executed by King Solomon (1 Kin. 2:28–35).

Abishai. Abishai served alongside Joab in David's army (10:10; 18:2; 23:18).

Asahel. Also listed among David's mighty men (23:24), Asahel's relentless pursuit of Abner in this present episode will lead to a violent death (v. 23).

■ **2:22 How then could I face your brother Joab.** Abner's attempts to avoid striking down Asahel may be motivated not simply by fear of reprisal from Joab, but also by a desire not to erect unnecessary barriers to eventual compromise with David. See note on v. 26.

■ **2:26 tell the people to return from pursuing their brethen.** Abner's reference to "their brethren" may suggest a shift in a more conciliatory direction; perhaps Abner senses that David cannot be stopped. Abner would prefer truce to defeat, especially if he could remain autonomous.

■ **2:28 trumpet.** See note on 1 Sam. 13:3.

■ **2:30, 31** The disparity between the number of casualties suffered by David's troops and by the Benjamites is a token of things to come.

■ **3:1 war between the house of Saul and the house of David.** At least in the northern tribes, the transfer of power to David after the death of Saul was not unopposed. A key figure supporting Saul was Abner, Saul's military commander who had installed Saul's surviving son, Ishbosheth, as king in Mahanaim (2:8, 9). But the tide was running in David's favor (2:30, 31 note).

■ **3:2–11** The list of six sons born to David (vv. 2–5) amplifies the statement in v. 1 that "David grew stronger and stronger," while the wrangling between Abner and Ishbosheth over a concubine (vv. 6–11) dramatizes the final statement in v. 1 that "the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker."

■ **3:2 Sons were born to David in Hebron.** As the list that follows reveals, David took additional wives in Hebron. In 5:13–16, after David's arrival in Jerusalem, yet more wives and concubines are added, and at least eleven more children will be born to David (see the cumulative list in 1 Chr. 3:1–9). While the narrator offers no explicit evaluation of David's behavior (ancient Near Eastern kings commonly multiplied wives and children), it violates the standards of Deut. 17:17.

■ **3:3 Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur.** David's marrying a foreign wife from the small Aramean kingdom of Geshur may have been politically motivated, giving him an ally north of Ishbosheth's shaky realm.

7 [g] 2 Sam. 21:8–11 [h] 2 Sam. 16:21

8 [i] Deut. 23:18; 1 Sam. 24:14; 2 Sam. 9:8; 16:9

9 [j] Ruth 1:17; 1 Kin. 19:2 [k] 1 Sam. 15:28; 16:1, 12; 28:17; 1 Chr. 12:23

10 [l] Judg. 20:1; 1 Sam. 3:20; 2 Sam. 17:11; 1 Kin. 4:25 [2] *family*

13 [m] Gen. 43:3 [n] 1 Sam. 18:20; 19:11; 25:44; 2 Sam. 6:16

14 [o] 2 Sam. 2:10 [p] 1 Sam. 18:25–27

15 [3] *Paltiel,* 1 Sam. 25:44

16 [q] 2 Sam. 16:5; 19:16 [4] Lit. *going and weeping*

18 [r] 2 Sam. 3:9 [5] So with many Heb. mss., LXX, Syr., Tg.; MT *he*

19 [s] 1 Sam. 10:20, 21; 1 Chr. 12:29

21 [t] 2 Sam. 3:10, 12 [u] 1 Kin. 11:37

22 [6] *booty*

Abner Joins Forces with David

6 Now it was so, while there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David, that Abner was strengthening *his hold* on the house of Saul.

7 And Saul had a concubine, whose name *was* [g]Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah. So *Ishbosheth* said to Abner, "Why have you [h]gone in to my father's concubine?"

8 Then Abner became very angry at the words of Ishbosheth, and said, "*Am* I [i]a dog's head that belongs to Judah? Today I show loyalty to the house of Saul your father, to his brothers, and to his friends, and have not delivered you into the hand of David; and you charge me today with a fault concerning this woman? 9 [j]May God do so to Abner, and more also, if I do not do for David [k]as the LORD has sworn to him— 10 to transfer the kingdom from the [2]house of Saul, and set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, [l]from Dan to Beersheba." 11 And he could not answer Abner another word, because he feared him.

12 Then Abner sent messengers on his behalf to David, saying, "Whose *is* the land?" saying *also,* "Make your covenant with me, and indeed my hand *shall be* with you to bring all Israel to you."

13 And *David* said, "Good, I will make a covenant with you. But one thing I require of you: [m]you shall not see my face unless you first bring [n]Michal, Saul's daughter, when you come to see my face." 14 So David sent messengers to [o]Ishbosheth, Saul's son, saying, "Give *me* my wife Michal, whom I betrothed to myself [p]for a hundred foreskins of the Philistines." 15 And Ishbosheth sent and took her from *her* husband, from [3]Paltiel the son of Laish. 16 Then her husband went along with her to [q]Bahurim, [4]weeping behind her. So Abner said to him, "Go, return!" And he returned.

17 Now Abner had communicated with the elders of Israel, saying, "In time past you were seeking for David *to be* king over you. 18 Now then, do *it!* [r]For the LORD has spoken of David, saying, 'By the hand of My servant David, [5]I will save My people Israel from the hand of the Philistines and the hand of all their enemies.' " 19 And Abner also spoke in the hearing of [s]Benjamin. Then Abner also went to speak in the hearing of David in Hebron all that seemed good to Israel and the whole house of Benjamin.

20 So Abner and twenty men with him came to David at Hebron. And David made a feast for Abner and the men who *were* with him. 21 Then Abner said to David, "I will arise and go, and [t]gather all Israel to my lord the king, that they may make a covenant with you, and that you may [u]reign over all that your heart desires." So David sent Abner away, and he went in peace.

Joab Murders Abner

22 At that moment the servants of David and Joab came from a raid and brought much [6]spoil with them. But Abner *was* not with David in Hebron, for he had sent him away, and he had gone in peace. 23 When Joab and all the troops that *were* with him had come, they told Joab, saying, "Abner the son of Ner came to the king, and he sent him away, and he has gone in peace."

■ **3:7 Why have you gone into my father's concubine.** Abner's appropriation of Saul's concubine would amount to a claim on the throne (12:8 note; 16:21 note; 1 Kin. 2:22). The reader is not told whether Ishbosheth's suspicion is well-founded or simple paranoia. Whatever the case, Abner uses the accusation as an occasion to shift his allegiance to David (vv. 8–10).

■ **3:9 as the LORD has sworn to him.** See 5:2 note; 1 Sam. 13:14 note; 15:28; 24:20 note.

■ **3:10 Dan to Beersheba.** A proverbial expression for "the whole country" (Judg. 20:1).

■ **3:11 he feared him.** Ishbosheth's reaction indicates that Abner was in a position not only to make a threat but to carry it out.

■ **3:12 Whose is the land.** Abner means that the land is his own, as one who controls it and can give it to David, or else that the land is David's by right, and that David should enlist Abner's help to secure it.

■ **3:13 bring Michal, Saul's daughter.** Returning David's wife Michal to him (1 Sam. 18:27) would not only make right Saul's wrong of having given her to another in David's absence (1 Sam. 25:44), but would also strengthen David's claim to the throne over Saul's former realm. The restrictions of Deut. 24:1–4 do not apply in this situation, since David's separation from Michal was involuntary.

■ **3:14 David sent messengers to Ishbosheth.** The insecurity of Ishbosheth's position is evident not only in his fear of Abner (v. 11) but also in his inability to resist David's orders.

a hundred foreskins of the Philistines. David refers to the bride-price that Saul had set for Michal (1 Sam. 18:25); his payment had actually been twice the amount (1 Sam. 18:27).

■ **3:16 Bahurim.** Tentatively identified with a site about 1.5 miles east of Jerusalem in the territory of Benjamin. Bahurim was the hometown of Shimei, son of Gera (16:5; 1 Kin. 2:8).

weeping. A vivid glimpse of suffering caused by deeds outside the man's control.

■ **3:17 you were seeking for David to be king over you.** See v. 1 note. Apparently Ishbosheth and Abner are all that have stood in the way of harmonious relations between David and Israel. Abner here steps aside, and Ishbosheth will not stand long without him (ch. 4).

■ **3:18 My servant David.** David is now recognized as the recipient of a commission like the one first given to Saul (1 Sam. 9:16).

■ **3:21 that they may make a covenant with you.** See 5:3.

in peace. The repetition of this phrase twice more in vv. 22, 23 underscores that David was not involved in Abner's death; see also vv. 26, 28, 29, 37.

24 Then Joab came to the king and said, "What have you done? Look, Abner came to you; why *is* it *that* you sent him away, and he has already gone? 25 Surely you realize that Abner the son of Ner came to deceive you, to know [v]your going out and your coming in, and to know all that you are doing."

26 And when Joab had gone from David's presence, he sent messengers after Abner, who brought him back from the well of Sirah. But David did not know *it.* 27 Now when Abner had returned to Hebron, Joab [w]took him aside in the gate to speak with him privately, and there [7]stabbed him [x]in the stomach, so that he died for the blood of [y]Asahel his brother.

28 Afterward, when David heard *it,* he said, "My kingdom and I *are* [8]guiltless before the LORD forever of the blood of Abner the son of Ner. 29 [z]Let it rest on the head of Joab and on all his father's house; and let there never fail to be in the [9]house of Joab one [a]who has a discharge or is a leper, who leans on a staff or falls by the sword, or who lacks bread." 30 So Joab and Abishai his brother killed Abner, because he had killed their brother [b]Asahel at Gibeon in the battle.

David's Mourning for Abner

31 Then David said to Joab and to all the people who were with him, [c]"Tear your clothes, [d]gird yourselves with sackcloth, and mourn for Abner." And King David followed the coffin. 32 So they buried Abner in Hebron; and the king lifted up his voice and wept at the grave of Abner, and all the people wept. 33 And the king sang *a lament* over Abner and said:

"Should Abner die as a [e]fool dies?
34 Your hands were not bound
Nor your feet put into fetters;
As a man falls before wicked men, *so* you fell."

Then all the people wept over him again.

35 And when all the people came [f]to persuade David to eat food while it was still day, David took an oath, saying, [g]"God do so to me, and more also, if I taste bread or anything else [h]till the sun goes down!" 36 Now all the people took note *of it,* and it pleased them, since whatever the king did pleased all the people. 37 For all the people and all Israel understood that day that it had not been the king's *intent* to kill Abner the son of Ner. 38 Then the king said to his servants, "Do you not know that a prince and a great man has fallen this day in Israel? 39 And I *am* weak today, though anointed king; and these men, the sons of Zeruiah, [i]*are* too harsh for me. [j]The LORD shall repay the evildoer according to his wickedness."

Ishbosheth Is Murdered

4 When Saul's [1]son heard that Abner had died in Hebron, [a]he[2] lost heart, and all Israel was [b]troubled. 2 Now Saul's son *had* two men *who were* captains of troops. The name of one *was* Baanah and the name of the other Rechab, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, of the children of Benjamin. (For [c]Beeroth also was [3]*part* of Benjamin, 3 because the Beerothites fled to [d]Gittaim and have been sojourners there until this day.)

25 [v]Deut. 28:6; 1 Sam. 29:6; Is. 37:28

27 [w]2 Sam. 20:9, 10; 1 Kin. 2:5 [x]2 Sam. 4:6 [y]2 Sam. 2:23 [7]Lit. *struck*

28 [8]*innocent*

29 [z]Deut. 21:6–9; 1 Kin. 2:32, 33 [a]Lev. 15:2 [9]*family*

30 [b]2 Sam. 2:23

31 [c]Josh. 7:6; 2 Sam. 1:2, 11 [d]Gen. 37:34

33 [e]2 Sam. 13:12, 13

35 [f]2 Sam. 12:17; Jer. 16:7, 8 [g]Ruth 1:17 [h]Judg. 20:26; 2 Sam. 1:12

39 [i]2 Sam. 19:5–7 [j]1 Kin. 2:5, 6, 32–34; 2 Tim. 4:14

CHAPTER 4

1 [a]Ezra 4:4; Is. 13:7 [b]Matt. 2:3 [1]Ishbosheth [2]Lit. *his hands dropped*

2 [c]Josh. 18:25 [3]*considered part of*

3 [d]Neh. 11:33

■ **3:24** Joab's agitation at the thought of Abner's peaceful departure is apparent in his words to David.

■ **3:26 well of Sirah.** A few miles north of Hebron.

But David did not know it. This note is another confirmation of David's innocence in the death of Abner (vv. 21–23, 28, 29, 37).

■ **3:27 for the blood of Asahel his brother.** See also v. 30. In 2:18–23 Abner's slaying of Asahel is depicted as essentially a matter of self-defense, and the battle context of Abner's action makes it doubtful that Joab had the right to act as an "avenger of blood" (14:11; Num. 35:16–25; Deut. 19:11–13; Josh. 20:3). Joab may also have wanted to eliminate a potential rival in David's court (see his murder of Amasa in 20:10).

■ **3:28 My kingdom and I are guiltless.** See vv. 21–23, 26, 37.

■ **3:29 Let it rest on the head of Joab.** David's decision only to utter a curse upon Joab's house rather than take direct disciplinary action may have been a result of the ambiguous circumstances of Joab's crime. More likely, however, such factors as Joab's considerable power and reputation and his familial relationship with David influenced his decision. Ultimately Joab's crime did not go unpunished (1 Kin. 2:5, 6, 28–35).

■ **3:39 too harsh.** That is, "too hard" or "ruthless." See v. 29 note; cf. 16:10; 19:22.

■ **4:1 Abner had died.** The death of Abner affected Ishbosheth and "all Israel" the same way, but for different reasons. Ishbosheth "lost heart" because he knew that Abner's death meant the loss of the backbone of his government. Israel, on the other hand, "was troubled" by what may have appeared as a rejection of their friendly overture to David (3:17–21).

■ **4:2 of the children of Benjamin.** The Benjamite origin of Ishbosheth's assassins is stressed (two verses are dedicated to establishing it), perhaps to show that disenchantment with the house of Saul extended even into his own tribe.

■ **4:3 the Beerothites fled to Gittaim.** Although Beeroth was one of the four major cities of the Gibeonites (an Amorite people who duped Joshua into making a peace treaty with them; Josh. 9:17), Josh. 18:25 indicates that the town was allotted to Benjamin. King Saul had attempted to annihilate the Gibeonites (21:1, 2), and this aggression may explain the flight of the Beerothites to Gittaim.

4 [e]2 Sam. 9:3 [f]1 Sam. 29:1, 11 [g]2 Sam. 9:6 [4]*Merib-Baal,* 1 Chr. 8:34; 9:40

5 [h]2 Sam. 2:8, 9

6 [i]2 Sam. 2:23; 20:10 [5]Lit. *struck*

8 [j]1 Sam. 19:2, 10, 11; 23:15; 25:29

9 [k]Gen. 48:16

10 [l]2 Sam. 1:2–16

11 [m][Gen. 9:5, 6] [6]Or *bloodshed* [7]Lit. *consume you*

12 [n]2 Sam. 1:15 [o]2 Sam. 3:32

CHAPTER 5

1 [a]1 Chr. 11:1–3 [b]2 Sam. 19:12, 13

2 [c]1 Sam. 18:5, 13, 16 [d]1 Sam. 16:1

3 [e]2 Sam. 3:17 [f]2 Kin. 11:17 [g]1 Sam. 23:18

4 [h]Gen. 41:46 [i]1 Chr. 26:31; 29:27

5 [j]2 Sam. 2:11

6 [k]Judg. 1:21 [l]Josh. 15:63

4 [e]Jonathan, Saul's son, had a son *who was* lame in *his* feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came [f]from Jezreel; and his nurse took him up and fled. And it happened, as she made haste to flee, that he fell and became lame. His name *was* [g]Mephibosheth.[4]

5 Then the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, set out and came at about the heat of the day to the [h]house of Ishbosheth, who was lying on his bed at noon. 6 And they came there, all the way into the house, *as though* to get wheat, and they [5]stabbed him [i]in the stomach. Then Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped. 7 For when they came into the house, he was lying on his bed in his bedroom; then they struck him and killed him, beheaded him and took his head, and were all night escaping through the plain. 8 And they brought the head of Ishbosheth to David at Hebron, and said to the king, "Here is the head of Ishbosheth, the son of Saul your enemy, [j]who sought your life; and the LORD has avenged my lord the king this day of Saul and his descendants."

9 But David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, and said to them, "*As* the LORD lives, [k]who has redeemed my life from all adversity, 10 when [l]someone told me, saying, 'Look, Saul is dead,' thinking to have brought good news, I arrested him and had him executed in Ziklag—the one who *thought* I would give him a reward for *his* news. 11 How much more, when wicked men have killed a righteous person in his own house on his bed? Therefore, shall I not now [m]require his [6]blood at your hand and [7]remove you from the earth?" 12 So David [n]commanded his young men, and they executed them, cut off their hands and feet, and hanged *them* by the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ishbosheth and buried *it* in the [o]tomb of Abner in Hebron.

David Reigns over All Israel

5 Then all the tribes of Israel [a]came to David at Hebron and spoke, saying, "Indeed [b]we *are* your bone and your flesh. 2 Also, in time past, when Saul was king over us, [c]you were the one who led Israel out and brought them in; and the LORD said to you, [d]'You shall shepherd My people Israel, and be ruler over Israel.' " 3 [e]Therefore all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, [f]and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron [g]before the LORD. And they anointed David king over Israel. 4 David *was* [h]thirty years old when he began to reign, *and* [i]he reigned forty years. 5 In Hebron he reigned over Judah [j]seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah.

The Conquest of Jerusalem

6 [k]And the king and his men went to Jerusalem against [l]the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who spoke to David, saying, "You shall not come in here; but the blind and the lame will

■ **4:4 news about Saul and Jonathan.** That is, of their deaths (1 Sam. 31).

Mephibosheth. Mephibosheth will appear again in 9:6–13; 16:1–4; 19:24–30; 21:7 (21:8 mentions a different Mephibosheth).

■ **4:9 who has redeemed my life from all adversity.** Whereas Rechab and Baanah have tried to portray themselves as agents of the Lord's judgment against Saul (v. 8), David's response makes clear that with the Lord as his deliverer David has no need of human assistance.

■ **4:12 So David commanded.** David shows none of the hesitation to act in this instance that he had shown in the case of Joab (3:29 note).

cut off their hands and feet. Mutilation of this sort was not uncommon in the ancient Near East.

■ **5:1 all the tribes of Israel.** That is, their leaders; cf. "all the elders" in v. 3. It has been suggested that the Hebrew word here translated "tribes" may also mean "rulers."

your bone and your flesh. This is an expression of kinship (19:12–13; Gen. 29:14; Judg. 9:2) and the first of three reasons given by the Israelites in vv. 1, 2 for wanting to make David king.

■ **5:2 led Israel out and brought them in.** An idiom for leading military campaigns (1 Sam. 18:13, 16). The second reason for wanting to make David king was his military success (1 Sam. 17:32, 45–47; 18:7; 25:28).

the LORD said to you. The third reason is David's divine appointment (1 Sam. 16:1 note).

shepherd. This designation is often used metaphorically in the Bible, either for God (Gen. 49:24; Ps. 23:1; 80:1; etc.), for His Son Jesus (John 10:11; Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 5:4; Rev. 7:17; etc.), or for divinely appointed human leaders (7:7; Num. 27:15–17; etc.). The image is one of intimate, caring leadership (v. 12 note).

ruler. The same word is rendered "commander" in 1 Sam. 9:16 (note).

■ **5:3 King David made a covenant.** See 3:21. The covenant establishing David's rule over the northern tribes likely consisted of regulations for the kingship (cf. 1 Sam. 10:25), including their rights and responsibilities to one another and to the Lord (2 Kin. 11:17). That this covenant did not end the sense of separate identity felt by Israel and Judah is evident in the revolt of Sheba (20:1) and particularly in the dissolution of the united kingdom under Rehoboam (1 Kin. 12:16).

they anointed David. See note on 2:4.

■ **5:4, 5** In the Old Testament, a stereotyped formula often introduces the account of a king's official tenure in office (e.g., 1 Sam. 13:1; 2 Sam. 2:10; 1 Kin. 14:21; 22:42; etc.). In this case it appropriately marks David's assumption of power over all Israel.

■ **5:6 Jerusalem.** A city of great antiquity (occupied as early as the third millennium B.C.), Jerusalem was in Benjamin, near the northern border of Judah. The city had earlier been conquered by Judah (Judg. 1:8), but neither Judah nor Benjamin had been successful in permanently dislodging its Jebusite inhabitants (Josh. 15:63; Judg. 1:21). David may well have thought that Jerusalem's strategic location and relatively independent status made the city well suited to the establishment of a national capital that would not imply favoritism to any particular region.

repel you," thinking, "David cannot come in here." 7 Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion [m] (that *is,* the City of David).

8 Now David said on that day, "Whoever climbs up by way of the water shaft and defeats the Jebusites (the lame and the blind, *who are* hated by David's soul), [n] *he shall be chief and captain.*" Therefore they say, "The blind and the lame shall not come into the house."

9 Then David dwelt in the stronghold, and called it [o] the City of David. And David built all around from [1] the Millo and inward. 10 So David went on and became great, and [p] the LORD God of hosts *was* with [q] him.

11 Then [r] Hiram [s] king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters and masons. And they built David a house. 12 So David knew that the LORD had established him as king over Israel, and that He had [t] exalted His kingdom [u] for the sake of His people Israel.

13 And [v] David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem, after he had come from Hebron. Also more sons and daughters were born to David. 14 Now [w] these *are* the names of those who were born to him in Jerusalem: [2] Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, [x] Solomon, 15 Ibhar, [3] Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, 16 Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet.

15 [3] *Elishama,* 1 Chr. 3:6

7 [m] 1 Kin. 2:10; 8:1; 9:24

8 [n] 1 Chr. 11:6–9

9 [o] 2 Sam. 5:7 [1] Lit. *The Landfill*

10 [p] 1 Sam. 17:45 [q] 1 Sam. 18:12, 28

11 [r] 1 Kin. 5:1–18 [s] 1 Chr. 14:1

12 [t] Num. 24:7 [u] Is. 45:4

13 [v] [Deut. 17:17]

14 [w] 1 Chr. 3:5–8 [x] 2 Sam. 12:24 [2] *Shimea,* 1 Chr. 3:5

Jebusites . . . spoke to David. The Jebusites' taunt, whether suggestive of overconfidence or simply of a determination to fight to the last man (even be he blind or lame), reflects the hostility between the Jebusites and David (see v. 8; 1 Sam. 17:54 note).

■ **5:7 stronghold of Zion.** This marks the first occurrence of "Zion" in the Bible and the only one in Samuel. The name originally designated a fortified mound located at the southern end of the Ophel ridge. Eventually the name came to be used in an extended sense for all of Jerusalem (2 Kin. 19:21; Is. 2:3) and even for the entire nation of Israel (Ps. 149:2; Is. 46:13). The name occurs frequently in Israel's poetic and prophetic literature, where it is often presented as the place of God's mighty acts of salvation and judgment (e.g., Ps. 14:7; Is. 4:4; Lam. 4:11).

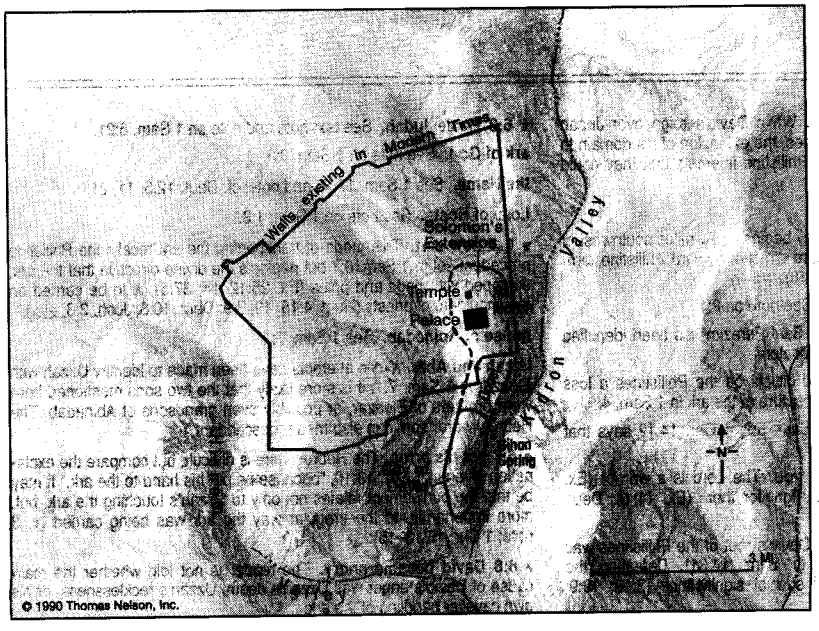
■ **5:10 became great.** Just as chs. 3 and 4 detail how "the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker" (3:1; 3:2–11 note), so chs. 5—10 show David growing "stronger and stronger" (3:1). The fundamental reason for David's success is that the Lord was with him (see note on 1 Sam. 16:18).

■ **5:11 Hiram king of Tyre.** Tyre was a Phoenician port city about thirty-five miles north of Mount Carmel and twenty-five miles south of Sidon. Hiram's generosity to David may have been motivated by the impressiveness of David's recent accomplishments, but it also involved an element of self-interest. Tyre needed the inland trade routes now controlled by David and the agricultural produce of central Palestine (cf. Ezra 3:7). Hiram's friendship with Israel continued well into Solomon's reign (1 Kin. 5:1–12; 9:11; etc.).

■ **5:12 the LORD had established him as king.** See note on v. 10.

for the sake of His people Israel. David understands not only that his kingship is dependent entirely upon God, but also that it is intended for the benefit of God's people (v. 2; 8:15).

■ **5:13–16** See 3:2 note, and the slightly longer list in 1 Chr. 14:3–7.



Jerusalem: David's City. David took the fortress called Jebus and renamed it the "City of David." This established his kingship militarily and politically. He then established his religious leadership by moving the ark of the covenant to the City of David. Solomon later expanded northward to Mt. Moriah and built the temple and the royal palace.

17 [y] 1 Chr. 11:16 [z] 2 Sam. 23:14
18 [a] 1 Chr. 11:15
19 [b] 1 Sam. 23:2
20 [c] Is. 28:21 [4] Lit. *Master of Breakthroughs*
21 [d] Deut. 7:5, 25 [5] *idols*
22 [e] 1 Chr. 14:13
23 [f] 2 Sam. 5:19
24 [g] 1 Chr. 14:15 [h] Judg. 4:14
25 [i] 1 Chr. 14:16 [j] Josh. 16:10 [6] So with MT, Tg., Vg.; LXX *Gibeon*

CHAPTER 6

2 [a] 1 Chr. 13:5, 6 [b] Ps. 80:1 [1] *Baalah, Kirjath Jearim,* Josh. 15:9; 1 Chr. 13:6 [2] LXX, Tg., Vg. omit *by the Name;* many Heb. mss., Syr. *there*
3 [c] 1 Sam. 26:1 [3] LXX adds *with the ark*
4 [d] 1 Sam. 7:1
5 [e] 1 Sam. 18:6, 7
6 [f] 1 Chr. 13:9 [g] Num. 4:15, 19, 20 [4] *held it*
7 [5] Or *irreverence*
8 [6] Lit. *Outburst Against Uzzah*
9 [h] Ps. 119:120

The Philistines Defeated

17 [y] Now when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines went up to search for David. And David heard *of it* [z] and went down to the stronghold. 18 The Philistines also went and deployed themselves in [a] the Valley of Rephaim. 19 So David [b] inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will You deliver them into my hand?"

And the LORD said to David, "Go up, for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into your hand."

20 So David went to [c] Baal Perazim, and David defeated them there; and he said, "The LORD has broken through my enemies before me, like a breakthrough of water." Therefore he called the name of that place [4] Baal Perazim. 21 And they left their [5] images there, and David and his men [d] carried them away.

22 [e] Then the Philistines went up once again and deployed themselves in the Valley of Rephaim. 23 Therefore [f] David inquired of the LORD, and He said, "You shall not go up; circle around behind them, and come upon them in front of the mulberry trees. 24 And it shall be, when you [g] hear the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees, then you shall advance quickly. For then [h] the LORD will go out before you to strike the camp of the Philistines." 25 And David did so, as the LORD commanded him; and he drove back the Philistines from [i] Geba [6] as far as [j] Gezer.

The Ark Brought to Jerusalem

6 Again David gathered all *the* choice *men* of Israel, thirty thousand. 2 And [a] David arose and went with all the people who *were* with him from [1] Baale Judah to bring up from there the ark of God, whose name is called [2] by the Name, the LORD of Hosts, [b] who dwells *between* the cherubim. 3 So they set the ark of God on a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which *was* on [c] the hill; and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drove the new [3] cart. 4 And they brought it out of [d] the house of Abinadab, which *was* on the hill, accompanying the ark of God; and Ahio went before the ark. 5 Then David and all the house of Israel [e] played *music* before the LORD on all kinds of *instruments of* fir wood, on harps, on stringed instruments, on tambourines, on sistrums, and on cymbals.

6 And when they came to [f] Nachon's threshing floor, Uzzah put out *his* [g] *hand* to the ark of God and [4] took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled. 7 Then the anger of the LORD was aroused against Uzzah, and God struck him there for *his* [5] error; and he died there by the ark of God. 8 And David became angry because of the LORD's outbreak against Uzzah; and he called the name of the place [6] Perez Uzzah to this day.

9 [h] David was afraid of the LORD that day; and he said, "How can the ark of the LORD come to

■ **5:17 when the Philistines heard.** While David's reign over Judah had not been contested by the Philistines, the extension of his domain to the northern tribes posed a threat to Philistine interests that they could not ignore.

stronghold. See 1 Sam. 23:14 note.

■ **5:18 Valley of Rephaim.** This valley begins a few miles southwest of Jerusalem and descends in a westward direction toward Philistine territory (21:16 note; 23:13; Josh. 15:8; 18:16).

■ **5:19 David inquired of the LORD.** See note on 2:1.

■ **5:20 Baal Perazim.** See text note. Baal Perazim has been identified with a site three miles southwest of Jerusalem.

■ **5:21 they left their images.** David inflicts on the Philistines a loss similar to what Israel suffered with the capture of the ark in 1 Sam. 4.

carried them away. See note on 1 Sam. 5:2; 1 Chr. 14:12 says that David burned them.

■ **5:24 the LORD will go out before you.** The Lord is a warrior (Ex. 15:3) who goes before His people to fight for them (Ex. 14:14; Deut. 1:30).

■ **5:25 from Geba as far as Gezer.** David's rout of the Philistines was far more decisive than Jonathan's (1 Sam. 14:31). Defeating the Philistines in particular (8:1) was of special significance (3:18; 19:9; 1 Chr. 14:17; cf. 1 Sam 9:16).

■ **6:2 Baale Judah.** See text note and note on 1 Sam. 6:21.

ark of God. See note on 1 Sam. 3:3.

the Name. See 1 Sam. 17:45 and note; cf. Deut. 12:5, 11, 21.

LORD of Hosts. See note on 1 Sam. 1:3.

■ **6:3 new cart.** This mode of transporting the ark recalls the Philistine precedent set in 1 Sam. 6:7 but neglects the divine directive that the ark, equipped with rings and poles (Ex. 25:12–14; 37:5), is to be carried on the shoulders of priests (Num. 4:15, 19; 7:9; Deut. 10:8; Josh. 3:8; etc.).

house of Abinadab. See 1 Sam. 7:1.

Uzzah and Ahio. While attempts have been made to identify Uzzah with Eleazar in 1 Sam. 7:1, it is more likely that the two sons mentioned here were brothers of Eleazar, or possibly even grandsons of Abinadab. The Hebrew word "son" can also mean "descendant."

■ **6:7 for his error.** The Hebrew here is difficult, but compare the explanation given in 1 Chr. 13:10, "because he put his hand to the ark." It may be that the punishment relates not only to Uzzah's touching the ark, but, more importantly, to the irregular way the ark was being carried (v. 3 note; 1 Chr. 15:13–15).

■ **6:8 David became angry.** The reader is not told whether the main cause of David's anger was Uzzah's death, Uzzah's recklessness, or his own cavalier handling of the ark.

10 So David would not move the ark of the LORD with him into the [i]City of David; but David took it aside into the house of Obed-Edom the [j]Gittite. 11 [k]The ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite three months. And the LORD [l]blessed Obed-Edom and all his household.

12 Now it was told King David, saying, "The LORD has blessed the house of Obed-Edom and all that *belongs* to him, because of the ark of God." [m]So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with gladness. 13 And so it was, when [n]those bearing the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, that he sacrificed [o]oxen and fatted sheep. 14 Then David [p]danced[7] before the LORD with all *his* might; and David *was* wearing [q]a linen ephod. 15 [r]So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet.

16 Now as the ark of the LORD came into the City of David, [s]Michal, Saul's daughter, looked through a window and saw King David leaping and whirling before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart. 17 So [t]they brought the ark of the LORD, and set it in [u]its place in the midst of the tabernacle that David had erected for it. Then David [v]offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD. 18 And when David had finished offering burnt offerings and peace offerings, [w]he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts. 19 [x]Then he distributed among all the people, among the whole multitude of Israel, both the women and the men, to everyone a loaf of bread, a piece *of meat,* and a cake of raisins. So all the people departed, everyone to his house.

20 [y]Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, "How glorious was the king of Israel today, [z]uncovering himself today in the eyes of the maids of his servants, as one of the [a]base fellows [8]shamelessly uncovers himself!"

21 So David said to Michal, "*It was* before the LORD, [b]who chose me instead of your father and all his house, to appoint me ruler over the [c]people of the LORD, over Israel. Therefore I will play *music* before the LORD. 22 And I will be even more undignified than this, and will be humble in my own sight. But as for the maidservants of whom you have spoken, by them I will be held in honor."

23 Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no children [d]to the day of her death.

God's Covenant with David

7 Now it came to pass [a]when the king was dwelling in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies all around, 2 that the king said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in [b]a house of cedar, [c]but the ark of God dwells inside tent [d]curtains."

3 Then Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that *is* in your [e]heart, for the LORD *is* with you."

10 [i]2 Sam. 5:7 [j]1 Chr. 13:13; 26:4–8

11 [k]1 Chr. 13:14 [l]Gen. 30:27; 39:5

12 [m]1 Chr. 15:25—16:3

13 [n]Josh. 3:3 [o]1 Kin. 8:5

14 [p]Ps. 30:11; 149:3 [q]1 Sam. 2:18, 28 [7]*whirled about*

15 [r]1 Chr. 15:28

16 [s]2 Sam. 3:14

17 [t]1 Chr. 16:1 [u]1 Chr. 15:1 [v]1 Kin. 8:5, 62, 63

18 [w]1 Kin. 8:14, 15, 55

19 [x]1 Chr. 16:3

20 [y]Ps. 30:title [z]2 Sam. 6:14, 16 [a]Judg. 9:4 [8]*openly*

21 [b]1 Sam. 13:14; 15:28 [c]2 Kin. 11:17

23 [d]Is. 22:14

CHAPTER 7

1 [a]1 Chr. 17:1–27

2 [b]2 Sam. 5:11 [c]Acts 7:46 [d]Ex. 26:1

3 [e]1 Kin. 8:17, 18

■ **6:10 Obed-Edom the Gittite.** That is, a man of Gath. Whether the reference is to the Philistine city of Gath (1 Sam. 4:1 note; 5:8 note) or to Gath Rimmon (a Levitical city in Dan or Manasseh; Josh. 21:23–25) is uncertain. Obed-Edom is frequently referred to as a Levite in Chronicles (e.g., 1 Chr. 15:17–25; 16:5, 38; 26:4, 5, 8, 15; 2 Chr. 25:24).

■ **6:13 bearing the ark.** This time the ark is transported according to the Mosaic legislation (vv. 3, 7 and notes).

six paces. After the first six steps.

he sacrificed. David's sacrifice is perhaps a symbol of thanksgiving and intercession—thanksgiving that the procession has begun with God's blessing, and intercession that it may so continue.

■ **6:14 linen ephod.** See note on 1 Sam. 2:18.

■ **6:16 she despised him.** Suggestions about the cause of Michal's displeasure are given only later, in vv. 20–22.

■ **6:17 burnt offerings and peace offerings.** See note on 1 Sam. 10:8.

■ **6:20 How glorious was the king of Israel today.** Michal's comment is heavy with sarcasm. She mentions his being king, his immodesty, and his other women. Her jealousy may have been aroused because her father had been displaced by David.

uncovering. David had taken off his robes and had worn only a linen ephod (v. 14).

■ **6:21 It was before the LORD.** David will not accept Michal's indictment. It was not before the "maids" (that is, for their eyes) but "before the LORD" that he celebrated. David pointedly mentions that the Lord displaced Saul and chose him instead.

■ **6:22 I will be even more undignified than this.** Or, "I will humble myself even more than this." Unlike Eli and his sons (1 Sam. 2:29, 30 and notes), and Michal's own father Saul (1 Sam. 15:12, 30 and notes), David is willing to be abased that the Lord may receive the honor due Him.

by them I will be held in honor. David replies that he has no reason to feel embarrassed before the maids. Michal's displeasure in him is wrong.

■ **6:23 Michal the daughter of Saul had no children.** This was either because of the direct decision of the Lord, or because David excluded Michal from marital relations. It was a reproach to be childless (1 Sam. 1:5, 6).

■ **7:1 rest from all his enemies.** See notes on vv. 6, 9. See also v. 11; Deut. 12:10; 25:19; Josh. 23:1.

■ **7:2 Nathan.** Mentioned here for the first time, Nathan the prophet will also play a significant role in ch. 12 and 1 Kin. 1. See also 1 Chr. 29:29; 2 Chr. 9:29; 29:25.

inside tent curtains. David apparently views his palace as symbolic of his now-established rule (5:11, 12), and he proposes that God's rule should be similarly symbolized with a permanent dwelling.

■ **7:3 Go.** David's plan seems reasonable to Nathan, but he is quick to reverse himself when ordered by the Lord (v. 4). Nathan is no flatterer (12:7–14).

4 But it happened that night that the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying, 5 "Go and tell My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: [f]"Would you build a house for Me to dwell in? 6 For I have not dwelt in a house [g]since the time that I brought the children of Israel up from Egypt, even to this day, but have moved about in [h]a tent and in a tabernacle. 7 Wherever I have [i]moved about with all the children of Israel, have I ever spoken a word to anyone from the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded [j]to shepherd My people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?' " ' 8 Now therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: [k]"I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Israel. 9 And [l]I have been with you wherever you have gone, [m]and have [l]cut off all your enemies from before you, and have made you a great name, like the name of the great men who *are* on the earth. 10 Moreover I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will [n]plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more; [o]nor shall the sons of wickedness oppress them anymore, as previously, 11 [p]since the time that I commanded judges *to be* over My people Israel, and have caused you to rest from all your enemies. Also the LORD [2]tells you [q]that He will make you a [3]house.

12 [r]"When your days are fulfilled and you [s]rest with your fathers, [t]I will set up your seed after you, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 [u]He shall build a house for My name, and I will [v]establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 14 [w]I will be his Father, and he shall be [x]My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the [4]blows of the sons of men. 15 But My mercy shall not depart from him, [y]as I took *it* from Saul, whom I removed from before you. 16 And [z]your house and your kingdom shall be established forever before [5]you. Your throne shall be established forever." ' "

17 According to all these words and according to all this vision, so Nathan spoke to David.

David's Thanksgiving to God

18 Then King David went in and sat before the LORD; and he said: [a]"Who *am* I, O Lord GOD? And what is my house, that You have brought me this far? 19 And yet this was a small thing in Your sight, O Lord GOD; and You have also spoken of Your servant's house for a great while to come. [b]*Is* this the manner of man, O Lord GOD? 20 Now what more can David say to You? For You, Lord GOD, [c]know Your servant. 21 For Your word's sake, and according to Your own heart, You have done all these great things, to make Your servant know *them.* 22 Therefore [d]You are

5 [f]1 Kin. 5:3, 4; 8:19
6 [g]1 Kin. 8:16 [h]Ex. 40:18, 34
7 [i]Lev. 26:11, 12 [j]2 Sam. 5:2
8 [k]1 Sam. 16:11, 12
9 [l]2 Sam. 5:10 [m]1 Sam. 31:6 [1]*destroyed*
10 [n]Ps. 44:2; 80:8 [o]Ps. 89:22, 23
11 [p]Judg. 2:14–16 [q]2 Sam. 7:27 [2]*declares to you* [3]Royal dynasty
12 [r]1 Kin. 2:1 [s]Deut. 31:16 [t]Ps. 132:11
13 [u]1 Kin. 5:5; 8:19 [v][Is. 9:7; 49:8]
14 [w][Heb. 1:5] [x][Ps. 2:7; 89:26, 27, 30] [4]*strokes*
15 [y]1 Sam. 15:23, 28; 16:14
16 [z]2 Sam. 7:13 [5]LXX *Me*
18 [a]Ex. 3:11
19 [b][Is. 55:8, 9]
20 [c]John 21:17
22 [d]Deut. 10:17

■ **7:4–17** The theological and historical significance of the divine promise to David recorded in these verses (paralleled in 1 Chr. 17:3–15) can hardly be overestimated. Indeed, the promise of an enduring Davidic kingdom has been called the summit of the entire Old Testament. Looking back, it takes up the promises of blessing made to Abraham and his elect seed (Gen. 17:16) and brings them to rest on David (vv. 9, 10, 12). Looking forward, it prepares for the messianic hope that inspires Israel's faith before and after the exile in Babylon (Is. 11:1; Jer. 23:5, 6; Zech. 3:8; 6:12). The hope for a Messiah culminates in the coming of Jesus Christ (Is. 9:1–7; Luke 1:32, 33, 69, 70; Acts 2:30, 31; 13:22, 23; Rom. 1:1–4; 2 Tim. 2:8; Rev. 22:16).

■ **7:5 My servant David.** Cf. 3:18; Ps. 89:3. The Lord's reference to David as "My servant" places him in a select company, which includes Abraham (Gen. 26:24), Moses (Num. 12:7, 8; Deut. 34:5), Caleb (Num. 14:24), and Joshua (Josh. 24:29).

■ **7:6 I have not dwelt in a house.** God has accompanied His elect people throughout their wanderings (vv. 6, 7). Not until He has planted them in their place (v. 10) and they enjoy "rest" (v. 11) that exceeds what they already have under David (v. 1) will He allow a permanent house to be built for His name (v. 13).

■ **7:9 I have been with you.** See note on 1 Sam. 16:18.

a great name. The declaration of a great name recalls the divine promise made to the patriarch Abraham in Gen. 12:2. Cf. 8;13, where David "made himself a name."

■ **7:11 He will make you a house.** Having declined David's offer to build Him a house (temple; v. 5), the Lord counters with the gracious announcement that He will instead establish a dynasty for David.

■ **7:12 your seed.** Solomon.

who will come from your body. The same words were spoken to Abraham in Gen. 15:4.

■ **7:13 for My name.** It was "for His great name's sake" that the Lord refused to reject His people after their sinful request for a king (1 Sam. 12:22). Now He announces to David that his own son, who will succeed him as king, will build a temple "for My name." For an explication of the significance of God's name, see Ex. 34:5–7; and note on 1 Sam. 17:45.

■ **7:14–16 his Father . . . My son.** The full significance of this promise, expressive of the special relationship that the Lord establishes with the Davidic kings (Ps. 2:7; 89:18–37), is ultimately realized in Christ (Mark 1:11; Acts 13:33; Heb. 1:5).

■ **7:14 I will chasten him.** As a father, the Lord will discipline the royal son when he does wrong, but His covenantal love will never be taken away from him. Though the punishment is severe, extending even to the loss of land and temple (1 Kin. 9:6–9), God's promise to establish forever the throne of David cannot fail. This promise will increasingly come to be understood in messianic terms (Is. 9:7; 11:1–5; Jer. 33:14–26; Mic. 5:2–5).

■ **7:18 David went in and sat before the LORD.** Presumably David sat in front of the ark, the symbol of the Lord's presence (Ex. 25:22; 30:6; Deut. 10:8; Josh. 6:8). It was not usual to sit while praying (Deut. 10:7).

Who am I. Having offered God a house, David is overwhelmed by the the Lord's declaration that He will build David a house. The humility evident in David's "Who am I" agrees with his recognition that it is the sovereign Lord who has been with him (1 Sam. 16:18 note) to bring him this far.

■ **7:19 Is this the manner of man.** The Hebrew of this phrase is difficult. The parallel verse at 1 Chr. 17:17 reads quite differently: you "have regarded me according to the rank of a man of high degree."

■ **7:22–24** David is moved by consideration of his own unique status and that of his house (vv. 18–21) to contemplate the uniqueness of his God. He is the only true God, and in His unmerited favor He chose David, and the nation of Israel itself, to be the people through whom His great name would become known (Ex. 15:11–13; Deut. 7:6–8).

great, [6]O Lord God. For [e]*there is* none like You, nor *is there any* God besides You, according to all that we have heard with our [f]ears. [23] And who *is* like Your people, like Israel, [g]the one nation on the earth whom God went to redeem for Himself as a people, to make for Himself a name—and to do for Yourself great and awesome deeds for Your land—before [h]Your people whom You redeemed for Yourself from Egypt, the nations, and their gods? [24] For [i]You have made Your people Israel Your very own people forever; [j]and You, LORD, have become their God.

[25] "Now, O LORD God, the word which You have spoken concerning Your servant and concerning his house, establish *it* forever and do as You have said. [26] So let Your name be magnified forever, saying, 'The LORD of hosts *is* the God over Israel.' And let the house of Your servant David be established before You. [27] For You, O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, have revealed *this* to Your servant, saying, 'I will build you a house.' Therefore Your servant has found it in his heart to pray this prayer to You.

[28] "And now, O Lord GOD, You are God, and [k]Your words are true, and You have promised this goodness to Your servant. [29] Now therefore, let it please You to bless the house of Your servant, that it may continue before You forever; for You, O Lord GOD, have spoken *it,* and with Your blessing let the house of Your servant be blessed [l]forever."

David's Further Conquests

8 After this it came to pass that David [1]attacked the Philistines and subdued them. And David took [2]Metheg Ammah from the hand of the Philistines.

[2] Then [a]he defeated Moab. Forcing them down to the ground, he measured them off with a line. With two lines he measured off those to be put to death, and with one full line those to be kept alive. So the Moabites became David's [b]servants, *and* [c]brought tribute.

[3] David also defeated Hadadezer the son of Rehob, king of [d]Zobah, as he went to recover [e]his territory at the River Euphrates. [4] David took from him one thousand *chariots,* [3]seven hundred horsemen, and twenty thousand foot soldiers. Also David [f]hamstrung all the chariot horses, except that he spared *enough* of them for one hundred chariots.

[5] [g]When the Syrians of Damascus came to help Hadadezer king of Zobah, David killed twenty-two thousand of the Syrians. [6] Then David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus; and the Syrians became David's servants, *and* brought tribute. So [h]the LORD preserved David wherever he went. [7] And David took [i]the shields of gold that had belonged to the servants of Hadadezer, and brought them to Jerusalem. [8] Also from [4]Betah and from [j]Berothai,[5] cities of Hadadezer, King David took a large amount of bronze.

[9] When [6]Toi king of [k]Hamath heard that David had defeated all the army of Hadadezer, [10] then Toi sent [7]Joram his son to King David, to [8]greet him and bless him, because he had fought against Hadadezer and defeated him (for Hadadezer had been at war with Toi); and *Joram* brought with him articles of silver, articles of gold, and articles of bronze. [11] King David also [l]dedicated these to the LORD, along with the silver and gold that he had dedicated from all the nations which he had subdued— [12] from [9]Syria, from Moab, from the people of Ammon, from the [m]Philistines, from Amalek, and from the spoil of Hadadezer the son of Rehob, king of Zobah.

[13] And David made *himself* a [n]name when he returned from killing [o]eighteen thousand [l]Syrians

22 [e]Ex. 15:11 [f]Ex. 10:2 [g]Tg., Syr. *O LORD God*

23 [g]Ps. 147:20 [h]Deut. 9:26; 33:29

24 [i][Deut. 26:18] [j]Ps. 48:14

28 [k]John 17:17

29 [l]2 Sam. 22:51

CHAPTER 8

1 [1]Lit. *struck* [2]Lit. *The Bridle of the Mother City*

2 [a]Num. 24:17 [b]2 Sam. 12:31 [c]1 Kin. 4:21

3 [d]1 Sam. 14:47 [e]2 Sam. 10:15–19

4 [f]Josh. 11:6, 9 [3]*seven thousand,* 1 Chr. 18:4

5 [g]1 Kin. 11:23–25

6 [h]2 Sam. 7:9; 8:14

7 [i]1 Kin. 10:16

8 [j]Ezek. 47:16 [4]*Tibhath,* 1 Chr. 18:8 [5]*Chun,* 1 Chr. 18:8

9 [k]1 Kin. 8:65 [6]*Tou,* 1 Chr. 18:9

10 [7]*Hadoram,* 1 Chr. 18:10 [8]Lit. *ask him of his welfare*

11 [l]1 Kin. 7:51

12 [m]2 Sam. 5:17–25 [9]LXX, Syr., Heb. mss. *Edom*

13 [n]2 Sam. 7:9 [o]2 Kin. 14:7 [l]LXX, Syr., Heb. mss. *Edomites* and 1 Chr. 18:12

■ **8:1 David attacked the Philistines and subdued them.** In this summary of David's victories, pride of place is given to his defeat of the Philistines, Israel's archenemy (3:18; 1 Sam. 9:16) and against whom David's successes far surpass those of his predecessor, Saul (1 Sam. 14:52). See also 5:25 note.

Metheg Ammah. The name is otherwise unattested. The parallel in 1 Chr. 18:1 reads "Gath and its towns," and "Metheg Ammah" may refer in some way to the Philistine capitals (see text note).

■ **8:2 he measured them off.** David executed two-thirds of his Moabite opponents and reduced the survivors to tributary status. The cause of David's ruthless treatment of a people whom he had earlier trusted (1 Sam. 22:3) is not stated.

Moabites. See notes on 1 Sam. 22:3.

■ **8:3 Hadadezer.** This name appears to be a compound of "Hadad," the Syrian storm-god or Baal, and "ezer," meaning "help." Though defeated by David, Hadadezer later assists the Ammonites in their opposition to David (10:15–19).

Zobah. Already during Saul's reign there had been conflict between Israel and the "kings of Zobah" (1 Sam. 14:47), a Syrian region north of Israel.

■ **8:4 hamstrung all the chariot horses, except.** According to Deut. 17:16, the kings of Israel were not to "multiply horses." Nevertheless, two of David's sons, Absalom and Adonijah, later dramatize their bids for the throne by preparing chariots and having fifty men run before them (15:1; 1 Kin. 1:5; cf. 1 Sam. 8:11). A third son, Solomon, will become well-known for his chariot (1 Kin. 4:26–28; 9:22; 10:26–29).

■ **8:6 the LORD preserved David wherever he went.** This statement, repeated in v. 14, sets the summary of David's victories apart from that of Saul's (1 Sam. 14:47–51 note; 16:18 note).

■ **8:8 bronze.** 1 Chr. 18:8 notes that Solomon used this bronze in the construction of the temple.

■ **8:11 King David also dedicated these to the LORD.** David's action is perhaps in preparation for the temple to be built by Solomon (1 Chr. 22:1–5, 14; 29:1–5, 16–19).

■ **8:13 Syrians.** See text note. The slaughter of eighteen thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt, south or southwest of the Dead Sea, is

13 [p] 1 Chr. 18:12; Ps. 60:title

14 [q] Gen. 27:29, 37–40; Num. 24:18; 1 Kin. 11:15

16 [r] 2 Sam. 19:13; 20:23; 1 Chr. 11:6 [s] 1 Kin. 4:3

17 [t] 1 Chr. 6:4–8; 24:3 [2] *Shavsha,* 1 Chr. 18:16 [3] *secretary*

18 [u] 1 Kin. 1:8; 1 Chr. 18:17 [v] 1 Sam. 30:14; 1 Kin. 1:38 [4] Lit. *priests*

in [p] the Valley of Salt. [14] He also put garrisons in Edom; throughout all Edom he put garrisons, and [q] all the Edomites became David's servants. And the LORD preserved David wherever he went.

David's Administration

[15] So David reigned over all Israel; and David administered judgment and justice to all his people. [16] [r] Joab the son of Zeruiah *was* over the army; [s] Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud *was* recorder; [17] [t] Zadok the son of Ahitub and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar *were* the priests; [2] Seraiah *was* the [3] scribe; [18] [u] Benaiah the son of Jehoiada *was over* both the [v] Cherethites and the Pelethites; and David's sons were [4] chief ministers.

David's Kindness to Mephibosheth

9 Now David said, "Is there still anyone who is left of the house of Saul, that I may [a] show him [1] kindness for Jonathan's sake?"

[2] And *there was* a servant of the house of Saul whose name *was* [b] Ziba. So when they had called him to David, the king said to him, "*Are* you Ziba?"

He said, "At your service!"

[3] Then the king said, "*Is* there not still someone of the house of Saul, to whom I may show [c] the kindness of God?"

And Ziba said to the king, "There is still a son of Jonathan *who is* [d] lame in *his* feet."

[4] So the king said to him, "Where *is* he?"

And Ziba said to the king, "Indeed he *is* in the house of [e] Machir the son of Ammiel, in Lo Debar."

[5] Then King David sent and brought him out of the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, from Lo Debar.

[6] Now when [f] Mephibosheth[2] the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, had come to David, he fell on his face and prostrated himself. Then David said, "Mephibosheth?"

And he answered, "Here is your servant!"

[7] So David said to him, "Do not fear, for I will surely show you kindness for Jonathan your

CHAPTER 9

1 [a] 1 Sam. 18:3; 20:14–16; 2 Sam. 21:7; [Prov. 27:10] [1] *covenant faithfulness*

2 [b] 2 Sam. 16:1–4; 19:17, 29

3 [c] 1 Sam. 20:14 [d] 2 Sam. 4:4

4 [e] 2 Sam. 17:27–29

6 [f] 2 Sam. 16:4; 19:24–30 [2] Or *Merib-Baal*

credited to Abishai in 1 Chr. 18:12. It may be that Abishai received credit as one of David's generals. See also Ps. 60, title.

■ **8:15 David administered judgment and justice.** As the prototypical theocratic king, David not only subjugated Israel's enemies (vv. 1–14), but also knew that his calling was to be just (23:3). His descendants did not always follow his example, despite prophetic exhortation (Jer. 22:3). Ultimately they saw the ruin of Jerusalem (foretold in, e.g., Jer. 22:5; cf. 52:12–14). But even before the fall of Jerusalem, there arose a hope for a "Branch of righteousness" from the line of David, "a King [who] shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the earth" (Jer. 23:5; 33:15). On this messianic expectation, see note on 7:4–17.

to all his people. See note on 5:12.

■ **8:16 Joab.** See note on 2:18.

recorder. The specific nature of this office is hard to determine. Conjectures include keeper of state records, secretary of state, and plausibly royal herald. Jehoshaphat continued to hold this office under the Solomonic administration (1 Kin. 4:3).

■ **8:17 Zadok the son of Ahitub.** Zadok was a Levite priest descended from Aaron through Eleazar (1 Chr. 6:3–8, 50–53). Although he was one of two chief priests under David, he became the sole high priest in Solomon's administration (1 Kin. 2:35). From that time on, the Zadokite priests were one of the most important and influential priestly families (Ezra 7:1, 2; Ezek. 40:46; 44:15).

Ahimelech the son of Abiathar. According to 20:25 and 1 Kin. 4:4, Zadok and Abiathar were David's priests (see 15:24, 35; 19:11). It was earlier reported that Abiathar, "one of the sons of Abimelech," had joined David during his exile from Saul's court (1 Sam. 22:20). It seems likely, therefore, that the names of father and son have somehow been reversed here (as also in 1 Chr. 18:16). Abiathar was a descendant of Eli through a different Ahitub than Zadok's father (1 Sam. 14:3; 22:20). His removal by Solomon for having supported Adonijah's bid for the throne (1 Kin. 1:7, 8) brought to fulfillment the judgment on the house of Eli (1 Sam. 2:31 note; 1 Kin. 2:26, 27).

Seraiah was the scribe. Variations in the recording of this name (20:25; 1 Chr. 18:16; possibly 1 Kin. 4:3) may suggest a non-Israelite origin—perhaps Egypt, where the scribal tradition was well established. The scribe would have been among the highest ranking civil servants (2 Kin. 12:10; 18:18).

■ **8:18 Benaiah.** A man of outstanding military credentials (23:20–22), Benaiah demonstrated his intense loyalty to David and Solomon (1 Kin. 1:8, 36, 37), and, after carrying out Solomon's order to execute Joab, became commander-in-chief of Solomon's army (1 Kin. 2:34, 35; 4:4).

Cherethites and the Pelethites. See note on 1 Sam. 30:14.

chief ministers. The Hebrew text reads "priests," an office for which they were not clearly eligible. The parallel at 1 Chr. 18:17 reads "chief ministers at the king's side." David and Solomon at least supervised sacrifices (6:17, 18; 1 Chr. 21:28; 2 Chr. 5:6).

■ **9:1 house of Saul.** On the progressive decline of the "house of Saul," see note on 5:10.

kindness for Jonathan's sake. On the covenant between David and Jonathan, see 1 Sam. 18:3, 4; 20:15 and notes.

■ **9:4 Machir the son of Ammiel.** Mentioned also in 17:27–29, Machir appears to have been a wealthy man in a good position to host a descendant of Israel's first king.

Lo Debar. This city has been tentatively located in Gilead about four miles northwest of Mahanaim, Ishbosheth's short-lived capital east of the Jordan River (2:8 note).

■ **9:6 Mephibosheth.** See note on 4:4.

■ **9:7 land of Saul your grandfather.** The property that David restored to Mephibosheth may well have been substantial (v. 10 note).

you shall eat bread at my table. David also offers Mephibosheth a place of honor at his own table (on the practice, see 2 Kin. 25:29). It has been suggested David was somewhat self-serving, since the arrangement would enable him to keep Mephibosheth under surveillance. But this suggestion seems unlikely for several reasons. The text offers no hint of such a motive; Mephibosheth's crippled condition made him less

father's sake, and will restore to you all the land of Saul your grandfather; and you shall eat bread at my table continually."

8 Then he bowed himself, and said, "What *is* your servant, that you should look upon such [g]a dead dog as I?"

9 And the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said to him, [h]"I have given to your master's son all that belonged to Saul and to all his house. 10 You therefore, and your sons and your servants, shall work the land for him, and you shall bring in *the harvest,* that your master's son may have food to eat. But Mephibosheth your master's son [i]shall eat bread at my table always." Now Ziba had [j]fifteen sons and twenty servants.

11 Then Ziba said to the king, "According to all that my lord the king has commanded his servant, so will your servant do."

"As for Mephibosheth," *said the king,* "he shall eat at [3]my table like one of the king's sons." 12 Mephibosheth had a young son [k]whose name *was* Micha. And all who dwelt in the house of Ziba *were* servants of Mephibosheth. 13 So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem, [l]for he ate continually at the king's table. And he [m]was lame in both his feet.

The Ammonites and Syrians Defeated

10 It happened after this that the [a]king of the people of Ammon died, and Hanun his son reigned in his place. 2 Then David said, "I will show [b]kindness to Hanun the son of [c]Nahash, as his father showed kindness to me."

So David sent by the hand of his servants to comfort him concerning his father. And David's servants came into the land of the people of Ammon. 3 And the princes of the people of Ammon said to Hanun their lord, "Do you think that David really honors your father because he has sent comforters to you? Has David not *rather* sent his servants to you to search the city, to spy it out, and to overthrow it?"

4 Therefore Hanun took David's servants, shaved off half of their beards, cut off their garments in the middle, [d]at their buttocks, and sent them away. 5 When they told David, he sent to meet them, because the men were greatly [1]ashamed. And the king said, "Wait at Jericho until your beards have grown, and *then* return."

6 When the people of Ammon saw that they [e]had made themselves repulsive to David, the people of Ammon sent and hired [f]the Syrians of [g]Beth Rehob and the Syrians of Zoba, twenty thousand foot soldiers; and from the king of [h]Maacah one thousand men, and from [i]Ish-Tob twelve thousand men. 7 Now when David heard *of it,* he sent Joab and all the army of [j]the mighty men. 8 Then the people of Ammon came out and put themselves in battle array at the entrance of the gate. And [k]the Syrians of Zoba, Beth Rehob, Ish-Tob, and Maacah *were* by themselves in the field.

9 When Joab saw that the battle line was against him before and behind, he chose some of Israel's best and put *them* in battle array against the Syrians. 10 And the rest of the people he put under the command of [l]Abishai his brother, that he might set *them* in battle array against the people of Ammon. 11 Then he said, "If the Syrians are too strong for me, then you shall help me; but if the people of Ammon are too strong for you, then I will come and help you. 12 [m]Be of

8 [g]2 Sam. 16:9

9 [h]2 Sam. 16:4; 19:29

10 [i]2 Sam. 9:7, 11, 13; 19:28 [j]2 Sam. 19:17

11 [3]LXX *David's table*

12 [k]1 Chr. 8:34

13 [l]2 Sam. 9:7, 10, 11; 1 Kin. 2:7; 2 Kin. 25:29 [m]2 Sam. 9:3

CHAPTER 10

1 [a]2 Sam. 11:1; 1 Chr. 19:1

2 [b]2 Sam. 9:1; 1 Kin. 2:7 [c]1 Sam. 11:1

4 [d]Is. 20:4; 47:2

5 [1]*humiliated*

6 [e]Gen. 34:30; Ex. 5:21 [f]2 Sam. 8:3, 5 [g]Judg. 18:28 [h]Deut. 3:14; Josh. 13:11, 13 [i]Judg. 11:3, 5

7 [j]2 Sam. 23:8

8 [k]2 Sam. 10:6

10 [l]1 Sam. 26:6; 2 Sam. 3:30

12 [m]Deut. 31:6; Josh. 1:6, 7, 9; Neh. 4:14

of a threat; and David would surely have known from his own experience that it was dangerous for a rival to be at court. (see 16:3).

■ **9:8 dead dog.** See note on 1 Sam. 24:14.

■ **9:10 fifteen sons and twenty servants.** The number of men put to work farming the land shows that the properties were extensive. The number also indicates Ziba's own power and his potential threat to Mephibosheth (16:3; 19:26).

■ **9:12 a young son whose name was Micha.** See also the genealogies of 1 Chr. 8:34, 35; 9:40, 41. David's beneficence "for Jonathan's sake" (v. 1) was not limited to Mephibosheth.

■ **10:1 the people of Ammon.** See note on 1 Sam. 11:1.

■ **10:2 show kindness to Hanun son of Nahash.** The Hebrew phrase translated "show kindness" suggests that there was a covenant between David and Nahash, even though Nahash's aggression towards Israel had helped Saul rise to power (1 Sam. 11:1–11; 12:12). The friendly relationship between David and Nahash may have been established during the period when David was a fugitive from Saul.

■ **10:3 the city.** Presumably this is a reference to the capital city, Rabbah (11:1 note).

■ **10:4 shaved off half of their beards.** Hanun humiliated the emissaries.

■ **10:5 Jericho.** The first site west of the Jordan that would be reached by the delegation returning from Rabbah.

■ **10:6 the Syrians of Beth Rehob . . . and Zoba.** See note on 8:3. Beth Rehob lay southwest of Zobah (cf. Num. 13:21; Judg. 18:28).

Maacah. Maacah was the region just north of Lake Huleh (Deut. 3:14; Josh. 13:11–13).

Ish-Tob. Probably Tob, a city east of the Jordan River and forty-eight miles north of Rabbah (11:1 note; Judg. 11:3, 5).

■ **10:7 Joab.** See note on 2:18.

■ **10:10 Abishai.** See note on 2:18.

■ **10:12 Be of good courage . . . may the LORD do what is good in His sight.** Finding himself in the difficult military position of having to fight on two fronts, Joab urges courage but recognizes that the outcome of the conflict will depend ultimately on the Lord (cf. David's words in 15:26).

12 [n]1 Sam. 4:9; 1 Cor. 16:13 [o]1 Sam. 3:18
14 [p]2 Sam. 11:1
16 [2]Heb. *Hadarezer* [3]The Euphrates [4]*Shophach,* 1 Chr. 19:16
18 [q]1 Chr. 19:18
19 [r]2 Sam. 8:6 [5]Heb. *Hadarezer*

CHAPTER 11

1 [a]1 Kin. 20:22–26 [b]1 Chr. 20:1 [c]2 Sam. 12:26; Jer. 49:2, 3; Amos 1:14
2 [d]Deut. 22:8; 1 Sam. 9:25; Matt. 24:17; Acts 10:9 [e]Gen. 34:2; [Ex. 20:17]; Job 31:1; [Matt. 5:28]
3 [1]*Bathshua,* 1 Chr. 3:5

good courage, and let us [n]be strong for our people and for the cities of our God. And may [o]the LORD do *what is* good in His sight."

13 So Joab and the people who *were* with him drew near for the battle against the Syrians, and they fled before him. 14 When the people of Ammon saw that the Syrians were fleeing, they also fled before Abishai, and entered the city. So Joab returned from the people of Ammon and went to [p]Jerusalem.

15 When the Syrians saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they gathered together. 16 Then [2]Hadadezer sent and brought out the Syrians who *were* beyond [3]the River, and they came to Helam. And [4]Shobach the commander of Hadadezer's army *went* before them. 17 When it was told David, he gathered all Israel, crossed over the Jordan, and came to Helam. And the Syrians set themselves in battle array against David and fought with him. 18 Then the Syrians fled before Israel; and David killed seven hundred charioteers and forty thousand [q]horsemen of the Syrians, and struck Shobach the commander of their army, who died there. 19 And when all the kings *who were* servants to [5]Hadadezer saw that they were defeated by Israel, they made peace with Israel and [r]served them. So the Syrians were afraid to help the people of Ammon anymore.

David, Bathsheba, and Uriah

11 It happened in the spring of the year, at the [a]time when kings go out *to battle,* that [b]David sent Joab and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the people of Ammon and besieged [c]Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem.

2 Then it happened one evening that David arose from his bed [d]and walked on the roof of the king's house. And from the roof he [e]saw a woman bathing, and the woman *was* very beautiful to behold. 3 So David sent and inquired about the woman. And *someone* said, "*Is* this not [1]Bath-

■ **10:14 So Joab returned.** Apparently he did not capture the city of Rabbah on this occasion (11:1; 12:26–29).

■ **10:16 Hadadezer.** See note on 8:3.

Helam. About twelve miles north of Tob (v. 6 note).

■ **10:19 the Syrians were afraid to help.** The door was opened to a second campaign against the Ammonites.

■ **11:1 when kings go out to battle.** See 1 Kin. 20:22, 26. In the Near East, springtime was a logical time for military campaigns, since the winter rains would have ceased and the labor-intensive harvest would not have begun.

David sent Joab. This is not the first time that David has sent Joab on a military expedition (10:7), but since it was the time when "kings go out to battle" and yet "David remained at Jerusalem," there may be some criticism of David for remaining behind.

besieged Rabbah. Called "Rabbah of the people of Ammon" in Deut. 3:11 and elsewhere (12:26; 17:27; Jer. 49:2; Ezek. 21:20), this city was the capital of Ammon (Amos 1:13–15). It is twenty-four miles east of the Jordan River opposite Jericho. In New Testament times it was called Philadelphia, and today it is Amman, Jordan. See also 10:14 and note.

■ **11:2 one evening . . . David arose from his bed.** David's luxury is in marked contrast to the activities of Joab and his men (vv. 1, 11).

■ **11:3 Bathsheba.** Not until 12:24 will the name "Bathsheba" be mentioned again; in the intervening verses the reference will be to "the woman" (v. 5) or to Uriah's "wife" (v. 26; 12:10, 15). The focus is not on Bathsheba herself so much as on her status as the wife of another man.

Eliam. If Bathsheba's father is the same as "Eliam the son of Ahithophel" (23:34), this might help to explain Ahithophel's later betrayal of David in favor of Absalom's conspiracy (15:12; 16:15), which ostensibly was motivated by a sense of David's injustice (15:4, 6). Notice especially the nature of Ahithophel's advice in 16:20, 21.

Uriah. Uriah is a Hebrew name, meaning "the LORD is my light."

The Troubles of David (11:4)

Causes	Effects
Adultery (11:4)	Bathsheba bears a son (11:5)
Murder of Uriah (11:17)	Accused, repents, but the child dies (12:10, 13, 19)
Amnon's incest (13:14)	Amnon murdered (13:28, 29)
Absalom usurps throne (16:15, 16)	Absalom murdered (18:14, 15)
The census (24:2)	Plague (24:15)

Consistently illustrated in the life of David's household is the principle that a disobedient life is a troubled life.

sheba, the daughter of [2]Eliam, the wife [f]of Uriah the [g]Hittite?" [4] Then David sent messengers, and took her; and she came to him, and [h]he lay with her, for she was [i]cleansed from her impurity; and she returned to her house. [5] And the woman conceived; so she sent and told David, and said, "I *am* with child."

[6] Then David sent to Joab, *saying,* "Send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent Uriah to David. [7] When Uriah had come to him, David asked how Joab was doing, and how the people were doing, and how the war prospered. [8] And David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and [j]wash your feet." So Uriah departed from the king's house, and a gift *of food* from the king followed him. [9] But Uriah slept at the [k]door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house. [10] So when they told David, saying, "Uriah did not go down to his house," David said to Uriah, "Did you not come from a journey? Why did you not go down to your house?"

[11] And Uriah said to David, [l]"The ark and Israel and Judah are dwelling in tents, and [m]my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are encamped in the open fields. Shall I then go to my house to eat and drink, and to lie with my wife? *As* you live, and *as* your soul lives, I will not do this thing."

[12] Then David said to Uriah, "Wait here today also, and tomorrow I will let you depart." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. [13] Now when David called him, he ate and drank before him; and he made him [n]drunk. And at evening he went out to lie on his bed [o]with the servants of his lord, but he did not go down to his house.

[14] In the morning it happened that David [p]wrote a letter to Joab and sent *it* by the hand of Uriah. [15] And he wrote in the letter, saying, "Set Uriah in the forefront of the [3]hottest battle, and retreat from him, that he may [q]be struck down and die." [16] So it was, while Joab besieged the city, that he assigned Uriah to a place where he knew there *were* valiant men. [17] Then the men of the city came out and fought with Joab. And *some* of the people of the servants of David fell; and Uriah the Hittite died also.

[18] Then Joab sent and told David all the things concerning the war, [19] and charged the messenger, saying, "When you have finished telling the matters of the war to the king, [20] if it happens that the king's wrath rises, and he says to you: 'Why did you approach so near to the city when you fought? Did you not know that they would shoot from the wall? [21] Who struck [r]Abimelech the son of [4]Jerubbesheth? Was it not a woman who cast a piece of a millstone on him from the wall, so that he died in Thebez? Why did you go near the wall?'—then you shall say, 'Your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.' "

[22] So the messenger went, and came and told David all that Joab had sent by him. [23] And the messenger said to David, "Surely the men prevailed against us and came out to us in the field; then we drove them back as far as the entrance of the gate. [24] The archers shot from the wall at your servants; and *some* of the king's servants are dead, and your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also."

[25] Then David said to the messenger, "Thus you shall say to Joab: 'Do not let this thing [5]displease you, for the sword devours one as well as another. Strengthen your attack against the city, and overthrow it.' So encourage him."

[26] When the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her

3 [f]2 Sam. 23:39 [g]1 Sam. 26:6 [2]*Ammiel,* 1 Chr. 3:5

4 [h][Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22]; Ps. 51:title; [James 1:14, 15] [i]Lev. 15:19, 28

8 [j]Gen. 18:4; 19:2

9 [k]1 Kin. 14:27, 28

11 [l]2 Sam. 7:2, 6 [m]2 Sam. 20:6–22

13 [n]Gen. 19:33, 35 [o]2 Sam. 11:9

14 [p]1 Kin. 21:8, 9

15 [q]2 Sam. 12:9 [3]*fiercest*

21 [r]Judg. 9:50–54 [4]*Jerubbaal* (Gideon), Judg. 6:32ff.

25 [5]Lit. *be evil in your sight*

■ **11:4 her impurity.** If the reference is to menstruation (Lev. 15:19–30), the point would be to remove all doubt that David is responsible for Bathsheba's pregnancy (v. 5).

■ **11:5 I am with child.** Bathsheba leaves it to David to decide what to do.

■ **11:8 wash your feet.** Uriah understands David to be suggesting that he sleep with his wife. This might make possible the deception that Uriah was the child's father.

a gift of food. David perhaps wanted to encourage the couple.

■ **11:9 But Uriah . . . did not go down to his house.** Despite David's efforts, Uriah does not do what he considers wrong. It is not impossible that Uriah knew about David's relationship with Bathsheba (perhaps from the messengers of v. 4), but this is unlikely in view of his willingness to carry a letter from David to Joab (v. 14). Uriah explains his abstinence in v. 11.

■ **11:11 The ark and Israel and Judah.** Uriah's insistence that he will not fare better than his fellow combatants again underscores by contrast the reprehensible nature of David's sin. Even though the Lord Himself (as symbolized by the presence of the ark) was on the field of battle, the king has been in Jerusalem (vv. 1, 2 and notes).

■ **11:13 made him drunk.** See note on v. 8. Uriah still remained faithful to his duty and did not go home.

■ **11:15 Set Uriah in the forefront.** Having failed to bend Uriah, David now feels compelled to take another course, and Joab, not surprisingly (2:18; 3:27; 20:10 and notes), is willing to help.

■ **11:21 Jerubbesheth.** "Besheth," meaning "shame," was sometimes substituted for "Baal." See text note.

■ **11:22 all that Joab had sent by him.** The Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) has a longer reading in which this statement is followed by an angry response from David along the lines anticipated by Joab in vv. 20, 21.

■ **11:25 Do not let this thing displease you.** David's answer is cynical. He pretends to console his accomplice in murder. Note the similar phrasing of v. 27.

husband. 27 And when her mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house, and she [s]became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing that David had done [t]displeased[6] the LORD.

Nathan's Parable and David's Confession

12 Then the LORD sent Nathan to David. And [a]he came to him, and [b]said to him: "There were two men in one city, one rich and the other poor. 2 The rich *man* had exceedingly many flocks and herds. 3 But the poor *man* had nothing, except one little ewe lamb which he had bought and nourished; and it grew up together with him and with his children. It ate of his own food and drank from his own cup and lay in his bosom; and it was like a daughter to him. 4 And a traveler came to the rich man, who refused to take from his own flock and from his own herd to prepare one for the wayfaring man who had come to him; but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him."

5 So David's anger was greatly aroused against the man, and he said to Nathan, "*As* the LORD lives, the man who has done this [t]shall surely die! 6 And he shall restore [c]fourfold for the lamb, because he did this thing and because he had no pity."

7 Then Nathan said to David, "You *are* the man! Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I [d]anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. 8 I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your keeping, and gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if *that had been* too little, I also would have given you much more! 9 [e]Why have you [f]despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in His sight? [g]You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword; you have taken his wife *to be* your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the people of Ammon. 10 Now therefore, [h]the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.' 11 Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house; and I will [i]take your wives before your eyes and give *them* to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. 12 For you did *it* secretly, [j]but I will do this thing before all Israel, before the sun.' "

13 [k]So David said to Nathan, [l]"I have sinned against the LORD."

And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has [m]put away your sin; you shall not die. 14 How-

27 [s]2 Sam. 12:9 [t]1 Chr. 21:7; [Heb. 13:4] [6]Lit. *was evil in the eyes of*

CHAPTER 12

1 [a]Ps. 51:title [b]1 Kin. 20:35–41

5 [t]*deserves to die,* lit. *is a son of death*

6 [c][Ex. 22:1]; Luke 19:8

7 [d]1 Sam. 16:13; 2 Sam. 5:3

9 [e]1 Sam. 15:19 [f]Num. 15:31 [g]2 Sam. 11:14–17, 27

10 [h]2 Sam. 13:28; 18:14; 1 Kin. 2:25; [Amos 7:9]

11 [i]Deut. 28:30; 2 Sam. 16:21, 22

12 [j]2 Sam. 16:22

13 [k]1 Sam. 15:24 [l]2 Sam. 24:10; Job 7:20; Ps. 51; Luke 18:13 [m]2 Sam. 24:10; Job 7:21; [Ps. 32:1–5; Prov. 28:13; Mic. 7:18]; Zech. 3:4

■ **11:27 when her mourning was over.** The customary period of mourning for her was probably seven days (Gen. 50:10; 1 Sam. 31:13). National leaders were sometimes mourned for longer periods. Aaron was mourned thirty days (Num. 20:29), likewise Moses (Deut. 34:8). The Egyptians mourned seventy days for Jacob (Gen. 50:3).

bore him a son. See 12:14.

displeased the LORD. Lit. "was evil in the eyes of the LORD"; see v. 25. David has broken at least four of the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:2–17; Deut. 5:6–21), namely, murder, adultery, lying, and coveting his neighbor's wife.

■ **12:1 the LORD sent Nathan.** The prophets were servants of the word of God, which has authority even over kings. The prophets needed courage and were sometimes in sharp conflict with the kings (1 Kin. 22:8; 2 Kin. 1:3, 4; Mark 6:17; cf. Acts 7:52).

one rich and the other poor. The rich man is David and the poor man is Uriah. The parable was also fulfilled by Ahab and Jezebel against Naboth (1 Kin. 21:1–14).

■ **12:3 like a daughter to him.** The verse ends with the Hebrew word for "daughter," not coincidentally also the first syllable of the name "Bathsheba."

■ **12:5 the man who has done this shall surely die.** Nathan's parable has succeeded; in pronouncing judgment on the rich man, David has condemned himself. His response is an exclamation, not a legal decision. He mentions first death, then restitution.

■ **12:6 fourfold.** Ex. 22:1 orders fourfold restitution for stolen sheep. Some commentators have detected here a hint of David's subsequent loss of four sons: the first son of Bathsheba (vv. 14, 18), Amnon (13:28, 29), Absalom (18:14, 15), and Adonijah (1 Kin. 2:24, 25).

■ **12:7–12** In a manner typical of prophetic judgment speeches (1 Sam. 2:27–36 note), Nathan begins with an accusation including a description of the Lord's providence (vv. 7, 8) and an accusing question and indictment (v. 9). He concludes by announcing the judgment and the penalties corresponding to the crime.

■ **12:7 I anointed you.** Compare Samuel's indictment of Saul (1 Sam. 15:17).

■ **12:8 your master's wives.** It is uncertain whether this statement is to be taken literally (only one wife and one concubine of Saul are mentioned, 3:7; 1 Sam. 14:50) or simply refers to the full extent of David's inheritance of Saul's kingdom. On the matter of kings acquiring their predecessors' harems, see 3:7 and note.

■ **12:9 evil in His sight.** This same idiom appears in 11:25, 27.

You have killed Uriah. Because David causes Uriah to die in battle, he is as guilty as if he had murdered him with his own hand.

■ **12:10 the sword shall never depart from your house.** As Uriah was killed by violence, the house of David will be plagued by violence. Absalom killed Amnon (13:28, 29); Joab killed Absalom (18:14, 15); and Solomon ordered the deaths of Adonijah (1 Kin. 2:24, 25) and Joab (1 Kin. 2:29–34).

■ **12:11 I will raise up adversity.** The prophecy is fulfilled by the rebellion of Absalom (chs. 15—18).

lie with your wives in the light of this sun. This prediction is fulfilled in 16:21, 22.

■ **12:13 I have sinned against the LORD.** When charged by God's prophet, David responds with an immediate and unqualified confession; contrast Saul's confessions in 1 Sam. 15:24, 25, 30 (notes). Ps. 51, according to its superscription, is a fuller picture of David's repentance.

you shall not die. See notes on 11:5; 12:5.

■ **12:14 the enemies of the LORD.** On the basis of an ancient translation of this verse, some scholars think "enemies" should be omitted. Nathan's charge would then be that David has showed contempt directly for the Lord.

ever, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD [n]to blaspheme, the child also *who is* born to you shall surely die." [15] Then Nathan departed to his house.

The Death of David's Son

And the [o]LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bore to David, and it became ill. [16] David therefore pleaded with God for the child, and David fasted and went in and [p]lay all night on the ground. [17] So the elders of his house arose *and went* to him, to raise him up from the ground. But he would not, nor did he eat food with them. [18] Then on the seventh day it came to pass that the child died. And the servants of David were afraid to tell him that the child was dead. For they said, "Indeed, while the child was alive, we spoke to him, and he would not heed our voice. How can we tell him that the child is dead? He may do some harm!"

[19] When David saw that his servants were whispering, David perceived that the child was dead. Therefore David said to his servants, "Is the child dead?"

And they said, "He is dead."

[20] So David arose from the ground, washed and [q]anointed himself, and changed his clothes; and he went into the house of the LORD and [r]worshiped. Then he went to his own house; and when he requested, they set food before him, and he ate. [21] Then his servants said to him, "What *is* this that you have done? You fasted and wept for the child *while he was* alive, but when the child died, you arose and ate food."

[22] And he said, "While the child was alive, I fasted and wept; [s]for I said, 'Who can tell *whether* [2]the LORD will be gracious to me, that the child may live?' [23] But now he is dead; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go [t]to him, but [u]he shall not return to me."

Solomon Is Born

[24] Then David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and went in to her and lay with her. So [v]she bore a son, and [w]he[3] called his name Solomon. Now the LORD loved him, [25] and He sent *word* by the hand of Nathan the prophet: So [4]he called his name [5]Jedidiah, because of the LORD.

Rabbah Is Captured

[26] Now [x]Joab fought against [y]Rabbah of the people of Ammon, and took the royal city. [27] And Joab sent messengers to David, and said, "I have fought against Rabbah, and I have taken the city's water *supply*. [28] Now therefore, gather the rest of the people together and encamp against the city and take it, lest I take the city and it be called after my name." [29] So David gathered all the people together and went to Rabbah, fought against it, and took it. [30] [z]Then he took their king's crown from his head. Its weight *was* a talent of gold, with precious stones. And it was *set* on David's head. Also he brought out the [6]spoil of the city in great abundance. [31] And he brought out the people who *were* in it, and put *them to work* with saws and iron picks and iron axes, and made them cross over to the brick works. So he did to all the cities of the people of Ammon. Then David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.

Amnon and Tamar

13 After this [a]Absalom the son of David had a lovely sister, whose name *was* [b]Tamar; and [c]Amnon the son of David loved her. [2] Amnon was so distressed over his sister Tamar

14 [n]Is. 52:5; [Ezek. 36:20, 23]; Rom. 2:24

15 [o]1 Sam. 25:38

16 [p]2 Sam. 13:31

20 [q]Ruth 3:3; Matt. 6:17 [r]Job 1:20

22 [s]Is. 38:1–5; Joel 2:14; Jon. 3:9 [2]Heb. mss., Syr. *God*

23 [t]Gen. 37:35 [u]Job 7:8–10

24 [v]Matt. 1:6 [w]1 Chr. 22:9 [3]So with Kt., LXX, Vg.; Qr., a few Heb. mss., Syr., Tg. *she*

25 [4]Qr., some Heb. mss., Syr., Tg. *she* [5]Lit. *Beloved of the* LORD

26 [x]1 Chr. 20:1 [y]Deut. 3:11; 2 Sam. 11:1

30 [z]1 Chr. 20:2 [6]*plunder*

CHAPTER 13

1 [a]2 Sam. 3:2, 3; 1 Chr. 3:2 [b]1 Chr. 3:9 [c]2 Sam. 3:2

■ **12:17 nor did he eat food with them.** See note on 1 Sam. 1:7.

■ **12:20 worshiped.** Like Eli, but unlike Saul, David humbly accepts the Lord's discipline (15:26; 16:11; 1 Sam. 3:18 and notes).

■ **12:23 I shall go to him.** That is, in the place of the dead (1 Sam. 28:19 note; Gen. 37:35).

■ **12:24 his wife.** Here for the first time Bathsheba is called David's wife (11:3 note).

Solomon. This name is usually considered to be derived from the Hebrew word for "peace" (cf. 1 Chr. 22:9). Another possibility is that it means "replacement"; the birth of Solomon compensates for the loss of the first child.

■ **12:25 Jedidiah.** See text note. This name confirms that "the LORD loved him" (v. 24) and bodes well for the future of the Davidic house. *Despite the sin of David and his descendants, the Lord's favor will not be withdrawn* (7:14 note).

■ **12:26–31** The narrative once again returns to the Ammonite campaign (11:1 and note). This time it is not David who sends Joab, but Joab who sends for David (v. 27).

■ **12:28 called after my name.** Joab's concern may have been prompted by an interest in David's reputation and the propriety of having the king receive the captive crown.

■ **12:30 their king's crown.** A crown weighing as much as seventy-five pounds ("a talent") would have been too heavy to wear except for brief ceremonies. The crown could have been from a statue of Milcom or Molech. The same Hebrew letters translated as "their king's" could also be read as "Milcom's" (i.e., Molech, the chief god of the Ammonites; see 1 Kin. 11:5, 33).

■ **12:31 put them to work.** Subjugation of defeated enemies was common practice for David (8:2) and in the culture of the ancient Near East generally (Ex. 1:11; Josh. 9:22–27; 1 Kin. 9:20, 21).

■ **13:1–39** David's sons follow their father's example of adultery (Amnon, vv. 1–22) and murder (Absalom, vv. 23–39).

3 [d]1 Sam. 16:9
6 [e]Gen. 18:6
9 [f]Gen. 45:1
11 [g]Gen. 39:12; [Deut. 27:22]; Ezek. 22:11
12 [h][Lev. 18:9–11; 20:17] [i]Gen. 34:7; Judg. 19:23; 20:6 [j]Lit. *humble me*
13 [l]Gen. 20:12
14 [k]Lev. 18:9; [Deut. 22:25; 27:22]; 2 Sam. 12:11
15 [z]*with a very great hatred*
18 [l]Gen. 37:3; Judg. 5:30; Ps. 45:13, 14
19 [m]Josh. 7:6; 2 Sam. 1:2; Job 2:12; 42:6 [n]Jer. 2:37

that he became sick; for she *was* a virgin. And it was improper for Amnon to do anything to her.
3 But Amnon had a friend whose name *was* Jonadab [d]the son of Shimeah, David's brother. Now Jonadab *was* a very crafty man. 4 And he said to him, "Why *are* you, the king's son, becoming thinner day after day? Will you not tell me?"

Amnon said to him, "I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister."

5 So Jonadab said to him, "Lie down on your bed and pretend to be ill. And when your father comes to see you, say to him, 'Please let my sister Tamar come and give me food, and prepare the food in my sight, that I may see *it* and eat it from her hand.' " 6 Then Amnon lay down and pretended to be ill; and when the king came to see him, Amnon said to the king, "Please let Tamar my sister come and [e]make a couple of cakes for me in my sight, that I may eat from her hand."

7 And David sent home to Tamar, saying, "Now go to your brother Amnon's house, and prepare food for him." 8 So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house; and he was lying down. Then she took flour and kneaded *it,* made cakes in his sight, and baked the cakes. 9 And she took the pan and placed *them* out before him, but he refused to eat. Then Amnon said, [f]"Have everyone go out from me." And they all went out from him. 10 Then Amnon said to Tamar, "Bring the food into the bedroom, that I may eat from your hand." And Tamar took the cakes which she had made, and brought *them* to Amnon her brother in the bedroom. 11 Now when she had brought *them* to him to eat, [g]he took hold of her and said to her, "Come, lie with me, my sister."

12 But she answered him, "No, my brother, do not [j]force me, for [h]no such thing should be done in Israel. Do not do this [i]disgraceful thing! 13 And I, where could I take my shame? And as for you, you would be like one of the fools in Israel. Now therefore, please speak to the king; [l]for he will not withhold me from you." 14 However, he would not heed her voice; and being stronger than she, he [k]forced her and lay with her.

15 Then Amnon hated her [z]exceedingly, so that the hatred with which he hated her *was* greater than the love with which he had loved her. And Amnon said to her, "Arise, be gone!"

16 So she said to him, "No, indeed! This evil of sending me away *is* worse than the other that you did to me."

But he would not listen to her. 17 Then he called his servant who attended him, and said, "Here! Put this *woman* out, away from me, and bolt the door behind her." 18 Now she had on [l]a robe of many colors, for the king's virgin daughters wore such apparel. And his servant put her out and bolted the door behind her.

19 Then Tamar put [m]ashes on her head, and tore her robe of many colors that *was* on her, and [n]laid her hand on her head and went away crying bitterly. 20 And Absalom her brother said to her, "Has Amnon your brother been with you? But now hold your peace, my sister. He *is* your brother; do not take this thing to heart." So Tamar remained desolate in her brother Absalom's house.

21 But when King David heard of all these things, he was very angry. 22 And Absalom spoke

■ **13:6 make a couple of cakes.** Both the words used for the "cakes" and their preparation ("make") are cognates of the Hebrew word for "heart" and may have an amorous connotation. A more common word for food is used by Jonadab in v. 5 and by David in v. 7. Unfortunately, David seems to have missed the innuendo in Amnon's overture.

in my sight. This emphasis (also in vv. 5, 8) is suggestive of a lustful aspect in Amnon's request.

■ **13:12–14** Tamar's desperate appeal to Amnon points first to the distinctive moral standards of Israel ("no such thing should be done in Israel," v. 12), then to the claims of human decency ("my shame"), then to Amnon's self-interest ("you would be like one of the fools"), and finally to marriage as a better means of fulfilling Amnon's desire (v. 13). But he does not listen (v. 14).

■ **13:12 do not force me.** The verb translated "force" is also used elsewhere to describe acts of rape (Gen. 34:2; Deut. 22:24, 29) and sexual violence (Judg. 19:24; 20:5).

■ **13:13 he will not withold me from you.** It is uncertain whether David would have allowed such a marriage (see Lev. 18:9, 11; 20:17; Deut. 27:22), or whether Tamar is simply trying every possible argument.

■ **13:15 the hatred . . . was greater than the love.** With keen psychological insight, the narrator notes that Amnon no sooner violates Tamar than he is suddenly repulsed by the victim of his crime.

■ **13:16 This evil of sending me away is worse.** See Ex. 22:16; Deut. 22:28, 29.

■ **13:17 this woman.** This is a rude and abrupt way of referring to Tamar. Compare Amnon's terse dismissal of her (v. 15).

■ **13:18 robe of many colors.** A garment of similar description was given to Joseph by his father Jacob (Gen. 37:3).

■ **13:20 Has Amnon your brother been with you.** Absalom's ability to discern the wrong suffered by Tamar suggests that Amnon's infatuation with her was not a deep secret.

hold your peace . . . do not take this thing to heart. Though seeking to calm his sister, Absalom would soon seek revenge against Amnon (vv. 22, 32)

■ **13:21 David . . . was very angry.** That David was furious at Amnon's violation of Tamar is understandable; that he took no disciplinary action is not (1 Sam. 3:13 and note). The Septuagint translation and the Dead Sea Scrolls add, "he would not hurt Amnon because he was his eldest son and he loved him." Whether original or not, the sentence accurately highlights a weakness in David's handling of his sons (14:24, 33; 1 Kin. 1:6 and notes). It was David's duty as father and as king to "administer judgment and justice to all his people" (8:15 and note). His failure to do this contributed to the greatest political crisis of his life, Absalom's rebellion. One of Absalom's complaints was that David withheld justice (15:4–6).

to his brother Amnon [o]neither good nor bad. For Absalom [p]hated Amnon, because he had forced his sister Tamar.

Absalom Murders Amnon

23 And it came to pass, after two full years, that Absalom [q]had sheepshearers in Baal Hazor, which *is* near Ephraim; so Absalom invited all the king's sons. 24 Then Absalom came to the king and said, "Kindly note, your servant has sheepshearers; please, let the king and his servants go with your servant."

25 But the king said to Absalom, "No, my son, let us not all go now, lest we be a burden to you." Then he urged him, but he would not go; and he blessed him.

26 Then Absalom said, "If not, please let my brother Amnon go with us."

And the king said to him, "Why should he go with you?" 27 But Absalom urged him; so he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him.

28 Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, "Watch now, when Amnon's [r]heart is merry with wine, and when I say to you, 'Strike Amnon!' then kill him. Do not be afraid. Have I not commanded you? Be courageous and [3]valiant." 29 So the servants of Absalom [s]did to Amnon as Absalom had commanded. Then all the king's sons arose, and each one got on [t]his mule and fled.

30 And it came to pass, while they were on the way, that news came to David, saying, "Absalom has killed all the king's sons, and not one of them is left!" 31 So the king arose and [u]tore his garments and [v]lay on the ground, and all his servants stood by with their clothes torn. 32 Then [w]Jonadab the son of Shimeah, David's brother, answered and said, "Let not my lord suppose they have killed all the young men, the king's sons, for only Amnon is dead. For by the command of Absalom this has been determined from the day that he forced his sister Tamar. 33 Now therefore, [x]let not my lord the king take the thing to his heart, to think that all the king's sons are dead. For only Amnon is dead."

Absalom Flees to Geshur

34 [y]Then Absalom fled. And the young man who was keeping watch lifted his eyes and looked, and there, many people were coming from the road on the hillside behind [4]him. 35 And Jonadab said to the king, "Look, the king's sons are coming; as your servant said, so it is." 36 So it was, as soon as he had finished speaking, that the king's sons indeed came, and they lifted up their voice and wept. Also the king and all his servants wept very bitterly.

37 But Absalom fled and went to [z]Talmai the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur. And *David* mourned for his son every day. 38 So Absalom fled and went to [a]Geshur, and was there three years. 39 And [5]King David [6]longed to go to Absalom. For he had been [b]comforted concerning Amnon, because he was dead.

Absalom Returns to Jerusalem

14 So Joab the son of Zeruiah perceived that the king's heart *was* concerned [a]about Absalom. 2 And Joab sent to [b]Tekoa and brought from there a wise woman, and said to her, "Please pretend to be a mourner, [c]and put on mourning apparel; do not anoint yourself with oil, but act like a woman who has been mourning a long time for the dead. 3 Go to the king and speak to him in this manner." So Joab [d]put the words in her mouth.

4 And when the woman of Tekoa [f]spoke to the king, she [e]fell on her face to the ground and prostrated herself, and said, [f]"Help, O king!"

22 [o]Gen. 24:50; 31:24 [p][Lev. 19:17, 18]

23 [q]1 Sam. 25:4

28 [r]1 Sam. 25:36 [3]Lit. *sons of valor*

29 [s]2 Sam. 12:10 [t]2 Sam. 18:9

31 [u]2 Sam. 1:11 [v]2 Sam. 12:16

32 [w]2 Sam. 13:3–5

33 [x]2 Sam. 19:19

34 [y]2 Sam. 13:37, 38 [4]LXX adds *And the watchman went and told the king, and said, "I see men from the way of Horonaim, from the regions of the mountains."*

37 [z]2 Sam. 3:3

38 [a]2 Sam. 14:23, 32; 15:8

39 [b]2 Sam. 12:19, 23 [5]So with MT, Syr., Vg.; LXX *the spirit of the king;* Tg. *the soul of King David* [6]So with MT, Tg.; LXX, Vg. *ceased to pursue after*

CHAPTER 14

1 [a]2 Sam. 13:39

2 [b]2 Chr. 11:6 [c]Ruth 3:3

3 [d]2 Sam. 14:19

4 [e]1 Sam. 20:41; 25:23 [f]2 Kin. 6:26, 28 [f]Many Heb. mss., LXX, Syr., Vg. *came*

■ **13:23 Baal Hazor.** Not the better known Hazor in Galilee, this site was some five miles from Bethel. It may have been chosen by Absalom to facilitate his imminent escape to relatives in Geshur, across the Jordan River (v. 37).

Absalom invited all the king's sons. The invitation was to participate in the feasting that accompanied the shearing of sheep (cf. 1 Sam. 25:4–8).

■ **13:26 let my brother Amnon go with us.** Amnon was the oldest son and crown prince, but even so his being singled out by Absalom aroused suspicion. David questions the request—"Why should he go with you?"

■ **13:27 But Absalom urged him.** David sends not only Amnon but the rest of his sons, perhaps to deter Absalom from taking revenge against Amnon.

■ **13:28 kill him.** In one stroke Absalom will avenge his sister Tamar and move himself closer to the throne (3:3; 15:1–6). He will also become a murderer, repeating his father's sin as Amnon repeated David's sin of sexual immorality.

■ **13:29 his mule.** See note on 18:9.

■ **13:32 only Amnon is dead.** Jonadab seems to have known something about Absalom's plans.

■ **13:37 Talmai.** Absalom's maternal grandfather (3:3).

Geshur. See note on v. 23.

■ **13:39—14:1 King David longed . . . was concerned.** It is hard to determine what emotions or reactions precisely are specified in these sentences. See text note.

■ **14:2 Tekoa.** Later known as the birthplace of Amos, Tekoa was a town ten miles south of Jerusalem.

5 [g][Zech. 7:10]

7 [h]Num. 35:19; Deut. 19:12, 13

9 [i]Gen. 27:13; 43:9; 1 Sam. 25:24; Matt. 27:25 [j]2 Sam. 3:28, 29; 1 Kin. 2:33 [2]*guilt*

11 [k]Num. 35:19, 21; [Deut. 19:4–10] [l]1 Sam. 14:45; 1 Kin. 1:52; Matt. 10:30; Acts 27:34

13 [m]Judg. 20:2 [n]2 Sam. 13:37, 38

14 [o]Job 30:23; 34:15; [Heb. 9:27] [p]Job 34:19; Matt. 22:16; Acts 10:34; Rom. 2:11 [q]Num. 35:15 [3]*cast out*

16 [r]Deut. 32:9; 1 Sam. 26:19; 2 Sam. 20:19

17 [s]1 Sam. 29:9; 2 Sam. 19:27 [t]1 Kin. 3:9

19 [u]2 Sam. 14:3

20 [v]2 Sam. 14:17; 19:27

22 [4]Lit. *blessed*

23 [w]2 Sam. 13:37, 38

5 Then the king said to her, "What troubles you?"

And she answered, [g]"Indeed I *am* a widow, my husband is dead. 6 Now your maidservant had two sons; and the two fought with each other in the field, and *there was* no one to part them, but the one struck the other and killed him. 7 And now the whole family has risen up against your maidservant, and they said, 'Deliver him who struck his brother, that we may execute him [h]for the life of his brother whom he killed; and we will destroy the heir also.' So they would extinguish my ember that is left, and leave to my husband *neither* name nor remnant on the earth."

8 Then the king said to the woman, "Go to your house, and I will give orders concerning you."

9 And the woman of Tekoa said to the king, "My lord, O king, *let* [i]the [2]iniquity *be* on me and on my father's house, [j]and the king and his throne *be* guiltless."

10 So the king said, "Whoever says *anything* to you, bring him to me, and he shall not touch you anymore."

11 Then she said, "Please let the king remember the LORD your God, and do not permit [k]the avenger of blood to destroy anymore, lest they destroy my son."

And he said, [l]"*As* the LORD lives, not one hair of your son shall fall to the ground."

12 Therefore the woman said, "Please, let your maidservant speak *another* word to my lord the king."

And he said, "Say on."

13 So the woman said: "Why then have you schemed such a thing against [m]the people of God? For the king speaks this thing as one who is guilty, *in that* the king does not bring [n]his banished one home again. 14 For we [o]will surely die and *become* like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again. Yet God does not [p]take away a life; but He [q]devises means, so that His banished ones are not [3]expelled from Him. 15 Now therefore, I have come to speak of this thing to my lord the king because the people have made me afraid. And your maidservant said, 'I will now speak to the king; it may be that the king will perform the request of his maidservant. 16 For the king will hear and deliver his maidservant from the hand of the man *who would* destroy me and my son together from the [r]inheritance of God.' 17 Your maidservant said, 'The word of my lord the king will now be comforting; for [s]as the angel of God, so *is* my lord the king in [t]discerning good and evil. And may the LORD your God be with you.' "

18 Then the king answered and said to the woman, "Please do not hide from me anything that I ask you."

And the woman said, "Please, let my lord the king speak."

19 So the king said, "*Is* the hand of Joab with you in all this?" And the woman answered and said, "*As* you live, my lord the king, no one can turn to the right hand or to the left from anything that my lord the king has spoken. For your servant Joab commanded me, and [u]he put all these words in the mouth of your maidservant. 20 To bring about this change of affairs your servant Joab has done this thing; but my lord *is* wise, [v]according to the wisdom of the angel of God, to know everything that *is* in the earth."

21 And the king said to Joab, "All right, I have granted this thing. Go therefore, bring back the young man Absalom."

22 Then Joab fell to the ground on his face and bowed himself, and [4]thanked the king. And Joab said, "Today your servant knows that I have found favor in your sight, my lord, O king, in that the king has fulfilled the request of his servant." 23 So Joab arose [w]and went to Geshur, and

■ **14:7 the whole family has risen up against your maidservant.** The tale which the wise women concocts raises not only the issue of blood revenge (v. 11; 3:27; Num. 35:16–25; Deut. 19:11–13; Josh. 20:3) but also the continuance of her family line on its ancestral property, for her enemies propose to execute the surviving son. As she points out, this would leave her with no name or descendant, something that Israelite law sought to avoid (Deut. 25:5–10). The woman skillfully introduces in her fictional story the same dilemma that David had. His duty to avenge the blood of Amnon conflicted with his anxiety that Absalom, now presumably his heir, not be cut off. Compare Nathan's parable in 12:1–4.

■ **14:9 let the iniquity be on me.** The woman is either expressing her willingness to shoulder whatever blame might arise, or is requesting, in polite court language, permission to speak further (1 Sam. 25:24).

■ **14:11 remember the LORD your God.** The woman requests and secures an oath from David, in the name of the Lord, that "the avenger of blood" shall not "destroy anymore." As was the case in Nathan's parable (12:1–6), a judgment is elicited from David's own mouth that will then be used to judge him (v. 13).

■ **14:14 God does not take away a life; but He devises means.** The woman seems to mean that God does not desire to take away lives, but is ready to see the banishment ended. Some translations read that "God will not take away the life of someone who arranges for a banishment to end."

■ **14:15, 16** While the woman has accomplished her objective of pleading for Absalom, she now returns to the matter of her own son, perhaps hoping that David will continue to believe her story and not discover that she and Joab have conspired together (vv. 1–3).

■ **14:17 angel of God.** The woman flatters David by praising his judgment. See also v. 20; 19:27; 1 Sam. 29:9.

■ **14:23 Geshur.** See 13:37 note.

brought Absalom to Jerusalem. 24 And the king said, "Let him return to his own house, but [x]do not let him see my face." So Absalom returned to his own house, but did not see the king's face.

David Forgives Absalom

25 Now in all Israel there was no one who was praised as much as Absalom for his good looks. [y]From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him. 26 And when he cut the hair of his head—at the end of every year he cut *it* because it was heavy on him—when he cut it, he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels according to the king's standard. 27 [z]To Absalom were born three sons, and one daughter whose name *was* Tamar. She was a woman of beautiful appearance.

28 And Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem, [a]but did not see the king's face. 29 Therefore Absalom sent for Joab, to send him to the king, but he would not come to him. And when he sent again the second time, he would not come. 30 So he said to his servants, "See, Joab's field is near mine, and he has barley there; go and set it on fire." And Absalom's servants set the field on fire.

31 Then Joab arose and came to Absalom's house, and said to him, "Why have your servants set my field on fire?"

32 And Absalom answered Joab, "Look, I sent to you, saying, 'Come here, so that I may send you to the king, to say, "Why have I come from Geshur? *It would be* better for me *to be* there still." ' Now therefore, let me see the king's face; but [b]if there is iniquity in me, let him execute me."

33 So Joab went to the king and told him. And when he had called for Absalom, he came to the king and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king. Then the king [c]kissed Absalom.

Absalom's Treason

15 After this [a]it happened that Absalom [b]provided himself with chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him. 2 Now Absalom would rise early and stand beside the way to the gate. *So* it was, whenever anyone who had a [c]lawsuit[1] came to the king for a decision, that Absalom would call to him and say, "What city *are* you from?" And he would say, "Your servant *is* from such and such a tribe of Israel." 3 Then Absalom would say to him, "Look, your [2]case *is* good and right; but *there is* no [3]deputy of the king to hear you." 4 Moreover Absalom would say, [d]"Oh, that I were made judge in the land, and everyone who has any suit or cause would come to me; then I would give him justice." 5 And *so* it was, whenever anyone came near to bow down to him, that he would put out his hand and take him and [e]kiss him. 6 In this manner Absalom acted toward all Israel who came to the king for judgment. [f]So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

7 Now it came to pass [g]after [4]forty years that Absalom said to the king, "Please, let me go to [h]Hebron and pay the vow which I made to the LORD. 8 [i]For your servant [j]took a vow [k]while I dwelt at Geshur in Syria, saying, 'If the LORD indeed brings me back to Jerusalem, then I will serve the LORD.' "

9 And the king said to him, "Go in peace." So he arose and went to Hebron.

24 [x]Gen. 43:3; 2 Sam. 3:13

25 [y]Deut. 28:35; Job 2:7; Is. 1:6

27 [z]2 Sam. 13:1; 18:18

28 [a]2 Sam. 14:24

32 [b]1 Sam. 20:8; [Prov. 28:13]

33 [c]Gen. 33:4; 45:15; Luke 15:20

CHAPTER 15

1 [a]2 Sam. 12:11 [b]1 Kin. 1:5

2 [c]Deut. 19:17 [1]Lit. *controversy*

3 [2]Lit. *words* [3]Lit. *listener*

4 [d]Judg. 9:29

5 [e]2 Sam. 14:33; 20:9

6 [f][Rom. 16:18]

7 [g][Deut. 23:21] [h]2 Sam. 3:2, 3 [4]LXX mss., Syr., Josephus *four*

8 [i]1 Sam. 16:2 [j]Gen. 28:20, 21 [k]2 Sam. 13:38

■ **14:24 do not let him see my face.** David allows Absalom to return to Jerusalem, but the estrangement continues.

■ **14:25, 26** As was with Saul before him, Absalom is described in exclusively physical terms (1 Sam. 9:1, 2 and notes). The description of how his hair was cut and weighed not only hints at Absalom's vanity, but also foreshadows the way he was to die (18:9–15).

■ **14:27 three sons.** See note on 18:18.

daughter whose name was Tamar. That only the daughter's name is recorded is sometimes taken to imply that Absalom's sons all died young, but the significance of this notice may lie elsewhere. The daughter's name was the same as the sister whose violation had brought Absalom into conflict with David.

■ **14:32 execute me.** Absalom hopes to win David over, and whatever happens he does not expect to be executed. David had not taken any dire action so far in the affair, and Absalom had some justification for killing Amnon. In effect his request is that he should be completely punished or completely forgiven, and not be left in between.

■ **14:33 the king kissed Absalom.** The narrative ends abruptly. Though David's action is sometimes referred to as the "kiss of reconciliation," it is doubtful that a real reconciliation was effected. Ironically, by giving kisses to those who approached him with petitions, Absalom was soon to steal away the hearts of the people and launch a rebellion against his father (15:5, 6).

■ **15:1 chariots and horses, and fifty men.** See notes on 8:4; 1 Sam. 8:11.

■ **15:4 I would give him justice.** See note on 13:21.

■ **15:7 after forty years.** The reading "four years" found in the versions (see text note) is to be preferred. Four years from the meeting of v. 33 would be six years from Absalom's return to Jerusalem (14:28).

Hebron. See note on 2:1. Hebron was Absalom's birthplace (3:2, 3), but also the place where David was first anointed king over Judah (2:4) and subsequently also over Israel (5:3).

■ **15:8 Geshur.** See note on 13:23.

■ **15:9 Go in peace.** Though employing a standard expression (e.g., 1 Sam. 1:17; 20:42; 29:7), David's farewell to Absalom adds a touch of irony to the story, since Absalom planned to make war.

10 [l]1 Kin. 1:34; 2 Kin. 9:13

11 [m]1 Sam. 16:3, 5 [n]Gen. 20:5

12 [o]2 Sam. 16:15; 1 Chr. 27:33; Ps. 41:9; 55:12–14 [p]Josh. 15:51 [q]Ps. 3:1

13 [r]Judg. 9:3; 2 Sam. 15:6 [s]Lit. *after*

14 [s]2 Sam. 12:11; Ps. 3:title

16 [t]Ps. 3:title [u]2 Sam. 12:11; 16:21, 22

18 [v]2 Sam. 8:18 [w]1 Sam. 23:13; 25:13; 30:1, 9 [6]Lit. *by his hand*

19 [x]2 Sam. 18:2

20 [y]1 Sam. 23:13

21 [z]Ruth 1:16, 17; [Prov. 17:17]

23 [a]2 Sam. 15:28; 16:2

24 [b]2 Sam. 8:17 [c]Num. 4:15; 1 Sam. 4:4 [d]1 Sam. 22:20

25 [e][Ps. 43:3] [f]Ex. 15:13; Jer. 25:30

26 [g]Num. 14:8; 2 Sam. 22:20; 1 Kin. 10:9; 2 Chr. 9:8; Is. 62:4 [h]1 Sam. 3:18

27 [i]1 Sam. 9:6–9 [j]2 Sam. 17:17–20 [7]*prophet*

28 [k]Josh. 5:10; 2 Sam. 17:16

10 Then Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, "As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then you shall say, 'Absalom [l]reigns in Hebron!' " 11 And with Absalom went two hundred men [m]invited from Jerusalem, and they [n]went along innocently and did not know anything. 12 Then Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, [o]David's counselor, from his city—from [p]Giloh—while he offered sacrifices. And the conspiracy grew strong, for the people with Absalom [q]continually increased in number.

David Escapes from Jerusalem

13 Now a messenger came to David, saying, [r]"The hearts of the men of Israel are [5]with Absalom."

14 So David said to all his servants who *were* with him at Jerusalem, "Arise, and let us [s]flee, or we shall not escape from Absalom. Make haste to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly and bring disaster upon us, and strike the city with the edge of the sword."

15 And the king's servants said to the king, "We *are* your servants, *ready to do* whatever my lord the king commands." 16 Then [t]the king went out with all his household after him. But the king left [u]ten women, concubines, to keep the house. 17 And the king went out with all the people after him, and stopped at the outskirts. 18 Then all his servants passed [6]before him; [v]and all the Cherethites, all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites, [w]six hundred men who had followed him from Gath, passed before the king.

19 Then the king said to [x]Ittai the Gittite, "Why are you also going with us? Return and remain with the king. For you *are* a foreigner and also an exile from your own place. 20 In fact, you came *only* yesterday. Should I make you wander up and down with us today, since I go [y]I know not where? Return, and take your brethren back. Mercy and truth *be* with you."

21 But Ittai answered the king and said, [z]"*As* the LORD lives, and *as* my lord the king lives, surely in whatever place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also your servant will be."

22 So David said to Ittai, "Go, and cross over." Then Ittai the Gittite and all his men and all the little ones who *were* with him crossed over. 23 And all the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people crossed over. The king himself also crossed over the Brook Kidron, and all the people crossed over toward the way of the [a]wilderness.

24 There was [b]Zadok also, and all the Levites with him, bearing the [c]ark of the covenant of God. And they set down the ark of God, and [d]Abiathar went up until all the people had finished crossing over from the city. 25 Then the king said to Zadok, "Carry the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the eyes of the LORD, He [e]will bring me back and show me *both* it and [f]His dwelling place. 26 But if He says thus: 'I have no [g]delight in you,' here I am, [h]let Him do to me as seems good to Him." 27 The king also said to Zadok the priest, "*Are* you *not* a [i]seer?[7] Return to the city in peace, and [j]your two sons with you, Ahimaaz your son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar. 28 See, [k]I will wait in the plains of the wilderness until word comes from you to inform me." 29 Therefore Zadok and Abiathar carried the ark of God back to Jerusalem. And they remained there.

■ **15:10 Absalom reigns in Hebron.** See note on v. 7.

■ **15:12 Ahithophel.** See note on 11:3 ("Eliam").

Giloh. A town in the hill country of Judah (Josh. 15:48, 51), probably not far from Hebron.

■ **15:17 the outskirts.** The Hebrew reads lit. "the last house" or "the Far House," perhaps denoting a well-known landmark on the outskirts of the city.

■ **15:18 Cherethites . . . Pelethites.** See note on 1 Sam. 30:14.

Gittites. That is, from Gath. Perhaps David won the loyalty of these troops during his time in the Philistine region ruled by Achish of Gath (1 Sam. 27).

six hundred. This number, which occurs frequently in military contexts (e.g., Judg. 3:31; 18:11; 20:47; 1 Sam. 13:15), may designate a standard military unit.

■ **15:19 Ittai the Gittite.** This foreigner became one of David's trusted military commanders, alongside Joab and Abishai (vv. 21, 22; 18:2, 5, 12).

■ **15:20 yesterday.** Presumably this is to be understood figuratively and not literally.

■ **15:21 there also your servant will be.** Ittai and his men were evidently mercenaries, but Ittai's loyalty was still outspoken.

■ **15:23 Brook Kidron.** A valley running from north to south along the eastern side of Jerusalem and separating Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives.

■ **15:24 Zadok . . . Abiathar.** See note on 8:17.

ark of the covenant of God. See notes on 1 Sam. 3:3; 4:3.

■ **15:25 Carry the ark of God back.** David clearly resists any magical understanding of the ark's power (contrast the elders of Israel, 1 Sam. 4:3). Rather, he casts himself on the Lord's mercy.

■ **15:26 let Him do to me as seems good to Him.** David humbly accepts the Lord's will (10:12 note; 1 Sam. 3:18), yet this does not prevent him from taking steps to secure his survival (vv. 28, 32–36).

■ **15:27 Return to the city.** Zadok, Abiathar, and their sons will prove useful to David's cause in 17:15–21.

■ **15:28 plains of the wilderness.** Probably the region along the western shore of the Dead Sea; see 17:16.

30 So David went up by the Ascent of the *Mount of* Olives, and wept as he went up; and he [l]had his head covered and went [m]barefoot. And all the people who *were* with him [n]covered their heads and went up, [o]weeping as they went up. 31 Then *someone* told David, saying, [p]"Ahithophel *is* among the conspirators with Absalom." And David said, "O LORD, I pray, [q]turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness!"

32 Now it happened when David had come to the top *of the mountain,* where he worshiped God—there was Hushai the [r]Archite coming to meet him [s]with his robe torn and dust on his head. 33 David said to him, "If you go on with me, then you will become [t]a burden to me. 34 But if you return to the city, and say to Absalom, [u]'I will be your servant, O king; *as* I *was* your father's servant previously, so I *will* now also *be* your servant,' then you may defeat the counsel of Ahithophel for me. 35 And *do* you not *have* Zadok and Abiathar the priests with you there? Therefore it will be *that* whatever you hear from the king's house, you shall tell to [v]Zadok and Abiathar the priests. 36 Indeed *they have* there [w]with them their two sons, Ahimaaz, Zadok's *son,* and Jonathan, Abiathar's *son;* and by them you shall send me everything you hear."

37 So Hushai, [x]David's friend, went into the city. [y]And Absalom came into Jerusalem.

Mephibosheth's Servant

16 When[a] David was a little past the top *of the mountain,* there was [b]Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth, who met him with a couple of saddled donkeys, and on them two hundred *loaves* of bread, one hundred clusters of raisins, one hundred summer fruits, and a skin of wine. 2 And the king said to Ziba, "What do you mean to do with these?"

So Ziba said, "The donkeys *are* for the king's household to ride on, the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat, and the wine for [c]those who are faint in the wilderness to drink."

3 Then the king said, "And where *is* your [d]master's son?"

[e]And Ziba said to the king, "Indeed he is staying in Jerusalem, for he said, 'Today the house of Israel will restore the kingdom of my father to me.' "

4 So the king said to Ziba, "Here, all that *belongs* to Mephibosheth *is* yours."

And Ziba said, "I humbly bow before you, *that* I may find favor in your sight, my lord, O king!"

Shimei Curses David

5 Now when King David came to [f]Bahurim, there was a man from the family of the house of Saul, whose name *was* [g]Shimei the son of Gera, coming from there. He came out, cursing continuously as he came. 6 And he threw stones at David and at all the servants of King David. And all the people and all the mighty men *were* on his right hand and on his left. 7 Also Shimei said thus when he cursed: "Come out! Come out! You [1]bloodthirsty man, [h]you [2]rogue! 8 The LORD has [i]brought upon you all [j]the blood of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned; and the LORD has delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom your son. So now you *are caught* in your own evil, because you are a [3]bloodthirsty man!"

9 Then Abishai the son of Zeruiah said to the king, "Why should this [k]dead dog [l]curse my lord the king? Please, let me go over and take off his head!"

10 But the king said, [m]"What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? So let him curse, because [n]the LORD has said to him, 'Curse David.' [o]Who then shall say, 'Why have you done so?' "

30 [l]2 Sam. 19:4; Esth. 6:12; Ezek. 24:17, 23 [m]Is. 20:2–4 [n]Jer. 14:3, 4 [o][Ps. 126:6]

31 [p]Ps. 3:1, 2; 55:12 [q]2 Sam. 16:23; 17:14, 23

32 [r]Josh. 16:2 [s]2 Sam. 1:2

33 [t]2 Sam. 19:35

34 [u]2 Sam. 16:19

35 [v]2 Sam. 17:15, 16

36 [w]2 Sam. 15:27

37 [x]2 Sam. 16:16; 1 Chr. 27:33 [y]2 Sam. 16:15

CHAPTER 16

1 [a]2 Sam. 15:30, 32 [b]2 Sam. 9:2; 19:17, 29

2 [c]2 Sam. 15:23; 17:29

3 [d]2 Sam. 9:9, 10 [e]2 Sam. 19:27

5 [f]2 Sam. 3:16 [g]2 Sam. 19:21; 1 Kin. 2:8, 9, 44–46

7 [h]Deut. 13:13 [1]Lit. *man of bloodshed* [2]*worthless man*

8 [i]Judg. 9:24, 56, 57; 1 Kin. 2:32, 33 [j]2 Sam. 1:16; 3:28, 29; 4:11, 12 [3]Lit. *man of bloodshed*

9 [k]1 Sam. 24:14; 2 Sam. 9:8 [l]Ex. 22:28

10 [m]2 Sam. 3:39; 19:22; [1 Pet. 2:23] [n]2 Kin. 18:25; [Lam. 3:38] [o][Rom. 9:20]

■ **15:30 Mount of Olives.** See note on v. 23.

head covered . . . barefoot. These are signs of grief and sorrow (Esth. 6:12; Is. 20:2–4; Jer. 14:3, 4; Mic. 1:8).

■ **15:32 Hushai.** No sooner does David pray that Ahithophel's counsel be confounded than he is presented, in the person of Hushai, with the means of accomplishing his objective.

the Archite. The Archites were of Canaanite descent (Gen. 10:15–17) and their territory was west of Bethel (Josh. 16:2).

■ **15:37 Hushai, David's friend.** Probably an official counselor. See 1 Chr. 27:33.

■ **16:1 Mephibosheth.** See note on 4:4.

■ **16:4 all that belongs to Mephibosheth is yours.** While David appears to believe Ziba's tale of Mephibosheth's treachery, he will change his ruling after hearing Mephibosheth's side of the story (19:24–30).

■ **16:5 Bahurim.** See note on 3:16.

Shimei. As a kinsman of Saul, Shimei may have held David responsible for the deaths of Abner and Ishbosheth (vv. 7, 8; on David's innocence, see 3:21, 26, 28; 4:9, 12 and notes). He may also have resented David's permitting seven of Saul's descendants to be executed by the Gibeonites (21:1 note). As a resident of Bahurim, moreover, Shimei may have been upset by David's treatment of Michal, Saul's daughter, for it was there that her second husband was ordered to cease following her as she was being taken back to David (3:16).

■ **16:8 The LORD has brought upon you.** Shimei is correct that divine retribution plays a part in David's distress, but it is not because of any injustice to the house of Saul. It was the result of David's sin against Uriah and Bathsheba (12:11).

■ **16:9 Abishai the son of Zeruiah.** See note on 2:18.

dead dog. See note on 1 Sam. 24:14.

11 [p]2 Sam. 12:11 [q]Gen. 15:4

12 [r]Deut. 23:5; Neh. 13:2; Prov. 20:22 [s]Deut. 23:5; [Rom. 8:28; Heb. 12:10, 11] [t]So with Kt., LXX, Syr., Vg.; Qr. *my eyes;* Tg. *tears of my eyes*

13 [u]Lit. *dusted him with dust*

15 [v]2 Sam. 15:12, 37

16 [w]2 Sam. 15:37 [x]2 Sam. 15:34

17 [y]2 Sam. 19:25; [Prov. 17:17]

19 [z]2 Sam. 15:34

20 [a]2 Sam. 15:12

21 [b]2 Sam. 15:16; 20:3 [c]Gen. 34:30; 1 Sam. 13:4 [d]2 Sam. 2:7; Zech. 8:13

22 [e]2 Sam. 12:11, 12

23 [f]2 Sam. 15:12

CHAPTER 17

2 [g]Deut. 25:18; 2 Sam. 16:14 [h]Zech. 13:7 [i]*tremble with fear*

4 [j]2 Sam. 5:3; 19:11

5 [k]2 Sam. 15:32–34

8 [l]Hos. 13:8

10 [m]Josh. 2:11

11 [n]2 Sam. 3:10 [o]Gen. 22:17

11 And David said to Abishai and all his servants, "See how [p]my son who [q]came from my own body seeks my life. How much more now *may this* Benjamite? Let him alone, and let him curse; for so the LORD has ordered him. 12 It may be that the LORD will look on [r]my affliction, and that the LORD will [s]repay me with good for his cursing this day." 13 And as David and his men went along the road, Shimei went along the hillside opposite him and cursed as he went, threw stones at him and [t]kicked up dust. 14 Now the king and all the people who *were* with him became weary; so they refreshed themselves there.

The Advice of Ahithophel

15 Meanwhile [u]Absalom and all the people, the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem; and Ahithophel *was* with him. 16 And so it was, when Hushai the Archite, [v]David's friend, came to Absalom, that [w]Hushai said to Absalom, "*Long* live the king! *Long* live the king!"

17 So Absalom said to Hushai, "*Is* this your loyalty to your friend? [x]Why did you not go with your friend?"

18 And Hushai said to Absalom, "No, but whom the LORD and this people and all the men of Israel choose, his I will be, and with him I will remain. 19 "Furthermore, [y]whom should I serve? *Should I* not *serve* in the presence of his son? As I have served in your father's presence, so will I be in your presence."

20 Then Absalom said to [z]Ahithophel, "Give advice as to what we should do."

21 And Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Go in to your father's [a]concubines, whom he has left to keep the house; and all Israel will hear that you [b]are abhorred by your father. Then [c]the hands of all who are with you will be strong." 22 So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the top of the house, and Absalom went in to his father's concubines [d]in the sight of all Israel.

23 Now the advice of Ahithophel, which he gave in those days, *was* as if one had inquired at the oracle of God. So *was* all the advice of Ahithophel [e]both with David and with Absalom.

17 Moreover Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Now let me choose twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue David tonight. 2 I will come upon him while he *is* [f]weary and weak, and make him [g]afraid. And all the people who *are* with him will flee, and I will [h]strike only the king. 3 Then I will bring back all the people to you. When all return except the man whom you seek, all the people will be at peace." 4 And the saying pleased Absalom and all the [i]elders of Israel.

The Advice of Hushai

5 Then Absalom said, "Now call Hushai the Archite also, and let us hear what he [j]says too." 6 And when Hushai came to Absalom, Absalom spoke to him, saying, "Ahithophel has spoken in this manner. Shall we do as he says? If not, speak up."

7 So Hushai said to Absalom: "The advice that Ahithophel has given *is* not good at this time. 8 For," said Hushai, "you know your father and his men, that they *are* mighty men, and they *are* enraged in their minds, like [k]a bear robbed of her cubs in the field; and your father *is* a man of war, and will not camp with the people. 9 Surely by now he is hidden in some pit, or in some *other* place. And it will be, when some of them are overthrown at the first, that whoever hears *it* will say, 'There is a slaughter among the people who follow Absalom.' 10 And even he *who is* valiant, whose heart *is* like the heart of a lion, will [l]melt completely. For all Israel knows that your father *is* a mighty man, and *those* who *are* with him *are* valiant men. 11 Therefore I advise that all Israel be fully gathered to you, [m]from Dan to Beersheba, [n]like the sand that *is* by the sea

■ **16:11 let him curse.** David refuses to silence Shimei for several reasons. The Lord has prompted him to curse (v. 10); if his own son wants to kill him, how much more a kinsman of Saul; if the cursing is unjust, the Lord may repay David with good (v. 12). David's ready submission to God's judgment is consistent with his character (12:20–23; 15:26) and reminiscent of Eli (1 Sam. 3:18 note).

■ **16:15 Ahithophel.** See note on 11:3 ("Eliam").

■ **16:16 Hushai the Archite.** See note on 15:32.

■ **16:17–19** Absalom's suspicion of David's "friend" (v. 16; 15:37) elicits from him a clever reply that he will be loyal to the one whom the Lord and all Israel have chosen. Moreover, it is a natural thing for one who served a father to serve his son also.

■ **16:21 Go in to your father's concubines.** To remove any thought among Absalom's followers of a reconciliation with David, Ahithophel counsels Absalom to lie with David's concubines who had been left behind (15:16). This would make clear Absalom's desire for the throne (3:7 note; 12:8 note; 1 Kin. 2:22). Whatever the motivation, such behavior was detestable to God (Lev. 18).

■ **16:22 Absalom went in.** This action fulfills the judgment announced by Nathan in 12:11, 12.

■ **17:5 Hushai the Archite.** See note on 15:32.

■ **17:6 this manner.** Absalom explained Ahithophel's advice to Hushai.

■ **17:7–13** After declaring Ahithophel's advice "not good at this time" (v. 7), Hushai offers an alternative plan, emphasizing not quick action but overpowering numbers (vv. 11–13). The plan he suggested gained time for David to escape across the Jordan River. (vv. 16, 22).

■ **17:11 from Dan to Beersheba.** See Judg. 20:1; 1 Sam. 3:20.

for multitude, and that you go to battle in person. 12 So we will come upon him in some place where he may be found, and we will fall on him as the dew falls on the ground. And of him and all the men who *are* with him there shall not be left so much as one. 13 Moreover, if he has withdrawn into a city, then all Israel shall bring ropes to that city; and we will [i]pull it into the river, until there is not one small stone found there."

14 So Absalom and all the men of Israel said, "The advice of Hushai the Archite *is* better than the advice of Ahithophel." For [j]the LORD had purposed to defeat the good advice of Ahithophel, to the intent that the LORD might bring disaster on Absalom.

Hushai Warns David to Escape

15 [k]Then Hushai said to Zadok and Abiathar the priests, "Thus and so Ahithophel advised Absalom and the elders of Israel, and thus and so I have advised. 16 Now therefore, send quickly and tell David, saying, 'Do not spend this night [l]in the plains of the wilderness, but speedily cross over, lest the king and all the people who *are* with him be swallowed up.' " 17 [m]Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz [n]stayed at [o]En Rogel, for they dared not be seen coming into the city; so a female servant would come and tell them, and they would go and tell King David. 18 Nevertheless a lad saw them, and told Absalom. But both of them went away quickly and came to a man's house [p]in Bahurim, who had a well in his court; and they went down into it. 19 [q]Then the woman took and spread a covering over the well's mouth, and spread ground grain on it; and the thing was not known. 20 And when Absalom's servants came to the woman at the house, they said, "Where *are* Ahimaaz and Jonathan?"

So [r]the woman said to them, "They have gone over the water brook."

And when they had searched and could not find *them,* they returned to Jerusalem. 21 Now it came to pass, after they had departed, that they came up out of the well and went and told King David, and said to David, [s]"Arise and cross over the water quickly. For thus has Ahithophel advised against you." 22 So David and all the people who *were* with him arose and crossed over the Jordan. By morning light not one of them was left who had not gone over the Jordan.

23 Now when Ahithophel saw that his advice was not followed, he saddled a donkey, and arose and went home to [t]his house, to his city. Then he [2]put his [u]household in order, and [v]hanged himself, and died; and he was buried in his father's tomb.

24 Then David went to [w]Mahanaim. And Absalom crossed over the Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him. 25 And Absalom made [x]Amasa captain of the army instead of Joab. This Amasa *was* the son of a man whose name *was* [3]Jithra, an [4]Israelite, who had gone in to [y]Abigail the daughter of Nahash, sister of Zeruiah, Joab's mother. 26 So Israel and Absalom encamped in the land of Gilead.

27 Now it happened, when David had come to Mahanaim, that [z]Shobi the son of Nahash from

13 [i]Mic. 1:6

14 [j]2 Sam. 15:31, 34

15 [k]2 Sam. 15:35, 36

16 [l]2 Sam. 15:28

17 [m]2 Sam. 15:27, 36 [n]Josh. 2:4–6 [o]Josh. 15:7; 18:16

18 [p]2 Sam. 3:16; 16:5

19 [q]Josh. 2:4–6

20 [r]Josh. 2:3–5

21 [s]2 Sam. 17:15, 16

23 [t]2 Sam. 15:12 [u]2 Kin. 20:1 [v]Matt. 27:5 [2]Lit. *gave charge concerning his house*

24 [w]2 Sam. 2:8; 19:32

25 [x]1 Kin. 2:5, 32 [y]1 Chr. 2:16 [3]*Jether,* 1 Chr. 2:17 [4]So with MT, some LXX mss., Tg.; some LXX mss. *Ishmaelite* (cf. 1 Chr. 2:17)

27 [z]2 Sam. 10:1; 12:29

■ **17:12 we will fall on him as the dew falls on the ground.** Hushai's simile evokes a sense of the all-encompassing and power of a "blanketing" mass attack, and also tends, by its use of serene imagery, to lessen the sense of urgency and to suggest that the victory will be effortless.

■ **17:14 the LORD had purposed.** Though the Lord does not openly intervene, He is far from inactive.

to defeat the good advice. This is an answer to David's prayer in 15:31.

■ **17:15 Zadok and Abiathar.** In 15:27–29 David sent them, along with their sons Ahimaaz and Jonathan, back to Jerusalem in order to gather and convey information to him (15:35, 36). For general information on Zadok and Abiathar, see note on 8:17.

■ **17:16 plains of the wilderness.** See note on 15:28.

■ **17:17 Jonathan and Ahimaaz.** See note on v. 15.

En Rogel. A spring outside the walls of Jerusalem, probably on the south.

a female servant. Drawing water was a normal task for a young woman, and these visits to the spring would not be noticed.

■ **17:18 came to a man's house in Bahurim.** From David's recent trip through Bahurim, the site of Shimei's cursing (16:5–14), he would know who his supporters were. On Bahurim, see note on 3:16.

■ **17:23 his city.** See 15:12 and note.

hanged himself. Ahithophel's suicide was presumably prompted not only because his most recent advice was ignored, but also because he knew Absalom's chances of success had become slim. Neither could there be any reconciliation with David (16:21 and note).

■ **17:24 Mahanaim.** See note on 2:8.

■ **17:25 Amasa.** According to 1 Chr. 2:13–17, Amasa was David's nephew. This would make Amasa a cousin of both Absalom and Joab (2:18 note). Absalom appoints Amasa to replace Joab as commander of the army, and David will later do the same (19:13). Amasa's tenure will be short, however, for Joab was never slow in dealing with a competitor (20:9, 10).

Abigail. Amasa's mother was either David's sister (1 Chr. 2:15–17) or perhaps his half-sister since she is here described as "the daughter of Nahash, sister of Zeruiah."

Nahash. This is presumably a different Nahash than the Ammonite "Nahash from Rabbah" in v. 27.

■ **17:27 Shobi the son of Nahash.** Like Hanun, Shobi was a member of the Ammonite royal family (10:1, 2), but unlike Hanun he was friendly towards David and may even have been David's appointee to govern the city of Rabbah after its capture (12:26–31).

Rabbah of the people of Ammon. See note on 11:1.

Machir. See note on 9:4.

Barzillai. For more on this benefactor of David and David's attempt to reward him, see 19:31–39; 1 Kin. 2:7.

Rabbah of the people of Ammon, [a]Machir the son of Ammiel from Lo Debar, and [b]Barzillai the Gileadite from Rogelim, [28] brought beds and basins, earthen vessels and wheat, barley and flour, parched *grain* and beans, lentils and parched *seeds,* [29] honey and curds, sheep and cheese of the herd, for David and the people who *were* with him to eat. For they said, "The people are hungry and weary and thirsty [c]in the wilderness."

Absalom's Defeat and Death

18 And David [f]numbered the people who *were* with him, and [a]set captains of thousands and captains of hundreds over them. [2] Then David sent out one third of the people under the hand of Joab, [b]one third under the hand of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and one third under the hand of [c]Ittai the Gittite. And the king said to the people, "I also will surely go out with you myself."

[3] [d]But the people answered, "You shall not go out! For if we flee away, they will not care about us; nor if half of us die, will they care about us. But *you are* worth ten thousand of us now. For you are now more help to us in the city."

[4] Then the king said to them, "Whatever seems best to you I will do." So the king stood beside the gate, and all the people went out by hundreds and by thousands. [5] Now the king had commanded Joab, Abishai, and Ittai, saying, "*Deal* gently for my sake with the young man Absalom." [e]And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains orders concerning Absalom.

[6] So the people went out into the field of battle against Israel. And the battle was in the [f]woods of Ephraim. [7] The people of Israel were overthrown there before the servants of David, and a great slaughter of twenty thousand took place there that day. [8] For the battle there was scattered over the face of the whole countryside, and the woods devoured more people that day than the sword devoured.

[9] Then Absalom met the servants of David. Absalom rode on a mule. The mule went under the thick boughs of a great terebinth tree, and [g]his head caught in the terebinth; so he was left hanging between heaven and earth. And the mule which *was* under him went on. [10] Now a certain man saw *it* and told Joab, and said, "I just saw Absalom hanging in a terebinth tree!"

[11] So Joab said to the man who told him, "You just saw *him!* And why did you not strike him there to the ground? I would have given you ten *shekels* of silver and a belt."

[12] But the man said to Joab, "Though I were to receive a thousand *shekels* of silver in my hand, I would not raise my hand against the king's son. [h]For in our hearing the king commanded you and Abishai and Ittai, saying, [2]'Beware lest anyone *touch* the young man Absalom!' [13] Otherwise I would have dealt falsely against my own life. For there is nothing hidden from the king, and you yourself would have set yourself against *me.*"

[14] Then Joab said, "I cannot linger with you." And he took three spears in his hand and thrust them through Absalom's heart, while he was *still* alive in the midst of the terebinth tree. [15] And ten young men who bore Joab's armor surrounded Absalom, and struck and killed him.

[16] So Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing Israel. For Joab held back the people. [17] And they took Absalom and cast him into a large pit in the woods, and [i]laid a very large heap of stones over him. Then all Israel [j]fled, everyone to his tent.

27 [a]2 Sam. 9:4 [b]2 Sam. 19:31, 32; 1 Kin. 2:7

29 [c]2 Sam. 16:2, 14

CHAPTER 18

1 [a]Ex. 18:25; Num. 31:14; 1 Sam. 22:7 [f]Lit. *attended to*

2 [b]Judg. 7:16; 1 Sam. 11:11 [c]2 Sam. 15:19–22

3 [d]2 Sam. 21:17

5 [e]2 Sam. 18:12

6 [f]Josh. 17:15, 18; 2 Sam. 17:26

9 [g]2 Sam. 14:26

12 [h]2 Sam. 18:5 [2]Vss. *'Protect the young man Absalom for me!'*

17 [i]Deut. 21:20, 21; Josh. 7:26; 8:29 [j]2 Sam. 19:8; 20:1, 22

■ **18:1 thousands . . . hundreds.** These are standard military units, (Ex. 18:21; Num. 31:14; Deut. 1:15; 1 Sam. 8:12; 22:7; 29:2).

■ **18:2 one third.** It was a conventional practice to divide troops into three parts (1 Sam. 11:11).

Abishai. See note on 2:18.

■ **18:3 You shall not go out.** In response to David's emphatic pronouncement in v. 2, the troops are adamant that he must not accompany them. Perhaps they fear that David's feelings for Absalom (v. 5; 18:33—19:7) or simply his advancing age (21:15–17) might prove a liability in the campaign. They recognize, moreover, that the death of David would mean sure defeat, as Ahithophel had earlier pointed out to Absalom (17:2, 3).

■ **18:4 beside the gate.** That is, in Mahanaim (17:24, 27). See note on 19:8.

■ **18:6 the woods of Ephraim.** Though the territory of Ephraim was west of the Jordan, the present context implies that "the woods of Ephraim" were east of the Jordan. Ephraim may have taken some territory in the east.

■ **18:8 the woods devoured more.** The enemy would be lost in the unfamiliar, rough terrain. Some might take the opportunity to desert and others become easy prey for more experienced soldiers.

■ **18:9 rode on a mule.** Mules were the royal mount of choice (13:29; 1 Kin. 1:33).

his head caught in the terebinth. The text does not say that Absalom's famous hair was caught in the branches, but it seems likely (14:25, 26 and note).

■ **18:11 I would have given you.** Joab has no qualms about violating David's express command (v. 5).

■ **18:12, 13** The man obviously does not share Joab's cavalier attitude towards David's orders. Moreover, he astutely concludes that, if he killed Absalom, Joab would deny having any part in it and leave him to take the blame.

■ **18:16 blew the trumpet.** See note on 1 Sam. 13:3.

■ **18:17 very large heap of stones over him.** Such burial was often reserved for criminals or enemies (Josh. 7:26; 8:29).

18 Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and set up a [3]pillar for himself, which *is* in [k]the King's Valley. For he said, [l]"I have no son to keep my name in remembrance." He called the pillar after his own name. And to this day it is called Absalom's Monument.

David Hears of Absalom's Death

19 Then [m]Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said, "Let me run now and take the news to the king, how the LORD has [4]avenged him of his enemies."

20 And Joab said to him, "You shall not take the news this day, for you shall take the news another day. But today you shall take no news, because the king's son is dead." 21 Then Joab said to the Cushite, "Go, tell the king what you have seen." So the Cushite bowed himself to Joab and ran.

22 And Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said again to Joab, "But [5]whatever happens, please let me also run after the Cushite."

So Joab said, "Why will you run, my son, since you have no news ready?"

23 "But whatever happens," *he said,* "let me run."

So he said to him, "Run." Then Ahimaaz ran by way of the plain, and outran the Cushite.

24 Now David was sitting between the [n]two gates. And the watchman went up to the roof over the gate, to the wall, lifted his eyes and looked, and there was a man, running alone. 25 Then the watchman cried out and told the king. And the king said, "If he *is* alone, *there is* news in his mouth." And he came rapidly and drew near.

26 Then the watchman saw *another* man running, and the watchman called to the gatekeeper and said, "There is *another* man, running alone!"

And the king said, "He also brings news."

27 So the watchman said, [6]"I think the running of the first is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok."

And the king said, "He *is* a good man, and comes with [o]good news."

28 So Ahimaaz called out and said to the king, [7]"All is well!" Then he bowed down with his face to the earth before the king, and said, [p]"Blessed *be* the LORD your God, who has delivered up the men who raised their hand against my lord the king!"

29 The king said, "Is the young man Absalom safe?"

Ahimaaz answered, "When Joab sent the king's servant and *me* your servant, I saw a great tumult, but I did not know what *it was about.*"

30 And the king said, "Turn aside *and* stand here." So he turned aside and stood still.

31 Just then the Cushite came, and the Cushite said, "There is good news, my lord the king! For the LORD has avenged you this day of all those who rose against you."

32 And the king said to the Cushite, "Is the young man Absalom safe?"

So the Cushite answered, "May the enemies of my lord the king, and all who rise against you to do harm, be like *that* young man!"

David's Mourning for Absalom

33 Then the king was deeply moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept. And as he went, he said thus: [q]"O my son Absalom—my son, my son Absalom—if only I had died in your place! O Absalom my son, [r]my son!"

19 And Joab was told, "Behold, the king is weeping and [a]mourning for Absalom." 2 So the victory that day was *turned* into [b]mourning for all the people. For the people heard it

18 [k]Gen. 14:17 [l]2 Sam. 14:27 [3]*monument*

19 [m]2 Sam. 15:36; 17:17 [4]*vindicated*

22 [5]Lit. *be what may*

24 [n]Judg. 5:11; 2 Sam. 13:34; 2 Kin. 9:17

27 [o]1 Kin. 1:42 [6]Lit. *I see the running*

28 [p]2 Sam. 16:12 [7]*Peace be to you*

33 [q]2 Sam. 12:10 [r]2 Sam. 19:4

CHAPTER 19

1 [a]Jer. 14:2

2 [b]Esth. 4:3

■ **18:18 pillar for himself.** Compare Saul's action in 1 Sam. 15:12. In life Absalom had envisaged for himself a king's career and had erected a pillar of remembrance in his own honor; in death he was branded a traitor and buried under a pile of stones.

King's Valley. Probably near Jerusalem (Gen. 14:17).

no son. Absalom's three sons, mentioned but not named in 14:27, presumably were not yet born or were already deceased when Absalom erected his monument.

■ **18:19 Ahimaaz.** Ahimaaz has previously served as a messenger for David (15:36; 17:15–21) and wishes to do so again.

■ **18:20 You shall not take the news this day.** It can be inferred from v. 27 that there was a correlation between the messenger chosen and the content of the message. Joab's decsion not to send Ahimaaz may have been prompted by a desire not to appear as personally taking too much pleasure in Absalom's death.

■ **18:21 Cushite.** Cush is the area south of Egypt.

■ **18:25 alone, there is news in his mouth.** Were he fleeing the battlefield he would not likely be alone, nor would he be approaching so energetically and openly (compare 19:3, which speaks of "people who are ashamed . . . when they flee in battle" and so steal into the city).

■ **18:27 good man . . . good news.** See note on v. 20.

■ **18:29 I saw a great tumult, but I did not know what it was about.** Ahimaaz conceals his knowledge of Absalom's death (v. 20).

■ **18:32 like that young man.** The Cushite offers a conventionally phrased response (1 Sam. 25:26), which David readily understands (v. 33).

■ **18:33 O my son Absalom.** The awful repetition in David's outburst conveys his anguish at the loss of his son (19:4). In spite of all the harm that Absalom caused, David's grief blinds him to everything else (19:5 note).

said that day, "The king is grieved for his son." 3 And the people [f]stole back [c]into the city that day, as people who are ashamed steal away when they flee in battle. 4 But the king [d]covered his face, and the king cried out with a loud voice, [e]"O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!"

5 Then [f]Joab came into the house to the king, and said, "Today you have disgraced all your servants who today have saved your life, the lives of your sons and daughters, the lives of your wives and the lives of your concubines, 6 in that you love your enemies and hate your friends. For you have declared today that you [2]regard neither princes nor servants; for today I perceive that if Absalom had lived and all of us had died today, then it would have pleased you well. 7 Now therefore, arise, go out and speak [3]comfort to your servants. For I swear by the LORD, if you do not go out, not one will stay with you this night. And that will be worse for you than all the evil that has befallen you from your youth until now." 8 Then the king arose and sat in the [g]gate. And they told all the people, saying, "There is the king, sitting in the gate." So all the people came before the king.

For everyone of Israel had [h]fled to his tent.

David Returns to Jerusalem

9 Now all the people were in a dispute throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, "The king saved us from the hand of our [i]enemies, he delivered us from the hand of the [j]Philistines, and now he has [k]fled from the land because of Absalom. 10 But Absalom, whom we anointed over us, has died in battle. Now therefore, why do you say nothing about bringing back the king?"

11 So King David sent to [l]Zadok and Abiathar the priests, saying, "Speak to the elders of Judah, saying, 'Why are you the last to bring the king back to his house, since the words of all Israel have come to the king, to his *very* house? 12 You *are* [m]my brethren, you *are* [m]my bone and my flesh. Why then are you the last to bring back the king?' 13 [n]And say to Amasa, '*Are* you not my bone and my flesh? [o]God do so to me, and more also, if you are not commander of the army before me [4]continually in place of Joab.' " 14 So he swayed the hearts of all the men of Judah, [p]just as *the heart of* one man, so that they sent *this word* to the king: "Return, you and all your servants!"

15 Then the king returned and came to the Jordan. And Judah came to [q]Gilgal, to go to meet the king, to escort the king [r]across the Jordan. 16 And [s]Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite, who *was* from Bahurim, hurried and came down with the men of Judah to meet King David. 17 *There were* a thousand men of [t]Benjamin with him, and [u]Ziba the servant of the house of Saul, and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him; and they went over the Jordan before the king. 18 Then a ferryboat went across to carry over the king's household, and to do what he thought good.

David's Mercy to Shimei

Now Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king when he had crossed the Jordan. 19 Then he said to the king, [v]"Do not let my lord [5]impute iniquity to me, or remember what [w]wrong your servant did on the day that my lord the king left Jerusalem, that the king should [x]take *it* to heart. 20 For I, your servant, know that I have sinned. Therefore here I am, the first to come today of all [y]the house of Joseph to go down to meet my lord the king."

3 [c]2 Sam. 17:24, 27; 19:32 [1]*went by stealth*
4 [d]2 Sam. 15:30 [e]2 Sam. 18:33
5 [f]2 Sam. 18:14
6 [2]*have no respect for*
7 [3]Lit. *to the heart of*
8 [g]2 Sam. 15:2; 18:24 [h]2 Sam. 18:17
9 [i]2 Sam. 8:1–14 [j]2 Sam. 3:18 [k]2 Sam. 15:14
11 [l]2 Sam. 15:24
12 [m]2 Sam. 5:1; 1 Chr. 11:1
13 [n]2 Sam. 17:25; 1 Chr. 2:17 [o]Ruth 1:17 [4]*permanently*
14 [p]Judg. 20:1
15 [q]Josh. 5:9; 1 Sam. 11:14, 15 [r]2 Sam. 17:22
16 [s]2 Sam. 16:5; 1 Kin. 2:8
17 [t]2 Sam. 3:19; 1 Kin. 12:21 [u]2 Sam. 9:2, 10; 16:1, 2
19 [v]1 Sam. 22:15 [w]2 Sam. 16:5, 6 [x]2 Sam. 13:33 [5]*charge me with iniquity*
20 [y]Judg. 1:22; 1 Kin. 11:28

■ **19:5 you have disgraced all your servants.** What might, under different circumstances, be an understandable display of grief is totally unacceptable here. Joab forcefully declares to David the demoralizing effect his behavior is having on those who have just saved his life. If the actions of later usurpers is any guide, Absalom's success could have cost the lives of David and his whole household (1 Kin. 15:29; 16:11, 12; 2 Kin. 10:6, 7, 17).

■ **19:7 not one will stay with you.** Joab practically threatens to lead a rebellion himself if David does not correct his behavior and show his troops proper honor.

■ **19:8 the king, sitting in the gate.** Heeding Joab's words, David takes his place in the gate of Mahanaim (18:4 note), the same spot where he had earlier given orders concerning the treatment of Absalom (18:5). The two gateway scenes provide a frame for the account of the death of Absalom.

■ **19:13 Amasa.** See note on 17:25.

commander of the army . . . in place of Joab. David's promotion of Amasa over Joab appears to be politically astute and magnanimous, since Amasa had sided with Absalom and was deserving of a traitor's death. But it turned out to be a mistake (20:8–10).

■ **19:15 Gilgal.** See 1 Sam. 13:4 note.

■ **19:16 Shimei the son of Gera.** See 16:5–14 and notes.

Bahurim. See note on 3:16.

■ **19:20 house of Joseph.** Strictly speaking, the "house of Joseph" would include only the descendants of Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh (Gen. 48:5, 20; Josh. 17:17). The expression is frequently used, however, to describe all the northern tribes (Josh. 18:5; 1 Kin. 11:28; Amos 5:6; Zech. 10:6). In the present context, even Benjamin, Shimei's tribe, is included.

21 But Abishai the son of Zeruiah answered and said, "Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, [z]because he [a]cursed the LORD's anointed?"

22 And David said, [b]"What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah, that you should be adversaries to me today? [c]Shall any man be put to death today in Israel? For do I not know that today I *am* king over Israel?" 23 Therefore [d]the king said to Shimei, "You shall not die." And the king swore to him.

David and Mephibosheth Meet

24 Now [e]Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king. And he had not cared for his feet, nor trimmed his mustache, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he returned in peace. 25 So it was, when he had come to Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said to him, [f]"Why did you not go with me, Mephibosheth?"

26 And he answered, "My lord, O king, my servant deceived me. For your servant said, 'I will saddle a donkey for myself, that I may ride on it and go to the king,' because your servant *is* lame. 27 And [g]he has slandered your servant to my lord the king, [h]but my lord the king *is* like the angel of God. Therefore do *what is* good in your eyes. 28 For all my father's house were but dead men before my lord the king; [i]yet you set your servant among those who eat at your own table. Therefore what right have I still to [6]cry out anymore to the king?"

29 So the king said to him, "Why do you speak anymore of your matters? I have said, 'You and Ziba divide the land.' "

30 Then Mephibosheth said to the king, "Rather, let him take it all, inasmuch as my lord the king has come back in peace to his own house."

David's Kindness to Barzillai

31 And [j]Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim and went across the Jordan with the king, to escort him across the Jordan. 32 Now Barzillai was a very aged man, eighty years old. And [k]he had provided the king with supplies while he stayed at Mahanaim, for he *was* a very rich man. 33 And the king said to Barzillai, "Come across with me, and I will provide for you while you are with me in Jerusalem."

34 But Barzillai said to the king, "How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem? 35 I *am* today [l]eighty years old. Can I discern between the good and bad? Can your servant taste what I eat or what I drink? Can I hear any longer the voice of singing men and singing women? Why then should your servant be a further burden to my lord the king? 36 Your servant will go a little way across the Jordan with the king. And why should the king repay me *with* such a reward? 37 Please let your servant turn back again, that I may die in my own city, near the grave of my father and mother. But here is your servant [m]Chimham; let him cross over with my lord the king, and do for him what seems good to you."

38 And the king answered, "Chimham shall cross over with me, and I will do for him what seems good to you. Now whatever you request of me, I will do for you." 39 Then all the people went over the Jordan. And when the king had crossed over, the king [n]kissed Barzillai and blessed him, and he returned to his own place.

The Quarrel About the King

40 Now the king went on to Gilgal, and [7]Chimham went on with him. And all the people of Judah escorted the king, and also half the people of Israel. 41 Just then all the men of Israel came to the king, and said to the king, "Why have our brethren, the men of Judah, stolen you away and [o]brought the king, his household, and all David's men with him across the Jordan?"

42 So all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, "Because the king *is* [p]a close relative of

21 [z][Ex. 22:28] [a][1 Sam. 26:9]

22 [b]2 Sam. 3:39; 16:10 [c]1 Sam. 11:13

23 [d]1 Kin. 2:8, 9, 37, 46

24 [e]2 Sam. 9:6; 21:7

25 [f]2 Sam. 16:17

27 [g]2 Sam. 16:3, 4 [h]2 Sam. 14:17, 20

28 [i]2 Sam. 9:7–13 [6]*complain*

31 [j]2 Sam. 17:27–29; 1 Kin. 2:7

32 [k]2 Sam. 17:27–29

35 [l]Ps. 90:10

37 [m]2 Sam. 19:40; Jer. 41:17

39 [n]Gen. 31:55; Ruth 1:14; 2 Sam. 14:33

40 [7]MT *Chimhan*

41 [o]2 Sam. 19:15

42 [p]2 Sam. 19:12

■ **19:21 cursed the LORD's anointed.** This was a grave offense. See note on 1 Sam. 2:10.

■ **19:22 Shall any man be put to death today in Israel.** For a similar sentiment under similar circumstances, see 1 Sam. 11:13.

■ **19:23 You shall not die.** Although David will remember his oath, he will not forget Shimei's offense, and on his deathbed will remind Solomon of it (1 Kin. 2:8, 9).

■ **19:24 Mephibosheth.** See note on 4:4.

had not cared for his feet. Mephibosheth's neglect of personal hygiene signified his distress over David's predicament and may also have been intended to serve as evidence of his loyalty, when and if David should return.

■ **19:27 angel of God.** See note on 14:17.

■ **19:29 divide the land.** David either is unwilling to call Ziba to account for his betrayal or is uncertain of the truth of Mephibosheth's story, so he settles for a compromise arrangement.

■ **19:37 Chimham.** In the light of the circumstances and of David's words in 1 Kin. 2:7, it is reasonable to assume that Chimham was a son of Barzillai. The later place name "habitation of Chimham, which is near Bethlehem" (Jer. 41:17) may suggest that a land grant was part of Chimham's reward.

ours. Why then are you angry over this matter? Have we ever eaten at the king's *expense?* Or has he given us any gift?"

43 And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, and said, "We have [q]ten shares in the king; therefore we also have more *right* to David than you. Why then do you despise us—were we not the first to advise bringing back our king?"

Yet [r]the words of the men of Judah were [s]fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.

The Rebellion of Sheba

20 And there happened to be there a [t]rebel, whose name *was* Sheba the son of Bichri, a Benjamite. And he blew a trumpet, and said:

[a]"We have no share in David,
Nor do we have inheritance in the son of Jesse;
[b]Every man to his tents, O Israel!"

2 So every man of Israel deserted David, *and* followed Sheba the son of Bichri. But the [c]men of Judah, from the Jordan as far as Jerusalem, remained loyal to their king.

3 Now David came to his house at Jerusalem. And the king took the ten women, [d]his concubines whom he had left to keep the house, and put them in seclusion and supported them, but did not go in to them. So they were shut up to the day of their death, living in widowhood.

4 And the king said to Amasa, [e]"Assemble the men of Judah for me within three days, and be present here yourself." 5 So Amasa went to assemble *the men of* Judah. But he delayed longer than the set time which David had appointed him. 6 And David said to [f]Abishai, "Now Sheba the son of Bichri will do us more harm than Absalom. Take [g]your lord's servants and pursue him, lest he find for himself fortified cities, and escape us." 7 So Joab's men, with the [h]Cherethites, the Pelethites, and [i]all the mighty men, went out after him. And they went out of Jerusalem to pursue Sheba the son of Bichri. 8 When they *were* at the large stone which *is* in Gibeon, Amasa came before them. Now Joab was dressed in battle armor; on it was a belt *with* a sword fastened in its sheath at his hips; and as he was going forward, it fell out. 9 Then Joab said to Amasa, "*Are* you in health, my brother?" [j]And Joab took Amasa by the beard with his right hand to kiss him. 10 But Amasa did not notice the sword that *was* in Joab's hand. And [k]he struck him with it [l]in the stomach, and his entrails poured out on the ground; and he did not *strike* him again. Thus he died.

Then Joab and Abishai his brother pursued Sheba the son of Bichri. 11 Meanwhile one of

43 [q]1 Kin. 11:30, 31 [r]Judg. 8:1; 12:1 [s]*harsher*

CHAPTER 20

1 [a]2 Sam. 19:43; 1 Kin. 12:16 [b]1 Sam. 13:2; 2 Sam. 18:17; 2 Chr. 10:16 [t]Lit. *man of Belial*

2 [c]2 Sam. 19:14

3 [d]2 Sam. 15:16; 16:21, 22

4 [e]2 Sam. 17:25; 19:13

6 [f]2 Sam. 21:17 [g]2 Sam. 11:11; 1 Kin. 1:33

7 [h]2 Sam. 8:18; 1 Kin. 1:38, 44 [i]2 Sam. 15:18

9 [j]Matt. 26:49; Luke 22:47

10 [k]2 Sam. 3:27; 1 Kin. 2:5 [l]2 Sam. 2:23

■ **19:43 ten shares in the king.** Whereas there are ten northern tribes, there are only two southern tribes, Judah and Simeon. The northerners felt slighted.

you despise us. The north-south hostility so much in evidence will fuel Sheba's revolt (ch. 20) and eventually bring about the division of the kingdom (1 Kin. 12). See note on 1 Sam. 11:8.

■ **20:1 rebel.** See text note and note on 1 Sam. 2:12, where the same Hebrew word is rendered "corrupt."

Sheba the son of Bichri, a Benjamite. From the same tribe as Saul, Sheba may even have been his relative.

no share in David. See note on 19:43. Although the aggressive behavior of the men of Judah was certainly a factor, residual allegiance to Saul must have also played a part in the mass withdrawal of support from David among the northern tribes.

Every man to his tents. This archaic turn of phrase should not be taken to imply that the Israelites at this stage in their history were still tent-dwellers. See Judg. 19:9 where the NKJV renders the Hebrew word for "tent" simply as "home."

■ **20:3 the ten women, his concubines.** See 15:16; notes on 16:21, 22.

■ **20:4 Amasa.** See notes on 17:25; 19:13.

three days. This was a limited, though not impossible, amount of time for the task set by David.

■ **20:5 he delayed longer.** The reason for Amasa's delay is not stated. Perhaps he did not entirely support David's cause or, alternatively, was unable to gain an immediate following among the Judahites, whose loyalties may still have been with Joab (v. 11 and note).

■ **20:6 said to Abishai.** Though Amasa is proving unsatisfactory, David is still unwilling to reinstate Joab (19:13), so he addresses Joab's brother Abishai instead. By the end of the episode, however, Joab will have retaken his former position, regardless of David's wishes (vv. 13, 23).

your lord's servants. They are called "Joab's men" in v. 7.

■ **20:7 the Cherethites, the Pelethites.** See note on 1 Sam. 30:14.

mighty men. They are presumably the same as those listed in 23:8–39.

■ **20:8 the large stone.** This was possibly a well-known landmark, on the order of those mentioned elsewhere in Samuel (15:17; 1 Sam. 19:22; 20:19). The large stone may have been an altar (cf. 1 Sam. 14:33, 34), and some have suggested a link with the "great high place" in Gibeon (1 Kin. 3:4).

Gibeon. See note on 2:12.

it fell out. Whether the sword fell to the ground, or into the folds of Joab's tunic (possibly girded up for marching), is not stated. See note on v. 10.

■ **20:9 took Amasa by the beard.** This was a normal gesture in administering the kiss of greeting and was not likely to arouse suspicion.

■ **20:10 the sword that was in Joab's hand.** It is unclear whether this is the sword that had fallen and so was retrieved, either from the ground or the folds of Joab's tunic (v. 8 note), or a second weapon that had been concealed on Joab's person (in which case the dropped sword was a decoy). At any rate, Joab is able to catch Amasa completely off guard and kill him, as he had killed Abner (3:27).

■ **20:11 Whoever favors Joab . . . David.** Two things might be inferred from this summons. Joab continued to enjoy the personal loyalty of

Joab's men stood near Amasa, and said, "Whoever favors Joab and whoever *is* for David—follow Joab!" 12 But Amasa wallowed in *his* blood in the middle of the highway. And when the man saw that all the people stood still, he moved Amasa from the highway to the field and threw a garment over him, when he saw that everyone who came upon him halted. 13 When he was removed from the highway, all the people went on after Joab to pursue Sheba the son of Bichri.

14 And he went through all the tribes of Israel to [m]Abel and Beth Maachah and all the Berites. So they were gathered together and also went after [2]*Sheba.* 15 Then they came and besieged him in Abel of Beth Maachah; and they [n]cast up a siege mound against the city, and it stood by the rampart. And all the people who *were* with Joab battered the wall to throw it down.

16 Then a wise woman cried out from the city, "Hear, hear! Please say to Joab, 'Come nearby, that I may speak with you.' " 17 When he had come near to her, the woman said, "*Are* you Joab?"

He answered, "I *am.*"

Then she said to him, "Hear the words of your maidservant."

And he answered, "I am listening."

18 So she spoke, saying, "They used to talk in former times, saying, 'They shall surely seek *guidance* at Abel,' and so they would end *disputes.* 19 I *am among the* peaceable *and* faithful in Israel. You seek to destroy a city and a mother in Israel. Why would you swallow up [o]the inheritance of the LORD?"

20 And Joab answered and said, "Far be it, far be it from me, that I should swallow up or destroy! 21 That *is* not so. But a man from the mountains of Ephraim, Sheba the son of Bichri by name, has raised his hand against the king, against David. Deliver him only, and I will depart from the city."

So the woman said to Joab, "Watch, his head will be thrown to you over the wall." 22 Then the woman [p]in her wisdom went to all the people. And they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri, and threw *it* out to Joab. Then he blew a trumpet, and they withdrew from the city, every man to his tent. So Joab returned to the king at Jerusalem.

David's Government Officers

23 And [q]Joab *was* over all the army of Israel; Benaiah the son of Jehoiada *was* over the Cherethites and the Pelethites; 24 Adoram *was* [r]in charge of revenue; [s]Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud *was* recorder; 25 Sheva *was* scribe; [t]Zadok and Abiathar *were* the priests; 26 [u]and Ira the Jairite was [3]a chief minister under David.

14 [m]1 Kin. 15:20; 2 Kin. 15:29; 2 Chr. 16:4 [2]Lit. *him*

15 [n]2 Kin. 19:32; Ezek. 4:2

19 [o]1 Sam. 26:19; 2 Sam. 14:16; 21:3

22 [p]2 Sam. 20:16; [Eccl. 9:13–16]

23 [q]2 Sam. 8:16–18; 1 Kin. 4:3–6

24 [r]1 Kin. 4:6 [s]2 Sam. 8:16; 1 Kin. 4:3

25 [t]2 Sam. 8:17; 1 Kin. 4:4

26 [u]2 Sam. 8:18 [3]Or *David's priest*

at least some of the troops, despite his having been ousted by David (19:13), and Amasa's loyalty to David was not beyond question. See note on v. 5.

■ **20:14 Abel and Beth Maachah.** This city is mentioned also in 1 Kin. 15:20; 2 Kin. 15:29. On the kingdom of Maacah, see 10:6 and note. Abel is usually identified with a site about twelve miles north of Lake Huleh and four miles west of Dan.

Berites. This name occurs nowhere else in the Old Testament, and some have suggested reading "Bichrites" (cf. "Sheba son of Bichri" in v. 1).

■ **20:19 a city and a mother in Israel.** The phrase "a mother in Israel" is one of veneration and honor (Judg. 5:7). This "peaceable and faithful" city deserves to be treated with respect rather than destroyed as a rebellious traitor.

the inheritance of the LORD. That is, Israel—its land and its people, as a whole and in its parts (14:16; 21:3; 1 Sam. 10:1 and note; 26:19).

■ **20:21 mountains of Ephraim.** This name may apply to a geographical area which extended into Benjamite territory, or else Sheba, although of Benjamite ancestry (v. 1), was living in Ephraim.

■ **20:23–26** This summary of David's officers parallels the list in 8:15–18, with several differences. The opening formula regarding "David's reign" (8:15) is lacking, as is any mention of David's sons (cf. 8:18). Seraiah (8:17) is here called Sheva (v. 25), and two new names are added to the list: Adoram and Ira (vv. 24, 26). 1 Kin. 4:1–6 indicates that many of David's officers continued in their duties during at least the early part of Solomon's reign.

■ **20:23 Joab was over all the army of Israel.** See note on v. 6. Having regained his former position, apparently without protest from David, Joab retained it until he was executed by Solomon for treason (1 Kin. 1:7; 2:22, 28–35).

Benaiah . . . the Cherethites and the Pelethites. See 1 Sam. 30:14 note.

■ **20:24 Adoram.** After serving not only under David but also under Solomon (1 Kin. 4:6 note), Adoram will be stoned by "all Israel" during the early days of King Rehoboam (1 Kin. 12:18).

revenue. The Hebrew word translated "revenue" here and in 1 Kin. 12:18 is used to describe the hard labor imposed on subjugated peoples like the Israelites in Egypt (Ex. 1:11), or the surviving Canaanites after the Israelite conquest (Josh. 16:10; Judg. 1:28). It also describes the labor done by conscripts from Israel itself on the building projects of Solomon (1 Kin. 9:15). Neither Adoram nor forced laborers are included in the first summary of David's government (8:15–18), which may suggest that forced labor was not introduced until later on in David's reign (see perhaps 12:31).

Jehoshaphat . . . recorder. That is, perhaps a "royal herald" (see 8:16 note).

■ **20:25 Sheva was scribe.** He was a high ranking official, perhaps akin to "secretary of state" (see note on 8:17).

■ **20:26 Ira.** Ira is not mentioned elsewhere in the Old Testament, unless he is "Ira son of Ikkesh" (23:26) or "Ira the Ithrite" (23:38), both listed among David's mighty men (23:24–39).

Jairite. Some have attempted to associate "Ira the Jairite" with the Levitical city of "Jattir" (Josh. 21:14). Others refer to "Jair, the son of Manasseh" (Num. 32:41; Deut. 3:14) or to "Jair, a Gileadite" (Judg. 10:3).

CHAPTER 21

1 [a]Num. 27:21; 2 Sam. 5:19 [t]Lit. *house of bloodshed*

2 [b]Josh. 9:3, 15–20 [c][Ex. 34:11–16]

3 [d]1 Sam. 26:19; 2 Sam. 20:19

6 [e]Num. 25:4 [f]1 Sam. 10:26 [g]1 Sam. 10:24; [Hos. 13:11]

7 [h]2 Sam. 4:4; 9:10 [i]1 Sam. 18:3; 20:12–17; 23:18; 2 Sam. 9:1–7

8 [j]2 Sam. 3:7 [2]*Merab,* 1 Sam. 18:19; 25:44; 2 Sam. 3:14; 6:23 [3]Lit. *bore to Adriel*

9 [k]2 Sam. 6:17

10 [l]2 Sam. 3:7; 21:8 [m]Deut. 21:23

12 [n]1 Sam. 31:11–13 [o]1 Sam. 31:8 [4]*Beth Shean,* Josh. 17:11

14 [p]Josh. 18:28 [q]Josh. 7:26; 2 Sam. 24:25

David Avenges the Gibeonites

21 Now there was a famine in the days of David for three years, year after year; and David [a]inquired of the LORD. And the LORD answered, "*It is* because of Saul and *his* [t]bloodthirsty house, because he killed the Gibeonites." 2 So the king called the Gibeonites and spoke to them. Now the Gibeonites *were* not of the children of Israel, but [b]of the remnant of the Amorites; the children of Israel had sworn protection to them, but Saul had sought to kill them [c]in his zeal for the children of Israel and Judah.

3 Therefore David said to the Gibeonites, "What shall I do for you? And with what shall I make atonement, that you may bless [d]the inheritance of the LORD?"

4 And the Gibeonites said to him, "We will have no silver or gold from Saul or from his house, nor shall you kill any man in Israel for us."

So he said, "Whatever you say, I will do for you."

5 Then they answered the king, "As for the man who consumed us and plotted against us, *that* we should be destroyed from remaining in any of the territories of Israel, 6 let seven men of his descendants be delivered [e]to us, and we will hang them before the LORD [f]in Gibeah of Saul, [g]*whom* the LORD chose."

And the king said, "I will give *them.*"

7 But the king spared [h]Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, because of [i]the LORD's oath that *was* between them, between David and Jonathan the son of Saul. 8 So the king took Armoni and Mephibosheth, the two sons of [j]Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, whom she bore to Saul, and the five sons of [2]Michal the daughter of Saul, whom she [3]brought up for Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholathite; 9 and he delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites, and they hanged them on the hill [k]before the LORD. So they fell, *all* seven together, and were put to death in the days of harvest, in the first *days,* in the beginning of barley harvest.

10 Now [l]Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth and spread it for herself on the rock, [m]from the beginning of harvest until the late rains poured on them from heaven. And she did not allow the birds of the air to rest on them by day nor the beasts of the field by night.

11 And David was told what Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, the concubine of Saul, had done. 12 Then David went and took the bones of Saul, and the bones of Jonathan his son, from the men of [n]Jabesh Gilead who had stolen them from the street of [4]Beth Shan, where the [o]Philistines had hung them up, after the Philistines had struck down Saul in Gilboa. 13 So he brought up the bones of Saul and the bones of Jonathan his son from there; and they gathered the bones of those who had been hanged. 14 They buried the bones of Saul and Jonathan his son in the country of Benjamin in [p]Zelah, in the tomb of Kish his father. So they performed all that the king commanded. And after that [q]God heeded the prayer for the land.

■ **21:1 there was a famine.** Not uncommon in the land of Canaan (Gen. 12:10; 26:1; Ruth 1:1), famine is often recognized in the Bible as a manifestation of God's judgment (e.g., 24:13; Deut. 32:24; 2 Kin. 8:1; Ps. 105:16; Is. 14:30; Jer. 11:22; Ezek. 14:21; Rev. 6:8).

in the days of David. The time frame is stated quite generally. Perhaps the famine should be placed about the time that Mephibosheth came to David's court (v. 7; ch. 9) and before Absalom's rebellion (16:5 note), but this is uncertain.

Saul and his bloodthirsty house. Saul had tried to annihilate the Gibeonites (v. 2; 4:3 note), though obviously with only partial success.

■ **21:2 the children of Israel had sworn.** Israel's treaty with the Gibeonites is recorded in Josh. 9. Although Israel had been remiss in entering into such a treaty without inquiring of the Lord (Josh. 9:14), they still felt obliged to honor their word (Josh. 9:19).

in his zeal for the children of Israel and Judah. Saul's attempt to annihilate the Gibeonites was motivated by nationalistic, not religious, zeal. He may have wanted to rid his home tribe, Benjamin, of unwanted Amorite survivors. For Saul's ancestral association with Gibeon, see 1 Chr. 9:35–39.

■ **21:3 the inheritance of the LORD.** See note on 20:19.

■ **21:6 seven.** This number symbolizes completeness, not the number of Gibeonites slain by Saul.

Gibeah of Saul, whom the LORD chose. Some scholars think the text should read "Gibeon—on the mountain of the LORD"; cf. "on the hill before the LORD" in v. 9 and "the great high place" at Gibeon in 1 Kin. 3:4.

■ **21:7 spared Mephibosheth.** See note on 9:1; ch. 9.

the LORD's oath . . . between David and Jonathan. See notes on 1 Sam. 18:3; 20:13.

■ **21:8 Mephibosheth.** A son of Saul, not to be confused with Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan (4:4).

Rizpah. See vv. 10, 11; 3:7.

Michal . . . Adriel. "Merab" should be read in place of "Michal," as in some Hebrew and also Greek manuscripts (see text note; 1 Sam. 18:19). Adriel's father, Barzillai the Meholathite, is not to be confused with the Gileadite of the same name (17:27; 19:31; 1 Kin. 2:7).

■ **21:9 in the beginning of barley harvest.** That is, in April.

■ **21:10 she did not allow the birds of the air to rest on them.** It was considered a disgrace when the bodies of the slain were allowed to become carrion for birds and beasts (Deut. 28:26; 1 Sam. 17:44, 46; Ps. 79:2; Is. 18:6; Jer. 7:33; 16:4). Rizpah guarded the bodies until they could be buried (vv. 11–14).

■ **21:11–14** David is prompted by Rizpah's vigil to gather the bones of the recently slain (so the Septuagint Greek translation of v. 13) and of Saul and Jonathan as well, and to give them a proper burial in the tomb of Kish, Saul's father.

■ **21:14 God heeded the prayer for the land.** An almost identical statement occurs in 24:25 after the lifting of the plague brought on by David's census.

Philistine Giants Destroyed

15 When the Philistines were at war again with Israel, David and his servants with him went
down and fought against the Philistines; and David grew faint. 16 Then Ishbi-Benob, who *was*
one of the sons of [5]the [r]giant, the weight of whose bronze spear *was* three hundred *shekels,* who
was bearing a new *sword,* thought he could kill David. 17 But [s]Abishai the son of Zeruiah came
to his aid, and struck the Philistine and killed him. Then the men of David swore to him, saying,
[t]"You shall go out no more with us to battle, lest you quench the [u]lamp of Israel."

18 [v]Now it happened afterward that there was again a battle with the Philistines at Gob. Then
[w]Sibbechai the Hushathite killed [6]Saph, who *was* one of the sons of [7]the giant. 19 Again there
was war at Gob with the Philistines, where [x]Elhanan the son of [8]Jaare-Oregim the Bethlehemite
killed [y]*the brother of* Goliath the Gittite, the shaft of whose spear *was* like a weaver's beam.

20 Yet again [z]there was war at Gath, where there was a man of *great* stature, who had six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, twenty-four in number; and he also was born to [9]the
giant. 21 So when he [a]defied Israel, Jonathan the son of [1]Shimea, David's brother, killed him.

22 [b]These four were born to [2]the giant in Gath, and fell by the hand of David and by the hand
of his servants.

Praise for God's Deliverance

22 Then David [a]spoke to the LORD the words of this song, on the day when the LORD had
[b]delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul. 2 And he
[c]said:

[d]"The LORD *is* my rock and my [e]fortress and my deliverer;
3 The God of my strength, [f]in whom I will trust;
My [g]shield and the [h]horn[1] of my salvation,
My [i]stronghold and my [j]refuge;
My Savior, You save me from violence.
4 I will call upon the LORD, *who is worthy* to be praised;
So shall I be saved from my enemies.

5 "When the waves of death surrounded me,
The floods of ungodliness [2]made me afraid.
6 The [k]sorrows of Sheol surrounded me;
The snares of death confronted me.

16 [r]2 Sam. 21:18–22 [5]Or *Rapha*

17 [s]2 Sam. 20:6–10 [t]2 Sam. 18:3 [u]1 Kin. 11:36

18 [v]1 Chr. 20:4–8 [w]1 Chr. 11:29; 27:11 [6]*Sippai,* 1 Chr. 20:4 [7]Or *Rapha*

19 [x]2 Sam. 23:24 [y]1 Chr. 20:5 [8]*Jair,* 1 Chr. 20:5

20 [z]1 Chr. 20:6 [9]Or *Rapha*

21 [a]1 Sam. 17:10 [1]*Shammah,* 1 Sam. 16:9 and elsewhere

22 [b]1 Chr. 20:8 [2]Or *Rapha*

CHAPTER 22

1 [a]Ex. 15:1 [b]Ps. 18:title; 34:19

2 [c]Ps. 18 [d]Deut. 32:4 [e]Ps. 91:2

3 [f]Heb. 2:13 [g]Gen. 15:1 [h]Luke 1:69 [i]Prov. 18:10 [j]Ps. 9:9; 46:1, 7, 11 [1]Strength

5 [2]Or *overwhelmed*

6 [k]Ps. 116:3

■ **21:15–22** These verses describe briefly the defeat of four Philistine champions at the hands of David and his men. While it is difficult to locate these events chronologically with any precision, their literary placement provides a fitting preface to David's song of praise (ch. 22).

■ **21:16 sons of the giant.** "Rapha" (see text note) is probably best understood as a collective noun for the Rephaim, pre-Israelite inhabitants of the land of Canaan (Gen. 14:5; 15:20) noted for their gigantic size (Deut. 2:20; 3:11; Josh. 17:15). The term "Rephaim" is sometimes applied to such peoples as the Emim, Zamzummim, and Anakim (Deut. 2:10, 11, 20, 21), all distinguished for their size and strength. According to Josh. 11:21, 22, the Anakim were driven from the hill country of Israel and Judah by Joshua, but remained in the Philistine cities of Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod.

three hundred shekels. That is, just over seven pounds. Goliath's spearhead had weighed twice as much (1 Sam. 17:7).

■ **21:17 Abishai.** See note on 2:18.

lamp of Israel. This metaphor expresses the belief that Israel's hope and promise of blessing resided in David and his house (1 Sam. 3:3 note).

■ **21:18 giant.** See note on v. 16.

■ **21:19 Elhanan . . . killed the brother of Goliath.** The supplied words "the brother of" are not present in the Hebrew text or in the Septuagint, the early Greek translation of the Old Testament. However, the corresponding verse in 1 Chr. 20:5 does contain the words "brother of." It has been suggested that "Elhanan" is another name for David (as "Jedidah" for Solomon, 2 Sam. 12:24, 25). This would make 2 Sam. say that Elhanan (David) killed Goliath, but it makes 1 Chr. 20:5 difficult, unless Elhanan (David) killed both Goliath and Lahmi. Neither Samuel nor Chronicles supposes that anyone except David killed Goliath, and it remains unclear why they introduce the name Elhanan in two verses.

■ **21:20 giant.** See note on v. 16.

■ **21:22 by the hand of David and . . . his servants.** David was directly involved in the encounter with Ishbi-Benob (vv. 16, 17).

■ **22:1 this song.** David's song of praise (which appears also in Ps. 18, with minor variations), together with the prayer of Hannah, forms a fitting frame for the books of 1 and 2 Samuel (1 Sam. 2:1–10 note). This song focuses on the Lord's deliverance of David. It may be outlined as follows: introductory praise of God as "Savior" (vv. 2–4); the psalmist's distress (vv. 5, 6); the psalmist's petition (v. 7); the Lord's response in cosmic demonstration (vv. 8–16) and personal rescue (vv. 17–20); the psalmist's innocence (vv. 21–25) and the Lord's faithfulness (vv. 26–30); the Lord's deliverance (vv. 31–37) and the psalmist's resultant victories (vv. 38–46); concluding praise of God as Savior (vv. 47–51). Ps. 144, also ascribed to David, shows many similarities in theme and language.

all his enemies. See 8:1–14; cf. 5:8; 7:1, 9, 11; 18:32.

from the hand of Saul. See 12:7; 1 Sam. 18—31 (especially 18:9–11; 19:2, 10–11, 15–16).

■ **22:2 rock.** See also vv. 32, 47; note on 1 Sam. 2:2.

■ **22:3 horn.** See notes on 1 Sam. 2:1, 10.

■ **22:5 waves . . . floods.** See v. 17. The image of overflowing water recurs frequently in Old Testament poetry as a symbol of distress and destruction (Ps. 32:6; 69:1, 2, 14; 144:7; Is. 43:2; Jon. 2:5).

7 In my distress [l]I called upon the LORD,
And cried out to my God;
He [m]heard my voice from His temple,
And my cry *entered* His ears.

8 "Then [n]the earth shook and trembled;
[o]The foundations of [3]heaven quaked and were shaken,
Because He was angry.
9 Smoke went up from His nostrils,
And devouring [p]fire from His mouth;
Coals were kindled by it.
10 He [q]bowed the heavens also, and came down
With [r]darkness under His feet.
11 He rode upon a cherub, and flew;
And He [4]was seen [s]upon the wings of the wind.
12 He made [t]darkness canopies around Him,
Dark waters *and* thick clouds of the skies.
13 From the brightness before Him
Coals of fire were kindled.

14 "The LORD [u]thundered from heaven,
And the Most High uttered His voice.
15 He sent out [v]arrows and scattered them;
Lightning bolts, and He vanquished them.
16 Then the channels of the sea [w]were seen,
The foundations of the world were uncovered,
At the [x]rebuke of the LORD,
At the blast of the breath of His nostrils.

17 "He[y] sent from above, He took me,
He drew me out of many waters.
18 He delivered me from my strong enemy,
From those who hated me;
For they were too strong for me.
19 They confronted me in the day of my calamity,
But the LORD was my [z]support.
20 [a]He also brought me out into a broad place;
He delivered me because He [b]delighted in me.

21 "The[c] LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness;
According to the [d]cleanness of my hands
He has recompensed me.
22 For I have [e]kept the ways of the LORD,
And have not wickedly departed from my God.
23 For all His [f]judgments *were* before me;
And *as for* His statutes, I did not depart from them.
24 I was also [g]blameless before Him,
And I kept myself from my iniquity.

7 [l]Ps. 116:4; 120:1 [m]Ex. 3:7; Ps. 34:6, 15
8 [n]Judg. 5:4; Ps. 77:18; 97:4 [o]Job 26:11 [3]So with MT, LXX, Tg.; Syr., Vg. *hills* (cf. Ps. 18:7)
9 [p]Deut. 32:22; Ps. 97:3, 4; Heb. 12:29
10 [q]Ex. 19:16–20; Is. 64:1 [r]Ex. 20:21
11 [s]Ps. 104:3 [4]So with MT, LXX; many Heb. mss., Syr., Vg. *flew* (cf. Ps. 18:10); Tg. *spoke with power*
12 [t]Job 36:29; Ps. 97:2
14 [u]1 Sam. 2:10; Job 37:2–5; Ps. 29:3
15 [v]Deut. 32:23; Josh. 10:10; 1 Sam. 7:10; Ps. 7:13
16 [w]Nah. 1:4 [x]Ex. 15:8
17 [y]Ps. 144:7; Is. 43:2
19 [z]Is. 10:20
20 [a]Ps. 31:8; 118:5 [b]2 Sam. 15:26
21 [c]1 Sam. 26:23; [Ps. 7:8] [d][Job 17:9]; Ps. 24:4
22 [e]Gen. 18:19; 2 Chr. 34:33; Ps. 119:3
23 [f][Deut. 6:6–9; 7:12]; Ps. 119:30, 102
24 [g]Gen. 6:9; 7:1; Job 1:1; [Eph. 1:4; Col. 1:21, 22]

■ **22:7 In my distress.** Being in a narrow or tightly confined space is a common figure for distress. In v. 20 (note) relief is described as being brought into a "broad place."

from His temple. This probably means God's heavenly sanctuary (1 Kin. 8:27, 38–39; Ps. 11:4; Is. 6:1; Jon. 2:7; Rev. 11:19; 14:17; 15:5).

■ **22:9 Smoke went up from His nostrils.** Compare the imagery used to describe the awesome power of Leviathan in Job 41:18–21.

■ **22:11 rode upon a cherub, and flew.** See Ex. 25:17–22; Num. 7:89; Ezek. 10:19; 11:22.

■ **22:14 The LORD thundered.** See 1 Sam. 2:10; 7:10. The Lord's voice is often likened to thunder (Job 37:4, 5; 40:9; Ps. 29:3; Is. 33:3).

Most High. See Gen. 14:19 and notes.

■ **22:15 He sent out arrows.** For similar imagery, see Deut. 32:23, 42; Job 6:4; Ps. 64:7. Lightning is sometimes described as the Lord's arrows (Ps. 77:17; cf. Hab. 3:11; Zech. 9:14).

■ **22:17 many waters.** See v. 5 note.

■ **22:20 broad place.** See v. 7 note.

■ **22:21–25** David is not laying claim to righteousness or sinlessness in any absolute sense. Rather he asserts his blamelessness with respect to his enemies and his confidence that the Lord rewards those who seek to be faithful to Him (v. 26; 1 Sam. 26:23). If this were not the case, David would surely be classed among "the haughty" (v. 28).

25 Therefore [h]the LORD has [5]recompensed me according to my righteousness,
According to [6]my cleanness in His eyes.

26 "With [i]the merciful You will show Yourself merciful;
With a blameless man You will show Yourself blameless;
27 With the pure You will show Yourself pure;
And [j]with the devious You will show Yourself shrewd.
28 You will save the [k]humble[7] people;
But Your eyes *are* on [l]the haughty, *that* You may bring *them* down.

29 "For You *are* my [m]lamp, O LORD;
The LORD shall enlighten my darkness.
30 For by You I can run against a troop;
By my God I can leap over a [n]wall.
31 *As for* God, [o]His way *is* perfect;
[p]The word of the LORD *is* proven;
He *is* a shield to all who trust in Him.

32 "For [q]who *is* God, except the LORD?
And who *is* a rock, except our God?
33 [8]God *is* my [r]strength *and* power,
And He [s]makes [9]my way [t]perfect.
34 He makes [l]my feet [u]like the *feet* of deer,
And [v]sets me on my high places.
35 He teaches my hands [2]to make war,
So that my arms can bend a bow of bronze.

36 "You have also given me the shield of Your salvation;
Your gentleness has made me great.
37 You [w]enlarged my path under me;
So my feet did not slip.

38 "I have pursued my enemies and destroyed them;
Neither did I turn back again till they were destroyed.
39 And I have destroyed them and wounded them,
So that they could not rise;
They have fallen [x]under my feet.
40 For You have [y]armed me with strength for the battle;
You have [3]subdued under me [z]those who rose against me.
41 You have also [4]given me the [a]necks of my enemies,
So that I destroyed those who hated me.
42 They looked, but *there was* none to save;
Even [b]to the LORD, but He did not answer them.
43 Then I beat them as fine [c]as the dust of the earth;
I trod them [d]like dirt in the streets,
And I [5]spread them out.

44 "You[e] have also delivered me from the [6]strivings of my people;
You have kept me as the [f]head of the nations.
[g]A people I have not known shall serve me.
45 The foreigners submit to me;

25 [h]2 Sam. 22:21 [5]*rewarded* [6]LXX, Syr., Vg. *the cleanness of my hands in His sight* (cf. Ps. 18:24); Tg. *my cleanness before His word*

26 [i][Matt. 5:7]

27 [j][Lev. 26:23, 24; Rom. 1:28]

28 [k]Ps. 72:12 [l]Job 40:11 [7]*afflicted*

29 [m]Ps. 119:105; 132:17

30 [n]2 Sam. 5:6–8

31 [o][Deut. 32:4]; Dan. 4:37; [Matt. 5:48] [p]Ps. 12:6; [Prov. 30:5]

32 [q]Is. 45:5, 6

33 [r]Ps. 27:1 [s][Heb. 13:21] [t]Ps. 101:2, 6 [8]DSS, LXX, Syr., Vg. *It is God who arms me with strength* (cf. Ps. 18:32); Tg. *It is God who sustains me with strength* [9]So with Qr., LXX, Syr., Tg., Vg. (cf. Ps. 18:32); Kt. *His*

34 [u]2 Sam. 2:18; Hab. 3:19 [v]Is. 33:16 [l]So with Qr., LXX, Syr., Tg., Vg. (cf. Ps. 18:33); Kt. *His*

35 [2]Lit. *for the war*

37 [w]2 Sam. 22:20; Prov. 4:12

39 [x]Mal. 4:3

40 [y][Ps. 18:32] [z][Ps. 44:5] [3]Lit. *caused to bow down*

41 [a]Gen. 49:8; Josh. 10:24 [4]*given me victory over*

42 [b]1 Sam. 28:6; Prov. 1:28; Is. 1:15

43 [c]2 Kin. 13:7; Ps. 18:42 [d]Is. 10:6 [5]*scattered*

44 [e]2 Sam. 3:1 [f]Deut. 28:13 [g][Is. 55:5] [6]*contentions*

■ **22:27 shrewd.** Lit. "And with the twisted you will deal tortuously." In the economy of God's justice, those who take "twisted" paths will find the way "tortuous" (Is. 59:8).

■ **22:28 humble . . . haughty.** See the theme of divine reversal of fortunes in Hannah's prayer (1 Sam. 2:1–10 and note; especially v. 7).

■ **22:29 my lamp.** Cf. notes on 21:17; 1 Sam. 3:3.

■ **22:32 rock.** See v. 2 and note.

■ **22:44 my people.** This is possibly a reference to the many perils that David experienced at the hands of Saul, Absalom, and others. The corresponding verse in Ps. 18:43 reads simply "the people," as does the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament translation) of this verse.

As soon as they hear, they obey me.
46 The foreigners fade away,
And [7]come frightened [h]from their hideouts.

47 "The LORD lives!
Blessed *be* my Rock!
Let God be exalted,
The [i]Rock of my salvation!
48 *It is* God who avenges me,
And [j]subdues the peoples under me;
49 He delivers me from my enemies.
You also lift me up above those who rise against me;
You have delivered me from the [k]violent man.
50 Therefore I will give thanks to You, O LORD, among [l]the Gentiles,
And sing praises to Your [m]name.

51 "*He*[n] is the tower of salvation to His king,
And shows mercy to His [o]anointed,
To David and [p]his descendants forevermore."

David's Last Words

23 Now these *are* the last words of David.

Thus says David the son of Jesse;
Thus says [a]the man raised up on high,
[b]The anointed of the God of Jacob,
And the sweet psalmist of Israel:

2 "The[c] Spirit of the LORD spoke by me,
And His word *was* on my tongue.
3 The God of Israel said,
[d]The Rock of Israel spoke to me:
'He who rules over men *must be* just,
Ruling [e]in the fear of God.
4 And [f]*he shall be* like the light of the morning *when* the sun rises,
A morning without clouds,
Like the tender grass *springing* out of the earth,
By clear shining after rain.'

5 "Although my house *is* not so with God,
[g]Yet He has made with me an everlasting covenant,
Ordered in all *things* and secure.
For *this is* all my salvation and all *my* desire;
Will He not make *it* increase?

46 [h]1 Sam. 14:11; [Mic. 7:17] [7]So with LXX, Tg., Vg. (cf. Ps. 18:45); MT *gird themselves*
47 [i][2 Sam. 22:3]; Ps. 89:26
48 [j]1 Sam. 24:12; Ps. 144:2
49 [k]Ps. 140:1, 4, 11
50 [l]2 Sam. 8:1–14 [m]Ps. 57:7; Rom. 15:9
51 [n]Ps. 144:10 [o]Ps. 89:20 [p]2 Sam. 7:12–16; Ps. 89:29

CHAPTER 23

1 [a]2 Sam. 7:8, 9; Ps. 78:70, 71 [b]1 Sam. 16:12, 13; Ps. 89:20
2 [c]Matt. 22:43; [2 Pet. 1:21]
3 [d][Deut. 32:4] [e]Ex. 18:21; [Is. 11:1–5]
4 [f]Ps. 89:36; Is. 60:1
5 [g]2 Sam. 7:12; Ps. 89:29; Is. 55:3

■ **22:51 His king . . . anointed.** The mention of the Lord's "king" and His "anointed" is reminiscent of the closing verse of Hannah's prayer in 1 Sam. 2:10. After the dynastic promise of 2 Sam. 7:5–16, David can speak confidently of God's unfailing mercy to his descendants forever. The dynastic theme is the transition to ch. 23, where David celebrates the "everlasting covenant" he has with the Lord (23:5).

■ **23:1 last words.** That is, his last poem. See 1 Kin. 2:1–10 for David's final instructions to Solomon.

says. Or "utterance" (cf. Num. 24:3, 4). The Hebrew word is often, though not exclusively, associated with prophecy (e.g., 1 Sam. 2:30; 2 Kin. 9:26), an association not inappropriate for David (v. 2 and note; Acts 2:30).

the sweet psalmist of Israel. Another translation of the Hebrew is "the beloved of Israel's Protector."

■ **23:2–4** The Lord revealed to David the essential character and glorious benefits of the ideal theocratic king. Only in the Christ, the greater Son of David, will such qualities of character be fully displayed and such benefits fully realized (7:4–17 note).

■ **23:2 The Spirit of the LORD spoke by me.** Other references to David acting or speaking under divine inspiration include 1 Chr. 28:11, 12; Matt. 22:43; Acts 1:16; 4:25. David's empowerment by the Spirit is recounted in 1 Sam. 16:13.

■ **23:3 Rock.** See v. 32; notes on 22:2; 1 Sam. 2:2.

just. Righteous rule is possible only for one who lives in a right relationship with God. On what it means to "fear" God, see 1 Sam. 12:14 note.

■ **23:4 light of the morning . . . shining after rain.** The benefits of righteous rule are enlightenment, fruitfulness, and refreshment. For a fuller development of similar themes, see Ps. 72.

■ **23:5 Although my house is not so with God.** David's confidence rests not in his own righteousness but in the everlasting covenant made with him by a gracious God (7:11–16; 2 Chr. 13:5; 21:7; Ps. 89:3, 4, 28, 29; Is. 55:3; Ezek. 37:25, 26).

But *the sons* of rebellion *shall* all *be* as thorns thrust away,
Because they cannot be taken with hands.
7 But the man *who* touches them
Must be [1]armed with iron and the shaft of a spear,
And they shall be utterly burned with fire in *their* place."

David's Mighty Men

8 These *are* the names of the mighty men whom David had: [2]Josheb-Basshebeth the Tachmonite, chief among [3]the captains. He was called Adino the Eznite, because he had killed eight hundred men at one time. 9 And after him *was* [h]Eleazar the son of [4]Dodo, the Ahohite, *one* of the three mighty men with David when they defied the Philistines *who* were gathered there for battle, and the men of Israel had retreated. 10 He arose and attacked the Philistines until his hand was [i]weary, and his hand stuck to the sword. The LORD brought about a great victory that day; and the people returned after him only to [j]plunder. 11 And after him *was* [k]Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite. [l]The Philistines had gathered together into a troop where there was a piece of ground full of lentils. So the people fled from the Philistines. 12 But he stationed himself in the middle of the field, defended it, and killed the Philistines. So the LORD brought about a great victory.

13 Then [m]three of the thirty chief men went down at harvest time and came to David at [n]the cave of Adullam. And the troop of Philistines encamped in [o]the Valley of Rephaim. 14 David *was* then in [p]the stronghold, and the garrison of the Philistines *was* then *in* Bethlehem. 15 And David said with longing, "Oh, that someone would give me a drink of the water from the well of Bethlehem, which *is* by the gate!" 16 So the three mighty men broke through the camp of the Philistines, drew water from the well of Bethlehem that *was* by the gate, and took it and brought *it* to David. Nevertheless he would not drink it, but poured it out to the LORD. 17 And he said, "Far be it from me, O LORD, that I should do this! Is *this not* [q]the blood of the men who went in *jeopardy of* their lives?" Therefore he would not drink it.

These things were done by the three mighty men.

18 Now [r]Abishai the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruiah, was chief of [5]*another* three. He lifted his spear against three hundred *men,* killed *them,* and won a name among *these* three. 19 Was he not the most honored of three? Therefore he became their captain. However, he did not attain to the *first* three.

20 Benaiah *was* the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man from [s]Kabzeel, [6]who had done many deeds. [t]He had killed two lion-like heroes of Moab. He also had gone down and killed a lion in the midst of a pit on a snowy day. 21 And he killed an Egyptian, [7]a spectacular man. The Egyptian *had* a spear in his hand; so he went down to him with a staff, wrested the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and killed him with his own spear. 22 These *things* Benaiah the son of Jehoiada did, and won a name among three mighty men. 23 He was more honored than the thirty, but he did not attain to the *first* three. And David appointed him [u]over his guard.

24 [v]Asahel the brother of Joab *was* one of the thirty; Elhanan the son of Dodo of Bethlehem, 25 [w]Shammah the Harodite, Elika the Harodite, 26 Helez the Paltite, Ira the son of Ikkesh the

7 [1]Lit. *filled*

8 [2]Lit. *One Who Sits in the Seat* (1 Chr. 11:11) [3]So with MT, Tg.; LXX, Vg. *the three*

9 [h]1 Chr. 11:12; 27:4 [4]*Dodai,* 1 Chr. 27:4

10 [i]Judg. 8:4 [j]1 Sam. 30:24, 25

11 [k]1 Chr. 11:27 [l]1 Chr. 11:13, 14

13 [m]1 Chr. 11:15 [n]1 Sam. 22:1 [o]2 Sam. 5:18

14 [p]1 Sam. 22:4, 5

17 [q][Lev. 17:10]

18 [r]2 Sam. 21:17; 1 Chr. 11:20 [5]So with MT, LXX, Vg.; some Heb. mss., Syr. *thirty;* Tg. *the mighty men*

20 [s]Josh. 15:21 [t]Ex. 15:15 [6]Lit. *great of acts*

21 [7]Lit. *a man of appearance*

23 [u]2 Sam. 8:18; 20:23

24 [v]2 Sam. 2:18; 1 Chr. 27:7

25 [w]1 Chr. 11:27

■ **23:6 sons of rebellion.** The Hebrew term is "Belial"; see note on 1 Sam. 2:12. The focus here may be on those who had opposed the rule of David.

■ **23:8–39** The presentation of David's "mighty men" in these verses forms a counterpart to the much shorter description of Davidic champions in 21:15–22. According to v. 39, the warriors listed should total thirty-seven. They are presented in two sets of three (vv. 8–12 and 13–17), plus Abishai (vv. 18, 19), Benaiah (vv. 20–23), and the thirty-one listed in vv. 24–39. However, the "three" of vv. 13–17 are apparently to be counted among "the thirty" (v. 13; v. 24 note) and not separately. Thus, this list would contain thirty-six mighty men, and Joab would make thirty-seven. A similar list is given in 1 Chr. 11:10–47 with more than fifteen additional names and no summary total.

■ **23:8 eight hundred.** 1 Chr. 11:11 has "three hundred," probably a copyist's error.

■ **23:10 The LORD brought about a great victory that day.** This statement, repeated in v. 12, serves as a reminder that, whatever the heroic qualities of the human agent, it is God who ultimately brings victory (8:6, 14; 1 Sam. 14:15, 23; 19:5).

■ **23:11 ground full of lentils.** Destroying crops was a common tactic of war (Judg. 6:3–6, 11).

■ **23:13 Valley of Rephaim.** See note on 5:18.

■ **23:14 stronghold.** See note on 1 Sam. 23:14.

■ **23:16 poured it out to the LORD.** The brave exploit of the three men is a testimony to their devotion to David, while David's refusal to drink (v. 17) what had been procured at such great risk to his loyal followers is testimony to his love for them.

■ **23:18 Abishai.** See note on 2:18.

■ **23:20 Benaiah.** See note on 8:18.

■ **23:23 guard.** David's bodyguard presumably comprised Cherethites and Pelethites (1 Sam. 30:14 note).

■ **23:24 Asahel.** See note on 2:18.

the thirty. "Thirty" may be a round number. Not surprisingly, more of David's men are from the tribe of Judah than from any other.

Elhanan. He is not necessarily the same Elhanan as in 21:19 (note).

Tekoite, [27] Abiezer the Anathothite, Mebunnai the Hushathite, [28] Zalmon the Ahohite, Maharai the Netophathite, [29] Heleb the son of Baanah (the Netophathite), Ittai the son of Ribai from Gibeah of the children of Benjamin, [30] Benaiah a Pirathonite, Hiddai from the brooks of [x]Gaash, [31] Abi-Albon the Arbathite, Azmaveth the Barhumite, [32] Eliahba the Shaalbonite (of the sons of Jashen), Jonathan, [33] [y]Shammah the [s]Hararite, Ahiam the son of Sharar the Hararite, [34] Eliphelet the son of Ahasbai, the son of the Maachathite, Eliam the son of [z]Ahithophel the Gilonite, [35] [g]Hezrai the Carmelite, Paarai the Arbite, [36] Igal the son of Nathan of [a]Zobah, Bani the Gadite, [37] Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai the Beerothite (armorbearer of Joab the son of Zeruiah), [38] [b]Ira the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite, [39] *and* [c]Uriah the Hittite: thirty-seven in all.

30 [x]Judg. 2:9
33 [y]2 Sam. 23:11 [s]Or *Ararite*
34 [z]2 Sam. 15:12
35 [g]*Hezro,* 1 Chr. 11:37
36 [a]2 Sam. 8:3
38 [b]1 Chr. 2:53
39 [c]2 Sam. 11:3, 6

CHAPTER 24

David's Census of Israel and Judah

24 Again [a]the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel, and He moved David against them to say, [b]"Go, [f]number Israel and Judah."

[2] So the king said to Joab the commander of the army who *was* with him, "Now go throughout all the tribes of Israel, [c]from Dan to Beersheba, and count the people, that [d]I may know the number of the people."

[3] And Joab said to the king, "Now may the LORD your God [e]add to the people a hundred times more than there are, and may the eyes of my lord the king see *it.* But why does my lord the king desire this thing?" [4] Nevertheless the king's word [2]prevailed against Joab and against the captains of the army. Therefore Joab and the captains of the army went out from the presence of the king to count the people of Israel.

[5] And they crossed over the Jordan and camped in [f]Aroer, on the right side of the town which *is* in the midst of the ravine of Gad, and toward [g]Jazer. [6] Then they came to Gilead and to the land of Tahtim Hodshi; they came to [h]Dan Jaan and around to [i]Sidon; [7] and they came to the stronghold of [j]Tyre and to all the cities of the [k]Hivites and the Canaanites. Then they went out to South Judah *as far as* Beersheba. [8] So when they had gone through all the land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days. [9] Then Joab gave the sum of the number of the people to the king. [l]And there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men who drew the sword, and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand men.

The Judgment on David's Sin

[10] And [m]David's heart condemned him after he had numbered the people. So [n]David said to the LORD, [o]"I have sinned greatly in what I have done; but now, I pray, O LORD, take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have [p]done very foolishly."

1 [a]2 Sam. 21:1, 2 [b]Num. 26:2; 1 Chr. 27:23, 24 [f]*take a census of*
2 [c]Judg. 20:1; 2 Sam. 3:10 [d][Jer. 17:5]
3 [e]Deut. 1:11
4 [2]*overruled*
5 [f]Deut. 2:36; Josh. 13:9, 16 [g]Num. 32:1, 3
6 [h]Josh. 19:47; Judg. 18:29 [i]Josh. 19:28; Judg. 18:28
7 [j]Josh. 19:29 [k]Josh. 11:3; Judg. 3:3
9 [l]1 Chr. 21:5
10 [m]1 Sam. 24:5 [n]2 Sam. 23:1 [o]2 Sam. 12:13 [p]1 Sam. 13:13; [2 Chr. 16:9]

■ **23:29 Gibeah of the children of Benjamin.** David received support even from Saul's hometown (1 Sam. 10:26; 11:4).

■ **23:30 Benaiah.** Not the same as Benaiah in vv. 20–23.

■ **23:34 Eliam the son of Ahithophel.** See note on 11:3.

■ **23:36 Zobah.** See note on 8:3.

■ **23:37 Beerothite.** See note on 4:3.

■ **23:39 Uriah the Hittite.** By concluding the list of David's mighty men with Uriah, the victim of David's great sin in ch. 11, the chapter ends with a poignant reminder that David was, like all men, a sinner and in need of God's forgiveness (ch. 12). This theme is continued in the next chapter.

thirty-seven in all. See note on vv. 8–39.

■ **24:1–25** This chapter is a fitting conclusion to the books of Samuel. David is shown for what he is, a sinner, but a sinner who is ready to repent and to cast himself upon God's mercy (12:13 and note). Another appropriate note is the association of the threshing floor of Araunah (vv. 18–25) with Mount Moriah, the future site of (1 Chr. 22:1; 2 Chr. 3:1; Gen. 22:2).

■ **24:1 Again.** If a specific occasion is in view, a probable one is the famine of 21:1.

He moved David. The antecedent of "He" is the Lord (cf. 1 Sam. 26:19). According to 1 Chr. 21:1, however, it was Satan who moved David. At issue here is the mystery of the presence and practice of evil. The Scripture is clear that God is not the author of evil (James 1:13–15), but it also teaches that the wicked acts of men and of Satan do not fall outside God's sovereign determination (Ex. 4:21; 1 Sam. 2:25 and note; 1 Kin. 22:20–23; Job 1:12; Ezek. 14:9; Acts 4:27, 28). Satan is a creature, absolutely subordinate to the sovereignty of God. Satan's activities and desires cannot create a space that is free from God's control or that escapes God's purposes.

number Israel and Judah. Taking a census does not appear to have been wrong in itself (Num. 1:1, 2; 4:1, 2; 26:1–4), but see Ex. 30:11, 12. This act of census may have pointed to a lack of trust in David's heart, or even to a desire to gain control of God's providence by making an inventory of His apparent resources. That the report (v. 9) emphasizes military strength may suggest that David wanted to take more territory than what the Lord had granted him.

■ **24:2 from Dan to Beersheba.** A proverbial expression for all the land.

■ **24:3 But why.** The reason for Joab's reluctance is not stated. It could as easily have been political as religious, since the people might have taken a census as a sign that David planned to raise taxes or to draft more soldiers.

■ **24:5–7** These verses indicate that the census was begun in the south, east of the Jordan River, and continued in a counterclockwise direction through the the land, finally arriving in Beersheba.

■ **24:8 nine months and twenty days.** Most of this time was needed for taking the census; the travel itself could have been accomplished in a matter of weeks.

■ **24:9 in Israel eight hundred thousand . . . Judah were five hundred thousand.** 1 Chr. 21:5 has "one million one hundred thousand" and "four hundred and seventy thousand," respectively. On this difference, see notes on 1 Chr. 21:5.

■ **24:10 take away the iniquity.** David's plea for forgiveness may have

11 Now when David arose in the morning, the word of the LORD came to the prophet [q]Gad, David's [r]seer, saying, 12 "Go and tell David, 'Thus says the LORD: "I offer you three *things;* choose one of them for yourself, that I may do *it* to you."' " 13 So Gad came to David and told him; and he said to him, "Shall [s]seven[3] years of famine come to you in your land? Or shall you flee three months before your enemies, while they pursue you? Or shall there be three days' plague in your land? Now consider and see what answer I should take back to Him who sent me."

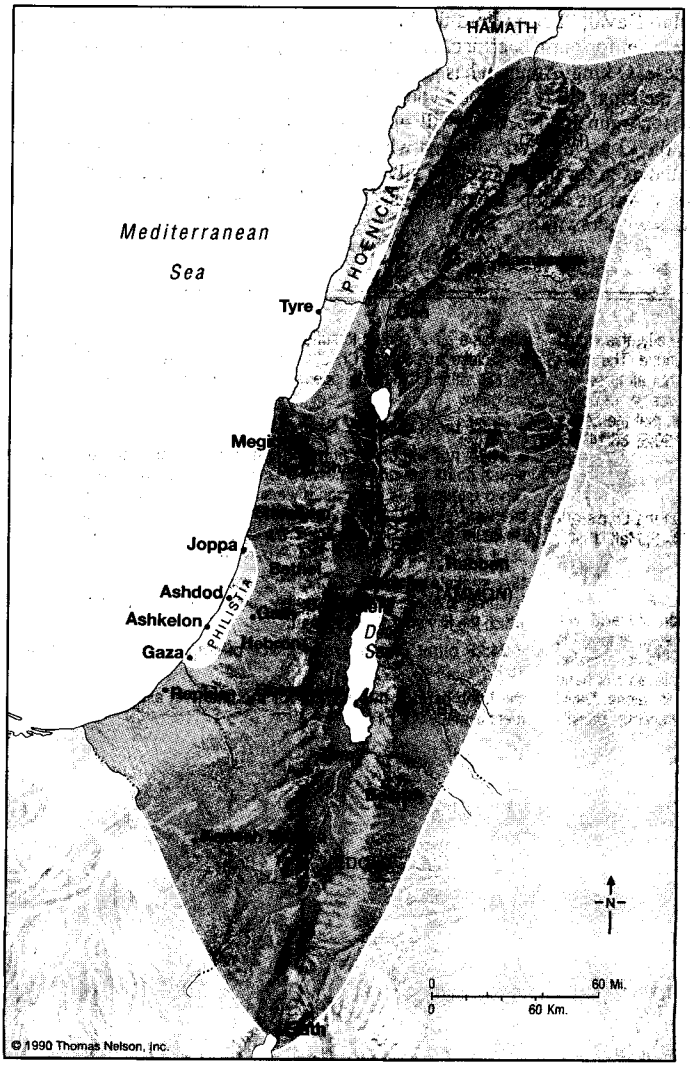
11 [q]1 Sam. 22:5
[r]1 Sam. 9:9; 1 Chr. 29:29

13 [s]Ezek. 14:21
[3]So with MT, Syr., Tg., Vg.; LXX *three* (cf. 1 Chr. 21:12)

been granted by God before the arrival of Gad (vv. 11–13). Nevertheless, as in the case of David's sin against Uriah and Bathsheba, forgiveness does not mean that sin will have no further consequences (v. 13; 12:13, 14).

■ **24:12 Go and tell David.** The Lord sends Gad to confront David, as He had earlier sent the prophet Nathan (12:1 and note).

■ **24:13 famine . . . enemies . . . plague.** Implicit in the threat of pursuit by "enemies" is loss of life by the sword, as 1 Chr. 21:12 makes explicit. Famine, sword, and plague are the Old Testament's triad of woes regularly threatened for obdurate covenant-breaking (Lev. 26:23–26; Deut. 28:21–26; 32:24, 25; 1 Kin. 8:37; 2 Chr. 20:9; Is. 51:19; Jer. 14:12; Ezek. 6:11, 12).



The Davidic Kingdom. The military successes of David led to the unprecedented expansion of the borders of his kingdom. His victories against the Moabites and Edomites to the east and south of Jerusalem greatly expanded and solidified his control of those areas. Repelling frequent attacks from the west, he succeeded in isolating Philistine control to a few coastal cities. Victory against Zobah and the Arameans in the northeast greatly extended his borders in that direction, and the subsequent victory against the Ammonites cemented his control over the central regions. Joab's census, taken prior to David's death, confirms the vast extent of David's kingdom.

14 [t][Ps. 51:1; 103:8, 13, 14; 119:156; 130:4, 7] [u][Is. 47:6; Zech. 1:15]

15 [v]1 Chr. 21:14

16 [w]Ex. 12:23; 2 Kin. 19:35; Acts 12:23 [x]Gen. 6:6; 1 Sam. 15:11 [4]Or *Angel* [5]*Ornan,* 1 Chr. 21:15

17 [y]2 Sam. 7:8; 1 Chr. 21:17; Ps. 74:1

18 [z]1 Chr. 21:18

21 [a]Gen. 23:8–16 [b]Num. 16:48, 50

22 [c]1 Sam. 6:14; 1 Kin. 19:21

23 [d][Ezek. 20:40, 41]

24 [e]1 Chr. 21:24, 25

25 [f]2 Sam. 21:14 [g]2 Sam. 24:21

14 And David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Please let us fall into the hand of the LORD, [t]for His mercies *are* great; but [u]do not let me fall into the hand of man."

15 So [v]the LORD sent a plague upon Israel from the morning till the appointed time. From Dan to Beersheba seventy thousand men of the people died. 16 [w]And when the [4]angel stretched out His hand over Jerusalem to destroy it, [x]the LORD relented from the destruction, and said to the [4]angel who was destroying the people, "It is enough; now restrain your hand." And the [4]angel of the LORD was by the threshing floor of [5]Araunah the Jebusite.

17 Then David spoke to the LORD when he saw the angel who was striking the people, and said, "Surely [y]I have sinned, and I have done wickedly; but these sheep, what have they done? Let Your hand, I pray, be against me and against my father's house."

The Altar on the Threshing Floor

18 And Gad came that day to David and said to him, [z]"Go up, erect an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite." 19 So David, according to the word of Gad, went up as the LORD commanded. 20 Now Araunah looked, and saw the king and his servants coming toward him. So Araunah went out and bowed before the king with his face to the ground.

21 Then Araunah said, "Why has my lord the king come to his servant?"

[a]And David said, "To buy the threshing floor from you, to build an altar to the LORD, that [b]the plague may be withdrawn from the people."

22 Now Araunah said to David, "Let my lord the king take and offer up whatever *seems* good to him. [c]Look, *here are* oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing implements and the yokes of the oxen for wood. 23 All these, O king, Araunah has given to the king."

And Araunah said to the king, "May the LORD your God [d]accept you."

24 Then the king said to Araunah, "No, but I will surely buy *it* from you for a price; nor will I offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God with that which costs me nothing." So [e]David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. 25 And David built there an altar to the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. [f]So the LORD heeded the prayers for the land, and [g]the plague was withdrawn from Israel.

■ **24:14 Let us fall into the hand of the LORD.** Technically, this would allow either the first or third option, that is, famine or plague. The inference is sometimes made that David's choice is selfish, but all three options, including flight before enemies, would have cost lives (v. 13 note). David's motivation is entirely different, for he had learned that the Lord's mercy is great (v. 16; cf. Ex. 34:6, 7; Neh. 9:17; Ps. 30:5; 86:14–16; 103:8–10; Is. 54:7, 8; 60:10; Hos. 11:8, 9; Joel 2:13).

■ **24:15 Dan to Beersheba.** See v. 2.

■ **24:16 angel of the LORD.** See note on Gen. 16:7. On the Lord's angels as agents of judgment, see Ex. 33:2; Ps. 35:5, 6; 78:49; Matt. 13:41; Acts 12:23.

threshing floor of Araunah. See note on 24:1–25.

■ **24:17 Let Your hand . . . be against me.** The heart of David, like the heart of God (v. 16), is grieved by the suffering he sees among his people, his "sheep." As their shepherd-king, he is moved to compassion and, not knowing that God in His mercy has already stayed His hand (vv. 16, 21), asks that the hand of judgment fall upon him alone. David deserved punishment for his sin and the people were innocent. David's offer as a guilty person to suffer in the place of innocent "sheep" is not a very close analogy of Christ's death for the sake of His sheep (John 10:11), although the language is similar. Christ was innocent and died for the guilty.

■ **24:22 burnt sacrifice.** See note on 1 Sam. 10:8.

■ **24:24 nor will I offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God with that which costs me nothing.** While God's grace and forgiveness are free, David understands that proper worship of God is never to be cheap or careless (cf. Mal. 1:6–14; 2 Cor. 8:1–5). The consistent testimony of Scripture is that God deserves our best, the "firstfruits" (Num. 18:12; Deut. 18:3–5; 26:10; Neh. 12:44; Prov. 3:9).

fifty shekels of silver. 1 Chr. 21:25 records a much larger sum of six hundred shekels of gold, possibly referring to a larger transaction of which the fifty shekels was a part.

■ **24:25 burnt offerings and peace offerings.** See note on 1 Sam. 10:8.

the LORD heeded the prayers for the land. An almost identical statement is made in 21:14.

The First Book of the

KINGS

Author

Jewish tradition held that Jeremiah wrote 1 and 2 Kings and Lamentations as well as the prophecy under his name. The points of view of Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings, are very similar, and because they develop the theological ideas expressed in Deuteronomy, they are often called "the Deuteronomic History" by modern authors. But the author of 1 and 2 Kings is not identified in the books themselves, and his identity cannot be known with certainty.

Date and Occasion

Indications are that the books were compiled from historical sources during the time the Jews were exiles in Babylon. Second Kings ends while the last king of Judah, Jehoiachin, is detained in Babylon (2 Kin. 25:27–30). Since there is no mention of the return of the people from exile in 538 B.C., it is probable that the final edition of the work was completed at the midpoint of the Babylonian exile (560–550 B.C.).

Earlier materials are no doubt also present. First, the author clearly had access to a variety of sources, both administrative and prophetic. The names of his sources: "the book of the acts of Solomon" (1 Kin. 11:41), "the chronicles of the kings of Israel" (1 Kin. 14:19), and "the chronicles of the kings of Judah" (1 Kin. 14:29). Probably the author also had access to material recounting the lives and ministries of the prophets. Second, there are a number of statements in 1 and 2 Kings that describe conditions that prevailed before the time of the captivity, and yet say of them that they continue "to this day" (1 Kin. 8:8; 9:20, 21; 12:19; 2 Kin. 8:22). Such statements point to the existence of pre-exilic material that was subsequently included in Kings. Third, the final chapter of 2 Kings is distinguished by a detailed chronology by day, month, and year of events surrounding the final siege of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple.

Second Kings has a somewhat unusual ending. The book seems to reach its climax with the reign of Josiah (2 Kin. 23:25), but this optimism is clouded by a prophecy of impending judgment (2 Kin. 23:26, 27). Moreover, the narrative stops abruptly with Judah in Babylon, with no theological summary or conclusion. For these reasons, some scholars believe that the main work of writing Kings was done before the time of the Exile. In this theory, the original book of Kings was composed during the reign of King Josiah, and someone living during the Exile updated this history with a brief record of Judah's final years. But whether one holds to this two-edition hypothesis or to a one-edition (exilic) hypothesis, the book has a unified perspective.

Characteristics and Themes

Kings as History. Characteristic of the author is a fondness for recording in detail many features of his nation's past. This genuine interest in the dates, figures, and institutions of the kingdom of Israel appears in his record of preparations for the temple (1 Kin. 5), its dimensions and decoration (1 Kin. 6), and its furniture and vessels (1 Kin. 7:13–51). The writer gives the length of reigns for monarchs in both kingdoms, and he synchronizes their reigns with each other.

The author organizes and presents Israel's experience with kingship in periods in order to provide a clear and meaningful account of his nation's past. Beginning with an evaluation of the united monarchy under Solomon (1 Kin. 1—11), the author carefully depicts its dissolution (1 Kin. 12:1–24) and the formation of two separate entities, Israel in the north and Judah in the south. He goes on to present the separate history of each realm, until the fall of the northern kingdom in 722 B.C. (2 Kin. 17). The alternation between the northern kingdom (usually called Israel) and the southern kingdom (usually called Judah) can be confusing, but it is central to the author's purpose of presenting a unified history of all the Israelite tribes.

In portraying the divided kingdom, the writer points out important differences between the two realms. Kingship in Judah was relatively stable, under the descendants of David, but kingship in Israel was unstable, and there was a succession of dynasties. Twenty kings from nine different families ruled over Israel in the northern kingdom during its existence of about two hundred years. In contrast, twenty kings from one family ruled over the southern kingdom for about three hundred fifty years. The writer concludes his coverage of the northern kingdom with a lengthy commentary on its major shortcomings (2 Kin. 17:7–34).

To consider Kings as no more than history of the monarchy would strip the book of its theological value, since the author is not a dispassionate observer, merely chronicling his nation's past. Nevertheless, the historical value of his work should not be underestimated. In composing a coherent and meaningful account of his nation's past, the biblical writer has provided an invaluable service to anyone who wants to understand this momentous era in Israelite history.

Kings as Theology. Kings is not only a history, but also a work of theology, a reflection on God's ways with His people Israel, whom He had delivered from the "iron furnace" of Egypt to be His own "inheritance" (1 Kin. 8:51–53). In composing a work of theological history, the writer takes lessons from the past to serve his people in the present and future. There are a number of central themes that inform his overall point of view and his evaluation of the monarchy.

1. The People as God's Elect. Israel was not in itself better than any of the other nations. Israel did not first choose God; rather, God "separated them from among all the peoples of the earth" according to His unfathomable grace (1 Kin. 8:53). Holiness results not from any intrinsic merit, but from God's election (Deut. 7:6; 26:18, 19).

Kings emphasizes the solidarity of Israel. The writer is concerned for all the tribes of Israel. Although he severely criticizes the northern kingdom and its monarchs because of their cultic apostasy, the writer still considers these tribes to be part of Israel, and he shows sustained interest in them. Even after the northern tribes are exiled by the Assyrians, the author does not forget them. He both documents and commends Josiah's reforms in Samaria (2 Kin. 23:15–20).

2. "My Servants the Prophets." Prophets play a major role during the Israelite monarchy. In writing about the prophets, the author is interested in their ministry as bearers of God's Word. The prophets passionately insist on undivided allegiance to the Lord, opposing any alliance or political posture that might jeopardize the distinctiveness of Israelite religion. Not surprisingly, this strict adherence to the covenant often pits the prophets against kings and queens who were willing to compromise in politics and religion with Israel's neighbors. Although the writer gives most of his attention to Elijah and Elisha, he mentions many other prophets: Nathan (1 Kin. 1:22), Ahijah (1 Kin. 11:29–39; 14:1–18), Shemaiah (1 Kin. 12:21–24), Micaiah (1 Kin. 22:8–28); Jonah (2 Kin. 14:25); Isaiah (2 Kin. 19:1–7, 20:14), and Huldah (2 Kin. 22:14–20).

3. One God, One Sanctuary. Yahweh is Lord of the cosmos and ruler over the kingdoms of the earth (2 Kin. 19:15). God leads His people into battle, answers their prayers, honors their sacrifices, and displays a special concern for the poor and oppressed. Undivided devotion to God is a hallmark of the covenant (1 Kin. 18:21, 39).

Related to the existence of the one supreme God is the author's contention that there can be only one central sanctuary (Deut. 12). The construction of the temple by Solomon is a major event in Israelite history. Accordingly, great attention is given in 1 Kings to the preparations for and construction of this edifice, including detailed descriptions of its dimensions and furnishings.

Consistent with this emphasis on one God and one temple is the prohibition of worshiping other gods or worshiping at other cult sites. As the books of Kings depict the deterioration in devotion toward God during the course of the divided kingdom, the problem is not so much a wholesale abandonment of Yahweh for other gods, but combining worship of Yahweh with worship of foreign gods. The influence of Canaanite worship was especially strong in northern Israel which, with the sponsorship of its monarchs, used Canaanite rituals, beliefs, and cult objects. This type of religious syncretism also affected Judah. The writer cites the worship of other gods as a major reason for the defeat and exile of both Israel and Judah (2 Kin. 17:7, 16, 19; 21:3–5).

4. Covenant and Kingship. Both the Mosaic and the Davidic covenants figure prominently in Kings. The writer evaluates the conduct of king and people alike on the basis of the covenant established at Mount Sinai.

Viewing the relationship between God and Israel as a covenant means that every human institution is subject to the authority of God. Thus, although the monarchy is God-ordained, its power is by no means absolute. King and people alike are responsible for remaining faithful to their covenant with God. Each king is evaluated according to whether he kept the Torah (or Law).

The author gives particular attention to loyalty toward God as manifested by justice and unwavering support of the temple in Jerusalem. Of the eight southern kings who receive positive estimations, only Hezekiah and Josiah are singled out for their devotion to Yahweh (2 Kin. 18:5; 23:25). Hezekiah is esteemed for removing the high places in Judah and for his unwavering trust in God during Sennacherib's invasion (2 Kin. 18:3–7). The author bestows high honor on Josiah for refurbishing the temple and carrying out sweeping reforms in both Judah and Samaria (2 Kin. 22:2; 23:25). Because Jehu purged Israel of Baal worship, he is the only one of the northern kings to receive a commendation (2 Kin. 10:30).

Chronology. The Book of Kings is filled with chronological data. The author dates the building of the temple 480 years after the Exodus (1 Kin. 6:1). He provides figures for the length of David's and Solomon's reigns, and he gives explicit information on the reigns of all of Judah's and Israel's kings. During the period of the divided kingdom, the author synchronizes the start of each king's reign with the regnal year of the king in the other kingdom. The author also lists the king's age upon accession and the name of his mother for the Judean kings.

Coordinating this data with Assyrian, Babylonian, and other extrabiblical records is a challenging task, since knowing how long a given king reigned does not establish precisely when he reigned. The dates of the fall of Israel and the fall of Judah are

known with some certainty, and other major dates can be calculated from them. One scheme is as follows:

970 B.C.	End of David's Reign
970–930 B.C.	Solomon's Reign
930 B.C.	Division of the Kingdom
722 B.C.	Fall of Israel
586 B.C.	Fall of Judah

Title The books of Kings concern the history and demise of the monarchy in Israel from the last days of David (970 B.C.) to the exile in Babylon almost four centuries later (586 B.C.). The two books comprise one unit within a larger group of books—Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, and 1 and 2 Kings—traditionally called the "former prophets" and more recently known as the Deuteronomistic (or Deuteronomic) History. These books are a continuous narrative, and it is helpful to recognize their essential unity.

The two books of Kings were originally one book. In the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament), the Vulgate (the Latin translation), and most other versions, the work is divided in two. This division was for convenience of copying or publication and was not based on content. The reigns of Ahaziah (1 Kin. 22:51–53; 2 Kin. 1) and Jehoshaphat (1 Kin. 22:41–50; 2 Kin. 3) overlap both books. In the same way the prophetic ministry of Elijah appears in both volumes (1 Kin. 17—19 and 2 Kin. 1; 2). □

Outline of 1 Kings

I. The Reign of Solomon (chs. 1—11)
  A. Solomon Established as David's Rightful Successor (chs. 1—4)
    1. Solomon's Succession to the Throne (1:1—2:11)
    2. Solomon's Consolidation of Power (2:12–46)
    3. The Gift of Wisdom (3:1–15)
    4. Solomon's Wisdom Exemplified (3:16—4:34)
  B. Major Accomplishments of Solomon's Reign (chs. 5—10)
    1. Preparations for Building the Temple (ch. 5)
    2. Construction of the Temple (ch. 6)
    3. Construction of a Royal Palace (7:1–12)
    4. Furnishing the Temple (7:13–51)
    5. Solomon's Temple Prayer and Dedication (ch. 8)
    6. God's Twofold Response (9:1–9)
    7. Solomon in All of His Glory (9:10—10:29)
  C. Solomon's Spiritual and Political Decline (ch. 11)
    1. Solomon's Sins (11:1–13)
    2. Punishments Against Solomon (11:14–25)
    3. Jeroboam's Rise: Punishment and New Hope (11:26–43)

II. The Early Divided Kingdom (chs. 12—16)
  A. The Secession of the Northern Tribes (12:1–24)
  B. Jeroboam I of Israel (12:25—14:20)
    1. Jeroboam's Gold Calves (12:25–33)
    2. Two Prophets (ch. 13)
    3. Judgment Against Jeroboam Decreed (14:1–20)
  C. Rehoboam of Judah (14:21–31)
  D. Abijam of Judah (15:1–8)
  E. Asa of Judah (15:9–24)
  F. Nadab of Israel (15:25–32)
  G. Baasha of Israel (15:33—16:7)
  H. Elah of Israel (16:8–14)
  I. Zimri of Israel (16:15–20)
  J. Omri of Israel (16:21–28)
  K. Ahab of Israel (16:29–34)

III. Prophets and Kings (1 Kin. 17:1—2 Kin. 8:15)
A. The Prophets and Ahab (17:1—22:40)
1. Elijah the Tishbite (ch. 17)
2. Elijah Against the Canaanite Prophets (ch. 18)
3. The Revelation to Elijah on Mount Horeb (ch. 19)
4. Ahab's Misconduct in Holy War (ch. 20)
5. Ahab and Jezebel Seize Naboth's Vineyard (ch. 21)
6. Micaiah's Judgment Against Ahab (22:1–40)
B. Jehoshaphat of Judah (22:41–50)
C. Ahaziah of Israel Defies Elijah (22:51—2 Kin. 1:18)

CHAPTER 1

1 [a]1 Chr. 23:1 [1]Seventy years
2 [2]Or *serve*
3 [b]1 Kin. 2:17 [c]Josh. 19:18
5 [d]2 Sam. 3:4 [e]2 Sam. 15:1 [3]The fourth son [4]Lit. *reign*
6 [f]2 Sam. 3:3, 4 [5]Lit. *pained*
7 [g]1 Chr. 11:6 [h]2 Sam. 20:25 [i]1 Kin. 2:22, 28
8 [j]1 Kin. 2:35 [k]1 Kin. 2:25 [l]2 Sam. 12:1 [m]1 Kin. 4:18 [n]2 Sam. 23:8

Adonijah Presumes to Be King

NOW King David was [a]old, [1]advanced in years; and they put covers on him, but he could not get warm. [2] Therefore his servants said to him, "Let a young woman, a virgin, be sought for our lord the king, and let her [2]stand before the king, and let her care for him; and let her lie in your bosom, that our lord the king may be warm." [3] So they sought for a lovely young woman throughout all the territory of Israel, and found [b]Abishag the [c]Shunammite, and brought her to the king. [4] The young woman *was* very lovely; and she cared for the king, and served him; but the king did not know her.

[5] Then [d]Adonijah the [3]son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, "I will [4]be king"; and [e]he prepared for himself chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him. [6] (And his father had not [5]rebuked him at any time by saying, "Why have you done so?" He *was* also very good-looking. [f]*His mother* had borne him after Absalom.) [7] Then he conferred with [g]Joab the son of Zeruiah and with [h]Abiathar the priest, and [i]they followed and helped Adonijah. [8] But [j]Zadok the priest, [k]Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, [l]Nathan the prophet, [m]Shimei, Rei, and [n]the mighty men who *belonged* to David were not with Adonijah.

[9] And Adonijah sacrificed sheep and oxen and fattened cattle by the stone of [6]Zoheleth, which *is* by [o]En Rogel;[7] he also invited all his brothers, the king's sons, and all the men of Judah, the king's servants. [10] But he did not invite Nathan the prophet, Benaiah, the mighty men, or [p]Solomon his brother.

9 [o]Josh. 15:7; 18:16 [6]Lit. *Serpent* [7]A spring south of Jerusalem in the Kidron Valley 10 [p]2 Sam. 12:24

■ **1:1—2:11** Solomon succeeds David as king in spite of political turmoil and intrigue by Adonijah, Abiathar, Joab, and Shimei.

■ **1:1 old, advanced in years.** As 1 Kings begins, David is about seventy years old (2 Sam. 5:4; 1 Kin. 2:11).

■ **1:3 Abishag the Shunammite.** Shunem was sixteen miles southwest of the Sea of Chinneroth (Galilee), near Mount Gilboa (Josh. 19:18; 1 Sam. 28:4; 2 Kin. 4:8).

■ **1:4 the king did not know her.** Since David did not have sexual relations with Abishag, Adonijah's later request to marry her (2:17) was not against the law of Deut. 22:30.

■ **1:5 Adonijah.** Probably the oldest living son of David (2 Sam. 3:2–5; 13:28; 18:14). As such, he may have thought he would succeed his father. At this time, however, there was no custom or law dictating who would be David's successor, other than his own decision (vv. 13, 17, 20, 30).

chariots and horsemen. Like Absalom before him (2 Sam. 15:1), Adonijah signals his ambitions and positions himself to take the throne.

■ **1:6 had not rebuked.** As in dealing with his other rebellious sons, David made no attempt either to question or discipline Adonijah. But his patience and forgiveness only seemed to invite further rebellion (2 Sam. 13:32, 39; 14:33; 18:5).

very good-looking. Handsome features were an asset for someone aspiring to the throne (1 Sam. 9:2; 16:12; 2 Sam. 14:25, 26).

■ **1:7 Joab the son of Zeruiah.** Joab was the commander of the army of Israel and one of David's longstanding supporters (2 Sam. 2:13; 8:16; 18:2; 20:10, 23). His relationship with David was strained by his harsh actions in putting down rebellions (2 Sam. 18:5; 19:5–8, 13; 1 Kin. 2:5, 6).

Abiathar the priest. He and Zadok were the two high priests appointed by David (1 Sam. 22:20–22; 2 Sam. 8:17 note).

■ **1:8 Benaiah the son of Jehoiada.** Benaiah was the commander of the Cherethites and Pelethites, mercenary forces who functioned in large measure as David's royal guard (2 Sam. 8:18; 20:7; 23:20; 1 Chr. 18:17).

Nathan the prophet. The most prominent prophet during David's reign (2 Sam. 7:1–17; 12:1–15).

Shimei. A different man than the one referred to in 2 Sam. 16:5–8; 1 Kin. 2:8, 36–46. Perhaps this person is the "Shimei the son of Elah" who was one of Solomon's governors (4:18).

mighty men. See 2 Sam. 23:8–39.

■ **1:9 sacrificed.** Again, Adonijah follows the example of Absalom (2 Sam. 15:7–12; 1:5 note).

En Rogel. This spring was located south of the city. Because of their importance to the city, springs were considered to be an appropriate place for such activity (v. 33; cf. 2 Sam. 17:17).

11 Then Nathan spoke to Bathsheba the mother of Solomon, saying, "Have you not heard that Adonijah the son of [q]Haggith has become king, and David our lord does not know *it?* 12 Come, please, let me now give you advice, that you may save your own life and the life of your son Solomon. 13 Go immediately to King David and say to him, 'Did you not, my lord, O king, swear to your maidservant, saying, [r]"Assuredly your son Solomon shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne"? Why then has Adonijah become king?' 14 Then, while you are still talking there with the king, I also will come in after you and confirm your words."

15 So Bathsheba went into the chamber to the king. (Now the king was very old, and Abishag the Shunammite was serving the king.) 16 And Bathsheba bowed and did homage to the king. Then the king said, "What is your wish?"

17 Then she said to him, "My lord, [s]you swore by the LORD your God to your maidservant, *saying,* 'Assuredly Solomon your son shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne.' 18 So now, look! Adonijah has become king; and now, my lord the king, you do not know about *it.* 19 [t]He has sacrificed oxen and fattened cattle and sheep in abundance, and has invited all the sons of the king, Abiathar the priest, and Joab the commander of the army; but Solomon your servant he has not invited. 20 And as for you, my lord, O king, the eyes of all Israel *are* on you, that you should tell them who will sit on the throne of my lord the king after him. 21 Otherwise it will happen, when my lord the king [u]rests with his fathers, that I and my son Solomon will be counted as offenders."

22 And just then, while she was still talking with the king, Nathan the prophet also came in. 23 So they told the king, saying, "Here is Nathan the prophet." And when he came in before the king, he bowed down before the king with his face to the ground. 24 And Nathan said, "My lord, O king, have you said, 'Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit on my throne'? 25 [v]For he has gone down today, and has sacrificed oxen and fattened cattle and sheep in abundance, and has invited all the king's sons, and the commanders of the army, and Abiathar the priest; and look! They are eating and drinking before him; and they say, [w]'*Long*[g] live King Adonijah!' 26 But he has not invited me—me your servant—nor Zadok the priest, nor Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, nor your servant Solomon. 27 Has this thing been done by my lord the king, and you have not told your servant who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?"

David Proclaims Solomon King

28 Then King David answered and said, "Call Bathsheba to me." So she came into the king's presence and stood before the king. 29 And the king took an oath and said, [x]"*As* the LORD lives, who has redeemed my life from every distress, 30 [y]just as I swore to you by the LORD God of Israel, saying, 'Assuredly Solomon your son shall be king after me, and he shall sit on my throne in my place,' so I certainly will do this day."

31 Then Bathsheba bowed with *her* face to the earth, and paid homage to the king, and said, [z]"Let my lord King David live forever!"

32 And King David said, "Call to me Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada." So they came before the king. 33 The king also said to them, [a]"Take with you the servants of your lord, and have Solomon my son ride on my own [b]mule, and take him down

11 [q]2 Sam. 3:4

13 [r]1 Kin. 1:30; 1 Chr. 22:9–13

17 [s]1 Kin. 1:13, 30

19 [t]1 Kin. 1:7–9, 25

21 [u]Deut. 31:16; 2 Sam. 7:12; 1 Kin. 2:10

25 [v]1 Kin. 1:9, 19 [w]1 Sam. 10:24 [g]Lit. *Let King Adonijah live*

29 [x]2 Sam. 4:9; 12:5

30 [y]1 Kin. 1:13, 17

31 [z]Neh. 2:3; Dan. 2:4; 3:9

33 [a]2 Sam. 20:6 [b]Esth. 6:8

■ **1:11 Bathsheba the mother of Solomon.** Queen mothers could play an influential role in the affairs of state (2:19; 15:13; 2 Kin. 10:13). As Solomon's mother, Bathsheba had a major interest in seeing that Adonijah was thwarted in his plans to become king.

■ **1:12 save your own life and the life of your son.** Since contenders for the throne in the ancient Near East sometimes sought to consolidate their own positions by eliminating all potential rivals, Nathan's advice conveys a sense of urgency (cf. 15:29; 2 Kin. 10:11; 11:1).

■ **1:13 Why then has Adonijah become king.** Nathan's advice plays on the ambiguity and instability inherent during a coup attempt. Actually David is still king, but Nathan's words underscore the fact that Adonijah has also publicly claimed this status (vv. 5, 9). By having both Bathsheba and himself speak with David, Nathan underscores the gravity of the situation to the "very old" king (v. 15).

■ **1:17 you swore.** In ancient Israel an oath taken in the Lord's name constituted a sacred obligation and, as such, was considered inviolable (Ex. 20:7; Lev. 19:12; Josh. 9:15, 18, 20; Judg. 11:30, 35; Eccl. 5:4–7).

■ **1:20 tell them who will sit on the throne.** Only a public declaration that Solomon will succeed David as king will suffice to turn back Adonijah's revolt.

■ **1:24–27 have you said.** Nathan incisively attacks the issue. Either David has privately affirmed Adonijah as heir apparent (and hence Nathan, Zadok, and Benaiah have been shunned), or David has not done so (and hence Adonijah has rebelled against his own father).

■ **1:30 Solomon your son shall be king after me.** Solomon will be the "seed" through whom God will fulfill His promise of establishing "the throne of his kingdom forever" (2 Sam. 7:12, 13).

■ **1:33 Solomon . . . on my own mule.** Mules and donkeys were used as mounts of royalty (Judg. 10:4; 2 Sam. 13:29; 18:9; Zech. 9:9). David is therefore making a public declaration that Solomon is the heir.

Gihon. The Gihon spring, located about one-half mile north of En Rogel (v. 9), was a major supply of water for Jerusalem (2 Chr. 32:30; 33:14). Due to topography, En Rogel is not visible from Gihon; however, the two are within earshot (v. 41).

to [c]Gihon.[g] 34 There let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet [d]anoint him king over Israel; and [e]blow the horn, and say, [1]'*Long* live King Solomon!' 35 Then you shall come up after him, and he shall come and sit on my throne, and he shall be king in my place. For I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and Judah."

36 Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king and said, [f]"Amen! May the LORD God of my lord the king say so *too*. 37 [g]As the LORD has been with my lord the king, even so may He be with Solomon, and [h]make his throne greater than the throne of my lord King David."

38 So Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, [i]Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the [j]Cherethites, and the Pelethites went down and had Solomon ride on King David's mule, and took him to Gihon. 39 Then Zadok the priest took a horn of [k]oil from the tabernacle and [l]anointed Solomon. And they blew the horn, [m]and all the people said, [2]"*Long* live King Solomon!" 40 And all the people went up after him; and the people played the flutes and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth *seemed to* split with their sound.

41 Now Adonijah and all the guests who *were* with him heard *it* as they finished eating. And when Joab heard the sound of the horn, he said, "Why *is* the city in such a noisy uproar?" 42 While he was still speaking, there came [n]Jonathan, the son of Abiathar the priest. And Adonijah said to him, "Come in, for [o]you *are* a prominent man, and bring good news."

43 Then Jonathan answered and said to Adonijah, "No! Our lord King David has made Solomon king. 44 The king has sent with him Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the Cherethites, and the Pelethites; and they have made him ride on the king's mule. 45 So Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king at Gihon; and they have gone up from there rejoicing, so that the city is in an uproar. This *is* the noise that you have heard. 46 Also Solomon [p]sits on the throne of the kingdom. 47 And moreover the king's servants have gone to bless our lord King David, saying, [q]'May God make the name of Solomon better than your name, and may He make his throne greater than your throne.' [r]Then the king bowed himself on the bed. 48 Also the king said thus, 'Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel, who has [s]given *one* to sit on my throne this day, while my eyes see [t]*it!*' "

49 So all the guests who were with Adonijah were afraid, and arose, and each one went his way.

50 Now Adonijah was afraid of Solomon; so he arose, and went and [u]took hold of the horns of the altar. 51 And it was told Solomon, saying, "Indeed Adonijah is afraid of King Solomon; for look, he has taken hold of the horns of the altar, saying, 'Let King Solomon swear to me today that he will not put his servant to death with the sword.' "

52 Then Solomon said, "If he proves himself a worthy man, [v]not one hair of him shall fall to the earth; but if wickedness is found in him, he shall die." 53 So King Solomon sent them to bring him down from the altar. And he came and fell down before King Solomon; and Solomon said to him, "Go to your house."

David's Instructions to Solomon

2 Now [a]the days of David drew near that he should die, and he [1]charged Solomon his son, saying: 2 [b]"I go the way of all the earth; [c]be strong, therefore, and prove yourself a man.

33 [c]2 Chr. 32:30; 33:14 [g]A spring east of Jerusalem in the Kidron Valley

34 [d]1 Sam. 10:1; 16:3, 12 [e]2 Sam. 15:10 [1]Lit. *Let King Solomon live*

36 [f]Jer. 28:6

37 [g]1 Sam. 20:13 [h]1 Kin. 1:47

38 [i]2 Sam. 8:18; 23:20–23 [j]2 Sam. 20:7

39 [k]Ps. 89:20 [l]1 Chr. 29:22 [m]1 Sam. 10:24 [2]Lit. *Let King Solomon live*

42 [n]2 Sam. 17:17, 20 [o]2 Sam. 18:27

46 [p]1 Chr. 29:23

47 [q]1 Kin. 1:37 [r]Gen. 47:31

48 [s]1 Kin. 3:6 [t]2 Sam. 7:12

50 [u]1 Kin. 2:28

52 [v]1 Sam. 14:45

CHAPTER 2

1 [a]Gen. 47:29 [1]*commanded*

2 [b]Josh. 23:14 [c]Deut. 31:7, 23

■ **1:34 anoint him king over Israel.** Priests (Ex. 28:41; 29:4–9; Lev. 4:3, 5, 16), kings (1 Sam. 2:10; 9:16; 10:1), and occasionally prophets (1 Kin. 19:16), were anointed in ancient Israel. The Hebrew for "anointed" became a technical term for the Lord's anointed, usually with royal connotations. The title is usually transliterated "messiah." The Greek word for "anointed" is *Christos* (English "Christ," Matt. 1:17). Although Solomon received God's promises to David, those promises were fully realized only with the coming of Jesus Christ.

blow the horn, and say, 'Long live King Solomon!' A public celebration of Solomon's new status as crown prince (cf. 1 Sam. 10:24; 2 Sam. 15:10; 16:16; 2 Kin. 9:13; 11:12).

■ **1:35 Israel and Judah.** Although made up of twelve tribes, the nation was composed of two major units, Israel in the north and Judah in the south. When David became king, he had to command assent from both Judah (2 Sam. 2:4) and Israel (2 Sam. 5:3). As heir to the Davidic dynasty, Solomon became king of both areas at once.

■ **1:38 Cherethites, and the Pelethites.** See note on v. 8.

■ **1:39 Zadok the priest.** In ancient Israel both priests and prophets could officiate at the anointing of a king (1 Sam. 9:16; 16:12; 2 Kin. 9:1–3; 11:12).

tabernacle. A reference to the tent David pitched (2 Sam. 6:17) to house the ark of the covenant (Ex. 37:1–9), not the same as the tabernacle of Moses (Ex. 35:4–29; 36:8–38; 1 Kin. 3:4; 1 Chr. 16:39; 21:29).

■ **1:41 Adonijah . . . heard it.** See note on v. 33.

■ **1:47 the king bowed himself.** David praises God (v. 48), because his prayer for succession has been granted (cf. Gen. 47:31).

■ **1:50 horns of the altar.** These were projections resembling horns at the four corners on the top of the altar (Ex. 27:2; 29:12; Lev. 4:7; Ps. 118:27). The place of sacrifice was sacred, and Adonijah was seeking sanctuary there before God in the hope that he would not be killed (Ex. 21:12–14; 1 Kin. 2:28–34).

■ **1:52 If he proves himself.** Solomon spares Adonijah on condition that he conduct himself as a loyal citizen of Solomon's kingdom.

■ **2:1 he charged Solomon.** David, like Jacob (Gen. 49), Moses (Deut. 31:1–8), Joshua (Josh. 23), and Samuel (1 Sam. 12) before him, gives a final speech before his death. These speeches mark the transition from one era to another and the transfer of authority.

■ **2:2 the way of all the earth.** That is, the grave (Josh. 23:14).

The Kings of Israel and Judah

The United Kingdom
Saul 1050–1010 B.C.
David 1010–970 B.C.
Solomon 970–930 B.C.

The Divided Kingdom

Judah		Israel	
Rehoboam	930–913	Jeroboam I	930–909
Abijah	913–910	Nadab	909–908
Asa	910–869	Baasha	908–886
		Elah	886–885
		Zimri	885
Jehoshaphat	872–848	Tibni	885–880
		Omri	885–874
		Ahab	874–853
		Ahaziah	853–852
Jehoram	848–841	Joram	852–841
Ahaziah	841	Jehu	841–814
Athaliah	841–835		
Joash	835–796		
		Jehoahaz	814–798
Amaziah	796–767	Jehoash	798–782
Azariah	792–740	Jeroboam II	793–753
Jotham	750–735	Zechariah	753
		Shallum	752
Ahaz	735–715	Menahem	752–742
		Pekahiah	742–740
Hezekiah	715–686	Pekah	752–732
		Hoshea	732–722
Manasseh	697–642		
Amon	642–640		
Josiah	640–609		
Jehoahaz	609		
Jehoiakim	609–598		
Jehoiachin	598–597		
Zedekiah	597–586		

3 [d][Deut. 29:9]
4 [e]2 Sam. 7:25 [f][Ps. 132:12] [g]2 Kin. 20:3 [h]2 Sam. 7:12, 13
5 [i]2 Sam. 3:39; 18:5, 12, 14 [j]2 Sam. 3:27 [k]2 Sam. 20:10
6 [l]1 Kin. 2:9
7 [m]2 Sam. 19:31–39 [n]2 Sam. 9:7, 10; 19:28 [o]2 Sam. 17:17–29
8 [p]2 Sam. 16:5–13 [q]2 Sam. 19:18 [r]2 Sam. 19:23
9 [s]Ex. 20:7 [t]Gen. 42:38; 44:31
10 [u]Acts 2:29; 13:36 [v]2 Sam. 5:7 [2]Died and joined his ancestors
11 [w]2 Sam. 5:4, 5
12 [x]1 Chr. 29:23 [y]2 Chr. 1:1
13 [z]1 Sam. 16:4, 5
15 [a]1 Kin. 1:11, 18 [b][Dan. 2:21]
16 [3]Lit. *turn away the face*
17 [c]1 Kin. 1:3, 4

3 And keep the charge of the LORD your God: to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may [d]prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn; 4 that the LORD may [e]fulfill His word which He spoke concerning me, saying, [f]'If your sons take heed to their way, to [g]walk before Me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul,' He said, [h]'you shall not lack a man on the throne of Israel.'

5 "Moreover you know also what Joab the son of Zeruiah [i]did to me, *and* what he did to the two commanders of the armies of Israel, to [j]Abner the son of Ner and [k]Amasa the son of Jether, whom he killed. And he shed the blood of war in peacetime, and put the blood of war on his belt that *was* around his waist, and on his sandals that *were* on his feet. 6 Therefore do [l]according to your wisdom, and do not let his gray hair go down to the grave in peace.

7 "But show kindness to the sons of [m]Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be among those who [n]eat at your table, for so [o]they came to me when I fled from Absalom your brother.

8 "And see, *you have* with you [p]Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite from Bahurim, who cursed me with a malicious curse in the day when I went to Mahanaim. But [q]he came down to meet me at the Jordan, and [r]I swore to him by the LORD, saying, 'I will not put you to death with the sword.' 9 Now therefore, [s]do not hold him guiltless, for you *are* a wise man and know what you ought to do to him; but [t]bring his gray hair down to the grave with blood."

Death of David

10 So [u]David [2]rested with his fathers, and was buried in [v]the City of David. 11 The period that David [w]reigned over Israel *was* forty years; seven years he reigned in Hebron, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years. 12 [x]Then Solomon sat on the throne of his father David; and his kingdom was [y]firmly established.

Solomon Executes Adonijah

13 Now Adonijah the son of Haggith came to Bathsheba the mother of Solomon. So she said, [z]"Do you come peaceably?"

And he said, "Peaceably." 14 Moreover he said, "I have something *to say* to you."

And she said, "Say it."

15 Then he said, "You know that the kingdom was [a]mine, and all Israel had set their expectations on me, that I should reign. However, the kingdom has been turned over, and has become my brother's; for [b]it was his from the LORD. 16 Now I ask one petition of you; do not [3]deny me."

And she said to him, "Say it."

17 Then he said, "Please speak to King Solomon, for he will not refuse you, that he may give me [c]Abishag the Shunammite as wife."

be strong, . . . prove yourself a man. These instructions were suitable either before a warrior went into battle or before a person undertook a difficult task (Deut. 31:7, 23; Josh. 1:6, 7, 9, 18; 1 Sam. 4:9).

■ **2:3 walk in His ways, to keep His statutes.** David admonishes Solomon to be faithful to God and so experience blessing (cf. Deut. 4:40; 6:2; 8:6, 11; 10:12—11:1).

■ **2:4 If your sons take heed to their way.** David's instructions to Solomon echo God's promises to David through the prophet Nathan in 2 Sam. 7:8–16 and reaffirmed in David's prayer in 2 Sam. 7:18–29. Here David underscores the need for covenant faithfulness (cf. 8:25, 26; 9:4, 5).

with all their heart and . . . soul. These words are an allusion to Deut. 4:29 and 6:5. When Jesus is asked what is the greatest commandment, He too quotes from Deut. 6:5 (Matt. 22:35–40).

■ **2:5 Joab the son of Zeruiah.** Joab was the most successful, but also the most unscrupulous, of David's generals (1:7 note). David calls on Solomon to see to it that the crimes Joab committed against his rivals "Abner the son of Ner" (2 Sam. 3:22–30) and "Amasa the son of Jether" (2 Sam. 20:4–10) do not go unpunished. The way Joab tricked Abner and Amasa and murdered them was unlawful (Deut. 19:1–13; 21:1–9).

■ **2:7 eat at your table.** That is, enjoy a position of honor at the court and share in the bounty of the state (2 Sam. 9:7; 19:28; 2 Kin. 25:29; Neh. 5:17).

■ **2:8 Shimei the son of Gera.** He had cursed and stoned David when the latter was running from his son Absalom (2 Sam. 16:5–8). Shimei later begged for pardon and David promised that Shimei would not die (2 Sam. 19:16–23).

■ **2:9 do not hold him guiltless.** Cursing a ruler violated God's law (Ex. 22:28; cf. 1 Kin. 21:10).

■ **2:10 the City of David.** One of David's major accomplishments was to capture Jerusalem, which became the nation's capital. The city afterward bore the name of David in his honor (2 Sam. 5:7).

■ **2:11 David reigned . . . forty years.** David ruled approximately 1010—970 B.C. During his last years he may have shared the throne with Solomon (1:38–40).

■ **2:15 all Israel . . . that I should reign.** This was wishful thinking on Adonijah's part (1:7–10).

it was his from the LORD. Adonijah claims to recognize the sanctity of Solomon's reign, but his request for Abishag suggests otherwise.

■ **2:17 give me Abishag the Shunammite.** In the ancient Near East, a large court and family was a sign of royal status. Abishag remained a virgin while she stayed with David (1:1–4) and so Adonijah would not be technically breaking the law by marrying her (Deut. 22:30). Nonetheless, should Adonijah prove successful in marrying Abishag from David's harem, this would constitute a claim to the throne and an open affront to Solomon's power (cf. 2 Sam. 3:6, 7; 12:7, 8; 16:20–24).

18 So Bathsheba said, "Very well, I will speak for you to the king."

19 Bathsheba therefore went to King Solomon, to speak to him for Adonijah. And the king rose up to meet her and [d]bowed down to her, and sat down on his throne and had a throne set for the king's mother; [e]so she sat at his right hand. 20 Then she said, "I desire one small petition of you; do not [4]refuse me."

And the king said to her, "Ask it, my mother, for I will not refuse you."

21 So she said, "Let Abishag the Shunammite be given to Adonijah your brother as wife."

22 And King Solomon answered and said to his mother, "Now why do you ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? Ask for him the kingdom also—for he *is* my [f]older brother—for him, and for [g]Abiathar the priest, and for Joab the son of Zeruiah." 23 Then King Solomon swore by the LORD, saying, [h]"May God do so to me, and more also, if Adonijah has not spoken this word against his own life! 24 Now therefore, *as* the LORD lives, who has confirmed me and set me on the throne of David my father, and who has established a [5]house for me, as He [i]promised, Adonijah shall be put to death today!"

25 So King Solomon sent by the hand of [j]Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; and he struck him down, and he died.

Abiathar Exiled, Joab Executed

26 And to Abiathar the priest the king said, "Go to [k]Anathoth, to your own fields, for [6]you *are* deserving of death; but I will not put you to death at this time, [l]because you carried the ark of the Lord GOD before my father David, and because you were afflicted every time my father was afflicted." 27 So Solomon removed Abiathar from being priest to the LORD, that he might [m]fulfill the word of the LORD which He spoke concerning the house of Eli at Shiloh.

28 Then news came to Joab, for Joab [n]had defected to Adonijah, though he had not defected to Absalom. So Joab fled to the tabernacle of the LORD, and [o]took hold of the horns of the altar. 29 And King Solomon was told, "Joab has fled to the tabernacle of the LORD; there *he is,* by the altar." Then Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, saying, "Go, [p]strike him down." 30 So Benaiah went to the tabernacle of the LORD, and said to him, "Thus says the king, [q]'Come out!' "

And he said, "No, but I will die here." And Benaiah brought back word to the king, saying, "Thus said Joab, and thus he answered me."

31 Then the king said to him, [r]"Do as he has said, and strike him down and bury him, [s]that you may take away from me and from the house of my father the innocent blood which Joab shed. 32 So the LORD [t]will return his [7]blood on his head, because he struck down two men more righteous [u]and better than he, and killed them with the sword—[v]Abner the son of Ner, the commander of the army of Israel, and [w]Amasa the son of Jether, the commander of the army of Judah—though my father David did not know *it.* 33 Their blood shall therefore return upon the head of Joab and [x]upon the head of his descendants forever. [y]But upon David and his descendants, upon his house and his throne, there shall be peace forever from the LORD."

34 So Benaiah the son of Jehoiada went up and struck and killed him; and he was buried in his own house in the wilderness. 35 The king put Benaiah the son of Jehoiada in his place over the army, and the king put [z]Zadok the priest in the place of [a]Abiathar.

19 [d][Ex. 20:12] [e]Ps. 45:9

20 [4]Lit. *turn away the face*

22 [f]1 Kin. 1:6; 2:15; 1 Chr. 3:2, 5 [g]1 Kin. 1:7

23 [h]Ruth 1:17

24 [i]2 Sam. 7:11, 13; 1 Chr. 22:10 [5]Royal dynasty

25 [j]2 Sam. 8:18; 1 Kin. 4:4

26 [k]Josh. 21:18; Jer. 1:1 [l]1 Sam. 22:23; 23:6; 2 Sam. 15:14, 29 [6]Lit. *you are a man of death*

27 [m]1 Sam. 2:31–35

28 [n]1 Kin. 1:7 [o]1 Kin. 1:50

29 [p]1 Kin. 2:5, 6

30 [q][Ex. 21:14]

31 [r][Ex. 21:14] [s][Num. 35:33; Deut. 19:13; 21:8, 9]

32 [t][Gen. 9:6]; Judg. 9:24, 57 [u]2 Chr. 21:13, 14 [v]2 Sam. 3:27 [w]2 Sam. 20:9, 10 [7]Or *bloodshed*

33 [x]2 Sam. 3:29 [y][Prov. 25:5]

35 [z]1 Sam. 2:35; 1 Kin. 4:4; 1 Chr. 6:53; 24:3; 29:22 [a]1 Kin. 2:27

■ **2:18–21** Bathsheba accedes to Adonijah's request. It is unclear whether she was taken in by Adonijah's ruse, or whether she is merely playing along, confident of what Solomon's response will be.

■ **2:19 his right hand.** The "right hand" was a position of high honor (Ps. 110:1; Matt. 20:21).

■ **2:24 confirmed.** See v. 12.

a house for me, as He promised. According to 1 Kin. 11:42 and 14:21, Solomon's son Rehoboam was born about a year before Solomon came to power (cf. 1 Chr. 22:9, 10).

■ **2:26** Because Abiathar, as a holy priest, "carried the ark" (2 Sam. 15:24, 29) and shared David's hardships (1 Sam. 22:20–23; 23:6–9; 30:7; 2 Sam. 17:15; 19:11), Solomon tempers the penalty he metes out to Abiathar, banishing him to Anathoth (his ancestral home). Anathoth was four miles from Jerusalem.

■ **2:27 fulfill the word.** *The writer of Kings is fond of pointing out God's* fulfillment of earlier promises (8:20; 12:15; 15:29; 16:12). In this case, the prophecy of a man of God concerning the demise and removal of Eli's descendants from priestly office (1 Sam. 2:30–36) is realized during the reign of Solomon.

■ **2:28** Having heard of Adonijah's execution and Abiathar's banishment, Joab flees to "the tabernacle of the LORD" (1:39 note), and grasps "the horns of the altar" (1:50 note) in the vain hope of escaping retribution.

■ **2:29 Go, strike him down.** Joab could have found asylum at the altar only if he had accidentally caused the death of another (Ex. 21:14). Instead, Joab's role in Adonijah's sedition gave Solomon the opportunity to honor one of his father's last requests (vv. 5, 6; 1:7 note).

■ **2:32** Despite their earlier loyalties to Saul and Absalom, Abner became commander of the army of Israel (2 Sam. 2:8, 9) and Amasa commander of the army of Judah (2 Sam. 19:13; 20:4–10); hence, they were perceived by Joab as threats to his control of the military.

■ **2:35** Both Zadok and Abiathar previously had played leading roles in *Israel as priests appointed by David (2 Sam. 8:17 note). Zadok and his* descendants now become the sole high priestly family in Israel (1 Sam. 2:35).

36 [b]1 Kin. 2:8

37 [c]2 Sam. 15:23 [d]Josh. 2:19 [e]Or *bloodshed*

39 [e]1 Sam. 27:2

44 [f]2 Sam. 16:5–13 [g]1 Sam. 25:39

45 [h][Prov. 25:5]

46 [i]2 Chr. 1:1

CHAPTER 3

1 [a]1 Kin. 7:8; 9:24 [b]2 Sam. 5:7 [c]1 Kin. 7:1 [d]1 Kin. 6 [e]1 Kin. 9:15, 19 [f]*an alliance*

2 [f][Deut. 12:2–5, 13, 14]

3 [g][Rom. 8:28] [h][1 Kin. 3:6, 14]

4 [i]2 Chr. 1:3 [j]1 Chr. 16:39; 21:29

5 [k]1 Kin. 9:2; 11:9 [l]Num. 12:6

6 [m]2 Chr. 1:8 [n]1 Kin. 2:4; 9:4 [o]1 Kin. 1:48

7 [p]Jer. 1:6, 7 [q]Num. 27:17

8 [r][Deut. 7:6] [s]Gen. 13:6; 15:5; 22:17

9 [t]2 Chr. 1:10 [u]Ps. 72:1, 2 [v][Heb. 5:14] [z]Lit. *hearing*

Shimei Executed

36 Then the king sent and called for [b]Shimei, and said to him, "Build yourself a house in Jerusalem and dwell there, and do not go out from there anywhere. 37 For it shall be, on the day you go out and cross [c]the Brook Kidron, know for certain you shall surely die; [d]your [g]blood shall be on your own head."

38 And Shimei said to the king, "The saying *is* good. As my lord the king has said, so your servant will do." So Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem many days.

39 Now it happened at the end of three years, that two slaves of Shimei ran away to [e]Achish the son of Maachah, king of Gath. And they told Shimei, saying, "Look, your slaves *are* in Gath!" 40 So Shimei arose, saddled his donkey, and went to Achish at Gath to seek his slaves. And Shimei went and brought his slaves from Gath. 41 And Solomon was told that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath and had come back. 42 Then the king sent and called for Shimei, and said to him, "Did I not make you swear by the LORD, and warn you, saying, 'Know for certain that on the day you go out and travel anywhere, you shall surely die'? And you said to me, 'The word I have heard *is* good.' 43 Why then have you not kept the oath of the LORD and the commandment that I gave you?" 44 The king said moreover to Shimei, "You know, as your heart acknowledges, [f]all the wickedness that you did to my father David; therefore the LORD will [g]return your wickedness on your own head. 45 But King Solomon *shall be* blessed, and [h]the throne of David shall be established before the LORD forever."

46 So the king commanded Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; and he went out and struck him down, and he died. Thus the [i]kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon.

Solomon Requests Wisdom

3 Now [a]Solomon made [f]a treaty with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and married Pharaoh's daughter; then he brought her [b]to the City of David until he had finished building his [c]own house, and [d]the house of the LORD, and [e]the wall all around Jerusalem. 2 [f]Meanwhile the people sacrificed at the high places, because there was no house built for the name of the LORD until those days. 3 And Solomon [g]loved the LORD, [h]walking in the statutes of his father David, except that he sacrificed and burned incense at the high places.

4 Now [i]the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, [j]for that *was* the great high place: Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. 5 [k]At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon [l]in a dream by night; and God said, "Ask! What shall I give you?"

6 [m]And Solomon said: "You have shown great mercy to Your servant David my father, because he [n]walked before You in truth, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with You; You have continued this great kindness for him, and You [o]have given him a son to sit on his throne, as *it is* this day. 7 Now, O LORD my God, You have made Your servant king instead of my father David, but I *am* a [p]little child; I do not know *how* [q]to go out or come in. 8 And Your servant *is* in the midst of Your people whom You [r]have chosen, a great people, [s]too numerous to be numbered or counted. 9 [t]Therefore give to Your servant an [z]understanding heart [u]to judge Your people, that I may [v]discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours?"

■ **2:39 Gath.** One of the five major Philistine cities (Josh. 13:3; 1 Sam. 21:11; 27:2).

■ **3:1 a treaty with Pharaoh.** The name of the pharaoh mentioned here is not known, but could be one of the last monarchs of the twenty-first Egyptian dynasty. This marriage alliance attests the international prominence of Israel during the period of the united monarchy.

■ **3:2 sacrificed at the high places.** When the Israelites entered the land of Canaan, they were supposed to destroy all the hilltop shrines of the Canaanites (Num. 33:52; Deut. 7:5; 12:3) and build instead their own centers of worship at divinely approved sites (Ex. 20:24; Judg. 6:24; 13:19; 1 Sam. 7:17; 9:12, 13). Worship at these sites was acceptable until the central sanctuary discussed at length in Deut. 12 was built.

■ **3:3 the statutes.** That is, the stipulations of the Mosaic covenant (2:3 note).

except that. The author will return to this exception later in Solomon's reign (11:1–13). Even after the temple was built, Solomon continued to worship indiscriminately at the high places.

■ **3:4 the great high place.** Chronicles says that the tabernacle of Moses and the ancient bronze altar were located at Gibeon (1 Chr. 21:29; 2 Chr. 1:2–6).

burnt offerings. Used for thanksgiving and atonement, burnt offerings were the most common type of offering. The animal was burned completely except for the hide, which was taken by the priest (Lev. 7:8).

■ **3:5 dream.** This dream sets the stage for the first major period in Solomon's tenure as king. For dreams as vehicles of revelation in the Bible, see Gen. 26:24; 28:12; 31:11; 46:2; Num. 12:6; Judg. 7:13; Dan. 2:4; 7:1; Matt. 1:20; 2:12, 19, 22.

■ **3:7 little child.** Solomon was possibly about twenty years old at his accession. He was young and inexperienced, but was humble enough to admit it (cf. Jer. 1:6).

■ **3:8 a great people.** Since the Exodus from Egypt, the Israelites had grown in population to the point that the promises to Abraham (Gen. 12:2; 13:16; 22:17, 18) and Jacob (Gen. 32:12) were now being realized. This large population faced its leader with considerable challenges.

10 The speech pleased the LORD, that Solomon had asked this thing. 11 Then God said to him: "Because you have asked this thing, and have [w]not asked long life for yourself, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have asked the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern justice, 12 [x]behold, I have done according to your words; [y]see, I have given you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you. 13 And I have also [z]given you what you have not asked: both [a]riches and honor, so that there shall not be anyone like you among the kings all your days. 14 So [b]if you walk in My ways, to keep My statutes and My commandments, [c]as your father David walked, then I will [d]lengthen[3] your days."

15 Then Solomon [e]awoke; and indeed it had been a dream. And he came to Jerusalem and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, offered up burnt offerings, offered peace offerings, and [f]made a feast for all his servants.

Solomon's Wise Judgment

16 Now two women *who were* harlots came to the king, and [g]stood before him. 17 And one woman said, "O my lord, this woman and I dwell in the same house; and I gave birth while she *was* in the house. 18 Then it happened, the third day after I had given birth, that this woman also gave birth. And we *were* together; [4]no one *was* with us in the house, except the two of us in the house. 19 And this woman's son died in the night, because she lay on him. 20 So she arose in the middle of the night and took my son from my side, while your maidservant slept, and laid him in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom. 21 And when I rose in the morning to nurse my son, there he was, dead. But when I had examined him in the morning, indeed, he was not my son whom I had borne."

22 Then the other woman said, "No! But the living one *is* my son, and the dead one *is* your son."

And the first woman said, "No! But the dead one *is* your son, and the living one *is* my son."

Thus they spoke before the king.

23 And the king said, "The one says, 'This *is* my son, who lives, and your son *is* the dead one'; and the other says, 'No! But your son *is* the dead one, and my son *is* the living one.' " 24 Then the king said, "Bring me a sword." So they brought a sword before the king. 25 And the king said, "Divide the living child in two, and give half to one, and half to the other."

26 Then the woman whose son *was* living spoke to the king, for [h]she yearned with compassion for her son; and she said, "O my lord, give her the living child, and by no means kill him!"

But the other said, "Let him be neither mine nor yours, *but* divide *him.*"

27 So the king answered and said, "Give the first woman the living child, and by no means kill him; she *is* his mother."

28 And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had rendered; and they feared the king, for they saw that the [i]wisdom of God *was* in him to administer justice.

Solomon's Administration

4 So King Solomon was king over all Israel. 2 And these *were* his officials: Azariah the son of Zadok, the priest; 3 Elihoreph and Ahijah, the sons of Shisha, [1]scribes; [a]Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud, the recorder; 4 [b]Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, over the army; Zadok and [c]Abiathar, the

11 [w][James 4:3]

12 [x][1 John 5:14, 15] [y]1 Kin. 4:29–31; 5:12; 10:24; Eccl. 1:16

13 [z][Matt. 6:33; Eph. 3:20] [a]1 Kin. 4:21, 24; 10:23; 1 Chr. 29:12

14 [b][1 Kin. 6:12] [c]1 Kin. 15:5 [d]Ps. 91:16; Prov. 3:2 [3]*prolong*

15 [e]Gen. 41:7 [f]Gen. 40:20; 1 Kin. 8:65; Esth. 1:3; Dan. 5:1; Mark 6:21

16 [g]Num. 27:2

18 [4]Lit. *no stranger*

26 [h]Gen. 43:30; Is. 49:15; Jer. 31:20; Hos. 11:8

28 [i]1 Kin. 3:9, 11, 12; 2 Chr. 1:12; Dan. 1:17; [Col. 2:2, 3]

CHAPTER 4

3 [a]2 Sam. 8:16; 20:24 [1]*secretaries*

4 [b]1 Kin. 2:35 [c]1 Kin. 2:27

■ **3:10 pleased the LORD.** Solomon did not ask for the usual wishes of an oriental king: long life, wealth, or the death of his enemies (v. 11).

■ **3:12 not been anyone like you.** Solomon's wisdom is incomparable in the history of Israel (4:29–34; 10:6–9).

■ **3:14 if you walk in My ways . . . I will lengthen your days.** Unlike the other divine gifts, a long life is contingent upon Solomon's continuing faithfulness to God—a condition he will fail to fulfill (11:1–13).

■ **3:15** In gratitude to God, Solomon returns to Jerusalem, stands before the ark, the central symbol of God's presence (Ex. 37:1–9), and offers burnt offerings (v. 4 note) and peace offerings (Lev. 3).

■ **3:16 came to the king.** In the ancient Near East it was expected of a king that he would hear special cases and appeals (2 Sam. 14:4–21; 15:1). In this way the monarch was directly responsible to the people.

■ **3:25 give half to one, and half to the other.** A legal tradition in the ancient Near East stipulated that if a judge could not determine who owned a disputed piece of property, he should divide it evenly between the two contestants (cf. Ex. 21:35). Solomon's application of this tradition in this case is brilliant.

■ **3:28 they feared the king.** Solomon's ruling demonstrated that God had indeed given him "wisdom . . . to administer justice" (cf. v. 11; Prov. 16:10).

■ **4:1 all Israel.** Solomon, like David before him, ruled over a united kingdom (1:35 note).

■ **4:2 son.** In Hebrew, the word "son" can mean "descendant" (Gen. 31:28, 43). In this case, Azariah is probably the son of Ahimaaz (1 Chr. 6:8, 9), and thus the grandson of Zadok the priest.

■ **4:4 Zadok and Abiathar.** These were the two leading priests during the reign of David and the beginning of Solomon's reign. Solomon deposed Abiathar for joining Adonijah in his sedition (1:7; 2:27), while Azariah succeeded Zadok as priest during the reign of Solomon (v. 2).

priests; [5] Azariah the son of Nathan, over [d]the officers; Zabud the son of Nathan, [e]a priest *and* [f]the king's friend; [6] Ahishar, over the household; and [g]Adoniram the son of Abda, over the labor force.

[7] And Solomon had twelve governors over all Israel, who provided food for the king and his household; each one made provision for one month of the year. [8] These *are* their names: [2]Ben-Hur, in the mountains of Ephraim; [9] [3]Ben-Deker, in Makaz, Shaalbim, Beth Shemesh, and Elon

5 [d]1 Kin. 4:7 [e]2 Sam. 8:18; 20:26 [f]2 Sam. 15:37; 16:16
6 [g]1 Kin. 5:14
8 [2]Lit. *Son of Hur*
9 [3]Lit. *Son of Deker*

■ **4:5 Nathan.** His identity is unclear. Possibilities include the prophet Nathan (2 Sam. 7:2–17, 12:1–15; 1 Kin. 1:11) and the son of David (2 Sam. 5:14).

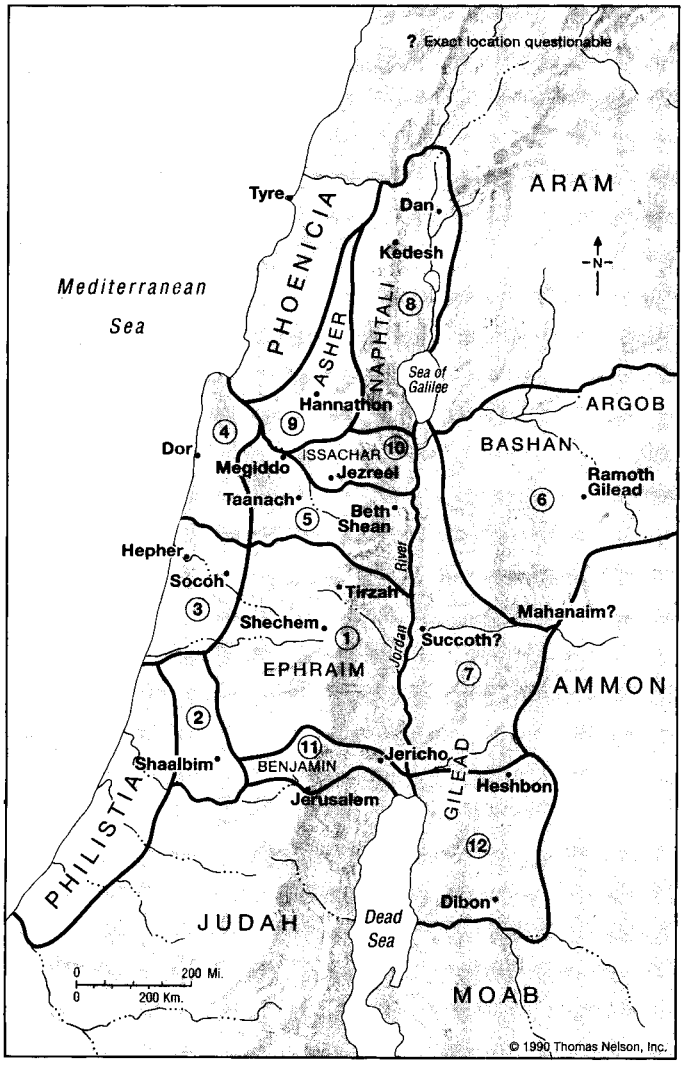
■ **4:6 over the household.** This important post involved administering the palace and overseeing the king's properties (1 Kin. 16:9; 18:3; 2 Kin. 18:18, 37; 19:2).

Adoniram. Also known as "Adoram," he was in charge of forced labor during the reigns of David (2 Sam. 20:24), Solomon, and Rehoboam (12:18).

labor force. This conscripted labor was performed primarily, but not exclusively, by captives of war from defeated nations (5:13–16; 9:15, 23; Num. 31:25–47; Josh. 9:23).

■ **4:7 twelve governors.** The new administrative districts overseen by these governors are not exactly the same as the old Israelite tribal areas, possibly because the tribes varied greatly in population and land holdings, and Solomon desired a steady monthly income for his government.

■ **4:19 Geber . . . Gilead.** For Sihon see Num. 32:33; Deut. 2:24–37.



Solomon's Administrative Districts. The growth and extension of Israel's borders under Solomon's leadership required extensive military expenditures. Coupled with this were ambitious building and commercial projects throughout his expanding kingdom. As a result, Solomon faced an urgent need for ever-increasing revenues.

To address this need, Solomon divided Israel into twelve districts and appointed governors over each district. These governors were responsible for levying and collecting taxes to provide for the needs of Jerusalem and the royal palace. The increasingly heavy taxes upon Israel created major dissension because the region of Judah was exempted from these burdensome taxes. Furthermore, the divisions of the districts violated the old tribal boundaries.

Beth Hanan; 10 [4]Ben-Hesed, in Arubboth; to him *belonged* Sochoh and all the land of Hepher; 11 [5]Ben-Abinadab, *in* all the regions of Dor; he had Taphath the daughter of Solomon as wife; 12 Baana the son of Ahilud, *in* Taanach, Megiddo, and all Beth Shean, which *is* beside Zaretan below Jezreel, from Beth Shean to Abel Meholah, as far as the other side of Jokneam; 13 [6]Ben-Geber, in Ramoth Gilead; to him *belonged* [h]the towns of Jair the son of Manasseh, in Gilead; to him *also belonged* [i]the region of Argob in Bashan—sixty large cities with walls and bronze gate-bars; 14 Ahinadab the son of Iddo, *in* Mahanaim; 15 [j]Ahimaaz, in Naphtali; he also took Basemath the daughter of Solomon as wife; 16 Baanah the son of [k]Hushai, in Asher and Aloth; 17 Jehoshaphat the son of Paruah, in Issachar; 18 [l]Shimei the son of Elah, in Benjamin; 19 Geber the son of Uri, in the land of Gilead, *in* [m]the country of Sihon king of the Amorites, and of Og king of Bashan. *He was* the only governor who *was* in the land.

Prosperity and Wisdom of Solomon's Reign

20 Judah and Israel *were* as numerous [n]as the sand by the sea in multitude, [o]eating and drinking and rejoicing. 21 So [p]Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from [q]the[7] River *to* the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt. [r]*They* brought tribute and served Solomon all the days of his life.

22 [s]Now Solomon's [8]provision for one day was thirty [9]kors of fine flour, sixty kors of meal, 23 ten fatted oxen, twenty oxen from the pastures, and one hundred sheep, besides deer, gazelles, roebucks, and fatted fowl.

24 For he had dominion over all *the region* on this side of [t]the River from Tiphsah even to Gaza, namely over [u]all the kings on this side of the River; and [v]he had peace on every side all around him. 25 And Judah and Israel [w]dwelt[2] safely, [x]each man under his vine and his fig tree, [x]from Dan as far as Beersheba, all the days of Solomon.

26 [y]Solomon had [3]forty thousand stalls of [z]horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen. 27 And [a]these governors, each man in his month, provided food for King Solomon and for all who came to King Solomon's table. There was no lack in their supply. 28 They also brought barley and straw to the proper place, for the horses and steeds, each man according to his charge.

29 And [b]God gave Solomon wisdom and exceedingly great understanding, and largeness of heart like the sand on the seashore. 30 Thus Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the men [c]of the East and all [d]the wisdom of Egypt. 31 For he was [e]wiser than all men—[f]than Ethan the Ezrahite, [g]and Heman, Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol; and his fame was in all the surrounding nations. 32 [h]He spoke three thousand proverbs, and his [i]songs were one thousand and five. 33 Also he spoke of trees, from the cedar tree of Lebanon even to the hyssop that springs out of the wall; he spoke also of animals, of birds, of creeping things, and of fish. 34 And men of all nations, from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom, [j]came to hear the wisdom of Solomon.

32 [h]Eccl. 12:9 [i]Song 1:1 **34** [j]1 Kin. 10:1

10 [4]Lit. *Son of Hesed*

11 [5]Lit. *Son of Abinadab*

13 [h]Num. 32:41 [i]Deut. 3:4 [6]Lit. *Son of Geber*

15 [j]2 Sam. 15:27

16 [k]1 Chr. 27:33

18 [l]1 Kin. 1:8

19 [m]Deut. 3:8–10

20 [n]Gen. 22:17; 32:12 [o]Mic. 4:4

21 [p]Ps. 72:8 [q]Gen. 15:18 [r]Ps. 68:29 [7]The Euphrates

22 [s]Neh. 5:18 [8]Lit. *bread* [9]Each about 5 bushels

24 [t]Ps. 72:11 [u]1 Chr. 22:9 [t]The Euphrates

25 [v][Jer. 23:6] [w][Mic. 4:4] [x]Judg. 20:1 [2]*lived in safety*

26 [y]1 Kin. 10:26 [z][Deut. 17:16] [3]So with MT, most other authorities; some LXX mss. *four thousand;* cf. 2 Chr. 9:25

27 [a]1 Kin. 4:7

29 [b]1 Kin. 3:12

30 [c]Gen. 25:6 [d]Is. 19:11, 12

31 [e]1 Kin. 3:12 [f]1 Chr. 15:19 [g]1 Chr. 2:6

Subsequent to the Israelite capture of Sihon's territory, the Israelites defeated King Og of Bashan and captured all his lands (east of the Sea of Chinneroth; see Num. 32:33; Deut. 3:1–11). Geber was therefore governor over a large district east of the Jordan.

■ **4:20 numerous as the sand by the sea.** This is a fulfillment of the promises to the patriarchs (3:8 note; Gen. 22:17; 32:12).

■ **4:21 as far as the border of Egypt.** The borders of Solomon's kingdom are in essence the borders promised to Abraham (Gen. 15:18; 17:8; Deut. 1:7; 11:24; Josh. 1:4). Hence, in the presentation of Kings, Solomon ruled over an empire representing the long-awaited fulfillment of the patriarchal promises (cf. vv. 24, 25).

■ **4:22 provision for one day.** These were for Solomon's court, palace, and extended family.

■ **4:24 Tiphsah . . . Gaza.** Tiphsah was located on the west bank of the Euphrates, and Gaza is located on the southeastern Mediterranean coast.

peace on every side. David had to fight many wars to secure the kingdom, and Solomon enjoyed the result. Conditions of peace were a prerequisite for building major projects such as the temple and palace (2 Sam. 7:10, 11; 1 Kin. 5:3–5).

■ **4:26 forty thousand stalls.** There are variations in the versions as to how many stalls for chariot horses Solomon had (text note). If the "twelve thousand horsemen" means "twelve thousand horses" then each stall had three horses, the normal complement for a chariot being two primary horses and one reserve. According to 10:26, Solomon had fourteen hundred chariots. Solomon's chariot force and bureaucracy required ample, regular provisions (vv. 27, 28).

■ **4:30 the East.** That is, Mesopotamia to the northeast (Gen. 29:1) and Arabia to the east (Jer. 49:28; Ezek. 25:4, 10).

Egypt. Examples of wisdom literature from both Mesopotamia and Egypt have been discovered and translated.

■ **4:32 proverbs . . . songs.** Solomon was a lover and supporter of wisdom literature, and was himself an accomplished author.

■ **4:33 trees . . . animals . . . birds.** Solomon took a special interest in nature. By writing proverbs Solomon gave order to social relations; by listing fauna and flora, he gave order to the elements of his kingdom.

■ **4:34 men of all nations.** Solomon acquired an international reputation for wisdom. The monarchs of various nations sent emissaries to learn from Solomon's erudition. The Ebla texts from 2350 B.C. mention learned men from many nations "lecturing" in Ebla, showing how early such travel was possible.

CHAPTER 5

1 [a]1 Kin. 5:10, 18; 2 Chr. 2:3 [b]2 Sam. 5:11; 1 Chr. 14:1

2 [c]2 Chr. 2:3

3 [d]1 Chr. 28:2, 3 [e]1 Chr. 22:8; 28:3 [f]Lit. *them*

4 [f]1 Kin. 4:24; 1 Chr. 22:9 [2]*peace* [3]*misfortune*

5 [g]2 Chr. 2:4 [h]2 Sam. 7:12, 13; 1 Kin. 6:38; 1 Chr. 17:12; 22:10; 28:6; 2 Chr. 6:2 [4]Lit. *I am saying*

6 [i]2 Chr. 2:8, 10

9 [j]Ezra 3:7 [k]Ezek. 27:17; Acts 12:20

11 [l]2 Chr. 2:10 [5]Each about 5 bushels [6]So with MT, Tg., Vg.; LXX, Syr. *twenty thousand kors*

12 [m]1 Kin. 3:12

14 [n]1 Kin. 12:18

15 [o]1 Kin. 9:20–22; 2 Chr. 2:17, 18

16 [p]1 Kin. 9:23 [7]So with MT, Tg., Vg.; LXX *six hundred*

17 [q]1 Kin. 6:7; 1 Chr. 22:2 [8]Lit. *house*

Solomon Prepares to Build the Temple

5 Now [a]Hiram king of Tyre sent his servants to Solomon, because he heard that they had anointed him king in place of his father, [b]for Hiram had always loved David. 2 Then [c]Solomon sent to Hiram, saying:

3 [d]"You know how my father David could not build a house for the name of the LORD his God [e]because of the wars which were fought against him on every side, until the LORD put [1]*his foes* under the soles of his feet.

4 But now the LORD my God has given me [f]rest[2] on every side; *there is* neither adversary nor [3]evil occurrence.

5 [g]And behold, [4]I propose to build a house for the name of the LORD my God, [h]as the LORD spoke to my father David, saying, 'Your son, whom I will set on your throne in your place, he shall build the house for My name.'

6 Now therefore, command that they cut down [i]cedars for me from Lebanon; and my servants will be with your servants, and I will pay you wages for your servants according to whatever you say. For you know *there is* none among us who has skill to cut timber like the Sidonians."

7 So it was, when Hiram heard the words of Solomon, that he rejoiced greatly and said,

"Blessed *be* the LORD this day, for He has given David a wise son over this great people!"

8 Then Hiram sent to Solomon, saying:

"I have considered *the message* which you sent me, *and* I will do all you desire concerning the cedar and cypress logs.

9 My servants shall bring *them* down [j]from Lebanon to the sea; I will float them in rafts by sea to the place you indicate to me, and will have them broken apart there; then you can take *them* away. And you shall fulfill my desire [k]by giving food for my household."

10 Then Hiram gave Solomon cedar and cypress logs *according to* all his desire. 11 [l]And Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand [5]kors of wheat *as* food for his household, and [6]twenty kors of pressed oil. Thus Solomon gave to Hiram year by year.

12 So the LORD gave Solomon wisdom, [m]as He had promised him; and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon, and the two of them made a treaty together.

13 Then King Solomon raised up a labor force out of all Israel; and the labor force was thirty thousand men. 14 And he sent them to Lebanon, ten thousand a month in shifts: they were one month in Lebanon *and* two months at home; [n]Adoniram *was* in charge of the labor force. 15 [o]Solomon had seventy thousand who carried burdens, and eighty thousand who quarried *stone* in the mountains, 16 besides three thousand [7]three hundred from the [p]chiefs of Solomon's deputies, who supervised the people who labored in the work. 17 And the king commanded them to quarry large stones, costly stones, *and* [q]hewn stones, to lay the foundation of the [8]temple.

■ **5:1 Hiram king of Tyre.** Tyre is a city on the Mediterranean coast, now in modern Lebanon. Since Hiram ruled about 980–947 B.C., his reign overlapped both David's and Solomon's.

Hiram had always loved David. Hiram supplied materials and workers when David built himself a palace (2 Sam. 5:11).

■ **5:3 the wars which were fought against him.** Even though David wanted to build the temple himself, he spent much of his reign expanding and consolidating the kingdom (2 Sam. 7:10, 11). In a play on the Hebrew word for "house," the prophet Nathan told David that God would build a "house," or dynasty, for him, while David's offspring would build a "house," or temple, for God (2 Sam. 7:12–16). Through God's grace, Solomon is implementing the promise made to his father David.

■ **5:4 rest on every side.** The rest that many of Israel's leaders had hoped for (Ex. 33:14; Deut. 25:19; Josh. 1:13, 15; 2 Sam. 7:11) is now a reality.

■ **5:5 the name of the LORD.** In Semitic culture, a name was thought to reveal something of a person's character and identity (Gen. 17:5; 32:28; Ex. 3:13, 14; 34:6, 7; Deut. 12:5).

Your son. Solomon refers explicitly to God's promise in 2 Sam. 7:12, 13.

■ **5:6 cedars . . . from Lebanon.** These trees were famous in the ancient Near East and often used in building royal palaces and temples.

none . . . has skill. The Israelites did not have the craftsmen and artisans needed to construct the temple by themselves.

Sidonians. Taken in a narrow sense, they were the residents of the port city of Sidon north of Tyre. Here the term probably refers to the inhabitants of Tyre, Gebal (Byblos), and Sidon, the people who were later called the Phoenicians.

■ **5:7 Blessed be the LORD this day.** Even a foreign king acknowledges the accomplishments of Israel's God manifested through King Solomon (cf. 10:6–9).

■ **5:9 food for my household.** In exchange for Hiram's help Solomon is expected to supply food for Hiram's court (v. 11) and wages for his workers (v. 6).

■ **5:12 the LORD gave Solomon wisdom.** Solomon's administrative and political talents are again associated with God's gift of wisdom. (cf. Deut. 1:15; Is. 11:2–4).

■ **5:13 raised up a labor force out of all Israel.** Solomon pressed some of his own people into service as forced laborers on his building projects. This policy was deeply resented and contributed in no small way to the division of the kingdom following Solomon's death (9:22; 12:4, 16 and notes).

■ **5:14 Adoniram.** See note on 4:6.

18 So Solomon's builders, Hiram's builders, and the Gebalites quarried *them;* and they prepared timber and stones to build the [9]temple.

Solomon Builds the Temple

6 And [a]it came to pass in the four hundred and [1]eightieth year after the children of Israel had come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of [2]Ziv, which *is* the second month, [b]that he began to build the house of the LORD. 2 Now [c]the house which King Solomon built for the LORD, its length *was* sixty cubits, its width twenty, and its height thirty cubits. 3 The vestibule in front of the [3]sanctuary of the house *was* [4]twenty cubits long across the width of the house, *and* the width of [5]*the vestibule extended* [6]ten cubits from the front of the house. 4 And he made for the house [d]windows with beveled frames.

5 Against the wall of the [7]temple he built [e]chambers all around, *against* the walls of the temple, all around the sanctuary [f]and the [8]inner sanctuary. Thus he made side chambers all around it. 6 The lowest chamber *was* five cubits wide, the middle *was* six cubits wide, and the third *was* seven cubits wide; for he made narrow ledges around the outside of the temple, so that *the support beams* would not be fastened into the walls of the [9]temple. 7 And [g]the temple, when it was being built, was built with stone finished at the quarry, so that no hammer or chisel *or* any iron tool was heard in the temple while it was being built. 8 The doorway for the [1]middle story *was* on the right side of the temple. They went up by stairs to the middle *story,* and from the middle to the third.

9 [h]So he built the [2]temple and finished it, and he paneled the temple with beams and boards of cedar. 10 And he built side chambers against the entire temple, each five cubits high; they were attached to the temple with cedar beams.

11 Then the word of the LORD came to Solomon, saying: 12 "*Concerning* this [3]temple which you are building, [i]if you walk in My statutes, execute My judgments, keep all My commandments, and walk in them, then I will perform My [4]word with you, [j]which I spoke to your father David. 13 And [k]I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not [l]forsake My people Israel."

14 So Solomon built the temple and finished it. 15 And he built the inside walls of the temple with cedar boards; from the floor of the temple to the ceiling he paneled the inside with wood; and he covered the floor of the temple with planks of cypress. 16 Then he built the twenty-cubit room at the rear of the temple, from floor to ceiling, with cedar boards; he built *it* inside as the inner sanctuary, as the [m]Most Holy *Place.* 17 And in front of it the temple sanctuary was forty cubits *long.* 18 The inside of the temple was cedar, carved with ornamental buds and open flowers. All *was* cedar; there was no stone *to be* seen.

12 [i]1 Kin. 2:4; 9:4 [j][2 Sam. 7:13] [3]Lit. *house* [4]*promise* **13** [k]Ex. 25:8 [l][Deut. 31:6] **16** [m]Ex. 26:33

18 [9]Lit. *house*

CHAPTER 6

1 [a]2 Chr. 3:1, 2 [b]Acts 7:47 [1]So with MT, Tg., Vg.; LXX *fortieth* [2]Or *Ayyar,* April or May

2 [c]Ezek. 41:1

3 [3]Heb. *heykal;* here the main room of the temple; elsewhere called the holy place, Ex. 26:33; Ezek. 41:1 [4]About 30 feet [5]Lit. *it* [6]About 15 feet

4 [d]Ezek. 40:16; 41:16

5 [e]Ezek. 41:6 [f]1 Kin. 6:16, 19–21, 31 [7]Lit. *house* [8]Heb. *debir;* here the inner room of the temple; elsewhere called the Most Holy Place, v. 16

6 [9]Lit. *house*

7 [g]Deut. 27:5, 6

8 [1]So with MT, Vg.; LXX *upper story;* Tg. *ground story*

9 [h]1 Kin. 6:14, 38 [2]Lit. *house*

■ **5:18 the Gebalites.** Gebal (or Byblos) was known internationally for its trade in papyrus, the ancient form of paper made from pressed and dried cuttings of papyrus reed.

■ **6:1 four hundred and eightieth year.** The author's chronology reflects how momentous the construction of the temple was for Israel's life under God. The building of the temple under Solomon was the culmination of a long series of events that began with the deliverance out of Egypt.

fourth year of Solomon's reign. Approximately 966 B.C., placing the Exodus in the year 1446 B.C. Some scholars date the Exodus in the thirteenth century B.C. They understand four hundred eighty years in one of two ways. Some take it as a figurative number representing twelve generations of forty years each. Others, on the basis of ancient Near Eastern custom, argue that the figure is the total of a sequence of periods, some of them overlapping.

■ **6:2 the house . . . for the LORD.** There are a number of similarities between the tabernacle and the temple, although the temple was twice the size of the tabernacle (Ex. 26:15–30; 36:20–34). Both were divided into three main sections: a vestibule, a sanctuary (the Holy Place), and an inner sanctuary (the Most Holy Place). This three-part structure was common in other ancient Near Eastern temples. Israel's sanctuary differed radically from a pagan sanctuary because it had no idols. At its center was the ark of the covenant containing the Ten Commandments, the moral will of God that ordered Israel's life (Deut. 10:4, 5; 1 Kin. 8:6–9).

■ **6:4 windows with beveled frames.** Wide on the inner side of the wall, these windows would gradually slope to form a slit on the outer wall.

■ **6:5 chambers.** These rooms surrounded the Most Holy Place and the Holy Place but not the vestibule. They were used for storage.

■ **6:6 The lowest chamber.** The total height of the three stories of side rooms was not as high as the main temple itself.

■ **6:8 doorway for the middle story.** That is, of the side rooms (see text note).

■ **6:11 the word of the LORD came to Solomon.** God characteristically speaks to Solomon, not through other prophets, but as a prophet himself (3:5, 11–14; 9:2–9; 11:11–13).

■ **6:12 if you walk in My statutes.** With special reference to the building of the temple, God reminds Solomon that the promises to David require covenant fidelity on Solomon's part (2:3, 4 and notes).

■ **6:13 will not forsake My people.** The existence of the temple did not in and of itself guarantee the presence of God with Israel. Loyalty to the Torah is the main issue in the people's relationship with God (2:3 note and 9:6–9).

■ **6:16 the inner sanctuary, as the Most Holy Place.** The Most Holy Place, a perfect cube about 30 feet on a side (v. 20), was the most sacred area of the temple. It contained the ark of the covenant (v. 19) and the cherubim. Only the High Priest was allowed to enter this room and then only on one day a year, the Day of Atonement (Hebrew *Yom Kippur;* Lev. 16; 23:26–32; Num. 29:7–11). The tabernacle had such "a Most Holy Place" (Ex. 26:33; cf. Heb. 9:12, 14).

19 [5]The Most Holy Place
22 [n]Ex. 30:1, 3, 6
23 [o]Ex. 37:7–9; 2 Chr. 3:10–12
27 [p]Ex. 25:20; 37:9; 1 Kin. 8:7; 2 Chr. 5:8 [6]Lit. *house*
29 [q]Ex. 36:8, 35
31 [7]Or *five-sided*
33 [8]*temple* [9]Or *four-sided*
34 [r]Ezek. 41:23–25
36 [s]1 Kin. 7:12; Jer. 36:10
37 [t]1 Kin. 6:1 [1]Or *Ayyar,* April or May
38 [u]2 Sam. 7:13; 1 Kin. 5:5; 6:1; 8:19 [2]Or *Heshvan,* October or November

CHAPTER 7

1 [a]1 Kin. 3:1; 9:10; 2 Chr. 8:1
2 [b]1 Kin. 10:17, 21; 2 Chr. 9:16 [1]About 150 feet [2]About 75 feet

19 And he prepared the [5]inner sanctuary inside the temple, to set the ark of the covenant of the LORD there. 20 The inner sanctuary *was* twenty cubits long, twenty cubits wide, and twenty cubits high. He overlaid it with pure gold, and overlaid the altar of cedar. 21 So Solomon overlaid the inside of the temple with pure gold. He stretched gold chains across the front of the inner sanctuary, and overlaid it with gold. 22 The whole temple he overlaid with gold, until he had finished all the temple; also he overlaid with gold [n]the entire altar that *was* by the inner sanctuary.

23 Inside the inner sanctuary [o]he made two cherubim *of* olive wood, *each* ten cubits high. 24 One wing of the cherub *was* five cubits, and the other wing of the cherub five cubits: ten cubits from the tip of one wing to the tip of the other. 25 And the other cherub *was* ten cubits; both cherubim *were* of the same size and shape. 26 The height of one cherub *was* ten cubits, and so *was* the other cherub. 27 Then he set the cherubim inside the inner [6]room; and [p]they stretched out the wings of the cherubim so that the wing of the one touched *one* wall, and the wing of the other cherub touched the other wall. And their wings touched each other in the middle of the room. 28 Also he overlaid the cherubim with gold.

29 Then he carved all the walls of the temple all around, both the inner and outer *sanctuaries,* with carved [q]figures of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers. 30 And the floor of the temple he overlaid with gold, both the inner and outer *sanctuaries.*

31 For the entrance of the inner sanctuary he made doors *of* olive wood; the lintel *and* doorposts *were* [7]one-fifth *of the wall.* 32 The two doors *were of* olive wood; and he carved on them figures of cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers, and overlaid *them* with gold; and he spread gold on the cherubim and on the palm trees. 33 So for the door of the [8]sanctuary he also made doorposts *of* olive wood, [9]one-fourth *of the wall.* 34 And the two doors *were of* cypress wood; [r]two panels *comprised* one folding door, and two panels *comprised* the other folding door. 35 Then he carved cherubim, palm trees, and open flowers *on them,* and overlaid *them* with gold applied evenly on the carved work.

36 And he built the [s]inner court with three rows of hewn stone and a row of cedar beams.

37 [t]In the fourth year the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid, in the month of [1]Ziv. 38 And in the eleventh year, in the month of [2]Bul, which is the eighth month, the house was finished in all its details and according to all its plans. So he was [u]seven years in building it.

Solomon's Other Buildings

7 But Solomon took [a]thirteen years to build his own house; so he finished all his house. 2 He also built the [b]House of the Forest of Lebanon; its length *was* [1]one hundred cubits, its width [2]fifty cubits, and its height thirty cubits, with four rows of cedar pillars, and cedar beams on the pillars. 3 And *it was* paneled with cedar above the beams that *were* on forty-five pillars, fifteen *to* a row. 4 *There were* windows *with beveled frames in* three rows, and window *was* opposite window *in* three tiers. 5 And all the doorways and doorposts *had* rectangular frames; and window *was* opposite window *in* three tiers.

■ **6:19 the ark of the covenant of the LORD.** The central symbol of the Israelite's communion with God, the ark contained the two tablets of the covenant (Ex. 25:21; Deut. 9:9).

■ **6:20 overlaid it with pure gold.** The temple was beautiful and costly. In its glory and beauty, this earthly temple was a symbol of God's heavenly temple (8:36, 39; Heb. 9:11).

■ **6:22 altar that was by the inner sanctuary.** This was probably an incense altar (7:48; Ex. 30:1, 6; 37:25–28; Heb. 9:4).

■ **6:23 two cherubim.** These were winged creatures with human faces (cf. Gen. 3:24; Ezek. 41:18, 19). The two cherubim stood as guardians on either side of the ark (8:6, 7; 2 Chr. 3:10–13). The tips of their unfolded wings reached ten cubits high, or half the height of the Most Holy Place itself (v. 16). In the ancient Near East, kings were sometimes depicted as sitting upon a throne supported by cherubim. The cherubim in the temple may have represented God's symbolic enthronement in the Most Holy Place. God was present with His people and associated Himself in a special way with this place of worship (1 Sam. 4:4; 6:2; 1 Kin. 8:10–13; 2 Kin. 19:15; Ps. 80:1; 99:1).

■ **6:29 palm trees, and open flowers.** An image reminiscent of the Garden of Eden in Gen. 2. Though our first ancestors were expelled from paradise because of their rebellion against God (Gen. 3:24), and we share their expulsion, communion with God is still possible through His grace.

■ **6:36 the inner court.** Part of the exterior courtyard surrounding the temple, where the great altar and the molten Sea were situated (cf. 7:23–26). Access to this area nearest the temple itself may have been restricted to the priests (2 Chr. 4:9).

three rows. Each layer of stone was separated by a layer of cedar beams (cf. Ezra. 6:4). Similar constructions have been unearthed at Megiddo.

■ **6:38 seven years.** It took Solomon seven years to build the temple, whereas it took him thirteen years to build his palace (7:1).

■ **7:2 the House of the Forest of Lebanon.** Probably so named because of the extensive use of Lebanon cedar inside. This complex was probably located immediately south of the temple.

length . . . one hundred cubits, its width fifty . . . and its height thirty. Although the same height as the temple, Solomon's palace was considerably longer and more than twice as wide (6:2).

He also made the Hall of Pillars: its length *was* fifty cubits, and its width thirty cubits; and in front of them *was* a portico with pillars, and a canopy *was* in front of them.

7 Then he made a hall for the throne, the Hall of Judgment, where he might judge; and *it was* paneled with cedar from floor to [3]ceiling.

8 And the house where he dwelt *had* another court inside the hall, of like workmanship. Solomon also made a house like this hall for Pharaoh's daughter, [c]whom he had taken *as wife*.

9 All these *were of* costly stones cut to size, trimmed with saws, inside and out, from the foundation to the eaves, and also on the outside to the great court. 10 The foundation *was of* costly stones, large stones, some ten cubits and some eight cubits. 11 And above *were* costly stones, hewn to size, and cedar wood. 12 The great court *was* enclosed with three rows of hewn stones and a row of cedar beams. So were the [d]inner court of the house of the LORD [e]and the vestibule of the temple.

Hiram the Craftsman

13 Now King Solomon sent and brought [4]Huram from Tyre. 14 [f]He *was* the son of a widow from the tribe of Naphtali, and [g]his father *was* a man of Tyre, a bronze worker; [h]he was filled with wisdom and understanding and skill in working with all kinds of bronze work. So he came to King Solomon and did all his work.

The Bronze Pillars for the Temple

15 And he [5]cast [i]two pillars of bronze, each one eighteen cubits high, and a line of twelve cubits measured the circumference of each. 16 Then he made two capitals *of* cast bronze, to set on the tops of the pillars. The height of one capital *was* five cubits, and the height of the other capital *was* five cubits. 17 *He made* a lattice network, with wreaths of chainwork, for the capitals which *were* on top of the pillars: seven chains for one capital and seven for the other capital. 18 So he made the pillars, and two rows of pomegranates above the network all around to cover the capitals that *were* on top; and thus he did for the other capital.

19 The capitals which *were* on top of the pillars in the hall *were* in the shape of lilies, four cubits. 20 The capitals on the two pillars also *had pomegranates* above, by the convex surface which *was* next to the network; and there *were* [j]two hundred such pomegranates in rows on each of the capitals all around.

21 [k]Then he set up the pillars by the vestibule of the temple; he set up the pillar on the right and called its name [6]Jachin, and he set up the pillar on the left and called its name [7]Boaz. 22 The tops of the pillars were in the shape of lilies. So the work of the pillars was finished.

The Sea and the Oxen

23 And he made [l]the Sea of cast bronze, ten cubits from one brim to the other; *it was* completely round. Its height *was* five cubits, and a line of thirty cubits measured its circumference.

24 Below its brim *were* ornamental buds encircling it all around, ten to a cubit, [m]all the way around the Sea. The ornamental buds *were* cast in two rows when it was cast. 25 It stood on [n]twelve oxen: three looking toward the north, three looking toward the west, three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east; the Sea *was set* upon them, and all their back parts *pointed* inward. 26 It *was* a handbreadth thick; and its brim was shaped like the brim of a cup, *like* a lily blossom. It contained [8]two thousand baths.

7 [3]Lit. *floor* of the upper level

8 [c]1 Kin. 3:1; 9:24; 11:1; 2 Chr. 8:11

12 [d]1 Kin. 6:36 [e]John 10:23; Acts 3:11

13 [4]Heb. *Hiram;* cf. 2 Chr. 2:13, 14

14 [f]2 Chr. 2:14 [g]2 Chr. 4:16 [h]Ex. 31:3; 36:1

15 [i]2 Kin. 25:17; 2 Chr. 3:15; 4:12; Jer. 52:21 [5]*fashioned*

20 [j]2 Chr. 3:16; 4:13; Jer. 52:23

21 [k]2 Chr. 3:17 [6]Lit. *He Shall Establish* [7]Lit. *In It Is Strength*

23 [l]2 Kin. 25:13; 2 Chr. 4:2; Jer. 52:17

24 [m]2 Chr. 4:3

25 [n]2 Chr. 4:4, 5; Jer. 52:20

26 [8]About 12,000 gallons; *three thousand,* 2 Chr. 4:5

■ **7:6 the Hall of Pillars.** Half the length of the palace and about two-thirds of the width (7:2), this colonnade was probably an impressive entrance hall.

■ **7:7 the Hall of Judgment.** The place where Solomon formally carried out his duties as administrator of God's holy kingdom (3:16 note).

■ **7:13–51** This part of the account is not placed chronologically; Solomon actually began making arrangements for equipping the temple prior to its actual completion (2 Chr. 2:7, 13, 14).

7:13 Huram. He should not be confused with Hiram, the king of Tyre, with whom Solomon ratified a treaty for the supply of materials and craftsmen (5:1–12).

■ **7:15 two pillars of bronze.** One pillar was on each side of the temple's entrance (v. 21). It is unclear whether they were freestanding or whether they supported a roof which may have also covered the porch of the temple.

■ **7:18–20 the capitals.** It was common in the ancient Near East to lavish capitals with ornate decoration.

■ **7:23 the Sea of cast bronze.** A huge circular basin holding up to eight thousand gallons of water (2 Chr. 4:5 note). According to Chronicles, the priests used the Sea for cleansing (2 Chr. 4:6). Its symbolic significance is disputed. Some scholars highlight the positive attributes of water as life-giving, while others argue that the bronze Sea commemorates God's power over the forces of chaos, typified by the sea (cf. Rev. 21:1).

■ **7:25 twelve oxen.** The Sea rested on four triads of oxen pointed in the four cardinal directions. In the ancient Near East, oxen symbolized physical and reproductive potency. Their arrangement is indicative of God's universal lordship.

27 [9]Or *stands*
37 [1]*one*
38 [o]Ex. 30:18; 2 Chr. 4:6 [2]About 240 gallons
40 [p]2 Chr. 4:11—5:1 [3]Heb. *Hiram;* cf. 2 Chr. 2:13, 14
41 [q]1 Kin. 7:17, 18
42 [r]1 Kin. 7:20
45 [s]Ex. 27:3; 2 Chr. 4:16 [4]Heb. *Hiram;* cf. 2 Chr. 2:13, 14
46 [t]2 Chr. 4:17 [u]Gen. 33:17; Josh. 13:27 [v]Josh. 3:16
47 [w]1 Chr. 22:3, 14
48 [x]Ex. 37:25, 26; 2 Chr. 4:8 [y]Ex. 37:10, 11 [z]Lev. 24:5–8
50 [5]*firepans*
51 [a]2 Sam. 8:11; 1 Chr. 18:11; 2 Chr. 5:1

The Carts and the Lavers

27 He also made ten [9]carts of bronze; four cubits *was* the length of each cart, four cubits its width, and three cubits its height. 28 And this *was* the design of the carts: They had panels, and the panels *were* between frames; 29 on the panels that *were* between the frames *were* lions, oxen, and cherubim. And on the frames *was* a pedestal on top. Below the lions and oxen *were* wreaths of plaited work. 30 Every cart had four bronze wheels and axles of bronze, and its four feet had supports. Under the laver *were* supports of cast *bronze* beside each wreath. 31 Its opening inside the crown at the top *was* one cubit in diameter; and the opening *was* round, shaped *like* a pedestal, one and a half cubits in outside diameter; and also on the opening *were* engravings, but the panels were square, not round. 32 Under the panels *were* the four wheels, and the axles of the wheels *were joined* to the cart. The height of a wheel *was* one and a half cubits. 33 The workmanship of the wheels *was* like the workmanship of a chariot wheel; their axle pins, their rims, their spokes, and their hubs *were* all of cast *bronze.* 34 And *there were* four supports at the four corners of each cart; its supports *were* part of the cart itself. 35 On the top of the cart, at the height of half a cubit, *it was* perfectly round. And on the top of the cart, its flanges and its panels *were* of the same casting. 36 On the plates of its flanges and on its panels he engraved cherubim, lions, and palm trees, wherever there was a clear space on each, with wreaths all around. 37 Thus he made the ten carts. All of them were of [1]the same mold, one measure, *and* one shape.

38 Then [o]he made ten lavers of bronze; each laver contained [2]forty baths, *and* each laver *was* four cubits. On each of the ten carts *was* a laver. 39 And he put five carts on the right side of the house, and five on the left side of the house. He set the Sea on the right side of the house, toward the southeast.

Furnishings of the Temple

40 [p]Huram[3] made the lavers and the shovels and the bowls. So Huram finished doing all the work that he was to do for King Solomon *for* the house of the LORD: 41 the two pillars, the *two* bowl-shaped capitals that *were* on top of the two pillars; the two [q]networks covering the two bowl-shaped capitals which *were* on top of the pillars; 42 [r]four hundred pomegranates for the two networks (two rows of pomegranates for each network, to cover the two bowl-shaped capitals that *were* on top of the pillars); 43 the ten carts, and ten lavers on the carts; 44 one Sea, and twelve oxen under the Sea; 45 [s]the pots, the shovels, and the bowls.

All these articles which [4]Huram made for King Solomon *for* the house of the LORD *were of* burnished bronze. 46 [t]In the plain of Jordan the king had them cast in clay molds, between [u]Succoth and [v]Zaretan. 47 And Solomon did not weigh all the articles, because *there were* so many; the weight of the bronze was not [w]determined.

48 Thus Solomon had all the furnishings made for the house of the LORD: [x]the altar of gold, and [y]the table of gold on which *was* [z]the showbread; 49 the lampstands of pure gold, five on the right *side* and five on the left in front of the inner sanctuary, with the flowers and the lamps and the wick-trimmers of gold; 50 the basins, the trimmers, the bowls, the ladles, and the [5]censers of pure gold; and the hinges of gold, *both* for the doors of the inner room (the Most Holy *Place*) *and* for the doors of the main hall of the temple.

51 So all the work that King Solomon had done for the house of the LORD was finished; and Solomon brought in the things [a]which his father David had dedicated: the silver and the gold and the furnishings. He put them in the treasuries of the house of the LORD.

■ **7:27 ten carts of bronze.** These portable and highly decorated wagons held water basins (v. 38). The priests used the water to wash sections of animals that had been slaughtered for burnt offerings (Lev. 1:9, 13; 2 Chr. 4:6).

■ **7:40 shovels and the bowls.** Priests used the shovels to remove ashes from the altar, and the bowls for rituals involving blood or water (Ex. 27:3; Jer. 52:18).

■ **7:46 Succoth.** This center of metallurgy was located east of the Jordan, north of the Wadi Jabbok (Gen. 33:17; Josh. 13:27; Judg. 8:4, 5) Zarethan was nearby.

■ **7:48 the altar of gold . . . table.** The same altar described in 6:22. The "showbread" or holy bread (1 Sam. 21:4, 6) arranged on the golden table was understood as an offering before God (Ex. 25:23–30; Lev. 24:5–9; Num. 4:7; 2 Chr. 13:11; Matt. 12:4).

■ **7:49 lampstands.** There were ten lampstands in the temple, as compared to only one in the tabernacle (Ex. 25:31–40; 26:35).

■ **7:51 his father David.** During his reign David accumulated booty from military campaigns and received tribute from a variety of states (2 Sam. 8:9–12; 1 Chr. 18:7–11; 2 Chr. 5:1).

treasuries of the house of the LORD. Depositories for the government's wealth, sometimes used as tribute by the kings to ward off foreign invaders (15:18; 2 Kin. 12:18; 18:13–16). The treasure was also the object of raids by opposing kings (14:25, 26; 2 Kin. 14:13, 14).

The Ark Brought into the Temple

8 Now [a]Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the chief fathers of the children of Israel, to King Solomon in Jerusalem, [b]that they might bring [c]up the ark of the covenant of the LORD from the City of David, which *is* Zion. 2 Therefore all the men of Israel assembled with King Solomon at the [d]feast in the month of [1]Ethanim, which *is* the seventh month. 3 So all the elders of Israel came, [e]and the priests took up the ark. 4 Then they brought up the ark of the LORD, [f]the [2]tabernacle of meeting, and all the holy furnishings that *were* in the tabernacle. The priests and the Levites brought them up. 5 Also King Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel who were assembled with him, *were* with him before the ark, [g]sacrificing sheep and oxen that could not be counted or numbered for multitude. 6 Then the priests [h]brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD to [i]its place, into the inner sanctuary of the temple, to the Most Holy *Place,* [j]under the wings of the cherubim. 7 For the cherubim spread *their* two wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubim overshadowed the ark and its poles. 8 The poles [k]extended so that the [3]ends of the poles could be seen from the holy *place,* in front of the inner sanctuary; but they could not be seen from outside. And they are there to this day. 9 [l]Nothing *was* in the ark [m]except the two tablets of stone which Moses [n]put there at Horeb, [o]when the LORD made *a covenant* with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt.

10 And it came to pass, when the priests came out of the holy *place,* that the cloud [p]filled the house of the LORD, 11 so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the [q]glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD.

12 [r]Then Solomon spoke:

"The LORD said He would dwell [s]in the dark cloud.
13 [t]I have surely built You an exalted house,
[u]And a place for You to dwell in forever."

Solomon's Speech at Completion of the Work

14 Then the king turned around and [v]blessed the whole assembly of Israel, while all the assembly of Israel was standing. 15 And he said: [w]"Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel, who [x]spoke with His mouth to my father David, and with His hand has fulfilled *it,* saying, 16 'Since the day that I brought My people Israel out of Egypt, I have chosen no city from any tribe of Israel *in which* to build a house, that [y]My name might be there; but I chose [z]David to be over My people Israel.' 17 Now [a]it was in the heart of my father David to build a [4]temple for the name of the LORD God of Israel. 18 [b]But the LORD said to my father David, 'Whereas it was in your heart to build a temple for My name, you did well that it was in your heart. 19 Nevertheless [c]you shall not build the temple, but your son who will come from your body, he shall build the temple for My name.' 20 So the LORD has fulfilled His word which He spoke; and I have [5]filled the position of my father David, and sit on the throne of Israel, [d]as the LORD promised; and I have built a temple for the name of the LORD God of Israel. 21 And there I have made a place for the ark, in

CHAPTER 8

1 [a]2 Chr. 5:2–14 [b]2 Sam. 6:12–17 [c]2 Sam. 5:7; 6:12, 16

2 [d]Lev. 23:34 [1]Or *Tishri,* September or October

3 [e]Num. 4:15; 7:9

4 [f]2 Chr. 1:3 [2]*tent*

5 [g]2 Sam. 6:13

6 [h]2 Sam. 6:17 [i]1 Kin. 6:19 [j]1 Kin. 6:27

8 [k]Ex. 25:13–15; 37:4, 5 [3]*heads*

9 [l]Ex. 25:21 [m]Deut. 10:5 [n]Ex. 24:7, 8; 40:20 [o]Ex. 34:27, 28

10 [p]Ex. 40:34, 35

11 [q]2 Chr. 7:1, 2

12 [r]2 Chr. 6:1 [s]Ps. 18:11; 97:2

13 [t]2 Sam. 7:13 [u]Ps. 132:14

14 [v]2 Sam. 6:18

15 [w]Luke 1:68 [x]2 Sam. 7:2, 12, 13, 25

16 [y]1 Kin. 8:29 [z]2 Sam. 7:8

17 [a]2 Sam. 7:2, 3 [4]Lit. *house,* and so in vv. 18–20

18 [b]2 Chr. 6:8, 9

19 [c]2 Sam. 7:5, 12, 13

20 [d]1 Chr. 28:5, 6 [5]*risen in the place of*

■ **8:1 the elders of Israel.** Senior leaders who were in charge of local government and justice throughout Old Testament history (Ex. 18:13–26; Num. 11:16–30; Judg. 21:16–24; 1 Sam. 8:1–9).

the city of David, which is Zion. This oldest section of Jerusalem was south of the temple. David had earlier brought the ark from the house of Obed-Edom to Zion (2 Sam. 6:1–19).

■ **8:2 the feast.** Solomon apparently waited eleven months to dedicate the temple (6:38) so that the ceremony could be part of the Feast of Tabernacles in the New Year, which was commemorated during the seventh month (Lev. 23:34; Deut. 16:13–15).

■ **8:4 the tabernacle of meeting.** The tabernacle along with all its furnishings is brought, presumably from Gibeon (3:4 note), by the priests and the Levites.

■ **8:6 under the wings of the cherubim.** See note on 6:23.

■ **8:8 to this day.** Statements to this effect (9:13, 21; 10:12; 12:19) were written from the perspective of a writer who lived before the destruction of the temple (586 B.C.). See Introduction: Author.

■ **8:9 the two tablets of stone.** The copy of the covenant (cf. v. 21; Ex. 25:16, 21; 40:20).

Horeb. Following the pattern established in Deuteronomy, the writers of the Deuteronomic History call the site where the covenant was made "Mount Horeb" and not "Mount Sinai." "Horeb" is used eleven times in Deuteronomy (cf. Deut. 5:2) and twice in the history (here and 19:8); "Sinai" occurs only once in each (Deut. 33:2; Judg. 5:5).

■ **8:10 the cloud filled the house of the LORD.** After the Exodus from Egypt, God led His people through the desert with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night (Ex. 13:21; 40:36–38). At Mount Sinai God revealed Himself in a cloud (Ex. 19:9; 24:15–18). When the tabernacle was constructed God covered it with the cloud of His glory (Ex. 40:34, 35; cf. Lev. 16:2). Now He shows His approval of the newly constructed sanctuary.

■ **8:12 dwell in the dark cloud.** No one can see God and live, but God can reveal Himself and manifest His love toward His people in indirect ways (v. 10 note).

■ **8:13 a place for You to dwell in forever.** The temple, as a divinely sanctioned place for prayer and sacrifice, was a special sign of God's presence among His people (Ps. 76:2; 132:13, 14; Is. 8:18; Amos 1:2).

which *is* [e]the covenant of the LORD which He made with our fathers, when He brought them out of the land of Egypt."

Solomon's Prayer of Dedication

22 Then Solomon stood before [f]the altar of the LORD in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and [g]spread out his hands toward heaven; 23 and he said: "LORD God of Israel, [h]*there is* no God in heaven above or on earth below like You, [i]who keep *Your* covenant and mercy with Your servants who [j]walk before You with all their hearts. 24 You have kept what You promised Your servant David my father; You have both spoken with Your mouth and fulfilled *it* with Your hand, as *it is* this day. 25 Therefore, LORD God of Israel, now keep what You promised Your servant David my father, saying, [k]'You shall not fail to have a man sit before Me on the throne of Israel, only if your sons take heed to their way, that they walk before Me as you have walked before Me.' 26 [l]And now I pray, O God of Israel, let Your word come true, which You have spoken to Your servant David my father.

27 "But [m]will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the [n]heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built! 28 Yet regard the prayer of Your servant and his supplication, O LORD my God, and listen to the cry and the prayer which Your servant is praying before You today: 29 that Your eyes may be open toward this [o]temple night and day, toward the place of which You said, [p]'My name shall be [q]there,' that You may hear the prayer which Your servant makes [r]toward this place. 30 [s]And may You hear the supplication of Your servant and of Your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. Hear in heaven Your dwelling place; and when You hear, forgive.

31 "When anyone sins against his neighbor, and is forced to take [t]an oath, and comes *and* takes an oath before Your altar in this temple, 32 then hear in heaven, and act, and judge Your servants, [u]condemning the wicked, bringing his way on his head, and justifying the righteous by giving him according to his righteousness.

33 [v]"When Your people Israel are defeated before an enemy because they have sinned against You, and [w]when they turn back to You and confess Your name, and pray and make supplication to You in this temple, 34 then hear in heaven, and forgive the sin of Your people Israel, and bring them back to the land which You gave to their [x]fathers.

35 [y]"When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain because they have sinned against You, when they pray toward this place and confess Your name, and turn from their sin because You afflict them, 36 then hear in heaven, and forgive the sin of Your servants, Your people Israel, that You may [z]teach them [a]the good way in which they should walk; and send rain on Your land which You have given to Your people as an inheritance.

37 [b]"When there is famine in the land, pestilence *or* blight *or* mildew, locusts *or* grasshoppers; when their enemy besieges them in the land of their [c]cities; whatever plague or whatever sickness *there is;* 38 whatever prayer, whatever supplication is made by anyone, *or* by all Your people Israel, when each one knows the plague of his own heart, and spreads out his hands toward this temple: 39 then hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and forgive, and act, and give to everyone according to all his ways, whose heart You know (for You alone [d]know the hearts of all the

21 [e]Deut. 31:26; 1 Kin. 8:9
22 [f]1 Kin. 8:54; 2 Chr. 6:12 [g]Ex. 9:33; Ezra 9:5
23 [h]Ex. 15:11; 2 Sam. 7:22 [i][Deut. 7:9; Neh. 1:5; Dan. 9:4] [j][Gen. 17:1; 1 Kin. 3:6]; 2 Kin. 20:3
25 [k]2 Sam. 7:12, 16; 1 Kin. 2:4; 9:5
26 [l]2 Sam. 7:25
27 [m][2 Chr. 2:6; Is. 66:1; Acts 7:49; 17:24] [n]2 Cor. 12:2
29 [o]Deut. 12:11 [p]1 Kin. 9:3; 2 Chr. 7:15 [q]Dan. 6:10 [r]Lit. *house*
30 [s]Neh. 1:6
31 [t]Ex. 22:8–11
32 [u]Deut. 25:1
33 [v]Lev. 26:17; Deut. 28:25 [w]Lev. 26:39, 40
34 [x][Lev. 26:40–42; Deut. 30:1–3]
35 [y]Lev. 26:19; Deut. 28:23
36 [z]Ps. 25:4; 27:11; 94:12 [a]1 Sam. 12:23
37 [b]Lev. 26:16, 25, 26; Deut. 28:21, 22, 27, 38, 42, 52 [c]Lit. *gates*
39 [d][1 Sam. 16:7; 1 Chr. 28:9; Jer. 17:10]; Acts 1:24

■ **8:22 spread out his hands.** This gesture signified prayer (Ex. 9:29; Is. 1:15; 1 Tim. 2:8).

■ **8:23 there is no God . . . like You.** The incomparability of God is a prominent theme throughout the Scriptures (Ex. 15:11; Deut. 4:39; Ps. 86:8; Mark 12:29; Eph. 4:6; Rev. 19:6). God's fidelity is not temporary (3:6; 8:16; Deut. 7:9, 12; Ps. 52:8; Heb. 13:8), nor is His power limited to a specific country (vv. 41–43; Jonah).

■ **8:25 only if your sons take heed.** Solomon repeats the condition that his dynasty would continue to rule Israel if David's sons remained faithful to God (2:3, 4; 6:11–13; 9:4–9; 11:11–13).

■ **8:29 My name shall be there.** God had promised that He would be present in a special way in the Jerusalem temple, and Solomon implores God to hear the prayers that are directed toward the temple (Dan. 6:10; 9:17; Jon. 2:4).

■ **8:31 an oath.** In certain trials the suspect might be required to take an oath of innocence at the sanctuary to corroborate his defense (Ex. 22:7–12; Num. 5:11–31). Solomon prays that God, through His involvement in the suspects' lives, would condemn the guilty and declare the innocent not guilty (v. 32).

■ **8:33 because they have sinned against You.** Defeat by an enemy was not a defeat by that enemy's god, but a defeat of Israel by God Himself due to Israel's own infidelity (Deut. 28:25; Josh. 7; 2 Chr. 36:15–19; Lam. 2:1–8).

■ **8:34 bring them back to the land.** It was not unusual for the army and people defeated in war to be deported to another land. Solomon asks God to be merciful and restore those who ask His forgiveness.

■ **8:35 When the heavens are shut up.** Just as God directs the fate of His people in war, so also God controls the world of nature. Drought was one of the curses of the covenant (17:1; Deut. 28:22–24; Amos 4:7, 8).

■ **8:37 famine . . . sickness.** Solomon mentions a wide variety of afflictions: famine, pestilence, locusts, war, and sickness, all mentioned in Deut. 28.

■ **8:39 give to everyone according to all his ways.** Solomon prays that God would use His infinite knowledge to establish justice among His people.

sons of men), 40 [c]that they may fear You all the days that they live in the land which You gave to our fathers.

41 "Moreover, concerning a foreigner, who *is* not of Your people Israel, but has come from a far country for Your name's sake 42 (for they will hear of Your great name and Your [d]strong hand and Your outstretched arm), when he comes and prays toward this temple, 43 hear in heaven Your dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to You, [e]that all peoples of the earth may know Your name and [f]fear You, as *do* Your people Israel, and that they may know that this temple which I have built is called by Your name.

44 "When Your people go out to battle against their enemy, wherever You send them, and when they pray to the LORD toward the city which You have chosen and the temple which I have built for Your name, 45 then hear in heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their [g]cause.

46 "When they sin against You [g](for *there is* no one who does not sin), and You become angry with them and deliver them to the enemy, and they take them captive [h]to the land of the enemy, far or near; 47 [i]*yet* when they [j]come to themselves in the land where they were carried captive, and repent, and make supplication to You in the land of those who took them captive, [j]saying, 'We have sinned and done wrong, we have committed wickedness'; 48 and *when* they [k]return to You with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their enemies who led them away captive, and [l]pray to You toward their land which You gave to their fathers, the city which You have chosen and the temple which I have built for Your name: 49 then hear in heaven Your dwelling place their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their [l]cause, 50 and forgive Your people who have sinned against You, and all their transgressions which they have transgressed against You; and [m]grant them compassion before those who took them captive, that they may have compassion on them 51 (for [n]they *are* Your people and Your inheritance, whom You brought out of Egypt, [o]out of the iron furnace), 52 [p]that Your eyes may be open to the supplication of Your servant and the supplication of Your people Israel, to listen to them whenever they call to You. 53 For You separated them from among all the peoples of the earth *to be* Your inheritance, [q]as You spoke by Your servant Moses, when You brought our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord GOD."

Solomon Blesses the Assembly

54 [r]And so it was, when Solomon had finished praying all this prayer and supplication to the LORD, that he arose from before the altar of the LORD, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven. 55 Then he stood [s]and blessed all the assembly of Israel with a loud voice, saying: 56 "Blessed *be* the LORD, who has given [t]rest[2] to His people Israel, according to all that He promised. [u]There has not failed one word of all His good promise, which He promised through His servant Moses. 57 May the LORD our God be with us, as He was with our fathers. [v]May He not leave us nor forsake us, 58 that He may [w]incline our hearts to Himself, to walk in all His ways, and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, which He commanded our fathers. 59 And may these words of mine, with which I have made supplication before the LORD, be near the LORD our God day and night, that He may maintain the cause of His servant and the cause of His people Israel, as each day may require, 60 [x]that all the peoples of the earth may know that [y]the LORD *is* God; *there is* no other. 61 Let your [z]heart therefore be [3]loyal to the LORD our God, to walk in His statutes and keep His commandments, as at this day."

40 [c][Ps. 130:4]
42 [d]Deut. 3:24
43 [e][1 Sam. 17:46] [f]Ps. 102:15
45 [g]*justice*
46 [g]Ps. 130:3 [h]Lev. 26:34, 44
47 [i][Lev. 26:40–42] [j]Dan. 9:5 [j]Lit. *bring back to their heart*
48 [k]Jer. 29:12–14 [l]Dan. 6:10
49 [l]*justice*
50 [m]Ps. 106:46
51 [n]Deut. 9:26–29 [o]Jer. 11:4
52 [p]1 Kin. 8:29
53 [q]Ex. 19:5, 6
54 [r]2 Chr. 7:1
55 [s]2 Sam. 6:18
56 [t]1 Chr. 22:18 [u]Deut. 12:10 [2]*peace*
57 [v]Deut. 31:6
58 [w]Ps. 119:36
60 [x]1 Sam. 17:46 [y]Deut. 4:35, 39
61 [z]Deut. 18:13 [3]Lit. *at peace with*

■ **8:43 that all peoples of the earth may know Your name.** Solomon prays that one day all peoples will commit their lives to God, just as Israel does (cf. Is. 56:6–8; Zech. 8:23; Matt. 28:19).

■ **8:44 When Your people go out to battle.** Solomon is referring to military endeavors taken at divine behest (20:13–30; Lev. 26:7; Deut. 20; 21:10; 1 Sam. 23:2, 4; 2 Sam. 5:19, 24).

■ **8:46 no one who does not sin.** See "Original Sin and Total Depravity" at Ps. 51:5.

they take them captive. Exile from the land is one of the most severe curses in the Sinaitic covenant (v. 33 note; Lev. 26:33–45; Deut. 28:64–68; 30:1–5). Exile is also a curse in a number of ancient Near Eastern treaties.

■ **8:50 forgive Your people.** Being outside the land of Israel does not mean that God's promises are no longer operative (Neh. 1:11). Solomon beseeches God to cause the exiles' captors to show mercy toward their captives (Ps. 106:46).

■ **8:53 For You separated them.** Since God specifically chose Israel and liberated them from Egypt to become His own special inheritance (Ex. 19:3–6; Deut. 4:20; 9:26), Solomon prays that God will not forget this history of redemption when Israel finds itself in exile.

■ **8:56 the LORD, who has given rest to His people.** After considerable upheaval in the period of wilderness wandering and conquest, Israel had experienced the fulfillment of the "good promise, which He promised through His servant Moses" (5:4 note; Ex. 33:14; Deut. 12:10). In the New Testament, Christians are exhorted to make every effort to enter God's rest (Heb. 4:11; cf. Rev. 14:13).

■ **8:60 there is no other.** The other gods whom people worship are fictional; the only real God is the God of Israel (cf. Deut. 4:35).

62 [a]2 Chr. 7:4–10
64 [b]2 Chr. 7:7
[c]2 Chr. 4:1
65 [d]Lev. 23:34
[e]Num. 34:8
[f]Gen. 15:18
[g]2 Chr. 7:8
66 [h]2 Chr. 7:9
[4]*thanked*

CHAPTER 9

1 [a]2 Chr. 7:11
[b]1 Kin. 7:1
[c]2 Chr. 8:6
2 [d]1 Kin. 3:5; 11:9
3 [e]Ps. 10:17 [f]1 Kin. 8:29 [g]Deut. 11:12
4 [h]Gen. 17:1
[i]1 Kin. 11:4, 6; 15:5 [j]1 Kin. 8:61
5 [k]2 Sam. 7:12, 16
6 [l]2 Sam. 7:14–16
[1]*turn back*
7 [m][Lev. 18:24–29]
[n][Jer. 7:4–14]
[o]Ps. 44:14
[2]*destroy*
8 [p]2 Chr. 7:21
[q][Deut. 29:24–26]
9 [r][Deut. 29:25–28]
10 [s]2 Chr. 8:1
11 [t]1 Kin. 5:1

Solomon Dedicates the Temple

62 Then [a]the king and all Israel with him offered sacrifices before the LORD. 63 And Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered to the LORD, twenty-two thousand bulls and one hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of the LORD. 64 On [b]the same day the king consecrated the middle of the court that *was* in front of the house of the LORD; for there he offered burnt offerings, grain offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings, because the [c]bronze altar that *was* before the LORD *was* too small to receive the burnt offerings, the grain offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings.

65 At that time Solomon held [d]a feast, and all Israel with him, a great assembly from [e]the entrance of Hamath to [f]the Brook of Egypt, before the LORD our God, [g]seven days and seven *more* days—fourteen days. 66 [h]On the eighth day he sent the people away; and they [4]blessed the king, and went to their tents joyful and glad of heart for all the good that the LORD had done for His servant David, and for Israel His people.

God's Second Appearance to Solomon

9 And [a]it came to pass, when Solomon had finished building the house of the LORD [b]and the king's house, and [c]all Solomon's desire which he wanted to do, 2 that the LORD appeared to Solomon the second time, [d]as He had appeared to him at Gibeon. 3 And the LORD said to him: [e]"I have heard your prayer and your supplication that you have made before Me; I have consecrated this house which you have built [f]to put My name there forever, [g]and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetually. 4 Now if you [h]walk before Me [i]as your father David walked, in integrity of heart and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded you, *and* if you [j]keep My statutes and My judgments, 5 then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever, [k]as I promised David your father, saying, 'You shall not fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.' 6 [l]*But* if you or your sons at all [1]turn from following Me, and do not keep My commandments *and* My statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them, 7 [m]then I will [2]cut off Israel from the land which I have given them; and this house which I have consecrated [n]for My name I will cast out of My sight. [o]Israel will be a proverb and a byword among all peoples. 8 And *as for* [p]this house, *which* is exalted, everyone who passes by it will be astonished and will hiss, and say, [q]'Why has the LORD done thus to this land and to this house?' 9 Then they will answer, 'Because they forsook the LORD their God, who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have embraced other gods, and worshiped them and served them; therefore the LORD has brought all this [r]calamity on them.' "

Solomon and Hiram Exchange Gifts

10 Now [s]it happened at the end of twenty years, when Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the LORD and the king's house 11 [t](Hiram the king of Tyre had supplied Solomon with

■ **8:63 twenty-two thousand bulls.** Over the course of fourteen days of dedicatory festivities, Solomon and the great many people present in Jerusalem offer a multitude of sacrifices, far more than at the comparatively modest dedication of the second temple (Ezra 6:16–18).

■ **8:64 offerings.** For burnt offerings, see note on 3:4. Grain offerings often accompanied animal sacrifices (Lev. 2; 7:11–14; 8:26; 9:4; 14:20; Num. 15:1–10) and were indications of the worshiper's gratitude and praise. For peace offerings, see Lev. 3.

the bronze altar. This altar on which sacrifices were burned was located in front of the temple (vv. 22, 54) and is different from the incense altar inside the temple (6:22 note).

■ **8:65 the entrance of Hamath.** This area near the northern limit of the territory controlled by Israel was located about 20 miles south of Kadesh on the Orontes River (Josh. 13:5; 2 Kin. 14:25).

Brook of Egypt. Probably to be equated with Wadi El-Arish, in northeastern Sinai. People from the entire extent of Solomon's kingdom were present for these festivities (4:21).

■ **8:66 all the good that the LORD had done for His servant David, and for Israel His people.** God graciously fulfilled His commitment to David that one of his offspring would build the temple he had wanted to build (2 Sam. 7:1–16). God also gave Israel a central sanctuary (Deut. 12) and rest from their enemies (1 Kin. 5:4).

■ **9:3 have consecrated.** God made the temple holy by being present in a special way (8:10–13, 29).

■ **9:4 if you walk.** The attention shifts to the conduct of Solomon and future kings. As stated previously (2:3, 4 and notes; 8:25), the future dominion of David's descendants over Israel is contingent on their fidelity to the Torah.

■ **9:7 cut off.** The presence of the temple is not an unchangeable guarantee against the consequences of prolonged covenant infidelity (6:13 note). The covenant curses will come into effect if the king and people are unfaithful (Deut. 28:37; Jer. 19:8).

■ **9:9 forsook.** Other peoples will understand the cause of the unusual spectacle of God destroying His own temple and exiling His people (Deut. 29:24–28).

■ **9:10—10:29** This section highlights Solomon's glory by summarizing his building projects (9:10–28), his fame (10:1–13), and his great riches (10:14–29).

■ **9:10 at the end of twenty years.** Given the earlier chronological notices (6:1, 37, 38; 7:1), this would be around 946 B.C.

■ **9:11 Solomon then gave Hiram twenty cities.** Although Solomon and Hiram had made an earlier agreement (5:1–12), it appears that Solomon was now in financial difficulty. In exchange for Hiram sending Solomon 120 talents (4½ tons) of gold (v. 14), Solomon granted Hiram the use of twenty cities in Galilee (cf. 2 Chr. 8:2 and note).

cedar and cypress and gold, as much as he desired), *that* King Solomon then gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee. 12 Then Hiram went from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him, but they did not please him. 13 So he said, "What *kind of* cities *are* these which you have given me, my brother?" [u]And he called them the land of [3]Cabul, as they are to this day. 14 Then Hiram sent the king one hundred and twenty talents of gold.

Solomon's Additional Achievements

15 And this *is* the reason for [v]the labor force which King Solomon raised: to build the house of the LORD, his own house, [4]the [w]Millo, the wall of Jerusalem, [x]Hazor, [y]Megiddo, and [z]Gezer. 16 (Pharaoh king of Egypt had gone up and taken Gezer and burned it with fire, [a]had killed the Canaanites who dwelt in the city, and had given it *as* a dowry to his daughter, Solomon's wife.) 17 And Solomon built Gezer, Lower [b]Beth Horon, 18 [c]Baalath, and Tadmor in the wilderness, in the land *of Judah,* 19 all the storage cities that Solomon had, cities for [d]his chariots and cities for his [e]cavalry, and whatever Solomon [f]desired to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion.

20 [g]All the people *who were* left of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, who *were* not of the children of Israel— 21 that is, their descendants [h]who were left in the land after them, [i]whom the children of Israel had not been able to destroy completely—[j]from these Solomon raised [k]forced labor, as it is to this day. 22 But of the children of Israel Solomon [l]made no forced laborers, because they *were* men of war and his servants: his officers, his captains, commanders of his chariots, and his cavalry.

23 Others *were* chiefs of the officials who *were* over Solomon's work: [m]five hundred and fifty, who ruled over the people who did the work.

24 But [n]Pharaoh's daughter came up from the City of David to [o]her house which [5]*Solomon* had built for her. [p]Then he built the Millo.

25 [q]Now three times a year Solomon offered burnt offerings and peace offerings on the altar which he had built for the LORD, and he burned incense with them *on the altar* that *was* before the LORD. So he finished the temple.

26 [r]King Solomon also built a fleet of ships at [s]Ezion Geber, which *is* near [6]Eloth on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom. 27 [t]Then Hiram sent his servants with the fleet, seamen who knew the sea, to work with the servants of Solomon. 28 And they went to [u]Ophir, and acquired four hundred and twenty talents of gold from there, and brought *it* to King Solomon.

The Queen of Sheba's Praise of Solomon

10 Now when the [a]queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came [b]to test him with hard questions. 2 She came to Jerusalem with a

13 [u]Josh. 19:27 [3]Lit. *Good for Nothing*

15 [v]1 Kin. 5:13 [w]2 Sam. 5:9 [x]Josh. 11:1; 19:36 [y]Josh. 17:11 [z]Josh. 16:10 [4]Lit. *The Landfill*

16 [a]Josh. 16:10

17 [b]2 Chr. 8:5

18 [c]Josh. 19:44

19 [d]1 Kin. 10:26 [e]1 Kin. 4:26 [f]1 Kin. 9:1

20 [g]2 Chr. 8:7

21 [h]Judg. 1:21–36; 3:1 [i]Josh. 15:63; 17:12, 13 [j]Judg. 1:28, 35 [k]Ezra 2:55, 58

22 [l][Lev. 25:39]

23 [m]2 Chr. 8:10

24 [n]1 Kin. 3:1 [o]1 Kin. 7:8 [p]2 Sam. 5:9 [5]Lit. *he;* cf. 2 Chr. 8:11

25 [q]Ex. 23:14–17

26 [r]2 Chr. 8:17, 18 [s]Num. 33:35 [6]Heb. *Eloth*

27 [t]1 Kin. 5:6, 9; 10:11

28 [u]Job 22:24

CHAPTER 10

1 [a]Matt. 12:42 [b]Judg. 14:12

■ **9:14 one hundred and twenty talents of gold.** At first glance, this seems like a huge amount of gold. Nevertheless, the gold Solomon received from Hiram is not as much as the 150 talents of gold Tiglath-Pileser III of Assyria claimed to have received from Tyre in about 730 B.C.

■ **9:15 the Millo.** As the city of Jerusalem expanded northward along the Ophel ridge, it was necessary to build supporting earthworks for the city's fortifications. The "Millo" (lit. "filling") was apparently such a restraining structure constructed east of the palace to fill in a depression along the ridgetop (cf. v. 24; 11:27; 2 Sam. 5:9; 2 Kin. 12:20; 2 Chr. 32:5).

Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer. These towns are strategically located along major trade routes. Hazor is ten miles north of the Sea of Chinneroth (Galilee); Megiddo is at the opening onto the Jezreel Valley of a strategic pass through the Carmel ridge. Gezer was twenty miles west of Jerusalem. Archaeological excavation has revealed identical Solomonic gates at each of these sites. By fortifying these three sites, Solomon consolidated his control of trade and commerce.

■ **9:16 Pharaoh . . . had gone up and taken Gezer.** Gezer had remained in Canaanite hands, despite the Israelite conquest (Josh. 16:10; Judg. 1:29). The pharaoh captured Gezer, perhaps from the Philistines. Since Egypt and Israel had a treaty (3:1), it was in the interest of both countries not to have Gezer in hostile hands.

■ **9:17 Lower Beth Horon.** Eleven miles northwest of Jerusalem (cf. Josh. 16:3) at the foot of a strategic pass controlling access to the Judean highlands.

■ **9:18 Baalath.** Eight miles northeast of Ashdod, near the Mediterranean coast (cf. Josh. 19:44).

Tadmor. Probably the same as Tamar, sixteen miles southwest of the Dead Sea (Judg. 1:16. Tamar means "palm"; Ezek. 47:19; 48:28).

■ **9:20 the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites.** When Israel entered the land of Canaan, they were to destroy completely the nations who were living there (Deut. 7:1; 20:17; Josh. 3:10; 9:1). The Israelites did not do this systematically in any systematic fashion (Josh. 16:10; Judg. 1—2; 3:5), and Solomon's policy was to conscript the descendants of these peoples permanently (v. 21).

■ **9:22 Solomon made no forced laborers.** Solomon conscripted permanently foreign peoples living in the land, but the Israelite workers he conscripted served for fixed periods of time (5:13 note; 12:4 note).

■ **9:26 Ezion Geber.** So as not to be dependent on the merchant navies and ports of other nations, Solomon built ships at Ezion Geber, his own port. This was a new venture for Israel, and Solomon enlisted the help of his ally, Hiram of Tyre, who supplied sailors to accompany Solomon's own (v. 27).

Red Sea. That is, the Gulf of Aqaba (Jer. 49:20, 21).

■ **9:28 Ophir.** The location of Ophir is disputed (Job 28:16; Ps. 45:9; Is. 13:12). Suggestions include western Arabia, the Horn of Africa, and India.

■ **10:1 Sheba.** Two main suggestions for this location are southwest Arabia (modern Yemen) and northern Arabia, the land of the Sabeans (Job 1:15; 6:19; Ps. 72:10).

very great [1]retinue, with camels that bore spices, very much gold, and precious stones; and when she came to Solomon, she spoke with him about all that was in her heart. 3 So Solomon answered all her questions; there was nothing [2]so difficult for the king that he could not explain *it* to her. 4 And when the queen of Sheba had seen all the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, 5 the food on his table, the seating of his servants, the service of his waiters and their apparel, his cupbearers, [c]and his entryway by which he went up to the house of the LORD, there was no more spirit in her. 6 Then she said to the king: "It was a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom. 7 However I did not believe the words until I came and saw with my own eyes; and indeed the half was not told me. Your wisdom and prosperity exceed the fame of which I heard. 8 [d]Happy *are* your men and happy *are* these your servants, who stand continually before you *and* hear your wisdom! 9 [e]Blessed be the LORD your God, who [f]delighted in you, setting you on the throne of Israel! Because the LORD has loved Israel forever, therefore He made you king, [g]to do justice and righteousness."

10 Then she [h]gave the king one hundred and twenty talents of gold, spices in great quantity, and precious stones. There never again came such abundance of spices as the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon. 11 [i]Also, the ships of Hiram, which brought gold from Ophir, brought great *quantities* of [3]almug wood and precious stones from Ophir. 12 [j]And the king made [4]steps of the almug wood for the house of the LORD and for the king's house, also harps and stringed instruments for singers. There never again came such [k]almug wood, nor has the like been seen to this day.

13 Now King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba all she desired, whatever she asked, besides what Solomon had given her according to the royal generosity. So she turned and went to her own country, she and her servants.

Solomon's Great Wealth

14 The weight of gold that came to Solomon yearly was six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold, 15 besides *that* from the [l]traveling merchants, from the income of traders, [m]from all the kings of Arabia, and from the governors of the country.

16 And King Solomon made two hundred large shields *of* hammered gold; six hundred *shekels* of gold went into each shield. 17 He also *made* [n]three hundred shields *of* hammered gold; three minas of gold went into each shield. The king put them in the [o]House of the Forest of Lebanon.

18 [p]Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with pure gold. 19 The throne had six steps, and the top of the throne *was* round at the back; *there were* armrests on either side of the place of the seat, and two lions stood beside the armrests. 20 Twelve lions stood there, one on each side of the six steps; nothing like *this* had been made for any *other* kingdom.

21 [q]All King Solomon's drinking vessels *were* gold, and all the vessels of the House of the Forest of Lebanon *were* pure gold. Not *one was* silver, for this was accounted as nothing in the

2 [1]*company*
3 [2]*too*
5 [c]1 Chr. 26:16; 2 Chr. 9:4
8 [d]Prov. 8:34
9 [e]1 Kin. 5:7 [f]2 Sam. 22:20 [g]2 Sam. 8:15; Ps. 72:2; [Prov. 8:15]
10 [h]Ps. 72:10, 15
11 [i]1 Kin. 9:27, 28; Job 22:24 [3]*algum*, 2 Chr. 9:10, 11
12 [j]2 Chr. 9:11 [k]2 Chr. 9:10 [4]Or *supports*
15 [l]2 Chr. 1:16 [m]2 Chr. 9:24; Ps. 72:10
17 [n]1 Kin. 14:26 [o]1 Kin. 7:2
18 [p]1 Kin. 10:22; 2 Chr. 9:17; Ps. 45:8
21 [q]2 Chr. 9:20

concerning the name of the LORD. The Queen of Sheba comes to Jerusalem not simply because of Solomon's fame, but because she recognizes the relationship between Solomon's fame and the Lord.

hard questions. Wishing to discover whether Solomon's reputation is deserved, the Queen of Sheba tests him with hard questions (cf. Judg. 14:12).

■ **10:5 the food on his table.** See notes on 2:7 and 4:22.

his cupbearers. The cupbearer was an important post in ancient Near Eastern governments (Gen. 40; 41:9; Neh. 1:11).

■ **10:9 Blessed be the LORD your God.** The Queen of Sheba specifically mentions the personal name of the God of Israel in her statement to Solomon (vv. 6–9). Jesus cites the Queen of Sheba in His indictment against the people of His own day (Matt. 12:42; Luke 11:31).

■ **10:11 ships of Hiram.** In addition to helping Solomon build his own fleet, Hiram of Tyre used some of his own ships to transport goods for Solomon (9:26–28; 10:22).

almug wood. See text note. Suggestions about the nature of this wood include red sandalwood and juniper.

■ **10:12 harps and stringed instruments for singers.** Israelite royalty probably sponsored musicians to compose appropriate hymns and psalms for worship.

■ **10:13 Solomon gave.** They exchanged gifts (v. 10).

■ **10:14 came to Solomon yearly.** Annual, steady tribute was necessary to support all of Solomon's major projects and outlays.

■ **10:15 from the traveling merchants . . . traders.** Solomon controlled a large territory on the trade routes north to Mesopotamia and south to Egypt. Tariffs on the goods transported through Israel would have been substantial.

governors of the country. See 4:7–19.

■ **10:16, 17 large shields.** These extremely heavy and valuable shields were made chiefly for ceremonial and aesthetic reasons. The use of such shields as a visible sign of a king's wealth and status is not unique to Solomon. After a campaign of about 714 B.C., King Sargon II claims to have taken "six shields of gold" from a temple.

■ **10:18 a great throne of ivory.** Solomon used the great influx of tribute to support an extravagant lifestyle (vv. 18–21, 23–25). His throne was probably made of wood inlaid with ivory and gold. Ivory carvings plated with gold have been found in the Assyrian royal palaces at Nimrud. Solomon's desire for the finest in furnishings and buildings burdened his subjects (12:4).

■ **10:21 all the vessels of the House . . . were pure gold.** Beautiful golden vessels from ancient times have been found in Egypt (thirteenth century B.C.), Ugarit (on the Mediterranean coast in modern Syria, thirteenth century B.C.), and Persia (sixth to fourth centuries B.C.).

days of Solomon. 22 For the king had [r]merchant[5] ships at sea with the fleet of Hiram. Once every three years the merchant [s]ships came bringing gold, silver, ivory, apes, and [6]monkeys. 23 So [t]King Solomon surpassed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom.

24 Now all the earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. 25 Each man brought his present: articles of silver and gold, garments, armor, spices, horses, and mules, at a set rate year by year.

26 [u]And Solomon [v]gathered chariots and horsemen; he had one thousand four hundred chariots and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he [7]stationed in the chariot cities and with the king at Jerusalem. 27 [w]The king made silver *as common* in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedar trees as abundant as the sycamores which *are* in the lowland.

28 [x]Also Solomon had horses imported from Egypt and Keveh; the king's merchants bought them in Keveh at the *current* price. 29 Now a chariot that was imported from Egypt cost six hundred *shekels* of silver, and a horse one hundred and fifty; [y]and [8]thus, through their agents, they exported *them* to all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Syria.

Solomon's Heart Turns from the LORD

11 But [a]King Solomon loved [b]many foreign women, as well as the daughter of Pharaoh: women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, *and* Hittites— 2 from the nations of whom the LORD had said to the children of Israel, [c]"You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods." Solomon clung to these in love. 3 And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart. 4 For it was so, when Solomon was old, [d]that his wives turned his heart after other gods; and his [e]heart was not [1]loyal to the LORD his God, [f]as *was* the heart of his father David. 5 For Solomon went after [g]Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and after [h]Milcom[2] the abomination of the [i]Ammonites. 6 Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not fully follow the LORD, as *did* his father David. 7 [j]Then Solomon built a [3]high place for [k]Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on [l]the hill that *is* east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon. 8 And he did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.

9 So the LORD became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from the LORD God of Israel, [m]who had appeared to him twice, 10 and [n]had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not keep what the LORD had commanded. 11 Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, "Because you have done this, and have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, [o]I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your [p]servant. 12 Nevertheless I will not do it in your days, for the sake of

22 [r]Gen. 10:4 [s]1 Kin. 9:26–28; 22:48 [5]Lit. *ships of Tarshish,* deep-sea vessels [6]Or *peacocks*

23 [t]1 Kin. 3:12, 13; 4:30

26 [u]1 Kin. 4:26 [v]1 Kin. 9:19 [7]So with LXX, Syr., Tg., Vg. (cf. 2 Chr. 9:25); MT *led*

27 [w]2 Chr. 1:15–17

28 [x][Deut. 17:16]

29 [y]2 Kin. 7:6, 7 [8]Lit. *by their hands*

CHAPTER 11

1 [a][Neh. 13:26] [b][Deut. 17:17]

2 [c][Deut. 7:3, 4]

4 [d][Deut. 17:17] [e]1 Kin. 8:61 [f]1 Kin. 9:4 [1]Lit. *at peace with*

5 [g]Judg. 2:13 [h][Lev. 20:2–5] [i]2 Kin. 23:13 [2]Or *Molech*

7 [j]Num. 33:52 [k]Judg. 11:24 [l]2 Kin. 23:13 [3]A place for pagan worship

9 [m]1 Kin. 3:5; 9:2

10 [n]1 Kin. 6:12; 9:6, 7

11 [o]1 Kin. 11:31; 12:15, 16 [p]1 Kin. 11:31, 37

■ **10:22 merchant ships.** These so-called "ships of Tarshish" (text note) were built to make long ocean voyages.

with the fleet of Hiram. See note on 9:26.

■ **10:26 chariots and horsemen.** The "law of the king" in Deut. 17:16 forbids the monarch to accumulate great numbers of chariots and horses.

■ **10:28 Egypt and Keveh.** Keveh was in what is now Turkey. It may be that "Egypt" (Hebrew *misrayim*) has been confused with "Musri," also in Turkey (see also 2 Kin. 7:6). Solomon may have financed the buildup of his own military forces by his trading in the famous Cilician horses and the superior chariots of Egypt (v. 29).

■ **10:29 imported . . . they exported.** Not only did Solomon amass chariots and horses, he also initiated substantial trade in these commodities through "the king's merchants" (v. 28). In doing this Solomon was exploiting Israel's strategic geographic location.

the kings of the Hittites. The Hittites lived in Anatolia (Asia Minor). During Solomon's reign they were no longer the unified empire they had been between 1375–1240 B.C. They were now ruled by a number of minor kings, each with his own domain.

■ **11:1 loved many foreign women.** Whereas in the first part of his reign, "Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of his father David" (3:3), he later "loved many foreign women." Diplomatic marriages between the dynasties of various kingdoms were common in the ancient Near East as a means of ratifying treaties, but the multiplication of royal wives is forbidden in Deut. 17:17. Moreover, there were prohibitions against marrying foreign wives in the land Israel was to possess (Ex. 34:16; Deut. 7:1–4; Josh. 23:12, 13).

■ **11:2 turn away your hearts.** The phrase alludes to the warning of Deut. 7:4.

■ **11:4 as was the heart of his father David.** David is consistently presented as a model king (3:14; 9:4; 14:8; 15:3; 2 Kin. 8:19; 22:2). He was not without sins (2 Sam. 11; 12; 24:1–15; 1 Kin. 15:5), but when he sinned, his repentance was exemplary (2 Sam. 12:16, 17; 24:10–17). David's devotion to God was unparalleled.

■ **11:5 Ashtoreth.** The Phoenician goddess of love and fertility, called Astarte by the Greeks (cf. Judg. 2:13; 2 Kin. 23:13).

Milcom. Or Molech (text note). He was the national god of the Ammonites.

■ **11:6 Solomon did evil.** Solomon's many sins violated fundamental principles of Israelite religion: multiplying wives (v. 1 note), worshiping other gods (Ex. 20:3, 5), and building sanctuaries for the foreign gods (vv. 7, 8; Ex. 20:4).

■ **11:7 Chemosh.** He was the national god of the Moabites (2 Kin. 3:26, 27). See "Syncretism and Idolatry" at Hos. 2:13.

■ **11:10 after other gods.** See 3:14; 9:6–9.

■ **11:11 tear the kingdom away.** See vv. 29–39.

■ **11:12 I will not do it in your days.** God's great love for David causes Him to temper His judgment on Solomon in two respects: first, God postpones the division until the reign of Solomon's son; and second, God does not remove the entire kingdom from the Davidic dynasty (v. 13).

13 [q]2 Sam. 7:15; 1 Chr. 17:13; Ps. 89:33 [r]1 Kin. 12:20 [s]2 Sam. 7:15, 16 [t]Deut. 12:11; 1 Kin. 9:3; 14:21

14 [u]1 Chr. 5:26

15 [v]2 Sam. 8:14; 1 Chr. 18:12, 13 [w]Num. 24:18, 19; [Deut. 20:13]

21 [x]1 Kin. 2:10, 34 [4]Died and joined his ancestors [5]Lit. *Send me away*

23 [y]2 Sam. 8:3; 10:16

24 [z]2 Sam. 8:3; 10:8, 18

26 [a]1 Kin. 12:2 [b]1 Kin. 11:11; 2 Chr. 13:6 [c]2 Sam. 20:21

27 [d]1 Kin. 9:15, 24 [6]Lit. *closed up the breaches*

28 [e][Prov. 22:29]

29 [f]1 Kin. 12:15; 14:2; 2 Chr. 9:29

your father David; I will tear it out of the hand of your son. 13 [q]However I will not tear away the whole kingdom; I will give [r]one tribe to your son [s]for the sake of My servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem [t]which I have chosen."

Adversaries of Solomon

14 Now the LORD [u]raised up an adversary against Solomon, Hadad the Edomite; he *was* a descendant of the king in Edom. 15 [v]For it happened, when David was in Edom, and Joab the commander of the army had gone up to bury the slain, [w]after he had killed every male in Edom 16 (because for six months Joab remained there with all Israel, until he had cut down every male in Edom), 17 that Hadad fled to go to Egypt, he and certain Edomites of his father's servants with him. Hadad *was* still a little child. 18 Then they arose from Midian and came to Paran; and they took men with them from Paran and came to Egypt, to Pharaoh king of Egypt, who gave him a house, apportioned food for him, and gave him land. 19 And Hadad found great favor in the sight of Pharaoh, so that he gave him as wife the sister of his own wife, that is, the sister of Queen Tahpenes. 20 Then the sister of Tahpenes bore him Genubath his son, whom Tahpenes weaned in Pharaoh's house. And Genubath was in Pharaoh's household among the sons of Pharaoh.

21 [x]So when Hadad heard in Egypt that David [4]rested with his fathers, and that Joab the commander of the army was dead, Hadad said to Pharaoh, [5]"Let me depart, that I may go to my own country."

22 Then Pharaoh said to him, "But what have you lacked with me, that suddenly you seek to go to your own country?"

So he answered, "Nothing, but do let me go anyway."

23 And God raised up *another* adversary against him, Rezon the son of Eliadah, who had fled from his lord, [y]Hadadezer king of Zobah. 24 So he gathered men to him and became captain over a band *of raiders,* [z]when David killed those *of Zobah.* And they went to Damascus and dwelt there, and reigned in Damascus. 25 He was an adversary of Israel all the days of Solomon (besides the trouble that Hadad *caused*); and he abhorred Israel, and reigned over Syria.

Jeroboam's Rebellion

26 Then Solomon's servant, [a]Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephraimite from Zereda, whose mother's name *was* Zeruah, a widow, [b]also [c]rebelled against the king.

27 And this *is* what caused him to rebel against the king: [d]Solomon had built the Millo *and* [6]repaired the damages to the City of David his father. 28 The man Jeroboam *was* a mighty man of valor; and Solomon, seeing that the young man was [e]industrious, made him the officer over all the labor force of the house of Joseph.

29 Now it happened at that time, when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, that the prophet [f]Ahijah the Shilonite met him on the way; and he had clothed himself with a new garment, and the two *were* alone in the field. 30 Then Ahijah took hold of the new garment that *was* on him, and

■ **11:13 one tribe.** This probably refers to Judah (12:20; 2 Kin. 17:18). If Judah is already understood without being mentioned, another tribe is meant, such as Benjamin (12:21) or Simeon.

for the sake of Jerusalem. Jerusalem was God's chosen city, the site of Israel's central sanctuary anticipated in Deut. 12 and constructed by Solomon. Jerusalem is a central symbol of God's love for His people and the communion between God and His people throughout the Bible (Ps. 68:29; 122:2–6; 135:21; 137:5–7; Is. 62:1; Dan. 9:25; Rev. 3:12; 21:2, 10).

■ **11:15 when David was in Edom.** See 2 Sam. 8:14. An earlier victory by Joab is reversed, as Hadad returns from exile in Egypt and successfully rebels against Solomon (v. 25).

■ **11:18 from Midian.** The Midianites lived east of Moab and Edom.

Paran. This area was in the Sinai peninsula southeast of Kadesh.

gave him a house. Taking notice of the emerging power of David, Pharaoh was ready to shelter David's foes in the hope that one day they would curtail Israel's power (v. 21). Ancient treaties forbid providing asylum to political rebels.

■ **11:22 do let me go.** Following David's death, Hadad wanted to return to his own land, despite the Pharaoh's objections, probably because he wanted to liberate it from Israelite domination (v. 25).

■ **11:23 another adversary.** Formerly Solomon could boast that in his reign there was "neither adversary nor evil occurrence" (5:4), but now God afflicted him with a succession of enemies.

Hadadezer king of Zobah. On David's conquest of Hadadezer and Syria, see 2 Sam. 8:3–6; 10:15–19.

■ **11:24 reigned in Damascus.** From his base in Damascus, Rezon persistently caused trouble for Solomon.

■ **11:26–43** Jeroboam rebels against Solomon and escapes to Egypt until Solomon's death.

■ **11:26 Jeroboam the son of Nebat . . . also rebelled.** Whereas Hadad and Rezon are external enemies raised up by God, Jeroboam, an Ephraimite, is an internal foe.

Zeredah. Twenty-one miles east of Joppa in the territory of Ephraim.

■ **11:27 the Millo.** See note on 9:15.

■ **11:28 over all the labor force of the house of Joseph.** Jeroboam was in charge of the laborers Solomon drafted from the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh (5:13–16), and was well aware of the resentment these tribes felt toward Solomon (12:4).

■ **11:29 Shilonite.** Shiloh was in Ephraim, about twelve miles east of Zeredah.

■ **11:30 tore it into twelve pieces.** Ahijah performs a symbolic action,

[g]tore it *into* twelve pieces. 31 And he said to Jeroboam, "Take for yourself ten pieces, for [h]thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: 'Behold, I will tear the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon and will give ten tribes to you 32 (but he shall have one tribe for the sake of My servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel), 33 [i]because [7]they have forsaken Me, and worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the people of Ammon, and have not walked in My ways to do *what is* right in My eyes and *keep* My statutes and My judgments, as *did* his father David. 34 However I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand, because I have made him ruler all the days of his life for the sake of My servant David, whom I chose because he kept My commandments and My statutes. 35 But [j]I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand and give it to you—ten tribes. 36 And to his son I will give one tribe, that [k]My servant David may always have a lamp before Me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen for Myself, to put My name there. 37 So I will take you, and you shall reign over all your heart desires, and you shall be king over Israel. 38 Then it shall be, if you heed all that I command you, walk in My ways, and do *what is* right in My sight, to keep My statutes and My commandments, as My servant David did, then [l]I will be with you and [m]build for you an enduring house, as I built for David, and will give Israel to you. 39 And I will afflict the descendants of David because of this, but not forever.' "

40 Solomon therefore sought to kill Jeroboam. But Jeroboam arose and fled to Egypt, to [n]Shishak king of Egypt, and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon.

Death of Solomon

41 Now [o]the rest of the acts of Solomon, all that he did, and his wisdom, *are* they not written in the book of the acts of Solomon? 42 [p]And the period that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel *was* forty years. 43 [q]Then Solomon [s]rested with his fathers, and was buried in the City of David his father. And Rehoboam his son reigned in his [r]place.

The Revolt Against Rehoboam

12 And [a]Rehoboam went to [b]Shechem, for all Israel had gone to Shechem to make him king. 2 So it happened, when [c]Jeroboam the son of Nebat heard *it* (he was still in [d]Egypt, for he had fled from the presence of King Solomon and had been dwelling in Egypt), 3 that they sent and called him. Then Jeroboam and the whole assembly of Israel came and spoke to

30 [g]1 Sam. 15:27, 28; 24:5

31 [h]1 Kin. 11:11, 13

33 [i]1 Sam. 7:3; 1 Kin. 11:5–8 [7]So with MT, Tg.; LXX, Syr., Vg. *he has*

35 [j]1 Kin. 12:16, 17

36 [k][1 Kin. 15:4; 2 Kin. 8:19]

38 [l]Deut. 31:8; Josh. 1:5 [m]2 Sam. 7:11, 27

40 [n]1 Kin. 11:17; 14:25; 2 Chr. 12:2–9

41 [o]2 Chr. 9:29

42 [p]2 Chr. 9:30

43 [q]1 Kin. 2:10; 2 Chr. 9:31 [r]1 Kin. 14:21; 2 Chr. 10:1 [s]Died and joined his ancestors

CHAPTER 12

1 [a]2 Chr. 10:1 [b]Judg. 9:6

2 [c]1 Kin. 11:26 [d]1 Kin. 11:40

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that is, he acts out a parable. Such colorful actions dramatize the reality of the spoken word and God's intervention in history (cf. 22:11; Is. 20; Jer. 13:1–11). In this case, the torn pieces of Ahijah's robe illustrate the impending division of the kingdom.

■ **11:31 Take for yourself ten pieces.** On behalf of the Lord, Ahijah summons Jeroboam to take ten of the twelve pieces, symbolizing the ten northern tribes over which Jeroboam will shortly become king. As with the earlier rebellions of Hadad and Rezon, Jeroboam's insurrection is a divine judgment against Solomon.

■ **11:32 one tribe.** See note on v. 13.

■ **11:34 I have made him ruler.** See note on v. 12.

■ **11:35 out of his son's hand.** That is, from Solomon's successor, Rehoboam (12:1–24).

■ **11:36 that My servant David may always have a lamp.** The metaphor of a lamp signifies the permanence of the Davidic dynasty in the city of Jerusalem (15:4; 2 Sam. 21:17; 2 Kin. 8:19; 2 Chr. 21:7; Ps. 132:17).

■ **11:37 over all your heart desires.** A similar promise is given to David (2 Sam. 3:21).

king over Israel. That is, over the ten northern tribes. During the period of the divided kingdom, the term "Israel" most often designates these ten tribes. "Judah" denotes the domain still ruled by David's descendants.

■ **11:38 if you heed all that I command you.** Jeroboam will be subject to the same covenantal stipulations that were operative for Saul, David, and Solomon (2:3, 4 and notes).

I will be with you. These words are an assurance of God's presence and sustenance (Deut. 31:8; Judg. 2:18; 6:12, 16; 1 Sam. 3:19; 2 Sam. 5:10; 7:9). Ahijah hopes that Jeroboam will be more loyal to the covenant than Solomon.

■ **11:39 but not forever.** This phrase looks forward to a restoration of Davidic power. Such a restoration was attempted by Josiah of Judah, but he could not complete it (2 Kin. 22; 23). The prophets also look for a renewal of Davidic rule (Jer. 30:9; Ezek. 34:23; 37:15–28; Hos. 3:5; Amos 9:11). These hopes are fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the Messiah (Matt. 1:1; Mark 1:1).

■ **11:40 Shishak.** Shishak was the first king over the twenty-second dynasty and ruled from 945–924 B.C. (14:25, 26). Solomon was married to a daughter of a pharaoh from the twenty-first dynasty (3:1 note).

■ **11:41 the book of the acts of Solomon.** One of the sources (no longer in existence) used by the writer of 1 and 2 Kings. Other official sources are mentioned in 14:19 and 29.

■ **11:42 forty years.** Approximately 970 to 930 B.C.

■ **12:1–24** King Rehoboam's refusal to listen to the people's request to lighten their burden sparks secession by the northern tribes. From this point on the northern kingdom is usually referred to as Israel, and the southern kingdom as Judah.

■ **12:1 Shechem.** This major Israelite center associated with the renewal of the covenant with the Lord (Josh. 24:1–33) was in northern Ephraim, thirty miles north of Jerusalem.

to make him king. Rehoboam traveled to Shechem to be made king by acclamation (see 1 Sam. 11:15 and the covenant the northern tribes made with David in 2 Sam. 5:1–3). As it turned out, the northern tribes did not accept Rehoboam.

■ **12:2 when Jeroboam . . . heard it.** That is, about the death of Solomon (11:43).

Rehoboam, saying, 4 "Your father made our [e]yoke [1]heavy; now therefore, lighten the burdensome service of your father, and his heavy yoke which he put on us, and we will serve you."

5 So he said to them, "Depart *for* three days, then come back to me." And the people departed.

6 Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who stood before his father Solomon while he still lived, and he said, "How do you advise *me* to answer these people?"

7 And they spoke to him, saying, [f]"If you will be a servant to these people today, and serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever."

8 But he rejected the advice which the elders had given him, and consulted the young men who had grown up with him, who stood before him. 9 And he said to them, "What advice do you give? How should we answer this people who have spoken to me, saying, 'Lighten the yoke which your father put on us'?"

10 Then the young men who had grown up with him spoke to him, saying, "Thus you should speak to this people who have spoken to you, saying, 'Your father made our yoke heavy, but you make *it* lighter on us'—thus you shall say to them: 'My little *finger* shall be thicker than my father's waist! 11 And now, whereas my father put a heavy yoke on you, I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with [2]scourges!' "

12 So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day, as the king had directed, saying, "Come back to me the third day." 13 Then the king answered the people [3]roughly, and rejected the advice which the elders had given him; 14 and he spoke to them according to the advice of the young men, saying, "My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with [4]scourges!" 15 So the king did not listen to the people; for [g]the turn *of events* was from the LORD, that He might fulfill His word, which the LORD had [h]spoken by Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

16 Now when all Israel saw that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king, saying:

[i]"What share have we in David?
We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse.
To your tents, O Israel!
Now, see to your own house, O David!"

So Israel departed to their tents. 17 But Rehoboam reigned over [j]the children of Israel who dwelt in the cities of Judah.

18 Then King Rehoboam [k]sent Adoram, who *was* in charge of the revenue; but all Israel stoned him with stones, and he died. Therefore King Rehoboam mounted his chariot in haste to flee to Jerusalem. 19 So [l]Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day.

20 Now it came to pass when all Israel heard that Jeroboam had come back, they sent for him and called him to the congregation, and made him king over all [m]Israel. There was none who followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah [n]only.

21 And when [o]Rehoboam came to Jerusalem, he assembled all the house of Judah with the tribe of [p]Benjamin, one hundred and eighty thousand chosen *men* who were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, that he might restore the kingdom to Rehoboam the son of Solomon.

4 [e]1 Sam. 8:11–18; 1 Kin. 4:7; 5:13–15 [1]*hard*

7 [f]2 Chr. 10:7; [Prov. 15:1]

11 [2]Scourges with points or barbs, lit. *scorpions*

13 [3]*harshly*

14 [4]Lit. *scorpions*

15 [g]Deut. 2:30; Judg. 14:4; 1 Kin. 12:24; 2 Chr. 10:15 [h]1 Kin. 11:11, 29, 31

16 [i]2 Sam. 20:1

17 [j]1 Kin. 11:13, 36; 2 Chr. 11:14–17

18 [k]1 Kin. 4:6; 5:14

19 [l]2 Chr. 17:21

20 [m]2 Kin. 17:21 [n]1 Kin. 11:13, 32, 36

21 [o]2 Chr. 11:1–4 [p]2 Sam. 19:17

■ **12:4 Your father made our yoke heavy.** The expression "yoke" is characteristically used for the oppression of the Israelites by foreign rulers (Lev. 26:13; Deut. 28:48; Is. 9:4; 10:27; 14:25; Jer. 27:8, 11; Ezek. 34:27). Its use here is an indictment of Solomon for imposing harsh labor on his own people (5:13; 9:22; 11:28 and notes).

■ **12:6 the elders.** These older and experienced advisors were well acquainted with the traditions of Israel and understood how the monarchy affected the lives of ordinary Israelites.

■ **12:7 If you will be a servant.** Though entrusted with power, the Israelite king was to establish justice and so serve both God and His people (Deut. 17:14–20; Ps. 72).

■ **12:8 the young men.** These young advisors, like Rehoboam himself, had grown up in the royal court. Apparently they thought that Rehoboam's privileges were inalienable like those of an oriental monarch.

■ **12:10 My little finger shall be thicker than my father's waist.** These words are an arrogant and unwise boast about how much more oppressive Rehoboam's yoke will be than his father's (v. 11).

■ **12:15 from the LORD.** The writer does not mention God's agency in order to excuse Rehoboam's foolishness. God is using Rehoboam's misguided actions as an instrument for fulfilling Ahijah's prophecy (11:31–39).

■ **12:16 see to your own house, O David.** The northern tribes secede from Judah and from the authority of David's descendants. For an identical taunt against David himself, see 2 Sam. 20:1.

■ **12:17 children of Israel.** That is, members of the northern tribes who had settled in the south.

■ **12:18 Adoram.** Rehoboam unwisely sent out the chief of forced labor to quell the uprising (4:6; 5:14, where the name is spelled "Adoniram").

all Israel. That is, representatives of the northern tribes (12:1).

■ **12:19 to this day.** See 8:8 note.

■ **12:20 to the congregation.** Jeroboam does not seem to have played an active role in the assembly at Shechem. Once he is made king, however, He takes charge over Israelite affairs (vv. 25–33).

22 But [q]the word of God came to Shemaiah the man of God, saying, 23 "Speak to Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of Judah, to all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the rest of the people, saying, 24 'Thus says the LORD: "You shall not go up nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel. Let every man return to his house, [r]for this thing is from Me." ' " Therefore they obeyed the word of the LORD, and turned back, according to the word of the LORD.

Jeroboam's Gold Calves

25 Then Jeroboam [s]built[5] Shechem in the mountains of Ephraim, and dwelt there. Also he went out from there and built [t]Penuel. 26 And Jeroboam said in his heart, "Now the kingdom may return to the house of David: 27 If these people [u]go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn back to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and go back to Rehoboam king of Judah."

28 Therefore the king asked advice, [v]made two calves of gold, and said to the people, "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. [w]Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt!" 29 And he set up one in [x]Bethel, and the other he put in [y]Dan. 30 Now this thing became [z]a sin, for the people went *to worship* before the one as far as Dan. 31 He made [6]shrines on the high places, [a]and made priests from every class of people, who were not of the sons of Levi.

32 Jeroboam [7]ordained a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, like [b]the feast that *was* in Judah, and offered sacrifices on the altar. So he did at Bethel, sacrificing to the calves that he had made. [c]And at Bethel he installed the priests of the high places which he had made. 33 So he made offerings on the altar which he had made at Bethel on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, in the month which he had [d]devised in his own heart. And he [8]ordained a feast for the children of Israel, and offered sacrifices on the altar and [e]burned incense.

The Message of the Man of God

13 And behold, [a]a man of God went from Judah to Bethel [1]by the word of the LORD, [b]and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense. 2 Then he cried out against the altar [2]by the word of the LORD, and said, "O altar, altar! Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, a child, [c]Josiah by name, shall be born to the house of David; and on you he shall sacrifice the priests of the high places who burn incense on you, and men's bones shall be [d]burned on you.' " 3 And he gave [e]a

22 [q]2 Chr. 11:2; 12:5–7

24 [r]1 Kin. 12:15

25 [s]Judg. 9:45–49 [t]Judg. 8:8, 17 [5]*fortified*

27 [u][Deut. 12:5–7, 14]

28 [v]2 Kin. 10:29; 17:16 [w]Ex. 32:4, 8

29 [x]Gen. 28:19 [y]Judg. 18:26–31

30 [z]1 Kin. 13:34

31 [a]2 Kin. 17:32 [6]Lit. *a house;* cf. 1 Kin. 13:32, lit. *houses*

32 [b]Lev. 23:33, 34 [c]Amos 7:10–13 [7]*instituted*

33 [d]Num. 15:39 [e]1 Kin. 13:1 [8]*instituted*

CHAPTER 13

1 [a]2 Kin. 23:17 [b]1 Kin. 12:32, 33 [1]*at the* LORD*'s command*

2 [c]2 Kin. 23:15, 16 [d][Lev. 26:30] [2]*at the* LORD*'s command*

3 [e]Is. 7:14; 38:7

■ **12:22 the man of God.** This common expression designates a prophet (1 Sam. 2:27; 1 Kin. 13:1; 2 Kin. 4:7).

■ **12:23 the rest of the people.** Probably a reference to members of the northern tribes who had settled in Judah (v. 17).

■ **12:24 return to his house, for this thing is from Me.** The prophet Shemaiah reaffirms what the prophet Ahijah had earlier declared (11:29–39): the division of the kingdom conforms to the will of God. The existence of two realms is ordained by God, and each now has the opportunity to prove their loyalty to His covenant.

■ **12:25–33** In an effort to retain the people's loyalty, Jeroboam makes golden calves at Bethel and Dan and institutes a counter-system of worship for Israel.

■ **12:25 Penuel.** Jeroboam consolidates his rule by fortifying Shechem and Penuel, two critical cities along the River Jabbok.

■ **12:27 If these people go up to offer sacrifices.** Jeroboam fears that religious unity between north and south will lead to a return to political unity as well.

■ **12:28 two calves of gold.** Canaanites characteristically depicted their gods standing on bulls, calves, or other animals. Jeroboam probably prepared his golden calves as a kind of throne platform for God, and not as images of the Lord. Nevertheless, his innovation was an invitation for Canaanite religious practices to enter the northern kingdom (cf. Ex. 32:4).

■ **12:29 Bethel, and . . . Dan.** These sites are the centers farthest south and north in Jeroboam's kingdom. Bethel (lit. "house of God") was a historic Israelite worship center (Gen. 12:8; 28:11–19; 35:6, 7; Judg. 20:26–28; 1 Sam. 7:16).

■ **12:30 this thing became a sin.** The establishment of national religious centers in competition with the one in Jerusalem is repeatedly referred to in the books of Kings as the sin of Jeroboam (13:34; 14:16; 15:26, 30; 16:2; 2 Kin. 3:3; 10:29; 13:2; 17:22). Unfortunately, every northern king followed the path first blazed by Jeroboam. None of them tried to institute a thorough reform. Without determined opposition the sin of Jeroboam brought about the deterioration and demise of Israel (2 Kin. 17:22, 23).

■ **12:31 shrines on the high places.** See note on 3:2. By promoting worship at the high places, Jeroboam introduced further innovations into his cult.

priests from every class of people. Jeroboam created his own priesthood, without regard to their priestly qualifications or Levitical genealogy (Deut. 18:1–8; Judg. 17:10–13).

■ **12:32 ordained a feast.** Perhaps he imitated the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:34; 1 Kin. 8:2).

■ **12:33 the month which he had devised.** That is, one not sanctioned by God. By instituting his own religious centers, festival, and priesthood, Jeroboam deliberately wished to disassociate himself and his people from the Jerusalem temple and the worship practiced there. This clearly goes against the intent of Jeroboam's commission from God as described in 11:36–39 and 12:15, which mandated a political but not a religious separation between Israel and Judah. Loyalty to the covenant (11:38) requires loyalty to the temple established for God's honor and to its priests, festivals, and sacrifices.

■ **13:1 man of God.** See note on 12:22.

from Judah. God sent a southern prophet to denounce Jeroboam's northern cult.

■ **13:2 Josiah.** He ruled Judah 640–609 B.C., three hundred years after Jeroboam.

sacrifice the priests of the high places. This prophecy is realized during Josiah's reign (2 Kin. 23:15–20). By burning human bones on the altar, Josiah desecrated it and made it unfit for continued use as a sacred precinct.

sign the same day, saying, "This *is* the sign which the LORD has spoken: Surely the altar shall split apart, and the ashes on it shall be poured out."

4 So it came to pass when King Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, who cried out against the altar in Bethel, that he stretched out his hand from the altar, saying, "Arrest him!" Then his hand, which he stretched out toward him, withered, so that he could not pull it back to himself. 5 The altar also was split apart, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the LORD. 6 Then the king answered and said to the man of God, "Please [f]entreat the favor of the LORD your God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored to me."

So the man of God entreated the LORD, and the king's hand was restored to him, and became as before. 7 Then the king said to the man of God, "Come home with me and refresh yourself, and [g]I will give you a reward."

8 But the man of God said to the king, [h]"If you were to give me half your house, I would not go in with you; nor would I eat bread nor drink water in this place. 9 For so it was commanded me by the word of the LORD, saying, [i]'You shall not eat bread, nor drink water, nor return by the same way you came.' " 10 So he went another way and did not return by the way he came to Bethel.

Death of the Man of God

11 Now an [j]old prophet dwelt in Bethel, and his [3]sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Bethel; they also told their father the words which he had spoken to the king. 12 And their father said to them, "Which way did he go?" For his sons [4]had seen which way the man of God went who came from Judah. 13 Then he said to his sons, "Saddle the donkey for me." So they saddled the donkey for him; and he rode on it, 14 and went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak. Then he said to him, "*Are* you the man of God who came from Judah?"

And he said, "I *am*."

15 Then he said to him, "Come home with me and eat bread."

16 And he said, [k]"I cannot return with you nor go in with you; neither can I eat bread nor drink water with you in this place. 17 For [5]I have been told [l]by the word of the LORD, 'You shall not eat bread nor drink water there, nor return by going the way you came.' "

18 He said to him, "I too *am* a prophet as you *are,* and an angel spoke to me by the word of the LORD, saying, 'Bring him back with you to your house, that he may eat bread and drink water.' " (He was lying to him.)

19 So he went back with him, and ate bread in his house, and drank water.

20 Now it happened, as they sat at the table, that the word of the LORD came to the prophet who had brought him back; 21 and he cried out to the man of God who came from Judah, saying, "Thus says the LORD: 'Because you have disobeyed the word of the LORD, and have not kept the commandment which the LORD your God commanded you, 22 but you came back, ate bread, and drank water in the [m]place of which *the LORD* said to you, "Eat no bread and drink no water," your corpse shall not come to the tomb of your fathers.' "

23 So it was, after he had eaten bread and after he had drunk, that he saddled the donkey for him, the prophet whom he had brought back. 24 When he was gone, [n]a lion met him on the road and killed him. And his corpse was thrown on the road, and the donkey stood by it. The lion also stood by the corpse. 25 And there, men passed by and saw the corpse thrown on the road, and the lion standing by the corpse. Then they went and told *it* in the city where the old prophet dwelt.

6 [f]Ex. 8:8; 9:28; 10:17; Num. 21:7; Jer. 37:3; Acts 8:24; [James 5:16]
7 [g]1 Sam. 9:7; 2 Kin. 5:15
8 [h]Num. 22:18; 24:13; 1 Kin. 13:16, 17
9 [i][1 Cor. 5:11]
11 [j]1 Kin. 13:25
[3]Lit. *son*
12 [4]LXX, Syr., Tg., Vg. *showed him*
16 [k]1 Kin. 13:8, 9
17 [l]1 Kin. 20:35; 1 Thess. 4:15
[5]Lit. *a command came to me by*
22 [m]1 Kin. 13:9
24 [n]1 Kin. 20:36

■ **13:3** The prophets sometimes gave a sign, an immediate proof, to corroborate a prophecy (2 Kin. 19:29; 20:8–11; Jer. 44:29, 30).

the ashes on it shall be poured out. The altar was thereby profaned (Lev. 6:10–13).

■ **13:5 The altar also was split apart.** This sign (v. 3) confirms the prophecy about Josiah and shows God's condemnation of Jeroboam's religious system.

■ **13:6 the king's hand was restored.** God, in generously healing Jeroboam's hand, reaffirms the authority of His prophet.

■ **13:8 eat bread nor drink water.** For the prophet to accept this hospitality would imply his approval of Jeroboam's policies.

■ **13:9 You shall not eat . . . nor drink . . . nor return.** The prophet has explicit instructions from God about his personal conduct (v. 17).

■ **13:11 dwelt in Bethel.** The old prophet is from the north, unlike the man of God from Judah.

■ **13:18 He was lying to him.** The man of God from Judah could not have known this, except that the new revelation violated his own orders from God.

■ **13:20 the word of the LORD.** Ironically, God uses the old "lying" prophet of Bethel to deliver a true prophecy (v. 18).

■ **13:22 your corpse shall not come to the tomb of your fathers.** It was considered important to be buried along with one's ancestors in the family burial plot (1:21; Gen. 47:30; Josh. 24:32; 2 Sam. 2:32; 17:23).

■ **13:24 the donkey . . . lion.** The strange behavior of the animals is understood to be miraculous, and when news of it reaches the old prophet he immediately understands its significance.

26 Now when the prophet who had brought him back from the way heard *it,* he said, "It *is* the man of God who was disobedient to the word of the LORD. Therefore the LORD has delivered him to the lion, which has torn him and killed him, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke to him." 27 And he spoke to his sons, saying, "Saddle the donkey for me." So they saddled *it.* 28 Then he went and found his corpse thrown on the road, and the donkey and the lion standing by the corpse. The lion had not eaten the corpse nor torn the donkey. 29 And the prophet took up the corpse of the man of God, laid it on the donkey, and brought it back. So the old prophet came to the city to mourn, and to bury him. 30 Then he laid the corpse in his own tomb; and they mourned over him, *saying,* [o]"Alas, my brother!" 31 So it was, after he had buried him, that he spoke to his sons, saying, "When I am dead, then bury me in the tomb where the man of God *is* buried; [p]lay my bones beside his bones. 32 [q]For the [6]saying which he cried out by the word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel, and against all the [7]shrines on the high places which *are* in the cities of [r]Samaria, will surely come to pass."

33 [s]After this event Jeroboam did not turn from his evil way, but again he made priests from every class of people for the high places; whoever wished, he consecrated him, and he became *one* of the priests of the high places. 34 [t]And this thing was the sin of the house of Jeroboam, so as [u]to exterminate and destroy *it* from the face of the earth.

Judgment on the House of Jeroboam

14 At that time Abijah the son of Jeroboam became sick. 2 And Jeroboam said to his wife, "Please arise, and disguise yourself, that they may not recognize you as the wife of Jeroboam, and go to Shiloh. Indeed, Ahijah the prophet *is* there, who told me that [a]*I would be* king over this people. 3 [b]Also take [1]with you ten loaves, *some* cakes, and a jar of honey, and go to him; he will tell you what will become of the child." 4 And Jeroboam's wife did so; she arose [c]and went to Shiloh, and came to the house of Ahijah. But Ahijah could not see, for his eyes were [2]glazed by reason of his age.

5 Now the LORD had said to Ahijah, "Here is the wife of Jeroboam, coming to ask you something about her son, for he *is* sick. Thus and thus you shall say to her; for it will be, when she comes in, that she will pretend *to be* another *woman.*"

6 And so it was, when Ahijah heard the sound of her footsteps as she came through the door, he said, "Come in, wife of Jeroboam. Why do you pretend *to be* another *person?* For I *have been* sent to you *with* bad *news.* 7 Go, tell Jeroboam, 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel: [d]"Because I exalted you from among the people, and made you ruler over My people Israel, 8 and [e]tore the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it to you; and *yet* you have not been as My servant David, [f]who kept My commandments and who followed Me with all his heart, to do only *what was* right in My eyes; 9 but you have done more evil than all who were before you, [g]for you have gone and made for yourself other gods and molded images to provoke Me to anger, and [h]have cast Me behind your back— 10 therefore behold! [i]I will bring disaster on the house of Jeroboam, and [j]will cut off from Jeroboam every male in Israel, [k]bond and free; I will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as one takes away refuse until it is all gone. 11 The dogs shall eat [l]whoever belongs to Jeroboam and dies in the city, and the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies in the field; for the LORD has spoken!" ' 12 Arise therefore, go to your own house. [m]When your feet enter the city, the child shall die. 13 And all Israel shall mourn for him and bury him, for he is the only one of Jeroboam who shall [3]come to the grave, because in him [n]there is found something good toward the LORD God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam.

14 [o]"Moreover the LORD will raise up for Himself a king over Israel who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam; [4]this is the day. What? Even now! 15 For the LORD will strike Israel, as a

30 [o]Jer. 22:18

31 [p]Ruth 1:17; 2 Kin. 23:17, 18

32 [q]1 Kin. 13:2; 2 Kin. 23:16, 19 [r]1 Kin. 16:24; John 4:5; Acts 8:14 [6]Lit. *word* [7]Lit. *houses*

33 [s]1 Kin. 12:31, 32; 2 Chr. 11:15; 13:9

34 [t]1 Kin. 12:30; 2 Kin. 17:21 [u][1 Kin. 14:10; 15:29, 30]

CHAPTER 14

2 [a]1 Kin. 11:29–31

3 [b]1 Sam. 9:7, 8; 1 Kin. 13:7; 2 Kin. 4:42 [1]Lit. *in your hand*

4 [c]1 Kin. 11:29 [2]Lit. *set*

7 [d]2 Sam. 12:7, 8; 1 Kin. 16:2

8 [e]1 Kin. 11:31 [f]1 Kin. 11:33, 38; 15:5

9 [g]1 Kin. 12:28; 2 Chr. 11:15 [h]2 Chr. 29:6; Neh. 9:26; Ps. 50:17

10 [i]1 Kin. 15:29 [j]1 Kin. 21:21; 2 Kin. 9:8 [k]Deut. 32:36; 2 Kin. 14:26

11 [l]1 Kin. 16:4; 21:24

12 [m]1 Kin. 14:17

13 [n]2 Chr. 12:12; 19:3 [3]Be buried

14 [o]1 Kin. 15:27–29 [4]Or *this day and from now on*

■ **13:30 Alas, my brother.** This lament is appropriate for an equal and not for a superior (cf. Jer. 22:18).

■ **13:31 lay my bones beside his bones.** The old prophet identifies himself with the prophecy of the man from Judah by having himself buried in the same tomb. When Josiah later desecrates the Bethel altar, he does not disturb the bones out of respect for the prophet from Judah (2 Kin. 23:17, 18).

■ **13:34 the sin of the house of Jeroboam.** See note on 12:30.

■ **14:1 Abijah the son of Jeroboam became sick.** People in Old Testament times sometimes looked to prophets to heal diseases (2 Kin. 4:18–22; 5:1–14) or to predict the fate of someone who was ill (2 Kin. 1:2–4; 8:8).

■ **14:2 disguise yourself.** Jeroboam evidently feared the prophet and thought his son would be treated better if he was not associated with him.

■ **14:3 take . . . ten loaves.** Jeroboam's wife is to carry these gifts fit for a commoner but not for royalty (1 Sam. 9:6–8; 2 Kin. 5:15; 8:8), to ingratiate herself with Ahijah.

■ **14:11 dogs shall eat . . . the birds of the air.** See Deut. 28:26. Such curses are typical of the ancient world, including Homer (Iliad 1.4).

■ **14:15 He will uproot Israel from this good land.** The possibility of exile for apostasy is raised in the Mosaic covenant (Deut. 28:63, 64; 29:28), in Joshua's farewell speech (Josh. 23:15, 16), and in Solomon's temple prayer (8:33, 34, 46–53).

reed is shaken in the water. He will [p]uproot Israel from this [q]good land which He gave to their fathers, and will scatter them [r]beyond [5]the River, [s]because they have made their [6]wooden images, provoking the LORD to anger. [16] And He will give Israel up because of the sins of Jeroboam, [t]who sinned and who made Israel sin."

[17] Then Jeroboam's wife arose and departed, and came to [u]Tirzah. [v]When she came to the threshold of the house, the child died. [18] And they buried him; and all Israel mourned for him, [w]according to the word of the LORD which He spoke through His servant Ahijah the prophet.

Death of Jeroboam

[19] Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he [x]made war and how he reigned, indeed they *are* written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. [20] The period that Jeroboam reigned *was* twenty-two years. So he rested with his fathers. Then [y]Nadab his son reigned in his place.

Rehoboam Reigns in Judah

[21] And Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah. [z]Rehoboam *was* forty-one years old when he became king. He reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city [a]which the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put His name there. [b]His mother's name *was* Naamah, an Ammonitess. [22] [c]Now Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD, and they [d]provoked Him to jealousy with their sins which they committed, more than all that their fathers had done. [23] For they also built for themselves [e]high[7] places, [f]*sacred* pillars, and [g]wooden images on every high hill and [h]under every green tree. [24] [i]And there were also [8]perverted persons in the land. They did according to all the [j]abominations of the nations which the LORD had cast out before the children of [k]Israel.

[25] [l]It happened in the fifth year of King Rehoboam *that* Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem. [26] [m]And he took away the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's house; he took away everything. He also took away all the gold shields [n]which Solomon had made. [27] Then King Rehoboam made bronze shields in their place, and [9]committed *them* to the hands of the captains of the [1]guard, who guarded the doorway of the king's house. [28] And whenever the king entered the house of the LORD, the guards carried them, then brought them back into the guardroom.

[29] [o]Now the rest of the acts of Rehoboam, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? [30] And there was [p]war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam

15 [p]2 Kin. 17:6 [q][Josh. 23:15, 16] [r]2 Kin. 15:29 [s][Ex. 34:13, 14] [5]The Euphrates [6]Heb. *Asherim*, Canaanite deities
16 [t]1 Kin. 12:30; 13:34; 15:30, 34; 16:2
17 [u]Song 6:4 [v]1 Kin. 14:12
18 [w]1 Kin. 14:13
19 [x]2 Chr. 13:2–20
20 [y]1 Kin. 15:25
21 [z]2 Chr. 12:13 [a]1 Kin. 11:32, 36 [b]1 Kin. 14:31
22 [c]2 Chr. 12:1, 14 [d]Deut. 32:21
23 [e]Deut. 12:2 [7][Deut. 16:22] [f][2 Kin. 17:9, 10] [g]Is. 57:5 [7]Places for pagan worship
24 [h]Deut. 23:17 [i]Deut. 20:18 [k][Deut. 9:4, 5] [8]Heb. *qadesh*, one practicing sodomy and prostitution in religious rituals
25 [l]1 Kin. 11:40
26 [m]2 Chr. 12:9–11 [n]1 Kin. 10:17
27 [9]*entrusted* [1]Lit. *runners*
29 [o]2 Chr. 12:15, 16
30 [p]1 Kin. 12:21–24; 15:6

wooden images. Probably carved figures of the Canaanite goddess Asherah, a consort of Baal (Ex. 34:13; Deut. 12:3; Judg. 3:7).

■ **14:17 Tirzah.** Tirzah was fourteen miles west of the Jordan River, about halfway between Jerusalem and the Sea of Chinneroth (Galilee). It was Jeroboam's place of residence and later the capital of Israel (15:33) until Omri built the city of Samaria (16:24).

When she came to the threshold. The death of Abijah was an indication that Ahijah's other prophecies would come true (v. 18).

■ **14:19 the rest of the acts.** The biblical writer does not claim to write an exhaustive account of Jeroboam's reign. Rather, he has written what he considers important for his readers to know (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes).

chronicles of the kings of Israel. See note on 11:41 and Introduction: Author.

■ **14:20 twenty-two years.** That is, 930–909 B.C.

■ **14:21–31** These verses summarize the reign of Rehoboam, Solomon's son and immediate successor. His reign is marked by growing idolatry and immorality, loss of treasures to the king of Egypt, and continual warfare with Jeroboam.

■ **14:21 Rehoboam.** The author switches his attention to the southern kingdom, recording events that chronologically overlap with events in the north.

seventeen years. That is, 930–913 B.C.

■ **14:22 Judah.** The Septuagint (Old Testament Greek translation) reads "Rehoboam" (cf. 2 Chr. 12:14 which reads "he did evil").

■ **14:23 high places.** See note on 3:2.

sacred pillars. Basically stones set up on the ground. Many of these sacred stones were used by the Canaanites in their worship. Such pillars were forbidden in Israel's law (Ex. 23:24; Lev. 26:1; Deut. 12:3; 16:22).

wooden images. See note on v. 15.

under every green tree. Religious activities carried out near certain trees in Old Testament times were considered of special significance (Deut. 12:2; 2 Kin. 17:10; Is. 57:5; Jer. 2:20; Ezek. 6:13; Hos. 4:13).

■ **14:24 perverted persons.** The Canaanites believed that ritual prostitution (see text note) helped to ensure the fertility of land, flocks, and people. It was forbidden in Israel (Deut. 23:17, 18; 1 Kin. 15:12; 22:46; 2 Kin. 23:7; Hos. 4:14).

■ **14:25 Shishak.** He founded the twenty-second dynasty over Egypt and began to rule around 945 B.C. According to Egyptian sources, including a fragment of a stele from Shishak's campaign, Shishak also invaded Israel and inflicted widespread destruction.

■ **14:26 he took away the treasures.** That is, treasures stored in the temple by King Solomon (7:51).

■ **14:27 bronze shields.** The independent kingdom of Judah was too small and too poor to be able to replace Solomon's shields exactly.

■ **14:29 book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah.** See note on 11:41.

■ **14:30 war . . . all their days.** Minor border skirmishes and full-fledged wars between Israel and Judah characterized the early history of the divided monarchy (12:24; 14:19; 15:6; 2 Chr. 13:1–20).

all *their* days. 31 [q]So Rehoboam [2]rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David. [r]His mother's name *was* Naamah, an Ammonitess. Then [s]Abijam[3] his son reigned in his place.

Abijam Reigns in Judah

15 [a]In the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam the son of Nebat, Abijam became king over Judah. 2 He reigned three years in Jerusalem. [b]His mother's name *was* [c]Maachah the granddaughter of [d]Abishalom. 3 And he walked in all the sins of his father, which he had done before him; [e]his heart was not [1]loyal to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David. 4 Nevertheless [f]for David's sake the LORD his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem, by setting up his son after him and by establishing Jerusalem; 5 because David [g]did *what was* right in the eyes of the LORD, and had not turned aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, [h]except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite. 6 [i]And there was war between [2]Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the days of his life. 7 [j]Now the rest of the acts of Abijam, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? And there was war between Abijam and Jeroboam.

8 [k]So Abijam [3]rested with his fathers, and they buried him in the City of David. Then Asa his son reigned in his place.

Asa Reigns in Judah

9 In the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel, Asa became king over Judah. 10 And he reigned forty-one years in Jerusalem. His grandmother's name *was* Maachah the granddaughter of Abishalom. 11 [l]Asa did *what was* right in the eyes of the LORD, as *did* his father David. 12 [m]And he banished the [4]perverted persons from the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made. 13 Also he removed [n]Maachah his grandmother from *being* queen mother, because she had made an obscene image of [5]Asherah. And Asa cut down her obscene image and [o]burned *it* by the Brook Kidron. 14 [p]But the [6]high places were not removed. Nevertheless Asa's [q]heart was loyal to the LORD all his days. 15 He also brought into the house of the LORD the things which his father [r]had dedicated, and the things which he himself had dedicated: silver and gold and utensils.

16 Now there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days. 17 And [s]Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah, and built [t]Ramah, [u]that he might let none go out or come in to Asa king of Judah. 18 Then Asa took all the silver and gold *that was* left in the treasuries of

31 [q]2 Chr. 12:16 [r]1 Kin. 14:21 [s]2 Chr. 12:16 [2]Died and joined his ancestors [3]*Abijah,* 2 Chr. 12:16

CHAPTER 15

1 [a]2 Chr. 13:1

2 [b]2 Chr. 11:20–22 [c]2 Chr. 13:2 [d]2 Chr. 11:21

3 [e]Ps. 119:80 [1]Lit. *at peace with*

4 [f]2 Sam. 21:17

5 [g]1 Kin. 9:4; 14:8 [h]2 Sam. 11:3, 15–17; 12:9, 10

6 [i]1 Kin. 14:30 [2]So with MT, LXX, Tg., Vg.; some Heb. mss., Syr. *Abijam*

7 [j]2 Chr. 13:2–22

8 [k]2 Chr. 14:1 [3]Died and joined his ancestors

11 [l]2 Chr. 14:2

12 [m]1 Kin. 14:24; 22:46 [4]Heb. *qedeshim,* those practicing sodomy and prostitution in religious rituals

13 [n]2 Chr. 15:16–18 [o]Ex. 32:20 [5]A Canaanite goddess 14 [p]1 Kin. 3:2; 22:43 [q]1 Kin. 8:61; 15:3 [6]Places for pagan worship 15 [r]1 Kin. 7:51 17 [s]2 Chr. 16:1–6 [t]Josh. 18:25 [u]1 Kin. 12:26–29

■ **14:31 Naamah, an Ammonitess.** Rehoboam was born of one of Solomon's marriages to foreign women (11:1).

■ **15:2 He reigned three years in Jerusalem.** That is, 913–910 B.C.

His mother's name was Maachah. Probably because of his sources, the author lists the name of the king's mother for the monarchs of Judah only (see Introduction: Chronology).

Abishalom. A variant spelling of "Absalom" (cf. 2 Sam. 3:3; 14:27; 2 Chr. 13:2).

■ **15:3 sins of his father.** See 14:22–24.

the heart of his father David. David was a model king (11:4 note).

■ **15:5 Uriah the Hittite.** The husband of Bathsheba and a general in David's army, whom David murdered (2 Sam. 11).

■ **15:7 the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah.** See note on 11:41 and Introduction: Author.

war between Abijam and Jeroboam. See note on 14:30; 2 Chr. 13:1–20.

■ **15:10 he reigned forty-one years.** That is, 910–869 B.C.

Maachah the granddaughter of Abishalom. See note on v. 2.

■ **15:11 Asa did what was right.** Asa earned this praise by expunging Canaanite religious symbols (vv. 12–14).

■ **15:12 perverted persons.** See note on 14:24.

the idols that his fathers had made. See note on 14:23.

■ **15:13 queen mother.** The queen mother could at times exercise considerable influence in the royal court (1:11–14, 28–31; 2 Kin. 11:1–20).

Brook Kidron. This wadi (seasonal stream bed) runs through the valley that marks the eastern boundary of Jerusalem.

■ **15:14 high places.** Such rural centers of worship could be devoted to the Lord, to one of the Canaanite deities, or to some combination of both (3:2 note).

■ **15:15 brought into the house of the LORD.** Asa tries to replace some of the treasures lost during Shishak's invasion (14:25, 26).

■ **15:16 war . . . all their days.** The reference is most likely not to a full-fledged war, but to a continuing series of skirmishes and battles (14:30 note).

■ **15:17 Ramah.** This town was in Benjamin, only six miles north of Jerusalem. Since Ramah was strategically located at the junction of several routes leading into the Judean highlands, the Israelite king could limit access to Jerusalem. Moreover, Israel was much larger than Judah. Baasha's campaign and blockade was a serious threat.

■ **15:18 sent them to Ben-Hadad.** Asa used the temple money to bribe the Syrians to help him against the Israelites under Baasha. The Syrians would have to breach a treaty to do this, as Asa himself acknowledges.

the house of the LORD and the treasuries of the king's house, and delivered them into the hand of his servants. And King Asa sent them to [v]Ben-Hadad the son of Tabrimmon, the son of Hezion, king of Syria, who dwelt in [w]Damascus, saying, 19 "*Let there be* a treaty between you and me, as there was between my father and your father. See, I have sent you a present of silver and gold. Come and break your treaty with Baasha king of Israel, so that he will withdraw from me."

20 So Ben-Hadad heeded King Asa, and [x]sent the captains of his armies against the cities of Israel. He attacked [y]Ijon, [z]Dan, [a]Abel Beth Maachah, and all Chinneroth, with all the land of Naphtali. 21 Now it happened, when Baasha heard *it,* that he stopped building Ramah, and remained in [b]Tirzah.

22 [c]Then King Asa made a proclamation throughout all Judah; none *was* exempted. And they took away the stones and timber of Ramah, which Baasha had used for building; and with them King Asa built [d]Geba of Benjamin, and [e]Mizpah.

23 The rest of all the acts of Asa, all his might, all that he did, and the cities which he built, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? But [f]in the time of his old age he was diseased in his feet. 24 So Asa [7]rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David his father. [g]Then [h]Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his place.

Nadab Reigns in Israel

25 Now [i]Nadab the son of Jeroboam became king over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah, and he reigned over Israel two years. 26 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in [j]his sin by which he had made Israel sin.

27 [k]Then Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar, conspired against him. And Baasha killed him at [l]Gibbethon, which *belonged* to the Philistines, while Nadab and all Israel laid siege to Gibbethon. 28 Baasha killed him in the third year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his place. 29 And it was so, when he became king, *that* he killed all the house of Jeroboam. He did not leave to Jeroboam anyone that breathed, until he had destroyed him, according to [m]the word of the LORD which He had spoken by His servant Ahijah the Shilonite, 30 [n]because of the sins of Jeroboam, which he had sinned and by which he had made Israel sin, because of his provocation with which he had provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger.

31 Now the rest of the acts of Nadab, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 32 [o]And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days.

Baasha Reigns in Israel

33 In the third year of Asa king of Judah, Baasha the son of Ahijah became king over all Israel in Tirzah, and *reigned* twenty-four years. 34 He did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in [p]the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin by which he had made Israel sin.

16 Then the word of the LORD came to [a]Jehu the son of [b]Hanani, against [c]Baasha, saying: 2 [d]"Inasmuch as I lifted you out of the dust and made you ruler over My people Israel,

18 [v]2 Chr. 16:2 [w]1 Kin. 11:23, 24
20 [x]1 Kin. 20:1 [y]2 Kin. 15:29 [z]Judg. 18:29; 1 Kin. 12:29 [a]2 Sam. 20:14, 15
21 [b]1 Kin. 14:17; 16:15–18
22 [c]2 Chr. 16:6 [d]Josh. 21:17 [e]Josh. 18:26
23 [f]2 Chr. 16:11–14
24 [g]2 Chr. 17:1 [h]1 Kin. 22:41–44; Matt. 1:8 [7]Died and joined his ancestors
25 [i]1 Kin. 14:20
26 [j]1 Kin. 12:28–33; 14:16
27 [k]1 Kin. 14:14 [l]Josh. 19:44; 21:23; 1 Kin. 16:15
29 [m]1 Kin. 14:10–14
30 [n]1 Kin. 14:9, 16
32 [o]1 Kin. 15:16
34 [p]1 Kin. 13:33; 14:16

CHAPTER 16

1 [a]1 Kin. 16:7; 2 Chr. 19:2; 20:34 [b]2 Chr. 16:7–10 [c]1 Kin. 15:27
2 [d]1 Sam. 2:8; 1 Kin. 14:7

■ **15:20 Ben-Hadad heeded.** The Syrian king gained money from Judah and territory from Israel by betraying Baasha.

Ijon, Dan . . . Naphtali. This area is north of the Sea of Chinneroth (Galilee). Subduing it gave Syria control of trade routes as well as access to the Phoenician cities of Tyre and Acco.

■ **15:21 Tirzah.** See note on 14:17.

■ **15:22 none was exempted.** Asa conscripted forced labor to destroy Ramah and build the fortifications at Geba and Miapah (5:13 note; 9:22 note).

Geba of Benjamin. Ramah, Geba, and Mizpah are all five to ten miles north of Jerusalem. By fortifying them, Asa discouraged another Israelite campaign against Judah (cf. 2 Chr. 14:6, 7).

■ **15:23 book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah.** See note on 11:41.

■ **15:24 Jehoshaphat.** For his reign, see 22:41–50.

■ **15:25–32** These verses summarize the reign of Nadab, king of Israel, but give more attention to the subsequent actions of his assassin and successor, Baasha. As soon as he becomes king, Baasha kills Jeroboam's whole family in fulfillment of Ahijah's prophecy (14:10, 11).

■ **15:25 two years.** That is, 909–908 B.C.

■ **15:26 his sin by which he had made Israel sin.** See note on 12:30.

■ **15:27 Gibbethon.** This city was assigned to the tribe of Dan but usually controlled by the Philistines (Josh. 19:44). It was west of Jerusalem and five miles north of Ekron.

■ **15:29 he killed all the house of Jeroboam.** In order to consolidate his position as king, Baasha disposes of all potential claimants to the throne in Jeroboam's family. This fulfills the prophecy of Ahijah to Jeroboam (14:10–11). The author does not commend Baasha's actions; on the contrary, he later condemns him (16:7).

■ **15:31 book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.** See note on 11:41.

■ **15:32 war between Asa and Baasha.** See note on 14:30.

■ **15:33 Tirzah.** See note on 14:17.

■ **15:34 the way of Jeroboam.** See note on 12:30.

■ **16:2 I lifted you out of the dust.** As with Ahijah's condemnation of Jeroboam (14:7, 8), Jehu begins his prophetic speech by rehearsing God's kindness to Baasha.

the way of Jeroboam. See note on 12:30.

and [e]you have walked in the way of Jeroboam, and have made My people Israel sin, to provoke Me to anger with their sins, 3 surely I will [f]take[f] away the posterity of Baasha and the posterity of his house, and I will make your house like [g]the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat. 4 The dogs shall eat [h]whoever belongs to Baasha and dies in the city, and the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies in the fields."

5 Now the rest of the acts of Baasha, what he did, and his might, [i]*are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 6 So Baasha [2]rested with his fathers and was buried in [j]Tirzah. Then Elah his son reigned in his place.

7 And also the word of the LORD came by the prophet [k]Jehu the son of Hanani against Baasha and his house, because of all the evil that he did in the sight of the LORD in provoking Him to anger with the work of his hands, in being like the house of Jeroboam, and because [l]he killed them.

Elah Reigns in Israel

8 In the twenty-sixth year of Asa king of Judah, Elah the son of Baasha became king over Israel, *and reigned* two years in Tirzah. 9 [m]Now his servant Zimri, commander of half *his* chariots, conspired against him as he was in Tirzah drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza, [n]steward[3] of *his* house in Tirzah. 10 And Zimri went in and struck him and killed him in the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Judah, and reigned in his place.

11 Then it came to pass, when he began to reign, as soon as he was seated on his throne, *that* he killed all the household of Baasha; he [o]did not leave him one male, neither of his relatives nor of his friends. 12 Thus Zimri destroyed all the household of Baasha, [p]according to the word of the LORD, which He spoke against Baasha by Jehu the prophet, 13 for all the sins of Baasha and the sins of Elah his son, by which they had sinned and by which they had made Israel sin, in provoking the LORD God of Israel to anger [q]with their [4]idols.

14 Now the rest of the acts of Elah, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

Zimri Reigns in Israel

15 In the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Judah, Zimri had reigned in Tirzah seven days. And the people *were* encamped [r]against Gibbethon, which *belonged* to the Philistines. 16 Now the people *who were* encamped heard it said, "Zimri has conspired and also has killed the king." So all Israel made Omri, the commander of the army, king over Israel that day in the camp. 17 Then Omri and all Israel with him went up from Gibbethon, and they besieged Tirzah. 18 And it happened, when Zimri saw that the city was [5]taken, that he went into the citadel of the king's house and burned the king's house [6]down upon himself with fire, and died, 19 because of the sins which he had committed in doing evil in the sight of the LORD, [s]in walking in the [t]way of Jeroboam, and in his sin which he had committed to make Israel sin.

20 Now the rest of the acts of Zimri, and the treason he committed, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

Omri Reigns in Israel

21 Then the people of Israel were divided into two parts: half of the people followed Tibni the son of Ginath, to make him king, and half followed Omri. 22 But the people who followed Omri

2 [e]1 Kin. 12:25–33; 15:34

3 [f]1 Kin. 16:11; 21:21 [g]1 Kin. 14:10; 15:29 [i]*consume*

4 [h]1 Kin. 14:11; 21:24

5 [i]2 Chr. 16:11

6 [j]1 Kin. 14:17; 15:21 [2]Died and joined his ancestors

7 [k]1 Kin. 16:1 [l]1 Kin. 15:27, 29

9 [m]2 Kin. 9:30–33 [n]Gen. 24:2; 39:4; 1 Kin. 18:3 [3]Lit. *who was over the house*

11 [o]1 Sam. 25:22

12 [p]1 Kin. 16:3

13 [q]Deut. 32:21; 1 Sam. 12:21; [Is. 41:29; Jon. 2:8; 1 Cor. 8:4; 10:19] [4]Lit. *vanities*

15 [r]1 Kin. 15:27

18 [5]*captured* [6]Lit. *over him*

19 [s]1 Kin. 15:26, 34 [t]1 Kin. 12:25–33

■ **16:3 Baasha and . . . his house.** Because Baasha followed the policies set by Jeroboam, Baasha and his house will suffer the same fate (15:29).

■ **16:4 dogs.** See 14:11 and note.

■ **16:5 book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.** See note on 11:41.

■ **16:8 reigned two years in Tirzah.** That is, 886–885 B.C.

■ **16:11, 12 he did not leave him one male.** This action fulfilled the prophecy of 16:3, 4 (15:29 note).

■ **16:14 the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.** See note on 11:41.

■ **16:15 the twenty-seventh year.** That is, 885 B.C.

Gibbethon. About twenty-five miles west of Jerusalem, and five miles north of Ekron, an important Philistine city.

reigned in Tirzah seven days. The history of Israel, the northern kingdom, was plagued by frequent coups and coup attempts. Judah, the southern kingdom, was somewhat more stable, perhaps because their kings continued to be descendants of David. But the instability of Israel in the north can also be blamed on their kings' disregard for the covenant. Political upheaval was God's way of disciplining and renewing Israel's leadership (11:29–39; 14:7–11; 16:1–4; 21:19–22; 22:17; 2 Kin. 1:2–4).

■ **16:16 Zimri has conspired.** The Israelite soldiers refuse to accept Zimri's kingship.

Omri, the commander. Omri held a higher rank than Zimri (v. 9). The troops may have felt more obligation to follow Omri than Zimri.

■ **16:19 the way of Jeroboam.** See note on 12:30.

■ **16:20 the book.** See note on 11:41.

■ **16:21 were divided.** Tibni contested Omri's right to the throne.

■ **16:22 Tibni died and Omri reigned.** This terse statement leaves the

prevailed over the people who followed Tibni the son of Ginath. So Tibni died and Omri reigned. 23 In the thirty-first year of Asa king of Judah, Omri became king over Israel, *and reigned* twelve years. Six years he reigned in [u]Tirzah. 24 And he bought the hill of Samaria from Shemer for two talents of silver; then he built on the hill, and called the name of the city which he built, [v]Samaria,[7] after the name of Shemer, owner of the hill. 25 [w]Omri did evil in the eyes of the LORD, and did worse than all who *were* before him. 26 For he [x]walked in all the ways of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and in his sin by which he had made Israel sin, provoking the LORD God of Israel to anger with their [y]idols.[8]

27 Now the rest of the acts of Omri which he did, and the might that he showed, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

28 So Omri rested with his fathers and was buried in Samaria. Then Ahab his son reigned in his place.

Ahab Reigns in Israel

29 In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab the son of Omri became king over Israel; and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years. 30 Now Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD, more than all who *were* before him. 31 And it came to pass, as though it had been a trivial thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, [z]that he took as wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the [a]Sidonians; [b]and he went and served Baal and worshiped him. 32 Then he set up an altar for Baal in [c]the temple of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. 33 [d]And Ahab made a [9]wooden image. Ahab [e]did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel who were before him. 34 In his days Hiel of Bethel built Jericho. He laid its foundation [f]with Abiram his firstborn, and with his youngest *son* Segub he set up its gates, [f]according to the word of the LORD, which He had spoken through Joshua the son of Nun.

Elijah Proclaims a Drought

17 And Elijah the Tishbite, of the [a]inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, [b]"*As* the LORD God of Israel lives, [c]before whom I stand, [d]there shall not be dew nor rain [e]these years, except at my word."

2 Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, 3 "Get away from here and turn eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. 4 And it will be *that* you shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the [f]ravens to feed you there."

5 So he went and did according to the word of the LORD, for he went and stayed by the Brook

23 [u]1 Kin. 15:21; 2 Kin. 15:14

24 [v]1 Kin. 13:32; 2 Kin. 17:24; John 4:4 [7]Heb. *Shomeron*

25 [w]Mic. 6:16

26 [x]1 Kin. 16:19 [y]1 Kin. 16:13 [8]Lit. *vanities*

31 [z]Deut. 7:3 [a]Judg. 18:7; 1 Kin. 11:1–5 [b]1 Kin. 21:25, 26; 2 Kin. 10:18; 17:16

32 [c]2 Kin. 10:21, 26, 27

33 [d]2 Kin. 13:6 [e]1 Kin. 14:9; 16:29, 30; 21:25 [9]Heb. *Asherah*, a Canaanite goddess

34 [f]Josh. 6:26 [f]At the cost of the life of

CHAPTER 17

1 [a]Judg. 12:4 [b]1 Kin. 18:10; 22:14; 2 Kin. 3:14; 5:20 [c]Deut. 10:8 [d]1 Kin. 18:1; James 5:17 [e]Luke 4:25

4 [f]Job 38:41

impression that Tibni was killed in the struggle with Omri and his followers, but natural causes cannot be ruled out.

■ **16:23 In the thirty-first year of Asa.** That is, 880 B.C. The struggle between Omri and Tibni lasted four years (v. 15).

and reigned twelve years. That is, 885–874 B.C.

■ **16:24 Samaria.** Like David (2 Sam. 5:6–12), Omri founded his own capital, Samaria. It was halfway between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea, about thirty-seven miles north of Jerusalem. Samaria was easily defended and became the permanent capital of Israel (20:1; 2 Kin. 6:24; 10:17; 13:6; 18:9, 10). "Samaria" sometimes refers to the northern kingdom as a whole (2 Kin. 17:24; Amos 3:9, 12).

■ **16:26 the ways of Jeroboam.** See note on 12:30.

■ **16:27 the might that he showed.** Politically and militarily Omri was quite successful. The Moabite stone, an inscription from one of Israel's neighbors, states that Omri subjugated Moab and captured Medeba. Much later, the annals of the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III (c. 732 B.C.) still speak of Israel as the "house of Omri."

■ **16:29 twenty-two years.** That is, 874–853 B.C.

■ **16:30 Ahab . . . did evil.** Note that the same phrase is applied to Jeroboam (14:9). The phrase means "extremely bad."

■ **16:31 he took as wife Jezebel.** This marriage of Omri's son to Ethbaal's daughter may have been arranged by Omri for diplomatic reasons. Jezebel's presence gave official support in Israel to the worship of Baal.

served Baal. "Baal" means "lord," "husband." Baal was a storm god, a dominant deity in Canaanite religion. He was considered instrumental in bringing life-giving rains and fertility to the land.

■ **16:33 wooden image.** See note on 14:15.

■ **16:34 Hiel of Bethel built Jericho.** After its earlier destruction (Josh. 5:13—6:27), Jericho had been inhabited as a settlement (Josh. 18:21; 2 Sam. 10:5). Hiel's wish to turn the site of Jericho into a full-fledged city brought on the curse of Josh. 6:26, which prohibited rebuilding the city and outlined the consequences of doing so.

■ **17:1 Elijah.** The name means "Yah is God." "Yah" or "Jah" is a short form of the divine name "Yahweh," translated as "LORD" (cf. Ex. 3:14, 15). Elijah's name corresponds to the theme of his ministry: the Lord is God and there is no other. Elijah was the major prophet of Yahweh when Ahab and Jezebel were promoting Baal worship in Israel.

Tishbite. Probably Elijah was from a town called Tishbe.

Gilead. Gilead is an area of undefined extent east of the Jordan River.

not be dew nor rain. Baal (16:31 note) was the Canaanite storm god, and this drought questioned Baal's ability to control the weather.

except at my word. The drought will demonstrate to a wayward Israel who truly is God.

■ **17:4 ravens to feed you.** Although Elijah was in the wilderness, the Lord could provide for him, much as He had for the nation of Israel centuries earlier during the Exodus (Ex. 16:4–36). Ironically, Israel is in the Promised Land, but has forgotten who sustains her.

■ **17:5 Brook Cherith.** This brook probably flowed into the Jordan from the east. It may have been in northern Gilead, toward the Sea of Chinneroth (Galilee).

Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. 6 The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the brook. 7 And it happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land.

Elijah and the Widow

8 Then the word of the LORD came to him, saying, 9 "Arise, go to [g]Zarephath, which *belongs* to [h]Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you." 10 So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, indeed a widow *was* there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, "Please bring me a little water in a cup, that I may drink." 11 And as she was going to get *it,* he called to her and said, "Please bring me a morsel of bread in your hand."

12 So she said, "As the LORD your God lives, I do not have bread, only a handful of flour in a bin, and a little oil in a [1]jar; and see, I *am* gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and [i]die."

13 And Elijah said to her, "Do not fear; go *and* do as you have said, but make me a small cake from it first, and bring *it* to me; and afterward make *some* for yourself and your son. 14 For thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the LORD sends rain on the earth.' "

15 So she went away and did according to the word of Elijah; and she and he and her household ate for *many* days. 16 The bin of flour was not used up, nor did the jar of oil run dry, according to the word of the LORD which He spoke by Elijah.

Elijah Revives the Widow's Son

17 Now it happened after these things *that* the son of the woman who owned the house became sick. And his sickness was so [2]serious that [3]there was no breath left in him. 18 So she said to Elijah, [j]"What have I to do with you, O man of God? Have you come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to kill my son?"

19 And he said to her, "Give me your son." So he took him out of her arms and carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his own bed. 20 Then he cried out to the LORD and said, "O LORD my God, have You also brought tragedy on the widow with whom I lodge, by killing her son?" 21 [k]And he stretched himself out on the child three times, and cried out to the LORD and said, "O LORD my God, I pray, let this child's soul come back to him." 22 Then the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came back to him, and he [l]revived.

23 And Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper room into the house, and gave him to his mother. And Elijah said, "See, your son lives!"

24 Then the woman said to Elijah, "Now by this [m]I know that you *are* a man of God, *and* that the word of the LORD in your mouth *is* the truth."

Elijah's Message to Ahab

18 And it came to pass *after* [a]many days that the word of the LORD came to Elijah, in the third year, saying, "Go, present yourself to Ahab, and [b]I will send rain on the earth."

2 So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab; and *there was* a severe famine in Samaria. 3 And Ahab had called Obadiah, who *was* [1]in charge of *his* house. (Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly. 4 For so it was, while Jezebel [2]massacred the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah had

9 [g]Obad. 20; Luke 4:25, 26 [h]2 Sam. 24:6

12 [i]Deut. 28:23, 24 [1]Lit. *pitcher* or *water jar*

17 [2]*severe* [3]He died.

18 [j]Luke 5:8

21 [k]2 Kin. 4:34, 35; Acts 20:10

22 [l]Luke 7:14, 15; Heb. 11:35

24 [m]John 2:11; 3:2; 16:30

CHAPTER 18

1 [a]1 Kin. 17:1; Luke 4:25; James 5:17 [b]Deut. 28:12

3 [1]Lit. *over the house*

4 [2]Lit. *cut off*

■ **17:9 Zarephath.** This town was on the Mediterranean coast between Tyre and Sidon. God commands Elijah to travel away from Israel into the area where Canaanite religion is supreme.

widow. The word is practically synonymous with "poor," because in the ancient Near East widows were largely unprotected by the law and were easily exploited (Deut. 14:29; 16:11; 24:20; 26:12; Ps. 94:6; Is. 47:8, 9). This particular widow was not an Israelite.

■ **17:12 As the LORD your God lives.** This is an oath formula (1:17 note) taken in the name of Elijah's God. The widow may have been deferring to Elijah, or she may have had a genuine interest in the God of Israel.

■ **17:13 make me a small cake . . . first.** Elijah presents her with a test of faith, demanding complete commitment. Despite the scarcity of food, she is to feed God's prophet before she takes care of herself and her son.

■ **17:18 What have I to do with you, O man of God.** The widow was upset with God because her son was dead, and she complained to Elijah by suggesting that it was his mission to punish her for her sin.

■ **17:21 he stretched himself out on the child three times.** Elijah performs a symbolic action together with his prophetic prayer (11:30 note). His repeated physical contact with the boy's body emphasizes the request for warmth and life to be returned to the boy (cf. 2 Kin. 4:34; Acts 20:10).

■ **17:22** See theological note "Miracles."

■ **18:3 in charge of his house.** This was an important position in the royal administration (4:6 note).

■ **18:4 Jezebel massacred the prophets of the LORD.** Not content to promote her native religion, Jezebel persecuted followers of the Lord and murdered His prophets.

7 [c]2 Kin. 1:6–8
12 [d]2 Kin. 2:16; Ezek. 3:12, 14; Matt. 4:1; Acts 8:39

taken one hundred prophets and hidden them, fifty to a cave, and had fed them with bread and water.) [5] And Ahab had said to Obadiah, "Go into the land to all the springs of water and to all the brooks; perhaps we may find grass to keep the horses and mules alive, so that we will not have to kill any livestock." [6] So they divided the land between them to explore it; Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself.

[7] Now as Obadiah was on his way, suddenly Elijah met him; and he [c]recognized him, and fell on his face, and said, "*Is* that you, my lord Elijah?"

[8] And he answered him, "*It is* I. Go, tell your master, 'Elijah *is here*.' "

[9] So he said, "How have I sinned, that you are delivering your servant into the hand of Ahab, to kill me? [10] *As* the LORD your God lives, there is no nation or kingdom where my master has not sent someone to hunt for you; and when they said, '*He is* not *here*,' he took an oath from the kingdom or nation that they could not find you. [11] And now you say, 'Go, tell your master, "Elijah *is here*" '! [12] And it shall come to pass, *as soon as* I am gone from you, that [d]the Spirit of the LORD will carry you to a place I do not know; so when I go and tell Ahab, and he cannot find you, he will kill me. But I your servant have feared the LORD from my youth. [13] Was it not reported to my lord what I did when Jezebel killed the prophets of the LORD, how I hid one hundred men of the LORD's prophets, fifty to a cave, and fed them with bread and water? [14] And now you say, 'Go, tell your master, "Elijah *is here*." ' He will kill me!"

[15] Then Elijah said, "*As* the LORD of hosts lives, before whom I stand, I will surely present myself to him today."

[16] So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him; and Ahab went to meet Elijah.

Miracles

Scripture has no single word for miracle. The concept includes thoughts expressed by several terms: "wonder," "mighty work," and "sign."

"Wonder" calls attention to the impression made by miracles. "Miracle," from the Latin *miraculum*, means something that evokes wonder. A miracle is an event beyond the normal, triggering awareness of God's presence and power. Striking providences and coincidences, as well as the phenomena of nature, can communicate a similar awareness, as they give evidence of God's "eternal power and Godhead" (Rom. 1:20).

"Mighty work" points to the presence in biblical history of supernatural acts of God involving the power that created the world from nothing. Raising the dead to life, which Jesus did more than once (Luke 7:11–17; 8:49–56; John 11:38–44), and Elijah, Elisha, Peter, and Paul did also (1 Kin. 17:17–24; 2 Kin. 4:18–37; Acts 9:36–41; 20:9–12), is a work of such creative power; it is not chance or coincidence, and cannot be explained from the course of nature.

"Sign" is a term regularly used for miracles in the Gospel of John, where seven key miracles are recorded, indicating that miracles point to something; they carry a message. The miracles in Scripture are nearly all clustered in the time of the Exodus, of Elijah and Elisha, and of Christ and His apostles. They authenticate the miracle-workers themselves as God's representatives and messengers (cf. Ex. 4:1–9; 1 Kin. 17:24; John 10:38; 14:11; 2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:3, 4), and beyond this, they show God's power bringing about salvation and executing judgment, despite all opposition. The miracles of the Bible are not absurd, irrational, or mere displays of power undertaken for their own sake. They directly fulfill God's purposes and are consistent with His majesty and holiness.

Belief in the miraculous is integral to Christianity. Jesus' incarnation and resurrection are the two supreme miracles of Scripture, defining the Christian faith. No one can refuse Jesus' life or His resurrection without refusing the faith itself. There is nothing irrational about believing that God who made the world can intervene creatively in it at any time; in truth, it would be irrational to believe in any other God. Not faith in the Biblical miracles, but doubt about them, is unreasonable in the end. □

■ **18:5 horses and mules.** The drought threatened Ahab's government because the army depended on these animals, for example, in the chariot forces. Ahab's reaction to the drought was practical, to find water, and did not reach the heart of the issue: who is sovereign over nature and life.

■ **18:12 the Spirit of the LORD will carry you.** Earlier Elijah had disappeared across the Jordan only to emerge in Zarephath.

17 Then it happened, when Ahab saw Elijah, that Ahab said to him, [e]"*Is that* you, O [f]troubler of Israel?"

18 And he answered, "I have not troubled Israel, but you and your father's house *have,* [g]in that you have forsaken the commandments of the LORD and have followed the Baals. 19 Now therefore, send *and* gather all Israel to me on [h]Mount Carmel, the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal, [i]and the four hundred prophets of [j]Asherah, who [k]eat at Jezebel's table."

Elijah's Mount Carmel Victory

20 So Ahab sent for all the children of Israel, and [l]gathered the prophets together on Mount Carmel. 21 And Elijah came to all the people, and said, [m]"How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD *is* God, follow Him; but if Baal, [n]follow him." But the people answered him not a word. 22 Then Elijah said to the people, [o]"I alone am left a prophet of the LORD; [p]but Baal's prophets *are* four hundred and fifty men. 23 Therefore let them give us two bulls; and let them choose one bull for themselves, cut it in pieces, and lay *it* on the wood, but put no fire *under it;* and I will prepare the other bull, and lay *it* on the wood, but put no fire *under it.* 24 Then you call on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD; and the God who [q]answers by fire, He is God."

So all the people answered and said, [5]"It is well spoken."

25 Now Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose one bull for yourselves and prepare *it* first, for you *are* many; and call on the name of your god, but put no fire *under it.*"

26 So they took the bull which was given them, and they prepared *it,* and called on the name of Baal from morning even till noon, saying, "O Baal, [6]hear us!" But *there was* [r]no voice; no one answered. Then they [7]leaped about the altar which they had made.

27 And so it was, at noon, that Elijah mocked them and said, "Cry [8]aloud, for he *is* a god; either he is meditating, or he is busy, or he is on a journey, *or* perhaps he is sleeping and must be awakened." 28 So they cried aloud, and [s]cut themselves, as was their custom, with [9]knives and lances, until the blood gushed out on them. 29 And when midday was past, [t]they prophesied until the *time* of the offering of the *evening* sacrifice. But *there was* [u]no voice; no one answered, no one paid attention.

30 Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come near to me." So all the people came near to him. [v]And he repaired the altar of the LORD *that was* broken down. 31 And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD had come, saying, [w]"Israel shall be your name." 32 Then with the stones he built an altar [x]in the name of the LORD; and he made a trench around the altar large enough to hold two seahs of seed. 33 And he [y]put the wood in order, cut the bull in pieces, and laid *it* on the wood, and said, "Fill four waterpots with water, and [z]pour *it* on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood." 34 Then he said, "Do *it* a second time," and they did *it* a second time; and he said, "Do *it* a third time," and they did *it* a third time. 35 So the water ran all around the altar; and he also filled [a]the trench with water.

36 And it came to pass, at *the time of* the offering of the *evening* sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, "LORD [b]God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, [c]let it be known this day

17 [e]1 Kin. 21:20 [f]Josh. 7:25

18 [g][2 Chr. 15:2]

19 [h]Josh. 19:26 [i]1 Kin. 16:33 [j]A Canaanite goddess [k]Are provided for by Jezebel

20 [l]1 Kin. 22:6

21 [m][Matt. 6:24] [n]Josh. 24:15

22 [o]1 Kin. 19:10, 14 [p]1 Kin. 18:19

24 [q]1 Chr. 21:26 [5]Lit. *The word is good*

26 [r]Jer. 10:5 [6]*answer* [7]Lit. *limped about, leaped in dancing around*

27 [8]*with a loud voice*

28 [s][Deut. 14:1] [9]*swords*

29 [t]Ex. 29:39, 41 [u]1 Kin. 18:26

30 [v]2 Chr. 33:16

31 [w]Gen. 32:28; 35:10

32 [x][Col. 3:17]

33 [y]Lev. 1:6–8 [z]Judg. 6:20

35 [a]1 Kin. 18:32, 38

36 [b]Ex. 3:6; 4:5 [c]1 Kin. 8:43

■ **18:17 O troubler of Israel.** Ahab views Elijah as a troublemaker, a threat to the normal functioning of society. His understanding is shallow.

■ **18:18 the Baals.** These were local manifestations of the god Baal.

■ **18:19 Mount Carmel.** This mountain juts out along the Mediterranean coast due west of the Sea of Chinneroth (Galilee). Because it was near the Phoenician cities, the influence of Baal religion was probably strong.

Asherah. See note on 14:15.

who eat at Jezebel's table. These prophets are supported by the state (2:7 note).

■ **18:24 the God who answers by fire.** Since Baal's followers believed that Baal controlled thunder, lightning, and storms, Elijah's challenge struck at the core of his alleged power (16:31 note).

■ **18:26 they leaped about the altar.** The Baal prophets engaged in a ritual dance (text note) to arouse the unresponsive Baal.

■ **18:27 Cry aloud.** Myths of Baal portray him traveling, fighting war, visiting the underworld, and even dying and coming back to life. Elijah knows these beliefs and plays on them when he taunts Baal's followers.

busy. The word is probably a euphemism for relieving oneself.

■ **18:28 as was their custom.** They cut themselves to provoke Baal. Self-laceration was prohibited in Old Testament law (Lev. 19:28; Deut. 14:1), but nevertheless was practiced by some (Jer. 41:5; 47:5).

■ **18:29 they prophesied.** This description probably indicates a trance or ecstatic state.

the time . . . of the evening sacrifice. That is, around 3:00 P.M. (Ex. 29:38–41; Num. 28:3–8; 2 Kin. 16:15; Acts 3:1).

■ **18:31 twelve stones.** Elijah emphasizes the oneness of the people, despite the division of the kingdom. In this way he also underscores that the contest at Mount Carmel is not significant for the northern tribes only, but for the southern tribes as well (Ex. 20:25; 24:4; Josh. 4).

Israel shall be your name. The words are a quotation of Gen. 35:10, where God affirmed the special name He had earlier given Jacob.

■ **18:36 Elijah . . . came near and said.** In contrast to the elaborate and frantic activities of the Baal prophets, Elijah's prayer is simple and direct.

36 [b]Num. 16:28

38 [c]Gen. 15:17; Lev. 9:24; 10:1, 2; Judg. 6:21; 2 Kin. 1:12; 1 Chr. 21:26; 2 Chr. 7:1; Job 1:16

39 [d]1 Kin. 18:21, 24

40 [e]2 Kin. 10:25 [f]Judg. 4:7; 5:21 [g][Deut. 13:5; 18:20]

42 [h]James 5:17, 18

44 [i]Lit. *Bind* or *Harness*

46 [j]2 Kin. 3:15; Is. 8:11; Ezek. 3:14 [k]2 Kin. 4:29; 9:1; Jer. 1:17; 1 Pet. 1:13 [l]Tucked the skirts of his robe in his belt in preparation for quick travel

CHAPTER 19

1 [a]1 Kin. 18:40

2 [b]Ruth 1:17; 1 Kin. 20:10; 2 Kin. 6:31

4 [c]Num. 11:15; Jer. 20:14–18; Jon. 4:3, 8 [l]*juniper*

5 [m]Or *Angel*

6 [n]*hot stones*

7 [o]Or *Angel*

8 [d]Ex. 24:18; 34:28; Deut. 9:9–11, 18; Matt. 4:2 [e]Ex. 3:1; 4:27

10 [f]Rom. 11:3 [g]Num. 25:11, 13; Ps. 69:9 [h]1 Kin. 18:4 [i]1 Kin. 18:22; Rom. 11:3

that You *are* God in Israel and I *am* Your servant, and *that* [b]I have done all these things at Your word. 37 Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that You *are* the LORD God, and *that* You have turned their hearts back *to You* again."

38 Then [c]the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that *was* in the trench. 39 Now when all the people saw *it,* they fell on their faces; and they said, [d]"The LORD, He *is* God! The LORD, He *is* God!"

40 And Elijah said to them, [e]"Seize the prophets of Baal! Do not let one of them escape!" So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the Brook [f]Kishon and [g]executed them there.

The Drought Ends

41 Then Elijah said to Ahab, "Go up, eat and drink; for *there is* the sound of abundance of rain." 42 So Ahab went up to eat and drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; [h]then he bowed down on the ground, and put his face between his knees, 43 and said to his servant, "Go up now, look toward the sea."

So he went up and looked, and said, "*There is* nothing." And seven times he said, "Go again."

44 Then it came to pass the seventh *time,* that he said, "There is a cloud, as small as a man's hand, rising out of the sea!" So he said, "Go up, say to Ahab, [i]'Prepare *your chariot,* and go down before the rain stops you.' "

45 Now it happened in the meantime that the sky became black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy rain. So Ahab rode away and went to Jezreel. 46 Then the [j]hand of the LORD came upon Elijah; and he [k]girded[2] up his loins and ran ahead of Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.

Elijah Escapes from Jezebel

19 And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, also how he had [a]executed all the prophets with the sword. 2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, [b]"So let the gods do *to me,* and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time." 3 And when he saw *that,* he arose and ran for his life, and went to Beersheba, which *belongs* to Judah, and left his servant there.

4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a [l]broom tree. And he [c]prayed that he might die, and said, "It is enough! Now, LORD, take my life, for I *am* no better than my fathers!"

5 Then as he lay and slept under a broom tree, suddenly an [m]angel touched him, and said to him, "Arise *and* eat." 6 Then he looked, and there by his head *was* a cake baked on [n]coals, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank, and lay down again. 7 And the [o]angel of the LORD came back the second time, and touched him, and said, "Arise *and* eat, because the journey *is* too great for you." 8 So he arose, and ate and drank; and he went in the strength of that food forty days and [d]forty nights as far as [e]Horeb, the mountain of God.

9 And there he went into a cave, and spent the night in that place; and behold, the word of the LORD *came* to him, and He said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

10 So he said, [f]"I have been very [g]zealous for the LORD God of hosts; for the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and [h]killed Your prophets with the sword. [i]I alone am left; and they seek to take my life."

■ **18:37 You have turned their hearts back.** The human act of repentance is not possible without divine grace.

■ **18:40 Brook Kishon.** This brook runs toward the north in the plain below Mount Carmel.

executed them there. Israel was a theocracy, a society founded by and constituted under God. Deut. 13:1–5 mandates the death of false prophets; Deut. 13:13–18 and 17:2–7 prescribe death to anyone embracing idolatry or inciting others to it.

■ **18:41 eat and drink.** Ahab's austerity can end, because the famine will soon be over (cf. James 5:17, 18).

■ **18:45 Ahab rode away and went to Jezreel.** Ahab used the town of Jezreel (located near Mount Gilboa) as a second residence (in addition to Samaria; 20:43; 21:1).

■ **19:1 Ahab told Jezebel.** Jezebel plays a major role in governing Israel (18:4 note). Together with Ahab, she wants to punish Elijah for killing the prophets of Baal (v. 2).

■ **19:2 So let the gods do to me.** Jezebel's oath calls down a penalty on herself if she should fail to kill Elijah within a day's time (1:17 note).

■ **19:3 Beersheba.** In the southern territory of Judah, 130 miles south of Jezreel. As he did before, Elijah flees outside the borders of the northern kingdom (17:3–6, 9).

■ **19:4 broom tree.** This desert bush grows as high as nine feet and provides some shade.

It is enough. After waging and winning a titanic struggle with God's help against the prophets of Baal, Elijah is discouraged and depressed. Although the Lord had defeated Baal, Elijah, has become a fugitive from Ahab and Jezebel. Because of the incongruity between the visible (the promoters of Baal who still govern Israel) and the invisible (the lordship of Yahweh), Elijah wants to die.

■ **19:7 the journey is too great for you.** Elijah is to travel all the way to Mount Horeb (that is, Mount Sinai), the original site of God's revelation to Moses. Horeb was in the arid Sinai Peninsula between Israel and Egypt, but the exact location is unknown (Ex. 3:1; 17:6; 33:6; Deut. 1:2, 6, 19; 4:10, 15).

God's Revelation to Elijah

11 Then He said, "Go out, and stand [j]on the mountain before the LORD." And behold, the LORD [k]passed by, and [l]a great and strong wind tore into the mountains and broke the rocks in pieces before the LORD, *but* the LORD *was* not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, *but* the LORD *was* not in the earthquake; 12 and after the earthquake a fire, *but* the LORD *was* not in the fire; and after the fire [s]a still small voice.

13 So it was, when Elijah heard *it,* that [m]he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood in the entrance of the cave. [n]Suddenly a voice *came* to him, and said, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

14 [o]And he said, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God of hosts; because the children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I alone am left; and they seek to take my life."

15 Then the LORD said to him: "Go, return on your way to the Wilderness of Damascus; [p]and when you arrive, anoint Hazael *as* king over Syria. 16 Also you shall anoint [q]Jehu the son of Nimshi *as* king over Israel. And [r]Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel Meholah you shall anoint *as* prophet in your place. 17 [s]It shall be *that* whoever escapes the sword of Hazael, Jehu will [t]kill; and whoever escapes the sword of Jehu, [u]Elisha will kill. 18 [v]Yet I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, [w]and every mouth that has not kissed him."

Elisha Follows Elijah

19 So he departed from there, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who *was* plowing *with* twelve yoke *of oxen* before him, and he was with the twelfth. Then Elijah passed by him and threw his [x]mantle on him. 20 And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah, and said, [y]"Please let me kiss my father and my mother, and *then* I will follow you."

And he said to him, "Go back again, for what have I done to you?"

21 So *Elisha* turned back from him, and took a yoke of oxen and slaughtered them and [z]boiled their flesh, using the oxen's equipment, and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and followed Elijah, and became his servant.

Ahab Defeats the Syrians

20 Now [a]Ben-Hadad the king of Syria gathered all his forces together; thirty-two kings *were* with him, with horses and chariots. And he went up and besieged [b]Samaria, and made war against it. 2 Then he sent messengers into the city to Ahab king of Israel, and said to him, "Thus says Ben-Hadad: 3 'Your silver and your gold *are* mine; your loveliest wives and children are mine.' "

4 And the king of Israel answered and said, "My lord, O king, just as you say, I and all that I have *are* yours."

11 [j]Ex. 19:20; 24:12, 18 [k]Ex. 33:21, 22 [l]Ezek. 1:4; 37:7

12 [s]*a delicate whispering voice*

13 [m]Ex. 3:6; Is. 6:2 [n]1 Kin. 19:9

14 [o]1 Kin. 19:10

15 [p]2 Kin. 8:8–15

16 [q]2 Kin. 9:1–10 [r]1 Kin. 19:19–21; 2 Kin. 2:9–15

17 [s]2 Kin. 8:12; 13:3, 22 [t]2 Kin. 9:14—10:28 [u][Hos. 6:5]

18 [v]Rom. 11:4 [w]Hos. 13:2

19 [x]1 Sam. 28:14; 2 Kin. 2:8, 13, 14

20 [y][Matt. 8:21, 22; Luke 9:61, 62]; Acts 20:37

21 [z]2 Sam. 24:22

CHAPTER 20

1 [a]1 Kin. 15:18, 20; 2 Kin. 6:24 [b]1 Kin. 16:24; 2 Kin. 6:24

■ **19:11, 12 the LORD passed by.** God summons Elijah to prepare for a divine revelation, in much the same way He prepared Moses at Mount Sinai (Ex. 33:30–33; 34:2).

wind . . . earthquake . . . fire. These phenomena were indications of God's presence on Mount Sinai (Ex. 19:18, 19; 20:18; 24:17; Deut. 4:11, 12; 5:22–25), but God does not reveal Himself to Elijah through them.

a still small voice. The Lord answers Elijah in an unexpected way. God is present in near silence. Contrary to the notions of Elijah, divine silence does not mean divine inactivity.

■ **19:13 wrapped his face.** Moses was covered by God's "hand" before He passed by (Ex. 33:20–23), and Elijah covers his face upon hearing the "still small voice." No one can see God and live (1 Tim. 6:16).

■ **19:15 anoint Hazael as king over Syria.** Although it was common for prophets to anoint kings, it was most unusual for them to anoint foreign kings. God's purpose was to use this king from Damascus to bring His judgment against the house of Ahab (2 Kin. 8:7–15, 28, 29; 10:32; 12:17, 18; 13:3, 22).

■ **19:16 anoint Jehu.** Jehu was a military commander under both Ahab and his son, Joram (2 Kin. 9:5, 6). At the behest of Elisha, Jehu would launch a complete purge of the house of Ahab (2 Kin. 9:1—10:17).

Elisha the son of Shaphat. The name "Elisha" means "God is salvation" or "God saves" and is an apt characterization of Elisha's mission. There are many parallels between the work of Elijah and that of Elisha. Both uphold the standards of the covenant of Sinai despite the opposition of kings (18:17–46; 21:19–22; 2 Kin. 3:13; 9:1–10).

■ **19:18 seven thousand.** Elijah had thought he was the only one left.

every mouth that has not kissed him. That is, has kissed the image of Baal (cf. Hos. 13:2).

■ **19:20 what have I done to you.** With this elliptic and enigmatic statement, Elijah apparently permits Elisha to make a visit to his home, because what has happened to him was great, and will not lose its effectiveness through such a delay.

■ **19:21 slaughtered them.** Elisha makes a total commitment to his new prophetic calling by ending his old way of life. The call of Jesus to His disciples is a comprehensive claim (Mark 1:16–20; 2:14). The same can be said for Jesus' demands upon any who would follow Him (Mark 8:34–38).

servant. Elisha does not begin as an equal with Elijah, but as his apprentice or aide. Moses also had Joshua as his servant, and trained him to be his successor (Ex. 24:13; 33:11).

■ **20:1 Ben-Hadad the king of Syria.** This is probably Ben-Hadad II, grandson of the Ben-Hadad mentioned in 15:18–20.

thirty-two kings. Ben-Hadad II assembled a coalition of thirty-two kings of client city-states and tribal chieftains to campaign against Ahab.

■ **20:4 My lord, O king.** Ahab addresses Ben-Hadad as an inferior to a superior. Ahab hoped that by surrendering he could preserve his own life and prevent his city from being destroyed.

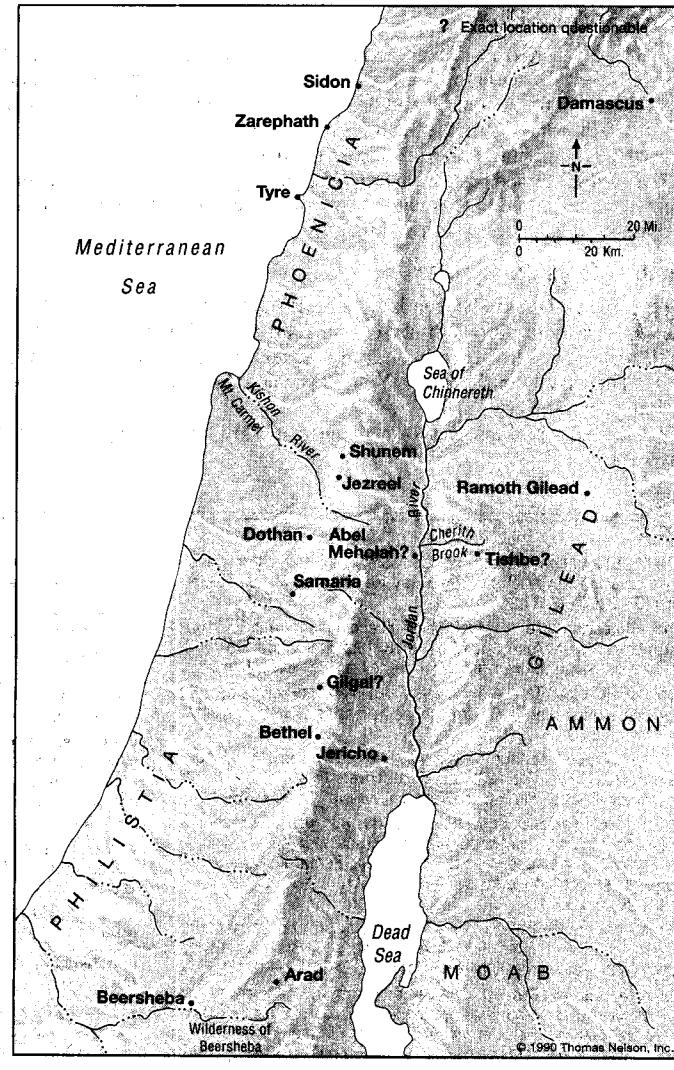
6 [1]*pleasing*

5 Then the messengers came back and said, "Thus speaks Ben-Hadad, saying, 'Indeed I have
sent to you, saying, "You shall deliver to me your silver and your gold, your wives and your
children"; 6 but I will send my servants to you tomorrow about this time, and they shall search
your house and the houses of your servants. And it shall be, *that* whatever is [1]pleasant in your
eyes, they will put *it* in their hands and take *it*.' "
7 So the king of Israel called all the elders of the land, and said, "Notice, please, and see how
this *man* seeks trouble, for he sent to me for my wives, my children, my silver, and my gold; and
I did not deny him."
8 And all the elders and all the people said to him, "Do not listen or consent."
9 Therefore he said to the messengers of Ben-Hadad, "Tell my lord the king, 'All that you sent
for to your servant the first time I will do, but this thing I cannot do.' "

■ **20:9 this thing I cannot do.** In his surrender (v. 4) Ahab did not contemplate actually handing over women and children, at least not those in his own palace and retinue.

Elijah and Elisha. Elijah's victory on Mt. Carmel ended with the slaying of 450 prophets of Baal (1 Kin. 18:20–40). His ministry spanned Canaan from the Brook Cherith near his birthplace (1 Kin. 17:1–7) to Zarephath where he performed the miracle that sustained the widow and her son, and to as far south as Mt. Horeb (not shown). In Samaria Elijah denounced King Ahab's injustice against Naboth of Jezreel (1 Kin. 21:17–29). Near Jericho Elijah separated the waters of the Jordan River to cross over and subsequently was carried to heaven in a chariot of fire (2 Kin. 2:1–12).

Elisha healed Naaman of leprosy in the Jordan River (2 Kin. 5:1–19) and led the blinded Syrians to their defeat at Samaria (2 Kin. 6:8–23). In Damascus, Elisha prophesied the death of King Ben-Hadad of Syria and the succession of Hazael as king of Syria.



And the messengers departed and brought back word to him.

10 Then Ben-Hadad sent to him and said, [c]"The gods do so to me, and more also, if enough dust is left of Samaria for a handful for each of the people [2]who follow me."

11 So the king of Israel answered and said, "Tell *him,* 'Let not the one who puts on *his armor* [d]boast like the one who takes *it off.*' "

12 And it happened when *Ben-Hadad* heard this message, as he and the kings *were* [e]drinking at the [3]command post, that he said to his servants, "Get ready." And they got ready to attack the city.

13 Suddenly a prophet approached Ahab king of Israel, saying, "Thus says the LORD: 'Have you seen all this great multitude? Behold, [f]I will deliver it into your hand today, and you shall know that I *am* the LORD.' "

14 So Ahab said, "By whom?"

And he said, "Thus says the LORD: 'By the young leaders of the provinces.' "

Then he said, "Who will set the battle in order?"

And he answered, "You."

15 Then he mustered the young leaders of the provinces, and there were two hundred and thirty-two; and after them he mustered all the people, all the children of Israel—seven thousand.

16 So they went out at noon. Meanwhile Ben-Hadad and the thirty-two kings helping him were [g]getting drunk at the command post. 17 The young leaders of the provinces went out first. And Ben-Hadad sent out *a patrol,* and they told him, saying, "Men are coming out of Samaria!" 18 So he said, "If they have come out for peace, take them alive; and if they have come out for war, take them alive."

19 Then these young leaders of the provinces went out of the city with the army which followed them. 20 And each one killed his man; so the Syrians fled, and Israel pursued them; and Ben-Hadad the king of Syria escaped on a horse with the cavalry. 21 Then the king of Israel went out and attacked the horses and chariots, and killed the Syrians with a great slaughter.

22 And the prophet came to the king of Israel and said to him, "Go, strengthen yourself; take note, and see what you should do, [h]for [4]in the spring of the year the king of Syria will come up against you."

The Syrians Again Defeated

23 Then the servants of the king of Syria said to him, "Their gods *are* gods of the hills. Therefore they were stronger than we; but if we fight against them in the plain, surely we will be stronger than they. 24 So do this thing: Dismiss the kings, each from his position, and put captains in their [5]places; 25 and you shall muster an army like the army [6]that you have lost, horse for horse and chariot for chariot. Then we will fight against them in the plain; surely we will be stronger than they."

And he listened to their voice and did so.

26 So it was, in the spring of the year, that Ben-Hadad mustered the Syrians and went up to [i]Aphek to fight against Israel. 27 And the children of Israel were mustered and given provisions, and they went against them. Now the children of Israel encamped before them like two little flocks of goats, while the Syrians filled the [j]countryside.

28 Then a [k]man of God came and spoke to the king of Israel, and said, "Thus says the LORD: 'Because the Syrians have said, "The LORD *is* God of the hills, but He *is* not God of the valleys," therefore [l]I will deliver all this great multitude into your hand, and you shall know that I *am* the LORD.' " 29 And they encamped opposite each other for seven days. So it was that on the seventh day the battle was joined; and the children of Israel killed one hundred thousand foot soldiers *of*

10 [c]1 Kin. 19:2; 2 Kin. 6:31 [2]Lit. *at my feet*

11 [d]Prov. 27:1; [Eccl. 7:8]

12 [e]1 Kin. 20:16 [3]Lit. *booths* or *shelters*

13 [f]1 Kin. 20:28

16 [g]1 Kin. 16:9; 20:12; [Prov. 20:1]

22 [h]2 Sam. 11:1; 1 Kin. 20:26 [4]Lit. *at the return*

24 [5]*positions*

25 [6]Lit. *that fell from you*

26 [i]Josh. 13:4; 2 Kin. 13:17

27 [j]Judg. 6:3–5; 1 Sam. 13:5–8

28 [k]1 Kin. 17:18 [l]1 Kin. 20:13

■ **20:10 The gods do so to me.** Enraged at Ahab's refusal, Ben-Hadad promises to reduce Samaria to a heap of dust.

■ **20:11 one who puts on his armor.** Ahab responds with a proverb that it is foolish to boast about winning before the fight has begun.

■ **20:13 I will deliver it into your hand today.** This is the form of assurance given before battles when the Lord is about to fight on Israel's side (Josh. 6:2, 16; 8:1, 18; Judg. 7:2; 18:10; 2 Chr. 13:16; 16:8). God defends the cause of His people against oppressors and enemies (Ex. 15:1–21; Judg. 5; Hab. 3:3–19; Rev. 18).

■ **20:16 getting drunk.** The thirty-two kings were over-confident and callous about their responsibilities.

■ **20:23 Their gods are gods of the hills.** Both Samaria and Jerusalem in the central hill country. In the polytheistic conceptions of the time, each god had specific zones of influence and strengths.

fight against them in the plain. It was understood that wars were fought not only by armies but also by their gods, and the Syrians wanted to fight in the plains where they thought Yahweh would be outside his sphere of influence and hence in a weak position.

■ **20:24 Dismiss the kings.** The kings had been getting drunk (vv. 12, 16) and it would be wise to replace them with fighting men.

■ **20:26 Aphek.** About four miles east of the Sea of Chinneroth (Galilee).

31 [m]Gen. 37:34; 2 Sam. 3:31
34 [n]1 Kin. 15:20
35 [o]2 Kin. 2:3, 5, 7, 15 [p]1 Kin. 13:17, 18
36 [q]1 Kin. 13:24
39 [r]2 Sam. 12:1 [s]2 Kin. 10:24 [t]Lit. *weigh*
42 [u]1 Kin. 22:31–37
43 [v]1 Kin. 21:4

the Syrians in one day. 30 But the rest fled to Aphek, into the city; then a wall fell on twenty-seven thousand of the men *who were* left.

And Ben-Hadad fled and went into the city, into an inner chamber.

Ahab's Treaty with Ben-Hadad

31 Then his servants said to him, "Look now, we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel *are* merciful kings. Please, let us [m]put sackcloth around our waists and ropes around our heads, and go out to the king of Israel; perhaps he will spare your life." 32 So they wore sackcloth around their waists and *put* ropes around their heads, and came to the king of Israel and said, "Your servant Ben-Hadad says, 'Please let me live.' "

And he said, "*Is* he still alive? He *is* my brother."

33 Now the men were watching closely to see whether *any sign of mercy would come* from him; and they quickly grasped *at this word* and said, "Your brother Ben-Hadad."

So he said, "Go, bring him." Then Ben-Hadad came out to him; and he had him come up into the chariot.

34 So *Ben-Hadad* said to him, [n]"The cities which my father took from your father I will restore; and you may set up marketplaces for yourself in Damascus, as my father did in Samaria."

Then *Ahab said,* "I will send you away with this treaty." So he made a treaty with him and sent him away.

Ahab Condemned

35 Now a certain man of [o]the sons of the prophets said to his neighbor [p]by the word of the LORD, "Strike me, please." And the man refused to strike him. 36 Then he said to him, "Because you have not obeyed the voice of the LORD, surely, as soon as you depart from me, a lion shall kill you." And as soon as he left him, [q]a lion found him and killed him.

37 And he found another man, and said, "Strike me, please." So the man struck him, inflicting a wound. 38 Then the prophet departed and waited for the king by the road, and disguised himself with a bandage over his eyes. 39 Now [r]as the king passed by, he cried out to the king and said, "Your servant went out into the midst of the battle; and there, a man came over and brought a man to me, and said, 'Guard this man; if by any means he is missing, [s]your life shall be for his life, or else you shall [t]pay a talent of silver.' 40 While your servant was busy here and there, he was gone."

Then the king of Israel said to him, "So *shall* your judgment *be;* you yourself have decided *it.*"

41 And he hastened to take the bandage away from his eyes; and the king of Israel recognized him as one of the prophets. 42 Then he said to him, "Thus says the LORD: [u]'Because you have let slip out of *your* hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction, therefore your life shall go for his life, and your people for his people.' "

43 So the king of Israel [v]went to his house sullen and displeased, and came to Samaria.

■ **20:31 the kings of . . . Israel are merciful.** Certain powers in the Near East, such as Assyria, were brutal toward the vanquished.

sackcloth . . . ropes. The Syrians were dramatizing their humility and submission to the Israelites.

■ **20:32 Your servant.** Earlier, Ahab had addressed Ben-Hadad as a superior (vv. 4, 9); now the tables are turned.

He is my brother. Ahab's surprising response depicts Ben-Hadad as an equal in a treaty relationship (9:13), a concession Ben-Hadad's men were quick to exploit (v. 33).

■ **20:34 you may set up marketplaces.** International trade could bring substantial income (10:23–29), and the guarantee of a market in another country would afford a distinct economic advantage for the merchants of Israel.

this treaty. The two kings formalize their negotiations by ratifying a covenant or treaty.

■ **20:35 sons of the prophets.** This designation does not mean physical children, but members of a prophetic guild or association. Elijah and Elisha were probably leaders of such groups (2 Kin. 2:3, 15; 4:1, 38; 6:1; 9:1).

■ **20:36 Because you have not obeyed the . . . LORD.** This highly unusual incident needs to be understood in the context of the previous story in which Ahab did not obey the dictates of holy war. Aware of Ahab's treaty with Ben-Hadad II, the prophet is dramatizing the consequences of refusing to heed the word of God.

a lion shall kill you. The old prophet from Bethel uttered a similar decree of judgment against the man of God from Judah (13:20–25).

■ **20:39 a talent of silver.** This was a huge quantity (about 75 pounds), more than a common soldier could afford.

■ **20:40 So shall your judgment be.** Ahab shows no mercy, and so passes judgment on himself (v. 42; 2 Sam. 12:7).

■ **20:42 whom I appointed to utter destruction.** See Lev. 27:28; Josh. 6:17; 7:1, 20–26. The wars were campaigns fought and won by God Himself, using the Israelites as His agents. In fighting these wars Israel was to conduct itself in a prescribed manner, observing stipulations of holy conduct. Ahab was willing to accept divine victory, but he violated the rules for the holy war by making a treaty with Ben-Hadad and yoking Israel to a foreign power (Deut. 7:1–6; 20:16–18).

your life shall go for his life, and your people for his people. Even though each person is responsible for his own conduct before God, the actions of each person inevitably affect the lives of others for good or ill.

Naboth Is Murdered for His Vineyard

21 And it came to pass after these things *that* Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard which *was* in [a]Jezreel, next to the palace of Ahab king of Samaria. 2 So Ahab spoke to Naboth, saying, "Give me your [b]vineyard, that I may have it for a vegetable garden, because it *is* near, next to my house; and for it I will give you a vineyard better than it. *Or,* if it seems good to you, I will give you its worth in money."

3 But Naboth said to Ahab, "The LORD forbid [c]that I should give the inheritance of my fathers to you!"

4 So Ahab went into his house sullen and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him; for he had said, "I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers." And he lay down on his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no food. 5 But [d]Jezebel his wife came to him, and said to him, "Why is your spirit so sullen that you eat no food?"

6 He said to her, "Because I spoke to Naboth the Jezreelite, and said to him, 'Give me your vineyard for money; or else, if it pleases you, I will give you *another* vineyard for it.' And he answered, 'I will not give you my vineyard.' "

7 Then Jezebel his wife said to him, "You now exercise authority over Israel! Arise, eat food, and let your heart be cheerful; I will give you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite."

8 And she wrote letters in Ahab's name, sealed *them* with his seal, and sent the letters to the elders and the nobles who *were* dwelling in the city with Naboth. 9 She wrote in the letters, saying,

> Proclaim a fast, and seat Naboth [f]with high honor among the people; 10 and seat two men, scoundrels, before him to bear witness against him, saying, You have [e]blasphemed God and the king. *Then* take him out, and [f]stone him, that he may die.

11 So the men of his city, the elders and nobles who were inhabitants of his city, did as Jezebel had sent to them, as it *was* written in the letters which she had sent to them. 12 [g]They proclaimed a fast, and seated Naboth with high honor among the people. 13 And two men, scoundrels, came in and sat before him; and the scoundrels [h]witnessed against him, against Naboth, in the presence of the people, saying, "Naboth has blasphemed God and the king!" [i]Then they took him outside the city and stoned him with stones, so that he died. 14 Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, "Naboth has been stoned and is dead."

15 And it came to pass, when Jezebel heard that Naboth had been stoned and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab, "Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give you for money; for Naboth is not alive, but dead." 16 So it was, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab got up and went down to take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite.

The LORD Condemns Ahab

17 [j]Then the word of the LORD came to [k]Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 18 "Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, [l]who *lives* in Samaria. There *he is,* in the vineyard of Naboth, where he has gone down to take possession of it. 19 You shall speak to him, saying, 'Thus says the LORD: "Have you murdered and also taken possession?" ' And you shall speak to him, saying, 'Thus says the LORD: [m]"In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, dogs shall lick your blood, even yours." ' "

CHAPTER 21

1 [a]Judg. 6:33; 1 Kin. 18:45, 46

2 [b]1 Sam. 8:14

3 [c][Lev. 25:23; Num. 36:7; Ezek. 46:18]

5 [d]1 Kin. 19:1, 2

9 [f]Lit. *at the head*

10 [e][Ex. 22:28; Lev. 24:15, 16]; Acts 6:11 [f][Lev. 24:14]

12 [g]Is. 58:4

13 [h][Ex. 20:16; 23:1, 7] [i]2 Kin. 9:26; 2 Chr. 24:21; Acts 7:58, 59; Heb. 11:37

17 [j][Ps. 9:12] [k]1 Kin. 19:1

18 [l]1 Kin. 13:32; 2 Chr. 22:9

19 [m]1 Kin. 22:38; 2 Kin. 9:26

■ **21:1 Jezreel.** About twenty-four miles north of Samaria. Ahab maintained a palace here in addition to one in the capital (18:45).

■ **21:2 Give me your vineyard.** In Canaanite nations a king could seize property and personal belongings at pleasure, because in theory all the property was owned by the royal family and only entrusted to their subjects. In Israel, God owned the land (Ex. 19:3–8; Lev. 25:23) and the people held it as His stewards (Num. 14:8; 35:34; Deut. 1:8). The powers of an Israelite monarch were limited in contrast to the powers of a Canaanite king (Deut. 17:14–20; 1 Sam. 8:9–19; 10:25). When Ahab wanted his neighbor's vineyard, his thought was to negotiate a purchase (cf. 16:24).

■ **21:3 The LORD forbid.** Naboth's reaction was quick, because his land was a sacred inheritance from the Lord. When the land was distributed following the conquest (Josh. 13—21), each family received its own inheritance as a divine gift and a trust. Since Naboth's vineyard was his portion of his family's inheritance, to sell it would mean cutting off his own descendants (Lev. 25:23; Num. 27:1–11; 36:1–12).

■ **21:8 she wrote letters . . . to the elders and the nobles.** Jezebel used the royal power to have Naboth falsely accused and executed.

■ **21:9 Proclaim a fast.** Jezebel, with Ahab's complicity, fosters apprehensiveness among the town's inhabitants, because fasting was a characteristic response to a crisis or major transgression (Judg. 20:26; 1 Sam. 7:5, 6; 2 Chr. 20:3; Jon. 3:5, 7–9).

■ **21:10 two men, scoundrels.** The law of Israel stipulated that at least two witnesses were required to convict a person of a capital offense (Num. 35:30; Deut. 17:5, 6; 19:15).

blasphemed God and the king. The penalty for cursing God was death (Ex. 22:28; Lev. 24:10–16).

■ **21:13 outside the city.** In accordance with the Law, the murderers avoided ritual impurity (Lev. 24:14; Num. 15:35, 36). Second Kin. 9:26 adds that Naboth's sons were also killed, eliminating any possible heirs.

20 [n]1 Kin. 18:17 [o][Rom. 7:14]
21 [p]1 Kin. 14:10 [q]2 Kin. 10:10 [r]1 Sam. 25:22 [s]1 Kin. 14:10
22 [t]1 Kin. 15:29 [u]1 Kin. 16:3, 11
23 [v]2 Kin. 9:10, 30–37 [2]So with MT, LXX; some Heb. mss., Syr., Tg., Vg. *plot of ground* instead of *wall* (cf. 2 Kin. 9:36)
24 [w]1 Kin. 14:11; 16:4
25 [x]1 Kin. 16:30–33; 21:20 [y]1 Kin. 16:31 [3]*incited him*
26 [z]2 Kin. 21:11
27 [a]Gen. 37:34
29 [b][2 Kin. 22:19] [c]2 Kin. 9:25; 10:11, 17

CHAPTER 22

2 [a]2 Chr. 18:2
3 [b]Deut. 4:43
4 [c]2 Kin. 3:7
5 [d]2 Kin. 3:11
6 [e]1 Kin. 18:19 [f]The false prophets
7 [f]2 Kin. 3:11 [2]Or *him*

20 So Ahab said to Elijah, [n]"Have you found me, O my enemy?"

And he answered, "I have found *you,* because [o]you have sold yourself to do evil in the sight of the LORD: 21 'Behold, [p]I will bring calamity on you. I will take away your [q]posterity, and will cut off from Ahab [r]every male in Israel, both [s]bond and free. 22 I will make your house like the house of [t]Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of [u]Baasha the son of Ahijah, because of the provocation with which you have provoked *Me* to anger, and made Israel sin.' 23 And [v]concerning Jezebel the LORD also spoke, saying, 'The dogs shall eat Jezebel by the [2]wall of Jezreel.' 24 The dogs shall eat [w]whoever belongs to Ahab and dies in the city, and the birds of the air shall eat whoever dies in the field."

25 But [x]there was no one like Ahab who sold himself to do wickedness in the sight of the LORD, [y]because Jezebel his wife [3]stirred him up. 26 And he behaved very abominably in following idols, according to all [z]*that* the Amorites had done, whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel.

27 So it was, when Ahab heard those words, that he tore his clothes and [a]put sackcloth on his body, and fasted and lay in sackcloth, and went about mourning.

28 And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 29 "See how Ahab has humbled himself before Me? Because he [b]has humbled himself before Me, I will not bring the calamity in his days. [c]In the days of his son I will bring the calamity on his house."

Micaiah Warns Ahab

22 Now three years passed without war between Syria and Israel. 2 Then it came to pass, in the third year, that [a]Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went down to *visit* the king of Israel.

3 And the king of Israel said to his servants, "Do you know that [b]Ramoth in Gilead *is* ours, but we hesitate to take it out of the hand of the king of Syria?" 4 So he said to Jehoshaphat, "Will you go with me to fight at Ramoth Gilead?"

Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, [c]"I *am* as you *are,* my people as your people, my horses as your horses." 5 Also Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, [d]"Please inquire for the word of the LORD today."

6 Then the king of Israel [e]gathered [f]the prophets together, about four hundred men, and said to them, "Shall I go against Ramoth Gilead to fight, or shall I refrain?"

So they said, "Go up, for the Lord will deliver *it* into the hand of the king."

7 And [f]Jehoshaphat said, "*Is there* not still a prophet of the LORD here, that we may inquire of [2]Him?"

■ **21:24 dogs . . . birds of the air shall eat.** See 14:11 and note.

■ **21:25 there was no one like Ahab.** See 16:30–33 and notes.

■ **21:26 Amorites.** The word here refers to the pre-Israelite inhabitants of Canaan (Gen. 15:16; Deut. 1:7; 2 Sam. 21:2).

■ **21:27 tore his clothes and put sackcloth on.** God's judgment, uttered through Elijah, changes Ahab's attitude. Tearing clothes and wearing sackcloth were marks of mourning and repentance (Gen. 37:34; 2 Sam. 3:31; 2 Kin. 6:30; Lam. 2:10; Joel 1:13).

■ **21:29 I will not bring the calamity in his days.** God revises the punishment He gave in vv. 21–24. The penalty was not rescinded but delayed a generation due to God's mercy.

his son. That is, Joram (2 Kin. 9:25, 26). Though Ahab would not live to see the end of his dynasty, he and Jezebel died shameful deaths (22:37, 38; 2 Kin. 9:10, 34–37).

■ **22:1 three years.** Israel had peace for three years following the two-year war between Syria and Israel described in 20:1–34. During this peace, Hadadezer (Ben-Hadad II) of Syria, Ahab of Israel, and ten other kings formed a coalition to ward off an Assyrian invasion led by Shalmaneser III. Assyrian records report that in the major battle of this campaign fought at Qarqar, Syria, on the Orontes River (853 B.C.), Ahab contributed two hundred chariots and ten thousand soldiers. Assyria's claim to have won a great victory seems to be an exaggeration, because the Assyrians withdrew and did not try to invade again for about four years.

■ **22:2 Jehoshaphat the king of Judah.** On his reign, see vv. 41–50 and 2 Kin. 3:7–27.

■ **22:3 Ramoth in Gilead.** Located about twenty-eight miles east of the Jordan River, near a tributary to the Yarmuk River, Ramoth in Gilead became Israel's possession during the conquest (Deut. 4:43; Josh. 20:8; cf. 1 Kin. 4:13), and Ahab thought it was time to retrieve it from the Syrians (v. 4).

■ **22:4 I am as you are.** This diplomatic language signifies Jehoshaphat's agreement to join the campaign against the Syrians. Jehoshaphat seems to be a junior partner in this coalition rather than an equal of Ahab, because Ahab tells him what to do (v. 30). Since formerly Judah was allied with the Syrians against Israel (15:16–21), this new arrangement marks a change in the foreign policies of both Israel and Judah. At some point in Ahab's reign, he formalized his relationship with Judah by giving his daughter Athaliah in marriage to Jehoram the son of the king of Judah (2 Kin. 8:18, 26). Athaliah was a devoted Baal worshiper, and the diplomatic marriage introduced state-sponsored Baal worship to Judah, corrupting the worship of Yahweh (2 Kin. 11).

■ **22:5 inquire for the word of the LORD.** It was usual to consult with God or His prophets before embarking on a major campaign (1 Sam. 23:1–4; 2 Sam. 2:1; 2 Kin. 3:11; 2 Chr. 20:3–17).

■ **22:6 prophets . . . about four hundred men.** The prophets whose words are recorded in the Scriptures are only a fraction of the total number of people who called themselves prophets in those times (18:19; 2 Kin. 3:13; Jer. 28). Prophets were also common in other societies of the ancient Near East.

they said, "Go up." Most of the Israelite prophets were eager to please their patrons, usually the kings, by pronouncing flatteries and agreeable messages (Jer. 28:1–4; Amos 7:10–13).

■ **22:7 Is there not still a prophet of the LORD.** Jehoshaphat is skeptical of his prophets.

[8] So the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "*There is* still one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the LORD; but I hate him, because he does not prophesy good concerning me, but evil."

And Jehoshaphat said, "Let not the king say such things!"

[9] Then the king of Israel called an officer and said, "Bring Micaiah the son of Imlah quickly!"

[10] The king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, having put on *their* robes, sat each on his throne, at a threshing floor at the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets prophesied before them. [11] Now Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah had made [g]horns of iron for himself; and he said, "Thus says the LORD: 'With these you shall [h]gore the Syrians until they are destroyed.' " [12] And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, "Go up to Ramoth Gilead and prosper, for the LORD will deliver *it* into the king's hand."

[13] Then the messenger who had gone to call Micaiah spoke to him, saying, "Now listen, the words of the prophets with one accord encourage the king. Please, let your word be like the word of one of them, and speak encouragement."

[14] And Micaiah said, "*As* the LORD lives, [i]whatever the LORD says to me, that I will speak."

[15] Then he came to the king; and the king said to him, "Micaiah, shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall we refrain?"

And he answered him, "Go and prosper, for the LORD will deliver *it* into the hand of the king!"

[16] So the king said to him, "How many times shall I make you swear that you tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?"

[17] Then he said, "I saw all Israel [j]scattered on the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd. And the LORD said, 'These have no master. Let each return to his house in peace.' "

[18] And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Did I not tell you he would not prophesy good concerning me, but evil?"

[19] Then *Micaiah* said, "Therefore hear the word of the LORD: [k]I saw the LORD sitting on His throne, [l]and all the host of heaven standing by, on His right hand and on His left. [20] And the LORD said, 'Who will persuade Ahab to go up, that he may fall at Ramoth Gilead?' So one spoke in this manner, and another spoke in that manner. [21] Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD, and said, 'I will persuade him.' [22] The LORD said to him, 'In what way?' So he said, 'I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' And the LORD said, [m]'You shall persuade *him,* and also prevail. Go out and do so.' [23] [n]Therefore look! The LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these prophets of yours, and the LORD has declared disaster against you."

[24] Now Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near and [o]struck Micaiah on the cheek, and said, [p]"Which way did the spirit from the LORD go from me to speak to you?"

[25] And Micaiah said, "Indeed, you shall see on that day when you go into an [q]inner chamber to hide!"

[26] So the king of Israel said, "Take Micaiah, and return him to Amon the governor of the city and to Joash the king's son; [27] and say, 'Thus says the king: "Put this *fellow* in [r]prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and water of affliction, until I come in peace." ' "

[28] But Micaiah said, "If you ever return in peace, [s]the LORD has not spoken by me." And he said, "Take heed, all you people!"

11 [g]Zech. 1:18–21 [h]Deut. 33:17

14 [i]Num. 22:38; 24:13

17 [j]Num. 27:17; 1 Kin. 22:34–36; 2 Chr. 18:16; Matt. 9:36; Mark 6:34

19 [k]Is. 6:1; Ezek. 1:26–28; Dan. 7:9 [l]Job 1:6; 2:1; Ps. 103:20; Dan. 7:10; Zech. 1:10; [Matt. 18:10; Heb. 1:7, 14]

22 [m]Judg. 9:23; 1 Sam. 16:14; 18:10; 19:9; Job 12:16; [Ezek. 14:9; 2 Thess. 2:11]

23 [n][Ezek. 14:9]

24 [o]Jer. 20:2 [p]2 Chr. 18:23

25 [q]1 Kin. 20:30

27 [r]2 Chr. 16:10; 18:25–27

28 [s]Num. 16:29; Deut. 18:20–22

■ **22:8 Micaiah the son of Imlah.** The name "Micaiah" means "Who is like Yahweh?" He appears only in this chapter.

he does not prophesy good concerning me. According to Jeremiah, one should be wary of prophets who prophesy too optimistically about the nation's future (Jer. 29:8, 9).

■ **22:10 sat each on his throne.** Ahab and Jehoshaphat sit in the city at the place where judicial and municipal decisions were made (Deut. 21:19; 25:7; Ruth 4:1–12; Amos 5:10–15).

■ **22:11 Zedekiah.** This man is one of the prophets sought out by Ahab.

horns of iron. The horns symbolize power (Deut. 33:17; Zech. 1:18–21). On symbolic actions of prophets, see 11:30 note.

■ **22:14 As the LORD lives.** A conventional oath (1:17 note).

whatever the LORD says to me. Even if he wanted to say something else, Micaiah can only speak the word of the Lord.

■ **22:15 Go and prosper.** Micaiah is being sarcastic, and Ahab knows it.

■ **22:17 I saw all Israel scattered.** Micaiah depicts the defeated and leaderless armies of Israel in a state of anarchy.

that have no shepherd. The term "shepherd" can refer to a king (Zech. 13:7). Micaiah does not identify which shepherd is meant.

■ **22:22 I will go out and be a lying spirit.** One of the celestial beings carries out God's wishes by using the four hundred prophets as a means of reinforcing a false sense of security in Ahab (1 Sam. 16:14–16; Job 1:6–8, 12; Jer. 14:14–16; 23:16, 26; Ezek. 14:9; Gal. 1:6–9).

■ **22:25 an inner chamber to hide.** When the battle is over, Zedekiah will be disgraced and forced to seek refuge.

■ **22:28 If you ever return.** Regardless of Ahab's will, the prophecy stands.

30 [f] 2 Chr. 35:22

31 [u] 1 Kin. 20:1 [v] 1 Kin. 20:24; 2 Chr. 18:30

32 [w] 2 Chr. 18:31

38 [x] 1 Kin. 21:19 [3] Tg., Syr. *they washed his armor*

39 [y] Ps. 45:8; Amos 3:15

40 [z] 2 Kin. 1:2, 18 [4] Died and joined his ancestors

41 [a] 2 Chr. 20:31

43 [b] 2 Chr. 17:3; 20:32, 33 [c] 1 Kin. 14:23; 15:14; 2 Kin. 12:3

44 [d] 2 Chr. 19:2 [e] 2 Chr. 18:1

45 [f] 2 Chr. 20:34

46 [g] Gen. 19:5; Deut. 23:17; 1 Kin. 14:24; 15:12; 2 Kin. 23:7; Jude 7 [5] Heb. *qadesh*, one practicing sodomy and prostitution in religious rituals

47 [h] 2 Sam. 8:14; 2 Kin. 3:9; 8:20

48 [i] 2 Chr. 20:35–37 [j] 1 Kin. 10:22 [k] 1 Kin. 9:28 [l] 2 Chr. 20:37 [6] Or *ships of Tarshish*

Ahab Dies in Battle

29 So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramoth Gilead. 30 And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "I will disguise myself and go into battle; but you put on your robes." So the king of Israel [f]disguised himself and went into battle.

31 Now the [u]king of Syria had commanded the thirty-two [v]captains of his chariots, saying, "Fight with no one small or great, but only with the king of Israel." 32 So it was, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, "Surely it *is* the king of Israel!" Therefore they turned aside to fight against him, and Jehoshaphat [w]cried out. 33 And it happened, when the captains of the chariots saw that it *was* not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him. 34 Now a *certain* man drew a bow at random, and struck the king of Israel between the joints of his armor. So he said to the driver of his chariot, "Turn around and take me out of the battle, for I am wounded."

35 The battle increased that day; and the king was propped up in his chariot, facing the Syrians, and died at evening. The blood ran out from the wound onto the floor of the chariot. 36 Then, as the sun was going down, a shout went throughout the army, saying, "Every man to his city, and every man to his own country!"

37 So the king died, and was brought to Samaria. And they buried the king in Samaria. 38 Then *someone* washed the chariot at a pool in Samaria, and the dogs licked up his blood while [3]the harlots bathed, according [x]to the word of the LORD which He had spoken.

39 Now the rest of the acts of Ahab, and all that he did, [y]the ivory house which he built and all the cities that he built, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 40 So Ahab [4]rested with his fathers. Then [z]Ahaziah his son reigned in his place.

Jehoshaphat Reigns in Judah

41 [a]Jehoshaphat the son of Asa had become king over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel. 42 Jehoshaphat *was* thirty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Azubah the daughter of Shilhi. 43 And [b]he walked in all the ways of his father Asa. He did not turn aside from them, doing *what was* right in the eyes of the LORD. Nevertheless [c]the high places were not taken away, *for* the people offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places. 44 Also [d]Jehoshaphat made [e]peace with the king of Israel.

45 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, the might that he showed, and how he made war, *are* they not written [f]in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 46 [g]And the rest of the [5]perverted persons, who remained in the days of his father Asa, he banished from the land. 47 [h]*There was* then no king in Edom, only a deputy of the king.

48 [i]Jehoshaphat [j]made [6]merchant ships to go to [k]Ophir for gold; [l]but they never sailed, for the

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■ **22:30 I will disguise myself.** Ahab's disguise indicates that he fears Micaiah's words.

your robes. Ahab cynically has Jehoshaphat dress in royal robes, hoping that if a king has to be killed in battle (v. 17), it will be Jehoshaphat.

■ **22:31 Fight with no one.** Neutralizing the leader of an opposing army was critical, because the opposing army might then collapse.

■ **22:38 the dogs licked up his blood.** This action is a partial realization of Elijah's prophecy in 21:19 (cf. 2 Kin. 9:25, 26).

while the harlots bathed. The reference is possibly to sacred prostitutes from the temple of Baal, but see text note.

■ **22:39 the ivory house which he built.** Archaeological excavations at Samaria have discovered decorative ivory inlays dating to this period. Such extravagance is criticized by Amos (Amos 3:15).

cities that he built. Archaeological excavations reveal that Samaria and Megiddo were re-fortified during this period.

book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. See note on 11:41.

■ **22:40 Ahaziah.** On the reign of Ahaziah, see vv. 51–53; 2 Kin. 1.

■ **22:41 in the fourth year.** If Jehoshaphat was co-regent with his father Asa for three years, as some scholars believe, the fourth year would be 869 B.C. and would refer to the beginning of his independent reign.

■ **22:42 he reigned . . . twenty-five years.** That is, 872–848 B.C.

■ **22:43 doing what was right in the eyes of the LORD.** Jehoshaphat is one of the southern kings depicted in a positive light by the author of Kings.

the high places were not taken away. See note on 3:2.

■ **22:44 Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel.** Whereas the early years of the divided kingdom were characterized by intermittent warfare, the treaty between Jehoshaphat and Ahab was the start of a period of peaceful relations between Judah and Israel (cf. 2 Kin. 8:18, 26).

■ **22:45 how he made war.** See 2 Kin. 3:7–27; 2 Chr. 17:11; 20).

book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah. See note on 11:41.

■ **22:46 perverted persons.** See note on 14:24.

■ **22:47 a deputy of the king.** There was "no king in Edom," because in all likelihood Edom was a vassal of Judah. The king of Judah then decided who would rule in Edom (2 Kin. 8:20–22).

■ **22:48 made merchant ships.** Jehoshaphat, like Solomon before him, wants to establish a navy of his own based at Ezion Geber (9:26–28; 10:22; 2 Chr. 20:35–37).

Ophir. See note on 9:28.

ships were wrecked at [m]Ezion Geber. 49 Then Ahaziah the son of Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, "Let my servants go with your servants in the ships." But Jehoshaphat would not.

50 And [n]Jehoshaphat [7]rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David his father. Then Jehoram his son reigned in his place.

Ahaziah Reigns in Israel

51 [o]Ahaziah the son of Ahab became king over Israel in Samaria in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned two years over Israel. 52 He did evil in the sight of the LORD, and [p]walked in the way of his father and in the way of his mother and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin; 53 for [q]he served Baal and worshiped him, and provoked the LORD God of Israel to anger, [r]according[8] to all that his father had done.

48 [m]1 Kin. 9:26

50 [n]2 Chr. 21:1
[7]Died and joined his ancestors

51 [o]1 Kin. 22:40

52 [p]1 Kin. 15:26; 21:25

53 [q]Judg. 2:11
[r]1 Kin. 16:30–32
[8]In the same way that

- **22:49 Ahaziah the son of Ahab.** See 1 Kin. 22:51—2 Kin. 1:18.

Let my servants go with your servants. See 2 Chr. 20:35–37.

- **22:51 and reigned two years.** That is, 853–852 B.C.
- **22:52 his father and . . . mother.** Ahab and Jezebel (16:29–34).

in the way of Jeroboam. See note on 12:30.

- **22:53 he served Baal and worshiped him.** The worship of Baal, introduced and supported by Ahab and Jezebel, is perpetuated by their son (16:31 note).

The Second Book of the

KINGS

Author

The two books of Kings were originally one book that has been divided for the convenience of scribes or printers. Although Jeremiah was traditionally considered the author of Kings, most scholars now believe that it was the work of an unknown writer or group of writers who finished compiling it during the Judean Exile (see "Introduction to 1 Kings: Author").

Characteristics and Themes

Second Kings begins during the reign of Ahaziah in Israel and Jehoshaphat in Judah. It carries the history through the exile of King Jehoiachin in Babylon. One of the high points of the book is the reign of Hezekiah, the first great reformer of worship at the temple (18:4). After the fall of Samaria, the northern kingdom of Israel, Hezekiah began the process of reunifying the people of the divided kingdom. The climax of the book is the reign of Josiah, the second reformer of the temple (22:3—23:24). Both Hezekiah and Josiah are singled out for their incomparable devotion to the Lord (18:5; 23:25). See "Introduction to 1 Kings: Characteristics and Themes."

Date and Occasion

In the concluding chapters of the book, Jerusalem is captured by the Babylonians. The account of the fall emphasizes the rapid sequence of events culminating in the theft of the temple furniture and treasures. The ending of the book is abrupt and has led scholars to propose that the last two chapters were written during the exile in Babylon. See "Introduction to 1 Kings: Date and Occasion." □

Outline of 2 Kings

(Continued from Outline of 1 Kings)

III. Prophets and Kings (1 Kin. 17:1—2 Kin. 8:15)
- A. The Prophets and Ahab (1 Kin. 17:1—22:40)
- B. Jehoshaphat of Judah (1 Kin. 22:41–50)
- C. Ahaziah of Israel Defies Elijah (1 Kin. 22:51—2 Kin. 1:18)
- D. Elijah Succeeded by Elisha (2:1–18)
- E. The Ministry of Elisha (2:19—8:15)
  1. Elisha and the Prophets (2:19–25)
  2. Elisha and the War Against Moab (ch. 3)
  3. Elisha's Ministry to the Needy (ch. 4)
  4. Elisha and Naaman of Syria (ch. 5)
  5. Elisha and the Prophets (6:1–7)
  6. Elisha and the Syrian Siege of Samaria (6:8—7:20)
  7. Elisha and the Shunammite Woman (8:1–6)
  8. Elisha and Hazael of Syria (8:7–15)

IV. The Late Divided Kingdom (8:16—17:41)
- A. Jehoram of Judah (8:16–24)
- B. Ahaziah of Judah (8:25–29)
- C. Jehu of Israel (chs. 9; 10)
  1. Jehu Anointed King (9:1–13)
  2. Jehu's Bloody Coup (9:14–37)
  3. Jehu Massacres Ahab's Family (10:1–17)
  4. Jehu's Campaign Against Baal Worship (10:18–36)
- D. The Coup Against Athaliah of Judah (ch. 11)
- E. Jehoash of Judah (ch. 12)
- F. Jehoahaz of Israel (13:1–9)
- G. Jehoash of Israel (13:10–25)

H. Amaziah of Judah (14:1–22)
I. Jeroboam II of Israel (14:23–29)
J. Azariah of Judah (15:1–7)
K. Zechariah of Israel (15:8–12)
L. Shallum of Israel (15:13–16)
M. Menahem of Israel (15:17–22)
N. Pekahiah of Israel (15:23–26)
O. Pekah of Israel (15:27–31)
P. Jotham of Judah (15:32–38)
Q. Ahaz of Judah (ch. 16)
R. Hoshea of Israel (17:1–6)
S. Reflection on the Exile of Israel (17:7–23)
T. Resettlement by Assyrian Deportees (17:24–41)
V. Judah Alone (18:1—25:30)
A. Hezekiah (chs. 18—20)
1. Summary (18:1–8)
2. Assyrian Invasion (18:9–37)
3. Divine Deliverance (ch. 19)
4. Hezekiah's Illness (20:1–11)
5. The Babylonian Envoy (20:12–21)
B. Manasseh (21:1–18)
C. Amon (21:19–26)
D. Josiah (22:1—23:30)
1. Repairing the Temple and the Discovery of the Book of the Law (ch. 22)
2. Reforms in Jerusalem, Judah, and Samaria (23:1–20)
3. Covenant Renewal and Passover (23:21–28)
4. Death in Battle with Necho of Egypt (23:29, 30)
E. Jehoahaz (23:31–34)
F. Jehoiakim (23:35—24:7)
G. Jehoiachin (24:8–16)
H. Zedekiah (24:17–20)
I. The Babylonian Exile of Judah (25:1–21)
J. The Assassination of Gedaliah (25:22–26)
K. Jehoiachin in Exile (25:27–30)

God Judges Ahaziah

CHAPTER 1

MOAB [a]rebelled against Israel [b]after the death of Ahab.
2 Now [c]Ahaziah fell through the lattice of his upper room in Samaria, and was injured; so he sent messengers and said to them, "Go, inquire of [d]Baal-Zebub,[1] the god of [e]Ekron, whether I shall recover from this injury." 3 But the [2]angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, "Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say to them, '*Is it* because *there is* no God in Israel *that* you are going to inquire of Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron?' 4 Now therefore, thus says the LORD: 'You shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone up, but you shall surely die.' " So Elijah departed.
5 And when the messengers returned to [3]him, he said to them, "Why have you come back?"
6 So they said to him, "A man came up to meet us, and said to us, 'Go, return to the king who sent you, and say to him, "Thus says the LORD: '*Is it* because *there is* no God in Israel *that* you are sending to inquire of Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone up, but you shall surely die.' " ' "

1 [a]2 Sam. 8:2 [b]2 Kin. 3:5
2 [c]1 Kin. 22:40 [d]2 Kin. 1:3, 6, 16; Matt. 10:25; Mark 3:22 [e]1 Sam. 5:10 [1]Lit. *Lord of Flies*
3 [2]Or *Angel*
5 [3]Ahaziah

■ **1:3 Elijah the Tishbite.** See note on 1 Kin. 17:1. **king of Samaria.** See note on 1 Kin. 16:24.

8 [f]Zech. 13:4; Matt. 3:4; Mark 1:6 [g]1 Kin. 18:7

10 [h]1 Kin. 18:36–38; Luke 9:54

13 [i]1 Sam. 26:21; Ps. 72:14 [4]Lit. *bowed down*

15 [5]Or *Angel*

17 [j]1 Kin. 22:50; 2 Kin. 8:16; Matt. 1:8 [6]The son of Ahab king of Israel, 2 Kin. 3:1

CHAPTER 2

1 [a]Gen. 5:24; [Heb. 11:5] [b]1 Kin. 19:16–21

2 [c]Ruth 1:15, 16 [d]1 Sam. 1:26; 2 Kin. 2:4, 6; 4:30

3 [e]1 Kin. 20:35; 2 Kin. 2:5, 7, 15; 4:1, 38; 9:1 [7]Lit. *from your head*

7 Then he said to them, "What kind of man *was it* who came up to meet you and told you these words?"

8 So they answered him, [f]"A hairy man wearing a leather belt around his waist."

And he said, [g]"It *is* Elijah the Tishbite."

9 Then the king sent to him a captain of fifty with his fifty men. So he went up to him; and there he was, sitting on the top of a hill. And he spoke to him: "Man of God, the king has said, 'Come down!' "

10 So Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, "If I *am* a man of God, then [h]let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men." And fire came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty. 11 Then he sent to him another captain of fifty with his fifty men.

And he answered and said to him: "Man of God, thus has the king said, 'Come down quickly!' "

12 So Elijah answered and said to them, "If I *am* a man of God, let fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men." And the fire of God came down from heaven and consumed him and his fifty.

13 Again, he sent a third captain of fifty with his fifty men. And the third captain of fifty went up, and came and [4]fell on his knees before Elijah, and pleaded with him, and said to him: "Man of God, please let my life and the life of these fifty servants of yours [i]be precious in your sight. 14 Look, fire has come down from heaven and burned up the first two captains of fifties with their fifties. But let my life now be precious in your sight."

15 And the [5]angel of the LORD said to Elijah, "Go down with him; do not be afraid of him." So he arose and went down with him to the king. 16 Then he said to him, "Thus says the LORD: 'Because you have sent messengers to inquire of Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron, *is it* because *there is* no God in Israel to inquire of His word? Therefore you shall not come down from the bed to which you have gone up, but you shall surely die.' "

17 So *Ahaziah* died according to the word of the LORD which Elijah had spoken. Because he had no son, [j]Jehoram[6] became king in his place, in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah.

18 Now the rest of the acts of Ahaziah which he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?

Elijah Ascends to Heaven

2 And it came to pass, when the LORD was about to [a]take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with [b]Elisha from Gilgal. 2 Then Elijah said to Elisha, [c]"Stay here, please, for the LORD has sent me on to Bethel."

But Elisha said, "*As* the LORD lives, and [d]*as* your soul lives, I will not leave you!" So they went down to Bethel.

3 Now [e]the sons of the prophets who *were* at Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, "Do you know that the LORD will take away your master [7]from over you today?"

And he said, "Yes, I know; keep silent!"

4 Then Elijah said to him, "Elisha, stay here, please, for the LORD has sent me on to Jericho."

But he said, "*As* the LORD lives, and *as* your soul lives, I will not leave you!" So they came to Jericho.

5 Now the sons of the prophets who *were* at Jericho came to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that the LORD will take away your master from over you today?"

So he answered, "Yes, I know; keep silent!"

■ **1:8 A hairy man . . . a leather belt.** In his appearance, his ascetic life, and his prophetic boldness, John the Baptist resembles Elijah (Matt. 3:4). Both prophets carried out a ministry of judgment and repentance (Matt. 3:1–12; Luke 3:2–17).

■ **1:9 Man of God, the king has said, 'Come down!'** For Ahaziah, Elijah's prophecy constituted interference in the affairs of state, and he should therefore be held accountable to the king for his actions. Ahaziah's response reveals a characteristically Canaanite understanding of the unbridled powers of kingship (1 Sam. 8:11–17; 1 Kin. 21:2 note; cf. Deut. 17:14–20).

■ **1:17 Jehoram.** Jehoram, like Ahaziah, was a son of Ahab (3:1; 1 Kin. 22:51). This Jehoram of the northern kingdom of Israel should not be confused with Jehoram (or Joram), the son and successor to Jehoshaphat (see 8:16, 23), who ruled in the southern kingdom (Judah) at about the same time.

■ **1:18 book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.** See note on 1 Kin. 11:41.

■ **2:1 into heaven by a whirlwind.** In the Bible only Elijah and Enoch (Gen. 5:24) are privileged not to die but to be directly taken up to heaven.

Gilgal. Located west of the Jordan near Jericho.

■ **2:2 Bethel.** Bethel is a major Israelite city in the central highlands (1 Kin. 12:29 note).

6 Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here, please, for the LORD has sent me on to the Jordan."

But he said, "*As* the LORD lives, and *as* your soul lives, I will not leave you!" So the two of them went on. 7 And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went and stood facing *them* at a distance, while the two of them stood by the Jordan. 8 Now Elijah took his mantle, rolled *it* up, and struck the water; and [f]it was divided this way and that, so that the two of them crossed over on dry [g]ground.

9 And so it was, when they had crossed over, that Elijah said to Elisha, "Ask! What may I do for you, before I am taken away from you?"

Elisha said, "Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me."

10 So he said, "You have asked a hard thing. *Nevertheless,* if you see me *when I am* taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be *so.*" 11 Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly [h]a chariot of fire *appeared* with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah [i]went up by a whirlwind into heaven.

12 And Elisha saw *it,* and he cried out, [j]"My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen!" So he saw him no more. And he took hold of his own clothes and tore them into two pieces. 13 He also took up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and went back and stood by the bank of the Jordan. 14 Then he took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, and said, "Where *is* the LORD God of Elijah?" And when he also had struck the water, [k]it was divided this way and that; and Elisha crossed over.

15 Now when the sons of the prophets who *were* [l]from[2] Jericho saw him, they said, "The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha." And they came to meet him, and bowed to the ground before him. 16 Then they said to him, "Look now, there are fifty strong men with your servants. Please let them go and search for your master, [m]lest perhaps the Spirit of the LORD has taken him up and cast him upon some mountain or into some valley."

And he said, "You shall not send anyone."

17 But when they urged him till he was [n]ashamed, he said, "Send *them!*" Therefore they sent fifty men, and they searched for three days but did not find him. 18 And when they came back to him, for he had stayed in Jericho, he said to them, "Did I not say to you, 'Do not go'?"

Elisha Performs Miracles

19 Then the men of the city said to Elisha, "Please notice, the situation of this city *is* pleasant, as my lord sees; but the water *is* bad, and the ground barren."

20 And he said, "Bring me a new bowl, and put salt in it." So they brought *it* to him. 21 Then he went out to the source of the water, and [o]cast in the salt there, and said, "Thus says the LORD: 'I have [3]healed this water; from it there shall be no more death or barrenness.' " 22 So the water remains [p]healed to this day, according to the word of Elisha which he spoke.

23 Then he went up from there to Bethel; and as he was going up the road, some youths came from the city and mocked him, and said to him, "Go up, you baldhead! Go up, you baldhead!"

8 [f]Ex. 14:21, 22; Josh. 3:16; 2 Kin. 2:14 [g]Josh. 3:17

11 [h]2 Kin. 6:17; Ps. 104:4 [i]Gen. 5:24; Heb. 11:5

12 [j]2 Kin. 13:14

14 [k]2 Kin. 2:8

15 [l]2 Kin. 2:7 [2]Or *at Jericho opposite him saw*

16 [m]1 Kin. 18:12; Ezek. 8:3; Acts 8:39

17 [n]2 Kin. 8:11

21 [o]Ex. 15:25, 26; 2 Kin. 4:41; 6:6; John 9:6 [3]*purified*

22 [p]Ezek. 47:8, 9

■ **2:8 struck the water.** Elijah, like Moses and Joshua before him, witnesses a division of waters that allows God's chosen to pass through safely on dry ground (Ex. 14:21, 22; Josh. 3:14–17).

■ **2:9 a double portion.** In Israel the oldest son received a double share of the family inheritance and with it the right of succession (Deut. 21:17). Elisha's desire for "a double portion of your spirit" was therefore a bold request to carry on Elijah's ministry.

■ **2:10 You have asked a hard thing.** It was not up to Elijah but to God to determine whether Elisha's daring request would be met.

■ **2:11 chariot of fire . . . with horses of fire.** God's heavenly attendants escort Elijah to heaven "by a whirlwind." Fire appears several times in Elijah's ministry as a sign of God's all-consuming power (1:10, 12, 14; 1 Kin. 18:38; cf. 1 Kin. 19:12).

■ **2:12 My father, my father.** This title of respect for a person of authority (Gen. 45:8; Judg. 17:10; Matt. 23:9) will later be used for Elisha (6:21; 13:14). The prophet Malachi declared that Elijah would return before the coming of the "day of the LORD" (Mal. 4:5 and note). Elijah would prepare the people for the Lord's ministry (1:8 note).

■ **2:13 took up the mantle.** Earlier Elijah had cast his cloak upon Elisha as a sign that Elisha would be his successor (1 Kin. 19:19). Now what was promised takes place.

■ **2:14 it was divided . . . and Elisha crossed over.** God designated Joshua as the approved successor to Moses (Num. 27:12–23; Deut. 31:1–8; 34:9; Josh. 1:1–9) by having Joshua lead the people across the Jordan River into the Promised Land, much as Moses led the people through the Red Sea (Ex. 14; 15; Josh. 3). Now God designates Elisha as the successor to Elijah by dividing the Jordan for him as He did for Elijah (v. 8).

■ **2:15 the sons of the prophets . . . bowed to the ground before him.** See note on 1 Kin. 20:35.

■ **2:19 the men of the city.** These men are probably the leaders of Jericho (v. 18).

■ **2:20 new bowl.** A new vessel would be free from any ceremonial pollution.

put salt in it. Salt is a preservative, and is an appropriate symbol for how God is faithful to His promises and maintains His people (Lev. 2:13; Num. 18:19; 2 Chr. 13:5; Ezek. 43:24; Matt. 5:13; Mark 9:49, 50).

■ **2:23 baldhead.** It may be that the youths were sarcastically comparing Elisha with his teacher Elijah, who was "hairy" (1:8), and taunting him to "go up" to heaven as Elijah had done (v. 11).

24 [q]Deut. 27:13–26
25 [r]1 Kin. 18:19, 20; 2 Kin. 4:25

CHAPTER 3

1 [a]2 Kin. 1:17
2 [b]1 Kin. 16:31, 32
3 [c]1 Kin. 12:28–32
4 [d]2 Sam. 8:2 [e]Is. 16:1, 2
5 [f]2 Kin. 1:1
7 [g]1 Kin. 22:4
11 [h]1 Kin. 22:7 [i]1 Kin. 19:21; [John 13:4, 5, 13, 14] [j]Was the personal servant of
12 [l]2 Kin. 2:25
13 [k][Ezek. 14:3] [l]Judg. 10:14; Ruth 1:15 [m]1 Kin. 22:6–11 [n]1 Kin. 18:19
14 [o]1 Kin. 17:1; 2 Kin. 5:16
15 [p]1 Sam. 10:5 [q]1 Sam. 16:16, 23; 1 Chr. 25:1 [r]Ezek. 1:3; 3:14, 22; 8:1
16 [s]Jer. 14:3 [2]*water canals*

24 So he turned around and looked at them, and [q]pronounced a curse on them in the name of the LORD. And two female bears came out of the woods and mauled forty-two of the youths.
25 Then he went from there to [r]Mount Carmel, and from there he returned to Samaria.

Moab Rebels Against Israel

3 Now [a]Jehoram the son of Ahab became king over Israel at Samaria in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and reigned twelve years. 2 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, but not like his father and mother; for he put away the *sacred* pillar of Baal [b]that his father had made. 3 Nevertheless he persisted in [c]the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin; he did not depart from them.

4 Now Mesha king of Moab was a sheepbreeder, and he [d]regularly paid the king of Israel one hundred thousand [e]lambs and the wool of one hundred thousand rams. 5 But it happened, when [f]Ahab died, that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel.

6 So King Jehoram went out of Samaria at that time and mustered all Israel. 7 Then he went and sent to Jehoshaphat king of Judah, saying, "The king of Moab has rebelled against me. Will you go with me to fight against Moab?"

And he said, "I will go up; [g]I *am* as you *are,* my people as your people, my horses as your horses." 8 Then he said, "Which way shall we go up?"

And he answered, "By way of the Wilderness of Edom."

9 So the king of Israel went with the king of Judah and the king of Edom, and they marched on that roundabout route seven days; and there was no water for the army, nor for the animals that followed them. 10 And the king of Israel said, "Alas! For the LORD has called these three kings together to deliver them into the hand of Moab."

11 But [h]Jehoshaphat said, "*Is there* no prophet of the LORD here, that we may inquire of the LORD by him?"

So one of the servants of the king of Israel answered and said, "Elisha the son of Shaphat *is* here, who [i]poured[j] water on the hands of Elijah."

12 And Jehoshaphat said, "The word of the LORD is with him." So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom [l]went down to him.

13 Then Elisha said to the king of Israel, [k]"What have I to do with you? [l]Go to [m]the prophets of your father and the [n]prophets of your mother."

But the king of Israel said to him, "No, for the LORD has called these three kings *together* to deliver them into the hand of Moab."

14 And Elisha said, [o]"*As* the LORD of hosts lives, before whom I stand, surely were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, I would not look at you, nor see you. 15 But now bring me [p]a musician."

Then it happened, when the musician [q]played, that [r]the hand of the LORD came upon him. 16 And he said, "Thus says the LORD: [s]'Make this valley full of [2]ditches.' 17 For thus says the LORD: 'You shall not see wind, nor shall you see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, so that you, your cattle, and your animals may drink.' 18 And this is a simple matter in the sight of the LORD; He will also deliver the Moabites into your hand. 19 Also you shall attack every for-

■ **2:24 pronounced a curse.** Elisha in his ministry is characteristically compassionate toward the repentant and hard on the unresponsive and obstinate. The mauling of the Bethel youths becomes another public manifestation of the power of God present in His spokesman, Elisha (vv. 14, 21).

■ **3:1 in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat.** Probably Jehoram of Judah and his father Jehoshaphat ruled together as co-regents for approximately five years (853–848 B.C.). "The second year of Jehoram" (1:17) would be the same as "the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat" (3:1).

twelve years. That is, 852–841 B.C.

■ **3:2 sacred pillar of Baal.** See note on 1 Kin. 14:23. Jehoram initiates a minor reform, attempting to undo some of the damage of his parents.

■ **3:3 sins of Jeroboam.** See note on 1 Kin. 12:30. Jehoram's reform was not thoroughgoing; he did not address the fundamental flaw in the worship of the northern kingdom.

■ **3:4 Mesha king of Moab.** According to the Moabite Stone, Mesha acknowledged that, like his predecessors, he also was a vassal to Israel. He claimed to have freed his land from subjection to Israel and boasted that "Israel has perished forever."

he regularly paid the king. Part of Mesha's obligations as a vassal would be to pay tribute regularly to his superior.

■ **3:9 king of Edom.** The ruler of Edom was likely a vassal to the king of Judah and therefore obliged to assist him (cf. 8:20; 1 Kin. 22:47).

■ **3:11 Is there no prophet of the LORD here.** Jehoshaphat posed a similar question to Ahab (1 Kin. 22:7).

■ **3:14 regard the presence of Jehoshaphat.** Elisha consents to prophesy for the coalition, but only for the sake of Jehoshaphat, whose reign was viewed positively (1 Kin. 22:43).

■ **3:15 bring me a musician.** The musician was employed to provide an atmosphere suitable for the reception of divine revelation (cf. 1 Sam. 10:5, 6; 19:20–24).

the hand of the LORD. The phrase is a symbol of prophetic inspiration (Ezek. 1:3; 8:1; 13:9).

■ **3:16 this valley.** This is usually identified as the Valley of Zered, a wadi (seasonal stream) that flows into the southern end of the Dead Sea and formed the border between Edom and Moab (Deut. 2:13).

tified city and every choice city, and shall cut down every good tree, and stop up every spring of water, and ruin every good piece of land with stones."

20 Now it happened in the morning, when [t]the grain offering was offered, that suddenly water came by way of Edom, and the land was filled with water.

21 And when all the Moabites heard that the kings had come up to fight against them, all who were able to bear arms and older were [3]gathered; and they stood at the border. 22 Then they rose up early in the morning, and the sun was shining on the water; and the Moabites saw the water on the other side *as* red as blood. 23 And they said, "This is blood; the kings have surely struck swords and have killed one another; now therefore, Moab, to the spoil!"

24 So when they came to the camp of Israel, Israel rose up and attacked the Moabites, so that they fled before them; and they entered *their* land, killing the Moabites. 25 Then they destroyed the cities, and each man threw a stone on every good piece of land and filled it; and they stopped up all the springs of water and cut down all the good trees. But they left the stones of [u]Kir Haraseth *intact.* However the slingers surrounded and attacked it.

26 And when the king of Moab saw that the battle was too fierce for him, he took with him seven hundred men who drew swords, to break through to the king of Edom, but they could not. 27 Then [v]he took his eldest son who would have reigned in his place, and offered him *as* a burnt offering upon the wall; and there was great [4]indignation against Israel. [w]So they departed from him and returned to *their own* land.

Elisha and the Widow's Oil

4 A certain woman of the wives of [a]the sons of the prophets cried out to Elisha, saying, "Your servant my husband is dead, and you know that your servant feared the LORD. And the creditor is coming [b]to take my two sons to be his slaves."

2 So Elisha said to her, "What shall I do for you? Tell me, what do you have in the house?" And she said, "Your maidservant has nothing in the house but a jar of oil."

3 Then he said, "Go, borrow vessels from everywhere, from all your neighbors—empty vessels; [c]do not gather just a few. 4 And when you have come in, you shall shut the door behind you and your sons; then pour it into all those vessels, and set aside the full ones."

5 So she went from him and shut the door behind her and her sons, who brought *the vessels* to her; and she poured *it* out. 6 Now it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said to her son, "Bring me another vessel."

And he said to her, "*There is* not another vessel." So the oil ceased. 7 Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, "Go, sell the oil and pay your debt; and you *and* your sons live on the rest."

Elisha Raises the Shunammite's Son

8 Now it happened one day that Elisha went to [d]Shunem, where there *was* a [1]notable woman, and she [2]persuaded him to eat some food. So it was, as often as he passed by, he would turn in there to eat some food. 9 And she said to her husband, "Look now, I know that this *is* a holy man of God, who passes by us regularly. 10 Please, let us make [3]a small upper room on the wall; and let us put a bed for him there, and a table and a chair and a lampstand; so it will be, whenever he comes to us, he can turn in there."

11 And it happened one day that he came there, and he turned in to the upper room and lay down there. 12 Then he said to [e]Gehazi his servant, "Call this Shunammite woman." When he had called her, she stood before him. 13 And he said to him, "Say now to her, 'Look, you have been concerned for us with all this care. What *can I* do for you? Do you want me to speak on your behalf to the king or to the commander of the army?' "

20 [t]Ex. 29:39, 40

21 [3]*summoned*

25 [u]Is. 16:7, 11; Jer. 48:31, 36

27 [v][Deut. 18:10; Amos 2:1; Mic. 6:7] [w]2 Kin. 8:20 [4]*wrath*

CHAPTER 4

1 [a]1 Kin. 20:35; 2 Kin. 2:3 [b][Lev. 25:39–41, 48]; 1 Sam. 22:2; Neh. 5:2–5; Matt. 18:25

3 [c]2 Kin. 3:16

8 [d]Josh. 19:18 [1]Lit. *great* [2]Lit. *laid hold on him*

10 [3]Or *a small walled upper chamber*

12 [e]2 Kin. 4:29–31; 5:20–27; 8:4, 5

■ **3:20 water came by way of Edom.** Flash floods in the mountains of Edom flowed rapidly through the stream bed in the direction of the Dead Sea.

■ **3:22 the water . . . as red as blood.** The water was colored by Edom's red sandstone (cf. Gen. 25:30).

■ **3:25 Kir Haraseth.** Probably this was the capital of Moab (Is. 16:7, 11; Jer. 48:31, 36), about eleven miles east of the Dead Sea and fourteen miles north of the Valley of Zered.

■ **3:27 his eldest son.** This grisly act was meant to induce the god Chemosh to deliver the Moabites from certain defeat. Child sacrifice was expressly forbidden in Israel (Ex. 34:20; Deut. 18:10); nevertheless, two later kings of Judah (Ahaz and Manasseh) apparently practiced it (16:3; 21:6).

■ **4:1 sons of the prophets.** See note on 1 Kin. 20:35.

my two sons to be his slaves. The Mosaic law allows taking children as bond servants (or slaves) for a limited period of time (Ex. 21:2, 7; Lev. 25:39–46; Deut. 15:12–18). Unfortunately, this provision was often abused (Neh. 5:5–8; Jer. 34:8–22; Amos 2:6; 8:6).

■ **4:8 Shunem.** In northern Canaan, outside Israel (1 Kin. 1:3 note).

■ **4:12 Gehazi.** Elisha's personal attendant (5:20–27; 6:15).

She answered, "I dwell among my own people."

14 So he said, "What then *is* to be done for her?"

And Gehazi answered, "Actually, she has no son, and her husband is old."

15 So he said, "Call her." When he had called her, she stood in the doorway. 16 Then he said, [4]"About this time next year you shall embrace a son."

And she said, "No, my lord. Man of God, [f]do not lie to your maidservant!"

17 But the woman conceived, and bore a son when the appointed time had come, of which Elisha had told her.

18 And the child grew. Now it happened one day that he went out to his father, to the reapers. 19 And he said to his father, "My head, my head!"

So he said to a servant, "Carry him to his mother." 20 When he had taken him and brought him to his mother, he sat on her knees till noon, and *then* died. 21 And she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, shut *the door* upon him, and went out. 22 Then she called to her husband, and said, "Please send me one of the young men and one of the donkeys, that I may run to the man of God and come back."

23 So he said, "Why are you going to him today? *It is* neither the [g]New Moon nor the Sabbath."

And she said, [5]"*It is* well." 24 Then she saddled a donkey, and said to her servant, "Drive, and go forward; do not slacken the pace for me unless I tell you." 25 And so she departed, and went to the man of God [h]at Mount Carmel.

So it was, when the man of God saw her afar off, that he said to his servant Gehazi, "Look, the Shunammite woman! 26 Please run now to meet her, and say to her, '*Is it* well with you? *Is it* well with your husband? *Is it* well with the child?' "

And she answered, "*It is* well." 27 Now when she came to the man of God at the hill, she caught him by the feet, but Gehazi came near to push her away. But the man of God said, "Let her alone; for her soul *is* in deep distress, and the LORD has hidden *it* from me, and has not told me."

28 So she said, "Did I ask a son of my lord? [i]Did I not say, 'Do not deceive me'?"

29 Then he said to Gehazi, [j]"Get[6] yourself ready, and take my staff in your hand, and be on your way. If you meet anyone, [k]do not greet him; and if anyone greets you, do not answer him; but [l]lay my staff on the face of the child."

30 And the mother of the child said, [m]"*As* the LORD lives, and *as* your soul lives, I will not [n]leave you." So he arose and followed her. 31 Now Gehazi went on ahead of them, and laid the staff on the face of the child; but *there was* neither voice nor hearing. Therefore he went back to meet him, and told him, saying, "The child has [o]not awakened."

32 When Elisha came into the house, there was the child, lying dead on his bed. 33 He [p]went in therefore, shut the door behind the two of them, [q]and prayed to the LORD. 34 And he went up and lay on the child, and put his mouth on his mouth, his eyes on his eyes, and his hands on his hands; and [r]he stretched himself out on the child, and the flesh of the child became warm. 35 He returned and walked back and forth in the house, and again went up [s]and stretched himself out on him; then [t]the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. 36 And he called Gehazi and said, "Call this Shunammite woman." So he called her. And when she came in to him, he said, "Pick up your son." 37 So she went in, fell at his feet, and bowed to the ground; then she [u]picked up her son and went out.

Elisha Purifies the Pot of Stew

38 And Elisha returned to [v]Gilgal, and *there was* a [w]famine in the land. Now the sons of the prophets *were* [x]sitting before him; and he said to his servant, "Put on the large pot, and boil stew

16 [f]2 Kin. 4:28 [4]Lit. *About this season, as the time of life*

23 [g]Num. 10:10; 28:11; 1 Chr. 23:31 [5]Or *It will be well*

25 [h]2 Kin. 2:25

28 [i]2 Kin. 4:16

29 [j]1 Kin. 18:46; 2 Kin. 9:1 [k]Luke 10:4 [l]Ex. 7:19; 14:16; 2 Kin. 2:8, 14; Acts 19:12 [6]Lit. *Gird up your loins.* The skirt of the robe was wrapped around the legs and tucked in the belt to gain freedom of movement.

30 [m]2 Kin. 2:2 [n]2 Kin. 2:4

31 [o]John 11:11

33 [p]2 Kin. 4:4; [Matt. 6:6]; Luke 8:51 [q]1 Kin. 17:20

34 [r]1 Kin. 17:21–23; Acts 20:10

35 [s]1 Kin. 17:21 [t]2 Kin. 8:1, 5

37 [u]1 Kin. 17:23; [Heb. 11:35]

38 [v]2 Kin. 2:1 [w]2 Kin. 8:1 [x]Luke 10:39; Acts 22:3

■ **4:14 she has no son, and her husband is old.** An heir was of great importance because the family name and possessions would be passed on to the children. Without a son, a family's home and goods would be given to others. Moreover, living as a widow, a real prospect for this woman, would be very difficult (1 Kin. 17:9 note).

■ **4:17 bore a son.** Throughout the Bible, God's grace to childless women, such as Sarah (Gen. 17:16–19), Rebekah (Gen. 25:21–26), Rachel (Gen. 29:31; 30:22–24), and Elizabeth (Luke 1:5–25), shows His love and compassion for the poor and downtrodden.

■ **4:21 laid him on the bed of the man of God.** She refuses to accept the death of her son and conceals his body in Elisha's room so that the ritual of mourning will not begin (Gen. 50:10; 2 Chr. 35:25; Job 2:12, 13; Dan. 10:2; Mark 5:38; John 11:33).

■ **4:23 It is neither the New Moon nor the Sabbath.** Ancient Israel had a lunar calendar, and a festival was celebrated at each New Moon (Num. 10:10; 28:11–15; Ezra 3:5; Neh. 10:33; Is. 1:13, 14; Amos 8:5). The law did not permit work on the Sabbath, and possibly not on the New Moon either (Ex. 16:23; 20:8–10; 1 Sam. 20:5; 1 Chr. 23:31).

■ **4:27 caught him by the feet.** Doing this was a sign of respect (John 11:32).

■ **4:38 Put on the large pot.** During a famine, Elisha's request was not trivial (cf. 1 Kin. 17:11–13).

for the sons of the prophets." [39] So one went out into the field to gather herbs, and found a wild vine, and gathered from it a lapful of wild gourds, and came and sliced *them* into the pot of stew, though they did not know *what they were.* [40] Then they served it to the men to eat. Now it happened, as they were eating the stew, that they cried out and said, "Man of God, *there is* [y]death in the pot!" And they could not eat *it.*

[41] So he said, "Then bring some flour." And [z]he put *it* into the pot, and said, "Serve *it* to the people, that they may eat." And there was nothing harmful in the pot.

Elisha Feeds One Hundred Men

[42] Then a man came from [a]Baal Shalisha, [b]and brought the man of God bread of the firstfruits, twenty loaves of barley bread, and newly ripened grain in his knapsack. And he said, "Give *it* to the people, that they may eat."

[43] But his servant said, [c]"What? Shall I set this before one hundred men?"

He said again, "Give it to the people, that they may eat; for thus says the LORD: [d]'They shall eat and have *some* left over.' " [44] So he set *it* before them; and they ate [e]and had *some* left over, according to the word of the LORD.

Naaman's Leprosy Healed

5 Now [a]Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Syria, was [b]a great and honorable man in the eyes of his master, because by him the LORD had given victory to Syria. He was also a mighty man of valor, *but* a leper. [2] And the Syrians had gone out [c]on[f] raids, and had brought back captive a young girl from the land of Israel. She [2]waited on Naaman's wife. [3] Then she said to her mistress, "If only my master *were* with the prophet who *is* in Samaria! For he would heal him of his leprosy." [4] And *Naaman* went in and told his master, saying, "Thus and thus said the girl who *is* from the land of Israel."

[5] Then the king of Syria said, "Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel."

So he departed and [d]took with him ten talents of silver, six thousand *shekels* of gold, and ten changes of clothing. [6] Then he brought the letter to the king of Israel, which said,

> Now be advised, when this letter comes to you, that I have sent Naaman my servant to you, that you may heal him of his leprosy.

[7] And it happened, when the king of Israel read the letter, that he tore his clothes and said, "*Am* I [e]God, to kill and make alive, that this man sends a man to me to heal him of his leprosy? Therefore please consider, and see how he seeks a quarrel with me."

[8] So it was, when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, "Why have you torn your clothes? Please let him come to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel."

[9] Then Naaman went with his horses and chariot, and he stood at the door of Elisha's house. [10] And Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and [f]wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored to you, and *you shall* be clean." [11] But Naaman became furious, and went away and said, "Indeed, I said to myself, 'He will surely come out *to me,* and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the place, and heal the leprosy.' [12] *Are* not the [3]Abanah and the Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?" So he turned and went away in a rage. [13] And his

40 [y]Ex. 10:17

41 [z]Ex. 15:25; 2 Kin. 2:21

42 [a]1 Sam. 9:4 [b]1 Sam. 9:7; [1 Cor. 9:11; Gal. 6:6]

43 [c]Luke 9:13; John 6:9 [d]Luke 9:17; John 6:11

44 [e]Matt. 14:20; 15:37; John 6:13

CHAPTER 5

1 [a]Luke 4:27 [b]Ex. 11:3

2 [c]2 Kin. 6:23; 13:20 [f]Or *in bands* [2]Served, lit. *was before*

5 [d]1 Sam. 9:8; 2 Kin. 8:8, 9

7 [e][Gen. 30:2; Deut. 32:39; 1 Sam. 2:6]

10 [f]2 Kin. 4:41; John 9:7

12 [3]So with Kt., LXX, Vg.; Qr., Syr., Tg. *Amanah*

■ **4:39 wild gourds.** There exist in this area several more or less poisonous gourds that resemble edible plants.

■ **4:42 Baal Shalisha.** In the hill country of Ephraim, on the Brook of Kanah.

bread of the firstfruits. By bringing the firstfruits of the harvest, the man showed his dedication to Elijah and his gratitude for his prophetic work (Lev. 2:14; 23:9–21; Deut. 18:3–5).

■ **5:1 the king of Syria.** This king and the king of Israel (v. 5) are probably Ben-Hadad II (8:7; 13:3; 1 Kin. 20:1) and Jehoram (1:17; 3:1; 9:24).

■ **5:2 raids.** During the long history of tension between Israel and Syria there were often skirmishes and raids along the border.

■ **5:5 a letter to the king of Israel.** The Syrian king sends an official letter to the king of Israel introducing Naaman and asking for a favor on his behalf. The Syrian king has mistakenly supposed that Elisha's work is at the command of the Israelite king.

ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold. That is, about 750 pounds of silver and 150 pounds of gold.

■ **5:7 he tore his clothes.** This was a sign of great distress (1 Kin. 21:27 note).

■ **5:8 Why have you torn your clothes.** Elisha scolds the king for reacting to the Syrian request with such alarm and not believing that God could help him.

he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel. See 3:11; 8:7, 8; 1 Kin. 17:24; 18:36. Elisha responds affirmatively to the Syrian gesture (v. 3).

■ **5:10 Elisha sent a messenger.** Both Elijah and Elisha would often test the faith of the people to whom they ministered (1 Kin. 17:13; 2 Kin. 4:3, 4). In this case, Elisha does not even meet with Naaman but sends instructions through a messenger instead.

■ **5:11 wave his hand over the place.** Not realizing the importance of divine freedom and the critical role of faith, Naaman thought there was something contemptible about having to bathe seven times in the river.

■ **5:12 Abanah and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus.** If the prophetic healing was a meaningless ritual, Naaman might as well have stayed at home.

13 g1 Sam. 28:23
14 h2 Kin. 5:10; Job 33:25 iLuke 4:27; 5:13
15 jDan. 2:47; 3:29; 6:26, 27 kGen. 33:11
16 l2 Kin. 3:14 mGen. 14:22, 23; 2 Kin. 5:20, 26; [Matt. 10:8]; Acts 8:18, 20
18 n2 Kin. 7:2, 17
20 o2 Kin. 4:12; 8:4, 5
22 p2 Kin. 4:26
24 qLit. *the hill*
26 r[Eccl. 3:1, 6]
27 s[1 Tim. 6:10] tEx. 4:6; Num. 12:10; 2 Kin. 15:5

CHAPTER 6

1 a2 Kin. 4:38
3 b2 Kin. 5:23
5 c[Ex. 22:14]
6 dEx. 15:25; 2 Kin. 2:21; 4:41

gservants came near and spoke to him. and said, "My father, *if* the prophet had told you *to do* something great, would you not have done *it?* How much more then, when he says to you, 'Wash, and be clean'?" 14 So he went down and dipped seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his hflesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and ihe was clean.

15 And he returned to the man of God, he and all his aides, and came and stood before him; and he said, "Indeed, now I know that *there is* jno God in all the earth, except in Israel; now therefore, please take ka gift from your servant."

16 But he said, l"*As* the LORD lives, before whom I stand, mI will receive nothing." And he urged him to take *it,* but he refused.

17 So Naaman said, "Then, if not, please let your servant be given two mule-loads of earth; for your servant will no longer offer either burnt offering or sacrifice to other gods, but to the LORD. 18 Yet in this thing may the LORD pardon your servant: when my master goes into the temple of Rimmon to worship there, and nhe leans on my hand, and I bow down in the temple of Rimmon—when I bow down in the temple of Rimmon, may the LORD please pardon your servant in this thing."

19 Then he said to him, "Go in peace." So he departed from him a short distance.

Gehazi's Greed

20 But oGehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, "Look, my master has spared Naaman this Syrian, while not receiving from his hands what he brought; but *as* the LORD lives, I will run after him and take something from him." 21 So Gehazi pursued Naaman. When Naaman saw *him* running after him, he got down from the chariot to meet him, and said, "*Is* all well?"

22 And he said, "All *is* pwell. My master has sent me, saying, 'Indeed, just now two young men of the sons of the prophets have come to me from the mountains of Ephraim. Please give them a talent of silver and two changes of garments.' "

23 So Naaman said, "Please, take two talents." And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and handed *them* to two of his servants; and they carried *them* on ahead of him. 24 When he came to qthe citadel, he took *them* from their hand, and stored *them* away in the house; then he let the men go, and they departed. 25 Now he went in and stood before his master. Elisha said to him, "Where *did you go,* Gehazi?"

And he said, "Your servant did not go anywhere."

26 Then he said to him, "Did not my heart go *with you* when the man turned back from his chariot to meet you? *Is it* rtime to receive money and to receive clothing, olive groves and vineyards, sheep and oxen, male and female servants? 27 Therefore the leprosy of Naaman sshall cling to you and your descendants forever." And he went out from his presence tleprous, *as white* as snow.

The Floating Ax Head

6 And athe sons of the prophets said to Elisha, "See now, the place where we dwell with you is too small for us. 2 Please, let us go to the Jordan, and let every man take a beam from there, and let us make there a place where we may dwell."

So he answered, "Go."

3 Then one said, b"Please consent to go with your servants."

And he answered, "I will go." 4 So he went with them. And when they came to the Jordan, they cut down trees. 5 But as one was cutting down a tree, the iron *ax head* fell into the water; and he cried out and said, "Alas, master! For it was cborrowed."

6 So the man of God said, "Where did it fall?" And he showed him the place. So dhe cut off a

■ **5:15 there is no God in all the earth, except in Israel.** Naaman was not merely saying that the Lord was more powerful than the Syrian gods; he was confessing that there is only one God, the Lord. In saying this, Naaman adopts the faith of Israel as his own (1 Kin. 18:39).

■ **5:16 As the LORD lives.** The words are an oath (1 Kin. 1:17 note).

■ **5:17 two mule-loads of earth.** People in the ancient Near East believed that the gods were tied to the lands they ruled. Naaman asks for dirt from the Lord's land to sanctify the altar he plans to build for Him in another country.

■ **5:18 Rimmon.** The word "Rimmon" (lit. "pomegranate") is a parody of the name Ramanu, the Syrian storm god corresponding to Baal. This chief deity of Syria was also known by the name Hadad (Zech. 12:11).

■ **5:22 sons of the prophets.** See note on 1 Kin. 20:35.

■ **5:26 money.** The word refers not to coins (which were probably not yet in use), but to quantities of gold or silver.

■ **5:27 to you and your descendants.** Sin is not only individual, but corporate (Ex. 20:5).

■ **6:1 the sons of the prophets.** See note on 1 Kin. 20:35.

■ **6:5 iron ax head.** This tool was expensive and relatively rare in Israel at this time. Because the prophet borrowed the ax head from a friend, its loss was a problem.

stick, and threw *it* in there; and he made the iron float. 7 Therefore he said, "Pick *it* up for yourself." So he reached out his hand and took it.

The Blinded Syrians Captured

8 Now the [e]king of Syria was making war against Israel; and he consulted with his servants, saying, "My camp *will be* in such and such a place." 9 And the man of God sent to the king of Israel, saying, "Beware that you do not pass this place, for the Syrians are coming down there." 10 Then the king of Israel sent *someone* to the place of which the man of God had told him. Thus he warned him, and he was watchful there, not just once or twice.

11 Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was greatly troubled by this thing; and he called his servants and said to them, "Will you not show me which of us *is* for the king of Israel?"

12 And one of his servants said, "None, my lord, O king; but Elisha, the prophet who *is* in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedroom."

13 So he said, "Go and see where he *is,* that I may send and get him."

And it was told him, saying, "Surely *he is* in [f]Dothan."

14 Therefore he sent horses and chariots and a great army there, and they came by night and surrounded the city. 15 And when the servant of the man of God arose early and went out, there was an army, surrounding the city with horses and chariots. And his servant said to him, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?"

16 So he answered, [g]"Do not fear, for [h]those who *are* with us *are* more than those who *are* with them." 17 And Elisha prayed, and said, "LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." Then the LORD [i]opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold, the mountain *was* full of [j]horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. 18 So when *the Syrians* came down to him, Elisha prayed to the LORD, and said, "Strike this people, I pray, with blindness." And [k]He struck them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.

19 Now Elisha said to them, "This *is* not the way, nor *is* this the city. Follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom you seek." But he led them to Samaria.

20 So it was, when they had come to Samaria, that Elisha said, "LORD, open the eyes of these *men,* that they may see." And the LORD opened their eyes, and they saw; and there *they were,* inside Samaria!

21 Now when the king of Israel saw them, he said to Elisha, "My [l]father, shall I kill *them?* Shall I kill *them?*"

22 But he answered, "You shall not kill *them.* Would you kill those whom you have taken captive with your sword and your bow? [m]Set food and water before them, that they may eat and drink and go to their master." 23 Then he prepared a great feast for them; and after they ate and drank, he sent them away and they went to their master. So [n]the bands of Syrian *raiders* came no more into the land of Israel.

Syria Besieges Samaria in Famine

24 And it happened after this that [o]Ben-Hadad king of Syria gathered all his army, and went up and besieged Samaria. 25 And there was a great [p]famine in Samaria; and indeed they besieged it until a donkey's head was *sold* for eighty *shekels* of silver, and one-fourth of a [l]kab of dove droppings for five *shekels* of silver.

26 Then, as the king of Israel was passing by on the wall, a woman cried out to him, saying, "Help, my lord, O king!"

27 And he said, "If the LORD does not help you, where can I find help for you? From the

8 [e]2 Kin. 8:28, 29

13 [f]Gen. 37:17

16 [g]Ex. 14:13; 1 Kin. 17:13 [h]2 Chr. 32:7; Ps. 55:18; [Rom. 8:31]

17 [i]Num. 22:31; Luke 24:31 [j]2 Kin. 2:11; Ps. 34:7; 68:17; Zech. 1:8; 6:1–7

18 [k]Gen. 19:11; Acts 13:11

21 [l]2 Kin. 2:12; 5:13; 8:9

22 [m][Rom. 12:20]

23 [n]2 Kin. 5:2; 6:8, 9

24 [o]1 Kin. 20:1

25 [p]2 Kin. 4:38; 8:1 [l]Approximately 1 pint

■ **6:8 king of Syria.** As in ch. 5, the kings of Syria and Israel (v. 9) are unnamed. They are most likely Ben-Hadad II (8:7; 13:3; 1 Kin. 20:1) and Jehoram (1:17; 3:1; 9:24).

war against Israel. Despite the ratification of a treaty between Israel and Syria (1 Kin. 20:34; 22:1), the two nations continued to fight.

■ **6:16 those who are with us.** Elisha is referring to God's heavenly "host" or army (cf. Josh. 5:13–15; 2 Chr. 32:7, 8; Dan. 10:20; 12:1). In fighting wars for God, the Israelites believed that they were not fighting alone, but with the power of God (Ex. 15:1–12; Deut. 20:1–4; 2 Sam. 22:7–16, 31–51). See also Matt. 26:53.

■ **6:17 open his eyes.** Elisha prays that the servant would see something that does not appear to the naked eye: God's heavenly armies waiting to do battle with the Syrians.

■ **6:21 My father.** The kings called Elisha "father" by way of respect (2:12 note; 13:14).

■ **6:22 Would you kill.** Elisha's point is twofold. First, the captives do not belong to the king because the victory was God's. Second, captives who are at the mercy of their captors were not normally killed (Deut. 20:11; 2 Sam. 8:2).

■ **6:24 Ben-Hadad.** Most likely Ben-Hadad II (8:7; 1 Kin. 20:1 note).

■ **6:25 a donkey's head was sold for eighty shekels of silver.** An undesirable part of an unclean animal (Lev. 11:2–7; Deut. 14:4–8) was selling for two pounds of silver.

threshing floor or from the winepress?" 28 Then the king said to her, "What is troubling you?"

And she answered, "This woman said to me, 'Give your son, that we may eat him today, and we will eat my son tomorrow.' 29 So [q]we boiled my son, and ate him. And I said to her on the next day, 'Give your son, that we may eat him'; but she has hidden her son."

30 Now it happened, when the king heard the words of the woman, that he [r]tore his clothes; and as he passed by on the wall, the people looked, and there underneath *he had* sackcloth on his body. 31 Then he said, [s]"God do so to me and more also, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat remains on him today!"

32 But Elisha was sitting in his house, and [t]the elders were sitting with him. And *the king* sent a man ahead of him, but before the messenger came to him, he said to the elders, [u]"Do you see how this son of [v]a murderer has sent someone to take away my head? Look, when the messenger comes, shut the door, and hold him fast at the door. *Is* not the sound of his master's feet behind him?" 33 And while he was still talking with them, there was the messenger, coming down to him; and then *the king* said, "Surely this calamity *is* from the LORD; [w]why should I wait for the LORD any longer?"

7 Then Elisha said, "Hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the LORD: [a]'Tomorrow about this time a [1]seah of fine flour *shall be sold* for a shekel, and two seahs of barley for a shekel, at the gate of Samaria.' "

2 [b]So an officer on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God and said, "Look, [c]*if* the LORD would make windows in heaven, could this thing be?"

And he said, "In fact, you shall see *it* with your eyes, but you shall not eat of it."

The Syrians Flee

3 Now there were four leprous men [d]at the entrance of the gate; and they said to one another, "Why are we sitting here until we die? 4 If we say, 'We will enter the city,' the famine *is* in the city, and we shall die there. And if we sit here, we die also. Now therefore, come, let us surrender to the [e]army of the Syrians. If they keep us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall only die." 5 And they rose at twilight to go to the camp of the Syrians; and when they had come to the outskirts of the Syrian camp, to their surprise no one *was* there. 6 For the LORD had caused the army of the Syrians [f]to hear the noise of chariots and the noise of horses—the noise of a great army; so they said to one another, "Look, the king of Israel has hired against us [g]the kings of the Hittites and the kings of the Egyptians to attack us!" 7 Therefore they [h]arose and fled at twilight, and left the camp intact—their tents, their horses, and their donkeys—and they fled for their lives. 8 And when these lepers came to the outskirts of the camp, they went into one tent and ate and drank, and carried from it silver and gold and clothing, and went and hid *them;* then they came back and entered another tent, and carried *some* from there *also,* and went and hid *it.*

9 Then they said to one another, "We are not doing right. This day *is* a day of good news, and we remain silent. If we wait until morning light, some [2]punishment will come upon us. Now therefore, come, let us go and tell the king's household." 10 So they went and called to the gatekeepers of the city, and told them, saying, "We went to the Syrian camp, and surprisingly no one *was* there, not a human sound—only horses and donkeys tied, and the tents intact." 11 And the gatekeepers called out, and they told *it* to the king's household inside.

12 So the king arose in the night and said to his servants, "Let me now tell you what the Syrians have done to us. They know that we *are* [i]hungry; therefore they have gone out of the camp to [3]hide themselves in the field, saying, 'When they come out of the city, we shall catch them alive, and get into the city.' "

13 And one of his servants answered and said, "Please, let several *men* take five of the remaining horses which are left in the city. Look, they *may either become* like all the multitude of Israel that are left in it; or indeed, *I say,* they *may become* like all the multitude of Israel left from those

CHAPTER 7

1 [a]2 Kin. 7:18, 19 [1]A third of an ephah, or about 8 gallons

2 [b]2 Kin. 5:18; 7:17, 19, 20 [c]Gen. 7:11; Mal. 3:10

3 [d][Lev. 13:45, 46; Num. 5:2–4; 12:10–14]

4 [e]2 Kin. 6:24

6 [f]2 Sam. 5:24; 2 Kin. 19:7; Job 15:21 [g]1 Kin. 10:29

7 [h]Ps. 48:4–6; [Prov. 28:1]

9 [2]Calamity

12 [i]2 Kin. 6:24–29 [3]Hide themselves in ambush

29 [q]Lev. 26:27–29; Deut. 28:52–57; Lam. 4:10

30 [r]1 Kin. 21:27

31 [s]Ruth 1:17; 1 Kin. 19:2

32 [t]Ezek. 8:1; 14:1; 20:1 [u]Luke 13:32 [v]1 Kin. 18:4, 13, 14; 21:10, 13

33 [w]Job 2:9

■ **6:28 Give your son, that we may eat him.** The curses of the Sinai covenant envision exactly this sort of cannibalism (Lev. 26:29; Deut. 28:52–57; cf. Lam. 2:20; 4:10; Ezek. 5:10).

■ **6:30 tore his clothes.** Doing this was a sign of distress (1 Kin. 21:27 note).

underneath he had sackcloth on his body. It became known that even the king was in a state of mourning (Gen. 37:34; 1 Kin. 21:27; Jon. 3:5, 6).

■ **6:32 the elders were sitting with him.** The leaders of the city were conferring with Elisha, not with the king (1 Kin. 8:1 note).

■ **7:1 a seah of fine flour shall be sold for a shekel.** Elisha prophesies a sudden reversal of the famine; seven quarts of flour will sell for less than one-half ounce of silver (cf. 6:25).

■ **7:3 at the entrance of the gate.** The Mosiac law prohibited people with skin diseases from living in the community (Lev. 13:46; Num. 5:1–4; 12:14, 15).

■ **7:6 the Hittites and . . . Egyptians.** The Hittites lived in Asia Minor (Num. 13:29). Egypt (Hebrew *misrayim*) may have been confused with a minor state next to the Hittites whose name is similar to the Hebrew name for Egypt (cf. 1 Kin. 10:28, 29 notes).

who are consumed; so let us send them and see." [14] Therefore they took two chariots with horses; and the king sent them in the direction of the Syrian army, saying, "Go and see." [15] And they went after them to the Jordan; and indeed all the road *was* full of garments and weapons which the Syrians had thrown away in their haste. So the messengers returned and told the king.
[16] Then the people went out and plundered the tents of the Syrians. So a seah of fine flour was *sold* for a shekel, and two seahs of barley for a shekel, *j*according to the word of the LORD.

[17] Now the king had appointed the officer on whose hand he leaned to have charge of the gate. But the people trampled him in the gate, and he died, just *k*as the man of God had said, who spoke when the king came down to him. [18] So it happened just as the man of God had spoken to the king, saying, *l*"Two seahs of barley for a shekel, and a seah of fine flour for a shekel, shall be *sold* tomorrow about this time in the gate of Samaria."

[19] Then that officer had answered the man of God, and said, "Now look, *if* the LORD would make windows in heaven, could such a thing be?"

And he had said, "In fact, you shall see *it* with your eyes, but you shall not eat of it." [20] And so it happened to him, for the people trampled him in the gate, and he died.

The King Restores the Shunammite's Land

8 Then Elisha spoke to the woman *a*whose son he had restored to life, saying, "Arise and go, you and your household, and stay wherever you can; for the LORD *b*has called for a *c*famine, and furthermore, it will come upon the land for seven years." [2] So the woman arose and did according to the saying of the man of God, and she went with her household and dwelt in the land of the Philistines seven years.

[3] It came to pass, at the end of seven years, that the woman returned from the land of the Philistines; and she went to make an appeal to the king for her house and for her land. [4] Then the king talked with *d*Gehazi, the servant of the man of God, saying, "Tell me, please, all the great things Elisha has done." [5] Now it happened, as he was telling the king how he had restored the dead to life, that there was the woman whose son he had *e*restored to life, appealing to the king for her house and for her land. And Gehazi said, "My lord, O king, this *is* the woman, and this *is* her son whom Elisha restored to life." [6] And when the king asked the woman, she told him.

So the king appointed a certain officer for her, saying, "Restore all that *was* hers, and all the proceeds of the field from the day that she left the land until now."

Death of Ben-Hadad

[7] Then Elisha went to Damascus, and *f*Ben-Hadad king of Syria was sick; and it was told him, saying, "The man of God has come here." [8] And the king said to *g*Hazael, *h*"Take a present in your hand, and go to meet the man of God, and *i*inquire of the LORD by him, saying, 'Shall I recover from this disease?' " [9] So *f*Hazael went to meet him and took a present with him, of every good thing of Damascus, forty camel-loads; and he came and stood before him, and said, "Your son Ben-Hadad king of Syria has sent me to you, saying, 'Shall I recover from this disease?' "

[10] And Elisha said to him, "Go, say to him, 'You shall certainly recover.' However the LORD has shown me that *k*he will really die." [11] Then he *l*set his countenance in a stare until he was ashamed; and the man of God *l*wept. [12] And Hazael said, "Why is my lord weeping?"

He answered, "Because I know *m*the evil that you will do to the children of Israel: Their strongholds you will set on fire, and their young men you will kill with the sword; and you *n*will dash their children, and rip open their women with child."

16 *j*2 Kin. 7:1

17 *k*2 Kin. 6:32; 7:2

18 *l*2 Kin. 7:1

CHAPTER 8

1 *a*2 Kin. 4:18, 31–35 *b*Ps. 105:16; Hag. 1:11 *c*2 Sam. 21:1; 1 Kin. 18:2; 2 Kin. 4:38; 6:25

4 *d*2 Kin. 4:12; 5:20–27

5 *e*2 Kin. 4:35

7 *f*2 Kin. 6:24

8 *g*1 Kin. 19:15 *h*1 Sam. 9:7; 1 Kin. 14:3; 2 Kin. 5:5 *i*2 Kin. 1:2

9 *j*1 Kin. 19:15

10 *k*2 Kin. 8:15

11 *l*Luke 19:41 *l fixed his gaze*

12 *m*2 Kin. 10:32; 12:17; 13:3, 7; Amos 1:3, 4 *n*2 Kin. 15:16; Hos. 13:16; Amos 1:13; Nah. 3:10

■ **8:1 a famine.** The writer does not state how much time had elapsed between the events of ch. 4 and this incident.

■ **8:2 in the land of the Philistines.** That is, on the southwestern plain, where rainfall was quite adequate for agriculture.

■ **8:3 to make an appeal.** In his capacity as overseer of the nation's judicial system, the king hears special cases (1 Kin. 3:16 note).

■ **8:4 the king.** He is unnamed, but if this king is Jehoram (1:17; 3:13), it is surprising that he knows nothing of Elisha's activities. Either this incident took place soon after the events of 4:8–37 or the king referred to here is Jehu (ch. 9).

Gehazi. He was Elisha's personal attendant (4:12 note; 5:27 note).

■ **8:7 Elisha went to Damascus.** It was unusual for prophets to visit foreign capitals, but Elisha was on an unusual mission: to implement the first of the three commands God had given to Elijah on Mount Horeb (1 Kin. 19:15, 16).

Ben-Hadad. Probably Ben-Hadad II (6:24; 1 Kin. 20:1 note).

■ **8:8 Hazael.** The Lord had told Elijah that he should anoint Hazael as king over Syria, to be part of God's judgment against the house of Ahab (1 Kin. 19:15).

■ **8:9 every good thing of Damascus.** The city of Damascus had an international reputation as a trade center of the ancient Near East.

Your son Ben-Hadad. This is a diplomatic indication of the high regard Ben-Hadad held for Elisha (6:21; 13:14).

■ **8:12 set on fire . . . rip open.** Such atrocities were common in ancient wars (Gen. 34:29; Ps. 137:9; Is. 13:16; Hos. 10:14; 13:16; Amos 1:13; Nah. 3:10). Elisha does not approve of such actions; he mourns them.

13 [o]1 Sam. 17:43; 2 Sam. 9:8
[p]1 Kin. 19:15
16 [q]2 Kin. 1:17; 3:1
[r]2 Chr. 21:3 [2]Co-regent with his father
17 [s]2 Chr. 21:5–10
18 [t]2 Kin. 8:26, 27
19 [u]2 Sam. 7:13; 1 Kin. 11:36; 15:4; 2 Chr. 21:7
20 [v]Gen. 27:40; 2 Chr. 21:8–10
[w]1 Kin. 22:47
21 [3]*Jehoram,* v. 16
22 [x]Josh. 21:13; 2 Kin. 19:8; 2 Chr. 21:10
24 [y]2 Chr. 22:1, 7
[4]Died and joined his ancestors [5]Or *Azariah* or *Jehoahaz*
26 [z]2 Chr. 22:2
27 [a]2 Chr. 22:3, 4
28 [b]2 Chr. 22:5
[c]1 Kin. 22:3, 29
29 [d]2 Kin. 9:15
[e]2 Kin. 9:16; 2 Chr. 22:6, 7
[6]*Ramoth,* v. 28

13 So Hazael said, "But what [o]*is* your servant—a dog, that he should do this gross thing?"
And Elisha answered, [p]"The LORD has shown me that you *will become* king over Syria."
14 Then he departed from Elisha, and came to his master, who said to him, "What did Elisha say to you?" And he answered, "He told me you would surely recover." 15 But it happened on the next day that he took a thick cloth and dipped *it* in water, and spread *it* over his face so that he died; and Hazael reigned in his place.

Jehoram Reigns in Judah

16 Now [q]in the fifth year of Joram the son of Ahab, king of Israel, Jehoshaphat *having been* king of Judah, [r]Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat began to reign as [2]king of Judah. 17 He was [s]thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. 18 And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, just as the house of Ahab had done, for [t]the daughter of Ahab was his wife; and he did evil in the sight of the LORD. 19 Yet the LORD would not destroy Judah, for the sake of His servant David, [u]as He promised him to give a lamp to him *and* his sons forever.

20 In his days [v]Edom revolted against Judah's authority, [w]and made a king over themselves. 21 So [3]Joram went to Zair, and all his chariots with him. Then he rose by night and attacked the Edomites who had surrounded him and the captains of the chariots; and the troops fled to their tents. 22 Thus Edom has been in revolt against Judah's authority to this day. [x]And Libnah revolted at that time.

23 Now the rest of the acts of Joram, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 24 So Joram [4]rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David. Then [y]Ahaziah[5] his son reigned in his place.

Ahaziah Reigns in Judah

25 In the twelfth year of Joram the son of Ahab, king of Israel, Ahaziah the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, began to reign. 26 Ahaziah *was* [z]twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Athaliah the granddaughter of Omri, king of Israel. 27 [a]And he walked in the way of the house of Ahab, and did evil in the sight of the LORD, like the house of Ahab, for he *was* the son-in-law of the house of Ahab.

28 Now he went [b]with Joram the son of Ahab to war against Hazael king of Syria at [c]Ramoth Gilead; and the Syrians wounded Joram. 29 Then [d]King Joram went back to Jezreel to recover from the wounds which the Syrians had inflicted on him at [6]Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Syria. [e]And Ahaziah the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, went down to see Joram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick.

■ **8:13 your servant—a dog.** This expression of self-deprecation before a superior occurs in a number of extrabiblical documents (the Lachish and Amarna letters) from early sixth century Judah (see also a similar formula in 1 Sam. 17:43; 24:14; 2 Sam. 3:8). Assyrian inscriptions refer to Hazael as "the son of a nobody," that is, a commoner.

■ **8:15 he took a thick cloth.** Hazael takes Elisha's prophecy as a license to commit murder, an indication of Hazael's ruthlessness.

■ **8:16 Jehoram.** Jehoram probably reigned together with his father Jehoshaphat for five years before becoming the sole monarch of Judah (1:17; 1 Kin. 22:42). This verse marks the death of Jehoshaphat and the beginning of Joram's independent rule (848–841 B.C.).

■ **8:18 walked in the way of the kings of Israel.** Usually Judah's kings are evaluated with reference to their own predecessors. Jehoram is purposely contrasted with the "house of Ahab" because he imitated their policies. Ahab introduced and sanctioned Baal worship in the northern kingdom of Israel, and now Jehoram does the same in Judah.

the daughter of Ahab. The ruling dynasties of north and south were now linked by ideology and by blood (v. 26; 2 Chr. 21:6). Athaliah promoted Baal worship in the south much as her mother Jezebel promoted Baal religion in the north (1 Kin. 16:31; 18:4; 19:2).

■ **8:19 for the sake of His servant David.** Because of God's love for David, He was longsuffering with Judah (2 Sam. 7:12–16 notes; 1 Kin. 11:4 note).

give a lamp . . . forever. See note on 1 Kin. 11:36.

■ **8:22 to this day.** See note on 1 Kin. 8:8.

Libnah revolted. Libnah was near the border with Philistia, about fifteen miles southeast of Ashdod.

■ **8:23 book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah.** See note on 1 Kin. 11:41.

■ **8:24 Ahaziah.** He should not be confused with his maternal uncle, King Ahaziah of Israel (1 Kin. 22:40, 51—2 Kin. 1:18).

■ **8:25 twelfth year of Joram the son of Ahab.** That is, 841 B.C.

■ **8:26 Athaliah.** See note on v. 18.

■ **8:27 he walked in the way of the house of Ahab, and did evil.** Like his father Jehoram, Ahaziah imitated the religious policies of Ahab, sanctioning the worship in Judah of the Canaanite god Baal (1 Kin. 16:31 note).

■ **8:28 he went with Joram the son of Ahab to war.** Earlier Jehoshaphat of Judah aligned himself with Ahab of Israel in a campaign against the Syrians at Ramoth Gilead (1 Kin. 22). This campaign, like the earlier one, ends in disaster (1 Kin. 22:32–37).

■ **8:29 King Joram went back to Jezreel.** A royal residence for the northern kings was maintained at Jezreel (1 Kin. 18:45 note). It was also the site of Ahab's and Jezebel's horrendous crime against Naboth (1 Kin. 21).

Ramah. That is, Ramoth Gilead.

Jehu Anointed King of Israel

9 And Elisha the prophet called one of [a]the sons of the prophets, and said to him, [b]"Get[1] yourself ready, take this flask of oil in your hand, [c]and go to Ramoth Gilead. 2 Now when you arrive at that place, look there for Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, and go in and make him rise up from among [d]his associates, and take him to an inner room. 3 Then [e]take the flask of oil, and pour *it* on his head, and say, 'Thus says the LORD: "I have anointed you king over Israel." ' Then open the door and flee, and do not delay."

4 So the young man, the servant of the prophet, went to Ramoth Gilead. 5 And when he arrived, there *were* the captains of the army sitting; and he said, "I have a message for you, Commander."

Jehu said, "For which *one* of us?"

And he said, "For you, Commander." 6 Then he arose and went into the house. And he poured the oil on his head, and said to him, [f]"Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I have anointed you king over the people of the LORD, over Israel. 7 You shall strike down the house of Ahab your master, that I may [g]avenge the blood of My servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the LORD, [h]at the hand of Jezebel. 8 For the whole house of Ahab shall perish; and [i]I will cut off from Ahab all [j]the males in Israel, both [k]bond and free. 9 So I will make the house of Ahab like the house of [l]Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of [m]Baasha the son of Ahijah. 10 [n]The dogs shall eat Jezebel on the plot *of ground* at Jezreel, and *there shall be* none to bury *her*.' " And he opened the door and fled.

11 Then Jehu came out to the servants of his master, and *one* said to him, "*Is* all well? Why did [o]this madman come to you?"

And he said to them, "You know the man and his babble."

12 And they said, "A lie! Tell us now."

So he said, "Thus and thus he spoke to me, saying, 'Thus says the LORD: "I have anointed you king over Israel." ' "

13 Then each man hastened [p]to take his garment and put *it* [2]under him on the top of the steps; and they blew trumpets, saying, "Jehu is king!"

Joram of Israel Killed

14 So Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, conspired against [q]Joram. (Now Joram had been defending Ramoth Gilead, he and all Israel, against Hazael king of Syria. 15 But [r]King [3]Joram had returned to Jezreel to recover from the wounds which the Syrians had inflicted on him when he fought with Hazael king of Syria.) And Jehu said, "If you are so minded, let no one leave *or* escape from the city to go and tell *it* in Jezreel." 16 So Jehu rode in a chariot and went to Jezreel, for Joram was laid up there; [s]and Ahaziah king of Judah had come down to see Joram.

17 Now a watchman stood on the tower in Jezreel, and he saw the company of Jehu as he came, and said, "I see a company of men."

And Joram said, "Get a horseman and send him to meet them, and let him say, [4]'*Is it* peace?' "

18 So the horseman went to meet him, and said, "Thus says the king: '*Is it* peace?' "

And Jehu said, "What have you to do with peace? [5]Turn around and follow me."

So the watchman reported, saying, "The messenger went to them, but is not coming back."

19 Then he sent out a second horseman who came to them, and said, "Thus says the king: '*Is it* peace?' "

And Jehu answered, "What have you to do with peace? Turn around and follow me."

20 So the watchman reported, saying, "He went up to them and is not coming back; and the driving *is* like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi, for he drives furiously!"

21 Then Joram said, [6]"Make ready." And his chariot was made ready. Then [t]Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah went out, each in his chariot; and they went out to meet Jehu,

CHAPTER 9

1 [a]1 Kin. 20:35 [b]2 Kin. 4:29; Jer. 1:17 [c]2 Kin. 8:28, 29 [1]Lit. *Gird up your loins*

2 [d]2 Kin. 9:5, 11

3 [e]1 Kin. 19:16

6 [f]1 Sam. 2:7, 8; 1 Kin. 19:16; 2 Kin. 9:3; 2 Chr. 22:7

7 [g][Deut. 32:35, 41] [h]1 Kin. 18:4; 21:15

8 [i]1 Kin. 14:10; 21:21; 2 Kin. 10:17 [j]1 Sam. 25:22 [k]Deut. 32:36; 2 Kin. 14:26

9 [l]1 Kin. 14:10; 15:29; 21:22 [m]1 Kin. 16:3, 11

10 [n]1 Kin. 21:23; 2 Kin. 9:35, 36

11 [o]Jer. 29:26; Hos. 9:7; Mark 3:21; John 10:20; Acts 26:24; [1 Cor. 4:10]

13 [p]Matt. 21:7, 8; Mark 11:7, 8 [2]Lit. *under his feet*

14 [q]2 Kin. 8:28

15 [r]2 Kin. 8:29 [3]*Jehoram*, v. 24

16 [s]2 Kin. 8:29

17 [4]Are you peaceful?

18 [5]Lit. *Turn behind me*

21 [t]1 Kin. 19:17; 2 Chr. 22:7 [6]*Harness up*

- **9:1 sons of the prophets.** See note on 1 Kin. 20:35.
- **9:3 take . . . oil, and pour it on his head.** Elisha directs one of the prophets to perform a ritual of anointing used to designate a (future) king (11:12; 23:30; 1 Sam. 9:16; 10:1; 16:13; 2 Sam. 2:7).
- **9:9 like the house of Jeroboam . . . like the house of Baasha.** God had destroyed these two earlier Israelite dynasties due to their unfaithfulness (1 Kin. 15:27–30; 16:8–13).
- **9:10 none to bury her.** The lack of a burial was a sign of disgrace (Jer. 8:2; 16:4–6; 22:19; 25:33).
- **9:11 this madman.** Because of their unusual lifestyle, eccentric habits, and ecstatic prophetic messages, the prophets struck some people as deranged (cf. Jer. 29:26; Hos. 9:7).
- **9:13 they blew trumpets.** The trumpets announced the anointing of a king (cf. 2 Sam. 15:10; 1 Kin. 1:34).
- **9:21 Naboth the Jezreelite.** Jehu's coup reaches its climax at the very place Ahab and Jezebel had Naboth killed (1 Kin. 21:1–16).

21 [u]1 Kin. 21:1–14 [7]Lit. *found*

24 [8]Lit. *filled his hand*

25 [v]1 Kin. 21:19, 24–29 [w]Is. 13:1

26 [x]1 Kin. 21:13, 19 [9]*on this property*.

27 [y]2 Chr. 22:7, 9 [1]Lit. *The Garden House* [2]Lit. *Strike*

30 [z][Jer. 4:30]; Ezek. 23:40

31 [a]1 Kin. 16:9–20; 2 Kin. 9:18–22

34 [b][Ex. 22:28]; 1 Kin. 16:31

36 [c]1 Kin. 21:23

37 [d]Ps. 83:10

CHAPTER 10

1 [1]So with MT, Syr., Tg.; LXX *Samaria;* Vg. *city* [2]*the guardians of*

3 [3]*most upright*

and [7]met him [u]on the property of Naboth the Jezreelite. 22 Now it happened, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, "*Is it* peace, Jehu?"

So he answered, "What peace, as long as the harlotries of your mother Jezebel and her witchcraft *are so* many?"

23 Then Joram turned around and fled, and said to Ahaziah, "Treachery, Ahaziah!" 24 Now Jehu [8]drew his bow with full strength and shot Jehoram between his arms; and the arrow came out at his heart, and he sank down in his chariot. 25 Then *Jehu* said to Bidkar his captain, "Pick *him* up, *and* throw him into the tract of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite; for remember, when you and I were riding together behind Ahab his father, that [v]the LORD laid this [w]burden upon him: 26 'Surely I saw yesterday the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons,' says the LORD, [x]'and I will repay you [9]in this plot,' says the LORD. Now therefore, take *and* throw him on the plot *of ground,* according to the word of the LORD."

Ahaziah of Judah Killed

27 But when Ahaziah king of Judah saw *this,* he fled by the road to [1]Beth Haggan. So Jehu pursued him, and said, [2]"Shoot him also in the chariot." *And they shot him* at the Ascent of Gur, which is by Ibleam. Then he fled to [y]Megiddo, and died there. 28 And his servants carried him in the chariot to Jerusalem, and buried him in his tomb with his fathers in the City of David. 29 In the eleventh year of Joram the son of Ahab, Ahaziah had become king over Judah.

Jezebel's Violent Death

30 Now when Jehu had come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard *of it;* [z]and she put paint on her eyes and adorned her head, and looked through a window. 31 Then, as Jehu entered at the gate, she said, [a]"*Is it* peace, Zimri, murderer of your master?"

32 And he looked up at the window, and said, "Who *is* on my side? Who?" So two *or* three eunuchs looked out at him. 33 Then he said, "Throw her down." So they threw her down, and *some* of her blood spattered on the wall and on the horses; and he trampled her underfoot. 34 And when he had gone in, he ate and drank. Then he said, "Go now, see to this accursed *woman,* and bury her, for [b]she was a king's daughter." 35 So they went to bury her, but they found no more of her than the skull and the feet and the palms of *her* hands. 36 Therefore they came back and told him. And he said, "This *is* the word of the LORD, which He spoke by His servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying, [c]'On the plot *of ground* at Jezreel dogs shall eat the flesh of Jezebel; 37 and the corpse of Jezebel shall be [d]as refuse on the surface of the field, in the plot at Jezreel, so that they shall not say, "Here *lies* Jezebel." ' "

Ahab's Seventy Sons Killed

10 Now Ahab had seventy sons in Samaria. And Jehu wrote and sent letters to Samaria, to the rulers of [1]Jezreel, to the elders, and to [2]those who reared Ahab's *sons,* saying:

2 Now as soon as this letter comes to you, since your master's sons *are* with you, and you have chariots and horses, a fortified city also, and weapons, 3 choose the [3]best qualified of your master's sons, set *him* on his father's throne, and fight for your master's house.

■ **9:22 What peace.** Jehu's question addresses the heart of the issue. There can be no true peace where there is idolatry and witchcraft (cf. 17:17; 21:6; Judg. 2:17; 8:33; Hos. 2; 3; Nah. 3:4).

■ **9:25 the LORD laid this burden upon him.** See 1 Kin. 21:21–24.

■ **9:27 Ahaziah king of Judah . . . died.** Jehu was not authorized to kill the descendants of David who were related to the house of Ahab through his daughter Athaliah (cf. vv. 8–10). Jehu was too zealous in carrying out his commission. Hosea criticizes him for "the bloodshed of Jezreel" (Hos. 1:4).

■ **9:29 In the eleventh year.** This figure may count only the whole years of his reign, leaving out the year he took the throne. This would agree with the figures given in 8:25.

■ **9:30 Jezreel.** Again the scene of action ominously returns to the site of Naboth's murder.

■ **9:31 Zimri.** In referring to Jehu in this way, Jezebel is sarcastically alluding to Zimri's bloody purge almost half a century earlier (1 Kin. 16:9–15).

■ **9:32 eunuchs.** This word could refer to men who were employed as guards and attendants of royal harems in the ancient Near East (as here) or to officials who served in the royal court (20:18; Is. 39:7; Jer. 29:2; 34:19; 38:7; Dan. 1:3, 7–10).

■ **9:34 a king's daughter.** Jehu does not dignify Jezebel with the title, Queen of Israel, but refers to her as the daughter of Ethbaal, the Sidonian king (1 Kin. 16:31).

■ **9:36 dogs shall eat the flesh of Jezebel.** The judgment oracle Jezebel so contemptuously scorned in her life is now fulfilled in her death (1 Kin. 21:23). Dogs were also present at Ahab's death (1 Kin. 22:38).

■ **10:1 seventy sons.** This figure probably included grandsons. How many wives (1 Kin. 20:5) Ahab had is not known.

elders. See note on 1 Kin. 8:1.

those who reared. These guardians (see text note) were responsible for bringing up and educating children in the royal household. The king was dead and Jehu addressed various lesser figures.

4 But they were exceedingly afraid, and said, "Look, [a]two kings could not [4]stand up to him; how then can we stand?" 5 And he who *was* in charge of the house, and he who *was* in charge of the city, the elders also, and those who reared *the sons,* sent to Jehu, saying, "We *are* your servants, we will do all you tell us; but we will not make anyone king. Do *what is* good in your sight." 6 Then he wrote a second letter to them, saying:

> If you *are* for me and will obey my voice, take the heads of the men, your master's sons, and come to me at Jezreel by this time tomorrow.

Now the king's sons, seventy persons, *were* with the great men of the city, *who* were rearing them. 7 So it was, when the letter came to them, that they took the king's sons and [b]slaughtered seventy persons, put their heads in baskets and sent *them* to him at Jezreel.

8 Then a messenger came and told him, saying, "They have brought the heads of the king's sons."

And he said, "Lay them in two heaps at the entrance of the gate until morning."

9 So it was, in the morning, that he went out and stood, and said to all the people, "You *are* righteous. Indeed [c]I conspired against my master and killed him; but who killed all these? 10 Know now that nothing shall [d]fall to the earth of the word of the LORD which the LORD spoke concerning the house of Ahab; for the LORD has done what He spoke [e]by His servant Elijah." 11 So Jehu killed all who remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel, and all his great men and his close acquaintances and his priests, until he left him none remaining.

Ahaziah's Forty-two Brothers Killed

12 And he arose and departed and went to Samaria. On the way, at [5]Beth Eked of the Shepherds, 13 [f]Jehu met with the brothers of Ahaziah king of Judah, and said, "Who *are* you?"

So they answered, "We *are* the brothers of Ahaziah; we have come down to greet the sons of the king and the sons of the queen mother."

14 And he said, "Take them alive!" So they took them alive, and [g]killed them at the well of [6]Beth Eked, forty-two men; and he left none of them.

The Rest of Ahab's Family Killed

15 Now when he departed from there, he [7]met [h]Jehonadab the son of [i]Rechab, *coming* to meet him; and he greeted him and said to him, "Is your heart right, as my heart *is* toward your heart?"

And Jehonadab answered, "It is."

Jehu said, "If it is, [j]give *me* your hand." So he gave *him* his hand, and he took him up to him into the chariot. 16 Then he said, "Come with me, and see my [k]zeal for the LORD." So they had him ride in his chariot. 17 And when he came to Samaria, [l]he killed all who remained to Ahab in Samaria, till he had destroyed them, according to the word of the LORD [m]which He spoke to Elijah.

Worshipers of Baal Killed

18 Then Jehu gathered all the people together, and said to them, [n]"Ahab served Baal a little, Jehu will serve him much. 19 Now therefore, call to me all the [o]prophets of Baal, all his servants, and all his priests. Let no one be missing, for I have a great sacrifice for Baal. Whoever is missing shall not live." But Jehu acted deceptively, with the intent of destroying the worshipers of Baal. 20 And Jehu said, [8]"Proclaim a solemn assembly for Baal." So they proclaimed *it.* 21 Then Jehu sent throughout all Israel; and all the worshipers of Baal came, so that there was not a man

4 [a]2 Kin. 9:24, 27 [4]Lit. *stand before*

7 [b]Judg. 9:5; 1 Kin. 21:21; 2 Kin. 11:1

9 [c]2 Kin. 9:14–24

10 [d]1 Sam. 3:19; 1 Kin. 8:56; Jer. 44:28 [e]1 Kin. 21:17–24, 29

12 [5]Or *The Shearing House*

13 [f]2 Chr. 22:8

14 [g]2 Chr. 22:8 [6]Or *The Shearing House*

15 [h]Jer. 35:6 [i]1 Chr. 2:55 [j]Ezra 10:19; Ezek. 17:18 [7]Lit. *found*

16 [k]1 Kin. 19:10

17 [l]2 Kin. 9:8; 2 Chr. 22:8 [m]1 Kin. 21:21, 29

18 [n]1 Kin. 16:31, 32

19 [o]1 Kin. 18:19; 22:6

20 [8]*Consecrate*

■ **10:5 in charge of the house.** See note on 1 Kin. 4:6.

in charge of the city. This position is similar to the "governor of the city" in 1 Kin. 22:26.

■ **10:6 take the heads of the men, your master's sons.** Jehu's demand takes the form of a pun. In Hebrew "head" can mean part of the body or it can mean "leader" or "chief." It is uncertain whether Jehu is asking for the death of all Ahab's male descendants, or for the leaders among the royal princes.

■ **10:7 slaughtered seventy persons.** The leaders of Samaria take no chances; they carry out Jehu's command literally. In this way another component of Elijah's prophecy comes to pass (1 Kin. 21:21–24).

■ **10:8 Lay them in two heaps.** Assyrian kings, like Ashurbanipal and Shalmaneser III, intimidated populations by leaving heaps of heads by the city gates.

■ **10:11 Jehu killed all.** Jehu's actions went far beyond the mandate of Elijah's oracle (1 Kin. 21:21–24) and the oracle delivered personally to Jehu (9:7–10).

■ **10:12 Beth Eked of the Shepherds.** Probably located a few miles northeast of Jenin.

■ **10:13 brothers of Ahaziah.** These relatives do not realize that a coup has taken place.

■ **10:15 Jehonadab the son of Rechab.** He was from a family or clan in Israel that led a life of austerity and abstinence. Following their convictions about worshiping God, the Rechabites did not plant fields or drink wine (Jer. 35).

■ **10:18 Ahab served Baal a little, Jehu will serve him much.** Jehu's ruse was designed to entice Baal supporters to reveal their allegiance publicly. Having utterly destroyed the house of Ahab (v. 17), Jehu now begins his purge of Baal worship in Israel.

left who did not come. So they came into the [9]temple of Baal, and the [p]temple of Baal was full from one end to the other. 22 And he said to the one in charge of the wardrobe, "Bring out vestments for all the worshipers of Baal." So he brought out vestments for them. 23 Then Jehu and Jehonadab the son of Rechab went into the temple of Baal, and said to the worshipers of Baal, "Search and see that no servants of the LORD are here with you, but only the worshipers of Baal." 24 So they went in to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings. Now Jehu had appointed for himself eighty men on the outside, and had said, "*If* any of the men whom I have brought into your hands escapes, *whoever lets him escape, it shall be* [q]his life for the life of the other."

25 Now it happened, as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, that Jehu said to the guard and to the captains, "Go in *and* kill them; let no one come out!" And they killed them with the edge of the sword; then the guards and the officers threw *them* out, and went into the [r]inner room of the temple of Baal. 26 And they brought the [s]*sacred* pillars out of the temple of Baal and burned them. 27 Then they broke down the *sacred* pillar of Baal, and tore down the [2]temple of Baal and [s]made it a refuse dump to this day. 28 Thus Jehu destroyed Baal from Israel.

29 However Jehu did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin, *that is,* from [t]the golden calves that *were* at Bethel and Dan. 30 And the LORD [u]said to Jehu, "Because you have done well in doing *what is* right in My sight, *and* have done to the house of Ahab all that *was* in My heart, [v]your sons shall sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth *generation.*" 31 But Jehu [3]took no heed to walk in the law of the LORD God of Israel with all his heart; for he did not depart from [w]the sins of Jeroboam, who had made Israel sin.

Death of Jehu

32 In those days the LORD began to cut off *parts* of Israel; and [x]Hazael conquered them in all the territory of Israel 33 from the Jordan eastward: all the land of Gilead—Gad, Reuben, and Manasseh—from [y]Aroer, which *is* by the River Arnon, including [z]Gilead and Bashan.

34 Now the rest of the acts of Jehu, all that he did, and all his might, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 35 So Jehu [4]rested with his fathers, and they buried him in Samaria. Then [a]Jehoahaz his son reigned in his place. 36 And the period that Jehu reigned over Israel in Samaria *was* twenty-eight years.

Athaliah Reigns in Judah

11 When [a]Athaliah [b]the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was [c]dead, she arose and destroyed all the royal heirs. 2 But [1]Jehosheba, the daughter of King Joram, sister of [d]Ahaziah, took [2]Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him away from among the king's sons *who were* being murdered; and they hid him and his nurse in the bedroom, from Athaliah, so that he was not killed. 3 So he was hidden with her in the house of the LORD for six years, while Athaliah reigned over the land.

21 [p]1 Kin. 16:32; 2 Kin. 11:18 [9]Lit. *house*

24 [q]1 Kin. 20:39

25 [r]Lit. *city*

26 [s][Deut. 7:5, 25]; 1 Kin. 14:23; 2 Kin. 3:2

27 [s]Ezra 6:11; Dan. 2:5; 3:29 [2]Lit. *house*

29 [t]1 Kin. 12:28–30; 13:33, 34

30 [u]2 Kin. 9:6, 7 [v]2 Kin. 13:1, 10; 14:23; 15:8, 12

31 [w]1 Kin. 14:16 [3]*was not careful*

32 [x]1 Kin. 19:17; 2 Kin. 8:12; 13:22

33 [y]Deut. 2:36 [z]Amos 1:3–5

35 [a]2 Kin. 13:1 [4]Died and joined his ancestors

CHAPTER 11

1 [a]2 Chr. 22:10 [b]2 Kin. 8:26 [c]2 Kin. 9:27

2 [d]2 Kin. 8:25 [1]*Jehoshabeath,* 2 Chr. 22:11 [2]Or *Jehoash*

■ **10:21 the temple of Baal.** Ahab built this structure in Samaria (1 Kin. 16:32).

■ **10:26 sacred pillars.** See note on 1 Kin. 14:23.

burned them. Stone monuments can be shattered by heating them with fire and then pouring cold water on them.

■ **10:27 made it a refuse dump.** This desecrated the site and discouraged any future Baal worshipers from trying to rebuild their temple.

■ **10:31 law of the LORD.** On the importance of keeping the law, see note on 1 Kin. 2:3.

■ **10:33 from the Jordan eastward.** Hazael succeeds in capturing the Israelite tribal territories located in the Transjordan, thus realizing Elisha's prophecy (8:12).

Aroer. The city was located just a few miles north of the River Arnon east of the Dead Sea (Deut. 2:36; Josh. 12:2; 13:9, 16).

■ **10:34 the rest of the acts of Jehu.** In an inscription on the "Black Obelisk," the Assyrian ruler Shalmaneser III records that "Jehu, son of Omri" paid him tribute of silver, gold, and other articles. Nothing is said of this in Kings.

book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. See note on 1 Kin. 11:41.

■ **10:35 Jehoahaz.** For his reign, see 13:1–9.

■ **10:36 twenty-eight years.** That is, 841–814 B.C.

■ **11:1–21** Jehoiada the priest leads a coup against the usurper Athaliah, mother of Ahaziah, and installs young Jehoash, son of Ahaziah, as rightful king of Judah.

■ **11:1 Athaliah.** A daughter of Ahab, she was dedicated to seeing Baal worship flourish in Judah (8:18; 11:18). Athaliah's attempted purge of the royal house of Judah brought the dynasty of David to the brink of extinction.

■ **11:2 Jehosheba.** Probably not a daughter of Athaliah, Jehosheba would be a half-sister of Ahaziah. In 2 Chr. 22:11, she is identified as the wife of Jehoiada the priest (cf. vv. 4, 9).

Joash. He was the son of Ahaziah and consequently a grandson of Athaliah.

in the bedroom. Joash, less than a year old (vv. 3, 21) and not yet weaned, is providentially saved from Athaliah's persecution.

■ **11:3 in the house of the LORD.** In the temple Joash would have been instructed in God's Law.

for six years. The writer acknowledges that Athaliah had control over Judah for at least six years, but because he regards her reign as illegitimate, he does not dignify it with the usual introduction and conclusion (cf. vv. 1, 20 with 11:21—12:3, 19–21). Her years as Judah's head of state are counted as part of Joash's reign.

Joash Crowned King of Judah

4 In [e]the seventh year Jehoiada sent and brought the captains of hundreds—of the bodyguards and the [3]escorts—and brought them into the house of the LORD to him. And he made a covenant with them and took an oath from them in the house of the LORD, and showed them the king's son. 5 Then he commanded them, saying, "This *is* what you shall do: One-third of you who [4]come on duty [f]on the Sabbath shall be keeping watch over the king's house, 6 one-third *shall be* at the gate of Sur, and one-third at the gate behind the escorts. You shall keep the watch of the house, lest it be broken down. 7 The two [5]contingents of you who go off duty on the Sabbath shall keep the watch of the house of the LORD for the king. 8 But you shall surround the king on all sides, every man with his weapons in his hand; and whoever comes within range, let him be put to death. You are to be with the king as he goes out and as he comes in."

9 [g]So the captains of the hundreds did according to all that Jehoiada the priest commanded. Each of them took his men who were to be on duty on the Sabbath, with those who were going off duty on the Sabbath, and came to Jehoiada the priest. 10 And the priest gave the captains of hundreds the spears and shields which *had belonged* to King David, [h]that were in the temple of the LORD. 11 Then the escorts stood, every man with his weapons in his hand, all around the king, from the right [6]side of the temple to the left side of the temple, by the altar and the house. 12 And he brought out the king's son, put the crown on him, and *gave him* the [i]Testimony;[7] they made him king and anointed him, and they clapped their hands and said, [j]"Long live the king!"

Death of Athaliah

13 [k]Now when Athaliah heard the noise of the escorts *and* the people, she came to the people *in* the temple of the LORD. 14 When she looked, there was the king standing by [l]a pillar according to custom; and the leaders and the trumpeters were by the king. All the people of the land were rejoicing and blowing trumpets. So Athaliah tore her clothes and cried out, "Treason! Treason!"

15 And Jehoiada the priest commanded the captains of the hundreds, the officers of the army, and said to them, "Take her outside [8]under guard, and slay with the sword whoever follows her." For the priest had said, "Do not let her be killed in the house of the LORD." 16 So they seized her; and she went by way of the horses' entrance *into* the king's house, and there she was killed.

17 [m]Then Jehoiada [n]made a covenant between the LORD, the king, and the people, that they should be the LORD's people, and *also* [o]between the king and the people. 18 And all the people of the land went to the [p]temple of Baal, and tore it down. They thoroughly [q]broke in pieces its altars and [9]images, and [r]killed Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. And [s]the priest appointed [t]officers over the house of the LORD. 19 Then he took the captains of hundreds, the bodyguards, the escorts, and all the people of the land; and they brought the king down from the house of the LORD, and went by way of the gate of the escorts to the king's house. Then he sat on the throne of the kings. 20 So all the people of the land rejoiced; and the city was quiet, for

4 [e]2 Kin. 12:2; 2 Chr. 23:1 [3]*guards*

5 [f]1 Chr. 9:25 [4]Lit. *enter in*

7 [5]*companies*

9 [g]2 Chr. 23:8

10 [h]2 Sam. 8:7; 1 Chr. 18:7

11 [6]Lit. *shoulder*

12 [i]Ex. 25:16; 31:18 [j]1 Sam. 10:24 [7]Law, Ex. 25:16, 21; Deut. 31:9

13 [k]2 Kin. 8:26; 2 Chr. 23:12

14 [l]2 Kin. 23:3; 2 Chr. 34:31

15 [8]Lit. *between ranks*

17 [m]2 Chr. 23:16 [n]Josh. 24:24, 25; 2 Chr. 15:12–15 [o]2 Sam. 5:3

18 [p]2 Kin. 10:26, 27 [q][Deut. 12:3] [r]1 Kin. 18:40; 2 Kin. 10:11 [s]2 Chr. 23:18 [9]Idols [t]Lit. *offices*

■ **11:4 the bodyguards.** That is, the royal guard (cf. the Cherethites in 2 Sam. 8:18; 20:23). They are of uncertain origin, although some scholars depict them as mercenaries from Caria in southeast Asia Minor.

■ **11:6 the gate behind the escorts.** This gate was probably in the southern wall separating the temple from the palace.

■ **11:10 spears and shields.** These articles may have been part of the booty David captured from King Hadadezer of Zobah (2 Sam. 8:3–11). Dedicated by David to the Lord (2 Sam. 8:7, 11), these spears and shields were stored in the temple. Another explanation is that they are David's personal spears and shields.

■ **11:12 the Testimony.** This refers either to the Sinaitic covenant as a whole (Ex. 25:16; cf. 23:3) or to a more limited document that specifies the duties and limitations of kingship (Deut. 17:14–20).

■ **11:14 standing by a pillar.** Pillars called "Jachin" and "Boaz" framed the vestibule of the temple (1 Kin. 7:15–22). When people gathered at the temple on important occasions, such as a royal speech, they would stand in this area in front of the temple proper.

people of the land. The precise meaning of this term is disputed by scholars and it is likely that its meaning changed during the course of Israelite history (Ezra 9:1, 2). Here it seems to designate leaders of the people who had remained faithful to the Lord and to the Davidic dynasty.

tore her clothes. See note on 1 Kin. 21:27.

■ **11:15 slay with the sword.** This command follows the stipulations of Deut. 13:12–18.

killed in the house of the LORD. Bloodshed within the temple precincts was sacrilege.

■ **11:17 a covenant.** Jehoiada leads the people and Joash in renewing their allegiance to the Mosaic covenant. Other covenant renewals had taken place in Israel's past (Deut. 29:1; Josh. 8:30–35; 24:1–28). Chronicles mentions a number of covenant renewals during the course of the monarchy (2 Chr. 15:12; 23:16; 29:10; 34:31). Considering the influx of Baal worship in Judah's recent past, it was appropriate for all parties to make a new beginning by rededicating themselves to the Lord.

between the king and the people. See 2 Chr. 23:3. Such an agreement would delineate the responsibilities of both parties within the larger context of the Mosaic covenant (Deut. 17:14–20; 2 Sam. 5:3).

■ **11:18 people of the land.** See note on v. 14.

the temple of Baal. Jehoiada leads the people in a thorough reformation, which parallels the earlier reformation led by Jehu in the north (10:18–29).

■ **11:19 the bodyguards.** See note on v. 4.

they had slain Athaliah with the sword *in* the king's house. 21 Jehoash *was* [t]seven years old when he became king.

21 [t]2 Chr. 24:1–14

CHAPTER 12

Jehoash Repairs the Temple

12 In the seventh year of Jehu, [a]Jehoash[1] became king, and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Zibiah of Beersheba. 2 Jehoash did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD all the days in which [b]Jehoiada the priest instructed him. 3 But [c]the [2]high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.

4 And Jehoash said to the priests, [d]"All the money of the dedicated gifts that are brought into the house of the LORD—each man's [e]census[3] money, each man's [f]assessment money—*and* all the money that [4]a man [g]purposes in his heart to bring into the house of the LORD, 5 let the priests take *it* themselves, each from his constituency; and let them repair the [5]damages of the temple, wherever any dilapidation is found."

6 Now it was so, by the twenty-third year of King Jehoash, [h]*that* the priests had not repaired the damages of the temple. 7 [i]So King Jehoash called Jehoiada the priest and the *other* priests, and said to them, "Why have you not repaired the damages of the temple? Now therefore, do not take *more* money from your constituency, but deliver it for repairing the damages of the temple." 8 And the priests agreed that they would neither receive *more* money from the people, nor repair the damages of the temple.

9 Then Jehoiada the priest took [j]a chest, bored a hole in its lid, and set it beside the altar, on the right side as one comes into the house of the LORD; and the priests who [6]kept the door put [k]there all the money brought into the house of the LORD. 10 So it was, whenever they saw that *there was* much money in the chest, that the king's [l]scribe[7] and the high priest came up and [8]put it in bags, and counted the money that was found in the house of the LORD. 11 Then they gave the money, which had been apportioned, into the hands of those who did the work, who had the oversight of the house of the LORD; and they [9]paid it out to the carpenters and builders who worked on the house of the LORD, 12 and to masons and stonecutters, and for buying timber and hewn stone, to [m]repair the damage of the house of the LORD, and for all that was paid out to repair the temple. 13 However [n]there were not made for the house of the LORD basins of silver, trimmers, sprinkling-bowls, trumpets, any articles of gold or articles of silver, from the money brought into the house of the LORD. 14 But they gave that to the workmen, and they repaired the house of the LORD with it. 15 Moreover [o]they did not require an account from the men into whose hand they delivered the money to be paid to workmen, for they dealt faithfully. 16 [p]The money from the trespass offerings and the money from the sin offerings was not brought into the house of the LORD. [q]It belonged to the priests.

1 [a]2 Chr. 24:1 [1]*Joash*, 2 Kin. 11:2ff.

2 [b]2 Kin. 11:4

3 [c]1 Kin. 15:14; 22:43; 2 Kin. 14:4; 15:35 [2]Places for pagan worship

4 [d]2 Kin. 22:4 [e]Ex. 30:13–16 [f]Lev. 27:2–28 [g]Ex. 35:5; 1 Chr. 29:3–9 [3]Lit. *the money coming over* [4]*any man's heart prompts him to bring*

5 [5]Lit. *breaches*

6 [h]2 Chr. 24:5

7 [i]2 Chr. 24:6

9 [j]2 Chr. 23:1; 24:8 [k]Mark 12:41; Luke 21:1 [6]*guarded at the door*

10 [l]2 Sam. 8:17; 2 Kin. 19:2; 22:3, 4, 12 [7]*secretary* [8]*tied it up*

11 [9]Lit. *weighed*

12 [m]2 Kin. 22:5, 6

13 [n]2 Chr. 24:14

15 [o]2 Kin. 22:7; [1 Cor. 4:2]; 2 Cor. 8:20

16 [p][Lev. 5:15, 18] [q][Lev. 7:7; Num. 18:9]

17 [r]2 Kin. 8:12 [s]2 Chr. 24:23 [t]Advance upon

18 [u]1 Kin. 15:18; 2 Kin. 16:8; 18:15, 16

Hazael Threatens Jerusalem

17 [r]Hazael king of Syria went up and fought against Gath, and took it; then [s]Hazael set his face to [t]go up to Jerusalem. 18 And Jehoash king of Judah [u]took all the sacred things that his fathers, Jehoshaphat and Jehoram and Ahaziah, kings of Judah, had dedicated, and his own sacred things, and all the gold found in the treasuries of the house of the LORD and in the king's house, and sent *them* to Hazael king of Syria. Then he went away from Jerusalem.

■ **11:21 Jehoash was seven years old.** Jehoiada was a significantly positive influence on Jehoash during the first part of his reign (12:2; 2 Chr. 24:22).

■ **12:1 seventh year of Jehu . . . reigned forty years.** That is, 835–796 B.C.

■ **12:2 did what was right.** Jehoash is one of several Judean kings who receive positive evaluations (Introduction to 1 Kings: Characteristics and Themes).

■ **12:3 the high places.** Jehoash's reign was not without its religious shortcomings. The people continued to worship at "the high places" (1 Kin. 3:2 note).

■ **12:4 the dedicated gifts.** Jehoash proposes to use the revenue of the temple to refurbish the temple (cf. Neh. 10:32). The temple had suffered neglect during the years of Athaliah (v. 5; 2 Chr. 24:7).

census. Israelite young men at the age of twenty were obliged to enlist for a year of military service and donate half a shekel to the sanctuary (Ex. 30:11–16).

■ **12:9 the priests.** See 22:4; 23:4; 25:18; Jer. 35:4; 52:24.

■ **12:13 any articles.** See 1 Kin. 7:50. Priority was given to repairing the temple building. During Athaliah's regime, temple furnishings were used for the worship of Baal (2 Chr. 24:7).

■ **12:16 trespass offerings.** See Lev. 5:16; 6:6, 7; Num. 5:7–10.

sin offerings. See Lev. 4. Jehoash's restoration did not deprive priests of the main sources of their income (Lev. 7:7).

■ **12:17 Gath.** One of the five major Philistine cities, it had previously belonged to Judah (1 Chr. 18:1; 2 Chr. 11:8).

■ **12:18 all the sacred things.** Jehoash plunders his own palace and temple for a bribe or tax to pay Hazael to withdraw.

Death of Joash

19 Now the rest of the acts of [2]Joash, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

20 And [a]his servants arose and formed a conspiracy, and killed Joash in the house of [3]the Millo, which goes down to Silla. 21 For [4]Jozachar the son of Shimeath and Jehozabad the son of [5]Shomer, his servants, struck him. So he died, and they buried him with his fathers in the City of David. Then [r]Amaziah his son reigned in his place.

Jehoahaz Reigns in Israel

13 In the twenty-third year of [a]Joash[1] the son of Ahaziah, king of Judah, [b]Jehoahaz the son of Jehu became king over Israel in Samaria, *and reigned* seventeen years. 2 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and followed the [c]sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin. He did not [2]depart from them.

3 Then [d]the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel, and He delivered them into the hand of [e]Hazael king of Syria, and into the hand of [f]Ben-Hadad the son of Hazael, all *their* days. 4 So Jehoahaz [g]pleaded with the LORD, and the LORD listened to him; for [h]He saw the oppression of Israel, because the king of Syria oppressed them. 5 [i]Then the LORD gave Israel a deliverer, so that they escaped from under the hand of the Syrians; and the children of Israel dwelt in their tents as before. 6 Nevertheless they did not depart from the sins of the house of Jeroboam, who had made Israel sin, *but* walked in them; [j]and the [3]wooden image also remained in Samaria. 7 For He left of the army of Jehoahaz only fifty horsemen, ten chariots, and ten thousand foot soldiers; for the king of Syria had destroyed them [k]and made them [l]like the dust at threshing.

8 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoahaz, all that he did, and his might, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 9 So Jehoahaz [4]rested with his fathers, and they buried him in Samaria. Then [5]Joash his son reigned in his place.

Jehoash Reigns in Israel

10 In the thirty-seventh year of Joash king of Judah, [6]Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz became king over Israel in Samaria, *and reigned* sixteen years. 11 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD. He did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin, *but* walked in them.

12 [m]Now the rest of the acts of Joash, [n]all that he did, and [o]his might with which he fought against Amaziah king of Judah, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 13 So Joash [p]rested[7] with his fathers. Then Jeroboam sat on his throne. And Joash was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel.

Death of Elisha

14 Elisha had become sick with the illness of which he would die. Then Joash the king of Israel came down to him, and wept over his face, and said, "O my father, my father, [q]the chariots of Israel and their horsemen!"

19 [2]*Jehoash*, vv. 1–18

20 [a]2 Kin. 14:5; 2 Chr. 24:25 [3]Lit. *The Landfill*

21 [r]2 Chr. 24:27 [4]*Zabad*, 2 Chr. 24:26 [5]*Shimrith*, 2 Chr. 24:26

CHAPTER 13

1 [a]2 Kin. 12:1 [b]2 Kin. 10:35 [1]*Jehoash*, 2 Kin. 12:1–18

2 [c]1 Kin. 12:26–33 [2]Lit. *turn*

3 [d]Judg. 2:14 [e]2 Kin. 8:12 [f]Amos 1:4

4 [g][Ps. 78:34] [h][Ex. 3:7, 9; Judg. 2:18]; 2 Kin. 14:26

5 [i]2 Kin. 13:25; 14:25, 27; Neh. 9:27

6 [j]1 Kin. 16:33 [3]Heb. *Asherah*, a Canaanite goddess

7 [k]2 Kin. 10:32 [l][Amos 1:3]

9 [4]Died and joined his ancestors [5]Or *Jehoash*

10 [6]*Joash*, v. 9

12 [m]2 Kin. 14:8–15 [n]2 Kin. 13:14–19, 25 [o]2 Kin. 14:9; 2 Chr. 25:17–25

13 [p]2 Kin. 14:16 [7]Died and joined his ancestors

14 [q]2 Kin. 2:12

■ **12:19 the rest of the acts.** See 2 Chr. 22:10—24:27.

book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah. See note on 1 Kin. 11:41.

■ **12:20 servants.** Joash's servants were sons of foreign women in the government's employ (14:5; 2 Chr. 24:26).

house of the Millo. The term may refer either to a building constructed upon the "Millo" in Jerusalem (the earthworks built by Solomon; 1 Kin. 9:15 note) or to a site within Jerusalem northwest of the City of David (cf. Judg. 9:6, 20).

■ **12:21 Amaziah.** For the reign of Amaziah, see 14:1–22.

■ **13:1 twenty-third year of Joash . . . reigned seventeen years.** That is, 814–798 B.C.

■ **13:2 the sins of Jeroboam.** See note on 1 Kin. 12:30.

■ **13:3 Ben-Hadad the son of Hazael.** That is, Ben-Hadad III. For Ben-Hadad I, see 1 Kin. 15:18–21; for Ben-Hadad II, see 1 Kin. 20:1 note; 2 Kin. 6:24; 8:7.

■ **13:5 gave Israel a deliverer.** Much as in the time of the judges (Judg. 2:16–23), God provides temporary help from the Syrian onslaught. The deliverer is not named.

■ **13:6 the sins of the house of Jeroboam.** See note on 1 Kin. 12:30.

wooden image. See text note. This object was set up by Ahab (1 Kin. 16:33) and apparently was left untouched by Jehu's reforms (2 Kin. 10:18–28).

■ **13:7 fifty horsemen, ten chariots, and ten thousand foot soldiers.** The king is left with a large number of infantry, but only a very few chariots. This crippled his ability to react quickly to a military crisis.

■ **13:8 book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.** See note on 1 Kin. 11:41.

■ **13:10 the thirty-seventh year of Joash.** That is, 798 B.C. Jehoash reigned 798–782 B.C.

■ **13:11 the sins of Jeroboam.** See note on 1 Kin. 12:30.

■ **13:12 book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.** See note on 1 Kin. 11:41.

■ **13:13 Jeroboam.** Jeroboam II ruled from 793–753 B.C., including eleven years as co-regent with his father Jehoash. Jeroboam began his independent reign when Jehoash died in 782 B.C. See 14:23–29.

■ **13:14 O my father.** See note on 2:12.

17 r1 Kin. 20:26
19 s2 Kin. 13:25
20 t2 Kin. 3:5; 24:2 8Having prophesied at least 55 years
22 u2 Kin. 8:12, 13
23 v2 Kin. 14:27 w[Ex. 2:24, 25] xGen. 13:16, 17; 17:2–7; Ex. 32:13
25 y2 Kin. 13:18, 19 9Joash, vv. 12–14, 25

CHAPTER 14

1 a2 Kin. 13:10 b2 Chr. 25:1, 2
3 c2 Kin. 12:2
4 d2 Kin. 12:3 1Places for pagan worship
5 e2 Kin. 12:20
6 fDeut. 24:16; [Jer. 31:30; Ezek. 18:4, 20]
7 g2 Chr. 25:5–16 h2 Sam. 8:13; 1 Chr. 18:12; Ps. 60:title iJosh. 15:38 2Lit. *The Rock;* the city of Petra
8 j2 Chr. 25:17, 18 3Joash, 2 Kin. 13:9, 12–14, 25; 2 Chr. 25:17ff.

15 And Elisha said to him, "Take a bow and some arrows." So he took himself a bow and some arrows. 16 Then he said to the king of Israel, "Put your hand on the bow." So he put his hand *on it,* and Elisha put his hands on the king's hands. 17 And he said, "Open the east window"; and he opened *it.* Then Elisha said, "Shoot"; and he shot. And he said, "The arrow of the LORD's deliverance and the arrow of deliverance from Syria; for you must strike the Syrians at rAphek till you have destroyed *them.*" 18 Then he said, "Take the arrows"; so he took *them.* And he said to the king of Israel, "Strike the ground"; so he struck three times, and stopped. 19 And the man of God was angry with him, and said, "You should have struck five or six times; then you would have struck Syria till you had destroyed *it!* sBut now you will strike Syria *only* three times."

20 Then Elisha 8died, and they buried him. And the t*raiding* bands from Moab invaded the land in the spring of the year. 21 So it was, as they were burying a man, that suddenly they spied a band *of raiders;* and they put the man in the tomb of Elisha; and when the man was let down and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived and stood on his feet.

Israel Recaptures Cities from Syria

22 And uHazael king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz. 23 But the LORD was vgracious to them, had compassion on them, and wregarded them, xbecause of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not yet destroy them or cast them from His presence.

24 Now Hazael king of Syria died. Then Ben-Hadad his son reigned in his place. 25 And 9Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz recaptured from the hand of Ben-Hadad, the son of Hazael, the cities which he had taken out of the hand of Jehoahaz his father by war. yThree times Joash defeated him and recaptured the cities of Israel.

Amaziah Reigns in Judah

14 In athe second year of Joash the son of Jehoahaz, king of Israel, bAmaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, became king. 2 He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem. 3 And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, yet not like his father David; he did everything cas his father Joash had done. 4 dHowever the 1high places were not taken away, and the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.

5 Now it happened, as soon as the kingdom was established in his hand, that he executed his servants ewho had murdered his father the king. 6 But the children of the murderers he did not execute, according to what is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, in which the LORD commanded, saying, f"Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall children be put to death for their fathers; but a person shall be put to death for his own sin."

7 gHe killed ten thousand Edomites in hthe Valley of Salt, and took 2Sela by war, iand called its name Joktheel to this day.

8 jThen Amaziah sent messengers to 3Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, king of Is-

the chariots of Israel and their horsemen. Earlier, Elisha used this expression of Elijah; now Jehoash applies the compliment to Elisha.

■ **13:17 east window.** This window opened toward the region controlled by Syria (10:32, 33).

the arrow of deliverance from Syria. The symbolic action is a prophecy that Jehoash himself will fulfill.

Aphek. See note on 1 Kin. 20:26.

■ **13:18 and stopped.** Somehow Jehoash failed to perceive the inner meaning of what the prophet was urging him to do. Elisha considered that Jehoash was clearly guilty for his lack of enthusiasm.

■ **13:20 Elisha died.** Presumably Elisha died of old age.

■ **13:23 because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.** Divine commitment is steadfast and eternal (cf. 1 Kin. 18:36).

■ **13:24 Ben-Hadad.** That is, Ben-Hadad III (v. 3 note).

■ **13:25 Three times Joash defeated him.** Fulfilling the last prophecy of Elisha (v. 19), the victories of Joash stopped the Syrian expansion. Later, Jeroboam II would also defeat the Syrians (14:25).

■ **14:1 In the second year of Joash.** That is, 796 B.C.

■ **14:3 he did what was right in the sight of the LORD.** He followed the laws of the covenant (1 Kin. 2:3 note).

yet not like his father David. See note on 1 Kin. 11:4.

■ **14:4 the high places were not taken away.** Amaziah is one of several kings of Judah praised by the author, but his praise is qualified because Amaziah tolerated worship at the hilltop shrines (1 Kin. 3:2 note).

■ **14:5 executed his servants.** See 12:20, 21.

■ **14:7 killed ten thousand Edomites.** This major victory temporarily reversed earlier losses (cf. 8:20–22; 2 Chr. 25:11, 12).

Valley of Salt. Probably this is the salt flats south of the Dead Sea (cf. 2 Sam. 8:13; Ps. 60:title).

Sela. The Septuagint (Old Testament Greek translation) identifies Sela (meaning "rock" in Hebrew) as Petra (meaning "rock" in Greek), located along the Rift Valley about fifty miles south of the Dead Sea. Some modern scholars place it in northern Edomite territory near Bozrah (Judg. 1:36).

to this day. This phrase reflects a time before the Jews were taken captive to Babylon (1 Kin. 8:8 note).

■ **14:8 Jehoash.** See 13:10–25.

rael, saying, "Come, let us face one another *in battle.*" 9 And Jehoash king of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, [k]"The thistle that *was* in Lebanon sent to the [l]cedar that *was* in Lebanon, saying, 'Give your daughter to my son as wife'; and a wild beast that *was* in Lebanon passed by and trampled the thistle. 10 You have indeed defeated Edom, and [m]your heart has [4]lifted you up. Glory *in that,* and stay at home; for why should you meddle with trouble so that you fall—you and Judah with you?"

11 But Amaziah would not heed. Therefore Jehoash king of Israel went out; so he and Amaziah king of Judah faced one another at [n]Beth Shemesh, which *belongs* to Judah. 12 And Judah was defeated by Israel, and every man fled to his tent. 13 Then Jehoash king of Israel captured Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Jehoash, the son of Ahaziah, at Beth Shemesh; and he went to Jerusalem, and broke down the wall of Jerusalem from [o]the Gate of Ephraim to [p]the Corner Gate—[5]four hundred cubits. 14 And he took all [q]the gold and silver, all the articles that were found in the house of the LORD and in the treasuries of the king's house, and hostages, and returned to Samaria.

15 [r]Now the rest of the acts of Jehoash which he did—his might, and how he fought with Amaziah king of Judah—*are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 16 So Jehoash [6]rested with his fathers, and was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel. Then Jeroboam his son reigned in his place.

17 [s]Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, lived fifteen years after the death of Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz, king of Israel. 18 Now the rest of the acts of Amaziah, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 19 And [t]they formed a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem, and he fled to [u]Lachish; but they sent after him to Lachish and killed him there. 20 Then they brought him on horses, and he was buried at Jerusalem with his fathers in the City of David.

21 And all the people of Judah took [v]Azariah,[7] who *was* sixteen years old, and made him king instead of his father Amaziah. 22 He built [w]Elath[8] and restored it to Judah, after [9]the king rested with his fathers.

Jeroboam II Reigns in Israel

23 In the fifteenth year of Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel, became king in Samaria, *and reigned* forty-one years. 24 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD; he did not depart from all the [x]sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin. 25 He [y]restored the [1]territory of Israel [z]from the entrance of Hamath to [a]the[2] Sea of the Arabah, according to the word of the LORD God of Israel, which He had spoken through His servant [b]Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet who *was* from [c]Gath Hepher. 26 For the LORD

9 [k]Judg. 9:8–15 [l]1 Kin. 4:33

10 [m]Deut. 8:14 [4]Made you proud

11 [n]Josh. 19:38; 21:16

13 [o]Neh. 8:16; 12:39 [p]Jer. 31:38 [5]About 600 feet

14 [q]1 Kin. 7:51

15 [r]2 Kin. 13:12, 13

16 [6]Died and joined his ancestors

17 [s]2 Chr. 25:25–28

19 [t]2 Chr. 25:27 [u]Josh. 10:31

21 [v]2 Kin. 15:13 [7]*Uzziah,* 2 Chr. 26:1ff.; Is. 6:1; etc.

22 [w]2 Kin. 16:6 [8]Heb. *Eloth* [9]Amaziah died and joined his ancestors.

24 [x]1 Kin. 12:26–33

25 [y]2 Kin. 10:32; 13:5, 25 [z]1 Kin. 8:65 [a]Deut. 3:17 [b]Jon. 1:1 [c]Josh. 19:13 [1]*border* [2]The Dead Sea

■ **14:9 The thistle.** The northern kingdom was larger and more powerful than the southern kingdom (1 Kin. 14:30; 15:16, 17 and notes). In this fable (cf. Judg. 9:8–15) the little thistle (Amaziah) thinks it is equal to a cedar of Lebanon (Jehoash) only to be trampled underfoot.

■ **14:11 Beth Shemesh.** A city fifteen miles west of Jerusalem (1 Kin. 4:9).

■ **14:13 Jehoash . . . captured Amaziah.** Jehoash probably brought Amaziah back to Samaria (v. 14). Amaziah was forced to stay there until the death of Jehoash (v. 17).

Gate of Ephraim. This main gate was in the north wall (Neh. 8:16; 12:39).

Corner Gate. At the northwest angle of the wall (2 Chr. 26:9; Jer. 31:38; Zech. 14:10).

■ **14:15 book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.** See note on 1 Kin. 11:41.

■ **14:16 Jeroboam.** Jeroboam II, who ruled from 793–753 B.C. (vv. 23–29).

■ **14:18 book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah.** See note on 1 Kin. 11:41.

■ **14:19 Lachish.** An important city of Judah fifteen miles west of Hebron.

■ **14:21 sixteen years old.** Probably Azariah was made king during his father's absence, and the reigns of father and son overlapped for many years (vv. 13, 17).

■ **14:22 Elath.** A seaport on the Gulf of Aqaba, Elath was first used by Solomon to foster sea trade with other nations (1 Kin. 9:26–28). Because Amaziah defeated Edom (v. 7), his son Azariah was able to rebuild Elath and again use it as a Judean port (cf. 1 Kin. 22:47–49; 2 Kin. 8:20–22; 16:6).

■ **14:23 In the fifteenth year of Amaziah.** That is, 782 B.C., the beginning of Jeroboam's independent reign.

Jeroboam. That is, Jeroboam II. For the reign of Jeroboam I, see 1 Kin. 11:26—14:19.

forty-one years. That is, 793–753 B.C. It is likely that Jeroboam II was co-regent with his father Jehoash for eleven years at the start of his reign (Introduction to 1 Kings: Characteristics and Themes).

■ **14:24 the sins of Jeroboam.** See note on 1 Kin. 12:30. Politically and economically, Jeroboam II was one of the most successful monarchs in the entire history of the northern kingdom (v. 25). He forced the Syrians to retreat from Damascus into central Syria. He also expanded Israelite territory toward the Dead Sea.

■ **14:25 the entrance of Hamath.** This area was the northernmost part of Israel (Num. 13:21; 34:7–9; 1 Kin. 8:65 note).

Sea of the Arabah. That is, the Dead Sea (Josh. 3:16; 12:3). Jeroboam expanded Israel's territory to the south on the eastern side of the Jordan, the lands of Ammon and Moab. Jeroboam II controlled more land than any previous northern king (cf. Amos 6:14).

Jonah the son of Amittai. See Introduction to Jonah.

Gath Hepher. About fourteen miles west of the southern part of the Sea of Chinneroth (Galilee). See Josh. 19:13.

26 [d]Ex. 3:7; 2 Kin. 13:4; Ps. 106:44 [e]Deut. 32:36

27 [f][2 Kin. 13:5, 23]

28 [g]1 Kin. 11:24 [h]2 Sam. 8:6; 1 Kin. 11:24; 2 Chr. 8:3

29 [i]2 Kin. 15:8 [3]Died and joined his ancestors

CHAPTER 15

1 [a]2 Kin. 15:13, 30 [b]2 Kin. 14:21; 2 Chr. 26:1, 3, 4

4 [c]2 Kin. 12:3; 14:4; 15:35 [f]Places for pagan worship

5 [d]2 Chr. 26:19–23; Ps. 78:31 [e]Is. 6:1 [f][Lev. 13:46]; Num. 12:14

7 [g]2 Chr. 26:23 [2]Died and joined his ancestors

8 [h]2 Kin. 14:29

9 [i]2 Kin. 14:24

10 [j]Amos 7:9

12 [k]2 Kin. 10:30

13 [3]*Azariah,* 2 Kin. 14:21ff.; 15:1ff.

14 [l]1 Kin. 14:17; Song 6:4

[d]saw *that* the affliction of Israel *was* very bitter; and whether bond or free, [e]there was no helper for Israel. 27 [f]And the LORD did not say that He would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven; but He saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash.

28 Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, and all that he did—his might, how he made war, and how he recaptured for Israel, from [g]Damascus and Hamath, [h]*what had belonged* to Judah—*are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 29 So Jeroboam [3]rested with his fathers, the kings of Israel. Then [i]Zechariah his son reigned in his place.

Azariah Reigns in Judah

15 In the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam king of Israel, [a]Azariah the son of Amaziah, king of Judah, [b]became king. 2 He was sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Jecholiah of Jerusalem. 3 And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah had done, 4 [c]except that the [f]high places were not removed; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places. 5 Then the LORD [d]struck the king, so that he was a leper until the day of his [e]death; so he [f]dwelt in an isolated house. And Jotham the king's son *was* over the *royal* house, judging the people of the land.

6 Now the rest of the acts of Azariah, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 7 So Azariah [2]rested with his fathers, and [g]they buried him with his fathers in the City of David. Then Jotham his son reigned in his place.

Zechariah Reigns in Israel

8 In the thirty-eighth year of Azariah king of Judah, [h]Zechariah the son of Jeroboam reigned over Israel in Samaria six months. 9 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, [i]as his fathers had done; he did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin. 10 Then Shallum the son of Jabesh conspired against him, and [j]struck and killed him in front of the people; and he reigned in his place.

11 Now the rest of the acts of Zechariah, indeed they *are* written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

12 This *was* the word of the LORD which He spoke to Jehu, saying, [k]"Your sons shall sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth *generation.*" And so it was.

Shallum Reigns in Israel

13 Shallum the son of Jabesh became king in the thirty-ninth year of [3]Uzziah king of Judah; and he reigned a full month in Samaria. 14 For Menahem the son of Gadi went up from [l]Tirzah,

■ **14:27 blot out the name.** In the ancient Near East names were erased from inscriptions as a sign of rejection or loss of power (Ex. 32:32, 33; Deut. 9:14; 29:20).

■ **14:28 Damascus.** The capital of Syria.

Hamath. That is, "the entrance of Hamath." See note on v. 25.

Judah. David and Solomon had controlled both Damascus and Hamath (2 Sam. 8:6; 1 Kin. 8:65; 2 Chr. 8:3).

book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. See note on 1 Kin. 11:41.

■ **14:29 Zechariah.** On the reign of Zechariah, see 15:8–12.

■ **15:1 In the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam.** That is, 767 B.C., when Amaziah died and Azariah began his independent rule.

■ **15:2 He was sixteen years old.** Azariah, also called Uzziah (15:30, 32, 34; Is. 6:1), was likely co-regent for many years with his father Amaziah, who was captured by Jehoash of Israel (14:13 note).

fifty-two years. That is, 792–740 B.C. Azariah, like Jeroboam II in the north, enjoyed a long reign, though in the end he suffered from a skin disease (v. 5).

■ **15:3 he did what was right in the sight of the LORD.** He followed the dictates of the covenant (1 Kin. 2:3 note).

■ **15:4 the high places were not removed.** Azariah, like his father Amaziah (14:3, 4), is praised, but the praise is qualified because Azariah did not stop worship at the hilltop shrines (1 Kin. 3:2 note).

■ **15:5 leper.** Azariah suffered from some form of skin disease distinct from Hansen's disease (2 Chr. 26:16–21).

Jotham . . . was over the royal house. He held the highest post in the government of Judah (18:18; Is. 22:15–23). Jotham acted as the king when Azariah became incapacitated and became king when Azariah died (vv. 32–38).

■ **15:6 book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah.** See note on 1 Kin. 11:41.

■ **15:7 Jotham.** See vv. 32–38.

■ **15:8 In the thirty-eighth year of Azariah.** That is, 753 B.C. Zechariah was the last king in the dynasty of Jehu (10:30).

■ **15:9 the sins of Jeroboam.** See note on 1 Kin. 12:30.

■ **15:10 Shallum . . . killed him.** Zechariah's death precipitated a long struggle for power that involved a series of revolutions and counter-revolutions. Including Zechariah, Israel had four different kings (Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah) in only thirteen years. These kings did not have the prophetic sanction (cf. Hos. 8:4).

■ **15:11 book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.** See note on 1 Kin. 11:41.

■ **15:13–16** Having usurped the throne of Israel by assassinating Zechariah, Shallum reigns only one month before he himself is killed.

■ **15:13 In the thirty-ninth year of Uzziah.** That is, 752 B.C. Uzziah is also called Azariah (v. 2 note).

■ **15:14 Tirzah.** The former capital of Israel (1 Kin. 14:17; 15:21, 33).

came to Samaria, and struck Shallum the son of Jabesh in Samaria and killed him; and he reigned in his place.

15 Now the rest of the acts of Shallum, and the conspiracy which he [4]led, indeed they *are* written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel. 16 Then from Tirzah, Menahem attacked [m]Tiphsah, all who *were* there, and its territory. Because they did not surrender, therefore he attacked *it.* All [n]the women there who were with child he ripped open.

Menahem Reigns in Israel

17 In the thirty-ninth year of Azariah king of Judah, Menahem the son of Gadi became king over Israel, *and reigned* ten years in Samaria. 18 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD; he did not depart all his days from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin. 19 [o]Pul[5] king of Assyria came against the land; and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver, that his [6]hand might be with him to [p]strengthen the kingdom under his control. 20 And Menahem [q]exacted[7] the money from Israel, from all the very wealthy, from each man fifty shekels of silver, to give to the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria turned back, and did not stay there in the land.

21 Now the rest of the acts of Menahem, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel? 22 So Menahem [8]rested with his fathers. Then Pekahiah his son reigned in his place.

Pekahiah Reigns in Israel

23 In the fiftieth year of Azariah king of Judah, Pekahiah the son of Menahem became king over Israel in Samaria, *and reigned* two years. 24 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD; he did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin. 25 Then Pekah the son of Remaliah, an officer of his, conspired against him and [9]killed him in Samaria, in the

15 [4]Lit. *conspired*

16 [m]1 Kin. 4:24 [n]2 Kin. 8:12; Hos. 13:16

19 [o]1 Chr. 5:26; Is. 66:19; Hos. 8:9 [p]2 Kin. 14:5 [5]Tiglath-Pileser III, v. 29 [6]Support

20 [q]2 Kin. 23:35 [7]*took*

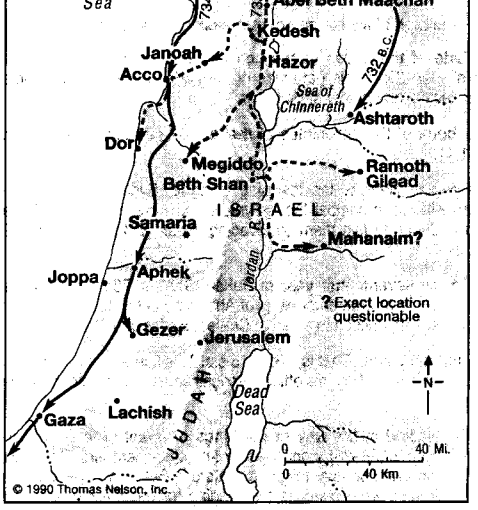
22 [8]Died and joined his ancestors

25 [9]Lit. *struck*

■ **15:15 book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.** See note on 1 Kin. 11:41.

■ **15:16 Tiphsah.** There is a place called Tiphsah on the Euphrates River in the far north (1 Kin. 4:24), but the text probably means "Tappuah" on the border between Manasseh and Ephraim (Josh. 16:8; 17:7, 8).

ripped open. See note on 8:12.



■ **15:17 reigned ten years.** That is, 752–742 B.C.

■ **15:18 the sins of Jeroboam.** See note on 1 Kin. 12:30.

■ **15:19 Pul.** The Babylonian throne name of the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III (745–727 B.C.; cf. 1 Chr. 5:26). The Assyrian Empire was growing stronger. The annals of Tiglath-Pileser III claim that he received tribute from a number of western kings, including Menahem of Samaria.

thousand talents of silver. This sum is consistent with the tribute demanded by other kings during this period.

strengthen the kingdom under his control. Ironically, Menahem uses his vassal relationship with the dreaded Assyrians to consolidate his own rule over Israel. This willing subservience to the Assyrians is decried by the prophet Hosea (Hos. 5:13, 14).

■ **15:20 from each man fifty shekels.** A conversion of the figures indicates that sixty thousand men paying twenty ounces of silver each would have raised the one thousand talents required.

■ **15:21 book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.** See note on 1 Kin. 11:41.

■ **15:23 fiftieth year . . . reigned two years.** That is, 742–740 B.C.

■ **15:24 the sins of Jeroboam.** See note on 1 Kin. 12:31.

■ **15:25 Pekah the son of Remaliah.** A high-ranking official in the northern kingdom, he was evidently part of an anti-Assyrian faction within the northern kingdom (v. 29). He pursued improved relations with the Syrians during his reign as a way to offset Assyrian designs in the west (16:1–9; Is. 7:1).

fifty men of Gilead. Pekah, like the rebels before him (vv. 10, 14), may have been from Gilead. Pekah may have reigned over Gilead before attempting to overthrow Pekahiah in Samaria.

Assyrian Campaigns Against Israel and Judah (734–732 B.C.). Tiglath-Pileser III mounted three separate campaigns. In 734 B.C. he moved along the coast all the way to the Egyptian border. In 733 and 732 he made two invasions into Israel.

25 [r] 1 Kin. 16:18
27 [s] 2 Chr. 28:6; Is. 7:1
29 [t] 2 Kin. 16:7, 10; 1 Chr. 5:26 [u] 1 Kin. 15:20 [v] 2 Kin. 17:6 [f] A later name of *Pul*, v. 19
30 [w] 2 Kin. 17:1; [Hos. 10:3, 7, 15]
32 [x] 2 Chr. 27:1
33 [2] *Jerushah*, 2 Chr. 27:1
34 [y] 2 Kin. 15:3, 4; 2 Chr. 26:4, 5
35 [z] 2 Kin. 15:4 [a] 2 Chr. 23:20; 27:3 [3] Places for pagan worship
37 [b] 2 Kin. 16:5–9; Is. 7:1–17 [c] 2 Kin. 15:26, 27
38 [4] Died and joined his ancestors

CHAPTER 16

3 [a] [Lev. 18:21]; 2 Kin. 17:17; 2 Chr. 28:3; Ps. 106:37, 38; Is. 1:1

[r] citadel of the king's house, along with Argob and Arieh; and with him were fifty men of Gilead. He killed him and reigned in his place.

26 Now the rest of the acts of Pekahiah, and all that he did, indeed they *are* written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

Pekah Reigns in Israel

27 In the fifty-second year of Azariah king of Judah, [s] Pekah the son of Remaliah became king over Israel in Samaria, *and reigned* twenty years. 28 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD; he did not depart from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin. 29 In the days of Pekah king of Israel, [t] Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria [u] came and took [u] Ijon, Abel Beth Maachah, Janoah, Kedesh, Hazor, Gilead, and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali; and he [v] carried them captive to Assyria. 30 Then Hoshea the son of Elah led a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Remaliah, and struck and killed him; so he [w] reigned in his place in the twentieth year of Jotham the son of Uzziah.

31 Now the rest of the acts of Pekah, and all that he did, indeed they *are* written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.

Jotham Reigns in Judah

32 In the second year of Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, [x] Jotham the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, began to reign. 33 He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* [2] Jerusha the daughter of Zadok. 34 And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD; he did [y] according to all that his father Uzziah had done. 35 [z] However the [3] high places were not removed; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places. [a] He built the Upper Gate of the house of the LORD.

36 Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 37 In those days the LORD began to send [b] Rezin king of Syria and [c] Pekah the son of Remaliah against Judah. 38 So Jotham [4] rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David his father. Then Ahaz his son reigned in his place.

Ahaz Reigns in Judah

16 In the seventeenth year of Pekah the son of Remaliah, Ahaz the son of Jotham, king of Judah, began to reign. 2 Ahaz *was* twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem; and he did not do *what was* right in the sight of the LORD his God, as his father David *had done.* 3 But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel; indeed [a] he

■ **15:26 book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.** See note on 1 Kin. 11:41.

■ **15:27–31** Having assassinated Pekahiah, Pekah succeeds him as king of Israel. The king of Assyria captures part of Israel's territory during Pekah's reign.

■ **15:27 In the fifty-second year of Azariah.** That is, 740 B.C.

twenty years. That is, 752–732 B.C. The chronology of Pekah's rule is difficult to establish. It is possible that he led a rebellion during the politically unstable reign of Menehem (vv. 17–22) and that his reign is calculated from this point (v. 25 note).

■ **15:28 the sins of Jeroboam.** See note on 1 Kin. 12:30.

■ **15:29 Tiglath-Pileser.** That is, Tiglath-Pileser III. All the cities and areas listed are in the northern part of the Israelite kingdom. During his campaign of 733–732 B.C., Tiglath-Pileser also ravaged Syria and captured its capital, Damascus (16:9).

carried them captive to Assyria. As is remarked in 10:32, God was reducing Israel in land and population.

■ **15:30 in the twentieth year of Jotham.** That is, 732 B.C. For the reign of Hoshea, see 17:1–6.

■ **15:31 book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.** See note on 1 Kin. 11:41.

■ **15:32 In the second year of Pekah.** That is, 750 B.C.

■ **15:33 He was twenty-five years old.** Jotham was likely co-regent with his father Azariah (Uzziah) for the first ten years of his reign (v. 2 note).

sixteen years. That is, 750–735 B.C.

■ **15:34 he did what was right in the sight of the LORD.** He was loyal to the covenant (1 Kin. 2:3 note).

■ **15:35 the high places were not removed.** See note on 1 Kin. 3:2.

Upper Gate of the house of the LORD. Also called the "high gate of Benjamin" (Jer. 20:2), this gate was in the northern part of the temple complex, facing the territory of Benjamin.

■ **15:36 book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah.** See note on 1 Kin. 11:41.

■ **15:37 Rezin.** He was the last king of Syria. Syria and Israel had forged an alliance to combat the Assyrians and were prepared to force the king of Judah to join them by invading Judah (v. 29 note; 16:5–12 and notes).

■ **16:1 In the seventeenth year of Pekah.** That is, 735 B.C. Scholars disagree over the precise chronology of Ahaz's reign (cf. 15:33, 37; 17:1; 18:1; and also Introduction to 1 Kings: Characteristics and Themes).

■ **16:2 sixteen years.** That is, 732–715 B.C. This figure would represent the length of his reign from his official recognition as king of Judah by the Assyrians.

■ **16:3 he walked in the way of the kings of Israel.** The sin of Jeroboam I (1 Kin. 12:26–33), continued by all subsequent Israelite kings, was the construction of ritual religious centers in Bethel and Dan. These northern cult sites were conduits for bringing foreign religions into the

made his son pass through the fire, according to the [b]abominations of the nations whom the LORD had cast out from before the children of Israel. 4 And he sacrificed and burned incense on the [c]high places, [d]on the hills, and under every green tree.

5 [e]Then Rezin king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, came up to Jerusalem to *make* war; and they besieged Ahaz but could not overcome *him.* 6 At that time Rezin king of Syria [f]captured [1]Elath for Syria, and drove the men of Judah from Elath. Then the [2]Edomites went to Elath, and dwell there to this day.

7 So Ahaz sent messengers to [g]Tiglath-Pileser[3] king of Assyria, saying, "I *am* your servant and your son. Come up and save me from the hand of the king of Syria and from the hand of the king of Israel, who rise up against me." 8 And Ahaz [h]took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the LORD, and in the treasuries of the king's house, and sent *it as* a present to the king of Assyria. 9 So the king of Assyria heeded him; for the king of Assyria went up against [i]Damascus and [j]took it, carried *its people* captive to [k]Kir, and killed Rezin.

10 Now King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria, and saw an altar that *was* at Damascus; and King Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the design of the altar and its pattern, according to all its workmanship. 11 Then [l]Urijah the priest built an altar according to all that King Ahaz had sent from Damascus. So Urijah the priest made *it* before King Ahaz came back from Damascus. 12 And when the king came back from Damascus, the king saw the altar; and [m]the king approached the altar and made offerings on it. 13 So he burned his burnt offering and his grain offering; and he poured his drink offering and sprinkled the blood of his peace offerings on the altar. 14 He also brought [n]the bronze altar which *was* before the LORD, from the front of the [4]temple—from between the *new* altar and the house of the LORD—and put it on the north side of the *new* altar. 15 Then King Ahaz commanded Urijah the priest, saying, "On the great *new* altar burn [o]the morning burnt offering, the evening grain offering, the king's burnt sacrifice, and his grain offering, with the burnt offering of all the people of the land, their grain offering, and their drink offerings; and sprinkle on it all the blood of the burnt offering and all the blood of the sacrifice. And the bronze altar shall be for me to inquire *by.*" 16 Thus did Urijah the priest, according to all that King Ahaz commanded.

17 [p]And King Ahaz cut off [q]the panels of the carts, and removed the lavers from them; and he took down [r]the Sea from the bronze oxen that *were* under it, and put it on a pavement of stones. 18 Also he removed the Sabbath pavilion which they had built in the temple, and he removed the king's outer entrance from the house of the LORD, on account of the king of Assyria.

19 Now the rest of the acts of Ahaz which he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 20 So Ahaz rested with his fathers, and [s]was buried with his fathers in the City of David. Then Hezekiah his son reigned in his place.

3 [b][Deut. 12:31]; 2 Kin. 21:2, 11

4 [c]2 Kin. 15:34, 35 [d][Deut. 12:2]; 1 Kin. 14:23

5 [e]2 Kin. 15:37; Is. 7:1, 4

6 [f]2 Kin. 14:22; 2 Chr. 26:2 [1]Lit. *Large Tree;* sing. of *Eloth* [2]A few ancient mss. *Syrians*

7 [g]2 Kin. 15:29; 1 Chr. 5:26; 2 Chr. 28:20 [3]A later name of *Pul,* 2 Kin. 15:19

8 [h]2 Kin. 12:17, 18; 2 Chr. 28:21

9 [i]2 Kin. 14:28 [j]Amos 1:5 [k]Is. 22:6; Amos 9:7

11 [l]Is. 8:2

12 [m]2 Chr. 26:16, 19

14 [n]Ex. 27:1, 2; 40:6, 29; 2 Chr. 4:1 [4]Lit. *house*

15 [o]Ex. 29:39–41

17 [p]2 Chr. 28:24 [q]1 Kin. 7:27–29 [r]1 Kin. 7:23–25

20 [s]2 Chr. 28:27

northern kingdom. In the southern kingdom, Ahaz built a foreign altar in Jerusalem. Like Jeroboam I, Ahaz officiated at inaugural sacrifices for the new altar (vv. 10–13; 1 Kin. 12:32, 33).

made his son pass through the fire. The atrocity of child sacrifice was practiced by some of Judah's neighbors, although it was outlawed by the law of Moses (Lev. 18:21; Deut. 18:10; cf. 2 Kin. 3:27). Ahaz was not the only Judean king who disobeyed this law (21:6; 23:10; Jer. 7:31; 32:35).

the abominations of the nations. In its behavior, Judah was becoming indistinguishable from the nations that God drove out of Canaan so that the Israelites could inhabit the land. The people were betraying their sacred calling to be "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex. 19:6).

■ **16:5 Rezin . . . and Pekah.** The Israelite and Syrian kings wanted to bring Judah forcibly under their control so that they could make a united front against Assyria (15:19, 25, 37). Into this crisis stepped the prophet Isaiah, who counseled the irresolute Ahaz (Is. 7:1–17).

■ **16:6 Rezin . . . captured Elath.** This undid Azariah's earlier victory (14:22).

Edomites went to Elath. Edom exploited Judah's defeat for its own gain.

to this day. See note on 1 Kin. 8:8.

■ **16:7 Tiglath-Pileser.** See notes on 15:19, 29.

■ **16:8 Ahaz took the silver and gold.** Ahaz, like a number of kings before him, attempted to buy security with a large tribute payment given as a bribe to a foreign power (12:18; Ex. 23:8; Deut. 16:19; 1 Kin. 15:18; Is. 5:23; Ezek. 22:12). A list from Assyria of rulers who brought tribute to Tiglath-Pileser in 734 B.C. includes the name of "Jehoahaz of Judah" (Ahaz).

■ **16:9 carried its people captive to Kir.** The destruction of Syria fulfilled prophecies of both Isaiah (Is. 7:16) and Amos (Amos 1:5). The exact location of Kir is not known (Is. 22:6; Amos 9:7).

■ **16:13 peace offerings.** See Lev. 7:11–21. Most of these sacrifices were also offered at the dedication of the temple under Solomon (1 Kin. 8:64). Ahaz considered the construction of this foreign altar to be of great importance for his kingdom.

■ **16:15 morning burnt offering.** See Ex. 29:38, 39.

evening grain offering. See note on 1 Kin. 18:29.

king's burnt sacrifice, and his grain offering. See Ezek. 46:12.

the bronze altar shall be for me to inquire by. Ahaz perverted the old altar from its normal use and instead employed it for divination, a foreign practice in which priests tried to tell the future by examining the entrails of sacrificial animals. Divination was rigorously outlawed in Israel (Lev. 19:26; Deut. 18:10).

■ **16:17 panels . . . and . . . lavers.** See 1 Kin. 7:27–37.

Sea. See 1 Kin. 7:22–26.

bronze oxen. Ahaz probably used the bronze to pay tribute to Assyria.

■ **16:19 book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah.** See note on 1 Kin. 11:41.

■ **16:20 Hezekiah.** For his reign, see chs. 18—20.

CHAPTER 17

1 [a]2 Kin. 15:30
3 [b]2 Kin. 18:9–12 [c]2 Kin. 24:1
5 [d]2 Kin. 18:9; Hos. 13:16
6 [e]2 Kin. 18:10, 11; Is. 7:7–9; Hos. 1:4; 13:16; Amos 4:2 [f]Lev. 26:32, 33; [Deut. 28:36, 64; 29:27, 28] [g]1 Chr. 5:26
7 [h][Josh. 23:16] [i]Judg. 6:10
8 [j][Lev. 18:3; Deut. 18:9]; 2 Kin. 16:3

Hoshea Reigns in Israel

17 In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah, [a]Hoshea the son of Elah became king of Israel in Samaria, *and he reigned* nine years. 2 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, but not as the kings of Israel who were before him. 3 [b]Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against him; and Hoshea [c]became his vassal, and paid him tribute money. 4 And the king of Assyria uncovered a conspiracy by Hoshea; for he had sent messengers to So, king of Egypt, and brought no tribute to the king of Assyria, as *he had done* year by year. Therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison.

Israel Carried Captive to Assyria

5 Now [d]the king of Assyria went throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria and besieged it for three years. 6 [e]In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria and [f]carried Israel away to Assyria, [g]and placed them in Halah and by the Habor, the River of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes.

7 For [h]so it was that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and they had [i]feared other gods, 8 and [j]had walked in the statutes of the nations whom the LORD had cast out from before the children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made. 9 Also the children of Israel secretly did against the LORD their God things that *were* not right,

■ **17:1–6** This section narrates the reign of Hoshea, the last king of Israel. In 722 B.C. the king of Assyria conquered Samaria and deported the people of Israel to Assyria.

■ **17:1 Ahaz.** The synchronism with Ahaz's reign is difficult to unravel. See 16:1 and note.

Hoshea . . . reigned nine years. That is, 732–723 B.C., ending with his imprisonment for three years preceding the fall of Samaria (vv. 4, 5).

■ **17:3 Shalmaneser.** Shalmaneser V, who succeeded Tiglath-Pileser III as king of Assyria, ruled from 727–722 B.C. Hoshea, unlike his predecessor Pekah (15:27–31 and notes), was a vassal of Assyria.

■ **17:4 So, king of Egypt.** "So" may be the name of a place in the eastern delta of Egypt, where the king of Egypt was. Switching his allegiance, Hoshea hoped that Egypt would protect him from any Assyrian reprisals. The prophet Hosea condemns this diplomacy as "without sense" (Hos. 7:11).

brought no tribute to the king of Assyria. Withholding tribute from a suzerain (overlord) was tantamount to rebellion.

■ **17:5 besieged it for three years.** The Assyrian campaign followed the arrest of Hoshea in 724/23 B.C. During this long siege, Shalmaneser V died and was succeeded by Sargon II (Is. 20:1), who exiled the inhabitants of Samaria (v. 6).

■ **17:6 In the ninth year of Hoshea.** That is, 722/21 B.C. The figure given ("ninth year") counts his reign from 730, perhaps because his having the Assyrians as sponsors delayed his official recognition. Another possibility is that it leaves out the three years he was in prison.

the king of Assyria. Sargon II, who ruled Assyria 722–705 B.C.

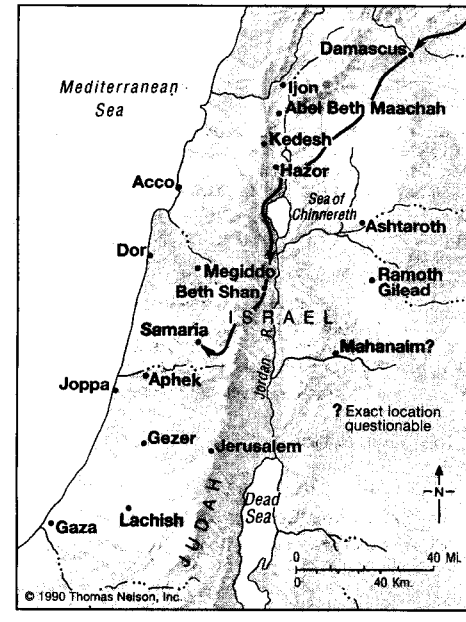
carried Israel away. Sargon II claims in his annals to have deported 27,290 inhabitants to distant locations. The capture of Samaria marked the end of the northern kingdom (1 Chr. 5:25, 26). It never rose again (vv. 7–23 and notes). Archaeological evidence suggests that many people fled Israel during the succession of Assyrian attacks on the north and settled in Judah. This influx of northern refugees significantly increased the population of Jerusalem during the late eighth and early seventh century B.C.

Gozan. This Assyrian provincial capital was near the Habor River, a northern tributary of the Euphrates.

cities of the Medes. Though not identified by name, they were probably in the area northeast of the Tigris River and south of the Caspian Sea.

■ **17:8 statutes.** Not only did Israel imitate the practices of its pagan neighbors (Ex. 34:15; Deut. 18:9; Judg. 2:13), but it also followed the cultic innovations of its wayward kings (1 Kin. 12:26–33; 16:30–34).

■ **17:9 high places.** See note on 1 Kin. 3:2.



Assyrian Campaigns Against Israel (725 B.C.). In 725 B.C. Shalmaneser V invaded Israel and marched on Samaria. After a three-year siege Samaria finally fell in 722 B.C. Sargon II, successor to Shalmaneser, claimed the credit for the Assyrian victory.

and they built for themselves [l]high places in all their cities, [k]from watchtower to fortified city. 10 [l]They set up for themselves *sacred* pillars and [m]wooden images[2] [n]on every high hill and under every green tree. 11 There they burned incense on all the high places, like the nations whom the LORD had carried away before them; and they did wicked things to provoke the LORD to anger, 12 for they served idols, [o]of which the LORD had said to them, [p]"You shall not do this thing."

13 Yet the LORD testified against Israel and against Judah, by all of His [q]prophets, [r]every seer, saying, [s]"Turn from your evil ways, and keep My commandments *and* My statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by My servants the prophets." 14 Nevertheless they would not hear, but [t]stiffened their necks, like the necks of their fathers, who [u]did not believe in the LORD their God. 15 And they [v]rejected His statutes [w]and His covenant that He had made with their fathers, and His testimonies which He had testified against them; they followed [x]idols, [y]became idolaters, and *went* after the nations who *were* all around them, *concerning* whom the LORD had charged them that they should [z]not do like them. 16 So they left all the commandments of the LORD their God, [a]made for themselves a molded image *and* two calves, [b]made a wooden image and worshiped all the [c]host of heaven, [d]and served Baal. 17 [e]And they caused their sons and daughters to pass through the fire, [f]practiced witchcraft and soothsaying, and [g]sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger. 18 Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them from His sight; there was none left [h]but the tribe of Judah alone.

19 Also [i]Judah did not keep the commandments of the LORD their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made. 20 And the LORD rejected all the descendants of Israel, afflicted them, and [j]delivered them into the hand of plunderers, until He had cast them from His [k]sight. 21 For [l]He tore Israel from the house of David, and [m]they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king. Then Jeroboam drove Israel from following the LORD, and made them commit a great sin. 22 For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they did not depart from them, 23 until the LORD removed Israel out of His sight, [n]as He had said by all His servants the prophets. [o]So Israel was carried away from their own land to Assyria, *as it is* to this day.

Assyria Resettles Samaria

24 [p]Then the king of Assyria brought *people* from Babylon, Cuthah, [q]Ava, Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed *them* in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel; and they took possession of Samaria and dwelt in its cities. 25 And it was so, at the beginning of their dwelling there, *that* they did not fear the LORD; therefore the LORD sent lions among them, which killed *some* of them. 26 So they spoke to the king of Assyria, saying, "The nations whom you

9 [k]2 Kin. 18:8 [l]Places for pagan worship

10 [l]Is. 57:5 [m][Ex. 34:12–14] [n][Deut. 12:2] [2]Heb. *Asherim*, Canaanite deities

12 [o][Ex. 20:3–5] [p][Deut. 4:19]

13 [q]Neh. 9:29, 30 [r]1 Sam. 9:9 [s][Jer. 18:11; 25:5; 35:15]

14 [t][Acts 7:51] [u]Deut. 9:23

15 [v]Jer. 44:3 [w]Deut. 29:25 [x]Deut. 32:21 [y][Rom. 1:21–23] [z][Deut. 12:30, 31]

16 [a]1 Kin. 12:28 [b][1 Kin. 14:15] [c][Deut. 4:19] [d]1 Kin. 16:31; 22:53

17 [e]2 Kin. 16:3 [f][Deut. 18:10–12] [g]1 Kin. 21:20

18 [h]1 Kin. 11:13, 32

19 [i]Jer. 3:8

20 [j]2 Kin. 13:3; 15:29 [k]2 Kin. 24:20

21 [l]1 Kin. 11:11, 31 [m]1 Kin. 12:20, 28

23 [n]1 Kin. 14:16 [o]2 Kin. 17:6

24 [p]Ezra 4:2, 10 [q]2 Kin. 18:34

■ **17:10 sacred pillars.** See note on 1 Kin. 14:23.

wooden images. See note on 1 Kin. 14:15.

on every high hill and under every green tree. See Deut. 12:2; Jer. 2:20; 3:6, 13; 17:2.

■ **17:12 idols.** Any representation of a pagan deity or of the Lord was expressly forbidden (Ex. 20:4; Deut. 4:15–19, 23–28).

■ **17:13 all the law.** That is, the Mosaic law with all the provisions of the covenant (1 Kin. 2:3 note).

■ **17:16 a molded image and two calves.** The religious idols of Jeroboam I at Bethel and Dan (1 Kin. 12:28, 29) were in part modeled on the construction of the golden calf by Aaron (Ex. 32:4, 8; Deut. 9:12, 16; Hos. 13:2).

the host of heaven. Although condemned in the Mosaic law (Deut. 4:19; 17:3), some Israelites participated in such astral cults (21:5; 23:4, 5; Amos 5:26).

served Baal. See 1 Kin. 16:31, 32.

■ **17:17 caused their sons and daughters to pass through the fire.** See notes on 3:27; 16:3.

witchcraft and soothsaying. See note on 16:15.

■ **17:19 the statutes of Israel which they made.** See 8:18; 11:18–21.

■ **17:20 the LORD rejected all the descendants of Israel.** God's rejection was demonstrated by their exile from the land He had given them (v. 6).

■ **17:21 He tore Israel from the house of David.** The creation of the northern kingdom was a punishment against Solomon (1 Kin. 11:11–13), but it also was a promising beginning for the northern tribes (1 Kin. 11:29–39).

made them commit a great sin. The reference is to Jeroboam's fashioning of two calves at Bethel and Dan (1 Kin. 12:25–33; 14:7–16 and notes).

■ **17:24 king of Assyria.** This king was most likely Sargon II. As the Assyrians deported people from Israel, they imported people from other countries. This policy was intended to ensure that the defeated nation would not reassert itself. Assyrian records attest that later Assyrian kings brought more foreign immigrants to Samaria.

Babylon, Cuthah. At this point Babylon was under Assyrian control. Cuthah was about eight miles northeast of Babylon.

Ava, Hamath, and . . . Sepharvaim. Ava or "Ivah" and Sepharvaim were probably in Syria (18:34; 19:13). Hamath was on the Orontes River (cf. 14:25 note).

Samaria. After its fall to the Assyrians, the region of the former northern kingdom of Israel is usually called "Samaria" (1 Kin. 16:24 note).

■ **17:25 lions among them.** Lions were often used by God as an instrument of judgment (1 Kin. 13:24; 20:36; Amos 3:12).

■ **17:26 the rituals of the God of the land.** The Assyrians, like many other peoples in the ancient Near East, believed that the gods of a particular land would trouble the people who lived there if they failed to perform the appropriate rituals for those gods.

have removed and placed in the cities of Samaria do not know the rituals of the God of the land; therefore He has sent lions among them, and indeed, they are killing them because they do not know the rituals of the God of the land." 27 Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying, "Send there one of the priests whom you brought from there; let him go and dwell there, and let him teach them the rituals of the God of the land." 28 Then one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in Bethel, and taught them how they should fear the LORD.

29 However every nation continued to make gods of its own, and put *them* [r]in the shrines on the high places which the Samaritans had made, *every* nation in the cities where they dwelt. 30 The men of [s]Babylon made Succoth Benoth, the men of Cuth made Nergal, the men of Hamath made Ashima, 31 [t]and the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak; and the Sepharvites [u]burned their children in fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech, the gods of Sepharvaim. 32 So they feared the LORD, [v]and from every class they appointed for themselves priests of the [3]high places, who sacrificed for them in the shrines of the high places. 33 [w]They feared the LORD, yet served their own gods—according to the rituals of the nations from among whom they were carried away.

34 To this day they continue practicing the former rituals; they do not fear the LORD, nor do they follow their statutes or their ordinances, or the law and commandment which the LORD had commanded the children of Jacob, [x]whom He named Israel, 35 with whom the LORD had made a covenant and charged them, saying: [y]"You shall not fear other gods, nor [z]bow down to them nor serve them nor sacrifice to them; 36 but the LORD, who [a]brought you up from the land of Egypt with great power and [b]an outstretched arm, [c]Him you shall fear, Him you shall worship, and to Him you shall offer sacrifice. 37 And the statutes, the ordinances, the law, and the commandment which He wrote for you, [d]you shall be careful to observe forever; you shall not fear other gods. 38 And the covenant that I have made with you, [e]you shall not forget, nor shall you fear other gods. 39 But the LORD your God you shall fear; and He will deliver you from the hand of all your enemies." 40 However they did not obey, but they followed their former rituals. 41 [f]So these nations feared the LORD, yet served their carved images; also their children and their children's children have continued doing as their fathers did, even to this day.

Hezekiah Reigns in Judah

18 Now it came to pass in the third year of [a]Hoshea the son of Elah, king of Israel, *that* [b]Hezekiah the son of Ahaz, king of Judah, began to reign. 2 He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* [c]Abi[1] the daughter of Zechariah. 3 And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father David had done.

4 [d]He removed the [2]high places and broke the *sacred* pillars, cut down the [3]wooden image and broke in pieces the [e]bronze serpent that Moses had made; for until those days the children of Israel burned incense to it, and called it [4]Nehushtan. 5 He [f]trusted in the LORD God of Israel, [g]so

29 [r]1 Kin. 12:31; 13:32

30 [s]2 Kin. 17:24

31 [t]Ezra 4:9 [u][Lev. 18:21; Deut. 12:31]

32 [v]1 Kin. 12:31; 13:33 [3]Places for pagan worship

33 [w]Zeph. 1:5

34 [x]Gen. 32:28; 35:10

35 [y]Judg. 6:10 [z][Ex. 20:5]

36 [a]Ex. 14:15–30 [b]Ex. 6:6; 9:15 [c][Deut. 10:20]

37 [d]Deut. 5:32

38 [e]Deut. 4:23; 6:12

41 [f]2 Kin. 17:32, 33

CHAPTER 18

1 [a]2 Kin. 17:1 [b]2 Chr. 28:27; 29:1

2 [c]Is. 38:5 [1]*Abijah,* 2 Chr. 29:1ff.

4 [d]2 Chr. 31:1 [e]Num. 21:5–9 [2]Places for pagan worship [3]Heb. *Asherah,* a Canaanite goddess [4]Lit. *Bronze Thing,* also similar to Heb. *nahash, serpent*

5 [f]2 Kin. 19:10; [Job 13:15; Ps. 13:5] [g]2 Kin. 23:25

■ **17:29 gods of its own.** Bringing back an Israelite priest to serve at Bethel did not oblige the immigrants settling in Samaria to follow the local religion. On the contrary, they continued to follow their own religious practices, taking over local sanctuaries and worshiping there.

the Samaritans. See 23:19; 1 Kin. 12:31; 13:32. Although the expression "Samaritans" appears only here in the Old Testament, it occurs in extrabiblical documents as early as the eighth century B.C. referring to the residents of the northern kingdom.

■ **17:33 served their own gods.** The religion was syncretistic—it combined elements of the worship of the Lord with the worship of many other deities.

■ **17:34 To this day.** See note on 1 Kin. 8:8.

the children of Jacob, whom He named Israel. The relationship between God and the people He elected was the covenant ratified on Mount Sinai (v. 35; Ex. 19—24) and renewed on the plains of Moab (Deuteronomy). Being an Israelite was in the end not an ethnic classification, but a religious one, to belong to the God of the covenant (Ex. 12:38; Deut. 26:5; Rom. 9:8).

■ **17:39 He will deliver you from the hand of all your enemies.** Just as God had delivered His people in the past, He could do so again in the future (Ex. 20:2; 23:22; Deut. 20:1–4; 23:14).

■ **17:41 to this day.** See note on 1 Kin. 8:8. Despite the Assyrian conquest and its aftermath, some of the "Samaritans" and their descendants continued to embrace monotheism and to follow the Sinaitic covenant throughout the biblical period and even into modern times.

■ **18:1 in the third year of Hoshea.** That is, 729 B.C., referring to the beginning of Hezekiah's reign as co-regent with his father Ahaz (cf. 16:1; 17:1, and Introduction to 1 Kings: Characteristics and Themes).

■ **18:2 twenty-nine years.** His reign as sole king of Judah lasted from 715–686 B.C.

■ **18:3 he did what was right in the sight of the LORD.** Hezekiah is one of the most highly praised kings in the entire history of Judah (vv. 4, 7 notes).

his father David. On David's reign as the standard by which all other reigns are judged, see note on 1 Kin. 11:4.

■ **18:4 He removed the high places.** Hezekiah, unlike earlier Judean kings of Judah, reformed the people's worship by destroying the local shrines (1 Kin. 3:2 note).

sacred pillars . . . wooden image. See notes on 1 Kin. 14:15, 23.

the bronze serpent. Originally preserved to commemorate God's mercy to the Israelites when they were in the wilderness (Num. 21:6–9), this bronze serpent had become in itself an object of worship, hence an idol (cf. John 3:14, 15).

that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor who were before him. 6 For he [h]held fast to the LORD; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the LORD had commanded Moses. 7 The LORD [i]was with him; he [j]prospered wherever he went. And he [k]rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him. 8 [l]He [5]subdued the Philistines, as far as Gaza and its territory, [m]from watchtower to fortified city.

9 Now [n]it came to pass in the fourth year of King Hezekiah, which *was* the seventh year of Hoshea the son of Elah, king of Israel, *that* Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria and besieged it. 10 And at the end of three years they took it. In the sixth year of Hezekiah, that *is,* [o]the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken. 11 [p]Then the king of Assyria carried Israel away captive to Assyria, and put them [q]in Halah and by the Habor, the River of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes, 12 because they [r]did not obey the voice of the LORD their God, but transgressed His covenant *and* all that Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded; and they would neither hear nor do *them.*

13 And [s]in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them. 14 Then Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria at Lachish, saying, "I have done wrong; turn away from me; whatever you impose on me I will pay." And the king of Assyria assessed Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. 15 So Hezekiah [t]gave *him* all the silver that was found in the house of the LORD and in the treasuries of the king's house. 16 At that time Hezekiah stripped *the gold from* the doors of the temple of the LORD, and *from* the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave [6]it to the king of Assyria.

6 [h]Deut. 10:20

7 [i][2 Chr. 15:2] [j]1 Sam. 18:5, 14 [k]2 Kin. 16:7

8 [l]Is. 14:29 [m]2 Kin. 17:9 [5]Lit. *struck*

9 [n]2 Kin. 17:3

10 [o]2 Kin. 17:6

11 [p]2 Kin. 17:6 [q]1 Chr. 5:26

12 [r]2 Kin. 17:7–18

13 [s]2 Chr. 32:1

15 [t]2 Kin. 12:18; 16:8

16 [6]Lit. *them*

17 [7]A title, probably *Commander in Chief* [8]A title, probably *Chief Officer* [9]A title, probably *Chief of Staff* or *Governor*

Sennacherib Boasts Against the LORD

17 Then the king of Assyria sent *the* [7]Tartan, *the* [8]Rabsaris, *and the* [9]Rabshakeh from Lachish, with a great army against Jerusalem, to King Hezekiah. And they went up and came to

■ **18:7 he rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him.** Hezekiah's father Ahaz had been a vassal of Assyria and modified temple arrangements to reflect this fact (16:7–18). Hezekiah's rebellion against the Assyrians probably involved withholding tribute from them.

■ **18:8 He subdued the Philistines.** During Ahaz's reign the Philistines were able to capture Judean territory (2 Chr. 28:18).

Gaza and its territory. Gaza was near the Mediterranean coast; Hezekiah had penetrated far into Philistine territory.

■ **18:9–37** The Assyrians invade Judah and, advancing to Jerusalem, demand Judah's surrender.

■ **18:9–12** The writer provides a summary of the fall of Samaria narrated and commented upon more fully in ch. 17. In so doing, he underscores the threat Assyria poses to Judah.

■ **18:13—20:19** The story of Sennacherib's campaign and its aftermath is found also in Is. 36—39, with a few additions and omissions.

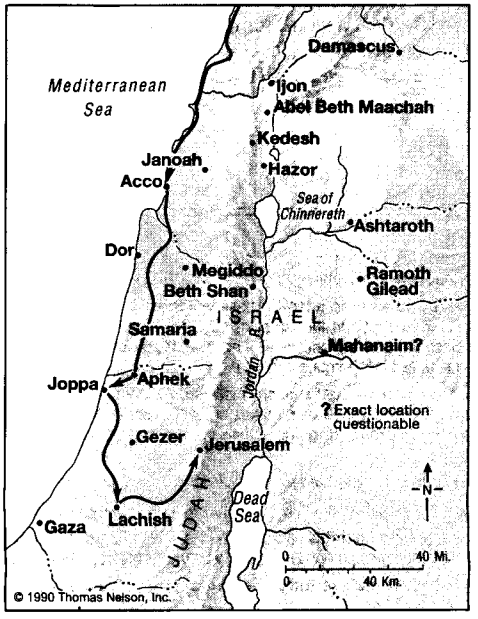
■ **18:13 In the fourteenth year.** 701 B.C., dated from the beginning of his independent reign (vv. 1, 2 and notes).

Sennacherib king of Assyria. Sennacherib succeeded Sargon II in 705 B.C.

came up against all the fortified cities of Judah. The annals of Sennacherib record his campaign against Phoenicia, Judah, the Philistine cities, and Egypt. He claims to have taken forty-six cities and "countless small villages." He also boasts of having shut up Hezekiah in Jerusalem "like a bird in a cage." His annals, however, do not claim that Sennacherib captured Jerusalem (Mic. 1:9 and note).

■ **18:14–16** Hezekiah attempts to convince Sennacherib to withdraw by offering a huge tribute payment (v. 7 note). In using temple and palace treasuries to influence the actions of a foreign king, Hezekiah follows the example of Asa (1 Kin. 15:18) and his own father Ahaz (16:8, 9). The annals of Sennacherib confirm that Hezekiah sent tribute at this time.

■ **18:17 the king of Assyria sent.** Some scholars believe that this refers to a second campaign of Sennacherib against Hezekiah about



Assyrian Campaign Against Judah (701 B.C.). In 701 B.C. Sennacherib moved southward along the coastal plains, defeated an Egyptian army, and overturned a plot against Assyria. Using Lachish as his camp, he then moved against Jerusalem, but did not capture the city.

Jerusalem. When they had come up, they went and stood by the [u]aqueduct from the upper pool, [v]which *was* on the highway to the Fuller's Field. 18 And when they had called to the king, [w]Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who *was* over the household, Shebna the [1]scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came out to them. 19 Then *the* Rabshakeh said to them, "Say now to Hezekiah, 'Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria: [x]"What confidence *is* this in which you trust? 20 You speak of *having* plans and power for war; but *they are* [2]mere words. And in whom do you trust, that you rebel against me? 21 [y]Now look! You are trusting in the staff of this broken reed, Egypt, on which if a man leans, it will go into his hand and pierce it. So *is* Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who trust in him. 22 But if you say to me, 'We trust in the LORD our God,' *is* it not He [z]whose [3]high places and whose altars Hezekiah has taken away, and said to Judah and Jerusalem, 'You shall worship before this altar in Jerusalem'?" ' 23 Now therefore, I urge you, give a pledge to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give you two thousand horses—if you are able on your part to put riders on them! 24 How then will you repel one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put your trust in Egypt for chariots and horsemen? 25 Have I now come up without the LORD against this place to destroy it? The LORD said to me, 'Go up against this land, and destroy it.' "

26 [a]Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, Shebna, and Joah said to *the* Rabshakeh, "Please speak to your servants in [b]Aramaic, for we understand *it;* and do not speak to us in [4]Hebrew in the hearing of the people who *are* on the wall."

27 But *the* Rabshakeh said to them, "Has my master sent me to your master and to you to speak these words, and not to the men who sit on the wall, who will eat and drink their own waste with you?"

28 Then *the* Rabshakeh stood and called out with a loud voice in [5]Hebrew, and spoke, saying, "Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria! 29 Thus says the king: [c]'Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he shall not be able to deliver you from his hand; 30 nor let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, "The LORD will surely deliver us; this city shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria." ' 31 Do not listen to Hezekiah; for thus says the king of Assyria: 'Make *peace* with me [6]by a present and come out to me; and every one of you eat from his own [d]vine and every one from his own fig tree, and every one of you drink the waters of his own cistern; 32 until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, [e]a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive groves and honey, that you may live and not die. But do not listen to Hezekiah, lest he persuade you, saying, "The LORD will deliver us." 33 [f]Has any of the gods of the nations at all delivered its land from the hand of the king of Assyria? 34 Where *are* the gods of [g]Hamath and Arpad? Where *are* the gods of Sepharvaim and Hena and [h]Ivah? Indeed, have they delivered Samaria from my hand? 35 Who among all the gods of the lands have delivered their countries from my hand, [i]that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?' "

36 But the people held their peace and answered him not a word; for the king's commandment was, "Do not answer him." 37 Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who *was* over the household, Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came to Hezekiah [j]with *their* clothes torn, and told him the words of *the* Rabshakeh.

17 [u]2 Kin. 20:20 [v]Is. 7:3

18 [w]2 Kin. 19:2; Is. 22:20 [1]*secretary*

19 [x]2 Chr. 32:10; [Ps. 118:8, 9]

20 [2]Lit. *a word of the lips*

21 [y]Is. 30:2–7; Ezek. 29:6, 7

22 [z]2 Kin. 18:4; 2 Chr. 31:1; 32:12 [3]Places for pagan worship

26 [a]Is. 36:11—39:8 [b]Ezra 4:7; Dan. 2:4 [4]Lit. *Judean*

28 [5]Lit. *Judean*

29 [c]2 Chr. 32:15

31 [d]1 Kin. 4:20, 25 [6]By paying tribute

32 [e]Deut. 8:7–9; 11:12

33 [f]2 Kin. 19:12; Is. 10:10, 11

34 [g]2 Kin. 19:13 [h]2 Kin. 17:24

35 [i]Dan. 3:15

37 [j]Is. 33:7

twelve to thirteen years after the first. While this view is possible, there is no solid evidence to support it and, in any event, it is unnecessary. Sennacherib's annals consistently report that Sennacherib not only demanded tribute from kings who "did not bow in submission to my yoke," but also insisted on deposing such rebellious kings and replacing them with monarchs of his own choosing. Hezekiah only sends tribute; he does not abdicate (vv. 14–16).

Lachish. This Judean fortress was located twenty-eight miles southwest of Jerusalem (cf. Mic. 1:13).

■ **18:18** The three Assyrian officials confer with three Judean officials: the palace administrator (cf. 1 Kin. 4:6), the secretary (cf. 2 Sam. 8:17), and the recorder (cf. 2 Sam. 8:16).

■ **18:26 Please speak to your servants in Aramaic.** Aramaic (the language of ancient Syria) had become by this time the international language of diplomacy. By asking the Assyrian officials to use Aramaic, the official hoped to prevent the inhabitants of Jerusalem from understanding the field commander's speech.

■ **18:31 vine . . . fig tree, and . . . cistern.** The description is indicative of normal, peaceful everyday life (1 Kin. 4:25; Mic. 4:4; Zech. 3:10).

■ **18:32 take you away to a land.** These words are a parody of God's gift of the promised land to the Israelites. The Assyrian king thereby offers to replace the Lord's promises with his own. Hezekiah will later refer to these claims as blasphemous (19:1–6).

■ **18:33** In the Bible the Lord is utterly distinct from other gods. The Assyrian field commander, however, makes no distinction. In the field commander's opinion, if the gods of the nations could not defeat Assyria, neither will the Lord.

■ **18:34 Hamath . . . Sepharvaim . . . and Ivah.** See note on 17:24.

Arpad. Located near Hamath in Syria, Arpad was captured in 740 B.C.

■ **18:36 the people held their peace.** The Assyrian effort to rouse the populace against their king (vv. 29, 31, 32) was a total failure.

■ **18:37 with their clothes torn.** The torn clothes indicate emotional duress (1 Kin. 21:27 note).

Isaiah Assures Deliverance

19 And [a]so it was, when King Hezekiah heard *it,* that he tore his clothes, covered himself with [b]sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD. 2 Then he sent Eliakim, who *was* over the household, Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz. 3 And they said to him, "Thus says Hezekiah: 'This day *is* a day of trouble, and rebuke, and blasphemy; for the children have come to birth, but *there is* no strength to [l]bring them forth. 4 [c]It may be that the LORD your God will hear all the words of *the* Rabshakeh, whom his master the king of Assyria has sent to [d]reproach the living God, and will [e]rebuke the words which the LORD your God has heard. Therefore lift up *your* prayer for the remnant that is left.' "

5 So the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah. 6 [f]And Isaiah said to them, "Thus you shall say to your master, 'Thus says the LORD: "Do not be [g]afraid of the words which you have heard, with which the [h]servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed Me. 7 Surely I will send [i]a spirit upon him, and he shall hear a rumor and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land." ' "

Sennacherib's Threat and Hezekiah's Prayer

8 Then *the* Rabshakeh returned and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah, for he heard that he had departed [j]from Lachish. 9 And [k]the king heard concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, "Look, he has come out to make war with you." So he again sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying, 10 "Thus you shall speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying: 'Do not let your God [l]in whom you trust deceive you, saying, "Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria." 11 Look! You have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by utterly destroying them; and shall you be delivered? 12 [m]Have the gods of the nations delivered those whom my fathers have destroyed, Gozan and Haran and Rezeph, and the people of [n]Eden who *were* in Telassar? 13 [o]Where *is* the king of Hamath, the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah?' "

14 [p]And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. 15 Then Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said: "O LORD God of Israel, *the One* [q]who dwells *between* the cherubim, [r]You are God, You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. 16 [s]Incline Your ear, O LORD, and hear; [t]open Your eyes, O LORD, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib, [u]which he has sent to reproach the living God. 17 Truly, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste the nations and their lands, 18 and have cast their gods into the fire; for they *were* [v]not gods, but [w]the work of men's hands—wood and stone. Therefore they destroyed them. 19 Now therefore, O LORD our God, I pray, save us from his hand, [x]that all the kingdoms of the earth may [y]know that You *are* the LORD God, You alone."

CHAPTER 19

1 [a]2 Kin. 18:13; 2 Chr. 32:20–22; Is. 37:1 [b]Ps. 69:11

3 [l]*give birth*

4 [c]2 Sam. 16:12 [d]2 Kin. 18:35 [e]Ps. 50:21

6 [f]Is. 37:6 [g][Ps. 112:7] [h]2 Kin. 18:17

7 [i]2 Kin. 19:35–37; Jer. 51:1

8 [j]2 Kin. 18:14, 17

9 [k]1 Sam. 23:27; Is. 37:9

10 [l]2 Kin. 18:5

12 [m]2 Kin. 18:33, 34 [n]Ezek. 27:23

13 [o]2 Kin. 18:34

14 [p]Is. 37:14

15 [q]Ex. 25:22; Ps. 80:1; Is. 37:16 [r][Is. 44:6]

16 [s]Ps. 31:2; Is. 37:17 [t]1 Kin. 8:29; 2 Chr. 6:40 [u]2 Kin. 19:4

18 [v][Is. 44:9–20; Jer. 10:3–5] [w]Ps. 115:4; Jer. 10:3; [Acts 17:29]

19 [x]Ps. 83:18 [y]1 Kin. 8:42, 43

■ **19:1 tore his clothes.** See 1 Kin. 21:27.

covered himself with sackcloth. See note on 6:30.

■ **19:2 who was over the household.** See 1 Kin. 4:6 note.

the scribe. See 2 Sam. 8:17.

the elders of the priests. These elders were probably the heads of the various priestly families in Jerusalem.

Isaiah the prophet. Isaiah plays a pivotal role by providing Hezekiah with good counsel during this crisis (Is. 37).

■ **19:4 the remnant that is left.** This remnant includes all the people left in Judah, whether from Judah or Israel, after the Assyrian attacks and deportations (17:6 note).

■ **19:8 Libnah.** This town was on the Judean border with Philistia, twelve miles southeast of Ashdod. In his annals, Sennacherib boasts of how he compelled Hezekiah to surrender into his custody the king of Ekron, whom Hezekiah was holding in Jerusalem. Sennacherib was evidently successful in reversing most of Hezekiah's earlier gains against the Philistines (18:8).

Lachish. See 18:17 and note.

■ **19:9 Tirhakah king of Ethiopia.** The Biblical "Cush" or Ethiopia refers to southern Egypt and the land to the south. Tirhakah was the brother of the pharaoh Shebteko, who launched a campaign into Palestine to counter the Assyrians under Sennacherib. Although Tirhakah did not become king until 690 or 688 B.C., by the time of the composition of this passage it was natural to refer to him with his characteristic title.

■ **19:12 Gozan.** See 17:6.

Haran. See Gen. 11:31.

Rezeph. A town in Syria northeast of Hamath.

the people of Eden who were in Telassar. Eden was a district in Syria south of Haran.

■ **19:13 Hamath . . . Ivah.** Sennacherib provided this litany of names, including cities where the Assyrians had deported people from Israel (17:24 and note), to impress on Hezekiah that Judah would suffer as Israel had.

■ **19:18 they were not gods.** See Deut. 4:28, 35; 32:17–21; Ps. 115:3–8; Is. 40:18–20; 44:9–20.

20 [z]Is. 37:21 [a]2 Kin. 20:5; Ps. 65:2
21 [b]Jer. 14:17; Lam. 2:13 [c]Ps. 22:7, 8
22 [d]Jer. 51:5
23 [e]2 Kin. 18:17 [f]Ps. 20:7
24 [g]Is. 19:6
25 [h][Is. 45:7] [i]Is. 10:5, 6
26 [j]Ps. 129:6
27 [k]Ps. 139:1–3; Is. 37:28
28 [l]Job 41:2; Ezek. 29:4; 38:4; Amos 4:2 [m]2 Kin. 19:33, 36
29 [n]Ex. 3:12; 1 Sam. 2:34; 2 Kin. 20:8, 9; Is. 7:11–14; Luke 2:12

The Word of the LORD Concerning Sennacherib

20 Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel: [z]'Because you have prayed to Me against Sennacherib king of Assyria, [a]I have heard.' 21 This *is* the word which the LORD has spoken concerning him:

'The virgin, [b]the daughter of Zion,
Has despised you, laughed you to scorn;
The daughter of Jerusalem
[c]Has shaken *her* head behind your back!

22 'Whom have you reproached and blasphemed?
Against whom have you raised *your* voice,
And lifted up your eyes on high?
Against [d]the Holy *One* of Israel.
23 [e]By your messengers you have reproached the Lord,
And said: [f]"By the multitude of my chariots
I have come up to the height of the mountains,
To the limits of Lebanon;
I will cut down its tall cedars
And its choice cypress trees;
I will enter the extremity of its borders,
To its fruitful forest.
24 I have dug and drunk strange water,
And with the soles of my feet I have [g]dried up
All the brooks of defense."

25 'Did you not hear long ago
How [h]I made it,
From ancient times that I formed it?
Now I have brought it to pass,
That [i]you should be
For crushing fortified cities *into* heaps of ruins.
26 Therefore their inhabitants had little power;
They were dismayed and confounded;
They were *as* the grass of the field
And the green herb,
As [j]the grass on the housetops
And *grain* blighted before it is grown.

27 'But [k]I know your dwelling place,
Your going out and your coming in,
And your rage against Me.
28 Because your rage against Me and your tumult
Have come up to My ears,
Therefore [l]I will put My hook in your nose
And My bridle in your lips,
And I will turn you back
[m]By the way which you came.

29 'This *shall be* a [n]sign to you:

■ **19:21 The virgin, the daughter of Zion.** The phrase refers affectionately to Jerusalem (Is. 1:8).

Has shaken her head behind your back. The words describe a gesture of mocking as Assyria runs away (Jer. 18:16).

■ **19:25 Did you not hear.** The Assyrians mistakenly believe that their great victories stem from their own might. They do not recognize that God is ultimately responsible for their success (cf. Is. 10:5–12; 14:24–27).

■ **19:28 I will put My hook in your nose And My bridle in your lips.** This reference is to the Assyrian custom of treating captured enemies like animals in a caravan (2 Chr. 33:11; cf. Ezek. 19:4, 9). God will turn the tables on Assyria.

■ **19:29 sign.** That is, a verification of a future event (1 Kin. 13:3 note).

You shall eat this year such as grows [2]of itself,
And in the second year what springs from the same;
Also in the third year sow and reap,
Plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them.
30 [o]And the remnant who have escaped of the house of Judah
Shall again take root downward,
And bear fruit upward.
31 For out of Jerusalem shall go a remnant,
And those who escape from Mount Zion.
[p]The zeal of the LORD [3]of hosts will do this.'

32 "Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria:

'He shall [q]not come into this city,
Nor shoot an arrow there,
Nor come before it with shield,
Nor build a siege mound against it.
33 By the way that he came,
By the same shall he return;
And he shall not come into this city,'
Says the LORD.
34 'For [r]I will [s]defend this city, to save it
For My own sake and [t]for My servant David's sake.' "

Sennacherib's Defeat and Death

35 And [u]it came to pass on a certain night that the [4]angel of the LORD went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when *people* arose early in the morning, there were the corpses—all dead. 36 So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went away, returned *home,* and remained at [v]Nineveh. 37 Now it came to pass, as he was worshiping in the temple of Nisroch his god, that his sons [w]Adrammelech and Sharezer [x]struck him down with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Ararat. Then [y]Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place.

Hezekiah's Life Extended

20 In [a]those days Hezekiah was sick and near death. And Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, went to him and said to him, "Thus says the LORD: 'Set your house in order, for you shall die, and not live.' "

2 Then he turned his face toward the wall, and prayed to the LORD, saying, 3 [b]"Remember now, O LORD, I pray, how I have walked before You in truth and with a loyal heart, and have done *what was* good in Your sight." And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

4 And it happened, before Isaiah had gone out into the middle court, that the word of the LORD came to him, saying, 5 "Return and tell Hezekiah [c]the leader of My people, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father: [d]"I have heard your prayer, I have seen [e]your tears; surely I will heal you. On the third day you shall go up to the house of the LORD. 6 And I will add to your

29 [2]Without cultivation

30 [o]2 Kin. 19:4; 2 Chr. 32:22, 23

31 [p]2 Kin. 25:26; Is. 9:7 [3]So with many Heb. mss. and ancient vss. (cf. Is. 37:32); MT omits *of hosts*

32 [q]Is. 8:7–10

34 [r]2 Kin. 20:6; 2 Chr. 32:21 [s]Is. 31:5 [t]1 Kin. 11:12, 13

35 [u]Ex. 12:29; Is. 10:12–19; 37:36; Hos. 1:7 [4]Or *Angel*

36 [v]Gen. 10:11

37 [w]2 Kin. 17:31 [x]2 Kin. 19:7; 2 Chr. 32:21 [y]Ezra 4:2

CHAPTER 20

1 [a]2 Kin. 18:13; 2 Chr. 32:24; Is. 38:1–22

3 [b]2 Kin. 18:3–6; Neh. 13:22

5 [c]1 Sam. 9:16; 10:1 [d]2 Kin. 19:20; Ps. 65:2 [e]Ps. 39:12; 56:8

■ **19:30 remnant.** See notes on v. 4 and Is. 1:9. The remnant will not only survive, but flourish.

■ **19:34 for My servant David's sake.** See note on 1 Kin. 11:36.

■ **19:35 angel of the LORD.** For the angel as an instrument of destruction, see Gen. 19:15; 2 Sam. 24:16. The massive destruction of the Assyrian army carries out the prophecies of vv. 21, 32–34.

■ **19:36 Nineveh.** The capital of the Assyrian Empire.

■ **19:37 Nisroch.** This god is not found in Assyrian records.

struck him down. Assyrian documents record that in a struggle for the throne in 681 B.C. one of Sennacherib's sons killed him. The author of Kings has telescoped the events surrounding Sennacherib's shameful defeat (701 B.C.) and his assassination (681 B.C.).

Ararat. The word is another name for Urartu, present day Armenia (Gen. 8:4).

Esarhaddon. He ruled Assyria from 681–669 B.C.

■ **20:1 In those days.** There is good reason to believe that this incident and the reception of the Babylonian envoys (vv. 12–19) occurred before the Assyrian invasion of Judah in 701 B.C., because according to Babylonian documents, Merodach-Baladan (v. 12) died in 703 B.C. Since God added fifteen years to Hezekiah's life (v. 6), he would have been ill in 702 B.C. or before.

■ **20:5 I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears.** God compassionately adds fifteen years (v. 6) to Hezekiah's life. Hezekiah's reforms (18:4, 5), together with his abiding trust in God during the Assyrian invasion (18:7, 22, 32; 19:4), reveal a consistency of character. In this respect Hezekiah's conduct is exemplary. Not only does this passage underscore the importance of prayer, but also divine freedom, compassion, and omnipotence (cf. 1 Kin. 21:27–29).

days fifteen years. I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria; and [f]I will defend this city for My own sake, and for the sake of My servant David." ' "

7 Then [g]Isaiah said, "Take a lump of figs." So they took and laid *it* on the boil, and he recovered.

8 And Hezekiah said to Isaiah, [h]"What *is* the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up to the house of the LORD the third day?"

9 Then Isaiah said, [i]"This is the sign to you from the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing which He has spoken: *shall* the shadow go forward ten degrees or go backward ten degrees?"

10 And Hezekiah answered, "It is an easy thing for the shadow to go down ten [1]degrees; no, but let the shadow go backward ten degrees."

11 So Isaiah the prophet cried out to the LORD, and [j]He brought the shadow ten [2]degrees backward, by which it had gone down on the sundial of Ahaz.

The Babylonian Envoys

12 [k]At that time [3]Berodach-Baladan the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he heard that Hezekiah had been sick. 13 And [l]Hezekiah was attentive to them, and showed them all the house of his treasures—the silver and gold, the spices and precious ointment, and [4]all [5]his armory—all that was found among his treasures. There was nothing in his house or in all his dominion that Hezekiah did not show them.

14 Then Isaiah the prophet went to King Hezekiah, and said to him, "What did these men say, and from where did they come to you?"

So Hezekiah said, "They came from a far country, from Babylon."

15 And he said, "What have they seen in your house?"

So Hezekiah answered, [m]"They have seen all that *is* in my house; there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shown them."

16 Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Hear the word of the LORD: 17 'Behold, the days are coming when all that *is* in your house, and what your fathers have accumulated until this day, [n]shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left,' says the LORD. 18 'And [o]they shall take away some of your sons who will [6]descend from you, whom you will beget; [p]and they shall be [q]eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.' "

19 So Hezekiah said to Isaiah, [r]"The word of the LORD which you have spoken *is* good!" For he said, "Will there not be peace and truth at least in my days?"

Death of Hezekiah

20 [s]Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah—all his might, and how he [t]made a [u]pool and a [7]tunnel and [v]brought water into the city—*are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 21 So [w]Hezekiah [8]rested with his fathers. Then Manasseh his son reigned in his place.

6 [f]2 Kin. 19:34; 2 Chr. 32:21
7 [g]Is. 38:21
8 [h]Judg. 6:17, 37, 39; Is. 7:11, 14; 38:22
9 [i]Num. 23:19; Is. 38:7, 8
10 [1]Lit. *steps*
11 [j]Josh. 10:12–14; Is. 38:8 [2]Lit. *steps*
12 [k]2 Kin. 8:8, 9; 2 Chr. 32:31; Is. 39:1–8 [3]*Merodach-Baladan,* Is. 39:1
13 [l]2 Kin. 16:9; 2 Chr. 32:27, 31 [4]So with many Heb. mss., Syr., Tg.; MT omits *all* [5]Lit. *the house of his armor*
15 [m]2 Kin. 20:13
17 [n]2 Kin. 24:13; 25:13–15; 2 Chr. 36:10; Jer. 27:21, 22; 52:17
18 [o]2 Kin. 24:12; 2 Chr. 33:11 [p]Dan. 1:3–7 [q]Dan. 1:11, 18 [6]*be born from*
19 [r]1 Sam. 3:18
20 [s]2 Chr. 32:32 [t]Neh. 3:16 [u]2 Kin. 18:17; Is. 7:3 [v]2 Chr. 32:3, 30 [7]*aqueduct*
21 [w]2 Kin. 16:20; 2 Chr. 32:33 [8]Died and joined his ancestors

■ **20:6 I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria.** See notes on v. 1 and 1 Kin. 11:13.

■ **20:7 lump of figs.** Divine agency in healing does not rule out the use of medicine (v. 5).

■ **20:10 ten degrees.** The reference is to index marks (lit. "steps") on "the sundial of Ahaz" (v. 11; Is. 38:8; cf. Josh. 10:12–14).

■ **20:12 Berodach-Baladan.** Merodach-Baladan (see text note) was king over Babylon from 721 B.C. until forced by the Assyrian King Sargon II into a vassal relationship (710 B.C.). Shortly after Sargon's death (705 B.C.), Merodach-Baladan led his country to a short-lived independence in 704 B.C. before Sennacherib forced him out in 703 B.C. (v. 1 note).

sent letters and a present to Hezekiah. Assyria was the dominant world empire at this time, and it is likely that Merodach-Baladan, together with the king of Egypt, was seeking to encourage Hezekiah's independence from the Assyrians.

■ **20:13 his armory—all that was found among his treasures.** This display probably occurred before Hezekiah sent his treasures as tribute to the Assyrians (v. 1 note; 18:14–16 note). Hezekiah was attempting to impress his Babylonian visitors with his nation's wealth and power. Hezekiah was receptive to the idea of an alignment with Egypt and Babylon. Isaiah opposed Ahaz's treaty with Assyria (Is. 7:1–17), and he opposed this attempt to make a treaty with Babylon and Egypt (vv. 16–18; Is. 30; 31).

■ **20:17 shall be carried to Babylon.** Isaiah rebukes a naive Hezekiah. The same treasures which might induce a treaty, might also attract an invasion. This prophecy was fulfilled by a Babylonian invasion in 598 B.C. and by the Babylonian exile of 586 B.C. Having sought refuge with the Babylonians, Hezekiah discovers that the Babylonians will ultimately be Judah's ruin.

■ **20:18 your sons who will descend from you.** Hezekiah's son Manasseh was exiled by the Assyrians and held captive in Babylon (2 Chr. 33:11). Other descendants followed later (24:15; 25:7).

■ **20:20 a pool and a tunnel and brought water into the city.** Hezekiah made improvements in Jerusalem's water supply in advance of the Assyrian invasion. An inscription in the Siloam Tunnel celebrates the completion of an impressive engineering feat. The conduit runs from the Gihon spring outside the city wall (cf. 1 Kin. 1:33 note) through seventeen hundred feet of solid rock to the Pool of Siloam inside the city.

book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah. See note on 1 Kin. 11:41.

Manasseh Reigns in Judah

21 Manasseh [a]*was* twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Hephzibah. 2 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, [b]according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel. 3 For he rebuilt the [1]high places [c]which Hezekiah his father had destroyed; he raised up altars for Baal, and made a [2]wooden image, [d]as Ahab king of Israel had done; and he [e]worshiped all [3]the host of heaven and served them. 4 [f]He also built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, [g]"In Jerusalem I will put My name." 5 And he built altars for all the host of heaven in the [h]two courts of the house of the LORD. 6 [i]Also he made his son pass through the fire, practiced [j]soothsaying, used witchcraft, and consulted spiritists and mediums. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke *Him* to anger. 7 He even set a carved image of [4]Asherah that he had made, in the [5]house of which the LORD had said to David and to Solomon his son, [k]"In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put My name forever; 8 [l]and I will not make the feet of Israel wander anymore from the land which I gave their fathers—only if they are careful to do according to all that I have commanded them, and according to all the law that My servant Moses commanded them." 9 But they paid no attention, and Manasseh [m]seduced them to do more evil than the nations whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel.

10 And the LORD spoke [n]by His servants the prophets, saying, 11 [o]"Because Manasseh king of Judah has done these abominations (*p*he has acted more wickedly than all the [q]Amorites who *were* before him, and [r]has also made Judah sin with his idols), 12 therefore thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'Behold, *I* am bringing *such* calamity upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whoever hears of it, both [s]his ears will tingle. 13 And I will stretch over Jerusalem [t]the measuring line of Samaria and the plummet of the house of Ahab; [u]I will wipe Jerusalem as *one* wipes a dish, wiping *it* and turning *it* upside down. 14 So I will forsake the [v]remnant of My inheritance and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become victims of plunder to all their enemies, 15 because they have done evil in My sight, and have provoked Me to anger since the day their fathers came out of Egypt, even to this day.' "

16 [w]Moreover Manasseh shed very much innocent blood, till he had filled Jerusalem from one

CHAPTER 21

1 [a]2 Chr. 33:1–9
2 [b]2 Kin. 16:3
3 [c]2 Kin. 18:4, 22 [d]1 Kin. 16:31–33 [e][Deut. 4:19; 17:2–5] [1]Places for pagan worship [2]Heb. *Asherah,* a Canaanite goddess [3]The gods of the Assyrians
4 [f]Jer. 7:30; 32:34 [g]1 Kin. 11:13
5 [h]1 Kin. 6:36; 7:12
6 [i][Lev. 18:21; 20:2] [j][Deut. 18:10–14]
7 [k]1 Kin. 8:29; 9:3 [4]A Canaanite goddess [5]Temple
8 [l]2 Sam. 7:10
9 [m][Prov. 29:12]
10 [n]2 Kin. 17:13
11 [o]2 Kin. 23:26, 27; 24:3, 4 [p]1 Kin. 21:26 [q]Gen. 15:16 [r]2 Kin. 21:9
12 [s]Jer. 19:3

13 [t]Amos 7:7, 8 [u]2 Kin. 22:16–19; 25:4–11 14 [v]Jer. 6:9 16 [w]2 Kin. 24:4

■ **21:1–18** These verses summarize the evil reign of Manasseh, king of Judah. Manasseh leads Judah into sin by reintroducing idolatry into Judah; he is also guilty of shedding "much innocent blood" (v. 16). So great is Manasseh's sin that God pronounces disaster on Judah and Jerusalem.

■ **21:1 twelve years old.** Manasseh most likely began his reign as co-regent with his father, Hezekiah.

fifty-five years. That is, 697–642 B.C., including a ten-year co-regency with Hezekiah. Manasseh's reign was the longest of any Judean king. Assyrian records say that Manasseh was a vassal of both Esarhaddon (681–669 B.C.) and Ashurbanipal (669–627 B.C.).

■ **21:2 he did evil.** Manasseh presided over the worst period of infidelity in Judah's history. The reforms instituted by Hezekiah were reversed by his son. Manasseh also introduced pagan elements into Judean worship that were unprecedented during the entire period of the monarchy (vv. 3–11 notes).

■ **21:3 the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed.** See 18:4 and note on 1 Kin. 3:2.

altars for Baal. State-sanctioned Baal worship had previously been eradicated in the reforms led by the priest Jehoiada (11:18).

wooden image. See note on 1 Kin. 14:15.

as Ahab king of Israel had done. Manasseh imitated the policies of the worst king of the northern kingdom (1 Kin. 16:30–33).

worshiped all the host of heaven. In Babylon and other nations, the sun, moon, and stars were personified as gods (17:16; 23:5). Star worship was forbidden in Israel (Deut. 4:19; 17:3).

■ **21:4 altars in the house of the LORD.** These altars were dedicated to "the host of heaven" (v. 5).

Jerusalem. See note on 1 Kin. 11:13.

■ **21:6 made his son pass through the fire.** On the gruesome practice of child sacrifice, see note on 16:3 and Deut. 12:29–31.

consulted spiritists and mediums. See note on 16:15.

■ **21:7 to David and to Solomon his son.** David wished to build the temple himself (2 Sam. 7:1–3), but the Lord instead promised David that He would build David a dynasty and that his son (Solomon) would build the temple (2 Sam. 7:8–16). That promise was fulfilled during Solomon's reign, and God blessed the temple as the divinely ordained place for sacrifice and prayer (1 Kin. 9:1–3; cf. Deut. 12:5).

■ **21:8 if they are careful to do.** The land was a gift, and its possession was predicated upon Israelite fidelity (Deut. 1:8; 3:18; 4:1, 25–28; 1 Kin. 9:4–9).

My servant Moses. See note on 1 Kin. 2:3.

■ **21:11 Amorites.** Here a general designation of the original inhabitants of Canaan (1 Kin. 21:26 note).

■ **21:13 measuring line . . . the plummet.** Both Samaria (17:5, 6) and the house of Ahab (10:10, 11) were destroyed. Yahweh uses for destruction the tools normally employed for construction (Is. 34:11; Lam. 2:8; Amos 7:7–9).

■ **21:14 I will forsake.** The time for patience and forbearance is over. Jerusalem and Judah will not be defeated by a superior people or a superior god. On the contrary, God is abandoning what is left of the original twelve tribes (the "remnant") to their enemies as punishment (Is. 1:5). The exile to Babylon of 586 B.C. is in view (25:1–17).

■ **21:15 since the day.** After liberating His people from slavery in Egypt, God made a covenant with Israel at Mount Sinai (Ex. 19:1—Num. 10:10). Although both God and Israel made promises in this covenant, only God remained faithful. Israel's history was characterized by constant rebellion.

■ **21:16 shed very much innocent blood.** This expression refers to oppression and persecution of the weak (Jer. 7:6; 22:3, 17; Ezek. 22:6–31).

end to another, besides his sin by which he made Judah sin, in doing evil in the sight of the LORD.

17 Now [x]the rest of the acts of [y]Manasseh—all that he did, and the sin that he committed—*are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 18 So [z]Manasseh [6]rested with his fathers, and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza. Then his son Amon reigned in his place.

Amon's Reign and Death

19 [a]Amon *was* twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Meshullemeth the daughter of Haruz of Jotbah. 20 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, [b]as his father Manasseh had done. 21 So he walked in all the ways that his father had walked; and he served the idols that his father had served, and worshiped them. 22 He [c]forsook the LORD God of his fathers, and did not walk in the way of the LORD.

23 [d]Then the servants of Amon [e]conspired against him, and killed the king in his own house. 24 But the people of the land [f]executed all those who had conspired against King Amon. Then the people of the land made his son Josiah king in his place.

25 Now the rest of the acts of Amon which he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 26 And he was buried in his tomb in the garden of Uzza. Then Josiah his son reigned in his place.

Josiah Reigns in Judah

22 Josiah [a]*was* eight years old when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Jedidah the daughter of Adaiah of [b]Bozkath. 2 And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the ways of his father David; he [c]did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.

Hilkiah Finds the Book of the Law

3 [d]Now it came to pass, in the eighteenth year of King Josiah, *that* the king sent Shaphan the scribe, the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, to the house of the LORD, saying: 4 "Go up to Hilkiah the high priest, that he may count the money which has been [e]brought into the house of the LORD, which [f]the doorkeepers have gathered from the people. 5 And let them [g]deliver it into the hand of those doing the work, who are the overseers in the house of the LORD; let them give it to those who *are* in the house of the LORD doing the work, to repair the damages of the house— 6 to carpenters and builders and masons—and to buy timber and hewn stone to repair the house. 7 However [h]there need be no accounting made with them of the money delivered into their hand, because they deal faithfully."

8 Then Hilkiah the high priest said to Shaphan the scribe, [i]"I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the LORD." And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it. 9 So Shaphan the scribe went to the king, bringing the king word, saying, "Your servants have [7]gathered the money that was found in the house, and have delivered it into the hand of those who do the work, who oversee the house of the LORD." 10 Then Shaphan the scribe showed the king, saying, "Hilkiah the priest has given me a book." And Shaphan read it before the king.

17 [x]2 Chr. 33:11–19 [y]2 Kin. 20:21

18 [z]2 Chr. 33:20 [6]Died and joined his ancestors

19 [a]2 Chr. 33:21–23

20 [b]2 Kin. 21:2–6, 11, 16

22 [c]Judg. 2:12, 13; 1 Kin. 11:33; 1 Chr. 28:9

23 [d]1 Chr. 3:14; 2 Chr. 33:24, 25; Matt. 1:10 [e]2 Kin. 12:20; 14:19

24 [f]2 Kin. 14:5

CHAPTER 22

1 [a]1 Kin. 13:2; 2 Chr. 34:1 [b]Josh. 15:39

2 [c]Deut. 5:32; Josh. 1:7

3 [d]2 Chr. 34:8

4 [e]2 Kin. 12:4 [f]2 Kin. 12:9, 10

5 [g]2 Kin. 12:11–14

7 [h]2 Kin. 12:15; [1 Cor. 4:2]

8 [i]Deut. 31:24–26; 2 Chr. 34:14

9 [7]Lit. *poured out*

■ **21:17 book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah.** See note on 1 Kin. 11:41.

■ **21:19 Amon . . . reigned two years.** That is, 642–640 B.C. It is probable that Amon, like Manasseh before him, was an Assyrian vassal.

■ **21:24 the people of the land.** See note on 11:14. Desiring thorough reforms and not merely the removal of Amon, the people step forward and install a descendant of David who will be loyal to the Davidic legacy.

■ **21:25 book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah.** See note on 1 Kin. 11:41.

■ **22:1 thirty-one years.** That is, 640–609 B.C.

Bozkath. A town in Judah, mentioned in Josh. 15:39 but of unknown location.

■ **22:2 his father David.** The writer commends several kings of Judah—Asa (1 Kin. 15:11), Jehoshaphat (1 Kin. 22:43), Joash (2 Kin. 12:2), Amaziah (14:3), Azariah (15:3), Jotham (15:34), and Hezekiah (18:3), but he gives Josiah the highest praise (23:25). Josiah instituted the most thoroughgoing reforms of any king (23:1–24). The prophet Jeremiah also spoke well of Josiah's reign (Jer. 22:15, 16).

did not turn aside. His actions were wholly in accord with the mandate of the covenant (Deut. 5:32; 17:11, 20; 28:14; Josh. 1:7; Prov. 4:27).

■ **22:3 eighteenth year.** That is, when Josiah was twenty-six years old.

the scribe. For "scribes," see 2 Sam. 8:17; Ezra 7:6 and notes. By the time of Josiah's reign, the Assyrian Empire was in a state of decline. Josiah, unlike Manasseh, asserted Judah's independence from Assyria. Josiah was able to gain control over at least part of the former northern kingdom (23:4, 15–20).

■ **22:4 Hilkiah.** Probably not the same man who is mentioned as the father of Jeremiah (Jer. 1:1), this Hilkiah was the grandfather of the high priest Seraiah who was exiled to Babylon (25:18–20).

which the doorkeepers have gathered from the people. King Joash earlier had used the same technique for collecting funds to refurbish the temple (12:4, 5). Josiah was restoring the temple after its neglect in the days of Manasseh and Amon.

■ **22:8 the Book of the Law.** Actually a scroll, this document was probably a version of the Book of Deuteronomy (Deut. 28:61; 31:24, 26). The reforms which Josiah initiates (23:1–24) follow Deuteronomy.

[11] Now it happened, when the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, that he tore his clothes. [12] Then the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, [j]Ahikam the son of Shaphan, [z]Achbor the son of Michaiah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant of the king, saying, [13] "Go, inquire of the LORD for me, for the people and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that has been found; for great *is* [k]the wrath of the LORD that is aroused against us, because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us."

[14] So Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of [l]Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe. (She dwelt in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter.) And they spoke with her. [15] Then she said to them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'Tell the man who sent you to Me, [16] "Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, [m]I will bring calamity on this place and on its inhabitants—all the words of the book which the king of Judah has read— [17] [n]because they have forsaken Me and burned incense to other gods, that they might provoke Me to anger with all the works of their hands. Therefore My wrath shall be aroused against this place and shall not be quenched.' " ' [18] But as for [o]the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, in this manner you shall speak to him, 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel: "*Concerning* the words which you have heard— [19] because your [p]heart was tender, and you [q]humbled yourself before the LORD when you heard what I spoke against this place and against its inhabitants, that they would become [r]a desolation and [s]a curse, and you tore your clothes and wept before Me, I also have heard *you*," says the LORD. [20] Surely, therefore, I will [3]gather you to your fathers, and you [t]shall [4]be gathered to your grave in peace; and your eyes shall not see all the calamity which I will bring on this place." ' " So they brought back word to the king.

Josiah Restores True Worship

23 Now [a]the king sent them to gather all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem to him. [2] The king went up to the house of the LORD with all the men of Judah, and with him all the inhabitants of Jerusalem—the priests and the prophets and all the people, both small and great. And he [b]read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant [c]which had been found in the house of the LORD.

[3] Then the king [d]stood by a pillar and made a [e]covenant before the LORD, to follow the LORD and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes, with all *his* heart and all *his* soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people took a stand for the covenant. [4] And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, the [f]priests of the second order, and the doorkeepers, to bring [g]out of the temple of the LORD all the articles that were made for Baal, for [1]Asherah, and for all [2]the host of heaven; and he burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried their ashes to Bethel. [5] Then he removed the idolatrous priests whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense on the high places in the cities of Judah and in the places all around Jerusalem, and those who burned incense to Baal, to the sun, to the moon, to the [3]constellations, and to [h]all the host of heaven. [6] And he brought

12 [j]2 Kin. 25:22; Jer. 26:24 [z]*Abdon the son of Micah,* 2 Chr. 34:20

13 [k][Deut. 29:23–28; 31:17, 18]

14 [l]2 Chr. 34:22

16 [m]Deut. 29:27; [Dan. 9:11–14]

17 [n]Deut. 29:25–27; 2 Kin. 21:22

18 [o]2 Chr. 34:26

19 [p]1 Sam. 24:5; [Ps. 51:17; Is. 57:15] [q]Ex. 10:3; 1 Kin. 21:29; [2 Chr. 7:14] [r]Lev. 26:31, 32 [s]Jer. 26:6; 44:22

20 [t]2 Kin. 23:30; [Ps. 37:37; Is. 57:1, 2] [3]Cause you to join your ancestors in death [4]Die a natural death

CHAPTER 23

1 [a]2 Sam. 19:11; 2 Chr. 34:29, 30

2 [b]Deut. 31:10–13 [c]2 Kin. 22:8

3 [d]2 Kin. 11:14 [e]2 Kin. 11:17

4 [f]2 Kin. 25:18; Jer. 52:24 [g]2 Kin. 21:3–7 [1]A Canaanite goddess [2]The gods of the Assyrians

5 [h]2 Kin. 21:3 [3]Of the Zodiac

■ **22:11 he tore his clothes.** See note on 1 Kin. 21:27. Josiah was disturbed because the Law was not being kept, and he realized that this displeased God (v. 13; Deut. 6:10–19; 28:15–68).

■ **22:12 Ahikam the son of Shaphan.** Ahikam was the father of Gedaliah, who was later appointed by Nebuchadnezzar to be governor of Judah (25:22; Jer. 26:24).

■ **22:13 Go, inquire of the LORD.** Josiah, like a number of kings before him, in a dire situation consults a prophet or prophetess in a dire situation (19:2; 20:1–5; 1 Kin. 14:1–18; 20:13, 14).

■ **22:14 Huldah the prophetess.** She was probably a court prophet, consulted on matters of state (Deut. 18:14–22).

the Second Quarter. Probably a recently developed quarter on the western hill of Jerusalem (cf. 2 Chr. 33:14; Zeph. 1:10).

■ **23:1 elders.** See 1 Kin. 8:1 note.

■ **23:2 Book of the Covenant.** Scholars debate the precise contents of this book or scroll. Although Ex. 20—23 is called the "Book of the Covenant" (Ex. 24:7), it is unlikely that only these chapters in Exodus are meant. Judging from the kinds of reform Josiah pursues in vv. 4–24, the book was a version of Deuteronomy (22:8 note) or a larger group of laws including Deuteronomy.

■ **23:3 by a pillar.** See 11:14 note; 1 Kin. 7:15 note.

made a covenant. Josiah, like Moses (Ex. 24:1–8; Deut. 29:1), Joshua (Josh. 24:1–28), and Jehoiada (2 Kin. 11:17) before him, leads the people in renewing their commitment to God. During the liturgy, the people pledged themselves to "keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes."

with all his heart and all his soul. See Deut. 6:5, and Jesus' summary of the law in Matt. 22:36–40.

■ **23:4 Baal.** See note on 1 Kin. 16:32.

Asherah. See note on 1 Kin. 14:15.

the host of heaven. See notes on 17:16 and 21:4.

ashes to Bethel. Bethel was one of the two original places where Jeroboam I used golden calves in a rival cult (1 Kin. 12:26–33). By depositing ashes at Bethel, Josiah desecrates Jeroboam's religious center (cf. vv. 15–20).

■ **23:5 idolatrous priests.** See Hos. 10:5; Zeph. 1:4.

high places. See note on 1 Kin. 3:2.

■ **23:6 burned it . . . and ground it to ashes.** This is like what Moses did after the Israelites worshiped a golden calf (Ex. 32:20; Deut. 9:21).

on the graves of the common people. Josiah does this to desecrate

out the [i]wooden[4] image from the house of the LORD, to the Brook Kidron outside Jerusalem, burned it at the Brook Kidron and ground *it* to [j]ashes, and threw its ashes on [k]the graves of the common people. 7 Then he tore down the *ritual* [5]booths [l]of the [6]perverted persons that *were* in the house of the LORD, [m]where the [n]women wove hangings for the wooden image. 8 And he brought all the priests from the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense, from [o]Geba to Beersheba; also he broke down the high places at the gates which *were* at the entrance of the Gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which *were* to the left of the city gate. 9 [p]Nevertheless the priests of the high places did not come up to the altar of the LORD in Jerusalem, [q]but they ate unleavened bread among their brethren.

10 And he defiled [r]Topheth, which *is* in [s]the Valley of the [7]Son of Hinnom, [t]that no man might make his son or his daughter [u]pass through the fire to Molech. 11 Then he removed the horses that the kings of Judah had [8]dedicated to the sun, at the entrance to the house of the LORD, by the chamber of Nathan-Melech, the officer who *was* in the court; and he burned the chariots of the sun with fire. 12 The altars that *were* [v]on the roof, the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which [w]Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the LORD, the king broke down and pulverized there, and threw their dust into the Brook Kidron. 13 Then the king defiled the [9]high places that *were* east of Jerusalem, which *were* on the [1]south of [2]the Mount of Corruption, which [x]Solomon king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Sidonians, for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the people of Ammon. 14 And he [y]broke in pieces the *sacred* pillars and cut down the wooden images, and filled their places with the bones of men.

15 Moreover the altar that *was* at Bethel, *and* the [3]high place [z]which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he broke down; and he burned the high place *and* crushed *it* to powder, and burned the wooden image. 16 As Josiah turned, he saw the tombs that *were* there on the mountain. And he sent and took the bones out of the tombs and burned *them* on the altar, and defiled it according to the [a]word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words. 17 Then he said, "What gravestone *is* this that I see?"

So the men of the city told him, "*It is* [b]the tomb of the man of God who came from Judah and proclaimed these things which you have done against the altar of Bethel."

18 And he said, "Let him alone; let no one move his bones." So they let his bones alone, with the bones of [c]the prophet who came from Samaria.

19 Now Josiah also took away all the [4]shrines of the [5]high places that *were* [d]in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke [6]the LORD to anger; and he did to them according to all the deeds he had done in Bethel. 20 [e]He [f]executed all the priests of the [7]high places

6 [i]2 Kin. 21:7 [j]Ex. 32:20 [k]2 Chr. 34:4 [4]Heb. *Asherah,* a Canaanite goddess

7 [l]1 Kin. 14:24; 15:12 [m]Ezek. 16:16 [n]Ex. 38:8 [5]Lit. *houses* [6]Heb. *qedeshim,* those practicing sodomy and prostitution in religious rituals

8 [o]Josh. 21:17

9 [p][Ezek. 44:10–14] [q]1 Sam. 2:36

10 [r]Is. 30:33 [s]Josh. 15:8 [t][Lev. 18:21] [u]2 Kin. 21:6 [7]Kt. *Sons*

11 [8]*given*

12 [v]Jer. 19:13 [w]2 Kin. 21:5

13 [x]1 Kin. 11:5–7 [9]Places for pagan worship [1]Lit. *right of* [2]The Mount of Olives

14 [y][Ex. 23:24]

15 [z]1 Kin. 12:28–33 [3]A place for pagan worship

16 [a]1 Kin. 13:2

17 [b]1 Kin. 13:1, 30, 31

18 [c]1 Kin. 13:11, 31

19 [d]2 Chr. 34:6, 7 [4]Lit. *houses* [5]Places for pagan worship [6]So with LXX, Syr., Vg.; MT, Tg. omit *the* LORD

20 [e]1 Kin. 13:2 [f]2 Kin. 10:25; 11:18 [7]Places for pagan worship

the wooden image, not to contaminate the graves of the poor (Num. 19:16; Jer. 26:23).

■ **23:7 perverted persons.** See note on 1 Kin. 14:24.

23:8 from Geba to Beersheba. Geba was at the far north of Judah and Beersheba at the far south. Josiah is centralizing the worship of the southern kingdom in accord with the prescriptions of Deut. 12.

■ **23:9 did not come up to at the altar of the LORD.** Deut. 18:6–8 allows local priests the option of joining the staff of the central sanctuary. However, the uncertain ancestry of these priests may have rendered them unfit for this task (1 Kin. 12:31; 13:33). They could aspire to a secondary role in the temple service.

ate unleavened bread. The priests from the high places were allowed a portion of the priestly provisions (Lev. 2:10; 6:16–20).

■ **23:10 Topheth.** Child sacrifice occurred at this location in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom outside Jerusalem (16:3; 21:6; Is. 30:33; Jer. 7:31, 32; 19:5, 6).

Molech. See note on 1 Kin. 11:5.

■ **23:11 horses . . . dedicated to the sun.** The sun was regarded as divine by some of Israel's neighbors (17:16), and the Assyrian sun-god was known by the title "chariot-rider." Miniature clay horses with solar disks on their foreheads have been found in excavations near the temple area. See also Ezek. 8:16.

■ **23:12 broke down.** By tearing down the altars used for astral worship, Josiah reversed the policies of Ahaz (16:3, 4, 10–16), Manasseh (21:3), and Amon (21:21).

■ **23:13 the high places . . . which Solomon king of Israel had built.** Of all the Judean kings, only Josiah was bold enough to tear down the high places Solomon built for the gods of his foreign wives (1 Kin. 11:1–8, 33).

■ **23:14 broke . . . cut down.** Josiah defiles sacred precincts dating to the time of Rehoboam, where there were "sacred pillars" and "wooden images" (1 Kin. 14:23).

■ **23:15 the altar that was at Bethel.** See 1 Kin. 12:32, 33. It is unclear whether Josiah defiled the cult center Jeroboam I established at Dan (1 Kin. 12:29, 30) or whether this cult center was still functioning.

■ **23:16 tombs.** These tombs belonged to the Bethel priests appointed by Jeroboam I (1 Kin. 12:31, 32; 13:2).

according to the word of the LORD. See the prophecy of 1 Kin. 13:2, 32 and the story of which it is a part (1 Kin. 13).

■ **23:18 Samaria.** The name here probably designates the former northern kingdom (v. 19 and 17:24; 1 Kin. 13:32) and not the city. The northern prophet was from Bethel (1 Kin. 13:11), and Omri built the city of Samaria sometime after this prophecy (1 Kin. 16:24 and note).

■ **23:19 in the cities of Samaria.** Josiah began his northern reforms at Bethel and extended them into the former northern kingdom.

■ **23:20 executed all the priests.** See the statutes dealing with those advocating the worship of other gods, Deut. 13:6–18; 17:2–7.

who *were* there, on the altars, and [g]burned men's bones on them; and he returned to Jerusalem.

21 Then the king commanded all the people, saying, [h]"Keep the Passover to the LORD your God, [i]as *it is* written in this Book of the Covenant." 22 [j]Such a Passover surely had never been held since the days of the judges who judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel and the kings of Judah. 23 But in the eighteenth year of King Josiah this Passover was held before the LORD in Jerusalem. 24 Moreover Josiah put away those who consulted mediums and spiritists, the household gods and idols, all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, that he might perform the words of [k]the law which were written in the book [l]that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the LORD. 25 [m]Now before him there was no king like him, who turned to the LORD with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses; nor after him did *any* arise like him.

Impending Judgment on Judah

26 Nevertheless the LORD did not turn from the fierceness of His great wrath, with which His anger was aroused against Judah, [n]because of all the provocations with which Manasseh had provoked Him. 27 And the LORD said, "I will also remove Judah from My sight, as [o]I have removed Israel, and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said, [p]'My name shall be there.' "

Josiah Dies in Battle

28 Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 29 [q]In his days Pharaoh Necho king of Egypt went [s]to the aid of the king of Assyria, to the River Euphrates; and King Josiah went against him. And *Pharaoh Necho* killed him at [r]Megiddo when he [s]confronted him. 30 [t]Then his servants moved his body in a chariot from Megiddo, brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own tomb. And [u]the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, anointed him, and made him king in his father's place.

The Reign and Captivity of Jehoahaz

31 [v]Jehoahaz *was* twenty-three years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* [w]Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. 32 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done. 33 Now Pharaoh Necho put him in prison [x]at Riblah in the land of Hamath, that he might not reign in Jerusalem; and he imposed on the land a tribute of one hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold. 34 Then [y]Pharaoh Necho made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in place of his father Josiah, and [z]changed his name to [a]Jehoiakim. And *Pharaoh* took Jehoahaz [b]and went to Egypt, and [g]he died there.

20 [g]2 Chr. 34:5

21 [h]Num. 9:5; Josh. 5:10; 2 Chr. 35:1 [i]Ex. 12:3; Lev. 23:5; Num. 9:2; Deut. 16:2–8

22 [j]2 Chr. 35:18, 19

24 [k][Lev. 19:31; 20:27]; Deut. 18:11 [l]2 Kin. 22:8

25 [m]2 Kin. 18:5

26 [n]2 Kin. 21:11, 12; 24:3, 4; Jer. 15:4

27 [o]2 Kin. 17:18, 20; 18:11; 21:13 [p]1 Kin. 8:29; 9:3; 2 Kin. 21:4, 7

29 [q]2 Chr. 35:20; Jer. 2:16; 46:2 [r]Judg. 5:19; Zech. 12:11 [s]2 Kin. 14:8 [s]Or *to attack*, Heb. *al* can mean *together with* or *against*

30 [t]2 Chr. 35:24; 2 Kin. 22:20 [u]2 Chr. 36:1–4

31 [v]1 Chr. 3:15; Jer. 22:11 [w]2 Kin. 24:18

33 [x]2 Kin. 25:6; Jer. 52:27

34 [y]2 Chr. 36:4 [z]2 Kin. 24:17; Dan. 1:7 [a]Matt. 1:11 [b]Jer. 22:11, 12; Ezek. 19:3, 4 [g]Jehoahaz

■ **23:21–28** Josiah reinstitutes the Passover.

■ **23:21 this Book of the Covenant.** This refers to Deuteronomy, especially 16:1–8, that authorizes eating the Passover only at the central sanctuary. The Passover was originally observed in a family setting (Ex. 12:1–28, 43–49).

■ **23:23 in the eighteenth year.** That is, when Josiah was twenty-six years old.

■ **23:24 mediums and spiritists.** These were introduced by Manasseh (21:6).

household gods. On these small idols, see Gen. 31:19; Judg. 17:5; 1 Sam. 19:13.

words of the law. See notes on v. 2; 22:8.

■ **23:26 the LORD did not turn from the fierceness of His great wrath.** The reforms of Josiah delayed but did not change God's decision to exile His people because of the sins of Manasseh (21:12–15 and notes).

■ **23:28 book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah.** See note on 1 Kin. 11:41.

■ **23:29 Necho.** This pharaoh ruled from 610–595 B.C.

to the aid of the king of Assyria. Babylon was now the most powerful nation in the Near East, and the Assyrian Empire was in decline. Necho was probably marching to aid the Assyrians against the resurgent Babylonians.

■ **23:30 people of the land.** See note on 11:14.

Jehoahaz. Jehoahaz (or Shallum) was chosen to replace the fallen Josiah even though he was Josiah's youngest son (1 Chr. 3:15; Jer. 22:11). He may have been selected over his older brothers because he pursued an anti-Egyptian posture, like that of his father (cf. Ezek. 19:3, 4).

anointed him. See note on 1 Kin. 1:34.

■ **23:31–35** These verses summarize the brief reign of Jehoahaz, King of Judah, who did "evil in the sight of the LORD" (v. 32). Jehoahaz was captured and deported to Egypt, and his son Eliakim (Jehoiakim) replaced him.

■ **23:31 three months.** During 609 B.C.

Jeremiah. Not the prophet Jeremiah, who was from Anathoth (Jer. 1:1).

Libnah. See note on 8:22.

■ **23:33 Riblah in the land of Hamath.** Located on the Orontes River in the north Lebanon Valley, Riblah was used first by Necho and later by Nebuchadnezzar as a military headquarters (25:6).

■ **23:34 *Eliakim . . . Jehoiakim.*** *When obliging their vassals to take a* loyalty oath, Assyrian kings sometimes changed their vassals' names. Necho's ability to make Eliakim change his name may be such an attempt to make a show of power.

35 [c] 2 Kin. 23:33

36 [d] 2 Chr. 36:5; Jer. 22:18, 19; 26:1

CHAPTER 24

1 [a] 2 Chr. 36:6; Jer. 25:1, 9; Dan. 1:1 [b] 2 Kin. 20:14

2 [c] Jer. 25:9; 32:28; 35:11; Ezek. 19:8 [d] 2 Kin. 20:17; 21:12–14; 23:27 [1] *troops*

3 [e] 2 Kin. 21:2, 11; 23:26

4 [f] 2 Kin. 21:16

6 [g] 2 Chr. 36:6, 8; Jer. 22:18, 19

7 [h] Jer. 37:5–7 [i] Jer. 46:2

8 [j] 1 Chr. 3:16; 2 Chr. 36:9 [2] *Jeconiah,* 1 Chr. 3:16; Jer. 24:1; or *Coniah,* Jer. 22:24, 28

10 [k] Dan. 1:1 [3] Lit. *came into siege*

12 [l] Jer. 22:24–30; 24:1; 29:1, 2; Ezek. 17:12 [m] 2 Chr. 36:10

13 [n] 2 Kin. 20:17; Is. 39:6 [o] Dan. 5:2, 3 [p] Jer. 20:5

14 [q] Is. 3:2, 3; Jer. 24:1

Jehoiakim Reigns in Judah

35 So Jehoiakim gave [c] the silver and gold to Pharaoh; but he taxed the land to give money according to the command of Pharaoh; he exacted the silver and gold from the people of the land, from every one according to his assessment, to give *it* to Pharaoh Necho. 36 [d] Jehoiakim *was* twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Zebudah the daughter of Pedaiah of Rumah. 37 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his fathers had done.

Judah Overrun by Enemies

24 In [a] his days Nebuchadnezzar king of [b] Babylon came up, and Jehoiakim became his vassal *for* three years. Then he turned and rebelled against him. 2 [c] And the LORD sent against him *raiding* [1] bands of Chaldeans, bands of Syrians, bands of Moabites, and bands of the people of Ammon; He sent them against Judah to destroy it, [d] according to the word of the LORD which He had spoken by His servants the prophets. 3 Surely at the commandment of the LORD *this* came upon Judah, to remove *them* from His sight [e] because of the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he had done, 4 [f] and also because of the innocent blood that he had shed; for he had filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, which the LORD would not pardon.

5 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, and all that he did, *are* they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? 6 [g] So Jehoiakim rested with his fathers. Then Jehoiachin his son reigned in his place.

7 And [h] the king of Egypt did not come out of his land anymore, for [i] the king of Babylon had taken all that belonged to the king of Egypt from the Brook of Egypt to the River Euphrates.

The Reign and Captivity of Jehoiachin

8 [j] Jehoiachin [2] *was* eighteen years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. His mother's name *was* Nehushta the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem. 9 And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father had done.

10 [k] At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem, and the city [3] was besieged. 11 And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city, as his servants were besieging it. 12 [l] Then Jehoiachin king of Judah, his mother, his servants, his princes, and his officers went out to the king of Babylon; and the king of Babylon, [m] in the eighth year of his reign, took him prisoner.

The Captivity of Jerusalem

13 [n] And he carried out from there all the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's house, and he [o] cut in pieces all the articles of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, [p] as the LORD had said. 14 Also [q] he carried into captivity all

■ **23:35 exacted the silver and gold from the people of the land.** Jehoiakim taxes the very people who had brought Jehoahaz to the throne (v. 30).

■ **23:36—24:7** The writer makes it clear that the disasters befalling Judah at the hands of foreign invaders are in fulfillment of God's word of judgment against Judah for Manasseh's sin (21:10–15; 24:2–4).

■ **23:36 eleven years.** That is, 609–598 B.C.

Rumah. The town was located about fourteen miles west of the Sea of Chinneroth (Galilee).

■ **24:1 Nebuchadnezzar.** Nebuchadnezzar II was king of Babylon from 605–562 B.C. Babylon defeated Necho of Egypt in a major battle at Carchemish (Jer. 46:2), and Judah was now ruled by Babylon instead of Egypt.

came up. According to Babylonian records, Nebuchadnezzar II subdued the "Hatti land," including the "city of Judah" (that is, Jerusalem).

three years. That is, 604–602 B.C.

he turned and rebelled. Going against Jeremiah's counsel (Jer. 27:9–11), Jehoiakim's decision to rebel may have been influenced by Egypt's successful defense against Nebuchadnezzar in 601 B.C.

■ **24:2 the LORD sent . . . raiding bands.** God's reaction against Judah's rebellion was swift. The Syrians, Moabites, and Ammonites were vassals of Babylon, and were probably compelled to participate in the invasion of Judah.

■ **24:4 innocent blood that he had shed.** See note on 21:16. The violation of the covenant was so reprehensible that the Lord "would not pardon" it.

■ **24:5 book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah.** See note on 1 Kin. 11:41.

■ **24:6 Jehoiachin.** He is also called "Jeconiah" (1 Chr. 3:16) and "Coniah" (Jer. 22:24).

reigned in his place. Jehoiakim died (598 B.C.) before Jerusalem surrendered to the Babylonians (vv. 8–12).

■ **24:7 Brook of Egypt.** See 1 Kin. 8:65 note.

■ **24:8 three months.** According to Babylonian records Jerusalem fell March 16, 597 B.C. The reign of Jehoiachin must have begun in December, 598.

■ **24:13 all the articles of gold.** See 1 Kin. 7:51.

■ **24:14 ten thousand captives.** Jer. 52:28 gives a figure of "three thousand and twenty-three" deportees, but that may not include women and children.

except the poorest. The Babylonians deported the upper classes and leaders from captured lands. In this way they crippled the economies of those societies.

Jerusalem: all the captains and all the mighty men of valor, [r]ten thousand captives, and [s]all the craftsmen and smiths. None remained except [t]the poorest people of the land. 15 And [u]he carried Jehoiachin captive to Babylon. The king's mother, the king's wives, his officers, and the mighty of the land he carried into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon. 16 [v]All the valiant men, seven thousand, and craftsmen and smiths, one thousand, all *who were* strong *and* fit for war, these the king of Babylon brought captive to Babylon.

Zedekiah Reigns in Judah

17 Then [w]the king of Babylon made Mattaniah, [x]*Jehoiachin's*[4] uncle, king in his place, and [y]changed his name to Zedekiah.

18 [z]Zedekiah *was* twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* [a]Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah. 19 [b]He also did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. 20 For because of the anger of the LORD *this* happened in Jerusalem and Judah, that He finally cast them out from His presence. [c]Then Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

The Fall and Captivity of Judah

25 Now it came to pass [a]in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, on the tenth *day* of the month, *that* Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army came against Jerusalem and encamped against it; and they built a siege wall against it all around. 2 So the city was besieged until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. 3 By the ninth *day* of the [b]*fourth* month the famine had become so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land.

4 Then [c]the city wall was broken through, and all the men of war *fled* at night by way of the gate between two walls, which was by the king's garden, even though the Chaldeans *were* still encamped all around against the city. And [d]*the king*[1] went by way of the [2]plain. 5 But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king, and they overtook him in the plains of Jericho. All his army was scattered from him. 6 So they took the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon [e]at

14 [r]2 Kin. 24:16 [s]1 Sam. 13:19 [t]2 Kin. 25:12

15 [u]Jer. 22:24–28

16 [v]Jer. 52:28

17 [w]Jer. 37:1 [x]2 Chr. 36:10 [y]2 Chr. 36:4 [4]Lit. *his*

18 [z]Jer. 52:1 [a]2 Kin. 23:31

19 [b]2 Chr. 36:12

20 [c]Ezek. 17:15

CHAPTER 25

1 [a]Jer. 6:6; 34:2

3 [b]Lam. 4:9, 10

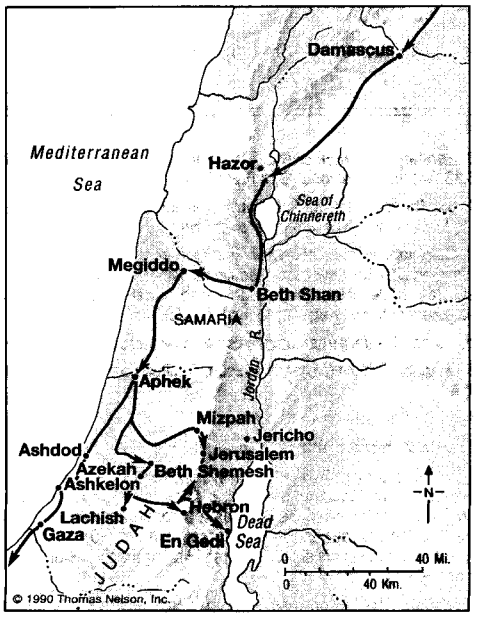
4 [c]Jer. 39:2 [d]Ezek. 12:12 [1]Lit. *he* [2]Or *Arabah,* the Jordan Valley

6 [e]Jer. 52:9

■ **24:16 valiant men . . . and craftsmen and smiths.** These may be part of the round figure of "ten thousand captives" in v. 14.

■ **24:17 Mattaniah.** A brother of Jehoiakim (Jehoiachin's father) and son of Josiah (1 Chr. 3:15; Jer. 1:3).

Zedekiah. Mattaniah's name was probably changed to show that he was a vassal under Nebuchadnezzar (23:34 note).



■ **24:18—25:21** This section of Kings is paralleled by Jer. 52:1–27.

■ **24:18 eleven years.** That is, 597–586 B.C.

Jeremiah. Not the prophet Jeremiah. See 23:31 and note.

Libnah. See note on 8:22.

■ **24:19 according to all that Jehoiakim had done.** The biblical writer does not tell all of the evil Zedekiah committed during his reign. God's judgment had already been decreed and Judah was sliding into oblivion (20:17, 18; 21:12–15; 22:16, 17). Further information on Zedekiah's reign can be found in Jer. 21; 24; 27; 29; 32; 37—39; Ezek. 17:11–21.

■ **24:20 Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.** Despite being a vassal appointed by Nebuchadnezzar, Zedekiah plotted with Egypt and other nations against the Babylonians (Jer. 27:3–8; Ezek. 17:11–21). Zedekiah's ill-fated decision to rebel against Babylon may have been encouraged by Pharaoh Hophra (Apries), who came to power in 589 B.C.

■ **25:1 in the ninth year.** That is, January, 588 B.C.

■ **25:2 until the eleventh year.** That is, July, 586 B.C. (Jer. 39:2; 52:5–7).

■ **25:3 famine.** During the siege, Jerusalem experienced terrible privation (Jer. 38:2–3; Lam. 4:10).

■ **25:4 gate between two walls.** This gate was in the southeastern wall of the City of David and may have been the "Fountain Gate" (Neh. 3:15).

■ **25:6 the king of Babylon at Riblah.** See note on 23:33.

Nebuchadnezzar's Campaigns Against Judah (605–586 B.C.). Nebuchadnezzar became king of Babylon in 605 B.C. and conducted several campaigns in Palestine. He squelched Jehoiakim's rebellion in about 602 B.C., deported Jehoiachin in 597 B.C., and destroyed Jerusalem in 586 B.C.

Riblah, and they pronounced judgment on him. 7 Then they killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, [f]put[3] out the eyes of Zedekiah, bound him with bronze fetters, and took him to Babylon.

8 And in the fifth month, [g]on the seventh *day* of the month (which *was* [h]the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon), [i]Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. 9 [j]He burned the house of the LORD [k]and the king's house; all the houses of Jerusalem, that is, all the houses of the great, [l]he burned with fire. 10 And all the army of the Chaldeans who *were with* the captain of the guard [m]broke down the walls of Jerusalem all around.

11 Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive [n]the rest of the people *who* remained in the city and the defectors who had deserted to the king of Babylon, with the rest of the multitude. 12 But the captain of the guard [o]left *some* of the poor of the land as vinedressers and farmers. 13 [p]The bronze [q]pillars that *were* in the house of the LORD, and [r]the carts and [s]the bronze Sea that *were* in the house of the LORD, the Chaldeans broke in pieces, and [t]carried their bronze to Babylon. 14 They also took away [u]the pots, the shovels, the trimmers, the spoons, and all the bronze utensils with which the priests ministered. 15 The firepans and the basins, the things of solid gold and solid silver, the captain of the guard took away. 16 The two pillars, one Sea, and the carts, which Solomon had made for the house of the LORD, [v]the bronze of all these articles was beyond measure. 17 [w]The height of one pillar *was* [4]eighteen cubits, and the capital on it *was* of bronze. The height of the capital was three cubits, and the network and pomegranates all around the capital were all of bronze. The second pillar was the same, with a network.

18 [x]And the captain of the guard took [y]Seraiah the chief priest, [z]Zephaniah the second priest, and the three doorkeepers. 19 He also took out of the city an officer who had charge of the men of war, [a]five men of [5]the king's close associates who were found in the city, the chief recruiting officer of the army, who mustered the people of the land, and sixty men of the people of the land *who were* found in the city. 20 So Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, took these and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah. 21 Then the king of Babylon struck them and put them to death at Riblah in the land of Hamath. [b]Thus Judah was carried away captive from its own land.

Gedaliah Made Governor of Judah

22 Then he made Gedaliah the son of [c]Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, governor over [d]the people who remained in the land of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had left. 23 Now when all the [e]captains of the armies, they and *their* men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah governor, they came to Gedaliah at Mizpah—Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, Johanan the son of Careah, Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth the Netophathite, and [6]Jaazaniah the son of a Maachathite, they and their men. 24 And Gedaliah took an oath before them and their men, and said to them, "Do not be afraid of the servants of the Chaldeans. Dwell in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be well with you."

25 But [f]it happened in the seventh month that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of

7 [f]Jer. 39:7; Ezek. 17:16 [3]*blinded*

8 [g]Jer. 52:12 [h]2 Kin. 24:12 [i]Jer. 39:9

9 [j]2 Kin. 25:13; 2 Chr. 36:19; Ps. 79:1; Jer. 7:14 [k]Jer. 39:8 [l]Jer. 17:27

10 [m]2 Kin. 14:13; Neh. 1:3

11 [n]Is. 1:9; Jer. 5:19; 39:9

12 [o]2 Kin. 24:14; Jer. 39:10; 40:7; 52:16

13 [p]Jer. 52:17 [q]1 Kin. 7:15 [r]1 Kin. 7:27 [s]1 Kin. 7:23 [t]2 Kin. 20:17; Jer. 27:19–22

14 [u]Ex. 27:3; 1 Kin. 7:45

16 [v]1 Kin. 7:47

17 [w]1 Kin. 7:15–22; Jer. 52:21 [4]About 27 feet

18 [x]Jer. 39:9–13; 52:12–16, 24 [y]1 Chr. 6:14; Ezra 7:1 [z]Jer. 21:1; 29:25, 29

19 [a]Esth. 1:14; Jer. 52:25 [5]Lit. *those seeing the king's face*

21 [b]Lev. 26:33; Deut. 28:36, 64; 2 Kin. 23:27

22 [c]2 Kin. 22:12 [d]Is. 1:9; Jer. 40:5

23 [e]Jer. 40:7–9 [6]*Jezaniah*, Jer. 40:8

25 [f]Jer. 41:1–3

■ **25:7 put out the eyes of Zedekiah.** Blinding was a common punishment for rebellious captives in the ancient Near East (Ezek. 12:13).

took him to Babylon. Zedekiah ignored the counsel of Jeremiah (Jer. 38:14–28). Jeremiah had urged the king to surrender to Babylon because the Lord's judgment was inevitable. Through a peaceful surrender, Jerusalem could be spared destruction. Zedekiah's stubborn resistance brought only horrible results for both his family and the people. Zedekiah himself died in Babylon (Jer. 52:11).

■ **25:8 in the fifth month.** That is, August, 586 B.C.

■ **25:9 all the houses of the great.** The terrible carnage and destruction was deliberate. Nebuchadnezzar did not rebuild Judah with Jerusalem as a Babylonian provincial capital. And unlike the Assyrians in their dealings with Israel (17:24–31; Ezra 4:2), he did not import new settlers from other areas to replace the dead and exiled.

■ **25:11 carried away captive.** The Babylonians implemented a second deportation (24:12–16), leaving only the poor to till the land (v. 12).

who had deserted. Apparently some of the people had given their allegiance to the Babylonians, even before the final siege. The Babylonians took them to Babylon.

■ **25:15 firepans and the basins.** See 24:13; 1 Kin. 7:50; Jer. 15:13; 20:5; 27:16–22.

■ **25:18 Seraiah the chief priest.** The grandson of Hilkiah (22:4, 8; 1 Chr. 6:13, 14) and ancestor of Ezra (Ezra 7:1).

■ **25:21 put them to death.** The Babylonian forces eliminated all the remaining leaders, not all of whom were soldiers.

■ **25:22 Gedaliah.** Having abolished the monarchy, Nebuchadnezzar appointed Gedaliah as governor. Gedaliah's father Ahikam supported Jeremiah (Jer. 26:24). Nebuchadnezzar chose a well-known citizen of Judah as governor to bring stability to the land (Jer. 40:9–12).

Ahikam. Gedaliah's father had been a close advisor of Josiah (22:12).

■ **25:23 Mizpah.** Gedaliah lived in Mizpah, 8 miles north of Jerusalem (Jer. 40:6).

■ **25:24 oath.** See note on 1 Kin. 1:17.

■ **25:25 seventh month.** That is, October, 586 B.C.

Ishmael . . . of the royal family. Ishmael's grandfather, Elishama, was royal secretary under Jehoiakim (Jer. 36:12; 41:1). Ishmael was part of a faction in Judah which viewed Gedaliah as a collaborator and wanted to resist the Babylonians (see the detailed account in Jer. 40:13—41:18). Ishmael probably had set his sights on reestablishing the throne of Judah with himself as king.

killed Gedaliah. This action created even worse conditions in Judah

Elishama, of the royal family, came with ten men and struck and killed Gedaliah, the Jews, as well as the Chaldeans who were with him at Mizpah. 26 And all the people, small and great, and the captains of the armies, arose [g] and went to Egypt; for they were afraid of the Chaldeans.

Jehoiachin Released from Prison

27 [h] Now it came to pass in the thirty-seventh year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-seventh *day* of the month, *that* [7] Evil-Merodach king of Babylon, in the year that he began to reign, [i] released Jehoiachin king of Judah from prison. 28 He spoke kindly to him, and gave him a more prominent seat than those of the kings who *were* with him in Babylon. 29 So Jehoiachin changed from his prison garments, and he [j] ate [8] bread regularly before the king all the days of his life. 30 And as for his [9] provisions, *there was* a [9] regular ration given him by the king, a portion for each day, all the days of his life.

26 [g] 2 Kin. 19:31; Jer. 43:4–7

27 [h] 2 Kin. 24:12, 15; Jer. 52:31–34 [i] Gen. 40:13, 20 [7] Lit. *Man of Marduk*

29 [j] 2 Sam. 9:7 [8] Food

30 [9] Lit. *allowance*

(Jer. 44:1–14). The exiles considered Gedaliah's death a great loss. They instituted fast days to mourn his death as well as the destruction of Judah and Jerusalem (Zech. 7:5; 8:19).

■ **25:26 went to Egypt.** Fearing reprisals from the Babylonians, these coup leaders sought refuge in Egypt where an anti-Babylonian pharaoh ruled (24:20 note). The law of the king in Deut. 17:14–20 forbids any king in Israel to lead the people back to Egypt (Deut. 17:16). Ironically, these coup leaders in their quest for power enact one of the curses of the covenant—returning to Egypt, the land of bondage and slavery (Deut. 28:68).

■ **25:27–30** The writer of Kings ends his work on a hopeful note by calling attention to the mercy shown to Jehoiachin, king of Judah, while in exile in Babylon.

■ **25:27 In the thirty-seventh year.** That is, March, 561 B.C.

Evil-Merodach . . . began to reign. Evil-Merodach was the son and successor of Nebuchadnezzar (24:1 note).

released Jehoiachin . . . from prison. Administrative texts from Babylonia mention payment of rations in oil and barley to Jehoiachin, king of Judah, and five of his sons. Evil-Merodach may have initiated this act of mercy on the occasion of his enthronement.

■ **25:28 a more prominent seat.** Deut. 4:25–31; 30:1–10 and King Solomon's temple prayer (1 Kin. 8:46–53) all address conditions of exile. These texts urge repentance (Deut. 4:30; 30:2; 1 Kin. 8:47). Solomon's prayer that the exiles might find compassion at the hands of their captors is realized in the kind treatment of Jehoiachin. Deut. 30:3–5 promises restoration to the people of God, and in 538 B.C. the Jews were allowed to return home (Ezra 1:1–4; Is. 44:24–28; 45:1–6). Christians understand the promise of Deut. 30:6, that God will circumcise the hearts of His people so that they will obey Him, to be fulfilled by the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:14–21; 2 Cor. 3:1–6).

■ **25:29 ate bread regularly before the king.** See note on 1 Kin. 2:7. The preferential treatment of Jehoiachin is a glimmer of hope for the continuance of the promises to David (2 Sam. 7:8–16). The somber final chapters of Kings emphasize the divine judgment on Judah (21:10–15; 23:26, 27; 24:3, 4, 20; 25:21), but they also reveal in the last few verses that the destruction of Judah and Jerusalem did not cut off the line of David. There is reason to look to the future with trust in God.

The First Book of the

CHRONICLES

Author Jewish tradition regarded Ezra as the primary author of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah. At least two reasons make this identification plausible: the book was written following the Babylonian exile of the Jews, near the time of Ezra's ministry (Date and Occasion below), and many passages in Chronicles sympathize with the priestly concerns of Ezra (Characteristics and Themes below).

Other considerations cast doubt on the traditional view of authorship. The date of composition for Chronicles cannot be limited to Ezra's lifetime (Date and Occasion); the focus on kingship characteristic of Chronicles is not present in Ezra's teaching; and Ezra's distress over the apostasy associated with intermarriage is not a prominent theme in Chronicles. In other words, historical and scriptural evidence does not point decisively to Ezra. By convention, the anonymous author is known as "the Chronicler."

The Chronicler had more than one written source. He depended on a number of biblical texts, especially Samuel and Kings, but also the Pentateuch, Judges, Ruth, Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Zechariah. There are specific citations of several royal sources not otherwise known, such as "the account of the chronicles of King David" (27:24), "the book of the kings" (2 Chr. 24:27), "the book of the kings of Israel" (9:1; 2 Chr. 20:34), "the book of the kings of Judah and Israel" (2 Chr. 16:11; 25:26; 28:26; 32:32), and "the book of the kings of Israel and Judah" (2 Chr. 27:7; 35:27; 36:8). The Chronicler used prophetic sources, including the writings of Samuel (29:29), Nathan (29:29; 2 Chr. 9:29), Gad (29:29), and others (9:29; 12:15; 13:22; 26:22; 32:32). Variations of style and content in the work suggest that there may have been still other unspecified sources.

Date and Occasion The final verses of 2 Chronicles indicate that it was written after the release of the exiles from Babylon in 538 B.C. The absence of Hellenistic influences suggests that the history was composed before the Alexandrian period (that is, before 331 B.C.). Nevertheless, opinions vary over the precise date of composition.

Some interpreters have proposed that the Chronicler wrote as early as the reconstruction of the temple under Zerubbabel (c. 520–515 B.C.). At least three pieces of evidence support this view. First, the Chronicler consistently presents the temple and its personnel in close partnership with the royal line of David. This emphasis suggests a date near the time of Zerubbabel, when expectations of royal and priestly partnership were high (Zech. 4). Second, there is close attention to the details of priestly and Levitical duties (1 Chr. 6:1–53 note). This suggests a connection with the time when the new temple order was being established. Third, the writer's omission of Solomon's downfall due to intermarriage with pagan women (1 Kin. 11:1–40; Neh. 13:26) suggests that Chronicles may have been written before intermarriage had become a major issue in the community following the exile in Babylon.

The majority of interpreters have dated Chronicles during or shortly after the ministries of Ezra and Nehemiah, in the latter half of the fifth century or the early decades of the fourth century B.C. It is reasonable to locate the book during the period from about the time of Zerubbabel to soon after the ministries of Ezra and Nehemiah. The major themes of the book fit well within these boundaries (between 515 and 400 B.C.).

The Chronicler wrote for historical and theological reasons. His extensive use of historical documents and devotion to numerical and chronological details (e.g., 1 Chr. 5:18; 2 Chr. 14:1, 9; 16:1, 12, 13) indicate that he intended to give his readers an accurate historical record. But he did not merely offer information about the past; he also wrote to convey a relevant theological message. Comparing the Chronicles with Samuel and Kings reveals that this account of Israel's past is shaped to address the needs of the community recently returned from Babylonian exile. It was written to encourage and guide the readers as they sought the full restoration of the kingdom.

The people who had returned from the exile faced many difficulties. The restoration had not brought about the dramatic changes for which many had hoped. Instead, they had to endure discouraging economic hardship, foreign opposition, and internal conflict. These difficulties raised many questions. Who are the legitimate heirs to the promises God gave His people? What political and religious institutions should be embraced? Was there hope for a new Davidic king? The historian who wrote Chronicles addressed these and similar questions.

Characteristics and Themes The theological message of Chronicles may be summarized in many ways, but three concerns are prominent. These are the people of God, the king and temple, and divine blessing and judgment.

First, the people of God. Throughout his history the writer identifies the people who should be counted as heirs of God's covenant promises. The prominence of this theme appears in his frequent use of the expression "all Israel" (1 Chr. 11:1; 2 Chr. 10:1; 29:24). On the one hand, the author considered those who had been released from Babylonian exile to be the people of God. Representatives of Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh, who had returned to the land were the chosen people (1 Chr. 9:3 note). On the other hand, the author considered the restoration of Israel to be incomplete as long as any of the tribes remained outside the land, separated from the Davidic king and the Jerusalem temple. As a result, the Chronicler is careful to include both the northern and southern tribes in his genealogies (2:3—9:1), to present the picture of the united monarchy under David and Solomon extending to all the people (11:1 note), and to depict the reunification of the northern and southern kingdoms in the days of Hezekiah. The returned exiles were the remnant of God's people, but they looked forward to the restoration of all the people of God. As Hezekiah put it, "For if you return to the LORD, your brethren and your children will be treated with compassion by those who lead them captive, so that they may come back to this land; for the LORD your God is gracious and merciful" (2 Chr. 30:9).

Second, the king and temple. Chronicles presents the people of God as organized around two central institutions, the Davidic throne and the Jerusalem temple. The genealogies give special attention to David's lineage (1 Chr. 2:10–17; ch. 3) and to the organization of priests and Levites (1 Chr. 6). David's line had been chosen by God as the permanent dynasty over the nation (1 Chr. 17; 2 Chr. 13:5; 21:7; 23:3), and the establishment of David's throne was a demonstration of divine love and blessing for Israel (1 Chr. 14:2; 2 Chr. 2:11). The historian also focuses on the temple as the place where God's name resides (2 Chr. 7:12, 16; 33:7). The joy and splendor of music in temple worship is revealed (6:31–47; 9:15–16, 33; 13:8; 15:16–24, 28; 23:5; ch. 25; 2 Chr. 5:1–13; 7:6; 23:13; 29:25–30; 34:12; and notes).

The full restoration of the kingdom could not take place apart from the Davidic king and the Jerusalem temple. As the Lord said to David, "I will set up your seed after you, who will be of your sons; and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build Me a house, and I will establish his throne forever" (1 Chr. 17:11, 12).

The third concern is divine blessing and judgment. The author shows his readers how to receive God's blessings in their day. He stresses the close connection between fidelity and blessing, infidelity and judgment (1 Chr. 28:9; 2 Chr. 6:14; 7:2–22; 15:2; 16:7–9; 21:12–15; 24:20; 28:9; 34:24–28). The king and the temple could not in themselves secure God's blessing for Israel; there had to be obedience to the Mosaic law and to prophetic and priestly instruction. The Lord blessed those who upheld the purity of temple worship and relied on Him alone (1 Chr. 5:20; 2 Chr. 13:18; 14:7; 32:20, 21). When the people or the kings turned to sin, an immediate retribution of illness and military defeat often followed (1 Chr. 10; 2 Chr. 13:1–16; 16:12; 28:1–5; 33:1–11). Even so, the people could be restored to blessing by seeking God in repentance and prayer (1 Chr. 21:1—22:1; 2 Chr. 7:13–15; 12:1–12; 33:10–13). The Chronicler shows that the full restoration of God's people would come only as they lived in fidelity to the Lord. Azariah says it well: "If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you" (2 Chr. 15:2).

The book's treatment of the people of God, the kingship and temple, and divine blessing and judgment, has immediate reference to the Jewish community in reconstruction following the Babylonian exile. The New Testament reveals that the kingdom will ultimately be restored in Christ, the promised Son of David.

The book's concept of the people of God becomes a reality in Christ. Like the community of the restoration, those who follow Christ are the heirs of Israel's promises (Gal. 3:14, 29; 4:28; Eph. 2:11–22; 3:6). The church extends beyond Israel to include the Gentiles (Luke 2:32; Acts 9:15; 11:1, 18), and in the end all of God's elect "the Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16), will be united under the lordship of Christ.

The hope for David's throne to be restored was fulfilled in Christ. He was born the Son of David, the heir to the Davidic covenant (Luke 1:32; Rom. 1:3; Rev. 22:16). Christ met all the conditions of obedience placed on David's line (Rom. 5:19; Phil. 2:8; Heb. 5:7–10). In the Resurrection, Christ took His throne in heaven (Acts 2:33–35; Eph. 1:20–23; Phil. 2:9; Rev. 3:21), from which He leads His people into blessing and victory (Rom. 8:37; Eph. 4:7–13). He will reign until all His enemies are defeated (1 Cor. 15:24–26).

The purposes of the temple are fulfilled in Christ. Christ was Himself the perfect sacrifice for sin (Heb. 9:11–28; 1 Pet. 3:18; 1 John 2:2). He mediates our prayers and intercedes on our behalf in heaven (Heb. 3:1; 4:14–16; 6:20; 7:26; 8:1). As our High Priest and Captain, He will bring all His people into the presence of God (John 14:1–4; 1 Thess. 4:16–17).

Finally, the book's revelation of divine blessing and judgment is realized in Christ. Jesus bore the judgment of God on sin and set His people free to follow the path of obedience (Rom. 3:21–26). He gives His people new life and makes them citizens of God's kingdom (John 3:16; Phil. 3:20).

As the outline below indicates, the book may be divided into four sections. Each part contributes

specific elements to the overall theological purpose. The first concerns genealogies and is discussed below. The united monarchy, its division, and its reunion, are discussed in the Introduction to 2 Chronicles.

Genealogies in the Ancient Near East had a variety of forms and functions. Some of the passages in Chronicles trace a single family line through many generations (2:34–41). Others sketch several family lines together (6:1–3). The genealogies sometimes skip generations without notice, emphasizing significant persons and events (6:4–15). Ancient genealogies often included brief narratives highlighting important events, and the writer of Chronicles pauses on occasion to tell a story (1 Chr. 4:9–10; 5:18–22).

Ancient genealogies set out not only family relations, but political, geographical, and social connections. The Chronicles contain an assortment of lists, including families (e.g., 1 Chr. 3:17–24), political relations (e.g., 1 Chr. 2:24, 42, 45, 49–52), and trade guilds (e.g., 1 Chr. 4:14, 21–23).

An essential purpose of the extensive genealogies is to establish that the returned exiles are the legitimate continuation of God's elect people. The writer works this out by reporting the election of Israel from all peoples (1 Chr. 1:2—2:2), the arrangement of the tribes of Israel (1 Chr. 2:3—9:1), and the representation of the tribes that returned from Babylon (1 Chr. 9:16–34).

The genealogies focus on the order of the tribes of Israel, especially the role of the families of David and Levi. If the people were to receive the blessings of God, they must observe carefully the divinely ordained arrangements. Their responsibility for obeying is established by their designation as God's elect people.

The Book of Chronicles, now in two parts as 1 and 2 Chronicles, was originally without title. The words of its traditional Hebrew name appear often in the books of Kings as part of longer phrases (e.g., 1 Kin. 14:29), and in other places by themselves (Neh. 12:23; Esth. 2:23; 6:1). Jerome in the fourth century, and Luther in the sixteenth, called the book "The Chronicle of the Entire Sacred History." The modern English title is from this tradition. □

Outline of 1 Chronicles

I. The Genealogies of God's People (1 Chr. 1:1—9:34)
  A. Adam to Israel (1:1—2:2)
  B. The Tribes of Israel (2:3—9:1)
    1. Judah (2:3—4:23)
    2. Simeon, Reuben, Gad and the Half-tribe of Manasseh (4:24—5:26)
    3. Levi (ch. 6)
    4. Issachar, Benjamin, Naphtali, Manasseh, Ephraim, and Asher (ch. 7)
    5. Benjamin (ch. 8)
    6. Summary (9:1a)
  C. Returnees from Exile (9:1b–34)
II. The United Monarchy (1 Chr. 9:35—2 Chr. 9:31)
  A. Saul (9:35—10:14)
    1. Genealogy (9:35–44)
    2. Death (ch. 10)
  B. David (chs. 11—29)
    1. Widespread Support (chs. 11; 12)
    2. Preparations for the Temple (chs. 13—29)
      a. Centralization of Worship (chs. 13—16)
      b. Commission to Prepare (ch. 17)
      c. Military Preparations (chs. 18—20)
      d. Discovery of Temple Site (21:1—22:1)
      e. Commission of Builders (22:2–19)
      f. Arrangement of Personnel (chs. 23—27)
      g. National Celebration and Solomon's Commission (chs. 28; 29)

The Family of Adam—Seth to Abraham

ADAM,[a] [b]Seth, Enosh, [2]Cainan, Mahalalel, Jared, [3]Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, [4][c]Noah,[1] Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

[5][d]The sons of Japheth *were* Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshech, and Tiras. [6]The sons of Gomer *were* Ashkenaz, [2]Diphath, and Togarmah. [7]The sons of Javan *were* Elishah, [3]Tarshishah, Kittim, and [4]Rodanim.

[8][e]The sons of Ham *were* Cush, Mizraim, Put, and Canaan. [9]The sons of Cush *were* Seba, Havilah, [5]Sabta, [6]Raama, and Sabtecha. The sons of Raama *were* Sheba and Dedan. [10]Cush [f]begot Nimrod; he began to be a mighty one on the earth. [11]Mizraim begot Ludim, Anamim, Lehabim, Naphtuhim, [12]Pathrusim, Casluhim (from whom came the Philistines and the [g]Caphtorim). [13][h]Canaan begot Sidon, his firstborn, and Heth; [14]the Jebusite, the Amorite, and the Girgashite; [15]the Hivite, the Arkite, and the Sinite; [16]the Arvadite, the Zemarite, and the Hamathite.

[17]The sons of [i]Shem *were* Elam, Asshur, [j]Arphaxad, Lud, Aram, Uz, Hul, Gether, and [7]Meshech. [18]Arphaxad begot Shelah, and Shelah begot Eber. [19]To Eber were born two sons: the name of one *was* [8]Peleg, for in his days the [9]earth was divided; and his brother's name *was* Joktan. [20][k]Joktan begot Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah, [21]Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, [22][l]Ebal, Abimael, Sheba, [23]Ophir, Havilah, and Jobab. All these *were* the sons of Joktan.

[24][l]Shem, Arphaxad, Shelah, [25][m]Eber, Peleg, Reu, [26]Serug, Nahor, Terah, [27]and [n]Abram, who *is* Abraham. [28][o]The sons of Abraham *were* [p]Isaac and [q]Ishmael.

The Family of Ishmael

[29]These *are* their genealogies: The [r]firstborn of Ishmael *was* Nebajoth; then Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, [30]Mishma, Dumah, Massa, [2]Hadad, Tema, [31]Jetur, Naphish, and Kedemah. These *were* the sons of Ishmael.

The Family of Keturah

[32]Now [s]the sons born to Keturah, Abraham's concubine, *were* Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah. The sons of Jokshan *were* Sheba and Dedan. [33]The sons of Midian *were* Ephah, Epher, Hanoch, Abida, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah.

The Family of Isaac

[34]And [t]Abraham begot Isaac. [u]The sons of Isaac *were* Esau and Israel. [35]The sons of [v]Esau *were* Eliphaz, Reuel, Jeush, Jaalam, and Korah. [36]And the sons of Eliphaz *were* Teman, Omar, [3]Zephi, Gatam, *and* Kenaz; and *by* [w]Timna, Amalek. [37]The sons of Reuel *were* Nahath, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah.

30 [2]*Hadar,* Gen. 25:15 **32** [s]Gen. 25:1–4 **34** [t]Gen. 21:2 [u]Gen. 25:9, 25, 26, 29; 32:28 **35** [v]Gen. 36:10–19 **36** [w]Gen. 36:12 [3]*Zepho,* Gen. 36:11

CHAPTER 1

1 [a]Gen. 1:27; 2:7; 5:1; 2, 5 [b]Gen. 4:25, 26; 5:3–9

4 [c]Gen. 5:28—10:1 [1]So with MT, Vg.; LXX adds *the sons of Noah*

5 [d]Gen. 10:2–4

6 [2]*Riphath,* Gen. 10:3

7 [3]*Tarshish,* Gen. 10:4 [4]*Dodanim,* Gen. 10:4

8 [e]Gen. 10:6

9 [5]*Sabtah,* Gen. 10:7 [6]*Raamah,* Gen. 10:7

10 [f]Gen. 10:8–10, 13

12 [g]Deut. 2:23

13 [h]Gen. 9:18, 25–27; 10:15

17 [i]Gen. 10:22–29; 11:10 [j]Luke 3:36 [7]*Mash,* Gen. 10:23

19 [8]Lit. *Division,* Gen. 10:25 [9]Or *land*

20 [k]Gen. 10:26

22 [l]*Obal,* Gen. 10:28

24 [l]Luke 3:34–36

25 [m]Gen. 11:15

27 [n]Gen. 17:5

28 [o]Gen. 21:2, 3 [p]Gen. 21:2 [q]Gen. 16:11, 15

29 [r]Gen. 25:13–16

■ **1:1—9:34** The writer establishes the election and arrangement of the people of God from the beginning of history until the return of Judah from the Babylonian exile of the sixth century B.C. This election is the basis of the privileges and responsibilities of the readers as the continuing people of God.

■ **1:4–27** Beginning with Noah, the account shows how God chose some nations over others. The sons of Noah are treated separately: Japheth (1:5–7), Ham (1:8–16), and Shem (1:17–27). Relying selectively on Gen. 10:1–32 (Gen. 10 note), the Chronicler places the chosen line last. From the descendants of Noah, the Shemites (Semitic peoples) alone were in special covenant relationship with God.

■ **1:5 sons.** In ancient Near Eastern genealogies, the terms "sons" and "fathers" are often used literally. But they may be used more loosely, referring to relatively distant family relations or other social or geographical connections. Here "sons" points to cultural and geographical relationships. Compare the geographical focus of 2:42–55; 4:1–23; 28:43; 6:54–81; 7:20–29; 9:2; 11:10–47.

■ **1:8 sons of Ham.** More attention is given to the Hamites than the Japhethites because Israel had more dealings with them. The list begins with all four sons of Ham, but records only the descendants of Cush, Mizraim, and Canaan. "Cush" is the Hebrew for "Ethiopia," meaning the remote areas south of Egypt. "Mizraim" means "Egypt."

■ **1:17 sons of Shem.** Divine election narrows within the Shemites to Abraham's family. The writer follows Gen. 10:21–31 closely and adds a brief summary of Gen. 11:10–27 to extend the genealogy to Abraham.

■ **1:28 Abraham.** The plan of sovereign election is shown in the descendants of Abraham. As before, the writer deals first with those not chosen (1:29–33) and then with the chosen line in Isaac (1:34—2:2).

■ **1:31 sons of Ishmael.** Following Genesis, the account distinguishes Ishmael's descendants from the covenant line.

Ishmael. He was promised great blessings from God (Gen. 16:11, 12), but he was not the heir of the covenant of grace God made with Abraham (Gen. 17:18–21).

■ **1:32 sons born to Keturah.** See note on Gen. 25:1–4. Abraham's descendants through Keturah were not from the line of promise in Isaac.

■ **1:34 sons of Isaac.** That is, Esau and Jacob. See Gen. 25:27–34; 27:1–40.

■ **1:35 sons of Esau.** See Gen. 36:10–43.

38 [x]Gen. 36:20–28
39 [4]*Hemam* or *Heman*, Gen. 36:22
40 [5]*Alvan*, Gen. 36:23 [6]*Shepho*, Gen. 36:23
41 [y]Gen. 36:25 [7]*Hemdan*, Gen. 36:26
42 [8]*Akan*, Gen. 36:27
43 [z]Gen. 36:31–43
46 [9]Lit. *struck*
48 [a]Gen. 36:37
50 [1]*Hadar*, Gen. 36:39 [2]*Pau*, Gen. 36:39
51 [3]*Alvah*, Gen. 36:40

CHAPTER 2

1 [a]Gen. 29:32–35; 35:23, 26; 46:8–27 [b]Gen. 29:32; 35:22 [1]*Jacob*, Gen. 32:28
3 [c]Num. 26:19 [d]Gen. 38:2 [e]Gen. 38:7
4 [f]Gen. 38:6 [g]Matt. 1:3
5 [h]Ruth 4:18
6 [i]1 Kin. 4:31 [2]*Zabdi*, Josh. 7:1 [3]*Darda*, 1 Kin. 4:31
7 [j]1 Chr. 4:1 [k]Josh. 6:18 [4]*Achan*, Josh. 7:1 [5]*banned* or *devoted*
9 [6]*Aram*, Matt. 1:3, 4 [7]*Caleb*, vv. 18, 42
10 [l]Matt. 1:4 [m]Num. 1:7; 2:3
11 [8]*Salmon*, Ruth 4:21; Luke 3:32

The Family of Seir

38 [x]The sons of Seir *were* Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer, and Dishan. 39 And the sons of Lotan *were* Hori and [4]Homam; Lotan's sister *was* Timna. 40 The sons of Shobal *were* [5]Alian, Manahath, Ebal, [6]Shephi, and Onam. The sons of Zibeon *were* Ajah and Anah. 41 The son of Anah *was* [y]Dishon. The sons of Dishon *were* [7]Hamran, Eshban, Ithran, and Cheran. 42 The sons of Ezer *were* Bilhan, Zaavan, *and* [8]Jaakan. The sons of Dishan *were* Uz and Aran.

The Kings of Edom

43 Now these *were* the [z]kings who reigned in the land of Edom before a king reigned over the children of Israel: Bela the son of Beor, and the name of his city was Dinhabah. 44 And when Bela died, Jobab the son of Zerah of Bozrah reigned in his place. 45 When Jobab died, Husham of the land of the Temanites reigned in his place. 46 And when Husham died, Hadad the son of Bedad, who [9]attacked Midian in the field of Moab, reigned in his place. The name of his city *was* Avith. 47 When Hadad died, Samlah of Masrekah reigned in his place. 48 [a]And when Samlah died, Saul of Rehoboth-by-the-River reigned in his place. 49 When Saul died, Baal-Hanan the son of Achbor reigned in his place. 50 And when Baal-Hanan died, [1]Hadad reigned in his place; and the name of his city was [2]Pai. His wife's name was Mehetabel the daughter of Matred, the daughter of Mezahab. 51 Hadad died also. And the chiefs of Edom were Chief Timnah, Chief [3]Aliah, Chief Jetheth, 52 Chief Aholibamah, Chief Elah, Chief Pinon, 53 Chief Kenaz, Chief Teman, Chief Mibzar, 54 Chief Magdiel, and Chief Iram. These *were* the chiefs of Edom.

The Family of Israel

2 These *were* the [a]sons of [1]Israel: [b]Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, 2 Dan, Joseph, Benjamin, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher.

From Judah to David

3 The sons of [c]Judah *were* Er, Onan, and Shelah. *These* three were born to him by the daughter of [d]Shua, the Canaanitess. [e]Er, the firstborn of Judah, was wicked in the sight of the LORD; so He killed him. 4 And [f]Tamar, his daughter-in-law, [g]bore him Perez and Zerah. All the sons of Judah *were* five.

5 The sons of [h]Perez *were* Hezron and Hamul. 6 The sons of Zerah *were* [2]Zimri, [i]Ethan, Heman, Calcol, and [3]Dara—five of them in all.

7 The son of [j]Carmi *was* [4]Achar, the troubler of Israel, who transgressed in the [k]accursed[5] thing.

8 The son of Ethan *was* Azariah.

9 Also the sons of Hezron who were born to him *were* Jerahmeel, [6]Ram, and [7]Chelubai. 10 Ram [l]begot Amminadab, and Amminadab begot Nahshon, [m]leader of the children of Judah; 11 Nahshon begot [8]Salma, and Salma begot Boaz; 12 Boaz begot Obed, and Obed begot Jesse; 13 [n]Jesse begot Eliab his firstborn, Abinadab the second, [9]Shimea the third, 14 Nethanel the fourth, Raddai the fifth, 15 Ozem the sixth, *and* David the [o]seventh.

16 Now their sisters *were* Zeruiah and Abigail. [p]And the sons of Zeruiah *were* Abishai, Joab, and Asahel—three. 17 Abigail bore Amasa; and the father of Amasa *was* [1]Jether the Ishmaelite.

13 [n]1 Sam. 16:6 [9]*Shammah*, 1 Sam. 16:9 **15** [o]1 Sam. 16:10, 11; 17:12 **16** [p]2 Sam. 2:18
17 [1]*Jithra the Israelite*, 2 Sam. 17:25

■ **2:1 sons of Israel.** This list follows Gen. 35:23–26 except for the position of Dan.

■ **2:3—9:1** The writer has presented the twelve tribes of Israel as the goal of divine election. Now he describes the extent and order of the covenant nation, covering prominent figures in all the tribes except Dan and Zebulun. The lists involve not only people but also tribal territories. This is suggestive of a hope that the community of those returned from exile would eventually grow to include all the tribes and their territories (1:5 note).

■ **2:3—4:23** Judah is placed first, a departure from the order of names announced in 2:1, 2. The priority of Judah reflects the importance of the throne of David for the hope of the returned exiles.

■ **2:3–9 sons of Judah.** These were Er, Onan, Shelah (by a Canaanite woman, Gen. 38:2), Perez, and Zerah (by Tamar, Judah's daughter-in-law, Gen. 38:11–30). Perez and Hezron were ancestors of David.

■ **2:6 Ethan, Heman, Calcol, and Dara.** These are traditional wise men compared with Solomon in 1 Kin. 4:31. Ethan and Heman probably should be distinguished from David's musicians having the same names (15:19 and Ps. 88; 89).

■ **2:7 Carmi.** A son of Zimri, who is mentioned in 2:6 (Josh. 7:1).

■ **2:10 Ram.** Departing from the order of Hezron's sons presented in 2:9, Ram is placed first, as part of the line of David (2:3—4:23 note). This genealogical information is probably from the Book of Ruth (Ruth 4:18–22).

■ **2:15 David the seventh.** According to 1 Sam. 17:12–14, David was Jesse's eighth son. Elihu is omitted here, although he is mentioned in 27:18. Perhaps Elihu is omitted because he had no children.

The Family of Hezron

18 Caleb the son of Hezron had children by Azubah, *his* wife, and by Jerioth. Now these were
her sons: Jesher, Shobab, and Ardon. 19 When Azubah died, Caleb [2]took [q]Ephrath[3] as his wife,
who bore him Hur. 20 And Hur begot Uri, and Uri begot [r]Bezalel.

21 Now afterward Hezron went in to the daughter of [s]Machir the father of Gilead, whom he
married when he *was* sixty years old; and she bore him Segub. 22 Segub begot [t]Jair,[4] who had
twenty-three cities in the land of Gilead. 23 [u](Geshur and Syria took from them the towns of Jair,
with Kenath and its towns—sixty towns.) All these *belonged to* the sons of Machir the father of
Gilead. 24 After Hezron died in Caleb Ephrathah, Hezron's wife Abijah bore him [v]Ashhur the fa-
ther of Tekoa.

The Family of Jerahmeel

25 The sons of Jerahmeel, the firstborn of Hezron, *were* Ram, the firstborn, and Bunah, Oren,
Ozem, *and* Ahijah. 26 Jerahmeel had another wife, whose name was Atarah; she was the mother
of Onam. 27 The sons of Ram, the firstborn of Jerahmeel, were Maaz, Jamin, and Eker. 28 The
sons of Onam were Shammai and Jada. The sons of Shammai *were* Nadab and Abishur.

29 And the name of the wife of Abishur *was* Abihail, and she bore him Ahban and Molid.
30 The sons of Nadab *were* Seled and Appaim; Seled died without children. 31 The son of Ap-
paim *was* Ishi, the son of Ishi *was* Sheshan, and [w]Sheshan's son *was* Ahlai. 32 The sons of Jada,
the brother of Shammai, *were* Jether and Jonathan; Jether died without children. 33 The sons of
Jonathan *were* Peleth and Zaza. These were the sons of Jerahmeel.

34 Now Sheshan had no sons, only daughters. And Sheshan had an Egyptian servant whose
name *was* Jarha. 35 Sheshan gave his daughter to Jarha his servant as wife, and she bore him At-
tai. 36 Attai begot Nathan, and Nathan begot [x]Zabad; 37 Zabad begot Ephlal, and Ephlal begot
[y]Obed; 38 Obed begot Jehu, and Jehu begot Azariah; 39 Azariah begot Helez, and Helez begot El-
easah; 40 Eleasah begot Sismai, and Sismai begot Shallum; 41 Shallum begot Jekamiah, and Jeka-
miah begot Elishama.

The Family of Caleb

42 The descendants of Caleb the brother of Jerahmeel *were* Mesha, his firstborn, who was the
father of Ziph, and the sons of Mareshah the father of Hebron. 43 The sons of Hebron *were* Ko-
rah, Tappuah, Rekem, and Shema. 44 Shema begot Raham the father of Jorkoam, and Rekem be-
got Shammai. 45 And the son of Shammai *was* Maon, and Maon *was* the father of Beth Zur.

46 Ephah, Caleb's concubine, bore Haran, Moza, and Gazez; and Haran begot Gazez. 47 And
the sons of Jahdai *were* Regem, Jotham, Geshan, Pelet, Ephah, and Shaaph.

48 Maachah, Caleb's concubine, bore Sheber and Tirhanah. 49 She also bore Shaaph the father
of Madmannah, Sheva the father of Machbenah and the father of Gibea. And the daughter of Ca-
leb *was* [z]Achsah.[5]

50 These were the descendants of Caleb: The sons of [a]Hur, the firstborn of [6]Ephrathah, *were*
Shobal the father of [b]Kirjath Jearim, 51 Salma the father of Bethlehem, *and* Hareph the father of
Beth Gader.

52 And Shobal the father of Kirjath Jearim had descendants: [7]Haroeh, *and* half of the [8]*families*
of Manuhoth. 53 The families of Kirjath Jearim *were* the Ithrites, the Puthites, the Shumathites,
and the Mishraites. From these came the Zorathites and the Eshtaolites.

54 The sons of Salma *were* Bethlehem, the Netophathites, [9]Atroth Beth Joab, half of the Ma-
nahethites, and the Zorites.

19 [q]1 Chr. 2:50 [2]Lit. *took to himself* [3]Or *Ephrathah*

20 [r]Ex. 31:2; 38:22

21 [s]Num. 27:1; Judg. 5:14; 1 Chr. 7:14

22 [t]Judg. 10:3 [4]Reckoned through the daughter of Machir, Num. 32:41; Deut. 3:14; 25:5, 6; 1 Kin. 4:13; 1 Chr. 7:14

23 [u]Num. 32:41; Deut. 3:14; Josh. 13:30

24 [v]1 Chr. 4:5

31 [w]1 Chr. 2:34, 35

36 [x]1 Chr. 11:41

37 [y]2 Chr. 23:1

49 [z]Josh. 15:17 [5]Or *Achsa*

50 [a]1 Chr. 4:4 [b]Josh. 9:17; 18:14 [6]*Ephrath,* v. 19

52 [7]*Reaiah,* 1 Chr. 4:2 [8]Or *Manuhothites,* same as *Manahethites,* v. 54

54 [9]Or *Ataroth of the house of Joab*

■ **2:18–24** This Caleb is not "Caleb the son of Jephunneh" (Num. 13:6; 1 Chr. 4:15), but "Chelubai" (v. 9).

■ **2:20 Bezalel.** The line of Ram (v. 10) leads to Jesse, David's father, and the line of Caleb leads to Bezalel, supervisor of the tabernacle construction in the days of Moses (Ex. 31:1–5; 35:30—36:7). The proximity of the royal family (2:10–17) to the family of Bezalel reflects the association of the throne of David with temple worship following the exile (6:1 note).

■ **2:25 Jerahmeel.** This is the only place where the Bible gives genealogical information about the family of Jerahmeel, who lived in southern Judah (1 Sam. 27:10; 30:27–29).

■ **2:34 Sheshan.** This additional information about the family of Jerahmeel concentrates on the line from Sheshan 2:31) to Elishama (2:41). It is possible that Elishama was a contemporary of David (the twenty-third generation of Judah), but he may have been the scribe of King Jehoiakim (Jer. 36:12, 20).

■ **2:42 father of Ziph . . . father of Hebron.** When the word "father" is associated with the name of a town or village, it probably means "founder" or "head" (1:5 note). The inclusion of settlements lying outside the control of the community would encourage readers of the time to consider regaining all the territories once occupied by the people of God (2:3—9:1 note).

55 [c]Judg. 1:16
[d]Jer. 35:2

55 And the families of the scribes who dwelt at Jabez *were* the Tirathites, the Shimeathites, *and* the Suchathites. These *were* the [c]Kenites who came from Hammath, the father of the house of [d]Rechab.

CHAPTER 3

The Family of David

1 [a]2 Sam. 3:2–5
[b]1 Sam. 25:43
[c]Josh. 15:56
[d]1 Sam. 25:39–42
[1]*Chileab,* 2 Sam. 3:3
2 [e]2 Sam. 13:37; 15:1 [f]1 Kin. 1:5
3 [g]2 Sam. 3:5
4 [h]2 Sam. 2:11 [i]2 Sam. 5:5
5 [j]1 Chr. 14:4–7 [k]2 Sam. 12:24, 25 [2]*Shammua,*1 Chr. 14:4; 2 Sam. 5:14 [3]*Bathsheba,* 2 Sam. 11:3 [4]*Eliam,* 2 Sam. 11:3
6 [5]*Elishua,* 1 Chr. 14:5; 2 Sam. 5:15 [6]*Elpelet,* 1 Chr. 14:5
8 [l]2 Sam. 5:14–16 [7]*Beeliada,* 1 Chr. 14:7
9 [m]2 Sam. 13:1
10 [n]1 Kin. 11:43 [8]*Abijam,* 1 Kin. 15:1
11 [9]*Jehoram,* 2 Kin. 1:17; 8:16 [1]Or *Azariah* or *Jehoahaz* [2]*Jehoash,* 2 Kin. 12:1
12 [3]*Uzziah,* Is. 6:1

3 Now these were the sons of David who were born to him in Hebron: The firstborn *was* [a]Amnon, by [b]Ahinoam the [c]Jezreelitess; the second, [1]Daniel, by [d]Abigail the Carmelitess; 2 the third, [e]Absalom the son of Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur; the fourth, [f]Adonijah the son of Haggith; 3 the fifth, Shephatiah, by Abital; the sixth, Ithream, by his wife [g]Eglah.

4 *These* six were born to him in Hebron. [h]There he reigned seven years and six months, and [i]in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years. 5 [j]And these were born to him in Jerusalem: [2]Shimea, Shobab, Nathan, and [k]Solomon—four by [3]Bathshua the daughter of [4]Ammiel. 6 Also *there* were Ibhar, [5]Elishama, [6]Eliphelet, 7 Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, 8 Elishama, [7]Eliada, and Eliphelet—[l]nine *in all.* 9 *These were* all the sons of David, besides the sons of the concubines, and [m]Tamar their sister.

The Family of Solomon

10 Solomon's son *was* [n]Rehoboam; [8]Abijah *was* his son, Asa his son, Jehoshaphat his son, 11 [9]Joram his son, [1]Ahaziah his son, [2]Joash his son, 12 Amaziah his son, [3]Azariah his son, Jotham his son, 13 Ahaz his son, Hezekiah his son, Manasseh his son, 14 Amon his son, *and* Josiah his son. 15 The sons of Josiah *were* Johanan the firstborn, the second [4]Jehoiakim, the third Zedekiah, and the fourth [5]Shallum. 16 The sons of [o]Jehoiakim *were* [6]Jeconiah his son *and* [7]Zedekiah his son.

The Family of Jeconiah

17 And the sons of [8]Jeconiah [9]*were* Assir, Shealtiel [p]his son, 18 *and* Malchiram, Pedaiah, Shenazzar, Jecamiah, Hoshama, and Nedabiah. 19 The sons of Pedaiah *were* Zerubbabel and Shimei. The sons of Zerubbabel *were* Meshullam, Hananiah, Shelomith their sister, 20 and Hashubah, Ohel, Berechiah, Hasadiah, and Jushab-Hesed—five *in all.*

21 The sons of Hananiah *were* Pelatiah and Jeshaiah, the sons of Rephaiah, the sons of Arnan, the sons of Obadiah, and the sons of Shechaniah. 22 The son of Shechaniah was Shemaiah. The sons of Shemaiah *were* [q]Hattush, Igal, Bariah, Neariah, and Shaphat—six *in all.* 23 The sons of Neariah *were* Elioenai, Hezekiah, and Azrikam—three *in all.* 24 The sons of Elioenai *were* Hodaviah, Eliashib, Pelaiah, Akkub, Johanan, Delaiah, and Anani—seven *in all.*

15 [4]*Eliakim,* 2 Kin. 23:34 [5]*Jehoahaz,* 2 Kin. 23:31 **16** [o]Matt. 1:11 [6]*Jehoiachin,* 2 Kin. 24:8, or *Coniah,* Jer. 22:24 [7]*Mattaniah,* 2 Kin. 24:17 **17** [p]Matt. 1:12 [8]*Jehoiachin,* 2 Kin. 24:8, or *Coniah,* Jer. 22:24 [9]Or *the captive were Shealtiel* **22** [q]Ezra 8:2

■ **2:55 Kenites.** These were foreigners related by marriage to Moses and adopted by Judah (Judg. 1:16; 4:11). They are included as legitimate members of the people of God.

■ **3:1 sons of David.** This material on the line of Ram, David's ancestor (2:3—4:23 note), shows that Zerubbabel (3:19) is the legitimate heir of the Davidic line. The record of David's family covers his children born in Hebron and Jerusalem (3:1–9); Solomon's descendants (3:10–16); and the descendants of Jehoiachin (3:17–24). The list of these sons is from 2 Sam. 3:2–5; 5:13–16; 13:1.

■ **3:10 Solomon's son.** David's other sons are passed over to focus on Solomon, the chosen descendant. The royal line moves unchallenged from David to Solomon (23:1 note). Azariah (3:12) is the same person later called Uzziah (2 Chr. 26:1 note).

■ **3:15 sons of Josiah.** Josiah's firstborn, Johanan (otherwise unknown), did not succeed him. Shallum (Jehoahaz) followed Josiah (2 Chr. 36:1, 2; 2 Kin. 23:30, 31). Pharaoh Necho removed Shallum from power and replaced him with his brother, Eliakim (Jehoiakim, 2 Chr. 36:3, 4; 2 Kin. 23:32–34). Jehoiakim was succeeded by his son Jehoiachin (2 Chr. 36:9, 10; 2 Kin. 24:8–16), but Nebuchadnezzar replaced Jehoiachin with Josiah's third son Zedekiah (2 Chr. 36:10–14; 2 Kin. 24:18–20).

■ **3:17 Jeconiah.** Also called Jehoiachin or Coniah (text note). The prophet Jeremiah, whose life and words were known to the writer (2 Chr. 35:25; 36:12, 21, 22), announced that God would remove Jeconiah's family from the throne (Jer. 22:30 note). In His mercy, however, God withdrew this curse and established Jeconiah's line once again. Jeconiah was released from prison in Babylon (2 Kin. 25:27–30). Sheshbazzar (spelled Shenazzar in 3:18) brought temple treasures back to Judah (Ezra 1:11; 5:14–16). Zerubbabel (3:19) was governor over the restored community following the exile in Babylon and rebuilt the temple (Ezra 3:1–13). God declared Zerubbabel His "signet ring" (Hag. 2:23), reversing the curse on Jeconiah (Jer. 22:24). Zerubbabel never became king, but his line represented the royal hopes of the community. Both Matthew (Matt. 1:12, 13) and Luke (Luke 3:27) identify Jesus, the supreme King, with this lineage.

■ **3:19 Pedaiah . . . Zerubbabel.** Zerubbabel is called the son of Shealtiel (3:17) elsewhere (Ezra 3:2, 8; Neh. 12:1; Hag. 1:12, 14; 2:2, 23; Matt. 1:12; Luke 3:27). This may mean that Zerubbabel succeeded Pedaiah. Alternatively, Pedaiah may have become the head of the family at Shealtiel's death, adopting Zerubbabel as his own.

■ **3:21 sons of Rephaiah . . . Shechaniah.** Probably not descendants of Zerubbabel, but other Davidic families contemporary with Zerubbabel. If this is correct, the genealogy goes only two generations beyond Zerubbabel (Introduction: Date and Occasion).

■ **3:22 six in all.** The verse mentions only five. One name may have been lost as the text was copied later. It is also possible that "six" includes Shemaiah with the five sons as the descendants of Shechaniah.

The Family of Judah

4 The sons of Judah *were* [a]Perez, Hezron, [1]Carmi, Hur, and Shobal. 2 And [2]Reaiah the son of Shobal begot Jahath, and Jahath begot Ahumai and Lahad. These *were* the families of the Zorathites. 3 These *were* the sons *of the father* of Etam: Jezreel, Ishma, and Idbash; and the name of their sister *was* Hazelelponi; 4 and Penuel *was* the father of Gedor, and Ezer *was the* father of Hushah.

These *were* the sons of [b]Hur, the firstborn of Ephrathah the father of Bethlehem.

5 And [c]Ashhur the father of Tekoa had two wives, Helah and Naarah. 6 Naarah bore him Ahuzzam, Hepher, Temeni, and Haahashtari. These *were* the sons of Naarah. 7 The sons of Helah *were* Zereth, Zohar, and Ethnan; 8 and Koz begot Anub, Zobebah, and the families of Aharhel the son of Harum.

9 Now Jabez was [d]more honorable than his brothers, and his mother called his name [3]Jabez, saying, "Because I bore *him* in pain." 10 And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, "Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my [4]territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep *me* from evil, that I may not cause pain!" So God granted him what he requested.

11 Chelub the brother of [e]Shuhah begot Mehir, who *was* the father of Eshton. 12 And Eshton begot Beth-Rapha, Paseah, and Tehinnah the father of [5]Ir-Nahash. These *were* the men of Rechah.

13 The sons of Kenaz *were* [f]Othniel and Seraiah. The sons of Othniel *were* [6]Hathath, 14 and Meonothai *who* begot Ophrah. Seraiah begot Joab the father of [g]Ge Harashim,[7] for they were craftsmen. 15 The sons of [h]Caleb the son of Jephunneh *were* Iru, Elah, and Naam. The son of Elah *was* [8]Kenaz. 16 The sons of Jehallelel *were* Ziph, Ziphah, Tiria, and Asarel. 17 The sons of Ezrah *were* Jether, Mered, Epher, and Jalon. And [9]*Mered's wife bore* Miriam, Shammai, and Ishbah the father of Eshtemoa. 18 ([1]His wife Jehudijah bore Jered the father of Gedor, Heber the father of Sochoh, and Jekuthiel the father of Zanoah.) And these were the sons of Bithiah the daughter of Pharaoh, whom Mered took.

19 The sons of Hodiah's wife, the sister of Naham, *were* the fathers of Keilah the Garmite and of Eshtemoa the [i]Maachathite. 20 And the sons of Shimon *were* Amnon, Rinnah, Ben-Hanan, and Tilon. And the sons of Ishi *were* Zoheth and Ben-Zoheth.

21 The sons of [j]Shelah [k]the son of Judah *were* Er the father of Lecah, Laadah the father of Mareshah, and the families of the house of the linen workers of the house of Ashbea; 22 also Jokim, the men of Chozeba, and Joash; Saraph, who ruled in Moab, and Jashubi-Lehem. Now the [2]records are ancient. 23 These *were* the potters and those who dwell at [3]Netaim and [4]Gederah; there they dwelt with the king for his work.

The Family of Simeon

24 The [l]sons of Simeon *were* [5]Nemuel, Jamin, [6]Jarib, [7]Zerah, *and* Shaul, 25 Shallum his son, Mibsam his son, and Mishma his son. 26 And the sons of Mishma *were* Hamuel his son, Zacchur his son, and Shimei his son. 27 Shimei had sixteen sons and six daughters; but his brothers did not have many children, [m]nor did any of their families multiply as much as the children of Judah.

28 They dwelt at Beersheba, Moladah, Hazar Shual, 29 [8]Bilhah, Ezem, [9]Tolad, 30 Bethuel, Hormah, Ziklag, 31 Beth Marcaboth, [1]Hazar Susim, Beth Biri, and at Shaaraim. These *were* their cities until the reign of David. 32 And their villages *were* [2]Etam, Ain, Rimmon, Tochen, and

CHAPTER 4

1 [a]Gen. 38:29; 46:12 [1]*Chelubai,* 1 Chr. 2:9 or *Caleb,* 1 Chr. 2:18

2 [2]*Haroeh,* 1 Chr. 2:52

4 [b]1 Chr. 2:50

5 [c]1 Chr. 2:24

9 [d]Gen. 34:19 [3]Lit. *He Will Cause Pain*

10 [4]*border*

11 [e]Job 8:1

12 [5]Lit. *City of Nahash*

13 [f]Josh. 15:17 [6]LXX, Vg. add *and Meonothai*

14 [g]Neh. 11:35 [7]Lit. *Valley of Craftsmen*

15 [h]1 Chr. 6:56 [8]Or *Uknaz*

17 [9]Lit. *she*

18 [1]Or *His Judean wife*

19 [i]2 Kin. 25:23

21 [j]Gen. 38:11, 14 [k]Gen. 38:1–5; 46:12

22 [2]Lit. *words*

23 [3]Lit. *Plants* [4]Lit. *Hedges*

24 [l]Num. 26:12–14 [5]*Jemuel,* Gen. 46:10; Ex. 6:15; Num. 26:12 [6]*Jachin,* Gen. 46:10; Num. 26:12 [7]*Zohar,* Gen. 46:10; Ex. 6:15

27 [m]Num. 2:9

29 [8]*Balah,* Josh. 19:3 [9]*Eltolad,* Josh. 19:4

31 [1]*Hazar Susah,* Josh. 19:5

32 [2]*Ether,* Josh. 19:7

■ **4:1–23 Judah.** In this section, personal and clan names are mixed with place-names, some of them outside the boundaries of the territory of the returned exiles (2:42 note).

■ **4:1 Carmi.** Probably this refers to Caleb (2:9). If so, the verse gives a linear genealogy from Judah to Shobal (2:4, 5, 9, 50).

■ **4:9 Jabez was more honorable.** This is a brief example of extraordinary piety in the line of Judah. Blessing through prayer and trust in God is a major theme in Chronicles (1 Chr. 5:18–22; 17:16–27; 21:1—22:1; 2 Chr. 6:12–42; 7:12–16; 13:14–16; 14:11–13; 18:31; 20:5–30; 30:18–20; 32:20–24; 33:11–13). In line with the geographical references in this chapter, the focus is on territorial expansion (1:5 note), victory, and safety through prayer (2 Chr. 6:34 note).

■ **4:13 Othniel.** Israel's first judge (Josh. 15:17; Judg. 1:13; 3:9–11).

■ **4:18 Bithiah the daughter of Pharaoh.** Mered's marriage to Pharaoh's daughter is otherwise not recorded. It suggests a time when Israelites were prominent in Egypt, possibly during the days of Joseph.

■ **4:21–23 Shelah.** Judah's oldest surviving son (2:3). The record of Shelah includes personal names, place-names, and trade guilds (linen workers, potters, and royal servants; see note on 1:5).

■ **4:24 Simeon.** The tribe of Simeon was closely associated with the tribe of Judah (Josh. 19:1–9; Judg. 1:3). This material is of several types: genealogies (4:24–27, 34–38), geography (4:28–33), and historical notes on territorial expansion (4:39–43). For other genealogical records of the tribe of Simeon, see Gen. 46:10; Ex. 6:15; Num. 26:12–14.

■ **4:28 Beersheba.** This list of settlements in Simeon is drawn from Josh. 19:2–8 (cf. Josh. 15:26–32, where several of these villages are given to Judah). Knowledge of territories held before the Babylonian exile would instill hopes for geographical expansion after the people returned (2:3—9:1 note).

33 [3]Baalath Beer, Josh. 19:8

41 [n]2 Kin. 18:8 [o]2 Kin. 19:11 [4]Lit. struck

43 [p]Ex. 17:14; 1 Sam. 15:8; 30:17 [5]Lit. struck

CHAPTER 5

1 [a]Gen. 29:32; 49:3 [b]Gen. 35:22; 49:4 [c]Gen. 48:15, 22

2 [d]Gen. 49:8, 10; Ps. 60:7; 108:8 [e]Mic. 5:2; Matt. 2:6 [1]the right of the firstborn

3 [f]Gen. 46:9; Ex. 6:14; Num. 26:5

6 [g]2 Kin. 18:11 [2]Heb. Tilgath-Pilneser

7 [h]1 Chr. 5:17

8 [i]Num. 32:34; Josh. 12:2; 13:15, 16

9 [j]Josh. 22:8, 9 [3]beginning [4]increased

10 [k]Gen. 25:12

11 [l]Num. 26:15–18 [m]Josh. 13:11, 24–28 [n]Deut. 3:10

16 [o]1 Chr. 27:29; Song 2:1; Is. 35:2; 65:10 [5]open lands

17 [p]2 Kin. 15:5, 32 [q]2 Kin. 14:16, 28

Ashan—five cities— [33] and all the villages that *were* around these cities as far as [3]Baal. These *were* their dwelling places, and they maintained their genealogy: [34] Meshobab, Jamlech, and Joshah the son of Amaziah; [35] Joel, and Jehu the son of Joshibiah, the son of Seraiah, the son of Asiel; [36] Elioenai, Jaakobah, Jeshohaiah, Asaiah, Adiel, Jesimiel, and Benaiah; [37] Ziza the son of Shiphi, the son of Allon, the son of Jedaiah, the son of Shimri, the son of Shemaiah— [38] these mentioned by name *were* leaders in their families, and their father's house increased greatly.

[39] So they went to the entrance of Gedor, as far as the east side of the valley, to seek pasture for their flocks. [40] And they found rich. good pasture, and the land *was* broad, quiet, and peaceful; for some Hamites formerly lived there.

[41] These recorded by name came in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah; and they [n]attacked[4] their tents and the Meunites who were found there, and [o]utterly destroyed them, as it is to this day. So they dwelt in their place, because *there was* pasture for their flocks there. [42] Now *some* of them, five hundred men of the sons of Simeon, went to Mount Seir, having as their captains Pelatiah, Neariah, Rephaiah, and Uzziel, the sons of Ishi. [43] And they [5]defeated [p]the rest of the Amalekites who had escaped. They have dwelt there to this day.

The Family of Reuben

5 Now the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel—[a]he *was* indeed the firstborn, but because he [b]defiled his father's bed, [c]his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph, the son of Israel, so that the genealogy is not listed according to the birthright; [2] yet [d]Judah prevailed over his brothers, and from him *came* a [e]ruler, although [1]the birthright was Joseph's— [3] the sons of [f]Reuben the firstborn of Israel were Hanoch, Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi.

[4] The sons of Joel *were* Shemaiah his son, Gog his son, Shimei his son, [5] Micah his son, Reaiah his son, Baal his son, [6] and Beerah his son, whom [2]Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria [g]carried into captivity. He *was* leader of the Reubenites. [7] And his brethren by their families, [h]when the genealogy of their generations was registered: the chief, Jeiel, and Zechariah, [8] and Bela the son of Azaz, the son of Shema, the son of Joel, who dwelt in [i]Aroer, as far as Nebo and Baal Meon. [9] Eastward they settled as far as the [3]entrance of the wilderness this side of the River Euphrates, because their cattle had [4]multiplied [j]in the land of Gilead.

[10] Now in the days of Saul they made war [k]with the Hagrites, who fell by their hand; and they dwelt in their tents throughout the entire *area* east of Gilead.

The Family of Gad

[11] And the [l]children of Gad dwelt next to them in the land of [m]Bashan as far as [n]Salcah: [12] Joel *was* the chief, Shapham the next, then Jaanai and Shaphat in Bashan, [13] and their brethren of their father's house: Michael, Meshullam, Sheba, Jorai, Jachan, Zia, and Eber—seven *in all.* [14] These *were* the children of Abihail the son of Huri, the son of Jaroah, the son of Gilead, the son of Michael, the son of Jeshishai, the son of Jahdo, the son of Buz; [15] Ahi the son of Abdiel, the son of Guni, *was* chief of their father's house. [16] And *the Gadites* dwelt in Gilead, in Bashan and in its villages, and in all the [5]common-lands of [o]Sharon within their borders. [17] All these were registered by genealogies in the days of [p]Jotham king of Judah, and in the days of [q]Jeroboam king of Israel.

[18] The sons of Reuben, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh *had* forty-four thousand

■ **4:34 Meshobab.** The writer lists some prominent leaders from Simeon (4:34–38) and then describes how they expanded their territories in several directions (4:39–43). Neh. 11:26–29 indicates that some of these cities (Moladah, Hazar Shual, Beersheba, Ziklag, and En Rimmon) were resettled after the Babylonian exile. The point is to tell the readers how far the Promised Land extends.

■ **4:41 to this day.** Also v. 43. The expression "today" or "this day" in Chronicles may refer to the writer's own time (5:26; 2 Chr. 20:26; 35:25), or it may refer to the earlier days of the sources being quoted. At times, it may even indicate the times of the sources used by the sources (13:11; 2 Chr. 5:9; 8:8; 10:19; 21:10). Sometimes the expression is an idiom for "from then on" or "in perpetuity."

■ **5:1–26** The tribes east of the Jordan River are discussed. This material is in four sections: Reuben (vv. 1–10); Gad (vv. 11–17); a brief narrative (vv. 18–22); and the half-tribe of Manasseh (vv. 23–26). The hope is that these tribes will be included in the nation after the return from exile in Babylon (2:42 note).

■ **5:1 he was indeed the firstborn.** The writer explains why Reuben the firstborn is given so little prominence among the tribes. He defiled his father's bed (Gen. 35:22; 49:4) and lost his right as firstborn to the double portion of the inheritance (Deut. 21:15–17). Instead, Joseph received Reuben's double portion through his sons Ephraim and Manasseh, who were treated as separate tribes (Gen. 48:1–22).

■ **5:2 from him came a ruler.** The ruler mentioned here is David, and by implication Zerubbabel, his descendant (2 Sam. 5:2; 6:21; 1 Chr. 11:2; 17:7).

■ **5:6 Tiglath-Pileser.** A king of Assyria (745–727 B.C.), also called Pul (v. 26). He invaded Israel (2 Kin. 15:29) and required Ahaz to pay tribute (2 Chr. 28:21 note). See the introductions to Amos, Isaiah, Hosea, and Micah.

■ **5:8 Aroer . . . Baal Meon.** This geographical information comes from Num. 32:37, 38 and Josh. 13:15–23.

■ **5:18–22 Reuben, the Gadites, and half the tribe of Manasseh.**

seven hundred and sixty valiant men, men able to bear shield and sword, to shoot with the bow, and skillful in war, who went to war. 19 They made war with the Hagrites, [r]Jetur, Naphish, and Nodab. 20 And [s]they were helped against them, and the Hagrites were delivered into their hand, and all who *were* with them, for they [t]cried out to God in the battle. He [6]heeded their prayer, because they [u]put their trust in Him. 21 Then they took away their livestock—fifty thousand of their camels, two hundred and fifty thousand of their sheep, and two thousand of their donkeys—also one hundred thousand of their men; 22 for many fell dead, because the war [v]*was* God's. And they dwelt in their place until [w]the captivity.

The Family of Manasseh (East)

23 So the children of the half-tribe of Manasseh dwelt in the land. Their *numbers* increased from Bashan to Baal Hermon, that is, to [x]Senir, or Mount Hermon. 24 These *were* the heads of their fathers' houses: Epher, Ishi, Eliel, Azriel, Jeremiah, Hodaviah, and Jahdiel. They were mighty men of valor, famous men, *and* heads of their fathers' houses.

25 And they were unfaithful to the God of their fathers, and [y]played the harlot after the gods of the peoples of the land, whom God had destroyed before them. 26 So the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of [z]Pul king of Assyria, that is, [a]Tiglath-Pileser[7] king of Assyria. He carried the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh into captivity. He took them to [b]Halah, Habor, Hara, and the river of Gozan to this day.

The Family of Levi

6 The sons of Levi *were* [a]Gershon,[1] Kohath, and Merari. 2 The sons of Kohath *were* Amram, [b]Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. 3 The children of Amram *were* Aaron, Moses, and Miriam. And the sons of Aaron *were* [c]Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. 4 Eleazar begot Phinehas, *and* Phinehas begot Abishua; 5 Abishua begot Bukki, and Bukki begot Uzzi; 6 Uzzi begot Zerahiah, and Zerahiah begot Meraioth; 7 Meraioth begot Amariah, and Amariah begot Ahitub; 8 [d]Ahitub begot [e]Zadok, and Zadok begot Ahimaaz; 9 Ahimaaz begot Azariah, and Azariah begot Johanan; 10 Johanan begot Azariah (it was he [f]who ministered as priest in the [g]temple[2] that Solomon built in Jerusalem); 11 [h]Azariah begot [i]Amariah, and Amariah begot Ahitub; 12 Ahitub begot Zadok, and Zadok begot [3]Shallum; 13 Shallum begot Hilkiah, and Hilkiah begot Azariah; 14 Azariah begot [j]Seraiah, and Seraiah begot Jehozadak. 15 Jehozadak went *into captivity* [k]when the LORD carried Judah and Jerusalem into captivity by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar.

16 The sons of Levi *were* [l]Gershon,[4] Kohath, and Merari. 17 These are the names of the sons of Gershon: Libni and Shimei. 18 The sons of Kohath *were* Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. 19 The sons of Merari *were* Mahli and Mushi. Now these *are* the families of the Levites according to their fathers: 20 Of Gershon *were* Libni his son, Jahath his son, [m]Zimmah his son, 21 [5]Joah his son, [6]Iddo his son, Zerah his son, *and* [7]Jeatherai his son. 22 The sons of Kohath *were* [8]Amminadab his son, [n]Korah his son, Assir his son, 23 Elkanah his son, Ebiasaph his son, Assir his

19 [r]Gen. 25:15

20 [s][1 Chr. 5:22] [t]2 Chr. 14:11–13 [u]Ps. 9:10; 20:7, 8; 22:4, 5 [6]Lit. *was entreated for them*

22 [v][Josh. 23:10] [w]2 Kin. 15:29; 17:6

23 [x]Deut. 3:9

25 [y]2 Kin. 17:7

26 [z]2 Kin. 15:19 [a]2 Kin. 15:29 [b]2 Kin. 17:6; 18:11 [7]Heb. *Tilgath-Pilneser*

CHAPTER 6

1 [a]Ex. 6:16 [1]Or *Gershom*, v. 16

2 [b]1 Chr. 6:18, 22

3 [c]Lev. 10:1, 2

8 [d]2 Sam. 8:17 [e]2 Sam. 15:27

10 [f]2 Chr. 26:17, 18 [g]1 Kin. 6:1 [2]Lit. *house*

11 [h]Ezra 7:3 [i]2 Chr. 19:11

12 [3]*Meshullam*, 1 Chr. 9:11

14 [j]Neh. 11:11

15 [k]2 Kin. 25:21

16 [l]Ex. 6:16 [4]Heb. *Gershom*, an alternate spelling for *Gershom*, vv. 1, 17, 20, 43, 62, 71

20 [m]1 Chr. 6:42

21 [5]*Ethan*, v. 42 [6]*Adaiah*, v. 41 [7]*Ethni*, v. 41

22 [n]Num. 16:1 [8]*Izhar*, vv. 2, 18

This brief narrative concerns all three tribes from east of the Jordan River (cf. 4:9, 10). The story illustrates the importance of prayer and reliance on God in battle, a theme appearing frequently in this history (2 Chr. 6:34 note).

■ **5:21 one hundred thousand.** The Israelites overcame an army much larger than their own (v. 18; 19:7 and note).

■ **5:22 until the captivity.** This remark refers to the deportation of the tribes east of the Jordan River by the Assyrians in 734 B.C. (vv. 6, 26).

■ **5:23–26** The tribes east of the Jordan River suffered exile because the infidelity of the half-tribe of Manasseh invited divine retribution. These events stand in contrast to the preceding narrative of prayer and blessing (vv. 18–22; cf. 4:9, 10).

■ **5:25 played the harlot.** See note on 2 Chr. 21:11.

■ **5:26 to this day.** See note on 4:41.

■ **6:1 Levi.** A lengthy account of the tribe of Levi provides the background for the arrangement of the temple personnel in the restored community following the exile in Babylon. The writer connects the Davidic monarchy with temple worship in his conception of a restored people. The discussion covers people and territories (1:5; 2:3—9:1 note). The attention given to Levi reveals the importance of the temple and priesthood. If the returning exiles are to see God's blessing, then the royal family (Judah) and the temple personnel also (Levi) must carry out their proper functions (29:22 note). The material covers the priests descended from Aaron, a survey of three clans of Levi, the temple musicians appointed by David (6:31–47), and the duties of the sons of Aaron and other families. These materials provide a rationale for ordering the tribe of Levi in the period after the exile in Babylon.

■ **6:8 Zadok.** See note on 15:11.

■ **6:10 Azariah.** An interest in Solomon's temple arrangement as a model for the community returning from the exile explains the relevance of a comment on Azariah (1 Kin. 4:2 and Introduction: Characteristics and Themes).

■ **6:14, 15 Jehozadak.** The high-priestly line is traced to Jehozadak, father of Jeshua (usually spelled Joshua), who was high priest in the early period following the exile to Babylon (Ezra 3:2; 5:2; 10:18; Hag. 1:1; 2:2; Zech. 3:1; 6:11).

■ **6:16–19** Drawn from Ex. 6:16–19 and Num. 3:17–20; 26:57–61.

■ **6:22 Amminadab.** Probably another name for Izhar (vv. 2, 37, 38; Ex. 6:18, 21).

■ **6:22, 23 Assir . . . Elkanah . . . Ebiasaph.** These men were all sons of Korah (Ex. 6:24; cf. v. 37).

25 [o] 1 Chr. 6:35, 36

26 [p] *Zuph,* v. 35; 1 Sam. 1:1 [r] *Toah,* v. 34

27 [q] *Eliel,* v. 34

28 [3] So with LXX, Syr., Arab.; cf. v. 33 and 1 Sam. 8:2 [4] Heb. *Vasheni*

31 [p] 1 Chr. 15:16–22, 27; 16:4–6 [q] 2 Sam. 6:17; 1 Kin. 8:4; 1 Chr. 15:25—16:1

33 [r] Num. 26:57 [5] Lit. *stood with*

34 [6] *Elihu,* 1 Sam. 1:1 [7] *Tohu,* 1 Sam. 1:1

37 [s] Ex. 6:24

39 [t] 2 Chr. 5:12

41 [u] 1 Chr. 6:21

44 [8] *Jeduthun,* 1 Chr. 9:16; 25:1, 3, 6; 2 Chr. 35:15; Ps. 62:title [9] Or *Kushaiah*

48 [v] 1 Chr. 9:14–34

49 [w] Ex. 28:1; [Num. 18:1–8] [x] Lev. 1:8, 9 [y] Ex. 30:7

50 [z] 1 Chr. 6:4–8; Ezra 7:5

54 [a] Josh. 21

55 [b] Josh. 14:13; 21:11, 12 [1] *open lands*

56 [c] Josh. 14:13; 15:13

57 [d] Josh. 21:13, 19

58 [2] *Holon,* Josh. 21:15

59 [3] *Ain,* Josh. 21:16

60 [4] *Almon,* Josh. 21:18

61 [e] 1 Chr. 6:66–70 [f] Josh. 21:5

63 [g] Josh. 21:7, 34–40

son, [24] Tahath his son, Uriel his son, Uzziah his son, and Shaul his son. [25] The sons of Elkanah *were* [o] Amasai and Ahimoth. [26] *As for* Elkanah, the sons of Elkanah *were* [p] Zophai his son, [1] Nahath his son, [27] [2] Eliab his son, Jeroham his son, *and* Elkanah his son. [28] The sons of Samuel *were* [3] *Joel* the firstborn, and Abijah [4] the second. [29] The sons of Merari *were* Mahli, Libni his son, Shimei his son, Uzzah his son, [30] Shimea his son, Haggiah his son, *and* Asaiah his son.

Musicians in the House of the LORD

[31] Now these are [p] the men whom David appointed over the service of song in the house of the LORD, after the [q] ark came to rest. [32] They were ministering with music before the dwelling place of the tabernacle of meeting, until Solomon had built the house of the LORD in Jerusalem, and they served in their office according to their order.

[33] And these *are* the ones who [5] ministered with their sons: Of the sons of the [r] Kohathites *were* Heman the singer, the son of Joel, the son of Samuel, [34] the son of Elkanah, the son of Jeroham, the son of [6] Eliel, the son of [7] Toah, [35] the son of Zuph, the son of Elkanah, the son of Mahath, the son of Amasai, [36] the son of Elkanah, the son of Joel, the son of Azariah, the son of Zephaniah, [37] the son of Tahath, the son of Assir, the son of [s] Ebiasaph, the son of Korah, [38] the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, the son of Israel. [39] And his brother [t] Asaph, who stood at his right hand, *was* Asaph the son of Berachiah, the son of Shimea, [40] the son of Michael, the son of Baaseiah, the son of Malchijah, [41] the son of [u] Ethni, the son of Zerah, the son of Adaiah, [42] the son of Ethan, the son of Zimmah, the son of Shimei, [43] the son of Jahath, the son of Gershon, the son of Levi.

[44] Their brethren, the sons of Merari, on the left hand, *were* [8] Ethan the son of [9] Kishi, the son of Abdi, the son of Malluch, [45] the son of Hashabiah, the son of Amaziah, the son of Hilkiah, [46] the son of Amzi, the son of Bani, the son of Shamer, [47] the son of Mahli, the son of Mushi, the son of Merari, the son of Levi.

[48] And their brethren, the Levites, *were* appointed to every [v] kind of service of the tabernacle of the house of God.

The Family of Aaron

[49] [w] But Aaron and his sons offered sacrifices [x] on the altar of burnt offering and [y] on the altar of incense, for all the work of the Most Holy *Place,* and to make atonement for Israel, according to all that Moses the servant of God had commanded. [50] Now these *are* the [z] sons of Aaron: Eleazar his son, Phinehas his son, Abishua his son, [51] Bukki his son, Uzzi his son, Zerahiah his son, [52] Meraioth his son, Amariah his son, Ahitub his son, [53] Zadok his son, *and* Ahimaaz his son.

Dwelling Places of the Levites

[54] [a] Now these *are* their dwelling places throughout their settlements in their territory, for they were *given* by lot to the sons of Aaron, of the family of the Kohathites: [55] [b] They gave them Hebron in the land of Judah, with its surrounding [1] common-lands. [56] [c] But the fields of the city and its villages they gave to Caleb the son of Jephunneh. [57] And [d] to the sons of Aaron they gave *one of* the cities of refuge, Hebron; also Libnah with its common-lands, Jattir, Eshtemoa with its common-lands, [58] [2] Hilen with its common-lands, Debir with its common-lands, [59] [3] Ashan with its common-lands, and Beth Shemesh with its common-lands. [60] And from the tribe of Benjamin: Geba with its common-lands, [4] Alemeth with its common-lands, and Anathoth with its common-lands. All their cities among their families *were* thirteen.

[61] [e] To the rest of the family of the tribe of the Kohathites *they gave* [f] by lot ten cities from half the tribe of Manasseh. [62] And to the sons of Gershon, throughout their families, *they gave* thirteen cities from the tribe of Issachar, from the tribe of Asher, from the tribe of Naphtali, and from the tribe of Manasseh in Bashan. [63] To the sons of Merari, throughout their families, *they gave* [g] twelve cities from the tribe of Reuben, from the tribe of Gad, and from the tribe of Zebu-

■ **6:26, 27 Zophai . . . Nahath . . . Eliab.** Probably alternative names for Zuph, Toah, and Eliel (vv. 34, 35).

■ **6:27, 28 Elkanah . . . Samuel.** 1 Sam. 1:1 traces Elkanah and his ancestors back to Zophia (Zuph) as Ephraimites. This designation may have indicated the location of his home, not his tribe (1 Sam. 1:1 note).

■ **6:31 David appointed.** David appointed groups from each of the three clans of Levi as musicians (15:16–26; 2 Chr. 35:3): the family of Heman from Kohath (vv. 33–38), the family of Asaph from Gershon (vv. 39–43), and the family of Ethan from Merari (vv. 44–47). The importance of music in worship is stressed (15:16 note), and what is said also gives a basis for the functions of these clans in the period following the exile in Babylon.

■ **6:49 all that Moses . . . had commanded.** See note on 16:40.

■ **6:53 Zadok.** Discussion of the Levitical families concludes with the exclusive right of the Zadokites to offer sacrifices because of their direct descent from Aaron. There may have been some controversy about this among the Levitical families at the time of writing (15:11 note).

■ **6:60 common-lands.** Areas of countryside used for pasture.

lun. 64 So the children of Israel gave *these* cities with their [5]common-lands to the Levites. 65 And they gave by lot from the tribe of the children of Judah, from the tribe of the children of Simeon, and from the tribe of the children of Benjamin these cities which are called by *their* names.

66 Now [h]some of the families of the sons of Kohath *were given* cities as their territory from the tribe of Ephraim. 67 [i]And they gave them *one of* the cities of refuge, Shechem with its common-lands, in the mountains of Ephraim, also Gezer with its common-lands, 68 [j]Jokmeam with its common-lands, Beth Horon with its common-lands, 69 Aijalon with its common-lands, and Gath Rimmon with its common-lands. 70 And from the half-tribe of Manasseh: Aner with its common-lands and Bileam with its common-lands, for the rest of the family of the sons of Kohath.

71 From the family of the half-tribe of Manasseh the sons of Gershon *were given* Golan in Bashan with its common-lands and [6]Ashtaroth with its common-lands. 72 And from the tribe of Issachar: [7]Kedesh with its common-lands, Daberath with its common-lands, 73 Ramoth with its common-lands, and Anem with its common-lands. 74 And from the tribe of Asher: Mashal with its common-lands, Abdon with its common-lands, 75 Hukok with its common-lands, and Rehob with its common-lands. 76 And from the tribe of Naphtali: Kedesh in Galilee with its common-lands, Hammon with its common-lands, and Kirjathaim with its common-lands.

77 From the tribe of Zebulun the rest of the children of Merari *were given* [8]Rimmon with its common-lands and Tabor with its common-lands. 78 And on the other side of the Jordan, across from Jericho, on the east side of the Jordan, *they were given* from the tribe of Reuben: Bezer in the wilderness with its common-lands, Jahzah with its common-lands, 79 Kedemoth with its common-lands, and Mephaath with its common-lands. 80 And from the tribe of Gad: Ramoth in Gilead with its common-lands, Mahanaim with its common-lands, 81 Heshbon with its common-lands, and Jazer with its common-lands.

64 [5]*open lands*
66 [h]1 Chr. 6:61
67 [i]Josh. 21:21
68 [j]Josh. 21:22
71 [6]*Beeshterah,* Josh. 21:27
72 [7]*Kishon,* Josh. 21:28
77 [8]Heb. *Rimmono,* an alternate spelling of *Rimmon,* 1 Chr. 4:32

The Family of Issachar

7 The sons of Issachar *were* [a]Tola, [1]Puah, [2]Jashub, and Shimron—four *in all.* 2 The sons of Tola *were* Uzzi, Rephaiah, Jeriel, Jahmai, Jibsam, and Shemuel, heads of their father's house. *The sons* of Tola *were* mighty men of valor in their generations; [b]their number in the days of David *was* twenty-two thousand six hundred. 3 The son of Uzzi *was* Izrahiah, and the sons of Izrahiah *were* Michael, Obadiah, Joel, and Ishiah. All five of them *were* chief men. 4 And with them, by their generations, according to their fathers' houses, *were* thirty-six thousand troops ready for war; for they had many wives and sons.

5 Now their brethren among all the families of Issachar *were* mighty men of valor, listed by their genealogies, eighty-seven thousand in all.

The Family of Benjamin

6 *The sons* of [c]Benjamin *were* Bela, Becher, and Jediael—three *in all.* 7 The sons of Bela were Ezbon, Uzzi, Uzziel, Jerimoth, and Iri—five *in all.* They *were* heads of *their* fathers' houses, and they were listed by their genealogies, twenty-two thousand and thirty-four mighty men of valor.

8 The sons of Becher *were* Zemirah, Joash, Eliezer, Elioenai, Omri, Jerimoth, Abijah, Anathoth, and Alemeth. All these *are* the sons of Becher. 9 And they were recorded by genealogy according to their generations, heads of their fathers' houses, twenty thousand two hundred mighty men of valor. 10 The son of Jediael *was* Bilhan, and the sons of Bilhan *were* Jeush, Benjamin, Ehud, Chenaanah, Zethan, Tharshish, and Ahishahar.

11 All these sons of Jediael *were* heads of their fathers' houses; *there were* seventeen thousand two hundred mighty men of valor fit to go out for war *and* battle. 12 [3]Shuppim and [4]Huppim *were* the sons of [5]Ir, *and* Hushim *was* the son of [6]Aher.

The Family of Naphtali

13 The [d]sons of Naphtali *were* [7]Jahziel, Guni, Jezer, and [8]Shallum, the sons of Bilhah.

CHAPTER 7

1 [a]Num. 26:23–25 [1]*Puvah,* Gen. 46:13 [2]*Job,* Gen. 46:13
2 [b]2 Sam. 24:1–9; 1 Chr. 27:1
6 [c]Gen. 46:21; Num. 26:38–41; 1 Chr. 8:1
12 [3]*Shupham,* Num. 26:39 [4]*Hupham,* Num. 26:39 [5]*Iri,* v. 7 [6]*Ahiram,* Num. 26:38
13 [d]Num. 26:48–50 [7]*Jahzeel,* Gen. 46:24 [8]*Shillem,* Gen. 46:24

■ **6:64** In this account (vv. 54–81), drawing from Josh. 21:4–48, the writer points to the wide area that had belonged to Levi. Most of the places named were outside the boundaries of the province occupied following the return from exile, suggesting a hope that the restored community would expand (2:42 note).

■ **7:1 Issachar.** The record of Issachar is drawn from Gen. 46:13; Num. 1:28; 26:23–25. Some portions of the material stem from military lists (vv. 2, 4, 5). For the numbers of fighting men, see note on 12:23.

■ **7:6–12 Benjamin.** The writer will return to the tribe of Benjamin again in ch. 8 to trace the lineage of Saul. Here he draws upon military lists (vv. 7, 9, 11). For the numbers of fighting men see note on 12:23.

■ **7:13 sons of Naphtali.** This list repeats information found in Gen. 46:24 and Num. 26:48–50.

14 [e]Num. 26:29–34 [f]1 Chr. 2:21

15 [g]Num. 26:30–33; 27:1 [g]*Hupham,* v. 12; Num. 26:39 [1]*Shupham,* v. 12; Num. 26:39 [2]Lit. *the second*

17 [h]1 Sam. 12:11

18 [3]*Jeezer,* Num. 26:30

20 [i]Num. 26:35–37

23 [4]Lit. *In Tragedy*

24 [j]Josh. 16:3, 5; 2 Chr. 8:5

26 [k]Num. 10:22

27 [l]Ex. 17:9, 14; 24:13; 33:11 [5]Heb. *Non*

28 [m]Josh. 16:1–10 [6]*Naarath,* Josh. 16:7 [7]Many Heb. mss., Bg., LXX, Tg., Vg. *Gazza*

29 [n]Gen. 41:51; Josh. 17:7 [o]Josh. 17:11

30 [p]Gen. 46:17; Num. 26:44–47

31 [8]Or *Birzavith* or *Birzoth*

32 [9]*Shemer,* 1 Chr. 7:34 [1]*Helem,* 1 Chr. 7:35

34 [q]1 Chr. 7:32

37 [2]*Jether,* v. 38

CHAPTER 8

1 [a]Gen. 46:21; Num. 26:38; 1 Chr. 7:6 [1]*Ahiram,* Num. 26:38

3 [2]*Ard,* Num. 26:40

5 [3]*Shupham,* Num. 26:39, or *Shuppim,* 1 Chr. 7:12

6 [b]1 Chr. 6:60 [c]1 Chr. 2:52

The Family of Manasseh (West)

14 The [e]descendants of Manasseh: his Syrian concubine bore him [f]Machir the father of Gilead, the father of Asriel. 15 Machir took as his wife *the sister* of [9]Huppim and [1]Shuppim, whose name *was* Maachah. The name of *Gilead's* [2]grandson *was* [g]Zelophehad, but Zelophehad begot only daughters. 16 (Maachah the wife of Machir bore a son, and she called his name Peresh. The name of his brother *was* Sheresh, and his sons *were* Ulam and Rakem. 17 The son of Ulam *was* [h]Bedan.) These *were* the descendants of Gilead the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh.

18 His sister Hammoleketh bore Ishhod, [3]Abiezer, and Mahlah.

19 And the sons of Shemida were Ahian, Shechem, Likhi, and Aniam.

The Family of Ephraim

20 [i]The sons of Ephraim *were* Shuthelah, Bered his son, Tahath his son, Eladah his son, Tahath his son, 21 Zabad his son, Shuthelah his son, and Ezer and Elead. The men of Gath who were born in *that* land killed *them* because they came down to take away their cattle. 22 Then Ephraim their father mourned many days, and his brethren came to comfort him.

23 And when he went in to his wife, she conceived and bore a son; and he called his name [4]Beriah, because tragedy had come upon his house. 24 Now his daughter *was* Sheerah, who built Lower and Upper [j]Beth Horon and Uzzen Sheerah; 25 and Rephah *was* his son, *as well* as Resheph, and Telah his son, Tahan his son, 26 Laadan his son, Ammihud his son, [k]Elishama his son, 27 [5]Nun his son, and [l]Joshua his son.

28 Now their [m]possessions and dwelling places *were* Bethel and its towns: to the east [6]Naaran, to the west Gezer and its towns, and Shechem and its towns, as far as [7]Ayyah and its towns; 29 and by the borders of the children of [n]Manasseh *were* Beth Shean and its towns, Taanach and its towns, [o]Megiddo and its towns, Dor and its towns. In these dwelt the children of Joseph, the son of Israel.

The Family of Asher

30 [p]The sons of Asher *were* Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi, Beriah, and their sister Serah. 31 The sons of Beriah *were* Heber and Malchiel, who was the father of [8]Birzaith. 32 And Heber begot Japhlet, [9]Shomer, [1]Hotham, and their sister Shua. 33 The sons of Japhlet *were* Pasach, Bimhal, and Ashvath. These *were* the children of Japhlet. 34 The sons of [q]Shemer *were* Ahi, Rohgah, Jehubbah, and Aram. 35 And the sons of his brother Helem *were* Zophah, Imna, Shelesh, and Amal. 36 The sons of Zophah *were* Suah, Harnepher, Shual, Beri, Imrah, 37 Bezer, Hod, Shamma, Shilshah, [2]Jithran, and Beera. 38 The sons of Jether *were* Jephunneh, Pispah, and Ara. 39 The sons of Ulla *were* Arah, Haniel, and Rizia.

40 All these *were* the children of Asher, heads of *their* fathers' houses, choice men, mighty men of valor, chief leaders. And they were recorded by genealogies among the army fit for battle; their number *was* twenty-six thousand.

The Family Tree of King Saul of Benjamin

8 Now Benjamin begot [a]Bela his firstborn, Ashbel the second, [1]Aharah the third, 2 Nohah the fourth, and Rapha the fifth. 3 The sons of Bela *were* [2]Addar, Gera, Abihud, 4 Abishua, Naaman, Ahoah, 5 Gera, [3]Shephuphan, and Huram.

6 These *are* the sons of Ehud, who were the heads of the fathers' *houses* of the inhabitants of [b]Geba, and who forced them to move to [c]Manahath: 7 Naaman, Ahijah, and Gera who forced them to move. He begot Uzza and Ahihud.

8 Also Shaharaim had children in the country of Moab, after he had sent away Hushim and

■ **7:14 Manasseh.** See 5:23–26 note. Much of the data here is taken from Num. 26:29–34 and Josh. 17:1–13. The focus on women in this line may stem from the importance of Zelophehad's daughters in Num. 26:33.

■ **7:20 Ephraim.** Matters of lineage and geography appear again (2:3—9:1 note).

■ **7:30 Asher.** The genealogy of Asher is drawn from Gen. 46:17 and Num. 26:44–46. For the numbers of fighting men, see note on 12:23.

■ **8:1 Benjamin.** The survey of the tribes of Israel concludes with a second, more extensive treatment of Benjamin (cf. 7:6–12). The genealogy of Benjamin is comparable in length to the treatment of Judah (2:3—4:23) and Levi (6:1–81). The tribe of Benjamin is of special importance because of its close association with Judah in the days before and after the Babylonian exile (1 Kin. 12:20, 21; 1 Chr. 9:4–9). Saul, the first king of Israel, was from the tribe of Benjamin (1 Sam. 9:1—10:27; 1 Chr. 9:35–44). This chapter is arranged according to geography: Geba (vv. 1–7), Moab (vv. 8–13), Jerusalem (vv. 14–28), and Gibeon (8:29–40).

■ **8:1–7** Compare the various lists in 7:6–12; Gen. 46:21; Num. 26:38–41.

■ **8:8–13 Moab.** For Israelites living in Moab (v. 8), see 1 Sam. 22:3–5 and Ruth 1:1, 2.

Baara his wives. 9 By Hodesh his wife he begot Jobab, Zibia, Mesha, Malcam, 10 Jeuz, Sachiah, and Mirmah. These *were* his sons, heads of their fathers' *houses.*

11 And by Hushim he begot Abitub and Elpaal. 12 The sons of Elpaal *were* Eber, Misham, and Shemed, who built Ono and Lod with its towns; 13 and Beriah and [d]Shema, who *were* heads of their fathers' *houses* of the inhabitants of Aijalon, who drove out the inhabitants of Gath. 14 Ahio, Shashak, Jeremoth, 15 Zebadiah, Arad, Eder, 16 Michael, Ispah, and Joha *were* the sons of Beriah. 17 Zebadiah, Meshullam, Hizki, Heber, 18 Ishmerai, Jizliah, and Jobab *were* the sons of Elpaal. 19 Jakim, Zichri, Zabdi, 20 Elienai, Zillethai, Eliel, 21 Adaiah, Beraiah, and Shimrath *were* the sons of [4]Shimei. 22 Ishpan, Eber, Eliel, 23 Abdon, Zichri, Hanan, 24 Hananiah, Elam, Antothijah, 25 Iphdeiah, and Penuel *were* the sons of Shashak. 26 Shamsherai, Shehariah, Athaliah, 27 Jaareshiah, Elijah, and Zichri *were* the sons of Jeroham.

28 These *were* heads of the fathers' *houses* by their generations, chief men. These dwelt in Jerusalem.

29 Now [5]the father of Gibeon, whose [e]wife's name *was* Maacah, dwelt at Gibeon. 30 And his firstborn son *was* Abdon, then Zur, Kish, Baal, Nadab, 31 Gedor, Ahio, [6]Zecher, 32 and Mikloth, *who* begot [7]Shimeah. They also dwelt [8]alongside their [9]relatives in Jerusalem, with their brethren. 33 [f]Ner[1] begot Kish, Kish begot Saul, and Saul begot Jonathan, Malchishua, [2]Abinadab, and [3]Esh-Baal. 34 The son of Jonathan *was* [4]Merib-Baal, and Merib-Baal begot [8]Micah. 35 The sons of Micah *were* Pithon, Melech, [5]Tarea, and Ahaz. 36 And Ahaz begot [6]Jehoaddah; Jehoaddah begot Alemeth, Azmaveth, and Zimri; and Zimri begot Moza. 37 Moza begot Binea, [7]Raphah his son, Eleasah his son, *and* Azel his son.

38 Azel had six sons whose names *were* these: Azrikam, Bocheru, Ishmael, Sheariah, Obadiah, and Hanan. All these *were* the sons of Azel. 39 And the sons of Eshek his brother *were* Ulam his firstborn, Jeush the second, and Eliphelet the third.

40 The sons of Ulam were mighty men of valor—archers. *They* had many sons and grandsons, one hundred and fifty *in all.* These *were* all sons of Benjamin.

9 So [a]all Israel was [1]recorded by genealogies, and indeed, they *were* inscribed in the book of the kings of Israel. But Judah was carried away captive to Babylon because of their unfaithfulness. 2 [b]And the first inhabitants who *dwelt* in their possessions in their cities *were* Israelites, priests, Levites, and [c]the Nethinim.

Dwellers in Jerusalem

3 Now in [d]Jerusalem the children of Judah dwelt, and some of the children of Benjamin, and of the children of Ephraim and Manasseh: 4 Uthai the son of Ammihud, the son of Omri, the son of Imri, the son of Bani, of the descendants of Perez, the son of Judah. 5 Of the Shilonites: Asaiah the firstborn and his sons. 6 Of the sons of Zerah: Jeuel, and their brethren—six hundred and ninety. 7 Of the sons of Benjamin: Sallu the son of Meshullam, the son of Hodaviah, the son of Hassenuah; 8 Ibneiah the son of Jeroham; Elah the son of Uzzi, the son of Michri; Meshullam the son of Shephatiah, the son of Reuel, the son of Ibnijah; 9 and their brethren, according to their generations—nine hundred and fifty-six. All these men *were* heads of a father's *house* in their fathers' houses.

13 [d]1 Chr. 8:21

21 [4]*Shema,* 1 Chr. 7:13

29 [e]1 Chr. 9:35–38 [5]Jeiel, 1 Chr. 9:35

31 [6]*Zechariah,* 1 Chr. 9:37

32 [7]*Shimeam,* 1 Chr. 9:38 [8]Lit. *opposite* [9]*brethren*

33 [f]1 Sam. 14:51 [1]Also the son of Gibeon, 1 Chr. 9:36, 39 [2]*Jishui,* 1 Sam. 14:49 [3]*Ishbosheth,* 2 Sam. 2:8

34 [9]2 Sam. 9:12 [4]*Mephibosheth,* 2 Sam. 4:4

35 [5]*Tahrea,* 1 Chr. 9:41

36 [6]*Jarah,* 1 Chr. 9:42

37 [7]*Raphaiah,* 1 Chr. 9:43

CHAPTER 9

1 [a]Ezra 2:59 [1]*enrolled*

2 [b]Ezra 2:70; Neh. 7:73 [c]Ezra 2:43; 8:20

3 [d]Neh. 11:1, 2

■ **8:29–40** Much of this list is repeated in 9:35–44. It traces the Benjamites in Gibeon to Saul (8:33) and many generations after him.

■ **8:33 Esh-Baal.** This is probably his original name, meaning "man of Baal." He is also called Jishui, or "man of the LORD" (1 Sam. 14:49), and Ishbosheth, "man of shame" (2 Sam. 2:8).

■ **8:34 Merib-Baal.** This name for Mephibosheth was probably first spelled Meri-Baal ("hero of Baal" or "loved of Baal") and later changed to Merib-Baal (perhaps "opponent of Baal"). "Mephibosheth" itself means "from the mouth of shame" (2 Sam. 4:4; 9:6).

■ **9:1–34** This chapter contains a selective summary of Israelites who made up the early community of those returning from exile in Babylon. Much of this material also appears in Neh. 11.

■ **9:1 all Israel.** The lists of the tribes of Israel represent the entire nation. The historical people of God and their territories are presented as a model for the community of those returning from exile in Babylon (11:1; 2 Chr. 10:1; 29:24 and notes).

■ **9:2 their possessions.** The account emphasizes that the returnees took possession of land that was rightfully theirs.

Israelites, priests, Levites, and the Nethinim. The lists that follow (9:4–34) cover each of these categories except the "Nethinim," or temple servants, who may have been descendants of the Gibeonites (Josh. 9:23) pressed into the mundane work required for maintaining the tabernacle (Ezra 8:20).

■ **9:3 Judah . . . Benjamin . . . Ephraim and Manasseh.** The northern and southern kingdoms are considered to have been reunited under Hezekiah (2 Chr. 29:1 note). Representatives of the entire nation went into the Babylonian exile and returned to the land. For this reason, the writer does not overlook Ephraim and Manasseh among those returning. Yet Judah and Benjamin are given special attention because they represent the southern kingdom, the home of the line of David and the location of the temple.

■ **9:4–6** Those belonging to the tribe of Judah are traced to Judah's sons: Perez (9:4), Shelah (9:5—"Shilonites" probably stands for "Shelanites"; cf. 2:3; 4:21–23; and Num. 26:20), and Zerah (9:6).

10 [e]Neh. 11:10–14

11 [f]2 Chr. 31:13; Jer. 20:1 [2]*Seraiah,* Neh. 11:11

13 [3]Lit. *mighty men of strength*

15 [g]Neh. 11:17

16 [h]Neh. 11:17 [i]Neh. 11:17

19 [4]Lit. *thresholds*

20 [j]Num. 25:6–13; 31:6

21 [k]1 Chr. 26:2, 14 [5]*gatekeeper*

22 [l]1 Chr. 26:1, 2 [m]1 Sam. 9:9

25 [n]2 Kin. 11:4–7; 2 Chr. 23:8

27 [o]1 Chr. 23:30–32 [6]*the watch was committed to them*

29 [p]1 Chr. 23:29

30 [q]Ex. 30:22–25

31 [r]Lev. 2:5; 6:21

32 [s]Lev. 24:5–8

33 [t]1 Chr. 6:31; 25:1

35 [u]1 Chr. 8:29–32

37 [7]*Zecher,* 1 Chr. 8:31

38 [8]*Shimeah,* 1 Chr. 8:32

The Priests at Jerusalem

10 [e]Of the priests: Jedaiah, Jehoiarib, and Jachin; 11 [2]Azariah the son of Hilkiah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Zadok, the son of Meraioth, the son of Ahitub, the [f]officer over the house of God; 12 Adaiah the son of Jeroham, the son of Pashur, the son of Malchijah; Maasai the son of Adiel, the son of Jahzerah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Meshillemith, the son of Immer; 13 and their brethren, heads of their fathers' *houses*—one thousand seven hundred and sixty. *They were* [3]very able men for the work of the service of the house of God.

The Levites at Jerusalem

14 Of the Levites: Shemaiah the son of Hasshub, the son of Azrikam, the son of Hashabiah, of the sons of Merari; 15 Bakbakkar, Heresh, Galal, and Mattaniah the son of Micah, the son of [g]Zichri, the son of Asaph; 16 [h]Obadiah the son of [i]Shemaiah, the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun; and Berechiah the son of Asa, the son of Elkanah, who lived in the villages of the Netophathites.

The Levite Gatekeepers

17 And the gatekeepers *were* Shallum, Akkub, Talmon, Ahiman, and their brethren. Shallum *was* the chief. 18 Until then *they had been* gatekeepers for the camps of the children of Levi at the King's Gate on the east.

19 Shallum the son of Kore, the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah, and his brethren, from his father's house, the Korahites, *were* in charge of the work of the service, [4]gatekeepers of the tabernacle. Their fathers had been keepers of the entrance to the camp of the LORD. 20 And [j]Phinehas the son of Eleazar had been the officer over them in time past; the LORD *was* with him. 21 [k]Zechariah the son of Meshelemiah *was* [5]keeper of the door of the tabernacle of meeting.

22 All those chosen as gatekeepers *were* two hundred and twelve. [l]They were recorded by their genealogy, in their villages. David and Samuel [m]the seer had appointed them to their trusted office. 23 So they and their children *were* in charge of the gates of the house of the LORD, the house of the tabernacle, by assignment. 24 The gatekeepers were assigned to the four directions: the east, west, north, and south. 25 And their brethren in their villages *had* to come with them from time to time [n]for seven days. 26 For in this trusted office *were* four chief gatekeepers; they were Levites. And they had charge over the chambers and treasuries of the house of God. 27 And they lodged *all* around the house of God because [6]they *had* the [o]responsibility, and they *were* in charge of opening *it* every morning.

Other Levite Responsibilities

28 Now *some* of them were in charge of the serving vessels, for they brought them in and took them out by count. 29 *Some* of them *were* appointed over the furnishings and over all the implements of the sanctuary, and over the [p]fine flour and the wine and the oil and the incense and the spices. 30 And *some* of the sons of the priests made [q]the ointment of the spices.

31 Mattithiah of the Levites, the firstborn of Shallum the Korahite, had the trusted office [r]over the things that were baked in the pans. 32 And some of their brethren of the sons of the Kohathites [s]*were* in charge of preparing the showbread for every Sabbath.

33 These are [t]the singers, heads of the fathers' *houses* of the Levites, *who lodged* in the chambers, *and were* free *from other duties;* for they were employed in *that* work day and night. 34 These heads of the fathers' *houses* of the Levites *were* heads throughout their generations. They dwelt at Jerusalem.

The Family of King Saul

35 Jeiel the father of Gibeon, whose wife's name *was* [u]Maacah, dwelt at Gibeon. 36 His firstborn son *was* Abdon, then Zur, Kish, Baal, Ner, Nadab, 37 Gedor, Ahio, [7]Zechariah, and Mikloth. 38 And Mikloth begot [8]Shimeam. They also dwelt alongside their relatives in Jerusalem,

■ **9:15, 16, 33 Asaph . . . Jeduthun.** Levites in charge of music (6:39; 9:33; 16:41, 42). Their prominence in this list reflects the importance of music in worship (15:16 note).

■ **9:16 Netophathites.** Netophah was a town about three miles south of Bethlehem (Neh. 7:26; 12:28).

■ **9:17 gatekeepers.** There is a list of gatekeepers in 26:1–19. This list reaches to the time of David (vv. 23, 24). The cycles of duty of the gatekeepers is described, evidently as a model for the new generation. David's tabernacle required twenty-four guards. Assignments and rotations were made by lot (26:12–18).

■ **9:28–34** The Levites performed a variety of functions in the temple. Special exemption was made for the musicians (15:16 note).

with their brethren. 39 [v]Ner begot Kish, Kish begot Saul, and Saul begot Jonathan, Malchishua, Abinadab, and Esh-Baal. 40 The son of Jonathan *was* Merib-Baal, and Merib-Baal begot Micah. 41 The sons of Micah *were* Pithon, Melech, [g]Tahrea, [w]*and*[l] *Ahaz.* 42 And Ahaz begot [2]Jarah; Jarah begot Alemeth, Azmaveth, and Zimri; and Zimri begot Moza; 43 Moza begot Binea, [3]Rephaiah his son, Eleasah his son, and Azel his son.

44 And Azel had six sons whose names *were* these: Azrikam, Bocheru, Ishmael, Shearíah, Obadiah, and Hanan; these *were* the sons of Azel.

Tragic End of Saul and His Sons

10 Now [a]the Philistines fought against Israel; and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell slain on Mount Gilboa. 2 Then the Philistines followed hard after Saul and his sons. And the Philistines killed Jonathan, [1]Abinadab, and Malchishua, Saul's sons. 3 The battle became fierce against Saul. The archers hit him, and he was wounded by the archers. 4 Then Saul said to his armorbearer, "Draw your sword, and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised men come and abuse me." But his armorbearer would not, for he was greatly afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword and fell on it. 5 And when his armorbearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his sword and died. 6 So Saul and his three sons died, and all his house died together. 7 And when all the men of Israel who *were* in the valley saw that they had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook their cities and fled; then the Philistines came and dwelt in them.

8 So it happened the next day, when the Philistines came to [2]strip the slain, that they found Saul and his sons fallen on Mount Gilboa. 9 And they stripped him and took his head and his armor, and sent word *throughout* the land of the Philistines to proclaim the news *in the temple* of their idols and among the people. 10 [b]Then they put his armor in the [3]temple of their gods, and fastened his head in the temple of Dagon.

11 And when all Jabesh Gilead heard all that the Philistines had done to Saul, 12 all the [c]valiant men arose and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons; and they brought them to [d]Jabesh, and buried their bones under the tamarisk tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days.

13 So Saul died for his unfaithfulness which he had [4]committed against the LORD, [e]because he did not keep the word of the LORD, and also because [f]he consulted a medium for guidance. 14 But *he* did not inquire of the LORD; therefore He killed him, and [g]turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse.

David Made King over All Israel

11 Then [a]all Israel came together to David at Hebron, saying, "Indeed we *are* your bone and your flesh. 2 Also, in time past, even when Saul was king, you *were* the one who led

39 [v]1 Chr. 8:33–38

41 [w]1 Chr. 8:35 [g]*Tarea,* 1 Chr. 8:35 [l]So with Arab., Syr., Tg., Vg. (cf. 8:35); MT, LXX omit *and Ahaz*

42 [2]*Jehoaddah,* 1 Chr. 8:36

43 [3]*Raphah,* 1 Chr. 8:37

CHAPTER 10

1 [a]1 Sam. 31:1, 2

2 [1]*Jishui,* 1 Sam. 14:49

8 [2]*plunder*

10 [b]1 Sam. 31:10 [3]Lit. *house*

12 [c]1 Sam. 14:52 [d]2 Sam. 21:12

13 [e]1 Sam. 13:13, 14; 15:22–26 [f][Lev. 19:31; 20:6]; 1 Sam. 28:7 [4]Lit. *transgressed*

14 [g]1 Sam. 15:28; 2 Sam. 3:9, 10; 5:3; 1 Chr. 12:23

CHAPTER 11

1 [a]2 Sam. 5:1

■ **9:39 Saul.** The writer has now established the identity, order, and territory of the people of God by lists and genealogies. His next task, occupying many chapters, is to give a portrait of the united monarchy. The united monarchy is presented as an ideal for the community of returned exiles engaged in restoring the kingdom in their own day. Unlike the lengthy record of Saul's rise and fall in the books of Samuel, Chronicles simply reports Saul's genealogy (9:35–44) and the transfer of power from Saul to David (10:1–14) before turning to the history of David (chs. 11—29) and Solomon (2 Chr. 1—9).

■ **10:1 fell slain.** The soldiers (10:1), Saul (10:4, 6–8, 12–14), his sons (10:2, 6–8, 12), and his armorbearer (10:5) all died, indicating that Saul was under severe divine judgment (10:13). The writer follows 1 Sam. 31 in his report of Saul's suicide, defilement, and burial. He adds vv. 13, 14 to give the reason for these tragic events.

■ **10:6 all his house.** Saul's three sons (10:2) and his chief officers died, but Ishbosheth (also called Esh-Baal) survived (8:33; 9:39; 2 Sam. 2:8). Saul's ruling house had come to an abrupt end, unlike David's house (dynasty) which God established permanently over Israel (17:1–15 note).

■ **10:9 took his head.** See the parallel with David and Goliath (1 Sam. 17:54). The treatment of Saul's body by his enemies highlights the dishonor of his defeat and death.

■ **10:13 unfaithfulness.** In 10:1–12, Saul's demise is seen to be the result of divine judgment. Saul died because he had been unfaithful to the Lord by failing to "keep the word" and to "inquire" of God. Saul's consultation with the medium at En Dor (strictly forbidden in Deut. 18:9–14) was the climax of his failures (1 Sam. 28).

■ **10:14 inquire of the LORD.** See note on 2 Chr. 7:14.

David. The reign of David is central to the history of this period. David is a model monarch for the generation returning from exile in Babylon. The books of Chronicles acknowledge that David had faults (13:7–11; 21:1–7), but did not record the major failures and troubles recorded in Samuel (2 Sam. 11:1—21:14). The account of David's reign focuses on two major concerns: David's great popularity (chs. 11—12) and his preparations for the temple (chs. 13—29). The section is arranged primarily by topic rather than chronology. The enthusiastic support for David from all over Israel should be an encouragement and model for the returned exiles.

■ **11:1 all Israel.** This and similar expressions are used in the narrative about the united monarchy to refer to the nation as a whole under the rule of David and Solomon (11:10; 12:38; 14:8; 15:3, 28; 18:14; 19:17; 21:5; 28:4, 8; 2 Chr. 1:2; 7:8; 9:30). Although there still was hope for an inclusive, unified kingdom under a new Davidic king, this hope could not be realized until the coming of Christ, the Son of David and messianic King (2 Chr. 10:1 note; 29:24 note; also Introduction: Characteristics and Themes).

■ **11:2 your God said.** On several occasions in this section it is explained that the popular support David received was the result of God's sovereign decree (11:3, 9, 10; 12:18, 23). A legitimate king of Israel had to be chosen by God, not merely by popular sentiment (Deut. 17:14, 15). David met this qualification (2 Chr. 6:6).

Israel out and brought them in; and the LORD your [b]God said to you, 'You shall [c]shepherd My people Israel, and be ruler over My people Israel.' " [3] Therefore all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD. And [d]they anointed David king over Israel, according to the word of the LORD [f]by [e]Samuel.

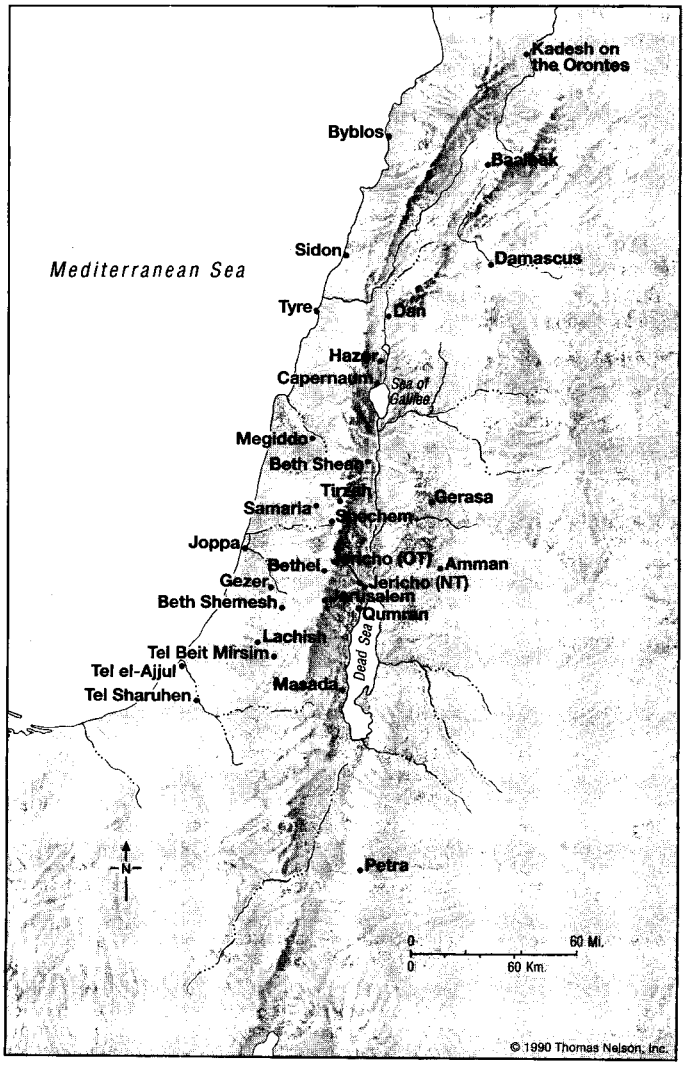
2 [b]Ps. 78:70–72 [c]2 Sam. 7:7
3 [d]2 Sam. 5:3 [e]1 Sam. 16:1, 4, 12, 13 [f]Lit. *by the hand of Samuel*

The City of David

[4] And David and all Israel [f]went to Jerusalem, which is Jebus, [g]where the Jebusites *were*, the inhabitants of the land. [5] But the inhabitants of Jebus said to David, "You shall not come in here!" Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion (that is, the City of David). [6] Now David said, "Whoever attacks the Jebusites first shall be [2]chief and captain." And Joab the son of Zeruiah went up first, and became chief. [7] Then David dwelt in the stronghold; therefore they called it [3]the City of David. [8] And he built the city around it, from [4]the Millo to the surrounding area.

4 [f]2 Sam. 5:6 [g]Judg. 1:21; 19:10, 11
6 [2]Lit. *head*
7 [3]*Zion*, 2 Sam. 5:7
8 [4]Lit. *The Landfill*

■ **11:5 Nevertheless David took the stronghold.** David's success is demonstrated by reporting the conquest and fortification of his capital city. Successful building projects often displayed the blessing of God on a king. See notes on 2 Chr. 2:1—8:16; 11:5–12; 14:6, 7; 17:12; 26:9; 27:3, 4; 32:27–29.



Sites of Major Archaeological Excavations. In many areas of Palestine, archaeological work has been underway for the past several decades. Many Palestinian cities were built on a slight hill, one after another atop the ruins of previous cities in the same location. Over several centuries, these hilly mounds or tels continued to grow in elevation. Modern archaeologists have been able to dig down through the various layers of these sites to discover relics from the cultures of previous ages. Work continues at the sites indicated on the map, constantly shedding additional light upon the customs and practices of the peoples living during biblical times.

Joab [5]repaired the rest of the city. [9] So David [h]went on and became great, and the LORD of hosts *was* with [i]him.

The Mighty Men of David

[10] Now [j]these *were* the heads of the mighty men whom David had, who strengthened themselves with him in his kingdom, with all Israel, to make him king, according to [k]the word of the LORD concerning Israel.

[11] And this *is* the number of the mighty men whom David had: [l]Jashobeam the son of a Hachmonite, [m]chief of [6]the captains; he had lifted up his spear against three hundred, killed *by him* at one time.

[12] After him *was* Eleazar the son of [n]Dodo, the Ahohite, who *was one* of the three mighty men. [13] He was with David at [7]Pasdammim. Now there the Philistines were gathered for battle, and there was a piece of ground full of barley. So the people fled from the Philistines. [14] But they [8]stationed themselves in the middle of *that* field, defended it, and killed the Philistines. So the LORD brought about a great victory.

[15] Now three of the thirty chief men [o]went down to the rock to David, into the cave of Adullam; and the army of the Philistines encamped [p]in the Valley of [9]Rephaim. [16] David *was* then in the stronghold, and the garrison of the Philistines *was* then in Bethlehem. [17] And David said with longing, "Oh, that someone would give me a drink of water from the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!" [18] So the three broke through the camp of the Philistines, drew water from the well of Bethlehem that *was* by the gate, and took *it* and brought *it* to David. Nevertheless David would not drink it, but poured it out to the LORD. [19] And he said, "Far be it from me, O my God, that I should do this! Shall I drink the blood of these men *who have put* their lives *in jeopardy?* For at the risk of their lives they brought it." Therefore he would not drink it. These things were done by the three mighty men.

[20] [q]Abishai the brother of Joab was chief of *another* [1]three. He had lifted up his spear against three hundred *men,* killed *them,* and won a name among *these* three. [21] [r]Of the three he was more honored than the other two men. Therefore he became their captain. However he did not attain to the *first* three.

[22] Benaiah was the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man from Kabzeel, who [2]had done many deeds. [s]He had killed two lion-like heroes of Moab. He also had gone down and killed a lion in the midst of a pit on a snowy day. [23] And he killed an Egyptian, a man of *great* height, [3]five cubits tall. In the Egyptian's hand *there was* a spear like a weaver's beam; and he went down to him with a staff, wrested the spear out of the Egyptian's hand, and killed him with his own spear. [24] These *things* Benaiah the son of Jehoiada did, and won a name among three mighty men. [25] Indeed he was more honored than the thirty, but he did not attain to the *first* three. And David appointed him over his guard.

[26] Also the mighty warriors *were* [t]Asahel the brother of Joab, Elhanan the son of Dodo of Bethlehem, [27] [4]Shammoth the Harorite, [u]Helez the [5]Pelonite, [28] [v]Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite, [w]Abiezer the Anathothite, [29] [6]Sibbechai the Hushathite, [7]Ilai the Ahohite, [30] [x]Maharai the Netophathite, [8]Heled the son of Baanah the Netophathite, [31] [9]Ithai the son of Ribai of Gibeah, of the sons of Benjamin, [y]Benaiah the Pirathonite, [32] [1]Hurai of the brooks of Gaash, [2]Abiel the Arbathite, [33] Azmaveth the [3]Baharumite, Eliahba the Shaalbonite, [34] the sons of [4]Hashem the Gizonite, Jonathan the son of Shageh the Hararite, [35] Ahiam the son of [5]Sacar the Hararite, [6]Eliphal the son of [7]Ur, [36] Hepher the Mecherathite, Ahijah the Pelonite, [37] [8]Hezro the Carmelite, [9]Naarai the son of Ezbai, [38] Joel the brother of Nathan, Mibhar the son of Hagri, [39] Zelek the Ammonite, Naharai the [1]Berothite (the armorbearer of Joab the son of Zeruiah), [40] Ira the Ithrite, Gareb the Ithrite, [41] [z]Uriah the Hittite, [2]Zabad the son of Ahlai, [42] Adina the son of Shiza the Reubenite (a chief of the Reubenites) and thirty with him, [43] Hanan the son of Maachah, Joshaphat the

35 [5]*Sharar,* 2 Sam. 23:33 [6]*Eliphelet,* 2 Sam. 23:34 [7]*Ahasbai,* 2 Sam. 23:34 **37** [8]*Hezrai,* 2 Sam. 23:38 [9]*Paarai the Arbite,* 2 Sam. 23:35 **39** [1]*Beerothite,* 2 Sam. 23:37 **41** [z]2 Sam. 11 [2]The last sixteen are not added in 2 Sam. 23.

8 [5]Lit. *revived*

9 [h]2 Sam. 3:1 [i]1 Sam. 16:18

10 [j]2 Sam. 23:8 [k]1 Sam. 16:1, 12

11 [l]1 Chr. 27:2 [m]1 Chr. 12:18 [6]So with Qr.; Kt., LXX, Vg. *the thirty* (cf. 2 Sam. 23:8)

12 [n]1 Chr. 27:4

13 [7]*Ephes Dammim,* 1 Sam. 17:1

14 [8]Lit. *took their stand*

15 [o]2 Sam. 23:13 [p]2 Sam. 5:18 [9]Lit. *Giants*

20 [q]2 Sam. 23:18 [1]So with MT, LXX, Vg.; Syr. *thirty*

21 [r]2 Sam. 23:19

22 [s]2 Sam. 23:20 [2]*was great in deeds*

23 [3]About 7½ feet

26 [t]2 Sam. 23:24

27 [u]1 Chr. 27:10 [4]*Shammah the Harodite,* 2 Sam. 23:25 [5]*Paltite,* 2 Sam. 23:26

28 [v]1 Chr. 27:9 [w]1 Chr. 27:12

29 [6]*Mebunnai,* 2 Sam. 23:27 [7]*Zalmon,* 2 Sam. 23:28

30 [x]1 Chr. 27:13 [8]*Heleb,* 2 Sam. 23:29, or *Heldai,* 1 Chr. 27:15

31 [y]1 Chr. 27:14 [9]*Ittai,* 2 Sam. 23:29

32 [1]*Hiddai,* 2 Sam. 23:30 [2]*Abi-Albon,* 2 Sam. 23:31

33 [3]*Barhumite,* 2 Sam. 23:31

34 [4]*Jashen,* 2 Sam. 23:32

■ **11:10–47** On the whole, this list of chiefs and mighty men is derived from 2 Sam. 23:8–39. The purpose is stated in the opening verse: these leaders supported David's kingship with "all Israel . . . according to the word of the LORD." The mighty acts of David's men highlight their outstanding qualities, placing David himself in a duly favorable light.

■ **11:10 all Israel.** See note on 11:1.

■ **11:15–19** David's mighty men displayed skill and courage by fetching water for him from behind enemy lines. In response, David showed humility by offering the water as a drink offering to the Lord (Gen. 35:14; 2 Kin. 16:13; Jer. 7:18).

■ **11:41–47** The Chronicler adds to the list of David's supporters recorded in 2 Sam. 23:39. Repeated references to tribes and locations illustrates the diverse and widespread support David enjoyed.

Mithnite, 44 Uzzia the Ashterathite, Shama and Jeiel the sons of Hotham the Aroerite, 45 Jediael the son of Shimri, and Joha his brother, the Tizite, 46 Eliel the Mahavite, Jeribai and Joshaviah the sons of Elnaam, Ithmah the Moabite, 47 Eliel, Obed, and Jaasiel the Mezobaite.

The Growth of David's Army

12 Now [a]these *were* the men who came to David at [b]Ziklag while he was still a fugitive from Saul the son of Kish; and they *were* among the mighty men, helpers in the war, 2 armed with bows, using both the right hand and [c]the left in *hurling* stones and *shooting* arrows with the bow. *They were* of Benjamin, Saul's brethren.

3 The chief *was* Ahiezer, then Joash, the sons of [1]Shemaah the Gibeathite; Jeziel and Pelet the sons of Azmaveth; Berachah, and Jehu the Anathothite; 4 Ishmaiah the Gibeonite, a mighty man among the thirty, and over the thirty; Jeremiah, Jahaziel, Johanan, and Jozabad the Gederathite; 5 Eluzai, Jerimoth, Bealiah, Shemariah, and Shephatiah the Haruphite; 6 Elkanah, Jisshiah, Azarel, Joezer, and Jashobeam, the Korahites; 7 and Joelah and Zebadiah the sons of Jeroham of Gedor.

8 *Some* Gadites [2]joined David at the stronghold in the wilderness, mighty men of valor, men trained for battle, who could handle shield and spear, whose faces *were like* the faces of lions, and *were* [d]as swift as gazelles on the mountains: 9 Ezer the first, Obadiah the second, Eliab the third, 10 Mishmannah the fourth, Jeremiah the fifth, 11 Attai the sixth, Eliel the seventh, 12 Johanan the eighth, Elzabad the ninth, 13 Jeremiah the tenth, and Machbanai the eleventh. 14 These *were* from the sons of Gad, captains of the army; the least was over a hundred, and the greatest was over a [e]thousand. 15 These *are* the ones who crossed the Jordan in the first month, when it had overflowed all its [f]banks; and they put to flight all *those* in the valleys, to the east and to the west.

16 Then some of the sons of Benjamin and Judah came to David at the stronghold. 17 And David went out [3]to meet them, and answered and said to them, "If you have come peaceably to me to help me, my heart will be united with you; but if to betray me to my enemies, since *there is* no [4]wrong in my hands, may the God of our fathers look and bring judgment." 18 Then the Spirit [5]came upon [g]Amasai, chief of the captains, *and he said:*

"*We are* yours, O David;
We *are* on your side, O son of Jesse!
Peace, peace to you,
And peace to your helpers!
For your God helps you."

So David received them, and made them captains of the troop.

19 And *some* from Manasseh defected to David [h]when he was going with the Philistines to battle against Saul; but they did not help them, for the lords of the Philistines sent him away by agreement, saying, [i]"He may defect to his master Saul *and endanger* our heads." 20 When he went to Ziklag, those of Manasseh who defected to him were Adnah, Jozabad, Jediael, Michael, Jozabad, Elihu, and Zillethai, captains of the thousands who *were* from Manasseh. 21 And they helped David against [j]the bands *of raiders,* for they *were* all mighty men of valor, and they were captains in the army. 22 For at *that* time they came to David day by day to help him, until *it was* a great army, [k]like the army of God.

David's Army at Hebron

23 Now these *were* the numbers of the [6]divisions *that were* equipped for war, *and* [l]came to David at [m]Hebron to [n]turn *over* the kingdom of Saul to him, [o]according to the word of the LORD:

CHAPTER 12

1 [a]1 Sam. 27:2 [b]1 Sam. 27:6

2 [c]Judg. 3:15; 20:16

3 [1]Or *Hasmaah*

8 [d]2 Sam. 2:18 [2]Lit. *separated themselves to*

14 [e]1 Sam. 18:13

15 [f]Josh. 3:15; 4:18, 19

17 [3]Lit. *before them* [4]Lit. *violence*

18 [g]2 Sam. 17:25 [5]Lit. *clothed*

19 [h]1 Sam. 29:2 [i]1 Sam. 29:4

21 [j]1 Sam. 30:1, 9, 10

22 [k]Gen. 32:2; Josh. 5:13–15

23 [l]2 Sam. 2:1–4 [m]1 Chr. 11:1 [n]1 Chr. 10:14 [o]1 Sam. 16:1–4 [6]Lit. *heads of those*

■ **12:8–19** At David's desert stronghold (cf. 1 Sam. 22:14, 29; 24:1), Israelites from various locations joined him. There were supporters from Gad, Benjamin, Judah, and Manasseh. See note on 11:10–47.

■ **12:8 faces of lions . . . swift as gazelles.** Animal metaphors are common for warriors and leaders, and the men from Gad were swift and fierce.

■ **12:15 had overflowed.** In March and April, northern melting snows frequently swell the rivers of Palestine, making the Jordan River particularly treacherous to cross. This detail emphasizes the superior courage of David's supporters from Gad.

■ **12:18 the Spirit.** By mentioning the Holy Spirit, the writer explains that the defection of men from Benjamin, the tribe of Saul, to David was not misguided. The Spirit of God directed David's supporters.

■ **12:19 they did not help them.** While significantly abbreviating the account of 1 Sam. 29, the writer is clear that David did not fight against his fellow Israelites.

■ **12:20 Ziklag.** David received further support at Ziklag (12:8–19 note).

■ **12:22 like the army of God.** The writer gives high praise to David's army by comparing it to the innumerable heavenly army.

■ **12:23 Hebron.** David found other supporters at Hebron, with repre-

[24] of the sons of Judah bearing shield and spear, six thousand eight hundred [7]armed for war; [25] of the sons of Simeon, mighty men of valor fit for war, seven thousand one hundred; [26] of the sons of Levi four thousand six hundred; [27] Jehoiada, the leader of the Aaronites, and with him three thousand seven hundred; [28] [p]Zadok, a young man, a valiant warrior, and from his father's house twenty-two captains; [29] of the sons of Benjamin, relatives of Saul, three thousand (until then [q]the greatest part of them had remained loyal to the house of Saul); [30] of the sons of Ephraim twenty thousand eight hundred, mighty men of valor, [8]famous men throughout their father's house; [31] of the half-tribe of Manasseh eighteen thousand, who were designated by name to come and make David king; [32] of the sons of Issachar [r]who had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, their chiefs were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their command; [33] of Zebulun there were fifty thousand who went out to battle, expert in war with all weapons of war, [s]stouthearted men who could keep ranks; [34] of Naphtali one thousand captains, and with them thirty-seven thousand with shield and spear; [35] of the Danites who could keep battle formation, twenty-eight thousand six hundred; [36] of Asher, those who could go out to war, able to keep battle formation, forty thousand; [37] of the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh, from the other side of the Jordan, one hundred and twenty thousand armed for battle with every *kind* of weapon of war.

[38] All these men of war, who could keep ranks, came to Hebron with a loyal heart, to make David king over all Israel; and all the rest of Israel *were* of [t]one mind to make David king. [39] And they were there with David three days, eating and drinking, for their brethren had prepared for them. [40] Moreover those who were near to them, from as far away as Issachar and Zebulun and Naphtali, were bringing food on donkeys and camels, on mules and oxen—provisions of flour and cakes of figs and cakes of raisins, wine and oil and oxen and sheep abundantly, for *there was* joy in Israel.

The Ark Brought from Kirjath Jearim

13 Then David consulted with the [a]captains of thousands and hundreds, *and* with every leader. [2] And David said to all the assembly of Israel, "If *it seems* good to you, and if it is of the LORD our God, let us send out to our brethren everywhere *who are* [b]left in all the land of Israel, and with them to the priests and Levites *who are* in their cities *and* their commonlands, that they may gather together to us; [3] and let us bring the ark of our God back to us, [c]for we have not inquired at it since the days of Saul." [4] Then all the assembly said that they would do so, for the thing was right in the eyes of all the people.

[5] So [d]David gathered all Israel together, from [e]Shihor in Egypt to as far as the entrance of Hamath, to bring the ark of God [f]from Kirjath Jearim. [6] And David and all Israel went up to [g]Baalah,[1] to Kirjath Jearim, which belonged to Judah, to bring up from there the ark of God the LORD, [h]who dwells *between* the cherubim, where *His* name is proclaimed. [7] So they [2]carried the ark of God [i]on a new cart [j]from the house of Abinadab, and Uzza and Ahio drove the cart.

24 [7]*equipped*

28 [p]2 Sam. 8:17; 1 Chr. 6:8, 53

29 [q]2 Sam. 2:8, 9

30 [8]Lit. *men of names*

32 [r]Esth. 1:13

33 [s]Ps. 12:2; [James 1:8]

38 [t]2 Chr. 30:12

CHAPTER 13

1 [a]1 Chr. 11:15; 12:34

2 [b]1 Sam. 31:1; Is. 37:4

3 [c]1 Sam. 7:1, 2

5 [d]1 Sam. 7:5 [e]Josh. 13:3 [f]1 Sam. 6:21; 7:1, 2

6 [g]Josh. 15:9, 60 [h]Ex. 25:22; 1 Sam. 4:4; 2 Kin. 19:15 [1]*Baale Judah,* 2 Sam. 6:2

7 [i]Num. 4:15; 1 Sam. 6:7 [j]1 Sam. 7:1 [2]Lit. *caused the ark of God to ride*

sentatives coming from each tribe. The numbers appear very high. Several explanations of these large numbers are possible. The Hebrew word translated "thousand" may be a technical term referring to a military unit of considerably smaller size. In that case, v. 24 would read "men of Judah, carrying shield and spear, six units with eight hundred armed for war." Second, the Hebrew consonants translated "thousand" could also be read with other vowel points, to mean "chiefs." On this account, v. 24 would read "six chiefs with eight hundred armed for war." Finally, it is possible that there is a figurative or rhetorical exaggeration (12:22 note).

■ **12:38–40** The report of David's widespread support closes with the observation that the people at Hebron, and the rest of the nation, were of "one mind" in their support of David. They celebrated their new king with joy and feasting. This happy event would have been a model for the community returning from exile in Babylon.

■ **12:38 all Israel.** See note on 11:1.

■ **13:1—29:30** The second essential component of David's model kingdom, his enthusiastic preparations for the temple, is recounted here. The account has two parts: centralization of worship in Jerusalem (chs. 13—16) and temple preparations (chs. 17—29). Comparison with 2 Sam. 5 and 6 indicates that the materials in Samuel and Chronicles are arranged topically and not in strict chronological order. The Chronicles account is in three parts: the failed attempt to transfer the ark to Jerusalem (ch. 13); David's blessings (ch. 14); and the successful recovery of the ark (chs. 15; 16).

■ **13:1–4** This introduction does not appear in 2 Sam. 5 and 6. It focuses on the support of "all the assembly" for worship centralized at Jerusalem (13:4–8; also 11:1 note).

■ **13:2 good to you . . . of the LORD.** The harmony between David and the people as they seek to obey God is a model for the returned exiles (2 Chr. 30:4, 5).

■ **13:3 we have not inquired at it.** The Chronicler contrasts David and Saul (11:2). David was concerned for the ark, while Saul neglected it.

■ **13:6 who dwells between the cherubim.** The ark of the covenant represented the presence of God among His people.

His name is proclaimed. The "name" of God indicates the nearness of God, the divine power dwelling in the temple and accessible through prayer and sacrifice (16:10; 22:7, 8, 10, 19; 28:3; 29:16; 2 Chr. 2:1, 4; 6:5–10, 20, 32–38; 7:16, 20; 12:13; 20:8, 9; 33:4, 7). The New Testament teaches Christians to pray "in the name" of Jesus, meaning "by authority of" Jesus (John 12:28; 14:13, 14; 16:24).

■ **13:7 on a new cart.** The Israelites did not observe the law of God about transporting the ark with poles on the priests' shoulders (Ex. 25:12–15). Instead, they handled it with disregard for the holiness of God and the divine regulation of worship (15:2, 11–15).

8 [k]2 Sam. 6:5 [3]*songs*

9 [4]*Nachon*, 2 Sam. 6:6 [5]Or *let it go off*

10 [l][Num. 4:15] [m]Lev. 10:2

11 [6]Lit. *Outburst Against Uzza*

14 [n]2 Sam. 6:11 [o]1 Chr. 26:4–8

CHAPTER 14

1 [a]2 Sam. 5:11

2 [b]Num. 24:7

4 [c]1 Chr. 3:5–8 [1]*Shimea*, 1 Chr. 3:5

5 [2]*Elishama*, 1 Chr. 3:6 [3]*Eliphelet*, 1 Chr. 3:6

7 [4]*Eliada*, 2 Sam. 5:6; 1 Chr. 3:8

8 [d]2 Sam. 5:17–21

9 [e]1 Chr. 11:15; 14:13 [5]Lit. *Giants*

10 [f]1 Sam. 23:2, 4; 30:8

11 [6]Lit. *Master of Breakthroughs*

13 [g]2 Sam. 5:22–25

14 [h]2 Sam. 5:23

16 [7]*Geba*, 2 Sam. 5:25

17 [i]Josh. 6:27 [j][Deut. 2:25; 11:25]

CHAPTER 15

1 [a]1 Chr. 16:1

2 [b][Num. 4:15] [c]Deut. 10:8; 31:9

8 Then [k]David and all Israel played *music* before God with all *their* might, with [3]singing, on harps, on stringed instruments, on tambourines, on cymbals, and with trumpets.

9 And when they came to [4]Chidon's threshing floor, Uzza put out his hand to hold the ark, for the oxen [5]stumbled. 10 Then the anger of the LORD was aroused against Uzza, and He struck him [l]because he put his hand to the ark; and he [m]died there before God. 11 And David became angry because of the LORD's outbreak against Uzza; therefore that place is called [6]Perez Uzza to this day. 12 David was afraid of God that day, saying, "How can I bring the ark of God to me?"

13 So David would not move the ark with him into the City of David, but took it aside into the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. 14 [n]The ark of God remained with the family of Obed-Edom in his house three months. And the LORD blessed [o]the house of Obed-Edom and all that he had.

David Established at Jerusalem

14 Now [a]Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, with masons and carpenters, to build him a house. 2 So David knew that the LORD had established him as king over Israel, for his kingdom was [b]highly exalted for the sake of His people Israel.

3 Then David took more wives in Jerusalem, and David begot more sons and daughters. 4 And [c]these are the names of his children whom he had in Jerusalem: [1]Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, 5 Ibhar, [2]Elishua, [3]Elpelet, 6 Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, 7 Elishama, [4]Beeliada, and Eliphelet.

The Philistines Defeated

8 Now when the Philistines heard that [d]David had been anointed king over all Israel, all the Philistines went up to search for David. And David heard *of it* and went out against them. 9 Then the Philistines went and made a raid [e]on the Valley of [5]Rephaim. 10 And David [f]inquired of God, saying, "Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will You deliver them into my hand?"

The LORD said to him, "Go up, for I will deliver them into your hand."

11 So they went up to Baal Perazim, and David defeated them there. Then David said, "God has broken through my enemies by my hand like a breakthrough of water." Therefore they called the name of that place [6]Baal Perazim. 12 And when they left their gods there, David gave a commandment, and they were burned with fire.

13 [g]Then the Philistines once again made a raid on the valley. 14 Therefore David inquired again of God, and God said to him, "You shall not go up after them; circle around them, [h]and come upon them in front of the mulberry trees. 15 And it shall be, when you hear a sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees, then you shall go out to battle, for God has gone out before you to strike the camp of the Philistines." 16 So David did as God commanded him, and they drove back the army of the Philistines from [7]Gibeon as far as Gezer. 17 Then [i]the fame of David went out into all lands, and the LORD [j]brought the fear of him upon all nations.

The Ark Brought to Jerusalem

15 *David* built houses for himself in the City of David; and he prepared a place for the ark of God, [a]and pitched a tent for it. 2 Then David said, "No one may carry the [b]ark of God but the Levites, for [c]the LORD has chosen them to carry the ark of God and to minister before

■ **13:8 played music before God.** See note on 15:16.

■ **13:10 He struck him.** Uzzah demonstrated a disregard for the sanctity of worship by touching the ark (Num. 4:15). Although seemingly a minor offense, Uzzah's violation involved carelessness for the holiness of God, which called for judgment that would be a warning to all (v. 7 note).

■ **13:11 to this day.** See note on 4:41.

■ **13:13 Obed-Edom.** A Levite (15:18, 21, 24) who was blessed with many sons (26:4, 5) presumably because he cared properly for the ark. Chronicles often mentions numerous children as a sign of divine approval and blessing (14:3; 2 Chr. 11:18–23; 13:21).

■ **14:1** This account illustrates that despite David's failure (ch. 13), God established and blessed him. Three items appear: palace preparations (14:1, 2), David's children in Jerusalem (14:3–7), and David's victory over the Philistines (14:8–17).

■ **14:2 the LORD had established . . . exalted for the sake of His people.** David recognized that the establishment of his kingdom was a blessing for the people. Following their exile in Babylon, readers would be encouraged by these remarks in their hope for a new Davidic king (2 Chr. 2:11 note).

■ **14:8–12** David's victory over the Philistines contrasts with Saul's defeat (10:1–7). David inquired of the Lord (14:10, 14); Saul had consulted a medium (10:13). This event also contrasts with David's failed attempt to retrieve the ark (13:1–14). While David had been angered by the Lord's "outbreak" against Uzzah (13:11), he now declares that "God has broken through" against the Philistines (14:11).

■ **14:8 all Israel.** See note on 11:1.

■ **14:12 they were burned with fire.** David followed Mosaic regulations in these actions (Deut. 7:5, 25).

■ **14:17 fear of him upon all nations.** This verse is in addition to the account of 2 Sam. 5, highlighting David's international fame (v. 1 note). David stood strong against his enemies. Other nations saw the power of God in the king's victory and feared (Josh. 2:11; 2 Chr. 17:10; 20:29). Readers of the book are encouraged to hope for a new David who would overthrow secular worldly powers (Hag. 2:6, 7, 20–23; Zech. 9:1–13).

■ **15:1—16:43** This account of the successful recovery of the ark explains David's order for the Levites and worship. Eight verses (15:25—16:3) are like 2 Sam. 6:12–19.

Him forever." 3 And David [d]gathered all Israel together at Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the LORD to its place, which he had prepared for it. 4 Then David assembled the children of Aaron and the Levites: 5 of the sons of Kohath, Uriel the chief, and one hundred and twenty of his [1]brethren; 6 of the sons of Merari, Asaiah the chief, and two hundred and twenty of his brethren; 7 of the sons of Gershom, Joel the chief, and one hundred and thirty of his brethren; 8 of the sons of [e]Elizaphan, Shemaiah the chief, and two hundred of his brethren; 9 of the sons of [f]Hebron, Eliel the chief, and eighty of his brethren; 10 of the sons of Uzziel, Amminadab the chief, and one hundred and twelve of his brethren.

11 And David called for [g]Zadok and [h]Abiathar the priests, and for the Levites: for Uriel, Asaiah, Joel, Shemaiah, Eliel, and Amminadab. 12 He said to them, "You *are* the heads of the fathers' *houses* of the Levites; [2]sanctify yourselves, you and your brethren, that you may bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel to *the place* I have prepared for it. 13 For [i]because you *did* not *do it* the first *time,* [j]the LORD our God broke out against us, because we did not consult Him [3]about the proper order."

14 So the priests and the Levites [4]sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of the LORD God of Israel. 15 And the children of the Levites bore the ark of God on their shoulders, by its poles, as [k]Moses had commanded according to the word of the LORD.

16 Then David spoke to the leaders of the Levites to appoint their brethren *to be* the singers accompanied by instruments of music, stringed instruments, harps, and cymbals, by raising the voice with resounding joy. 17 So the Levites appointed [l]Heman the son of Joel; and of his brethren, [m]Asaph the son of Berechiah; and of their brethren, the sons of Merari, [n]Ethan the son of Kushaiah; 18 and with them their brethren of the second *rank:* Zechariah, [5]Ben, Jaaziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattithiah, Elipheleh, Mikneiah, Obed-Edom, and Jeiel, the gatekeepers; 19 the singers, Heman, Asaph, and Ethan, *were* to sound the cymbals of bronze; 20 Zechariah, [6]Aziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Maaseiah, and Benaiah, with strings according to [o]Alamoth; 21 Mattithiah, Elipheleh, Mikneiah, Obed-Edom, Jeiel, and Azaziah, to direct with harps on the [p]Sheminith; 22 Chenaniah, leader of the Levites, was instructor *in charge of* the music, because he *was* skillful; 23 Berechiah and Elkanah *were* doorkeepers for the ark; 24 Shebaniah, Joshaphat, Nethanel, Amasai, Zechariah, Benaiah, and Eliezer, the priests, [q]were to blow the trumpets before the ark of God; and [r]Obed-Edom and Jehiah, doorkeepers for the ark.

25 So [s]David, the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD from the house of Obed-Edom with joy. 26 And so it was, when God helped the Levites who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD, that they offered seven bulls and seven rams. 27 David was clothed with a robe of fine [t]linen, as were all the Levites who bore the ark, the singers, and Chenaniah the music master *with* the singers. David also wore a linen ephod. 28 [u]Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the LORD with shouting and with the sound of the horn, with trumpets and with cymbals, making music with stringed instruments and harps.

29 And it happened, [v]*as* the ark of the covenant of the LORD came to the City of David, that Michal, Saul's daughter, looked through a window and saw King David whirling and playing music; and she despised him in her heart.

The Ark Placed in the Tabernacle

16 So [a]they brought the ark of God, and set it in the midst of the tabernacle that David had erected for it. Then they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before God. 2 And

3 [d]Ex. 40:20, 21; 2 Sam. 6:12; 1 Kin. 8:1; 1 Chr. 13:5

5 [1]*kinsmen*

8 [e]Ex. 6:22

9 [f]Ex. 6:18

11 [g]2 Sam. 8:17; 15:24–29, 35, 36; 18:19, 22, 27; 19:11; 20:25; 1 Chr. 12:28 [h]1 Sam. 22:20–23; 23:6; 30:7; 1 Kin. 2:22, 26, 27; Mark 2:6

12 [2]*consecrate*

13 [i]2 Sam. 6:3 [j]1 Chr. 13:7–11 [3]*regarding the ordinance*

14 [4]*consecrated*

15 [k]Ex. 25:14; Num. 4:15; 7:9

17 [l]1 Chr. 6:33; 25:1 [m]1 Chr. 6:39 [n]1 Chr. 6:44

18 [5]So with MT, Vg.; LXX omits *Ben*

20 [o]Ps. 46:title [6]*Jaaziel,* v. 18

21 [p]Ps. 6:title

24 [q][Num. 10:8]; Ps. 81:3 [r]1 Chr. 13:13, 14

25 [s]2 Sam. 6:12, 13; 1 Kin. 8:1

27 [t]1 Sam. 2:18, 28

28 [u]Num. 23:21; Josh. 6:20; 1 Chr. 13:8; Zech. 4:7; 1 Thess. 4:16

29 [v]1 Sam. 18:20, 27; 19:11–17; 2 Sam. 3:13, 14; 6:16, 20–23

CHAPTER 16

1 [a]2 Sam. 6:17; 1 Chr. 15:1

■ **15:1 pitched a tent.** The tabernacle was still in Gibeon (16:39). David constructed a new tabernacle for the ark.

■ **15:2** This verse and vv. 13–15 show that David transferred the ark in compliance with Mosaic law (Ex. 25:12–15; Deut. 10:8; 18:5).

■ **15:4–10** All three divisions of the tribe of Levi (Kohathites, Merarites, and Gershonites) were included in David's worship organization, providing a model for Levitical orders following the nation's exile in Babylon (6:1–53 and notes).

■ **15:11 Zadok and Abiathar.** The two high priests during David's reign. Zadok served at the tabernacle in Gibeon (16:39) and Abiathar served in Jerusalem (18:16; 27:34 and notes). Solomon later excluded Abiathar because of his support of Adonijah's bid for the throne (1 Kin. 1:7; 2:26, 27). This left Zadok and his descendants as the high priestly family in Jerusalem (6:1, 53 and notes).

■ **15:15 as Moses had commanded.** See note on 16:40.

■ **15:16** An interest in the music of worship is apparent in 1 and 2 Chronicles; see 1 Chr. 6:31–47; 9:15–16, 33; 13:8; 15:28; 16:4–6; 23:5; 25:1–7; 2 Chr. 5:12, 13; 7:6; 23:13; 29:25–30; 34:12. This emphasis is doubtless related to a concern for the restoration of proper worship in the period following the return from exile in Babylon (6:1 note).

■ **15:27 a robe of fine linen.** The robe of fine linen and the linen ephod were the usual clothing of priests (1 Sam. 2:18; 22:18).

■ **15:28 all Israel.** See note on 11:1.

■ **15:29 Michal, Saul's daughter.** Attention is drawn to the hardened heart of Saul's daughter. In contrast to the people, the Levites, and David, Michal was disgusted by the enthusiastic worship. Michal's sarcastic rebuke (2 Sam. 6:20) is not repeated here, perhaps to avoid casting doubt on the purity of David's worship.

when David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, [b]he blessed the people in the name of the LORD. [3] Then he distributed to everyone of Israel, both man and woman, to everyone a loaf of bread, a piece *of meat,* and a cake of raisins.

[4] And he appointed some of the Levites to minister before the ark of the LORD, to [c]commemorate, to thank, and to praise the LORD God of Israel: [5] Asaph the chief, and next to him Zechariah, *then* [d]Jeiel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, and Obed-Edom: Jeiel with stringed instruments and harps, but Asaph made music with cymbals; [6] Benaiah and Jahaziel the priests regularly *blew* the trumpets before the ark of the covenant of God.

David's Song of Thanksgiving

[7] On that day [e]David [f]first delivered *this psalm* into the hand of Asaph and his brethren, to thank the LORD:

8 [g]Oh, give thanks to the LORD!
Call upon His name;
Make known His deeds among the peoples!
9 Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him;
Talk of all His wondrous works!
10 Glory in His holy name;
Let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the LORD!
11 Seek the LORD and His strength;
Seek His face evermore!
12 Remember His marvelous works which He has done,
His wonders, and the judgments of His mouth,
13 O seed of Israel His servant,
You children of Jacob, His chosen ones!

14 He *is* the LORD our God;
His [h]judgments *are* in all the earth.
15 Remember His covenant forever,
The word which He commanded, for a thousand generations,
16 *The* [i]*covenant which* He made with Abraham,
And His oath to Isaac,
17 And [j]confirmed it to [k]Jacob for a statute,
To Israel *for* an everlasting covenant,
18 Saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan
As the allotment of your inheritance,"
19 When you were [l]few in number,
Indeed very few, and strangers in it.

20 When they went from one nation to another,
And from *one* kingdom to another people,
21 He permitted no man to do them wrong;
Yes, He [m]rebuked kings for their sakes,
22 *Saying,* [n]"Do not touch My anointed ones,
And do My prophets no harm."

23 [o]Sing to the LORD, all the earth;
Proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day.

2 [b]1 Kin. 8:14
4 [c]Ps. 38:title; 70:title
5 [d]1 Chr. 15:18
7 [e]2 Sam. 22:1; 23:1 [f]Ps. 105:1–15
8 [g]1 Chr. 17:19, 20; Ps. 105:1–15
14 [h]Ps. 48:10; [Is. 26:9]
16 [i]Gen. 17:2; 26:3; 28:13; 35:11
17 [j]Gen. 35:11, 12 [k]Gen. 28:10–15
19 [l]Gen. 34:30; Deut. 7:7
21 [m]Gen. 12:17; 20:3; Ex. 7:15–18
22 [n]Gen. 20:7; Ps. 105:15
23 [o]Ps. 96:1–13

■ **16:4 Levites.** The Davidic arrangement of the Levites is noted (6:1 note).

to commemorate, to thank, and to praise. These correspond to the three principal kinds of psalms.

■ **16:5 stringed instruments and harps.** See note on 15:16.

■ **16:7–36 psalm . . . to thank the LORD.** There is a psalm of celebration not found in Samuel. The passage is similar to portions of several psalms (compare vv. 8–22 with Ps. 105:1–15; vv. 23–33 with Ps. 96; vv. 34–36 with Ps. 106:1, 47, 48). David celebrated the entry of the ark into Jerusalem as a mighty act of God, and his words had continuing value for those returning to Jerusalem from the exile in Babylon. David calls for the praise of God (vv. 8–13). He remembers the promise of the land and the protection of God in the wanderings of the past (vv. 15–22). Later readers experienced similar blessings in their return to the land. David invites the people to cry out for further protection and deliverance (v. 35). Those returned from Babylon needed the same help from God. Finally, the people responded with praise and joy at the blessings of God (v. 36), just as the later readers should praise God in their day.

■ **16:11 Seek.** See note on 2 Chr. 7:14.

24 Declare His glory among the nations,
His wonders among all peoples.

25 For the LORD *is* great and greatly to be praised;
He *is* also to be feared above all gods.
26 For all the gods [p]of the peoples *are* [l]idols,
But the LORD made the heavens.
27 Honor and majesty *are* before Him;
Strength and gladness are in His place.

28 Give to the LORD, O families of the peoples,
Give to the LORD glory and strength.
29 Give to the LORD the glory *due* His name;
Bring an offering, and come before Him.
Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness!
30 Tremble before Him, all the earth.
The world also is firmly established,
It shall not be moved.

31 Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;
And let them say among the nations, "The LORD reigns."
32 Let the sea roar, and all its fullness;
Let the field rejoice, and all that *is* in it.
33 Then the [q]trees of the woods shall rejoice before the LORD,
For He is [r]coming to judge the earth.

34 [s]Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for *He is* good!
For His mercy *endures* forever.
35 [t]And say, "Save us, O God of our salvation;
Gather us together, and deliver us from the Gentiles,
To give thanks to Your holy name,
To triumph in Your praise."

36 [u]Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel
From everlasting to everlasting!

And all [v]the people said, "Amen!" and praised the LORD.

Regular Worship Maintained

37 So he left [w]Asaph and his brothers there before the ark of the covenant of the LORD to minister before the ark regularly, as every day's work [x]required; 38 and [y]Obed-Edom with his sixty-eight brethren, including Obed-Edom the son of Jeduthun, and Hosah, *to be* gatekeepers; 39 and Zadok the priest and his brethren the priests, [z]before the tabernacle of the LORD [a]at the [2]high place that *was* at Gibeon, 40 to offer burnt offerings to the LORD on the altar of burnt offering regularly [b]morning and evening, and *to do* according to all that is written in the Law of the LORD which He commanded Israel; 41 and with them Heman and Jeduthun and the rest who were chosen, who were designated by name, to give thanks to the LORD, [c]because His mercy *endures* forever; 42 and with them Heman and Jeduthun, to sound aloud with trumpets and cymbals and the musical instruments of God. Now the sons of Jeduthun *were* gatekeepers.

43 [d]Then all the people departed, every man to his house; and David returned to bless his house.

26 [p]Lev. 19:4; [1 Cor. 8:5, 6] [l]*worthless things*

33 [q]Is. 55:12, 13 [r][Joel 3:1–14]; Zech. 14:1–14; [Matt. 25:31–46]

34 [s]2 Chr. 5:13; 7:3; Ezra 3:11; Ps. 106:1; 107:1; 118:1; 136:1; Jer. 33:11

35 [t]Ps. 106:47, 48

36 [u]1 Kin. 8:15, 56; Ps. 72:18 [v]Deut. 27:15; Neh. 8:6

37 [w]1 Chr. 16:4, 5 [x]2 Chr. 8:14; Ezra 3:4

38 [y]1 Chr. 13:14

39 [z]1 Chr. 21:29; 2 Chr. 1:3 [a]1 Kin. 3:4 [2]Place for pagan worship

40 [b][Ex. 29:38–42; Num. 28:3, 4]

41 [c]1 Chr. 25:1–6; 2 Chr. 5:13; 7:3; Ezra 3:11; Jer. 33:11

43 [d]2 Sam. 6:18–20

■ **16:29 worship.** See theological note "God's Pattern for Worship."

■ **16:40 all that is written in the Law of the LORD.** David's commitment to observing Mosaic law is presented as a model for the reorganization of the community following the return from exile in Babylon (6:49; 15:15; 22:12, 13; 2 Chr. 6:16; 12:1, 2; 14:4; 17:3–9; 24:6,9; 25:4; 30:15, 16; 31:3–21; 33:8; 34:19–33; 35:6–26). See Introduction: Characteristics and Themes.

God's Pattern for Worship

Biblical worship is the due response of rational creatures to the self-revelation of their Creator. It honors and glorifies God by gratefully offering back to Him all the good gifts, and all the knowledge of His greatness and graciousness, that He has given. His servants praise Him for what He is, thank Him for what He has done, desire Him to increase in glory through continuing acts of mercy, judgment, and power, and trust Him with their prayers for their own and others' well-being. Learning from God is worship too: attention to His word of instruction honors Him, while inattention is an offense. Acceptable worship requires "clean hands and a pure heart" (Ps. 24:4), and a willingness to express devotion in works of service as well as words of adoration.

The basis of worship is the covenant relationship whereby God has bound Himself to those whom He has saved and claimed (see "God's Covenant of Grace" at Gen. 12:1). This grounding in covenant was true of Old Testament worship, as it is now of Christian worship. The spirit of covenant worship, as the Old Testament reveals it, is a blend of awe and joy at the privilege of drawing near to the mighty Creator, with radical self-humbling and honest confession of sin and need. Since God is holy and man is fallen, it must always be so in this world. Worship will be central in the life of heaven (Rev. 4:8–11, 5:9–14; 7:9–17; 11:15–18; 15:2–4; 19:1–10), and so it must be central in the life of the church on earth. It should already be the main activity, both private and corporate, in each believer's life (Col. 3:17).

In the Mosaic law God gave His covenant people a pattern for their worship. All the elements of true worship were included in it, though some of them were typical, pointing forward to Christ and ceasing to be valid after He came. The Book of Psalms provided hymns and prayers for use in Israel's worship; Christians use the psalms in worship today, distinguishing between the demands of the Old and New Testament administrations of the one covenant of grace.

The main features in the pattern for public worship that God gave to Israel were:

(a) The Sabbath, the seventh day following each six days of work: a holy day of rest, to be observed as a memorial of creation (Gen. 2:3; Ex. 20:8–11) and redemption (Deut. 5:12–15). God required sabbath-keeping (Ex. 16:21–30; 20:8–9; 31:12–17; 34:21; 35:1–3; Lev. 19:3, 30; 23:3; cf. Is. 58:13–14) and made sabbath-breaking a capital offense (Ex. 31:14; Num. 15:32–36).

(b) Three annual feasts were held (Ex. 23:14–17; 34:23; Deut. 16:16) at which the people gathered at God's sanctuary and offered sacrifices celebrating His bounty. They sought and acknowledged reconciliation and fellowship with Him, and ate and drank together as an expression of joy. The Passover was held on the fourteenth day of the first month and commemorated the Exodus (Ex. 12; Lev. 23:5–8; Num. 28:16–25; Deut. 16:1–8). The Feast of Weeks, also called the Feast of Harvest, Firstfruits, or Pentecost, was held fifty days after Passover and marked the end of the grain harvest (Ex. 23:16; 34:22; Lev. 23:15–22; Num. 28:26–31; Deut. 16:9–12). The Feast of Tabernacles (or "Booths") was held in the seventh month and celebrated the end of the agricultural year, as well as reminded the people how God had led them through the desert (Lev. 23:39–43; Num. 29:12–38; Deut. 16:13–15).

(c) The Day of Atonement was held on the tenth day of the seventh month. Once each year the high priest took blood into the innermost room of the sanctuary to atone for Israel's sins, and a scapegoat was sent into the desert as a sign that those sins were taken away (Lev. 16).

(d) The regular sacrificial system required daily and monthly burnt offerings (Num. 28:1–15), as well as certain personal sacrifices. The common features of these sacrifices were that the offering must be flawless, and the blood of the sacrifice must be poured out on the altar to make atonement (Lev. 17:11).

Rituals of personal purification (Lev. 12—15; Num. 19) and devotion (e.g., consecration of the firstborn, Ex. 13:1–16) were also part of the God-given pattern.

Under the new covenant, in which Old Testament types have given way to their antitypes, Christ's priesthood, sacrifice, and intercession supersede the entire Mosaic system for putting away sin (Heb. 7—10). Baptism (Matt. 28:19) and the Lord's Supper (Matt. 26:26–29; 1 Cor. 11:23–26) replace circumcision (Gal. 2:3–5; 6:12–16) and Passover (1 Cor. 5:7, 8); the Jewish festal calendar no longer applies (Gal. 4:10; Col. 2:16); ceremonial defilement and rites of purification have passed away (Mark 7:19; 1 Tim. 4:3, 4); and the Sabbath is renewed, with the day changed from the last to the first day of the week. The apostles and the early Christians worshiped on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2), celebrating the day Jesus rose from the dead, "the Lord's day" (Rev. 1:10), and regarding it as the Christian Sabbath. These changes from old to new were momentous, but the pattern of true worship, with its essential elements, continues unchanged to this day. □

God's Covenant with David

17 Now [a]it came to pass, when David was dwelling in his house, that David said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of the covenant of the LORD *is* under tent curtains."

2 Then Nathan said to David, "Do all that *is* in your heart, for God *is* with you."

3 But it happened that night that the word of God came to Nathan, saying, 4 "Go and tell My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: "You shall [b]not build Me a house to dwell in. 5 For I have not dwelt in a house since the time that I brought up Israel, even to this day, but have gone from tent to tent, and from *one* tabernacle *to another.* 6 Wherever I have moved about with all Israel, have I ever spoken a word to any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd My people, saying, 'Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?' " ' 7 Now therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: "I took you [c]from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be [1]ruler over My people Israel. 8 And I have been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies from before you, and have [2]made you a name like the name of the great men who *are* on the earth. 9 Moreover I will appoint a place for My people Israel, and will [d]plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own and move no more; nor shall the sons of wickedness oppress them anymore, as previously, 10 since the time that I commanded judges *to be* over My people Israel. Also I will subdue all your enemies. Furthermore I tell you that the LORD will build you a [3]house. 11 And it shall be, when your days are [e]fulfilled, when you must [4]go *to be* with your fathers, that I will set up your [f]seed after you, who will be of your sons; and I will establish his kingdom. 12 [g]He shall build Me a house, and I will establish his throne forever. 13 [h]I will be his Father, and he shall be My son; and I will not take My mercy away from him, [i]as I took *it* from *him* who was before you. 14 And [j]I will establish him in My house and in My kingdom forever; and his throne shall be established forever." ' "

CHAPTER 17

1 [a]2 Sam. 7:1

4 [b][1 Chr. 28:2, 3]

7 [c]1 Sam. 16:11–13 [1]*leader*

8 [2]*given you prestige*

9 [d]Amos 9:14

10 [3]Royal dynasty

11 [e]1 Kin. 2:10 [f][1 Chr. 22:9–13; 28:20] [4]Die and join your ancestors

12 [g][Ps. 89:20–37]

13 [h]Heb. 1:5 [i][1 Sam. 15:23–28]

14 [j][Luke 1:31–33]

■ **17:1—29:30** David made a most important contribution to Israel's history by preparing for the temple. This account has six major sections: being commissioned by God (ch. 17); making military preparation (chs. 18—20); discovering the temple site (21:1—22:1); commissioning the builders (22:2–19); arranging personnel (chs. 23—27); and leading national celebration and exhortation (chs. 28; 29).

■ **17:1–27** David's commission from God to prepare for the temple is in two parts: Nathan's dynastic oracle (17:1–15) and David's prayer of acceptance (17:16–27). The writer follows 2 Sam. 7 closely.

■ **17:1–15** The word "house" lies at the heart of this passage. David saw his own house ("palace") and desired to build a "house" (a temple) for God. But God declared that He would build a "house" (a dynasty, v. 10) for David. David's son would build a "house" (a temple, v. 12) for the Lord.

■ **17:1, 10** The Chronicler does not repeat the references to David's rest from enemies found in 2 Sam. 7:1, 11. The emphasis is that David was a man of war (but see 17:8; 22:18), and therefore unqualified to build the temple (22:6–10 note).

■ **17:7–14** Nathan announces the dynastic promises associated with the Davidic covenant. The covenant with David is also celebrated in Ps. 89 and 132. God promised that David's descendants would become a dynasty ruling always over Israel. Individual kings were subject to severe chastisement (2 Sam. 7:14; Ps. 89:30–32), but the line of David would never be permanently rejected from the throne (2 Sam. 7:15, 16; 2 Chr. 6:16; Ps. 89:33–37; 132:11, 12). This covenant was a basis for hope that Israel could be fully restored (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes). The New Testament reveals that the promises to David were fulfilled in Christ. Christ kept the conditions of the covenant perfectly (Heb. 4:15); He serves as the Mediator of the covenant of grace (Acts 2:25–36; Heb. 9:15); and He promised to return as conquering King (Matt. 24:29–31; Mark 13:24–27; Luke 21:25–28).

■ **17:13 his Father . . . My son.** This language indicates a special adoption of the chosen king, not a belief in the divinity of the king as in other ancient Near Eastern cultures (Ps. 2:7; 45:6; 89:27 and note). New Testament writers understand these words about Solomon as a foreshadowing of Christ, the final Davidic King (Mark 1:11; Luke 1:32, 33; Heb. 1:5). Christ was the Son of David, but He was also the Son of God. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35) and is the Second Person of the Godhead (John 1:1–18; 17:1).

■ **17:14 his throne shall be established forever.** God designated David's line as the permanent dynasty over His people. When David's descendants failed they were chastised (2 Sam. 7:14), but God always raised up another son of David to continue the line. This promise gave hope to the community following the exile of the sixth century B.C., and came to fulfillment in Jesus, who reigns on the throne of David forever (vv. 7–14 note; 2 Chr. 21:7).

The House of God Then and Now (17:14)

David desires to build God's house	2 Samuel 7:5
David not allowed to build God's house	1 Chronicles 28:3
David's descendant chosen to build God's house	1 Chronicles 17:12
A house that will stand forever	1 Chronicles 17:14
A house not built with hands	Hebrews 9:11
The risen Christ, God's eternal house	John 2:19
The people of God as a holy temple	Ephesians 2:19–22

16 [k]2 Sam. 7:18

21 [l][Deut. 4:6–8, 33–38]; Ps. 147:20

25 [5]Lit. *have uncovered the ear of*

26 [6]Or *You alone are*

CHAPTER 18

1 [a]2 Sam. 8:1–18 [1]Lit. *struck*

2 [b]2 Sam. 8:2; Zeph. 2:9 [c]Ps. 60:8 [2]Lit. *struck*

3 [d]2 Sam. 8:3 [3]Lit. *struck* [4]Heb. *Hadarezer*

4 [5]*seven hundred,* 2 Sam. 8:4 [6]*crippled*

5 [e]2 Sam. 8:5, 6; 1 Kin. 11:23–25

8 [f]2 Sam. 8:8 [g]1 Kin. 7:15, 23; 2 Chr. 4:12, 15, 16 [7]*Betah,* 2 Sam. 8:8 [8]*Berothai,* 2 Sam. 8:8 [9]Heb. *Hadarezer* [1]Great laver or basin

9 [2]*Toi,* 2 Sam. 8:9, 10 [3]Lit. *struck*

10 [h]2 Sam. 8:10–12 [4]*Joram,* 2 Sam. 8:10 [5]Lit. *struck*

11 [i]2 Sam. 10:14 [j]2 Sam. 5:17–25 [k]2 Sam. 1:1

15 According to all these words and according to all this vision, so Nathan spoke to David.

16 [k]Then King David went in and sat before the LORD; and he said: "Who *am* I, O LORD God? And what is my house, that You have brought me this far? 17 And *yet* this was a small thing in Your sight, O God; and You have *also* spoken of Your servant's house for a great while to come, and have regarded me according to the rank of a man of high degree, O LORD God. 18 What more can David *say* to You for the honor of Your servant? For You know Your servant. 19 O LORD, for Your servant's sake, and according to Your own heart, You have done all this greatness, in making known all these great things. 20 O LORD, *there is* none like You, nor *is there any* God besides You, according to all that we have heard with our ears. 21 [l]And who *is* like Your people Israel, the one nation on the earth whom God went to redeem for Himself *as* a people—to make for Yourself a name by great and awesome deeds, by driving out nations from before Your people whom You redeemed from Egypt? 22 For You have made Your people Israel Your very own people forever; and You, LORD, have become their God.

23 "And now, O LORD, the word which You have spoken concerning Your servant and concerning his house, *let it* be established forever, and do as You have said. 24 So let it be established, that Your name may be magnified forever, saying, 'The LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, *is* Israel's God.' And let the house of Your servant David be established before You. 25 For You, O my God, [5]have revealed to Your servant that You will build him a house. Therefore Your servant has found it *in his heart* to pray before You. 26 And now, LORD, [6]You are God, and have promised this goodness to Your servant. 27 Now You have been pleased to bless the house of Your servant, that it may continue before You forever; for You have blessed it, O LORD, and *it shall be* blessed forever."

David's Further Conquests

18 After this [a]it came to pass that David [1]attacked the Philistines, subdued them, and took Gath and its towns from the hand of the Philistines. 2 Then he [2]defeated [b]Moab, and the Moabites became David's [c]servants, *and* brought tribute.

3 And [d]David [3]defeated [4]Hadadezer king of Zobah *as far as* Hamath, as he went to establish his power by the River Euphrates. 4 David took from him one thousand chariots, [5]seven thousand horsemen, and twenty thousand foot soldiers. Also David [6]hamstrung all the chariot *horses,* except that he spared enough of them for one hundred chariots.

5 When the [e]Syrians of Damascus came to help Hadadezer king of Zobah, David killed twenty-two thousand of the Syrians. 6 Then David put *garrisons* in Syria of Damascus; and the Syrians became David's servants, *and* brought tribute. So the LORD preserved David wherever he went. 7 And David took the shields of gold that were on the servants of Hadadezer, and brought them to Jerusalem. 8 Also from [7]Tibhath and from [8]Chun, cities of [9]Hadadezer, David brought a large amount of [f]bronze, with which [g]Solomon made the bronze [1]Sea, the pillars, and the articles of bronze.

9 Now when [2]Tou king of Hamath heard that David had [3]defeated all the army of Hadadezer king of Zobah, 10 he sent [4]Hadoram his son to King David, to greet him and bless him, because he had fought against Hadadezer and [5]defeated him (for Hadadezer had been at war with Tou); and *Hadoram brought with him* all kinds of [h]articles of gold, silver, and bronze. 11 King David also dedicated these to the LORD, along with the silver and gold that he had brought from all *these* nations—from Edom, from Moab, from the [i]people of Ammon, from the [j]Philistines, and from [k]Amalek.

■ **17:16 Who am I.** David's sincere expression of humility sets an attractive and valuable example (29:14–16; 2 Chr. 2:6).

■ **17:24 name.** See note on 13:6.

■ **18:1—20:8** This section concerns David's military and political accomplishments. Relying on 2 Sam. 8; 10; 11; and 21, it is organized in four sections: a survey of victories (18:1–13); a list of officials (18:14–17); victory over the Ammonites (19:1—20:3); and victory over the Philistines (20:4–8). This material demonstrates how David established the political security necessary for temple construction in Solomon's day (18:13 note; 22:17–19). Second, it offers the background for David's enormous contributions to the temple construction (18:8, 11 note). Third, it anticipates David's disqualification from temple building because of his warfare (22:6–10 note; 28:3). Fourth, David's victories inspired the readers to hope for victory over the enemies of their day (19:1—20:3 note). David's involvement with Mephibosheth (2 Sam. 9; 21:1–14) is omitted, as is his adultery with Bathsheba and its aftermath (2 Sam. 11—20; see 10:14 note).

■ **18:1–13** See 2 Sam. 8:1–14 and notes. The only noteworthy omission in the account is David's severe treatment of the Moabites (2 Sam. 8:2).

■ **18:4 seven thousand.** According to the parallel text in 2 Sam. 8:4, David captured "seven hundred." However, an ancient translation of 2 Sam. agrees with 1 Chr. in reading "seven thousand," and it may be that the Hebrew text of 2 Sam. was miscopied at some point (see 19:18 note).

■ **18:8, 11 Solomon made . . . David also dedicated.** David devoted the spoils of warfare to temple construction, preparing the way for Solomon to build.

■ **18:11 Edom . . . Amalek.** This list of enemies covers most of the armies mentioned in chs. 18—20.

12 Moreover [l]Abishai the son of Zeruiah killed [m]eighteen thousand [6]Edomites in the Valley of Salt. 13 [n]He also put garrisons in Edom, and all the Edomites became David's servants. And the LORD preserved David wherever he went.

David's Administration

14 So David reigned over all Israel, and administered judgment and justice to all his people. 15 Joab the son of Zeruiah *was* over the army; Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud *was* recorder; 16 Zadok the son of Ahitub and [7]Abimelech the son of Abiathar *were* the priests; [8]Shavsha *was* the scribe; 17 [o]Benaiah the son of Jehoiada *was* over the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and David's sons *were* [9]chief ministers at the king's side.

The Ammonites and Syrians Defeated

19 It[a] happened after this that Nahash the king of the people of Ammon died, and his son reigned in his place. 2 Then David said, "I will show kindness to Hanun the son of Nahash, because his father showed kindness to me." So David sent messengers to comfort him concerning his father. And David's servants came to Hanun in the land of the people of Ammon to comfort him.

3 And the princes of the people of Ammon said to Hanun, [1]"Do you think that David really honors your father because he has sent comforters to you? Did his servants not come to you to search and to overthrow and to spy out the land?"

4 Therefore Hanun took David's servants, shaved them, and cut off their garments [2]in the middle, at their [b]buttocks, and sent them away. 5 Then *some* went and told David about the men; and he sent to meet them, because the men were greatly ashamed. And the king said, "Wait at Jericho until your beards have grown, and *then* return."

6 When the people of Ammon saw that they had made themselves repulsive to David, Hanun and the people of Ammon sent a thousand talents of silver to hire for themselves chariots and horsemen from [3]Mesopotamia, from Syrian Maacah, [c]and from [4]Zobah. 7 So they hired for themselves thirty-two thousand chariots, with the king of Maacah and his people, who came and encamped before Medeba. Also the people of Ammon gathered together from their cities, and came to battle.

8 Now when David heard *of it,* he sent Joab and all the army of the mighty men. 9 Then the people of Ammon came out and put themselves in battle array before the gate of the city, and the kings who had come *were* by themselves in the field.

10 When Joab saw that the battle line was against him before and behind, he chose some of Israel's best, and put *them* in battle array against the Syrians. 11 And the rest of the people he put under the command of Abishai his brother, and they set *themselves* in battle array against the people of Ammon. 12 Then he said, "If the Syrians are too strong for me, then you shall help me; but if the people of Ammon are too strong for you, then I will help you. 13 Be of good courage, and let us be strong for our people and for the cities of our God. And may the LORD do *what is* good in His sight."

14 So Joab and the people who *were* with him drew near for the battle against the Syrians, and they fled before him. 15 When the people of Ammon saw that the Syrians were fleeing, they also fled before Abishai his brother, and entered the city. So Joab went to Jerusalem.

16 Now when the Syrians saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they sent messengers and brought the Syrians who were beyond [5]the River, and [6]Shophach the commander of

12 [l]2 Sam. 23:18; 1 Chr. 2:16 [m]2 Sam. 8:13 [6]*Syrians,* 2 Sam. 8:13

13 [n]Gen. 27:29–40; Num. 24:18; 2 Sam. 8:14

16 [7]*Ahimelech,* 2 Sam. 8:17 [8]*Seraiah,* 2 Sam. 8:17, or *Shisha,* 1 Kin. 4:3

17 [o]2 Sam. 8:18 [9]Lit. *at the hand of the king*

CHAPTER 19

1 [a]1 Sam. 11:1; 2 Sam. 10:1–19

3 [1]Lit. *In your eyes is David honoring your father because*

4 [b]Is. 20:4 [2]*in half*

6 [c]1 Chr. 18:5, 9 [3]Heb. *Aram Naharaim* [4]*Zoba,* 2 Sam. 10:6

16 [5]The Euphrates [6]*Zoba,* 2 Sam. 10:6, or *Shobach,* 2 Sam. 10:16

■ **18:13 the LORD preserved David.** David's victories provided a secure political environment that allowed Solomon to concentrate on building (19:1—20:3 note).

■ **18:14 David reigned over all Israel.** David's domestic arrangements also contributed to the political stability necessary for building projects (18:1—20:8 note).

all Israel. The Chronicler carries this expression over from 2 Sam. 8:15.

■ **18:16 Zadok . . . Abimelech the son of Abiathar.** See note on 15:11.

■ **18:17 Cherethites . . . Pelethites.** Foreign mercenaries among the king's guards (1 Sam. 30:14 note).

chief ministers. The Hebrew word translated "chief ministers" in 2 Sam. 8:18 is the normal word for "priests." Chronicles uses a word more definitely referring to high political office. David and his sons were not technically priests, and the writer is being more precise about the proper ordering of royalty and priesthood (6:1 note).

■ **19:1—20:3** Compare 2 Sam. 10:1–19; 11:1; 12:29–31 and notes. For the omission of David's sin with Bathsheba and the ensuing troubles in the Davidic house (2 Sam. 11:1—21:14) see note on 18:1—20:8.

■ **19:1 the people of Ammon.** The Ammonites were longstanding enemies of Israel (Judg. 10:7–9; 10:17—11:40; 1 Sam. 11:1–11; 14:47). They also troubled the community following the return from exile in Babylon (Neh. 2:19; 4:3, 7, 8).

■ **19:6 Mesopotamia.** Chronicles replaces the less familiar Beth Rehob with Mesopotamia and omits the reference to Ish-Tob (2 Sam. 10:6).

■ **19:7 thirty-two thousand.** Israel's victory is frequently highlighted by reporting the numbers of the opposing army (15:18–22; 2 Chr. 12:2–4; 13:3; 14:9).

18 [7]*seven hundred,* 2 Sam. 10:18 [8]*horsemen,* 2 Sam. 10:18

Hadadezer's army *went* before them. [17] When it was told David, he gathered all Israel, crossed over the Jordan and came upon them, and set up in battle array against them. So when David had set up in *battle* array against the Syrians, they fought with him. [18] Then the Syrians fled before Israel; and David killed [7]seven thousand charioteers and forty thousand [8]foot soldiers of the Syrians, and killed Shophach the commander of the army. [19] And when the servants of Hadadezer saw that they were defeated by Israel, they made peace with David and became his servants. So the Syrians were not willing to help the people of Ammon anymore.

Rabbah Is Conquered

CHAPTER 20

1 [a]2 Sam. 11:1 [b]2 Sam. 11:2—12:25 [c]2 Sam. 12:26 [f]Lit. *at the return of the year*

2 [d]2 Sam. 12:30, 31 [2]*plunder*

3 [3]LXX *cut them with*

4 [e]2 Sam. 21:18 [f]1 Chr. 11:29 [4]*Gob,* 2 Sam. 21:18 [5]*Saph,* 2 Sam. 21:18 [6]Or *Raphah*

5 [g]1 Sam. 17:7; 1 Chr. 11:23 [7]*Jaare-Oregim,* 2 Sam. 21:19

6 [h]1 Sam. 5:8; 2 Sam. 21:20 [8]Or *Raphah*

7 [9]*Shammah,* 1 Sam. 16:9 or *Shimeah,* 2 Sam. 21:21

20 It[a] happened [f]in the spring of the year, at the time kings go out *to battle,* that Joab led out the armed forces and ravaged the country of the people of Ammon, and came and besieged Rabbah. But [b]David stayed at Jerusalem. And [c]Joab defeated Rabbah and overthrew it. [2] Then David [d]took their king's crown from his head, and found it to weigh a talent of gold, and *there were* precious stones in it. And it was set on David's head. Also he brought out the [2]spoil of the city in great abundance. [3] And he brought out the people who *were* in it, and [3]put *them* to work with saws, with iron picks, and with axes. So David did to all the cities of the people of Ammon. Then David and all the people returned *to* Jerusalem.

Philistine Giants Destroyed

[4] Now it happened afterward [e]that war broke out at [4]Gezer with the Philistines, at which time [f]Sibbechai the Hushathite killed [5]Sippai, *who was one* of the sons of [6]the giant. And they were subdued.

[5] Again there was war with the Philistines, and Elhanan the son of [7]Jair killed Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite, the shaft of whose spear *was* like a weaver's [g]beam.

[6] Yet again [h]there was war at Gath, where there was a man of *great* stature, with twenty-four fingers and toes, six *on each hand* and six *on each foot;* and he also was born to [8]the giant. [7] So when he defied Israel, Jonathan the son of [9]Shimea, David's brother, killed him.

[8] These were born to the giant in Gath, and they fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants.

The Census of Israel and Judah

CHAPTER 21

1 [a]2 Sam. 24:1–25; Job 1:6 [f]*take a census of*

2 [b]1 Chr. 27:23, 24

21 Now [a]Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to [f]number Israel. [2] So David said to Joab and to the leaders of the people, "Go, number Israel from Beersheba to Dan, [b]and bring the number of them to me that I may know *it.*"

[3] And Joab answered, "May the LORD make His people a hundred times more than they are. But, my lord the king, *are* they not all my lord's servants? Why then does my lord require this thing? Why should he be a cause of guilt in Israel?"

[4] Nevertheless the king's word prevailed against Joab. Therefore Joab departed and went throughout all Israel and came to Jerusalem. [5] Then Joab gave the sum of the number of the peo-

■ **19:17 all Israel.** See note on 11:1.

■ **19:18 seven thousand.** 2 Sam. 10:18 reads "seven hundred." It is possible that the higher number in Chronicles is due to a copyist's error in transmission of the text.

■ **20:1 in the spring.** Armies typically advanced after the first spring harvest when food was more abundant (2 Sam. 11:1; 1 Kin. 20:22, 26).

■ **20:2 spoil . . . in great abundance.** See note on 18:8, 11.

■ **20:4 were subdued.** Not found in 2 Sam. 21:18. The sentence indicates that the promise of 17:10 was fulfilled (2 Chr. 13:18; and contrast 28:19).

■ **21:1—22:1** The history continues with David's discovery of the temple site (17:1—29:30 note). The theme of military victory (19:1—20:8) leads to an account of David's census. With two major exceptions, the account follows 2 Sam. 24 closely (21:1; 21:28—22:1 and notes). Second Samuel reports how David brought trouble on the nation but successfully interceded on its behalf. In Chronicles the point of the story is to tell how God led David to discover the holy site for the temple.

■ **21:1 Satan.** When the Hebrew word *satan* is used with a definite article, it means lit. "the adversary" (Job 1:6; Zech. 3:1). Here *satan* is used for the first time without a definite article, probably as a proper name. See "Satan" at Job 1:6.

Satan stood up. According to 1 Sam. 24:1, it was God who moved David. God Himself tempts no one (James 1:13), but He employs created means under His sovereign control. Chronicles identifies Satan as the instrument by which David was led astray. The two passages together remind us that God is sovereign over all events, not excepting temptation and sin (11:4; 25:20 note; Ex. 4:21 note; Josh. 11:20; 1 Kin. 22:22–23; 2 Chr. 10:15 note; Job 1:12; 2:10; Ezek. 3:20; 14:9; Matt. 6:13; Acts 4:27, 28).

■ **21:3 a cause of guilt in Israel.** Taking a census was not prohibited by Old Testament law, though there were specific regulations (Ex. 30:12; Num. 1:2; 26:2). David's desire for a count of his military personnel may have been an indication of reliance on human might rather than on divine power (2 Chr. 13:18 and note). In the light of Joab's response (21:6; 27:24), David may have insisted that the tribe of Levi be counted for military service as well (v. 6 note).

■ **21:5 All Israel.** 2 Sam. 24:9 reads simply "Israel." See note on 11:1.

one million. The differences of these numbers from those in 2 Sam. 24:9 are problematic. It may be that the number of men from Judah is included in the total for "all Israel" (that is, *including* Judah with 470,000 not "and Judah"). The Book of Chronicles may exclude some elements, such as Levi and Benjamin, from its count (21:6 note). Or the numbers may be

ple to David. All Israel *had* one million one hundred thousand men who drew the sword, and Judah *had* four hundred and seventy thousand men who drew the sword. 6 [c]But he did not count Levi and Benjamin among them, for the king's [2]word was abominable to Joab.

7 And [3]God was displeased with this thing; therefore He struck Israel. 8 So David said to God, [d]"I have sinned greatly, because I have done this thing; [e]but now, I pray, take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have done very foolishly."

9 Then the LORD spoke to Gad, David's [f]seer, saying, 10 "Go and tell David, [g]saying, 'Thus says the LORD: "I offer you three *things;* choose one of them for yourself, that I may do *it* to you." ' "

11 So Gad came to David and said to him, "Thus says the LORD: 'Choose for yourself, 12 [h]either [4]three years of famine, or three months to be defeated by your foes with the sword of your enemies overtaking *you,* or else for three days the sword of the LORD—the plague in the land, with the [5]angel of the LORD destroying throughout all the territory of Israel.' Now consider what answer I should take back to Him who sent me."

13 And David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Please let me fall into the hand of the LORD, for His [i]mercies *are* very great; but do not let me fall into the hand of man."

14 So the LORD sent a [j]plague upon Israel, and seventy thousand men of Israel fell. 15 And God sent [6]an [k]angel to Jerusalem to destroy it. As [7]he was destroying, the LORD looked and [l]relented of the disaster, and said to the angel who was destroying, "It is enough; now restrain [8]your hand." And the angel of the LORD stood by the [m]threshing floor of [9]Ornan the Jebusite.

16 Then David lifted his eyes and [n]saw the angel of the LORD standing between earth and heaven, having in his hand a drawn sword stretched out over Jerusalem. So David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell on their faces. 17 And David said to God, "Was it not I who commanded the people to be numbered? I am the one who has sinned and done evil indeed; but these [o]sheep, what have they done? Let Your hand, I pray, O LORD my God, be against me and my father's house, but not against Your people that they should be plagued."

18 Therefore, the [p]angel of the LORD commanded Gad to say to David that David should go and erect an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. 19 So David went up at the word of Gad, which he had spoken in the name of the LORD. 20 Now Ornan turned and saw the angel; and his four sons *who were* with him hid themselves, but Ornan continued threshing wheat. 21 So David came to Ornan, and Ornan looked and saw David. And he went out from the threshing floor, and bowed before David with *his* face to the ground. 22 Then David said to Ornan, [1]"Grant me the place of *this* threshing floor, that I may build an altar on it to the LORD. You shall grant it to me at the full price, that the plague may be withdrawn from the people."

23 But Ornan said to David, "Take *it* to yourself, and let my lord the king do *what is* good in his eyes. Look, I *also* give *you* the oxen for burnt offerings, the threshing implements for wood, and the wheat for the grain offering; I give *it* all."

24 Then King David said to Ornan, "No, but I will surely buy *it* for the full price, for I will not take what is yours for the LORD, nor offer burnt offerings with *that which* costs *me* nothing." 25 So [q]David gave Ornan six hundred shekels of gold by weight for the place. 26 And David built there an altar to the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called on the LORD; and [r]He answered him from heaven by fire on the altar of burnt offering.

27 So the LORD commanded the angel, and he returned his sword to its sheath.

6 [c]1 Chr. 27:24
[2]*command*

7 [3]Lit. *it was evil in the eyes of God*

8 [d]2 Sam. 24:10
[e]2 Sam. 12:13

9 [f]1 Sam. 9:9; 2 Kin. 17:13; 1 Chr. 29:29; 2 Chr. 16:7, 10; Is. 30:9, 10; Amos 7:12, 13

10 [g]2 Sam. 24:12–14

12 [h]2 Sam. 24:13
[4]*seven,* 2 Sam. 24:13 [5]Or *Angel,* and so throughout the chapter

13 [i]Ps. 51:1; 130:4, 7

14 [j]1 Chr. 27:24

15 [k]2 Sam. 24:16
[l]Gen. 6:6 [m]2 Chr. 3:1 [6]Or *the Angel* [7]Or *He* [8]Or *Your* [9]*Araunah,* 2 Sam. 24:16, 18–24

16 [n]Josh. 5:13; 2 Chr. 3:1

17 [o]2 Sam. 7:8; Ps. 74:1

18 [p]1 Chr. 21:11, 12; 2 Chr. 3:1

22 [1]Lit. *Give*

25 [q]2 Sam. 24:24

26 [r]Lev. 9:24; Judg. 6:21; 1 Kin. 18:36–38; 2 Chr. 3:1; 7:1

approximations. Beyond this, one or both texts may suffer from errors of copying.

■ **21:6 he did not count.** Joab did not carry through completely the census David had ordered (v. 3 note).

Levi and Benjamin. These tribes were not included in the census. The tribe of Levi was to be excluded from any military census, according to Mosaic Law (Num. 1:49; 2:33). Benjamin may have been excluded because the tabernacle was in Gibeon at the time (v. 29).

■ **21:13 His mercies are very great.** Despite the severity of divine chastisement, David trusts in the abundant mercy of God. Undoubtedly, the promises to David in 17:1–14 supply a background to David's confident trust in God's mercy.

■ **21:16** This verse is not found in the traditional Hebrew text of 2 Sam. 24. However, recently discovered texts of Samuel (Dead Sea Scrolls) and other witnesses suggest that the verse was probably originally in Samuel.

■ **21:20, 21** Although these verses about Ornan (spelled "Araunah" in 2 Sam. 24) do not appear in the traditional Hebrew text of 2 Sam. 24:20, recently discovered texts of Samuel (Dead Sea Scrolls) and other witnesses suggest that the information was originally in Samuel.

■ **21:22 at the full price.** This portion of the account is reminiscent of Abraham's purchase of the burial site for Sarah (Gen. 23). David purchased the site at full price. As a result, the future temple site (21:28—22:1 note) was a royal possession devoted to the temple.

■ **21:25 six hundred shekels . . . for the place.** 2 Sam. 24:24 reads "the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver." It has been suggested that Samuel focuses on the threshing floor with its oxen, while Chronicles gives the value of the whole site.

■ **21:26 He answered him . . . by fire.** A rare occurrence, indicating God's special approval of David's actions (Lev. 9:24; 1 Kin. 18:37, 38). This event anticipates Solomon's temple dedication later at this same site (2 Chr. 7:1).

29 [s]1 Kin. 3:4 [t]1 Chr. 16:39

CHAPTER 22

1 [a]Deut. 12:5
2 [b]1 Kin. 9:20, 21 [c]1 Kin. 5:17, 18
3 [d]1 Kin. 7:47
4 [e]1 Kin. 5:6–10
5 [f]1 Chr. 29:1, 2
6 [1]*commanded*
7 [g]2 Sam. 7:1, 2 [h]Deut. 12:5, 11
8 [i]1 Chr. 28:3
9 [j]1 Chr. 28:5 [k]1 Kin. 4:20, 25; 5:4 [2]Lit. *Peaceful*
10 [l]1 Chr. 17:12, 13; 28:6 [m]Heb. 1:5
11 [n]1 Chr. 22:16
12 [o]1 Kin. 3:9–12
13 [p]1 Chr. 28:7 [q][Josh. 1:6, 7, 9] [3]*commanded*
14 [r]1 Chr. 22:3
16 [s]1 Chr. 22:11

28 At that time, when David saw that the LORD had answered him on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, he sacrificed there. 29 [s]For the tabernacle of the LORD and the altar of the burnt offering, which Moses had made in the wilderness, *were* at that time at the high place in [t]Gibeon. 30 But David could not go before it to inquire of God, for he was afraid of the sword of the angel of the LORD.

David Prepares to Build the Temple

22 Then David said, [a]"This *is* the house of the LORD God, and this *is* the altar of burnt offering for Israel." 2 So David commanded to gather the [b]aliens who *were* in the land of Israel; and he appointed masons to [c]cut hewn stones to build the house of God. 3 And David prepared iron in abundance for the nails of the doors of the gates and for the joints, and bronze in abundance [d]beyond measure, 4 and cedar trees in abundance; for the [e]Sidonians and those from Tyre brought much cedar wood to David.

5 Now David said, [f]"Solomon my son *is* young and inexperienced, and the house to be built for the LORD *must be* exceedingly magnificent, famous and glorious throughout all countries. I will now make preparation for it." So David made abundant preparations before his death.

6 Then he called for his son Solomon, and [1]charged him to build a house for the LORD God of Israel. 7 And David said to Solomon: "My son, as for me, [g]it was in my mind to build a house [h]to the name of the LORD my God; 8 but the word of the LORD came to me, saying, [i]'You have shed much blood and have made great wars; you shall not build a house for My name, because you have shed much blood on the earth in My sight. 9 [j]Behold, a son shall be born to you, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him [k]rest from all his enemies all around. His name shall be [2]Solomon, for I will give peace and quietness to Israel in his days. 10 [l]He shall build a house for My name, and [m]he shall be My son, and I *will be* his Father; and I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.' 11 Now, my son, may [n]the LORD be with you; and may you prosper, and build the house of the LORD your God, as He has said to you. 12 Only may the LORD [o]give you wisdom and understanding, and give you charge concerning Israel, that you may keep the law of the LORD your God. 13 [p]Then you will prosper, if you take care to fulfill the statutes and judgments with which the LORD [3]charged Moses concerning Israel. [q]Be strong and of good courage; do not fear nor be dismayed. 14 Indeed I have taken much trouble to prepare for the house of the LORD one hundred thousand talents of gold and one million talents of silver, and bronze and iron [r]beyond measure, for it is so abundant. I have prepared timber and stone also, and you may add to them. 15 Moreover *there are* workmen with you in abundance: woodsmen and stonecutters, and all types of skillful men for every kind of work. 16 Of gold and silver and bronze and iron *there is* no limit. Arise and begin working, and [s]the LORD be with you."

■ **21:28—22:1** These verses are not found in 2 Sam. 24. They show an interest in sacrifice (21:28), and possibly help explain David's neglect of the tabernacle (21:29, 30). The main point is that David recognized the threshing floor of Ornan as the site for the future temple (22:1). This remarkable ending with its clear account of moral failure in David's life indicates vividly the place to which the community must turn for sacrifice, forgiveness, and answered prayer (2 Chr. 3:1; 6:12–42 and notes).

■ **22:2—29:20** This is the longest section about David's life found only in Chronicles. The history of how David completed temple preparations begins and ends with descriptions of royal assemblies (22:2–19 and 28:1—29:20) that are similar at several points (compare 22:8 with 28:3; 22:13 with 28:20; and 22:17 with 28:21).

■ **22:2–19** This is the first assembly in which David gave commissions to foreign laborers (22:2–4), Solomon (22:5–16), and the Israelite leaders (22:17–19) to construct the temple of God.

■ **22:2 aliens.** David and Solomon used conscripted labor made up primarily of foreigners (1 Kin. 5:13–18; 9:15–23; 11:28; 2 Chr. 2:2, 17–18; 8:7–10). The mention of "aliens" participating in the construction of the first temple corresponds to the participation of foreigners in the reconstruction of the temple following the Babylonian exile of the Jews (Is. 60:10–12).

■ **22:3 iron.** Presumably taken from the Philistines whom David had conquered (1 Sam. 13:19–22).

bronze. Taken from the spoils of war (18:8, 11 note).

■ **22:5 young and inexperienced.** Solomon was not experienced enough to handle the responsibility of preparing for the temple (cf. 29:1; 2 Chr. 13:7).

abundant preparations. The central theme of this section is how David provided virtually everything for the temple built by Solomon, including plans, materials, workers, work assignments, political stability, and popular support. In effect, the temple was a joint project of David and Solomon (22:2—29:20; 2 Chr. 2:3 and notes). See Introduction: Characteristics and Themes.

■ **22:6–10** The writer explains why David himself could not build the temple. 1 Kin. 5:3–5 states that David was preoccupied with warfare, and this passage states specifically that David was ritually defiled by bloodshed so that he could not be directly involved in the building (2 Chr. 6:9).

■ **22:7, 8, 10, 19 name.** See note on 13:6.

■ **22:9 rest . . . peace and quietness.** On several occasions peace and rest from warfare are seen as God's reward to His faithful people (v. 18; 2 Chr. 14:6, 7; 15:15; 20:30; 23:21). This blessing was held out to those returned from Babylonian exile as a basis for hope in their troubled days.

■ **22:12, 13 keep the law of the LORD.** See note on 16:40.

■ **22:13 Be strong and of good courage.** David's commission to Solomon (22:12, 13) is reminiscent of Joshua's commission from God (cf. 28:20 and Josh. 1:6–9).

17 David also commanded all the [t]leaders of Israel to help Solomon his son, *saying,* 18 "*Is* not the LORD your God with you? [u]And has He *not* given you rest on every side? For He has given the inhabitants of the land into my hand, and the land is subdued before the LORD and before His people. 19 Now set your heart and your soul to seek the LORD your God. Therefore arise and build the sanctuary of the LORD God, to [v]bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD and the holy articles of God into the house that is to be built [w]for the name of the LORD."

The Divisions of the Levites

23 So when David was old and full of days, he made his son [a]Solomon king over Israel. 2 And he gathered together all the leaders of Israel, with the priests and the Levites. 3 Now the Levites were numbered from the age of [b]thirty years and above; and the number of individual males was thirty-eight thousand. 4 Of these, twenty-four thousand *were* to [c]look after the work of the house of the LORD, six thousand *were* [d]officers and judges, 5 four thousand *were* gatekeepers, and four thousand [e]praised the LORD with *musical* instruments, *f*"which I made," *said David,* "for giving praise."

6 Also [g]David separated them into [1]divisions among the sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath, and Merari.

7 Of the [h]Gershonites: [2]Laadan and Shimei. 8 The sons of Laadan: the first Jehiel, then Zetham and Joel—three *in all.* 9 The sons of Shimei: Shelomith, Haziel, and Haran—three *in all.* These were the heads of the fathers' *houses* of Laadan. 10 And the sons of Shimei: Jahath, [3]Zina, Jeush, and Beriah. These *were* the four sons of Shimei. 11 Jahath was the first and Zizah the second. But Jeush and Beriah did not have many sons; therefore they were assigned as one father's house.

12 [i]The sons of Kohath: Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel—four *in all.* 13 The sons of [j]Amram: Aaron and Moses; and [k]Aaron was set apart, he and his sons forever, that he should [4]sanctify the most holy things, [l]to burn incense before the LORD, [m]to minister to Him, and [n]to give the blessing in His name forever. 14 Now [o]the sons of Moses the man of God were reckoned to the tribe of Levi. 15 [p]The sons of Moses *were* [5]Gershon and Eliezer. 16 Of the sons of Gershon, [q]Shebuel[6] *was* the first. 17 Of the descendants of Eliezer, [r]Rehabiah was the first. And Eliezer had no other sons, but the sons of Rehabiah were very many. 18 Of the sons of Izhar, [s]Shelomith *was* the first. 19 [t]Of the sons of Hebron, Jeriah *was* the first, Amariah the second, Jahaziel the third, and Jekameam the fourth. 20 Of the sons of Uzziel, Michah *was* the first and Jesshiah the second.

21 [u]The sons of Merari *were* Mahli and Mushi. The sons of Mahli *were* Eleazar and [v]Kish. 22 And Eleazar died, and [w]had no sons, but only daughters; and their [7]brethren, the sons of Kish, [x]took them *as wives.* 23 [y]The sons of Mushi *were* Mahli, Eder, and Jeremoth—three *in all.*

24 These *were* the sons of [z]Levi by their fathers' houses—the heads of the fathers' *houses* as they were counted individually by the number of their names, who did the work for the service of the house of the LORD, from the age of [a]twenty years and above.

25 For David said, "The LORD God of Israel [b]has given rest to His people, that they may dwell in Jerusalem forever"; 26 and also to the Levites, "They shall no longer [c]carry the tabernacle, or any of the articles for its service." 27 For by the [d]last words of David the Levites *were* numbered from twenty years old and above; 28 because their duty *was* to help the sons of Aaron in the service of the house of the LORD, in the courts and in the chambers, in the purifying of all holy things and the work of the service of the house of God, 29 both with [e]the showbread and [f]the fine

17 [t]1 Chr. 28:1–6
18 [u]Josh. 22:4
19 [v]2 Chr. 5:2–14 [w]1 Kin. 5:3

CHAPTER 23

1 [a]1 Kin. 1:33–40
3 [b]Num. 4:1–3
4 [c]Ezra 3:8, 9 [d]Deut. 16:18–20
5 [e]1 Chr. 15:16 [f]2 Chr. 29:25–27
6 [g]Ex. 6:16 [1]*groups*
7 [h]1 Chr. 26:21 [2]*Libni,* Ex. 6:17
10 [3]LXX, Vg. *Zizah* and v. 11
12 [i]Ex. 6:18
13 [j]Ex. 6:20 [k]Heb. 5:4 [l]1 Sam. 2:28 [m][Deut. 21:5] [n]Num. 6:23 [4]*consecrate*
14 [o]1 Chr. 26:20–24
15 [p]Ex. 18:3, 4 [5]Heb. *Gershom,* 1 Chr. 6:16
16 [q]1 Chr. 26:24 [6]*Shubael,* 1 Chr. 24:20
17 [r]1 Chr. 26:25
18 [s]1 Chr. 24:22
19 [t]1 Chr. 24:23
21 [u]1 Chr. 24:26 [v]1 Chr. 24:29
22 [w]1 Chr. 24:28 [x]Num. 36:6 [7]*kinsmen*
23 [y]1 Chr. 24:30
24 [z]Num. 10:17, 21 [a]Ezra 3:8
25 [b]1 Chr. 22:18
26 [c]Num. 4:5, 15; 7:9

27 [d]2 Sam. 23:1 **29** [e]Ex. 25:30 [f]Lev. 6:20

■ **22:17–19** David's success in war provided the political stability necessary for constructing the temple (18:1—20:8 note).

■ **22:18 rest.** See note on v. 9.

■ **22:19 seek the LORD.** See note on 2 Chr. 7:14.

■ **23:1** This opening verse is a topical heading for 23:1—29:20.

he made his son Solomon king over Israel. Apparently assuming his readers' knowledge of the Book of Kings, the writer of Chronicles says little about the checkered history of David's rise to power (11:1–9 note). He also does not discuss Solomon's struggle for kingship (1 Kin. 1; 2), presenting a smooth transition of power from David to Solomon. See 3:10–16 note, and Introduction: Characteristics and Themes.

■ **23:2—27:34** David's organization of religious (23:2—26:32) and civil (ch. 27) personnel established arrangements for Solomon's administration, and it also provided a model for the reorganization of the people in the community after the return from exile in Babylon.

■ **23:2–32 the priests and the Levites.** Between introductory (23:2–6) and concluding remarks (23:24–32) comes the list of divisions of Levites into Gershonites (23:7–11), Kohathites (23:12–20), and Merarites (23:21–23). See note on 6:1.

■ **23:3 age of thirty years.** Apparently the age at which Levites began service was adjusted according to need: thirty years (Num. 4:1–3), twenty-five years (Num. 8:23–25), and twenty years (1 Chr. 23:24, 27). A period of apprenticeship may be in view in some passages.

■ **23:5 musical instruments.** See note on 15:16.

■ **23:6–23** Compare similar lists in 6:16–30; 24:20–30.

■ **23:24, 27 twenty years.** See note on v. 3.

■ **23:28 to help the sons of Aaron.** The Levites were under the authority of the Aaronic priests. See notes on 6:53 and 15:11.

flour for the grain offering, with [g]the unleavened cakes and [h]*what is baked in* the pan, with what is mixed and with all kinds of [i]measures and sizes; [30] to stand every morning to thank and praise the LORD, and likewise at evening; [31] and at every presentation of a burnt offering to the LORD [j]on the Sabbaths and on the New Moons and on the [k]set[8] feasts, by number according to the ordinance governing them, regularly before the LORD; [32] and that they should [l]attend to the [m]needs of the tabernacle of meeting, the needs of the holy *place,* and the [n]needs of the sons of Aaron their brethren in the work of the house of the LORD.

The Divisions of the Priests

24 Now *these are* the divisions of the sons of Aaron. [a]The sons of Aaron *were* Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar. [2] And [b]Nadab and Abihu died before their father, and had no children; therefore Eleazar and Ithamar ministered as priests. [3] Then David with Zadok of the sons of Eleazar, and [c]Ahimelech of the sons of Ithamar, divided them according to the schedule of their service.

[4] There were more leaders found of the sons of Eleazar than of the sons of Ithamar, and *thus* they were divided. Among the sons of Eleazar *were* sixteen heads of *their* fathers' houses, and eight heads of their fathers' houses among the sons of Ithamar. [5] Thus they were divided by lot, one group as another, for there were officials of the sanctuary and officials *of the house* of God, from the sons of Eleazar and from the sons of Ithamar. [6] And the scribe, Shemaiah the son of Nethanel, *one of* the Levites, wrote them down before the king, the leaders, Zadok the priest, Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, and the heads of the fathers' *houses* of the priests and Levites, one father's house taken for Eleazar and *one* for Ithamar.

[7] Now the first lot fell to Jehoiarib, the second to Jedaiah, [8] the third to Harim, the fourth to Seorim, [9] the fifth to Malchijah, the sixth to Mijamin, [10] the seventh to Hakkoz, the eighth to [d]Abijah, [11] the ninth to Jeshua, the tenth to Shecaniah, [12] the eleventh to Eliashib, the twelfth to Jakim, [13] the thirteenth to Huppah, the fourteenth to Jeshebeab, [14] the fifteenth to Bilgah, the sixteenth to Immer, [15] the seventeenth to Hezir, the eighteenth to [f]Happizzez, [16] the nineteenth to Pethahiah, the twentieth to [g]Jehezekel, [17] the twenty-first to Jachin, the twenty-second to Gamul, [18] the twenty-third to Delaiah, the twenty-fourth to Maaziah.

[19] This *was* the schedule of their service [e]for coming into the house of the LORD according to their ordinance by the hand of Aaron their father, as the LORD God of Israel had commanded him.

Other Levites

[20] And the rest of the sons of Levi: of the sons of Amram, [3]Shubael; of the sons of Shubael, Jehdeiah. [21] Concerning [f]Rehabiah, of the sons of Rehabiah, the first *was* Isshiah. [22] Of the Izharites, [4]Shelomoth; of the sons of Shelomoth, Jahath. [23] Of the sons [5]*of* [g]*Hebron,* Jeriah [5]*was the first,* Amariah the second, Jahaziel the third, *and* Jekameam the fourth. [24] *Of* the sons of Uzziel, Michah; of the sons of Michah, Shamir. [25] The brother of Michah, Isshiah; of the sons of Isshiah, Zechariah. [26] [h]The sons of Merari *were* Mahli and Mushi; the son of Jaaziah, Beno. [27] The sons of Merari by Jaaziah *were* Beno, Shoham, Zaccur, and Ibri. [28] Of Mahli: Eleazar, [i]who had no sons. [29] Of Kish: the son of Kish, Jerahmeel.

[30] Also [j]the sons of Mushi *were* Mahli, Eder, and Jerimoth. These *were* the sons of the Levites according to their fathers' houses.

[31] These also cast lots just as their brothers the sons of Aaron did, in the presence of King David, Zadok, Ahimelech, and the heads of the fathers' *houses* of the priests and Levites. The chief fathers *did* just as their younger brethren.

29 [g]Lev. 2:1, 4 [h]Lev. 2:5, 7 [i]Lev. 19:35

31 [j]Num. 10:10 [k]Lev. 23:2–4 [8]*appointed feasts*

32 [l]2 Chr. 13:10, 11 [m][Num. 1:53]; 1 Chr. 9:27 [n]Num. 3:6–9, 38

CHAPTER 24

1 [a]Lev. 10:1–6; Num. 26:60, 61; 1 Chr. 6:3

2 [b]Num. 3:1–4; 26:61

3 [c]1 Chr. 18:16

10 [d]Neh. 12:4, 17; Luke 1:5

15 [f]LXX, Vg. *Aphses*

16 [2]MT *Jehezekel*

19 [e]1 Chr. 9:25

20 [3]*Shebuel,* 1 Chr. 23:16

21 [f]1 Chr. 23:17

22 [4]*Shelomith,* 1 Chr. 23:18

23 [g]1 Chr. 23:19; 26:31 [5]Supplied from 23:19 (following some Heb. mss. and LXX mss.)

26 [h]Ex. 6:19; 1 Chr. 23:21

28 [i]1 Chr. 23:22

30 [j]1 Chr. 23:23

■ **24:1, 2** The account follows the traditional division of the sons of Aaron (cf. 6:3; Ex. 6:23; Num. 3:2–4). The descendants of Eleazar and Ithamar alone served as priests (6:1 note; Lev. 10:1–3).

■ **24:3 Zadok.** See notes on 6:53 and 15:11.

■ **24:5 divided by lot.** Casting lots in careful accord with revealed standards was designed to ensure that decisions were made according to divine direction rather than human prejudice (Prov. 16:33; Luke 1:8, 9; Acts 1:26).

■ **24:6 Ahimelech the son of Abiathar.** See note on 18:16.

■ **24:7–18** Twenty-four divisions were established to provide for regular rotation of duty among the priestly families. See the similar practice in New Testament times (Luke 1:8, 9).

■ **24:7 Jehoiarib.** The father of the Maccabees (Matthaias) was in the division of Jehoiarib (cf. 1 Macc. 2:1).

■ **24:10 Abijah.** The father of John the Baptist (Zacharias) was in the division of Abijah (Luke 1:5).

■ **24:31 Zadok.** See notes on 6:53 and 15:11.

just as their younger brethren. The equal treatment of all the families was a model to be followed by the readers in the period following the Babylonian exile (24:5 note). Possibly there was a controversy that required emphasis on this fairness.

The Musicians

25 Moreover David and the captains of the army separated for the service *some* of the sons of [a]Asaph, of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who *should* prophesy with harps, stringed instruments, and cymbals. And the number of the skilled men performing their service was: [2] Of the sons of Asaph: Zaccur, Joseph, Nethaniah, and [1]Asharelah; the sons of Asaph *were* [2]under the direction of Asaph, who prophesied according to the order of the king. [3] Of [b]Jeduthun, the sons of Jeduthun: Gedaliah, [3]Zeri, Jeshaiah, [4]Shimei, Hashabiah, and Mattithiah, [5]six, under the direction of their father Jeduthun, who prophesied with a harp to give thanks and to praise the LORD. [4] Of Heman, the sons of Heman: Bukkiah, Mattaniah, [6]Uzziel, [7]Shebuel, [8]Jerimoth, Hananiah, Hanani, Eliathah, Giddalti, Romamti-Ezer, Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir, *and* Mahazioth. [5] All these *were* the sons of Heman the king's seer in the words of God, to [9]exalt his [c]horn. For God gave Heman fourteen sons and three daughters.

[6] All these *were* under the direction of their father for the music *in* the house of the LORD, with cymbals, stringed instruments, and [d]harps, for the service of the house of God. Asaph, Jeduthun, and Heman *were* [e]under the authority of the king. [7] So the [f]number of them, with their brethren who were instructed in the songs of the LORD, all who were skillful, *was* two hundred and eighty-eight.

[8] And they cast lots for their duty, the small as well as the great, [g]the teacher with the student.

[9] Now the first lot for Asaph came out for Joseph; the second for Gedaliah, him with his brethren and sons, twelve; [10] the third for Zaccur, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [11] the fourth for [1]Jizri, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [12] the fifth for Nethaniah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [13] the sixth for Bukkiah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [14] the seventh for [2]Jesharelah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [15] the eighth for Jeshaiah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [16] the ninth for Mattaniah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [17] the tenth for Shimei, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [18] the eleventh for [3]Azarel, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [19] the twelfth for Hashabiah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [20] the thirteenth for [4]Shubael, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [21] the fourteenth for Mattithiah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [22] the fifteenth for [5]Jeremoth, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [23] the sixteenth for Hananiah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [24] the seventeenth for Joshbekashah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [25] the eighteenth for Hanani, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [26] the nineteenth for Mallothi, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [27] the twentieth for Eliathah, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [28] the twenty-first for Hothir, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [29] the twenty-second for Giddalti, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [30] the twenty-third for Mahazioth, his sons and his brethren, twelve; [31] the twenty-fourth for Romamti-Ezer, his sons and his brethren, twelve.

The Gatekeepers

26 Concerning the divisions of the gatekeepers: of the Korahites, [1]Meshelemiah the son of [a]Kore, of the sons of [2]Asaph. [2] And the sons of Meshelemiah *were* [b]Zechariah the firstborn, Jediael the second, Zebadiah the third, Jathniel the fourth, [3] Elam the fifth, Jehohanan the sixth, Eliehoenai the seventh.

[4] Moreover the sons of [c]Obed-Edom *were* Shemaiah the firstborn, Jehozabad the second, Joah the third, Sacar the fourth, Nethanel the fifth, [5] Ammiel the sixth, Issachar the seventh, Peulthai the eighth; for God blessed him.

[6] Also to Shemaiah his son were sons born who governed their fathers' houses, because they *were* men of great ability. [7] The sons of Shemaiah *were* Othni, Rephael, Obed, and Elzabad, whose brothers Elihu and Semachiah *were* able men.

[8] All these *were* of the sons of Obed-Edom, they and their sons and their brethren, [d]able men with strength for the work: sixty-two of Obed-Edom.

CHAPTER 25

1 [a]1 Chr. 6:30, 33, 39, 44; 2 Chr. 5:12

2 [1]*Jesharelah,* v. 14 [2]Lit. *at the hands of*

3 [b]1 Chr. 16:41, 42 [3]*Jizri,* v. 11 [4]So with one Heb. ms., LXX mss. [5]Shimei is the sixth, v. 17

4 [6]*Azarel,* v. 18 [7]*Shubael,* v. 20 [8]*Jeremoth,* v. 22

5 [c]1 Chr. 16:42 [9]Increase his power or influence

6 [d]1 Chr. 15:16 [e]1 Chr. 15:19; 25:2

7 [f]1 Chr. 23:5

8 [g]2 Chr. 23:13

11 [1]*Zeri,* v. 3

14 [2]*Asharelah,* v. 2

18 [3]*Uzziel,* v. 4

20 [4]*Shebuel,* v. 4

22 [5]*Jerimoth,* v. 4

CHAPTER 26

1 [a]Ps. 42:title [1]*Shelemiah,* v. 14 [2]*Ebiasaph,* 1 Chr. 6:37; 9:19

2 [b]1 Chr. 9:21

4 [c]1 Chr. 15:18, 21

8 [d]1 Chr. 9:13

■ **25:1–31** The music of worship is mentioned many times in this chapter (15:16 note).

■ **25:1 captains of the army.** The name of David together with his captains recommends their assignments (11:10; 12:32) as a model for the organization of the community.

prophesy. Temple personnel are seen in prophetic roles on several occasions (2 Chr. 20:14–17; 24:19–22; 29:30; 35:15; cf. 2 Kin. 23:2 with 2 Chr. 34:30). This theme suggests the role of priests as guides for the restoration of the community after the return from exile in Babylon (Zech. 6:9–15).

■ **25:8 cast lots for their duty.** See note on 24:5.

■ **25:9–31 first . . . twenty-fourth.** See note on 24:7–18.

■ **26:1–19 gatekeepers.** The specific duties of gatekeepers are described in 9:22–29.

■ **26:4 Obed-Edom.** See note on 13:13.

■ **26:5 for God blessed him.** Numerous children are a sign of divine blessing (13:13 note).

9 And Meshelemiah had sons and brethren, eighteen able men.

10 Also [e]Hosah, of the children of Merari, had sons: Shimri the first (for *though* he was not the firstborn, his father made him the first), 11 Hilkiah the second, Tebaliah the third, Zechariah the fourth; all the sons and brethren of Hosah *were* thirteen.

12 Among these *were* the divisions of the gatekeepers, among the chief men, *having* duties just like their brethren, to serve in the house of the LORD. 13 And they [f]cast lots for each gate, the small as well as the great, according to their father's house. 14 The lot for the East *Gate* fell to [3]Shelemiah. Then they cast lots *for* his son Zechariah, a wise counselor, and his lot came out for the North Gate; 15 to Obed-Edom the South Gate, and to his sons the [4]storehouse. 16 To Shuppim and Hosah *the lot came out* for the West Gate, with the Shallecheth Gate on the [g]ascending highway—watchman opposite watchman. 17 On the east were *six* Levites, on the north four each day, on the south four each day, and for the [5]storehouse two by two. 18 As for the [6]Parbar on the west, *there were* four on the highway *and* two at the Parbar. 19 These were the divisions of the gatekeepers among the sons of Korah and among the sons of Merari.

The Treasuries and Other Duties

20 Of the Levites, Ahijah *was* [h]over the treasuries of the house of God and over the treasuries of the [i]dedicated[7] things. 21 The sons of [8]Laadan, the descendants of the Gershonites of Laadan, heads of their fathers' *houses,* of Laadan the Gershonite: [9]Jehieli. 22 The sons of Jehieli, Zetham and Joel his brother, *were* over the treasuries of the house of the LORD. 23 Of the [j]Amramites, the Izharites, the Hebronites, and the Uzzielites: 24 [k]Shebuel the son of Gershom, the son of Moses, *was* overseer of the treasuries. 25 And his brethren by Eliezer *were* Rehabiah his son, Jeshaiah his son, Joram his son, Zichri his son, and [l]Shelomith his son.

26 This Shelomith and his brethren *were* over all the treasuries of the dedicated things [m]which King David and the heads of fathers' *houses,* the captains over thousands and hundreds, and the captains of the army, had dedicated. 27 Some of the [l]spoils won in battles they dedicated to maintain the house of the LORD. 28 And all that Samuel [n]the seer, Saul the son of Kish, Abner the son of Ner, and Joab the son of Zeruiah had dedicated, every dedicated *thing,* was under the hand of Shelomith and his brethren.

29 Of the Izharites, Chenaniah and his sons [o]*performed* duties as [p]officials and judges over Israel outside Jerusalem.

30 Of the Hebronites, [q]Hashabiah and his brethren, one thousand seven hundred able men, had the oversight of Israel on the west side of the Jordan for all the business of the LORD, and in the service of the king. 31 Among the Hebronites, [r]Jerijah *was* head of the Hebronites according to his genealogy of the fathers. In the fortieth year of the reign of David they were sought, and there were found among them capable men [s]at Jazer of Gilead. 32 And his brethren *were* two thousand seven hundred able men, heads of fathers' *houses,* whom King David made officials over the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, for every matter pertaining to God and the [t]affairs of the king.

The Military Divisions

27 And the children of Israel, according to their number, the heads of fathers' *houses,* the captains of thousands and hundreds and their officers, served the king in every matter of the *military* divisions. *These divisions* came in and went out month by month throughout all the months of the year, each division *having* twenty-four thousand.

2 Over the first division for the first month *was* [a]Jashobeam the son of Zabdiel, and in his division *were* twenty-four thousand; 3 *he was* of the children of Perez, and the chief of all the cap-

10 [e]1 Chr. 16:38
13 [f]1 Chr. 24:5, 31; 25:8
14 [3]*Meshelemiah,* v. 1
15 [4]Heb. *asuppim*
16 [g]1 Kin. 10:5; 2 Chr. 9:4
17 [5]Heb. *asuppim*
18 [6]Probably a court or colonnade extending west of the temple
20 [h]1 Chr. 9:26 [i]2 Sam. 8:11; 1 Chr. 26:22, 24, 26; 28:12; Ezra 2:69 [7]*holy things*
21 [8]*Libni,* 1 Chr. 6:17 [9]*Jehiel,* 1 Chr. 23:8; 29:8
23 [j]Ex. 6:18; Num. 3:19
24 [k]1 Chr. 23:16
25 [l]1 Chr. 23:18
26 [m]2 Sam. 8:11
27 [l]*plunder*
28 [n]1 Sam. 9:9
29 [o]Neh. 11:16 [p]1 Chr. 23:4
30 [q]1 Chr. 27:17
31 [r]1 Chr. 23:19 [s]Josh. 21:39
32 [t]2 Chr. 19:11

CHAPTER 27

2 [a]1 Chr. 11:11

■ **26:13–16 cast lots.** For the casting of lots see note on 24:5.

■ **26:14 East Gate.** The main entrance to the temple with six gatekeepers (26:17).

■ **26:15 to Obed-Edom the South Gate.** The South Gate was the main entrance for the king. Obed-Edom was highly honored by this assignment.

■ **26:20 Levites.** The Levites were given responsibilities in the temple (26:20–28) and away from Jerusalem (26:29–32).

treasuries. The temple was a storehouse of great wealth (29:6–9; 2 Chr. 4; 34:9–11; 36:7–19). The Levites were in charge of collecting and managing its extensive resources.

■ **26:26–28 David . . . Samuel . . . Saul . . . Abner . . . Joab.** Apparently, special attention was given to temple donations made by important figures.

■ **26:29–32** Legal and administrative functions for Levites were established in Mosaic legislation (Deut. 17:8–13). See notes on 2 Chr. 17:7, 8 and 19:5–11.

■ **27:1–34** The writer turns to questions of military order (27:1–15), tribal heads (27:16–24), royal overseers (27:25–31), and royal counselors (27:32–34). David's extensive organization of his kingdom laid the groundwork for Solomon's temple project (22:5 note).

■ **27:1 month by month.** Military duties rotated much as did priestly responsibilities (24:7–18 note).

■ **27:2 twenty-four thousand.** See note on 12:23. Many officers listed here appear in a similar list in 11:11–47 (cf. 2 Sam. 23:8–39).

tains of the army for the first month. 4 Over the division of the second month *was* [1]Dodai an Ahohite, and of his division Mikloth also *was* the leader; in his division *were* twenty-four thousand. 5 The third captain of the army for the third month *was* [b]Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada the priest, who was chief; in his division *were* twenty-four thousand. 6 This was the Benaiah *who was* [c]mighty *among* the thirty, and was over the thirty; in his division *was* Ammizabad his son. 7 The fourth *captain* for the fourth month *was* [d]Asahel the brother of Joab, and Zebadiah his son after him; in his division *were* twenty-four thousand. 8 The fifth *captain* for the fifth month *was* [2]Shamhuth the Izrahite; in his division were twenty-four thousand. 9 The sixth *captain* for the sixth month *was* [e]Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite; in his division *were* twenty-four thousand. 10 The seventh *captain* for the seventh month *was* [f]Helez the Pelonite, of the children of Ephraim; in his division *were* twenty-four thousand. 11 The eighth *captain* for the eighth month *was* [g]Sibbechai the Hushathite, of the Zarhites; in his division *were* twenty-four thousand. 12 The ninth *captain* for the ninth month *was* [h]Abiezer the Anathothite, of the Benjamites; in his division *were* twenty-four thousand. 13 The tenth *captain* for the tenth month *was* [i]Maharai the Netophathite, of the Zarhites; in his division *were* twenty-four thousand. 14 The eleventh *captain* for the eleventh month *was* [j]Benaiah the Pirathonite, of the children of Ephraim; in his division *were* twenty-four thousand. 15 The twelfth *captain* for the twelfth month *was* [3]Heldai the Netophathite, of Othniel; in his division *were* twenty-four thousand.

Leaders of Tribes

16 Furthermore, over the tribes of Israel: the officer over the Reubenites *was* Eliezer the son of Zichri; over the Simeonites, Shephatiah the son of Maachah; 17 *over* the Levites, [k]Hashabiah the son of Kemuel; over the Aaronites, Zadok; 18 *over* Judah, [l]Elihu, *one* of David's brothers; *over* Issachar, Omri the son of Michael; 19 *over* Zebulun, Ishmaiah the son of Obadiah; *over* Naphtali, Jerimoth the son of Azriel; 20 *over* the children of Ephraim, Hoshea the son of Azaziah; *over* the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joel the son of Pedaiah; 21 *over* the half-*tribe* of Manasseh in Gilead, Iddo the son of Zechariah; *over* Benjamin, Jaasiel the son of Abner; 22 *over* Dan, Azarel the son of Jeroham. These *were* the leaders of the tribes of Israel.

23 But David did not take the number of those twenty years old and under, because [m]the LORD had said He would multiply Israel like the [n]stars of the heavens. 24 Joab the son of Zeruiah began a census, but he did not finish, for [o]wrath came upon Israel because of this census; nor was the number recorded in the account of the chronicles of King David.

Other State Officials

25 And Azmaveth the son of Adiel *was* over the king's treasuries; and Jehonathan the son of Uzziah was over the storehouses in the field, in the cities, in the villages, and in the fortresses. 26 Ezri the son of Chelub was over those who did the work of the field for tilling the ground. 27 And Shimei the Ramathite *was* over the vineyards, and Zabdi the Shiphmite was over the produce of the vineyards for the supply of wine. 28 Baal-Hanan the Gederite was over the olive trees and the sycamore trees that *were* in the lowlands, and Joash *was* over the store of oil. 29 And Shitrai the Sharonite *was* over the herds that fed in Sharon, and Shaphat the son of Adlai was over the herds *that were* in the valleys. 30 Obil the Ishmaelite *was* over the camels, Jehdeiah the Meronothite *was* over the donkeys, 31 and Jaziz the [p]Hagrite *was* over the flocks. All these *were* the officials over King David's property.

32 Also Jehonathan, David's uncle, *was* a counselor, a wise man, and a [4]scribe; and Jehiel the [5]son of Hachmoni *was* with the king's sons. 33 [q]Ahithophel *was* the king's counselor, and [r]Hushai the Archite *was* the king's companion. 34 After Ahithophel *was* Jehoiada the son of Benaiah, then [s]Abiathar. And the general of the king's army *was* [t]Joab.

Solomon Instructed to Build the Temple

28 Now David assembled at Jerusalem all [a]the leaders of Israel: the officers of the tribes and [b]the captains of the divisions who served the king, the captains over thousands and

4 [1]Heb. *Dodai*, usually spelled *Dodo*, 2 Sam. 23:9

5 [b]1 Chr. 18:17

6 [c]2 Sam. 23:20–23

7 [d]2 Sam. 23:24; 1 Chr. 11:26

8 [2]*Shammah*, 2 Sam. 23:11, or *Shammoth*, 1 Chr. 11:27

9 [e]1 Chr. 11:28

10 [f]1 Chr. 11:27

11 [g]2 Sam. 21:18; 1 Chr. 11:29; 20:4

12 [h]1 Chr. 11:28

13 [i]2 Sam. 23:28; 1 Chr. 11:30

14 [j]1 Chr. 11:31

15 [3]*Heleb*, 2 Sam. 23:29, or *Heled*, 1 Chr. 11:30

17 [k]1 Chr. 26:30

18 [l]1 Sam. 16:6

23 [m][Deut. 6:3] [n]Gen. 15:5; 22:17; 26:4; Ex. 32:13; Deut. 1:10

24 [o]2 Sam. 24:12–15; 1 Chr. 21:1–7

31 [p]1 Chr. 5:10

32 [4]*secretary* [5]Or *Hachmonite*

33 [q]2 Sam. 15:12 [r]2 Sam. 15:32–37

34 [s]1 Kin. 1:7 [t]1 Chr. 11:6

CHAPTER 28

1 [a]1 Chr. 27:16 [b]1 Chr. 27:1, 2

■ **27:16–22 tribes of Israel.** Gad and Asher are omitted, perhaps because Ephraim and the two halves of Manasseh are counted. The total remains twelve.

■ **27:23, 24** These verses refer to David's census in 21:1—22:1 (2 Sam. 24). Because of God's reaction to the census, the count never became part of the official court record.

■ **27:25–31** This is probably a partial list indicating how much property and wealth David had acquired in preparation for Solomon's construction of the temple (22:5 note).

■ **27:32–34** A list of David's closest advisers (18:14–17) highlights the organizational preparations David made for Solomon's construction of the temple.

■ **28:1—29:20** The writer describes David's final assembly in which he charged the officials of Israel and Solomon (ch. 28), collected contributions

captains over hundreds, and [c]the stewards over all the substance and [f]possessions of the king and of his sons, with the officials, the valiant men, and all [d]the mighty men of valor.

2 Then King David rose to his feet and said, "Hear me, my brethren and my people: [e]I *had* it in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and for [f]the footstool of our God, and had made preparations to build it. 3 But God said to me, [g]'You shall not build a house for My name, because you *have been* a man of war and have shed [h]blood.' 4 However the LORD God of Israel [i]chose me above all the house of my father to be king over Israel forever, for He has chosen [j]Judah *to be* the ruler. And of the house of Judah, [k]the house of my father, and [l]among the sons of my father, He was pleased with me to make *me* king over all Israel. 5 [m]And

1 [c]1 Chr. 27:25 [d]1 Chr. 11:10–47 [f]Or *livestock*
2 [e]2 Sam. 7:2 [f]Ps. 99:5; 132:7
3 [g]2 Sam. 7:5, 13 [h][1 Chr. 17:4; 22:8]
4 [i]1 Sam. 16:6–13 [j]Gen. 49:8–10 [k]1 Sam. 16:1 [l]1 Sam. 13:14; 16:12, 13
5 [m]1 Chr. 3:1–9; 14:3–7; 23:1

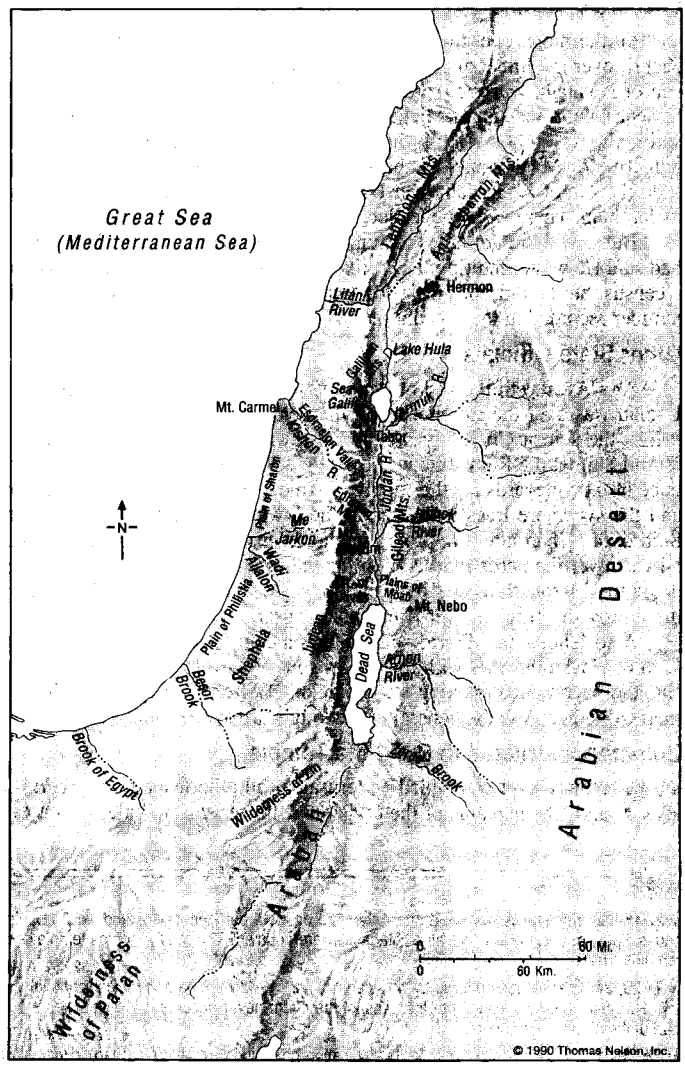
for the temple (29:1–9), and offered praise and petitions (29:10–20). See note on 22:2—29:20.

■ **28:1 all the leaders of Israel.** These are the officials listed in ch. 27, representing the entire nation (11:1 note).

■ **28:3 My name.** See note on 13:6.

■ **28:4, 8 all Israel.** See note on 11:1.

■ **28:5 He has chosen.** Solomon was designated as David's successor by divine election, not because of human maneuvering. Being chosen by



Palestine: Physical Regions. Enormous variety characterizes the geography of Palestine. Two steep mountain ranges in the north, with major majestic peaks such as Mt. Hermon dominating the landscape, are divided by the upper Jordan River, which flows into the Sea of Galilee. The Jordan rift valley extends southward from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea, being cut ever deeper by the Jordan River. The coastal plains extend along the Mediterranean from below Mt. Carmel to the Gaza strip and beyond. East of the Jordan River, the Transjordan plateau dominates the landscape from the Sea of Galilee southward to the Dead Sea and beyond. East of the Transjordan plateau and south of the Dead Sea stretch vast expanses of desert, providing a natural barrier to the region.

of all my sons (for the LORD has given me many sons) [n]He has chosen my son Solomon to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel. [6]Now He said to me, 'It is [o]your son Solomon *who* shall build My house and My courts; for I have chosen him *to be* My son, and I will be his Father. [7]Moreover I will establish his kingdom forever, [p]if he is steadfast to observe My commandments and My judgments, as it is this day.' [8]Now therefore, in the sight of all Israel, the assembly of the LORD, and in the hearing of our God, be careful to seek out all the commandments of the LORD your God, that you may possess this good land, and leave *it* as an inheritance for your children after you forever.

[9]"As for you, my son Solomon, [q]know the God of your father, and serve Him [r]with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for [s]the LORD searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts. [t]If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will [u]cast you off forever. [10]Consider now, [v]for the LORD has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary; be strong, and do it."

[11]Then David gave his son Solomon [w]the plans for the vestibule, its houses, its treasuries, its upper chambers, its inner chambers, and the place of the mercy seat; [12]and the [x]plans for all that he had by the Spirit, of the courts of the house of the LORD, of all the chambers all around, [y]of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries for the dedicated things; [13]also for the division of the priests and the [z]Levites, for all the work of the service of the house of the LORD, and for all the articles of service in the house of the LORD. [14]*He gave* gold by weight for *things* of gold, for all articles used in every kind of service; also *silver* for all articles of silver by weight, for all articles used in every kind of service; [15]the weight for the [a]lampstands of gold, and their lamps of gold, by weight for each lampstand and its lamps; for the lampstands of silver by weight, for the lampstand and its lamps, according to the use of each lampstand. [16]And by weight *he gave* gold for the tables of the showbread, for each [b]table, and silver for the tables of silver; [17]also pure gold for the forks, the basins, the pitchers of pure gold, and the golden bowls—*he gave gold* by weight for every bowl; and for the silver bowls, *silver* by weight for every bowl; [18]and refined gold by weight for the [c]altar of incense, and for the construction of the chariot, that is, the gold [d]cherubim that spread *their wings* and overshadowed the ark of the covenant of the LORD. [19]"All *this,*" *said David,* [e]"the LORD made me understand in writing, by *His* hand upon me, all the [2]works of these plans."

[20]And David said to his son Solomon, [f]"Be strong and of good courage, and do *it;* do not fear nor be dismayed, for the LORD God—my God—*will be* with you. [g]He will not leave you nor forsake you, until you have finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD. [21]*Here are* [h]the divisions of the priests and the Levites for all the service of the house of God; and [i]every willing craftsman *will be* with you for all manner of workmanship, for every kind of service; also the leaders and all the people *will be* completely at your command."

Offerings for Building the Temple

29 Furthermore King David said to all the assembly: "My son Solomon, whom alone God has [a]chosen, *is* [b]young and inexperienced; and the work *is* great, because the [1]temple *is* not for man but for the LORD God. [2]Now for the house of my God I have prepared with all my might: gold for *things to be made of* gold, silver for *things of* silver, bronze for *things of* bronze, iron for *things of* iron, wood for *things of* wood, [c]onyx stones, *stones* to be set, glistening stones

5 [n]1 Chr. 22:9; 29:1
6 [o]2 Sam. 7:13, 14
7 [p]1 Chr. 22:13
9 [q][John 17:3] [r]2 Kin. 20:3 [s][1 Sam. 16:7] [t]2 Chr. 15:2 [u]Deut. 31:17
10 [v]1 Chr. 22:13; 28:6
11 [w]1 Chr. 28:19
12 [x]Heb. 8:5 [y]1 Chr. 26:20, 28
13 [z]1 Chr. 23:6
15 [a]Ex. 25:31–39
16 [b]1 Kin. 7:48
18 [c]Ex. 30:1–10 [d]Ex. 25:18–22
19 [e]Ex. 25:40 [2]*details*
20 [f]1 Chr. 22:13 [g]Josh. 1:5
21 [h]1 Chr. 24—26 [i]Ex. 35:25–35; 36:1, 2

CHAPTER 29

1 [a]1 Chr. 28:5 [b]1 Kin. 3:7 [1]Lit. *palace*
2 [c]Is. 54:11, 12

God was the essential requirement for a legitimate Israelite king (Deut. 17:15).

■ **28:6 My son.** See note on 17:13.

■ **28:7 to observe My commandments and My judgments.** See note on 16:40.

■ **28:9 If you seek Him . . . if you forsake Him.** Basic covenantal conditions apply to the promises given to David and his line. Though the Davidic dynasty itself would not be rejected, individual kings and the nation could suffer severely under God's judgment for apostasy. For similar expressions of this principle see 2 Chr. 6:14, 16; 7:17–22; 15:2; 16:7–9; 19:2, 3; 21:12–15; 24:20; 34:23–28. See also Introduction: Characteristics and Themes.

■ **28:12 plans . . . by the Spirit.** Although David actively planned for the temple, his efforts were directed by the Holy Spirit. This underlines the need for the community after the Babylonian exile to follow the patterns established for the temple by David and Solomon.

■ **28:20 Be strong and of good courage.** The language resembles Joshua's commission (22:13 note).

■ **28:21 will be with you . . . at your command.** David's organization of the priests, Levites, and artisans was for the sake of building Solomon's temple (22:5 note).

■ **29:1–9** David followed Moses' example in asking for contributions to the temple project (Ex. 25:1–8; 35:4–9, 20–29). These directions would remind the exiles returned from Babylon of the importance of continuing contributions to the new temple (Hag. 1:2–11; Mal. 3:8–10). See notes on 2 Chr. 24:10–12.

■ **29:1 young and inexperienced.** See note on 22:5.

■ **29:2–5** David declared the purpose behind his previous accomplishments. All was done to prepare for Solomon's temple (22:5; 27:1–34 and notes).

4 [d]1 Kin. 9:28

5 [e][2 Cor. 8:5, 12] [2]Lit. *fill his hand*

6 [f]1 Chr. 27:1; 28:1 [g]1 Chr. 27:25–31 [h]Ex. 35:21–35

8 [i]1 Chr. 23:8 [3]Possibly the same as *Jehieli*, 1 Chr. 26:21, 22

9 [j]2 Cor. 9:7

11 [k]1 Tim. 1:17

12 [l]Rom. 11:36

14 [4]Lit. *of Your hand*

15 [m]Heb. 11:13, 14 [n]Job 14:2 [5]*sojourners*, temporary residents [6]*transients*, temporary residents in an even more temporary sense

17 [o][1 Chr. 28:9] [p]Prov. 11:20

of various colors, all kinds of precious stones, and marble slabs in abundance. 3 Moreover, because I have set my affection on the house of my God, I have given to the house of my God, over and above all that I have prepared for the holy house, my own special treasure of gold and silver: 4 three thousand talents of gold, of the gold of [d]Ophir, and seven thousand talents of refined silver, to overlay the walls of the houses; 5 the gold for *things of* gold and the silver for *things of* silver, and for all kinds of work *to be done* by the hands of craftsmen. Who *then* is [e]willing to [2]consecrate himself this day to the LORD?"

6 Then [f]the leaders of the fathers' *houses,* leaders of the tribes of Israel, the captains of thousands and of hundreds, with [g]the officers over the king's work, [h]offered willingly. 7 They gave for the work of the house of God five thousand talents and ten thousand darics of gold, ten thousand talents of silver, eighteen thousand talents of bronze, and one hundred thousand talents of iron. 8 And whoever had *precious* stones gave *them* to the treasury of the house of the LORD, into the hand of [i]Jehiel[3] the Gershonite. 9 Then the people rejoiced, for they had offered willingly, because with a loyal heart they had [j]offered willingly to the LORD; and King David also rejoiced greatly.

David's Praise to God

10 Therefore David blessed the LORD before all the assembly; and David said:

"Blessed are You, LORD God of Israel, our Father, forever and ever.
11 [k]Yours, O LORD, *is* the greatness,
The power and the glory,
The victory and the majesty;
For all *that is* in heaven and in earth *is Yours;*
Yours *is* the kingdom, O LORD,
And You are exalted as head over all.
12 [l]Both riches and honor *come* from You,
And You reign over all.
In Your hand *is* power and might;
In Your hand *it is* to make great
And to give strength to all.

13 "Now therefore, our God,
We thank You
And praise Your glorious name.
14 But who *am* I, and who *are* my people,
That we should be able to offer so willingly as this?
For all things *come* from You,
And [4]of Your own we have given You.
15 For [m]we *are* [5]aliens and [6]pilgrims before You,
As *were* all our fathers;
[n]Our days on earth *are* as a shadow,
And without hope.

16 "O LORD our God, all this abundance that we have prepared to build You a house for Your holy name is from Your hand, and *is* all Your own. 17 I know also, my God, that You [o]test the heart and [p]have pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of my heart I have willingly offered all these *things;* and now with joy I have seen Your people, who are present here to

■ **29:3 I have given . . . my own special treasure.** David gave from his own wealth in addition to the spoils of war (18:8, 11; 2 Chr. 30:24 and notes). David served as an example of generous contribution to the temple (29:18 note).

■ **29:7 darics.** The daric was a Persian coin used in the Chronicler's day. He uses this terminology for the sake of his readers (Introduction: Author).

■ **29:10–19** David praises God for what has been accomplished (29:10–13) and asks for continued empowerment of the people and of Solomon (29:14–19).

■ **29:11 Yours, O LORD.** This is probably the source of the longer ending of the Lord's prayer (Matt. 6:13; cf. Luke 11:4). See theological note "The Greatness of God."

■ **29:14–16** Although David worked hard to prepare for Solomon's temple, he acknowledged that all of his accomplishments came from the sovereign hand of God. David saw himself as powerless and hopeless apart from God's blessing (2 Chr. 1:9; 20:6, 12).

■ **29:14 who am I.** See note on 17:16; 2 Chr. 2:6.

■ **29:16 name.** See note on 13:6.

offer willingly to You. 18 O LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, keep this forever in the intent of the thoughts of the heart of Your people, and fix their heart toward You. 19 And [q]give my son Solomon a loyal heart to keep Your commandments and Your testimonies and Your statutes, to do all *these things,* and to build the [r]temple for which [s]I have made provision."

20 Then David said to all the assembly, "Now bless the LORD your God." So all the assembly blessed the LORD God of their fathers, and bowed their heads and prostrated themselves before the LORD and the king.

19 [q](1 Ch. 29:1, 2) [r]Lit. *palace*

21 [s]1 Kin. 8:62, 63

Solomon Anointed King

21 And they made sacrifices to the LORD and offered burnt offerings to the LORD on the next day: a thousand bulls, a thousand rams, a thousand lambs, with their drink offerings, and [s]sacrifices in abundance for all Israel. 22 So they ate and drank before the LORD with great gladness on

The Greatness of God

God is great (Deut. 7:21; Neh. 4:14; Ps. 48:1; 86:10; 95:3; 145:3; Dan. 9:4), greater than we can grasp. Theology states this truth by describing Him as "incomprehensible"—not that He is irrational or illogical, so as to prevent us from following His thoughts at all, but that our minds cannot contain Him, because He is infinite and we are finite. Scripture portrays God not only as dwelling in thick and impenetrable darkness, but also as dwelling in unapproachable light (Ps. 97:2; 1 Tim. 6:16). These two images express the same thought: our Creator is above us, and it is beyond our power to take His measure.

God tells us in the Bible that creation, providence, the Trinity, the incarnation, the regenerating work of the Spirit, union with Christ in His death and resurrection, and the inspiration of Scripture—to go no further—are facts, and we accept them on the strength of His word, without knowing how they can be. As creatures, we are unable fully to comprehend either the being or the actions of the Creator.

As it would be wrong, however, to suppose ourselves to know everything about God (and so in effect to imprison Him in the box of our own limited notion of Him), so it would be wrong to doubt that our concept of God constitutes real knowledge of Him. One of the consequences of being made in God's image is that we are able both to know *about* Him and to know *Him* relationally, in a true if limited way. Calvin speaks of God as condescending to our weakness and accommodating Himself to our incapacity, both in the inspiration of the Scriptures and the incarnation of the Son, in order to give us genuine understanding of Himself. By analogy, the form and substance of a parent's baby-talk bears no comparison with the full contents of the parent's mind, which might be expressed in conversation with another adult; but still the child receives true information about the parent from the baby-talk, and responds with growing love and trust.

This is why the Creator presents Himself to us anthropomorphically, as having a face (Ex. 33:11), ears (Neh. 1:6), and eyes (Job 28:10); or as having feet (Nah. 1:3), sitting on a throne (1 Kin. 22:19), flying on the wind (Ps. 18:10), or fighting in battle (2 Chr. 32:8; Is. 63:1–6). These are not descriptions of what God is in Himself, but of what He is to us: the transcendent Lord who relates to His people as Father and Friend. God comes to us in this way to draw us out in love and trust, even though in a way we are always like little children who understand only in part (1 Cor. 13:12).

We should never forget that the purpose of theology is doxology; we study in order to praise. The truest expression of trust in God will always be worship, and it will always be proper worship to praise God for being greater than we know.□

■ **29:18 keep this forever.** David's words speak directly to the readers of a later time, who must continue to give freely to temple worship.

■ **29:19 keep Your commandments.** See note on 16:40.

■ **29:21–25** The transfer of power to Solomon culminates in a grand celebration of sacrifice (v. 21), feasting (v. 22), and national harmony (vv. 22–25). See note on 23:1.

■ **29:22 the second time.** This phrase is omitted from some ancient translations, possibly because its exact reference is hard to determine. It may be that 1 Kin. 1:32–36 is the first anointing, accomplished in private and followed by the more public one. Both Saul (1 Sam. 10:1; 11:14–15) and David (1 Sam. 16:13; 2 Sam. 2:4; 5:3) received more than one anointing.

Zadok to be priest. The writer associates closely the Davidic monarchy and the Zadokite priestly line (6:1 note).

22 [t]1 Kin. 1:32–35, 39; 1 Chr. 23:1

24 [u]Eccl. 8:2 [s]Lit. *gave the hand*

25 [v]1 Kin. 3:13; 2 Chr. 1:12; Eccl. 2:9

27 [w]2 Sam. 5:4; 1 Kin. 2:11 [x]2 Sam. 5:5

28 [y]Gen. 25:8 [z]1 Chr. 23:1

29 [9]Lit. *words*

30 [a]Dan. 2:21; 4:23, 25

that day. And they made Solomon the son of David king the second time, and [t]anointed *him* before the LORD *to be* the leader, and Zadok *to be* priest. 23 Then Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD as king instead of David his father, and prospered; and all Israel obeyed him. 24 All the leaders and the mighty men, and also all the sons of King David, [u]submitted[s] themselves to King Solomon. 25 So the LORD exalted Solomon exceedingly in the sight of all Israel, and [v]bestowed on him *such* royal majesty as had not been on any king before him in Israel.

The Close of David's Reign

26 Thus David the son of Jesse reigned over all Israel. 27 [w]And the period that he reigned over Israel *was* forty years; [x]seven years he reigned in Hebron, and thirty-three *years* he reigned in Jerusalem. 28 So he [y]died in a good old age, [z]full of days and riches and honor; and Solomon his son reigned in his place. 29 Now the acts of King David, first and last, indeed they *are* written in the [9]book of Samuel the seer, in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer, 30 with all his reign and his might, [a]and the events that happened to him, to Israel, and to all the kingdoms of the lands.

■ **29:24 submitted themselves.** The writer omits discussion of the attempted rebellion of Adonijah (1 Kin. 1), apparently counting it as a failed attempt that does not color the unanimity of support for Solomon.

■ **29:25 had not been on any king before him.** Especially in the building of the temple, Solomon's reign was more glorious than his father David's.

■ **29:29, 30 the book of.** The writer of Chronicles refers to several sources for David's reign, in addition to the books of Samuel and Kings (see Introduction).

The Second Book of the

CHRONICLES

Author

Early Jewish tradition regarded Ezra as the author of the Chronicles, but it is doubtful that the work can be decisively dated within his lifetime (see "Date and Occasion"). The book is widely considered to be by an anonymous author, usually called "the Chronicler," who composed his history of Israel and Judah by drawing on a number of biblical (e.g., Samuel and Kings) and extra-biblical sources (e.g., the no longer extant writings of Nathan, Ahijah, and Iddo, 9:29). See "Introduction to 1 Chronicles: Author."

Date and Occasion

Chronicles was written to encourage and guide the community that had returned from exile in Babylonia as they sought to reestablish their lives as the people of God in the land He had promised to the patriarchs. Exactly when in this period of restoration the book was completed, however, is difficult to ascertain. Although some evidence points to the social and political situation among the first groups of returnees, the genealogies in the early part of the book (see especially 1 Chr. 3:17–24 and notes) suggest a date shortly after the ministries of Ezra and Nehemiah, c. 400 B.C. (see "Introduction to 1 Chronicles").

Characteristics and Themes

The Chronicler retells the history of Israel and Judah in order to provide theological answers to three fundamental questions which arose after the Jews returned from exile in Babylonia. How can it be known who are the heirs to God's covenant promises after the dislocation of exile and return? What was to become of their central political and religious institutions, the Davidic throne and the Jerusalem temple, and how would they be related to one another in the restored community? Thirdly, how were the people to understand the experience of exile and restoration in the light of God's law and grace, His judgment and forgiveness? The discussion of these themes begun in the Introduction to 1 Chronicles is continued here with respect to 2 Chronicles.

The United Monarchy under Solomon (1:1—9:31). The opening section of 2 Chronicles depicts Solomon as the divinely blessed successor of David. The Chronicler passes over Solomon's struggle for power (1 Chr. 23:1 note) and his later downfall due to intermarriage (1 Kin. 11:1–40). He shows Solomon as the king of "all Israel" (1 Chr. 11:1 note), and as the prime instrument for constructing the temple in Jerusalem (2:1—8:16). There is a brief notice of his death (9:29–31).

Solomon's reign is narrated in a topical and symmetrical form, opening and closing with passages describing the king's wisdom and wealth (ch. 1; 9:13–28). Just inside these passages are sections about his international relations (ch. 2; 8:17—9:12). Inserted between these passages are sections about the building of the temple and Solomon's other projects throughout Israel (3:1—5:1; 8:1–16), and in the center is the description of the temple dedication (5:2—7:10) and the divine response to it (7:12–22). A concentric outline of this kind emphasizes the topics in the middle, in this case the dedication of the temple.

The Divided Kingdom (10:1—28:26). The record of Israel's history from Rehoboam to Ahaz focuses on events in the southern kingdom of Judah. Although the Book of Kings is the source of much of the information, Chronicles omits large blocks of material dealing with the northern kingdom of Israel. The focus of Chronicles is Judah and its capital Jerusalem, the place of the Davidic king and the temple of God.

The kings of the period are measured by the ideal of the united monarchy. The king must be faithful to the Law of Moses; he must support the temple order established by David and Solomon; and he must listen to prophetic and priestly instruction. Some kings are evaluated negatively (Jehoram, 21:4–20; Ahaziah, 22:1–9; Ahaz, 28:1–27), others positively (Abijah, 13:1—14:1; Jotham, 27:1–9). For the most part the records are mixed (Rehoboam, 10:1—12:16; Asa, 14:2—16:14; Jehoshaphat, 17:1—21:3; Joash, 22:10—24:27; Amaziah, 25:1–28; Uzziah, 26:1–23).

God blessed His people when they were faithful, and chastised them when they turned away from Him. Victory, security, and prosperity came to those who sought the Lord. Defeat, trouble, and illness came upon those who forgot Him.

The Reunited Kingdom (29:1—36:23). Beginning with Hezekiah, Israel entered a new phase of her history. Like David and Solomon, Hezekiah was able to unite the faithful of Israel and Judah around the Davidic throne through worship and celebration at the temple (29:1 note and 29:24 note). This reunited people experienced periods of failure: Manasseh's apostasy (33:1–10), the reign of Amon (33:21–25), and the kings of Judah just before the Babylonian exile (36:2–14). But each failure was followed by God's gracious renewal of the people: Manasseh's restoration (33:11–17), Josiah's reforms (34:3—35:19), and the return from exile in Babylonia (36:22–23).

Despite the failures of the reunited kingdom, God continued to grant blessings to His repentant people. He extended His mercy to them, offering them His blessing. At the same time, the events of the period demonstrate the requirements placed on those who longed for the full restoration of the kingdom. The nation must turn to the Lord in humility and live faithfully before Him. □

Outline of 2 Chronicles

(Continued from Outline of 1 Chronicles)

II. The United Monarchy (1 Chr. 9:35—2 Chr. 9:31)
- A. Saul (1 Chr. 9:35—10:14)
- B. David (1 Chr. 11—29)
- C. Solomon (2 Chr. 1—9)
  1. Wisdom and Wealth (ch. 1)
  2. International Assistance (ch. 2)
  3. Temple Building and Furnishings (3:1—5:1)
  4. Temple Dedication (5:2—7:11)
  5. Divine Response to Dedication (7:12–22)
  6. Conclusion to Temple Building (8:1–16)
  7. International Recognition (8:17—9:12)
  8. Wisdom and Wealth (9:13–28)
  9. End of Reign and Death (9:29–31)

III. The Divided Kingdom (2 Chr. 10—28)
- A. Rehoboam (chs. 10—12)
- B. Abijah (13:1—14:1)
- C. Asa (14:2—16:14)
- D. Jehoshaphat (17:1—21:1)
- E. Jehoram (21:2–20)
- F. Ahaziah (22:1–9)
- G. Athaliah (22:10—23:15)
- H. Joash (23:16—24:27)
- I. Amaziah (ch. 25)
- J. Uzziah (ch. 26)
- K. Jotham (ch. 27)
- L. Ahaz (ch. 28)

IV. The Reunited Kingdom (2 Chr. 29—36)
- A. Hezekiah (chs. 29—32)
- B. Manasseh (33:1–20)
- C. Amon (33:21–25)
- D. Josiah (chs. 34; 35)
- E. Josiah's Successors (36:1–14)
- F. Exile and Release (36:15–23)

Solomon Requests Wisdom

NOW [a]Solomon the son of David was strengthened in his kingdom, and [b]the LORD his God *was* with him and [c]exalted him exceedingly.

2 And Solomon spoke to all Israel, to [d]the captains of thousands and of hundreds, to the judges, and to every leader in all Israel, the heads of the fathers' *houses.* 3 Then Solomon, and all the assembly with him, went to [1]the high place that *was* at [e]Gibeon; for the tabernacle of meeting with God was there, which Moses the servant of the LORD had [f]made in the wilderness. 4 [g]But David had brought up the ark of God from Kirjath Jearim to *the place* David had prepared for it, for he had pitched a tent for it at Jerusalem. 5 Now [h]the bronze altar that [i]Bezalel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, had made, [2]he put before the tabernacle of the LORD; Solomon and the assembly sought Him *there.* 6 And Solomon went up there to the bronze altar before the LORD, which *was* at the tabernacle of meeting, and [j]offered a thousand burnt offerings on it.

7 [k]On that night God appeared to Solomon, and said to him, "Ask! What shall I give you?"

8 And Solomon said to God: "You have shown great [l]mercy to David my father, and have made me [m]king in his place. 9 Now, O LORD God, let Your promise to David my father be established, [n]for You have made me king over a people like the [o]dust of the earth in multitude. 10 [p]Now give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may [q]go out and come in before this people; for who can judge this great people of Yours?"

11 [r]Then God said to Solomon: "Because this was in your heart, and you have not asked riches or wealth or honor or the life of your enemies, nor have you asked long life—but have asked wisdom and knowledge for yourself, that you may judge My people over whom I have made you king— 12 wisdom and knowledge *are* granted to you; and I will give you riches and wealth and honor, such as [s]none of the kings have had who *were* before you, nor shall any after you have the like."

Solomon's Military and Economic Power

13 So Solomon came to Jerusalem from [3]the high place that *was* at Gibeon, from before the tabernacle of meeting, and reigned over Israel. 14 [t]And Solomon gathered chariots and horsemen; he had one thousand four hundred chariots and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king in Jerusalem. 15 [u]Also the king made silver and gold as common in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedars as abundant as the sycamores which *are* in the lowland. 16 [v]And Solomon had horses imported from Egypt and Keveh; the king's merchants bought them in Keveh at the *current* price. 17 They also acquired and imported from Egypt a chariot for six hundred *shekels* of silver, and a horse for one hundred and fifty; thus, [4]through their agents, they exported them to all the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Syria.

CHAPTER 1

1 [a]1 Kin. 2:46 [b]Gen. 39:2 [c]1 Chr. 29:25

2 [d]1 Chr. 27:1–34

3 [e]1 Kin. 3:4 [f]Ex. 25—27; 35:4—36:38 [1]Place for worship

4 [g]2 Sam. 6:2–17

5 [h]Ex. 27:1, 2; 38:1, 2 [i]Ex. 31:2 [2]Some authorities *it was there*

6 [j]1 Kin. 3:4

7 [k]1 Kin. 3:5–14; 9:2

8 [l]Ps. 18:50 [m]1 Chr. 28:5

9 [n]2 Sam. 7:8–16 [o]Gen. 13:16

10 [p]1 Kin. 3:9 [q]Deut. 31:2

11 [r]1 Kin. 3:11–13

12 [s]2 Chr. 9:22

13 [3]Place for worship

14 [t]1 Kin. 10:26

15 [u]2 Chr. 9:27

16 [v]1 Kin. 10:28; 22:36

17 [4]Lit. *by their hands*

■ **1:1–17** This section is balanced by a parallel section on Solomon's wisdom and wealth (9:13–28).

■ **1:1 was strengthened.** The historian frequently uses expressions like this to indicate success after difficulty (12:13; 13:21; 17:1; 25:11; 27:6). Indirectly he acknowledges that Solomon's rise to power was tumultuous, although he omits the details given in 1 Kin. 2 (1 Chr. 23:1 note).

God was with him. Solomon's success was the result of God's sovereign blessing in fulfillment of David's hopes (1 Chr. 22:11, 16; 28:20).

■ **1:2–13** This passage roughly follows 1 Kin. 3:4–15, but the account is expanded somewhat, emphasizing the theme of Solomon's reign over "all Israel" (v. 2) and explaining why Solomon went to Gibeon to sacrifice (vv. 3–6).

■ **1:2 all Israel.** See note on 1 Chr. 11:1.

■ **1:5 Bezalel.** In the course of building the temple, Solomon emerges as a kind of counterpart of Bezalel who had helped construct the tabernacle. See notes on 1 Chr. 2:20 and Ex. 31:1–11.

■ **1:7 appeared . . . said.** As does the Book of 1 Kings, Chronicles reports that God spoke directly to Solomon in dreams (7:12). Solomon, like David, was an instrument of revelation for Israel (1 Chr. 22:8; 28:6, 19).

■ **1:9 let Your promise to David my father be established.** This request ties the reign of Solomon to David (1 Chr. 17:1–15 note; 22:5 note). Solomon depended fully on God for the ability to carry out his role as king (cf. 1 Chr. 29:14–16 note).

like the dust . . . in multitude. Solomon recognized the multiplication of Israel as fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham (Gen. 13:16; 22:17). The promise would encourage readers in the time following the Babylonian exile to hope for successful repopulation of the Promised Land in their own day (Neh. 1:8, 9; Zech. 8:7, 8).

■ **1:10 wisdom.** The splendor and power of Solomon's reign was the result of divinely bestowed wisdom. In his wisdom Solomon foreshadowed Christ, who is the Wisdom of God incarnate (Is. 11:1, 2; Col. 2:3).

■ **1:13** The account in Kings ends with Solomon's sacrifice in Jerusalem (1 Kin. 3:15). Passing over this as well as Solomon's judgment between the two mothers (1 Kin. 3:16–28), Chronicles focuses on Solomon's temple construction as a demonstration of his wisdom.

■ **1:14–17** God kept His promise to make Solomon wealthy (v. 12). This passage is connected with its parallel (9:13–28) in the overall narrative by the repetition of the topic of horse trade (compare 1:14, 16, 17 with 9:25–28) and abundance of "silver and gold" like "stones" and "cedars" as common as sycamore trees (1:15; 9:27).

CHAPTER 2

1 [a]1 Kin. 5:5

2 [b]1 Kin. 5:15, 16; 2 Chr. 2:18

3 [c]1 Chr. 14:1 [1]Heb. *Huram;* cf. 1 Kin. 5:1

4 [d]2 Chr. 2:1 [e]Ex. 30:7 [f]Ex. 25:30; Lev. 24:8 [g]Ex. 29:38–42 [h]Num. 28:3, 9–11 [2]Lit. *incense of spices* [3]*appointed*

5 [i]Ps. 135:5; [1 Cor. 8:5, 6]

6 [j]1 Kin. 8:27; 2 Chr. 6:18; Is. 66:1

7 [k]1 Chr. 22:15

8 [l]1 Kin. 5:6

9 [4]Lit. *house*

Solomon Prepares to Build the Temple

2 Then Solomon [a]determined to build a temple for the name of the LORD, and a royal house for himself. 2 [b]Solomon selected seventy thousand men to bear burdens, eighty thousand to quarry *stone* in the mountains, and three thousand six hundred to oversee them.

3 Then Solomon sent to [1]Hiram king of Tyre, saying:

> [c]As you have dealt with David my father, and sent him cedars to build himself a house to dwell in, *so deal with me.* 4 Behold, [d]I am building a temple for the name of the LORD my God, to dedicate *it* to Him, [e]to burn before Him [2]sweet incense, for [f]the continual showbread, for [g]the burnt offerings morning and evening, on the [h]Sabbaths, on the New Moons, and on the [3]set feasts of the LORD our God. This *is an ordinance* forever to Israel.
>
> 5 And the temple which I build *will be* great, for [i]our God is greater than all gods. 6 [j]But who is able to build Him a temple, since heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him? Who *am* I then, that I should build Him a temple, except to burn sacrifice before Him?
>
> 7 Therefore send me at once a man skillful to work in gold and silver, in bronze and iron, in purple and crimson and blue, who has skill to engrave with the skillful men who are with me in Judah and Jerusalem, [k]whom David my father provided. 8 [l]Also send me cedar and cypress and algum logs from Lebanon, for I know that your servants have skill to cut timber in Lebanon; and indeed my servants *will be* with your servants, 9 to prepare timber for me in abundance, for the [4]temple which I am about to build *shall be* great and wonderful.

■ **2:1–18** Solomon's most prominent work in the Chronicles is the building of the temple. The mention of the temple and palace (v. 1) and Hiram (v. 3) connects this passage with the parallel account in 8:1–16.

■ **2:1 name.** See note on 1 Chr. 13:6.

royal house for himself. Solomon's palace is mentioned on several occasions (2:12; 7:11; 8:1; 9:3, 11), but there is no description of its elaborate construction as in 1 Kin. 7:1–12. Attention is focused on the temple.

■ **2:2 selected seventy thousand men.** See note on 1 Chr. 22:2.

■ **2:3 David my father.** This account of Solomon's message to Hiram makes it clear that David laid the foundation on which Solomon is building (v. 7; and cf. 1 Kin. 5:3–5). See note on 1 Chr. 22:5.

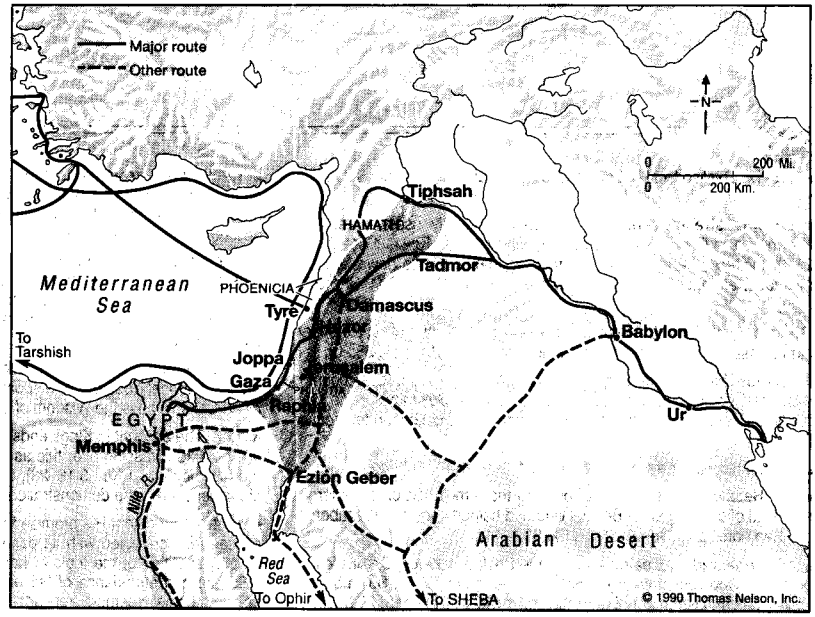
■ **2:4 name.** See note on 1 Chr. 13:6.

an ordinance forever to Israel. This is a reminder that Solomon's temple services were to be observed in their day.

■ **2:6 cannot contain Him.** Solomon recognized that his temple was incapable of containing the omnipresent Creator (6:18). Nevertheless, the splendor of the temple must reflect the greatness of God.

Who am I then. Solomon recognized he was unworthy of God's blessing, as his father had been before him (1 Chr. 17:16 note).

The Spread of Solomon's Fame. Solomon's influence in economic and political affairs was enhanced by the transportation and trade routes that intersected his kingdom. That Solomon acquired much through trade is suggested by the response of the queen of Sheba on her visit to Solomon, and by the mention of traders and merchants (2 Chr. 9:14) in the account of his wealth. Solomon's fortification of Tadmor (2 Chr. 8:4) may have provided a safe and direct trade route from Asia Minor to Damascus.



10 [m]And indeed I will give to your servants, the woodsmen who cut timber, twenty thousand kors of ground wheat, twenty thousand kors of barley, twenty thousand baths of wine, and twenty thousand baths of oil.

11 Then Hiram king of Tyre answered in writing, which he sent to Solomon:

[n]Because the LORD loves His people, He has made you king over them.

12 [5]Hiram also said:

[o]Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel, [p]who made heaven and earth, for He has given King David a wise son, endowed with prudence and understanding, who will build a temple for the LORD and a royal house for himself!

13 And now I have sent a skillful man, endowed with understanding, [6]Huram my [7]master *craftsman* 14 [q](the son of a woman of the daughters of Dan, and his father was a man of Tyre), skilled to work in gold and silver, bronze and iron, stone and wood, purple and blue, fine linen and crimson, and to make any engraving and to accomplish any plan which may be given to him, with your skillful men and with the skillful men of my lord David your father.

15 Now therefore, the wheat, the barley, the oil, and the wine which [r]my lord has spoken of, let him send to his servants. 16 [s]And we will cut wood from Lebanon, as much as you need; we will bring it to you in rafts by sea to [8]Joppa, and you will carry it up to Jerusalem.

17 [t]Then Solomon numbered all the aliens who *were* in the land of Israel, after the census in which [u]David his father had numbered them; and there were found to be one hundred and fifty-three thousand six hundred. 18 And he made [v]seventy thousand of them bearers of burdens, eighty thousand stonecutters in the mountain, and three thousand six hundred overseers to make the people work.

Solomon Builds the Temple

3 Now [a]Solomon began to build the house of the LORD at [b]Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where [1]*the LORD* had appeared to his father David, at the place that David had prepared on the threshing floor of [c]Ornan[2] the Jebusite. 2 And he began to build on the second *day* of the second month in the fourth year of his reign.

3 This is the foundation [d]which Solomon laid for building the house of God: The length *was* sixty cubits (by cubits according to the former measure) and the width twenty cubits. 4 And the [e]vestibule that *was* in front *of* [3]*the sanctuary* was twenty cubits long across the width of the house, and the height *was* [4]one hundred and twenty. He overlaid the inside with pure gold. 5 [f]The larger [5]room he [g]paneled with cypress which he overlaid with fine gold, and he carved palm trees and chainwork on it. 6 And he decorated the house with precious stones for beauty, and the gold *was* gold from Parvaim. 7 He also overlaid the house—the beams and doorposts, its walls and doors—with gold; and he carved cherubim on the walls.

8 And he made the [h]Most Holy Place. Its length was according to the width of the house, twenty cubits, and its width twenty cubits. He overlaid it with six hundred talents of fine gold. 9 The weight of the nails *was* fifty shekels of gold; and he overlaid the upper [i]area with gold. 10 [j]In the Most Holy Place he made two cherubim, fashioned by carving, and overlaid them with gold. 11 The wings of the cherubim *were* twenty cubits in *overall* length: one wing *of the one*

10 [m]1 Kin. 5:11

11 [n]1 Kin. 10:9; 2 Chr. 9:8

12 [o]1 Kin. 5:7 [p]Gen. 1; 2; Acts 4:24; 14:15; Rev. 10:6 [5]Heb. *Huram;* cf. 1 Kin. 5:1

13 [6]*Hiram,* 1 Kin. 7:13 [7]Lit. *father,* 1 Kin. 7:13, 14

14 [q]1 Kin. 7:13, 14

15 [r]2 Chr. 2:10

16 [s]1 Kin. 5:8, 9 [8]Heb. *Japho*

17 [t]1 Kin. 5:13; 2 Chr. 8:7, 8 [u]1 Chr. 22:2

18 [v]2 Chr. 2:2

CHAPTER 3

1 [a]1 Kin. 6:1 [b]Gen. 22:2–14 [c]1 Chr. 21:18; 22:1 [1]Lit. *He,* following MT, Vg.; LXX *the* LORD; Tg. *the Angel of the* LORD [2]*Araunah,* 2 Sam. 24:16

3 [d]1 Kin. 6:2; 1 Chr. 28:11–19

4 [e]1 Kin. 6:3; 1 Chr. 28:11 [3]The holy place, the main room of the temple, 1 Kin. 6:3 [4]So with MT, LXX, Vg.; Arab., some LXX mss., Syr. *twenty*

5 [f]1 Kin. 6:17 [g]1 Kin. 6:15; Jer. 22:14 [5]Lit. *house*

8 [h]Ex. 26:33; 1 Kin. 6:16

9 [i]1 Chr. 28:11

10 [j]Ex. 25:18–20; 1 Kin. 6:23–28

■ **2:11 Because the LORD loves His people.** The establishment of the Davidic line was an act of divine love toward Israel (1 Chr. 14:2 note).

■ **2:12 wise son.** This verse makes it explicit that Solomon's wisdom was visible in his construction of the temple (1:13 note).

■ **2:14 Dan.** 1 Kin. 7:14 reports that Huram's mother was from Naphtali. She may have been from Dan but living in Naphtali.

■ **2:17, 18 aliens . . . bearers of burdens . . . stonecutters . . . overseers to make the people work.** See note on 1 Chr. 22:2.

■ **3:1 Mount Moriah . . . the threshing floor of Ornan.** The place of Solomon's temple is holy, corresponding to the site where Abraham was tried (Gen. 22:2–14). David purchased this site after his census (1 Chr. 21:1—22:1), securing the place for Solomon to work (1 Chr. 22:5 note).

■ **3:3–17** Compared to the account of temple construction in 1 Kin. 6:4–20, this account gives more details of ornamentation (3:4–9), including the decorations of the main hall ("the larger room," 3:4–7), the Most Holy Place (3:8–14), and the vestibule (3:15–17).

■ **3:4 vestibule.** The vestibule of the temple brought the length of the entire structure to eighty cubits (120 feet).

■ **3:5 The larger room.** That is, the holy place.

■ **3:10 cherubim.** These decorations were free-standing statues (vv. 11–18), much larger than the cherubim on the cover of the ark of the covenant itself (Ex. 25:18–20).

14 [k]Ex. 26:31

15 [l]1 Kin. 7:15–20 [6]Lit. *house* [7]*eighteen,* 1 Kin. 7:15; 2 Kin. 25:17; Jer. 52:21 [8]Lit. *long*

16 [m]1 Kin. 7:20

17 [n]1 Kin. 7:21 [9]Lit. *He Shall Establish* [1]Lit. *In It Is Strength*

cherub was five cubits, touching the wall of the room, and the other wing *was* five cubits, touching the wing of the other cherub; 12 *one* wing of the other cherub *was* five cubits, touching the wall of the room, and the other wing *also was* five cubits, touching the wing of the other cherub. 13 The wings of these cherubim spanned twenty cubits overall. They stood on their feet, and they faced inward. 14 And he made the [k]veil of blue, purple, crimson, and fine linen, and wove cherubim into it.

15 Also he made in front of the [6]temple [l]two pillars [7]thirty-five cubits [8]high, and the capital that *was* on the top of each of *them* was five cubits. 16 He made wreaths of chainwork, as in the inner sanctuary, and put *them* on top of the pillars; and he made [m]one hundred pomegranates, and put *them* on the wreaths of chainwork. 17 Then he [n]set up the pillars before the temple, one on the right hand and the other on the left; he called the name of the one on the right hand [9]Jachin, and the name of the one on the left [1]Boaz.

Furnishings of the Temple

CHAPTER 4

1 [a]Ex. 27:1, 2

2 [b]1 Kin. 7:23–26 [1]Great laver or basin

4 Moreover he made [a]a bronze altar: twenty cubits was its length, twenty cubits its width, and ten cubits its height.

2 [b]Then he made the [1]Sea of cast *bronze,* ten cubits from one brim to the other; *it was* completely round. Its height *was* five cubits, and a line of thirty cubits measured its circumference.

■ **3:14 veil.** Solomon's temple was according to the pattern of Moses' tabernacle but twice the size (Ex. 26:31–35). In Solomon's temple also a veil separated the Most Holy Place from the holy place ("the larger room"). The veil prohibited access to the Most Holy Place. It symbolized restriction of access to God's presence, a restriction done away with in the mediating work of Christ's death (Matt. 27:51 note; Heb. 9:1–14 note; 10:11–22 note).

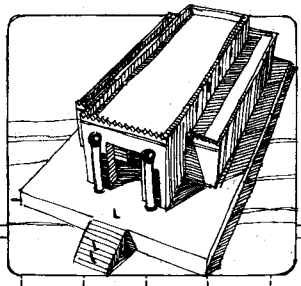
■ **3:15 thirty-five cubits high.** 1 Kin. 7:15 reads "each one eighteen cubits" (cf. 2 Kin. 25:17; Jer. 52:21). It has been suggested that "thirty-five" represents the sum of the lengths of the two pillars (eighteen plus eighteen) or the sum of the dimensions given (eighteen in height, twelve around, and five for the capital). It is also possible that a later copyist has introduced an error.

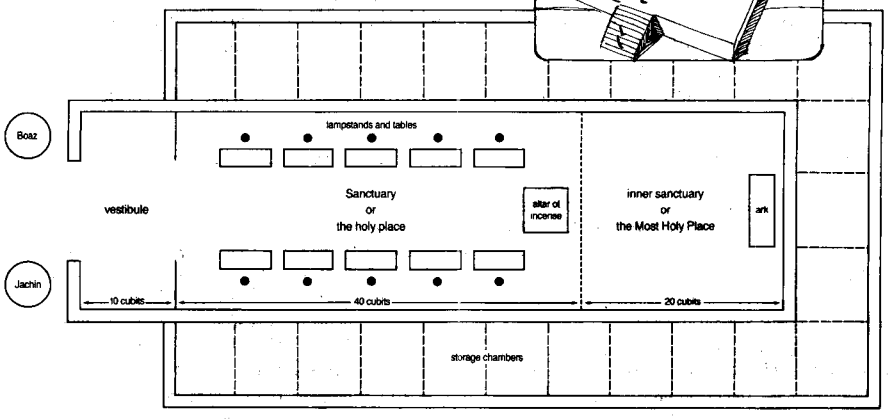
■ **4:1 bronze altar.** Mentioned also in 1 Kin. 8:64; 2 Kin. 16:14. The bronze altar was the main altar. The large measurements are the dimensions of the base, from which steps went to the altar (Ezek. 43:13–17).

■ **4:2 Sea of cast bronze.** See text note. Solomon's version of the "laver of bronze" in Moses' tabernacle (Ex. 30:18). The water of this basin was used for rituals of cleansing (4:6; 1 Kin. 7:23 note).

The Plan of Solomon's Temple (3:1)

Solomon constructed the temple on Mount Moriah, north of the ancient City of David. The temple was built according to plans that David received from the Lord and passed on to Solomon (1 Chr. 28:11–13, 19). The division into a sanctuary and inner sanctuary corresponds to the division of the tabernacle into the holy place and Most Holy Place.





3 [c] And under it *was* the likeness of oxen encircling it all around, ten to a cubit, all the way around the Sea. The oxen *were* cast in two rows, when it was cast. 4 It stood on twelve [d] oxen: three looking toward the north, three looking toward the west, three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east; the Sea *was set* upon them, and all their back parts *pointed* inward. 5 It *was* a handbreadth thick; and its brim was shaped like the brim of a cup, *like* a lily blossom. It contained [2] three thousand baths.

6 He also made [e] ten lavers, and put five on the right side and five on the left, to wash in them; such things as they offered for the burnt offering they would wash in them, but the [3] Sea *was* for the [f] priests to wash in. 7 [g] And he made ten lampstands of gold [h] according to their design, and set *them* in the temple, five on the right side and five on the left. 8 [i] He also made ten tables, and placed *them* in the temple, five on the right side and five on the left. And he made one hundred [j] bowls of gold.

9 Furthermore [k] he made the court of the priests, and the [l] great court and doors for the court; and he overlaid these doors with bronze. 10 [m] He set the Sea on the right side, toward the southeast.

11 Then [n] Huram made the pots and the shovels and the bowls. So Huram finished doing the work that he was to do for King Solomon for the house of God: 12 the two pillars and [o] the bowl-shaped capitals *that were* on top of the two pillars; the two networks covering the two bowl-shaped capitals which *were* on top of the pillars; 13 [p] four hundred pomegranates for the two networks (two rows of pomegranates for each network, to cover the two bowl-shaped capitals that *were* on the pillars); 14 he also made [q] carts and the lavers on the carts; 15 one Sea and twelve oxen under it; 16 also the pots, the shovels, the forks—and all their articles [r] Huram his [4] master *craftsman* made of burnished bronze for King Solomon for the house of the LORD.

17 In the plain of Jordan the king had them cast in clay molds, between Succoth and [5] Zeredah. 18 [s] And Solomon had all these articles made in such great abundance that the weight of the bronze was not determined.

19 Thus [t] Solomon had all the furnishings made for the house of God: the altar of gold and the tables on which *was* [u] the showbread; 20 the lampstands with their lamps of pure gold, to burn [v] in the prescribed manner in front of the inner sanctuary, 21 with [w] the flowers and the lamps and the wick-trimmers of gold, of purest gold; 22 the trimmers, the bowls, the ladles, and the censers of pure gold. As for the entry of the [6] sanctuary, its inner doors to the Most Holy *Place,* and the doors of the main hall of the temple, *were* gold.

5 So [a] all the work that Solomon had done for the house of the LORD was finished; and Solomon brought in the things which his father David had dedicated: the silver and the gold and all the furnishings. And he put *them* in the treasuries of the house of God.

The Ark Brought into the Temple

2 [b] Now Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the chief fathers of the children of Israel, in Jerusalem, that they might bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD up [c] from the City of David, which *is* Zion. 3 [d] Therefore all the men of Israel assembled with the king [e] at the feast, which *was* in the seventh month. 4 So all the elders of Israel came, and the [f] Levites took up the ark. 5 Then they brought up the ark, the tabernacle of meeting, and all the holy furnishings that *were* in the tabernacle. The priests and the Levites brought them up. 6 Also King Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel who were assembled with him before the ark, were sacrificing sheep and oxen that could not be counted or numbered for multitude. 7 Then the

3 [c] 1 Kin. 7:24–26

4 [d] 1 Kin. 7:25

5 [2] About 8,000 gallons; *two thousand,* 1 Kin. 7:26

6 [e] 1 Kin. 7:38, 40 [f] Ex. 30:19–21 [3] Great basin

7 [g] 1 Kin. 7:49 [h] Ex. 25:31; 1 Chr. 28:12, 19

8 [i] 1 Kin. 7:48 [j] 1 Chr. 28:17

9 [k] 1 Kin. 6:36 [l] 2 Kin. 21:5

10 [m] 1 Kin. 7:39

11 [n] 1 Kin. 7:40–51

12 [o] 1 Kin. 7:41

13 [p] 1 Kin. 7:20

14 [q] 1 Kin. 7:27, 43

16 [r] 1 Kin. 7:45; 2 Chr. 2:13 [4] Lit. *father*

17 [5] *Zaretan,* 1 Kin. 7:46

18 [s] 1 Kin. 7:47

19 [t] 1 Kin. 7:48–50 [u] Ex. 25:30

20 [v] Ex. 27:20, 21

21 [w] Ex. 25:31

22 [6] Lit. *house*

CHAPTER 5

1 [a] 1 Kin. 7:51

2 [b] 1 Kin. 8:1–9; Ps. 47:9 [c] 2 Sam. 6:12

3 [d] 1 Kin. 8:2 [e] Lev. 23:34; 2 Chr. 7:8–10

4 [f] 1 Chr. 15:2, 15

■ **4:3 oxen.** 1 Kin. 7:24 reads "ornamental buds." The basin rested on twelve "oxen," and the ornamental border was probably buds or gourds of some kind.

■ **4:4 twelve oxen.** See note on 1 Kin. 7:25. The twelve bulls pointed to the four directions of the compass (cf. Num. 2 on the encampment of the tribes; Rev. 21:12–14).

■ **4:5 three thousand baths.** 1 Kin. 7:26 reads "two thousand baths." These are round numbers and not exact statement of volume.

■ **4:9 court of the priests, and the great court.** Both courtyards are mentioned in Kings (1 Kin. 6:36; 7:12). The large court was for the laity.

■ **4:11 Huram.** The artisan sent by Hiram of Tyre (2:13; 4:16).

■ **4:11–22** The text follows 1 Kin. 7:40–50 in the description of Huram's work.

■ **5:1 his father David.** The historian ties Solomon's temple directly to David's preparations (2:3 note).

■ **5:2—7:10** The text closely follows the account of temple dedication in 1 Kin. 8. The report is in four balanced sections: an opening celebration of the transfer of the ark (5:2—6:2); Solomon's blessing (6:3–11); Solomon's prayer (6:12–42); and concluding celebrations (7:1–10).

■ **5:3 all the men of Israel.** Like David, Solomon received widespread support from Israel (1 Chr. 11:1 note).

seventh month. This was Tishri, when the Feast of Tabernacles was celebrated. Since the temple was completed in the eighth month of Solomon's eleventh year (1 Kin. 6:38), the ark would have been brought in eleven months later.

■ **5:5 priests . . . Levites.** Repeated references to priests and Levites in this account indicates that Solomon observed carefully the tabernacle and temple regulations (1 Chr. 6 notes).

priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the Lord to its place, into the [g]inner sanctuary of the [f]temple, to the Most Holy *Place,* under the wings of the cherubim. 8 For the cherubim spread *their* wings over the place of the ark, and the cherubim overshadowed the ark and its poles. 9 The poles extended so that the ends of the [h]poles of the ark could be seen from *the holy place,* in front of the inner sanctuary; but they could not be seen from outside. And [2]they are there to this day. 10 Nothing was in the ark except the two tablets which Moses [i]put *there* at Horeb, [3]when the Lord made *a covenant* with the children of Israel, when they had come out of Egypt.

11 And it came to pass when the priests came out of the *Most* Holy *Place* (for all the priests who *were* present had [4]sanctified themselves, without keeping to their [j]divisions), 12 [k]and the Levites *who were* the singers, all those of Asaph and Heman and Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, stood at the east end of the altar, clothed in white linen, having cymbals, stringed instruments and harps, [l]and with them one hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets— 13 indeed it came to pass, when the trumpeters and singers *were* as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord, and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, *saying:*

> [m]"*For He is* good,
> For His mercy *endures* forever,"

that the house, the house of the Lord, was filled with a cloud, 14 so that the priests could not [5]continue ministering because of the cloud; [n]for the glory of the Lord filled the house of God.

6 Then [a]Solomon spoke:

"The Lord said He would dwell in the [b]dark cloud.
2 I have surely built You an exalted house,
And [c]a place for You to dwell in forever."

Solomon's Speech upon Completion of the Work

3 Then the king turned around and [d]blessed the whole assembly of Israel, while all the assembly of Israel was standing. 4 And he said: "Blessed *be* the Lord God of Israel, who has fulfilled with His hands *what* He spoke with His mouth to my father David, [e]saying, 5 'Since the day that I brought My people out of the land of Egypt, I have chosen no city from any tribe of Israel *in which* to build a house, that My name might be there, nor did I choose any man to be a ruler over My people Israel. 6 [f]Yet I have chosen Jerusalem, that My name may be there, and I [g]have chosen David to be over My people Israel.' 7 Now [h]it was in the heart of my father David to build a [i]temple for the name of the Lord God of Israel. 8 But the Lord said to my father David, 'Whereas it was in your heart to build a temple for My name, you did well in that it was in your heart. 9 Nevertheless you shall not build the temple, but your son who will come from your body, he shall build the temple for My [j]name.' 10 So the Lord has fulfilled His word which He spoke, and I have filled the position of my father David, and [k]sit on the throne of Israel, as the Lord promised; and I have built the temple for the name of the Lord God of Israel. 11 And there I have put the ark, [l]in which *is* the covenant of the Lord which He made with the children of Israel."

Solomon's Prayer of Dedication

12 [l]Then [2]*Solomon* stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands 13 (for Solomon had made a bronze platform five cubits long, five

7 [g]2 Chr. 4:20 [f]Lit. *house*
9 [h]Ex. 25:13–15 [2]Lit. *it is*
10 [i]Ex. 25:16; Deut. 10:2, 5; 2 Chr. 6:11; Heb. 9:4 [3]Or *where*
11 [j]1 Chr. 24:1–5 [4]*consecrated*
12 [k]Ex. 32:26; 1 Chr. 25:1–7 [l]1 Chr. 13:8; 15:16, 24
13 [m]1 Chr. 16:34, 41; 2 Chr. 7:3; Ezra 3:11; Ps. 100:5; 106:1; 136; Jer. 33:11
14 [n]Ex. 40:35; 1 Kin. 8:11; 2 Chr. 7:2; Ezek. 43:5 [5]Lit. *stand to minister*

CHAPTER 6

1 [a]Ex. 19:9; 20:21; 1 Kin. 8:12–21 [b][Lev. 16:2]; Ps. 97:2
2 [c]2 Sam. 7:13; 1 Chr. 17:12; 2 Chr. 7:12
3 [d]2 Sam. 6:18
4 [e]1 Chr. 17:5
6 [f]Deut. 12:5–7; 2 Chr. 12:13; Zech. 2:12 [g]1 Sam. 16:7–13; 1 Chr. 28:4
7 [h]2 Sam. 7:2; 1 Chr. 17:1; 28:2; Ps. 132:1–5 [i]Lit. *house,* and so in vv. 8–10
9 [j]1 Chr. 28:3–6
10 [k]1 Kin. 2:12; 10:9
11 [l]2 Chr. 5:7–10
12 [l]1 Kin. 8:22; 2 Chr. 7:7–9 [2]Lit. *he*

■ **5:9 there to this day.** See note on 1 Chr. 4:41.

■ **5:10 Nothing . . . except the two tablets.** In the tabernacle of Moses' time the ark also contained Aaron's staff (Num. 17:10, 11) and the jar of manna (Ex. 16:32–34).

■ **5:11–13** See 1 Kin. 8:10, 11. The books of Chronicles emphasize the use of music in worship (1 Chr. 15:16 note).

■ **5:13 He is good . . . forever.** A familiar line of descriptive praise honoring God for His enduring goodness and mercy (7:3, 6; Ps. 106:1; 107:1; 136).

■ **5:13, 14 cloud . . . glory.** God blessed Solomon's temple with His presence as He had blessed the tabernacle (Ex. 40:34–38). The prophets hoped for God's glory to return to the temple after the exile in Babylonia (Ezek. 43:1–5; Hag. 2:7–9; Zech. 2:10; 8:3).

■ **6:1, 2** Solomon expresses his hope for the permanence of the presence of God in the temple. This was a keen concern for the community seeking to reestablish itself after returning from exile in Babylonia in the sixth century B.C. (5:13, 14 note).

■ **6:5–10, 20, 32–34, 38 name.** See note on 1 Chr. 13:6; "This Is My Name': God's Self-disclosure" at Ex. 3:15.

■ **6:9 you shall not build.** For the explanation of David's disqualification, see 1 Chr. 22:6–10 and note.

■ **6:10 as the Lord promised.** See notes on 1 Chr. 17:1–15.

■ **6:13** This verse does not appear in the traditional Hebrew (Masoretic) text of 1 Kin. 8. The repetition of "spread out his hands" at the end of

cubits wide, and three cubits high, and had set it in the midst of the court; and he stood on it, knelt down on his knees before all the assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands toward heaven); 14 and he said: "LORD God of Israel, [m]*there is* no God in heaven or on earth like You, who keep *Your* [n]covenant and mercy with Your servants who walk before You with all their hearts. 15 [o]You have kept what You promised Your servant David my father; You have both spoken with Your mouth and fulfilled *it* with Your hand, as *it is* this day. 16 Therefore, LORD God of Israel, now keep what You promised Your servant David my father, saying, [p]'You shall not fail to have a man sit before Me on the throne of Israel, [q]only if your sons take heed to their way, that they walk in My law as you have walked before Me.' 17 And now, O LORD God of Israel, let Your word come true, which You have spoken to Your servant David.

18 "But will God indeed dwell with men on the earth? [r]Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this [3]temple which I have built! 19 Yet regard the prayer of Your servant and his supplication, O LORD my God, and listen to the cry and the prayer which Your servant is praying before You: 20 that Your eyes may be [s]open toward this temple day and night, toward the place where *You* said *You would* put Your name, that You may hear the prayer which Your servant makes [t]toward this place. 21 And may You hear the supplications of Your servant and of Your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. Hear from heaven Your dwelling place, and when You hear, [u]forgive.

22 "If anyone sins against his neighbor, and is forced to take an [v]oath, and comes *and* takes an oath before Your altar in this temple, 23 then hear from heaven, and act, and judge Your servants, bringing retribution on the wicked by bringing his way on his own head, and justifying the righteous by giving him according to his [w]righteousness.

24 "Or if Your people Israel are defeated before an [x]enemy because they have sinned against You, and return and confess Your name, and pray and make supplication before You in this temple, 25 then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of Your people Israel, and bring them back to the land which You gave to them and their fathers.

26 "When the [y]heavens are shut up and there is no rain because they have sinned against You, when they pray toward this place and confess Your name, and turn from their sin because You afflict them, 27 then hear *in* heaven, and forgive the sin of Your servants, Your people Israel, that You may teach them the good way in which they should walk; and send rain on Your land which You have given to Your people as an inheritance.

28 "When there [z]is famine in the land, pestilence or blight or mildew, locusts or grasshoppers; when their enemies besiege them in the land of their cities; whatever plague or whatever [a]sickness *there is;* 29 whatever prayer, whatever supplication is *made* by anyone, or by all Your people Israel, when each one knows his own burden and his own grief, and spreads out his hands to this temple: 30 then hear from heaven Your dwelling place, and forgive, and give to everyone according to all his ways, whose heart You know (for You alone [b]know the [c]hearts of the sons of men), 31 that they may fear You, to walk in Your ways as long as they live in the land which You gave to our fathers.

14 [m][Ex. 15:11; Deut. 4:39] [n][Deut. 7:9]

15 [o]1 Chr. 22:9, 10

16 [p]2 Sam. 7:12, 16; 1 Kin. 2:4; 6:12; 2 Chr. 7:18 [q]Ps. 132:12

18 [r][2 Chr. 2:6; Is. 66:1; Acts 7:49] [3]Lit. *house*

20 [s]2 Chr. 7:15 [t]Ps. 5:7; Dan. 6:10

21 [u][Is. 43:25; 44:22; Mic. 7:18]

22 [v]Ex. 22:8–11

23 [w][Job 34:11]

24 [x]2 Kin. 21:14, 15

26 [y]Deut. 28:23, 24; 1 Kin. 17:1

28 [z]2 Chr. 20:9 [a][Mic. 6:13]

30 [b][1 Chr. 28:9; Prov. 21:2; 24:12] [c][1 Sam. 16:7]

vv. 12 and 13 may have caused a scribe to skip the intervening material at some point in the copying of manuscripts.

court. That is, the "great court" outside the temple proper (4:9 note).

■ **6:14 Your covenant and mercy.** Solomon's words of praise touch on both sides of the covenant relationship between God and His people. God keeps His covenant, and the people must walk in it "with all their hearts." Violation of the covenant invites divine retribution (Deut. 7:9–12; 30:15–20). This idea of the covenant is central in the books of the Chronicles (1 Chr. 28:9 note).

■ **6:16, 17** Solomon refers to the promise given through Nathan of a permanent dynasty (1 Chr. 17:7–14 notes).

■ **6:16 only if your sons take heed.** The responsibility to persevere is emphasized.

walk in My law. See note on 1 Chr. 16:40.

■ **6:18–39** Solomon turns to the heart of his concern. He prays that the temple will be the national center for effective prayer. He begins with a general request to God to hear the people's prayers (vv. 18–21) listing seven specific situations in which prayers may be offered in or toward the temple (vv. 22–39). This aspect of Solomon's prayer would encourage readers in the time of restoration following the exile in Babylonia to make the restored temple the center of prayer in that time.

■ **6:18 the heaven of heavens cannot contain You.** See note on 2:6.

■ **6:19–21 prayer . . . pray.** See note on 7:14.

■ **6:21 Hear from heaven Your dwelling place.** Solomon uses this expression four times in his prayer (vv. 21, 30, 33, 39). The temple was the earthly place that provided access to the heavenly court through the sacrifices offered there and the promise of God's gracious presence (1 Chr. 13:6 note).

■ **6:22 forced to take an oath.** For the kinds of legal procedures in mind here, see Ex. 22:10, 11; Lev. 6:1–7.

■ **6:24 defeated . . . because they have sinned.** Military defeat is often listed as a consequence of violating the covenant (Lev. 26:14–17; Deut. 28:25, 26, 47–52).

■ **6:24, 26, 38 return . . . turn.** See note on 7:14.

■ **6:24, 26, 32, 34, 38 pray.** See note on 7:14.

■ **6:26 no rain.** Rain and drought are presented as covenant blessings and curses (Lev. 26:3, 4; Deut. 11:13, 14; Jer. 3:3; Joel 2:23–27; Hag. 1:9–11).

■ **6:28 famine . . . locusts.** Famines and plagues of various sorts are often listed as covenant curses (Lev. 26:16, 20, 25, 26; Deut. 28:20–22, 27, 28, 35, 42).

32 [d]John 12:20; Acts 8:27

33 [4]Lit. *Your name is called upon this house*

36 [e]Prov. 20:9; Eccl. 7:20; [Rom. 3:9, 19; 5:12; Gal. 3:10]; James 3:2; 1 John 1:8 [f]Deut. 28:63–68

37 [5]Lit. *bring back to their hearts*

38 [g]Dan. 6:10

40 [h]2 Chr. 6:20

41 [i]Ps. 132:8–10, 16 [j]1 Chr. 28:2 [k]Neh. 9:25

42 [l]2 Sam. 7:15; Ps. 89:49; 132:1, 8–10; Is. 55:3

CHAPTER 7

1 [a]1 Kin. 8:54 [b]Lev. 9:24; Judg. 6:21; 1 Kin. 18:38; 1 Chr. 21:26 [c]1 Kin. 8:10, 11 [1]Lit. *house*

2 [d]2 Chr. 5:14

3 [e]2 Chr. 5:13; Ps. 106:1; 136:1 [f]1 Chr. 16:41; 2 Chr. 20:21

4 [g]1 Kin. 8:62, 63

32 "Moreover, concerning a foreigner, [d]who is not of Your people Israel, but has come from a far country for the sake of Your great name and Your mighty hand and Your outstretched arm, when they come and pray in this temple; 33 then hear from heaven Your dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to You, that all peoples of the earth may know Your name and fear You, as *do* Your people Israel, and that they may know that [4]this temple which I have built is called by Your name.

34 "When Your people go out to battle against their enemies, wherever You send them, and when they pray to You toward this city which You have chosen and the temple which I have built for Your name, 35 then hear from heaven their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause.

36 "When they sin against You (for *there is* [e]no one who does not sin), and You become angry with them and deliver them to the enemy, and they take them [f]captive to a land far or near; 37 *yet* when they [5]come to themselves in the land where they were carried captive, and repent, and make supplication to You in the land of their captivity, saying, 'We have sinned, we have done wrong, and have committed wickedness'; 38 and *when* they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their captivity, where they have been carried captive, and pray toward their land which You gave to their fathers, the [g]city which You have chosen, and toward the temple which I have built for Your name: 39 then hear from heaven Your dwelling place their prayer and their supplications, and maintain their cause, and forgive Your people who have sinned against You. 40 Now, my God, I pray, let Your eyes be [h]open and *let* Your ears *be* attentive to the prayer *made* in this place.

41 "Now[i] therefore,
Arise, O LORD God, to Your [j]resting place,
You and the ark of Your strength.
Let Your priests, O LORD God, be clothed with salvation,
And let Your saints [k]rejoice in goodness.

42 "O LORD God, do not turn away the face of Your Anointed;
[l]Remember the mercies of Your servant David."

Solomon Dedicates the Temple

7 When [a]Solomon had finished praying, [b]fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and [c]the glory of the LORD filled the [1]temple. 2 [d]And the priests could not enter the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD's house. 3 When all the children of Israel saw how the fire came down, and the glory of the LORD on the temple, they bowed their faces to the ground on the pavement, and worshiped and praised the LORD, *saying:*

[e]"For *He is* good,
[f]For His mercy *endures* forever."

4 [g]Then the king and all the people offered sacrifices before the LORD. 5 King Solomon offered a sacrifice of twenty-two thousand bulls and one hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the

■ **6:32, 33 foreigner.** Solomon asked that foreigners would also receive answers to prayer at the temple. The prophets looked forward to the inclusion of Gentiles among the people of God (Is. 56:6–8; Zech. 8:20–23; 14:16–21). The form of the petition emphasizes the centrality of the temple even as the kingdom expands to other nations. The inclusion of many Gentiles in the kingdom was ultimately fulfilled in Christ (Rom. 3:29; Gal. 3:14; Eph. 2:14–22).

■ **6:34 go out to battle.** The writer frequently reports how God answered prayer offered in battle (1 Chr. 5:18–22 note; 2 Chr. 13:14 note; 14:11 note; 18:31 note; 32:20 note).

■ **6:36–39 take them captive . . . maintain their cause.** Exile and captivity are often listed as curses for violating the covenant (Deut. 28:36, 37, 64). Solomon's request was realized twice within the history of Chronicles itself. First Manasseh (33:10–13) and later the entire remnant of Israel (36:20–23) suffered exile in Babylonia and were restored to the Promised Land.

■ **6:37 repent.** See note on 7:14.

■ **6:38 toward their land . . . city . . . temple.** See the practice of Daniel (Dan. 6:10) and Jonah (Jon. 2:4).

■ **6:40 Now, my God.** Solomon's prayer ends with an adaptation of Ps. 132:8–10 about the joy of worship in the place chosen by God. The concluding words of the prayer given in 1 Kin. 8:50, 51 specify that the people were chosen by God and brought out of Egypt. Solomon asks God to remember the people and the place that He chose, and there to receive graciously all who turn to Him. Solomon's appeal is based on God's initiative in election.

■ **7:1 fire came down.** See note on 1 Chr. 21:26.

glory. See "The Glory of God" at Ezek. 1:28.

■ **7:2, 3** The repetition of elements from 5:13, 14 balances the initial celebration with the closing celebration. Note especially the praise for God's enduring mercy (7:3, 6; 5:13 and note).

king and all the people dedicated the house of God. 6 [h]And the priests attended to their services; the Levites also with instruments of the music of the LORD, which King David had made to praise the LORD, saying, "For His mercy *endures* forever," whenever David offered praise by their [2]ministry. [i]The priests sounded trumpets opposite them, while all Israel stood.

7 Furthermore [j]Solomon consecrated the middle of the court that *was* in front of the house of the LORD; for there he offered burnt offerings and the fat of the peace offerings, because the bronze altar which Solomon had made was not able to receive the burnt offerings, the grain offerings, and the fat.

8 [k]At that time Solomon kept the feast seven days, and all Israel with him, a very great assembly [l]from the entrance of Hamath to [m]the[3] Brook of Egypt. 9 And on the eighth day they held a [n]sacred assembly, for they observed the dedication of the altar seven days, and the feast seven days. 10 [o]On the twenty-third day of the seventh month he sent the people away to their tents, joyful and glad of heart for the good that the LORD had done for David, for Solomon, and for His people Israel. 11 Thus [p]Solomon finished the house of the LORD and the king's house; and Solomon successfully accomplished all that came into his heart to make in the house of the LORD and in his own house.

God's Second Appearance to Solomon

12 Then the LORD [q]appeared to Solomon by night, and said to him: "I have heard your prayer, [r]and have chosen this [s]place for Myself as a house of sacrifice. 13 [t]When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, 14 if My people who are [u]called by My name will [v]humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, [w]then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. 15 Now [x]My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to prayer *made* in this place. 16 For now [y]I have chosen and [4]sanctified this house, that My name may be there forever; and [5]My eyes and [6]My heart will be there perpetually. 17 [z]As for you, if you walk before Me as your father David walked, and do according to all that I have commanded you, and if you keep My statutes and My judgments, 18 then I will establish the throne of your kingdom, as I covenanted with David your father, saying, [a]'You shall not fail *to have* a man as ruler in Israel.'

19 [b]"But if you turn away and forsake My statutes and My commandments which I have set before you, and go and serve other gods, and worship them, 20 [c]then I will uproot them from My land which I have given them; and this house which I have [7]sanctified for My name I will cast out of My sight, and will make it a proverb and a [d]byword among all peoples.

21 "And *as for* [e]this [8]house, which [9]is exalted, everyone who passes by it will be [f]astonished and say, [g]'Why has the LORD done thus to this land and this house?' 22 Then they will answer, 'Because they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and embraced other gods, and worshiped them and served them; therefore He has brought all this calamity on them.' "

Solomon's Additional Achievements

8 It [a]came to pass at the end of [b]twenty years, when Solomon had built the house of the LORD and his own house, 2 that the cities which [1]Hiram had given to Solomon, Solomon built

6 [h]1 Chr. 15:16 [i]2 Chr. 5:12 [2]Lit. *hand*

7 [j]1 Kin. 8:64–66; 9:3

8 [k]1 Kin. 8:65 [l]1 Kin. 4:21, 24 [m]Josh. 13:3 [3]The Shihor, 1 Chr. 13:5

9 [n]Lev. 23:36

10 [o]1 Kin. 8:66

11 [p]1 Kin. 9:1

12 [q]1 Kin. 3:5; 11:9 [r]Deut. 12:5, 11 [s]2 Chr. 6:20

13 [t]2 Chr. 6:26–28

14 [u][Is. 43:7] [v][James 4:10] [w]2 Chr. 6:27, 30

15 [x]2 Chr. 6:20, 40

16 [y]2 Chr. 6:6 [4]*set apart* [5]My attention [6]My concern

17 [z]1 Kin. 9:4

18 [a]2 Chr. 6:16

19 [b]Lev. 26:14, 33

20 [c]Deut. 28:63–68 [d]Ps. 44:14 [7]*set apart*

21 [e]2 Kin. 25:9 [f]2 Chr. 29:8 [g][Deut. 29:24, 25] [8]Temple [9]Or *was*

CHAPTER 8

1 [a]1 Kin. 9:10–14 [b]1 Kin.6:38—7:1

2 [1]Heb. *Huram*, 2 Chr. 2:3

■ **7:6** The music of worship adds to the splendor of the celebration (1 Chr. 15:16 note).

all Israel. The whole nation was involved (1 Chr. 11:1 note).

■ **7:8 feast.** The Feast of Tabernacles (5:3 note).

■ **7:10 for David, for Solomon.** 1 Kin. 8:66 simply reads "David." The writer of Chronicles regards the temple construction as a joint effort of David and Solomon (1 Chr. 22:5 note).

■ **7:13–15** These verses do not appear in Kings. They report God's response to several requests mentioned in Solomon's prayer (6:14–42). Readers of the time following the return of exiles from Babylonia were looking to God to help them restore or "heal" the land (Introduction to 1 Chronicles: Date and Occasion).

■ **7:13 rain . . . locusts . . . pestilence.** Refers directly to 6:26–31.

■ **7:14 if My people.** God promised that the nation would receive relief from the hardships caused by their sin if the people would turn to Him in humility and prayer. This promise was especially relevant to the restored community following the Babylonian exile. A number of events in the divided and reunited kingdoms illustrate the principles of this passage (12:6; 13:14; 14:8–15; 18:31; 20:5–19; 32:20; 33:12, 13 and notes). Many times in Chronicles the concepts in this passage appear as the decisive factor for divine blessing and curses.

humble. An attitude of contrition and dependence on God (12:6, 7, 12; 30:11; 33:12, 19, 23; 34:27).

■ **7:16, 20 name.** See note on 1 Chr. 13:6.

■ **7:17–22** The promise that the dynasty founded by David would remain forever, gave hope to those seeking to restore the nation following their return from exile in Babylonia. While the promise to David's line was irrevocable, the nation always faced the threat of punishment if they should be unfaithful (1 Chr. 17:7–14 note; and 28:9 note).

■ **7:17 keep My statutes and My judgments.** See note on 1 Chr. 16:40.

■ **8:1–16** This account of Solomon's building projects and temple arrangements balances with 3:1—5:1. Its content follows 1 Kin. 9:10–28.

■ **8:2 Hiram had given to Solomon.** Solomon gave these cities to Hiram, who later returned them (1 Kin. 9:10–14).

them; and he settled the children of Israel there. 3 And Solomon went to Hamath Zobah and seized it. 4 [c]He also built Tadmor in the wilderness, and all the storage cities which he built in [d]Hamath. 5 He built Upper Beth Horon and [e]Lower Beth Horon, fortified cities *with* walls, gates, and bars, 6 also Baalath and all the storage cities that Solomon had, and all the chariot cities and the cities of the cavalry, and all that Solomon [f]desired to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon, and in all the land of his dominion.

7 [g]All the people *who were* left of the Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, who *were* not of Israel— 8 that is, their descendants who were left in the land after them, whom the children of Israel did not destroy—from these Solomon raised forced labor, as it is to this day. 9 But Solomon did not make the children of Israel [2]servants for his work. Some *were* men of war, captains of his officers, captains of his chariots, and his cavalry. 10 And others *were* chiefs of the officials of King Solomon: [h]two hundred and fifty, who ruled over the people.

11 Now Solomon [i]brought the daughter of Pharaoh up from the City of David to the house he had built for her, for he said, "My wife shall not dwell in the house of David king of Israel, because *the places* to which the ark of the LORD has come are holy."

12 Then Solomon offered burnt offerings to the LORD on the altar of the LORD which he had built before the vestibule, 13 according to the [j]daily rate, offering according to the commandment of Moses, for the Sabbaths, the New Moons, and the [k]three appointed yearly [l]feasts—the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Tabernacles. 14 And, according to the [3]order of David his father, he appointed the [m]divisions of the priests for their service, [n]the Levites for their duties (to praise and serve before the priests) as the duty of each day required, and the [o]gatekeepers by their divisions at each gate; for so David the man of God had commanded. 15 They did not depart from the command of the king to the priests and Levites concerning any matter or concerning the [p]treasuries.

16 Now all the work of Solomon was well-ordered [4]from the day of the foundation of the house of the LORD until it was finished. So the house of the LORD was completed.

17 Then Solomon went to [q]Ezion Geber and [5]Elath on the seacoast, in the land of Edom. 18 [r]And Hiram sent him ships by the hand of his servants, and servants who knew the sea. They went with the servants of Solomon to [s]Ophir, and acquired four hundred and fifty talents of gold from there, and brought it to King Solomon.

The Queen of Sheba's Praise of Solomon

9 Now [a]when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon, she came to Jerusalem to test Solomon with hard questions, *having* a very great retinue, camels that bore spices, gold in abundance, and precious stones; and when she came to Solomon, she spoke with him about all that was in her heart. 2 So Solomon answered all her questions; there was nothing so difficult for Solomon that he could not explain it to her. 3 And when the queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon, the house that he had built, 4 the food on his table, the seating of his servants, the service of his waiters and their apparel, his [b]cupbearers and their apparel, and his entryway by which he went up to the house of the LORD, there was no more spirit in her.

5 Then she said to the king: "*It was* a true report which I heard in my own land about your words and your wisdom. 6 However I did not believe their words until I came and saw with my own eyes; and indeed the half of the greatness of your wisdom was not told me. You exceed the fame of which I heard. 7 Happy *are* your men and happy *are* these your servants, who stand continually before you and hear your wisdom! 8 Blessed be the LORD your God, who delighted in you, setting you on His throne *to be* king for the LORD your God! Because your God has [c]loved Israel, to establish them forever, therefore He made you king over them, to do justice and righteousness."

9 And she gave the king one hundred and twenty talents of gold, spices in great abundance, and precious stones; there never were any spices such as those the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.

4 [c]1 Kin. 9:17, 18 [d]1 Chr. 18:3, 9
5 [e]1 Chr. 7:24
6 [f]2 Chr. 7:11
7 [g]Gen. 15:18–21; 1 Kin. 9:20
9 [2]*slaves*
10 [h]1 Kin. 9:23
11 [i]1 Kin. 3:1; 7:8; 9:24; 11:1
13 [j]Ex. 29:38–42; Num. 28:3, 9, 11, 26; 29:1 [k]Ex. 23:14–17; 34:22, 23; Deut. 16:16 [l]Lev. 23:1–44
14 [m]1 Chr. 24:3 [n]1 Chr. 25:1 [o]1 Chr. 9:17; 26:1 [3]*ordinance*
15 [p]1 Chr. 26:20–28
16 [4]So with LXX, Syr., Vg.; MT *as far as*
17 [q]1 Kin. 9:26; 2 Chr. 20:36 [5]Heb. *Eloth*, 2 Kin. 14:22
18 [r]1 Kin. 9:27; 2 Chr. 9:10, 13 [s]1 Chr. 29:4

CHAPTER 9

1 [a]1 Kin. 10:1; Ps. 72:10; [Matt. 12:42; Luke 11:31]
4 [b]Neh. 1:11
8 [c]Deut. 7:8; 2 Chr. 2:11; [Ps. 44:3]

■ **8:8 Solomon raised forced labor.** See note on 1 Chr. 22:2.

to this day. See note on 1 Chr. 4:41.

■ **8:11 the places . . . are holy.** Solomon moved his Egyptian wife out of regard for the holiness of the ark and the places associated with it. Unlike the books of Kings (1 Kin. 11:1–13) and Nehemiah (Neh. 13:26, 27), Chronicles reserves negative comment on Solomon's international marriages. These sad facts were well known.

■ **8:12–16** Again the account of details concerning worship, Levites, and priests, is more full than that in Kings (cf. 1 Kin. 9:25; 1 Chr. 6:1 note).

■ **9:8 to establish them forever.** The Queen of Sheba recognized Solomon's wise rule as God's provision for the well-being of Israel. Solomon's wealth and wisdom (2:13–28), like the international favor he enjoyed (v. 23), was a high point for the covenant community. The generation that returned from the distress of exile in Babylonia looked to it for inspiration and courage in their work of rebuilding.

10 Also, the servants of Hiram and the servants of Solomon, [d]who brought gold from Ophir, brought [1]algum wood and precious stones. 11 And the king made walkways *of* the [2]algum wood for the house of the LORD and for the king's house, also harps and stringed instruments for singers; and there were none such *as these* seen before in the land of Judah.

12 Now King Solomon gave to the queen of Sheba all she desired, whatever she asked, *much more* than she had brought to the king. So she turned and went to her own country, she and her servants.

Solomon's Great Wealth

13 [e]The weight of gold that came to Solomon yearly was six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold, 14 besides *what* the traveling merchants and traders brought. And all the kings of Arabia and governors of the country brought gold and silver to Solomon. 15 And King Solomon made two hundred large shields of hammered gold; six hundred *shekels* of hammered gold went into each shield. 16 *He* also *made* three hundred shields of hammered gold; [3]three hundred *shekels* of gold went into each shield. The king put them in the [f]House of the Forest of Lebanon.

17 Moreover the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with pure gold. 18 The throne *had* six steps, with a footstool of gold, *which were* fastened to the throne; there were [4]armrests on either side of the place of the seat, and two lions stood beside the armrests. 19 Twelve lions stood there, one on each side of the six steps; nothing like *this* had been made for any *other* kingdom.

20 All King Solomon's drinking vessels *were* gold, and all the vessels of the House of the Forest of Lebanon *were* pure gold. Not *one was* silver, for this was accounted as nothing in the days of Solomon. 21 For the king's ships went to [g]Tarshish with the servants of [5]Hiram. Once every three years the [6]merchant ships came, bringing gold, silver, ivory, apes, and [7]monkeys.

22 So King Solomon surpassed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom. 23 And all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. 24 Each man brought his present: articles of silver and gold, garments, [h]armor, spices, horses, and mules, at a set rate year by year.

25 Solomon [i]had four thousand stalls for horses and chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen whom he stationed in the chariot cities and with the king at Jerusalem.

26 [j]So he reigned over all the kings [k]from [8]the River to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt. 27 [l]The king made silver *as common* in Jerusalem as stones, and he made cedar trees [m]as abundant as the sycamores which *are* in the lowland. 28 [n]And they brought horses to Solomon from Egypt and from all lands.

Death of Solomon

29 [o]Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, first and last, *are* they not written in the book of Nathan the prophet, in the prophecy of [p]Ahijah the Shilonite, and in the visions of [q]Iddo the seer concerning Jeroboam the son of Nebat? 30 [r]Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel forty years. 31 Then Solomon [9]rested with his fathers, and was buried in the City of David his father. And Rehoboam his son reigned in his place.

The Revolt Against Rehoboam

10 And [a]Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had gone to Shechem to make him king. 2 So it happened, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat heard *it* (he was in Egypt, [b]where he

10 [d]2 Chr. 8:18 [1]*almug,* 1 Kin. 10:11, 12

11 [2]*almug,* 1 Kin. 10:11, 12

13 [e]1 Kin. 10:14–29

16 [f]1 Kin. 7:2 [3]*three minas,* 1 Kin. 10:17

18 [4]Lit. *hands*

21 [g]2 Chr. 20:36, 37; Ps. 72:10 [5]Heb. *Huram;* cf. 1 Kin. 10:22 [6]Lit. *ships of Tarshish,* deep-sea vessels [7]Or *peacocks*

24 [h]1 Kin. 20:11

25 [i]Deut. 17:16; 1 Kin. 4:26; 10:26; 2 Chr. 1:14; Is. 2:7

26 [j]1 Kin. 4:21 [k]Gen. 15:18; Ps. 72:8 [8]The Euphrates

27 [l]1 Kin. 10:27 [m]2 Chr. 1:15–17

28 [n]1 Kin. 10:28; 2 Chr. 1:16

29 [o]1 Kin. 11:41 [p]1 Kin. 11:29 [q]2 Chr. 12:15; 13:22

30 [r]1 Kin. 4:21; 11:42, 43; 1 Chr. 29:28

31 [9]Died and joined his ancestors

CHAPTER 10

1 [a]1 Kin. 12:1–20

2 [b]1 Kin. 11:40

■ **9:23 all the kings of the earth.** See 9:8 note.

■ **9:27, 28 silver . . . trees . . . horses.** See note on 1:14–17.

■ **9:29–31** Writing for a generation in need of encouragement (v. 8 note), the author does not discuss the well-known trouble caused by Solomon's foreign wives (1 Kin. 11:1–40). He moves directly from the king's glory to the end of his reign. In the same way he does not bring up David's sin with Bathsheba and the troubles this caused.

■ **9:29 written in the book of.** See Introduction to 1 Chronicles: Author.

■ **10:1—28:27** The Divided Kingdom. In this section the writer makes use of 1 Kin. 12—2 Kin. 17. His record of the period of the divided monarchy does not rehearse the harsh condemnation of the northern tribes found in Kings, focusing instead on events in Judah where the temple was and the Davidic king lived. Throughout this section, the writer reports how the conditions in the kingdom depended on the nation's faithfulness to God. As readers considered these events, they could see clearly the choices for blessing and curse in their own day.

In telling about Rehoboam's kingship, the writer makes broad use of Kings (cf. 10:1—11:4 with 1 Kin. 12:1–24; 12:9–16 with 1 Kin. 14:21, 25–31), while presenting the material in accord with his own theological understanding and emphasis. The account is presented in two parts (chs. 10; 11 and 12:1–14), each part narrating a problematic situation, prophetic encounter, and divine blessing. The conclusion is a notice of his wars with Jeroboam and his death (12:15, 16). The chapters impress on the readers God's curse against pride and infidelity and the benefits of living in humility and obedience to the prophetic word (20:20 note).

■ **10:1—11:23** The first section recounting Rehoboam's reign focuses on his first three years as king (11:17), in which there is conflict (ch. 10), obedience to the prophetic word (11:1–4), and divine blessing (11:5–23).

8 [c]1 Kin. 12:8–11

had fled from the presence of King Solomon), that Jeroboam returned from Egypt. 3 Then they sent for him and called him. And Jeroboam and all Israel came and spoke to Rehoboam, saying, 4 "Your father made our yoke heavy; now therefore, lighten the burdensome service of your father and his heavy yoke which he put on us, and we will serve you."

5 So he said to them, "Come back to me after three days." And the people departed.

6 Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who stood before his father Solomon while he still lived, saying, "How do you advise *me* to answer these people?"

7 And they spoke to him, saying, "If you are kind to these people, and please them, and speak good words to them, they will be your servants forever."

8 [c]But he rejected the advice which the elders had given him, and consulted the young men who had grown up with him, who stood before him. 9 And he said to them, "What advice do you

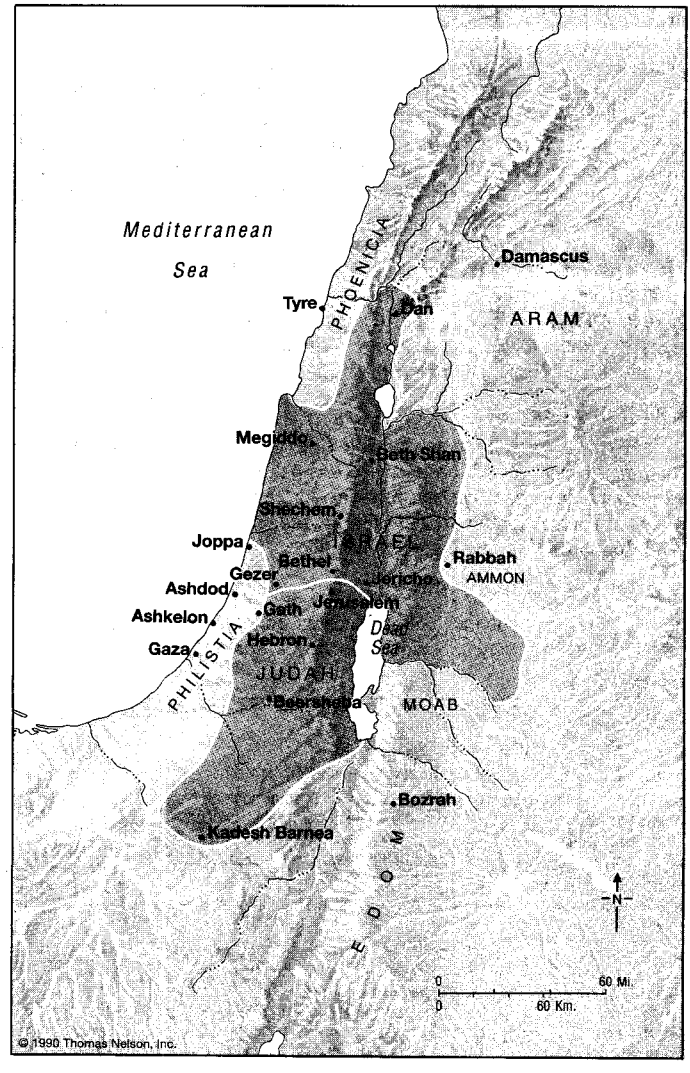
10:1—11:4 is derived from 1 Kin. 12:1–24 (notes); the Chronicler adds 11:5–23.

■ **10:1 Rehoboam.** Reigned 931–913 B.C.

all Israel. In the discussion of the period of the divided monarchy, this expression and others like it can refer to: the southern kingdom alone (11:3; 12:1; 24:5; 28:23); the northern kingdom alone (10:16; 11:13; 13:4, 15); or both kingdoms together (18:16; cf. 1 Chr. 11:1 note; 2 Chr. 29:24 note).

A Kingdom Divided. The glory of the united kingdom faded at the death of Solomon. Bitter feelings had been aroused by some of the harsh policies of Solomon's rule. The system of forced labor for building projects (1 Kin. 5:13) and the administrative districts which cut across old tribal boundaries (1 Kin. 4:7–19) were not popular with the people.

When Solomon's son Rehoboam ascended the throne, he inherited an internal tension between north and south that had to be addressed if the kingdom were to remain united. At Shechem the people, with Jeroboam as their leader, asked for change. Rehoboam's harsh rejection of their demands led to the people's rebellious response: "Every man to your tents, O Israel! Now see to your own house, O David!" The kingdom split. Rehoboam reigned over Judah to the south, but Jeroboam became king of Israel to the north.



give? How should we answer this people who have spoken to me, saying, 'Lighten the yoke which your father put on us'?"

10 Then the young men who had grown up with him spoke to him, saying, "Thus you should speak to the people who have spoken to you, saying, 'Your father made our yoke heavy, but you make *it* lighter on us'—thus you shall say to them: 'My little *finger* shall be thicker than my father's waist! 11 And now, whereas my father put a heavy yoke on you, I will add to your yoke; my father chastised you with whips, but I *will chastise you* with [f]scourges!' "

12 So [d]Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day, as the king had directed, saying, "Come back to me the third day." 13 Then the king answered them roughly. King Rehoboam rejected the advice of the elders, 14 and he spoke to them according to the advice of the young men, saying, [2]"My father made your yoke heavy, but I will add to it; my father chastised you with whips, but I *will chastise you* with [f]scourges!" 15 So the king did not listen to the people; [e]for the turn *of events* was from God, that the LORD might fulfill His [g]word, which He had spoken by the hand of Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat.

16 Now when all Israel *saw* that the king did not listen to them, the people answered the king, saying:

"What share have we in David?
We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse.
Every man to your tents, O Israel!
Now see to your own house, O David!"

So all Israel departed to their tents. 17 But Rehoboam reigned over the children of Israel who dwelt in the cities of Judah.

18 Then King Rehoboam sent Hadoram, who *was* in charge of revenue; but the children of Israel stoned him with stones, and he died. Therefore King Rehoboam mounted *his* chariot in haste to flee to Jerusalem. 19 [g]So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day.

11 Now [a]when Rehoboam came to Jerusalem, he assembled from the house of Judah and Benjamin one hundred and eighty thousand chosen *men* who were warriors, to fight against Israel, that he might restore the kingdom to Rehoboam.

2 But the word of the LORD came [b]to Shemaiah the man of God, saying, 3 "Speak to Rehoboam the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and to all Israel in Judah and Benjamin, saying, 4 'Thus says the LORD: "You shall not go up or fight against your brethren! Let every man return to his house, for this thing is from Me." ' " Therefore they obeyed the words of the LORD, and turned back from attacking Jeroboam.

Rehoboam Fortifies the Cities

5 So Rehoboam dwelt in Jerusalem, and built cities for defense in Judah. 6 And he built Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa, 7 Beth Zur, Sochoh, Adullam, 8 Gath, Mareshah, Ziph, 9 Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah, 10 Zorah, Aijalon, and Hebron, which are in Judah and Benjamin, fortified cities. 11 And he fortified the strongholds, and put captains in them, and stores of food, oil, and wine. 12 Also in every city *he put* shields and spears, and made them very strong, having Judah and Benjamin on his side.

Priests and Levites Move to Judah

13 And from all their territories the priests and the Levites who *were* in all Israel took their stand with him. 14 For the Levites left [c]their common-lands and their possessions and came to

11 [f]Scourges with points or barbs, lit. *scorpions*

12 [d]1 Kin. 12:12–14

14 [2]So with many Heb. mss., LXX, Syr., Vg. (cf. v. 10; 1 Kin. 12:14); MT / [f]Lit. *scorpions*

15 [e]Judg. 14:4; 1 Chr. 5:22; 2 Chr. 11:4; 22:7 [g]1 Kin. 11:29–39

19 [g]1 Kin. 12:19

CHAPTER 11

1 [a]1 Kin. 12:21–24

2 [b]1 Chr. 12:5; 2 Chr. 12:15

14 [c]Num. 35:2–5

■ **10:15 from God, that the LORD might fulfill His word.** The author points out that Rehoboam's reaction must be seen in the light of God's sovereign purposes. Ahijah's prophecy concerning Jeroboam (1 Kin. 11:29–39) was fulfilled by this turn of events. Divine sovereignty extends over the sinful actions of human beings (1 Chr. 21:1 note).

■ **10:16 all Israel.** See note on 10:1.

■ **10:19 to this day.** See note on 1 Chr. 4:41.

■ **11:2 Shemaiah.** The prophet appears twice in Rehoboam's reign (cf. 12:5–8). To his credit and benefit, both times Rehoboam listened to the prophet's word.

■ **11:3 all Israel in Judah.** See note on 10:1.

■ **11:4 this thing is from Me.** See note on 10:15.

■ **11:5–23** The writer gives three illustrations of divine blessing to demonstrate the wisdom of Rehoboam's response to the prophetic warning (20:20 note). The text mentions fortifications and military strength in Judah and Benjamin (11:5–12), the defection of Levites from the northern kingdom (11:13–17), and the increase of his family (11:18–23).

■ **11:5 built cities for defense.** See note on 1 Chr. 11:5.

■ **11:13 all Israel.** See note on 10:1.

■ **11:14 Jeroboam . . . had rejected them.** The historian does not repeat the account found in 1 Kings about how Jeroboam established

Judah and Jerusalem, for [d]Jeroboam and his sons had rejected them from serving as priests to the LORD. 15 [e]Then he appointed for himself priests for the [f]high places, for [g]the demons, and [g]the calf idols which he had made. 16 [h]And [2]after *the Levites left,* those from all the tribes of Israel, such as set their heart to seek the LORD God of Israel, [i]came to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the LORD God of their fathers. 17 So they [j]strengthened the kingdom of Judah, and made Rehoboam the son of Solomon strong for three years, because they walked in the way of David and Solomon for three years.

The Family of Rehoboam

18 Then Rehoboam took for himself as wife Mahalath the daughter of Jerimoth the son of David, *and of* Abihail the daughter of [k]Eliab the son of Jesse. 19 And she bore him children: Jeush, Shamariah, and Zaham. 20 After her he took [l]Maachah the [3]granddaughter of [m]Absalom; and she bore him [n]Abijah, Attai, Ziza, and Shelomith. 21 Now Rehoboam loved Maachah the granddaughter of Absalom more than all his [o]wives and his concubines; for he took eighteen wives and sixty concubines, and begot twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters. 22 And Rehoboam [p]appointed [q]Abijah the son of Maachah as chief, *to be* leader among his brothers; for he *intended* to make him king. 23 He dealt wisely, and [4]dispersed some of his sons throughout all the territories of Judah and Benjamin, to every [r]fortified city; and he gave them provisions in abundance. He also sought many wives *for them.*

Egypt Attacks Judah

12 Now [a]it came to pass, when Rehoboam had established the kingdom and had strengthened himself, that [b]he forsook the law of the LORD, and all Israel along with him. 2 [c]And it happened in the fifth year of King Rehoboam *that* Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, because they had transgressed against the LORD, 3 with twelve hundred chariots, sixty thousand horsemen, and people without number who came with him out of Egypt—[d]the Lubim and the Sukkiim and the Ethiopians. 4 And he took the fortified cities of Judah and came to Jerusalem.

5 Then [e]Shemaiah the prophet came to Rehoboam and the leaders of Judah, who were gathered together in Jerusalem because of Shishak, and said to them, "Thus says the LORD: 'You have forsaken Me, and therefore I also have left you in the hand of Shishak.' "

6 So the leaders of Israel and the king [f]humbled themselves; and they said, [g]"The LORD *is* righteous."

7 Now when the LORD saw that they humbled themselves, [h]the word of the LORD came to Shemaiah, saying, "They have humbled themselves; *therefore* I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some deliverance. My wrath shall not be poured out on Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak. 8 Nevertheless [i]they will be his servants, that they may distinguish [j]My service from the service of the kingdoms of the nations."

9 [k]So Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, and took away the treasures of the house of the LORD and the treasures of the king's house; he took everything. He also carried

14 [d]1 Kin. 12:28–33; 2 Chr. 13:9

15 [e]1 Kin. 12:31; 13:33; 14:9; [Hos. 13:2] [f][Lev. 17:7; 1 Cor. 10:20] [g]1 Kin. 12:28 [1]Places for pagan worship

16 [h]2 Chr. 15:9, 10; 30:11, 18 [2]Lit. *after them*

17 [j]2 Chr. 12:1, 13

18 [k]1 Sam. 16:6

20 [l]2 Chr. 13:2 [m]1 Kin. 15:2 [n]1 Kin. 14:31 [3]Lit. *daughter,* but in the broader sense of granddaughter

21 [o]Deut. 17:17

22 [p]Deut. 21:15–17 [q]2 Chr. 13:1

23 [r]2 Chr. 11:5 [4]*distributed*

CHAPTER 12

1 [a]2 Chr. 11:17 [b]1 Kin. 14:22–24

2 [c]1 Kin. 11:40; 14:25

3 [d]2 Chr. 16:8; Nah. 3:9

5 [e]2 Chr. 11:2

6 [f][James 4:10] [g]Ex. 9:27; [Dan. 9:14]

7 [h]1 Kin. 21:28, 29

8 [i]Is. 26:13 [j][Deut. 28:47, 48]

9 [k]1 Kin. 14:25, 26

idolatrous worship centers at Dan and Bethel (1 Kin. 12:25–33), but he assumes that the reader knows it. Jeroboam rejected priests and Levites who were faithful to Jerusalem as the proper site for worship. Jeroboam's animosity drove these priests to Rehoboam. The theme of faithful Israelites defecting to Judah appears several times in the periods of the divided and reunited kingdoms (13:8–11; 15:9; 30:10–12). Following the return of the remnant from exile in Babylonia, these accounts were a precedent for Israelites from the northern kingdom, since the restoration was centered in Jerusalem (1 Chr. 9:3 note; see Introduction: The Divided Kingdom).

■ **11:17 three years, because they walked in the way of David and Solomon.** Rehoboam enjoyed God's blessing because he imitated the faithfulness of David and Solomon for the early years of his reign.

■ **11:18–23** The historian frequently mentions the increase of family to demonstrate God's blessing (1 Chr. 13:13 note).

■ **11:20 Maachah.** See 13:2 note.

■ **12:1–12** For the second major portion of the account of Rehoboam's reign (chs. 10—12 note) the historian expands the account of 1 Kin. 14:25–28. He reports Rehoboam's disobedience in his fourth year and the divine retribution by Shishak's invasion in the fifth year (12:2).

■ **12:1, 2 forsook the law . . . transgressed against the LORD.** See 1 Kin. 14:22–24 for more details on this apostasy. See also note on 1 Chr. 16:40.

■ **12:1 all Israel.** See note on 10:1.

■ **12:2 Shishak.** The founder of the twenty-second dynasty of Egypt (c. 945–924 B.C.), whose military campaign extended to the plains of Jezreel and Megiddo.

■ **12:3–9** The author adds these verses to complete the parallel with Rehoboam's previous encounter with Shemaiah (cf 11:2–4; 10:1—11:23 note).

■ **12:3 twelve hundred . . . sixty thousand . . . without number.** See note on 1 Chr. 19:7.

■ **12:6 humbled themselves.** See also vv. 7, 12. This event illustrates God's response to Solomon's prayer (7:14 note).

■ **12:7, 8** Although Shemaiah modified his first warning, God's sovereign plan was not overturned. Prophetic warnings were designed to stir repentance. If they succeeded in this, the threat of judgment was often removed, postponed, or softened (Jer. 18:1–12; Joel 2:12–14; Jon. 3).

away the gold shields which Solomon had [l]made. 10 Then King Rehoboam made bronze shields in their place, and committed *them* [m]to the hands of the captains of the guard, who guarded the doorway of the king's house. 11 And whenever the king entered the house of the LORD, the guard would go and bring them out; then they would take them back into the guardroom. 12 When he humbled himself, the wrath of the LORD turned from him, so as not to destroy *him* completely; and things also went well in Judah.

The End of Rehoboam's Reign

13 Thus King Rehoboam strengthened himself in Jerusalem and reigned. Now [n]Rehoboam *was* forty-one years old when he became king; and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, [o]the city which the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, to put His name there. His mother's name *was* Naamah, an [p]Ammonitess. 14 And he did evil, because he did not prepare his heart to seek the LORD.

15 The acts of Rehoboam, first and last, *are* they not written in the book of Shemaiah the prophet, [q]and of Iddo the seer concerning genealogies? [r]And *there were* wars between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all their days. 16 So Rehoboam [l]rested with his fathers, and was buried in the City of David. Then [s]Abijah[2] his son reigned in his place.

Abijah Reigns in Judah

13 In [a]the eighteenth year of King Jeroboam, Abijah became king over [b]Judah. 2 He reigned three years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* [l]Michaiah the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah.

And there was war between Abijah and Jeroboam. 3 Abijah set the battle in order with an army of valiant warriors, four hundred thousand choice men. Jeroboam also drew up in battle formation against him with eight hundred thousand choice men, mighty men of valor.

4 Then Abijah stood on Mount [c]Zemaraim, which *is* in the mountains of Ephraim, and said, "Hear me, Jeroboam and all Israel: 5 Should you not know that the LORD God of Israel [d]gave the dominion over Israel to David forever, to him and his sons, [e]by a covenant of salt? 6 Yet Jeroboam the son of Nebat, the servant of Solomon the son of David, rose up and [f]rebelled against his lord. 7 Then [g]worthless rogues gathered to him, and strengthened themselves against Rehoboam the son of Solomon, when Rehoboam was [h]young and inexperienced and could not withstand them. 8 And now you think to withstand the kingdom of the LORD, which is in the hand of the sons of David; and you *are* a great multitude, and with you are the gold calves which Jeroboam [i]made for you as gods. 9 [j]Have you not cast out the priests of the LORD, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites, and made for yourselves priests, like the peoples of *other* lands, [k]so that whoever comes to consecrate himself with a young bull and seven rams may be a priest of [l]*things that are* not gods? 10 But as for us, the LORD *is* our [m]God, and we have not forsaken Him; and the priests who minister to the LORD *are* the sons of Aaron, and the Levites *attend* to *their*

9 [f]1 Kin. 10:16, 17; 2 Chr. 9:15, 16

10 [m]1 Kin. 14:27

13 [n]1 Kin. 14:21 [o]2 Chr. 6:6 [p]1 Kin. 11:1, 5

15 [q]2 Chr. 9:29; 13:22 [r]1 Kin. 14:30

16 [s]2 Chr. 11:20–22 [t]Died and joined his ancestors [2]*Abijam,* 1 Kin. 14:31

CHAPTER 13

1 [a]1 Kin. 15:1 [b]1 Kin. 12:17

2 [t]*Maachah,* 1 Kin. 15:2; 2 Chr. 11:20, 21

4 [c]Josh. 18:22

5 [d]2 Sam. 7:8–16 [e]Lev. 2:13; Num. 18:19

6 [f]1 Kin. 11:28; 12:20

7 [g]Judg. 9:4 [h]2 Chr. 12:13

8 [i]1 Kin. 12:28; 14:9; 2 Chr. 11:15; [Hos. 8:4–6]

9 [j]2 Chr. 11:13–15 [k]Ex. 29:29–33 [l]Jer. 2:11; 5:7

10 [m]Josh. 24:15

■ **12:12 went well in Judah.** While Rehoboam continued to suffer for his sins, God graciously established his kingdom and blessed the nation.

■ **12:14 he did evil.** Probably a reference to the sins of Rehoboam's fourth year (vv. 1, 2 note). 1 Kin. 14:29–31 does not include this observation.

■ **12:15 written in the book.** See Introduction to 1 Chronicles: Author.

■ **13:1—14:1** The account of Abijah's reign in Chronicles (13:2–21) differs considerably from that in Kings (1 Kin. 15:3–5). Chronicles emphasizes the positive side of Abijah's reign while the writer of Kings focuses on the negative side (1 Kin. 15:3). Chronicles reports Abijah's speech against the northern kingdom (13:4–12) and his prayerful reliance on God in battle (13:14).

■ **13:1 Abijah.** He reigned 913–910 B.C. while Jeroboam I ruled the northern kingdom (930–909 B.C.).

■ **13:2 Michaiah.** A variant spelling of "Maachah" (see 11:20; 1 Kin. 15:2). Maachah was apparently the granddaughter of Absalom through his daughter Tamar and her husband Uriel of Gibeah.

war between Abijah and Jeroboam. 1 Kin. 15:6, 7 mentions this war, but Chronicles has more details including the drawing of battle lines, Abijah's speech, the battle itself, and its outcome.

■ **13:3 four hundred thousand . . . eight hundred thousand.** Judah was greatly outnumbered, highlighting the power of God at work on behalf of faithful Judah (1 Chr. 12:23 note; 19:7 note).

■ **13:4–12** Abijah's speech against the northern kingdom makes clear that David's dynasty was approved by God, and that the temple worship in Jerusalem was established by God.

■ **13:4 Mount Zemaraim.** This was in the border regions between Judah and Israel, probably in the territory of Benjamin (cf. Josh. 18:22).

■ **13:6 Jeroboam . . . rebelled.** Abijah appeals to the northern army by blaming Jeroboam for the rebellion against Rehoboam.

■ **13:7 young and inexperienced and could not withstand them.** Abijah explains that Rehoboam's offense against the northern tribes (10:1–17) was the result of his youth and inexperience (cf. 1 Chr. 22:5; 29:1; 2 Chr. 12:13).

■ **13:8 kingdom of the LORD.** Despite Rehoboam's offense, to oppose David's dynasty was to resist God Himself.

■ **13:9 cast out the priests . . . and the Levites.** The writer of Chronicles has already mentioned the defection of these Levites as an indication of God's blessing on Rehoboam (11:13–17 and notes).

■ **13:10 we have not forsaken.** In contrast with the northern kingdom, Judah had remained fundamentally loyal to the temple, priests, and Levites (but see 12:1, 2). This assessment of Judah's condition is reversed later in Hezekiah's day (29:4–11 note; 30:6–9 note).

duties. 11 [n]And they burn to the LORD every morning and every evening burnt sacrifices and sweet incense; *they* also *set* the [o]showbread *in order on* the pure *gold* table, and the lampstand of gold with its lamps [p]to burn every evening; for we keep the command of the LORD our God, but you have forsaken Him. 12 Now look, God Himself is with us as *our* [q]head, [r]and His priests with sounding trumpets to sound the alarm against you. O children of Israel, do not fight against the LORD God of your fathers, for you shall not prosper!"

13 But Jeroboam caused an ambush to go around behind them; so they were in front of Judah, and the ambush *was* behind them. 14 And when Judah looked around, to their surprise the battle line *was* at both front and rear; and they [s]cried out to the LORD, and the priests sounded the trumpets. 15 Then the men of Judah gave a shout; and as the men of Judah shouted, it happened that God [t]struck Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah. 16 And the children of Israel fled before Judah, and God delivered them into their hand. 17 Then Abijah and his people struck them with a great slaughter; so five hundred thousand choice men of Israel fell slain. 18 Thus the children of Israel were subdued at that time; and the children of Judah prevailed, [u]because they relied on the LORD God of their fathers.

19 And Abijah pursued Jeroboam and took cities from him: Bethel with its villages, Jeshanah with its villages, and [v]Ephrain[2] with its villages. 20 So Jeroboam did not recover strength again in the days of Abijah; and the LORD [w]struck him, and [x]he died.

21 But Abijah grew mighty, married fourteen wives, and begot twenty-two sons and sixteen daughters. 22 Now the rest of the acts of Abijah, his ways, and his sayings *are* written in [y]the [3]annals of the prophet Iddo.

14 So Abijah rested with his fathers, and they buried him in the City of David. Then [a]Asa his son reigned in his place. In his days the land was quiet for ten years.

Asa Reigns in Judah

2 Asa did *what was* good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God, 3 for he removed the altars of the foreign *gods* and [b]the [1]high places, and [c]broke down the *sacred* pillars [d]and cut down the wooden images. 4 He commanded Judah to [e]seek the LORD God of their fathers, and to observe the law and the commandment. 5 He also removed the [2]high places and the incense altars from all the cities of Judah, and the kingdom was quiet under him. 6 And he built fortified cities in Judah, for the land had rest; he had no war in those years, because the LORD had given him [f]rest. 7 Therefore he said to Judah, "Let us build these cities and make walls around *them,* and towers, gates, and bars, *while* the land *is* yet before us, because we have sought the LORD our God; we have sought *Him,* and He has given us rest on every side." So they built and prospered. 8 And

11 [n]Ex. 29:38; 2 Chr. 2:4 [o]Ex. 25:30; Lev. 24:5–9 [p]Ex. 27:20, 21; Lev. 24:2, 3

12 [q]Josh. 5:13–15; [Heb. 2:10] [r][Num. 10:8–10]

14 [s]Josh. 24:7; 2 Chr. 6:34, 35; 14:11

15 [t]1 Kin. 14:14; 2 Chr. 14:12

18 [u]1 Chr. 5:20; 2 Chr. 14:11; [Ps. 22:5]

19 [v]Josh. 15:9 [2]Or *Ephron*

20 [w]1 Sam. 2:6; 25:38; Acts 12:23 [x]1 Kin. 14:20

22 [y]2 Chr. 9:29 [3]Or *commentary,* Heb. *midrash*

CHAPTER 14

1 [a]1 Kin. 15:8

3 [b]1 Kin. 15:14; 2 Chr. 15:17 [c][Ex. 34:13] [d]1 Kin. 11:7 [1]Places for pagan worship

4 [e][2 Chr. 7:14]

5 [2]Places for pagan worship

6 [f]2 Chr. 15:15

■ **13:11, 12** Abijah's speech refers to his care for proper worship. The original readers of Chronicles were reestablishing worship in Jerusalem following the return of the Jews from exile in Babylonia.

■ **13:12 God Himself is with us.** See Is. 7:14 notes; Num. 14:9; Ps. 46:7; Matt. 1:23. The presence of God with the army of Judah secured victory. Abijah asserted that God was with Judah, even in a fight against the northern kingdom.

■ **13:14 cried out to the LORD.** In his dedicatory prayer Solomon had spoken of praying to God in battle (6:34 note). Prayer appears as the decisive factor in the battle (1 Chr. 4:9 note).

■ **13:15 all Israel.** In this context, the northern kingdom.

■ **13:18 were subdued.** See note on 1 Chr. 20:4.

because they relied on the LORD. Reliance on the power of the Lord instead of human strength is a dominant theme in 1 and 2 Chronicles (16:2 note).

■ **13:20, 21** The outcomes for Jeroboam and Abijah indicate whether God approved or disapproved of them. Jeroboam never recovered from his defeat. Abijah, however, grew stronger and had many children (1 Chr. 13:13 note).

■ **13:22 annals of the prophet Iddo.** See Introduction to 1 Chronicles: Author.

■ **14:1 the land was quiet.** See note on 1 Chr. 22:9.

■ **14:2—16:14** This account of Asa's reign is considerably longer than that of 1 Kin. 15:9–24. Asa's reign is presented in two parts: years of fidelity and blessing (14:2—15:19) and later years of infidelity and curse (ch. 16). These two parts form a pattern of contrasting parallels. Asa's growing prosperity (14:2–7) is balanced by the concluding section on his illness and death (16:11–14). The main section concerns warfare, prophetic encouragement, and the royal response (14:8—15:19 and 16:1–10). The historian contrasts the results of relying on God (15:8–19) with the results of relying on human power (16:2 note; 20:20 note).

■ **14:2 Asa.** Reigned from 911 to 870 B.C.

■ **14:3 removed . . . the high places.** Asa removed pagan high places from both Jerusalem and "all the cities of Judah" (14:5), but 15:17 (1 Kin. 15:14) indicates that these initial efforts were not continued throughout his life. A similar explanation holds for the descriptions of Jehoshaphat's removal of high places (cf. 17:6; 20:33).

■ **14:4 seek the LORD.** See note on 7:14.

observe the law and the commandment. See note on 1 Chr. 16:40.

■ **14:6 he had no war.** Apparently, this means that there were no major wars in this period. The writer says later that Asa had captured some towns in Ephraim during this time (15:8).

the LORD had given him rest. Chronicles presents peace in Asa's reign as a blessing for devotion and obedience to God (14:2—16:14 note; 1 Chr. 22:9 note).

■ **14:6, 7 he built . . . Let us build.** God also assisted Asa's building projects (1 Chr. 11:5 note).

■ **14:7 because we have sought the LORD.** Asa plainly said that his success came from having sought God (v. 4).

■ **14:8–15** When Zerah attacked, Asa sought the Lord and gained victory, fulfilling Solomon's request in his prayer (6:34 note). This battle directly contrasts with Asa's later battle against Baasha (16:1–6; see note on 14:2—16:14).

Asa had an army of three hundred thousand from Judah who carried [3]shields and spears, and from Benjamin two hundred and eighty thousand men who carried shields and drew [g]bows; all these *were* mighty men of [h]valor.

9 [i]Then Zerah the Ethiopian came out against them with an army of a million men and three hundred chariots, and he came to [j]Mareshah. 10 So Asa went out against him, and they set the troops in battle array in the Valley of Zephathah at Mareshah. 11 And Asa [k]cried out to the LORD his God, and said, "LORD, *it is* [l]nothing for You to help, whether with many or with those who have no power; help us, O LORD our God, for we rest on You, and [m]in Your name we go against this multitude. O LORD, You *are* our God; do not let man prevail against You!"

12 So the LORD [n]struck the Ethiopians before Asa and Judah, and the Ethiopians fled. 13 And Asa and the people who *were* with him pursued them to [o]Gerar. So the Ethiopians were overthrown, and they could not recover, for they were broken before the LORD and His army. And they carried away very much [4]spoil. 14 Then they defeated all the cities around Gerar, for [p]the fear of the LORD came upon them; and they plundered all the cities, for there was exceedingly much [5]spoil in them. 15 They also [6]attacked the livestock enclosures, and carried off sheep and camels in abundance, and returned to Jerusalem.

The Reforms of Asa

15 Now [a]the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded. 2 And he went out [1]to meet Asa, and said to him: "Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin. [b]The LORD *is* with you while you are with Him. [c]If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but [d]if you forsake Him, He will forsake you. 3 [e]For a long time Israel *has been* without the true God, without a [f]teaching priest, and without [g]law; 4 but [h]when in their trouble they turned to the LORD God of Israel, and sought Him, He was found by them. 5 And in those times *there was* no peace to the one who went out, nor to the one who came in, but great turmoil *was* on all the inhabitants of the lands. 6 [i]So nation was [2]destroyed by nation, and city by city, for God troubled them with every adversity. 7 But you, be strong and do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded!"

8 And when Asa heard these words and the prophecy of [3]Oded the prophet, he took courage, and removed the abominable idols from all the land of Judah and Benjamin and from the cities [j]which he had taken in the mountains of Ephraim; and he restored the altar of the LORD that *was* before the vestibule of the LORD. 9 Then he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and [k]those who dwelt with them from Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon, for they came over to him in great numbers from Israel when they saw that the LORD his God was with him.

10 So they gathered together at Jerusalem in the third month, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa. 11 [l]And they offered to the LORD [4]at that time seven hundred bulls and seven thousand sheep from the [5]spoil they had brought. 12 Then they [m]entered into a covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul; 13 [n]and whoever would not seek the LORD God of Israel [o]was to be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman. 14 Then they took an oath before the LORD with a loud voice, with shouting and trumpets and rams' horns. 15 And all Judah rejoiced at the oath, for they had sworn with all their heart and [p]sought Him with all their soul; and He was found by them, and the LORD gave them [q]rest all around.

8 [g]1 Chr. 12:2 [h]2 Chr. 13:3 [3]*large shields*

9 [i]2 Chr. 12:2, 3; 16:8 [j]Josh. 15:44

11 [k]Ex. 14:10 [l][1 Sam. 14:6] [m]1 Sam. 17:45

12 [n]2 Chr. 13:15

13 [o]Gen. 10:19; 20:1 [4]*plunder*

14 [p]2 Chr. 17:10 [5]*plunder*

15 [6]Lit. *struck*

CHAPTER 15

1 [a]2 Chr. 20:14; 24:20

2 [b][James 4:8] [c][1 Chr. 28:9] [d]2 Chr. 24:20 [1]Lit. *before*

3 [e]Hos. 3:4 [f]2 Kin. 12:2 [g]Lev. 10:11

4 [h][Deut. 4:29]

6 [i]Matt. 24:7 [2]Lit. *beaten in pieces*

8 [j]2 Chr. 13:19 [3]So with MT, LXX; Syr., Vg. *Azariah the son of Oded* (cf. v. 1)

9 [k]2 Chr. 11:16

11 [l]2 Chr. 14:13–15 [4]Lit. *in that day* [5]*plunder*

12 [m]2 Kin. 23:3

13 [n]Ex. 22:20 [o]Deut. 13:5–15

15 [p]2 Chr. 15:2 [q]2 Chr. 14:7

■ **14:8** Asa's army totalled 580,000. The attacking army was nearly twice as large ("a million men," v. 9). On these large numbers, see note on 1 Chr. 12:23.

■ **14:9 Zerah the Ethiopian.** Possibly a general of Pharaoh Osorkon I, second ruler of the twenty-second dynasty of Egypt. "Ethiopia" in the Bible is the remote region south of Egypt, including parts of modern Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Sudan.

a million men. See 1 Chr. 19:7 note.

■ **14:11 no power.** Asa expressed his utter inadequacy for battle against Zerah (20:12 note).

we rest on You. Reliance on the Lord's power was the key to Asa's victory (16:2 note).

■ **15:1–7** Azariah proclaims the principle of retribution so often illustrated in this account of the divided monarchy. Faithfulness to God will bring blessing; disloyalty will result in chastisement.

■ **15:2 If you seek Him.** See notes on 7:14 and 1 Chr. 28:9.

■ **15:4 turned to the LORD.** See note on 7:14.

■ **15:8–19** Asa responded to the prophets with further reforms (v. 8) and an assembly of covenant renewal (vv. 9–15); he went so far as to depose Maachah, his relative, because of her religious apostasy (vv. 16–19).

■ **15:9 came over to him.** Israelites from the northern tribes (11:14 note) defected and joined Asa as he suppressed idolatry and reestablished worship in Jerusalem.

■ **15:12 entered into a covenant.** Covenant renewal here continues God's relationship with His people through the generations. Asa (15:12), Jehoiada (23:16), Hezekiah (29:10), and Josiah (34:30–32) lead the nation in such renewals.

■ **15:13 put to death.** The Law of Moses prescribed capital punishment for those who sought other gods (Ex. 22:20; Deut. 13:6–16).

■ **15:15 rest all around.** See note on 1 Chr. 22:9.

16 [r]1 Kin. 15:2, 10, 13 [6]Or *grandmother* [7]A Canaanite deity

17 [s]1 Kin. 15:14; 2 Chr. 14:3, 5 [8]Places for pagan worship

CHAPTER 16

1 [a]1 Kin. 15:17–22 [b]2 Chr. 15:9

7 [c]1 Kin. 16:1; 2 Chr. 19:2 [d]2 Chr. 32:8–10; Ps. 118:9; [Is. 31:1; Jer. 17:5]

8 [e]2 Chr. 14:9 [f]2 Chr. 12:3 [g]2 Chr. 13:16, 18

9 [h]Job 34:21; [Prov. 5:21; 15:3; Jer. 16:17; 32:19]; Zech. 4:10 [i]1 Sam. 13:13 [j]1 Kin. 15:32

10 [k]2 Chr. 18:26; Jer. 20:2; Matt. 14:3

11 [l]1 Kin. 15:23, 24; 2 Chr. 14:2

12 [m][Jer. 17:5]

13 [n]1 Kin. 15:24 [l]Died and joined his ancestors

16 Also he removed [r]Maachah, the [6]mother of Asa the king, from *being* queen mother, because she had made an obscene image of [7]Asherah; and Asa cut down her obscene image, then crushed and burned *it* by the Brook Kidron. 17 But [s]the [8]high places were not removed from Israel. Nevertheless the heart of Asa was loyal all his days.

18 He also brought into the house of God the things that his father had dedicated and that he himself had dedicated: silver and gold and utensils. 19 And there was no war until the thirty-fifth year of the reign of Asa.

Asa's Treaty with Syria

16 In the thirty-sixth year of the reign of Asa, [a]Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah and built Ramah, [b]that he might let none go out or come in to Asa king of Judah. 2 Then Asa brought silver and gold from the treasuries of the house of the LORD and of the king's house, and sent to Ben-Hadad king of Syria, who dwelt in Damascus, saying, 3 "*Let there be* a treaty between you and me, as there was between my father and your father. See, I have sent you silver and gold; come, break your treaty with Baasha king of Israel, so that he will withdraw from me."

4 So Ben-Hadad heeded King Asa, and sent the captains of his armies against the cities of Israel. They attacked Ijon, Dan, Abel Maim, and all the storage cities of Naphtali. 5 Now it happened, when Baasha heard *it,* that he stopped building Ramah and ceased his work. 6 Then King Asa took all Judah, and they carried away the stones and timber of Ramah, which Baasha had used for building; and with them he built Geba and Mizpah.

Hanani's Message to Asa

7 And at that time [c]Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah, and said to him: [d]"Because you have relied on the king of Syria, and have not relied on the LORD your God, therefore the army of the king of Syria has escaped from your hand. 8 Were [e]the Ethiopians and [f]the Lubim not a huge army with very many chariots and horsemen? Yet, because you relied on the LORD, He delivered them into your [g]hand. 9 [h]For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of *those* whose heart *is* loyal to Him. In this [i]you have done foolishly; therefore from now on [j]you shall have wars." 10 Then Asa was angry with the seer, and [k]put him in prison, for *he was* enraged at him because of this. And Asa oppressed *some* of the people at that time.

Illness and Death of Asa

11 [l]Note that the acts of Asa, first and last, are indeed written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. 12 And in the thirty-ninth year of his reign, Asa became diseased in his feet, and his malady was severe; yet in his disease he [m]did not seek the LORD, but the physicians.

13 [n]So Asa [l]rested with his fathers; he died in the forty-first year of his reign. 14 They buried

■ **15:17 all his days.** See note on 14:3.

■ **15:19 no war.** See note on 14:6.

■ **15:19—16:1 thirty-fifth year . . . thirty-sixth year.** Kings reports that Elah succeeded Baasha in Asa's 26th year (1 Kin. 15:33; 16:8), Zimri in Asa's 27th year (1 Kin. 16:10, 15) and Omri in Asa's 31st year (1 Kin. 16:23). Consequently, this battle could not have taken place in the 36th year of Asa (16:1) since Baasha would have been dead for ten years. No simple solution to this difficulty has been found.

■ **16:1–6** Asa's battle with Baasha of Israel began his downfall. He sought the assistance of Ben-Hadad of Syria, in sharp contrast with his battle against Zerah when he relied on the Lord (14:2—16:14 note).

■ **16:2 treasuries of the house of the LORD . . . to Ben-Hadad.** Asa's actions were wrong on two counts. He took from the temple treasuries, showing disregard for the temple and its worship (cf. 28:21). Second, he allied himself with a foreign power instead of relying on the Lord. The historian demonstrates the benefits of relying on God many times (1 Chr. 5:20; 2 Chr. 13:18; 14:11–15; 16:7, 8; 32:20–22). He also deplores foreign alliances and points to their dire consequences (18:1; 19:2; 20:35–37; 22:3–9; 25:7; 28:16–21; 35:21 note), a suitable warning to those engaged in rebuilding the nation following the return from exile in Babylonia.

■ **16:7–10** In contrast to the earlier episode of Azariah's encouragement and Asa's reforms (ch. 15), Hanani now rebuked King Asa, who reacted negatively (14:2—16:14 note).

■ **16:7 escaped from your hand.** Baasha deserted his position before the arrival of Asa and Ben-Hadad, cutting short Asa's victory (16:5).

■ **16:8 Were the Ethiopians.** Hanani referred directly to the contrast with Asa's victory over Zerah (14:8–15). "Ethiopians" means people from south of Egypt. The "Lubim" (Libyans) were from north Africa.

■ **16:9 from now on you shall have wars.** Hanani threatens divine judgment because of Asa's infidelity (1 Chr. 28:9 note; 2 Chr. 14:6 note).

■ **16:10 some of the people.** Presumably those who agreed with Hanani the prophet.

■ **16:11–14** Asa's rejection of the prophetic word led to his disease and death (14:2—16:14 note).

■ **16:12 physicians.** Asa continued to turn away from the Lord and rely on human strength. The Old Testament does not hesitate to prescribe medical treatment for physical maladies (2 Kin. 20:5–7 and the use of balm in Jer. 8:22; 51:8), but it never divorces natural remedies from seeking divine assistance (Deut. 32:39).

■ **16:14 made a very great burning for him.** These fires were not cremations, but memorials honoring deceased kings. Contrast the honor bestowed on Asa with the response to Jehoram's death (21:19).

him in his own tomb, which he had [2]made for himself in the City of David; and they laid him in the bed which was filled [o]with spices and various ingredients prepared in a mixture of ointments. They made [p]a very great burning for him.

Jehoshaphat Reigns in Judah

17 Then [a]Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his place, and strengthened himself against Israel. 2 And he placed troops in all the fortified cities of Judah, and set garrisons in the land of [b]Judah and in the cities of Ephraim [c]which Asa his father had taken. 3 Now the LORD was with Jehoshaphat, because he walked in the former ways of his father David; he did not seek the Baals, 4 but sought [1]the God of his father, and walked in His commandments and not according to [d]the acts of Israel. 5 Therefore the LORD established the kingdom in his hand; and all Judah [e]gave presents to Jehoshaphat, [f]and he had riches and honor in abundance. 6 And his heart took delight in the ways of the LORD; moreover [g]he removed the [2]high places and wooden images from Judah.

7 Also in the third year of his reign he sent his leaders, Ben-Hail, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethanel, and Michaiah, [h]to teach in the cities of Judah. 8 And with them *he sent* Levites: Shemaiah, Nethaniah, Zebadiah, Asahel, Shemiramoth, Jehonathan, Adonijah, Tobijah, and Tobadonijah—the Levites; and with them Elishama and Jehoram, the priests. 9 [i]So they taught in Judah, and *had* the Book of the Law of the LORD with them; they went throughout all the cities of Judah and taught the people.

10 And [j]the fear of the LORD fell on all the kingdoms of the lands that *were* around Judah, so that they did not make war against Jehoshaphat. 11 Also *some* of the Philistines [k]brought Jehoshaphat presents and silver as tribute; and the Arabians brought him flocks, seven thousand seven hundred rams and seven thousand seven hundred male goats.

12 So Jehoshaphat became increasingly powerful, and he built fortresses and storage cities in Judah. 13 He had much property in the cities of Judah; and the men of war, mighty men of valor, *were* in Jerusalem.

14 These *are* their numbers, according to their fathers' houses. Of Judah, the captains of thousands: Adnah the captain, and with him three hundred thousand mighty men of valor; 15 and next to him *was* Jehohanan the captain, and with him two hundred and eighty thousand; 16 and next to him *was* Amasiah the son of Zichri, [l]who willingly offered himself to the LORD, and with him two hundred thousand mighty men of valor. 17 Of Benjamin: Eliada a mighty man of valor, and with him two hundred thousand men armed with bow and shield; 18 and next to him *was* Jehozabad, and with him one hundred and eighty thousand prepared for war. 19 These served the king, besides [m]those the king put in the fortified cities throughout all Judah.

Micaiah Warns Ahab

18 Jehoshaphat [a]had riches and honor in abundance; and by marriage he [b]allied himself with [c]Ahab. 2 [d]After some years he went down to *visit* Ahab in Samaria; and Ahab killed sheep and oxen in abundance for him and the people who were with him, and persuaded him to

14 [o]Gen. 50:2; Mark 16:1; John 19:39, 40 [p]2 Chr. 21:19; Jer. 34:5 [2]Lit. *dug*

CHAPTER 17

1 [a]1 Kin. 15:24; 2 Chr. 20:31

2 [b]2 Chr. 11:5 [c]2 Chr. 15:8

4 [d]1 Kin. 12:28 [1]LXX *the* LORD *God*

5 [e]1 Sam. 10:27; 1 Kin. 10:25 [f]2 Chr. 18:1

6 [g]1 Kin. 22:43; 2 Chr. 15:17; 19:3; 20:33 [2]Places for pagan worship

7 [h]2 Chr. 15:3; 35:3

9 [i]Deut. 6:4–9; 2 Chr. 35:3; Neh. 8:3, 7

10 [j]Gen. 35:5; 2 Chr. 14:14

11 [k]2 Sam. 8:2; 2 Chr. 9:14; 26:8

16 [l]Judg. 5:2, 9; 1 Chr. 29:9

19 [m]2 Chr. 17:2

CHAPTER 18

1 [a]2 Chr. 17:5 [b]1 Kin. 22:44; 2 Kin. 8:18 [c]1 Kin. 22:40

2 [d][Ex. 23:2]; 1 Kin. 22:2

■ **17:1—21:3** The account of Jehoshaphat's reign incorporates most of the record in Kings (cf. 1 Kin. 22:1–35 with 2 Chr. 18:2–34; 1 Kin. 22:41–46, 49 with 2 Chr. 20:31–36), adding some material and a summary of his reign.

■ **17:1 Jehoshaphat.** He reigned 872–848 B.C. Jehoshaphat was probably co-regent with Asa for three years (872–869 B.C.) because of Asa's illness (16:11–14; cf. 20:31 note).

■ **17:2 cities of Ephraim.** See note on 14:6.

■ **17:6 high places.** See note on 14:3.

■ **17:7 in the third year.** This teaching mission probably took place just after Asa's death (17:1 note).

■ **17:7, 8 leaders . . . Levites.** The royal officials were accompanied by Levites whom Moses had ordained to be teachers of the people (1 Chr. 26:29–32 note; 2 Chr. 19:5–11 note).

■ **17:9 the Book of the Law of the LORD.** The identity of this book is uncertain. It may have included the entire Pentateuch, but in light of the nature of Jehoshaphat's reforms (19:4–11), it may have been limited to the Book of Deuteronomy.

■ **17:10 fear of the LORD.** Fear of the divine power displayed in Jehoshaphat's military strength gave him peace with other nations (1 Chr. 14:17 note).

■ **17:12 he built fortresses and storage cities.** See note on 1 Chr. 11:5.

■ **17:14–18** For these large numbers see note on 1 Chr. 12:23.

■ **18:1—19:3** In contrast with his early years, Jehoshaphat came under God's curse because he ignored the prophetic warning and made an alliance with the northern kingdom (16:2 note; 20:20 note).

■ **18:1 by marriage he allied himself.** The author refers to the marriage of Jehoshaphat's son, Jehoram, to Athaliah, daughter of Ahab (21:6; 22:2). In Kings, Ahab represents the depths of apostasy in the northern kingdom (1 Kin. 16:30). Cf. 19:1–3 and see note on 16:2.

■ **18:2 persuaded him.** The Hebrew expression can have the connotation of enticing to apostasy (Deut. 13:6; 1 Chr. 21:1).

Ramoth Gilead. A city thirty miles east of the Jordan River, closer to the Sea of Galilee than the Dead Sea. It had belonged to Israel since the time of Moses (Deut. 4:43; Josh. 20:8). Ben-Hadad failed to return the city to Israel as he had agreed (1 Kin. 20:34).

go up *with him* to Ramoth Gilead. 3 So Ahab king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat king of Judah, "Will you go with me *against* Ramoth Gilead?"

And he answered him, "I *am* as you *are,* and my people as your people; *we will be* with you in the war."

4 Also Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, [e]"Please inquire for the word of the LORD today."

5 Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, four hundred men, and said to them, "Shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall I refrain?"

So they said, "Go up, for God will deliver it into the king's hand."

6 But Jehoshaphat said, "*Is there* not still a prophet of the LORD here, that we may inquire of [f]Him?"[1]

7 So the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "*There is* still one man by whom we may inquire of the LORD; but I hate him, because he never prophesies good concerning me, but always evil. He *is* Micaiah the son of Imla."

And Jehoshaphat said, "Let not the king say such things!"

8 Then the king of Israel called one *of his* officers and said, "Bring Micaiah the son of Imla quickly!"

9 The king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah, clothed in *their* robes, sat each on his throne; and they sat at a threshing floor at the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets prophesied before them. 10 Now Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah had made [g]horns of iron for himself; and he said, "Thus says the LORD: 'With these you shall gore the Syrians until they are destroyed.' "

11 And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, "Go up to Ramoth Gilead and prosper, for the LORD will deliver *it* into the king's hand."

12 Then the messenger who had gone to call Micaiah spoke to him, saying, "Now listen, the words of the prophets with one accord encourage the king. Therefore please let your word be like *the word of* one of them, and speak encouragement."

13 And Micaiah said, "*As* the LORD lives, [h]whatever my God says, that I will speak."

14 Then he came to the king; and the king said to him, "Micaiah, shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall I refrain?"

And he said, "Go and prosper, and they shall be delivered into your hand!"

15 So the king said to him, "How many times shall I make you swear that you tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?"

16 Then he said, "I saw all Israel [i]scattered on the mountains, as sheep that have no [j]shepherd. And the LORD said, 'These have no master. Let each return to his house in peace.' "

17 And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Did I not tell you he would not prophesy good concerning me, but evil?"

18 Then *Micaiah* said, "Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on His [k]throne, and all the host of heaven standing on His right hand and His left. 19 And the LORD said, 'Who will persuade Ahab king of Israel to go up, that he may fall at Ramoth Gilead?' So one spoke in this manner, and another spoke in that manner. 20 Then a [l]spirit came forward and stood before the LORD, and said, 'I will persuade him.' The LORD said to him, 'In what way?' 21 So he said, 'I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' And *the LORD* said, 'You shall persuade *him* and also prevail; go out and do so.' 22 Therefore look! [m]The LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouth of these prophets of yours, and the LORD has declared disaster against you."

23 Then Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near and [n]struck Micaiah on the cheek, and said, "Which way did the spirit from the LORD go from me to speak to you?"

24 And Micaiah said, "Indeed you shall see on that day when you go into an inner chamber to hide!"

25 Then the king of Israel said, "Take Micaiah, and return him to Amon the governor of the city and to Joash the king's son; 26 and say, 'Thus says the king: [o]"Put this *fellow* in prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and water of affliction, until I return in peace." ' "

27 But Micaiah said, "If you ever return in peace, the LORD has not spoken by [p]me." And he said, "Take heed, all you people!"

4 [e]1 Sam. 23:2, 4, 9; 2 Sam. 2:1
6 [f]2 Kin. 3:11 [1]Or *him*
10 [g]Zech. 1:18–21
13 [h]Num. 22:18–20, 35; 23:12, 26; 1 Kin. 22:14
16 [i][Jer. 23:1–8; 31:10] [j]Num. 27:17; 1 Kin. 22:17; [Ezek. 34:5–8]; Matt. 9:36; Mark 6:34
18 [k]Is. 6:1–5; Dan. 7:9, 10
20 [l]Job 1:6; 2 Thess. 2:9
22 [m]Job 12:16, 17; Is. 19:12–14; Ezek. 14:9
23 [n]Jer. 20:2; Mark 14:65; Acts 23:2
26 [o]2 Chr. 16:10
27 [p]Deut. 18:22

■ **18:18 I saw the LORD.** Micaiah's vision of heavenly deliberations (cf. Job 1:6–12; Is. 6:1–8; Zech. 3) demonstrates that the sovereignty of God extends over evil events (1 Chr. 21:1 note).

Ahab Dies in Battle

28 So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah went up to Ramoth Gilead. 29 And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "I will [q]disguise myself and go into battle; but you put on your robes." So the king of Israel disguised himself, and they went into battle.

30 Now the king of Syria had commanded the captains of the chariots who *were* with him, saying, "Fight with no one small or great, but only with the king of Israel."

31 So it was, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, "It *is* the king of Israel!" Therefore they surrounded him to attack; but Jehoshaphat [r]cried out, and the LORD helped him, and God diverted them from him. 32 For so it was, when the captains of the chariots saw that it was not the king of Israel, that they turned back from pursuing him. 33 Now a certain man drew a bow at random, and struck the king of Israel between the [2]joints of his armor. So he said to the driver of his chariot, "Turn around and take me out of the battle, for I am wounded." 34 The battle increased that day, and the king of Israel propped *himself* up in *his* chariot facing the Syrians until evening; and about the time of sunset he died.

19 Then Jehoshaphat the king of Judah returned safely to his house in Jerusalem. 2 And Jehu the son of Hanani [a]the seer went out to meet him, and said to King Jehoshaphat, "Should you help the wicked and [b]love those who hate the LORD? Therefore the [c]wrath of the LORD *is* upon you. 3 Nevertheless [d]good things are found in you, in that you have removed the [1]wooden images from the land, and have [e]prepared your heart to seek God."

The Reforms of Jehoshaphat

4 So Jehoshaphat dwelt at Jerusalem; and he went out again among the people from Beersheba to the mountains of Ephraim, and brought them back to the LORD God of their [f]fathers. 5 Then he set [g]judges in the land throughout all the fortified cities of Judah, city by city, 6 and said to the judges, "Take heed to what you are doing, for [h]you do not judge for man but for the LORD, [i]who *is* with you [2]in the judgment. 7 Now therefore, let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take care and do *it,* for [j]*there is* no iniquity with the LORD our God, no [k]partiality, nor taking of bribes."

8 Moreover in Jerusalem, for the judgment of the LORD and for controversies, Jehoshaphat [l]appointed some of the Levites and priests, and some of the chief fathers of Israel, [3]when they returned to Jerusalem. 9 And he commanded them, saying, "Thus you shall act [m]in the fear of the LORD, faithfully and with a loyal heart: 10 [n]Whatever case comes to you from your brethren who dwell in their cities, whether of bloodshed or offenses against law or commandment, against statutes or ordinances, you shall warn them, lest they trespass against the LORD and [o]wrath come upon [p]you and your brethren. Do this, and you will not be guilty. 11 And take notice: [q]Amariah the chief priest *is* over you [r]in all matters of the LORD; and Zebadiah the son of Ishmael, the ruler of the house of Judah, for all the king's matters; also the Levites *will be* officials before you. Behave courageously, and the LORD will be [s]with the good."

Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir Defeated

20 It happened after this *that* the people of [a]Moab with the people of [b]Ammon, and *others* with them besides the [c]Ammonites,[1] came to battle against Jehoshaphat. 2 Then some came and told Jehoshaphat, saying, "A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea, from [2]Syria; and they are [d]in Hazazon Tamar" (which *is* [e]En Gedi). 3 And Jehoshaphat feared, and set [3]himself to [f]seek the LORD, and [g]proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. 4 So

29 [q]2 Chr. 35:22

31 [r]2 Chr. 13:14, 15

33 [2]Or *scale armor and the breastplate*

CHAPTER 19

2 [a]1 Kin. 16:1 [b]Ps. 139:21 [c]2 Chr. 32:25

3 [d]2 Chr. 17:4, 6 [e]2 Chr. 30:19 [1]Or *Asherim,* Heb. *Asheroth*

4 [f]2 Chr. 15:8–13

5 [g][Deut. 16:18–20]

6 [h][Deut. 1:17] [i]Ps. 82:1 [2]Lit. *in the matter of the judgment*

7 [j][Deut. 32:4] [k][Deut. 10:17, 18]

8 [l]2 Chr. 17:8 [3]LXX, Vg. *for the inhabitants of Jerusalem*

9 [m][2 Sam. 23:3]

10 [n]Deut. 17:8 [o]Num. 16:46 [p][Ezek. 3:18]

11 [q]Ezra 7:3 [r]1 Chr. 26:30 [s][2 Chr. 15:2; 20:17]

CHAPTER 20

1 [a]1 Chr. 18:2 [b]1 Chr. 19:15 [c]2 Chr. 26:7 [1]So with MT, Vg.; LXX *Meunites* (cf. 2 Chr. 26:7)

2 [d]Gen. 14:7 [e]Josh. 15:62 [2]So with MT, LXX, Vg.; Heb. mss., Old Lat. *Edom*

3 [f]2 Chr. 19:3 [g]Ezra 8:21 [3]Lit. *his face*

■ **18:28** In contrast with Rehoboam (11:4) and Asa after his first battle (15:1–8), Jehoshaphat paid no attention to the prophet's warning. As a result, Jehoshaphat barely escaped with his life (18:31). See note on 20:20.

■ **18:31 Jehoshaphat cried out.** The writer adds to the words of 1 Kings 22:32 the explicit statement that "the LORD helped him," recalling the request of Solomon's dedicatory prayer (6:34 note; 7:14 note).

■ **18:34 he died.** The writer does not repeat the details of Ahab's death found in 1 Kin. 22:36–40.

■ **19:1–3** Jehoshaphat escaped death after crying out to the Lord (18:31). Even so, Jehu rebukes him for his sin. God had chastised Jehoshaphat for depending on a foreign alliance (16:7–10 note; 1 Chr. 28:9 note).

■ **19:5–11** Jehoshaphat established a system of courts throughout Judah to enforce Mosaic law (1 Chr. 26:20–32). He had earlier sent out leaders, Levites, and priests to teach (17:7–9).

■ **19:6 who is with you.** This does not mean that their decisions were inspired, but that God approved of the work of the courts in general, and wanted their decisions to be made according to His law first of all.

■ **20:1–30.** This battle is not found in Kings. Jehoshaphat responded to a serious military threat with exemplary reliance on the Lord (contrast his approach to the battle in 18:1—19:3).

■ **20:1 people of Moab . . . Ammon.** The descendants of these enemies were still a threat to Israel after the return from exile in Babylonia (Neh. 2:19; 4:1–3; 13).

■ **20:2 A great multitude . . . against you.** See note on 1 Chr. 19:7.

■ **20:3, 4 proclaimed a fast.** Jehoshaphat responded immediately by calling Judah to fast and seek the Lord; these actions recall Solomon's dedicatory prayer (see notes on 6:34).

Judah gathered together to ask [h]*help* from the LORD; and from all the cities of Judah they came to seek the LORD.

5 Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD, before the new court, 6 and said: "O LORD God of our fathers, *are* You not [i]God in heaven, and [j]do You *not* rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and [k]in Your hand *is there not* power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You? 7 *Are* You not [l]our God, *who* [m]drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham [n]Your friend forever? 8 And they dwell in it, and have built You a sanctuary in it for Your name, saying, 9 [o]'If disaster comes upon us—sword, judgment, pestilence, or famine—we will stand before this temple and in Your presence (for Your [p]name *is* in this temple), and cry out to You in our affliction, and You will hear and save.' 10 And now, here are the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir—whom You [q]would not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt, but [r]they turned from them and did not destroy them— 11 here they are, rewarding us [s]by coming to throw us out of Your possession which You have given us to inherit. 12 O our God, will You not [t]judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but [u]our eyes *are* upon You."

13 Now all Judah, with their little ones, their wives, and their children, stood before the LORD.

14 Then [v]the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly. 15 And he said, "Listen, all you of Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, King Jehoshaphat! Thus says the LORD to you: [w]'Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, [x]for the battle *is* not yours, but God's. 16 Tomorrow go down against them. They will surely come up by the Ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the [4]brook before the Wilderness of Jeruel. 17 [y]You will not *need* to fight in this *battle.* Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the LORD, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem!' Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, [z]for the LORD *is* with you."

18 And Jehoshaphat [a]bowed his head with *his* face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem bowed before the LORD, worshiping the LORD. 19 Then the Levites of the children of the Kohathites and of the children of the Korahites stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel with voices loud and high.

20 So they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: [b]Believe in the LORD your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper." 21 And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the LORD, [c]and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying:

[d]"Praise the LORD,
[e]For His mercy *endures* forever."

22 Now when they began to sing and to praise, [f]the LORD set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated. 23 For the people of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir to utterly kill and destroy *them.* And when they [5]had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, [g]they helped to destroy one another.

24 So when Judah came to a place overlooking the wilderness, they looked toward the multitude; and there *were* their dead bodies, fallen on the earth. No one had escaped.

25 When Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away their spoil, they found among them an abundance of valuables on the [6]dead bodies, and precious jewelry, which they stripped off for

4 [h]2 Chr. 14:11

6 [i]Deut. 4:39; Josh. 2:11; [1 Kin. 8:23]; Matt. 6:9 [j]Ps. 22:28; 47:2, 8; Dan. 4:17, 25, 32 [k]1 Chr. 29:12; 2 Chr. 25:8; Ps. 62:11; Matt. 6:13

7 [l]Gen. 13:14–17; 17:7; Ex. 6:7 [m]Ps. 44:2 [n]Is. 41:8; James 2:23

9 [o]1 Kin. 8:33, 37; 2 Chr. 6:28–30 [p]2 Chr. 6:20

10 [q]Deut. 2:4, 9, 19 [r]Num. 20:21

11 [s]Ps. 83:1–18

12 [t]Judg. 11:27; [1 Sam. 3:13] [u]Ps. 25:15; 121:1, 2; 123:1, 2; 141:8

14 [v]Num. 11:25, 26; 24:2; 2 Chr. 15:1; 24:20

15 [w]Ex. 14:13, 14; [Deut. 1:29, 30; 31:6, 8]; 2 Chr. 32:7 [x]1 Sam. 17:47; Zech. 14:3

16 [4]*streambed* or *wadi*

17 [y]Ex. 14:13, 14 [z]Num. 14:9; [2 Chr. 15:2; 32:8]

18 [a]Ex. 4:31; 2 Chr. 7:3; 29:28

20 [b]Is. 7:9

21 [c]1 Chr. 16:29; Ps. 29:2; 90:17; 96:9; 110:3 [d]1 Chr. 16:34; Ps. 106:1; 136:1 [e]1 Chr. 16:41; 2 Chr. 5:13

22 [f]Judg. 7:22; 1 Sam. 14:20

23 [g]Judg. 7:22; 1 Sam. 14:20 [5]*had finished*

25 [6]A few Heb. mss., Old Lat., Vg. *garments;* LXX *armor*

■ **20:5–19** Jehoshaphat's assembly followed the liturgical pattern often associated with prayers of lament: corporate prayer is offered (20:5–13); there is an oracle of deliverance from God (20:14–17); and the people respond with praise (20:18, 19).

■ **20:9** Jehoshaphat applied Solomon's dedicatory prayer explicitly to his situation (6:12–42 and notes).

■ **20:12 we have no power.** Confession of human impotence, humility, and reliance on divine power also appear in Asa's prayer (14:11 note).

■ **20:15 not yours, but God's.** Human effort in Israel's warfare was overshadowed by divine power. The prophet reminded Jehoshaphat that human responsibility depends on the sovereignty of God (v. 17).

■ **20:20–30** The strategy and outcome of this battle form a striking contrast to Jehoshaphat's previous battle (18:28–34 and notes).

■ **20:20 believe His prophets, and you shall prosper.** 2 Chronicles frequently emphasizes the importance of trusting and obeying the prophetic word (chs. 10—12 note; 14:2—16:14 note; 18:1—19:3 note; 24:19 note; 25:1–13 note; 25:15, 16 note; 28:5–15 note; 36:15 note; see also Introduction to 1 Chronicles: Characteristics and Themes). Jehoshaphat's instruction contrasts with his earlier rejection of Micaiah (18:1–32).

■ **20:21 His mercy endures forever.** See note on 5:13.

themselves, more than they could carry away; and they were three days gathering the spoil because there was so much. 26 And on the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of [7]Berachah, for there they blessed the LORD; therefore the name of that place was called The Valley of Berachah until this day. 27 Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, with Jehoshaphat in front of them, to go back to Jerusalem with joy, for the LORD had [h]made them rejoice over their enemies. 28 So they came to Jerusalem, with stringed instruments and harps and trumpets, to the house of the LORD. 29 And [i]the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of *those* countries when they heard that the LORD had fought against the enemies of Israel. 30 Then the realm of Jehoshaphat was quiet, for his [j]God gave him rest all around.

The End of Jehoshaphat's Reign

31 [k]So Jehoshaphat was king over Judah. *He was* thirty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned twenty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Azubah the daughter of Shilhi. 32 And he walked in the way of his father [l]Asa, and did not turn aside from it, doing *what was* right in the sight of the LORD. 33 Nevertheless [m]the [8]high places were not taken away, for as yet the people had not [n]directed their hearts to the God of their fathers.

34 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, first and last, indeed they *are* written in the book of Jehu the son of Hanani, [o]which *is* mentioned in the book of the kings of Israel.

35 After this [p]Jehoshaphat king of Judah allied himself with Ahaziah king of Israel, [q]who acted very [r]wickedly. 36 And he allied himself with him [s]to make ships to go to Tarshish, and they made the ships in Ezion Geber. 37 But Eliezer the son of Dodavah of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, "Because you have allied yourself with Ahaziah, the LORD has destroyed your works." [t]Then the ships were wrecked, so that they were not able to go [u]to Tarshish.

Jehoram Reigns in Judah

21 And [a]Jehoshaphat [1]rested with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the City of David. Then Jehoram his son reigned in his place. 2 He had brothers, the sons of Jehoshaphat: Azariah, Jehiel, Zechariah, Azaryahu, Michael, and Shephatiah; all these *were* the sons of Jehoshaphat king of Israel. 3 Their father gave them great gifts of silver and gold and precious things, with fortified cities in Judah; but he gave the kingdom to Jehoram, because he *was* the firstborn.

4 Now when Jehoram [2]was established over the kingdom of his father, he strengthened himself and killed all his brothers with the sword, and also *others* of the princes of Israel.

5 [b]Jehoram *was* thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. 6 And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, just as the house of Ahab had done, for he had the daughter of [c]Ahab as a wife; and he did evil in the sight of the LORD. 7 Yet the LORD would not destroy the house of David, because of the [d]covenant that He had made with David, and since He had promised to give a lamp to him and to his [e]sons forever.

8 [f]In his days Edom revolted against Judah's authority, and made a king over themselves. 9 So Jehoram went out with his officers, and all his chariots with him. And he rose by night and attacked the Edomites who had surrounded him and the captains of the chariots. 10 Thus Edom has

26 [7]Lit. *Blessing*

27 [h]Neh. 12:43

29 [i]2 Chr. 14:14; 17:10

30 [j]1 Kin. 22:41–43; 2 Chr. 14:6, 7; 15:15; Job 34:29

31 [k][1 Kin. 22:41–43]

32 [l]2 Chr. 14:2

33 [m]2 Chr. 15:17; 17:6 [n]2 Chr. 12:14; 19:3 [8]Places for pagan worship

34 [o]1 Kin. 16:1, 7

35 [p]2 Chr. 18:1 [q]1 Kin. 22:48–53 [r][2 Chr. 19:2]

36 [s]1 Kin. 9:26; 10:22

37 [t]1 Kin. 22:48 [u]2 Chr. 9:21

CHAPTER 21

1 [a]1 Kin. 22:50 [1]Died and joined his ancestors

4 [2]Lit. *arose*

5 [b]2 Kin. 8:17–22

6 [c]2 Chr. 18:1

7 [d]2 Sam. 7:8–17 [e]1 Kin. 11:36; 2 Kin. 8:19; Ps. 132:11

8 [f]2 Kin. 8:20; 14:7, 10; 2 Chr. 25:14, 19

- **20:26 until this day.** See note on 1 Chr. 4:41.
- **20:29 fear of God.** See note on 17:10.
- **20:30 quiet . . . rest.** See note on 1 Chr. 22:9.
- **20:31 twenty-five years.** 2 Kin. 3:1 (eighteen years) and 8:16 (four years) bring Jehoshaphat's reign to twenty-two years. Chronicles and 1 Kin. 22:42 include the three years in which Jehoshaphat was co-regent with Asa (17:1 note).
- **20:33 high places.** See note on 14:3.
- **20:34 written in the book.** See Introduction to 1 Chronicles: Author.
- **20:35–37** The text includes a brief notice of another time Jehoshaphat received a prophetic rebuke for making an alliance with the northern kingdom (16:2 note).
- **20:37 Eliezer . . . prophesied.** See note on 20:20.
- **21:2–20** The historian supplements the record of Jehoram's reign in Kings (2 Kin. 8:16–24); in Kings the assessment is negative. Jehoram reigned as co-regent with Jehoshaphat 853–848 B.C. (2 Kin. 1:17; 3:1), and by himself 848–841 B.C. He murdered his brothers (21:2–7); Edom and Libnah rebelled against him (21:8–10); he fell into idolatry (21:11); and Elijah prophesied an impending judgment (21:12–20).
- **21:2 brothers.** The murder of Jehoram's brothers recorded here is additional to the account in Kings (2 Kin. 8:16–22). On the other side, Kings describes how Solomon disposed of Adonijah, an event omitted from Chronicles (1 Kin. 2:24).
- **21:4 Israel.** See note on 10:1.
- **21:5 eight years.** As sole monarch (21:2–20 note).
- **21:7 would not destroy the house of David.** The house of David was on the brink of annihilation. Jehoram deserved to die, but God preserved his life to fulfill His promise of a permanent dynasty to David. Despite the sins of individual descendants of David, the Davidic line would never be entirely rejected (1 Chr. 17:7–14 note).
- **21:8–10** God's displeasure toward Jehoram became evident when these two nations subject to Judah successfully rebelled against him.
- **21:8 Edom.** Jehoshaphat had subjugated Edom through righteous dependence on God (20:1–30). Jehoram, however, failed in his attempt.
- **21:10 to this day.** See note on 1 Chr. 4:41.

Libnah. An area between Judah and Philistia.

been in revolt against Judah's authority to this day. At that time Libnah revolted against his rule, because he had forsaken the LORD God of his fathers. 11 Moreover he made [3]high places in the mountains of Judah, and caused the inhabitants of Jerusalem to [g]commit harlotry, and led Judah astray.

12 And a letter came to him from Elijah the prophet, saying,

> Thus says the LORD God of your father David:
> Because you have not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat your father, or in the ways of Asa king of Judah, 13 but have walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and have [h]made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to [i]play the harlot like the [j]harlotry of the house of Ahab, and also have [k]killed your brothers, those of your father's household, *who were* better than yourself, 14 behold, the LORD will strike your people with a serious affliction—your children, your wives, and all your possessions; 15 and you *will become* very sick with a [l]disease of your intestines, until your intestines come out by reason of the sickness, day by day.

16 Moreover the [m]LORD [n]stirred up against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines and the [o]Arabians who *were* near the Ethiopians. 17 And they came up into Judah and invaded it, and carried away all the possessions that were found in the king's house, and also [p]his sons and his wives, so that there was not a son left to him except [4]Jehoahaz, the youngest of his sons.

18 After all this the LORD struck him [q]in his intestines with an incurable disease. 19 Then it happened in the course of time, after the end of two years, that his intestines came out because of his sickness; so he died in severe pain. And his people made no [5]burning for him, like [r]the burning for his fathers.

20 He was thirty-two years old when he became king. He reigned in Jerusalem eight years and, to no one's sorrow, departed. However they buried him in the City of David, but not in the tombs of the kings.

Ahaziah Reigns in Judah

22 Then the inhabitants of Jerusalem made [a]Ahaziah his youngest son king in his place, for the raiders who came with the [b]Arabians into the camp had killed all the [c]older *sons*. So Ahaziah the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, reigned. 2 Ahaziah *was* [1]forty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* [d]Athaliah the [2]granddaughter of Omri. 3 He also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother advised him to do wickedly. 4 Therefore he did evil in the sight of the LORD, like the house of Ahab; for they were his counselors after the death of his father, to his destruction. 5 He also followed their advice, and went with [3]Jehoram the son of Ahab king of Israel to war against Hazael king of Syria at Ramoth Gilead; and the Syrians wounded Joram. 6 [e]Then he returned to Jezreel to recover from the wounds which he had received at Ramah, when he fought against Hazael king of Syria. And [4]Azariah the son of Jehoram, king of Judah, went down to see Jehoram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick.

7 His going to Joram [f]was God's occasion for Ahaziah's [5]downfall; for when he arrived, [g]he went out with [6]Jehoram against Jehu the son of Nimshi, [h]whom the LORD had anointed to [7]cut off the house of Ahab. 8 And it happened, when Jehu was [i]executing judgment on the house of

11 [g]Lev. 20:5 [3]Places for pagan worship
13 [h]2 Chr. 21:11 [i]Ex. 34:15; Deut. 31:16 [j]1 Kin. 16:31–33; 2 Kin. 9:22 [k]1 Kin. 2:32; 2 Chr. 21:4
15 [l]2 Chr. 21:18, 19
16 [m]2 Chr. 33:11; Jer. 51:11 [n]1 Kin. 11:14, 23 [o]2 Chr. 17:11
17 [p]2 Chr. 24:7 [4]*Ahaziah* or *Azariah*, 2 Chr. 22:1
18 [q]2 Chr. 13:20; 21:15; Acts 12:23
19 [r]2 Chr. 16:14 [5]Burning of spices

CHAPTER 22

1 [a]2 Chr. 21:17; 22:6 [b]2 Chr. 21:16 [c]2 Chr. 21:17
2 [d]2 Chr. 21:6 [1]*twenty-two*, 2 Kin. 8:26 [2]Lit. *daughter*
5 [3]*Joram*, v. 7; 2 Kin. 8:28
6 [e]2 Kin. 9:15 [4]Heb. mss., LXX, Syr., Vg. *Ahaziah* and 2 Kin. 8:29
7 [f]Judg. 14:4; 1 Kin. 12:15; 2 Chr. 10:15 [g]2 Kin. 9:21–24 [h]2 Kin. 9:6, 7 [5]Lit. *crushing* [6]*Joram*, vv. 5, 7; 2 Kin. 8:28 [7]*destroy*
8 [i]2 Kin. 9:22–24

■ **21:11–20** This episode illustrating the depths of Jehoram's sin is additional to the account in Kings.

■ **21:11 made high places.** While Asa and Jehoshaphat failed to rid the land of all high places (14:3 note), Jehoram actively built them (cf. 28:25).

to commit harlotry. Perhaps literally through involvement with prostitution in pagan worship rituals, or metaphorically through spiritual infidelity (1 Chr. 5:25).

■ **21:12 Elijah.** The only mention of the prophet in Chronicles; compare the lengthy account of his prophetic activities in 1 Kin. 17—2 Kin. 2.

■ **21:14–19** The judgment against Jehoram was twofold. God promises "a serious affliction" on the people and on Jehoram's family, a threat fulfilled by the attacks of Philistines and Arabs. Second, Jehoram becomes terminally ill, as promised. The emphasis is on immediate retribution (1 Chr. 28:9 note).

■ **21:19 made no burning.** Contrast with the response to Asa's death (16:14). Jehoram (21:20), Joash (24:25), Ahaz (28:27), and Manasseh (33:20) died in ignominy. Amon was disgracefully assassinated (cf. 33:24).

■ **21:20** Chronicles supplements the record given in 2 Kin. 8:24 of Jehoram's death and burial with details that reveal his utter disgrace.

eight years. See note on v. 5.

■ **22:1–9** The record of Chronicles ties Ahaziah (841 B.C.) closely to his father Jehoram (21:4–20). Both kings were deeply influenced by Athaliah and so are evaluated negatively (21:6; 22:3, 4). In both reigns, the Davidic dynasty barely escaped annihilation (21:16, 17; 22:7–9).

■ **22:2 forty-two.** This would make Ahaziah older than his father, who died at age forty (21:5, 20). 2 Kin. 8:26 reads "twenty-two," probably indicating a copyist's error in the text of 2 Chronicles.

■ **22:3–9** Chronicles presents Ahaziah's rapid downfall as divine chastisement for his alliance with the northern kingdom (16:2 note).

■ **22:5 Hazael.** See 1 Kin. 19:15 and 2 Kin. 8:7–15.

■ **22:8 Jehu was executing judgment.** Kings reports that Elisha

Ahab, and [j]found the princes of Judah and the sons of Ahaziah's brothers who served Ahaziah, that he killed them. 9 [k]Then he searched for Ahaziah; and they caught him (he was hiding in Samaria), and brought him to Jehu. When they had killed him, they buried him, "because," they said, "he is the son of [l]Jehoshaphat, who [m]sought the LORD with all his heart."

So the house of Ahaziah had no one to assume power over the kingdom.

Athaliah Reigns in Judah

10 [n]Now when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the royal heirs of the house of Judah. 11 But [s]Jehoshabeath, the daughter of the king, took [o]Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him away from among the king's sons who were being murdered, and put him and his nurse in a bedroom. So Jehoshabeath, the daughter of King Jehoram, the wife of Jehoiada the priest (for she was the sister of Ahaziah), hid him from Athaliah so that she did not kill him. 12 And he was hidden with them in the house of God for six years, while Athaliah reigned over the land.

Joash Crowned King of Judah

23 In [a]the seventh year [b]Jehoiada strengthened himself, *and made a* covenant with the captains of hundreds: Azariah the son of Jeroham, Ishmael the son of Jehohanan, Azariah the son of [c]Obed, Maaseiah the son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat the son of Zichri. 2 And they went throughout Judah and gathered the Levites from all the cities of Judah, and the [d]chief fathers of Israel, and they came to Jerusalem.

3 Then all the assembly made a covenant with the king in the house of God. And he said to them, "Behold, the king's son shall reign, as the LORD has [e]said of the sons of David. 4 This *is* what you shall do: One-third of you [f]entering on the Sabbath, of the priests and the Levites, *shall be* keeping watch over the doors; 5 one-third *shall be* at the king's house; and one-third at the Gate of the Foundation. All the people *shall be* in the courts of the house of the LORD. 6 But let no one come into the house of the LORD except the priests and [g]those of the Levites who serve. They may go in, for they *are* holy; but all the people shall keep the watch of the LORD. 7 And the Levites shall surround the king on all sides, every man with his weapons in his hand; and whoever comes into the house, let him be put to death. You are to be with the king when he comes in and when he goes out."

8 So the Levites and all Judah did according to all that Jehoiada the priest commanded. And each man took his men who were to be on duty on the Sabbath, with those who were going *off duty* on the Sabbath; for Jehoiada the priest had not dismissed [h]the divisions. 9 And Jehoiada the priest gave to the captains of hundreds the spears and the large and small [i]shields which *had belonged* to King David, that *were* in the temple of God. 10 Then he set all the people, every man with his weapon in his hand, from the right side of the temple to the left side of the temple, along by the altar and by the temple, all around the king. 11 And they brought out the king's son, put the crown on him, [j]*gave him* the [l]Testimony, and made him king. Then Jehoiada and his sons anointed him, and said, "*Long* live the king!"

Death of Athaliah

12 Now when [k]Athaliah heard the noise of the people running and praising the king, she came to the people *in* the temple of the LORD. 13 *When* she looked, there was the king standing by his

8 [j]2 Kin. 10:10–14; Hos. 1:4

9 [k][2 Kin. 9:27] [l]1 Kin. 15:24 [m]2 Chr. 17:4; 20:3, 4

10 [n]2 Kin. 11:1–3

11 [o]2 Kin. 12:18 [s]*Jehosheba,* 2 Kin. 11:2

CHAPTER 23

1 [a]2 Kin. 11:4 [b]2 Kin. 12:2 [c]1 Chr. 2:37, 38

2 [d]Ezra 1:5

3 [e]2 Sam. 7:12; 1 Kin. 2:4; 9:5; 2 Chr. 6:16; 7:18; 21:7

4 [f]1 Chr. 9:25

6 [g]1 Chr. 23:28–32

8 [h]1 Chr. 24:1–31

9 [i]2 Sam. 8:7

11 [j]Deut. 17:18 [l]Law, Ex. 25:16, 21; 31:18

12 [k]2 Chr. 22:10

anointed Jehu to destroy the house of Omri (2 Kin. 9:1—10:31). The death of Ahaziah was part of this judgment.

■ **22:9 they buried him.** Ahaziah received an honorable burial, not because of his own character, but because of his grandfather Jehoshaphat.

■ **22:10—24:27** Compare 2 Kin. chs. 11 and 12 on the record of Joash. This portion of Chronicles illustrates the close association between king and priest. The Davidic line was preserved by Jehoshabeath and her husband, the priest Jehoiada (22:10—23:21); the Davidic king served faithfully under the influence of Jehoiada (24:1–16); the king failed when he rejected the instruction of Jehoiada's son, and put him to death (24:17–27). Cooperation of king and priest was essential. See also Zech. 3; 4; 6:9–15.

■ **22:10–12** Jehoshaphat's marriage alliance (18:1 note) finally yielded its worst result. Athaliah nearly destroyed the Davidic line in her quest to establish herself as queen.

■ **22:11 Joash.** Reigned 835–796 B. C.

■ **22:12 Athaliah.** Athaliah was the only queen to rule in Judah (841–835 B.C.).

■ **23:1–11** The Zadokite priest Jehoiada resisted Queen Athaliah and gained the military support necessary for temple and political reform.

■ **23:2 throughout Judah . . . all the cities.** This verse expands the account in Kings depicting Joash's widespread support in Judah (1 Chr. 11:1 note).

■ **23:3 as the LORD has said.** See note on 1 Chr. 17:14.

■ **23:11 the Testimony.** Probably the covenant made in 23:3; compare also Deut. 17:18–20.

■ **23:13 trumpets . . . singers . . . musical instruments.** See 1 Chr. 15:16 note.

13 [l]1 Chr. 25:6–8 [m]2 Kin. 9:23
15 [n]Neh. 3:28; Jer. 31:40
16 [o]Josh. 24:24, 25; 2 Chr. 15:12–15
17 [p]Deut. 13:6–9; 1 Kin. 18:40 [2]Lit. *house*
18 [q]1 Chr. 23:6, 30, 31; 24:1 [r]Num. 28:2
19 [s]1 Chr. 26:1–19
20 [t]1 Kin. 9:22; 2 Kin. 11:19

CHAPTER 24

1 [a]2 Kin. 11:21; 12:1–15
2 [b]2 Chr. 26:4, 5
5 [c]2 Kin. 12:4
6 [d]2 Kin. 12:7 [e]Ex. 30:12–16 [f]Num. 1:50; Acts 7:44
7 [g]2 Chr. 21:17 [h]2 Kin. 12:4
8 [i]2 Kin. 12:9
9 [j]2 Chr. 24:6
11 [k]2 Kin. 12:10

pillar at the entrance; and the leaders and the trumpeters *were* by the king. All the people of the land were rejoicing and blowing trumpets, also the singers with musical instruments, and [l]those who led in praise. So Athaliah tore her clothes and said, [m]"Treason! Treason!"

14 And Jehoiada the priest brought out the captains of hundreds who were set over the army, and said to them, "Take her outside under guard, and slay with the sword whoever follows her." For the priest had said, "Do not kill her in the house of the LORD."

15 So they seized her; and she went by way of the entrance [n]of the Horse Gate *into* the king's house, and they killed her there.

16 Then Jehoiada made a [o]covenant between himself, the people, and the king, that they should be the LORD's people. 17 And all the people went to the [2]temple of Baal, and tore it down. They broke in pieces its altars and images, and [p]killed Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars. 18 Also Jehoiada appointed the oversight of the house of the LORD to the hand of the priests, the Levites, whom David had [q]assigned in the house of the LORD, to offer the burnt offerings of the LORD, as *it is* written in the [r]Law of Moses, with rejoicing and with singing, *as it was established* by David. 19 And he set the [s]gatekeepers at the gates of the house of the LORD, so that no one *who was* in any way unclean should enter.

20 [t]Then he took the captains of hundreds, the nobles, the governors of the people, and all the people of the land, and brought the king down from the house of the LORD; and they went through the Upper Gate to the king's house, and set the king on the throne of the kingdom. 21 So all the people of the land rejoiced; and the city was quiet, for they had slain Athaliah with the sword.

Joash Repairs the Temple

24 Joash [a]*was* seven years old when he became king, and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Zibiah of Beersheba. 2 Joash [b]did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD all the days of Jehoiada the priest. 3 And Jehoiada took two wives for him, and he had sons and daughters.

4 Now it happened after this *that* Joash set his heart on repairing the house of the LORD. 5 Then he gathered the priests and the Levites, and said to them, "Go out to the cities of Judah, and [c]gather from all Israel money to repair the house of your God from year to year, and see that you do it quickly."

However the Levites did not do it quickly. 6 [d]So the king called Jehoiada the chief *priest,* and said to him, "Why have you not required the Levites to bring in from Judah and from Jerusalem the collection, *according to the commandment* of [e]Moses the servant of the LORD and of the assembly of Israel, for the [f]tabernacle of witness?" 7 For [g]the sons of Athaliah, that wicked woman, had broken into the house of God, and had also presented all the [h]dedicated things of the house of the LORD to the Baals.

8 Then at the king's command [i]they made a chest, and set it outside at the gate of the house of the LORD. 9 And they made a proclamation throughout Judah and Jerusalem to bring to the LORD [j]the collection *that* Moses the servant of God *had imposed* on Israel in the wilderness. 10 Then all the leaders and all the people rejoiced, brought their contributions, and put *them* into the chest until all had given. 11 So it was, at that time, when the chest was brought to the king's official by the hand of the Levites, and [k]when they saw that *there was* much money, that the king's scribe and the high priest's officer came and emptied the chest, and took it and returned it to its place. Thus they did day by day, and gathered money in abundance.

12 The king and Jehoiada gave it to those who did the work of the service of the house of the

■ **23:16 made a covenant.** See note on 15:12.

■ **23:17 temple of Baal.** Probably a shrine to Baal erected for Athaliah (cf. 1 Kin. 11:1–8).

■ **23:18, 19** This account emphasizes more than 2 Kin. 11:18 that the new temple order under Jehoiada and Joash was according to Mosaic and Davidic design. The books of Chronicles were written in the time of reconstruction following the return of the Jews from exile in Babylonia, and such encouragement was appropriate.

■ **23:21 quiet.** See note on 1 Chr. 22:9.

■ **24:1–22** This account should be compared with 2 Kin. 12. Note that vv.15–22 are a lengthy supplement.

■ **24:2 all the days of Jehoiada.** Joash's positive accomplishments were the result of the influence of Jehoiada (24:14). After Jehoiada's death, Joash turned away from the Lord (24:17–19; cf. 26:5). The historian illustrates the importance of mutual support between king and priest (22:10—24:27 note).

■ **24:5 priests and the Levites.** Chronicles more than 2 Kin. 12:1–3 emphasizes the need for proper Levitical order (23:18, 19 note).

money . . . from year to year. This requirement was the half-shekel tax of Ex. 30:11–16; 38:24–26 (see 24:9).

■ **24:6, 9 commandment of Moses . . . Moses . . . had imposed.** See note on 1 Chr. 16:40.

■ **24:10–12** The generous and joyful giving of the officials and people was a good example for those engaged in restoring temple worship following the return from exile in Babylonia (1 Chr. 29:1–9 note).

LORD; and they hired masons and carpenters to [l]repair the house of the LORD, and also those who worked in iron and bronze to restore the house of the LORD. 13 So the workmen labored, and the work was completed by them; they restored the house of God to its original condition and reinforced it. 14 When they had finished, they brought the rest of the money before the king and Jehoiada; [m]they made from it articles for the house of the LORD, articles for serving and offering, spoons and vessels of gold and silver. And they offered burnt offerings in the house of the LORD continually all the days of Jehoiada.

Apostasy of Joash

15 But Jehoiada grew old and was full of days, and he died; *he was* one hundred and thirty years old when he died. 16 And they buried him in the City of David among the kings, because he had done good in Israel, both toward God and His house.

17 Now after the death of Jehoiada the leaders of Judah came and bowed down to the king. And the king listened to them. 18 Therefore they left the house of the LORD God of their fathers, and served [n]wooden images and idols; and [o]wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem because of their trespass. 19 Yet He [p]sent prophets to them, to bring them back to the LORD; and they testified against them, but they would not listen.

20 Then the Spirit of God [1]came upon [q]Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, who stood above the people, and said to them, "Thus says God: [r]'Why do you transgress the commandments of the LORD, so that you cannot prosper? [s]Because you have forsaken the LORD, He also has forsaken you.' " 21 So they conspired against him, and at the command of the king they [t]stoned him with stones in the court of the house of the LORD. 22 Thus Joash the king did not remember the kindness which Jehoiada his [2]father had done to him, but killed his son; and as he died, he said, "The LORD look on *it,* and [u]repay!"

Death of Joash

23 So it happened in the spring of the year *that* [v]the army of Syria came up against him; and they came to Judah and Jerusalem, and destroyed all the leaders of the people from among the people, and sent all their [3]spoil to the king of Damascus. 24 For the army of the Syrians [w]came with a small company of men; but the LORD [x]delivered a very great army into their hand, because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers. So they [y]executed judgment against Joash. 25 And when they had withdrawn from him (for they left him severely wounded), [z]his own servants conspired against him because of the blood of the [4]sons of Jehoiada the priest, and killed him on his bed. So he died. And they buried him in the City of David, but they did not bury him in the tombs of the kings.

26 These are the ones who conspired against him: [5]Zabad the son of Shimeath the Ammonitess, and Jehozabad the son of [6]Shimrith the Moabitess. 27 Now *concerning* his sons, and [a]the many oracles about him, and the repairing of the house of God, indeed they *are* written in the [7]annals of the book of the kings. [b]Then Amaziah his son reigned in his place.

Amaziah Reigns in Judah

25 Amaziah [a]*was* twenty-five years old *when* he became king, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Jehoaddan of Jerusalem. 2 And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, [b]but not with a loyal heart.

3 [c]Now it happened, as soon as the kingdom was established for him, that he executed his servants who had murdered his father the king. 4 However he did not execute their children, but *did* as *it is* written in the Law in the Book of Moses, where the LORD commanded, saying, [d]"The

12 [l]2 Chr. 30:12

14 [m]2 Kin. 12:13

18 [n]1 Kin. 14:23 [o][Ex. 34:12–14]; Judg. 5:8; 2 Chr. 19:2; 28:13; 29:8; 32:25

19 [p]2 Kin. 17:13; 21:10–15; 2 Chr. 36:15, 16; Jer. 7:25, 26; 25:4

20 [q]Judg. 6:34; Matt. 23:35 [r]Num. 14:41; [Prov. 28:13] [s][2 Chr. 15:2] [1]Lit. *clothed*

21 [t][Neh. 9:26]; Matt. 23:35; Acts 7:58, 59

22 [u][Gen. 9:5] [2]Foster father

23 [v]2 Kin. 12:17; Is. 7:2 [3]*plunder*

24 [w]Lev. 26:8; [Deut. 32:30]; Is. 30:17 [x]Lev. 26:25; [Deut. 28:25] [y]2 Chr. 22:8; Is. 10:5

25 [z]2 Kin. 12:20, 21; 2 Chr. 25:3 [4]LXX, Vg. *son* and vv. 20–22

26 [5]*Jozachar,* 2 Kin. 12:21 [6]*Shomer,* 2 Kin. 12:21

27 [a]2 Kin. 12:18 [b]2 Kin. 12:21 [7]Or *commentary,* Heb. *midrash*

CHAPTER 25

1 [a]2 Kin. 14:1–6

2 [b]2 Kin. 14:4; 2 Chr. 25:14

3 [c]2 Kin. 14:5; 2 Chr. 24:25

4 [d]Deut. 24:16; 2 Kin. 14:6; Jer. 31:30; [Ezek. 18:20]

■ **24:19 prophets . . . they would not listen.** Apostasy is tied to the rejection of God's prophets (20:20 note).

■ **24:20 you have forsaken . . . He also has forsaken.** See note on 1 Chr. 28:9.

■ **24:23, 24** Chronicles frequently mentions military defeat as the judgment of God against sin (1 Chr. 10; 2 Chr. 13:1–16; 18:33, 34; 21:16, 17; 25:14–24; 28:1–5; 33:1–11).

■ **24:24 they had forsaken.** The tables are turned against Judah as had been threatened in the covenant (Deut. 28:25; 32:30; 1 Chr. 28:9 note).

■ **24:26 Ammonitess . . . Moabitess.** Jehoshaphat had earlier defeated Ammon and Moab (20:1 note).

■ **24:27 annals of the book of the kings.** See Introduction to 1 Chronicles: Author.

■ **25:1–28** The account of Amaziah's reign (796–767 B.C.) should be compared with 2 Kin. 14. Note that the war against Edom is recorded only in Chronicles (vv. 5–16). The writer of Chronicles shows how foreign alliances, response to prophetic instruction, and idolatry affect Israel's military security. The account describes fidelity and infidelity, much as in the accounts of Joash and Uzziah (22:10—24:27 note).

■ **25:1–13** Ahaziah was not devoted wholeheartedly to the Lord, but he responded properly to prophetic warning (20:20 note).

■ **25:4 Book of Moses.** See 1 Chr. 16:40.

fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor shall the children be put to death for their fathers; but a person shall die for his own sin."

The War Against Edom

5 Moreover Amaziah gathered Judah together and set over them captains of thousands and captains of hundreds, according to *their* fathers' houses, throughout all Judah and Benjamin; and he numbered them [e]from twenty years old and above, and found them to be three hundred thousand choice *men, able* to go to war, who could handle spear and shield. 6 He also hired one hundred thousand mighty men of valor from Israel for one hundred talents of silver. 7 But a [f]man of God came to him, saying, "O king, do not let the army of Israel go with you, for the LORD *is* not with Israel—*not with* any of the children of Ephraim. 8 But if you go, be gone! Be strong in battle! *Even so,* God shall make you fall before the enemy; for God has [g]power to help and to overthrow."

9 Then Amaziah said to the man of God, "But what *shall we* do about the hundred talents which I have given to the troops of Israel?"

And the man of God answered, [h]"The LORD is able to give you much more than this." 10 So Amaziah discharged the troops that had come to him from Ephraim, to go back home. Therefore their anger was greatly aroused against Judah, and they returned home in great anger.

11 Then Amaziah strengthened himself, and leading his people, he went to [i]the Valley of Salt and killed ten thousand of the people of Seir. 12 Also the children of Judah took captive ten thousand alive, brought them to the top of the rock, and cast them down from the top of the rock, so that they all were dashed in pieces.

13 But as for the soldiers of the army which Amaziah had discharged, so that they would not go with him to battle, they raided the cities of Judah from Samaria to Beth Horon, killed three thousand in them, and took much [j]spoil.

14 Now it was so, after Amaziah came from the slaughter of the Edomites, that [k]he brought the gods of the people of Seir, set them up *to be* [l]his gods, and bowed down before them and burned incense to them. 15 Therefore the anger of the LORD was aroused against Amaziah, and He sent him a prophet who said to him, "Why have you sought [m]the gods of the people, which [n]could not rescue their own people from your hand?"

16 So it was, as he talked with him, that *the king* said to him, "Have we made you the king's counselor? Cease! Why should you be killed?"

Then the prophet ceased, and said, "I know that God has [o]determined to destroy you, because you have done this and have not heeded my advice."

Israel Defeats Judah

17 Now [p]Amaziah king of Judah asked advice and sent to [q]Joash the son of Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, king of Israel, saying, "Come, let us face one another *in battle.*"

18 And Joash king of Israel sent to Amaziah king of Judah, saying, "The thistle that *was* in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, 'Give your daughter to my son as wife'; and a wild beast that *was* in Lebanon passed by and trampled the thistle. 19 Indeed you say that you have defeated the Edomites, and your heart is lifted up to [r]boast. Stay at home now; why should you meddle with trouble, that you should fall—you and Judah with you?"

20 But Amaziah would not heed, for [s]it *came* from God, that He might give them into the hand *of their enemies,* because they [t]sought the gods of Edom. 21 So Joash king of Israel went out; and

5 [e]Num. 1:3
7 [f]2 Chr. 11:2
8 [g]2 Chr. 14:11; 20:6
9 [h][Deut. 8:18]; Prov. 10:22
11 [i]2 Kin. 14:7
13 [j]*plunder*
14 [k]2 Chr. 28:23 [l][Ex. 20:3, 5]
15 [m][Ps. 96:5] [n]2 Chr. 25:11
16 [o][1 Sam. 2:25]
17 [p]2 Kin. 14:8–14 [q]*Jehoash,* 2 Kin. 14:8ff.
19 [r]2 Chr. 26:16; 32:25; [Prov. 16:18]
20 [s]1 Kin. 12:15; 2 Chr. 22:7 [t]2 Chr. 25:14

■ **25:5, 6 three hundred thousand . . . one hundred thousand.** For these large numbers, see note on 1 Chr. 12:23.

■ **25:7 do not let the army of Israel go.** The prophet again condemns an alliance with the northern kingdom (16:2 note).

the LORD is not with Israel . . . Ephraim. Abijah had voiced a similar opinion concerning the northern kingdom (13:9, 10).

■ **25:8 God has power.** In typical fashion, the man of God proclaims the need to rely solely upon divine power in battle (16:2 note).

■ **25:10 anger . . . against Judah.** Although Amaziah obeyed the prophetic word, the northern mercenaries were angry. If not their pay, they had lost their chance for booty (cf. v. 13).

■ **25:12 all were dashed in pieces.** Amaziah followed Mosaic instructions for holy war (Deut. 20:13–18).

■ **25:13 Samaria.** An unidentified town in Judah, not the better-known capital of the northern kingdom.

■ **25:14 brought the gods.** In contrast with Amaziah's earlier obedience (v. 12), he now disobeyed Mosaic instructions (Ex. 20:3; Deut. 7:25) and David's example (1 Chr. 14:12), bringing the Edomite gods to Jerusalem. He eventually worshiped these gods.

■ **25:15, 16** In contrast with his earlier repentance at the prophetic word (25:7–10), Amaziah rebuffed the prophet and received a stern warning (20:20 note).

■ **25:16 God has determined to destroy you.** See note on 1 Chr. 28:9.

■ **25:20 it came from God.** The sovereignty of God includes hardening the hearts of sinners so that they no longer respond to warnings (1 Chr. 21:1 note; cf. Ex. 3:19; 4:12; 7:3, 4).

he and Amaziah king of Judah faced one another at [s]Beth Shemesh, which *belongs* to Judah. 22 And Judah was defeated by Israel, and every man fled to his tent. 23 Then Joash the king of Israel captured Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Joash, the son of [t]Jehoahaz, at Beth Shemesh; and he brought him to Jerusalem, and broke down the wall of Jerusalem from the Gate of Ephraim to the Corner Gate—four hundred cubits. 24 And *he took* all the gold and silver, all the articles that were found in the house of God with [u]Obed-Edom, the treasures of the king's house, and hostages, and returned to Samaria.

Death of Amaziah

25 [v]Amaziah the son of Joash, king of Judah, lived fifteen years after the death of Joash the son of Jehoahaz, king of Israel. 26 Now the rest of the acts of Amaziah, from first to last, indeed *are* they not written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel? 27 After the time that Amaziah turned away from following the LORD, they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem, and he fled to Lachish; but they sent after him to Lachish and killed him there. 28 Then they brought him on horses and buried him with his fathers in [3]the City of Judah.

Uzziah Reigns in Judah

26 Now all the people of Judah took [1]Uzziah, who *was* sixteen years old, and made him king instead of his father Amaziah. 2 He built [2]Elath and restored it to Judah, after the king rested with his fathers.

3 Uzziah *was* sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jecholiah of Jerusalem. 4 And he did *what was* [a]right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Amaziah had done. 5 [b]He sought God in the days of Zechariah, who [c]had understanding in the [3]visions of God; and as long as he sought the LORD, God made him [d]prosper.

6 Now he went out and [e]made war against the Philistines, and broke down the wall of Gath, the wall of Jabneh, and the wall of Ashdod; and he built cities *around* Ashdod and among the Philistines. 7 God helped him against [f]the Philistines, against the Arabians who lived in Gur Baal, and against the Meunites. 8 Also the Ammonites [g]brought tribute to Uzziah. His fame spread as far as the entrance of Egypt, for he became exceedingly strong.

9 And Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the [h]Corner Gate, at the Valley Gate, and at the corner buttress of the wall; then he fortified them. 10 Also he built towers in the desert. He dug many wells, for he had much livestock, both in the lowlands and in the plains; *he also had* farmers and vinedressers in the mountains and in [4]Carmel, for he loved the soil.

11 Moreover Uzziah had an army of fighting men who went out to war by companies, according to the number on their roll as prepared by Jeiel the scribe and Maaseiah the officer, under the hand of Hananiah, *one* of the king's captains. 12 The total number of [5]chief officers of the mighty men of valor *was* two thousand six hundred. 13 And under their authority *was* an army of three hundred and seven thousand five hundred, that made war with mighty power, to help the king against the enemy. 14 Then Uzziah prepared for them, for the entire army, shields, spears, helmets, body armor, bows, and slings *to cast* stones. 15 And he made devices in Jerusalem, invented by [i]skillful men, to be on the towers and the corners, to shoot arrows and large stones. So his fame spread far and wide, for he was marvelously helped till he became strong.

21 [s]Josh. 19:38

23 [t]2 Chr. 21:17; 22:1, 6

24 [u]1 Chr. 26:15

25 [v]2 Kin. 14:17–22

28 [3]The City of David

CHAPTER 26

1 [1]*Azariah,* 2 Kin. 14:21ff.

2 [2]Heb. *Eloth*

4 [a]2 Chr. 24:2

5 [b]2 Chr. 24:2 [c]Gen. 41:15; Dan. 1:17; 10:1 [d][2 Chr. 15:2; 20:20; 31:21] [3]Heb. mss., LXX, Syr., Tg., Arab. *fear*

6 [e]Is. 14:29

7 [f]2 Chr. 21:16

8 [g]2 Sam. 8:2; 2 Chr. 17:11

9 [h]2 Kin. 14:13; 2 Chr. 25:23; Neh. 3:13, 19, 32; Zech. 14:10

10 [4]Or *the fertile fields*

12 [5]Lit. *chief fathers*

15 [i]Ex. 39:3, 8

- **25:22–24** The defeat of Amaziah contrasts with his earlier victory (vv. 11–13).
- **25:26 book of the kings.** See Introduction to 1 Chronicles: Author.
- **26:1–23** The historian who composed Chronicles adds a long section (vv. 5–20) to the brief notices about Uzziah in 2 Kings 14 and 15. His account is in four stages: rise to power (vv. 1–2), obedience and blessing (vv. 3–15), disobedience and curse (vv. 16–20), and summary and death (vv. 22, 23).
- **26:1 Uzziah.** Uzziah reigned 792/91–740/39 B.C. In 2 Kings he is frequently, but not always, called Azariah.
- **26:4 according to . . . his father Amaziah.** The historian compares Uzziah with his father, whose reign was also divided between blessing and curse.
- **26:5 sought God . . . sought the LORD.** See note on 7:14.
- **in the days of Zechariah.** An unknown royal advisor. It is unlikely that this is the person named in Is. 8:2, since "in the days of" suggests that Zechariah died during Uzziah's reign and could not have been an advisor to his grandson. Joash was obedient as long as Jehodiah was alive, and Uzziah did well under Zechariah's tutelage (24:2 note).
- **26:6–15** Uzziah was blessed in international conflict (vv. 6–8), domestic affairs (vv. 9, 10), and military strength (vv. 11–15).
- **26:7 Meunites.** Uzziah's blessing recalls Jehoshaphat's victory (20:1–30).
- **26:8 Ammonites.** See note on 1 Chr. 19:1.
- **26:9 Uzziah built.** A reversal of the destruction in Amaziah's defeat (25:23). See note on 1 Chr. 11:5.
- **26:13 three hundred and seven thousand five hundred.** For the large number, see note on 1 Chr. 12:23.

16 *i*[Deut. 32:15] *k*Deut. 8:14; 2 Chr. 25:19 *l*1 Kin. 13:1–4; 2 Kin. 16:12, 13

17 *m*1 Chr. 6:10

18 *n*[Num. 3:10; 16:39, 40; 18:7] *o*Ex. 30:7, 8; Heb. 7:14

19 *p*Lev. 13:42; Num. 12:10; 2 Kin. 5:25–27

20 *q*Esth. 6:12

21 *r*2 Kin. 15:5 *s*[Lev. 13:46; Num. 5:2]

22 *t*2 Kin. 20:1; 2 Chr. 32:20, 32; Is. 1:1

23 *u*2 Kin. 15:7; 2 Chr. 21:20; 28:27; Is. 6:1 *v*Died and joined his ancestors

CHAPTER 27

1 *a*2 Kin. 15:32–35 *w*Jerusha, 2 Kin. 15:33

2 *b*2 Kin. 15:35; Ezek. 20:44; 30:13

3 *c*2 Chr. 33:14; Neh. 3:26

5 *d*2 Chr. 26:8

6 *e*2 Chr. 26:5

9 *f*2 Kin. 15:38 *g*Is. 1:1; Hos. 1:1; Mic. 1:1 *z*Died and joined his ancestors

The Penalty for Uzziah's Pride

16 But *i*when he was strong his heart was *k*lifted up, to *his* destruction, for he transgressed against the LORD his God *l*by entering the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense. 17 So *m*Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him were eighty priests of the LORD—valiant men. 18 And they withstood King Uzziah, and said to him, "*It n*is not for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD, but for the *o*priests, the sons of Aaron, who are consecrated to burn incense. Get out of the sanctuary, for you have trespassed! You *shall have* no honor from the LORD God."

19 Then Uzziah became furious; and he *had* a censer in his hand to burn incense. And while he was angry with the priests, *p*leprosy broke out on his forehead, before the priests in the house of the LORD, beside the incense altar. 20 And Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked at him, and there, on his forehead, he *was* leprous; so they thrust him out of that place. Indeed he also *q*hurried to get out, because the LORD had struck him.

21 *r*King Uzziah was a leper until the day of his death. He dwelt in an *s*isolated house, because he was a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD. Then Jotham his son *was* over the king's house, judging the people of the land.

22 Now the rest of the acts of Uzziah, from first to last, the prophet *t*Isaiah the son of Amoz wrote. 23 *u*So Uzziah *v*rested with his fathers, and they buried him with his fathers in the field of burial which *belonged* to the kings, for they said, "He is a leper." Then Jotham his son reigned in his place.

Jotham Reigns in Judah

27 Jotham *a*was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was w*Jerushah the daughter of Zadok. 2 And he did *what* was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Uzziah had done (although he did not enter the temple of the LORD). But still *b*the people acted corruptly.

3 He built the Upper Gate of the house of the LORD, and he built extensively on the wall of *c*Ophel. 4 Moreover he built cities in the mountains of Judah, and in the forests he built fortresses and towers. 5 He also fought with the king of the *d*Ammonites and defeated them. And the people of Ammon gave him in that year one hundred talents of silver, ten thousand kors of wheat, and ten thousand of barley. The people of Ammon paid this to him in the second and third years also. 6 So Jotham became mighty, *e*because he prepared his ways before the LORD his God.

7 Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all his wars and his ways, indeed they *are* written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah. 8 He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. 9 *f*So Jotham *z*rested with his fathers, and they buried him in the City of David. Then *g*Ahaz his son reigned in his place.

■ **26:16–20** This episode shows God's judgment against Uzziah's pride. As with Rehoboam (12:1), initial success led to disregard for God and His law. Uzziah's leprosy is mentioned only briefly in 2 Kin. 15:5.

■ **26:16 when he was strong.** Moses warned Israel to be careful not to let success make them proud and rely on themselves rather than on God (Deut. 8:10–18).

■ **26:17 Azariah.** An otherwise unknown priest. He and eighty courageous priests delivered God's judgment to Uzziah. The writer of Chronicles highlights the role of priests as instructors of royalty for a third time (24:2 and note).

■ **26:18 for the priests.** Burning incense was restricted to the priests in Mosaic legislation (Ex. 30:7–9; Num. 16:39, 40). See "Christians and Civil Government" at Rom. 13:1.

■ **26:21 cut off from the house of the LORD.** Uzziah was quarantined and kept out of the temple, in agreement with the Law of Moses (Lev. 13:46; Num. 5:1–4).

■ **26:22 the prophet Isaiah . . . wrote.** See Introduction to 1 Chronicles: Author.

■ **26:23 in the field.** Uzziah was buried away from the royal family in relative dishonor because of the curse of leprosy.

■ **27:1–9** In contrast to the records from Joash to Uzziah, where each reign has a balance of obedience and disobedience (22:10—24:27 note), the writer's evaluation of Jotham is fully positive. This is followed with a negative treatment of Ahaz (ch. 28). Chronicles points out that faithfulness to God is the way to success in construction projects and military conflict.

■ **27:1 Jotham . . . sixteen years.** Reigned 750–732 B.C. Jotham reigned during the period of his father Uzziah's leprosy (750–740 B.C.), and had co-regency with his son Ahaz (735–732 B.C.). For six years he was the sole monarch. The figure "sixteen years" here and in v. 8 probably refers to his co-regency with his father and his independent reign. Adding his four years with Ahaz brings the total to twenty years (2 Kin. 15:30).

■ **27:2 did not enter the temple.** Jotham did not violate priestly regulations as Uzziah had done (26:18 note).

the people acted corruptly. The historian explains that the people and not Jotham were guilty of continuing corruption. (cf. 2 Kin. 15:35).

■ **27:5, 6** This record of victory over the Ammonites highlights God's approval of Jotham.

■ **27:7 in the book of the kings.** See Introduction to 1 Chronicles: Author.

Ahaz Reigns in Judah

28 Ahaz [a]*was* twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem; and he did not do *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, as his father David *had done.* [2] For he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, and made [b]molded images for [c]the Baals. [3] He burned incense in [d]the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, and burned [e]his children in the [f]fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the LORD had [g]cast out before the children of Israel. [4] And he sacrificed and burned incense on the [i]high places, on the hills, and under every green tree.

Syria and Israel Defeat Judah

[5] Therefore [h]the LORD his God delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria. They [i]defeated him, and carried away a great multitude of them as captives, and brought *them* to Damascus. Then he was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel, who defeated him with a great slaughter. [6] For [j]Pekah the son of Remaliah killed one hundred and twenty thousand in Judah in one day, all valiant men, [k]because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers. [7] Zichri, a mighty man of Ephraim, killed Maaseiah the king's son, Azrikam the officer over the house, and Elkanah *who was* second to the king. [8] And the children of Israel carried away captive of their [l]brethren two hundred thousand women, sons, and daughters; and they also took away much [2]spoil from them, and brought the spoil to Samaria.

Israel Returns the Captives

[9] But a [m]prophet of the LORD was there, whose name *was* Oded; and he went out before the army that came to Samaria, and said to them: "Look, [n]because the LORD God of your fathers was angry with Judah, He has delivered them into your hand; but you have killed them in a rage *that* [o]reaches up to heaven. [10] And now you propose to force the children of Judah and Jerusalem to be your [p]male and female slaves; *but are* you not also guilty before the LORD your God? [11] Now hear me, therefore, and return the captives, whom you have taken captive from your brethren, [q]for the fierce wrath of the LORD *is* upon you."

[12] Then some of the heads of the children of Ephraim, Azariah the son of Johanan, Berechiah the son of Meshillemoth, Jehizkiah the son of Shallum, and Amasa the son of Hadlai, stood up against those who came from the war, [13] and said to them, "You shall not bring the captives here, for we *already* have offended the LORD. You intend to add to our sins and to our guilt; for our guilt is great, and *there is* fierce wrath against Israel." [14] So the armed men left the captives and the [3]spoil before the leaders and all the assembly. [15] Then the men [r]who were designated by name rose up and took the captives, and from the [4]spoil they clothed all who were naked among them, dressed them and gave them sandals, [s]gave them food and drink, and anointed them; and they let all the feeble ones ride on donkeys. So they brought them to their brethren at Jericho, [t]the city of palm trees. Then they returned to Samaria.

Assyria Refuses to Help Judah

[16] [u]At the same time King Ahaz sent to the [5]kings of Assyria to help him. [17] For again the [v]Edomites had come, attacked Judah, and carried away captives. [18] [w]The Philistines also had invaded the cities of the lowland and of the South of Judah, and had taken Beth Shemesh, Aijalon, Gederoth, Sochoh with its villages, Timnah with its villages, and Gimzo with its villages; and they dwelt there. [19] For the LORD [6]brought Judah low because of Ahaz king of [x]Israel, for he had [y]encouraged moral decline in Judah and had been continually unfaithful to the LORD. [20] Also

CHAPTER 28

1 [a]2 Kin. 16:2–4

2 [b]Ex. 34:17; Lev. 19:4 [c]Judg. 2:11

3 [d]Josh. 15:8 [e]2 Kin. 23:10 [f][Lev. 18:21]; 2 Kin. 16:3; 2 Chr. 33:6 [g][Lev. 18:24–30]

4 [i]Places for pagan worship

5 [h][Is. 10:5] [i]2 Kin. 16:5, 6; [2 Chr. 24:24]; Is. 7:1, 17

6 [j]2 Kin. 15:27 [k][2 Chr. 29:8]

8 [l]Deut. 28:25, 41; 2 Chr. 11:4 [2]*plunder*

9 [m]2 Chr. 25:15 [n]Ps. 69:26; [Is. 10:5; 47:6]; Ezek. 25:12, 15; 26:2; Obad. 10; [Zech. 1:15] [o]Ezra 9:6; Rev. 18:5

10 [p][Lev. 25:39, 42, 43, 46]

11 [q]Ps. 78:49; James 2:13

14 [3]*plunder*

15 [r]2 Chr. 28:12 [s][Prov. 25:21, 22; Luke 6:27; Rom. 12:20] [t]Deut. 34:3; Judg. 1:16 [4]*plunder*

16 [u]2 Kin. 16:7 [5]LXX, Syr., Vg. *king* (cf. v. 20)

17 [v]2 Chr. 21:10; Obad. 10–14

18 [w]2 Chr. 21:16, 17; Ezek. 16:27, 57

19 [x]2 Kin. 16:2; 2 Chr. 21:2 [y]Ex. 32:25 [6]*humbled Judah*

■ **28:1–27** The account of Ahaz in 2 Kin. 16 is supplemented in 2 Chronicles. Ahaz's reign contrasts sharply with his father's kingdom (ch. 27 note), and the account focuses on how infidelity leads to military defeat.

■ **28:1 Ahaz.** Ahaz reigned together with Jotham 735–732 B.C., and then as sole monarch for sixteen years, 732–716 B.C. If he was twenty when he took office, he was thirty-six when he died, and he would have been only eleven when his son Hezekiah was born (29:1). Some ancient sources give the figure "twenty-five" instead of "twenty" for his age at succession.

■ **28:3 burned his children.** Ahaz's apostasy was so complete that he practiced human sacrifice. See Lev. 18:21; Deut. 12:31; 18:10; 2 Kin. 16:3; 17:17; 21:6; 23:10; 2 Chr. 33:6; Ps. 106:37, 38; Is. 57:5; Jer. 7:30, 31; 19:5; 32:35; Ezek. 16:20, 21; Mic. 6:7.

■ **28:5–15** Ahaz is defeated in battle as a divine judgment on his flagrant apostasy (v. 5).

■ **28:5 king of Syria . . . king of Israel.** Rezin (king of Syria) and Pekah (king of Israel) joined forces against Ahaz (2 Kin. 16:5, 6; Is. 7:1–17).

■ **28:9 Samaria.** Turning from his usual focus on the southern kingdom (Judah), the historian reports that citizens of Samaria, capital of the northern kingdom, obeyed when a prophet spoke to them. This obedience was an instructive contrast to the apostasy of Judah, the southern kingdom.

20 [z]2 Kin. 15:29; 16:7–9; 1 Chr. 5:26 [7]Heb. *Tilgath-Pilneser*

23 [a]2 Chr. 25:14 [b]Jer. 44:17, 18

24 [c]2 Chr. 29:3, 7

25 [8]Places for pagan worship

26 [d]2 Kin. 16:19, 20

27 [e]2 Chr. 21:20; 24:25 [9]Died and joined his ancestors

CHAPTER 29

1 [a]2 Kin. 18:1; 2 Chr. 32:22, 33 [1]*Abi,* 2 Kin. 18:2

3 [b]2 Chr. 28:24; 29:7

5 [c]1 Chr. 15:12; 2 Chr. 29:15, 34; 35:6 [2]*consecrate*

6 [d][Is. 1:4]; Jer. 2:27; Ezek. 8:16 [3]Temple

7 [e]2 Chr. 28:24

8 [f]2 Chr. 24:18 [g]2 Chr. 28:5 [h]1 Kin. 9:8; Jer. 18:16; 19:8; 25:9, 18; 29:18 [i]Deut. 28:32

9 [j]Deut. 28:25; 2 Chr. 28:5–8, 17

10 [k]2 Chr. 15:12; 23:16

11 [l]Num. 3:6; 8:14; 18:2, 6; 2 Chr. 30:16, 17

12 [m]2 Chr. 31:13

[z]Tiglath-Pileser[7] king of Assyria came to him and distressed him, and did not assist him. [21] For Ahaz took part *of the treasures* from the house of the LORD, from the house of the king, and from the leaders, and he gave *it* to the king of Assyria; but he did not help him.

Apostasy and Death of Ahaz

[22] Now in the time of his distress King Ahaz became increasingly unfaithful to the LORD. This *is that* King Ahaz. [23] For [a]he sacrificed to the gods of Damascus which had defeated him, saying, "Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, I will sacrifice to them [b]that they may help me." But they were the ruin of him and of all Israel. [24] So Ahaz gathered the articles of the house of God, cut in pieces the articles of the house of God, [c]shut up the doors of the house of the LORD, and made for himself altars in every corner of Jerusalem. [25] And in every single city of Judah he made [8]high places to burn incense to other gods, and provoked to anger the LORD God of his fathers.

[26] [d]Now the rest of his acts and all his ways, from first to last, indeed they *are* written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. [27] So Ahaz [9]rested with his fathers, and they buried him in the city, in Jerusalem; but they [e]did not bring him into the tombs of the kings of Israel. Then Hezekiah his son reigned in his place.

Hezekiah Reigns in Judah

29 Hezekiah [a]became king *when he was* twenty-five years old, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* [1]Abijah the daughter of Zechariah. [2] And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father David had done.

Hezekiah Cleanses the Temple

[3] In the first year of his reign, in the first month, he [b]opened the doors of the house of the LORD and repaired them. [4] Then he brought in the priests and the Levites, and gathered them in the East Square, [5] and said to them: "Hear me, Levites! Now [2]sanctify yourselves, [c]sanctify the house of the LORD God of your fathers, and carry out the rubbish from the holy *place.* [6] For our fathers have trespassed and done evil in the eyes of the LORD our God; they have forsaken Him, have [d]turned their faces away from the [3]dwelling place of the LORD, and turned *their* backs *on Him.* [7] [e]They have also shut up the doors of the vestibule, put out the lamps, and have not burned incense or offered burnt offerings in the holy *place* to the God of Israel. [8] Therefore the [f]wrath of the LORD fell upon Judah and Jerusalem, and He has [g]given them up to trouble, to desolation, and to [h]jeering, as you see with your [i]eyes. [9] For indeed, because of this [j]our fathers have fallen by the sword; and our sons, our daughters, and our wives *are* in captivity.

[10] "Now *it is* in my heart to make [k]a covenant with the LORD God of Israel, that His fierce wrath may turn away from us. [11] My sons, do not be negligent now, for the LORD has [l]chosen you to stand before Him, to serve Him, and that you should minister to Him and burn incense."

[12] Then these Levites arose: [m]Mahath the son of Amasai and Joel the son of Azariah, of the

■ **28:21 took . . . from the house of the LORD.** See note on 16:2.

did not help him. Tiglath-Pileser of Assyria (745–727 B.C.) gave some temporary relief to Judah from the threats of Syria and Israel (2 Kin. 16:7–9), but Judah became subservient to Assyria.

■ **28:25 made high places.** See note on 21:11.

■ **28:26 the book of the kings.** See Introduction to 1 Chronicles: Author.

■ **28:27 not . . . tombs.** See note on 21:19.

■ **29:1 Hezekiah.** The reign of Hezekiah (716–687 B.C.) begins a new era in the history of Israel and Judah. The northern kingdom had been destroyed by the Assyrians and only Judah remained. Hezekiah brought together representatives from both kingdoms to form a single, reunited kingdom with one king and one temple in Jerusalem. The writer of Chronicles devotes more attention to Hezekiah than any other king except David and Solomon. He uses material from 2 Kin. 18—20, but he supplements it broadly, including an extensive account of Hezekiah's temple reforms and Passover celebration (29:3—31:1). Hezekiah's reign appears as a return to the glory of Solomon's kingdom.

■ **29:3 opened the doors . . . and repaired them.** Hezekiah overturns the actions of his father Ahaz (28:25 note) and restores the gold ornamentation stripped from the temple doors (2 Kin. 16:8, 9).

■ **29:4** Chronicles normally gives attention to matters concerning the priests and Levites (1 Chr. 6:1 note).

■ **29:4–11** Hezekiah's speech stands in contrast with Abijah's earlier assessments (13:6–12 notes). Judah is no longer different from Israel; both have forsaken God. Judah must repent as well.

■ **29:7 shut up the doors.** As Ahaz did (28:24).

■ **29:8 upon Judah and Jerusalem.** Hezekiah asserts that Judah and Jerusalem were under the curse of God for their neglect of the temple.

■ **29:9 in captivity.** During the reign of Ahaz, many people from Judah were taken into exile by the Syrians (28:5–8) and Edomites (28:17). These events foreshadowed the Babylonian captivity to come (36:15–23), making the reign of Hezekiah a persuasive example for restoration after exile.

■ **29:10 in my heart.** The anger of God turned Hezekiah toward Him in repentance, not away from Him in fear.

make a covenant. See note on 15:12.

■ **29:12–14** The historian mentions representatives of the three divisions of the tribe of Levi (v. 12) and the three families of singers (vv. 13, 14). Hezekiah's reforms were widely supported by the Levites and in accordance with the order established under David and Solomon (1 Chr. 6:1 note).

sons of the [n]Kohathites; of the sons of Merari, Kish the son of Abdi and Azariah the son of Jehallelel; of the Gershonites, Joah the son of Zimmah and Eden the son of Joah; [13] of the sons of Elizaphan, Shimri and Jeiel; of the sons of Asaph, Zechariah and Mattaniah; [14] of the sons of Heman, Jehiel and Shimei; and of the sons of Jeduthun, Shemaiah and Uzziel.

[15] And they gathered their brethren, [o]sanctified[4] themselves, and went according to the commandment of the king, at the words of the LORD, [p]to cleanse the house of the LORD. [16] Then the priests went into the inner part of the house of the LORD to cleanse *it,* and brought out all the debris that they found in the temple of the LORD to the court of the house of the LORD. And the Levites took *it* out and carried *it* to the Brook [q]Kidron.

[17] Now they began to [5]sanctify on the first *day* of the first month, and on the eighth day of the month they came to the vestibule of the LORD. So they sanctified the house of the LORD in eight days, and on the sixteenth day of the first month they finished.

[18] Then they went in to King Hezekiah and said, "We have cleansed all the house of the LORD, the altar of burnt offerings with all its articles, and the table of the showbread with all its articles. [19] Moreover all the articles which King Ahaz in his reign had [r]cast aside in his transgression we have prepared and [6]sanctified; and there they *are,* before the altar of the LORD."

Hezekiah Restores Temple Worship

[20] Then King Hezekiah rose early, gathered the rulers of the city, and went up to the house of the LORD. [21] And they brought seven bulls, seven rams, seven lambs, and seven male goats for a [s]sin offering for the kingdom, for the sanctuary, and for Judah. Then he commanded the priests, the sons of Aaron, to offer *them* on the altar of the LORD. [22] So they killed the bulls, and the priests received the blood and [t]sprinkled *it* on the altar. Likewise they killed the rams and sprinkled the blood on the altar. They also killed the lambs and sprinkled the blood on the altar. [23] Then they brought out the male goats *for* the sin offering before the king and the assembly, and they laid their [u]hands on them. [24] And the priests killed them; and they presented their blood on the altar as a sin offering [v]to make an atonement for all Israel, for the king commanded *that* the burnt offering and the sin offering *be made* for all Israel.

[25] [w]And he stationed the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, with stringed instruments, and with harps, [x]according to the commandment of David, of [y]Gad the king's seer, and of Nathan the prophet; [z]for thus *was* the commandment of the LORD by His prophets. [26] The Levites stood with the instruments [a]of David, and the priests with [b]the trumpets. [27] Then Hezekiah commanded *them* to offer the burnt offering on the altar. And when the burnt offering began, [c]the song of the LORD *also* began, with the trumpets and with the instruments of David king of Israel. [28] So all the assembly worshiped, the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded; all *this continued* until the burnt offering was finished. [29] And when they had finished offering, [d]the king and all who were present with him bowed and worshiped. [30] Moreover King Hezekiah and the leaders commanded the Levites to sing praise to the LORD with the words of David and of Asaph the seer. So they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshiped.

[31] Then Hezekiah answered and said, "Now *that* you have consecrated yourselves to the LORD, come near, and bring sacrifices and [e]thank offerings into the house of the LORD." So the assembly brought in sacrifices and thank offerings, and as many as were of a [f]willing heart *brought* burnt offerings. [32] And the number of the burnt offerings which the assembly brought was seventy bulls, one hundred rams, *and* two hundred lambs; all these *were* for a burnt offering to the LORD. [33] The consecrated things *were* six hundred bulls and three thousand sheep. [34] But the priests were too few, so that they could not skin all the burnt offerings; therefore [g]their brethren the Levites helped them until the work was ended and until the *other* priests had [7]sanctified themselves, [h]for the Levites were [i]more diligent in [j]sanctifying themselves than the

12 [n]Num. 3:19, 20

15 [o]2 Chr. 29:5 [p]1 Chr. 23:28 [4]*consecrated*

16 [q]2 Chr. 15:16; 30:14

17 [5]*consecrate*

19 [r]2 Chr. 28:24 [6]*consecrated*

21 [s]Lev. 4:3–14

22 [t]Lev. 8:14, 15, 19, 24; Heb. 9:21

23 [u]Lev. 4:15, 24; 8:14

24 [v]Lev. 14:20

25 [w]1 Chr. 16:4; 25:6 [x]1 Chr. 23:5; 25:1; 2 Chr. 8:14 [y]2 Sam. 24:11 [z]2 Chr. 30:12

26 [a]1 Chr. 23:5; Amos 6:5 [b]Num. 10:8, 10; 1 Chr. 15:24; 16:6; 2 Chr. 5:12

27 [c]2 Chr. 23:18

29 [d]2 Chr. 20:18

31 [e]Lev. 7:12 [f]Ex. 35:5, 22

34 [g]2 Chr. 35:11 [h]2 Chr. 30:3 [i]Ps. 7:10 [j]2 Chr. 29:5 [7]*consecrated*

■ **29:13 Elizaphan.** A prominent leader of the Kohathites (Num. 3:30).

■ **29:16 priests went into the inner part.** The historian offers these details to demonstrate that Hezekiah's renovation strictly accorded with Mosaic legislation.

■ **29:20–36** Hezekiah's dedication of the temple is reported in three parts: sacrifices brought by the leaders (vv. 20–24), arrangement of music (vv. 25–30), and sacrifices brought by the people (vv. 31–36).

■ **29:21 for the kingdom . . . sanctuary, and . . . Judah.** Sacrifices were made on behalf of the royal family, the priests and Levites, and the people. All three groups were involved in the apostasy under Ahaz (2 Kin. 16).

■ **29:24 all Israel.** In connection with the reunited kingdom (chs. 29—36), the expression "all Israel" (30:1; 31:1; 35:3) refers to both Judah together with the refugees from the northern tribes (1 Chr. 11:1 note; 2 Chr. 10:1 note). Hezekiah ordered sacrifices to be offered, not for Judah only (v. 21), but for all the descendants of Israel. This desire to unite is clearly expressed in his arrangements for the Passover (30:1–6).

■ **29:25 cymbals . . . stringed instruments . . . harps.** See note on 1 Chr. 15:16.

■ **29:32–35** These sacrifices were fewer in number, but still a reminder of what Solomon had offered when the temple was dedicated (7:4–6).

35 [k]Lev. 3:15, 16 [l]Num. 15:5–10

priests. 35 Also the burnt offerings *were* in abundance, with [k]the fat of the peace offerings and *with* [l]the drink offerings for *every* burnt offering.

So the service of the house of the LORD was set in order. 36 Then Hezekiah and all the people rejoiced that God had prepared the people, since the events took place so suddenly.

Hezekiah Keeps the Passover

CHAPTER 30

2 [a]Num. 9:10, 11

3 [b]Ex. 12:6, 18 [c]2 Chr. 29:17, 34 [1]The first month, Lev. 23:5; lit. *that time*

5 [2]*established a decree to*

6 [d]Esth. 8:14 [e][Jer. 4:1] [f]2 Kin. 15:19, 29 [g]2 Chr. 28:20

7 [h]Ezek. 20:18 [i]Is. 1:9 [j]2 Chr. 29:8

8 [k]Ex. 32:9 [l]2 Chr. 29:10 [3]Rebellious

9 [m]Ps. 106:46 [n][Ex. 34:6] [o][Is. 55:7]

10 [p]2 Chr. 36:16

11 [q]2 Chr. 11:16; 30:18, 21

12 [r][Phil. 2:13] [s]2 Chr. 29:25

13 [t]Lev. 23:6

14 [u]2 Chr. 28:24 [v]2 Chr. 29:16

15 [w]2 Chr. 29:34 [4]*humbled themselves* [5]*set themselves apart*

16 [x]2 Chr. 35:10, 15 [6]Or *in their proper order*

17 [y]2 Chr. 29:34 [7]*consecrated*

18 [z]2 Chr. 30:1, 11, 25 [a][Num. 9:10]

30 And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah, and also wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh, that they should come to the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, to keep the Passover to the LORD God of Israel. 2 For the king and his leaders and all the assembly in Jerusalem had agreed to keep the Passover in the second [a]month. 3 For they could not keep it [b]at [1]the regular time, [c]because a sufficient number of priests had not consecrated themselves, nor had the people gathered together at Jerusalem. 4 And the matter pleased the king and all the assembly. 5 So they [2]resolved to make a proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba to Dan, that they should come to keep the Passover to the LORD God of Israel at Jerusalem, since they had not done *it* for a long *time* in the *prescribed* manner.

6 Then the [d]runners went throughout all Israel and Judah with the letters from the king and his leaders, and spoke according to the command of the king: "Children of Israel, [e]return to the LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel; then He will return to the remnant of you who have escaped from the hand of [f]the kings of [g]Assyria. 7 And do not be [h]like your fathers and your brethren, who trespassed against the LORD God of their fathers, so that He [i]gave them up to [j]desolation, as you see. 8 Now do not be [k]stiff-necked,[3] as your fathers *were, but* yield yourselves to the LORD; and enter His sanctuary, which He has sanctified forever, and serve the LORD your God, [l]that the fierceness of His wrath may turn away from you. 9 For if you return to the LORD, your brethren and your children *will be treated* with [m]compassion by those who lead them captive, so that they may come back to this land; for the LORD your God *is* [n]gracious and merciful, and will not turn *His* face from you if you [o]return to Him."

10 So the runners passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh, as far as Zebulun; but [p]they laughed at them and mocked them. 11 Nevertheless [q]some from Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem. 12 Also [r]the hand of God was on Judah to give them singleness of heart to obey the command of the king and the leaders, [s]at the word of the LORD.

13 Now many people, a very great assembly, gathered at Jerusalem to keep the Feast of [t]Unleavened Bread in the second month. 14 They arose and took away the [u]altars that *were* in Jerusalem, and they took away all the incense altars and cast *them* into the Brook [v]Kidron. 15 Then they slaughtered the Passover *lambs* on the fourteenth *day* of the second month. The priests and the Levites [4]were [w]ashamed, and [5]sanctified themselves, and brought the burnt offerings to the house of the LORD. 16 They stood in their [x]place [6]according to their custom, according to the Law of Moses the man of God; the priests sprinkled the blood *received* from the hand of the Levites. 17 For *there were* many in the assembly who had not [7]sanctified themselves; [y]therefore the Levites had charge of the slaughter of the Passover *lambs* for everyone *who was* not clean, to sanctify *them* to the LORD. 18 For a multitude of the people, [z]many from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun, had not cleansed themselves, [a]yet they ate the Passover contrary to what

■ **29:36 took place so suddenly.** The restoration of the temple took less than three weeks (vv. 3, 17), an evidence that God was working in the people.

■ **30:1 the Passover.** The writer of Kings emphasizes the Passover under Josiah (2 Kin. 23:21–23) without discussing the celebration arranged by Hezekiah. The writer of Chronicles exalts this celebration that reunited the northern and southern tribes in temple worship. Such reunion was of striking relevance for those who were working for the restoration of Israel in the time following the return of the exiles from Babylon (Introduction to 1 Chronicles: Characteristics and Themes).

■ **30:2 king . . . leaders . . . all the assembly.** Hezekiah followed the good example of David (1 Chr. 13:1).

the second month. Normally, the Unleavened Bread and Passover feasts were to be observed in the first month (Ex. 12:2, 6; Deut. 16:1–8; cf. 2 Chr. 35:1). However, exceptions were made for those who were traveling or were unclean (Num. 9:9–13). Hezekiah applied the exception generously to the entire nation (v. 3).

■ **30:6–9** Hezekiah sent the same letter to both Israel and Judah (v. 6). His letter contrasts with Abijah's speech to the northerners (13:4–12). By Hezekiah's day, Judah and Israel were both in need of repentance and renewal.

■ **30:6 return to the LORD.** See note on 7:14.

the remnant of you who have escaped. The historian uses this terminology in a technical sense, meaning those who had been spared by God to represent the continuation of the nation.

■ **30:9 compassion . . . come back to this land.** Hezekiah recalls Solomon's dedicatory prayer (6:36–39). His concern for the return of those who had been taken into exile was instructive for anyone hoping to see the nation restored in the time following the Babylonian exile (Zech. 8:7, 8).

■ **30:11 Nevertheless some.** The presence of some was important, even if all would not come.

■ **30:16 Law of Moses.** See note on 1 Chr. 16:40.

■ **30:17–20** The failure of some to be ritually cleansed threatened the reunification of the tribes. Hezekiah interceded for the offenders, and God made the reunification of the nation possible (cf. Ex. 32:30–32).

was written. But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, "May the good LORD provide atonement for everyone 19 *who* [b]prepares his heart to seek God, the LORD God of his fathers, though *he is* not *cleansed* according to the purification of the sanctuary." 20 And the LORD listened to Hezekiah and healed the people.

21 So the children of Israel who were present at Jerusalem kept [c]the Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with great gladness; and the Levites and the priests praised the LORD day by day, *singing* to the LORD, accompanied by loud instruments. 22 And Hezekiah gave encouragement to all the Levites [d]who taught the good knowledge of the LORD; and they ate throughout the feast seven days, offering peace offerings and [e]making confession to the LORD God of their fathers.

23 Then the whole assembly agreed to keep *the feast* [f]another seven days, and they kept it *another* seven days with gladness. 24 For Hezekiah king of Judah [g]gave to the assembly a thousand bulls and seven thousand sheep, and the leaders gave to the assembly a thousand bulls and ten thousand sheep; and a great number of priests [h]sanctified[8] themselves. 25 The whole assembly of Judah rejoiced, also the priests and Levites, all the assembly that came from Israel, the sojourners [i]who came from the land of Israel, and those who dwelt in Judah. 26 So there was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the time of [j]Solomon the son of David, king of Israel, *there had* been nothing like this in Jerusalem. 27 Then the priests, the Levites, arose and [k]blessed the people, and their voice was heard; and their prayer came *up* to [l]His holy dwelling place, to heaven.

The Reforms of Hezekiah

31 Now when all this was finished, all Israel who were present went out to the cities of Judah and [a]broke the sacred pillars in pieces, cut down the wooden images, and threw down the [1]high places and the altars—from all Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh—until they had utterly destroyed them all. Then all the children of Israel returned to their own cities, every man to his possession.

2 And Hezekiah appointed [b]the divisions of the priests and the Levites according to their divisions, each man according to his service, the priests and Levites [c]for burnt offerings and peace offerings, to serve, to give thanks, and to praise in the gates of the [2]camp of the LORD. 3 The king also *appointed* a [3]portion of his [d]possessions[4] for the burnt offerings: for the morning and evening burnt offerings, the burnt offerings for the Sabbaths and the New Moons and the set feasts, as *it is* written in the [e]Law of the LORD.

4 Moreover he commanded the people who dwelt in Jerusalem to contribute [f]support[5] for the priests and the Levites, that they might devote themselves to [g]the Law of the LORD.

5 As soon as the commandment was circulated, the children of Israel brought in abundance [h]the firstfruits of grain and wine, oil and honey, and of all the produce of the field; and they brought in abundantly the [i]tithe of everything. 6 And the children of Israel and Judah, who dwelt in the cities of Judah, brought the tithe of oxen and sheep; also the [j]tithe of holy things which were consecrated to the LORD their God they laid in heaps.

7 In the third month they began laying them in heaps, and they finished in the seventh month. 8 And when Hezekiah and the leaders came and saw the heaps, they blessed the LORD and His people Israel. 9 Then Hezekiah questioned the priests and the Levites concerning the heaps. 10 And Azariah the chief priest, from the [k]house of Zadok, answered him and said, [l]"Since *the people* began to bring the offerings into the house of the LORD, we have had enough to eat and have plenty left, for the LORD has blessed His people; and what is left *is* this great [m]abundance."

11 Now Hezekiah commanded *them* to prepare [n]rooms[6] in the house of the LORD, and they prepared them. 12 Then they faithfully brought in the offerings, the tithes, and the dedicated things; [o]Cononiah the Levite had charge of them, and Shimei his brother *was* the next. 13 Jehiel, Azaziah, Nahath, Asahel, Jerimoth, Jozabad, Eliel, Ismachiah, Mahath, and Benaiah *were*

19 [b]2 Chr. 19:3

21 [c]Ex. 12:15; 13:6; 1 Kin. 8:65

22 [d][Deut. 33:10]; 2 Chr. 17:9; 35:3 [e]Ezra 10:11

23 [f]1 Kin. 8:65; 2 Chr. 35:17, 18

24 [g]2 Chr. 35:7, 8 [h]2 Chr. 29:34 [8]*consecrated*

25 [i]2 Chr. 30:11, 18

26 [j]2 Chr. 7:8–10

27 [k]Num. 6:23 [l]Deut. 26:15; Ps. 68:5

CHAPTER 31

1 [a]2 Kin. 18:4 [1]Places for pagan worship

2 [b]1 Chr. 23:6; 24:1 [c]1 Chr. 23:30, 31 [2]Temple

3 [d]2 Chr. 35:7 [e]Num. 28:1—29:40 [3]*share* [4]*property*

4 [f]Num. 18:8; 2 Kin. 12:16; Neh. 13:10; Ezek. 44:29 [g]Mal. 2:7 [5]*the portion due*

5 [h]Ex. 22:29; Neh. 13:12 [i][Lev. 27:30]; Deut. 14:28; 26:12, 13

6 [j][Lev. 27:30]; Deut. 14:28

10 [k]1 Chr. 6:8, 9 [l][Mal. 3:10] [m]Ex. 36:5

11 [n]1 Kin. 6:5–8 [6]*storerooms*

12 [o]2 Chr. 35:9; Neh. 13:13

■ **30:23–27** Just as Solomon's temple celebration was extended (7:8, 9), Hezekiah's feast continued for another week.

■ **30:24 Hezekiah . . . gave.** Hezekiah followed the example of David in supporting the temple at his own expense (1 Chr. 29:3 note; 2 Chr. 35:7, 8 note).

■ **30:27 His holy dwelling place, to heaven.** Note the similar language in Solomon's prayer (6:21, 30, 33, 39).

■ **31:2–21** Apart from 31:20, 21 (cf. 2 Kin. 18:5–7), this material is not in Kings. The author of Chronicles writes in a time when temple worship was being reestablished, and the provisions of Hezekiah would have been of obvious relevance for that task.

■ **31:2 appointed the divisions of the priests and the Levites.** Hezekiah returned to the order of Solomon (8:14), who followed David's design (1 Chr. 6:1 note).

■ **31:3, 4 the Law of the LORD.** See note on 1 Chr. 16:40.

his possessions . . . he commanded the people. As David had done, Hezekiah gave from his own treasury before appealing to the people (1 Chr. 29:3 note).

overseers under the hand of Cononiah and Shimei his brother, at the commandment of Hezekiah the king and Azariah the [p]ruler of the house of God. 14 Kore the son of Imnah the Levite, the keeper of the East Gate, *was* over the [q]freewill offerings to God, to distribute the offerings of the LORD and the most holy things. 15 And under him *were* [r]Eden, Miniamin, Jeshua, Shemaiah, Amariah, and Shecaniah, *his* faithful assistants in [s]the cities of the priests, to distribute [t]allotments to their brethren by divisions, to the great as well as the small.

16 Besides those males from three years old and up who were written in the genealogy, they distributed to everyone who entered the house of the LORD his daily portion for the work of his service, by his division, 17 and to the priests who were written in the genealogy according to their father's house, and to the Levites [u]from twenty years old and up according to their work, by their divisions, 18 and to all who were written in the genealogy—their little ones and their wives, their sons and daughters, the whole company of them—for in their faithfulness they [7]sanctified themselves in holiness.

19 Also for the sons of Aaron the priests, *who were* in [v]the fields of the common-lands of their cities, in every single city, *there were* men who were [w]designated by name to distribute portions to all the males among the priests and to all who were listed by genealogies among the Levites.

20 Thus Hezekiah did throughout all Judah, and he [x]did what *was* good and right and true before the LORD his God. 21 And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, in the law and in the commandment, to seek his God, he did *it* with all his heart. So he [y]prospered.

Sennacherib Boasts Against the LORD

32 After [a]these deeds of faithfulness, Sennacherib king of Assyria came and entered Judah; he encamped against the fortified cities, thinking to win them over to himself. 2 And when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come, and that his purpose was to make war against Jerusalem, 3 he consulted with his leaders and [1]commanders to stop the water from the springs which *were* outside the city; and they helped him. 4 Thus many people gathered together who stopped all the [b]springs and the brook that ran through the land, saying, "Why should the [2]kings of Assyria come and find much water?" 5 And [c]he strengthened himself, [d]built up all the wall that was broken, raised *it* up to the towers, and *built* another wall outside; also he repaired [3]the [e]Millo *in* the City of David, and made [4]weapons and shields in abundance. 6 Then he set military captains over the people, gathered them together to him in the open square of the city gate, and [f]gave them encouragement, saying, 7 [g]"Be strong and courageous; [h]do not be afraid nor dismayed before the king of Assyria, nor before all the multitude that *is* with him; for [i]*there are* more with us than with him. 8 With him *is* an [j]arm of flesh; but [k]with us *is* the LORD our God, to help us and to fight our battles." And the people were strengthened by the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.

9 [l]After this Sennacherib king of Assyria sent his servants to Jerusalem (but he and all the forces with him *laid siege* against Lachish), to Hezekiah king of Judah, and to all Judah who *were* in Jerusalem, saying, 10 [m]"Thus says Sennacherib king of Assyria: 'In what do you trust, that you remain under siege in Jerusalem? 11 Does not Hezekiah persuade you to give yourselves over to die by famine and by thirst, saying, [n]"The LORD our God will deliver us from the hand of the king of Assyria"? 12 [o]Has not the same Hezekiah taken away His high places and His altars, and commanded Judah and Jerusalem, saying, "You shall worship before one altar and burn incense on [p]it"? 13 Do you not know what I and my fathers have done to all the peoples of *other* lands? [q]Were the gods of the nations of those lands in any way able to deliver their lands out of my hand? 14 Who *was there* among all the gods of those nations that my fathers utterly destroyed that could deliver his people from my hand, that your God should be able to deliver you from my [r]hand? 15 Now therefore, [s]do not let Hezekiah deceive you or persuade you like this, and do not believe him; for no god of any nation or kingdom was able to deliver his people from my hand or the hand of my fathers. How much less will your God deliver you from my hand?' "

13 [p]1 Chr. 9:11; Jer. 20:1
14 [q]Deut. 23:23; 2 Chr. 35:8
15 [r]2 Chr. 29:12 [s]Josh. 21:1–3, 9 [t]1 Chr. 9:26
17 [u]1 Chr. 23:24, 27
18 [7]*consecrated*
19 [v]Lev. 25:34; Num. 35:1–4 [w]2 Chr. 31:12–15
20 [x]2 Kin. 20:3; 22:2
21 [y]2 Chr. 26:5; 32:30; Ps. 1:3

CHAPTER 32

1 [a]2 Kin. 18:13—19:37; Is. 36:1—37:38
3 [1]Lit. *mighty men*
4 [b]2 Kin. 20:20 [2]So with MT, Vg.; Arab., LXX, Syr. *king*
5 [c]Is. 22:9, 10 [d]2 Kin. 25:4; 2 Chr. 25:23 [e]2 Sam. 5:9; 1 Kin. 9:15, 24; 11:27; 2 Kin. 12:20; 1 Chr. 11:8 [3]Lit. *The Landfill* [4]*javelins*
6 [f]2 Chr. 30:22; Is. 40:2
7 [g][Deut. 31:6] [h]2 Chr. 20:15 [i]2 Kin. 6:16; [Rom. 8:31]
8 [j][Jer. 17:5; 1 John 4:4] [k]Ex. 14:13; [1 Sam. 17:45–47]; 2 Chr. 13:12; 20:17; [Rom. 8:31]
9 [l]2 Kin. 18:17
10 [m]2 Kin. 18:19
11 [n]2 Kin. 18:30
12 [o]2 Kin. 18:22 [p]2 Chr. 31:1, 2
13 [q]2 Kin. 18:33–35
14 [r][Is. 10:5–12]
15 [s]2 Kin. 18:29

■ **31:16 three years old.** Perhaps this refers to the inclusion of children in the distribution of food (see also v. 18). However, "three" could be a copyist's error for "thirty," the age of active service in the temple (1 Chr. 23:3 note).

■ **31:21 So he prospered.** The Lord rewarded Hezekiah for his faithfulness and obedience. He delivered him from invasion (32:1), healed his illness (32:24), forgave his pride (32:26), and gave him wealth (32: 27–31).

■ **32:1–23** In Kings the account of Sennacherib's invasion is the most prominent episode of Hezekiah's reign (2 Kin. 18:17—19:37). Chronicles gives a shorter account, using it to illustrate the divine blessing granted because of fidelity, trust, and prayer.

■ **32:7, 8** Hezekiah's speech demonstrated his full reliance on divine power to overcome his great enemy.

■ **32:9** The writer of Chronicles does not repeat what 2 Kings says about Hezekiah's payment of tribute to Sennacherib from the treasures of the temple, or the Assyrian's charge that Hezekiah had an alliance with Egypt (2 Kin. 18:14–27). He emphasizes Hezekiah's virtues.

16 Furthermore, his servants spoke against the LORD God and against His servant Hezekiah.
17 He also wrote letters to revile the LORD God of Israel, and to speak against Him, saying, [t]"As the gods of the nations of *other* lands have not delivered their people from my hand, so the God of Hezekiah will not deliver His people from my [u]hand." 18 [v]Then they called out with a loud voice in [5]Hebrew to the people of Jerusalem who *were* on the wall, to frighten them and trouble them, that they might take the city. 19 And they spoke against the God of Jerusalem, as against the gods of the people of the earth—[w]the work of men's hands.

Sennacherib's Defeat and Death

20 [x]Now because of this King Hezekiah and [y]the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz, prayed and cried out to heaven. 21 [z]Then the LORD sent an angel who cut down every mighty man of valor, leader, and captain in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned [a]shamefaced to his own land. And when he had gone into the temple of his god, some of his own offspring struck him down with the sword there.
22 Thus the LORD saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib the king of Assyria, and from the hand of all *others,* and [6]guided them on every side. 23 And many brought gifts to the LORD at Jerusalem, and [b]presents[7] to Hezekiah king of Judah, so that he was [c]exalted in the sight of all nations thereafter.

Hezekiah Humbles Himself

24 [d]In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death, and he prayed to the LORD; and He spoke to him and gave him a sign. 25 But Hezekiah [e]did not repay according to the favor *shown* him, for [f]his heart was lifted up; [g]therefore wrath was looming over him and over Judah and Jerusalem. 26 [h]Then Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD did not come upon them [i]in the days of Hezekiah.

Hezekiah's Wealth and Honor

27 Hezekiah had very great riches and honor. And he made himself treasuries for silver, for gold, for precious stones, for spices, for shields, and for all kinds of desirable items; 28 storehouses for the harvest of grain, wine, and oil; and stalls for all kinds of livestock, and [8]folds for flocks. 29 Moreover he provided cities for himself, and possessions of flocks and herds in abundance; for [j]God had given him very much property. 30 [k]This same Hezekiah also stopped the water outlet of Upper Gihon, and [9]brought the water by tunnel to the west side of the City of David. Hezekiah [l]prospered in all his works.
31 However, *regarding* the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, whom they [m]sent to him to inquire about the wonder that was *done* in the land, God withdrew from him, in order to [n]test him, that He might know all *that was* in his heart.

Death of Hezekiah

32 Now the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and his goodness, indeed they *are* written in [o]the vision of Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, *and* in the [p]book of the kings of Judah and Israel. 33 [q]So Hezekiah [r]rested with his fathers, and they buried him in the upper tombs of the sons of David; and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem [s]honored him at his death. Then Manasseh his son reigned in his place.

Manasseh Reigns in Judah

33 Manasseh [a]*was* twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. 2 But he did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to the [b]abominations of

17 [t]2 Kin. 19:9; [1 Cor. 8:5, 6] [u]2 Kin. 19:12; Dan. 3:15
18 [v]2 Kin. 18:28; Ps. 59:6 [5]Lit. *Judean*
19 [w]2 Kin. 19:18; [Ps. 96:5; 115:4–8]
20 [x]2 Kin. 19:15 [y]2 Kin. 19:2
21 [z]2 Kin. 19:35; Is. 10:12–19; Zech. 14:3 [a]Ps. 44:7
22 [6]LXX *gave them rest;* Vg. *gave them treasures*
23 [b]2 Sam. 8:10; 2 Chr. 17:5; 26:8; Ps. 45:12 [c]2 Chr. 1:1 [7]Lit. *precious things*
24 [d]2 Kin. 20:1–11; Is. 38:1–8
25 [e]Ps. 116:12 [f]2 Chr. 26:16; [Hab. 2:4] [g]2 Chr. 24:18
26 [h]Jer. 26:18, 19 [i]2 Kin. 20:19
28 [8]So with LXX, Vg.; Arab., Syr. omit *folds for flocks;* MT *flocks for sheepfolds*
29 [j]1 Chr. 29:12
30 [k]Is. 22:9–11 [l]2 Chr. 31:21 [9]Lit. *brought it straight to* (cf. 2 Kin. 20:20)
31 [m]2 Kin. 20:12; Is. 39:1 [n][Deut. 8:2, 16]
32 [o]Is. 36—39 [p]2 Kin. 18—20
33 [q]1 Kin. 1:21; 2 Kin. 20:21 [r]Ps. 112:6; Prov. 10:7 [s]Died and joined his ancestors

CHAPTER 33

1 [a]2 Kin. 21:1–9
2 [b][Deut. 18:9–12]; 2 Chr. 28:3; [Jer. 15:4]

■ **32:20 Hezekiah and . . . Isaiah . . . prayed.** There is a more detailed account of these events in 2 Kin. 19:1–34. On the value of prayer in battle, see 6:34 note.

■ **32:24–26** There is a fuller account of this illness and prayer in 2 Kin. 20:1–11.

■ **32:25 heart was lifted up.** See note on 26:16.

■ **32:27–29 very great riches.** Hezekiah's wealth recalls the wealth of Solomon's kingdom (ch. 1; 9:13–28).

■ **32:31** The historian abbreviates the record of 2 Kin. 20:12–19 (cf. Is. 39) in which Isaiah told Hezekiah that his treasures would be taken to Babylon. The author, apparently assuming that his readers are familiar with the account in Kings, leaves out Isaiah's harsh rebuke.

ambassadors . . . of Babylon. The Babylonian ambassadors came to investigate reports of Hezekiah's "sign" (v. 24; cf. 2 Kin. 20:8–11). Apparently, they desired a military alliance with Hezekiah against Assyria.

to test him. Hezekiah was tested to see whether he would form an alliance with Babylon against Assyria. As the Book of Kings reports, Hezekiah failed the test (2 Kin. 20:12–19).

■ **32:32 written in the vision of Isaiah the prophet.** The historian may be referring to the canonical Book of Isaiah (called a "vision," Is. 1:1).

■ **33:1–20** This portrait of Manasseh forms a striking contrast with 2 Kin. 21:1–18. The harsh condemnation of Manasseh (2 Kin. 21:10–16) is

the nations whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel. 3 For he rebuilt the [1]high places which Hezekiah his father had [c]broken down; he raised up altars for the Baals, and [d]made wooden images; and he worshiped [e]all [2]the host of heaven and served them. 4 He also built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, [f]"In Jerusalem shall My name be forever." 5 And he built altars for all the host of heaven [g]in the two courts of the house of the LORD. 6 [h]Also he caused his sons to pass through the fire in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom; he practiced [i]soothsaying, used witchcraft and sorcery, and [j]consulted mediums and spiritists. He did much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger. 7 [k]He even set a carved image, the idol which he had made, in the [3]house of God, of which God had said to David and to Solomon his son, [l]"In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put My name forever; 8 [m]and I will not again remove the foot of Israel from the land which I have appointed for your fathers—only if they are careful to do all that I have commanded them, according to the whole law and the statutes and the ordinances by the hand of Moses." 9 So Manasseh seduced Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to do more evil than the nations whom the LORD had destroyed before the children of Israel.

Manasseh Restored After Repentance

10 And the LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they would not [4]listen. 11 [n]Therefore the LORD brought upon them the captains of the army of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh with [5]hooks, [o]bound him with [6]bronze *fetters,* and carried him off to Babylon. 12 Now when he was in affliction, he implored the LORD his God, and [p]humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, 13 and prayed to Him; and He [q]received his entreaty, heard his supplication, and brought him back to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh [r]knew that the LORD *was* God.

14 After this he built a wall outside the City of David on the west side of [s]Gihon, in the valley, as far as the entrance of the Fish Gate; and *it* [t]enclosed Ophel, and he raised it to a very great height. Then he put military captains in all the fortified cities of Judah. 15 He took away [u]the foreign gods and the idol from the house of the LORD, and all the altars that he had built in the mount of the house of the LORD and in Jerusalem; and he cast *them* out of the city. 16 He also repaired the altar of the LORD, sacrificed peace offerings and [v]thank offerings on it, and commanded Judah to serve the LORD God of Israel. 17 [w]Nevertheless the people still sacrificed on the [7]high places, *but* only to the LORD their God.

Death of Manasseh

18 Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, his prayer to his God, and the words of [x]the seers who spoke to him in the name of the LORD God of Israel, indeed they *are written* in the [8]book of the kings of Israel. 19 Also his prayer and *how God* received his entreaty, and all his sin and trespass, and the sites where he built [9]high places and set up wooden images and carved images, be-

3 [c]2 Kin. 18:4 [d]Deut. 16:21 [e]Deut. 17:3 [1]Places for pagan worship [2]The gods of the Assyrians
4 [f]2 Chr. 6:6; 7:16
5 [g]2 Chr. 4:9
6 [h][Lev. 18:21] [i]Deut. 18:11 [j]2 Kin. 21:6
7 [k]2 Chr. 25:14 [l]Ps. 132:14 [3]Temple
8 [m]2 Sam. 7:10
10 [4]*obey*
11 [n]Deut. 28:36 [o]2 Chr. 36:6 [5]Nose hooks, 2 Kin. 19:28 [6]*chains*
12 [p]2 Chr. 7:14; 32:26
13 [q]Ezra 8:23 [r]Dan. 4:25
14 [s]1 Kin. 1:33 [t]2 Chr. 27:3
15 [u]2 Chr. 33:3, 5, 7
16 [v]Lev. 7:12
17 [w]2 Chr. 32:12 [7]Places for pagan worship
18 [x]1 Sam. 9:9 [8]Lit. *words*
19 [9]Places for pagan worship

omitted, and there is instead an account of his exile, repentance, return, and reforms (vv. 11–17). The writer of Kings blames Manasseh for the downfall of Jerusalem (2 Kin. 21:11–15). Knowing this, the historian of Chronicles encourages his readers by demonstrating that even the worst of sinners can be forgiven and restored through repentance, humility, and prayer.

■ **33:1 Manasseh . . . fifty-five years.** Manasseh reigned 696–642 B.C., the longest reign of any king in Judah.

■ **33:2 abominations of the nations.** Note the repetition of this theme in v. 9. See the similar evaluation of Ahaz (28:3). Manasseh's sins were so great that he deserved destruction as much as the Canaanites whom God destroyed during the conquest (Gen. 15:16).

■ **33:4 My name.** See v. 7 and note on 1 Chr. 13:6.

■ **33:6 his sons to pass through the fire.** This is another terrible similarity between Manasseh and Ahaz (28:3 note; 33:2 note).

■ **33:8 Moses.** See note on 1 Chr. 16:40.

■ **33:10 the LORD spoke.** The historian abbreviates the fuller description in 2 Kin. 21:10–15.

■ **33:11–13** The author adds a report of Manasseh's exile, repentance, and return.

■ **33:11 the king of Assyria.** Either Esarhaddon (681–669 B.C.) or Ashurbanipal (669–627 B.C.).

to Babylon. It is possible that Manasseh was involved in the rebellion (652–648 B.C.) of Shamash-Shum-Ukin of Babylon against the Assyrian king, Ashurbanipal. Manasseh's captivity in Babylon and his return to the Promised Land might remind the readers of their own deportation to Babylon and their recent restoration.

■ **33:12, 13** Manasseh's prayer and restoration were in line with Solomon's temple dedication (6:36–39) and God's response to it (7:14 note).

■ **33:14–16** For similar reforms see 17:1–6.

■ **33:14** The historian notes Manasseh's building projects as a sign of God's blessing.

■ **33:15 all the altars.** The writer of Kings notes that Josiah had to destroy altars Manasseh had erected (2 Kin. 23:12). Apparently, Manasseh's reforms were incomplete.

■ **33:18, 19 the book of the kings of Israel . . . sayings of Hozai.** See Introduction to 1 Chronicles: Author.

fore he was humbled, indeed they *are* written among the sayings of [l]Hozai. 20[y]So Manasseh rested with his fathers, and they buried him in his own house. Then his son Amon reigned in his place.

Amon's Reign and Death

21 [z]Amon *was* twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. 22 But he did evil in the sight of the LORD, as his father Manasseh had done; for Amon sacrificed to all the carved images which his father Manasseh had made, and served them. 23 And he did not humble himself before the LORD, [a]as his father Manasseh had humbled himself; but Amon trespassed more and more.

24 [b]Then his servants conspired against him, and [c]killed him in his own house. 25 But the people of the land executed all those who had conspired against King Amon. Then the people of the land made his son Josiah king in his place.

Josiah Reigns in Judah

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

3 For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was still [b]young, he began to [c]seek the God of his father David; and in the twelfth year he began [d]to purge Judah and Jerusalem [e]of the [f]high places, the wooden images, the carved images, and the molded images. 4 [f]They broke down the altars of the Baals in his presence, and the incense altars which *were* above them he cut down; and the wooden images, the carved images, and the molded images he broke in pieces, and made dust of them [g]and scattered *it* on the graves of those who had sacrificed to them. 5 He also [h]burned the bones of the priests on their [i]altars, and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem. 6 And *so he did* in the cities of Manasseh, Ephraim, and Simeon, as far as Naphtali and all around, with [2]axes. 7 When he had broken down the altars and the wooden images, had [j]beaten the carved images into powder, and cut down all the incense altars throughout all the land of Israel, he returned to Jerusalem.

Hilkiah Finds the Book of the Law

8 [k]In the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the land and the [3]temple, he sent [l]Shaphan the son of Azaliah, Maaseiah the [m]governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of the LORD his God. 9 When they came to Hilkiah the high priest, they delivered [n]the money that was brought into the house of God, which the Levites who kept the doors had gathered from the hand of Manasseh and Ephraim, from all the [o]remnant of Israel, from all Judah and Benjamin, and *which* they had brought back to Jerusalem. 10 Then they put *it* in the hand of the foremen who had the oversight of the house of the LORD; and they gave it to the workmen who worked in the house of the LORD, to repair and restore the house. 11 They gave *it* to the craftsmen and builders to buy hewn stone and timber for beams, and to floor the houses which the kings of Judah had destroyed. 12 And the men did the work faithfully. Their overseers *were* Jahath and Obadiah the Levites, of the sons of Merari, and Zechariah and Meshullam, of the sons of the Kohathites, to supervise. *Others of* the Levites, all of whom were skillful with instruments of music, 13 *were* [p]over the burden bearers and *were* overseers of all who did work in any kind of service. [q]And *some* of the Levites *were* scribes, officers, and gatekeepers.

14 Now when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the LORD,

19 [l]LXX *the seers*

20 [y]1 Kin. 1:21; 2 Kin. 21:18

21 [z]2 Kin. 21:19–24; 1 Chr. 3:14

23 [a]2 Chr. 33:12, 19

24 [b]2 Kin. 21:23, 24; 2 Chr. 24:25 [c]2 Chr. 25:27

CHAPTER 34

1 [a]2 Kin. 22:1, 2; Jer. 1:2; 3:6

3 [b]Eccl. 12:1 [c]2 Chr. 15:2; [Prov. 8:17] [d]1 Kin. 13:2 [e]2 Chr. 33:17–19, 22 [f]Places for pagan worship

4 [f]Lev. 26:30; 2 Kin. 23:4 [g]2 Kin. 23:6

5 [h]1 Kin. 13:2 [i]2 Kin. 23:20

6 [2]Lit. *swords*

7 [j]Deut. 9:21

8 [k]2 Kin. 22:3–20 [l]2 Kin. 25:22 [m]2 Chr. 18:25 [3]Lit. *house*

9 [n]2 Kin. 12:4 [o]2 Chr. 30:6

13 [p]2 Chr. 8:10 [q]1 Chr. 23:4, 5

■ **33:20 buried him in his own house.** See note on 21:19.

■ **33:21–25** See 2 Kin. 21:19–26.

■ **33:21 Amon . . . two years.** He reigned 642–640 B.C.

■ **34:1—36:1** Josiah's reign is also recorded in 2 Kin. 22:1—23:30.

■ **34:1 Josiah . . . thirty-one years.** Josiah reigned 640–609 B.C.

■ **34:3—35:19** The historian bases his account of Josiah's reforms on 2 Kin. 22:3—23:23, but the order of events differs. Broadly speaking, in 2 Kings Josiah's reforms are summarized geographically: discovery of the book in the temple (2 Kin. 22:3—23:3), reformation of city and nation (2 Kin. 23:4–20), and Passover celebration at the temple (2 Kin. 23:21–23). The historian of Chronicles orders the events chronologically: reforming the city and nation (34:3–7), discovering the book in the temple (34:8–33), and celebrating the Passover (35:1–19). References to the eighth and twelfth years (34:3) and the eighteenth year (34:8; 35:19) indicate that the reforms began before the discovery of the book.

■ **34:3 while he was still young.** Josiah began to reverse the policies of Amon at an early age.

he began to purge. Josiah's removal of idolatry is reported more completely in 2 Kin. 23:4–20.

■ **34:12 the Levites.** The involvement of the Levites would ensure that Josiah's reforms were according to the patterns established by David (1 Chr. 6), Solomon (2 Chr. 7:6; 8:14) and Hezekiah (29:2–19).

instruments of music. See note on 1 Chr. 15:16.

Hilkiah the priest [r]found the Book of the Law of the LORD *given* by Moses. 15 Then Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe. "I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the LORD." And Hilkiah gave the [s]book to Shaphan. 16 So Shaphan carried the book to the king, bringing the king word, saying, "All that was committed to your servants they are doing. 17 And they have [t]gathered the money that was found in the house of the LORD, and have delivered it into the hand of the overseers and the workmen." 18 Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, "Hilkiah the priest has given me a book." And Shaphan read it before the king.

19 Thus it happened, when the king heard the words of the Law, that he tore his clothes. 20 Then the king commanded Hilkiah, [u]Ahikam the son of Shaphan, [5]Abdon the son of Micah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant of the king, saying, 21 "Go, inquire of the LORD for me, and for those who are left in Israel and Judah, concerning the words of the book that is found; for great *is* the wrath of the LORD that is poured out on us, because our fathers have not [v]kept the word of the LORD, to do according to all that is written in this book."

22 So Hilkiah and those the king *had appointed* went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of [6]Tokhath, the son of [7]Hasrah, keeper of the wardrobe. (She dwelt in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter.) And they spoke to her to that *effect.*

23 Then she answered them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'Tell the man who sent you to Me, 24 "Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will [w]bring calamity on this place and on its inhabitants, all the curses that are written in the [x]book which they have read before the king of Judah, 25 because they have forsaken Me and burned incense to other gods, that they might provoke Me to anger with all the works of their hands. Therefore My wrath will be poured out on this place, and not be quenched.' " ' 26 But as for the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, in this manner you shall speak to him, 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel: "*Concerning* the words which you have heard— 27 because your heart was tender, and you humbled yourself before God when you heard His words against this place and against its inhabitants, and you humbled yourself before Me, and you tore your clothes and wept before Me, I also have heard *you,*" says the [y]LORD. 28 "Surely I will gather you to your fathers, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace; and your eyes shall not see all the calamity which I will bring on this place and its inhabitants." ' " So they brought back word to the king.

Josiah Restores True Worship

29 [z]Then the king sent and gathered all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. 30 The king went up to the house of the LORD, with all the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem—the priests and the Levites, and all the people, great and small. And he [z]read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant which had been found in the house of the LORD. 31 Then the king [a]stood in [b]his place and made a [c]covenant before the LORD, to follow the LORD, and to keep His commandments and His testimonies and His statutes with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant that were written in this book. 32 And he made all who were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin take a stand. So the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers. 33 Thus Josiah removed all the [d]abominations from all the country that *belonged* to the children of Israel, and made all who were present in Israel [8]diligently serve the LORD their God. [e]All his days they did not depart from following the LORD God of their fathers.

Josiah Keeps the Passover

35 Now [a]Josiah kept a Passover to the LORD in Jerusalem, and they slaughtered the Passover *lambs* on the [b]fourteenth *day* of the first month. 2 And he set the priests in their [c]duties and [d]encouraged them for the service of the house of the LORD. 3 Then he said to the Levites [e]who taught all Israel, who were holy to the LORD: [f]"Put the holy ark [g]in the house which Solomon the son of David, king of Israel, built. [h]*It shall* no longer *be* a burden on *your* shoul-

14 [r]2 Kin. 22:8
15 [s]Deut. 31:24, 26
17 [t]Lit. *poured out*
20 [u]Jer. 26:24 [5]*Achbor the son of Michaiah,* 2 Kin. 22:12
21 [v]2 Kin. 17:15–19
22 [6]*Tikvah,* 2 Kin. 22:14 [7]*Harhas,* 2 Kin. 22:14
24 [w]2 Chr. 36:14–20 [x]Deut. 28:15–68
27 [y]2 Kin. 22:19; 2 Chr. 12:7; 30:6; 33:12, 13
29 [z]2 Kin. 23:1–3
30 [z]Neh. 8:1–3
31 [a]2 Chr. 6:13 [b]2 Kin. 11:14; 23:3; 2 Chr. 30:16 [c]2 Chr. 23:16; 29:10
33 [d]1 Kin. 11:5; 2 Chr. 33:2 [e]Jer. 3:10 [8]Lit. *serve to serve*

CHAPTER 35

1 [a]2 Kin. 23:21, 22 [b]Ex. 12:6; Num. 9:3; Ezra 6:19
2 [c]2 Chr. 23:18; Ezra 6:18 [d]2 Chr. 29:5–15
3 [e]Deut. 33:10; 2 Chr. 17:8, 9; Neh. 8:7 [f]2 Chr. 34:14 [g]Ex. 40:21; 2 Chr. 5:7 [h]1 Chr. 23:26

■ **34:15 the Book of the Law . . . of the LORD.** Probably Deuteronomy (2 Kin. 22:8 note). The priests delivered the book to Josiah, who accepted it as the guide for his reforms (cf. Ezra 7:6–10; Neh. 8; 9).

■ **34:23–28** Huldah the prophetess announced divine judgment because of the violation of God's law, but Josiah's humility had the effect of postponing disaster (1 Chr. 28:9 note).

■ **34:30 the Covenant.** Josiah promulgated the law of God to the people and swore himself to obey it. He required the people to join him in this public renewal of God's relationship with them (v. 32).

■ **35:1 Passover.** The Passover celebrated in Josiah's eighteenth year is mentioned briefly in 2 Kin. 23:21–23, but described here in detail. Like Hezekiah before him (30:1 note), Josiah enthusiastically observed this national celebration in the temple at Jerusalem (see also Ezra 6:19–22).

first month. See note on 30:2.

■ **35:3 all Israel.** This includes people from the northern and southern kingdoms. Like Hezekiah, Josiah presided over a reunion of the people (30:1 note).

ders. Now serve the LORD your God and His people Israel. 4 Prepare *yourselves* [i]according to your fathers' [j]houses, according to your divisions, following the [k]written instruction of David king of Israel and the [l]written instruction of Solomon his son. 5 And [m]stand in the holy *place* according to the divisions of the fathers' houses of your brethren the *lay* people, and *according to* the division of the father's house of the Levites. 6 So slaughter the Passover *offerings,* [n]consecrate yourselves, and prepare *them* for your brethren, that *they* may do according to the word of the LORD by the hand of Moses."

7 Then Josiah [o]gave the *lay* people lambs and young goats from the flock, all for Passover *offerings* for all who were present, to the number of thirty thousand, as well as three thousand cattle; these *were* from the king's [p]possessions. 8 And his [q]leaders gave willingly to the people, to the priests, and to the Levites. Hilkiah, Zechariah, and Jehiel, rulers of the house of God, gave to the priests for the Passover *offerings* two thousand six hundred *from the flock,* and three hundred cattle. 9 Also [r]Conaniah, his brothers Shemaiah and Nethanel, and Hashabiah and Jeiel and Jozabad, chief of the Levites, gave to the Levites for Passover *offerings* five thousand *from the flock* and five hundred cattle.

10 So the service was prepared, and the priests [s]stood in their places, and the [t]Levites in their divisions, according to the king's command. 11 And they slaughtered the Passover *offerings;* and the priests [u]sprinkled *the blood* with their hands, while the Levites [v]skinned *the animals.* 12 Then they removed the burnt offerings that *they* might give them to the divisions of the fathers' houses of the *lay* people, to offer to the LORD, as *it is* written [w]in the Book of Moses. And so *they did* with the cattle. 13 Also they [x]roasted the Passover *offerings* with fire according to the ordinance; but the *other* holy *offerings* they [y]boiled in pots, in caldrons, and in pans, and divided *them* quickly among all the *lay* people. 14 Then afterward they prepared portions for themselves and for the priests, because the priests, the sons of Aaron, *were busy* in offering burnt offerings and fat until night; therefore the Levites prepared portions for themselves and for the priests, the sons of Aaron. 15 And the singers, the sons of Asaph, *were* in their places, according to the [z]command of David, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun the king's seer. Also the gatekeepers [a]were at each gate; they did not have to leave their position, because their brethren the Levites prepared portions for them.

16 So all the service of the LORD was prepared the same day, to keep the Passover and to offer burnt offerings on the altar of the LORD, according to the command of King Josiah. 17 And the children of Israel who were present kept the Passover at that time, and the Feast of [b]Unleavened Bread for seven days. 18 [c]There had been no Passover kept in Israel like that since the days of Samuel the prophet; and none of the kings of Israel had kept such a Passover as Josiah kept, with the priests and the Levites, all Judah and Israel who were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 19 In the eighteenth year of the reign of Josiah this Passover was kept.

Josiah Dies in Battle

20 [d]After all this, when Josiah had prepared the temple, Necho king of Egypt came up to fight against [e]Carchemish by the Euphrates; and Josiah went out against him. 21 But he sent messengers to him, saying, "What have I to do with you, king of Judah? *I have* not *come* against you this day, but against the house with which I have war; for God commanded me to make haste. Refrain *from meddling with* God, who *is* with me, lest He destroy you." 22 Nevertheless Josiah would not turn his face from him, but [f]disguised himself so that he might fight with him, and did not heed the words of Necho from the mouth of God. So he came to fight in the Valley of Megiddo.

23 And the archers shot King Josiah; and the king said to his servants, "Take me away, for I am severely wounded." 24 [g]His servants therefore took him out of that chariot and put him in the

4 [i]1 Chr. 9:10–13 [j]1 Chr. 23—26 [k]2 Chr. 8:14 [l]*households*

5 [m]Ps. 134:1

6 [n]2 Chr. 29:5, 15

7 [o]2 Chr. 30:24 [p]2 Chr. 31:3

8 [q]Num. 7:2

9 [r]2 Chr. 31:12

10 [s]Ezra 6:18; Heb. 9:6 [t]2 Chr. 5:12; 7:6; 8:14, 15; 13:10; 29:25–34

11 [u]Ex. 12:22; 2 Chr. 29:22 [v]2 Chr. 29:34

12 [w]Lev. 3:3; Ezra 6:18

13 [x]Ex. 12:8, 9; Deut. 16:7 [y]1 Sam. 2:13–15

15 [z]1 Chr. 25:1–6 [a]1 Chr. 9:17, 18

17 [b]Ex. 12:15; 13:6; 2 Chr. 30:21

18 [c]2 Kin. 23:22, 23

20 [d]2 Kin. 23:29 [e]Is. 10:9; Jer. 46:2

22 [f]1 Kin. 22:30; 2 Chr. 18:29

24 [g]2 Kin. 23:30

■ **35:4 written instruction of David . . . and . . . Solomon.** Josiah's celebration could stand as an example to future generations because it was conducted according to the recognized standards of David and Solomon.

■ **35:6 the word of the Lord by the hand of Moses.** See note on 1 Chr. 16:40.

■ **35:7, 8** Josiah followed a pattern similar to David (1 Chr. 29:3 note) and Hezekiah (30:24 note). His own contributions were followed by enthusiastic contributions from others.

■ **35:18 no Passover . . . like that since the days of Samuel.** The writer makes a similar observation about Hezekiah's Passover (30:26).

■ **35:20** Even a king who "had prepared the temple" would suffer divine retribution if he ignored the word of God. Josiah fell in battle because he refused to obey the divinely directed words of Pharaoh Necho (v.22).

■ **35:21 house with which I have war.** It is not clear why Josiah wanted to impede the progress of Pharaoh Necho. He may have been entangled in an alliance with Necho's enemies (cf. 2 Kin. 23:29).

■ **35:22 from the mouth of God.** In some way God had conveyed His purposes to the foreign king, as He had to Ahimelech through a dream (Gen. 20:3), but Josiah would not listen.

■ **35:24 Jerusalem mourned.** Despite his final weakness, Josiah was an honorable king of Judah (21:19 note).

24 [g] 1 Kin. 14:18; Zech. 12:11

25 [h] Lam. 4:20 [i] Jer. 22:10, 11 [j] Matt. 9:23 [k] Jer. 22:20

CHAPTER 36

1 [a] 2 Kin. 23:30–34

2 [1] MT *Joahaz*

4 [2] Lit. *his* [3] MT *Joahaz*

5 [b] 2 Kin. 23:36, 37; 1 Chr. 3:15 [c] [Jer. 22:13–19]

6 [d] 2 Kin. 24:1; Hab. 1:6 [e] [Deut. 29:22–29]; 2 Chr. 33:11; Jer. 36:30 [4] *chains*

7 [f] 2 Kin. 24:13; Dan. 1:1, 2

8 [5] Or *Jeconiah*

9 [g] 2 Kin. 24:8–17 [6] Heb. mss., LXX, Syr. *eighteen* and 2 Kin. 24:8

10 [h] 2 Kin. 24:10–17 [i] Dan. 1:1, 2 [j] Jer. 37:1 [7] Or *Mattaniah* [8] Lit. *his brother,* 2 Kin. 24:17

11 [k] 2 Kin. 24:18–20; Jer. 52:1

12 [l] Jer. 21:3–7; 44:10

13 [m] Jer. 52:3; Ezek. 17:15 [n] 2 Kin. 17:14; [2 Chr. 30:8]

second chariot that he had, and they brought him to Jerusalem. So he died, and was buried in *one of* the tombs of his fathers. And [g] all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah.

25 Jeremiah also [h] lamented for [i] Josiah. And to this day [j] all the singing men and the singing women speak of Josiah in their lamentations. [k] They made it a custom in Israel; and indeed they *are* written in the Laments.

26 Now the rest of the acts of Josiah and his goodness, according to *what was* written in the Law of the LORD, 27 and his deeds from first to last, indeed they *are* written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah.

The Reign and Captivity of Jehoahaz

36 Then [a] the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and made him king in his father's place in Jerusalem. 2 [1] Jehoahaz *was* twenty-three years old when he became king, and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. 3 Now the king of Egypt deposed him at Jerusalem; and he imposed on the land a tribute of one hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold. 4 Then the king of Egypt made [2] *Jehoahaz's* brother Eliakim king over Judah and Jerusalem, and changed his name to Jehoiakim. And Necho took [3] Jehoahaz his brother and carried him off to Egypt.

The Reign and Captivity of Jehoiakim

5 [b] Jehoiakim *was* twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. And he did [c] evil in the sight of the LORD his God. 6 [d] Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against him, and bound him in [4] bronze *fetters* to [e] carry him off to Babylon. 7 [f] Nebuchadnezzar also carried off *some* of the articles from the house of the LORD to Babylon, and put them in his temple at Babylon. 8 Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, the abominations which he did, and what was found against him, indeed they *are* written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah. Then [5] Jehoiachin his son reigned in his place.

The Reign and Captivity of Jehoiachin

9 [g] Jehoiachin *was* [6] eight years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months and ten days. And he did evil in the sight of the LORD. 10 At the turn of the year [h] King Nebuchadnezzar summoned *him* and took him to Babylon, [i] with the costly articles from the house of the LORD, and made [j] Zedekiah, [7] [8] *Jehoiakim's* brother, king over Judah and Jerusalem.

Zedekiah Reigns in Judah

11 [k] Zedekiah *was* twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. 12 He did evil in the sight of the LORD his God, *and* [l] did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet, *who spoke* from the mouth of the LORD. 13 And he also [m] rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear *an oath* by God; but he [n] stiffened his neck and hardened his heart against turning to the LORD God of Israel. 14 Moreover all the leaders of the priests and the people transgressed more and more, *according* to all the abominations of the nations, and defiled the house of the LORD which He had consecrated in Jerusalem.

■ **35:25 Jeremiah also lamented.** This passage has been taken to show that Jeremiah wrote the Book of Lamentations, but the identification is uncertain.

to this day. See note on 1 Chr. 4:41.

■ **35:27 the book of the kings.** See the introduction to 1 Chronicles.

■ **36:2–14** The historian quickly traces the reigns of Josiah's three sons (Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, and Zedekiah) and his grandson (Jehoiachin). His account is shorter than Kings (2 Kin. 23:31—24:20); he reports the failures and disobedience leading to exile in Babylonia (1 Chr. 3:15 note; 3:17 note).

■ **36:2 Jehoahaz.** Reigned for three months in 609 B.C.

■ **36:3 king of Egypt.** After Josiah's defeat by Necho (609 B.C.), Egypt dominated Judah.

■ **36:4 changed his name.** To change another king's name demonstrated political dominance.

■ **36:5–8** An abbreviation of 2 Kin. 23:36—24:7.

■ **36:5 Jehoiakim.** Reigned 609–598 B.C.

■ **36:6 Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.** After Egypt was defeated by the Babylonians at Carchemish (605 B.C.), Judah was subjected to Babylonian power.

■ **36:9 Jehoiachin.** Reigned for just over three months in 597 B.C. This capture and release is reported in 2 Kin. 24:8–12; 25:27–30. Chronicles passes over his release from Babylon, electing instead to end with the edict of Cyrus permitting the exiles to return to Jerusalem.

■ **36:11 Zedekiah.** Reigned 597–586 B.C. Zedekiah sought help from Egypt, but to no avail. The Babylonians laid siege to Jerusalem for two years and finally took the city in 586 B.C.

■ **36:14 all the leaders.** Not only the kings, but the priests and the people also committed sins that subjected them to the retribution of exile in Babylonia.

The Fall of Jerusalem

15 [o]And the LORD God of their fathers sent *warnings* to them by His messengers, rising up
early and sending *them,* because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place.
16 But [p]they mocked the messengers of God, [q]despised His words, and [r]scoffed at His prophets,
until the [s]wrath of the LORD arose against His people, till *there was* no remedy.
17 [t]Therefore He brought against them the king of the Chaldeans, who [u]killed their young men
with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion on young man or virgin,
on the aged or the weak; He gave *them* all into his hand. 18 [v]And all the articles from the house
of God, great and small, the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king and
of his leaders, all *these* he took to Babylon. 19 [w]Then they burned the house of God, broke down
the wall of Jerusalem, burned all its palaces with fire, and destroyed all its precious possessions.
20 And [x]those who escaped from the sword he carried away to Babylon, [y]where they became ser-
vants to him and his sons until the rule of the kingdom of Persia, 21 to fulfill the word of the
LORD by the mouth of [z]Jeremiah, until the land [a]had enjoyed her Sabbaths. As long as she lay
desolate [b]she kept Sabbath, to fulfill seventy years.

The Proclamation of Cyrus

22 [c]Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of
[d]Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of [e]Cyrus king of Persia, so that he
made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also *put it* in writing, saying,

23 [f]Thus says Cyrus king of Persia:
All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has
commanded me to build Him a [g]house at Jerusalem which is in Judah. Who *is* among you
of all His people? May the LORD his God *be* with him, and let him go up!

15 [o]Jer. 7:13; 25:3, 4
16 [p]Jer. 5:12, 13 [q][Prov. 1:24–32] [r]Jer. 38:6 [s]Ps. 79:5
17 [t]2 Kin. 25:1 [u]Ps. 74:20
18 [v]2 Kin. 25:13–15
19 [w]2 Kin. 25:9
20 [x]2 Kin. 25:11 [y]Jer. 17:4; 27:7
21 [z]Jer. 25:9–12; 27:6–8; 29:10 [a]Lev. 26:34–43 [b]Lev. 25:4, 5
22 [c]Ezra 1:1–3 [d]Jer. 29:10 [e]Is. 44:28; 45:1
23 [f]Ezra 1:2, 3 [g]Temple

■ **36:15 His messengers.** The warnings of prophets appear often in Chronicles (20:20 note). Jeremiah was active during the reign of Zedekiah (Jer. 1; 21; 34; 37; 38; 52).

■ **36:16 no remedy.** Compare Heb. 6:4–6.

■ **36:21 land had enjoyed her Sabbaths.** This observation shows that God had His own purposes in allowing the Babylonian exile of the Jews. During it the land could enjoy the Sabbath rests it had been denied (Lev. 26:40–45).

seventy years. See Jer. 25:1–14 and Dan. 9. Chronicles takes the end of the seventy years to be the first year of Cyrus (538 B.C.). Perhaps the calculation is from the first deportation (605 or 604 B.C.) under Jehoiakim. Zech. 1:12–17 may indicate that the seventy years was measured from the destruction of the temple in 586 B.C. to its rededication in 516 B.C.

■ **36:22, 23** This passage is repeated with some variation in Ezra 1:1–4. Cyrus exercised a liberal policy toward many people deported by the Babylonians. Israel's release recalls Solomon's prayer of dedication (6:36–39 note).

■ **36:23 commanded me to build Him a house at Jerusalem.** God caused Cyrus to return the people to Israel with the specific purpose of rebuilding the temple. In the course of his work the writer of Chronicles has given due emphasis to the temple and its services, showing how its renewal could be accomplished under God's guidance.

The Book of

EZRA

Author It is not known who wove together into their present form all the documents included in Ezra and Nehemiah (Characteristics and Themes below). Despite an earlier view that a single author wrote the books of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah, the consensus among scholars is that the historian who wrote Chronicles ("the Chronicler") was probably not the author of Ezra and Nehemiah (Introduction to 1 Chronicles: Author). Ezra kept a journal or "memoirs" (7:28 note), as Nehemiah did also. Given his literary skills (7:6 and note), Ezra may well have been the compiler of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, as is held by Jewish tradition.

Date and Occasion Ezra and Nehemiah can be dated in the period 430–400 B.C. The narratives were written to encourage the Jews who had returned from exile by revealing to them that though Israel was still under Persian rule, their sovereign God was continuing His redemptive work and reestablishing true worship among them.

Characteristics and Themes Although modern Bibles treat Ezra and Nehemiah as two separate books, they were originally a single work. They are treated as one composition in the Hebrew Bible, the Talmud, Josephus (c. A.D. 37–100), and the oldest manuscripts of the Septuagint (the Old Testament Greek translation). Origen (A.D. 185–253) was the first to separate Ezra and Nehemiah into two books.

Ezra-Nehemiah is a historical narrative composed of numerous originally separate documents, woven together to form a beautiful and powerful whole. Lists play a significant role in Ezra and Nehemiah. There are lists regarding (a) the temple articles (1:9–11), (b) those who initially returned from exile (2:3–70, repeated in Neh. 7:8–73), (c) the leaders who returned with Ezra (8:2–14), (d) those involved in mixed marriages (10:18–43), (e) those who rebuilt the wall (Neh. 3), (f) those who sealed the covenant (Neh. 10:1–27), (g) new residents in Jerusalem and those in the villages (Neh. 11), and (h) the priests and Levites who returned with Zerubbabel (Neh. 12:1–26).

Much official correspondence has also been included. These letters were written in Aramaic, the language of international diplomacy at that time. There is (a) the letter of Rehum to Artaxerxes (4:11–16), (b) the reply of Artaxerxes (4:17–22), (c) the letter of Tattenai to Darius (5:7–17), (d) the memorandum regarding the decree of Cyrus (6:2–5), (e) the reply of Darius to Tattenai (6:6–12), and (f) the letter of Artaxerxes on behalf of Ezra (7:12–26).

In addition, the decree of Cyrus (1:2–4) and materials from Ezra and Nehemiah themselves have been included (7:27—9:15; Neh. 1:1—7:5; 12:27–43; 13:14–31).

Three themes of Ezra and Nehemiah can be found in the decree of Cyrus (1:2–4). First, rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem is God's objective in the history of redemption at this point; second, the people of God as a whole, and not merely the great leaders, are vital for accomplishing this purpose. Third, the written word is a powerful tool used by God to accomplish His objective.

Cyrus commissioned the return from exile for the express purpose of rebuilding "the house of the LORD God of Israel" (1:3). Cyrus's commission was directed toward the people of God as a whole, not toward this or that leader. The long lists of otherwise unknown people testify that the people of God as a whole are responsible for rebuilding.

Cyrus's written decree was the human instrument generating the action in Ezra and Nehemiah. Written documents play a major role in the subordinate actions as well. Letters stop and start the work on the temple (4:23; 6:6–7). A letter gives Ezra authority to carry out reforms (7:25–26). The written word of God is a moving force in the narrative (3:2; 10:3; Neh. 8:1; 9:13). This theme is significant, since the era involved is that of the last Old Testament prophets (Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi). There was to be a period of silence after them, during which the people of God would be governed exclusively by the written word. The silence was broken by John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ.

The overall purpose of Ezra and Nehemiah is to affirm that God works sovereignly through responsible human agents to accomplish His redemptive objective. Cyrus issued his decree because the Lord had moved his spirit (1:1). Those who returned came back because the Lord had moved their spirits (1:5). Ezra succeeded because the good hand of God was upon him (7:9). Artaxerxes supported the work of rebuilding because the Lord had put it in his spirit (7:27). Human beings acted freely and responsibly under the providence of God to bring His plans to fruition (see "God Reigns: Divine Sovereignty" at Dan. (4:34). □

Outline of Ezra

I. Return of the Exiles and Rebuilding of the Temple (chs. 1—6)
- A. Return of the Exiles (chs. 1; 2)
  - 1. The Decree of Cyrus (1:1–4)
  - 2. Preparations for Returning (1:5–11)
  - 3. The List of Returnees (ch. 2)
- B. Rebuilding of the Temple (chs. 3—6)
  - 1. Rebuilding of the Altar (3:1–6)
  - 2. Rebuilding of the Temple Proper (3:7—6:22)
    - a. Rebuilding Begun (3:7–13)
    - b. Opposition to Rebuilding (ch. 4)
    - c. Rebuilding Resumed (5:1, 2)
    - d. Opposition to Rebuilding (5:3—6:12)
    - e. Rebuilding Completed (6:13–22)

II. Return of Ezra and Rebuilding of the Community (chs. 7—10)
- A. Return of Ezra (chs. 7; 8)
  - 1. Ezra's Return (7:1–10)
  - 2. Ezra's Commission (7:11–26)
  - 3. Ezra's Doxology (7:27, 28)
  - 4. Ezra's Companions (8:1–14)
  - 5. Ezra's Return (8:15–36)
- B. Rebuilding of the Community (chs. 9; 10)
  - 1. Ezra's Reaction to Intermarriage (ch. 9)
    - a. Ezra Hears (9:1, 2)
    - b. Ezra Grieves (9:3, 4)
    - c. Ezra Confesses (9:5–15)
  - 2. The People's Reaction to Ezra (ch. 10)
    - a. The People Grieve (10:1)
    - b. The People Confess (10:2)
    - c. The People Repent (10:3–17)
    - d. The People Who Were Guilty (10:18–44)

End of the Babylonian Captivity

CHAPTER 1

NOW in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD [a]by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, [b]so that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and also *put it* in writing, saying,

1 [a]2 Chr. 36:22, 23; Jer. 25:12; 29:10 [b]Ezra 5:13, 14; Is. 44:28—45:13

2 Thus says Cyrus king of Persia:

■ **1:1–3** The same words, with minor differences, close 2 Chronicles. Ezra picks up the history of redemption where Chronicles leaves off.

■ **1:1 first year.** 538 B.C., the first year of Cyrus's reign. He conquered Babylon in October 539 and reigned over Persia from 550 to 530.

that the word of the LORD . . . might be fulfilled. Jeremiah had prophesied seventy years of captivity in Babylon (Jer. 25:11–12; 29:10; see Dan. 9:2). From 605 when the first captives were deported, to 538 when the decree to return was issued, is sixty-seven years. Other prophecies may also be in view (Jer. 16:14–15; 27:22). The Lord was sovereignly bringing to pass the word He had spoken over half a century before.

the LORD stirred up the spirit. This phrase expresses the main theme of the book: God works sovereignly through responsible human agents to accomplish His redemptive plan (6:22; 7:27). In the words of Prov. 21:1, the Lord directed Cyrus's spirit "like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes."

■ **1:2–4** The decree may have been written with the help of Jewish advisers.

■ **1:2 the LORD God of heaven.** A title identifying the Lord as the supreme authority and power (5:12; 6:9, 10; 7:12, 21, 23; Neh. 1:4, 5; 2:4, 20; Dan. 2:18, 19, 37, 44; Jon. 1:9).

has given me . . . has commanded me. Cyrus's testimony to the sovereignty of God was probably a formality for him, since the Cylinder of Cyrus says similar things about other gods (1:3 note).

a house at Jerusalem. This "house" refers in the first place to the temple, but in the end will include the city of God and the people of God. The rebuilding of the "house" of God is a dominant theme in Ezra and Nehemiah (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes).

2 [c]Is. 44:28; 45:1, 13 [f]Temple
3 [d]1 Kin. 8:23; 18:39; Is. 37:16; Dan. 6:26
5 [e][Phil. 2:13] [2]*stirred up*
6 [f]Ezra 2:68 [3]Lit. *strengthened their hands*
7 [g]Ezra 5:14; 6:5; Dan. 1:2; 5:2, 3 [h]2 Kin. 24:13; 2 Chr. 36:7, 18 [4]Lit. *house*
8 [i]Ezra 5:14, 16

All the kingdoms of the earth the LORD God of heaven has given me. And He has [c]commanded me to build Him a [f]house at Jerusalem which *is* in Judah. [3] Who *is* among you of all His people? May his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem which *is* in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel [d](He *is* God), which *is* in Jerusalem. [4] And whoever is left in any place where he dwells, let the men of his place help him with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, besides the freewill offerings for the house of God which *is* in Jerusalem.

[5] Then the heads of the fathers' *houses* of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites, with all whose spirits [e]God [2]had moved, arose to go up and build the house of the LORD which *is* in Jerusalem. [6] And all those who *were* around them [3]encouraged them with articles of silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with precious things, besides all *that* was [f]willingly offered.

[7] [g]King Cyrus also brought out the articles of the house of the LORD, [h]which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from Jerusalem and put in the [4]temple of his gods; [8] and Cyrus king of Persia brought them out by the hand of Mithredath the treasurer, and counted them out to [i]Sheshbazzar the prince of Judah. [9] This *is* the number of them: thirty gold platters, one thousand silver platters, twenty-nine knives, [10] thirty gold basins, four hundred and ten silver basins of a similar *kind, and*

■ **1:3** Cyrus treated Israel in the same way as his other subject peoples. His purpose was to enlist the gods of these peoples in his own service (note the motivation of Darius in 6:10 and of Artaxerxes in 7:23). The Lord's controlling purpose, however, is to continue the progress of redemption.

of all His people. Cyrus's commission is directed to all the people, not the leaders, expressing a major theme of the book (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes): the people of God as a whole are vital to the accomplishing of God's redemptive plan.

■ **1:4 whoever is left in any place.** This phrase refers to Jews who stayed in Babylon, and perhaps to Gentiles.

help him. In the Exodus from Egypt, the Egyptians sent Israel out with gifts (Ex. 12:35–36).

■ **1:5** The response is described in language parallel to the decree, emphasizing the immediate response of the people to Cyrus's decree and God's prompting.

heads of the fathers' houses. These were the patriarchs of extended families.

Judah and Benjamin. The two tribes exiled by the Babylonians.

the priests and the Levites. Restoration of the temple service required their return (8:15–17).

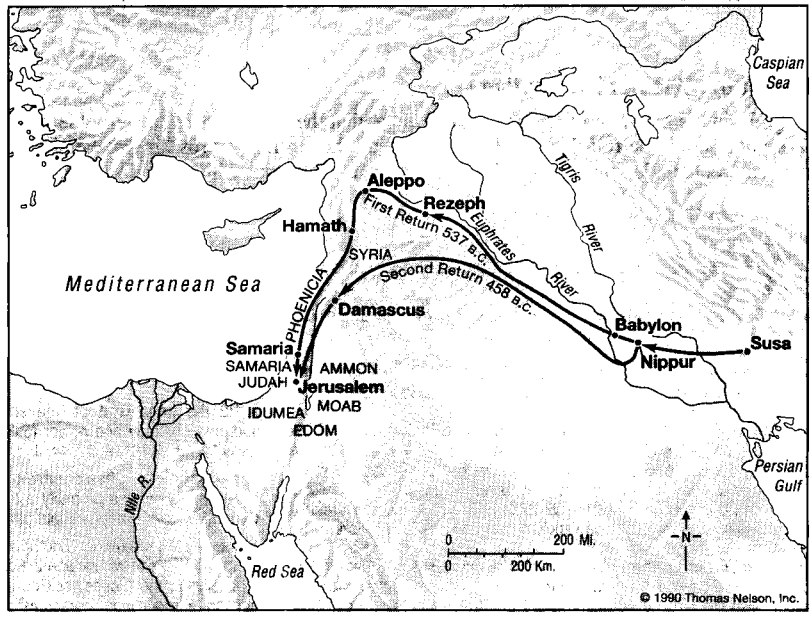
God had moved. The same Hebrew phrase as in v. 1 (see text note). God's sovereign power generated the decree and the response.

■ **1:8 Mithredath.** A Persian official.

Sheshbazzar. Identified by some as Zerubbabel. However, Sheshbazzar seems to be a somewhat unknown figure in 5:14–16, whereas Zerubbabel is well-known (5:2–3). Probably Sheshbazzar was the official leader, perhaps a Persian, designated by Cyrus, while Zerubbabel was the popular leader.

■ **1:9–11** The total of the numbers in vv. 9–10 is 2,499, not 5,400 as reported in v. 11. The reason for this discrepancy is not known. The difficulty is compounded by not knowing exactly what the "platters" and "basins" were. The production of these treasures must have encouraged the spirits of God's people, since Jeremiah had prophesied that they would be preserved and carried back to Jerusalem (Jer. 27:22).

The Return from Exile. When Cyrus the Persian captured Babylon in 539 B.C., the way was opened for captive Judah to begin the return to her homeland. The edict of Cyrus in 538 B.C. allowed Jewish exiles not only to return to Judah, but also to rebuild the temple. While there were probably several caravans of returning exiles, two major expeditions are reported. The first led by Sheshbazzar occurred soon after the edict, possibly in 537 B.C. The traditional date of the second return led by Ezra is 458 B.C. Other possibilities are 428 or 398 B.C.



one thousand other articles. 11 All the articles of gold and silver *were* five thousand four hundred. All *these* Sheshbazzar took with the captives who were brought from Babylon to Jerusalem.

The Captives Who Returned to Jerusalem

2 Now [a]these *are* the people of the province who came back from the captivity, of those who had been carried away, [b]whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away to Babylon, and who returned to Jerusalem and Judah, everyone to his *own* city.

2 *Those* who came with Zerubbabel *were* Jeshua, Nehemiah, [1]Seraiah, [2]Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, [3]Mispar, Bigvai, [4]Rehum, *and* Baanah. The number of the men of the people of Israel: 3 the people of Parosh, two thousand one hundred and seventy-two; 4 the people of Shephatiah, three hundred and seventy-two; 5 the people of Arah, [c]seven hundred and seventy-five; 6 the people of [d]Pahath-Moab, of the people of Jeshua *and* Joab, two thousand eight hundred and twelve; 7 the people of Elam, one thousand two hundred and fifty-four; 8 the people of Zattu, nine hundred and forty-five; 9 the people of Zaccai, seven hundred and sixty; 10 the people of [5]Bani, six hundred and forty-two; 11 the people of Bebai, six hundred and twenty-three; 12 the people of Azgad, one thousand two hundred and twenty-two; 13 the people of Adonikam, six hundred and sixty-six; 14 the people of Bigvai, two thousand and fifty-six; 15 the people of Adin, four hundred and fifty-four; 16 the people of Ater of Hezekiah, ninety-eight; 17 the people of Bezai, three hundred and twenty-three; 18 the people of [6]Jorah, one hundred and twelve; 19 the people of Hashum, two hundred and twenty-three; 20 the people of [7]Gibbar, ninety-five; 21 the people of Bethlehem, one hundred and twenty-three; 22 the men of Netophah, fifty-six; 23 the men of Anathoth, one hundred and twenty-eight; 24 the people of [8]Azmaveth, forty-two; 25 the people of [9]Kirjath Arim, Chephirah, and Beeroth, seven hundred and forty-three; 26 the people of Ramah and Geba, six hundred and twenty-one; 27 the men of Michmas, one hundred and twenty-two; 28 the men of Bethel and Ai, two hundred and twenty-three; 29 the people of Nebo, fifty-two; 30 the people of Magbish, one hundred and fifty-six; 31 the people of the other [e]Elam, one thousand two hundred and fifty-four; 32 the people of Harim, three hundred and twenty; 33 the people of Lod, Hadid, and Ono, seven hundred and twenty-five; 34 the people of Jericho, three hundred and forty-five; 35 the people of Senaah, three thousand six hundred and thirty.

36 The priests: the sons of [f]Jedaiah, of the house of Jeshua, nine hundred and seventy-three; 37 the sons of [g]Immer, one thousand and fifty-two; 38 the sons of [h]Pashhur, one thousand two hundred and forty-seven; 39 the sons of [i]Harim, one thousand and seventeen.

40 The Levites: the sons of Jeshua and Kadmiel, of the sons of [1]Hodaviah, seventy-four.

41 The singers: the sons of Asaph, one hundred and twenty-eight.

42 The sons of the gatekeepers: the sons of Shallum, the sons of Ater, the sons of Talmon, the sons of Akkub, the sons of Hatita, and the sons of Shobai, one hundred and thirty-nine *in* all.

43 [j]The Nethinim: the sons of Ziha, the sons of Hasupha, the sons of Tabbaoth, 44 the sons of Keros, the sons of [2]Siaha, the sons of Padon, 45 the sons of Lebanah, the sons of Hagabah, the sons of Akkub, 46 the sons of Hagab, the sons of Shalmai, the sons of Hanan, 47 the sons of Giddel, the sons of Gahar, the sons of Reaiah, 48 the sons of Rezin, the sons of Nekoda, the sons of Gazzam, 49 the sons of Uzza, the sons of Paseah, the sons of Besai, 50 the sons of Asnah, the sons of Meunim, the sons of [3]Nephusim, 51 the sons of Bakbuk, the sons of Hakupha, the sons of

CHAPTER 2

1 [a]Neh. 7:6–73; Jer. 32:15; 50:5; Ezek. 14:22 [b]2 Kin. 24:14–16; 25:11; 2 Chr. 36:20

2 [1]*Azariah,* Neh. 7:7 [2]*Raamiah,* Neh. 7:7 [3]*Mispereth,* Neh. 7:7 [4]*Nehum,* Neh. 7:7

5 [c]Neh. 7:10

6 [d]Neh. 7:11

10 [5]*Binnui,* Neh. 7:15

18 [6]*Hariph,* Neh. 7:24

20 [7]*Gibeon,* Neh. 7:25

24 [8]*Beth Azmaveth,* Neh. 7:28

25 [9]*Kirjath Jearim,* Neh. 7:29

31 [e]Ezra 2:7

36 [f]1 Chr. 24:7–18

37 [g]1 Chr. 24:14

38 [h]1 Chr. 9:12

39 [i]1 Chr. 24:8

40 [1]*Judah,* Ezra 3:9, or *Hodevah,* Neh. 7:43

43 [j]1 Chr. 9:2; Ezra 7:7

44 [2]*Sia,* Neh. 7:47

50 [3]*Nephishesim,* Neh. 7:52

■ **1:11** The exiles returned to Jerusalem with the articles for the temple according to the decree of Cyrus. The Lord kept His promise that after chastening His people for breaking the covenant He would bring them back to the Promised Land (Deut. 30:1–5).

■ **2:1–70** This list of exiles who returned may not appear theologically important, but the repetition of the same list, with some variations, in Neh. 7 would suggest otherwise. First, the Lord knows His people personally. The covenant relation between the Lord and His people is a bond of intimate friendship. Second, common people are vital to the accomplishing of God's redemptive plan (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes). Not only are the religious and political leaders important in rebuilding the house of God, but so are the common people. In fact, "the rest of the people" contributed more to the rebuilding than did "the heads of the fathers' houses" and the governor (Neh. 7:70–72). Third, the enumeration resembles those found in Numbers and Joshua (Num. 1; 26; Josh. 18; 19). As the Lord formed the covenant community following the Exodus from Egypt, so He re-creates it following the return from Babylon.

■ **2:2 Zerubbabel.** A descendant of David and a grandson of King Jehoiachin, he was the leader responsible for laying the temple's foundation (3:8–10).

Jeshua. He was high priest at the time of the restoration (Hag. 1:1; Zech. 3:1).

Nehemiah. Not the same Nehemiah who later oversaw the reconstruction of Jerusalem's walls.

Mordecai. Not the same Mordecai who was Esther's cousin.

■ **2:2–35** The first group listed is the laity. The list is in two parts: part one (vv. 3–20) gives the family names of the returnees, and part two (vv. 21–35) lists their towns. The laity are mentioned ahead of the clergy, in keeping with the emphasis in Ezra and Nehemiah on the significance of the common people in rebuilding the kingdom (2:1–70 note).

■ **2:36–58** The next groups were officially associated with the temple service: priests (vv. 36–39), Levites (v. 40), singers (v. 41), gatekeepers (v. 42), temple servants ("Nethinim," vv. 43–54), and Solomon's servants (vv. 55–57). Solomon's servants probably served in the temple, since they are counted together with the temple servants in v. 58.

Harhur, 52 the sons of [d]Bazluth, the sons of Mehida, the sons of Harsha, 53 the sons of Barkos, the sons of Sisera, the sons of Tamah, 54 the sons of Neziah, and the sons of Hatipha.

55 The sons of [k]Solomon's servants: the sons of Sotai, the sons of [l]Sophereth, the sons of [5]Peruda, 56 the sons of Jaala, the sons of Darkon, the sons of Giddel, 57 the sons of Shephatiah, the sons of Hattil, the sons of Pochereth of Zebaim, and the sons of [6]Ami. 58 All the [m]Nethinim and the children of [n]Solomon's servants were three hundred and ninety-two.

59 And these *were* the ones who came up from Tel Melah, Tel Harsha, Cherub, [7]Addan, and Immer; but they could not [8]identify their father's house or their [9]genealogy, whether they *were* of Israel: 60 the sons of Delaiah, the sons of Tobiah, and the sons of Nekoda, six hundred and fifty-two; 61 and of the sons of the priests: the sons of [o]Habaiah, the sons of [1]Koz, and the sons of [p]Barzillai, who took a wife of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite, and was called by their name. 62 These sought their listing *among* those who were registered by genealogy, but they were not found; [q]therefore they *were excluded* from the priesthood as defiled. 63 And the [2]governor said to them that they [r]should not eat of the most holy things till a priest could consult with the [s]Urim and Thummim.

64 [t]The whole assembly together *was* forty-two thousand three hundred *and* sixty, 65 besides their male and female servants, of whom *there were* seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven; and they had two hundred men and women singers. 66 Their horses *were* seven hundred and thirty-six, their mules two hundred and forty-five, 67 their camels four hundred and thirty-five, and *their* donkeys six thousand seven hundred and twenty.

68 [u]*Some* of the heads of the fathers' *houses,* when they came to the house of the LORD which *is* in Jerusalem, offered freely for the house of God, to erect it in its place: 69 According to their ability, they gave to the [v]treasury for the work sixty-one thousand gold drachmas, five thousand minas of silver, and one hundred priestly garments.

70 [w]So the priests and the Levites, *some* of the people, the singers, the gatekeepers, and the Nethinim, dwelt in their cities, and all Israel in their cities.

Worship Restored at Jerusalem

3 And when the [a]seventh month had come, and the children of Israel *were* in the cities, the people gathered together as one man to Jerusalem. 2 Then [1]Jeshua the son of [b]Jozadak[2] and his brethren the priests, [c]and Zerubbabel the son of [d]Shealtiel and his brethren, arose and built the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings on it, as *it is* [e]written in the Law of Moses the man of God. 3 Though fear *had come* upon them because of the people of those countries, they set the altar on its [3]bases; and they offered [f]burnt offerings on it to the LORD, *both* the morning and evening burnt offerings. 4 [g]They also kept the Feast of Tabernacles, [h]as *it is* written, and [i]*offered* the daily burnt offerings in the number required by ordinance for each day. 5 Afterwards *they offered* the [j]regular burnt offering, and *those* for New Moons and for all the

52 [4]*Bazlith,* Neh. 7:54

55 [k]1 Kin. 9:21 [l]Neh. 7:57–60 [5]*Perida,* Neh. 7:57

57 [6]*Amon,* Neh. 7:59

58 [m]1 Chr. 9:2 [n]1 Kin. 9:21

59 [7]Or *Addon,* Neh. 7:61 [8]Lit. *tell* [9]Lit. *seed*

61 [o]Neh. 7:63 [p]2 Sam. 17:27 [1]Or *Hakkoz*

62 [q]Num. 3:10

63 [r]Lev. 22:2, 10, 15, 16 [s]Ex. 28:30 [2]Heb. *Tirshatha*

64 [t]Neh. 7:66

68 [u]Neh. 7:70

69 [v]Ezra 8:25–35

70 [w]Neh. 7:73

CHAPTER 3

1 [a]Neh. 7:73; 8:1, 2

2 [b]Neh. 12:1, 8 [c]Ezra 2:2; 4:2, 3; 5:2 [d]1 Chr. 3:17 [e]Deut. 12:5, 6 [1]Or *Joshua* [2]*Jehozadak,* 1 Chr. 6:14

3 [f]Num. 28:3 [3]*foundations*

4 [g]Neh. 8:14–18 [h]Ex. 23:16 [i]Num. 29:12, 13

5 [j]Ex. 29:38

■ **2:59–63** The final group of returnees is made up of those who could not prove that they were Israelites. Again, the laity is listed first (v. 60), then the priests (v. 61).

■ **2:62 excluded . . . as defiled.** A man had to be descended from Aaron in order to be a priest (Ex. 29:44; Num. 3:3).

■ **2:63 the most holy things.** Only a priest or a member of his household could eat the portion of the sacrifice allotted to the priests (Lev. 22:10).

the Urim and Thummim. A device for making decisions (Ex. 28:30), needed in this case to determine the ancestry of these priests.

■ **2:64 forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty.** This is the same total as in Neh. 7:66. The sum of the figures in the list in Ezra is, however, only 29,818, while the sum of the list in Neh. 7 is 31,089. Certain groups may have been counted without being listed, or an error might have occurred in copying manuscripts.

■ **2:68 offered freely.** The first temple was also built with freewill offerings (1 Chr. 29:1–9), not with the tithe. The principle of giving beyond the tithe willingly and according to one's ability is still at work in building the kingdom under the new covenant (2 Cor. 8:11).

■ **2:70** This final verse closes off the section by echoing v. 1. In v. 1 they "came back" and "returned"; in v. 70 they have "dwelt in their cities." The Lord had returned the people of promise to the Land of Promise.

■ **3:1—6:22** The people rebuild the altar, resume the sacrifices (3:1–6), and then rebuild the temple itself (3:7—6:22). Spurred on by the prophets Haggai and Zechariah (5:1–2) and blessed by God (5:5), they succeed in spite of opposition from the peoples around them (ch. 4) and the governor of Trans-Euphrates, "the region beyond the River," (5:3—6:12).

■ **3:1 the seventh month.** This was Tishri (September-October), the month of the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:33–44). The desire to celebrate this feast (3:4) no doubt provided the stimulus needed to rebuild the altar.

■ **3:2 burnt offerings.** Burnt offerings were the primary offerings (Lev. 1), but others are also in view (v. 5). The burnt offering was the continuing basis on which a sinful people could live in the presence of a holy God (Ex. 29:42), looking forward as it did to the sacrifice of Christ, as the final sacrifice that brings sinners into the presence of God (Heb. 10:19–20).

as it is written. The written word was a powerful tool used by God to accomplish His redemptive plan.

■ **3:3 Though fear had come upon them.** They had the courage to build the altar and lay the foundation of the temple. But their courage would soon be tested (4:4–5), and the work would be stopped (4:24).

■ **3:4–6** Not only was the Feast of Tabernacles celebrated, but the entire sacrificial system was set in motion, because the sacrifices were a part of maintaining the covenant relationship (Heb. 9:22). So important were the sacrifices that they were started before the temple itself was finished.

appointed feasts of the LORD that were consecrated, and *those* of everyone who willingly offered a freewill offering to the LORD. 6 From the first day of the seventh month they began to offer burnt offerings to the LORD, although the foundation of the temple of the LORD had not been laid. 7 They also gave money to the masons and the carpenters, and [k]food, drink, and oil to the people of Sidon and Tyre to bring cedar logs from Lebanon to the sea, to [l]Joppa, [m]according to the permission which they had from Cyrus king of Persia.

Restoration of the Temple Begins

8 Now in the second month of the second year of their coming to the house of God at Jerusalem, [n]Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, Jeshua the son of [4]Jozadak, and the rest of their brethren the priests and the Levites, and all those who had come out of the captivity to Jerusalem, began *work* [o]and appointed the Levites from twenty years old and above to oversee the work of the house of the LORD. 9 Then Jeshua *with* his sons and brothers, Kadmiel *with* his sons, and the sons of [5]Judah, arose as one to oversee those working on the house of God: the sons of Henadad *with* their sons and their brethren the Levites.

10 When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, [p]the[6] priests stood in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the LORD, according to the [q]ordinance[7] of David king of Israel. 11 [r]And they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the LORD:

[s]"For *He is* good,
[t]For His mercy *endures* forever toward Israel."

Then all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.

12 But many of the priests and Levites and [u]heads of the fathers' *houses,* old men who had seen the first temple, wept with a loud voice when the foundation of this temple was laid before their eyes. Yet many shouted aloud for joy, 13 so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people, for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the sound was heard afar off.

Resistance to Rebuilding the Temple

4 Now when [a]the [1]adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the descendants of the captivity were building the temple of the LORD God of Israel, 2 they came to Zerubbabel and the heads of the fathers' *houses,* and said to them, "Let us build with you, for we seek your God as you *do;* and we have sacrificed to Him [b]since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assyria, who brought us here." 3 But Zerubbabel and Jeshua and the rest of the heads of the fathers' *houses* of Israel said to them, [c]"You may do nothing with us to build a [2]house for our God; but we alone will build to the LORD God of Israel, as [d]King Cyrus the king of Persia has commanded us." 4 Then [e]the people of the land tried to discourage the people of Judah. They troubled them in

7 [k]1 Kin. 5:6, 9; 2 Chr. 2:10; Acts 12:20 [l]2 Chr. 2:16; Acts 9:36 [m]Ezra 1:2; 6:3

8 [n]Ezra 3:2; 4:3 [o]1 Chr. 23:4, 24 [4]*Jehozadak,* 1 Chr. 6:14

9 [5]*Hodaviah,* Ezra 2:40

10 [p]1 Chr. 16:5, 6 [q]1 Chr. 6:31; 16:4; 25:1 [6]So with LXX, Syr., Vg.; MT *they stationed the priests* [7]Lit. *hands*

11 [r]Ex. 15:21; 2 Chr. 7:3; Neh. 12:24 [s]1 Chr. 16:34; Ps. 136:1 [t]1 Chr. 16:41; Jer. 33:11

12 [u]Ezra 2:68

CHAPTER 4

1 [a]Ezra 4:7–9 [1]*enemies*

2 [b]2 Kin. 17:24; 19:37; Ezra 4:10

3 [c]Neh. 2:20 [d]Ezra 1:1–4 [2]Temple

4 [e]Ezra 3:3

■ **3:7** Provisions were made immediately to begin rebuilding the temple. The language of v. 7 recalls the materials assembled for Solomon's temple (1 Chr. 22:2–4; 2 Chr. 2:8–16).

■ **3:8 the second month.** This is Ziv (or Iyar, April-May), the same time of year that Solomon began building the original temple (2 Chr. 3:2).

the second year. 536 B.C.

to oversee the work of the house of the LORD. This phrasing is virtually identical to the language used about Solomon's temple (1 Chr. 23:4).

■ **3:10 When the builders laid the foundation.** The focus of the narrative is the response of the people rather than the mechanics of construction. If the return of the temple articles encouraged the spirits of the people (1:9–11 note), much more did the laying of the foundation confirm their faith in God, who had promised restoration after exile (Deut. 30:1–5). Their expression of praise echoes exactly the dedication of Solomon's temple (2 Chr. 5:13).

■ **3:12 But many . . . wept.** The tears of the older members of the community were not tears of joy, but tears of disappointment because of the contrast between this small beginning (cf. Zech. 4:10) and the splendor of Solomon's temple. Similar disappointment would later call for rebuke (Hag. 2:1–5), but for the moment the joy of the Lord was the strength of many.

■ **4:1 the adversaries.** Though these people came with apparently good intentions, they are referred to as "adversaries," since they later tried to undermine the work of restoration. There was some political motivation in this conflict, because only returnees had authorization from Cyrus to undertake construction (1:2–4). But ultimately the trouble was religious. The "adversaries" were people from various places who had been transplanted into Samaria, the area north of Judah, after the destruction of the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 B.C. (4:9–10 note). They worshiped many gods and incorporated worship of the Lord into their polytheism (2 Kin. 17:24–41). The animosity between the Jews and the Samaritans who descended from these "adversaries" forms part of the background of the New Testament (cf. John 4:1–42).

■ **4:3 we alone will build.** The discrimination was not racial or political, but religious. From the early days of living in the Promised Land (Judg. 3:6) and throughout their history (2 Kin. 17:7–17), alliances with foreigners led the Israelites into idolatry and ultimately to exile from the land (2 Kin. 17:18–23). The failure of the returnees to separate themselves from the indigenous population became a problem before long (Ezra 9; 10). The same principle of religious separation is still operative under the new covenant (2 Cor. 6:14—7:1).

■ **4:4 the people of the land.** The "adversaries" of v. 1.

building, [5] and hired counselors against them to frustrate their purpose all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of [f]Darius king of Persia.

Rebuilding of Jerusalem Opposed

[6] In the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, they wrote an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem.

[7] In the days of [g]Artaxerxes also, [3]Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabel, and the rest of their companions wrote to Artaxerxes king of Persia; and the letter *was* written in [h]Aramaic script, and translated into the Aramaic language. [8] [4]Rehum the commander and Shimshai the scribe wrote a letter against Jerusalem to King Artaxerxes in this fashion:

[9] [5]From Rehum the commander, Shimshai the scribe, and the rest of their companions—*representatives* of [i]the Dinaites, the Apharsathchites, the Tarpelites, the people of Persia and Erech and Babylon and [6]Shushan, the Dehavites, the Elamites, [10][j]and the rest of the nations whom the great and noble Osnapper took captive and settled in the cities of Samaria and the remainder beyond [7]the River—[k]and[8] so forth.

[11] (This *is* a copy of the letter that they sent him)

To King Artaxerxes from your servants, the men *of the region* beyond the River, [9]and so forth:

[12] Let it be known to the king that the Jews who came up from you have come to us at Jerusalem, and are building the [l]rebellious and evil city, and are finishing *its* [m]walls and repairing the foundations. [13] Let it now be known to the king that, if this city is built and the walls completed, they will not pay [n]tax, tribute, or custom, and the king's treasury will be diminished. [14] Now because we receive support from the palace, it was not proper for us to see the king's dishonor; therefore we have sent and informed the king, [15] that search may be made in the book of the records of your fathers. And you will find in the book of the records and know that this city *is* a rebellious city, harmful to kings and provinces, and that they have incited sedition within the city in former times, for which cause this city was destroyed.

[16] We inform the king that if this city is rebuilt and its walls are completed, the result will be that you will have no dominion beyond the River.

[17] The king sent an answer:

To Rehum the commander, *to* Shimshai the scribe, *to* the rest of their companions who dwell in Samaria, and *to* the remainder beyond the River:

5 [f]Ezra 5:5; 6:1

7 [g]Ezra 7:1, 7, 21 [h]2 Kin. 18:26 [3]Or *in peace*

8 [4]The original language of Ezra 4:8 through 6:18 is Aramaic.

9 [i]2 Kin. 17:30, 31 [5]Lit. *Then* [6]Or *Susa*

10 [j]2 Kin. 17:24; Ezra 4:1 [k]Ezra 4:11, 17; 7:12 [7]The Euphrates [8]Lit. *and now*

11 [9]Lit. *and now*

12 [l]2 Chr. 36:13 [m]Ezra 5:3, 9

13 [n]Ezra 4:20; 7:24

■ **4:5 hired counselors.** Perhaps these were Persian officials who could be bribed. The obstructive efforts of the adversaries caused a delay in the work from the time of Cyrus (550–530 B.C.) until the second year of Darius (522–486 B.C.).

■ **4:6–23** This material is a separate section, describing opposition to rebuilding the wall after Darius and during the reigns of Xerxes (486–465 B.C.) and Artaxerxes I (465–424 B.C.). The narrative justifies calling the neighboring peoples in v. 1 "adversaries." Second, it shows that opposition was not a brief and passing problem, but a foretaste of prolonged opposition to the people of God in rebuilding God's "house"—the temple, but also the city and the nation.

■ **4:6 Ahasuerus.** Ahasuerus (Xerxes) succeeded Darius and was king of Persia from 486 to 465 B.C.

they wrote an accusation. The subject of the verb is not specified, but the context shows that the troublemakers were a later generation of the "adversaries" of v. 1. Nothing is said about the nature of the accusation.

■ **4:7 Artaxerxes.** Artaxerxes I, successor to Ahasuerus (Xerxes) and king of Persia from 465 to 424 B.C.

wrote to Artaxerxes. There is no information about the content of this letter, but considering the context it was doubtless an effort to prevent rebuilding the wall.

Aramaic. This was the language of international diplomacy in the ancient Near East.

■ **4:8—6:18** This section is written not in Hebrew, but Aramaic, the language of the original documents. The correspondence expresses the concern of various Gentile officials about the progress of the Jews' work.

■ **4:8 scribe.** Scribes were high officials who wrote official correspondence and kept archival records for the provincial government (7:6 note).

■ **4:9 the rest of their companions.** The opposition did not come from a few, but was broadly based.

■ **4:10 Osnapper.** Probably Ashurbanipal, the last successful king of Assyria (668–627 B.C.), who transplanted various peoples into Samaria. This practice was begun after the fall of Samaria in 722 B.C., probably by Sargon II (2 Kin. 17:24).

beyond the River. The area west of the Euphrates, including Aram, Phoenicia, and Palestine.

■ **4:12 finishing its walls.** See note on 4:6–23.

■ **4:14 we receive support from the palace.** Lit. "we have salted with the salt of the palace." Probably this is a way of referring to the covenantal obligation of a vassal to his overlord (cf. Lev. 2:13; Num. 18:19; 2 Chr. 13:5).

■ **4:15 book of the records.** The various Aramaic documents used in writing this section of Ezra would have been kept in a similar archive.

a rebellious city . . . was destroyed. See 2 Kin. 18:7; 24:1.

■ **4:16 have no dominion.** Obviously an exaggeration, these words were intended to sway Artaxerxes.

Peace, [1] and so forth.

18 The letter which you sent to us has been clearly read before me. 19 And [2]I gave the command, and a search has been made, and it was found that this city in former times has revolted against kings, and rebellion and sedition have been fostered in it. 20 There have also been mighty kings over Jerusalem, who have [o]ruled over all *the region* [p]beyond the River; and tax, tribute, and custom were paid to them. 21 Now [3]give the command to make these men cease, that this city may not be built until the command is given by me.

22 Take heed now that you do not fail to do this. Why should damage increase to the hurt of the kings?

23 Now when the copy of King Artaxerxes' letter *was* read before Rehum, Shimshai the scribe, and their companions, they went up in haste to Jerusalem against the Jews, and by force of arms made them cease. 24 Thus the work of the house of God which *is* at Jerusalem ceased, and it was discontinued until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.

Restoration of the Temple Resumed

5 Then the prophet [a]Haggai and [b]Zechariah the son of Iddo, prophets, prophesied to the Jews who *were* in Judah and Jerusalem, in the name of the God of Israel, *who was* over them. 2 So [c]Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua the son of [1]Jozadak rose up and began to build the house of God which *is* in Jerusalem; and [d]the prophets of God *were* with them, helping them.

3 At the same time [e]Tattenai the governor of *the region* beyond [2]the River and Shethar-Boznai and their companions came to them and spoke thus to them: [f]"Who has commanded you to build this [3]temple and finish this wall?" 4 [g]Then, accordingly, we told them the names of the men who were constructing this building. 5 But [h]the eye of their God was upon the elders of the Jews, so that they could not make them cease till a report could go to Darius. Then a [i]written answer was returned concerning this *matter.* 6 This is a copy of the letter that Tattenai sent:

The governor of *the region* beyond the River, and Shethar-Boznai, [j]and his companions, the Persians who *were in the region* beyond the River, to Darius the king.

7 (They sent a letter to him, in which was written thus)

To Darius the king:

All peace.

8 Let it be known to the king that we went into the province of Judea, to the [4]temple of the great God, which is being built with [5]heavy stones, and timber is being laid in the walls; and this work goes on diligently and prospers in their hands.

9 Then we asked those elders, *and* spoke thus to them: [k]"Who commanded you to build this temple and to finish these walls?" 10 We also asked them their names to inform you, that we might write the names of the men who *were* chief among them.

17 [1]Lit. *and now*

19 [2]Lit. *by me a decree has been put forth*

20 [o]1 Kin. 4:21; 1 Chr. 18:3; Ps. 72:8 [p]Gen. 15:18; Josh. 1:4

21 [3]*put forth a decree*

CHAPTER 5

1 [a]Hag. 1:1 [b]Zech. 1:1

2 [c]Ezra 3:2; Hag. 1:12 [d]Ezra 6:14; Hag. 2:4 [1]*Jehozadak,* 1 Chr. 6:14

3 [e]Ezra 5:6; 6:6 [f]Ezra 1:3; 5:9 [2]The Euphrates [3]Lit. *house*

4 [g]Ezra 5:10

5 [h]2 Chr. 16:9; Ezra 7:6, 28; Ps. 33:18 [i]Ezra 6:6

6 [j]Ezra 4:7–10

8 [4]Lit. *house* [5]Lit. *stones of rolling,* stones too heavy to be carried

9 [k]Ezra 5:3, 4

■ **4:18 has been clearly read.** The king was not given a summary of the letter; it was read to him word for word.

■ **4:20** Israel once received tribute from other nations, under David and Solomon. Now, even though they have returned to the Land of Promise, God's people must submit to the rule of the ungodly (9:9 and note).

■ **4:24** After the section dealing with opposition to the rebuilding of the wall (vv. 6–23), the author returns to the topic of vv. 1–5, rebuilding the temple.

■ **5:1, 2** The year Haggai and Zechariah began to prophesy was the same year referred to in 4:24, the second year of Darius (Hag. 1:1; Zech. 1:1). Work on the temple did not resume because of a decree from Darius, but because of the preaching of God's prophets and the obedient response of God's people (Hag. 1:14, 15).

■ **5:1 over them.** Both the people (Deut. 28:10) and the prophets (Jer. 15:16) belonged to God.

■ **5:2 helping them.** The help took the form of courageous preaching and constant encouragement (as in the books of Haggai and Zechariah).

■ **5:3, 4** As soon as the work on the temple was renewed, the Persian officials of the area renewed their opposition to it.

■ **5:5** This time God chose to intervene, and the officials permitted the work to continue until they should hear from Darius. Here, as throughout Ezra and Nehemiah, God intervened through the actions of people (cf. note on 1:1).

■ **5:8 province of Judea.** Judea was a province in the Persian Empire, not an independent political state.

prospers in their hands. It prospered due to the care of God (v. 5), the preaching of the prophets (vv. 1, 2), and the leadership of Zerubbabel and Jeshua (v. 2).

■ **5:9 Who commanded you.** The question underscores Judah's lack of independence.

11 [l]1 Kin. 6:1, 38 [6]Lit. *house*

12 [m]2 Chr. 34:25; 36:16, 17 [n]2 Kin. 24:2; 25:8–11; 2 Chr. 36:17; Jer. 52:12–15 [o]Jer. 13:19

13 [p]Ezra 1:1 [7]Temple

14 [q]Ezra 1:7, 8; 6:5; Dan. 5:2 [r]Hag. 1:14; 2:2, 21

16 [s]Ezra 3:8–10; Hag. 2:18 [t]Ezra 6:15

17 [u]Ezra 6:1, 2

CHAPTER 6

1 [a]Ezra 5:17 [1]Lit. *house of the scrolls*

2 [b]2 Kin. 17:6 [2]Probably *Ecbatana,* the ancient capital of Media

3 [c]Ezra 1:1; 5:13

4 [d]1 Kin. 6:36 [e]Ezra 3:7

5 [f]Ezra 1:7, 8; 5:14

6 [g]Ezra 5:3, 6

8 [3]Temple

11 And thus they returned us an answer, saying: "We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and we are rebuilding the [6]temple that was built many years ago, which a great king of Israel built [l]and completed. 12 But [m]because our fathers provoked the God of heaven to wrath, He gave them into the hand of [n]Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, the Chaldean, *who* destroyed this temple and [o]carried the people away to Babylon. 13 However, in the first year of [p]Cyrus king of Babylon, King Cyrus issued a decree to build this [7]house of God. 14 Also, [q]the gold and silver articles of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple that *was* in Jerusalem and carried into the temple of Babylon—those King Cyrus took from the temple of Babylon, and they were given to [r]one named Sheshbazzar, whom he had made governor. 15 And he said to him, 'Take these articles; go, carry them to the temple *site* that *is* in Jerusalem, and let the house of God be rebuilt on its former site.' 16 Then the same Sheshbazzar came *and* [s]laid the foundation of the house of God which *is* in Jerusalem; but from that time even until now it has been under construction, and [t]it is not finished."

17 Now therefore, if *it seems* good to the king, [u]let a search be made in the king's treasure house, which *is* there in Babylon, whether it is *so* that a decree was issued by King Cyrus to build this house of God at Jerusalem, and let the king send us his pleasure concerning this *matter.*

The Decree of Darius

6 Then King Darius issued a decree, [a]and a search was made in the [1]archives, where the treasures were stored in Babylon. 2 And at [2]Achmetha, in the palace that *is* in the province of [b]Media, a scroll was found, and in it a record *was* written thus:

3 In the first year of King Cyrus, King Cyrus issued a [c]decree *concerning* the house of God at Jerusalem: "Let the house be rebuilt, the place where they offered sacrifices; and let the foundations of it be firmly laid, its height sixty cubits *and* its width sixty cubits, 4 [d]*with* three rows of heavy stones and one row of new timber. Let the [e]expenses be paid from the king's treasury. 5 Also let [f]the gold and silver articles of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took from the temple which *is* in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon, be restored and taken back to the temple which *is* in Jerusalem, *each* to its place; and deposit *them* in the house of God"—

6 [g]Now *therefore,* Tattenai, governor of *the region* beyond the River, and Shethar-Boznai, and your companions the Persians who *are* beyond the River, keep yourselves far from there. 7 Let the work of this house of God alone; let the governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews build this house of God on its site.

8 Moreover I issue a decree *as to* what you shall do for the elders of these Jews, for the building of this [3]house of God: Let the cost be paid at the king's expense from taxes *on*

■ **5:11–16** The reply of the Jewish leaders to the questions of the Persian officials (vv. 3–4) is included in the letter to Darius.

■ **5:11 God of heaven and earth.** This was a fuller form of the more frequent title "God of heaven" (1:2 note).

a great king of Israel. Solomon built the original temple in the years 966–959 B.C. (1 Kin. 6:1, 38).

■ **5:12 gave them into the hand.** God gave Israel into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar to punish them for breaking the covenant. Those who trust in Christ are safe from God's righteous anger (1 John 4:17–18), because God the Father gave Christ into the hands of wicked men, and Christ endured God's wrath on behalf of the elect (Mark 9:31; Luke 9:44; 24:7; Rom. 8:32).

Chaldean. The Chaldeans lived in southern Mesopotamia and established the Neo-Babylonian Empire by overthrowing the Assyrians in 612 B.C. The new empire continued until overthrown by the Persians in 539.

■ **5:13 issued a decree.** Here is the answer, on the human level, to the question posed in 5:3.

■ **5:14 Sheshbazzar.** See note on 1:8.

■ **5:16 from that time . . . under construction.** The work was not done continuously, but with a break of about seventeen years (4:24 note).

■ **5:17 let a search be made.** This is the second reference to an archival search, underscoring the theme of the power of written documents (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes). The first search (4:15) had stopped the building of the wall. The second search would result in the completion of the temple.

■ **6:1, 2** Darius responded to Tattenai's request. The search began in the treasury at Babylon, but the decree was found in Achmetha (Ecbatana, see text note), a city almost three hundred miles northeast of Babylon, and probably the city from which Cyrus issued the decree.

■ **6:3–5** This copy of the decree differs somewhat from that in 1:2–4; for example, God's name is not used ("LORD"). The copy in 1:2–4 is what the heralds proclaimed to the Jews, while this copy is the minutes kept as an official record.

■ **6:3 its height sixty cubits and its width sixty cubits.** These dimensions are larger than those of Solomon's temple (1 Kin. 6:2). They may give the maximum size allowed rather than the size planned.

■ **6:6–12** Having found Cyrus's decree, Darius issued a second decree reinforcing it. In God's providence the opposition of Tattenai and his associates turned out for the good of the project (cf. Gen. 50:20).

the region beyond the River; this is to be given immediately to these men, so that they are not hindered. 9 And whatever they need—young bulls, rams, and lambs for the burnt offerings of the God of heaven, wheat, salt, wine, and oil, according to the request of the priests who *are* in Jerusalem—let it be given them day by day without fail, 10 [h]that they may offer sacrifices of sweet aroma to the God of heaven, and pray for the life of the king and his sons.

11 Also I issue a decree that whoever alters this edict, let a timber be pulled from his house and erected, and let him be hanged on it; [i]and let his house be made a refuse heap because of this. 12 And may the God who causes His [j]name to dwell there destroy any king or people who put their hand to alter it, or to destroy this [4]house of God which is in Jerusalem. I Darius issue a decree; let it be done diligently.

The Temple Completed and Dedicated

13 Then Tattenai, governor of *the region* beyond the River, Shethar-Boznai, and their companions diligently did according to what King Darius had sent. 14 [k]So the elders of the Jews built, and they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the son of Iddo. And they built and finished *it,* according to the commandment of the God of Israel, and according to the [5]command of [l]Cyrus, [m]Darius, and [n]Artaxerxes king of Persia: 15 Now the temple was finished on the third day of the month of Adar, which was in the sixth year of the reign of King Darius. 16 Then the children of Israel, the priests and the Levites and the rest of the descendants of the captivity, celebrated [o]the dedication of this [6]house of God with joy. 17 And they [p]offered sacrifices at the dedication of this house of God, one hundred bulls, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs, and as a sin offering for all Israel twelve male goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel. 18 They assigned the priests to their [q]divisions and the Levites to their [r]divisions, over the service of God in Jerusalem, [s]as it is written in the Book of Moses.

The Passover Celebrated

19 [7]And the descendants of the captivity kept the Passover [t]on the fourteenth *day* of the first month. 20 For the priests and the Levites had [u]purified themselves; all of them *were ritually* clean. And they [v]slaughtered the Passover *lambs* for all the descendants of the captivity, for their brethren the priests, and for themselves. 21 Then the children of Israel who had returned from the captivity ate together with all who had separated themselves from the [w]filth[8] of the nations of the land in order to seek the LORD God of Israel. 22 And they kept the [x]Feast of Unleavened Bread seven days with joy; for the LORD made them joyful, and [y]turned the heart [z]of the king of Assyria toward them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.

The Arrival of Ezra

7 Now after these things, in the reign of [a]Artaxerxes king of Persia, Ezra the [b]son of Seraiah, [c]the son of Azariah, the son of [d]Hilkiah, 2 the son of Shallum, the son of Zadok, the son of

10 [h]Ezra 7:23; [Jer. 29:7; 1 Tim. 2:1, 2]

11 [i]Dan. 2:5; 3:29

12 [j]Deut. 12:5, 11; 1 Kin. 9:3
[4]Temple

14 [k]Ezra 5:1, 2 [l]Ezra 1:1; 5:13; 6:3 [m]Ezra 4:24; 6:12 [n]Ezra 7:1, 11; Neh. 2:1
[5]*decree*

16 [o]1 Kin. 8:63; 2 Chr. 7:5
[6]Temple

17 [p]Ezra 8:35

18 [q]1 Chr. 24:1; 2 Chr. 35:5 [r]1 Chr. 23:6 [s]Num. 3:6; 8:9

19 [t]Ex. 12:6 [7]The Hebrew language resumes in Ezra 6:19 and continues through 7:11.

20 [u]2 Chr. 29:34; 30:15 [v]2 Chr. 35:11

21 [w]Ezra 9:11
[8]*uncleanness*

22 [x]Ex. 12:15; 13:6, 7; 2 Chr. 30:21; 35:17 [y]Ezra 7:27; [Prov. 21:1] [z]2 Kin. 23:29; 2 Chr. 33:11; Ezra 1:1; 6:1

CHAPTER 7

1 [a]Neh. 2:1 [b]1 Chr. 6:14 [c]Jer. 52:24 [d]2 Chr. 35:8

■ **6:9 whatever they need.** As a result of the opposition, provision was made for continuing the temple services.

■ **6:10 pray for the life of the king.** See note on 1:3.

■ **6:11 whoever alters this edict.** It was customary to pronounce curses on anyone who changed an official document (cf. Rev. 22:18–19). As a result of the opposition, God's people were granted irrevocable support to rebuild the temple.

■ **6:13 diligently did according to what King Darius had sent.** Darius had ordered that his decree be "done diligently" (6:12), and it was.

■ **6:14 the prophesying of Haggai . . . and Zechariah.** The preaching of the prophets moved the people to start the work again (5:1–2) and to complete it.

God . . . Cyrus. The same word is used for the command of God and the decrees of the Persian kings. God's sovereign decree does not negate human responsibility, but rather establishes it. The reference to Artaxerxes may seem to be out of place, since the temple proper was completed before he became king. However, the temple is not explicitly mentioned in the Aramaic text of v. 14, so the reference could be a preview to the finishing of the rebuilding of the entire "house of God," including the community and the wall that were rebuilt under the authority of Artaxerxes (7:11–26; Neh. 2:1, 8).

■ **6:15 the temple was finished.** The date was March 12, 515 B.C., four years after the work was renewed (Hag. 1:15), twenty years after the work was begun (3:8), and almost exactly seventy years after the Solomonic temple was destroyed in 586.

■ **6:16 the dedication of this house of God.** With the dedication of the temple a major milestone has been reached. The parenthetical section of 4:6–23 has already given a preview of trouble to come. The dedication of the wall (Neh. 12:27) and the final reforms (Neh. 13) will complete the restoration of the Jewish community.

■ **6:17 they offered.** The number of offerings is small in comparison to those of Solomon (1 Kin. 8:62, 63). Reference to a sin offering shows an awareness of sin and faith in God who keeps His covenant of love (Deut. 7:9).

■ **6:18 written in the Book of Moses.** The written text prescribed the temple duties and ensured that they would be carried out. The first Aramaic section of Ezra ends with this verse.

■ **7:1 Now after these things.** About sixty years passed between the

Ahitub, 3 the son of Amariah, the son of Azariah, the son of Meraioth, 4 the son of Zerahiah, the son of Uzzi, the son of Bukki, 5 the son of Abishua, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the chief priest— 6 this Ezra came up from Babylon; and he *was* [e]a skilled scribe in the Law of Moses, which the LORD God of Israel had given. The king granted him all his request, [f]according to the hand of the LORD his God upon him. 7 [g]*Some* of the children of Israel, the priests, [h]the Levites, the singers, the gatekeepers, and [i]the Nethinim came up to Jerusalem in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes. 8 And Ezra came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which *was* in the seventh year of the king. 9 On the first *day* of the first month he began *his* journey from Babylon, and on the first *day* of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, [j]according to the good hand of his God upon him. 10 For Ezra had prepared his heart to [k]seek[l] the Law of the LORD, and to do *it,* and to [l]teach statutes and ordinances in Israel.

The Letter of Artaxerxes to Ezra

11 This *is* a copy of the letter that King Artaxerxes gave Ezra the priest, the scribe, expert in the words of the commandments of the LORD, and of His statutes to Israel:

12 [2]Artaxerxes, [m]king of kings,

To Ezra the priest, a scribe of the Law of the God of heaven:

Perfect *peace,* [n]and[3] so forth.

13 I issue a decree that all those of the people of Israel and the priests and Levites in my realm, who volunteer to go up to Jerusalem, may go with you. 14 And whereas you are being sent [4]by the king and his [o]seven counselors to inquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem, with regard to the Law of your God which *is* in your hand; 15 and *whereas you are* to carry the silver and gold which the king and his counselors have freely offered to the God of Israel, [p]whose dwelling *is* in Jerusalem; 16 [q]and *whereas* all the silver and gold that you may find in all the province of Babylon, along with the freewill offering of the people and the priests, *are to be* [r]freely offered for the [5]house of their God in Jerusalem— 17 now therefore, be careful to buy with this money bulls, rams, and

6 [e]Ezra 7:11, 12, 21 [f]Ezra 7:9, 28; 8:22

7 [g]Ezra 8:1–14 [h]Ezra 8:15 [i]Ezra 2:43; 8:20

9 [j]Ezra 7:6; Neh. 2:8, 18

10 [k]Ps. 119:45 [l]Deut. 33:10; Ezra 7:6, 25; Neh. 8:1–8; [Mal. 2:7] [l]Study

12 [m]Ezek. 26:7; Dan. 2:37 [n]Ezra 4:10 [2]The original language of Ezra 7:12–26 is Aramaic. [3]Lit. *and now*

14 [o]Esth. 1:14 [4]*from before*

15 [p]2 Chr. 6:2; Ezra 6:12; Ps. 135:21

16 [q]Ezra 8:25 [r]1 Chr. 29:6, 9 [5]Temple

events at the end of ch. 6 and those at the beginning of ch. 7. The only information we have on this period from Ezra and Nehemiah concerns opposition in the days of Ahasuerus (4:6 note)—the events in the Book of Esther occurred during this period (Esth. 1:1).

Artaxerxes. Artaxerxes I, king of Persia from 465–424 B.C.

Ezra. The lengthy introduction of Ezra (vv. 1–10) signals his importance for what follows. The first information given about Ezra is his ancestry. The genealogy is full but not complete; the phrase "son of" is often used to mean "descendant." Ezra's line goes back to Aaron, establishing his priestly authority for his subsequent actions.

■ **7:6 came up from Babylon.** Not all the pious exiles had returned with Sheshbazzar in 538 B.C. Ezra's family had not. Ezra had probably not been born at the time of the first return. He grew up in Babylon, where most of the exiles lived.

a skilled scribe. In the Old Testament, scribes were often government officials who composed official documents (4:8 note; 2 Sam. 8:17; 1 Kin. 4:3), administered temple treasuries (2 Kin. 12:10, 11; 22:3, 4, 9; Neh. 13:13), served as court emissaries (2 Kin. 18:18–37), and provided literary functions like taking dictation (Jer. 36:32). Ezra had governmental authority (v. 25), but his most important qualification was as a teacher of God's law (vv. 10, 11, 14; Neh. 8:1–9).

which the LORD . . . had given. The "Law of Moses" is divine in origin (2 Tim. 3:16). The reference here may be to the first five books of the Bible.

The king granted . . . his request. The actions of responsible human beings are traced back to the sovereign action of God: Ezra asked and Artaxerxes complied because God favored Ezra.

■ **7:7 Some . . . came up.** Ezra was not alone, but leading a second group of returning exiles.

the seventh year. 458 B.C.

■ **7:9 he came to Jerusalem.** The trip took place in the spring, when there would have been ample water along the way. It took about four months.

the good hand of his God. Success is attributed to God's providence.

■ **7:10 For.** Ezra's goal in going to Jerusalem is now given. As a diligent hearer and doer of the Word (James 1:22), Ezra's goal was to teach others to do the same.

■ **7:11–26** A copy of a letter from King Artaxerxes records his commission of Ezra to return to Jerusalem to inquire about the spiritual state of the people (v. 14), to provide supplies for the temple (vv. 15–24), and to arrange for the administration of justice (vv. 25, 26).

■ **7:11 letter.** The letter (vv. 12–26), written in Aramaic (4:7 note), gives Ezra the authority to carry out the reforms recorded in the following chapters. The letter may have been written by Ezra and then signed by Artaxerxes, or Artaxerxes may have had Jewish advisers help compose the letter, as some of the details seem to indicate.

■ **7:12 king of kings.** A title used by Persian monarchs to indicate their supremacy over all subject kings. That God is the true King of kings is implicit in the Book of Ezra (1:1 note) and explicit elsewhere in Scripture (Rev. 17:14; 19:16).

scribe. See note on v. 6.

■ **7:13** This permission to return extends to all who are willing, as did the original decree of Cyrus in 1:3.

■ **7:14 to inquire.** Whereas Cyrus commissioned the first returnees "to build" a temple, Artaxerxes commissioned Ezra to inquire about the spiritual condition of the people. His efforts would help rebuild the community of God's people, God's "house" (Num. 12:7).

■ **7:15–17** Artaxerxes' knowledge of the details of Israelite worship indicates that Ezra or Jewish advisers wrote the letter themselves or assisted in writing it (1:2–4 note).

lambs, with their [s]grain offerings and their drink offerings, and [t]offer them on the altar of the house of your God in Jerusalem.

18 And whatever seems good to you and your brethren to do with the rest of the silver and the gold, do it according to the will of your God. 19 Also the articles that are given to you for the service of the house of your God, deliver in full before the God of Jerusalem. 20 And whatever more may be needed for the house of your God, which you may have occasion to provide, pay *for it* from the king's treasury.

21 And I, *even* I, Artaxerxes the king, issue a decree to all the treasurers who *are in the region* beyond the River, that whatever Ezra the priest, the scribe of the Law of the God of heaven, may require of you, let it be done diligently, 22 up to one hundred talents of silver, one hundred kors of wheat, one hundred baths of wine, one hundred baths of oil, and salt without prescribed limit. 23 Whatever [6]is commanded by the God of heaven, let it diligently be done for the [7]house of the God of heaven. For why should there be wrath against the realm of the king and his sons?

24 Also we inform you that it shall not be lawful to impose tax, tribute, or custom *on* any of the priests, Levites, singers, gatekeepers, Nethinim, or servants of this house of God. 25 And you, Ezra, according to your God-given wisdom, [u]set magistrates and judges who may judge all the people who *are in the region* beyond the River, all such as know the laws of your God; and [v]teach those who do not know *them.* 26 Whoever will not observe the law of your God and the law of the king, let judgment be executed speedily on him, whether *it be* death, or [8]banishment, or confiscation of goods, or imprisonment.

27 [w]Blessed[9] *be* the LORD God of our fathers, [x]who has put *such a thing* as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of the LORD which *is* in Jerusalem, 28 and [y]has extended mercy to me before the king and his counselors, and before all the king's mighty princes.

So I was encouraged, as [z]the hand of the LORD my God *was* upon me; and I gathered leading men of Israel to go up with me.

Heads of Families Who Returned with Ezra

8 These *are* the heads of their fathers' *houses,* and *this is* the genealogy of those who went up with me from Babylon, in the reign of King Artaxerxes: 2 of the sons of Phinehas, Gershom; of the sons of Ithamar, Daniel; of the sons of David, [a]Hattush; 3 of the sons of Shecaniah, of the sons of [b]Parosh, Zechariah; and registered with him *were* one hundred and fifty males; 4 of the sons of [c]Pahath-Moab, Eliehoenai the son of Zerahiah, and with him two hundred males; 5 of [1]the sons of Shechaniah, Ben-Jahaziel, and with him three hundred males; 6 of the sons of Adin, Ebed the son of Jonathan, and with him fifty males; 7 of the sons of Elam, Jeshaiah the son of Athaliah, and with him seventy males; 8 of the sons of Shephatiah, Zebadiah the son of Michael, and with him eighty males; 9 of the sons of Joab, Obadiah the son of Jehiel, and with him two hundred and eighteen males; 10 of [2]the sons of Shelomith, Ben-Josiphiah, and with him one hundred and sixty males; 11 of the sons of [d]Bebai, Zechariah the son of Bebai, and with him twenty-eight males; 12 of the sons of Azgad, Johanan [3]the son of Hakkatan, and with him one hundred and ten males; 13 of the last sons of Adonikam, whose names *are* these—Eliphelet, Jeiel, and

17 [s]Num. 15:4–13 [t]Deut. 12:5–11

23 [6]Lit. *is from the decree* [7]Temple

25 [u]Ex. 18:21, 22; Deut. 16:18 [v]2 Chr. 17:7; Ezra 7:10; [Mal. 2:7; Col. 1:28]

26 [8]Lit. *rooting out*

27 [w]1 Chr. 29:10 [x]Ezra 6:22; [Prov. 21:1] [9]The Hebrew language resumes in Ezra 7:27.

28 [y]Ezra 9:9 [z]Ezra 5:5; 7:6, 9; 8:18

CHAPTER 8

2 [a]1 Chr. 3:22; Ezra 2:68

3 [b]Ezra 2:3

4 [c]Ezra 10:30

5 [1]So with MT; Vg.; LXX *the sons of Zatho, Shechaniah*

10 [2]So with MT, Vg.; LXX *the sons of Banni, Shelomith*

11 [d]Ezra 10:28

12 [3]Or *the youngest son,*

■ **7:18 the will of your God.** Conformity to God's will is a major theme in the rest of the book.

■ **7:20 whatever more may be needed.** The generosity of Artaxerxes was like that of Darius (6:9).

■ **7:23 why should there be wrath.** See note on 1:3.

■ **7:25** Ezra's role was twofold: exercising governmental authority and teaching the law of God (7:6 note).

all the people . . . beyond the River. This means the Jews who had returned to Judah and Jerusalem.

■ **7:26 the law of your God and the law of the king.** The two are not identical. The distinction between religious and civil law was more important for the Jews in exile under a foreign civil power, than during the monarchy, when the state was of the same religion as the people. The second Aramaic section of Ezra ends with this verse.

let judgment be executed. Ezra himself is not given the authority to punish in this verse; the "leaders and elders" exercise it in 10:8.

■ **7:27 put such a thing . . . in the king's heart.** The actions of Artaxerxes are traced to the sovereign action of God.

■ **7:28 extended mercy.** "Mercy" represents the Hebrew word *hesed,* which refers to God's covenant loyalty. The same word occurs in 9:9. Artaxerxes' favor toward Ezra is owing to God's covenant loyalty to His people.

to me. The first reference to Ezra in the first person and the beginning of the Ezra's "Memoirs" (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes).

the hand of the LORD. Ezra's awareness of God's providential control was a source of encouragement for the tasks that lay ahead.

■ **8:1–14** Not all the exiles returned in response to the decree of Cyrus in 538 B.C. A second but significantly smaller group returned with Ezra about eighty years after the first return.

Shemaiah—and with them sixty males; [14] also of the sons of Bigvai, Uthai and [d]Zabbud, and with them seventy males.

Servants for the Temple

[15] Now I gathered them by the river that flows to Ahava, and we camped there three days. And I looked among the people and the priests, and found none of the [e]sons of Levi there. [16] Then I sent for Eliezer, Ariel, Shemaiah, Elnathan, Jarib, Elnathan, Nathan, Zechariah, and [f]Meshullam, leaders; also for Joiarib and Elnathan, men of understanding. [17] And I gave them a command for Iddo the chief man at the place Casiphia, and [5]I told them what they should say [6]to Iddo *and* his brethren the Nethinim at the place Casiphia—that they should bring us servants for the house of our God. [18] Then, by the good hand of our God upon us, they [g]brought us a man of understanding, of the sons of Mahli the son of Levi, the son of Israel, namely Sherebiah, with his sons and brothers, eighteen men; [19] and [h]Hashabiah, and with him Jeshaiah of the sons of Merari, his brothers and their sons, twenty men; [20] [i]also of the Nethinim, whom David and the leaders had appointed for the service of the Levites, two hundred and twenty Nethinim. All of them were designated by name.

Fasting and Prayer for Protection

[21] Then I [j]proclaimed a fast there at the river of Ahava, that we might [k]humble ourselves before our God, to seek from Him the [l]right way for us and our little ones and all our possessions. [22] For [m]I was ashamed to request of the king an escort of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy on the road, because we had spoken to the king, saying, [n]"The hand of our God *is* upon all those for [o]good who seek Him, but His power and His wrath *are* [p]against all those who [q]forsake Him." [23] So we fasted and entreated our God for this, and He [r]answered our prayer.

Gifts for the Temple

[24] And I separated twelve of the leaders of the priests—Sherebiah, Hashabiah, and ten of their brethren with them— [25] and weighed out to them [s]the silver, the gold, and the articles, the offering for the house of our God which the king and his counselors and his princes, and all Israel *who were* present, had offered. [26] I weighed into their hand six hundred and fifty talents of silver, silver articles *weighing* one hundred talents, one hundred talents of gold, [27] twenty gold basins *worth* a thousand drachmas, and two vessels of fine polished bronze, precious as gold. [28] And I said to them, "You *are* [t]holy[7] to the LORD; the articles *are* [u]holy also; and the silver and the gold *are* a freewill offering to the LORD God of your fathers. [29] Watch and keep *them* until you weigh *them* before the leaders of the priests and the Levites and [v]heads of the fathers' *houses* of Israel in Jerusalem, *in* the chambers of the house of the LORD." [30] So the priests and the Levites received the silver and the gold and the articles by weight, to bring *them* to Jerusalem to the house of our God.

14 [d]Or *Zakkur*

15 [e]Ezra 7:7; 8:2

16 [f]Ezra 10:15

17 [5]Lit. *I put words in their mouths to say* [6]So with Vg.; MT *to Iddo his brother;* LXX *to their brethren*

18 [g]2 Chr. 30:22; Neh. 8:7

19 [h]Neh. 12:24

20 [i]Ezra 2:43; 7:7

21 [j]1 Sam. 7:6; 2 Chr. 20:3 [k]Lev. 16:29; 23:29; Is. 58:3, 5 [l]Ps. 5:8

22 [m]1 Cor. 9:15 [n]Ezra 7:6, 9, 28 [o][Ps. 33:18, 19; 34:15, 22; Rom. 8:28] [p][Ps. 34:16] [q][2 Chr. 15:2]

23 [r][1 Chr. 5:20]; 2 Chr. 33:13; Is. 19:22

25 [s]Ezra 7:15, 16

28 [t]Lev. 21:6–9; Deut. 33:8 [u]Lev. 22:2, 3; Num. 4:4, 15, 19, 20 [7]*consecrated*

29 [v]Ezra 4:3

■ **8:15 none of the sons of Levi.** Ezra wanted more Levites for service in the temple (v. 17), and perhaps to help with the sacrifices mentioned in v. 35. He may also have wanted Levites to be part of the caravan to the Promised Land, as they had been at the time of the Exodus from Egypt and the first return from Babylon (1:2 note).

■ **8:16 Then I sent for.** Ezra selected a group of influential men to persuade some Levites to return with him.

■ **8:17 the chief man at the place Casiphia.** The location is not certain, but it could be Ctesiphon on the Tigris River north of Babylon. Since in earlier (Deut. 12:5; Jer. 7:2–3) and later times, "the place" refers to a holy place, it seems that Casiphia was the site of a sanctuary. There was a Jewish sanctuary at Elephantine, Egypt, at this same time. Levites would have been concentrated at such a sanctuary, explaining why Ezra sent the delegation to Casiphia. Iddo would have been the leader at the sanctuary.

■ **8:18–20 the good hand of our God.** Ezra did not weary of ascribing his success to God's providential control (7:6 note). Thirty-eight Levites were persuaded to return along with three key levitical leaders and 220 temple servants ("Nethinim"). Just as the Lord had stirred the spirits of Cyrus (1:1), the first returnees (1:5), and Artaxerxes (7:27), so His good hand moved these Levites to accept Ezra's call.

■ **8:21 a fast.** Fasting is an aspect of "humbling ourselves" for the purpose of requesting something from God (2 Chr. 20:3).

right way. Safety from bandits, among other dangers, is in view (v. 31).

■ **8:22 I was ashamed.** Ezra had testified to God's providential control, not only before the saints but also before Artaxerxes. It would have seemed inconsistent with this testimony to ask for a military escort in addition. See note on Neh. 2:7–9 for a contrast between Ezra and Nehemiah on this point.

■ **8:23 He answered our prayer.** Not then and there with words, but throughout the journey with actions (vv. 31, 32).

■ **8:24 twelve.** Twelve priests and twelve Levites, perhaps as representatives of all Israel (cf. v. 35).

■ **8:25 the king . . . had offered.** The total contribution listed in v. 26 is enormous, such that critics have doubted the authenticity of the list. However, the Persian kings were known for their great wealth and generosity toward the religions of subject peoples. There were also wealthy Jewish families in Babylon by this time.

■ **8:28 holy to the LORD.** Holiness is an attribute of God (Lev. 19:2) and, by extension, of anyone or anything belonging to Him, especially priests (Lev. 21:6), Levites (Num. 3:11–13, where "sanctified" means dedicated to God), and temple articles (Ex. 30:22–29). Ezra's strict command arises from the spiritual threat that contact with the profane represented for the holy.

The Return to Jerusalem

31 Then we departed from the river of Ahava on the twelfth *day* of the first month, to go to Jerusalem. And [w]the hand of our God was upon us, and He delivered us from the hand of the enemy and from ambush along the road. 32 So we [x]came to Jerusalem, and stayed there three days.

33 Now on the fourth day the silver and the gold and the articles were [y]weighed in the house of our God by the hand of Meremoth the son of Uriah the priest, and with him *was* Eleazar the son of Phinehas; with them *were* the Levites, [z]Jozabad the son of Jeshua and Noadiah the son of Binnui, 34 with the number *and* weight of everything. All the weight was written down at that time.

35 The children of those who had been [a]carried away captive, who had come from the captivity, [b]offered burnt offerings to the God of Israel: twelve bulls for all Israel, ninety-six rams, seventy-seven lambs, and twelve male goats *as* a sin offering. All *this was* a burnt offering to the LORD.

36 And they delivered the king's [c]orders to the king's satraps and the governors *in the region* beyond [d]the River. So they gave support to the people and the [e]house of God.

Intermarriage with Pagans

9 When these things were done, the leaders came to me, saying, "The people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not [a]separated themselves from the peoples of the lands, [b]with respect to the abominations of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. 2 For they have [c]taken some of their daughters *as wives* for themselves and their sons, so that the [d]holy seed is [e]mixed with the peoples of *those* lands. Indeed, the hand of the leaders and rulers has been foremost in this [f]trespass." 3 So when I heard this thing, [f]I tore my garment and my robe, and plucked out some of the

31 [w]Ezra 7:6, 9, 28
32 [x]Neh. 2:11
33 [y]Ezra 8:26, 30 [z]Neh. 11:16
35 [a]Ezra 2:1 [b]Ezra 6:17
36 [c]Ezra 7:21–24 [d]The Euphrates [e]Temple

CHAPTER 9

1 [a]Ezra 6:21; Neh. 9:2 [b]Deut. 12:30, 31
2 [c]Ex. 34:16; [Deut. 7:3]; Ezra 10:2; Neh. 13:23 [d]Ex. 22:31; [Deut. 7:6] [e][2 Cor. 6:14] [f]*unfaithfulness*
3 [f]Job 1:20

■ **8:31 twelfth day.** According to 7:9, departure was on the first day. The difference is due to the delay experienced in order to find the needed Levites.

He delivered us. Again Ezra attributes his success to God's providential control. The fasting and prayer for a safe journey was answered with the arrival of people and possessions in Jerusalem (vv. 21, 32).

■ **8:32 stayed there three days.** Compare the similar rest of Nehemiah in Neh. 2:11 (cf. Josh. 3:2).

■ **8:35 offered burnt offerings.** Just as the provisions had been made (7:17), so the sacrifices were offered. This is a picture of complete success.

■ **9:1 When these things were done.** That is, four and a half months after arrival (7:9; 10:9).

the leaders came to me, saying. Ezra had come to teach the law (7:10 note) and now some of the leaders came to him to report certain sins. Possibly they were responding to his teaching.

have not separated themselves. The point was the difference of religion, not race, as the following verses indicate (vv. 10–12; 4:3 note).

the peoples of the lands. Of those listed, only the Ammonites, Moabites, and Egyptians were present in the days of Ezra. The others were in the land during the Conquest under Joshua, and the mention of them could have brought to mind the original prohibitions against intermarriage (Ex. 34:10–16; Deut. 7:1–4).

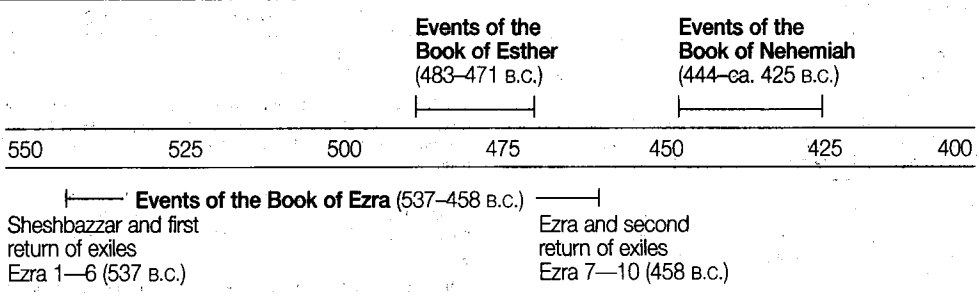
■ **9:2 the holy seed is mixed.** The problem was not intermarriage of different ethnic groups, but the confusion of those set apart as holy by covenant with the Lord with those who were outside the covenant and therefore unclean (8:28, 29 note; 9:11–12 note).

the leaders. The word for "leaders" here is the same as in v. 1. Not all the leaders led people to sin; some led the way to reform.

■ **9:3 I tore my garment and my robe.** This action was a typical way of expressing grief (2 Sam. 13:19).

plucked out some of the hair of my head and beard. This action is unusual. Some years later, Nehemiah would encounter the same sin, but rather than pulling out his own hair, he would pull out the hair of the offenders (Neh. 13:25).

The Times of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther (8:36)



hair of my head and beard, and sat down [g]astonished. 4 Then everyone who [h]trembled at the words of the God of Israel assembled to me, because of the transgression of those who had been carried away captive, and I sat astonished until the [i]evening sacrifice.

5 At the evening sacrifice I arose from my fasting; and having torn my garment and my robe, I fell on my knees and [j]spread out my hands to the LORD my God. 6 And I said: "O my God, I am too [k]ashamed and humiliated to lift up my face to You, my God; for [l]our iniquities have risen higher than *our* heads, and our guilt has [m]grown up to the heavens. 7 Since the days of our fathers to this day [n]we *have been* very guilty, and for our iniquities [o]we, our kings, *and* our priests have been delivered into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the [p]sword, to captivity, to plunder, and to [q]humiliation,[2] as *it is* this day. 8 And now for a little while grace has been *shown* from the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a peg in His holy place, that our God may [r]enlighten our eyes and give us a measure of revival in our bondage. 9 [s]For we *were* slaves. [t]Yet our God did not forsake us in our bondage; but [u]He extended mercy to us in the sight of the kings of Persia, to revive us, to repair the house of our God, to rebuild its ruins, and to give us [v]a wall in Judah and Jerusalem. 10 And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? For we have forsaken Your commandments, 11 which You commanded by Your servants the prophets, saying, 'The land which you are entering to possess is an unclean land, with the [w]uncleanness of the peoples of the lands, with their abominations which have filled it from one end to another with their impurity. 12 Now therefore, [x]do not give your daughters as wives for their sons, nor take their daughters to your sons; and [y]never seek their peace or prosperity, that you may be strong and eat the good of the land, and [z]leave *it* as an inheritance to your children forever.' 13 And after all that has come upon us for our evil deeds and for our great guilt, since You our God [a]have punished us less than our iniquities *deserve,* and have given us *such* deliverance as this, 14 should we [b]again break Your commandments, and [c]join in marriage with the people *committing* these abominations? Would You not be [d]angry with us until You had [3]consumed *us,* so that *there would be* no remnant or survivor? 15 O LORD God of Israel, [e]You *are* righteous, for we are left as a remnant, as *it is* this day. [f]Here we *are* before You, [g]in our guilt, though no one can stand before You because of this!"

3 [g]Ps. 143:4
4 [h]Ezra 10:3 [i]Ex. 29:39
5 [j]Ex. 9:29
6 [k]Dan. 9:7, 8 [l]Ps. 38:4 [m]Rev. 18:5
7 [n]Dan. 9:5, 6 [o]Deut. 28:36 [p]Deut. 32:25 [q]Dan. 9:7, 8 [2]Lit. *shame of faces*
8 [r]Ps. 34:5
9 [s]Neh. 9:36 [t]Ps. 136:23 [u]Ezra 7:28 [v]Is. 5:2
11 [w]Ezra 6:21
12 [x][Deut. 7:3, 4] [y]Deut. 23:6 [z][Prov. 13:22; 20:7]
13 [a][Ps. 103:10]
14 [b][John 5:14] [c]Neh. 13:23 [d]Deut. 9:8 [3]*destroyed*
15 [e]Dan. 9:14 [f][Rom. 3:19] [g]1 Cor. 15:17

■ **9:4 everyone who trembled.** There was a group who had not intermarried, but who had feared the Lord and kept His law (cf. Is. 66:2).

the evening sacrifice. Mid-afternoon, a time of prayer as well as sacrifice (Ps. 141:2).

■ **9:5 fell on my knees and spread out my hands.** See 1 Kin. 8:54. Kneeling expresses humility before the majestic Lord (Ps. 95:6), and spreading the hands often accompanies petitions (Ps. 28:2).

■ **9:6 ashamed and humiliated.** Previously, Ezra had been ashamed to ask Artaxerxes for protection on the return trip (8:22). Now his shame is of a different kind, a shame joined with the guilt that results from sin.

our iniquities . . . our guilt. Ezra is acutely aware of the people's sin and guilt before God. Note also the sudden shift from "my" to "our." Though Ezra was not guilty of marrying into paganism, he identified himself with the people in their sin, as did the Suffering Servant of Isaiah (Is. 53:12; 2 Cor. 5:21).

■ **9:7 Since the days of our fathers.** There was a sense of corporate solidarity and mutual responsibility that spanned the generations.

■ **9:8 a little while.** The status of the returnees as the recipients of God's favor was in jeopardy.

grace has been shown from the LORD . . . a remnant. Justice demanded the absolute end of the people of God, but grace preserved a remnant. Through this remnant the Messiah would come and redemption would be accomplished.

a peg. A "peg" is a stake that holds a tent in position (Judg. 4:21) or a nail that holds up objects that are hung on it (Is. 22:23–25). The Lord had given Israel a place in His temple, like the peg of a tent, and had made Ezra someone who could be trusted with burdens.

enlighten our eyes. An idiom for increased vigor (Ps. 13:3).

■ **9:9 we were slaves.** Though restored to their land, the people of God were not politically independent, as they had been during the monarchy (4:19–23 note).

God did not forsake us. God's promise not to forsake the nation was, in its outer, typological aspect, conditional (10:5 note). If Israel forsook God and the covenant by disregarding the law, she would forfeit the blessings and experience the curses (Deut. 28:20; 29:24–25; 31:16–17). But even so God would never finally desert Israel, through whom Christ would come. See Lev. 26:44, 45; Ps. 89:30–37; Is. 54:7; Rom. 11.

the kings of Persia. Specifically, Cyrus (550–530 B.C.), who issued the decree to return, Darius (522–486 B.C.), who confirmed the decree, and Artaxerxes (465–424 B.C.), who commissioned Ezra to teach the people.

a wall in Judah and Jerusalem. This phrase does not refer to the wall built later by Nehemiah, but is a figure for the protection afforded the returnees (note the other figurative language in v. 8, and that the wall of Nehemiah was not built around all of Judah).

■ **9:10 forsaken Your commandments.** Forsaking the commandments meant that covenant curses could fall upon the people at any time (v. 9 note on "forsake us").

■ **9:11 You commanded . . . saying.** Moses was the prophet who gave the command initially (Deut. 7:1–3). The words are not a quotation of a single text, but a summary of the theology of separation taken from numerous texts, such as Lev. 18:25; Deut. 4:5; 7:3; 18:9; 27:3; 2 Kin. 21:16. The separation was not ethnic or racial but religious. Intermarriage with people outside the covenant introduced a relentless temptation to corrupt or abandon worship of the true and living God (cf. Deut. 7:3, 4; Judg. 14:1–4; 1 Kin. 11:1–4; 2 Cor. 6:14).

■ **9:13 less than our iniquities deserve . . . deliverance.** The restoration was on the basis of grace and the promise of the Abrahamic covenant (Deut. 4:25–31). So also was the initial entrance into the land (Deut. 9:5).

■ **9:14 no remnant.** Ezra fears that the current covenant breach might result in ultimate judgment. Though judgment would later come upon the nation (Luke 20:9–19), even then there would be a remnant according to grace (Rom. 11:1–5).

■ **9:15** Ezra's conclusion is that even now the people live only because of God's grace.

Confession of Improper Marriages

10 Now [a]while Ezra was praying, and while he was confessing, weeping, and bowing down [b]before the house of God, a very large assembly of men, women, and children gathered to him from Israel; for the people wept very [c]bitterly. 2 And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, *one* of the sons of Elam, spoke up and said to Ezra, "We have [d]trespassed[1] against our God, and have taken pagan wives from the peoples of the land; yet now there is hope in Israel in spite of this. 3 Now therefore, let us make [e]a covenant with our God to put away all these wives and those who have been born to them, according to the advice of my master and of those who [f]tremble at [g]the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the [h]law. 4 Arise, for *this* matter *is* your *responsibility.* We also *are* with you. [i]Be of good courage, and do *it.*"

5 Then Ezra arose, and made the leaders of the priests, the Levites, and all Israel [j]swear an oath that they would do according to this word. So they swore an oath. 6 Then Ezra rose up from before the house of God, and went into the chamber of Jehohanan the son of Eliashib; and *when* he came there, he [k]ate no bread and drank no water, for he mourned because of the guilt of those from the captivity.

7 And they issued a proclamation throughout Judah and Jerusalem to all the descendants of the captivity, that they must gather at Jerusalem, 8 and that whoever would not come within three days, according to the instructions of the leaders and elders, all his property would be confiscated, and he himself would be separated from the assembly of those from the captivity.

9 So all the men of Judah and Benjamin gathered at Jerusalem within three days. It *was* the ninth month, on the twentieth of the month; and [l]all the people sat in the open square of the house of God, trembling because of *this* matter and because of heavy rain. 10 Then Ezra the priest stood up and said to them, "You have [2]transgressed and [3]have taken pagan wives, adding to the guilt of Israel. 11 Now therefore, [m]make confession to the LORD God of your fathers, and do His will; [n]separate yourselves from the peoples of the land, and from the pagan wives."

12 Then all the assembly answered and said with a loud voice, "Yes! As you have said, so we must do. 13 But *there are* many people; *it is* the season for heavy rain, and we are not able to stand outside. Nor *is this* the work of one or two days, for *there are* many of us who have transgressed in this matter. 14 Please, let the leaders of our entire assembly stand; and let all those in our cities who have taken pagan wives come at appointed times, together with the elders and judges of their cities, until [o]the fierce wrath of our God is turned away from us in this matter." 15 Only Jonathan the son of Asahel and Jahaziah the son of Tikvah opposed this, and [p]Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levite gave them support.

CHAPTER 10

1 [a]Dan. 9:4, 20 [b]2 Chr. 20:9 [c]Neh. 8:1–9

2 [d]Ezra 10:10, 13, 14, 17, 18; Neh. 13:23–27 [1]*been unfaithful to*

3 [e]2 Chr. 34:31 [f]Ezra 9:4 [g]Deut. 7:2, 3 [h]Deut. 24:1, 2

4 [i]1 Chr. 28:10

5 [j]Ezra 10:12, 19; Neh. 5:12; 13:25

6 [k]Deut. 9:18

9 [l]1 Sam. 12:18; Ezra 9:4; 10:3

10 [2]*acted unfaithfully* [3]Heb. *have caused to dwell* or *have brought back*

11 [m][Lev. 26:40–42]; Josh. 7:19; [Prov. 28:13] [n]Ezra 10:3

14 [o]2 Kin. 23:26; 2 Chr. 28:11–13; 29:10; 30:8

15 [p]Ezra 8:16; Neh. 3:4

■ **10:1 Ezra . . . weeping.** Other leaders had set the pace for sin (9:2). Now Ezra set the pace for repentance, not by exhorting the people to mourn, but by mourning himself.

■ **10:2** Ezra's confession in 9:13, 14 became the confession of the people through one of their leaders, Shechaniah.

there is hope. Shechaniah encouraged Ezra that all was not lost.

■ **10:3 make a covenant.** This was not an entirely new covenant, but the renewal of the Mosaic covenant in terms of an oath (v. 5) to keep the stipulation regarding intermarriage (Deut. 7:3; cf. Jer. 34:8–22 for a similar covenant renewal).

to put away. This is not the usual Hebrew phrase for divorce, and is used only here for putting away a wife. The Hebrew expression in v. 2 ("have taken . . . wives") is not the usual phrase for marriage, and is used in the same way only in Neh. 13, in an analogous situation. The author's choice of language seems to indicate that he did not regard the unions as legitimate marriages, nor the sending away as actual divorce.

according to the law. The law does not provide explicitly for this exact situation. The phrase may refer to sending a woman away with her children, some provisions (Gen. 21:14), and certain legal rights (Deut. 21:10–14).

■ **10:5 Ezra arose.** Ezra responded to the encouragement of Shechaniah and put his advice into practice.

made . . . all Israel swear an oath. The covenant was conditional, as the swearing of the oath by the Israelites and not by the Lord indicates (9:9 note; Jer. 34:8–22).

■ **10:6 the chamber.** Located in the temple.

ate no bread and drank no water. A total fast was rare (Deut. 9:18). The fast indicates that Ezra did not think the exiles were immune to the covenant punishments on the basis of an oath alone.

■ **10:8 within three days.** Three days was sufficient time for any who wished to travel to Jerusalem, owing to the reduced territory of Judah.

confiscated . . . be separated. Failure to comply would have resulted in the loss of property and excommunication (7:26).

■ **10:9 Judah and Benjamin.** See note on 1:5.

the ninth month, on the twentieth of the month. It was December, in the cold and rainy season. Jerusalem is colder than most of the countryside around it, and rainfall in the region is more concentrated than in temperate climates.

all the people. The people as a whole responded to the proclamation.

trembling because of this matter. Ezra's distress had spread throughout the populace (v. 1 note).

■ **10:11 make confession.** Lit. "give thanks and praise to." When a person confesses sin and trusts in God for mercy, praise is given to God. In Psalm 103 the psalmist "blesses" God by confessing who God is and what He has done.

do His will. Confession must lead to repentance (v. 6 note).

separate yourselves. See note on 9:11–12.

■ **10:12 all the assembly answered.** Not only had all the men assembled and expressed their distress (v. 9), but they also agreed with Ezra as to their sin and guilt.

■ **10:13 But.** This was not an attempt to escape the responsibility to repent, but an expression of genuine concern that the repentance be carried out well.

■ **10:15 opposed this.** They probably opposed the delay, though they may have opposed the sending away of the foreign women.

16 [q]Ezra 4:3
18 [r]Ezra 5:2; Hag. 1:1, 12; 2:4; Zech. 3:1; 6:11 [t]*Jehozadak,* 1 Chr. 6:14
19 [s]2 Kin. 10:15 [t]Lev. 6:4, 6 [u]Lev. 5:6, 15
25 [v]Ezra 2:3; 8:3; Neh. 7:8
28 [w]Ezra 8:11
29 [y]Or *Jeremoth*
30 [x]Ezra 8:4
35 [6]Or *Cheluhi* or *Cheluhu*
37 [7]Or *Jaasu*
43 [8]Or *Jaddu*

16 Then the descendants of the captivity did so. And Ezra the priest, *with* certain [q]heads of the fathers' *households,* were set apart by the fathers' *households,* each of them by name; and they sat down on the first day of the tenth month to examine the matter. 17 By the first day of the first month they finished *questioning* all the men who had taken pagan wives.

Pagan Wives Put Away

18 And among the sons of the priests who had taken pagan wives *the following* were found of the sons of [r]Jeshua the son of [t]Jozadak, and his brothers: Maaseiah, Eliezer, Jarib, and Gedaliah. 19 And they [s]gave their promise that they would put away their wives; and *being* [t]guilty, *they presented* a ram of the flock as their [u]trespass offering.

20 Also of the sons of Immer: Hanani and Zebadiah; 21 of the sons of Harim: Maaseiah, Elijah, Shemaiah, Jehiel, and Uzziah; 22 of the sons of Pashhur: Elioenai, Maaseiah, Ishmael, Nethanel, Jozabad, and Elasah.

23 Also of the Levites: Jozabad, Shimei, Kelaiah (the same *is* Kelita), Pethahiah, Judah, and Eliezer.

24 Also of the singers: Eliashib; and of the gatekeepers: Shallum, Telem, and Uri.

25 And others of Israel: of the [v]sons of Parosh: Ramiah, Jeziah, Malchiah, Mijamin, Eleazar, Malchijah, and Benaiah; 26 of the sons of Elam: Mattaniah, Zechariah, Jehiel, Abdi, Jeremoth, and Eliah; 27 of the sons of Zattu: Elioenai, Eliashib, Mattaniah, Jeremoth, Zabad, and Aziza; 28 of the [w]sons of Bebai: Jehohanan, Hananiah, Zabbai, *and* Athlai; 29 of the sons of Bani: Meshullam, Malluch, Adaiah, Jashub, Sheal, *and* [5]Ramoth; 30 of the [x]sons of Pahath-Moab: Adna, Chelal, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattaniah, Bezalel, Binnui, and Manasseh; 31 *of* the sons of Harim: Eliezer, Ishijah, Malchijah, Shemaiah, Shimeon, 32 Benjamin, Malluch, *and* Shemariah; 33 of the sons of Hashum: Mattenai, Mattattah, Zabad, Eliphelet, Jeremai, Manasseh, *and* Shimei; 34 of the sons of Bani: Maadai, Amram, Uel, 35 Benaiah, Bedeiah, [6]Cheluh, 36 Vaniah, Meremoth, Eliashib, 37 Mattaniah, Mattenai, [7]Jaasai, 38 Bani, Binnui, Shimei, 39 Shelemiah, Nathan, Adaiah, 40 Machnadebai, Shashai, Sharai, 41 Azarel, Shelemiah, Shemariah, 42 Shallum, Amariah, *and* Joseph; 43 of the sons of Nebo: Jeiel, Mattithiah, Zabad, Zebina, [8]Jaddai, Joel, *and* Benaiah.

44 All these had taken pagan wives, and *some* of them had wives *by whom* they had children.

■ **10:18–44** From this list of those guilty of intermarriage it is evident that the individual who sins cannot find sanctuary within the larger community (Deut. 29:19–21). But for those who will avail themselves of the sacrifice provided by God there is always forgiveness (v. 19).

The Book of

NEHEMIAH

Author

Ezra and Nehemiah were originally a single book composed from a variety of historical sources, including the personal memoirs of Ezra and Nehemiah. According to Jewish tradition, Ezra was responsible for compiling these sources into their current form (see "Introduction to Ezra: Author").

Date and Occasion

Assuming the traditional view of authorship, these narratives were written during the period 430–400 B.C. to encourage the Judeans who had returned from exile in Babylon and were reestablishing their community in and around Jerusalem (see "Introduction to Ezra: Date and Occasion").

Characteristics and Themes

The major theme of Ezra and Nehemiah is that God works sovereignly through responsible human agents to accomplish His redemptive purpose. The author develops this theme in Nehemiah with particular attention to the rebuilding and dedication of the defensive walls of Jerusalem (1:1—7:3; 12:27–43) and the reconstitution of the whole people called "Israel" in their covenant relationship with God (7:4—13:31). See "Introduction to Ezra: Characteristics and Themes" for further discussion of the themes of Ezra and Nehemiah as a whole. □

Outline of Nehemiah

I. Return of Nehemiah and Rebuilding of the Wall (1:1—7:3)
  A. Return of Nehemiah (1:1—2:10)
    1. Preparations for the Return (1:1—2:8)
      a. Report from Judah (1:1–3)
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      c. Request Before the King (2:1–8)
    2. The Trip and the Beginning of the Conflict (2:9, 10)
  B. Rebuilding the Wall (2:11—7:3)
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    2. First Escalation of the Conflict (2:19, 20)
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    5. Rebuilding Continued (4:7–23)
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II. Return of the Exiles and Rebuilding the Community (7:4—13:31)
  A. Return of the Exiles (7:4–73)
    1. The Need to Repopulate Jerusalem (7:4, 5)
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    1. Renewing the Covenant (7:73—10:39)
      a. Reading of the Law (7:73—8:18)
      b. Confession of Sin (9:1–37)
      c. Ratification of the Oath (9:38—10:39)
    2. Dedication of the Wall (chs. 11; 12)
      a. Listing of Residents (ch. 11)
      b. Listing of Priests and Levites (12:1–26)
      c. The Dedication Proper (12:27–43)
      d. Provisions for Clergy (12:44–47)

3. Reformation of the People (ch. 13)
   a. Exclusion of Foreigners (13:1–3)
   b. Attention to the Temple (13:4–14)
   c. Observance of the Sabbath (13:15–22)
   d. The End of Intermarriage (13:23–31)

CHAPTER 1

1 [a]Neh. 10:1 [b]Neh. 2:1 [c]Esth. 1:1, 2, 5 [1]Or *Susa* [2]Or *fortified palace,* and so elsewhere in the book

2 [d]Neh. 7:2

3 [e]Neh. 7:6 [f]Neh. 2:17 [g]Neh. 2:17 [h]2 Kin. 25:10

5 [i]Dan. 9:4 [j]Neh. 4:14 [k][Ex. 20:6; 34:6, 7] [3]Lit. *Him* [4]Lit. *His*

6 [l]2 Chr. 6:40 [m]Dan. 9:20

7 [n]Dan. 9:5 [o]Deut. 28:15

8 [p]Lev. 26:33 [5]*act treacherously*

9 [q][Deut. 4:29–31; 30:2–5] [r]Deut. 30:4

10 [s]Deut. 9:29

11 [t]Neh. 1:6

Nehemiah Prays for His People

THE words of [a]Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah.

It came to pass in the month of Chisley, *in* the [b]twentieth year, as I was in [c]Shushan[1] the [2]citadel, [2] that [d]Hanani one of my brethren came with men from Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews who had escaped, who had survived the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. [3] And they said to me, "The survivors who are left from the captivity in the [e]province *are* there in great distress and [f]reproach. [g]The wall of Jerusalem [h]*is* also broken down, and its gates *are* burned with fire."

[4] So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned *for many* days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven.

[5] And I said: "I pray, [i]LORD God of heaven, O great and [j]awesome God, [k]*You* who keep *Your* covenant and mercy with those who love [3]You and observe [4]Your commandments, [6] please let Your ear be attentive and [l]Your eyes open, that You may hear the prayer of Your servant which I pray before You now, day and night, for the children of Israel Your servants, and [m]confess the sins of the children of Israel which we have sinned against You. Both my father's house and I have sinned. [7] [n]We have acted very corruptly against You, and have [o]not kept the commandments, the statutes, nor the ordinances which You commanded Your servant Moses. [8] Remember, I pray, the word that You commanded Your servant Moses, saying, [p]'*If* you [5]are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations; [9] [q]but *if* you return to Me, and keep My commandments and do them, [r]though some of you were cast out to the farthest part of the heavens, *yet* I will gather them from there, and bring them to the place which I have chosen as a dwelling for My name.' [10] [s]Now these *are* Your servants and Your people, whom You have redeemed by Your great power, and by Your strong hand. [11] O Lord, I pray, please [t]let Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant, and to the prayer of Your servants who [u]desire to fear Your name; and

■ **1:1 The words of.** The introductory phrase does not mean that the Book of Nehemiah was originally separate. It may indicate the beginning of personal records or memoirs by Nehemiah (Introduction: Author).

Nehemiah. The name means "the LORD has comforted."

Chislev . . . twentieth year. November-December 446 B.C., the twentieth year of Artaxerxes I (2:1; Ezra 7:1).

Shushan. This city was a winter residence of the Persian kings (Esth. 1:2 note).

■ **1:2 Hanani.** A short form of Hananiah, it means "the LORD is gracious." A certain Hananiah who was head of Jewish affairs is mentioned in the Elephantine papyri, and is believed by some to have been the brother of Nehemiah (7:2).

■ **1:3 its gates are burned with fire.** Perhaps this destruction was the result of the events recorded in Ezra 4:7–23, but the reference to "gates" makes the destruction by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. more likely.

■ **1:4 fasting and praying.** Fasting is here connected with mourning (1 Sam. 31:13) as well as with making a request of God (Ezra 8:21 note). Nehemiah was a man of prayer (2:4; 4:4, 9; 5:19; 6:9, 14; 13:14, 22, 29, 31).

the God of heaven. See notes on Ezra 1:2; Dan. 4:37.

■ **1:5** In this address Nehemiah captures both the transcendence of God and His immanence. The true God is not only far above His people as the God of heaven (v. 4 note); He is near His people as the God of the covenant (Deut. 4:7).

mercy. See note on Ezra 7:28.

■ **1:6 now, day and night.** The reference is to the prayer of one particular day (v. 11), after four months of prayer and fasting (1:4; 2:1 note). "Day and night" means "continually" (Josh. 1:8; Ps. 1:2).

■ **1:7** The Mosaic covenant was conditional: the Lord would keep His promises if Israel obeyed His commands (v. 5). Israel failed to obey His commands and the result was exile (Ezra 9:9 note).

■ **1:8 Remember.** A common petition (Deut. 9:27; Ps. 132:1; Jer. 14:21), particularly in Nehemiah (5:19; 6:14; 13:14, 22, 29, 31).

■ **1:9 I will gather them.** The Mosaic covenant promised restoration of a remnant after exile (Deut. 30:1–5) on the basis of the covenant made with Abraham (Deut. 4:25–31).

dwelling for My name. The name of God symbolizes God Himself, as He reveals Himself to His people. A place for His name to dwell is a place for Him to be with the people and to receive their worship (Deut. 12:5 note).

■ **1:10 redeemed.** The reference is to the Exodus (Ex. 32:11; Mic. 6:4).

■ **1:11 who desire to fear Your name.** The fear of the Lord is the proper response to God's self-revelation. To fear God is to know Him (Prov. 9:10), to trust Him (Ps. 34:11, 22), to obey Him (Prov. 8:13), and to show Him reverence.

this man. Artaxerxes I.

cupbearer. A member of the royal court, whose responsibility was to choose wine (2:1) and safeguard it from poison. The steward's access to the king secured prestige and influence at court.

let Your servant prosper this day, I pray, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man."
For I was the king's [v]cupbeare[r].

Nehemiah Sent to Judah

2 And it came to pass in the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of [a]King [1]Artaxerxes, *when* wine *was* before him, that [b]I took the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had never been sad in his presence before. [2]Therefore the king said to me, "Why *is* your face sad, since you *are* not sick? This *is* nothing but [c]sorrow of heart."

So I became [2]dreadfully afraid, [3]and said to the king, [d]"May the king live forever! Why should my face not be sad, when [e]the city, the place of my fathers' tombs, *lies* waste, and its gates are burned with [f]fire?"

[4]Then the king said to me, "What do you request?"

So I [g]prayed to the God of heaven. [5]And I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, I ask that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' tombs, that I may rebuild it."

[6]Then the king said to me (the queen also sitting beside him), "How long will your journey be? And when will you return?" So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him [h]a time.

[7]Furthermore I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, let letters be given to me for the [i]governors *of the region* beyond [3]the River, that they must permit me to pass through till I come to Judah, [8]and a letter to Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he must give me timber to make beams for the gates of the [4]citadel which *pertains* [j]to the [5]temple, for the city wall, and for the house that I will occupy." And the king granted *them* to me [k]according to the good hand of my God upon me.

[9]Then I went to the governors *in the region* beyond the River, and gave them the king's letters. Now the king had sent captains of the army and horsemen with me. [10]When [l]Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite [6]official heard *of it,* they were deeply disturbed that a man had come to seek the well-being of the children of Israel.

11 [u]Is. 26:8; [Heb. 13:18] [v]Gen. 40:21; Neh. 2:1

CHAPTER 2

1 [a]Ezra 7:1 [b]Neh. 1:11 [1]Artaxerxes Longimanus

2 [c]Prov. 15:13 [2]Lit. *very much*

3 [d]1 Kin. 1:31; Dan. 2:4; 5:10; 6:6, 21 [e]2 Kin. 25:8–10; 2 Chr. 36:19; Jer. 52:12–14 [f]2 Kin. 24:10; Neh. 1:3

4 [g]Neh. 1:4

6 [h]Neh. 5:14; 13:6

7 [i]Ezra 7:21; 8:36 [3]The Euphrates

8 [j]Neh. 3:7 [k]Ezra 5:5; 7:6, 9, 28; Neh. 2:18 [4]*palace* [5]Lit. *house*

10 [l]Neh. 2:19; 4:1 [6]Lit. *servant*

■ **2:1 Nisan . . . twentieth year.** The date was March-April 445 B.C., four months after Nehemiah received the report about Jerusalem. The Persian New Year or another holiday may be indicated by the use of wine (cf. 1:11 note).

King Artaxerxes. See note on Ezra 4:7.

■ **2:2 dreadfully afraid.** Nehemiah feared the king's wrath (Prov. 16:14) because he was sad on a festive occasion, or because he was about to ask the king to reverse a previous decision (Ezra 4:21). Nehemiah may also have feared that he would be refused the permission he sought.

■ **2:5 that I may rebuild it.** Rebuilding the city is one aspect of rebuilding the "house of God" (cf. Num. 12:7), a major theme in Ezra and Nehemiah (Introduction to Ezra: Characteristics and Themes). It is the focus of Neh. 1:1—7:3.

■ **2:6 How long . . . I set him a time.** It may seem doubtful that Nehemiah requested the twelve-year absence presumed in 5:14, but his request to rebuild his personal residence (v. 8) seems to indicate that more than a brief leave was in view from the beginning.

■ **2:7 Furthermore I said.** Nehemiah now makes his specific requests.

letters. The two references to letters in vv. 7, 8 are part of a major theme in Ezra and Nehemiah: the written word is an effective instrument used by God to accomplish His redemptive purpose (Introduction to Ezra: Characteristics and Themes).

■ **2:8 timber . . . for the gates.** The scope of the building project becomes clear: fortress, walls, governor's residence.

the good hand of my God. Nehemiah acts as a responsible human agent in making the request, but the success is from God's sovereign good pleasure (Ezra 7:6). This theme expresses the overarching message of Ezra and Nehemiah (Introduction to Ezra: Characteristics and Themes).

■ **2:10 Sanballat.** A Babylonian name, meaning "Sin (the moon god) gives life." Sanballat and his descendents served for more than a century as the governors of Samaria, the area north of Judah. He may have worshiped the God of Israel in some fashion (2 Kin. 17:24–41), since the names of his sons, Deliah and Shelemiah, end with a short form of "Yahweh."

Tobiah. Probably the governor of Ammon, east of Judah. The name means "the LORD is good," indicating that he, too, may have worshiped the God of Israel (6:17, 18; 13:4).

Persian Kings of the Restoration, 559–404 B.C. (2:1)

Cyrus 559–530	Cambyses 530–522	Smerdis 522	Darius I 522–486	Xerxes I (Ahasuerus) (486–465)	Artaxerxes I 465–424	Xerxes II 424	Darius II 423–404
575	550	525	500	475	450	425	400

11 [m]Ezra 8:32

13 [n]Neh. 3:13 [o]Neh. 1:3; 2:17 [7]*Dung* [8]*examined*

14 [p]Neh. 3:15 [q]2 Kin. 20:20

15 [r]2 Sam. 15:23 [9]*torrent valley, wadi* [t]*examined*

17 [s]Neh. 1:3 [2]*desolate*

18 [t]Neh. 2:8 [u]2 Sam. 2:7 [3]Lit. *strengthened*

19 [v]Neh. 6:6

20 [w]Ezra 4:3

CHAPTER 3

1 [a]Neh. 3:20; 12:10; 13:4, 7, 28 [b]John 5:2 [c]Neh. 12:39 [d]Jer. 31:38 [1]Heb. *Hammeah*

2 [e]Neh. 7:36 [2]Lit. *On his hand*

3 [f]Zeph. 1:10 [g]Neh. 6:1; 7:1

4 [h]Ezra 8:33 [i]Ezra 10:15 [3]Or *Hakkoz*

5 [j][Judg. 5:23] [4]Lit. *necks*

6 [k]Neh. 12:39

Nehemiah Views the Wall of Jerusalem

11 So I [m]came to Jerusalem and was there three days. 12 Then I arose in the night, I and a few men with me; I told no one what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem; nor was there any animal with me, except the one on which I rode. 13 And I went out by night [n]through the Valley Gate to the Serpent Well and the [7]Refuse Gate, and [8]viewed the walls of Jerusalem which were [o]broken down and its gates which were burned with fire. 14 Then I went on to the [p]Fountain Gate and to the [q]King's Pool. but *there was* no room for the animal under me to pass. 15 So I went up in the night by the [r]valley,[9] and [t]viewed the wall; then I turned back and entered by the Valley Gate, and so returned. 16 And the officials did not know where I had gone or what I had done; I had not yet told the Jews, the priests, the nobles, the officials, or the others who did the work.

17 Then I said to them, "You see the distress that we *are* in, how Jerusalem *lies* [2]waste, and its gates are burned with fire. Come and let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer be [s]a reproach." 18 And I told them of [t]the hand of my God which had been good upon me, and also of the king's words that he had spoken to me.

So they said, "Let us rise up and build." Then they [u]set[3] their hands to *this* good *work.*

19 But when Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official, and Geshem the Arab heard *of it,* they laughed at us and despised us, and said, "What *is* this thing that you are doing? [v]Will you rebel against the king?"

20 So I answered them, and said to them, "The God of heaven Himself will prosper us; therefore we His servants will arise and build, [w]but you have no heritage or right or memorial in Jerusalem."

Rebuilding the Wall

3 Then [a]Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brethren the priests [b]and built the Sheep Gate; they consecrated it and hung its doors. They built [c]as far as the Tower of [1]the Hundred, *and* consecrated it, then as far as the Tower of [d]Hananel. 2 [2]Next to *Eliashib* [e]the men of Jericho built. And next to them Zaccur the son of Imri built.

3 Also the sons of Hassenaah built [f]the Fish Gate; they laid its beams and [g]hung its doors with its bolts and bars. 4 And next to them [h]Meremoth the son of Urijah, the son of [3]Koz, made repairs. Next to them [i]Meshullam the son of Berechiah, the son of Meshezabel, made repairs. Next to them Zadok the son of Baana made repairs. 5 Next to them the Tekoites made repairs; but their nobles did not put their [4]shoulders to [j]the work of their Lord.

6 Moreover Jehoiada the son of Paseah and Meshullam the son of Besodeiah repaired [k]the Old

heard. References to the enemies "having heard" will punctuate the rest of 1:1—7:3 like a refrain (v. 19; 4:1, 7, 15; 6:1, 16). The conflict escalates until it is resolved in 6:16.

deeply disturbed. The opposition had a political aspect, but was religious at its root (v. 20; Ezra 4:13 notes).

■ **2:11–18** Soon after returning to Jerusalem, Nehemiah conducts a nighttime inspection of the walls and, aware of God's blessing upon him, advises the officials of the city to rebuild them.

■ **2:11–16** Nehemiah's three-day wait after arriving in Jerusalem invites a comparison with Ezra (Ezra 8:32). Ezra acted publicly, Nehemiah secretly (that Nehemiah had "told no one" is emphasized in v. 12; cf. v. 16).

■ **2:17 waste.** The city had lain in ruins for almost 150 years (1:3 note). An earlier attempt to rebuild the wall had been stopped (Ezra 4:7–23). Nehemiah's presence would change all that.

build the wall. See note on v. 5.

■ **2:18 also of the king's words.** Nehemiah's acknowledgment of God's sovereignty as the ultimate source of his plan does not exclude the providentially ordered actions of the king (v. 8 note).

Let us rise up. Nehemiah's initiative met with wholehearted support on the part of the leaders of Judah; by now the reader knows that this response, too, is governed by God's purpose (Ezra 1:5 note).

■ **2:19 Sanballat . . . Tobiah.** See v. 10 and note.

Geshem the Arab. This third opponent of Nehemiah was probably an Arab chief controlling the area south of Judah. Nehemiah is pictured as virtually surrounded by enemies—Sanballat to the north, Tobiah to the east, and Geshem to the south (4:7, 8 note).

■ **2:20 God of heaven.** See note on 1:4.

prosper. Nehemiah had requested success from God in 1:11. Now he expresses confidence that the sovereign God will prosper the people.

you have no heritage. On this religious exclusivity, see the note on Ezra 4:3.

■ **3:1–32** This chapter underscores an important theme of Ezra and Nehemiah: the people of God as a whole and not just the great leaders are vital for accomplishing God's redemptive purpose. All of God's people worked together to rebuild the wall: clergy and laity, craftsmen and tradesmen, by town and by family, each contributing to the completion of the whole (cf. Eph. 4:16).

■ **3:1 Eliashib.** He was the grandson of Jeshua, the High Priest during the days of Zerubbabel.

Sheep Gate. This gate was at the northeast corner of the city (cf. John 5:2). The description in the following verses moves counterclockwise until the Sheep Gate is mentioned again in v. 32.

Tower of the Hundred. This would have been somewhere on the north side, the side with the poorest natural defenses.

Tower of Hananel. A tower on the north side.

■ **3:3 Fish Gate.** A main gate on the north side (2 Chr. 33:14; Zeph. 1:10), this was probably the gate used by merchants (cf. 13:16).

■ **3:5 their nobles did not.** Though the text presents an amazing picture of unanimity, it notes realistically that not all of God's people were in harmony with what the Lord was doing through Nehemiah.

■ **3:6 the Old Gate.** A gate on the northwest corner of the city.

Gate; they laid its beams and hung its doors, with its bolts and bars. 7 And next to them Melatiah the Gibeonite, Jadon the Meronothite, the [l]men of Gibeon and Mizpah, repaired the [m]residence[5] of the governor *of the region* [6]beyond the River. 8 Next to him Uzziel the son of Harhaiah, one of the goldsmiths, made repairs. Also next to him Hananiah, [7]one of the perfumers, made repairs; and they [8]fortified Jerusalem as far as the [n]Broad Wall. 9 And next to them Rephaiah the son of Hur, leader of half the district of Jerusalem, made repairs. 10 Next to them Jedaiah the son of Harumaph made repairs in front of his house. And next to him Hattush the son of Hashabniah made repairs.

11 Malchijah the son of Harim and Hashub the son of Pahath-Moab repaired another section, [o]as well as the Tower of the Ovens. 12 And next to him was Shallum the son of Hallohesh, leader of half the district of Jerusalem; he and his daughters made repairs.

13 Hanun and the inhabitants of Zanoah repaired [p]the Valley Gate. They built it, hung its doors with its bolts and bars, and *repaired* a thousand cubits of the wall as far as [q]the Refuse Gate.

14 Malchijah the son of Rechab, leader of the district of [r]Beth Haccerem, repaired the Refuse Gate; he built it and hung its doors with its bolts and bars.

15 Shallun the son of Col-Hozeh, leader of the district of Mizpah, repaired [s]the Fountain Gate; he built it, covered it, hung its doors with its bolts and bars, and repaired the wall of the Pool of [t]Shelah[9] by the [u]King's Garden, as far as the stairs that go down from the City of David. 16 After him Nehemiah the son of Azbuk, leader of half the district of Beth Zur, made repairs as far as *the place* in front of the [l]tombs of David, to the [v]man-made pool, and as far as the House of the Mighty.

17 After him the Levites, *under* Rehum the son of Bani, made repairs. Next to him Hashabiah, leader of half the district of Keilah, made repairs for his district. 18 After him their brethren, *under* [2]Bavai the son of Henadad, leader of the *other* half of the district of Keilah, made repairs. 19 And next to him Ezer the son of Jeshua, the leader of Mizpah, repaired another section in front of the Ascent to the Armory at the [w]buttress.[3] 20 After him Baruch the son of [4]Zabbai carefully repaired the other section, from the [5]buttress to the door of the house of Eliashib the high priest. 21 After him Meremoth the son of Urijah, the son of [6]Koz, repaired another section, from the door of the house of Eliashib to the end of the house of Eliashib.

22 And after him the priests, the men of the plain, made repairs. 23 After him Benjamin and Hasshub made repairs opposite their house. After them Azariah the son of Maaseiah, the son of Ananiah, made repairs by his house. 24 After him [x]Binnui the son of Henadad repaired another section, from the house of Azariah to [y]the [7]buttress, even as far as the corner. 25 Palal the son of Uzai *made repairs* opposite the [8]buttress, and on the tower which projects from the king's upper house that *was* by the [z]court of the prison. After him Pedaiah the son of Parosh *made repairs.*

26 Moreover [a]the Nethinim who dwelt in [b]Ophel *made repairs* as far as *the place* in front of [c]the Water Gate toward the east, and on the projecting tower. 27 After them the Tekoites repaired another section, next to the great projecting tower, and as far as the wall of Ophel.

28 Beyond the [d]Horse Gate the priests made repairs, each in front of his *own* house. 29 After them Zadok the son of Immer made repairs in front of his *own* house. After him Shemaiah the son of Shechaniah, the keeper of the East Gate, made repairs. 30 After him Hananiah the son of Shelemiah, and Hanun, the sixth son of Zalaph, repaired another section. After him Meshullam the son of Berechiah made repairs in front of his [9]dwelling. 31 After him Malchijah, [1]one of the goldsmiths, made repairs as far as the house of the Nethinim and of the merchants, in front of the

7 [l]Neh. 7:25 [m]Ezra 8:36; Neh. 2:7–9 [5]Lit. *throne* [6]West of the Euphrates

8 [n]Neh. 12:38 [7]Lit. *the son* [8]*restored*

11 [o]Neh. 12:38

13 [p]Neh. 2:13, 15 [q]Neh. 2:13

14 [r]Jer. 6:1

15 [s]Neh. 2:14 [t]Is. 8:6; John 9:7 [u]2 Kin. 25:4 [9]Or *Shiloah*

16 [v]2 Kin. 20:20; Is. 7:3; 22:11 [l]LXX, Syr., Vg. *tomb*

18 [2]So with MT, Vg.; some Heb. mss., LXX, Syr. *Binnui* (cf. v. 24)

19 [w]2 Chr. 26:9 [3]Lit. *turning*

20 [4]A few Heb. mss., Syr., Vg. *Zaccai* [5]Lit. *turning*

21 [6]Or *Hakkoz*

24 [x]Ezra 8:33 [y]Neh. 3:19 [7]Lit. *turning*

25 [z]Jer. 32:2; 33:1; 37:21 [8]Lit. *turning*

26 [a]Ezra 2:43; Neh. 11:21 [b]2 Chr. 27:3 [c]Neh. 8:1, 3; 12:37

28 [d]2 Kin. 11:16; 2 Chr. 23:15; Jer. 31:40

30 [9]Lit. *room*

31 [1]Lit. *a son of the goldsmiths*

■ **3:8 Broad Wall.** A wall on the west side of the northern half of the city.

■ **3:10 in front of his house.** Probably others too, like Jedaiah, worked on the sections near their homes.

■ **3:11 Tower of the Ovens.** A tower on the west side of the city, perhaps midway.

■ **3:12 he and his daughters.** This phrase is an extraordinary testimony to the dedication of the whole community to the task of rebuilding (5:1 note; 12:43 note).

■ **3:13 Valley Gate.** On the west side of the city facing the Tyropean Valley.

Refuse Gate. On the southwest corner of the city facing the Hinnom Valley.

■ **3:15 Fountain Gate.** On the southeast corner of the city facing the Kidron Valley.

City of David. Though in disrepair, it was still the city David established to be the political and religious capital of the theocracy. There is continuity between the past and present generations (Ezra 2:1–70 note).

■ **3:26 Ophel.** Ophel has usually been located south of the temple mount, but more probably it included also the southern part of the city below the Water Gate.

Water Gate. About halfway up the east side of the city, this gate faced the Kidron Valley and the main water source, the Gihon Spring.

■ **3:28 Horse Gate.** On the northeast side of the city.

■ **3:29 East Gate.** Just north of the Horse Gate.

■ **3:31 Miphkad Gate.** Between the East Gate and the Sheep Gate.

31 [z]Lit. *Inspection* or *Recruiting*

32 [e]Neh. 3:1; 12:39

CHAPTER 4

1 [a]Neh. 2:10, 19

3 [b]Neh. 2:10, 19

4 [c]Ps. 123:3, 4 [d]Ps. 79:12; Prov. 3:34

5 [e]Ps. 69:27, 28; 109:14, 15; Jer. 18:23

7 [f]Neh. 4:1 [g]Neh. 2:19 [1]Lit. *breaks*

8 [h]Ps. 83:3–5

9 [i][Ps. 50:15]

14 [j][Num. 14:9]; Deut. 1:29 [k][Deut. 10:17] [l]2 Sam. 10:12

15 [m]Job 5:12

16 [z]Supported

[z]Miphkad Gate, and as far as the upper room at the corner. 32 And between the upper room at the corner, as far as the [e]Sheep Gate, the goldsmiths and the merchants made repairs.

The Wall Defended Against Enemies

4 But it so happened, [a]when Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, that he was furious and very indignant, and mocked the Jews. 2 And he spoke before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, "What are these feeble Jews doing? Will they fortify themselves? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they complete it in a day? Will they revive the stones from the heaps of rubbish—*stones* that are burned?"

3 Now [b]Tobiah the Ammonite *was* beside him, and he said, "Whatever they build, if even a fox goes up *on it,* he will break down their stone wall."

4 [c]Hear, O our God, for we are despised; [d]turn their reproach on their own heads, and give them as plunder to a land of captivity! 5 [e]Do not cover their iniquity, and do not let their sin be blotted out from before You; for they have provoked *You* to anger before the builders.

6 So we built the wall, and the entire wall was joined together up to half its *height,* for the people had a mind to work.

7 Now it happened, [f]when Sanballat, Tobiah, [g]the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites heard that the walls of Jerusalem were being restored and the [1]gaps were beginning to be closed, that they became very angry, 8 and all of them [h]conspired together to come *and* attack Jerusalem and create confusion. 9 Nevertheless [i]we made our prayer to our God, and because of them we set a watch against them day and night.

10 Then Judah said, "The strength of the laborers is failing, and *there is* so much rubbish that we are not able to build the wall."

11 And our adversaries said, "They will neither know nor see anything, till we come into their midst and kill them and cause the work to cease."

12 So it was, when the Jews who dwelt near them came, that they told us ten times, "From whatever place you turn, *they will be* upon us."

13 Therefore I positioned *men* behind the lower parts of the wall, at the openings; and I set the people according to their families, with their swords, their spears, and their bows. 14 And I looked, and arose and said to the nobles, to the leaders, and to the rest of the people, [j]"Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, [k]great and awesome, and [l]fight for your brethren, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses."

15 And it happened, when our enemies heard that it was known to us, and [m]*that* God had brought their plot to nothing, that all of us returned to the wall, everyone to his work. 16 So it was, from that time on, *that* half of my servants worked at construction, while the other half held the spears, the shields, the bows, and *wore* armor; and the leaders [z]*were* behind all the house of Judah. 17 Those who built on the wall, and those who carried burdens, loaded themselves so that with one hand they worked at construction, and with the other held a weapon. 18 Every one of the builders had his sword girded at his side as he built. And the one who sounded the trumpet *was* beside me.

■ **3:32 Sheep Gate.** The counterclockwise description has come full circle (v. 1 note).

■ **4:1–3 when Sanballat heard.** The conflict between Israel and their Gentile rulers is escalating (2:10 note). The intent of the mockery is to stop the work.

■ **4:4, 5** This is the first of three such imprecatory prayers (6:14; 13:29). An imprecatory prayer is one that calls for the enemy to be cursed (e.g., Ps. 79:12; 94:1–3; 137:7–9). See Introduction to Psalms: "The Curses of the Psalms."

■ **4:7 when Sanballat . . . heard.** One more group, the Ashdodites, is added to the list of enemies. Nehemiah is now completely encircled by the enemy, as Ashdod lies on the Philistine plain to his west (2:19 note).

■ **4:10 Judah said.** A collective term is used, emphasizing that discouragement was widespread.

The strength . . . the wall. Perhaps this poetic couplet was chanted by the people. Part of the reason that they were discouraged was simply that the work was hard.

■ **4:12 told us ten times.** Ten is a symbolic number for completeness. The fear of violence was growing in the minds of the people.

■ **4:13 I positioned men.** Nehemiah's first action was to station additional guards at the most vulnerable points. The tension continues to rise as the people of Judah take up arms for the first time.

■ **4:14 great and awesome.** See "The Greatness of God" at 1 Chr. 29:11.

■ **4:15 God had brought their plot to nothing.** In Ezra 4:5, 24 the enemy frustrated the plan to build the temple; now God responds in kind by frustrating the plan to stop building.

all of us returned to the wall. Nehemiah responded successfully to the tide of discouragement by adding guards and exhorting the people.

■ **4:16 spears . . . armor.** The arms first mentioned in v. 13 are supplemented here with shield and armor (a breastplate of metal).

■ **4:17 those who carried . . . held a weapon.** The porters had a hand free to hold a weapon, which may have been no more than a stone for throwing.

■ **4:18 Every one of the builders had his sword.** The builders needed two hands to work, so they wore swords at their sides.

the trumpet. The trumpet, or *shofar,* had numerous functions in the Old Testament. Here as in Judg. 3:27 it would rally the troops.

19 Then I said to the nobles, the rulers, and the rest of the people, "The work *is* great and extensive, and we are separated far from one another on the wall. 20 Wherever you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. [n]Our God will fight for us."

21 So we labored in the work, and half of [3]*the men* held the spears from daybreak until the stars appeared. 22 At the same time I also said to the people, "Let each man and his servant stay at night in Jerusalem, that they may be our guard by night and a working party by day." 23 So neither I, my brethren, my servants, nor the men of the guard who followed me took off our clothes, *except* that everyone took them off for washing.

Nehemiah Deals with Oppression

5 And there was a great [a]outcry of the people and their wives against their [b]Jewish brethren. 2 For there were those who said, "We, our sons, and our daughters *are* many; therefore let us get grain, that we may eat and live."

3 There were also *some* who said, "We have mortgaged our lands and vineyards and houses, that we might buy grain because of the famine."

4 There were also those who said, "We have borrowed money for the king's tax *on* our lands and vineyards. 5 Yet now [c]our flesh *is* as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children; and indeed we [d]are forcing our sons and our daughters to be slaves, and *some* of our daughters have been brought into slavery. *It is* not in our power *to redeem them,* for other men have our lands and vineyards."

6 And I became very angry when I heard their outcry and these words. 7 After serious thought, I rebuked the nobles and rulers, and said to them, [e]"Each of you is [1]exacting usury from his brother." So I [2]called a great assembly against them. 8 And I said to them, "According to our ability we have [f]redeemed our Jewish brethren who were sold to the nations. Now indeed, will you even sell your brethren? Or should they be sold to us?"

Then they were silenced and found nothing *to say.* 9 Then I said, "What you are doing *is* not good. Should you not walk [g]in the fear of our God [h]because of the reproach of the nations, our enemies? 10 I also, *with* my brethren and my servants, am lending them money and grain. Please, let us stop this [3]usury! 11 Restore now to them, even this day, their lands, their vineyards, their olive groves, and their houses, also a hundredth of the money and the grain, the new wine and the oil, that you have charged them."

12 So they said, "We will restore *it,* and will require nothing from them; we will do as you say."

Then I called the priests, [i]and required an oath from them that they would do according to this promise. 13 Then [j]I shook out [4]the fold of my garment and said, "So may God shake out each man from his house, and from his property, who does not perform this promise. Even thus may he be shaken out and emptied."

And all the assembly said, "Amen!" and praised the LORD. [k]Then the people did according to this promise.

20 [n]Ex. 14:14, 25; Deut. 1:30; 3:22; 20:4; Josh. 23:10; 2 Chr. 20:29

21 [3]Lit. *them*

CHAPTER 5

1 [a]Lev. 25:35–37; Neh. 5:7, 8 [b]Deut. 15:7

5 [c]Is. 58:7 [d]Ex. 21:7; [Lev. 25:39]

7 [e][Ex. 22:25; Lev. 25:36; Deut. 23:19, 20]; Ezek. 22:12 [1]*charging interest* [2]Lit. *held*

8 [f]Lev. 25:48

9 [g]Lev. 25:36 [h]2 Sam. 12:14; Rom. 2:24; [1 Pet. 2:12]

10 [3]*interest*

12 [i]Ezra 10:5; Jer. 34:8, 9

13 [j]Matt. 10:14; Acts 13:51; 18:6 [k]2 Kin. 23:3 [4]Lit. *my lap*

■ **4:21 until the stars appeared.** This shows how strong their dedication was, since work usually ended at sundown.

■ **5:1–13** This section leaves the main topic of opposition by outsiders to consider the difficulties that arose from within. Probable causes of the economic stress mentioned are that Judah was cut off from trading with neighbors; farmers were away from their fields, because they stayed in Jerusalem, (4:22); there was a famine (v. 3); and previous administrators had burdened the people (v. 15). Times were so bad that children were sold into slavery, houses and vineyards were mortgaged, and money was borrowed at interest. The crushing realization for Nehemiah was that not foreigners but the people themselves were forcing these intolerable measures on each other.

■ **5:1 and their wives.** Since women play a minor role in Ezra and Nehemiah, mentioning them here emphasizes how severe the crisis was (3:12 note; 12:43 note).

■ **5:3 famine.** Famines were often signs of God's judgment (Deut. 11:16, 17; 1 Chr. 21:12; Hag. 1:7–11). Perhaps this famine was God's judgment upon the leaders' failure to do what was right.

■ **5:5 slavery.** According to Lev. 25:39–43, a man who became poor could sell himself, along with his family, to a fellow Israelite in order to get back on his feet financially; he was to be treated as a hired worker, not as a slave. The error in Nehemiah's day seems to be twofold: (a) only the children were being sold, resulting in the breakup of family units; (b) the children were being treated as slaves, not as hired workers.

■ **5:7 rebuked the nobles.** A bold step on Nehemiah's part.

usury. The law prohibited not only usury, but interest of any kind (Ex. 22:25–27; Lev. 25:35–37; Deut. 23:20).

■ **5:10 I also, with my brethren.** Nehemiah too seems to have made interest-bearing loans. He includes himself in the call to repent.

■ **5:11 the grain, the new wine and the oil.** This familiar triad is in the order of the agricultural harvests: first grain, then grapes, and finally olives ripened.

■ **5:12 required an oath.** This act was a renewal of their commitment to keep the law of Moses concerning lending and debt-slavery. See theological note "Honest Speech, Oaths, and Vows."

■ **5:13 shook out the fold.** In this covenant renewal Nehemiah dramatized the curses for failing to keep the oath (cf. Jer. 34:8–22).

14 *l*Neh. 2:1; 13:6 *m*[1 Cor. 9:4–15]
15 *n*2 Cor. 11:9; 12:13 *o*Neh. 5:9
16 *p*Neh. 4:1; 6:1 *5*So with MT; LXX, Syr., Vg. *I*
17 *q*2 Sam. 9:7; 1 Kin. 18:19
18 *r*1 Kin. 4:22

The Generosity of Nehemiah

14 Moreover, from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year *l*until the thirty-second year of King Artaxerxes, twelve years, neither I nor my brothers *m*ate the governor's provisions. 15 But the former governors who *were* before me laid burdens on the people, and took from them bread and wine, besides forty shekels of silver. Yes, even their servants bore rule over the people, but *n*I did not do so, because of the *o*fear of God. 16 Indeed, I also continued the *p*work on this wall, and *5*we did not buy any land. All my servants *were* gathered there for the work.

17 And *q*at my table *were* one hundred and fifty Jews and rulers, besides those who came to us from the nations around us. 18 Now *that* *r*which was prepared daily *was* one ox *and* six choice sheep. Also fowl were prepared for me, and once every ten days an abundance of all kinds of

Honest Speech, Oaths, and Vows

Truth in relationships, especially between Christians, is divinely commanded (Eph. 4:25; Col. 3:9), and truth-telling is integral to authentic godliness (Ps. 15:1–3). God forbids lying, deception, and malicious misrepresentation (Ex. 20:16; Lev. 19:11). Jesus traces lying back to Satan (John 8:44). Those who, like Satan, lie in order to deceive and harm others are sternly condemned in Scripture (Ps. 5:9; 12:1–4; 52:2–5; Jer. 9:3–6; Rev. 22:15). One way of acknowledging the dignity of our neighbors, who bear God's image, is to recognize that they have a right to the truth. Telling the truth shows proper respect for our neighbor and for God, and is fundamental to true religion and the love of one's neighbor.

In the ninth commandment God prohibits false witness (Ex. 20:16). Using the principle that the commandments require what is good as they forbid what is evil, the *Westminster Larger Catechism* (Q. 144) observes that the ninth commandment requires:

> the preserving and promoting of truth between man and man, and the good name of our neighbor, as well as our own; appearing and standing for the truth; and from the heart, sincerely, freely, clearly, and fully, speaking the truth, and only the truth, in matters of judgment and justice, and in all other things whatsoever.

Oaths are solemn declarations invoking God as a witness to statements and promises, inviting Him to punish anything false. Scripture approves oaths as appropriate on solemn occasions (Gen. 24:1–9; Ezra 10:5; Neh. 5:12; cf. 2 Cor. 1:23; Heb. 6:13–17). During the Reformation, the Anabaptists refused to take oaths as part of their rejection of involvement in the life of the secular world. They understood Jesus' condemnation of oaths as if it were a rejection of oath-taking as such, rather than a condemnation of false or improper oaths, used to create a false impression, to manipulate, or to deceive (Matt. 5:33–37; cf. James 5:12).

Vows to God are the devotional equivalent of oaths, and must be treated with equal seriousness (Deut. 21:23; Eccl. 5:4–6). What one swears or vows to do must at all costs be done (Ps. 15:4; cf. Josh. 9:15–18). God requires us to take His words seriously, and our own as well. However, "no man may vow to do anything forbidden in the Word of God, or what would hinder any duty therein commanded" (*Westminster Confession*, XXII. 7). □

■ **5:14 twentieth year . . . thirty-second year.** 445 B.C. to 433 B.C. This twelve-year period was Nehemiah's first term as governor; after it he was recalled to the Persian court (13:6, 7), and then he returned to Jerusalem for a second term of unknown length.

the governor's provisions. A governor had the right to collect taxes for his personal support. Nehemiah waived this right for the benefit of the people (v. 18; cf. 1 Cor. 9:4, 12; 2 Thess. 3:8, 9).

■ **5:15 former governors . . . laid burdens.** Sheshbazzar (Ezra 5:14) and Zerubbabel (Hag. 1:1) were former governors, but their terms were almost one hundred years earlier. The oppressive governors were Nehemiah's more immediate predecessors, whose policies had been harmful (5:1–13 note).

fear of God. See note on 1:11.

■ **5:16** Nehemiah's reason for being governor was service, not personal advancement, corresponding to his reason for going to Judah in the first place (2:5).

■ **5:17 at my table.** According to Persian custom, Nehemiah as governor had to entertain the officials under his authority as well as visiting dignitaries from other countries.

■ **5:18 daily.** The food listed could have fed hundreds of people. Nehemiah was as generous as he was rich.

wine. Yet in spite of this [s]I did not demand the governor's provisions, because the bondage was heavy on this people.

19 [t]Remember me, my God, for good, *according to* all that I have done for this people.

Conspiracy Against Nehemiah

6 Now it happened [a]when Sanballat, Tobiah, [1]Geshem the Arab, and the rest of our enemies heard that I had rebuilt the wall, and *that* there were no breaks left in it [b](though at that time I had not hung the doors in the gates), 2 that Sanballat and [2]Geshem [c]sent to me, saying, "Come, let us meet together [3]among the villages in the plain of [d]Ono." But they [e]thought to do me harm.

3 So I sent messengers to them, saying, "I *am* doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease while I leave it and go down to you?"

4 But they sent me this message four times, and I answered them in the same manner.

5 Then Sanballat sent his servant to me as before, the fifth time, with an open letter in his hand. 6 In it *was* written:

> It is reported among the nations, and [4]Geshem says, *that* you and the Jews plan to rebel; therefore, according to these rumors, you are rebuilding the wall, [f]that you may be their king. 7 And you have also appointed prophets to proclaim concerning you at Jerusalem, saying, "*There is* a king in Judah!" Now these matters will be reported to the king. So come, therefore, and let us consult together.

8 Then I sent to him, saying, "No such things as you say are being done, but you invent them in your own heart."

9 For they all *were trying to* make us afraid, saying, "Their hands will be weakened in the work, and it will not be done."

Now therefore, *O God,* strengthen my hands.

10 Afterward I came to the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah, the son of Mehetabel, who *was* a secret informer; and he said, "Let us meet together in the house of God, within the [5]temple, and let us close the doors of the temple, for they are coming to kill you; indeed, at night they will come to kill you."

11 And I said, "Should such a man as I flee? And who *is there* such as I who would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in!" 12 Then I perceived that God had not sent him at all, but that [g]he pronounced *this* prophecy against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him. 13 For this reason he *was* hired, that I should be afraid and act that way and sin, so *that* they might have *cause* for an evil report, that they might reproach me.

14 [h]My God, remember Tobiah and Sanballat, according to these their works, and the [i]prophetess Noadiah and the rest of the prophets who would have made me afraid.

18 [s]Neh. 5:14, 15

19 [t]2 Kin. 20:3; Neh. 13:14, 22, 31

CHAPTER 6

1 [a]Neh. 2:10, 19; 4:1, 7; 13:28 [b]Neh. 3:1, 3 [1]Or *Gashmu*

2 [c]Prov. 26:24, 25 [d]1 Chr. 8:12; Neh. 11:35 [e]Ps. 37:12, 32 [2]Or *Gashmu* [3]Or *in Kephirim,* exact location unknown

6 [f]Neh. 2:19 [4]Heb. *Gashmu*

10 [5]Lit. *house*

12 [g]Ezek. 13:22

14 [h]Neh. 13:29 [i]Ezek. 13:17

■ **5:19 Remember me.** The second use of "remember" in a prayer (1:8 note) and the first of four prayers in the form "remember me" (13:14, 22, 31).

■ **6:1 when Sanballat . . . heard.** The phrase continues the series of similar phrases (2:10 note) and brings the reader back to the main topic of Neh. 1:1—7:3, from which ch. 5 was a digression (5:1–13 note). The conflict that has been steadily escalating here reaches its climax, as the wall is virtually complete. This final attempt to stop the work is threefold: to harm (vv. 2–4), to frighten (vv. 5–9), and to discredit (vv. 10–13) Nehemiah.

■ **6:2 Ono.** Ono was in the northwestern corner of Judah, as far from the safety of Jerusalem as is possible without leaving the country.

to do me harm. A vague phrase, perhaps referring to murder (v. 10) or to a later allegation that Nehemiah's trip to Ono was to enlist others in revolt against Persia (v. 6).

■ **6:3 Why should the work cease.** Nehemiah saw that the basic purpose of the plot was to stop the work on the wall.

■ **6:4 four times.** Both sides are persistent as the conflict reaches its climax.

■ **6:5 open letter.** Letters were normally sealed, but Sanballat wanted this letter to be public, so as to stop the work.

■ **6:6, 7** The accusation was plausible: the wall was being rebuilt, Judah had a history of rebellion against her overlords, and Nehemiah was a skillful leader with a passion for his homeland.

■ **6:9 Now . . . strengthen my hands.** Another of the brief prayers so characteristic of Nehemiah (1:4 note).

■ **6:10 Shemaiah.** He may have been not only a prophet (v. 12) but a priest, giving him access to the temple.

in the house of God. The final ploy now unfolds. Nehemiah might have sought asylum in the courtyard of the temple (Ex. 21:12–14), but he was not allowed to enter the temple itself since he was not a priest (Num. 18:7).

■ **6:11** Nehemiah's courage shines through again (5:7 note).

■ **6:13 I should be afraid . . . reproach me.** The idea was to make Nehemiah behave like a coward and a lawbreaker, so that his reputation would be ruined and he could not finish the wall.

■ **6:14 remember.** The third use of "remember" in a prayer (1:8 note) and the second imprecatory prayer (4:4, 5 note), as the "remembering" here is unto judgment.

16 *i*Neh. 2:10, 20; 4:1, 7; 6:1 *k*Ps. 126:2

18 *l*Neh. 13:4, 28 *m*Ezra 10:15; Neh. 3:4

19 *6*Or *affairs*

CHAPTER 7

1 *a*Neh. 6:1, 15

2 *b*Neh. 1:2 *c*Neh. 2:8; 10:23 *d*Ex. 18:21 *1palace*

4 *e*Deut. 4:27

6 *f*Ezra 2:1–70

7 *g*Ezra 5:2; Neh. 12:1, 47; Matt. 1:12, 13 *2Seraiah,* Ezra 2:2 *3Mispar,* Ezra 2:2

15 *4Bani,* Ezra 2:10

The Wall Completed

15 So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth *day* of Elul, in fifty-two days. 16 And it happened, *i*when all our enemies heard *of it,* and all the nations around us saw *these things,* that they were very disheartened in their own eyes; for *k*they perceived that this work was done by our God.

17 Also in those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters to Tobiah, and *the letters of* Tobiah came to them. 18 For many in Judah were pledged to him, because he was the *l*son-in-law of Shechaniah the son of Arah, and his son Jehohanan had married the daughter of *m*Meshullam the son of Berechiah. 19 Also they reported his good deeds before me, and reported my *6*words to him. Tobiah sent letters to frighten me.

7 Then it was, when the wall was built and I had *a*hung the doors, when the gatekeepers, the singers, and the Levites had been appointed, 2 that I gave the charge of Jerusalem to my brother *b*Hanani, and Hananiah the leader *c*of the *1*citadel, for he *was* a faithful man and *d*feared God more than many.

3 And I said to them, "Do not let the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun is hot; and while they stand *guard,* let them shut and bar the doors; and appoint guards from among the inhabitants of Jerusalem, one at his watch station and another in front of his own house."

The Captives Who Returned to Jerusalem

4 Now the city *was* large and spacious, but the people in it *were e*few, and the houses *were* not rebuilt. 5 Then my God put it into my heart to gather the nobles, the rulers, and the people, that they might be registered by genealogy. And I found a register of the genealogy of those who had come up in the first *return,* and found written in it:

6 *f*These *are* the people of the province who came back from the captivity, of those who had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away, and who returned to Jerusalem and Judah, everyone to his city.

7 Those who came with *g*Zerubbabel *were* Jeshua, Nehemiah, *2*Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, *3*Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum, and Baanah.

The number of the men of the people of Israel: 8 the sons of Parosh, two thousand one hundred and seventy-two;
9 the sons of Shephatiah, three hundred and seventy-two;
10 the sons of Arah, six hundred and fifty-two;
11 the sons of Pahath-Moab, of the sons of Jeshua and Joab, two thousand eight hundred and eighteen;
12 the sons of Elam, one thousand two hundred and fifty-four;
13 the sons of Zattu, eight hundred and forty-five;
14 the sons of Zaccai, seven hundred and sixty;
15 the sons of *4*Binnui, six hundred and forty-eight;
16 the sons of Bebai, six hundred and twenty-eight;
17 the sons of Azgad, two thousand three hundred and twenty-two;
18 the sons of Adonikam, six hundred and sixty-seven;

■ **6:15 So the wall was finished.** This verse actually forms the conclusion to the section that began in v. 1, with v. 16 opening the final episode of Neh. 1:1—7:3. The last of six attempts to stop the work had failed.

Elul. August-September 445 B.C.

■ **6:16—7:3** Although opposition to rebuilding the walls ceases with their completion (v. 16), attempts to intimidate Nehemiah continue (6:17–19). Nehemiah takes measures to secure the gates of the city against possible continued aggression by Israel's enemies (7:1–3).

■ **6:17–19** Tobiah's relation by marriage to those at work on the wall would have provided a natural channel for the transfer of information about the circumstances in Jerusalem to Nehemiah's opponents.

■ **7:1 hung the doors.** This showed that the wall was now complete (6:1).

■ **7:2 gave the charge.** Leaders were appointed to oversee the security of the city.

Hananiah. See note on 1:2.

feared God. See note on 1:11.

■ **7:3 until the sun is hot.** Guards were appointed to secure the gates at night. The gates were usually opened at dawn; waiting until later was a security measure for the city.

■ **7:4–73** Nehemiah prepares to meet the need to repopulate Jerusalem (vv. 4, 5) by consulting a genealogical record of exiles who had returned earlier (vv. 5–73).

■ **7:5 my God put it into my heart.** See note on "hand of my God" at 2:8.

registered by genealogy. The purpose of this registration is to help repopulate Jerusalem, as will become clear when this topic is resumed in 11:1, 2.

register of the genealogy . . . in the first return. On the theological significance of this list, see the note at Ezra 2:1–70. The repetition of the list underscores the continuity of Nehemiah's generation with the first ones to return.

19 the sons of Bigvai, two thousand and sixty-seven;
20 the sons of Adin, six hundred and fifty-five;
21 the sons of Ater of Hezekiah, ninety-eight;
22 the sons of Hashum, three hundred and twenty-eight;
23 the sons of Bezai, three hundred and twenty-four;
24 the sons of [5]Hariph, one hundred and twelve;
25 the sons of [6]Gibeon, ninety-five;
26 the men of Bethlehem and Netophah, one hundred and eighty-eight;
27 the men of Anathoth, one hundred and twenty-eight;
28 the men of [7]Beth Azmaveth, forty-two;
29 the men of [8]Kirjath Jearim, Chephirah, and Beeroth, seven hundred and forty-three;
30 the men of Ramah and Geba, six hundred and twenty-one;
31 the men of Michmas, one hundred and twenty-two;
32 the men of Bethel and Ai, one hundred and twenty-three;
33 the men of the other Nebo, fifty-two;
34 the sons of the other [h]Elam, one thousand two hundred and fifty-four;
35 the sons of Harim, three hundred and twenty;
36 the sons of Jericho, three hundred and forty-five;
37 the sons of Lod, Hadid, and Ono, seven hundred and twenty-one;
38 the sons of Senaah, three thousand nine hundred and thirty.

39 The priests: the sons of [i]Jedaiah, of the house of Jeshua, nine hundred and seventy-three;
40 the sons of [j]Immer, one thousand and fifty-two;
41 the sons of [k]Pashhur, one thousand two hundred and forty-seven;
42 the sons of [l]Harim, one thousand and seventeen.

43 The Levites: the sons of Jeshua, of Kadmiel,
and of the sons of [9]Hodevah, seventy-four.

44 The singers: the sons of Asaph, one hundred and forty-eight.

45 The gatekeepers: the sons of Shallum,
the sons of Ater,
the sons of Talmon,
the sons of Akkub,
the sons of Hatita,
the sons of Shobai, one hundred and thirty-eight.

46 The Nethinim: the sons of Ziha,
the sons of Hasupha,
the sons of Tabbaoth,
47 the sons of Keros,
the sons of [1]Sia,
the sons of Padon,
48 the sons of [2]Lebana,
the sons of [3]Hagaba,
the sons of [4]Salmai,
49 the sons of Hanan,
the sons of Giddel,
the sons of Gahar,
50 the sons of Reaiah,
the sons of Rezin,
the sons of Nekoda,
51 the sons of Gazzam,
the sons of Uzza,
the sons of Paseah,
52 the sons of Besai,
the sons of Meunim,
the sons of [5]Nephishesim,
53 the sons of Bakbuk,

24 [5]*Jorah,* Ezra 2:18
25 [6]*Gibbar,* Ezra 2:20
28 [7]*Azmaveth,* Ezra 2:24
29 [8]*Kirjath Arim,* Ezra 2:25
34 [h]Neh. 7:12
39 [i]1 Chr. 24:7
40 [j]1 Chr. 9:12
41 [k]Ezra 2:38; 10:22
42 [l]1 Chr. 24:8
43 [9]*Hodaviah,* Ezra 2:40; or *Judah,* Ezra 3:9
47 [1]*Siaha,* Ezra 2:44
48 [2]MT *Lebanah* [3]MT *Hogabah* [4]*Shalmai,* Ezra 2:46; or *Shamlai*
52 [5]*Nephusim,* Ezra 2:50

the sons of Hakupha,
the sons of Harhur,
54 the sons of [6]Bazlith,
the sons of Mehida,
the sons of Harsha,
55 the sons of Barkos,
the sons of Sisera,
the sons of Tamah,
56 the sons of Neziah,
and the sons of Hatipha.

57 The sons of Solomon's servants: the sons of Sotai,
the sons of Sophereth,
the sons of [7]Perida,
58 the sons of Jaala,
the sons of Darkon,
the sons of Giddel,
59 the sons of Shephatiah,
the sons of Hattil,
the sons of Pochereth of Zebaim,
and the sons of [8]Amon.
60 All the Nethinim, and the sons of Solomon's servants, *were* three hundred and ninety-two.

61 And these *were* the ones who came up from Tel Melah, Tel Harsha, Cherub, [9]Addon, and Immer, but they could not identify their father's house nor their lineage, whether they *were* of Israel: 62 the sons of Delaiah,
the sons of Tobiah,
the sons of Nekoda, six hundred and forty-two;
63 and of the priests: the sons of Habaiah,
the sons of [1]Koz,
the sons of Barzillai, who took a wife of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite, and was called by their name.
64 These sought their listing *among* those who were registered by genealogy, but it was not found; therefore they were excluded from the priesthood as defiled. 65 And the [2]governor said to them that they should not eat of the most holy things till a priest could consult with the Urim and Thummim.

66 Altogether the whole assembly *was* forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty, 67 besides their male and female servants, of whom *there were* seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven; and they had two hundred and forty-five men and women singers. 68 Their horses were seven hundred and thirty-six, their mules two hundred and forty-five, 69 *their* camels four hundred and thirty-five, *and* donkeys six thousand seven hundred and twenty.

70 And some of the heads of the fathers' houses gave to the work. [m]The [3]governor gave to the treasury one thousand gold drachmas, fifty basins, and five hundred and thirty priestly garments. 71 Some of the heads of the fathers' *houses* gave to the treasury of the work [n]twenty thousand gold drachmas, and two thousand two hundred silver minas. 72 And that which the rest of the people gave *was* twenty thousand gold drachmas, two thousand silver minas, and sixty-seven priestly garments.

73 So the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, *some* of the people, the Nethinim, and all Israel dwelt in their cities.

Ezra Reads the Law

[o]When the seventh month came, the children of Israel *were* in their cities.

8 Now all [a]the people gathered together as one man in the open square that *was* [b]in front of the Water Gate; and they told Ezra the [c]scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses,

54 [6]*Bazluth,* Ezra 2:52
57 [7]*Peruda,* Ezra 2:55
59 [8]*Ami,* Ezra 2:57
61 [9]*Addan,* Ezra 2:59
63 [1]Or *Hakkoz*
65 [2]Heb. *Tirshatha*
70 [m]Neh. 8:9 [3]Heb. *Tirshatha*
71 [n]Ezra 2:69
73 [o]Ezra 3:1

CHAPTER 8

1 [a]Ezra 3:1 [b]Neh. 3:26 [c]Ezra 7:6

■ **7:73—13:31** The covenant community itself is rebuilt as Israel renews the covenant with God (7:73—10:39), dedicates the walls of the city (chs. 11; 12), and obeys other aspects of the law (ch. 13).

which the LORD had commanded Israel. 2 So Ezra the priest brought [d]the Law before the assembly of men and women and all who *could* hear with understanding [e]on the first day of the seventh month. 3 Then he [f]read from it in the open square that *was* in front of the Water Gate [l]from morning until midday, before the men and women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people *were attentive* to the Book of the Law.

4 So Ezra the scribe stood on a platform of wood which they had made for the purpose; and beside him, at his right hand, stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Urijah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah; and at his left hand Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbadana, Zechariah, *and* Meshullam. 5 And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was *standing* above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people [g]stood up. 6 And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God.

Then all the people [h]answered, "Amen, Amen!" while [i]lifting up their hands. And they [j]bowed their heads and worshiped the LORD with *their* faces to the ground.

7 Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, [k]helped the people to understand the Law; and the people [l]*stood* in their place. 8 So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped *them* to understand the reading.

9 [m]And Nehemiah, who *was* the [2]governor, Ezra the priest *and* scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, [n]"This day *is* holy to the LORD your God; [o]do not mourn nor weep." For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the Law.

10 Then he said to them, "Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, [p]and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for *this* day *is* holy to our Lord. Do not sorrow, for the joy of the LORD is your strength."

11 So the Levites quieted all the people, saying, "Be still, for the day *is* holy; do not be grieved." 12 And all the people went their way to eat and drink, to [q]send portions and rejoice greatly, because they [r]understood the words that were declared to them.

The Feast of Tabernacles

13 Now on the second day the heads of the fathers' *houses* of all the people, with the priests and Levites, were gathered to Ezra the scribe, in order to understand the words of the Law. 14 And they found written in the Law, which the LORD had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in [s]booths[3] during the feast of the seventh month, 15 and [t]that they should announce and proclaim in all their cities and [u]in Jerusalem, saying, "Go out to the mountain, and [v]bring olive branches, branches of oil trees, myrtle branches, palm branches, and branches of leafy trees, to make booths, as *it is* written."

16 Then the people went out and brought *them* and made themselves booths, each one on the [w]roof of his house, or in their courtyards or the courts of the house of God, and in the open square of the [x]Water Gate [y]and in the open square of the Gate of Ephraim. 17 So the whole assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made [4]booths and sat under the booths; for since the days of Joshua the son of Nun until that day the children of Israel had not done so. And there was very [z]great gladness. 18 Also [a]day by day, from the first day until the last day, he read

2 [d][Deut. 31:11, 12]; Neh. 8:9 [e]Lev. 23:24; Num. 29:1–6

3 [f]Deut. 31:9–11; 2 Kin. 23:2 [l]Lit. *from the light*

5 [g]Judg. 3:20; 1 Kin. 8:12–14

6 [h]Neh. 5:13; [1 Cor. 14:16] [i]Ps. 28:2; Lam. 3:41; 1 Tim. 2:8 [j]Ex. 4:31; 12:27; 2 Chr. 20:18

7 [k]Lev. 10:11; Deut. 33:10; 2 Chr. 17:7; [Mal. 2:7] [l]Neh. 9:3

9 [m]Ezra 2:63; Neh. 7:65, 70; 10:1 [n]Lev. 23:24; Num. 29:1 [o]Deut. 16:14; Eccl. 3:4 [2]Heb. *Tirshatha*

10 [p][Deut. 26:11–13]; Esth. 9:19, 22; Rev. 11:10

12 [q]Neh. 8:10 [r]Neh. 8:7, 8

14 [s]Lev. 23:34, 40, 42; Deut. 16:13 [3]Temporary shelters

15 [t]Lev. 23:4 [u]Deut. 16:16 [v]Lev. 23:40

16 [w]Deut. 22:8 [x]Neh. 12:37 [y]2 Kin. 14:13; Neh. 12:39

17 [z]2 Chr. 30:21 [4]Temporary shelters

18 [a]Deut. 31:11

■ **8:2 before the assembly.** The participants (repeated in v. 3) are in keeping with those required to be present at the reading of the Law prescribed for the Feast of Tabernacles in Deut. 31:10–13.

first day of the seventh month. This was the time for celebrating the Feast of Trumpets (Num. 29:1–6).

■ **8:3 he read from it in the open square.** For the public reading of the Law in the context of covenant ratification or renewal, see Ex. 24:7; Josh. 8:30–35; 2 Kin. 23:1–3.

■ **8:5 book.** A scroll.

all the people stood up. By standing they expressed their reverence for the Law (cf. v. 6).

■ **8:6 Amen, Amen.** The people concurred in the praise offered by Ezra; the repetition expresses the emphatic degree of assent.

lifting up their hands. Lifting the hands often accompanies prayer and praise to God (Ps. 28:2; 63:4; 134:2; 1 Tim. 2:8).

■ **8:8 gave the sense.** The Law was not only read but explained, to ensure that the people grasped the meaning. There may also have been translation from Hebrew to Aramaic. The doctrine of the perspicuity ("clarity") of Scripture is that the things necessary for salvation can be understood from the Bible without special techniques or higher education. This truth does not eliminate the need for faithful exposition of the Scriptures by persons trained for this (Ezra 7:6–10).

■ **8:9 Nehemiah . . . Ezra . . . Levites.** There was unity among all the leaders on this occasion.

This day is holy . . . do not mourn. Holiness and mourning are not mutually exclusive (Lev. 23:26–32; Is. 6:3–5), but it was clear that on this occasion sorrow would be inappropriate.

■ **8:10 those for whom nothing is prepared.** Those who had plenty to eat were to share with those who did not (cf. Ps. 22:26). This incident provides an illustration for understanding the sin in 1 Cor. 11:17–34.

■ **8:14 dwell in booths.** This temporary living arrangement was a reminder of life in the wilderness after the redemption from Egypt and before entering the Promised Land (Lev. 23:42, 43).

the feast of the seventh month. The Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:34–40).

from the Book of the Law of God. And they kept the feast [b]seven days; and on the [c]eighth day *there was* a sacred assembly, according to the *prescribed* manner.

18 [b]Lev. 23:36 [c]Num. 29:35

CHAPTER 9

1 [a]Neh. 8:2 [b]Josh. 7:6; 1 Sam. 4:12; 2 Sam. 1:2; Job 2:12 [f]Lit. *earth on them*

2 [c]Ezra 10:11; Neh. 13:3, 30 [d]Neh. 1:6

3 [e]Neh. 8:7, 8

4 [z]Lit. *ascent*

5 [f]1 Chr. 29:13

6 [g]Deut. 6:4; 2 Kin. 19:15, 19; [Ps. 86:10]; Is. 37:16, 20 [h]Gen. 1:1; Ex. 20:11; Rev. 14:7 [i][Deut. 10:14]; 1 Kin. 8:27 [j]Gen. 2:1 [k][Ps. 36:6]

7 [l]Gen. 11:31 [m]Gen. 17:5

8 [n]Gen. 15:6; 22:1–3; [James 2:21–23] [o]Gen. 15:18 [p]Josh. 23:14

9 [q]Ex. 2:25; 3:7 [r]Ex. 14:10

10 [s]Ex. 7—14 [t]Ex. 18:11 [u]Jer. 32:20 [3]*presumptuously* or *insolently*

The People Confess Their Sins

9 Now on the twenty-fourth day of [a]this month the children of Israel were assembled with fasting, in sackcloth, [b]and with [f]dust on their heads. 2 Then [c]those of Israelite lineage separated themselves from all foreigners; and they stood and [d]confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers. 3 And they stood up in their place and [e]read from the Book of the Law of the LORD their God *for one*-fourth of the day; and *for another* fourth they confessed and worshiped the LORD their God.

4 Then Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, *and* Chenani stood on the [z]stairs of the Levites and cried out with a loud voice to the LORD their God. 5 And the Levites, Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabniah, Sherebiah, Hodijah, Shebaniah, *and* Pethahiah, said:

"Stand up *and* bless the LORD your God
Forever and ever!

"Blessed be [f]Your glorious name,
Which is exalted above all blessing and praise!
6 [g]You alone *are* the LORD;
[h]You have made heaven,
[i]The heaven of heavens, with [j]all their host,
The earth and everything on it,
The seas and all that is in them,
And You [k]preserve them all.
The host of heaven worships You.

7 "You *are* the LORD God,
Who chose [l]Abram,
And brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans,
And gave him the name [m]Abraham;
8 You found his heart [n]faithful before You,
And made a [o]covenant with him
To give the land of the Canaanites,
The Hittites, the Amorites,
The Perizzites, the Jebusites,
And the Girgashites—
To give *it* to his descendants.
You [p]have performed Your words,
For You *are* righteous.

9 "You[q] saw the affliction of our fathers in Egypt,
And [r]heard their cry by the Red Sea.
10 You [s]showed signs and wonders against Pharaoh,
Against all his servants,
And against all the people of his land.
For You knew that they [t]acted [3]proudly against them.
So You [u]made a name for Yourself, as *it is* this day.

■ **9:1 were assembled.** In 8:1 the people had gathered to hear the Law; here they gather to confess their sins in response to it (v. 3).

■ **9:2 their sins . . . their fathers.** See note on Ezra 9:7.

■ **9:3 Law of the LORD.** The Law calls for at least two responses: confession and worship.

■ **9:5–37** In this prayer of praise, the Levites (vv. 4, 5) address God on behalf of the people, extolling Him as Creator (v. 6) and Redeemer (vv. 7–12), Lawgiver and Disciplinarian, Savior and Judge (vv. 13–31). On the basis of His character and covenant, they petition God to take notice of their distress (vv. 32–37) in preparation for their covenant renewal (9:38—10:39 and note).

■ **9:7, 8** The people praise God for choosing Abraham and giving him the covenant of promise (Gen. 12—22).

■ **9:8 made a covenant.** This covenant with Abraham (Gen. 15) is the basis upon which God's grace is extended time and again to His unfaithful people, as is brought out in the remainder of this prayer of praise.

You have performed Your words. God's promise to Abraham was conditioned only upon God's righteous oath (Gen. 15:9–21; Deut. 9:4–6).

■ **9:9–12** God is praised for redeeming Israel from Egypt (Ex. 1—19).

11 [v]And You divided the sea before them,
So that they went through the midst of the sea on the dry land;
And their persecutors You threw into the deep,
[w]As a stone into the mighty waters.
12 Moreover You [x]led them by day with a cloudy pillar,
And by night with a pillar of fire,
To give them light on the road
Which they should travel.

13 "You[y] came down also on Mount Sinai,
And spoke with them from heaven,
And gave them [z]just ordinances and true laws,
Good statutes and commandments.
14 You made known to them Your [a]holy Sabbath,
And commanded them precepts, statutes and laws,
By the hand of Moses Your servant.
15 You [b]gave them bread from heaven for their hunger,
And [c]brought them water out of the rock for their thirst,
And told them to [d]go in to possess the land
Which You had [4]sworn to give them.

16 "But[e] they and our fathers acted [5]proudly,
[f]Hardened[6] their necks,
And did not heed Your commandments.
17 They refused to obey,
And [g]they were not mindful of Your wonders
That You did among them.
But they hardened their necks,
And [7]in their rebellion
They appointed [h]a leader
To return to their bondage.
But You *are* God,
Ready to pardon,
[i]Gracious and merciful,
Slow to anger,
Abundant in kindness,
And did not forsake them.

18 "Even[j] when they made a molded calf for themselves,
And said, 'This *is* your god
That brought you up out of Egypt,'
And worked great provocations,
19 Yet in Your [k]manifold mercies
You did not forsake them in the wilderness.
The [l]pillar of the cloud did not depart from them by day,
To lead them on the road;
Nor the pillar of fire by night,
To show them light,
And the way they should go.

11 [v]Ex. 14:20–28 [w]Ex. 15:1, 5
12 [x]Ex. 13:21, 22
13 [y]Ex. 20:1–18 [z][Rom. 7:12]
14 [a]Gen. 2:3; Ex. 16:23; 20:8; 23:12
15 [b]Ex. 16:14–17; John 6:31 [c]Ex. 17:6; Num. 20:8; [1 Cor. 10:4] [d]Deut. 1:8 [4]Lit. *raised Your hand to*
16 [e]Ps. 106:6 [f]Deut. 1:26–33; 31:27; Neh. 9:29 [5]*presumptuously* [6]*Stiffened their necks,* became stubborn
17 [g]Ps. 78:11, 42–45 [h]Num. 14:4; Acts 7:39 [i]Joel 2:13 [7]So with MT, Vg.; LXX *in Egypt*
18 [j]Ex. 32:4–8, 31
19 [k]Ps. 106:45 [l]Ex. 13:20–22; 1 Cor. 10:1

■ **9:13–21** The praise of God continues with an account of the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai and God's gracious provisions in the wilderness.

■ **9:13 Mount Sinai.** See Ex. 20.

just ordinances . . . Good statutes. The Law was not perceived to be a burden, but a delight (Ps. 119:5–16; Rom. 7:12).

■ **9:14 Sabbath.** The Sabbath was a key symbol in the Law (Is. 56:2, 4, 6; Ezek. 20:13, 16, 21, 24; 22:8; 23:38).

■ **9:15 sworn.** The reference is to God's oath to Abraham (Ex. 6:8).

■ **9:16, 17** The first confession of sin.

■ **9:17 appointed a leader.** See Num. 14:1–4. In contrast to the unfaithfulness of Israel is the faithfulness of God to His oath to Abraham (vv. 8, 15; Ezra 9:13 note).

■ **9:18 Even when.** God's grace shines all the more brightly when juxtaposed against Israel's sin (Rom. 9:22–24).

■ **9:19–21** God's continual care in the wilderness was not due to Israel's obedience, but to His own compassion, stemming from His promise to Abraham (vv. 7, 8).

20 [m]Num. 11:17 [n]Ex. 16:14–16 [o]Ex. 17:6
21 [p]Deut. 2:7 [q]Deut. 8:4; 29:5
22 [r]Num. 21:21–35 [s]Lit. *corners* [t]So with MT, Vg.; LXX omits *The land of*
23 [s]Gen. 15:5; 22:17; Heb. 11:12
24 [t]Josh. 1:2–4 [u]Josh. 18:1; [Ps. 44:2, 3] [r]Lit. *sons*
25 [v]Num. 13:27 [w]Deut. 6:11; Josh. 24:13 [x][Deut. 32:15] [y]Hos. 3:5 [z]Lit. *trees for eating*
26 [z]Judg. 2:11 [a]1 Kin. 14:9; Ps. 50:17 [b]1 Kin. 18:4; 19:10; Matt. 23:37; Acts 7:52 [3]*admonished* or *warned them*
27 [c]Judg. 2:14; Ps. 106:41 [d]Ps. 106:44 [e]Judg. 2:18
28 [f]Judg. 3:12 [g]Ps. 106:43

20 You also gave Your [m]good Spirit to instruct them,
And did not withhold Your [n]manna from their mouth,
And gave them [o]water for their thirst.
21 [p]Forty years You sustained them in the wilderness;
They lacked nothing;
Their [q]clothes did not wear out
And their feet did not swell.

22 "Moreover You gave them kingdoms and nations,
And divided them into [s]districts.
So they took possession of the land of [r]Sihon,
[t]The land of the king of Heshbon,
And the land of Og king of Bashan.
23 You also multiplied [s]their children as the stars of heaven,
And brought them into the land
Which You had told their fathers
To go in and possess.
24 So [t]the [1]people went in
And possessed the land;
[u]You subdued before them the inhabitants of the land,
The Canaanites,
And gave them into their hands,
With their kings
And the people of the land,
That they might do with them as they wished.
25 And they took strong cities and a [v]rich land,
And possessed [w]houses full of all goods,
Cisterns *already* dug, vineyards, olive groves,
And [2]fruit trees in abundance.
So they ate and were filled and [x]grew fat,
And delighted themselves in Your great [y]goodness.

26 "Nevertheless they [z]were disobedient
And rebelled against You,
[a]Cast Your law behind their backs
And killed Your [b]prophets, who [3]testified against them
To turn them to Yourself;
And they worked great provocations.
27 [c]Therefore You delivered them into the hand of their enemies,
Who oppressed them;
And in the time of their trouble,
When they cried to You,
You [d]heard from heaven;
And according to Your abundant mercies
[e]You gave them deliverers who saved them
From the hand of their enemies.

28 "But after they had rest,
[f]They again did evil before You.
Therefore You left them in the hand of their enemies,
So that they had dominion over them;
Yet when they returned and cried out to You,
You heard from heaven;
And [g]many times You delivered them according to Your mercies,

■ **9:22–25** God enabled the Israelites to conquer the land of Canaan in keeping with His promise to Abraham (vv. 7–8).

■ **9:26–28** Israel responded to God's faithfulness with disobedient rebellion during the days of the judges. For the pattern of rebellion, oppression, petition, and salvation, see Judg. 2:10–19.

■ **9:28 many times . . . Your mercies.** Where sin abounded grace abounded all the more (Rom. 5:20).

29 And [4]testified against them,
That You might bring them back to Your law.
Yet they acted [5]proudly,
And did not heed Your commandments,
But sinned against Your judgments,
[h]'Which if a man does, he shall live by them.'
And they shrugged their shoulders,
[6]Stiffened their necks,
And would not hear.
30 Yet for many years You had patience with them,
And [7]testified [i]against them by Your Spirit [j]in Your prophets.
Yet they would not listen;
[k]Therefore You gave them into the hand of the peoples of the lands.
31 Nevertheless in Your great mercy
[l]You did not utterly consume them nor forsake them;
For You *are* God, gracious and merciful.

32 "Now therefore, our God,
The great, the [m]mighty, and awesome God,
Who keeps covenant and mercy:
Do not let all the [8]trouble seem small before You
That has come upon us,
Our kings and our princes,
Our priests and our prophets,
Our fathers and on all Your people,
[n]From the days of the kings of Assyria until this day.
33 However [o]You *are* just in all that has befallen us;
For You have dealt faithfully,
But [p]we have done wickedly.
34 Neither our kings nor our princes,
Our priests nor our fathers,
Have kept Your law,
Nor heeded Your commandments and Your testimonies,
With which You testified against them.
35 For they have [q]not served You in their kingdom,
Or in the many good *things* that You gave them,
Or in the large and rich land which You set before them;
Nor did they turn from their wicked works.

36 "Here [r]we *are,* servants today!
And the land that You gave to our fathers,
To eat its fruit and its bounty,
Here we *are,* servants in it!
37 And [s]it yields much increase to the kings
You have set over us,
Because of our sins;
Also they have [t]dominion over our bodies and our cattle
At their pleasure;
And we *are* in great distress.

29 [h]Lev. 18:5; Rom. 10:5; [Gal. 3:12] [4]*admonished them* [5]*presumptuously* [6]Became stubborn

30 [i]2 Kin. 17:13–18; 2 Chr. 36:11–20; Jer. 7:25 [j][Acts 7:51]; 1 Pet. 1:11 [k]Is. 5:5 [7]*admonished* or *warned them*

31 [l]Jer. 4:27; [Rom. 11:2–5]

32 [m][Ex. 34:6, 7] [n]2 Kin. 15:19; 17:3–6; Ezra 4:2, 10 [8]*hardship*

33 [o]Ps. 119:137; [Dan. 9:14] [p]Ps. 106:6; [Dan. 9:5, 6, 8]

35 [q]Deut. 28:47

36 [r]Deut. 28:48; Ezra 9:9

37 [s]Deut. 28:33, 51 [t]Deut. 28:48

■ **9:29–31** The praise of God continues with mention of His patience during the monarchy.

■ **9:29 he shall live by them.** The Mosaic covenant offered life for obedience (Lev. 18:5; Rom. 10:5). Israel's failure to merit life in the land testifies to the universal need for a Substitute through whom the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met on behalf of those who could not meet these terms on their own (Rom. 8:3, 4).

■ **9:32 trouble seem small.** The petition is that God would do again what He had done in the past, to see the distress of His people and come to their aid.

kings of Assyria. These are the Neo-Assyrian kings of the late tenth century B.C. After them came the Neo-Babylonian kings in the late seventh century, and then the Persian kings in the mid-sixth century.

■ **9:33 You are just.** The execution of the covenant curses throughout Israel's history was in perfect harmony with the principle of divine justice, which lay at the foundation of the Mosaic covenant (Ezra 9:9 note).

■ **9:34, 35** The leaders are singled out as particularly responsible.

■ **9:36 servants.** See note on "we were slaves" at Ezra 9:9.

■ **9:37 we are in great distress.** Implicit in this statement is a request for aid (v. 32 note).

38 "And because of all this,
We [u]make a sure *covenant* and write *it;*
Our leaders, our Levites, *and* our priests [v]seal *it.*"

38 [u]2 Kin. 23:3; 2 Chr. 29:10; Ezra 10:3 [v]Neh. 10:1

CHAPTER 10

The People Who Sealed the Covenant

10 Now those who placed *their* seal on *the document were:*
Nehemiah the [1]governor, [a]the son of Hacaliah, and Zedekiah, 2 [b]Seraiah, Azariah, Jeremiah, 3 Pashhur, Amariah, Malchijah, 4 Hattush, Shebaniah, Malluch, 5 Harim, Meremoth, Obadiah, 6 Daniel, Ginnethon, Baruch, 7 Meshullam, Abijah, Mijamin, 8 Maaziah, Bilgai, *and* Shemaiah. These *were* the priests.

9 The Levites: Jeshua the son of Azaniah, Binnui of the sons of Henadad, *and* Kadmiel.

10 Their brethren: Shebaniah, Hodijah, Kelita, Pelaiah, Hanan, 11 Micha, Rehob, Hashabiah, 12 Zaccur, Sherebiah, Shebaniah, 13 Hodijah, Bani, *and* Beninu.

14 The leaders of the people: [c]Parosh, Pahath-Moab, Elam, Zattu, Bani, 15 Bunni, Azgad, Bebai, 16 Adonijah, Bigvai, Adin, 17 Ater, Hezekiah, Azzur, 18 Hodijah, Hashum, Bezai, 19 Hariph, Anathoth, Nebai, 20 Magpiash, Meshullam, Hezir, 21 Meshezabel, Zadok, Jaddua, 22 Pelatiah, Hanan, Anaiah, 23 Hoshea, Hananiah, Hasshub, 24 Hallohesh, Pilha, Shobek, 25 Rehum, Hashabnah, Maaseiah, 26 Ahijah, Hanan, Anan, 27 Malluch, Harim, *and* Baanah.

10 [1]Heb. *Tirshatha*
1 [a]Neh. 1:1
2 [b]Neh. 12:1–21
14 [c]Ezra 2:3

The Covenant That Was Sealed

28 [d]Now the rest of the people—the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, the Nethinim, [e]and all those who had separated themselves from the peoples of the lands to the Law of God, their wives, their sons, and their daughters, everyone who had knowledge and understanding— 29 these joined with their brethren, their nobles, [f]and entered into a curse and an oath [g]to walk in God's Law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the LORD our Lord, and His ordinances and His statutes: 30 We would not give [h]our daughters as wives to the peoples of the land, nor take their daughters for our sons; 31 [i]*if* the peoples of the land brought [2]wares or any grain to sell on the Sabbath day, we would not buy it from them on the Sabbath, or on a holy day; and we would forego the [j]seventh year's *produce* and the [k]exacting[3] of every debt.

32 Also we made ordinances for ourselves, to exact from ourselves yearly [l]one-third of a shekel for the service of the house of our God: 33 for [m]the showbread, for the regular grain offering, for the [n]regular burnt offering of the Sabbaths, the New Moons, and the set feasts; for the holy things, for the sin offerings to make atonement for Israel, and all the work of the house of our God. 34 We cast lots among the priests, the Levites, and the people, [o]for *bringing* the wood offering into the house of our God, according to our fathers' houses, at the appointed times year by year, to burn on the altar of the LORD our God [p]as *it is* written in the Law.

35 And *we made ordinances* [q]to bring the firstfruits of our ground and the firstfruits of all fruit of all trees, year by year, to the house of the LORD; 36 to bring the [r]firstborn of our sons and our

28 [d]Neh. 13:31; [Is. 40:16] [e]Lev. 6:12
29 [f]Ex. 23:19; 34:26; Lev. 19:23; Num. 18:12; Deut. 26:1, 2
30 [g]Ex. 34:16; Deut. 7:3; [Ezra 9:12]
31 [h]Ex. 20:10; Lev. 23:3; Deut. 5:12 [i]Ex. 23:10, 11; Lev. 25:4; Jer. 34:14 [k][Deut. 15:1, 2]; Neh. 5:12 [2]*merchandise* [3]*collection*
32 [l]Ex. 30:11–16; 38:25, 26; 2 Chr. 24:6, 9; Matt. 17:24
33 [m]Lev. 24:5; 2 Chr. 2:4 [n]Num. 28; 29
34 [o]Neh. 13:31; [Is. 40:16] [p]Lev. 6:12
35 [q]Ex. 23:19; 34:26; Lev. 19:23; Num. 18:12; Deut. 26:1, 2
36 [r]Ex. 13:2, 12, 13; Lev. 27:26, 27; Num. 18:15, 16

■ **9:38—10:39** The people not only prayed for aid, but also renewed their obligations under the Mosaic covenant. From the beginning, the Mosaic covenant had to be renewed after periods of covenant violation (Ex. 34; 1 Sam. 12; 2 Kin. 23).

■ **9:38 write it.** When the law was written down and sealed it could become an effective instrument in the redemptive purposes of God (Introduction to Ezra: Characteristics and Themes).

■ **10:1–27** The leaders who renewed the covenant are listed. Surprisingly Ezra is absent. He played a significant role in ch. 8, but has now quietly disappeared from the scene. His job was successfully completed when the people themselves were reading from the Law and understanding it on their own.

■ **10:1 those who placed their seal.** This list of people, who for the most part are not known elsewhere, reinforces one of the major themes of Ezra and Nehemiah: the people of God as a whole, not just the great leaders, are vital for the accomplishing of God's redemptive plan (Introduction to Ezra: Characteristics and Themes).

■ **10:28 Nethinim.** These were temple servants, together with the priests, Levites, and others (1 Chr. 9:2 note).

■ **10:29 entered into . . . an oath.** The swearing of the oath by the people (9:15; Ezra 10:5 note) emphasizes the distinctively legal nature of the Mosaic covenantal arrangement, as compared to the Abrahamic covenant of grace (Gen. 12:1–3), in which the oath is taken by God alone. As the apostle Paul would later reveal, the Mosaic covenant was a kind of "tutor" whose introduction would not annul the covenant of promise already made with Abraham (Gal. 3:17, 24). Throughout the history of redemption, all of God's covenantal arrangements call for an obedience springing from faith in God and willing to observe the terms of the covenant.

■ **10:30–39** Particular pledges of obedience are elaborated.

■ **10:30 give . . . as wives.** Intermarriage with people outside the covenant was a recurring problem in the history of Israel (cf. Ezra 4:3 note).

■ **10:31 Sabbath.** See Ex. 20:8–11; Deut. 5:12–15. See note on 9:14.

■ **10:32 one-third of a shekel.** Ex. 30:13, 14 prescribes half a shekel. The difference could be from the use of a new monetary system under the Persians, or it could be a concession to the hard economic times.

■ **10:33 offerings.** See Lev. 1—7.

cattle, as *it is* written in the Law, and the firstborn of our herds and our flocks, to the house of our God, to the priests who minister in the house of our God; 37 [s]to bring the firstfruits of our dough, our offerings, the fruit from all kinds of trees, *the* new wine and oil, to the priests, to the storerooms of the [t]house of our God; and to bring [u]the tithes of our land to the Levites, for the Levites should receive the tithes in all our farming communities. 38 And the priest, the descendant of Aaron, shall be with the Levites [v]when the Levites receive tithes; and the Levites shall bring up a tenth of the tithes to the house of our God, to [w]the rooms of the storehouse.

39 For the children of Israel and the children of Levi [x]shall bring the offering of the grain, of the new wine and the oil, to the storerooms where the articles of the sanctuary *are, where* the priests who minister and the gatekeepers [y]and the singers *are;* and we will not [z]neglect the house of our God.

The People Dwelling in Jerusalem

11 Now the leaders of the people dwelt at Jerusalem; the rest of the people cast lots to bring one out of ten to dwell in Jerusalem, [a]the holy city, and nine-tenths *were to dwell* in *other* cities. 2 And the people blessed all the men who [b]willingly offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem.

3 [c]These *are* the heads of the province who dwelt in Jerusalem. (But in the cities of Judah everyone dwelt in his own possession in their cities—Israelites, priests, Levites, [d]Nethinim, and [e]descendants of Solomon's servants.) 4 Also [f]in Jerusalem dwelt *some* of the children of Judah and of the children of Benjamin.

The children of Judah: Athaiah the son of Uzziah, the son of Zechariah, the son of Amariah, the son of Shephatiah, the son of Mahalalel, of the children of [g]Perez; 5 and Maaseiah the son of Baruch, the son of Col-Hozeh, the son of Hazaiah, the son of Adaiah, the son of Joiarib, the son of Zechariah, the son of Shiloni. 6 All the sons of Perez who dwelt at Jerusalem *were* four hundred and sixty-eight valiant men.

7 And these are the sons of Benjamin: Sallu the son of Meshullam, the son of Joed, the son of Pedaiah, the son of Kolaiah, the son of Maaseiah, the son of Ithiel, the son of Jeshaiah; 8 and after him Gabbai *and* Sallai, nine hundred and twenty-eight. 9 Joel the son of Zichri *was* their overseer, and Judah the son of [1]Senuah *was* second over the city.

10 [h]Of the priests: Jedaiah the son of Joiarib, and Jachin; 11 Seraiah the son of Hilkiah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Zadok, the son of Meraioth, the son of Ahitub, *was* the leader of the house of God. 12 Their brethren who did the work of the house *were* eight hundred and twenty-two; and Adaiah the son of Jeroham, the son of Pelaliah, the son of Amzi, the son of Zechariah, the son of Pashhur, the son of Malchijah, 13 and his brethren, heads of the fathers' *houses, were* two hundred and forty-two; and Amashai the son of Azarel, the son of Ahzai, the son of Meshillemoth, the son of Immer, 14 and their brethren, mighty men of valor, *were* one hundred and twenty-eight. Their overseer *was* Zabdiel [2]the son of *one of* the great men.

15 Also of the Levites: Shemaiah the son of Hasshub, the son of Azrikam, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Bunni; 16 [i]Shabbethai and [j]Jozabad, of the heads of the Levites, *had* the oversight of [k]the business outside of the [3]house of God; 17 Mattaniah the son of [4]Micha, the son of Zabdi, the son of Asaph, the leader *who* began the thanksgiving with prayer; Bakbukiah, the second among his brethren; and Abda the son of Shammua, the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun. 18 All the Levites in [l]the holy city *were* two hundred and eighty-four.

19 Moreover the gatekeepers, Akkub, Talmon, and their brethren who kept the gates, *were* one hundred and seventy-two.

20 And the rest of Israel, of the priests *and* Levites, *were* in all the cities of Judah, everyone in his inheritance. 21 [m]But the Nethinim dwelt in Ophel. And Ziha and Gishpa *were* over the Nethinim.

37 [s]Lev. 23:17; Num. 15:19; 18:12; Deut. 18:4; 26:2 [t]Lev. 27:30; Num. 18:21; Mal. 3:10 [u]Temple

38 [v]Num. 18:26 [w]1 Chr. 9:26; 2 Chr. 31:11

39 [x]Deut. 12:6, 11; 2 Chr. 31:12; Neh. 13:12 [y]Neh. 13:10, 11 [z][Heb. 10:25]

CHAPTER 11

1 [a]Neh. 10:18; Matt. 4:5; 5:35; 27:53

2 [b]Judg. 5:9; 2 Chr. 17:16

3 [c]1 Chr. 9:2, 3 [d]Ezra 2:43 [e]Ezra 2:55

4 [f]1 Chr. 9:3 [g]Gen. 38:29

9 [1]Or *Hassenuah*

10 [h]1 Chr. 9:10

14 [2]Or *the son of Haggedolim*

16 [i]Ezra 10:15 [j]Ezra 8:33 [k]1 Chr. 26:29 [3]Temple

17 [4]Or *Michah*

18 [l]Neh. 11:1

21 [m]2 Chr. 27:3; Neh. 3:26

■ **10:39 not neglect the house of God.** Rebuilding the house of God is a major theme in Ezra and Nehemiah (Introduction to Ezra: Characteristics and Themes).

■ **11:1 cast lots.** This phrase ties this list to the pledges in 10:30–39 (cf. 10:34) and shows the quick implementation of those pledges.

one out of ten. Populating the city by means of a tithe (a tenth) of the people is the first step in not neglecting the house of God, as pledged in 10:39.

the holy city. A rare phrase, used elsewhere only in v. 18; Is. 48:2; 52:1. Holiness has been expanding—from holy vessels (Ezra 1:7; cf. 8:28) to priests (Ezra 8:28), people (Ezra 9:2), the holy place (Ezra 9:8), the gates (3:1), the Sabbaths (9:14)—the entire city is now holy. The city with all that is in it has become holy, a "house of God," which the Lord purposed to build (Heb. 3:1–6).

■ **11:2 who willingly offered.** This probably does not refer to a second group in addition to the tenth chosen by lot, but to a willing spirit in those who were chosen.

■ **11:4 Judah . . . Benjamin.** See note on Ezra 1:5.

22 [5]*work* [6]Temple
23 [n]Ezra 6:8, 9; 7:20 [7]*fixed share*
24 [o]Gen. 38:30 [p]1 Chr. 18:17 [8]Lit. *at the king's hand*
25 [q]Josh. 14:15
35 [r]1 Chr. 4:14

CHAPTER 12

1 [a]Ezra 2:1, 2; 7:7 [b]Neh. 7:7; Matt. 1:12, 13 [c]Neh. 10:2–8
2 [1]*Melichu,* v. 14
3 [2]*Shebaniah,* v. 14 [3]*Harim,* v. 15 [4]*Meraioth,* v. 15
4 [d]Luke 1:5 [5]*Ginnethon,* v. 16
5 [6]*Minjamin,* v. 17 [7]*Moadiah,* v. 17
7 [e]Ezra 3:2; Hag. 1:1; Zech. 3:1 [8]*Sallai,* v. 20
8 [f]Neh. 11:17
12 [g]Neh. 7:70, 71; 8:13; 11:13
14 [9]*Malluch,* v. 2 [1]*Shechaniah,* v. 3
15 [2]*Rehum,* v. 3 [3]*Meremoth,* v. 3
17 [4]*Mijamin,* v. 5 [5]*Maadiah,* v. 5
20 [6]*Sallu,* v. 7
22 [h]1 Chr. 24:6
23 [i]1 Chr. 9:14–22
24 [j]Neh. 11:17 [k]Ezra 3:11 [l]1 Chr. 23—26 [7]Lit. *watch by watch*
26 [m]Neh. 8:9 [n]Ezra 7:6, 11 [8]*Jehozadak,* 1 Chr. 6:14
27 [o]Deut. 20:5; Neh. 7:1; Ps. 30:title [p]1 Chr. 25:6; 2 Chr. 5:13; 7:6

22 Also the overseer of the Levites at Jerusalem *was* Uzzi the son of Bani, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Micha, of the sons of Asaph, the singers in charge of the [5]service of the [6]house of God. 23 For [n]*it was* the king's command concerning them that a [7]certain portion should be for the singers, a quota day by day. 24 Pethahiah the son of Meshezabel, of the children of [o]Zerah the son of Judah, *was* [p]the[8] king's deputy in all matters concerning the people.

The People Dwelling Outside Jerusalem

25 And as for the villages with their fields, *some* of the children of Judah dwelt in [q]Kirjath Arba and its villages, Dibon and its villages, Jekabzeel and its villages; 26 in Jeshua, Moladah, Beth Pelet, 27 Hazar Shual, and Beersheba and its villages; 28 in Ziklag and Meconah and its villages; 29 in En Rimmon, Zorah, Jarmuth, 30 Zanoah, Adullam, and their villages; in Lachish and its fields; in Azekah and its villages. They dwelt from Beersheba to the Valley of Hinnom.

31 Also the children of Benjamin from Geba *dwelt* in Michmash, Aija, and Bethel, and their villages; 32 in Anathoth, Nob, Ananiah; 33 in Hazor, Ramah, Gittaim; 34 in Hadid, Zeboim, Neballat; 35 in Lod, Ono, *and* [r]the Valley of Craftsmen. 36 Some of the Judean divisions of Levites *were* in Benjamin.

The Priests and Levites

12 Now these *are* the [a]priests and the Levites who came up with [b]Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua: [c]Seraiah, Jeremiah, Ezra, 2 Amariah, [1]Malluch, Hattush, 3 [2]Shechaniah, [3]Rehum, [4]Meremoth, 4 Iddo, [5]Ginnethoi, [d]Abijah, 5 [6]Mijamin, [7]Maadiah, Bilgah, 6 Shemaiah, Joiarib, Jedaiah, 7 [8]Sallu, Amok, Hilkiah, *and* Jedaiah.

These *were* the heads of the priests and their brethren in the days of [e]Jeshua.

8 Moreover the Levites *were* Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel, Sherebiah, Judah, *and* Mattaniah [f]*who led* the thanksgiving *psalms,* he and his brethren. 9 Also Bakbukiah and Unni, their brethren, *stood* across from them in *their* duties.

10 Jeshua begot Joiakim, Joiakim begot Eliashib, Eliashib begot Joiada, 11 Joiada begot Jonathan, and Jonathan begot Jaddua.

12 Now in the days of Joiakim, the priests, the [g]heads of the fathers' *houses were:* of Seraiah, Meraiah; of Jeremiah, Hananiah; 13 of Ezra, Meshullam; of Amariah, Jehohanan; 14 of [9]Melichu, Jonathan; of [1]Shebaniah, Joseph; 15 of [2]Harim, Adna; of [3]Meraioth, Helkai; 16 of Iddo, Zechariah; of Ginnethon, Meshullam; 17 of Abijah, Zichri; *the son* of [4]Minjamin; of [5]Moadiah, Piltai; 18 of Bilgah, Shammua; of Shemaiah, Jehonathan; 19 of Joiarib, Mattenai; of Jedaiah, Uzzi; 20 of [6]Sallai, Kallai; of Amok, Eber; 21 of Hilkiah, Hashabiah; *and* of Jedaiah, Nethanel.

22 During the reign of Darius the Persian, a record *was also kept* of the Levites and priests *who had been* [h]heads of their fathers' *houses* in the days of Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan, and Jaddua. 23 The sons of Levi, the heads of the fathers' *houses* until the days of Johanan the son of Eliashib, *were* written in the book of the [i]chronicles.

24 And the heads of the Levites *were* Hashabiah, Sherebiah, and Jeshua the son of Kadmiel, with their brothers across from them, to [j]praise *and* give thanks, [k]group[7] alternating with group, [l]according to the command of David the man of God. 25 Mattaniah, Bakbukiah, Obadiah, Meshullam, Talmon, and Akkub *were* gatekeepers keeping the watch at the storerooms of the gates. 26 These *lived* in the days of Joiakim the son of Jeshua, the son of [8]Jozadak, and in the days of Nehemiah [m]the governor, and of Ezra the priest, [n]the scribe.

Nehemiah Dedicates the Wall

27 Now at [o]the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought out the Levites in all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem to celebrate the dedication with gladness, [p]both with

■ **11:23 the king's command.** The reference may be to David (12:24; 1 Chr. 25) or to King Artaxerxes (Ezra 7:21–24).

■ **11:25–36** This list is of those who resettled the surrounding area. It links with Ezra 2:21–35, binding Ezra and Nehemiah into a whole.

■ **12:1–10** This list of priests and Levites who returned under Zerubbabel connects the end of Nehemiah to the beginning of Ezra, uniting the whole work.

■ **12:1 Zerubbabel . . . Jeshua.** See note on Ezra 2:2.

Ezra. This is not the same Ezra as the leading figure of Ezra and Nehemiah. That Ezra returned eighty years after Zerubbabel (Ezra 7:6 note).

■ **12:9 across from them.** For antiphonal singing, see v. 24.

■ **12:10 Eliashib.** See 3:1 and note.

■ **12:12–21** This list is repeated with certain variations from vv. 1–7.

■ **12:22–26** This is a list of heads of Levitical families.

■ **12:22 Darius the Persian.** This is Darius II (423–404 B.C.) or more probably Darius III (336–331).

■ **12:27–43** The dedication ceremony is for the wall surrounding God's

thanksgivings and singing, *with* cymbals and stringed instruments and harps. 28 And the sons of the singers gathered together from the countryside around Jerusalem, from the [q]villages of the Netophathites, 29 from the house of Gilgal, and from the fields of Geba and Azmaveth; for the singers had built themselves villages all around Jerusalem. 30 Then the priests and Levites [r]purified themselves, and purified the people, the gates, and the wall.

31 So I brought the leaders of Judah up on the wall, and appointed two large thanksgiving choirs. [s]*One* went to the right hand on the wall [t]toward the Refuse Gate. 32 After them went Hoshaiah and half of the leaders of Judah, 33 and Azariah, Ezra, Meshullam, 34 Judah, Benjamin, Shemaiah, Jeremiah, 35 and some of the priests' sons [u]with trumpets—Zechariah the son of Jonathan, the son of Shemaiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Michaiah, the son of Zaccur, the son of Asaph, 36 and his brethren, Shemaiah, Azarel, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethanel, Judah, *and* Hanani, with [v]the musical [w]instruments of David the man of God. And Ezra the scribe *went* before them. 37 [x]By the Fountain Gate, in front of them, they went up [y]the stairs of the [z]City of David, on the stairway of the wall, beyond the house of David, as far as [a]the Water Gate eastward.

38 [b]The other thanksgiving choir went the opposite *way,* and I *was* behind them with half of the people on the wall, going past the [c]Tower of the Ovens as far as [d]the Broad Wall, 39 [e]and above the Gate of Ephraim, above [f]the Old Gate, above [g]the Fish Gate, [h]the Tower of Hananel, the Tower of [i]the Hundred, as far as [j]the Sheep Gate; and they stopped by [j]the Gate of the Prison.

40 So the two thanksgiving choirs stood in the house of God, likewise I and the half of the rulers with me; 41 and the priests, Eliakim, Maaseiah, [k]Minjamin, Michaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah, *and* Hananiah, with trumpets; 42 also Maaseiah, Shemaiah, Eleazar, Uzzi, Jehohanan, Malchijah, Elam, and Ezer. The singers [l]sang loudly with Jezrahiah the director.

43 Also that day they offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced, for God had made them rejoice with great joy; the women and the children also rejoiced, so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard [k]afar off.

Temple Responsibilities

44 [l]And at the same time some were appointed over the rooms of the storehouse for the offerings, the firstfruits, and the [m]tithes, to gather into them from the fields of the cities the portions specified by the Law for the priests and Levites; for Judah rejoiced over the priests and Levites who [3]ministered. 45 Both the singers and the gatekeepers kept the charge of their God and the charge of the purification, [n]according to the command of David *and* Solomon his son. 46 For in the days of David [o]and Asaph of old *there were* chiefs of the singers, and songs of praise and thanksgiving to God. 47 In the days of Zerubbabel and in the days of Nehemiah all Israel gave the portions for the singers and the gatekeepers, a portion for [p]each day. [q]They also [4]consecrated *holy things* for the Levites, [r]and the Levites consecrated *them* for the children of Aaron.

Principles of Separation

13 On that day [a]they read from the Book of Moses in the hearing of the people, and in it was found written [b]that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever come into the assembly of God, 2 because they had not met the children of Israel with bread and water, but [c]hired Balaam

28 [q]1 Chr. 9:16

30 [r]Ezra 6:20; Neh. 13:22, 30

31 [s]Neh. 12:38 [t]Neh. 2:13; 3:13

35 [u]Num. 10:2, 8

36 [v]1 Chr. 23:5 [w]2 Chr. 29:26, 27

37 [x]Neh. 2:14; 3:15 [y]Neh. 3:15 [z]2 Sam. 5:7–9 [a]Neh. 3:26; 8:1, 3, 16

38 [b]Neh. 12:31 [c]Neh. 3:11 [d]Neh. 3:8

39 [e]2 Kin. 14:13; Neh. 8:16 [f]Neh. 3:6 [g]Neh. 3:3 [h]Neh. 3:1 [i]Neh. 3:32 [j]Jer. 32:2 [3]Heb. *Hammeah*

41 [k]Or *Mijamin,* v. 5

42 [l]Lit. *made their voice to be heard*

43 [k]Ezra 3:13

44 [l]2 Chr. 31:11, 12; Neh. 13:5, 12, 13 [m]Neh. 10:37–39 [3]Lit. *stood*

45 [n]1 Chr. 25; 26

46 [o]1 Chr. 25:1; 2 Chr. 29:30

47 [p]Neh. 11:23 [q]Num. 18:21, 24 [r]Num. 18:26 [4]*set apart*

CHAPTER 13

1 [a][Deut. 31:11, 12]; 2 Kin. 23:2; Neh. 8:3, 8; 9:3; Is. 34:16 [b]Deut. 23:3, 4

2 [c]Num. 22:5; Josh. 24:9, 10

"house," the temple as such and the community, which is now complete. In this section Nehemiah writes in the first person (v. 31).

■ **12:27 sought out the Levites.** The dedication could not take place without the help of the Levites, who are included in the preceding lists (vv. 1–26).

■ **12:28, 29 the singers gathered.** Hence the list in 11:22, 23.

■ **12:30 purified.** Ritual purification was a representation or symbol of moral purity (Lev. 16:30).

■ **12:31–39** A grand procession took place, apparently beginning at the Valley Gate (3:13). Part of the procession, led by Ezra (v. 36), moved counterclockwise (v. 31), passing the Refuse Gate, the Fountain Gate, and the Water Gate before proceeding to the temple. The other part of the procession, accompanied by Nehemiah (v. 38), moved clockwise (v. 38), passing the gates on the north side of the city before going to the temple. For the locations, see ch. 3 and notes.

■ **12:43 God had made them rejoice.** The people rejoiced, because God had given them cause to do so by His sovereign work through human agents (Introduction to Ezra: Characteristics and Themes).

the women and the children. Including women and children underlines the great size of the celebration (3:12 note; 5:1 note).

■ **12:44–47** These verses show that the people had honored their pledge (10:39) and not neglected the house of God.

■ **12:45 command of David and Solomon.** See 1 Chr. 25; 2 Chr. 8:14.

■ **12:47 all Israel.** The people of God as a whole, not just the great leaders, are vital for accomplishing God's redemptive plan.

■ **13:1–3** The pledge of general obedience to the Law of Moses (10:28, 29) included separation from neighboring peoples (10:28). The people did not conform to this aspect of the law (Deut. 23:3–6). The exclusion of the "mixed multitude" was in keeping with the pledge in 10:28, 29. It was religious separation, not racial or political (Ezra 4:3 note).

■ **13:1 On that day.** This was during Nehemiah's second term as governor, as indicated by the chronological references in vv. 4, 6.

against them to curse them. [d]However, our God turned the curse into a blessing. [3] So it was, when they had heard the Law, [e]that they separated all the mixed multitude from Israel.

The Reforms of Nehemiah

[4] Now before this, [f]Eliashib the priest, having authority over the storerooms of the house of our God, *was* allied with [g]Tobiah. [5] And he had prepared for him a large room, [h]where previously they had stored the grain offerings, the frankincense, the articles, the tithes of grain, the new wine and oil, [i]which were commanded *to be given* to the Levites and singers and gatekeepers, and the offerings for the priests. [6] But during all this I was not in Jerusalem, [j]for in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon I had returned to the king. Then after certain days I obtained leave from the king, [7] and I came to Jerusalem and discovered the evil that Eliashib had done for Tobiah, in [k]preparing a room for him in the courts of the [l]house of God. [8] And it grieved me bitterly; therefore I threw all the household goods of Tobiah out of the room. [9] Then I commanded them to [l]cleanse the rooms; and I brought back into them the articles of the house of God, with the grain offering and the frankincense.

[10] I also realized that the portions for the Levites had [m]not been given *them;* for each of the Levites and the singers who did the work had gone back to [n]his field. [11] So [o]I contended with the rulers, and said, [p]"Why is the house of God forsaken?" And I gathered them together and set them in their place. [12] [q]Then all Judah brought the tithe of the grain and the new wine and the oil to the storehouse. [13] [r]And I appointed as treasurers over the storehouse Shelemiah the priest and Zadok the scribe, and of the Levites, Pedaiah; and next to them *was* Hanan the son of Zaccur, the son of Mattaniah; for they were considered [s]faithful, and their task *was* to distribute to their brethren.

[14] [t]Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and do not wipe out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for its services!

[15] In those days I saw *people* in Judah treading wine presses [u]on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and loading donkeys with wine, grapes, figs, and all *kinds of* burdens, [v]which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. And I warned *them* about the day on which they were selling provisions. [16] Men of Tyre dwelt there also, who brought in fish and all kinds of goods, and sold *them* on the Sabbath to the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem.

[17] Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said to them, "What evil thing *is* this that you do, by which you profane the Sabbath day? [18] [w]Did not your fathers do thus, and did not our God bring all this disaster on us and on this city? Yet you bring added wrath on Israel by profaning the Sabbath."

[19] So it was, at the gates of Jerusalem, as it [x]began to be dark before the Sabbath, that I commanded the gates to be shut, and charged that they must not be opened till after the Sabbath. [y]Then I posted *some* of my servants at the gates, *so that* no burdens would be brought in on the Sabbath day. [20] Now the merchants and sellers of all kinds of [2]wares [3]lodged outside Jerusalem once or twice.

[21] Then I warned them, and said to them, "Why do you spend the night [4]around the wall? If you do *so* again, I will lay hands on you!" From that time on they came no *more* on the Sabbath.

2 [d]Num. 23:1; 24:10; Deut. 23:5
3 [e]Neh. 9:2; 10:28
4 [f]Neh. 12:10 [g]Neh. 2:10; 4:3; 6:1
5 [h]Neh. 12:44 [i]Num. 18:21, 24
6 [j]Neh. 5:14–16
7 [k]Neh. 13:1, 5 [l]Temple
9 [l]2 Chr. 29:5, 15, 16
10 [m]Neh. 10:37; Mal. 3:8 [n]Num. 35:2
11 [o]Neh. 13:17, 25 [p]Neh. 10:39
12 [q]Neh. 10:38; 12:44
13 [r]2 Chr. 31:12 [s]1 Cor. 4:2
14 [t]Neh. 5:19; 13:22, 31
15 [u][Ex. 20:10] [v]Neh. 10:31; [Jer. 17:21]
18 [w]Ezra 9:13; [Jer. 17:21]
19 [x]Lev. 23:32 [y]Jer. 17:21, 22
20 [2]*merchandise* [3]*spent the night*
21 [4]Lit. *before*

■ **13:3 heard the Law.** Though Ezra is not on the scene, his labor is still bearing fruit (10:1–27 note).

■ **13:4–14** The final pledge, not to neglect the house of God (10:39), had been violated during Nehemiah's absence (v. 11), as had the pledges regarding the storerooms and the tithes (10:37–39). Reform was needed.

■ **13:4 Eliashib.** This Eliashib was possibly the high priest (3:1 note), but more likely another priest with the same name; the high priest would probably not have been put in charge of the storerooms.

Tobiah. See note on 2:10.

■ **13:6 I was not in Jerusalem.** See note on 5:14.

king of Babylon. The Persian kings bore this title after the conquest of the Babylonian Empire (Ezra 5:13).

■ **13:8 threw.** Compare Matt. 21:12, 13.

■ **13:10 portions for the Levites.** These words link this section to the pledge in 10:37. The Levites possessed no land (Num. 18:20–24; Deut. 14:29; 18:1), though some may have had private income (Deut. 18:8). The dependence of the Levites on the support of the people may explain the reluctance of many Levites to leave Babylonia (Ezra 8:15–20).

■ **13:11 I contended.** See note on 5:7.

forsaken. The pledge not to neglect the house of God (10:39) had been violated.

■ **13:12 brought the tithe.** They did so in keeping with the pledge in 10:37.

■ **13:13 faithful.** Cf. Acts 6:1–5; 2 Cor. 8:16–21.

■ **13:14 Remember me.** The fourth use of "remember" in a prayer (1:8 note), and the second of four prayers by Nehemiah in the specific form "remember me" (5:19 note).

■ **13:15 Sabbath . . . bringing . . . selling.** Three links with the pledge in 10:31 that had been violated.

■ **13:16 Men of Tyre.** These men were one of the "peoples of the land" in view in 10:31.

■ **13:19 began to be dark.** The Israelites usually counted days from sunset to sunset (Lev. 23:32; Esth. 4:16; Dan. 8:14 text note).

22 And I commanded the Levites that [z]they should cleanse themselves, and that they should go and guard the gates, to sanctify the Sabbath day.

Remember me, O my God, *concerning* this also, and spare me according to the greatness of Your mercy!

23 In those days I also saw Jews *who* [a]had married women of [b]Ashdod, Ammon, *and* Moab. 24 And half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod, and could not speak the language of Judah, but spoke according to the language of one or the other people.

25 So I [c]contended with them and [5]cursed them, struck some of them and pulled out their hair, and made them [d]swear by God, *saying,* "You shall not give your daughters as wives to their sons, nor take their daughters for your sons or yourselves. 26 [e]Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? Yet among many nations there was no king like him, [f]who was beloved of his God; and God made him king over all Israel. [g]Nevertheless pagan women caused even him to sin. 27 Should we then hear of your doing all this great evil, [h]transgressing against our God by marrying pagan women?"

28 And *one* of the sons [i]of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, *was* a son-in-law of [j]Sanballat the Horonite; therefore I drove him from me.

29 [k]Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood and [l]the covenant of the priesthood and the Levites.

30 [m]Thus I cleansed them of everything pagan. I also [n]assigned duties to the priests and the Levites, each to his service, 31 and *to bringing* [o]the wood offering and the firstfruits at appointed times.

[p]Remember me, O my God, for good!

22 [z]1 Chr. 15:12; Neh. 12:30

23 [a]Ezra 9:2 [b]Neh. 4:7

25 [c]Prov. 28:4 [d]Neh. 10:29, 30 [5]*pronounced them cursed*

26 [e]1 Kin. 11:1, 2 [f]2 Sam. 12:24, 25 [g]1 Kin. 11:4–8

27 [h][Ezra 10:2]

28 [i]Neh. 12:10, 12 [j]Neh. 4:1, 7; 6:1, 2

29 [k]Neh. 6:14 [l]Mal. 2:4, 11, 12

30 [m]Neh. 10:30 [n]Neh. 12:1

31 [o]Neh. 10:34 [p]Neh. 13:14, 22

■ **13:22 Remember me.** See note on v. 14.

■ **13:23 married.** Ezra had dealt with this perennial problem twenty-five years before (Ezra 9:1 note).

Ashdod. See note on 4:7, 8.

■ **13:25 pulled out their hair.** Nehemiah's action can be contrasted with that of Ezra in Ezra 9:3.

shall not give. Ezra actually dissolved the illegitimate unions (Ezra 10:3 note), whereas Nehemiah only attempted to prevent such unions in the future.

■ **13:26 even him.** The argument is from the greater to the less: "If Solomon was not spared, how much less will we be spared."

■ **13:28 son-in-law.** His marriage was doubly grievous, first, because a high priest in particular was not to marry a foreigner (Lev. 21:14), and second, because Sanballat was an enemy (2:19; 4:1; 6:1).

■ **13:29 Remember them.** The sixth use of "remember" in a prayer (1:8 note), and the third imprecatory prayer (4:4, 5 note).

■ **13:31 wood.** Contributions of wood are made in keeping with the pledge in 10:34.

Remember me. See note on v. 14. The book does not end on the high note of 12:27–47, but on the note of failure to carry out the pledges of 10:30–39 and the continuing need for reform. The people of God had not arrived at a resting place. Ezra and Nehemiah show the devotion of the faithful to the temple of God and the community surrounding it, a devotion that comes to maturity in Christ and the church (1 Cor. 3:5–17; Eph. 2:21, 22; 4:16; Heb. 3:1–6).

The Book of

ESTHER

Author Although the author of the Book of Esther is unknown, his interest in the origin and observance of the festival of Purim, his intense nationalism, and his intimate knowledge of the Persian court, customs, and geography suggest that he was a Persian Jew living in Susa.

Date and Occasion The earliest possible date for the book is sometime after the events described in it, that is, the fifth century B.C. The latest possible date is during the first century B.C. A late fifth- or fourth-century dating is now generally preferred by scholars, who point to linguistic evidence as well as the author's favorable attitude toward the Persian king and Gentiles in general as evidence for an early date.

The writer of Esther clearly intended his book to explain the origin of the celebration of Purim, to establish Purim as a festival celebrated by each new generation of Jews, and to regulate its observance (9:20–32).

Interpretive Difficulties The question of whether the Book of Esther belongs in the canon of Scripture has been raised from an early period by both Jews and Christians, though the book's commendation of the popular festival of Purim argued strongly in favor of its inclusion in the Jewish canon. Objections voiced by some Christians to Esther's canonicity included its absence from some of the earliest lists of canonical books, its lack of citation in the New Testament, its lack of overt references to God and to religious practices, its excessive Jewish nationalism, and its spirit of vengeance. Some of these objections were alleviated when the early church adopted an expanded version of the Book of Esther found in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament). This Septuagint text contains over one hundred verses, not found in the Hebrew text, that made the book more religiously acceptable to some. These additions include a dream of Mordecai about the coming destruction of the Jews and prayers of Mordecai and Esther for deliverance. However, when the Protestant churches judged the shorter Hebrew version of Esther to be the authoritative version, objections to the book's canonicity resurfaced.

The violence in the Book of Esther is a kind of civil war, which Cicero called the worst of all calamities. The author of Esther shows the relief of the people when justice triumphs, and does not criticize the means employed, such as the hanging of Haman's sons. But it would be a mistake to consider these events as models for behavior. The extreme situation and threat under which they happened limits what can be concluded from them. The author does not engage in moral reflection about the massive killing and the motives of avengers. The reader struggling with some of the questions that arise needs to go to other places, such as the prophets, Job, or Revelation, where the discussion includes them and answers may be found. Positively, the Book of Esther testifies clearly to the invisible hand of Providence, which will not allow the covenant people to be utterly destroyed.

Characteristics and Themes The Book of Esther is renowned for the high quality of its literary artistry, which functions as the principal vehicle for its religious meaning. The author skillfully uses narrative tensions created by reversals or sharp contrasts of fortunes and expectations, and by roles that are often highly ironic in nature. Notice the two descriptions of banquets of Ahasuerus and his wife, the first described in full detail and the second presented tersely (1:1–8, 9); the striking contrast between the initial portrait of the king as powerful and pompous (1:1–8) and the subsequent revelation of his incompetence and weakness; the effective contrast between the king's response when Vashti failed to appear before him and when Esther appeared unannounced (1:11–21; 5:1–3); the ironic reversal of Haman's career (6:4–12); the pathetic scene in which Haman pleads for Esther's mercy, only to be accused of attempted rape (7:7–9); and the poetic justice of hanging Haman on his own gallows. The last is an example of the ironic reversals in the fortunes and position of Haman and Mordecai (7:9–10; 8:1–2; 9:25). Such reversals, when compared with those of the Exodus, the Babylonian exile, and even the Crucifixion and Resurrection, subtly reveal God's hand in the salvation history of His people.

The writer also uses repetition or duplication to weave the various parts of the story together. For example, notice the three references to official records ("chronicles") located at significant turning points in the narrative (2:23; 6:1; 10:2). There are three sets of paired banquets marking the beginning, middle, and end of the book: the banquets of Ahasuerus (1:3–4, 5–8), Esther (5:4–8; 7:1–10), and the two celebrations of Purim (9:18–32). See also the banquet theme in 1:9; 2:18; 3:15; 8:17; 9:17; the threefold mention of the size of Ahasuerus's empire (1:1; 8:9; 9:30); the repeated promise to Esther of "up to half the

kingdom" (5:3, 6; 7:2; cf. 9:12); the repeated insistence that the Hebrews did not plunder their enemies (9:10, 15–16); the two accounts of Esther's hidden identity (2:10, 20); the double assembling of virgins (2:8, 19); Haman's two interchanges with his wife and friends (5:10–14; 6:13–14); the two veilings of Haman's head (6:12; 7:8); the two references to the subsiding of Ahasuerus's anger (2:1; 7:10); and the two reminders that the laws of the Medes and Persians cannot be altered (1:19; 8:8). The use of the number "seven" is noteworthy (1:5, 10, 14), as is Esther's repeated request and reception of favor (2:9, 15, 17; 5:2, 8; 7:3; 8:9).

The literary technique of foreshadowing is also employed in the Book of Esther. Most striking is the prediction of Haman's wife that he would "surely fall" because Mordecai was a Jew (6:13). The author is a master of suspense and paces the speed of the narrative well. The constant references to time not only present the events as history (1:1, 2) and underscore the theme of God's providential working in history, but also keep the story moving (e.g., 2:1, 15, 19, 21; 3:1).

The writer of Esther creatively builds upon the symbolic or typical aspects of the names of two of the main characters to show how the personal antagonism between Haman, the archenemy of the Jews, and Mordecai, the faithful Jew, was part of the historic conflict between Israel and the Amalekites. This conflict provides the foundation for the plot against all the Jews (2:5 note; 3:1 note). Similarities in phrasing, setting, story line, and emphasis also suggest that the Joseph story was an important model for the writer of Esther (note the similarities between 2:2–4 and Gen. 41:34–37; 3:10 and Gen. 41:42; 8:6 and Gen. 44:34).

A number of important themes are intertwined in the book. The theme of feasting or banquets establishes the setting of the main action of the narrative, culminating with the celebration of Purim, and contrasting with the theme of fasting (4:3, 16; 9:31). A contrast of obedience and disobedience also runs through the book. The initial disobedience of Vashti in ch. 1 sets the stage for the challenges facing Esther about obeying Mordecai (2:10, 20; 4:8–16) and standing up against the king's law (4:11, 16; 5:1, 2). The stage is also set for Mordecai's refusal to obey Haman's command, and his contrary willingness to carry out Esther's instructions (4:17) and to serve both the Persian king and the best interests of the Jews (10:3). The theme of providential protection of the Jews, as indicated in 4:14, is basic to the narrative and is a reason for the book's continuing significance among the community of faith. Related to this theme is that of rest and relief from enemies, which the feast of Purim commemorates (9:16, 22, cf. Deut. 25:19). Though God is not explicitly mentioned in this book, the reader nevertheless learns through the narrative that God is always, if invisibly, present with His people. He continues to guide and protect them today, even as He defended them in ancient Persia. □

Outline of Esther

I. Selection of Esther as Queen (chs. 1; 2)
  A. The Downfall of Queen Vashti (ch. 1)
  B. The Rise of Queen Esther (2:1–18)
  C. A Conspiracy Discovered (2:19–23)
II. Plot to Destroy the Jews (chs. 3; 4)
  A. Haman's Promotion and Plot (ch. 3)
  B. Mordecai's Counterplan (ch. 4)
III. Esther Saves the Jews (5:1—9:15)
  A. Esther's Uninvited Audience with the King (5:1–8)
  B. Haman's Plan to Hang Mordecai (5:9–14)
  C. Haman's Humiliation and Mordecai's Reward (6:1–13)
  D. Haman's Execution (6:14—7:10)
  E. Plan for Deliverance of the Jews (ch. 8)
  F. Victory for the Jews (9:1–15)
IV. Establishment of the Feast of Purim (9:16–32)
V. Epilogue (ch. 10)

CHAPTER 1

1 [a]Ezra 4:6; Dan. 9:1 [b]Esth. 8:9 [c]Dan. 6:1 [f]Generally identified with Xerxes I (486–465 B.C.)

2 [d]1 Kin. 1:46 [e]Neh. 1:1; Dan. 8:2 [2]Or *Susa* [3]Or *fortified palace,* and so elsewhere in the book

3 [f]Gen. 40:20; Esth. 2:18

5 [4]Or *Susa* [5]*palace*

6 [g]Esth. 7:8; Ezek. 23:41; Amos 2:8; 6:4

7 [h]Esth. 2:18 [6]Lit. *hand*

10 [i]Esth. 7:9

The King Dethrones Queen Vashti

NOW it came to pass in the days of [a]Ahasuerus[f] (this *was* the Ahasuerus who reigned [b]over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces, [c]from India to Ethiopia), [2] in those days when King Ahasuerus [d]sat on the throne of his kingdom, which *was* in [e]Shushan[2] the [3]citadel, [3] *that* in the third year of his reign he [f]made a feast for all his officials and servants—the powers of Persia and Media, the nobles, and the princes of the provinces *being* before him— [4] when he showed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the splendor of his excellent majesty for many days, one hundred and eighty days *in all.*

[5] And when these days were completed, the king made a feast lasting seven days for all the people who were present in [4]Shushan the [5]citadel, from great to small, in the court of the garden of the king's palace. [6] *There were* white and blue linen *curtains* fastened with cords of fine linen and purple on silver rods and marble pillars; *and the* [g]couches *were* of gold and silver on a *mosaic* pavement of alabaster, turquoise, and white and black marble. [7] And they served drinks in golden vessels, each vessel being different from the other, with royal wine in abundance, [h]according to the [6]generosity of the king. [8] In accordance with the law, the drinking was not compulsory; for so the king had ordered all the officers of his household, that they should do according to each man's pleasure.

[9] Queen Vashti also made a feast for the women *in* the royal palace which *belonged* to King Ahasuerus.

[10] On the seventh day, when the heart of the king was merry with wine, he commanded Mehuman, Biztha, [i]Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar, and Carcas, seven eunuchs who served in the presence of King Ahasuerus, [11] to bring Queen Vashti before the king, *wearing* her royal crown,

■ **1:1 Ahasuerus.** Also known as Xerxes (486–465 B.C.), Ahasuerus was the Persian king mentioned in Ezra 4:6. He was renowned for consolidating his father Darius's empire, for his successful building projects, and for his wars against the Greeks from 480–470 B.C.

one hundred and twenty-seven provinces. The reference here to the large number of divisions within the twenty larger administrative districts, or satrapies, in the Persian Empire is intended to impress.

Ethiopia. In Hebrew, "Cush," the region south of Egypt, now part of northern Sudan.

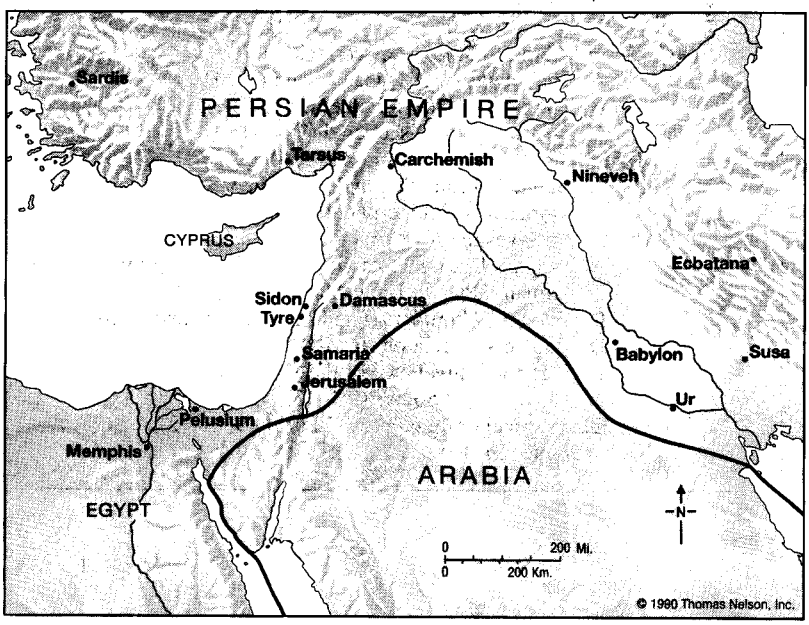
■ **1:2 Shushan the citadel.** This acropolis, a fortified palace 120 feet above the surrounding city of Susa, was one of the three Persian capitals and the royal winter residence. It has been excavated several times since 1851.

■ **1:3 in the third year.** 483 B.C.

■ **1:4–7** For 180 days the king ostentatiously displayed the royal wealth. The extravagant seven-day outdoor feast was the climax of the celebrations. The elaborate details about the drinking vessels and the abundance of the wine stress the king's lavish generosity.

■ **1:9 Vashti.** This name, not found elsewhere, may be related to the Persian word meaning "the beloved" or "the best." Extrabiblical sources name Ahasuerus's queen as Amestris. He may have had other queens.

Persian Empire (500 B.C.). The rise of Persia was rapid. In 550 B.C. Cyrus the Persian inherited the kingdom of the Medes. In 546 B.C. he captured the Lydian capital of Sardis. In 539 B.C. he took Babylon without a fight. In 538 B.C. he permitted the Jews to begin returning to Palestine and supported their cause in rebuilding their homeland. By 500 B.C. the Persian Empire stretched from India in the east through Asia Minor to Greece in the west, and included Egypt and some of coastal Africa to the south.



in order to show her beauty to the people and the officials, for she *was* beautiful to behold. 12 But Queen Vashti refused to come at the king's command *brought* by *his* eunuchs; therefore the king was furious, and his anger burned within him.

13 Then the king said to the [j]wise men [k]who understood the times (for this *was* the king's manner toward all who knew law and justice, 14 those closest to him *being* Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan, the [l]seven princes of Persia and Media, [m]who had access to the king's presence, *and* who [7]ranked highest in the kingdom): 15 "What *shall we* do to Queen Vashti, according to law, because she did not obey the command of King Ahasuerus *brought to her* by the eunuchs?"

16 And Memucan answered before the king and the princes: "Queen Vashti has not only wronged the king, but also all the princes, and all the people who *are* in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus. 17 For the queen's behavior will become known to all women, so that they will [n]despise their husbands in their eyes, when they report, 'King Ahasuerus commanded Queen Vashti to be brought in before him, but she did not come.' 18 This very day the *noble* ladies of Persia and Media will say to all the king's officials that they have heard of the behavior of the queen. Thus *there will be* excessive contempt and wrath. 19 If it pleases the king, let a royal [8]decree go out from him, and let it be recorded in the laws of the Persians and the Medes, so that it will [o]not [9]be altered, that Vashti shall come no more before King Ahasuerus; and let the king give her royal position to another who is better than she. 20 When the king's decree which he will make is proclaimed throughout all his empire (for it is great), all wives will [p]honor their husbands, both great and small."

21 And the reply pleased the king and the princes, and the king did according to the word of Memucan. 22 Then he sent letters to all the king's provinces, [q]to each province in its own script, and to every people in their own language, that each man should [r]be master in his own house, and speak in the language of his own people.

Esther Becomes Queen

2 After these things, when the wrath of King Ahasuerus subsided, he remembered Vashti, [a]what she had done, and what had been decreed against her. 2 Then the king's servants who attended him said: "Let beautiful young virgins be sought for the king; 3 and let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom, that they may gather all the beautiful young virgins to [1]Shushan the [2]citadel, into the women's quarters, under the custody of [3]Hegai the king's eunuch, custodian of the women. And let beauty preparations be given *them.* 4 Then let the young woman who pleases the king be queen instead of Vashti."

This thing pleased the king, and he did so.

5 In [4]Shushan the [5]citadel there was a certain Jew whose name *was* Mordecai the son of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of [b]Kish, a Benjamite. 6 [c]*Kish*[6] had been carried away from Jerusalem with the captives who had been captured with [7]Jeconiah king of Judah, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away. 7 And *Mordecai* had brought up Hadassah, that *is,* Esther,

13 [j]Jer. 10:7; Dan. 2:12; Matt. 2:1 [k]1 Chr. 12:32

14 [l]Ezra 7:14 [m]2 Kin. 25:19; [Matt. 18:10] [7]Lit. *sat in first place*

17 [n][Eph. 5:33]

19 [o]Esth. 8:8; Dan. 6:8 [8]Lit. *word* [9]*pass away*

20 [p][Eph. 5:33; Col. 3:18; 1 Pet. 3:1]

22 [q]Esth. 3:12; 8:9 [r][Eph. 5:22–24; 1 Tim. 2:12]

CHAPTER 2

1 [a]Esth. 1:19, 20

3 [1]Or *Susa* [2]*palace* [3]Heb. *Hege*

5 [b]1 Sam. 9:1 [4]Or *Susa* [5]*palace*

6 [c]2 Kin. 24:14, 15; 2 Chr. 36:10, 20; Jer. 24:1 [6]Lit. *Who* [7]*Jehoiachin,* 2 Kin. 24:6

■ **1:12** Reasons for Vashti's disobedience are not given in the Hebrew text, though early Jewish interpreters explained that she was commanded to appear naked, wearing only her crown, or that she had some disfigurement. The queen's refusal to obey introduces the theme of obedience and disobedience.

■ **1:13, 14 the times.** This expression usually refers to astrology, though in this context it probably means "the proper course to follow" (cf. 1 Chr. 12:32). The satirical flavor of the narrative is evident as the king, who has just displayed all the power and glory of his magnificent kingdom, has to consult experts on matters of law and justice, and to go to the nobles (cf. Ezra 7:14) for advice on how to deal with his wife's behavior.

■ **1:19 laws of the Persians . . . will not be altered.** The permanency of royal law is an important feature in the development of the story (4:11; 8:8). The plan to banish Vashti and to give her position to someone better, more beautiful or more obedient, had to be carried out.

■ **1:21, 22 letters to all the king's provinces.** The Persian postal system, renowned for its efficiency, was used to publish the irrevocable royal edicts (3:12–14; 8:9, 10; cf. 9:20, 30).

■ **2:1 subsided.** The use of the same rare verb in 7:10 suggests a parallel between the dismissal of Vashti and the hanging of Haman.

he remembered Vashti. The king may have regretted his actions, but it was too late; the legislation had made his actions permanent.

■ **2:5 Mordecai.** A name derived from Marduk, the Babylonian city-god. Mordecai, like Esther (Hadassah), may also have had a Jewish name. The discovery in ancient texts (including one dated about 485 B.C.) of the Babylonian personal name, Mardukaya, and the discovery of an archive of texts in Nippur containing the names of Jews from the time of Artaxerxes I and Darius, point to the authenticity of Mordecai's name and to the historicity of the events behind the story. Mordecai was a Jew living in the citadel, which may imply that he was a Persian official.

Jair . . . Shimei . . . Kish. The names in his genealogy may refer to his remote rather than immediate genealogy (Shimei, 2 Sam. 16:5–14; Kish, 1 Sam. 9:1–2; 1 Chr. 8:33). Kish may well have been an earlier ancestor, rather than the one carried into exile (v. 6 text note). That Mordecai's family was "carried away . . . with Jeconiah" (King Jeholachin) may mean that his family was among the Judean nobility (v. 6; 2 Kin. 24:6–17; 25:27–30). Mordecai's connection with Saul, who was also a Benjamite, takes on great significance when we encounter Haman, Mordecai's enemy, who was a distant relative of Agag, the Amalekite, Saul's enemy (3:1 note; Introduction: Characteristics and Themes).

■ **2:7 Hadassah.** Esther's Hebrew name meaning "myrtle."

Esther. Perhaps derived from the Persian word for "star," or a form of Ishtar, a Babylonian goddess.

7 [d]Esth. 2:15
8 [e]Esth. 2:3 [g]Or *Susa* [g]*palace*
9 [f]Esth. 2:3, 12 [f]Lit. *her portions*
10 [g]Esth. 2:20 [2]Revealed the identity of
15 [h]Esth. 2:7; 9:29 [i]Esth. 5:2, 8
17 [j]Esth. 1:11
18 [k]Esth. 1:3 [3]Lit. *hand*
20 [l]Esth. 2:10; [Prov. 22:6]
21 [4]*Bigthana*, Esth. 6:2
22 [m]Esth. 6:1, 2
23 [n]Esth. 6:1

CHAPTER 3

1 [a]Num. 24:7; 1 Sam. 15:8 [b]Esth. 5:11

[d]his uncle's daughter, for she had neither father nor mother. The young woman *was* lovely and beautiful. When her father and mother died, Mordecai took her as his own daughter.

8 So it was, when the king's command and decree were heard, and when many young women were [e]gathered at [g]Shushan the [g]citadel, *under* the custody of Hegai, that Esther also was taken to the king's palace, into the care of Hegai the custodian of the women. 9 Now the young woman pleased him, and she obtained his favor; so he readily gave [f]beauty preparations to her, besides [f]her allowance. Then seven choice maidservants were provided for her from the king's palace, and he moved her and her maidservants to the best *place* in the house of the women.

10 [g]Esther had not [2]revealed her people or family, for Mordecai had charged her not to reveal *it*. 11 And every day Mordecai paced in front of the court of the women's quarters, to learn of Esther's welfare and what was happening to her.

12 Each young woman's turn came to go in to King Ahasuerus after she had completed twelve months' preparation, according to the regulations for the women, for thus were the days of their preparation apportioned: six months with oil of myrrh, and six months with perfumes and preparations for beautifying women. 13 Thus *prepared, each* young woman went to the king, and she was given whatever she desired to take with her from the women's quarters to the king's palace. 14 In the evening she went, and in the morning she returned to the second house of the women, to the custody of Shaashgaz, the king's eunuch who kept the concubines. She would not go in to the king again unless the king delighted in her and called for her by name.

15 Now when the turn came for Esther [h]the daughter of Abihail the uncle of Mordecai, who had taken her as his daughter, to go in to the king, she requested nothing but what Hegai the king's eunuch, the custodian of the women, advised. And Esther [i]obtained favor in the sight of all who saw her. 16 So Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus, into his royal palace, in the tenth month, which *is* the month of Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign. 17 The king loved Esther more than all the *other* women, and she obtained grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins; so he set the royal [j]crown upon her head and made her queen instead of Vashti. 18 Then the king [k]made a great feast, the Feast of Esther, for all his officials and servants; and he proclaimed a holiday in the provinces and gave gifts according to the [3]generosity of a king.

Mordecai Discovers a Plot

19 When virgins were gathered together a second time, Mordecai sat within the king's gate. 20 [l]*Now* Esther had not revealed her family and her people, just as Mordecai had charged her, for Esther obeyed the command of Mordecai as when she was brought up by him.

21 In those days, while Mordecai sat within the king's gate, two of the king's eunuchs, [4]Bigthan and Teresh, doorkeepers, became furious and sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus. 22 So the matter became known to Mordecai, [m]who told Queen Esther, and Esther informed the king in Mordecai's name. 23 And when an inquiry was made into the matter, it was confirmed, and both were hanged on a gallows; and it was written in [n]the book of the chronicles in the presence of the king.

Haman's Conspiracy Against the Jews

3 After these things King Ahasuerus promoted Haman, the son of Hammedatha the [a]Agagite, and [b]advanced him and set his seat above all the princes who *were* with him. 2 And all the

■ **2:9 favor.** A secular use of the Hebrew word for covenant loyalty (*hesed*, Ex. 15:13 note). Pleasing the king and gaining his favor, so necessary for survival in Ahasuerus's empire, can be seen as signs of God's providential care and leading of Esther (cf. v. 17; 5:2; contrast the more explicit references to God's providence in Dan. 1:9).

her allowance. See text note. Esther's reception of special portions of food contrasts with her intentional fast in 4:16. Unlike Daniel, Esther did not follow Jewish dietary laws (v. 10).

■ **2:12** The elaborate preparations are in keeping with the other excesses of the court (1:4–8).

■ **2:18** Esther's accession to the throne, which is celebrated with a banquet, contrasts with Vashti's banquet in 1:9.

a holiday. Lit. "a giving of rest," a celebration that may have included remission of taxes, giving gifts (probably food), and other favors. These celebrations foreshadow the great banquet and rest for the Jews in 9:16–18, 22. See Introduction: Characteristics and Themes.

■ **2:19 within the king's gate.** This expression (cf. v. 21; 3:2; 5:9, 13; 6:10, 12) may imply that Mordecai had been made a palace official, a position that not only enabled him to discover the conspiracy to assassinate the king (v. 21), but also may have incited Haman's jealousy (5:13).

■ **2:23 on a gallows.** Lit. "on a tree." This refers to impalement on wooden stakes, a Persian and Assyrian form of execution. To the Jews, this would be a sign that the two officials were under God's curse (Deut. 21:22, 23 and note), confirming the appropriateness of Mordecai's loyalty to the pagan king.

written in the book of the chronicles. Mordecai was not rewarded at this time (6:1–11); instead, the account of Haman's promotion is given (3:1).

■ **3:1 Haman . . . the Agagite.** Although the names "Haman" and "Hammedatha" may be Persian, the identification of Haman as "the Agagite" suggests an important association with Agag, the king of the Amalekites, the archenemies of Israel, who were opposed by Saul (Ex. 17:8–16; Deut. 25:17–19; 1 Sam. 14:47—15:35).

■ **3:2 Mordecai would not bow or pay homage.** Mordecai's refusal to

king's servants who *were* [c]within the king's gate bowed and paid homage to Haman, for so the king had commanded concerning him. But Mordecai [d]would not bow or pay homage. 3 Then the king's servants who *were* within the king's gate said to Mordecai, "Why do you transgress the [e]king's command?" 4 Now it happened, when they spoke to him daily and he would not listen to them, that they told *it* to Haman, to see whether Mordecai's words would stand; for *Mordecai* had told them that he *was* a Jew. 5 When Haman saw that Mordecai [f]did not bow or pay him homage, Haman was [g]filled with wrath. 6 But he disdained to lay hands on Mordecai alone, for they had told him of the people of Mordecai. Instead, Haman [h]sought to destroy all the Jews who *were* throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus—the people of Mordecai.

7 In the first month, which is the month of Nisan, in the twelfth year of King Ahasuerus, [i]they cast Pur (that *is,* the lot), before Haman [1]to determine the day and the [2]month, [3]until *it fell on the* twelfth *month,* which *is* the month of Adar.

8 Then Haman said to King Ahasuerus, "There is a certain people scattered and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of your kingdom; [j]their laws *are* different from all *other* people's, and they do not keep the king's laws. Therefore it *is* not fitting for the king to let them remain. 9 If it pleases the king, let *a decree* be written that they be destroyed, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those who do the work, to bring *it* into the king's treasuries."

10 So the king [k]took [l]his signet ring from his hand and gave it to Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the [m]enemy of the Jews. 11 And the king said to Haman, "The money and the people *are* given to you, to do with them as seems good to you."

12 [n]Then the king's scribes were called on the thirteenth day of the first month, and *a decree* was written according to all that Haman commanded—to the king's satraps, to the governors who *were* over each province, to the officials of all people, to every province [o]according to its script, and to every people in their language. [p]In the name of King Ahasuerus it was written, and sealed with the king's signet ring. 13 And the letters were [q]sent by couriers into all the king's provinces, to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate all the Jews, both young and old, little children and women, [r]in one day, on the thirteenth *day* of the twelfth *month,* which *is* the month of Adar, and [s]to plunder their [4]possessions. 14 [t]A copy of the document was to be issued as law in every province, being published for all people, that they should be ready for that day. 15 The couriers went out, hastened by the king's command; and the decree was proclaimed in [5]Shushan the [6]citadel. So the king and Haman sat down to drink, but [u]the city of Shushan was [7]perplexed.

Esther Agrees to Help the Jews

4 When Mordecai learned all that had happened, [1]he [a]tore his clothes and put on sackcloth [b]and ashes, and went out into the midst of the city. He [c]cried out with a loud and bitter cry. 2 He went as far as the front of the king's gate, for no one *might* enter the king's gate clothed with sackcloth. 3 And in every province where the king's command and decree arrived, *there was* great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping, and wailing; and many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

4 So Esther's maids and eunuchs came and told her, and the queen was deeply distressed. Then she sent garments to clothe Mordecai and take his sackcloth away from him, but he would

2 [c]Esth. 2:19, 21; 5:9 [d]Ps. 15:4

3 [e]Esth. 3:2

5 [f]Esth. 3:2; 5:9 [g]Dan. 3:19

6 [h]Ps. 83:4

7 [i]Esth. 9:24–26 [1]Lit. *from day to day and month to month* [2]LXX adds *to destroy the people of Mordecai in one day;* Vg. adds *the nation of the Jews should be destroyed* [3]So with MT, Vg.; LXX *and the lot fell on the fourteenth of the month*

8 [j]Acts 16:20, 21

10 [k]Gen. 41:42 [l]Esth. 8:2, 8 [m]Esth. 7:6

12 [n]Esth. 8:9 [o]Esth. 1:22 [p]Esth. 8:8–10

13 [q]Esth. 8:10, 14 [r]Esth. 8:12 [s]Esth. 8:11; 9:10 [4]LXX adds the text of the letter here

14 [t]Esth. 8:13, 14

15 [u]Esth. 8:15 [5]Or *Susa* [6]*palace* [7]*in confusion*

CHAPTER 4

1 [a]2 Sam. 1:11 [b]Josh. 7:6 [c]Gen. 27:34 [1]Lit. *Mordecai*

honor Haman cannot be explained on the basis of Old Testament law, since Jews did not regard bowing before kings and other honored persons as a violation of the first and second commandments (Ex. 20:3–6; 1 Sam. 25:23; 2 Sam. 18:28; 2 Kin. 4:37). Haman and Mordecai are best understood as representatives of two hostile nations—Israel and its enemy Amalek, a nation under divine curse (v. 1 note). Mordecai's refusal to bow down to his hereditary enemy because he (Mordecai) "was a Jew" is understandable (v. 4). Similarly, Haman's seemingly excessive passion to destroy the entire Jewish nation for Mordecai's insolence is explained (v. 6).

■ **3:7 Pur (that is, the lot).** Haman used the ancient practice of casting lots (1 Sam. 14:41–42; Prov. 16:33) to determine the most propitious time to set in motion his plan to destroy the Jews. The plural form of *Pur, Purim,* is the name of the celebration that commemorates the death of Haman, "the enemy of all the Jews" (9:23–32).

■ **3:9 ten thousand talents of silver.** This enormous bribe is calculated to have been about two-thirds the annual revenue of the Persian Empire under King Darius.

■ **3:10 signet ring.** Yet another of the king's impulsive responses authorized Haman to issue royal edicts (cf. Gen. 41:42). The repetition of Haman's full name together with the added phrase, "the enemy of the Jews," underlines the terrible predicament of the Jews at this point.

■ **3:12–14** Haman's plans were set in motion. The elaborate descriptive language (e.g., the multiple verbs in the edict "to destroy, to kill, and to annihilate") highlights the painfulness of the senseless edict and emphasizes the extreme danger to God's covenant people. See Introduction: Characteristics and Themes.

to plunder their possessions. To be compared with the Jews' refusal to plunder (9:10, 15–16).

■ **4:1–3 tore his clothes . . . bitter cry . . . fasting . . . ashes.** These responses by Mordecai (vv. 1, 2) and by Jews in every province (v. 3), are conventional signs of intense grief and horror at the reception of bad news (cf. Gen. 37:29, 34; Dan. 9:3; Jon. 3:6). The Persians responded similarly after their defeat by the Greeks at the battle of Salamis.

■ **4:4 sent garments.** Esther may have wanted Mordecai to be attired properly so that she could speak with him in person (v. 2).

not accept *them.* [5] Then Esther called Hathach, *one* of the king's eunuchs whom he had appointed to attend her, and she gave him a command concerning Mordecai, to learn what and why this *was.* [6] So Hathach went out to Mordecai in the city square that *was* in front of the king's gate. [7] And Mordecai told him all that had happened to him, and [d]the sum of money that Haman had promised to pay into the king's treasuries to destroy the Jews. [8] He also gave him [e]a copy of the written decree for their destruction, which was given at [2]Shushan, that he might show it to Esther and explain it to her, and that he might command her to go in to the king to make supplication to him and plead before him for her people. [9] So Hathach returned and told Esther the words of Mordecai.

[10] Then Esther spoke to Hathach, and gave him a command for Mordecai: [11] "All the king's servants and the people of the king's provinces know that any man or woman who goes into [f]the inner court to the king, who has not been called, [g]*he has* but one law: put *all* to death, except the one [h]to whom the king holds out the golden scepter, that he may live. Yet I myself have not been [i]called to go in to the king these thirty days." [12] So they told Mordecai Esther's words.

[13] And Mordecai told *them* to answer Esther: "Do not think in your heart that you will escape in the king's palace any more than all the other Jews. [14] For if you remain completely silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for *such* a time as this?"

[15] Then Esther told *them* to reply to Mordecai: [16] "Go, gather all the Jews who are present in [3]Shushan, and fast for me; neither eat nor drink for [j]three days, night or day. My maids and I will fast likewise. And so I will go to the king, which *is* against the law; [k]and if I perish, I perish!"

[17] So Mordecai went his way and did according to all that Esther commanded [4]him.

Esther's Banquet

5 Now it happened [a]on the third day that Esther put on *her* royal *robes* and stood in [b]the inner court of the king's palace, across from the king's house, while the king sat on his royal throne in the royal house, facing the entrance of the [1]house. [2] So it was, when the king saw Queen Esther standing in the court, *that* [c]she found favor in his sight, and [d]the king held out to Esther the golden scepter that *was* in his hand. Then Esther went near and touched the top of the scepter.

[3] And the king said to her, "What do you wish, Queen Esther? What *is* your request? [e]It shall be given to you—up to half the kingdom!"

[4] So Esther answered, "If it pleases the king, let the king and Haman come today to the banquet that I have prepared for him."

[5] Then the king said, "Bring Haman quickly, that he may do as Esther has said." So the king and Haman went to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

[6] At the banquet of wine [f]the king said to Esther, [g]"What *is* your petition? It shall be granted you. What *is* your request, up to half the kingdom? It shall be done!"

[7] Then Esther answered and said, "My petition and request *is this:* [8] If I have found favor in

7 [d]Esth. 3:9
8 [e]Esth. 3:14, 15 [2]Or *Susa*
11 [f]Esth. 5:1; 6:4 [g]Dan. 2:9 [h]Esth. 5:2; 8:4 [i]Esth. 2:14
16 [j]Esth. 5:1 [k]Gen. 43:14 [3]Or *Susa*
17 [4]LXX adds a prayer of Mordecai here

CHAPTER 5

1 [a]Esth. 4:16 [b]Esth. 4:11; 6:4 [1]LXX adds many extra details in vv. 1, 2
2 [c][Prov. 21:1] [d]Esth. 4:11; 8:4
3 [e]Esth. 7:2; Mark 6:23
6 [f]Esth. 7:2 [g]Esth. 9:12

■ **4:5 Hathach.** His name may mean "the good one," or perhaps "courier."

■ **4:8 decree.** Mordecai made sure that Esther not only was given a copy of the edict but had it explained to her (perhaps translated) before he charged her to entreat the king for mercy for her people. Mordecai's previous command that Esther conceal her identity as a Jew is reversed (2:10).

■ **4:12–14** Mordecai subtly alludes to his belief that God, in His sovereignty, has providentially ordered the events of Esther's life to put her in a position where she can act to deliver all the Jews. Mordecai believed that the sovereign God would bring relief and deliverance to the Jews, that Esther could be the means through which that deliverance would come, and that God was not restricted to this plan if Esther decided to remain quiet.

■ **4:16 Go, gather . . . fast for me.** With conviction, faith, and fear, Esther directs that a fast (prayer always accompanied religious fasting, Deut. 9:9; Judg. 20:26, 27; Ezra 8:21–23; 2 Sam. 12:16; Dan. 9:3) be undertaken on her behalf. God honored the faith of the Jews at this time by saving them from destruction.

three days, night or day. Fasts generally were prescribed for only one day. This unusually long fast points to the seriousness of the situation and effectively contrasts with the feasts that stand at the beginning and end of the book (1:3, 5, 9; 2:18; 9:17–18).

against the law. Esther's dilemma reintroduces the theme of obedience, since obedience to Mordecai meant disobeying the law.

if I perish, I perish. Courage, rather than passive resignation, is seen here (cf. Gen. 43:14).

■ **5:1, 2** Wearing royal robes that undoubtedly enhanced her beauty (contrast the mourning attire in 4:15–16), Esther approached the king, who granted her request for an audience.

■ **5:3 half the kingdom.** This generous offer reflects a courtly convention and should not be taken literally (v. 6; cf. Mark 6:23). Esther's first request is that the king and Haman attend a banquet (v. 4). Her second response (v. 8) effectively obliges the king to grant her petition. But it is not until 7:2–6 that Esther finally answers the king's question. Esther's delaying tactics not only demonstrate her wisdom and sense of control, but also raise the suspense in the story.

the sight of the king, and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and [2]fulfill my request, then let the king and Haman come to the [h]banquet which I will prepare for them, and tomorrow I will do as the king has said."

Haman's Plot Against Mordecai

9 So Haman went out that day [i]joyful and with a glad heart; but when Haman saw Mordecai in the king's gate, and [j]that he did not stand or tremble before him, he was filled with indignation against Mordecai. 10 Nevertheless Haman [k]restrained himself and went home, and he sent and called for his friends and his wife Zeresh. 11 Then Haman told them of his great riches, [l]the multitude of his children, everything in which the king had promoted him, and how he had [m]advanced him above the officials and servants of the king.

12 Moreover Haman said, "Besides, Queen Esther invited no one but me to come in with the king to the banquet that she prepared; and tomorrow I am again invited by her, along with the king. 13 Yet all this avails me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate."

14 Then his wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, "Let a [n]gallows[3] be made, [4]fifty cubits high, and in the morning [o]suggest to the king that Mordecai be hanged on it; then go merrily with the king to the banquet."

And the thing pleased Haman; so he had [p]the gallows made.

The King Honors Mordecai

6 That night [1]the king could not sleep. So one was commanded to bring [a]the book of the records of the chronicles; and they were read before the king. 2 And it was found written that Mordecai had told of [2]Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's eunuchs, the doorkeepers who had sought to lay hands on King Ahasuerus. 3 Then the king said, "What honor or dignity has been bestowed on Mordecai for this?"

And the king's servants who attended him said, "Nothing has been done for him."

4 So the king said, "Who *is* in the court?" Now Haman had *just* entered [b]the outer court of the king's palace [c]to suggest that the king hang Mordecai on the gallows that he had prepared for him.

5 The king's servants said to him, "Haman is there, standing in the court."

And the king said, "Let him come in."

6 So Haman came in, and the king asked him, "What shall be done for the man whom the king delights to honor?"

Now Haman thought in his heart, "Whom would the king delight to honor more than [d]me?"

7 And Haman answered the king, "*For* the man whom the king delights to honor, 8 let a royal robe be brought which the king has worn, and [e]a horse on which the king has ridden, which has a royal [3]crest placed on its head. 9 Then let this robe and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes, that he may array the man whom the king delights to honor. Then [4]parade him on horseback through the city square, [f]and proclaim before him: 'Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor!' "

10 Then the king said to Haman, "Hurry, take the robe and the horse, as you have suggested, and do so for Mordecai the Jew who sits within the king's gate! Leave nothing undone of all that you have spoken."

11 So Haman took the robe and the horse, arrayed Mordecai and led him on horseback through the city square, and proclaimed before him, "Thus shall it be done to the man whom the king delights to honor!"

12 Afterward Mordecai went back to the king's gate. But Haman [g]hurried to his house, mourning [h]and with his head covered. 13 When Haman told his wife Zeresh and all his friends everything that had happened to him, his wise men and his wife Zeresh said to him, "If Mordecai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of Jewish descent, you will not prevail against [i]him but will surely fall before him."

8 [h]Esth. 6:14 [2]Lit. *to do*

9 [i][Job 20:5; Luke 6:25] [j]Esth. 3:5

10 [k]2 Sam. 13:22

11 [l]Esth. 9:7–10 [m]Esth. 3:1

14 [n]Esth. 7:9 [o]Esth. 6:4 [p]Esth. 7:10 [3]Lit. *tree* or *wood* [4]About 75 feet

CHAPTER 6

1 [a]Esth. 2:23; 10:2 [1]Lit. *the king's sleep fled away*

2 [2]*Bigthan,* Esth. 2:21

4 [b]Esth. 5:1 [c]Esth. 5:14

6 [d][Prov. 16:18; 18:12]

8 [e]1 Kin. 1:33 [3]*crown*

9 [f]Gen. 41:43 [4]Lit. *cause him to ride*

12 [g]2 Chr. 26:20 [h]2 Sam. 15:30; Jer. 14:3, 4

13 [i][Gen. 12:3]; Zech. 2:8

■ **6:6–9** The identity of the one to be honored is concealed (cf. Haman's intentional veiling of the identity of the people to be destroyed, 3:8). Assuming that he himself was the man to be honored, Haman unveiled his personal dream list, which focused not on material gain or position, but rather on public acclaim and adulation (cf. Gen. 41:42, 43).

■ **6:13 you will not prevail against him.** Haman's wife and advisors give voice to the belief that the Jewish people were indomitable and, perhaps, even to the view that their God was the living God. See the predictions about the fall of Amalek before Israel (Ex. 17:16; Num. 24:20; Deut. 25:17–19; 1 Sam. 15; 2 Sam. 1:8–16; cf. Dan. 6:26, 27; Josh. 2:11; 9:29; Ezek. 38:23). See also Introduction: Characteristics and Themes.

14 /Esth. 5:8

CHAPTER 7

2 [a]Esth. 5:6

4 [b]Esth. 3:9; 4:7 [c]Deut. 28:68

6 [d]Esth. 3:10

8 [e]Esth. 1:6 [f]Job 9:24

9 [g]Esth. 1:10 [h]Esth. 5:14; [Ps. 7:16; Prov. 11:5, 6] [i]Esth. 6:2 [j]Lit. *tree* or *wood*

10 [k][Ps. 7:16; 94:23; Prov. 11:5, 6] [l]Ps. 37:35, 36; Dan. 6:24

CHAPTER 8

1 [a]Esth. 7:6 [b]Esth. 2:7, 15

2 [c]Esth. 3:10

4 [d]Esth. 4:11; 5:2

5 [e]Esth. 3:13

6 [f]Neh. 2:3; Esth. 7:4; 9:1

7 [g]Esth. 8:1; Prov. 13:22

8 [h]Lit. *as is good in your eyes*

14 While they *were* still talking with him, the king's eunuchs came, and hastened to bring Haman to [j]the banquet which Esther had prepared.

Haman Hanged Instead of Mordecai

7 So the king and Haman went to dine with Queen Esther. 2 And on the second day, [a]at the banquet of wine, the king again said to Esther, "What *is* your petition, Queen Esther? It shall be granted you. And what *is* your request, up to half the kingdom? It shall be done!"

3 Then Queen Esther answered and said, "If I have found favor in your sight, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request. 4 For we have been [b]sold, my people and I, to be destroyed, to be killed, and to be annihilated. Had we been sold as [c]male and female slaves, I would have held my tongue, although the enemy could never compensate for the king's loss."

5 So King Ahasuerus answered and said to Queen Esther, "Who is he, and where is he, who would dare presume in his heart to do such a thing?"

6 And Esther said, "The adversary and [d]enemy *is* this wicked Haman!"

So Haman was terrified before the king and queen.

7 Then the king arose in his wrath from the banquet of wine *and went* into the palace garden; but Haman stood before Queen Esther, pleading for his life, for he saw that evil was determined against him by the king. 8 When the king returned from the palace garden to the place of the banquet of wine, Haman had fallen across [e]the couch where Esther *was.* Then the king said, "Will he also assault the queen while I *am* in the house?"

As the word left the king's mouth, they [f]covered Haman's face. 9 Now [g]Harbonah, one of the eunuchs, said to the king, "Look! [h]The [i]gallows, fifty cubits high, which Haman made for Mordecai, who spoke [i]good on the king's behalf, is standing at the house of Haman."

Then the king said, "Hang him on it!"

10 So [j]they [k]hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then the king's wrath subsided.

Esther Saves the Jews

8 On that day King Ahasuerus gave Queen Esther the house of Haman, the [a]enemy of the Jews. And Mordecai came before the king, for Esther had told [b]how he *was related* to her. 2 So the king took off [c]his signet ring, which he had taken from Haman, and gave it to Mordecai; and Esther appointed Mordecai over the house of Haman.

3 Now Esther spoke again to the king, fell down at his feet, and implored him with tears to counteract the evil of Haman the Agagite, and the scheme which he had devised against the Jews. 4 And [d]the king held out the golden scepter toward Esther. So Esther arose and stood before the king, 5 and said, "If it pleases the king, and if I have found favor in his sight and the thing *seems* right to the king and I am pleasing in his eyes, let it be written to revoke the [e]letters devised by Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, which he wrote to annihilate the Jews who *are* in all the king's provinces. 6 For how can I endure to see [f]the evil that will come to my people? Or how can I endure to see the destruction of my countrymen?"

7 Then King Ahasuerus said to Queen Esther and Mordecai the Jew, "Indeed, [g]I have given Esther the house of Haman, and they have hanged him on the gallows because he *tried to* lay his hand on the Jews. 8 You yourselves write *a decree* concerning the Jews, [h]as you please, in the

■ **6:14 hastened to bring Haman.** The affairs of the court were always carried out in haste. It was oriental custom for servants to escort guests to special functions.

■ **7:3** The drama of the scene is heightened by Esther's slow unveiling of her petition for her own life and her request that her people be spared.

■ **7:4 sold.** A reference to Haman's initial bribe (3:9; 4:7).

destroyed . . . killed . . . annihilated. The Hebrew verbs are precisely those used in the initial decree (3:13).

the enemy could never compensate. The Hebrew is somewhat difficult to translate. Esther seems to argue that Haman's financial offer (3:9) would not compensate for the king's damages (i.e., lost revenue from the Jews).

■ **7:8 fallen across the couch.** Haman's violations of etiquette seal his fate.

covered Haman's face. The court attendants understood the implications of the king's word (v. 8). As always, the king welcomed the advice of others—here, the eunuch, Harbonah (1:10; cf. the speech in 5:14). The order to hang Haman on the gallows intended for Mordecai is the great ironic reversal of the story. See Introduction: Characteristics and Themes.

■ **8:1 gave Queen Esther the house of Haman.** According to Persian custom, the property of a traitor was confiscated by the crown.

Mordecai came before the king. Mordecai was given official status (1:14) and effectively took over Haman's official and personal position.

■ **8:7, 8** Although the king is not able to revoke the decree formally (1:19), he authorizes Esther and Mordecai to issue another decree that will effectively nullify the first edict.

king's name, and seal *it* with the king's signet ring; for whatever is written in the king's name and sealed with the king's signet ring [h]no one can revoke."

9 [i]So the king's scribes were called at that time, in the third month, which *is* the month of Sivan, on the twenty-third *day;* and it was written, according to all that Mordecai commanded, to the Jews, the satraps, the governors, and the princes of the provinces [j]from India to Ethiopia, one hundred and twenty-seven provinces *in all,* to every province [k]in its own script, to every people in their own language, and to the Jews in their own script and language. 10 [l]And he wrote in the name of King Ahasuerus, sealed *it* with the king's signet ring, and sent letters by couriers on horseback, riding on royal horses [2]bred from swift steeds.

11 By these letters the king permitted the Jews who *were* in every city to [m]gather together and protect their lives—to [n]destroy, kill, and annihilate all the forces of any people or province that would assault them, *both* little children and women, and to plunder their possessions, 12 [o]on one day in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, on the thirteenth *day* of the twelfth month, which *is* the month of [3]Adar. 13 [p]A copy of the document was to be issued as a decree in every province and published for all people, so that the Jews would be ready on that day to avenge themselves on their enemies. 14 The couriers who rode on royal horses went out, hastened and pressed on by the king's command. And the decree was issued in [4]Shushan the [5]citadel.

15 So Mordecai went out from the presence of the king in royal apparel of [6]blue and white, with a great crown of gold and a garment of fine linen and purple; and [q]the city of [7]Shushan rejoiced and was glad. 16 The Jews had [r]light and gladness, joy and honor. 17 And in every province and city, wherever the king's command and decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast [s]and a holiday. Then many of the people of the land [t]became Jews, because [u]fear of the Jews fell upon them.

The Jews Destroy Their Tormentors

9 Now [a]in the twelfth month, that *is,* the month of Adar, on the thirteenth day, [b]*the time* came for the king's command and his decree to be executed. On the day that the enemies of the Jews had hoped to overpower them, the opposite occurred, in that the Jews themselves [c]overpowered those who hated them. 2 The Jews [d]gathered together in their cities throughout all the provinces of King Ahasuerus to lay hands on those who [e]sought their harm. And no one could withstand them, [f]because fear of them fell upon all people. 3 And all the officials of the provinces, the satraps, the governors, and all those doing the king's work, helped the Jews, because the fear of Mordecai fell upon them. 4 For Mordecai *was* great in the king's palace, and his fame spread throughout all the provinces; for this man Mordecai [g]became increasingly prominent. 5 Thus the Jews defeated all their enemies with the stroke of the sword, with slaughter and destruction, and did what they pleased with those who hated them.

6 And in [h]Shushan[1] the [2]citadel the Jews killed and destroyed five hundred men. 7 Also Parshandatha, Dalphon, Aspatha, 8 Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha, 9 Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai, and Vajezatha— 10 [i]the ten sons of Haman the son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews—they killed; [j]but they did not lay a hand on the [3]plunder.

11 On that day the number of those who were killed in [4]Shushan the [5]citadel [6]was brought to the king. 12 And the king said to Queen Esther, "The Jews have killed and destroyed five hundred men in Shushan the citadel, and the ten sons of Haman. What have they done in the rest of the king's provinces? Now [k]what *is* your petition? It shall be granted to you. Or what *is* your further request? It shall be done."

13 Then Esther said, "If it pleases the king, let it be granted to the Jews who *are* in Shushan to do again tomorrow [l]according to today's decree, and let Haman's ten sons [m]be hanged on the gallows."

8 [h]Dan. 6:8, 12, 15

9 [i]Esth. 3:12 [j]Esth. 1:1 [k]Esth. 1:22; 3:12

10 [l]1 Kin. 21:8 [2]Lit. *sons of the swift horses*

11 [m]Esth. 9:2 [n]Esth. 9:10, 15, 16

12 [o]Esth. 3:13; 9:1 [3]LXX adds the text of the letter here

13 [p]Esth. 3:14, 15

14 [4]Or *Susa* [5]*palace*

15 [q]Prov. 29:2 [6]*violet* [7]Or *Susa*

16 [r]Ps. 97:11; 112:4

17 [s]Esth. 9:19 [t]Ps. 18:43 [u]Gen. 35:5

CHAPTER 9

1 [a]Esth. 8:12 [b]Esth. 3:13 [c]2 Sam. 22:41

2 [d]Esth. 8:11; 9:15–18 [e]Ps. 71:13, 14 [f]Esth. 8:17

4 [g]2 Sam. 3:1

6 [h]Esth. 1:2; 3:15; 4:16 [1]Or *Susa* [2]*palace*

10 [i]Esth. 5:11; 9:7–10 [j]Esth. 8:11 [3]*spoil*

11 [4]Or *Susa* [5]*palace* [6]Lit. *came*

12 [k]Esth. 5:6; 7:2

13 [l]Esth. 8:11; 9:15 [m]2 Sam. 21:6, 9

■ **8:9–14** The new decree, issued two months and ten days after the first (3:12), is almost identical to Haman's first decree (3:12–15).

■ **8:17 many of the people . . . became Jews.** The conversion of those from other nations who feared the Jews marks a climax in the story (cf. Josh. 2:9; Ex. 15:14–16; Ps. 105:38).

■ **9:1 the opposite occurred.** The theme of ironic reversal is again stressed. See Introduction: Characteristics and Themes.

■ **9:2 fear of them.** Fear of the God of the Jews was behind the Persians' pervasive fear of the Jews (cf. Ex. 15:14–16). The reversal (v. 1 note) was so complete that all the officials who were to have enforced the extermination of the Jews aided them.

■ **9:5 did what they pleased.** The extent of the killing is emphasized (vv. 6–11), but so is the Jews' not plundering their enemies (v. 10). Their refusal to plunder recalls the plundering of the Amalekites that led to Saul's demise (1 Sam. 15:17–19). This contrast (cf. 8:11) suggests the propriety of their conduct in this final encounter with the Amalekites, despite the extent of the killing.

■ **9:12–15** Esther's requests for further vengeance (v. 13), which may have been due to the great degree of anti-Semitism in that city, led to a second day of bloodshed in Susa (v. 15). Notably, the emphasis in the narrative is on killing enemies and not just on winning a victory. The two days of bloodshed have led to differences among Jews over which day to observe Purim (vv. 17–19).

15 [n]Esth. 8:11; 9:2 [o]Esth. 9:10 [7]Or *Susa*

16 [p]Esth. 9:2 [q]Esth. 8:11

17 [8]Lit. *it*

18 [r]Esth. 9:11, 15 [9]Or *Susa* [t]Lit. *it*

19 [s]Deut. 16:11, 14 [t]Esth. 8:16, 17 [u]Neh. 8:10, 12; Esth. 9:22

22 [v]Neh. 8:10; Esth. 9:19 [w][Deut. 15:7–11]; Job 29:16

24 [x]Esth. 3:6, 7; 9:26

25 [y]Esth. 7:4–10; 8:3; 9:13, 14 [z]Esth. 7:10 [2]Lit. *she* or *it* [3]Lit. *his*

26 [a]Esth. 9:20 [4]Lit. *Lot*

27 [b]Esth. 8:17; [Is. 56:3, 6]; Zech. 2:11

29 [c]Esth. 2:15 [d]Esth. 8:10; 9:20, 21

30 [e]Esth. 1:1

31 [f]Esth. 4:3, 16

14 So the king commanded this to be done; the decree was issued in Shushan, and they hanged Haman's ten sons.

15 And the Jews who *were* in [7]Shushan [n]gathered together again on the fourteenth day of the month of Adar and killed three hundred men at Shushan; [o]but they did not lay a hand on the plunder.

16 The remainder of the Jews in the king's provinces [p]gathered together and protected their lives, had rest from their enemies, and killed seventy-five thousand of their enemies; [q]but they did not lay a hand on the plunder. 17 *This was* on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar. And on the fourteenth of [8]*the month* they rested and made it a day of feasting and gladness.

The Feast of Purim

18 But the Jews who *were* at [9]Shushan assembled together [r]on the thirteenth *day,* as well as on the fourteenth; and on the fifteenth of [t]*the month* they rested, and made it a day of feasting and gladness. 19 Therefore the Jews of the villages who dwelt in the unwalled towns celebrated the fourteenth day of the month of Adar [s]*with* gladness and feasting, [t]as a holiday, and for [u]sending presents to one another.

20 And Mordecai wrote these things and sent letters to all the Jews, near and far, who *were* in all the provinces of King Ahasuerus, 21 to establish among them that they should celebrate yearly the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar, 22 as the days on which the Jews had rest from their enemies, as the month which was turned from sorrow to joy for them, and from mourning to a holiday; that they should make them days of feasting and joy, of [v]sending presents to one another and gifts to the [w]poor. 23 So the Jews accepted the custom which they had begun, as Mordecai had written to them, 24 because Haman, the son of Hammedatha the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, [x]had plotted against the Jews to annihilate them, and had cast Pur (that *is,* the lot), to consume them and destroy them; 25 but [y]when [2]*Esther* came before the king, he commanded by letter that [3]this wicked plot which *Haman* had devised against the Jews should [z]return on his own head, and that he and his sons should be hanged on the gallows.

26 So they called these days Purim, after the name [4]Pur. Therefore, because of all the words of [a]this letter, what they had seen concerning this matter, and what had happened to them, 27 the Jews established and imposed it upon themselves and their descendants and all who would [b]join them, that without fail they should celebrate these two days every year, according to the written *instructions* and according to the *prescribed* time, 28 *that* these days *should be* remembered and kept throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city, that these days of Purim should not fail *to be observed* among the Jews, and *that* the memory of them should not perish among their descendants.

29 Then Queen Esther, [c]the daughter of Abihail, with Mordecai the Jew, wrote with full authority to confirm this [d]second letter about Purim. 30 And *Mordecai* sent letters to all the Jews, to [e]the one hundred and twenty-seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus, *with* words of peace and truth, 31 to confirm these days of Purim at their *appointed* time, as Mordecai the Jew and Queen Esther had prescribed for them, and as they had decreed for themselves and their descendants concerning matters of their [f]fasting and lamenting. 32 So the decree of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim, and it was written in the book.

■ **9:14 they hanged Haman's ten sons.** The bodies of the dead sons (v. 12) were displayed as a warning and a sign of ultimate dishonor (2:23 note).

■ **9:16, 17** The slaughter of a further seventy-five thousand enemies emphasizes the extent of the antagonism towards the Jews throughout the empire, which in turn explains the celebrations that followed.

■ **9:16 rest from their enemies.** The rest granted to the Jews at this time became the basis for the annual celebration of Purim (also v. 22).

■ **9:19 sending presents to one another.** The exchange of gifts, usually food (v. 22), enabled even the poorest Jew to join in the celebrations (Neh. 8:10, 12; Deut. 16:11, 14) and is a further instance of providential care for the oppressed, here within the Jewish community itself.

■ **9:20–32** These verses clarify that the purpose of the book is to establish Purim as a festival to be celebrated by each new generation of Jews, and to give instructions for its observance.

■ **9:20 Mordecai wrote these things.** He sent the letters of instruction regarding the festival.

■ **9:24, 25** This brief summary of the events of the preceding chapters focuses, not on Esther and Mordecai, but on the king and Haman, and presents Haman as the archetypal adversary of all Jews, past and present (3:10; 8:1; 9:10).

■ **9:29–32** Esther and Mordecai sent a final official letter regarding Purim that carefully places the feast within the setting of the more established Israelite practices of fasting and lamentation (v. 31). In this way Purim was made an official religious celebration of the Jews, a task the writer of Esther seemed to view as important because of the non-Mosaic origin of the feast.

Mordecai's Advancement

10 And King Ahasuerus imposed tribute on the land and *on* [a]the islands of the sea. [2]Now all the acts of his power and his might, and the account of the greatness of Mordecai, [b]to which the king [1]advanced him, *are* they not written in the book of the [c]chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia? [3]For Mordecai the Jew *was* [d]second to King Ahasuerus, and was great among the Jews and well received by the multitude of his brethren, [e]seeking the good of his people and speaking peace to all his [2]countrymen.

CHAPTER 10

1 Is. 11:11; 24:15

2 [b]Esth. 8:15; 9:4 [c]Esth. 6:1 [1]Lit. *made him great*

3 [d]Gen. 41:40, 43, 44; [e]Neh. 2:10; [2]Lit. *seed.* LXX, Vg. add a dream of Mordecai here; Vg. adds six more chapters

■ **10:1–3** This postscript to the book focuses attention on King Ahasuerus and Mordecai and directs the reader to the book of the official records ("chronicles") of the kings of Media and Persia for further information (cf. 1 Kin. 14:19, 29). For some reason Esther's name is not included in the postscript.

■ **10:3** Mordecai is esteemed as an ideal Jewish statesman. His importance as a model for the Jews and in the establishment of the Feast of Purim was acknowledged in the apocryphal Book of Maccabees, where Purim is called "the Day of Mordecai" (2 Macc. 15:36).

The Book of

JOB

Author

The relationship between the opening narrative of the book (the prologue, chs. 1; 2) and the content of Job's discussions with his friends (the dialogue, chs. 3—27) make it clear that Job was not the author of this book. Had he known what took place in the divine council, there would have been no point to the debate over whether Job had brought on his sufferings by sinful conduct. Rather, God used a skilful poet from the covenant community to write this remarkable book. The language presents many challenges to the translator because of its poetic grammar and its rich vocabulary. We know that the author was an Israelite since he refers to God by the covenant name "Yahweh," while Job and his companions (see 1:1) use such terms as "God" and "the Almighty" (12:9 is the only exception). The probability is that the poet used sources from patriarchal times, including some from Job himself, in composing the book.

Date and Occasion

We do not know exactly when the author of Job lived and wrote, but the classical Hebrew of the prologue places him after 1500 B.C. The final form of the book may not have appeared until the era of Solomon or somewhat later when Hebrew wisdom literature reached its zenith. The discovery of fragments from Job among the Dead Sea scrolls has ruled out attempts to date Job as late as the second century B.C.

Among the wisdom writings of the Old Testament the Book of Job stands with Ecclesiastes as a kind of anti-wisdom. It counters the traditional wisdom as it wrestles with the difficult question of suffering along with the affirmation that God is just and good. The book deals with this subject with a frankness that is often baffling. The book does not suggest that there is an evil deity, or that God's power is limited. Instead it praises the Creator's sovereignty, wisdom, and glory. That the God of Job is neither evil nor limited is seen in two portrayals of Job's relationship with God.

The first is taken from the book's prologue and epilogue. The prologue depicts Job's submission to the divine will in the midst of suffering. There Job appears as a good man trusting the goodness of his God. Finally, in the epilogue (42:7–17), God honors his trust by restoring him.

The second portrait shows Job's indignation over his plight. He thinks that God has become his enemy and is unjustly afflicting him. Job comes to this conclusion because he knows that God is sovereign. Had he believed in a limited deity, he would have had no problem with God's justice or goodness, since then he could not hold God responsible for every event, including his misfortune.

The church has often emphasized only the message of the prologue and epilogue because it is easier to understand. The reference of James 5:11 to the "patience" or "perseverance" of Job is not based on a shallow interpretation that ignores the central section of dialogues. James is not stressing Job's passivity, but his "perseverance" and, with it, God's compassion and mercy in accomplishing His purposes. God's purpose in Job's suffering is the key to understanding the seeming discrepancy between the tranquil Job of the prologue (chs. 1; 2) and the raging Job of the central section. God's purpose is complex, involving more than one question of faith.

Characteristics and Themes

Compositions similar to the Book of Job appear in Mesopotamian and Egyptian sources from Old Testament times. One ("A Dialogue About Human Misery") is about a counselor who criticizes a sufferer for his impiety while the sufferer struggles over the character of the gods. The literary format of Job is not unique among documents from the ancient Near East, consisting of a prose prologue, a poetic dialogue, and finally a prose epilogue. But there is no other work dealing with the problem of human suffering in light of the transcendence and goodness of God that approaches the theological depth, literary sophistication, and practical application of the Book of Job.

The book's exploration of the themes associated with God's purpose in human suffering unfolds in the following manner. In the prologue we view the God-Job relationship from the divine perspective. God chose Job to be one of His suffering servants, an instrument through whom to accomplish a spiritual triumph: "Have you considered My servant Job?" (1:8, 2:3). Satan falsely accuses Job of serving God for the sake of material blessings (1:9–11). Job is given the high calling of remaining true to God even when everything is taken away, and grim suffering becomes his daily lot. Will Job do as the Adversary predicts, and curse God to His face? This is the question that drives the moving drama of the book as Job loses his initial confidence and sinks into despair. If Job remains faithful, God through Job will show that the Adversary is a liar.

While the prologue gives us the divine perspective, the central section of speeches presents the human perspective. As a human being he is ignorant of

what took place in the divine council. He struggles with a traditional view, a perversion of Proverbs, that all suffering is an immediate punishment of human sins. Job's counselors, like many others, considered the depth of Job's suffering to be adequate evidence that his sin was great (cf. John 9:2).

As Job confronts the heartless counselors used by Satan to accuse him falsely, he says things for which he must later repent (42:5, 6). He knows the counselors are wrong, but he cannot understand how a pious person like himself should suffer so much when the godless enjoy prosperity and health (12:6).

Like the psalmists, Job often complains to God in the language of legal disputes. Some of what Job says shocks his friends. While they say all the right things *about* God, they never say anything *to* Him. Job wrestles with God and tells Him every doubt and fear. His relationship with God is vital while theirs consists of dead aphorisms. It is not so much what they say, as how they apply it to Job, that shows the arrogance of their insisting that they know why Job is suffering. They are insensitive (13:4, 5; 16:2; 19:21), as well as shallow and presumptuous regarding divine things. Job has been falsely accused; he is not suffering for his sins, though he cannot avoid wondering about this. But even though he imagines God is angry with him, in his better moments he still believes God is just and will provide a Redeemer (16:19–21; 19:23–27).

This hope becomes a reality when Job finally has the face-to-face audience with God that he requested (13:15–18; 31:35–37). When God appears in the storm (chs. 38—41), Job is not rebuked as one suffering for his sins, but is humbled before the Lord as one whose ill-advised speech had obscured God's purpose (38:2; 42:2, 3). God reveals Himself as Job's friend, bringing him before the astonishing works of creation to show him that the One he has reproached is sovereign in goodness and power. Job recognizes that God is and remains his friend.

When his eyes have seen the Lord and he has repented in dust and ashes, Job has come to understand that God on His throne is sovereign, and rewards those who belong to Him despite times of pressure and pain. The reader learns that Job suffered, not because he was one of the worst of men, but because he was one of the best, and that his ordeal glorified his God. □

Outline of Job

I. Prologue (1:1—2:13)
  A. Job Blessed and Blameless (1:1–5)
  B. Job Tested (1:6—2:13)
    1. Satan Accuses Job (1:6–12)
    2. Job's Commitment Despite Tragedy (1:13–22)
    3. Satan Accuses Job Again (2:1–6)
    4. Job's Faith Despite Personal Suffering (2:7–10)
    5. The Arrival of the Counselors (2:11–13)
II. Dialogue (chs. 3—27)
  A. Job Laments His Birth (ch. 3)
  B. The First Cycle of Speeches (chs. 4—14)
    1. Eliphaz (chs. 4; 5)
    2. Job's Reply (chs. 6; 7)
    3. Bildad (ch. 8)
    4. Job's Reply (chs. 9; 10)
    5. Zophar (ch. 11)
    6. Job's Reply (chs. 12—14)
  C. The Second Cycle of Speeches (chs. 15—21)
    1. Eliphaz (ch. 15)
    2. Job's Reply (chs. 16; 17)
    3. Bildad (ch. 18)
    4. Job's Reply (ch. 19)
    5. Zophar (ch. 20)
    6. Job's Reply (ch. 21)
  D. The Third Cycle of Speeches (chs. 22—26)
    1. Eliphaz (ch. 22)
    2. Job's Reply (chs. 23; 24)

3. Bildad (ch. 25)
4. Job's Reply (ch. 26)
E. Job's Closing Discourse (ch. 27)
III. Interlude on Wisdom (ch. 28)
IV. Monologues (chs. 29—41)
A. Job's Final Oration (chs. 29—31)
1. Past Blessing, Honor, and Personal Benevolence (ch. 29)
2. Present Dishonor and Suffering and No Benevolence (ch. 30)
3. A Protestation of Innocence Under Sanctions and Oath (ch. 31)
B. Elihu's Speeches (chs. 32—37)
1. Apology for Speaking (32:1–5)
2. The First Speech (32:6—33:33)
3. The Second Speech (ch. 34)
4. The Third Speech (ch. 35)
5. The Fourth Speech (chs. 36; 37)
C. God's Responses (38:1—42:6)
1. God's First Discourse (38:1—40:2)
2. Job Humbled (40:3–5)
3. God's Second Discourse (40:6—41:34)
4. Job Repentant (42:1–6)
V. Epilogue (42:7–17)
A. The Counselors Rebuked (42:7–9)
B. Job Restored (42:10–17)

CHAPTER 1

Job and His Family in Uz

THERE was a man [a]in the land of Uz, whose name *was* [b]Job; and that man was [c]blameless and upright, and one who [d]feared God and [f]shunned evil. [2] And seven sons and three daughters were born to him. [3] Also, his possessions were seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred female donkeys, and a very large household, so that this man was the greatest of all the [2]people of the East.

[4] And his sons would go and feast *in their* houses, each on his *appointed* day, and would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. [5] So it was, when the days of feasting had run their course, that Job would send and [3]sanctify them, and he would rise early in the morning [e]and offer burnt offerings *according to* the number of them all. For Job said, "It may be that my sons have sinned and [f]cursed[4] God in their hearts." Thus Job did regularly.

Satan Attacks Job's Character

[6] Now [g]there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and [5]Satan also came among them. [7] And the LORD said to [6]Satan, "From where do you come?"

1 [a]1 Chr. 1:17 [b]Ezek. 14:14, 20 [c]Gen. 6:9; 17:1 [d][Prov. 16:6] [f]Lit. *turned away from*

3 [2]Lit. *sons*

5 [e][Job 42:8] [f]1 Kin. 21:10, 13 [3]*consecrate* [4]Lit. *blessed,* but in an evil sense; cf. Job 1:11; 2:5, 9

6 [g]Job 2:1 [5]Lit. *the Adversary* [6]Lit. *the Adversary*

■ **1:1–5** The prologue (1; 2) begins with a depiction of Job blessed by and devoted to his God.

■ **1:1 Uz.** Uz was an extended region east of Judah, perhaps on the edge of the desert, but conducive to raising crops (v. 14) and livestock (v. 3). Job was not a nomad but an elder in a major town (29:7).

blameless and upright. This is ordinary language and does not mean that Job was sinless.

■ **1:3 sheep . . . camels . . . oxen . . . donkeys.** Patriarchal wealth was measured by amount of livestock (cf. Gen. 30:43).

■ **1:5 sanctify them.** Job was rightly concerned for the spiritual welfare of his children.

offer burnt offerings. By this means of grace the patriarch Job, like Abraham (Gen. 15:9, 10), filled the role of priest for the family, consecrating his children to the Lord.

cursed God in their hearts. The Hebrew reads lit. "blessed God," but that is a euphemism. Cursing God was a sin about which Job himself would be tested (v. 11).

■ **1:6—2:13** The writer reveals the developments in heaven and their consequences on earth that led to Job's suffering.

■ **1:6–12** This is the first of two scenes in heaven depicting the divine council and focusing on the encounter between God (Yahweh) and Satan. Satan is more than prosecutor. He opposes the will of God, in keeping with the role of the serpent in Gen. 3. In v. 9 he questions Job's religious motive. The use of "Yahweh," the covenant name of God, throughout chs. I and 2 (also in 38:1; 40:1; and ch. 42) indicates that God was in a covenant relation with Job in love and mercy from first to last.

■ **1:6 Satan.** See theological note "Satan."

So Satan answered the LORD and said, "From [h]going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it."

8 Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you [7]considered My servant Job, that *there is* none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and [8]shuns evil?"

9 So Satan answered the LORD and said, "Does Job fear God for nothing? 10 [i]Have You not [9]made a hedge around him, around his household, and around all that he has on every side? [j]You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. 11 [k]But now, stretch out Your hand and touch all that he has, and he will surely [l]curse[1] You to Your face!"

12 And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has *is* in your [2]power; only do not lay a hand on his *person*."

So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

Job Loses His Property and Children

13 Now there was a day [m]when his sons and daughters *were* eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house; 14 and a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys feeding beside them, 15 when the [3]Sabeans [4]raided *them* and took them away—indeed they have killed the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you!"

7 [h][1 Pet. 5:8]

8 [7]Lit. *set your heart on* [8]Lit. *turns away from*

10 [i]Job 29:2–6; Ps. 34:7; Is. 5:2 [j][Ps. 128:1, 2; Prov. 10:22] [9]Protected him

11 [k]Job 2:5; 19:21 [l]Is. 8:21; Mal. 3:13, 14 [1]Lit. *bless,* but in an evil sense; cf. Job 1:5

12 [2]Lit. *hand*

13 [m][Eccl. 9:12]

15 [3]Lit. *Sheba;* cf. Job 6:19 [4]Lit. *fell upon*

Satan

Satan is the leader of the fallen angels, and like them he comes into full view only in the New Testament. His name means "adversary" (opponent of God and His people), and the Old Testament introduces him as such (1 Chr. 21:1; Job 1; 2; Zech. 3:1, 2. The New Testament gives him revealing titles: Devil (*diabolos*), meaning "accuser" (that is, of God's people; Rev. 12:9, 10); Apollyon, meaning "destroyer" (Rev. 9:11); tempter (Matt. 4:3; 1 Thess. 3:5); and wicked one (1 John 5:18, 19). "Ruler of this world" (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11) and "god of this age" (2 Cor. 4:4) point to Satan as presiding over mankind's anti-God lifestyles (cf. Eph. 2:2; 1 John 5:19; Rev. 12:9). Jesus said that Satan was always a murderer, and is the father of lies. As such, he is both the original liar and the sponsor of all subsequent falsehood and deceits (John 8:44). Finally, he is identified as the serpent who fooled Eve in Eden (Rev. 12:9; 20:2). The picture is one of malice, fury, and cruelty, directed against God, against God's truth, and against those whom God loves.

Satan's deceptive cunning is highlighted by Paul's statement that he becomes an angel of light, disguising evil as good (2 Cor. 11:14). His destructive ferocity comes out in the description of him as a roaring, devouring lion (1 Pet. 5:8) and as a dragon (Rev. 12:9). As he was Christ's sworn foe (Matt. 4:1–11; 16:23; Luke 4:13; cf. Luke 22:3), so now he opposes the Christian, always probing for weaknesses, misdirecting strengths, and undermining faith, hope, and love (Luke 22:32; 2 Cor. 2:11; 11:3–15; Eph. 6:16). Satan's malice and cunning should be taken seriously, but the Christian should not lapse into abject terror of him, for he is a defeated enemy. Satan is stronger than human beings, but Christ has triumphed over him (Matt. 12:29), and Christians will triumph over him as well, resisting him with the resources Christ supplies (Eph. 6:10–18; James 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:9, 10). "He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

Acknowledging Satan's reality, taking his opposition seriously, noting his strategy, and reckoning on continual war with him, is not a lapse into a dualistic concept of two gods, one good, one evil, fighting it out. Satan is a creature, superhuman but not divine; he has much knowledge and power, but he is neither omniscient nor omnipotent; he is not omnipresent; and he is an already defeated rebel, having no more power than God allows him and being destined for the lake of fire (Rev. 20:10). □

■ **1:8** Job is honored by God, who approves of him as a true and faithful servant, i.e., one keeping the solemn oaths of the covenant relationship. It is God, not Satan, who singles out Job for testing.

■ **1:11** Will Job, who was so sensitive to the possibility of his children cursing God, now sin that way himself?

■ **1:12** The Adversary is allowed to test Job, but at this point, only with regard to his possessions and family. His power is restricted to what is permitted by the Lord.

■ **1:13–22** Despite Satan's divinely-permitted (and divinely-limited) assaults on his possessions, servants, and children, Job remains steadfast in his belief that God is good.

16 [5]destroyed
18 [n]Job 1:4, 13
19 [6]LXX omits *across*
20 [o]Gen. 37:29, 34; Josh. 7:6; Ezra 9:3 [p][1 Pet. 5:6]
21 [q][Ps. 49:17; Eccl. 5:15]; 1 Tim. 6:7 [r]Eccl. 5:19; [James 1:17] [s]Gen. 31:16; [1 Sam. 2:6] [t]Eph. 5:20; [1 Thess. 5:18]
22 [u]Job 2:10

CHAPTER 2

1 [a]Job 1:6–8
2 [b]Job 1:7
3 [c]Job 1:1, 8 [d]Job 27:5, 6 [e]Job 9:17 [f]Lit. *consume*
5 [f]Job 1:11 [g]Job 19:20 [z]Lit. *bless,* but in an evil sense; cf. Job 1:5
6 [h]Job 1:12
7 [i]Is. 1:6
8 [j]Job 42:6; Jer. 6:26; Ezek. 27:30; Jon. 3:6; Matt. 11:21
9 [y]Lit. *Bless,* but in an evil sense; cf. Job 1:5
10 [k]Job 1:21, 22; [Heb. 12:6; James 5:10, 11] [l]Job 1:22; [James 1:12] [m]Ps. 39:1

16 While he *was* still speaking, another also came and said, "The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants, and [5]consumed them; and I alone have escaped to tell you!"

17 While he *was* still speaking, another also came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three bands, raided the camels and took them away, yes, and killed the servants with the edge of the sword; and I alone have escaped to tell you!"

18 While he *was* still speaking, another also came and said, [n]"Your sons and daughters *were* eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, 19 and suddenly a great wind came from [6]across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people, and they are dead; and I alone have escaped to tell you!"

20 Then Job arose, [o]tore his robe, and shaved his head; and he [p]fell to the ground and worshiped. 21 And he said:

> [q]"Naked I came from my mother's womb,
> And naked shall I return there.
> The LORD [r]gave, and the LORD has [s]taken away;
> [t]Blessed be the name of the LORD."

22 [u]In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong.

Satan Attacks Job's Health

2 Again [a]there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD. 2 And the LORD said to Satan, "From where do you come?"

[b]Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it."

3 Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that *there is* none like him on the earth, [c]a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil? And still he [d]holds fast to his integrity, although you incited Me against him, [e]to [f]destroy him without cause."

4 So Satan answered the LORD and said, "Skin for skin! Yes, all that a man has he will give for his life. 5 [f]But stretch out Your hand now, and touch his [g]bone and his flesh, and he will surely [z]curse You to Your face!"

6 [h]And the LORD said to Satan, "Behold, he *is* in your hand, but spare his life."

7 So Satan went out from the presence of the LORD, and struck Job with painful boils [i]from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head. 8 And he took for himself a potsherd with which to scrape himself [j]while he sat in the midst of the ashes.

9 Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast to your integrity? [y]Curse God and die!"

10 But he said to her, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. [k]Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?" [l]In all this Job did not [m]sin with his lips.

■ **1:20–22** Job utters a wisdom poem that portrays the wisdom of quiet submission to the secret will of God. Everything belongs to the Creator who gave it. God's people must praise Him for whatever he does with what is His. The word "blessed," (or "praised," v. 21) is the same used in v. 11 for "cursed." By using it here, the author is stressing how Job has frustrated Satan's predictions in v. 11. But v. 22 implies the testing is not yet over.

■ **2:1–6** Further developments in heaven—another round of accusations from Satan—precede more suffering for Job on earth.

■ **2:3 holds fast to his integrity . . . without cause.** The sudden change from the words of 1:6–8 at the end of 2:1–3 shows how the Adversary, who has lost the first round, is humiliated by God through a bit of irony. The same word Satan had used to accuse Job is used here, translated "without cause." It is the Adversary who has done wrong, not Job.

■ **2:4 Skin for skin.** Satan is suggesting that even Job's statement of faith in 1:21 is nothing but a ploy. He is willing to sacrifice anything for his own skin. If God will only stretch out His hand and strike Job's body, then he would curse God to His face.

■ **2:6 spare his life.** God permits the Adversary to be used as His instrument to strike Job. This brings up the problem of evil. Satan, as a creature, is reined in. He is allowed to go only as far as God permits. The word translated "spare" can be translated "safeguard"; it would appear that Satan is being held responsible for Job's life.

■ **2:7–10** Despite Satan's divinely-permitted (and divinely-limited) attacks on his body, Job holds firmly committed to his conviction that God is praiseworthy.

■ **2:7 painful boils.** We have no way of knowing the exact nature of Job's disease.

■ **2:8 sat in the midst of the ashes.** Perhaps by trial and error the ancients learned that the ashes were a place where disease would not spread. Or it may simply have been a way of lamenting.

■ **2:9** Job's wife was unaware of God's guarantee that Job's life would not be taken.

■ **2:10 foolish.** The Hebrew word for "foolish" or "fool" has to do with faithlessness and religious apostasy, as in Ps. 14:1 (cf. 53:1). It is more an ethical judgment than an intellectual one.

Job did not sin with his lips. This stress on the purity of Job's speech is an anticipation of the contrast that will come in the dialogue, where Job's words are less pure.

Job's Three Friends

11 Now when Job's three friends heard of all this adversity that had come upon him, each one
came from his own place—Eliphaz the [n]Temanite, Bildad the [o]Shuhite, and Zophar the Naama-
thite. For they had made an appointment together to come [p]and mourn with him, and to comfort
him. 12 And when they raised their eyes from afar, and did not recognize him, they lifted their
voices and wept; and each one tore his robe and [q]sprinkled dust on his head toward heaven. 13 So
they sat down with him on the ground [r]seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to
him, for they saw that *his* grief was very great.

Job Deplores His Birth

3 After this Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his *birth.* 2 And Job [1]spoke, and said:

3 "May[a] the day perish on which I was born,
And the night *in which* it was said,
'A male child is conceived.'
4 May that day be darkness;
May God above not seek it,
Nor the light shine upon it.
5 May darkness and [b]the shadow of death claim it;
May a cloud settle on it;
May the blackness of the day terrify it.
6 *As for* that night, may darkness seize it;
May it not [2]rejoice among the days of the year,
May it not come into the number of the months.
7 Oh, may that night be barren!
May no joyful shout come into it!
8 May those curse it who curse the day,
Those [c]who are ready to arouse Leviathan.
9 May the stars of its morning be dark;
May it look for light, but *have* none,
And not see the [3]dawning of the day;
10 Because it did not shut up the doors of my *mother's* womb,
Nor hide sorrow from my eyes.

11 "Why[d] did I not die at birth?
Why did I *not* [4]perish when I came from the womb?
12 [e]Why did the knees receive me?
Or why the breasts, that I should nurse?
13 For now I would have lain still and been quiet,
I would have been asleep;
Then I would have been at rest
14 With kings and counselors of the earth,
Who [f]built ruins for themselves,
15 Or with princes who had gold,
Who filled their houses *with* silver;
16 Or *why* was I not hidden [g]like a stillborn child,
Like infants who never saw light?

11 [n]Gen. 36:11; 1 Chr. 1:36; Job 6:19; Jer. 49:7; Obad. 9 [o]Gen. 25:2; 1 Chr. 1:32 [p]Job 42:11; Rom. 12:15

12 [q]Josh. 7:6; Neh. 9:1; Lam. 2:10; Ezek. 27:30

13 [r]Gen. 50:10; Ezek. 3:15

CHAPTER 3

2 [1]Lit. *answered*

3 [a]Job 10:18, 19; Jer. 20:14–18

5 [b]Job 10:21, 22; Jer. 13:16; Amos 5:8

6 [2]LXX, Syr., Tg., Vg. *be joined*

8 [c]Jer. 9:17

9 [3]*eyelids of the dawn*

11 [d]Job 10:18, 19 [4]*expire*

12 [e]Gen. 30:3

14 [f]Job 15:28; Is. 58:12

16 [g]Ps. 58:8

■ **2:11–13** Job's friends arrive to comfort him in the midst of his terrible suffering.

■ **2:13 they sat down with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him.** This behavior, tied to the number of completeness (seven), expresses the most intense form of grief they could display. Near Eastern protocol demanded that Job should be the first to speak. For the practice of mourning seven days over the dead, see Gen. 50:10.

■ **3:1—27:23** In three cycles of speeches, the writer explores human perspectives on Job's suffering.

■ **3:1–26** Job breaks the silence with a fiercely emotional lamentation. He expresses the same kind of depression that overtook the psalmist (Ps. 88) and also Jeremiah (Jer. 20:14, 15), whose bitter lament is, in language, similar to Job's.

■ **3:3–10** Job does not curse God, but he goes so far as to question God's wisdom in giving him life.

■ **3:11–26** Vv. 3–10 were set in the form of curses, while these are rhetorical questions. Job gives vent to his frustration, asking why he was not stillborn (vv. 11, 12, 16). Since that did not happen, his frustration moves on to ask rhetorically why he should not have experienced premature death (vv. 20, 23).

17 There the wicked cease *from* troubling,
And there the [5]weary are at [h]rest.
18 *There* the prisoners [6]rest together;
[i]They do not hear the voice of the oppressor.
19 The small and great are there,
And the servant *is* free from his master.

20 "Why[j] is light given to him who is in misery,
And life to the [k]bitter of soul,
21 Who [l]long[7] for death, but it does not *come,*
And search for it more than [m]hidden treasures;
22 Who rejoice exceedingly,
And are glad when they can find the [n]grave?
23 *Why is light given* to a man whose way is hidden,
[o]And whom God has hedged in?
24 For my sighing comes before [8]I eat,
And my groanings pour out like water.
25 For the thing I greatly [p]feared has come upon me,
And what I dreaded has happened to me.
26 I am not at ease, nor am I quiet;
I have no rest, for trouble comes."

Eliphaz: Job Has Sinned

4 Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said:

2 "If one attempts a word with you, will you become weary?
But who can withhold himself from speaking?
3 Surely you have instructed many,
And you [q]have strengthened weak hands.
4 Your words have upheld him who was stumbling,
And you [b]have strengthened the [l]feeble knees;
5 But now it comes upon you, and you are weary;
It touches you, and you are troubled.
6 *Is* not [c]your reverence [d]your confidence?
And the integrity of your ways your hope?

7 "Remember now, [e]who *ever* perished being innocent?
Or where were the upright *ever* cut off?
8 Even as I have seen,
[f]Those who plow iniquity
And sow trouble reap the same.
9 By the blast of God they perish,
And by the breath of His anger they are consumed.
10 The roaring of the lion,
The voice of the fierce lion,
And [g]the teeth of the young lions are broken.
11 [h]The old lion perishes for lack of prey,
And the cubs of the lioness are scattered.

12 "Now a word was secretly brought to me,
And my ear received a whisper of it.

17 [h]Job 17:16 [5]Lit. *weary of strength*
18 [i]Job 39:7 [6]*are at ease*
20 [j]Jer. 20:18 [k]2 Kin. 4:27
21 [l]Rev. 9:6 [m]Prov. 2:4 [7]Lit. *wait*
22 [n]Job 7:15, 16
23 [o]Job 19:8; Ps. 88:8; Lam. 3:7
24 [8]Lit. *my bread*
25 [p][Job 9:28; 30:15]

CHAPTER 4

3 [q]Is. 35:3
4 [b]Is. 35:3 [l]Lit. *bending*
6 [c]Job 1:1 [d]Prov. 3:26
7 [e][Job 8:20; 36:6, 7; Ps. 37:25]
8 [f][Job 15:31, 35; Prov. 22:8; Hos. 10:13; Gal. 6:7]
10 [g]Job 5:15; Ps. 58:6
11 [h]Job 29:17; Ps. 34:10

■ **4:1—5:27** Eliphaz begins the first cycle of speeches (chs. 4—14) in which Job and his friends debate the reasons for his predicament.

■ **4:2–6** Eliphaz is the least caustic of Job's three friends, at least in his first speech. These opening words, which assume Job is innocent (v. 7), should be compared with 22:1–11, where he is fully convinced Job is getting what he deserves. Job is complimented for being a wisdom teacher (vv. 3, 4), but in v. 5 he is warned lest he fail to apply to himself what he has taught others.

■ **4:6 your reverence.** Lit. "your fear," i.e., the fear you have of God, which is the Old Testament way of referring to true worship.

■ **4:8 sow trouble reap the same.** This is a wisdom truth that cannot be denied, but is Job guilty of this? That the innocent never perish (v. 7) is not true, nor has it ever been since the death of Abel (cf. Gen. 4:8–11).

13 [i]In disquieting thoughts from the visions of the night,
When deep sleep falls on men,
14 Fear came upon me, and [j]trembling,
Which made all my bones shake.
15 Then a spirit passed before my face;
The hair on my body stood up.
16 It stood still,
But I could not discern its appearance.
A form *was* before my eyes;
There was silence;
Then I heard a voice *saying:*
17 'Can a mortal be more righteous than God?
Can a man be more pure than his Maker?
18 If He [k]puts no trust in His servants,
If He charges His angels with error,
19 How much more those who dwell in houses of clay,
Whose foundation is in the dust,
Who are crushed before a moth?
20 [l]They are broken in pieces from morning till evening;
They perish forever, with no one regarding.
21 Does not their own excellence go away?
They die, even without wisdom.'

13 [i]Job 33:15
14 [j]Hab. 3:16
18 [k]Job 15:15
20 [l]Ps. 90:5, 6

CHAPTER 5

3 [a][Ps. 37:35, 36]; Jer. 12:1–3
4 [b]Ps. 119:155 [c]Ps. 109:12
5 [1]LXX *They shall not be taken from evil men;* Vg. *And the armed man shall take him by violence* [2]LXX *The might shall draw them off;* Vg. *And the thirsty shall drink up their riches* [3]*wealth*
7 [d]Job 14:1 [4]*labor*

Eliphaz: Job Is Chastened by God

5 "Call out now;
Is there anyone who will answer you?
And to which of the holy ones will you turn?
2 For wrath kills a foolish man,
And envy slays a simple one.
3 [a]I have seen the foolish taking root,
But suddenly I cursed his dwelling place.
4 His sons are [b]far from safety,
They are crushed in the gate,
And [c]*there is* no deliverer.
5 Because the hungry eat up his harvest,
[1]Taking it even from the thorns,
[2]And a snare snatches their [3]substance.
6 For affliction does not come from the dust,
Nor does trouble spring from the ground;
7 Yet man is [d]born to [4]trouble,
As the sparks fly upward.

8 "But as for me, I would seek God,
And to God I would commit my cause—
9 Who does great things, and unsearchable,
Marvelous things without number.

■ **4:16 A form.** Eliphaz is not sure who it is or what it is, but he is sure it is a supernatural revelation.

■ **4:17 more righteous than God.** Another way to render this phrase is, "can a mortal be righteous before God?" The question is not whether humans can be more righteous than God, which was unthinkable in that culture, but whether they can be righteous at all in His sight. Even the angels are not pure in His sight (v. 18). It is possible that only v. 17 is the revelation from the Spirit, and that vv. 18–21 are Eliphaz's comment on these words. The quotation mark in that case would come after v. 17 instead of after v. 21.

■ **4:21 die, even without wisdom.** That is, their death was without any purpose and therefore meaningless. They "perish forever" (v. 20) without there ever having been a purpose to their lives.

■ **5:1 to which of the holy ones will you turn.** None of the "sons of God," the holy angels, would dare to help Job.

■ **5:7 man is born to trouble.** Eliphaz's point is that trouble does not spring up spontaneously like a weed, but has to have been sown by those who reap it.

As the sparks fly upward. Lit. "the sons of Resheph fly upward." Resheph was the god of pestilence, lightning, and destruction. A similar idiom is used in Song 8:6, where love is described as "flames of fire." In other places the idiom is used for bolts of lightning (Ps. 78:48) and of pestilence (Deut. 32:24; Hab. 3:5).

10 [e]He gives rain on the earth,
And sends waters on the fields.
11 [f]He sets on high those who are lowly,
And those who mourn are lifted to safety.
12 [g]He frustrates the devices of the crafty,
So that their hands cannot carry out their plans.
13 He catches the [h]wise in their own craftiness,
And the counsel of the cunning comes quickly upon them.
14 They meet with darkness in the daytime,
And grope at noontime as in the night.
15 But [i]He saves the needy from the sword,
From the mouth of the mighty,
And from their hand.
16 [j]So the poor have hope,
And injustice shuts her mouth.

17 "Behold,[k] happy *is* the man whom God corrects;
Therefore do not despise the chastening of the Almighty.
18 [l]For He bruises, but He binds up;
He wounds, but His hands make whole.
19 [m]He shall deliver you in six troubles,
Yes, in seven [n]no evil shall touch you.
20 [o]In famine He shall redeem you from death,
And in war from the [5]power of the sword.
21 [p]You shall be hidden from the scourge of the tongue,
And you shall not be afraid of destruction when it comes.
22 You shall laugh at destruction and famine,
And [q]you shall not be afraid of the [r]beasts of the earth.
23 [s]For you shall have a covenant with the stones of the field,
And the beasts of the field shall be at peace with you.
24 You shall know that your tent *is* in peace;
You shall visit your dwelling and find nothing amiss.
25 You shall also know that [t]your descendants *shall be* many,
And your offspring [u]like the grass of the earth.
26 [v]You shall come to the grave at a full age,
As a sheaf of grain ripens in its season.
27 Behold, this we have [w]searched out;
It *is* true.
Hear it, and know for yourself."

Job: My Complaint Is Just

6 Then Job answered and said:

2 "Oh, that my grief were fully weighed,
And my calamity laid with it on the scales!
3 For then it would be heavier than the sand of the sea—
Therefore my words have been rash.

10 [e][Job 36:27–29; 37:6–11; 38:26]
11 [f]Ps. 113:7
12 [g]Neh. 4:15
13 [h][Job 37:24; 1 Cor. 3:19]
15 [i]Job 4:10, 11; Ps. 35:10
16 [j]1 Sam. 2:8; Ps. 107:41, 42
17 [k]Ps. 94:12; [Prov. 3:11, 12; Heb. 12:5, 6; Rev. 3:19]
18 [l][Deut. 32:39; 1 Sam. 2:6, 7]; Is. 30:26; Hos. 6:1
19 [m]Ps. 34:19; 91:3; [1 Cor. 10:13] [n]Ps. 91:10; [Prov. 24:16]
20 [o]Ps. 33:19, 20; 37:19 [5]Lit. *hand*
21 [p]Job 5:15; Ps. 31:20
22 [q]Ps. 91:13; Is. 11:9; 35:9; 65:25; Ezek. 34:25 [r]Hos. 2:18
23 [s]Ps. 91:12
25 [t]Ps. 112:2 [u]Ps. 72:16
26 [v][Prov. 9:11; 10:27]
27 [w]Ps. 111:2

■ **5:17–26** This reference to the disciplinary nature of human suffering is the only place in the speeches of the three counselors where the subject is even broached.

■ **5:19 in six . . . in seven.** A poetic expression meaning "many."

■ **5:23 a covenant with the stones of the field.** Attempts to explain such a covenant as merely figurative language do not satisfy the context. Some read this, "covenant with the offspring of the field," since the other side of the parallelism reads, "the beasts of the field shall be at peace with you." Since the wild animals often kill the domestic animals, this fits the entire context, for in v. 22 Eliphaz said that Job had no need to fear the beasts of the earth.

■ **5:25 your descendants shall be many.** Considering that Job has lost all his children, the statement is both unnecessary and cruel.

■ **5:26** At this point neither Job nor Eliphaz could have imagined that this statement would come true for Job.

■ **5:27 this we have searched out; It is true.** This final verbal volley shows that Eliphaz was in error. He thought he understood what was happening to Job, but he did not. Such an assertion reveals spiritual arrogance.

■ **6:1—7:21** Job upbraids Eliphaz for uttering presumptuous, insensitive, not to mention false, words about him (6:1–30), and then addresses his complaint to God.

■ **6:3, 4 my words have been rash. For the arrows of the Almighty are within me.** Job excuses his raging by fantasizing that God has become his enemy.

4 [a]For the arrows of the Almighty *are* within me;
My spirit drinks in their poison;
[b]The terrors of God are arrayed [c]against me.
5 Does the [d]wild donkey bray when it has grass,
Or does the ox low over its fodder?
6 Can flavorless food be eaten without salt?
Or is there *any* taste in the white of an egg?
7 My soul refuses to touch them;
They *are* as loathsome food to me.

8 "Oh, that I might have my request,
That God would grant *me* the thing that I long for!
9 That it would please God to crush me,
That He would loose His hand and [e]cut me off!
10 Then I would still have comfort;
Though in anguish I would exult;
He will not spare;
For [f]I have not concealed the words of [g]the Holy One.

11 "What strength do I have, that I should hope?
And what *is* my end, that I should prolong my life?
12 *Is* my strength the strength of stones?
Or is my flesh bronze?
13 *Is* my help not within me?
And is success driven from me?

14 "To[h] him who is [i]afflicted, kindness *should be shown* by his friend,
Even though he forsakes the fear of the Almighty.
15 [j]My brothers have dealt deceitfully like a brook,
[j]Like the streams of the brooks that pass away,
16 Which are dark because of the ice,
And into which the snow vanishes.
17 When it is warm, they cease to flow;
When it is hot, they vanish from their place.
18 The paths of their way turn aside,
They go nowhere and perish.
19 The caravans of [k]Tema look,
The travelers of [l]Sheba hope for them.
20 They are [m]disappointed[2] because they were confident;
They come there and are confused.
21 For now [n]you are nothing,
You see terror and [o]are afraid.
22 Did I ever say, 'Bring *something* to me'?
Or, 'Offer a bribe for me from your wealth'?
23 Or, 'Deliver me from the enemy's hand'?
Or, 'Redeem me from the hand of oppressors'?

24 "Teach me, and I will hold my tongue;
Cause me to understand wherein I have erred.
25 How forceful are right words!
But what does your arguing prove?
26 Do you intend to rebuke *my* words,

CHAPTER 6

4 [a]Job 16:13; Ps. 38:2 [b]Ps. 88:15, 16 [c]Job 30:15

5 [d]Job 39:5–8

9 [e]Num. 11:15; 1 Kin. 19:4; Job 7:16; 9:21; 10:1

10 [f]Acts 20:20 [g][Lev. 19:2; Is. 57:15]

14 [h][Prov. 17:17] [i]Or *despairing*

15 [j]Ps. 38:11 [j]Jer. 15:18

19 [k]Gen. 25:15; Is. 21:14; Jer. 25:23 [l]1 Kin. 10:1; Ps. 72:10; Ezek. 27:22, 23

20 [m]Jer. 14:3 [2]Lit. *ashamed*

21 [n]Job 13:4 [o]Ps. 38:11

■ **6:6, 7 flavorless food . . . My soul refuses.** Eliphaz has offered him no real food (v. 5); i.e., words of comfort. What was supposed to be good food (words) made Job sick.

■ **6:8 grant me the thing that I long for.** The only comfort left is the exquisite release from pain that death would bring him. He strongly affirms continued faith in the Lord. Note that this passage shows Job believes in a blissful afterlife.

■ **6:25 How forceful are right words.** The difference between Job and his friends is summed up here. The speeches of the friends are formally correct but do not necessarily apply to Job. Indeed, the friends accuse Job falsely of having lived a sinful life. Job insists on speaking honest words about his life. He has not forsaken God or lived in a profligate way.

And the speeches of a desperate one, *which are* as wind?
27 Yes, you overwhelm the fatherless,
And you [p]undermine your friend.
28 Now therefore, be pleased to look at me;
For I would never lie to your face.
29 [q]Yield now, let there be no injustice!
Yes, concede, my [r]righteousness [3]still stands!
30 Is there injustice on my tongue?
Cannot my [4]taste discern the unsavory?

Job: My Suffering Is Comfortless

7 "*Is there* not [a]a time of hard service for man on earth?
Are not his days also like the days of a hired man?
2 Like a servant who [l]earnestly desires the shade,
And like a hired man who eagerly looks for his wages,
3 So I have been allotted [b]months of futility,
And wearisome nights have been appointed to me.
4 [c]When I lie down, I say, 'When shall I arise,
And the night be ended?'
For I have had my fill of tossing till dawn.
5 My flesh is [d]caked with worms and dust,
My skin is cracked and breaks out afresh.

6 "My[e] days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle,
And are spent without hope.
7 Oh, remember that [f]my life *is* a breath!
My eye will never again see good.
8 [g]The eye of him who sees me will see me no *more;*
While your *eyes* are upon me, I shall no longer *be.*
9 *As* the cloud disappears and vanishes away,
So [h]he who goes down to the grave does not come up.
10 He shall never return to his house,
[i]Nor shall his place know him anymore.

11 "Therefore I will [j]not restrain my mouth;
I will speak in the anguish of my spirit;
I will [k]complain in the bitterness of my soul.
12 *Am* I a sea, or a sea serpent,
That You set a guard over me?
13 [l]When I say, 'My bed will comfort me,
My couch will ease my complaint,'
14 Then You scare me with dreams
And terrify me with visions,

27 [p]Ps. 57:6
29 [q]Job 17:10 [r]Job 27:5, 6; 34:5 [3]Lit. *is in it*
30 [4]*palate*

CHAPTER 7

1 [a][Job 14:5, 13, 14]; Ps. 39:4
2 [l]Lit. *pants for*
3 [b][Job 15:31]
4 [c]Deut. 28:67; Job 7:13, 14
5 [d]Is. 14:11
6 [e]Job 9:25; 16:22; 17:11; Is. 38:12; [James 4:14]
7 [f]Job 7:16; Ps. 78:39; 89:47
8 [g]Job 8:18; 20:9
9 [h]2 Sam. 12:23
10 [i]Ps. 103:16
11 [j]Ps. 39:1, 9 [k]1 Sam. 1:10
13 [l]Job 9:27

■ **6:27 you overwhelm the fatherless.** Later, Job will speak of his own loving care for the fatherless (31:16–22). His own name possibly means "without a father."

■ **6:29 still stands.** Lit. "is in it." The "it" is their insistence that he is suffering for his sins. Either he or they must be wrong.

■ **6:30 my taste.** Lit. "my palate." In vv. 6, 7 Job had already spoken of their words as bad food. Here he pleads that they change the "stuff" they are feeding him.

■ **7:1–21** Job now directs his words toward God. This is a prayer in the form of a complaint the psalmists often use.

■ **7:1 hard service.** The terminology often refers to military service.

■ **7:5** Job's malady may have been a combination of diseases. Repellent symptoms, however, appeared all over his skin, his largest and most sensitive bodily organ.

■ **7:7 never again see good.** Worse than pain is the loss of hope for a return to health.

■ **7:9 does not come up.** This is the language of appearance. Job is not developing a doctrine, but merely stating what all observe. Later, Job will show he believes in the possibility of resurrection (14:12–15).

■ **7:11 will not restrain my mouth.** Like the psalmist, Job insists on complaining out of his "bitterness of soul"; but note that he complains to God, not to man here.

■ **7:12 Am I a sea.** The Hebrew uses "sea" as a proper name here without the definite article. This is poetic language for the boisterous Canaanite deity Yam (Sea). Job does not worship Yam, but he knows the story about him.

■ **7:14 You scare me.** Job imagines that God is actually doing all this. The reader knows from the prologue that He permitted Satan to do it. Yet that permission is within God's sovereign ordination.

15 So that my soul chooses strangling
And death rather than [2]my body.
16 [m]I loathe *my life;*
I would not live forever.
[n]Let me alone,
For [o]my days *are but* [3]a breath.

17 "What[p] *is* man, that You should exalt him,
That You should set Your heart on him,
18 That You should [4]visit him every morning,
And test him every moment?
19 How long?
Will You not look away from me,
And let me alone till I swallow my saliva?
20 Have I sinned?
What have I done to You, [q]O watcher of men?
Why [r]have You set me as Your target,
So that I am a burden [5]to myself?
21 Why then do You not pardon my transgression,
And take away my iniquity?
For now I will lie down in the dust,
And You will seek me diligently,
But I *will* no longer *be.*"

Bildad: Job Should Repent

8 Then Bildad the Shuhite answered and said:

2 "How long will you speak these *things,*
And the words of your mouth *be like* a strong wind?
3 [a]Does God subvert judgment?
Or does the Almighty pervert justice?
4 If [b]your sons have sinned against Him,
He has cast them away [1]for their transgression.
5 [c]If you would earnestly seek God
And make your supplication to the Almighty,
6 If you *were* pure and upright,
Surely now He would [2]awake for you,
And prosper your rightful dwelling place.
7 Though your beginning was small,
Yet your latter end would [d]increase abundantly.

8 "For[e] inquire, please, of the former age,
And consider the things discovered by their fathers;

15 [2]Lit. *my bones*

16 [m]Job 10:1 [n]Job 14:6 [o]Ps. 62:9 [3]Without substance, futile

17 [p]Job 22:2; Ps. 8:4; 144:3; Heb. 2:6

18 [4]*attend to*

20 [q]Ps. 36:6 [r]Ps. 21:12 [5]So with MT, Tg., Vg.; LXX, Jewish tradition *to You*

CHAPTER 8

3 [a]Gen. 18:25; [Deut. 32:4; 2 Chr. 19:7; Job 34:10, 12; 36:23; 37:23]; Rom. 3:5

4 [b]Job 1:5, 18, 19 [1]Lit. *into the hand of their transgression*

5 [c][Job 5:17–27; 11:13]

6 [2]*arise*

7 [d]Job 42:12

8 [e]Deut. 4:32; 32:7; Job 15:18; 20:4

■ **7:15 my soul chooses . . . death.** Job sees death as the way out, but Satan was not permitted to go that far, nor would death have served Satan's purpose of getting him to curse God to His face.

■ **7:16 Let me alone.** Again, Job imagines that God is the one who torments him. We know from the prologue, however, that God has a high and holy purpose in permitting Satan to touch Job.

■ **7:17 What is man, that You should exalt him.** Cf. Ps. 8:4 and 144:3. The psalmist is not suffering, so his thoughts on this subject are positive. He marvels that God cares so much for the creature He has made to reflect His own image. But Job, in his distress, wishes that God would leave him alone.

■ **7:20 O watcher of men.** He thinks God is too faultfinding. For what sin is it that God is punishing him so severely?

a burden to myself. Some Hebrew manuscripts and the ancient Greek translation read "a burden to you."

■ **7:21 And take away my iniquity.** Though Job will stress his integrity (i.e., his honest commitment to godliness and righteousness) in his former life, he never denies that he was a sinner.

■ **8:1–22** This reply presents Bildad as a blunt and unfeeling man. He had failed to hear Job's cry for compassion (6:13, 14, 26). His message to Job is forthright. He and his family have gotten what they deserve. If only now he will repent of the shameless deeds that brought on this disaster, he can be restored to even greater prosperity and happiness than he had before.

■ **8:2 like a strong wind.** This is a strong accusation. It is unlike the tone of Eliphaz who attempted a soft approach at first (4:2).

■ **8:6 If you were pure and upright.** In Bildad's mind God has mercy only when human beings deserve it. Mercy, however, cannot ever be deserved. If it is deserved it would be justice.

■ **8:8 inquire . . . of the former age.** Eliphaz had appealed to revelation as his authority, even though that revelation was somewhat enigmatic (4:12–17). Bildad appeals to human tradition.

9 For [f]we *were born* yesterday, and know [3]nothing,
Because our days on earth *are* a shadow.
10 Will they not teach you and tell you,
And utter words from their heart?

11 "Can the papyrus grow up without a marsh?
Can the reeds flourish without water?
12 [g]While it *is* yet green *and* not cut down,
It withers before any *other* plant.
13 So *are* the paths of all who [h]forget God;
And the hope of the [i]hypocrite shall perish,
14 Whose confidence shall be cut off,
And whose trust *is* [4]a spider's web.
15 [j]He leans on his house, but it does not stand.
He holds it fast, but it does not endure.
16 He grows green in the sun,
And his branches spread out in his garden.
17 His roots wrap around the rock heap,
And look for a place in the stones.
18 [k]If he is destroyed from his place,
Then *it* will deny him, *saying,* 'I have not seen you.'

19 "Behold, this is the joy of His way,
And [l]out of the earth others will grow.
20 Behold, [m]God will not [5]cast away the blameless,
Nor will He uphold the evildoers.
21 He will yet fill your mouth with laughing,
And your lips with [6]rejoicing.
22 Those who hate you will be [n]clothed with shame,
And the dwelling place of the wicked [7]will come to nothing."

Job: There Is No Mediator

9 Then Job answered and said:

2 "Truly I know *it is* so,
But how can a [a]man be [b]righteous before God?
3 If one wished to [1]contend with Him,
He could not answer Him one time out of a thousand.
4 [c]God is wise in heart and mighty in strength.
Who has hardened *himself* against Him and prospered?
5 He removes the mountains, and they do not know
When He overturns them in His anger;
6 He [d]shakes the earth out of its place,
And its [e]pillars tremble;
7 He commands the sun, and it does not rise;
He seals off the stars;
8 [f]He alone spreads out the heavens,

9 [f]Gen. 47:9; [1 Chr. 29:15]; Job 7:6; [Ps. 39:5; 102:11; 144:4] [3]Lit. *not*
12 [g]Ps. 129:6
13 [h]Ps. 9:17 [i]Job 11:20; 18:14; 27:8; Ps. 112:10; [Prov. 10:28]
14 [4]Lit. *a spider's house*
15 [j]Job 8:22; 27:18; Ps. 49:11
18 [k]Job 7:10
19 [l]Ps. 113:7
20 [m]Job 4:7 [5]*reject*
21 [6]Lit. *shouts of joy*
22 [n]Ps. 35:26; 109:29 [7]Lit. *will not be*

CHAPTER 9

2 [a][Job 4:17; 15:14–16; Ps. 143:2; Rom. 3:20] [b][Hab. 2:4; Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38]
3 [1]*argue*
4 [c]Job 36:5
6 [d]Is. 2:19, 21; Hag. 2:6; Heb. 12:26 [e]Job 26:11
8 [f]Gen. 1:6; Job 37:18; Ps. 104:2, 3; Is. 40:22

■ **8:13 the hypocrite.** Bildad draws on several illustrations from nature to describe the hopelessness of those whom he calls "the hypocrite." The Hebrew word refers to someone who is profane or defiled by sin. Obviously, Bildad sees Job as a case in point.

■ **8:20 God will not cast away the blameless.** This verse contains the heart of Bildad's theology of suffering. As standard wisdom it was not wrong. Ps. 1:6 teaches that the Lord cares about the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked shall perish. Bildad's error consisted in assuming that because Job was suffering he had to be a godless person.

■ **9:1—10:22** Job's reply to Bildad in chs. 9; 10 starts with a discourse on God's power and wisdom (9:1–13), but shifts to questioning his justice (9:14–35). In 9:30 he begins to direct his words to God, and this continues through ch. 10.

■ **9:2 But how can a man be righteous before God.** Job agrees with the view of Bildad that God punishes the wicked and cares for the righteous (Ps. 1:6), but is there anybody who is wholly righteous?

■ **9:3** Job does not know yet that God Himself will be his cross-examiner (38:3; 40:7).

■ **9:6 its pillars.** The earth is described poetically as having subterranean architecture.

■ **9:7** The reference is to an eclipse of the sun and the disappearance of certain stars over the seasons.

■ **9:8** The poetic figures in this verse refer to God's creation and control of the forces of nature.

And [2]treads on the [3]waves of the sea;
9 [g]He made [4]the Bear, Orion, and the Pleiades,
And the chambers of the south;
10 [h]He does great things past finding out,
Yes, wonders without number.
11 [i]If He goes by me, I do not see *Him;*
If He moves past, I do not perceive Him;
12 [j]If He takes away, [5]who can hinder Him?
Who can say to Him, 'What are You doing?'
13 God will not withdraw His anger,
[k]The allies of [6]the proud lie prostrate beneath Him.

14 "How then can I answer Him,
And choose my words *to reason* with Him?
15 [l]For though I were righteous, I could not answer Him;
I would beg mercy of my Judge.
16 If I called and He answered me,
I would not believe that He was listening to my voice.
17 For He crushes me with a tempest,
And multiplies my wounds [m]without cause.
18 He will not allow me to catch my breath,
But fills me with bitterness.
19 If *it is a matter* of strength, indeed *He is* strong;
And if of justice, who will appoint my day *in court?*
20 Though I were righteous, my own mouth would condemn me;
Though I *were* blameless, it would prove me perverse.

21 "I am blameless, yet I do not know myself;
I despise my life.
22 It *is* all one *thing;*
Therefore I say, [n]'He destroys the blameless and the wicked.'
23 If the scourge slays suddenly,
He laughs at the plight of the innocent.
24 The earth is given into the hand of the wicked.
He covers the faces of its judges.
If it is not *He,* who else could it be?

25 "Now [o]my days are swifter than a runner;
They flee away, they see no good.
26 They pass by like [7]swift ships,
[p]Like an eagle swooping on its prey.
27 [q]If I say, 'I will forget my complaint,
I will put off my sad face and wear a smile,'
28 [r]I am afraid of all my sufferings;
I know that You [s]will not hold me innocent.
29 *If* I am condemned,
Why then do I labor in vain?
30 [t]If I wash myself with snow water,
And cleanse my hands with [8]soap,
31 Yet You will plunge me into the pit,
And my own clothes will [9]abhor me.

8 [2]*walks* [3]Lit. *heights*
9 [g]Gen. 1:16; Job 38:31; Amos 5:8 [4]Heb. *Ash, Kesil,* and *Kimah*
10 [h]Job 5:9
11 [i][Job 23:8, 9; 35:14]
12 [j][Is. 45:9; Dan. 4:35; Rom. 9:20] [5]Lit. *who can turn Him back?*
13 [k]Job 26:12 [6]Heb. *rahab*
15 [l]Job 10:15; 23:1–7
17 [m]Job 2:3
22 [n][Eccl. 9:2, 3]; Ezek. 21:3
25 [o]Job 7:6, 7
26 [p]Job 39:29; Hab. 1:8 [7]Lit. *ships of reeds*
27 [q]Job 7:13
28 [r]Ps. 119:120 [s]Ex. 20:7
30 [t][Jer. 2:22] [8]*lye*
31 [9]*loathe*

■ **9:13 the proud.** Lit. "Rahab." Rahab is the Semitic sea monster after whom the prostitute in Josh. 2 was named. Cf. 26:12. In Is. 30:7 it is a symbol of Egypt.

■ **9:15** Job desires an audience with God to prove his innocence, but thinks that his cause could be hopeless (vv. 14–20, 32–35).

■ **9:21–24** These verses represent the lowest point of Job's speeches. As happens to many who suffer greatly over a long period, Job is tempted to be fatalistic. He wavers between hope and doubt and even accuses God.

■ **9:24 If it is not He, who else could it be.** These sad but profound words reflect Job's belief in the absolute sovereignty of God. He would not have felt this perplexity if he thought God were limited.

■ **9:25–31** Job finds himself caught in an impossible dilemma. He believes he is innocent, but according to the traditional view of suffering his experience proclaims that God thinks the contrary.

32 "For [u]*He is* not a man, as I *am*,
That I may answer Him,
And that we should go to court together.
33 [v]Nor is there any mediator between us,
Who may lay his hand on us both.
34 [w]Let Him take His rod away from me,
And do not let dread of Him terrify me.
35 *Then* I would speak and not fear Him,
But it is not so with me.

Job: I Would Plead with God

10 "My [a]soul loathes my life;
I will [1]give free course to my complaint,
[b]I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.
2 I will say to God, 'Do not condemn me;
Show me why You contend with me.
3 *Does it* seem good to You that You should oppress,
That You should despise the work of Your hands,
And smile on the counsel of the wicked?
4 Do You have eyes of flesh?
Or [c]do You see as man sees?
5 *Are* Your days like the days of a mortal man?
Are Your years like the days of a mighty man,
6 That You should seek for my iniquity
And search out my sin,
7 Although You know that I am not wicked,
And *there is* no one who can deliver from Your hand?

8 'Your[d] hands have made me and fashioned me,
An intricate unity;
Yet You would [e]destroy me.
9 Remember, I pray, [f]that You have made me like clay.
And will You turn me into dust again?
10 [g]Did You not pour me out like milk,
And curdle me like cheese,
11 Clothe me with skin and flesh,
And knit me together with bones and sinews?
12 You have granted me life and favor,
And Your care has preserved my spirit.

13 'And these *things* You have hidden in Your heart;
I know that this *was* with You:
14 If I sin, then [h]You mark me,
And will not acquit me of my iniquity.

32 [u]Eccl. 6:10; [Is. 45:9; Jer. 49:19; Rom. 9:20]
33 [v][1 Sam. 2:25]; Job 9:19; Is. 1:18
34 [w]Job 13:20, 21; Ps. 39:10

CHAPTER 10

1 [a]1 Kin. 19:4; Job 7:16; Jon. 4:3 [b]Job 7:11 [1]Lit. *leave on myself*
4 [c][1 Sam. 16:7; Job 28:24; 34:21]
8 [d]Job 10:3; Ps. 119:73 [e][Job 9:22]
9 [f]Gen. 2:7; Job 33:6
10 [g][Ps. 139:14–16]
14 [h]Job 7:20; Ps. 139:1

■ **9:33 Nor is there any mediator.** Eliphaz had taunted Job with the thought that no heavenly being would think of defending him (5:1). Here Job touches a profound truth, that sinful man needs an arbiter who can reach both God and man. Although not a direct prediction, this verse foresees the need of the "one Mediator between God and men" (1 Tim. 2:5).

■ **10:1 My soul loathes.** Cf. 7:16; 9:21. Job is not only willing to die, but is seeking it as his only means of escape (6:8, 9). Nothing worse can happen, so he will complain freely.

■ **10:2 Show me why You contend with me.** He speaks on the assumption that the traditional view of suffering held by the counselors is correct. He has not been able to deliver himself from this view.

■ **10:3 Does it seem good to You.** Lit. "is it good?" Perhaps it should be translated, "is it right?"

smile on the counsel of the wicked. No wonder God would later accuse him of discrediting his justice (40:8).

■ **10:4–7** Here is irony. Job knows God is omniscient. He does not have to search out sins like a human prosecutor. He knows Job is innocent; yet He has made Job His helpless victim.

■ **10:8–12** Like the author of Ps. 139:13–16, Job understands that God fashioned him in the womb, gave him life, and blessed him. Now he cannot understand how the same good God can treat him so badly.

■ **10:13 these things.** What are the "things" Job refers to? Job seems to mean that his suffering is a divine punishment planned right from the beginning of his life. He does not understand that God's plan in his suffering is something other than punishment.

■ **10:14, 15** All this is predicated on the mistaken assumption that his suffering is due to God's punitive wrath.

15 If I am wicked, [i]woe to me;
[j]Even *if* I am righteous, I [2]cannot lift up my head.
I am full of disgrace;
[k]See my misery!
16 If *my head* is exalted,
[l]You hunt me like a fierce lion,
And again You show Yourself awesome against me.
17 You renew Your witnesses against me,
And increase Your indignation toward me;
Changes and war are *ever* with me.

18 'Why[m] then have You brought me out of the womb?
Oh, that I had perished and no eye had seen me!
19 I would have been as though I had not been.
I would have been carried from the womb to the grave.
20 [n]Are not my days few?
Cease! [o]Leave me alone, that I may take a little comfort,
21 Before I go *to the place from which* I shall not return,
[p]To the land of darkness [q]and the shadow of death,
22 A land as dark as darkness *itself,*
As the shadow of death, without any order,
Where even the light *is* like darkness.' "

Zophar Urges Job to Repent

11 Then Zophar the Naamathite answered and said:

2 "Should not the multitude of words be answered?
And should [1]a man full of talk be vindicated?
3 Should your empty talk make men [2]hold their peace?
And when you mock, should no one rebuke you?
4 For you have said,
[a]'My doctrine *is* pure,
And I am clean in your eyes.'
5 But oh, that God would speak,
And open His lips against you,
6 That He would show you the secrets of wisdom!
For *they would* double *your* prudence.
Know therefore that [b]God [3]exacts from you
Less than your iniquity *deserves.*

7 "Can[c] you search out the deep things of God?
Can you find out the limits of the Almighty?
8 *They are* higher than heaven— what can you do?
Deeper than [4]Sheol— what can you know?
9 Their measure *is* longer than the earth
And broader than the sea.

10 "If[d] He passes by, imprisons, and gathers *to judgment,*
Then who can [5]hinder Him?

15 [i]Job 10:7; Is. 3:11 [j][Job 9:12, 15] [k]Ps. 25:18 [2]Lit. *will not*

16 [l]Is. 38:13; Lam. 3:10; Hos. 13:7

18 [m]Job 3:11–13

20 [n]Ps. 39:5 [o]Job 7:16, 19

21 [p]Ps. 88:12 [q]Ps. 23:4

CHAPTER 11

2 [1]Lit. *a man of lips*

3 [2]*be silent*

4 [a]Job 6:30

6 [b][Ezra 9:13] [3]Lit. *forgets some of your iniquity for you*

7 [c]Job 33:12, 13; 36:26; [Eccl. 3:11; Rom. 11:33]

8 [4]The abode of the dead

10 [d]Job 9:12; [Rev. 3:7] [5]*restrain*

■ **10:21 the place . . . return.** Notice the difference between Job's present description of that place as a land of darkness, while in 3:13–19 he looked on it as being a place of peace and rest. This proves that Job's emotional raging must not be used as a basis for constructing normative Old Testament or Christian theology. The rule of interpretation should be that when Job or the counselors are in agreement with normative theology we accept them. But in the dramatic flow of the book, neither he nor they can be relied on as a source of theological formulations.

■ **11:1–20** Zophar, the most severe of Job's counselors, now speaks his mind on Job's plight, misapplying some truths about God.

■ **11:1 the Naamathite.** Possibly from Arabia. This is not the Naamah mentioned in Josh. 15:41, which was in the western foothills of Judah.

■ **11:4 I am clean in your eyes.** This is not an exact quotation of Job, who has not said he was sinless. He has claimed not to have led the kind of sinful life that might deserve such severe suffering. He has admitted that no mortal can be righteous before God (9:2).

■ **11:6 Less than your iniquity deserves.** The words reflect Zophar's supposition of the enormity of Job's sin.

■ **11:7–9** These words are an eloquent expression of the transcendence of God, which Zophar then misapplies.

11 For [e]He knows deceitful men;
He sees wickedness also.
Will He not then consider *it?*
12 For an [f]empty-headed man will be wise,
When a wild donkey's colt is born a man.

13 "If you would [g]prepare your heart,
And [h]stretch out your hands toward Him;
14 If iniquity *were* in your hand, *and you* put it far away,
And [i]would not let wickedness dwell in your tents;
15 [j]Then surely you could lift up your face without spot;
Yes, you could be steadfast, and not fear;
16 Because you would [k]forget *your* misery,
And remember *it* as waters *that have* passed away,
17 And *your* life [l]would be brighter than noonday.
Though you were dark, you would be like the morning.
18 And you would be secure, because there is hope;
Yes, you would dig *around you, and* [m]take your rest in safety.
19 You would also lie down, and no one would make *you* afraid;
Yes, many would court your favor.
20 But [n]the eyes of the wicked will fail,
And they shall not escape,
And [o]their hope—[6]loss of life!"

Job Answers His Critics

12 Then Job answered and said:

2 "No doubt you *are* the people,
And wisdom will die with you!
3 But I have [1]understanding as well as you;
I *am* not [a]inferior to you.
Indeed, who does not *know* such things as these?

4 "I[b] am one mocked by his friends,
Who [c]called on God, and He answered him,
The just and blameless *who is* ridiculed.
5 A [2]lamp is despised in the thought of one who is at ease;
It is made ready for [d]those whose feet slip.
6 [e]The tents of robbers prosper,
And those who provoke God are secure—
In what God provides by His hand.

7 "But now ask the beasts, and they will teach you;
And the birds of the air, and they will tell you;
8 Or speak to the earth, and it will teach you;
And the fish of the sea will explain to you.
9 Who among all these does not know
That the hand of the LORD has done this,
10 [f]In whose hand *is* the [3]life of every living thing,

11 [e][Ps. 10:14]
12 [f][Ps. 39:5]; Rom. 1:22
13 [g][1 Sam. 7:3] [h]Ps. 88:9
14 [i]Ps. 101:3
15 [j]Job 22:26; Ps. 119:6; [1 John 3:21]
16 [k]Is. 65:16
17 [l]Ps. 37:6; Prov. 4:18; Is. 58:8, 10
18 [m]Lev. 26:5, 6; Ps. 3:5; Prov. 3:24
20 [n]Lev. 26:16; Deut. 28:65; Job 17:5 [o]Job 18:14; [Prov. 11:7] [6]Lit. *the breathing out of life*

CHAPTER 12

3 [a]Job 13:2 [1]Lit. *a heart*
4 [b]Job 21:3 [c]Ps. 91:15
5 [d]Prov. 14:2 [2]Or *disaster*
6 [e][Job 9:24; 21:6–16; Ps. 73:12; Jer. 12:1; Mal. 3:15]
10 [f][Acts 17:28] [3]Or *soul*

■ **11:13–20** This looks like good advice for a profligate sinner, but it does not properly apply to Job. Like Bildad, Zophar makes no allowance for mercy. Job has to become righteous before God will accept him.

■ **11:14, 15** It is arrogance on the part of Zophar to think that he knows why Job is suffering. We know from the prologue that it was not because Job had sinned. Job was called by God to join that grand company of innocent sufferers for the glory of the Lord.

■ **12:1—14:22** Job's reply in this long speech starts with a blast of sarcasm against his counselors. He continues to speak to them through 13:19. Beginning in 13:20 Job turns to God, creating a major break in the speech. This inclination of Job to talk to God (to pray) is in notable contrast to the counselors, who never say a word to God. They only talk about Him.

■ **12:4–6** Job agonizes over being made a laughingstock, even to his friends, while evildoers and idolaters live in ease and security.

■ **12:7, 8 ask the beasts . . . speak to the earth.** Like Eliphaz who had called upon revelation and Bildad who had called upon tradition to support their arguments, Job calls on every creature in the universe to bear witness to his argument that the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer.

And the [g]breath of [4]all mankind?
11 Does not the ear test words
And the [5]mouth taste its food?
12 Wisdom *is* with aged men,
And with [6]length of days, understanding.

13 "With Him *are* [h]wisdom and strength,
He has counsel and understanding.
14 If [i]He breaks *a thing* down, it cannot be rebuilt;
If He imprisons a man, there can be no release.
15 If He [j]withholds the waters, they dry up;
If He [k]sends them out, they overwhelm the earth.
16 With Him *are* strength and prudence.
The deceived and the deceiver *are* His.
17 He leads counselors away plundered,
And makes fools of the judges.
18 He loosens the bonds of kings,
And binds their waist with a belt.
19 He leads [7]princes away plundered,
And overthrows the mighty.
20 [l]He deprives the trusted ones of speech,
And takes away the discernment of the elders.
21 [m]He pours contempt on princes,
And [8]disarms the mighty.
22 He [n]uncovers deep things out of darkness,
And brings the shadow of death to light.
23 [o]He makes nations great, and destroys them;
He [9]enlarges nations, and guides them.
24 He takes away the [l]understanding of the chiefs of the people of the earth,
And [p]makes them wander in a pathless wilderness.
25 [q]They grope in the dark without light,
And He makes them [r]stagger like a drunken *man.*

13 "Behold, my eye has seen all *this,*
My ear has heard and understood it.
2 [a]What you know, I also know;
I *am* not inferior to you.
3 [b]But I would speak to the Almighty,
And I desire to reason with God.
4 But you forgers of lies,
[c]You *are* all worthless physicians.
5 Oh, that you would be silent,
And [d]it would be your wisdom!
6 Now hear my reasoning,
And heed the pleadings of my lips.
7 [e]Will you speak [l]wickedly for God,
And talk deceitfully for Him?
8 Will you show partiality for Him?
Will you contend for God?
9 Will it be well when He searches you out?
Or can you mock Him as one mocks a man?

10 [g]Job 27:3; 33:4 [4]Lit. *all flesh of men*
11 [5]*palate*
12 [6]Long life
13 [h]Job 9:4; 36:5
14 [i]Job 11:10; Is. 25:2
15 [j]Deut. 11:17; [1 Kin. 8:35, 36] [k]Gen. 7:11–24
19 [7]Lit. *priests,* but not in a technical sense
20 [l]Job 32:9
21 [m][Job 34:19]; Ps. 107:40; [Dan. 2:21] [8]*loosens the belt of*
22 [n]Dan. 2:22; [1 Cor. 4:5]
23 [o]Is. 9:3; 26:15 [9]Lit. *spreads out*
24 [p]Ps. 107:4 [l]Lit. *heart*
25 [q]Job 5:14; 15:30; 18:18 [r]Ps. 107:27

CHAPTER 13

2 [a]Job 12:3
3 [b]Job 23:3; 31:35
4 [c]Job 6:21; [Jer. 23:32]
5 [d]Job 13:13; 21:5; Prov. 17:28
7 [e]Job 27:4; 36:4 [l]*unrighteously*

■ **12:12** This verse can also be translated as a question: "Shouldn't wisdom be found among the aged?" The verse is irony aimed at the counselors who are old but have not become wise.

■ **12:13–25** In this unit of poetry Job expounds the doctrine of God's sovereign freedom. Some have interpreted this as said tongue-in-cheek, a subtle criticism of God for mismanaging the universe. In this view God is limited, and needs to be "forgiven" by his creatures. But throughout this book, even when Job is raging over his suffering and suggesting doubts about God's justice, he always assumes that God is sovereign, and that man can make no effective objection to what He does. Job wrestles with a mystery, one too deep for the shallow counselors. This part of the speech may have been provoked by Zophar's question in 11:7, "Can you search out the deep things of God?" The poem may also be a reply to Eliphaz's hymn in 5:1–26, where only good things happen to good people, an idea proved false in this stanza.

11 [2]Lit. *exaltation*
13 [3]*Be silent*
14 [f]Job 18:4
15 [g]Ps. 23:4; [Prov. 14:32] [h]Job 27:5
16 [i]Job 8:13
18 [j][Rom. 8:34]
19 [k]Job 7:21; 10:8; Is. 50:8
20 [l]Job 9:34
21 [m]Job 9:34; Ps. 39:10
22 [n]Job 9:16; 14:15
24 [o][Deut. 32:20]; Ps. 13:1 [p]Lam. 2:5
25 [q]Is. 42:3
26 [r]Job 20:11
27 [s]Job 33:11 [4]Lit. *inscribe a print* [5]Lit. *roots*
28 [6]Lit. *He*

10 He will surely rebuke you
If you secretly show partiality.
11 Will not His [2]excellence make you afraid,
And the dread of Him fall upon you?
12 Your platitudes *are* proverbs of ashes,
Your defenses are defenses of clay.

13 "Hold.[3] your peace with me, and let me speak,
Then let come on me what *may!*
14 Why [f]do I take my flesh in my teeth,
And put my life in my hands?
15 [g]Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.
[h]Even so, I will defend my own ways before Him.
16 He also *shall* be my salvation,
For a [i]hypocrite could not come before Him.
17 Listen carefully to my speech,
And to my declaration with your ears.
18 See now, I have prepared *my* case,
I know that I shall be [j]vindicated.
19 [k]Who *is* he *who* will contend with me?
If now I hold my tongue, I perish.

Job's Despondent Prayer

20 "Only[l] two *things* do not do to me,
Then I will not hide myself from You:
21 [m]Withdraw Your hand far from me,
And let not the dread of You make me afraid.
22 Then call, and I will [n]answer;
Or let me speak, then You respond to me.
23 How many *are* my iniquities and sins?
Make me know my transgression and my sin.
24 [o]Why do You hide Your face,
And [p]regard me as Your enemy?
25 [q]Will You frighten a leaf driven to and fro?
And will You pursue dry stubble?
26 For You write bitter things against me,
And [r]make me inherit the iniquities of my youth.
27 [s]You put my feet in the stocks,
And watch closely all my paths.
You [4]set a limit for the [5]soles of my feet.

28 "*Man*[6] decays like a rotten thing,
Like a garment that is moth-eaten.

CHAPTER 14

1 [a]Job 5:7; Eccl. 2:23 [1]*turmoil*
2 [b]Job 8:9; Ps. 90:5, 6, 9; 102:11; 103:15; 144:4; Is. 40:6; James 1:10, 11; 1 Pet. 1:24
3 [c]Ps. 8:4; 144:3

14 "Man *who is* born of woman
Is of few days and [a]full of [1]trouble.
2 [b]He comes forth like a flower and fades away;
He flees like a shadow and does not continue.
3 And [c]do You open Your eyes on such a one,

■ **13:13–27** Job returns to the thought suggested in v. 3. He has decided now that he must have an audience with God.

■ **13:14 put my life in my hands.** He is fearful that he might not survive such an audience.

■ **13:15 Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him.** This verse has often been quoted as the supreme expression of trust in the Lord. Job is confident that he will have an audience with God and that this will bring about his deliverance: "For a hypocrite could not come before Him!" Moreover, v. 18 makes it clear that Job is positive about his being vindicated when he comes before the Lord. The word "vindicated" implies that Job will be shown to be right in his claim that he is innocent of the false charges the counselors have been making against him.

■ **13:23 How many are my iniquities and sins.** Job trusts that if his sins are discovered they will not include the sort of unbridled wickedness that might justify his terrible suffering. See notes on 11:4 and 29:7–17.

■ **13:24 And regard me as Your enemy.** This is the delusive fantasy with which Job is struggling. God never considered Job his enemy.

■ **13:28** This verse is probably the opening line of the poem in 14:1–6. In this poem Job imagines that God is constantly punishing human beings for their misdeeds.

And [d]bring [2]me to judgment with Yourself?
4 Who [e]can bring a clean *thing* out of an unclean?
No one!
5 [f]Since his days *are* determined,
The number of his months *is* with You;
You have appointed his limits, so that he cannot pass.
6 [g]Look away from him that he may [3]rest,
Till [h]like a hired man he finishes his day.

7 "For there is hope for a tree,
If it is cut down, that it will sprout again,
And that its tender shoots will not cease.
8 Though its root may grow old in the earth,
And its stump may die in the ground,
9 *Yet* at the scent of water it will bud
And bring forth branches like a plant.
10 But man dies and [4]is laid away;
Indeed he [5]breathes his last
And where *is* [i]he?
11 *As* water disappears from the sea,
And a river becomes parched and dries up,
12 So man lies down and does not rise.
[j]Till the heavens *are* no more,
They will not awake
Nor be roused from their sleep.

13 "Oh, that You would hide me in the grave,
That You would conceal me until Your wrath is past,
That You would appoint me a set time, and remember me!
14 If a man dies, shall he live *again?*
All the days of my hard service [k]I will wait,
Till my change comes.
15 [l]You shall call, and I will answer You;
You shall desire the work of Your hands.
16 For now [m]You number my steps,
But do not watch over my sin.
17 [n]My transgression *is* sealed up in a bag,
And You [6]cover my iniquity.

18 "But *as* a mountain falls *and* crumbles away,
And *as* a rock is moved from its place;
19 *As* water wears away stones,
And as torrents wash away the soil of the earth;
So You destroy the hope of man.
20 You prevail forever against him, and he passes on;
You change his countenance and send him away.
21 His sons come to honor, and [o]he does not know *it;*
They are brought low, and he does not perceive *it.*
22 But his flesh will be in pain over it,
And his soul will mourn over it."

3 [d][Ps. 143:2] [2]LXX, Syr., Vg. *him*

4 [e][Job 15:14; 25:4; Ps. 51:2, 5, 10; John 3:6; Rom. 5:12; Eph. 2:3]

5 [f]Job 7:1; 21:21; Heb. 9:27

6 [g]Job 7:16, 19; Ps. 39:13 [h]Job 7:1 [3]Lit. *cease*

10 [i]Job 10:21, 22 [4]*lies prostrate* [5]*expires*

12 [j]Ps. 102:25, 26; [Is. 51:6; 65:17; 66:22]; Acts 3:21; [2 Pet. 3:7, 10, 11; Rev. 20:11; 21:1]

14 [k]Job 13:15

15 [l]Job 13:22

16 [m]Job 10:6, 14; 13:27; 31:4; 34:21; Ps. 56:8; 139:1–3; Prov. 5:21; [Jer. 32:19]

17 [n]Deut. 32:32–34 [6]Lit. *plaster over*

21 [o]Eccl. 9:5; Is. 63:16

■ **14:7–22** Having concluded that death is the only escape from suffering, Job suggests that God let him die and then raise him up after His anger has cooled down. The reader, however, knows God was not angry to begin with. This chapter does not clearly teach a doctrine of resurrection, but it shows that the subject was in people's minds.

■ **14:13 that You would hide me in the grave.** Job is doubtful that God will inflict a temporary death, and He concludes that He will not. But he believes in God's ability to do it.

■ **14:14 I will wait.** Here, and in succeeding verses, some translate "will" as "would" (e.g., "I would wait" and "You would call" [v. 15]).

change. A form of the word translated "sprout again" in v. 7.

■ **14:18–22** Job finally concludes that the world will go on as it has in the past, and those suffering like him will continue to have little hope. He declares that God goes so far as to destroy man's hope (v. 19).

CHAPTER 15

1 [a]Job 4:1
2 [1]Lit. *his belly*
4 [2]*meditation* or *complaint*
6 [b]Job 9:20; [Luke 19:22]
7 [c]Job 38:4, 21; Ps. 90:2; Prov. 8:25
8 [d]Job 29:4; Rom. 11:34; [1 Cor. 2:11]
9 [e]Job 12:3; 13:2
10 [f]Job 8:8–10; 12:12; 32:6, 7
11 [3]Or *a secret thing*
12 [4]Or *why do your eyes flash*
14 [g]Job 14:4; Prov. 20:9; [Eccl. 7:20; 1 John 1:8, 10]
15 [h]Job 4:18; 25:5
16 [i]Job 4:19; Ps. 14:3; 53:3 [j]Job 34:7; Prov. 19:28
18 [k]Job 8:8; 20:4
19 [l]Joel 3:17 [5]Or *earth*
20 [m]Ps. 90:12
21 [n]Job 20:21; 1 Thess. 5:3 [6]*Terrifying*
22 [o]Job 14:10–12
23 [p]Ps. 59:15; 109:10 [q]Job 18:12

Eliphaz Accuses Job of Folly

15 Then [a]Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said:

2 "Should a wise man answer with empty knowledge,
And fill [1]himself with the east wind?
3 Should he reason with unprofitable talk,
Or by speeches with which he can do no good?
4 Yes, you cast off fear,
And restrain [2]prayer before God.
5 For your iniquity teaches your mouth,
And you choose the tongue of the crafty.
6 [b]Your own mouth condemns you, and not I;
Yes, your own lips testify against you.

7 "*Are* you the first man *who* was born?
[c]Or were you made before the hills?
8 [d]Have you heard the counsel of God?
Do you limit wisdom to yourself?
9 [e]What do you know that we do not know?
What do you understand that *is* not in us?
10 [f]Both the gray-haired and the aged *are* among us,
Much older than your father.
11 *Are* the consolations of God too small for you,
And the word *spoken* [3]gently with you?
12 Why does your heart carry you away,
And [4]what do your eyes wink at,
13 That you turn your spirit against God,
And let *such* words go out of your mouth?

14 "What[g] *is* man, that he could be pure?
And *he who is* born of a woman, that he could be righteous?
15 [h]If *God* puts no trust in His saints,
And the heavens are not pure in His sight,
16 [i]How much less man, *who is* abominable and filthy,
[j]Who drinks iniquity like water!

17 "I will tell you, hear me;
What I have seen I will declare,
18 What wise men have told,
Not hiding *anything received* [k]from their fathers,
19 To whom alone the [5]land was given,
And [l]no alien passed among them:
20 The wicked man writhes with pain all *his* days,
[m]And the number of years is hidden from the oppressor.
21 [6]Dreadful sounds *are* in his ears;
[n]In prosperity the destroyer comes upon him.
22 He does not believe that he will [o]return from darkness,
For a sword is waiting for him.
23 He [p]wanders about for bread, *saying,* 'Where *is it?*'
He knows [q]that a day of darkness is ready at his hand.
24 Trouble and anguish make him afraid;

■ **15:1–35** Eliphaz begins the second cycle of speeches (15:1—21:34), moving away from the tactful approach he used in chs. 4; 5.

■ **15:3 speeches with which he can do no good.** It is more than peer pressure that has moved Eliphaz. It was the additional raging that he heard coming from Job's lips.

■ **15:7, 8** This list of rhetorical questions drips with sarcasm. In v. 8 Eliphaz returns to Job the very sarcasm Job used on him in 12:2.

■ **15:9** He continues to answer Job using Job's own words. Cf. 12:3; 13:2.

■ **15:10** Job's irony in 12:12 is not lost on Eliphaz. He assures Job that all the elders are on their side, not his.

■ **15:14, 15** Eliphaz harks back to the oracle he received in 4:17. Compare vv. 15, 16 with 4:18, 19.

They overpower him, like a king ready for [7]battle.
25 For he stretches out his hand against God,
And acts defiantly against the Almighty,
26 Running stubbornly against Him
With his strong, embossed shield.

27 "Though[r] he has covered his face with his fatness,
And made *his* waist heavy with fat,
28 He dwells in desolate cities,
In houses which no one inhabits,
Which are destined to become ruins.
29 He will not be rich,
Nor will his wealth [s]continue,
Nor will his possessions overspread the earth.
30 He will not depart from darkness;
The flame will dry out his branches,
And [t]by the breath of His mouth he will go away.
31 Let him not [u]trust in futile *things,* deceiving himself,
For futility will be his reward.
32 It will be accomplished [v]before his time,
And his branch will not be green.
33 He will shake off his unripe grape like a vine,
And cast off his blossom like an olive tree.
34 For the company of hypocrites *will be* barren,
And fire will consume the tents of bribery.
35 [w]They conceive trouble and bring forth futility;
Their womb prepares deceit."

Job Reproaches His Pitiless Friends

16 Then Job answered and said:

2 "I have heard many such things;
[a]Miserable[1] comforters *are* you all!
3 Shall [2]words of wind have an end?
Or what provokes you that you answer?
4 I also could speak as you *do,*
If your soul were in my soul's place.
I could heap up words against you,
And [b]shake my head at you;
5 *But* I would strengthen you with my mouth,
And the comfort of my lips would relieve *your grief.*

6 "Though I speak, my grief is not relieved;
And *if* I remain silent, how am I eased?
7 But now He has [c]worn me out;
You [d]have made desolate all my company.
8 You have shriveled me up,
And it is a [e]witness *against me;*
My leanness rises up against me
And bears witness to my face.
9 [f]He tears *me* in His wrath, and hates me;
He gnashes at me with His teeth;
[g]My adversary sharpens His gaze on me.
10 They [h]gape at me with their mouth,
They [i]strike me reproachfully on the cheek,

24 [7]*attack*

27 [r]Ps. 17:10; 73:7; 119:70

29 [s]Job 20:28; 27:16, 17

30 [t]Job 4:9

31 [u]Job 35:13; Is. 59:4

32 [v]Job 22:16; Ps. 55:23; Eccl. 7:17

35 [w]Ps. 7:14; Is. 59:4; [Hos. 10:13]

CHAPTER 16

2 [a]Job 13:4; 21:34 [1]*Troublesome*

3 [2]Empty words

4 [b]Ps. 22:7; 109:25; Lam. 2:15; Zeph. 2:15; Matt. 27:39

7 [c]Job 7:3 [d]Job 16:20; 19:13–15

8 [e]Job 10:17

9 [f]Job 10:16, 17; 19:11; Hos. 6:1 [g]Job 13:24; 33:10

10 [h]Ps. 22:13; 35:21 [i]Is. 50:6; Lam. 3:30; Mic. 5:1; Matt. 26:67; Mark 14:65; Luke 22:63; Acts 23:2

■ **15:30–35** A grim poetic description of what the counselors mean by perishing.

■ **16:1—17:16** Job dismisses Eliphaz's harangue as a sickening repetition of a defective perspective on suffering.

■ **16:3 that you answer.** Job has grown weary, not of the length of their speeches, but of their failure to say anything helpful.

■ **16:8–14** Again Job imagines God is his adversary. In v. 9 the figure is that of a lion. In vv. 12–14 a graphic warrior figure is employed.

They gather together against me.
11 God [j]has delivered me to the ungodly,
And turned me over to the hands of the wicked.
12 I was at ease, but He has [k]shattered me;
He also has taken *me* by my neck, and shaken me to pieces;
He has [l]set me up for His target,
13 His archers surround me.
He pierces my [3]heart and does not pity;
He pours out my gall on the ground.
14 He breaks me with wound upon wound;
He runs at me like a [4]warrior.

15 "I have sewn sackcloth over my skin,
And [m]laid my [5]head in the dust.
16 My face is [6]flushed from weeping,
And on my eyelids *is* the shadow of death;
17 Although no violence *is* in my hands,
And my prayer *is* pure.

18 "O earth, do not cover my blood,
And [n]let my cry have no *resting* place!
19 Surely even now [o]my witness *is* in heaven,
And my evidence *is* on high.
20 My friends scorn me;
My eyes pour out *tears* to God.
21 [p]Oh, that one might plead for a man with God,
As a man *pleads* for his [7]neighbor!
22 For when a few years are finished,
I shall [q]go the way of no return.

Job Prays for Relief

17 "My spirit is broken,
My days are extinguished,
[a]The grave *is ready* for me.
2 *Are* not mockers with me?
And does not my eye [l]dwell on their [b]provocation?

3 "Now put down a pledge for me with Yourself.
Who *is* he *who* [c]will shake hands with me?
4 For You have hidden their heart from [d]understanding;
Therefore You will not exalt *them.*
5 He who speaks flattery to *his* friends,
Even the eyes of his children will [e]fail.

6 "But He has made me [f]a byword of the people,
And I have become one in whose face men spit.
7 [g]My eye has also grown dim because of sorrow,
And all my members *are* like shadows.

11 [j]Job 1:15, 17
12 [k]Job 9:17 [l]Job 7:20; Lam. 3:12
13 [3]Lit. *kidneys*
14 [4]Vg. *giant*
15 [m]Job 30:19; Ps. 7:5 [5]Lit. *horn*
16 [6]Lit. *red*
18 [n]Job 27:9; [Ps. 66:18]
19 [o]Gen. 31:50; Rom. 1:9; Phil. 1:8; 1 Thess. 2:5
21 [p]Job 31:35; Eccl. 6:10; [Is. 45:9; Rom. 9:20] [7]*friend*
22 [q]Job 10:21; Eccl. 12:5

CHAPTER 17

1 [a]Ps. 88:3, 4
2 [b]1 Sam. 1:6; Job 12:4; 17:6; 30:1, 9; 34:7 [l]Lit. *lodge*
3 [c]Prov. 6:1; 17:18; 22:26
4 [d]Job 12:20; 32:9
5 [e]Job 11:20
6 [f]Job 30:9
7 [g]Ps. 6:7; 31:9

■ **16:18** The earth is personified as a witness to Job's suffering.

■ **16:19** Job believes he has a witness in heaven, a notion that was summarily dismissed by Eliphaz in 5:1. But now the thought has tremendous meaning for Job.

■ **16:22** This verse goes better with ch. 17 (cf. 13:8 note). This is a reminder that the chapter divisions are not original. Job longs for death as a release from his constant pain (14:13), although he expects to live "a few years" longer.

■ **17:3** Job wants God to vindicate him, i.e., to prove to the counselors that he is in the right.

■ **17:4 their heart.** That is, the minds of the counselors.

■ **17:6** Since God has not vindicated him, he continues to hold God responsible for his frightful condition. Cf. 30:10.

■ **17:7** The symptoms of his disease included boils, other skin problems, and nightmares (2:7; 7:5, 14). Here and in 19:20 there is loss of weight; and in 19:17, bad breath, in 30:30, fever; and in 30:17, pain day and night.

8 Upright *men* are astonished at this,
And the innocent stirs himself up against the hypocrite.
9 Yet the righteous will hold to his [h]way,
And he who has [i]clean hands will be stronger and stronger.

10 "But please, [j]come back again, [2]all of you,
For I shall not find *one* wise *man* among you.
11 [k]My days are past,
My purposes are broken off,
Even the [3]thoughts of my heart.
12 They change the night into day;
'The light *is* near,' *they say,* in the face of darkness.
13 If I wait *for* the grave *as* my house,
If I make my bed in the darkness,
14 If I say to corruption, 'You *are* my father,'
And to the worm, 'You *are* my mother and my sister,'
15 Where then *is* my [l]hope?
As for my hope, who can see it?
16 *Will* they go down [m]to the gates of [4]Sheol?
Shall *we have* [n]rest together in the dust?"

Bildad: The Wicked Are Punished

18 Then [a]Bildad the Shuhite answered and said:

2 "How long *till* you put an end to words?
Gain understanding, and afterward we will speak.
3 Why are we counted [b]as beasts,
And regarded as stupid in your sight?
4 [c]You[1] who tear yourself in anger,
Shall the earth be forsaken for you?
Or shall the rock be removed from its place?

5 "The[d] light of the wicked indeed goes out,
And the flame of his fire does not shine.
6 The light is dark in his tent,
[e]And his lamp beside him is put out.
7 The steps of his strength are shortened,
And [f]his own counsel casts him down.
8 For [g]he is cast into a net by his own feet,
And he walks into a snare.
9 The net takes *him* by the heel,
And [h]a snare lays hold of him.
10 A noose *is* hidden for him on the ground,
And a trap for him in the road.
11 [i]Terrors frighten him on every side,
And drive him to his feet.
12 His strength is starved,
And [j]destruction *is* ready at his side.
13 It devours patches of his skin;
The firstborn of death devours his [2]limbs.
14 He is uprooted from [k]the shelter of his tent,
And they parade him before the king of terrors.
15 They dwell in his tent *who are* none of his;

9 [h]Prov. 4:18 [i]Ps. 24:4

10 [j]Job 6:29 [2]So with some Heb. mss., LXX, Syr., Vg.; MT, Tg. *all of them*

11 [k]Job 7:6 [3]*desires*

15 [l]Job 7:6; 13:15; 14:19; 19:10

16 [m]Jon. 2:6 [n]Job 3:17–19; 21:33 [4]The abode of the dead

CHAPTER 18

1 [a]Job 8:1

3 [b]Ps. 73:22

4 [c]Job 13:14 [1]Lit. *one who tears his soul*

5 [d]Job 21:17; Prov. 13:9; 20:20; 24:20

6 [e]Job 21:17; Ps. 18:28

7 [f]Job 5:12, 13; 15:6

8 [g]Job 22:10; Ps. 9:15; 35:8; Is. 24:17, 18

9 [h]Job 5:5

11 [i]Job 20:25; Jer. 6:25

12 [j]Job 15:23

13 [2]*parts*

14 [k]Job 11:20

■ **17:12** Job appears to remember Zophar's words in 11:17.

■ **18:1–21** Bildad accuses Job, impatiently repeating his earlier exposition on the destiny of the wicked (cf. 8:8–19).

■ **18:2–4** Bildad opens his speech with a heartless rebuke of one who is suffering greatly. He has not changed his argument.

■ **18:14 the king of terrors.** The Canaanites understood death as a god whose one lip touched the earth and the other the heavens, so that he swallowed up everything. According to Bildad, "the firstborn of death" following in the footsteps of his father, eats away the skin and devours the limbs of the wicked. According to Is. 25:8, the Lord will "swallow up death forever" (1 Cor. 15:54).

Brimstone is scattered on his dwelling.
16 [l]His roots are dried out below,
And his branch withers above.
17 [m]The memory of him perishes from the earth,
And he has no name [3]among the renowned.
18 [4]He is driven from light into darkness,
And chased out of the world.
19 [n]He has neither son nor posterity among his people,
Nor any remaining in his dwellings.
20 Those [5]in the west are astonished [o]at his day,
As those [6]in the east are frightened.
21 Surely such *are* the dwellings of the wicked,
And this *is* the place *of him who* [p]does not know God."

Job Trusts in His Redeemer

19 Then Job answered and said:

2 "How long will you torment my soul,
And break me in pieces with words?
3 These ten times you have [1]reproached me;
You are not ashamed *that* you [2]have wronged me.
4 And if indeed I have erred,
My error remains with me.
5 If indeed you [a]exalt *yourselves* against me,
And plead my disgrace against me,
6 Know then that [b]God has wronged me,
And has surrounded me with His net.

7 "If I cry out concerning [3]wrong, I am not heard.
If I cry aloud, *there is* no justice.
8 [c]He has [4]fenced up my way, so that I cannot pass;
And He has set darkness in my paths.
9 [d]He has stripped me of my glory.
And taken the crown *from* my head.
10 He breaks me down on every side,
And I am gone;
My [e]hope He has uprooted like a tree.
11 He has also kindled His wrath against me,
And [f]He counts me as *one of* His enemies.
12 His troops come together
And build up their road against me;
They encamp all around my tent.

13 "He[g] has removed my brothers far from me,
And my acquaintances are completely estranged from me.
14 My relatives have failed,
And my close friends have forgotten me.
15 Those who dwell in my house, and my maidservants,
Count me as a stranger;
I am an alien in their sight.
16 I call my servant, but he gives no answer;
I beg him with my mouth.
17 My breath is offensive to my wife,
And I am [5]repulsive to the children of my own body.

16 [l]Job 29:19
17 [m]Job 24:20; [Ps. 34:16]; Prov. 10:7 [3]Lit. *before the outside*, i.e., the distinguished or famous
18 [4]Or *They drive him*
19 [n]Job 27:14, 15; Is. 14:22
20 [o]Ps. 37:13; Jer. 50:27; Obad. 12 [5]Lit. *who came after* [6]Lit. *who have gone before*
21 [p]Jer. 9:3; 1 Thess. 4:5

CHAPTER 19

3 [1]*shamed* or *disgraced* [2]A Jewish tradition *make yourselves strange to me*
5 [a]Ps. 35:26; 38:16; 55:12, 13
6 [b]Job 16:11
7 [3]*violence*
8 [c]Job 3:23; Ps. 88:8; Lam. 3:7, 9 [4]*walled off my way*
9 [d]Job 12:17, 19; Ps. 89:44
10 [e]Job 17:14–16
11 [f]Job 13:24; 33:10
13 [g]Job 16:20; Ps. 31:11; 38:11; 69:8; 88:8, 18
17 [5]Lit. *strange*

■ **19:1–29** In ch. 19 Job accuses God of wronging him and not listening to his plea for justice (vv. 6, 7), of stripping him of honor and attacking him (vv. 9–12), and of alienating his kinsmen and friends (vv. 13–20). Job was wrong on all points. He was wrestling with God over the apparent meaninglessness of his suffering that was actually the work of the Adversary, but ordained by the Lord to accomplish a higher purpose. The counselors, on the other hand, had reduced God and His acts to an impersonal formula. They were incapable of empathy with the agony of Job's predicament or of showing him any mercy.

18 Even [h]young children despise me;
I arise, and they speak against me.
19 [i]All my close friends abhor me,
And those whom I love have turned against me.
20 [j]My bone clings to my skin and to my flesh,
And I have escaped by the skin of my teeth.

21 "Have pity on me, have pity on me, O you my friends,
For the hand of God has struck me!
22 Why do you [k]persecute me as God *does,*
And are not satisfied with my flesh?

23 "Oh, that my words were written!
Oh, that they were inscribed in a book!
24 That they were engraved on a rock
With an iron pen and lead, forever!
25 For I know *that* my Redeemer lives,
And He shall stand at last on the earth;
26 And after my skin is [6]destroyed, this *I know,*
That [l]in my flesh I shall see God,
27 Whom I shall see for myself,
And my eyes shall behold, and not another.
How my [7]heart yearns within me!
28 If you should say, 'How shall we persecute him?'—
Since the root of the matter is found in me,
29 Be afraid of the sword for yourselves;
For wrath *brings* the punishment of the sword,
That you may know *there is* a judgment."

Zophar's Sermon on the Wicked Man

20 Then [a]Zophar the Naamathite answered and said:

2 "Therefore my anxious thoughts make me answer,
Because of the turmoil within me.
3 I have heard the rebuke [1]that reproaches me,
And the spirit of my understanding causes me to answer.

4 "Do you *not* know this of [b]old,
Since man was placed on earth,
5 [c]That the triumphing of the wicked is short,
And the joy of the hypocrite is *but* for a [d]moment?
6 [e]Though his haughtiness mounts up to the heavens,
And his head reaches to the clouds,
7 *Yet* he will perish forever like his own refuse;

18 [h]2 Kin. 2:23; Job 17:6

19 [i]Ps. 38:11; 55:12, 13

20 [j]Job 16:8; 33:21; Ps. 102:5; Lam. 4:8

22 [k]Job 13:24, 25; 16:11; 19:6; Ps. 69:26

26 [l][Ps. 17:15]; Matt. 5:8; 1 Cor. 13:12; [1 John 3:2] [6]Lit. *struck off*

27 [7]Lit. *kidneys*

CHAPTER 20

1 [a]Job 11:1

3 [1]Lit. *of my insulting correction*

4 [b]Job 8:8; 15:10

5 [c]Ps. 37:35, 36 [d][Job 8:13; 13:16; 15:34; 27:8]

6 [e]Is. 14:13, 14

■ **19:20 the skin of my teeth.** This idiom has entered the English language through the Bible, but it is hard to see how the figure suggests a narrow escape. Some suggest that the phrase means "with only my skin or gums remaining." His teeth would be lost.

■ **19:21** Job needed heartfelt friendship (6:14), but nothing of the sort was possible from his counselors who only added to his misery.

■ **19:23, 24** Job has an important message that he wants permanently inscribed for posterity. Through the inspiration of the Spirit his words are preserved for all time in the Bible (cf. Mark 14:9).

■ **19:25 I know that my Redeemer lives.** The Hebrew word translated "Redeemer" can also be rendered "Avenger," "Guarantor," "Vindicator," or "Kinsman-Redeemer" (Ruth 2:20 note). Job's words are clear, but from his perspective, who does he expect to help him? The prologue reveals that God was not Job's enemy. Indeed, God will become his vindicator (42:7). Job seems to be thinking of the Redeemer as a third party (16:19–21).

He shall stand at last on the earth. In Job's mind this Vindicator will be both heavenly (16:19) and earthly (able to stand on the earth).

■ **19:26 in my flesh.** The meaning of the preposition "in" could be either "in" my flesh or "apart from" my flesh. Since the book does touch on the idea of resurrection in ch. 14, it seems likely that when death is spoken of in v. 26, resurrection is in mind here, and the translation should be "in" my flesh. What is certain is that Job believes he has a Redeemer who loves him and for whom his heart yearns (v. 27). The whole passage is strongly evocative of every sinner's need for the one Mediator who is both God and man (1 Tim. 2:5, 6).

■ **20:1–29** Ch. 20 is another eloquent statement of the fate of the wicked. In it, Zophar expresses the truth of the moral governance of the world by God, but fails to make a correct application of it.

■ **20:2 the turmoil within me.** Job's closing words in 19:28, 29 have not been lost on Zophar.

Those who have seen him will say, 'Where is he?'
8 He will fly away [f]like a dream, and not be found;
Yes, he [g]will be chased away like a vision of the night.
9 The eye *that* saw him will *see him* no more,
Nor will his place behold him anymore.
10 His children will seek the favor of the poor,
And his hands will restore his wealth.
11 His bones are full of [h]his youthful vigor,
[i]But it will lie down with him in the dust.

12 "Though evil is sweet in his mouth,
And he hides it under his tongue,
13 *Though* he spares it and does not forsake it,
But still keeps it in his [2]mouth,
14 *Yet* his food in his stomach turns sour;
It becomes cobra venom within him.
15 He swallows down riches
And vomits them up again;
God casts them out of his belly.
16 He will suck the poison of cobras;
The viper's tongue will slay him.
17 He will not see [j]the streams,
The rivers flowing with honey and cream.
18 He will restore that for which he labored,
And will not swallow *it* down;
From the proceeds of business
He will get no enjoyment.
19 For he has [3]oppressed *and* forsaken the poor,
He has violently seized a house which he did not build.

20 "Because[k] he knows no quietness in his [4]heart,
He will not save anything he desires.
21 Nothing is left for him to eat;
Therefore his well-being will not last.
22 In his self-sufficiency he will be in distress;
Every hand of [5]misery will come against him.
23 *When* he is about to fill his stomach,
God will cast on him the fury of His wrath,
And will rain *it* on him while he is eating.
24 [l]He will flee from the iron weapon;
A bronze bow will pierce him through.
25 It is drawn, and comes out of the body;
Yes, [m]the glittering *point comes* out of his [6]gall.
[n]Terrors *come* upon him;
26 Total darkness *is* reserved for his treasures.
[o]An unfanned fire will consume him;
It shall go ill with him who is left in his tent.
27 The heavens will reveal his iniquity,
And the earth will rise up against him.
28 The increase of his house will depart,
And his goods will flow away in the day of His [p]wrath.
29 [q]This *is* the portion from God for a wicked man,
The heritage appointed to him by God."

8 [f]Ps. 73:20; 90:5 [g]Job 18:18; 27:21–23
11 [h]Job 13:26 [i]Job 21:26
13 [2]Lit. *palate*
17 [j]Ps. 36:8; Jer. 17:8
19 [3]*crushed*
20 [k]Eccl. 5:13–15 [4]Lit. *belly*
22 [5]Or *the wretched* or *sufferer*
24 [l]Is. 24:18; Amos 5:19
25 [m]Job 16:13 [n]Job 18:11, 14 [6]Gallbladder
26 [o]Ps. 21:9
28 [p]Job 20:15; 21:30
29 [q]Job 27:13; 31:2, 3

■ **20:29 This is the portion from God for a wicked man.** What Zophar teaches will ultimately come to pass, but sadly, he has no word to say about God's mercy. Even in his earlier speech in 11:13–20, where he called on Job to change his ways, there is no mention of mercy. People get God's blessing, according to Zophar, only by earning it.

Job's Discourse on the Wicked

21 Then Job answered and said:

2 "Listen carefully to my speech,
And let this be your [1]consolation.
3 Bear with me that I may speak,
And after I have spoken, keep [a]mocking.

4 "As for me, *is* my complaint against man?
And if *it were,* why should I not be impatient?
5 Look at me and be astonished;
[b]Put *your* hand over *your* mouth.
6 Even when I remember I am terrified,
And trembling takes hold of my flesh.
7 [c]Why do the wicked live *and* become old,
Yes, become mighty in power?
8 Their descendants are established with them in their sight,
And their offspring before their eyes.
9 Their houses *are* safe from fear,
[d]Neither *is* [2]the rod of God upon them.
10 Their bull breeds without failure;
Their cow calves [e]without miscarriage.
11 They send forth their little ones like a flock,
And their children dance.
12 They sing to the tambourine and harp,
And rejoice to the sound of the flute.
13 They [f]spend their days in wealth,
And [3]in a moment go down to the [4]grave.
14 [g]Yet they say to God, 'Depart from us,
For we do not desire the knowledge of Your ways.
15 [h]Who *is* the Almighty, that we should serve Him?
And [i]what profit do we have if we pray to Him?'
16 Indeed [5]their prosperity *is* not in their hand;
[j]The counsel of the wicked is far from me.

17 "How often is the lamp of the wicked put out?
How often does their destruction come upon them,
The sorrows *God* [k]distributes in His anger?
18 [l]They are like straw before the wind,
And like chaff that a storm [6]carries away.
19 *They say,* 'God [7]lays up [8]one's iniquity [m]for his children';
Let Him recompense him, that he may know *it.*
20 Let his eyes see his destruction,
And [n]let him drink of the wrath of the Almighty.
21 For what does he care about his household after him,
When the number of his months is cut in half?

22 "Can[o] *anyone* teach God knowledge,
Since He judges those on high?
23 One dies in his full strength,
Being wholly at ease and secure;
24 His [9]pails are full of milk,

CHAPTER 21

2 [1]*comfort*

3 [a]Job 16:10

5 [b]Judg. 18:19; Job 13:5; 29:9; 40:4

7 [c]Job 12:6; Ps. 17:10, 14; 73:3, 12; [Jer. 12:1]; Hab. 1:13, 16

9 [d]Ps. 73:5 [2]The rod of God's chastisement

10 [e]Ex. 23:26

13 [f]Job 21:23; 36:11 [3]Without lingering [4]Or *Sheol*

14 [g]Job 22:17

15 [h]Ex. 5:2; Job 22:17; 34:9 [i]Job 35:3; Mal. 3:14

16 [j]Job 22:18; Ps. 1:1; Prov. 1:10 [5]Lit. *their goal*

17 [k][Job 31:2, 3; Luke 12:46]

18 [l]Ps. 1:4; 35:5; Is. 17:13; Hos. 13:3 [6]*steals away*

19 [m][Ex. 20:5]; Jer. 31:29; Ezek. 18:2 [7]*stores up* [8]Lit. *his*

20 [n]Ps. 75:8; Is. 51:17; Jer. 25:15; Rev. 14:10; 19:15

22 [o]Job 35:11; 36:22; [Is. 40:13; 45:9; Rom. 11:34; 1 Cor. 2:16]

24 [9]LXX, Vg. *bowels;* Syr. *sides;* Tg. *breasts*

■ **21:1–34** Job closes this second cycle with a firm rejection of the friends' arguments that the wicked always suffer. Note how he alludes to their very words. Cf. 20:11 with 21:7; 8:19 with 21:8; 18:5 with 21:17; 5:4 and 20:10 with 21:19; 20:5–7 with 21:28–30.

■ **21:5 Look at me and be astonished; Put your hand over your mouth.** If they had any compassion, Job thinks that they would stop accusing him and lying about him.

■ **21:7 Why do the wicked live.** Job admits that he is perplexed. He has no answer. The counselors assumed they knew exactly what was going on (cf. John 9:41).

■ **21:22 Can anyone teach God knowledge.** Job's high view of God only makes his problem more perplexing.

And the marrow of his bones is moist.
25 Another man dies in the bitterness of his soul,
Never having eaten with pleasure.
26 They [p]lie down alike in the dust,
And worms cover them.

27 "Look, I know your thoughts,
And the schemes *with which* you would wrong me.
28 For you say,
'Where *is* the house of the prince?
And where *is* [1]the tent,
The dwelling place of the wicked?'
29 Have you not asked those who travel the road?
And do you not know their signs?
30 [q]For the wicked are reserved for the day of doom;
They shall be brought out on the day of wrath.
31 Who condemns his way to his face?
And who repays him *for what* he has done?
32 Yet he shall be brought to the grave,
And a vigil kept over the tomb.
33 The clods of the valley shall be sweet to him;
[r]Everyone shall follow him,
As countless *have gone* before him.
34 How then can you comfort me with empty words,
Since [2]falsehood remains in your answers?"

Eliphaz Accuses Job of Wickedness

22 Then [a]Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said:

2 "Can[b] a man be profitable to God,
Though he who is wise may be profitable to himself?
3 *Is it* any pleasure to the Almighty that you are righteous?
Or *is it* gain *to Him* that you make your ways blameless?

4 "Is it because of your fear of Him that He corrects you,
And enters into judgment with you?
5 *Is* not your wickedness great,
And your iniquity without end?
6 For you have [c]taken pledges from your brother for no reason,
And stripped the naked of their clothing.
7 You have not given the weary water to drink,
And you [d]have withheld bread from the hungry.
8 But the [1]mighty man possessed the land,
And the honorable man dwelt in it.
9 You have sent widows away empty,
And the [2]strength of the fatherless was crushed.
10 Therefore snares *are* all around you,
And sudden fear troubles you,
11 Or darkness *so that* you cannot see;
And an abundance of [e]water covers you.

12 "Is not God in the height of heaven?
And see the highest stars, how lofty they are!

26 [p]Job 3:13; 20:11; Eccl. 9:2
28 [1]Vg. omits *the tent*
30 [q]Job 20:29; [Prov. 16:4; 2 Pet. 2:9]
33 [r]Heb. 9:27
34 [2]*faithlessness*

CHAPTER 22

1 [a]Job 4:1; 15:1; 42:9
2 [b]Job 35:7; [Ps. 16:2; Luke 17:10]
6 [c][Ex. 22:26, 27]; Deut. 24:6, 10, 17; Job 24:3, 9; Ezek. 18:16
7 [d]Deut. 15:7; Job 31:17; Is. 58:7; Ezek. 18:7; Matt. 25:42
8 [1]Lit. *man of arm*
9 [2]Lit. *arms*
11 [e]Job 38:34; Ps. 69:1, 2; 124:5; Lam. 3:54

■ **22:1–30** Eliphaz begins the third cycle of speeches (22:1—26:14) listing Job's sins and calling on him to repent.

■ **22:2, 3** Eliphaz reacts to Job's statement that God allows wickedness to go unpunished, and he also says that human uprightness adds nothing to Him.

■ **22:3** The sense may be, "Would it please God if you were vindicated?"

■ **22:5** Eliphaz reached the conclusion Zophar and Bildad had already expressed—that Job's sins are endless.

■ **22:6–11** Here is a direct personal attack on Job for specific sins, especially social sins against the poor and widows. Later Job will emphasize his social righteousness (chs. 29, 31).

■ **22:12–14** Eliphaz attacks Job's complaint that God is absent (13:24).

13 And you say, [f]'What does God know?
Can He judge through the deep darkness?
14 [g]Thick clouds cover Him, so that He cannot see,
And He walks above the circle of heaven.'
15 Will you keep to the old way
Which wicked men have trod,
16 Who [h]were cut down before their time,
Whose foundations were swept away by a flood?
17 [i]They said to God, 'Depart from us!
What can the Almighty do to [3]them?'
18 Yet He filled their houses with good *things;*
But the counsel of the wicked is far from me.

19 "The[j] righteous see *it* and are glad,
And the innocent laugh at them:
20 'Surely our [4]adversaries are cut down,
And the fire consumes their remnant.'

21 "Now acquaint yourself with Him, and [k]be at peace;
Thereby good will come to you.
22 Receive, please, [l]instruction from His mouth,
And [m]lay up His words in your heart.
23 If you return to the Almighty, you will be built up;
You will remove iniquity far from your tents.
24 Then you will [n]lay your gold in the dust,
And the *gold* of Ophir among the stones of the brooks.
25 Yes, the Almighty will be your [5]gold
And your precious silver;
26 For then you will have your [o]delight in the Almighty,
And lift up your face to God.
27 [p]You will make your prayer to Him,
He will hear you,
And you will pay your vows.
28 You will also declare a thing,
And it will be established for you;
So light will shine on your ways.
29 When they cast *you* down, and you say, 'Exaltation *will come!*'
Then [q]He will save the humble *person.*
30 He will *even* deliver one who is not innocent;
Yes, he will be delivered by the purity of your hands."

Job Proclaims God's Righteous Judgments

23 Then Job answered and said:

2 "Even today my [a]complaint is bitter;
[1]My hand is listless because of my groaning.
3 [b]Oh, that I knew where I might find Him,
That I might come to His seat!
4 I would present *my* case before Him,
And fill my mouth with arguments.
5 I would know the words *which* He would answer me,
And understand what He would say to me.
6 [c]Would He contend with me in His great power?
No! But He would take *note* of me.

13 [f]Ps. 73:11
14 [g]Ps. 139:11, 12
16 [h]Job 14:19; 15:32; Ps. 90:5; Is. 26:2; Matt. 7:26, 27
17 [i]Job 21:14, 15 [3]LXX, Syr. *us*
19 [j]Ps. 52:6; 58:10; 107:42
20 [4]LXX *substance is*
21 [k][Ps. 34:10]; Is. 27:5
22 [l]Job 6:10; 23:12; Prov. 2:6 [m][Ps. 119:11]
24 [n]2 Chr. 1:15
25 [5]Ancient vss. suggest *defense;* MT *gold,* as in v. 24
26 [o]Job 27:10; Ps. 37:4; Is. 58:14
27 [p]Job 11:13; 33:26; [Is. 58:9–11]
29 [q]Job 5:11; [Matt. 23:12; James 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5]

CHAPTER 23

2 [a]Job 7:11 [1]So with MT, Tg., Vg.; LXX, Syr. *His*
3 [b]Job 13:3, 18; 16:21; 31:35
6 [c]Is. 57:16

It is not unnatural for Job, in the midst of suffering, to complain that God is either too observant and intrusive to leave him alone (7:17–19; 10:8; 16:9), or too far away.

■ **23:1–12** Job's thoughts vacillate. In ch. 9 he doubted God would give him a hearing. In ch. 13 he is convinced he will get a hearing and be vindicated. In 17:1 he is convinced only death awaits him, but also his counselors will not triumph and he will be vindicated (17:10–16). That conviction reaches its zenith in 19:25–27, and from then on he never again doubts it, as these verses and especially ch. 31 prove.

7 There the upright could reason with Him,
And I would be delivered forever from my Judge.

8 "Look,[d] I go forward, but He is not *there,*
And backward, but I cannot perceive Him;
9 When He works on the left hand, I cannot behold *Him;*
When He turns to the right hand, I cannot see *Him.*
10 But [e]He knows the way that I take;
When [f]He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold.
11 [g]My foot has held fast to His steps;
I have kept His way and not turned aside.
12 I have not departed from the [h]commandment of His lips;
[i]I have treasured the words of His mouth
More than my [2]necessary *food.*

13 "But He *is* unique, and who can make Him change?
And *whatever* [j]His soul desires, *that* He does.
14 For He performs *what is* [k]appointed for me,
And many such *things are* with Him.
15 Therefore I am terrified at His presence;
When I consider *this,* I am afraid of Him.
16 For God [l]made my heart weak,
And the Almighty terrifies me;
17 Because I was not [m]cut off [3]from the presence of darkness,
And He did *not* hide deep darkness from my face.

Job Complains of Violence on the Earth

24 "*Since* [a]times are not hidden from the Almighty,
Why do those who know Him see not His [b]days?

2 "*Some* remove [c]landmarks;
They seize flocks violently and feed *on them;*
3 They drive away the donkey of the fatherless;
They [d]take the widow's ox as a pledge.
4 They push the needy off the road;
All the [e]poor of the land are forced to hide.
5 Indeed, *like* wild donkeys in the desert,
They go out to their work, searching for food.
The wilderness *yields* food for them *and* for *their* children.
6 They gather their fodder in the field
And glean in the vineyard of the wicked.
7 They [f]spend the night naked, without clothing,
And have no covering in the cold.
8 They are wet with the showers of the mountains,
And [g]huddle around the rock for want of shelter.

9 "*Some* snatch the fatherless from the breast,
And take a pledge from the poor.
10 They cause *the poor* to go naked, without [h]clothing;
And they take away the sheaves from the hungry.
11 They press out oil within their walls,
And tread winepresses, yet suffer thirst.
12 The dying groan in the city,

8 [d]Job 9:11; 35:14
10 [e][Ps. 1:6; 139:1–3] [f][Ps. 17:3; 66:10; James 1:12]
11 [g]Job 31:7; Ps. 17:5
12 [h]Job 6:10; 22:22 [i]Ps. 44:18 [2]Lit. *appointed portion*
13 [j][Ps. 115:3]
14 [k][1 Thess. 3:2–4]
16 [l]Ps. 22:14
17 [m]Job 10:18, 19 [3]Or *by* or *before*

CHAPTER 24

1 [a][Acts 1:7] [b][Is. 2:12]; Jer. 46:10; [Obad. 15]; Zeph. 1:7
2 [c][Deut. 19:14; 27:17]; Prov. 22:28; 23:10; Hos. 5:10
3 [d][Deut. 24:6, 10, 12, 17]; Job 22:6, 9
4 [e]Job 29:16; Prov. 28:28
7 [f]Ex. 22:26, 27; [Deut. 24:12, 13]; Job 22:6; [James 2:15, 16]
8 [g]Lam. 4:5
10 [h]Job 31:19

■ **23:8** Job's God is invisible but He has an all-seeing eye (v. 10).

■ **24:1–25** Job has not yet learned the important lesson that justice does not operate mechanically in this world, but according to the divine will. If it were not so, the human race would have perished long ago. This chapter alternates between descriptions of the fortunate wicked and the sufferings of their victims, with emphasis on the sufferings. Job wants the wicked to be judged so that those who know God will see it and know that God is just. The chapter shows Job's hatred of wickedness.

And the souls of the wounded cry out;
Yet God does not charge *them* with wrong.

13 "There are those who rebel against the light;
They do not know its ways
Nor abide in its paths.
14 [i]The murderer rises with the light;
He kills the poor and needy;
And in the night he is like a thief.
15 [j]The eye of the adulterer waits for the twilight,
[k]Saying, 'No eye will see me';
And he [l]disguises *his* face.
16 In the dark they break into houses
Which they marked for themselves in the daytime;
[l]They do not know the light.
17 For the morning is the same to them as the shadow of death;
If *someone* recognizes *them,*
They are in the terrors of the shadow of death.

18 "They *should be* swift on the face of the waters,
Their portion *should be* cursed in the earth,
So that no *one would* turn into the way of their vineyards.
19 As drought and heat [2]consume the snow waters,
So [3]the grave *consumes those who* have sinned.
20 The womb *should* forget him,
The worm *should* feed sweetly on him;
[m]He *should* be remembered no more,
And wickedness *should* be broken like a tree.
21 For he [4]preys on the barren *who* do not bear,
And does no good for the widow.

22 "But *God* draws the mighty away with His power;
He rises up, but no *man* is sure of life.
23 He gives them security, and they rely *on it;*
Yet [n]His eyes *are* on their ways.
24 They are exalted for a little while,
Then they are gone.
They are brought low;
They are [5]taken out of the way like all *others;*
They dry out like the heads of grain.

25 "Now if *it is* not *so,* who will prove me a liar,
And make my speech worth nothing?"

Bildad: How Can Man Be Righteous?

25 Then [a]Bildad the Shuhite answered and said:

2 "Dominion and fear *belong* to Him;
He makes peace in His high places.
3 [l]Is there any number to His armies?
Upon whom does [b]His light not rise?

14 [i]Ps. 10:8
15 [j]Prov. 7:7–10 [k]Ps. 10:11 [l]Lit. *puts a covering on his face*
16 [l][John 3:20]
19 [2]Lit. *seize* [3]Or *Sheol*
20 [m]Job 18:17; Ps. 34:16; Prov. 10:7
21 [4]Lit. *feeds on*
23 [n]Ps. 11:4; [Prov. 15:3]
24 [5]Lit. *gathered up*

CHAPTER 25

1 [a]Job 8:1; 18:1
3 [b]James 1:17 [l]Can His armies be counted?

■ **24:18–24** Some think these words are an unannounced quotation from the counselors since the views expressed here seem more consistent with their positions than Job's. Others think the whole chapter is an attempt by early editors to make Job sound more orthodox. But Job may have a reason for seeming to adopt the counselor's argument.

■ **24:23, 24** These verses must be connected with v. 1 in order to understand the point of the chapter. Job is trying to show that, though the wicked are punished, it takes place little by little (vv. 23, 24), while what the righteous want to see is justice meted out completely. Job's thought anticipates the "day of the LORD" doctrine of the prophets, which looks for the final judgment day.

■ **25:1–6** Bildad makes no new argument, but repeats what has already been said about God's dominion, power, and purity.

4 [c]Job 4:17; 15:14; Ps. 130:3; 143:2 [d][Job 14:4]

5 [e]Job 15:15

6 [f]Ps. 22:6

CHAPTER 26

6 [a][Ps. 139:8]; Prov. 15:11; [Heb. 4:13]

7 [b]Job 9:8; Ps. 24:2; 104:2

8 [c]Job 37:11; Prov. 30:4 [1]*do not break*

10 [d][Job 38:1–11]; Ps. 33:7; 104:9; Prov. 8:29; Jer. 5:22

11 [2]*amazed*

12 [e]Ex. 14:21; Job 9:13; Is. 51:15; [Jer. 31:35] [3]Heb. *rahab*

13 [f][Job 9:8]; Ps. 33:6 [g]Is. 27:1

CHAPTER 27

2 [a]Job 34:5

4 [c]How then can man be righteous before God?
Or how can he be [d]pure *who is* born of a woman?
5 If even the moon does not shine,
And the stars are not pure in His [e]sight,
6 How much less man, *who is* [f]a maggot,
And a son of man, *who is* a worm?"

Job: Man's Frailty and God's Majesty

26 But Job answered and said:

2 "How have you helped *him who is* without power?
How have you saved the arm *that has* no strength?
3 How have you counseled *one who has* no wisdom?
And *how* have you declared sound advice to many?
4 To whom have you uttered words?
And whose spirit came from you?

5 "The dead tremble,
Those under the waters and those inhabiting them.
6 [a]Sheol *is* naked before Him,
And Destruction has no covering.
7 [b]He stretches out the north over empty space;
He hangs the earth on nothing.
8 [c]He binds up the water in His thick clouds,
Yet the clouds [1]are not broken under it.
9 He covers the face of *His* throne,
And spreads His cloud over it.
10 [d]He drew a circular horizon on the face of the waters,
At the boundary of light and darkness.
11 The pillars of heaven tremble,
And are [2]astonished at His rebuke.
12 [e]He stirs up the sea with His power,
And by His understanding He breaks up [3]the storm.
13 [f]By His Spirit He adorned the heavens;
His hand pierced [g]the fleeing serpent.
14 Indeed these *are* the mere edges of His ways,
And how small a whisper we hear of Him!
But the thunder of His power who can understand?"

Job Maintains His Integrity

27 Moreover Job continued his discourse, and said:

2 "*As* God lives, [a]*who* has taken away my justice,

■ **25:4 be righteous before God.** Human impurity is a given, but what is missing here is a hint of grace. Paul, who developed the doctrine of the total depravity of man in Romans, did so as a background for God's marvelous grace. Bildad does not think in terms of grace.

■ **25:5, 6 a maggot . . . a worm.** Bildad risks overstating the depth of human worthlessness because he has a pessimistic view of man (cf. Eliphaz in 15:14–16). The doctrine of total depravity is not pessimistic. Even in sin human beings retain the image of God, giving each person dignity and value.

■ **26:1–14** This chapter falls into distinct parts: vv. 1–4 and vv. 5–14. This has led some to say that only the opening verses are the words of Job. Notice the ironic use of rhetorical questions ending with the suggestion (v.4) that his counselors represent some outside source.

■ **26:5–14** These verses celebrate God's omnipotence. They are not unlike Job's words in 9:5–10, and need not be assigned, as they sometimes are, to one of the counselors.

■ **26:5, 6** Unlike the Canaanite gods, who each had a restricted domain of power, the true God is Lord even of Sheol (Prov. 15:11), the supposed domain of Mot, the god of death.

■ **26:7, 8** Job's purpose here is not to teach the science of space or weather. but to glorify God through the mysteries of His work in nature.

■ **26:11 The pillars of heaven.** Here possibly is a reference to the mountains, that often reach into the clouds and appear to support the sky.

■ **26:12 stirs up the sea.** God rules the supposed dominion of Yam, the Canaanite god of the sea. Jesus Christ showed He was the true God of His ancient people when He calmed the sea in Matt. 8:23–27.

the storm. In Hebrew, "Rahab," a mystical Canaanite monster of the deep, similar to Leviathan. This poetic imagery enriches the concept of God's great power over the boisterous sea (Ps. 89:9, 10).

■ **27:1–12** These verses are directed at the counselors. With an oath founded on God's existence, Job denies their false accusations, and at the same time asserts his integrity.

And the Almighty, *who* has made my soul bitter,
3 As long as my breath *is* in me,
And the breath of God in my nostrils,
4 My lips will not speak wickedness,
Nor my tongue utter deceit.
5 Far be it from me
That I should say you are right;
Till I die [b]I will not put away my integrity from me.
6 My righteousness I [c]hold fast, and will not let it go;
[d]My heart shall not [1]reproach *me* as long as I live.

7 "May my enemy be like the wicked,
And he who rises up against me like the unrighteous.
8 [e]For what is the hope of the hypocrite,
Though he may gain *much,*
If God takes away his life?
9 [f]Will God hear his cry
When trouble comes upon him?
10 [g]Will he delight himself in the Almighty?
Will he always call on God?

11 "I will teach you [2]about the hand of God;
What *is* with the Almighty I will not conceal.
12 Surely all of you have seen *it;*
Why then do you behave with complete nonsense?

13 "This[h] is the portion of a wicked man with God,
And the heritage of oppressors, received from the Almighty:
14 [i]If his children are multiplied, *it is* for the sword;
And his offspring shall not be satisfied with bread.
15 Those who survive him shall be buried in death,
And [j]their[3] widows shall not weep,
16 Though he heaps up silver like dust,
And piles up clothing like clay—
17 He may pile *it* up, but [k]the just will wear *it,*
And the innocent will divide the silver.
18 He builds his house like a [4]moth,
[l]Like a [5]booth *which* a watchman makes.
19 The rich man will lie down,
[6]But not be gathered *up;*
He opens his eyes,
And he *is* [m]no more.
20 [n]Terrors overtake him like a flood;
A tempest steals him away in the night.
21 The east wind carries him away, and he is gone;
It sweeps him out of his place.
22 It hurls against him and does not [o]spare;
He flees desperately from its [7]power.
23 *Men* shall clap their hands at him,
And shall hiss him out of his place.

Job's Discourse on Wisdom

28 "Surely there is a mine for silver,
And a place *where* gold is refined.

5 [b]Job 2:9; 13:15

6 [c]Job 2:3; 33:9 [d]Acts 24:16 [1]*reprove*

8 [e]Matt. 16:26; Luke 12:20

9 [f]Job 35:12, 13; Ps. 18:41; Prov. 1:28; 28:9; [Is. 1:15]; Jer. 14:12; Ezek. 8:18; [Mic. 3:4; John 9:31; James 4:3]

10 [g]Job 22:26, 27; [Ps. 37:4; Is. 58:14]

11 [2]Or *by*

13 [h]Job 20:29

14 [i]Deut. 28:41; Esth. 9:10; Hos. 9:13

15 [j]Ps. 78:64 [3]Lit. *his*

17 [k]Prov. 28:8; [Eccl. 2:26]

18 [l]Is. 1:8; Lam. 2:6 [4]So with MT, Vg.; LXX, Syr. *spider* (cf. 8:14); Tg. *decay* [5]Temporary shelter

19 [m]Job 7:8, 21; 20:7 [6]So with MT, Tg.; LXX, Syr. *But shall not add* (i.e., do it again); Vg. *But take away nothing*

20 [n]Job 18:11

22 [o]Jer. 13:14; Ezek. 5:11; 24:14 [7]Lit. *hand*

■ **27:7–10** Curses like these are found in the Psalms (Ps. 109:6–15; 139:19–22). See Introduction to Psalms.

■ **27:13–23** Job turns to discuss the fate of the wicked, a topic overworked by the counselors. His comments show that he understands it as well as they do. But Job makes the counselors, and not himself, the implied objects of the destiny described.

■ **28:1–28** The new form of ch. 28 indicates that the disputation or dialogue is over. Now a different type of wisdom literature is presented: the

CHAPTER 28

2 [1]Lit. *dust*

8 [2]Lit. *sons of pride*, figurative of the great lions

9 [3]At the base

12 [a]Eccl. 7:24

13 [b]Prov. 3:15

14 [c]Job 28:22

15 [d]Prov. 3:13–15; 8:10, 11, 19

17 [e]Prov. 8:10; 16:16 [4]*vessels*

18 [f]Prov. 3:15; 8:11 [5]Heb. *ramoth*

19 [g]Prov. 8:19

20 [h]Job 28:12; [Ps. 111:10; Prov. 1:7; 9:10]

21 [6]*heaven*

22 [i]Job 28:14 [7]Heb. *Abaddon*

24 [j][Ps. 11:4; 33:13, 14; 66:7; Prov. 15:3]

25 [k]Ps. 135:7

26 [l]Job 37:3; 38:25

2 Iron is taken from the [1]earth,
And copper *is* smelted *from* ore.
3 *Man* puts an end to darkness,
And searches every recess
For ore in the darkness and the shadow of death.
4 He breaks open a shaft away from people;
In places forgotten by feet
They hang far away from men;
They swing to and fro.
5 *As for* the earth, from it comes bread,
But underneath it is turned up as by fire;
6 Its stones *are* the source of sapphires,
And it contains gold dust.
7 *That* path no bird knows,
Nor has the falcon's eye seen it.
8 The [2]proud lions have not trodden it,
Nor has the fierce lion passed over it.
9 He puts his hand on the flint;
He overturns the mountains [3]at the roots.
10 He cuts out channels in the rocks,
And his eye sees every precious thing.
11 He dams up the streams from trickling;
What is hidden he brings forth to light.

12 "But[a] where can wisdom be found?
And where *is* the place of understanding?
13 Man does not know its [b]value,
Nor is it found in the land of the living.
14 [c]The deep says, '*It is* not in me';
And the sea says, '*It is* not with me.'
15 It [d]cannot be purchased for gold,
Nor can silver be weighed *for* its price.
16 It cannot be valued in the gold of Ophir,
In precious onyx or sapphire.
17 Neither [e]gold nor crystal can equal it,
Nor can it be exchanged for [4]jewelry of fine gold.
18 No mention shall be made of [5]coral or quartz,
For the price of wisdom *is* above [f]rubies.
19 The topaz of Ethiopia cannot equal it,
Nor can it be valued in pure [g]gold.

20 "From[h] where then does wisdom come?
And where *is* the place of understanding?
21 It is hidden from the eyes of all living,
And concealed from the birds of the [6]air.
22 [i]Destruction[7] and Death say,
'We have heard a report about it with our ears.'
23 God understands its way,
And He knows its place.
24 For He looks to the ends of the earth,
And [j]sees under the whole heavens,
25 [k]To establish a weight for the wind,
And apportion the waters by measure.
26 When He [l]made a law for the rain,
And a path for the thunderbolt,

standard wisdom like that of the Book of Proverbs. The author of Job reflects on the lack of wisdom displayed so far in the dialogue. The subject is the elusiveness of true wisdom (cf. the refrain in vv. 12, 20). The poem ends (v. 28) with the answer to the question asked in the refrain, "Where can wisdom be found?"

■ **28:1–11** Man, the technologist, gathers treasure from the hidden recesses of the earth.

27 Then He saw [g]*wisdom* and declared it;
He prepared it, indeed, He searched it out.
28 And to man He said,
'Behold, [m]the fear of the Lord, that *is* wisdom,
And to depart from evil *is* understanding.' "

Job's Summary Defense

29 Job further continued his discourse, and said:

2 "Oh, that I were as *in* months [a]past,
As *in* the days *when* God [b]watched over me;
3 [c]When His lamp shone upon my head,
And when by His light I walked *through* darkness;
4 Just as I was in the days of my prime,
When [d]the friendly counsel of God *was* over my tent;
5 When the Almighty *was* yet with me,
When my children *were* around me;
6 When [e]my steps were bathed with [f]cream,
And [f]the rock poured out rivers of oil for me!

7 "When I went out to the gate by the city,
When I took my seat in the open square,
8 The young men saw me and hid,
And the aged arose *and* stood;
9 The princes refrained from talking,
And [g]put *their* hand on their mouth;
10 The voice of nobles was hushed,
And their [h]tongue stuck to the roof of their mouth.
11 When the ear heard, then it blessed me,
And when the eye saw, then it approved me;
12 Because [i]I delivered the poor who cried out,
The fatherless and *the one who* had no helper.
13 The blessing of a perishing *man* came upon me,
And I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy.
14 [j]I put on righteousness, and it clothed me;
My justice *was* like a robe and a turban.
15 I *was* [k]eyes to the blind,
And I *was* feet to the lame.
16 I *was* a father to the poor,
And [l]I searched out the case *that* I did not know.
17 I broke [m]the fangs of the wicked,
And plucked the victim from his teeth.

18 "Then I said, [n]'I shall die in my nest,
And multiply *my* days as the sand.
19 [o]My root *is* spread out [p]to the waters,
And the dew lies all night on my branch.
20 My glory *is* fresh within me,
And my [q]bow is renewed in my hand.'

27 [g]Lit. *it*

28 [m][Deut. 4:6; Ps. 111:10; Prov. 1:7; 9:10; Eccl. 12:13]

CHAPTER 29

2 [a]Job 1:1–5 [b]Job 1:10

3 [c]Job 18:6

4 [d]Job 15:8; [Ps. 25:14; Prov. 3:32]

6 [e]Gen. 49:11; Deut. 32:14; Job 20:17 [f]Deut. 32:13; Ps. 81:16 [f]So with ancient vss. and a few Heb. mss. (cf. Job 20:17); MT *wrath*

9 [g]Job 21:5

10 [h]Ps. 137:6

12 [i]Job 31:16–23; [Ps. 72:12; Prov. 21:13; 24:11]

14 [j]Deut. 24:13; Job 27:5, 6; Ps. 132:9; [Is. 59:17; 61:10; Eph. 6:14]

15 [k]Num. 10:31

16 [l]Prov. 29:7

17 [m]Ps. 58:6; Prov. 30:14

18 [n]Ps. 30:6

19 [o]Job 18:16 [p]Ps. 1:3; [Jer. 17:7, 8]

20 [q]Gen. 49:24; Ps. 18:34

■ **28:28** The application of the poem that makes up ch. 28. We can learn God's wisdom through His revealed will and obeying it (Deut. 4:5, 6; Prov. 8:4–9; 9:10). For the New Testament application, Col. 2:2, 3 and Eph. 3:8–10.

■ **29:1–25** This chapter begins the first of three monologues (chs. 29—31 [Job]; chs. 32—37; chs. 38—41). First Job looks back at the days of blessing. In ch. 30, he laments his loss, especially the loss of God's friendship. In ch. 31 he defends himself and calls again for vindication.

■ **29:2–6** Job bemoans the loss of God's favor on him and his house.

■ **29:7–17** Job recalls the noble reputation he built as a practitioner of what James will call "pure and undefiled religion" (cf. vv. 12–16 with James 1:27).

■ **29:14 righteousness . . . clothed me . . . justice was like a robe and a turban.** This verse is the middle of the chapter, everything centering around it as an emphatic assertion of his main point, his call for vindication.

■ **29:18–20** In light of his past deeds, Job had expected to be vigorous in the later years of his life.

23 [r]Zech. 10:1]

CHAPTER 30

1 [1]Lit. *of fewer days*

4 [2]A plant of the salty marshes

6 [3]*wadis* [4]Lit. *holes*

9 [a]Job 17:6; Ps. 69:12; Lam. 3:14, 63

10 [b]Num. 12:14; Deut. 25:9; Job 17:6; Is. 50:6; Matt. 26:67; 27:30

11 [c]Job 12:18 [5]So with MT, Syr., Tg.; LXX, Vg. *His*

12 [d]Job 19:12

16 [e]Ps. 42:4 [f]Ps. 22:14; Is. 53:12

21 "*Men* listened to me and waited,
And kept silence for my counsel.
22 After my words they did not speak again,
And my speech settled on them *as dew.*
23 They waited for me *as* for the rain,
And they opened their mouth wide *as* for [r]the spring rain.
24 *If* I mocked at them, they did not believe *it,*
And the light of my countenance they did not cast down.
25 I chose the way for them, and sat as chief;
So I dwelt as a king in the army,
As one *who* comforts mourners.

30 "But now they mock at me, *men* [1]younger than I,
Whose fathers I disdained to put with the dogs of my flock.
2 Indeed, what *profit* is the strength of their hands to me?
Their vigor has perished.
3 *They are* gaunt from want and famine,
Fleeing late to the wilderness, desolate and waste,
4 Who pluck [2]mallow by the bushes,
And broom tree roots *for* their food.
5 They were driven out from among *men,*
They shouted at them as *at* a thief.
6 *They had* to live in the clefts of the [3]valleys,
In [4]caves of the earth and the rocks.
7 Among the bushes they brayed,
Under the nettles they nestled.
8 *They were* sons of fools,
Yes, sons of vile men;
They were scourged from the land.

9 "And[a] now I am their taunting song;
Yes, I am their byword.
10 They abhor me, they keep far from me;
They do not hesitate [b]to spit in my face.
11 Because [c]He has loosed [5]my bowstring and afflicted me,
They have cast off restraint before me.
12 At *my* right *hand* the rabble arises;
They push away my feet,
And [d]they raise against me their ways of destruction.
13 They break up my path,
They promote my calamity;
They have no helper.
14 They come as broad breakers;
Under the ruinous storm they roll along.
15 Terrors are turned upon me;
They pursue my honor as the wind,
And my prosperity has passed like a cloud.

16 "And[e] now my soul is [f]poured out because of my *plight;*
The days of affliction take hold of me.
17 My bones are pierced in me at night,
And my gnawing pains take no rest.
18 By great force my garment is disfigured;

■ **29:21–25** Job remembers his former dignity and honor.

■ **30:1–31** Cf. ch. 30 with ch. 29. Here, point for point, Job laments how the blessings he enjoyed were taken away from him. In ch. 29 he dealt with honor from man, blessings from God, and his own benevolent deeds. Note how this chapter stresses the opposite.

■ **30:1–15** Job bewails his dishonor from hoodlums (cf. 29:7–10, 21–25). These verses are a good example of the discursive style of the poet.

■ **30:16–23** He has no blessing from God (cf. 29:2–6, 18–20).

■ **30:18 my garment is disfigured.** The Septuagint (ancient Greek

It binds me about as the collar of my coat.
19 He has cast me into the mire,
And I have become like dust and ashes.

20 "I [g]cry out to You, but You do not answer me;
I stand up, and You regard me.
21 *But* You have become cruel to me;
With the strength of Your hand You [h]oppose me.
22 You lift me up to the wind and cause me to ride *on it;*
You spoil my success.
23 For I know *that* You will bring me *to* death,
And *to* the house [i]appointed for all living.

24 "Surely He would not stretch out *His* hand against a heap of ruins,
If they cry out when He destroys *it.*
25 [j]Have I not wept for him who was in trouble?
Has *not* my soul grieved for the poor?
26 [k]But when I looked for good, evil came *to me;*
And when I waited for light, then came darkness.
27 [6]My heart is in turmoil and cannot rest;
Days of affliction confront me.
28 [l]I go about mourning, but not in the sun;
I stand up in the assembly *and* cry out for help.
29 [m]I am a brother of jackals,
And a companion of ostriches.
30 [n]My skin grows black and falls from me;
[o]My bones burn with fever.
31 My harp is *turned* to mourning,
And my flute to the voice of those who weep.

31 "I have made a covenant with my eyes;
Why then should I [1]look upon a [a]young woman?
2 For what *is* the [b]allotment of God from above,
And the inheritance of the Almighty from on high?
3 *Is* it not destruction for the wicked,
And disaster for the workers of iniquity?
4 [c]Does He not see my ways,
And count all my steps?

5 "If I have walked with falsehood,
Or if my foot has hastened to deceit,
6 [2]Let me be weighed on honest scales,
That God may know my [d]integrity.
7 If my step has turned from the way,
Or [e]my heart walked after my eyes,
Or if any spot adheres to my hands,
8 *Then* [f]let me sow, and another eat;
Yes, let my harvest be [3]rooted out.

20 [g]Job 19:7
21 [h]Job 10:3; 16:9, 14; 19:6, 22
23 [i][Heb. 9:27]
25 [j]Ps. 35:13, 14; Rom. 12:15
26 [k]Job 3:25, 26; Jer. 8:15
27 [6]*I seethe inside*
28 [l]Job 30:31; Ps. 38:6; 42:9; 43:2
29 [m]Ps. 44:19; 102:6; Mic. 1:8
30 [n]Ps. 119:83; Lam. 4:8; 5:10 [o]Ps. 102:3

CHAPTER 31

1 [a][Matt. 5:28] [1]*look intently* or *gaze*
2 [b]Job 20:29
4 [c][2 Chr. 16:9]; Job 24:23; 28:24; 34:21; 36:7; [Prov. 5:21; 15:3; Jer. 32:19]
6 [d]Job 23:10; 27:5, 6 [2]Lit. *Let Him weigh me*
7 [e]Num. 15:39; [Eccl. 11:9]; Ezek. 6:9; [Matt. 5:29]
8 [f]Lev. 26:16; Deut. 28:30, 38; Job 20:18; Mic. 6:15 [3]*uprooted*

translation) reads "He seizes my garment." Job is talking again as if God were his enemy.

■ **30:24–31** See 29:11–17. Job receives no benevolence from his friends. They forget his kindness without returning it.

■ **31:1–40** The most important issue in Job's mind in ch. 31 is the false accusation that he was a man of exceptional wickedness, suffering no more than what he deserved. This chapter is based on an important theme in the legal procedure of Job's day. He appeals to God with an oath in the divine name and with a call for divine sanctions if he is lying. Although this is a protestation of innocence, it is not the self-righteousness of the Pharisee in Luke 18:11, 12. Like the psalmist, Job is the victim of false accusation, so vindication has become a passion with him.

■ **31:1–4** Job explains that he determined not to sin with his eyes (1 John 2:16). He may be speaking of more than ordinary lust, that is of the worship of the fertility goddesses so popular in Old Testament times. The word translated "young woman" (v. 1) is used of the goddess of fertility in Canaanite writings. She was a kind of Venus and was called the "maiden Anat" in Ugarit.

■ **31:5–8** Job clears himself of avarice with a sanction based on God's "honest scales," His justice.

9 "If my heart has been enticed by a woman,
Or *if* I have lurked at my neighbor's door,
10 *Then* let my wife grind for [g]another,
And let others bow down over her.
11 For that *would be* wickedness;
Yes, [h]it *would be* iniquity *deserving of* judgment.
12 For that *would be* a fire *that* consumes to destruction,
And would root out all my increase.

13 "If I have [i]despised the cause of my male or female servant
When they complained against me,
14 What then shall I do when [j]God rises up?
When He punishes, how shall I answer Him?
15 [k]Did not He who made me in the womb make them?
Did not the same One fashion us in the womb?

16 "If I have kept the poor from *their* desire,
Or caused the eyes of the widow to [l]fail,
17 Or eaten my morsel by myself,
So that the fatherless could not eat of it
18 (But from my youth I reared him as a father,
And from my mother's womb I guided [4]*the widow*);
19 If I have seen anyone perish for lack of clothing,
Or any poor *man* without covering;
20 If his [5]heart has not [m]blessed me,
And *if* he was *not* warmed with the fleece of my sheep;
21 If I have raised my hand [n]against the fatherless,
When I saw I had help in the gate;
22 *Then* let my arm fall from my shoulder,
Let my arm be torn from the socket.
23 For [o]destruction *from* God *is* a terror to me,
And because of His magnificence I cannot endure.

24 "If[p] I have made gold my hope,
Or said to fine gold, '*You are* my confidence';
25 [q]If I have rejoiced because my wealth *was* great,
And because my hand had gained much;
26 [r]If I have observed the [6]sun when it shines,
Or the moon moving *in* brightness,
27 So that my heart has been secretly enticed,
And my mouth has kissed my hand;
28 This also *would be* an iniquity *deserving of* judgment,
For I would have denied God *who is* above.

29 "If[s] I have rejoiced at the destruction of him who hated me,
Or lifted myself up when evil found him
30 [t](Indeed I have not allowed my mouth to sin
By asking for a curse on his [7]soul);
31 If the men of my tent have not said,
'Who is there that has not been satisfied with his meat?'
32 [u](*But* no sojourner had to lodge in the street,
For I have opened my doors to the [8]traveler);
33 If I have covered my transgressions [v]as[9] Adam,
By hiding my iniquity in my bosom,

10 [g]Deut. 28:30; 2 Sam. 12:11; Jer. 8:10
11 [h]Gen. 38:24; [Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22]; Job 31:28
13 [i][Deut. 24:14, 15]
14 [j][Ps. 44:21]
15 [k]Job 34:19; Prov. 14:31; 22:2; [Mal. 2:10]
16 [l]Job 29:12
18 [4]Lit. *her*
20 [m][Deut. 24:13] [5]Lit. *loins*
21 [n]Job 22:9
23 [o]Is. 13:6
24 [p][Matt. 6:19, 20; Mark 10:23–25]
25 [q]Job 1:3, 10; Ps. 62:10
26 [r][Deut. 4:19; 17:3]; Ezek. 8:16 [6]Lit. *light*
29 [s][Prov. 17:5; 24:17]; Obad. 12
30 [t][Matt. 5:44] [7]Or *life*
32 [u]Gen. 19:2, 3 [8]So with LXX, Syr., Tg., Vg.; MT *road*
33 [v]Gen. 3:10; [Prov. 28:13] [9]Or *as men do*

- **31:9–12** Job clears himself of adultery with God's fire as the sanction.
- **31:13–15** Job clears himself of injustice with reference to God's court as the sanction.
- **31:16–23** Job clears himself of neglect of the needy and abuse of the helpless with God's terror as the sanction.
- **31:24–27** Job clears himself of idolatry with regard to gold or the gods.
- **31:29–34** Job clears himself of hatred, selfishness, and hypocrisy. In these verses God's divine judgment is the sanction (v. 28).

34 Because I feared the great [w]multitude,
And dreaded the contempt of families,
So that I kept silence
And did not go out of the door—
35 [x]Oh, that I had one to hear me!
Here is my mark.
Oh, [y]*that* the Almighty would answer me,
That my [1]Prosecutor had written a book!
36 Surely I would carry it on my shoulder,
And bind it on me *like* a crown;
37 I would declare to Him the number of my steps;
Like a prince I would approach Him.

38 "If my land cries out against me,
And its furrows weep together;
39 If [z]I have eaten its [2]fruit without money,
Or [a]caused its owners to lose their lives;
40 *Then* let [b]thistles grow instead of wheat,
And weeds instead of barley."

The words of Job are ended.

Elihu Contradicts Job's Friends

32 So these three men ceased answering Job, because he *was* [a]righteous in his own eyes. 2 Then the wrath of Elihu, the son of Barachel the [b]Buzite, of the family of Ram, was aroused against Job; his wrath was aroused because he [c]justified himself rather than God. 3 Also against his three friends his wrath was aroused, because they had found no answer, and *yet* had condemned Job.

4 Now because they *were* years older than he, Elihu had waited [1]to speak to Job. 5 When Elihu saw that *there was* no answer in the mouth of these three men, his wrath was aroused.

6 So Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, answered and said:

"I *am* [d]young in years, and you *are* very old;
Therefore I was afraid,
And dared not declare my opinion to you.
7 I said, [2]'Age should speak,
And multitude of years should teach wisdom.'
8 But *there is* a spirit in man,
And [e]the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding.
9 [f]Great[3] men are not *always* wise,
Nor do the aged *always* understand justice.

10 "Therefore I say, 'Listen to me,
I also will declare my opinion.'
11 Indeed I waited for your words,
I listened to your reasonings, while you searched out what to say.
12 I paid close attention to you;

34 [w]Ex. 23:2

35 [x]Job 19:7; 30:20, 24, 28 [y]Job 13:22, 24; 33:10 [1]Lit. *Accuser*

39 [z]Job 24:6, 10–12; [James 5:4] [a]1 Kin. 21:19 [2]Lit. *strength*

40 [b]Gen. 3:18

CHAPTER 32

1 [a]Job 6:29; 31:6; 33:9

2 [b]Gen. 22:21 [c]Job 27:5, 6

4 [1]Vg. *till Job had spoken*

6 [d]Lev. 19:32

7 [2]Lit. *Days,* i.e., years

8 [e]1 Kin. 3:12; 4:29; [Job 35:11; 38:36; Prov. 2:6; Eccl. 2:26; Dan. 1:17; 2:21; Matt. 11:25; James 1:5]

9 [f][1 Cor. 1:26] [3]Or *Men of many years*

■ **31:35–37** The climax: Job attaches his binding signature ("Here is my mark," v. 35) and challenges for a specific indictment.

■ **31:37** Job has already expressed confidence that God would accept him if he had an opportunity to present his case (13:14–16). In the end this is possible only through grace.

■ **31:40 The words of Job are ended.** With his signature Job closes his case. The rest is now up to the Judge.

■ **32:1—37:24** These chapters present the second monologue, that of the young man Elihu who, unlike the others, has a Hebrew name. Many critics see him as a self-important, know-it-all person. Others believe these chapters are additions to the original text. Both views are defective. Elihu is not mentioned in the Epilogue (ch. 42) but the reason is that he is not guilty of the same errors as the other three. Elihu's critique centers on Job's words uttered during the dispute. He quotes Job, but does not accuse him of having lived a wicked life. He stresses an issue neglected by the three friends: the disciplinary and redemptive role of suffering. Eliphaz alone had touched suffering as discipline (5:17). Elihu's wordiness, like that of Job and the counselors, was considered eloquent in their culture.

■ **32:1–5** The narrator introduces Elihu's four speeches on Job's situation with an explanation for why he injected himself into the debate.

■ **32:3 and yet had condemned Job.** According to ancient Jewish tradition the original reading was "condemned Elohim," changed by pious convention to "condemned Job," so as to avoid writing a blasphemous thought.

■ **32:6—33:7** It takes Elihu this entire section just to make his introduction and to give his reason for speaking. He appears to have a warmer personality than the counselors who never called Job by his name (cf. 33:1, 31).

13 [g][Jer. 9:23; 1 Cor. 1:29]
14 [4]ordered
19 [5]bosom [6]opening
22 [h]Job 27:8

CHAPTER 33

4 [a][Gen. 2:7]; Job 32:8
6 [b]Job 4:19 [7]Lit. as your mouth
7 [c]Job 9:34
8 [2]Lit. in my ears
9 [d]Job 10:7
10 [e]Job 13:24; 16:9
11 [f]Job 13:27; 19:8

And surely not one of you convinced Job,
Or answered his words—
13 [g]Lest you say,
'We have found wisdom';
God will vanquish him, not man.
14 Now he has not [4]directed *his* words against me;
So I will not answer him with your words.

15 "They are dismayed and answer no more;
Words escape them.
16 And I have waited, because they did not speak,
Because they stood still *and* answered no more.
17 I also will answer my part,
I too will declare my opinion.
18 For I am full of words;
The spirit within me compels me.
19 Indeed my [5]belly *is* like wine *that* has no [6]vent;
It is ready to burst like new wineskins.
20 I will speak, that I may find relief;
I must open my lips and answer.
21 Let me not, I pray, show partiality to anyone;
Nor let me flatter any man.
22 For I do not know how to flatter,
Else my Maker would soon take me [h]away.

Elihu Contradicts Job

33 "But please, Job, hear my speech,
And listen to all my words.
2 Now, I open my mouth;
My tongue speaks in my mouth.
3 My words *come* from my upright heart;
My lips utter pure knowledge.
4 [a]The Spirit of God has made me,
And the breath of the Almighty gives me life.
5 If you can answer me,
Set *your words* in order before me;
Take your stand.
6 [b]Truly I *am* [1]as your spokesman before God;
I also have been formed out of clay.
7 [c]Surely no fear of me will terrify you,
Nor will my hand be heavy on you.

8 "Surely you have spoken [2]in my hearing,
And I have heard the sound of *your* words, *saying,*
9 '[d]*I am* pure, without transgression;
I *am* innocent, and *there is* no iniquity in me.
10 Yet He finds occasions against me,
[e]He counts me as His enemy;
11 [f]He puts my feet in the stocks,
He watches all my paths.'

12 "Look, *in* this you are not righteous.
I will answer you,
For God is greater than man.

■ **33:8 your words.** In quoting Job, Elihu is accurate (cf. 33:10, 11 with 13:24 and 27). Verbatim quotation was not the expected norm in ancient Eastern culture.

■ **33:12–22** Elihu's appeal to God's transcendence repeats what the counselors have already said, but he handles the theme differently from them. His purpose is to show that, despite God's transcendence, He does speak to man: through revelation (dreams) and through suffering.

13 Why do you [g]contend with Him?
For He does not give an accounting of any of His words.
14 [h]For God may speak in one way, or in another,
Yet man does not perceive it.
15 [i]In a dream, in a vision of the night,
When deep sleep falls upon men,
While slumbering on their beds,
16 [j]Then He opens the ears of men,
And seals their instruction.
17 In order to turn man *from his* deed,
And conceal pride from man,
18 He keeps back his soul from the Pit,
And his life from [3]perishing by the sword.

19 "*Man* is also chastened with pain on his [k]bed,
And with strong *pain* in many of his bones,
20 [l]So that his life abhors [m]bread,
And his soul [4]succulent food.
21 His flesh wastes away from sight,
And his bones stick out *which once* were not seen.
22 Yes, his soul draws near the Pit,
And his life to the executioners.

23 "If there is a messenger for him,
A mediator, one among a thousand,
To show man His uprightness,
24 Then He is gracious to him, and says,
'Deliver him from going down to the Pit;
I have found [5]a ransom';
25 His flesh shall be young like a child's,
He shall return to the days of his youth.
26 He shall pray to God, and He will delight in him,
He shall see His face with joy,
For He restores to man His righteousness.
27 Then he looks at men and [n]says,
'I have sinned, and perverted *what was* right,
And it [o]did not profit me.'
28 He will [p]redeem [6]his soul from going down to the Pit,
And [6]his life shall see the light.

29 "Behold, God works all these *things,*
Twice, *in fact,* three *times* with a man,
30 [q]To bring back his soul from the Pit,
That he may be enlightened with the light of life.

31 "Give ear, Job, listen to me;
Hold your peace, and I will speak.
32 If you have anything to say, answer me;
Speak, for I desire to justify you.
33 If not, [r]listen to me;
[7]Hold your peace, and I will teach you wisdom."

Elihu Proclaims God's Justice

34 Elihu further answered and said:
2 "Hear my words, you wise *men;*

13 [g]Job 40:2; [Is. 45:9]
14 [h]Job 33:29; 40:5; Ps. 62:11
15 [i][Num. 12:6]
16 [j][Job 36:10, 15]
18 [3]Lit. *passing*
19 [k]Job 30:17
20 [l]Ps. 107:18 [m]Job 3:24; 6:7 [4]*desirable*
24 [5]*an atonement*
27 [n][2 Sam. 12:13; Prov. 28:13; Luke 15:21; 1 John 1:9] [o][Rom. 6:21]
28 [p]Is. 38:17 [6]Kt. *my*
30 [q]Ps. 56:13
33 [r]Ps. 34:11 [7]*Keep silent*

■ **33:23–30** Unlike the counselors who saw no place for grace or mediation (5:1), Elihu knows God provides both.

■ **34:1–37** Following a pedantic introduction, Elihu quotes words from Job that are easy to refute (12:4; 13:16; 27:2, 6). His thesis is that no one

CHAPTER 34

Give ear to me, you who have knowledge.
3 [a]For the ear tests words
As the palate tastes food.
4 Let us choose justice for ourselves;
Let us know among ourselves what *is* good.

5 "For Job has said, [b]'I am righteous,
But [c]God has taken away my justice;
6 [d]Should I lie concerning my right?
My [1]wound *is* incurable, *though I am* without transgression.'
7 What man *is* like Job,
[e]*Who* drinks [2]scorn like water,
8 Who goes in company with the workers of iniquity,
And walks with wicked men?
9 For [f]he has said, 'It profits a man nothing
That he should delight in God.'

10 "Therefore listen to me, you [3]men of understanding:
[g]Far be it from God *to do* wickedness,
And *from* the Almighty to *commit* iniquity.
11 [h]For He repays man *according to* his work,
And makes man to find a reward according to *his* way.
12 Surely God will never do wickedly,
Nor will the Almighty [i]pervert justice.
13 Who gave Him charge over the earth?
Or who appointed *Him over* the whole world?
14 If He should set His heart on it,
If He should [j]gather to Himself His Spirit and His breath,
15 [k]All flesh would perish together,
And man would return to dust.

16 "If *you have* understanding, hear this;
Listen to the sound of my words:
17 [l]Should one who hates justice govern?
Will you [m]condemn *Him who is* most just?
18 [n]*Is it fitting* to say to a king, '*You are* worthless,'
And to nobles, '*You are* wicked'?
19 Yet He [o]is not partial to princes,
Nor does He regard the rich more than the poor;
For [p]they *are* all the work of His hands.
20 In a moment they die, [q]in the middle of the night;
The people are shaken and pass away;
The mighty are taken away without a hand.

21 "For[r] His eyes *are* on the ways of man,
And He sees all his steps.
22 [s]There is no darkness nor shadow of death
Where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves.
23 For He need not further consider a man,
That he should go before God in judgment.
24 [t]He breaks in pieces mighty men without inquiry,
And sets others in their place.

3 [a]Job 6:30; 12:11
5 [b]Job 13:18; 33:9 [c]Job 27:2
6 [d]Job 6:4; 9:17 [1]Lit. *arrow*
7 [e]Job 15:16 [2]*derision*
9 [f]Mal. 3:14
10 [g][Gen. 18:25; Deut. 32:4; 2 Chr. 19:7]; Job 8:3; 36:23; Ps. 92:15; Rom. 9:14 [3]*men of heart*
11 [h]Job 34:25; Ps. 62:12; [Prov. 24:12; Jer. 32:19]; Ezek. 33:20; [Matt. 16:27]; Rom. 2:6; [2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 22:12]
12 [i]Job 8:3
14 [j]Job 12:10; Ps. 104:29; [Eccl. 12:7]
15 [k][Gen. 3:19]; Job 10:9; [Eccl. 12:7]
17 [l]2 Sam. 23:3; Job 34:30 [m]Job 40:8
18 [n]Ex. 22:28
19 [o][Deut. 10:17; Acts 10:34; Rom. 2:11, 12] [p]Job 31:15
20 [q]Ex. 12:29; Job 34:25; 36:20
21 [r][2 Chr. 16:9]; Job 31:4; Ps. 34:15; [Prov. 5:21; 15:3; Jer. 16:17; 32:19]
22 [s][Ps. 139:11, 12; Amos 9:2, 3]
24 [t]Job 12:19; [Dan. 2:21]

is really innocent, so God denies no one justice (v. 5). The bulk of this second speech is a defense of God's goodness and justice (vv. 10–30). Elihu closes with another condemnation of Job's words and a call for repentance (vv. 31–37).

■ **34:10 Far be it from God to do wickedness.** For the next twenty-one verses Elihu expounds this theme. In moments of extreme stress Job had said practically the opposite (10:3; 12:4–6; 21:7,8; 24:1–12).

■ **34:14, 15** Elihu is right: God's continual common grace is necessary for any of His creatures to continue its existence.

■ **34:16–20** Job had asked why the innocent do not see God's judgment of the wicked (24:1). Elihu's answer is that God is judging them all the time, though it is not always evident.

Therefore He knows their works;
He overthrows *them* in the night,
And they are crushed.
26 He strikes them as wicked *men*
In the open sight of others,
27 Because they [u]turned back from Him,
And [v]would not consider any of His ways,
28 So that they [w]caused the cry of the poor to come to Him;
For He [x]hears the cry of the afflicted.
29 When He gives quietness, who then can make trouble?
And when He hides *His* face, who then can see Him,
Whether *it is* against a nation or a man alone?—
30 That the hypocrite should not reign,
Lest the people be ensnared.

31 "For has *anyone* said to God,
'I have borne *chastening;*
I will offend no more;
32 Teach me *what* I do not see;
If I have done iniquity, I will do no more'?
33 Should He repay *it* according to your *terms,*
Just because you disavow it?
You must choose, and not I;
Therefore speak what you know.

34 "Men of understanding say to me,
Wise men who listen to me:
35 'Job[y] speaks without knowledge,
His words *are* without wisdom.'
36 Oh, that Job were tried to the utmost,
Because *his* answers *are like* those of wicked men!
37 For he adds [z]rebellion to his sin;
He claps *his hands* among us,
And multiplies his words against God."

Elihu Condemns Self-Righteousness

35 Moreover Elihu answered and said:

2 "Do you think this is right?
Do you say,
'My righteousness is more than God's'?
3 For [a]you say,
'What advantage will it be to You?
What profit shall I have, more than *if* I had sinned?'

4 "I will answer you,
And [b]your companions with you.
5 [c]Look to the heavens and see;
And behold the clouds—
They are higher than you.
6 If you sin, what do you accomplish [d]against Him?
Or, *if* your transgressions are multiplied, what do you do to Him?
7 [e]If you are righteous, what do you give Him?
Or what does He receive from your hand?

27 [u]1 Sam. 15:11 [v]Ps. 28:5; Is. 5:12
28 [w]Job 35:9; James 5:4 [x][Ex. 22:23]; Job 22:27
35 [y]Job 35:16; 38:2
37 [z]Job 7:11; 10:1

CHAPTER 35

3 [a]Job 21:15; 34:9
4 [b]Job 34:8
5 [c]Gen. 15:5; [Job 22:12; Ps. 8:3]
6 [d]Job 7:20; [Prov. 8:36; Jer. 7:19]
7 [e]Job 22:2; Ps. 16:2; Prov. 9:12; [Luke 17:10]; Rom. 11:35

■ **34:31** The Hebrew text of vv. 31–33 is difficult to understand.

■ **35:3** This question resembles Eliphaz's words in 22:3, but may be extrapolated from Job's words in 9:14–31.

■ **35:6, 7** Elihu does not say that God is beyond good and evil, but that God is not within the power of the creature. See Rom. 11:34, 35.

8 Your wickedness affects a man such as you,
And your righteousness a son of man.

9 "Because[f] of the multitude of oppressions they cry out;
They cry out for help because of the arm of the mighty.
10 But no one says, [g]'Where *is* God my Maker,
[h]Who gives songs in the night,
11 Who [i]teaches us more than the beasts of the earth,
And makes us wiser than the birds of heaven?'
12 [j]There they cry out, but He does not answer,
Because of the pride of evil men.
13 [k]Surely God will not listen to empty *talk,*
Nor will the Almighty regard it.
14 [l]Although you say you do not see Him,
Yet justice *is* before Him, and [m]you must wait for Him.
15 And now, because He has not [n]punished in His anger,
Nor taken much notice of folly,
16 [o]Therefore Job opens his mouth in vain;
He multiplies words without knowledge."

Elihu Proclaims God's Goodness

36 Elihu also proceeded and said:

2 "Bear with me a little, and I will show you
That *there are* yet words to speak on God's behalf.
3 I will fetch my knowledge from afar;
I will ascribe righteousness to my Maker.
4 For truly my words *are* not false;
One who is perfect in knowledge *is* with you.

5 "Behold, God *is* mighty, but despises *no one;*
[a]*He is* mighty in strength [1]of understanding.
6 He does not preserve the life of the wicked,
But gives justice to the [b]oppressed.
7 [c]He does not withdraw His eyes from the righteous;
But [d]*they are* on the throne with kings,
For He has seated them forever,
And they are exalted.
8 And [e]if *they are* bound in [2]fetters,
Held in the cords of affliction,
9 Then He tells them their work and their transgressions—
That they have acted [3]defiantly.
10 [f]He also opens their ear to [4]instruction,
And commands that they turn from iniquity.
11 If they obey and serve *Him,*
They shall [g]spend their days in prosperity,
And their years in pleasures.
12 But if they do not obey,
They shall perish by the sword,
And they shall die [5]without [h]knowledge.

9 [f]Job 34:28

10 [g]Is. 51:13 [h]Job 8:21; Ps. 42:8; 77:6; 149:5; Acts 16:25

11 [i]Job 36:22; Ps. 94:12; [Is. 48:17]; Jer. 32:33; [1 Cor. 2:13]

12 [j]Prov. 1:28

13 [k]Job 27:9; [Prov. 15:29; Is. 1:15]; Jer. 11:11; [Mic. 3:4]

14 [l]Job 9:11 [m][Ps. 37:5, 6]

15 [n]Ps. 89:32

16 [o]Job 34:35; 38:2

CHAPTER 36

5 [a]Job 12:13, 16; 37:23; [Ps. 99:2–5] [1]*of heart*

6 [b]Job 5:15

7 [c][Ps. 33:18; 34:15] [d]Job 5:11; Ps. 113:8

8 [e]Ps. 107:10 [2]*chains*

9 [3]*proudly*

10 [f]Job 33:16; 36:15 [4]*discipline*

11 [g]Job 21:13; [Is. 1:19, 20]

12 [h]Job 4:21 [5]MT *as one without knowledge*

■ **35:9–13** Job had complained in ch. 23 that God was indifferent to his condition. Elihu counters with some good advice (especially vv. 9–11). But some of it does not apply to Job (v. 12).

■ **35:14–16** Elihu criticizes what Job has said and its effect on his relation to God.

■ **36:1—37:24** Elihu's fourth speech focuses on Job's suffering from the perspective of God's perfect righteousness and absolute power.

■ **36:1–4** Elihu opens the speech with an apology in which he reasserts his credentials.

■ **36:5–15** Elihu struggles with Job's complaint about the wicked who prosper and the righteous who suffer (v. 6). With this in mind he dwells on God's power, goodness, justice, and mercy. But all this is in the context of the view of suffering where suffering is always in direct proportion to sins and righteousness is always blessed. Only the last judgment will reveal this; compare John 9:2, 3 with Rom. 2:6; 2 Cor. 5:10.

13 "But the hypocrites in heart [i]store up wrath;
They do not cry for help when He binds them.
14 [j]They[6] die in youth,
And their life *ends* among the [7]perverted persons.
15 He delivers the poor in their affliction,
And opens their ears in oppression.

16 "Indeed He would have brought you out of dire distress,
[k]*Into* a broad place where *there is* no restraint;
And [l]what is set on your table *would be* full of [m]richness.
17 But you are filled with the judgment due the [n]wicked;
Judgment and justice take hold *of you.*
18 Because *there is* wrath, *beware* lest He take you away with *one* blow;
For [o]a large ransom would not help you avoid *it.*
19 [p]Will your riches,
Or all the mighty forces,
Keep you from distress?
20 Do not desire the night,
When people are cut off in their place.
21 Take heed, [q]do not turn to iniquity,
For [r]you have chosen this rather than affliction.

22 "Behold, God is exalted by His power;
Who teaches like Him?
23 [s]Who has assigned Him His way,
Or who has said, 'You have done [t]wrong'?

Elihu Proclaims God's Majesty

24 "Remember to [u]magnify His work,
Of which men have sung.
25 Everyone has seen it;
Man looks on *it* from afar.

26 "Behold, God *is* great, and we [v]do not know *Him;*
[w]Nor can the number of His years *be* discovered.
27 For He [x]draws up drops of water,
Which distill as rain from the mist,
28 [y]Which the clouds drop down
And pour abundantly on man.
29 Indeed, can *anyone* understand the spreading of clouds,
The thunder from His canopy?
30 Look, He [z]scatters His light upon it,
And covers the depths of the sea.
31 For [a]by these He judges the peoples;
He [b]gives food in abundance.
32 [c]He covers *His* hands with lightning,
And commands it to [8]strike.
33 [d]His thunder declares it,
The cattle also, concerning [9]the rising *storm.*

37 "At this also my heart trembles,
And leaps from its place.
2 Hear attentively the thunder of His voice,

13 [i][Rom. 2:5]
14 [j]Ps. 55:23 [6]Lit. *Their soul dies* [7]Heb. *qedeshim,* those practicing sodomy or prostitution in religious rituals
16 [k]Ps. 18:19; 31:8; 118:5 [l]Ps. 23:5 [m]Ps. 36:8
17 [n]Job 22:5, 10, 11
18 [o]Ps. 49:7
19 [p][Prov. 11:4]
21 [q]Job 36:10; [Ps. 31:6; 66:18] [r]Job 36:8, 15; [Heb. 11:25]
23 [s]Job 34:13; [Is. 40:13, 14] [t][Deut. 32:4]; Job 8:3
24 [u][Ps. 92:5; Rev. 15:3]
26 [v]Job 11:7–9; 37:23; [1 Cor. 13:12] [w]Job 10:5; [Ps. 90:2; 102:24, 27]; Heb. 1:12
27 [x]Job 5:10; 37:6, 11; 38:28; Ps. 147:8
28 [y][Prov. 3:20]
30 [z]Job 37:3
31 [a][Acts 14:17] [b]Gen. 9:3; Ps. 104:14, 15
32 [c]Ps. 147:8 [8]*strike the mark*
33 [d]1 Kin. 18:41; Job 37:2 [9]Lit. *what is rising*

■ **36:16–21** Elihu assures Job of God's good purpose in his suffering and sternly admonishes him to receive his divine discipline with its promise of deliverance from distress.

■ **36:22–26** Elihu now returns to his opening thesis (v. 5) concerning the sovereignty of God, whose purpose is always good.

■ **36:27—37:13** Elihu's graphic description of God's majesty displayed in the forces of nature is somewhat like the first speech by God (cf. ch. 38).

CHAPTER 37

3 [1]Or *light*

4 [a]Ps. 29:3

5 [b]Job 5:9; 9:10; 36:26; Rev. 15:3

6 [c]Ps. 147:16, 17 [2]Lit. *shower of rain*

7 [d]Ps. 109:27 [e]Ps. 19:3, 4

8 [f]Job 38:40; Ps. 104:21, 22

10 [g]Job 38:29, 30; Ps. 147:17, 18

11 [3]*clouds of light*

12 [h]Job 36:32; Ps. 148:8 [4]Lit. *the world of the earth*

13 [i]Ex. 9:18, 23; 1 Sam. 12:18, 19 [j]Job 38:26, 27 [k]1 Kin. 18:41–46 [5]Lit. *a rod*

14 [l]Ps. 111:2

15 [6]*places them*

16 [m]Job 36:29 [n]Job 36:4

18 [o]Gen. 1:6; [Is. 44:24] [p]Job 9:8; Ps. 104:2; [Is. 45:12; Jer. 10:12; Zech. 12:1]

23 [q][Job 11:7, 8; Rom. 11:33, 34; 1 Tim. 6:16] [r][Job 9:4; 36:5]

24 [s][Matt. 10:28] [t][Job 5:13; Matt. 11:25]; 1 Cor. 1:26

And the rumbling *that* comes from His mouth.
3 He sends it forth under the whole heaven,
His [l]lightning to the ends of the earth.
4 After it [a]a voice roars;
He thunders with His majestic voice,
And He does not restrain them when His voice is heard.
5 God thunders marvelously with His voice;
[b]He does great things which we cannot comprehend.
6 For [c]He says to the snow, 'Fall *on* the earth';
Likewise to the [2]gentle rain and the heavy rain of His strength.
7 He seals the hand of every man,
[d]That [e]all men may know His work.
8 The beasts [f]go into dens,
And remain in their lairs.
9 From the chamber *of the south* comes the whirlwind,
And cold from the scattering winds *of the north.*
10 [g]By the breath of God ice is given,
And the broad waters are frozen.
11 Also with moisture He saturates the thick clouds;
He scatters His [3]bright clouds.
12 And they swirl about, being turned by His guidance,
That they may [h]do whatever He commands them
On the face of [4]the whole earth.
13 [i]He causes it to come,
Whether for [5]correction,
Or [j]for His land,
Or [k]for mercy.

14 "Listen to this, O Job;
Stand still and [l]consider the wondrous works of God.
15 Do you know when God [6]dispatches them,
And causes the light of His cloud to shine?
16 [m]Do you know how the clouds are balanced,
Those wondrous works of [n]Him who is perfect in knowledge?
17 Why *are* your garments hot,
When He quiets the earth by the south *wind?*
18 With Him, have you [o]spread out the [p]skies,
Strong as a cast metal mirror?

19 "Teach us what we should say to Him,
For we can prepare nothing because of the darkness.
20 Should He be told that I *wish to* speak?
If a man were to speak, surely he would be swallowed up.
21 Even now *men* cannot look at the light *when it is* bright in the skies,
When the wind has passed and cleared them.
22 He comes from the north *as* golden *splendor;*
With God *is* awesome majesty.
23 *As for* the Almighty, [q]we cannot find Him;
[r]*He is* excellent in power,
In judgment and abundant justice;
He does not oppress.
24 Therefore men [s]fear Him;
He shows no partiality to any *who are* [t]wise of heart."

■ **37:14–24** Here the link with the divine speeches (chs. 38—41) becomes more pronounced, as the young counselor begins to cross-examine Job about God's power and righteousness. His concluding words anticipate the appearance of God in the heavens (vv. 21, 22).

The LORD Reveals His Omnipotence to Job

38 Then the LORD answered Job [a]out of the whirlwind, and said:

2 "Who[b] *is* this who darkens counsel
By [c]words without knowledge?
3 [d]Now [1]prepare yourself like a man;
I will question you, and you shall answer Me.

4 "Where[e] were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?
Tell *Me,* if you have understanding.
5 Who determined its measurements?
Surely you know!
Or who stretched the [2]line upon it?
6 To what were its foundations fastened?
Or who laid its cornerstone,
7 When the morning stars sang together,
And all [f]the sons of God shouted for joy?

8 "Or[g] *who* shut in the sea with doors,
When it burst forth *and* issued from the womb;
9 When I made the clouds its garment,
And thick darkness its swaddling band;
10 When [h]I fixed My limit for it,
And set bars and doors;
11 When I said,
'This far you may come, but no farther,
And here your proud waves [i]must stop!'

12 "Have you[j] commanded the morning since your days *began,*
And caused the dawn to know its place,
13 That it might take hold of the ends of the earth,
And [k]the wicked be shaken out of it?
14 It takes on form like clay *under* a seal,
And stands out like a garment.
15 From the wicked their [l]light is withheld,
And [m]the [3]upraised arm is broken.

16 "Have you [n]entered the springs of the sea?
Or have you walked in search of the depths?
17 Have [o]the gates of death been [4]revealed to you?
Or have you seen the doors of the shadow of death?
18 Have you comprehended the breadth of the earth?
Tell *Me,* if you know all this.

19 "Where *is* the way *to* the dwelling of light?
And darkness, where *is* its place,

CHAPTER 38

1 [a]Ex. 19:16; Job 40:6

2 [b]Job 34:35; 42:3 [c]1 Tim. 1:7

3 [d]Job 40:7 [1]Lit. *gird up your loins like*

4 [e]Job 15:7; Ps. 104:5

5 [2]*measuring line*

7 [f]Job 1:6

8 [g]Gen. 1:9; Ps. 33:7; 104:9; Prov. 8:29; [Jer. 5:22]

10 [h]Job 26:10

11 [i][Ps. 89:9; 93:4]

12 [j][Ps. 74:16; 148:5]

13 [k]Job 34:25; Ps. 104:35

15 [l]Job 18:5; [Prov. 13:9] [m][Num. 15:30]; Ps. 10:15; 37:17 [3]Lit. *high*

16 [n][Ps. 77:19]; Prov. 8:24

17 [o]Ps. 9:13 [4]Lit. *opened*

■ **38:1—41:34** In His appearance to Job, God does not mention the subject of Job's suffering, much less give the reason for it. What the Lord says is far more important than Job's suffering, which the Lord knew He would shortly remove. Nor did Job receive the bill of indictment he wanted (31:35), because there was none. Job learns he must rest his case, including his desire for vindication, in the hands of a sovereign and good God, who is not his enemy (1 Pet. 4:19).

■ **38:1—40:2** The Lord calls on Job to withdraw his accusations against the Almighty by exposing his weakness and foolishness.

■ **38:1 the LORD.** The divine covenant name is now used again, as in the prologue, showing that the author was an Israelite. Job and the counselors use other divine epithets, like "God," and "the Almighty." Job 12:9 is the only place where Job or the counselors use "Yahweh," and some manuscripts have "God" even there. Job was evidently not an Israelite.

■ **38:4—39:30** In this cross-examination of Job, the Lord reveals Himself as sovereign over the natural world. He is Creator (38:4–14) of the earth (vv. 4–7), of the sea (vv. 8–11), and of day and night (vv. 12–15). He is Lord of inanimate nature (38:16–38) and of animate nature (38:39—39:30).

■ **38:5 Surely you know.** The irony here and in vv. 18 and 21 is not sarcasm, but a reminder that God is the Creator.

■ **38:7** For the personification of natural forces as God's angels see Ps. 104:4 and Heb. 1:7.

■ **38:15** The light of the wicked is darkness (Is. 5:20; Luke 11:35).

■ **38:17 the gates of death.** The "gates" stand for dominion (Matt. 16:18). The Lord is sovereign over this invisible realm, which no living person has ever seen (17:16). According to the pagan religions of Canaan, the god Mot was ruler of the realm of the dead, but Job knew otherwise (cf. 26:6).

22 [p]Ps. 135:7
23 [q]Ex. 9:18; Josh. 10:11; Is. 30:30; Ezek. 13:11, 13; Rev. 16:21
24 [5]Lit. *divided*
25 [r]Job 28:26
27 [s]Ps. 104:13, 14; 107:35
28 [t]Job 36:27, 28; [Ps. 147:8; Jer. 14:22]
29 [u][Job 37:10]; Ps. 147:16, 17
30 [v][Job 37:10] [6]Lit. *imprisoned*
31 [w]Job 9:9; Amos 5:8 [7]Or *the Seven Stars*
32 [8]Lit. *Constellations* [9]Or *Arcturus*
33 [x][Ps. 148:6]; Jer. 31:35, 36
36 [y][Job 9:4; 32:8; Ps. 51:6; Eccl. 2:26; James 1:5] [1]Lit. *the inward parts*
39 [z]Ps. 104:21
41 [a]Ps. 147:9; [Matt. 6:26; Luke 12:24]

20 That you may take it to its territory,
That you may know the paths *to* its home?
21 Do you know *it,* because you were born then,
Or *because* the number of your days *is* great?

22 "Have you entered [p]the treasury of snow,
Or have you seen the treasury of hail,
23 [q]Which I have reserved for the time of trouble,
For the day of battle and war?
24 By what way is light [5]diffused,
Or the east wind scattered over the earth?

25 "Who [r]has divided a channel for the overflowing *water,*
Or a path for the thunderbolt,
26 To cause it to rain on a land *where there is* no one,
A wilderness in which *there is* no man;
27 [s]To satisfy the desolate waste,
And cause to spring forth the growth of tender grass?
28 [t]Has the rain a father?
Or who has begotten the drops of dew?
29 From whose womb comes the ice?
And the [u]frost of heaven, who gives it birth?
30 The waters harden like stone,
And the surface of the deep is [v]frozen.[6]

31 "Can you bind the cluster of the [w]Pleiades,[7]
Or loose the belt of Orion?
32 Can you bring out [8]Mazzaroth in its season?
Or can you guide [9]the Great Bear with its cubs?
33 Do you know [x]the ordinances of the heavens?
Can you set their dominion over the earth?

34 "Can you lift up your voice to the clouds,
That an abundance of water may cover you?
35 Can you send out lightnings, that they may go,
And say to you, 'Here we *are!*'?
36 [y]Who has put wisdom in [1]the mind?
Or who has given understanding to the heart?
37 Who can number the clouds by wisdom?
Or who can pour out the bottles of heaven,
38 When the dust hardens in clumps,
And the clods cling together?

39 "Can[z] you hunt the prey for the lion,
Or satisfy the appetite of the young lions,
40 When they crouch in *their* dens,
Or lurk in their lairs to lie in wait?
41 [a]Who provides food for the raven,
When its young ones cry to God,
And wander about for lack of food?

■ **38:26 to rain . . . A wilderness.** In a world where rainwater was precious, God impresses on Job his sovereign freedom to do what perplexes those who don't appreciate the distinctions between the sovereign God and themselves.

■ **38:31 bind . . . Pleiades . . . loose the belt of Orion.** God alone has dominion over the cosmic forces that constrain the cluster of stars called Pleiades and those making up the belt of the hunter Orion.

■ **38:36 the mind . . . the heart.** The Hebrew word translated "heart" occurs only here, and its meaning has been in question since the ancient times. If one traditional translation is accepted, the verse asks who gave wisdom to "the ibis" and "the rooster," birds that were thought to announce the coming of the rain and the flooding of the Nile.

■ **38:39** Here the questions shift from the inanimate to animate creation: a sampling of God's creatures great and small.

39 1 "Do you know the time when the wild [a]mountain goats bear young?
Or can you mark when [b]the deer gives birth?
2 Can you number the months *that* they fulfill?
Or do you know the time when they bear young?
3 They bow down,
They bring forth their young,
They deliver their [1]offspring.
4 Their young ones are healthy,
They grow strong with grain;
They depart and do not return to them.

5 "Who set the wild donkey free?
Who loosed the bonds of the [2]onager,
6 [c]Whose home I have made the wilderness,
And the [3]barren land his dwelling?
7 He scorns the tumult of the city;
He does not heed the shouts of the driver.
8 The range of the mountains *is* his pasture,
And he searches after [d]every green thing.

9 "Will the [e]wild ox be willing to serve you?
Will he bed by your manger?
10 Can you bind the wild ox in the furrow with ropes?
Or will he plow the valleys behind you?
11 Will you trust him because his strength *is* great?
Or will you leave your labor to him?
12 Will you trust him to bring home your [4]grain,
And gather it to your threshing floor?

13 "The wings of the ostrich wave proudly,
But are her wings and pinions *like the* kindly stork's?
14 For she leaves her eggs on the ground,
And warms them in the dust;
15 She forgets that a foot may crush them,
Or that a wild beast may break them.
16 She [f]treats her young harshly, as though *they were* not hers;
Her labor is in vain, without [5]concern,
17 Because God deprived her of wisdom,
And did not [g]endow her with understanding.
18 When she lifts herself on high,
She scorns the horse and its rider.

19 "Have you given the horse strength?
Have you clothed his neck with [6]thunder?
20 Can you [7]frighten him like a locust?
His majestic snorting strikes terror.
21 He paws in the valley, and rejoices in *his* strength;
[h]He gallops into the clash of arms.
22 He mocks at fear, and is not frightened;
Nor does he turn back from the sword.
23 The quiver rattles against him,
The glittering spear and javelin.

CHAPTER 39

1 [a]Deut. 14:5; 1 Sam. 24:2; Ps. 104:18 [b]Ps. 29:9
3 [1]Lit. *pangs*
5 [2]A species of wild donkey
6 [c]Job 24:5; Jer. 2:24; Hos. 8:9 [3]Lit. *salt land*
8 [d]Gen. 1:29
9 [e]Num. 23:22; Deut. 33:17; Ps. 22:21; 29:6; 92:10; Is. 34:7
12 [4]Lit. *seed*
16 [f]Lam. 4:3 [5]Lit. *fear*
17 [g]Job 35:11
19 [6]Or *a mane*
20 [7]*make him spring*
21 [h]Jer. 8:6

■ **39:1, 2 Do you know . . . can you mark . . . Can you number.** God reminds Job of His creative, wise, and sustaining work even in the barren hills where man can scarcely live—and of Job's ignorance by contrast.

■ **39:5 Who set the wild donkey free.** This wild creature was greatly admired for its freedom and its ability to live in "the barren land" (v. 6).

■ **39:9 Will the wild ox be willing to serve you.** This now extinct animal was already rare in Palestine in Job's day. They were hunted to extinction by the Egyptians and Assyrians.

■ **39:18 She scorns the horse and its rider.** The ostrich is a bird that cannot fly yet runs faster than a horse. Job has complained of paradoxes in his life; God shows him natural paradoxes that are resolved only in the secret (or revealed) purposes of the self-existent God.

■ **39:19 Have you given the horse strength.** Probably this is the warhorse, by reputation the strongest and most intelligent animal.

24 He devours the distance with fierceness and rage;
Nor does he come to a halt because the trumpet *has* sounded.
25 At *the blast of* the trumpet he says, 'Aha!'
He smells the battle from afar,
The thunder of captains and shouting.

26 "Does the hawk fly by your wisdom,
And spread its wings toward the south?
27 Does the [i]eagle mount up at your command,
And [j]make its nest on high?
28 On the rock it dwells and resides,
On the crag of the rock and the stronghold.
29 From there it spies out the prey;
Its eyes observe from afar.
30 Its young ones suck up blood;
And [k]where the slain *are,* there it *is.*"

40 Moreover the LORD [a]answered Job, and said:

2 "Shall [b]the one who contends with the Almighty correct *Him?*
He who [c]rebukes God, let him answer it."

Job's Response to God

3 Then Job answered the LORD and said:

4 "Behold,[d] I am vile;
What shall I answer You?
[e]I lay my hand over my mouth.
5 Once I have spoken, but I will not answer;
Yes, twice, but I will proceed no further."

God's Challenge to Job

6 [f]Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said:

7 "Now[g] [l]prepare yourself like a man;
[h]I will question you, and you shall answer Me:

8 "Would[i] you indeed [2]annul My judgment?
Would you condemn Me that you may be justified?
9 Have you an arm like God?
Or can you thunder with [j]a voice like His?
10 [k]Then adorn yourself *with* majesty and splendor,
And array yourself with glory and beauty.
11 Disperse the rage of your wrath;
Look on everyone *who is* proud, and humble him.
12 Look on everyone *who is* [l]proud, *and* bring him low;
Tread down the wicked in their place.
13 Hide them in the dust together,
Bind their faces in hidden *darkness.*
14 Then I will also confess to you
That your own right hand can save you.

27 [f]Prov. 30:18, 19 [i]Jer. 49:16; Obad. 4
30 [k]Matt. 24:28; Luke 17:37

CHAPTER 40

1 [a]Job 38:1
2 [b]Job 9:3; 10:2; 33:13 [c]Job 13:3; 23:4
4 [d]Ezra 9:6; Job 42:6 [e]Job 29:9; Ps. 39:9
6 [f]Job 38:1
7 [g]Job 38:3 [h]Job 42:4 [l]Lit. *gird up your loins*
8 [i]Job 16:11; 19:6; [Ps. 51:4; Rom. 3:4] [2]*nullify*
9 [j]Job 37:4; [Ps. 29:3, 4]
10 [k]Ps. 93:1; 104:1
12 [l]1 Sam. 2:7; [Is. 2:12; 13:11]; Dan. 4:37

■ **39:29 Its eyes observe from afar.** In addition to the mysterious migratory instinct of birds (v. 26), these words speak of the phenomenal eyesight of eagles.

■ **40:1, 2** This conclusion of the first speech should be compared with its opening in 38:2. Both are directed toward Job's bold but erroneous utterances during his moments of doubt.

■ **40:3–5** Job abandons his obsession with being vindicated. It is his turn to speak, but he has nothing to say. He is brought low before the Almighty.

■ **40:6—41:34** The Lord opens His second discourse (40:6, 7) as He did in 38:1–3, but here challenges Job with a new line of reasoning about Job's questioning whether God is just in judging the wicked. In His first speech God revealed Himself as Lord of nature, but here as the Lord of the moral realm.

■ **40:8–14** This section emphasizes God's power over pride and wickedness (vv. 11, 12). The monsters in the verses following, behemoth and leviathan, probably represent such forces of evil that God can control but before which Job is helpless.

15 "Look now at the [3]behemoth, which I made *along* with you;
He eats grass like an ox.
16 See now, his strength *is* in his hips,
And his power *is* in his stomach muscles.
17 He moves his tail like a cedar;
The sinews of his thighs are tightly knit.
18 His bones *are like* beams of bronze,
His ribs like bars of iron.
19 He *is* the first of the [m]ways of God;
Only He who made him can bring near His sword.
20 Surely the mountains [n]yield food for him,
And all the beasts of the field play there.
21 He lies under the lotus trees,
In a covert of reeds and marsh.
22 The lotus trees cover him *with* their shade;
The willows by the brook surround him.
23 Indeed the river may rage,
Yet he is not disturbed;
He is confident, though the Jordan gushes into his mouth,
24 *Though* he takes it in his eyes,
Or one pierces *his* nose with a snare.

41 "Can you draw out [a]Leviathan[1] with a hook,
Or *snare* his tongue with a line *which* you lower?
2 Can you [b]put a reed through his nose,
Or pierce his jaw with a [2]hook?
3 Will he make many supplications to you?
Will he speak softly to you?
4 Will he make a covenant with you?
Will you take him as a servant forever?
5 Will you play with him as *with* a bird,
Or will you leash him for your maidens?
6 Will *your* companions [3]make a banquet of him?
Will they apportion him among the merchants?
7 Can you fill his skin with harpoons,
Or his head with fishing spears?
8 Lay your hand on him;
Remember the battle—
Never do it again!
9 Indeed, *any* hope of *overcoming* him is false;
Shall *one not* be overwhelmed at the sight of him?
10 No one *is so* fierce that he would dare stir him up.
Who then is able to stand against Me?
11 [c]Who has preceded Me, that I should pay *him?*
[d]Everything under heaven is Mine.

12 "I will not [4]conceal his limbs,
His mighty power, or his graceful proportions.
13 Who can [5]remove his outer coat?
Who can approach *him* with a double bridle?
14 Who can open the doors of his face,
With his terrible teeth all around?

15 [3]A large animal, exact identity unknown

19 [m]Job 26:14

20 [n]Ps. 104:14

CHAPTER 41

1 [a]Ps. 74:14; 104:26; Is. 27:1 [1]A large sea creature, exact identity unknown

2 [b]2 Kin. 19:38; Is. 37:29 [2]*thorn*

6 [3]Or *bargain over him*

11 [c][Rom. 11:35] [d]Ex. 19:5; [Deut. 10:14; Job 9:5–10; 26:6–14]; Ps. 24:1; 50:12; 1 Cor. 10:26, 28

12 [4]Lit. *keep silent about*

13 [5]Lit. *take off the face of his garment*

■ **40:15 behemoth.** The Hebrew root is used for "cattle," but the form here implies the meaning, "the beast beyond comparison." Parts of the description, especially v. 19, go beyond any natural creature like the hippopotamus or the crocodile. Canaanite literature describes the goddess Anat overcoming a terrible bull and a seven-headed "Leviathan." The Lord's speech indicates that whatever may be the forces suggested by such creatures, they are no more than playthings in comparison with His unfathomable power.

■ **41:1 Leviathan.** Possibly "leviathan" and "behemoth" form a poetic repetition, both referring to one creature. The poetic description in these lines is anchored in nature, but the creature or creatures described represent something more. Like Leviathan in Is. 27:1 and Ps. 74:14, they symbolize threatening powers in the heavenly and earthly realms (Rev. 12:7, 13:1).

15 [6]Lit. *shields*
22 [7]*despair*
25 [8]Or *purify themselves*

CHAPTER 42

2 [a]Gen. 18:14; [Matt. 19:26; Mark 10:27; 14:36; Luke 18:27]
3 [b]Job 38:2 [c]Ps. 40:5; 131:1; 139:6
4 [d]Job 38:3; 40:7
5 [e]Job 26:14; [Rom. 10:17]

15 *His* rows of [6]scales are *his* pride,
Shut up tightly *as with* a seal;
16 One is so near another
That no air can come between them;
17 They are joined one to another,
They stick together and cannot be parted.
18 His sneezings flash forth light,
And his eyes *are* like the eyelids of the morning.
19 Out of his mouth go burning lights;
Sparks of fire shoot out.
20 Smoke goes out of his nostrils,
As *from* a boiling pot and burning rushes.
21 His breath kindles coals,
And a flame goes out of his mouth.
22 Strength dwells in his neck,
And [7]sorrow dances before him.
23 The folds of his flesh are joined together;
They are firm on him and cannot be moved.
24 His heart is as hard as stone,
Even as hard as the lower *millstone.*
25 When he raises himself up, the mighty are afraid;
Because of his crashings they [8]are beside themselves.
26 *Though* the sword reaches him, it cannot avail;
Nor does spear, dart, or javelin.
27 He regards iron as straw,
And bronze as rotten wood.
28 The arrow cannot make him flee;
Slingstones become like stubble to him.
29 Darts are regarded as straw;
He laughs at the threat of javelins.
30 His undersides *are* like sharp potsherds;
He spreads pointed *marks* in the mire.
31 He makes the deep boil like a pot;
He makes the sea like a pot of ointment.
32 He leaves a shining wake behind him;
One would think the deep had white hair.
33 On earth there is nothing like him,
Which is made without fear.
34 He beholds every high *thing;*
He *is* king over all the children of pride."

Job's Repentance and Restoration

42 Then Job answered the LORD and said:

2 "I know that You [a]can do everything,
And that no purpose *of Yours* can be withheld from You.
3 *You asked,* [b]'Who *is* this who hides counsel without knowledge?'
Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand,
[c]Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.
4 Listen, please, and let me speak;
You said, [d]'I will question you, and you shall answer Me.'
5 "I have [e]heard of You by the hearing of the ear,
But now my eye sees You.

■ **41:34** This fits exactly the lines introducing behemoth and leviathan in 40:11, 12.

■ **42:1–6** Appropriately, Job is now more than humbled: he must repent for his rash words doubting God's justice during his deepest suffering. Because of his experience, his repentance is unforced and sincere.

■ **42:2** See "Omnipresence and Omnipotence" at Jer. 23:24.

■ **42:5 But now my eye sees You.** Job could not see physically through the whirlwind out of which God spoke (38:1; 40:6); he expresses a deeper meaning. He knew God with words, but he now experiences His living presence in his inner being. He meets Him as Savior and friend and, above all, God.

6 Therefore I [f]abhor[1] *myself,*
And repent in dust and ashes."

7 And so it was, after the LORD had spoken these words to Job, that the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "My wrath is aroused against you and your two friends, for you have not spoken of Me *what is* right, as My servant Job *has.* 8 Now therefore, take for yourselves [g]seven bulls and seven rams, [h]go to My servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and My servant Job shall [i]pray for you. For I will accept [2]him, lest I deal with you *according to your* folly; because you have not spoken of Me *what is* right, as My servant Job *has.*"

9 So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite *and* Zophar the Naamathite went and did as the LORD commanded them; for the LORD had [3]accepted Job. 10 [j]And the LORD [4]restored Job's losses when he prayed for his friends. Indeed the LORD gave Job [k]twice as much as he had before. 11 Then [l]all his brothers, all his sisters, and all those who had been his acquaintances before, came to him and ate food with him in his house; and they consoled him and comforted him for all the adversity that the LORD had brought upon him. Each one gave him a piece of silver and each a ring of gold.

12 Now the LORD blessed [m]the latter *days* of Job more than his beginning; for he had [n]fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, one thousand yoke of oxen, and one thousand female donkeys. 13 [o]He also had seven sons and three daughters. 14 And he called the name of the first [5]Jemimah, the name of the second [6]Keziah, and the name of the third [7]Keren-Happuch. 15 In all the land were found no women *so* beautiful as the daughters of Job; and their father gave them an inheritance among their brothers.

16 After this Job [p]lived one hundred and forty years, and saw his children and grandchildren *for* four generations. 17 So Job died, old and [q]full of days.

6 [f]Ezra 9:6 [1]*despise*

8 [g]Num. 23:1 [h][Matt. 5:24] [i]Gen. 20:17 [2]Lit. *his face*

9 [3]Lit. *lifted up the face of Job*

10 [j]Deut. 30:3 [k]Is. 40:2 [4]Lit. *turned the captivity of Job,* what was captured from Job

11 [l]Job 19:13

12 [m]James 5:11 [n]Job 1:3

13 [o]Job 1:2

14 [5]Lit. *Handsome as the Day* [6]*Cassia,* a fragrance [7]Lit. *The Horn of Color* or *The Colorful Ray*

16 [p]Job 5:26; Prov. 3:16

17 [q]Gen. 15:15; 25:8

■ **42:7–17** The drama introduced in the prologue now comes full circle.

■ **42:7–9** God rebukes Job's counselors and accepts Job's prayers on their behalf.

■ **42:7 what is right.** Since God has rebuked (and forgiven) Job for things he had said, why does He say here that Job said what was right while the counselors did not? Their words were often formally blameless. The counselors failed since without knowing why Job was suffering, they arrogantly assumed they did, and falsely accused Job of kinds of sins of which he was not guilty. That God accepted Job's prayer on their behalf indicates His gracious forgiveness of them also.

■ **42:8 shall pray for you.** We often assume that praying for one's detractors is a New Testament teaching, but it is here in Job. In this way Job foreshadows Christ, who when nailed to the cross prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (Luke 23:34).

■ **42:12 the LORD blessed.** Job is restored, and those who refused to be near him in his dark hour (19:13–20) are forgiven. Commentators have objected to this restoration, since so many through the ages have suffered without being restored. But God had allowed Satan (the Adversary) to strike Job to prove that His servant would remain true. The reader knows that Satan was proved a liar: Job never cursed God (1:11; 2:5) and God was glorified. It was the good pleasure of God to reward His servant. The "perseverance of Job" was known to God (James 5:11). Job's cry, "I will defend my own ways before Him" (13:15), can be compared with Jacob's, "I will not let You go unless You bless me" (Gen. 32:26).

The Lord Challenges Job (42:1)

In the face of God's fearful challenge, Job could only humble himself:

God's Challenge	Job's Response
First, Job's ignorance (38:1—40:2) • He was absent at creation • He cannot explain the forces of nature	Job admits his ignorance and becomes silent (40:3–5)
Second, Job's frailty (40:6—41:34) • He cannot overrule God's ways • He cannot control the forces of nature	Job confesses his presumption and repents (42:2–6)

Introduction to

HEBREW POETRY

The most prominent distinguishing feature of Hebrew poetry is the repetition of ideas, called parallelism. An idea is stated and then immediately expressed again in different words, with the concepts of the two lines corresponding more or less closely. The types of parallelism were described by Lowth (1753) as belonging to three basic categories. These are: *synonymous,* in which the idea is repeated in a similar way; *antithetic,* in which the idea is stated by opposition; and *synthetic,* in which the second line develops or extends the thought of the first rather than merely repeating it. Other categories have also been distinguished. For example, in *emblematic* parallelism one line is a figure of speech and the other puts the same idea literally, explaining the figure. In *step, staircase,* or *climactic* parallelism, the succeeding lines carry the idea forward, each one adding a new element to what went before. Characteristic examples of the types mentioned are: (a) synonymous, Ps. 113:7; Ps. 147:10 (b) antithetic, Ps. 1:6; Prov. 10:1; (c) synthetic, Ps. 52:9; (d) emblematic, Prov. 25:4, 5; and (e) step, Judg. 5:30; Ps. 29:5, 6; 65:4.

The corresponding parts of parallel lines often help to explain each other. Two lines together may define an idea more clearly than one alone. More recently, it has been observed that even if the two lines are practically identical, there is still a special effect due to repetition alone. In this sense, all parallelisms are to some extent synthetic. However, the usual analysis has not lost its validity and is widely used in discussions of biblical poetry.

It is helpful to study the techniques of antithesis, figurative speech, and so on, in simple parallelisms, because the same techniques are combined in more complicated examples. Thus Ps. 92:12–15 has synonymous and emblematic elements that compare a flourishing tree with a righteous person, and define the righteous person as one who is planted, or remains, in God's house. The fruit of the tree is the praise of God's righteousness. Comparing and contrasting the balanced parts of parallel expressions is the basic key to understanding as well as enjoying biblical poetry.

The meter or rhythm of Hebrew poetry has been a subject of continuous debate. It seems established that there is at least one clearly defined meter, the *qinah* or lament, having three beats and then two in each line. But there is no general agreement about other proposed meters. In any case, while the parallelism of ideas can be carried over and appreciated even in translation, meter is much harder to replicate. The same is true of features like alliteration, rhyme, and other effects depending on the sound of words. In Hebrew poetry these are not nearly as important as parallelism.

Another formal feature, which is often indicated in the margins or notes of translations, is the acrostic. In this type of composition lines or stanzas begin with successive letters of the alphabet. This technique, like parallelism, would help in memorizing and teaching. It may also be a way of suggesting that the subject has been handled completely. The outstanding example is Ps. 119.

Poetry in general, and not just Hebrew poetry, is characterized by compression of ideas and economy of expression. This means that transitions are often left out and the relationship of ideas is left for the reader to determine. For example, in the Psalms there are many confusing changes of subject, and ideas that seem unrelated may nevertheless occur next to each other. But the difficulty and subtlety of poetic language can be regarded as a virtue. Good poetry rewards the effort required to understand it, as well as to memorize it. □

The Book of

PSALMS

Author

Many of the psalms begin with a title linking the psalm with a particular individual or group, using a Hebrew preposition that could possibly indicate dedication ("to David"), subject matter ("about David"), or authorship ("by David"). However, one of the few psalm titles with an expanded context leaves no doubt that the title intends to identify the composer of the psalm (Ps. 18). David is by far the most frequently cited author, most of his psalms being in the first two books (see Structure), though there is a small collection of psalms by him at the very end (Ps. 138—145). The tradition that associates David with singing and psalm composition is so strong that there is little doubt that David wrote the psalms that bear his name (1 Sam. 16:14–23; 2 Sam. 1:17–27; 2 Sam. 22; 2 Sam. 23:1; 1 Chr. 6:31; 15:16; 16:7; Ps. 18; Amos 6:5).

Other authors appear in psalm titles: Moses (Ps. 90), Solomon (Ps. 72; 127), the sons of Korah (Ps. 42—49; 84; 85; 87; 88), the sons of Asaph (Ps. 50; 73—83), and Ethan the Ezrahite (Ps. 89). A number of psalms have no designated author (e.g. Ps. 1; 10).

Date and Occasion

The titles of the psalms show that they were composed by individuals in response to a particular corporate or individual experience. The dates and occasions of the psalms (see introductory paragraphs to the psalms in the notes) range from the time of Moses (Ps. 90), to the experiences of David (Ps. 51), to the time after the exile of the Jews in Babylon (Ps. 126). Still, the psalms collected for use in public worship were never so specific that they could not be used in new situations.

Forming the collection took several centuries, arriving at its present form some time after the exile in Babylon. The name "Psalms" means "songs," and is taken from the Septuagint, the early Greek translation of the Old Testament. This is the name used in the New Testament (Luke 20:42; 24:44; Acts 1:20).

Characteristics and Themes

Titles. The titles of individual psalms are usually not assigned a verse number in translations, giving the impression that they are separate from other verses. In the Hebrew Bible the titles are usually numbered as the first verse. The titles are either an original part of the psalms, or at least from extremely early tradition.

The titles may be divided into five basic types: authorship, historical, musical, genre (literary type), and instructions for use in worship.

1. Authorship Titles. See the discussion under "Author" above.

2. Historical Titles. There are fewer historical than authorship titles (Ps. 3; 7; 18; 30; 34; 51; 52; 54; 56; 57; 59; 60; 63; 142). The authenticity of the former has been disputed, although there is no textual evidence that they were added later. However, some believe that apparent disharmony between psalm and title (as in Ps. 30) or between the title and other books (Ps. 56 compared with 1 Sam. 21:10–15) indicates that those titles are late and artificial. Others argue that if historical titles were added later, whoever added them would have made sure they matched the content of the psalm. To give an example, why would a later editor connect Ps. 30 with the dedication of the temple when there was no mention of the temple in the psalm?

The historical titles may give us an indication of the origins of a psalm (see below), but they are of limited help in interpretation. That is, while psalms may have been written in reaction to particular historical events, the composers were careful not to be specific in the body of the poem.

The psalms were intended to express what others could share in formal and public worship, and were not private poems. However, the interpreter is not bound to reconstruct the historical background of all the psalms (a practice of many earlier psalm commentators).

3. Genre Titles. A number of the terms in the titles classify the psalms into genres, or literary types. It is difficult to know the precise meaning of the terms used. Some are found often: *mizmor* (a "song," e.g. Ps. 139) and *shir* ("song"), others rarely. In today's discussion literary types are determined from the content of the psalms and not from the titles.

4. Musical Notations. Some of the genre terms, as above, are also musical notations, notably *mizmor* (from a verbal root "to sing") and *shir* ("song"). Others are of less certain meaning. A few are probably names of tunes (e.g., Ps. 60, "Set to 'Lily of the Testimony' ").

Selah is a word that occurs frequently in the body of the psalms. Its meaning is unknown, though it could be a musical term, like "rest" or "interlude."

5. Instructions for Use in Worship. Occasionally the titles indicate how the psalms were used in formal worship. Of these the best known are the "Songs of Ascents" (Ps. 120—134; see the introductory paragraph to Ps. 120).

Structure. The psalms are arranged in five books. Each book closes with a doxology and benediction (Ps.

1—41; 42—72; 73—89; 90—106; 107—150). Jewish tradition is that the number five was chosen to match the five books of Moses.

Psalms 1 and 2 are the entryway into the sanctuary of the Psalms, and Ps. 146—150 conclude the book with a long doxology. Ps. 1 transforms the prayers and praises originally offered in the temple into a book for meditation in meetings and at home.

The first two books celebrate Israel's golden age during the time of the united monarchy. Ps. 2 and 72 are prayers that the king will extend the rule of God to the ends of the earth. All the psalms in Book I are attributed to David, except Ps. 1, 2, and 33. Laments in the first two books always conclude with praise.

By contrast, Book III (Ps. 73—89) is dark. The first psalm of the section complains that the righteous suffer. The last psalm of the section laments that the Davidic covenant seems to have failed, with the king's crown rolling in the dust. Ps. 88 is as the only psalm without praise.

Book IV (Ps. 90—106) turns to God Himself who has been Israel's help in ages past. In this book Moses is mentioned seven times; he is mentioned only once before (Ps. 77). Psalms 93—99, called "enthronement psalms," look to God's reign on earth. The writer of Hebrews assigns the praise of God celebrated in Ps. 102:25–27 to Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:10–12).

Book V begins by thanking God for bringing Israel back from the exile. The book includes psalms holding up David as a model for piety (138—145) and psalms predicting the reign of Christ (110).

Genres. Distinguishing characteristics allow the psalms to be assigned to literary groups for the purpose of study. Following are the literary types commonly used.

1. Hymns of Praise. Hymns are easily recognized by their exuberant praise of the Lord. God is praised for who He is and for His power and mercy. For examples, see Ps. 8; 24; 29; 33; 47; 48.

2. Laments. Laments express an emotion opposite to that of praise. In the lament, the psalmist opens his heart honestly to God, a heart often filled with sadness, fear, or even anger. With few exceptions the laments turn to the Lord with confidence at the end. For examples, see Ps. 25; 39; 51; 86; 102; 120.

3. Thanksgiving Psalms. A psalm of thanksgiving is appropriate when the Lord answers a prayer of lament. The first three psalm types form a kind of triad. The psalmist sings hymns when he is right with the Lord, laments when he is out of harmony with Him, and gives thanks when the relationship is reestablished. For examples see Ps. 18; 66; 107; 118; 138.

4. Songs of Confidence (or trust). Some psalms have trust as their dominant mood. These are often short and contain a striking metaphor that captures the psalmist's trusting attitude. For examples, see Ps. 23; 121; 131.

5. Kingship Psalms. Since God, the King of the universe, is the subject of the Psalms and since David, the human king, is both singer and subject of many psalms, kingship is an important concept in the Psalter. However, a few psalms focus so intensely either on God's kingship (Ps. 24; 93) or on the human king (Ps. 20; 21; 45) that they stand out.

6. Wisdom Psalms. For biblical wisdom we commonly turn to books like Proverbs, Job, Song of Songs, and Ecclesiastes. In these books are practical directions for how God wants us to live our lives. The "wisdom psalms" make use of themes found in the wisdom books. For instance, the strong contrast between the righteous and the wicked found in the Book of Proverbs is found in Ps. 1. For other examples, see Ps. 37 and 49.

Poetic Style. No special knowledge is needed to recognize the poetic quality of the Psalter. Instead of sentences forming paragraphs, the psalms are composed of short poetic verses of nearly equal length. This characteristic is easily recognized on the printed page.

Poetry is deliberate communication that pays particular attention to its own form. The poetic language addresses not only the mind but the imagination and emotions. To say "The LORD is my Shepherd" (Ps. 23:1) does more than inform. The metaphor of a shepherd evokes a picture and touches the emotions in a way that a didactic statement would not.

Parallelism is the most obvious poetic device in Old Testament poetry. Ps. 6:1 is a good example:

> O LORD, do not rebuke me in Your anger,
> Nor chasten me in Your hot displeasure.

To interpret parallel lines, it is important to bear in mind that the second line continues and carries forward the thought of the first. In this verse, the first line asks the Lord not to punish in word, while the second part asks Him not to punish in deed.

Examples may be found of lines that are even more similar (Ps. 2:1) and of those where it is harder to recognize the connection (Ps. 2:6). But the general principle of interpretation is that the second half of a poetic verse carries forward the thought of the first half. See "Introduction to Hebrew Poetry."

Theology of the Psalms. Just as the Psalter was formed during the entire period of the Old Testament, so the theology of the psalms is as large as the Old Testament. Martin Luther called the Psalms "a little Bible, and the summary of the Old Testament."

Christian readers of the Psalms appreciate the relationship these ancient songs have to Jesus Christ. Jesus told His disciples after the Resurrection that "all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me" (Luke 24:44). The Old Testament, including the Psalms, looked forward to Christ's coming, His suffering, and His glory. Jesus and the New Testament writers use psalm after psalm to express His suffering (Matt. 27:46) and His glorification (Matt. 22:41–46). In addition, Jesus was revealed as the object of the worship of the psalms.

Since Christ is the Second Person of the Trinity, the hymns and laments of the psalms are directed to Him as to the Father and the Spirit. Jesus is both a singer of the psalms (Heb. 2:12) and the focus of their interest. We can sing to Him our praise, tell Him our complaints and petitions, and thank Him for His goodness. We extol Him as our King, rest our confidence in Him, and look to Him as the embodiment of God's wisdom.

The Curses of the Psalms. Some psalms cry out not only for the righteous to be vindicated, but also for God to punish the wicked (Ps. 69:22–28). Such prayers reflect the calling of Israel to holy war as God's instruments of judgment. With the coming of Christ to bear God's judgment, the warfare of God's people continues, directed now against "spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Eph. 6:12). In their present warfare, Christians are commanded not to curse, but to bless their personal enemies, overcoming evil with good (Rom. 12:17–21).

Title "Psalms" means "songs" and is taken from the Septuagint, the early Greek translation of the Old Testament. The New Testament uses this name (Luke 20:42; 24:44; Acts 1:20). The corresponding Hebrew word *mizmor* occurs frequently in the psalms and means a vocal or instrumental song.□

Outline of Psalms

I. Book I, Psalms 1—41
II. Book II, Psalms 42—72
III. Book III, Psalms 73—89
IV. Book IV, Psalms 90—106
V. Book V, Psalms 107—150

Book One: Psalms 1—41

PSALM 1

The Way of the Righteous and the End of the Ungodly

Blessed [a]*is* the man
Who walks not in the counsel of the [1]ungodly,
Nor stands in the path of sinners,
[b]Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;
2 But [c]his delight *is* in the law of the LORD,
[d]And in His law he [2]meditates day and night.
3 He shall be like a tree
[e]Planted by the [3]rivers of water,
That brings forth its fruit in its season,
Whose leaf also shall not wither;
And whatever he does shall [f]prosper.

4 The ungodly *are* not so,
But *are* [g]like the chaff which the wind drives away.

PSALM 1

1 [a]Prov. 4:14 [b]Ps. 26:4, 5; Jer. 15:17 [1]*wicked*
2 [c]Ps. 119:14, 16, 35 [d][Josh. 1:8] [2]*ponders* by talking to himself
3 [e][Ps. 92:12–14]; Jer. 17:8; Ezek. 19:10 [f]Gen. 39:2, 3, 23; Ps. 128:2 [3]*channels*
4 [g]Job 21:18; Ps. 35:5; Is. 17:13

■ **Ps. 1** Like the gateway to a sanctuary, one of the relatively few wisdom psalms introduces the whole collection. Before having close conversation with God, the reader's attitude toward the law of God has to be considered. The righteous person loves and studies it; the wicked person hates it.

■ **1:1 Blessed.** A stronger word than "happy"; to be "blessed" is to enjoy God's special favor and grace.

walks not . . . Nor stands . . . Nor sits. The righteous man is described by what he avoids. There is a downward progression in the verbs "walks," "stands," and "sits."

■ **1:2 his delight.** The righteous man is described as someone who loves the law of God. "Law" can refer to a specific command, but also to the whole Scripture. The righteous person grows by an obedient response to the Scriptures, which express the will of God.

■ **1:3 like a tree.** As Joseph prospered in Egypt, so will the righteous man. He is compared to a luxuriant tree, ever blooming because water is near.

■ **1:4 The ungodly are not so.** The contrast is strong. The wicked are compared to dead and rootless plants. A puff of wind carries them away.

5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment,
Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.

6 For [h]the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
But the way of the ungodly shall perish.

PSALM 2

The Messiah's Triumph and Kingdom

Why [a]do the [1]nations [2]rage,
And the people plot a [3]vain thing?
2 The kings of the earth set themselves,
And the [b]rulers take counsel together,
Against the LORD and against His [c]Anointed,[4] *saying,*
3 "Let [d]us break Their bonds in pieces
And cast away Their cords from us."

4 He who sits in the heavens [e]shall laugh;
The LORD shall hold them in derision.
5 Then He shall speak to them in His wrath,
And distress them in His deep displeasure:
6 "Yet I have [5]set My King
[6]On My holy hill of Zion."

7 "I will declare the [7]decree:
The LORD has said to Me,
[f]'You *are* My Son,
Today I have begotten You.
8 Ask of Me, and I will give *You*
The nations *for* Your inheritance,
And the ends of the earth *for* Your possession.
9 [g]You shall [8]break them with a rod of iron;
You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.' "

10 Now therefore, be wise, O kings;
Be instructed, you judges of the earth.
11 Serve the LORD with fear,
And rejoice with trembling.
12 [9]Kiss the Son, lest [i]He be angry,
And you perish *in* the way,
When [h]His wrath is kindled but a little.
[i]Blessed *are* all those who put their trust in Him.

6 [h]Ps. 37:18; [Nah. 1:7; John 10:14; 2 Tim. 2:19]

PSALM 2

1 [a]Acts 4:25, 26 [1]*Gentiles* [2]*throng tumultuously* [3]*worthless* or *empty*

2 [b][Matt. 12:14; 26:3, 4, 59–66; 27:1, 2; Mark 3:6; 11:18] [c][John 1:41] [4]Christ, Commissioned One, Heb. *Messiah*

3 [d]Luke 19:14

4 [e]Ps. 37:13

6 [5]Lit. *installed* [6]Lit. *Upon Zion, the hill of My holiness*

7 [f][Matt. 3:17; Mark 1:1, 11; Luke 3:22; John 1:18; Acts 13:33; [Heb. 1:5; 5:5] [7]Or *decree of the* LORD: *He said to Me*

9 [g]Ps. 89:23; 110:5, 6; [Rev. 2:26, 27; 12:5; 19:15] [8]So with MT, Tg.; LXX, Syr., Vg. *rule* (cf. Rev. 2:27)

12 [h][Rev. 6:16, 17] [i][Ps. 5:11; 34:22] [9]LXX, Vg. *Embrace discipline;* Tg. *Receive instruction* [1]LXX *the* LORD

■ **1:6 the LORD knows the way.** The two ways of life are determined by one's relation to the Lord. The ideal of righteousness is fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

■ **Ps. 2** The theme of kingship pervades this psalm. While most of the kingship psalms focus on either divine or human kingship, Ps. 2 masterfully integrates both, contrasting the divine King and His human counterpart with the hostile "kings of the earth." The psalm has no title, but the New Testament ascribes it to David (Acts 4:25). The New Testament frequently quotes and alludes to this psalm (Matt. 3:17; 17:5; Acts 4:25–27; 13:33; Rom. 1:4; Heb. 1:5; 5:5). Jesus Christ is the Son of David and the Son of God; the promises given to David come to fulfillment in Him.

■ **2:2 kings.** The nations are being organized by their political leaders.

His Anointed. While the living Davidic king is undoubtedly in view for the psalmist, the ultimate reference of the song is to Christ, the King of Kings.

■ **2:3 break Their bonds.** A metaphor for rebellion.

■ **2:4–6** The Lord answers His enemies with the installation of the King.

■ **2:6 My King.** The Lord counters the plotting of the kings by pointing to the establishment of His messianic King, prefigured in the temporal monarchy of Jerusalem.

Zion. Zion is a hill north of the Davidic city of Jerusalem. It is not important because of its size, but because it is the location of the temple. Jerusalem as a whole is sometimes called Zion. Earthly Zion was a token of the heavenly Zion. Much of the symbolism of the temple pointed to heavenly realities.

■ **2:7 You are My Son.** The divine speech addressed to the divine Son (cf. Heb. 1:5), with David as witness, reflects the promise of 2 Sam. 7:14—the "Davidic covenant," which had in view not merely David's earthly descendants, but the divine Son of whom David was also an ancestor.

■ **2:9** See "God Reigns: Divine Sovereignty" at Dan. 4:34.

■ **2:12 Kiss the Son.** To kiss the Son is an act of submission (cf. 1 Sam. 10:1). The word "Son" is not the usual Hebrew term, but an unexpected Aramaic term.

PSALM 3

The LORD Helps His Troubled People

A Psalm of David [a] when he fled from Absalom his son.

LORD, how they have increased who trouble me!
Many *are* they who rise up against me.
2 Many *are* they who say of me,
"*There is* no help for him in God." Selah

3 But You, O LORD, *are* [b] a shield [1] for me,
My glory and [c] the One who lifts up my head.
4 I cried to the LORD with my voice,
And [d] He heard me from His [e] holy hill. Selah

5 [f] I lay down and slept;
I awoke, for the LORD sustained me.
6 [g] I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people
Who have set *themselves* against me all around.

7 Arise, O LORD;
Save me, O my God!
[h] For You have struck all my enemies on the cheekbone;
You have broken the teeth of the ungodly.
8 [i] Salvation *belongs* to the LORD.
Your blessing *is* upon Your people. Selah

PSALM 3

title [a] 2 Sam. 15:13–17

3 [b] Ps. 5:12; 28:7 [c] Ps. 9:13; 27:6 [1] Lit. *around*

4 [d] Ps. 4:3; 34:4 [e] Ps. 2:6; 15:1; 43:3

5 [f] Lev. 26:6; Ps. 4:8; Prov. 3:24

6 [g] Ps. 23:4; 27:3

7 [h] Job 16:10

8 [i] Ps. 28:8; 35:3; [Is. 43:11]

PSALM 4

The Safety of the Faithful

To the [1] Chief Musician. With stringed instruments. A Psalm of David.

Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness!
You have relieved me in *my* distress;
[2] Have mercy on me, and hear my prayer.

2 How long, O you sons of men,
Will you turn my glory to shame?
How long will you love worthlessness
And seek falsehood? Selah
3 But know that [a] the LORD has [3] set apart for Himself him who is godly;
The LORD will hear when I call to Him.

PSALM 4

title [1] *Choir Director*

1 [2] *Be gracious to me*

3 [a] [2 Tim. 2:19] [3] Many Heb. mss., LXX, Tg., Vg. *made wonderful*

■ **Ps. 3** Surrounded by trouble and crying out to the Lord in distress, the psalmist expresses deep trust in God. The psalm was originally composed when David fled from Absalom and battled against revolt. The military terminology throughout the psalm may indicate that it continued to be used in warfare.

■ **3:1 Many . . . who rise up.** The number and nature of the foes betrays the royal origin of the psalm. The foes of the nation are also the king's foes.

■ **3:3 lifts up my head.** An expression of encouragement.

■ **3:4 holy hill.** That is, Zion (see note on Ps. 2:6). God designated Zion as the place where His people could approach Him through sacrifice.

■ **3:5 I lay down and slept.** As in Ps. 91, the psalmist is able to sleep in the war camp, though the enemy surrounds him.

■ **3:7 Arise.** This expression is typical of psalms sung at the beginning of war. God fights for His people against their flesh and blood enemies.

■ **Ps. 4** Like Ps. 3, this psalm was composed in distress, and the psalmist exhibits a deep confidence in God. Both psalms meditate on faith in the night (vv. 4, 8). The righteous have nothing to fear, because God hears their prayers and cares for them. The righteous are not without sin, but are in covenant relationship with God.

■ **4:1 Hear me . . . my righteousness.** The imperative verbs in this verse show the boldness of the psalmist in prayer. He can fearlessly call on God because he knows that God is his righteousness (Jer. 23:6).

■ **4:2 turn my glory to shame.** It seems that the psalmist is angry at men who turn away from God to serve the false gods of the nations.

worthlessness. Lit. "empty things."

seek falsehood. The idols of the nations are lies because they don't really exist; they are the figments of sinful imagination.

■ **4:3 godly.** Those who are in covenant with God, the recipients of God's lovingkindness.

4 [b][Ps. 119:11; Eph. 4:26] [c]Ps. 77:6 [4]Lit. *Tremble* or *Be agitated*

5 [d]Deut. 33:19; Ps. 51:19 [e]Ps. 37:3, 5; 62:8

6 [f]Num. 6:26; Ps. 80:3, 7, 19

7 [g]Ps. 97:11, 12; Is. 9:3; Acts 14:17

8 [h]Job 11:19; Ps. 3:5 [i][Lev. 25:18]; Deut. 12:10

4 [b]Be[4] angry, and do not sin.
[c]Meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still. Selah
5 Offer [d]the sacrifices of righteousness,
And [e]put your trust in the LORD.

6 *There are* many who say,
"Who will show us *any* good?"
[f]LORD, lift up the light of Your countenance upon us.
7 You have put [g]gladness in my heart,
More than in the season that their grain and wine increased.
8 [h]I will both lie down in peace, and sleep;
[i]For You alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.

PSALM 5

PSALM 5

A Prayer for Guidance

title [1]Heb. *nehiloth*

1 [a]Ps. 4:1 [2]Lit. *groaning*

3 [b]Ps. 55:17; 88:13

4 [3]Lit. *sojourn*

5 [c][Hab. 1:13] [d]Ps. 1:5

6 [e]Ps. 55:23

7 [4]Lit. *the temple of Your holiness*

8 [f]Ps. 25:4, 5; 27:11; 31:3

9 [g]Rom. 3:13 [5]*uprightness*

To the Chief Musician. With [1]flutes. A Psalm of David.

Give [a]ear to my words, O LORD,
Consider my [2]meditation.
2 Give heed to the voice of my cry,
My King and my God,
For to You I will pray.
3 My voice You shall hear in the morning, O LORD;
[b]In the morning I will direct *it* to You,
And I will look up.

4 For You *are* not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness,
Nor shall evil [3]dwell with You.
5 The [c]boastful shall not [d]stand in Your sight;
You hate all workers of iniquity.
6 You shall destroy those who speak falsehood;
The LORD abhors the [e]bloodthirsty and deceitful man.

7 But as for me, I will come into Your house in the multitude of Your mercy;
In fear of You I will worship toward [4]Your holy temple.
8 [f]Lead me, O LORD, in Your righteousness because of my enemies;
Make Your way straight before my face.

9 For *there is* no [5]faithfulness in their mouth;
Their inward part *is* destruction;
[g]Their throat *is* an open tomb;
They flatter with their tongue.

■ **4:4 Be angry, and do not sin.** Compare with Eph. 4:26. These are the sacrifices prescribed in Lev. 1—7, offered with a righteous attitude without which all sacrifice or worship is unacceptable (Ps. 40:6–8).

■ **4:6 good.** The skeptics taunt that there is nothing good. The psalmist responds to their doubts with an appeal that God would reveal Himself.

light of Your countenance. The phrase resembles the priestly blessing found in Num. 6:25, 26.

■ **4:8 lie down in peace.** God's intimate presence allows the psalmist to sleep peacefully and with full confidence. His heart is filled with spiritual blessing.

■ **Ps. 5** This lament petitions the Lord in the midst of distress. However, the psalmist also expresses trust in the Lord's protection. The psalmist's distress is caused by the evil speech of the wicked.

■ **5:1 meditation.** The Hebrew word implies a kind of muttering or scarcely audible speech, as would accompany memorizing and reflection (1:2).

■ **5:2 King.** David, Israel's king, addresses God as his King. He knows that his own kingship is a pale reflection of God's.

■ **5:4 not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness.** This is a poetic understatement. God hates sin (v. 5; 11:5).

Nor shall evil dwell. God is holy, "set apart" from all evil. Sinful people may not come into His presence without a substitutionary sacrifice.

■ **5:7 I will come into Your house.** The psalmist protests his innocence by stating his desire to worship the Lord. "Your house" and "Your holy temple" may refer to the site where the temple would be built, or perhaps the tabernacle of the psalmist's own time (1 Sam. 1:9).

multitude of Your mercy. The writer knows that he is different from the wicked only because of God's grace. His own sin would destroy him if God did not have compassion on him as he approached God's presence.

■ **5:8 Your way.** The path of safety that God opens is also the path of obedience to His will.

■ **5:9 destruction . . . open tomb.** Note how evil speech brings death.

10 Pronounce them guilty, O God!
Let them fall by their own counsels;
Cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions,
For they have rebelled against You.

11 But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You;
Let them ever shout for joy, because You [6]defend them;
Let those also who love Your name
Be joyful in You.
12 For You, O LORD, will bless the righteous;
With favor You will surround him as *with* a shield.

PSALM 6

A Prayer of Faith in Time of Distress

To the Chief Musician. With stringed instruments. [a]On [f]an eight-stringed harp. A Psalm of David.

O LORD, [b]do not rebuke me in Your anger,
Nor chasten me in Your hot displeasure.
2 Have mercy on me, O LORD, for I *am* weak;
O LORD, [c]heal me, for my bones are troubled.
3 My soul also is greatly [d]troubled;
But You, O LORD—how long?

4 Return, O LORD, deliver me!
Oh, save me for Your mercies' sake!
5 [e]For in death *there is* no remembrance of You;
In the grave who will give You thanks?

6 I am weary with my groaning;
[2]All night I make my bed swim;
I drench my couch with my tears.
7 [f]My eye wastes away because of grief;
It grows old because of all my enemies.

8 [g]Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity;
For the LORD has [h]heard the voice of my weeping.
9 The LORD has heard my supplication;
The LORD will receive my prayer.
10 Let all my enemies be ashamed and greatly troubled;
Let them turn back *and* be ashamed suddenly.

11 [6]*protect,* lit. *cover*

PSALM 6

title [a]Ps. 12:title [f]Heb. *sheminith*

1 [b]Ps. 38:1; 118:18; [Jer. 10:24]

2 [c]Ps. 41:4; 147:3; [Hos. 6:1]

3 [d]Ps. 88:3; John 12:27

5 [e]Ps. 30:9; 88:10–12; 115:17; [Eccl. 9:10]; Is. 38:18

6 [2]Or *Every night*

7 [f]Job 17:7; Ps. 31:9

8 [g][Matt. 25:41] [h]Ps. 3:4; 28:6

■ **5:10 Let them fall by their own counsels.** The psalmist calls upon God to punish the wicked because they are guilty. Sin often brings its own retributive consequences.

■ **Ps. 6** The psalm is an individual lament. As with many laments, the psalmist expresses his trust in the Lord at the end of the psalm. The occasion of the psalm appears to be a severe illness (vv. 2, 5). This psalm is one of seven "penitential psalms" (along with 32; 38; 51; 102; 130; 143).

■ **6:1 rebuke . . . chasten.** The psalmist begs the Lord to refrain from verbal and physical punishment. Though God disciplines His people (Heb. 12:1–13), it is for correction and not destruction.

■ **6:2 I am weak . . . my bones are troubled.** The psalmist experiences suffering, probably a serious illness. Some take the language as figurative for spiritual distress.

■ **6:3 how long.** The psalmist boldly asks how long God will permit his suffering to continue. He desperately seeks relief from the One who is able to give it.

■ **6:4 Return, O LORD.** The psalmist thinks that God has turned away from him.

Your mercies' sake. The word translated "mercy" indicates how devotedly God binds Himself to His people by His covenant.

■ **6:5 no remembrance.** A similar statement is expressed in 30:9. The doctrine of resurrection, like the doctrine of the Trinity, is implicit in the Old Testament, but not developed fully until the New Testament. The living observe that the dead are silent and do not take part in worship.

grave. Hebrew *sheol.* This word is found most often in poetic passages that reveal the thoughts and fears of the living, but are not presentations of a doctrine of resurrection or of the intermediate state. See Is. 14:9–11 note.

■ **6:8 all you workers of iniquity.** This reference, along with the reference to "enemies" in the preceding verse, is abrupt. It is possible that the foes are people, like the "friends" of Job, who blamed the patient's sickness on his sin.

PSALM 7

title [a]Hab. 3:1 [b]2 Sam. 16 [1]Heb. *Shiggaion*

1 [c]Ps. 31:15

2 [d]Ps. 57:4; Is. 38:13 [e]Ps. 50:22

3 [f]2 Sam. 16:7 [g]1 Sam. 24:11

4 [h]1 Sam. 24:7; 26:9

6 [i]Ps. 94:2 [j]Ps. 35:23; 44:23 [2]So with MT, Tg., Vg.; LXX *O* LORD *my God*

8 [k]Ps. 26:1; 35:24; 43:1 [l]Ps. 18:20; 35:24

9 [m][1 Sam. 16:7] [3]Lit. *kidneys,* the most secret part of man

10 [n]Ps. 97:10, 11; 125:4 [4]Lit. *My shield is upon God*

12 [o]Deut. 32:41

14 [p]Job 15:35; Is. 59:4; [James 1:15]

15 [q][Job 4:8]; Ps. 57:6

16 [r]Esth. 9:25; Ps. 140:9 [5]The crown of his own head

PSALM 7

Prayer and Praise for Deliverance from Enemies

A [a]Meditation[1] of David, which he sang to the LORD [b]concerning the words of Cush, a Benjamite.

O LORD my God, in You I put my trust;
[c]Save me from all those who persecute me;
And deliver me,
2 [d]Lest they tear me like a lion,
[e]Rending *me* in pieces, while *there is* none to deliver.

3 O LORD my God, [f]if I have done this:
If there is [g]iniquity in my hands,
4 If I have repaid evil to him who was at peace with me,
Or [h]have plundered my enemy without cause,
5 Let the enemy pursue me and overtake *me;*
Yes, let him trample my life to the earth,
And lay my honor in the dust. Selah

6 Arise, O LORD, in Your anger;
[i]Lift Yourself up because of the rage of my enemies;
[j]Rise up [2]for me *to* the judgment You have commanded!
7 So the congregation of the peoples shall surround You;
For their sakes, therefore, return on high.
8 The LORD shall judge the peoples;
[k]Judge me, O LORD, [l]according to my righteousness,
And according to my integrity within me.

9 Oh, let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end,
But establish the just;
[m]For the righteous God tests the hearts and [3]minds.
10 [4]My defense *is* of God,
Who saves the [n]upright in heart.

11 God *is* a just judge,
And God is angry *with the wicked* every day.
12 If he does not turn back,
He will [o]sharpen His sword;
He bends His bow and makes it ready.
13 He also prepares for Himself instruments of death;
He makes His arrows into fiery shafts.

14 [p]Behold, *the wicked* brings forth iniquity;
Yes, he conceives trouble and brings forth falsehood.
15 He made a pit and dug it out,
[q]And has fallen into the ditch *which* he made.
16 [r]His trouble shall return upon his own head,
And his violent dealing shall come down on [5]his own crown.

17 I will praise the LORD according to His righteousness,
And will sing praise to the name of the LORD Most High.

■ **Ps. 7** A lament and psalm of refuge by an innocent person beset by enemies. As one falsely accused of murder could find sanctuary in the house of God and appeal his case to God's judgment, so the psalmist commits his case to God. His protestations of innocence refer to specific charges and are not a claim to be sinless. See Ps. 11; 17; 26; 27; 31; 71.

■ **7:2 like a lion.** Though not found in Israel today, lions were plentiful there in ancient times. The lion often symbolized power, cruelty, and ruthlessness (Is. 5:29; Nah. 2:11, 12).

■ **7:5 Let the enemy.** He is not afraid to invoke a curse on himself, since he knows he is innocent.

■ **7:6 Arise.** See 3:7 note.

■ **7:8 Judge.** There is a judicial setting in this psalm of refuge. God must judge between the psalmist and his opponents.

■ **7:14, 15 conceives trouble . . . made a pit.** These terms express the conviction that a sinner reaps what he sows. Sin brings its own retribution.

PSALM 8

The Glory of the LORD in Creation

To the Chief Musician. [1]On the instrument of Gath. A Psalm of David.

O LORD, our Lord,
How [a]excellent *is* Your name in all the earth,
Who have [b]set Your glory above the heavens!

2 [c]Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants
You have [2]ordained strength,
Because of Your enemies,
That You may silence [d]the enemy and the avenger.

3 When I [e]consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers,
The moon and the stars, which You have ordained,
4 [f]What is man that You are mindful of him,
And the son of man that You [g]visit[3] him?
5 For You have made him a little lower than [4]the angels,
And You have crowned him with glory and honor.

6 [h]You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands;
[i]You have put all *things* under his feet,
7 All sheep and oxen—
Even the beasts of the field,
8 The birds of the air,
And the fish of the sea
That pass through the paths of the seas.

9 [j]O LORD, our Lord,
How excellent *is* Your name in all the earth!

PSALM 9

Prayer and Thanksgiving for the LORD's Righteous Judgments

To the Chief Musician. To *the tune of* [1]"Death of the Son." A Psalm of David.

I will praise *You,* O LORD, with my whole heart;
I will tell of all Your marvelous works.
2 I will be glad and [a]rejoice in You;
I will sing praise to Your name, [b]O Most High.

PSALM 8

title [1]Heb. *Al Gittith*

1 [a]Ps. 148:13 [b]Ps. 113:4

2 [c]Matt. 21:16; [1 Cor. 1:27] [d]Ps. 44:16 [2]*established*

3 [e]Ps. 111:2

4 [f]Job 7:17, 18; [Heb. 2:6–8] [g][Job 10:12] [3]*give attention to* or *care for*

5 [4]Heb. *Elohim, God;* LXX, Syr., Tg., Jewish tradition *angels*

6 [h][Gen. 1:26, 28] [i][1 Cor. 15:27; Eph. 1:22; Heb. 2:8]

9 [j]Ps. 8:1

PSALM 9

title [1]Heb. *Muth Labben*

2 [a]Ps. 5:11; 104:34 [b][Ps. 83:18; 92:1]

■ **Ps. 8** The subject of this hymn is the excellence of God in His works of creation, a major theme of the wisdom literature. The psalm can be called a wisdom poem. It ponders God's exaltation of lowly humanity in giving them dominion over creation (Gen. 1:28).

■ **8:1 LORD.** The personal, or covenantal, name of God revealed to Moses at the burning bush (Ex. 3).

our Lord. A title, which can also be translated "governor" or "master." He is *our* Lord because He has established His covenant with His people.

How excellent is Your name. The repetition of this line at the end enhances the high note of reverence that pervades the psalm. "Name" signifies the character or reputation of God.

■ **8:2 babes . . . enemies.** Note the contrast between the weak and the strong. However, because of God whose praise they sing, the weak silence the powerful. See Matt. 21:16.

■ **8:3 the work of Your fingers.** The almost limitless universe is described as the work of God's fingers, emphasizing the power of God.

■ **8:4–6** This passage is applied to Jesus in Heb. 2:6–8. He was perfect Man as well as God. Jesus is the model of redeemed humanity and restored human dominion over creation (Gen. 1:28). See also 1 Cor. 15:27 and Eph. 1:22.

■ **8:4 What is man.** See Job 7:17; 25:6; Ps. 144:3. In the vastness of the universe and against the greatness of God's power, man is little.

■ **8:5 angels.** The Hebrew word *'elohim,* here translated "angels," usually means "God," but it can mean "divine beings." If God were in view one would have expected, "You have made him a little lower than Yourself."

■ **8:6 dominion.** The "cultural mandate" of Gen. 1:28 divinely confers on humanity the authority and responsibility for governing earthly life.

■ **Ps. 9** This lament begins like a thanksgiving, but in v. 13 the psalmist turns to the Lord with new petitions, and the psalm concludes on this note. Probably Ps. 9 and 10 were originally a single psalm. Together they form a single acrostic (see Introduction to Hebrew Poetry).

■ **9:1 marvelous works.** The Hebrew word refers to the great acts of God, His intervention in human affairs, as at the Exodus from Egypt.

5 [c]Prov. 10:7 [2]*Gentiles*
6 [d][Ps. 34:16]
7 [e]Ps. 102:12, 26; Heb. 1:11
8 [f][Ps. 96:13; 98:9; Acts 17:31]
9 [g]Ps. 32:7; 46:1; 91:2. [3]Lit. *secure height*
10 [h]Ps. 91:14
11 [i]Ps. 66:16; 107:22
12 [j][Gen. 9:5; Ps. 72:14] [4]*afflicted*
14 [k]Ps. 13:5; 20:5; 35:9 [5]Jerusalem
15 [l]Ps. 7:15, 16 [6]*Gentiles*
16 [m]Ex. 7:5 [n]Ps. 92:3 [7]Heb. *Higgaion*
17 [o]Job 8:13; Ps. 50:22 [8]*Gentiles*
18 [p]Ps. 9:12; 12:5 [q][Ps. 62:5; 71:5]; Prov. 23:18

3 When my enemies turn back,
They shall fall and perish at Your presence.
4 For You have maintained my right and my cause;
You sat on the throne judging in righteousness.
5 You have rebuked the [2]nations,
You have destroyed the wicked;
You have [c]blotted out their name forever and ever.

6 O enemy, destructions are finished forever!
And you have destroyed cities;
Even their memory has [d]perished.
7 [e]But the LORD shall endure forever;
He has prepared His throne for judgment.
8 [f]He shall judge the world in righteousness,
And He shall administer judgment for the peoples in uprightness.

9 The LORD also will be a [g]refuge[3] for the oppressed,
A refuge in times of trouble.
10 And those who [h]know Your name will put their trust in You;
For You, LORD, have not forsaken those who seek You.

11 Sing praises to the LORD, who dwells in Zion!
[i]Declare His deeds among the people.
12 [j]When He avenges blood, He remembers them;
He does not forget the cry of the [4]humble.

13 Have mercy on me, O LORD!
Consider my trouble from those who hate me,
You who lift me up from the gates of death,
14 That I may tell of all Your praise
In the gates of [5]the daughter of Zion.
I will [k]rejoice in Your salvation.

15 [l]The [6]nations have sunk down in the pit *which* they made;
In the net which they hid, their own foot is caught.
16 The LORD is [m]known *by* the judgment He executes;
The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands.
[n]Meditation.[7] Selah

17 The wicked shall be turned into hell,
And all the [8]nations [o]that forget God.
18 [p]For the needy shall not always be forgotten;
[q]The expectation of the poor shall *not* perish forever.

■ **9:3 When my enemies turn back.** This is a statement of future hope, not past reality.

■ **9:4 throne judging in righteousness.** The psalmist is not confident in himself, but in God's character as the righteous Judge.

■ **9:5 blotted out their name.** To be remembered no more, contrasted with God's name (v. 2), which will be praised forever.

■ **9:11 dwells in Zion.** See 2:6 note. The afflicted should know that God is present with them in the world.

■ **9:12 avenges blood.** Lit. "seeks blood." God does not let wickedness go unpunished (Gen. 9:6; Nah. 1:2–6).

■ **9:13 gates of death.** See Prov. 1:12 note. This verse is the first sign of the psalmist's present distress.

■ **9:14 the gates of the daughter of Zion.** Contrasted with "gates of death" in the previous verse. The psalmist will praise God for answered prayer in the most public places in Jerusalem, the "daughter of Zion."

■ **9:15 have sunk down in the pit which they made.** See Ps. 7:14–16. The wickedness of such enemies will come back to haunt them.

■ **9:17 wicked.** Further defined in the second half of the verse as "all the nations that forget God."

hell. Hebrew *sheol* (Prov. 1:12 note).

■ **9:18 the needy . . . the poor.** The phrase "the poor and the needy" (35:10; 74:21; Prov. 31:9; Ezek. 18:12) is a fixed expression in the Old Testament, and the words also appear frequently in parallel (72:12; Job 24:4; Is. 32:7; Amos 8:4). The meaning is frequently literal poverty, but the words may also be used figuratively to express total dependence on God (40:17; 86:1; 109:22; also Matt. 5:3 and Luke 6:20). Poverty is not itself meritorious, but God gives special attention to the cries of the oppressed (12:5; 72:4 note). Jeremiah equates bringing "justice and righteousness" to the "poor and needy" with "knowing Me" (Jer. 22:15, 16). This was an explicit responsibility of those in power.

19 Arise, O LORD,
Do not let man prevail;
Let the [9]nations be judged in Your sight.
20 Put them in fear, O LORD,
That the [1]nations may know themselves *to be but* men. Selah

PSALM 10

A Song of Confidence in God's Triumph over Evil

Why do You stand afar off, O LORD?
Why do You hide in times of trouble?
2 The wicked in *his* pride [1]persecutes the poor;
[a]Let them be caught in the plots which they have devised.

3 For the wicked [b]boasts of his heart's desire;
[2]He [c]blesses the greedy *and* renounces the LORD.
4 The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek *God;*
[3]God *is* in none of his [d]thoughts.

5 His ways [4]are always prospering;
Your judgments *are* far above, out of his sight;
As for all his enemies, he sneers at them.
6 [e]He has said in his heart, "I shall not be moved;
[f]I shall never be in adversity."
7 [g]His mouth is full of cursing and [h]deceit and oppression;
Under his tongue *is* trouble and iniquity.

8 He sits in the lurking places of the villages;
In the secret places he murders the innocent;
His eyes are secretly fixed on the helpless.
9 He lies in wait secretly, as a lion in his den;
He lies in wait to catch the poor;
He catches the poor when he draws him into his net.
10 So [5]he crouches, he lies low,
That the helpless may fall by his [6]strength.
11 He has said in his heart,
"God has forgotten;
He hides His face;
He will never see."

12 Arise, O LORD!
O God, [i]lift up Your hand!
Do not forget the [j]humble.
13 Why do the wicked renounce God?
He has said in his heart,
"You will not require *an account.*"

19 [9]*Gentiles*

20 [1]*Gentiles*

PSALM 10

2 [a]Ps. 7:16; 9:16 [1]*hotly pursues*

3 [b]Ps. 49:6; 94:3, 4 [c]Prov. 28:4 [2]Or *The greedy man curses and spurns the* LORD

4 [d]Ps. 14:1; 36:1 [3]Or *All his thoughts are, "There is* no God"

5 [4]Lit. *are strong*

6 [e]Ps. 49:11; [Eccl. 8:11] [f]Rev. 18:7

7 [g][Rom. 3:14] [h]Ps. 55:10, 11

10 [5]Or *he is crushed, is bowed* [6]Or *mighty ones*

12 [i]Ps. 17:7; 94:2; Mic. 5:9 [j]Ps. 9:12

■ **9:19 Arise.** See Ps. 3:7 note.

■ **Ps. 10** This psalm has no title. In its original form, it was likely combined with Ps. 9 (see above on Ps. 9). Taken separately the psalm would be an individual lament, bemoaning the wicked who victimize the righteous and calling on God to restore justice.

■ **10:1 Why do You stand afar off.** The psalmist is more troubled by the apparent absence of God than by the presence of enemies.

■ **10:3 blesses . . . renounces.** The wicked person's ethical judgments are upside-down. He should bless the Lord and reject the greedy.

■ **10:5 always prospering.** From the perspective of the oppressed, it appears that the oppressor has no troubles (Ps. 73:12).

■ **10:6 I shall not be moved.** This attitude of self-trust brought trouble to the psalmist himself (Ps. 30:6). Confidence must be in God, not in one's own ability.

■ **10:7 mouth . . . tongue.** Sins of speech are the focus of attention. Rom. 3:14 alludes to this verse.

■ **10:8 sits in the lurking places.** The metaphor of the wicked in ambush is well known from Proverbs (Prov. 1:11).

secretly. The wicked prefer to work in darkness, not in the light (John 3:19).

■ **10:9 into his net.** The wicked is a hunter of the helpless.

■ **10:12 Arise, O LORD.** See note on 3:7.

lift up Your hand. The metaphor refers to God's active intervention on behalf of the psalmist.

14 [k][Ps. 11:4] [l][2 Tim. 1:12] [m]Ps. 68:5; Hos. 14:3 [7]Lit. *leaves,* entrusts

16 [n]Ps. 29:10

18 [8]*vindicate* [9]*terrify*

PSALM 11

1 [a]Ps. 56:11

2 [b]Ps. 64:3, 4 [1]Lit. *in darkness*

3 [c]Ps. 82:5; 87:1; 119:152

4 [d]Ps. 2:4; [Is. 66:1]; Matt. 5:34; 23:22; [Acts 7:49]; Rev. 4:2 [e][Ps. 33:18; 34:15, 16]

5 [f]Gen. 22:1; [James 1:12]

6 [g]1 Sam. 1:4; Ps. 75:8; Ezek. 38:22 [2]Their allotted portion or serving

7 [h]Ps. 33:5; 45:7 [3]Or *The upright beholds His countenance*

14 But You have [k]seen, for You observe trouble and grief,
To repay *it* by Your hand.
The helpless [l]commits[7] himself to You;
[m]You are the helper of the fatherless.
15 Break the arm of the wicked and the evil *man;*
Seek out his wickedness *until* You find none.

16 [n]The LORD *is* King forever and ever;
The nations have perished out of His land.
17 LORD, You have heard the desire of the humble;
You will prepare their heart;
You will cause Your ear to hear,
18 To [8]do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed,
That the man of the earth may [9]oppress no more.

PSALM 11

Faith in the LORD's Righteousness

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

In [a]the LORD I put my trust;
How can you say to my soul,
"Flee *as* a bird to your mountain"?
2 For look! [b]The wicked bend *their* bow,
They make ready their arrow on the string,
That they may shoot [1]secretly at the upright in heart.
3 [c]If the foundations are destroyed,
What can the righteous do?

4 The LORD *is* in His holy temple,
The LORD's [d]throne *is* in heaven;
[e]His eyes behold,
His eyelids test the sons of men.
5 The LORD [f]tests the righteous,
But the wicked and the one who loves violence His soul hates.
6 Upon the wicked He will rain coals;
Fire and brimstone and a burning wind
[g]*Shall be* [2]the portion of their cup.

7 For the LORD *is* righteous,
He [h]loves righteousness;
[3]His countenance beholds the upright.

■ **10:14 fatherless.** In the ancient Near East the fatherless and the widow were extreme examples of helplessness, since they had no kinship protection.

■ **10:16 King.** God is covenant LORD; see Introduction: Characteristics and Themes.

nations. Those who worship other gods and persecute God's people.

■ **10:17, 18 justice to the fatherless.** The lament concludes with a strong statement of trust in God, who delivers the weak from oppression. Men terrify, but God overrules the wickedness in men.

■ **Ps. 11** Another psalm of refuge. Threatened by his enemies, the psalmist puts his confidence in God.

■ **11:1 to your mountain.** Possibly, "from your mountain." If it is "to your mountain," then the advice is to flee the city for a mountain fortress. If it is "from your mountain," the reference is to Zion. In either case David is being advised by others to find salvation elsewhere than in God.

■ **11:2 bow . . . arrow.** While the psalm may have had an original military setting, and would find an appropriate use during periods of war, the image could also refer to other types of affliction as well.

■ **11:3 foundations.** That is, of the kingdom conceived as a political entity; including its economy, military, and the like.

righteous. Or perhaps this is a reference to God: "Righteous One." The next few verses go on to describe what God is doing.

■ **11:4 throne.** As King of the universe, God is in control. Nothing escapes His notice. Not even the actions of the wicked are beyond His purview.

■ **11:6 Fire and brimstone.** Reminiscent of the judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:24). Evil will be completely burned up.

the portion of their cup. There is a cup of God's blessing (Ps. 23:5) as well as a cup of His wrath. The wicked will drink wrath to its dregs (75:8). Jesus Christ took His people's punishment upon Himself by drinking the cup of God's judgment.

■ **11:7 His countenance.** God will make His presence known to His people in the darkness. In the resurrection of the just this hope will be realized.

PSALM 12

Man's Treachery and God's Constancy

To the Chief Musician. [a]On [1]an eight-stringed harp. A Psalm of David.

Help,[2] LORD, for the godly man [b]ceases!
For the faithful disappear from among the sons of men.
2 [c]They speak idly everyone with his neighbor;
With flattering lips *and* [3]a double heart they speak.

3 May the LORD [4]cut off all flattering lips,
And the tongue that speaks [5]proud things,
4 Who have said,
"With our tongue we will prevail;
Our lips *are* our own;
Who *is* lord over us?"

5 "For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy,
Now I will arise," says the LORD;
"I will set *him* in the safety for which he yearns."

6 The words of the LORD *are* [d]pure words,
Like silver tried in a furnace of earth,
Purified seven times.
7 You shall keep them, O LORD,
You shall preserve them from this generation forever.

8 The wicked prowl on every side,
When vileness is exalted among the sons of men.

PSALM 13

Trust in the Salvation of the LORD

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

How long, O LORD? Will You forget me forever?
[a]How long will You hide Your face from me?
2 How long shall I take counsel in my soul,
Having sorrow in my heart daily?
How long will my enemy be exalted over me?

3 Consider *and* hear me, O LORD my God;
[b]Enlighten my eyes,
[c]Lest I sleep the *sleep of* death;
4 Lest my enemy say,
"I have prevailed against him";
Lest those who trouble me rejoice when I am moved.

5 But I have trusted in Your mercy;
My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation.

PSALM 12

title [a]Ps. 6:title [1]Heb. *sheminith*

1 [b][Is. 57:1]; Mic. 7:2 [2]*Save*

2 [c]Ps. 10:7; 41:6 [3]An inconsistent mind

3 [4]*destroy* [5]*great*

6 [d]2 Sam. 22:31; Ps. 18:30; 119:140; Prov. 30:5

PSALM 13

1 [a]Job 13:24; Ps. 89:46

3 [b]1 Sam. 14:29; Ezra 9:8; Job 33:30; Ps. 18:28 [c]Jer. 51:39

■ **12:1 the godly man ceases.** Like Elijah in 1 Kin. 19:14, the psalmist feels alone in his devotion to the Lord.

■ **12:2 They speak idly.** Lit. "they speak lies," or "emptiness," including outright falsehoods, but also insincere and irresponsible talk, which cheapens and corrodes all human communication.

■ **12:3 cut off.** To be "cut off" usually means to be excluded from the community, but occasionally may mean death.

■ **12:5 arise.** See Ps. 3:7 note.

■ **Ps. 13** A lament expressed from the perspective of an individual. The situation of distress is not clearly defined, allowing multiple applications. If "enemy" is taken literally, warfare is in view. Or the psalmist may be ill and near death (v. 3).

■ **13:1 How long.** See note on Ps. 6:3. The fourfold repetition expresses his anguish.

■ **13:5 mercy.** A covenant term, specifically, gracious devotion, the love by which God has bound Himself to His people.

shall rejoice. Contrast v. 4. The enemy rejoices in the fall (death) of the psalmist; God, in his salvation.

6 I will sing to the LORD,
Because He has dealt bountifully with me.

PSALM 14

Folly of the Godless, and God's Final Triumph

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

The [a]fool has said in his heart,
"*There is* no God."
They are corrupt,
They have done abominable works,
There is none who does good.

2 [b]The LORD looks down from heaven upon the children of men,
To see if there are any who understand, who seek God.
3 [c]They have all turned aside,
They have together become corrupt;
There is none who does good,
No, not one.

4 Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge,
Who eat up my people *as* they eat bread,
And [d]do not call on the LORD?
5 There they are in great fear,
For God *is* with the generation of the righteous.
6 You shame the counsel of the poor,
But the LORD *is* his [e]refuge.

7 [f]Oh,[1] that the salvation of Israel *would come* out of Zion!
[g]When the LORD brings back [2]the captivity of His people,
Let Jacob rejoice *and* Israel be glad.

PSALM 15

The Character of Those Who May Dwell with the LORD

A Psalm of David.

LORD, [a]who may [1]abide in Your tabernacle?
Who may dwell in Your holy hill?

2 He who walks uprightly,
And works righteousness,
And speaks the [b]truth in his heart;

PSALM 14

1 [a]Ps. 10:4; 53:1
2 [b]Ps. 33:13, 14; 102:19; Rom. 3:11
3 [c]Rom. 3:12
4 [d]Ps. 79:6; Is. 64:7; Jer. 10:25; Amos 8:4; Mic. 3:3
6 [e]Ps. 9:9; 40:17; 46:1; 142:5
7 [f]Ps. 53:6; [Rom. 11:25–27] [g]Deut. 30:3; Job 42:10 [1]Lit. *Who will give out of Zion the salvation of Israel?* [2]Or *His captive people*

PSALM 15

1 [a]Ps. 24:3–5 [1]*sojourn*
2 [b]Zech. 8:16; [Eph. 4:25]

■ **Ps. 14** This psalm has an attitude of quiet meditation while focusing on human evil. See Ps. 53, which has a similar opening.

■ **14:1 fool.** The fool may be highly intelligent by the world's standards, but is oblivious to the true nature of reality (Eccl. 2:14). To be called a fool is a moral judgment.

There is no God. The fool denies the existence of God as a matter of human concern. This is practical atheism. God is held to be unconcerned about the affairs of the world and especially the affairs of the individual. See "Mankind's Guilty Knowledge of God" at Rom. 1:19.

corrupt. Note the use of this psalm by Paul in Rom. 3:10–18. Foolishness points to lack of morality, not absence of native intellect.

■ **14:2 who seek God.** Fallen man does not actively seek God.

■ **14:4 as they eat bread.** The wicked exploit people frequently and without feeling guilt. It is as natural to them as eating bread.

■ **14:6 his refuge.** God can overrule the wicked plans of evildoers for the good of the afflicted. This principle is stated by Joseph (Gen. 50:20), and is applied to the Crucifixion in Acts 2:22–24.

■ **14:7 out of Zion.** The place where God most personally and directly revealed His presence.

■ **Ps. 15** This psalm, reminiscent of Ps. 1, focuses on the requirements for approaching God's presence at the sanctuary. It is similar to Ps. 24:3–6. The two passages (cf. also Is. 33:14–16) have been called "entrance liturgies," since they answer the question, "Who can enter the holy place of God?"

■ **15:1 tabernacle.** Lit. "tent." Before the temple was built, the symbol of God's dwelling with His people was a tent.

holy hill. Mount Zion, where the temple was located.

■ **15:2–5** The ten requirements for entrance are ethical, not formal or liturgical.

3 He *who* [c]does not backbite with his tongue,
Nor does evil to his neighbor,
[d]Nor does he [2]take up a reproach against his friend;
4 [e]In whose eyes a vile person is despised,
But he honors those who fear the LORD;
He *who* [f]swears to his own hurt and does not change;
5 He *who* does not put out his money at usury,
Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent.

He who does these *things* [g]shall never be moved.

PSALM 16

The Hope of the Faithful, and the Messiah's Victory

A [a]Michtam of David.

Preserve[1] me, O God, for in You I put my trust.

2 *O my soul,* you have said to the LORD,
"You *are* my Lord,
[b]My goodness is nothing apart from You."
3 As for the saints who *are* on the earth,
"They are the excellent ones, in [c]whom is all my delight."

4 Their sorrows shall be multiplied who hasten *after* another *god;*
Their drink offerings of [d]blood I will not offer,
[e]Nor take up their names on my lips.

5 O LORD, *You are* the portion of my inheritance and my cup;
You [2]maintain my lot.
6 The lines have fallen to me in pleasant *places;*
Yes, I have a good inheritance.

7 I will bless the LORD who has given me counsel;
My [3]heart also instructs me in the night seasons.
8 [f]I have set the LORD always before me;
Because *He is* at my right hand I shall not be moved.

9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices;
My flesh also will [4]rest in hope.
10 [g]For You will not leave my soul in [5]Sheol,
Nor will You allow Your Holy One to [6]see corruption.
11 You will show me the [h]path of life;

3 [c][Lev. 19:16–18] [d]Ex. 23:1 [2]*receive*
4 [e]Esth. 3:2 [f]Lev. 5:4
5 [g]2 Pet. 1:10

PSALM 16

title [a]Ps. 56—60
1 [1]*Watch over*
2 [b]Job 35:7
3 [c]Ps. 119:63
4 [d]Ps. 106:37, 38 [e][Ex. 23:13]; Josh. 23:7
5 [2]Lit. *uphold*
7 [3]Mind, lit. *kidneys*
8 [f][Acts 2:25–28]
9 [4]Or *dwell securely*
10 [g]Ps. 49:15; 86:13; Acts 2:31, 32; Heb. 13:20 [5]The abode of the dead [6]*undergo*
11 [h]Ps. 139:24; [Matt. 7:14]

■ **15:4 to his own hurt.** Alternatively, "and does not falter." The point is the same: when he promises, the righteous person fulfills his word.

■ **15:5 not . . . at usury.** See Deut. 23:19, 20. A foreigner could be charged interest, but not a fellow Israelite. Loans were intended to relieve extreme need, and such interest was a form of exploitation.

■ **Ps. 16** This psalm expresses confidence in the Lord, though it is difficult to tell whether the crisis is past or present to the psalmist. Death may be imminent for him (v. 10).

■ **16:1** An invocation of the Lord and a plea for help. This line indicates that the crisis is still present to the psalmist.

■ **16:3 saints.** Lit. "those who are set apart," God's elect people.

■ **16:4 another god.** The danger of worshiping other gods was always present in Israel (cf. 1 Kin. 18). The psalms emphasize that the powers and epithets ascribed to the pagan gods really belong to Yahweh (Ps. 29).

offerings of blood . . . names. That is, of foreign gods. These are two examples of ways that the religious systems of the surrounding nations tried to compel their gods to help them.

■ **16:5 portion . . . cup . . . lot.** Three metaphors that describe life as a gift of God.

■ **16:6 lines.** Once again, probably metaphoric for the psalmist's quality of life. Not only is the life that God has given him secure (v. 5), it is also "pleasant."

■ **16:7 heart.** Lit. "kidneys." Like "heart," it stands for the core of a person's being.

■ **16:10 You will not leave my soul in Sheol.** The immediate application of this psalm is to David and to the Old Testament saints. It refers to deliverance from the immediate threat of death, but it points prophetically to the Son of David whom the historical David reflected and anticipated. Both Peter and Paul recognized that Jesus was the ultimate fulfillment of this psalm (Acts 2:25–28; 13:35).

PSALM 17

3 [a]Job 23:10; Ps. 66:10; Zech. 13:9; [1 Pet. 1:7]
[b]Ps. 39:1
[1]*examined*
[2]Nothing evil

5 [c]Job 23:11; Ps. 44:18; 119:133

6 [d]Ps. 86:7; 116:2

7 [3]*deliver*

8 [4]*pupil*

10 [e]Ezek. 16:49
[f][1 Sam. 2:3]

In Your presence *is* fullness of joy;
At Your right hand *are* pleasures forevermore.

PSALM 17

Prayer with Confidence in Final Salvation

A Prayer of David.

Hear a just cause, O LORD,
Attend to my cry;
Give ear to my prayer *which is* not from deceitful lips.
2 Let my vindication come from Your presence;
Let Your eyes look on the things that are upright.

3 You have tested my heart;
You have visited *me* in the night;
[a]You have [1]tried me and have found [2]nothing;
I have purposed that my mouth shall not [b]transgress.
4 Concerning the works of men,
By the word of Your lips,
I have kept away from the paths of the destroyer.
5 [c]Uphold my steps in Your paths,
That my footsteps may not slip.

6 [d]I have called upon You, for You will hear me, O God;
Incline Your ear to me, *and* hear my speech.
7 Show Your marvelous lovingkindness by Your right hand,
O You who [3]save those who trust *in You*
From those who rise up *against them.*
8 Keep me as the [4]apple of Your eye;
Hide me under the shadow of Your wings,
9 From the wicked who oppress me,
From my deadly enemies who surround me.

10 They have closed up their [e]fat *hearts;*
With their mouths they [f]speak proudly.
11 They have now surrounded us in our steps;
They have set their eyes, crouching down to the earth,
12 As a lion is eager to tear his prey,
And like a young lion lurking in secret places.

13 Arise, O LORD,
Confront him, cast him down;
Deliver my life from the wicked with Your sword,

■ **Ps. 17** A psalm of refuge whose title is "Prayer." The Book of Psalms is a prayer book as well as a collection of hymns.

■ **17:1 my prayer.** The psalmist is not denying that he is a sinner. He is denying specific charges made against him.

■ **17:2 vindication.** Lit. "judgment." The psalmist appeals his case to God.

■ **17:3 tested my heart.** Here, the "heart" is the hidden center of a person's being, but God can read the heart.

■ **17:4 word of Your lips.** God's will, disclosed in the law of God.

■ **17:5 Your paths.** These ways, as spelled out in God's Word, are to be contrasted with the "paths of the destroyer" (v. 4).

■ **17:7 marvelous lovingkindness.** The Hebrew word denotes God's love toward those with whom He is in covenant relationship.

You who save. The psalmist could look back over the history of Israel and see how many times God saved His people in distress. The Exodus from Egypt is the prime example of God's saving love.

■ **17:8 apple.** The pupil, one of the most sensitive parts of the body (Deut. 32:10).

■ **17:10 their fat hearts.** An alternative translation is "their fat," a caricature of their physical appearance.

■ **17:11 surrounded us.** The enemy has taken the initiative to destroy the psalmist.

■ **17:12 lion.** Commonly known for its ruthlessness and cruelty. Cf. Ps. 7:2; 10:9; 22:13.

■ **17:13 Arise.** Ps. 3:7 note.

14 With Your hand from men, O LORD,
From men of the world *who have* their portion in *this* life,
And whose belly You fill with Your hidden treasure.
They are satisfied with children,
And leave the rest of their *possession* for their babes.

15 As for me, [g]I will see Your face in righteousness;
[h]I shall be satisfied when I [i]awake in Your likeness.

PSALM 18

God the Sovereign Savior

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David [a]the servant of the LORD, who spoke to the LORD the words of [b]this song on the day that the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. And he said:

I [c]will love You, O LORD, my strength.
2 The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer;
My God, my [1]strength, [d]in whom I will trust;
My shield and the [2]horn of my salvation, my stronghold.
3 I will call upon the LORD, [e]*who is worthy* to be praised;
So shall I be saved from my enemies.

4 [f]The pangs of death surrounded me,
And the floods of [3]ungodliness made me afraid.
5 The sorrows of Sheol surrounded me;
The snares of death confronted me.
6 In my distress I called upon the LORD,
And cried out to my God;
He heard my voice from His temple,
And my cry came before Him, *even* to His ears.

7 [g]Then the earth shook and trembled;
The foundations of the hills also quaked and were shaken,
Because He was angry.
8 Smoke went up from His nostrils,
And devouring fire from His mouth;
Coals were kindled by it.
9 [h]He bowed the heavens also, and came down
With darkness under His feet.
10 [i]And He rode upon a cherub, and flew;
[j]He flew upon the wings of the wind.

15 [g][1 John 3:2] [h]Ps. 4:6, 7; 16:11 [i][Is. 26:19]

PSALM 18

title [a]Ps. 36:title [b]2 Sam. 22
1 [c]Ps. 144:1
2 [d]Heb. 2:13 [1]Lit. *rock* [2]Strength
3 [e]Ps. 76:4; Rev. 5:12
4 [f]Ps. 116:3 [3]Lit. *Belial*
7 [g]Acts 4:31
9 [h]Ps. 144:5
10 [i]Ps. 80:1; 99:1 [j][Ps. 104:3]

■ **17:14 whose belly You fill.** This verse expresses the general truth that the righteous will not want.

■ **17:15 will see Your face.** The psalmist will know God's presence, hinting at his resurrection in the "likeness" of God (1 John 3:2).

■ **Ps. 18** The psalm thanks the Lord for a great deliverance. The same psalm appears in 2 Sam. 22 with minor differences.

■ **18:title** See Introduction: Author; Characteristics and Themes. The title unambiguously attributes this psalm to David.

■ **18:1 love.** Not the usual Hebrew word for love, it emphasizes intimacy, expressing David's personal devotion.

■ **18:2 rock.** This term connotes protection. When David fled from Saul, he could find refuge in the caves and cliffs of the dry streambeds.

horn. See text note.

■ **18:4 pangs of death.** The tentacles of death rise up from Sheol, the underworld, to drag the psalmist down.

floods of ungodliness. The powers of evil and death are frequently likened to an overwhelming flood (Is. 28:15, 17, 18; Matt. 16:18; Ps. 46:2 note; 69:1, 2 notes).

■ **18:6 from His temple.** The place of God's special presence. At the dedication of the temple Solomon indicated that this was the proper response to trouble (1 Kin. 8).

■ **18:7 the earth . . . trembled.** When God reveals Himself as a warrior, nature convulses (Is. 24:4–13; Nah. 1:5).

hills. The hills symbolize all that is firm and established in the world, but they shake before the might of God.

■ **18:8 nostrils . . . mouth.** The nostrils and mouth are standard figures of speech for anger. Smoke and fire often accompany a theophany (a visual self-revelation of God; Gen. 15:17; Ex. 19:18; Nah. 1:6).

■ **18:9 darkness under His feet.** God is pictured as coming with the storm clouds into battle. This portrayal is frequent in the Bible (Ps. 68:4; 104:3; Nah. 1:3; Dan. 7:13). In the New Testament, Christ is portrayed as coming in the clouds (Mark 13:26; Rev. 1:7).

■ **18:10 cherub.** Angelic beings first mentioned in Gen. 3:24. Their role

11 [k]He made darkness His secret place;
[k]His canopy around Him *was* dark waters
And thick clouds of the skies.
12 [l]From the brightness before Him,
His thick clouds passed with hailstones and coals of fire.

13 The LORD thundered from heaven,
And the Most High uttered [m]His voice,
[4]Hailstones and coals of fire.
14 [n]He sent out His arrows and scattered [5]the foe,
Lightnings in abundance, and He vanquished them.
15 Then the channels of the sea were seen,
The foundations of the world were uncovered
At Your rebuke, O LORD,
At the blast of the breath of Your nostrils.

16 [o]He sent from above, He took me;
He drew me out of many waters.
17 He delivered me from my strong enemy,
From those who hated me,
For they were too strong for me.
18 They confronted me in the day of my calamity,
But the LORD was my support.
19 [p]He also brought me out into a broad place;
He delivered me because He delighted in me.

20 [q]The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness;
According to the cleanness of my hands
He has recompensed me.
21 For I have kept the ways of the LORD,
And have not wickedly departed from my God.
22 For all His judgments *were* before me,
And I did not put away His statutes from me.
23 I was also blameless [6]before Him,
And I kept myself from my iniquity.
24 [r]Therefore the LORD has recompensed me according to my righteousness,
According to the cleanness of my hands in His sight.

25 [s]With the merciful You will show Yourself merciful;
With a blameless man You will show Yourself blameless;
26 With the pure You will show Yourself pure;
And [t]with the devious You will show Yourself shrewd.
27 For You will save the humble people,
But will bring down [u]haughty looks.

28 [v]For You will light my lamp;
The LORD my God will enlighten my darkness.

11 [k]Ps. 97:2
12 [l]Ps. 97:3; 140:10; Hab. 3:11
13 [m][Ps. 29:3–9; 104:7] [4]So with MT, Tg., Vg.; a few Heb. mss., LXX omit *Hailstones and coals of fire*
14 [n]Josh. 10:10; Ps. 144:6; Is. 30:30; Hab. 3:11 [5]Lit. *them*
16 [o]Ps. 144:7
19 [p]Ps. 4:1; 31:8; 118:5
20 [q]1 Sam. 24:19; [Job 33:26]; Ps. 7:8
23 [6]*with*
24 [r]1 Sam. 26:23; Ps. 18:20
25 [s][1 Kin. 8:32; Ps. 62:12]; Matt. 5:7
26 [t][Lev. 26:23–28]; Prov. 3:34
27 [u][Ps. 101:5]; Prov. 6:17
28 [v]1 Kin. 15:4; Job 18:6; [Ps. 119:105]

in Gen. 3 and their symbolic representation at key places in the tabernacle (Ex. 26:1, 31) indicate that they are guardians of God's holiness (cf. Ezek. 1 and 10).

- **18:13 voice.** Thunder; cf. Ps. 29:3–9.
- **18:14 His arrows.** Lightning.
- **18:15 were seen . . . uncovered.** When God appears as a defender of His people, the waters representing chaos and evil shrink back. Compare 77:16–19 (reflecting on the Exodus from Egypt); Nah. 1:4; Rev. 21:1.

rebuke. God controls the chaotic waters of the sea (Ps. 106:9). Jesus shows Himself to be the Second Person of the Trinity by silencing the chaotic waters with His rebuke (Luke 8:22–25).

- **18:16 many waters.** Symbolic of trouble and distress (Ps. 69:2).
- **18:19 broad place.** This may be an allusion to the Exodus and the conquest of Canaan. God delivered Israel from many waters (Red Sea) and brought them to a broad place (the Promised Land). The broad place contrasts with a narrow one, from which it would be hard or impossible to escape from an enemy.
- **18:21 ways of the LORD.** God's covenant law.
- **18:25 merciful . . . show Yourself merciful.** The term translated "merciful" has reference to God's special lovingkindness toward those with whom He is in covenant relationship.
- **18:27 You will save the humble.** A constant teaching of the Old Testament and the Psalms, most notably Ps. 113:7–9.

29 For by You I can [7]run against a troop,
By my God I can leap over a wall.
30 *As for* God, [w]His way *is* perfect;
[x]The word of the LORD is [8]proven;
He *is* a shield [y]to all who trust in Him.

31 [z]For who *is* God, except the LORD?
And who *is* a rock, except our God?
32 *It is* God who [a]arms me with strength,
And makes my way perfect.
33 [b]He makes my feet like the *feet of* deer,
And [c]sets me on my high places.
34 [d]He teaches my hands to make war,
So that my arms can bend a bow of bronze.

35 You have also given me the shield of Your salvation;
Your right hand has held me up,
Your gentleness has made me great.
36 You enlarged my path under me,
[e]So my feet did not slip.

37 I have pursued my enemies and overtaken them;
Neither did I turn back again till they were destroyed.
38 I have wounded them,
So that they could not rise;
They have fallen under my feet.
39 For You have armed me with strength for the battle;
You have [9]subdued under me those who rose up against me.
40 You have also given me the necks of my enemies,
So that I destroyed those who hated me.
41 They cried out, but *there was* none to save;
[f]*Even* to the LORD, but He did not answer them.
42 Then I beat them as fine as the dust before the wind;
I [g]cast them out like dirt in the streets.

43 You have delivered me from the strivings of the people;
[h]You have made me the head of the [1]nations;
[i]A people I have not known shall serve me.
44 As soon as they hear of me they obey me;
The foreigners [2]submit to me.
45 [j]The foreigners fade away,
And come frightened from their hideouts.

46 The LORD lives!
Blessed *be* my Rock!
Let the God of my salvation be exalted.
47 *It is* God who avenges me,
[k]And subdues the peoples under me;

29 [7]Or *run through*

30 [w][Deut. 32:4]; Rev. 15:3 [x]Ps. 12:6; 119:140; [Prov. 30:5] [y][Ps. 17:7] [8]Lit. *refined*

31 [z][Deut. 32:31, 39; 1 Sam. 2:2; Ps. 86:8–10; Is. 45:5]

32 [a][Ps. 91:2]

33 [b]2 Sam. 2:18; Hab. 3:19 [c]Deut. 32:13; 33:29

34 [d]Ps. 144:1

36 [e]Ps. 66:9; Prov. 4:12

39 [9]Lit. *caused to bow*

41 [f]Job 27:9; Prov. 1:28; Is. 1:15; Ezek. 8:18; Zech. 7:13

42 [g]Zech. 10:5

43 [h]2 Sam. 8; Ps. 89:27 [i]Is. 52:15 [1]*Gentiles*

44 [2]*feign submission*

45 [j]Mic. 7:17

47 [k]Ps. 47:3

■ **18:29 against a troop.** A glimpse at the original inspiration of the verse. It appears as if the psalmist is waging war.

■ **18:30 The word of the LORD.** His revelation to His people. Since this is a psalm of David in a warfare setting, perhaps the reference is more specifically to 2 Sam. 7, the Davidic covenant, where God promises to be David's Father and God.

■ **18:31 except the LORD.** The use of these rhetorical questions is emphatic: there is no one like the Lord (Ex. 15:11).

■ **18:34 bow of bronze.** Bows were constructed primarily of wood, at times reinforced with metal. The bronze bow is meant to suggest the psalmist's God-given strength.

■ **18:36 my feet did not slip.** Paths are narrow and rocky in Israel permitting slipping and injury to a soldier. The divinely enabled, steadfast faith of David is illustrated.

■ **18:38–40 under my feet . . . necks of my enemies.** Ancient Near Eastern tablets and stone memorials show enemies under the feet of conquerors and bowing before their captors.

■ **18:41 They cried . . . Even to the LORD.** This indicates that the psalmist was battling fellow Israelites.

■ **18:43 me.** David's personal imprint is strong here. God granted him victories over neighboring nations that were brought under his rule (2 Sam. 8:1–14).

48 [f]Ps. 27:6; 59:1

49 [m]2 Sam. 22:50; Rom. 15:9 [3]*nations*

50 [n]2 Sam. 7:12; Ps. 21:1; 144:10 [4]Lit. *seed*

PSALM 19

1 [a]Is. 40:22; [Rom. 1:19, 20] [b]Gen. 1:6, 7 [1]*expanse* of heaven [2]*the work of His hands*

4 [c]Rom. 10:18 [3]LXX, Syr., Vg. *sound;* Tg. *business*

48 He delivers me from my enemies.
[f]You also lift me up above those who rise against me;
You have delivered me from the violent man.
49 [m]Therefore I will give thanks to You, O LORD, among the [3]Gentiles,
And sing praises to Your name.

50 [n]Great deliverance He gives to His king,
And shows mercy to His anointed,
To David and his [4]descendants forevermore.

PSALM 19

The Perfect Revelation of the LORD

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

The [a]heavens declare the glory of God;
And the [b]firmament[1] shows [2]His handiwork.
2 Day unto day utters speech,
And night unto night reveals knowledge.
3 *There is* no speech nor language
Where their voice is not heard.
4 [c]Their [3]line has gone out through all the earth,
And their words to the end of the world.

General Revelation

God's world is not a veil hiding the Creator's power and majesty; "the heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork" (Ps. 19:1). The natural order proves that there is a mighty and majestic Creator. Paul says the same in Rom. 1:19–21, and in Acts 17:28 calls Aratus, a Greek poet, to witness that every living person was created by the same God. Paul also affirms that the goodness of the Creator is evident from kindly providences (Acts 14:17; cf. Rom. 2:4), and that some at least of the demands of His law are apparent to every human conscience (Rom. 2:14, 15), along with the uncomfortable certainty of eventual judgment (Rom. 1:32). These evident certainties are the content of general revelation.

General revelation is so called because it comes to everyone, just through their being alive in God's world. God has revealed Himself this way from the start of human history. He actively discloses these aspects of Himself to everyone, so that failure to thank and serve the Creator is always a sin against knowledge. In the end no denial of having received this knowledge will be admitted. Paul uses God's universal revelation of His power and goodness as the basis for his indictment of the whole human race as sinful and guilty before God for our failure to serve Him as we should (Rom. 1:18—3:19).

God has added to general revelation the further revelation of Himself as the Savior of sinners through Jesus Christ. This revelation, accomplished in history and written in Scripture, is called "special revelation." It includes explicit verbal statement of all that general revelation tells us about God. □

■ **18:49 among the Gentiles.** Quoted by Paul in Rom. 15:9 as fulfilled in Christ, who brings the Gentiles to join in His praise of God the Father.

■ **18:50 anointed.** At his coronation, the king was anointed with oil by the priest. Jesus Christ, David's Lord and descendant, fulfills this psalm.

■ **Ps. 19** The psalm praises the Lord for His two great gifts to humanity: creation and the law. To use modern terminology, the psalm speaks of God's general revelation in nature and His special revelation in Scripture.

■ **19:1–6** God is revealed in His creation, but people resist what they see (Rom. 1:18–20).

■ **19:1 heavens.** The psalmist uses creation language here; compare Gen. 1:1–8, where this word has been translated "firmament" or ("expanse"). See theological note "General Revelation."

■ **19:2 utters speech.** This metaphor claims that the creation, specifically the heavens, constantly attests God's power and goodness.

■ **19:4 all the earth.** God's revelation in creation is open to all who do not suppress it. Paul applies this verse to gospel proclamation (Rom. 10:18).

In them He has set a [4]tabernacle for the sun,
5 Which *is* like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,
[d]*And* rejoices like a strong man to run its race.
6 Its rising *is* from one end of heaven,
And its circuit to the other end;
And there is nothing hidden from its heat.

7 [e]The law of the LORD *is* perfect, [5]converting the soul;
The testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making [f]wise the simple;
8 The statutes of the LORD *are* right, rejoicing the heart;
The commandment of the LORD *is* pure, enlightening the eyes;
9 The fear of the LORD *is* clean, enduring forever;
The judgments of the LORD *are* true *and* righteous altogether.
10 More to be desired *are they* than [g]gold,
Yea, than much fine gold;
Sweeter also than honey and the [6]honeycomb.
11 Moreover by them Your servant is warned,
And in keeping them *there is* great reward.

12 Who can understand *his* errors?
[h]Cleanse me from secret *faults.*
13 Keep back Your servant also from [i]presumptuous *sins;*
Let them not have [j]dominion over me.
Then I shall be blameless,
And I shall be innocent of [7]great transgression.

14 [k]Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
Be acceptable in Your sight,
O LORD, my [8]strength and my [l]Redeemer.

4 [4]*tent*
5 [d]Eccl. 1:5
7 [e]Ps. 111:7; [Rom. 7:12] [f]Ps. 119:130 [5]*restoring*
10 [g]Ps. 119:72, 127; Prov. 8:10, 11, 19 [6]*honey in the combs*
12 [h][Ps. 51:1, 2]
13 [i]Num. 15:30 [j]Ps. 119:133; [Rom. 6:12–14] [7]Or *much*
14 [k]Ps. 51:15 [l]Ps. 31:5; Is. 47:4 [8]Lit. *rock*

PSALM 20

The Assurance of God's Saving Work

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

May the LORD answer you in the day of trouble;
May the name of the God of Jacob [1]defend you;
2 May He send you help from the sanctuary,
And strengthen you out of Zion;
3 May He remember all your offerings,
And accept your burnt sacrifice. Selah

4 May He grant you according to your heart's *desire,*
And [a]fulfill all your [2]purpose.
5 We will rejoice in your salvation,

PSALM 20
1 [1]Lit. *set you on high*
4 [a]Ps. 21:2 [2]*counsel*

set a tabernacle. The sun is personified throughout this section, but not deified as in other ancient Near Eastern religions. The context indicates that the reference to the tabernacle (tent) is probably an allusion to its absence from the nighttime sky.

■ **19:5 like a strong man.** Robust and strong as it courses across the sky, the sun is God's creation. If it is powerful, how much more is God.

■ **19:6 nothing.** Nothing escapes the heat of the sun, and nothing can hide from the Creator.

■ **19:7–11** The law, God's special revelation, reflects the character of its author. Different names are used for the law, synonyms that point to the whole of God's special revelation to humanity.

■ **19:7 law.** Torah, the most general term for the law.

converting the soul. God's Word transforms the lives of those subject to that Word.

making wise. Wisdom is not superior intellectual power. God's Word instills reverence for God.

■ **19:12, 13 secret faults . . . presumptuous sins.** The psalmist knows that he sins consciously and unconsciously, in ignorance of what God requires. He prays against both faults.

I shall be blameless. Only by God's grace.

■ **20:1 you.** The king. The congregation calls upon the Lord to bless the king as he sets out for war. The blessings in these verses are also properly applied to New Testament believers in their battle of faith.

■ **20:2 from the sanctuary.** Cf. 1 Kin. 8:44, 45.

■ **20:5 rejoice in your salvation.** The psalms contain hymns of praise sung to God after victories. Two examples are Ps. 24 and 98.

6 [3]Commissioned one, Heb. *messiah*

7 [b]Deut. 20:1; Ps. 33:16, 17; Prov. 21:31; Is. 31:1

PSALM 21

2 [a]2 Sam. 7:26–29

4 [b]Ps. 61:5, 6; 133:3

6 [c]Ps. 16:11; 45:7 [1]Lit. *joyful with gladness*

7 [2]*shaken*

10 [3]Lit. *seed*

11 [d]Ps. 2:1–4

And in the name of our God we will set up *our* banners!
May the LORD fulfill all your petitions.

6 Now I know that the LORD saves His [3]anointed;
He will answer him from His holy heaven
With the saving strength of His right hand.

7 Some *trust* in chariots, and some in [b]horses;
But we will remember the name of the LORD our God.
8 They have bowed down and fallen;
But we have risen and stand upright.

9 Save, LORD!
May the King answer us when we call.

PSALM 21

Joy in the Salvation of the LORD

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

The king shall have joy in Your strength, O LORD;
And in Your salvation how greatly shall he rejoice!
2 You have given him his heart's desire,
And have not withheld the [a]request of his lips. Selah

3 For You meet him with the blessings of goodness;
You set a crown of pure gold upon his head.
4 [b]He asked life from You, *and* You gave *it* to him—
Length of days forever and ever.
5 His glory *is* great in Your salvation;
Honor and majesty You have placed upon him.
6 For You have made him most blessed forever;
[c]You have made him [1]exceedingly glad with Your presence.
7 For the king trusts in the LORD,
And through the mercy of the Most High he shall not be [2]moved.

8 Your hand will find all Your enemies;
Your right hand will find those who hate You.
9 You shall make them as a fiery oven in the time of Your anger;
The LORD shall swallow them up in His wrath,
And the fire shall devour them.
10 Their offspring You shall destroy from the earth,
And their [3]descendants from among the sons of men.
11 For they intended evil against You;
They devised a plot *which* they are not able *to* [d]*perform.*
12 Therefore You will make them turn their back;
You will make ready *Your arrows* on Your string toward their faces.

13 Be exalted, O LORD, in Your own strength!
We will sing and praise Your power.

■ **20:6–8** Israel will win the battle because of the Lord's presence. Israel's trust is rooted in God's promise to protect His people in warfare when they are obedient to His commands (Deut. 7 and 20).

■ **20:6 anointed.** The Davidic king, anticipating the Son of David who reigns forever, Jesus Christ (text note).

■ **20:7 we will remember the name.** The believer's rescue from sin and Satan, like Israel's deliverance from enemies, is grounded in God's trustworthiness.

■ **21:2 his heart's desire.** Similar language is used in 20:4, though it is uncertain whether the same occasion inspired both psalms. The first part of Ps. 21 sounds like the answer to the prayer in Ps. 20.

■ **21:3 set a crown . . . upon his head.** While some think this verse is about a coronation, it probably refers to the king's transition from a war leader (who does not wear his crown) to a king sitting on his throne.

■ **21:4 asked life from You . . . forever and ever.** The king prays that his life will be spared during battle—and was also given life eternal, as is the believer of today.

PSALM 22

The Suffering, Praise, and Posterity of the Messiah

To the Chief Musician. Set to [1]"The Deer of the Dawn." A Psalm of David.

My [a]God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?
Why are You so far from helping Me,
And from the words of My groaning?
2 O My God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not hear;
And in the night season, and am not silent.

3 But You *are* holy,
Enthroned in the [b]praises of Israel.
4 Our fathers trusted in You;
They trusted, and You delivered them.
5 They cried to You, and were delivered;
[c]They trusted in You, and were not ashamed.

6 But I *am* [d]a worm, and no man;
[e]A reproach of men, and despised by the people.
7 [f]All those who see Me ridicule Me;
They [2]shoot out the lip, they shake the head, *saying,*
8 "He[g] [3]trusted in the LORD, let Him rescue Him;
[h]Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!"

9 [i]But You *are* He who took Me out of the womb;
You made Me trust *while* on My mother's breasts.
10 I was cast upon You from birth.
From My mother's womb
[j]You *have been* My God.
11 Be not far from Me,
For trouble *is* near;
For *there is* none to help.

12 [k]Many bulls have surrounded Me;
Strong *bulls* of [l]Bashan have encircled Me.
13 [m]They [4]gape at Me *with* their mouths,
Like a raging and roaring lion.

14 I am poured out like water,
[n]And all My bones are out of joint;
My heart is like wax;
It has melted [5]within Me.

PSALM 22

title [1]Heb. *Aijeleth Hashahar*

1 [a][Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34]

3 [b]Deut. 10:21; Ps. 148:14

5 [c]Is. 49:23

6 [d]Job 25:6; Is. 41:14 [e]Ps. 109:25; [Is. 53:3]; Matt. 27:39–44

7 [f]Matt. 27:39; Mark 15:29 [2]Show contempt with their mouth

8 [g]Matt. 27:43; Luke 23:35 [h]Ps. 91:14 [3]LXX, Syr., Vg. *hoped;* Tg. *praised*

9 [i][Ps. 71:5, 6]

10 [j][Is. 46:3; 49:1]; Luke 1:35

12 [k]Ps. 22:21; 68:30 [l]Deut. 32:14

13 [m]Job 16:10; Ps. 35:21; Lam. 2:16; 3:46 [4]Lit. *have opened their mouths at Me*

14 [n]Ps. 31:10; Dan. 5:6 [5]Lit. *in the midst of My bowels*

■ **Ps. 22** This psalm is well known for its many citations and allusions in the New Testament (Matt. 27:35, 39, 43, 46; John 19:23, 24, 28; Heb. 2:12). The psalm, like Ps. 69, expresses the suffering of Christ, the Son of David, dying at the hands of wicked men.

■ **22:1 why have You forsaken Me.** The psalmist cries in anguish the "why?" of the righteous sufferer. Where is the presence God has promised (Josh. 1:5)? The cry is taken up by Jesus, who knew the reality of a total abandonment that was only partial with David. In the place of David and all the people of God, Jesus bore the dreadful curse that sin deserves.

■ **22:3 Enthroned in the praises.** God's kingship exists before any human acclamation, but His reign becomes manifest to worshipers through their praises.

■ **22:4, 5 Our fathers.** David could think of the time that Abraham was delivered from the five kings (Gen. 14), Joseph from the Egyptian prison (Gen. 41), and most of all Moses and Israel from the land of Egypt (Ex. 1—15).

■ **22:7 ridicule.** His enemies ridicule his trust in God. This experience is alluded to in Matt. 27:41–44, as Christ had to endure the ridicule of hypocritical priests and criminals.

■ **22:9 out of the womb.** He affirms a long-standing trust in God's ability to save him. He has had confidence in God as far back as he can remember.

■ **22:12 bulls of Bashan.** These bulls were noted for their power and size (Amos 4:1).

■ **22:13 roaring lion.** Often representing power, ferocity, and ruthlessness in the Bible and the ancient Near East (Nah. 2:14; Zeph. 3:3).

■ **22:14 My bones . . . My heart.** Outward attack is matched by inward agony. The figures, as used by David, reflect the inward turmoil induced by the encircling threat of his enemies. As fulfilled in Christ, the prophetic words describe the agony of the crucified One.

15 [o]My strength is dried up like a potsherd,
And [p]My tongue clings to My jaws;
You have brought Me to the dust of death.

16 For dogs have surrounded Me;
The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me.
[q]They[6] pierced My hands and My feet;
17 I can count all My bones.
[r]They look *and* stare at Me.
18 [s]They divide My garments among them,
And for My clothing they cast lots.

19 But You, O LORD, do not be far from Me;
O My Strength, hasten to help Me!
20 Deliver Me from the sword,
[t]My[7] precious *life* from the power of the dog.
21 [u]Save Me from the lion's mouth
And from the horns of the wild oxen!

[v]You have answered Me.

22 [w]I will declare Your name to [x]My brethren;
In the midst of the assembly I will praise You.
23 [y]You who fear the LORD, praise Him!
All you [8]descendants of Jacob, glorify Him,
And fear Him, all you offspring of Israel!
24 For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted;
Nor has He hidden His face from Him;
But [z]when He cried to Him, He heard.

25 [a]My praise *shall be* of You in the great assembly;
[b]I will pay My vows before those who fear Him.
26 The poor shall eat and be satisfied;
Those who seek Him will praise the LORD.
Let your heart live forever!

27 All the ends of the world
Shall remember and turn to the LORD,
And all the families of the [9]nations
Shall worship before [1]You.
28 [c]For the kingdom *is* the LORD's,
And He rules over the nations.

29 [d]All the prosperous of the earth
Shall eat and worship;
[e]All those who go down to [2]the dust

15 [o]Prov. 17:22 [p]John 19:28
16 [q]Is. 53:7; Matt. 27:35; John 20:25 [6]So with some Heb. mss., LXX, Syr., Vg.; MT *Like a lion* instead of *They pierced*
17 [r]Luke 23:27, 35
18 [s]Matt. 27:35; Mark 15:24; Luke 23:34; John 19:24
20 [t]Ps. 35:17 [7]Lit. *My only one*
21 [u]2 Tim. 4:17 [v]Is. 34:7
22 [w]Matt. 4:23; Mark 1:21, 39; Heb. 2:12 [x][Rom. 8:29]
23 [y]Ps. 135:19, 20 [8]Lit. *seed*
24 [z]Ps. 31:22; Heb. 5:7
25 [a]Ps. 35:18; 40:9, 10 [b]Ps. 61:8; Eccl. 5:4
27 [9]*Gentiles* [1]So with MT, LXX, Tg.; Arab., Syr., Vg. *Him*
28 [c][Ps. 47:7]; Obad. 21; [Zech. 14:9]; Matt. 6:13
29 [d]Ps. 17:10; 45:12; Hab. 1:16 [e]Ps. 28:1; [Is. 26:19] [2]Death

■ **22:16 pierced.** The traditional Hebrew reading may reflect a copyist's error, for it reads (lit.) "like a lion." The Septuagint (the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament) suggests that the correct reading is "pierced."

■ **22:19–21** After the laments and confessions of trust comes the climax, an appeal to the Lord. Notice that the enemies are named in reverse: humans, dogs, lions, and oxen.

■ **22:21 You have answered.** The assurance of being heard is also present in other psalms of lament (3:4; 28:6; cf. 27:13; 34:4, 6; 38:15; 118:5, 21).

■ **22:22 I will declare.** The thankful praise of the psalmist will be offered as the payment of his vows (v. 25). In Heb. 2:12 this verse is applied to Christ, who leads the praise of the great congregation.

■ **22:24 Nor has He hidden His face.** Christ's enemies despised Him, but God did not.

■ **22:25 My praise shall be of You.** Lit. "My praise comes from You."

pay My vows. Mention of vows is common in psalms of lament (13:6; 27:6; 35:18; 54:6; 69:30, 31; cf. 51:16; 116:13, 14). The sufferer promises to bring a thanksgiving when his prayer is answered (Lev. 7:16; 22:23; Deut. 12:6, 7).

■ **22:26 shall eat and be satisfied.** Perhaps a reference to the sacrificial meal of the Old Testament peace offering, when the vow is paid and the worshipers are included.

■ **22:27 All the ends of the world.** The scope of praise expands, showing the prophetic reference to Christ and the New Testament church.

Shall bow before Him,
Even he who cannot keep himself alive.

30 A posterity shall serve Him.
It will be recounted of the Lord to the *next* generation,
31 They will come and declare His righteousness to a people who will be born,
That He has done *this.*

PSALM 23

The LORD the Shepherd of His People

A Psalm of David.

The LORD *is* [a]my shepherd;
[b]I shall not [1]want.
2 [c]He makes me to lie down in [2]green pastures;
[d]He leads me beside the [3]still waters.
3 He restores my soul;
[e]He leads me in the paths of righteousness
For His name's sake.

4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of [f]the shadow of death,
[g]I will fear no evil;
[h]For You *are* with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

5 You [i]prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
You [j]anoint my head with oil;
My cup runs over.
6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
All the days of my life;
And I will [4]dwell in the house of the LORD
[5]Forever.

PSALM 24

The King of Glory and His Kingdom

A Psalm of David.

The [a]earth *is* the LORD's, and all its fullness,
The world and those who dwell therein.
2 For He has [b]founded it upon the seas,
And established it upon the [1]waters.

PSALM 23

1 [a]Ps. 78:52; 80:1; [Is. 40:11]; Ezek. 34:11, 12; [John 10:11; 1 Pet. 2:25; Rev. 7:16, 17] [b][Ps. 34:9, 10; Phil. 4:19] [1]*lack*

2 [c]Ps. 65:11–13; Ezek. 34:14 [d][Rev. 7:17] [2]Lit. *pastures of tender grass* [3]Lit. *waters of rest*

3 [e]Ps. 5:8; 31:3; Prov. 8:20

4 [f]Job 3:5; 10:21, 22; 24:17; Ps. 44:19 [g][Ps. 3:6; 27:1] [h]Ps. 16:8; [Is. 43:2]

5 [i]Ps. 104:15 [j]Ps. 92:10; Luke 7:46

6 [4]So with LXX, Syr., Tg., Vg.; MT *return* [5]Or *To the end of my days,* lit. *For length of days*

PSALM 24

1 [a]1 Cor. 10:26, 28

2 [b]Ps. 89:11 [1]Lit. *rivers*

■ **22:31 That He has done this.** The final victory of salvation is accomplished by Christ (John 19:30).

■ **Ps. 23** This psalm is perhaps the best known example of a psalm of confidence (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes). It is a literary unity, with two governing metaphors expressing God's care and goodness: the shepherd and the banquet table.

■ **23:1 shepherd.** The image of God as shepherd is inexhaustibly rich. The shepherd stays with the flock (Is. 40:11; 63:9–12). His sheep are totally dependent upon him for food, water, and protection from wild animals. In the New Testament, Jesus is revealed as the shepherd of His people (John 10:11, 14), fulfilling the prophecy that God will come to shepherd His people (Ezek. 34:7–16, 23).

■ **23:2, 3 makes me to lie down . . . leads me . . . restores . . . leads me.** These verses extend the metaphor of the shepherd's care for the sheep. The Lord lovingly cares for His people.

■ **23:4 valley of the shadow of death.** See Job 10:21, 22.

rod . . . staff. The rod was used to fight wild animals and the staff to direct the flock.

■ **23:5, 6** The Lord treats the psalmist as an honored guest.

■ **23:5 table.** The image shifts to that of a banquet, a victory celebration.

anoint. Guests were anointed at feasts (Ps. 104:15; Luke 7:46).

■ **23:6 I will dwell.** Like the sheep with its shepherd, the psalmist quiets himself in God's assurance of an eternal home with Him. See John 14:23; "God Is Love: Divine Goodness and Faithfulness" at Ps. 136:1.

■ **Ps. 24** Jesus alone is qualified to ascend to heaven (vv. 3, 4), and He is the victorious Lord, for whom the gates of glory open (vv. 7–10).

■ **24:1 The earth is the LORD's.** God created and sustains the whole earth; it belongs to Him. Paul cites this verse to establish the principle that there is no food, even things offered to pagan idols, which is unlawful for Christians to eat (1 Cor. 10:25, 26).

■ **24:2 He has founded it upon the seas.** This section reflects the

3 [c]Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD?
Or who may stand in His holy place?
4 He who has [d]clean hands and [e]a pure heart,
Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol,
Nor [f]sworn deceitfully.
5 He shall receive blessing from the LORD,
And righteousness from the God of his salvation.
6 This *is* Jacob, the generation of those who [g]seek Him,
Who seek Your face. Selah

7 [h]Lift up your heads, O you gates!
And be lifted up, you everlasting doors!
[i]And the King of glory shall come in.
8 Who *is* this King of glory?
The LORD strong and mighty,
The LORD mighty in [j]battle.
9 Lift up your heads, O you gates!
Lift up, you everlasting doors!
And the King of glory shall come in.
10 Who is this King of glory?
The LORD of hosts,
He *is* the King of glory. Selah

3 [c]Ps. 15:1–5
4 [d][Job 17:9]; Ps. 26:6 [e]Ps. 51:10; 73:1; [Matt. 5:8] [f]Ps. 15:4
6 [g]Ps. 27:4, 8
7 [h]Ps. 118:20; Is. 26:2 [i]Ps. 29:2, 9; 97:6; Hag. 2:7; Acts 7:2; [1 Cor. 2:8]
8 [j]Rev. 19:13–16

PSALM 25

A Plea for Deliverance and Forgiveness

A Psalm of David.

To [a]You, O LORD, I lift up my soul.
2 O my God, I [b]trust in You;
Let me not be ashamed;
[c]Let not my enemies triumph over me.
3 Indeed, let no one who [l]waits on You be ashamed;
Let those be ashamed who deal treacherously without cause.

4 [d]Show me Your ways, O LORD;
Teach me Your paths.
5 Lead me in Your truth and teach me,
For You *are* the God of my salvation;
On You I wait all the day.

6 Remember, O LORD, [e]Your tender mercies and Your lovingkindnesses,
For they *are* from of old.
7 Do not remember [f]the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions;
[g]According to Your mercy remember me,
For Your goodness' sake, O LORD.

8 Good and upright *is* the LORD;
Therefore He teaches sinners in the way.

1 [a]Ps. 86:4; 143:8
2 [b]Ps. 34:8 [c]Ps. 13:4; 41:11
3 [l]Waits for You in faith
4 [d]Ex. 33:13; Ps. 5:8; 27:11; 86:11; 119:27; 143:8
6 [e]Ps. 103:17; 106:1
7 [f]Job 13:26; [Jer. 3:25] [g]Ps. 51:1

creation account in Gen. 1. However, the sea is also a poetic image for evil. Throughout the psalms and the prophets, God is pictured as winning a victory over the sea (Ps. 29:10, 11; 77:16–20; 104:5–9; Nah. 1:4; Dan. 7).

■ **24:3** See "God's Pattern for Worship" at 1 Chr. 16:29.

■ **24:4 clean hands.** Righteous action.

pure heart. Righteous thoughts and motives.

deceitfully. By the names of false gods.

■ **24:7–9 heads.** The city or temple gates are personified.

shall come in. The return of the King of glory implies that He has gone out to battle and returns in victory.

■ **Ps. 25** This acrostic psalm is primarily the lament of an individual (vv. 16–21), but the last verse applies it to the community. Covenantal (v. 10) and wisdom (vv. 4, 5) language pervade the poem.

■ **25:5** See "Understanding the Word of God" at 119:34.

■ **25:6, 7 Remember . . . mercies . . . lovingkindnesses.** These words are all closely connected with God's covenant, which is the basis of the psalmist's trust.

9 The humble He guides in justice,
And the humble He teaches His way.
10 All the paths of the LORD *are* mercy and truth,
To such as keep His covenant and His testimonies.
11 [h]For Your name's sake, O LORD,
Pardon my iniquity, for it *is* great.

12 Who *is* the man that fears the LORD?
[i]Him shall [2]He teach in the way [2]He chooses.
13 [j]He himself shall dwell in [3]prosperity,
And [k]his descendants shall inherit the earth.
14 [l]The secret of the LORD *is* with those who fear Him,
And He will show them His covenant.
15 [m]My eyes *are* ever toward the LORD,
For He shall [4]pluck my feet out of the net.

16 [n]Turn Yourself to me, and have mercy on me,
For I *am* [5]desolate and afflicted.
17 The troubles of my heart have enlarged;
Bring me out of my distresses!
18 [o]Look on my affliction and my pain,
And forgive all my sins.
19 Consider my enemies, for they are many;
And they hate me with [6]cruel hatred.
20 Keep my soul, and deliver me;
Let me not be ashamed, for I put my trust in You.
21 Let integrity and uprightness preserve me,
For I wait for You.

22 [p]Redeem Israel, O God,
Out of all their troubles!

PSALM 26

A Prayer for Divine Scrutiny and Redemption

A Psalm of David.

Vindicate [a]me, O LORD,
For I have [b]walked in my integrity.
[c]I have also trusted in the LORD;
I shall not slip.
2 [d]Examine me, O LORD, and [1]prove me;
Try my mind and my heart.
3 For Your lovingkindness *is* before my eyes,
And [e]I have walked in Your truth.
4 I have not [f]sat with idolatrous mortals,
Nor will I go in with hypocrites.
5 I have [g]hated the assembly of evildoers,
And will not sit with the wicked.

11 [h]Ps. 31:3; 79:9; 109:21; 143:11

12 [i][Ps. 25:8; 37:23] [2]Or *he*

13 [j][Prov. 19:23] [k]Ps. 37:11; 69:36; Matt. 5:5 [3]Lit. *goodness*

14 [l][Prov. 3:32; John 7:17]

15 [m][Ps. 123:2; 141:8] [4]Lit. *bring out*

16 [n]Ps. 69:16 [5]*lonely*

18 [o]2 Sam. 16:12; Ps. 31:7

19 [6]*violent hatred*

22 [p][Ps. 130:8]

PSALM 26

1 [a]Ps. 7:8 [b]2 Kin. 20:3; [Prov. 20:7] [c][Ps. 13:5; 28:7]

2 [d]Ps. 17:3; 139:23 [1]*test me*

3 [e]2 Kin. 20:3; Ps. 86:11

4 [f]Ps. 1:1; Jer. 15:17

5 [g]Ps. 31:6; 139:21

■ **25:10 His covenant and His testimonies.** His revealed will for our lives; that is, the law.

■ **25:12 fears the LORD.** Cf. Prov. 1:7 and Eccl. 12:13. The fear of the Lord is reverence and awe toward God, not life-disrupting anxiety. Also, see note on Ps. 111:10.

■ **25:13 inherit the earth.** The blessings and curses of Deut. 27; 28 make it clear that Israel will keep the land given them by God if they remain faithful to the conditions of the covenant (cf. v. 10).

■ **25:14 show them His covenant.** Each time Abraham doubted God's ability to fulfill the promises of Gen. 12:1–3, God appeared to him and renewed the covenant (Gen. 15 and 17).

■ **25:18, 19 my sins . . . my enemies.** He recognizes that his troubles are caused by both his own sins and the attacks of outside forces (the "enemy").

■ **26:1 in my integrity.** David identifies himself in motive and action with the righteous rather than the wicked. He invites God to test the truth of this claim (v. 2). David has no illusions of being sinless (53:5) or of having no need for mercy (v. 11; 130:3).

■ **26:4 I have not sat.** Cf. Ps. 1:1.

6 I will wash my hands in innocence;
So I will go about Your altar, O LORD,
7 That I may proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving,
And tell of all Your wondrous works.
8 LORD, [h]I have loved the habitation of Your house,
And the place [2]where Your glory dwells.

9 [i]Do[3] not gather my soul with sinners,
Nor my life with bloodthirsty men,
10 In whose hands *is* a sinister scheme,
And whose right hand is full of [j]bribes.

11 But as for me, I will walk in my integrity;
Redeem me and be merciful to me.
12 [k]My foot stands in an even place;
In the congregations I will bless the LORD.

8 [h]Ps. 27:4; 84:1–4, 10 [2]Lit. *of the tabernacle of Your glory*
9 [i]Ps. 28:3 [3]*Do not take away*
10 [j]1 Sam. 8:3
12 [k]Ps. 40:2

PSALM 27

An Exuberant Declaration of Faith

A Psalm of David.

The LORD *is* my [a]light and my salvation;
Whom shall I fear?
The [b]LORD *is* the strength of my life;
Of whom shall I be afraid?
2 When the wicked came against me
To [c]eat[1] up my flesh,
My enemies and foes,
They stumbled and fell.
3 [d]Though an army may encamp against me,
My heart shall not fear;
Though war may rise against me,
In this I *will be* confident.

4 [e]One *thing* I have desired of the LORD,
That will I seek:
That I may [f]dwell in the house of the LORD
All the days of my life,
To behold the [2]beauty of the LORD,
And to inquire in His temple.
5 For [g]in the time of trouble
He shall hide me in His pavilion;
In the secret place of His tabernacle
He shall hide me;
He shall [h]set me high upon a rock.

6 And now [i]my head shall be [3]lifted up above my enemies all around me;
Therefore I will offer sacrifices of [4]joy in His tabernacle;
I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the LORD.

1 [a]Ps. 18:28; 84:11; [Is. 60:19, 20; Mic. 7:8] [b]Ex. 15:2; Ps. 62:7; 118:14; Is. 12:2; 33:2
2 [c]Ps. 14:4 [1]*devour*
3 [d]Ps. 3:6
4 [e]Ps. 26:8; 65:4 [f]Luke 2:37 [2]*delightfulness*
5 [g]Ps. 31:20; 91:1 [h]Ps. 40:2
6 [i]Ps. 3:3 [3]Lifted up in honor [4]*joyous shouts*

■ **26:6 Your altar.** The language fits a prayer for admission to the sanctuary.

■ **26:9 sinners.** He wants to distance himself from the wicked, for if they enter the sanctuary precincts (vv. 6–8), they will be quickly destroyed. David asks to be spared this judgment.

■ **26:12 in an even place.** A metaphor for personal stability and right relationship with the Lord.

■ **27:1 light.** God brings clarity, order, and understanding, while darkness is evil and chaotic. See Nah. 1:8, where the defeat of the enemy is shown by their being pursued into darkness. Also see "God Is Light: Divine Holiness and Justice" at Lev. 11:44.

■ **27:2 eat up my flesh.** The enemy seeks the physical harm of the psalmist. The expression also has a figurative meaning, "to slander me."

■ **27:4 house of the LORD.** The place where God's presence is manifest is a place of sanctuary from the enemy.

■ **27:5 set me high.** Above all trouble.

■ **27:6 sacrifices of joy.** He shouts for victory because the Lord has saved him.

7 Hear, O LORD, *when* I cry with my voice!
Have mercy also upon me, and answer me.
8 *When You said,* "Seek My face,"
My heart said to You, "Your face, LORD, I will seek."
9 [j]Do not hide Your face from me;
Do not turn Your servant away in anger;
You have been my help;
Do not leave me nor forsake me,
O God of my salvation.
10 [k]When my father and my mother forsake me,
Then the LORD will take care of me.

11 [l]Teach me Your way, O LORD,
And lead me in a smooth path, because of my enemies.
12 Do not deliver me to the will of my adversaries;
For [m]false witnesses have risen against me,
And such as breathe out violence.
13 *I would have lost heart,* unless I had believed
That I would see the goodness of the LORD
[n]In the land of the living.

14 [o]Wait[5] on the LORD;
Be of good courage,
And He shall strengthen your heart;
Wait, I say, on the LORD!

PSALM 28

Rejoicing in Answered Prayer

A Psalm of David.

To You I will cry, O LORD my Rock:
[a]Do not be silent to me,
[b]Lest, if You *are* silent to me,
I become like those who go down to the pit.
2 Hear the voice of my supplications
When I cry to You,
[c]When I lift up my hands [d]toward Your holy sanctuary.

3 Do not [f]take me away with the wicked
And with the workers of iniquity,
[e]Who speak peace to their neighbors,
But evil *is* in their hearts.
4 [f]Give them according to their deeds,
And according to the wickedness of their endeavors;
Give them according to the work of their hands;
Render to them what they deserve.
5 Because [g]they do not regard the works of the LORD,
Nor the operation of His hands,

9 [j]Ps. 69:17; 143:7
10 [k]Is. 49:15
11 [l]Ps. 25:4; 86:11; 119:33
12 [m]Deut. 19:18; Ps. 35:11; Matt. 26:60; Mark 14:56; John 19:33
13 [n]Job 28:13; Ps. 52:5; 116:9; 142:5; Is. 38:11; Jer. 11:19; Ezek. 26:20
14 [o]Ps. 25:3; 37:34; 40:1; 62:5; 130:5; Prov. 20:22; Is. 25:9; [Hab. 2:3]
[5]Wait in faith

PSALM 28

1 [a]Ps. 35:22; 39:12; 83:1 [b]Ps. 88:4; 143:7; Prov. 1:12
2 [c]Ps. 5:7 [d]Ps. 138:2
3 [e]Ps. 12:2; 55:21; 62:4; Jer. 9:8
[1]*drag*
4 [f][Ps. 62:12]; 2 Tim. 4:14; [Rev. 18:6; 22:12]
5 [g]Is. 5:12

■ **27:8 face.** To seek God's face is to seek intimate fellowship with Him.

■ **27:9 Do not hide Your face.** The psalmist recognizes that, however great his desire, he can only see God's face if God reveals it.

■ **27:13 goodness of the LORD.** He is confident of God's vindication while he is still alive.

■ **27:14 Wait on the LORD.** See text note. His counsel is, "In the midst of present trouble, do not give up; give God time to answer."

■ **28:1 my Rock.** Using this familiar name the psalmist remembers God as his source of protection and strength (Deut. 32:4, 18, 31; Ps. 78:35).

go down to the pit. That is, to die. The pit stands for Sheol, the grave (6:5 note).

■ **28:2 holy sanctuary.** The Most Holy Place, the inner room in the tabernacle or temple where the ark of the covenant stood.

■ **28:3 speak peace.** The psalmist knows the hypocrisy of his enemies.

■ **28:4 Render to them.** An imprecation, that is, a prayer that God would punish the enemy.

■ **28:5 He shall destroy them.** The previous verse appealed for judgment and this one pronounces it.

He shall destroy them
And not build them up.

6 Blessed *be* the LORD,
Because He has heard the voice of my supplications!
7 The LORD *is* [h]my strength and my shield;
My heart [i]trusted in Him, and I am helped;
Therefore my heart greatly rejoices,
And with my song I will praise Him.

8 The LORD *is* [2]their strength,
And He *is* the [j]saving refuge of His [3]anointed.
9 Save Your people,
And bless [k]Your inheritance;
Shepherd them also,
[l]And bear them up forever.

PSALM 29

Praise to God in His Holiness and Majesty

A Psalm of David.

Give[1] [a]unto the LORD, O you mighty ones,
Give unto the LORD glory and strength.
2 [2]Give unto the LORD the glory [3]due to His name;
Worship the LORD in [b]the [4]beauty of holiness.

3 The voice of the LORD *is* over the waters;
[c]The God of glory thunders;
The LORD *is* over many waters.
4 The voice of the LORD *is* powerful;
The voice of the LORD *is* full of majesty.

5 The voice of the LORD breaks [d]the cedars,
Yes, the LORD splinters the cedars of Lebanon.
6 [e]He makes them also skip like a calf,
Lebanon and [f]Sirion like a young wild ox.
7 The voice of the LORD [5]divides the flames of fire.

8 The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness;
The LORD shakes the Wilderness of [g]Kadesh.
9 The voice of the LORD makes the [h]deer give birth,
And strips the forests bare;
And in His temple everyone says, "Glory!"

7 [h]Ps. 18:2; 59:17 [i]Ps. 13:5; 112:7
8 [j]Ps. 20:6 [2]So with MT, Tg.; LXX, Syr., Vg. *the strength of His people* [3]Commissioned one, Heb. *messiah*
9 [k][Deut. 9:29; 32:9; 1 Kin. 8:51; Ps. 33:12]; 106:40 [l]Deut. 1:31; Is. 63:9

PSALM 29

1 [a]1 Chr. 16:28, 29 [1]*Ascribe*
2 [b]2 Chr. 20:21; Ps. 110:3 [2]*Ascribe* [3]Lit. *of His name* [4]*majesty*
3 [c][Job 37:4, 5]; Ps. 18:13; Acts 7:2
5 [d]Judg. 9:15; 1 Kin. 5:6; Ps. 104:16; Is. 2:13; 14:8
6 [e]Ps. 114:4 [f]Deut. 3:9
7 [5]*stirs up,* lit. *hews out*
8 [g]Num. 13:26
9 [h]Job 39:1

■ **28:9 Your people.** The psalmist broadens his appeal to the Lord to include the whole nation.

Shepherd them. See note on Ps. 23:1.

■ **Ps. 29** A song of praise to God the King. The psalm uses themes that were current in the religions of the surrounding nations: the power behind storms (vv. 3–9) and the victor over floodwaters (vv. 10, 11). The psalmist attacks these religions by taking the praises they claimed for their false gods and ascribing them to the Lord. The picture of God as King, enthroned over the vanquished floodwaters, is one of many indications that the psalm was used to celebrate a divinely given victory in battle.

■ **29:1 mighty ones.** Lit. "sons of gods." This phrase is used in the religious texts of the Canaanites and refers to the gods of their pantheon. In the Bible it would refer to spiritual beings such as the cherubim and the angels.

■ **29:2 name.** This is His reputation achieved through His acts in history.

■ **29:3–9** The Canaanites believed that Baal provided rain and fertility, and that his power was seen in the storm. They called him "cloud rider" in their religious texts. But the Lord controls nature (1 Kin. 18).

■ **29:3 voice of the LORD.** Thunder.

waters . . . many waters. In the religions of the Near East, as in the Bible, the sea represents forces of chaos and evil. See 18:4; 46:2; 69:1, 2 and notes.

■ **29:6 Lebanon . . . Sirion.** These are regions of mountains that will shake before the power of God. See Ps. 46:2.

■ **29:8 Wilderness of Kadesh.** This could be translated (lit.) "holy desert." Its location is uncertain.

10 The [i]LORD sat *enthroned* at the Flood,
And [j]the LORD sits as King forever.
11 [k]The LORD will give strength to His people;
The LORD will bless His people with peace.

PSALM 30

The Blessedness of Answered Prayer

A Psalm. A Song [a]at the dedication of the house of David.

I will extol You, O LORD, for You have [b]lifted me up,
And have not let my foes [c]rejoice over me.
2 O LORD my God, I cried out to You,
And You [d]healed me.
3 O LORD, [e]You brought my soul up from the grave;
You have kept me alive, [f]that I should not go down to the pit.

4 [g]Sing praise to the LORD, you saints of His,
And give thanks at the remembrance of [2]His holy name.
5 For [h]His anger *is but for* a moment,
[h]His favor *is for* life;
Weeping may endure for a night,
But [3]joy *comes* in the morning.

6 Now in my prosperity I said,
"I shall never be [4]moved."
7 LORD, by Your favor You have made my mountain stand strong;
[i]You hid Your face, *and* I was troubled.

8 I cried out to You, O LORD;
And to the LORD I made supplication:
9 "What profit *is there* in my blood,
When I go down to the pit?
[j]Will the dust praise You?
Will it declare Your truth?
10 Hear, O LORD, and have mercy on me;
LORD, be my helper!"

11 [k]You have turned for me my mourning into dancing;
You have put off [5]my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness,
12 To the end that *my* [6]glory may sing praise to You and not be silent.
O LORD my God, I will give thanks to You forever.

10 [i]Gen. 6:17; Job 38:8, 25 [j]Ps. 10:16

11 [k]Ps. 28:8; 68:35; [Is. 40:29]

PSALM 30

title [a]Deut. 20:5

1 [b]Ps. 28:9 [c]Ps. 25:2

2 [d]Ps. 6:2; 103:3; [Is. 53:5]

3 [e]Ps. 86:13 [f]So with Qr., Tg.; Kt., LXX, Syr., Vg. *from those who descend to the pit*

4 [g]Ps. 97:12 [2]Or *His holiness*

5 [h]Ps. 103:9; Is. 26:20; 54:7, 8 [h]Ps. 63:3 [3]*a shout of joy*

6 [4]*shaken*

7 [i][Deut. 31:17; Ps. 104:29; 143:7]

9 [j][Ps. 6:5]

11 [k]Ecc. 3:4; Is. 61:3; Jer. 31:4 [5]The sackcloth of my mourning

12 [6]*soul*

■ **29:10 Flood.** See v. 3.

■ **Ps. 30** The title indicates that the psalm was written for the dedication of the temple. In David's time the temple had not yet been built, but he could have prepared for its dedication much as he prepared for building it by gathering supplies (1 Chr. 22). A greater difficulty is the lack of any mention of the temple in the body of the psalm (Introduction: Characteristic and Themes). Attempts to link the psalm with the plague recorded in 1 Chr. 21:1—22:1 fail to take into account that David himself was not afflicted.

■ **30:1 lifted me up.** The Hebrew verb is used of drawing a bucket out of a well, an appropriate portrayal of saving someone from Sheol (i.e., the grave), which is often pictured as a wet and muddy pit.

■ **30:2 healed me.** An indication that the psalm is a thanksgiving in response to physical healing.

■ **30:3 soul.** See "Body and Soul, Male and Female" at Gen. 2:7.

■ **30:4 saints.** The word is related to covenant lovingkindness and specifies those in covenant relationship with God.

■ **30:5 for a moment.** God's mercy is sure. See Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 4:17.

morning. Cf. Ps. 90:14.

■ **30:7 my mountain.** Mountains, as opposed to the sea, are a symbol of stability and often represent security in the protection of God (Ps. 46:2).

■ **30:9 profit.** The psalmist bargains with God for his life (Gen. 18) by pointing out that God would gain a voice of praise if He healed him. This is not a developed treatment of the afterlife. The point is that death would bring to a conclusion David's desire to glorify God in this world.

PSALM 31

1 [a]Ps. 22:5 [1]*have taken refuge*
2 [b]Ps. 17:6; 71:2; 86:1; 102:2 [2]*strength* [3]Lit. *house of fortresses*
3 [c][Ps. 18:2] [d]Ps. 23:3; 25:11
5 [e]Luke 23:46 [f][Deut. 32:4]; Ps. 71:22
6 [g]Jon. 2:8
7 [h][John 10:27] [4]*troubles*
8 [i][Deut. 32:30]; Ps. 37:33 [j][Ps. 4:1; 18:19] [5]*given me over*
9 [k]Ps. 6:7 [6]Lit. *belly*
11 [l][Is. 53:4] [m]Job 19:13; Ps. 38:11; 88:8, 18 [n]Ps. 64:8 [7]*despised thing*
12 [o]Ps. 88:4, 5 [8]Lit. *perishing*
13 [p]Ps. 50:20; Jer. 20:10 [q]Lam. 2:22 [r]Ps. 62:4; Matt. 27:1

PSALM 31

The LORD a Fortress in Adversity

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

In [a]You, O LORD, I [1]put my trust;
Let me never be ashamed;
Deliver me in Your righteousness.
2 [b]Bow down Your ear to me,
Deliver me speedily;
Be my rock of [2]refuge,
A [3]fortress of defense to save me.

3 [c]For You *are* my rock and my fortress;
Therefore, [d]for Your name's sake,
Lead me and guide me.
4 Pull me out of the net which they have secretly laid for me,
For You *are* my strength.
5 [e]Into Your hand I commit my spirit;
You have redeemed me, O LORD God of [f]truth.

6 I have hated those [g]who regard useless idols;
But I trust in the LORD.
7 I will be glad and rejoice in Your mercy,
For You have considered my trouble;
You have [h]known my soul in [4]adversities,
8 And have not [i]shut[5] me up into the hand of the enemy;
[j]You have set my feet in a wide place.

9 Have mercy on me, O LORD, for I am in trouble;
[k]My eye wastes away with grief,
Yes, my soul and my [6]body!
10 For my life is spent with grief,
And my years with sighing;
My strength fails because of my iniquity,
And my bones waste away.
11 [l]I am a [7]reproach among all my enemies,
But [m]especially among my neighbors,
And *am* repulsive to my acquaintances;
[n]Those who see me outside flee from me.
12 [o]I am forgotten like a dead man, out of mind;
I am like a [8]broken vessel.
13 [p]For I hear the slander of many;
[q]Fear *is* on every side;
While they [r]take counsel together against me,
They scheme to take away my life.

14 But as for me, I trust in You, O LORD;
I say, "You *are* my God."

■ **31:1 in Your righteousness.** The psalmist appeals to the Lord's righteousness in his distress caused by the wickedness of the enemy. "Your righteousness" indicates God's commitment to save those who are in covenant relationship with Him.

■ **31:5 I commit my spirit.** Jesus quoted these words on the cross (Luke 23:46). The desperate cries of lament found in the psalms often express Christ's own anguish as He faced the rejection of the world (Ps. 22 and 69).

■ **31:6 useless idols.** They are worthless because they are the figments of their worshipers' imaginations. The psalmist trusts the Lord, who is the "God of truth" (v. 5).

■ **31:7 mercy.** Specifically, the love between covenant partners (God and David), which moves God to respond to the psalmist's distress.

■ **31:10 iniquity.** Several ancient translations read, "affliction," which draws support from the psalm's general theme of distress from outside forces rather than from the psalmist's guilt.

■ **31:12 broken vessel.** A metaphor for serious illness, even death (Eccl. 12:6).

■ **31:14 You are my God.** A simple and foundational confession that David is in covenant with God.

15 My times *are* in Your [s]hand;
Deliver me from the hand of my enemies,
And from those who persecute me.
16 [t]Make Your face shine upon Your servant;
Save me for Your mercies' sake.
17 [u]Do not let me be ashamed, O LORD, for I have called upon You;
Let the wicked be ashamed;
[v]Let them be silent in the grave.
18 [w]Let the lying lips be put to silence,
Which [x]speak insolent things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.

19 [y]Oh, how great *is* Your goodness,
Which You have laid up for those who fear You,
Which You have prepared for those who trust in You
In the presence of the sons of men!
20 [z]You shall hide them in the secret place of Your presence
From the plots of man;
[a]You shall keep them secretly in a [9]pavilion
From the strife of tongues.

21 Blessed *be* the LORD,
For [b]He has shown me His marvelous kindness in a [1]strong city!
22 For I said in my haste,
"I am cut off from before Your eyes";
Nevertheless You heard the voice of my supplications
When I cried out to You.

23 Oh, love the LORD, all you His saints!
For the LORD preserves the faithful,
And fully repays the proud person.
24 [c]Be of good courage,
And He shall strengthen your heart,
All you who hope in the LORD.

15 [s][Job 14:5; 24:1]
16 [t]Ps. 4:6; 80:3
17 [u]Ps. 25:2, 20 [v][1 Sam. 2:9]; Ps. 94:17; 115:17
18 [w]Ps. 109:2; 120:2 [x][1 Sam. 2:3]; Ps. 94:4; [Jude 15]
19 [y]Ps. 145:7; [Rom. 2:4; 11:22]
20 [z][Ps. 27:5; 32:7] [a]Job 5:21 [9]*shelter*
21 [b][Ps. 17:7] [1]*fortified*
24 [c][Ps. 27:14]

PSALM 32

The Joy of Forgiveness

A Psalm of David. A [1]Contemplation.

Blessed *is he whose* [a]transgression *is* forgiven,
Whose sin *is* covered.
2 Blessed *is* the man to whom the LORD [b]does not [2]impute iniquity,
And [c]in whose spirit *there is* no deceit.

3 When I kept silent, my bones grew old
Through my groaning all the day long.
4 For day and night Your [d]hand was heavy upon me;

PSALM 32

title [1]Heb. *Maschil*
1 [a][Ps. 85:2; 103:3]; Rom. 4:7, 8
2 [b][2 Cor. 5:19] [c]John 1:47 [2]*charge his account with*
4 [d]1 Sam. 5:6; Ps. 38:2; 39:10

■ **31:15 My times.** The psalmist knows that God controls history in general and his life in particular. This comforts him in his distress.

■ **31:16 face shine.** See the priestly blessing of Num. 6:25. The metaphor of God's face represents His loving presence that will bring salvation to the psalmist.

■ **31:21 strong city.** This phrase is difficult to understand. The psalmist could be remembering a particular incident. It may be that the original reading was "in a difficult time," a rendering that fits the context well. A copyist's error in one letter would account for the difference of reading.

■ **31:23 His saints.** The word is formed from the same Hebrew root (*hesed*) as "mercy," understood as God's lovingkindness toward those in a covenant relationship with Him.

■ **Ps. 32** A penitential psalm containing some distinctive wisdom language (vv. 1, 2, 8–10).

■ **32:2 iniquity.** Three different words for sin are used in the first two verses to bring out the many aspects of man's rebellion against God. Paul cites the first two verses of this psalm in Rom. 4:6–8 in describing the grace of God's forgiveness.

■ **32:3 my bones grew old.** The psalmist perceives sin's consequences in his body. This is not merely poetic language, although sin does not always have immediate physical consequences.

■ **32:4 My vitality was . . . drought.** Guilt immobilized and enervated the psalmist.

My vitality was turned into the drought of summer. Selah
5 I acknowledged my sin to You,
And my iniquity I have not hidden.
[e]I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,"
And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah

6 [f]For this cause everyone who is godly shall [g]pray to You
In a time when You may be found;
Surely in a flood of great waters
They shall not come near him.
7 [h]You *are* my hiding place;
You shall preserve me from trouble;
You shall surround me with [i]songs of deliverance. Selah

8 I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;
I will guide you with My eye.
9 Do not be like the [j]horse *or* like the mule,
Which have no understanding,
Which must be harnessed with bit and bridle,
Else they will not come near you.

10 [k]Many sorrows *shall be* to the wicked;
But [l]he who trusts in the LORD, mercy shall surround him.
11 [m]Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous;
And shout for joy, all *you* upright in heart!

PSALM 33

The Sovereignty of the LORD in Creation and History

[a]Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous!
For praise from the upright is beautiful.
2 Praise the LORD with the harp;
[1]Make melody to Him with an instrument of ten strings.
3 Sing to Him a new song;
Play skillfully with a shout of joy.

4 For the word of the LORD *is* right,
And all His work *is done* in truth.
5 He loves righteousness and justice;
The earth is full of the goodness of the LORD.

6 [b]By the word of the LORD the heavens were made,
And all the [c]host of them [d]by the breath of His mouth.
7 [e]He gathers the waters of the sea together [2]as a heap;
He lays up the deep in storehouses.

5 [e]2 Sam. 12:13; Ps. 38:18; [Prov. 28:13; 1 John 1:9]
6 [f][1 Tim. 1:16] [g]Ps. 69:13; Is. 55:6
7 [h]Ps. 9:9 [i]Ex. 15:1; Judg. 5:1; [Ps. 40:3]
9 [j]Prov. 26:3
10 [k]Ps. 16:4; [Prov. 13:21; Rom. 2:9] [l][Ps. 5:11, 12]; Prov. 16:20
11 [m]Ps. 64:10; 68:3; 97:12

PSALM 33

1 [a]Ps. 32:11; 97:12; Phil. 3:1; 4:4
2 [1]Lit. *Sing to Him*
6 [b]Gen. 1:6, 7; Ps. 148:5; [Heb. 11:3; 2 Pet. 3:5] [c]Gen. 2:1 [d][Job 26:13]
7 [e]Gen. 1:9; Job 26:10; 38:8 [2]LXX, Tg., Vg. *in a vessel*

■ **32:5 I acknowledged my sin to You.** He praises God's willingness and authority to forgive.

■ **32:6 godly.** Or "saints"; see Ps. 31:23 note.

great waters. Elsewhere translated "deep waters." See notes on Ps. 18:4, 16; 29:3, 10; 46:2; 69:1, 2; 144:7.

■ **32:8 I will instruct you.** Using language found in wisdom sections of the Old Testament (e.g., Ps. 1 and Prov. 1—9), God promises to direct the psalmist in the way of the covenant, in the way of righteousness.

■ **32:9 like the horse.** Horses and mules do the will of their masters only under compulsion (Prov. 26:3). The righteous should obey out of love and gratitude to their God.

■ **Ps. 33** There are twenty-two verses in the psalm, the same as the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet, but the psalm is not an acrostic (see Introduction to Hebrew Poetry).

■ **33:3 new song.** Often such "new" psalms are found in contexts of victorious war and can be seen as shouts of victory. Cf. Ps. 96; 98; 144; 149; Is. 42:10; Rev. 5:9; 14:3).

■ **33:4 the word of the LORD is right.** God's speech to men reflects His character. He does not deceive His people, but leads them into the truth. The Bible, as God's written Word, does the same.

■ **33:6 host of them.** Literally, this word is simply "hosts" and may refer not merely to the innumerable stars of heaven, but also to the angelic armies.

■ **33:7 the waters of the sea.** The creator is pictured poetically as exercising command over the waters of chaos (Ps. 18:16 note). There may also be a poetical allusion to the song of Moses and Israel at the Red Sea (Ex. 15).

8 Let all the earth fear the LORD;
Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.
9 For [f]He spoke, and it was *done;*
He commanded, and it stood fast.

10 [g]The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing;
He makes the plans of the peoples of no effect.
11 [h]The counsel of the LORD stands forever,
The plans of His heart to all generations.
12 Blessed *is* the nation whose God *is* the LORD,
The people He has [i]chosen as His own inheritance.

13 [j]The LORD looks from heaven;
He sees all the sons of men.
14 From the place of His dwelling He looks
On all the inhabitants of the earth;
15 He fashions their hearts individually;
[k]He [3]considers all their works.

16 [l]No king *is* saved by the multitude of an army;
A mighty man is not delivered by great strength.
17 [m]A horse *is* a [4]vain hope for safety;
Neither shall it deliver *any* by its great strength.

18 [n]Behold, the eye of the LORD *is* on those who fear Him,
On those who hope in His mercy,
19 To deliver their soul from death,
And [o]to keep them alive in famine.

20 Our soul waits for the LORD;
He *is* our help and our shield.
21 For our heart shall rejoice in Him,
Because we have trusted in His holy name.
22 Let Your mercy, O LORD, be upon us,
Just as we hope in You.

PSALM 34

The Happiness of Those Who Trust in God

A Psalm of David [a]when he pretended madness before Abimelech, who drove him away, and he departed.

I will [b]bless the LORD at all times;
His praise *shall* continually *be* in my mouth.
2 My soul shall make its boast in the LORD;
The humble shall hear *of it* and be glad.

9 [f]Gen. 1:3; Ps. 148:5

10 [g][Ps. 2:1–3]; Is. 8:10; 19:3

11 [h][Job 23:13; Prov. 19:21]

12 [i][Ex. 19:5; Deut. 7:6]; Ps. 28:9

13 [j]Job 28:24; [Ps. 14:2]

15 [k][2 Chr. 16:9]; Job 34:21; [Jer. 32:19]
[3]*understands*

16 [l]Ps. 44:6; 60:11; [Jer. 9:23, 24]

17 [m][Ps. 20:7; 147:10; Prov. 21:31] [4]*false*

18 [n][Job 36:7]; Ps. 32:8; 34:15; [1 Pet. 3:12]

19 [o]Job 5:20; Ps. 37:19

PSALM 34

title [a]1 Sam. 21:10–15

1 [b][Eph. 5:20; 1 Thess. 5:18]

- **33:8 fear the LORD.** To honor, love, and obey Him.
- **33:10 nations.** Godless nations who seek their own will and not God's.
- **33:11 The counsel of the LORD stands forever.** Nothing can subvert God's purposes. He is in absolute control of history.
- **33:12 The people He has chosen.** God is the One who initiated the relationship with Israel, the nation He chose (Deut. 7:7–11).
- **33:13 heaven.** See "Heaven" at Rev. 21:1.
- **33:15** God not only sees all, He forms the hearts of all.
- **Ps. 34** The psalm has a historical title (see below), but the verses themselves are written in a general style, lending the poem to use by different people in different situations. The psalm is an acrostic (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes), although there is no line for the sixth Hebrew letter (*waw*), and the line for the seventeenth letter is out of order, coming last.
- **34:title** See 1 Sam. 21:10–15 for the historical situation of the title. Abimelech is probably a royal title for the king of the Philistines, not the proper name of the king (Achish, in the time of Samuel).
- **34:2 boast in the LORD.** While boasting in oneself is the height of pride and godlessness (Rom. 1:30), to boast in God is right (Jer. 9:24; 2 Cor. 10:17).

3 Oh, magnify the LORD with me,
And let us exalt His name together.

4 I [c]sought the LORD, and He heard me,
And delivered me from all my fears.
5 They looked to Him and were radiant,
And their faces were not ashamed.
6 This poor man cried out, and the LORD heard *him,*
And saved him out of all his troubles.
7 [d]The [1]angel of the LORD [e]encamps all around those who fear Him,
And delivers them.

8 Oh, [f]taste and see that the LORD *is* good;
[g]Blessed *is* the man *who* trusts in Him!
9 Oh, fear the LORD, you His saints!
There is no [2]want to those who fear Him.
10 The young lions lack and suffer hunger;
[h]But those who seek the LORD shall not lack any good *thing.*

11 Come, you children, listen to me;
[i]I will teach you the fear of the LORD.
12 [j]Who *is* the man *who* desires life,
And loves *many* days, that he may see good?
13 Keep your tongue from evil,
And your lips from speaking [k]deceit.
14 [l]Depart from evil and do good;
[m]Seek peace and pursue it.

15 [n]The eyes of the LORD *are* on the righteous,
And His ears *are open* to their cry.
16 [o]The face of the LORD *is* against those who do evil,
[p]To [3]cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.

17 *The righteous* cry out, and [q]the LORD hears,
And delivers them out of all their troubles.
18 [r]The LORD *is* near [s]to those who have a broken heart,
And saves such as [4]have a contrite spirit.

19 [t]Many *are* the afflictions of the righteous,
[u]But the LORD delivers him out of them all.
20 He guards all his bones;
[v]Not one of them is broken.
21 [w]Evil shall slay the wicked,
And those who hate the righteous shall be [5]condemned.
22 The LORD [x]redeems the soul of His servants,
And none of those who trust in Him shall be condemned.

4 [c][2 Chr. 15:2; Ps. 9:10; Matt. 7:7; Luke 11:9]
7 [d][Ps. 91:11]; Dan. 6:22 [e]2 Kin. 6:17 [1]Or *Angel*
8 [f]Ps. 119:103; [Heb. 6:5]; 1 Pet. 2:3 [g]Ps. 2:12
9 [2]*lack*
10 [h][Ps. 84:11]
11 [i]Ps. 32:8
12 [j][1 Pet. 3:10–12]
13 [k][Eph. 4:25]
14 [l]Ps. 37:27; Is. 1:16, 17 [m][Rom. 14:19; Heb. 12:14]
15 [n]Job 36:7; [Ps. 33:18]
16 [o]Lev. 17:10; Jer. 44:11; Amos 9:4 [p]Job 18:17; Ps. 9:6; 109:15; [Prov. 10:7] [3]*destroy*
17 [q]Ps. 34:6; 145:19
18 [r][Ps. 145:18] [s]Ps. 51:17; [Is. 57:15] [4]*are crushed in spirit*
19 [t]Prov. 24:16 [u]Ps. 34:4, 6, 17
20 [v]John 19:33, 36
21 [w]Ps. 94:23; 140:11; Prov. 24:16 [5]*held guilty*
22 [x]1 Kin. 1:29

■ **34:3 His name.** That is, His reputation. The congregation is exhorted to witness to God's great acts in history and in our lives.

■ **34:4 He heard me.** One of the most frequent themes of the psalms is stated boldly: God hears and answers the prayers of His people.

■ **34:5 were radiant.** They reflect the Lord's shining upon them (Ps. 31:16 note). Radiance reflects the joy of God's revealed presence, while the sense of God's withdrawal from us brings the darkness of shame.

■ **34:6 This poor man.** The psalmist, who had no power to save himself.

■ **34:7 The angel of the LORD.** One of God's heavenly troops. See text note; "Angels" at Zech. 1:9.

those who fear Him. Those who are in a right relationship with Him. Gehazi learned the truth of this verse when Elisha prayed for his eyes to be opened and showed him the army of the Lord (2 Kin. 6:8–23).

■ **34:8 taste.** The psalmist describes his personal experience of God's goodness. After tasting God's goodness in Christ, Peter alludes to this passage (1 Pet. 2:3).

■ **34:10 The young lions.** The strong and ruthless do not always get what they want, but God's people lack nothing that is good for them.

■ **34:11 children.** A common and poetic form of address to all ages.

■ **34:20 Not one of them is broken.** John 19:36 applies this verse to Christ, the only perfect righteous Man.

PSALM 35

The LORD the Avenger of His People

A Psalm of David.

Plead[1] *my cause,* O LORD, with those who strive with me;
Fight against those who fight against me.
2 Take hold of shield and [2]buckler,
And stand up for my help.
3 Also draw out the spear,
And stop those who pursue me.
Say to my soul,
"I *am* your salvation."

4 [a]Let those be put to shame and brought to dishonor
Who seek after my life;
Let those be [b]turned back and brought to confusion
Who plot my hurt.
5 [c]Let them be like chaff before the wind,
And let the [3]angel of the LORD chase *them.*
6 Let their way be [d]dark and slippery,
And let the angel of the LORD pursue them.
7 For without cause they have [e]hidden their net for me *in* a pit,
Which they have dug without cause for my life.
8 [4]Let [f]destruction come upon him unexpectedly,
And let his net that he has hidden catch himself;
Into that very destruction let him fall.

9 And my soul shall be joyful in the LORD;
It shall rejoice in His salvation.
10 [g]All my bones shall say,
"LORD, [h]who *is* like You,
Delivering the poor from him who is too strong for him,
Yes, the poor and the needy from him who plunders him?"

11 Fierce witnesses rise up;
They ask me *things* that I do not know.
12 [i]They reward me evil for good,
To the sorrow of my soul.
13 But as for me, [j]when they were sick,
My clothing *was* sackcloth;
I humbled myself with fasting;
And my prayer would return to my own [5]heart.

PSALM 35

1 [1]*Contend for me*

2 [2]A small shield

4 [a]Ps. 40:14, 15; 70:2, 3 [b]Ps. 129:5

5 [c]Job 21:18; Ps. 83:13; Is. 29:5 [3]Or *Angel*

6 [d]Ps. 73:18; Jer. 23:12

7 [e]Ps. 9:15

8 [f][Ps. 55:23]; Is. 47:11; [1 Thess. 5:3] [4]Lit. *Let destruction he does not know come upon him,*

10 [g]Ps. 51:8 [h][Ex. 15:11]; Ps. 71:19; 86:8; [Mic. 7:18]

12 [i]Ps. 38:20; 109:5; Jer. 18:20; John 10:32

13 [j]Job 30:25 [5]Lit. *bosom*

■ **Ps. 35** The psalm is a lament by one whose life is threatened. The psalm uses the language of warfare (vv. 1–3) as well as legal language (vv. 11, 23, 24). Twice the psalm comes to a climax with the figure of the offering of a vow in praise (vv. 18, 28).

■ **35:1 Plead.** The word is a legal term that means "bring a case against someone." Such language runs through the psalm (vv. 11–16, 23, 24), as David commits his case to God.

Fight. The psalmist calls upon the Lord to wage war on his behalf.

■ **35:2 stand up.** A request that occurs in many of the psalms in the setting of warfare (cf. 3:7; 7:6; 12:5, etc.).

■ **35:3 your salvation.** In the particular context, this phrase indicates victory in battle.

■ **35:5 like chaff.** Easily scattered and unable to stand. See Ps. 1:4.

■ **35:7 without cause.** The Lord's righteous servant has done no evil to his enemies.

■ **35:8 destruction come upon him.** The enemies' evil intentions turn back on themselves. Their evil becomes their own judgment, a frequent theme in the prophets. If they dig a pit for someone they will fall into it themselves. See Ps. 7:14–16; 34:21.

■ **35:10 LORD, who is like You.** Compare Ex. 15:11, in another divine warrior psalm. Vv. 9, 10 anticipate the sure victory of God.

■ **35:11 Fierce witnesses.** The law condemns circulating false reports (Ex. 23:1). "Fierce" indicates the cruelty of such witnesses who want to harm the defendant.

■ **35:12 evil for good.** The height of injustice; cf. Gen. 44:4; 1 Sam. 25:21; Ps. 38:20; 109:5; Prov. 17:13.

■ **35:13, 14** The psalmist did no evil to those who now attack him; he actively and sacrificially pursued their well-being.

14 [6]*in mourning*
15 [7]*limping, stumbling*
17 [k]Ps. 13:1; [Hab. 1:13]
18 [8]*a mighty*
19 [l]Ps. 69:4; 109:3; Lam. 3:52; [John 15:25]
26 [m]Ps. 109:29
27 [n]Rom. 12:15

PSALM 36

1 [a]Rom. 3:18

14 I paced about as though *he were* my friend *or* brother;
I bowed down [6]heavily, as one who mourns *for his* mother.

15 But in my [7]adversity they rejoiced
And gathered together;
Attackers gathered against me,
And I did not know *it;*
They tore *at me* and did not cease;
16 With ungodly mockers at feasts
They gnashed at me with their teeth.

17 Lord, how long will You [k]look on?
Rescue me from their destructions,
My precious *life* from the lions.
18 I will give You thanks in the great assembly;
I will praise You among [8]many people.

19 [l]Let them not rejoice over me who are wrongfully my enemies;
Nor let them wink with the eye who hate me without a cause.
20 For they do not speak peace,
But they devise deceitful matters
Against *the* quiet ones in the land.
21 They also opened their mouth wide against me,
And said, "Aha, aha!
Our eyes have seen *it.*"

22 *This* You have seen, O LORD;
Do not keep silence.
O Lord, do not be far from me.
23 Stir up Yourself, and awake to my vindication,
To my cause, my God and my Lord.
24 Vindicate me, O LORD my God, according to Your righteousness;
And let them not rejoice over me.
25 Let them not say in their hearts, "Ah, so we would have it!"
Let them not say, "We have swallowed him up."

26 Let them be ashamed and brought to mutual confusion
Who rejoice at my hurt;
Let them be [m]clothed with shame and dishonor
Who exalt themselves against me.

27 [n]Let them shout for joy and be glad,
Who favor my righteous cause;
And let them say continually,
"Let the LORD be magnified,
Who has pleasure in the prosperity of His servant."
28 And my tongue shall speak of Your righteousness
And of Your praise all the day long.

PSALM 36

Man's Wickedness and God's Perfections

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David the servant of the LORD.

An oracle within my heart concerning the transgression of the wicked:
[a]*There is* no fear of God before his eyes.

■ **35:19 wink with the eye.** Taunting the psalmist.

■ **35:20 do not speak peace.** A technical term in ancient treaties. They are breaking their covenant agreement.

■ **35:28 my tongue shall speak.** The deliverance has not yet come, but the psalmist is singing with praises.

■ **36:1 oracle.** Usually this word is found in the formula "oracle of the LORD," identifying what follows as a new revelation from God.

2 For he flatters himself in his own eyes,
When he finds out his iniquity *and* when he hates.
3 The words of his mouth *are* wickedness and deceit;
[b]He has ceased to be wise *and* to do good.
4 [c]He devises wickedness on his bed;
He sets himself [d]in a way *that is* not good;
He does not [f]abhor [e]evil.

5 Your mercy, O LORD, *is* in the heavens;
Your faithfulness *reaches* to the clouds.
6 Your righteousness *is* like the [2]great mountains;
[f]Your judgments *are* a great deep;
O LORD, You preserve man and beast.

7 How precious *is* Your lovingkindness, O God!
Therefore the children of men [g]put their trust under the shadow of Your wings.
8 [h]They are abundantly satisfied with the fullness of Your house,
And You give them drink from [i]the river of Your pleasures.
9 [j]For with You *is* the fountain of life;
[k]In Your light we see light.

10 Oh, continue Your lovingkindness to those who know You,
And Your righteousness to the upright in heart.
11 Let not the foot of pride come against me,
And let not the hand of the wicked drive me away.
12 There the workers of iniquity have fallen;
They have been cast down and are not able to rise.

PSALM 37

The Heritage of the Righteous and the Calamity of the Wicked

A Psalm of David.

D[a] not fret because of evildoers,
Nor be envious of the workers of iniquity.
2 For they shall soon be cut down [b]like the grass,
And wither as the green herb.

3 Trust in the LORD, and do good;
Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness.
4 [c]Delight yourself also in the LORD,
And He shall give you the desires of your [d]heart.

5 [e]Commit[1] your way to the LORD,
Trust also in Him,

3 [b]Ps. 94:8; Jer. 4:22

4 [c]Prov. 4:16; [Mic. 2:1] [d]Is. 65:2 [e][Ps. 52:3; Rom. 12:9] [f]*reject, loathe*

6 [f]Job 11:8; Ps. 77:19; [Rom. 11:33] [2]Lit. *mountains of God*

7 [g]Ruth 2:12; Ps. 17:8; 57:1; 91:4

8 [h]Ps. 63:5; 65:4; Is. 25:6; Jer. 31:12–14 [i]Ps. 46:4; Rev. 22:1

9 [j][Jer. 2:13; John 4:10, 14] [k][1 Pet. 2:9]

PSALM 37

1 [a]Ps. 73:3; [Prov. 23:17; 24:19]

2 [b]Job 14:2; Ps. 90:5, 6; 92:7; James 1:11

4 [c]Job 22:26; Ps. 94:19; Is. 58:14 [d]Ps. 21:2; 145:19; [Matt. 7:7, 8]

5 [e][Ps. 55:22; Prov. 16:3; 1 Pet. 5:7] [1]Lit. *Roll off onto*

no fear of God. The psalmist identifies the root of all evil, just as Prov. 1:7 cites the fear of God as the beginning of all knowledge. The fear of God that springs from faith is a special response to revelation, the reverential awe that recognizes total dependence upon the Lord. In the absence of reverence a different type of fear of the Lord will be experienced, namely dread.

■ **36:3 wickedness . . . wise.** Wisdom has an ethical side: to be wise is to do good.

■ **36:4 on his bed.** Wickedness is a full-time occupation for the wicked. Even at night, when they should be praying before sleep, wicked people plot and scheme.

■ **36:5 mercy.** A special word in Hebrew, signifying the loving devotion in which God binds Himself to His people. It indicates His lovingkindness toward those with whom He is in covenant relationship. This word recurs throughout Psalms, showing that it is a book of covenantal prayers.

■ **36:6 great mountains.** See notes on Ps. 29:6; 30:7; 46:2.

■ **36:7 wings.** This seems to refer to the wings of the cherubim of God's throne, as represented by the beings depicted as covering the ark of the covenant with their wings. Otherwise God is perceived as the protector of His people, like a mother bird who protects her young brood.

■ **36:8 abundantly satisfied.** The psalmist pictures God as a rich and generous host.

■ **36:9 fountain of life.** God is the source of all life. The doctrine of eternal life is more fully revealed in the New Testament (e.g., Matt. 22:31, 32; Luke 23:42, 43; John 3:16; Rev. 21:3–7; 22:3–5). See "Resurrection and Glorification" at 1 Cor. 15:21.

■ **Ps. 37** An acrostic (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes), and like most acrostics, a wisdom meditation.

■ **37:2 grass.** The metaphor is apt. In Israel the grass comes up and flourishes in the winter, but in the summer is withered by the sun.

And He shall bring *it* to pass.
6 [f]He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light,
And your justice as the noonday.

7 Rest in the LORD, [g]and wait patiently for Him;
Do not fret because of him who [h]prospers in his way,
Because of the man who brings wicked schemes to pass.
8 [i]Cease from anger, and forsake wrath;
[j]Do not fret—*it* only *causes* harm.

9 For evildoers shall be [2]cut off;
But those who wait on the LORD,
They shall [k]inherit the earth.
10 For [l]yet a little while and the wicked *shall be* no *more;*
Indeed, [m]you will look carefully for his place,
But it *shall be* no *more.*
11 [n]But the meek shall inherit the earth,
And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

12 The wicked plots against the just,
[o]And gnashes at him with his teeth.
13 [p]The Lord laughs at him,
For He sees that [q]his day is coming.
14 The wicked have drawn the sword
And have bent their bow,
To cast down the poor and needy,
To slay those who are of upright conduct.
15 Their sword shall enter their own heart,
And their bows shall be broken.

16 [r]A little that a righteous man has
Is better than the riches of many wicked.
17 For the arms of the wicked shall be broken,
But the LORD upholds the righteous.

18 The LORD knows the days of the upright,
And their inheritance shall be forever.
19 They shall not be ashamed in the evil time,
And in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.
20 But the wicked shall perish;
And the enemies of the LORD,
Like the splendor of the meadows, shall vanish.
Into smoke they shall vanish away.

21 The wicked borrows and does not repay,
But [s]the righteous shows mercy and gives.
22 [t]For *those* blessed by Him shall inherit the earth,
But *those* cursed by Him shall be [3]cut off.

23 [u]The steps of a *good* man are [4]ordered by the LORD,
And He delights in his way.

6 [f]Job 11:17; [Is. 58:8, 10]
7 [g]Ps. 40:1; 62:5; [Lam. 3:26] [h][Ps. 73:3–12]
8 [i][Eph. 4:26] [j]Ps. 73:3
9 [k]Ps. 25:13; Prov. 2:21; [Is. 57:13; 60:21; Matt. 5:5] [2]*destroyed*
10 [l][Heb. 10:37] [m]Job 7:10; Ps. 37:35, 36
11 [n][Matt. 5:5]
12 [o]Ps. 35:16
13 [p]Ps. 2:4; 59:8 [q]1 Sam. 26:10; Job 18:20
16 [r]Prov. 15:16; 16:8; [1 Tim. 6:6]
21 [s]Ps. 112:5, 9
22 [t][Prov. 3:33] [3]*destroyed*
23 [u][1 Sam. 2:9]; Ps. 40:2; 66:9; 119:5 [4]*established*

■ **37:8 anger.** Probably anger against God.

causes harm. Anger is a dangerous force (James 1:20).

■ **37:9 cut off.** A technical term meaning to be exiled, to be excommunicated from society, or even to be executed (Gen. 17:14; Lev. 17:14).

■ **37:11 the meek shall inherit the earth.** Land and its cultivation is the basis of physical life. This verse is used in Matt. 5:5.

■ **37:13 The Lord laughs at him.** See Ps. 2:4. Vivid human language describes the folly of rebellion against the Almighty. God is not threatened, nor is His judgment avoided.

■ **37:15 Their sword shall enter their own heart.** The consequences of sin are frequently the result of its own outworking. See 7:14–16; 34:21; 35:8.

■ **37:21 borrows and does not repay.** The wicked break the eighth commandment, against stealing, by not repaying their debts. The righteous pay their debts and give money generously. Those who give mercifully in God's cause prosper at last.

24 [v]Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down;
For the LORD upholds *him with* His hand.

25 I have been young, and *now* am old;
Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken,
Nor his descendants begging bread.
26 [w]*He is* [5]ever merciful, and lends;
And his descendants *are* blessed.

27 Depart from evil, and do good;
And dwell forevermore.
28 For the LORD loves justice,
And does not forsake His saints;
They are preserved forever,
But the descendants of the wicked shall be cut off.
29 [x]The righteous shall inherit the land,
And dwell in it forever.

30 [y]The mouth of the righteous speaks wisdom,
And his tongue talks of justice.
31 The law of his God *is* in his heart;
None of his steps shall [6]slide.

32 The wicked [z]watches the righteous,
And seeks to slay him.
33 The LORD [a]will not leave him in his hand,
Nor condemn him when he is judged.

34 [b]Wait on the LORD,
And keep His way,
And He shall exalt you to inherit the land;
When the wicked are cut off, you shall see *it.*
35 I have seen the wicked in great power,
And spreading himself like a native green tree.
36 Yet [7]he passed away, and behold, he *was* no *more;*
Indeed I sought him, but he could not be found.

37 Mark the blameless *man,* and observe the upright;
For the future of *that* man *is* peace.
38 [c]But the transgressors shall be destroyed together;
The future of the wicked shall be cut off.

39 But the salvation of the righteous *is* from the LORD;
He is their strength [d]in the time of trouble.
40 And [e]the LORD shall help them and deliver them;
He shall deliver them from the wicked,
And save them,
[f]Because they trust in Him.

24 [v]Prov. 24:16
26 [w][Deut. 15:8]; Ps. 37:21 [5]Lit. *all the day*
29 [x]Ps. 37:9; Prov. 2:21
30 [y][Matt. 12:35]
31 [6]*slip*
32 [z]Ps. 10:8; 17:11
33 [a]Ps. 31:8; [2 Pet. 2:9]
34 [b]Ps. 27:14; 37:9
36 [7]So with MT, LXX, Tg.; Syr., Vg. *I passed by*
38 [c][Ps. 1:4–6; 37:20, 28]
39 [d]Ps. 9:9; 37:19
40 [e]Ps. 22:4; Is. 31:5; Dan. 3:17; 6:23 [f]1 Chr. 5:20; Ps. 34:22

■ **37:24 fall.** The wise man is not perfect—he may fall in the way. But God guides and protects him even when he sins and encounters obstacles.

■ **37:25, 26** Confirming the truth of v. 24, the psalmist draws on the experience of his own long life to assure the upright that God will abandon neither them nor their children. The righteous are known by their deeds of mercy and generosity.

■ **37:30, 31** Governed inwardly by God's law, both the speech and actions of the righteous person are wise and just. In Hebrew, "heart" is the normal way of referring to the inner principle that governs outward performance (Prov. 4:23).

■ **37:33 judged.** The Lord will not allow the accusations of the wicked to destroy those He deems righteous. At His own bar of justice God will pronounce them innocent.

■ **37:35 green tree.** It commonly happens that the wicked prosper in the business of this world (Luke 16:8). Far from being envied they should be mourned, since their temporary success is but a prelude to eternal loss.

■ **37:37 future.** Or "posterity." Either the individual's later life or his children are meant here, but in the ultimate sense this promise speaks of the eternal peace enjoyed in God's presence.

PSALM 38

title [a]Ps. 70:title
1 [b]Ps. 6:1
6 [1]Lit. *bent down*
11 [c]Ps. 31:11; 88:18
15 [d][Ps. 39:7] [2]*I wait for You, O* LORD [3]*answer*

PSALM 38

Prayer in Time of Chastening

A Psalm of David. [a]To bring to remembrance.

O LORD, do not [b]rebuke me in Your wrath,
Nor chasten me in Your hot displeasure!
2 For Your arrows pierce me deeply,
And Your hand presses me down.

3 *There is* no soundness in my flesh
Because of Your anger,
Nor *any* health in my bones
Because of my sin.
4 For my iniquities have gone over my head;
Like a heavy burden they are too heavy for me.
5 My wounds are foul *and* festering
Because of my foolishness.

6 I am [1]troubled, I am bowed down greatly;
I go mourning all the day long.
7 For my loins are full of inflammation,
And *there is* no soundness in my flesh.
8 I am feeble and severely broken;
I groan because of the turmoil of my heart.

9 Lord, all my desire *is* before You;
And my sighing is not hidden from You.
10 My heart pants, my strength fails me;
As for the light of my eyes, it also has gone from me.

11 My loved ones and my friends [c]stand aloof from my plague,
And my relatives stand afar off.
12 Those also who seek my life lay snares *for me;*
Those who seek my hurt speak of destruction,
And plan deception all the day long.

13 But I, like a deaf *man,* do not hear;
And *I am* like a mute *who* does not open his mouth.
14 Thus I am like a man who does not hear,
And in whose mouth *is* no response.

15 For [2]in You, O LORD, [d]I hope;
You will [3]hear, O Lord my God.

■ **Ps. 38** In this penitential psalm the writer attributes his illness to sin and guilt. He calls on the Lord for help in the midst of intense pain.

■ **38:2 Your arrows.** God usually fights for the psalmist and against the enemy (Ps. 18:14), but here is a quite different case. The psalmist confesses the sin that has brought God's anger upon him.

■ **38:3 Because of Your anger . . . Because of my sin.** These two phrases are parallel and show a dual (divine and human) reason for the psalmist's illness.

Nor any health. The psalmist's sin had serious effects on his health. In some cases sin and guilt are the cause of illness, but sickness is not always the result of sins committed by the person who suffers (Book of Job; John 9:1–12).

■ **38:5 wounds.** Implies some kind of physical abuse by others. The symptoms cannot all be related to a specific disease or condition. It has been suggested that the symptoms are actually a catalog of distresses experienced over a period of time.

■ **38:11 my friends . . . stand afar off.** Friends are of no help to the psalmist because they are afraid or repulsed by the intensity of his suffering. Here, as elsewhere in the psalm, we are reminded of Job's experience (v. 3).

■ **38:12 lay snares.** While friends stay away, his enemies draw near to hurry his downfall.

■ **38:13 deaf man . . . mute.** The psalmist is totally unable to do anything to help himself.

■ **38:15 in You . . . I hope.** This verse strikes the most positive note of confidence in the psalm.

16 For I said, *"Hear me,* lest they rejoice over me,
Lest, when my foot slips, they exalt *themselves* against me."

17 [e]For I *am* ready to fall,
And my sorrow *is* continually before me.
18 For I will [f]declare my iniquity;
I will be [g]in [4]anguish over my sin.
19 But my enemies *are* vigorous, *and* they are strong;
And those who hate me wrongfully have multiplied.
20 Those also [h]who render evil for good,
They are my adversaries, because I follow *what is* good.

21 Do not forsake me, O LORD;
O my God, [i]be not far from me!
22 Make haste to help me,
O Lord, my salvation!

PSALM 39

Prayer for Wisdom and Forgiveness

To the Chief Musician. To Jeduthun. A Psalm of David.

I said, "I will guard my ways,
Lest I sin with my [a]tongue;
I will restrain my mouth with a muzzle,
While the wicked are before me."
2 [b]I was mute with silence,
I held my peace *even* from good;
And my sorrow was stirred up.
3 My heart was hot within me;
While I was [1]musing, the fire burned.
Then I spoke with my tongue:

4 "LORD, [c]make me to know my end,
And what *is* the measure of my days,
That I may know how frail I *am.*
5 Indeed, You have made my days *as* handbreadths,
And my age *is* as nothing before You;
Certainly every man at his best state *is* but [d]vapor. Selah
6 Surely every man walks about like a shadow;
Surely they [2]busy themselves in vain;
He heaps up *riches,*
And does not know who will gather them.

7 "And now, Lord, what do I wait for?
My [e]hope *is* in You.
8 Deliver me from all my transgressions;
Do not make me [f]the reproach of the foolish.
9 [g]I was mute, I did not open my mouth,
Because it was [h]You who did *it.*

17 [e]Ps. 51:3
18 [f]Ps. 32:5 [g][2 Cor. 7:9, 10] [4]*anxiety*
20 [h]Ps. 35:12
21 [i]Ps. 22:19; 35:22

PSALM 39

1 [a]Job 2:10; Ps. 34:13; [James 3:5–12]
2 [b]Ps. 38:13
3 [1]*meditating*
4 [c]Ps. 90:12; 119:84
5 [d]Ps. 62:9; [Eccl. 6:12]
6 [2]*make an uproar for nothing*
7 [e]Ps. 38:15
8 [f]Ps. 44:13; 79:4; 119:22
9 [g]Ps. 39:2 [h]2 Sam. 16:10; Job 2:10

■ **38:16 lest they rejoice over me.** He mentions to God the shame he will suffer when the enemy rejoices at the downfall of one of God's children.

■ **Ps. 39** This lament is more personal and autobiographical than most. The author seems to have been an older, reflective person, like the writer of Ecclesiastes. His anger (vv. 2, 3) is not unlike Job's.

■ **39:1 Lest I sin with my tongue.** The psalmist may have been questioning the prosperity of the wicked, and feared that if he spoke in his anger and frustration he might say something offensive to God. **muzzle.** He desires to speak out and has to force himself to be quiet.

■ **39:2 my sorrow.** The psalmist repressed his feelings but could not do away with them. Finally, he spoke.

■ **39:4 measure of my days.** Their own short, hard lives tempted the faithful as they compared them to the prosperity of the wicked and questioned God's wisdom and justice. See note on Ps. 88:5.

■ **39:6 in vain.** The same Hebrew word is translated "vapor" in v. 5. The sentiment is similar to that found in the Book of Ecclesiastes (5:8–20).

10 [i]Remove Your plague from me;
I am consumed by the blow of Your hand.
11 When with rebukes You correct man for iniquity,
You make his beauty [j]melt away like a moth;
Surely every man *is* vapor. Selah

12 "Hear my prayer, O LORD,
And give ear to my cry;
Do not be silent at my tears;
For I *am* a stranger with You,
A sojourner, [k]as all my fathers *were*.
13 [l]Remove Your gaze from me, that I may regain strength,
Before I go away and [m]am no more."

PSALM 40

Faith Persevering in Trial

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

I [a]waited patiently for the LORD;
And He inclined to me,
And heard my cry.
2 He also brought me up out of a horrible pit,
Out of [b]the miry clay,
And [c]set my feet upon a rock,
And established my steps.
3 [d]He has put a new song in my mouth—
Praise to our God;
Many will see *it* and fear,
And will trust in the LORD.

4 [e]Blessed *is* that man who makes the LORD his trust,
And does not respect the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies.
5 [f]Many, O LORD my God, *are* Your wonderful works
Which You have done;
[g]And Your thoughts toward us
Cannot be recounted to You in order;
If I would declare and speak *of them*,
They are more than can be numbered.

6 [h]Sacrifice and offering You did not desire;
My ears You have opened.
Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require.
7 Then I said, "Behold, I come;

10 [i]Job 9:34; 13:21
11 [j]Job 13:28; [Ps. 90:7]; Is. 50:9
12 [k]Gen. 47:9; Lev. 25:23; 1 Chr. 29:15; Ps. 119:19; Heb. 11:13; 1 Pet. 2:11
13 [l]Job 7:19; 10:20, 21; 14:6; Ps. 102:24 [m][Job 14:10]

PSALM 40

1 [a]Ps. 25:5; 27:14; 37:7
2 [b]Ps. 69:2, 14; Jer. 38:6 [c]Ps. 27:5
3 [d]Ps. 32:7; 33:3
4 [e]Ps. 34:8; 84:12
5 [f]Job 9:10 [g]Ps. 139:17; [Is. 55:8]
6 [h][1 Sam. 15:22]; Ps. 51:16; Is. 1:11; [Jer. 6:20; 7:22, 23]; Amos 5:22; [Mic. 6:6–8; Heb. 10:5–9]

■ **39:10 Your plague.** This could be sickness, but it could include depression and other setbacks in life.

■ **39:12** The psalmist has passed from anger to weeping. The strong emotion of the psalm makes its final prayer especially vivid.

■ **Ps. 40** This psalm has two sections joined together with vv. 9–10 as an appropriate transition. God has answered an earlier prayer of the psalmist, but he still has problems to bring before God. He looks to God in a time of new crisis.

■ **40:2 horrible pit . . . rock.** A miry pit is contrasted with the sure footing of a rock. Sheol, the grave, is often pictured as a pit (6:5 and notes; 30:3). Perhaps the psalmist was ill and threatened with death; or, since the psalm is probably royal, he may have felt the threat of death in battle.

■ **40:3 new song.** See Ps. 33:3 note.

■ **40:4 Blessed.** See Ps. 1:1 note.

proud. A rare word used of Egypt in Ps. 87:4 and there simply translated "Rahab." Here it probably refers to the false idols of the surrounding nations.

■ **40:6 You did not desire.** The psalmist knows that the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament were mandated by God. But if they were offered without genuine repentance and faith, God did not want them.

My ears You have opened. This difficult phrase may be idiomatic. The Hebrew more literally translated would be "dug" rather than "opened." This would mean that God gave the psalmist ears to hear and obey. The phrase is important because it is cited in Heb. 10:5–7. Hebrews uses the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) translation, "a body You have prepared for Me." The meaning is the same; the "ears" are to the "body" as the part to the whole. The obedience of Jesus in the body is to offer Himself once and for all, replacing the animal sacrifices of the Old Testament.

■ **40:7 In the scroll of the book it is written of me.** The reference may refer to the commandment recorded for kings in Deut. 17.

In the scroll of the book *it is* written of me.
8 [i]I delight to do Your will, O my God,
And Your law *is* [j]within my heart."

9 [k]I have proclaimed the good news of righteousness
In the great assembly;
Indeed, [l]I do not restrain my lips,
O LORD, You Yourself know.
10 [m]I have not hidden Your righteousness within my heart;
I have declared Your faithfulness and Your salvation;
I have not concealed Your lovingkindness and Your truth
From the great assembly.

11 Do not withhold Your tender mercies from me, O LORD;
[n]Let Your lovingkindness and Your truth continually preserve me.
12 For innumerable evils have surrounded me;
[o]My iniquities have overtaken me, so that I am not able to look up;
They are more than the hairs of my head;
Therefore my heart fails me.

13 [p]Be pleased, O LORD, to deliver me;
O LORD, make haste to help me!
14 [q]Let them be ashamed and brought to mutual confusion
Who seek to destroy my [r]life;
Let them be driven backward and brought to dishonor
Who wish me evil.
15 Let them be [r]confounded because of their shame,
Who say to me, "Aha, aha!"

16 [s]Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You;
Let such as love Your salvation [t]say continually,
"The LORD be magnified!"
17 [u]But I *am* poor and needy;
[v]*Yet* the LORD thinks upon me.
You *are* my help and my deliverer;
Do not delay, O my God.

8 [i][Matt. 26:39; John 4:34; 6:38]; Heb. 10:7 [j][Ps. 37:31; Jer. 31:33; 2 Cor. 3:3]
9 [k]Ps. 22:22, 25 [l]Ps. 119:13
10 [m]Acts 20:20, 27
11 [n]Ps. 61:7; Prov. 20:28
12 [o]Ps. 38:4; 65:3
13 [p]Ps. 70:1
14 [q]Ps. 35:4, 26; 70:2; 71:13 [r]Lit. *soul*
15 [r]Ps. 73:19
16 [s]Ps. 70:4 [t]Ps. 35:27
17 [u]Ps. 70:5; 86:1; 109:22 [v]Ps. 40:5; 1 Pet. 5:7

PSALM 41

The Blessing and Suffering of the Godly

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

Blessed *is* he who considers the [l]poor;
The LORD will deliver him in time of trouble.
2 The LORD will preserve him and keep him alive,
And he will be blessed on the earth;
[a]You will not deliver him to the will of his enemies.

PSALM 41

1 [l]*helpless* or *powerless*
2 [a]Ps. 27:12

■ **40:8 I delight to do Your will.** This verse comes to the heart of the matter. The psalmist offers what God requires—heartfelt obedience.

■ **40:9 great assembly.** Either the assembled worshipers or the whole nation.

■ **40:12 evils . . . iniquities.** The psalmist identifies the source of his troubles as both external (enemies seeking to thwart him) and internal (his own sin).

■ **40:13–17** See notes on Ps. 70.

■ **Ps. 41** The psalm begins with the atmosphere of the wisdom tradition, shifting in v. 4 to lament and prayer.

■ **41:1 Blessed.** See note on Ps. 1:1.

considers the poor. Understands or empathizes with those who are helpless and unable to take care of themselves. The psalmist is in this condition due to his debilitating sickness. Accordingly, the first three verses here may have been spoken to him by another person, perhaps a priest.

The LORD will deliver him. Those strong in self-confidence do not turn to the Lord, because they think they have no need for Him. Those not so deluded, realizing their weakness, have nowhere else to turn.

■ **41:2 on the earth.** The Lord preserves the life of His people, but He will also prosper them in the land. This applies the promise of the land found in the Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 12:1–3).

3 [2]*restore*
4 [b]Ps. 6:2; 103:3; 147:3
6 [3]*empty words*
7 [4]*plot*
8 [5]Lit. *A thing of Belial*
9 [c]2 Sam. 15:12; Job 19:13, 19 [d]Ps. 55:12–14, 20; Jer. 20:10; Obad. 7; [Mic. 7:5]; Matt. 26:14–16, 21–25, 47–50; John 13:18, 21–30; Acts 1:16, 17 [6]Acted as a traitor
12 [e][Job 36:7; Ps. 21:6; 34:15]
13 [f]Ps. 72:18, 19; 89:52; 106:48; 150:6

3 The LORD will strengthen him on his bed of illness;
You will [2]sustain him on his sickbed.

4 I said, "LORD, be merciful to me;
[b]Heal my soul, for I have sinned against You."
5 My enemies speak evil of me:
"When will he die, and his name perish?"
6 And if he comes to see *me,* he speaks [3]lies;
His heart gathers iniquity to itself;
When he goes out, he tells *it.*

7 All who hate me whisper together against me;
Against me they [4]devise my hurt.
8 "An[5] evil disease," *they say,* "clings to him.
And *now* that he lies down, he will rise up no more."
9 [c]Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted,
[d]Who ate my bread,
Has [6]lifted up *his* heel against me.

10 But You, O LORD, be merciful to me, and raise me up,
That I may repay them.
11 By this I know that You are well pleased with me,
Because my enemy does not triumph over me.
12 As for me, You uphold me in my integrity,
And [e]set me before Your face forever.

13 [f]Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel
From everlasting to everlasting!
Amen and Amen.

Book Two: Psalms 42—72

PSALM 42

Yearning for God in the Midst of Distresses

PSALM 42

title [1]Heb. *Maschil*
1 [2]Lit. *longs for*
2 [a]Ps. 63:1; 84:2; 143:6; [Jer. 10:10] [b]Rom. 9:26; 1 Thess. 1:9 [3]So with MT, Vg.; some Heb. mss., LXX, Syr., Tg. *I see the face of God*
3 [c]Ps. 80:5; 102:9 [d]Ps. 79:10; 115:2; Joel 2:17; Mic. 7:10

To the Chief Musician. A [1]Contemplation of the sons of Korah.

As the deer [2]pants for the water brooks,
So pants my soul for You, O God.
2 [a]My soul thirsts for God, for the [b]living God.
When shall I come and [3]appear before God?
3 [c]My tears have been my food day and night,
While they continually say to me,
[d]"Where *is* your God?"

■ **41:6 he speaks lies.** The psalmist's enemies visited him while he was ill, speaking words of comfort, but afterward spreading malicious lies about him.

■ **41:9 lifted up his heel.** For this idiom see Gen. 25:19–26 and Jer. 9:4, where the noun "heel" is connected with the verb "to deceive." The point is that the psalmist's close friend has betrayed him in his moment of need. He is abandoned by everyone. Jesus applied this verse specifically to Judas Iscariot (John 13:18).

■ **41:13 Blessed be.** After a note of confidence (vv. 11, 12), a doxology concludes the final psalm of Book I of the Psalter (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes).

■ **Ps. 42** This psalm and Ps. 43 are actually two halves of a single psalm. A number of early Hebrew manuscripts put them together, and a common refrain unites them (42:5, 11; 43:5). Ps. 43 is without a title in a part of the Psalter where almost every psalm is titled. The two psalms are a single lament in three parts, each concluding with the refrain (42:1–5, 6–11, Ps. 43). For some reason the psalmist is forced to be separated from Jerusalem, the place God has chosen to make His throne. His distance from the Lord and the presence of his enemies causes him to cry out to the Lord for help.

■ **42:1 As the deer pants for the water brooks.** A powerful description of deep desire for God's presence.

■ **42:2 appear before God.** Due to Jesus' redemptive work on the cross, the Christian has ready access to the Lord in prayer. The psalmist suffers because he is separated from the temple, the place God specifically set apart for worship during the period between David and Jesus. The psalmist desires to return to the temple and the assurance of God's life-giving presence.

4 When I remember these *things,*
[e]I pour out my soul within me.
For I used to go with the multitude;
[f]I went with them to the house of God,
With the voice of joy and praise,
With a multitude that kept a pilgrim feast.

5 [g]Why are you [4]cast down, O my soul?
And *why* are you disquieted within me?
[h]Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him
[5]*For* the help of His countenance.

6 [6]O my God, my soul is cast down within me;
Therefore I will remember You from the land of the Jordan,
And from the heights of Hermon,
From [7]the Hill Mizar.
7 Deep calls unto deep at the noise of Your waterfalls;
[i]All Your waves and billows have gone over me.
8 The LORD will [j]command His lovingkindness in the daytime,
And [k]in the night His song *shall be* with me—
A prayer to the God of my life.

9 I will say to God my Rock,
[l]"Why have You forgotten me?
Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?"
10 *As* with a [8]breaking of my bones,
My enemies [9]reproach me,
[m]While they say to me all day long,
"Where *is* your God?"

11 [n]Why are you cast down, O my soul?
And why are you disquieted within me?
Hope in God;
For I shall yet praise Him,
The [1]help of my countenance and my God.

PSALM 43

Prayer to God in Time of Trouble

Vindicate [a]me, O God,
And [b]plead my cause against an ungodly nation;
Oh, deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man!
2 For You *are* the God of my strength;
Why do You cast me off?
[c]Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?

4 [e]1 Sam. 1:15; Job 30:16 [f]Ps. 55:14; 122:1; Is. 30:29

5 [g]Ps. 42:11; 43:5 [h]Ps. 71:14; Lam. 3:24 [4]Lit. *bowed down* [5]So with MT, Tg.; a few Heb. mss., LXX, Syr., Vg. *The help of my countenance, my God*

6 [6]So with MT, Tg.; a few Heb. mss., LXX, Syr., Vg. put *my God* at the end of v. 5 [7]Or *Mount*

7 [i]Ps. 69:1, 2; 88:7; Jon. 2:3

8 [j]Deut. 28:8 [k]Job 35:10; Ps. 149:5

9 [l]Ps. 38:6

10 [m]Ps. 42:3; Joel 2:17; Mic. 7:10 [8]Lit. *shattering* [9]*revile*

11 [n]Ps. 43:5 [1]Lit. *salvation*

PSALM 43

1 [a][Ps. 26:1; 35:24] [b]1 Sam. 24:15; Ps. 35:1

2 [c]Ps. 42:9

■ **42:4 When I remember these things.** During this time of depression and separation from God, the psalmist recalls the past when his relationship with God was good and he rejoiced in participating in the worship processions in Jerusalem. The Songs of Ascents (Ps. 120—134) were sung at these celebrations.

■ **42:5 Why are you cast down, O my soul.** This verse occurs twice more as a refrain (v. 11 and 43:5). In dialogue with himself, the psalmist takes fresh hold on God.

■ **42:6 I will remember You.** Ps. 77 is another lament where the remembrance of God's grace provides a bulwark against depression in the present.

land of the Jordan, . . . Hermon, . . . Mizar. Hermon is the mountain range at the far north of Israel's boundaries, near the source of the Jordan River. Mizar is of unknown location.

■ **42:7 have gone over me.** The overwhelming waters of chaos are a well-known image of despair and trouble in the Bible. Cf. Ps. 18:4; 32:6; 46:2, 3; 69:1, 2; 114:3.

■ **42:8 lovingkindness.** Specifically, God's lovingkindness toward those in covenant with Him, who acknowledge His rule over them, and to whom He has given promises.

■ **Ps. 43** See introduction to Ps. 42. The two psalms were originally one.

■ **43:1 Vindicate me . . . plead my cause.** These words are technical legal terms that give the psalm a judicial setting.

ungodly. Literally, those who are without covenant lovingkindness. These are nations or people who do not enjoy a covenant relationship with God, who do not honor His laws, and therefore do not share in His covenant promises.

3 [d]Oh, send out Your light and Your truth!
Let them lead me;
Let them bring me to [e]Your holy hill
And to Your [f]tabernacle.
4 Then I will go to the altar of God,
To God my exceeding joy;
And on the harp I will praise You,
O God, my God.

5 [f]Why are you cast down, O my soul?
And why are you disquieted within me?
Hope in God;
For I shall yet praise Him,
The [2]help of my countenance and my God.

PSALM 44

Redemption Remembered in Present Dishonor

To the Chief Musician. A [a]Contemplation[1] of the sons of Korah.

We have heard with our ears, O God,
[b]Our fathers have told us,
The deeds You did in their days,
In days of old:
2 [c]You drove out the [2]nations with Your hand,
But them You planted;
You afflicted the peoples, and cast them out.
3 For [d]they did not gain possession of the land by their own sword,
Nor did their own arm save them;
But it was Your right hand, Your arm, and the light of Your countenance,
[e]Because You favored them.

4 [f]You are my King, [3]O God;
[4]Command victories for Jacob.
5 Through You [g]we will push down our enemies;
Through Your name we will trample those who rise up against us.
6 For [h]I will not trust in my bow,
Nor shall my sword save me.
7 But You have saved us from our enemies,
And have put to shame those who hated us.
8 [i]In God we boast all day long,
And praise Your name forever. Selah

9 But [j]You have cast *us* off and put us to shame,
And You do not go out with our armies.
10 You make us [k]turn back from the enemy,
And those who hate us have taken [5]spoil for themselves.

3 [d][Ps. 40:11] [e]Ps. 3:4 [1]*dwelling places*
5 [f]Ps. 42:5, 11 [2]Lit. *salvation*

PSALM 44

title [a]Ps. 42:title [1]Heb. *Maschil*
1 [b][Ex. 12:26, 27; Deut. 6:20]; Judg. 6:13; Ps. 78:3
2 [c]Ex. 15:17; 2 Sam. 7:10; Jer. 24:6; Amos 9:15 [2]*Gentiles, heathen*
3 [d][Deut. 8:17, 18]; Josh. 24:12 [e][Deut. 4:37; 7:7, 8]
4 [f][Ps. 74:12] [3]So with MT, Tg.; LXX, Vg. *and my God* [4]So with MT, Tg.; LXX, Syr., Vg. *Who commands*
5 [g]Deut. 33:17; [Dan. 8:4]
6 [h][1 Sam. 17:47]; Ps. 33:16; [Hos. 1:7]
8 [i]Ps. 34:2; [Jer. 9:24]
9 [j]Ps. 60:1
10 [k]Lev. 26:17; Josh. 7:8, 12; Ps. 89:43 [5]*plunder*

■ **43:3 Your holy hill.** This is Mount Zion in Jerusalem, where the temple was located. God's firm mountain is to be contrasted with the turbulent waters of chaos (46:2, 3).

■ **43:5 Why are you cast down.** See note on 42:5.

■ **Ps. 44** In this psalm an alternation between "I" and "we" suggests that the psalmist is the king of Israel. It is not possible to identify a special occasion for the writing of the psalm, and it can be applied to many different occasions.

■ **44:1 deeds You did in their days.** Memory plays a key role in the psalms (Ps. 77). When in distress, it brings healing to remember God's gracious acts in the past. In this psalm, however, past deliverance throws a question mark over the present. Why doesn't God work now as He did for our fathers in the past?

■ **44:2 them You planted.** The reference is to the conquest and settlement of the land as recorded in the Book of Joshua.

■ **44:3 it was Your right hand.** Israel did not take possession of the land by their own might or strategy, but through God's power. God fought for them like a warrior in their midst (Josh. 6; Deut. 7).

■ **44:4 Jacob.** Another name for Israel.

■ **44:6 Nor shall my sword save me.** God's people must fight, but they do not trust in the size of their army nor in their weapons.

■ **44:9 You have cast us off and put us to shame.** God was with Israel at Jericho, but now He does not bless the army with His leadership. This resulted in their easy defeat.

11 [l]You have given us up like sheep *intended* for food,
And have [m]scattered us among the nations.
12 [n]You sell Your people for *next to* nothing,
And are not enriched by selling them.

13 [o]You make us a reproach to our neighbors,
A scorn and a derision to those all around us.
14 [p]You make us a byword among the nations,
[q]A shaking of the head among the peoples.
15 My dishonor *is* continually before me,
And the shame of my face has covered me,
16 Because of the voice of him who reproaches and reviles,
[r]Because of the enemy and the avenger.

17 [s]All this has come upon us;
But we have not forgotten You,
Nor have we dealt falsely with Your covenant.
18 Our heart has not turned back,
[t]Nor have our steps departed from Your way;
19 But You have severely broken us in [u]the place of jackals,
And covered us [v]with the shadow of death.

20 If we had forgotten the name of our God,
Or [w]stretched[6] out our hands to a foreign god,
21 [x]Would not God search this out?
For He knows the secrets of the heart.
22 [y]Yet for Your sake we are killed all day long;
We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.

23 [z]Awake! Why do You sleep, O Lord?
Arise! Do not cast *us* off forever.
24 [a]Why do You hide Your face,
And forget our affliction and our oppression?
25 For [b]our soul is bowed down to the [7]dust;
Our body clings to the ground.
26 Arise for our help,
And redeem us for Your mercies' sake.

PSALM 45

The Glories of the Messiah and His Bride

To the Chief Musician. [a]Set to [1]"The Lilies." A [2]Contemplation of the sons of Korah. A Song of Love.

My heart is overflowing with a good theme;
I recite my composition concerning the King;
My tongue *is* the pen of a [3]ready writer.

11 [l]Ps. 44:22; Rom. 8:36 [m]Lev. 26:33; Deut. 4:27; 28:64; Ps. 106:27; Ezek. 20:23

12 [n]Is. 52:3, 4; Jer. 15:13

13 [o]Ps. 79:4; 80:6; Jer. 24:9

14 [p]Deut. 28:37 [q]Job 16:4

16 [r]Ps. 8:2

17 [s]Dan. 9:13

18 [t]Job 23:11

19 [u]Is. 34:13 [v][Ps. 23:4]

20 [w][Deut. 6:14] [6]Worshiped

21 [x]Job 31:14; [Ps. 139:1, 2; Jer. 17:10]

22 [y]Rom. 8:36

23 [z]Ps. 7:6

24 [a]Job 13:24

25 [b]Ps. 119:25 [7]Ground, in humiliation

PSALM 45

title [a]Ps. 69:title [1]Heb. *Shoshannim* [2]Heb. *Maschil*

1 [3]*skillful*

■ **44:12 You sell Your people for next to nothing.** These are bold words, a striking example of the honesty of the psalmist's approach to God in prayer.

■ **44:19 shadow of death.** Normally reserved for God's enemies (Nah. 1:8).

■ **44:22 for Your sake.** The world seems utterly turned around. The people have not forgotten God, yet they suffer for His sake. Paul quotes this verse in Rom. 8:36.

■ **44:23 Awake.** The psalmist prays as if God were asleep and unaware of Israel's plight. This daring language reflects the writer's frustration. The usual cry to God before battle is "Arise" (Ps. 7:6).

■ **44:26 Your mercies' sake.** Specifically, God's lovingkindness to those with whom He is in covenantal relationship (e.g., Abraham, Gen. 17:1–9).

■ **Ps. 45** As the title indicates, Ps. 45 is a wedding song. There are no other examples in the Psalter. The closest parallels are the love poems found in the Song of Solomon. This song is appropriate for a royal wedding, and was probably used in many royal weddings throughout the history of Israel. Since the Davidic kingship reflects God's ultimate kingship and anticipates Christ as King, the psalm has a second application to Christ, the King and Bridegroom, and the church as His bride (Eph. 5:25–32). Ps. 45 is applied to Jesus Christ in Heb. 1:8, 9.

■ **45:1 good theme . . . the King.** The messianic King is described.

tongue. *This word could mean that this psalm and others were composed orally and written down later.*

2 [b]Luke 4:22
3 [c][Is. 49:2; Heb. 4:12]; Rev. 1:16 [d][Is. 9:6] [e]Jude 25 [4]*Belt on*
4 [f]Rev. 6:2
6 [g][Ps. 93:2]; Heb. 1:8, 9 [h][Num. 24:17]
7 [i]Ps. 2:2 [j]Ps. 21:6; Heb. 1:8, 9
8 [k]Song 1:12, 13
9 [l]Song 6:8 [m]1 Kin. 2:19
10 [n]Deut. 21:13; Ruth 1:16, 17
11 [o]Ps. 95:6; [Is. 54:5]
12 [p]Is. 49:23
14 [q]Song 1:4
16 [r][1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6; 20:6]
17 [s]Mal. 1:11

PSALM 46

title [a]1 Chr. 15:20
1 [b]Ps. 62:7, 8 [c][Deut. 4:7; Ps. 145:18] [1]*An abundantly available help*

2 You are fairer than the sons of men;
[b]Grace is poured upon Your lips;
Therefore God has blessed You forever.
3 [4]Gird Your [c]sword upon *Your* thigh, [d]O Mighty One,
With Your [e]glory and Your majesty.
4 [f]And in Your majesty ride prosperously because of truth, humility, *and* righteousness;
And Your right hand shall teach You awesome things.
5 Your arrows *are* sharp in the heart of the King's enemies;
The peoples fall under You.

6 [g]Your throne, O God, *is* forever and ever;
A [h]scepter of righteousness *is* the scepter of Your kingdom.
7 You love righteousness and hate wickedness;
Therefore God, Your God, has [i]anointed You
With the oil of [j]gladness more than Your companions.
8 All Your garments are [k]scented with myrrh and aloes *and* cassia,
Out of the ivory palaces, by which they have made You glad.
9 [l]Kings' daughters *are* among Your honorable women;
[m]At Your right hand stands the queen in gold from Ophir.

10 Listen, O daughter,
Consider and incline your ear;
[n]Forget your own people also, and your father's house;
11 So the King will greatly desire your beauty;
[o]Because He *is* your Lord, worship Him.
12 And the daughter of Tyre *will come* with a gift;
[p]The rich among the people will seek your favor.

13 The royal daughter *is* all glorious within *the palace;*
Her clothing *is* woven with gold.
14 [q]She shall be brought to the King in robes of many colors;
The virgins, her companions who follow her, shall be brought to You.
15 With gladness and rejoicing they shall be brought;
They shall enter the King's palace.

16 Instead of Your fathers shall be Your sons,
[r]Whom You shall make princes in all the earth.
17 [s]I will make Your name to be remembered in all generations;
Therefore the people shall praise You forever and ever.

PSALM 46

God the Refuge and Conqueror of the Nations

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of the sons of Korah. A Song [a]for Alamoth.

God *is* our [b]refuge and strength,
[c]A[1] very present help in trouble.

■ **45:2 fairer.** The poet takes the bride's part in extolling the beauty of her lover.

blessed You forever. This language reflects the promises of the Davidic covenant in 2 Sam. 7. David would have a descendant on the throne forever, a promise fulfilled in Jesus Christ, who as the Son of David rules from heaven as King.

■ **45:4 Your right hand.** The Davidic king was the head of the military forces of Israel, ordained by God to fight for the people. In this role the king reflects God's glory, since the Lord fought on behalf of Israel. Likewise, Jesus Christ leads the church against demonic forces (Eph. 6:10–20) and will return again to destroy all evil (Rev. 19:11–16).

■ **45:6 O God.** Here is a clear identification of the divine King in this psalm, that is, Christ.

■ **45:7 anointed You.** Davidic kings were anointed at their inauguration (1 Sam. 16:13), which was a temporal prefiguration of the Christ as the anointed King of glory.

■ **45:8 myrrh and aloes and cassia.** A description of the king on his wedding day.

■ **45:10 Forget your own people.** Just as the bride is exhorted to leave her former family, so the Christian believer breaks every tie to be joined to Christ (Gen. 2:24; Matt. 10:37, 38).

■ **45:16 Your sons.** The Redeemer-King is the divine Agent by whom many sons are brought forth to glory (Heb. 2:10).

■ **45:17 the people shall praise You forever.** Eternal praises belong to the King of this psalm, the Messiah.

■ **Ps. 46** This psalm has some affinities with Ps. 48; 76; 84; and 87, which are called "Zion Songs." Though Zion is not specifically mentioned,

2 Therefore we will not fear,
Even though the earth be removed,
And though the mountains be carried into the [2]midst of the sea;
3 [d]*Though* its waters roar *and* be troubled,
Though the mountains shake with its swelling. Selah

4 *There is* a [e]river whose streams shall make glad the [f]city of God,
The holy *place* of the [3]tabernacle of the Most High.
5 God *is* [g]in the midst of her, she shall not be [4]moved;
God shall help her, just [5]at the break of dawn.
6 [h]The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved;
He uttered His voice, the earth melted.

7 The [i]LORD of hosts *is* with us;
The God of Jacob *is* our refuge. Selah

8 Come, behold the works of the LORD,
Who has made desolations in the earth.
9 [j]He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
[k]He breaks the bow and cuts the spear in two;
[l]He burns the chariot in the fire.

10 Be still, and know that I *am* God;
[m]I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth!

11 The LORD of hosts *is* with us;
The God of Jacob *is* our refuge. Selah

2 [2]Lit. *heart*
3 [d][Ps. 93:3, 4]
4 [e][Ezek. 47:1–12] [f]Ps. 48:1, 8; Is. 60:14 [3]*dwelling places*
5 [g][Deut. 23:14; Is. 12:6]; Ezek. 43:7; Hos. 11:9; [Joel 2:27; Zeph. 3:15; Zech. 2:5, 10, 11; 8:3] [4]*shaken* [5]Lit. *at the turning of the morning*
6 [h]Ps. 2:1, 2
7 [i]Num. 14:9; 2 Chr. 13:12
9 [j]Is. 2:4 [k]Ps. 76:3 [l]Ezek. 39:9
10 [m][Is. 2:11, 17]

PSALM 47

Praise to God, the Ruler of the Earth

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of the sons of Korah.

O h, clap your hands, all you peoples!
Shout to God with the voice of triumph!
2 For the LORD Most High *is* awesome;
He is a great [a]King over all the earth.
3 [b]He will subdue the peoples under us,

PSALM 47
2 [a]Deut. 7:21; Neh. 1:5; Ps. 76:12
3 [b]Ps. 18:47

it is alluded to in vv. 4, 5. Martin Luther was moved by this psalm to write the famous hymn, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God."

■ **46:1 strength.** See "Omnipresence and Omnipotence" at Jer. 23:24.

■ **46:2 the mountains . . . the sea.** A violent earthquake is described; there may be ancient Near Eastern portrayals of cosmic violence employed here. God overcomes the sea to accomplish His purposes (cf. Ps. 18; 74; 77; Nah. 1).

■ **46:4 a river.** Ancient and present Jerusalem have no river. There was a river in Eden (Gen. 2:10), as well as a "river . . . of life" that flows from the throne of God in the New Jerusalem (Rev. 22:1, 2).

The holy place. As the Israelites looked to the temple, they felt secure in the symbol of God's protection. Later in their history the people regarded the temple as a kind of idol that would save them from the Babylonians (Jer. 7). In this psalm, however, their trust is faithful and obedient, prefiguring the security enjoyed by God's people in the eternal city that is to come (Rev. 22:3).

■ **46:5 she shall not be moved.** Ancient Jerusalem indeed fell to the Babylonians in 586 B.C. The New Jerusalem will stand "forever and ever" (Rev. 22:5).

break of dawn. In military campaigns, fighting commenced at first light. God's help will not be slow.

■ **46:6 the earth melted.** At the voice of God the tumult of the rebellious is stilled forever.

■ **46:7 with us.** The refrain (again in v. 11) reflects the consolation of God's people enjoying His protection.

■ **46:10 Be still.** In the true knowledge of God and His deliverance there is peace, in contrast with the troubled "nations" (v. 6).

■ **Ps. 47** Along with Ps. 93 and 95—99, this psalm can be classified as a kingship psalm. The image of God's enthronement is at the heart of the psalm. The occasion is a great military victory, and God is King, not only of Israel, but of the universe. This prayer also properly celebrates the ascension and rule of Jesus Christ. Jesus is both King and Warrior (Luke 19:38; 23:38; John 1:49).

■ **47:1 all you peoples.** Since God is King of all the earth, and not just Israel, all the nations are called to join in the praise.

■ **47:2 King over all the earth.** See "God Reigns: Divine Sovereignty" at Dan. 4:34.

■ **47:3 He will subdue the peoples.** God won innumerable victories for His people throughout their history, beginning with the great victory at the Red Sea (Ex. 15).

4 [c][1 Pet. 1:4]
5 [d]Ps. 68:24, 25
7 [e]Zech. 14:9 [f]1 Cor. 14:15
8 [g]1 Chr. 16:31 [h]Ps. 97:2 [i]Ps. 48:1
9 [j][Rom. 4:11, 12] [k][Ps. 89:18]

PSALM 48

1 [a]Ps. 46:4; 87:3; Matt. 5:35
2 [b]Ps. 50:2 [l]*height*
4 [c]2 Sam. 10:6, 14
6 [d]Ex. 15:15
7 [e]1 Kin. 10:22; Ezek. 27:25

And the nations under our feet.
4 He will choose our [c]inheritance for us,
The excellence of Jacob whom He loves. Selah

5 [d]God has gone up with a shout,
The LORD with the sound of a trumpet.
6 Sing praises to God, sing praises!
Sing praises to our King, sing praises!
7 [e]For God *is* the King of all the earth;
[f]Sing praises with understanding.

8 [g]God reigns over the nations;
God [h]sits on His [i]holy throne.
9 The princes of the people have gathered together,
[j]The people of the God of Abraham.
[k]For the shields of the earth *belong* to God;
He is greatly exalted.

PSALM 48

The Glory of God in Zion

A Song. A Psalm of the sons of Korah.

Great *is* the LORD, and greatly to be praised
In the [a]city of our God,
In His holy mountain.
2 [b]Beautiful in [l]elevation,
The joy of the whole earth,
Is Mount Zion *on* the sides of the north,
The city of the great King.
3 God *is* in her palaces;
He is known as her refuge.

4 For behold, [c]the kings assembled,
They passed by together.
5 They saw *it, and* so they marveled;
They were troubled, they hastened away.
6 Fear [d]took hold of them there,
And pain, as of a woman in birth pangs,
7 *As when* You break the [e]ships of Tarshish
With an east wind.

■ **47:4 our inheritance.** This refers to the conquest and allotment of the Promised Land. Deut. 7:1–11 explains that it is only through God's grace that Israel possessed the land.

■ **47:5 has gone up.** This is an enthronement. God has been King from all eternity (Ps. 93:2), but after the victory His kingship is celebrated anew.

■ **47:9 The princes.** These leaders should gather today; they will gather tomorrow when Christ returns.

■ **Ps. 48** Ps. 48 is similar to Ps. 46, and it may also be compared with Ps. 76; 84; 87; 122. After the Fall (Gen. 3) sinful human beings lost their access to God. His holiness could not tolerate their unatoned sin. The patriarchs worshiped God at altars of sacrifice. After the Exodus, sacrifices were offered at the tabernacle and then at the temple appointed by God to be in Jerusalem. The whole city derived its sanctity from God's house. Jesus Christ replaced the symbolism of the temple with the reality of His incarnation (John 1:14). Through His Spirit, the people of God are His temple (1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; Eph. 2:21; 1 Pet. 2:5). The true Mount Zion is a heavenly reality that is known in the earthly assembly of the saints (Gal. 4:26; Heb. 12:18–28).

■ **48:1 His holy mountain.** Mount Zion, the location of the temple in Jerusalem. See "The Greatness of God" at 1 Chr. 29:11.

■ **48:2 joy of the whole earth.** Although the nations did not acknowledge Him, God is King of the universe and not only of Israel.

the sides of the north. Lit. "beyond Zaphon." This is not a reference to Jerusalem but to a mountain often described in Canaanite texts as the dwelling place of their gods (Is. 14:13 and notes). Yahweh is described with terms used by the neighboring religions to show that all praise really belongs to the true God. Praise to other gods is in vain because they do not exist (Is. 44:6; 1 Cor. 8:4).

■ **48:4 the kings assembled.** The language is similar to Ps. 2:1–3.

■ **48:5 were troubled.** Their fear is due to God's power, which He exercised in Jerusalem, because He had chosen that city as His dwelling place.

■ **48:7 ships of Tarshish.** Seagoing merchant ships.

8 As we have heard,
So we have seen
In the city of the LORD of hosts,
In the city of our God:
God will [f]establish it forever. Selah

9 We have thought, O God, on [g]Your lovingkindness,
In the midst of Your temple.
10 According to [h]Your name, O God,
So *is* Your praise to the ends of the earth;
Your right hand is full of righteousness.
11 Let Mount Zion rejoice,
Let the daughters of Judah be glad,
Because of Your judgments.

12 Walk about Zion,
And go all around her.
Count her towers;
13 Mark well her bulwarks;
Consider her palaces;
That you may [i]tell *it* to the generation following.
14 For this *is* God,
Our God forever and ever;
[j]He will be our guide
[2]*Even* to death.

8 [f][Ps. 87:5; Is. 2:2]; Mic. 4:1
9 [g]Ps. 26:3
10 [h][Deut. 28:58]; Josh. 7:9; Mal. 1:11
13 [i][Ps. 78:5–7]
14 [j]Is. 58:11 [2]So with MT, Syr.; LXX, Vg. *Forever*

PSALM 49

The Confidence of the Foolish

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of the sons of Korah.

Hear this, all peoples;
Give ear, all inhabitants of the world,
2 Both low and high,
Rich and poor together.
3 My mouth shall speak wisdom,
And the meditation of my heart *shall give* understanding.
4 I will incline my ear to a proverb;
I will disclose my [1]dark saying on the harp.

5 Why should I fear in the days of evil,
When the iniquity at my heels surrounds me?
6 Those who [a]trust in their wealth
And boast in the multitude of their riches,
7 None *of them* can by any means redeem *his* brother,

PSALM 49
4 [1]*riddle*
6 [a]Job 31:24; Ps. 52:7; [Prov. 11:28; Mark 10:23, 24]

■ **48:8 LORD of hosts.** A military title identifying God as the One who leads His heavenly army into battle for the protection of His people.

■ **48:9 lovingkindness.** Specifically, God's love for those in covenant relationship with Him.

■ **48:14 our guide.** Israel's fate was not a matter of chance or human striving. God is in control and His sovereignty is not limited by death.

■ **Ps. 49** This psalm is in the wisdom tradition (vv. 3, 4), treating issues typical of the wisdom books. The psalmist wrestles with two problems: death and the prosperity of the rich. The psalm is one of the most difficult to translate and interpret correctly. Few places in the Old Testament express so directly the hope for the resurrection of the dead. The full doctrine of the resurrection was not revealed until Jesus rose from the grave and ascended to the right hand of God.

■ **49:1 peoples.** The psalm applies not only to people in redemptive relationship with God, but to all people everywhere.

■ **49:2 Rich and poor.** The psalmist is disturbed by the complacency of the rich.

■ **49:3 speak wisdom.** The psalm will provide practical insight on the problem at hand. The psalmist identifies himself with the sages of Israel.

■ **49:4 proverb . . . dark saying.** These words locate the psalm in the wisdom tradition.

■ **49:5 days of evil.** These are the days approaching one's death (cf. *Eccl.* 12:1).

■ **49:6 trust in their wealth.** Rather than trusting God.

■ **49:7 None . . . redeem his brother.** No amount of money can prevent death, and no one can escape his or her obligation to die.

Nor [b]give to God a ransom for him—
8 For [c]the redemption of their souls *is* costly,
And it shall cease forever—
9 That he should continue to live eternally,
And [d]not [2]see the Pit.

10 For he sees wise men die;
Likewise the fool and the senseless person perish,
And leave their wealth to others.
11 [3]Their inner thought *is that* their houses *will last* forever,
Their dwelling places to all generations;
They [e]call *their* lands after their own names.
12 Nevertheless man, *though* in honor, does not [4]remain;
He is like the beasts *that* perish.

13 This is the way of those who *are* [f]foolish,
And of their posterity who approve their sayings. Selah
14 Like sheep they are laid in the grave;
Death shall feed on them;
[g]The upright shall have dominion over them in the morning;
[h]And their beauty shall be consumed in [5]the grave, far from their dwelling.
15 But God [i]will redeem my soul from the power of [6]the grave,
For He shall [j]receive me. Selah

16 Do not be afraid when one becomes rich,
When the glory of his house is increased;
17 For when he dies he shall carry nothing away;
His glory shall not descend after him.
18 Though while he lives [k]he blesses himself
(For *men* will praise you when you do well for yourself),
19 He shall go to the generation of his fathers;
They shall never see [l]light.[7]
20 A man *who is* in honor, yet does not understand,
[m]Is like the beasts *that* perish.

7 [b]Job 36:18, 19
8 [c][Matt. 16:26]
9 [d]Ps. 89:48 [2]*experience corruption*
11 [e]Gen. 4:17; Deut. 3:14 [3]LXX, Syr., Tg., Vg. *Their graves shall be their houses forever*
12 [4]So with MT, Tg.; LXX, Syr., Vg. *understand* (cf. v. 20)
13 [f][Luke 12:20]
14 [g]Ps. 47:3; [Dan. 7:18; 1 Cor. 6:2; Rev. 2:26] [h]Job 4:21 [5]Or *Sheol*
15 [i][Hos. 13:4]; Mark 16:6, 7; Acts 2:31, 32 [j]Ps. 73:24 [6]Or *Sheol*
18 [k]Deut. 29:19; Luke 12:19
19 [l]Job 33:30 [7]The light of life
20 [m]Eccl. 3:19

PSALM 50

1 [a]Is. 9:6

PSALM 50

God the Righteous Judge

A Psalm of Asaph.

The [a]Mighty One, God the LORD,
Has spoken and called the earth

■ **49:10 wise men die; Likewise the fool.** The thought is reminiscent of Eccl. 2:12–16. The psalmist classifies the rich oppressor with the fools and the senseless.

■ **49:11 Their dwelling places to all generations.** The rich spend much of their lifetime building earthly homes and amassing wealth. But all these things soon pass away.

■ **49:12 He is like the beasts that perish.** In comparing this experience of both humans and animals, the psalmist parallels the thought of Eccl. 3:18–21.

■ **49:14 Like sheep.** Unaware, the self-trusting rich are on the road to slaughter.

■ **49:15 God will redeem my soul from . . . the grave.** While God does not accept a ransom for death (v. 7), He provides one for the psalmist. The key to this Old Testament awareness of redemption from death is recognition of the eternity of God and of His eternal relationship with His people: "He shall receive me." See Mark 12:26, 27.

■ **49:16–20** The wicked rich cannot carry their wealth into the dark, joyless eternity to which they are appointed.

■ **Ps. 50** This psalm has a prophetic cast since a large part of it is composed of two oracles of the Lord, one spoken to the righteous, and the other against the wicked. The psalm places special focus on the need to give thanks (vv. 14, 15, 22, 23). With regard to its title, see Introduction: Author.

■ **50:1 The Mighty One, God the LORD.** The psalm opens impressively with three divine names. The third is God's covenant name, conventionally translated with the word "LORD" in small capitals. In Hebrew it is four consonants, called the "Tetragrammaton," and probably pronounced "Yahweh." "Jehovah" uses the vowels of a different word in a way suggested by the Jewish custom of not pronouncing God's sacred name. See Ex. 3:13–15 and notes.

From the rising of the sun to its going down. From east to west, God addresses the whole earth.

From the rising of the sun to its going down.
2 Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty,
[b]God will shine forth.
3 Our God shall come, and shall not keep silent;
[c]A fire shall devour before Him,
And it shall be very tempestuous all around Him.

4 [d]He shall call to the heavens from above,
And to the earth, that He may judge His people:
5 "Gather [e]My saints together to Me,
[f]Those who have [1]made a covenant with Me by sacrifice."
6 Let the [g]heavens declare His righteousness,
For [h]God Himself *is* Judge. Selah

7 "Hear, O My people, and I will speak,
O Israel, and I will testify against you;
[i]I *am* God, your God!
8 [j]I will not [2]rebuke you [k]for your sacrifices
Or your burnt offerings,
Which are continually before Me.
9 [l]I will not take a bull from your house,
Nor goats out of your folds.
10 For every beast of the forest *is* Mine,
And the cattle on a thousand hills.
11 I know all the birds of the mountains,
And the wild beasts of the field *are* Mine.

12 "If I were hungry, I would not tell you;
[m]For the world *is* Mine, and all its fullness.
13 [n]Will I eat the flesh of bulls,
Or drink the blood of goats?
14 [o]Offer to God thanksgiving,
And [p]pay your vows to the Most High.
15 [q]Call upon Me in the day of trouble;
I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me."

16 But to the wicked God says:
"What *right* have you to declare My statutes,
Or take My covenant in your mouth,
17 [r]Seeing you hate instruction

2 [b]Deut. 33:2; Ps. 80:1
3 [c]Lev. 10:2; Num. 16:35; [Ps. 97:3]
4 [d]Deut. 4:26; 31:28; 32:1; Is. 1:2
5 [e]Deut. 33:3 [f]Ex. 24:7 [1]Lit. *cut*
6 [g][Ps. 97:6] [h]Ps. 75:7
7 [i]Ex. 20:2
8 [j]Jer. 7:22 [k]Is. 1:11; [Hos. 6:6] [2]*reprove*
9 [l]Ps. 69:31
12 [m]Ex. 19:5; [Deut. 10:14; Job 41:11]; 1 Cor. 10:26
13 [n][Ps. 51:15–17]
14 [o]Hos. 14:2; Heb. 13:15 [p]Num. 30:2; Deut. 23:21
15 [q]Job 22:27; [Zech. 13:9]
17 [r]Neh. 9:26; Rom. 2:21

■ **50:2 Zion.** The location of the temple, the place God has chosen to make His presence known. See Ps. 2:6.

shine forth. The language indicates a "theophany," a visual self-revelation of God. God's presence is manifest at His temple in Jerusalem. See Deut. 33:2.

■ **50:3 A fire shall devour before Him.** God's theophany (v. 2 note) is often accompanied by powerful and dangerous forces, especially when He speaks in judgment (Ex. 19; Is. 24; Nah. 1).

■ **50:5 a covenant with Me by sacrifice.** A covenant is a solemn agreement between persons. Here, as in most places, it signifies the bond between God and His people. However, since man is sinful, this relationship must be accompanied by sacrifice, representing the punishment for sin.

■ **50:6 heavens.** Possibly a poetic way of referring to the inhabitants of heaven, the angels; otherwise, the glory of the inanimate, created heavens.

■ **50:7 testify.** This legal terminology is used because covenants were legal instruments, like contracts or treaties. When there was some disruption in the people's faithfulness, they were often put on trial by the Lord or by one of His prophets (Mic. 6:1–8).

■ **50:8 I will not rebuke you for your sacrifices.** This verse indicates that the people's problem was not observance of the sacrificial rites. They were faithful to do them, but they apparently misunderstood their significance.

■ **50:9 will not take.** The people of the surrounding nations thought that their gods ate the sacrifices offered to them and grew hungry when deprived. In the Gilgamesh Epic, the goddess Ishtar bemoans the lack of sacrifices that resulted in her god-sized hunger.

■ **50:10 every beast of the forest is Mine.** God affirms that He created and owns all the creatures of the world.

■ **50:13, 14 Will I eat the flesh of bulls.** This rhetorical question makes it clear that the Lord neither eats the sacrifices, nor is He satisfied with them apart from sincere commitment and thanksgiving.

■ **50:16 wicked.** Probably the wicked people within the professing covenant community, since they know God's law.

declare. This may be a reference to a covenant renewal ceremony in which the covenant community together recites the law and reaffirms its intention to keep it (Deut. 31:9–11).

■ **50:17 hate instruction.** A sure sign of a fool (Prov. 1:7).

And cast My words behind you?
18 When you saw a thief, you [s]consented[3] with him,
And have been a [t]partaker with adulterers.
19 You give your mouth to evil,
And [u]your tongue frames deceit.
20 You sit *and* speak against your brother;
You slander your own mother's son.
21 These *things* you have done, and I kept silent;
[v]You thought that I was altogether like you;
But I will rebuke you,
And [w]set *them* in order before your eyes.

22 "Now consider this, you who [x]forget God,
Lest I tear *you* in pieces,
And *there be* none to deliver:
23 Whoever offers praise glorifies Me;
And [y]to him who orders *his* conduct *aright*
I will show the salvation of God."

PSALM 51

A Prayer of Repentance

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David [a]when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.

Have mercy upon me, O God,
According to Your lovingkindness;
According to the multitude of Your tender mercies,
[b]Blot out my transgressions.
2 [c]Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
And cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I acknowledge my transgressions,
And my sin *is* always before me.
4 [d]Against You, You only, have I sinned,
And done *this* evil [e]in Your sight—
[f]That You may be found just [1]when You speak,
And blameless when You judge.

5 [g]Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,
And in sin my mother conceived me.
6 Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts,
And in the hidden *part* You will make me to know wisdom.

18 [s][Rom. 1:32] [t]1 Tim. 5:22 [3]LXX, Syr., Tg., Vg. *ran*
19 [u]Ps. 52:2
21 [v][Rom. 2:4] [w][Ps. 90:8]
22 [x][Job 8:13]
23 [y]Gal. 6:16

PSALM 51

title [a]2 Sam. 12:1
1 [b][Is. 43:25; 44:22; Acts 3:19; Col. 2:14]
2 [c]Jer. 33:8; Ezek. 36:33; [Heb. 9:14; 1 John 1:7, 9]
4 [d]2 Sam. 12:13 [e][Luke 5:21] [f]Rom. 3:4 [1]LXX, Tg., Vg. *in Your words*
5 [g][Job 14:4; Ps. 58:3; John 3:6; Rom. 5:12]

■ **50:18, 19** The psalmist cites the seventh, eighth, and ninth commandments.

■ **50:21 I kept silent.** God's silence was frequently taken by the wicked as a sign that He didn't care if they sinned.

■ **50:22 Lest I tear you in pieces.** God insists on obedience from the wicked hypocrites, or they will meet a fearful end.

■ **Ps. 51** Ps. 51 is a uniquely powerful statement of the depths of sin and repentance. It is the most striking of the "prayers of penitence" (introduction to Ps. 6), a type of lament.

■ **51:1 According to Your lovingkindness.** David had been guilty of a great sin in the matter of Uriah, husband of Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11). David pleads for God's mercy, in keeping with His promised love for His people.

tender mercies. God's forgiveness of sinners is the result of His mercy. Sinners deserve death, but He gives life.

■ **51:2 Wash.** The word means specifically to "wash clothes." The psalmist's iniquity is like filthy clothes that need to be laundered.

■ **51:4 You only.** David committed adultery with Bathsheba and sent her husband to his death. How can he say he sinned against God only? Rebellion against God was the root of his sin, and his crime injured people who belonged to God and transgressed a social order created by God.

just . . . blameless. David recognized that God's anger against him was just. This verse is cited by Paul in Rom. 3:4.

■ **51:5 brought forth in iniquity.** The Bible clearly teaches that children are sinners. They are not born innocent and only later become sinners. Children, too, need God's salvation. See theological note "Original Sin and Total Depravity."

■ **51:6 inward parts . . . hidden part.** That is, truth and wisdom at the center of one's being.

7 [h]Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
Wash me, and I shall be [i]whiter than snow.
8 Make me hear joy and gladness,
That the bones You have broken [j]may rejoice.
9 Hide Your face from my sins,
And blot out all my iniquities.

10 [k]Create in me a clean heart, O God,
And renew a steadfast spirit within me.
11 Do not cast me away from Your presence,
And do not take Your [l]Holy Spirit from me.

7 [h]Ex. 12:22; Lev. 14:4; Num. 19:18; Heb. 9:19 [i][Is. 1:18]
8 [j][Matt. 5:4]
10 [k][Ezek. 18:31; Eph. 2:10]
11 [l][Luke 11:13]

Original Sin and Total Depravity

Scripture diagnoses sin as a universal deformity of human nature, found at every point in every person (1 Kin. 8:46; Rom. 3:9–23; 7:18; 1 John 1:8–10). Both Testaments describe sin as rebellion against God's rule, missing the mark God set for us to aim at, transgressing God's law, offending God's purity by defiling oneself, and incurring guilt before God the Judge. The moral deformity is dynamic: sin is an energy of irrational, negative, and rebellious reaction to God. It is a spirit of fighting God in order to play God. The root of sin is pride and enmity against God, the spirit seen in Adam's first transgression, and sinful acts always have behind them thoughts and desires that one way or another express the willful opposition of the fallen heart to God's claims on our lives.

Sin may be defined as breaking the law of God, or failing to conform to it, in any aspect of life, whether thought, word, or deed. Scriptures illustrating different aspects of sin include Jer. 17:9; Matt. 12:30–37; Mark 7:20–23; Rom. 1:18–3:20; 7:7–25; 8:5–8; 14:23 (Luther said that Paul wrote Romans to "magnify sin"); Gal. 5:16–21; Eph. 2:1–3; 4:17–19; Heb. 3:12; James 2:10–11; 1 John 3:4; 5:17.

"Original sin," meaning sin derived from our origin, is not a biblical phrase (it comes from Augustine), but it does bring into focus the reality of sin in our spiritual system. Original sin does not mean that sin belongs to human nature as such; "God made man upright" (Eccl. 7:29). Nor does it mean that the processes of reproduction and birth are sinful; the uncleanness associated with sexuality in the Law (Lev. 12; 15) was typical and ceremonial, not moral. Rather, "original sin" means that sinfulness marks everyone from birth, in the form of a heart inclined toward sin, prior to any actual sins; this inner sinfulness is the root and source of all actual sins; it is transmitted to us from Adam, our first representative before God. The doctrine of original sin makes the point that we are not sinners because we sin, but we sin because we are sinners, born with a nature enslaved to sin.

The phrase "total depravity" is commonly used to make explicit the implications of original sin. It signifies a corruption of our moral and spiritual nature that is total in principle, although not in degree (for no one is as bad as he or she might be). No part of us is untouched by sin, and no action of ours is as good as it should be. Consequently, nothing we do is ever meritorious in God's eyes. We cannot earn God's favor, no matter what we do; unless grace saves us, we are lost.

Total depravity includes total inability, that is, being without power to believe in God or His word (John 6:44; Rom. 8:7, 8). Paul calls this universal unresponsiveness a form of death; the fallen heart is "dead" (Eph. 2:1, 5; Col. 2:13). As the *Westminster Confession* (IX. 3) explains, "Man by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able by his own strength to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto." To this darkness the word of God alone brings light (Luke 18:27; 2 Cor. 4:6). □

■ **51:7 with hyssop.** The allusion is to Lev. 14:6, 7, where the cleansing of a leper is described.

Wash me. *This may be an allusion to Num. 19:19, where instructions are given for ritual washing after contact with a dead person. On the need for washing the heart, see "Legalism" at Matt. 23:4.*

■ **51:10 Create.** The verb is the same used at Gen. 1:1 for the creation of the world. *The psalmist knows that the redirection of his desires and thoughts can only come about through the intervention of God. See "Repentance" at Acts 26:20.*

■ **51:11 Holy Spirit.** The Old Testament does not make a full disclosure of the personhood of the Holy Spirit. David understands that his spiritual well-being depends on God's presence with him. He fears that the Spirit may be taken away, because the Spirit is holy and David is sinful. *See "The Holy Spirit" at John 14:26.*

12 [m][2 Cor. 3:17]
16 [n][1 Sam. 15:22]; Ps. 50:8–14; [Mic. 6:6–8]
17 [o]Ps. 34:18; [Is. 57:15]; 66:2
19 [p]Ps. 4:5

12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation,
And uphold me *by Your* [m]generous Spirit.
13 *Then* I will teach transgressors Your ways,
And sinners shall be converted to You.

14 Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God,
The God of my salvation,
And my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness.
15 O Lord, open my lips,
And my mouth shall show forth Your praise.
16 For [n]You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give *it;*
You do not delight in burnt offering.
17 [o]The sacrifices of God *are* a broken spirit,
A broken and a contrite heart—
These, O God, You will not despise.

18 Do good in Your good pleasure to Zion;
Build the walls of Jerusalem.
19 Then You shall be pleased with [p]the sacrifices of righteousness,
With burnt offering and whole burnt offering;
Then they shall offer bulls on Your altar.

PSALM 52

The End of the Wicked and the Peace of the Godly

PSALM 52

title [a]1 Sam. 22:9
[b]Ezek. 22:9
[f]Heb. *Maschil*

To the Chief Musician. A [f]Contemplation of David [a]when Doeg the Edomite went and [b]told Saul, and said to him, "David has gone to the house of Ahimelech."

Why do you boast in evil, O mighty man?
The goodness of God *endures* continually.
2 Your tongue devises destruction,
Like a sharp razor, working deceitfully.
3 You love evil more than good,
Lying rather than speaking righteousness. Selah
4 You love all devouring words,
You deceitful tongue.

5 God shall likewise destroy you forever;
He shall take you away, and pluck you out of *your* dwelling place,
And uproot you from the land of the living. Selah
6 The righteous also shall see and fear,
And shall laugh at him, *saying,*
7 "Here is the man *who* did not make God his strength,

■ **51:12 joy of Your salvation.** David had suffered from a spiritual dullness that led to moral bankruptcy. To prevent such disaster in the future, he prays for joy.

■ **51:13 I will teach transgressors Your ways.** If forgiven, the psalmist promises to use his life to help others find forgiveness.

■ **51:14 sing aloud of Your righteousness.** David has previously spoken of God's justice in condemning sin (v. 4). Now, the same justice overcomes sin and condemnation through grace, as explained in Rom. 3:21–26 and epitomized in 1 John 1:9.

■ **51:16 You do not delight in burnt offering.** The Bible values heartfelt obedience above outward religious conformity (40:6–8; Mic. 6:6–8). As v. 19 shows, this did not condemn sacrifices as such.

■ **51:18, 19** The restoration of the king leads to blessing for the people.

■ **Ps. 52** This psalm expresses confidence in the Lord like a psalm of trust, pronounces judgment on the wicked like a lament, and uses wisdom language.

■ **52:title** The historical title refers to the event recorded in 1 Sam. 22:6–23. In effect, the title identifies Doeg with the boastful, wicked man, and David with the righteous psalmist. However, the psalm itself is not so specific and continues to be immediately relevant to the people of God.

■ **52:1 mighty man.** A soldier or warrior.

■ **52:4 devouring.** More exactly, "confused." The wisdom literature consistently teaches that confusion is on the side of the wicked and order on the side of righteousness.

■ **52:6 fear.** This verb may seem strange as associated with laughter. The meaning, however, is not fear in the sense of dread, but rather of reverence and awe. The righteous see the justice of God's judgment against the wicked.

■ **52:7 who did not make God his strength.** This man is the opposite of everything the psalms stand for. Throughout the psalms people are urged to make God their stronghold and to put no trust in themselves. God is the power behind His people in all their victories.

But trusted in the abundance of his riches,
And strengthened himself in his [2]wickedness."

8 But I *am* [c]like a green olive tree in the house of God;
I trust in the mercy of God forever and ever.
9 I will praise You forever,
Because You have done *it;*
And in the presence of Your saints
I will wait on Your name, for *it* [3]*is* good.

PSALM 53

Folly of the Godless, and the Restoration of Israel

To the Chief Musician. Set to "Mahalath." A [1]Contemplation of David.

The [a]fool has said in his heart,
"*There is* no God."
They are corrupt, and have done abominable iniquity;
[b]*There is* none who does good.

2 God looks down from heaven upon the children of men,
To see if there are *any* who understand, who [c]seek God.
3 Every one of them has turned aside;
They have together become corrupt;
There is none who does good,
No, not one.

4 Have the workers of iniquity [d]no knowledge,
Who eat up my people *as* they eat bread,
And do not call upon God?
5 [e]There they are in great fear
Where no fear was,
For God has scattered the bones of him who encamps against you;
You have put *them* to shame,
Because God has despised them.

6 [f]Oh, that the salvation of Israel would come out of Zion!
When God brings back [2]the captivity of His people,
Let Jacob rejoice *and* Israel be glad.

PSALM 54

Answered Prayer for Deliverance from Adversaries

To the Chief Musician. With [1]stringed instruments. A [2]Contemplation of David [a]when the Ziphites went and said to Saul, "Is David not hiding with us?"

Save me, O God, by Your name,
And vindicate me by Your strength.

7 [2]Lit. *desire,* in evil sense
8 [c]Jer. 11:16
9 [3]Or *has a good reputation*

PSALM 53

title [1]Heb. *Maschil*
1 [a]Ps. 10:4 [b]Rom. 3:10–12
2 [c][2 Chr. 15:2]
4 [d]Jer. 4:22
5 [e]Lev. 26:17, 36; Prov. 28:1
6 [f]Ps. 14:7 [2]Or *His captive people*

PSALM 54

title [a]1 Sam. 23:19 [1]Heb. *neginoth* [2]Heb. *Maschil*

■ **52:8 olive tree.** Reminiscent of Ps. 1. Olive trees can live for hundreds of years.

■ **52:9 in the presence of Your saints.** The assurance of the psalmist leads to praise in public worship. See note on 22:22.

■ **Ps. 53** Cf. Ps. 14. A meditation on the wickedness of the fool. God will destroy the fool and restore Israel's fortunes. Ps. 53, in contrast to Ps. 14, uses "God" rather than the more specific, covenant "LORD" to refer to the deity. This variation fits the broader context, since Ps. 53 is in Book II of the Psalter, which uses the broader term rather than the covenant name.

■ **53:1–4** See notes on Ps. 14:1–4.

■ **53:5 scattered the bones.** In the Old Testament God often fights for His people against their flesh-and-blood enemies. With New Testament revelation the underlying spiritual conflict to save His people from sin becomes the dominant theme, although the real conflict has been at this level from the beginning (Gen. 3:4, 5).

■ **53:6 salvation of Israel.** An expression of hope for deliverance from evil.

■ **54:title** The historical title locates the inspiration of the psalm in David's premonarchical days. He wrote the psalm after being betrayed by the Ziphites (1 Sam. 23:19; 26:1).

■ **54:1 vindicate me.** The word identifies his complaint as a judicial one. David had been unjustly betrayed by the Ziphites, his countrymen from Judah.

4 [3]*sustain my soul*
5 [4]*Destroy them*
[5]Or *faithfulness*
7 [b]Ps. 59:10

2 Hear my prayer, O God;
Give ear to the words of my mouth.
3 For strangers have risen up against me,
And oppressors have sought after my life;
They have not set God before them. Selah

4 Behold, God *is* my helper;
The Lord *is* with those who [3]uphold my life.
5 He will repay my enemies for their evil.
[4]Cut them off in Your [5]truth.

6 I will freely sacrifice to You;
I will praise Your name, O LORD, for *it is* good.
7 For He has delivered me out of all trouble;
[b]And my eye has seen *its desire* upon my enemies.

PSALM 55

title [1]Heb. *neginoth*
[2]Heb. *Maschil*
2 [a]Is. 38:14; 59:11; Ezek. 7:16
[3]*wander*
3 [b]2 Sam. 16:7, 8
4 [c]Ps. 116:3
9 [d]Jer. 6:7
[4]*speech,* their counsel
10 [e]Ps. 10:7
11 [f]Ps. 10:7

PSALM 55

Trust in God Concerning the Treachery of Friends

To the Chief Musician. With [1]stringed instruments. A [2]Contemplation of David.

Give ear to my prayer, O God,
And do not hide Yourself from my supplication.
2 Attend to me, and hear me;
I [a]am[3] restless in my complaint, and moan noisily,
3 Because of the voice of the enemy,
Because of the oppression of the wicked;
[b]For they bring down trouble upon me,
And in wrath they hate me.

4 [c]My heart is severely pained within me,
And the terrors of death have fallen upon me.
5 Fearfulness and trembling have come upon me,
And horror has overwhelmed me.
6 So I said, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove!
I would fly away and be at rest.
7 Indeed, I would wander far off,
And remain in the wilderness. Selah
8 I would hasten my escape
From the windy storm *and* tempest."

9 Destroy, O Lord, *and* divide their [4]tongues,
For I have seen [d]violence and strife in the city.
10 Day and night they go around it on its walls;
[e]Iniquity and trouble *are* also in the midst of it.
11 Destruction *is* in its midst;
[f]Oppression and deceit do not depart from its streets.

■ **54:3 strangers.** Though they are countrymen, he does not know them personally.

■ **54:6, 7** A vow to sacrifice to the Lord as thanks for being rescued from trouble. See 22:22 and note.

■ **Ps. 55** Like many laments, this psalm bemoans the attack of enemies. Most unusual is the sorrow over betrayal by a friend. The psalm descends to the pits of despair, but turns at the end toward the Lord with hope. The psalm anticipates the suffering of Christ, who was betrayed by Judas, a disciple of His inner circle (Matt. 26:47–56).

■ **55:3 enemy.** The psalmist refers to enemies in general terms because he knows that his song will be used by other people in other situations (v. 22).

■ **55:6 I would fly away.** The writer has the urge to escape the source of his distress, but is unable to do so.

■ **55:9 divide their tongues.** The psalmist alludes to the judgment the Lord brought upon the wicked generation who built the tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1–9).

■ **55:10 go around it on its walls.** Lawless men are loose and active on the walls, the main defense of the city.

■ **55:11 its streets.** This description of an ancient city of Israel, presumably Jerusalem during David's reign, could be applied to today's lawless cities.

12 [g]For *it is* not an enemy *who* reproaches me;
Then I could bear *it.*
Nor *is it* one *who* hates me who has [h]exalted *himself* against me;
Then I could hide from him.
13 But *it was* you, a man my equal,
[i]My companion and my acquaintance.
14 We took sweet counsel together,
And [j]walked to the house of God in the throng.

15 Let death seize them;
Let them [k]go down alive into [5]hell,
For wickedness *is* in their dwellings *and* among them.

16 As for me, I will call upon God,
And the LORD shall save me.
17 [l]Evening and morning and at noon
I will pray, and cry aloud,
And He shall hear my voice.
18 He has redeemed my soul in peace from the battle *that was* against me,
For [m]there were many against me.
19 God will hear, and afflict them,
[n]Even He who abides from of old. Selah
Because they do not change,
Therefore they do not fear God.

20 He has [o]put forth his hands against those who [p]were at peace with him;
He has broken his [6]covenant.
21 [q]*The words* of his mouth were smoother than butter,
But war *was* in his heart;
His words were softer than oil,
Yet they *were* drawn swords.

22 [r]Cast your burden on the LORD,
And [s]He shall sustain you;
He shall never permit the righteous to be [7]moved.

23 But You, O God, shall bring them down to the pit of destruction;
[t]Bloodthirsty and deceitful men [u]shall not live out half their days;
But I will trust in You.

12 [g]Ps. 41:9 [h]Ps. 35:26; 38:16
13 [i]2 Sam. 15:12
14 [j]Ps. 42:4
15 [k]Num. 16:30, 33 [5]Or *Sheol*
17 [l]Dan. 6:10; Luke 18:1; Acts 3:1; 10:3, 30
18 [m]2 Chr. 32:7, 8
19 [n][Deut. 33:27]
20 [o]Acts 12:1 [p]Ps. 7:4 [6]*treaty*
21 [q]Ps. 28:3; 57:4; [Prov. 5:3, 4; 12:18]
22 [r][Ps. 37:5; Matt. 6:25–34; Luke 12:22–31; 1 Pet. 5:7] [s]Ps. 37:24 [7]*shaken*
23 [t]Ps. 5:6 [u]Prov. 10:27

PSALM 56

Prayer for Relief from Tormentors

To the Chief Musician. Set to [1]"The Silent Dove in Distant Lands." A Michtam of David when the [a]Philistines captured him in Gath.

Be [b]merciful to me, O God, for man would swallow me up;
Fighting all day he oppresses me.

PSALM 56
title [a]1 Sam. 21:11 [1]Heb. *Jonath Elem Rechokim*
1 [b]Ps. 57:1

■ **55:13** The terms become increasingly intimate, from "a man my equal" to "my companion" to the climax, "my acquaintance."

■ **55:14 sweet counsel together.** The worst hurt of all is that the close friend was a fellow worshiper in the house of God.

■ **55:15 alive into hell.** That is, into Sheol, the grave.

■ **55:18 the battle.** While the psalm could conceivably have had its origin in battle, it is more likely that the battle is a metaphor for the struggles that the psalmist feels with his enemies and friends who surround him.

■ **55:19 abides from of old.** God hears the psalmist's prayers from His kingly throne in heaven.

■ **55:20 his covenant.** The psalmist describes the willful breaking of a formal agreement between friends. A covenant is a solemn agreement under sanctions.

■ **55:21 smoother than butter . . . softer than oil.** A powerful poetic description of hypocrisy and deceit.

■ **55:22 He shall never permit the righteous to be moved.** The context of the psalm shows that there is no unqualified promise that the righteous will always be happy and prosperous. The psalmist sings this lament to the Lord because he is in despair. The verse must mean that God will not leave the righteous in the fallen position forever, but will vindicate them in the end.

■ **55:23 the pit of destruction.** The grave.

■ **56:title** The title is difficult to fit into David's life as it is known from the historical books. The closest parallel is 1 Sam. 21:10–15, when David was feigning madness before the king of Gath in order to escape him.

2 [c]Ps. 57:3
4 [d]Ps. 118:6; Is. 31:3; [Heb. 13:6]
8 [e][Mal. 3:16]
9 [f][Ps. 118:6; Rom. 8:31]
13 [g]Ps. 116:8, 9 [h]Job 33:30

2 My enemies would [c]hound *me* all day,
For *there are* many who fight against me, O Most High.

3 Whenever I am afraid,
I will trust in You.
4 In God (I will praise His word),
In God I have put my trust;
[d]I will not fear.
What can flesh do to me?

5 All day they twist my words;
All their thoughts *are* against me for evil.
6 They gather together,
They hide, they mark my steps,
When they lie in wait for my life.
7 Shall they escape by iniquity?
In anger cast down the peoples, O God!

8 You number my wanderings;
Put my tears into Your bottle;
[e]*Are they* not in Your book?
9 When I cry out *to You,*
Then my enemies will turn back:
This I know, because [f]God *is* for me.
10 In God (I will praise *His* word),
In the LORD (I will praise *His* word),
11 In God I have put my trust;
I will not be afraid.
What can man do to me?

12 Vows *made* to You *are binding* upon me, O God;
I will render praises to You,
13 [g]For You have delivered my soul from death.
Have You not *kept* my feet from falling,
That I may walk before God
In the [h]light of the living?

PSALM 57

Prayer for Safety from Enemies

To the Chief Musician. Set to [i]"Do Not Destroy." A Michtam of David [a]when he fled from Saul into the cave.

Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me!
For my soul trusts in You;
[b]And in the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge,
[c]Until *these* calamities have passed by.

- **56:2 hound me.** The enemies, like ruthless animals, treat the psalmist as their prey.
- **56:5 twist my words.** They change the meanings of his words to put him in a bad light.
- **56:7 cast down the peoples.** The parallelism of this verse suggests that the enemies are the foreign nations that surround Israel.
- **56:8 number.** The psalmist is calling upon God to hear and remember his prayer.
- **56:9 This I know.** The psalmist remembers God's covenant promises, such as Deut. 28:7, a promise that God will scatter the enemies of His people.
- **56:12 render praises.** When the psalmist's prayer is answered, he promises to return to offer his thanks. He would do this by offering sacrifices and singing thanksgiving songs similar to Ps. 34. See Ps. 22:22 and note.
- **Ps. 57** The psalm was composed before David was king, when he was hiding from Saul in a cave. Many scholars relate the psalm to 1 Sam. 24, but a closer parallel is 1 Sam. 22:1–5, when David fled to the cave of Adullam. This song ends with an intense concluding statement that is close in wording to Ps. 108:1–5.
- **57:1 in the shadow of Your wings.** The image of God as a protective mother bird protecting her young from trouble communicates God's compassion for His people. See note on maternal representations of God at Ps. 131:2.

2 I will cry out to God Most High,
To God [d]who performs *all things* for me.
3 [e]He shall send from heaven and save me;
He reproaches the one who [2]would swallow me up. Selah
God [f]shall send forth His mercy and His truth.

4 My soul *is* among lions;
I lie *among* the sons of men
Who are set on fire,
[g]Whose teeth *are* spears and arrows,
And their tongue a sharp sword.
5 [h]Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;
Let Your glory *be* above all the earth.

6 [i]They have prepared a net for my steps;
My soul is bowed down;
They have dug a pit before me;
Into the midst of it they *themselves* have fallen. Selah

7 [j]My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast;
I will sing and give praise.
8 Awake, [k]my glory!
Awake, lute and harp!
I will awaken the dawn.

9 [l]I will praise You, O Lord, among the peoples;
I will sing to You among the [3]nations.
10 [m]For Your mercy reaches unto the heavens,
And Your truth unto the clouds.

11 [n]Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;
Let Your glory *be* above all the earth.

2 [d][Ps. 138:8]
3 [e]Ps. 144:5, 7 [f]Ps. 43:3 [2]*snaps at* or *hounds me,* or *crushes me*
4 [g]Prov. 30:14
5 [h]Ps. 108:5
6 [i]Ps. 9:15
7 [j]Ps. 108:1–5
8 [k]Ps. 16:9
9 [l]Ps. 108:3 [3]*Gentiles*
10 [m]Ps. 103:11
11 [n]Ps. 57:5

PSALM 58

The Just Judgment of the Wicked

title [1]Heb. *Al Tashcheth*

To the Chief Musician. Set to [1]"Do Not Destroy." A Michtam of David.

Do you indeed speak righteousness, you silent ones?
Do you judge uprightly, you sons of men?
2 No, in heart you work wickedness;
You weigh out the violence of your hands in the earth.

■ **57:2 who performs all things for me.** This Hebrew phrase might be rendered "who avenges me," and indicates that God judges His people's enemies.

■ **57:4 lions.** Lions were numerous in the ancient Near East and in Palestine. They often symbolized power and ruthlessness.

■ **57:5 above the heavens.** God is so great that not even the heavens can hold Him (1 Kin. 8:27). He is transcendent, but in His compassion He dwells with men.

■ **57:6 a net . . . a pit.** Like a hunter, the enemy sets snares and traps for the psalmist. The principle that evil people are ultimately caught by their own wicked schemes is a theme that runs through the psalms and the prophets. See Ps. 7:14–16; 34:21; 35:8; 37:15.

■ **57:7 steadfast.** Nothing can swerve the psalmist from his faithful intention to offer up his hymn of praise.

■ **57:8 I will awaken the dawn.** He will praise the Lord through the night, until dawn arises.

■ **57:9 among the peoples.** God is more than the God of Israel. He is King of the universe, and the psalmist will praise God's great deeds throughout the universe.

■ **Ps. 58** Psalms of lament often contain sections that are curses directed against the evil and unjust. The objects of the psalmist's scorn seem to be human rulers (v. 1 note), especially unjust judges. Early Christian tradition associated this psalm with the high priest and the Sanhedrin as they condemned Jesus (Matt. 26:57–68).

■ **58:1 silent ones.** The Hebrew word translated "silent ones" resembles the word for "gods." The word "gods" could be used for the corrupt judges of this verse, according to the example in Ps. 82:1 (see text note at 82:1).

3 [a][Ps. 53:3; Is. 48:8]
4 [b]Eccl. 10:11
5 [c]Jer. 8:17
6 [d]Job 4:10 [2]*Break away*
7 [e]Josh. 2:11; 7:5; Ps. 112:10; Is. 13:7; Ezek. 21:7
8 [f]Job 3:16
9 [g]Ps. 118:12; Eccl. 7:6 [h]Job 27:21; Prov. 10:25
10 [i][Deut. 32:43]; Jer. 11:20 [j]Ps. 68:23
11 [k]Ps. 92:15; Prov. 11:18; [2 Cor. 5:10] [l]Ps. 50:6; 75:7

PSALM 59

title [a]1 Sam. 19:11 [1]Heb. *Al Tashcheth*
1 [2]Lit. *Set me on high*
3 [b]Ps. 56:6
4 [c]Ps. 35:23
5 [3]*Gentiles*

3 [a]The wicked are estranged from the womb;
They go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies.
4 [b]Their poison *is* like the poison of a serpent;
They are like the deaf cobra *that* stops its ear,
5 Which will not [c]heed the voice of charmers,
Charming ever so skillfully.

6 [d]Break[2] their teeth in their mouth, O God!
Break out the fangs of the young lions, O LORD!
7 [e]Let them flow away as waters *which* run continually;
When he bends *his bow,*
Let his arrows be as if cut in pieces.
8 *Let them be* like a snail which melts away as it goes,
[f]*Like* a stillborn child of a woman, that they may not see the sun.

9 Before your [g]pots can feel *the burning* thorns,
He shall take them away [h]as with a whirlwind,
As in His living and burning wrath.
10 The righteous shall rejoice when he sees the [i]vengeance;
[j]He shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked,
11 [k]So that men will say,
"Surely *there is* a reward for the righteous;
Surely He is God who [l]judges in the earth."

PSALM 59

The Assured Judgment of the Wicked

To the Chief Musician. Set to [1]"Do Not Destroy." A Michtam of David [a]when Saul sent men, and they watched the house in order to kill him.

Deliver me from my enemies, O my God;
[2]Defend me from those who rise up against me.
2 Deliver me from the workers of iniquity,
And save me from bloodthirsty men.

3 For look, they lie in wait for my life;
[b]The mighty gather against me,
Not *for* my transgression nor *for* my sin, O LORD.
4 They run and prepare themselves through no fault *of mine.*

[c]Awake to help me, and behold!
5 You therefore, O LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel,
Awake to punish all the [3]nations;
Do not be merciful to any wicked transgressors. Selah

■ **58:3 from the womb.** David recognized this of himself in Ps. 51:5. All are born with a nature that rebels against God—this is the meaning of the doctrine of original sin. David means that the wickedness of the evil judges in particular extends back to the beginning of their lives.

■ **58:4, 5 poison of a serpent.** The psalmist likens the wicked rulers to snakes. The story of the Fall (Gen. 3), initiated by the serpent, sharpens the image. The rulers' words are as distinctive as the venom of the serpent, and they turn a deaf ear to logical arguments and even divine judgments that may be addressed to them.

■ **58:7 Let his arrows be . . . cut in pieces.** Bring to nothing their evil schemes that seek violence against the innocent.

■ **58:10 The righteous shall rejoice.** Eternity will show that God's judgment of the wicked is just. This judgment will cause rejoicing since the alternative would be unthinkable: heaven populated with God's enemies (Rev. 16:5, 6; 19:1–3; 21:27).

■ **58:11 there is a reward.** When the wicked prosper or the righteous suffer, faith is shaken. The covenant promises of Deut. 28 provide for curses on the wicked and blessings for the righteous. The last judgment will set things right again.

■ **Ps. 59** The psalm comes from the period before David became king. Saul set a watch over David's house, hoping to kill him; but David's wife Michal, the daughter of Saul, helped David escape (1 Sam. 19:11–17).

■ **59:3 Not for my transgression . . . my sin.** The psalmist is not saying that he is without sin; he is asserting that the enemy has no cause against him. This was true of the original situation, where David had committed no aggression against Saul's kingship. See Ps. 26.

■ **59:5 God of hosts.** This divine title indicates that God has heavenly armies at His command.

nations . . . wicked transgressors. The enemies come from the nations outside of Israel, but also from within.

6 [d]At evening they return,
They growl like a dog,
And go all around the city.
7 Indeed, they belch with their mouth;
[e]Swords *are* in their lips;
For *they say,* [f]"Who hears?"

8 But [g]You, O LORD, shall laugh at them;
You shall have all the [4]nations in derision.
9 I will wait for You, O You [5]his Strength;
[h]For God *is* my [6]defense.
10 [7]My God of mercy shall [i]come to meet me;
God shall let [j]me see *my desire* on my enemies.

11 Do not slay them, lest my people forget;
Scatter them by Your power,
And bring them down,
O Lord our shield.
12 [k]*For* the sin of their mouth *and* the words of their lips,
Let them even be taken in their pride,
And for the cursing and lying *which* they speak.
13 [l]Consume *them* in wrath, consume *them,*
That they *may* not *be;*
And [m]let them know that God rules in Jacob
To the ends of the earth. Selah

14 And [n]at evening they return,
They growl like a dog,
And go all around the city.
15 They [o]wander up and down for food,
And [8]howl if they are not satisfied.

16 But I will sing of Your power;
Yes, I will sing aloud of Your mercy in the morning;
For You have been my defense
And refuge in the day of my trouble.
17 To You, [p]O my Strength, I will sing praises;
For God *is* my defense,
My God of mercy.

6 [d]Ps. 59:14
7 [e]Ps. 57:4; Prov. 12:18 [f]Job 22:13; Ps. 10:11
8 [g]Prov. 1:26 [4]*Gentiles*
9 [h][Ps. 62:2] [5]So with MT, Syr.; some Heb. mss., LXX, Tg., Vg. *my Strength* [6]Lit. *fortress*
10 [i]Ps. 21:3 [j]Ps. 54:7 [7]So with Qr.; some Heb. mss., LXX, Vg. *My God, His mercy;* Kt., some Heb. mss., Tg. *O God, my mercy;* Syr. *O God, Your mercy*
12 [k]Prov. 12:13
13 [l]Ps. 104:35 [m]Ps. 83:18
14 [n]Ps. 59:6
15 [o]Job 15:23 [8]So with LXX, Vg.; MT, Syr., Tg. *spend the night*
17 [p]Ps. 18:1

PSALM 60

Urgent Prayer for the Restored Favor of God

To the Chief Musician. [a]Set to [1]"Lily of the Testimony." A Michtam of David. For teaching. [b]When he fought against Mesopotamia and Syria of Zobah, and Joab returned and killed twelve thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt.

O God, [c]You have cast us off;
You have broken us down;

title [a]Ps. 80 [b]2 Sam. 8:3, 13; 1 Chr. 18:3 [1]Heb. *Shushan Eduth*
1 [c]Ps. 44:9

■ **59:6 like a dog.** The enemies are like a pack of dogs who roam the streets of the city and make them unsafe. Dogs were not valued in the ancient Near East.

■ **59:7 Who hears.** See 64:5 and note.

■ **59:10 God . . . shall come to meet me.** God will lead the way in the fight against the enemy. In the time of Joshua, the ark, symbolic of God's presence, led Israel into the Promised Land.

see my desire. For now, the enemy gloats over the psalmist, but the psalmist expects a reversal.

■ **59:11 Do not slay them.** The psalmist desires to prolong the suffering of the enemy. This will make them an example to the rest of Israel that evil doesn't pay.

■ **59:12 sin of their mouth.** Words are powerful, and can bring either great blessing or tremendous harm.

■ **59:13 let them know.** The ultimate goal of the destruction of the enemy is that the glory of God's justice may be seen.

■ **Ps. 60** The psalm laments a military defeat and asks God why He has rejected the people. For the most part, the community voice dominates and the psalm addresses God with the first person plural.

■ **60:title** This psalm has the longest title in the Psalter, referring to the

You have been displeased;
Oh, restore us again!
2 You have made the earth tremble;
You have broken it;
[d]Heal its breaches, for it is shaking.
3 [e]You have shown Your people hard things;
[f]You have made us drink the wine of [2]confusion.
4 [g]You have given a banner to those who fear You,
That it may be displayed because of the truth. Selah
5 [h]That Your beloved may be delivered,
Save *with* Your right hand, and hear me.

6 God has [i]spoken in His holiness:
"I will rejoice;
I will [j]divide [k]Shechem
And measure out [l]the Valley of Succoth.
7 Gilead *is* Mine, and Manasseh *is* Mine;
[m]Ephraim also *is* the [3]helmet for My head;
[n]Judah *is* My lawgiver.
8 [o]Moab *is* My washpot;
[p]Over Edom I will cast My shoe;
[q]Philistia, shout in triumph because of Me."

9 Who will bring me *to* the strong city?
Who will lead me to Edom?
10 *Is it* not You, O God, [r]*who* cast us off?
And You, O God, *who* did [s]not go out with our armies?
11 Give us help from trouble,
[t]For the help of man *is* useless.
12 Through God [u]we will do valiantly,
For *it is* He *who* shall tread down our enemies.

2 [d][2 Chr. 7:14]; Is. 30:26
3 [e]Ps. 71:20 [f]Is. 51:17, 22; Jer. 25:15 [2]*staggering*
4 [g]Ps. 20:5; Is. 5:26; 11:12; 13:2
5 [h]Ps. 108:6–13
6 [i]Ps. 89:35 [j]Josh. 1:6 [k]Gen. 12:6 [l]Josh. 13:27
7 [m]Deut. 33:17 [n][Gen. 49:10] [3]Lit. *protection*
8 [o]2 Sam. 8:2 [p]2 Sam. 8:14; Ps. 108:9 [q]2 Sam. 8:1
10 [r]Ps. 108:11 [s]Josh. 7:12
11 [t]Ps. 118:8; 146:3
12 [u]Num. 24:18

PSALM 61

title [1]Heb. *neginah*

PSALM 61

Assurance of God's Eternal Protection

To the Chief Musician. On [1]a stringed instrument. A Psalm of David.

Hear my cry, O God;
Attend to my prayer.

events recorded in 2 Sam. 8 and 1 Chr. 18. The historical books, however, tell only of the conclusion of the battle's victory. The title and the psalm suggest that David experienced setbacks on the way to victory. The historical books and the psalm differ on the number of Edomites killed in the Valley of Salt, probably through a copyist's error. The psalm associates Joab with the victory, while 2 Sam. 8:13 names David, and 1 Chr. 18:12 lists Abishai. All three were high commanders in the army and could be credited with the victory.

■ **60:1 cast us off.** When God rejects His people, He abandons them and leaves them to the mercy of the enemy. It is only with God's approval that the people of Israel have any reason for confidence.

■ **60:3 drink the wine of confusion.** The image is a frequent one in the prophets. The cup that makes a nation stagger is the cup of judgment (Jer. 25:15–38; Nah. 3:11). Jesus drank the cup of wrath to its dregs on behalf of His people (Matt. 26:39 and parallels).

■ **60:4 those who fear You.** The verse is a token of hope for the faithful. God gives protection to His people from the weapons of the enemy.

■ **60:6 God has spoken in His holiness.** The divine oracle was probably spoken through a prophet associated with the temple. The gist of his message is that victory will be forthcoming, a message borne out by the report in 2 Sam. 8.

I will divide. The following verses exult in the inheritance of the Promised Land.

Shechem . . . Succoth. These names are the first two places that Jacob occupied after returning from his encounter with Esau (Gen. 33:17–20). They are on opposite sides of the Jordan River.

■ **60:7 Gilead . . . Manasseh.** Both these areas are located, at least in part, in the region of the Transjordan.

Ephraim . . . Judah. These were the two most powerful tribes in Israel. They were frequently rivals, but here they are united as parts of God's army.

■ **60:8 Moab . . . Edom . . . Philistia.** Moab and Edom were east of Judah, and Philistia was west of Judah on the Mediterranean coast. These countries were traditional enemies of Israel, but in this song God exults in His power and authority over them.

cast My shoe. A gesture of contempt, or possibly a claim to ownership (Ruth 4:7).

■ **60:9 me.** Likely the king, who speaks on behalf of the nation.

■ **60:12 we will do valiantly.** The psalmist confesses that it is only through God's power that they will win the victory. This is the primary attitude that motivates Israel's wars in the Old Testament.

■ **Ps. 61** Elements of lament, thanksgiving, and petition are combined in this memorable psalm.

2 From the end of the earth I will cry to You,
When my heart is overwhelmed;
Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

3 For You have been a shelter for me,
[a]A strong tower from the enemy.
4 I will abide in Your [2]tabernacle forever;
[b]I will trust in the shelter of Your wings. Selah

5 For You, O God, have heard my vows;
You have given *me* the heritage of those who fear Your name.
6 You will prolong the king's life,
His years as many generations.
7 He shall abide before God forever.
Oh, prepare mercy [c]and truth, *which* may [3]preserve him!

8 So I will sing praise to Your name forever,
That I may daily perform my vows.

3 [a]Prov. 18:10
4 [b]Ps. 91:4 [2]*tent*
7 [c]Ps. 40:11 [3]Lit. *guard* or *keep*

PSALM 62

A Calm Resolve to Wait for the Salvation of God

To the Chief Musician. To [a]Jeduthun. A Psalm of David.

Truly [b]my soul silently *waits* for God;
From Him *comes* my salvation.
2 He only *is* my rock and my salvation;
He is my [1]defense;
I shall not be greatly [c]moved.[2]

3 How long will you attack a man?
You shall be slain, all of you,
[d]Like a leaning wall and a tottering fence.
4 They only consult to cast *him* down from his high position;
They [e]delight in lies;
They bless with their mouth,
But they curse inwardly. Selah

5 My soul, wait silently for God alone,
For my [3]expectation *is* from Him.

PSALM 62

title [a]1 Chr. 25:1
1 [b]Ps. 33:20
2 [c]Ps. 55:22 [1]*strong tower* [2]*shaken*
3 [d]Is. 30:13
4 [e]Ps. 28:3
5 [3]*hope*

■ **61:2 From the end of the earth.** The psalmist means that he is at a distance from the sanctuary on Mount Zion, and feels himself to be far from God.

rock. He comes to the critical recognition that he does not have the strength to rescue himself; he can only turn to God in trust.

■ **61:3 from the enemy.** God has protected the writer in the past against his enemies. This phrase leads us to believe that the psalmist is not only physically distant from the temple, but is engaged in a military action for which he needs God's help.

■ **61:4** The psalmist yearns for God's fellowship. See v. 2.

in the shelter of Your wings. Some see here a metaphor for God's compassion, as in the protection of the mother bird for her young. On the other hand, David's reference to the familiar wings of the cherubim portrayed on the ark of the covenant seems more likely.

■ **61:5 my vows.** In the process of petitioning the Lord, the psalmist has made promises of obedience to the Lord. See 22:22 and 1 Sam. 1:11.

heritage. As a member of God's community, he receives the promises of the covenant, including the land of Israel and the promise of God's protection.

■ **61:6 the king's life.** Israel's king was the center of the social order in Israel. The stability of that office affected the stability of the society as a whole. The earthly king was a symbol of the divine King. When Christ came, His gospel announced the "kingdom of heaven."

■ **61:7 abide . . . forever.** Jesus Christ, David's greater Son, fulfilled this verse beyond the expectation of the psalmist.

mercy. Specifically, lovingkindness toward those with whom God is in covenantal relationship.

■ **62:1 silently waits.** Lit. "is silent." True contentment can be found only in a right relationship with God.

■ **62:2 my rock . . . my defense.** Portrayals of God's protection from the dangers of life. See note on Ps. 28:1.

■ **62:3 leaning wall and a tottering fence.** The modern idiom is to "kick a man when he's down." The wicked continue to take advantage of the weak.

■ **62:4 They bless.** The wicked add hypocrisy to violence.

■ **62:5 my expectation.** His hope to be saved from the enemy (text note).

6 He only *is* my rock and my salvation;
He is my defense;
I shall not be [4]moved.
7 [f]In God *is* my salvation and my glory;
The rock of my strength,
And my refuge, *is* in God.

8 Trust in Him at all times, you people;
[g]Pour out your heart before Him;
God *is* a refuge for us. Selah

9 [h]Surely men of low degree *are* [5]a vapor,
Men of high degree *are* a lie;
If they are weighed on the scales.
They *are* altogether *lighter* than vapor.
10 Do not trust in oppression,
Nor vainly hope in robbery;
[i]If riches increase,
Do not set *your* heart *on them.*

11 God has spoken once,
Twice I have heard this:
That power *belongs* to God.
12 Also to You, O Lord, *belongs* mercy;
For [j]You [6]render to each one according to his work.

6 [4]*shaken*
7 [f]Jer. 3:23
8 [g]1 Sam. 1:15; Ps. 42:4; Lam. 2:19
9 [h]Job 7:16; Ps. 39:5; Is. 40:17 [5]*vanity*
10 [i]Job 31:25; [Mark 10:24; Luke 12:15; 1 Tim. 6:10]
12 [j]Matt. 16:27; Rom. 2:6; 1 Cor. 3:8 [6]*reward*

PSALM 63

Joy in the Fellowship of God

A Psalm of David [a]when he was in the wilderness of Judah.

O God, You *are* my God;
Early will I seek You;
[b]My soul thirsts for You;
My flesh longs for You
In a dry and thirsty land
Where there is no water.
2 So I have looked for You in the sanctuary,
To see [c]Your power and Your glory.

3 [d]Because Your lovingkindness *is* better than life,
My lips shall praise You.
4 Thus I will bless You while I live;
I will [e]lift up my hands in Your name.

PSALM 63
title [a]1 Sam. 22:5
1 [b]Ps. 42:2; [Matt. 5:6]
2 [c]Ps. 27:4
3 [d]Ps. 138:2
4 [e]Ps. 28:2; 143:6

■ **62:8 you people.** The psalmist turns to the faithful in the congregation and encourages them to put their trust in God alone.

■ **62:9 vapor . . . vapor.** The word may be translated variously. It is the most characteristic word of Ecclesiastes, where it is often translated "vanity" or "meaningless." The point is that people are meaningless and without consequence *in and of themselves.* The psalmist takes comfort in this; his persecutors, in reality, are not significant.

■ **62:10 riches increase.** Doubt arises when people become rich through evil means (Ps. 73). In this psalm, the author clearly sees that such riches are transitory.

■ **62:12 mercy.** God is not only able to save the psalmist; He desires to do so.

render . . . according to his work. The psalmist has a long-range perspective here, since at present the righteous are often at the mercy of the wicked. From the New Testament we understand that there will be many unresolved injustices in the present life until Christ returns.

■ **Ps. 63** This beautiful psalm expresses quiet confidence in God's ability to protect the psalmist.

■ **63:title** The setting of the psalm is the desert of Judah.

■ **63:1 thirsts.** Cf. Ps. 42.

My flesh. The Book of Psalms permits no false spiritualization. The whole person yearns for God, not merely a non-physical aspect of the person.

■ **63:2 in the sanctuary.** The psalmist remembers the place of God's appointment, and the vision of God's "power" and "glory" entrusted to him there.

■ **63:3 Your lovingkindness.** That is, the unchanging love God shows toward those joined to Him by His covenant.

5 My soul shall be satisfied as with [1]marrow and [2]fatness,
And my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips.

6 When I remember You on my bed,
I meditate on You in the *night* watches.
7 Because You have been my help,
Therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice.
8 My soul follows close behind You;
Your right hand upholds me.

9 But those *who* seek my life, to destroy *it,*
Shall go into the lower parts of the earth.
10 They shall [3]fall by the sword;
They shall be [4]a portion for jackals.

11 But the king shall rejoice in God;
[g]Everyone who swears by Him shall glory;
But the mouth of those who speak lies shall be stopped.

5 [1]Lit. *fat* [2]Abundance
6 [f]Ps. 42:8
10 [3]Lit. *pour him out by the hand of the sword* [4]Prey
11 [g]Deut. 6:13; [Is. 45:23; 65:16]

PSALM 64

Oppressed by the Wicked but Rejoicing in the LORD

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

Hear my voice, O God, in my [1]meditation;
Preserve my life from fear of the enemy.
2 Hide me from the secret plots of the wicked,
From the rebellion of the workers of iniquity,
3 Who sharpen their tongue like a sword,
[a]And bend *their bows to shoot* their arrows—bitter words,
4 That they may shoot in secret at the blameless;
Suddenly they shoot at him and do not fear.

5 They encourage themselves *in* an evil matter;
They talk of laying snares secretly;
[b]They say, "Who will see them?"
6 They devise iniquities:
"We have perfected a shrewd scheme."
Both the inward thought and the heart of man are deep.

7 But God shall shoot at them *with* an arrow;
Suddenly they shall be wounded.
8 So He will make them stumble over their own tongue;
[c]All who see them shall flee away.

PSALM 64
1 [1]*complaint*
3 [a]Ps. 58:7
5 [b]Ps. 10:11; 59:7
8 [c]Ps. 31:11

■ **63:5 shall be satisfied.** Only in praise to God, in intimate communion with Him, will the psalmist feel spiritually content.

■ **63:6 night watches.** The psalmist has confidence in the Lord when he is most vulnerable to fear and attack.

■ **63:7 Your wings.** God may be compared to a mother bird who protects her young, but see second note on 61:4.

■ **63:8 My soul follows close behind You.** Though far removed from the sanctuary, the place where he has experienced God's presence, the psalmist still enjoys intimate communion with Him. Clinging to the Lord means finding in Him one's only hope (Deut. 10:20; 11:22).

■ **63:9 seek my life.** This verse is the first indication of distress or danger in the poem of the psalmist's distress.

■ **63:11 who swears by Him shall glory.** God's justice wins out. Those who love God will continue to praise Him, while the wicked will be stifled.

■ **64:1 fear of the enemy.** Because unnamed, the "enemy" can apply to any adversary.

■ **64:3 like a sword . . . arrows—bitter words.** The Bible consistently teaches that words are powerful and can be used for good (Prov. 25:15) or evil (Prov. 12:18; 25:18).

■ **64:5 Who will see them.** They do not fear men, and by their question they show they do not fear God. They think their acts go unnoticed, forgetting that there is a just God in heaven who watches their every move (Ps. 2).

■ **64:6 perfected a shrewd scheme.** To their other crimes, these evildoers add the sin of pride.

■ **64:7 shoot at them with an arrow.** This verse should be contrasted with v. 4. Some of the same words are used to highlight the reversal. The wicked who try to shoot the righteous are themselves struck by the arrows of God.

■ **64:8 their own tongue.** Contrast with v. 3. God reverses the effects of their tongues. They wanted to use their tongues against the psalmist; they finally incriminated themselves.

9 [d]Jer. 50:28; 51:10
10 [e]Job 22:19; Ps. 32:11

PSALM 65

1 [f]A promised deed
2 [g][Is. 66:23]
3 [h]Ps. 51:2; 79:9; Is. 6:7; [Heb. 9:14; 1 John 1:7, 9]
4 [c]Ps. 33:12 [d]Ps. 4:3 [e]Ps. 36:8
6 [f]Ps. 93:1
7 [g]Matt. 8:26 [h]Is. 17:12, 13
8 [2]*shout for joy*
9 [i][Deut. 11:12]; Jer. 5:24 [j]Ps. 46:4; 104:13; 147:8 [3]*give attention to*

9 All men shall fear,
And shall [d]declare the work of God;
For they shall wisely consider His doing.

10 [e]The righteous shall be glad in the LORD, and trust in Him.
And all the upright in heart shall glory.

PSALM 65

Praise to God for His Salvation and Providence

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David. A Song.

Praise is awaiting You, O God, in Zion;
And to You the [f]vow shall be performed.
2 O You who hear prayer,
[g]To You all flesh will come.
3 Iniquities prevail against me;
As for our transgressions,
You will [h]provide atonement for them.

4 [c]Blessed *is the man* You [d]choose,
And cause to approach *You,*
That he may dwell in Your courts.
[e]We shall be satisfied with the goodness of Your house,
Of Your holy temple.

5 *By* awesome deeds in righteousness You will answer us,
O God of our salvation,
You who are the confidence of all the ends of the earth,
And of the far-off seas;
6 Who established the mountains by His strength,
[f]*Being* clothed with power;
7 [g]You who still the noise of the seas,
The noise of their waves,
[h]And the tumult of the peoples.
8 They also who dwell in the farthest parts are afraid of Your signs;
You make the outgoings of the morning and evening [2]rejoice.

9 You [3]visit the earth and [i]water it,
You greatly enrich it;
[j]The river of God is full of water;

■ **64:9 shall fear.** Seeing God's justice, the world will be startled by the judgment of the wicked. People of the world will reconsider their own acts in the light of God's dealings with the wicked.

■ **Ps. 65** Israel's agricultural economy depended on rainfall, which was commonly variable. This psalm thanks God for sending rain in answer to prayer.

■ **65:1 in Zion.** The location chosen by God for the temple, and the place toward which praise is directed. See notes on Ps. 50:2; 128:5; 129:5, and especially 2:6.

the vow. When Israel brought petitions before the Lord, they frequently promised to offer sacrifices in response to answered prayer.

■ **65:3 our transgressions.** From the perspective of the sinner, there is no hope. God in His grace, however, forgives the sinner; this is a source of great joy to the psalmist.

■ **65:4 Blessed.** See Ps. 1:1.

You choose. God's free grace is the source of blessing, and the highest blessing of all is to enjoy His fellowship (Ps. 16:11).

■ **65:5 awesome deeds.** God is not a distant deity who has nothing to do with His creation. He answers prayer by intervening in history and in the lives of His people.

ends of the earth. In the theologies of the surrounding lands, it was thought that there were different gods for different localities; e.g., Marduk of Babylon and Baal of Ugarit. The psalmist knows that the Lord is not simply another god among many; He is the God of the universe.

■ **65:6 the mountains.** A symbol of firmness and strength. God's creation of them shows His power and greatness (Ps. 46:2, 3 and notes).

clothed with power. God is clothed with power as a divine warrior who conquers the enemies of Israel (Ex. 15; Josh. 5:13–15; Judg. 5).

■ **65:7 The noise of their waves.** The seas represent chaos and evil (Ps. 77:16–19 and notes), often the chaos and evil of surrounding nations who attack Israel (Dan. 7).

■ **65:8 dwell in the farthest parts.** A deeper meaning of this verse was brought to light in the coming of Christ and the preaching of the gospel throughout the world.

■ **65:9 water it.** Compare 1 Kin. 17—19, the time of Elijah, when God cursed His rebellious people by withholding the rain.

You provide their grain,
For so You have prepared it.
10 You water its ridges abundantly,
You settle its furrows;
You make it soft with showers,
You bless its growth.

11 You crown the year with Your goodness,
And Your paths drip *with* abundance.
12 They drop *on* the pastures of the wilderness,
And the little hills rejoice on every side.
13 The pastures are clothed with flocks;
[k]The valleys also are covered with grain;
They shout for joy, they also sing.

PSALM 66

Praise to God for His Awesome Works

To the Chief Musician. A Song. A Psalm.

Make [a]a joyful shout to God, all the earth!
2 Sing out the honor of His name;
Make His praise glorious.
3 Say to God,
"How [b]awesome are Your works!
[c]Through the greatness of Your power
Your enemies shall submit themselves to You.
4 [d]All the earth shall worship You
And sing praises to You;
They shall sing praises *to* Your name." Selah

5 Come and see the works of God;
He is awesome *in His* doing toward the sons of men.
6 [e]He turned the sea into dry *land;*
[f]They went through the river on foot.
There we will rejoice in Him.
7 He rules by His power forever;
His eyes observe the nations;
Do not let the rebellious exalt themselves. Selah

8 Oh, bless our God, you peoples!
And make the voice of His praise to be heard,
9 Who keeps our soul among the living,
And does not allow our feet to [l]be moved.
10 For [g]You, O God, have tested us;
[h]You have refined us as silver is refined.
11 [i]You brought us into the net;
You laid affliction on our backs.

13 [k]Is. 44:23; 55:12

PSALM 66

1 [a]Ps. 100:1

3 [b]Ps. 65:5 [c]Ps. 18:44

4 [d]Ps. 117:1; Zech. 14:16

6 [e]Ex. 14:21 [f]Josh. 3:14–16

9 [l]*slip*

10 [g]Job 23:10; Ps. 17:3 [h][Is. 48:10; Zech. 13:9; Mal. 3:3; 1 Pet. 1:7]

11 [i]Lam. 1:13; Ezek. 12:13

■ **66:3 awesome.** Great and fearful.

submit. When God appears as a warrior, the enemies have reason to fear they will be destroyed (Josh. 2:11).

■ **66:5 Come and see.** The psalmist invites the hearer to remember God's great acts in history (Ps. 46:8).

■ **66:6 sea . . . river.** The first phrase of this verse refers to crossing the Red Sea (Ex. 14; 15). The second refers to crossing the Jordan forty years later (Josh. 3). These great acts demonstrated God's power to His people.

■ **66:9 keeps our soul.** This is a general truth, but there may be an allusion to the Exodus. A context of Israel's more recent testing may also be possible.

■ **66:10 tested us.** God occasionally laid difficult decisions before His people to see whether they would be obedient to Him in spite of their suffering (Ex. 15:25).

as silver. When silver is refined, it is purified; the dross is taken away. When God tests His people, those who are not obedient are taken away, while the faithful remain steadfast.

■ **66:11 into the net.** The Lord has brought the psalmist and the faithful through a period of affliction.

12 [j]Is. 51:23 [k]Is. 43:2 [2]*abundance*

13 [l]Ps. 100:4; 116:14, 17–19 [m][Eccl. 5:4] [3]Promised deeds

17 [4]*praised*

18 [n]Job 27:9; [Prov. 15:29; 28:9]; Is. 1:15; [John 9:31; James 4:3]

19 [o]Ps. 116:1, 2

12 [j]You have caused men to ride over our heads;
[k]We went through fire and through water;
But You brought us out to [2]rich *fulfillment.*

13 [l]I will go into Your house with burnt offerings;
[m]I will pay You my [3]vows,
14 Which my lips have uttered
And my mouth has spoken when I was in trouble.
15 I will offer You burnt sacrifices of fat animals,
With the sweet aroma of rams;
I will offer bulls with goats. Selah

16 Come *and* hear, all you who fear God,
And I will declare what He has done for my soul.
17 I cried to Him with my mouth,
And He was [4]extolled with my tongue.
18 [n]If I regard iniquity in my heart,
The Lord will not hear.
19 *But* certainly God [o]has heard *me;*
He has attended to the voice of my prayer.

20 Blessed *be* God,
Who has not turned away my prayer,
Nor His mercy from me!

PSALM 67

An Invocation and a Doxology

PSALM 67

title [1]Heb. *neginoth*

1 [a]Num. 6:25

2 [b]Acts 18:25 [c]Is. 52:10; Titus 2:11

4 [d][Ps. 96:10, 13; 98:9]

6 [e]Lev. 26:4; Ps. 85:12; [Ezek. 34:27]; Zech. 8:12 [2]*give her produce*

To the Chief Musician. On [1]stringed instruments. A Psalm. A Song.

God be merciful to us and bless us,
And [a]cause His face to shine upon us, Selah
2 That [b]Your way may be known on earth,
[c]Your salvation among all nations.

3 Let the peoples praise You, O God;
Let all the peoples praise You.
4 Oh, let the nations be glad and sing for joy!
For [d]You shall judge the people righteously,
And govern the nations on earth. Selah

5 Let the peoples praise You, O God;
Let all the peoples praise You.
6 [e]*Then* the earth shall [2]yield her increase;
God, our own God, shall bless us.
7 God shall bless us,
And all the ends of the earth shall fear Him.

■ **66:12 to rich fulfillment.** A possible reference to recent salvation from distress, but there may also be an allusion to Israel's conquest of Canaan.

■ **66:13 pay . . . my vows.** The psalmist expresses his individual thanks. Apparently, God has recently saved him from some distress. While he was suffering, he promised to worship God with sacrifices if God heard his prayer. (22:22 note).

■ **66:16 Come and hear.** Often, the fulfilling of the vow leads to public praise, witnessing to God's salvation.

■ **Ps. 67** The universal scope of this psalm is striking, even in the Book of Psalms where such far-reaching vision is not rare.

■ **67:1 cause His face to shine upon us.** The psalmist picks up the standard priestly blessing found in Num. 6:25. The thing promised in the blessing is that God will be present.

■ **67:2 all nations.** God is sovereign over all, not merely of a particular country.

■ **67:3 Let the peoples.** The psalmist's desire to see peoples from many different nations praise the Lord was begun in a new way when the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ broke down "the middle wall of separation" (Eph. 2:14).

■ **67:6 increase.** The psalm may have been sung at one of the agricultural festivals, such as the Feast of Ingathering (Ex. 23:14–17).

PSALM 68

The Glory of God in His Goodness to Israel

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David. A Song.

Let [a]God arise,
Let His enemies be scattered;
Let those also who hate Him flee before Him.
2 [b]As smoke is driven away,
So drive *them* away;
[c]As wax melts before the fire,
So let the wicked perish at the presence of God.
3 But [d]let the righteous be glad;
Let them rejoice before God;
Yes, let them rejoice exceedingly.

4 Sing to God, sing praises to His name;
[e]Extol[1] Him who rides on the [2]clouds,
[f]By His name [3]YAH,
And rejoice before Him.

5 [g]A father of the fatherless, a defender of widows,
Is God in His holy habitation.
6 [h]God sets the solitary in families;
[i]He brings out those who are bound into prosperity;
But [j]the rebellious dwell in a dry *land.*

7 O God, [k]when You went out before Your people,
When You marched through the wilderness, Selah
8 The earth shook;
The heavens also dropped *rain* at the presence of God;
Sinai itself *was moved* at the presence of God, the God of Israel.
9 [l]You, O God, sent a plentiful rain,
Whereby You confirmed Your inheritance,
When it was weary.
10 Your congregation dwelt in it;
[m]You, O God, provided from Your goodness for the poor.

11 The Lord gave the word;
Great *was* the [4]company of those who proclaimed *it:*
12 "Kings[n] of armies flee, they flee,
And she who remains at home divides the [5]spoil.
13 [o]Though you lie down among the [6]sheepfolds,
[p]*You will be* like the wings of a dove covered with silver,

PSALM 68

1 [a]Num. 10:35
2 [b][Is. 9:18]; Hos. 13:3 [c]Ps. 97:5; Mic. 1:4
3 [d]Ps. 32:11
4 [e]Deut. 33:26 [f][Ex. 6:3] [1]*Praise* [2]MT *deserts;* Tg. *heavens* (cf. v. 34 and Is. 19:1) [3]Lit. LORD, a shortened Heb. form
5 [g][Ps. 10:14, 18; 146:9]
6 [h]Ps. 107:4–7 [i]Acts 12:6–11 [j]Ps. 107:34
7 [k]Ex. 13:21; [Hab. 3:13]
9 [l]Lev. 26:4; Deut. 11:11; Job 5:10; Ezek. 34:26
10 [m]Deut. 26:5; Ps. 74:19
11 [4]*host*
12 [n]Num. 31:8; Josh. 10:16; Judg. 5:19 [5]*plunder*
13 [o]Ps. 81:6 [p]Ps. 105:37 [6]Or *saddlebags*

■ **Ps. 68** This psalm has an enigmatic quality. Some have found it so disconnected as to suggest that it was a collection of first lines of other poems. Yet there are common themes and attitudes in the psalm. It has a hymn-like mood of joy with frequent allusions to community worship. God appears as a warrior at its center. His victory over His enemies as expressed here became the background for Jesus' victory over the forces of Satan at the Ascension (Eph. 4:7–13).

■ **68:1 Let God arise.** See Num. 10:35. These were the first words Moses spoke each day before Israel marched during the wilderness period. As he spoke, the ark of the covenant would be raised to lead the procession.

■ **68:2 smoke . . . wax.** The two images call on God to deal with the enemy quickly.

■ **68:4 who rides on the clouds.** God's coming with the clouds is a frequent theme in the Scriptures (Ps. 18:7–15; 104:3; Dan. 7:13; Nah. 1:3).

■ **68:5 fatherless . . . widows.** Widows and orphans were particularly vulnerable in ancient society. God commanded Israel to care for them (Ex. 22:22; Deut. 10:18; Ruth 4:14, 15).

■ **68:6 the solitary.** Since the family was the center of Israelite society, those outside of its structure were alone and often needy.

■ **68:7 through the wilderness.** The reference is to the forty years of wilderness wanderings.

■ **68:8 Sinai . . . was moved.** God made the earth shake at Sinai (Ex. 19:18, 19).

■ **68:9 plentiful rain.** An essential blessing in a land not known for rainfall. Long droughts had devastating effects (1 Kin. 17—19).

■ **68:11 company.** Or "host"; the word is a military term.

■ **68:12 divides the spoil.** See Judg. 5:30.

And her feathers with yellow gold."

14 [q]When the Almighty scattered kings in it,
It was *white* as snow in Zalmon.

15 A mountain of God *is* the mountain of Bashan;
A mountain *of many* peaks *is* the mountain of Bashan.
16 Why do you [7]fume with envy, you mountains of *many* peaks?
[r]*This is* the mountain *which* God desires to dwell in;
Yes, the LORD will dwell *in it* forever.

17 [s]The chariots of God *are* twenty thousand,
Even thousands of thousands;
The Lord is among them *as in* Sinai, in the Holy *Place.*
18 [t]You have ascended on high,
[u]You have led captivity captive;
[v]You have received gifts among men,
Even *from* [w]the rebellious,
[x]That the LORD God might dwell *there.*

19 Blessed *be* the Lord,
Who daily loads us *with benefits,*
The God of our salvation! Selah
20 Our God *is* the God of salvation;
And [y]to GOD the Lord *belong* escapes from death.

21 But [z]God will wound the head of His enemies,
[a]The hairy scalp of the one who still goes on in his trespasses.
22 The Lord said, "I will bring [b]back from Bashan,
I will bring *them* back [c]from the depths of the sea,
23 [d]That [8]your foot may crush *them* in blood,
[e]And the tongues of your dogs *may have* their portion from *your* enemies."

24 They have seen Your [9]procession, O God,
The procession of my God, my King, into the sanctuary.
25 [f]The singers went before, the players on instruments *followed* after;
Among *them were* the maidens playing timbrels.
26 Bless God in the congregations,
The Lord, from [g]the fountain of Israel.
27 [h]There *is* little Benjamin, their leader,
The princes of Judah *and* their [1]company,
The princes of Zebulun *and* the princes of Naphtali.

28 [2]Your God has [i]commanded your strength;
Strengthen, O God, what You have done for us.
29 Because of Your temple at Jerusalem,
[j]Kings will bring presents to You.
30 Rebuke the beasts of the reeds,
[k]The herd of bulls with the calves of the peoples,

14 [q]Josh. 10:10
16 [r][Deut. 12:5]; 1 Kin. 9:3 [7]Lit. *stare*
17 [s]Deut. 33:2; Dan. 7:10
18 [t]Mark 16:19; Acts 1:9; Eph. 4:8; Phil. 2:9; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3 [u]Judg. 5:12 [v]Acts 2:4, 33; 10:44–46; [1 Cor. 12:4–11; Eph. 4:7–12] [w][1 Tim. 1:13] [x]Ps. 78:60
20 [y][Deut. 32:39]
21 [z]Hab. 3:13 [a]Ps. 55:23
22 [b]Num. 21:33; Deut. 30:1–9; Amos 9:1–3 [c]Ex. 14:22
23 [d]Ps. 58:10 [e]1 Kin. 21:19; Jer. 15:3 [8]LXX, Syr., Tg., Vg. *you may dip your foot*
24 [9]Lit. *goings*
25 [f]1 Chr. 13:8
26 [g]Deut. 33:28; Is. 48:1
27 [h]Judg. 5:14; 1 Sam. 9:21 [1]*throng*
28 [i]Ps. 42:8; Is. 26:12 [2]LXX, Syr., Tg., Vg. *Command, O God*
29 [j]1 Kin. 10:10, 25; 2 Chr. 32:23; Ps. 45:12; 72:10; Is. 18:7
30 [k]Ps. 22:12

■ **68:16 the mountain which God desires to dwell in.** Though the Bashan mountains are physically majestic, far more imposing than Zion, the latter is surpassing because Zion's majesty is spiritual, not physical.

■ **68:18 received gifts.** In Eph. 4:8 Paul writes "gave gifts." In a procession of triumph, the victor would receive and distribute gifts.

■ **68:19 Who daily loads us with benefits.** God cares for His people and is constantly in touch with their needs. This passage may be contrasted with Is. 46:1–4, where the prophet decries the inability of the idols to care for their worshipers.

■ **68:20 God of salvation.** The Lord saves His people from illness and from death in battle. In Jesus Christ His people learn that He, by His resurrection, delivers from death by obtaining eternal life for them.

■ **68:22 from Bashan.** Likely a reference to the defeat of Og, king of Bashan in the period before the conquest of the land (Deut. 3).

from the depths of the sea. God delivered Israel from death at the Red Sea (Ex. 14).

■ **68:24 Your procession.** After being led by God in battle, the army would return to the city of Jerusalem, carrying the ark with them (Ps. 24). Worshiping crowds would accompany it to the temple.

■ **68:29 Because of Your temple.** Jerusalem's prestige has a single, spiritual cause: God has for that time chosen it as a special place of His dwelling (Deut. 12; 2 Sam. 7; cf. Is. 22:1, 2).

Till everyone [l]submits himself with pieces of silver.
Scatter the peoples *who* delight in war.
31 [m]Envoys will come out of Egypt;
[n]Ethiopia will quickly [o]stretch out her hands to God.

32 Sing to God, you [p]kingdoms of the earth;
Oh, sing praises to the Lord, Selah
33 To Him [q]who rides on the heaven of heavens, *which were* of old!
Indeed, He sends out His voice, a [r]mighty voice.
34 [s]Ascribe strength to God;
His excellence *is* over Israel,
And His strength *is* in the clouds.
35 O God, [t]*You are* more awesome than Your holy places.
The God of Israel *is* He who gives strength and power to *His* people.

Blessed *be* God!

PSALM 69

An Urgent Plea for Help in Trouble

To the Chief Musician. Set to [1]"The Lilies." A Psalm of David.

Save me, O God!
For [a]the waters have come up to *my* [2]neck.
2 [b]I sink in deep mire,
Where *there is* no standing;
I have come into deep waters,
Where the floods overflow me.
3 [c]I am weary with my crying;
My throat is dry;
[d]My eyes fail while I wait for my God.

4 Those who [e]hate me without a cause
Are more than the hairs of my head;
They are mighty who would destroy me,
Being my enemies wrongfully;
Though I have stolen nothing,
I *still* must restore *it.*

5 O God, You know my foolishness;
And my sins are not hidden from You.
6 Let not those who [3]wait for You, O Lord GOD of hosts, be ashamed because of me;
Let not those who seek You be [4]confounded because of me, O God of Israel.
7 Because for Your sake I have borne reproach;
Shame has covered my face.
8 [f]I have become a stranger to my brothers,
And an alien to my mother's children;

30 [l]2 Sam. 8:2
31 [m]Is. 19:19–23 [n]Is. 45:14; Zeph. 3:10 [o]Ps. 44:20
32 [p][Ps. 67:3, 4]
33 [q]Deut. 33:26; Ps. 18:10 [r]Ps. 46:6; Is. 30:30
34 [s]Ps. 29:1
35 [t]Ps. 76:12

PSALM 69

title [1]Heb. *Shoshannim*
1 [a]Job 22:11; Jon. 2:5 [2]Lit. *soul*
2 [b]Ps. 40:2
3 [c]Ps. 6:6 [d]Deut. 28:32; Ps. 119:82, 123; Is. 38:14
4 [e]Ps. 35:19; John 15:25
6 [3]Wait in faith [4]*dishonored*
8 [f]Is. 53:3; Mark 3:21; Luke 8:19; John 7:3–5

■ **68:30 Rebuke.** More than a verbal assault, to "rebuke" a nation is to destroy it.

the beasts of the reeds. Either the crocodile or the hippopotamus, both symbols of Egypt.

■ **68:31 Ethiopia.** A traditional ally of Egypt (Nah. 3:9). "Ethiopia" (or "Cush") in the Bible is the remote land south of Egypt, including parts of modern Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Sudan.

■ **68:33 rides on the heaven of heavens.** As in v. 4, the psalmist poetically alludes to the heavens as God's war chariot.

■ **Ps. 69** This psalm is well known because of its application in the New Testament to the anguish of Jesus, God's righteous Servant, as He sought His Father's will during His earthly ministry.

■ **69:1 the waters.** The psalmist pictures his distress as one slowly sinking down in a river. The raging waters are a frequent biblical illustration of social or personal chaos. See notes on Ps. 18:4; 46:2, 3.

■ **69:2 the floods overflow me.** The poetic language in this section can be compared to a water ordeal, in which a person suspected of a crime might be cast into a river. The river would be expected to overwhelm and carry away the guilty one, but to release the innocent.

■ **69:5 my sins.** Although the psalmist is innocent of the charges alluded to in v. 4, he does not claim to be without sin.

■ **69:6 those who seek You.** The psalmist is concerned not for himself only, but for others in Israel who might be injured in some way through his sins. The possibility that his sins would affect others is enhanced by his power and prominence in society.

9 [g]John 2:17 [h]Rom. 15:3
11 [5]Symbolic of sorrow
12 [i]Job 30:9 [6]Sit as judges
19 [j]Ps. 22:6, 7; Heb. 12:2
20 [k]Is. 63:5 [l]Job 16:2 [7]Lit. *sickness*
21 [m]Matt. 27:34, 48; Mark 15:23, 36; Luke 23:36; John 19:28–30
22 [n]Rom. 11:9, 10
23 [o]Is. 6:9, 10
24 [p][Jer. 10:25; 1 Thess. 2:16]
25 [q]Matt. 23:38; Luke 13:35; Acts 1:20
26 [r][Is. 53:4; 1 Pet. 2:24]

9 [g]Because zeal for Your house has eaten me up,
[h]And the reproaches of those who reproach You have fallen on me.
10 When I wept *and chastened* my soul with fasting,
That became my reproach.
11 I also [5]made sackcloth my garment;
I became a byword to them.
12 Those who [6]sit in the gate speak against me,
And I *am* the song of the [i]drunkards.

13 But as for me, my prayer *is* to You,
O LORD, *in* the acceptable time;
O God, in the multitude of Your mercy,
Hear me in the truth of Your salvation.
14 Deliver me out of the mire,
And let me not sink;
Let me be delivered from those who hate me,
And out of the deep waters.
15 Let not the floodwater overflow me,
Nor let the deep swallow me up;
And let not the pit shut its mouth on me.

16 Hear me, O LORD, for Your lovingkindness *is* good;
Turn to me according to the multitude of Your tender mercies.
17 And do not hide Your face from Your servant,
For I am in trouble;
Hear me speedily.
18 Draw near to my soul, *and* redeem it;
Deliver me because of my enemies.

19 You know [j]my reproach, my shame, and my dishonor;
My adversaries *are* all before You.
20 Reproach has broken my heart,
And I am full of [7]heaviness;
[k]I looked *for someone* to take pity, but *there was* none;
And for [l]comforters, but I found none.
21 They also gave me gall for my food,
[m]And for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

22 [n]Let their table become a snare before them,
And their well-being a trap.
23 [o]Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see;
And make their loins shake continually.
24 [p]Pour out Your indignation upon them,
And let Your wrathful anger take hold of them.
25 [q]Let their dwelling place be desolate;
Let no one live in their tents.
26 For they persecute the *ones* [r]You have struck,
And talk of the grief of those You have wounded.

■ **69:9 for Your house.** This verse is applied to Jesus as He cleared the temple of money changers (John 2:17), and through doing good attracted the hatred of the wicked. Enmity directed toward God may cause suffering for those who are like God (Rom. 15:3).

■ **69:11 made sackcloth my garment.** When the psalmist performs religious acts like fasting, he must bear the brunt of ridicule from rich and poor alike (v. 12).

■ **69:15 the pit.** See Prov. 1:12; Is. 5:14 and notes.

■ **69:21 gall . . . vinegar.** The bitterness of gall is proverbial. When the psalmist suffers such maltreatment, he responds with a curse (vv. 22–29). The metaphor became a reality when Jesus Christ was offered vinegar at His crucifixion (John 19:29). He responded with compassion for those who tormented Him.

■ **69:25 Let their dwelling place be desolate.** The psalmist asks for the death of the wicked (v. 28). Peter cites this verse in connection with the death of Judas Iscariot and the void he left among the disciples (Acts 1:20).

■ **69:26 they persecute the ones You have struck.** The enemy furthers the pain of the afflicted. If God chastises someone, this is no excuse for others to increase his pain.

27 [s]Add iniquity to their iniquity,
[t]And let them not come into Your righteousness.
28 Let them [u]be blotted out of the book of the living,
[v]And not be written with the righteous.

29 But I *am* poor and sorrowful;
Let Your salvation, O God, set me up on high.
30 [w]I will praise the name of God with a song,
And will magnify Him with thanksgiving.
31 [x]*This* also shall please the LORD better than an ox *or* bull,
Which has horns and hooves.
32 [y]The humble shall see *this and* be glad;
And you who seek God, [z]your hearts shall live.
33 For the LORD hears the poor,
And does not despise [a]His prisoners.

34 [b]Let heaven and earth praise Him,
The seas [c]and everything that moves in them.
35 [d]For God will save Zion
And build the cities of Judah,
That they may dwell there and possess it.
36 Also, [e]the [g]descendants of His servants shall inherit it,
And those who love His name shall dwell in it.

27 [s]Neh. 4:5; [Rom. 1:28] [t][Is. 26:10]
28 [u][Ex. 32:32]; Phil. 4:3; [Rev. 3:5; 13:8] [v]Ezek. 13:9; Luke 10:20; Heb. 12:23
30 [w][Ps. 28:7]
31 [x]Ps. 50:13, 14, 23; 51:16
32 [y]Ps. 34:2 [z]Ps. 22:26
33 [a][Ps. 68:6]; Eph. 3:1
34 [b]Ps. 96:11; Is. 44:23; 49:13 [c]Is. 55:12
35 [d]Ps. 51:18; Is. 44:26
36 [e]Ps. 102:28
[g]Lit. *seed*

PSALM 70

Prayer for Relief from Adversaries

To the Chief Musician. *A Psalm* of David. [a]To bring to remembrance.

***M**ake haste,* [b]O God, to deliver me!
Make haste to help me, O LORD!

2 [c]Let them be ashamed and confounded
Who seek my life;
Let them be [f]turned back and confused
Who desire my hurt.
3 [d]Let them be turned back because of their shame,
Who say, [2]"Aha, aha!"

4 Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You;
And let those who love Your salvation say continually,
"Let God be magnified!"

5 [e]But I *am* poor and needy;
[f]Make haste to me, O God!
You *are* my help and my deliverer;
O LORD, do not delay.

PSALM 70
title [a]Ps. 38:title
1 [b]Ps. 40:13–17
2 [c]Ps. 35:4, 26 [f]So with MT, LXX, Tg., Vg.; some Heb. mss., Syr. *appalled* (cf. 40:15)
3 [d]Ps. 40:15 [2]An expression of scorn
5 [e]Ps. 72:12, 13 [f]Ps. 141:1

■ **69:30 I will praise.** The transition from pain and the call for judgment to resolute praise is abrupt. Such compression of thought is not unusual in biblical poetry.

■ **69:31 better than an ox.** An ox was the most expensive sacrifice. God is concerned with genuine praise, not wealth (50:12–14, 23; Hos. 14:2; Rom. 15:6; Heb. 13:15).

■ **69:32, 33 The humble . . . the poor.** The way to God is open to the humble poor.

■ **69:35 build the cities of Judah.** The last verses were probably added later than David, during or shortly after the exile of the Jews to Babylon in the sixth century B.C.

■ **Ps. 70** This psalm is nearly identical with Ps. 40:13–17.

■ **70:title To bring to remembrance.** This title is used elsewhere only for Ps. 38.

■ **70:1 Make haste . . . to deliver me.** In his desperate plight, the psalmist boldly asks the Lord to come to his rescue.

■ **70:2 be turned back and confused.** He wants the Lord to turn the tables on the enemy. They seek the psalmist's ruin and his life; he asks God to ruin them.

■ **70:5 poor and needy.** See 9:18 note.

PSALM 71

1 [a]Ps. 25:2, 3
2 [b]Ps. 31:1 [c]Ps. 17:6
3 [d]Ps. 31:2, 3 [e]Ps. 44:4 [f]Lit. *rock of refuge* or *rock of habitation*
4 [f]Ps. 140:1, 3
5 [g]Jer. 14:8; 17:7, 13, 17; 50:7
6 [h]Ps. 22:9, 10; Is. 46:3 [2]*sustained from the womb*
7 [i]Is. 8:18; Zech. 3:8; 1 Cor. 4:9
8 [j]Ps. 35:28
10 [k]2 Sam. 17:1
12 [l]Ps. 35:22 [m]Ps. 70:1
13 [3]*ashamed*
17 [n]Deut. 4:5; 6:7

PSALM 71

God the Rock of Salvation

In [a]You, O LORD, I put my trust;
Let me never be put to shame.
2 [b]Deliver me in Your righteousness, and cause me to escape;
[c]Incline Your ear to me, and save me.
3 [d]Be my [f]strong refuge,
To which I may resort continually;
You have given the [e]commandment to save me,
For You *are* my rock and my fortress.

4 [f]Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked,
Out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.
5 For You are [g]my hope, O Lord GOD;
You are my trust from my youth.
6 [h]By You I have been [2]upheld from birth;
You are He who took me out of my mother's womb.
My praise *shall be* continually of You.

7 [i]I have become as a wonder to many,
But You *are* my strong refuge.
8 Let [j]my mouth be filled *with* Your praise
And with Your glory all the day.

9 Do not cast me off in the time of old age;
Do not forsake me when my strength fails.
10 For my enemies speak against me;
And those who lie in wait for my life [k]take counsel together,
11 Saying, "God has forsaken him;
Pursue and take him, for *there is* none to deliver *him.*"

12 [l]O God, do not be far from me;
O my God, [m]make haste to help me!
13 Let them be [3]confounded *and* consumed
Who are adversaries of my life;
Let them be covered *with* reproach and dishonor
Who seek my hurt.

14 But I will hope continually,
And will praise You yet more and more.
15 My mouth shall tell of Your righteousness
And Your salvation all the day,
For I do not know *their* limits.
16 I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD;
I will make mention of Your righteousness, of Yours only.

17 O God, You have taught me from my [n]youth;
And to this *day* I declare Your wondrous works.

■ **Ps. 71** A psalm of lament uttered by an older man (v. 9). This psalm is one of the few in the first two books of the Psalms without a title.

■ **71:2 in Your righteousness.** See note on Ps. 31:1.

■ **71:3 my rock and my fortress.** God is the psalmist's only place of protection. See note on Ps. 61:2.

■ **71:5 from my youth.** The language of the psalmist shows that he is now an older man. He is in a position where he can look back over his life and ponder his relationship with God.

■ **71:6 out of my mother's womb.** The psalmist confesses that God created him for a gracious purpose.

■ **71:11 God has forsaken him.** Like Job's friends, the psalmist's enemies have come to the wrong conclusion about his suffering.

■ **71:14 I will hope continually.** He can look back over his long life and see how God has saved him in the past. His memory serves as a bulwark of devotion.

■ **71:15 For I do not know their limits.** Uninterrupted praise cannot adequately express God's mercy; His salvation is beyond comprehension.

18 Now also [o]when *I am* old and grayhead,
O God, do not forsake me,
Until I declare Your strength to *this* generation,
Your power to everyone *who* is to come.

19 Also [p]Your righteousness, O God, *is* [4]very high,
You who have done great things;
[q]O God, who *is* like You?
20 [r]*You,* who have shown me great and severe troubles,
[s]Shall revive me again,
And bring me up again from the depths of the earth.
21 You shall increase my greatness,
And comfort me on every side.

22 Also [t]with the lute I will praise You—
And Your faithfulness, O my God!
To You I will sing with the harp,
O [u]Holy One of Israel.
23 My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing to You,
And [v]my soul, which You have redeemed.
24 My tongue also shall talk of Your righteousness all the day long;
For they are confounded,
For they are brought to shame
Who seek my hurt.

18 [o][Is. 46:4]

19 [p]Deut. 3:24; Ps. 57:10 [q]Ps. 35:10 [4]*great,* lit. *to the height* of heaven

20 [r]Ps. 60:3 [s]Hos. 6:1, 2

22 [t]Ps. 92:1–3 [u]2 Kin. 19:22; Is. 1:4

23 [v]Ps. 103:4

PSALM 72

Glory and Universality of the Messiah's Reign

A Psalm [a]of Solomon.

Give the king Your judgments, O God,
And Your righteousness to the king's Son.
2 [b]He will judge Your people with righteousness,
And Your poor with justice.
3 [c]The mountains will bring peace to the people,
And the little hills, by righteousness.
4 [d]He will bring justice to the poor of the people;
He will save the children of the needy,
And will [1]break in pieces the oppressor.

5 [2]They shall fear You
[e]As long as the sun and moon endure,
Throughout all generations.
6 [f]He shall come down like rain upon the grass before mowing,

PSALM 72

title [a]Ps. 127:title

2 [b][Is. 9:7; 11:2–5; 32:1]

3 [c]Ps. 85:10

4 [d]Is. 11:4 [1]*crush*

5 [e]Ps. 72:7, 17; 89:36 [2]So with MT, Tg.; LXX, Vg. *They shall continue*

6 [f]Deut. 32:2; 2 Sam. 23:4; Hos. 6:3

■ **71:18 to this generation.** It is the duty of the older members of God's community to teach the young what God has done in their elder's lives.

■ **71:19 is very high.** God's righteousness is so great it cannot be contained. It is without limit.

who is like You. To ask this rhetorical question is to answer it.

■ **71:20 You . . . have shown me . . . troubles.** The psalmist knows that life is hard and that God has not sheltered him from every difficulty. Nonetheless, he has confidence that God will deliver him.

■ **71:21 comfort me on every side.** Job is an example of a person who was restored after a time of intense suffering. But this kind of restoration does not always happen during earthly existence (Luke 16:25; Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 4:17).

■ **Ps. 72** The second part of Psalms concludes with a royal psalm asking God to bless the just king. Some of the language goes beyond what applies to the earthly king, anticipating the Messiah.

■ **72:title** See Introduction: Author. The Septuagint (ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament) understands the title to name Solomon as the subject matter and not as the author of the psalm. The traditional understanding of the Hebrew is to indicate authorship.

■ **72:1 Your judgments . . . Your righteousness.** God, the divine King, is the source of all justice and righteousness. If the human king is to have such qualities, he must receive them from God.

■ **72:2 Your people.** The human king receives his calling from the divine King.

■ **72:3 peace.** See note on 122:6.

■ **72:4 poor . . . needy.** The king had a special responsibility to the vulnerable in society. God has a special concern and love for the poor, and the earthly king must take special care of them. See 9:18 note.

■ **72:5 As long as the sun.** As applied to an earthly king, this is a poetic overstatement. The language looks forward to the one King who will live forever (Luke 1:33; Heb. 7:16; Rev. 11:15).

Like showers *that* water the earth.
7 In His days the righteous shall flourish,
[g] And abundance of peace,
Until the moon is no more.

8 [h] He shall have dominion also from sea to sea,
And from the River to the ends of the earth.
9 [i] Those who dwell in the wilderness will bow before Him,
[j] And His enemies will lick the dust.
10 [k] The kings of Tarshish and of the isles
Will bring presents;
The kings of Sheba and Seba
Will offer gifts.
11 [l] Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him;
All nations shall serve Him.

12 For He [m] will deliver the needy when he cries,
The poor also, and *him* who has no helper.
13 He will spare the poor and needy,
And will save the souls of the needy.
14 He will redeem their life from oppression and violence;
And [n] precious shall be their blood in His sight.

15 And He shall live;
And the gold of [o] Sheba will be given to Him;
Prayer also will be made for Him continually,
And daily He shall be praised.

16 There will be an abundance of grain in the earth,
On the top of the mountains;
Its fruit shall wave like Lebanon;
[p] And *those* of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.

17 [q] His name shall endure forever;
His name shall continue as long as the sun.
And [r] *men* shall be blessed in Him;
[s] All nations shall call Him blessed.

18 [t] Blessed *be* the LORD God, the God of Israel,
[u] Who only does wondrous things!
19 And [v] blessed *be* His glorious name forever!
[w] And let the whole earth be filled *with* His glory.
Amen and Amen.

20 The prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended.

7 [g] Is. 2:4
8 [h] Ex. 23:31; [Is. 9:6; Zech. 9:10]
9 [i] Ps. 74:14; Is. 23:13 [j] Is. 49:23; Mic. 7:17
10 [k] 1 Kin. 10:2; 2 Chr. 9:21
11 [l] Is. 49:23
12 [m] Job 29:12
14 [n] 1 Sam. 26:21; [Ps. 116:15]
15 [o] Is. 60:6
16 [p] 1 Kin. 4:20
17 [q] [Ps. 89:36] [r] [Gen. 12:3] [s] Luke 1:48
18 [t] 1 Chr. 29:10 [u] Ex. 15:11; Job 5:9
19 [v] [Neh. 9:5] [w] Num. 14:21; Hab. 2:14

■ **72:8 from sea to sea.** There is an allusion here to the promised boundaries of Ex. 23:31, but the language far exceeds any achievement of an earthly king of Israel, and so looks forward to the Messiah's reign.

■ **72:9 Those who dwell in the wilderness.** He will subdue the rebellious tribes of the desert.

■ **72:10 Tarshish . . . Sheba . . . Seba.** These places were considered to be remote. Tarshish is usually associated with Tartessus in Spain. Sheba and probably Seba are in southern Arabia.

■ **72:17 His name shall endure forever.** The verse recalls the Abrahamic promises of Gen. 12:2, 3. The king is a focal point for the society of God's people. He represents the people and is the heir of the promises; in Jesus Christ these promises come to fulfillment.

■ **72:18, 19** Each of the five books of the Psalms concludes with a doxology praising the name of the Lord.

■ **72:20** At some point in the process of collecting the psalms, all of the psalms of David were grouped together in the first two books. This unity was not preserved as the book continued, and this verse cannot be applied strictly to Ps. 1—72.

Book Three: Psalms 73—89

PSALM 73

The Tragedy of the Wicked, and the Blessedness of Trust in God

A Psalm of [a]Asaph.

Truly God *is* good to Israel,
To such as are pure in heart.
2 But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled;
My steps had nearly [b]slipped.
3 [c]For I *was* envious of the boastful,
When I saw the prosperity of the [d]wicked.

4 For *there are* no [1]pangs in their death,
But their strength *is* firm.
5 [e]They *are* not in trouble *as other* men,
Nor are they plagued like *other* men.
6 Therefore pride serves as their necklace;
Violence covers them [f]*like* a garment.
7 [g]Their [2]eyes bulge with abundance;
They have more than heart could wish.
8 [h]They scoff and speak wickedly *concerning* oppression;
They [i]speak [3]loftily.
9 They set their mouth [j]against the heavens,
And their tongue walks through the earth.

10 Therefore his people return here,
[k]And waters of a full *cup* are drained by them.
11 And they say, [l]"How does God know?
And is there knowledge in the Most High?"
12 Behold, these *are* the ungodly,
Who are always at ease;
They increase *in* riches.
13 Surely I have [4]cleansed my heart *in* [m]vain,
And washed my hands in innocence.
14 For all day long I have been plagued,
And chastened every morning.

15 If I had said, "I will speak thus,"
Behold, I would have been untrue to the generation of Your children.
16 When I thought *how* to understand this,
It *was* [5]too painful for me—
17 Until I went into the sanctuary of God;
Then I understood their [n]end.

PSALM 73

title [a]Ps. 50:title
2 [b]Job 12:5
3 [c]Ps. 37:1, 7; [Prov. 23:17] [d]Job 21:5–16; Jer. 12:1
4 [1]*pains*
5 [e]Job 21:9
6 [f]Ps. 109:18
7 [g]Job 15:27; Jer. 5:28 [2]Tg. *face bulges;* LXX, Syr., Vg. *iniquity bulges*
8 [h]Ps. 53:1 [i]2 Pet. 2:18; Jude 16 [3]Proudly
9 [j]Rev. 13:6
10 [k][Ps. 75:8]
11 [l]Job 22:13
13 [m]Job 21:15; 35:3; Mal. 3:14 [4]*kept my heart pure in vain*
16 [5]*troublesome in my eyes*
17 [n][Ps. 37:38; 55:23]

■ **Ps. 73** The psalm begins with an assertion that God is good, a belief won only after long struggle with what is observed in the world, especially the prosperity of the wicked. This important theme is also treated in Ps. 37; 49, and the Book of Job.

■ **73:1 God is good.** What clouded the psalmist's heart and troubled his relationship with the Lord has been resolved.

■ **73:2 my feet had almost stumbled.** An obedient life is often compared to a walk along a straight path (Prov. 1—9). The psalmist describes doubt and skepticism with the image of falling off a path.

■ **73:6 pride . . . as their necklace.** The prosperity of the wicked leads to the deeper sins of pride and violence.

■ **73:7 eyes bulge.** A figure for a heart made insensitive by overindulgence (1 John 2:16).

■ **73:9 against the heavens.** The proud are not afraid to talk as if they had created the world themselves, leaving God behind (Acts 20:22).

■ **73:10 waters . . . are drained.** It is difficult to understand which cup is meant. Perhaps it means that even though the wicked are so evil, the people still "drink up" what they have to say.

■ **73:13 in vain.** These verses show the poet's attitude before he resolved the issue in his mind.

■ **73:15 If I had said.** If he had broadcast his doubts and complaints before coming to a solution, he would have instilled doubt in the community of God.

■ **73:16 this.** That is, the prosperity of the wicked and the suffering of the righteous.

■ **73:17 into the sanctuary.** The change came for him when he entered the presence of God revealed in the temple.

their end. Though the wicked may prosper for a time, their final lot is destruction. See "The Final Judgment" at Matt. 25:41.

18 [o]Ps. 35:6
21 [6]Lit. *pierced in my kidneys*
22 [p]Ps. 92:6
24 [q]Ps. 32:8; 48:14; Is. 58:11
25 [r][Phil. 3:8]
26 [s]Ps. 84:2 [t]Ps. 16:5 [7]Lit. *rock*
27 [u][Ps. 119:155] [8]Are unfaithful to You
28 [v][Heb. 10:22; James 4:8] [w]Ps. 116:10; 2 Cor. 4:13

PSALM 74

title [1]Heb. *Maschil*
4 [a]Lam. 2:7 [b]Num. 2:2

18 Surely [o]You set them in slippery places;
You cast them down to destruction.
19 Oh, how they are *brought* to desolation, as in a moment!
They are utterly consumed with terrors.
20 As a dream when *one* awakes,
So, Lord, when You awake,
You shall despise their image.

21 Thus my heart was grieved,
And I was [6]vexed in my mind.
22 [p]I *was* so foolish and ignorant;
I was *like* a beast before You.
23 Nevertheless I *am* continually with You;
You hold *me* by my right hand.
24 [q]You will guide me with Your counsel,
And afterward receive me *to* glory.

25 [r]Whom have I in heaven *but You?*
And *there is* none upon earth *that* I desire besides You.
26 [s]My flesh and my heart fail;
But God *is* the [7]strength of my heart and my [t]portion forever.

27 For indeed, [u]those who are far from You shall perish;
You have destroyed all those who [8]desert You for harlotry.
28 But *it is* good for me to [v]draw near to God;
I have put my trust in the Lord GOD,
That I may [w]declare all Your works.

PSALM 74

A Plea for Relief from Oppressors

A [1]Contemplation of Asaph.

O God, why have You cast *us* off forever?
Why does Your anger smoke against the sheep of Your pasture?
2 Remember Your congregation, *which* You have purchased of old,
The tribe of Your inheritance, *which* You have redeemed—
This Mount Zion where You have dwelt.
3 Lift up Your feet to the perpetual desolations.
The enemy has damaged everything in the sanctuary.
4 [a]Your enemies roar in the midst of Your meeting place;
[b]They set up their banners *for* signs.
5 They seem like men who lift up
Axes among the thick trees.
6 And now they break down its carved work, all at once,
With axes and hammers.

■ **73:20 As a dream.** God will come in judgment against the wicked. When He does, their prosperity will seem like a dream.

■ **73:22 foolish and ignorant.** His negative emotions blocked clear thinking about God and His ways.

■ **73:23 You hold me by my right hand.** God is close to the worshiper to counsel and guide him.

■ **73:24 to glory.** While some take this to refer to earthly fame and reputation, it is more likely a reference to eternal glory. Nothing will break the intimate fellowship the psalmist enjoys with God (Rom. 8:38, 39).

■ **Ps. 74** This lament for the destruction of the temple in 586 B.C. is comparable to the mournful poems of Lamentations.

■ **74:1 cast us off.** Israel's defeat at the hands of the Babylonians indicated that God had abandoned His chosen people and would protect them no longer. The prophets (Ezek. 9—11) describe God's abandonment of His temple, blaming it on Israel's sin and unbelief. See note on Ps. 22:1.

the sheep. The writer appeals to this metaphor of intimate relationship between God and His people in order to plead for restoration. See Ps. 23:1.

■ **74:2 Remember.** The psalmist means more than mental recall here; he wants God to act on His ancient covenant promise to save His people.

Mount Zion. The location of the temple and the place where God made His presence known in a special way. See Ps. 2:6; 50:2; 128:5; 129:5.

■ **74:3 Lift up Your feet.** The psalmist asks God to survey and to react to the damage the enemy has inflicted on His possessions. When Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem in 586 B.C. he ordered the sanctuary to be demolished.

7 They have set fire to Your sanctuary;
They have defiled the dwelling place of Your name to the ground.
8 [c]They said in their hearts,
"Let us [2]destroy them altogether."
They have burned up all the meeting places of God in the land.

9 We do not see our signs;
[d]*There is* no longer any prophet;
Nor *is there* any among us who knows how long.
10 O God, how long will the adversary [3]reproach?
Will the enemy blaspheme Your name forever?
11 [e]Why do You withdraw Your hand, even Your right hand?
Take it out of Your bosom and destroy *them.*
12 For [f]God *is* my King from of old,
Working salvation in the midst of the earth.
13 [g]You divided the sea by Your strength;
You broke the heads of the [4]sea serpents in the waters.
14 You broke the heads of [5]Leviathan in pieces,
And gave him *as* food to the people inhabiting the wilderness.
15 [h]You broke open the fountain and the flood;
[i]You dried up mighty rivers.
16 The day *is* Yours, the night also *is* [j]Yours;
[k]You have prepared the light and the sun.
17 You have [l]set all the borders of the earth;
[m]You have made summer and winter.

18 Remember this, *that* the enemy has reproached, O LORD,
And *that* a foolish people has blasphemed Your name.
19 Oh, do not deliver the life of Your turtledove to the wild beast!
Do not forget the life of Your poor forever.
20 [n]Have respect to the covenant;
For the [6]dark places of the earth are full of the [7]haunts of [8]cruelty.
21 Oh, do not let the oppressed return ashamed!
Let the poor and needy praise Your name.

22 Arise, O God, plead Your own cause;
Remember how the foolish man [9]reproaches You daily.
23 Do not forget the voice of Your enemies;
The tumult of those who rise up against You increases continually.

PSALM 75

Thanksgiving for God's Righteous Judgment

To the Chief Musician. Set to [a]"Do [1] Not Destroy." A Psalm of Asaph. A Song.

We give thanks to You, O God, we give thanks!
For Your wondrous works declare *that* Your name is near.

8 [c]Ps. 83:4 [2]*oppress*
9 [d]1 Sam. 3:1; Lam. 2:9; Ezek. 7:26; Amos 8:11
10 [3]*revile*
11 [e]Lam. 2:3
12 [f]Ps. 44:4
13 [g]Ex. 14:21 [4]*sea monsters*
14 [5]A large sea creature of unknown identity
15 [h]Ex. 17:5, 6; Num. 20:11; Ps. 105:41; Is. 48:21 [i]Ex. 14:21, 22; Josh. 2:10; 3:13
16 [j]Job 38:12 [k]Gen. 1:14–18
17 [l]Deut. 32:8; Acts 17:26 [m]Gen. 8:22
20 [n]Gen. 17:7, 8; Lev. 26:44, 45 [6]*hiding places* [7]*homes* [8]*violence*
22 [9]*reviles* or *taunts*

PSALM 75

title [a]Ps. 57:title [1]Heb. *Al Tashcheth*

■ **74:9 do not see our signs . . . any prophet.** The worst fear of all is that God will be silent in the face of destruction. This psalm was likely written soon after the event, since a number of prophets were active during the period of restoration.

■ **74:10 blaspheme Your name.** The psalmist tries to persuade God by arguing that His own reputation is in danger. Asaph is distressed by God's apparent inactivity.

■ **74:13 the sea.** In the next few verses the poet alludes to a popular concept of creation and applies it to the Lord. For the defeat of the "Sea," see Ezek. 28:2 and note. In using these figures, the psalmist is not endorsing the popular myths, but using them to say that the God of Israel is the Creator of all. The gods of the Near East are nothing because they do not exist. See Ps. 18:4; 29:3, 10; 46:2, 3; 69:1, 2; Jer. 14:22; 1 Cor. 8:4.

■ **74:14 heads of Leviathan.** The psalmist borrows the language of popular mythology, related in texts discovered at ancient Ugarit in Syria. In those texts "Leviathan" (or "Lothan") is a seven-headed sea monster defeated by Baal at the time of creation.

■ **74:20 the covenant.** The writer appeals to God's covenant, knowing that His patience is not exhausted despite the disobedience that led to the fall of the northern kingdom in the eighth century B.C.

■ **74:22 Arise.** See note on Ps. 7:6.

■ **Ps. 75** The theme of casting down the wicked and lifting up the righteous is also found in Hannah's song (1 Sam. 2:1–10) and Mary's words of praise (Luke 1:46–55).

■ **75:1 We.** The psalm begins as a communal thanksgiving, though at the end an individual speaks for the community.

2 [2]*appointed*
4 [b][1 Sam. 2:3]; Ps. 94:4 [3]Raise the head proudly like a horned animal
5 [4]Insolent pride
7 [c]Ps. 50:6 [d]1 Sam. 2:7; Ps. 147:6; Dan. 2:21
8 [e]Job 21:20; Ps. 60:3; Jer. 25:15; Rev. 14:10; 16:19
10 [f]Ps. 101:8; Jer. 48:25 [g]Ps. 89:17; 148:14 [h]1 Sam. 2:1 [5]Strength

PSALM 76

title [1]Heb. *neginoth*
1 [a]Ps. 48:1, 3
2 [2]Jerusalem
4 [b]Ezek. 38:12
5 [c]Is. 10:12; 46:12 [d]Ps. 13:3 [3]Lit. *have slumbered their sleep*
6 [e]Ex. 15:1–21; Ezek. 39:20; Nah. 2:13; Zech. 12:4

2 "When I choose the [2]proper time,
I will judge uprightly.
3 The earth and all its inhabitants are dissolved;
I set up its pillars firmly. Selah

4 "I said to the boastful, 'Do not deal boastfully,'
And to the wicked, [b]'Do not [3]lift up the horn.
5 Do not lift up your horn on high;
Do *not* speak with [4]a stiff neck.' "

6 For exaltation *comes* neither from the east
Nor from the west nor from the south.
7 But [c]God *is* the Judge:
[d]He puts down one,
And exalts another.
8 For [e]in the hand of the LORD *there is* a cup,
And the wine is red;
It is fully mixed, and He pours it out;
Surely its dregs shall all the wicked of the earth
Drain *and* drink down.

9 But I will declare forever,
I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.

10 "All[f] the [5]horns of the wicked I will also cut off,
But [g]the horns of the righteous shall be [h]exalted."

PSALM 76

The Majesty of God in Judgment

To the Chief Musician. On [1]stringed instruments. A Psalm of Asaph. A Song.

1 In [a]Judah God *is* known;
His name *is* great in Israel.
2 In [2]Salem also is His tabernacle,
And His dwelling place in Zion.
3 There He broke the arrows of the bow,
The shield and sword of battle. Selah

4 You *are* more glorious and excellent
[b]*Than* the mountains of prey.
5 [c]The stouthearted were plundered;
[d]They [3]have sunk into their sleep;
And none of the mighty men have found the use of their hands.
6 [e]At Your rebuke, O God of Jacob,
Both the chariot and horse were cast into a dead sleep.

Your wondrous works. God's great acts in history (Rev. 15:3, 4).

name. See Ps. 8:1.

■ **75:2 judge uprightly.** God's judgments are always just, and He knows the secrets of the heart.

■ **75:3 I set up its pillars firmly.** God provides the underlying stability of the world order.

■ **75:4 the horn.** This common metaphor is one of a powerful horned beast proudly lifting up its head in defiance and anger. God warns the wicked not to act in this way against Him.

■ **75:7 But God is the Judge.** God and not any person in the east, west, or south determines what shall stand.

■ **75:8 a cup.** See note on Ps. 11:6.

■ **Ps. 76** The psalm celebrates a great victory over Israel's enemies. From the New Testament perspective, this song praises God for His victory at the cross and looks forward to the great final victory over evil at the end of the age (Rev. 19:11–21).

■ **76:2 in Salem . . . His tabernacle.** Salem is the ancient name for Jerusalem. God's tabernacle is His sanctuary. The tabernacle was a tent, but the temple that replaced it could still be called a tent poetically.

Zion. The mountain where the temple was situated (Ps. 2:6).

■ **76:3 He broke.** God defeated the enemy at Jerusalem. A good example of such a battle would be the siege by Sennacherib in 701 B.C. (2 Kin. 19; Is. 37).

■ **76:4 glorious and excellent.** See John 1:4–9.

■ **76:5 stouthearted were plundered.** God has destroyed powerful soldiers; they are no match for Him.

■ **76:6 rebuke.** God's rebuke is the word of His powerful judgment. At

7 You, Yourself, *are* to be feared;
And [f]who may stand in Your presence
When once You are angry?
8 [g]You caused judgment to be heard from heaven;
[h]The earth feared and was still,
9 When God [i]arose to judgment,
To deliver all the oppressed of the earth. Selah

10 [j]Surely the wrath of man shall praise You;
With the remainder of wrath You shall gird Yourself.

11 [k]Make vows to the LORD your God, and pay *them;*
[l]Let all who are around Him bring presents to Him who ought to be feared.
12 He shall cut off the spirit of princes;
[m]*He is* awesome to the kings of the earth.

PSALM 77

The Consoling Memory of God's Redemptive Works

To the Chief Musician. [a]To Jeduthun. A Psalm of Asaph.

I cried out to God with my voice—
To God with my voice;
And He gave ear to me.
2 In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord;
My hand was stretched out in the night without ceasing;
My soul refused to be comforted.
3 I remembered God, and was troubled;
I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Selah

4 You hold my eyelids *open;*
I am so troubled that I cannot speak.
5 I have considered the days of old,
The years of ancient times.
6 I call to remembrance my song in the night;
I meditate within my heart,
And my spirit [1]makes diligent search.

7 Will the Lord cast off forever?
And will He be favorable no more?
8 Has His mercy ceased forever?
Has *His* [b]promise failed [2]forevermore?
9 Has God forgotten to be gracious?
Has He in anger shut up His tender mercies? Selah

10 And I said, "This *is* my [3]anguish;
But I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High."

7 [f][Ezra 9:15; Nah. 1:6; Mal. 3:2; Rev. 6:17]
8 [g]Ex. 19:9 [h]1 Chr. 16:30; 2 Chr. 20:29
9 [i][Ps. 9:7–9]
10 [j]Ex. 9:16; Rom. 9:17
11 [k][Eccl. 5:4–6] [l]2 Chr. 32:22, 23
12 [m]Ps. 68:35

PSALM 77

title [a]Ps. 39:title
6 [1]*ponders diligently*
8 [b][2 Pet. 3:8, 9] [2]Lit. *unto generation and generation*
10 [3]Lit. *infirmity*

His rebuke the forces of chaos and evil flee before Him and peace reigns (Nah. 1:4; Matt. 8:23–27; 17:18).

■ **76:10 the wrath . . . shall praise You.** God's wrath brings praise because it is directed against the wicked and unjust, who afflict the poor and vulnerable (9:18 note).

■ **76:11 vows.** See Lev. 27.

■ **Ps. 77** An individual prays on behalf of the community (vv. 7–9). A deep lament is followed by eloquent memory of the Exodus.

■ **77:2 My hand was stretched out.** A common gesture of prayer was reaching out toward heaven.

■ **77:5 the days of old.** The days when God was near and acted to save Israel from its distress.

■ **77:7 cast off.** The Lord's promise to be with His people required their obedience. Though God was longsuffering, at times His patience would run out (1 Sam. 4; Ezek. 9—11; Lamentations).

■ **77:9 Has God forgotten to be gracious.** It is impossible that God should cease to be merciful, but the distress of life elicit these questions in the psalmist.

■ **77:10 But I will remember.** This verse provides a crucial transition in the psalm. By remembering God's great acts in the past, the poet builds confidence in the present and for the future.

years of the right hand. When God's power was seen to act for them (Ex. 15:6).

13 [c]Ps. 73:17 [4]Or *holiness*
16 [d]Ex. 14:21; Hab. 3:8, 10

11 I will remember the works of the LORD;
Surely I will remember Your wonders of old.
12 I will also meditate on all Your work,
And talk of Your deeds.
13 Your way, O God, *is* in [4]the [c]sanctuary;
Who *is* so great a God as *our* God?
14 You *are* the God who does wonders;
You have declared Your strength among the peoples.
15 You have with *Your* arm redeemed Your people,
The sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah

16 The waters saw You, O God;
The waters saw You, they were [d]afraid;
The depths also trembled.
17 The clouds poured out water;
The skies sent out a sound;
Your arrows also flashed about.
18 The voice of Your thunder *was* in the whirlwind;
The lightnings lit up the world;
The earth trembled and shook.
19 Your way *was* in the sea,
Your path in the great waters,
And Your footsteps were not known.
20 You led Your people like a flock
By the hand of Moses and Aaron.

PSALM 78

God's Kindness to Rebellious Israel

PSALM 78

[title] [a]Ps. 74:title [1]Heb. *Maschil*
2 [b]Matt. 13:34, 35 [2]*obscure sayings* or *riddles*
4 [c]Ex. 12:26, 27; Deut. 4:9; 6:7; Job 15:18; Is. 38:19; Joel 1:3 [d]Ex. 13:8, 14
5 [e]Ps. 147:19 [f]Deut. 4:9; 11:19
6 [g]Ps. 102:18

A [a]Contemplation[1] of Asaph.

Give ear, O my people, *to* my law;
Incline your ears to the words of my mouth.
2 I will open my mouth in a [b]parable;
I will utter [2]dark sayings of old,
3 Which we have heard and known,
And our fathers have told us.
4 [c]We will not hide *them* from their children,
[d]Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD,
And His strength and His wonderful works that He has done.

5 For [e]He established a testimony in Jacob,
And appointed a law in Israel,
Which He commanded our fathers,
That [f]they should make them known to their children;
6 [g]That the generation to come might know *them,*
The children *who* would be born,

■ **77:13 great.** As the writer remembers God's great acts in the past, he is reminded of God's attributes: His holiness and His unique power.

■ **77:15 redeemed Your people.** The context shows that the psalmist has in mind the deliverance of Israel from Egypt.

■ **77:16 waters.** In this poetic remembrance of the Exodus, the waters of the Red Sea are personified. In this way the crossing of the Red Sea is pictured as a battle against the waters of chaos (18:4; 29:3, 10; 46:2, 3 and notes).

■ **77:19 Your footsteps were not known.** God's action was from above, not controlled by the constraints of earthly conditions.

■ **77:20 You led Your people like a flock.** The crossing of the Red Sea was a violent conflict; in this verse, the mood is calm as the Shepherd of Israel leads His people through the desert.

■ **78:2 in a parable.** The writer means that he will recount the events of the past in a poetic way designed to instruct the hearts of distant generations.

■ **78:3 told us.** Instruction was disseminated in his family from generation to generation (Deut. 6:4–9; 32:7).

■ **78:5 testimony . . . law.** God established a relationship with His people based on grace alone. In this context He gave them laws to live by and to show their gratefulness to Him. These laws are summarized in the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20; Deut. 5).

■ **78:6 declare them to their children.** See note on v. 3.

That they may arise and declare *them* to their children,
7 That they may set their hope in God,
And not forget the works of God,
But keep His commandments;
8 And [h]may not be like their fathers,
[i]A stubborn and rebellious generation,
A generation [j]*that* did not [3]set its heart aright,
And whose spirit was not faithful to God.

9 The children of Ephraim, *being* armed *and* [4]carrying bows,
Turned back in the day of battle.
10 [k]They did not keep the covenant of God;
They refused to walk in His law,
11 And [l]forgot His works
And His wonders that He had shown them.

12 [m]Marvelous things He did in the sight of their fathers,
In the land of Egypt, [n]*in* the field of Zoan.
13 [o]He divided the sea and caused them to pass through;
And [p]He made the waters stand up like a heap.
14 [q]In the daytime also He led them with the cloud,
And all the night with a light of fire.
15 [r]He split the rocks in the wilderness,
And gave *them* drink in abundance like the depths.
16 He also brought [s]streams out of the rock,
And caused waters to run down like rivers.

17 But they sinned even more against Him
By [t]rebelling against the Most High in the wilderness.
18 And [u]they tested God in their heart
By asking for the food of their fancy.
19 [v]Yes, they spoke against God:
They said, "Can God prepare a table in the wilderness?
20 [w]Behold, He struck the rock,
So that the waters gushed out,
And the streams overflowed.
Can He give bread also?
Can He provide meat for His people?"

21 Therefore the LORD heard *this* and [x]was furious;
So a fire was kindled against Jacob,
And anger also came up against Israel,
22 Because they [y]did not believe in God,
And did not trust in His salvation.
23 Yet He had commanded the clouds above,
[z]And opened the doors of heaven,
24 [a]Had rained down manna on them to eat,

8 [h]2 Kin. 17:14; 2 Chr. 30:7; Ezek. 20:18 [i]Ex. 32:9; Deut. 9:7, 24; 31:27; Judg. 2:19; Is. 30:9 [j]Job 11:13; Ps. 78:37 [3]Lit. *prepare its heart*

9 [4]Lit. *bow shooters*

10 [k]2 Kin. 17:15

11 [l]Ps. 106:13

12 [m]Ex. 7—12 [n]Num. 13:22; Is. 19:11; 30:4; Ezek. 30:14

13 [o]Ex. 14:21 [p]Ex. 15:8

14 [q]Ex. 13:21

15 [r]Ex. 17:6; Num. 20:11; Is. 48:21; [1 Cor. 10:4]

16 [s]Num. 20:8, 10, 11

17 [t]Deut. 9:22; Is. 63:10; Heb. 3:16

18 [u]Ex. 16:2

19 [v]Ex. 16:3; Num. 11:4; 20:3; 21:5

20 [w]Num. 20:11

21 [x]Num. 11:1

22 [y]Deut. 1:32; 9:23; [Heb. 3:18]

23 [z]Gen. 7:11; [Mal. 3:10]

24 [a]Ex. 16:4

■ **78:7 keep His commandments.** The object of the history lesson is not merely antiquarian, but to deepen the faith and obedience of God's people.

■ **78:9 children of Ephraim.** This verse should be compared to vv. 67, 68, where the choice of Judah is coupled with the rejection of Ephraim.

■ **78:10 the covenant of God.** God promised to protect His people if they obeyed the terms of His covenant, but to destroy them if they disobeyed (Deut. 27:9—28:68).

■ **78:13 He divided the sea.** Chief among the great acts of God was the deliverance from Egypt by which God rescued His people from slavery and brought them into their own land. The Red Sea crossing was the greatest demonstration of God's power in the past and, accordingly, was often called to memory by psalmists and prophets.

■ **78:18 tested God.** Time and time again Israel grumbled about the food in the desert, and God provided for their needs (Ex. 16).

■ **78:20 Can He give bread also.** God's provision of water in the desert should have led to faith and trust. Instead the Israelites tested the Lord by asking for food (cf. John 6:25–58).

■ **78:21 was furious.** Rebellion against the Lord led to His judgment (Num. 11:1–3). After judging the people, He returned with His grace (vv. 23–39), but grace led only to further rebellion (vv. 40, 41). This is the story of Israel throughout the Old Testament, perhaps best represented in the Book of Judges (see Judg. 2:6–23). Heb. 12:1–12 reminds us that God chastises those He loves.

And given them of the [5]bread of [b]heaven.
25 Men ate angels' food;
He sent them food to [6]the full.

26 [c]He caused an east wind to blow in the heavens;
And by His power He brought in the south wind.
27 He also rained meat on them like the dust,
Feathered fowl like the sand of the seas;
28 And He let *them* fall in the midst of their camp,
All around their dwellings.
29 [d]So they ate and were well filled,
For He gave them their own desire.
30 They were not [7]deprived of their craving;
But [e]while their food *was* still in their mouths,
31 The wrath of God came against them,
And slew the stoutest of them,
And struck down the choice *men* of Israel.

32 In spite of this [f]they still sinned,
And [g]did not believe in His wondrous works.
33 [h]Therefore their days He consumed in futility,
And their years in fear.

34 [i]When He slew them, then they sought Him;
And they returned and sought earnestly for God.
35 Then they remembered that [j]God *was* their rock,
And the Most High God [k]their Redeemer.
36 Nevertheless they [l]flattered Him with their mouth,
And they lied to Him with their tongue;
37 For their heart was not steadfast with Him,
Nor were they faithful in His covenant.
38 [m]But He, *being* full of [n]compassion, forgave *their* iniquity,
And did not destroy *them.*
Yes, many a time [o]He turned His anger away,
And [p]did not stir up all His wrath;
39 For [q]He remembered [r]that they *were but* flesh,
[s]A breath that passes away and does not come again.

40 How often they [t]provoked[8] Him in the wilderness,
And grieved Him in the desert!
41 Yes, [u]again and again they tempted God,
And limited the Holy One of Israel.
42 They did not remember His [9]power:
The day when He redeemed them from the enemy,
43 When He worked His signs in Egypt,
And His wonders in the field of Zoan;
44 [v]Turned their rivers into blood,
And their streams, that they could not drink.
45 [w]He sent swarms of flies among them, which devoured them,
And [x]frogs, which destroyed them.
46 He also gave their crops to the caterpillar,
And their labor to the [y]locust.

24 [b]John 6:31 [5]Lit. *grain*
25 [6]*satiation*
26 [c]Num. 11:31
29 [d]Num. 11:19, 20
30 [e]Num. 11:33 [7]Lit. *separated*
32 [f]Num. 14:16, 17 [g]Num. 14:11; Ps. 78:11, 22
33 [h]Num. 14:29, 35
34 [i]Num. 21:7; [Hos. 5:15]
35 [j][Deut. 32:4, 15] [k][Ex. 15:13]; Deut. 7:8; Is. 41:14; 44:6; 63:9
36 [l]Ex. 24:7, 8; Ezek. 33:31
38 [m][Num. 14:18–20] [n]Ex. 34:6 [o][Is. 48:9] [p]1 Kin. 21:29
39 [q]Job 10:9; Ps. 103:14–16 [r]John 3:6 [s][Job 7:7, 16; James 4:14]
40 [t]Ps. 95:8–10; [Eph. 4:30]; Heb. 3:16 [8]*rebelled against Him*
41 [u]Num. 14:22; Deut. 6:16
42 [9]Lit. *hand*
44 [v]Ex. 7:20
45 [w]Ex. 8:24 [x]Ex. 8:6
46 [y]Ex. 10:14

■ **78:33 in futility.** This word is the same as found in the opening words of Ecclesiastes: "vanity" (Eccl. 1:2). It describes the world apart from God and under the curse of the Fall. Apart from God we have nothing: only the fear of death and the void.

■ **78:37 Nor . . . faithful in His covenant.** See v. 10. God initiated a relationship with Israel through His grace, and then revealed His will to them through His law, including the curses and blessings of the covenant. The people disobeyed the law and brought on themselves God's judgment.

■ **78:40 often they provoked.** Examples include Num. 11; 14; 16.

■ **78:44–51** He lists six of the plagues of Egypt.

47 [z]He destroyed their vines with hail,
And their sycamore trees with frost.
48 He also gave up their [a]cattle to the hail,
And their flocks to fiery [1]lightning.
49 He cast on them the fierceness of His anger,
Wrath, indignation, and trouble,
By sending angels of destruction *among them.*
50 He made a path for His anger;
He did not spare their soul from death,
But gave [2]their life over to the plague,
51 And destroyed all the [b]firstborn in Egypt,
The first of *their* strength in the tents of Ham.
52 But He [c]made His own people go forth like sheep,
And guided them in the wilderness like a flock;
53 And He [d]led them on safely, so that they did not fear;
But the sea [e]overwhelmed their enemies.
54 And He brought them to His [f]holy border,
This mountain [g]*which* His right hand had acquired.
55 [h]He also drove out the nations before them,
[i]Allotted them an inheritance by [3]survey,
And made the tribes of Israel dwell in their tents.

56 [j]Yet they tested and provoked the Most High God,
And did not keep His testimonies,
57 But [k]turned back and acted unfaithfully like their fathers;
They were turned aside [l]like a deceitful bow.
58 [m]For they provoked Him to anger with their [n]high places,
And moved Him to jealousy with their carved images.
59 When God heard *this,* He was furious,
And greatly abhorred Israel,
60 [o]So that He forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh,
The tent He had placed among men,
61 [p]And delivered His strength into captivity,
And His glory into the enemy's hand.
62 [q]He also gave His people over to the sword,
And was furious with His inheritance.
63 The fire consumed their young men,
And [r]their maidens were not given in marriage.
64 [s]Their priests fell by the sword,
And [t]their widows made no lamentation.

65 Then the Lord awoke as *from* sleep,
[u]Like a mighty man who shouts because of wine.
66 And [v]He beat back His enemies;
He put them to a perpetual reproach.

67 Moreover He rejected the tent of Joseph,
And did not choose the tribe of Ephraim,

47 [z]Ex. 9:23–25
48 [a]Ex. 9:19
[1]*lightning bolts*
50 [2]Or *their beasts*
51 [b]Ex. 12:29, 30
52 [c]Ps. 77:20
53 [d]Ex. 14:19, 20 [e]Ex. 14:27, 28
54 [f]Ex. 15:17 [g]Ps. 44:3
55 [h]Josh. 11:16–23; Ps. 44:2 [i]Josh. 13:7; 19:51; 23:4 [3]*surveyed measurement,* lit. *measuring cord*
56 [j]Judg. 2:11–13
57 [k]Ezek. 20:27, 28 [l]Hos. 7:16
58 [m]Deut. 32:16, 21; Judg. 2:12; 1 Kin. 14:9; Is. 65:3 [n]Deut. 12:2
60 [o]1 Sam. 4:11; Jer. 7:12–14; 26:6–9
61 [p]Judg. 18:30
62 [q]Judg. 20:21; 1 Sam. 4:10
63 [r]Jer. 7:34; 16:9; 25:10
64 [s]1 Sam. 4:17; 22:18 [t]Job 27:15; Ezek. 24:23
65 [u]Is. 42:13
66 [v]1 Sam. 5:6

■ **78:52 like a flock.** See Ps. 77:20.

■ **78:54–64** God blessed them with the Promised Land, but they quickly forgot Him.

■ **78:55 He also drove out the nations.** Israel fought, but the faithful knew that it was God, the Divine Warrior, who actually won the victories against the enemies. The story of the defeat of Jericho is a model for the battles of the conquest under Joshua (Josh. 5:13—6:27).

■ **78:56 tested and provoked the Most High God.** They did not keep His law in the desert, nor did they keep it in the Promised Land. See Judg. 2:10–15.

■ **78:58 with their carved images.** The height of their rebellion was to worship false gods.

■ **78:60 the tabernacle of Shiloh.** Soon after entering the Promised Land, the tabernacle was set up in Shiloh (Josh. 18:1), twenty miles northeast of Jerusalem, in the tribal territory of Ephraim.

■ **78:61 His strength into captivity.** During Samuel's youth, God punished Israel and its leaders, particularly Eli's sons, by abandoning Israel in battle and allowing the Philistines to capture the ark (1 Sam. 4; 5).

■ **78:65 as from sleep.** God had left Israel temporarily and seemed to be asleep. An unusual figure of speech explains how He began to act.

■ **78:67 He rejected.** The rejection of the tribe of Ephraim refers to the abandonment of the Shiloh sanctuary, and perhaps also the rejection of Saul's monarchy.

68 But chose the tribe of Judah,
Mount Zion [w]which He loved.
69 And He built His [x]sanctuary like the heights,
Like the earth which He has established forever.
70 [y]He also chose David His servant,
And took him from the sheepfolds;
71 From following [z]the ewes that had young He brought him,
[a]To shepherd Jacob His people,
And Israel His inheritance.
72 So he shepherded them according to the [b]integrity of his heart,
And guided them by the skillfulness of his hands.

PSALM 79

A Dirge and a Prayer for Israel, Destroyed by Enemies

A Psalm of Asaph.

O God, the [1]nations have come into [a]Your inheritance;
Your holy temple they have defiled;
[b]They have laid Jerusalem [2]in heaps.
2 [c]The dead bodies of Your servants
They have given *as* food for the birds of the heavens,
The flesh of Your saints to the beasts of the earth.
3 Their blood they have shed like water all around Jerusalem,
And *there was* no one to bury *them.*
4 We have become a reproach to our [d]neighbors,
A scorn and derision to those who are around us.

5 [e]How long, LORD?
Will You be angry forever?
Will Your [f]jealousy burn like fire?
6 [g]Pour out Your wrath on the [3]nations that [h]do not know You,
And on the kingdoms that [i]do not call on Your name.
7 For they have devoured Jacob,
And laid waste his dwelling place.

8 [j]Oh, do not remember [4]former iniquities against us!
Let Your tender mercies come speedily to meet us,
For we have been brought very low.
9 Help us, O God of our salvation,
For the glory of Your name;
And deliver us, and provide atonement for our sins,
[k]For Your name's sake!
10 [l]Why should the [5]nations say,

68 [w][Ps. 87:2]
69 [x]1 Kin. 6:1–38
70 [y]1 Sam. 16:11, 12; 2 Sam. 7:8
71 [z]2 Sam. 7:8; [Is. 40:11] [a]2 Sam. 5:2; 1 Chr. 11:2
72 [b]1 Kin. 9:4

PSALM 79

1 [a]Ps. 74:2 [b]2 Kin. 25:9, 10; 2 Chr. 36:17–19; Jer. 26:18; 52:12–14; Mic. 3:12 [1]*Gentiles* [2]*in ruins*
2 [c]Deut. 28:26; Jer. 7:33; 19:7; 34:20
4 [d]Ps. 44:13; [Dan. 9:16]
5 [e]Ps. 74:1, 9 [f][Zeph. 3:8]
6 [g]Jer. 10:25; [Zeph. 3:8] [h]Is. 45:4, 5; 1 Thess. 4:5; [2 Thess. 1:8] [i]Ps. 53:4 [3]*Gentiles*
8 [j]Is. 64:9 [4]Or *against us the iniquities of those who were before us*
9 [k]Jer. 14:7, 21
10 [l]Ps. 42:10 [5]*Gentiles*

■ **78:68 But chose the tribe of Judah.** Jerusalem succeeded Shiloh as the designated location for the worship of God.

Mount Zion. See note on Ps. 2:6.

■ **78:70 sheepfolds.** This verse recalls David's humble origins (1 Sam. 16:11–13).

■ **78:72 integrity of his heart.** The psalm climaxes on a positive note with a faithful king in Jerusalem, the place of God's special presence.

■ **Ps. 79** The destruction of the temple (v. 1) dates this psalm to the period after the Babylonian defeat of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.

■ **79:1 the nations have come into Your inheritance.** Because the people disobeyed God's covenant, He did what He had warned them He would do (Deut. 28:15–68), sending a foreign nation against them. Both city and temple were destroyed at this time (2 Kin. 25; 2 Chr. 36:15–23; Lamentations).

■ **79:2 Your servants . . . Your saints.** The faithful also suffered at the hands of the Babylonians. The psalmist singles out the death of the faithful as he appeals to God for restoration.

■ **79:5 How long, LORD.** This is a prayer to God to change a hard situation.

jealousy. A synonym for anger.

■ **79:6 Pour out Your wrath on the nations.** The poet calls for a reversal, asking God to turn His wrath from Israel to the nations God was using to punish them. In the end the Lord answered the psalmist's prayer, restoring Israel and destroying Babylon.

■ **79:8 former iniquities.** This psalm may have been written some time after the destruction of Jerusalem. The chief sin was idolatry, turning to false gods.

"Where *is* their God?"
Let there be known among the nations in our sight
The avenging of the blood of Your servants *which has been* shed.

11 Let [m]the groaning of the prisoner come before You;
According to the greatness of Your [6]power
Preserve those who are appointed to die;
12 And return to our neighbors [n]sevenfold into their bosom
[o]Their reproach with which they have reproached You, O Lord.

13 So [p]we, Your people and sheep of Your pasture,
Will give You thanks forever;
[q]We will show forth Your praise to all generations.

PSALM 80

Prayer for Israel's Restoration

To the Chief Musician. [a]Set to [1]"The Lilies." A [2]Testimony of Asaph. A Psalm.

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,
[b]You who lead Joseph [c]like a flock;
You who dwell *between* the cherubim, [d]shine forth!
2 Before [e]Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh,
Stir up Your strength,
And come *and* save us!

3 [f]Restore us, O God;
[g]Cause Your face to shine,
And we shall be saved!

4 O LORD God of hosts,
[h]How long will You be angry
Against the prayer of Your people?
5 [i]You have fed them with the bread of tears,
And given them tears to drink in great measure.
6 You have made us a strife to our neighbors,
And our enemies laugh among themselves.

7 Restore us, O God of hosts;
Cause Your face to shine,
And we shall be saved!

8 You have brought [j]a vine out of Egypt;
[k]You have cast out the [3]nations, and planted it.
9 You prepared *room* for it,
And caused it to take deep root,
And it filled the land.
10 The hills were covered with its shadow,

11 [m]Ps. 102:20 [6]Lit. *arm*

12 [n]Gen. 4:15; Lev. 26:21; Prov. 6:31; Is. 30:26 [o]Ps. 74:10, 18, 22

13 [p]Ps. 74:1; 95:7 [q]Is. 43:21

PSALM 80

title [a]Ps. 45:title [1]Heb. *Shoshannim* [2]Heb. *Eduth*

1 [b][Ex. 25:20–22]; 1 Sam. 4:4; 2 Sam. 6:2 [c]Ps. 77:20 [d]Deut. 33:2

2 [e]Ps. 78:9, 67

3 [f]Lam. 5:21 [g]Num. 6:25; Ps. 4:6

4 [h]Ps. 79:5

5 [i]Ps. 42:3; Is. 30:20

8 [j][Is. 5:1, 7]; Jer. 2:21; Ezek. 15:6; 17:6; 19:10 [k]Ps. 44:2; Acts 7:45 [3]*Gentiles*

■ **79:11 the prisoner.** The writer knows that God has a special place in His heart for the oppressed and vulnerable, so he reminds Him of those who need Him (9:18 note).

■ **80:1 O Shepherd.** God is Israel's Shepherd (Ps. 23) because He guides them and provides for them (77:20; 78:52, 71, 72; 79:13). In the ancient Near East, "shepherd" is not an unusual title for kings.

between the cherubim. Above the ark of the covenant, in the Most Holy Place of the temple, the wings of the cherubim stretched out over God's throne (Ex. 25:22; Num. 7:89).

shine forth. Note the allusion to the priestly benediction in Num. 6:24–26. The psalmist is calling upon God to reveal His gracious presence to them.

■ **80:2 Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh.** The mention of these chief tribes of the northern kingdom may indicate that the psalm was composed in the last days of that kingdom.

■ **80:5 bread of tears.** Their mourning is so continuous that it is like their daily food and drink.

■ **80:8 vine.** Israel is the vine God transplanted from slavery in Egypt to the fruitful soil of Palestine (Is. 5:1–7; John 15:1, 2).

■ **80:10 covered with its shadow.** The lowly vine became so great through the blessing of God that the mountains and the giant cedars were covered with its shadow (Luke 13:19).

10 [l]Lev. 23:40 [4]Lit. *cedars of God*
11 [5]The Mediterranean [6]The Euphrates
12 [m]Is. 5:5; Nah. 2:2 [7]*walls* or *fences*
14 [n]Is. 63:15
15 [o][Is. 49:5]
16 [p][Ps. 39:11]
17 [q]Ps. 89:21

PSALM 81

title [a]Ps. 8:title [r]Heb. *Al Gittith*
4 [b]Lev. 23:24; Num. 10:10
5 [c]Deut. 28:49; Ps. 114:1; Jer. 5:15
7 [d]Ex. 2:23; 14:10; Ps. 50:15

And the [4]mighty cedars with its [l]boughs.
11 She sent out her boughs to [5]the Sea,
And her branches to [6]the River.

12 Why have You [m]broken down her [7]hedges,
So that all who pass by the way pluck her *fruit?*
13 The boar out of the woods uproots it,
And the wild beast of the field devours it.

14 Return, we beseech You, O God of hosts;
[n]Look down from heaven and see,
And visit this vine
15 And the vineyard which Your right hand has planted,
And the branch *that* You made strong [o]for Yourself.
16 *It is* burned with fire, *it is* cut down;
[p]They perish at the rebuke of Your countenance.
17 [q]Let Your hand be upon the man of Your right hand,
Upon the son of man *whom* You made strong for Yourself.
18 Then we will not turn back from You;
Revive us, and we will call upon Your name.

19 Restore us, O LORD God of hosts;
Cause Your face to shine,
And we shall be saved!

PSALM 81

An Appeal for Israel's Repentance

To the Chief Musician. [a]On[r] an instrument of Gath. A Psalm of Asaph.

Sing aloud to God our strength;
Make a joyful shout to the God of Jacob.
2 Raise a song and strike the timbrel,
The pleasant harp with the lute.

3 Blow the trumpet at the time of the New Moon,
At the full moon, on our solemn feast day.
4 For [b]this *is* a statute for Israel,
A law of the God of Jacob.
5 This He established in Joseph *as* a testimony,
When He went throughout the land of Egypt,
[c]*Where* I heard a language I did not understand.

6 "I removed his shoulder from the burden;
His hands were freed from the baskets.
7 [d]You called in trouble, and I delivered you;

■ **80:11 Sea . . . River.** See text notes. The language is reminiscent of the promises made to Abraham.

■ **80:12 Why have You.** The psalmist knows that no matter what human army actually defeated Israel, God had allowed it. God seemed to be turning His back on the people He had created.

■ **80:17 the son of man.** Though the reference might be to Israel, it is more likely to the Davidic king, and ultimately to the Messiah.

■ **Ps. 81** This psalm begins like a hymn, but most of it is a divine pronouncement in which God reminds Israel of the Exodus and the nation's subsequent apostasy. The original setting of the psalm was clearly the Feast of Tabernacles (v. 3).

■ **81:2 Raise a song.** The psalms teach us by example to worship with exuberance.

■ **81:3 New Moon.** The Bible occasionally mentions a special celebration that took place at the time of the new moon (1 Sam. 20:5, 18; 2 Kin. 4:23; Is. 66:23; Ezek. 46:1, 6; Amos 8:5). Frequently, the New Moon festival is mentioned along with regular Sabbath observance; see also Col. 2:16, 17.

■ **81:5 a language I did not understand.** The language may be Egyptian. Another translation is "a voice we did not know," to refer to the verses following.

■ **81:6 I removed . . . the burden.** With specific language God reminds Israel of their slavery in Egypt.

■ **81:7 secret place of thunder.** This may refer to God's appearance at Mount Sinai (Ex. 19:16–25), although thunder and lightning were frequent signs of His presence.

Meribah. See Ex. 17:1–7; Num. 20:1–13.

[e]I answered you in the secret place of thunder;
I [f]tested you at the waters of [2]Meribah. Selah

8 "Hear,[g] O My people, and I will admonish you!
O Israel, if you will listen to Me!
9 There shall be no [h]foreign god among you;
Nor shall you worship any foreign god.
10 [i]I *am* the LORD your God,
Who brought you out of the land of Egypt;
[j]Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.

11 "But My people would not heed My voice,
And Israel would *have* [k]none of Me.
12 [l]So I gave them over to [3]their own stubborn heart,
To walk in their own counsels.

13 "Oh,[m] that My people would listen to Me,
That Israel would walk in My ways!
14 I would soon subdue their enemies,
And turn My hand against their adversaries.
15 [n]The haters of the LORD would pretend submission to Him,
But their [4]fate would endure forever.
16 He would [o]have fed them also with [5]the finest of wheat;
And with honey [p]from the rock I would have satisfied you."

PSALM 82

A Plea for Justice

A Psalm of Asaph.

God [a]stands in the congregation of [1]the mighty;
He judges among [b]the [2]gods.
2 How long will you judge unjustly,
And [c]show partiality to the wicked? Selah
3 [3]Defend the poor and fatherless;
Do justice to the afflicted and [d]needy.
4 Deliver the poor and needy;
Free *them* from the hand of the wicked.

5 They do not know, nor do they understand;
They walk about in darkness;
All the [e]foundations of the earth are [4]unstable.

6 I said, [f]"You *are* [5]gods,
And all of you *are* children of the Most High.

7 [e]Ex. 19:19; 20:18 [f]Ex. 17:6, 7; Num. 20:13 [2]Lit. *Strife* or *Contention*
8 [g][Ps. 50:7]
9 [h][Ex. 20:3; Deut. 5:7; 32:12]; Ps. 44:20; [Is. 43:12]
10 [i]Ex. 20:2; Deut. 5:6 [j]Ps. 103:5
11 [k]Ex. 32:1; Deut. 32:15
12 [l][Job 8:4; Acts 7:42; Rom. 1:24, 26] [3]*the dictates of their heart*
13 [m][Deut. 5:29; Is. 48:18]
15 [n]Rom. 1:30 [4]Lit. *time*
16 [o]Deut. 32:14 [p]Job 29:6 [5]Lit. *fat of wheat*

PSALM 82

1 [a][2 Chr. 19:6; Eccl. 5:8] [b]Ps. 82:6 [1]Heb. *El*, lit. *God* [2]Judges; Heb. *elohim*, lit. *mighty ones* or *gods*
2 [c][Deut. 1:17]; Prov. 18:5
3 [d][Deut. 24:17; Is. 11:4; Jer. 22:16] [3]*Vindicate*
5 [e]Ps. 11:3 [4]*moved*
6 [f]John 10:34 [5]Judges; Heb. *elohim*, lit. *mighty ones* or *gods*

■ **81:9 Nor shall you worship any foreign god.** The warning implies that Israel was not observing this basic commandment (Ex. 20:3).

■ **81:10 I am the LORD your God.** Strongly reminiscent of the preamble to the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:2). The relationship of grace came before revelation of the law.

I will fill it. Much of Israel's history, as recorded in Joshua through Chronicles, is the story of God's people looking for satisfaction without God. If they were worried about rain, they turned to Baal (1 Kin. 18). If they were worried about enemies, they wanted a strong king (1 Sam. 8). They kept forgetting they had a God who could and would fulfill all their needs easily.

■ **81:12 I gave them over.** See Rom. 1:24.

■ **81:13 Oh, that My people.** God's compassion for Israel is clearly seen in this verse.

■ **Ps. 82** This short psalm presents some difficult problems. Chief among them is the "gods" mentioned in vv. 1 and 6. A number of scholars take this as a reference to angelic powers, lesser spiritual beings who make up God's heavenly council. A second interpretation understands "gods" literally, as deities made subordinate to Yahweh. The most probable interpretation is that the "gods" are human judges. The Hebrew word *'elohim* ("gods") is used of human judges in Ex. 21:6; 22:8, 9. Within Ps. 82, the human nature of these "gods" is indicated by vv. 6, 7. A rough paraphrase would be, "As judges, people may call you 'lord,' but you are as mortal as anyone else."

■ **82:1 congregation of the mighty.** The exact scope of this congregation is unclear. It may be the heavenly assembly (including only spiritual powers), or it may include earthly kings.

■ **82:3 the poor.** See Ps. 9:18 note.

8 [g]Ps. 2:8; [Rev. 11:15]

PSALM 83

1 [a]Ps. 28:1

2 [b]Ps. 81:15; Is. 17:12; Acts 4:25 [1]*uproar* [2]Exalted themselves

3 [c][Ps. 27:5]

4 [d]Esth. 3:6, 9; Jer. 11:19; 31:36

5 [3]Lit. *heart* [4]Lit. *cut a covenant*

6 [e]2 Chr. 20:1, 10, 11

9 [f]Num. 31:7; Judg. 7:22 [g]Judg. 4:15–24; 5:20, 21

10 [h]Zeph. 1:17

11 [i]Judg. 7:25 [j]Judg. 8:12–21

13 [k]Is. 17:13 [l]Job 21:18; Ps. 35:5; Is. 40:24; Jer. 13:24

14 [m]Ex. 19:18; Deut. 32:22

7 But you shall die like men,
And fall like one of the princes."

8 Arise, O God, judge the earth;
[g]For You shall inherit all nations.

PSALM 83

Prayer to Frustrate Conspiracy Against Israel

A Song. A Psalm of Asaph.

1 [a]Do not keep silent, O God!
Do not hold Your peace,
And do not be still, O God!
2 For behold, [b]Your enemies make a [1]tumult;
And those who hate You have [2]lifted up their head.
3 They have taken crafty counsel against Your people,
And consulted together [c]against Your sheltered ones.
4 They have said, "Come, and [d]let us cut them off from *being* a nation,
That the name of Israel may be remembered no more."

5 For they have consulted together with one [3]consent;
They [4]form a confederacy against You:
6 [e]The tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites;
Moab and the Hagrites;
7 Gebal, Ammon, and Amalek;
Philistia with the inhabitants of Tyre;
8 Assyria also has joined with them;
They have helped the children of Lot. Selah

9 Deal with them as *with* [f]Midian,
As *with* [g]Sisera,
As *with* Jabin at the Brook Kishon,
10 Who perished at En Dor,
[h]*Who* became *as* refuse on the earth.
11 Make their nobles like [i]Oreb and like Zeeb,
Yes, all their princes like [j]Zebah and Zalmunna,
12 Who said, "Let us take for ourselves
The pastures of God for a possession."

13 [k]O my God, make them like the whirling dust,
[l]Like the chaff before the wind!
14 As the fire burns the woods,
And as the flame [m]sets the mountains on fire,

■ **82:8 judge the earth.** Since the human judges were failing to reflect His justice, God Himself would have to do it.

■ **Ps. 83** The psalm is a model prayer for the Christian's spiritual warfare. Instead of calling upon the Lord to destroy our flesh-and-blood enemies, we call upon Him to vanquish the spiritual forces of evil.

■ **83:1 Do not keep silent . . . do not be still.** The heart of the covenant is the promise that God will be present with His people. To the psalmist's eyes God is absent from His people if they are defeated before the enemy.

■ **83:5 they.** The nations involved in the plot against Israel are listed in vv. 6–8. Attempts have been made to identify the historical situation behind the psalm, but no time period is known in which all of these enemies were actively hostile toward Israel at the same time. The closest is Jehoshaphat's war recorded in 2 Chr. 20, but there is no mention of Assyria there.

■ **83:8 children.** That is, Moab and Ammon (Gen. 19:30–38).

■ **83:9 Midian.** God enabled Gideon to destroy the Midianites (Judg. 7).

Sisera . . . Jabin. Jabin was a king of Canaan and Sisera was his general early in the period of the judges. God delivered the Israelites from them through the work of Deborah (Judg. 4; 5).

■ **83:11 Oreb . . . Zeeb.** Two leaders who were destroyed by Ephraimites during Gideon's battle against the Midianites (Judg. 7:25—8:3).

Zebah and Zalmunna. Midianite kings who were captured and executed by Gideon (Judg. 8:4–21).

■ **83:12 The pastures of God.** The land of Israel, where the Shepherd-God settled His sheep, the people of Israel. The quote is ascribed to Israel's enemies in order to highlight the blasphemous nature of their plots against Israel.

15 So pursue them with Your tempest,
And frighten them with Your storm.
16 Fill their faces with shame,
That they may seek Your name, O LORD.
17 Let them be [5]confounded and dismayed forever;
Yes, let them be put to shame and perish,
18 [n]That they may know that You, whose [o]name alone *is* the LORD,
Are [p]the Most High over all the earth.

17 [5]*ashamed*
18 [n]Ps. 59:13 [o]Ex. 6:3 [p][Ps. 92:8]

PSALM 84

The Blessedness of Dwelling in the House of God

To the Chief Musician. [a]On [1] an instrument of Gath. A Psalm of the sons of Korah.

How [b]lovely [2]*is* Your tabernacle,
O LORD of hosts!
2 [c]My soul longs, yes, even faints
For the courts of the LORD;
My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.

3 Even the sparrow has found a home,
And the swallow a nest for herself,
Where she may lay her young—
Even Your altars, O LORD of hosts,
My King and my God.
4 Blessed *are* those who dwell in Your [d]house;
They will still be praising You. Selah

5 Blessed *is* the man whose strength *is* in You,
Whose heart *is* set on pilgrimage.
6 *As they* pass through the Valley [e]of [3]Baca,
They make it a spring;
The rain also covers it with [4]pools.
7 They go [f]from strength to strength;
[5]*Each one* [g]appears before God in Zion.

8 O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer;
Give ear, O God of Jacob! Selah
9 [h]O God, behold our shield,
And look upon the face of Your [6]anointed.

PSALM 84

title [a]Ps. 8:title [1]Heb: *Al Gittith*
1 [b]Ps. 27:4; 46:4, 5 [2]*are Your dwellings*
2 [c]Ps. 42:1, 2
4 [d][Ps. 65:4]
6 [e]2 Sam. 5:22–25 [3]Lit. *Weeping* [4]Or *blessings*
7 [f]Prov. 4:18; Is. 40:31; John 1:16; 2 Cor. 3:18 [g]Ex. 34:23; Deut. 16:16 [5]LXX, Syr., Vg. *The God of gods shall be seen*
9 [h]Gen. 15:1 [6]Commissioned one, Heb. *messiah*

■ **83:15 Your tempest . . . Your storm.** God's wrath is often compared to a violent storm (Ps. 18:7–15; Nah. 1:3).

■ **83:16 seek Your name.** The psalm supplies a redemptive reason behind the judgment. As God judges the wickedness of the attackers, they will see their folly and turn to Him.

■ **83:18 Most High.** The Hebrew words used sound similar to the most common title of the Canaanite god Baal. The poet is asking God to judge the nations so that they will see that Yahweh, not Baal, is the only God.

■ **Ps. 84** This psalm expresses the author's deep longing for the presence of God. While Christians do not have to travel to a special location to enjoy God's presence (John 4:21–24), the psalm gives voice to the yearning and happiness experienced in Christ's nearness.

■ **84:1 Your tabernacle.** The temple, the place which God chose to reveal His presence to the people (Deut. 12; 1 Kin. 8).

■ **84:2 living God.** The true object of the psalmist's devotion is not the temple building itself, but the God who revealed Himself there. Israel was often tempted to forget God and rely on the external trappings of religion (Jer. 7).

■ **84:3 sparrow . . . swallow.** Note the playful envy expressed by the psalmist. He is jealous of the birds who are able to build their homes near the altar. In this way he expresses his deepest longings to be as close as possible to God.

■ **84:4 Blessed.** See note on Ps. 1:1.

Your house. The temple, being the place of God's appointment on earth, is like heaven on earth. From a New Testament perspective, this verse gives a glimpse of the unending happiness of heaven.

■ **84:5 Blessed.** See note on Ps. 1:1.

whose strength is in You. Their vitality in life is found in God's power, not in their own.

pilgrimage. People living outside of Jerusalem made special trips to the temple to enjoy God's presence in worship. The Songs of Ascents (120—134) were probably used during these journeys (120:title).

■ **84:6 Valley of Baca.** The name of a valley otherwise unknown. There is a similar sounding Hebrew verb meaning "to weep." Others identify the noun as a certain kind of tree that flourishes in dry places, like the balsam or aspen. The context indicates that the valley is arid but transformed by the presence of the joyful pilgrims.

■ **84:7 in Zion.** The location of the temple, the ultimate goal of their pilgrimage. See notes on Ps. 2:6; 50:2; 74:2; 137:1.

■ **84:9 our shield . . . Your anointed.** The king is not only the political leader of Israel, but also the reflection of God's kingship on earth.

10 For a day in Your courts *is* better than a thousand.
I would rather [7]be a doorkeeper in the house of my God
Than dwell in the tents of wickedness.
11 For the LORD God *is* [i]a sun and [j]shield;
The LORD will give grace and glory;
[k]No good *thing* will He withhold
From those who walk uprightly.

12 O LORD of hosts,
[l]Blessed *is* the man who trusts in You!

PSALM 85

Prayer that the LORD Will Restore Favor to the Land

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm [a]of the sons of Korah.

LORD, You have been favorable to Your land;
You have [b]brought back the captivity of Jacob.
2 You have forgiven the iniquity of Your people;
You have covered all their sin. Selah
3 You have taken away all Your wrath;
You have turned from the fierceness of Your anger.

4 [c]Restore us, O God of our salvation,
And cause Your anger toward us to cease.
5 [d]Will You be angry with us forever?
Will You prolong Your anger to all generations?
6 Will You not [e]revive us again,
That Your people may rejoice in You?
7 Show us Your mercy, LORD,
And grant us Your salvation.

8 I will hear what God the LORD will speak,
For He will speak peace
To His people and to His saints;
But let them not turn back to [l]folly.
9 Surely [f]His salvation *is* near to those who fear Him,
[g]That glory may dwell in our land.

10 Mercy and truth have met together;
[h]Righteousness and peace have kissed.
11 Truth shall spring out of the earth,
And righteousness shall look down from heaven.

10 [7]*stand at the threshold*
11 [i]Is. 60:19, 20; Mal. 4:2; Rev. 21:23 [j]Gen. 15:1 [k]Ps. 34:9, 10
12 [l][Ps. 2:12; 40:4]

PSALM 85

title [a]Ps. 42:title
1 [b]Ezra 1:11—2:1; Ps. 14:7; Jer. 30:18; 31:23; Ezek. 39:25; Hos. 6:11; Joel 3:1
4 [c]Ps. 80:3, 7
5 [d]Ps. 79:5
6 [e]Hab. 3:2
8 [l]*foolishness*
9 [f]Is. 46:13 [g]Hag. 2:7; Zech. 2:5; [John 1:14]
10 [h]Ps. 72:3; [Is. 32:17]; Luke 2:14

■ **84:11 sun.** The metaphor comparing God to the sun praises Him as the source of light and energy. The burning rays of the sun in the dry country east of the Mediterranean make it a suitable portrayal of God's power.

No good thing will He withhold. See Rom. 8:28–39, especially v. 32.

■ **85:1 favorable to Your land.** A number of occasions in biblical history are illustrative for the psalm. Perhaps most appropriate, though the psalm could have already been in existence for many years, was Judah's return from Babylonian captivity in the sixth century B.C.

■ **85:2 forgiven the iniquity.** The people's misfortunes came from their sin before God. Forgiveness of sins means that God's wrath will be stilled. The necessary repentance is also the gift of God's grace.

■ **85:8 I.** The community has been speaking as a unit up to this point ("us"), but now an individual steps forward. Whoever he is (priest or prophet), he speaks on behalf of God.

He will speak peace. The word for "peace" (Hebrew *shalom*) indicates health and wholeness, and like "mercy," is a word intimately associated with the covenant. God promises the restoration of intimate relationship with His people.

His saints. This word is formed from the same root as "mercy" (v. 7), and denotes those who are the objects of God's covenant love.

■ **85:10 met together . . . have kissed.** This verse has long been interpreted to refer to the reconciliation that Jesus Christ effected between God's justice, that cannot tolerate sin, and His mercy, that does not rejoice in the death of the wicked (Ezek. 33:11; 2 Pet. 3:9). Justice and mercy came together in the cross of Christ. See "God Is Light: Divine Holiness and Justice" at Lev. 11:44.

■ **85:11 out of the earth . . . from heaven.** The future restored relationship with God will join God's blessing from heaven with the faithfulness of His people on earth.

12 [i]Yes, the LORD will give *what is* good;
And our land will yield its increase.
13 Righteousness will go before Him,
And shall make His footsteps *our* pathway.

PSALM 86

Prayer for Mercy, with Meditation on the Excellencies of the LORD

A Prayer of David.

Bow down Your ear, O LORD, hear me;
For I *am* poor and needy.
2 Preserve my [1]life, for I *am* holy;
You are my God;
Save Your servant who trusts in You!
3 Be merciful to me, O Lord,
For I cry to You all day long.
4 [2]Rejoice the soul of Your servant,
[a]For to You, O Lord, I lift up my soul.
5 For [b]You, Lord, *are* good, and ready to forgive,
And abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You.

6 Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer;
And attend to the voice of my supplications.
7 In the day of my trouble I will call upon You,
For You will answer me.

8 [c]Among the gods *there is* none like You, O Lord;
Nor *are there any works* like Your works.
9 All nations whom You have made
Shall come and worship before You, O Lord,
And shall glorify Your name.
10 For You *are* great, and [d]do wondrous things;
[e]You alone *are* God.

11 [f]Teach me Your way, O LORD;
I will walk in Your truth;
[3]Unite my heart to fear Your name.
12 I will praise You, O Lord my God, with all my heart,
And I will glorify Your name forevermore.
13 For great *is* Your mercy toward me,
And You have delivered my soul from the depths of [4]Sheol.

14 O God, the proud have risen against me,
And a mob of violent *men* have sought my life,
And have not set You before them.
15 But [g]You, O Lord, *are* a God full of compassion, and gracious,
Longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth.

12 [i][Ps. 84:11; James 1:17]

PSALM 86

2 [1]Lit. *soul*

4 [a]Ps. 25:1; 143:8 [2]*Make glad*

5 [b]Ps. 130:7; 145:9; [Joel 2:13]

8 [c][Ex. 15:11]; 2 Sam. 7:22; 1 Kin. 8:23; Ps. 89:6; Jer. 10:6

10 [d][Ex. 15:11] [e]Deut. 6:4; Is. 37:16; Mark 12:29; 1 Cor. 8:4

11 [f]Ps. 27:11; 143:8 [3]Give me singleness of heart

13 [4]The abode of the dead

15 [g]Ex. 34:6; [Ps. 86:5]

■ **85:12 yield its increase.** Fertility of land in an arid climate is an indication of God's care and love for His people.

■ **85:13 Righteousness will go before Him.** This attribute of God is personified as a herald who proclaims God's way before Him (cf. Ps. 23:6).

■ **86:title Prayer.** See introduction to Ps. 17.

■ **86:2 who trusts in You.** The psalmist recognizes his own inability, but he knows where true strength lies.

■ **86:3 Be merciful to me.** The poet knows that God's answer to his prayer is a manifestation of His unmerited grace. God owes him nothing.

■ **86:5 mercy.** The special love of God toward those in covenant with Him.

those who call upon You. God does not forgive all people indiscriminately; He waits until they turn to Him with prayers of repentance.

■ **86:8 there is none like You.** The psalmist sees that no god of the surrounding nations can be compared with the Lord in what He is or what He does. This confession of God's uniqueness is not a tacit admission that other gods exist (see v. 10). The psalmist is comparing the foreigners' vain imaginations with the reality of Yahweh.

■ **86:9 All nations whom You have made.** Yahweh is the God of all the nations, even though they may not recognize Him. God gives them their existence and whatever blessings they have.

■ **86:11 Unite my heart.** Such a united heart is one totally set on God.

■ **86:13 mercy.** The lovingkindness freely offered and promised in the gospel.

16 Oh, turn to me, and have mercy on me!
Give Your strength to Your servant,
And save the son of Your maidservant.
17 Show me a sign for good,
That those who hate me may see *it* and be ashamed,
Because You, LORD, have helped me and comforted me.

PSALM 87

The Glories of the City of God

A Psalm of the sons of Korah. A Song.

His foundation *is* in the holy mountains.
2 [a]The LORD loves the gates of Zion
More than all the dwellings of Jacob.
3 [b]Glorious things are spoken of you,
O city of God! Selah

4 "I will make mention of [f]Rahab and Babylon to those who know Me;
Behold, O Philistia and Tyre, with Ethiopia:
'This *one* was born there.' "

5 And of Zion it will be said,
"This *one* and that *one* were born in her;
And the Most High Himself shall establish her."
6 The LORD will record,
When He [c]registers the peoples:
"This *one* was born there." Selah

7 Both the singers and the players on instruments *say,*
"All my springs *are* in you."

PSALM 88

A Prayer for Help in Despondency

A Song. A Psalm of the sons of Korah. To the Chief Musician. Set to "Mahalath Leannoth." A [f]Contemplation of [a]Heman the Ezrahite.

O LORD, [b]God of my salvation,
I have cried out day and night before You.

PSALM 87

2 [a]Ps. 78:67, 68
3 [b]Is. 60:1
4 [f]Egypt
6 [c]Is. 4:3

PSALM 88

title [a]1 Kin. 4:31; 1 Chr. 2:6 [f]Heb. *Maschil*
1 [b]Ps. 27:9; [Luke 18:7]

■ **Ps. 87** The object of this psalm is to glorify Jerusalem, or Zion, the seat of God's special presence; see Ps. 46; 48; 76. The unique contribution of Ps. 87 is to give a glimpse of the universal character of God's worship. Its universalistic language brings to mind the future day when the "Gentiles should be fellow heirs" in the gospel (Eph. 3:6).

■ **87:1 His foundation.** This refers to the building of the temple on Mount Zion, north of the city of David and towering over it.

holy mountains. God is omnipresent: He is everywhere. Nevertheless, God met His people in an intimate and special way at Zion. See notes on Ps. 2:6; 29:6; 46:2.

■ **87:2 loves . . . More than.** The point is not that God hated other parts of Israel, but that He blessed Jerusalem with His presence. After the temple was built, there was only one designated place for the official worship of God—at Jerusalem (Deut. 12).

■ **87:3 are spoken of you.** Referring to the divine pronouncement to follow in the next few verses.

■ **87:4 I will make mention.** This formal introduction to the divine pronouncement uses the idea of the "book of the living" (Ex. 32:32; Ps. 69:28; 139:16; Is. 4:3; Rev. 21:24–27).

Rahab and Babylon. Rahab is a name for Egypt (Is. 30:7). Egypt and Babylon were the two superpowers who continually fought against Israel.

those who know Me. There were occasional foreigners, like Rahab and Naaman, who worshiped the Lord during the Old Testament period (cf. Ex. 12:38). This amazing verse looks forward to whole foreign nations bowing down to God.

Philistia. Israel's traditional enemy on the Mediterranean coast west of Judah.

Tyre. An affluent sea power north of Israel.

Ethiopia. Biblical Ethiopia is the remote region south of Egypt, including parts of modern Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Sudan.

■ **87:5 were born in her.** The verse refers metaphorically to a spiritual birth in Zion. Zion is mother to the spiritual birth of peoples from all over the world.

■ **87:6 registers the peoples.** See v. 4, note on "book of the living."

■ **87:7 my springs.** Physical thirst stands for spiritual thirst (Ps. 42:1, 2), that can only be satisfied in Jerusalem, God's chosen place.

■ **Ps. 88** This psalm is the most depressed of all the laments in the

Let my prayer come before You;
[2]Incline Your ear to my cry.

3 For my soul is full of troubles,
And my life [c]draws near to the grave.
4 I am counted with those who [d]go[3] down to the pit;
[e]I am like a man *who has* no strength,
5 [4]Adrift among the dead,
Like the slain who lie in the grave,
Whom You remember no more,
And who are cut off from Your hand.

6 You have laid me in the lowest pit,
In darkness, in the depths.
7 Your wrath lies heavy upon me,
And You have afflicted *me* with all [f]Your waves. Selah
8 [g]You have [5]put away my acquaintances far from me;
You have made me an abomination to them;
[h]*I am* shut up, and I cannot get out;
9 My eye wastes away because of affliction.

[i]LORD, I have called daily upon You;
I have stretched out my hands to You.
10 Will You work wonders for the dead?
Shall [6]the dead arise *and* praise You? Selah
11 Shall Your lovingkindness be declared in the grave?
Or Your faithfulness in the place of destruction?
12 Shall Your wonders be known in the dark?
And Your righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?

13 But to You I have cried out, O LORD,
And in the morning my prayer comes before You.
14 LORD, why do You cast off my soul?
Why do You hide Your face from me?
15 I *have been* afflicted and ready to die from *my* youth;
I suffer Your terrors;
I am distraught.
16 Your fierce wrath has gone over me;
Your terrors have [7]cut me off.
17 They came around me all day long like water;
They engulfed me altogether.
18 [j]Loved one and friend You have put far from me,
And my acquaintances into darkness.

2 [2]Listen to
3 [c]Ps. 107:18
4 [d][Ps. 28:1] [e]Ps. 31:12 [3]Die
5 [4]Lit. *Free*
7 [f]Ps. 42:7
8 [g]Job 19:13, 19; Ps. 31:11; 142:4 [h]Lam. 3:7 [5]*taken away my friends*
9 [i]Ps. 86:3
10 [6]*shades, ghosts*
16 [7]*destroyed me*
18 [j]Job 19:13; Ps. 31:11; 38:11

Psalter. The writer's distress can be heard from beginning to end, because his pain has lasted from his youth (v. 15) until the present. Most laments turn to confidence and praise at the end, but in this one the only glimmer of hope is that the psalmist is concerned to pray at all. He refers to God as "my salvation" (v. 1). A Christian is not, as such, free from the suffering of this world. Contrariwise, the Christian lot commonly is suffering and pain. We cannot hope to escape all suffering, but we find solace in the suffering and resurrection of Christ (Phil. 3:10).

■ **88:3 the grave.** Hebrew *sheol;* see 6:5 note.

■ **88:5 Adrift among the dead.** His condition is so bad that people treat him as if he were already dead.

■ **88:8 an abomination.** The psalmist's unhappiness is reminiscent of the suffering of Job.

■ **88:9 stretched out my hands.** An attitude of prayer. Though God afflicts him, or perhaps, because God afflicts him, the psalmist knows there is only one refuge for him—God.

■ **88:10 work wonders for the dead.** See 6:5; 30:9 and notes.

■ **88:17 like water.** For water as a figure of trouble, see notes on 18:4, 15.

■ **88:18 my acquaintances into darkness.** His closest friends have abandoned him (v. 8), and God is distant (v. 14), leaving only darkness nearby. This is the only psalm that ends on such a downcast note (introduction to Ps. 88).

PSALM 89

title [a]1 Kin. 4:31
[1]Heb. *Maschil*
2 [b][Ps. 119:89, 90]
3 [c]1 Kin. 8:16
[d]2 Sam. 7:11; 1 Chr. 17:10–12
4 [e][2 Sam. 7:13; Is. 9:7; Luke 1:33]
5 [f][Ps. 19:1]
6 [g]Ps. 86:8; 113:5
7 [h]Ps. 76:7, 11
9 [i]Ps. 65:7; 93:3, 4; 107:29
10 [j]Ex. 14:26–28; Ps. 87:4; Is. 30:7; 51:9 [2]Egypt
11 [k][Gen. 1:1; 1 Chr. 29:11]
12 [l]Josh. 19:22; Judg. 4:6; Jer. 46:18 [m]Deut. 3:8; Josh. 11:17; 12:1; Song 4:8

PSALM 89

Remembering the Covenant with David, and Sorrow for Lost Blessings

A [1]Contemplation of [a]Ethan the Ezrahite.

I will sing of the mercies of the LORD forever;
With my mouth will I make known Your faithfulness to all generations.
2 For I have said, "Mercy shall be built up forever;
[b]Your faithfulness You shall establish in the very heavens."

3 "I[c] have made a covenant with My chosen,
I have [d]sworn to My servant David:
4 'Your seed I will establish forever,
And build up your throne [e]to all generations.' " Selah

5 And [f]the heavens will praise Your wonders, O LORD;
Your faithfulness also in the assembly of the saints.
6 [g]For who in the heavens can be compared to the LORD?
Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened to the LORD?
7 [h]God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints,
And to be held in reverence by all *those* around Him.
8 O LORD God of hosts,
Who *is* mighty like You, O LORD?
Your faithfulness also surrounds You.
9 [i]You rule the raging of the sea;
When its waves rise, You still them.
10 [j]You have broken [2]Rahab in pieces, as one who is slain;
You have scattered Your enemies with Your mighty arm.

11 [k]The heavens *are* Yours, the earth also *is* Yours;
The world and all its fullness, You have founded them.
12 The north and the south, You have created them;
[l]Tabor and [m]Hermon rejoice in Your name.
13 You have a mighty arm;
Strong is Your hand, *and* high is Your right hand.
14 Righteousness and justice *are* the foundation of Your throne;
Mercy and truth go before Your face.

■ **Ps. 89** The psalm opens joyfully, but is finally a lament. The issue at the heart of the psalm is the Davidic covenant. In 2 Sam. 7:4–17 (cf. 1 Chr. 17:1–15) God established a covenant with David in which He promised that the special relationship would pass on to David's obedient sons (32:11). God's language was bold; the covenant was to last "forever" (2 Sam. 7:13).

But this promise was not without conditions upon the recipients. If they sinned they would be punished (1 Kin. 8:25; 2 Sam. 7:14). David's own son Solomon began his slide into apostasy by admitting the religious cults of his foreign wives (1 Kin. 11). The continuing disobedience of the Davidic kings resulted in the Babylonian exile and an end to that period of Israel's monarchy in the sixth century B.C. But the spiritual substance of the promise was not canceled; Christ came to take the throne of David forever (Is. 9:7; Luke 1:32; 22:30).

■ **89:1 mercies.** The wonders of God's devotion to His people in the love of His covenant with them.

faithfulness. God is not fickle or capricious, but will keep the promises He makes. Hope in the fulfillment of God's promise to David is what will motivate the lament at the end of the psalm (vv. 38–51).

■ **89:5 heavens.** The heavens are here personified; the reference is to the beings in heaven, such as the cherubim and the angels. God is so great that even these powerful spiritual entities fall to their knees in adoration.

assembly. The angels and other spiritual beings in heaven are God's divine assembly through whom He works His will.

■ **89:6 in the heavens.** Having mentioned spiritual beings, the psalmist is quick to point out the uniqueness of God. The writings of the Canaanites and Mesopotamians also mention an "assembly of the holy ones," but this was an assembly made up of different gods. The God of Israel is not the best of such gods but wholly different from them. The Old Testament expresses His transcendence in numerous places (Is. 44:6).

■ **89:10 Rahab.** Like Leviathan, Rahab is here a sea monster of Near Eastern mythology, standing for forces of evil and chaos (Job 9:13; Ezek. 29:3 and note). Frequently the name Rahab is applied to Egypt (Ps. 87:4 and note).

■ **89:11 You have founded them.** Unlike the heathen gods, the Lord is the Creator of the world.

■ **89:12 Tabor and Hermon.** Hermon in the far north is the highest peak in Israel. Tabor is a mountain of distinctive shape standing in the Megiddo plain, a landmark of the boundary of three tribes.

■ **89:14 Righteousness and justice.** As King, God is responsible for the administration of law in the land. He does not judge arbitrarily.

go before Your face. See Ps. 85:13.

15 Blessed *are* the people who know the [n]joyful sound!
They walk, O LORD, in the light of Your countenance.
16 In Your name they rejoice all day long,
And in Your righteousness they are exalted.
17 For You *are* the glory of their strength,
And in Your favor our [3]horn is [o]exalted.
18 For our shield *belongs* to the LORD,
And our king to the Holy One of Israel.

19 Then You spoke in a vision to Your [4]holy one,
And said: "I have given help to *one who is* mighty;
I have exalted one [p]chosen from the people.
20 [q]I have found My servant David;
With My holy oil I have anointed him,
21 [r]With whom My hand shall be established;
Also My arm shall strengthen him.
22 The enemy shall not [5]outwit him,
Nor the son of wickedness afflict him.
23 I will beat down his foes before his face,
And plague those who hate him.

24 "But My faithfulness and My mercy *shall be* with him,
And in My name his horn shall be exalted.
25 Also I will [s]set his hand over the sea,
And his right hand over the rivers.
26 He shall cry to Me, 'You *are* [t]my Father,
My God, and [u]the rock of my salvation.'
27 Also I will make him [v]*My* firstborn,
[w]The highest of the kings of the earth.
28 [x]My mercy I will keep for him forever,
And My covenant shall stand firm with him.
29 His seed also I will make *to endure* forever,
[y]And his throne [z]as the days of heaven.

30 "If[a] his sons [b]forsake My law
And do not walk in My judgments,
31 If they [6]break My statutes
And do not keep My commandments,
32 Then I will punish their transgression with the rod,
And their iniquity with stripes.
33 [c]Nevertheless My lovingkindness I will not [7]utterly take from him,
Nor [8]allow My faithfulness to fail.
34 My covenant I will not break,

15 [n]Lev. 23:24; Num. 10:10; Ps. 98:6

17 [o]Ps. 75:10; 92:10; 132:17
[3]Strength

19 [p]1 Kin. 11:34
[4]So with many Heb. mss.; MT, LXX, Tg., Vg. *holy ones*

20 [q]1 Sam. 13:14; 16:1–12; Acts 13:22

21 [r]Ps. 80:17

22 [5]Or *exact usury from him*

25 [s]Ps. 72:8

26 [t]2 Sam. 7:14; [1 Chr. 22:10]; Jer. 3:19
[u]2 Sam. 22:47

27 [v]Ex. 4:22; Ps. 2:7; Jer. 31:9; [Col. 1:15, 18]
[w]Num. 24:7; [Ps. 72:11]; Rev. 19:16

28 [x]Is. 55:3

29 [y][1 Kin. 2:4; Is. 9:7]; Jer. 33:17
[z]Deut. 11:21

30 [a][2 Sam. 7:14]
[b]Ps. 119:53

31 [6]*profane*

33 [c]2 Sam. 7:14, 15
[7]Lit. *break off*
[8]Lit. *deal falsely with My faithfulness*

■ **89:17 our horn.** The king. The metaphor of the horn is associated with that of the bull, which stands for strength. God is the One who endows the human king with power. This thought is specified in the next line.

■ **89:19 in a vision.** The exact words of this vision are not found elsewhere in Scripture, but the allusion is probably to the prophetic insight of Nathan in 2 Sam. 7, if not to the initial divine word given to Samuel concerning David's kingship (1 Sam. 6).

■ **89:21 shall strengthen him.** The king had sacred responsibilities, both political and religious. God promises to give David the strength he needs to carry out his divinely given tasks.

■ **89:24 My faithfulness and My mercy.** These two key words reverberate throughout the psalm, beginning in v. 1; see note on v. 1.

■ **89:26 You are my Father.** A reference to the intimate relationship established between God and David in 2 Sam. 7:14. The king played an important role as mediator of the Davidic covenant between God and His people. This special function made the apostasy of later kings especially heinous.

■ **89:27 My firstborn.** Calling David the "firstborn" means that he was first in rank in the covenant community, the head of a household (Gen. 4:4; 25:31 and notes). David in particular foreshadows Christ, uniquely the Son of God and Head of the church (Eph. 1:22; Heb. 3:6).

■ **89:29 forever.** The dynasty of David as an earthly political enterprise was long-lived, but not eternal. It fell because of the sins of David's successors. Superseding it, as the reality casting a shadow, was the eternal kingdom of Jesus Christ.

■ **89:31 My statutes.** God's will as summarized in the first five books of the Old Testament. Deut. 17:19 commands the king to be well versed in God's law and obedient to it.

■ **89:34 I will not break.** God's promises stand forever. The Davidic covenant has a conditional element, as this psalm points out in v. 32, but its ultimate fulfillment does not depend on human response. David and the psalmist knew that it would be fulfilled, but could not know everything about how that would occur (Acts 2:29–31; 1 Pet. 1:10, 11).

Nor [d]alter the word that has gone out of My lips.
35 Once I have sworn [e]by My holiness;
I will not lie to David:
36 [f]His seed shall endure forever,
And his throne [g]as the sun before Me;
37 It shall be established forever like the moon,
Even *like* the faithful witness in the sky." Selah

38 But You have [h]cast off and [i]abhorred,[9]
You have been furious with Your [j]anointed.
39 You have renounced the covenant of Your servant;
[j] You have [2]profaned his crown *by casting it* to the ground.
40 You have broken down all his hedges;
You have brought his [3]strongholds to ruin.
41 All who pass by the way [k]plunder him;
He is a reproach to his neighbors.
42 You have exalted the right hand of his adversaries;
You have made all his enemies rejoice.
43 You have also turned back the edge of his sword,
And have not sustained him in the battle.
44 You have made his [4]glory cease,
And cast his throne down to the ground.
45 The days of his youth You have shortened;
You have covered him with shame. Selah

46 How long, LORD?
Will You hide Yourself forever?
Will Your wrath burn like fire?
47 Remember how short my time [l]is;
For what [m]futility have You created all the children of men?
48 What man can live and not [5]see [n]death?
Can he deliver his life from the power of [6]the grave? Selah

49 Lord, where *are* Your former lovingkindnesses,
Which You [o]swore to David [p]in Your truth?
50 Remember, Lord, the reproach of Your servants—
[q] *How* I bear in my bosom *the reproach of* all the many peoples,
51 [r]With which Your enemies have reproached, O LORD,
With which they have reproached the footsteps of Your [7]anointed.

52 [s]Blessed *be* the LORD forevermore!
Amen and Amen.

Book Four: Psalms 90—106

PSALM 90

The Eternity of God, and Man's Frailty

A Prayer [a]of Moses the man of God.

Lord, [b]You have been our [l]dwelling place in all generations.
2 [c]Before the mountains were brought forth,

34 [d][Num. 23:19]; Jer. 33:20–22
35 [e][1 Sam. 15:29]; Amos 4:2; [Titus 1:2]
36 [f][Luke 1:33] [g]Ps. 72:17
38 [h][1 Chr. 28:9] [i]Deut. 32:19 [9]*rejected* [j]Commissioned one, Heb. *messiah*
39 [j]Ps. 74:7; Lam. 5:16 [2]*defiled*
40 [3]*fortresses*
41 [k]Ps. 80:12
44 [4]*splendor* or *brightness*
47 [l]Ps. 90:9 [m]Ps. 62:9
48 [n][Eccl. 3:19] [5]*experience death* [6]Or *Sheol*
49 [o][2 Sam. 7:15]; Jer. 30:9; Ezek. 34:23 [p]Ps. 54:5
50 [q]Ps. 69:9, 19
51 [r]Ps. 74:10, 18, 22 [7]Commissioned one, Heb. *messiah*
52 [s]Ps. 41:13

PSALM 90

title [a]Deut. 33:1
1 [b][Deut. 33:27; Ezek. 11:16] [l]LXX, Tg., Vg. *refuge*
2 [c]Job 15:7; [Prov. 8:25, 26]

■ **89:38 You have cast off.** The focus of the psalm shifts to the present and the great rift in the relationship between God and the king.

Your anointed. An unspecified Davidic successor to the throne.

■ **89:39 renounced.** The psalmist is outspoken, speaking boldly in his appeal to break God's silence.

■ **89:41 All . . . plunder him.** God's absence is experienced through the victory of their enemies.

■ **89:49 Your former lovingkindnesses.** God's lovingkindness is the love by which God binds Himself to His people in covenant devotion.

■ **89:52** A doxology concludes Book III of the Psalter (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes).

■ **Ps. 90** This psalm, the only one ascribed to Moses, contrasts God's eternity and human mortality. Moses seems to pray for God's blessing on his own generation, doomed to wander in the wilderness.

■ **90:2 from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.** The psalmist affirms the eternal existence of God. God's work of creation (Gen. 1)

Or ever You [2]had formed the earth and the world,
Even from everlasting to everlasting, You *are* God.

3 You turn man to destruction,
And say, [d]"Return, O children of men."
4 [e]For a thousand years in Your sight
Are like yesterday when it is past,
And *like* a watch in the night.
5 You carry them away *like* a flood;
[f]*They are* like a sleep.
In the morning [g]they are like grass *which* grows up:
6 In the morning it flourishes and grows up;
In the evening it is cut down and withers.

7 For we have been consumed by Your anger,
And by Your wrath we are terrified.
8 [h]You have set our iniquities before You,
Our [i]secret *sins* in the light of Your countenance.
9 For all our days have passed away in Your wrath;
We finish our years like a sigh.
10 The days of our lives *are* seventy years;
And if by reason of strength *they are* eighty years,
Yet their boast *is* only labor and sorrow;
For it is soon cut off, and we fly away.
11 Who knows the power of Your anger?
For as the fear of You, *so is* Your wrath.
12 [j]So teach *us* to number our days,
That we may gain a heart of wisdom.

2 [2]Lit. *gave birth to*

3 [d]Gen. 3:19; Job 34:14, 15

4 [e]2 Pet. 3:8

5 [f]Ps. 73:20 [g]Is. 40:6

8 [h]Ps. 50:21; [Jer. 16:17] [i]Ps. 19:12; [Eccl. 12:14]

12 [j]Deut. 32:29; Ps. 39:4

The Self-existence of God

Children sometimes ask, "Who made God?" The clearest answer is that God never needed to be made, because He was always there. He exists in a different way from us: we exist in a derived, finite, and fragile way, but our Creator exists as eternal, self-sustaining, and necessary. His existence is necessary in the sense that there is no possibility in Him of ceasing to exist.

God's self-existence is a basic truth. In his presentation of the "unknown God" to the Athenians, Paul explained that the Creator of the world is not "worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things" (Acts 17:23–25). The Creator has life in Himself and draws His unending energy from Himself, needing nothing. The independent self-existence of God is a truth stated clearly in the Bible (Ps. 90:1–4; 102:25–27; Is. 40:28–31; John 5:26; Rev. 4:10).

In theology, many errors result from supposing that the conditions and limits of our own finite existence apply to God. In the life of faith we can too easily impoverish ourselves by embracing an idea of God that is limited and small. The doctrine of His self-existence is a bulwark and defense against such mistakes. The principle that God exists from Himself alone distinguishes Him from every creature and is a foundation of our thinking about Him. Knowing that God's existence is independent protects our understanding of His greatness, and so has clear practical value for our spiritual health. □

brought the whole universe into existence; God Himself had always been there. See theological note "The Self-existence of God."

■ **90:3 to destruction.** Lit. "to dust." God's judgment returns the descendants of Adam to the dust in death.

■ **90:4 like yesterday.** God is not subject to time, but is its Creator. See "God the Creator" at 148:5.

■ **90:5** The brevity of human life—like a sleep—contrasts with God's eternity.

■ **90:8 Our secret sins.** People commit sins they think they can hide, like envy, hatred, and lust. But before God there are no secrets (Heb. 4:12, 13).

■ **90:10 seventy years.** To a young person, seventy years seems like a long time. But before God's eternity, and in human retrospect, it is brief.

■ **90:11 Who knows.** Only Jesus Christ, who drank the full cup of God's wrath for sinners, knows the full power of death.

13 [k]Ex. 32:12; Deut. 32:36
14 [l]Ps. 85:6
16 [m][Deut. 32:4]; Hab. 3:2
17 [n]Ps. 27:4 [o]Is. 26:12

PSALM 91

1 [a]Ps. 27:5; 31:20; 32:7 [b]Ps. 17:8; Is. 25:4; 32:2
2 [c]Ps. 142:5
3 [d]Ps. 124:7; Prov. 6:5 [1]One who catches birds in a trap or snare
4 [e]Ps. 17:8 [2]A small shield
5 [f][Job 5:19; Ps. 112:7; Is. 43:2]
8 [g]Ps. 37:34; Mal. 1:5
9 [h]Ps. 91:2 [i]Ps. 90:1
10 [j][Prov. 12:21]
11 [k]Ps. 34:7; Matt. 4:6; Luke 4:10; [Heb. 1:14]

13 Return, O LORD!
How long?
And [k]have compassion on Your servants.
14 Oh, satisfy us early with Your mercy,
[l]That we may rejoice and be glad all our days!
15 Make us glad according to the days *in which* You have afflicted us,
The years *in which* we have seen evil.
16 Let [m]Your work appear to Your servants,
And Your glory to their children.
17 [n]And let the beauty of the LORD our God be upon us,
And [o]establish the work of our hands for us;
Yes, establish the work of our hands.

PSALM 91

Safety of Abiding in the Presence of God

He [a]who dwells in the secret place of the Most High
Shall abide [b]under the shadow of the Almighty.
2 [c]I will say of the LORD, "*He is* my refuge and my fortress;
My God, in Him I will trust."

3 Surely [d]He shall deliver you from the snare of the [1]fowler
And from the perilous pestilence.
4 [e]He shall cover you with His feathers,
And under His wings you shall take refuge;
His truth *shall be your* shield and [2]buckler.
5 [f]You shall not be afraid of the terror by night,
Nor of the arrow *that* flies by day,
6 *Nor* of the pestilence *that* walks in darkness,
Nor of the destruction *that* lays waste at noonday.

7 A thousand may fall at your side,
And ten thousand at your right hand;
But it shall not come near you.
8 Only [g]with your eyes shall you look,
And see the reward of the wicked.

9 Because you have made the LORD, *who is* [h]my refuge,
Even the Most High, [i]your dwelling place,
10 [j]No evil shall befall you,
Nor shall any plague come near your dwelling;
11 [k]For He shall give His angels charge over you,
To keep you in all your ways.

■ **90:13 How long.** See note on Ps. 6:3.

■ **90:16 Your work.** God must act to redeem and restore.

their children. Moses contemplates a generation entering the Promised Land.

■ **90:17 the beauty of the LORD our God.** In the midst of life in the wilderness, only the blessing of God's own presence can give meaning and joy.

establish the work of our hands. Wanderers in the desert may leave no monuments, but God can give eternal significance to the deeds of hands that serve Him.

■ **Ps. 91** The original setting of this poem appears to be warfare with its threats of battle and plague among the soldiers (vv. 3–8). In the face of the hard realities of war, God is portrayed as a compassionate mother bird protecting her young (v. 4).

■ **91:1 He who dwells . . . Shall abide.** The verse states the theme of the whole psalm. Those who draw near to God can have peace in Him, however difficult their circumstances.

■ **91:3 He shall deliver you.** God is present and able to deliver His people. See "Omnipresence and Omnipotence" at Jer. 23:24.

■ **91:4 with His feathers.** Psalms of confidence often have a metaphor for God's compassion at their core. God is likened to a mother bird who protects her young.

His truth. God's steadfast love and the certainty that He will keep His promises to sustain the psalmist.

■ **91:5 the terror by night.** Perhaps a reference to plagues that could sweep through an encampment.

arrow. The literal setting of battle can be taken figuratively for the struggles of life.

■ **91:11, 12 His angels.** God often works His will through His spiritual attendants, the angels.

12 In *their* hands they shall [3]bear you up,
[l]Lest you [4]dash your foot against a stone.
13 You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra,
The young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot.

14 "Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him;
I will [5]set him on high, because he has [m]known My name.
15 He shall [n]call upon Me, and I will answer him;
I *will be* [o]with him in trouble;
I will deliver him and honor him.
16 With [6]long life I will satisfy him,
And show him My salvation."

PSALM 92

Praise to the LORD for His Love and Faithfulness

A Psalm. A Song for the Sabbath day.

It is [a]good to give thanks to the LORD,
And to sing praises to Your name, O Most High;
2 To [b]declare Your lovingkindness in the morning,
And Your faithfulness every night,
3 [c]On an instrument of ten strings,
On the lute,
And on the harp,
With harmonious sound.
4 For You, LORD, have made me glad through Your work;
I will triumph in the works of Your hands.

5 [d]O LORD, how great are Your works!
[e]Your thoughts are very deep.
6 [f]A senseless man does not know,
Nor does a fool understand this.
7 When [g]the wicked [l]spring up like grass,
And when all the workers of iniquity flourish,
It is that they may be destroyed forever.

8 [h]But You, LORD, *are* on high forevermore.
9 For behold, Your enemies, O LORD,
For behold, Your enemies shall perish;
All the workers of iniquity shall [i]be scattered.

10 But [j]my [2]horn You have exalted like a wild ox;
I have been [k]anointed with fresh oil.
11 [l]My eye also has seen *my desire* on my enemies;
My ears hear *my desire* on the wicked
Who rise up against me.

12 [l]Matt. 4:6; Luke 4:11 [3]*lift* [4]*strike*

14 [m][Ps. 9:10] [5]*exalt him*

15 [n]Job 12:4; Ps. 50:15 [o]Is. 43:2

16 [6]Lit. *length of days*

PSALM 92

1 [a]Ps. 147:1

2 [b]Ps. 89:1

3 [c]1 Chr. 23:5

5 [d]Ps. 40:5; [Rev. 15:3] [e]Ps. 139:17, 18; [Is. 28:29; Rom. 11:33, 34]

6 [f]Ps. 73:22

7 [g]Job 12:6; Ps. 37:1, 2; Jer. 12:1, 2; [Mal. 3:15] [l]*sprout*

8 [h][Ps. 83:18]

9 [i]Ps. 68:1

10 [j]Ps. 89:17 [k]Ps. 23:5 [2]Strength

11 [l]Ps. 54:7

■ **91:12 they shall bear you up.** Satan quoted this passage to Jesus in the wilderness (Matt. 4:6) tempting Him to jump from the top of the temple. Satan's aim was to turn faith into presumption.

■ **91:14 Because he has set his love upon Me.** God's promise of protection comes to those who have faith in Him.

■ **92:1 Most High.** This title is similar to one commonly given to Baal in Canaanite religious texts. Applying it to the God of Israel is a kind of taunt directed toward anyone tempted to worship Baal (83:18).

■ **92:2 Your lovingkindness . . . Your faithfulness.** In His covenant with His people, God pledges Himself to love them faithfully. He is the author of the terms of the covenant binding Him and His people together (136:1 and note).

■ **92:4 Your work . . . the works of Your hands.** The psalmist concentrates on God's acts in time and space. God is not out of touch with created reality, but works through such reality to demonstrate His love for His people.

■ **92:5 how great . . . thoughts are very deep.** God's acts and thoughts overwhelm us as we contemplate them. They draw us on to reverent fascination and humble devotion that exceeds our poor grasp.

■ **92:7 the wicked spring up like grass.** The psalmist does not deny that the wicked appear to prosper in this world.

■ **92:9 Your enemies shall perish.** As the psalmist meditates on the greatness and justice of God, he comes to the sure conclusion that the wicked will be destroyed.

■ **92:10 my horn You have exalted.** The horn of an animal is used in the Bible as a symbol of power. The wild ox raises its horn with pride and confidence. See 75:4; 89:17; 132:17; 148:14 and notes.

12 [m]Num. 24:6; Ps. 52:8; Jer. 17:8; Hos. 14:5, 6
14 [3]Full of oil or sap, lit. *fat* [4]*green*
15 [n][Deut. 32:4] [o][Rom. 9:14]

PSALM 93

1 [a]Ps. 96:10 [b]Ps. 65:6 [1]*shaken*
2 [c]Ps. 45:6; [Lam. 5:19]
3 [2]*raised up*
4 [d]Ps. 65:7
5 [3]Lit. *for length of days*

PSALM 94

1 [a]Deut. 32:35; [Is. 35:4; Nah. 1:2; Rom. 12:19]
2 [b][Gen. 18:25] [1]*Repay with*
3 [c][Job 20:5]
4 [d]Ps. 31:18; Jude 15

12 [m]The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree,
He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.
13 Those who are planted in the house of the LORD
Shall flourish in the courts of our God.
14 They shall still bear fruit in old age;
They shall be [3]fresh and [4]flourishing,
15 To declare that the LORD is upright;
[n]*He is* my rock, and [o]*there is* no unrighteousness in Him.

PSALM 93

The Eternal Reign of the LORD

The [a]LORD reigns, He is clothed with majesty;
The LORD is clothed,
[b]He has girded Himself with strength.
Surely the world is established, so that it cannot be [1]moved.
2 [c]Your throne *is* established from of old;
You *are* from everlasting.

3 The floods have [2]lifted up, O LORD,
The floods have lifted up their voice;
The floods lift up their waves.
4 [d]The LORD on high *is* mightier
Than the noise of many waters,
Than the mighty waves of the sea.

5 Your testimonies are very sure;
Holiness adorns Your house,
O LORD, [3]forever.

PSALM 94

God the Refuge of the Righteous

O LORD God, [a]to whom vengeance belongs—
O God, to whom vengeance belongs, shine forth!
2 Rise up, O [b]Judge of the earth;
[1]Render punishment to the proud.
3 LORD, [c]how long will the wicked,
How long will the wicked triumph?

4 They [d]utter speech, *and* speak insolent things;
All the workers of iniquity boast in themselves.

■ **92:12 like a palm tree . . . like a cedar.** A strong contrast is drawn between the flourishing of the righteous and the destruction of the wicked (v. 7). The wicked are like fragile grass, whereas the righteous are strong, vital, and productive trees. A similar type of contrast is found in Ps. 1.

■ **92:13 planted in the house of the LORD.** The source of the vitality of the righteous is not themselves, but God.

■ **Ps. 93** This short poem stands at the head of a group of psalms that praise God as King (93; 95—100). Comparison may also be made with Ps. 24 and 46.

■ **93:1 The LORD reigns.** This phrase and its slight variants may be found throughout this section of the Psalter (Ps. 96:10; 97:1; 98:6; 99:1). God is King, with omnipotent power and sovereign control over the world. See "God Reigns: Divine Sovereignty" at Dan. 4:34.

the world is established. This word of assurance is based on the fact that the King has created and maintains the world. The forces of evil, disorder, and chaos (vv. 3, 4) will not overwhelm the world.

■ **93:2 You are from everlasting.** God has no beginning; He is uncreated. This conception of the eternal kingship of God stands in stark contrast with the theology of Mesopotamia and Canaan. In these neighboring regions, the power of the gods varied according to changes in the political arena.

■ **93:3 The floods.** An ancient symbol of the forces of chaos and evil. See notes on 18:4, 15.

■ **93:5 Your testimonies.** The stability and order that exists because of God's eternal kingship is shared with humanity through the revealed law.

■ **Ps. 94** The psalmist calls on the Lord as Judge to bring justice to arrogant evildoers, those who disobey Him. The writer mentions an oppressive "throne of iniquity" (vv. 20–23).

■ **94:2 Rise up, O Judge.** See notes on 3:7 and 7:6; "God Is Light: Divine Holiness and Justice" at Lev. 11:44.

■ **94:3 how long.** See note on Ps. 6:3.

■ **94:4 speak insolent things.** They should be ashamed and silent, but instead they shout their evil accomplishments from the rooftops.

5 They break in pieces Your people, O LORD,
And afflict Your heritage.
6 They slay the widow and the stranger,
And murder the fatherless.
7 [e]Yet they say, "The LORD does not see,
Nor does the God of Jacob [2]understand."

8 Understand, you senseless among the people;
And *you* fools, when will you be wise?
9 [f]He who planted the ear, shall He not hear?
He who formed the eye, shall He not see?
10 He who [3]instructs the [4]nations, shall He not correct,
He who teaches man knowledge?
11 The LORD [g]knows the thoughts of man,
That they *are* futile.

12 Blessed *is* the man whom You [h]instruct, O LORD,
And teach out of Your law,
13 That You may give him [5]rest from the days of adversity,
Until the pit is dug for the wicked.
14 For the LORD will not [6]cast off His people,
Nor will He forsake His inheritance.
15 But judgment will return to righteousness,
And all the upright in heart will follow it.

16 Who will rise up for me against the evildoers?
Who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?
17 Unless the LORD *had been* my help,
My soul would soon have settled in silence.
18 If I say, "My foot slips,"
Your mercy, O LORD, will hold me up.
19 In the multitude of my anxieties within me,
Your comforts delight my soul.

20 Shall [i]the throne of iniquity, which devises evil by law,
Have fellowship with You?
21 They gather together against the life of the righteous,
And condemn [j]innocent blood.
22 But the LORD has been my defense,
And my God the rock of my refuge.
23 He has brought on them their own iniquity,
And shall [7]cut them off in their own wickedness;
The LORD our God shall cut them off.

7 [e]Job 22:13; Ps. 10:11 [2]*pay attention*

9 [f][Ex. 4:11; Prov. 20:12]

10 [3]*disciplines* [4]*Gentiles*

11 [g]Job 11:11; 1 Cor. 3:20

12 [h][Deut. 8:5; Job 5:17; Ps. 119:71; Prov. 3:11, 12; Heb. 12:5, 6]

13 [5]*relief*

14 [6]*abandon*

20 [i]Amos 6:3

21 [j][Ex. 23:7]; Ps. 106:38; [Prov. 17:15]; Matt. 27:4

23 [7]*destroy them*

■ **94:6 widow . . . stranger . . . fatherless.** See 9:18 note.

■ **94:7 The LORD does not see.** The wicked in their prosperity believe that God does not care what they do.

■ **94:8 be wise.** The wicked will be wise when they shed the illusion that God does not know their evil schemes, or that He is unable to do anything about them.

■ **94:11 knows the thoughts of man.** The Lord knows even the secret thoughts hidden away in the heart (Ps. 90:8).

■ **94:13 Until the pit is dug.** The psalmist recognizes that there is often a delay between a wicked act and its punishment. The unrighteous may prosper for a time. However, that they will pay for their crimes is a certainty.

■ **94:14 will not cast off His people.** God may discipline the righteous (v. 12), to return them to conformity to His will, but He will never leave them.

■ **94:16 for me.** The psalm takes on a personal note as the author prepares to mention how God delivered him.

■ **94:18 Your mercy.** Specifically, God's love for those in covenant with Him.

■ **94:20 throne of iniquity.** A king who perverts justice. A king of Israel was to reflect the kingship of God, particularly God's justice and compassion. The psalmist refers to an Israelite king who did not seek the will of God. There are many such examples from the history of the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

PSALM 95

2 [a]Eph. 5:19; James 5:13
3 [b][Ps. 96:4; 1 Cor. 8:5, 6]
4 [1]In His possession
5 [c]Gen. 1:9, 10; Jon. 1:9
6 [d]2 Chr. 6:13; Dan. 6:10; [Phil. 2:10]
7 [e]Ps. 79:13 [f]Heb. 3:7–11, 15; 4:7 [2]Under His care
8 [g]Ex. 17:2–7; Num. 20:13 [3]Or *Meribah,* lit. *Strife, Contention* [4]Or *Massah,* lit. *Trial, Testing*
9 [h]Ps. 78:18; [1 Cor. 10:9] [i]Num. 14:22
10 [j]Acts 7:36; 13:18; Heb. 3:10, 17 [5]*disgusted*
11 [k]Num. 14:23, 28–30; Deut. 1:35; Heb. 4:3, 5

PSALM 96

1 [a]1 Chr. 16:23–33
3 [1]*Gentiles*

PSALM 95

A Call to Worship and Obedience

Oh come, let us sing to the LORD!
Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation.
2 Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving;
Let us shout joyfully to Him with [a]psalms.
3 For [b]the LORD *is* the great God,
And the great King above all gods.
4 [1]In His hand *are* the deep places of the earth;
The heights of the hills *are* His also.
5 [c]The sea *is* His, for He made it;
And His hands formed the dry *land.*

6 Oh come, let us worship and bow down;
Let [d]us kneel before the LORD our Maker.
7 For He *is* our God,
And [e]we *are* the people of His pasture,
And the sheep [2]of His hand.

[f]Today, if you will hear His voice:
8 "Do not harden your hearts, as in the [3]rebellion,
[g]As *in* the day of [4]trial in the wilderness,
9 When [h]your fathers tested Me;
They tried Me, though they [i]saw My work.
10 For [j]forty years I was [5]grieved with *that* generation,
And said, 'It *is* a people who go astray in their hearts,
And they do not know My ways.'
11 So [k]I swore in My wrath,
'They shall not enter My rest.' "

PSALM 96

A Song of Praise to God Coming in Judgment

Oh, [a]sing to the LORD a new song!
Sing to the LORD, all the earth.
2 Sing to the LORD, bless His name;
Proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day.
3 Declare His glory among the [1]nations,
His wonders among all peoples.

■ **Ps. 95** The psalm opens with an exuberant hymn and ends with God's warning to listen to His voice and obey Him.

■ **95:1 let us.** A worship leader, such as a priest, calls on the congregation to worship the Lord together with him.

■ **95:3 the great King above all gods.** As the supreme God of the universe all sovereignty is His. The reference is to popular Near Eastern mythology, not the actual existence of such gods (48:2; 74:13 and notes).

■ **95:5 The sea . . . the dry land.** As in v. 4, complementary terms are used to indicate the whole earth.

■ **95:6 our Maker.** We worship our Creator.

■ **95:7 Today.** This is an ever-present day.

■ **95:8 rebellion . . . trial.** These place-names may be translated "quarreling" and "testing." They sum up Israel's attitude toward God during the forty years of wandering in the wilderness. For the history see Ex. 17:1–7 and notes; Num. 20:1–13.

■ **95:11 They shall not enter My rest.** Those who rebelled against the Lord in the wilderness never entered the Promised Land. Heb. 3:7—4:7 cites this passage and applies it to the Christian's life. Professing Christians must heed God's Word, or they will not enter God's eternal rest.

■ **Ps. 96** The psalmist calls on all nations to proclaim God as their King. The psalm contrasts God with the lifeless idols of the nations (vv. 4–6). The theme of God's universal kingship is similar to that seen in Ps. 47; 93; 97; 99, and particularly Ps. 98. 1 Chr. 16:8–36 records the thanksgiving song of David when he brought the ark to Jerusalem, a song composed from Ps. 96 and 105. See especially 1 Chr. 16:23–33 for Ps. 96.

■ **96:1 a new song.** See note on Ps. 33:3.

all the earth. Since God is King of the whole earth, and not merely of Israel, the writer calls on all His subjects to praise Him. It is not until Christ returns that substantial numbers from the nations join in the universal chorus of praise.

■ **96:3 His wonders.** God's acts in history provide marvelous events for which to praise Him, e.g., He "made the heavens" (v. 5).

4 For [b]the LORD *is* great and [c]greatly to be praised;
[d]He *is* to be feared above all gods.
5 For [e]all the gods of the peoples *are* idols,
[f]But the LORD made the heavens.
6 Honor and majesty *are* before Him;
Strength and [g]beauty *are* in His sanctuary.

7 [h]Give[2] to the LORD, O families of the peoples,
Give to the LORD glory and strength.
8 [3]Give to the LORD the glory *due* His name;
Bring an offering, and come into His courts.
9 Oh, worship the LORD [i]in the beauty of holiness!
Tremble before Him, all the earth.

10 Say among the [4]nations, [j]"The LORD reigns;
The world also is firmly established,
It shall not be [5]moved;
[k]He shall judge the peoples righteously."

11 [l]Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;
[m]Let the sea roar, and [6]all its fullness;
12 Let the field be joyful, and all that *is* in it.
Then all the trees of the woods will rejoice before the LORD.
13 For He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth.
[n]He shall judge the world with righteousness,
And the peoples with His truth.

PSALM 97

A Song of Praise to the Sovereign LORD

The LORD [a]reigns;
Let the earth rejoice;
Let the multitude of [1]isles be glad!

2 [b]Clouds and darkness surround Him;
[c]Righteousness and justice *are* the foundation of His throne.
3 [d]A fire goes before Him,
And burns up His enemies round about.
4 [e]His lightnings light the world;
The earth sees and trembles.
5 [f]The mountains melt like wax at the presence of the LORD,
At the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.
6 [g]The heavens declare His righteousness,
And all the peoples see His glory.

7 [h]Let all be put to shame who serve carved images,
Who boast of idols.
[i]Worship Him, all *you* gods.
8 Zion hears and is glad,

4 [b]Ps. 145:3 [c]Ps. 18:3 [d]Ps. 95:3
5 [e]1 Chr. 16:26; [Jer. 10:11] [f]Ps. 115:15; Is. 42:5
6 [g]Ps. 29:2
7 [h]1 Chr. 16:28, 29; Ps. 29:1, 2 [2]*Ascribe*
8 [3]*Ascribe*
9 [i]1 Chr. 16:29; 2 Chr. 20:21; Ps. 29:2
10 [j]Ps. 93:1; 97:1; [Rev. 11:15; 19:6] [k]Ps. 67:4 [4]*Gentiles* [5]*shaken*
11 [l]Ps. 69:34; Is. 49:13 [m]Ps. 98:7 [6]*all that is in it*
13 [n][Rev. 19:11]

PSALM 97

1 [a][Ps. 96:10] [1]*Or coastlands*
2 [b]Ex. 19:9; Deut. 4:11; 1 Kin. 8:12; Ps. 18:11 [c][Ps. 89:14]
3 [d]Ps. 18:8; Dan. 7:10; Hab. 3:5
4 [e]Ex. 19:18
5 [f]Ps. 46:6; Amos 9:5; Mic. 1:4; Nah. 1:5
6 [g]Ps. 19:1
7 [h][Ex. 20:4] [i][Heb. 1:6]

■ **96:8 an offering.** See Lev. 2. The word is also used for the tribute due a king (2 Kin. 17:4).

■ **96:10 The LORD reigns.** The psalmist proclaims God's kingship among the nations.

It shall not be moved. God created the world, and He will hold the forces of chaos in check.

judge . . . righteously. God does not rule according to whim, but according to justice and righteousness. As there is stability in creation, so there is stability in justice.

■ **97:1 The LORD reigns.** For God as King, see note on Ps. 93:1.

the earth. The psalm calls on all the earth to praise God. This call to the nations has taken on a whole new meaning after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

■ **97:2, 3 Clouds and darkness . . . fire.** See Ps. 18 and 29. The visible revelation of God (i.e., in theophany) was sometimes in the context of a storm-like event. Such a manifestation helped God's people to appreciate His awesome power.

■ **97:5 mountains.** See note on Ps. 46:2, 3.

■ **97:7 Who boast of idols.** See notes on Ps. 96:4–6.

■ **97:8 Because of Your judgments.** The people of God know that the judgments of God will remove the wicked and so bring about their own liberation.

9 *i*Ps. 83:18 *k*Ex. 18:11; Ps. 95:3; 96:4

10 *l*[Ps. 34:14; Prov. 8:13; Amos 5:15; Rom. 12:9] *m*Ps. 31:23; 145:20; Prov. 2:8 *n*Ps. 37:40; Jer. 15:21; Dan. 3:28

11 *o*Job 22:28; Ps. 112:4; Prov. 4:18

12 *p*Ps. 33:1 *q*Ps. 30:4 *2*Or *for the memory* *3*Or *His holiness*

And the daughters of Judah rejoice
Because of Your judgments, O LORD.
9 For You, LORD, *are* *j*most high above all the earth;
*k*You are exalted far above all gods.

10 You who love the LORD, *l*hate evil!
*m*He preserves the souls of His saints;
*n*He delivers them out of the hand of the wicked.
11 *o*Light is sown for the righteous,
And gladness for the upright in heart.
12 *p*Rejoice in the LORD, you righteous,
*q*And give thanks *2*at the remembrance of *3*His holy name.

PSALM 98

A Song of Praise to the LORD for His Salvation and Judgment

A Psalm.

PSALM 98

1 *a*Ps. 33:3; Is. 42:10 *b*Ex. 15:11; Ps. 77:14

2 *c*Is. 52:10; [Luke 1:77; 2:30, 31] *d*Is. 62:2; Rom. 3:25 *1*Gentiles

3 *e*[Is. 49:6]; Luke 3:6; [Acts 13:47; 28:28]

9 *f*[Ps. 96:10, 13] *2*uprightness

Oh, *a*sing to the LORD a new song!
For He has *b*done marvelous things;
His right hand and His holy arm have gained Him the victory.
2 *c*The LORD has made known His salvation;
*d*His righteousness He has revealed in the sight of the *1*nations.
3 He has remembered His mercy and His faithfulness to the house of Israel;
*e*All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

4 Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth;
Break forth in song, rejoice, and sing praises.
5 Sing to the LORD with the harp,
With the harp and the sound of a psalm,
6 With trumpets and the sound of a horn;
Shout joyfully before the LORD, the King.

7 Let the sea roar, and all its fullness,
The world and those who dwell in it;
8 Let the rivers clap *their* hands;
Let the hills be joyful together before the LORD,
9 *f*For He is coming to judge the earth.
With righteousness He shall judge the world,
And the peoples with *2*equity.

PSALM 99

Praise to the LORD for His Holiness

The LORD reigns;
Let the peoples tremble!

■ **Ps. 98** A royal psalm, like Ps. 47; 93; 95; 96; 97; 99. The theme of deliverance is divided into past (vv. 1–3), present (vv. 4–6), and future (vv. 7–9).

■ **98:1 a new song.** See "Music in the Church" at Col. 3:16.

marvelous things. This phrase translated "marvelous works" in Ps. 9:1 (see note there).

gained . . . victory. In its Old Testament context the reference is to a military victory. It is appropriate today to apply the verse to a spiritual victory, since it is a great victory by God over "the rulers of the darkness of this age" (Eph. 6:12).

■ **98:3 has remembered.** More than mere memory, God's remembrance includes His favorable action.

■ **98:4 Shout joyfully.** This section demonstrates the enthusiastic worship of a people who have deep love for God. Their worship is active and noisy.

■ **98:7 the sea.** Nature is here personified as praising the Lord. He is Creator of all, animate and inanimate (Ps. 95:5).

■ **98:8 the rivers . . . the hills.** See note on v. 7 and on Ps. 46:2, 3.

■ **98:9 judge . . . with equity.** See note on Ps. 96:10.

■ **Ps. 99** A royal psalm (Ps. 93 note). The psalm may be divided into three uneven stanzas based on a refrain that is repeated three times with some variation (vv. 3, 5, 9).

■ **99:1 The LORD reigns.** See notes on Ps. 5:2 and 93:1.

between the cherubim. Cherubim are spiritual beings who dwell in heaven with God. They are guardians of God's holiness, as witnessed by their role in protecting the post-Fall garden (Gen. 3:24). Cherubim were

[a]He dwells *between* the cherubim;
Let the earth be [1]moved!
2 The LORD *is* great in Zion,
And He *is* high above all the peoples.
3 Let them praise Your great and awesome name—
[2]He *is* holy.

4 The King's strength also loves justice;
You have established equity;
You have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob.
5 Exalt the LORD our God,
And worship at His footstool—
He *is* holy.

6 Moses and Aaron were among His priests,
And Samuel was among those who [b]called upon His name;
They called upon the LORD, and He answered them.
7 He spoke to them in the cloudy pillar;
They kept His testimonies and the [3]ordinance He gave them.

8 You answered them, O LORD our God;
You were to them God-Who-Forgives,
Though You took vengeance on their deeds.
9 Exalt the LORD our God,
And worship at His holy hill;
For the LORD our God *is* holy.

PSALM 99

1 [a]Ex. 25:22; 1 Sam. 4:4; Ps. 80:1 [1]*shaken*
3 [2]Or *It*
6 [b]1 Sam. 7:9; 12:18
7 [3]*statute*

PSALM 100

title [a]Ps. 145:title
1 [b]Ps. 95:1 [1]Lit. *all the earth*
3 [c]Job 10:3, 8; Ps. 119:73; 139:13, 14; [Eph. 2:10] [d]Ps. 95:7; [Is. 40:11]; Ezek. 34:30, 31 [2]So with Kt., LXX, Vg.; Qr., many Heb. mss., Tg. *we are His*
4 [e]Ps. 66:13; 116:17–19

PSALM 100

A Song of Praise for the LORD's Faithfulness to His People

[a]A Psalm of Thanksgiving.

Make [b]a joyful shout to the LORD, [1]all you lands!
2 Serve the LORD with gladness;
Come before His presence with singing.
3 Know that the LORD, He *is* God;
[c]*It is* He *who* has made us, and [2]not we ourselves;
[d]*We are* His people and the sheep of His pasture.

4 [e]Enter into His gates with thanksgiving,
And into His courts with praise.
Be thankful to Him, *and* bless His name.

symbolically represented in the tabernacle, both in the innermost curtain (Ex. 36:35), and in the Most Holy Place (Ex. 37:1–9). The psalm refers to the cherubim of God's throne with their outstretched wings above the ark of the covenant.

the earth be moved. At God's special self-revelations (theophanies) reverberations, like those of a natural earthquake were sometimes felt throughout the earth. See "The Greatness of God" at 1 Chr. 29:11.

■ **99:2 in Zion.** The location of the temple. See note on Ps. 3:4.

■ **99:3 name.** See note on Ps. 8:1.

He is holy. This is the refrain of the song (vv. 5, 9); God is set apart from all His creatures. This is evident from His uncreated nature, His power, and His moral perfection.

■ **99:4 executed justice.** See note on Ps. 96:10.

■ **99:6 Moses . . . Aaron . . . Samuel.** Three of the most prominent leaders of Israel in the period before the monarchy. All three served as mediators between God and His people.

called upon His name. The emphasis in this section of the psalm is that God speaks to His people when they turn to Him for help in prayer.

■ **99:7 the cloudy pillar.** See Ex. 13:21, 22; 40:34–38.

■ **99:8 You took vengeance on their deeds.** For their own good, and to preserve His holiness, God may punish His people for the sins they commit. Israel knew this because God gave foreign enemies power over them when they persisted in unbelief. This reflects God's corrective punishment.

■ **99:9 God is holy.** See note on v. 3.

■ **Ps. 100** See 95:1 note.

■ **100:1 all you lands.** As in the royal psalms preceding, the call goes out beyond the chosen people to all the peoples of the earth. God is their King too, whether they are aware of it or not.

■ **100:2 with gladness.** God is not a despotic king who forces his people to serve him. Loving service is grateful response to the grace of God.

■ **100:3 the sheep of His pasture.** See Ps. 23:1 for note on royal overtones of the portrayal of God as a shepherd.

■ **100:4 His gates . . . His courts.** Those of the temple. This psalm may have been sung during a festive entry into the temple precincts.

5 For the LORD *is* good;
[f]His mercy *is* everlasting,
And His truth *endures* to all generations.

PSALM 101

Promised Faithfulness to the LORD

A Psalm of David.

I will sing of mercy and justice;
To You, O LORD, I will sing praises.
2 I will behave wisely in a [1]perfect way.
Oh, when will You come to me?
I will [a]walk within my house with a perfect heart.
3 I will set nothing [2]wicked before my eyes;
[b]I hate the work of those [c]who fall away;
It shall not cling to me.
4 A perverse heart shall depart from me;
I will not [d]know wickedness.
5 Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor,
Him I will destroy;
[e]The one who has a haughty look and a proud heart,
Him I will not endure.
6 My eyes *shall be* on the faithful of the land,
That they may dwell with me;
He who walks in a [3]perfect way,
He shall serve me.
7 He who works deceit shall not dwell within my house;
He who tells lies shall not [4]continue in my presence.
8 [f]Early I will destroy all the wicked of the land,
That I may cut off all the evildoers [g]from the city of the LORD.

PSALM 102

The LORD's Eternal Love

A Prayer of the afflicted, [a]when he is overwhelmed and pours out his complaint before the LORD.

Hear my prayer, O LORD,
And let my cry come to You.
2 [b]Do not hide Your face from me in the day of my trouble;
Incline Your ear to me;
In the day that I call, answer me speedily.

5 [f]Ps. 136:1

PSALM 101

2 [a]1 Kin. 11:4 [1]*blameless*
3 [b]Ps. 97:10 [c]Josh. 23:6 [2]*worthless*
4 [d][Ps. 119:115]
5 [e]Prov. 6:17
6 [3]*blameless*
7 [4]Lit. *be established*
8 [f][Ps. 75:10]; Jer. 21:12 [g]Ps. 48:2, 8

PSALM 102

title [a]Ps. 61:2
2 [b]Ps. 27:9; 69:17

■ **100:5 His mercy.** God's lovingkindness to people who are in covenant with Him.

■ **Ps. 101** In this psalm the king promises to live a life of obedience, pursuing holiness in his own life and seeking to root out evil from his kingdom. David could not live up to his own ideals. He failed time after time, though he lived a life of repentance. Many believe that Psalm 101 was written by David and later used as a coronation psalm, beginning with Solomon. If so, high ideals at the beginning of his reign degenerated into disobedience and, in the case of Solomon, open apostasy. Christ alone could offer perfect obedience in the flesh.

■ **101:1 justice.** The reference is to God's judgments. The psalmist praises the Lord for them because they are consistent and righteous, not arbitrary.

■ **101:2 a perfect way.** As defined by the law of God. See Mic. 6:8 for the classic description.

■ **101:3 I hate.** The psalmist strongly repudiates wicked deeds. He will not tolerate them in his presence. In this he seeks to emulate God, who will not tolerate an unrepentant sinner in His presence.

■ **101:5 I will destroy . . . I will not endure.** The psalmist will actively oppose unrighteousness in his area of authority.

haughty look . . . proud heart. The heart is the foundation of a person's being and character. The "look" refers to demeanor. See Ps. 131:1.

■ **102:title** The title is unusual in that it gives, not a specific historical occasion, but the situation (affliction) in which the psalm finds appropriate use.

■ **102:2 hide Your face.** The psalmist wonders at the withdrawal of God's friendship. He knows it is a sign of God's wrath, since He promised to "be with" His obedient covenant people.

3 For my days [1] are [c] consumed like smoke,
And my bones are burned like a hearth.
4 My heart is stricken and withered like grass,
So that I forget to eat my bread.
5 Because of the sound of my groaning
My bones cling to my [2] skin.
6 I am like a pelican of the wilderness;
I am like an owl of the desert.
7 I lie awake,
And am like a sparrow alone on the housetop.

8 My enemies reproach me all day long;
Those who deride me swear an oath against me.
9 For I have eaten ashes like bread,
And mingled my drink with weeping,
10 Because of Your indignation and Your wrath;
For You have lifted me up and cast me away.
11 My days *are* like a shadow that lengthens,
And I wither away like grass.

12 But You, O LORD, shall endure forever,
And the remembrance of Your name to all generations.
13 You will arise *and* have mercy on Zion;
For the time to favor her,
Yes, the set time, has come.
14 For Your servants take pleasure in her stones,
And show favor to her dust.
15 So the [3] nations shall [d] fear the name of the LORD,
And all the kings of the earth Your glory.
16 For the LORD shall build up Zion;
[e] He shall appear in His glory.
17 [f] He shall regard the prayer of the destitute,
And shall not despise their prayer.

18 This will be [g] written for the generation to come,
That [h] a people yet to be created may praise the LORD.
19 For He [i] looked down from the height of His sanctuary;
From heaven the LORD viewed the earth,
20 [j] To hear the groaning of the prisoner,
To release those appointed to death,
21 To [k] declare the name of the LORD in Zion,
And His praise in Jerusalem,
22 [l] When the peoples are gathered together,
And the kingdoms, to serve the LORD.

23 He weakened my strength in the way;
He [m] shortened my days.

3 [c] James 4:14 [1] Lit. *end in*
5 [2] *flesh*
15 [d] 1 Kin. 8:43 [3] *Gentiles*
16 [e] [Is. 60:1, 2]
17 [f] Neh. 1:6; Ps. 22:24
18 [g] Deut. 31:19; [Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11] [h] Ps. 22:31
19 [i] Deut. 26:15; Ps. 14:2
20 [j] Ps. 79:11
21 [k] Ps. 22:22
22 [l] [Is. 2:2, 3; 49:22, 23; 60:3]; Zech. 8:20–23
23 [m] Job 21:21

■ **102:3 like a hearth.** Points to the pain and suffering of life or more specifically to a raging fever.

■ **102:5 bones cling to my skin.** His suffering is not only spiritual and psychological, but physical as well.

■ **102:6 like an owl of the desert.** He is silent in his affliction, and without friends or supporters.

■ **102:8 My enemies.** As is typical in a lament, unnamed but real enemies are a source of distress to the psalmist. Because the enemies are unnamed, the psalm has timeless application to all generations.

■ **102:10 Your wrath.** The psalmist knows the ultimate cause of his suffering: God's anger. He never disputes the justice of that anger, but he turns to God for relief.

■ **102:12 forever.** Over against the fragility of the psalmist's life stands the constancy and eternity of the Lord.

■ **102:13 arise.** See notes on Ps. 3:7 and 7:6.

on Zion. See Ps. 2:6; 3:3. The references to the destruction of Zion have led many commentators to place the psalm just after the Babylonian captivity.

■ **102:15 the nations shall fear.** As Jerusalem rises up from destruction, all who see it will praise the Lord.

■ **102:20 To hear . . . To release.** Though God is above heaven, He enters the world to help the afflicted (9:18; 72:4 and notes).

■ **102:23 shortened my days.** Through the sickness that now threatens the psalmist's life.

24 [n]I said, "O my God,
Do not take me away in the midst of my days;
[o]Your years *are* throughout all generations.
25 [p]Of old You laid the foundation of the earth,
And the heavens *are* the work of Your hands.
26 [q]They will perish, but You will [4]endure;
Yes, they will all grow old like a garment;
Like a cloak You will change them,
And they will be changed.
27 But [r]You *are* the same,
And Your years will have no end.
28 [s]The children of Your servants will continue,
And their descendants will be established before You."

PSALM 103

Praise for the LORD's Mercies

A Psalm of David.

Bless [a]the LORD, O my soul;
And all that is within me, *bless* His holy name!
2 Bless the LORD, O my soul,
And forget not all His benefits:
3 [b]Who forgives all your iniquities,
Who [c]heals all your diseases,
4 Who redeems your life from destruction,
[d]Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies,
5 Who satisfies your mouth with good *things,*
So that [e]your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

6 The LORD executes righteousness
And justice for all who are oppressed.
7 [f]He made known His ways to Moses,
His acts to the children of Israel.
8 [g]The LORD *is* merciful and gracious,
Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.
9 [h]He will not always strive *with us,*
Nor will He keep *His anger* forever.
10 [i]He has not dealt with us according to our sins,
Nor punished us according to our iniquities.

11 For as the heavens are high above the earth,
So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him;
12 As far as the east is from the west,
So far has He [j]removed our transgressions from us.

24 [n][Ps. 39:13]; Is. 38:10 [o]Job 36:26; [Ps. 90:2]; Hab. 1:12
25 [p][Gen. 1:1; Neh. 9:6; Heb. 1:10–12]
26 [q]Is. 34:4; 51:6; Matt. 24:35; [2 Pet. 3:7, 10–12]; Rev. 20:11 [4]*continue*
27 [r][Is. 41:4; 43:10; Mal. 3:6; Heb. 13:8]; James 1:17
28 [s]Ps. 69:36

PSALM 103

1 [a]Ps. 104:1, 35
3 [b]Ps. 130:8; Is. 33:24 [c][Ex. 15:26]; Ps. 147:3; [Is. 53:5]; Jer. 17:14
4 [d][Ps. 5:12]
5 [e][Is. 40:31]
7 [f]Ex. 33:12–17; Ps. 147:19
8 [g][Ex. 34:6, 7; Num. 14:18]; Deut. 5:10; Neh. 9:17; Ps. 86:15; Jer. 32:18; Jon. 4:2; James 5:11
9 [h][Ps. 30:5; Is. 57:16]; Jer. 3:5; [Mic. 7:18]
10 [i][Ezra 9:13; Lam. 3:22]
12 [j][2 Sam. 12:13; Is. 38:17; 43:25; Zech. 3:9; Heb. 9:26]

■ **102:25 Of old.** God existed before His work of creation. The author of Hebrews applies vv. 25–27 to Christ (Heb. 1:10–12). There the argument is that however great the angels are considered, they are created, and not eternal. But Christ, the Second Person of the Trinity, exists through all eternity.

■ **102:27 You are the same.** See "The Self-existence of God" at 90:2.

■ **102:28 The children of Your servants.** The poet's hope is with the future generations. Though he suffers now in the present, he sees a brighter future.

■ **103:1 O my soul.** The psalmist carries on a public dialogue with himself. He encourages himself to praise, and so encourages others who see his example.

■ **103:3 forgives all your iniquities.** The primary benefit of grace is the forgiveness of sins (Acts 13:38). God is compassionate toward His repentant people.

■ **103:4 from destruction.** That is, from death.

lovingkindness. See 92:2 note.

■ **103:5 with good things.** God provides everything that is constructive and wholesome for His people.

■ **103:6 for all who are oppressed.** See 102:2 note.

■ **103:7 to Moses.** By referring to Moses, the psalmist calls to mind all of God's blessings associated with the Exodus, the wilderness wanderings, and even the conquest of the Promised Land.

■ **103:12 As far as the east is from the west.** When God forgives sins, He completely removes them. The height and breadth of His mercy are vast.

13 [k]As a father pities *his* children,
So the LORD pities those who fear Him.
14 For He [l]knows our frame;
He remembers that we *are* dust.

15 *As for* man, [l]his days *are* like grass;
As a flower of the field, so he flourishes.
16 [m]For the wind passes over it, and it is [2]gone,
And [n]its place remembers it no more.
17 But the mercy of the LORD *is* from everlasting to everlasting
On those who fear Him,
And His righteousness to children's children,
18 [o]To such as keep His covenant,
And to those who remember His commandments to do them.

19 The LORD has established His throne in heaven,
And [p]His kingdom rules over all.

20 [q]Bless the LORD, you His angels,
Who excel in strength, who [r]do His word,
Heeding the voice of His word.
21 Bless the LORD, all *you* His hosts,
[s]*You* [3]ministers of His, who do His pleasure.
22 Bless the LORD, all His works,
In all places of His dominion.

Bless the LORD, O my soul!

13 [k]Mal. 3:17
14 [l]Understands our constitution
15 [l]Is. 40:6–8; James 1:10, 11; 1 Pet. 1:24
16 [m][Is. 40:7] [n]Job 7:10 [2]*not*
18 [o][Deut. 7:9]; Ps. 25:10
19 [p][Ps. 47:2; Dan. 4:17, 25]
20 [q]Ps. 148:2 [r][Matt. 6:10]
21 [s][Heb. 1:14] [3]*servants*

PSALM 104

Praise to the Sovereign LORD for His Creation and Providence

Bless [a]the LORD, O my soul!

O LORD my God, You are very great:
You are clothed with honor and majesty,
2 Who cover *Yourself* with light as *with* a garment,
Who stretch out the heavens like a curtain.

3 [b]He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters,
Who makes the clouds His chariot,
Who walks on the wings of the wind,
4 Who makes His angels spirits,
His [l]ministers a flame of fire.

PSALM 104
1 [a]Ps. 103:1
3 [b][Amos 9:6]
4 [l]*servants*

■ **103:13 As a father.** The comparison of God to a compassionate and loving father is developed in Rom. 8:12–17. See Ex. 4:22, 23; Hos. 11:1, 8, 9.

■ **103:14 For He knows.** God knows us better than we know ourselves.

we are dust. According to Gen. 2:7, God formed Adam from the dust of the ground. The consequence of sin is that humans die as surely as the animals (Eccl. 3:19). Yet God has mercy on us. See "Body and Soul, Male and Female" at Gen. 2:7.

■ **103:17 mercy . . . On those who fear Him.** There is a reciprocal relationship between divine initiative and human response. God first loves us, then we love Him in return as shown in the faithful obedience of our lives (Rom. 5:8; 1 John 4:10).

■ **103:18 such as keep His covenant.** The obedience of those who keep God's covenant shows the reality of His mercy. They walk in devoted fellowship with the Lord who loved them in His covenant of grace.

■ **103:19 rules over all.** See "Providence" at Prov. 16:33.

■ **103:21 His hosts.** A reference to the divine army. It would include the angels, the cherubim, and other heavenly creatures. See "Angels" at Zech. 1:9.

■ **Ps. 104** God's great act of creation is emphasized, reflecting the teaching and vocabulary of Gen. 1. Parallels may be observed between this song and an Egyptian hymn of Amenhotep IV (Akhenaton) to the sun. But the psalm affirms that the Creator alone, and not any aspect of creation, such as the sun, should be worshiped.

■ **104:1 O my soul.** See comment on Ps. 103:1.

You are clothed. This section develops the metaphor of the creation as God's garment. This emphasizes the distinction between the Creator and the creation and implicitly disparages worship of any aspect of the creation, however glorious it may seem (Rom. 1:22).

■ **104:2 with light.** A reference to the first day of creation (Gen. 1:3).

the heavens. The second day of creation (Gen. 1:6–8).

■ **104:3 the wings of the wind.** See 18:9 and note.

■ **104:4 a flame of fire.** God's heavenly servants have an awesome appearance. How much more powerful must God, their Creator, be. This

5 You who [2]laid the foundations of the earth,
So *that* it should not be moved forever,
6 You [c]covered it with the deep as *with* a garment;
The waters stood above the mountains.
7 At Your rebuke they fled;
At the voice of Your thunder they hastened away.
8 [3]They went up over the mountains;
They went down into the valleys,
To the place which You founded for them.
9 You have [d]set a boundary that they may not pass over,
[e]That they may not return to cover the earth.

10 He sends the springs into the valleys;
They flow among the hills.
11 They give drink to every beast of the field;
The wild donkeys quench their thirst.
12 By them the birds of the heavens have their home;
They sing among the branches.
13 [f]He waters the hills from His upper chambers;
The earth is satisfied with [g]the fruit of Your works.

14 [h]He causes the grass to grow for the cattle,
And vegetation for the service of man,
That he may bring forth [i]food from the earth,
15 And [j]wine *that* makes glad the heart of man,
Oil to make *his* face shine,
And bread *which* strengthens man's heart.
16 The trees of the LORD are full *of sap,*
The cedars of Lebanon which He planted,
17 Where the birds make their nests;
The stork has her home in the fir trees.
18 The high hills *are* for the wild goats;
The cliffs are a refuge for the [k]rock[4] badgers.

19 [l]He appointed the moon for seasons;
The [m]sun knows its going down.
20 [n]You make darkness, and it is night,
In which all the beasts of the forest creep about.
21 [o]The young lions roar after their prey,
And seek their food from God.
22 *When* the sun rises, they gather together
And lie down in their dens.
23 Man goes out to [p]his work
And to his labor until the evening.

24 [q]O LORD, how manifold are Your works!
In wisdom You have made them all.

5 [2]Lit. *founded the earth upon her bases*
6 [c]Gen. 1:6
8 [3]Or *The mountains rose up; The valleys sank down*
9 [d]Job 26:10; Ps. 33:7; [Jer. 5:22] [e]Gen. 9:11–15
13 [f]Ps. 147:8 [g]Jer. 10:13
14 [h]Gen. 1:29 [i]Job 28:5
15 [j]Judg. 9:13; Ps. 23:5; Prov. 31:6; Eccl. 10:19
18 [k]Lev. 11:5 [4]*rock hyraxes*
19 [l]Gen. 1:14 [m]Job 38:12; Ps. 19:6
20 [n][Ps. 74:16; Is. 45:7]
21 [o]Job 38:39
23 [p]Gen. 3:19
24 [q]Ps. 40:5; Prov. 3:19; [Jer. 10:12]; 51:15

verse may be a polemic against Baal worship, since Canaanite mythological texts describe the servants of their god as flames of fire.

■ **104:5 should not be moved.** The world is stable and ordered, not chaotic. God's control of the world is comforting to those who recognize it. See "God the Creator" at 148:5.

■ **104:6 The waters.** God created the waters and ordered them in rivers, lakes, and oceans. In the religions of the surrounding nations, the sea is a symbol of chaos and disorder. Their pantheistic theology deifies the sea and sets it against the gods of order. The Bible uses this imagery, but disallows the polytheistic theology (Ps. 18:4; 46:2, 3; 74:13–15; Nah. 1).

■ **104:9 may not return.** A reference to the promise God made to Noah after the Flood (Gen. 9:11).

■ **104:14 He causes the grass to grow.** A reflection of the third day of creation (Gen. 1:9–13).

■ **104:15 wine that makes glad the heart.** God's kindness is exhibited in His provisions for daily life (Acts 14:17; 1 Tim. 4:3, 4).

■ **104:19 the moon . . . The sun.** See Gen. 1:14–19—the fourth day of creation.

■ **104:21 from God.** What appears to be purely natural—lions seeking their prey—is an act of providence.

■ **104:23 Man goes out.** God has given His creation a wonderfully ordered rhythm.

■ **104:24 In wisdom.** See notes on Prov. 8:22–31. The divine answer

The earth is full of Your [r]possessions—
25 This great and wide sea,
In which *are* innumerable teeming things,
Living things both small and great.
26 There the ships sail about;
There is that [s]Leviathan[5]
Which You have [6]made to play there.

27 [t]These all wait for You,
That You may give *them* their food in due season.
28 *What* You give them they gather in;
You open Your hand, they are filled with good.
29 You hide Your face, they are troubled;
[u]You take away their breath, they die and return to their dust.
30 [v]You send forth Your Spirit, they are created;
And You renew the face of the earth.

31 May the glory of the LORD endure forever;
May the LORD [w]rejoice in His works.
32 He looks on the earth, and it [x]trembles;
[y]He touches the hills, and they smoke.

33 [z]I will sing to the LORD as long as I live;
I will sing praise to my God while I have my being.
34 May my [a]meditation be sweet to Him;
I will be glad in the LORD.
35 May [b]sinners be consumed from the earth,
And the wicked be no more.

Bless the LORD, O my soul!
[7]Praise the LORD!

24 [r]Ps. 65:9
26 [s]Job 41:1; Is. 27:1 [5]A large sea creature of unknown identity [6]Lit. *formed*
27 [t]Job 36:31; Ps. 136:25
29 [u]Job 34:15; [Eccl. 12:7]
30 [v]Is. 32:15
31 [w]Gen. 1:31; Prov. 8:31
32 [x]Hab. 3:10 [y]Ex. 19:18; Ps. 144:5
33 [z]Ps. 63:4
34 [a]Ps. 19:14
35 [b]Ps. 37:38 [7]Heb. *Hallelujah*

PSALM 105

The Eternal Faithfulness of the LORD

Oh, [a]give thanks to the LORD!
Call upon His name;
[b]Make known His deeds among the peoples!
2 Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him;
[c]Talk of all His wondrous works!
3 Glory in His holy name;
Let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the LORD!
4 Seek the LORD and His strength;
[d]Seek His face evermore!

PSALM 105
1 [a]1 Chr. 16:8–22, 34; Ps. 106:1; Is. 12:4 [b]Ps. 145:12
2 [c]Ps. 119:27
4 [d]Ps. 27:8

to Job (Job 38—41) contains many examples of God's wisdom in creation. See "The Wisdom and Will of God" at Dan. 2:20.

■ **104:25 sea . . . innumerable teeming things.** The fifth day of creation (Gen. 1:20–23).

■ **104:26 the ships . . . Leviathan.** The psalmist's imagination is caught up with God's mysterious sea. On its surface ships glide to and fro from distant ports, while underneath lurks the monster Leviathan, here, a poetic symbol of God's creative power (Job 41).

■ **104:29 hide Your face.** God is omnipresent: He is everywhere (Ps. 139). However, in His anger God withdraws covenant blessings and this is experienced as divine absence.

■ **104:30 Your Spirit.** This alludes to Gen. 2:4–8, the creation of man on the sixth day.

■ **104:32 the hills . . . smoke.** Hills are the symbol of stability and firmness (Ps. 46:2, 3), but God's mere touch sets them aflame.

■ **104:35 May sinners be consumed from the earth.** The psalmist would like to see the removal of everything that opposes the godly order he has so eloquently described.

■ **Ps. 105** While Ps. 104 praises God's acts in creating the world, this song meditates on His acts in the world's continuing history. The first fifteen verses are quoted (along with Ps. 96 and part of 106) in 1 Chr. 16, perhaps indicating use of the psalm in worship.

■ **105:1 among the peoples.** Israel cannot hide its light "under a basket" (Matt. 5:15). True people of God gladly bear witness to God's grace throughout the world.

■ **105:2 His wondrous works.** Those acts of grace and judgment that God performs in history. God enters history and acts graciously on behalf of His people, remarkably so in the life, death, resurrection and ascension of His only begotten Son.

■ **105:4 Seek His face.** Seek to live in His presence. The psalmist often testifies of the horror associated with the withdrawal of God's friendship (Ps. 22:1; 28:1).

5 [e]Ps. 77:11
7 [f][Is. 26:9]
8 [g]Luke 1:72
9 [h]Gen. 17:2; Luke 1:73; [Gal. 3:17]; Heb. 6:17
11 [i]Gen. 13:15; 15:18
12 [j]Gen. 34:30; [Deut. 7:7] [k]Gen. 23:4; Heb. 11:9
14 [l]Gen. 35:5 [m]Gen. 12:17
16 [n]Gen. 41:54 [o]Lev. 26:26; Is. 3:1; Ezek. 4:16
17 [p][Gen. 45:5] [q]Gen. 37:28, 36; Acts 7:9
18 [r]Gen. 40:15 [t]*His soul came into iron*
19 [s]Gen. 39:11–21; 41:25, 42, 43
20 [t]Gen. 41:14
21 [u]Gen. 41:40–44
22 [z]Bind as prisoners
23 [v]Gen. 46:6; Acts 7:15 [w]Ps. 78:51
24 [x]Ex. 1:7, 9
25 [y]Ex. 1:8–10; 4:21

5 [e]Remember His marvelous works which He has done,
His wonders, and the judgments of His mouth,
6 O seed of Abraham His servant,
You children of Jacob, His chosen ones!

7 He *is* the LORD our God;
[f]His judgments *are* in all the earth.
8 He [g]remembers His covenant forever,
The word *which* He commanded, for a thousand generations,
9 [h]*The covenant* which He made with Abraham,
And His oath to Isaac,
10 And confirmed it to Jacob for a statute,
To Israel *as* an everlasting covenant,
11 Saying, [i]"To you I will give the land of Canaan
As the allotment of your inheritance,"
12 [j]When they were few in number,
Indeed very few, [k]and strangers in it.

13 When they went from one nation to another,
From *one* kingdom to another people,
14 [l]He permitted no one to do them wrong;
Yes, [m]He rebuked kings for their sakes,
15 *Saying,* "Do not touch My anointed ones,
And do My prophets no harm."

16 Moreover [n]He called for a famine in the land;
He destroyed all the [o]provision of bread.
17 [p]He sent a man before them—
Joseph—*who* [q]was sold as a slave.
18 [r]They hurt his feet with fetters,
[t]He was laid in irons.
19 Until the time that his word came to pass,
[s]The word of the LORD tested him.
20 [t]The king sent and released him,
The ruler of the people let him go free.
21 [u]He made him lord of his house,
And ruler of all his possessions,
22 To [z]bind his princes at his pleasure,
And teach his elders wisdom.

23 [v]Israel also came into Egypt,
And Jacob dwelt [w]in the land of Ham.
24 [x]He increased His people greatly,
And made them stronger than their enemies.
25 [y]He turned their heart to hate His people,
To deal craftily with His servants.

■ **105:5 Remember.** "Remembering" God's works is more than recalling what they were; it means reacting with faith and obedience to what they mean.

■ **105:8 He remembers.** Once again (as in v. 5) remembrance involves doing as well as knowing. In this case, God acts in the present based on the promises given to Abraham.

His covenant. The specific covenant here is the Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 12:1–3; 15; 17).

■ **105:9, 10 to Isaac . . . to Jacob.** God reaffirmed His covenant relationship with the descendants of Abraham. See Gen. 26:3.

■ **105:11 I will give the land of Canaan.** See Gen. 15:17–20.

■ **105:12 strangers.** Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob lived in the Promised Land as resident aliens. They wandered from place to place in Canaan.

■ **105:14 He rebuked kings.** See Gen. 12:10–20; 26.

■ **105:15 My prophets.** Abraham is referred to as a prophet in Gen. 20:7.

■ **105:16–22** God promoted Joseph to a position of power in Egypt.

■ **105:16 He called for a famine.** God directed the events in Egypt so that when famine threatened that country Joseph was in power and able "to save many people alive" (Gen. 50:20).

■ **105:23 Israel also came into Egypt.** See Gen. 46.

the land of Ham. Another name for Egypt.

26 [z]He sent Moses His servant,
And Aaron whom He had chosen.
27 They [a]performed His signs among them,
And wonders in the land of Ham.
28 He sent darkness, and made *it* dark;
And they did not rebel against His word.
29 [b]He turned their waters into blood,
And killed their fish.
30 [c]Their land abounded with frogs,
Even in the chambers of their kings.
31 [d]He spoke, and there came swarms of flies,
And lice in all their territory.
32 [e]He gave them hail for rain,
And flaming fire in their land.
33 [f]He struck their vines also, and their fig trees,
And splintered the trees of their territory.
34 [g]He spoke, and locusts came,
Young locusts without number,
35 And ate up all the vegetation in their land,
And devoured the fruit of their ground.
36 [h]He also [3]destroyed all the firstborn in their land,
[i]The first of all their strength.

37 [j]He also brought them out with silver and gold,
And *there was* none feeble among His tribes.
38 [k]Egypt was glad when they departed,
For the fear of them had fallen upon them.
39 [l]He spread a cloud for a covering,
And fire to give light in the night.
40 [m]*The people* asked, and He brought quail,
And [n]satisfied them with the bread of heaven.
41 [o]He opened the rock, and water gushed out;
It ran in the dry places *like* a river.

42 For He remembered [p]His holy promise,
And Abraham His servant.
43 He brought out His people with joy,
His chosen ones with [4]gladness.
44 [q]He gave them the lands of the [5]Gentiles,
And they inherited the labor of the nations,
45 [r]That they might observe His statutes
And keep His laws.

[6]Praise the LORD!

26 [z]Ex. 3:10; 4:12–15
27 [a]Ex. 7—12; Ps. 78:43
29 [b]Ex. 7:20, 21; Ps. 78:44
30 [c]Ex. 8:6
31 [d]Ex. 8:16, 17
32 [e]Ex. 9:23–25
33 [f]Ps. 78:47
34 [g]Ex. 10:4
36 [h]Ex. 12:29; 13:15; Ps. 135:8; 136:10 [i]Gen. 49:3 [3]Lit. *struck down*
37 [j]Ex. 12:35, 36
38 [k]Ex. 12:33
39 [l]Ex. 13:21; Neh. 9:12; Ps. 78:14; Is. 4:5
40 [m]Ex. 16:12 [n]Ps. 78:24
41 [o]Ex. 17:6; Num. 20:11; Ps. 78:15; 114:8; Is. 48:21; [1 Cor. 10:4]
42 [p]Gen. 15:13, 14; Ps. 105:8
43 [4]*a joyful shout*
44 [q]Josh. 11:16–23; 13:7; Ps. 78:55 [5]*nations*
45 [r][Deut. 4:1, 40] [6]Heb. *Hallelujah*

■ **105:28 He sent darkness.** The psalmist emphasizes the ninth plague by naming it first.

■ **105:31 flies, And lice.** These are the third and fourth plagues in reverse order of their actual occurrence in Egypt.

■ **105:32 hail.** The fifth and sixth plagues are unmentioned by the psalmist. The plague of hail was the seventh.

■ **105:36 the firstborn.** The tenth and final plague, after which Egypt allowed Israel to leave Goshen.

■ **105:37 with silver and gold.** God's great mercy and generosity may be seen here. As a slave nation in Egypt, Israel had little to call their own. Through the plagues, however, God struck fear into the hearts of the Egyptians so that they not only let Israel go, but were willing to hand over their valuables to encourage Israel's exodus (Ex. 12:33–36).

■ **105:40 the bread of heaven.** The manna. God's providential mercy went beyond bringing them out of Egypt—He provided for them in the wilderness by giving them food and drink.

■ **105:42 His holy promise.** The Abrahamic covenant included the promise that God would make Israel "a great nation" (Gen. 12:2).

■ **105:45 observe His statutes.** The covenant relationship between God and His people is established and maintained by God alone as His work of grace. His people (indeed, all humanity) are responsible to reciprocate, not merely in the formal observance of particular commands, but appropriately with all of their being (Mark 12:29–34; cf. 10:20–22).

PSALM 106

1 [a]1 Chr. 16:34, 41 [1]Heb. *Hallelujah*
2 [2]*express*
3 [b]Ps. 15:2 [c][Gal. 6:9] [3]LXX, Syr., Tg., Vg. *those who do*
4 [d]Ps. 119:132
5 [4]The people of Your inheritance
6 [e]1 Kin. 8:47; [Ezra 9:7; Neh. 1:7; Jer. 3:25; Dan. 9:5]
7 [f]Ex. 14:11, 12
8 [g]Ex. 9:16
9 [h]Ex. 14:21; Ps. 18:15; Is. 51:10; Nah. 1:4 [i]Is. 63:11–13
10 [j]Ex. 14:30
11 [k]Ex. 14:27, 28; 15:5
12 [l]Ex. 15:1–21
13 [m]Ex. 15:24; 16:2; 17:2
14 [n]Num. 11:4; 1 Cor. 10:6
15 [o]Num. 11:31 [p]Is. 10:16
16 [q]Num. 16:1–3

PSALM 106

Joy in Forgiveness of Israel's Sins

Praise[1] the LORD!

[a]Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for *He is* good!
For His mercy *endures* forever.

2 Who can [2]utter the mighty acts of the LORD?
Who can declare all His praise?
3 Blessed *are* those who keep justice,
And [3]he who [b]does righteousness at [c]all times!

4 [d]Remember me, O LORD, with the favor *You have toward* Your people.
Oh, visit me with Your salvation,
5 That I may see the benefit of Your chosen ones,
That I may rejoice in the gladness of Your nation,
That I may glory with [4]Your inheritance.

6 [e]We have sinned with our fathers,
We have committed iniquity,
We have done wickedly.
7 Our fathers in Egypt did not understand Your wonders;
They did not remember the multitude of Your mercies,
[f]But rebelled by the sea—the Red Sea.

8 Nevertheless He saved them for His name's sake,
[g]That He might make His mighty power known.
9 [h]He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it dried up;
So [i]He led them through the depths,
As through the wilderness.
10 He [j]saved them from the hand of him who hated *them,*
And redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.
11 [k]The waters covered their enemies;
There was not one of them left.
12 [l]Then they believed His words;
They sang His praise.

13 [m]They soon forgot His works;
They did not wait for His counsel,
14 [n]But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness,
And tested God in the desert.
15 [o]And He gave them their request,
But [p]sent leanness into their soul.

16 When [q]they envied Moses in the camp,
And Aaron the saint of the LORD,

■ **Ps. 106** While Ps. 105 is mainly concerned with God's redemptive acts, this psalm focuses on human sin.

■ **106:1 Praise the LORD.** In Hebrew, *Halluyah,* "You (plural) praise Yah."

for He is good. Though the writer is concerned about Israel's suffering, he knows that its source is in Israel's sin and not in God's character.

■ **106:4 me.** The psalmist has no doubt that God will come to aid His chosen people, but he does not assume that he will personally enjoy God's blessing. He turns to God in prayer for this.

■ **106:6 We have sinned.** This verse is an introductory statement that gives the theme for the body of the psalm down through v. 39. Israel has deliberately and constantly rebelled against the Lord.

■ **106:7 rebelled by the sea.** The poet stands amazed at the stubbornness of his people. He remembers that a previous generation had doubted God's power—even though they had just witnessed the ten plagues—when they were caught between the Egyptian army and the Red Sea (Ex. 14).

■ **106:9 He rebuked the Red Sea.** By personifying the Red Sea, the psalmist makes it a part of God's defeat of the powers of chaos.

He led them through. In spite of their sin, God saved them. God's persevering love in the face of rejection is a major theme here, and indeed throughout the Bible.

■ **106:13 They soon forgot.** The people's faith and thanks were short-lived. As remembrance (Ps. 105:5 note) includes obedience, so forgetting leads to disobedience.

17 [r]The earth opened up and swallowed Dathan,
And covered the faction of Abiram.
18 [s]A fire was kindled in their company;
The flame burned up the wicked.

19 [t]They made a calf in Horeb,
And worshiped the molded image.
20 Thus [u]they changed their glory
Into the image of an ox that eats grass.
21 They forgot God their Savior,
Who had done great things in Egypt,
22 Wondrous works in the land of Ham,
Awesome things by the Red Sea.
23 [v]Therefore He said that He would destroy them,
Had not Moses His chosen one [w]stood before Him in the breach,
To turn away His wrath, lest He destroy *them.*

24 Then they despised [x]the pleasant land;
They [y]did not believe His word,
25 [z]But complained in their tents,
And did not heed the voice of the LORD.
26 [a]Therefore He raised His hand *in an oath* against them,
[b]To [5]overthrow them in the wilderness,
27 [c]To [6]overthrow their descendants among the [7]nations,
And to scatter them in the lands.

28 [d]They joined themselves also to Baal of Peor,
And ate sacrifices [8]made to the dead.
29 Thus they provoked *Him* to anger with their deeds,
And the plague broke out among them.
30 [e]Then Phinehas stood up and intervened,
And the plague was stopped.
31 And that was accounted to him [f]for righteousness
To all generations forevermore.

32 [g]They angered *Him* also at the waters of [9]strife,
[h]So that it went ill with Moses on account of them;
33 [i]Because they rebelled against His Spirit,
So that he spoke rashly with his lips.

34 [j]They did not destroy the peoples,
[k]Concerning whom the LORD had commanded them,

17 [r]Num. 16:31, 32; Deut. 11:6

18 [s]Num. 16:35, 46

19 [t]Ex. 32:1–4; Deut. 9:8; Acts 7:41

20 [u]Jer. 2:11; Rom. 1:23

23 [v]Ex. 32:10; Deut. 9:19 [w]Ezek. 22:30

24 [x]Deut. 8:7; Jer. 3:19; Ezek. 20:6 [y]Deut. 1:32; 9:23; [Heb. 3:18, 19]

25 [z]Num. 14:2, 27; Deut. 1:27

26 [a]Ezek. 20:15, 16; [Heb. 3:11, 18] [b]Num. 14:28–30 [5]*make them fall*

27 [c]Lev. 26:33; Ezek. 20:23 [6]*make their descendants fall also* [7]*Gentiles*

28 [d]Num. 25:3; Deut. 4:3; Hos. 9:10 [8]*offered*

30 [e]Num. 25:7, 8

31 [f]Gen. 15:6; Num. 25:11–13

32 [g]Num. 20:3–13; Ps. 81:7 [h]Deut. 1:37; 3:26 [9]Or *Meribah*

33 [i]Num. 20:3, 10

34 [j]Judg. 1:21 [k][Deut. 7:2, 16]; Judg. 2:2

■ **106:17 Dathan . . . Abiram.** See Num. 16.

■ **106:20 they changed their glory.** They put a metal idol in the place of God and worshiped it. As Paul points out (Rom. 1:21–23), idolatry consists in worshiping any part or aspect of creation as God.

■ **106:22 Wondrous works in the land of Ham.** Ham is another name for Egypt, and the works are preeminently the ten plagues.

■ **106:23 Moses . . . stood before Him in the breach.** See Ex. 32:11–14. Moses interceded on behalf of the people and saved them from the wrath of God. In this, he foreshadowed the work of Jesus Christ, who not only prayed for His people but died to save them.

■ **106:24 they despised the pleasant land.** They despised the Promised Land by not having faith that God could give it to them (Num. 13; 14).

■ **106:26 raised His hand.** This gesture accompanies a formal oath, showing God's determination to judge the sons of Israel.

■ **106:28 joined themselves.** The language is derogatory; worshiping a foreign idol is like becoming a beast of burden.

Baal of Peor. Baal was a god of the eastern Mediterranean region at the time Israel was entering the Promised Land. Baal took slightly different characteristics in each local worship site and so is often identified by the region.

sacrifices made to the dead. This could refer to funeral rituals of some sort. Canaanite funeral rituals involved heavy drinking, feasting, and obscene lust. The whole incident, initiated by Balaam, is reported in Num. 25.

■ **106:31 accounted to him for righteousness.** When Israel took the fateful steps toward idolatry, Phinehas took a violent step to bring Israel back to the way of God. As a result, God made a covenant with his family to give them the priesthood. Similar language is used in connection with the covenant promises given to Abraham (Gen. 15:6) and inherited by the church (Rom. 4:3).

■ **106:32 waters of strife.** Meribah, see Num. 20:1–13.

■ **106:33 they rebelled.** By not trusting God to provide for their survival in the wilderness.

35 [l]But they mingled with the Gentiles
And learned their works;
36 [m]They served their idols,
[n]Which became a snare to them.
37 [o]They even sacrificed their sons
And their daughters to [p]demons,
38 And shed innocent blood,
The blood of their sons and daughters,
Whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan;
And [q]the land was polluted with blood.
39 Thus they [l]were [r]defiled by their own works,
And [s]played[2] the harlot by their own deeds.

40 Therefore [t]the wrath of the LORD was kindled against His people,
So that He abhorred [u]His own inheritance.
41 And [v]He gave them into the hand of the Gentiles,
And those who hated them ruled over them.
42 Their enemies also oppressed them,
And they were brought into subjection under their hand.
43 [w]Many times He delivered them;
But they rebelled in their counsel,
And were brought low for their iniquity.

44 Nevertheless He regarded their affliction,
When [x]He heard their cry;
45 [y]And for their sake He remembered His covenant,
And [z]relented [a]according to the multitude of His mercies.
46 [b]He also made them to be pitied
By all those who carried them away captive.

47 [c]Save us, O LORD our God,
And gather us from among the Gentiles,
To give thanks to Your holy name,
To triumph in Your praise.

48 [d]Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel
From everlasting to everlasting!
And let all the people say, "Amen!"

[3]Praise the LORD!

35 [l]Judg. 3:5, 6
36 [m]Judg. 2:12 [n]Deut. 7:16
37 [o][Deut. 12:31; 32:17, 18]; 2 Kin. 16:3; 17:17; Ezek. 16:20, 21; [1 Cor. 10:20] [p][Lev. 17:7]
38 [q][Num. 35:33; Is. 24:5; Jer. 3:1, 2]
39 [r][Lev. 18:24]; Ezek. 20:18 [s][Lev. 17:7; Num. 15:39]; Judg. 2:17; Hos. 4:12 [1]*became unclean* [2]Were unfaithful
40 [t]Judg. 2:14; Ps. 78:59 [u][Deut. 9:29; 32:9]
41 [v]Judg. 2:14; [Neh. 9:27]
43 [w]Judg. 2:16; [Neh. 9:27]
44 [x]Judg. 3:9; 6:7; 10:10
45 [y][Lev. 26:41, 42] [z]Judg. 2:18 [a]Ps. 69:16
46 [b]1 Kin. 8:50; [2 Chr. 30:9]; Ezra 9:9; Neh. 1:11; Jer. 42:12
47 [c]1 Chr. 16:35, 36
48 [d]Ps. 41:13 [3]Heb. *Hallelujah*

PSALM 107

1 [a]1 Chr. 16:34; Ps. 106:1; Jer. 33:11 [1]Heb. same as *goodness*, vv. 8, 15, 21, 31, and *lovingkindness*, v. 43
3 [b]Is. 43:5, 6; Jer. 29:14; 31:8–10; [Ezek. 39:27, 28]

Book Five: Psalms 107—150

PSALM 107

Thanksgiving to the LORD for His Great Works of Deliverance

Oh, [a]give thanks to the LORD, for *He is* good!
For His [1]mercy *endures* forever.
2 Let the redeemed of the LORD say *so,*
Whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy,
3 And [b]gathered out of the lands,

■ **106:37 to demons.** The spiritual reality behind the lifeless idols is demonic, a world of hostility to the one God.

■ **106:39 they . . . played the harlot.** Joining themselves to a false god is spiritual adultery.

■ **106:45 He remembered His covenant.** God's promises express the commitment that causes Him to continue with His people even though they turned their backs on Him. On remembrance, see Ps. 105:5.

■ **Ps. 107** This community thanksgiving accompanied the offering of sacrifices (v. 22). The date of its original composition is not certain.

■ **107:1 He is good.** See vv. 1, 8, 15, 21, 31, 43.

His mercy. God's covenant devotion, by which He binds Himself to His people.

■ **107:3 gathered.** The situation after the Babylonian exile seems to be in view here.

From the east and from the west,
From the north and from the south.

4 They wandered in [c]the wilderness in a desolate way;
They found no city to dwell in.
5 Hungry and thirsty,
Their soul fainted in them.
6 [d]Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble,
And He delivered them out of their distresses.
7 And He led them forth by the [e]right way,
That they might go to a city for a dwelling place.
8 [f]Oh, that *men* would give thanks to the LORD *for* His goodness,
And *for* His wonderful works to the children of men!
9 For [g]He satisfies the longing soul,
And fills the hungry soul with goodness.

10 Those who [h]sat in darkness and in the shadow of death,
[i]Bound[2] in affliction and irons—
11 Because they [j]rebelled against the words of God,
And [3]despised [k]the counsel of the Most High,
12 Therefore He brought down their heart with labor;
They fell down, and *there was* [l]none to help.
13 Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble,
And He saved them out of their distresses.
14 [m]He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death,
And broke their chains in pieces.
15 Oh, that *men* would give thanks to the LORD *for* His goodness,
And *for* His wonderful works to the children of men!
16 For He has [n]broken the gates of bronze,
And cut the bars of iron in two.

17 Fools, [o]because of their transgression,
And because of their iniquities, were afflicted.
18 [p]Their soul abhorred all manner of food,
And they [q]drew near to the gates of death.
19 Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble,
And He saved them out of their distresses.
20 [r]He sent His word and [s]healed them,
And [t]delivered *them* from their destructions.
21 Oh, that *men* would give thanks to the LORD *for* His goodness,
And *for* His wonderful works to the children of men!
22 [u]Let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving,
And [v]declare His works with [4]rejoicing.

23 Those who go down to the sea in ships,
Who do business on great waters,
24 They see the works of the LORD,

4 [c]Num. 14:33; 32:13; [Deut. 2:7; 32:10]; Josh. 5:6; 14:10

6 [d]Ps. 50:15; [Hos. 5:15]

7 [e]Ezra 8:21; Ps. 5:8; Jer. 31:9

8 [f]Ps. 107:15, 21

9 [g][Ps. 34:10; Luke 1:53]

10 [h][Is. 42:7; Mic. 7:8; Luke 1:79] [i]Job 36:8 [2]*Prisoners*

11 [j]Lam. 3:42 [k][Ps. 73:24] [3]*scorned*

12 [l]Ps. 22:11

14 [m]Ps. 68:6

16 [n]Is. 45:1, 2

17 [o][Is. 65:6, 7; Jer. 30:14, 15]; Lam. 3:39; Ezek. 24:23

18 [p]Job 33:20 [q]Job 33:22

20 [r]Matt. 8:8 [s]2 Kin. 20:5; Ps. 30:2 [t]Job 33:28, 30

22 [u]Lev. 7:12; Ps. 50:14; Heb. 13:15 [v]Ps. 9:11 [4]*joyful singing*

■ **107:4–9** God guides those wandering in the wilderness to a city.

■ **107:6 they cried out . . . He delivered them.** This section is the first of four that illustrate God's readiness to answer the prayers of His people.

■ **107:10–16** God delivers His imprisoned people to freedom.

■ **107:12 He brought down their heart.** God chastises His wayward people in order to elicit their repentance. See Heb. 12:1–13.

■ **107:13 they cried out to the LORD . . . He saved them.** See v. 6.

■ **107:17–22** God saves foolish rebels when they call on Him.

■ **107:17 Fools.** Not because they were without natural intelligence, but because they refused to face the reality that the Lord is God. "Foolishness" is an ethical-spiritual category, not an academic one.

■ **107:18 abhorred all manner of food.** It seems that a physical malady, some kind of sickness, is in view here.

■ **107:20 His word.** We learn as early as the creation account (Gen. 1:3) that God's word is powerful and effective.

■ **107:22 sacrifices of thanksgiving.** This verse points to public worship in the temple.

■ **107:23–32** God rescues those in trouble on the seas.

■ **107:24 the works of the LORD.** The mystery, power, and beauty of the sea, with everything that lives in it, testifies eloquently to God's wisdom (Gen. 1:9, 10, 21).

And His wonders in the deep.
25 For He commands and [w]raises the stormy wind,
Which lifts up the waves of the sea.
26 They mount up to the heavens,
They go down again to the depths;
[x]Their soul melts because of trouble.
27 They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man,
And [5]are at their wits' end.
28 Then they cry out to the LORD in their trouble,
And He brings them out of their distresses.
29 [y]He calms the storm,
So that its waves are still.
30 Then they are glad because they are quiet;
So He guides them to their desired haven.
31 [z]Oh, that *men* would give thanks to the LORD *for* His goodness,
And *for* His wonderful works to the children of men!
32 Let them exalt Him also [a]in the assembly of the people,
And praise Him in the company of the elders.

33 He [b]turns rivers into a wilderness,
And the watersprings into dry ground;
34 A [c]fruitful land into [6]barrenness,
For the wickedness of those who dwell in it.
35 [d]He turns a wilderness into pools of water,
And dry land into watersprings.
36 There He makes the hungry dwell,
That they may establish a city for a dwelling place,
37 And sow fields and plant vineyards,
That they may yield a fruitful harvest.
38 [e]He also blesses them, and they multiply greatly;
And He does not let their cattle [f]decrease.

39 When they are [g]diminished and brought low
Through oppression, affliction and sorrow,
40 [h]He pours contempt on princes,
And causes them to wander in the wilderness *where there is* no way;
41 [i]Yet He sets the poor on high, far from affliction,
And [j]makes *their* families like a flock.
42 [k]The righteous see *it* and rejoice,
And all [l]iniquity stops its mouth.

43 [m]Whoever *is* wise will observe these *things,*
And they will understand the lovingkindness of the LORD.

25 [w]Jon. 1:4
26 [x]Ps. 22:14
27 [5]Lit. *all their wisdom is swallowed up*
29 [y]Ps. 89:9; Matt. 8:26; Luke 8:24
31 [z]Ps. 107:8, 15, 21
32 [a]Ps. 22:22, 25
33 [b]1 Kin. 17:1, 7; Is. 50:2
34 [c]Gen. 13:10; Deut. 29:23 [6]Lit. *a salty waste*
35 [d]Ps. 114:8; [Is. 41:17, 18]
38 [e]Gen. 12:2; 17:16, 20 [f]Ex. 1:7; [Deut. 7:14]
39 [g]2 Kin. 10:32
40 [h]Job 12:21, 24
41 [i]1 Sam. 2:8; [Ps. 113:7, 8] [j]Ps. 78:52
42 [k]Job 5:15, 16 [l]Job 5:16; Ps. 63:11; [Rom. 3:19]
43 [m]Ps. 64:9; Jer. 9:12; [Hos. 14:9]

■ **107:26 They mount up . . . go down again.** The ship as it rises and falls on the waves.

■ **107:28 they cry out to the LORD . . . He brings them out.** See vv. 6, 13, and 19.

■ **107:29 He calms the storm.** God shows His divine power and might by controlling the chaotic sea. See notes on Ps. 18:4, 15. Christ demonstrated His power from on high when He stilled the waters (Mark 4:35–41).

■ **107:33–38** God turns fertility into waste, and waste into fertility. He controls all things.

■ **107:34 For the wickedness.** God does not arbitrarily bring destruction upon His people. Here the reason is identified as the people's sin. A historical example of this verse may be found in 1 Kin. 17, where God determined to withhold rain and dew from Israel because Ahab and Jezebel had turned the nation toward Baal.

■ **107:36 establish a city.** The ultimate reference is to the conquest in which God gave the land of Canaan to Israel. They passed from the hard conditions of the wilderness wanderings into the pleasant land of Palestine.

■ **107:39–42** God punishes and blesses His people.

■ **107:40 where there is no way.** Perhaps a reference to the Babylonian exile.

PSALM 108

Assurance of God's Victory over Enemies

A Song. A Psalm of David.

O [a]God, my heart is steadfast;
I will sing and give praise, even with my glory.
2 [b]Awake, lute and harp!
I will awaken the dawn.
3 I will praise You, O LORD, among the peoples,
And I will sing praises to You among the nations.
4 For Your mercy *is* great above the [1]heavens,
And Your truth *reaches* to the clouds.

5 [c]Be exalted, O God, above the heavens,
And Your glory above all the earth;
6 [d]That Your beloved may be delivered,
Save *with* Your right hand, and [2]hear me.

7 God has spoken in His holiness:
"I will rejoice;
I will divide Shechem
And measure out the Valley of Succoth.
8 Gilead *is* Mine; Manasseh *is* Mine;
Ephraim also *is* the [3]helmet for My head;
[e]Judah *is* My lawgiver.
9 Moab *is* My washpot;
Over Edom I will cast My shoe;
Over Philistia I will triumph."

10 [f]Who will bring me *into* the strong city?
Who will lead me to Edom?
11 *Is it* not *You,* O God, *who* cast us off?
And *You,* O God, *who* did not go out with our armies?
12 Give us help from trouble,
For the help of man is useless.
13 [g]Through God we will do valiantly,
For *it is* He *who* shall tread down our enemies.

PSALM 108

1 [a]Ps. 57:7–11
2 [b]Ps. 57:8–11
4 [1]*skies*
5 [c]Ps. 57:5, 11
6 [d]Ps. 60:5–12
[2]Lit. *answer*
8 [e][Gen. 49:10]
[3]Lit. *protection*
10 [f]Ps. 60:9
13 [g]Ps. 60:12

■ **Ps. 108** This psalm is composed of two previous psalms. The first five verses are from Ps. 57:7–11, and vv. 6–13 are from Ps. 60:5–12. There are only minor changes of wording, but the overall effect of the psalm is quite different. Ps. 57 and 60 include elements of complaint; this psalm is a statement of assurance.

■ **108:1 steadfast.** The psalmist has resolved to praise the Lord, and nothing can cause him to swerve from his resolve to offer up his hymn of praise.

■ **108:2 I will awaken the dawn.** See note on 57:8.

■ **108:3 among the peoples.** The psalmist realizes that God is more than the God of Israel. He is the King of the universe, and as a result He will witness to God's great deeds throughout the universe.

■ **108:4 Your mercy.** Specifically, the mercy God has for the people who are in covenant relationship with Him.

■ **108:5 above the heavens.** God is so great that not even the heavens can contain Him (1 Kin. 8:27). He is transcendent, yet in special ways (presently by the Holy Spirit), He is also immanent in that He compassionately condescends to dwell with His people.

■ **108:7 God has spoken in His holiness.** The divine oracle was probably spoken through a prophet associated with the temple. The sense of His message is that victory will be forthcoming.

Shechem . . . Succoth. These two places are associated with Jacob in Gen. 33:17–20 as the first two places the patriarch occupied after returning from his encounter with Esau. They are on opposite sides of the Jordan River.

■ **108:8 Gilead . . . Manasseh.** Both these areas are located, at least in part, east of the Jordan River.

Ephraim . . . Judah. The two most powerful tribes in Israel. They were frequently rivals, but here they are united as parts of God's army.

lawgiver. See Gen. 49:10.

■ **108:9** On this verse see 60:8 and notes.

■ **108:10 me.** Likely the king, who speaks on behalf of the nation.

■ **108:13 Through God.** The writer confesses that it is only through God's power that they will be victorious.

PSALM 109

1 [a]Ps. 83:1

2 [b]Ps. 27:12

3 [c]Ps. 35:7; 69:4; John 15:25

5 [d]Ps. 35:7, 12; 38:20; Prov. 17:13

6 [e]Zech. 3:1 [f]Heb. *satan*

7 [f][Prov. 28:9]

8 [g][Ps. 55:23]; John 17:12 [h]Ps. 69:25; Acts 1:20

9 [i]Ex. 22:24

10 [2]*wander continuously* [3]So with MT, Tg.; LXX, Vg. *be cast out*

11 [j]Neh. 5:7; Job 5:5; 18:9

13 [k]Job 18:19; Ps. 37:28 [l]Prov. 10:7 [4]*descendants be destroyed*

14 [m][Ex. 20:5; Num. 14:18]; Is. 65:6; [Jer. 32:18] [n]Neh. 4:5; Jer. 18:23

15 [o]Job 18:17; [Ps. 34:16]

16 [p][Ps. 34:18]

17 [q]Prov. 14:14; [Matt. 7:2]

PSALM 109

Plea for Judgment of False Accusers

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

Do[a] not keep silent,
O God of my praise!
2 For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful
Have opened against me;
They have spoken against me with a [b]lying tongue.
3 They have also surrounded me with words of hatred,
And fought against me [c]without a cause.
4 In return for my love they are my accusers,
But I *give myself to* prayer.
5 Thus [d]they have rewarded me evil for good,
And hatred for my love.

6 Set a wicked man over him,
And let [e]an [f]accuser stand at his right hand.
7 When he is judged, let him be found guilty,
And [f]let his prayer become sin.
8 Let his days be [g]few,
And [h]let another take his office.
9 [i]Let his children be fatherless,
And his wife a widow.
10 Let his children [2]continually be vagabonds, and beg;
Let them [3]seek *their bread* also from their desolate places.
11 [j]Let the creditor seize all that he has,
And let strangers plunder his labor.
12 Let there be none to extend mercy to him,
Nor let there be any to favor his fatherless children.
13 [k]Let his [4]posterity be cut off,
And in the generation following let their [l]name be blotted out.

14 [m]Let the iniquity of his fathers be remembered before the LORD,
And let not the sin of his mother [n]be blotted out.
15 Let them be continually before the LORD,
That He may [o]cut off the memory of them from the earth;
16 Because he did not remember to show mercy,
But persecuted the poor and needy man,
That he might even slay the [p]broken in heart.
17 [q]As he loved cursing, so let it come to him;
As he did not delight in blessing, so let it be far from him.
18 As he clothed himself with cursing as with his garment,

■ **Ps. 109** The psalmist stands before a corrupt court, falsely accused of a crime. In his distress, he turns to God for help, asking Him to reverse the roles and allow him to judge the court, and one person in particular (either the judge or the accuser). The poet does not conceal his strong feelings against his enemies (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes).

■ **109:1 Do not keep silent.** See note on Ps. 83:1.

■ **109:4 they are my accusers.** The legal language here and elsewhere in the psalm reveals that the psalmist is a defendant in a courtroom setting.

■ **109:5 evil for good.** See note on Ps. 35:12.

for my love. What makes the writer's plight so poignant is that his attackers were once friends but have turned treacherously against him.

■ **109:6 a wicked man . . . an accuser.** The penalty for accusing someone of a certain crime falsely was the penalty corresponding to that crime (Deut. 19:16–21).

■ **109:8 let another take his office.** As this accuser brought false charges against the psalmist, so Judas Iscariot sought Christ's death by turning Him over to the Jewish authorities. Afterwards Judas killed himself in remorse. Peter understood that this psalm was about that situation and cited it as a replacement was sought for Judas among the disciples (Acts 1:20).

■ **109:9 fatherless . . . widow.** Among people who depended heavily on their relatives for social support, this verse was a hard-hitting curse, calling for punishment on the accuser and on his family as well.

■ **109:13 their name be blotted out.** The curses focus on eradicating the accuser's family line. To have descendants stretching into the distant future was considered extremely important in ancient Israel.

■ **109:17 so let it come to him.** Once again the psalmist invokes the principle that the unrighteous will receive the penalty they are trying to call down upon another. See note on v. 6.

So let it [r]enter his body like water,
And like oil into his bones.
19 Let it be to him like the garment which covers him,
And for a belt with which he girds himself continually.
20 *Let* this *be* the LORD's reward to my accusers,
And to those who speak evil against my person.

21 But You, O GOD the Lord,
Deal with me for Your name's sake;
Because Your mercy *is* good, deliver me.
22 For I *am* poor and needy,
And my heart is wounded within me.
23 I am gone [s]like a shadow when it lengthens;
I am shaken off like a locust.
24 My [t]knees are weak through fasting,
And my flesh is feeble from lack of fatness.
25 I also have become [u]a reproach to them;
When they look at me, [v]they shake their heads.

26 Help me, O LORD my God!
Oh, save me according to Your mercy,
27 [w]That they may know that this *is* Your hand—
That You, LORD, have done it!
28 [x]Let them curse, but You bless;
When they arise, let them be ashamed,
But let [y]Your servant rejoice.
29 [z]Let my accusers be clothed with shame,
And let them cover themselves with their own disgrace as with a mantle.

30 I will greatly praise the LORD with my mouth;
Yes, [a]I will praise Him among the multitude.
31 For [b]He shall stand at the right hand of the poor,
To save *him* from those [5]who condemn him.

PSALM 110

Announcement of the Messiah's Reign

A Psalm of David.

The [a]LORD said to my Lord,
"Sit at My right hand,

18 [r]Num. 5:22
23 [s]Ps. 102:11
24 [t]Heb. 12:12
25 [u]Ps. 22:7; Jer. 18:16; Lam. 2:15 [v]Matt. 27:39; Mark 15:29
27 [w]Job 37:7
28 [x]2 Sam. 6:11, 12 [y]Is. 65:14
29 [z]Job 8:22; Ps. 35:26
30 [a]Ps. 35:18; 111:1
31 [b][Ps. 16:8] [5]Lit. *judging his soul*

PSALM 110

1 [a]Matt. 22:44; Mark 12:36; 16:19; Luke 20:42, 43; Acts 2:34, 35; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:13

■ **109:21 for Your name's sake.** The psalmist appeals to God's reputation (Ps. 8:1). He belongs to God, and if he should die at the hand of the wicked, it will appear as if God can do nothing about evil.

■ **109:25 shake their heads.** In disgust.

■ **109:26 according to Your mercy.** The Hebrew word for "mercy" refers salvation to God's covenant faithfulness.

■ **109:31 stand at the right hand.** Instead of finding an accuser at his right hand, the psalmist finds his support in God.

■ **Ps. 110** There can be no doubt that this psalm looks forward to Christ. Jesus Himself cites it to show that David knew that its ultimate fulfillment would come with One who is greater than he (Mark 12:35–37 and parallels). Even before Christ's coming, a prophetic-messianic interpretation of the psalm was well known among Jewish interpreters.

Nevertheless, like all other royal psalms, Ps. 110 does address the time in which it was first composed. It is likely that it was sung at the time of the coronation of the king. The composition seems to have been written after David defeated Jebus (Jerusalem), and celebrates his victory and enthronement in that city, explaining why he also inherits the royal priesthood of Melchizedek.

Focusing on two divine oracles, the first (v. 1) shows the close, but subordinate, relationship that the human king bears to the divine King. The New Testament writers cite this oracle to demonstrate Jesus' post-resurrection glory and to point to the struggle between God and the spiritual powers of evil (Acts 2:34, 35; 1 Cor. 15:25; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:13; 1 Pet. 3:22).

The second oracle appointed the king as a priest, but as a special type of priest. As opposed to the hereditary Aaronic priesthood, this priesthood is descended from Melchizedek (Gen. 14:18–23), whose mysterious origins are related to Jesus Christ, the great High Priest (Heb. 5:6; 7:17; 8:1; 10:12–14).

■ **110:title** The truth of the authorship title of this psalm is critical for its interpretation in the New Testament (Mark 12:35–37).

■ **110:1 LORD.** As the translators indicate with the use of small capital letters, this is God's name, Yahweh.

Lord. This title is often used for God but can also be addressed to a king or other respected person. The New Testament makes it clear that King David refers to his Son as his "Lord" (Mark 12:35–37). The promised Messiah descended from David but is greater than David. See "Jesus' Heavenly Reign" at Acts 7:55.

Till I make Your enemies Your [n]footstool."
2 The LORD shall send the rod of Your strength [c]out of Zion.
[d]Rule in the midst of Your enemies!

3 [e]Your people *shall be* volunteers
In the day of Your power;
[f]In the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning,
You have the dew of Your youth.
4 The LORD has sworn
And [g]will not relent,
"You *are* a [h]priest forever
According to the order of [i]Melchizedek."

5 The Lord *is* [j]at Your right hand;
He shall [l]execute kings [k]in the day of His wrath.
6 He shall judge among the nations,
He shall fill *the places* with dead bodies,
[l]He shall [2]execute the heads of many countries.
7 He shall drink of the brook by the wayside;
[m]Therefore He shall lift up the head.

1 [b][1 Cor. 15:25; Eph. 1:22]
2 [c][Rom. 11:26, 27] [d][Ps. 2:9; Dan. 7:13, 14]
3 [e]Judg. 5:2; Neh. 11:2 [f]1 Chr. 16:29; Ps. 96:9
4 [g][Num. 23:19] [h][Zech. 6:13] [i][Heb. 5:6, 10; 6:20]
5 [j][Ps. 16:8] [k]Ps. 2:5, 12; [Rom. 2:5; Rev. 6:17] [l]Lit. *break kings in pieces*
6 [l]Ps. 68:21 [2]Lit. *break in pieces*
7 [m][Is. 53:12]

PSALM 111

Praise to God for His Faithfulness and Justice

Praise [l] the LORD!

[a]I will praise the LORD with *my* whole heart,
In the assembly of the upright and *in* the congregation.

2 [b]The works of the LORD *are* great,
[c]Studied by all who have pleasure in them.
3 His work *is* [d]honorable and glorious,
And His righteousness endures forever.
4 He has made His wonderful works to be remembered;
[e]The LORD *is* gracious and full of compassion.
5 He has given food to those who fear Him;

1 [a]Ps. 35:18 [l]Heb. *Hallelujah*
2 [b]Ps. 92:5 [c]Ps. 143:5
3 [d]Ps. 145:4, 5
4 [e][Ps. 86:5]

at My right hand. The place of honor. After His resurrection, Jesus was exalted to the right hand of God in heaven.

Your enemies. In the Old Testament they were physical flesh and blood enemies of Israel. In the New Testament the battle is intensified, as Jesus fights against the invisible, cosmic powers of evil.

footstool. A place of disgrace, symbolizing subjugation. After a victory, Near Eastern leaders would humiliate their defeated enemies by stepping on their heads or necks (Josh. 10:24–26).

■ **110:2 shall send.** God will enlarge the King's authority.

rod. A common symbol of governmental power and authority.

out of Zion. See note on Ps. 2:6.

■ **110:3 the dew of Your youth.** A difficult phrase in the Hebrew. The image compares the dew, that appears suddenly during the night and is present in the morning, with the eager and mysterious appearance of the king's troops.

■ **110:4 the order of Melchizedek.** The regular priesthood of Israel was from Aaron, and their duties were limited to religious worship. Little is known about Melchizedek (Gen. 14:18–20), but it appears that he combined the functions of king and priest. David also combined these functions to an extent. Jesus Christ is both King and Priest, though not descended from the line of Aaron (Heb. 5:6; 7:17; 8:1; 10:12–14).

■ **110:5 Lord.** A title of respect (v. 1 note).

■ **110:6 judge among the nations.** God often used the human king to bring His judgment upon the nations through warfare. As applied to Jesus, this verse anticipates the Last Judgment that will take place at the end of time.

■ **110:7 He shall drink.** This verse is difficult in Hebrew. The king finds refreshment during the battle and can carry on God's work of judgment.

■ **Ps. 111** This psalm of praise recalls the Exodus, wilderness wanderings, and conquest of the Promised Land. The psalm is an acrostic (see introduction to Ps. 112; 119), a trait common among wisdom poems, and it ends on a note that could be called the "motto" of the Book of Proverbs (v. 10).

■ **111:1 In the assembly.** The holy congregation as they gather to praise the Lord in the sanctuary.

■ **111:2 The works of the LORD.** The psalmist has in mind the great acts of redemption that God performed in their past. The preeminent example would be the Exodus, when God rescued His people from their oppressors in Egypt.

■ **111:3 His righteousness.** God acts in history in conformity to His character and law. Through His great historical acts, people can recognize His righteousness.

■ **111:4 to be remembered.** Remembrance involves more than an act of the memory; it also involves devotion and obedience. See Ps. 44:1.

gracious and full of compassion. Israel, due to sin, could not deserve God's salvation; it springs from God's love for His people. See Ex. 34:6.

■ **111:5 given food.** This may allude to the wilderness wanderings when God miraculously provided food for Israel (e.g., Num. 11).

He will ever be mindful of His covenant.
6 He has declared to His people the power of His works,
In giving them the [2]heritage of the nations.

7 The works of His hands *are* [f]verity[3] and justice;
All His precepts *are* sure.
8 [g]They stand fast forever and ever,
And are [h]done in truth and uprightness.
9 [i]He has sent redemption to His people;
He has commanded His covenant forever:
[j]Holy and awesome *is* His name.

10 [k]The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom;
A good understanding have all those who do *His commandments.*
His praise endures forever.

PSALM 112

The Blessed State of the Righteous

Praise[1] the LORD!

Blessed *is* the man *who* fears the LORD,
Who [a]delights greatly in His commandments.

2 [b]His descendants will be mighty on earth;
The generation of the upright will be blessed.
3 [c]Wealth and riches *will be* in his house,
And his righteousness [2]endures forever.
4 [d]Unto the upright there arises light in the darkness;
He is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous.
5 [e]A good man deals graciously and lends;
He will guide his affairs [f]with discretion.
6 Surely he will never be shaken;
[g]The righteous will be in everlasting remembrance.
7 [h]He will not be afraid of evil tidings;
His heart is steadfast, trusting in the LORD.
8 His [i]heart *is* established;
[j]He will not be afraid,
Until he [k]sees *his desire* upon his enemies.

9 He has dispersed abroad,
He has given to the poor;
His righteousness endures forever;
His [3]horn will be exalted with honor.

6 [2]*inheritance*
7 [f][Rev. 15:3] [3]*truth*
8 [g]Is. 40:8; Matt. 5:18 [h][Rev. 15:3]
9 [i]Luke 1:68 [j]Luke 1:49
10 [k]Job 28:28; [Prov. 1:7; 9:10]; Eccl. 12:13

PSALM 112

1 [a]Ps. 128:1 [r]Heb. *Hallelujah*
2 [b][Ps. 102:28]
3 [c]Prov. 3:16; 8:18; [Matt. 6:33] [2]*stands*
4 [d]Job 11:17; Ps. 97:11
5 [e]Ps. 37:26; [Luke 6:35] [f][Eph. 5:15; Col. 4:5]
6 [g]Prov. 10:7
7 [h][Prov. 1:33]
8 [i]Heb. 13:9 [j][Ps. 27:1; 56:11]; Prov. 1:33; 3:24; [Is. 12:2] [k]Ps. 59:10
9 [3]Strength

ever be. God is not fickle. His people may depend on Him.

His covenant. When God acts to save His people, He does so because of the relationship He has already established with them.

■ **111:6 giving them the heritage of the nations.** God gave to Israel the land of a number of peoples when He gave them the Promised Land (Deut. 7:1–6).

■ **111:10 fear of the LORD.** This well-known phrase captures the right way to approach the Lord. The Lord is God, inspiring reverence and awe. He will make good His threats against the wicked. See notes on Ps. 34:7; 36:1; 128:1; 130:4.

■ **Ps. 112** Ps. 112 is in the center of three psalms that begin with the expression "Praise the LORD" (Hebrew *hallu yah*). Both Ps. 111 and 112 are acrostics, each half-line beginning with successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and they complement each other in content. Ps. 111 tells about God and His deeds, while Ps. 112 describes the happiness of the person who serves God.

■ **112:1 in His commandments.** The righteous person receives the law as a testimony of God, they are a joy, to be kept in love and gratitude for His great salvation.

■ **112:4 in the darkness.** Darkness is a metaphor for troubled times. The psalmist knows that there are hard times, but he also knows that "all things work together for good to those who love God" (Rom. 8:28).

gracious, and full of compassion. The godly man reflects the attributes of his Lord; see 111:4.

■ **112:7 not be afraid of evil tidings.** The righteous man does not fear trouble or distress, because he knows that God is able to bring him through it.

■ **112:9 has dispersed abroad.** Generosity is a basic characteristic of a servant of God. Paul quotes this verse in 2 Cor. 9:9 in a context that encourages generosity.

10 The wicked will see *it* and be grieved;
He will gnash his teeth and melt away;
The desire of the wicked shall perish.

PSALM 113

The Majesty and Condescension of God

Praise[l] the LORD!

[a]Praise, O servants of the LORD,
Praise the name of the LORD!
2 [b]Blessed be the name of the LORD
From this time forth and forevermore!
3 [c]From the rising of the sun to its going down
The LORD's name *is* to be praised.

4 The LORD *is* [d]high above all nations,
[e]His glory above the heavens.
5 [f]Who *is* like the LORD our God,
Who dwells on high,
6 [g]Who humbles Himself to behold
The things that are in the heavens and in the earth?

7 [h]He raises the poor out of the dust,
And lifts the [i]needy out of the ash heap,
8 That He may [j]seat *him* with princes—
With the princes of His people.
9 [k]He grants the [2]barren woman a home,
Like a joyful mother of children.

Praise the LORD!

PSALM 114

The Power of God in His Deliverance of Israel

When [a]Israel went out of Egypt,
The house of Jacob [b]from a people [1]of strange language,
2 [c]Judah became His sanctuary,
And Israel His dominion.

3 [d]The sea saw *it* and fled;
[e]Jordan turned back.

PSALM 113

1 [a]Ps. 135:1 [1]Heb. *Hallelujah*
2 [b][Dan. 2:20]
3 [c]Is. 59:19; Mal. 1:11
4 [d]Ps. 97:9; 99:2 [e][Ps. 8:1]
5 [f]Ps. 89:6; [Is. 57:15]
6 [g][Ps. 11:4; Is. 57:15]
7 [h]1 Sam. 2:8; Ps. 107:41 [i]Ps. 72:12
8 [j][Job 36:7]
9 [k]1 Sam. 2:5; Is. 54:1 [2]*childless*

PSALM 114

1 [a]Ex. 12:51; 13:3 [b]Ps. 81:5 [1]*who spoke unintelligibly*
2 [c]Ex. 6:7; 19:6; 25:8; 29:45, 46; Deut. 27:9
3 [d]Ex. 14:21; Ps. 77:16 [e]Josh. 3:13–16

■ **Ps. 113** God is both transcendent (vv. 4–6) and immanent (vv. 7–9); above creation but present with His people. Ps. 113 is the first of several psalms used to celebrate the great annual festivals of Passover, Weeks, Tabernacles, New Moon, and the Dedication of the temple. Ps. 113—118 were sung during the Passover, so it is likely that Jesus and His disciples sang them during their last evening together (Matt. 26:30; Mark 14:26). Ps. 113 (see v. 9) should be compared with the songs of Hannah (1 Sam. 2, especially vv. 5, 8) and Mary (Luke 1:46–55).

■ **113:1 O servants of the LORD.** A priest leads the faithful in worship.

■ **113:3 From the rising of the sun to its going down.** That is, from east to west, everywhere.

■ **113:4 high above all nations.** In the ancient Near East each nation had its imagined national gods. Only the God of Israel could proclaim Himself the true God of all nations.

■ **113:5 Who is like.** Yahweh is incomparable.

■ **113:6 humbles Himself.** Part of God's greatness is His condescension, as at Bethlehem (Luke 2:4–7; Phil. 2:5–11).

in the heavens. Often the heavens are spoken of as the dwelling place of God, but strictly speaking, God's infinite transcendence is such that even the heavens are unable to contain Him (1 Kin. 8:27).

■ **Ps. 114** Jewish tradition assigned this psalm to the eighth day of Passover. In eight short verses, and with virtually unrivaled poetic subtlety, the psalmist describes the tremendous power of God's visual self-revelation (theophany) at the time of Israel's salvation from Egypt and entry into Canaan (Ex. 13:21).

■ **114:1 went out of Egypt.** The Exodus was the most tremendous display of God's redemptive power during the Old Testament period. It was constantly remembered and became a source of encouragement for later generations, including Christians who perceive themselves as "strangers and pilgrims" in search of their true "homeland" (Heb. 11:13, 14).

■ **114:2 His sanctuary.** The people and their country were God's sanctuary because God chose to be present with them. The tabernacle, and then the temple, were symbols of His presence.

■ **114:3 The sea saw it.** The Red Sea is personified (Ex. 14; 15), poetically describing the crossing of the sea as a conflict between it and the Lord.

4 [f]The mountains skipped like rams,
The little hills like lambs.
5 [g]What ails you, O sea, that you fled?
O Jordan, *that* you turned back?
6 O mountains, *that* you skipped like rams?
O little hills, like lambs?

7 Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord,
At the presence of the God of Jacob,
8 [h]Who turned the rock *into* a pool of water,
The flint into a fountain of waters.

PSALM 115

The Futility of Idols and the Trustworthiness of God

Not [a]unto us, O LORD, not unto us,
But to Your name give glory,
Because of Your mercy,
Because of Your truth.
2 Why should the [1]Gentiles say,
[b]"So where *is* their God?"

3 [c]But our God *is* in heaven;
He does whatever He pleases.
4 [d]Their idols *are* silver and gold,
The work of men's hands.
5 They have mouths, but they do not speak;
Eyes they have, but they do not see;
6 They have ears, but they do not hear;
Noses they have, but they do not smell;
7 They have hands, but they do not handle;
Feet they have, but they do not walk;
Nor do they mutter through their throat.
8 [e]Those who make them are like them;
So is everyone who trusts in them.

9 [f]O Israel, trust in the LORD;
[g]He *is* their help and their shield.
10 O house of Aaron, trust in the LORD;
He *is* their help and their shield.
11 You who fear the LORD, trust in the LORD;
He *is* their help and their shield.

4 [f]Ex. 19:18; Judg. 5:5; Ps. 29:6; Hab. 3:6
5 [g]Hab. 3:8
8 [h]Ex. 17:6; Num. 20:11; Ps. 107:35

PSALM 115

1 [a][Is. 48:11]; Ezek. 36:32
2 [b]Ps. 42:3, 10
[1] *nations*
3 [c][1 Chr. 16:26]
4 [d]Deut. 4:28; 2 Kin. 19:18; Is. 37:19; 44:10, 20; Jer. 10:3
8 [e]Ps. 135:18; Is. 44:9–11
9 [f]Ps. 118:2, 3 [g]Ps. 33:20

■ **114:4 The mountains.** The mountains were symbols of power, firmness, and endurance (Ps. 46). God's appearance shakes them like frightened rams.

■ **114:5 What ails you.** The psalmist questions the poetically personified sea and mountains making explicit what was implicit in the first two stanzas of the poem.

■ **114:7 Tremble.** When God comes in judgment and with power, the inhabitants of the earth should fear because they will be objects of His judgment. Nothing can stand in His way.

■ **114:8 turned the rock into a pool.** God's provision at Kadesh (Num. 20:1–13) demonstrates His power and compassion.

■ **Ps. 115** This psalm is a liturgy for public worship, declaring Israel's faith in the Lord over against the worthless idols of the nations.

■ **115:1 Your mercy.** God's covenantal affection for His people.

■ **115:2 the Gentiles.** The nations that surrounded Israel at different times: Canaan, Babylonia, Assyria, Persia, and Egypt.

where is their God. As the nations observed Israel struggling, they would say that Israel's God was unable or unwilling to act.

■ **115:3 whatever He pleases.** A notable expression of God's sovereignty.

■ **115:4 Their idols.** The psalmist draws a sharp contrast between the living God of Israel and the man-made deities of the Near East. See Is. 44:6–23; Rom. 1:21–23; "Syncretism and Idolatry" at Hos. 2:13.

■ **115:8 are like them.** When people construct their own gods, they make them in their own image. As they worship these gods, they are more and more conformed to their likeness. See 2 Kin. 17:15.

■ **115:9 O Israel.** A reference to all the people of God.

■ **115:10 house of Aaron.** The speaker addresses the priests of Israel.

■ **115:11 You who fear the LORD.** Finally, the psalmist singles out those who tremble before the Lord. These are the faithful within Israel or, as later usage suggests, also proselytes.

12 [z]has remembered us
13 [h]Ps. 128:1, 4
15 [i][Gen. 14:19] [j]Gen. 1:1; Acts 14:15; Rev. 14:7
17 [k]Ps. 6:5; 88:10–12; [Is. 38:18]
18 [l]Ps. 113:2; Dan. 2:20

PSALM 116

1 [a]Ps. 18:1
3 [b]Ps. 18:4–6 [1]Lit. cords [2]distresses [3]Lit. found me
5 [c][Ps. 103:8] [d][Ezra 9:15]; Neh. 9:8; [Ps. 119:137; 145:17; Jer. 12:1; Dan. 9:14]
7 [e][Jer. 6:16; Matt. 11:29] [f]Ps. 13:6
8 [g]Ps. 56:13
9 [h]Ps. 27:13

12 The LORD [z]has been mindful of *us;*
He will bless us;
He will bless the house of Israel;
He will bless the house of Aaron.
13 [h]He will bless those who fear the LORD,
Both small and great.

14 May the LORD give you increase more and more,
You and your children.
15 *May* you *be* [i]blessed by the LORD,
[j]Who made heaven and earth.

16 The heaven, *even* the heavens, *are* the LORD'S;
But the earth He has given to the children of men.
17 [k]The dead do not praise the LORD,
Nor any who go down into silence.
18 [l]But we will bless the LORD
From this time forth and forevermore.

Praise the LORD!

PSALM 116

Thanksgiving for Deliverance from Death

I [a]love the LORD, because He has heard
My voice *and* my supplications.
2 Because He has inclined His ear to me,
Therefore I will call *upon Him* as long as I live.

3 [b]The [1]pains of death surrounded me,
And the [2]pangs of Sheol [3]laid hold of me;
I found trouble and sorrow.
4 Then I called upon the name of the LORD:
"O LORD, I implore You, deliver my soul!"

5 [c]Gracious *is* the LORD, and [d]righteous;
Yes, our God *is* merciful.
6 The LORD preserves the simple;
I was brought low, and He saved me.
7 Return to your [e]rest, O my soul,
For [f]the LORD has dealt bountifully with you.

8 [g]For You have delivered my soul from death,
My eyes from tears,
And my feet from falling.
9 I will walk before the LORD
[h]In the land of the living.

■ **115:12 been mindful.** See Ps. 44:1.

■ **115:15 Who made heaven and earth.** As the Creator of all, God is able to provide for His people the material blessings they need.

■ **115:16 the earth He has given to the children of men.** God created the earth and it belongs to Him. Along with the gift of the earth comes the responsibility to work and serve God faithfully.

■ **115:17 The dead.** See note on Ps. 88:5.

■ **Ps. 116** An exuberant thanksgiving to the Lord for delivering the psalmist from death. It is impossible to be precise about the threat that hung over the psalmist (perhaps sickness), but he looks back to his cry of distress to the Lord and proclaims with gladness that God heard him. As a result, he determines to offer sacrifices to the Lord. For the use of this psalm at a feast, see introduction to Ps. 113.

■ **116:1 I love the LORD.** The psalmist expresses his deep affection for the Lord, grounding it in God's own love toward him. God showed His love for the psalmist by hearing his prayer.

■ **116:3 The pains of death.** It was as if ropes came out of a grave, pulling the psalmist into the ground.

■ **116:5 Gracious . . . righteous . . . merciful.** God reveals His kindness in His answer to the psalmist's request. He does not stand at a distance when His people suffer.

10 [i]I believed, therefore I spoke,
"I am greatly afflicted."
11 [j]I said in my haste,
[k]"All men *are* liars."

12 What shall I render to the LORD
For all His benefits toward me?
13 I will take up the cup of salvation,
And call upon the name of the LORD.
14 [l]I will pay my vows to the LORD
Now in the presence of all His people.

15 [m]Precious in the sight of the LORD
Is the death of His saints.

16 O LORD, truly [n]I *am* Your servant;
I *am* Your servant, [o]the son of Your maidservant;
You have loosed my bonds.
17 I will offer to You [p]the sacrifice of thanksgiving,
And will call upon the name of the LORD.

18 I will pay my vows to the LORD
Now in the presence of all His people,
19 In the [q]courts of the LORD's house,
In the midst of you, O Jerusalem.

[4]Praise the LORD!

PSALM 117

Let All Peoples Praise the LORD

[a]Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles!
[1]Laud Him, all you peoples!
2 For His merciful kindness is great toward us,
And [b]the truth of the LORD *endures* forever.

Praise the LORD!

PSALM 118

Praise to God for His Everlasting Mercy

[a]Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for *He is* good!
[b]For His mercy *endures* forever.

2 [c]Let Israel now say,
"His mercy *endures* forever."

10 [i]2 Cor. 4:13
11 [j]Ps. 31:22 [k]Rom. 3:4
14 [l]Ps. 116:18
15 [m]Ps. 72:14; [Rev. 14:13]
16 [n]Ps. 119:125; 143:12 [o]Ps. 86:16
17 [p]Lev. 7:12; Ps. 50:14; 107:22
19 [q]Ps. 96:8 [4]Heb. *Hallelujah*

PSALM 117

1 [a]Rom. 15:11 [1]*Praise*
2 [b][Ps. 100:5]

PSALM 118

1 [a]1 Chr. 16:8, 34; Jer. 33:11 [b]2 Chr. 5:13; 7:3; Ezra 3:11; [Ps. 136:1–26]
2 [c][Ps. 115:9]

■ **116:10 therefore I spoke.** It was the psalmist's faith in God that led him to pray to Him in the beginning.

■ **116:11 "All men are liars."** He remembers his complaint; he apparently had been the object of a false accusation.

■ **116:13 the cup of salvation.** This may be a reference to a drink offering (Num. 15:10), but it is more likely a metaphor, contrasting with the more common "cup" of God's wrath (Ps. 75:8).

■ **116:14 in the presence of all His people.** The psalmist promises to proclaim publicly God's great acts (Ps. 22:22 note).

■ **116:15 Precious.** Their deaths, like their lives, are significant and important to God. See "Death and the Intermediate State" at Phil. 1:23.

■ **116:19 the courts of the LORD's house.** The temple in Jerusalem.

■ **Ps. 117** This is the shortest chapter in the Bible, but the song's exuberant praise reaches to all the nations. Paul uses the psalm to show that the nations share in the promises to the patriarchs (Rom. 15:7–11).

■ **117:1 all you Gentiles.** The call to praise goes beyond Israel to all nations.

■ **117:2 His merciful kindness.** Specifically, the love connected with His covenant. This verse, though using different vocabulary, may be seen as a meditation on the truth expressed in Ex. 34:6. It celebrates God's covenant relationship with His people.

■ **Ps. 118** This psalm concludes the section associated with the celebration of Passover (113—118). As the last song of the group, it may have been the final psalm in the mind of Jesus as He celebrated Passover with His disciples (Mark 14:26). Jesus quoted vv. 22, 23 about Himself (Mark

3 Let the house of Aaron now say.
"His mercy *endures* forever."
4 Let those who fear the LORD now say,
"His mercy *endures* forever."

5 [d]I called on the LORD in distress;
The LORD answered me *and* [e]*set me* in a broad place.
6 [f]The LORD *is* on my side;
I will not fear.
What can man do to me?
7 [g]The LORD is for me among those who help me;
Therefore [h]I shall see *my desire* on those who hate me.
8 [i]*It is* better to trust in the LORD
Than to put confidence in man.
9 [j]*It is* better to trust in the LORD
Than to put confidence in princes.

10 All nations surrounded me,
But in the name of the LORD I will destroy them.
11 They [k]surrounded me,
Yes, they surrounded me;
But in the name of the LORD I will destroy them.
12 They surrounded me [l]like bees;
They were quenched [m]like a fire of thorns;
For in the name of the LORD I will [l]destroy them.
13 You pushed me violently, that I might fall,
But the LORD helped me.
14 [n]The LORD *is* my strength and song,
And He has become my salvation.

15 The voice of rejoicing and salvation
Is in the tents of the righteous;
The right hand of the LORD does valiantly.
16 [o]The right hand of the LORD is exalted;
The right hand of the LORD does valiantly.
17 [p]I shall not die, but live,
And [q]declare the works of the LORD.
18 The LORD has [r]chastened[2] me severely,
But He has not given me over to death.

19 [s]Open to me the gates of righteousness;
I will go through them,
And I will praise the LORD.
20 [t]This is the gate of the LORD,
[u]Through which the righteous shall enter.

5 [d]Ps. 120:1 [e]Ps. 18:19
6 [f]Ps. 27:1; 56:9; [Rom. 8:31; Heb. 13:6]
7 [g]Ps. 54:4 [h]Ps. 59:10
8 [i]2 Chr. 32:7, 8; Ps. 40:4; Is. 31:1, 3; 57:13; Jer. 17:5
9 [j]Ps. 146:3
11 [k]Ps. 88:17
12 [l]Deut. 1:44 [m]Eccl. 7:6; Nah. 1:10 [1]*cut them off*
14 [n]Ex. 15:2; Is. 12:2
16 [o]Ex. 15:6
17 [p][Ps. 6:5]; Hab. 1:12 [q]Ps. 73:28
18 [r]Ps. 73:14; Jer. 31:18; [1 Cor. 11:32]; 2 Cor. 6:9 [2]*disciplined*
19 [s]Is. 26:2
20 [t]Ps. 24:7 [u]Is. 35:8; [Rev. 21:27; 22:14, 15]

12:10, 11; Matt. 23:29; Luke 13:35; cf. Acts 4:11). The people greeted Jesus' triumphal entry with shouts of joy taken from this psalm (Mark 11:9, 10; Luke 19:38; John 12:13). The main speaker is likely the king (vv. 5–21), but the psalm as a whole is a liturgy with other speakers as well (vv. 21–27). The references to altar, temple, and procession (vv. 19, 20, 27) show that it was used in corporate worship.

■ **118:1 His mercy endures forever.** A refrain of this psalm and Ps. 136.

■ **118:5 I.** The king.

■ **118:6 The LORD is on my side.** This is the heart of the covenant of grace: God siding with His redeemed. The implication for the psalmist is that he has nothing to fear from anyone because God is in control. Victory is not guaranteed by superior forces or weapons; it is a gift from God.

■ **118:12 a fire of thorns.** The simile has two sides: Thorns, with their sharp points are apt descriptions of an enemy; they also burn quickly, like an enemy running away.

■ **118:14 my salvation.** For the psalmist the "salvation" in view is victory in battle.

■ **118:15 voice of rejoicing.** Israel responds to God's help by singing victory songs that rejoice in God's salvation.

The right hand. This is the arm that is used to wield the sword in battle (v. 16; cf. Ex. 15:6, 12).

■ **118:19 the gates of righteousness.** The entrance to the sanctuary, leading to the presence of God, where the psalmist will offer thanks. The gates are righteous because the One who dwells behind them is righteous, and those who enter must be righteous as well (Ps. 15 and 24).

21 I will praise You,
For You have [v]answered me,
And have become my salvation.

22 [w]The stone *which* the builders rejected
Has become the chief cornerstone.
23 [3]This was the LORD's doing;
It *is* marvelous in our eyes.
24 This *is* the day the LORD has made;
We will rejoice and be glad in it.

25 Save now, I pray, O LORD;
O LORD, I pray, send now prosperity.
26 [x]Blessed *is* he who comes in the name of the LORD!
We have blessed you from the house of the LORD.
27 God *is* the LORD,
And He has given us [y]light;
Bind the sacrifice with cords to the horns of the altar.
28 You *are* my God, and I will praise You;
[z]*You are* my God, I will exalt You.

29 Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for *He is* good!
For His mercy *endures* forever.

PSALM 119

Meditations on the Excellencies of the Word of God

א ALEPH

Blessed *are* the [1]undefiled in the way,
[a]Who walk in the law of the LORD!
2 Blessed *are* those who keep His testimonies,
Who seek Him with the [b]whole heart!
3 [c]They also do no iniquity;
They walk in His ways.
4 You have commanded *us*
To keep Your precepts diligently.

21 [v]Ps. 116:1

22 [w]Matt. 21:42; Mark 12:10, 11; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11; [Eph. 2:20; 1 Pet. 2:7, 8]

23 [3]Lit. *This is from the* LORD

26 [x]Matt. 21:9; 23:39; Mark 11:9; Luke 13:35; 19:38

27 [y]Esth. 8:16; [1 Pet. 2:9]

28 [z]Ex. 15:2; Is. 25:1

PSALM 119

1 [a]Ps. 128:1; [Ezek. 11:20; 18:17]; Mic. 4:2
[1]*blameless*

2 [b]Deut. 6:5; 10:12; 11:13; 13:3

3 [c][1 John 3:9; 5:18]

■ **118:21 my salvation.** See note on v. 14.

■ **118:22 The stone which the builders rejected.** The metaphor would likely refer originally to the king, who represented his people. The stone was cast off in despair when defeat seemed inevitable, and victory was no longer a realistic hope (but see following note).

the chief cornerstone. The low and insignificant, despite having been rejected, is exalted to the chief place. Jesus later applies this passage to Himself (Matt. 21:42; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11 and 1 Pet. 2:7). Jesus is the cornerstone (Eph. 2:20), cast away by the earthly rulers of His day, but exalted to the right hand of the Father. To some this is a cause for stumbling (Is. 8:14; 1 Pet. 2), but to others the basis of hope.

■ **118:24 the day the LORD has made.** Because of God's victory, His people will turn the day of despair into a day of worship before the Lord.

■ **118:26 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD.** Later, this cry is lifted up by the crowds as they welcome the true King, Christ Jesus, into Jerusalem (Matt. 21:9). In a way still beyond their understanding, Jesus was about to defeat sin and death on the cross.

■ **118:27 the sacrifice.** The sacrifice was performed in public worship before the Lord.

■ **118:29 Oh, give thanks to the LORD.** The psalm ends as it began.

■ **Ps. 119** As Ps. 117 has the distinction of being the shortest chapter in the Bible, so Ps. 119 is the longest. The psalm is an acrostic of twenty-two stanzas, one for each letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The eight poetic lines of each stanza begin with the same Hebrew letter.

The number eight may be connected with eight Hebrew words that appear throughout the psalm concerning its main theme. The words are translated variously as "law," "testimonies," "precepts," "statutes," "commandments," "judgments," "word," and "ordinances." In five stanzas all eight Hebrew words occur, and every stanza has at least six of the eight.

While the psalmist expresses his love for the law and his desire to obey it, he also recognizes his failures. Elements of lament and petition are intertwined with expressions of confidence and innocence.

The law is a faithful expression of God's character. God sent His Son to keep the law for us. The law no longer condemns us, setting us free to accept it as our own guide for pleasing the One who died in our place.

■ **119:1 Blessed.** See Ps. 1:1.

Who walk. A metaphor for the activities of daily life.

the law of the LORD. The law, or Torah, refers to the first five books of the Bible as a unit, or to the legal sections of those books. Here the latter is meant: the Ten Commandments and the other laws of the Pentateuch.

■ **119:2 with the whole heart.** The psalmist is not speaking of a mere external adherence to the law. He calls for obedience that comes from a deep-seated faith in the Lord.

■ **119:4 You have commanded . . . keep Your precepts.** God entered into a covenant relationship with Israel freely out of grace, and within that relationship God gave them His law to obey. He was not asking them to earn His favor, or pay for their redemption. It was the way of thankful obedience for those in covenant with Him.

5 Oh, that my ways were directed
To keep Your statutes!
6 [d]Then I would not be ashamed,
When I look into all Your commandments.
7 I will praise You with uprightness of heart,
When I learn Your righteous judgments.
8 I will keep Your statutes;
Oh, do not forsake me utterly!

ב BETH

9 How can a young man cleanse his way?
By taking heed according to Your word.
10 With my whole heart I have [e]sought You;
Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!
11 [f]Your word I have hidden in my heart,
That I might not sin against You.
12 Blessed *are* You, O LORD!
Teach me Your statutes.
13 With my lips I have [g]declared
All the judgments of Your mouth.
14 I have rejoiced in the way of Your testimonies,
As *much as* in all riches.
15 I will meditate on Your precepts,
And [2]contemplate Your ways.
16 I will [h]delight myself in Your statutes;
I will not forget Your word.

ג GIMEL

17 [i]Deal bountifully with Your servant,
That I may live and keep Your word.
18 Open my eyes, that I may see
Wondrous things from Your law.
19 [j]I *am* a stranger in the earth;
Do not hide Your commandments from me.
20 [k]My soul [3]breaks with longing
For Your judgments at all times.
21 You rebuke the proud—the cursed,
Who stray from Your commandments.
22 [l]Remove from me reproach and contempt,
For I have kept Your testimonies.
23 Princes also sit *and* speak against me,
But Your servant meditates on Your statutes.
24 Your testimonies also *are* my delight
And my counselors.

6 [d]Job 22:26
10 [e]2 Chr. 15:15
11 [f]Ps. 37:31; Luke 2:19
13 [g]Ps. 34:11
15 [2]*look into*
16 [h]Ps. 1:2
17 [i]Ps. 116:7
19 [j]Gen. 47:9; Lev. 25:23; 1 Chr. 29:15; Ps. 39:12; Heb. 11:13
20 [k]Ps. 42:1, 2; 63:1; 84:2 [3]*is crushed*
22 [l]Ps. 39:8

- **119:5 Oh.** The psalmist does not think of himself as an example of perfect obedience.
- **119:7 When I learn.** Worship and obedience requires knowledge of the Scripture.
- **119:8 I will.** The psalmist decides to follow God's law.
- **119:9–16** The psalmist seeks to keep his way pure by meditating on God's law.
- **119:9 according to Your word.** God does not hide from us what pleases Him. He states it clearly in His Word, the Bible.
- **119:10 I have sought . . . let me not wander.** There is a deep connection between striving after moral perfection and the realization that the quest is itself impossible without God's help.
- **119:15 I will meditate.** God's law requires more than surface reading or rote memorization; it demands careful reflection.
- **119:17 That I may live.** The psalmist's life depends on grace.
- **119:18 Open my eyes.** We need God's grace to illumine His word. He must guide our understanding.
- **119:19 stranger.** See Heb. 11:13. His true home is not on the earth, but with God.
- **119:22 Remove from me.** The psalm goes beyond praise of the law to petition for God's grace in distress.
- **119:23 Princes . . . speak against me.** Perhaps indicating the royal status of the psalmist.

ד DALETH

25 [m]My soul clings to the dust;
[n]Revive me according to Your word.
26 I have declared my ways, and You answered me;
[o]Teach me Your statutes.
27 Make me understand the way of Your precepts;
So [p]shall I meditate on Your wonderful works.
28 [q]My soul [4]melts from [5]heaviness;
Strengthen me according to Your word.
29 Remove from me the way of lying,
And grant me Your law graciously.
30 I have chosen the way of truth;
Your judgments I have laid *before me.*
31 I cling to Your testimonies;
O LORD, do not put me to shame!
32 I will run the course of Your commandments,
For You shall [r]enlarge my heart.

ה HE

33 [s]Teach me, O LORD, the way of Your statutes,
And I shall keep it *to* the end.
34 [t]Give me understanding, and I shall keep Your law;
Indeed, I shall observe it with *my* whole heart.
35 Make me walk in the path of Your commandments,
For I delight in it.
36 [6]Incline my heart to Your testimonies,
And not to [u]covetousness.
37 [v]Turn[7] away my eyes from [w]looking at worthless things,
And revive me in [8]Your way.
38 [x]Establish Your word to Your servant,
Who *is devoted* to fearing You.
39 Turn away my reproach which I dread,
For Your judgments *are* good.
40 Behold, I long for Your precepts;
Revive me in Your righteousness.

ו WAW

41 Let Your mercies come also to me, O LORD—
Your salvation according to Your word.
42 So shall I have an answer for him who [9]reproaches me,
For I trust in Your word.
43 And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth,
For I have hoped in Your ordinances.
44 So shall I keep Your law continually,
Forever and ever.
45 And I will walk [1]at [y]liberty,
For I seek Your precepts.
46 [z]I will speak of Your testimonies also before kings,
And will not be ashamed.

25 [m]Ps. 44:25 [n]Ps. 143:11
26 [o]Ps. 25:4; 27:11; 86:11
27 [p]Ps. 145:5, 6
28 [q]Ps. 107:26 [4]Lit. *drops* [5]*grief*
32 [r]1 Kin. 4:29; Is. 60:5; 2 Cor. 6:11, 13
33 [s][Matt. 10:22; Rev. 2:26]
34 [t][Prov. 2:6; James 1:5]
36 [u]Ezek. 33:31; [Mark 7:20–23]; Luke 12:15; [Heb. 13:5] [6]Cause me to long for
37 [v]Is. 33:15 [w]Prov. 23:5 [7]Lit. *Cause my eyes to pass away from* [8]So with MT, LXX, Vg.; Tg. *Your words*
38 [x]2 Sam. 7:25
42 [9]*taunts*
45 [y]Prov. 4:12 [1]Lit. *in a wide place*
46 [z]Ps. 138:1; Matt. 10:18; Acts 26

■ **119:29 Remove from me the way of lying.** The psalmist sees that, if left to himself, he would be walking in ways contrary to God's law.

■ **119:33–40** The psalmist beseeches the Lord for instruction in His law.

■ **119:34 with my whole heart.** He resolves with his whole mind, strength, and will. The psalmist expresses his deep devotion to the Lord. He loves the Lord and wants to be obedient. Jesus told His disciples, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15). See theological note "Understanding the Word of God."

■ **119:36 Incline my heart.** He realizes that his love for the Lord has its source in God Himself.

■ **119:37 Turn away my eyes from . . . worthless things.** Matching his positive desire to move closer to God's law, there is a corresponding negative desire to turn away from worthless things, particularly idols. For the same word, see note on Ps. 31:6.

■ **119:38 Your word.** Likely referring to God's covenant promise of blessing.

■ **119:41 Your mercies.** God's love or devotion to those in covenant with Him.

■ **119:45 at liberty.** By keeping God's laws the writer will be liberated from slavery to sin.

47 And I will delight myself in Your commandments,
Which I love.
48 My hands also I will lift up to Your commandments,
Which I love,
And I will meditate on Your statutes.

ז ZAYIN

49 Remember the word to Your servant,
Upon which You have caused me to hope.

Understanding the Word of God

All Christians have a right and duty, not only to learn from the church's heritage of faith, but also to interpret Scripture for themselves. The church of Rome at one time forbid this, alleging that individuals easily misinterpret the Scriptures. The *Westminster Confession of Faith* agrees that "All things in Scripture are not alike in plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all," but it also states clearly the authority of individual believers to read the Bible for themselves: "not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding" of the Scriptures. The "ordinary means" include principles of interpretation such as the following.

The Bible is inspired by God, and its words continue to be God's words, but the Bible is also the product of human writers. Realizing this is essential. No allegorizing or other fanciful method that ignores the original writer's expressed meaning can be appropriate.

Each book was written, not in code, but in a way that could be understood by the readers to whom it was addressed. This is true even of such books as Daniel, Zechariah, and Revelation, that primarily use symbolism; the main thrust is always clear, even if details are clouded. So when we understand the words used, the historical background, and the cultural conventions of the writer and his readers, we are well on the way to grasping the thoughts that are being conveyed. But a spiritual understanding—that is, discerning the reality of God, His ways with His people, His present will, and one's own relationship to Him—will not reach us from the text until the veil is removed from our hearts and we are able to share the writer's own passion for God (2 Cor. 3:16; 1 Cor. 2:14). We should pray that God's Spirit would generate this passion in us and show us God in the text. See Ps. 119:18, 19, 26, 27, 33, 34, 73, 125, 144, 169; Eph. 1:17–19; 3:16–19.

Each book took its form at a particular time in the process of God's revelation of grace. That place must be considered when interpreting the text. The psalms, for instance, model the godly heart in every age, but they express its prayers and praises in terms of the realities of the life of grace before the coming of Christ—such as the ceremonial law, the sacrificial system, and the special role of Israel as a theocratic kingdom.

Each book proceeded from the same divine mind, so the teaching of the Bible's sixty-six books is complementary and consistent. If we cannot yet see this, the fault is in us, not in Scripture. Scripture nowhere contradicts Scripture; rather, one passage explains another. This sound principle of interpreting Scripture by Scripture is sometimes called the analogy of Scripture, or the analogy of faith.

Each book exhibits unchanging truth about God, the world, and His will for people, applied to and illustrated by particular situations. The final stage in biblical interpretation is to reapply these truths to our own life-situations; this is the way to discern what God in Scripture is saying to us at this moment. Examples of such reapplication are Josiah's realization of God's wrath at Judah's failure to observe His law (2 Kin. 22:8–13), Jesus' reasoning from Gen. 2:24 (Matt. 19:4–6), and Paul's use of Gen. 15:6 and Ps. 32:1, 2 to show the reality of present righteousness by faith (Rom. 4:1–8).

No meaning may be read into or imposed on Scripture that cannot with certainty be read out of Scripture—shown, that is, to be unambiguously expressed by one or more of the human writers.

Careful and prayerful observance of these rules is a mark of every Christian who is "rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). □

■ **119:49 Remember.** See Ps. 44:1.

50 This *is* my [a]comfort in my affliction,
For Your word has given me life.
51 The proud have me in great derision,
Yet I do not turn aside from Your law.
52 I remembered Your judgments of old, O LORD,
And have comforted myself.
53 [b]Indignation has taken hold of me
Because of the wicked, who forsake Your law.
54 Your statutes have been my songs
In the house of my pilgrimage.
55 [c]I remember Your name in the night, O LORD,
And I keep Your law.
56 This has become mine,
Because I kept Your precepts.

ח HETH

57 [d]*You are* my portion, O LORD;
I have said that I would keep Your words.
58 I entreated Your favor with *my* whole heart;
Be merciful to me according to Your word.
59 I [e]thought about my ways,
And turned my feet to Your testimonies.
60 I made haste, and did not delay
To keep Your commandments.
61 The cords of the wicked have bound me,
But I have not forgotten Your law.
62 [f]At midnight I will rise to give thanks to You,
Because of Your righteous judgments.
63 I *am* a companion of all who fear You,
And of those who keep Your precepts.
64 [g]The earth, O LORD, is full of Your mercy;
Teach me Your statutes.

ט TETH

65 You have dealt well with Your servant,
O LORD, according to Your word.
66 Teach me good judgment and [h]knowledge,
For I believe Your commandments.
67 Before I was [i]afflicted I went astray,
But now I keep Your word.
68 You *are* [j]good, and do good;
Teach me Your statutes.
69 The proud have [k]forged[2] a lie against me,
But I will keep Your precepts with *my* whole heart.
70 [l]Their heart is [3]as fat as grease,
But I delight in Your law.
71 *It is* good for me that I have been afflicted,
That I may learn Your statutes.
72 [m]The law of Your mouth *is* better to me
Than thousands of *coins of* gold and silver. •

50 [a]Job 6:10; [Rom. 15:4]
53 [b]Ex. 32:19; Ezra 9:3; Neh. 13:25
55 [c]Ps. 63:6
57 [d]Num. 18:20; Ps. 16:5; Jer. 10:16; Lam. 3:24
59 [e]Mark 14:72; Luke 15:17
62 [f]Acts 16:25
64 [g]Ps. 33:5
66 [h]Phil. 1:9
67 [i]Prov. 3:11; Jer. 31:18, 19; [Heb. 12:5–11]
68 [j]Ps. 106:1; 107:1; [Matt. 19:17]
69 [k]Job 13:4; Ps. 109:2 [2]Lit. *smeared me with a lie*
70 [l]Deut. 32:15; Job 15:27; Ps. 17:10; Is. 6:10; Jer. 5:28; Acts 28:27 [3]Insensible
72 [m]Ps. 19:10; Prov. 8:10, 11, 19

■ **119:52 Your judgments of old.** Given through Moses and contained in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy.

■ **119:54 Your statutes . . . my songs.** The law was not simply a matter of obedience for the psalmist, but of worship.

■ **119:55 name.** See Ps. 8:1.

■ **119:57 my portion.** The poet's portion is not an inheritance in the land, but the Lord Himself (Num. 18:20).

■ **119:63 a companion.** Obedience to the Lord takes place in community with other believers who also serve the Lord.

who fear You. See Ps. 34:7.

■ **119:65–72** The psalmist found that affliction brought him back from wandering away from God.

■ **119:67 I went astray.** God uses distress and suffering in our lives to bring us back to Him (Ps. 31; Heb. 12:1–13).

■ **119:70 fat as grease.** Cf. 1 Tim. 4:2.

■ **119:71 It is good for me . . . been afflicted.** In retrospect the writer is thankful for his suffering because it has led to a new intimacy with the Lord.

73 [n]Job 10:8; 31:15; [Ps. 139:15, 16]
74 [o]Ps. 34:2
75 [p][Heb. 12:10] [q]Lit. *righteous*
78 [q]Ps. 25:3
81 [r]Ps. 73:26; 84:2
83 [s]Job 30:30
84 [t]Ps. 39:4 [u]Rev. 6:10
85 [v]Ps. 35:7; Prov. 16:27; Jer. 18:22
86 [w]Ps. 35:19
89 [x]Ps. 89:2; Is. 40:8; Matt. 24:35; [1 Pet. 1:25] [s]Lit. *stands firm*
90 [s]Lit. *stands*
91 [y]Jer. 33:25

י YOD

73 [n]Your hands have made me and fashioned me;
Give me understanding, that I may learn Your commandments.
74 [o]Those who fear You will be glad when they see me,
Because I have hoped in Your word.
75 I know, O LORD, [p]that Your judgments *are* [q]right,
And *that* in faithfulness You have afflicted me.
76 Let, I pray, Your merciful kindness be for my comfort,
According to Your word to Your servant.
77 Let Your tender mercies come to me, that I may live;
For Your law *is* my delight.
78 Let the proud [q]be ashamed,
For they treated me wrongfully with falsehood;
But I will meditate on Your precepts.
79 Let those who fear You turn to me,
Those who know Your testimonies.
80 Let my heart be blameless regarding Your statutes,
That I may not be ashamed.

כ KAPH

81 [r]My soul faints for Your salvation,
But I hope in Your word.
82 My eyes fail *from searching* Your word,
Saying, "When will You comfort me?"
83 For [s]I have become like a wineskin in smoke,
Yet I do not forget Your statutes.
84 [t]How many *are* the days of Your servant?
[u]When will You execute judgment on those who persecute me?
85 [v]The proud have dug pits for me,
Which *is* not according to Your law.
86 All Your commandments *are* faithful;
They persecute me [w]wrongfully;
Help me!
87 They almost made an end of me on earth,
But I did not forsake Your precepts.
88 Revive me according to Your lovingkindness,
So that I may keep the testimony of Your mouth.

ל LAMED

89 [x]Forever, O LORD,
Your word [s]is settled in heaven.
90 Your faithfulness *endures* to all generations;
You established the earth, and it [s]abides.
91 They continue this day according to [y]Your ordinances,
For all *are* Your servants.
92 Unless Your law *had been* my delight,
I would then have perished in my affliction.
93 I will never forget Your precepts,
For by them You have given me life.

■ **119:74 when they see me.** As others who share the psalmist's deep commitment to the Lord see his happiness, they will be encouraged.

■ **119:75 You have afflicted me.** See vv. 67 and 71.

■ **119:82 My eyes fail.** Because he has been looking so long in expectation.

■ **119:83 a wineskin in smoke.** A striking metaphor, unparalleled elsewhere. The smoke damages the wineskin; this is comparable to the harm the writer has suffered at the hand of his enemies.

■ **119:84 When will You execute judgment.** The poet expects God to come to his aid and punish those who persecute him unjustly. God's seeming delay is a trial for him.

■ **119:86 wrongfully.** See Ps. 38:19.

■ **119:87 But I did not forsake Your precepts.** The psalmist would not allow his obedience to depend on his situation.

■ **119:89 Forever.** As God is eternal, so is His word. It is forever valid. It speaks to all people and for all time.

■ **119:93 forget.** To forget something, in the psalms, implies disobedience.

94 I *am* Yours, save me;
For I have sought Your precepts.
95 The wicked wait for me to destroy me,
But I will [7]consider Your testimonies.
96 [z]I have seen the consummation of all perfection,
But Your commandment *is* exceedingly broad.

מ MEM

97 Oh, how I love Your law!
[a]It *is* my meditation all the day.
98 You, through Your commandments, make me [b]wiser than my enemies;
For they *are* ever with me.
99 I have more understanding than all my teachers,
[c]For Your testimonies *are* my meditation.
100 [d]I understand more than the [8]ancients,
Because I keep Your precepts.
101 I have restrained my feet from every evil way,
That I may keep Your word.
102 I have not departed from Your judgments,
For You Yourself have taught me.
103 [e]How sweet are Your words to my taste,
Sweeter than honey to my mouth!
104 Through Your precepts I get understanding;
Therefore I hate every false way.

נ NUN

105 [f]Your word *is* a lamp to my feet
And a light to my path.
106 [g]I have sworn and confirmed
That I will keep Your righteous judgments.
107 I am afflicted very much;
Revive me, O LORD, according to Your word.
108 Accept, I pray, [h]the freewill offerings of my mouth, O LORD,
And teach me Your judgments.
109 [i]My life *is* continually [9]in my hand,
Yet I do not forget Your law.
110 [j]The wicked have laid a snare for me,
Yet I have not strayed from Your precepts.
111 [k]Your testimonies I have taken as a [l]heritage forever,
For they *are* the rejoicing of my heart.
112 I have inclined my heart to perform Your statutes
Forever, to the very end.

ס SAMEK

113 I hate the [2]double-minded,
But I love Your law.
114 [l]You *are* my hiding place and my shield;
I hope in Your word.

95 [7]*give attention to*
96 [z]Matt. 5:18
97 [a]Ps. 1:2
98 [b]Deut. 4:6
99 [c][2 Tim. 3:15]
100 [d][Job 32:7–9] [8]*aged*
103 [e]Ps. 19:10; Prov. 8:11
105 [f]Prov. 6:23
106 [g]Neh. 10:29
108 [h]Hos. 14:2; Heb. 13:15
109 [i]Judg. 12:3; Job 13:14 [9]*In danger*
110 [j]Ps. 140:5
111 [k]Deut. 33:4 [l]*inheritance*
113 [2]Lit. *divided* in heart or mind
114 [l][Ps. 32:7]

■ **119:97 I love Your law.** The psalmist loves the law because it comes from his God and Savior. See "The Law of God" at Ex. 20:1.

■ **119:98 wiser than my enemies.** His enemies rebel against God and reject the law, refusing the insight that God their Creator can give them.

■ **119:99 more understanding than all my teachers.** The psalmist does not mean this as a boast but as an emphatic expression of his devotion to God's law.

■ **119:102 You Yourself have taught me.** The psalmist does not claim to study with superior intelligence, or even superior determination; he attributes everything to God.

■ **119:105 a lamp to my feet.** God's revelation provides the insight to guide His servant. He will not trip in the darkness.

■ **119:109 My life is continually in my hand.** The psalmist's obedience is not risk-free, for it exposes him to the wiles of his enemies. He could wish to be free of the danger, but is more concerned to live a godly life in spite of it.

■ **119:113 double-minded.** The poet is of a single mind; he loves God and His law. Consequently, he is stable, unlike the double-minded man (James 1:8).

115 [m]Depart from me, you evildoers,
For I will keep the commandments of my God!
116 Uphold me according to Your word, that I may live;
And do not let me [n]be ashamed of my hope.
117 [3]Hold me up, and I shall be safe,
And I shall observe Your statutes continually.
118 You reject all those who stray from Your statutes,
For their deceit *is* falsehood.
119 You [4]put away all the wicked of the earth [o]*like* [5]dross;
Therefore I love Your testimonies.
120 [p]My flesh trembles for fear of You,
And I am afraid of Your judgments.

ע AYIN

121 I have done justice and righteousness;
Do not leave me to my oppressors.
122 Be [q]surety[6] for Your servant for good;
Do not let the proud oppress me.
123 My eyes fail *from seeking* Your salvation
And Your righteous word.
124 Deal with Your servant according to Your mercy,
And teach me Your statutes.
125 [r]I *am* Your servant;
Give me understanding,
That I may know Your testimonies.
126 *It is* time for *You* to act, O LORD,
For they have [7]regarded Your law as void.
127 [s]Therefore I love Your commandments
More than gold, yes, than fine gold!
128 Therefore all *Your* precepts *concerning* all *things*
I consider *to be* right;
I hate every false way.

פ PE

129 Your testimonies are wonderful;
Therefore my soul keeps them.
130 The entrance of Your words gives light;
[t]It gives understanding to the [u]simple.
131 I opened my mouth and [v]panted,
For I longed for Your commandments.
132 [w]Look upon me and be merciful to me,
[x]As Your custom *is* toward those who love Your name.
133 [y]Direct my steps by Your word,
And [z]let no iniquity have dominion over me.
134 [a]Redeem me from the oppression of man,
That I may keep Your precepts.

115 [m]Ps. 6:8; Matt. 7:23
116 [n]Ps. 25:2; [Rom. 5:5; 9:33; 10:11; Phil. 1:20]
117 [3]*Uphold me*
119 [o]Is. 1:22, 25; Ezek. 22:18, 19 [4]*destroy,* lit. *cause to cease* [5]*slag* or *refuse*
120 [p]Job 4:14; Hab. 3:16
122 [q]Job 17:3; Heb. 7:22 [6]*guaranty*
125 [r]Ps. 116:16
126 [7]*broken Your law*
127 [s]Ps. 19:10
130 [t]Prov. 6:23 [u][Ps. 19:7]; Prov. 1:4
131 [v]Ps. 42:1
132 [w]Ps. 106:4 [x]Ps. 51:1; [2 Thess. 1:6]
133 [y]Ps. 17:5 [z][Ps. 19:13; Rom. 6:12]
134 [a]Luke 1:74

■ **119:119 dross.** The waste that results when metal is smelted. When the wicked are similarly cast off, the righteous remain as refined silver. Cf. Prov. 25:3–5; Is. 1:22, 25.

■ **119:120** The fear of the Lord is vividly described.

■ **119:123 My eyes fail.** See v. 82.

■ **119:124 according to Your mercy.** The devotion that God shows toward His covenant people, demonstrating His mercy and compassion.

■ **119:126 It is time for You to act.** With the direct honesty characteristic of the psalmist, he tells God that He has delayed His judgment long enough. The wicked deserve the punishment they are about to receive.

■ **119:130 The entrance of Your words.** It is not clear whether the writer refers to the initial act of revelation, the process of interpreting God's word, or applying the law to his heart. Perhaps all three are intended as a single process bringing light, hope, and understanding to the dark soul.

■ **119:131 panted.** The concept is the same as Ps. 42:1, 2.

■ **119:132 toward those who love Your name.** Cf. Rom. 8:28.

■ **119:133 Direct my steps.** The psalmist wants the Lord to guide him through life. He realizes that one is within the will of God while seeking to obey His revealed word. But he also knows that obedience is impossible unless God supplies the grace to do so.

135 [b]Make Your face shine upon Your servant,
And teach me Your statutes.
136 [c]Rivers of water run down from my eyes,
Because *men* do not keep Your law.

צ TSADDE

137 [d]Righteous *are* You, O LORD,
And upright *are* Your judgments.
138 [e]Your testimonies, *which* You have commanded,
Are righteous and very faithful.
139 [f]My zeal has [g]consumed me,
Because my enemies have forgotten Your words.
140 [g]Your word *is* very [g]pure;
Therefore Your servant loves it.
141 I *am* small and despised,
Yet I do not forget Your precepts.
142 Your righteousness *is* an everlasting righteousness,
And Your law *is* [h]truth.
143 Trouble and anguish have [i]overtaken me,
Yet Your commandments *are* my delights.
144 The righteousness of Your testimonies *is* everlasting;
Give me understanding, and I shall live.

ק QOPH

145 I cry out with *my* whole heart;
Hear me, O LORD!
I will keep Your statutes.
146 I cry out to You;
Save me, and I will keep Your testimonies.
147 [i]I rise before the dawning of the morning,
And cry for help;
I hope in Your word.
148 [j]My eyes are awake through the *night* watches,
That I may meditate on Your word.
149 Hear my voice according to Your lovingkindness;
O LORD, revive me according to Your justice.
150 They draw near who follow after wickedness;
They are far from Your law.
151 You *are* [k]near, O LORD,
And all Your commandments *are* truth.
152 Concerning Your testimonies,
I have known of old that You have founded them [l]forever.

ר RESH

153 [m]Consider my affliction and deliver me,
For I do not forget Your law.
154 [n]Plead my cause and redeem me;
Revive me according to Your word.

135 [b]Num. 6:25; Ps. 4:6

136 [c]Jer. 9:1, 18; 14:17; Lam. 3:48; Ezek. 9:4

137 [d]Ezra 9:15; Neh. 9:33; Jer. 12:1; Lam. 1:18; Dan. 9:7, 14

138 [e][Ps. 19:7–9]

139 [f]Ps. 69:9; John 2:17 [g]*put an end to*

140 [g]Ps. 12:6 [g]Lit. *refined* or *tried*

142 [h][Ps. 19:9; John 17:17]

143 [i]Lit. *found*

147 [i]Ps. 5:3

148 [j]Ps. 63:1, 6

151 [k][Ps. 145:18]; Is. 50:8

152 [l]Luke 21:33

153 [m]Lam. 5:1

154 [n]1 Sam. 24:15; Mic. 7:9

■ **119:135 Make Your face shine upon Your servant.** The psalmist asks for God to come and be with him. He wants to live in the consciousness of God's favor. Compare the priestly blessing in Num. 6:22–27.

■ **119:137 Righteous are You.** God acts according to His nature; there is nothing arbitrary or inconsistent about Him.

■ **119:145 with my whole heart.** The psalmist is a model of fervent and honest prayer to God.

■ **119:147 I rise before the dawning.** The poet's first thought as he awakens is the Lord. His prayer is frequent as well as fervent.

■ **119:149 according to Your lovingkindness . . . according to Your justice.** God's love and devotion toward His people is not incompatible with His law.

■ **119:151 You are near, O LORD.** God's covenantal presence nullifies the negative effects of the presence of the enemy (v. 150).

■ **119:153 For I do not forget Your law.** The psalmist expects that God will bless him because he is obedient. Such an attitude could be presumptuous, a sin the Book of Job guards against, but it could also arise from faith.

■ **119:154 Plead my cause.** This phrase comes from the courtroom. The psalmist asks the Lord to intercede for him before his enemies.

155 Salvation *is* far from the wicked,
For they do not seek Your statutes.
156 [z]Great *are* Your tender mercies, O LORD;
Revive me according to Your judgments.
157 Many *are* my persecutors and my enemies,
Yet I do not [o]turn from Your testimonies.
158 I see the treacherous, and [p]am disgusted,
Because they do not keep Your word.
159 Consider how I love Your precepts;
Revive me, O LORD, according to Your lovingkindness.
160 The entirety of Your word *is* truth,
And every one of Your righteous judgments *endures* forever.

ש SHIN

161 [q]Princes persecute me without a cause,
But my heart stands in awe of Your word.
162 I rejoice at Your word
As one who finds great treasure.
163 I hate and abhor lying,
But I love Your law.
164 Seven times a day I praise You,
Because of Your righteous judgments.
165 [r]Great peace have those who love Your law,
And [3]nothing causes them to stumble.
166 [s]LORD, I hope for Your salvation,
And I do Your commandments.
167 My soul keeps Your testimonies,
And I love them exceedingly.
168 I keep Your precepts and Your testimonies,
[t]For all my ways *are* before You.

ת TAU

169 Let my cry come before You, O LORD;
[u]Give me understanding according to Your word.
170 Let my [4]supplication come before You;
Deliver me according to Your word.
171 [v]My lips shall utter praise,
For You teach me Your statutes.
172 My tongue shall speak of Your word,
For all Your commandments *are* righteousness.
173 Let Your hand become my help,
For [w]I have chosen Your precepts.
174 [x]I long for Your salvation, O LORD,
And [y]Your law *is* my delight.
175 Let my soul live, and it shall praise You;
And let Your judgments help me.
176 [z]I have gone astray like a lost sheep;
Seek Your servant,
For I do not forget Your commandments.

156 [2]Or *Many*
157 [o]Ps. 44:18
158 [p]Ezek. 9:4
161 [q]1 Sam. 24:11; 26:18
165 [r]Prov. 3:2; [Is. 26:3; 32:17] [3]Lit. *they have no stumbling block*
166 [s]Gen. 49:18
168 [t]Job 24:23; Prov. 5:21
169 [u]Ps. 119:27, 144
170 [4]Prayer of supplication
171 [v]Ps. 119:7
173 [w]Josh. 24:22; Luke 10:42
174 [x]Ps. 119:166 [y]Ps. 119:16, 24
176 [z][Is. 53:6]; Jer. 50:6; Matt. 18:12; Luke 15:4; [1 Pet. 2:25]

■ **119:156 Great are Your tender mercies.** See Lam. 3:23.

■ **119:161 Princes persecute me.** The opposition of princes indicate that the psalmist is probably a powerful person, perhaps the king of Israel.

without a cause. See Ps. 38:19.

■ **119:167 And I love them exceedingly.** Obedience is not an onerous task for the psalmist; he follows God's law because he wants to.

■ **119:169 Give me understanding.** This line sums up one of the major themes of the psalm: the desire for insight into God's will so that the writer may act in obedience.

■ **119:170 Deliver me.** Another major theme of the psalm is summed up: the psalmist's need for deliverance.

■ **119:175 Let my soul live.** Once again, an indication that the poet was in the midst of trouble at the time he composed his song.

■ **119:176 Seek Your servant.** The psalmist concludes by invoking God as his Shepherd (Ps. 23; John 10); he begs Him to bring him back into the flock.

PSALM 120

Plea for Relief from Bitter Foes

A Song of Ascents.

In [a]my distress I cried to the LORD,
And He heard me.
2 Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips
And from a deceitful tongue.

3 What shall be given to you,
Or what shall be done to you,
You false tongue?
4 Sharp arrows of the [1]warrior,
With coals of the broom tree!

5 Woe is me, that I dwell in [b]Meshech,
[c]*That* I dwell among the tents of Kedar!
6 My soul has dwelt too long
With one who hates peace.
7 I *am for* peace;
But when I speak, they *are* for war.

PSALM 121

God the Help of Those Who Seek Him

A Song of Ascents.

I [a]will lift up my eyes to the hills—
From whence comes my help?
2 [b]My help *comes* from the LORD,
Who made heaven and earth.

3 [c]He will not allow your foot to [1]be moved;
[d]He who keeps you will not slumber.
4 Behold, He who keeps Israel
Shall neither slumber nor sleep.

5 The LORD *is* your [2]keeper;
The LORD *is* [e]your shade [f]at your right hand.
6 [g]The sun shall not strike you by day,
Nor the moon by night.

PSALM 120

1 [a]Jon. 2:2
4 [1]*mighty one*
5 [b]Gen. 10:2; 1 Chr. 1:5; Ezek. 27:13; 38:2, 3; 39:1 [c]Gen. 25:13; Is. 21:16; 60:7; Jer. 2:10; 49:28; Ezek. 27:21

PSALM 121

1 [a][Jer. 3:23]
2 [b][Ps. 124:8]
3 [c]1 Sam. 2:9; Prov. 3:23, 26 [d][Ps. 127:1; Prov. 24:12]; Is. 27:3 [1]*slip*
5 [e]Is. 25:4 [f]Ps. 16:8 [2]*protector*
6 [g]Ps. 91:5; Is. 49:10; Jon. 4:8; Rev. 7:16

■ **Ps. 120** This psalm is the first of the fifteen "Songs of Ascents" (120—134). As tradition suggests, they were sung by pilgrims traveling to the mountain of God (Zion) to worship. Ps. 120 opens the group appropriately with the song of a faithful worshiper who is far away from the temple among pagan people (v. 5 note).

■ **120:2 lying lips . . . deceitful tongue.** The psalmist's enemies slander him unmercifully.

■ **120:3 to you.** The enemy whose lies trouble the psalmist.

■ **120:4 Sharp arrows of the warrior.** The liars will be repaid in kind.

■ **120:5 Meshech . . . Kedar.** The writer may be speaking figuratively, comparing the treatment he receives from God's people to what he might expect from barbarians. The literal places are far from Israel and also from each other. Meshech was in Asia Minor (Gen. 10:2; Ezek. 38:2) and Kedar was in Arabia (Is. 21:16; Ezek. 7:21).

■ **Ps. 121** The first verse suggests why this psalm was included among the "Songs of Ascents" (Ps. 120 note). The psalmist's vision is set firmly on the final goal, Jerusalem, and Zion, the hill of God. The pronoun shift from "I" to "you" could represent an internal dialogue (similar to Ps. 42; 43 or Ps. 103), or more likely the words of the pilgrim who begins the psalm followed by the assurance spoken by a priest or other person.

■ **121:1 to the hills.** Jerusalem was in the hill country; the temple was also built on a hill—Zion.

■ **121:3 He will not allow your foot to be moved.** A particularly apt image of God's careful protection; Israel is notorious for its rocky and slippery terrain.

■ **121:4 Shall neither slumber nor sleep.** God never sleeps, and there is no danger that the psalmist will be forgotten. Elijah ridiculed the prophets of Baal by sarcastically suggesting their god was asleep when they needed him (1 Kin. 18:27).

■ **121:5 your shade.** As a person's shadow is always with him, so is God with His people. The metaphor comes from ancient treaty language and has covenantal overtones.

7 [h]Ps. 41:2 [3]*keep*
8 [i]Deut. 28:6; [Prov. 2:8; 3:6] [4]*keep*

PSALM 122

1 [a][Is. 2:3; Mic. 4:2]; Zech. 8:21
3 [b]2 Sam. 5:9
4 [c]Ex. 23:17; Deut. 16:16 [d]Ex. 16:34 [1]Or *As a testimony to*
5 [e]Deut. 17:8; 2 Chr. 19:8
6 [f]Ps. 51:18
9 [g]Neh. 2:10; Esth. 10:3

PSALM 123

1 [a]Ps. 121:1; 141:8 [b]Ps. 2:4; 11:4; 115:3

7 The LORD shall [3]preserve you from all evil;
He shall [h]preserve your soul.
8 The LORD shall [i]preserve[4] your going out and your coming in
From this time forth, and even forevermore.

PSALM 122

The Joy of Going to the House of the LORD

A Song of Ascents. Of David.

I was glad when they said to me,
[a]"Let us go into the house of the LORD."
2 Our feet have been standing
Within your gates, O Jerusalem!

3 Jerusalem is built
As a city that is [b]compact together,
4 [c]Where the tribes go up,
The tribes of the LORD,
[1]To [d]the Testimony of Israel,
To give thanks to the name of the LORD.
5 [e]For thrones are set there for judgment,
The thrones of the house of David.

6 [f]Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
"May they prosper who love you.
7 Peace be within your walls,
Prosperity within your palaces."
8 For the sake of my brethren and companions,
I will now say, "Peace *be* within you."
9 Because of the house of the LORD our God
I will [g]seek your good.

PSALM 123

Prayer for Relief from Contempt

A Song of Ascents.

Unto You [a]I lift up my eyes,
O You [b]who dwell in the heavens.
2 Behold, as the eyes of servants *look* to the hand of their masters,

■ **Ps. 122** This "Song of Ascents" records the decision of the poet to accompany a group on a visit to Jerusalem. The psalm describes the glories of Jerusalem, where God is worshiped and where the dynasty of David rules (2 Sam. 7), asking God to protect the city and its inhabitants.

This psalm is similar to the "Zion" songs which extol the city of Jerusalem (46; 48; 76). Jerusalem was prized above other cities because God chose to reveal Himself there to His people. Since Christ has come, God's people can meet Him in Christ anywhere on the face of the earth (John 4:19–23). Jerusalem represents all believers (Gal. 4:26), and it typifies the coming New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:9–27).

■ **122:1 I.** David is the speaker, although the circumstances of composition are not revealed. Later the psalm would be appropriate for pilgrims going to Jerusalem, as for one of the major festivals (Ex. 23:14–19).

■ **122:4 To the Testimony of Israel.** Perhaps a reference to the law of centralization of worship (Deut. 12), or to laws connected with the annual festivals.

■ **122:5 thrones . . . for judgment.** The king was the paramount judge in the land, and Jerusalem was the political as well as religious capital of Israel.

■ **122:6 peace.** The well-known Hebrew term *shalom,* which denotes wholeness and health. The prayer is for absence of war and for prosperity and growth.

■ **122:8 For the sake of my brethren and companions.** The psalm promotes a sense of community among the people of God. Ultimately, Jerusalem is not bricks and mortar, but people in relationship with one another and with God.

■ **122:9 the house of the LORD our God.** The temple building stands for the presence of God in the midst of the people of God.

■ **Ps. 123** The last two verses (vv. 3, 4) show that this prayer arises from a situation of distress and persecution.

■ **123:1 I lift up my eyes.** See Ps. 121:1.

who dwell in the heavens. The ark and the cherubim in the Most Holy Place were in a representative sense God's earthly throne, but the psalmist, like Solomon, knew that "heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You" (1 Kin. 8:27).

■ **123:2 So our eyes look to the LORD our God.** A servant watches the employer's hand for a variety of reasons: to receive orders, to hear

As the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress,
[c]So our eyes *look* to the LORD our God,
Until He has mercy on us.

3 Have mercy on us, O LORD, have mercy on us!
For we are exceedingly filled with contempt.
4 Our soul is exceedingly filled
With the scorn of those who are at ease,
With the contempt of the proud.

PSALM 124

The LORD the Defense of His People

A Song of Ascents. Of David.

"If it had not been the LORD who was on our [a]side,"
[b]Let Israel now say—
2 "If it had not been the LORD who was on our side,
When men rose up against us,
3 Then they would have [c]swallowed us alive,
When their wrath was kindled against us;
4 Then the waters would have overwhelmed us,
The stream would have [1]gone over our soul;
5 Then the swollen waters
Would have [2]gone over our soul."

6 Blessed *be* the LORD,
Who has not given us *as* prey to their teeth.
7 [d]Our soul has escaped [e]as a bird from the snare of the [3]fowlers;
The snare is broken, and we have escaped.
8 [f]Our help *is* in the name of the LORD,
[g]Who made heaven and earth.

PSALM 125

The LORD the Strength of His People

A Song of Ascents.

Those who trust in the LORD
Are like Mount Zion,
Which cannot be moved, *but* abides forever.
2 As the mountains surround Jerusalem,
So the LORD surrounds His people
From this time forth and forever.

2 [c]Ps. 25:15

PSALM 124

1 [a]Ps. 118:6; [Rom. 8:31] [b]Ps. 129:1
3 [c]Num. 16:30; Ps. 56:1, 2; 57:3; Prov. 1:12
4 [1]*swept over*
5 [2]*swept over*
7 [d]Ps. 91:3 [e]Prov. 6:5; Hos. 9:8 [3]Persons who catch birds in a trap or snare
8 [f][Ps. 121:2] [g]Gen. 1:1; Ps. 134:3

instruction, to receive salary or provisions. The verse teaches that God's people are utterly dependent upon Him for every aspect of their well-being.

■ **123:3 filled with contempt.** The strong wording has led some to date the psalm to the period following the Babylonian exile of the sixth century B.C.

■ **Ps. 124** In this community of thanksgiving the people praise the Lord for delivering them from a dangerous confrontation with their enemies. The psalm is included in the "Songs of Ascents" indicating its use during festal pilgrimages. The deliverance described would not necessarily be recent, but could be the exodus from Egypt. Today the psalm appeals to the Lord as the One who is able to protect His church from the attacks of principalities and powers in the spiritual realm (Eph. 6:10–20).

■ **124:1 who was on our side.** See 118:6 note.

Let Israel now say. These words would be spoken by a priest leading the congregation in corporate thanksgiving.

■ **124:3 they would have swallowed us alive.** The enemies would have killed them. See Prov. 1:12 note.

■ **124:4 the waters.** See 18:4, 15 and notes.

■ **124:6 to their teeth.** The enemy is compared to a lion (Ps. 34:10; 58:6) or a dog (Ps. 59:6, 14).

■ **124:8 Who made heaven and earth.** Israel has nothing to fear while God fights for them.

■ **Ps. 125** The sixth of the "Songs of Ascents" begins like a confident Zion hymn (cf. Ps. 46; 48; 76). From the temple on Mount Zion the Lord provides protection for His people.

■ **125:2 As the mountains surround Jerusalem.** The surrounding mountains were important in the defense of the city and picture God's protective presence (12:1; 2 Kin. 6:17).

PSALM 125

3 [a]Prov. 22:8; Is. 14:5

5 [b]Prov. 2:15; Is. 59:8 [c]Ps. 128:6; [Gal. 6:16]

PSALM 126

1 [a]Ps. 85:1; Jer. 29:14; Hos. 6:11; Joel 3:1 [b]Acts 12:9 [1]Those of the captivity

2 [c]Job 8:21 [2]*Gentiles*

5 [d]Is. 35:10; 51:11; 61:7; Jer. 31:9; [Gal. 6:9]

6 [e]Is. 61:3 [3]*to and fro* [4]Lit. *a bag of seed for sowing* [5]*with shouts of joy*

PSALM 127

1 [a][Ps. 121:3–5]

3 For [a]the scepter of wickedness shall not rest
On the land allotted to the righteous,
Lest the righteous reach out their hands to iniquity.

4 Do good, O LORD, to *those who are* good,
And to *those who are* upright in their hearts.

5 As for such as turn aside to their [b]crooked ways,
The LORD shall lead them away
With the workers of iniquity.

[c]Peace *be* upon Israel!

PSALM 126

A Joyful Return to Zion

A Song of Ascents.

When [a]the LORD brought back [1]the captivity of Zion,
[b]We were like those who dream.
2 Then [c]our mouth was filled with laughter,
And our tongue with singing.
Then they said among the [2]nations,
"The LORD has done great things for them."
3 The LORD has done great things for us,
And we are glad.

4 Bring back our captivity, O LORD,
As the streams in the South.

5 [d]Those who sow in tears
Shall reap in joy.
6 He who continually goes [3]forth weeping,
Bearing [4]seed for sowing,
Shall doubtless come again [5]with [e]rejoicing,
Bringing his sheaves *with him.*

PSALM 127

Laboring and Prospering with the LORD

A Song of Ascents. Of Solomon.

Unless the LORD builds the house,
They labor in vain who build it;
Unless [a]the LORD guards the city,

■ **125:3 the scepter of wickedness.** The scepter is a symbol of political and military rule, in this case pointing to the oppression of the people of God by a wicked, possibly foreign force.

reach out their hands. By way of imitation, or under the pressures of a corrupt government and society.

■ **125:4, 5** See 18:25, 26.

■ **126:1 When the LORD brought back the captivity of Zion.** The allusion is to the return from Babylonian exile in the sixth century B.C., when the captive people of Israel were permitted to return to their country (see books of Ezra, Nehemiah). Cyrus's decision to allow the return was not the mere result of political policy, but of God's intervention.

■ **126:4 Bring back our captivity.** Restoration from captivity meant more than a physical return to the land. God's covenantal presence was still needed.

As the streams in the South. The south of Israel is dry, and in a rainstorm the wadi (seasonal streambeds) become dangerous floods.

■ **126:5 Shall reap in joy.** God reverses the fortunes of His people. He overrules evil with good, suffering with blessing (Ps. 30:11, 12; John 16:20).

■ **Ps. 127** This wise prayer falls into two related parts. The first stanza (vv. 1, 2) expresses the belief that human effort is useless apart from God (paralleling the message of Ecclesiastes), whether for building a house, defending a city, or earning a living. The second stanza (vv. 3–5) focuses on another meaning of building, that of raising children. Children are a gift from God.

A father could be supported during his old age by strong, young sons. Children were a fulfillment of the promise to Abraham that the chosen people would become a great and numerous nation (Gen. 12:1–3). The ultimate focus of the Abrahamic promise of many descendants is on Jesus Christ. In the present day the psalm expresses the joy of Christian parents as they reflect on God's gift of children and His promise to them (Acts 2:39).

■ **127:1 builds the house.** The primary reference is to the actual building of a residence, but as a "Song of Ascents" written by Solomon, it is

The watchman stays awake in vain.
2 *It is* vain for you to rise up early,
To sit up late,
To [b]eat the bread of sorrows;
For so He gives His beloved sleep.

3 Behold, [c]children *are* a heritage from the LORD,
[d]The fruit of the womb *is* a [e]reward.
4 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior,
So *are* the children of one's youth.
5 [f]Happy *is* the man who has his quiver full of them;
[g]They shall not be ashamed,
But shall speak with their enemies in the gate.

PSALM 128

Blessings of Those Who Fear the LORD

A Song of Ascents.

Blessed [a]*is* every one who fears the LORD,
Who walks in His ways.

2 [b]When you eat the [f]labor of your hands,
You *shall be* happy, and *it shall be* [c]well with you.
3 Your wife *shall be* [d]like a fruitful vine
In the very heart of your house,
Your [e]children [f]like olive plants
All around your table.
4 Behold, thus shall the man be blessed
Who fears the LORD.

5 [g]The LORD bless you out of Zion,
And may you see the good of Jerusalem
All the days of your life.
6 Yes, may you [h]see your children's children.

[i]Peace *be* upon Israel!

PSALM 129

Song of Victory over Zion's Enemies

A Song of Ascents.

"Many a time they have [a]afflicted[f] me from [b]my youth,"
[c]Let Israel now say—

2 [b][Gen. 3:17, 19]
3 [c][Gen. 33:5; Josh. 24:3, 4; Ps. 113:9] [d]Deut. 7:13; 28:4; Is. 13:18 [e][Ps. 113:9]
5 [f]Ps. 128:2, 3 [g]Job 5:4; Prov. 27:11

PSALM 128

1 [a]Ps. 119:1
2 [b]Is. 3:10 [c]Deut. 4:40 [f]Fruit of the labor
3 [d]Ezek. 19:10 [e]Ps. 127:3–5 [f]Ps. 52:8; 144:12
5 [g]Ps. 134:3
6 [h]Gen. 48:11; 50:23; Job 42:16; Ps. 103:17; [Prov. 17:6] [i]Ps. 125:5

PSALM 129

1 [a][Jer. 1:19; 15:20]; Matt. 16:18; 2 Cor. 4:8, 9 [b]Ezek. 23:3; Hos. 2:15 [c]Ps. 124:1
[f]*persecuted*

natural to think specifically of the temple. Furthermore, in the light of the second half of the psalm, the house refers to the family as well as to a physical structure.

guards the city. A city is not secured by its defenses, but by the protection of the Lord. The psalm would remind pilgrims that Jerusalem was not a place of magical protection and security, but that all depended on the Lord.

■ **127:3 children.** Lit. "the fruit of the womb." The psalm concentrates on sons, who had the power to provide for their father in his old age, but the second part of this verse includes all children, male and female alike.

■ **127:5 in the gate.** Formal court proceedings were held in the vicinity of the city gates.

■ **128:1 fears the LORD.** See notes on Ps. 34:7; 36:1; 119:63.

walks in His ways. Those who obey God's will for their lives as manifested in His law.

■ **128:2 the labor of your hands.** One result of the Fall was that Adam would have to work hard to get food on the table (Gen. 3:17–19). The Preacher of Ecclesiastes was driven to despair because some people labored while others, less deserving, enjoyed the benefits of their labor (Eccl. 5:8—6:12; Is. 65:22). The psalmist envisions the righteous prospering from their own labor, a just situation.

■ **128:3 a fruitful vine.** The vine produced the grapes for wine, a source of joy to the Israelites (Ps. 104:15). The blessing that the fruitful wife brings includes children around the table.

olive plants. Olives and olive oil were valued staple commodities in the nation's life.

■ **128:5 out of Zion.** That is, from the temple (Ps. 2:6; 50:2).

■ **128:6 your children's children.** Long life and large families were a blessing in ancient Israel, particularly in the light of the Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 12:1–3).

Peace. See 122:6 note.

■ **Ps. 129** The purpose of this psalm is to curse Israel's enemies (vv.

6 [d]Ps. 37:2
7 [2]*armsful,* lit. *bosom*
8 [e]Ruth 2:4

PSALM 130

1 [a]Lam. 3:55
3 [b][Ps. 143:2] [c][Nah. 1:6; Mal. 3:2]; Rev. 6:17 [1]*take note of*
4 [d][Ex. 34:7; Neh. 9:17; Ps. 86:5; Is. 55:7; Dan. 9:9] [e][1 Kin. 8:39, 40; Jer. 33:8, 9]
5 [f][Ps. 27:14] [g]Ps. 119:81
6 [h]Ps. 119:147
7 [i]Ps. 131:3 [j][Ps. 86:5, 15; Is. 55:7]
8 [k][Ps. 103:3, 4]; Luke 1:68; Titus 2:14

2 "Many a time they have afflicted me from my youth;
Yet they have not prevailed against me.
3 The plowers plowed on my back;
They made their furrows long."
4 The LORD *is* righteous;
He has cut in pieces the cords of the wicked.

5 Let all those who hate Zion
Be put to shame and turned back.
6 Let them be as the [d]grass *on* the housetops,
Which withers before it grows up,
7 With which the reaper does not fill his hand,
Nor he who binds sheaves, his [2]arms.
8 Neither let those who pass by them say,
[e]"The blessing of the LORD *be* upon you;
We bless you in the name of the LORD!"

PSALM 130

Waiting for the Redemption of the LORD

A Song of Ascents.

Out [a]of the depths I have cried to You, O LORD;
2 Lord, hear my voice!
Let Your ears be attentive
To the voice of my supplications.

3 [b]If You, LORD, should [1]mark iniquities,
O Lord, who could [c]stand?
4 But *there is* [d]forgiveness with You,
That [e]You may be feared.

5 [f]I wait for the LORD, my soul waits,
And [g]in His word I do hope.
6 [h]My soul *waits* for the Lord
More than those who watch for the morning—
Yes, more than those who watch for the morning.

7 [i]O Israel, hope in the LORD;
For [j]with the LORD *there is* mercy,
And with Him *is* abundant redemption.
8 And [k]He shall redeem Israel
From all his iniquities.

5–8). The introduction (vv. 1–4) confidently asserts that the Lord has overturned evil plans against His people frequently in the past.

■ **129:1 afflicted me.** The history of Israel is often a history of suffering and oppression, beginning with slavery in Egypt and continuing through the Babylonian captivity.

from my youth. From Israel's beginning as a nation. The nation is personified, speaking of itself as "me" and "my."

■ **129:2 they have not prevailed against me.** Slavery in Egypt ended in the Exodus; the Babylonian exile ended with the return and restoration of Judah.

■ **129:3 plowed on my back.** The metaphor describes the horrors of Israel's past suffering.

■ **129:4 He has cut . . . the cords.** It was as if the wicked held Israel a prisoner bound by strong ropes, but their Savior set them free.

■ **129:5 Zion.** See notes on Ps. 2:6; 50:2; 128:5.

■ **129:6 grass on the housetops.** Grass is a common metaphor for the brevity of life (37:2; 90:5, 6; 92:7). On the housetop the shallow roots and hot sun make the grass more fragile still.

■ **Ps. 130** The psalm is a complaint of a special kind, since the author does not ask for the destruction of the enemy, but meekly turns to God for forgiveness of his own sins.

■ **130:1 Out of the depths.** The allusion is to the deep waters of sorrow that overwhelm the psalmist (18:14 and notes).

■ **130:3 who could stand.** The psalmist is well aware that there is no one without sin (Ps. 53:1–3; Rom. 3:9–20).

■ **130:4 there is forgiveness.** See 103:3; Ex. 34:7; Luke 7:49; Eph. 2:4, 5. The perception of God's mercy helps the heart to rightly cultivate the "fear of the Lord."

■ **130:6 those who watch for the morning.** The phrase expresses not only the intense yearning of the poet, but also the certainty of his hope.

■ **130:7 O Israel.** The writer now calls upon the whole nation to share his penitence and hope.

PSALM 131

Simple Trust in the LORD

A Song of Ascents. Of David.

LORD, my heart is not [1]haughty,
Nor my eyes [2]lofty.
[a]Neither do I [3]concern myself with great matters,
Nor with things too [4]profound for me.

2 Surely I have calmed and quieted my soul,
[b]Like a weaned child with his mother;
Like a weaned child *is* my soul within me.

3 [c]O Israel, hope in the LORD
From this time forth and forever.

PSALM 132

The Eternal Dwelling of God in Zion

A Song of Ascents.

LORD, remember David
And all his afflictions;
2 How he swore to the LORD,
[a]*And* vowed to [b]the Mighty One of Jacob:
3 "Surely I will not go into the chamber of my house,
Or go up to the comfort of my bed;
4 I will [c]not give sleep to my eyes
Or slumber to my eyelids,
5 Until I [d]find a place for the LORD,
A dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob."

6 Behold, we heard of it [e]in Ephrathah;
[f]We found it [g]in the fields of [1]the woods.
7 Let us go into His tabernacle;
[h]Let us worship at His footstool.
8 [i]Arise, O LORD, to Your resting place,
You and [j]the ark of Your strength.
9 Let Your priests [k]be clothed with righteousness,
And let Your saints shout for joy.

PSALM 131

1 [a]Jer. 45:5; [Rom. 12:16] [1]Proud [2]Arrogant [3]Lit. *walk in* [4]*difficult*

2 [b][Matt. 18:3; 1 Cor. 14:20]

3 [c][Ps. 130:7]

PSALM 132

2 [a]Ps. 65:1 [b]Gen. 49:24; Is. 49:26; 60:16

4 [c]Prov. 6:4

5 [d]1 Kin. 8:17; 1 Chr. 22:7; Ps. 26:8; Acts 7:46

6 [e]1 Sam. 17:12 [f]1 Sam. 7:1 [g]1 Chr. 13:5 [1]Heb. *Jaar,* lit. *Woods*

7 [h]Ps. 5:7; 99:5

8 [i]Num. 10:35 [j]Ps. 78:61

9 [k]Job 29:14

■ **Ps. 131** David expresses his deeply felt confidence in the Lord with this simple, clear, yet profound prayer. It voices the trust of a close, personal relationship with God.

■ **131:1 heart . . . eyes . . . great matters.** The first verse has a threefold denial of pride: in the heart, in the eyes, and in actions.

■ **131:2 Like a weaned child.** The psalmist draws a beautiful picture of the perfect contentment and confidence he enjoys in God. He is not like an unweaned child, easily disturbed by hunger.

with his mother. God is the Creator of both men and women. The care and protection that is the strength of the mother is a reflection of an aspect of God's own character (Prov. 8; Is. 66:12, 13).

■ **131:3 O Israel.** Like Ps. 130, this intensely personal prayer becomes corporate at the end.

■ **Ps. 132** Here is a lament asking God to save the king (vv. 1, 6–9). The psalm grounds the petition in God's covenant with David (vv. 10–12; cf. 2 Sam. 7 and Ps. 89) and in the choice of Zion as a revelation of God's earthly presence (see Ps. 46; 48; 76). Since vv. 8–10 are quoted in Solomon's prayer (2 Chr. 6:41, 42), it is likely that this is the time of its composition. After the period of the Hebrew monarchy, the psalm's reference to the Messiah became increasingly clear.

■ **132:1 his afflictions.** The historical books record the troubles David endured as he sought to serve the Lord faithfully. In his young manhood he had to run away from Saul; in his maturity he dealt with troubles in his realm, notably Absalom's revolt.

■ **132:2 vowed.** David's vow gives the temple and its worship the highest priority. Fulfillment of the vow is implied in vv. 6–9, when David ordered that the ark be removed from Kirjath Jearim and brought to Jerusalem (1 Chr. 13:6).

■ **132:3 I will not go into . . . my house.** Similar to his sentiment recorded in 2 Sam. 7, David felt uneasy that he had a comfortable dwelling place while the ark of the covenant, the primary symbol of God's presence, was still housed in the tabernacle.

■ **132:6–9** The ark comes to its proper place.

■ **132:6 Ephrathah.** Bethlehem.

the fields of the woods. Kirjath Jearim (1 Chr. 13:1–14).

■ **132:7 at His footstool.** A common way to refer to the ark of the covenant. The Lord revealed Himself as enthroned over the ark, resting His feet on it.

■ **132:8 Arise, O LORD.** See Ps. 3:7; 7:6.

10 For Your servant David's sake.
Do not turn away the face of Your [2]Anointed.

11 [l]The LORD has sworn *in* truth to David;
He will not turn from it:
"I will set upon your throne [m]the [3]fruit of your body.
12 If your sons will keep My covenant
And My testimony which I shall teach them,
Their sons also shall sit upon your throne forevermore."

13 [n]For the LORD has chosen Zion;
He has desired *it* for His [4]dwelling place:
14 "This[o] *is* My resting place forever;
Here I will dwell, for I have desired it.
15 [p]I will abundantly bless her [5]provision;
I will satisfy her poor with bread.
16 [q]I will also clothe her priests with salvation,
[r]And her saints shall shout aloud for joy.
17 [s]There I will make the [6]horn of David grow;
[t]I will prepare a lamp for My [7]Anointed.
18 His enemies I will [u]clothe with shame,
But upon Himself His crown shall flourish."

10 [2]Commissioned One, Heb. *Messiah*

11 [l][Ps. 89:3, 4, 33; 110:4] [m]2 Sam. 7:12; [1 Kin. 8:25; 2 Chr. 6:16; Luke 1:69; Acts 2:30] [3]*offspring*

13 [n][Ps. 48:1, 2] [4]*home*

14 [o]Ps. 68:16; Matt. 23:21

15 [p]Ps. 147:14 [5]*supply of food*

16 [q]2 Chr. 6:41; Ps. 132:9; 149:4 [r]1 Sam. 4:5; Hos. 11:12

17 [s]Ezek. 29:21; Luke 1:69 [t]1 Kin. 11:36; 15:4; 2 Kin. 8:19; 2 Chr. 21:7; Ps. 18:28 [6]Government [7]Heb. *Messiah*

18 [u]Job 8:22; Ps. 35:26

PSALM 133

Blessed Unity of the People of God

A Song of Ascents. Of David.

Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is*
For [a]brethren to dwell together in unity!

2 *It is* like the precious oil upon the head,
Running down on the beard,
The beard of Aaron,
Running down on the edge of his garments.
3 *It is* like the dew of [b]Hermon,
Descending upon the mountains of Zion;
For [c]there the LORD commanded the blessing—
Life forevermore.

PSALM 133

1 [a]Gen. 13:8; Heb. 13:1

3 [b]Deut. 4:48 [c]Lev. 25:21; Deut. 28:8; Ps. 42:8

■ **132:10 For Your servant David's sake.** The climax of the psalm is an appeal to the Lord to bless the descendant of David who is ruling on the throne. God had promised David that his descendants would rule after him (2 Sam. 7:11–16). Although the line of David was interrupted, God's promises were not thwarted. Jesus, David's greater Son, fulfills the Davidic covenant, and so it is no surprise that the psalm was understood messianically in the early church (cf. Luke 1:32; Acts 2:30).

■ **132:11 I will set upon your throne.** An allusion to 2 Sam. 7:11–16.

■ **132:12 If your sons will keep My covenant.** There was a conditional element in the Davidic covenant. His physical descendants would only rule successfully in Jerusalem if they were obedient to the covenant.

■ **132:13 Zion.** See notes on Ps. 2:6; 50:2.

■ **132:14 Here I will dwell.** God chose Zion and had the temple built as the earthly reflection of His heavenly residence. In this sense the temple is His palace from which He rules the world.

■ **132:15 I will . . . bless her.** As a generous king, the Lord will tend His subject people Israel with a special eye on the destitute (9:18 note; Deut. 28:1–14).

■ **132:17 horn.** A symbol for political strength (92:10 note).

a lamp. See 1 Kin. 11:36.

■ **Ps. 133** In this "Song of Ascents," dwelling "together in unity" refers to the relationship among believers as they worship the Lord at Mount Zion. Through Jesus Christ, the New Testament includes with them peoples from all over the world (John 10:16; Rom. 1:5; 15:16; Eph. 2:11–22).

■ **133:title Of David.** David's own sons did not live in unity, but fought each other bitterly—Amnon against Absalom, and Adonijah against Solomon.

■ **133:1 brethren.** This term could refer to family members, but here probably refers to tribal and national comrades as they unite in worship.

■ **133:2 like the precious oil.** The first simile refers to the anointing of Aaron, the high priest. The special and exclusive blend of oil (Ex. 30:22–33) was poured out extravagantly, running down his beard and onto his sacred robes. In the same way the unity of the people of God is a rich perfume making their worship pleasing to Him (Rom. 15:6).

■ **133:3 the dew of Hermon . . . mountains of Zion.** Hermon is a majestic mountain on the northern boundaries of Israel, known for a heavy precipitation of refreshing dew. The downward flow of the liquid signifies that God gives the blessing of unity—through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

there. In the place where unity is found.

PSALM 134

Praising the LORD in His House at Night

A Song of Ascents.

Behold, bless the LORD,
All *you* servants of the LORD,
Who by night stand in the house of the LORD!
2 [a]Lift up your hands *in* the sanctuary,
And bless the LORD.

3 The LORD who made heaven and earth
Bless you from Zion!

PSALM 135

Praise to God in Creation and Redemption

Praise the LORD!

Praise the name of the LORD;
[a]Praise *Him,* O you servants of the LORD!
2 [b]You who stand in the house of the LORD,
In [c]the courts of the house of our God,
3 Praise the LORD, for [d]the LORD *is* good;
Sing praises to His name, [e]for *it is* pleasant.
4 For [f]the LORD has chosen Jacob for Himself,
Israel for His [1]special treasure.

5 For I know that [g]the LORD *is* great,
And our Lord *is* above all gods.
6 [h]Whatever the LORD pleases He does,
In heaven and in earth,
In the seas and in all deep places.
7 [i]He causes the [2]vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth;
[j]He makes lightning for the rain;
He brings the wind out of His [k]treasuries.

8 [l]He [3]destroyed the firstborn of Egypt,
[4]Both of man and beast.
9 [m]He sent signs and wonders into the midst of you, O Egypt,
[n]Upon Pharaoh and all his servants.
10 [o]He defeated many nations
And slew mighty kings—

PSALM 134

2 [a][1 Tim. 2:8]

PSALM 135

1 [a]Ps. 113:1

2 [b]Luke 2:37 [c]Ps. 116:19

3 [d][Ps. 119:68] [e]Ps. 147:1

4 [f][Ex. 19:5]; Mal. 3:17; [Titus 2:14; 1 Pet. 2:9] [1]*precious possession*

5 [g]Ps. 95:3; 97:9

6 [h]Ps. 115:3

7 [i]Jer. 10:13 [j]Job 28:25, 26; 38:24–28 [k]Jer. 51:16 [2]Water vapor

8 [l]Ex. 12:12; Ps. 78:51 [3]Lit. *struck down* [4]Lit. *From man to beast*

9 [m]Ex. 7:10; Deut. 6:22; Ps. 78:43 [n]Ps. 136:15

10 [o]Num. 21:24; Ps. 136:17

■ **Ps. 134** This brief conclusion to the "Songs of Ascents" is composed of a call to worship (vv. 1, 2) followed by a blessing (v. 3). Many take the first two verses as an exhortation from the departing worshipers to the priests who tend the temple precincts at night. In response the priests bless the congregation. The psalm is a reminder that God's praise is a continual, not momentary, activity (cf. 1 Thess. 5:16, 17).

■ **134:1 servants of the LORD.** Priests or Levites who tend the temple at night.

house of the LORD. The temple. See note on Ps. 2:6.

■ **134:3 from Zion.** The mountain where God's temple was.

■ **135:1 Praise the LORD.** Hebrew *hallu yah.* The phrase opens and closes (v. 21) the psalm with praise.

name. See Ps. 8:1.

servants. The reference is probably to the priests and Levites who serve in the temple area. While some have said that "servants" is never used in such a restricted manner, the next two phrases seem to limit the reference to the temple personnel.

■ **135:4 chosen . . . for Himself.** The Lord chose Israel for Himself out of His unconditional love, not because of any merit in Israel (Deut. 7:7–11).

special treasure. God has lifted the lowly and made them great in His eyes.

■ **135:5 is above all gods.** The foreign nations could not imagine a god like the Lord (113:4 note).

■ **135:6 in the seas.** Special reference is made to the seas, since the seas culturally represented the forces of chaos in the ancient Near East (18:4, 15 and notes). But it is God Himself who controls the seas.

■ **135:7 lightning for the rain.** God's control over the storm may be a reply to Canaanites or Israelites who dared to attribute the power of the storm to Baal (Ps. 29 and notes).

■ **135:8 the firstborn of Egypt.** The culmination of the ten plagues God used to win freedom for His people (Ex. 11).

11 [p]Josh. 12:7–24
12 [q]Ps. 78:55; 136:21, 22
[5]*inheritance*
13 [r][Ex. 3:15; Ps. 102:12]
14 [s]Deut. 32:36
15 [t][Ps. 115:4–8]
19 [u][Ps. 115:9]
21 [v]Ps. 134:3

PSALM 136

1 [a]Ps. 106:1 [b]1 Chr. 16:34; Jer. 33:11
2 [c][Deut. 10:17]
4 [d]Deut. 6:22; Job 9:10; Ps. 72:18
5 [e]Gen. 1:1, 6–8; Prov. 3:19; Jer. 51:15
6 [f]Gen. 1:9; Ps. 24:2; [Is. 42:5]; Jer. 10:12

11 Sihon king of the Amorites,
Og king of Bashan,
And [p]all the kingdoms of Canaan—
12 [q]And gave their land *as* a [5]heritage,
A heritage to Israel His people.

13 [r]Your name, O LORD, *endures* forever,
Your fame, O LORD, throughout all generations.
14 [s]For the LORD will judge His people,
And He will have compassion on His servants.

15 [t]The idols of the nations *are* silver and gold,
The work of men's hands.
16 They have mouths, but they do not speak;
Eyes they have, but they do not see;
17 They have ears, but they do not hear;
Nor is there *any* breath in their mouths.
18 Those who make them are like them;
So is everyone who trusts in them.

19 [u]Bless the LORD, O house of Israel!
Bless the LORD, O house of Aaron!
20 Bless the LORD, O house of Levi!
You who fear the LORD, bless the LORD!
21 Blessed be the LORD [v]out of Zion,
Who dwells in Jerusalem!

Praise the LORD!

PSALM 136

Thanksgiving to God for His Enduring Mercy

Oh, [a]give thanks to the LORD, for *He is* good!
[b]For His mercy *endures* forever.
2 Oh, give thanks to [c]the God of gods!
For His mercy *endures* forever.
3 Oh, give thanks to the Lord of lords!
For His mercy *endures* forever:

4 To Him [d]who alone does great wonders,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
5 [e]To Him who by wisdom made the heavens,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
6 [f]To Him who laid out the earth above the waters,
For His mercy *endures* forever;

■ **135:11 Sihon . . . Og.** Kings opposing Israel during their time in the wilderness under Moses (Num. 21:21–35).

■ **135:15 The idols of the nations.** The surrounding nations worshiped their gods by statues of wood and precious metals. The psalmist, like Isaiah (Is. 44), ridicules this practice. It is a crude and absurd example of taking a piece of creation and exalting it above the Creator (Rom. 1:21–23).

■ **135:18 are like them.** The pagans made their gods in their own image. Those who serve such gods will become like them, powerless and contemptible. See Is. 44:9–20; Rom. 1:22–25.

■ **135:19 house of Aaron.** The priests. See Ps. 115:9–11 for a similar progression.

■ **Ps. 136** This psalm is an antiphonal liturgy with the memorable refrain, "His mercy endures forever." A priest or soloist would chant the first part of a verse, and the congregation would respond with the refrain. Performance of the liturgy must have been powerful and moving, as the priest added example to example of God's praise.

■ **136:1 His mercy endures forever.** God's mercy is His devotion to His people, to whom He is freely bound by the pledge of His own grace in His covenant. See theological note "God Is Love: Divine Goodness and Faithfulness."

■ **136:5 by wisdom.** God's wisdom is associated often with the creation (Prov. 8).

made the heavens. This section meditates on God's creation as described in Gen. 1.

7 [g]To Him who made great lights,
For His mercy *endures* forever—
8 [h]The sun to rule by day,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
9 The moon and stars to rule by night,
For His mercy *endures* forever.

10 [i]To Him who struck Egypt in their firstborn,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
11 [j]And brought out Israel from among them,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
12 [k]With a strong hand, and with [l]an outstretched arm,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
13 [l]To Him who divided the Red Sea in two,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
14 And made Israel pass through the midst of it,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
15 [m]But overthrew Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea,
For His mercy *endures* forever;

7 [g]Gen. 1:14–18
8 [h]Gen. 1:16
10 [i]Ex. 12:29; Ps. 135:8
11 [j]Ex. 12:51; 13:3, 16
12 [k]Ex. 6:6; Deut. 4:34; 5:15; 7:19; 9:29; 11:2; 2 Kin. 17:36; 2 Chr. 6:32; Jer. 32:17 [l]Mighty power
13 [l]Ex. 14:21
15 [m]Ex. 14:27

God Is Love: Divine Goodness and Faithfulness

The statement, "God is love," is often explained in terms of the revelation, given through the life and teaching of Christ, of the endless life of the triune God as one of mutual affection and honor (Matt. 3:17; 17:5; John 3:35; 14:31; 16:13, 14; 17:1–5, 22–26). With this idea is linked the recognition that God made angels and men to glorify Him in sharing the joyful give-and-take of this divine life according to their own creaturely mode. But when John says "God is love" (1 John 4:8), he means, as he goes on to explain, that God through Christ has saved sinners. "In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:9, 10).

As always in the New Testament, "we" or "us" as the objects and beneficiaries of redeeming love means "us who believe." "We" or "us" does not refer to every individual belonging to the human race. When "the world" is said to be loved and redeemed (John 3:16, 17; 2 Cor. 5:19; 1 John 2:2), that "world" is the great number of God's elect scattered worldwide, in every nation (cf. John 10:16; 11:52). The redeemed "world" is not each and every person who ever did or will exist.

Sovereign redemptive love is one facet of the quality Scripture calls God's goodness (Ps. 100:5; Mark 10:18), that is, the glorious kindness and generosity that touches all His creatures (Ps. 145:9, 15, 16) and that ought to lead all sinners to repentance (Rom. 2:4). Other aspects of this goodness are the pity that shows kindness to people in distress and rescues them from trouble (Ps. 107, 136), and the patience that does not cut off God's kindness from people who continue in sin (Ex. 34:6; Ps. 78:38; Jon. 3:10—4:11; Rom. 9:22; 2 Pet. 3:9). The supreme expression of God's goodness is the love that saves sinners who deserve only condemnation: saving them, moreover, at the cost of Christ's death on Calvary (Rom. 3:22–24; 5:5–8; 8:32–39; Eph. 2:1–10; 3:14–18; 5:25–27).

God's faithfulness is another aspect of His goodness and praiseworthiness. People lie, and break their word; God will do neither. In the worst of times it can be affirmed: "His compassions fail not . . . Great is Your faithfulness" (Lam. 3:22, 23; Ps. 36:5; cf. Ps. 89, especially vv. 1, 2, 14, 24, 33, 37, 49). Even when circumstances are unexpected and bewildering, and threaten to hide His faithfulness, still we know that God keeps His promises to us who believe: "All have come to pass for you; not one word . . . has failed" (Josh. 23:14). □

■ **136:7 great lights.** The sun and the moon (vv. 8, 9).

■ **136:10 Egypt . . . their firstborn.** The tenth and most terrible plague preceding the Exodus (Ex. 11).

■ **136:13 who divided the Red Sea in two.** Ex. 14; 15.

16 [n]Ex. 13:18; 15:22; Deut. 8:15
17 [o]Ps. 135:10–12
18 [p]Deut. 29:7
19 [q]Num. 21:21
20 [r]Num. 21:33
21 [s]Josh. 12:1 [2]*inheritance*
23 [t]Gen. 8:1; Deut. 32:36; Ps. 113:7
24 [u]Ps. 44:7
25 [v]Ps. 104:27; 145:15

PSALM 137

3 [a]Ps. 79:1
6 [b]Job 29:10; Ps. 22:15; Ezek. 3:26

16 [n]To Him who led His people through the wilderness,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
17 [o]To Him who struck down great kings,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
18 [p]And slew famous kings,
For His mercy *endures* forever—
19 [q]Sihon king of the Amorites,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
20 [r]And Og king of Bashan,
For His mercy *endures* forever—
21 [s]And gave their land as a [2]heritage,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
22 A heritage to Israel His servant,
For His mercy *endures* forever.

23 Who [t]remembered us in our lowly state,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
24 And [u]rescued us from our enemies,
For His mercy *endures* forever;
25 [v]Who gives food to all flesh,
For His mercy *endures* forever.

26 Oh, give thanks to the God of heaven!
For His mercy *endures* forever.

PSALM 137

Longing for Zion in a Foreign Land

By the rivers of Babylon,
There we sat down, yea, we wept
When we remembered Zion.
2 We hung our harps
Upon the willows in the midst of it.
3 For there those who carried us away captive asked of us a song,
And those who [a]plundered us *requested* mirth,
Saying, "Sing us *one* of the songs of Zion!"

4 How shall we sing the LORD's song
In a foreign land?
5 If I forget you, O Jerusalem,
Let my right hand forget *its skill!*
6 If I do not remember you,
Let my [b]tongue cling to the roof of my mouth—

■ **136:19, 20 Sihon . . . Og.** See 135:11 and note.

■ **136:23 remembered us.** The psalm becomes personal, applying God's salvation to the present. God continues to work as He has worked in the past to save His people from distress.

■ **136:24 our enemies.** The enemies are not specified, permitting the easy application of the psalm to all generations.

■ **Ps. 137** Of all the psalms this is probably the most clearly related to a historical event, the Exile of Judah to Babylon in the sixth century B.C. There is conflicting evidence about whether the psalm was composed during the Exile or immediately afterward (v. 1 note). The despair experienced in the Exile is eloquently expressed along with anger toward the enemy (vv. 7–9).

■ **137:1 the rivers of Babylon.** The Tigris and Euphrates, as well as numerous canals flowed near Babylon, far from Zion and the temple.

we sat down . . . we wept. These words express the deep despair caused by deportation and exile.

Zion. See Ps. 2:6; 50:2; 65:1; 74:2; 128:5; 129:5.

■ **137:2 harps.** Instruments of joy. After a victory Israel responded with songs (Ex. 15; Judg. 5). In defeat, the music ceases and there is silence (Is. 24:8, 9).

■ **137:3 those who carried us away.** The Babylonians.

one of the songs of Zion. These are songs such as Ps. 46 and 48, about the greatness of Zion and Jerusalem. With Jerusalem destroyed, the Babylonians ridiculed their captives.

■ **137:5 my right hand forget.** How to play the harp. If he cannot sing of Jerusalem, he will not sing at all.

■ **137:6 my chief joy.** Now that Christ has come, there are no special holy places, but during the period of the Psalms there was but one—Zion. Jerusalem symbolically represented the City of God, composed of all believers (Gal. 4:26; Rev. 21:9–27). For the exiles, not only religious but political and cultural feelings were evoked by thoughts of their homeland.

If I do not exalt Jerusalem
Above my chief joy.

7 Remember, O LORD, against [c]the sons of Edom
The day of Jerusalem,
Who said, [1]"Raze *it,* raze *it,*
To its very foundation!"

8 O daughter of Babylon, [d]who are to be destroyed,
Happy the one [e]who repays you as you have served us!
9 Happy the one who takes and [f]dashes
Your little ones against the rock!

PSALM 138

The LORD's Goodness to the Faithful

A Psalm of David.

I will praise You with my whole heart;
[a]Before the gods I will sing praises to You.
2 [b]I will worship [c]toward Your holy temple,
And praise Your name
For Your lovingkindness and Your truth;
For You have [d]magnified Your word above all Your name.
3 In the day when I cried out, You answered me,
And made me bold *with* strength in my soul.

4 [e]All the kings of the earth shall praise You, O LORD,
When they hear the words of Your mouth.
5 Yes, they shall sing of the ways of the LORD,
For great *is* the glory of the LORD.
6 [f]Though the LORD *is* on high,
Yet [g]He regards the lowly;
But the proud He knows from afar.

7 [h]Though I walk in the midst of trouble, You will revive me;
You will stretch out Your hand
Against the wrath of my enemies,
And Your right hand will save me.
8 [i]The LORD will [1]perfect *that which* concerns me;
Your mercy, O LORD, *endures* forever;
[j]Do not forsake the works of Your hands.

7 [c]Jer. 49:7–22; Lam. 4:21; Ezek. 25:12–14; 35:2; Amos 1:11; Obad. 10–14
[1]Lit. *Make bare*

8 [d]Is. 13:1–6; 47:1 [e]Jer. 50:15; Rev. 18:6

9 [f]2 Kin. 8:12; Is. 13:16; Hos. 13:16; Nah. 3:10

PSALM 138

1 [a]Ps. 119:46

2 [b]Ps. 28:2 [c]1 Kin. 8:29 [d]Is. 42:21

4 [e]Ps. 102:15

6 [f][Ps. 113:4–7] [g]Prov. 3:34; [Is. 57:15]; Luke 1:48; [James 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5]

7 [h][Ps. 23:3, 4]

8 [i]Ps. 57:2; [Phil. 1:6] [j]Job 10:3, 8
[1]*complete*

■ **137:7 Remember . . . Edom.** Obadiah testifies to the callousness and hostility of the Edomites when Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians.

■ **137:8 daughter of Babylon.** A personification of the nation of Babylon.

■ **137:9 dashes . . . against the rock.** See Is. 13:16; Hos. 13:16; Nah. 3:10. On this cry for retributive justice see Introduction: The Curses of the Psalms.

■ **Ps. 138** The next eight psalms are assigned to David.

■ **138:1 Before the gods.** See introduction to Ps. 82.

■ **138:3 I cried out, You answered me.** The motivating force behind David's thanksgiving. God answers prayer.

■ **138:4 All the kings of the earth.** David knows that his individual praise is unworthy of the greatness of God. He envisions all the rulers of the world calling upon the Lord. This never happened during the period of the Old Testament; if anything, the kings of the earth were opposed to God (Ps. 2; 48). After the coming of Christ, the gospel was extended to the nations (note on 133:title). In the end, all the kings of the earth will bring their glory into the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:24).

■ **138:6 He regards.** He cares for them and meets them in their need.

■ **138:7 in the midst of trouble.** The trouble is general, enabling later worshipers to readily apply this thought to their own condition.

Your right hand. See Ps. 74:11.

■ **138:8 Your mercy.** See v. 2.

PSALM 139

1 [a]Ps. 17:3; Jer. 12:3
2 [b]2 Kin. 19:27 [c]Is. 66:18; Matt. 9:4
3 [d]Job 14:16; 31:4 [1]Lit. *winnow*
4 [e][Heb. 4:13]
5 [2]*enclosed*
6 [f]Job 42:3; Ps. 40:5
7 [g][Jer. 23:24; Amos 9:2–4]
8 [h][Amos 9:2–4] [i][Job 26:6; Prov. 15:11] [3]Or *Sheol*
11 [4]Vg., Symmachus *cover*
12 [j]Job 26:6; 34:22; [Dan. 2:22; Heb. 4:13] [5]Lit. *is not dark*
13 [6]*wove*
14 [7]So with MT, Tg.; LXX, Syr., Vg. *You are fearfully wonderful*
15 [k]Job 10:8, 9; Eccl. 11:5 [8]Lit. *bones were*

PSALM 139

God's Perfect Knowledge of Man

For the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

O LORD, [a]You have searched me and known *me*.
2 [b]You know my sitting down and my rising up;
You [c]understand my thought afar off.
3 [d]You [1]comprehend my path and my lying down,
And are acquainted with all my ways.
4 For *there is* not a word on my tongue,
But behold, O LORD, [e]You know it altogether.
5 You have [2]hedged me behind and before,
And laid Your hand upon me.
6 [f]*Such* knowledge *is* too wonderful for me;
It is high, I cannot *attain* it.

7 [g]Where can I go from Your Spirit?
Or where can I flee from Your presence?
8 [h]If I ascend into heaven, You *are* there;
[i]If I make my bed in [3]hell, behold, You *are there.*
9 *If* I take the wings of the morning,
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
10 Even there Your hand shall lead me,
And Your right hand shall hold me.
11 If I say, "Surely the darkness shall [4]fall on me,"
Even the night shall be light about me;
12 Indeed, [j]the darkness [5]shall not hide from You,
But the night shines as the day;
The darkness and the light *are* both alike *to You.*

13 For You formed my inward parts;
You [6]covered me in my mother's womb.
14 I will praise You, for [7]I am fearfully *and* wonderfully made;
Marvelous are Your works,
And *that* my soul knows very well.
15 [k]My [8]frame was not hidden from You,
When I was made in secret,

■ **Ps. 139** This psalm is the prayer of a person who calls on God, announcing that he is innocent of all charges. With this purpose in mind he meditates on the character of God, exploring God's wisdom, His omniscience, and His greatness as the Creator.

■ **139:1 You have searched me . . . known me.** Compare the appeal in vv. 23, 24. He is the all-knowing God who has an intimate understanding of the psalmist, as of all His creation.

■ **139:2 You understand my thought.** God is omniscient. Thoughts may be the most private areas of life, but they cannot be hidden from the Lord (1 Chr. 28:9; Jer. 17:10; John 2:25).

■ **139:4 not a word on my tongue.** God knows David's thought before it is spoken. This is why we can pray to God silently in our thoughts. See "God Sees and Knows: Divine Omniscience" at Prov. 15:3.

■ **139:5 You have hedged me.** The Lord sets His limits around the psalmist's actions.

laid Your hand. To guide him in life.

■ **139:7 Your Spirit . . . Your presence.** God's personal presence is everywhere throughout His creation. The thought of these rhetorical questions is that there is nowhere the psalmist can go that is beyond God's view. Jonah learned this lesson when he tried to flee God's commission to preach to the Ninevites. See "The Spiritual Nature of God" at Is. 66:1.

■ **139:8 into heaven . . . in hell.** The psalmist expresses God's omnipresence through a series of contrasts. The first contrast is spatial—God is in heaven; His presence reaches even to "hell," here a translation of the Hebrew *sheol*, "the grave" (6:5 and note). Yet the hope of life beyond the grave shines through in the psalm (v. 10).

■ **139:9 the wings of the morning . . . uttermost parts of the sea.** A poetic expression meaning from the east to the west, anywhere on earth.

■ **139:10 shall lead me.** It is not merely that God will see the psalmist wherever he is: He will be there to guide and support him as well. See "Omnipresence and Omnipotence" at Jer. 23:24.

Your right hand. See Ps. 73:23–26; 74:11; 138:7.

■ **139:13 You formed my inward parts.** God's knowledge of the writer goes back even before his birth, to his conception, when the Lord created the psalmist's personal existence.

■ **139:14 Marvelous are Your works.** Such works include creating the writer and every other human being. The wonder of the developing child in the womb gives praise to the Creator.

■ **139:15 in secret.** In his mother's womb.

lowest parts of the earth. Here a metaphor for the womb.

And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.
16 Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed.
And in Your book they all were written,
The days fashioned for me,
When *as yet there were* none of them.

17 [l]How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God!
How great is the sum of them!
18 *If* I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand;
When I awake, I am still with You.

19 Oh, that You would [m]slay the wicked, O God!
[n]Depart from me, therefore, you [o]bloodthirsty men.
20 For they [o]speak against You wickedly;
[l]Your enemies take *Your name* in vain.
21 [p]Do I not hate them, O LORD, who hate You?
And do I not loathe those who rise up against You?
22 I hate them with [2]perfect hatred;
I count them my enemies.

23 [q]Search me, O God, and know my heart;
Try me, and know my anxieties;
24 And see if *there is any* wicked way in me,
And [r]lead me in the way everlasting.

17 [l][Ps. 40:5; Rom. 11:33]
19 [m][Is. 11:4] [n]Ps. 119:115 [o]Lit. *men of bloodshed*
20 [o]Jude 15 [l]LXX, Vg. *They take your cities in vain*
21 [p]2 Chr. 19:2
22 [2]*complete*
23 [q]Job 31:6; Ps. 26:2
24 [r]Ps. 5:8; 143:10

PSALM 140

Prayer for Deliverance from Evil Men

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

Deliver me, O LORD, from evil men;
Preserve me from violent men,
2 Who plan evil things in *their* hearts;
[a]They continually gather together *for* war.
3 They sharpen their tongues like a serpent;
The [b]poison of asps *is* under their lips. Selah

4 [c]Keep me, O LORD, from the hands of the wicked;
Preserve me from violent men,
Who have purposed to make my steps stumble.
5 The proud have hidden a [d]snare for me, and cords;
They have spread a net by the wayside;
They have set traps for me. Selah

6 I said to the LORD: "You *are* my God;
Hear the voice of my supplications, O LORD.
7 O GOD the Lord, the strength of my salvation,
You have [1]covered my head in the day of battle.

PSALM 140
2 [a]Ps. 56:6
3 [b]Ps. 58:4; Rom. 3:13; James 3:8
4 [c]Ps. 71:4
5 [d]Ps. 35:7; Jer. 18:22
7 [1]*sheltered*

■ **139:16. The days fashioned for me.** God's preparation of the poet's days does not wait for time. He rejoices in God's predetermined course for his life.

■ **139:17 precious . . . to me.** The incomprehensible greatness of God's knowledge overwhelms the psalmist. To know that One so great knows him so intimately is a source of consolation to David.

■ **139:19 Depart from me.** The psalmist wants to distance himself from the wicked, because he is allied with God.

■ **139:23 Search . . . know . . . Try.** The psalmist trusts God and invites Him to probe his innermost thoughts and feelings (v. 1). He submits himself to God's correction and direction.

■ **Ps. 140** This psalm is a complaint, which characteristically turns to the Lord at the end with confidence (vv. 12, 13).

■ **140:2 gather together for war.** Taken literally, this language suggests that the original setting of the psalm was war. Probably the language is figurative, like the reference to hunting in v. 5.

■ **140:3 The poison of asps.** The enemy, through gossip and slander, has carefully planned the writer's destruction.

■ **140:7 in the day of battle.** See v. 2 note. The psalmist reminds God that He has been his protector.

8 Do not grant, O LORD, the desires of the wicked;
Do not further his *wicked* scheme,
[e]*Lest* they be exalted. Selah

9 "*As for* the head of those who surround me,
Let the evil of their lips cover them;
10 [f]Let burning coals fall upon them;
Let them be cast into the fire,
Into deep pits, that they rise not up again.
11 Let not a slanderer be established in the earth;
Let evil hunt the violent man to overthrow *him.*"

12 I know that the LORD will [g]maintain
The cause of the afflicted,
And justice for the poor.
13 Surely the righteous shall give thanks to Your name;
The upright shall dwell in Your presence.

PSALM 141

Prayer for Safekeeping from Wickedness

A Psalm of David.

LORD, I cry out to You;
Make haste to me!
Give ear to my voice when I cry out to You.
2 Let my prayer be set before You [a]*as* incense,
[b]The lifting up of my hands *as* [c]the evening sacrifice.

3 Set a guard, O LORD, over my [d]mouth;
Keep watch over the door of my lips.
4 Do not incline my heart to any evil thing,
To practice wicked works
With men who work iniquity;
[e]And do not let me eat of their delicacies.

5 [f]Let the righteous strike me;
It shall be a kindness.
And let him rebuke me;
It shall be as excellent oil;
Let my head not refuse it.

For still my prayer *is* against the deeds of the wicked.
6 Their judges are overthrown by the sides of the [i]cliff,
And they hear my words, for they are sweet.
7 Our bones are scattered at the mouth of the grave,
As when one plows and breaks up the earth.

8 But [g]my eyes *are* upon You, O GOD the Lord;
In You I take refuge;

8 [e]Deut. 32:27
10 [f]Ps. 11:6
12 [g]1 Kin. 8:45; Ps. 9:4

PSALM 141

2 [a][Ex. 30:8]; Luke 1:10; [Rev. 5:8; 8:3, 4] [b]Ps. 134:2; [1 Tim. 2:8] [c]Ex. 29:39, 41; 1 Kin. 18:29, 36; Dan. 9:21
3 [d][Prov. 13:3; 21:23]
4 [e]Prov. 23:6
5 [f][Prov. 9:8; Eccl. 7:5; Gal. 6:1]
6 [i]*rock*
8 [g]2 Chr. 20:12; Ps. 25:15

■ **140:9 evil of their lips.** He asks God to turn back on his persecutors the evil they meant for him (7:14–16 notes).

■ **140:10 Let them be cast into the fire.** See Introduction: Characteristics and Themes.

■ **140:12 will maintain . . . cause of the afflicted.** See 9:18 note; 72:4.

■ **141:2 as incense . . . as the evening sacrifice.** This simile comes from the sacrificial worship of ancient Israel and suggests that the psalm was set in that context. The incense was valuable and pleasing to the Lord (Ex. 30:34–38), and the psalmist asks for his prayers to be received favorably also. In Rev. 8:3–5, an angel carries the prayers of the saints, together with incense, to the throne of God.

■ **141:3 Set a guard . . . over my mouth.** The writer foresees that he will be tempted to speak unwisely, and so shows forthright humility in asking God to deter him.

■ **141:4 to any evil thing.** Indicating any compromise.

■ **141:5 Let the righteous strike me.** A wise person accepts correction; the person who refuses to listen will finally be destroyed (Prov. 29:1; Heb. 12:1–13).

[2] Do not leave my soul destitute.
9 Keep me from [h] the snares they have laid for me,
And from the traps of the workers of iniquity.
10 [i] Let the wicked fall into their own nets,
While I escape safely.

PSALM 142

A Plea for Relief from Persecutors

A [a] Contemplation [t] of David. A Prayer [b] when he was in the cave.

I cry out to the LORD with my voice;
With my voice to the LORD I make my supplication.
2 I pour out my complaint before Him;
I declare before Him my trouble.

3 When my spirit [2] was [c] overwhelmed within me,
Then You knew my path.
In the way in which I walk
They have secretly [d] set a snare for me.
4 Look on *my* right hand and see,
For *there is* no one who acknowledges me;
Refuge has failed me;
No one cares for my soul.

5 I cried out to You, O LORD:
I said, "You *are* my refuge,
My portion in the land of the living.
6 [3] Attend to my cry,
For I am brought very low;
Deliver me from my persecutors,
For they are stronger than I.
7 Bring my soul out of prison,
That I may [e] praise Your name;
The righteous shall surround me,
For You shall deal bountifully with me."

PSALM 143

An Earnest Appeal for Guidance and Deliverance

A Psalm of David.

Hear my prayer, O LORD,
Give ear to my supplications!
In Your faithfulness answer me,
And in Your righteousness.

8 [2] Lit. *Do not make my soul bare*
9 [h] Ps. 119:110
10 [i] Ps. 35:8

PSALM 142

title [a] Ps. 32:title [b] 1 Sam. 22:1; Ps. 57:title [t] Heb. *Maschil*
3 [c] Ps. 77:3 [d] Ps. 141:9 [2] Lit. *fainted*
6 [3] *Give heed*
7 [e] Ps. 34:1, 2

■ **141:9 the snares.** A hunting image; see note on Ps. 140:5.

■ **141:10 into their own nets.** See 7:14, 15 and note.

■ **Ps. 142** The psalm is the complaint of someone at the end of his resources.

■ **142:title when he was in the cave.** Except for this instance, historical titles for psalms are found only in the first two books of the Psalter.

■ **142:3, 4 my spirit was overwhelmed.** The psalmist was exhausted from persecution.

■ **142:4 on my right.** The place where one would expect to find a helper for him; he wants God to see that there is no one on his side (16:8; 110:5; 121:5).

■ **142:7 out of prison.** According to the title, the reference is to the cave where David hid (57:title). In later use, the prison could be any situation that holds a person captive, including a literal prison.

The righteous shall surround me. David looks forward to a time when God will be with him and he will not be alone.

■ **Ps. 143** This song is the last of the "penitential psalms" (introduction to Ps. 6). The note of penitence is seen in v. 2, which may be alluded to by Paul (Rom. 3:20; Gal. 2:16). Ps. 142 and 143 are both appeals to God for help in the midst of trouble when there are no resources to depend on.

■ **143:1 In Your faithfulness . . . righteousness.** The psalmist appeals to God's nature and character.

PSALM 143

2 [a]Do not enter into judgment with Your servant,
For [a]in Your sight no one living is righteous.

3 For the enemy has persecuted my soul;
He has crushed my life to the ground;
He has made me dwell in [1]darkness,
Like those who have long been dead.

4 [b]Therefore my spirit is overwhelmed within me;
My heart within me is distressed.

5 [c]I remember the days of old;
I meditate on all Your works;
I [2]muse on the work of Your hands.

6 I spread out my hands to You;
[d]My soul *longs* for You like a thirsty land. Selah

7 Answer me speedily, O LORD;
My spirit fails!
Do not hide Your face from me,
[e]Lest I [3]be like those who [4]go down into the pit.

8 Cause me to hear Your lovingkindness [f]in the morning,
For in You do I trust;
[g]Cause me to know the way in which I should walk,
For [h]I lift up my soul to You.

9 Deliver me, O LORD, from my enemies;
[5]In You I take shelter.

10 [i]Teach me to do Your will,
For You *are* my God;
[j]Your Spirit *is* good.
Lead me in [k]the land of uprightness.

11 [l]Revive me, O LORD, for Your name's sake!
For Your righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble.

12 In Your mercy [m]cut[6] off my enemies,
And destroy all those who afflict my soul;
For I *am* Your servant.

PSALM 144

A Song to the LORD Who Preserves and Prospers His People

A Psalm of David.

Blessed *be* the LORD my Rock,
[a]Who trains my hands for war,
And my fingers for battle—

PSALM 143

2 [a][Ex. 34:7]; Job 4:17; 9:2; 25:4; Ps. 130:3; Eccl. 7:20; [Rom. 3:20–23; Gal. 2:16]

3 [1]*dark places*

4 [b]Ps. 77:3

5 [c]Ps. 77:5, 10, 11 [2]*ponder*

6 [d]Ps. 63:1

7 [e]Ps. 28:1 [3]*become* [4]Die

8 [f]Ps. 46:5 [g]Ps. 5:8 [h]Ps. 25:1

9 [5]LXX, Vg. *To You I flee*

10 [i]Ps. 25:4, 5 [j]Neh. 9:20 [k]Is. 26:10

11 [l]Ps. 119:25

12 [m]Ps. 54:5 [6]*put an end to*

PSALM 144

1 [a]2 Sam. 22:35; Ps. 18:34

■ **143:2 no one living is righteous.** David has measured his own heart in the sight of God and has learned that no one can pretend to be righteous at the bar of God's judgment.

■ **143:4 my spirit is overwhelmed within me.** See note on Ps. 142:3.

■ **143:5 I remember.** See note on Ps. 44:1; cf. Ps. 77:3, 11; 111:4.

■ **143:7 who go down into the pit.** He will die (Ezek. 26:20).

■ **143:8 Cause me.** The psalmist not only desires deliverance—he wants God's guidance. He knows that it is only as he walks in the way of the Lord that he will live safely.

lovingkindness. The love of God's covenant devotion to His people.

the morning. The psalmist utters his prayer at night or in the very early morning, hoping that God's answer will greet him at dawn.

■ **143:11 Your name's sake.** See Ps. 8:1.

■ **Ps. 144** This psalm is set in the midst of conflict (v. 11), but the speaker does not panic as he calls upon the Lord to appear. The language of God's appearance is similar to Ps. 18, also by David. The language of battle applies figuratively to the spiritual warfare that Christians wage against the "spiritual hosts of wickedness" (Eph. 6:10–20).

■ **144:1 my Rock.** See notes on Ps. 62:2; cf. Ps. 28:7; Deut. 32:18; Ex. 17:6.

Who trains my hands for war. The association of God with warfare can be a stumbling block in appreciating the Old Testament. There is no conflict between the Old and New Testaments on this point. The warfare of God's people has been heightened and intensified for Christians, whose war is against unseen spiritual enemies arrayed against God and themselves for His sake (Eph. 6:10–20).

2 My lovingkindness and my fortress,
My high tower and my deliverer,
My shield and *the One* in whom I take refuge,
Who subdues [1]my people under me.

3 [b]LORD, what *is* man, that You take knowledge of him?
Or the son of man, that You are mindful of him?
4 [c]Man is like a breath;
[d]His days *are* like a passing shadow.

5 [e]Bow down Your heavens, O LORD, and come down;
[f]Touch the mountains, and they shall smoke.
6 [g]Flash forth lightning and scatter them;
Shoot out Your arrows and destroy them.
7 Stretch out Your hand from above;
Rescue me and deliver me out of great waters,
From the hand of foreigners,
8 Whose mouth [h]speaks [2]lying words,
And whose right hand *is* a right hand of falsehood.

9 I will [i]sing a new song to You, O God;
On a harp of ten strings I will sing praises to You,
10 *The One* who gives [3]salvation to kings,
[j]Who delivers David His servant
From the deadly sword.

11 Rescue me and deliver me from the hand of foreigners,
Whose mouth speaks lying words,
And whose right hand *is* a right hand of falsehood—
12 That our sons *may be* [k]as plants grown up in their youth;
That our daughters *may be* as [4]pillars,
Sculptured in palace style;
13 *That* our barns *may be* full,
Supplying all kinds of produce;
That our sheep may bring forth thousands
And ten thousands in our fields;
14 *That* our oxen *may be* well laden;
That there be no [5]breaking in or going out;
That there be no outcry in our streets.
15 [l]Happy *are* the people who are in such a state;
Happy *are* the people whose God *is* the LORD!

PSALM 145

A Song of God's Majesty and Love

[a]A Praise of David.

I will [1]extol You, my God, O King;
And I will bless Your name forever and ever.

2 [1]So with MT, LXX, Vg.; Syr., Tg. *the peoples* (cf. 18:47)

3 [b]Job 7:17; Ps. 8:4; Heb. 2:6

4 [c]Ps. 39:11 [d]Job 8:9; 14:2; Ps. 102:11

5 [e]Ps. 18:9; Is. 64:1 [f]Ps. 104:32

6 [g]Ps. 18:13, 14

8 [h]Ps. 12:2 [2]*empty* or *worthless*

9 [i]Ps. 33:2, 3; 40:3

10 [j]Ps. 18:50 [3]*deliverance*

12 [k]Ps. 128:3 [4]*corner pillars*

14 [5]Lit. *breach*

15 [l]Deut. 33:29; [Ps. 33:12; Jer. 17:7]

PSALM 145

title [a]Ps. 100:title

1 [1]*praise*

■ **144:2 lovingkindness . . . fortress.** The Bible presents no conflict between God's love and His warfare.

under me. David and later faithful kings.

■ **144:3 what is man.** See Ps. 8:4.

■ **144:4 like a breath.** Ephemeral and short-lived. The word is translated "vanity" in Eccl. 1:2. The poet is amazed that God cares for him.

■ **144:5 they shall smoke.** When God appears, nature trembles before Him (Ex. 19:16–19).

■ **144:7 great waters.** The enemies are compared to the Near Eastern popular conception of the cosmic waters of chaos (18:4, 14 and notes).

■ **144:9 a new song.** See note on Ps. 33:3.

■ **144:11 from the hand of foreigners.** The threat is from outside Israel.

■ **144:12 our sons . . . our daughters.** When the oppressive foreigners have been thrown back, the next generation will flourish.

■ **144:14 no breaking in.** The poet envisions complete security from outside military threats.

■ **Ps. 145** The psalmist leads Israel in praise of the Lord. This poem is the first of six hymns that close the Psalter like a display of fireworks. The psalm is an acrostic, each parallel line beginning with a consecutive letter of the alphabet. One letter (*nun*) is missing, here, possibly a copyist's error.

Every day I will bless You,
And I will praise Your name forever and ever.
3 [b]Great *is* the LORD, and greatly to be praised;
And [c]His greatness *is* [2]unsearchable.

4 [d]One generation shall praise Your works to another,
And shall declare Your mighty acts.
5 [3]I will meditate on the glorious splendor of Your majesty,
And [4]on Your wondrous works.
6 *Men* shall speak of the might of Your awesome acts,
And I will declare Your greatness.
7 They shall [5]utter the memory of Your great goodness,
And shall sing of Your righteousness.

8 [e]The LORD *is* gracious and full of compassion,
Slow to anger and great in mercy.
9 [f]The LORD *is* good to all,
And His tender mercies *are* over all His works.

10 [g]All Your works shall praise You, O LORD,
And Your saints shall bless You.
11 They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom,
And talk of Your power,
12 To make known to the sons of men His mighty acts,
And the glorious majesty of His kingdom.
13 [h]Your kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom,
And Your dominion *endures* throughout all [6]generations.

14 The LORD upholds all who fall,
And [i]raises up all *who are* bowed down.
15 [j]The eyes of all look expectantly to You,
And [k]You give them their food in due season.
16 You open Your hand
[l]And satisfy the desire of every living thing.

17 The LORD *is* righteous in all His ways,
Gracious in all His works.
18 [m]The LORD *is* near to all who call upon Him,
To all who call upon Him [n]in truth.
19 He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him;
He also will hear their cry and save them.
20 [o]The LORD preserves all who love Him,
But all the wicked He will destroy.
21 My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD,

3 [b][Ps. 147:5] [c]Job 5:9; 9:10; 11:7; Is. 40:28; [Rom. 11:33] [2]Beyond our understanding
4 [d]Is. 38:19
5 [3]So with MT, Tg.; DSS, LXX, Syr., Vg. *They* [4]Lit. *on the words of Your wondrous works*
7 [5]*eagerly utter,* lit. *bubble forth*
8 [e][Ex. 34:6, 7; Num. 14:18]; Ps. 86:5, 15
9 [f][Ps. 100:5]; Jer. 33:11; Nah. 1:7; [Matt. 19:17; Mark 10:18]
10 [g]Ps. 19:1
13 [h]Dan. 2:44; 4:3; [1 Tim. 1:17; 2 Pet. 1:11] [6]So with MT, Tg.; DSS, LXX, Syr., Vg. add *The LORD is faithful in all His words, And holy in all His works*
14 [i]Ps. 146:8
15 [j]Ps. 104:27 [k]Ps. 136:25
16 [l]Ps. 104:21, 28
18 [m][Deut. 4:7] [n][John 4:24]
20 [o][Ps. 31:23]

■ **145:1 my God, O King.** See note on Ps. 93:1.

■ **145:3 unsearchable.** God's power and might are so great that finite human minds are unable to comprehend them fully. This verse teaches the doctrine of the incomprehensibility of God. People can have a true understanding of God, but never a complete or exhaustive one.

■ **145:4 One generation . . . to another.** See Ps. 78:4. Parents had the duty of instructing their children in the ways of the Lord (Deut. 6:20–25).

■ **145:5 Your majesty . . . Your wondrous works.** God is great in what He is and what He does.

■ **145:8 The LORD is gracious.** The wording of this verse occurs a number of times throughout Scripture, beginning at Ex. 34:6.

full of compassion. That God allows people to live in spite of their deep sin is a sign of His mercy.

great in mercy. The love of God's covenant devotion to His people.

■ **145:10 All Your works.** See "General Revelation" at 19:1.

■ **145:11 Your kingdom.** The revelation of God as the King who rules His kingdom emphasizes His sovereign power and control over His creation.

■ **145:13 an everlasting kingdom.** God is eternal, and His kingdom will never be destroyed. See Nebuchadnezzar's confession in Dan. 4:34.

■ **145:14 upholds all who fall.** God is compassionate toward the weak and restores the erring (9:18 note; 72:4).

■ **145:16 of every living thing.** God gives gifts to all His creatures, people and animals, saints and sinners.

■ **145:18 To all who call upon Him.** While God is kind to all creation, the psalm goes on to specify those who love Him and turn to Him.

■ **145:19 those who fear Him.** See notes on Ps. 34:7; 36:1.

And all flesh shall bless His holy name
Forever and ever.

PSALM 146

The Happiness of Those Whose Help Is the LORD

Praise[1] the LORD!

[a]Praise the LORD, O my soul!
2 [b]While I live I will praise the LORD;
I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.

3 [c]Do not put your trust in princes,
Nor in [2]a son of man, in whom *there is* no [3]help.
4 [d]His spirit departs, he returns to his earth;
In that very day [e]his plans perish.

5 [f]Happy *is he* who *has* the God of Jacob for his help,
Whose hope *is* in the LORD his God,
6 [g]Who made heaven and earth,
The sea, and all that *is* in them;
Who keeps truth forever,
7 [h]Who executes justice for the oppressed,
[i]Who gives food to the hungry.
[j]The LORD gives freedom to the prisoners.

8 [k]The LORD opens *the eyes of* the blind;
[l]The LORD raises those who are bowed down;
The LORD loves the righteous.
9 [m]The LORD watches over the strangers;
He relieves the fatherless and widow;
[n]But the way of the wicked He [4]turns upside down.

10 [o]The LORD shall reign forever—
Your God, O Zion, to all generations.

Praise the LORD!

PSALM 147

Praise to God for His Word and Providence

Praise[1] the LORD!
For [a]*it is* good to sing praises to our God;
[b]For *it is* pleasant, *and* [c]praise is beautiful.

PSALM 146

1 [a]Ps. 103:1 [1]Heb. *Hallelujah*
2 [b]Ps. 104:33
3 [c][Is. 2:22] [2]A human being [3]*salvation*
4 [d][Eccl. 12:7] [e][Ps. 33:10; 1 Cor. 2:6]
5 [f]Jer. 17:7
6 [g]Gen. 1:1; Ex. 20:11; Acts 4:24; Rev. 14:7
7 [h]Ps. 103:6 [i]Ps. 107:9 [j]Ps. 107:10; Is. 61:1
8 [k]Matt. 9:30; [John 9:7, 32, 33] [l]Luke 13:13
9 [m]Deut. 10:18; Ps. 68:5 [n]Ps. 147:6 [4]Lit. *makes crooked*
10 [o]Ex. 15:18; Ps. 10:16; [Rev. 11:15]

PSALM 147

1 [a]Ps. 92:1 [b]Ps. 135:3 [c]Ps. 33:1 [1]Heb. *Hallelujah*

■ **Ps. 146** The last five psalms are hymns marked by opening and closing cries of "Praise the LORD," characterizing their pervasive mood.

■ **146:1 O my soul.** See note on Ps. 103:1.

■ **146:3 in princes.** Some believe that this reference is to foreign kings who rule over Judah after the nation's Babylonian exile of the sixth century B.C. However, there were earlier times when the children of Israel misplaced their trust in native rulers (1 Sam. 8).

■ **146:5 Happy.** See Ps. 1:1.

his help. God is the only One capable of helping those in distress. This verse provides the theme of the psalm, and the following verses describe His power and compassion.

■ **146:6 Who made.** God's role as Creator is highlighted to emphasize His power.

The sea. See Ps. 24:2.

■ **146:7 the oppressed . . . the hungry.** See 9:18 note; 72:4.

■ **146:9 the wicked He turns upside down.** While God promotes the cause of the weak, He resists the proud and abusive.

■ **146:10 reign forever.** See Ps. 93:1.

O Zion. See 2:6 note; 50:2; 74:2; 84:7; 128:5; 129:5; 137:6.

Praise the LORD. See v. 1.

■ **Ps. 147** This is part of the great doxology that concludes the Psalter. It praises the Lord for rebuilding Jerusalem and was probably composed during the period of Judah's restoration following its Babylonian captivity in the sixth century B.C. (Neh. 12:27–47). As in Ps. 146, God's power is radically contrasted with human might.

■ **147:1 it is good.** In this way the poet encourages the congregation to praise the Lord.

2 [d]Ps. 102:16 [e]Deut. 30:3; Is. 11:12; 56:8; Ezek. 39:28
3 [f][Ps. 51:17]; Is. 61:1; Luke 4:18 [2]Lit. *sorrows*
4 [g]Is. 40:26
5 [h]Ps. 48:1 [i]Nah. 1:3 [j]Is. 40:28
6 [k]Ps. 146:8, 9
8 [l]Job 38:26; Ps. 104:13
9 [m]Job 38:41 [n][Matt. 6:26]
10 [o]Ps. 33:16, 17
14 [p]Is. 54:13; 60:17, 18 [q]Ps. 132:15 [3]Lit. *fat of wheat*
15 [r][Ps. 107:20]
16 [s]Job 37:6
17 [4]*fragments* of food
18 [t]Job 37:10
19 [u]Deut. 33:4; Ps. 103:7 [v]Mal. 4:4
20 [w]Deut. 4:32–34; [Rom. 3:1, 2] [5]Heb. *Hallelujah*

2 The LORD [d]builds up Jerusalem:
[e]He gathers together the outcasts of Israel.
3 [f]He heals the brokenhearted
And binds up their [2]wounds.
4 [g]He counts the number of the stars;
He calls them all by name.
5 [h]Great *is* our Lord, and [i]mighty in power;
[j]His understanding *is* infinite.
6 [k]The LORD lifts up the humble;
He casts the wicked down to the ground.

7 Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving;
Sing praises on the harp to our God,
8 [l]Who covers the heavens with clouds,
Who prepares rain for the earth,
Who makes grass to grow on the mountains.
9 [m]He gives to the beast its food,
And [n]to the young ravens that cry.

10 [o]He does not delight in the strength of the horse;
He takes no pleasure in the legs of a man.
11 The LORD takes pleasure in those who fear Him,
In those who hope in His mercy.

12 Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem!
Praise your God, O Zion!
13 For He has strengthened the bars of your gates;
He has blessed your children within you.
14 [p]He makes peace *in* your borders.
And [q]fills you with [3]the finest wheat.

15 [r]He sends out His command *to the* earth;
His word runs very swiftly.
16 [s]He gives snow like wool;
He scatters the frost like ashes;
17 He casts out His hail like [4]morsels;
Who can stand before His cold?
18 [t]He sends out His word and melts them;
He causes His wind to blow, *and* the waters flow.

19 [u]He declares His word to Jacob,
[v]His statutes and His judgments to Israel.
20 [w]He has not dealt thus with any nation;
And *as for His* judgments, they have not known them.

[5]Praise the LORD!

■ **147:2 gathers . . . the outcasts.** See introduction to this psalm. This verse probably refers to the return of Judeans to the Promised Land following Cyrus's decree (2 Chr. 36:22, 23) that ended the Babylonian exile.

■ **147:4 the number of the stars.** The number of stars seems infinite. Cf. Gen. 15:5.

■ **147:5 His understanding is infinite.** God is above and beyond human intelligence. There is no scale that can measure infinity.

■ **147:8, 9 clouds . . . rain . . . grass . . . food.** God regulates all the processes that provide food for His creatures.

■ **147:10 the legs of a man.** God does not judge people by their physical strength or appearance, but according to their heart's attitude toward Him (1 Sam. 16:7). Strong legs, like good horses, were important for soldiers.

■ **147:11 who fear Him.** See notes on Ps. 34:7 and 36:1.

mercy. God's covenant love for His people.

■ **147:13 the bars of your gates.** The gates provide security for the city; note what happens when they are weak (Nah. 3:13).

■ **147:14 the finest wheat.** Representative of fertility and provision.

■ **147:15 His word runs very swiftly.** It accomplishes its purpose quickly.

■ **147:19 His statutes . . . judgments.** He guides Israel in the proper way of corporate behavior.

■ **147:20 Praise the LORD.** See v. 1.

PSALM 148

Praise to the LORD from Creation

Praise[1] the LORD!

Praise the LORD from the heavens;
Praise Him in the heights!
2 Praise Him, all His angels;
Praise Him, all His hosts!
3 Praise Him, sun and moon;
Praise Him, all you stars of light!
4 Praise Him, [a]you heavens of heavens,
And [b]you waters above the heavens!

5 Let them praise the name of the LORD,
For [c]He commanded and they were created.
6 [d]He also established them forever and ever;
He made a decree which shall not pass away.

7 Praise the LORD from the earth,
[e]You great sea creatures and all the depths;

PSALM 148

1 [1]Heb. *Hallelujah*

4 [a]Deut. 10:14; 1 Kin. 8:27; [Neh. 9:6] [b]Gen. 1:7

5 [c]Gen. 1:1, 6

6 [d]Ps. 89:37; [Jer. 31:35, 36; 33:20, 25]

7 [e]Is. 43:20

God the Creator

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). There was no preexisting material; God created from nothing, by fiat. He decided that things should exist and called them into being with His word ("Let there be . . ."). God gave the creation an existence dependent on His own existence yet distinct from it. In the work of creation, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit acted together (Gen. 1:2; Ps. 33:6, 9; 148:5; John 1:1–3; Col. 1:15, 16; Heb. 1:2; 11:3).

The act of creation is mystery to us; there is more in it than we can understand. We cannot create by a mere act of the will, and we do not know how God could. To say that He created "out of nothing" is to confess the mystery, not explain it. In particular, we cannot conceive how a dependent existence can be distinct, or how angels and people in their dependent existence can make free decisions and be morally accountable to their Maker. Yet Scripture everywhere teaches us this truth.

As the world-order is not self-created, so also it is not self-sustaining, as God is. The universe is constantly upheld by God; without this activity of the divine Son (Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3), every creature of every kind, including ourselves, would cease to be. As Paul told the Athenians, "He gives to all life, breath, and all things . . . in Him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:25, 28).

God is not "in" space or time; space and time are dimensions of the created order, and God is not bound by them as we are. He is able to act in the created order in ways that are not accessible to our understanding.

Knowing that God created us and the world around us is basic to true religion. God is to be praised as the Creator, known from the marvelous order and beauty of His works (see, for example, Ps. 104). God is a sovereign Lord, whose eternal plan covers all events and destinies without exception. He has power to redeem, recreate, and renew. Realizing that we depend on God for our moment-by-moment existence calls us to live lives of devotion, gratitude, and loyalty towards Him. □

■ **Ps. 148** The summons to praise takes prominence over the reasons for praise in this psalm. The initial exhortation is toward heaven (vv. 1–6), the second to the earth (vv. 7–12), and the last to the chosen people of God (vv. 13, 14).

■ **148:1 the heavens.** The heavens are normally described as containing different levels, though the details are never spelled out in the Bible (cf. 2 Cor. 12:2). The highest heavens cannot contain God (1 Kin. 8:27), showing that His transcendence cannot be measured.

■ **148:4 waters above the heavens.** See Gen. 1:7.

■ **148:5 they were created.** See the six days of creation in Gen. 1; theological note "God the Creator."

■ **148:7 from the earth.** This idea is elaborated in the following verses as different parts of creation are called to praise God.

sea creatures. The sea was a source of special fascination and fear to the Israelites. Often, the sea represents everything opposed to God and His created order (18:4, 15 notes). God's greatness is demonstrated as He requires their praise.

9 [f]Is. 44:23; 49:13
13 [g]Ps. 8:1
14 [h]1 Sam. 2:1; Ps. 75:10 [i]Ps. 149:9 [j]Lev. 10:3; Eph. 2:17 [2]Strength or dominion [3]Heb. *Hallelujah*

8 Fire and hail, snow and clouds;
Stormy wind, fulfilling His word;
9 [f]Mountains and all hills;
Fruitful trees and all cedars;
10 Beasts and all cattle;
Creeping things and flying fowl;
11 Kings of the earth and all peoples;
Princes and all judges of the earth;
12 Both young men and maidens;
Old men and children.

13 Let them praise the name of the LORD,
For His [g]name alone is exalted;
His glory *is* above the earth and heaven.
14 And He [h]has exalted the [2]horn of His people,
The praise of [i]all His saints—
Of the children of Israel,
[j]A people near to Him.

[3]Praise the LORD!

PSALM 149

1 [a]Ps. 33:3 [1]Heb. *Hallelujah*
2 [b]Judg. 8:23; Zech. 9:9; Matt. 21:5
3 [c]Ex. 15:20; Ps. 81:2
4 [d]Ps. 35:27 [e]Ps. 132:16; Is. 61:3 [2]*meek*
5 [f]Job 35:10
6 [g]Heb. 4:12; Rev. 1:16

PSALM 149

Praise to God for His Salvation and Judgment

Praise[1] the LORD!

[a]Sing to the LORD a new song,
And His praise in the assembly of saints.

2 Let Israel rejoice in their Maker;
Let the children of Zion be joyful in their [b]King.
3 [c]Let them praise His name with the dance;
Let them sing praises to Him with the timbrel and harp.
4 For [d]the LORD takes pleasure in His people;
[e]He will beautify the [2]humble with salvation.

5 Let the saints be joyful in glory;
Let them [f]sing aloud on their beds.
6 *Let* the high praises of God *be* in their mouth,
And [g]a two-edged sword in their hand,
7 To execute vengeance on the nations,
And punishments on the peoples;
8 To bind their kings with chains,
And their nobles with fetters of iron;

■ **148:11 Kings of the earth.** The psalm proclaims that universal praise is due to the Lord (138:4 note).

■ **148:13 the name of the LORD.** See Ps. 8:1.

■ **148:14 the horn.** The horn symbolizes the strength and vigor of the nation as a whole or the king in particular. See 92:10 note.

people near to Him. See Deut. 7:7–11.

■ **Ps. 149** Reference to a "new song" (v. 1) and the martial language of vv. 6–9 suggest that the song was sung in celebration of a victory in battle. On war, see 144:1 note.

■ **149:1 Praise the LORD.** See note on Ps. 146:1. Note the parallel phrase at v. 9.

new song. See note on Ps. 33:3.

■ **149:2 their Maker . . . their King.** God brought Israel into being as a nation in the Exodus and at Sinai, and now He rules over them. These events provide ample reasons to worship Him.

children of Zion. See note on Ps. 2:6.

■ **149:3 with the dance . . . with the timbrel and harp.** The psalmist calls on Israel to celebrate the Lord actively, with enthusiasm and joy.

■ **149:5 on their beds.** They may worship God at all times, in public and private.

■ **149:7 execute vengeance on the nations.** God uses His people to bring judgment on the nations. The most notable example from biblical history is the judgment brought upon the Canaanites in the time of Joshua.

9 [h]To execute on them the written judgment—
[i]This honor have all His saints.

[3]Praise the LORD!

PSALM 150

Let All Things Praise the LORD

[a1]Praise the LORD!

Praise God in His sanctuary;
Praise Him in His mighty [2]firmament!

2 Praise Him for His mighty acts;
Praise Him according to His excellent [b]greatness!

3 Praise Him with the sound of the [3]trumpet;
Praise Him with the lute and harp!
4 Praise Him with the timbrel and dance;
Praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes!
5 Praise Him with loud cymbals;
Praise Him with clashing cymbals!

6 Let everything that has breath praise the LORD.

[4]Praise the LORD!

9 [h]Deut. 7:1, 2; Ezek. 28:26 [i]Ps. 148:14; 1 Cor. 6:2 [3]Heb. *Hallelujah*

PSALM 150

1 [a]Ps. 145:5, 6 [1]Heb. *Hallelujah* [2]*expanse* of heaven
2 [b]Deut. 3:24
3 [3]*cornet*
6 [4]Heb. *Hallelujah*

■ **149:9 Praise the LORD.** See v. 1.

■ **150:1 Praise the LORD.** See Ps. 146:1. Note the parallel closing at v. 6.

in His sanctuary . . . in His mighty firmament. These are the locations where worship was focused.

■ **150:2 His mighty acts . . . His excellent greatness.** This verse gives reasons why God should be worshiped.

■ **150:3–5 trumpet . . . lute and harp . . . timbrel and dance . . . stringed instruments and flutes . . . cymbals.** A wonderful array of instruments for the praises of God. See "Music in the Church" at Col. 3:16.

■ **150:6 everything that has breath.** See Gen. 2:7. Life is represented in the breath. The breath is also the means of speech, for prayer, and for praise.

Praise the LORD. See v. 1.

Introduction to the

WISDOM LITERATURE

Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes make up the wisdom literature of the Bible. Wisdom literature has a recognizable approach as well as a distinctive range of subject matter that makes it a separate department of study. In these books the term "wisdom" and its synonyms, such as "understanding," are used noticeably more often than in other parts of the Bible. These books can be distinguished from the Prophets and the histories of the Old Testament by the way truth is revealed in them. Like the historians, the wisdom writers rely on observation and study. But they make greater use of introspection and meditation than the historians. Unlike the historians, the sages do not discuss Israel's history. They say little or nothing about Moses, the Law, the kings, geography, or politics. Instead, the wisdom writers speak of the human condition as such, in its enduring aspects. They bring to it the perspective of the divine majesty and superintending providence, pondering the question of how the creature should think about the Creator. They give special attention to the problem of human suffering.

Wisdom literature resembles prophecy in the use of poetry and the expression of profound truths. But, in their role as messengers of God, the prophets transmit divine messages directed to specific situations. They also predict the future. The sages observed the world around them, and under the guidance of the Spirit drew conclusions about human nature and living a life that is pleasing to God.

Other poetic sections of the Bible, like the Psalms (Ps. 8:3, 4), may deal with themes similar to those found in wisdom literature, and such sections are commonly regarded as showing the presence or influence of the wisdom tradition. Indeed, wisdom is a kind of human tradition or culture. It is found not only in Israel but in other civilizations as well. A constituent part of all wisdom, in addition to its philosophy, is practical advice and teaching on how to live. Yet the wisdom of the Bible is distinctive, because in all its ways through the heights and depths of human experience it relies on the God of Abraham, the Father of Jesus Christ. Wisdom has its source and beginning in "the fear of the LORD" (Prov. 9:10), both in its ideas and equally in its methods and morals.

In His revelation through the sages, the Spirit of God ranges from direct and homely proverbs, to the puzzling, often difficult words of Ecclesiastes, and to the mysterious and sublime words of Job. It is often said that the parables of Jesus are allied to the wisdom tradition. This association shows that the proverbial, humble, and seemingly human origin of much wisdom literature is not an obstacle to perceiving its divine inspiration. On the contrary, it is the many-sided wisdom of God that is revealed in wisdom literature. □

The Book of

PROVERBS

Author Proverbs is a collection of wise sayings from a number of authors. Solomon's name appears in 1:1; 10:1; 25:1. Chapter 30 is attributed to Agur, and ch. 31 to Lemuel. That Solomon was a key figure in the wisdom movement and wrote many proverbs is clear from 1 Kin. 4:29–34. Solomon's general influence upon the Book of Proverbs is considerable, and his direct authorship of much of the material need not be doubted. The statement in 1:1 ("The proverbs of Solomon") need not be taken, however, to assert more than the leading role of the king in the compilation. The Solomonic title may refer as much to the stamp of Solomon's character on the wisdom literature as to its direct authorship. While it is obvious that he did not write the whole book as we have it, 1:1–7 indicates that this is no haphazard collection, but a purposeful construction with certain aims.

Date and Occasion Nothing in the literary forms or content of Proverbs demands a dating later than the fall of Jerusalem and the Babylonian exile of the sixth century B.C. The whole work is consonant with that period, although when the book reached its present form is impossible to say. Parts of it are from the time of King Hezekiah (25:1).

Characteristics and Themes The Book of Proverbs displays two major forms of wisdom writing. In chs. 1—9 there are a number of longer constructions that are similar to the "instruction" of some early Egyptian literature. Some dependence in form and content should not surprise us, given the common concerns of wisdom in all cultures. Whether the form developed in schools for the elite (as in Egypt) or in the home (as was probably the case in Israel), the content is wisdom for life as it was taught to the youth by an elder. The instruction generally begins with an address ("My son"), followed by exhortations and commands with supporting explanations and encouragements.

The other major form in Proverbs is a one-sentence proverbial saying, found mainly in 10:1—22:16 and 25:1—29:27. These sayings are frequently given in a parallel form, in which the second line makes a direct contrast with the first, or in which the second line carries forward the idea contained in the first. The contrasting parallel is typically used to compare wisdom with folly and righteousness with wickedness.

Another prominent form is the numerical saying (6:16–19; 30:15, 16, 18, 19), which, particularly with the one-sentence sayings, appears to promote the perception of order in the complex issues and experiences of life. By groupings and comparisons of these the task of gaining and assessing knowledge proceeds so that we learn what the good life is and how to pursue it.

For additional discussion of the characteristics, themes, and poetic forms of Proverbs, see introductions to the Wisdom Literature and to Hebrew Poetry. Proverbs, like the Law of Moses, bears witness to Christ by portraying His person and work. The Law presents the righteousness and holiness of Christ, the great descendant of Abraham who would inherit God's covenant blessings and mediate them to all nations (Gal. 3:14). Proverbs and the other wisdom books display the wisdom and discernment of Christ. According to the New Testament, Jesus Christ is the wisdom of God incarnate (1 Cor. 1:24, 30; Col. 2:2, 3).

The Book of Proverbs does not touch on several of the more prominent religious themes in the Old Testament. But through dealing with what are often considered the more mundane areas of life, Proverbs teaches us that all of life is to be lived to the glory of the sovereign Creator. There is a moral order to all of creation, and violations of that order only lead to adverse consequences. □

Outline of Proverbs

I. Prologue: the Purpose of the Book (1:1–7)
II. Wisdom's Instructions (1:8—9:18)
A. Recommendation of Wisdom (1:8, 9)
B. Warning Against Violence (1:10–19)
C. Rewards of Wisdom (1:20–33)

D. Wisdom as a Divine Gift and Human Task (ch. 2)
E. The Lord's Discipline (3:1–12)
F. Hymn to Wisdom (3:13–20)
G. Guidance in Life's Way (3:21–26)
H. Precepts on Human Relationships (3:27–35)
I. Commendations of Wisdom (ch. 4)
J. Warning Against Adultery (ch. 5)
K. Cautionary Instructions (6:1–19)
L. More Warnings Against Adultery (6:20—7:27)
M. Wisdom's Call and Self-commendation (ch. 8)
N. Competing Calls of Wisdom and Folly (ch. 9)
III. Proverbs of Solomon (10:1—22:16)
IV. Instructions of the Wise Men (22:17—24:22)
V. More Sayings of the Wise Men (24:23–34)
VI. More Proverbs of Solomon, Copied by Hezekiah's Men (chs. 25—29)
VII. The Words of Agur (ch. 30)
VIII. The Words of King Lemuel (ch. 31)
A. The Good King (31:1–9)
B. The Good Wife (31:10–31)

CHAPTER 1

1 [a]1 Kin. 4:32; Prov. 10:1; 25:1; Eccl. 12:9

2 [1]*understand* or *discern*

4 [b]Prov. 9:4

5 [c]Prov. 9:9 [2]*acquire*

6 [d]Num. 12:8; Ps. 78:2; Dan. 8:23

The Beginning of Knowledge

THE [a]proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel:

2 To know wisdom and instruction,
To [1]perceive the words of understanding,
3 To receive the instruction of wisdom,
Justice, judgment, and equity;
4 To give prudence to the [b]simple,
To the young man knowledge and discretion—
5 [c]A wise *man* will hear and increase learning,
And a man of understanding will [2]attain wise counsel,
6 To understand a proverb and an enigma,
The words of the wise and their [d]riddles.

■ **1:1 proverbs.** The Hebrew word has a range of meanings, but is usually applied to an aphorism or maxim in a wisdom context. The prologue (1:1–7) applies to the whole book and the variety of wisdom sayings it contains, all broadly classified as "proverbs."

Solomon. Although Solomon wrote many proverbs (1 Kin. 4:32), the words of sages other than Solomon are apparently included under this heading (e.g., Agur, 30:1; and Lemuel, 31:1). Even in the materials attributed to Solomon, something other than direct authorship may be involved. The roots of proverbial traditions in folk experience make it unlikely that Solomon was the exclusive originator of all the proverbs that he wrote down (Introduction: Author).

■ **1:2–4** Explicit reference to the purpose behind this collection suggests that some kind of formal educational use was being made of such material, although evidence for wisdom schools in Israel is not strong.

■ **1:2 wisdom.** The purpose of Proverbs is to guide the reader into wisdom, a word with many nuances. It is related to the intellect and the control of human behavior. It is a way of thinking about reality that enables one to pursue what is good in life. Through wisdom, God reveals what the values of life are and how they may be achieved.

instruction. The word suggests moral and intellectual discipline. It often means the learning of wisdom.

understanding. Or discernment, the ability to read between the lines and make correct distinctions.

■ **1:3 Justice, judgment, and equity.** These words can be used in religious and ethical contexts as well as in temporal affairs. At times, biblical wisdom seems to concern itself with worldly matters, but it always does so within the framework of divine design in the created order.

■ **1:4 prudence.** That is, shrewdness.

simple. The word is paralleled in this verse by "young man"; it refers to the untutored and inexperienced, not those lacking intellectual powers. Wisdom is a matter of practical godliness.

discretion. The word suggests making right decisions with understanding.

■ **1:5 increase.** Wisdom was institutionalized in the ancient culture in that the wise called upon people to improve their wisdom. Succeeding generations were to learn from those who went before (v. 8). Note the typical parallel structure of this verse in which almost synonymous phrases are joined.

counsel. This Hebrew word, used only in Proverbs and Job, means to guide, steer, or direct. It highlights the importance of right thinking and experience in decision making.

■ **1:6** These different words may be used synonymously, as in Hab. 2:6, but probably here they are distinct forms of wisdom sayings, having as a common characteristic an enigma that challenges the intellect (1:1 note).

enigma. Sometimes rendered "parable." Actually the parables of Jesus are somewhat different from what is found in Proverbs, although they show the influence of wisdom literature.

7 [e]The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of knowledge,
But fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Shun Evil Counsel

8 [f]My son, hear the instruction of your father,
And do not forsake the law of your mother;
9 For they *will be* a [g]graceful ornament on your head,
And chains about your neck.

10 My son, if sinners entice you,
[h]Do not consent.
11 If they say, "Come with us,
Let us [i]lie in wait to *shed* blood;
Let us lurk secretly for the innocent without cause;
12 Let us swallow them alive like [3]Sheol,
And whole, [j]like those who go down to the Pit;
13 We shall find all *kinds* of precious [4]possessions,
We shall fill our houses with [5]spoil;
14 Cast in your lot among us,
Let us all have one purse"—
15 My son, [k]do not walk in the way with them,
[l]Keep your foot from their path;
16 [m]For their feet run to evil,
And they make haste to shed blood.
17 Surely, in [6]vain the net is spread
In the sight of any [7]bird;
18 But they lie in wait for their *own* blood,
They lurk secretly for their *own* lives.
19 [n]So *are* the ways of everyone who is greedy for gain;
It takes away the life of its owners.

7 [e]Job 28:28; Ps. 111:10; Prov. 9:10; 15:33; [Eccl. 12:13]
8 [f]Prov. 4:1
9 [g]Prov. 3:22
10 [h]Gen. 39:7–10; Deut. 13:8; Ps. 50:18; [Eph. 5:11]
11 [i]Prov. 12:6; Jer. 5:26
12 [j]Ps. 28:1 [3]Or *the grave*
13 [4]Lit. *wealth* [5]*plunder*
15 [k]Ps. 1:1; Prov. 4:14 [l]Ps. 119:101
16 [m]Prov. 6:17, 18; [Is. 59:7]; Rom. 3:15
17 [6]*futility* [7]Lit. *lord of the wing*
19 [n]Prov. 15:27; [1 Tim. 6:10]

riddles. These are probably a broad but identifiable type of wisdom literature. The word is used of Samson's riddle (Judg. 14:12–19), of an allegory (Ezek. 17:2), and of the sayings used to test Solomon (1 Kin. 10:1).

■ **1:7 The fear of the LORD.** This idea is the controlling principle of Proverbs, and is ancient Israel's decisive contribution to the human quest for knowledge and understanding. The fear of the Lord is the only basis of true knowledge. This "fear" is not distrustful terror of God, but rather the reverent awe and worshipful response of faith to the God who reveals Himself as Creator, Savior, and Judge.

Although Israel's covenant relationship with God receives little overt attention in Proverbs, the use of the divine name most closely associated with the covenant, the LORD (Hebrew *Yahweh,* Ex. 3:15; 6:3 and notes) is significant. It indicates that God's redemptive covenant with His people and the special revelation that accompany it are foundational for true wisdom. In Deuteronomy, "fear of the LORD" means living by the stipulations of the covenant in grateful response to God's redemptive grace (Deut. 6:2, 24). The temple built by Solomon later became the visible expression of Israel's covenant relationship with the Lord, which again is described as the "fear of the LORD" (1 Kin. 8:40, 43). There is an important link through Solomon and the temple between biblical wisdom and the covenant theology found elsewhere in the Old Testament.

is the beginning of knowledge. See also 2:4–6; 9:10; 15:33; Job 28:28; Ps. 111:10. The Hebrew means either the starting point of knowledge, or its basic, ruling principle. The latter is in view here. While in His common grace God enables unbelievers to know much about the world, only the fear of the Lord enables one to know what anything means ultimately. Relying on this light, wisdom pursues the task of reflecting on human experience. See "The Wisdom and Will of God" at Dan. 2:20.

■ **1:8, 9** The instruction form of ancient Near Eastern wisdom literature typically begins with a call for attentiveness. Father and mother were both involved in home instruction.

■ **1:8 instruction.** See note on 3:1.

■ **1:9 graceful ornament . . . chains.** These metaphors portray the effect of wisdom in beautifying one's life.

■ **1:10–19** These verses make up another unit in the instruction form. Possibly this form was a teaching tool in more formal education outside the home as wise men taught their pupils. The conditional or "if" clauses (vv. 10, 11) indicate the situations to which this wisdom applies. The command in v. 15 is supported by the reasons for it in vv. 16–19.

■ **1:12 Sheol.** The realm of death is here depicted as ready to swallow its victims. Elsewhere this poetic term denotes a realm where corruption is father and the worm is mother (Job 17:13, 14), a domain with gates (Is. 38:10). It is a land of no return (Job 7:9), silence (Ps. 94:17), darkness (Ps. 143:3), and forgetfulness (Ps. 88:11, 12). See 9:18 note; Is. 14:9–11 note.

■ **1:13 precious possessions.** Proverbs does not forbid or discourage wealth—only the use of evil to get it. However, the ultimate wealth is wisdom itself (2:4; 3:13–16; Job 28:12–19).

■ **1:15 My son.** After the extended conditional clause (vv. 10–14) the address is repeated to reinforce the command to avoid evil people.

■ **1:16** This verse is almost identical with Is. 59:7 and is partly quoted in Rom. 3:15.

■ **1:17 in vain . . . bird.** This saying is introduced to strengthen the reasons for the author's counsel. The apparent meaning is that even a bird will avoid a trap once it has knowledge of it. Those who are tempted should do the same.

■ **1:19** Such folly is contrary to the true order of the world which, though fallen, is still under God's sovereign rule. This expression of inevitable retribution is based on the observable order of causes and consequence. Apparent interruptions in this pattern prompted other biblical writers to address the problem of the prosperous wicked and the suffering righteous (Job; Ps. 73).

The Call of Wisdom

20 [o]Wisdom calls aloud [8]outside;
She raises her voice in the open squares.
21 She cries out in the [9]chief concourses,
At the openings of the gates in the city
She speaks her words:
22 "How long, you [1]simple ones, will you love [2]simplicity?
For scorners delight in their scorning,
And fools hate knowledge.
23 Turn at my rebuke;
Surely [p]I will pour out my spirit on you;
I will make my words known to you.
24 [q]Because I have called and you refused,
I have stretched out my hand and no one regarded,
25 Because you [r]disdained all my counsel,
And would have none of my rebuke,
26 [s]I also will laugh at your calamity;
I will mock when your terror comes,
27 When [t]your terror comes like a storm,
And your destruction comes like a whirlwind,
When distress and anguish come upon you.

28 "Then[u] they will call on me, but I will not answer;
They will seek me diligently, but they will not find me.
29 Because they [v]hated knowledge
And did not [w]choose the fear of the LORD,
30 [x]They would have none of my counsel
And despised my every rebuke.
31 Therefore [y]they shall eat the fruit of their own way,
And be filled to the full with their own fancies.
32 For the [3]turning away of the simple will slay them,
And the complacency of fools will destroy them;
33 But whoever listens to me will dwell [z]safely,
And [a]will be [4]secure, without fear of evil."

The Value of Wisdom

2 My son, if you receive my words,
And [a]treasure my commands within you,

20 [o]Prov. 8:1; 9:3; [John 7:37] [8]*in the street*
21 [9]LXX, Syr., Tg. *top of the walls;* Vg. *the head of multitudes*
22 [1]*naive* [2]*naivete*
23 [p]Is. 32:15; Joel 2:28; [John 7:39]
24 [q]Is. 65:12; 66:4; Jer. 7:13; Zech. 7:11
25 [r]Ps. 107:11; Luke 7:30
26 [s]Ps. 2:4
27 [t][Prov. 10:24, 25]
28 [u]1 Sam. 8:18; Job 27:9; 35:12; Ps. 18:41; Is. 1:15; Jer. 11:11; 14:12; Ezek. 8:18; Mic. 3:4; Zech. 7:13; [James 4:3]
29 [v]Job 21:14; Prov. 1:22 [w]Ps. 119:173
30 [x]Ps. 81:11; Prov. 1:25
31 [y]Job 4:8; Prov. 5:22, 23; 22:8; Is. 3:11; Jer. 6:19
32 [3]*waywardness*
33 [z]Prov. 3:24–26 [a]Ps. 112:7 [4]*at ease*

CHAPTER 2

1 [a][Prov. 4:21]

■ **1:20** Wisdom is portrayed as an open-air preacher similar to the caller in Is. 55. Personified as a woman, she calls on the simple to repent of folly and to seek wisdom before it is too late. Personification of wisdom is found also in 3:14–18; 8:1–36; 9:1–12.

■ **1:21 gates.** The town gate was the public forum for counsel and judgment (Deut. 22:15; 25:7; Ruth 4:1, 11; 2 Sam. 19:8). This is the fitting location for the figure of wisdom to call people to heed her counsel.

■ **1:22 simple ones.** See text note; also v. 4 and note. There has been a development of thought. At issue is not merely gaining more insight, but a deliberate choice between two ways. Wisdom and folly, righteousness and wickedness, are constantly opposed in Proverbs as the only two options for life (cf. Matt. 7:24–27).

scorners. The precise meaning of this word, used mostly in Proverbs, is difficult to determine. The mocker, or scoffer, is a person who resists the discipline of the wise (9:7, 8; 13:1; 14:6; 21:11).

fools. Thick, unteachable people.

knowledge. See 1:7. In wisdom literature, "knowledge" is often a synonym for wisdom.

■ **1:23 my spirit.** Proverbs recognizes wisdom as both a divine gift and a human task. The former is seen in 1:7, where the fear of the Lord grows from the grace of God in redemption. Redemption involves renewal of the mind as well as regeneration of the soul (Rom. 12:1, 2; 1 Cor. 1:18—2:6).

■ **1:24 you refused.** The rejection of wisdom's evangel has its parallels in the rejection of God's grace by Israel.

■ **1:25 counsel.** Here wisdom speaks with full authority. As God's counsel, her counsel and advice is not open to debate (2:6; 8:14).

■ **1:28 I will not answer.** True wisdom is an aspect of God's saving grace, and there comes a point of no return for those who reject it. This truth reinforces the urgency of the message. No one can expect God's favor and at the same time scorn the gifts He offers (Deut. 1:45; 1 Sam. 28:6; Ps. 18:41).

■ **1:29 knowledge.** This word is a synonym for wisdom, and is explained here by the phrase parallel with it, "the fear of the LORD." Wisdom comes from above (James 3:17), as God's gift in redemptive revelation. This is true even when it must be desired and strived for (2:4–6; Heb. 5:7, 8; James 1:5).

■ **1:31 fruit.** The relationship between deed and outcome is observable in natural cause and effect. Here the image is not one of pleasure after a full meal, but disgust at being glutted.

■ **1:32 turning away.** Indifference or willful neglect.

complacency of fools. The ignorant self-satisfaction of the willfully unteachable, who see no need to learn anything from anyone.

■ **1:33** This verse stands in direct contrast with v. 32. Wisdom brings life and security. To reject wisdom is to reject all that promotes life.

■ **2:1–22** Although this instruction lacks the usual imperatives, the em-

2 So that you incline your ear to wisdom,
And apply your heart to understanding;
3 Yes, if you cry out for discernment,
And lift up your voice for understanding,
4 [b]If you seek her as silver,
And search for her as *for* hidden treasures;
5 [c]Then you will understand the fear of the LORD,
And find the knowledge of God.
6 [d]For the LORD gives wisdom;
From His mouth *come* knowledge and understanding;
7 He stores up sound wisdom for the upright;
[e]*He is* a shield to those who walk uprightly;
8 He guards the paths of justice,
And [f]preserves the way of His saints.
9 Then you will understand righteousness and justice,
Equity *and* every good path.

10 When wisdom enters your heart,
And knowledge is pleasant to your soul,
11 Discretion will preserve you;
[g]Understanding will keep you,
12 To deliver you from the way of evil,
From the man who speaks perverse things,
13 From those who leave the paths of uprightness
To [h]walk in the ways of darkness;
14 [i]Who rejoice in doing evil,
And delight in the perversity of the wicked;
15 [j]Whose ways *are* crooked,
And *who are* devious in their paths;
16 To deliver you from [k]the immoral woman,
[l]From the seductress *who* flatters with her words,
17 Who forsakes the companion of her youth,
And forgets the covenant of her God.
18 For [m]her house [l]leads down to death,
And her paths to the dead;

4 [b]Prov. 3:14]
5 [c]James 1:5, 6]
6 [d]1 Kin. 3:9, 12; [Job 32:8; James 1:5]
7 [e]Ps. 84:11]; Prov. 30:5
8 [f][1 Sam. 2:9]; Ps. 66:9
11 [g]Prov. 4:6; 6:22
13 [h]Ps. 82:5; Prov. 4:19; [John 3:19, 20]
14 [i]Prov. 10:23; Jer. 11:15; [Rom. 1:32]
15 [j]Ps. 125:5; [Prov. 21:8]
16 [k]Prov. 5:20; 6:24; 7:5 [l]Prov. 5:3
18 [m]Prov. 7:27
[l] *sinks*

phatic force is indicated by the subject matter—wisdom that delivers from death. The consequences of accepting wisdom are knowing God and the blessings of life (vv. 5, 9, 21). The two aspects of wisdom—divine gift and human task—are clearly seen (e.g., vv. 4, 6).

■ **2:2 heart.** The seat of reason and the will. Today's popular distinction between heart knowledge and head knowledge does not apply here. The usual Old Testament contrast is between a formal or outward compliance lacking true assent of will, and willing, whole-hearted compliance.

■ **2:3 cry out . . . lift up your voice.** In contrast with the lack of response to wisdom's call in 1:20–23.

■ **2:4 hidden treasures.** Note the similar image used by Jesus in Matt. 13:44.

■ **2:5 you will understand . . . LORD.** In 1:7 the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, and here it is the goal. There is no discrepancy, since wisdom is both a gift and a task. God gives knowledge of Himself in redemptive revelation. Starting here, the wise person takes up the task of learning more wisdom and of knowing God, always moving toward the goal of knowing Him more perfectly and being conformed to the image of His Son.

■ **2:6 the LORD gives wisdom.** No matter how much we are engaged in the task of searching for knowledge through our human experience in the world, the source of all truth is God. He must provide the wisdom necessary for the proper interpretation of reality (3:5).

From His mouth. Although their emphasis is different, both Deuteronomy and Proverbs recognize that the underlying foundation of knowledge is the Word of God (Deut. 8:3). Even before sin had entered the world, Adam and Eve needed God's Word in order to know themselves and their relationship to creation (Gen. 1:28–30).

■ **2:7** The character of God, which the wise come to know (v. 5), is the basis of morality. Standards of integrity and righteousness are expressions of wisdom.

■ **2:8 His saints.** These are people who show that they possess the fear of the Lord by imitating His covenant love.

■ **2:9 every good path.** The wisdom literature is important to our understanding of God's guidance of our lives. It points to the task of gaining wisdom so that we can make decisions that are responsible and consistent with our covenant status as God's people (1 Pet. 2:9).

■ **2:11 Discretion.** Or, "resourcefulness."

■ **2:12** Right moral discernment will save us from those who scorn wisdom.

perverse things. Words of rebellion that overturn truth.

■ **2:16 immoral woman.** Adultery is a radical departure from God's order for human relationships (5:1–23; 6:20–29; 7:1–27). The Hebrew term is "foreign" or "strange" woman. In this context it means a woman who is foreign to the proper marital relationship, a harlot or adulteress.

■ **2:17 companion.** That is, her husband.

covenant of her God. If the "immoral woman" is a non-Israelite (v. 16 note), "covenant" may refer to a marriage witnessed to by some foreign god. More likely, the woman is an Israelite who transgresses the requirements of the covenant given at Sinai, particularly the commandment against adultery (Ex. 20:14).

■ **2:18 death.** In wisdom literature, "life" is not mere existence, but a

19 [2]Lit. *reach*

21 [n]Ps. 37:3

22 [3]*destroyed* [4]*land*

CHAPTER 3

1 [a]Deut. 8:1

2 [b]Ps. 119:165; Prov. 4:10

3 [c]Ex. 13:9; Deut. 6:8; Prov. 6:21 [d]Prov. 7:3; Jer. 17:1; [2 Cor. 3:3]

4 [e]1 Sam. 2:26; Luke 2:52; Rom. 14:18 [f]Lit. *good understanding*

5 [f][Ps. 37:3, 5]; Prov. 22:19 [g]Prov. 23:4; [Jer. 9:23, 24]

6 [h][1 Chr. 28:9]; Prov. 16:3; [Phil. 4:6; James 1:5] [2]Or *make smooth* or *straight*

7 [i]Rom. 12:16

8 [j]Job 21:24 [3]Body, lit. *navel* [4]Lit. *drink*

19 None who go to her return,
Nor do they [2]regain the paths of life—
20 So you may walk in the way of goodness,
And keep *to* the paths of righteousness.
21 For the upright will dwell in the [n]land,
And the blameless will remain in it;
22 But the wicked will be [3]cut off from the [4]earth,
And the unfaithful will be uprooted from it.

Guidance for the Young

3 My son, do not forget my law,
[a]But let your heart keep my commands;
2 For length of days and long life
And [b]peace they will add to you.

3 Let not mercy and truth forsake you;
[c]Bind them around your neck,
[d]Write them on the tablet of your heart,
4 [e]*And* so find favor and [f]high esteem
In the sight of God and man.

5 [f]Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
[g]And lean not on your own understanding;
6 [h]In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He shall [2]direct your paths.

7 Do not be wise in your own [i]eyes;
Fear the LORD and depart from evil.
8 It will be health to your [3]flesh,
And [j]strength[4] to your bones.

way characterized by true relationships that conform to God's design. "Death" is not only the end of physical life, but an irreversible descent into the disorder of moral perversity (cf. 5:23, where to "die" is parallel with "go astray").

■ **2:19 None . . . return.** This note of finality highlights the seriousness of breaching standards that are not merely social customs, but creation ordinances of God.

■ **2:20–22** The promise of land was a basic part of the covenant God made with Abraham, Moses, and the people (Gen. 13:15 and note; Ex. 20:12; Deut. 1:8; 26:1–9). These promises foreshadow the promise of eternal life (Heb. 11:16). The conditional aspect of the covenant is reflected here (Gen. 17:2 note)—the upright and the wise inherit the land, but the wicked are removed (Deut. 28).

■ **3:1–12** These verses are probably a single unit of instruction, with the typical "my son" address repeated in v. 11. The unit contains the usual imperatives (vv. 1, 3, 5–7, 9, 11) and motivating clauses (vv. 2, 4, 8, 10). Verse 12 explains the purpose of the Lord's discipline, encouraging the wise to follow the precept of v. 11.

■ **3:1 law.** The Hebrew word for "law," *torah*, has the basic meaning of "instruction" and in Jewish tradition designates the Pentateuch. Wisdom's instruction, while not to be confused with the precepts of the Law of Moses, is likewise authoritative.

commands. This word is also found in the law. As is typical of the parallel phrases of Hebrew poetry, the second half of the verse repeats the idea of the first half, clarifying it or expanding on it. Essentially, this verse means to memorize the commands and then put them into practice.

■ **3:2 length of days.** The normal expectation is that wisdom will lead to a long, prosperous life, which is the blessing of God (Ex. 20:12).

peace. Hebrew *shalom*. The term denotes general well-being, a harmony of relationships, wholeness, and health (v. 8). In the Old Testament, the blessings of God are seen primarily in terms of this present life. It was not easy to reconcile this perspective with the suffering of the righteous or the prosperity of the wicked. The revelation that was to come with Christ and especially His resurrection from the dead was still far in the future.

■ **3:3 mercy and truth.** The Hebrew phrase indicates clearly that wisdom is being advanced in a covenantal framework. The instruction (v. 1) is practical teaching for life based on the character of God revealed in His Word.

Bind . . . neck. This metaphor indicates that wisdom will beautify one's life.

Write . . . heart. The sense is the same as v. 1. Make them part of you by committing them to memory and then conforming your will to them.

■ **3:5 Trust in the LORD.** Rely entirely upon the Lord's Word and promises as revealed through the sage (2:6; 16:20). See note on 1:7.

lean . . . understanding. The contrast is between the perception of reality that submits to God's revealed Word as the authority for all truth, and a perception that assumes human conjecture to have that authority.

■ **3:6 acknowledge Him.** This is the practical expression of the mind that submits to God and knows Him.

He shall direct your paths. The Lord will guide you to the final goal of life. God gives wisdom and with it the task of making wise decisions; these are the two aspects of guidance in wisdom teaching. There is no hint of guidance that bypasses the duty of making decisions. But human decisions do not overrule the protection of God's providence (Gen. 50:20, 21; Ps. 103:14).

■ **3:7 wise in your own eyes.** The phrase summarizes the idea that the human mind with its intellect and reason is independently capable of reaching a true understanding of reality, without any dependence upon God's revelation.

■ **3:8** True wisdom is life-affirming in the most practical ways.

9 [k]Honor the LORD with your possessions,
And with the firstfruits of all your increase;
10 [l]So your barns will be filled with plenty,
And your vats will overflow with new wine.

11 [m]My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD,
Nor detest His correction;
12 For whom the LORD loves He corrects,
[n]Just as a father the son *in whom* he delights.

13 [o]Happy *is* the man *who* finds wisdom,
And the man *who* gains understanding;
14 [p]For her proceeds *are* better than the profits of silver,
And her gain than fine gold.
15 She *is* more precious than rubies,
And [q]all the things you may desire cannot compare with her.
16 [r]Length of days *is* in her right hand,
In her left hand riches and honor.
17 [s]Her ways *are* ways of pleasantness,
And all her paths *are* peace.
18 She *is* [t]a tree of life to those who take hold of her,
And happy *are all* who [5]retain her.

19 [u]The LORD by wisdom founded the earth;
By understanding He established the heavens;
20 By His knowledge the depths were [v]broken up,
And clouds drop down the dew.

21 My son, let them not depart from your eyes—
Keep sound wisdom and discretion;
22 So they will be life to your soul
And grace to your neck.
23 [w]Then you will walk safely in your way,
And your foot will not stumble.
24 When you lie down, you will not be afraid;
Yes, you will lie down and your sleep will be sweet.
25 [x]Do not be afraid of sudden terror,
Nor of trouble from the wicked when it comes;
26 For the LORD will be your confidence,
And will keep your foot from being caught.

9 [k]Ex. 22:29; Deut. 26:2; [Mal. 3:10]
10 [l]Deut. 28:8
11 [m]Job 5:17; Ps. 94:12; Heb. 12:5, 6; Rev. 3:19
12 [n]Deut. 8:5; Prov. 13:24
13 [o]Prov. 8:32, 34, 35
14 [p]Job 28:13
15 [q]Matt. 13:44
16 [r]Prov. 8:18; [1 Tim. 4:8]
17 [s][Matt. 11:29]
18 [t]Gen. 2:9; Prov. 11:30; 13:12; 15:4; Rev. 2:7
[5]*hold her fast*
19 [u]Ps. 104:24; Prov. 8:27
20 [v]Gen. 7:11
23 [w][Ps. 37:24; 91:11, 12]; Prov. 10:9
25 [x]Ps. 91:5; 1 Pet. 3:14

■ **3:9, 10** Honoring God with the right use of material things expresses gratitude for His favor and recognizes that He controls the natural order and its processes.

■ **3:9 firstfruits.** This first part of the annual harvest was given to the priests (Lev. 23:10; Num. 18:12, 13).

■ **3:11 chastening.** Although the instruction of God will require chastisement, this correction is not calculated to harm or anger His children. But because chastisement is suffering, specific encouragement not to rebel against it is necessary.

■ **3:12** Heb. 12:3–11 explains that God's correction is better than that of an earthly father; for the comparison, see Luke 11:11–13. Chastisement is not the main content of God's fatherly teaching; the instruction of Proverbs is designed for people who want to hear it (2:3–5; 4:5–9; 8:11, 17).

■ **3:13–20** This section is formed more as a hymn in praise of wisdom than as a piece of instruction (cf. Ps. 1). But see 8:32–36 for a practical conclusion.

■ **3:13 Happy.** The word does not mean merely a subjective feeling. It is found almost exclusively in the Psalms and the wisdom literature, describing the life that enjoys God's grace and favor.

■ **3:14, 15** Job 28 describes wisdom as a treasure. Psalm 19:10 refers specifically to the revealed law.

■ **3:16, 17** See v. 2 and notes.

■ **3:18 tree of life.** This is probably not a specific allusion to the tree of life in Gen. 2:9, though the author would have known of it. The flourishing tree was a common figure in the literature of the time for continuing blessings. The metaphor is used again in 11:30; 13:12; 15:4. More important is the theme of "life" in Proverbs. "Life" in the Bible is essentially linked to our relationship with God. Disruption of the proper relationship with God, the source of life, leads to death (Gen. 2:17). Wisdom is concerned with proper relationships with God, other people, and with nature.

■ **3:19, 20** Wisdom, understanding, and knowledge belong to God and find expression in the act of creation (8:22–31). The writer points to the purposefulness and design of creation. The order of creation is not totally destroyed by sin, and the theology of creation is an important part of wisdom literature.

■ **3:21–26** This collection of sayings centers on the theme of guidance in life's way.

■ **3:21** See note on 1:4.

■ **3:22** See notes on vv. 2, 3.

■ **3:23** Again guidance is seen in terms of making wise decisions.

■ **3:24** Part of wisdom is the avoidance of life-threatening situations, not by refusing to face danger when necessary, but by pursuing right relationships and an orderly existence.

27 [y]Do not withhold good from [6]those to whom it is due,
When it is in the power of your hand to do *so.*
28 [z]Do not say to your neighbor,
"Go, and come back,
And tomorrow I will give *it,*"
When *you have* it with you.
29 Do not devise evil against your neighbor,
For he dwells by you for safety's sake.
30 [a]Do not strive with a man without cause,
If he has done you no harm.

31 [b]Do not envy the oppressor,
And choose none of his ways;
32 For the perverse *person is* an abomination to the LORD,
[c]But His secret counsel *is* with the upright.
33 [d]The curse of the LORD *is* on the house of the wicked,
But [e]He blesses the home of the just.
34 [f]Surely He scorns the scornful,
But gives grace to the humble.
35 The wise shall inherit glory,
But shame shall be the legacy of fools.

Security in Wisdom

4 Hear, [a]*my* children, the instruction of a father,
And give attention to know understanding;
2 For I give you good doctrine:
Do not forsake my law.
3 When I was my father's son,
[b]Tender and the only one in the sight of my mother,
4 [c]He also taught me, and said to me:
"Let your heart retain my words;
[d]Keep my commands, and live.
5 [e]Get wisdom! Get understanding!
Do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth.
6 Do not forsake her, and she will preserve you;
[f]Love her, and she will keep you.
7 [g]Wisdom *is* the principal thing;
Therefore get wisdom.
And in all your getting, get understanding.
8 [h]Exalt her, and she will promote you;

27 [y]Rom. 13:7; [Gal. 6:10] [6]Lit. *its owners*
28 [z]Lev. 19:13; Deut. 24:15
30 [a]Prov. 26:17; [Rom. 12:18]
31 [b]Ps. 37:1; Prov. 24:1
32 [c]Ps. 25:14
33 [d]Lev. 26:14, 16; Deut. 11:28; Zech. 5:3, 4; Mal. 2:2 [e]Job 8:6; Ps. 1:3
34 [f]James 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5

CHAPTER 4

1 [a]Ps. 34:11; Prov. 1:8
3 [b]1 Chr. 29:1
4 [c]1 Chr. 28:9; Eph. 6:4 [d]Prov. 7:2
5 [e]Prov. 2:2, 3
6 [f]2 Thess. 2:10
7 [g]Prov. 3:13, 14; Matt. 13:44
8 [h]1 Sam. 2:30

■ **3:27–35** The section begins with a series of commandments about certain abuses in human relationships (vv. 27–31). These are followed by clauses explaining the Lord's direct interest in the morality of these precepts (vv. 32–35).

■ **3:32** Devious persons are alienated from God, but those who are righteous enjoy intimacy with the Lord.

■ **3:33** Here the typical proverbial contrast between the righteous and the wicked (cf. 10:2, 3, 6, 7, 11, 16) is related to God's blessings and curses. This parallels the covenant theology of Deuteronomy, in which faithfulness is rewarded by the blessings of God (Deut. 11:26–29; 28:1–19).

■ **4:1–27** This chapter most naturally divides into three instructional sayings, each beginning with the usual address of father to son (vv. 1, 10, 20). The first saying sees wisdom as a most precious acquisition (vv. 1–9), the second as the path to true life (vv. 10–19), and the third as the way of uprightness (vv. 20–27). There is no direct reference to religion.

Wisdom traditions are shared by peoples of different cultures and religions. See notes on 22:17—24:22. Solomon discussed wisdom with people from other nations (1 Kin. 4:29–34; 10:1–7), showing how certain features of wisdom were shared across national and religious boundaries. In Israel, the insights of empirical wisdom were used in the framework of the covenant relationship and cannot be separated from special revelation (1:7 and notes).

■ **4:2 doctrine.** Or "teaching." The Hebrew term emphasizes the receptive activity of the learner.

■ **4:3, 4** The wise continue the tradition of wisdom by passing on to succeeding generations the wisdom they learned from their parents. Age and experience are not absolute authorities, but they are important and must be highly regarded (Lev. 19:32).

■ **4:4 live.** See notes on 2:18 and 3:2.

■ **4:6** Note the parallel structure in this verse, where the second line says almost the same as the first, yet with some development of thought. "Do not forsake" becomes the positive injunction to "love." Wisdom is far more than an accumulation of facts. It involves trust and commitment.

■ **4:7 Wisdom is the principal thing.** As translated the verse means, "Wisdom is of the first importance, do not neglect it." Another possible sense is that "Wisdom is first in line" for the learner. Wisdom is ready, and the one who wishes to learn may begin immediately.

in all your getting. Jesus used a similar saying about how one should seek the kingdom of God (Matt. 13:45, 46).

She will bring you honor, when you embrace her.
9 She will place on your head [f]an ornament of grace;
A crown of glory she will deliver to you."

10 Hear, my son, and receive my sayings,
[j]And the years of your life will be many.
11 I have [k]taught you in the way of wisdom;
I have led you in right paths.
12 When you walk, [l]your steps will not be hindered,
[m]And when you run, you will not stumble.
13 Take firm hold of instruction, do not let go;
Keep her, for she *is* your life.

14 [n]Do not enter the path of the wicked,
And do not walk in the way of evil.
15 Avoid it, do not travel on it;
Turn away from it and pass on.
16 [o]For they do not sleep unless they have done evil;
And their sleep is [1]taken away unless they make *someone* fall.
17 For they eat the bread of wickedness,
And drink the wine of violence.

18 [p]But the path of the just [q]*is* like the shining [2]sun,
That shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.
19 [r]The way of the wicked *is* like darkness;
They do not know what makes them stumble.

20 My son, give attention to my words;
Incline your ear to my sayings.
21 Do not let them depart from your eyes;
Keep them in the midst of your heart;
22 For they *are* life to those who find them,
And health to all their flesh.
23 Keep your heart with all diligence,
For out of it *spring* the issues of [s]life.
24 Put away from you a [3]deceitful mouth,
And put perverse lips far from you.
25 Let your eyes look straight ahead,
And your eyelids look right before you.
26 Ponder the path of your [t]feet,
And let all your ways be established.
27 Do not turn to the right or the left;
Remove your foot from evil.

9 [f]Prov. 3:22
10 [j]Prov. 3:2
11 [k]1 Sam. 12:23
12 [l]Job 18:7; Ps. 18:36 [m][Ps. 91:11]; Prov. 3:23
14 [n]Ps. 1:1; Prov. 1:15
16 [o]Ps. 36:4; Mic. 2:1 [1]Lit. *robbed*
18 [p]Is. 26:7; Matt. 5:14, 45; Phil. 2:15 [q]2 Sam. 23:4 [2]Lit. *light*
19 [r]1 Sam. 2:9; [Job 18:5, 6]; Prov. 2:13; [Is. 59:9, 10; Jer. 23:12]; John 12:35
23 [s][Matt. 12:34; 15:18, 19; Mark 7:21; Luke 6:45]
24 [3]*devious*
26 [t]Prov. 5:21; Heb. 12:13

■ **4:9** See note on 1:9.

■ **4:10** See note on 3:2.

■ **4:11** The metaphor of life as a way or path is common in Israelite wisdom.

■ **4:13 she is your life.** Life cannot exist without wisdom. In the New Testament, Christ is called our wisdom (1 Cor. 1:30) and our life (Col. 3:4).

■ **4:14 path of the wicked.** Wisdom typically contrasts opposing ways and ideas (especially in the concise proverbs of chs. 10—22). This teaching device accentuates the path of wisdom by opposing various aspects of it to the path of folly and evil. Here vv. 11–13 contrast with vv. 14–17, and v. 18 with v. 19.

■ **4:16 do not sleep.** Evil is like an addictive drug. Those who embrace it find that without their daily dose they are unable to sleep.

■ **4:17 eat . . . drink.** Wickedness and violence become their staple food.

■ **4:18, 19** These verses use imagery of an ever-increasing light to characterize righteousness, and an impenetrable gloom for wickedness (John 8:12; Eph. 5:8–13).

■ **4:20–27** This instruction contrasts the two ways of wisdom and folly without using those terms. The emphasis is on concentration of mind and attention to the wisdom teaching, which leads to life.

■ **4:21 heart.** Or, the mind (2:2 note).

■ **4:22 health.** Wholeness and soundness that includes the body (3:8).

■ **4:23 out of it . . . life.** Our thoughts in turn shape the way we speak and live. See Matt. 12:35; Mark 7:21; Rom. 2:29.

■ **4:25–27** Wisdom enables one to keep to life's path without swerving into the mire.

CHAPTER 5

1 [1]Lit. *Bow*

2 [a]Mal. 2:7 [2]*appreciate good judgment*

3 [b]Prov. 2:16 [c]Ps. 55:21 [3]Lit. *a strange*

5 [d]Prov. 7:27 [4]Or *Sheol*

9 [5]*vigor*

10 [6]Lit. *strength*

The Peril of Adultery

5 My son, pay attention to my wisdom;
[1]Lend your ear to my understanding,
2 That you may [2]preserve discretion,
And your lips [a]may keep knowledge.
3 [b]For the lips of [3]an immoral woman drip honey,
And her mouth *is* [c]smoother than oil;
4 But in the end she is bitter as wormwood,
Sharp as a two-edged sword.
5 Her feet go down to death,
[d]Her steps lay hold of [4]hell.
6 Lest you ponder *her* path of life—
Her ways are unstable;
You do not know *them.*

7 Therefore hear me now, *my* children,
And do not depart from the words of my mouth.
8 Remove your way far from her,
And do not go near the door of her house,
9 Lest you give your [5]honor to others,
And your years to the cruel *one;*
10 Lest aliens be filled with your [6]wealth,
And your labors *go* to the house of a foreigner;
11 And you mourn at last,
When your flesh and your body are consumed,
12 And say:
"How I have hated instruction,
And my heart despised correction!
13 I have not obeyed the voice of my teachers,
Nor inclined my ear to those who instructed me!
14 I was on the verge of total ruin,
In the midst of the assembly and congregation."

15 Drink water from your own cistern,
And running water from your own well.

■ **5:1–23** This passage is best taken as a single unit. While vv. 15–23 are conceivably a distinct composition, the theme is a logical development of what goes before. Wisdom urges us to avoid the life-destroying adulteress and to find sexual and emotional satisfaction in faithfulness to the marriage bond.

■ **5:1–6** These verses describe the character of the seducing adulteress. On the surface she is all sweetness and light, but underneath is the stench of death.

■ **5:2 lips may keep knowledge.** The sense may be that one should learn to maintain discreet silence when necessary, or possibly, that one should have something of substance to say (Mal. 2:7).

■ **5:3** In contrast with v. 2, the seducer begins with deceptive words of charm. Cf. the sweetness of true love in Song 4:11.

■ **5:4 in the end.** The phrase speaks of the end result for the victim of seduction.

bitter as wormwood. A plant especially bitter to the taste, wormwood is used as a metaphor for the experience of affliction (Deut. 29:18).

two-edged sword. The smoothness of her words is deceptive (v. 3), and the liaison leads only to injury.

■ **5:5 death.** Not merely a matter of an early demise brought about by dissolute living, "death" in this context is all that does not promote "life" as defined by God.

hell. The place of the dead (Hebrew *sheol*). Disorderly life leads to physical death. On "Sheol" see Is. 14:9–11 note.

■ **5:6 Her ways are unstable.** The moral censure here is inseparable from the wisdom idea that folly and wickedness involve a rejection of God's order and plan for things.

■ **5:7–14** These verses provide a more detailed description of the fruit of immorality and the price it exacts.

■ **5:8 Remove . . . far from her.** The wise will make a conscious choice to avoid any contact with immorality and keep out of the way of temptation.

■ **5:9–11** Those who foolishly engage in immorality pay a high price for it.

■ **5:9 the cruel one.** Perhaps the outraged husband of the adulteress (6:34, 35).

■ **5:10** This verse may refer literally to the high cost of keeping a mistress (a "foreigner"). Or the warning may be that immorality takes away wealth and strength (see text note).

■ **5:11** Such dissipation leads to regret as one reflects on the waste and futility of the life that has been lived.

■ **5:12, 13** Sexual immorality epitomizes the way of folly that rejects the discipline of wise instruction.

■ **5:14 assembly.** In view here is either public disgrace or punishment by the covenant community.

■ **5:15 Drink water . . . cistern.** The context suggests that this is a metaphor for marital relations with one's wife.

16 Should your fountains be dispersed abroad,
[7]Streams of water in the streets?
17 Let them be only your own,
And not for strangers with you.
18 Let your fountain be blessed,
And rejoice with [e]the wife of your youth.
19 [f]*As a* loving deer and a graceful doe,
Let her breasts satisfy you at all times;
And always be [8]enraptured with her love.
20 For why should you, my son, be enraptured by [g]an immoral woman,
And be embraced in the arms of a seductress?

21 [h]For the ways of man *are* before the eyes of the LORD,
And He [9]ponders all his paths.
22 [i]His own iniquities entrap the wicked *man,*
And he is caught in the cords of his sin.
23 [j]He shall die for lack of instruction,
And in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray.

Dangerous Promises

6 My son, [a]if you become [1]surety for your friend,
If you have [2]shaken hands in pledge for a stranger,
2 You are snared by the words of your mouth;
You are taken by the words of your mouth.
3 So do this, my son, and deliver yourself;
For you have come into the hand of your friend:
Go and humble yourself;
Plead with your friend.
4 [b]Give no sleep to your eyes,
Nor slumber to your eyelids.
5 Deliver yourself like a gazelle from the hand *of the hunter,*
And like a bird from the hand of the [3]fowler.

The Folly of Indolence

6 [c]Go to the ant, you sluggard!
Consider her ways and be wise,
7 Which, having no [4]captain,
Overseer or ruler,
8 Provides her [5]supplies in the summer,
And gathers her food in the harvest.

16 [7]*Channels*

18 [e]Deut. 24:5; Eccl. 9:9; Mal. 2:14

19 [f]Song 2:9 [8]Lit. *intoxicated*

20 [g]Prov. 2:16

21 [h]2 Chr. 16:9; Job 31:4; 34:21; Prov. 15:3; Jer. 16:17; 32:19; Hos. 7:2; Heb. 4:13 [9]*observes,* lit. *weighs*

22 [i]Num. 32:23; Ps. 9:5; Prov. 1:31; Is. 3:11

23 [j]Job 4:21

CHAPTER 6

1 [a]Prov. 11:15 [1]*guaranty* or *collateral* [2]Lit. *struck*

4 [b]Ps. 132:4

5 [3]One who catches birds in a trap or snare

6 [c]Job 12:7

7 [4]Lit. *leader*

8 [5]Lit. *bread*

■ **5:16 fountains . . . Streams.** The imagery suggests the wastefulness of a promiscuous life.

■ **5:18 fountain.** Another metaphor for the wife, perhaps indicating the bearing of many children.

wife of your youth. The wife taken when you were young.

■ **5:19** The poetic language of this verse is like that of the Song of Solomon. The imagery of a graceful animal of rare beauty emphasizes physical pleasure as integral to marital relations. See Song 1:2, 3; 4:1–7.

■ **5:21–23** Up to this point, the warnings against adultery have not been referred to God's law. Similar warnings can be found in other wisdom traditions. Now the writer explains that the natural consequences of folly, and especially sexual folly, are punishments ordained by God.

■ **5:21 ponders.** Or "takes note of." Our behavior is under constant scrutiny. The text does not say that every sin is visited with an immediate penalty. Rather, God oversees the created order so that sinners are captured by their own folly (vv. 22, 23).

■ **5:23 die.** See notes on v.5 and 2:18.

■ **6:1 pledge for a stranger.** Such an agreement to guarantee another's debt is unwise because it involves matters quite beyond the guarantor's control (11:15; 17:18; 22:26).

■ **6:2 snared.** Borrowing money is one thing, but to provide security for another is to walk into a trap of one's own making.

■ **6:3 into the hand.** By accepting responsibility for another's debts you allow another to take control of your life.

humble yourself. This is not the time for pride.

■ **6:4 Give no sleep.** There must be an unremitting effort to have the contract annulled.

■ **6:5** The imagery of creatures hunted and trapped heightens the sense of urgency.

■ **6:6–11** These verses are an object lesson based on the industry of the ant. The underlying assumption is not only that the universe is orderly, but that there are points of analogy between even the lowly insect world and humans. Solomon's nature proverbs may have drawn other such analogies (1 Kin. 4:33).

■ **6:6 ant.** See 30:25. The ant's industry gives the appearance of prudent activity.

sluggard. The word suggests a lazy person whose inactivity expresses an attitude of folly (10:26; 13:4; 15:19; 19:24; 20:4; 26:16).

9 [d]How long will you [6]slumber, O sluggard?
When will you rise from your sleep?
10 A little sleep, a little slumber,
A little folding of the hands to sleep—
11 [e]So shall your poverty come on you like a prowler,
And your need like an armed man.

The Wicked Man

12 A worthless person, a wicked man,
Walks with a perverse mouth;
13 [f]He winks with his eyes,
He [7]shuffles his feet,
He points with his fingers;
14 Perversity *is* in his heart,
[g]He devises evil continually,
[h]He sows discord.
15 Therefore his calamity shall come [i]suddenly;
Suddenly he shall [j]be broken [k]without remedy.

16 These six *things* the LORD hates,
Yes, seven *are* an abomination to [8]Him:
17 [l]A[9] proud look,
[m]A lying tongue,
[n]Hands that shed innocent blood,
18 [o]A heart that devises wicked plans,
[p]Feet that are swift in running to evil,
19 [q]A false witness *who* speaks lies,
And one who [r]sows discord among brethren.

Beware of Adultery

20 [s]My son, keep your father's command,
And do not forsake the law of your mother.
21 [t]Bind them continually upon your heart;
Tie them around your neck.

9 [d]Prov. 24:33, 34 [6]Lit. *lie down*
11 [e]Prov. 10:4
13 [f]Job 15:12; Ps. 35:19; Prov. 10:10 [7]*gives signals,* lit. *scrapes*
14 [g]Prov. 3:29; Mic. 2:1 [h]Prov. 6:19
15 [i]Prov. 24:22; Is. 30:13; 1 Thess. 5:3 [j]Jer. 19:11 [k]2 Chr. 36:16
16 [8]Lit. *His soul*
17 [l]Ps. 101:5; Prov. 21:4 [m]Ps. 120:2; Prov. 12:22 [n]Deut. 19:10; Prov. 28:17; Is. 1:15 [9]Lit. *Haughty eyes*
18 [o]Gen. 6:5; Ps. 36:4; Prov. 24:2; Jer. 18:18; Mark 14:1, 43–46 [p]2 Kin. 5:20–27; Is. 59:7; Rom. 3:15
19 [q]Ps. 27:12; Prov. 19:5, 9; Matt. 26:59–66 [r]Prov. 6:14; 1 Cor. 1:11–13; [Jude 3, 4, 16–19]
20 [s]Eph. 6:1
21 [t]Prov. 3:3

■ **6:10, 11** This proverbial saying has been linked with the previous saying (vv. 6–9) to provide an application of it. The same saying is later linked with a different object lesson (24:33, 34).

■ **6:11 poverty.** Proverbs warns against attitudes and behavior that produce poverty. Laziness is one of these (10:4, 5; 19:15; 20:13). While diligence and industry are normally associated with prosperity (12:11; 13:4; 14:23), it must not be said that all poverty is the result of folly (14:31; 17:5; 19:1, 17, 22; 21:12; 22:22; 28:3, 11).

like a prowler . . . an armed man. The comparison is not so much to a sneak thief who comes at the night, as to a robber who overpowers his victim.

■ **6:12–15** The form suggests a proverbial saying that has been expanded to apply to a specific situation. A string of descriptive clauses is added to the main thought, that the worthless person stirs up discord.

■ **6:12 worthless person.** Lit. "man of Belial," a phrase of uncertain origin and meaning. It probably indicates a base and worthless person, with an element of active malevolence.

■ **6:13 winks . . . shuffles . . . points.** The wicked will not speak plainly and openly, but make veiled suggestions and signs that sow seeds of distrust and dissension.

■ **6:15** Such people, in time, bring destruction upon themselves. The Old Testament reveals that ultimately God will punish the wicked (24:19, 20) and reward the righteous (23:17, 18; 24:15, 16), but it does not present a fully developed doctrine of punishment in the afterlife. The prosperity of the wicked was a continuing problem (Ps. 37:7; 73:3–14). The New Testament clearly indicates that the righteous judgment of God falls on the wicked, whether in this life or the next (Luke 16:23, 24; Rev. 14:10–12; 20:15).

■ **6:16–19** These verses are the first of the numerical sayings in Proverbs (cf. 30:15–31). The form of these sayings suggests a kind of riddle with an answer provided, not to dispose of the question, but to invite further appropriate answers. Wisdom literature often lists things together that are perceived to have something in common. Relationships are established in surprising ways, and the process of discerning orderly relationships in the universe increases wisdom. This unit is quite distinct from the previous one (vv. 12–15), but is probably placed next to it for development of the theme. Whereas v. 15 expresses the perspective of an unspecified natural retribution, this saying implies that the Lord renders judgment (5:21–23 note).

■ **6:16 six . . . seven.** The use of successive numbers is a common device in Hebrew poetry (Job 5:19; Amos 1:3).

■ **6:20–35** Another warning against adultery (chs. 5; 7; 30:20). The form of this section is essentially that of the instruction, but with considerable variation. Some quite elaborate word-pictures are used to heighten the urgency of the warnings (vv. 23, 26, 27, 28, 30, 31). Verses 21 and 23 depend on Deut. 6:8 and Ps. 119:105, which refer to the Law. The Law provides a clear framework for revelation, showing Israel the proper response to God's covenant relationship with her. Wisdom works within that framework to describe the bounds of human responsibility. The Law condemns adultery and prescribes a penalty for it (Ex. 20:14; Lev. 20:10). Wisdom shares this opposition to adultery—the sages were all men of the covenant—and it adds its warnings about the inevitable disaster that such folly brings.

■ **6:20** See 1:8.

command. See note on 3:1.

■ **6:21** See 3:3 and Deut. 6:6, 8.

22 [u]When you roam, [1]they will lead you;
When you sleep, [v]they will keep you;
And *when* you awake, they will speak with you.
23 [w]For the commandment *is* a lamp,
And the law a light;
Reproofs of instruction *are* the way of life,
24 [x]To keep you from the evil woman,
From the flattering tongue of a seductress.
25 [y]Do not lust after her beauty in your heart,
Nor let her allure you with her eyelids.
26 For [z]by means of a harlot
A man is reduced to a crust of bread;
[a]And [2]an adulteress will [b]prey upon his precious life.
27 Can a man take fire to his bosom,
And his clothes not be burned?
28 Can one walk on hot coals,
And his feet not be seared?
29 So *is* he who goes in to his neighbor's wife;
Whoever touches her shall not be innocent.

30 *People* do not despise a thief
If he steals to satisfy himself when he is starving.
31 Yet *when* he is found, [c]he must restore sevenfold;
He may have to give up all the substance of his house.
32 Whoever commits adultery with a woman [d]lacks understanding;
He *who* does so destroys his own soul.
33 Wounds and dishonor he will get,
And his reproach will not be wiped away.
34 For [e]jealousy *is* a husband's fury;
Therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance.
35 He will [3]accept no recompense,
Nor will he be appeased though you give many gifts.

7 My son, keep my words,
And [a]treasure my commands within you.
2 [b]Keep my commands and live,
[c]And my law as the apple of your eye.
3 [d]Bind them on your fingers;
Write them on the tablet of your heart.

22 [u][Prov. 3:23] [v]Prov. 2:11 [1]Lit. *it*
23 [w]Ps. 19:8; 2 Pet. 1:19
24 [x]Prov. 2:16
25 [y]Matt. 5:28
26 [z]Prov. 29:3 [a]Gen. 39:14 [b]Ezek. 13:18 [2]Wife of another, lit. *a man's wife*
31 [c]Ex. 22:1–4
32 [d]Prov. 7:7
34 [e]Prov. 27:4; Song 8:6
35 [3]Lit. *lift up the face of any*

CHAPTER 7

1 [a]Prov. 2:1
2 [b]Lev. 18:5; Prov. 4:4; [Is. 55:3] [c]Deut. 32:10; Ps. 17:8; Zech. 2:8
3 [d]Deut. 6:8; Prov. 6:21

■ **6:22** See notes on 3:23, 24; cf. Deut. 6:7. Wisdom is comprehensive in its effects on one's life.

they will lead you. See notes on 1:5; 2:9; 3:6.

■ **6:23** In Ps. 119:105 the same metaphor is applied to the law as such. The wise person accepts the revealed law, and depending on it, examines nature and the experiences of life. In this way, wisdom supplements the law from its own perspective.

■ **6:24** See notes on 2:16 and 5:3.

■ **6:25 Do not lust.** The lustful desire of the heart is the start of the progression of folly. The connection between the desire and the act is not as starkly put as in Matt. 5:28, but it is present.

■ **6:26 crust of bread.** Although consorting with prostitutes is self-destructive, adultery is worse. It is not only a violation of marriage, but a direct attack on it.

■ **6:27–29** The vivid and transparent metaphors emphasize the folly of adultery.

■ **6:29 not be innocent.** Wisdom in Proverbs emphasizes the expected results of folly, but also, from time to time, goes behind the natural cause-and-effect chain to the overarching purpose and judgment of God.

■ **6:30–33** The person driven by hunger to steal is still subject to the law, but people can understand such need. By contrast, adultery has no such extenuating factor and brings utter disgrace. The law required restoration of four times the theft; "sevenfold" exaggerates this for emphasis (Ex. 22:1).

■ **6:34, 35** The offended husband's jealousy leads to fury and to a merciless revenge that no offer of compensation can avert. The forces that drive human relationships are often at the center of wisdom thinking.

■ **7:1–27** This chapter is made up of three, possibly independent, parts, linked by the common theme of adultery. The first (vv. 1–5) and third (vv. 24–27) are in the form of instructions, and both warn about involvement with the adulteress. The middle section (vv. 6–23) appears as a dramatic narrative that functions as an imaginative reinforcement of the instruction.

■ **7:1 commands.** See note on 3:1.

■ **7:2 live.** See notes on 2:18 and 3:2.

apple of your eye. Lit. "the little man of your eye," a reference to the pupil, in which the image of the observer is reflected. The pupil admits light to the eye and must be protected from all harm (cf. Deut. 32:10; Ps. 17:8; Zech. 2:8).

■ **7:3** See 3:3 and notes. The procedures outlined in vv. 1–3 are an aspect of wisdom's method. The traditions are handed down in order to mold life and character.

4 Say to wisdom, "You *are* my sister,"
And call understanding *your* nearest kin,
5 [e]That they may keep you from the immoral woman,
From the seductress *who* flatters with her words.

The Crafty Harlot

6 For at the window of my house
I looked through my lattice,
7 And saw among the simple,
I perceived among the [f]youths,
A young man [f]devoid[2] of understanding,
8 Passing along the street near her corner;
And he took the path to her house
9 [g]In the twilight, in the evening,
In the black and dark night.

10 And there a woman met him,
With the attire of a harlot, and a crafty heart.
11 [h]She *was* loud and rebellious,
[i]Her feet would not stay at home.
12 At times *she was* outside, at times in the open square,
Lurking at every corner.
13 So she caught him and kissed him;
With an [3]impudent face she said to him:
14 "*I have* peace offerings with me;
Today I have paid my vows.
15 So I came out to meet you,
Diligently to seek your face,
And I have found you.
16 I have spread my bed with tapestry,
Colored coverings of [j]Egyptian linen.
17 I have perfumed my bed
With myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.
18 Come, let us take our fill of love until morning;
Let us delight ourselves with love.
19 For [4]my husband *is* not at home;
He has gone on a long journey;
20 He has taken a bag of money [5]with him,
And will come home [6]on the appointed day."

21 [7]With [k]her enticing speech she caused him to yield,
[l]With her flattering lips she [8]seduced him.
22 Immediately he went after her, as an ox goes to the slaughter,
Or [9]as a fool to the correction of the [l]stocks,

5 [e]Prov. 2:16; 5:3
7 [f][Prov. 6:32; 9:4, 16] [1]Lit. *sons* [2]*lacking*
9 [g]Job 24:15
11 [h]Prov. 9:13; 1 Tim. 5:13 [i]Titus 2:5
13 [3]*shameless*
16 [j]Is. 19:9; Ezek. 27:7
19 [4]Lit. *the man*
20 [5]Lit. *in his hand* [6]*at the full moon*
21 [k]Prov. 5:3 [l]Ps. 12:2 [7]*By the greatness of her words* [8]*compelled*
22 [9]LXX, Syr., Tg. *as a dog to bonds;* Vg. *as a lamb . . . to bonds* [1]*shackles*

■ **7:4 sister . . . nearest kin.** One should think of wisdom and understanding as one's close relatives. This is probably intended to depict the desired intimacy with wisdom, rather than to contrast with the adulteress of v. 5.

■ **7:7 simple . . . devoid of understanding.** See note on 1:4. The lad is naive and unskilled in the art of living. The teaching of wisdom is aimed at such an impressionable type (1:2–4).

■ **7:10** Seduction involves a deceitful show that attracts the victim while at the same time concealing the real intent.

■ **7:14 peace offerings.** The food from these religious offerings provided opportunity for gluttony (Lev. 7:12–18). See 17:1; 21:27.

■ **7:15** The words are flattery, assuring the young man that he was specially chosen for this treat.

■ **7:17 myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.** Aromatic spices used for perfuming garments and beds.

■ **7:18 take our fill of love.** This is the most fraudulent proposition of all. To suggest that casual and illicit sex can satisfy deep longings for mutual, loving commitment is a destructive lie.

■ **7:19, 20** The woman is aware that this illicit relationship involves them in deceit. They vainly hope to avoid the jealous husband's rage (6:33–35).

■ **7:21** The seductive power of words is a constant theme (2:16; 5:3; 6:24; 9:16, 17). Over against this is contrasted the healing power of wisdom's words (2:1–6; 3:1, 2; 5:1, 2; 7:24, 25).

■ **7:22 as an ox goes to the slaughter.** The dumb animal is unaware of its fate and allows itself to be led.

as a fool to the . . . stocks. See text note. The uncertainty of this line does not obscure the overall sense of the verse: the young man has walked into a trap.

23 Till an arrow struck his liver.
[m] As a bird hastens to the snare,
He did not know it [2]*would cost* his life.

24 Now therefore, listen to me, *my* children;
Pay attention to the words of my mouth:
25 Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways,
Do not stray into her paths;
26 For she has cast down many wounded,
And [n] all who were slain by her were strong *men.*
27 [o] Her house *is* the way to [3]hell,
Descending to the chambers of death.

23 [m]Eccl. 9:12 [2]Lit. *is for*
26 [n]Neh. 13:26
27 [o]Prov. 2:18; 5:5; 9:18; [1 Cor. 6:9, 10; Rev. 22:15] [3]Or *Sheol*

The Excellence of Wisdom

8 Does not [a] wisdom cry out,
And understanding lift up her voice?
2 She takes her stand on the top of the [1] high hill,
Beside the way, where the paths meet.
3 She cries out by the gates, at the entry of the city,
At the entrance of the doors:
4 "To you, O men, I call,
And my voice *is* to the sons of men.
5 O you [2] simple ones, understand prudence,
And you fools, be of an understanding heart.

CHAPTER 8

1 [a]Prov. 1:20, 21; 9:3; [1 Cor. 1:24]
2 [1]Lit. *heights*
5 [2]*naive*

■ **7:23 arrow struck his liver.** A mortal wound.

■ **7:25 heart.** See note on 2:2.

Do not stray into her paths. The wise man's prescription is to keep one's thoughts (heart) from adultery, and to stay away from places where there is temptation.

■ **7:26, 27** A motive for prudence is to avoid the carnage that results from folly.

■ **7:27 hell . . . death.** See 1:12; 2:18; 5:5 and notes.

■ **8:1–36** In chs. 1—7, the mouthpiece of wisdom is a teacher or sage. In this majestic poem, wisdom is personified as the supreme teacher who teaches on her own authority. The personification is most probably a poetic device to express more vividly the authority of wisdom. Although it is premature to see personified wisdom (especially in vv. 22–31) as a direct portrayal of a divine being, there is no doubt that the revelation of Jesus Christ as the wisdom of God shows us the significance of a wisdom that is its own absolute authority (1 Cor. 1:24, 30; Heb. 1:1–4; Col. 1:15, 16; John 1:1–18). The poem progresses from a consideration of the human task of learning wisdom (vv. 1–11) to the powerful effects of wisdom in the world (vv. 12–21)—and then to the divine origin of wisdom and its place in the totality of creation (vv. 22–31). A final appeal equates wisdom with life (vv. 32–36). Behind human wisdom is the original, uncreated wisdom of God, by which He established all created things in their proper relationships to God and to one another. This means that human wisdom is valid and life-affirming insofar as it proceeds within the context provided by divine special revelation (ch. 4 note).

■ **8:1–3** See notes on 1:20–33.

■ **8:4 men.** The Hebrew word usually applies to males, but may extend to all humanity. Wisdom, in the role of the instructor, addresses not sons or pupils, but all people. There is no elite class in the matter of learning wisdom; it is for all.

■ **8:5** See notes on 1:4, 22.

Wisdom Cries Out (8:1)

Wisdom is personified in Proverbs as being with God before creation. She offers instruction in the ways of God. Her benefits are the basis of life itself.

Origin of Wisdom	Teaching of Wisdom	Value of Wisdom
In God (v. 22) From everlasting (v. 23) Before all things (vv. 23–30)	Prudence (vv. 5, 12) Understanding (v. 5) Excellent things (v. 6) Truth (v. 7) Hatred of wickedness (v. 7) Righteousness (v. 8) Knowledge (v. 12) Discretion (v. 12) Fear of the Lord (v. 13)	Yields riches and honor (v. 18) Greater than gold and silver (v. 19) The wise are blessed (vv. 32, 34) The wise find life (v. 35) The wise obtain God's favor (v. 35)

6 [b]Prov. 22:20
11 [c]Job 28:15; Ps. 19:10; 119:127; Prov. 3:14, 15; 4:5, 7; 16:16
13 [d]Prov. 3:7; 16:6 [e]1 Sam. 2:3; [Prov. 16:17, 18; Is. 13:11] [f]Prov. 4:24
14 [g]Eccl. 7:19; 9:16
15 [h]2 Chr. 1:10; Prov. 29:4; Dan. 2:21; [Matt. 28:18]; Rom. 13:1
16 [3]MT, Syr., Tg., Vg. *righteousness;* LXX, Bg., some mss. and editions *earth*
17 [i]1 Sam. 2:30; [Ps. 91:14]; Prov. 4:6; [John 14:21] [j]Prov. 2:4, 5; John 7:37; James 1:5
18 [k]Prov. 3:16; [Matt. 6:33]
20 [4]*walk about on*
22 [l]Job 28:26–28; Ps. 104:24; Prov. 3:19; [John 1:1]

6 Listen, for I will speak of [b]excellent things,
And from the opening of my lips *will come* right things;
7 For my mouth will speak truth;
Wickedness *is* an abomination to my lips.
8 All the words of my mouth *are* with righteousness;
Nothing crooked or perverse *is* in them.
9 They *are* all plain to him who understands,
And right to those who find knowledge.
10 Receive my instruction, and not silver,
And knowledge rather than choice gold;
11 [c]For wisdom *is* better than rubies,
And all the things one may desire cannot be compared with her.

12 "I, wisdom, dwell with prudence,
And find out knowledge *and* discretion.
13 [d]The fear of the LORD *is* to hate evil;
[e]Pride and arrogance and the evil way
And [f]the perverse mouth I hate.
14 Counsel *is* mine, and sound wisdom;
I *am* understanding, [g]I have strength.
15 [h]By me kings reign,
And rulers decree justice.
16 By me princes rule, and nobles,
All the judges of [3]the earth.
17 [i]I love those who love me,
And [j]those who seek me diligently will find me.
18 [k]Riches and honor *are* with me,
Enduring riches and righteousness.
19 My fruit *is* better than gold, yes, than fine gold,
And my revenue than choice silver.
20 I [4]traverse the way of righteousness,
In the midst of the paths of justice,
21 That I may cause those who love me to inherit wealth,
That I may fill their treasuries.

22 "The [l]LORD possessed me at the beginning of His way,
Before His works of old.

■ **8:6 excellent things.** Princely or valuable things.

right things. The moral element is implied.

■ **8:7 truth.** The word denotes what is utterly reliable. It is the opposite of wickedness. Proverbs relates truth to wisdom in several places, and here the word of wisdom is described in a way suggestive of divine origin.

■ **8:8 righteousness.** See note on v. 18.

■ **8:9** Wisdom is a self-consistent reality. One must be attuned to it in order to learn it. This is another way of saying that all truth is God's truth and without the knowledge of God we cannot know the absolute truth. Cf. the wisdom of Jesus in Matt. 13:10–16; Luke 11:52.

■ **8:10, 11** The comparison of wisdom to the most desirable emblems of wealth is a way of emphasizing its value (2:4; 3:14, 15; 8:19–21; Job 28:17). The warning against crass materialism is obvious.

■ **8:12** See 1:4 and note.

■ **8:13 The fear of the LORD.** See 1:7; 2:5; 3:7; 9:10 and notes. Wisdom reminds us that the search for an ethic based solely on experience is futile. Education and experience must build on the basis of the faithfulness and hope provided by God's covenant promises. Ethical systems without the absolute standard of right, goodness, and truth revealed in the Scriptures cannot survive (Ps. 36:9).

Pride . . . I hate. Wisdom echoes the hatred that God has for evil (6:16; Deut. 12:31; 16:22; Ps. 5:5; Is. 61:8; Jer. 44:4).

■ **8:14 Counsel.** The word means advice derived from wisdom and experience, and also, plans made by joint deliberation on a course of action. The same word is used for the mind of God concerning His own plans and purposes (Is. 5:19; 19:17; 25:1; 28:29). Wisdom has access to this counsel.

■ **8:15, 16** The proper function of human rulers is defined by the order of God's creation as revealed in the Word of God (Gen. 1:26–28). Wise rulership begins with the fear of the Lord (Deut. 17:18–20; 1 Kin. 3:6–9; 4:29–34). The Messiah will rule by perfect wisdom (Is. 11:1–3). See "Christians and Civil Government" at Rom. 13:1.

■ **8:17 I love those who love me.** The statements contrast with wisdom being hidden from fools (1:28, 29). Wisdom cares for her own (4:6, 8, 9).

those who seek me . . . find me. See 2:4, 5; 3:13–15. This suggests a relationship between wisdom and the grace of God that causes Him to draw near to us (Is. 55:6). Jesus, Himself the final revelation of divine wisdom (1 Cor. 1:24, 30; Col. 2:2, 3), possibly alludes to this verse in Matt. 7:7.

■ **8:18 Riches and honor.** See 3:2, 16. Solomon's early reign was an example of the material and social benefits of wisdom (1 Kin. 10:1–9).

righteousness. This means obedience to God's law, extending to the cultivation of right relationships between God, people, and creation. See Rom. 12:18; 1 Tim. 2:1–4.

8:19 See note on vv. 10, 11.

■ **8:22–31** This hymn-like section presents wisdom as the basis of de-

23 [m]I have been established from everlasting,
From the beginning, before there was ever an earth.
24 When *there were* no depths I was brought forth,
When *there were* no fountains abounding with water.
25 [n]Before the mountains were settled,
Before the hills, I was brought forth;
26 While as yet He had not made the earth or the [5]fields,
Or the [6]primal dust of the world.
27 When He prepared the heavens, I *was* there,
When He drew a circle on the face of the deep,
28 When He established the clouds above,
When He strengthened the fountains of the deep,
29 [o]When He assigned to the sea its limit,
So that the waters would not transgress His command,
When [p]He marked out the foundations of the earth,
30 [q]Then I was beside Him *as* [7]a master craftsman;
[r]And I was daily *His* delight,
Rejoicing always before Him,
31 Rejoicing in His inhabited world,
And [s]my delight *was* with the sons of men.

32 "Now therefore, listen to me, *my* children,
For [t]blessed *are those who* keep my ways.
33 Hear instruction and be wise,
And do not disdain *it.*
34 [u]Blessed is the man who listens to me,
Watching daily at my gates,
Waiting at the posts of my doors.
35 For whoever finds me finds life,
And [v]obtains favor from the LORD;
36 But he who sins against me [w]wrongs his own soul;
All those who hate me love death."

23 [m][Ps. 2:6]
25 [n]Job 15:7, 8
26 [5]*outer places* [6]Lit. *beginning of the dust*
29 [o]Gen. 1:9, 10; Job 38:8–11; Ps. 33:7; 104:9; Jer. 5:22 [p]Job 28:4, 6; Ps. 104:5
30 [q][John 1:1–3, 18] [r][Matt. 3:17] [7]A Jewish tradition *one brought up*
31 [s]Ps. 16:3; John 13:1
32 [t]Ps. 119:1, 2; 128:1; Prov. 29:18; Luke 11:28
34 [u]Prov. 3:13, 18
35 [v]Prov. 3:4; 12:2; [John 17:3]
36 [w]Prov. 20:2

sign in the universe. The focus is unusual, but this view of wisdom does not go against the theology of the covenant and God's saving acts in Israel. The sages were also men of the covenant (1:7; 2:20–22 and notes). The method of wisdom is to emphasize the biblical theology of creation as the basis for understanding our lives as redeemed people of God.

■ **8:22 The LORD.** The proper name of God as the Redeemer and the Author of the covenant (Ex. 3:15 and notes). God's redemptive covenant with Israel underscores His commitment to creation, for the covenant promises culminate in Jesus Christ—the great Seed of Abraham (Gen. 12:7; cf. Gal. 3:16) and Son of David (2 Sam. 7:16; cf. Luke 1:32)—through whom the broken and fallen creation is redeemed (Rom. 8:20–22; 2 Cor. 5:17 note; Col. 1:15–20; Rev. 21:1).

possessed me. Wisdom is not a fourth divine person, but an attribute of God that is given expression in creation as well as redemption. In this chapter, wisdom is personified for poetic effect. The attributes of God are eternal, so the figure of wisdom is said to be from "the beginning."

at the beginning of His way. Wisdom is the prior counsel of God's will (Eph. 1:11), the eternal decree that establishes all things in their relationships and determines the course of history.

Before His works of old. Wisdom existed prior to God's self-revelation in His covenant and saving acts.

■ **8:23** Wisdom was also prior to the creation of the universe.

■ **8:24–31** Job reminds us that creation wisdom ultimately belongs to God alone (Job 38; 39). The "cultural mandate," assigning to humans the task of understanding creation and exercising dominion over it (Gen. 1:26–28), is the basis for wisdom's interest in knowing the world of nature (1 Kin. 4:29, 33). This is pursued within the framework established by special revelation (the Scripture) and in the fear of the Lord (1:7 note; 8:1–36 note; 9:10).

■ **8:24 I was brought forth.** The wise plan of God precedes His action. Reference to being "brought forth" suggests that wisdom is uniquely the child of God, but this is still a poetic device and does not refer to a new divine being.

■ **8:27 I was there.** Wisdom was prior to creation and a participant in it. Creation is the first great demonstration of the wisdom of God.

■ **8:28 fountains of the deep.** See Gen. 7:11; 8:2.

■ **8:30 a master craftsman.** Wisdom is now described as the agent of creation. Skilled craftsmanship is an aspect of wisdom (cf. Ex. 31:3), which points to the practical nature of wisdom. See 1:2 and note.

■ **8:31 Rejoicing . . . delight.** Wisdom reflects the satisfaction expressed in the divine declaration that creation is very good (Gen. 1:31).

■ **8:32 blessed.** See note on 3:13. The blessings of God on obedience are a feature of covenant theology (Deut. 28:1–14; see "God's Covenant of Grace" at Gen. 12:1). Here the word describes the rewards of wisdom (3:13–18).

■ **8:34 Watching daily at my gates.** The pupil attends at the house of the teacher, eager to learn whatever wisdom will impart.

■ **8:35** The benefits of wisdom are equated with life itself. To be truly alive is to be rightly related to God, other people, and the created order. See notes on 3:2, 18.

favor from the LORD. That is, acceptance and goodwill. The sage is not describing an alternative way of gaining acceptance other than that provided in the covenant community and sacrifices. Rather, he describes the richness of the believers' fellowship with the Lord as their lives are molded by true wisdom (12:2).

■ **8:36 hate.** To hate wisdom is to hate life, and therefore to love death.

CHAPTER 9

1 [a][Matt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 3:9, 10; Eph. 2:20–22; 1 Pet. 2:5]

2 [b]Matt. 22:4 [c]Prov. 23:30 [1]*arranged*

4 [d]Ps. 19:7

5 [e]Song 5:1; Is. 55:1; [John 6:27]

8 [f]Prov. 15:12; Matt. 7:6 [g]Ps. 141:5; Prov. 10:8

9 [h][Matt. 13:12]

10 [i]Job 28:28; Ps. 111:10; Prov. 1:7

11 [j]Prov. 3:2, 16

12 [k]Job 35:6, 7; Prov. 16:26

13 [l]Prov. 7:11 [2]*boisterous*

The Way of Wisdom

9 Wisdom has [a]built her house,
She has hewn out her seven pillars;
2 [b]She has slaughtered her meat,
[c]She has mixed her wine,
She has also [1]furnished her table.
3 She has sent out her maidens,
She cries out from the highest places of the city,
4 "Whoever[d] *is* simple, let him turn in here!"
As for him who lacks understanding, she says to him,
5 "Come,[e] eat of my bread
And drink of the wine I have mixed.
6 Forsake foolishness and live,
And go in the way of understanding.

7 "He who corrects a scoffer gets shame for himself,
And he who rebukes a wicked *man only* harms himself.
8 [f]Do not correct a scoffer, lest he hate you;
[g]Rebuke a wise *man,* and he will love you.
9 Give *instruction* to a wise *man,* and he will be still wiser;
Teach a just *man,* [h]and he will increase in learning.

10 "The[i] fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom,
And the knowledge of the Holy One *is* understanding.
11 [j]For by me your days will be multiplied,
And years of life will be added to you.
12 [k]If you are wise, you are wise for yourself,
And *if* you scoff, you will bear *it* alone."

The Way of Folly

13 [l]A foolish woman is [2]clamorous;
She is simple, and knows nothing.
14 For she sits at the door of her house,

■ **9:1–18** This section consists of two competing invitations, one from wisdom and the other from folly. Both are portrayed as women calling people to enter their houses. Wisdom invites the simple to eat of her life-giving food (vv. 1–12). Folly offers food that leads to death (vv. 13–18).

■ **9:1 her seven pillars.** The significance of "seven pillars" is not clear. It may simply indicate the architectural splendor of the house. However, "seven" often symbolizes perfection or completeness, and so may here represent the perfection of divine wisdom.

■ **9:2 mixed her wine.** The mixture was probably of wine and spices (Song 8:2).

■ **9:3 her maidens.** Wisdom's servants are sent out to summon any who will hear her invitation to life.

from the highest places. The invitation is open and universal (Is. 52:7).

■ **9:4 simple.** See 1:4 and note. Note the competing call of folly in v. 16.

lacks understanding. Lit. "lacks heart," the will to think and act rightly.

■ **9:5 Come, eat.** A banquet is the right setting for the food distributed by wisdom. The banquet motif is later used to portray the blessings of the redeemed (Is. 55:1, 2; Matt. 22:1–13; 26:29; Rev. 19).

■ **9:6 Forsake foolishness and live.** See 1:4, 22; 2:19; 3:2, 18; 8:35 and notes.

■ **9:7–12** These verses contrast the wise and the fool, not only at the point of decision to enter the houses of wisdom or folly, but in the kind of lives that result from those decisions.

■ **9:7 scoffer.** The scoffer has gone beyond a simple lack of judgment, and has made a conscious decision for evil.

gets shame for himself. The effort to correct such a person will fail and may backfire.

he who rebukes. This parallel phrase is synonymous in meaning to the first part of the verse.

■ **9:8** Here the parallel structure is antithetic (i.e., the two parts are contrasted opposites).

Rebuke a wise man. While a fool shuts out wisdom, a wise person is glad for the opportunity to shut out folly. Wisdom perceives the positive side of correction; wisdom is not defensive and easily offended, but humble and responsive.

■ **9:9** Wisdom recognizes an important principle of human nature: there is no standing still; we progress in the direction of our choice. Wisdom accumulates more wisdom (cf. Matt. 13:12).

■ **9:10 The fear of the LORD.** See 1:7 and note; "The Wisdom and Will of God" at Dan. 2:20.

Holy One. Lit. "holy ones" or "saints." The translation here is based on the parallel with "the LORD" in the previous line (cf. 30:3, where the same plural form is used).

■ **9:11** See 3:2 and note.

■ **9:12 you are wise for yourself.** That is, you will benefit (3:13–18; 4:9–13; 8:34, 35).

■ **9:13–18** The description of folly is directly opposed to that of wisdom in vv. 1–6.

■ **9:13 clamorous.** See 7:11, 12.

simple, and knows nothing. The sensuous appeal of folly contrasts with wisdom as the teacher.

■ **9:14 by the highest places of the city.** Folly counterfeits the actions of wisdom so as to appear wise (cf. v. 3).

On a seat [m]*by* the highest places of the city,
15 To call to those who pass by,
Who go straight on their way:
16 "Whoever[n] *is* [3]simple, let him turn in here";
And *as for* him who lacks understanding, she says to him,
17 "Stolen[o] water is sweet,
And bread *eaten* in secret is pleasant."
18 But he does not know that [p]the dead *are* there,
That her guests *are* in the depths of [4]hell.

Wise Sayings of Solomon

10 The proverbs of [a]Solomon:

[b]A wise son makes a glad father,
But a foolish son *is* the grief of his mother.

2 [c]Treasures of wickedness profit nothing,
[d]But righteousness delivers from death.
3 [e]The LORD will not allow the righteous soul to famish,
But He casts away the desire of the wicked.

4 [f]He who has a slack hand becomes poor,
But [g]the hand of the diligent makes rich.
5 He who gathers in [h]summer *is* a wise son;
He who sleeps in harvest *is* [i]a son who causes shame.

6 Blessings *are* on the head of the righteous,
But violence covers the mouth of the wicked.
7 [j]The memory of the righteous *is* blessed,
But the name of the wicked will rot.

8 The wise in heart will receive commands,
[k]But [l]a prating fool will [2]fall.

14 [m]Prov. 9:3
16 [n]Prov. 7:7, 8 [3]*naive*
17 [o]Prov. 20:17
18 [p]Prov. 2:18; 7:27 [4]Or *Sheol*

CHAPTER 10

1 [a]Prov. 1:1; 25:1 [b]Prov. 15:20; 17:21, 25; 19:13; 29:3, 15
2 [c]Ps. 49:7; Prov. 11:4; 21:6; Ezek. 7:19; [Luke 12:19, 20] [d]Dan. 4:27
3 [e]Ps. 34:9, 10; 37:25; Prov. 28:25; [Matt. 6:33]
4 [f]Prov. 19:15 [g]Prov. 12:24; 13:4; 21:5
5 [h]Prov. 6:8 [i]Prov. 19:26
7 [j]Ps. 112:6; Eccl. 8:10
8 [k]Prov. 10:10 [l]Lit. *the foolish of lips* [2]*be thrust down* or *ruined*

■ **9:15, 16** Folly's entreaties further imitate those of wisdom (cf. v. 4).

■ **9:17 Stolen water.** Anything that is forbidden, especially illicit sex (5:3, 15; 7:16–18).

bread eaten in secret. Because it is stolen or forbidden. There is a perversity in human nature that is stirred up by prohibition and the law (Rom. 7:7–11).

■ **9:18 the dead.** Hebrew *rephaim*, of uncertain derivation. The word is used eight times in the Bible, all in Hebrew poetry, referring to the spirits of the departed.

hell. Hebrew *sheol*, lit. "the grave." See 1:12; 5:5; 7:27 and notes. In Proverbs, Sheol is the fitting destination of fools not because it is a place of torment, as Hell is later described (Rev. 14:9–11), but simply because those who go there have lost the possibility of relationship with the living God. See also 2:18 and note.

■ **10:1—22:16** This section consists mainly of single-sentence proverbs. There is no evidence that these are a form of wisdom writing from a different time than the longer instructions of chs. 1—9. They are simply different forms, and function in different ways. Aphorisms are often stated categorically, without the qualifications that might allow them to cover every conceivable situation.

The wisdom of Proverbs presupposes and builds upon the special revelation of God in the Law (1:7 and notes). The Hebrew sages assumed that, given human intelligence and the gift of God's wisdom in His self-revelation, God's people learn to discern the order and relationships that make for a meaningful and productive life. The wisdom of Proverbs gives the fruit of experience and reflection, stressing the need to think through and to apply human knowledge and the Word of God to all the affairs of life in a responsible way.

■ **10:1–32** As is often the case in the Bible, the chapter divisions are rather arbitrary and do not aid the analysis of the text. The individual sentences can be classified according to their literary structures and their themes. Chapters 10—15 consist mainly of contrasts between opposites, as indicated by the conjunction "but" introducing the second line of most of these proverbs. This common literary device uses contrasting pairs such as "righteous" versus "wicked" and "wise" versus "fool." Occasional grouping of sentences according to theme and form is evident in the book, a method that aids memorization but does not assist the interpretation of the mostly independent sayings. Each sentence has its own social setting and special aim. Much like folk sayings in our Western societies, some of the sayings have been separated from their contexts in order to provide concise, practical guidelines for living.

■ **10:1 The proverbs of Solomon.** See Introduction: Author.

■ **10:2 righteousness.** See note on 8:18. In this chapter, about half the verses contain a contrast between the righteous and the wicked.

delivers from death. See 2:18; 3:18 and notes.

■ **10:3 will not allow . . . to famish.** There is a correlation between righteousness and life both in the covenant promises of God and in general life experience. The suffering of the righteous is not in view, however (cf. 1:19 note).

■ **10:4, 5** See 6:6–11; 13:4; 15:19; 24:30–34. A frequently used wisdom theme, poverty itself is no shame, but poverty due to laziness is.

■ **10:5 wise son.** Family relationships and obligations are primary concerns in wisdom literature.

■ **10:6 Blessings.** The unspecified blessings leave the application open to a range of situations, but, as in v. 22, the goodness of the Lord is experienced.

■ **10:7 memory.** How the righteous person is remembered after death.

■ **10:8 receive commands.** The wise person is teachable and receives the commands of wisdom (2:1; 3:1 note).

9 [l][Ps. 23:4; Prov. 3:23; 28:18; Is. 33:15, 16]
12 [m]Prov. 17:9; [1 Cor. 13:4–7; James 5:20]; 1 Pet. 4:8
13 [n]Prov. 26:3 [3]Lit. *lacks heart*
14 [o]Prov. 18:7
15 [p]Job 31:24; Ps. 52:7; Prov. 18:11; [1 Tim. 6:17]
16 [q]Prov. 6:23
17 [4]*leads*
18 [r]Prov. 26:24 [s]Ps. 15:3; 101:5
19 [t]Job 11:2; [Prov. 18:21]; Eccl. 5:3 [u]Prov. 17:27; [James 1:19; 3:2]
21 [5]Lit. *heart*

9 [l]He who walks with integrity walks securely,
But he who perverts his ways will become known.

10 He who winks with the eye causes trouble,
But a prating fool will fall.

11 The mouth of the righteous *is* a well of life,
But violence covers the mouth of the wicked.

12 Hatred stirs up strife,
But [m]love covers all sins.

13 Wisdom is found on the lips of him who has understanding,
But [n]a rod *is* for the back of him who [3]is devoid of understanding.

14 Wise *people* store up knowledge,
But [o]the mouth of the foolish *is* near destruction.

15 The [p]rich man's wealth *is* his strong city;
The destruction of the poor *is* their poverty.

16 The labor of the righteous *leads* to [q]life,
The wages of the wicked to sin.

17 He who keeps instruction *is in* the way of life,
But he who refuses correction [4]goes astray.

18 Whoever [r]hides hatred *has* lying lips,
And [s]whoever spreads slander *is* a fool.

19 [t]In the multitude of words sin is not lacking,
But [u]he who restrains his lips *is* wise.

20 The tongue of the righteous *is* choice silver;
The heart of the wicked *is worth* little.

21 The lips of the righteous feed many,
But fools die for lack of [5]wisdom.

prating fool. Fools do not know when to be silent and listen. They lack the discipline of wisdom and promote their own downfall (v. 14 note).

■ **10:9 will become known.** The one who attempts to pervert the truth will be exposed and disciplined by God.

■ **10:10 winks with the eye.** See 6:13 and note.

prating fool. See v. 8 and note. This phrase does not seem to correspond to the first line, either as a parallel or a contrast. The Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) reads, "but the one who boldly reproves makes peace."

■ **10:11 well of life.** The image is similar to "tree of life" (3:18 note). The words of the wise, like a well, are a source of life (Ezek. 47:1–12; Rev. 22:1–3).

■ **10:12 Hatred.** The word suggests the rejection of the good order, indeed the dissolution (cf. 1 John 3:15) of human relationships. Such hatred causes the fragmentation of society.

love. The word suggests seeking the best for others. Love is the greatest expression of ordered relationships.

covers. In order to promote harmony of relationships, love covers over those matters that cause friction. This verse is alluded to in James 5:20 and 1 Pet. 4:8.

■ **10:13** Those who are perceptive reveal their character in the wisdom of their words. Those who lack sense simply involve themselves in strife. The parallel suggests that foolish talk is the cause of their problems.

■ **10:14 store up knowledge.** The wise person, though no longer the pupil, will continue to learn. Only a fool claims to know everything.

mouth of the foolish. Note how often the fool is portrayed as a babbler (vv. 6, 8, 13, 18, 19, 31, 32). The Book of James, the "Proverbs" of the New Testament, also explores this theme (James 1:26; 3:1–12). Knowing when to speak and when to keep silent is a prominent wisdom theme (11:12 note; 26:4–5; Job 38:2; 42:1–6).

■ **10:15 strong city.** The image is that of security against the uncertainties of life.

destruction of the poor. The poor do not have much defense against the unexpected. This circumstance is observed without comment on its rightness or wrongness (cf. Matt. 26:11). In the final analysis, however, the rich, whose confidence is in themselves (28:11), will find that their monetary security is illusory (11:4, 28; 18:10, 11; 23:4, 5). Only the Lord is a sure defense (3:5, 6).

■ **10:16 wages.** The outcome or reward of righteousness is life (3:2, 18 and notes; cf. Rom. 6:23).

sin. "Sin," or its consequence, punishment, is opposed to life.

■ **10:18** The form of this verse differs from the parallel of opposites (antithetic parallelism) found in much of this chapter. Again the subject is foolish speech (lying or slander), and the one who engages in such action is either malicious or foolish (v. 14 note). Such foolishness is not lightly regarded, because this folly is actually sin (Ex. 20:16).

■ **10:20 heart.** Here the word is parallel with tongue. The mind, will, and inner character of the wicked are the source of futile words (Matt. 15:18, 19).

■ **10:21** See vv. 11 and 17. The wisdom of the righteous has good effects upon others, but fools cannot even sustain themselves.

22 [v]The blessing of the LORD makes *one* rich,
And He adds no sorrow with it.

23 [w]To do evil *is* like sport to a fool,
But a man of understanding has wisdom.
24 [x]The fear of the wicked will come upon him,
And [y]the desire of the righteous will be granted.
25 When the whirlwind passes by, [z]the wicked *is* no *more,*
But [a]the righteous *has* an everlasting foundation.

26 As vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes,
So *is* the lazy *man* to those who send him.

27 [b]The fear of the LORD prolongs days,
But [c]the years of the wicked will be shortened.
28 The hope of the righteous *will be* gladness,
But the [d]expectation of the wicked will perish.
29 The way of the LORD *is* strength for the upright,
But [e]destruction *will come* to the workers of iniquity.

30 [f]The righteous will never be removed,
But the wicked will not inhabit the [6]earth.
31 [g]The mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom,
But the perverse tongue will be cut out.
32 The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable,
But the mouth of the wicked *what is* perverse.

11 [a]Dishonest[1] scales *are* an abomination to the LORD,
But a [2]just weight *is* His delight.

2 When pride comes, then comes [b]shame;
But with the humble *is* wisdom.

3 The integrity of the upright will guide [c]them,
But the perversity of the unfaithful will destroy them.
4 [d]Riches do not profit in the day of wrath,

22 [v]Gen. 24:35; 26:12; Deut. 8:18; Ps. 37:22; Prov. 8:21

23 [w]Prov. 2:14; 15:21

24 [x]Job 15:21; Prov. 1:27; Is. 66:4 [y]Ps. 145:19; Prov. 15:8; Matt. 5:6; [1 John 5:14, 15]

25 [z]Ps. 37:9, 10 [a]Ps. 15:5; Prov. 12:3; Matt. 7:24, 25

27 [b]Prov. 9:11 [c]Job 15:32

28 [d]Job 8:13

29 [e]Ps. 1:6

30 [f]Ps. 37:22; Prov. 2:21 [6]*land*

31 [g]Ps. 37:30; Prov. 10:13

CHAPTER 11

1 [a]Lev. 19:35, 36; Deut. 25:13–16; Prov. 20:10, 23; Mic. 6:11 [1]*deceptive* [2]Lit. *perfect stone*

2 [b]Prov. 16:18; 18:12; 29:23

3 [c]Prov. 13:6

4 [d]Prov. 10:2; Ezek. 7:19; Zeph. 1:18

■ **10:22 rich.** In the Old Testament context this would be material wealth, a result of Solomon's wisdom (1 Kin. 4:22–28; 10:4–13). Wealth is not wisdom's goal, but is often wisdom's reward (v. 2).

■ **10:24 fear of the wicked.** The wicked's fear of punishment. The meaning seems to be that God's righteous judgment is inevitable.

■ **10:26** The form of this proverb differs from the parallel of opposites (antithetic parallelism) usual in this chapter. The comparison turns on what is common to the three pairs (synonymous parallelism; see "Introduction to Hebrew Poetry"). The lazy person is a distasteful irritant to his employer.

■ **10:27 The fear of the LORD.** See 1:7; 9:10 and notes. Harmony with God, here recognized as coming through the provisions of the covenant, means harmony with life. As in the fifth commandment, the blessings of God are seen in terms of a lengthy and fruitful life in the Promised Land (Ex. 20:12; Deut. 5:16 note). See 2:20–22; 3:2 and note.

■ **10:29** This proverb states a basic principle of covenant theology rather than an observation on human life. The wisdom writers remind us that the source of all true knowledge and wisdom is the self-revelation of God in His creative, providential, and saving works, and especially in the Scriptures.

■ **10:30** See v. 27. Here is another proverb grounded in God's covenant with Israel. The "land" (see text note) is that promised to Israel, and its possession is basic to life. Possession of the land was conditional upon the response of faith to the covenant promises.

■ **10:31, 32** See note on v. 14.

■ **10:31 perverse.** The word suggests that which speaks dishonestly and seeks to prevent sound judgment in others.

■ **11:1–31** As in ch. 10, many sayings in this chapter contrast the ways of righteousness and wickedness. Other sentences not explicitly naming these two opposites nevertheless compare specific examples of them.

■ **11:1 Dishonest scales.** Honesty and fair dealing are basic to covenant ethics. Reference to the Lord indicates that covenant relationships are in view.

■ **11:2 pride . . . shame.** Wisdom recognizes the importance of self-control. Arrogance and pride are easily recognized by others who will then withhold honor.

with the humble is wisdom. Because humility involves the realistic appraisal of one's place in relationship to others, it promotes a wise sense of the true order of things.

■ **11:3 integrity.** From a Hebrew root meaning "complete," this word indicates ethical straightness and perfection. Guidance in living is put in its ethical framework. A right relationship to the Lord leads to a right course in life.

perversity. The word means "crookedness" or "twistedness." This lifestyle destroys a person because God's order cannot ultimately be resisted.

■ **11:4 day of wrath.** The saying anticipates not merely natural and impersonal retribution in life, but a personal Judge and His wrath. Wealth cannot secure anyone from God's wrath (Luke 12:13–21).

righteousness. See note on 8:18.

But [e]righteousness delivers from death.
5 The righteousness of the blameless will [3]direct his way aright,
But the wicked will fall by his own [f]wickedness.
6 The righteousness of the upright will deliver them,
But the unfaithful will be caught by *their* lust.

7 When a wicked man dies, *his* expectation will [g]perish,
And the hope of the unjust perishes.
8 [h]The righteous is delivered from trouble,
And it comes to the wicked instead.
9 The hypocrite with *his* mouth destroys his neighbor,
But through knowledge the righteous will be delivered.
10 [i]When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices;
And when the wicked perish, *there is* jubilation.
11 By the blessing of the upright the city is [j]exalted,
But it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked.

12 He who [4]is devoid of wisdom despises his neighbor,
But a man of understanding holds his peace.

13 [k]A talebearer reveals secrets,
But he who is of a faithful spirit [l]conceals a matter.

14 [m]Where *there is* no counsel, the people fall;
But in the multitude of counselors *there is* safety.

15 He who is [n]surety[5] for a stranger will suffer,
But one who hates [6]being surety is secure.

16 A gracious woman retains honor,
But ruthless *men* retain riches.
17 [o]The merciful man does good for his own soul,
But *he who is* cruel troubles his own flesh.
18 The wicked *man* does deceptive work,
But [p]he who sows righteousness *will have* a sure reward.
19 As righteousness *leads* to [q]life,
So he who pursues evil *pursues it* to his own [r]death.

4 [e]Gen. 7:1
5 [f]Prov. 5:22 [3]Or *make smooth* or *straight*
7 [g]Prov. 10:28
8 [h]Prov. 21:18
10 [i]Prov. 28:12
11 [j]Prov. 14:34
12 [4]Lit. *lacks heart*
13 [k]Lev. 19:16; Prov. 20:19; 1 Tim. 5:13 [l]Prov. 19:11
14 [m]1 Kin. 12:1
15 [n]Prov. 6:1, 2 [5]*guaranty* [6]*those pledging guaranty,* lit. *those who strike hands*
17 [o][Matt. 5:7; 25:34–36]
18 [p]Hos. 10:12; [Gal. 6:8, 9]; James 3:18
19 [q]Prov. 10:16; 12:28 [r]Prov. 21:16; [Rom. 6:23; James 1:15]

■ **11:5, 6** The sense is almost identical with v. 3.

■ **11:8 delivered.** An apparent reference to God's providential intervention. Proverbial sayings often state what is generally true, but not without exceptions. The suffering of the righteous (e.g., Job) shows that while a degree of order is perceptible in human experience, such order is not invariable since God is sovereign and pursues His own eternal purposes. Only trust in God's goodness, even when His goodness is not immediately seen, addresses the problem of the righteous sufferer. See note on 10:1—22:16; and "Introduction to Hebrew Poetry."

■ **11:9 with his mouth.** See 10:13, 14, 18 and notes.

knowledge. Wisdom and knowledge as the way to life enable one to escape the ways of the godless (vv. 4, 6, 8).

■ **11:10** A viable society must have some recognition of right and wrong and of reward and retribution. Without descending to vindictive revenge, there is a proper rejoicing when the perpetrators of evil, corruption, and human misery are destroyed.

■ **11:11** The corporate implications of behavior are apparent: righteous lives strengthen the community, while the wicked corrupt and overthrow it.

■ **11:12** See note on 10:14. Gossip and derision easily destroy another's reputation, but they do not advance the reputation of the gossiper. The wise know when to keep silent (v. 13; 12:23; 13:3; 17:28; 18:2, 6–8; Eccl. 3:7).

■ **11:13** A variation on v. 12, this verse notes that maintaining confidences strengthens relationships, while a fool's gossip destroys them (10:14 and note).

■ **11:14 counsel . . . counselors.** See 15:22; 20:18; 24:6. Counsel or advice was a feature of the emergence of wisdom in political life during the reign of David (2 Sam. 15:30—17:23).

■ **11:15** See 6:1 and note.

■ **11:16** These opposed parallel thoughts (antithetic parallelism) perhaps teach the desirability of respect over mere wealth (22:1; cf. Eccl. 7:1). Alternatively, the sense may be that the gracious woman retains honor as surely as the ruthless acquire riches.

■ **11:17 merciful.** The word describes one who behaves rightly toward others. There is a legitimate self-interest expressed in "love your neighbor as yourself" (Lev. 19:18). What is best for others is best for us.

■ **11:18** See 10:2, 16; cf. 1 Cor. 9:6–11. The reward may be material or spiritual. The principle is the lasting value of the rewards of righteousness.

■ **11:19** The ways of righteousness and evil, worked out in specific detail in many sayings in the chapter, are here stated in the broadest terms. The underlying principle is explained in Deut. 30:15–20. In this verse, "righteousness" and "evil" are used broadly, to include the God-given order in existence that experience discerns (8:18 note).

20 Those who are of a perverse heart *are* an abomination to the LORD,
But *the* blameless in their ways *are* His delight.
21 [s]*Though they join* [7]forces, the wicked will not go unpunished;
But [t]the posterity of the righteous will be delivered.

22 *As* a ring of gold in a swine's snout,
So is a lovely woman who lacks [8]discretion.

23 The desire of the righteous *is* only good,
But the expectation of the wicked [u]*is* wrath.

24 There is *one* who [v]scatters, yet increases more;
And there is *one* who withholds more than is right,
But it *leads* to poverty.
25 [w]The generous soul will be made rich,
[x]And he who waters will also be watered himself.
26 The people will curse [y]him who withholds grain,
But [z]blessing *will be* on the head of him who sells *it.*

27 He who earnestly seeks good [9]finds favor,
[a]But trouble will come to him who seeks *evil.*

28 [b]He who trusts in his riches will fall,
But [c]the righteous will flourish like foliage.

29 He who troubles his own house [d]will inherit the wind,
And the fool *will be* [e]servant to the wise of heart.

30 The fruit of the righteous *is a* tree of life,
And [f]he who [1]wins souls *is* wise.

31 [g]If the righteous will be [2]recompensed on the earth,
How much more the ungodly and the sinner.

12 Whoever loves instruction loves knowledge,
But he who hates correction *is* stupid.

2 A good *man* obtains favor from the LORD,
But a man of wicked intentions He will condemn.

21 [s]Prov. 16:5 [t]Ps. 112:2; Prov. 14:26 [7]Lit. *hand to hand*

22 [8]*taste*

23 [u]Prov. 10:28; Rom. 2:8, 9

24 [v]Ps. 112:9; Prov. 13:7; 19:17

25 [w]Prov. 3:9, 10; [2 Cor. 9:6, 7] [x][Matt. 5:7]

26 [y]Amos 8:5, 6 [z]Job 29:13

27 [a]Esth. 7:10; Ps. 7:15, 16; 57:6 [9]Lit. *seeks*

28 [b]Job 31:24 [c]Ps. 1:3; Jer. 17:8

29 [d]Eccl. 5:16 [e]Prov. 14:19

30 [f]Prov. 14:25; [Dan. 12:3; 1 Cor. 9:19–22; James 5:20] [1]Lit. *takes,* in the sense of *brings,* cf. 1 Sam. 16:11

31 [g]Jer. 25:29 [2]*rewarded*

■ **11:20 perverse.** Or, "crooked," "twisted" (8:8).

■ **11:21 will not go unpunished.** The legal terminology indicates that the judgment of God, and not merely natural retribution, is involved. In the same way, there is a judicial act of God involved in the escape of the righteous from judgment.

■ **11:23** See 10:24, 25, 28–30. The contrast of the righteous and the wicked is seen in their destinies.

■ **11:24–26** These verses make the general point that the generous person is blessed, while miserliness leads to ruin (v. 17 note).

■ **11:26** The generosity of v. 25 is illustrated by the community-minded merchant who puts the needs of others ahead of his own interests.

■ **11:27** See v. 17 and note. The one who "seeks good" is either the benefactor of society who receives community approval in return, or the seeker of righteousness who receives the approval of God (cf. Matt. 5:6).

■ **11:28 He who trusts in his riches will fall.** See v. 4 and note. When possessions are seen to ensure life, God is excluded, as are right relations with others. The result is a life of diminished quality.

■ **11:29** The parallel thoughts of this verse are not obvious unless we understand the first line to mean a reckless use of the family wealth that brings ruin on the household. The fool inherits nothing (wind) and must be the servant of the one who has managed his finances well.

■ **11:30 fruit . . . tree of life.** The metaphor is curiously mixed. The result of righteousness is life. See 3:18 and note, 13:12; 15:4.

wins souls. Lit. "takes souls" or "takes lives." The usual meaning of the phrase is to kill, or take away life. To accommodate this, the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) renders the clause, "But the souls of the lawless are taken away before their time." The translation is uncertain (cf. text note).

■ **11:31** The form of this proverb, using intensification ("how much more") is typical of wisdom (15:11; 17:7; 19:7, 10; 21:27).

the righteous will be recompensed. Not even the righteous escape the scrutiny of judgment. The Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) translation reads, "If the righteous one is scarcely saved" (as quoted in 1 Pet. 4:18).

on the earth. Or, "in the land" (2:20–22 note).

How much more the ungodly. If the sins of the righteous are judged, obviously those of the ungodly are judged as well. The principle of human responsibility is clear: even the righteous must accept responsibility for their folly.

■ **12:1 Whoever loves instruction loves knowledge.** Lit. "loving discipline, loving knowledge." The form of this proverb, like 13:3 and 14:2, groups things that belong together without explicitly stating the relationship. These are then contrasted with their opposites. The wise person accepts correction and consequently grows wiser, but the one who cannot accept criticism goes nowhere.

■ **12:2 favor.** See note on 8:35.

LORD. See note on 1:7.

CHAPTER 12

3 [a]Prov. 10:25

4 [b]Prov. 31:23; 1 Cor. 11:7 [c]Prov. 14:30; Hab. 3:16 [1]Lit. *A wife of valor*

6 [d]Prov. 1:11, 18 [e]Prov. 14:3

7 [f]Ps. 37:35–37; Prov. 11:21; Matt. 7:24–27

8 [g]1 Sam. 25:17; Prov. 18:3

9 [h]Prov. 13:7 [2]*lightly esteemed*

10 [i]Deut. 25:4

11 [j]Gen. 3:19 [k]Prov. 28:19 [l]Prov. 6:32 [3]*works* or *cultivates* [4]Lit. *vain things* [5]Lit. *heart*

13 [m]Prov. 18:7 [n][2 Pet. 2:9]

14 [o]Prov. 13:2; 15:23; 18:20 [p]Job 34:11; Prov. 1:31; 24:12; [Is. 3:10, 11]; Hos. 4:9

15 [q]Prov. 3:7; Luke 18:11

16 [r]Prov. 11:13; 29:11

3 A man is not established by wickedness,
But the [a]root of the righteous cannot be moved.

4 [b]An[1] excellent wife *is* the crown of her husband,
But she who causes shame *is* [c]like rottenness in his bones.

5 The thoughts of the righteous *are* right,
But the counsels of the wicked *are* deceitful.

6 [d]The words of the wicked *are,* "Lie in wait for blood,"
[e]But the mouth of the upright will deliver them.

7 [f]The wicked are overthrown and *are* no more,
But the house of the righteous will stand.

8 A man will be commended according to his wisdom,
[g]But he who is of a perverse heart will be despised.

9 [h]Better *is the one* who is [2]slighted but has a servant,
Than he who honors himself but lacks bread.

10 [i]A righteous *man* regards the life of his animal,
But the tender mercies of the wicked *are* cruel.

11 [j]He who [3]tills his land will be satisfied with [k]bread,
But he who follows [4]frivolity [l]*is* devoid of [5]understanding.

12 The wicked covet the catch of evil *men,*
But the root of the righteous yields *fruit.*

13 [m]The wicked is ensnared by the transgression of *his* lips,
[n]But the righteous will come through trouble.

14 [o]A man will be satisfied with good by the fruit of *his* mouth,
[p]And the recompense of a man's hands will be rendered to him.

15 [q]The way of a fool *is* right in his own eyes,
But he who heeds counsel *is* wise.

16 [r]A fool's wrath is known at once,
But a prudent *man* covers shame.

■ **12:4** See the extended appraisal of the virtuous wife at 31:10–31.

■ **12:5** The character of a person establishes principles for action. There is an implicit warning against trusting people on the basis of appearances.

■ **12:6** See 1:11. This verse stresses the power of words for good or evil.

will deliver them. That is, they will rescue the victims of the wicked.

■ **12:7** See 10:25 and note.

■ **12:8 wisdom.** Practical good sense. The display of mastery in life wins praise.

perverse heart. The phrase suggests an inability to think straight; more muddled than evil.

■ **12:9** A number of proverbs have this form of direct comparison using the "better . . . than" formula (15:16, 17; 16:8, 19, 32; 17:1, 12; 19:1).

one who is slighted. A person of no social standing or reputation.

but has a servant. The Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) renders this phrase, "who works for himself." The meaning is either, "Better humble prosperity than poverty concealed by pretense," or, "Better to work without esteem than to go hungry while dreaming of affluence."

■ **12:10** God takes account of our treatment of animals (1 Kin. 4:33). This is consistent with concern for the right order of things in the world.

righteous. See note on 8:18.

tender mercies . . . are cruel. The wicked person is incapable of kindness even towards his livestock.

■ **12:11** A variation of v. 9, this verse contrasts the benefits of honest hard work with fantasies that produce nothing. See 6:6–11; 20:4; 24:30–34; 28:19.

■ **12:12** Although the Hebrew of this verse is difficult, the basic contrast—the benefits of righteousness against the effects of wickedness—is plain.

■ **12:13** See 10:11, 14, 31.

■ **12:14** The principle of rewards, expressed for example in v. 21, is focused on wise speech. Such speech creates good relationships and shows care for the life-enhancing order of things. Its rewards are as tangible as those of physical labor.

■ **12:15** The fool thinks he knows better than others. The wise person is humble enough to learn from the experience of others and has the ability to discern what is good counsel (v. 1).

■ **12:16** Self-control is characteristic of the wise. The fool reacts too strongly and too soon, destroying relationships. The wise person leaves the way open for reconciliation.

17 [s]He *who* speaks truth declares righteousness,
But a false witness, deceit.
18 [t]There is one who speaks like the piercings of a sword,
But the tongue of the wise *promotes* health.
19 The truthful lip shall be established forever,
[u]But a lying tongue *is* but for a moment.
20 Deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil,
But counselors of peace have joy.
21 [v]No grave [6]trouble will overtake the righteous,
But the wicked shall be filled with evil.
22 [w]Lying lips *are* an abomination to the LORD,
But those who deal truthfully *are* His delight.

23 [x]A prudent man conceals knowledge,
But the heart of fools proclaims foolishness.

24 [y]The hand of the diligent will rule,
But the lazy *man* will be put to forced labor.

25 [z]Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression,
But [a]a good word makes it glad.

26 The righteous should choose his friends carefully,
For the way of the wicked leads them astray.

27 The lazy *man* does not roast what he took in hunting,
But diligence *is* man's precious possession.

28 In the way of righteousness *is* life,
And in *its* pathway *there is* no death.

13 A wise son *heeds* his father's instruction,
[a]But a scoffer does not listen to rebuke.

2 [b]A man shall eat well by the fruit of *his* mouth,
But the soul of the unfaithful feeds on violence.
3 [c]He who guards his mouth preserves his life,
But he who opens wide his lips shall have destruction.

17 [s]Prov. 14:5

18 [t]Ps. 57:4; Prov. 4:22; 15:4

19 [u][Ps. 52:4, 5]; Prov. 19:9

21 [v]Ps. 91:10; Prov. 1:33; 1 Pet. 3:13 [6]*harm*

22 [w]Prov. 6:17; 11:20; Rev. 22:15

23 [x]Prov. 13:16

24 [y]Prov. 10:4

25 [z]Prov. 15:13 [a]Is. 50:4

CHAPTER 13

1 [a]Is. 28:14, 15

2 [b]Prov. 12:14

3 [c]Ps. 39:1; Prov. 21:23; [James 3:2]

■ **12:17** On first sight this proverb expresses what should be self-evident, but it effectively illustrates the inevitable relationship between character and deeds (v. 5 note).

■ **12:18, 19** These two proverbs may have been placed with v. 17 because they enlarge on the same theme. Verse 18 considers the effects of words on our relationships with others, while v. 19 considers the strength of truth compared with the weakness of lies that inevitably give themselves away (cf. v. 13).

■ **12:20 Deceit.** The contrast with "joy" seems to require that this means deceiving oneself.

peace. This word (Hebrew *shalom*) refers to wholeness; it is a term addressing relationships rather than a reference to the private experience of tranquility.

■ **12:21 No grave trouble.** This basic condition of the righteous refers both to natural calamity and the judgment of God. See note on 11:8.

■ **12:22** The Lord's self-revealed character and attitudes provide a strong motive for truth.

■ **12:23 conceals knowledge.** Not out of selfishness but so that he does not parade his knowledge. Wisdom knows when it is right to keep silent and when to speak (26:4, 5; Eccl. 3:7; James 3:17, 18).

proclaims foolishness. The fool not only has an inflated assessment of his own cleverness (v. 15), but cannot resist showing it off. Such posturing betrays his real foolishness.

■ **12:25** The ministry of encouragement is more than a superficial word (James 2:15, 16), but the spoken word is still an important aspect of caring for one another. God acts towards us with deeds interpreted by His Word.

■ **12:27 roast.** It is difficult to tell whether the translation should be that the man is too lazy to roast his prey, or too lazy to catch it in the first place. The second line praises diligence without continuing the metaphor of the hunt.

■ **12:28 life.** See 3:2, 18 and notes.

no death. Hebrew "not death." See 2:18 and note, also 3:2. The Hebrew consonants translated as "no" can also mean "to:" in contrast to the "way of righteousness" leading to life, "there is a path that leads to death."

■ **13:1** The teachability of the child or pupil contrasts with the fool's propensity to scoff and to refuse correction (1:8, 22 and notes).

■ **13:2 fruit of his mouth.** The power of words is a frequent wisdom theme. See 10:11, 13, 19; 12:14 and notes. Wise words are constructive, and the speaker personally benefits from them.

unfaithful. The word suggests treacherous deceivers whose social conscience is warped.

■ **13:3 guards his mouth.** Having control over one's speech so that what is said is carefully considered for its possible effects.

opens wide his lips. Blurts out words, either hastily or maliciously, without concern for the consequences.

4 [d]The soul of a lazy *man* desires, and *has* nothing;
But the soul of the diligent shall be made rich.

5 A righteous *man* hates lying,
But a wicked *man* is loathsome and comes to shame.
6 [e]Righteousness guards *him whose* way is blameless,
But wickedness overthrows the sinner.

7 [f]There is one who makes himself rich, yet *has* nothing;
And one who makes himself poor, yet *has* great riches.

8 The ransom of a man's life *is* his riches,
But the poor does not hear rebuke.

9 The light of the righteous rejoices,
[g]But the lamp of the wicked will be put out.

10 By pride comes nothing but [h]strife,
But with the well-advised *is* wisdom.

11 [i]Wealth *gained by* dishonesty will be diminished,
But he who gathers by labor will increase.

12 Hope deferred makes the heart sick,
But [j]*when* the desire comes, *it is* a tree of life.

13 He who [k]despises the word will be destroyed,
But he who fears the commandment will be rewarded.
14 [l]The law of the wise *is* a fountain of life,
To turn *one* away from [m]the snares of death.

15 Good understanding [l]gains [n]favor,
But the way of the unfaithful *is* hard.
16 [o]Every prudent *man* acts with knowledge,
But a fool lays open *his* folly.

17 A wicked messenger falls into trouble,
But [p]a faithful ambassador *brings* health.

18 Poverty and shame *will come* to him who [2]disdains correction,
But [q]he who regards a rebuke will be honored.

4 [d]Prov. 10:4
6 [e]Prov. 11:3, 5, 6
7 [f][Prov. 11:24; 12:9; Luke 12:20, 21]
9 [g]Job 18:5, 6; 21:17; Prov. 24:20
10 [h]Prov. 10:12
11 [i]Prov. 10:2; 20:21
12 [j]Prov. 13:19
13 [k]Num. 15:31; 2 Chr. 36:16; Is. 5:24
14 [l]Prov. 6:22; 10:11; 14:27 [m]2 Sam. 22:6
15 [n]Ps. 111:10; Prov. 3:4 [1]*gives*
16 [o]Prov. 12:23
17 [p]Prov. 25:13
18 [q]Prov. 15:5, 31, 32 [2]Lit. *ignores*

■ **13:4 lazy man.** See 6:6–11 and notes. Human responsibility cannot be avoided. Neither the world nor God owes us a living.

diligent. Rightly understanding the rewards of honest labor, the industrious person is sustained.

■ **13:5 righteous.** See note on 8:18.

■ **13:6** See 10:9; 11:3–9.

■ **13:7 makes himself.** Or, "pretends to be." Though the disparity of possessions is noted, the point of the proverb seems to be the similarity of pretense. Each misrepresents the facts about himself.

■ **13:8** The rich may be kidnapped for ransom, but such threats do not concern the poor. Behind each situation is the principle that the security of riches can be illusory while the insecurity of poverty has its advantages.

■ **13:9 rejoices.** The metaphor presents two kinds of houses: one brightly lit and happy, the other dark and deserted. These houses symbolize human lives: one person prospers and lives long while another is cut short (10:27 note).

■ **13:11** The wisdom of honest hard work is contrasted with the folly of dishonest gain.

■ **13:12** A common human experience: frustrated expectations cause a loss of morale and a sense of hopelessness. This does not imply that instant gratification is good, but rather that we should honestly strive for desirable goals in life.

tree of life. See 3:18 and note.

■ **13:13 word.** The word of wise instruction.

commandment. See 3:1 and note. The opposite effects of obedience and disobedience are constant themes.

■ **13:14 fountain of life.** The same Hebrew term is rendered "well of life" at 10:11 (10:11 note).

■ **13:15 unfaithful.** See v. 2 and note.

■ **13:16** The truth of this proverb seems to be self-evident, but see 12:17 and note.

■ **13:17 wicked messenger.** One who brings a deceitful message.

trouble. Or, "misfortune." Such a messenger was the Amalekite who, hoping to win favor from David, falsely claimed to have killed Saul, but was executed for his trouble (2 Sam. 1:1–16). The parallel statements of this proverb suggest that the faithful messenger, perhaps an envoy, promotes the welfare of others.

19 A desire accomplished is sweet to the soul,
But *it is* an abomination to fools to depart from evil.

20 He who walks with wise *men* will be wise,
But the companion of fools will be destroyed.

21 [r]Evil pursues sinners,
But to the righteous, good shall be repaid.

22 A good *man* leaves an inheritance to his children's children,
But [s]the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous.

23 [t]Much food *is in* the [3]fallow *ground* of the poor,
And for lack of justice there is [4]waste.

24 [u]He who spares his rod hates his son,
But he who loves him disciplines him [5]promptly.

25 [v]The righteous eats to the satisfying of his soul,
But the stomach of the wicked shall be in want.

14 The wise woman builds her house,
But the foolish pulls it down with her hands.

2 He who walks in his uprightness fears the LORD,
[a]But *he who is* perverse in his ways despises Him.

3 In the mouth of a fool *is* a rod of pride,
[b]But the lips of the wise will preserve them.

4 Where no oxen *are,* the [1]trough *is* clean;
But much increase *comes* by the strength of an ox.

5 A [c]faithful witness does not lie,
But a false witness will utter [d]lies.

6 A scoffer seeks wisdom and does not *find it,*
But [e]knowledge *is* easy to him who understands.

7 Go from the presence of a foolish man,
When you do not perceive *in him* the lips of [f]knowledge.

21 [r]Ps. 32:10; Is. 47:11

22 [s]Job 27:16, 17; Prov. 28:8; [Eccl. 2:26]

23 [t]Prov. 12:11
[3]*uncultivated*
[4]Lit. *what is swept away*

24 [u]Prov. 19:18
[5]*early*

25 [v]Ps. 34:10; Prov. 10:3

CHAPTER 14

2 [a][Rom. 2:4]

3 [b]Prov. 12:6

4 [1]*manger* or *feed trough*

5 [c]Rev. 1:5; 3:14
[d]Ex. 23:1; Deut. 19:16; Prov. 6:19; 12:17

6 [e]Prov. 8:9; 17:24

7 [f]Prov. 23:9

■ **13:19** See v. 12 and note. The achievement of a worthwhile goal has benefits for one's life. Fools will not turn from evil to pursue such goals.

■ **13:20** The simple lesson is that we become like those whose company we keep.

■ **13:21** Hebrew wisdom, with its focus on the lessons from human experience (ch. 4 note), stresses the general cause-and-effect relation between lifestyles and their outcome. While this can be thought of as natural retribution because of the observed patterns of human experience, there is an underlying assumption that the order in the world is a consequence of God's rule.

■ **13:22 leaves an inheritance.** Wisdom in life has lasting effects, especially in one's own family.

stored up for the righteous. The wealth of the wicked may be taken away and given to those more deserving (28:8; Job 27:13–19). This verse may point to the irresponsible dissipation of wealth due to folly, or to divine retribution on the wicked wealthy for other sins (cf. James 5:1–3).

■ **13:23** The natural relationship between diligence and sufficiency (vv. 4, 11 notes) is broken by oppression and injustice.

■ **13:24 rod.** Although the word may symbolize any kind of disciplinary correction, there is little doubt that corporal punishment was approved in some situations (10:13; 22:15; 23:13, 14; 29:15). Discipline with love prevents the rod from being destructive (3:11, 12 and notes).

■ **13:25** See vv. 13, 18, 21 and notes.

■ **14:1 wise woman builds her house.** Note the verbal parallels with the personification of wisdom as a woman who builds her house in 9:1.

■ **14:2 uprightness.** A contrast with "perverse," the word means "straight," "honest."

fears the LORD. See 1:7 and note.

■ **14:3** See 10:13 and note.

■ **14:4 clean.** It is unclear whether the Hebrew means that the trough is "clean," or full of "grain," as a result of being unused. In either case, the minor benefit of the unused trough must be weighed against the nothing that is produced when no oxen are working. Expenses must be accepted if anything is to be accomplished.

■ **14:5** A fact and a warning that emphasize the consistency of character with action (12:5, 17 and notes).

■ **14:6 scoffer.** See 1:22 and note.

seeks wisdom. This kind of person may recognize the value of wisdom, but does not have the teachability to succeed.

8 The wisdom of the prudent *is* to understand his way,
But the folly of fools *is* deceit.

9 [g]Fools mock at [2]sin,
But among the upright *there is* favor.

10 The heart knows its own bitterness,
And a stranger does not share its joy.

11 [h]The house of the wicked will be overthrown,
But the tent of the upright will flourish.

12 [i]There is a way *that seems* right to a man,
But [j]its end *is* the way of [k]death.

13 Even in laughter the heart may sorrow,
And [l]the end of mirth *may be* grief.

14 The backslider in heart will be [m]filled with his own ways,
But a good man *will be satisfied* [3]from [n]above.

15 The simple believes every word,
But the prudent considers well his steps.

16 [o]A wise *man* fears and departs from evil,
But a fool rages and is self-confident.

17 A quick-tempered *man* acts foolishly,
And a man of wicked intentions is hated.

18 The simple inherit folly,
But the prudent are crowned with knowledge.

19 The evil will bow before the good,
And the wicked at the gates of the righteous.

20 [p]The poor *man* is hated even by his own neighbor,
But [4]the rich *has* many [q]friends.

21 He who despises his neighbor sins;
[r]But he who has mercy on the poor, happy *is* he.

9 [g]Prov. 10:23 [2]Lit. *guilt*
11 [h]Job 8:15
12 [i]Prov. 16:25 [j]Rom. 6:21 [k]Prov. 12:15
13 [l]Prov. 5:4; Eccl. 2:1, 2
14 [m]Prov. 1:31; 12:15 [n]Prov. 13:2; 18:20 [3]Lit. *from above himself*
16 [o]Job 28:28; Ps. 34:14; Prov. 22:3
20 [p]Prov. 19:7 [q]Prov. 19:4 [4]Lit. *many are the lovers of the rich*
21 [r]Ps. 112:9; [Prov. 19:17]

■ **14:8 prudent.** In the context of wisdom, the term indicates one who is shrewd, who acts with real discernment in a way that promotes life. See 12:16, 23; 13:16 and notes.

deceit. Perhaps self-deception (cf. 12:20 and note), although the deception of others may be involved.

■ **14:9 mock at sin.** This may mean that they mock at the suggestion of presenting the sacrificial trespass offering to God, or of making restitution to the person wronged (Lev. 6:1–7).

favor. The second line of the verse contrasts with the first, and the sense of the word is either acceptance with God or restored fellowship with others.

■ **14:10** While much biblical wisdom literature reflects on interpersonal relationships, there is also a concern for those aspects of life that are personal and private. Some things cannot be communicated and one must learn to know what they are.

■ **14:12** See 2:18, 20–22; 3:18 and notes.

seems right. The saying implies that the way is not right and that the person in question is rash, undiscerning, or ignorant.

■ **14:13** Cf. v. 10 and note. Outward joy and hidden grief may coexist, but grief may be the truth to be faced in the end.

■ **14:14** The Hebrew in the second line of this verse is difficult, but the basic contrast between the rewards for good and evil behavior is apparent.

■ **14:15 simple.** See note on 1:4. The "simple" person is unskilled in the use of critical judgment.

prudent. See note on v. 8.

■ **14:17 quick-tempered.** See v. 29; 16:32; 19:11 and notes.

of wicked intentions. The Hebrew word usually signifies "discretion," a positive virtue (1:4; 2:11; 3:21; 5:2; 8:12). A following line of opposite meaning (antithetic parallelism), as found in most of the proverbs in this chapter, would suggest the opposite of quick-tempered.

■ **14:18 knowledge.** See 1:7 and note.

■ **14:19** Even in this life, evil people are sometimes compelled to give grudging respect to the good. But the justice of God may be intended, in which the righteous are finally vindicated and the wicked made to bow before them at the last judgment.

■ **14:20** Although originally an independent saying regarding friends who can assist in times of trouble (cf. Luke 16:9), its placement immediately before the proverb of v. 21 gives it an additional application. Even with the best of intentions, people grow tired of a friendship that always makes demands. Friendship is easy when it makes no demands or brings gains.

■ **14:21** God's law commands kindness and care for one's neighbor as a reflection of the Lord's own character (Lev. 19:10–18). This principle has even greater clarity in the New Testament, which requires that we treat each other in a way that reflects God's gracious treatment of us through Christ (1 John 4:7–11).

22 Do they not go astray who devise evil?
But mercy and truth *belong* to those who devise good.

23 In all labor there is profit,
But [5]idle chatter *leads* only to poverty.

24 The crown of the wise is their riches,
But the foolishness of fools *is* folly.

25 A true witness [6]delivers [s]souls,
But a deceitful *witness* speaks lies.

26 In the fear of the LORD *there is* strong confidence,
And His children will have a place of refuge.
27 [t]The fear of the LORD *is* a fountain of life,
To turn *one* away from the snares of death.

28 In a multitude of people *is* a king's honor,
But in the lack of people *is* the downfall of a prince.

29 [u]*He who is* slow to wrath has great understanding,
But *he who is* [7]impulsive exalts folly.

30 A sound heart *is* life to the body,
But [v]envy *is* [w]rottenness to the bones.

31 [x]He who oppresses the poor reproaches [y]his Maker,
But he who honors Him has mercy on the needy.

32 The wicked is banished in his wickedness,
But [z]the righteous has a refuge in his death.

33 Wisdom rests in the heart of him who has understanding,
But [a]*what is* in the heart of fools is made known.

34 Righteousness exalts a [b]nation,
But sin *is* a [8]reproach to *any* people.

35 [c]The king's favor *is* toward a wise servant,
But his wrath *is against* him who causes shame.

15 A [a]soft answer turns away wrath,
But [b]a harsh word stirs up anger.
2 The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly,
[c]But the mouth of fools pours forth foolishness.

23 [5]Lit. *talk of the lips*

25 [s][Ezek. 3:18–21] [6]*saves lives*

27 [t]Prov. 13:14

29 [u]Prov. 16:32; 19:11; Eccl. 7:9; James 1:19 [7]Lit. *short of spirit*

30 [v]Ps. 112:10 [w]Prov. 12:4; Hab. 3:16

31 [x]Prov. 17:5; Matt. 25:40; 1 John 3:17 [y][Job 31:15; Prov. 22:2]

32 [z]Gen. 49:18; Job 13:15; [Ps. 16:11; 73:24]; 2 Cor. 1:9; 5:8; [2 Tim. 4:18]

33 [a]Prov. 12:16

34 [b]Prov. 11:11 [8]*shame* or *disgrace*

35 [c]Matt. 24:45–47

CHAPTER 15

1 [a]Prov. 25:15 [b]1 Sam. 25:10

2 [c]Prov. 12:23

■ **14:22 mercy and truth.** This phrase, used of God's loving compassion for His covenant people (Ps. 86:15), is here applied to the highest human love and loyalty.

■ **14:23** See 10:4; 12:11; 13:4 and notes.

■ **14:24** As it stands, this verse is similar to v. 23. The self-evident truth in the second line emphasizes the futility of folly.

■ **14:25** See v. 5. The first line expresses the results of truthful witness in a legal dispute (see text note). The second line does not express the opposite of the thought in the first line (as is usually the case in antithetic parallelism), but simply indicates the nature of false witness as it obscures the truth.

■ **14:26 fear of the LORD.** See 1:7 and note.

■ **14:27 fountain of life.** See 3:18; 10:11; 11:30; 13:14 and notes.

■ **14:29** See v. 17.

■ **14:30 heart.** See note on 2:2. The ancients recognized the link between mental and spiritual tranquility and physical health (3:7, 8).

■ **14:32 death.** The Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) reads "piety," making a more direct contrast with "wickedness." The Hebrew text does not speak explicitly of resurrection from death, but it does suggest confidence that God vindicates the righteous (23:18 and note).

■ **14:33 is made known.** The meaning of this line is uncertain. Either the fool readily flaunts what he imagines to be his wisdom, or even the fool manifests an occasional bit of wisdom.

■ **14:34 exalts.** Either morally, or as a consequence of divine material blessings (Deut. 28:1–14; 1 Kin. 4:20–28).

■ **14:35** The wisdom of the royal court provides this warning against the incompetent fool.

■ **15:1** The power of words to build up or to destroy relationships is stressed here and in vv. 2, 4, 7, 14, and 23.

■ **15:2** See 6:17, 24; 10:20, 31; 12:17–19.

3 [d]2 Chr. 16:9; Job 34:21; Prov. 5:21; Jer. 16:17; 32:19; Zech. 4:10; Heb. 4:13
4 [f]Lit. *healing*
5 [e]Prov. 10:1 [f]Prov. 13:18 [2]Lit. *keeps*
7 [3]*spread*
8 [g]Prov. 21:27; Eccl. 5:1; Is. 1:11; Jer. 6:20; Mic. 6:7
9 [h]Prov. 21:21
10 [i]1 Kin. 22:8 [j]Prov. 5:12

3 [d]The eyes of the LORD *are* in every place,
Keeping watch on the evil and the good.

4 A [f]wholesome tongue *is* a tree of life,
But perverseness in it breaks the spirit.

5 [e]A fool despises his father's instruction,
[f]But he who [2]receives correction is prudent.

6 *In* the house of the righteous *there is* much treasure,
But in the revenue of the wicked is trouble.

7 The lips of the wise [3]disperse knowledge,
But the heart of the fool *does* not *do* so.

8 [g]The sacrifice of the wicked *is* an abomination to the LORD,
But the prayer of the upright *is* His delight.
9 The way of the wicked *is* an abomination to the LORD,
But He loves him who [h]follows righteousness.

10 [i]Harsh discipline *is* for him who forsakes the way,
And [j]he who hates correction will die.

God Sees and Knows: Divine Omniscience

"Omniscient" means "knowing everything." God's eyes run everywhere (Job 24:23; Ps. 33:13–15; 139:13–16; Prov. 15:3; Jer. 16:17; Heb. 4:13), and He searches all hearts, as well as observing everyone's ways (1 Sam. 16:7; 1 Kin. 8:39; 1 Chr. 28:9; Ps. 139:1–6, 23; Jer. 17:10; Luke 16:15; Rom. 8:27; Rev. 2:23)—in other words, He knows everything about everything and everybody all the time. He knows the future no less than the past and present, and possible events that never happen no less than the actual events that do (1 Sam. 23:9–13; 2 Kin. 13:19; Ps. 81:14, 15; Is. 48:18). Nor does He have to search for information about things, as a computer might retrieve a file; all His knowledge is immediately and directly before Him. Bible writers stand in awe of the capacity of God's mind in this regard (Ps. 139:1–6; 147:5; Is. 40:13, 14, 28; cf. Rom. 11:33–36).

God's knowledge is linked with His sovereignty; He knows each thing because He created it, sustains it, and now makes it function every moment according to His plan (Eph. 1:11). The idea that God could know, and foreknow, everything without controlling everything is not only unscriptural but illogical.

Believers are encouraged by God's omniscience because it assures them that everything about them is known to One who loves them, and who will overlook nothing at all that concerns them (Is. 40:27–31; Matt. 6:8). To the unbeliever, the truth of God's universal knowledge must bring dread, for it comes as a reminder that one cannot hide either oneself or one's sins from God (Ps. 139:7–12; 94:1–11; Jon. 1:1–12). □

■ **15:3 eyes of the LORD.** See 2 Chr. 16:9; Ps. 33:13–15. The sages sometimes looked beyond the observable events and natural retribution to remind themselves of the reality of divine justice. See theological note "God Sees and Knows: Divine Omniscience."

■ **15:4 wholesome.** See text note. A conciliatory tongue mends relationships (v. 2; 12:18).

tree of life. See 3:18 and note.

perverseness. See note on 11:3.

breaks the spirit. Destroys morale and self-esteem (Is. 65:14 text note).

■ **15:5** See 1:8; 6:20; 12:15; 13:1, 13, 18. Humble teachability is the mark of the wise.

■ **15:6 treasure.** Either material riches, or perhaps a metaphor for wisdom itself (cf. 8:18–21).

is trouble. Or, "will be destroyed," as in the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament translation).

■ **15:7** See v. 2 and note.

■ **15:8** See Is. 1:12–15; Amos 5:21–24. The sage here draws on Israel's religious life, illustrating the covenantal framework within which biblical wisdom operates.

■ **15:10 the way.** The way of divine wisdom (2:12–20). Discipline will be needed to bring this one back to God's path (v. 5; 12:1).

hates correction will die. See 2:18 and note.

11 [k]Hell[4] and [5]Destruction *are* before the LORD;
So how much more [l]the hearts of the sons of men.

12 [m]A scoffer does not love one who corrects him,
Nor will he go to the wise.

13 [n]A merry heart makes a cheerful [6]countenance,
But [o]by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.

14 The heart of him who has understanding seeks knowledge,
But the mouth of fools feeds on foolishness.

15 All the days of the afflicted *are* evil,
[p]But he who is of a merry heart *has* a continual feast.

16 [q]Better *is* a little with the fear of the LORD,
Than great treasure with trouble.

17 [r]Better *is* a dinner of [7]herbs where love is,
Than a fatted calf with hatred.

18 [s]A wrathful man stirs up strife,
But *he who is* slow to anger allays contention.

19 [t]The way of the lazy *man is* like a hedge of thorns,
But the way of the upright *is* a highway.

20 [u]A wise son makes a father glad,
But a foolish man despises his mother.

21 [v]Folly *is* joy *to him who is* destitute of [8]discernment,
[w]But a man of understanding walks uprightly.

22 [x]Without counsel, plans go awry,
But in the multitude of counselors they are established.

23 A man has joy by the answer of his mouth,
And [y]a word *spoken* [9]in due season, how good *it is!*

24 [z]The way of life *winds* upward for the wise,
That he may [a]turn away from [l]hell below.

25 [b]The LORD will destroy the house of the proud,
But [c]He will establish the boundary of the widow.

11 [k]Job 26:6; Ps. 139:8 [l]1 Sam. 16:7; 2 Chr. 6:30; Ps. 44:21; Acts 1:24 [4]Or *Sheol* [5]Heb. *Abaddon*

12 [m]Prov. 13:1; Amos 5:10; 2 Tim. 4:3

13 [n]Prov. 12:25 [o]Prov. 17:22 [6]*face*

15 [p]Prov. 17:22

16 [q]Ps. 37:16; Prov. 16:8; Eccl. 4:6; 1 Tim. 6:6

17 [r]Prov. 17:1 [7]Or *vegetables*

18 [s]Prov. 26:21

19 [t]Prov. 22:5

20 [u]Prov. 10:1

21 [v]Prov. 10:23 [w]Eph. 5:15 [8]Lit. *heart*

22 [x]Prov. 11:14

23 [y]Prov. 25:11; Is. 50:4 [9]Lit. *in its time*

24 [z]Phil. 3:20; [Col. 3:1, 2] [a]Prov. 14:16 [l]Or *Sheol*

25 [b]Prov. 12:7; Is. 2:11 [c]Ps. 68:5, 6

■ **15:11 Hell.** Hebrew *sheol* (1:12 note).

Destruction. See text note. Death is here portrayed as a kind of destruction from the Lord. The Lord penetrates the secrets of the grave; how much easier is it for Him to know our minds (Ps. 139:23, 24).

■ **15:12 scoffer.** See note on 1:22.

■ **15:13** See note on 14:30.

■ **15:15 feast.** A metaphor for joy.

■ **15:16** For examples of the "better . . . than" comparison form, see note on 12:9. The fear of the Lord brings its own riches (v. 6 note).

treasure with trouble. See 10:2. Riches that do not accrue from a wise life carry their own seeds of destruction (Mark 10:25).

■ **15:17** The contrast is indicative of poverty and wealth. The quality of family relationships is not tied to wealth; the quality of hospitality is based on relationships, not on the food provided.

■ **15:18** See 14:17, 29; 15:1. The disposition of people calms or inflames a quarrel. We can disagree without being disagreeable.

■ **15:19** See 6:6–11; 10:4; 13:4.

upright. The word is used here as the opposite of "lazy." There is an implied link between sloth and unrighteousness, diligence and virtue.

■ **15:23** The wise receive great satisfaction from being able to give the proper word at the right time.

■ **15:24** See 2:18–22 and notes.

hell. See note on 1:12.

■ **15:25** A recognition of ultimate divine retribution.

house of the proud. See 14:11.

boundary of the widow. See note on Deut. 19:14. Since the oppression of widows did take place (e.g., Is. 1:17, 23; 10:2), this proverb must be seen as a statement of confidence that God's righteousness is finally realized.

26 [d]Prov. 6:16, 18
[e]Ps. 37:30
27 [f]Is. 5:8; [Jer. 17:11]
28 [g]1 Pet. 3:15
29 [h]Ps. 10:1; 34:16
[i]Ps. 145:18; [James 5:16]
30 [2]Lit. *fat*
33 [j]Prov. 1:7
[k]Prov. 18:12

CHAPTER 16

1 [a]Jer. 10:23
[b]Matt. 10:19
[1]*plans*
2 [c]Prov. 21:2
3 [d]Ps. 37:5; Prov. 3:6; [1 Pet. 5:7]
[2]Lit. *Roll*
4 [e]Is. 43:7; Rom. 11:36 [f]Job 21:30; [Rom. 9:22] [3]Lit. *evil*
5 [g]Prov. 6:17; 8:13
[4]Lit. *hand to hand*
6 [h]Dan. 4:27; Luke 11:41 [i]Prov. 8:13; 14:16

26 [d]The thoughts of the wicked *are* an abomination to the LORD,
[e]But *the words* of the pure *are* pleasant.

27 [f]He who is greedy for gain troubles his own house,
But he who hates bribes will live.

28 The heart of the righteous [g]studies how to answer,
But the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil.

29 [h]The LORD *is* far from the wicked,
But [i]He hears the prayer of the righteous.

30 The light of the eyes rejoices the heart,
And a good report makes the bones [2]healthy.

31 The ear that hears the rebukes of life
Will abide among the wise.

32 He who disdains instruction despises his own soul,
But he who heeds rebuke gets understanding.

33 [j]The fear of the LORD *is* the instruction of wisdom,
And [k]before honor *is* humility.

16 The [a]preparations[1] of the heart *belong* to man,
[b]But the answer of the tongue *is* from the LORD.

2 All the ways of a man *are* pure in his own [c]eyes,
But the LORD weighs the spirits.

3 [d]Commit[2] your works to the LORD,
And your thoughts will be established.

4 The [e]LORD has made all for Himself,
[f]Yes, even the wicked for the day of [3]doom.

5 [g]Everyone proud in heart *is* an abomination to the LORD;
Though they join [4]forces, none will go unpunished.

6 [h]In mercy and truth
Atonement is provided for iniquity;
And [i]by the fear of the LORD *one* departs from evil.

7 When a man's ways please the LORD,
He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.

■ **15:26** As with vv. 8, 9, to maintain a right relationship with the Lord is the ultimate wisdom.

■ **15:27 greedy . . . bribes.** These parallel lines suggest one whose riches are ill-gotten. Our folly usually has repercussions on those closest to us (1:19).

will live. See 2:20–22 and notes.

■ **15:28** The wise and righteous recognize the need to weigh matters carefully before giving advice.

■ **15:29** See note on v. 8.

■ **15:30 The light of the eyes.** The idea seems to be that a cheerful, radiant person, or a beautiful scene, affects one's mind in the same way that good news promotes our general well-being. See note on 14:30.

■ **15:32 despises his own soul.** Folly is self-destructive.

■ **15:33** See 1:7; 11:2 and notes.

■ **16:1** The sages occasionally remind us that human responsibility to reason and act does not contradict God's sovereignty (vv. 2, 9).

answer . . . from the LORD. The phrase means either that God enables us to give that apt answer and carry through plans, or that God's answer (His word of decision) is the real power that shapes events (19:21; cf. Phil. 2:12, 13).

■ **16:2 spirits.** People are able to rationalize almost any kind of behavior as they strive to justify themselves (12:15; 30:12). God's knowledge is a warning against such self-deception (Heb. 4:12; cf. 1 Cor. 4:3–5).

■ **16:3 Commit.** Hebrew "roll." The expression is unusual. It may mean that our plans should be entrusted to the Lord (Ps. 37:5), or devised with conscious application of the principles of God's Word.

■ **16:4 for Himself.** Lit. "for His answer" or "for its answer." All of creation, even the wicked and their actions, stand under God's sovereignty and serve His purposes (cf. Rom. 9:17–23).

■ **16:5** See 11:20, 21.

■ **16:6 mercy and truth.** The phrase summarizes the attitude of the wise to the Lord (3:3; 14:22; 20:28). The saying is a rebuke to formal religion without true faith.

■ **16:7 please the LORD.** Following God's way has reconciling and healing effects on personal relationships.

8 [j]Better *is* a little with righteousness,
Than vast revenues without justice.

9 [k]A man's heart plans his way,
[l]But the LORD directs his steps.

10 Divination *is* on the lips of the king;
His mouth must not transgress in judgment.
11 [m]Honest weights and scales *are* the LORD's;
All the weights in the bag *are* His [5]work.
12 *It is* an abomination for kings to commit wickedness,
For [n]a throne is established by righteousness.
13 [o]Righteous lips *are* the delight of kings,
And they love him who speaks *what is* right.
14 As messengers of death *is* the king's wrath,
But a wise man will [p]appease it.
15 In the light of the king's face *is* life,
And his favor *is* like a [q]cloud of the latter rain.

16 [r]How much better to get wisdom than gold!
And to get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver.

17 The highway of the upright *is* to depart from evil;
He who keeps his way preserves his soul.

18 Pride *goes* before destruction,
And a haughty spirit before [6]a fall.
19 Better *to be* of a humble spirit with the lowly,
Than to divide the [7]spoil with the proud.

20 He who heeds the word wisely will find good,
And whoever [s]trusts in the LORD, happy *is* he.

21 The wise in heart will be called prudent,
And sweetness of the lips increases learning.

22 Understanding *is* a wellspring of life to him who has it.
But the correction of fools *is* folly.

23 The heart of the wise teaches his mouth,
And adds learning to his lips.

24 Pleasant words *are like* a honeycomb,
Sweetness to the soul and health to the bones.

8 [j]Ps. 37:16; Prov. 15:16
9 [k]Prov. 19:21 [l]Ps. 37:23; Prov. 20:24; Jer. 10:23
11 [m]Lev. 19:36 [5]*concern*
12 [n]Prov. 25:5
13 [o]Prov. 14:35
14 [p]Prov. 25:15
15 [q]Zech. 10:1
16 [r]Prov. 8:10, 11, 19
18 [6]*stumbling*
19 [7]*plunder*
20 [s]Ps. 34:8; Jer. 17:7

■ **16:8** See 15:16, 17 and notes.

■ **16:9** See vv. 1, 2 and notes.

■ **16:10 Divination.** The king's word was law, and he was entitled to seek divine guidance for his judgments. David spoke as a messenger of God (2 Sam. 14:17, 20) and Solomon desired a discerning heart (1 Kin. 3:9). The gift of God's wisdom to the king did not relieve him of the responsibility to seek wisdom and to act according to justice.

■ **16:11** See 11:1; 20:10, 23; Amos 8:5. Behind this statement is wisdom's view of God as the One who establishes and maintains the righteous order that makes life meaningful. For the law against false weights, see Lev. 19:35, 36; Deut. 25:13–16.

■ **16:12–15** Wisdom concerning kingship not only reflects the ideal of Solomon and his wise rule, but also expresses the power of the king to establish righteous order in his realm.

■ **16:15 cloud of the latter rain.** See note on Amos 4:7, 8. The king's favor can cause one's life to flourish like crops in spring.

■ **16:16** The "better . . . than" comparisons unambiguously state the superiority of the one thing over another, but without saying why (12:9 note). That wisdom is better than material riches is a common wisdom theme (3:13–15; 8:10, 11, 19). This does not mean that riches are in themselves undesirable (3:9, 10; 1 Kin. 3:10–13; 10:7–9), but only that they must be acquired as the fruit of wisdom.

■ **16:18** See 11:2 and note. The proud are unteachable and, therefore, headed for destruction.

■ **16:19** See v. 16; 15:16 and notes.

■ **16:21 sweetness of the lips.** "Honeyed words"; words that reflect an aptitude for communication.

■ **16:22 wellspring of life.** See 10:11 and note.

the correction of fools is folly. That is, it is senseless to correct fools because they will not listen. The Hebrew could also mean that their own foolishness becomes an adequate punishment for fools.

■ **16:23 heart.** See note on 2:2. The wise person speaks out of a mind informed by the truth.

■ **16:24 Pleasant words.** See note on v. 21. Such words have healing value for human relationships and for personal well-being.

25 There is a way *that seems* right to a man,
But its end *is* the way of [t]death.

26 The person who labors, labors for himself,
For his *hungry* mouth drives [u]him *on.*

27 [s]An ungodly man digs up evil,
And *it is* on his lips like a burning [v]fire.

28 A perverse man sows strife,
And [w]a whisperer separates the best of friends.

29 A violent man entices his neighbor,
And leads him in a way *that is* not good.

30 He winks his eye to devise perverse things;
He [g]purses his lips *and* brings about evil.

31 [x]The silver-haired head *is* a crown of glory,
If it is found in the way of righteousness.

32 [y]*He who is* slow to anger *is* better than the mighty,
And he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city.

33 The lot is cast into the lap,
But its every decision *is* from the LORD.

17 Better *is* [a]a dry morsel with quietness,
Than a house full of [f]feasting *with* strife.

2 A wise servant will rule over [b]a son who causes shame,
And will share an inheritance among the brothers.

3 The refining pot *is* for silver and the furnace for gold,
[c]But the LORD tests the hearts.

4 An evildoer gives heed to false lips;
A liar listens eagerly to a [z]spiteful tongue.

5 [d]He who mocks the poor reproaches his Maker;
[e]He who is glad at calamity will not go unpunished.

6 [f]Children's children *are* the crown of old men,
And the glory of children *is* their father.

7 Excellent speech is not becoming to a fool,
Much less lying lips to a prince.

25 [t]Prov. 14:12
26 [u][Eccl. 6:7; John 6:35]
27 [v][James 3:6] [s]Lit. *A man of Belial*
28 [w]Prov. 17:9
30 [g]Lit. *compresses*
31 [x]Prov. 20:29
32 [y]Prov. 14:29; 19:11

CHAPTER 17

1 [a]Prov. 15:17 [f]Or *sacrificial meals*
2 [b]Prov. 10:5
3 [c]1 Chr. 29:17; Ps. 26:2; Prov. 15:11; Jer. 17:10; [Mal. 3:3]
4 [z]Lit. *destructive*
5 [d]Prov. 14:31 [e]Job 31:29; Prov. 24:17; Obad. 12; 1 Cor. 13:6
6 [f][Ps. 127:3; 128:3]

■ **16:26 hungry mouth.** The most basic incentive against idleness is the threat of hunger (2 Thess. 3:10–12).

■ **16:27 ungodly man.** See text note; also note on 6:12.

a burning fire. The metaphor emphasizes the destructive power of vindictive and slanderous words.

■ **16:30 winks.** See note on 6:13.

■ **16:31 If it is found.** Or, "It is found." The righteous life is the wise life that promotes longevity (3:2 note). The elderly are honored for their wisdom, learning, and experience.

■ **16:32 slow to anger.** Such a person brings calm and sound judgment to a crisis (James 1:19, 20).

■ **16:33 The lot.** See note on Jon. 1:7; theological note "Providence."

every decision is from the LORD. When the lot was properly used the answer was not a matter of chance, but came from God.

■ **17:1 feasting with strife.** Lit. "sacrifices of strife" (see text note), perhaps a contrast with the peace or fellowship offering (Deut. 27:7). Harmony can exist without lavish provision.

■ **17:2** Inherited privilege can easily be forfeited to those who by diligence show themselves worthy to enjoy it (11:29).

■ **17:3 the LORD tests the hearts.** The comparisons indicate that the Lord uses our experiences to improve us. The fiery test is not to destroy, but to refine.

■ **17:4** The sin is not simply in the listening, but in the implied perverse desire to use for evil what is heard (cf. 16:27).

■ **17:5** See 14:21 and note.

■ **17:6 Children's children.** The natural desire of all parents to have grandchildren was intensified in Israel, where the full blessings of the covenant, which lay in the future, were to be possessed by one's descendants (Ps. 127:3; 128:1–6).

glory of children is their father. See Ex. 20:12. The parents are the guardians and most influential teachers of divine truth to their children.

■ **17:7 lying lips to a prince.** See 8:15, 16; 16:10, 12, 13 and notes.

8 A present *is* a precious stone in the eyes of its possessor;
Wherever he turns, he prospers.

9 [g]He who covers a transgression seeks love,
But [h]he who repeats a matter separates friends.

10 [i]Rebuke is more effective for a wise *man*
Than a hundred blows on a fool.

9 [g][Prov. 10:12; 1 Cor. 13:5–7; James 5:20] [h]Prov. 16:28

10 [i]Prov. 10:17; [Mic. 7:9]

Providence

"God's works of providence are, His most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all His creatures, and all their actions" (*Westminster Shorter Catechism*, Q. 11). If creation was a unique exercise of divine energy causing the world to be, providence is a continued exercise of the same energy. By it the Creator, according to His own will, keeps all creatures in being, involves Himself in all events, and directs all things to their appointed end. God is completely in charge of His world. His hand may be hidden, but His perfect rule extends to all things.

It is sometimes supposed that God knows the future but does not control it; that He upholds the world, but does not intervene in it; or that He gives general direction, but is not concerned with details. The Bible emphatically rules out all such limitations of His providence.

The Bible clearly teaches God's providential control (1) over the universe at large, Ps. 103:19; Dan. 4:35; Eph. 1:11; (2) over the physical world, Job 37; Ps. 104:14; 135:6; Mt. 5:45; (3) over the brute creation, Ps. 104:21, 28; Mt. 6:26; 10:29; (4) over the affairs of nations, Job 12:23; Ps. 22:28; 66:7; Acts 17:26; (5) over man's birth and lot in life, 1 Sam. 16:1; Ps. 139:16; Is. 45:5; Gal. 1:15, 16; (6) over the outward successes and failures of men's lives, Ps. 75:6, 7; Lk. 1:52; (7) over things seemingly accidental or insignificant, Pr. 16:33; Mt. 10:30; (8) in the protection of the righteous, Ps. 4:8; 5:12; 63:8; 121:3; Rom. 8:28; (9) in supplying the wants of God's people, Gn. 22:8, 14; Dt. 8:3; Phil. 4:19; (10) in giving answers to prayer, 1 Sam. 1:19; Is. 20:5, 6; 2 Chr. 33:13; Ps. 65:2; Mt. 7:7; Lk. 18:7, 8; and (11) in the exposure and punishment of the wicked, Ps. 7:12, 13; 11:6.

(L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* 2d rev. ed. [Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1941], p. 168.).

Describing God's involvement in the world and in the acts of rational creatures requires complementary statements. For example, a person wills an action, an event is triggered by natural causes, or Satan shows his hand—yet God overrules. Again, people may go against God's will of command—yet they fulfill His will of events. People's motives may be evil—yet God uses their actions for good (Gen. 50:20; Acts 2:23). Although human sin is under God's decree, God is not the author of sin (James 1:13–17).

God's "concurrent" or "confluent" involvement in all that occurs does not violate the natural order, ongoing causal processes, or the free, responsible agency of human beings. God's sovereign control does not take away the responsibility and power of second causes; on the contrary, they are created and have their roles by His appointment.

Of the evils that infect God's world (spiritual, moral, and physical) the Bible says: God permits evil (Acts 14:16); He uses evil as a punishment (Ps. 81:11–12; Rom. 1:26–32); He brings good out of evil (Gen. 50:20; Acts 2:23; 4:27–28; 13:27; 1 Cor. 2:7–8); He uses evil to test and discipline those He loves (Matt. 4:1–11; Heb. 12:4–14); but one day He will redeem His people from the power and presence of evil altogether (Rev. 21:27; 22:14–15).

The doctrine of providence teaches Christians that they are never in the grip of blind fortune, chance, luck, or fate. All that happens to them is divinely planned, and each event comes as a new summons to trust, obey, and rejoice, knowing that all is for one's spiritual and eternal good (Rom. 8:28). □

■ **17:8 present.** Or, "bribe." Bribery is often effective. This observation of corrupt human behavior is made without passing moral judgment (cf. the unjust steward in Luke 16:1–9). Bribery is condemned in 15:27. Wisdom rejects pragmatism in favor of obedience to God's law.

■ **17:10** A frequent wisdom theme: wise people are teachable. By contrast, the fool will not learn at all (9:7–9).

11 An evil *man* seeks only rebellion;
Therefore a cruel messenger will be sent against him.

12 Let a man meet [j]a bear robbed of her cubs,
Rather than a fool in his folly.

13 Whoever [k]rewards evil for good,
Evil will not depart from his house.

14 The beginning of strife *is like* releasing water;
Therefore [l]stop contention before a quarrel starts.

15 [m]He who justifies the wicked, and he who condemns the just,
Both of them alike *are* an abomination to the LORD.

16 Why *is there* in the hand of a fool the purchase price of wisdom,
Since *he has* no heart *for it?*

17 [n]A friend loves at all times,
And a brother is born for adversity.

18 [o]A man devoid of [3]understanding [4]shakes hands in a pledge,
And becomes [5]surety for his friend.

19 He who loves transgression loves strife,
And [p]he who exalts his gate seeks destruction.

20 He who has a [6]deceitful heart finds no good,
And he who has [q]a perverse tongue falls into evil.

21 He who begets a scoffer *does so* to his sorrow,
And the father of a fool has no joy.

22 A [r]merry heart [7]does good, *like* medicine,
But a broken spirit dries the bones.

23 A wicked *man* accepts a bribe [8]behind the back
To pervert the ways of justice.

24 [s]Wisdom *is* in the sight of him who has understanding,
But the eyes of a fool *are* on the ends of the earth.

25 A [t]foolish son *is* a grief to his father,
And bitterness to her who bore him.

26 Also, to punish the righteous *is* not good,
Nor to strike princes for *their* uprightness.

27 [u]He who has knowledge spares his words,
And a man of understanding is of a calm spirit.

12 [j]2 Sam. 17:8; Hos. 13:8
13 [k]Ps. 109:4, 5; Jer. 18:20; Rom. 12:17; 1 Thess. 5:15; [1 Pet. 3:9]
14 [l][Prov. 20:3; 1 Thess. 4:11]
15 [m]Ex. 23:7; Prov. 24:24; Is. 5:23
17 [n]Ruth 1:16; Prov. 18:24
18 [o]Prov. 6:1 [3]Lit. *heart* [4]Lit. *strikes the hands* [5]*guaranty* or *collateral*
19 [p]Prov. 16:18
20 [q]James 3:8 [6]*crooked*
22 [r]Prov. 12:25; 15:13, 15 [7]Or *makes medicine even better*
23 [8]Under cover, lit. *from the bosom*
24 [s]Eccl. 2:14
25 [t]Prov. 10:1; 15:20; 19:13
27 [u]Prov. 10:19; James 1:19

■ **17:11** Government is given by God for the preservation of order in society (Rom. 13:1–5). Rebellion invites official retribution against the attempt to destroy social order.

■ **17:16 purchase price of wisdom.** The fool cannot overcome lack of wisdom by buying an education.

■ **17:18** See 6:1–3 and notes.

■ **17:19** The parallel lines of this proverb relate pride and wrongdoing with fighting and destruction, giving the reader material for reflection.

■ **17:21** See 10:1; 15:20; 17:25.

■ **17:22** See 14:30; 15:13, 30 and notes.

■ **17:23** See v. 8 and note.

■ **17:24** The contrast is between concentration on the task of learning wisdom and day dreaming (12:11 note).

■ **17:25** See v. 21 and note.

■ **17:27 spares.** That is, restrains his speech. This proverb contrasts with 16:27, 28. The wise know how to control their tongues.

28 [v]Even a fool is counted wise when he holds his peace;
When he shuts his lips, *he is considered* perceptive.

18 A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire;
He rages against all [1]wise judgment.

2 A fool has no delight in understanding,
But in expressing his [a]own heart.

3 When the wicked comes, contempt comes also;
And with dishonor *comes* reproach.

4 [b]The words of a man's mouth *are* deep waters;
[c]The wellspring of wisdom *is* a flowing brook.

5 *It is* not good to show partiality to the wicked,
Or to overthrow the righteous in [d]judgment.

6 A fool's lips enter into contention,
And his mouth calls for blows.

7 [e]A fool's mouth *is* his destruction,
And his lips *are* the snare of his [f]soul.

8 [g]The words of a [2]talebearer *are* like [3]tasty trifles,
And they go down into the [4]inmost body.

9 He who is slothful in his work
Is a brother to him who is a great destroyer.

10 The name of the LORD *is* a strong [h]tower;
The righteous run to it and are [5]safe.

11 The rich man's wealth *is* his strong city,
And like a high wall in his own esteem.

12 [i]Before destruction the heart of a man is haughty,
And before honor *is* humility.

13 He who answers a matter before he hears *it,*
It *is* folly and shame to him.

14 The spirit of a man will sustain him in sickness,
But who can bear a broken spirit?

15 The heart of the prudent acquires knowledge,
And the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.

16 [j]A man's gift makes room for him,
And brings him before great men.

28 [v]Job 13:5

CHAPTER 18

1 [1]*sound wisdom*

2 [a]Eccl. 10:3

4 [b]Prov. 10:11 [c][James 3:17]

5 [d]Lev. 19:15; Deut. 1:17; 16:19; Ps. 82:2; Prov. 17:15

7 [e]Ps. 64:8; 140:9; Prov. 10:14 [f]Eccl. 10:12

8 [g]Prov. 12:18 [2]*gossip* or *slanderer* [3]A Jewish tradition *wounds* [4]Lit. *rooms of the belly*

10 [h]2 Sam. 22:2, 3, 33; Ps. 18:2; 61:3; 91:2; 144:2 [5]*secure,* lit. *set on high*

12 [i]Prov. 15:33; 16:18

16 [j]Gen. 32:20, 21; 1 Sam. 25:27; Prov. 17:8; 21:14

■ **17:28** The proverb is a hypothetical extension of v. 27. Ironically, the fool who has the wit to keep silent shows at least some potential for wisdom.

■ **18:1** The Hebrew is difficult. The first line suggests that the unfriendly person (Hebrew "estranged") is self-seeking.

■ **18:3** The social consequences of folly and wickedness are loss of honor and esteem.

■ **18:4 The words of a man's mouth are deep waters.** The sense of the clause is either that a common person's words are obscure, or a wise person's words are profound. If the former meaning is taken, then line two contrasts such obscurity with the clarity of wisdom. If the wise are in view, line two develops the theme. The ambiguity may be deliberate, leaving the application open.

■ **18:6, 7** See 6:2; 10:11, 14; 13:3; 14:3 and notes.

■ **18:7 of his soul.** Or, "of his life."

■ **18:8** It is part of our sinful human nature to have an appetite for gossip.

■ **18:9** See 6:9–11.

■ **18:10 The name of the LORD.** In Hebrew culture, a name was not a mere label, but usually an expression of the character of a person. God's covenant name, "LORD," is associated with His character as Savior of His people (Ex. 3:13–15; 15:1–3 and notes).

a strong tower. The security of the righteous is based on God's character as a faithful Savior.

■ **18:11** This verse is a clear contrast with v. 10 (cf. 10:15). The implicit warning is against trusting only wealth (Luke 12:13–21).

■ **18:13** Fools blurt out opinions on matters that they have not taken the trouble to hear carefully. One should listen well before speaking.

■ **18:14** See 14:30 and note.

■ **18:16** Here the gift is not necessarily a bribe, but the practical effects of a gift are noted (17:8 note).

17 The first *one* to plead his cause *seems* right,
Until his neighbor comes and examines him.

18 [k]Casting lots causes contentions to cease,
And keeps the mighty apart.

19 A brother offended *is harder to win* than a strong city,
And contentions *are* like the bars of a castle.

20 [l]A man's stomach shall be satisfied from the fruit of his mouth;
From the produce of his lips he shall be filled.

21 [m]Death and life *are* in the power of the tongue,
And those who love it will eat its fruit.

22 [n]*He who* finds a wife finds a good *thing,*
And obtains favor from the LORD.

23 The poor *man* uses entreaties,
But the rich answers [o]roughly.

24 A man *who has* friends [6]must himself be friendly,
[p]But there is a friend *who* sticks closer than a brother.

19 Better [a]*is* the poor who walks in his integrity
Than *one who is* perverse in his lips, and is a fool.

2 Also it is not good *for* a soul *to be* without knowledge,
And he sins who hastens with *his* feet.

3 The foolishness of a man twists his way,
And his heart frets against the LORD.

4 [b]Wealth makes many friends,
But the poor is separated from his friend.

5 A [c]false witness will not go unpunished,
And *he who* speaks lies will not escape.

6 Many entreat the favor of the nobility,
And every man *is* a friend to one who gives gifts.

7 [d]All the brothers of the poor hate him;
How much more do his friends go [e]far from him!
He may pursue *them with* words, *yet* they [f]abandon *him.*

18 [k][Prov. 16:33]
20 [l]Prov. 12:14; 14:14
21 [m]Prov. 12:13; 13:3; Matt. 12:37
22 [n]Gen. 2:18; [Prov. 12:4; 19:14]
23 [o]James 2:3, 6
24 [p]Prov. 17:17; [John 15:14, 15] [6]So with Gr. mss., Syr., Tg., Vg.; MT *may come to ruin*

CHAPTER 19

1 [a]Prov. 28:6
4 [b]Prov. 14:20
5 [c]Ex. 23:1; Deut. 19:16–19; Prov. 6:19; 21:28
7 [d]Prov. 14:20 [e]Ps. 38:11 [f]Lit. *are not*

■ **18:17** An argument in a dispute may be persuasive until it is challenged by the other side. This piece of practical wisdom stresses the importance of getting to the truth.

■ **18:18 Casting lots.** If the decision comes from without, the contending parties can both rest.

■ **18:19 A brother offended.** The precise meaning of this verse is uncertain. The apparent intent is that reconciliation is difficult.

■ **18:20 the produce of his lips.** See 12:14; 13:2 and notes.

he shall be filled. Probably a metaphor for the constructive results of wise speech that promotes life-giving relationships.

■ **18:21** Speech can do good or harm. The person who is fond of talk should note which way its effects go.

■ **18:22 a wife.** The assumption is that she is a good wife, such as the one described in 31:10–31 (12:4; 19:14 and notes).

favor from the LORD. See note on 8:35.

■ **18:23** The proverb is a matter-of-fact observation of the harsh reality of life's inequalities due to the effects of sin.

■ **18:24 A man . . . be friendly.** Or, "A man with friends may come to ruin" (see text note). The contrast seems to be between two kinds of companions: those whose friendship is superficial and who cause trouble, and the rare friend who is as loyal as a brother (17:17).

■ **19:2 soul . . . without knowledge . . . who hastens.** That is, one who rushes on without proper planning. Sincerity and energy by themselves miss the mark (Rom. 10:2).

■ **19:3** Sinners bring their own misfortune, but they blame God for it.

■ **19:4** A common fact of life, stated without moral judgment (vv. 6, 7; 18:23), although the sinful partiality is obvious (James 2:1–4).

■ **19:5** See v. 9. In an ordered society, perjury is a serious crime severely punished (cf. Ex. 20:16). Divine retribution is not in view here, but rather the demands of normal social order.

■ **19:6, 7** See v. 4 and note.

8 He who gets [2]wisdom loves his own soul;
He who keeps understanding [f]will find good.

9 A false witness will not go unpunished,
And *he who* speaks lies shall perish.

10 Luxury is not fitting for a fool,
Much less [g]for a servant to rule over princes.

11 [h]The discretion of a man makes him slow to anger,
[i]And his glory *is* to overlook a transgression.

12 [j]The king's wrath *is* like the roaring of a lion,
But his favor *is* [k]like dew on the grass.

13 [l]A foolish son *is* the ruin of his father,
[m]And the contentions of a wife *are* a continual [3]dripping.

14 [n]Houses and riches *are* an inheritance from fathers,
But [o]a prudent wife *is* from the LORD.

15 [p]Laziness casts *one* into a deep sleep,
And an idle person will [q]suffer hunger.

16 [r]He who keeps the commandment keeps his soul,
But he who [4]is careless of his ways will die.

17 [s]He who has pity on the poor lends to the LORD,
And He will pay back what he has given.

18 [t]Chasten your son while there is hope,
And do not set your heart [5]on his destruction.

19 *A man of* great wrath will suffer punishment;
For if you rescue *him,* you will have to do it again.

20 Listen to counsel and receive instruction,
That you may be wise [u]in your latter days.

21 There are many plans in a man's heart,
[v]Nevertheless the LORD's counsel—that will stand.

22 What is desired in a man is [6]kindness,
And a poor man is better than a liar.

8 [f]Prov. 16:20 [2]Lit. *heart*

10 [g]Prov. 30:21, 22

11 [h]James 1:19 [i]Prov. 16:32; [Matt. 5:44]; Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13

12 [j]Prov. 16:14 [k]Gen. 27:28; Deut. 33:28; Ps. 133:3; Hos. 14:5; Mic. 5:7

13 [l]Prov. 10:1 [m]Prov. 21:9, 19 [3]Irritation

14 [n]2 Cor. 12:14 [o]Prov. 18:22

15 [p]Prov. 6:9 [q]Prov. 10:4

16 [r]Prov. 13:13; 16:17; Luke 10:28; 11:28 [4]Is reckless, lit. *despises*

17 [s]Deut. 15:7, 8; Job 23:12, 13; Prov. 28:27; Eccl. 11:1; Matt. 10:42; 25:40; [2 Cor. 9:6–8]; Heb. 6:10

18 [t]Prov. 13:24 [5]Lit. *to put him to death;* a Jewish tradition *on his crying*

20 [u]Ps. 37:37

21 [v]Ps. 33:10, 11; Prov. 16:9; Is. 46:10; Heb. 6:17

22 [6]Lit. *lovingkindness*

■ **19:8 loves his own soul.** Or, "loves life." Wisdom promotes relationships that are essential for the good life.

■ **19:9** See v. 5 and note.

■ **19:10 Luxury . . . for a fool.** A fool cannot handle the responsibility of riches. Possibly the verse refers to a fool in a position of administrative power rather than of wealth.

a servant to rule over princes. The situation is unfitting, not so much because the oppressed become the new oppressors, but because it is incongruous for those not socially and intellectually prepared to govern society. But compare 2 Sam. 7:8 for the exception.

■ **19:11 slow to anger.** See 14:17, 29; 16:32 and notes. Discipline is a mark of the wise man. A proper self-evaluation prevents him from taking offense at every little insult.

■ **19:13** See 10:1; 17:21.

contentions. Or "nagging." Closer relationships have potential for greater destructiveness.

continual dripping. Like the leaking roof that makes a house uninhabitable during rain (27:15).

■ **19:14** This proverb does not imply that the Lord is not ultimately in control of the inheritance of wealth. It emphasizes rather that the outcome of one's choice of spouse is not so easy to predict or control. A happy marriage is indeed cause to thank God.

■ **19:15** See 6:10, 11; 10:4 and notes.

■ **19:16 commandment.** See note on 3:1.

will die. See 2:18 and note.

■ **19:17** The Lord rewards those who show compassion to the poor.

■ **19:18 Chasten.** See 3:11 and note.

hope. That is, reason to expect a desired result.

set your heart on his destruction. That is, contribute to his untimely death (see text note) by failure to discipline and correct him.

■ **19:21** See 16:1, 9 and notes.

■ **19:22 kindness.** Or, "loyalty."

23 [w]The fear of the LORD *leads* to life,
And *he who has it* will abide in satisfaction;
He will not be visited with evil.

24 [x]A lazy *man* buries his hand in the [7]bowl,
And will not so much as bring it to his mouth again.

25 Strike a scoffer, and the simple [y]will become wary;
[z]Rebuke one who has understanding, *and* he will discern knowledge.

26 He who mistreats *his* father *and* chases away *his* mother
Is [a]a son who causes shame and brings reproach.

27 Cease listening to instruction, my son,
And you will stray from the words of knowledge.

28 A [8]disreputable witness scorns justice,
And [b]the mouth of the wicked devours iniquity.

29 Judgments are prepared for scoffers,
[c]And beatings for the backs of fools.

20 Wine [a]*is* a mocker,
Strong drink *is* a brawler,
And whoever is led astray by it is not wise.

2 The [1]wrath of a king *is* like the roaring of a lion;
Whoever provokes him to anger sins *against* his own life.

3 [b]*It is* honorable for a man to stop striving,
Since any fool can start a quarrel.

4 [c]The lazy *man* will not plow because of winter;
[d]He will beg during harvest and *have* nothing.

5 Counsel in the heart of man *is like* deep water,
But a man of understanding will draw it out.

6 Most men will proclaim each his own [2]goodness,
But who can find a faithful man?

7 [e]The righteous *man* walks in his integrity;
[f]His children *are* blessed after him.

23 [w]Prov. 14:27; [1 Tim. 4:8]

24 [x]Prov. 15:19 [7]LXX, Syr. *bosom;* Tg., Vg. *armpit*

25 [y]Deut. 13:11 [z]Prov. 9:8

26 [a]Prov. 17:2

28 [b]Job 15:16 [8]Lit. *witness of Belial,* worthless witness

29 [c]Prov. 26:3

CHAPTER 20

1 [a]Gen. 9:21; Prov. 23:29–35; Is. 28:7; Hos. 4:11

2 [1]Lit. *fear* or *terror,* produced by the king's wrath

3 [b]Prov. 17:14

4 [c]Prov. 10:4 [d]Prov. 19:15

6 [2]Lit. *mercy*

7 [e]2 Cor. 1:12 [f]Ps. 37:26

better than a liar. A loyal friend, though poor, is better than a treacherous friend.

■ **19:23 The fear of the LORD.** See 1:7; 2:5 and notes. "The fear of the LORD" here is probably a synonym for the wisdom of which the Lord is the wise Author (James 3:17).

leads to life. See 3:18 and note.

abide in satisfaction. Or, "sleep secure" in the care of the Lord.

■ **19:24** The proverb is a humorous comment on the sluggard (6:6 note). The picture of a person too lazy to feed himself reflects the situation of 6:10, 11. Such a one does not have the will for self-preservation.

■ **19:25 scoffer.** See note on 9:7.

simple will become wary. See 1:4 and note. The mocker deserves the punishment, and the teachable mind of the untutored observes it and learns, and so is deterred from similar folly.

■ **19:26** The meaning is clear, especially viewed against the background of God's purposes for family relationship (17:6; Ex. 20:12).

■ **19:28 disreputable.** See text note; note on 6:12.

■ **19:29** See v. 25; 10:13; 14:3. Even if the punishment will not deter them, it is deserved.

■ **20:1 mocker.** Wine mocks the person who comes under its spell, or, more likely, it makes one become a mocker (9:7 note).

is not wise. Either that it is folly to get drunk, or that the intoxicated person cannot act wisely.

■ **20:2** See 16:14.

■ **20:3** See 15:18; 17:14.

■ **20:4** See 6:6–11.

■ **20:5 will draw it out.** If "deep water" refers to truth deeply hidden in "the heart," the wise person is seen as one who can draw such wisdom to the surface and bring it to expression (18:4 and note).

■ **20:6** Many profess such mercy (text note), but few practice it in their relationships with others.

■ **20:7** See 13:22 and note; 14:11.

righteous man. See 8:18 and note.

8 A king who sits on the throne of judgment
Scatters all evil with his eyes.

9 [g]Who can say, "I have made my heart clean,
I am pure from my sin"?

10 [h]Diverse weights *and* diverse measures,
They *are* both alike, an abomination to the LORD.

11 Even a child is [i]known by his deeds,
Whether what he does *is* pure and right.

12 [j]The hearing ear and the seeing eye,
The LORD has made them both.

13 [k]Do not love sleep, lest you come to poverty;
Open your eyes, *and* you will be satisfied with bread.

14 "*It is* [3]good for nothing," cries the buyer;
But when he has gone his way, then he boasts.

15 There is gold and a multitude of rubies,
But [l]the lips of knowledge *are* a precious jewel.

16 [m]Take the garment of one who is surety *for* a stranger,
And hold it as a pledge *when it* is for a seductress.

17 [n]Bread gained by deceit *is* sweet to a man,
But afterward his mouth will be filled with gravel.

18 [o]Plans are established by counsel;
[p]By wise counsel wage war.

19 [q]He who goes about *as* a talebearer reveals secrets;
Therefore do not associate with one [r]who flatters with his lips.

20 [s]Whoever curses his father or his mother,
[t]His lamp will be put out in deep darkness.

21 [u]An inheritance gained hastily at the beginning
[v]Will not be blessed at the end.

22 [w]Do not say, "I will [4]recompense evil";
[x]Wait for the LORD, and He will save you.

9 [g][1 Kin. 8:46; 2 Chr. 6:36]; Job 9:30, 31; 14:4; [Ps. 51:5; Eccl. 7:20; Rom. 3:9; 1 John 1:8]

10 [h]Deut. 25:13

11 [i]Matt. 7:16

12 [j]Ex. 4:11; Ps. 94:9

13 [k]Rom. 12:11

14 [3]Lit. *evil, evil*

15 [l][Job 28:12–19; Prov. 3:13–15]

16 [m]Prov. 22:26

17 [n]Prov. 9:17

18 [o]Prov. 24:6
[p]Luke 14:31

19 [q]Prov. 11:13
[r]Rom. 16:18

20 [s]Ex. 21:17; Lev. 20:9; Prov. 30:11; Matt. 15:4 [t]Job 18:5, 6; Prov. 24:20

21 [u]Prov. 28:20
[v]Hab. 2:6

22 [w][Deut. 32:35]; Prov. 17:13; 24:29; [Rom. 12:17–19]; 1 Thess. 5:15; [1 Pet. 3:9]
[x]2 Sam. 16:12
[4]*repay*

■ **20:8** See v. 26. The wise king can discriminate between the wheat and the chaff, between good and evil.

■ **20:9** See 16:2 and note. The answer to this question must be simply, "No one" (1 John 1:8).

■ **20:10** See 11:1 and note.

■ **20:11 child.** The Hebrew word covers a wide age range, from infancy to early adulthood.

■ **20:12** Two of the principal means of gaining knowledge are God-given and therefore reliable. There may be an implied warning against the wrong use of them.

■ **20:13** See 6:6–11; 10:4; 19:15 and notes.

■ **20:14** A humorous comment on customs of the marketplace where bargaining is a well-established social ritual.

■ **20:15** See 3:13–15; 8:10, 11; 16:16. Wealth is not condemned, but wisdom is more desirable.

■ **20:16 Take the garment.** The garment is security taken for a loan (Deut. 24:6 note). The verse is probably a warning to be careful with money in dealing with people who take risks or who are unreliable.

■ **20:17 Bread.** This is a metaphor for wealth, which, when pursued dishonestly does not satisfy.

■ **20:18** Count the cost and leave nothing to chance (1:5; 15:22; cf. Luke 14:28–32).

■ **20:20 His lamp will be put out.** See 13:9 and note. Death will come, either by society executing the law, by divine retribution, or by indirect consequences of such enormous sin.

■ **20:21 gained hastily at the beginning.** That is, prematurely, before gaining the wisdom to handle it, or by the wrong means.

■ **20:22** This directive parallels the principle in Deut. 32:35 and Rom. 12:19, warning against taking the law into one's own hands and undermining the order of society. The deliverance is not national (Deut. 32:35,

23 Diverse weights *are* an abomination to the LORD,
And dishonest scales *are* not good.

24 A man's steps *are* of the LORD;
How then can a man understand his own way?

25 *It is* a snare for a man to devote rashly *something as* holy,
And afterward to reconsider *his* vows.

26 [y] A wise king sifts out the wicked,
And brings the threshing wheel over them.

27 [z] The spirit of a man *is* the lamp of the LORD,
Searching all the [5] inner depths of his heart.

28 [a] Mercy and truth preserve the king,
And by [6] lovingkindness he upholds his throne.

29 The glory of young men *is* their strength,
And [b] the splendor of old men *is* their gray head.

30 Blows that hurt cleanse away evil,
As *do* stripes the [7] inner depths of the heart.

21 The king's heart *is* in the hand of the LORD,
Like the [1] rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes.

2 [a] Every way of a man *is* right in his own eyes,
[b] But the LORD weighs the hearts.

3 [c] To do righteousness and justice
Is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.

4 [d] A haughty look, a proud heart,
And the [2] plowing of the wicked *are* sin.

5 [e] The plans of the diligent *lead* surely to plenty,
But *those of* everyone *who is* hasty, surely to poverty.

6 [f] Getting treasures by a lying tongue
[3] *Is* the fleeting fantasy of those who seek death.

7 The violence of the wicked will [4] destroy them,
Because they refuse to do justice.

26 [y] Ps. 101:8
27 [z] 1 Cor. 2:11
[5] Lit. *rooms of the belly*
28 [a] Ps. 101:1; Prov. 21:21
[6] *mercy*
29 [b] Prov. 16:31
30 [7] Lit. *rooms of the belly*

CHAPTER 21

1 [1] *channels*
2 [a] Prov. 16:2
[b] Prov. 24:12; Luke 16:15
3 [c] 1 Sam. 15:22; Prov. 15:8; Is. 1:11, 16, 17; Hos. 6:6; [Mic. 6:7, 8]
4 [d] Prov. 6:17 [2] Or *lamp*
5 [e] Prov. 10:4
6 [f] 2 Pet. 2:3 [3] LXX *Pursue vanity on the snares of death;* Vg. *Is vain and foolish, and shall stumble on the snares of death;* Tg. *They shall be destroyed, and they shall fall who seek death*
7 [4] Lit. *drag them away*

36) but individual, possibly by means of due legal process, but ultimately with the Lord Himself as its source.

■ **20:23** See v. 10 and note.

■ **20:24** See 16:1, 9 and notes; 19:21. Such passages point to the limitations of knowledge obtained from observation. God's sovereign purposes alone are certain.

■ **20:25 devote.** Lit. "say it is holy," thus dedicating it to God. A rash vow that cannot be honored is worse than no vow at all (Ecc. 5:4–7).

■ **20:26** See v. 8 and note. The wise king has the ability to discern.

■ **20:27 the lamp of the LORD.** A metaphor for the searching eye of God that knows our inmost thoughts (cf. v. 24).

■ **20:28 Mercy and truth.** This may refer to the king's attitude toward his people, which establishes a stable society and a secure throne (3:3; 14:22 and notes). However, it is probable that the phrase is used here of God's covenant with the dynasty of David (2 Sam. 7:11–15).

■ **20:29** See 16:31 and note. While physical strength decreases with age, wisdom should increase.

■ **20:30** Corporal punishment has a place in prodding the conscience, but it takes wisdom to know when and how to apply it.

■ **21:1 The king's heart . . . LORD.** Possibly a reference to the sovereignty of God even over pagan kings who unwittingly do His will (e.g., Cyrus in Is. 45:1), or to the king of Israel, who, like Solomon, received a special endowment of the wisdom of God (16:10 and note). See "God Reigns: Divine Sovereignty" at Dan. 4:34.

■ **21:3** See v. 27. Prophetic themes such as this (1 Sam. 15:22; Is. 1:11–17) are rarely found in wisdom literature (15:8 note).

■ **21:4 A haughty look.** See 6:17. This expression describes pride and arrogance, similar to "a proud heart."

the plowing of the wicked. The meaning of this metaphor is uncertain. The Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) reads, "the lamp of the wicked" (13:9 and note).

■ **21:5** In v. 25 and 19:15 poverty is brought on by laziness. Here it results from rash and unwise action.

■ **21:6** The Hebrew is difficult (see text note). The meaning of the proverb is probably similar to that of 20:17 (note).

■ **21:7 will destroy them.** Or, "snare them." See 1:17, 19 and notes; 12:13.

8 The way of [5]a guilty man *is* perverse;
But *as for* the pure, his work *is* right.

9 Better to dwell in a corner of a housetop,
Than in a house shared with [g]a contentious woman.

10 [h]The soul of the wicked desires evil;
His neighbor finds no favor in his eyes.

11 When the scoffer is punished, the simple is made wise;
But when the [i]wise is instructed, he receives knowledge.

12 The righteous *God* wisely considers the house of the wicked,
Overthrowing the wicked for *their* wickedness.

13 [j]Whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor
Will also cry himself and not be heard.

14 A gift in secret pacifies anger,
And a bribe [6]behind the back, strong wrath.

15 *It is* a joy for the just to do justice,
But destruction *will come* to the workers of iniquity.

16 A man who wanders from the way of understanding
Will rest in the assembly of the [k]dead.

17 He who loves pleasure *will be* a poor man;
He who loves wine and oil will not be rich.

18 The wicked *shall be* a ransom for the righteous,
And the unfaithful for the upright.

19 Better to dwell [7]in the wilderness,
Than with a contentious and angry woman.

20 [l]*There is* desirable treasure,
And oil in the dwelling of the wise,
But a foolish man squanders it.

21 [m]He who follows righteousness and mercy
Finds life, righteousness and honor.

8 [5]Or *The way of a man is perverse and strange;*
9 [g]Prov. 19:13
10 [h]James 4:5
11 [i]Prov. 19:25
13 [j][Matt. 7:2; 18:30–34]; James 2:13; 1 John 3:17
14 [6]Under cover, lit. *in the bosom*
16 [k]Ps. 49:14
19 [7]Lit. *in the land of the desert*
20 [l]Ps. 112:3; Prov. 8:21
21 [m]Prov. 15:9; Matt. 5:6; [Rom. 2:7]; 1 Cor. 15:58

■ **21:8 right.** See note on 14:2.

■ **21:9 corner of a housetop.** The reference is probably to a small attic room built on the customarily flat housetop.

contentious woman. See v. 19; 19:13 and note. This wife is the opposite of the prudent wife in 19:14.

■ **21:10 evil.** That which is destructive of human relationships.

■ **21:12 The righteous God.** The Hebrew can be translated "righteous person," but it makes more sense as a reference to God. The divine retribution is then affirmed on the basis of divine righteousness rather than human observation.

■ **21:14** See 17:8; 18:16 and notes.

■ **21:15** Maintaining true order (justice) establishes the well-being of those who live according to it. Those who transgress it will be undone. The wise discern this divine, providential order which, though marred by sin, is to some degree maintained in the world. God preserves such an order, and it is our task to perceive His order and live in harmony with it. At its center are God's Word and our faithful obedience to it. Such obedience is what is meant by "the fear of the LORD."

■ **21:16** This proverb contrasts the ways of life and death (2:18; 3:18 and notes). To forsake wisdom is to forsake life itself and to end up with the dead.

■ **21:17 wine and oil.** The words suggest extravagance, especially in feasting.

■ **21:18** See 11:8 and note. A ransom is a sum paid to release someone. However, this proverb does not depend on this precise sense, but points in general terms to the Last Judgment, when the righteous will be vindicated and the wicked defeated.

■ **21:19** See 19:13; 21:9 and notes.

■ **21:21** Those who cultivate right relationships and loyalty find lasting benefits in life (v. 16 and note).

22 [n] A wise *man* [8] scales the city of the mighty,
And brings down the trusted stronghold.

23 [o] Whoever guards his mouth and tongue
Keeps his soul from troubles.

24 A proud *and* haughty *man*—"Scoffer" *is* his name;
He acts with arrogant pride.

25 The [p] desire of the lazy *man* kills him,
For his hands refuse to labor.

26 He covets greedily all day long,
But the righteous [q] gives and does not spare.

27 [r] The sacrifice of the wicked *is* an abomination;
How much more *when* he brings it with wicked intent!

28 A false witness shall perish,
But the man who hears *him* will speak endlessly.

29 A wicked man hardens his face,
But *as for* the upright, he [9] establishes his way.

30 [s] *There is* no wisdom or understanding
Or counsel against the LORD.

31 The horse *is* prepared for the day of battle,
But [t] deliverance *is* of the LORD.

22 A [a] *good* name is to be chosen rather than great riches,
Loving favor rather than silver and gold.

2 The [b] rich and the poor have this in common,
The [c] LORD *is* the maker of them all.

3 A prudent *man* foresees evil and hides himself,
But the simple pass on and are [d] punished.

4 By humility *and* the fear of the LORD
Are riches and honor and life.

5 Thorns *and* snares *are* in the way of the perverse;
He who guards his soul will be far from them.

22 [n] 2 Sam. 5:6–9; Prov. 24:5; Eccl. 7:19; 9:15, 16
[8] Climbs over the walls of

23 [o] Prov. 12:13; 13:3; 18:21; [James 3:2]

25 [p] Prov. 13:4

26 [q] [Prov. 22:9; Eph. 4:28]

27 [r] Prov. 15:8; Is. 66:3; Jer. 6:20; Amos 5:22

29 [9] Qr., LXX *understands*

30 [s] Is. 8:9, 10; [Jer. 9:23, 24]; Acts 5:39; 1 Cor. 3:19, 20

31 [t] Ps. 3:8; Jer. 3:23; [1 Cor. 15:57]

CHAPTER 22

1 [a] [Prov. 10:7]; Eccl. 7:1

2 [b] Prov. 29:13
[c] Job 31:15; [Prov. 14:31]

3 [d] Prov. 27:12; Is. 26:20

■ **21:22** See 16:32 and note. Force is no match for wisdom. A similar image is applied to spiritual warfare in 2 Cor. 10:4.

■ **21:23** See 13:3; 15:23; 18:13 and notes.

■ **21:24 Scoffer.** See 9:7 and note; 19:25.

■ **21:25 desire.** This desire does not connect him to the real world where work would bring its rewards (13:4; 19:24 and notes).

■ **21:26** The proverb seems to be a continuation of v. 25. If not, it is a contrast between greed and self-giving.

■ **21:27** See v. 3; 15:8 and notes.

■ **21:28** See 14:25; 19:5, 9 and notes.

■ **21:29 hardens his face.** The wicked man resorts to arrogant bluffing in his dealings with others.

establishes his way. The Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) renders this "considers his ways," indicating that the righteous person is concerned to live by truth and its consequences.

■ **21:30** The limits of human understanding must be acknowledged in the light of God's wisdom and sovereignty. The fear of the Lord (1:7 note) puts us in touch with the revealed wisdom of God. But God is wise beyond what He reveals, and this unrevealed wisdom is not comprehended by us.

■ **21:31** The verse takes for granted that people will make suitable preparations to reach their goals, while recognizing that the result depends on God.

■ **22:1 A good name.** A choice reputation is one of the social consequences of wisdom.

rather than great riches. Riches are not discouraged but put into right perspective (16:16 note).

■ **22:2 have this in common.** Lit. "meet together." Despite the inequalities of this life, both rich and poor stand under God as their Creator and Judge.

■ **22:3 prudent . . . simple.** See 1:4 and note.

■ **22:4 humility and the fear of the LORD.** See 1:7; 15:33 and notes.

riches and honor and life. A life governed by wisdom tends to prosperity. Israel's sages emphasized that a right relationship with the Lord is the ultimate wisdom that enhances life (3:2, 18; 8:18 and notes).

■ **22:5 Thorns and snares.** These are metaphors for the misfortunes of life that stem from a breakdown of the true life-giving order (cf. 15:19).

guards his soul. That is, by establishing his life on the wisdom of God.

6 [e]Train up a child in the way he should go,
[f]And when he is old he will not depart from it.

7 The [f]rich rules over the poor,
And the borrower *is* servant to the lender.

8 He who sows iniquity will reap [g]sorrow,[2]
And the rod of his anger will fail.

9 [h]He who has a [3]generous eye will be [i]blessed,
For he gives of his bread to the poor.

10 [j]Cast out the scoffer, and contention will leave;
Yes, strife and reproach will cease.

11 [k]He who loves purity of heart
And has grace on his lips,
The king *will be* his friend.

12 The eyes of the LORD preserve knowledge,
But He overthrows the words of the faithless.

13 [l]The lazy *man* says, "*There is* a lion outside!
I shall be slain in the streets!"

14 [m]The mouth of an immoral woman *is* a deep pit;
[n]He who is abhorred by the LORD will fall there.

15 Foolishness *is* bound up in the heart of a child;
[o]The rod of correction will drive it far from him.

16 He who oppresses the poor to increase his *riches,*
And he who gives to the rich, *will* surely *come* to poverty.

Sayings of the Wise

17 Incline your ear and hear the words of the wise,
And apply your heart to my knowledge;
18 For *it is* a pleasant thing if you keep them within you;
Let them all be fixed upon your lips,

6 [e]Eph. 6:4; 2 Tim. 3:15 [f]*Even*
7 [f]Prov. 18:23; James 2:6
8 [g]Job 4:8 [2]*trouble*
9 [h]2 Cor. 9:6 [i][Prov. 19:17] [3]Lit. *good*
10 [j]Ps. 101:5
11 [k]Ps. 101:6
13 [l]Prov. 26:13
14 [m]Prov. 2:16; 5:3; 7:5 [n]Eccl. 7:26
15 [o]Prov. 13:24; 23:13, 14

■ **22:6 Train up a child.** The Hebrew expression includes the idea of inauguration, or starting a child's life along a particular way. That way is the way of wisdom (1:22 note). True wisdom maintains itself because it has the humility to continue learning in the way. See "The Christian Family" at Eph. 5:22.

■ **22:7** A simple observation of present reality: in this world, wealth is power (10:15 and note).

■ **22:8** Folly transgresses the divine order, inviting the punishments of sorrow and dissolution (Hos. 8:7; Gal. 6:7–9).

■ **22:9 who has a generous eye.** One who is willingly disposed to the needy. Our own well-being is bound up with that of others, so that what we do for their good benefits ourselves as well (19:17).

■ **22:10 scoffer.** See 9:7 and note. Social harmony cannot exist with such a person stirring up strife.

■ **22:11 king.** See 8:15, 16; 14:35; 16:12, 13; 20:26 and notes.

■ **22:12 The eyes of the LORD.** See 15:3; 20:8, 27 and notes. The Lord is the guardian of truth.

■ **22:13 lazy man.** See 6:6 and note. With humor and irony the proverb mocks the sluggard's excuses for avoiding work.

■ **22:14** See 5:3–5; 6:24; 7:5, 14–21. Here the fool's downfall is seen as due to the wrath of God.

■ **22:15 Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child.** The inborn propensity of fallen human nature is toward folly.

The rod of correction. The rod may apply to a wide range of disciplinary choices, including corporal punishment (13:24; 29:15). Discipline is an educational task of wisdom, and is necessary until the child learns self-discipline.

■ **22:16** The Hebrew is difficult to translate. As rendered here, both oppression of the poor and currying favor with the rich lead one into poverty.

■ **22:17—24:22** This section is a collection of wisdom sayings mainly in the form of instructions (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes). There is evidence that the first part (22:17—23:11) has drawn upon the Egyptian wisdom of Amenemope (cf. 4:1–27 note). If so, these insights have been consciously appropriated as admonitions that assist one in meeting covenant obligations to "trust . . . in the LORD" (22:19). The author of Proverbs, like the historians of the Bible, was not prevented in principle from using existing materials in the course of writing what God inspired.

■ **22:17–21** This introductory section exhorts the hearer to pay attention and listen, and also indicates some of the benefits of such learning.

■ **22:17 apply your heart.** Think carefully (2:2 and note).

■ **22:18 upon your lips.** The internalized sayings are ready for use.

19 So that your trust may be in the LORD;
I have instructed you today, even you.
20 Have I not written to you excellent things
Of counsels and knowledge,
21 [p]That I may make you know the certainty of the words of truth,
[q]That you may answer words of truth
To those who [4]send to you?

22 Do not rob the [r]poor because he *is* poor,
Nor oppress the afflicted at the gate;
23 [s]For the LORD will plead their cause,
And plunder the soul of those who plunder them.

24 Make no friendship with an angry man,
And with a [t]furious man do not go,
25 Lest you learn his ways
And set a snare for your soul.

26 [u]Do not be one of those who [5]shakes hands in a pledge,
One of those who is [6]surety for debts;
27 If you have nothing *with which* to pay,
Why should he take away your bed from under you?

28 [v]Do not remove the ancient [7]landmark
Which your fathers have set.

29 Do you see a man *who* [8]excels in his work?
He will stand before kings;
He will not stand before [9]unknown *men.*

23 When you sit down to eat with a ruler,
Consider carefully what *is* before you;
2 And put a knife to your throat
If you *are* a man given to appetite.
3 Do not desire his delicacies,
For they *are* deceptive food.

4 [a]Do not overwork to be rich;
[b]Because of your own understanding, cease!
5 [1]Will you set your eyes on that which is not?
For *riches* certainly make themselves wings;
They fly away like an eagle *toward* heaven.

6 Do not eat the bread of [c]a[2] miser,
Nor desire his delicacies;

21 [p]Luke 1:3, 4 [q]Prov. 25:13; 1 Pet. 3:15 [4]Or *send you*

22 [r]Ex. 23:6; Job 31:16–21; Zech. 7:10

23 [s]1 Sam. 24:12; Ps. 12:5; 140:12

24 [t]Prov. 29:22

26 [u]Prov. 11:15 [5]Lit. *strikes* [6]*guaranty*

28 [v]Deut. 19:14; 27:17; Job 24:2; Prov. 23:10 [7]*boundary*

29 [8]*is prompt in his business* [9]*obscure*

CHAPTER 23

4 [a][Prov. 28:20; Matt. 6:19; 1 Tim. 6:9, 10; Heb. 13:5] [b]Rom. 12:16

5 [1]Lit. *Will you cause your eyes to fly upon it and it is not?*

6 [c]Deut. 15:9; Prov. 28:22 [2]Lit. *one who has an evil eye*

■ **22:19** This saying expresses the biblical view of wisdom (3:5 note).

■ **22:20 excellent things.** Or, "thirty sayings." The latter is preferable since the section 22:17—24:22 divides into roughly thirty parts, which is formally similar to Amenemope's thirty-chapter arrangement (22:17—24:22 note).

■ **22:22, 23** A short instruction highlighting the threat of divine retribution. The Lord is pictured as the legal advocate of the poor (Ps. 9:18 note).

■ **22:24, 25** The danger of unwise friendships is expounded in 1:10–19; 12:26.

■ **22:24 angry man.** The person is quick to lose self-control (14:17; 15:18 and notes).

■ **22:26, 27** See 6:1–5 and notes.

■ **22:28** See 15:25 and notes. In 23:10, 11 the command is given against the background of God's determination to defend the oppressed.

■ **22:29 a man who excels.** Hebrew "who is quick." Such speed in work comes from well-learned skills rather than from taking shortcuts.

He will stand before kings. The words are an indirect exhortation to excellence, which, as in the Egyptian schools of the wise, was the way of promotion to higher service (22:17—24:22 note).

■ **23:1–3** The verses are a warning, possibly to a diplomat, against overindulgence in the pleasures of the table with a ruler.

■ **23:1 what is before you.** Or, "who is before you." The sense is either, "Do not allow the feast to excite you with greed," or, "Be attentive to the great ruler, and not to the food."

■ **23:3 deceptive food.** Gluttony may undermine human relationships and their advantages.

■ **23:4, 5** It is not worth ruining one's health for riches that have the habit of elusively disappearing.

■ **23:6 miser.** The meaning is uncertain, but the context suggests a person whose hospitality is insincere, presumably with hidden motives.

7 For as he thinks in his heart, so *is* he.
"Eat and drink!" [d]he says to you,
But his heart is not with you.
8 The morsel you have eaten, you will vomit up,
And waste your pleasant words.

9 [e]Do not speak in the hearing of a fool,
For he will despise the wisdom of your words.

10 Do not remove the ancient [3]landmark,
Nor enter the fields of the fatherless;
11 [f]For their Redeemer *is* mighty;
He will plead their cause against you.

12 Apply your heart to instruction,
And your ears to words of knowledge.

13 [g]Do not withhold correction from a child,
For *if* you beat him with a rod, he will not die.
14 You shall beat him with a rod,
And deliver his soul from [4]hell.

15 My son, if your heart is wise,
My heart will rejoice—indeed, I myself;
16 Yes, my [5]inmost being will rejoice
When your lips speak right things.

17 [h]Do not let your heart envy sinners,
But [i]*be zealous* for the fear of the LORD all the day;
18 [j]For surely there is a [6]hereafter,
And your hope will not be cut off.

19 Hear, my son, and be wise;
And guide your heart in the way.
20 [k]Do not mix with winebibbers,
Or with gluttonous eaters of meat;
21 For the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty,
And drowsiness will clothe *a man* with rags.

22 [l]Listen to your father who begot you,
And do not despise your mother when she is old.

23 [m]Buy the truth, and do not sell *it,*
Also wisdom and instruction and understanding.

7 [d]Prov. 12:2
9 [e]Prov. 9:8; Matt. 7:6
10 [3]*boundary*
11 [f]Prov. 22:23
13 [g]Prov. 13:24
14 [4]Or *Sheol*
16 [5]Lit. *kidneys*
17 [h]Ps. 37:1; Prov. 24:1, 19 [i]Prov. 28:14
18 [j][Ps. 37:37] [6]Future, lit. *latter end*
20 [k]Prov. 20:1; 23:29, 30; Is. 5:22; Matt. 24:49; [Luke 21:34]; Rom. 13:13; [Eph. 5:18]
22 [l]Prov. 1:8; Eph. 6:1
23 [m]Prov. 4:7; 18:15; [Matt. 13:44]

■ **23:8 vomit.** A metaphor for the spoiled relationship and the feeling of disgust at the host's insincerity.

■ **23:9** This short instruction repeats the meaning of proverbs such as 9:7 that indicate that the fool is unteachable (cf. Matt. 7:6).

■ **23:10, 11** See 22:28 and note.

■ **23:11 Redeemer.** In ancient Israelite society, the redeemer (Hebrew *goel*) helped another family member in great need (Ruth 2:20 note). The term is frequently applied to God in His saving action for His people (e.g., Job 19:25; Ps. 19:14; Is. 41:14; 43:14; 44:24), as it is here.

■ **23:13, 14** See 13:24; 19:18; 22:6, 15 and notes.

■ **23:13 he will not die.** The meaning is either that such corporal punishment will not unduly hurt him, or that by the discipline he will avoid death (the meaning of v. 14).

■ **23:14 hell.** See 9:18 note.

■ **23:17, 18** This instruction reflects Israel's covenant relationship and the promises of God (1:7 note). It goes beyond the practical and immediate concerns of wisdom to the revelation that sustains the suffering righteous. See notes on 1:19; 11:8.

■ **23:17 the fear of the LORD.** See 1:7 and note.

■ **23:18 a hereafter . . . your hope.** The word "hereafter" (lit. "future") may be a reference to a hope for life and vindication after death. More likely, however, it refers to a long and full life.

■ **23:19–21** Poor company, drunkenness, and gluttony are examples of the foolish life that easily overtakes one.

■ **23:22–25** Instructions to children on right family relationships. These principles are derived from the fifth commandment (Ex. 20:12) and testified to by the sages' discerning observation of harmonious and joyful human relationships.

24 [n]Prov. 10:1
27 [o]Prov. 22:14
28 [p]Prov. 7:12; Eccl. 7:26
29 [q]Is. 5:11, 22 [r]Gen. 49:12
30 [s]1 Sam. 25:36; Prov. 20:1; 21:17; Is. 5:11; 28:7; [Eph. 5:18] [t]Ps. 75:8
31 [7]*goes around*
34 [8]Lit. *heart*
35 [u]Prov. 27:22; Jer. 5:3 [v]Eph. 4:19

CHAPTER 24

1 [a]Ps. 1:1; 37:1; Prov. 23:17

24 [n]The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice,
And he who begets a wise *child* will delight in him.
25 Let your father and your mother be glad,
And let her who bore you rejoice.

26 My son, give me your heart,
And let your eyes observe my ways.
27 [o]For a harlot *is* a deep pit,
And a seductress *is* a narrow well.
28 [p]She also lies in wait as *for* a victim,
And increases the unfaithful among men.

29 [q]Who has woe?
Who has sorrow?
Who has contentions?
Who has complaints?
Who has wounds without cause?
Who [r]has redness of eyes?
30 [s]Those who linger long at the wine,
Those who go in search of [t]mixed wine.
31 Do not look on the wine when it is red,
When it sparkles in the cup,
When it [7]swirls around smoothly;
32 At the last it bites like a serpent,
And stings like a viper.
33 Your eyes will see strange things,
And your heart will utter perverse things.
34 Yes, you will be like one who lies down in the [8]midst of the sea,
Or like one who lies at the top of the mast, *saying:*
35 "They[u] have struck me, *but* I was not hurt;
They have beaten me, but I did not feel *it.*
When shall [v]I awake, that I may seek another *drink?*"

24 Do not be [a]envious of evil men,
Nor desire to be with them;
2 For their heart devises violence,
And their lips talk of troublemaking.

3 Through wisdom a house is built,
And by understanding it is established;
4 By knowledge the rooms are filled
With all precious and pleasant riches.

- **23:26–28** A warning against immoral women (2:16–19; 5:1–20).
- **23:26 give me your heart.** That is, pay attention (2:2 note). The wisdom teachers call for undivided attention and trust in their teaching.
- **23:27 deep pit.** The image is of a pit for trapping wild animals.

seductress. Lit. "a foreign woman," a term used for immoral or adulterous persons (2:16 note).

narrow well. Impossible to escape from (Jer. 38:6).

- **23:28 unfaithful.** Lit. "treacherous," here signifying unfaithfulness in marriage.
- **23:29–35** The perils of drunkenness are put in the form of a riddle. The effects are seen objectively (v. 29) and subjectively (vv. 33–35). The values of biblical wisdom are opposite: self-control, clear perception of reality, and positive relationships.
- **23:30 mixed wine.** See 9:2 and note.
- **23:31 look on the wine when it is red.** The occasions when wine seems especially desirable call for deliberate caution in its use.
- **23:32 bites like a serpent.** The hangover, which is the natural consequence of drunkenness, is like a snakebite.
- **23:33 strange things . . . perverse things.** The words suggest hallucinations and confused thinking.
- **23:34 midst of the sea . . . top of the mast.** Two nautical metaphors express the feeling of dizziness that drunkenness produces.
- **23:35 I was not hurt.** Numbed by drink, the drunk does not notice injuries.

another drink. The alcoholic craves more despite the pain it brings.

- **24:1, 2** See v. 19.
- **24:2 their heart devises violence.** These are deliberately evil people who use all their intellect and determination to harm others.
- **24:3, 4 wisdom . . . understanding . . . knowledge.** These words are used synonymously of the perception and harnessing of right relationships. True wisdom applies to the craftsman's skill in construction (as in Ex. 36:1), to human relationships, and to the legitimate achievement of prosperity.
- **24:3 a house is built.** "House" refers either literally to a building to live in, or is a metaphor for a family, or even a dynasty (2 Sam. 7:11, 12).
- **24:4 riches.** Either material wealth (e.g., Solomon's wealth), or metaphorically, the beauty of good family relationships.

5 [b]A wise man *is* strong,
Yes, a man of knowledge increases strength;
6 [c]For by wise counsel you will wage your own war,
And in a multitude of counselors *there is* safety.

7 [d]Wisdom *is* too lofty for a fool;
He does not open his mouth in the gate.

8 He who [e]plots to do evil
Will be called a [f]schemer.
9 The devising of foolishness *is* sin,
And the scoffer *is* an abomination to men.

10 *If* you [f]faint in the day of adversity,
Your strength *is* small.

11 [g]Deliver *those who* are drawn toward death,
And hold back *those* stumbling to the slaughter.
12 If you say, "Surely we did not know this,"
Does not [h]He who weighs the hearts consider *it?*
He who keeps your soul, does He *not* know *it?*
And will He *not* render to *each* man [i]according to his deeds?

13 My son, [j]eat honey because *it is* good,
And the honeycomb *which is* sweet to your taste;
14 [k]So *shall* the knowledge of wisdom *be* to your soul;
If you have found *it,* there is a [2]prospect,
And your hope will not be cut off.

15 Do not lie in wait, O wicked *man,* against the dwelling of the righteous;
Do not plunder his resting place;
16 [l]For a righteous *man* may fall seven times
And rise again,
[m]But the wicked shall fall by calamity.

17 [n]Do not rejoice when your enemy falls,
And do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles;
18 Lest the LORD see *it,* and [3]it displease Him,
And He turn away His wrath from him.

19 [o]Do not fret because of evildoers,
Nor be envious of the wicked;

5 [b]Prov. 21:22; Eccl. 9:16
6 [c]Luke 14:31
7 [d]Ps. 10:5; Prov. 14:6
8 [e]Prov. 6:14; 14:22; Rom. 1:30 [f]Lit. *master of evil plots*
10 [f]Deut. 20:8; Job 4:5; Jer. 51:46; Heb. 12:3
11 [g]Ps. 82:4; Is. 58:6, 7; 1 John 3:16
12 [h]1 Sam. 16:7; Prov. 21:2 [i]Job 34:11; Ps. 62:12; Rev. 2:23; 22:12
13 [j]Ps. 19:10; 119:103; Prov. 25:16; Song 5:1
14 [k]Ps. 19:10; 58:11; Prov. 23:18 [2]Lit. *latter end*
16 [l]Job 5:19; [Ps. 34:19; 37:24; Mic. 7:8] [m]Esth. 7:10; Amos 5:2
17 [n]Job 31:29; Ps. 35:15, 19; [Prov. 17:5]; Obad. 12
18 [3]Lit. *it be evil in His eyes*
19 [o]Ps. 37:1

■ **24:5, 6** See 11:14; 21:22 and notes.

■ **24:7 too lofty.** Fools are out of their depth since they are unteachable.

the gate. The traditional meeting place for counsel and judgment was the town gate.

■ **24:8 Will be called a schemer.** In a well-ordered society, social values act beneficially to suppress evil. Here the one who schemes is shamed.

■ **24:9 The devising of foolishness is sin.** See v. 2 and note. Folly is not lack of intellect, but active rebellion against truth and the order derived from it.

an abomination to men. See v. 8 and note.

■ **24:10** A person's moral strength is only seen when it is truly tested.

■ **24:11, 12** These two verses are best taken together. One cannot use the excuse of ignorance to avoid the responsibility to help another in need.

■ **24:12 He who weighs the hearts.** One's accountability to God is stressed. Here the eternal rather than the merely social consequences of failing to help others are considered.

■ **24:13 eat honey.** This mention of honey is not merely a metaphor. Good food, a part of the prosperous life, is a concern of wisdom (25:16; Eccl. 9:7, 8; Song 5:1).

■ **24:14 So shall . . . wisdom be.** Wisdom sustains our inner life as honey sustains the body.

prospect. That is, hope for the future (see text note; also 23:18 and note).

■ **24:15, 16** The assumption is that God does not allow the unrighteous to prosper permanently. On the other hand, the righteous may suffer many adversities, yet God finally vindicates them.

■ **24:17 Do not rejoice.** On its own, this verse would make perfect sense as implying that compassion should not be entirely withdrawn from any other human being. While the motive cited in v. 18 may initially appear vindictive, it seems to teach that when we are devoid of kindness to our enemy, we deserve God's wrath more than the enemy does.

■ **24:19 fret.** Lit. "become hot," i.e., become agitated or vexed.

be envious. See v. 1.

21 [p][Rom. 13:7; 1 Pet. 2:17]
23 [q]Lev. 19:15; Deut. 1:17; 16:19; [John 7:24] [4]Lit. *recognize faces*
24 [r]Prov. 17:15; Is. 5:23
25 [s]Prov. 28:23
27 [t]1 Kin. 5:17; Prov. 27:23–27
28 [u]Lev. 6:2, 3; 19:11; Eph. 4:25 [5]LXX, Vg. *Do not deceive*
29 [v][Prov. 20:22; Matt. 5:39–44; Rom. 12:17–19]
31 [w]Gen. 3:18
33 [x]Prov. 6:9, 10
34 [y]Prov. 6:9–11 [6]Lit. *one who walks about* [7]Lit. *a man with a shield*

CHAPTER 25

1 [a]1 Kin. 4:32
2 [b]Deut. 29:29; Rom. 11:33

20 For there will be no prospect for the evil *man;*
The lamp of the wicked will be put out.

21 My son, [p]fear the LORD and the king;
Do not associate with those given to change;
22 For their calamity will rise suddenly,
And who knows the ruin those two can bring?

Further Sayings of the Wise

23 These *things* also *belong* to the wise:

[q]*It is* not good to [4]show partiality in judgment.
24 [r]He who says to the wicked, "You *are* righteous,"
Him the people will curse;
Nations will abhor him.
25 But those who rebuke *the wicked* will have [s]delight,
And a good blessing will come upon them.
26 He who gives a right answer kisses the lips.
27 [t]Prepare your outside work,
Make it fit for yourself in the field;
And afterward build your house.

28 [u]Do not be a witness against your neighbor without cause,
[5]For would you deceive with your lips?
29 [v]Do not say, "I will do to him just as he has done to me;
I will render to the man according to his work."

30 I went by the field of the lazy *man,*
And by the vineyard of the man devoid of understanding;
31 And there it was, [w]all overgrown with thorns;
Its surface was covered with nettles;
Its stone wall was broken down.
32 When I saw *it,* I considered *it* well;
I looked on *it and* received instruction:
33 [x]A little sleep, a little slumber,
A little folding of the hands to rest;
34 [y]So shall your poverty come *like* [6]a prowler,
And your need like [7]an armed man.

Further Wise Sayings of Solomon

25 These[a] also *are* proverbs of Solomon which the men of Hezekiah king of Judah copied:

2 [b]*It is* the glory of God to conceal a matter,
But the glory of kings *is* to search out a matter.

■ **24:20 prospect.** Or, "future hope" (v. 14; 23:18 and note).

■ **24:21 fear the LORD.** See 1:7 and note.

the king. In Israel's covenant-based society, the king became the exemplar of wisdom and the agent of God's rule (cf. Deut. 17:14–20 and notes).

■ **24:22 the ruin those two can bring.** That is, righteous retribution from God and the king.

■ **24:23–25** Justice is essential. A well-ordered society is one in which justice is done and is seen to be done. This complements the directive given in vv. 21, 22.

■ **24:26 kisses the lips.** This comparison to the most intimate expression of friendship highlights the value of a just and right answer (cf. 27:6).

■ **24:27 build your house.** Either the physical structure, or the family (v. 3 note). Both need a firm economic basis, such as is provided by the proceeds of one's crops, before they can be built.

■ **24:28, 29** If, as seems likely, these two verses belong together, there is even more at stake than the need to avoid giving false witness (6:16, 19). Revenge is born out of anger and the heat of passion. The loss of control depicted in v. 29 is the opposite of the self-restraint called for by biblical wisdom.

■ **24:30–34** See 6:6–11 and notes.

■ **25:1 proverbs of Solomon.** See Introduction: Author; note on 1:1.

Hezekiah. He was king of Judah at the time of the destruction of the northern kingdom of Israel. Hezekiah vigorously carried out reforms of Judah's corrupt religious practices. This introduction to a new section of the Book of Proverbs shows that Hezekiah not only promoted a return to the Law of Moses, but also encouraged the wisdom movement by literary activity.

copied. The development of a scribal class in Israel was dictated by the religious and administrative needs of the nation. The Hebrew word used here indicates transmission and may mean committing oral tradition to writing, or transcribing something already written.

■ **25:2** It can already be seen from creation that the wisdom of God is

3 *As* the heavens for height and the earth for depth,
So the heart of kings *is* unsearchable.

4 [c]Take away the dross from silver,
And it will go to the silversmith *for* jewelry.
5 Take away the wicked from before the king,
And his throne will be established in [d]righteousness.

6 Do not exalt yourself in the presence of the king,
And do not stand in the place of the great;
7 [e]For *it is* better that he say to you,
"Come up here,"
Than that you should be put lower in the presence of the prince,
Whom your eyes have seen.

8 [f]Do not go hastily to [1]court;
For what will you do in the end,
When your neighbor has put you to shame?
9 [g]Debate your case with your neighbor,
And do not disclose the secret to another;
10 Lest he who hears *it* expose your shame,
And [2]your reputation be ruined.

11 A word fitly [h]spoken *is like* apples of gold
In settings of silver.
12 *Like* an earring of gold and an ornament of fine gold
Is a wise rebuker to an obedient ear.

13 [i]Like the cold of snow in time of harvest
Is a faithful messenger to those who send him,
For he refreshes the soul of his masters.

14 [j]Whoever falsely boasts of giving
Is like [k]clouds and wind without rain.

15 [l]By long forbearance a ruler is persuaded,
And a gentle tongue breaks a bone.

4 [c]2 Tim. 2:21
5 [d]Prov. 16:12; 20:8
7 [e]Luke 14:7–11
8 [f]Prov. 17:14; Matt. 5:25 [1]Lit. *contend* or *bring a lawsuit*
9 [g][Matt. 18:15].
10 [2]*the evil report concerning you not pass away*
11 [h]Prov. 15:23; Is. 50:4
13 [i]Prov. 13:17
14 [j]Prov. 20:6 [k]Jude 12
15 [l]Prov. 15:1

beyond all human knowing (Ps. 92:5; 147:5; Is. 40:12–17; Rom. 1:20). The king as God's servant makes probing inquiry into the questions that concern his rule, and he is to be admired for his success in uncovering what he has to know (16:12–15; 20:8, 26; 25:3, 5 and notes).

■ **25:3 unsearchable.** The same verb as in v. 2 is used here in the negative. The knowledge that the king has acquired through effort and the royal decisions based on it are reflections of God's rule based on His wisdom. The king is understood to rule through God's appointment (cf. Rom. 13:4).

■ **25:4, 5** No matter how skilled the craftsman, he must have good materials to work with. In the same way, the king needs a society purged of evil elements if he is to establish a righteous rule. Good order in society cannot simply be commanded from the throne.

■ **25:6, 7** Wisdom of the royal court observes an unspoken protocol. It rebukes conceit and self-seeking that overreaches itself and leads to humiliation. It is better to start out with humility and then be exalted. Jesus adapted this instruction to speak of our place in the kingdom of God (Luke 14:7–11).

■ **25:8 court.** See text note. The principle can apply more widely to the need for prudence in speech that reflects on the character of others.

■ **25:9 do not disclose the secret to another.** Do not involve others in a dispute.

■ **25:10 your reputation be ruined.** Betrayal of confidences will lead to a reputation for disloyalty.

■ **25:11** Lit. "Apples of gold in settings of silver, a word fitly spoken." This kind of proverbial comparison simply places two or more things side by side (cf. v. 18), leaving the reader to work out the nature of the comparison. The importance of well-chosen words, a common wisdom theme, is highlighted by their comparison with objects of fine craftsmanship.

■ **25:12** A similar comparison of ideas is found in v. 11. Two pieces of jewelry are set alongside a good relationship between the wise teacher's rebuke and the receptive pupil. The implied comparison says either that a rebuke is as valuable as fine gold jewelry, or that a wise rebuke and a receptive ear go together like matched jewelry.

■ **25:13 Like the cold of snow.** The imagery is not of an unseasonable snowfall, which would be disastrous for the harvest, but of refreshment (cf. v. 25).

■ **25:14** Inhabitants of Palestine often experienced clouds that promised rain but proved to be dry (Jude 12). Such a proverb today might be applied to those who seek power and influence, whether political or personal, by promises that are not fulfilled.

■ **25:15 By long forbearance.** That is, by being slow to anger and resisting provocation.

breaks a bone. By gentle diplomacy strong resistance is broken.

16 Have you found honey?
Eat only as much as you need,
Lest you be filled with it and vomit.

17 Seldom set foot in your neighbor's house,
Lest he become weary of you and hate you.

18 [m]A man who bears false witness against his neighbor
Is like a club, a sword, and a sharp arrow.

19 Confidence in an unfaithful *man* in time of trouble
Is like a bad tooth and a foot out of joint.

20 *Like* one who takes away a garment in cold weather,
And like vinegar on soda,
Is one who [n]sings songs to a heavy heart.

21 [o]If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat;
And if he is thirsty, give him water to drink;
22 For *so* you will heap coals of fire on his head,
[p]And the LORD will reward you.

23 The north wind brings forth rain,
And [q]a backbiting tongue an angry countenance.

24 [r]*It is* better to dwell in a corner of a housetop,
Than in a house shared with a contentious woman.

25 *As* cold water to a weary soul,
So *is* [s]good news from a far country.

26 A righteous *man* who falters before the wicked
Is like a murky spring and a [3]polluted well.

27 *It is* not good to eat much honey;
So [t]to seek one's own glory *is not* glory.

28 [u]Whoever *has* no rule over his own spirit
Is like a city broken down, without walls.

26 As snow in summer [a]and rain in harvest,
So honor is not fitting for a fool.

2 Like a flitting sparrow, like a flying swallow,
So [b]a curse without cause shall not alight.

18 [m]Ps. 57:4; Prov. 12:18
20 [n]Dan. 6:18
21 [o]Ex. 23:4, 5; 2 Kin. 6:22; 2 Chr. 28:15; Matt. 5:44; Rom. 12:20
22 [p]2 Sam. 16:12; [Matt. 6:4, 6]
23 [q]Ps. 101:5
24 [r]Prov. 19:13
25 [s]Prov. 15:30
26 [3]*ruined*
27 [t]Prov. 27:2; [Luke 14:11]
28 [u]Prov. 16:32

CHAPTER 26

1 [a]1 Sam. 12:17
2 [b]Num. 23:8; Deut. 23:5; 2 Sam. 16:12

■ **25:16, 17** What were probably separate sayings are here joined to reinforce the message they have in common: Know when to stop; honey is good for you, but too much makes you sick; neighborly friendship is good, but excessive familiarity can abuse another's privacy. Relationships need to be wisely defined.

■ **25:18** False testimony belongs to the same group as weapons of war because they all are lethal instruments used to assault another's well-being.

■ **25:20 vinegar on soda.** The application of vinegar to "soda" (a cleansing agent such as baking soda) renders the latter useless. Another possible translation is, "like vinegar on a wound." Just as taking away someone's coat or pouring vinegar on wounds causes pain, so also does frivolity in the presence of sorrow (Ps. 137:3, 4; Rom. 12:15).

■ **25:22 you will heap coals of fire on his head.** The meaning of this metaphor must be determined from its context (see v. 21). The apostle Paul (Rom. 12:2) uses it, as here, as an image of overcoming evil with good. Ps. 140:10 uses the phrase as a description of punishment. The most likely meaning is penitence through a burning sense of shame. Some associate the image with an Egyptian penitential rite in which coals were carried on the head to show contrition. But the proverb comments on divine recompense: "the LORD will reward you." See note on 1:7.

Apart from Ex. 23:4, 5, Israel was rarely ordered to show kindness to enemies. This is probably because of the significance of the enemies as those who not only oppose God's kingdom but also threaten Israel's survival as the messianic people. Jesus developed the implications of the gospel for the treatment of personal enemies in Matt. 5:43–48.

■ **25:23** Note the inevitable cause and effect relationship expressed in both lines.

■ **25:24** See 21:9 and note.

■ **25:25** For the form of this proverb, see note on v. 11.

■ **25:26 righteous man.** See note on 8:18.

■ **25:28** This comparison (see v. 11 note) illustrates the vulnerability of the person who lacks self-control.

■ **26:1** The comparison is explicit ("As . . . So"). The perceptible orderliness of nature should be paralleled in society's estimation of human character.

■ **26:2** The form is the same as in v. 1. Curses have no power to afflict

3 [c]A whip for the horse,
A bridle for the donkey,
And a rod for the fool's back.
4 Do not answer a fool according to his folly,
Lest you also be like him.
5 [d]Answer a fool according to his folly,
Lest he be wise in his own eyes.
6 He who sends a message by the hand of a fool
Cuts off *his own* feet *and* drinks violence.
7 *Like* the legs of the lame that hang limp
Is a proverb in the mouth of fools.
8 Like one who binds a stone in a sling
Is he who gives honor to a fool.
9 *Like* a thorn *that* goes into the hand of a drunkard
Is a proverb in the mouth of fools.
10 [1]The great *God* who formed everything
Gives the fool *his* hire and the transgressor *his* wages.
11 [e]As a dog returns to his own vomit,
[f]*So* a fool repeats his folly.
12 [g]Do you see a man wise in his own eyes?
There is more hope for a fool than for him.

13 The lazy *man* says, "*There is* a lion in the road!
A fierce lion *is* in the [2]streets!"
14 *As* a door turns on its hinges,
So *does* the lazy *man* on his bed.
15 The [h]lazy *man* buries his hand in the [3]bowl;
It wearies him to bring it back to his mouth.
16 The lazy *man is* wiser in his own eyes
Than seven men who can answer sensibly.

17 He who passes by *and* meddles in a quarrel not his own
Is like one who takes a dog by the ears.

18 Like a madman who throws firebrands, arrows, and death,
19 *Is* the man *who* deceives his neighbor,
And says, [i]"I was only joking!"

20 Where *there is* no wood, the fire goes out;
And where *there is* no [4]talebearer, strife ceases.

3 [c]Ps. 32:9; Prov. 19:29

5 [d]Matt. 16:1–4; Rom. 12:16

10 [1]Heb. difficult in v. 10; ancient and modern translators differ greatly

11 [e]2 Pet. 2:22 [f]Ex. 8:15

12 [g]Prov. 29:20; Luke 18:11, 12; [Rev. 3:17]

13 [2]Or *plazas, squares*

15 [h]Prov. 19:24 [3]LXX, Syr. *bosom;* Tg., Vg. *armpit*

19 [i]Eph. 5:4

20 [4]*gossip* or *slanderer,* lit. *whisperer*

someone who is innocent. Such a curse has meaning only as an expression of divine retribution.

■ **26:4, 5** Taken together these verses illustrate the point that no proverb is intended to cover every possible situation. The apparent contradiction in the two proverbs indicates that proverbs must be appropriately applied. One situation demands that we avoid playing the fool's game by giving an answer, while another demands that we expose the folly so that the fool is not considered wise.

■ **26:6 drinks violence.** Or, "suffers violence." Sending a fool on an errand is asking for trouble.

■ **26:7** A wisdom saying uttered by a fool is so incongruous with his character that it loses power.

■ **26:8** The absurdity of preventing a stone from leaving the sling illustrates the absurdity of honoring the fool.

■ **26:9 Like a thorn . . . a proverb.** This saying apparently refers to a thorn piercing the hand of a person too drunk to sense it. Either the fool is too simple to perceive the significance of the proverb, or, as the thorn injures the drunkard's hand, so fools will use the proverb to their own hurt.

■ **26:11** Fools will not learn from their mistakes but rather return, like a dog to its vomit, to repeat them.

■ **26:12** There are degrees of folly, and the highest is found in fools who think they are wise. An extreme example is seen in the worldly wisdom that regards God's wisdom as folly (1 Cor. 1:18—2:5).

■ **26:13–16** Four proverbs reflect on laziness that works against well-ordered human existence and against life itself. See 6:6–11; 24:30–34 and notes.

■ **26:13** See 22:13 and note.

■ **26:14** Just like a door on its hinges, so lazy persons turn restlessly on their beds.

■ **26:16 seven men.** The precise number, although often symbolizing completeness, is not important in this instance; it serves only to highlight the self-delusion of the fool.

■ **26:17** Wisdom includes knowing when not to interfere in others' disputes.

■ **26:18, 19** The common element is the potential for destruction: to property and persons (v. 18), and to personal relationships (v. 19).

■ **26:20 talebearer.** A gossip, a purveyor of malicious murmuring with little concern for the truth.

21 [j]As charcoal *is* to burning coals, and wood to fire,
So *is* a contentious man to kindle strife.
22 The words of a [5]talebearer *are* like [6]tasty trifles,
And they go down into the [7]inmost body.

23 Fervent lips with a wicked heart
Are like earthenware covered with silver dross.

24 He who hates, disguises *it* with his lips,
And lays up deceit within himself;
25 [k]When [8]he speaks kindly, do not believe him,
For *there are* seven abominations in his heart;
26 *Though his* hatred is covered by deceit,
His wickedness will be revealed before the assembly.

27 [l]Whoever digs a pit will fall into it,
And he who rolls a stone will have it roll back on him.

28 A lying tongue hates *those who are* crushed by it,
And a flattering mouth works [m]ruin.

27 Do[a] not boast about tomorrow,
For you do not know what a day may bring forth.

2 [b]Let another man praise you, and not your own mouth;
A stranger, and not your own lips.

3 A stone *is* heavy and sand *is* weighty,
But a fool's wrath *is* heavier than both of them.

4 Wrath *is* cruel and anger a torrent,
But [c]who *is* able to stand before jealousy?

5 [d]Open rebuke *is* better
Than love carefully concealed.

6 Faithful *are* the wounds of a friend,
But the kisses of an enemy *are* [e]deceitful.

7 A satisfied soul [1]loathes the honeycomb,
But to a hungry soul every bitter thing *is* sweet.

8 Like a bird that wanders from its nest
Is a man who wanders from his place.

9 Ointment and perfume delight the heart,
And the sweetness of a man's friend *gives delight* by [2]hearty counsel.

21 [j]Prov. 15:18

22 [5]*gossip or slanderer* [6]A Jewish tradition *wounds* [7]Lit. *rooms of the belly*

25 [k]Ps. 28:3; Prov. 26:23; Jer. 9:8 [8]Lit. *his voice is gracious*

27 [l]Esth. 7:10; Ps. 7:15; Prov. 28:10; Eccl. 10:8

28 [m]Prov. 29:5

CHAPTER 27

1 [a]Luke 12:19–21; James 4:13–16

2 [b]Prov. 25:27; 2 Cor. 10:12, 18; 12:11

4 [c]Prov. 6:34; 1 John 3:12

5 [d][Prov. 28:23]; Gal. 2:14

6 [e]Matt. 26:49

7 [1]*tramples on*

9 [2]Lit. *counsel of the soul*

■ **26:21 contentious man.** Such people are not happy unless they are actively undermining personal relationships.

■ **26:22** See 18:8 and note.

■ **26:23** Although the Hebrew text is difficult, the apparent meaning is like that of vv. 24–26: a pleasing veneer can hide an opposite nature beneath.

■ **26:25, 26** The person of v. 24 must be avoided. In time, people will see through such deceptions (5:14 and note).

■ **26:27** Troublemakers often make trouble for themselves (cf. Gal. 6:7). The theme of retribution is probably intended to be linked with vv. 23–26. Here the emphasis is not on direct divine judgment, but on the providentially self-destructive nature of folly aimed at destroying others.

■ **26:28** Hatred is the ultimate breakdown in human relationships (1 John 3:15). Human speech has enormous potential for evil, and its misuse cannot be lightly excused (James 3:5–10).

■ **27:1** Though wisdom is concerned with taking hold on life, people do not have complete control over their future. Fools think they have, but they do not reckon with the sovereign will of God (21:30 note; Luke 12:19, 20).

■ **27:2** Wisdom is humble (cf. 1 Cor. 13:4, 5).

■ **27:3, 4** Two comparisons emphasize the destructiveness of folly.

■ **27:5 Open rebuke.** A salutary word aimed at correction for one's good.

love carefully concealed. This love, though genuine, lacks the moral strength to risk giving a rebuke.

■ **27:6 wounds of a friend.** The meaning is similar to "open rebuke" in v. 5.

■ **27:7** See 25:16, 17, 27 and notes. The meaning of the proverb is not limited to food, but applies to anything for which we have an appetite.

■ **27:8** Rootlessness hurts both the wanderer and those with whom he should be relating. Human beings need personal relationships.

10 Do not forsake your own friend or your father's friend,
Nor go to your brother's house in the day of your calamity;
[f]Better *is* a neighbor nearby than a brother far away.

11 My son, be wise, and make my heart glad,
[g]That I may answer him who reproaches me.

12 A prudent *man* foresees evil *and* hides himself;
The simple pass on *and* are [h]punished.

13 Take the garment of him who is surety for a stranger,
And hold it in pledge *when* he is surety for a seductress.

14 He who blesses his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning,
It will be counted a curse to him.

15 A [i]continual dripping on a very rainy day
And a contentious woman are alike;
16 Whoever [3]restrains her restrains the wind,
And grasps oil with his right hand.

17 *As* iron sharpens iron,
So a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.

18 [j]Whoever [4]keeps the fig tree will eat its fruit;
So he who waits on his master will be honored.

19 As in water face *reflects* face,
So a man's heart *reveals* the man.

20 [k]Hell[5] and [6]Destruction are never full;
So [l]the eyes of man are never satisfied.

21 [m]The refining pot *is* for silver and the furnace for gold,
And a man *is valued* by what others say of him.

22 [n]Though you grind a fool in a mortar with a pestle along with crushed grain,
Yet his foolishness will not depart from him.

23 Be diligent to know the state of your [o]flocks,
And attend to your herds;
24 For riches *are* not forever,
Nor does a crown *endure* to all generations.
25 [p]*When* the hay is removed, and the tender grass shows itself,
And the herbs of the mountains are gathered in,

10 [f]Prov. 17:17; 18:24

11 [g]Prov. 10:1; 23:15–26

12 [h]Prov. 22:3

15 [i]Prov. 19:13

16 [3]Lit. *hides*

18 [j]2 Kin. 18:31; Song 8:12; Is. 36:16; [1 Cor. 3:8; 9:7–13]; 2 Tim. 2:6 [4]*protects* or *tends*

20 [k]Prov. 30:15, 16; Hab. 2:5 [l]Eccl. 1:8; 4:8 [5]Or *Sheol* [6]Heb. *Abaddon*

21 [m]Prov. 17:3

22 [n]Prov. 23:35; 26:11; Jer. 5:3

23 [o]Prov. 24:27

25 [p]Ps. 104:14

■ **27:10** The point of this instruction seems to be that one should develop relationships beyond the immediate family, for relatives are sometimes unwilling or unable to come to our aid.

■ **27:11** Parents are vindicated before others by their success in passing wisdom on to their children (10:1).

■ **27:12 prudent . . . simple.** See 1:4; 12:16 and notes.

■ **27:13** See 20:16 and note.

■ **27:14** The reference is probably to false and inappropriately timed protestations of friendship that cloak an evil intent (26:18, 19, 24–26).

■ **27:17** This saying probably refers to the positive effect of interaction with others on one's character.

■ **27:18** Diligent work and honest service are rewarded (22:29).

■ **27:19** Just as water reflects our outward appearance, so the thoughts of our "hearts" reveal our inner nature and character.

■ **27:20 Hell and Destruction.** See notes on 15:11. The parallel with destruction implies that the insatiability of the eyes involves endless desires that become destructive.

■ **27:21** The sense is either that public praise tests character (here one's resistance to the temptation of pride), or that public esteem is generally a reliable indication of one's character (but cf. Matt. 5:11).

■ **27:22 mortar . . . pestle.** A bowl and a rod used to grind things in it. The fool is unteachable even when the most drastic measures are taken.

■ **27:23–27** Economic resources of a renewable sort (flocks, crops) are preferable to riches that cannot be replaced. Careful attention to the providential order of nature generally ensures lasting provision for our needs. The ecological implications of this passage are even more obvious in the modern context.

26 The lambs *will provide* your clothing,
And the goats the price of a field;
27 *You shall have* enough goats' milk for your food,
For the food of your household,
And the nourishment of your maidservants.

CHAPTER 28

28 The [a]wicked flee when no one pursues,
But the righteous are bold as a lion.

2 Because of the transgression of a land, many *are* its princes;
But by a man of understanding *and* knowledge
Right will be prolonged.

3 [b]A poor man who oppresses the poor
Is like a driving rain [f]which leaves no food.

4 [c]Those who forsake the law praise the wicked,
[d]But such as keep the law contend with them.

5 [e]Evil men do not understand justice,
But [f]those who seek the LORD understand all.

6 Better *is* the poor who walks in his integrity
Than one perverse *in his* ways, though he *be* rich.

7 Whoever keeps the law *is* a discerning son,
But a companion of gluttons shames his father.

8 One who increases his possessions by usury and extortion
Gathers it for him who will pity the poor.

9 One who turns away his ear from hearing the law,
[g]Even his prayer *is* an abomination.

10 [h]Whoever causes the upright to go astray in an evil way,
He himself will fall into his own pit;
[i]But the blameless will inherit good.

11 The rich man *is* wise in his own eyes,
But the poor who has understanding searches him out.

1 [a]Lev. 26:17, 36; Ps. 53:5
3 [b]Matt. 18:28 [f]Lit. *and there is no bread*
4 [c]Ps. 49:18; Rom. 1:32 [d]1 Kin. 18:18; Neh. 13:11, 15; Matt. 3:7; 14:4; Eph. 5:11
5 [e]Ps. 92:6; Is. 6:9; 44:18 [f]Ps. 119:100; Prov. 2:9; John 17:17; 1 Cor. 2:15; [1 John 2:20, 27]
9 [g]Ps. 66:18; 109:7; Prov. 15:8
10 [h]Ps. 7:15; Prov. 26:27 [i]Matt. 6:33; Heb. 6:12; 1 Pet. 3:9]

■ **28:1–28** This chapter contains a heavier concentration of theological reflection than earlier chapters of proverbial sentences. Sometimes this is explicit, with references to God or to the law and righteousness. In other sentences it is more implicit, as in the contrast of the righteous and the wicked, which seems to assume the underlying providential order and judgment of God.

■ **28:2** Although the Hebrew is difficult, the meaning seems to be that unrighteousness and political instability (as occurred in the northern kingdom of Israel) go hand in hand, while a wise or righteous person helps maintain social order.

■ **28:3 A poor man . . . the poor.** The change of a Hebrew vowel produces the reading, "A ruler who oppresses the poor." Both excessive rainfall and a wicked ruler can do great harm.

■ **28:4 the law.** Probably the Law of Moses, although wisdom instruction may be in view (3:1 note). Although wisdom literature often seems to reflect more on human experience in the created order than on God's revelation in Scripture, the Hebrew sages were men of God who knew the law and its demands (1:7 note).

■ **28:5 justice.** The word refers either to God's moral rule of the universe, or to the good order of things, of which God's rule is the basis.

those who seek the LORD. Those whose faith recognizes that the purpose of life is to serve God.

understand all. The phrase does not imply total knowledge or infallibility, but a renewed mind that knows things truly because it knows them as they are interpreted by God's revelation in Scripture (1:7 note).

■ **28:6 in his integrity.** Integrity in one's relationships with God and others is more important than riches.

■ **28:7 law.** See v. 4 and note.

companion of gluttons shames. See 23:19–25 and notes.

■ **28:8 usury and extortion.** In Lev. 25:35–38, the grace of God establishes the principle of helping others freely and not for gain (Deut. 23:19, 20).

Gathers it for him who will pity. The justice of God will not allow the greedy rich to retain their wealth (13:22; 22:16; Job 27:13–19), but will instead give it to those who generously aid others (19:17).

■ **28:9** See 15:8, 29.

■ **28:10 causes the upright to go astray.** The justice of God seems to be implied here; there is a special judgment on those who seek to seduce God's people (Matt. 5:19; 18:6).

■ **28:11** While riches do not necessarily correlate with unrighteousness, nor poverty with wisdom and righteousness, there is that tendency nevertheless (vv. 6, 8, 20, 22, 25, 27).

wise in his own eyes. See 26:5, 16. There are no greater fools than those who see their folly as wisdom (cf. 1 Cor. 1:18–25).

12 When the righteous rejoice, *there is* great [j]glory;
But when the wicked arise, men [2]hide themselves.

13 [k]He who covers his sins will not prosper,
But whoever confesses and forsakes *them* will have mercy.

14 Happy *is* the man who is always reverent,
But he who hardens his heart will fall into calamity.

15 [l]*Like* a roaring lion and a charging bear
[m]*Is* a wicked ruler over poor people.

16 A ruler who lacks understanding *is* a great [n]oppressor,
But he who hates covetousness will prolong *his* days.

17 [o]A man burdened with bloodshed will flee into a pit;
Let no one help him.

18 Whoever walks blamelessly will be [3]saved,
But *he who is* perverse *in his* ways will suddenly fall.

19 [p]He who tills his land will have plenty of bread,
But he who follows frivolity will have poverty enough!

20 A faithful man will abound with blessings,
[q]But he who hastens to be rich will not go unpunished.

21 [r]To [4]show partiality *is* not good,
[s]Because for a piece of bread a man will transgress.

22 A man with an evil eye hastens after riches,
And does not consider that [t]poverty will come upon him.

23 [u]He who rebukes a man will find more favor afterward
Than he who flatters with the tongue.

24 Whoever robs his father or his mother,
And says, "*It is* no transgression,"
The same [v]*is* companion to a destroyer.

25 [w]He who is of a proud heart stirs up strife,
[x]But he who trusts in the LORD will be prospered.

26 He who [y]trusts in his own heart is a fool,
But whoever walks wisely will be delivered.

12 [j]Prov. 11:10; 29:2 [2]Lit. *will be searched for*

13 [k]Ps. 32:3–5; 1 John 1:8–10

15 [l]Prov. 19:12; 1 Pet. 5:8 [m]Ex. 1:14; Prov. 29:2; Matt. 2:16

16 [n]Eccl. 10:16; Is. 3:12

17 [o]Gen. 9:6

18 [3]*delivered*

19 [p]Prov. 12:11; 20:13

20 [q]Prov. 13:11; 20:21; 23:4; 1 Tim. 6:9

21 [r]Prov. 18:5 [s]Ezek. 13:19 [4]Lit. *recognize faces*

22 [t]Prov. 21:5

23 [u]Prov. 27:5, 6

24 [v]Prov. 18:9

25 [w]Prov. 13:10 [x]Prov. 29:25; 1 Tim. 6:6

26 [y]Prov. 3:5

■ **28:12** Righteousness leads to social order and happiness, while unrighteousness destroys and alienates (v. 28 and 29:2).

■ **28:13** The orderliness and well-being in one's life is linked to an intensely personal relationship with God. Unconfessed sin is the ultimate disorder in life. Confession and repentance lead to a restoration of a right relationship with God, based on mercy (Ps. 32:1–4; 1 John 1:6–9). All other relationships depend on this.

■ **28:14 Happy.** See 3:13 and note.

he who hardens his heart. One who sets his will against the Lord (Ex. 7:3, 13).

■ **28:15** See vv. 3, 16.

■ **28:16** Tyranny is so contrary to wisdom that it demonstrates a lack of discernment. The second line implies that the greedy tyrant brings about his own destruction.

■ **28:18 Whoever . . . will be saved.** See notes on 1:19; 10:3; 11:8.

■ **28:20** Faith and wisdom may lead to riches, but to give priority to riches is serious error.

■ **28:21** See 18:5; 24:23, 24. Even a small bribe can have disastrous results in the maintenance of order and justice in society.

■ **28:22 man with an evil eye.** A miser (23:6 note and text note).

poverty will come. The meaning is either that the miser lacks the wisdom to gain and keep wealth, or that God's justice will not allow such a one to be rich (v. 20).

■ **28:23** A needed rebuke ultimately has a positive effect on personal relationships (27:5), while flattery only undermines them.

■ **28:24** See 19:26 and note.

It is no transgression. Family relationships are at the hub of all human ties. To plunder one's parents without shame shows moral depravity that undermines all relationships.

■ **28:25 trusts in the LORD.** Reliance and faith are included in the fear of the Lord (1:7 note).

■ **28:26 trusts in his own heart.** See 3:5, 6 and notes. Trust in self is the destructive opposite of trusting the Lord.

27 [z]He who gives to the poor will not lack,
But he who hides his eyes will have many curses.

28 When the wicked arise, [a]men hide themselves;
But when they perish, the righteous increase.

29 He[a] who is often rebuked, *and* hardens *his* neck,
Will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

2 When the righteous [1]are in authority, the [b]people rejoice;
But when a wicked *man* rules, [c]the people groan.

3 Whoever loves wisdom makes his father rejoice,
But a companion of harlots wastes *his* wealth.

4 The king establishes the land by justice,
But he who receives bribes overthrows it.

5 A man who [d]flatters his neighbor
Spreads a net for his feet.

6 By transgression an evil man is snared,
But the righteous sings and rejoices.

7 The righteous [e]considers the cause of the poor,
But the wicked does not understand *such* knowledge.

8 Scoffers [f]set a city aflame,
But wise *men* turn away wrath.

9 *If* a wise man contends with a foolish man,
[g]Whether *the fool* rages or laughs, *there is* no peace.

10 [h]The bloodthirsty hate the blameless,
But the upright seek his [2]well-being.

11 A fool vents all his [i]feelings,[3]
But a wise *man* holds them back.

12 If a ruler pays attention to lies,
All his servants *become* wicked.

13 The poor *man* and the oppressor have this in common:
[j]The LORD gives light to the eyes of both.

14 The king who judges the [k]poor with truth,
His throne will be established forever.

27 [z]Deut. 15:7; Prov. 19:17; 22:9
28 [a]Job 24:4

CHAPTER 29

1 [a]2 Chr. 36:16; Prov. 6:15
2 [b]Esth. 8:15; Prov. 28:12 [c]Esth. 4:3 [1]*become great*
5 [d]Prov. 26:28
7 [e]Job 29:16; Ps. 41:1; Prov. 31:8, 9
8 [f]Prov. 11:11
9 [g]Matt. 11:17
10 [h]Gen. 4:5–8; 1 John 3:12 [2]Lit. *soul* or *life*
11 [i]Prov. 14:33 [3]Lit. *spirit*
13 [j][Matt. 5:45]
14 [k]Ps. 72:4; Is. 11:4

walks wisely. The way of wisdom and the fear of the Lord are correlated in vv. 25, 26 (1:7 note).

- **28:27** See 11:24–26; 14:21; 22:9 and notes.
- **28:28** See v. 12 and note; 29:2.
- **29:1 often rebuked.** See 1:30; 5:12; 9:7, 8; 10:17; 12:1 and notes.

hardens his neck. That is, becomes self-willed and unteachable (28:14).

- **29:3 makes his father rejoice.** See 10:1; 28:7.

wastes his wealth. The parallelism implies that such behavior is a disgrace and a sorrow to one's father (6:26).

- **29:4** See 8:15, 16; 20:8, 26 and notes.
- **29:5** See 28:23.
- **29:7 considers the cause.** Lit. "knows the judgment." They know and do what God requires for the poor.
- **29:8 Scoffers.** See 1:22 and note.

set a city aflame. The unwise, by nature, tend to undermine harmony in society.

- **29:9** If at all possible, the wise should avoid disputing with fools. Fools are incapable of rational argument, and even when right judgment is given they cannot be reconciled. See note on 26:4, 5.
- **29:12** Corruption in society tends to start at the top. The dishonest ruler not only attracts evil officials, but encourages subordinates to become corrupt.
- **29:13 gives light to the eyes of both.** God has created both rich and poor (22:2 and note).
- **29:14** See v. 4; 16:12–15 and notes.

15 The rod and rebuke give [l]wisdom,
But a child left *to himself* brings shame to his mother.

16 When the wicked are multiplied, transgression increases;
But the righteous will see their [m]fall.

17 Correct your son, and he will give you rest;
Yes, he will give delight to your soul.

18 [n]Where *there is* no [4]revelation, the people cast off restraint;
But [o]happy *is* he who keeps the law.

19 A servant will not be corrected by mere words;
For though he understands, he will not respond.

20 Do you see a man hasty in his words?
[p]*There is* more hope for a fool than for him.

21 He who pampers his servant from childhood
Will have him as a son in the end.

22 [q]An angry man stirs up strife,
And a furious man abounds in transgression.

23 [r]A man's pride will bring him low,
But the humble in spirit will retain honor.

24 Whoever is a partner with a thief hates his own life;
[s]He [5]swears to tell the truth, but reveals nothing.

25 [t]The fear of man brings a snare,
But whoever trusts in the LORD shall be [6]safe.

26 [u]Many seek the ruler's [7]favor,
But justice for man *comes* from the LORD.

27 An unjust man *is* an abomination to the righteous,
And *he who is* upright in the way *is* an abomination to the wicked.

15 [l]Prov. 22:15

16 [m]Ps. 37:34; Prov. 21:12

18 [n]1 Sam. 3:1; Ps. 74:9; Amos 8:11, 12 [o]Prov. 8:32; John 13:17 [4]*prophetic vision*

20 [p]Prov. 26:12

22 [q]Prov. 26:21

23 [r]Job 22:29; Prov. 15:33; 18:12; Is. 66:2; Dan. 4:30; Matt. 23:12; Luke 14:11; 18:14; Acts 12:23; [James 4:6–10; 1 Pet. 5:5, 6]

24 [s]Lev. 5:1 [5]Lit. *hears the adjuration* or *oath*

25 [t]Gen. 12:12; 20:2; Luke 12:4; John 12:42, 43 [6]*secure,* lit. *set on high*

26 [u]Ps. 20:9 [7]Lit. *face*

The Wisdom of Agur

30 The words of Agur the son of Jakeh, *his* utterance. This man declared to Ithiel—to Ithiel and Ucal:

■ **29:15** See 13:24; 22:15; 23:13, 14 and notes.

■ **29:16** This proverb implicitly expresses confidence in the ultimate establishment of a just order under the rule of God.

■ **29:17 Correct.** Not only chastening (v. 15) is in view, but also active and positive instruction in wisdom. In the covenantal context of Israel's faith, discipline and instruction come from the revelation of God in His word and acts.

■ **29:18 revelation.** Either there is no word (1 Sam. 3:1), or there is an inability to hear the word (Amos 8:11, 12).

■ **29:19** An observation of conditions in Hebrew society rather than a constant attitude of all workers (cf. 18:23 and note). The educational applications of wisdom are in view here, with the recognition that not all dispositions can be changed by words or reason alone.

■ **29:21 Will have him . . . end.** In what is perhaps a better reading, the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) translates this, "in the end he will come to grief." Servants who are not corrected and disciplined will be a source of grief (v. 19).

■ **29:22 stirs up strife.** See 15:18 and note.

■ **29:23** See 15:33; also 16:18, 19 and notes. The sin of pride does not allow the fool to benefit from another's wisdom.

■ **29:24** This verse depicts the predicament of accomplices to a crime. They are obliged to be witnesses (Lev. 5:1), but if they do testify they incriminate themselves.

■ **29:26** Wisdom recognizes the special function of rulers to maintain godly order, and thus to be agents of God's rule (21:1 note). It also recognizes the weakness of human rulers. Here the supplicant seeks special treatment that would involve injustice. The only sure way to justice is to seek it from the Lord.

■ **30:1 Agur the son of Jakeh.** His identity is unknown, but many consider him to be a foreigner. See note on 22:17—24:22; and Introduction: Author.

his utterance. It is possible that the Hebrew word is a place-name, "Massa" (also in 31:1), and that both Agur and Lemuel were Ishmaelites from Massa, thought to be in Arabia (Gen. 25:14).

to Ithiel and Ucal. The words are possibly names of persons addressed. Alternatively, the Hebrew can be read, "I am weary, O God, and tired."

CHAPTER 30

2 [a]Ps. 73:22; Prov. 12:1

3 [b][Prov. 9:10]

4 [c][Ps. 68:18; John 3:13] [d]Job 38:4; Ps. 104:3; Is. 40:12

5 [e]Ps. 12:6; 19:8; 119:140 [f]Ps. 18:30; 84:11; 115:9–11 [f]*tested, refined, found pure*

6 [g]Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Rev. 22:18

8 [h]Job 23:12; Matt. 6:11; [Phil. 4:19]

9 [i]Deut. 8:12–14; Neh. 9:25, 26; Hos. 13:6

11 [j]Ex. 21:17; Prov. 20:20

12 [k][Prov. 16:2]; Is. 65:5; Luke 18:11; [Titus 1:15, 16]

13 [l]Ps. 131:1; Prov. 6:17; Is. 2:11; 5:15 [2]In arrogance

14 [m]Job 29:17; Ps. 52:2 [n]Ps. 14:4; Amos 8:4

2 [a]Surely I *am* more stupid than *any* man,
And do not have the understanding of a man.
3 I neither learned wisdom
Nor have [b]knowledge of the Holy One.

4 [c]Who has ascended into heaven, or descended?
[d]Who has gathered the wind in His fists?
Who has bound the waters in a garment?
Who has established all the ends of the earth?
What *is* His name, and what *is* His Son's name,
If you know?

5 [e]Every word of God *is* [f]pure;
[f]He *is* a shield to those who put their trust in Him.
6 [g]Do not add to His words,
Lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar.

7 Two *things* I request of You
(Deprive me not before I die):
8 Remove falsehood and lies far from me;
Give me neither poverty nor riches—
[h]Feed me with the food allotted to me;
9 [i]Lest I be full and deny *You,*
And say, "Who *is* the LORD?"
Or lest I be poor and steal,
And profane the name of my God.

10 Do not malign a servant to his master,
Lest he curse you, and you be found guilty.

11 *There is* a generation *that* curses its [j]father,
And does not bless its mother.
12 *There is* a generation [k]*that is* pure in its own eyes,
Yet is not washed from its filthiness.
13 *There is* a generation—oh, how [l]lofty are their eyes!
And their eyelids are [2]lifted up.
14 [m]*There is* a generation whose teeth *are like* swords,
And whose fangs *are like* knives,
[n]To devour the poor from off the earth,
And the needy from *among* men.

15 The leech has two daughters—
Give *and* Give!

■ **30:2, 3** This statement is not mere modesty or humility, but a recognition of the mystery of the being and ways of God such as is found in Job and Ecclesiastes. The writer is acutely conscious of the bounds of human knowledge and wisdom. God is not an object for our investigation or speculation, but the infinite and personal Creator in whom we must trust. There may be a note of irony in the profession of ignorance here, but v. 4 indicates the meaning.

■ **30:4** These questions express the conviction that knowledge based solely on observation of creation can never fully comprehend God. In Job 38, the same point is made in the course of God's answer to Job.

■ **30:5, 6** With these words Agur gives an assessment of God's Word within the framework of Israel's law and prophetic writings. He quotes Ps. 18:30 and echoes Deut. 4:2. The full knowledge of God comes through special revelation and is received by faith (1:7 note).

■ **30:5 pure.** That is, tried and found to be utterly reliable.

■ **30:6 Do not add to His words.** To add to God's words is to sit in judgment on them and to find them wanting by human standards. This shifts the basis of knowledge and truth from God to ourselves. This pride of the creature is a mainspring of sin (Gen. 2:9 note).

■ **30:7–9** This prayer reflects a desire to learn from the kind of wisdom that is in Proverbs.

■ **30:8 the food allotted to me.** The request is for a sufficiency that avoids both extremes of poverty and unnecessary riches.

■ **30:9 Who is the LORD.** People who have an excess of material possessions soon forget their dependence on the Lord (Deut. 8:10–18; Luke 12:16–21).

■ **30:10** This saying is only superficially connected with what precedes or follows. The point is that interference in another's domestic affairs may backfire.

■ **30:12 pure in its own eyes.** See 16:2; 21:2.

■ **30:15–31** On the form of these numerical sayings, see notes on 6:16–19.

■ **30:15 The leech . . . Give and Give.** The two ends of the leech look the same, and the animal seems to have no function except to devour. The following numerical sayings share the theme of greed.

There are three *things that* are never satisfied,
Four never say, "Enough!":
16 [o]The [3]grave,
The barren womb,
The earth *that* is not satisfied with water—
And the fire never says, "Enough!"

17 [p]The eye *that* mocks *his* father,
And scorns obedience to *his* mother,
The ravens of the valley will pick it out,
And the young eagles will eat it.

18 There are three *things which* are too wonderful for me,
Yes, four *which* I do not understand:
19 The way of an eagle in the air,
The way of a serpent on a rock,
The way of a ship in the [4]midst of the sea,
And the way of a man with a virgin.

20 This *is* the way of an adulterous woman:
She eats and wipes her mouth,
And says, "I have done no wickedness."

21 For three *things* the earth is perturbed,
Yes, for four it cannot bear up:
22 [q]For a servant when he reigns,
A fool when he is filled with food,
23 A [5]hateful *woman* when she is married,
And a maidservant who succeeds her mistress.

24 There are four *things which* are little on the earth,
But they *are* exceedingly wise:
25 [r]The ants *are* a people not strong,
Yet they prepare their food in the summer;
26 [s]The [6]rock badgers are a feeble folk,
Yet they make their homes in the crags;
27 The locusts have no king,
Yet they all advance in ranks;
28 The [7]spider skillfully grasps with its hands,
And it is in kings' palaces.

29 There are three *things which* are majestic in pace,
Yes, four *which* are stately in walk:
30 A lion, *which is* mighty among beasts
And does not turn away from any;
31 A [8]greyhound,
A male goat also,
And [9]a king *whose* troops *are* with him.

16 [o]Prov. 27:20; Hab. 2:5 [3]Or *Sheol*
17 [p]Gen. 9:22; Lev. 20:9; Prov. 20:20
19 [4]Lit. *heart*
22 [q]Prov. 19:10; Eccl. 10:7
23 [5]Or *hated*
25 [r]Prov. 6:6
26 [s]Lev. 11:5; Ps. 104:18 [6]*rock hyraxes*
28 [7]Or *lizard*
31 [8]Or perhaps *strutting rooster,* lit. *girded of waist* [9]A Jewish tradition *a king against whom there is no uprising*

■ **30:17 The eye that mocks.** The contemptuous look can be as poisonous as words. Dishonor toward parents, evidence of breakdown in the most basic human relationship, deserves the ultimate curse.

ravens . . . will pick. The words portray the fate of the corpse that lies unburied, with special attention to the offending eye.

■ **30:18, 19** The four ways cannot be understood, either because they leave no traces or because they are so easily, yet mysteriously, mastered. Some suggest that the emphasis is on the fourth way, human sexual relations, of which the other three may be metaphors.

■ **30:20 eats and wipes her mouth.** The expression is a metaphor for sexual intercourse (7:18; 9:17)—her adultery has become as natural to her as eating. This verse is not part of the previous saying.

■ **30:21 the earth is perturbed.** The four items in vv. 22, 23 hardly seem able to produce such dire consequences in the natural order. This is likely a figure of speech for an intolerable state of affairs.

■ **30:24–28** If this saying went no farther than natural history, it would still fulfill a purpose of wisdom: the perception of order and of how things work together. Many proverbs show an interest in nature as a parable on human life (e.g., 6:6–11). The fact that wisdom is ascribed to these creatures implies some unity with human existence. The creatures are wise because they are able to surmount some serious inherent weakness, and so to survive well. These gifts of wisdom, to each according to its kind, are given by the Creator of all.

■ **30:29–31** The inclusion of a king with the animals suggests a human parallel with nature and the underlying coherence of all creation. The observation of rule and order in both animal and human society indicates that both are products of the same Creator's genius.

32 If you have been foolish in exalting yourself,
Or if you have devised evil, [t]*put your* hand on *your* mouth.
33 For *as* the churning of milk produces butter,
And wringing the nose produces blood,
So the forcing of wrath produces strife.

The Words of King Lemuel's Mother

31 The words of King Lemuel, the utterance which his mother taught him:

2 What, my son?
And what, son of my womb?
And what, [a]son of my vows?
3 [b]Do not give your strength to women,
Nor your ways [c]to that which destroys kings.

4 [d]*It is* not for kings, O Lemuel,
It is not for kings to drink wine,
Nor for princes intoxicating drink;
5 [e]Lest they drink and forget the law,
And pervert the justice of all [f]the afflicted.
6 [f]Give strong drink to him who is perishing,
And wine to those who are bitter of heart.
7 Let him drink and forget his poverty,
And remember his misery no more.

8 [g]Open your mouth for the speechless,
In the cause of all *who are* [2]appointed to die.
9 Open your mouth, [h]judge righteously,
And [i]plead the cause of the poor and needy.

The Virtuous Wife

10 [j]Who[3] can find a [4]virtuous wife?
For her worth *is* far above rubies.
11 The heart of her husband safely trusts her;
So he will have no lack of gain.
12 She does him good and not evil
All the days of her life.
13 She seeks wool and flax,
And willingly works with her hands.
14 She is like the merchant ships,

32 [t]Job 21:5; 40:4; Mic. 7:16

CHAPTER 31

2 [a]Is. 49:15

3 [b]Prov. 5:9 [c]Deut. 17:17; 1 Kin. 11:1; Neh. 13:26; Prov. 7:26; Hos. 4:11

4 [d]Eccl. 10:17

5 [e]Hos. 4:11 [f]Lit. *sons of affliction*

6 [f]Ps. 104:15

8 [g]Job 29:15, 16; Ps. 82 [2]Lit. *sons of passing away*

9 [h]Lev. 19:15; Deut. 1:16 [i]Job 29:12; Is. 1:17; Jer. 22:16

10 [j]Ruth 3:11; Prov. 12:4; 19:14 [3]Vv. 10–31 are an alphabetic acrostic in Hebrew; cf. Ps. 119 [4]Lit. *a wife of valor,* in the sense of all forms of excellence

■ **30:32 put your hand on your mouth.** That is, stop talking; cease your scheming and provocation.

■ **30:33 churning . . . wringing . . . forcing.** Lit. "pressing . . . pressing . . . pressing." The repetition emphasizes the parallel in each situation. In this proverb we have a warning that provocation leads to strife.

■ **31:1 The words of King Lemuel, the utterance.** See note on 30:1. Lemuel was not an Israelite king. The nature of this section (vv. 1–9) suggests an Egyptian or perhaps a Babylonian origin. Its intention is apparently vocational, the equipping of the ruler for his task. The form is similar to the instructions of chs. 1—9 (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes). In this case, the teaching is given by the mother (1:8; 4:1, 3). While the father may have been the principal teacher of the children, godly women also took that role (cf. 14:1 note), and there were in Israel noteworthy wise women (2 Sam. 14:2; 20:16).

■ **31:2 son of my vows.** The expression may refer to a vow made in anticipation of the birth (cf. 1 Sam. 1:11).

■ **31:3 that which destroys kings.** The parallel indicates that fornication is perhaps in view.

■ **31:4 not for kings to drink wine.** The king's responsibilities give him no leisure to be confused by wine.

■ **31:6 Give strong drink . . . wine.** While the king must avoid using strong drink as a means of escape from the concerns of high office, it may be given to those whose suffering is too much to bear.

■ **31:8, 9** The king's task is to uphold righteousness in society. In Israel, this task was viewed in the context of the covenant with the Lord (Deut. 17:14–20).

■ **31:10–31** This section is an acrostic poem extolling the virtues of a wife who exemplifies the principles of wisdom, both practically and spiritually. The sequence of virtues is governed more by the demands of the acrostic (the first word in each verse beginning with successive letters of the alphabet) than by logic. Yet the overall effect is of a coherent description of a woman beautified by her virtues of practical wisdom and charity. That the household described is well-to-do does not detract from the universal applicability of the principles of wifely wisdom.

■ **31:10 Who can find.** Such a wife is not an impossible dream, but may be hard to find.

■ **31:11 no lack of gain.** This state of affairs results from the wife's astuteness in household affairs.

■ **31:12** See 18:22 and notes.

■ **31:14 like the merchant ships.** As vv. 16, 18 indicate, she engages in commerce.

She brings her food from afar.
15 [k]She also rises while it is yet night,
And [l]provides food for her household,
And a portion for her maidservants.
16 She considers a field and buys it;
From [5]her profits she plants a vineyard.
17 She girds herself with strength,
And strengthens her arms.
18 She perceives that her merchandise *is* good,
And her lamp does not go out by night.
19 She stretches out her hands to the distaff,
And her hand holds the spindle.
20 [m]She extends her hand to the poor,
Yes, she reaches out her hands to the needy.
21 She is not afraid of snow for her household,
For all her household *is* clothed with scarlet.
22 She makes tapestry for herself;
Her clothing *is* fine linen and purple.
23 [n]Her husband is known in the gates,
When he sits among the elders of the land.
24 She makes linen garments and sells *them,*
And supplies sashes for the merchants.
25 Strength and honor *are* her clothing;
She shall rejoice in time to come.
26 She opens her mouth with wisdom,
And on her tongue *is* the law of kindness.
27 She watches over the ways of her household,
And does not eat the bread of idleness.
28 Her children rise up and call her blessed;
Her husband *also,* and he praises her:
29 "Many daughters have done well,
But you excel them all."
30 Charm *is* deceitful and beauty *is* passing,
But a woman *who* fears the LORD, she shall be praised.
31 Give her of the fruit of her hands,
And let her own works praise her in the gates.

15 [k]Prov. 20:13; Rom. 12:11 [l]Luke 12:42
16 [5]Lit. *the fruit of her hands*
20 [m]Deut. 15:11; Job 31:16–20; Prov. 22:9; Rom. 12:13; Eph. 4:28; Heb. 13:16
23 [n]Prov. 12:4

■ **31:15 a portion.** Either food or duties.

■ **31:16** She is able in business and reinvests her earnings.

■ **31:18 her lamp does not go out.** This is either a metaphor for prosperity (13:9), or a reference to her diligence in using the hours of dark for work.

■ **31:19 distaff.** The meaning is uncertain. The context indicates ability to make her own thread.

■ **31:21 scarlet.** If "scarlet" is the correct reading, it probably indicates high quality cloth that is very warm.

■ **31:22 fine linen and purple.** As in v. 21, high quality articles are in view.

■ **31:23** The implication is that the wife's skill and diligence in home affairs remove all concerns about them from her husband. He is free to pursue his place as a respected elder in public life. **in the gates.** See 1:21 and note.

■ **31:25 Strength and honor are her clothing.** The words refer either to her character, or, as is more likely in view of the second fine, to the esteem earned by her economic prowess. She has no worry about the future. Both interpretations are consistent with wisdom.

■ **31:28, 29** The result of her skill and wisdom is the cementing of family relationships. The praise of husband and children is her great reward.

■ **31:30, 31 who fears the LORD.** Up to this point the poem concentrates on practical wisdom. Now the basis of all true wisdom is emphasized. The Book of Proverbs ends as it begins: observation of the created order can provide some wisdom and knowledge of God (Rom. 1:20–23), but only the self-revelation of the Creator enables us to know and appreciate the God-centered meaning of reality. True wisdom is seen as the life lived in wholehearted obedience to God's revelation in His Word, which is "the fear of the LORD" (1:7 and note). This trust is the foundation and continuing path of wisdom as it brings us to final perfection in Christ.

The Book of

ECCLESIASTES

Author

To many interpreters of Ecclesiastes, the lineage (1:1), kingship in Jerusalem (1:12), unsurpassed wisdom (1:16), and unrivaled wealth (2:4–9) of the author indicate that Solomon (1 Kin. 3; 4:21–34; 10), calling himself "the Preacher" (1:12), is the author of Ecclesiastes. There is a concluding tribute to the book (12:9–14), praising Solomon's wisdom and summarizing with the central admonition to "fear God and keep His commandments" (12:13).

Some interpreters, however, believe that the type of Hebrew language used in the book, as well as the negative view of rulers suggested in it (4:13; 7:19; 8:2–4; 10:4–7), indicate that the work was written after Solomon's time and presented as a legitimate voice of the wisdom tradition that has Solomon as its most famous exponent, therefore going by his name.

It is notable that Ecclesiastes is not a summary of other wisdom teaching, but a particular statement of wisdom teaching that deepens it while adding to its broad appeal.

Date and Occasion

Those who see the book as coming from a writer later than Solomon generally date Ecclesiastes after the Jewish exile in Babylon, which occurred in the sixth century B.C. If it is assumed that Solomon was the author, the book is to be dated from the tenth century B.C.

Ecclesiastes has been understood as an apologetic work, that is, an attempt to recommend faith in God by way of answering negative arguments. As such an attempt, the book often seems to express a secular point of view, arguing that life is meaningless. In the face of such arguments the writer comes to the conclusion that faith in God is the only avenue to satisfaction in life. While the book's teaching may be used in evangelism, most Jewish and Christian interpreters have understood Ecclesiastes to be addressed to God's people, rather than to those who are ignorant of God or in rebellion against Him. The book is God's wise counsel to those who know His ways but have found them perplexing and troubling.

Characteristics and Themes

Ecclesiastes searches for an answer to the question, What is the advantage of humanity's work and wisdom? Work and wisdom comprise two main themes of the book. The word "profit" and its related words such as "more" (6:8) occurs eighteen times. Another important word, "vanity," which conveys the notion of uselessness, occurs 38 times. This key term is used in the motto that frames the book (1:2; 12:8), which in each case is accompanied by a poem related to the motto (1:3–11; 1:7—12:7). Apart from these obvious literary structures, no consensus has been reached about the book's structure. Its cross-currents of optimism and pessimism make the overall intention of the book difficult to discern. Nevertheless, the blocks of material that comprise the book mostly relate to these two themes. A helpful outline arranges these blocks into three cycles (1:3—3:8; 3:9—6:7; 6:8—12:7), each, though formulated differently, beginning with the crucial question "what is the profit?" The question is raised also at the end of both 5:16 and 6:11.

The first cycle contains three pairs of sections about work and wisdom (1:12–15 and 1:16–18; 2:1–11 and 2:12–17; 2:18–26 and 3:1–8) presenting the conclusion that although the employment of human labor and understanding provides satisfaction of accomplishment, the profit achieved by a person is canceled by death.

The second cycle (3:9—6:7) treats the theme of humanity's labor, contrasting it with God's perfect enduring works and counselling enjoyment of the simple blessings God provides in this life, even in the face of human oppression. The third cycle (6:8—12:7) elaborates the theme of human wisdom, contrasting it with the inscrutability of God's ways.

Solomon's conclusion that death makes vain all human labor and wisdom on earth ("under the sun"; 1:14, 17: 2:11, 17) does not mean that people should abandon society and culture to lead an ascetic life. Neither does the Christian priority of proclaiming the gospel for the conversion of sinners (a "labor . . . not in vain," 1 Cor. 15:58) mean Christians should abdicate their cultural responsibilities. On the contrary, Solomon commands (9:7–10) God's people to enjoy life, despite its futility, harsh realities, and uncertainties, and to work with full vigor. This practical approach to life is neither a version of Greek stoicism nor a product of human effort: it is a gift of God (3:13; 5:19) for those who fear Him and keep His commands (5:1–7; 12:13, 14). Ecclesiastes teaches both the human responsibility to obey God joyfully, and God's sovereign provision of the ability to obey.

Ecclesiastes grapples with the question of how people should live (6:12) in a world where the good Creator (3:11, 14) and just Judge (3:17) sovereignly ordains that "bad" things happen to the righteous (7:13, 14) as well as to the wicked, and not according to what they deserve (8:14; 9:1). The gift of contentment is to be exercised not only in the face of human oppression (3:22—4:3) but under the futility and death (9:7–10) that God imposed upon the human race because of sin.

Relating the book to Christ and the New Testament, we would make the following points. If the divine verdict of righteous or unrighteous is not rendered in this life, it will be given after death, at the Judgment (3:17; 12:14). Ecclesiastes teaches existence after death (9:10; 12:7), but the resurrection of the body is not mentioned; the resurrection of Christ, which guarantees the resurrection of believers to eternal life (1 Cor. 15), was still in the future.

The sphere of creation discussed in Ecclesiastes is indicated by the synonymous phrases "under the sun," "under heaven," and "on earth." Solomon's determination that everything is futile is not applied to transcendent heavenly reality; there is no contradiction between Solomon and Paul. Whatever earthly treasures are gathered by Adam's descendants will be taken away, but heavenly labors performed through the Second Adam who conquered death are never in vain (1 Cor. 15:58).

In summary, Ecclesiastes teaches how God's elect, pilgrims in this world "under the sun" (1 Pet. 1:1), but also citizens of heaven (Phil. 3:20), should live amid the profound frustrations and tensions of the present evil age (Rom. 8:18–23).

Title "Ecclesiastes" is a translation of the Hebrew word *qoheleth,* meaning "assembler of the covenant community" and conventionally translated "preacher." The term "Ecclesiastes" was used by the Septuagint (Greek) translation of the Bible and by the Vulgate (Latin) translation. □

Outline of Ecclesiastes

I. Introduction (1:1)
II. Motto (1:2)
III. Limitations of Work and Wisdom (1:3—3:8)
  A. Cycles in Creation (1:3–11)
  B. Futility of Work and Wisdom (1:12–18)
  C. Ephemeral Rewards of Work and Wisdom (2:1–17)
  D. Enigmas of Work and Wisdom (2:18—3:8)
IV. Work in Fear Before God Whose Work Endures (3:9—6:7)
  A. God as Creator and Judge (3:9–21)
  B. Contentment or Envy (3:22—4:16)
  C. Sincere Commitment to God (5:1–7)
  D. Dissatisfaction in Work (5:8—6:7)
V. Wisdom in Humility Before a Judging God Whose Wisdom Is Unfathomable (6:8—12:7)
  A. The Futility of Contending with God (6:8–12)
  B. What Is Good for Man (7:1–18)
  C. Wisdom's Power (7:19—8:8)
  D. Unfulfilled Judgment (8:9—9:10)
  E. Folly's Power (9:11—10:7)
  F. Advice for Wise Living (10:8—12:7)
VI. Motto (12:8)
VII. Conclusion (12:9–14)

CHAPTER 1

1 [a]Prov. 1:1

2 [b]Ps. 39:5, 6; 62:9; 144:4; Eccl. 12:8 [c][Rom. 8:20, 21] [1]Or *Absurdity, Frustration, Futility, Nonsense;* and so throughout the book

3 [d]Eccl. 2:22; 3:9 [2]*labors*

4 [e]Ps. 104:5; 119:90

5 [f]Ps. 19:4–6 [3]Is eager for, lit. *panting*

6 [g]Eccl. 11:5; John 3:8

7 [h][Ps. 104:8, 9; Jer. 5:22]

8 [i]Prov. 27:20; Eccl. 4:8 [4]*wearisome*

9 [j]Eccl. 3:15

11 [k]Eccl. 2:16

13 [l][Eccl. 7:25; 8:16, 17] [m]Gen. 3:19; Eccl. 3:10

The Vanity of Life

THE words of the Preacher, the son of David, [a]king in Jerusalem.

2 "Vanity[b][1] of vanities," says the Preacher;
"Vanity of vanities, [c]all *is* vanity."

3 [d]What profit has a man from all his labor
In which he [2]toils under the sun?
4 *One* generation passes away, and *another* generation comes;
[e]But the earth abides forever.
5 [f]The sun also rises, and the sun goes down,
And [3]hastens to the place where it arose.
6 [g]The wind goes toward the south,
And turns around to the north;
The wind whirls about continually,
And comes again on its circuit.
7 [h]All the rivers run into the sea,
Yet the sea *is* not full;
To the place from which the rivers come,
There they return again.
8 All things *are* [4]full of labor;
Man cannot express *it.*
[i]The eye is not satisfied with seeing,
Nor the ear filled with hearing.

9 [j]That which has been *is* what will be,
That which *is* done is what will be done,
And *there is* nothing new under the sun.
10 Is there anything of which it may be said,
"See, this *is* new"?
It has already been in ancient times before us.
11 *There is* [k]no remembrance of former *things,*
Nor will there be any remembrance of *things* that are to come
By *those* who will come after.

The Grief of Wisdom

12 I, the Preacher, was king over Israel in Jerusalem. 13 And I set my heart to seek and [l]search out by wisdom concerning all that is done under heaven; [m]this burdensome task God has given

■ **1:1 Preacher.** The Hebrew emphasizes Solomon's function as convener of the covenant community to witness and to celebrate the glory of the King of heaven that fills His earthly temple (1 Kin. 8). Solomon's words are directed to God's people, not to agnostics.

son of David. See Introduction: Author.

■ **1:2 Vanity.** The Hebrew word means "breath" or "mist," and hence what is "insubstantial," "useless," or "futile." Human death makes the deeds and desires of people who build earthly culture ("under the sun") useless.

all. This word is qualified by the phrase "under the sun" (v. 3) and means everything people experience with their senses (v. 8).

■ **1:3–11** The phrase, "What profit has a man," provides the theme of this opening poem, focusing the reader's attention on the apparent futility of work and study. Although these offer some satisfaction in accomplishment, death seems to make them meaningless.

■ **1:3–8** Because of death, people must continuously begin cultural labors again. They are never completely satisfied with the results and are driven to repeat previous efforts.

■ **1:3 profit.** The idea that life's labor is unprofitable, presented here as a rhetorical question, is stated directly in 2:11.

under the sun. This phrase is synonymous with "under heaven" and "on earth." Paul's equivalent is "this present evil age" (Gal. 1:4). The energies poured into earthly kingdoms are often of no value to the kingdom of heaven (Mark 8:36). By contrast, the work of the Lord is not in vain (John 6:27–29; 1 Cor. 15:58).

■ **1:4 passes away . . . comes.** People are constantly starting over (like the sun in v. 5), while by contrast the earth (to which every person returns) abides.

■ **1:6 whirls about continually.** This phrase is the focal point of the poem in 1:4–8, an image for Solomon's recurrent refrain "grasping for the wind."

■ **1:7 is not full.** People's experiences commonly never fill or satisfy them, just as waters never fill the sea.

■ **1:9–11** Cultural endeavors cannot reverse the futile process of repeating what has already been done, for all die and their works are forgotten.

■ **1:12–15** Solomon's personal investigation concludes that human culture is misdirected and incomplete.

■ **1:12 king . . . in Jerusalem.** See Introduction: Author.

■ **1:13 by wisdom.** The endeavors of this world performed under the curse of God (Gen. 3:16–19) are futile and frustrating.

burdensome task. Human existence includes divinely imposed burdens (Gen. 3:16–19; Rom. 8:22, 23). Jesus makes them bearable (Matt. 11:28–30).

to the sons of man, by which they may be [5]exercised. [14] I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and indeed, all *is* vanity and grasping for the wind.

15 [n] *What is* crooked cannot be made straight,
And what is lacking cannot be numbered.

[16] I communed with my heart, saying, "Look, I have attained greatness, and have gained [o]more wisdom than all who were before me in Jerusalem. My heart has [6]understood great wisdom and knowledge." [17] [p] And I set my heart to know wisdom and to know madness and folly. I perceived that this also is grasping for the wind.

18 For [q] in much wisdom *is* much grief,
And he who increases knowledge increases sorrow.

The Vanity of Pleasure

2 I said [a] in my heart, "Come now, I will test you with [b] mirth; [1] therefore enjoy pleasure"; but surely, [c] this also *was* vanity. [2] I said of laughter—"Madness!"; and of mirth, "What does it accomplish?" [3] [d] I searched in my heart *how* [2]to gratify my flesh with wine, while guiding my heart with wisdom, and how to lay hold on folly, till I might see what *was* [e] good for the sons of men to do under heaven all the days of their lives.

[4] I made my works great, I built myself [f] houses, and planted myself vineyards. [5] I made myself gardens and orchards, and I planted all *kinds* of fruit trees in them. [6] I made myself water pools from which to [3]water the growing trees of the grove. [7] I acquired male and female servants, and had [4]servants born in my house. Yes, I had greater possessions of herds and flocks than all who were in Jerusalem before me. [8] [g] I also gathered for myself silver and gold and the special treasures of kings and of the provinces. I acquired male and female singers, the delights of the sons of men, *and* [5]musical instruments of all kinds.

[9] [h] So I became great and [6]excelled [i] more than all who were before me in Jerusalem. Also my wisdom remained with me.

10 Whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them.
I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure,
For my heart rejoiced in all my labor;
And [j] this was my [7]reward from all my labor.
11 Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done
And on the labor in which I had toiled;
And indeed all *was* [k] vanity and grasping for the wind.
There was no profit under the sun.

The End of the Wise and the Fool

12 Then I turned myself to consider wisdom [l] and madness and folly;
For what *can* the man *do* who succeeds the king?—
Only what he has already [m] done.
13 Then I saw that wisdom [n] excels folly
As light excels darkness.

13 [5]Or *afflicted*
15 [n]Ecc. 7:13
16 [o]1 Kin. 3:12, 13; Ecc. 2:9 [6]Lit. *seen*
17 [p]Ecc. 2:3, 12; 7:23, 25; [1 Thess. 5:21]
18 [q]Ecc. 12:12

CHAPTER 2

1 [a]Luke 12:19 [b]Prov. 14:13; [Ecc. 7:4; 8:15] [c]Ecc. 1:2 [1]*gladness*
3 [d]Ecc. 1:17 [e][Ecc. 3:12, 13; 5:18; 6:12] [2]Lit. *to draw my flesh*
4 [f]1 Kin. 7:1–12
6 [3]*irrigate*
7 [4]Lit. *sons of my house*
8 [g]1 Kin. 9:28; 10:10, 14, 21 [5]Exact meaning unknown
9 [h]Ecc. 1:16 [i]2 Chr. 9:22 [6]Lit. *increased*
10 [j]Ecc. 3:22; 5:18; 9:9 [7]Lit. *portion*
11 [k]Ecc. 1:3, 14
12 [l]Ecc. 1:17; 7:25 [m]Ecc. 1:9
13 [n]Ecc. 7:11, 14, 19; 9:18; 10:10

God. God's personal covenant name "Yahweh" (conventionally translated LORD, with small capitals) is not used in this book.

■ **1:13, 14 under heaven . . . under the sun.** See 1:3 note.

■ **1:14 I have seen all.** Solomon had an accurate perspective on the present, because of God's gift (1 Kin. 3), as well as on the past, because he meditated on God's revealed Word.

■ **1:15 crooked . . . lacking.** This is the result not only of human evil, but also of the divine curse (7:13; Gen. 3:16–19).

■ **1:16 wisdom.** An increase in true wisdom heightens one's sensitivity to the unhappy effects of sin, not all of which are immediately visible.

all who were before me in Jerusalem. From Solomon's perspective these would refer to ancient pre-Israelite kings (Gen. 14:18; Josh. 10:1).

■ **2:1–11** The joys of earthly accomplishments are unsatisfying, for Solomon in particular (1 Kin. 4—11).

■ **2:1 pleasure.** A reference to self-indulgence.

■ **2:3 while guiding my heart with wisdom.** See v. 9. To determine what was good for people to do, Solomon investigated life without forgetting the protective guidance of God's word.

■ **2:4–9 great . . . excelled.** The world's wealth flowed into Jerusalem for Solomon's disposition.

■ **2:10, 11 rejoiced . . . reward . . . no profit under the sun.** Solomon experienced joy in doing work, but failed to achieve the satisfaction of producing anything of final heavenly value.

■ **2:12–17** The earthly advantage of wisdom over folly is canceled by death.

■ **2:12, 13 wisdom.** Not secular wisdom or shrewdness, but unmatched, God-given wisdom.

14 [o]Prov. 17:24; Eccl. 8:1 [p]Ps. 49:10; Eccl. 9:2, 3, 11

16 [q]Eccl. 1:11; 4:16

18 [r]Ps. 49:10

21 [s]Lit. *portion*

22 [s]Eccl. 1:3; 3:9

23 [t]Job 5:7; 14:1

24 [u]Eccl. 3:12, 13, 22; Is. 56:12; Luke 12:19; 1 Cor. 15:32; [1 Tim. 6:17]

25 [g]So with MT, Tg., Vg.; some Heb. mss., LXX, Syr. *without Him*

26 [v]Job 32:8; Prov. 2:6; James 1:5 [w]Job 27:16, 17; Prov. 28:8

CHAPTER 3

1 [a]Eccl. 3:17; 8:6

2 [b]Job 14:5; Heb. 9:27 [l]Lit. *to bear*

4 [c]Rom. 12:15

14 [o]The wise man's eyes *are* in his head,
But the fool walks in darkness.
Yet I myself perceived
That [p]the same event happens to them all.

15 So I said in my heart,
"As it happens to the fool,
It also happens to me,
And why was I then more wise?"
Then I said in my heart,
"This also *is* vanity."

16 For *there is* [q]no more remembrance of the wise than of the fool forever,
Since all that now *is* will be forgotten in the days to come.
And how does a wise *man* die?
As the fool!

17 Therefore I hated life because the work that was done under the sun *was* distressing to me, for all *is* vanity and grasping for the wind.

18 Then I hated all my labor in which I had toiled under the sun, because [r]I must leave it to the man who will come after me. 19 And who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will rule over all my labor in which I toiled and in which I have shown myself wise under the sun. This also *is* vanity. 20 Therefore I turned my heart and despaired of all the labor in which I had toiled under the sun. 21 For there is a man whose labor *is* with wisdom, knowledge, and skill; yet he must leave his [s]heritage to a man who has not labored for it. This also *is* vanity and a great evil. 22 [s]For what has man for all his labor, and for the striving of his heart with which he has toiled under the sun? 23 For all his days *are* [t]sorrowful, and his work burdensome; even in the night his heart takes no rest. This also is vanity.

24 [u]Nothing *is* better for a man *than* that he should eat and drink, and *that* his soul should enjoy good in his labor. This also, I saw, was from the hand of God. 25 For who can eat, or who can have enjoyment, [g]more than I? 26 For *God* gives [v]wisdom and knowledge and joy to a man who *is* good in His sight; but to the sinner He gives the work of gathering and collecting, that [w]he may give to *him who is* good before God. This also *is* vanity and grasping for the wind.

Everything Has Its Time

3 To everything *there is* a season,
A [a]time for every purpose under heaven:

2 A time [l]to be born,
And [b]a time to die;
A time to plant,
And a time to pluck *what is* planted;
3 A time to kill,
And a time to heal;
A time to break down,
And a time to build up;
4 A time to [c]weep,
And a time to laugh;
A time to mourn,
And a time to dance;

■ **2:15 more wise.** Wisdom's value appears to be compromised because it cannot keep the wise any more than the fool from the abyss of death.

■ **2:17 hated.** Concluding that the curse of death erases the profit of wise labor, Solomon comes to hate life in this present evil age.

■ **2:18–26** Solomon reflects on the frustrations associated with work. Death takes labor's profit from its producer. The situation is made harder to bear by not knowing whether in the future the property will be dissipated by a fool (vv. 18, 19) or given to an heir who will not appreciate it (vv. 20, 21).

■ **2:23 no rest.** The ever-present, painful burdens of life undermine even the legitimate pleasures of work (v. 10) and can deprive the laborer of sleep.

■ **2:24 better.** In his conclusion about what is good (v. 3) Solomon observes that the common pleasures of life and work are also from God.

■ **2:26 to a man who is good . . . sinner.** However great the temporary prosperity of the wicked, it is the righteous "before God" who are at last the beneficiaries of God's blessings.

vanity. The point seems be the futility of the work of one person being transferred to another, as in vv. 20, 21.

■ **3:1 time.** The truly wise know that all their "times" are in God's hand (Ps. 31:15) and that there is an appropriate time for every human activity.

5 A time to cast away stones,
And a time to gather stones;
[d]A time to embrace,
And a time to refrain from embracing;
6 A time to gain,
And a time to lose;
A time to keep,
And a time to throw away;
7 A time to tear,
And a time to sew;
[e]A time to keep silence,
And a time to [f]speak;
8 A time to love,
And a time to [g]hate;
A time of war,
And a time of peace.

The God-Given Task

9 [h]What profit has the worker from that in which he labors? 10 [i]I have seen the God-given task with which the sons of men are to be occupied. 11 He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that [j]no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.

12 I know that nothing *is* [k]better for them than to rejoice, and to do good in their lives, 13 and also that [l]every man should eat and drink and enjoy the good of all his labor—it *is* the gift of God.

14 I know that whatever God does,
It shall be forever.
[m]Nothing can be added to it,
And nothing taken from it.
God does *it,* that men should fear before Him.
15 [n]That which is has already been,
And what is to be has already been;
And God [2]requires an account of [3]what is past.

Injustice Seems to Prevail

16 Moreover [o]I saw under the sun:

In the place of [4]judgment,
Wickedness *was* there;
And *in* the place of righteousness,
[5]Iniquity *was* there.

17 I said in my heart,

[p]"God shall judge the righteous and the wicked,
For *there is* a time there for every [6]purpose and for every work."

18 I said in my heart, "Concerning the condition of the sons of men, God tests them, that they may see that they themselves are *like* animals." 19 [q]For what happens to the sons of men also happens to animals; one thing befalls them: as one dies, so dies the other. Surely, they all have one breath; man has no advantage over animals, for all *is* vanity. 20 All go to one place: [r]all are

5 [d]Joel 2:16; 1 Cor. 7:5
7 [e]Amos 5:13 [f]Prov. 25:11
8 [g]Prov. 13:5; Luke 14:26
9 [h]Eccl. 1:3
10 [i]Eccl. 1:13
11 [j]Job 5:9; Eccl. 7:23; 8:17; Rom. 11:33
12 [k]Eccl. 2:3, 24
13 [l]Eccl. 2:24
14 [m]James 1:17
15 [n]Eccl. 1:9 [2]Lit. *seeks* [3]*what is pursued*
16 [o]Eccl. 5:8 [4]*justice* [5]*Wickedness*
17 [p]Gen. 18:25; Ps. 96:13; Eccl. 11:9; [Matt. 16:27; Rom. 2:6–10; 2 Cor. 5:10; 2 Thess. 1:6–9] [6]*desire*
19 [q]Ps. 49:12, 20; 73:22; [Eccl. 2:16]
20 [r]Gen. 3:19; Ps. 103:14

■ **3:11 eternity.** This is the Hebrew term translated "forever" in v. 14 and explained in v. 11 as "from beginning to end." The heart knows that history is not meaningless, but is frustrated in its efforts to discern the pattern of events.

■ **3:12 nothing is better.** The author's major application is his repeated advice (2:24–26; 3:12, 22; 5:18–20; 8:15) and command (9:7–10) to be content with what God has ordained for one's life (1 Cor. 7:20; 1 Tim. 6:8).

■ **3:14 fear.** The term means to give God the honor corresponding to what He is (Ex. 34:8; Is. 6:5; Luke 5:8; Rev. 1:17).

■ **3:15–21** God the Judge is in view.

■ **3:17 the righteous and the wicked.** As punishment for sin, people like animals (vv. 18–20) must die (Gen. 3:19). Nevertheless the distinction between the righteous and the wicked is not removed by death, but will be revealed at God's judgment.

time. God ordains whatever occurs on earth (vv. 1–8). He has also appointed a day for judging the deeds of all (the "day of the Lord"; Joel 3).

from the dust, and all return to dust. 21 [s]Who[7] knows the spirit of the sons of men, which goes upward, and the spirit of the animal, which goes down to the earth? 22 [t]So I perceived that nothing *is* better than that a man should rejoice in his own works, for [u]that *is* his [8]heritage. [v]For who can bring him to see what will happen after him?

4 Then I returned and considered all the [a]oppression that is done under the sun:

And look! The tears of the oppressed,
But they have no comforter—
[1]On the side of their oppressors *there is* power,
But they have no comforter.
2 [b]Therefore I praised the dead who were already dead,
More than the living who are still alive.
3 [c]Yet, better than both *is he* who has never existed,
Who has not seen the evil work that is done under the sun.

The Vanity of Selfish Toil

4 [4]Again, I saw that for all toil and every skillful work a man is envied by his neighbor. This also *is* vanity and grasping for the wind.

5 [d]The fool folds his hands
And consumes his own flesh.
6 [e]Better a handful *with* quietness
Than both hands full, *together with* toil and grasping for the wind.

7 Then I returned, and I saw vanity under the sun:

8 There is one alone, without [2]companion:
He has neither son nor brother.
Yet *there is* no end to all his labors,
Nor is his [f]eye satisfied with riches.
But [g]*he never asks,*
"For whom do I toil and deprive myself of [h]good?"
This also *is* vanity and a [3]grave misfortune.

The Value of a Friend

9 Two *are* better than one,
Because they have a good reward for their labor.
10 For if they fall, one will lift up his companion.
But woe to him *who is* alone when he falls,
For *he has* no one to help him up.
11 Again, if two lie down together, they will keep warm;
But how can one be warm *alone?*
12 Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him.
And a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

Popularity Passes Away

13 Better a poor and wise youth
Than an old and foolish king who will be admonished no more.
14 For he comes out of prison to be king,
Although [4]he was born poor in his kingdom.

21 [s]Eccl. 12:7 [7]LXX, Syr., Tg., Vg. *Who knows whether the spirit . . . goes upward, and whether . . . goes downward to the earth?*

22 [t]Eccl. 2:24; 5:18 [u]Eccl. 2:10 [v]Eccl. 6:12; 8:7 [8]*portion* or *lot*

CHAPTER 4

1 [a]Job 35:9; Ps. 12:5; Eccl. 3:16; 5:8; Is. 5:7 [1]Lit. *At the hand*

2 [b]Job 3:17, 18

3 [c]Job 3:11–22; Eccl. 6:3; Luke 23:29

5 [d]Prov. 6:10; 24:33

6 [e]Prov. 15:16, 17; 16:8

8 [f]Prov. 27:20; Eccl. 5:10; [1 John 2:16] [g]Ps. 39:6 [h]Eccl. 2:18–21 [2]Lit. *a second* [3]Lit. *evil task*

14 [4]The youth

■ **3:21 Who knows the spirit of the sons of men.** Elsewhere Solomon observes that though the physical body returns to dust, the spirit returns to God (12:7).

■ **4:1–3 the oppressed . . . I praised the dead.** Viewing the plight of the oppressed, Solomon speculates that the dead and unborn are better off.

■ **4:4–16** Envy and lack of contentment fuel the futile drive for earthly satisfaction.

■ **4:5, 6 quietness.** Notwithstanding his previous dark thoughts, Solomon does conclude that sufficiency with contentment is better than need resulting from laziness (v. 5) or excess accompanied by restless toil (vv. 6, 8).

■ **4:9–12 Two.** Cooperation, rather than strife rooted in envy, produces success and provides protection from the covetous.

■ **4:13–16** A characteristically discontented people does not appreciate good leaders, a thought that brings Solomon back to his theme of the apparent futility of life.

15 I saw all the living who walk under the sun;
They were with the second youth who stands in his place.
16 *There was* no end of all the people [5]over whom he was made king;
Yet those who come afterward will not rejoice in him.
Surely this also *is* vanity and grasping for the wind.

Fear God, Keep Your Vows

5 Walk [a]prudently when you go to the house of God; and draw near to hear rather [b]than to give the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know that they do evil.

2 Do not be [c]rash with your mouth,
And let not your heart utter anything hastily before God.
For God *is* in heaven, and you on earth;
Therefore let your words [d]be few.
3 For a dream comes through much activity,
And [e]a fool's voice *is known* by *his* many words.

4 [f]When you make a vow to God, do not delay to [g]pay it;
For *He has* no pleasure in fools.
Pay what you have vowed—
5 [h]Better not to vow than to vow and not pay.

6 Do not let your [i]mouth cause your flesh to sin, [j]nor say before the messenger *of God* that it *was* an error. Why should God be angry at your [l]excuse and destroy the work of your hands? 7 For in the multitude of dreams and many words *there is* also vanity. But [k]fear God.

The Vanity of Gain and Honor

8 If you [l]see the oppression of the poor, and the violent [2]perversion of justice and righteousness in a province, do not marvel at the matter; for [m]high official watches over high official, and higher officials are over them.
9 Moreover the profit of the land is for all; *even* the king is served from the field.

10 He who loves silver will not be satisfied with silver;
Nor he who loves abundance, with increase.
This also *is* vanity.

11 When goods increase,
They increase who eat them;
So what profit have the owners
Except to see *them* with their eyes?

12 The sleep of a laboring man *is* sweet,
Whether he eats little or much;
But the abundance of the rich will not permit him to sleep.

13 [n]There is a severe evil *which* I have seen under the sun:
Riches kept for their owner to his hurt.
14 But those riches perish through [3]misfortune;
When he begets a son, *there is* nothing in his hand.

16 [5]Lit. *to all before whom he was to be*

CHAPTER 5

1 [a]Ex. 3:5; Is. 1:12 [b][1 Sam. 15:22]; Ps. 50:8; Prov. 15:8; 21:27; [Hos. 6:6]
2 [c]Prov. 20:25 [d]Prov. 10:19; Matt. 6:7
3 [e]Prov. 10:19
4 [f]Num. 30:2; Deut. 23:21–23; Ps. 50:14; 76:11 [g]Ps. 66:13, 14
5 [h]Prov. 20:25; Acts 5:4
6 [i]Prov. 6:2 [j]1 Cor. 11:10 [l]Lit. *voice*
7 [k][Eccl. 12:13]
8 [l]Eccl. 3:16 [m][Ps. 12:5; 58:11; 82:1] [2]*wresting*
13 [n]Eccl. 6:1, 2
14 [3]Lit. *bad business*

■ **5:1–7** The summary of the book (12:13) enlarges on the exhortation to fear God (v. 7), the principle here emphasized by Solomon.

■ **5:2 mouth.** The thoughts of the heart are expressed in the words of the mouth. God will judge them (Matt. 12:34–37).

■ **5:4, 5 vow.** A particular promise made to God (Deut. 23:21–23). See "Honest Speech, Oaths, and Vows" at Neh. 5:12.

■ **5:6 mouth.** See note on v. 2.

messenger. This Hebrew word can also be translated "angel." It could refer to a priest serving in the temple (Mal. 2:7).

■ **5:8–17** Greed is responsible for many of the detrimental aspects of wealth.

■ **5:8 do not marvel.** Oppression and injustice are inevitable (4:1–3).

■ **5:10–12 loves silver.** Greed is insatiable and robs one of sleep; contentment provides rest (1 Tim. 6:6–10).

■ **5:13–17** Solomon ponders the tragedies of unused and lost wealth. Whatever is not lost "through misfortune" must be left behind at death. Earthly labor appears to be in vain.

15 [o]As he came from his mother's womb, naked shall he return,
To go as he came;
And he shall take nothing from his labor
Which he may carry away in his hand.

16 And this also *is* a severe evil—
Just exactly as he came, so shall he go.
And [p]what profit has he [q]who has labored for the wind?
17 All his days [r]he also eats in darkness,
And *he has* much sorrow and sickness and anger.

18 Here is what I have seen: [s]*It is* good and fitting *for one* to eat and drink, and to enjoy the good of all his labor in which he toils under the sun all the days of his life which God gives him; [t]for it *is* his [4]heritage. 19 As for [u]every man to whom God has given riches and wealth, and given him power to eat of it, to receive his [5]heritage and rejoice in his labor—this *is* the [v]gift of God. 20 For he will not dwell unduly on the days of his life, because God keeps *him* busy with the joy of his heart.

6 There[a] is an evil which I have seen under the sun, and it *is* common among men: 2 A man to whom God has given riches and wealth and honor, [b]so that he lacks nothing for himself of all he desires; [c]yet God does not give him power to eat of it, but a foreigner consumes it. This *is* vanity, and it *is* an evil [1]affliction.

3 If a man begets a hundred *children* and lives many years, so that the days of his years are many, but his soul is not satisfied with goodness, or [d]indeed he has no burial, I say *that* [e]a [2]stillborn child *is* better than he— 4 for it comes in vanity and departs in darkness, and its name is covered with darkness. 5 Though it has not seen the sun or known *anything,* this has more rest than that man, 6 even if he lives a thousand years twice—but has not seen goodness. Do not all go to one [f]place?

7 [g]All the labor of man *is* for his mouth,
And yet the soul is not satisfied.
8 For what more has the wise *man* than the fool?
What does the poor man have,
Who knows *how* to walk before the living?
9 Better *is* [3]the [h]sight of the eyes than the wandering of [4]desire.
This also *is* vanity and grasping for the wind.

10 Whatever one is, he has been named [i]already,
For it is known that he *is* man;
[j]And he cannot contend with Him who is mightier than he.
11 Since there are many things that increase vanity,
How *is* man the better?

12 For who knows what *is* good for man in life, [5]all the days of his [6]vain life which he passes like [k]a shadow? [l]Who can tell a man what will happen after him under the sun?

The Value of Practical Wisdom

7 A [a]good name *is* better than precious ointment,
And the day of death than the day of one's [b]birth;

15 [o]Job 1:21; Ps. 49:17; 1 Tim. 6:7
16 [p]Eccl. 1:3 [q]Prov. 11:29
17 [r]Ps. 127:2
18 [s]Eccl. 2:24; 3:12, 13; [1 Tim. 6:17] [t]Eccl. 2:10; 3:22 [4]Lit. *portion*
19 [u][Eccl. 6:2] [v]Eccl. 2:24; 3:13 [5]Lit. *portion*

CHAPTER 6

1 [a]Eccl. 5:13
2 [b]Job 21:10; Ps. 17:14; 73:7 [c]Luke 12:20 [1]*disease*
3 [d]2 Kin. 9:35; Is. 14:19, 20; Jer. 22:19 [e]Job 3:16; Ps. 58:8; Eccl. 4:3 [2]Or *miscarriage*
6 [f]Eccl. 2:14, 15
7 [g]Prov. 16:26
9 [h]Eccl. 11:9 [3]What the eyes see [4]Lit. *soul*
10 [i]Eccl. 1:9; 3:15 [j]Job 9:32; Is. 45:9; Jer. 49:19
12 [k]Ps. 102:11; James 4:14 [l]Ps. 39:6; Eccl. 3:22 [5]Lit. *the number of the days* [6]*futile*

CHAPTER 7

1 [a]Prov. 22:1 [b]Eccl. 4:2

■ **5:18—6:7** God sovereignly distributes wealth.

■ **5:18 good.** God intends that people should enjoy the benefits of their work as a due reward of their labor.

■ **5:19 gift of God.** The ability to enjoy earthly labor comes not from stoic human strength, but from God-given grace, granted to rich and poor (v. 12) alike.

■ **6:2 God.** Riches and poverty, as well as the ability or inability to enjoy one's resources, are decreed by God.

power to eat. This involves control over the management of wealth, not merely pleasure derived from spending it.

■ **6:3 his soul is not satisfied with goodness.** To be discontented with God's abundant provision is a great tragedy.

■ **6:6 one place.** The case of those who live long in discontent is more pathetic than that of a stillborn child. The stillborn, at least, does not spend long years in the self-inflicted misery of ingratitude.

■ **6:7 soul is not satisfied.** Again, earthly labor by itself does not fill the emptiness of the soul (1:8).

■ **6:8 What does the poor man have.** Those, though poor, who know how to live effectively in the world avoid the discontentment of wandering, unsatisfied desires.

■ **6:10 named . . . known.** God identifies every person as a sinner (7:20).

contend. No one, apart from Christ, has a defense against God.

■ **7:1 day of death.** For the godly, death is "far better" (Phil. 1:23) because they are with Christ.

2 Better to go to the house of mourning
Than to go to the house of feasting,
For that *is* the end of all men;
And the living will take *it* to [c]heart.
3 [1]Sorrow *is* better than laughter,
[d]For by a sad countenance the heart is made [2]better.
4 The heart of the wise *is* in the house of mourning,
But the heart of fools *is* in the house of mirth.

5 [e]*It is* better to [3]hear the rebuke of the wise
Than for a man to hear the song of fools.
6 [f]For like the [4]crackling of thorns under a pot,
So *is* the laughter of the fool.
This also is vanity.
7 Surely oppression destroys a wise *man's* reason,
[g]And a bribe [5]debases the heart.

8 The end of a thing *is* better than its beginning;
[h]The patient in spirit *is* better than the proud in spirit.
9 [i]Do not hasten in your spirit to be angry,
For anger rests in the bosom of fools.
10 Do not say,
"Why were the former days better than these?"
For you do not inquire wisely concerning this.

11 Wisdom *is* good with an inheritance,
And profitable [j]to those who see the sun.
12 For wisdom *is* [6]a [k]defense *as* money *is* a defense,
But the [7]excellence of knowledge *is that* wisdom gives [l]life to those who have it.

13 Consider the work of God;
For [m]who can make straight what He has made crooked?
14 [n]In the day of prosperity be joyful,
But in the day of adversity consider:
Surely God has appointed the one [8]as well as the other,
So that man can find out nothing *that will come* after him.

15 I have seen everything in my days of vanity:

[o]There is a just *man* who perishes in his righteousness,
And there is a wicked *man* who prolongs *life* in his wickedness.

16 [p]Do not be overly righteous,
[q]Nor be overly wise:
Why should you destroy yourself?
17 Do not be overly wicked,
Nor be foolish:
[r]Why should you die before your time?

2 [c][Ps. 90:12]
3 [d][2 Cor. 7:10] [1]*Vexation* or *Grief* [2]*well* or *pleasing*
5 [e]Ps. 141:5; [Prov. 13:18; 15:31, 32] [3]*listen to*
6 [f]Ecc. 2:2 [4]Lit. *sound*
7 [g]Ex. 23:8; Deut. 16:19; [Prov. 17:8, 23] [5]*destroys*
8 [h]Prov. 14:29; Gal. 5:22; Eph. 4:2
9 [i]Prov. 14:17; James 1:19
11 [j]Ecc. 11:7
12 [k]Ecc. 9:18 [l]Prov. 3:18 [6]A protective shade, lit. *shadow* [7]*advantage* or *profit*
13 [m]Job 12:14
14 [n]Deut. 28:47 [8]*alongside*
15 [o]Ecc. 8:12–14
16 [p]Prov. 25:16; Phil. 3:6 [q]Rom. 12:3
17 [r]Job 15:32; Ps. 55:23

■ **7:2, 4 house of mourning.** A funeral provides an indispensable perspective on the universally terminal condition.

■ **7:7 oppression . . . a bribe.** These common experiences may threaten to destabilize an otherwise good spiritual condition (4:1–3).

■ **7:9 anger rests.** If unquenched, the anger ignited by life's frustrations leads to folly.

■ **7:11, 12 Wisdom . . . gives life.** True wisdom gives benefits in this life (contrast 8:8) and that to come. Christ is the redemptive wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:30), making wisdom accessible to sinners.

■ **7:13–18** Both human illusions of perfection in this life and the abandonment of oneself to wickedness have God for an adversary.

■ **7:13 who can make straight.** God's decrees cannot be reversed. The curse of Gen. 3 will not be annulled until the consummation.

■ **7:14 prosperity . . . adversity.** God decrees the one as the other.

man can find out nothing. The future is unknown.

■ **7:15 just . . . wicked.** The question implied by this observation is formulated in Jer. 12:1 ("Why does the way of the wicked prosper?") and handled at more length in Ps. 37 and 73.

■ **7:16, 17 Do not be overly righteous . . . overly wicked.** Pride can masquerade as righteousness, even in small things; on the other hand, there is an impulse to lawlessness that goes beyond everyday standards of life.

18 [s]Ecc. 3:14; 5:7; 8:12, 13 [g]Lit. *come forth from all of them*

19 [f]Prov. 21:22; Ecc. 9:13–18

20 [u]1 Kin. 8:46; 2 Chr. 6:36; Prov. 20:9; Rom. 3:23; 1 John 1:8

23 [v]Rom. 1:22 [l]*tested*

24 [w]Job 28:12; 1 Tim. 6:16 [x]Rom. 11:33

25 [y]Ecc. 1:17

26 [z]Prov. 5:3, 4 [2]Lit. *He who is good before God*

27 [a]Ecc. 1:1, 2

28 [b]Job 33:23

29 [c]Gen. 1:27 [d]Gen. 3:6, 7

CHAPTER 8

1 [a]Prov. 4:8, 9; Acts 6:15 [b]Deut. 28:50 [l]Lit. *strength*

2 [c]Ex. 22:11; 2 Sam. 21:7; 1 Chr. 29:24; Ezek. 17:18; [Rom. 13:5]

3 [d]Ecc. 10:4

4 [e]1 Sam. 13:11, 13; Job 34:18

18 *It is* good that you grasp this,
And also not remove your hand from the other;
For he who [s]fears God will [g]escape them all.

19 [f]Wisdom strengthens the wise
More than ten rulers of the city.

20 [u]For *there is* not a just man on earth who does good
And does not sin.

21 Also do not take to heart everything people say,
Lest you hear your servant cursing you.
22 For many times, also, your own heart has known
That even you have cursed others.

23 All this I have [l]proved by wisdom.
[v]I said, "I will be wise";
But it *was* far from me.
24 [w]As for that which is far off and [x]exceedingly deep,
Who can find it out?
25 [y]I applied my heart to know,
To search and seek out wisdom and the reason *of things,*
To know the wickedness of folly,
Even of foolishness *and* madness.
26 [z]And I find more bitter than death
The woman whose heart *is* snares and nets,
Whose hands *are* fetters.
[2]He who pleases God shall escape from her,
But the sinner shall be trapped by her.

27 "Here is what I have found," says [a]the Preacher,
"*Adding* one thing to the other to find out the reason,
28 Which my soul still seeks but I cannot find:
[b]One man among a thousand I have found,
But a woman among all these I have not found.
29 Truly, this only I have found:
[c]That God made man upright,
But [d]they have sought out many schemes."

8 Who *is* like a wise *man?*
And who knows the interpretation of a thing?
[a]A man's wisdom makes his face shine,
And [b]the [l]sternness of his face is changed.

Obey Authorities for God's Sake

[2]I *say,* "Keep the king's commandment [c]for the sake of your oath to God. [3][d]Do not be hasty to go from his presence. Do not take your stand for an evil thing, for he does whatever pleases him."

4 Where the word of a king *is, there is* power;
And [e]who may say to him, "What are you doing?"
5 He who keeps his command will experience nothing harmful;

- **7:18 this . . . the other.** Right knowledge of God delivers those who possess it from destructive excesses of self-righteousness and wickedness.
- **7:19 strengthens the wise.** Wisdom is powerful and encouraging.
- **7:20 not a just man.** All are guilty before God (Ps. 14:3; 53:3).
- **7:22 many times.** We are all multiple offenders in God's sight.
- **7:24 Who can find it out.** No one can fully comprehend God's understanding; it is qualitatively different from human knowledge (8:16, 17; 1 Cor. 2:11).
- **7:29 made man upright.** God created Adam morally good (Gen. 1:31), but all sin (Rom. 3:23; 5:12). See "The Fall" at Gen. 3:6.
- **8:5, 6 time and judgment.** The truly wise seek and commonly find the proper time for every action (3:1–8).

And a wise man's heart [2]discerns both time and judgment,
6 Because [f]for every matter there is a time and judgment,
Though the misery of man [3]increases greatly.
7 [g]For he does not know what will happen;
So who can tell him when it will occur?
8 [h]No one has power over the spirit to retain the spirit,
And no one has power in the day of death.
There is [i]no release from that war,
And wickedness will not deliver those who are given to it.

9 All this I have seen, and applied my heart to every work that is done under the sun: *There is* a time in which one man rules over another to his own hurt.

Death Comes to All

10 Then I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of holiness, and they were [j]forgotten[4] in the city where they had so done. This also *is* vanity. 11 [k]Because the sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil. 12 [l]Though a sinner does evil a hundred *times,* and his *days* are prolonged, yet I surely know that [m]it will be well with those who fear God, who fear before Him. 13 But it will not be well with the wicked; nor will he prolong *his* days, *which are* as a shadow, because he does not fear before God.

14 There is a vanity which occurs on earth, that there are just *men* to whom it [n]happens according to the work of the wicked; again, there are wicked *men* to whom it happens according to the work of the [o]righteous. I said that this also *is* vanity.

15 [p]So I commended enjoyment, because a man has nothing better under the sun than to eat, drink, and be merry; for this will remain with him in his labor *all* the days of his life which God gives him under the sun.

16 When I applied my heart to know wisdom and to see the business that is done on earth, even though one sees no sleep day or night, 17 then I saw all the work of God, that [q]a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun. For though a man labors to discover *it,* yet he will not find *it;* moreover, though a wise *man* attempts to know *it,* he will not be able to find *it.*

9 For I [1]considered all this in my heart, so that I could declare it all: [a]that the righteous and the wise and their works *are* in the hand of God. People know neither love nor hatred *by* anything *they see* before them. 2 [b]All things *come* alike to all:

One event *happens* to the righteous and the wicked;
To the [2]good, the clean, and the unclean;
To him who sacrifices and him who does not sacrifice.
As is the good, so *is* the sinner;
He who takes an oath as *he* who fears an oath.

3 This *is* an evil in all that is done under the sun: that one thing *happens* to all. Truly the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil; madness *is* in their hearts while they live, and after that *they go* to the dead. 4 But for him who is joined to all the living there is hope, for a living dog is better than a dead lion.

5 For the living know that they will die;
But [c]the dead know nothing,
And they have no more reward,

5 [2]Lit. *knows*

6 [f]Eccl. 3:1, 17 [3]*is great upon him*

7 [g]Prov. 24:22; Eccl. 6:12

8 [h]Ps. 49:6, 7; Job 14:5 [i]Deut. 20:5–8

10 [j]Eccl. 2:16; 9:5 [4]Some Heb. mss., LXX, Vg. *praised*

11 [k]Ps. 10:6; 50:21; Is. 26:10

12 [l]Is. 65:20; [Rom. 2:5–7] [m][Deut. 4:40; Ps. 37:11, 18, 19; Prov. 1:32, 33; Is. 3:10; Matt. 25:34, 41]

14 [n]Ps. 73:14 [o]Eccl. 2:14; 7:15; 9:1–3

15 [p]Eccl. 2:24

17 [q]Job 5:9; Ps. 73:16; Eccl. 3:11; Rom. 11:33

CHAPTER 9

1 [a]Deut. 33:3; Job 12:10; Eccl. 8:14 [1]Lit. *put*

2 [b]Gen. 3:17–19; Job 21:7; Ps. 73:3, 12, 13; Mal. 3:15 [2]LXX, Syr., Vg. *good and bad,*

5 [c]Job 14:21; Is. 63:16

■ **8:8 power.** We cannot control death or evil, but Christ has this power (John 10:18; Rev. 1:18).

■ **8:9 to his own hurt.** Probably this means to hurt the one ruled. Solomon has seen how the irresponsible use of God-given authority injures people (Rom. 13:3, 4).

■ **8:10–13** Though inequities abound in human societies, as experienced in civil disorders of our own time, God will nevertheless settle all accounts justly.

■ **8:14 on earth.** In this life the righteous and wicked do not necessarily get what they deserve.

■ **8:15 commended.** In the face of injustice, people are nevertheless to rejoice in this life. Solomon's mode of expression is pessimistic, but in the immediate context he mentions that life is the gift of God.

■ **8:17 all the work of God.** See 7:13; 11:5.

cannot find out. God's work cannot be fathomed.

■ **9:1–10** Solomon commands the enjoyment of life, despite the reality of death.

■ **9:1 in the hand of God.** God sovereignly controls the affairs of both the righteous and wicked.

neither love nor hatred. Presently both "good" and "bad" things happen to righteous and wicked people according to God's inscrutable design (Matt. 5:44, 45; Luke 13:1–5).

■ **9:3 full of evil.** People are totally depraved, that is, corrupt in every aspect (Gen. 6:5).

5 [d]Job 7:8–10; Eccl. 1:11; 2:16; 8:10; Is. 26:14
7 [e]Eccl. 8:15
9 [f]Eccl. 2:10 [g]Lit. *See life*
10 [g][Col. 3:17] [h]Rom. 12:11; Col. 3:23
11 [i]Jer. 9:23; Amos 2:14, 15 [j]1 Sam. 6:9
12 [k]Eccl. 8:7 [l]Prov. 29:6; Luke 12:20, 39; 17:26; 1 Thess. 5:3
14 [m]2 Sam. 20:16–22 [n]LXX, Syr., Vg. *bulwarks*
16 [n]Eccl. 7:12, 19 [o]Mark 6:2, 3
18 [p]Josh. 7:1–26; 2 Kin. 21:2–17

CHAPTER 10

1 [1]Lit. *Flies of death* [2]Tg., Vg. omit *putrefy*
3 [q]Prov. 13:16; 18:2

For [d]the memory of them is forgotten.
6 Also their love, their hatred, and their envy have now perished;
Nevermore will they have a share
In anything done under the sun.

7 Go, [e]eat your bread with joy,
And drink your wine with a merry heart;
For God has already accepted your works.
8 Let your garments always be white,
And let your head lack no oil.

9 [3]Live joyfully with the wife whom you love all the days of your vain life which He has given you under the sun, all your days of vanity; [f]for that *is* your portion in life, and in the labor which you perform under the sun.
10 [g]Whatever your hand finds to do, do *it* with your [h]might; for *there is* no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going.
11 I returned [i]and saw under the sun that—

The race *is* not to the swift,
Nor the battle to the strong,
Nor bread to the wise,
Nor riches to men of understanding,
Nor favor to men of skill;
But time and [j]chance happen to them all.
12 For [k]man also does not know his time:
Like fish taken in a cruel net,
Like birds caught in a snare,
So the sons of men *are* [l]snared in an evil time,
When it falls suddenly upon them.

Wisdom Superior to Folly

13 This wisdom I have also seen under the sun, and it *seemed* great to me: 14 [m]*There was* a little city with few men in it; and a great king came against it, besieged it, and built great [4]snares around it. 15 Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city. Yet no one remembered that same poor man.
16 Then I said:

"Wisdom *is* better than [n]strength.
Nevertheless [o]the poor man's wisdom *is* despised,
And his words are not heard.
17 Words of the wise, *spoken* quietly, *should be* heard
Rather than the shout of a ruler of fools.
18 Wisdom *is* better than weapons of war;
But [p]one sinner destroys much good."

10 Dead [1]flies [2]putrefy the perfumer's ointment,
And cause it to give off a foul odor;
So does a little folly to one respected for wisdom *and* honor.
2 A wise man's heart *is* at his right hand,
But a fool's heart at his left.
3 Even when a fool walks along the way,
He lacks wisdom,
[a]And he shows everyone *that* he *is* a fool.

■ **9:10 with your might.** Like v. 4, this verse emphasizes the necessity of dealing with life as we find it.

■ **9:11, 12 chance.** Solomon describes people as victims of inscrutable or even "cruel" chance. Nevertheless, the believer understands that God orders events in unexpected ways.

■ **9:16 despised.** Solomon sees that wisdom is indeed better than might—but that the wise are not appreciated.

■ **10:2 right . . . left.** These had the conventional meanings of good and bad, or blessing and cursing, in the ancient world.

4 If the spirit of the ruler rises against you,
[b]Do not leave your post;
For [c]conciliation[3] pacifies great offenses.

5 There is an evil I have seen under the sun,
As an error proceeding from the ruler:
6 [d]Folly is set in [4]great dignity,
While the rich sit in a lowly place.
7 I have seen servants [e]on horses,
While princes walk on the ground like servants.

8 [f]He who digs a pit will fall into it,
And whoever breaks through a wall will be bitten by a serpent.
9 He who quarries stones may be hurt by them,
And he who splits wood may be endangered by it.
10 If the ax is dull,
And one does not sharpen the edge,
Then he must use more strength;
But wisdom [5]brings success.

11 A serpent may bite [g]when *it is* not charmed;
The [6]babbler is no different.
12 [h]The words of a wise man's mouth *are* gracious,
But [i]the lips of a fool shall swallow him up;
13 The words of his mouth begin with foolishness,
And the end of his talk *is* raving madness.
14 [j]A fool also multiplies words.
No man knows what is to be;
Who can tell him [k]what will be after him?
15 The labor of fools wearies them,
For they do not even know how to go to the city!

16 [l]Woe to you, O land, when your king *is* a child,
And your princes feast in the morning!
17 Blessed *are* you, O land, when your king *is* the son of nobles,
And your [m]princes feast at the proper time—
For strength and not for drunkenness!
18 Because of laziness the [7]building decays,
And [n]through idleness of hands the house leaks.
19 A feast is made for laughter,
And [o]wine makes merry;
But money answers everything.

20 [p]Do not curse the king, even in your thought;
Do not curse the rich, even in your bedroom;
For a bird of the air may carry your voice,
And a bird in flight may tell the matter.

The Value of Diligence

11 Cast your bread [a]upon the waters,
[b]For you will find it after many days.
2 [c]Give a serving [d]to seven, and also to eight,
[e]For you do not know what evil will be on the earth.

4 [b]Eccl. 8:3 [c]1 Sam. 25:24–33; Prov. 25:15 [3]Lit. *healing, health*
6 [d]Esth. 3:1 [4]*exalted positions*
7 [e]Prov. 19:10; 30:22
8 [f]Ps. 7:15; Prov. 26:27
10 [5]Lit. *is a successful advantage*
11 [g]Ps. 58:4, 5; Jer. 8:17 [6]Lit. *master of the tongue*
12 [h]Prov. 10:32; Luke 4:22 [i]Prov. 10:14; Eccl. 4:5
14 [j][Prov. 15:2]; Eccl. 5:3 [k]Eccl. 3:22; 8:7
16 [l]Is. 3:4, 5; 5:11
17 [m]Prov. 31:4; Is. 5:11
18 [n]Prov. 24:30–34 [7]Lit. *rafters sink*
19 [o]Judg. 9:13; Ps. 104:15; Eccl. 2:3
20 [p]Ex. 22:28; Acts 23:5

CHAPTER 11

1 [a]Is. 32:20 [b][Deut. 15:10; Prov. 19:17; Matt. 10:42; 2 Cor. 9:8; Gal. 6:9, 10; Heb. 6:10]
2 [c]Ps. 112:9; Matt. 5:42; Luke 6:30; [1 Tim. 6:18, 19] [d]Mic. 5:5 [e]Eph. 5:16

■ **10:5 error.** Rulers often govern inappropriately.

■ **10:10 sharpen the edge.** Overcome the obstacles to effective work by being properly prepared with the wisdom or skill needed for the task.

■ **10:12–14 words.** Words reveal a person's heart, and what is spoken can have serious consequences (Matt. 12:34–37).

■ **10:19 everything.** This can mean that money is needed for both food and wine, or that money provides life's needs (compare 7:12).

■ **10:20 bird.** A figure of speech meaning a spy or an informer.

■ **11:1 bread upon the waters.** Possibly a reference to Solomon's grain trade by sea.

■ **11:2 seven . . . eight.** An admonition to spread the risks you take (v. 6).

do not know. Uncertainty is a reason for diversity in financial management. See v. 6.

3 If the clouds are full of rain,
They empty *themselves* upon the earth;
And if a tree falls to the south or the north,
In the place where the tree falls, there it shall lie.
4 He who observes the wind will not sow,
And he who regards the clouds will not reap.

5 As [f]you do not know what *is* the way of the [1]wind,
[g]*Or* how the bones *grow* in the womb of her who is with child,
So you do not know the works of God who makes everything.
6 In the morning sow your seed,
And in the evening do not withhold your hand;
For you do not know which will prosper,
Either this or that,
Or whether both alike *will be* good.

7 Truly the light is sweet,
And *it is* pleasant for the eyes [h]to behold the sun;
8 But if a man lives many years
And [i]rejoices in them all,
Yet let him [j]remember the days of darkness,
For they will be many.
All that is coming *is* vanity.

Seek God in Early Life

9 Rejoice, O young man, in your youth,
And let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth;
[k]Walk in the [2]ways of your heart,
And [3]in the sight of your eyes;
But know that for all these
[l]God will bring you into judgment.
10 Therefore remove [4]sorrow from your heart,
And [m]put away evil from your flesh,
[n]For childhood and [5]youth *are* vanity.

12 Remember[a] now your Creator in the days of your youth,
Before the [1]difficult days come,
And the years draw near [b]when you say,
"I have no pleasure in them":
2 While the sun and the light,
The moon and the stars,
Are not darkened,
And the clouds do not return after the rain;
3 In the day when the keepers of the house tremble,
And the strong men bow down;
When the grinders cease because they are few,
And those that look through the windows grow dim;
4 When the doors are shut in the streets,

5 [f]John 3:8 [g]Ps. 139:14 [1]Or *spirit*
7 [h]Eccl. 7:11
8 [i]Eccl. 9:7 [j]Eccl. 12:1
9 [k]Num. 15:39; Job 31:7; Eccl. 2:10 [l]Eccl. 3:17; 12:14; [Rom. 14:10] [2]Impulses [3]As you see to be best
10 [m]2 Cor. 7:1; 2 Tim. 2:22 [n]Ps. 39:5 [4]*vexation* [5]Prime of life

CHAPTER 12

1 [a]2 Chr. 34:3; Prov. 22:6; Lam. 3:27 [b]2 Sam. 19:35 [1]Lit. *evil*

■ **11:3, 4 clouds.** Do not use uncertainty as an excuse for laziness.

■ **11:5 works of God.** Here again is an affirmation of God's incomprehensible, secret counsel (8:17 note).

■ **11:6 do not know.** See note on v. 2.

■ **11:7—12:7** Natural, youthful life is to be governed with discretion, because this present life will be followed by a certain meeting with God (12:8).

■ **11:8 rejoices . . . remember.** The joys of present life should be held loosely, in the awareness that such joy is temporary.

■ **11:9 judgment.** Solomon does not encourage mindless self-indulgence, but gives a sober warning that God will bring everything into judgment (Matt. 12:36).

■ **12:1 difficult days.** If pleasure is unrestrained in youth, both pleasure and the Creator will be unknown in later years.

■ **12:2–7** Solomon comments on aging and death, using the extended metaphor of a house that is falling down. He contrasts the deterioration of the house with the permanence of nature. It is best to take the metaphors here for their overall effect, rather than speculate on the meaning of each individual figure. As the following notes indicate, some associations are clearer than others.

■ **12:3 keepers of the house.** The phrases here probably refer to parts of the body as members of a household.

And the sound of grinding is low;
When one rises up at the sound of a bird,
And all [c]the daughters of music are brought low.
5 Also they are afraid of height,
And of terrors in the way;
When the almond tree blossoms,
The grasshopper is a burden,
And desire fails.
For man goes to [d]his eternal home,
And [e]the mourners go about the streets.

6 *Remember your Creator* before the silver cord is [2]loosed,
Or the golden bowl is broken,
Or the pitcher shattered at the fountain,
Or the wheel broken at the well.
7 [f]Then the dust will return to the earth as it was,
[g]And the spirit will return to God [h]who gave it.

8 "Vanity[i] of vanities," says the Preacher,
"All *is* vanity."

4 [c]2 Sam. 19:35
5 [d]Job 17:13 [e]Gen. 50:10; Jer. 9:17
6 [2]So with Qr., Tg.; Kt. *removed;* LXX, Vg. *broken*
7 [f]Gen. 3:19; Job 34:15; Ps. 90:3 [g]Eccl. 3:21 [h]Num. 16:22; 27:16; Job 34:14; Is. 57:16; Zech. 12:1
8 [i]Ps. 62:9
9 [j]1 Kin. 4:32 [3]*arranged*
10 [4]Lit. *delightful*
11 [5]Lit. *masters of assemblies*
12 [k]Eccl. 1:18

The Whole Duty of Man

9 And moreover, because the Preacher was wise, he still taught the people knowledge; yes, he pondered and sought out *and* [j]set[3] in order many proverbs. 10 The Preacher sought to find [4]acceptable words; and *what was* written *was* upright—words of truth. 11 The words of the wise are like goads, and the words of [5]scholars are like well-driven nails, given by one Shepherd. 12 And further, my son, be admonished by these. Of making many books *there is* no end, and [k]much study *is* wearisome to the flesh.

13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter:

■ **12:5 the almond tree blossoms.** Their white color is associated with the hair of the aged.

eternal home. The words refer not just to the grave, but to the presence of one's Creator and Judge (v. 7).

■ **12:6 golden bowl.** These words describe a lamp broken in the fall caused by a break in a silver chain. Broken vessels and severed cords suggest the frailty that comes with aging.

■ **12:7 spirit will return.** Human existence continues beyond death.

■ **12:8 Vanity.** A final reiteration of the Preacher's refrain.

■ **12:9–14** The book concludes with a tribute to Solomon's wisdom, providing the keys to interpreting the book.

■ **12:11 given by one Shepherd.** The words of Ecclesiastes are God-breathed (2 Tim. 3:16).

■ **12:13 conclusion.** Loyal submission to the rule of God is the central and summary admonition of wisdom literature (5:7; Job 28:28; Prov. 1:7; 9:10).

The Way of Wisdom (12:14)

Without reverence for God "all is vanity":

Godless learning →	cynicism (1:7, 8)
Godless greatness →	sorrow (1:16–18)
Godless pleasure →	disappointment (2:1, 2)
Godless labor →	hatred of life (2:17)
Godless philosophy →	emptiness (3:1–9)
Godless eternity →	unfulfillment (3:11)
Godless life →	depression (4:2, 3)
Godless religion →	dread (5:4–7)
Godless wealth →	trouble (5:12)
Godless existence →	frustration (6:12)
Godless wisdom →	despair (11:1–8)

The beginning of wisdom is the fear of God, a deeply serious attitude toward the commands of God.

GODLY FEAR → FULFILLMENT (12:13, 14)

13 [l][Deut. 6:2; 10:12]
14 [m]Matt. 12:36

[l]Fear God and keep His commandments,
For this is man's all.
14 For [m]God will bring every work into judgment,
Including every secret thing,
Whether good or evil.

■ **12:14 judgment.** God's judgment of thoughts and deeds is a dominant theme that emerges throughout the book (3:17; 8:12, 13; 11:9; 2 Cor. 5:10).

The SONG OF SOLOMON

Author

According to the title, the Song belongs to Solomon. The Hebrew phrase "which is Solomon's" (1:1) can be translated "by" Solomon (as its author), or "for" Solomon (as the person to whom it is dedicated). The traditional view among Jews and Christians is that Solomon was the author (cf. 1 Kin. 4:32).

Date and Occasion

If the Song was written by Solomon, it would have been composed in the mid-tenth century B.C. Dedication of the Song to Solomon might also favor this date, as do certain other features of the book (cf. 6:4 note).

Many interpreters, both Jewish and Christian, have regarded the Song as an allegory of God's love for Israel or the Church. The association of the book with Solomon, however, points us in the direction of the wisdom literature of the Old Testament. Wisdom literature is distinguished, among other things, by its focus on the common sphere of human relationships. The Book of Proverbs uses language similar to that of the Song of Solomon in talking about marital love (Prov. 5:15–19), the subject of the Song. This love must finally be seen in the context of the even greater love of God that the Bible as a whole reveals. The beauty and worth of sexual love is affirmed at the beginning of the Bible, where the difference and relationship of the sexes is associated with the creation of humanity in God's image (Gen. 1:27; cf. 2:19–25). If sexual love were evil in itself, it would be inappropriate as an allegory of Christ's love for His church.

The Song of Solomon reveals three qualities of love between a man and a woman: self-giving, desire, and commitment. In all these ways love reflects the greater love of God our Creator. God delights in us and gives Himself to us. God desires us wholly for Himself. God feels deeply both the pain and pleasure of His relationship with us. Although it is not proper to attribute sexuality to God, there is an analogy between the love we experience in marriage and the love that God has for us. The Old Testament prophets compare the love of God for His people to the love of a bridegroom for the bride (e.g., Jer. 2:2; Hos. 2:14–20). Christian marriage, according to Paul, should be modeled on the most perfect expression of such love, the self-giving love of Christ for His church and its willing response (Eph. 5:22, 33). The climax of the Song of Solomon is the praise of vehement and faithful love (8:6, 7).

The Song of Solomon shows us love outside Eden, not free from sorrow, but still beautiful and a reflection of God's own love for us. It looks back to the gift of love in creation, and forward to the perfection of love in One greater than Solomon, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Characteristics and Themes

The Song is written in verse, as love poetry. The lines are short and rhythmical, the language rich in imagery and highly sensual. The poem deals more with emotions than with rational ideas, requiring a special sensitivity in the reader. It is irrelevant, for example, whether the woman who is described in 6:9 is really "perfect" in any way that could be proven. The word is an expression of her beloved's deep affection for her, and that is all that the images are intended to be. The Song is a rhapsody of love: an outpouring of the words and feelings of people who are experiencing human, sexual love with all its pains and pleasures. It is a book for those who want to know, or to remember, what it is like to be in love.

Although not a formal drama, there are nevertheless exchanges between the characters within the poem. It is possible to identify the characters who speak certain lines based on clues provided by the gender, number, and person of the Hebrew verbs and pronouns, even though interpreters do not always agree on the precise divisions and identifications. The speakers have been identified by capitalized headings inserted in the translation (no such headings appear in the Hebrew text). The most important characters are "the Shulamite" (6:13), a young country girl; "the beloved," her shepherd lover (1:7; 6:3); and "the daughters of Jerusalem," who function much like the chorus in a drama (2:7). There are numerous minor figures—Solomon himself is mentioned (1:5; 3:7, 9, 11; 8:11, 12), as are the mothers of the young lovers (6:9; 8:5), her brothers (cf. 8:8, 9), their friends (5:1), and the city watchmen (3:3; 5:7).

The presence of these characters has led many commentators to propose that the book is about a relationship between the girl and the shepherd, with Solomon as an intruder. But it is hard to see how Solomon could appear so unfavorably in a book that was either written by him or dedicated to him. It has proved difficult to identify a clear story line of the interactions between these three characters, or even to decide which words are Solomon's

and which the shepherd's. Because of such problems, many writers have argued that the book is an anthology of love poems with common themes rather than a unified work. But such a division of the book into separate poems is unhelpful and unnecessary.

The poem is perhaps best understood as expressing the depth of love between the Shulamite girl and her beloved shepherd in the language of romantic fantasy. She envisions him as a dashing king, the prince of her dreams. In this interpretation Solomon is the archetypal lover, not an intruder. Yet he is not presented as one who must be envied. The Song shows us a world in which a country girl and a shepherd can be as happy and fulfilled as a king on his throne (8:11, 12).

A refrain is found at three points in the Song (2:7; 3:5; 8:4), addressed to the "daughters of Jerusalem." Its essence is: "Do not try to force the situation. Let love take its natural course and its own time." This refrain creates movement and suspense. The lovers experience separation, hostility, and interference, but the refrain anticipates that the relationship is nevertheless moving forward. There is a sense of fulfillment at the end of the book, when the lovers, together at last and at ease in public, walk arm-in-arm to the home of the parents, the place where their relationship began (8:5). The following two verses praise the excellence of love (8:6, 7). This is the climax of the Song, but not quite the end. It concludes by quietly echoing some of the key elements of the work (8:8–14).

Between the expressions of longing at the beginning and the consummation at the end, there is what seems to be a dream sequence in chs. 3—6 (3:1; 5:2). In this section the girl dreams about her wedding and the lovemaking that will follow. There is everything that we might expect here: erotic reveries, nightmares, fears of losing her lover, and romantic experiences that transform him into a prince. In her dreams, the girl's wedding becomes a splendid, royal occasion, and the lover is identified with Solomon himself.

Despite the romantic images and fantasies in this book, there is realism in it. The author knows about erotic desire, meddling relatives, and the struggle to establish a relationship in the face of separation and hostility. He understands that we no longer live in the Garden of Eden, but in a fallen world, where love, too, has its pain. But there remains also idealism. The overwhelming impression that the book leaves with the reader is that love is beautiful, and can provide deep satisfaction and contentment.

Title The title has been translated "The Song of Solomon," "Song of Songs," and "Canticles" (from the Latin word for "song"). The word "song" in the title is the common Hebrew word for a happy song, with no special religious connotation. The whole phrase "song of songs" is a superlative expression meaning "the greatest song," announcing that the book is a single song of outstanding quality. □

Outline of Song of Solomon

I. Desire for Love (1:1—2:17)
  A. Title (1:1)
  B. Mutual Praise and Longing (1:2—2:7)
  C. Visit of the Beloved (2:8–17)
II. The Bride's Reverie (3:1—6:3)
  A. Dream of Separation (3:1–5)
  B. Wedding Procession (3:6–11)
  C. Praise of the Shulamite (4:1—5:1)
  D. Anxiety in Love (5:2—6:3)
III. Mutual Praise and Longing (6:4—8:4)
  A. Praise of the Shulamite (6:4–10)
  B. Union of the Shulamite and Her Beloved (6:11—8:4)
IV. The Value of Love in Union (8:5–14)
  A. In Praise of Love (8:5–7)
  B. Conclusion (8:8–14)

THE [a]song of songs, which *is* Solomon's.

The Banquet

THE [1]SHULAMITE

2 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth—
[b]For [2]your love *is* better than wine.
3 Because of the fragrance of your good ointments,
Your name *is* ointment poured forth;
Therefore the virgins love you.
4 [c]Draw me away!

THE DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM

[d]We will run after [3]you.

THE SHULAMITE

The king [e]has brought me into his chambers.

THE DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM

We will be glad and rejoice in [4]you.

We will remember [3]your love more than wine.

THE SHULAMITE

Rightly do they love [3]you.

5 I *am* dark, but lovely,
O daughters of Jerusalem,

CHAPTER 1

1 [a]1 Kin. 4:32

2 [b]Song 4:10 [1]A Palestinian young woman, Song 6:13. The speaker and audience are identified according to the number, gender, and person of the Hebrew words. Occasionally the identity is not certain. [2]Masc. sing.: the Beloved

4 [c]Hos. 11:4; John 6:44; 12:32 [d]Phil. 3:12–14 [e]Ps. 45:14, 15; John 14:2; Eph. 2:6 [3]Masc. sing.: the Beloved [4]Fem. sing.: the Shulamite

■ **1:1** See Introduction: Author; Title.

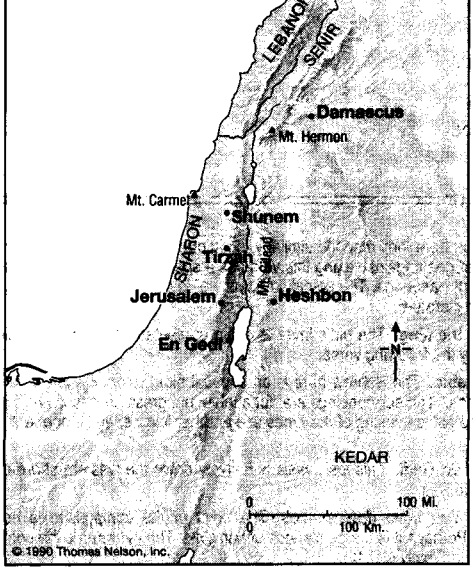
■ **1:2–4** Third person expressions in 1:2 and 1:4 ("Let him kiss me . . . The king has brought me") open and close the paragraph, which is otherwise in the second person ("your love . . . Your name"). The girl oscillates between thinking about her absent lover and addressing him as though he were present.

■ **1:4 The king has brought me.** This is the first of five occurrences of the word "king" (1:4, 12; 3:9, 11; 7:5). Here in v. 4 there are two possibilities: either the king is Solomon, who has tried unsuccessfully to win the girl's affections, or he is her lover, whom she romantically fantasizes as her king. The latter interpretation is to be preferred (see Introduction: Characteristics and Themes). The paragraph ends, as it began, with the girl referring to her absent lover in the third person (vv. 2–4 note).

We will be glad and rejoice in you. The "daughters of Jerusalem" (v. 5) agree with the girl that the love of her lover is better than wine (v. 2).

■ **1:5, 6** The girl responds to criticism of her complexion (v. 5, "I am dark") by the daughters of Jerusalem (5:10–16 note). She is deeply tanned because her brothers have made her work in the vineyards, and consequently she has not been able to care properly for her "own vineyard" (her body, v. 6).

tents of Kedar. The Bedouin tribes living on the edge of the deserts east of Israel made their tents of dark goat hair.



Places Named in Song of Solomon. From the peaks of Lebanon to the streets of Jerusalem (Song 4:8; 6:4), the love story in the Song of Solomon takes place in a variety of settings. The lovers speak of, and to, each other with several word pictures, including "the rose of Sharon" (Song 2:1), "the lily of the valleys" (Song 2:1), and "the vineyards of En Gedi" (Song 1:14).

Like the tents of Kedar,
Like the curtains of Solomon.

6 Do not look upon me, because I *am* dark,
Because the sun has [5]tanned me.
My mother's sons were angry with me;
They made me the keeper of the vineyards,
But my own [f]vineyard I have not kept.

(TO HER BELOVED)

7 Tell me, O you whom I love,
Where you feed *your flock,*
Where you make *it* rest at noon.
For why should I be as one who [6]veils herself
By the flocks of your companions?

THE BELOVED

8 If you do not know, [g]O fairest among women,
[7]Follow in the footsteps of the flock,
And feed your little goats
Beside the shepherds' tents.

9 I have compared you, [h]my love,
[i]To my filly among Pharaoh's chariots.

10 [j]Your cheeks are lovely with ornaments,
Your neck with chains *of gold.*

THE DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM

11 We will make [8]you ornaments of gold
With studs of silver.

THE SHULAMITE

12 While the king *is* at his table,
My [9]spikenard sends forth its fragrance.

13 A bundle of myrrh *is* my beloved to me,
That lies all night between my breasts.

14 My beloved *is* to me a cluster of henna *blooms*
In the vineyards of En Gedi.

THE BELOVED

15 [k]Behold, you *are* fair, [l]my love!
Behold, you *are* fair!
You *have* dove's eyes.

THE SHULAMITE

16 Behold, you *are* [l]handsome, my beloved!
Yes, pleasant!

6 [f]Song 8:11, 12 [5]Lit. *looked upon me*

7 [6]LXX, Syr., Vg. *wanders*

8 [g]Song 5:9 [7]Lit. *Go out*

9 [h]Song 2:2, 10, 13; 4:1, 7; John 15:14 [i]2 Chr. 1:16

10 [j]Ezek. 16:11

11 [8]Fem. sing.: the Shulamite

12 [9]*perfume*

15 [k]Song 4:1; 5:12 [l]*my companion, friend*

16 [l]Song 5:10–16

■ **1:7 as one who veils herself.** The word "veils" has the same negative connotations here as it does in Gen. 38:14, 15. The girl does not want to be mistaken for a prostitute.

■ **1:8 fairest among women.** Elsewhere in the Song this form of address is used only by the "daughters of Jerusalem" (5:9; 6:1) If the speakers here are the same "daughters of Jerusalem" whose critical stares were referred to in v. 6, their attitude seems to have changed. More likely, however, their words here are sarcastic (5:8, 9).

■ **1:9 my filly among Pharaoh's chariots.** Solomon began his reign by making a marriage alliance with Pharaoh (1 Kin. 3:1). He also traded in horses from Egypt (1 Kin. 10:28), and Pharaoh's chariots with their twin stallions would be well-known and much admired in Israel. What is envisaged here would have been exceptional: a bejewelled mare among the stallions, causing wonder and excitement.

■ **1:11 We.** In v. 4 the "daughters of Jerusalem" echo the girl's praise of her lover; here they respond similarly to his praise of her. The plural subject "we" goes against taking this verse as a speech of the girl's lover using courtly language. The so-called "royal we" is not used in ancient Near Eastern literature.

■ **1:12 the king.** The girl's lover is again presented as a king, as indicated by the following verse.

at his table. The Hebrew here is an unusual expression, lit. "in his surroundings." The surroundings are not a table, but grass and trees (vv. 16, 17). The girl is thinking of the times she and her lover spend alone in the woods.

■ **1:14 En Gedi.** This lush oasis is halfway down the western shore of the Dead Sea.

■ **1:15 You have dove's eyes.** The point of the comparison is not stated. Perhaps it is the gentleness of her gaze. The girl returns the compliment indirectly in 5:12.

Also our [2]bed *is* green.
17 The beams of our houses *are* cedar,
And our rafters of fir.

2 I *am* the rose of Sharon,
And the lily of the valleys.

THE BELOVED

2 Like a lily among thorns,
So is my love among the daughters.

THE SHULAMITE

3 Like an apple tree among the trees of the woods,
So *is* my beloved among the sons.
I sat down in his shade with great delight,
And [a]his fruit *was* sweet to my taste.

THE SHULAMITE TO THE DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM

4 He brought me to the [1]banqueting house,
And his banner over me *was* love.
5 Sustain me with cakes of raisins,
Refresh me with apples,
For I *am* lovesick.

6 [b]His left hand *is* under my head,
And his right hand embraces me.
7 [c]I [2]charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
By the gazelles or by the does of the field,
Do not stir up nor awaken love
Until it pleases.

The Beloved's Request

THE SHULAMITE

8 The voice of my beloved!
Behold, he comes
Leaping upon the mountains,
Skipping upon the hills.
9 [d]My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag.
Behold, he stands behind our wall;
He is looking through the windows,
Gazing through the lattice.

10 My beloved spoke, and said to me:
"Rise up, my love, my fair one,
And come away.

16 [2]*couch*

CHAPTER 2

3 [a]Song 4:16; Rev. 22:1, 2

4 [1]Lit. *house of wine*

6 [b]Song 8:3

7 [c]Song 3:5; 8:4 [2]*adjure*

9 [d]Prov. 6:5; Song 2:17

■ **2:1 rose.** The Hebrew indicates a plant of the bulb family, like a crocus or daffodil.

Sharon. This plain extends south from Mount Carmel along the Mediterranean coast. In this verse the girl modestly compares herself to some familiar wildflowers.

■ **2:4 banqueting house.** Lit. "house of wine." The setting is outdoors (1:12 note). The lovers' "house" to this point has been the forest (1:16, 17). Now they move to a different "house," namely, the young man's vineyard, his "house" of wine. The expression continues the royal imagery of 1:4, 12 (the shepherd is a king), and the comparison of love and wine in 1:2.

his banner. Banners commonly adorned royal banquet halls, but this banquet hall, or "house of wine," is different. It has only one banner, love, and that is also the only "wine" that will be consumed at the banquet.

■ **2:5 raisins . . . apples.** Raisins or "raisin cakes" are associated elsewhere in the Old Testament with religious rites, sometimes even in a pagan context (2 Sam. 6:19; Hos. 3:1). This has led some commentators to suppose that the Song of Solomon originated as the script of a pagan fertility rite involving ritual sex (cf. Hos. 4:11–14). But the lovemaking in the Song has no obvious religious dimension. The raisins here, like the apples, are simple aphrodisiacs. The girl calls for raisins and apples to renew her strength.

■ **2:7** For comments on this refrain, which occurs also at 3:5 and 8:4, see Introduction: Characteristics and Themes. Here the refrain is a reminder that the lovemaking so far has been imagined rather than actual, despite the vivid language.

■ **2:8–17** The image of the shepherd-lover as a gazelle or a young stag on the hills introduces and concludes this section, another imagined rendezvous between the two lovers. After her brief address to the daughters of Jerusalem in v. 7, the girl has returned to her musings.

11 For lo, the winter is past,
The rain is over *and* gone.
12 The flowers appear on the earth;
The time of singing has come,
And the voice of the turtledove
Is heard in our land.
13 The fig tree puts forth her green figs,
And the vines *with* the tender grapes
Give a good smell.
Rise up, my love, my fair one,
And come away!

14 "O my [e]dove, in the clefts of the rock,
In the secret *places* of the cliff,
Let me see your [3]face,
[f]Let me hear your voice;
For your voice *is* sweet,
And your face *is* lovely."

HER BROTHERS

15 Catch us [g]the foxes,
The little foxes that spoil the vines,
For our vines *have* tender grapes.

THE SHULAMITE

16 [h]My beloved *is* mine, and I *am* his.
He feeds *his flock* among the lilies.

(TO HER BELOVED)

17 [i]Until the day breaks
And the shadows flee away,
Turn, my beloved,
And be [j]like a gazelle
Or a young stag
Upon the mountains of [4]Bether.

A Troubled Night

THE SHULAMITE

3 By [a]night on my bed I sought the one I love;
I sought him, but I did not find him.
2 "I will rise now," *I said,*
"And go about the city;
In the streets and in the squares
I will seek the one I love."
I sought him, but I did not find him.

14 [e]Song 5:2 [f]Song 8:13 [3]Lit. *appearance*
15 [g]Ps. 80:13; Ezek. 13:4; Luke 13:32
16 [h]Song 6:3
17 [i]Song 4:6 [j]Song 8:14 [4]Lit. *Separation*

CHAPTER 3

1 [a]Is. 26:9

■ **2:14 Let me see your face.** The switch to the feminine form of the possessive pronoun "your" suggests that this verse and the following one should be assigned to the shepherd, "the beloved."

■ **2:15 The little foxes that spoil the vines.** The foxes are the one negative element in the otherwise ideal spring setting of vv. 10–15. The imperative with no specific subject is like a passive ("May the foxes be caught"), and the whole verse is a wish by the lovers that nothing should be allowed to interfere with their lovemaking.

■ **2:16 He feeds his flock among the lilies.** In view of the context, this is most likely a metaphor for lovemaking. See note on v. 15 and 6:2.

■ **2:17 Until the day breaks And the shadows flee away.** Traditionally, these lines have been taken with what follows, but they may make better sense if read with v. 16. The lovers have been together through the night, and when day breaks they must part. The young man's return to the hills marks the end of the unit that opened in v. 8 (see 2:8–17 note).

■ **3:1 By night on my bed.** The girl is not yet with her lover, but alone on her bed, imagining various encounters with him. A more explicit indication that she is dreaming is given in 5:2. It is not clear where the dream begins or ends, but it is certainly a major feature of the book (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes).

■ **3:2–4** This search for her lover either follows the girl's night of dreaming, or is itself one of her dreams. The presence of watchmen patrolling the city streets indicates that it is night, and that this is probably a dream. The parallel in 5:2–8 is a dream (5:2). Both dreams have a nightmarish quality, the one in ch. 5 more obviously than this one (see especially 5:7).

3 [b]The watchmen who go about the city found me;
I said,
"Have you seen the one I love?"

4 Scarcely had I passed by them,
When I found the one I love.
I held him and would not let him go,
Until I had brought him to the [c]house of my mother,
And into the [1]chamber of her who conceived me.

5 [d]I [2]charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
By the gazelles or by the does of the field,
Do not stir up nor awaken love
Until it pleases.

The Coming of Solomon

THE SHULAMITE

6 [e]Who *is* this coming out of the wilderness
Like pillars of smoke,
Perfumed with myrrh and frankincense,
With all the merchant's fragrant powders?
7 Behold, it *is* Solomon's couch,
With sixty valiant men around it,
Of the valiant of Israel.
8 They all hold swords,
Being expert in war.
Every man *has* his sword on his thigh
Because of fear in the night.

9 Of the wood of Lebanon
Solomon the King
Made himself a [3]palanquin:
10 He made its pillars *of* silver,
Its support *of* gold,
Its seat *of* purple,
Its interior paved *with* love
By the daughters of Jerusalem.
11 Go forth, O daughters of Zion,
And see King Solomon with the crown
With which his mother crowned him
On the day of his wedding,
The day of the gladness of his heart.

3 [b]Song 5:7; Is. 21:6–8, 11, 12
4 [c]Song 8:2 [1]*room*
5 [d]Song 2:7; 8:4 [2]*adjure*
6 [e]Song 8:5
9 [3]A portable enclosed chair

■ **3:4 house of my mother.** This is presumably where the unmarried girl lies sleeping (v. 1). In her dream she brings her beloved home.

■ **3:5** This second occurrence of the refrain confirms that the lovemaking at this stage is imagined rather than real. The consummation remains future (2:7 note).

■ **3:6–11** Placed as it is between the two indications that the girl is at home in bed (3:1; 5:2), this wedding scene is best taken as part of her dreaming. Nightmare gives way to fantasy. She dreams of her wedding day, transformed into a royal occasion, with her lover as a king, the magnificent Solomon. It is not the first time she has pictured her lover as a king (1:4, 12; 2:4).

■ **3:8 Because of fear in the night.** Solomon's men would form a bodyguard for protection from marauders, especially as weddings were celebrated at nightfall. But the verse has a double reference. There is also the "night" introduced in 3:1, which was spoiled by the girl's own "fear in the night." These fears are banished, at least for a time, by the splendid vision of Solomon with his fighting men (vv. 2–4 note).

■ **3:11 Zion.** An alternative name for Jerusalem (e.g., Is. 40:9).

the crown. This is not the king's crown, but the sort of crown worn by brides and grooms at Jewish weddings. The custom was abandoned by the Jews in their sorrow caused by the tragic war with Rome and the loss of Jerusalem (A.D. 70). A rabbinic proverb states that "a bridegroom resembles a king."

his mother. The family structure reflected in the Song appears to be matriarchal (1:6; 3:4; 6:9; 8:1, 2, 5). There is no reference to a father, and within the relationship between the lovers there appears to be mutuality. But there are nonetheless elements of male dominance in the Song, notably the roles played by the girl's brothers (1:6; 8:8, 9) and the watchmen (5:7).

the day of his wedding. The real Solomon had many weddings (1 Kin. 11:3). The one day in view here is a romantic ideal (vv. 6–11 note).

CHAPTER 4

1 [a]Song 1:15; 5:12 [b]Song 6:5

2 [c]Song 6:6 [1]*bereaved*

3 [d]Song 6:7

4 [e]Song 7:4 [f]Neh. 3:19 [2]Small shields

5 [g]Prov. 5:19; Song 7:3

6 [h]Song 2:17

7 [i]Song 1:15; Eph. 5:27

8 [j]Deut. 3:9; 1 Chr. 5:23; Ezek. 27:5

10 [k]Song 1:2, 4 [3]*fragrance*

THE BELOVED

4 Behold, [a]you *are* fair, my love!
Behold, you *are* fair!
You *have* dove's eyes behind your veil.
Your hair *is* like a [b]flock of goats,
Going down from Mount Gilead.
2 [c]Your teeth *are* like a flock of shorn *sheep*
Which have come up from the washing,
Every one of which bears twins,
And none *is* [1]barren among them.
3 Your lips *are* like a strand of scarlet,
And your mouth is lovely.
[d]Your temples behind your veil
Are like a piece of pomegranate.
4 [e]Your neck *is* like the tower of David,
Built [f]for an armory,
On which hang a thousand [2]bucklers,
All shields of mighty men.
5 [g]Your two breasts *are* like two fawns,
Twins of a gazelle,
Which feed among the lilies.

6 [h]Until the day breaks
And the shadows flee away,
I will go my way to the mountain of myrrh
And to the hill of frankincense.

7 [i]You *are* all fair, my love,
And *there is* no spot in you.
8 Come with me from Lebanon, *my* spouse,
With me from Lebanon.
Look from the top of Amana,
From the top of Senir [j]and Hermon,
From the lions' dens,
From the mountains of the leopards.

9 You have ravished my heart,
My sister, *my* spouse;
You have ravished my heart
With one *look* of your eyes,
With one link of your necklace.
10 How fair is your love,
My sister, *my* spouse!
[k]How much better than wine is your love,
And the [3]scent of your perfumes
Than all spices!
11 Your lips, O *my* spouse,
Drip as the honeycomb;

■ **4:1—5:1** In this single unit the man praises the Shulamite (4:1–15); she responds with an invitation (4:16); and he accepts (5:1).

■ **4:1 Mount Gilead.** A high plateau east of the Jordan River.

■ **4:4 the tower of David.** The location of this tower is unknown. It is not the present-day tower of David just inside the Jaffa gate of Jerusalem, since that tower is no older than the time of Herod the Great. The girl's neck is adorned with jewelry as the famous tower was adorned with shields.

■ **4:6 Until the day breaks.** The time when the lovers must part is approaching (2:17 note).

the mountain of myrrh . . . the hill of frankincense. Frankincense, like myrrh, was an imported aromatic spice (cf. Matt. 2:11). Despite the exotic language, the reference is probably to the local hill country, fragrant with spring blossoms (cf. 1:13–17).

■ **4:8 Lebanon . . . Amana . . . Senir . . . Hermon.** All these sites are in the remote north of Palestine. We are not meant to think of the girl as living on the summit of Mount Hermon. Rather, the place names are symbols of the inaccessibility that the wooing is meant to overcome.

my spouse. The word is not used literally, but as a term of affection, in anticipation of marriage.

■ **4:9 My sister.** In ancient Near Eastern languages "sister" is commonly used by lovers as a term of endearment. It expresses a closeness between persons who are not members of the same family.

■ **4:10 better than wine.** The compliment of 1:2 is returned.

[l]Honey and milk *are* under your tongue;
And the fragrance of your garments
Is [m]like the fragrance of Lebanon.

12 A garden [k]enclosed
Is my sister, *my* spouse,
A spring shut up,
A fountain sealed.
13 Your plants *are* an orchard of pomegranates
With pleasant fruits,
Fragrant henna with spikenard,
14 Spikenard and saffron,
Calamus and cinnamon,
With all trees of frankincense,
Myrrh and aloes,
With all the chief spices—
15 A fountain of gardens,
A well of [n]living waters,
And streams from Lebanon.

THE SHULAMITE

16 Awake, O north *wind,*
And come, O south!
Blow upon my garden,
That its spices may flow out.
[o]Let my beloved come to his garden
And eat its pleasant [p]fruits.

THE BELOVED

5 I [a]have come to my garden, my [b]sister, *my* spouse;
I have gathered my myrrh with my spice;
[c]I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey;
I have drunk my wine with my milk.

(TO HIS FRIENDS)

Eat, O [d]friends!
Drink, yes, drink deeply,
O beloved ones!

The Shulamite's Troubled Evening

THE SHULAMITE

2 I sleep, but my heart is awake;
It is the voice of my beloved!
[e]He knocks, *saying,*
"Open for me, my sister, [f]my love,
My dove, my perfect one;
For my head is covered with dew,
My [2]locks with the drops of the night."

11 [l]Prov. 24:13, 14; Song 5:1 [m]Gen. 27:27; Hos. 14:6, 7

12 [k]*locked* or *barred*

15 [n]Zech. 14:8; John 4:10; 7:38

16 [o]Song 5:1 [p]Song 7:13

CHAPTER 5

1 [a]Song 4:16 [b]Song 4:9 [c]Song 4:11 [d]Luke 15:7, 10; John 3:29

2 [e]Rev. 3:20 [f]*my companion, friend* [2]*curls* or *hair*

■ **4:12 A garden enclosed . . . A spring shut up.** These are images of virginity.

spring . . . fountain. Her beloved longs for her as a thirsty traveller longs for refreshing water (Prov. 5:15–20).

■ **4:13, 14 Your plants.** The image of the enclosed garden is further developed (v. 12 note). "Plants" alludes to the anticipated delights of lovemaking.

■ **4:15 A well of living waters.** This image expresses how the young man would like his lover to be: no longer a sealed fountain (v. 12 and note). There is an implicit invitation to sexual surrender.

■ **4:16 Let my beloved come to his garden.** The girl unlocks the "garden" of her virginity to her beloved (v. 12 note).

■ **5:1 I have come to my garden.** The lover accepts his beloved's invitation.

my sister, my spouse. The girl's inaccessibility has finally been overcome (4:8 note).

Eat . . . Drink . . . O beloved ones. The speakers are not specified, but they echo the language used by the shepherd in the previous two lines ("I have eaten . . . I have drunk"). Eating and drinking are often figurative for lovemaking. The girl dreams of the time when her relationship with her beloved will not only be consummated, but have the approval of family and friends.

■ **5:2 sleep . . . awake.** See notes on 3:1 and 3:2–4.

3 [3]*dirty*
4 [4]*opening*
6 [f]Song 3:1 [5]Lit. *soul*
7 [g]Song 3:3
9 [h]Song 1:8; 6:1 [6]*adjure*
10 [7]*Distinguished*
12 [i]Song 1:15; 4:1 [8]*sitting in a setting*

3 I have taken off my robe;
How can I put it on *again?*
I have washed my feet;
How can I [3]defile them?
4 My beloved put his hand
By the [4]latch *of the door,*
And my heart yearned for him.
5 I arose to open for my beloved,
And my hands dripped *with* myrrh,
My fingers with liquid myrrh,
On the handles of the lock.

6 I opened for my beloved,
But my beloved had turned away *and* was gone.
My [5]heart leaped up when he spoke.
[f]I sought him, but I could not find him;
I called him, but he gave me no answer.
7 [g]The watchmen who went about the city found me.
They struck me, they wounded me;
The keepers of the walls
Took my veil away from me.
8 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
If you find my beloved,
That you tell him I *am* lovesick!

THE DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM

9 What *is* your beloved
More than *another* beloved,
[h]O fairest among women?
What *is* your beloved
More than *another* beloved,
That you so [6]charge us?

THE SHULAMITE

10 My beloved *is* white and ruddy,
[7]Chief among ten thousand.
11 His head *is like* the finest gold;
His locks *are* wavy,
And black as a raven.
12 [i]His eyes *are* like doves
By the rivers of waters,
Washed with milk,
And [8]fitly set.
13 His cheeks *are* like a bed of spices,
Banks of scented herbs.
His lips *are* lilies,
Dripping liquid myrrh.

■ **5:5 liquid myrrh.** Myrrh in its virgin, liquid state, exactly as it flows from the tree, was a rare and precious substance (cf. Ex. 30:23). It is not clear from the Hebrew whether the girl has applied it liberally to herself before going to the door, or whether her disappointed lover has left it on the door latch as a token of his love. The repetition of the exact expression in v. 13 marginally favors the latter.

■ **5:6 my beloved had turned away.** At this point the dream becomes a nightmare as the girl's fears rise up to confront her. First is the fear of losing her lover.

■ **5:7 struck me . . . wounded me . . . Took my veil away.** The nightmare continues, as the girl now dreams of being attacked (v. 6 note). The bride-to-be both longs for and fears love, and the dream combines these longings and fears.

■ **5:10–16** In response to an implied devaluation of her beloved by the daughters of Jerusalem (v. 9), the girl praises him in elaborate terms. The situation parallels 1:5, 6, where the girl responds to an implied criticism of her own complexion by the same group of women.

■ **5:12 His eyes are like doves.** The compliment of 1:15 and 4:1 is returned (1:15 note). The contrast with "locks . . . black as a raven" in the previous line is striking. Her description suggests that her beloved displays both strength and gentleness.

Washed with milk. This image probably refers to the whites of the eyes. The description of the eyes in this verse is an example of mixed metaphor.

■ **5:13 Dripping liquid myrrh.** Lit. "dripping flowing myrrh." See note on v. 5.

14 His hands *are* rods of gold
Set with beryl.
His body *is* carved ivory
Inlaid *with* sapphires.
15 His legs *are* pillars of marble
Set on bases of fine gold.
His countenance *is* like Lebanon,
Excellent as the cedars.
16 His mouth *is* most sweet,
Yes, he *is* altogether lovely.
This *is* my beloved,
And this *is* my friend,
O daughters of Jerusalem!

THE DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM

6 Where has your beloved gone,
[a]O fairest among women?
Where has your beloved turned aside,
That we may seek him with you?

THE SHULAMITE

2 My beloved has gone to his [b]garden,
To the beds of spices,
To feed *his flock* in the gardens,
And to gather lilies.
3 [c]I *am* my beloved's,
And my beloved *is* mine.
He feeds *his flock* among the lilies.

Praise of the Shulamite's Beauty

THE BELOVED

4 O my love, you *are as* beautiful as Tirzah,
Lovely as Jerusalem,
Awesome as *an army* with banners!
5 Turn your eyes away from me,
For they have [1]overcome me.
Your hair *is* [d]like a flock of goats
Going down from Gilead.
6 [e]Your teeth *are* like a flock of sheep
Which have come up from the washing;
Every one bears twins,
And none *is* [2]barren among them.
7 [f]Like a piece of pomegranate
Are your temples behind your veil.

CHAPTER 6

1 [a]Song 1:8; 5:9
2 [b]Song 4:16; 5:1
3 [c]Song 2:16; 7:10
5 [d]Song 4:1
[1]*overwhelmed*
6 [e]Song 4:2
[2]*bereaved*
7 [f]Song 4:3

■ **5:14 beryl.** The exact stone referred to cannot be determined. In Ex. 28:20 the same type of stone is set in gold on the breast piece worn by the high priest.

■ **5:16 my beloved . . . my friend.** The relationship between man and woman in the Song is broader than lovemaking, although that is central to it. It involves companionship as well.

■ **6:1 seek him.** The girl's spirited praise of her lover seems to have convinced the daughters of Jerusalem that he is worth looking for (cf. 5:9). But whether they want to find him for their friend's sake or for their own is not clear.

■ **6:2, 3** The language of these two verses is taken from two earlier passages dealing with imagined encounters between the girl and her beloved, 5:1 and 2:16. Most likely because she suspects their motives (v. 1 note), the girl has in effect rejected the offer of the daughters of Jerusalem to help her search for her beloved, and has returned to musing about her times of intimacy with him.

■ **6:4 Tirzah.** This city six miles northeast of Shechem in central Palestine is in a setting of great natural beauty. It was the capital of the breakaway northern kingdom for approximately fifty years following Solomon's death. It continued to be a place of political intrigue until it was destroyed in the seventh century B.C. (1 Kin. 14:17; 15:21; 16:8–18; 2 Kin. 15:14–16). The positive reference to Tirzah here, particularly in parallel with Jerusalem, supports the traditional view that the Song originated in the time of Solomon, before hostility between the northern and southern tribes led to the division into two separate kingdoms.

■ **6:5 Gilead.** See note on 4:1.

8 [g]Song 1:3
9 [h]Song 2:14; 5:2
10 [i]Song 6:4
11 [j]Song 7:12
12 [3]Heb. *Ammi Nadib*
13 [4]Heb. *Mahanaim*

CHAPTER 7

1 [a]Ps. 45:13

8 There are sixty queens
And eighty concubines,
And [g]virgins without number.
9 My dove, my [h]perfect one,
Is the only one,
The only one of her mother,
The favorite of the one who bore her.
The daughters saw her
And called her blessed,
The queens and the concubines,
And they praised her.

10 Who is she who looks forth as the morning,
Fair as the moon,
Clear as the sun,
[i]Awesome as *an army* with banners?

THE SHULAMITE

11 I went down to the garden of nuts
To see the verdure of the valley,
[j]To see whether the vine had budded
And the pomegranates had bloomed.
12 Before I was even aware,
My soul had made me
As the chariots of [3]my noble people.

THE BELOVED AND HIS FRIENDS

13 Return, return, O Shulamite;
Return, return, that we may look upon you!

THE SHULAMITE

What would you see in the Shulamite—
As it were, the dance of [4]the two camps?

Expressions of Praise

THE BELOVED

7 How beautiful are your feet in sandals,
[a]O prince's daughter!
The curves of your thighs *are* like jewels,

■ **6:8, 9** The two references to queens and concubines indicate that vv. 8 and 9 belong together. In her beloved's eyes the girl is more beautiful than all the women of Solomon's harem (8:11, 12 and notes).

■ **6:8 sixty . . . eighty.** At its peak Solomon's harem contained many more wives and concubines than this (1 Kin. 11:13), and there is already a suggestion of its future growth in the expression "virgins without number."

concubines. A concubine was not an illicit or casual partner, but a wife of secondary status (Gen. 25:6; 36:12; Judg. 20:4).

■ **6:9 My dove, my perfect one.** In her dreams the girl's mind returns again and again to her beloved's terms of endearment (5:2).

The only one of her mother. The close relationship between the daughter and her mother is apparent throughout the book (3:11 note), but there is no sign of possessiveness on the mother's part.

■ **6:10 Who is she.** It is the girl who is praised here, probably by the queens and concubines (v. 9).

morning . . . moon . . . sun. The girl is described almost as a goddess.

Awesome as an army with banners. The phrase is an exact repetition of the last line of v. 4. The praise given here echoes that of the girl's beloved, and rounds off the unit (vv. 4–10).

■ **6:12** The Hebrew of this verse is difficult. At the least the verse indicates that the girl is still dreaming or daydreaming that she is a princess and her beloved is a prince or king. See note on 3:6–11.

■ **6:13 Return.** The speakers are male, as indicated by the response of the girl here: "what would you (masculine plural) see . . . ?" They are possibly the watchmen of 5:7 from whom she has presumably fled. This identification would explain the suggestions of lust in their call. If so, she is still dreaming. A nightmarish quality returns briefly in this verse, only to be dispelled by the timely appearance of the girl's beloved.

Shulamite. The designation probably refers to the girl's hometown, as a variant spelling of "Shunammite" (1 Kin. 1:3, 15; 2:17–22).

two camps. See text note. Mahanaim is the name of a town east of the Jordan River (Gen. 32:2). The nature of the "dance of the two camps" is unknown, but the words "look" and "see" suggest that the girl's honor would have been compromised by performing it, causing her beloved to intervene as he does.

■ **7:1 prince's daughter.** "Prince" here is the same word translated as "noble" in 6:12. There the girl imagined herself to be a princess; here she imagines her beloved addressing her as such. In everyday life she is a country maiden (1:5, 6).

The work of the hands of a skillful workman.
2 Your navel *is* a rounded goblet;
It lacks no [1]blended beverage.
Your waist *is* a heap of wheat
Set about with lilies.
3 [b]Your two breasts *are* like two fawns,
Twins of a gazelle.
4 [c]Your neck *is* like an ivory tower,
Your eyes *like* the pools in Heshbon
By the gate of Bath Rabbim.
Your nose *is* like the tower of Lebanon
Which looks toward Damascus.
5 Your head *crowns* you like *Mount* Carmel,
And the hair of your head *is* like purple;
A king *is* held captive by *your* tresses.

6 How fair and how pleasant you are,
O love, with your delights!
7 This stature of yours is like a palm tree,
And your breasts *like* its clusters.
8 I said, "I will go up to the palm tree,
I will take hold of its branches."
Let now your breasts be like clusters of the vine,
The fragrance of your [2]breath like apples,
9 And the roof of your mouth like the best wine.

THE SHULAMITE

The wine goes *down* smoothly for my beloved,
[3]Moving gently the [4]lips of sleepers.
10 [d]I *am* my beloved's,
And [e]his desire *is* toward me.

11 Come, my beloved,
Let us go forth to the field;
Let us lodge in the villages.
12 Let us get up early to the vineyards;
Let us [f]see if the vine has budded,
Whether the grape blossoms are open,
And the pomegranates are in bloom.
There I will give you my love.
13 The [g]mandrakes give off a fragrance,
And at our gates [h]*are* pleasant *fruits,*
All manner, new and old,
Which I have laid up for you, my beloved.

2 [1]Lit. *mixed or spiced drink*
3 [b]Song 4:5
4 [c]Song 4:4
8 [2]Lit. *nose*
9 [3]*Gliding over* [4]LXX, Syr., Vg. *lips and teeth.*
10 [d]Song 2:16; 6:3 [e]Ps. 45:11
12 [f]Song 6:11
13 [g]Gen. 30:14 [h]Song 2:3; 4:13, 16; Matt. 13:52

■ **7:4 Heshbon.** This city east of the Jordan River opposite Jerusalem was captured by the Israelites in the time of Moses (Num. 21:25, 26). Excavations have revealed large reservoirs near the city, perhaps the pools mentioned here.

gate of Bath Rabbim. *Bath Rabbim* ("daughter of many") is probably the name of the gate, possibly one of the gates of Heshbon.

tower of Lebanon. The identity of this tower is not known. The great height suggested by "looks toward" or over Damascus has led some to take it as referring to the Lebanon mountains (cf. v. 5).

■ **7:5 like Mount Carmel.** Lit. "like Carmel." There are two places with this name in the Old Testament. One is in the relatively arid south, in the hills west of the Dead Sea (1 Sam. 15:12). The other is the famous mountain where Elijah confronted the prophets of Baal (1 Kin. 18), in the lush north. This is probably the one used here as a favorable comparison. Mount Carmel is on the Mediterranean coast, due west of the Sea of Chinnereth (Galilee).

A king. The man fancies himself a king, enchanted by the beauty of his princess (v. 1; cf. 1:4, 12; 6:12).

■ **7:8 I will go up . . . take hold.** These are images of lovemaking (v. 7; cf. 5:1).

■ **7:9–13** Here as in 4:16 the woman responds to her beloved's wooing with happy surrender.

■ **7:13 mandrakes.** This plant has purple flowers and an orange, tomato-like fruit, and was believed to be an aphrodisiac (Gen. 30:14–16).

our gates. The imagined meeting place of the lovers is outdoors (v. 12); "at our gates" simply means "ready at hand." Note the figurative use of "house" in 1:17.

CHAPTER 8

2 [a]Song 3:4 [b]Prov. 9:2

3 [c]Song 2:6

4 [d]Song 2:7; 3:5

5 [e]Song 3:6

6 [f]Is. 49:16; Jer. 22:24; Hag. 2:23 [g]Prov. 6:34, 35 [1]*severe,* lit. *hard* [2]Or *Sheol* [3]Lit. *A flame of YAH,* poetic form of *YHWH, the* LORD

7 [h]Prov. 6:35

8 Oh, that you were like my brother,
Who nursed at my mother's breasts!
If I should find you outside,
I would kiss you;
I would not be despised.
2 I would lead you *and* bring you
Into the [a]house of my mother,
She *who* used to instruct me.
I would cause you to drink of [b]spiced wine,
Of the juice of my pomegranate.

(TO THE DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM)

3 [c]His left hand *is* under my head,
And his right hand embraces me.
4 [d]I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
Do not stir up nor awaken love
Until it pleases.

Love Renewed in Lebanon

A RELATIVE

5 [e]Who *is* this coming up from the wilderness,
Leaning upon her beloved?

I awakened you under the apple tree.
There your mother brought you forth;
There she *who* bore you brought *you* forth.

THE SHULAMITE TO HER BELOVED

6 [f]Set me as a seal upon your heart,
As a seal upon your arm;
For love *is as* strong as death,
[g]Jealousy *as* [1]cruel as [2]the grave;
Its flames *are* flames of fire,
[3]A most vehement flame.

7 Many waters cannot quench love,
Nor can the floods drown it.
[h]If a man would give for love
All the wealth of his house,
It would be utterly despised.

■ **8:1 like my brother.** The key word here is "like." She does not, of course, wish that her lover were actually her brother, but only that she had the freedom to kiss him in public and to go with him anywhere without attracting comment.

■ **8:2 house of my mother.** See note on 3:4.

She who used to instruct me. The Hebrew can also mean "you (the man) would teach me," and the context seems to require this translation. The man would lead the woman in the art of lovemaking.

■ **8:3** This verse is identical to 2:6. In both cases the girl is dreaming of being in her beloved's embrace.

■ **8:4** Occurring for the third and last time, the refrain points to the consummation that is yet to be (2:7; 3:5; Introduction: Characteristics and Themes).

■ **8:5 Who is this coming up from the wilderness.** This clause is an exact repetition of 3:6, where it introduces the wedding segment of the girl's dream (3:6–11 note). Now the dream has given way to reality. The happy pair, married at last, no longer have to conceal their relationship, but can walk in public arm in arm (contrast v. 1 and note).

Leaning upon her beloved. This simple statement captures an intimate and typical pose of man and woman.

I awakened you. That is, "began to woo you." The Hebrew text itself does not make clear whether it is the girl or her beloved who speaks here and in the next three lines. Tradition, as indicated by the vowel marks added later, makes the girl the speaker. The content of the lines suggests that it is the man who is speaking, at least to the end of v. 5. Either way, the passage indicates that the consummation has been reached, and the lovers reminisce about how it all began.

There. Presumably this does not refer to "apple tree" but to her parent's home that they are now approaching. The girl had dreamed about bringing her beloved home (3:4; 8:2); now she does so.

■ **8:6 seal.** This "seal" is a signet made of metal or stone and worn on a necklace over the heart or on an arm band (Gen. 38:18).

strong as death. Love is as strong as the most powerful, negative human experience. This phrase marks the beginning of a short "hymn to love" spoken by the bride.

Jealousy. In parallel with "love" here, "jealousy" is positive zeal, like the jealousy of God (Ex. 20:5; John 2:17). Like God's love, the love being celebrated tolerates no rivals.

vehement flame. Lit. "the flame of Yah," where "Yah" is a shortened form of the divine name *Yahweh.* The use of the expression confirms that there is an implicit comparison with divine love.

THE SHULAMITE'S BROTHERS

8 [i]We have a little sister,
And she has no breasts.
What shall we do for our sister
In the day when she is spoken for?
9 If she *is* a wall,
We will build upon her
A battlement of silver;
And if she *is* a door,
We will enclose her
With boards of cedar.

THE SHULAMITE

10 I *am* a wall,
And my breasts like towers;
Then I became in his eyes
As one who found peace.
11 Solomon had a vineyard at Baal Hamon;
[j]He leased the vineyard to keepers;
Everyone was to bring for its fruit
A thousand silver coins.

(TO SOLOMON)

12 My own vineyard *is* before me.
You, O Solomon, *may have* a thousand,
And those who tend its fruit two hundred.

THE BELOVED

13 You who dwell in the gardens,
The companions listen for your voice—
[k]Let me hear it!

THE SHULAMITE

14 [l]Make[4] haste, my beloved,
And [m]be like a gazelle
Or a young stag
On the mountains of spices.

8 [i]Ezek. 23:33
11 [j]Matt. 21:33
13 [k]Song 2:14
14 [l]Rev. 22:17, 20
[m]Song 2:7, 9, 17
[4]*Hurry,* lit. *Flee*

■ **8:8–10** The climax of the Song has been reached and passed (see Introduction: Characteristics and Themes), but there is still room for a few memories. In this unit, the woman remembers how possessive and protective her brothers were when she was too young to marry (1:6).

■ **8:8 spoken for.** That is, asked for as a prospective bride.

■ **8:9 If she is a wall.** That is, if she is firm in her refusal of the marriage proposal. The brothers' response to this answer will be to "build upon her a battlement of silver"; that is, they will confirm her refusal and honor her for it.

if she is a door. That is, if she accepts the proposal. Then the brothers will "enclose her with boards of cedar"; that is, they will refuse her permission to marry.

■ **8:10 I am a wall, And my breasts like towers.** The girl affirms the strength of her moral integrity, but also her sexual maturity (contrast v. 8).

peace. Complete well-being, the Hebrew *shalom.* By implication, the Song points to the marriage relationship as the place where such fulfillment is to be found.

■ **8:11 a vineyard at Baal Hamon.** Some interpreters have regarded this "vineyard" as a metaphor for Solomon's harem, but the designation of a specific place suggests otherwise. The location of Baal Hamon is unknown.

for its fruit. The keepers would bring what came in from selling the fruit.

■ **8:12** The expression "My own vineyard" suggests that this verse is spoken by the woman. Here as in 1:8 the literal use of "vineyard" is followed by a metaphorical use. The girl's "vineyard" is her body, with its natural, rustic beauty. She is content with this treasure to share with the one she loves. Solomon can keep his wealth.

■ **8:13 companions.** Probably these are wedding guests.

Let me hear it. The bridegroom is eager to be alone with his bride.

■ **8:14 Make haste, my beloved.** The desire is mutual. She invites him to come with her in language reminiscent of the lovemaking of her dreams (2:8, 9; 4:6).

Introduction to the

PROPHETS

The idea of prophecy is introduced in the Old Testament by the relationship between Moses and Aaron. Since Moses declined to speak on his own, Aaron was appointed by God to serve as Moses' "spokesman" (Ex. 4:12–16); Aaron would act as Moses' "mouth" to speak for him. Aaron's role is later described as being Moses' "prophet" (Ex. 7:1, 2). Likewise, the prophet of God is one who transmits the words of God. While God is not unable to speak—as the burning bush, the bringing of the Law, and the still small voice heard by Elijah show—His choice is to speak His words to His people through the voice of human beings, who are His agents of revelation.

According to Heb. 1:1, the revelation of the Old Testament period was given in "various ways." The phenomena of Old Testament prophecy illustrate this point. There are visions, trances, enigmatic actions, inner compulsion, signs, and wonders. It is difficult to summarize these aspects of an institution that covered many times and situations, although it should be observed that the message of prophecy is in the words of the prophets, and their actions can hardly be interpreted on their own. Old Testament prophecy is not dark or chaotic, and does not lead people into selfish, occult, and self-destructive paths. As God's voice, the prophets exhorted, threatened, and encouraged the public. To the continual sin of the human heart they opposed the contrary word of God.

The history of Old Testament prophecy is generally divided into three main periods. The prophets who ministered during the early years of the monarchy in Israel and Judah are known to us only from what is recorded about them in the historical books. Such important prophets in Israel's history as Samuel, Nathan, Elijah, and Elisha belong to this "preclassical" period of Israelite prophecy. Since they did not write down their prophecies in separate books, these prophets are often better remembered for what they did than for what they said. The "classical" period of Israelite prophecy in the eighth and seventh centuries B.C. saw the first collections of written oracles. The prophets during this period appear to cluster around two great crises: the fall of Israel to the Assyrians (Amos and Hosea in Israel, Isaiah and Micah in Judah), and the fall of Judah to the Babylonians (Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Jeremiah). Finally, the "exilic and postexilic" prophets spoke God's word to the people during the dark years of the Babylonian exile (Ezekiel and Daniel) and the period of Judah's restoration in Palestine (Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi).

The content of the Protestant canon of Scripture indicates that the prophetic ministry as the precursor of the kingdom of God fell into silence between Malachi and John the Baptist. Malachi predicted that the Messiah would be preceded by a reappearance of Elijah (Mal. 4:5, 6). Elijah was not reincarnated, but his authority was heard again in John the Baptist. The character and message of John the Baptist form a kind of summary description of his prophetic predecessors. John was a person separated from society, but whose message could compel them to listen. He appeared before kings and suffered persecution from them. His message called people to change their ways and return to God. He predicted the coming and the greatness of Jesus Christ. In all these ways he resembles the Old Testament prophets.

Just as John the Baptist had disciples (Luke 7:19; John 1:35–37; cf. Acts 19:1–5), so the Old Testament prophets were assisted by servants (1 Kin. 19:19–21; 2 Kin. 5:20) and accompanied by prophetic guilds known as "the sons of the prophets" (2 Kin. 2:3–7, 15; 4:38; 6:1–3; cf. 1 Sam. 10:10–12). Based on the evidence of Baruch's relationship with Jeremiah (Jer. 36:4, 14–18, 32), it seems that these prophetic guilds played an important part in writing down the oracles delivered by the prophets and preserving the books that bear their names. A noticeable feature of the prophetic books is that they often bring short passages together whose only connection is that they came from the same prophet. There is little narrative or connective writing, and the original historical reference may be impossible to recover.

The prophetic books were originally written on separate scrolls, long before the production of long books in one physical unit was possible. Not surprisingly, then, the order of the prophetic books in the finished canon of Scripture shows some variation. The Old Testament received by the Protestant churches is identical in content with the Hebrew Bible, despite the differences in the order of the books. In general, like the New Testament books, the order of the prophetic books is a compromise of overlapping considerations of length, date, and authorship. Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, self-evidently "major prophets," are arranged chronologically at the head of the collection. The relatively short books of the twelve "minor prophets" (counted together as one book in the Hebrew Bible) then follow in roughly chronological order. In the Hebrew Bible, Lamentations and Daniel (the last of the "major prophets" in the Protestant canon) are included in "the Writings," with Job, Psalms, and other books, notably Ezra and Nehemiah, which deal with the same period of history.

The words of the prophets are the message of God to the people of God. Although they contain a wide range of subjects and styles, there are some recurrent themes that are useful to review.

1. The figure of marriage often occurs, as the Lord impresses on His people the closeness of His relationship with them and its foundation in His solemn commitment to them (Ezek. 16:8–14; Hos. 2:14–20).

2. The covenant lawsuit (Hebrew *rib*) is a form in which God brings against the people the complaint that

they have broken their covenant with Him (Hos. 12:3; Mic. 6:1–3). The features of a courtroom, such as witnesses and a formal accusation, identify this form. Often the prophets indicted the rich, the powerful, and the religious elite for oppressing the poor. The prophets criticized the nation as a whole with the charge that there was no "knowledge of God in the land" (Hos. 4:1). The people knew *about* God, but they had not maintained a faithful and trusting relationship with Him.

3. The oracles against the nations are speeches denouncing the enemies of God's people and condemning anyone who commits the sins described (Jer. 46—51; Ezek. 25—32). Israel is not always held up as more righteous than its neighbors.

4. The moral teaching of the prophets includes decisive pronouncements that defy the will of sinners. The prophets condemn dishonesty, cruelty, pride, and sensuality. They denounce false religion, but also the distortion of true religion, especially any ritual that conceals an empty heart.

5. The tension between true and false prophecy can emerge in conflicts between God's prophets and either the prophets of false gods (the prophets of Baal, 1 Kin. 18:22) or prophets who claim falsely to speak in God's name (Hananiah, Jer. 28). The proof that a prophet comes from God and is not an impostor follows from the prophetic commission to transmit the divine word (Deut. 18:20–22). The prophecies must be true, including prophecies that foretell future events. The life of a prophet must be agreeable to God's word. Finally, the prophet's message must be consistent with the character and teaching of God.

6. Many prophecies refer to the Messiah. In the course of His life on earth, Jesus fulfilled numerous predictions. Together these prophecies are a persuasive witness to the unique status of Jesus, the focus of the prophetic word. The New Testament says that "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev. 19:10), and that "all the promises of God" are "Yes" and "Amen" in Him (2 Cor. 1:20).

The prophets often write in poetry. This, together with their reference to historical situations long past, can make translating and interpreting their words extremely difficult. Consequently, it is necessary to give particular attention to the original context of the prophecy to provide the right foundation for hearing its enduring message. The prophets brought instruction and rebuke to people at all levels of society, denouncing every kind of sin. Religiously, they are "ethical monotheists"; socially, they are the unquenchable conscience of the just; spiritually, they are the precursors of the kingdom of God, announcing Jesus Christ to the world.

The distinctive ministry of the Old Testament prophets ended with the coming of Jesus as the last and greatest Prophet, as He Himself suggests (Luke 7:24–28). All the prophets before Him pointed to Him; when He was present, the future orientation of prophecy had to undergo a permanent change. At the Day of Pentecost, all the Lord's people received the Spirit (Acts 2:17; cf. Num. 11:29), and the gift of prophecy continued with the "prophets" of the early church (Acts 21:10, 11; Rom. 12:6; 1 Tim. 4:14; Rev. 1:3). Their new authority and inspiration should be distinguished from that of the Old Testament prophets.

The ministry of the Word was committed to the apostles, and then to the church founded on their testimony. The gospel is no longer proclaimed in the "various ways" that characterized the Old Testament prophets (Heb. 1:1). Yet the prophets of ancient Israel are the common property of the church of all ages, and after the passing of centuries, continue to be God's voice to His people. □

The Book of

ISAIAH

Author Isaiah was an aristocrat by birth, well-educated, and by calling a preacher of God's oracles. He was God's appointed instrument in Jerusalem.

Isaiah was married, and two of his children are named in the book: Shear-Jashub and Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz (7:3; 8:3). According to tradition, Isaiah was martyred by being sawn in two (cf. Heb. 11:37).

Date and Occasion Isaiah ministered for a period of more than forty years, from 740 until after 701 B.C. The opening sentence of Isaiah names the kings who ruled in Judah during that time: Uzziah (died 740 B.C.), Jotham (750–731 B.C.), Ahaz (735–715 B.C.), and Hezekiah (729–686 B.C.). It was an era of great political turmoil due to Assyrian imperialism.

In Jotham's reign there was a war between Judah and the united kingdoms of Israel and Syria (the Syro-Ephraimite crisis of 734–732 B.C.; Isaiah 7—9). In this war Ahaz, the King of Judah, was opposed by a coalition of forces from Pekah, King of Israel, and Rezin, King of Aram or Syria. Ahaz responded with fear and unbelief. He refused God's sign (7:10) and tried to find a political solution.

During the reign of Hezekiah, Judah and several other nations fought against Assyria under Sennacherib (705–681 B.C.). Sennacherib's response was to devastate the countryside of Judah and lay siege to Jerusalem itself. But unlike Ahaz, Hezekiah trusted in the Lord. He poured out his burden before God in prayer and trusted God's word through Isaiah (37:14–35).

During the second half of the eighth century the prophet railed against the leaders for their hypocrisy (1:10–15), greed (5:8), self-indulgence (5:11), and cynicism (5:19). With these sins they were bringing the nation to moral ruin. God raised up Isaiah to announce their fate (6:11–13). As Isaiah predicted, Israel was exiled in 722 B.C., and Hezekiah barely escaped the Assyrian destruction (36:1—37:37).

The exile of Israel in Babylon is the context of Isaiah's ministry of encouragement to the afflicted. In a brilliant series of wide-ranging, yet specific prophecies, Isaiah predicts the fall of pagan Babylon (46:1—47:15) and the salvation of Israel's remnant. He names Cyrus, the Persian, as God's anointed agent to restore the remnant to the land more than a century before he came to power (44:24—45:13). He urges the remnant to flee from Babylon (48:20, 21). He challenges the people to renew their loyalty to the Lord when they return to the land (56:1–8) and to avoid falling back into acts of treachery (57:3–13).

Beyond this immediate salvation Isaiah predicted the coming of a Servant and Savior much greater than Cyrus. This anonymous Servant would bring justice to the nations (42:1–4), establish Israel in a new covenant with the Lord (42:5–7), become a light to the Gentiles (49:1–7), and take away the sins of His people (52:13—53:12). The Servant would suffer willingly to achieve these victories, and God would reward and vindicate Him (50:4–11). The New Testament identifies the Servant as Jesus Christ, the incarnate Lord.

Interpretive Difficulties For over two centuries scholars have disputed the unity of Isaiah. They have raised historical, philosophical, and linguistic issues to argue that the book is the result of a complex transmission through many hands. Briefly, they divide the book into three sections, assigning these to Isaiah of Jerusalem (chs. 1—39); to a prophet of the time of the Exile (second, or "Deutero-Isaiah," chs. 40—55); and to a post-exilic prophet (the "Third Isaiah," chs. 56—66).

Variations in language between the proposed divisions of the book may be due to differences in subject matter, changed perspectives, or the prophet's personal growth. The similarities among the three sections have led many critics to conclude that a final hand unified the work. These unifying features include the repetition of theological themes (Zion, the advent of God, the Davidic representative, and the outworking of the Lord's sovereign plan), the names for God ("the Holy One of Israel," 1:4 and note), and the unified message of judgment and salvation. Conservative scholars defend the traditional understanding that the book is all the work of one prophet, Isaiah. The book was published under his name (1:1), and he is frequently mentioned in it (2:1; 7:3; 13:1; etc.).

Other books of the Old Testament that have multiple authors, such as Psalms and Proverbs, name them. Nothing in what this book says about its own authorship indicates more than one writer. In the New Testament, the apostle John attributes prophecies from Is. 6:10 and 53:10, allegedly from "Proto-Isaiah" and "Deutero-Isaiah," simply to Isaiah (John 12:38–41).

Modern critics assume that a prophet addresses only his contemporaries. They argue that since chs. 1—39 are addressed to the nation during the Assyrian invasions (ca. 740–700 B.C.), and chs. 40—55 to the exiles in Babylon (600–539 B.C.), and chs. 56—66 to the community after its return to the land (c. 539–500 B.C.), more than one prophet must have spoken. But prophets often ask one generation to participate by faith in a salvation that lies in the distant future. For example, even though

Israel's prosperity still lay in a remote future, Isaiah commanded the dispirited people to "Enlarge the place of your tent" (54:2).

The Old Testament views the covenant community as a historical unity. Every part of Israel participates in its past and future history. Moses addressed the generation born after their ancestors had entered into covenant with the Lord at Sinai as though they had been there (Deut. 5:3).

The critics assume that miraculous prophecy, such as naming Cyrus more than a century beforehand and predicting the birth of Jesus from the Virgin Mary, is impossible. But the Bible reproves philosophical naturalism. In fact, Isaiah reproaches Ahaz for this kind of unbelief (7:10–13). In chs. 40—55 the Lord validates His sovereign rule over the nations precisely by the powers of His prophets. Pagan prophets were deceived by their idols. They could not meet the Lord's challenge of showing that their past prophecies had been fulfilled, nor could they give any reliable prophecies of what was to come (41:21–29). By contrast, Israel's God fulfilled Isaiah's former prophecies about Assyria. He also predicted the future, mentioning Cyrus by name. Isaiah delivered these supernatural prophecies (41:21–29; 44:24—45:8) to leave unbelievers without excuse (48:3–5). Isaiah's remarkable prophecies about Christ's suffering and death put the case for supernatural prophecy beyond reasonable doubt.

Characteristics and Themes

Isaiah served God in the role of covenant prosecutor. His message consists of charges, condemnation, and judgments, as he declares God's curse on Israel, Judah, and the nations (1:2–31; 13—23; 56; 57; 65). Isaiah's autobiographical account of his call to become a messenger from the Lord's heavenly court is recounted in ch. 6. When Isaiah was summoned to represent the heavenly court in Jerusalem's earthly court, he discovered to his dismay that God was not sending him to save Israel but to harden their impenitent hearts (6:9, 10). Isaiah was to present to the people the Lord's complaint that they were faithless and rebellious (1:2, 3; 31:1–3; 57:3–10). God's people had become like the nations in their pride, sarcasm, and selfishness. They had lost the vision of God's kingdom of righteousness, love, and peace and had tried to establish their own kingdom. The prophet also serves as an advocate. He calls on the godly to seek the Lord, to hope for God's kingdom, to experience God's peace within, and to respond with faith to God's new acts of redemption. The Lord's covenant ends with blessings on Israel, not curses (Deut. 30:1–10). In the end, a godly remnant will survive the judgment.

The first part of the book, chs. 1—35, focuses on God's judgment on Israel by Assyria; the second, chs. 40—66, on the remnant's return from Babylon and their ultimate deliverance in the remote future (see the note on 36:1—39:8 for a bridge between these sections). The second part like the first begins with a vision of the heavenly court. Isaiah overhears God sending messengers to announce that Israel's punishment has been paid for and will come to an end (40:1–8). Isaiah's vision of God's kingdom is great, because it includes the history of redemption from his day until the fullness of redemption. It embraces the exile, the return of the Jews from exile, the mission, ministry, and kingdom of Jesus Christ, the mission and hope of the church, Jesus' present rule over this world, and the restoration of all things in holiness and righteousness.

Isaiah was a master of his language, using a rich vocabulary and imagery. Many of his words and expressions are used nowhere else in the Old Testament. His imagery reveals that he knew the tragedies of war (63:1–6), the injustices of high society (3:1–17), and the disappointments of agriculture (5:1–7).

Isaiah was a gifted preacher. Through his poetic imagination and rhetorical style he exposed the folly of relying on human structures as over against the wisdom of trusting in God's kingdom. Although the ungodly harden themselves against the Lord (6:10), Isaiah's prophetic oracles move the godly to respond with awe and worship of God. □

Outline of Isaiah

I. The Lord Is the Holy One of Israel (chs. 1—12)
   A. Oracles of Judgment and Hope (chs. 1—5)
   B. The Prophetic Call and Revelation of God's Holiness (ch. 6)
   C. Oracles of Judgment and Hope During the War with Israel and Syria (chs. 7—11)
   D. The Hymn of the Redeemed (ch. 12)
II. The Day of the Lord in All Creation (chs. 13—23)
   A. Babylon and Assyria (13:1—14:27)
   B. Philistia (14:28–32)
   C. Moab (chs. 15; 16)

D. Damascus and Ethiopia (chs. 17; 18)
E. Egypt (chs. 19; 20)
F. Babylon (21:1–10)
G. Edom (21:11, 12)
H. Arabia (21:13–17)
I. Jerusalem (ch. 22)
J. Tyre (ch. 23)
III. The Little Apocalypse (chs. 24—27)
A. The Immanence of the Day of the Lord (ch. 24)
B. Joy in Transformation (ch. 25)
C. The Relationship Between God and His People (26:1—27:1)
D. Transformation (27:2–13)
IV. Judgment and Salvation (chs. 28—35)
A. The Kingdoms of This World (chs. 28—33)
B. The Day of Vengeance and Favor (chs. 34; 35)
V. Isaiah and Hezekiah (chs. 36—39)
A. Sennacherib and Jerusalem (chs. 36; 37)
B. Hezekiah's Illness (ch. 38)
C. Hezekiah's Self-confidence and the Future Exile of Judah (ch. 39)
VI. The Glorious Kingdom of God (chs. 40—48)
A. The Proclamation of Restoration (ch. 40)
B. The Lord's Plan of Restoration (ch. 41)
C. The People, Witnesses to the Lord's Redemption (42:1–13)
D. The Restoration of Israel (42:14—44:23)
E. The Lord's Use of Cyrus (44:24—45:25)
F. The Fall of Babylon (chs. 46; 47)
G. An Invitation to Return to the Lord and to Escape His Judgment on Babylon (ch. 48)
VII. The Ministry of Restoration (chs. 49—55)
A. The Servant of God and the Renewal of the Promises (chs. 49; 50)
B. Encouragement to the Godly (51:1—52:12)
C. The Suffering Servant (52:13—53:12)
D. The Renewal of the Covenant (chs. 54; 55)
VIII. Responsibility Toward and Certainty of the Glorious Kingdom (chs. 56—66)
A. The Pursuit of Justice and Promise of God's Presence (chs. 56; 57)
B. Call to Repentance Because of God's Covenant (chs. 58; 59)
C. The Nature of the Glorious Salvation (ch. 60)
D. The Grandeur of the Lord's Favor and the Glory of Zion (61:1—63:6)
E. The Prayer for the Lord's Deliverance (63:7—64:12)
F. The Benefits of God's Salvation and the Severity of His Judgment (chs. 65; 66)

CHAPTER 1

1 [a]Num. 12:6 [b]2 Chr. 26—32

2 [c]Jer. 2:12

THE [a]vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the [b]days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, *and* Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

The Wickedness of Judah

2 [c]Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth!
For the LORD has spoken:

■ **1:1 vision . . . Isaiah.** The superscription refers to the entire Book of Isaiah. "Vision" means that the book is a revelation from God.

Isaiah. "The Lord saves" (8:18).

kings of Judah. See Introduction: Date and Occasion.

■ **1:2 heavens . . . earth.** The whole of creation will bear witness against Israel that the Lord had warned them they would be judged if they broke their covenant with Him (Deut. 30:19; 32:1).

LORD. This name signifies the personal revelation of God to Israel and His solemn promise to be their God (Ex. 3:15).

children. They were children by creation, by election, and by covenant (45:11; 49:7; 64:8; Deut. 32:6, 18; Mal. 2:10).

rebelled. Rebellion is willful transgression against the Lord's sovereign and gracious rule (1:28; 43:27; 48:8; 59:13).

"I have nourished and brought up children,
And they have rebelled against Me;
3 [d]The ox knows its owner
And the donkey its master's [1]crib;
But Israel [e]does not know,
My people do not [2]consider."

4 Alas, sinful nation,
A people [3]laden with iniquity,
[f]A [4]brood of evildoers,
Children who are corrupters!
They have forsaken the LORD,
They have provoked to anger
The Holy One of Israel,
They have turned away backward.

5 [g]Why should you be stricken again?
You will revolt more and more.
The whole head is sick,
And the whole heart faints.
6 From the sole of the foot even to the head,
There is no soundness in it,
But wounds and bruises and putrefying sores;
They have not been closed or bound up,
Or soothed with ointment.

7 [h]Your country *is* desolate,
Your cities *are* burned with fire;
Strangers devour your land in your presence;
And *it is* desolate, as overthrown by strangers.
8 So the daughter of Zion is left [i]as a [5]booth in a vineyard,
As a hut in a garden of cucumbers,
[j]As a besieged city.
9 [k]Unless the LORD of hosts
Had left to us a very small remnant,
We would have become like [l]Sodom,
We would have been made like Gomorrah.

10 Hear the word of the LORD,
You rulers [m]of Sodom;
Give ear to the law of our God,
You people of Gomorrah:

3 [d]Jer. 8:7 [e]Jer. 9:3, 6 [1]*manger* or *feed trough* [2]*understand*
4 [f]Is. 57:3, 4; Matt. 3:7 [3]Lit. *heavy, weighed down* [4]*offspring, seed*
5 [g]Jer. 5:3
7 [h]Deut. 28:51, 52; 2 Chr. 36:19
8 [i]Job 27:18 [j]Jer. 4:17 [5]*shelter*
9 [k]2 Kin. 25:11, 22; Lam. 3:22 [l]Gen. 19:24; Rom. 9:29
10 [m]Deut. 32:32

■ **1:4 Alas.** This is an emphatic particle used in contexts of lament (1:4), but more often in threats ("woe," 3:9, 11; 5:11, 18, 20, 21). The staccato lament decries the folly and evil of God's children.

The Holy One of Israel. With his special designation for the Lord, Isaiah calls attention to the unique and awe-inspiring splendor of the Lord. The phrase occurs twenty-six times in Isaiah (e.g., 5:19, 24; 41:14, 16, 20; 60:9, 14). See also "the Holy One of Jacob" (29:23), "Holy One" (10:17; 40:25), and "your Holy One" (43:15).

■ **1:5 Why.** Further preaching only hardens impenitent sinners.

■ **1:5, 6 stricken . . . sores.** The people were unable to recover from God's chastisement. The imagery of the suffering nation has its counterpart in the suffering of God's Servant (53:4, 5), who endured the judgment of God in His own body vicariously (that is, as a substitute for others).

■ **1:8 daughter of Zion.** This Hebrew idiom is a personification of Jerusalem. Zion was the hill captured by David (2 Sam. 5:7), but the term often stands for all of Jerusalem or even all of Judah and Israel.

booth. A temporary shelter (text note) used by watchmen during harvest. See 4:6 note.

■ **1:9 LORD of hosts.** This designation of God presents Him as a divine warrior (13:4; 30:27; 40:10; 42:13, 25; 59:17; 66:15, 16), the commander over all troops whether in heaven or on earth. Israel's survival ultimately is not due to the enemy's weakness, but to God's sovereign power.

remnant. The Lord will not overturn His promise. Even in the midst of judgment He will preserve a remnant. Paul quotes this verse in Rom. 9:29, presenting the idea of a remnant taken out of a larger group as an expression of the electing grace of God. In Rom. 9:27 he quotes from Isaiah's teaching about the remnant at 10:20–23. See also Is. 4:3; 7:3 and note; 11:11, 12, 16; 28:5; 37:31, 32; 46:3.

Sodom . . . Gomorrah. God's people have become like the wicked inhabitants of Canaan, whose cities were destroyed (1:10; Gen. 18:20, 21; 19:24, 25). The fate of Sodom and Gomorrah typifies the terrible judgment of God on the kingdoms of this world (3:9; 13:19; Luke 17:28, 29; 2 Pet. 2:6–10; Jude 7; Rev. 11:8).

11 "To what purpose *is* the multitude of your [n]sacrifices to Me?"
Says the LORD.
"I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams
And the fat of fed cattle.
I do not delight in the blood of bulls,
Or of lambs or goats.

12 "When you come [o]to appear before Me,
Who has required this from your hand,
To trample My courts?
13 Bring no more [p]futile[6] sacrifices;
Incense is an abomination to Me.
The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and [q]the calling of assemblies—
I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting.
14 Your [r]New Moons and your [s]appointed feasts
My soul hates;
They are a trouble to Me,
I am weary of bearing *them.*
15 [t]When you [7]spread out your hands,
I will hide My eyes from you;
[u]Even though you make many prayers,
I will not hear.
Your hands are full of [8]blood.

16 "Wash[v] yourselves, make yourselves clean;
Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes.
[w]Cease to do evil,
17 Learn to do good;
Seek justice,
Rebuke [9]the oppressor;
[1]Defend the fatherless,
Plead for the widow.

18 "Come now, and let us [x]reason together,"
Says the LORD,
"Though your sins are like scarlet,
[y]They shall be as white as snow;
Though they are red like crimson,
They shall be as wool.
19 If you are willing and obedient,
You shall eat the good of the land;
20 But if you refuse and rebel,
You shall be devoured by the sword";
[z]For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

The Degenerate City

21 [a]How the faithful city has become a [2]harlot!
It was full of justice;

11 [n][1 Sam. 15:22]
12 [o]Ex. 23:17
13 [p]Matt. 15:9 [q]Joel 1:14 [6]*worthless*
14 [r]Num. 28:11 [s]Lam. 2:6
15 [t]Prov. 1:28 [u]Ps. 66:18; Is. 59:1–3; Mic. 3:4 [7]*Pray* [8]*bloodshed*
16 [v]Jer. 4:14 [w]Rom. 12:9
17 [9]*Some ancient vss. the oppressed* [1]*Vindicate*
18 [x]Is. 43:26; Mic. 6:2 [y]Ps. 51:7; [Is. 43:25]; Rev. 7:14
20 [z]Is. 40:5; 58:14; Mic. 4:4; [Titus 1:2]
21 [a]Is. 57:3–9; Jer. 2:20 [2]*Unfaithful*

■ **1:11 sacrifices.** These were the central visible observances of Old Testament religion. Although God had ordered them to be performed, they were of no value without obedience from the heart (vv. 16, 17; 1 Sam. 15:22, 23; Ps. 51:16, 17; Mic. 6:6–8; Matt. 23:23).

do not delight. The Lord's distaste for sacrifices offered by those who do evil (v. 16) is expressed with increasing sharpness: "I cannot endure" (v. 13); "My soul hates" (v. 14).

■ **1:16–18 the fatherless . . . the widow.** Concern for the needy is a practical demonstration of true godliness (v. 23; 58:7; Ps. 9:18 note; Jer. 22:16; James 1:27).

■ **1:18 scarlet.** The color depicts hands "full of blood" (v. 15).

white as snow. God can take away the stain of sin without compromising His righteousness because Jesus Christ bore God's punishment for sinners (53:4–6; Rom. 3:21–26).

■ **1:19, 20** The gospel is a two-edged sword: eternal life (v. 19) or eternal death (v. 20; 66:24).

■ **1:21 faithful.** Godliness is demonstrated by perseverance, stability, and consistency in doing God's will. Through the purifying process, the Lord will renew a remnant who will again constitute a "faithful city" (v. 26), because He is faithful (49:7; 55:3).

harlot. A "harlot" in religion is an idolater, someone who has forsaken God to serve idols (Jer. 2:20; 3:1; Hos. 2:2; 3:1; Ezek. 16:23–30). The

Righteousness lodged in it,
But now [b]murderers.
22 [c]Your silver has become dross,
Your wine mixed with water.
23 [d]Your princes *are* rebellious,
And [e]companions of thieves;
[f]Everyone loves bribes,
And follows after rewards.
They [g]do not defend the fatherless,
Nor does the cause of the widow come before them.
24 Therefore the Lord says,
The LORD of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel,
"Ah, [h]I will [3]rid Myself of My adversaries,
And [4]take vengeance on My enemies.
25 I will turn My hand against you,
And [i]thoroughly[5] purge away your dross,
And take away all your alloy.
26 I will restore your judges [j]as at the first,
And your counselors as at the beginning.
Afterward [k]you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city."
27 Zion shall be redeemed with justice,
And her [6]penitents with righteousness.
28 The [l]destruction of transgressors and of sinners *shall be* together,
And those who forsake the LORD shall be consumed.
29 For [7]they shall be ashamed of the [8]terebinth trees
Which you have desired;
And you shall be embarrassed because of the gardens
Which you have chosen.
30 For you shall be as a terebinth whose leaf fades,
And as a garden that has no water.
31 [m]The strong shall be as tinder,
And the work of it as a spark;
Both will burn together,
And no one shall [n]quench *them.*

The Future House of God

2 The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

2 Now [a]it shall come to pass [b]in the latter days
[c]*That* the mountain of the LORD's house

21 [b]Mic. 3:1–3

22 [c]Jer. 6:28

23 [d]Hos. 9:15 [e]Prov. 29:24 [f]Jer. 22:17 [g]Is. 10:2; Jer. 5:28; Ezek. 22:7; Zech. 7:10

24 [h]Deut. 28:63 [3]*be relieved of* [4]*avenge Myself*

25 [i]Is. 48:10; Ezek. 22:19–22; Mal. 3:3 [5]*refine with lye*

26 [j]Jer. 33:7–11 [k]Is. 33:5; Zech. 8:3

27 [6]Lit. *returners*

28 [l]Job 31:3; Ps. 9:5; [Is. 66:24; 2 Thess. 1:8, 9]

29 [7]So with MT, LXX, Vg.; some Heb. mss., Tg. *you* [8]Sites of pagan worship

31 [m]Ezek. 32:21 [n]Is. 66:24; Matt. 3:12; Mark 9:43

CHAPTER 2

2 [a]Mic. 4:1 [b]Gen. 49:1 [c]Ps. 68:15

sins listed (vv. 21–23) are all evidence that God's people had forsaken Him.

justice . . . Righteousness. Justice means right relations between people. It is violated by murder, rebellion, stealing, and bribery (vv. 21–23). True justice will defend the cause of orphans and widows as much as the cause of those who can pay bribes and give rewards. The enemies of justice may even pass laws that facilitate their wrongdoing (10:1). Despite all such obstacles, God promises to restore righteousness to the earth (v. 26; 32:1; 33:5, 6; 42:1–4).

■ **1:22 silver . . . wine.** These are figures for Jerusalem's unjust rulers (v. 23).

■ **1:23 bribes.** The practice of bribery is strongly condemned in God's law, since it fosters injustice and discrimination (cf. Is. 5:23; Ex. 23:8; Deut. 16:19).

■ **1:24 the Lord.** That is, the Master, God, the Sovereign, will restore justice by removing His enemies, the unrighteous leaders of Jerusalem.

■ **1:26 as at the first.** The new age will be a restoration, bringing miraculous continuation and renewal to the covenant community. Leadership and people will live in harmony with God's will (24:23; 32:1).

city of righteousness. The new community is composed of men and women who practice righteousness and demonstrate a commitment to God and to other human beings (1:21 note).

■ **1:27 redeemed.** The term means "ransomed," transferred or freed from ownership by another through the payment of a price. The penitent, who turn their backs on idolatry and injustice, find freedom from Satan, sin, and death through the righteousness of Christ imputed to them and applied to their hearts by the Holy Spirit.

■ **1:29 ashamed . . . embarrassed.** What people hold in honor will be exposed as worthless. Sinners will see how wrong they have been when they come to ruin (26:11; 44:9, 11; 65:13; 66:5).

terebinth trees . . . gardens. See text note. These were places of fertility rites and pagan worship that the people had chosen in preference to serving God (65:3 and note; 66:17).

■ **1:30 that has no water.** Drought and fire are metaphors for judgment. Water in Isaiah signifies free, gracious, and bountiful salvation (11:9; 32:2; 41:18; 55:1; 58:11). The absence of water signifies separation from God's blessings (3:1; 50:2).

■ **1:31 burn.** See note on 4:4.

■ **2:2 in the latter days.** This reference to "the latter days" is indefinite and may include a lengthy process of fulfillment, including the reigns of

Shall be established on the top of the mountains,
And shall be exalted above the hills;
And all nations shall flow to it.
3 Many people shall come and say,
[d]"Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
To the house of the God of Jacob;
He will teach us His ways,
And we shall walk in His paths."
[e]For out of Zion shall go forth the law,
And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
4 He shall judge between the nations,
And rebuke many people;
They shall beat their swords into plowshares,
And their spears into pruning [1]hooks;
Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
Neither shall they learn war anymore.

The Day of the LORD

5 O house of Jacob, come and let us [f]walk
In the light of the LORD.

6 For You have forsaken Your people, the house of Jacob,
Because they are filled [g]with eastern ways;
They *are* [h]soothsayers like the Philistines,
[i]And they [2]are pleased with the children of foreigners.
7 [j]Their land is also full of silver and gold,
And there is no end to their treasures;
Their land is also full of horses,
And there is no end to their chariots.
8 [k]Their land is also full of idols;
They worship the work of their own hands,
That which their own fingers have made.
9 People bow down,
And each man humbles himself;
Therefore do not forgive them.

10 [l]Enter into the rock, and hide in the dust,
From the terror of the LORD
And the glory of His majesty.
11 The [3]lofty looks of man shall be [m]humbled,

3 [d]Jer. 50:5; [Zech. 8:21–23; 14:16–21] [e]Luke 24:47
4 [1]*knives*
5 [f]Eph. 5:8
6 [g]Num. 23:7 [h]Deut. 18:14 [i]Ps. 106:35 [2]Or *clap, shake hands to make bargains with the children*
7 [j]Deut. 17:16; Is. 30:16; 31:1; Mic. 5:10
8 [k]Is. 40:19, 20; Jer. 2:28
10 [l]Is. 2:19, 21; Rev. 6:15, 16
11 [m]Prov. 16:5; Is. 5:15 [3]*proud*

Hezekiah and Josiah, the period of restoration after the Exile, the First Advent of our Lord, the present age, and the glorious consummation (Jer. 23:20; 30:24; Ezek. 38:8, 16; Hos. 3:5). The term designates a new epoch that for the prophet lies in the hidden future. The new epoch alters history in every dimension and is the goal toward which events are striving. The apostle Peter relates this time to the new age begun at Pentecost by using the phrase for an introduction to his citation of Joel 2:28–32 (Acts 2:17).

mountain. The prophet spoke of the temple mount as a metaphor for the Lord's kingdom that will be exalted above all other kingdoms (cf. 11:9; 65:25; 66:20). Mount Zion and the temple on it were symbols of heaven and the heavenly sanctuary (Heb. 9:24). These earthly representations have passed away (Heb. 8:13); through the priesthood of the ascended Lord, the church comes directly to the heavenly reality (Heb. 12:22–24).

on the top of the mountains. Pagans worshiped their gods at mountain shrines. Israel's God, who is worshiped on Mount Zion, will establish Himself in the eyes of all races and nations as the only true and living God, even as He is worshiped today.

■ **2:3 let us go.** They encourage one another to worship God from regenerate hearts (John 3:3–8).

out of Zion. The prophet proclaims the new era in which Jews and Gentiles will serve one King (11:10–12; 27:13; 56:3–8; 66:19–23). Zion, or Jerusalem, stands for God's throne (1:8 note).

■ **2:4 swords into plowshares.** Compare Joel 3:10.

■ **2:5 light.** Light stands for God's blessings, presence, and revelation (9:2; 30:26; 42:6, 16; 60:1–3). The Lord is the light in blessing and in judgment (10:17; 60:19, 20; cf. John 1:4; 8:12). People who exchange His light for the darkness of their corrupt minds (5:20; 8:20), will experience His judgment and live in the darkness of separation from God (5:30; 13:10; 59:9; cf. John 3:19, 20).

■ **2:6–9** Isaiah condemns syncretism, the mixture of religions. These verses contrast the light with all the things the people adopted from the nations: magic, greed, warfare, and idolatry.

■ **2:6 eastern ways . . . Philistines.** This refers to the pagan cultures on either side of Judah; Philistia was to the west. The law condemns all forms of magic and divination (Lev. 19:26; Deut. 18:10, 11).

■ **2:7 horses . . . chariots.** They relied on their own strength (30:16; 31:1, 3), rather than on the Lord (Ps. 20:7).

■ **2:10 rock.** At God's judgment people may seek shelter, but no one can hide from Him (Rev. 6:16).

■ **2:11 in that day.** The day of the Lord brings judgment on the godless, but blessing and salvation to the godly (Joel 2:31; Zeph. 1:7;

The haughtiness of men shall be bowed down,
And the LORD alone shall be exalted [n]in that day.

12 For the day of the LORD of hosts
Shall come upon everything proud and lofty,
Upon everything lifted up—
And it shall be brought low—
13 Upon all [o]the cedars of Lebanon *that are* high and lifted up,
And upon all the oaks of Bashan;
14 [p]Upon all the high mountains,
And upon all the hills *that are* lifted up;
15 Upon every high tower,
And upon every fortified wall;
16 [q]Upon all the ships of Tarshish,
And upon all the beautiful sloops.
17 The [4]loftiness of man shall be bowed down,
And the haughtiness of men shall be brought low;
The LORD alone will be exalted in that day,
18 But the idols [5]He shall utterly abolish.

19 They shall go into the [r]holes of the rocks,
And into the caves of the [6]earth,
[s]From the terror of the LORD
And the glory of His majesty,
When He arises [t]to shake the earth mightily.

20 In that day a man will cast away his idols of silver
And his idols of gold,
Which they made, *each* for himself to worship,
To the moles and bats,
21 To go into the clefts of the rocks,
And into the crags of the rugged rocks,
From the terror of the LORD
And the glory of His majesty,
When He arises to shake the earth mightily.

22 [u]Sever[7] yourselves from such a man,
Whose [v]breath *is* in his nostrils;
For [8]of what account is he?

Judgment on Judah and Jerusalem

3 For behold, the Lord, the LORD of hosts,
[a]Takes away from Jerusalem and from Judah
[b]The[1] stock and the store,
The whole supply of bread and the whole supply of water;
2 [c]The mighty man and the man of war,
The judge and the prophet,
And the diviner and the elder;
3 The captain of fifty and the [2]honorable man,
The counselor and the skillful artisan,
And the expert enchanter.

11 [n]Hos. 2:16

13 [o]Is. 14:8; Zech. 11:1, 2

14 [p]Is. 30:25

16 [q]1 Kin. 10:22; Is. 23:1, 14; 60:9

17 [4]*pride*

18 [5]Or *shall utterly vanish*

19 [r]Hos. 10:8; [Rev. 9:6] [s][2 Thess. 1:9] [t]Ps. 18:7; Is. 2:21; 13:13; 24:1, 19, 20; Hag. 2:6, 7; Heb. 12:26 [6]Lit. *dust*

22 [u]Ps. 146:3; Jer. 17:5 [v]Job 27:3 [7]Lit. *Cease yourselves from the man* [8]Lit. *in what is he to be esteemed*

CHAPTER 3

1 [a]2 Kin. 25:3; Is. 5:13; Jer. 37:21 [b]Lev. 26:26 [1]Every support

2 [c]2 Kin. 24:14; Is. 9:14, 15; Ezek. 17:12, 13

3 [2]Eminent looking men

2:13–18). Isaiah's reference encompasses historical events (the fall of Israel, Assyria, Judah) and the coming judgment and salvation (3:7; 7:18–25; 11:10, 11; 24:21; 27:1).

■ **2:13 cedars of Lebanon . . . oaks of Bashan.** These were large, impressive trees with valuable wood (Ezek. 27:5, 6). Like the forests of the American Northwest, they symbolized the permanence and splendor of nature. But even they were subject to God's judgment.

■ **2:16 ships . . . sloops.** These symbolize pride at being first in trade and commerce (23:1, 8).

■ **2:17 in that day.** See 2:11 note.

■ **2:22 man . . . breath.** One must trust God, who gives breath, not those who are dependent on Him.

■ **3:1 bread . . . water.** The chaotic conditions result in lack of food and water. See note on 1:30.

■ **3:2, 3 mighty man . . . enchanter.** The Lord will remove every kind of leader that the people were trusting to secure their society: warriors, sages, magicians, and other prominent people. See 11:2 note.

4 [d]Eccl. 10:16 [3]boys [4]Or capricious ones
5 [5]aged [6]despised, lightly esteemed
6 [7]Lit. hand
8 [e]2 Chr. 36:16, 17; Mic. 3:12
9 [f]Gen. 13:13; Is. 1:10–15
10 [g][Deut. 28:1–14; Eccl. 8:12; Is. 54:17] [h]Ps. 128:2
11 [i][Ps. 11:6; Eccl. 8:12, 13] [8]done to him
12 [j]Is. 9:16 [9]lead you astray
13 [k]Is. 66:16; Hos. 4:1; Mic. 6:2 [l]contend, plead His case
14 [m]Matt. 21:33 [2]burned
15 [n]Mic. 3:2, 3

4 "I will give [d]children[3] *to be* their princes,
And [4]babes shall rule over them.
5 The people will be oppressed,
Every one by another and every one by his neighbor;
The child will be insolent toward the [5]elder,
And the [6]base toward the honorable."

6 When a man takes hold of his brother
In the house of his father, *saying,*
"You have clothing;
You be our ruler,
And *let* these ruins *be* under your [7]power,"
7 In that day he will protest, saying,
"I cannot cure *your* ills,
For in my house *is* neither food nor clothing;
Do not make me a ruler of the people."

8 For [e]Jerusalem stumbled,
And Judah is fallen,
Because their tongue and their doings
Are against the LORD,
To provoke the eyes of His glory.
9 The look on their countenance witnesses against them,
And they declare their sin as [f]Sodom;
They do not hide *it.*
Woe to their soul!
For they have brought evil upon themselves.

10 "Say to the righteous [g]that *it shall be* well *with them,*
[h]For they shall eat the fruit of their doings.
11 Woe to the wicked! [i]*It shall be* ill *with him,*
For the reward of his hands shall be [8]given him.
12 *As for* My people, children *are* their oppressors,
And women rule over them.
O My people! [j]Those who lead you [9]cause *you* to err,
And destroy the way of your paths."

Oppression and Luxury Condemned

13 The LORD stands up [k]to [l]plead,
And stands to judge the people.
14 The LORD will enter into judgment
With the elders of His people
And His princes:
"For you have [2]eaten up [l]the vineyard;
The plunder of the poor *is* in your houses.
15 What do you mean by [m]crushing My people
And grinding the faces of the poor?"
Says the Lord GOD of hosts.

16 Moreover the LORD says:

■ **3:4 children . . . babes.** The nation will be ruled by people without experience and unable to govern wisely.

■ **3:5 every one by his neighbor.** The collapse of civilization comes with social strife: rich against poor, young against old.

■ **3:6 clothing.** In a collapsing society, someone who has as little as a decent suit of clothes will seem prosperous enough to be made a ruler. But when the people try to draft such a person, he will reply that his wealth is only an illusion; he has no better answers than they have.

■ **3:8 Jerusalem . . . Judah.** The fall of Jerusalem (586 B.C.) was a partial fulfillment of this prophecy, as was the devastation caused by Sennacherib's siege of the city in 701 B.C.

■ **3:9 Sodom.** Israel has no sense of shame, defying God and acting as if the covenant did not exist. See 1:9, 10.

■ **3:12 O My people.** See note on 40:1. On the lack of leadership and its consequences, see 3:4–7 and notes.

■ **3:15 crushing My people.** Compare the actions of these rulers with those of the ideal Davidic king in 11:3–5.

■ **3:16 daughters of Zion.** They live to the fullest at the expense of others. The ornaments are meant to impress others, to provide cash in case of an emergency, and to supply magical protection from sudden disaster. This outward adornment reflects an inner attitude of pride (1 Pet. 3:3, 4).

"Because the daughters of Zion are haughty,
And walk with [3]outstretched necks
And [4]wanton eyes,
Walking and [5]mincing *as* they go,
Making a jingling with their feet,
17 Therefore the Lord will strike with [n]a scab
The crown of the head of the daughters of Zion,
And the LORD will [o]uncover their secret parts."

18 In that day the Lord will take away the finery:
The jingling anklets, the [6]scarves, and the [p]crescents;
19 The pendants, the bracelets, and the veils;
20 The headdresses, the leg ornaments, and the headbands;
The perfume boxes, the charms,
21 and the rings;
The nose jewels,
22 the festal apparel, and the mantles;
The outer garments, the purses,
23 and the mirrors;
The fine linen, the turbans, and the robes.

24 And so it shall be:

Instead of a sweet smell there will be a stench;
Instead of a sash, a rope;
Instead of well-set hair, [q]baldness;
Instead of a rich robe, a girding of sackcloth;
And [7]branding instead of beauty.
25 Your men shall fall by the sword,
And your [8]mighty in the war.

26 [r]Her gates shall lament and mourn,
And she *being* desolate [s]shall sit on the ground.

4 And [a]in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying,
"We will [b]eat our own food and wear our own apparel;
Only let us be called by your name,
To take away [c]our reproach."

The Renewal of Zion

2 In that day [d]the Branch of the LORD shall be beautiful and glorious;
And the fruit of the earth *shall be* excellent and appealing
For those of Israel who have escaped.

3 And it shall come to pass that *he who is* left in Zion and remains in Jerusalem [e]will be called holy—everyone who is [f]recorded among the living in Jerusalem. 4 When [g]the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and purged the [I]blood of Jerusalem from her midst, by

16 [3]Head held high [4]*seductive, ogling* [5]*tripping* or *skipping*

17 [n]Deut. 28:27 [o]Jer. 13:22

18 [p]Judg. 8:21, 26 [6]*headbands*

24 [q]Is. 22:12; Ezek. 27:31; Amos 8:10 [7]*burning scar*

25 [8]Lit. *strength*

26 [r]Jer. 14:2; Lam. 1:4 [s]Lam. 2:10

CHAPTER 4

1 [a]Is. 2:11, 17 [b]2 Thess. 3:12 [c]Luke 1:25

2 [d]Is. 12:1–6; [Jer. 23:5]; Zech. 3:8

3 [e]Is. 60:21 [f]Phil. 4:3

4 [g]Mal. 3:2, 3 [I]*bloodshed*

■ **3:24—4:1 stench . . . reproach.** The destitution threatened by the day of the Lord is expressed with words associated with bloodshed, war, and captivity.

■ **3:26 gates.** Jerusalem is personified and joins in the lament.

■ **4:1 in that day.** See note on 2:11.

■ **4:2 Branch.** The term has two possible senses: one is literal, corresponding to the parallel phrase "fruit of the earth," and the other is as a messianic title for Jesus Christ, who yields spiritual fruit (11:1–5; Jer. 23:5; Zech. 3:8; John 15:1–8). The remnant find life in Him (6:13). Because Jesus humbled Himself, He is crowned with glory (52:13; 53:12; Phil. 2:9–11).

glorious. This means displaying the splendor and brightness of God. The glory of God is revealed in all His works, but especially in the Messiah (Ps. 19:1; John 1:18).

those . . . who have escaped. That is, a remnant (1:9 note).

■ **4:3 Zion.** See note on 1:8.

holy. Consecrated to God, the Holy One of Israel (1:4 note; 62:12).

recorded. Their names are written in the "book" of life (Ex. 32:32, 33; Ps. 69:28; Dan. 12:1; Rev. 20:12).

■ **4:4 spirit.** Possibly this is the Holy Spirit, but more likely it refers to the process of purification (cf. 28:6).

burning. This metaphor signifies judgment (1:31; 10:17; 30:27; 42:25). Through the process of refining fire, consuming the faithless and purifying the faithful, God will produce a holy Zion.

the spirit of judgment and by the spirit of burning, 5 then the LORD will create above every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and above her assemblies, [h]a cloud and smoke by day and [i]the shining of a flaming fire by night. For over all the glory there *will be* a [2]covering. 6 And there will be a tabernacle for shade in the daytime from the heat, [j]for a place of refuge, and for a shelter from storm and rain.

God's Disappointing Vineyard

5 Now let me sing to my Well-beloved
A song of my Beloved [a]regarding His vineyard:

My Well-beloved has a vineyard
[1]On a very fruitful hill.
2 He dug it up and cleared out its stones,
And planted it with the choicest vine.
He built a tower in its midst,
And also [2]made a winepress in it;
[b]So He expected *it* to bring forth *good* grapes,
But it brought forth wild grapes.

3 "And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah,
[c]Judge, please, between Me and My vineyard.
4 What more could have been done to My vineyard
That I have not done in [d]it?
Why then, when I expected *it* to bring forth *good* grapes,
Did it bring forth wild grapes?
5 And now, please let Me tell you what I will do to My vineyard:
[e]I will take away its hedge, and it shall be burned;
And break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down.
6 I will lay it [f]waste;
It shall not be pruned or [3]dug,
But there shall come up briers and [g]thorns.
I will also command the clouds
That they rain no rain on it."

7 For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts *is* the house of Israel,
And the men of Judah are His pleasant plant.
He looked for justice, but behold, oppression;
For righteousness, but behold, [4]a cry *for help.*

Impending Judgment on Excesses

8 Woe to those who [5]join [h]house to house;
They add field to field,
Till *there is* no place
Where they may dwell alone in the midst of the land!

5 [h]Ex. 13:21, 22; Num. 9:15–23 [i]Zech. 2:5 [2]*canopy*

6 [j]Ps. 27:5; Is. 25:4

CHAPTER 5

1 [a]Ps. 80:8; Jer. 2:21; Matt. 21:33; Mark 12:1; Luke 20:9 [1]Lit. *In a horn, the son of fatness*

2 [b]Deut. 32:6 [2]Lit. *hewed out*

3 [c][Rom. 3:4]

4 [d]2 Chr. 36:15, 16; Jer. 2:5; 7:25, 26; Mic. 6:3; Matt. 23:37

5 [e]2 Chr. 36:19; Ps. 80:12; 89:40, 41

6 [f]2 Chr. 36:19–21 [g]Is. 7:19–25; Jer. 25:11 [3]*hoed*

7 [4]*wailing*

8 [h]Jer. 22:13–17; Mic. 2:2; Hab. 2:9–12 [5]Accumulate houses

■ **4:5 create.** In the new act of redemption, the Creator of heaven and earth (40:26; 42:5; 45:12, 18) will renew everything for the sake of His people. The glory of the messianic age is given by God, and does not come from human effort or skill (Jon. 2:9; Eph. 2:4–10).

cloud and smoke . . . shining of a flaming fire. Unlike the burning of the fire of judgment in v. 4, this cloud and fire signals God's protective presence, as at the Red Sea (Ex. 13:20–22), over the tabernacle (Ex. 40:34–38), and in the wilderness (Num. 9:15–23). Here His presence covers a restored and sanctified Mount Zion (2:2 note).

■ **4:6 shade.** See note on 30:2.

refuge. In contrast to human deceptions (28:15, 17), the Lord provides effective shelter from the storm (25:4; cf. Ps. 14:6; 46:1; 62:7; 94:22).

■ **5:1–7** The owner and the vineyard stand for God and His people. The song is fulfilled in Jesus Christ, who replaces sour grapes with new fruit (Matt. 21:33–44; John 15:1–6).

■ **5:2 tower . . . good grapes.** These images reinforce the expectation of an abundant harvest.

wild grapes. The Hebrew means "stinking things."

■ **5:5, 6 burned . . . trampled.** God decrees desolation.

briers and thorns. The weeds represent God's curse (7:23–25; 32:13), that is, the anarchy following war (3:4, 5). God can also turn curse into blessing, replacing the briers and thorns with the pine tree and myrtle (55:13).

■ **5:7 LORD of hosts.** See note on 1:9.

■ **5:8** This is the first of six exclamations of woe, proclaiming God's displeasure on greed, drunkenness, and other sins. The first woe condemns greed.

add field to field. The land belonged to God (Lev. 25:23), had been allotted to specific families by patrimony (Num. 33:54), and was the basis of livelihood. Deprived of their land, small farmers in Israel became day laborers or slaves.

9 [i]In my hearing the LORD of hosts *said,*
"Truly, many houses shall be desolate,
Great and beautiful ones, without inhabitant.
10 For ten acres of vineyard shall yield one [j]bath,[6]
And a homer of seed shall yield one [7]ephah."

11 [k]Woe to those who rise early in the morning,
That they may [8]follow intoxicating drink;
Who continue until night, *till* wine inflames them!
12 [l]The harp and the strings,
The tambourine and flute,
And wine are in their feasts;
But [m]they do not regard the work of the LORD,
Nor consider the operation of His hands.

13 [n]Therefore my people have gone into captivity,
Because *they have* no [o]knowledge;
Their honorable men *are* famished,
And their multitude dried up with thirst.
14 Therefore Sheol has enlarged itself
And opened its mouth beyond measure;
Their glory and their multitude and their pomp,
And he who is jubilant, shall descend into it.
15 People shall be brought down,
[p]Each man shall be humbled,
And the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled.
16 But the LORD of hosts shall be [q]exalted in judgment,
And God who is holy shall be hallowed in righteousness.
17 Then the lambs shall feed in their pasture,
And in the waste places of [r]the [9]fat ones strangers shall eat.

18 Woe to those who [t]draw iniquity with cords of [2]vanity,
And sin as if with a cart rope;
19 [s]That say, "Let Him make speed *and* hasten His work,
That we may see *it;*
And let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw near and come,
That we may know *it.*"

20 Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil;
Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness;
Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

21 Woe to *those who are* [t]wise in their own eyes,
And prudent in their own sight!

9 [i]Is. 22:14

10 [j]Ezek. 45:11 [6]1 bath = 1/10 homer [7]1 ephah = 1/10 homer

11 [k]Prov. 23:29, 30; Eccl. 10:16, 17; Is. 5:22 [8]*pursue*

12 [l]Amos 6:5 [m]Job 34:27; Ps. 28:5

13 [n]2 Kin. 24:14–16 [o]Is. 1:3; 27:11; Hos. 4:6

15 [p]Is. 2:9, 11

16 [q]Is. 2:11

17 [r]Is. 10:16 [9]Lit. *fatlings,* rich ones

18 [t]*drag* [2]*emptiness* or *falsehood*

19 [s]Jer. 17:15; Amos 5:18

21 [t]Prov. 3:7; Rom. 1:22; 12:16; [1 Cor. 3:18–20]

■ **5:9 houses.** God's judgment targets the rich in their self-indulgence. Mansions provide no protection from his eye (24:10 note).

■ **5:10 bath . . . homer . . . ephah.** The bath was a liquid measure of about six gallons. For its size, the vineyard would produce practically nothing. Likewise, a homer of seed planted would yield only an ephah of produce. Six bushels of seed would yield about a half bushel at harvest. The land would be cursed (Deut. 28:38, 39).

■ **5:11 wine.** The second woe condemns drunkenness. See note on 24:11. Overindulgence in drink is a characteristic of social corruption and moral laxity (chs. 22, 28; Amos 4:1–3; 6:6, 7).

■ **5:13 my people.** See note on 40:1.

captivity. The exile with all its miseries is threatened as a judgment on the people, who have shown no knowledge of the right way to behave.

■ **5:14 Sheol.** This is the Hebrew word for "the grave," used almost exclusively in poetry. See Prov. 9:18 and notes. Isaiah portrays death as a terrible beast that devours anyone without regard to social class, both the "honorable" and the "multitude" (v. 13).

■ **5:16 righteousness.** See 1:21 note.

■ **5:18** The third woe condemns those who mock God as they sin.

■ **5:19 the Holy One of Israel.** See 1:4 note.

■ **5:20** The fourth woe condemns moral corruption.

darkness . . . light. See notes on 2:5 and 5:30.

■ **5:21** The fifth woe condemns pride and self-righteousness.

wise in their own eyes. This is an expression for irrational, arrogant autonomy. A revelation from God, who alone knows all things, is the only firm foundation for knowledge.

22 Woe to men mighty at drinking wine,
Woe to men valiant for mixing intoxicating drink,
23 Who [u]justify the wicked for a bribe,
And take away justice from the righteous man!

24 Therefore, [v]as the [3]fire devours the stubble,
And the flame consumes the chaff,
So [w]their root will be as rottenness,
And their blossom will ascend like dust;
Because they have rejected the law of the LORD of hosts,
And despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.
25 [x]Therefore the anger of the LORD is aroused against His people;
He has stretched out His hand against them
And stricken them,
And [y]the hills trembled.
Their carcasses *were* as refuse in the midst of the streets.

[z]For all this His anger is not turned away,
But His hand *is* stretched out still.

26 [a]He will lift up a banner to the nations from afar,
And will [b]whistle to them from [c]the end of the earth;
Surely [d]they shall come with speed, swiftly.
27 No one will be weary or stumble among them,
No one will slumber or sleep;
Nor [e]will the belt on their loins be loosed,
Nor the strap of their sandals be broken;
28 [f]Whose arrows *are* sharp,
And all their bows bent;
Their horses' hooves will [4]seem like flint,
And their wheels like a whirlwind.
29 Their roaring *will be* like a lion,
They will roar like young lions;
Yes, they will roar
And lay hold of the prey;
They will carry *it* away safely,
And no one will deliver.
30 In that day they will roar against them
Like the roaring of the sea.
And if *one* [g]looks to the land,
Behold, darkness *and* [5]sorrow;
And the light is darkened by the clouds.

23 [u]Ex. 23:8; Prov. 17:15; Is. 1:23; Mic. 3:11; 7:3
24 [v]Ex. 15:7 [w]Job 18:16 [3]Lit. *tongue of fire*
25 [x]2 Kin. 22:13, 17; Is. 66:15 [y]Ps. 18:7; Is. 64:3; Jer. 4:24; Nah. 1:5 [z]Is. 9:12, 17; Jer. 4:8; Dan. 9:16
26 [a]Is. 11:10, 12 [b]Is. 7:18; Zech. 10:8 [c]Mal. 1:11 [d]Joel 2:7
27 [e]Dan. 5:6
28 [f]Jer. 5:16 [4]Lit. *be regarded as*
30 [g]Is. 8:22; Jer. 4:23–28; Joel 2:10; Luke 21:25, 26 [5]*distress*

■ **5:22** The sixth woe condemns those who pervert justice.

mixing intoxicating drink. This refers to wine and beer with spices added. Once again, as in 5:11, Isaiah speaks of overindulgence.

■ **5:23 bribe.** See note on 1:23. Bribery involves injustice and greed, as in 5:8.

■ **5:24 fire.** See note on "burning" at 4:4.

■ **5:25 the hills trembled.** At the revelation of God's anger, nature quakes (2:19; 13:13; 24:18, 19; Ezek. 32:6–8 note). For a contrasting image of redemption, see 54:10.

streets. See note on 24:11.

His anger is not turned away. God is not reconciled, and His wrath hangs over the disobedient (9:12, 17, 21; 10:4; 31:3).

■ **5:26–30** This description of the Assyrian army closely matches its portrayal on ancient Assyrian reliefs; perhaps the poet had seen such troops with his own eyes.

■ **5:26 banner.** This is a signal flag (11:10, 12; 18:3; 49:22; 62:10). Like a commander in battle, the Lord summons the nations to execute His judgment (10:5).

nations from afar. These would be Syria, Assyria, Babylon, etc. The imperial Assyrian army was composed of mercenaries hired from all over the Assyrian Empire.

■ **5:30 In that day.** See note on 2:11.

darkness. This metaphor for depression, alienation, and judgment (8:22; 42:7; 47:5; 60:2) teaches that all who twist justice by living in darkness (5:20; 29:15) will suffer the darkness of God's judgment. By contrast, the light of God will dawn on the needy (9:2; 29:18; 42:7; 49:9; 58:10; 60:1, 2). The Lord is sovereign over darkness and light (45:7).

sorrow. The Hebrew word means "distress," "narrowness." God delivers His own from such confinement (25:4; 63:9).

Isaiah Called to Be a Prophet

CHAPTER 6

6 In the year that [a]King Uzziah died, I [b]saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His *robe* filled the temple. 2 Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, [c]with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one cried to another and said:

[d]"Holy, holy, holy *is* the LORD of hosts;
[e]The whole earth *is* full of His glory!"

4 And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke.

5 So I said:

"Woe *is* me, for I am [f]undone!
Because I *am* a man of [f]unclean lips,
And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips;
For my eyes have seen the King,
The LORD of hosts."

6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal *which* he had taken with the tongs from [g]the altar. 7 And he [h]touched my mouth *with it,* and said:

"Behold, this has touched your lips;
Your iniquity is taken away,
And your sin [2]purged."

8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying:

"Whom shall I send,
And who will go for [i]Us?"

Then I said, "Here *am* I! Send me."

9 And He said, "Go, and [j]tell this people:

'Keep on hearing, but do not understand;
Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.'

1 [a]2 Kin. 15:7; 2 Chr. 26:23; Is. 1:1 [b]John 12:41; Rev. 4:2, 3; 20:11
2 [c]Ezek. 1:11
3 [d]Rev. 4:8 [e]Num. 14:21; Ps. 72:19
5 [f]Ex. 6:12, 30 [1]*destroyed, cut off*
6 [g]Rev. 8:3
7 [h]Jer. 1:9; Dan. 10:16 [2]*atoned for*
8 [i]Gen. 1:26
9 [j]Is. 43:8; Matt. 13:14; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; John 12:40; Acts 28:26; Rom. 11:8

■ **6:1 Uzziah.** He died in 740 B.C., having suffered from leprosy (2 Chr. 26:16–21).

I saw. Isaiah describes a "theophany," a visible manifestation of God. God's coming is often attended by such phenomena as earthquakes, smoke, fire, and lightning (13:3 note; 29:6; 30:27–31; Ex. 19:18, 19; Ps. 18:7–15; 50:3; 97:2; Mic. 1:3, 4; Nah. 1:3–8; Hab. 3:3–15).

the Lord. *Adonai* in Hebrew, meaning "Sovereign."

throne. The Lord rules heaven and earth from His throne. The choir of seraphim (6:2 note) and the splendor of God's holiness inspired the prophet throughout his ministry.

the temple. In his vision he saw not the temple in Jerusalem, but the heavenly temple (cf. Rev. 4:1–8).

■ **6:2 seraphim.** This is a Hebrew word probably meaning "burning ones" (cf. the fiery serpents in Num. 21:6). Representations of angelic creatures with six wings have been discovered in the Near East by archaeologists.

covered his face. The seraphim have no glory to compare with God's and they cannot look on Him directly.

covered his feet. This may be an indication of modesty.

flew. The seraph does the Sovereign's will. Here it is to praise Him.

■ **6:3 Holy, holy, holy.** A three-fold repetition is the strongest sort of superlative. Nothing is as holy as God. See note on 1:4.

LORD of hosts. See note on 1:9.

whole earth. This announcement explains the cosmic perspective of the prophet. God is King of the world, and His salvation and judgment extend to all nations (11:4, 9, 12; 42:1, 4, 5; 65:17; 66:1; cf. Luke 2:14).

glory. See note on 4:2, "glorious."

■ **6:5 Woe is me.** Isaiah was astonished by the glory of God; like Peter he became afraid (Luke 5:8). He pronounces an oracular curse upon himself.

■ **6:6 altar.** The altar from which the live coal was taken is not described. The stress is on the purification necessary for approaching God. The altar symbolizes purification by blood, and the fire, purification by the Spirit. The blood of Christ and the ministry of the Holy Spirit sanctify believers today.

■ **6:7 my mouth . . . your lips.** The purification makes the prophet acceptable as a minister of God's words (Jer. 1:9).

■ **6:8 who will go for Us.** The Lord invited Isaiah to listen in on the sessions of the royal, heavenly court. From this moment on Isaiah is a servant of God's court and proclaims God's message to kings and people alike (cf. 1 Kin. 22:19, 20; Jer. 23:18, 22).

■ **6:9 Go.** Isaiah's mission is paradoxical in its effect, as is the proclamation of the word of God (Matt. 13:13–15; Rom. 11:7–10, 25). The prophetic word closes the way of God to those who are rebellious, proud and hypocritical (29:13–16; 65:1–7), but opens it to the deaf, the blind, the humble, and the poor (29:18, 19).

10 [k]Ps. 119:70; Mark 6:1–6; Acts 7:51; Rom. 10:1–4 [l]Jer. 5:21

11 [m]Mic. 3:12

12 [n]2 Kin. 25:21; Is. 5:9

13 [o]Deut. 7:6; Ezra 9:2

10 "Make [k]the heart of this people dull,
And their ears heavy,
And shut their eyes;
[l]Lest they see with their eyes,
And hear with their ears,
And understand with their heart,
And return and be healed."

11 Then I said, "Lord, how long?"
And He answered:

[m]"Until the cities are laid waste and without inhabitant,
The houses are without a man,
The land is utterly desolate,
12 [n]The LORD has removed men far away,
And the forsaken places *are* many in the midst of the land.
13 But yet a tenth *will be* in it,
And will return and be for consuming,
As a terebinth tree or as an oak,
Whose stump *remains* when it is cut down.
So [o]the holy seed *shall be* its stump."

CHAPTER 7

1 [a]2 Chr. 28 [b]2 Kin. 16:5, 9 [1]*conquer it*

2 [2]Lit. *settled upon*

3 [3]Lit. *A Remnant Shall Return*

4 [c]Ex. 14:13; Is. 30:15; Lam. 3:26 [4]*Be careful* [5]*be calm*

6 [6]*cause a sickening dread*

7 [d]2 Kin. 16:5; Is. 8:10; Acts 4:25, 26

8 [e]2 Sam. 8:6; 2 Kin. 17:6 [7]Lit. *shattered*

Isaiah Sent to King Ahaz

7 Now it came to pass in the days of [a]Ahaz the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, *that* Rezin king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up to Jerusalem to *make* war against [b]it, but could not [1]prevail against it. 2 And it was told to the house of David, saying, "Syria's forces are [2]deployed in Ephraim." So his heart and the heart of his people were moved as the trees of the woods are moved with the wind.

3 Then the LORD said to Isaiah, "Go out now to meet Ahaz, you and [3]Shear-Jashub your son, at the end of the aqueduct from the upper pool, on the highway to the Fuller's Field, 4 and say to him: [4]"Take heed, and [5]be [c]quiet; do not fear or be fainthearted for these two stubs of smoking firebrands, for the fierce anger of Rezin and Syria, and the son of Remaliah. 5 Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah have plotted evil against you, saying, 6 "Let us go up against Judah and [6]trouble it, and let us make a gap in its wall for ourselves, and set a king over them, the son of Tabel"— 7 thus says the Lord GOD:

[d]"It shall not stand,
Nor shall it come to pass.
8 [e]For the head of Syria *is* Damascus,
And the head of Damascus *is* Rezin.
Within sixty-five years Ephraim will be [7]broken,
So that it will not *be* a people.
9 The head of Ephraim *is* Samaria,
And the head of Samaria *is* Remaliah's son.

■ **6:13 a tenth.** The land will be laid waste, but a remnant will be saved and purified (1:9 note).

stump. The Middle Eastern terebinth and oak trees can produce new shoots even when they appear to have been cut or damaged beyond all hope.

■ **7:1—11:16** These oracles of judgment and hope are associated with the war between Judah and a coalition of Israel and Syria (734–732 B.C.). Ahaz, king of Judah, was seriously threatened by the alliance of Pekah, king of Israel, with Rezin, king of Syria (2 Kin. 16:5–18; 2 Chr. 28:16–21). They threatened to invade Judah if Ahaz would not help them against Assyria.

■ **7:2 the house of David.** This expression means the current head of the house, Ahaz. It recalls the Lord's covenant with David, granting him an eternal offspring and kingdom (2 Sam. 7:12–16). The attempt to replace his dynasty with another ("the son of Tabel," v. 6) cannot succeed because God's promises are at stake.

moved. Ahaz, the proud king, was unable to calm his people. The response of the leader created panic among the people (22:3 note).

■ **7:3 Shear-Jashub.** The name means "a remnant will return" (10:20–22). It is a promise of salvation and life for the faithful beyond the imminent doom of the unfaithful. Judah may suffer, but a remnant will remain.

■ **7:4 two stubs.** Two kingdoms were about to be destroyed: Damascus in 732 B.C. by Tiglath-Pileser III, and Samaria in 722 B.C. by Sargon II.

■ **7:7 Lord GOD.** See note on 25:8. The Lord voids the counsel of kings (8:9, 10; 40:23; Ps. 33:10, 11).

■ **7:8 sixty-five years.** God will fulfill His promises after Ahaz's death (2 Kin. 17:24–41).

■ **7:9 believe . . . be established.** This is a play on different meanings of the same Hebrew word. Faith means knowing God's promise, assenting to it intellectually, and trusting Him to keep it.

[f]If you will not believe,
Surely you shall not be established." ' "

The Immanuel Prophecy

10 Moreover the LORD spoke again to Ahaz, saying, 11 [g]"Ask a sign for yourself from the LORD your God; [g]ask it either in the depth or in the height above."

12 But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, nor will I test the LORD!"

13 Then he said, "Hear now, O house of David! *Is it* a small thing for you to weary men, but will you weary my God also? 14 Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: [h]Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear [i]a Son, and shall call His name [j]Immanuel.[g] 15 Curds and honey He shall eat, that He may know to refuse the evil and choose the good. 16 [k]For before the Child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that you dread will be forsaken by [l]both her kings. 17 [m]The LORD will bring the king of Assyria upon you and your people and your father's house—days that have not come since the day that [n]Ephraim departed from Judah."

18 And it shall come to pass in that day
That the LORD [o]will whistle for the fly
That *is* in the farthest part of the rivers of Egypt,
And for the bee that *is* in the land of Assyria.
19 They will come, and all of them will rest
In the desolate valleys and in [p]the clefts of the rocks,
And on all thorns and in all pastures.

20 In the same day the Lord will shave with a [q]hired [r]razor,
With those from beyond [l]the River, with the king of Assyria,
The head and the hair of the legs,
And will also remove the beard.

21 It shall be in that day
That a man will keep alive a young cow and two sheep;
22 So it shall be, from the abundance of milk they give,
That he will eat curds;
For curds and honey everyone will eat who is left in the land.

9 [f]2 Chr. 20:20; Is. 5:24

11 [g]Matt. 12:38 [g]Lit. *make the request deep or make it high above*

14 [h]Matt. 1:23; Luke 1:31; John 1:45; Rev. 12:5 [i][Is. 9:6] [j]Is. 8:8, 10 [g]Lit. *God-With-Us*

16 [k]Is. 8:4 [l]2 Kin. 15:30

17 [m]2 Chr. 28:19, 20; Is. 8:7, 8; 10:5, 6 [n]1 Kin. 12:16

18 [o]Is. 5:26

19 [p]Is. 2:19; Jer. 16:16

20 [q]Is. 10:5, 15 [r]2 Kin. 16:7; 2 Chr. 28:20 [l]The Euphrates

■ **7:11 a sign.** A sign would authenticate the prophetic message concerning the future.

depth . . . height. Nothing is outside Yahweh's sovereignty (Deut. 10:14; Ps. 139:8; Rom. 8:39).

■ **7:13 house of David.** See note on 7:2.

■ **7:14 virgin.** The Hebrew word occurs seven times in the Old Testament. It means a young woman of marriageable age, normally a virgin (Gen. 24:43). The Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament made about 150 B.C.) translated with a word more specifically meaning "virgin." The New Testament understands Isaiah to be designating the Virgin Mary (Matt. 1:23). See "The Virgin Birth of Jesus" at Luke 1:27.

Immanuel. "God with us." The name conveys God's promise to save, bless, and protect His children. The identity of the virgin and the child has been the subject of considerable discussion. Three major views have been proposed. First, some, especially Jews of the second century A.D., understood the prophecy to mean Ahaz's wife and her child, Hezekiah (2 Kin. 18:2). But as Jerome (c. 400 A.D.) pointed out, Hezekiah was already born. Second, others identify the woman as Isaiah's wife or a woman betrothed to him (8:3). The child is then Isaiah's son, Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz. This interpretation is questionable. The Hebrew term translated "virgin" would not normally be used for a woman who was already a mother (of Shear-Jashub, 7:3). If someone engaged to the prophet is meant, it becomes necessary to assume that his first wife had died. Also, the interpretation requires that the child have contradictory names: "God Is With Us" (Immanuel) and "Speed the Spoil, Hasten the Booty" (Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz). Though not impossible, it seems unlikely. Finally, the child's diet of "curds and honey" suggests that He would grow up after Judah's destruction (v. 15 note). Tradition suggests a third interpretation, identifying the child as the Messiah, a divine personage whose birth is above nature. It equates the Child named "Immanuel" with the Child possessing God's titles in 9:6, and with the "Branch" of ch. 11. According to Matthew, the virgin is Mary and the Child is Jesus Christ (Matt. 1:22, 23). In v. 16, the birth seems nevertheless to be imminent. Perhaps the prophecy has a partial fulfillment in the birth of Isaiah's son Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz (8:1–3), while the definitive fulfillment waits for the birth of Jesus Christ, who secures God's throne forever.

■ **7:15 Curds and honey.** This is not a typical food for infants, but points to a time when people will have to live off unworked fields (v. 22). The Child is identified with the remnant.

that He may know to refuse the evil. Self-indulgence made the failed leadership of Israel insensitive to social and spiritual values (5:11–23), but this diet will sensitize Christ to the work of the Lord (42:1–4).

■ **7:16 For before.** The verse seems to mean that before the time required for a child to become accountable—twelve years—Pekah and Remaliah will both be defeated. In this understanding, "Child" will point primarily to Isaiah's son, and secondarily to Christ.

■ **7:18 in that day.** See note on 2:11. The fall of Damascus, of Samaria, and the devastation of Judah are foretastes of the events of the Last Judgment.

fly . . . bee. These insects swarm in great numbers, like the hordes of invaders.

■ **7:19 desolate valleys . . . clefts.** Traditional hiding places will provide no escape (2:19).

■ **7:20 hired razor.** Shaving the head is a sign of mourning (15:2) and a way of humiliating conquered enemies (2 Sam. 10:4, 5). Ahaz had hired Assyria to help him against Syria and Samaria, but the Lord would use Assyria to humiliate Israel instead (v. 17).

23 [s]Is. 5:6

CHAPTER 8

1 [a]Is. 30:8; Hab. 2:2 [1]Lit. *Speed the Spoil, Hasten the Booty*

2 [b]2 Kin. 16:10

4 [c]2 Kin. 17:6; Is. 7:16 [d]2 Kin. 15:29 [2]*knows how* [3]*plunder*

6 [e]John 9:7 [f]Is. 7:1, 2

7 [4]The Euphrates [5]Overflow

8 [g]Is. 30:28 [h]Is. 7:14; Matt. 1:23 [6]Lit. *be the fullness of* [7]Lit. *God-With-Us*

9 [i]Joel 3:9

10 [j]Is. 7:7; Acts 5:38

23 It shall happen in that day,
That wherever there could be a thousand vines
Worth a thousand *shekels* of silver,
[s]It will be for briers and thorns.
24 With arrows and bows men will come there,
Because all the land will become briers and thorns.

25 And to any hill which could be dug with the hoe,
You will not go there for fear of briers and thorns;
But it will become a range for oxen
And a place for sheep to roam.

Assyria Will Invade the Land

8 Moreover the LORD said to me, "Take a large scroll, and [a]write on it with a man's pen concerning [1]Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz. 2 And I will take for Myself faithful witnesses to record, [b]Uriah the priest and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah."

3 Then I went to the prophetess, and she conceived and bore a son. Then the LORD said to me, "Call his name Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz; 4 [c]for before the child [2]shall have knowledge to cry 'My father' and 'My mother,' [d]the riches of Damascus and the [3]spoil of Samaria will be taken away before the king of Assyria."

5 The LORD also spoke to me again, saying:

6 "Inasmuch as these people refused
The waters of [e]Shiloah that flow softly,
And rejoice [f]in Rezin and in Remaliah's son;
7 Now therefore, behold, the Lord brings up over them
The waters of [4]the River, strong and mighty—
The king of Assyria and all his glory;
He will [5]go up over all his channels
And go over all his banks.
8 He will pass through Judah,
He will overflow and pass over,
[g]He will reach up to the neck;
And the stretching out of his wings
Will [6]fill the breadth of Your land, O [h]Immanuel.[7]

9 "Be[i] shattered, O you peoples, and be broken in pieces!
Give ear, all you from far countries.
Gird yourselves, but be broken in pieces;
Gird yourselves, but be broken in pieces.
10 [j]Take counsel together, but it will come to nothing;

■ **7:22 abundance.** The land will be so depopulated that this limited food will seem abundant.

curds and honey. See note on v. 15. The remnant will have something to eat.

■ **7:23–25 in that day.** The cultivated land will return to weeds, barely fit for grazing.

■ **8:1 scroll.** Probably a polished piece of wood like a signboard, rather than a scroll. The meaning of the name is given in the text note and explained in v. 4.

■ **8:2 witnesses.** The apostate king, Ahaz, was forced to take part in the sign of Immanuel's birth (7:10–14). Now an apostate priest, Uriah (2 Kin. 16:10, 11), and a presumably false prophet, Zechariah, are forced to become parties to this prophecy.

■ **8:3 prophetess.** Isaiah refers to his wife in this way, perhaps because of her association with him as a prophet, or perhaps because she was a prophet in her own right (Judg. 4:4; 2 Kin. 22:14).

Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz. See text note on v. 1. The name signifies the rapid devastation of Syria, Israel, and Judah, but also the presence of God with the remnant and the impending fulfillment of God's word.

■ **8:6 these people.** That is, Judah.

waters of Shiloah. Perhaps this refers to a stream flowing from the Gihon spring (2 Chr. 32:30). It is a symbol of the Lord's provision, which the people despised (cf. 1:30 note; Jer. 2:13; Zech. 4:10).

rejoice. The people may have looked forward to the fall of Rezin, king of Syria, without considering that the word of judgment applied to Judah as well.

■ **8:7 the River.** The River Euphrates, standing for the Assyrian invaders. The Euphrates contrasts with the soft waters of Shiloah (v. 6).

■ **8:8 the neck.** The implication is that Assyria will almost, but not quite, annihilate Judah. At the height of the Assyrian invasion in 701 B.C., Jerusalem did escape.

O Immanuel. See v. 10; 7:14 note. Isaiah bestows the name of the virgin's Child on Judah as the object of God's care.

■ **8:9 you peoples.** Syria and Israel.

■ **8:10 Take counsel together.** See note on 11:2.

God is with us. In Hebrew, "Immanuel." God is with the remnant of Judah, which will not be destroyed (v. 8, notes; 7:14 note).

Speak the word, [k]but it will not stand,
[l]For [8]God *is* with us."

Fear God, Heed His Word

11 For the LORD spoke thus to me with [9]a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying:

12 "Do not say, 'A conspiracy,'
Concerning all that this people call a conspiracy,
Nor be afraid of their [1]threats, nor be [2]troubled.
13 The LORD of hosts, Him you shall hallow;
Let Him *be* your fear,
And *let* Him *be* your dread.
14 [m]He will be as a [3]sanctuary,
But [n]a stone of stumbling and a rock of [4]offense
To both the houses of Israel,
As a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.
15 And many among them shall [o]stumble;
They shall fall and be broken,
Be snared and [5]taken."

16 Bind up the testimony,
Seal the law among my disciples.
17 And I will wait on the LORD,
Who [p]hides His face from the house of Jacob;
And I [q]will hope in Him.
18 [r]Here am I and the children whom the LORD has given me!
We [s]*are* for signs and wonders in Israel
From the LORD of hosts,
Who dwells in Mount Zion.

19 And when they say to you, [t]"Seek those who are mediums and wizards, [u]who whisper and mutter," should not a people seek their God? *Should they* [v]*seek* the dead on behalf of the living?
20 [w]To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, *it is* because [x]*there*[6] *is* no light in them.
21 They will pass through it hard-pressed and hungry; and it shall happen, when they are hungry, that they will be enraged and [y]curse [7]their king and their God, and look upward. 22 Then they will look to the earth, and see trouble and darkness, gloom of anguish; and *they will be* driven into darkness.

The Government of the Promised Son

9 Nevertheless [a]the gloom *will* not *be* upon her who *is* distressed,
As when at [b]first He lightly esteemed

10 [k]Is. 7:14 [l]Rom. 8:31 [8]Heb. *Immanuel*

11 [9]Mighty power

12 [1]Lit. *fear* or *terror* [2]Lit. *in dread*

14 [m]Is. 4:6; 25:4; Ezek. 11:16 [n]Luke 2:34; 20:17; Rom. 9:33; 1 Pet. 2:8 [3]*holy abode* [4]*stumbling over*

15 [o]Matt. 21:44 [5]*captured*

17 [p]Deut. 31:17; Is. 54:8 [q]Hab. 2:3

18 [r]Heb. 2:13 [s]Ps. 71:7

19 [t]1 Sam. 28:8 [u]Is. 29:4 [v]Ps. 106:28

20 [w]Is. 1:10; 8:16; Luke 16:29 [x]Is. 8:22; Mic. 3:6 [6]Or *they have no dawn*

21 [y]Rev. 16:11 [7]Or *by their king and by their God*

CHAPTER 9

1 [a]Is. 8:22 [b]2 Kin. 15:29; 2 Chr. 16:4

■ **8:11 with a strong hand.** Isaiah had an experience of inner compulsion from the Spirit of God (Ezek. 1:3; 3:14).

■ **8:12 conspiracy.** The people considered Isaiah a traitor because he said that Ahab and his administration were wrong to rely on Assyria.

■ **8:13 fear . . . dread.** It is not people (v. 12), but the Lord who is the object of fear. He is the ultimate authority to whom all must submit, in whom all may trust, and to whom everyone must render an account (12:2; 33:6; 50:10; 59:19; Ps. 25:12–15; 34:11–14).

■ **8:14 sanctuary.** A place of refuge.

both the houses. Judah and Israel.

■ **8:16 testimony . . . law.** This could refer to the revelation of God (1:10) to Moses (Deut. 4:44, 45), to Isaiah, or to both.

disciples. Isaiah's followers wrote down and sealed his prophecy like a law so that it could be known whether it failed or was fulfilled by events (vv. 1, 2, 20). This is the test of a true prophet (Deut. 18:21, 22; Jer. 28:9), through whom God is known and trusted.

■ **8:17 wait on . . . hope.** See 25:9; 26:8; 30:18; 33:2; 40:31; 49:23; 64:4.

hides His face. The covenant God is free in bestowing grace (54:8; 64:7; Deut. 31:18; 32:20).

■ **8:18 We are for signs.** The children's names were significant (7:3; 8:1, 3 and notes).

■ **8:19 mediums and wizards.** Diviners were prohibited by God's law (Is. 2:6 note).

whisper and mutter. The mediums promised contact with the dead, who in the popular understanding were insubstantial and weak-voiced. Isaiah regards calling on them as contemptible.

■ **8:20 law . . . testimony.** See note on 8:16.

light. See note on 2:5.

■ **8:22 darkness.** This is a figure for despair (5:30 note; 50:10).

■ **9:1 Zebulun . . . Naphtali.** These regions in Galilee were the first to suffer from the Assyrian invasion of 732 B.C. (2 Kin. 15:29).

1 [c]Matt. 4:13–16

2 [d]Matt. 4:16; Luke 1:79; 2 Cor. 4:6; Eph. 5:8

3 [e]Judg. 5:30 [f]So with Qr., Tg.; Kt., Vg. *not increased joy;* LXX *Most of the people You brought down in Your joy*

4 [f]Judg. 7:22

5 [g]Is. 66:15 [2]*boot* [3]*for the fire*

6 [h][Is. 7:14; Luke 2:11]; John 1:45 [i]Luke 2:7; [John 3:16; 1 John 4:9] [j][Matt. 28:18; 1 Cor. 15:25]; Rev. 12:5 [k]Judg. 13:18 [l]Titus 2:13 [m]Eph. 2:14

7 [n]Dan. 2:44; Matt. 1:1, 6; Luke 1:32, 33; John 7:42 [o]Is. 37:32

8 [p]Gen. 32:28

The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,
And [c]afterward more heavily oppressed *her,*
By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan,
In Galilee of the Gentiles.

2 [d]The people who walked in darkness
Have seen a great light;
Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death,
Upon them a light has shined.

3 You have multiplied the nation
And [f]increased its joy;
They rejoice before You
According to the joy of harvest,
As *men* rejoice [e]when they divide the spoil.

4 For You have broken the yoke of his burden
And the staff of his shoulder,
The rod of his oppressor,
As in the day of [f]Midian.

5 For every warrior's [2]sandal from the noisy battle,
And garments rolled in blood,
[g]Will be used for burning *and* fuel [3]of fire.

6 [h]For unto us a Child is born,
Unto us a [i]Son is given;
And [j]the government will be upon His shoulder.
And His name will be called
[k]Wonderful, Counselor, [l]Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, [m]Prince of Peace.

7 Of the increase of *His* government and peace
[n]*There will be* no end,
Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom,
To order it and establish it with judgment and justice
From that time forward, even forever.
The [o]zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

The Punishment of Samaria

8 The Lord sent a word against [p]Jacob,
And it has fallen on Israel.

9 All the people will know—
Ephraim and the inhabitant of Samaria—
Who say in pride and arrogance of heart:

■ **9:2 light.** See note on 2:5.

shadow of death. The Assyrians cast their terrible shadow over the land and the people (cf. Ps. 23:4; 44:19; 107:10). Yet there is hope.

■ **9:3 joy.** God opens up a new future for the humble (29:19) where gloom had previously existed (35:10; 51:3; 61:7). This new joy finds expression in the metaphors of harvest and of victory. Contrast 5:10; 8:4.

■ **9:4 yoke . . . staff.** These are figures of oppression (10:27; 14:25; 47:6; contrast at Matt. 11:29, 30).

day of Midian. A reference to Gideon's defeat of the Midianites (10:26, 27; Judg. 6:7; 7:22–25).

■ **9:5** The debris left from battle can be removed and burned when the fighting stops. God will bring an end to war (2:4; Ps. 46:9, 10; 2 Cor. 10:4).

■ **9:6 Child . . . Son.** The good news is the birth of Jesus Christ. The four royal names express His divine and human qualities, giving assurance that He is indeed "Immanuel" (7:14).

born . . . given. The verbs are consistent with His humanity and deity respectively.

Wonderful, Counselor. Since the other titles each consist of two words, it is probably best to combine these two words in a single title, "Wonderful Counselor."

Mighty God. As a warrior, God protects His people (10:21; Deut. 10:17; Jer. 32:18).

Everlasting Father. The Father and King cares for His subjects (40:9–11; 65:17–25; Matt. 18:12–14; 23:9–12; Rom. 8:15–17).

Prince of Peace. His government brings peace (2:4; 11:6–9; Ps. 72:7; Zech. 9:10; Luke 2:14).

■ **9:7 throne of David.** He is a descendant of David (11:1 note), who will establish the kingdom of God in "judgment and justice" (1:21 note).

zeal. God guarantees that this will be fulfilled (37:32; 42:13; Zech. 1:14).

■ **9:8—10:4** The Lord will judge Israel (the northern kingdom) and its capital Samaria. The northern kingdom is also sometimes called Ephraim. (Judah is the southern kingdom, with Jerusalem as its capital.)

■ **9:9 pride and arrogance.** Their motivation was to preserve and glorify themselves. Compare also their words "we will . . . we will" in v. 10 (Gen. 11:3, 4; Is. 5:21).

10 "The bricks have fallen down,
But we will rebuild with hewn stones;
The sycamores are cut down,
But we will replace *them* with cedars."
11 Therefore the LORD shall set up
The adversaries of Rezin against him,
And spur his enemies on,
12 The Syrians before and the Philistines behind;
And they shall devour Israel with an open mouth.

For all this His anger is not turned away,
But His hand *is* [4]stretched out still.

13 For the people do not turn to Him who strikes them,
Nor do they seek the LORD of hosts.
14 Therefore the LORD will cut off head and tail from Israel,
Palm branch and bulrush [q]in one day.
15 The elder and honorable, he *is* the head;
The prophet who teaches lies, he *is* the tail.
16 For [r]the leaders of this people cause *them* to err,
And *those who are* led by them are destroyed.
17 Therefore the Lord [s]will have no joy in their young men,
Nor have mercy on their fatherless and widows;
For everyone *is* a hypocrite and an evildoer,
And every mouth speaks [5]folly.

[t]For all this His anger is not turned away,
But His hand *is* stretched out still.

18 For wickedness [u]burns as the fire;
It shall devour the briers and thorns,
And kindle in the thickets of the forest;
They shall mount up *like* rising smoke.
19 Through the wrath of the LORD of hosts
[v]The land is burned up,
And the people shall be as fuel for the fire;
[w]No man shall spare his brother.
20 And he shall [6]snatch on the right hand
And be hungry;
He shall devour on the left hand
[x]And not be satisfied;
[y]Every man shall eat the flesh of his own arm.
21 Manasseh *shall devour* Ephraim, and Ephraim Manasseh;
Together they *shall be* [z]against Judah.

[a]For all this His anger is not turned away,
But His hand *is* stretched out still.

12 [4]In judgment
14 [q]Rev. 18:8
16 [r]Is. 3:12; Mic. 3:1, 5, 9; Matt. 15:14
17 [s]Ps. 147:10 [t]Is. 5:25 [5]*foolishness*
18 [u]Ps. 83:14; [Is. 1:7; 10:17]; Nah. 1:10; Mal. 4:1
19 [v]Is. 8:22 [w]Mic. 7:2, 6
20 [x]Lev. 26:26 [y]Jer. 19:9 [6]*slice off* or *tear*
21 [z]2 Chr. 28:6, 8; Is. 11:13 [a]Is. 9:12, 17

■ **9:10 hewn stones . . . cedars.** The people thought they were going to start rebuilding with the best materials, when in reality there was destruction ahead.

■ **9:11, 12 adversaries of Rezin.** Foes. The Assyrians (7:1 note; 7:20 note; 8:7 note) will attack from the north and the Philistines from the south. The Lord will raise up many enemies.

His anger is not turned away. This refrain is also found in 9:17, 21; 10:4 (cf. 31:3). See note on 5:25.

■ **9:13 do not turn.** They were unresponsive to divine discipline (Amos 4:6, 8–11). They did not depend wholly on the Lord or seek Him with diligence (8:19; 11:10; 31:1; 55:6; 58:2; 65:10).

■ **9:14 head . . . tail.** These figures represent the civil and religious leadership, as explained in v. 15 (cf. 3:1–3; 30:10 note). The same figures, including the "palm branch and bulrush," are used of Egyptian leaders in 19:15.

■ **9:17 fatherless and widows.** See note on 1:16–18. The gravity of God's anger is vividly expressed when it is said that He will have no mercy on the fatherless.

everyone is a hypocrite and an evildoer. Sin is found in every person, even the fatherless and widow, and it corrupts both their thoughts and their deeds (Gen. 6:5; 8:21).

■ **9:20, 21 devour . . . eat.** Pride, narcissism, and greed destroy the fiber of society, especially the covenant relationship among the tribes. Historically, Manasseh had fought Ephraim (Judg. 12:4), and together they battled Judah during the war with Israel and Syria.

CHAPTER 10

1 [a]Ps. 58:2

3 [b]Job 31:14 [c]Is. 13:6; Jer. 9:9; Hos. 9:7; Luke 19:44 [d]Is. 5:26

4 [e]Is. 24:22 [f]Is. 5:25 [1]Lit. *under*

5 [g]Jer. 51:20

6 [h]Is. 9:17 [i]2 Kin. 17:6; Jer. 34:22

7 [j]Gen. 50:20; Mic. 4:11, 12; Acts 2:23, 24

8 [k]2 Kin. 19:10

9 [l]Gen. 10:10; Amos 6:2 [m]2 Chr. 35:20 [n]2 Kin. 16:9

12 [o]2 Kin. 19:31; Is. 28:21 [p]2 Kin. 19:35; 2 Chr. 32:21; Jer. 50:18 [2]*completed*

13 [q][2 Kin. 19:22–24]; Is. 37:24–27; Ezek. 28:4; Dan. 4:30

10 "Woe to those who [a]decree unrighteous decrees,
Who write misfortune,
Which they have prescribed
2 To rob the needy of justice,
And to take what is right from the poor of My people,
That widows may be their prey,
And *that* they may rob the fatherless.
3 [b]What will you do in [c]the day of punishment,
And in the desolation *which* will come from [d]afar?
To whom will you flee for help?
And where will you leave your glory?
4 Without Me they shall bow down among the [e]prisoners,
And they shall fall [1]among the slain."

[f]For all this His anger is not turned away,
But His hand *is* stretched out still.

Arrogant Assyria Also Judged

5 "Woe to Assyria, [g]the rod of My anger
And the staff in whose hand is My indignation.
6 I will send him against [h]an ungodly nation,
And against the people of My wrath
I will [i]give him charge,
To seize the spoil, to take the prey,
And to tread them down like the mire of the streets.
7 [j]Yet he does not mean so,
Nor does his heart think so;
But *it is* in his heart to destroy,
And cut off not a few nations.
8 [k]For he says,
'*Are* not my princes altogether kings?
9 *Is* not [l]Calno [m]like Carchemish?
Is not Hamath like Arpad?
Is not Samaria [n]like Damascus?
10 As my hand has found the kingdoms of the idols,
Whose carved images excelled those of Jerusalem and Samaria,
11 As I have done to Samaria and her idols,
Shall I not do also to Jerusalem and her idols?' "

12 Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Lord has [2]performed all His work [o]on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, *that He will say,* [p]"I will punish the fruit of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his haughty looks."

13 [q]For he says:

"By the strength of my hand I have done *it,*
And by my wisdom, for I am prudent;
Also I have removed the boundaries of the people,
And have robbed their treasuries;

■ **10:1–4** The principle of retribution is an important biblical teaching. People reap what they sow, whether to destruction or benefit (Gal. 6:7, 8).

■ **10:2 justice.** See note on 1:21. On social injustice, see 1:23.

poor . . . fatherless. See 1:16–18; 11:4; Ps. 9:18 and notes.

My people. See note on 40:1.

■ **10:3 day of punishment.** The day of the Lord (2:11 note).

from afar. The desolation brought by the Assyrians.

■ **10:5 rod of My anger.** God makes the nations serve Him as instruments of His will, but they continue to be responsible for their acts (5:25; 7:20 and notes). God's anger is against those who administer His kingdom on earth corruptly, both rulers and people (9:12, 17, 21; 10:4, 25).

■ **10:6 ungodly nation.** This includes Israel and Judah (v. 11).

■ **10:9 Calno . . . Damascus.** These cities were conquered by Assyria: Calno (Calneh, Amos 6:2) in 738 B.C.; Carchemish in 717 B.C.; Hamath in 738 and 720 B.C.; Arpad in 740 B.C.; Samaria in 722 B.C.; and Damascus in 732 B.C. See also 36:19; 37:12, 13.

■ **10:10 my hand.** Assyria boasts of its power (cf. Dan. 4:30; Luke 12:18–20).

kingdoms. See note on 13:4.

■ **10:12 Zion.** See note on 1:8.

■ **10:13, 14** These verses are a restatement of vv. 5–11. For similar expressions of pride, see 14:13, 14; Ezek. 28:2–5.

So I have put down the inhabitants like a [3]valiant *man.*
14 [r]My hand has found like a nest the riches of the people,
And as one gathers eggs *that are* left,
I have gathered all the earth;
And there was no one who moved *his* wing,
Nor opened *his* mouth with even a peep."

15 Shall [s]the ax boast itself against him who chops with it?
Or shall the saw exalt itself against him who saws with it?
As if a rod could wield *itself* against those who lift it up,
Or as if a staff could lift up, *as if it were* not wood!
16 Therefore the Lord, the [4]Lord of hosts,
Will send leanness among his fat ones;
And under his glory
He will kindle a burning
Like the burning of a fire.
17 So the Light of Israel will be for a fire,
And his Holy One for a flame;
[t]It will burn and devour
His thorns and his briers in one day.
18 And it will consume the glory of his forest and of [u]his fruitful field,
Both soul and body;
And they will be as when a sick man wastes away.
19 Then the rest of the trees of his forest
Will be so few in number
That a child may write them.

The Returning Remnant of Israel

20 And it shall come to pass in that day
That the remnant of Israel,
And such as have escaped of the house of Jacob,
[v]Will never again depend on him who [5]defeated them,
But will depend on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth.
21 The remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob,
To the [w]Mighty God.
22 [x]For though your people, O Israel, be as the sand of the sea,
[y]A remnant of them will return;
The destruction decreed shall overflow with righteousness.
23 [z]For the Lord GOD of hosts
Will make a determined end
In the midst of all the land.

24 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD of hosts: "O My people, who dwell in Zion, [a]do not be afraid of the Assyrian. He shall strike you with a rod and lift up his staff against you, in the manner of [b]Egypt. 25 For yet a very little while [c]and the indignation will cease, as will My anger in their destruction." 26 And the LORD of hosts will [6]stir up [d]a scourge for him like the slaughter of [e]Midian at the rock of Oreb; *[f]as* His rod was on the sea, so will He lift it up in the manner of Egypt.

13 [3]*mighty*
14 [r]Job 31:25
15 [s]Jer. 51:20
16 [4]So with Bg.; MT, DSS *YHWH (the* LORD)
17 [t]Is. 9:18
18 [u]2 Kin. 19:23
20 [v]2 Kin. 16:7 [5]Lit. *struck*
21 [w][Is. 9:6]
22 [x]Rom. 9:27, 28 [y]Is. 6:13
23 [z]Is. 28:22; Dan. 9:27; Rom. 9:28
24 [a]Is. 7:4; 12:2 [b]Ex. 14
25 [c]Is. 10:5; 26:20; Dan. 11:36
26 [d]2 Kin. 19:35 [e]Judg. 7:25; Is. 9:4 [f]Ex. 14:26, 27 [6]*arouse*

■ **10:15 ax . . . staff.** See note on v. 5.

■ **10:17 Light.** See note on 2:5.

■ **10:18 glory.** See note on 4:2. What men think should be honored or despised means little before God's fiery judgment.

forest . . . fruitful field. The Assyrian pride will end quickly like thorns in a fire. Little will remain (v. 19).

■ **10:20 in that day.** See note on 2:11.

remnant. See note on 1:8.

■ **10:22 sand of the sea.** This phrase recalls God's promise to Abraham (Gen. 22:17; cf. 1 Kin. 4:20).

decreed. God is determined in His judgment (v. 23; 28:22).

■ **10:23 the Lord God of hosts.** See notes on 1:9, 24.

■ **10:24 do not be afraid.** A word of encouragement for the remnant in Judah (37:6; 41:10, 13; 43:1). See note on 35:4.

■ **10:25 destruction.** The instruments of destruction will themselves be destroyed.

■ **10:26 Midian . . . Oreb . . . Egypt.** Two examples are taken from the history of redemption: the defeat of Midian at the rock of Oreb (a Midianite leader; Judg. 7:25), and the victory over Egypt at the Red Sea (Ex. 14:26–28).

27 It shall come to pass in that day
That his burden will be taken away from your shoulder,
And his yoke from your neck,
And the yoke will be destroyed because of [g]the anointing oil.

28 He has come to Aiath,
He has passed Migron;
At Michmash he has attended to his equipment.
29 They have gone [7]along [h]the ridge,
They have taken up lodging at Geba.
Ramah is afraid,
[i]Gibeah of Saul has fled.
30 [8]Lift up your voice,
O daughter [j]of Gallim!
Cause it to be heard as far as [k]Laish—
[9]O poor Anathoth!
31 [l]Madmenah has fled,
The inhabitants of Gebim seek refuge.
32 As yet he will remain [m]at Nob that day;
He will [n]shake his fist at the mount of [o]the daughter of Zion,
The hill of Jerusalem.

33 Behold, the Lord,
The LORD of hosts,
Will lop off the bough with terror;
[p]Those of high stature *will be* hewn down,
And the haughty will be humbled.
34 He will cut down the thickets of the forest with iron,
And Lebanon will fall by the Mighty One.

The Reign of Jesse's Offspring

11 There [a]shall come forth a [1]Rod from the [2]stem of [b]Jesse,
And [c]a Branch shall [3]grow out of his roots.

27 [g]Ps. 105:15; [1 John 2:20]

29 [h]1 Sam. 13:23 [i]1 Sam. 11:4 [7]Or *over the pass*

30 [j]1 Sam. 25:44 [k]Judg. 18:7 [8]Or *Cry shrilly* [9]So with MT, Tg., Vg.; LXX, Syr. *Listen to her, O Anathoth*

31 [l]Josh. 15:31

32 [m]1 Sam. 21:1; Neh. 11:32 [n]Is. 13:2 [o]Is. 37:22

33 [p]Is. 37:24, 36–38; Ezek. 31:3; Amos 2:9

CHAPTER 11

1 [a][Zech. 6:12]; Rev. 5:5 [b][Is. 9:7; 11:10]; Matt. 1:5; [Acts 13:23] [c]Is. 4:2 [1]*Shoot* [2]*stock* or *trunk* [3]*be fruitful*

■ **10:28–32 Aiath . . . Zion.** These verses describe a march to Judah from north to south through the cities mentioned. The last, Nob, is within sight of Zion. For a similar portrayal of Assyria's invasion, but from the southwest, see Mic. 1:10–16.

■ **10:33** The Assyrians may inspire Judah with terror, but the Lord will intervene.

■ **10:34 cut down . . . the forest.** The Assyrians are portrayed as a forest that the Lord is going to cut down (v. 18 note).

Mighty One. See 33:21.

■ **11:1 stem.** All that is left of the Davidic dynasty is a stump. The privileged sons of David no less than Assyria are like trees that have been chopped down (10:33, 34). But in spite of this judgment on Judah, the Lord will raise up new leadership from the dynasty of David (Matt. 1:1).

Jesse. The father of David (1 Sam. 16:10–13). David inaugurated a great kingdom, but the greater David (Ezek. 34:23–25; Zech. 12:7–10), now only a tender plant (53:2), will rule an incomparably greater kingdom.

Branch. See note on 4:2.

The Messiah and His Kingdom (11:1)

Isaiah described the qualifications of the ideal King whose rule would contrast with the dark reign of King Ahaz. The role remained unfulfilled until the coming of Jesus the Messiah. "The kingdom of God is within you" was His message.

The Messiah		His Kingdom	
The Branch, a descendant of David, the stem of Jesse	11:1, 10	The Gentiles will seek Him	11:10
God's Spirit will rest upon Him	11:2	The remnant of Israel will be gathered	11:11–16
He will fear the Lord	11:3	There will be joy in God's salvation	12:1–6
He will judge the earth with righteousness	11:4, 5		

2 [d]The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him,
The Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
The Spirit of counsel and might,
The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD.

3 His delight *is* in the fear of the LORD,
And He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes,
Nor decide by the hearing of His ears;
4 But [e]with righteousness He shall judge the poor,
And decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
He shall [f]strike the earth with the rod of His mouth,
And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked.
5 Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins,
And faithfulness the belt of His waist.

6 "The[g] wolf also shall dwell with the lamb,
The leopard shall lie down with the young goat,
The calf and the young lion and the fatling together;
And a little child shall lead them.
7 The cow and the bear shall graze;
Their young ones shall lie down together;
And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
8 The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole,
And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den.
9 [h]They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,
For [i]the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD
As the waters cover the sea.

10 "And[j] in that day [k]there shall be a Root of Jesse,
Who shall stand as a [l]banner to the people;
For the [m]Gentiles shall seek Him,
And His resting place shall be glorious."

11 It shall come to pass in that day
That the Lord shall set His hand again the second time

2 [d][Is. 42:1; 48:16; 61:1; Matt. 3:16]; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22; [John 1:32]

4 [e]Rev. 19:11 [f]Job 4:9; Is. 30:28, 33; Mal. 4:6; 2 Thess. 2:8

6 [g]Hos. 2:18

9 [h]Job 5:23; Is. 65:25; Ezek. 34:25; Hos. 2:18 [i]Ps. 98:2, 3; Is. 45:6; Hab. 2:14

10 [j]Is. 2:11 [k]Is. 11:1; Rom. 15:12 [l]Is. 27:12, 13 [m]Rom. 15:10

■ **11:2 Spirit of the LORD.** As the fourfold repetition emphasizes, the same God-given endowment of the Spirit that brought David his successes (1 Sam. 16:13; Ps. 51:11) will empower the Messiah (42:1; Luke 3:22). The Spirit is the creative agent for establishing God's kingdom (Gen. 1:2; Judg. 3:10; 6:34; 1 Sam. 10:6 and notes).

rest upon Him. The Spirit came in a powerful way on saints in the Old Testament: Moses (Num. 11:17); certain elders (Num. 11:25, 26); Joshua (Deut. 34:9); the judges (Judg. 3:10; 11:29; 13:25); kings (1 Sam. 11:6); and prophets (1 Sam. 10:10; 2 Sam. 23:2; 1 Kin. 22:24; 2 Kin. 2:15; Mic. 3:8). The Spirit is the divine agent of restoration (32:15; Joel 2:28–32).

wisdom. Solomon prayed for wisdom and understanding (1 Kin. 3:9), the administrative skill to govern the people in righteousness and justice. See Introduction to the Wisdom Literature.

counsel. Authoritative plans and decisions are in view here. Human counsel may or may not be in accord with God's plan (30:1), but the Messiah's counsel is by the Spirit.

knowledge. This refers to wise and submissive living in accordance with the will of God (33:6; 53:11). It is a perfection of God (40:14).

fear of the LORD. Fearing God includes obeying His commandments because of faith that the Lord will keep His threats against transgressors (Prov. 1:7 note).

■ **11:3 judge.** See note on 2:4.

■ **11:4 righteousness.** See note on 1:21.

poor . . . meek. That is, those who long for divine righteousness and justice (25:4) because of oppression by the rulers of this earth (3:15; 10:2; 32:7; 61:1). They are the afflicted, oppressed, and humble, whom Jesus also blessed (Matt. 5:3–10; Ps. 19:8 note).

equity. The Hebrew word also means "level" or "straight" (40:4). God's judgment is balanced and fair.

rod . . . breath. With great power and authority (Ps. 2:9; 82:8; Rev. 6:15–17; 20:11–12) the Messiah will conquer by His word (49:2; 61:1; Heb. 4:12; Rev. 19:15).

■ **11:5 faithfulness.** See note on 1:21; cf. 25:1; 33:6.

■ **11:6–9** Carnivorous animals, now remade with natures that protect what they formerly devoured, effectively portray the wonderful peace on earth in the new age ruled by the Messiah. The vision corresponds to reconciling love in the church (Eph. 2:14–18) and will be consummated in the new heavens and new earth (Rev. 21:4, 24–27).

■ **11:10 in that day.** See note on 2:11.

Root of Jesse. See note on v. 1 (Rev. 22:16).

banner. Here the banner is a sign of hope (cf. John 12:32), in contrast to 5:26 (see note).

glorious. See note on 4:2.

■ **11:11 the second time.** The first time God reclaimed a people was from Egypt through the Exodus; the second time is from the Exile (51:9–11).

remnant. See note on 1:8. The Lord will lead His children from wherever they are distressed.

To recover the remnant of His people who are left,
[n] From Assyria and Egypt,
From Pathros and Cush,
From Elam and Shinar,
From Hamath and the [4]islands of the sea.

12 He will set up a banner for the nations,
And will [5]assemble the outcasts of Israel,
And gather together [o]the dispersed of Judah
From the four [6]corners of the earth.
13 Also [p]the envy of Ephraim shall depart,
And the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off;
Ephraim shall not envy Judah,
And Judah shall not harass Ephraim.
14 But they shall fly down upon the shoulder of the Philistines toward the west;
Together they shall plunder the [7]people of the East;
[q] They shall lay their hand on Edom and Moab;
And the people of Ammon shall obey them.
15 The LORD [r]will utterly [8]destroy the tongue of the Sea of Egypt;
With His mighty wind He will shake His fist over [9]the River,
And strike it in the seven streams,
And make *men* cross over [t]dryshod.
16 [s] There will be a highway for the remnant of His people
Who will be left from Assyria,
[t] As it was for Israel
In the day that he came up from the land of Egypt.

A Hymn of Praise

12 And [a]in that day you will say:

"O LORD, I will praise You;
Though You were angry with me,
Your anger is turned away, and You comfort me.
2 Behold, God *is* my salvation,
I will trust and not be afraid;
[b] 'For [c]YAH, the LORD, *is* my strength and song;
He also has become my salvation.' "

3 Therefore with joy you will draw [d]water
From the wells of salvation.

4 And in that day you will say:

11 [n]Is. 19:23–25; Hos. 11:11; Zech. 10:10 [4]Or *coastlands*
12 [o]John 7:35 [5]*gather* [6]Lit. *wings*
13 [p]Is. 9:21; Jer. 3:18; Ezek. 37:16, 17, 22; Hos. 1:11
14 [q]Is. 63:1; Dan. 11:41; Joel 3:19; Amos 9:12 [7]Lit. *sons*
15 [r]Is. 50:2; 51:10, 11; Zech. 10:10, 11 [8]So with MT, Vg.; LXX, Syr., Tg. *dry up* [9]The Euphrates [t]Lit. *in sandals*
16 [s]Is. 19:23 [t]Ex. 14:29

CHAPTER 12

1 [a]Is. 2:11
2 [b]Ps. 83:18 [c]Ex. 15:2; Ps. 118:14
3 [d][John 4:10, 14; 7:37, 38]

■ **11:12 four corners.** The remnant will come from all the known world, described as the four corners of the earth (24:15; 42:4, 10; 51:5; 59:18, 19; cf. Matt. 24:31).

■ **11:13 Ephraim . . . Judah.** The era of restoration will witness a reconciliation of the disunited tribes. When the remnant returned to the land after the Exile, they offered sacrifices on behalf of all twelve tribes (Ezra 6:17; 8:35).

■ **11:14 Philistines . . . Ammon.** This is a figure for freedom from the oppression, subjugation, and harassment that had characterized Israel's experience in the land (cf. 54:3; Mic. 5:6 note for a similar use of Assyria).

■ **11:15 destroy . . . the River.** The second Exodus will come by another miracle similar to the parting of the Red Sea (vv. 11, 12).

mighty wind. See Ex. 14:24–27.

■ **11:16 highway.** A level way is prepared by the Lord, a figure for the certainty of His salvation (35:8, 9; 40:3–5; 57:14; 62:10).

■ **12:1–6** Isaiah's new hymn at the second Exodus corresponds to that of Moses at the first (Ex. 15).

■ **12:1 in that day.** See note on 2:11.

I will praise. The prophet speaks as a representative of the people of God. The reason for praise is God Himself.

■ **12:2 God is my salvation.** See Ex. 15:2. He is the source and the initiator of salvation (49:6, 8; 51:6, 8; 56:1; 62:1).

YAH, the LORD. The double reference to the name of the LORD is a poetic emphasis on the certainty of salvation provided by Yahweh, the covenant God (Ex. 3:15).

■ **12:3 joy . . . salvation.** The salvation of the Lord always brings joy (35:10; 51:3, 11; 61:3), as God removes the causes for sorrow and anxiety.

water . . . wells. Salvation is compared to an abundance of water (Ps. 1:3; 65:9; 104:10–13; 107:35) coming "from the wells of salvation" (41:18; cf. John 4:14).

■ **12:4 exalted.** See 2:11, 17; 33:5.

[e]"Praise the LORD, call upon His name;
[f]Declare His deeds among the peoples,
Make mention that His [g]name is exalted.
5 [h]Sing to the LORD,
For He has done excellent things;
This *is* known in all the earth.
6 [i]Cry out and shout, O inhabitant of Zion,
For great *is* [j]the Holy One of Israel in your midst!"

Proclamation Against Babylon

13 The [a]burden[1] against Babylon which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw.

2 "Lift[b] up a banner [c]on the high mountain,
Raise your voice to them;
[d]Wave your hand, that they may enter the gates of the nobles.
3 I have commanded My [2]sanctified ones;
I have also called [e]My mighty ones for My anger—
Those who [f]rejoice in My exaltation."

4 The [g]noise of a multitude in the mountains,
Like that of many people!
A tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together!
The LORD of hosts musters
The army for battle.
5 They come from a far country,
From the end of heaven—
The [h]LORD and His [3]weapons of indignation,
To destroy the whole [i]land.

6 Wail, [j]for the day of the LORD *is* at hand!
[k]It will come as destruction from the Almighty.
7 Therefore all hands will be limp,
Every man's heart will melt,
8 And they will be afraid.
[l]Pangs[4] and sorrows will take hold of *them;*
They will be in pain as a woman in childbirth;
They will be amazed at one another;
Their faces *will be like* flames.

9 Behold, [m]the day of the LORD comes,
Cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger,
To lay the land desolate;
And He will destroy [n]its sinners from it.

4 [e]1 Chr. 16:8; Ps. 105:1 [f]Ps. 145:4–6 [g]Ps. 34:3

5 [h]Ex. 15:1; Ps. 98:1; Is. 24:14; 42:10, 11; 44:23

6 [i]Is. 52:9; 54:1; Zeph. 3:14, 15 [j]Ps. 89:18

CHAPTER 13

1 [a]Jer. 50; 51; Matt. 1:11; Rev. 14:8 [1]*oracle, prophecy*

2 [b]Is. 18:3 [c]Jer. 51:25 [d]Is. 10:32

3 [e]Joel 3:11 [f]Ps. 149:2 [2]*consecrated* or *set apart*

4 [g]Is. 17:12; Joel 3:14

5 [h]Is. 42:13 [i]Is. 24:1; 34:2 [3]Or *instruments*

6 [j]Is. 2:12; Ezek. 30:3; Amos 5:18; Zeph. 1:7; Rev. 6:17 [k]Is. 10:25; Job 31:23; Joel 1:15

8 [l]Ps. 48:6 [4]*Sharp pains*

9 [m]Mal. 4:1 [n]Ps. 104:35; Prov. 2:22

■ **12:5 excellent things.** This is an allusion to "triumphed gloriously" (Ex. 15:1) and a synonym for "exalted" (v. 4).

■ **13:1—23:18** Isaiah prophesies concerning the day of the Lord and what it means for the nations. Babylon and Assyria are treated together in the first oracle (13:1–14:27) because Babylon became the crown jewel of the Assyrian Empire. Assyrian kings had themselves crowned as kings of this renowned city. Babylon was regarded as an epitome of religion and culture, and as such Babylon represents the kingdoms of this world. Peter and John continue to use Babylon as a symbol for ungodly nations (1 Pet. 5:13; Rev. 14:8; 16:19; 17:1—18:24).

■ **13:1 burden.** The Hebrew word can mean a literal weight, corresponding to the idea that the prophetic word is a heavy responsibility for the prophet who must deliver it. On the other hand, the word can mean simply a message or oracle, without the suggestion of weight.

■ **13:2 banner.** See 5:26 note.

gates of the nobles. It is implied that the city is proud.

■ **13:3 sanctified ones . . . mighty ones.** These are the armies used by God as instruments of judgment.

■ **13:4 noise.** The great noise indicates the exercise of God's power (30:30, 31; 33:3; Ps. 29:5–9).

kingdoms of nations. The Lord is the commander of human kingdoms. Babylon thought of herself as "the glory of the kingdoms" (13:19) or the "Lady of the Kingdoms" (47:5) and ruled over others with great force (14:16).

■ **13:5 far country . . . end of heaven.** Yahweh's kingdom is universal.

weapons of indignation. See note on 10:5.

■ **13:6–22** The terror of the day of the Lord is described.

■ **13:6 the day of the LORD.** This is also called "the day" (vv. 9, 13); see note on 2:11.

■ **13:7 limp . . . melt.** The people will be utterly helpless (Jer. 6:24; Ezek. 7:17).

■ **13:8 woman in childbirth.** This comparison is used often in the Bible for intense pain and suffering (21:3; 49:24; 50:43; Ps. 48:6; Mic. 4:9; cf. Rom. 8:22).

10 For the stars of heaven and their constellations
Will not give their light;
The sun will be [o]darkened in its going forth,
And the moon will not cause its light to shine.

11 "I will [p]punish the world for *its* evil,
And the wicked for their iniquity;
[q]I will halt the arrogance of the proud,
And will lay low the haughtiness of the [5]terrible.
12 I will make a mortal more rare than fine gold,
A man more than the golden wedge of Ophir.
13 [r]Therefore I will shake the heavens,
And the earth will move out of her place,
In the wrath of the LORD of hosts
And in [s]the day of His fierce anger.
14 It shall be as the hunted gazelle,
And as a sheep that no man [6]takes up;
[t]Every man will turn to his own people,
And everyone will flee to his own land.
15 Everyone who is found will be thrust through,
And everyone who is captured will fall by the sword.
16 Their children also will be [u]dashed to pieces before their eyes;
Their houses will be plundered
And their wives [v]ravished.

17 "Behold,[w] I will stir up the Medes against them,
Who will not [7]regard silver;
And *as for* gold, they will not delight in it.
18 Also *their* bows will dash the young men to pieces,
And they will have no pity on the fruit of the womb;
Their eye will not spare children.
19 [x]And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms,
The beauty of the Chaldeans' pride,
Will be as when God overthrew [y]Sodom and Gomorrah.
20 [z]It will never be inhabited,
Nor will it be settled from generation to generation;
Nor will the Arabian pitch tents there,
Nor will the shepherds make their sheepfolds there.
21 [a]But wild beasts of the desert will lie there,
And their houses will be full of [8]owls;
Ostriches will dwell there,
And wild goats will caper there.
22 The hyenas will howl in their citadels,
And jackals in their pleasant palaces.

10 [o]Is. 24:21–23; Ezek. 32:7; Joel 2:31; Matt. 24:29; Mark 13:24; Luke 21:25

11 [p]Is. 26:21 [q][Is. 2:17] [5]Or *tyrants*

13 [r]Is. 34:4; 51:6; Hag. 2:6 [s]Ps. 110:5; Lam. 1:12

14 [t]Jer. 50:16; 51:9 [6]*gathers*

16 [u]Ps. 137:8, 9; Is. 13:18; 14:21; Hos. 10:14; Nah. 3:10 [v]Zech. 14:2

17 [w]Is. 21:2; Jer. 51:11, 28; Dan. 5:28, 31 [7]*esteem*

19 [x]Is. 14:4; Dan. 4:30; Rev. 18:11–16, 19, 21 [y]Gen. 19:24; Deut. 29:23; Jer. 50:40; Amos 4:11

20 [z]Jer. 50:3

21 [a]Is. 34:11–15; Zeph. 2:14; Rev. 18:2 [8]Or *howling creatures*

■ **13:10 stars . . . moon.** These are figures for God's cosmic judgment (24:23; Joel 2:10, 31; Rev. 6:12–14).

light. See note on 2:5. The ancients worshiped the heavenly bodies, but Scripture teaches that God is the Creator of them all (Deut. 4:19). Darkness symbolizes judgment. The imagery is also used for the final destruction of the world (34:3).

■ **13:11 terrible.** See note on 29:20.

■ **13:13 shake the heavens . . . the earth will move.** These expressions depict the coming of God in judgment against His creation. The shaking of the world symbolizes the overthrow of all that unbelievers exalt as rivals to God (2:12–18). The king of Babylon is described as one "who made the earth tremble" (14:16).

■ **13:14 turn . . . flee.** The attractiveness of Babylon will become a phantom when people realize how short-lived human kingdoms are.

■ **13:15, 16 thrust through . . . ravished.** These are the terrors brought by war.

■ **13:16 houses.** See note on 24:10.

■ **13:17 Medes.** These were inhabitants of the Zagros Mountains, east of Babylon and Assyria. They were never subjugated by Assyria and joined Babylon in the conquest of Assyria (612–609 B.C.). For the dating of this prophecy it is significant that Persia, which conquered Media in 549 B.C., is not mentioned.

■ **13:19 kingdoms.** See note on v. 4.

Sodom and Gomorrah. See note on 1:9.

■ **13:20 never be inhabited.** This is the measure of God's judgment on human pride. Babylon was finally laid waste as described.

■ **13:21, 22 wild beasts . . . jackals.** Babylon becomes unfit for human habitation; only wild animals haunt the site (34:11–15; Jer. 50:39; 51:37; Zeph. 2:14, 15).

[b] Her time *is* near to come,
And her days will not be prolonged."

Mercy on Jacob

14 For the LORD [a] will have mercy on Jacob, and [b] will still choose Israel, and settle them in their own land. [c] The strangers will be joined with them, and they will cling to the house of Jacob. 2 Then people will take them [d] and bring them to their place, and the house of Israel will possess them for servants and maids in the land of the LORD; they will take them captive whose captives they were, [e] and rule over their oppressors.

Fall of the King of Babylon

3 It shall come to pass in the day the LORD gives you rest from your sorrow, and from your fear and the hard bondage in which you were made to serve, 4 that you [f] will take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say:

"How the oppressor has ceased,
The [g] golden [1] city ceased!
5 The LORD has broken [h] the staff of the wicked,
The scepter of the rulers;
6 He who struck the people in wrath with a continual stroke,
He who ruled the nations in anger,
Is persecuted *and* no one hinders.
7 The whole earth is at rest *and* quiet;
They break forth into singing.
8 [i] Indeed the cypress trees rejoice over you,
And the cedars of Lebanon,
Saying, 'Since you [2] were cut down,
No woodsman has come up against us.'

9 "Hell [j 3] from beneath is excited about you,
To meet *you* at your coming;
It stirs up the dead for you,
All the chief ones of the earth;
It has raised up from their thrones
All the kings of the nations.
10 They all shall [k] speak and say to you:
'Have you also become as weak as we?
Have you become like us?
11 Your pomp is brought down to Sheol,
And the sound of your stringed instruments;
The maggot is spread under you,
And worms cover you.'

The Fall of Lucifer

12 "How [l] you are fallen from heaven,
O [4] Lucifer, son of the morning!

22 [b] Jer. 51:33

CHAPTER 14

1 [a] Ps. 102:13; Is. 49:13, 15; 54:7, 8 [b] Is. 41:8, 9; Zech. 1:17; 2:12 [c] Is. 60:4, 5, 10
2 [d] Is. 49:22; 60:9; 66:20 [e] Is. 60:14
4 [f] Is. 13:19; Hab. 2:6 [g] Rev. 18:16 [1] Or *insolent*
5 [h] Ps. 125:3
8 [i] Is. 55:12; Ezek. 31:16 [2] *have lain down*
9 [j] Ezek. 32:21 [3] Or *Sheol*
10 [k] Ezek. 32:21
12 [l] Is. 34:4; Luke 10:18; [Rev. 12:7–9] [4] Lit. *Day Star*

■ **14:1 choose.** Election is God's choice, and He is free to set Israel aside, or to choose Israel again for a new future (41:8, 9; 44:1, 2; 45:4; 65:9; Ex. 19:6; Deut. 7:6; cf. Rom. 9—11).

■ **14:2 people.** These are instruments of God's plan of redemption (55:5; 60:1–18; 61:5–7; 66:19, 20; cf. Ezra 1:1–8).

■ **14:3–21** A taunt against the king of Babylon. Victors frequently sang taunt songs against their victims (v. 7; 12:1; Ex. 15:1).

■ **14:3 rest.** As in the first Exodus, God will liberate the people from oppression.

■ **14:4 proverb.** The Hebrew term has a range of meanings including brief sayings like those in the Book of Proverbs, and a figurative poem like the one here.

king of Babylon. This king is a chief representative of oppressive human power.

■ **14:7 singing.** Instead of "the song of the terrible ones" (25:5), a new song will be heard in response to God's judgment and deliverance (24:14, 16; 26:1, 19; 44:23; 49:13). See note on 12:1–6.

■ **14:8 cypress . . . cedars.** Nature responds to God's acts of judgment and restoration (55:13; 60:13; contrast 37:24).

No woodsman. Assyrian kings boast in their annals of the magnificent trees they carted off from pillaged lands to build their splendid palaces.

■ **14:9–11 Hell . . . Sheol.** Isaiah uses the popular conception of the realm of the dead with its shadowy figures welcoming newcomers in an ironic description of Babylon's fall and her descent into the lower regions. The use of these conventional ideas is poetic, and is not intended as a theology of the afterlife. See 5:14 and note; Prov. 1:12; 9:18 and notes.

■ **14:9 thrones.** The defeated kings had thrones in their royal graves. By contrast the king of Babylon is given a bed of maggots (v. 11).

■ **14:12 fallen from heaven.** This figure represents in an exaggerated

How you are cut down to the ground,
You who weakened the nations!
13 For you have said in your heart:
[m]'I will ascend into heaven,
[n]I will exalt my throne above the stars of God;
I will also sit on the [o]mount of the congregation
[p]On the farthest sides of the north;
14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds,
[q]I will be like the Most High.'
15 Yet you [r]shall be brought down to Sheol,
To the [5]lowest depths of the Pit.

16 "Those who see you will gaze at you,
And consider you, *saying:*
'*Is* this the man who made the earth tremble,
Who shook kingdoms,
17 Who made the world as a wilderness
And destroyed its cities,
Who [6]did not open the house of his prisoners?'

18 "All the kings of the nations,
All of them, sleep in glory,
Everyone in his own house;
19 But you are cast out of your grave
Like an [7]abominable branch,
Like the garment of those who are slain,
[8]Thrust through with a sword,
Who go down to the stones of the pit,
Like a corpse trodden underfoot.
20 You will not be joined with them in burial,
Because you have destroyed your land
And slain your people.
[s]The brood of evildoers shall never be named.
21 Prepare slaughter for his children
[t]Because of the iniquity of their fathers,
Lest they rise up and possess the land,
And fill the face of the world with cities."

Babylon Destroyed

22 "For I will rise up against them," says the LORD of hosts,
"And cut off from Babylon [u]the name and [v]remnant,
[w]And offspring and posterity," says the LORD.
23 "I will also make it a possession for the [x]porcupine,
And marshes of muddy water;
I will sweep it with the broom of destruction," says the LORD of hosts.

13 [m]Ezek. 28:2; Matt. 11:23 [n]Dan. 8:10; 2 Thess. 2:4 [o]Ezek. 28:14 [p]Ps. 48:2
14 [q]Is. 47:8; 2 Thess. 2:4
15 [r]Ezek. 28:8; Matt. 11:23; Luke 10:15 [5]Lit. *recesses*
17 [6]Would not release
19 [7]*despised* [8]*Pierced*
20 [s]Job 18:19; Ps. 21:10; 109:13; Is. 1:4; 31:2
21 [t]Ex. 20:5; Lev. 26:39; Is. 13:16; Matt. 23:35
22 [u]Prov. 10:7; Is. 26:14; Jer. 51:62 [v]1 Kin. 14:10 [w]Job 18:19; Is. 47:9
23 [x]Is. 34:11; Zeph. 2:14

way the fall of Babylon, with all its imperial ambitions, into destruction (cf. Lam. 2:1; Luke 4:6; 10:15).

Lucifer, son of the morning. Lit. "shining one, son of dawn." Probably this refers to the planet Venus, rising in the morning and climbing toward the top of the sky, only to be overtaken by the sun. In the ancient world observations of this astronomical cycle gave rise to several myths. Babylon seems to have thought of itself as fulfilling such a heavenly destiny, and becoming an eternal and universal empire. But with the appearance of God (v. 22), Babylon's light would be extinguished.

■ **14:13 on the mount of the congregation.** According to Canaanite myths, the god El presided over an assembly of gods on a mountain in Syria. Babylon was ready to claim this honor for itself.

sides of the north. A traditional rendering of Hebrew *zaphon.* Psalm 48:1, 2 mentions these "sides of the north" as belonging to the Lord alone.

■ **14:14 Most High.** See Gen. 14:19, 20. This is a restatement of v. 13. People may claim rule over every realm of God's kingdom, but God is still sovereign.

■ **14:15 Sheol . . . Pit.** See vv. 9–11 and notes.

■ **14:16 kingdoms.** See note on 13:4.

■ **14:17 wilderness . . . prisoners.** Babylon used the power of which it was so proud for destruction and cruelty.

■ **14:18 the kings . . . sleep.** The satirical contrast introduced in v. 9 is taken up again. The conquered kings are pictured in honored rest, while proud Babylon is thrown out like unhealthy refuse. To be deprived of a proper burial was regarded as a great misfortune.

■ **14:22 remnant.** Unlike Israel, Assyria has no remnant (v. 30; cf. 15:9; 17:3 and 1:9 note).

■ **14:23 porcupine.** See note on 13:21, 22. It is possible that a certain type of bird is meant, rather than a porcupine.

Assyria Destroyed

24 The LORD of hosts has sworn, saying,
"Surely, as I have thought, so it shall come to pass,
And as I have purposed, *so* it shall [y]stand:
25 That I will break the [z]Assyrian in My land,
And on My mountains tread him underfoot.
Then [a]his yoke shall be removed from them,
And his burden removed from their shoulders.
26 This *is* the [b]purpose that is purposed against the whole earth,
And this *is* the hand that is stretched out over all the nations.
27 For the LORD of hosts has [c]purposed,
And who will annul *it?*
His hand *is* stretched out,
And who will turn it back?"

Philistia Destroyed

28 This is the [g]burden which came in the year that [d]King Ahaz died.

29 "Do not rejoice, all you of Philistia,
[e]Because the rod that struck you is broken;
For out of the serpent's roots will come forth a viper,
[f]And its offspring *will be* a fiery flying serpent.
30 The firstborn of the poor will feed,
And the needy will lie down in safety;
I will kill your roots with famine,
And it will slay your remnant.
31 Wail, O gate! Cry, O city!
All you of Philistia *are* dissolved;
For smoke will come from the north,
And no one *will be* alone in his [l]appointed times."

32 What will they answer the messengers of the nation?
That [g]the LORD has founded Zion,
And [h]the poor of His people shall take refuge in it.

Proclamation Against Moab

15 The [a]burden[l] against Moab.

Because in the night [b]Ar of [c]Moab is laid waste
And destroyed,
Because in the night Kir of Moab is laid waste
And destroyed,

24 [y]Is. 43:13

25 [z]Mic. 5:5, 6; Zeph. 2:13 [a]Is. 10:27; Nah. 1:13

26 [b]Is. 23:9; Zeph. 3:6, 8

27 [c]2 Chr. 20:6; Job 9:12; 23:13; Ps. 33:11; Prov. 19:21; 21:30; Is. 43:13; Dan. 4:31, 35

28 [d]2 Kin. 16:20; 2 Chr. 28:27 [g]*oracle, prophecy*

29 [e]2 Chr. 26:6 [f]2 Kin. 18:8

31 [l]Or *ranks*

32 [g]Ps. 87:1, 5 [h]Zech. 11:11

CHAPTER 15

1 [a]2 Kin. 3:4 [b]Deut. 2:9; Num. 21:28 [c]Is. 15:1—16:14; Jer. 25:21; 48:1–47; Amos 2:1–3; Zeph. 2:8–11 [l]*oracle, prophecy*

■ **14:25 yoke.** See note on 9:3, 4.

■ **14:26, 27 the purpose . . . who will annul.** These verses concluding the section that began at 13:1 are an eloquent statement of God's irresistible judgment over the whole earth (43:13).

■ **14:28 burden.** See note on 13:1. This oracle could date from as early as 727 B.C., four years before Shalmaneser's attack on Samaria, or as late as 715 B.C., fourteen years before the fall of Samaria (2 Kin. 18:13). The later date is preferable since it corresponds to a time of Philistine revolt against Assyria.

■ **14:29 rod.** See note on 10:5. This is an Assyrian king—either Tiglath-Pileser III (d. 727 B.C.) or Sargon (d. 705 B.C.).

broken. This weakness in Assyria's hegemony is temporary.

viper . . . fiery flying serpent. There is no need to identify the snakes with particular kings, like Sennacherib, Esarhaddon, or Ashurbanipal. The idea is that Assyrian strength will go on for more than one generation despite successions of kings.

■ **14:30 poor . . . needy.** See 11:4; Ps. 19:8 and notes.

remnant. See note on v. 22.

■ **14:31 smoke . . . from the north.** This reference is to the Assyrian invasion.

■ **14:32 messengers.** The Philistines sought to create a coalition with Judah and other nations, but God's response through Isaiah is clear. God will protect His own, in spite of the political and military turmoil.

■ **15:1—16:14** This oracle of judgment against Moab was probably delivered around the time of Sargon's defeat of Moab in 715 B.C. See also 11:14; 25:10; Jer. 48; Ezek. 25:8–11; Amos 2:1–3; Zeph. 2:8–11. The oracle concerns Moab's distress (ch. 15) and the response to Moab's distress (ch. 16).

■ **15:1 burden.** See note on 13:1.

Moab. Moab was a nation east of the Dead Sea, between the Ammonites and the Edomites. Her relations with Judah were often tense.

Ar . . . Kir. The city of Ar was on the Arnon River, and Kir was the capital of Moab.

2 He has gone up to the [2]temple and Dibon,
To the high places to weep.
Moab will wail over Nebo and over Medeba;
[d]On all their heads *will be* baldness,
And every beard cut off.
3 In their streets they will clothe themselves with sackcloth;
On the tops of their houses
And in their streets
Everyone will wail, [e]weeping bitterly.
4 Heshbon and Elealeh will cry out,
Their voice shall be heard as far as [f]Jahaz;
Therefore the [3]armed soldiers of Moab will cry out;
His life will be burdensome to him.
5 "My[g] heart will cry out for Moab;
His fugitives *shall flee* to Zoar,
Like [4]a three-year-old heifer.
For [h]by the Ascent of Luhith
They will go up with weeping;
For in the way of Horonaim
They will raise up a cry of destruction,
6 For the waters [i]of Nimrim will be desolate,
For the green grass has withered away;
The grass fails, there is nothing green.
7 Therefore the abundance they have gained,
And what they have laid up,
They will carry away to the Brook of the Willows.
8 For the cry has gone all around the borders of Moab,
Its wailing to Eglaim
And its wailing to Beer Elim.
9 For the waters of [5]Dimon will be full of blood;
Because I will bring more upon [5]Dimon,
[j]Lions upon him who escapes from Moab,
And on the remnant of the land."

Moab Destroyed

16 Send [a]the lamb to the ruler of the land,
[b]From [1]Sela to the wilderness,
To the mount of the daughter of Zion.
2 For it shall be as a [c]wandering bird thrown out of the nest;
So shall be the daughters of Moab at the fords of the [d]Arnon.

2 [d]Lev. 21:5; Jer. 48:37 [2]Heb. *bayith*, lit. *house*
3 [e]Jer. 48:38
4 [f]Num. 21:28; 32:3; Jer. 48:34 [3]So with MT, Tg., Vg.; LXX, Syr. *loins*
5 [g]Is. 16:11; Jer. 48:31 [h]Jer. 48:5 [4]Or *The Third Eglath*, an unknown city, Jer. 48:34
6 [i]Num. 32:36
9 [j]2 Kin. 17:25; Jer. 50:17 [5]So with MT, Tg.; DSS, Vg. *Dibon;* LXX *Rimon*

CHAPTER 16

1 [a]2 Kin. 3:4; Ezra 7:17 [b]2 Kin. 14:7; Is. 42:11 [1]Lit. *Rock*
2 [c]Prov. 27:8 [d]Num. 21:13

■ **15:2 Dibon . . . high places.** Dibon was a site north of the Arnon River devoted to the worship of the Moabite god Chemosh.

Nebo . . . Medeba. Nebo was a village north of the Arnon River, not far from the mountain where Moses went to look at the Promised Land (Deut. 34:1). Medeba was five miles to the southeast.

baldness. The customs of mourning included cutting the hair and shaving.

■ **15:3 streets.** See note on 24:11.

sackcloth . . . weeping. These were customs of mourning (v. 2; 22:12; Jer. 4:8; 41:5; 48:20, 34; Lam. 2:10).

■ **15:4 Heshbon and Elealeh.** These two towns were close together, about six miles north of Medeba (v. 2). Heshbon was captured by Israel under Moses (Num. 21:23–26).

Jahaz. Located on the Arnon River, about twenty miles south of Heshbon (Num. 21:23; Jer. 48:34).

■ **15:5 My heart will cry.** Isaiah has noticeably more sympathy for Moab, Ruth's homeland (16:11), than for the other nations.

Zoar. The Moabites flee to Zoar, as their forefather Lot had done (Gen. 19:23–30).

Luhith . . . Horonaim. Unidentified cities probably close to Zoar (Jer. 48:3, 5, 34).

■ **15:6 waters of Nimrim.** Possibly a seasonal stream southeast of the Dead Sea (Jer. 48:34).

■ **15:7 Brook of the Willows.** This may be the Zered River on the border between Moab and Edom (v. 8).

■ **15:9 Dimon . . . blood.** Dimon may be another spelling of Dibon, a city on the Arnon River.

Lions. The fugitives go from trouble to trouble (cf. Amos 5:19) in their flight southward. They finally turn to Judah in the west for asylum (16:1–5).

■ **16:1 Send the lamb.** The Moabites were shepherds (Num. 32:3, 4), and could send lambs as tokens of their submission (cf. 2 Kin. 3:4).

From Sela. The fugitives were either at Sela, a naturally fortified site in Edom or at a mountain stronghold (Hebrew *sela'* means "rock," or "cliff"). The tribute is sent from their outpost to Judah.

Zion. See note on 1:8.

■ **16:2 bird . . . at the fords.** The fugitives became refugees fleeing to the south (15:8, 9).

3 "Take counsel, execute judgment;
Make your shadow like the night in the middle of the day;
Hide the outcasts,
Do not betray him who escapes.
4 Let My outcasts dwell with you, O Moab;
Be a shelter to them from the face of the [2]spoiler.
For the extortioner is at an end,
Devastation ceases,
The oppressors are consumed out of the land.
5 In mercy [e]the throne will be established;
And One will sit on it in truth, in the tabernacle of David,
[f]Judging and seeking justice and hastening [g]righteousness."

6 We have heard of the [h]pride of Moab—
He is very proud—
Of his haughtiness and his pride and his wrath;
[i]*But* his [3]lies *shall* not *be* so.
7 Therefore Moab shall [j]wail for Moab;
Everyone shall wail.
For the foundations [k]of Kir Hareseth you shall mourn;
Surely *they are* stricken.

8 For [l]the fields of Heshbon languish,
And [m]the vine of Sibmah;
The lords of the nations have broken down its choice plants,
Which have reached to Jazer
And wandered through the wilderness.
Her branches are stretched out,
They are gone over the [n]sea.
9 Therefore I will bewail the vine of Sibmah,
With the weeping of Jazer;
I will drench you with my tears,
[o]O Heshbon and Elealeh;
For [4]battle cries have fallen
Over your summer fruits and your harvest.

10 [p]Gladness is taken away,
And joy from the plentiful field;
In the vineyards there will be no singing,
Nor will there be shouting;
No treaders will tread out wine in the presses;
I have made their shouting cease.
11 Therefore [q]my [5]heart shall resound like a harp for Moab,
And my inner being for [6]Kir Heres.

12 And it shall come to pass,
When it is seen that Moab is weary on [r]the high place,
That he will come to his sanctuary to pray;
But he will not prevail.

4 [2]*devastator*

5 [e][Is. 9:6, 7; 32:1; 55:4; Dan. 7:14; Mic. 4:7; Luke 1:33; Rev. 11:15] [f]Ps. 72:2 [g]Is. 9:7

6 [h]Jer. 48:29; Amos 2:1; Obad. 3, 4; Zeph. 2:8, 10 [i]Is. 28:15 [3]Lit. *vain talk*

7 [j]Jer. 48:20 [k]2 Kin. 3:25; Jer. 48:31

8 [l]Is. 24:7 [m]Is. 16:9 [n]Jer. 48:32

9 [o]Is. 15:4 [4]Or *shouting has*

10 [p]Is. 24:8; Jer. 48:33

11 [q]Is. 15:5; 63:15; Jer. 48:36; Hos. 11:8; Phil. 2:1 [5]Lit. *belly* [6]*Kir Hareseth*, v. 7

12 [r]Is. 15:2

■ **16:3 shadow.** The verse requests protection from the heat of the day.

■ **16:4 extortioner . . . oppressors.** Assyria.

■ **16:5 In mercy.** God had made a covenant with David (55:3; 2 Sam. 22:51; Ps. 89:28; see note on 54:8). In Jesus, the Son of David, the nations find shelter (Acts 15:16, 17).

throne . . . tabernacle of David. Hope lies in Yahweh and in His promises to David (9:2–7; 11:1–9; Amos 9:11, 12).

■ **16:7** See "God Sees and Knows: Divine Omniscience" at Prov. 15:3.

foundations. The text should probably be translated as "raisin cakes."

■ **16:8 Heshbon . . . Sibmah.** These places were not far apart (15:4; Jer. 48:32).

vine. The imagery of the vineyard (5:1–7) is applied here to Moab.

Jazer . . . the sea. Jazer was the extreme north of Moabite territory.

■ **16:9 I will bewail . . . I will drench.** Isaiah is moved by the desolation of the fine vineyards.

Elealeh. See 15:4.

■ **16:11 my heart shall resound . . . my inner being.** This describes deeply felt sorrow (v. 9; 21:3, 4; cf. Jer. 48:36). See note on 15:5.

■ **16:12 high place . . . sanctuary.** See note on 15:2.

13 This *is* the word which the LORD has spoken concerning Moab since that time. 14 But now the LORD has spoken, saying, "Within three years, [s]as the years of a hired man, the glory of Moab will be despised with all that great multitude, and the remnant *will be* very small *and* feeble."

Proclamation Against Syria and Israel

17 The [a]burden[1] against Damascus.

"Behold, Damascus will cease from *being* a city,
And it will be a ruinous heap.
2 [2]The cities of [b]Aroer *are* forsaken;
They will be for flocks
Which lie down, and [c]no one will make *them* afraid.
3 [d]The fortress also will cease from Ephraim,
The kingdom from Damascus,
And the remnant of Syria;
They will be as the glory of the children of Israel,"
Says the LORD of hosts.

4 "In that day it shall come to pass
That the glory of Jacob will [3]wane,
And [e]the fatness of his flesh grow lean.
5 [f]It shall be as when the harvester gathers the grain,
And reaps the heads with his arm;
It shall be as he who gathers heads of grain
In the Valley of Rephaim.
6 [g]Yet gleaning grapes will be left in it,
Like the shaking of an olive tree.
Two *or* three olives at the top of the uppermost bough,
Four *or* five in its most fruitful branches,"
Says the LORD God of Israel.

7 In that day a man will [h]look to his Maker,
And his eyes will have respect for the Holy One of Israel.
8 He will not look to the altars,
The work of his hands;
He will not respect what his [i]fingers have made,
Nor the [4]wooden images nor the incense altars.

9 In that day his strong cities will be as a forsaken [5]bough
And [6]an uppermost branch,
Which they left because of the children of Israel;
And there will be desolation.

14 [s]Job 7:1; 14:6; Is. 21:16

CHAPTER 17

1 [a]Gen. 14:15; 15:2; 2 Kin. 16:9; Jer. 49:23; Amos 1:3–5; Zech. 9:1; Acts 9:2 [1]*oracle, prophecy*

2 [b]Num. 32:34 [c]Jer. 7:33 [2]So with **MT**, Vg.; LXX *It shall be forsaken forever;* Tg. *Its cities shall be forsaken and desolate*

3 [d]Is. 7:16; 8:4

4 [e]Is. 10:16 [3]*fade*

5 [f]Is. 17:11; Jer. 51:33; Joel 3:13; Matt. 13:30

6 [g]Deut. 4:27; Is. 24:13; Obad. 5

7 [h]Is. 10:20; Hos. 3:5; Mic. 7:7

8 [i]Is. 2:8; 31:7 [4]Heb. *Asherim,* Canaanite deities

9 [5]LXX *Hivites;* Tg. *laid waste;* Vg. *as the plows* [6]LXX *Amorites;* Tg. *in ruins;* Vg. *corn*

■ **16:13 the LORD has spoken.** This summary regarding Moab's distress is in prose form. Either it is a revelation in the past or a reference to the oracles in 15:1–9 or 15:1—16:12.

■ **16:14 Within three years.** The desolation of Moab is at hand. Perhaps this is a reference to the quelling of the rebellion against Sargon, king of Assyria, in 715 B.C.

glory. The prophetic word applies to all who exalt themselves and trouble the people of God. Salvation is in the Messiah (v. 5), but those who seek refuge for political or economic reasons will not find shelter in Zion.

■ **17:1–14** This oracle of judgment concerning Damascus may be dated to the Syro-Ephraimite crisis of 734–732 B.C.

■ **17:1 burden.** See 13:1.

Damascus. Besides being the capital of Syria, it was also the commercial hub along the trade routes between Mesopotamia, Egypt and Arabia. Damascus was captured by Tiglath-Pileser III in 732 B.C.

■ **17:2 Aroer.** This city was located on the Arnon River (2 Kin. 10:32, 33). Syria's political control extended at times to the Arnon.

■ **17:3 fortress . . . Ephraim.** The "strong cities" (v. 9) of Israel were already weakened by 732 B.C. (9:1 note) and ceased to exist in 722 B.C.

remnant. Unlike Israel, Syria has no remnant.

■ **17:5 Valley of Rephaim.** A lush valley southwest of Jerusalem, it was the gateway to the western plains (Josh. 15:8; 18:16; 2 Sam. 5:18, 22; 1 Chr. 14:9).

■ **17:7 man.** The faithful remnant look to their Creator.

Maker. The prophet contrasts the works of God with those of His creatures. See note on 2:8.

■ **17:8 wooden images.** See text note. The Canaanite goddess Asherah was a fertility goddess, symbolized by sacred groves and poles (27:9; Ex. 34:13; Deut. 16:21; Judg. 2:13).

10 Because you have forgotten [j]the God of your salvation,
And have not been mindful of the Rock of your [7]stronghold,
Therefore you will plant pleasant plants
And set out foreign seedlings;
11 In the day you will make your plant to grow,
And in the morning you will make your seed to flourish;
But the harvest *will be* a heap of ruins
In the day of grief and desperate sorrow.

12 Woe to the multitude of many people
Who make a noise [k]like the roar of the seas,
And to the rushing of nations
That make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters!
13 The nations will rush like the rushing of many waters;
But *God* will [l]rebuke them and they will flee far away,
And [m]be chased like the chaff of the mountains before the wind,
Like a rolling thing before the whirlwind.
14 Then behold, at eventide, trouble!
And before the morning, he *is* no more.
This *is* the portion of those who plunder us,
And the lot of those who rob us.

Proclamation Against Ethiopia

18 Woe [a]to the land shadowed with buzzing wings,
Which *is* beyond the rivers of [1]Ethiopia,
2 Which sends ambassadors by sea,
Even in vessels of reed on the waters, *saying,*
"Go, swift messengers, to a nation tall and smooth *of skin,*
To a people terrible from their beginning onward,
A nation powerful and treading down,
Whose land the rivers divide."

3 All inhabitants of the world and dwellers on the earth:
[b]When he lifts up a banner on the mountains, you see *it;*
And when he blows a trumpet, you hear *it.*
4 For so the LORD said to me,
"I will take My rest,

10 [j]Ps. 68:19; Is. 51:13 [7]*refuge*

12 [k]Is. 5:30; Jer. 6:23; Ezek. 43:2; Luke 21:25

13 [l]Ps. 9:5; Is. 41:11 [m]Ps. 83:13; Hos. 13:3

CHAPTER 18

1 [a]2 Kin. 19:9; Is. 20:4, 5; Ezek. 30:4, 5, 9; Zeph. 2:12; 3:10 [1]Heb. *Cush*

3 [b]Is. 5:26

■ **17:10 forgotten . . . not been mindful.** This expression describes apostasy (Deut. 4:9, 23; 8:11, 14, 19; 32:18).

Rock. See note on 8:14, 15.

stronghold. The Lord alone is the strength of His people (25:4; 27:5), in contrast to military and political solutions (v. 9; 23: 11, 14; 30:2).

pleasant plants . . . foreign seedlings. This reference probably points to Canaanite fertility rituals. Israel had cultivated relations with her neighbors and had adapted their ways.

■ **17:11 make your plant to grow.** Perhaps this alludes to a pagan practice in which potted plants were forced to sprout in order to secure fertile crops.

harvest. The end will bring nothing but disaster.

■ **17:12 roar of the seas . . . mighty waters.** The destructive power of the nations appears to be like that of the "seas" and "mighty waters" (8:7 note). In ancient Near Eastern myths the sea represents chaos and death (Ezek. 28:2; 32:2 and notes).

■ **17:13 chaff . . . rolling thing.** To be driven away as chaff (cf. 29:5; 41:15, 16; Ps. 83:13) reveals a lack of life, value, and stability.

mountains. Grain is winnowed on windy hilltops.

■ **17:14 trouble.** An unforeseen series of troubles (24:17, 18), appear on the day of the Lord's wrath (22:5). The Lord still protects His people. He is Immanuel (7:14 note; 8:8 note; 8:10 note), who repays the nations for the evil done to His people.

■ **18:1 Woe.** See note on 1:4.

land . . . buzzing wings. This may mean either a land of "many insects" or "many ships" (so ancient translations).

Ethiopia. The biblical Ethiopia or "Cush" is the remote region of southern Egypt and beyond, including Nubia, south of the fourth cataract of the Nile. The Nubian Shabako ruled over lower Egypt from 715 B.C. (twenty-fifth Dynasty). His administration tried to extend his influence northward into the delta region.

■ **18:2 vessels of reed.** These are papyrus boats that the Nubians could use to send messengers to incite the nations to rebel against Assyria.

tall and smooth of skin. The phrase possibly refers to the impressive appearance of the nation or nations that the remote Nubians were trying to stir up.

■ **18:3 inhabitants of the world.** Those addressed in this oracle will observe what the Lord is doing.

banner. See note on 5:26. Trumpets were also commonly used as signals in war.

■ **18:4 I will take My rest . . . My dwelling place.** Yahweh patiently observes the rebellion of the nations (Ps. 2:1–4).

clear heat . . . cloud of dew. Expressive of the stillness as God waits to act (see 25:5).

4 [2]*watch*

7 [c]Ps. 68:31; 72:10; Is. 16:1; Zeph. 3:10; Mal. 1:11; Acts 8:27–38 [3]So with DSS, LXX, Vg.; MT omits *From;* Tg. *To*

CHAPTER 19

1 [a]Jer. 9:25, 26; Ezek. 29:1—30:19; Joel 3:19 [b]Ps. 18:10; 104:3; Matt. 26:64; Rev. 1:7 [c]Ex. 12:12; Jer. 43:12 [1]*oracle, prophecy* [2]Lit. *shake*

2 [d]Judg. 7:22; 1 Sam. 14:16, 20; 2 Chr. 20:23; Matt. 10:21, 36

3 [e]1 Chr. 10:13; Is. 8:19; 47:12; Dan. 2:2

4 [f]Is. 20:4; Jer. 46:26; Ezek. 29:19

5 [g]Is. 50:2; Jer. 51:36; Ezek. 30:12

6 [h]2 Kin. 19:24

And I will [2]look from My dwelling place
Like clear heat in sunshine,
Like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest."
5 For before the harvest, when the bud is perfect
And the sour grape is ripening in the flower,
He will both cut off the sprigs with pruning hooks
And take away *and* cut down the branches.
6 They will be left together for the mountain birds of prey
And for the beasts of the earth;
The birds of prey will summer on them,
And all the beasts of the earth will winter on them.

7 In that time [c]a present will be brought to the LORD of hosts
[3]From a people tall and smooth *of skin,*
And from a people terrible from their beginning onward,
A nation powerful and treading down,
Whose land the rivers divide—
To the place of the name of the LORD of hosts,
To Mount Zion.

Proclamation Against Egypt

19 The [a]burden[1] against Egypt.

Behold, the LORD [b]rides on a swift cloud,
And will come into Egypt;
[c]The idols of Egypt will [2]totter at His presence,
And the heart of Egypt will melt in its midst.

2 "I will [d]set Egyptians against Egyptians;
Everyone will fight against his brother,
And everyone against his neighbor,
City against city, kingdom against kingdom.
3 The spirit of Egypt will fail in its midst;
I will destroy their counsel,
And they will [e]consult the idols and the charmers,
The mediums and the sorcerers.
4 And the Egyptians I will give
[f]Into the hand of a cruel master,
And a fierce king will rule over them,"
Says the Lord, the LORD of hosts.

5 [g]The waters will fail from the sea,
And the river will be wasted and dried up.
6 The rivers will turn foul;
The brooks [h]of defense will be emptied and dried up;
The reeds and rushes will wither.

■ **18:5, 6** These verses contain two images of God's judgment. First, there is the pruning of the vines before harvest to encourage the development of the grapes, "sprigs" and "branches." Second, there is the carcass on which the "mountain birds of prey" and the wild animals feed. Contrast 31:5.

summer . . . winter. The length of time implied emphasizes how extensive the carnage will be.

■ **18:7 a present.** The nations offer tokens of submission (13:4 note; 16:1 note).

tall and smooth of skin. See v. 2.

the place. The temple was the Old Testament token of God's kingdom (Deut. 12:5, 11).

■ **19:1—20:6** An oracle of judgment concerning Egypt. In contrast to ch. 20, the language of ch. 19 is symbolic, not historically specific.

■ **19:1 burden.** Prophetic message (13:1 note).

■ **19:3 the idols . . . and the sorcerers.** On idolatry and divination, see 2:6, 8; 8:19.

■ **19:4 cruel master . . . fierce king.** Egypt, too, will be subjugated; perhaps this is an allusion to Pharaoh's cruelty before the Exodus (Ex. 6:9).

LORD of hosts. See note on 1:9.

■ **19:5 river . . . dried.** This spells economic disaster for a country whose life depends on the Nile. God can easily dry up Egypt's many waters.

■ **19:6 reeds and rushes.** Contrast 35:6, 7.

7 The papyrus reeds by [3]the River, by the mouth of the River,
And everything sown by the River,
Will wither, be driven away, and be no more.
8 The fishermen also will mourn;
All those will lament who cast hooks into the River,
And they will languish who spread nets on the waters.
9 Moreover those who work in [i]fine flax
And those who weave fine fabric will be ashamed;
10 And its foundations will be broken.
All who make wages *will be* troubled of soul.

11 Surely the princes of [j]Zoan *are* fools;
Pharaoh's wise counselors give foolish counsel.
[k]How do you say to Pharaoh, "I *am* the son of the wise,
The son of ancient kings?"
12 [l]Where *are* they?
Where are your wise men?
Let them tell you now,
And let them know what the LORD of hosts has [m]purposed against Egypt.
13 The princes of Zoan have become fools;
[n]The princes of [4]Noph are deceived;
They have also [5]deluded Egypt,
Those who are the [6]mainstay of its tribes.
14 The LORD has mingled [o]a perverse spirit in her midst;
And they have caused Egypt to err in all her work,
As a drunken man staggers in his vomit.
15 Neither will there be *any* work for Egypt,
Which [p]the head or tail,
Palm branch or bulrush, may do.

16 In that day Egypt will [q]be like women, and will be afraid and fear because of the waving of the hand of the LORD of hosts, [r]which He waves over it. 17 And the land of Judah will be a terror to Egypt; everyone who makes mention of it will be afraid in himself, because of the counsel of the LORD of hosts which He has [s]determined against it.

Egypt, Assyria, and Israel Blessed

18 In that day five cities in the land of Egypt will [t]speak the language of Canaan and [u]swear by the LORD of hosts; one will be called the City of [7]Destruction.

19 In that day [v]there will be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to the [w]LORD at its border. 20 And [x]it will be for a sign and for a witness to the LORD of hosts in the land of Egypt; for they will cry to the LORD because of the oppressors, and He will send them a [y]Savior and a Mighty One, and He will deliver them. 21 Then the LORD will be known to

7 [3]The Nile

9 [i]1 Kin. 10:28; Prov. 7:16; Ezek. 27:7

11 [j]Num. 13:22; Ps. 78:12, 43; Is. 30:4 [k]Gen. 41:38, 39; 1 Kin. 4:29, 30; Acts 7:22

12 [l]1 Cor. 1:20 [m]Ps. 33:11

13 [n]Jer. 2:16; Ezek. 30:13 [4]Ancient Memphis [5]Lit. *caused to stagger* [6]*cornerstone*

14 [o]1 Kin. 22:22; Is. 29:10

15 [p]Is. 9:14–16

16 [q]Jer. 51:30; Nah. 3:13 [r]Is. 11:15

17 [s]Is. 14:24; Dan. 4:35

18 [t]Zeph. 3:9 [u]Is. 45:23 [7]Some Heb. mss., Arab., DSS, Tg., Vg. *Sun;* LXX *Asedek,* lit. *Righteousness*

19 [v]Gen. 28:18; Ex. 24:4; Josh. 22:10, 26, 27; Is. 56:7; 60:7 [w]Ps. 68:31

20 [x]Josh. 4:20; 22:27 [y]Is. 43:11

■ **19:7 sown by the River.** Egypt was the bread-basket of many countries because of the regular flooding of the Nile (Gen. 41:57).

■ **19:9 flax . . . fine fabric.** God's judgment against Egypt fell on the important industries of fishing (v. 8) and flax products, for which Egypt was famous.

■ **19:10 foundations.** The meaning of this Hebrew word is uncertain. Some believe it is a metaphor for the nobles as the "foundation" of the society in contrast to those "who make wages." Others suggest "weavers" of cloth. The point is that all aspects of the society will suffer greatly.

■ **19:11 Zoan.** Also known as Tanis, this was a city in the Nile Delta (Num. 13:22; Ps. 78:12, 43) and Egypt's capital at the time.

fools. God turns the wisdom of the wise into folly.

counselors . . . foolish counsel. See note on 11:2.

son of the wise, The son of ancient kings. This sarcastic remark taunts Egypt's claim to wisdom (cf. 1 Kin. 4:29–31).

■ **19:12 Where are your wise men.** These words addressed to Pharaoh continue to stand as a polemic against human pride (1 Cor. 1:20).

■ **19:13 princes . . . mainstay.** These include political, economic, and religious leaders.

Noph. That is, Memphis. This city in Lower Egypt was its ancient capital.

■ **19:16 waving of the hand.** See note on 14:26, 27.

■ **19:18 five cities.** Not just one but five cities will turn to the Lord.

language of Canaan. This shows how great a change is in view, because anything Canaanite was an abomination to the Egyptians (Gen. 43:32; 46:34).

swear by the LORD. That is, submit completely to God.

City of Destruction. This probably refers to Heliopolis ("City of the Sun," see text note). Jewish scribes parodied the name by changing the Hebrew word for "sun" to the almost identical Hebrew word for "destruction."

■ **19:20 sign . . . witness.** The altar (v. 19) signifies their commitment to the Lord (cf. Gen. 12:8; 28:22; Josh. 22:26–29).

Egypt, and the Egyptians will [z]know the LORD in that day, and [a]will make sacrifice and offering; yes, they will make a vow to the LORD and perform *it.* 22 And the LORD will strike Egypt, He will strike and [b]heal *it;* they will return to the LORD, and He will be entreated by them and heal them.

23 In that day [c]there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian will come into Egypt and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians will [d]serve with the Assyrians.

24 In that day Israel will be one of three with Egypt and Assyria—a blessing in the midst of the land, 25 whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, "Blessed *is* Egypt My people, and Assyria [e]the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance."

The Sign Against Egypt and Ethiopia

20 In the year that [a]Tartan[1] came to Ashdod, when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him, and he fought against Ashdod and took it, 2 at the same time the LORD spoke by Isaiah the son of Amoz, saying, "Go, and remove [b]the sackcloth from your [2]body, and take your sandals off your feet." And he did so, [c]walking naked and barefoot.

3 Then the LORD said, "Just as My servant Isaiah has walked naked and barefoot three years [d]*for* a sign and a wonder against Egypt and Ethiopia, 4 so shall the [e]king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians as prisoners and the Ethiopians as captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, [f]with their buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt. 5 [g]Then they shall be afraid and ashamed of Ethiopia their expectation and Egypt their glory. 6 And the inhabitant of this territory will say in that day, 'Surely such *is* our expectation, wherever we flee for [h]help to be delivered from the king of Assyria; and how shall we escape?' "

The Fall of Babylon Proclaimed

21 The [1]burden against the Wilderness of the Sea.

As [a]whirlwinds in the South pass through,
So it comes from the desert, from a terrible land.
2 A distressing vision is declared to me;
[b]The treacherous dealer deals treacherously,
And the plunderer plunders.
[c]Go up, O Elam!
Besiege, O Media!
All its sighing I have made to cease.

21 [z]Is. 2:3, 4; 11:9] [a]Is. 56:7; 60:7; Zech. 14:16–18; Mal. 1:11

22 [b]Deut. 32:39; Is. 30:26; 57:18; [Heb. 12:11]

23 [c]Is. 11:16; 35:8; 49:11; 62:10 [d]Is. 27:13

25 [e]Deut. 14:2; Ps. 100:3; Is. 29:23; Hos. 2:23; [Eph. 2:10]

CHAPTER 20

1 [a]2 Kin. 18:17 [1]Or *the Commander in Chief*

2 [b]Zech. 13:4; Matt. 3:4 [c]1 Sam. 19:24; Mic. 1:8 [2]Lit. *loins*

3 [d]Is. 8:18

4 [e]Is. 19:4 [f]2 Sam. 10:4; Is. 3:17; Jer. 13:22; Mic. 1:11

5 [g]2 Kin. 18:21; Is. 30:3–5; 31:1; Ezek. 29:6, 7

6 [h]Is. 30:5, 7

CHAPTER 21

1 [a]Zech. 9:14 [1]*oracle, prophecy*

2 [b]Is. 33:1 [c]Is. 13:17; 22:6; Jer. 49:34

Savior and a Mighty One. God will fill these roles to deliver them from oppressors, as He did for Israel in the days of the judges (Judg. 2:18; 3:9, 15).

■ **19:22 strike . . . heal.** Divine discipline will draw the Egyptians to the Lord (30:26; Hos. 6:1; 14:1, 2, 4).

■ **19:23 highway.** Building this link between Egypt and Assyria symbolizes the removal of the alienation between them (cf. 11:16 note).

Egypt to Assyria. These two great cultures find unity in a common commitment to the Lord.

■ **19:24 blessing in the midst of the land.** Israel, Egypt, and Assyria will join in the patriarchal promises (Gen. 12:2, 3).

■ **19:25 people . . . work of My hands . . . inheritance.** Each will share in full covenant membership, signified by three designations: "people" (cf. 10:24; 40:1 note; Ps. 100:3; Jer. 11:4; Hos. 2:23); "work of My hands" (60:21; Ps. 119:73; 138:8); "inheritance" (Deut. 32:9).

■ **20:1 Tartan.** Probably not a name but a title designating a high officer in the Assyrian army (see text note).

Ashdod. This Philistine city rebelled against Assyria at the encouragement of Shabako, the Nubian king (18:1 note) in 713 B.C. It fell in 711. An inscription mentioning Sargon by name has been unearthed at Ashdod.

Sargon. This is Sargon II, king of Assyria from 721 to 705 B.C.

■ **20:2 sackcloth . . . barefoot.** The Lord ordered Isaiah to be partially clad like a captive going into exile. Sackcloth was a garment for times of mourning (15:3; 22:12; 37:1, 2; 58:5), or else the distinctive prophetic garment (2 Kin. 1:8; Zech. 13:4).

■ **20:3 My servant.** The phrase refers to a position of trust and honor before God. Moses was God's friend and servant (Ex. 14:31; Num. 12:7, 8; Deut. 34:5). Also included among God's servants were Abraham (Ps. 105:42); Jacob (Ezek. 28:25); Joshua (Josh. 24:29); David (37:35; 2 Sam. 3:18; Ps. 132:10); the Suffering Servant (52:13—53:12); and groups of people, such as the prophets (44:26) and restored Israel (41:8, 9; 43:10; 44:1, 2, 21; 45:4; 48:20). God's servants may suffer, but they are promised a great heritage as "servants of the LORD" (54:17; 65:8, 9, 13–15; 66:14).

three years. It could designate the time that Isaiah walked about as a sign or the duration before the sign would be realized.

sign and a wonder. The prophetic style of life (8:18; cf. Deut. 13:1, 2; Jer. 32:20) pointed out the folly of relying on Egypt, because Egypt, like any nation, was vulnerable.

■ **20:4 king of Assyria.** Esarhaddon fulfilled this prophecy in 671 B.C.

■ **20:6 in that day.** See note on 2:11.

expectation. Egypt's fate will persuade the people that no ally can help them escape.

■ **21:1 burden.** See note on 13:1.

Wilderness of the Sea. This is probably a sarcastic parody. Babylon's southern region on the Persian Gulf, known as "Land of the Sea," will become a wilderness or as good as a wilderness to anyone looking for salvation from there.

■ **21:2 distressing vision.** The prophet is overwhelmed by what he sees.

deals treacherously . . . plunders. In the course of waging war.

Elam . . . Media. Elam was a major region of Persia. It was allied with Media in 700 B.C. Perhaps as a part of Assyria's army (5:26 note) Elam helped to conquer Babylon in 689 B.C., as they certainly did in 539 B.C. (11:11; 13:17 and notes).

its. The indefinite subject could refer to the groan of Babylon under Assyrian domination or to the groan of the nations under Babylonian control. The former is more likely, because Babylon rose to power in 605 B.C.

3 Therefore [d]my loins are filled with pain;
[e]Pangs have taken hold of me, like the pangs of a woman in labor.
I was [2]distressed when *I* heard *it;*
I was dismayed when *I* saw *it.*
4 My heart wavered, fearfulness frightened me;
[f]The night for which I longed He turned into fear for me.
5 [g]Prepare the table,
Set a watchman in the tower,
Eat and drink.
Arise, you princes,
Anoint the shield!

6 For thus has the Lord said to me:
"Go, set a watchman,
Let him declare what he sees."
7 And he saw a chariot *with* a pair of horsemen,
A chariot of donkeys, *and* a chariot of camels,
And he listened earnestly with great care.
8 [3]Then he cried, "A lion, my Lord!
I stand continually on the [h]watchtower in the daytime;
I have sat at my post every night.
9 And look, here comes a chariot of men *with* a pair of horsemen!"
Then he answered and said,
[i]"Babylon is fallen, is fallen!
And [j]all the carved images of her gods
He has broken to the ground."

10 [k]Oh, my threshing and the grain of my floor!
That which I have heard from the LORD of hosts,
The God of Israel,
I have declared to you.

Proclamation Against Edom

11 [l]The [4]burden against Dumah.

He calls to me out of [m]Seir,
"Watchman, what of the night?
Watchman, what of the night?"
12 The watchman said,
"The morning comes, and also the night.
If you will inquire, inquire;
Return! Come back!"

Proclamation Against Arabia

13 [n]The [5]burden against Arabia.

In the forest in Arabia you will lodge,
O you traveling companies [o]of Dedanites.

3 [d]Is. 15:5; 16:11 [e]Is. 13:8 [2]Lit. *bowed*
4 [f]Deut. 28:67
5 [g]Jer. 51:39; Dan. 5:5
8 [h]Hab. 2:1 [3]DSS *Then the observer cried, "My Lord!*
9 [i]Is. 13:19; 47:5, 9; 48:14; Jer. 51:8; Dan. 5:28, 31; Rev. 14:8; 18:2 [j]Is. 46:1; Jer. 50:2; 51:44
10 [k]Jer. 51:33; Mic. 4:13
11 [l]Gen. 25:14; 1 Chr. 1:30; Josh. 15:52 [m]Gen. 32:3; Jer. 49:7; Ezek. 35:2; Obad. 1 [4]*oracle, prophecy*
13 [n]Jer. 25:24; 49:28 [o]Gen. 10:7; 1 Chr. 1:9, 32; Jer. 25:23; Ezek. 27:15 [5]*oracle, prophecy*

■ **21:3, 4** The expressions in these verses convey great psychological suffering on the prophet's part (16:9–11; 22:4; cf. Dan. 8:27; 10:16–17). The report of Babylon's fall may have distressed Isaiah because now no one could rescue Judah from Assyria.

■ **21:5 Anoint the shield.** Prepare for battle.

■ **21:6 watchman.** Isaiah is God's watchman in Judah.

■ **21:7 chariot . . . camels.** Probably signs of an approaching army.

■ **21:9 Babylon is fallen.** Finally, the seductive power of Babylon, her religion (17:7–9; 27:9; 46:1–13), and her culture have come to an end (13:19).

■ **21:10 my threshing and the grain of my floor.** Judah is portrayed as an oppressed people, much like the grain under the threshing sledge (28:27, 28; 41:15, 16; Amos 1:3). See note on 40:1.

■ **21:11 burden.** See note on 13:1.

Dumah. An oasis in Edom at the intersection of the roads from the Red Sea to Palmyra and from the Persian Gulf to Petra.

Seir. Edom. The Edomites ask the prophet what the future will hold.

■ **21:12 morning . . . night.** The future holds both hope and judgment, specifically, relief from Assyrian domination followed by oppression from Babylon.

■ **21:13 burden.** See note on 13:1.

Dedanites. Dedan was an oasis 200 miles south of Dumah (Ezek. 27:20; 38:13).

14 O inhabitants of the land of Tema,
Bring water to him who is thirsty;
With their bread they met him who fled.
15 For they fled from the swords, from the drawn sword,
From the bent bow, and from the distress of war.

16 For thus the LORD has said to me: "Within a year, [p]according to the year of a hired man, all the glory of [q]Kedar will fail; 17 and the remainder of the number of archers, the mighty men of the people of Kedar, will be diminished; for the LORD God of Israel has spoken *it.*"

Proclamation Against Jerusalem

22 The [1]burden against the Valley of Vision.

What ails you now, that you have all gone up to the housetops,
2 You who are full of noise,
A [2]tumultuous city, [a]a joyous city?
Your slain *men are* not slain with the sword,
Nor dead in battle.
3 All your rulers have fled together;
They are captured by the archers.
All who are found in you are bound together;
They have fled from afar.
4 Therefore I said, "Look away from me,
[b]I will weep bitterly;
Do not labor to comfort me
Because of the plundering of the daughter of my people."

5 [c]For *it is* a day of trouble and treading down and perplexity
[d]By the Lord GOD of hosts
In the Valley of Vision—
Breaking down the walls
And of crying to the mountain.
6 [e]Elam bore the quiver
With chariots of men *and* horsemen,
And [f]Kir uncovered the shield.
7 It shall come to pass *that* your choicest valleys
Shall be full of chariots,
And the horsemen shall set themselves in array at the gate.

8 [g]He removed the [3]protection of Judah.
You looked in that day to the armor [h]of the House of the Forest;

16 [p]Is. 16:14 [q]Ps. 120:5; Song 1:5; Is. 42:11; 60:7; Ezek. 27:21

CHAPTER 22

1 [1]*oracle, prophecy*
2 [a]Is. 32:13 [2]*boisterous*
4 [b]Jer. 4:19
5 [c]Is. 37:3 [d]Lam. 1:5; 2:2
6 [e]Jer. 49:35 [f]Is. 15:1
8 [g]2 Kin. 18:15, 16 [h]1 Kin. 7:2; 10:17 [3]Lit. *covering*

■ **21:14 Tema.** This also was an oasis, located 90 miles north of Dedan (Jer. 25:23). The desert peoples provide food and water for the fugitives from the battle.

■ **21:16 Within a year.** Arabia's glory will be directly affected by what happens in Babylon.

Kedar. Arabia, including Syria; the area inhabited by Bedouin tribes (Jer. 49:28, 29).

■ **22:1–25** An oracle of judgment concerning the Valley of Vision, Jerusalem. The placement of an oracle concerning Jerusalem in the midst of oracles against foreign nations may be explained by the historical association of Jerusalem with Babylon. Jerusalem had trusted in Babylon during the Assyrian hegemony, but ultimately was taken into captivity by her former ally. The occasion may be Ashdod's rebellion and the Assyrian campaign in 711 B.C., or the lifting of the siege on Jerusalem after the devastation of Judah in 701 B.C.

■ **22:1 burden.** See note on 13:1.

Valley of Vision. This may be intended as an insult, to the effect that the city built on a hill (2:1) is now a valley.

gone up to the housetops. The Assyrians having left, the people gathered on the housetops for purposes of socializing and celebrating (v. 13).

■ **22:2 full of noise . . . tumultuous . . . joyous.** The noisy and excited citizenry has not seen what the prophet has seen. Rather they have become complacent (32:13; Zeph. 2:15; 3:11).

not slain with the sword. They had run away (v.3).

■ **22:3 your rulers have fled.** The people were governed by unreliable and selfish leaders who abandoned them to save their own lives (2 Kin. 25:4–6). The prophet is critical of human leadership and of people who have no understanding of what is happening around them (1:23–26; 3:13–15; 9:14–17; 19:13–15; 28:7–13; 29:15).

■ **22:4 Do not labor to comfort me.** His sorrow was too deep for consolation. See note on 21:3–4.

■ **22:5 day.** The day of the Lord. See note on 2:11.

trouble and treading down and perplexity. These images are a vivid description of desolation and destruction (18:2, 7; Deut. 28:20; Ezek. 7:7; Amos 3:9; Zech. 14:13).

Breaking down . . . crying. There is frenzied anxiety and screams of anguish.

■ **22:6 Elam . . . Kir.** See notes on 11:11; 21:2. These nations to the east of Babylon joined Assyria in the siege of Jerusalem (5:26 note).

■ **22:8 the House of the Forest.** This was apparently a storeroom for weapons next to the temple (1 Kin. 7:2–5).

9 [i]You also saw the [j]damage to the city of David,
That it was great;
And you gathered together the waters of the lower pool.
10 You numbered the houses of Jerusalem,
And the houses you broke down
To fortify the wall.
11 [i]You also made a reservoir between the two walls
For the water of the old [k]pool.
But you did not look to its Maker,
Nor did you have respect for Him who fashioned it long ago.

12 And in that day the Lord GOD of hosts
[l]Called for weeping and for mourning,
[m]For baldness and for girding with sackcloth.
13 But instead, joy and gladness,
Slaying oxen and killing sheep,
Eating meat and [n]drinking wine:
[o]"Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!"

14 [p]Then it was revealed in my hearing by the LORD of hosts,
"Surely for this iniquity there [q]will be no atonement for you,
Even to your death," says the Lord GOD of hosts.

The Judgment on Shebna

15 Thus says the Lord GOD of hosts:

"Go, proceed to this steward,
To [r]Shebna, who *is* over the house, *and say:*
16 'What have you here, and whom have you here,
That you have hewn a sepulcher here,
As he [s]who hews himself a sepulcher on high,
Who carves a tomb for himself in a rock?
17 Indeed, the LORD will throw you away violently,
O mighty man,
[t]And will surely seize you.
18 He will surely turn violently and toss you like a ball
Into a large country;
There you shall die, and there [u]your glorious chariots
Shall be the shame of your master's house.
19 So I will drive you out of your office,
And from your position [5]he will pull you down.

20 'Then it shall be in that day,
That I will call My servant [v]Eliakim the son of Hilkiah;

9 [j]2 Kin. 20:20; 2 Chr. 32:4; Neh. 3:16 [k]Lit. *breaches* in the city walls

11 [i]Neh. 3:16 [k]2 Kin. 20:20; 2 Chr. 32:3, 4

12 [l]Is. 32:11; Joel 1:13; 2:17 [m]Ezra 9:3; Is. 15:2; Mic. 1:16

13 [n]Is. 5:11, 22; 28:7, 8; Luke 17:26–29 [o]Is. 56:12; 1 Cor. 15:32

14 [p]Is. 5:9 [q]1 Sam. 3:14; Ezek. 24:13

15 [r]2 Kin. 18:37; Is. 36:3

16 [s]2 Sam. 18:18; 2 Chr. 16:14; Matt. 27:60

17 [t]Esth. 7:8

18 [u]Is. 2:7

19 [5]LXX omits *he will pull you down;* Syr., Tg., Vg. *I will pull you down*

20 [v]2 Kin. 18:18; Is. 36:3, 22; 37:2

■ **22:9 city of David.** Jerusalem.

lower pool. This may be the pool of Siloam. Hezekiah put buildings around it to ensure that people in Jerusalem could reach it, while denying it to enemies outside (Luke 13:4; John 9:7, 11).

■ **22:11 old pool.** Probably the Gihon Spring, also known as the "upper pool" (7:3; 36:2).

did not look . . . have respect. While busying themselves with planning and fortifying Jerusalem, they forgot the Lord.

fashioned it long ago. God had planned the future of Jerusalem when He determined long before to create it (37:26). No one could change His plan or avert His judgment.

■ **22:13 joy and gladness . . . drinking.** This is the spirit of revelry (v. 2). It should be contrasted with the joy of God's people (35:10; 51:11).

wine. See note on 24:11.

Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die. This is a proverbial expression of contempt and disregard for God's purposes in history (1 Cor. 15:32; cf. Luke 12:19, 20).

■ **22:14 for this iniquity there will be no atonement.** God's judgment stands (Amos 7:1–9).

■ **22:16 sepulcher . . . tomb for himself in a rock.** Isaiah questions Shebna's preparation of a royal tomb in the hillside. Shebna should be providing leadership, not working on luxuries for himself. A tomb that may be Shebna's, cut in the rock, has been excavated in the Kidron Valley.

■ **22:17 mighty man.** This ironic expression challenges Shebna's presumption.

■ **22:18 toss you like a ball.** Shebna is insignificant and is readily overthrown (cf. Jer. 22:26).

chariots. This emphasizes Shebna's luxurious way of life.

■ **22:19 I will drive you out.** By 701 B.C. Shebna had been demoted to serve as secretary, and Eliakim had assumed Shebna's office (36:3, 22).

■ **22:20 My servant.** See note on 20:3. God regarded Eliakim (36:3, 11, 22; 37:2) as His servant, a special designation for one close to God.

21 I will clothe him with your robe
And strengthen him with your belt;
I will commit your responsibility into his hand.
He shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem
And to the house of Judah.
22 The key of the house of David
I will lay on his [w]shoulder;
So he shall [x]open, and no one shall shut;
And he shall shut, and no one shall open.
23 I will fasten him *as* [y]a peg in a secure place,
And he will become a glorious throne to his father's house.

24 'They will hang on him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the posterity, all vessels of small quantity, from the cups to all the pitchers. 25 In that day,' says the LORD of hosts, 'the peg that is fastened in the secure place will be removed and be cut down and fall, and the burden that *was* on it will be cut off; for the LORD has spoken.' "

Proclamation Against Tyre

23 The [a]burden[1] against Tyre.

Wail, you ships of Tarshish!
For it is laid waste,
So that there is no house, no harbor;
From the land of [2]Cyprus it is revealed to them.

2 Be still, you inhabitants of the coastland,
You merchants of Sidon,
[3]Whom those who cross the sea have filled.
3 And on great waters the grain of Shihor,
The harvest of [4]the River, *is* her revenue;
And [b]she is a marketplace for the nations.

4 Be ashamed, O Sidon;
For the sea has spoken,
The strength of the sea, saying,
"I do not labor, nor bring forth children;
Neither do I rear young men,
Nor bring up virgins."
5 [c]When the report *reaches* Egypt,
They also will be in agony at the report of Tyre.

6 Cross over to Tarshish;
Wail, you inhabitants of the coastland!

22 [w]Is. 9:6 [x]Job 12:14; Rev. 3:7

23 [y]Ezra 9:8; Zech. 10:4

CHAPTER 23

1 [a]Jer. 25:22; 47:4; Ezek. 26—28; Amos 1:9; Zech. 9:2, 4 [1]*oracle, prophecy* [2]Heb. *Kittim,* western lands, especially Cyprus

2 [3]So with MT, Vg.; LXX, Tg. *Passing over the water;* DSS *Your messengers passing over the sea*

3 [b]Ezek. 27:3–23 [4]The Nile

5 [c]Is. 19:16

■ **22:21 robe . . . belt.** These were garments for a person in high office.

father. He would be a godly leader who serves the people well.

■ **22:23 glorious throne.** He will bring honor to his family and offspring, in contrast to Shebna ("the shame of your master's house," v. 18).

■ **22:24 vessels of small quantity.** A metaphor for those who depended on God's servant.

■ **22:25 In that day.** Though Eliakim was faithful, he could not avert God's judgment on Judah.

■ **23:1–18** An oracle of judgment concerning Tyre, concerning commercial systems that do not take God into consideration. The language is general and symbolic, not historically specific.

■ **23:1 burden.** See note on 13:1.

Tyre. A prominent Phoenician port on the Mediterranean, west of Mt. Hermon and Damascus. Judah had a longstanding relationship with Tyre, for Solomon had traded with Hiram of Tyre (1 Kin. 5:1, 8–11) and Phoenician sailors had manned Solomon's fleet (1 Kin. 9:27).

ships of Tarshish. These large vessels of the merchant fleet (1 Kin. 10:22; Ps. 48:7) traversed great distances to the Phoenician colonies along the Mediterranean coasts.

it is laid waste. The fall of Tyre would require the ships to find another port.

Cyprus. This would be a port of call on the return voyage.

■ **23:2 Sidon.** Tyre and Sidon were the two most important Phoenician cities, both Mediterranean ports. The fall of one would affect the other.

■ **23:3 Shihor.** Egypt (cf. 19:7).

■ **23:4 the sea has spoken.** The sea laments the loss or destruction of its children. Hearing this, Sidon should not be overconfident.

■ **23:6 Tarshish.** Tartessus in Spain (Jon. 1:3). The nations join in the lament.

Is this your [d]joyous *city,*
Whose antiquity *is* from ancient days,
Whose feet carried her far off to dwell?
8 Who has taken this counsel against Tyre, [e]the crowning *city,*
Whose merchants *are* princes,
Whose traders *are* the honorable of the earth?
9 The LORD of hosts has [f]purposed it,
To [5]bring to dishonor the [g]pride of all glory,
To bring into contempt all the honorable of the earth.

10 Overflow through your land like [6]the River,
O daughter of Tarshish;
There is no more [7]strength.
11 He stretched out His hand over the sea,
He shook the kingdoms;
The LORD has given a commandment [h]against Canaan
To destroy its strongholds.
12 And He said, "You will rejoice no more,
O you oppressed virgin daughter of Sidon.
Arise, [i]cross over to Cyprus;
There also you will have no rest."

13 Behold, the land of the [j]Chaldeans,
This people *which* was not;
Assyria founded it for [k]wild beasts of the desert.
They set up its towers,
They raised up its palaces,
And brought it to ruin.

14 [l]Wail, you ships of Tarshish!
For your strength is laid waste.

15 Now it shall come to pass in that day that Tyre will be forgotten seventy years, according to the days of one king. At the end of seventy years it will happen to Tyre as *in* the song of the harlot:

16 "Take a harp, go about the city,
You forgotten harlot;
Make sweet melody, sing many songs,
That you may be remembered."

17 And it shall be, at the end of seventy years, that the LORD will deal with Tyre. She will return to her hire, and [m]commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world on the face of the earth. 18 Her gain and her pay [n]will be set apart for the LORD; it will not be treasured nor laid up, for her gain will be for those who dwell before the LORD, to eat sufficiently, and for [8]fine clothing.

7 [d]Is. 22:2; 32:13
8 [e]Ezek. 28:2, 12
9 [f]Is. 14:26 [g]Job 40:11, 12; Is. 13:11; 24:4; Dan. 4:37 [5]*pollute*
10 [6]The Nile [7]*restraint,* lit. *belt*
11 [h]Zech. 9:2–4
12 [i]Ezek. 26:13, 14; Rev. 18:22
13 [j]Is. 47:1 [k]Ps. 72:9
14 [l]Ezek. 27:25–30
17 [m]Rev. 17:2
18 [n]Ex. 28:36; Zech. 14:20, 21 [8]*choice*

■ **23:7, 8 joyous city . . . honorable.** Tyre was known for her revelry (22:2 note), "antiquity," far-flung influence, wealth, and fame (v. 8).

■ **23:9–13** See "God Sees and Knows: Divine Omniscience" at Prov. 15:3.

■ **23:9 LORD of hosts.** See note on 1:9.

purposed. Throughout his prophecy Isaiah seeks to bring to light something of God's counsel (11:2 note).

■ **23:11 sea . . . kingdoms.** God is Lord of land and sea.

Canaan. Canaan includes Tyre and Sidon.

■ **23:12 virgin daughter.** The inhabitants of Sidon (cf. 37:22; 47:1).

■ **23:13 Chaldeans . . . beasts of the desert.** "Chaldeans" is another name for the Assyrians; they defeated Babylon in 689 B.C. Isaiah refers to the defeat as an example for Tyre.

■ **23:15 seventy years.** A period of time ordained by God; "seventy" signifies fullness. It is not possible to determine the specific time referred to.

song of the harlot. A street song concerning a prostitute.

■ **23:17 to her hire.** Like a harlot, Tyre formed economic alliances with anyone who enriched her, regardless of ethics.

■ **23:18 for the LORD.** Tyre, too, will acknowledge the sovereignty of the Lord by paying tribute (Deut. 2:3–35; Josh. 6:17, 19).

eat sufficiently, and for fine clothing. The wealth of the nations builds up the kingdom of God (45:14; 60:5, 11; 61:6; 66:12; Hag. 2:7, 8).

CHAPTER 24

2 [a]Hos. 4:9 [b]Ezek. 7:12, 13

4 [c]Is. 25:11 [1]*proud*

5 [d]Gen. 3:17; Num. 35:33; Is. 9:17; 10:6 [e]Is. 59:12 [f]1 Chr. 16:14–19; Ps. 105:7–12

6 [g]Mal. 4:6 [h]Is. 9:19 [2]Or *held guilty*

7 [i]Is. 16:8–10; Joel 1:10, 12

8 [j]Is. 5:12, 14; Jer. 7:34; 16:9; 25:10; Ezek. 26:13; Hos. 2:11; Rev. 18:22

Impending Judgment on the Earth

24 Behold, the LORD makes the earth empty and makes it waste,
Distorts its surface
And scatters abroad its inhabitants.
2 And it shall be:
As with the people, so with the [a]priest;
As with the servant, so with his master;
As with the maid, so with her mistress;
[b]As with the buyer, so with the seller;
As with the lender, so with the borrower;
As with the creditor, so with the debtor.
3 The land shall be entirely emptied and utterly plundered,
For the LORD has spoken this word.

4 The earth mourns *and* fades away,
The world languishes *and* fades away;
The [c]haughty[1] people of the earth languish.
5 [d]The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants,
Because they have [e]transgressed the laws,
Changed the ordinance,
Broken the [f]everlasting covenant.
6 Therefore [g]the curse has devoured the earth,
And those who dwell in it are [2]desolate.
Therefore the inhabitants of the earth are [h]burned,
And few men *are* left.

7 [i]The new wine fails, the vine languishes,
All the merry-hearted sigh.
8 The mirth [j]of the tambourine ceases,
The noise of the jubilant ends,
The joy of the harp ceases.
9 They shall not drink wine with a song;
Strong drink is bitter to those who drink it.
10 The city of confusion is broken down;
Every house is shut up, so that none may go in.
11 *There is* a cry for wine in the streets,
All joy is darkened,
The mirth of the land is gone.
12 In the city desolation is left,
And the gate is stricken with destruction.

■ **24:1—27:13** This section of Isaiah is often called an "apocalypse." The prophet holds before sinner and godly the clear teaching that the day of the Lord brings judgment on creation and the fullness of salvation for the saints. God's plan of redemption includes restoration from exile, the blessings of Christ in the church, and the establishment of God's kingdom in all nations. Ch. 24 focuses on God's overthrow of the corrupted earth; ch. 25, on the praise that comes to Him in response; and chs. 26 and 27 on God's interaction with His people. Brilliant assonances, incapable of translation, enhance the prophetic message.

■ **24:1 the LORD makes the earth empty.** This is not annihilation, but a situation in which human structures can no longer operate (v. 3).

waste. All human resources are removed (Nah. 2:10).

Distorts its surface. The world is filled with disturbances and distresses (Lam. 3:9).

scatters. God will judge the people more severely than He did at Babel, when He scattered them by confounding their languages (Gen. 11:8, 9).

■ **24:2 people . . . priest.** God will judge everyone, without making social distinctions.

■ **24:3 spoken.** See note on 1:19, 20.

■ **24:4 haughty.** People in their pride elevate themselves against God (2:11, 12, 17).

■ **24:5 earth is also defiled . . . Broken.** The days of Noah will have returned to the earth (Gen. 6:5, 11–13). The earth itself is considered to be in danger of judgment due to the sins of those who live on it (Jer. 44:22; Rom. 8:20–22).

■ **24:6 left.** This Hebrew word is also translated "remnant" (1:9; 10:20, 21). As in the days of Noah (Gen. 6:8, 18), "few" will remain.

■ **24:7–13** The prophet explains what the universal day of the Lord will be like. There will be sorrow instead of laughter (vv. 8–11; see notes on 22:2, 13). The makers of music and song stop in the middle of their act (cf. 5:12).

■ **24:10 city of confusion.** That is, the city of desolation or desolate city; possibly Jerusalem, possibly meaning civilization in general.

house. What used to be a place of private security and enjoyment of life (5:9; 6:11; 13:16, 21; 32:13) is closed.

13 When it shall be thus in the midst of the land among the people,
[k]*It shall be* like the shaking of an olive tree,
Like the gleaning of grapes when the vintage is done.

14 They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing;
For the majesty of the LORD
They shall cry aloud from the sea.
15 Therefore [l]glorify the LORD in the dawning light,
[m]The name of the LORD God of Israel in the coastlands of the sea.
16 From the ends of the earth we have heard songs:
"Glory to the righteous!"
But I said, [3]"I am ruined, ruined!
Woe to me!
[n]The treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously,
Indeed, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously."

17 [o]Fear and the pit and the snare
Are upon you, O inhabitant of the earth.
18 And it shall be
That he who flees from the noise of the fear
Shall fall into the pit,
And he who comes up from the midst of the pit
Shall be [4]caught in the snare;
For [p]the windows from on high are open,
And [q]the foundations of the earth are shaken.

19 [r]The earth is violently broken,
The earth is split open,
The earth is shaken exceedingly.
20 The earth shall [s]reel[5] to and fro like a drunkard,
And shall totter like a hut;
Its transgression shall be heavy upon it,
And it will fall, and not rise again.

21 It shall come to pass in that day
That the LORD will punish on high the host of exalted ones,
And on the earth [t]the kings of the earth.
22 They will be gathered together,
As prisoners are gathered in the [6]pit,
And will be shut up in the prison;
After many days they will be punished.
23 Then the [u]moon will be disgraced
And the sun ashamed;
For the LORD of hosts will [v]reign
On [w]Mount Zion and in Jerusalem
And before His elders, gloriously.

13 [k][Is. 17:5, 6; 27:12]
15 [l]Is. 25:3 [m]Mal. 1:11
16 [n]Is. 21:2; 33:1; Jer. 3:20; 5:11 [3]Lit. *Leanness to me, leanness to me*
17 [o]Jer. 48:43; Amos 5:19
18 [p]Gen. 7:11 [q]Ps. 18:7; 46:2; Is. 2:19, 21; 13:13 [4]Lit. *taken*
19 [r]Jer. 4:23
20 [s]Is. 19:14; 24:1; 28:7 [5]*stagger*
21 [t]Ps. 76:12
22 [6]*dungeon*
23 [u]Is. 13:10; 60:19; Ezek. 32:7; Joel 2:31; 3:15 [v]Rev. 19:4, 6 [w][Heb. 12:22]

■ **24:13 olive tree . . . gleaning.** See note on 17:4.

■ **24:14 lift up their voice.** The new song is in response to God's act of salvation (cf. ch. 12; 35:6; 42:10–13; 44:23; 49:13; 52:8, 9; 65:14). See v. 16; 14:7 note.

majesty. They sing of the greatness of Yahweh as over against human pride.

■ **24:15 glorify the LORD.** This is a call to give God the recognition worthy of His name (25:3; 43:20; Ps. 22:23; Rev. 4:8—5:14). See note on 37:16.

■ **24:16 the ends of the earth.** The nations will also join in.

But I. Isaiah, filled with tension as he looks forward to God's salvation, sees the corruption around him and is unable to join the hymn of praise.

treacherous. The Hebrew evokes a sense of widespread corruption. Deception is everywhere.

■ **24:18 windows . . . are open.** The judgment is like the Flood (cf. Gen. 7:11; 8:2).

foundations . . . shaken. The image of an earthquake is expanded in vv. 19, 20 and is an expression of a theophany (6:1 note; 13:13 note; Ps. 99:1 note).

■ **24:21 host of exalted ones . . . kings.** These include the gods of the nations, Satan's hosts, and human powers (cf. Eph. 6:11, 12). They are reserved for punishment and will be cast out from God's presence (2 Pet. 2:4; Rev. 17:8; 20:10).

■ **24:23 moon . . . sun.** See note on 13:10.

Zion. See note on 1:8. As those in Noah's ark found rest on Mount Ararat, so the remnant will find rest on Mount Zion.

CHAPTER 25

1 [a]Ex. 15:2 [b]Ps. 98:1 [c]Num. 23:19

2 [d]Is. 21:9; 23:13; Jer. 51:37

3 [e]Is. 24:15; Rev. 11:13 [f]*terrifying*

4 [f]Is. 4:6

5 [2]*humbled*

6 [g][Is. 2:2–4; 56:7] [h]Prov. 9:2; Matt. 22:4 [i][Dan. 7:14; Matt. 8:11] [3]Lit. *fat things* [4]*wines matured on the sediment*

7 [j]2 Cor. 3:15; [Eph. 4:18]

8 [k][Hos. 13:14; 1 Cor. 15:54; Rev. 20:14] [l]Is. 30:19; Rev. 7:17; 21:4

9 [m]Gen. 49:18; Is. 8:17; 26:8; [Titus 2:13]

Praise to God

25 O LORD, You *are* my God.
[a]I will exalt You,
I will praise Your name,
[b]For You have done wonderful *things;*
[c]*Your* counsels of old *are* faithfulness *and* truth.
2 For You have made [d]a city a ruin,
A fortified city a ruin,
A palace of foreigners to be a city no more;
It will never be rebuilt.
3 Therefore the strong people will [e]glorify You;
The city of the [f]terrible nations will fear You.
4 For You have been a strength to the poor,
A strength to the needy in his distress,
[f]A refuge from the storm,
A shade from the heat;
For the blast of the terrible ones *is* as a storm *against* the wall.
5 You will reduce the noise of aliens,
As heat in a dry place;
As heat in the shadow of a cloud,
The song of the terrible ones will be [2]diminished.

6 And in [g]this mountain
[h]The LORD of hosts will make for [i]all people
A feast of [3]choice pieces,
A feast of [4]wines on the lees,
Of fat things full of marrow,
Of well-refined wines on the lees.
7 And He will destroy on this mountain
The surface of the covering cast over all people,
And [j]the veil that is spread over all nations.
8 He will [k]swallow up death forever,
And the Lord GOD will [l]wipe away tears from all faces;
The rebuke of His people
He will take away from all the earth;
For the LORD has spoken.

9 And it will be said in that day:
"Behold, this *is* our God;
[m]We have waited for Him, and He will save us.

■ **25:1 my God.** A personal affirmation of confidence in God (7:13; 49:4, 5).

exalt . . . praise. See note on 12:1.

faithfulness. See notes at 1:21; 11:5.

■ **25:2 city.** See 24:10 note.

■ **25:3 glorify.** The nations will acknowledge the Lord (24:14–16 and notes).

terrible nations. Oppressive, tyrannical nations. See notes on 19:24; 29:20.

■ **25:4 strength.** See note on "stronghold" at 17:10.

poor . . . needy. See Ps. 9:18 note.

refuge . . . shade. See notes at 4:6; 30:2.

■ **25:5 heat.** Like "storm" in v. 4, this is a metaphor for oppression and persecution.

terrible ones. The oppressors, troublers, and seducers of God's people.

■ **25:6–8** Isaiah envisions the grand banquet that will celebrate God's victory.

■ **25:6 mountain.** Zion, the mountain of the Lord (vv. 7, 10). See note on 2:2.

for all people. The guests come from all nations (24:14–16; Rev. 14:6).

choice pieces . . . wines. Ps. 23:5; Matt. 8:11; Luke 13:29; Rev. 19:9.

■ **25:7 covering . . . veil.** Perhaps these words refer to the grave as the covering for the dead.

■ **25:8 swallow up death.** Paradoxically, the devouring "mouth," from which no one can escape, will itself be swallowed up (5:14; Prov. 1:12 note).

Lord GOD. This title combines the Hebrew word for "lord, sovereign" with the covenant name of God (see 28:16; 40:10; 52:4; 65:13).

tears . . . rebuke. All mourning (30:19; 35:10; 61:2–5; Rev. 7:17; 21:4), even death and the sting of death (1 Cor. 15:54), will be removed.

■ **25:9 our God.** The prophet identifies himself with the people of God (26:13; 40:3; 61:6).

waited. See 8:17 note.

be glad . . . salvation. See 12:1–3 and notes.

This *is* the LORD;
We have waited for Him;
[n]We will be glad and rejoice in His salvation."

10 For on this mountain the hand of the LORD will rest,
And [o]Moab shall be trampled down under Him,
As straw is trampled down for the refuse heap.
11 And He will spread out His hands in their midst
As a swimmer reaches out to swim,
And He will bring down their [p]pride
Together with the trickery of their hands.
12 The [q]fortress of the high fort of your walls
He will bring down, lay low,
And bring to the ground, down to the dust.

A Song of Salvation

26 In [a]that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah:

"We have a strong city;
[b]*God* will appoint salvation *for* walls and bulwarks.
2 [c]Open the gates,
That the righteous nation which [1]keeps the truth may enter in.
3 You will keep *him* in perfect [d]peace,
Whose mind *is* stayed *on You,*
Because he trusts in You.
4 Trust in the LORD forever,
[e]For in YAH, the LORD, *is* [2]everlasting strength.
5 For He brings [3]down those who dwell on high,
[f]The lofty city;
He lays it low,
He lays it low to the ground,
He brings it down to the dust.
6 The foot shall [4]tread it down—
The feet of the poor
And the steps of the needy."

7 The way of the just *is* uprightness;
[g]O Most Upright,
You [5]weigh the path of the just.
8 Yes, [h]in the way of Your judgments,
O LORD, we have [i]waited for You;
The desire of *our* soul *is* for Your name
And for the remembrance of You.
9 [j]With my soul I have desired You in the night,
Yes, by my spirit within me I will seek You early;
For when Your judgments *are* in the earth,
The inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

9 [n]Ps. 20:5

10 [o]Is. 16:14; Jer. 48:1–47; Ezek. 25:8–11; Amos 2:1–3; Zeph. 2:9

11 [p]Is. 24:4; 26:5

12 [q]Is. 26:5

CHAPTER 26

1 [a]Is. 2:11; 12:1 [b]Is. 60:18

2 [c]Ps. 118:19, 20 [1]Or *remains faithful*

3 [d]Is. 57:19; [Phil. 4:6, 7]

4 [e]Is. 12:2; 45:17 [2]Or *Rock of Ages*

5 [f]Is. 25:11, 12 [3]*low*

6 [4]*trample*

7 [g]Ps. 37:23 [5]Or *make level*

8 [h]Is. 64:5 [i]Is. 25:9; 33:2

9 [j]Ps. 63:6; Song 3:1; Is. 50:10; Luke 6:12

■ **25:10 on this mountain.** See note on v. 6.

hand. This is the hand of judgment (9:12 and note; 9:17, 21; 10:4).

Moab. Here Moab is representative of all the proud nations, as is Edom in 34:5–17; 63:1–6; Obad. 1.

■ **25:11 pride . . . trickery.** See note on 5:21.

■ **26:1 song.** See note on 14:7.

city. The city of God is the community of the redeemed (1:26; 2:2; 60:18 and notes; Ps. 46:4; 48:1–3, 12, 13; Rev. 21:2, 10).

salvation for walls and bulwarks. Since God is with His people, He provides salvation and security (12:2 note). God is like a wall protecting His people from disgrace (49:16).

■ **26:2 Open the gates.** The gates open for the entrance of the glorious King and His people (Ps. 15; 24:7, 9; 118:19, 20).

■ **26:3 perfect peace.** The "peace" of God that the righteous receive and promote (v. 12; 32:17, 18; 55:12; 66:12) will not be extended to the wicked (48:22; 59:8). This "peace" is found in Immanuel (9:6; 11:6–9; 14:7 and notes).

stayed . . . trusts. See notes on 2:22; 8:12, 17.

■ **26:4 everlasting strength.** See text note; 8:14, 15; cf. 1 Sam. 2:2.

■ **26:5 brings down.** As Nebuchadnezzar discovered (Dan. 4:37).

■ **26:8 waited for You.** This statement is a magnificent expression of what God desires: children who do His will, love Him, and wait trustingly for His full salvation.

10 [k]Let grace be shown to the wicked,
Yet he will not learn righteousness;
In [l]the land of uprightness he will deal unjustly,
And will not behold the majesty of the LORD.
11 LORD, *when* Your hand is lifted up, [m]they will not see.
But they will see and be ashamed
For [6]*their* envy of people;
Yes, the fire of Your enemies shall devour them.

12 LORD, You will establish peace for us,
For You have also done all our works [7]in us.
13 O LORD our God, [n]masters besides You
Have had dominion over us;
But by You only we make mention of Your name.
14 *They are* dead, they will not live;
They are deceased, they will not rise.
Therefore You have punished and destroyed them,
And made all their memory to [o]perish.
15 You have increased the nation, O LORD,
You have [p]increased the nation;
You are glorified;
You have expanded all the [8]borders of the land.

16 LORD, [q]in trouble they have visited You,
They poured out a prayer *when* Your chastening *was* upon them.
17 As [r]a woman with child
Is in pain and cries out in her [9]pangs,
When she draws near the time of her delivery,
So have we been in Your sight, O LORD.
18 We have been with child, we have been in pain;
We have, as it were, [t]brought forth wind;
We have not accomplished any deliverance in the earth,
Nor have [s]the inhabitants of the world fallen.

19 [t]Your dead shall live;
Together with [2]my dead body they shall arise.
[u]Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust;
For your dew *is like* the dew of herbs,
And the earth shall cast out the dead.

Take Refuge from the Coming Judgment

20 Come, my people, [v]enter your chambers,
And shut your doors behind you;

10 [k]Eccl. 8:12; [Rom. 2:4] [l]Ps. 143:10
11 [m]Job 34:27; Ps. 28:5; Is. 5:12 [6]Or *Your zeal for the people*
12 [7]Or *for us*
13 [n]2 Chr. 12:8
14 [o]Eccl. 9:5; Is. 14:22
15 [p]Is. 9:3 [8]Or *ends*
16 [q]Is. 37:3; Hos. 5:15
17 [r]Is. 13:8; [John 16:21] [9]*sharp pains*
18 [s]Ps. 17:14 [t]*given birth to*
19 [t]Is. 25:8; [Ezek. 37:1–14] [u][Dan. 12:2]; Hos. 13:14 [2]So with MT, Vg.; Syr., Tg. *their dead bodies;* LXX *those in the tombs*
20 [v]Ex. 12:22, 23; [Ps. 91:1, 4]

■ **26:10 grace.** God's common grace (Matt. 5:45; Luke 6:35) is evidenced in His blessings in nature, procreation, health, and prosperity (Acts 14:17).

■ **26:11 hand.** The hand of judgment (9:12 and note; 9:17, 21; 10:4; 25:10).

fire. See note on "burning" at 4:4.

■ **26:12 peace.** See note on v. 3.

■ **26:14 will not rise.** Notice the contrast with v. 19 (cf. 14:22, 30).

memory. Their names, dynasty, and memorials are forgotten.

■ **26:15 increased . . . expanded.** This verse describes the experience of restoration in earthly terms, fostering hope in the final restoration (9:3; 54:2).

■ **26:18 brought forth wind.** This expression of futility is due to the failure of the godly to establish God's kingdom (49:4). They suffered, but without apparent success.

deliverance in the earth. The hope of God's people both before and after the coming of Christ was the renewal of the earth and its transformation into a kingdom of peace and righteousness (cf. 42:4; 2 Pet. 3:13; cf. note on 12:2).

■ **26:19 dead . . . body.** This message of hope for the future, is in contrast to v. 14 (cf. Ezek. 37:11, 12). The Old Testament expresses faith in the resurrection of the body since death is an invasion of God's created order (25:8 note; Job 19:26; Ps. 49:15; 73:24–26; Dan. 12:2; Hos. 13:14).

■ **26:20 my people.** That is, the remnant (vv. 7–9; 40:1 note).

enter . . . Hide. As He protected Noah behind doors of safety (Gen. 7:16), so here God protects His own, as they await His salvation.

a little moment. This "moment" is as long as God's judgment lasts. The present suffering is not worthy to be compared to the eternal glory that follows (v. 19; 54:7; Ps. 30:5; 2 Cor. 4:17; 2 Pet. 3:9).

indignation. See 10:5 and note.

Hide yourself, as it were, [w]for a little moment,
Until the indignation is past.
21 For behold, the LORD [x]comes out of His place
To punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity;
The earth will also disclose her [3]blood,
And will no more cover her slain.

27 In that day the LORD with His severe sword, great and strong,
Will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent,
[a]Leviathan that twisted serpent;
And He will slay [b]the reptile that *is* in the sea.

The Restoration of Israel

2 In that day [c]sing to her,
[d]"A vineyard of [1]red wine!
3 [e]I, the LORD, keep it,
I water it every moment;
Lest any hurt it,
I keep it night and day.
4 Fury *is* not in Me.
Who would set [f]briers *and* thorns
Against Me in battle?
I would go through them,
I would burn them together.
5 Or let him take hold [g]of My strength,
That he may [h]make peace with Me;
And he shall make peace with Me."

6 Those who come He shall cause [i]to take root in Jacob;
Israel shall blossom and bud,
And fill the face of the world with fruit.

7 [j]Has He struck [2]Israel as He struck those who struck him?
Or has He been slain according to the slaughter of those who were slain by Him?
8 [k]In measure, by sending it away,
You contended with it.
[l]He removes *it* by His rough wind
In the day of the east wind.
9 Therefore by this the iniquity of Jacob will be covered;
And this *is* all the fruit of taking away his sin:
When he makes all the stones of the altar
Like chalkstones that are beaten to dust,
[3]Wooden images and incense altars shall not stand.

20 [w][Ps. 30:5; Is. 54:7, 8; 2 Cor. 4:17]

21 [x]Mic. 1:3; [Jude 14] [3]Or *bloodshed*

CHAPTER 27

1 [a]Gen. 3:1; Ps. 74:13, 14; Rev. 12:9, 15 [b]Is. 51:9; Ezek. 29:3; 32:2

2 [c]Is. 5:1 [d]Ps. 80:8; Is. 5:7; Jer. 2:21 [1]So with MT (Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica*), Bg., Vg.; MT (*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*), some Heb. mss., LXX *delight;* Tg. *choice vineyard*

3 [e]1 Sam. 2:9; Ps. 121:4, 5; Is. 31:5; [John 10:28]

4 [f]2 Sam. 23:6; Is. 9:18

5 [g]Is. 25:4 [h]Job 22:21; Is. 26:3, 12; [Rom. 5:1; 2 Cor. 5:20]

6 [i]Is. 37:31; Hos. 14:5, 6

7 [j]Is. 10:12, 17; 30:30–33 [2]Lit. *him*

8 [k]Job 23:6; Ps. 6:1; Jer. 10:24; 30:11; 46:28; [1 Cor. 10:13] [l][Ps. 78:38]

9 [3]Heb. *Asherim,* Canaanite deities

■ **26:21 blood.** See Gen. 4:10; 37:26; Ps. 9:12.

■ **27:1 In that day.** See note on 2:11.

Leviathan . . . reptile. The Old Testament employs this image to denote evil, autocratic powers (30:7 note; 51:9; Ezek. 28:2; 32:2 and notes) and to assure the godly that the Lord will punish all such human expressions of power and resistance to His kingdom. Behind earth's tyrants is Satan, and behind the elect is Christ (Gen. 3:15; Rom. 16:20; Rev. 12:1–6).

■ **27:2–13** The coming transformation is again portrayed.

■ **27:2–6** This song of the vineyard is in sharp contrast to the parable of 5:1–7. For the vine and vineyard, see 3:14; 61:5; 65:21.

■ **27:3 water . . . night and day.** He provides for all the needs by His blessing and steadfast protection of His people (cf. Ps. 121:4, 5).

■ **27:4 Fury is not in Me.** The Lord is ready to forgive and to reconcile people to Himself.

burn. See note on 4:4.

■ **27:5 make peace.** God welcomes all who are reconciled to Him (26:3).

■ **27:6 take root . . . with fruit.** These are indicators of a good and productive vine (John 15:1–8).

the face of the world. The people of God (Jew and Gentile) make up the kingdom of God (1 Pet. 2:9–12).

■ **27:7 struck . . . slain.** The Lord has dealt more graciously with His people than with their oppressors. God fatally struck the nations, not Israel (10:5–23; 13:19—14:2; 47:4, 5).

■ **27:8 removes . . . wind.** The east wind brought dust and scorching heat from the desert, destroying vegetation. Here it is a figure for God's wrath.

■ **27:9 iniquity . . . sin.** By undergoing God's discipline (v. 7), Jacob, that is to say Israel, will pay their debt to divine justice for their idolatry. The proof that the discipline has been effective will be the destruction of the places where they worshiped idols. This atonement and new obedience illustrates on a national level what Christ would accomplish in a perfect way on behalf of a greater number (John 11:52).

10 [m]Is. 5:6, 17; 32:14; Jer. 26:18

11 [n]Deut. 32:28; Is. 1:3 [o]Is. 9:17 [p]Deut. 32:18; Is. 43:1, 7; 44:2, 21, 24

12 [q][Is. 11:11; 56:8] [4]The Euphrates

13 [r]Is. 2:11 [s]Lev. 25:9; 1 Chr. 15:24; Matt. 24:31; Rev. 11:15 [t]Is. 19:21, 22 [u][Is. 2:3]; Zech. 14:16; [Heb. 12:22]

10 Yet the fortified city *will be* [m]desolate,
The habitation forsaken and left like a wilderness;
There the calf will feed, and there it will lie down
And consume its branches.
11 When its boughs are withered, they will be broken off;
The women come *and* set them on fire.
For [n]it *is* a people of no understanding;
Therefore He who made them will [o]not have mercy on them,
And [p]He who formed them will show them no favor.
12 And it shall come to pass in that day
That the LORD will thresh,
From the channel of [4]the River to the Brook of Egypt;
And you will be [q]gathered one by one,
O you children of Israel.
13 [r]So it shall be in that day:
[s]The great trumpet will be blown;
They will come, who are about to perish in the land of Assyria,
And they who are outcasts in the land of [t]Egypt,
And shall [u]worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem.

CHAPTER 28

1 [1]Lit. *valleys of fatness*

2 [a]Is. 30:30; Ezek. 13:11

4 [2]Lit. *valley of fatness*

Woe to Ephraim and Jerusalem

28 Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim,
Whose glorious beauty *is* a fading flower
Which *is* at the head of the [1]verdant valleys,
To those who are overcome with wine!
2 Behold, the Lord has a mighty and strong one,
[a]Like a tempest of hail and a destroying storm,
Like a flood of mighty waters overflowing,
Who will bring *them* down to the earth with *His* hand.
3 The crown of pride, the drunkards of Ephraim,
Will be trampled underfoot;
4 And the glorious beauty is a fading flower
Which *is* at the head of the [2]verdant valley,
Like the first fruit before the summer,
Which an observer sees;
He eats it up while it is still in his hand.

■ **27:10 fortified city.** That is, the city of man (26:1–6 note).

■ **27:11 boughs.** The mighty city will become brittle like dried out branches.

people of no understanding. The city is inhabited by foolish idolaters (2:8 note; Rom. 1:20–23).

He who made. See 22:11 note.

He who formed. A frequent designation of God as Creator, Ruler, and Redeemer of His people. The verb denotes planning ("purposed," 46:11); authority, as of an artisan over his materials (41:25); creation and providence (45:18); and the formation of a new people (43:1, 21; 44:2, 21; 49:5; 64:8).

favor. This is the undeserved grace of God (26:10; 30:18, 19; 33:2).

■ **27:12 thresh.** This verb can refer to separating grain (by flailing the stalks, Ruth 2:17) or olives (by beating the branches, Deut. 24:20). It is frequently used as a metaphor for separating and gathering God's people from the world.

River . . . Brook. That is, the Euphrates River and the Wadi el-Arish, defining the boundaries of the territory of Canaan, given by promise to Abraham (Gen. 15:18). Assyria and Egypt will be connected by a highway (11:16; 35:8, 9) that leads from both to Jerusalem. People from different origins will be united in worship of the one God.

■ **27:13 trumpet.** Like the banner (11:10), the trumpet is used for summoning troops (Ex. 19:16, 19; 1 Sam. 13:3; 2 Sam. 6:15; Matt. 24:31; 1 Thess. 4:16).

perish. This could refer to the oppressed and scattered remnant (Jer. 50:6; Ezek. 34:4–6), to the dead (25:8; 26:14, 19), or to both.

mount. That is, Zion (2:2 note). It is the place of both God's throne (14:13) and His blessed presence (25:6, 7). These promises are both already realized (e.g., Heb. 12:22) and still to come (e.g., Rev. 21:2, 3).

■ **28:1–13** An oracle of woe on the occasion of Ephraim's fall (722 B.C.). This is the first section of woes (1:4 note) in chs. 28—33 (28:1; 29:1, 15; 30:1; 31:1; 33:1).

■ **28:1 crown.** A symbol of royalty (Ezek. 21:31) or deity (2 Sam. 12:30), or if translated "wreath," a sign of social status or celebration (Song 3:11, of a garland worn at a wedding). The reference is to Samaria and its debauched leadership.

pride. Human arrogance stands in opposition to the "majesty" (same word in Hebrew) of the Lord (26:10).

drunkards . . . wine. See note on 24:11.

■ **28:2 mighty and strong one.** Assyria.

hail . . . mighty waters. Assyria is likened to a powerful storm (7:2; 17:13; 28:17; 29:6; 30:30; 32:19). For God's protection, see 4:6.

■ **28:4 first fruit before the summer.** The June figs were delightful because they foreshadowed the September harvest (Hos. 9:10; Mic. 7:1; Nah. 3:12). Ephraim with all her possibilities of achievement would be exiled, and the fruit of her labors would be enjoyed by the Assyrians.

5 In that day the LORD of hosts will be
For a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty
To the remnant of His people,
6 For a spirit of justice to him who sits in judgment,
And for strength to those who turn back the battle at the gate.

7 But they also [b]have erred through wine,
And through intoxicating drink are out of the way;
[c]The priest and the prophet have erred through intoxicating drink,
They are swallowed up by wine,
They are out of the way through intoxicating drink;
They err in vision, they stumble *in* judgment.
8 For all tables are full of vomit *and* filth;
No place *is clean.*

9 "Whom[d] will he teach knowledge?
And whom will he make to understand the message?
Those *just* weaned from milk?
Those *just* drawn from the breasts?
10 [e]For precept *must be* upon precept, precept upon precept,
Line upon line, line upon line,
Here a little, there a little."

11 For with [f]stammering lips and another tongue
He will speak to this people,
12 To whom He said, "This *is* the [g]rest *with which*
You may cause the weary to rest,"
And, "This *is* the refreshing";
Yet they would not hear.
13 But the word of the LORD was to them,
"Precept upon precept, precept upon precept,
Line upon line, line upon line,
Here a little, there a little,"
That they might go and fall backward, and be broken
And snared and caught.

14 Therefore hear the word of the LORD, you scornful men,
Who rule this people who *are* in Jerusalem,
15 Because you have said, "We have made a covenant with death,
And with Sheol we are in agreement.
When the overflowing scourge passes through,
It will not come to us,
[h]For we have made lies our refuge,
And under falsehood we have hidden ourselves."

7 [b]Prov. 20:1; Is. 5:11, 22; Hos. 4:11 [c]Is. 56:10, 12

9 [d]Jer. 6:10

10 [e][2 Chr. 36:15; Neh. 9:30; Jer. 25:3, 4; 35:15; 44:4]

11 [f]Is. 33:19; 1 Cor. 14:21

12 [g]Is. 30:15; Jer. 6:16; [Matt. 11:28, 29]

15 [h]Is. 9:15; Ezek. 13:22; Amos 2:4

■ **28:5 In that day.** See note on 2:11.

remnant. See note on 1:9; cf. 10:19–23.

■ **28:6 spirit of justice.** As such, He will be the Spirit of transformation (32:15; 44:3–5; 59:21; 61:1). See notes at 4:4; 11:2. Paul also contrasted being drunk with wine to the work of the Spirit (Eph. 5:18). The "spirit of justice" prevails in the messianic age (11:1–5; 42:1–4).

justice. See note on 1:21.

■ **28:7 wine . . . intoxicating drink.** See v. 1; 24:11 note.

priest and the prophet. The leaders of God's people had become sensual, hard of heart, and sarcastic (29:9–14; cf. Zeph. 3:4).

■ **28:9 Whom will he teach.** See note on 27:7. The hardened, insulting leaders speak against Isaiah.

■ **28:11 stammering lips.** That is, the foreign language of the oppressors (33:19; Jer. 5:15). The Assyrians will become Israel's teachers due to its own failed leadership. For Paul's application of this verse to "speaking in tongues," see 1 Cor. 14:21, 22.

■ **28:12 rest.** Israel could not enter the full rest in Canaan (Deut. 12:9) because of unbelief (Ps. 95:11). The hope for rest lay in the promises to Moses (1 Kin. 8:56) and to David (Ps. 132:8, 14, 17). Instead of enjoying the rest that comes by faith, Israel will be punished by her enemies.

■ **28:13 word of the LORD.** This revelation will come to Israel through the discipline of foreigners who teach Israel morals.

Precept upon precept. Isaiah throws the taunts of the religious leaders (v. 10) back at them.

fall backward. God's word will have a hardening effect on its hearers.

■ **28:14 scornful men . . . rule.** These are foolish and wicked rulers (Prov. 1:22; 29:8).

■ **28:15 covenant . . . agreement.** They had chosen to ally themselves with Egypt for the purpose of remaining independent (30:2), but the choice was deadly.

lies . . . hidden ourselves. Their confidence was false (4:6 note).

16 [i]Gen. 49:24; Ps. 118:22; Is. 8:14, 15; Matt. 21:42; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11; Rom. 9:33; 10:11; Eph. 2:20; 1 Pet. 2:6–8

21 [j]2 Sam. 5:20; 1 Chr. 14:11 [k]Josh. 10:10, 12; 2 Sam. 5:25; 1 Chr. 14:16 [l][Lam. 3:33; Luke 19:41–44] [3]Lit. *foreign*

22 [m]Is. 10:22; Dan. 9:27 [4]Lit. *complete end*

25 [5]*rye*

A Cornerstone in Zion

16 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:

"Behold, I lay in Zion [i]a stone for a foundation,
A tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation;
Whoever believes will not act hastily.
17 Also I will make justice the measuring line,
And righteousness the plummet;
The hail will sweep away the refuge of lies,
And the waters will overflow the hiding place.
18 Your covenant with death will be annulled,
And your agreement with Sheol will not stand;
When the overflowing scourge passes through,
Then you will be trampled down by it.
19 As often as it goes out it will take you;
For morning by morning it will pass over,
And by day and by night;
It will be a terror just to understand the report."

20 For the bed is too short to stretch out *on,*
And the covering so narrow that one cannot wrap himself *in it.*
21 For the LORD will rise up as *at* Mount [j]Perazim,
He will be angry as in the Valley of [k]Gibeon—
That He may do His work, [l]His awesome work,
And bring to pass His act, His [3]unusual act.
22 Now therefore, do not be mockers,
Lest your bonds be made strong;
For I have heard from the Lord GOD of hosts,
[m]A [4]destruction determined even upon the whole earth.

Listen to the Teaching of God

23 Give ear and hear my voice,
Listen and hear my speech.
24 Does the plowman keep plowing all day to sow?
Does he keep turning his soil and breaking the clods?
25 When he has leveled its surface,
Does he not sow the black cummin
And scatter the cummin,
Plant the wheat in rows,
The barley in the appointed place,
And the [5]spelt in its place?
26 For He instructs him in right judgment,
His God teaches him.

■ **28:16 Lord GOD.** See note on 25:7.

stone . . . sure foundation. See note on 8:14–15. The sure foundation is Jesus Christ (cf. Ps. 118:22; Rom. 9:33; 10:11; 1 Cor. 3:11; Eph. 2:20; 1 Pet. 2:4–8).

■ **28:17 justice . . . righteousness.** See note on 1:21.

hail . . . waters. See note on v. 2.

refuge. See note on 4:6.

■ **28:19 As often as.** The Assyrian army marched through Israel many times.

terror. Divine judgment in human history brings people face-to-face with God's power.

■ **28:20 short . . . narrow.** The things people depend on for safety are neither adequate nor comfortable.

■ **28:21 Perazim . . . Gibeon.** In the past the Lord struck the Philistines (2 Sam. 5:19, 20) and the Canaanites (Josh. 10:10) at these places.

work . . . unusual act. The Lord will turn against His own people.

■ **28:22 mockers.** They are responsible for any increased discipline.

determined. God ordains the events of history. See 10:22, 23.

■ **28:23–29** As timing is important for success in farming, so God has times for grace and for judgment.

■ **28:23 Give ear . . . hear.** The prophet issues the call of divine wisdom (1:2; Prov. 1:8; 4:1; 5:1).

■ **28:25 spelt.** Probably rye (Ex. 9:32). The comparison follows the natural order of plowing, breaking up the clods, harrowing, and sowing (vv. 24, 25).

27 For the black cummin is not threshed with a threshing sledge,
Nor is a cartwheel rolled over the cummin;
But the black cummin is beaten out with a stick,
And the cummin with a rod.
28 Bread *flour* must be ground;
Therefore he does not thresh it forever,
Break *it with* his cartwheel,
Or crush it *with* his horsemen.
29 This also comes from the LORD of hosts,
[n] *Who* is wonderful in counsel *and* excellent in [6] guidance.

Woe to Jerusalem

29 "Woe [a] to [1] Ariel, to Ariel, the city [b] *where* David dwelt!
Add year to year;
Let feasts come around.
2 Yet I will distress Ariel;
There shall be heaviness and sorrow,
And it shall be to Me as Ariel.
3 I will encamp against you all around,
I will lay siege against you with a mound,
And I will raise siegeworks against you.
4 You shall be brought down,
You shall speak out of the ground;
Your speech shall be low, out of the dust;
Your voice shall be like a medium's, [c] out of the ground;
And your speech shall whisper out of the dust.

5 "Moreover the multitude of your [d] foes
Shall be like fine dust,
And the multitude of the terrible ones
Like [e] chaff that passes away;
Yes, it shall be [f] in an instant, suddenly.
6 [g] You will be punished by the LORD of hosts
With thunder and [h] earthquake and great noise,
With storm and tempest
And the flame of devouring fire.
7 [i] The multitude of all the nations who fight against [2] Ariel,
Even all who fight against her and her fortress,
And distress her,
Shall be [j] as a dream of a night vision.
8 [k] It shall even be as when a hungry man dreams,
And look—he eats;
But he awakes, and his soul is still empty;
Or as when a thirsty man dreams,
And look—he drinks;
But he awakes, and indeed *he is* faint,
And his soul still craves:
So the multitude of all the nations shall be,
Who fight against Mount Zion."

29 [n] Ps. 92:5; Is. 9:6; Jer. 32:19
[6] *sound wisdom*

CHAPTER 29

1 [a] Ezek. 24:6, 9
[b] 2 Sam. 5:9
[1] Jerusalem, lit. *Lion of God*
4 [c] Is. 8:19
5 [d] Is. 25:5 [e] Job 21:18; Is. 17:13
[f] Is. 30:13; 47:11; 1 Thess. 5:3
6 [g] Is. 28:2; 30:30
[h] 1 Sam. 2:10; Zech. 14:4; Matt. 24:7; Mark 13:8; Luke 21:11; Rev. 16:18, 19
7 [i] Is. 37:36; Mic. 4:11, 12; Zech. 12:9 [j] Job 20:8
[2] Jerusalem
8 [k] Ps. 73:20

■ **28:27 not . . . a threshing sledge.** The different grains require different treatment; the Lord adjusts His judgment to circumstances and does not "keep plowing all day" (v. 24).

■ **28:29 counsel . . . guidance.** See note on 11:2. The scoffing rulers foolishly mock the one who is wonderful in counsel (cf. 9:6).

■ **29:1–14** An oracle of woe against Jerusalem.

■ **29:1 Woe.** See note on 1:4.

David. Jerusalem's claim to be the city of God springs from David (cf. Ps. 132).

year . . . feasts. This points out the repetitious and tiring observance of empty rituals. See note on 1:11–15.

■ **29:3 lay siege.** God refers to Assyria's siege of Jerusalem in 701 B.C.

■ **29:4 low . . . whisper.** These images describe Jerusalem's experience of humiliation (2:10; 8:19).

■ **29:5 terrible ones.** See note on v. 20.

■ **29:6 thunder . . . fire.** Nature rages when the Lord of the heavenly armies appears (6:4 note; Ex. 19:16–19; Judg. 5:4, 5; Ps. 18:7–15; Ezek. 32:6–8 note).

9 [l]Is. 28:7, 8 [m]Is. 51:21

10 [n]Ps. 69:23; Is. 6:9, 10; Mic. 3:6; Rom. 11:8 [o]Ps. 69:23; Is. 6:10 [p]1 Sam. 9:9; Is. 44:18; Mic. 3:6; [2 Thess. 2:9–12]

11 [q]Is. 8:16 [r]Dan. 12:4, 9; [Matt. 13:11–16]; Rev. 5:1–5, 9 [3]*scroll*

12 [4]Lit. *does not know books*

13 [s]Ps. 78:36; Ezek. 33:31; Matt. 15:8, 9; Mark 7:6, 7 [t]Col. 2:22

14 [u]Is. 6:9, 10; 28:21; Hab. 1:5 [v]Is. 44:25; Jer. 49:7; Obad. 8; 1 Cor. 1:19

15 [w]Is. 30:1 [x]Ps. 10:11; 94:7; Is. 47:10; Ezek. 8:12; Mal. 2:17

16 [y]Is. 45:9; Jer. 18:1–6; [Rom. 9:19–21]

17 [z]Is. 32:15

18 [a]Is. 35:5; Matt. 11:5; Mark 7:37

19 [b][Ps. 25:9; 37:11; Is. 11:4; 61:1; Matt. 5:5; 11:29] [c]Is. 14:30; [Matt. 5:3; 11:5; James 2:5]

The Blindness of Disobedience

9 Pause and wonder!
Blind yourselves and be blind!
[l]They are drunk, [m]but not with wine;
They stagger, but not with intoxicating drink.
10 For [n]the LORD has poured out on you
The spirit of deep sleep,
And has [o]closed your eyes, namely, the prophets;
And He has covered your heads, *namely,* [p]the seers.

11 The whole vision has become to you like the words of a [3]book [q]that is sealed, which *men* deliver to one who is literate, saying, "Read this, please."
[r]And he says, "I cannot, for it *is* sealed."
12 Then the book is delivered to one who [4]is illiterate, saying, "Read this, please."
And he says, "I am not literate."
13 Therefore the Lord said:

[s]"Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths
And honor Me [t]with their lips,
But have removed their hearts far from Me,
And their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men,
14 [u]Therefore, behold, I will again do a marvelous work
Among this people,
A marvelous work and a wonder;
[v]For the wisdom of their wise *men* shall perish,
And the understanding of their prudent *men* shall be hidden."

15 [w]Woe to those who seek deep to hide their counsel far from the LORD,
And their works are in the dark;
[x]They say, "Who sees us?" and, "Who knows us?"
16 Surely you have things turned around!
Shall the potter be esteemed as the clay;
For shall the [y]thing made say of him who made it,
"He did not make me"?
Or shall the thing formed say of him who formed it,
"He has no understanding"?

Future Recovery of Wisdom

17 *Is* it not yet a very little while
Till [z]Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field,
And the fruitful field be esteemed as a forest?
18 [a]In that day the deaf shall hear the words of the book,
And the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness.
19 [b]The humble also shall increase *their* joy in the LORD,
And [c]the poor among men shall rejoice
In the Holy One of Israel.

■ **29:10 seers.** See note on 30:10.

■ **29:13 draw near . . . far from Me.** God desires expressions of devotion from the heart and hates empty ritual (1 Cor. 1:19; Col. 2:20–23).

■ **29:14 wisdom . . . hidden.** God will shatter human wisdom and planning (30:1–5; 31:1–3).

■ **29:15, 16** This oracle of woe against Jerusalem's sages begins the third section of woes in chs. 28—33 (28:1–13 note).

■ **29:15 counsel . . . works.** They oppose the plans and works of God (11:2 note; Ps. 10:11; 64:5, 6). They try to manipulate God rather than submit to Him.

■ **29:16 potter . . . clay.** They overturned God's order by their independent and haughty spirit (27:11 note; cf. Rom. 9:20).

■ **29:17 Lebanon.** The forests of Lebanon will become fields, and fields will become forests. Judgment brings about such reversals; "the last will be first, and the first last" (Matt. 20:16; Luke 1:52, 53).

■ **29:18 In that day.** See note on 2:11.

deaf . . . blind. These words are used here as figures for the people's former spiritual conditions. The "deaf" are those formerly deaf to the message of God (42:18, 19; 43:8; cf. 6:10; 29:9). The "blind" formerly wandered from and did not discern the ways of God (42:7, 16; 56:10; 59:10; Lam. 4:14). The restoration of the spiritually "deaf" and "blind" is fulfilled today in Christ (61:1).

book. See notes on vv. 11, 12.

■ **29:19 humble . . . poor.** See Ps. 9:18 note.

the Holy One of Israel. See note on 1:4.

20 For the [5]terrible one is brought to nothing,
[d]The scornful one is consumed,
And all who [e]watch for iniquity are cut off—
21 Who make a man an offender by a word,
And [f]lay a snare for him who reproves in the gate,
And turn aside the just [g]by empty words.

22 Therefore thus says the LORD, [h]who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob:

"Jacob shall not now be [i]ashamed,
Nor shall his face now grow pale;
23 But when he sees his children,
[j]The work of My hands, in his midst,
They will hallow My name,
And hallow the Holy One of Jacob,
And fear the God of Israel.
24 These also [k]who erred in spirit will come to understanding,
And those who complained will learn doctrine."

Futile Confidence in Egypt

30 "Woe to the rebellious children," says the LORD,
[a]"Who take counsel, but not of Me,
And who [l]devise plans, but not of My Spirit,
[b]That they may add sin to sin;
2 [c]Who walk to go down to Egypt,
And [d]have not asked My advice,
To strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh,
And to trust in the shadow of Egypt!
3 [e]Therefore the strength of Pharaoh
Shall be your shame,
And trust in the shadow of Egypt
Shall be *your* humiliation.
4 For his princes were at [f]Zoan,
And his ambassadors came to Hanes.
5 [g]They were all ashamed of a people *who* could not benefit them,
Or be help or benefit,
But a shame and also a reproach."

6 [h]The [2]burden against the beasts of the South.

Through a land of trouble and anguish,
From which *came* the lioness and lion,
[i]The viper and fiery flying serpent,

20 [d]Is. 28:14 [e]Is. 59:4; Mic. 2:1 [5]*terrifying*

21 [f]Amos 5:10, 12 [g]Prov. 28:21

22 [h]Josh. 24:3 [i]Is. 45:17

23 [j][Is. 45:11; 49:20–26; Eph. 2:10]

24 [k]Is. 28:7

CHAPTER 30

1 [a]Is. 29:15 [b]Deut. 29:19 [l]Lit. *weave a web*

2 [c]Is. 31:1; Jer. 43:7 [d]Num. 27:21; Josh. 9:14; 1 Kin. 22:7; Jer. 21:2; 42:2, 20

3 [e]Is. 20:5; Jer. 37:5, 7

4 [f]Is. 19:11

5 [g]Jer. 2:36

6 [h]Is. 57:9; Hos. 8:9; 12:1 [i]Deut. 8:15; Is. 14:29 [2]*oracle, prophecy*

■ **29:20 terrible.** These people are the powerful and tyrannical oppressors of this world (13:11; 25:3–5; 29:5; 49:25; cf. Ps. 37:35; 86:14; Ezek. 28:7; 30:11; 32:12).

scornful one. This designation common in wisdom literature means a hardened and cynical person (28:14; Ps. 1:1; Prov. 1:22; 3:34; 9:7, 8; 21:24).

watch for iniquity. Such a person is identified in v. 21.

■ **29:22 redeemed Abraham.** God accomplished redemption for Abraham by election and by covenant, promising him and his descendants the hope of the divine presence (cf. Josh. 24:14; Acts 7:2–4).

ashamed. Humiliated in defeat.

■ **29:23 children.** Jacob's hope lies in God's gracious dealing with his offspring from generation to generation (49:20–22; 54:1, 13; 65:23).

■ **30:1 Woe.** See note on 1:4.

rebellious children. These are Hezekiah's counselors (cf. 1:2 note).

devise plans. See text note. The Hebrew could be translated "weaving a web" or "pouring out libations." Either refers to making political alliances.

not of My Spirit. Human plans (v. 2) are opposed to the plans of the Spirit of God.

add sin to sin. Here we see stubbornness increasing (1:2–4) from the plan to act independently of God to the sin of injustice (v. 12; 10:1–4 notes).

■ **30:2 Egypt.** In 701 B.C. Judah counted on Egyptian troops for help against Sennacherib (20:5, 6; 2 Kin. 8:21).

shadow. God alone provides His people with protection from danger (4:6; 16:3; 25:4, 5; 51:16; cf. Ps. 17:8; 36:7; 91:1; 121:5).

■ **30:3 shame.** From this experience of utter failure, the Lord promises to deliver those who trust in Him (54:4; 61:7).

■ **30:4 princes.** Perhaps these were Judah's ambassadors who went to Zoan (19:11 note) and to Hanes (fifty miles south of Cairo).

■ **30:6 burden.** See note on 13:1.

They will carry their riches on the backs of young donkeys,
And their treasures on the humps of camels,
To a people *who* shall not profit:
7 [j]For the Egyptians shall help in vain and to no purpose.
Therefore I have called her
[3]Rahab-Hem-Shebeth.

A Rebellious People

8 Now go, [k]write it before them on a tablet,
And note it on a scroll,
That it may be for time to come.
Forever and ever:
9 That [l]this *is* a rebellious people,
Lying children,
Children *who* will not hear the law of the LORD;
10 [m]Who say to the seers, "Do not see,"
And to the prophets, "Do not prophesy to us right things;
[n]Speak to us smooth things, prophesy deceits.
11 Get out of the way,
Turn aside from the path,
Cause the Holy One of Israel
To cease from before us."

12 Therefore thus says the Holy One of Israel:

"Because you [o]despise this word,
And trust in oppression and perversity,
And rely on them,
13 Therefore this iniquity shall be to you
[p]Like a breach ready to fall,
A bulge in a high wall,
Whose breaking [q]comes suddenly, in an instant.
14 And [r]He shall break it like the breaking of the potter's vessel,
Which is broken in pieces;
He shall not spare.
So there shall not be found among its fragments
[4]A shard to take fire from the hearth,
Or to take water from the cistern."

15 For thus says the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel:

[s]"In returning and rest you shall be saved;
In quietness and confidence shall be your strength."
[t]But you would not,

7 [j]Jer. 37:7 [3]Lit. *Rahab Sits Idle*
8 [k]Hab. 2:2
9 [l]Deut. 32:20; Is. 1:2, 4; 65:2
10 [m]Is. 5:20; Jer. 11:21; Amos 2:12; Mic. 2:6 [n]1 Kin. 22:8, 13; Jer. 6:14; 23:17, 26; Ezek. 13:7; Mic. 2:11; Rom. 16:18; 2 Tim. 4:3, 4
12 [o]Lev. 26:43; Num. 15:31; Prov. 1:30; 13:13; Is. 5:24; Ezek. 20:13, 16, 24; Amos 2:4
13 [p]1 Kin. 20:30; Ps. 62:3, 4; Is. 58:12 [q]Is. 29:5
14 [r]Ps. 2:9; Jer. 19:11 [4]A piece of broken pottery
15 [s]Ps. 116:7; Is. 7:4; 28:12 [t]Matt. 23:37

■ **30:7 Rahab-Hem-Shebeth.** The name Rahab alludes to a chaos monster defeated by the gods in Canaanite creation mythology (Ezek. 28:2 and note). The prophet mocks both the mythical monster and Egypt with a title meaning roughly "Rahab, who does nothing."

■ **30:8 tablet . . . scroll.** The oracles concerning the folly of dependence on Egypt were to be written down as a witness to future generations.

■ **30:9 children.** See note on 1:2.

law. The law that they are rejecting is the godly wisdom taught by Isaiah (cf. Prov. 2:1–5).

■ **30:10 seers . . . prophets.** The preaching of many prophets conformed to the expectations of the people (9:15; 28:7; 29:10; 44:25; 1 Kin. 22:8; Jer. 6:14; 14:13–16; 20:9, 10; 28:8, 9; Ezek. 13; Hos. 9:7–9; Amos 2:12; 7:12, 16; Mic. 2:6–11; 3:5, 11). Others, like Isaiah, spoke by inspiration of the Spirit and under compulsion of a divine vision.

■ **30:11 the Holy One of Israel.** See note on 1:4.

■ **30:12 Therefore.** Since they would not listen to God's prophets, they will hear from Him in judgment.

word. That is, the word of God through Isaiah (vv. 8, 9).

oppression and perversity. Jerusalem's leaders were unprincipled, and their diplomacy resulted in oppression.

■ **30:13 iniquity.** Their stubborn resistance to the Lord and dependence on Egypt will bring about their downfall.

■ **30:15 Lord GOD.** See note on 25:7.

rest . . . quietness. The Lord can give His people what they searched for in Egypt.

be saved . . . strength. The Lord is the strength of His people and He will be victorious (12:2 note).

16 And you said, "No, for we will flee on horses"—
Therefore you shall flee!
And, "We will ride on swift *horses*"—
Therefore those who pursue you shall be swift!

17 [u]One thousand *shall flee* at the threat of one,
At the threat of five you shall flee,
Till you are left as a [5]pole on top of a mountain
And as a banner on a hill.

God Will Be Gracious

18 Therefore the LORD will wait, that He may be [v]gracious to you;
And therefore He will be exalted, that He may have mercy on you.
For the LORD *is* a God of justice;
[w]Blessed *are* all those who [x]wait for Him.

19 For the people [y]shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem;
You shall [z]weep no more.
He will be very gracious to you at the sound of your cry;
When He hears it, He will [a]answer you.
20 And *though* the Lord gives you
[b]The bread of adversity and the water of [6]affliction,
Yet [c]your teachers will not be moved into a corner anymore,
But your eyes shall see your teachers.
21 Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying,
"This *is* the way, walk in it,"
Whenever you [d]turn to the right hand
Or whenever you turn to the left.
22 [e]You will also defile the covering of your images of silver,
And the ornament of your molded images of gold.
You will throw them away as an unclean thing;
[f]You will say to them, "Get away!"

23 [g]Then He will give the rain for your seed
With which you sow the ground,
And bread of the increase of the earth;
It will be [7]fat and plentiful.
In that day your cattle will feed
In large pastures.
24 Likewise the oxen and the young donkeys that work the ground
Will eat cured fodder,
Which has been winnowed with the shovel and fan.
25 There will be [h]on every high mountain
And on every high hill
Rivers *and* streams of waters,
In the day of the [i]great slaughter,
When the towers fall.

17 [u]Lev. 26:36; Deut. 28:25; 32:30; Josh. 23:10; [Prov. 28:1] [5]A tree stripped of branches

18 [v]Is. 33:2 [w]Ps. 2:12; 34:8; Prov. 16:20; Jer. 17:7 [x]Is. 26:8

19 [y]Is. 65:9; [Ezek. 37:25, 28] [z]Is. 25:8 [a]Ps. 50:15; Is. 65:24; [Matt. 7:7–11]

20 [b]1 Kin. 22:27; Ps. 127:2 [c]Ps. 74:9; Amos 8:11 [6]*oppression*

21 [d]Josh. 1:7

22 [e]2 Chr. 31:1; Is. 2:20; 31:7 [f]Hos. 14:8

23 [g][Matt. 6:33]; 1 Tim. 6:8 [7]*rich*

25 [h]Is. 2:14, 15 [i]Is. 2:10–21; 34:2

■ **30:16 horses.** They depended on military strength and stratagems (2:7 note; 31:1, 3).

■ **30:17 thousand . . . one.** This is a reversal of God's promise to give His people victory (Lev. 26:7, 8; Deut. 32:30; Josh. 23:10).

■ **30:18 justice.** God upholds His kingdom in His patience (1:21 note).

■ **30:19 weep.** See note on 25:7, 8; cf. Rev. 7:17; 21:4.

■ **30:20 teachers.** "Prophets"; or possibly the word refers to God, since it could be understood as a singular, "Teacher." For God's instruction, see 28:11–13; 29:11, 12. After His judgment they will see His salvation (29:24).

■ **30:22** On Isaiah's polemic against idolatry, see 2:8.

defile. That is, desecrate (2 Kin. 23:4–8).

■ **30:23 rain . . . bread.** These blessings will come in response to the repentance apparent in the preceding verses (v. 20; cf. Deut. 28:11, 12).

In that day. See note on 2:11.

■ **30:25 Rivers and streams.** Isaiah uses exaggeration to proclaim God's abundant blessings prepared for His children (cf. Joel 3:18; Amos 9:13).

day of the great slaughter. The day of the Lord (cf. 34:2, 6; Jer. 12:3; 19:6; 46:10; Zeph. 1:7, 8).

towers. Symbols of human pride (2:12–17).

26 [j][Is. 60:19, 20; Rev. 21:23; 22:5]

28 [k]Is. 11:4; 2 Thess. 2:8 [l]Is. 8:8 [m]2 Kin. 19:28; Is. 37:29

29 [n][Is. 2:3] [s]Lit. *the Rock*

30 [o]Is. 29:6 [p]Is. 28:2

31 [q]Is. 14:25; 37:36 [r]Is. 10:5, 24 [s]Lit. *shattered*

32 [s]Is. 11:15

33 [t]2 Kin. 23:10; Jer. 7:31

CHAPTER 31

1 [a]Is. 30:1, 2 [b]Deut. 17:16; Ps. 20:7; Is. 2:7; 30:16

26 Moreover [j]the light of the moon will be as the light of the sun,
And the light of the sun will be sevenfold,
As the light of seven days,
In the day that the LORD binds up the bruise of His people
And heals the stroke of their wound.

Judgment on Assyria

27 Behold, the name of the LORD comes from afar,
Burning *with* His anger,
And *His* burden *is* heavy;
His lips are full of indignation,
And His tongue like a devouring fire.
28 [k]His breath is like an overflowing stream,
[l]Which reaches up to the neck,
To sift the nations with the sieve of futility;
And *there shall be* [m]a bridle in the jaws of the people,
Causing *them* to err.

29 You shall have a song
As in the night *when* a holy festival is kept,
And gladness of heart as when one goes with a flute,
To come into [n]the mountain of the LORD,
To [s]the Mighty One of Israel.
30 [o]The LORD will cause His glorious voice to be heard,
And show the descent of His arm,
With the indignation of *His* anger
And the flame of a devouring fire,
With scattering, tempest, [p]and hailstones.
31 For [q]through the voice of the LORD
Assyria will be [r]beaten down,
As He strikes with the [r]rod.
32 And *in* every place where the staff of punishment passes,
Which the LORD lays on him,
It will be with tambourines and harps;
And in battles of [s]brandishing He will fight with it.
33 [t]For Tophet *was* established of old,
Yes, for the king it is prepared.
He has made *it* deep and large;
Its pyre *is* fire with much wood;
The breath of the LORD, like a stream of brimstone,
Kindles it.

The Folly of Not Trusting God

31 Woe to those [a]who go down to Egypt for help,
And [b]rely on horses,
Who trust in chariots because *they are* many,
And in horsemen because they are very strong,
But who do not look to the Holy One of Israel,

■ **30:26 sevenfold.** Here the exaggerated figure indicates that God is with His people (2:5 note; 42:16; 60:19; Rev. 21:22, 23).

binds up . . . heals. God disciplines, but He remembers and heals the wounds of His people (19:22; 57:18; 61:1; Ps. 147:3; Jer. 3:22; 30:17; but cf. Is. 6:10).

■ **30:27 name of the LORD.** The covenant name represents God (12:2 note; cf. Ex. 3:14).

lips . . . tongue. Isaiah uses the resources of poetry to depict the angry power of God.

■ **30:29 song . . . flute.** This celebration is like that of a pilgrimage feast.

mountain. See note on 2:2.

■ **30:33 Tophet.** Tophet was a pit on the south side of Jerusalem where children had been sacrificed and a continual fire burned to consume the refuse that was thrown there (57:5; 2 Kin. 23:10; Jer. 7:31, 32; 19:6, 11–13).

■ **31:1 Egypt . . . horsemen.** Judah thought they could be delivered by Egyptian horses and chariots (30:2).

look to. One way of seeking the Lord is to consult His prophets (29:9, 10; 30:1).

the Holy One of Israel. See note on 1:4.

[c]Nor seek the LORD!
2 Yet He also *is* wise and will bring disaster,
And [d]will not [l]call back His words,
But will arise against the house of evildoers,
And against the help of those who work iniquity.
3 Now the Egyptians *are* men, and not God;
And their horses are flesh, and not spirit.
When the LORD stretches out His hand,
Both he who helps will fall,
And he who is helped will fall down;
They all will perish [e]together.

God Will Deliver Jerusalem

4 For thus the LORD has spoken to me:

[f]"As a lion roars,
And a young lion over his prey
(When a multitude of shepherds is summoned against him,
He will not be afraid of their voice
Nor be disturbed by their noise),
So the LORD of hosts will come down
To fight for Mount Zion and for its hill.
5 [g]Like birds flying about,
So will the LORD of hosts defend Jerusalem.
Defending, He will also deliver *it;*
Passing over, He will preserve *it.*"

6 Return *to Him* against whom the children of Israel have [h]deeply revolted. 7 For in that day every man shall [i]throw away his idols of silver and his idols of gold—[j]sin, which your own hands have made for yourselves.

8 "Then Assyria shall [k]fall by a sword not of man,
And a sword not of mankind shall [l]devour him.
But he shall flee from the sword,
And his young men shall become forced labor.
9 [m]He shall cross over to his stronghold for fear,
And his princes shall be afraid of the banner,"
Says the LORD,
Whose fire *is* in Zion
And whose furnace *is* in Jerusalem.

A Reign of Righteousness

32 Behold, [a]a king will reign in righteousness,
And princes will rule with justice.
2 A man will be as a hiding place from the wind,
And [b]a [l]cover from the tempest,
As rivers of water in a dry place,
As the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

1 [c]Is. 9:13; Dan. 9:13; Amos 5:4–8
2 [d]Num. 23:19; Jer. 44:29 [l]*retract*
3 [e]Is. 20:6
4 [f]Num. 24:9; Hos. 11:10; Amos 3:8
5 [g]Deut. 32:11; Ps. 91:4
6 [h]Hos. 9:9
7 [i]Is. 2:20; 30:22 [j]1 Kin. 12:30
8 [k]2 Kin. 19:35, 36 [l]Is. 37:36
9 [m]Is. 37:37

CHAPTER 32

1 [a]Ps. 45:1
2 [b]Is. 4:6 [l]*shelter*

■ **31:2 He also is wise.** This prophetic sarcasm ridicules the royal counselors.

disaster. He is sovereign in judgment (45:7).

■ **31:3 Egyptians . . . not spirit.** This model of poetic parallelism contrasts flesh and spirit, creature and Creator (2:22; Ps. 56:4; John 4:24).

■ **31:4 lion . . . not be afraid.** The Lord is as determined as a lion. Assyrian kings likened themselves to lions, proverbial for their strength and ferocity.

■ **31:5 defend Jerusalem.** The Lord cares for His people like a mother bird (Ex. 19:4; Deut. 32:11, 12).

■ **31:7 in that day.** See note on 2:11.

idols . . . hands. On Isaiah's polemic against idolatry, see 2:8.

■ **31:8 shall fall.** Assyria will come to an end by God's hand and at His time, not by human stratagems (37:36).

■ **31:9 stronghold.** Assyria will be looking for a place to hide (Rev. 6:16).

fire . . . furnace. See 4:5 note; 10:17; 30:27, 30, 33.

■ **32:1–3** The peace and harmony of godly leadership.

■ **32:1 king . . . princes.** This means the Messiah (9:1–7; 11:1–9) and godly leaders (1:26; 1 Pet. 5:2).

■ **32:2 cover . . . great rock.** The protective role of the king and his cohorts results from their dependence on the Lord (4:6 note); in contrast to any reliance on Egypt (30:1, 2, 12; 31:1, 3).

3 [c]Is. 29:18; 35:5
4 [d]Is. 29:24 [2]*hasty*
5 [3]*noble*
6 [e]Prov. 24:7–9
7 [f]Jer. 5:26–28; Mic. 7:3
8 [4]*noble*
9 [g]Is. 47:8; Amos 6:1; Zeph. 2:15
13 [h]Is. 7:23–25; Hos. 9:6 [i]Is. 22:2
14 [j]Is. 27:10
15 [k][Is. 11:2]; Ezek. 39:29; [Joel 2:28] [l]Ps. 107:35; Is. 29:17

3 [c]The eyes of those who see will not be dim,
And the ears of those who hear will listen.
4 Also the heart of the [2]rash will [d]understand knowledge,
And the tongue of the stammerers will be ready to speak plainly.
5 The foolish person will no longer be called [3]generous,
Nor the miser said *to be* bountiful;
6 For the foolish person will speak foolishness,
And his heart will work [e]iniquity:
To practice ungodliness,
To utter error against the LORD,
To keep the hungry unsatisfied,
And he will cause the drink of the thirsty to fail.
7 Also the schemes of the schemer *are* evil;
He devises wicked plans
To destroy the poor with [f]lying words,
Even when the needy speaks justice.
8 But a [4]generous man devises generous things,
And by generosity he shall stand.

Consequences of Complacency

9 Rise up, you women [g]who are at ease,
Hear my voice;
You complacent daughters,
Give ear to my speech.
10 In a year and *some* days
You will be troubled, you complacent women;
For the vintage will fail,
The gathering will not come.
11 Tremble, you *women* who are at ease;
Be troubled, you complacent ones;
Strip yourselves, make yourselves bare,
And gird *sackcloth* on *your* waists.
12 People shall mourn upon their breasts
For the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine.
13 [h]On the land of my people will come up thorns *and* briers,
Yes, on all the happy homes *in* [i]the joyous city;
14 [j]Because the palaces will be forsaken,
The bustling city will be deserted.
The forts and towers will become lairs forever,
A joy of wild donkeys, a pasture of flocks—
15 Until [k]the Spirit is poured upon us from on high,
And [l]the wilderness becomes a fruitful field,
And the fruitful field is counted as a forest.

The Peace of God's Reign

16 Then justice will dwell in the wilderness,
And righteousness remain in the fruitful field.

■ **32:3 eyes . . . ears.** This is in contrast to 6:9, 10; 29:9, 10; 30:1, 2; 31:1. See note on 29:18.

■ **32:4 heart . . . tongue.** This is all in fulfillment of 29:24.

■ **32:7 poor . . . needy.** See Ps. 9:18 note.

■ **32:8 generous man.** He stands in contrast to the fool, who is willing to oppress the needy (vv. 5–7).

■ **32:9 women . . . at ease.** The people were confident of succeeding in their schemes (vv. 5–7; cf. 3:16–24; Amos 6:1; Zech. 1:15).

complacent. This is the same word rendered "assurance" in v. 17 and "secure" in v. 18. The false security based on confidence in Egypt contrasts with the true security based on trust in God.

■ **32:10 vintage . . . gathering.** Poor harvest is an indication of God's judgment.

■ **32:13 land . . . city.** Everything will become a wasteland (cf. 5:5, 6; 16:8–10; 24:7–13; 34:13–15).

joyous city. See notes on 22:2, 13.

■ **32:15 Spirit.** The Holy Spirit transforms everything according to God's order. He is the Spirit of restoration. See 11:2; 28:6; 42:1; 61:1; Ezek. 36:27; Joel 2:28, 29.

from on high. The Spirit is above all earthly powers (Ps. 93:4; Luke 24:49; Eph. 4:8).

wilderness . . . forest. See note on 29:17.

17 [m]The work of righteousness will be peace,
And the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever.
18 My people will dwell in a peaceful habitation,
In secure dwellings, and in quiet [n]resting places,
19 [o]Though hail comes down [p]on the forest,
And the city is brought low in humiliation.

20 Blessed *are* you who sow beside all waters,
Who send out freely the feet of [q]the ox and the donkey.

A Prayer in Deep Distress

33 Woe to you [a]who plunder, though you *have* not *been* plundered;
And you who deal treacherously, though they have not dealt treacherously with you!
[b]When you cease plundering,
You will be [c]plundered;
When you make an end of dealing treacherously,
They will deal treacherously with you.

2 O LORD, be gracious to us;
[d]We have waited for You.
Be [1]their arm every morning,
Our salvation also in the time of trouble.
3 At the noise of the tumult the people [e]shall flee;
When You lift Yourself up, the nations shall be scattered;
4 And Your plunder shall be gathered
Like the gathering of the caterpillar;
As the running to and fro of locusts,
He shall run upon them.

5 [f]The LORD is exalted, for He dwells on high;
He has filled Zion with justice and righteousness.
6 Wisdom and knowledge will be the stability of your times,
And the strength of salvation;
The fear of the LORD *is* His treasure.

7 Surely their valiant ones shall cry outside,
[g]The ambassadors of peace shall weep bitterly.
8 [h]The highways lie waste,
The traveling man ceases.
[i]He has broken the covenant,
[2]He has despised the [3]cities,
He regards no man.
9 [j]The earth mourns *and* languishes,
Lebanon is shamed *and* shriveled;

17 [m]Ps. 119:165; Is. 2:4; Rom. 14:17; James 3:18

18 [n]Is. 11:10; 14:3; 30:15; [Hos. 2:18–23; Zech. 2:5; 3:10]

19 [o]Is. 30:30 [p]Zech. 11:2

20 [q][Eccl. 11:1]; Is. 30:23, 24

CHAPTER 33

1 [a]Is. 21:2; Hab. 2:8 [b]Rev. 13:10 [c]Is. 10:12; 14:25; 31:8

2 [d]Is. 25:9; 26:8 [1]LXX omits *their;* Syr., Tg., Vg. *our*

3 [e]Is. 17:13

5 [f]Ps. 97:9

7 [g]2 Kin. 18:18, 37

8 [h]Judg. 5:6 [i]2 Kin. 18:13–17 [2]Tg. *They have been removed from their cities* [3]So with MT, Vg.; DSS *witnesses;* LXX omits *cities*

9 [j]Is. 24:4

■ **32:18 My people.** See note on 40:1.

■ **32:19 hail.** See note on 28:2.

■ **33:1–24** This sixth and final oracle of woe in chs. 28—33 is against Assyria. By focusing on Assyria's defeat and Judah's exaltation, the Lord, the King of Judah, is exalted.

■ **33:1 plunder . . . deal treacherously.** Though Assyria is the reference in the historical context (cf. 10:5, 12, 24; 14:25; 30:31; 31:8; 2 Kin. 18:13–16; 19:32–37), it represents any power opposed to God.

■ **33:2** This verse begins a prayer for mercy during the hour of judgment.

■ **33:3 scattered.** See Num. 10:35.

■ **33:4 Your plunder.** The spoils go to the Lord, victor over the nations (23:18).

■ **33:5 dwells on high.** See note on 32:15.

■ **33:6 salvation.** See note on 12:2.

His treasure. Probably the meaning is that the best gift a person can receive from God is the pure faith that is formed in response to the revelation of God's grace (Ps. 130:4; Prov. 9:10; Luke 5:10).

■ **33:7–12** With all Judah's false hopes gone (vv. 7–9), the Lord acts to destroy Assyria.

■ **33:7 valiant ones.** Perhaps this sarcasm is directed at the three officials who conversed with Assyria (36:3, 22).

cry . . . weep. Human ploys have failed. International trade, diplomacy, and military expeditions have come to an end. The Assyrians accepted gifts and tribute from Judah but treacherously continued their siege.

■ **33:9 earth . . . Carmel.** Areas famous for their fertility have become like deserts (2:13; 29:17; 32:13 and notes). For the transformation, see 35:1, 2.

Sharon is like a wilderness,
And Bashan and Carmel shake off *their fruits.*

Impending Judgment on Zion

10 "Now[k] I will rise," says the LORD;
"Now I will be exalted,
Now I will lift Myself up.
11 [l]You shall conceive chaff,
You shall bring forth stubble;
Your breath, *as* fire, shall devour you.
12 And the people shall be *like* the burnings of lime;
[m]*Like* thorns cut up they shall be burned in the fire.
13 Hear, [n]you *who are* afar off, what I have done;
And you *who are* near, acknowledge My might."

14 The sinners in Zion are afraid;
Fearfulness has seized the hypocrites:
"Who among us shall dwell with the devouring [o]fire?
Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?"
15 He who [p]walks righteously and speaks uprightly,
He who despises the gain of oppressions,
Who gestures with his hands, refusing bribes,
Who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed,
And [q]shuts his eyes from seeing evil:
16 He will dwell on [4]high;
His place of defense *will be* the fortress of rocks;
Bread will be given him,
His water *will be* sure.

The Land of the Majestic King

17 Your eyes will see the King in His [r]beauty;
They will see the land that is very far off.
18 Your heart will meditate on terror:
[s]"Where *is* the scribe?
Where *is* he who weighs?
Where *is* he who counts the towers?"
19 [t]You will not see a fierce people,
[u]A people of obscure speech, beyond perception,
Of a [5]stammering tongue *that you* cannot understand.

20 [v]Look upon Zion, the city of our appointed feasts;
Your eyes will see [w]Jerusalem, a quiet home,
A tabernacle *that* will not be taken down;
[x]Not one of [y]its stakes will ever be removed,
Nor will any of its cords be broken.
21 But there the majestic LORD *will be* for us

10 [k]Ps. 12:5; Is. 2:19, 21
11 [l][Ps. 7:14; Is. 26:18; 59:4; James 1:15]
12 [m]Is. 9:18
13 [n]Ps. 48:10; Is. 49:1
14 [o]Is. 30:27, 30; Heb. 12:29
15 [p]Ps. 15:2; 24:3, 4; Is. 58:6–11 [q]Ps. 119:37
16 [4]Lit. *heights*
17 [r]Ps. 27:4
18 [s]1 Cor. 1:20
19 [t]2 Kin. 19:32 [u]Deut. 28:49, 50; Is. 28:11; Jer. 5:15 [5]Unintelligible speech
20 [v]Ps. 48:12 [w]Ps. 46:5; 125:1; Is. 32:18 [x]Is. 37:33 [y]Is. 54:2

■ **33:10 Now.** The time for divine intervention and the glorious establishment of His kingdom has arrived.

■ **33:12 lime . . . thorns.** These similes explain how completely Assyria will be destroyed (cf. 27:4; Amos 2:1).

■ **33:13 Hear . . . acknowledge.** People will confess that God's judgments in history are wise and powerful and submit to His sovereignty.

afar off . . . near. See 57:19; these statements include every person, from whatever nation or tribe.

■ **33:14 Who among us shall dwell.** This realization by sinners challenges them to repent and live in harmony with God's holy presence (Ps. 15:1; 24:3).

■ **33:15 walks . . . shuts his eyes.** These phrases describe conduct of the godly (Ps. 1:1, 2; 15:2–5; 24:4; Gal. 5:22–25; Eph. 5:1; James 3:13–18).

bribes. See note on 1:23.

■ **33:16 dwell on high.** With God.

fortress . . . water. He enjoys divine protection (cf. Ps. 18:1–3) and provision (49:10; 55:1, 2; 62:9; 65:13; contrast 30:20).

■ **33:17 King.** The arrival of God's kingdom and Messiah is of greater splendor than any previous manifestation (32:1 note).

■ **33:18, 19 terror . . . stammering tongue.** Isaiah describes the misery of exile from home and oppression by foreigners.

■ **33:20 tabernacle . . . cords.** The exile has ended. Jerusalem enjoys stability and prosperity (54:2; cf. Rev. 21:1–3).

■ **33:21 broad rivers and streams.** God provides all the needs of the citizens of His kingdom (41:18; 48:18).

A place of broad rivers *and* streams,
In which no [6]galley with oars will sail,
Nor majestic ships pass by
22 (For the LORD *is* our [z]Judge,
The LORD *is* our [a]Lawgiver,
[b]The LORD *is* our King;
He will save us);
23 Your tackle is loosed,
They could not strengthen their mast,
They could not spread the sail.

Then the prey of great plunder is divided;
The lame take the prey.
24 And the inhabitant will not say, "I am sick";
[c]The people who dwell in it *will be* forgiven *their* iniquity.

Judgment on the Nations

34 Come [a]near, you nations, to hear;
And heed, you people!
[b]Let the earth hear, and all that is in it,
The world and all things that come forth from it.
2 For the indignation of the LORD *is* against all nations,
And *His* fury against all their armies;
He has utterly destroyed them,
He has given them over to the [c]slaughter.
3 Also their slain shall be thrown out;
[d]Their stench shall rise from their corpses,
And the mountains shall be melted with their blood.
4 [e]All the host of heaven shall be dissolved,
And the heavens shall be rolled up like a scroll;
[f]All their host shall fall down
As the leaf falls from the vine,
And as [g]*fruit* falling from a fig tree.

5 "For [h]My sword shall be bathed in heaven;
Indeed it [i]shall come down on Edom,
And on the people of My curse, for judgment.
6 The [j]sword of the LORD is filled with blood,
It is made [l]overflowing with fatness,
With the blood of lambs and goats,
With the fat of the kidneys of rams.
For [k]the LORD has a sacrifice in Bozrah,
And a great slaughter in the land of Edom.
7 The wild oxen shall come down with them,
And the young bulls with the mighty bulls;
Their land shall be soaked with blood,
And their dust [2]saturated with fatness."

21 [6]*ship*

22 [z][Acts 10:42] [a]Is. 1:10; 51:4, 7; James 4:12 [b]Ps. 89:18; Is. 25:9; 35:4; Zech. 9:9

24 [c]Is. 40:2; Jer. 50:20; Mic. 7:18, 19; 1 John 1:7–9

CHAPTER 34

1 [a]Ps. 49:1; Is. 41:1; 43:9 [b]Deut. 32:1; Is. 1:2

2 [c]Is. 13:5

3 [d]Joel 2:20; Amos 4:10

4 [e]Ps. 102:26; Is. 13:13; Ezek. 32:7, 8; Joel 2:31; Matt. 24:29; 2 Pet. 3:10 [f]Is. 14:12 [g]Rev. 6:12–14

5 [h]Deut. 32:41, 42; Jer. 46:10; Ezek. 21:3–5 [i]Is. 63:1; Jer. 49:7, 8, 20; Ezek. 25:12–14; 35:1–15; Amos 1:11, 12; Obad. 1–14; Mal. 1:4

6 [j]Is. 66:16 [k]Zeph. 1:7 [l]Lit. *fat*

7 [2]Lit. *made fat*

galley . . . majestic ships. The kingdoms of this world can no longer intimidate and harass God's people.

■ **33:22** See notes on 2:4; 12:2; cf. 44:6; 51:4; Ps. 46; 48; 96—99; Zeph. 3:15, 17.

■ **33:23 Your tackle . . . sail.** The people of the Lord are compared to a drifting ship.

■ **33:24 inhabitant . . . people who dwell.** See note on v. 14.

■ **34:2 indignation . . . fury.** See notes on 5:25; 10:5.

utterly destroyed . . . slaughter. They are consigned to destruction, as the Canaanites were (Josh. 6:17).

■ **34:3 blood.** The blood of the slain will be so great it will create mud slides (v. 7). This is imagery of the day of the Lord on earth.

■ **34:4 rolled up.** See Heb. 1:10–12; 2 Pet. 3:12. As the Lord stretched out the heavens at creation (42:25), in the end He will roll them up (Mark 13:24, 25; Rev. 6:13).

■ **34:5 come down.** The Lord's avenging sword moves from demolishing the pantheon of heaven to Edom in particular.

Edom. Here representing the nations (63:1–6; Ezek. 35; Obad. 10–14; cf. Rev. 18:2).

■ **34:6 sword of the LORD.** See Rev. 19:15.

Bozrah. An important city in Edom 30 miles southeast of the Dead Sea.

■ **34:7 wild oxen . . . mighty bulls.** These terms refer to the Edomite leaders.

8 For *it is* the day of the LORD's [f]vengeance,
The year of recompense for the cause of Zion.
9 [m]Its streams shall be turned into pitch,
And its dust into brimstone;
Its land shall become burning pitch.
10 It shall not be quenched night or day;
[n]Its smoke shall ascend forever.
[o]From generation to generation it shall lie waste;
No one shall pass through it forever and ever.
11 [p]But the [3]pelican and the [4]porcupine shall possess it,
Also the owl and the raven shall dwell in it.
And [q]He shall stretch out over it
The line of confusion and the stones of emptiness.
12 They shall call its nobles to the kingdom,
But none *shall be* there, and all its princes shall be nothing.

13 And [r]thorns shall come up in its palaces,
Nettles and brambles in its fortresses;
[s]It shall be a habitation of jackals,
A courtyard for ostriches.
14 The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the [5]jackals,
And the wild goat shall bleat to its companion;
Also [6]the night creature shall rest there,
And find for herself a place of rest.
15 There the arrow snake shall make her nest and lay *eggs*
And hatch, and gather *them* under her shadow;
There also shall the hawks be gathered,
Every one with her mate.

16 "Search from [t]the book of the LORD, and read:
Not one of these shall fail;
Not one shall lack her mate.
For My mouth has commanded it, and His Spirit has gathered them.
17 He has cast the lot for them,
And His hand has divided it among them with a measuring line.
They shall possess it forever;
From generation to generation they shall dwell in it."

The Future Glory of Zion

35 The [a]wilderness and the [1]wasteland shall be glad for them,
And the [b]desert[2] shall rejoice and blossom as the rose;
2 [c]It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice,
Even with joy and singing.
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
The excellence of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the [d]glory of the LORD,
The excellency of our God.

8 [f]Is. 63:4
9 [m]Deut. 29:23; Ps. 11:6; Is. 30:33
10 [n]Rev. 14:11; 18:18; 19:3 [o]Is. 13:20–22; 24:1; 34:10–15; Mal. 1:3, 4
11 [p]Is. 14:23; Zeph. 2:14; Rev. 18:2 [q]2 Kin. 21:13; Lam. 2:8 [3]Or *owl* [4]Or *hedgehog*
13 [r]Is. 32:13; Hos. 9:6 [s]Is. 13:21
14 [5]Lit. *howling creatures* [6]Heb. *lilith*
16 [t][Mal. 3:16]

CHAPTER 35

1 [a]Is. 32:15; 55:12 [b]Is. 41:19; 51:3 [1]*desert* [2]Heb. *arabah*
2 [c]Is. 32:15 [d]Is. 40:5

■ **34:8 day of . . . vengeance.** The day of the Lord is the time when the Lord establishes His kingdom on earth by delivering and glorifying His saints and by punishing the wicked and the oppressors of His children (2:11 note; 35:4; 59:17, 18; 61:2; 63:4).

■ **34:9 pitch . . . burning pitch.** Alluding to the fall of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:24–28; Ps. 11:6; Jer. 49:17, 18; Rev. 14:10, 11).

■ **34:10 night or day . . . generation to generation.** God's judgment is everlasting (66:24; Matt. 18:8, 9; 25:41, 46; Mark 9:43, 48).

■ **34:11 confusion . . . emptiness.** The same Hebrew words are rendered "without form, and void" in Gen. 1:2. God has decreed the desolation of powers that oppose His order. He brings disorder on those who have wreaked havoc with His order.

■ **34:16 book of the LORD.** Probably the prophecy of vv. 1–15. The Spirit will see to it that what the Word announces is fulfilled.

■ **34:17 cast the lot.** As God distributed the Promised Land by lot (Josh. 18:10), so He has divided Edom among the unclean animals (v. 11).

■ **35:1 wilderness.** See note on 40:3. The presence of God's Spirit of restoration transforms nature and people, even when affected by this sinful world (32:15 note).

■ **35:2 our God.** For the revelation of God's kingdom, see notes on 6:3; 33:17, 21.

3 [e]Strengthen the [3]weak hands,
And make firm the [4]feeble knees.
4 Say to those *who are* fearful-hearted,
"Be strong, do not fear!
Behold, your God will come *with* [f]vengeance,
With the recompense of God;
He will come and [g]save you."

5 Then the [h]eyes of the blind shall be opened,
And [i]the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.
6 Then the [j]lame shall leap like a deer,
And the [k]tongue of the dumb sing.
For [l]waters shall burst forth in the wilderness,
And streams in the desert.
7 The parched ground shall become a pool,
And the thirsty land springs of water;
In [m]the habitation of jackals, where each lay,
There shall be grass with reeds and rushes.

8 A [n]highway shall be there, and a road,
And it shall be called the Highway of Holiness.
[o]The unclean shall not pass over it,
But it *shall be* for others.
Whoever walks the road, although a fool,
Shall not go astray.
9 [p]No lion shall be there,
Nor shall *any* ravenous beast go up on it;
It shall not be found there.
But the redeemed shall walk *there,*
10 And the [q]ransomed of the LORD shall return,
And come to Zion with singing,
With everlasting joy on their heads.
They shall obtain joy and gladness,
And [r]sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Sennacherib Boasts Against the LORD

36 Now [a]it came to pass in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah *that* Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and took them. 2 Then the king of

3 [e]Job 4:3, 4; Heb. 12:12 [3]Lit. *sinking* [4]*tottering* or *stumbling*

4 [f]Is. 34:8 [g]Ps. 145:19; Is. 33:22

5 [h]Is. 29:18; Matt. 9:27; John 9:6, 7 [i][Matt. 11:5]

6 [j]Matt. 11:5; 15:30; John 5:8, 9; Acts 8:7 [k]Is. 32:4; Matt. 9:32; 12:22 [l]Is. 41:18; [John 7:38]

7 [m]Is. 34:13

8 [n]Is. 19:23 [o]Is. 52:1; Joel 3:17; [Matt. 7:13, 14]; 1 Pet. 1:15, 16; Rev. 21:27

9 [p]Lev. 26:6; [Is. 11:7, 9]; Ezek. 34:25

10 [q]Is. 51:11 [r]Is. 25:8; 30:19; 65:19; [Rev. 7:17; 21:4]

CHAPTER 36

1 [a]2 Kin. 18:13, 17; 2 Chr. 32:1

■ **35:4 do not fear.** This admonition often occurs as an assurance of deliverance from oppressors (7:4; 8:12 note; 10:24; 37:6; 41:10, 13; 43:5; 51:7).

vengeance . . . save. God will bring complete deliverance to the oppressed and establish justice on earth (34:8 note).

■ **35:5, 6 blind . . . dumb.** These transformations are evidences of a supernatural restoration and are associated with the ministry of Jesus (Matt. 11:2–6; 12:22; Mark 7:37; Luke 7:21, 22).

waters. See note on 1:30.

■ **35:7 reeds and rushes.** This is in contrast to 19:5, 6.

■ **35:8 highway.** See note on 11:16; 40:3; contrast 33:8.

Highway of Holiness. Only those who have been cleansed and consecrated are privileged to walk on the road of salvation that leads to Zion (4:3 note).

■ **35:9 lion . . . ravenous beast.** Contrast 13:21, 22; 34:11–15.

■ **35:9, 10 redeemed . . . ransomed.** These two Hebrew words often appear as parallels (Jer. 31:11; Hos. 13:14), and are almost synonymous. Both words are used to describe God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt (Ex. 6:6; 15:15, where the word "redeemed" translates the word for "ransomed" here). They play an important role in Isaiah's description of the future deliverance from the Exile as a new exodus (51:10, 11). The Lord is the "Redeemer" (41:14 and note; 49:26) who has forgiven Israel's sins (44:22; Ps. 103:3, 4).

■ **35:10 sorrow and sighing.** See note on 25:8. Cf. 51:11.

■ **36:1—39:8** This historical bridge between chs. 1—35 and 40—66 directly parallels 2 Kin. 18:13—20:19. It records the fulfillment of Isaiah's predictions that the Lord would judge Judah by bringing the Assyrian army to the gates of Jerusalem and would then judge that proud army by destroying it there, preserving a faithful remnant in the city. Hezekiah's faith contrasts with that of his father, Ahaz. Hezekiah by faith accepted a sign when confronted with illness (30:7, 8); Ahaz refused to ask for a sign (7:12).

■ **36:1 fourteenth year.** About 701 B.C. Hezekiah ruled with his father Ahaz as co-regent from 729–715 B.C. and was sole king from 715–686 B.C. Some explain the "fourteenth" year as a copyist's error for "twenty-fourth," while others suggest that Isaiah is referring to the beginning of Hezekiah's independent rule in 715 B.C.

Sennacherib. He was the king of Assyria from 705–681 B.C.

fortified cities. Sennacherib states in his annals that forty-six such cities were conquered during this campaign (2 Kin. 18:13 note).

■ **36:2 the Rabshakeh.** He was the royal counsellor for military affairs. According to 2 Kin. 18:17 the king also sent his "Tartan" ("commander in chief"; cf. Is. 20:1) and his "Rabsaris" ("chief officer").

great army. According to 37:36, 185,000 troops were killed in the siege of Jerusalem; the full army would have been much larger than that.

2 [1]A title, probably *Chief of Staff* or *Governor*
3 [b]Is. 22:20 [c]Is. 22:15
4 [d]2 Kin. 18:19
5 [2]Lit. *a word of the lips*
6 [e]Ezek. 29:6 [f]Ps. 146:3; Is. 30:3, 5, 7
11 [3]Lit. *Judean*

Assyria sent *the* [1]Rabshakeh with a great army from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem. And he stood by the aqueduct from the upper pool, on the highway to the Fuller's Field. [3] And [b]Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who was over the household, [c]Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came out to him.

[4] [d]Then *the* Rabshakeh said to them, "Say now to Hezekiah, 'Thus says the great king, the king of Assyria: "What confidence is this in which you trust? [5] I say you speak of having plans and power for war; but *they are* [2]mere words. Now in whom do you trust, that you rebel against me? [6] Look! You are trusting in the [e]staff of this broken reed, Egypt, on which if a man leans, it will go into his hand and pierce it. So *is* Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who [f]trust in him.

[7] "But if you say to me, 'We trust in the LORD our God,' *is it* not He whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah has taken away, and said to Judah and Jerusalem, 'You shall worship before this altar'?" ' [8] Now therefore, I urge you, give a pledge to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give you two thousand horses—if you are able on your part to put riders on them! [9] How then will you repel one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put your trust in Egypt for chariots and horsemen? [10] Have I now come up without the LORD against this land to destroy it? The LORD said to me, 'Go up against this land, and destroy it.' "

[11] Then Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah said to *the* Rabshakeh, "Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, for we understand *it;* and do not speak to us in [3]Hebrew in the hearing of the people who *are* on the wall."

[12] But *the* Rabshakeh said, "Has my master sent me to your master and to you to speak these

Lachish. This fortress town in the western hill country of Judah, guarded an important road that led into the highlands south of Jerusalem (Jer. 34:7).

upper pool. Isaiah had met Ahaz there (7:3).

■ **36:3 Eliakim . . . Shebna.** See note on 22:19.

Joah . . . recorder. He was an important office holder and the official spokesperson of the kings.

■ **36:4 great king.** An official title of Assyrian kings equivalent to "emperor." By contrast, Hezekiah is named without a title (vv. 13, 14).

■ **36:5 whom do you trust.** The challenge of loyalty to Assyria, other political powers, or to the Lord is the essential message of Isaiah (12:2 note).

■ **36:6 Egypt.** Hezekiah had depended on Egypt for support (30:2, 6, 7, 13; 31:1, 3 and notes). But as Isaiah had said Egypt could never deliver Judah because she too was under divine judgment (19:1–15; 20:3–6).

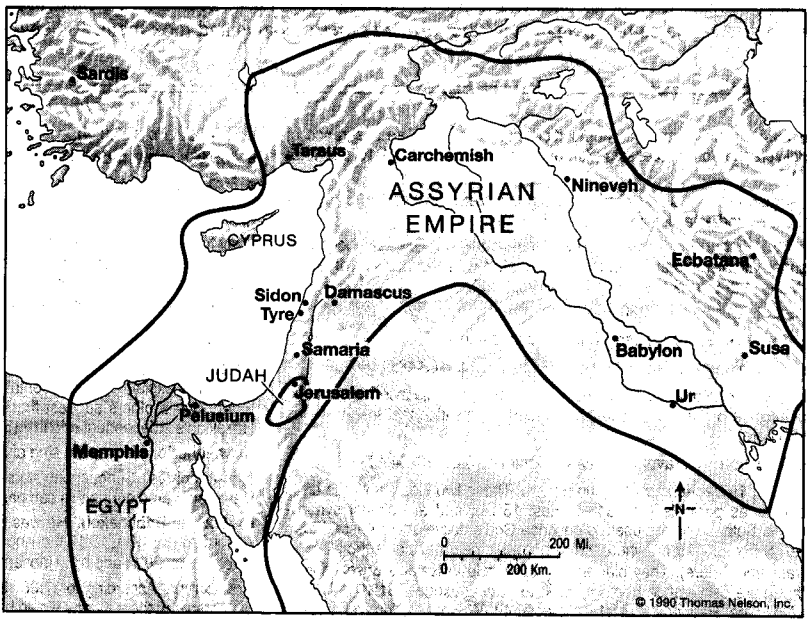
■ **36:7 high places and . . . altars.** Hezekiah had removed many pagan and idolatrous sites in Judah (2 Kin. 18:4; 2 Chr. 31:1), no doubt to the dismay and anger of many Judeans.

this altar. This charge focuses on the requirement to worship exclusively at the temple of Solomon.

■ **36:8 horses . . . riders.** Judah did not have cavalry; Assyria did.

■ **36:10 The LORD said to me.** He is trying to appeal to the religious people of Judah.

■ **36:11 Aramaic.** For many centuries Aramaic was the international language of diplomacy and commerce.



Assyrian Empire (650 B.C.). By 650 B.C. the Assyrian Empire, with its capital in Nineveh, stretched from the Persian Gulf in the east throughout the fertile crescent into Palestine and beyond, embracing for a short time all of Egypt in the southwest. Judah, while a free zone, still paid tribute to Assyria during the reign of Manasseh.

words, and not to the men who sit on the wall, who will eat and drink their own waste with you?"

13 Then *the* Rabshakeh stood and called out with a loud voice in Hebrew, and said, "Hear the words of the great king, the king of Assyria! 14 Thus says the king: 'Do not let Hezekiah deceive you, for he will not be able to deliver you; 15 nor let Hezekiah make you trust in the LORD, saying, "The LORD will surely deliver us; this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria." ' 16 Do not listen to Hezekiah; for thus says the king of Assyria: 'Make *peace* with me *by a* present and come out to me; [g]and every one of you eat from his own vine and every one from his own fig tree, and every one of you drink the waters of his own cistern; 17 until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards. 18 *Beware* lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, "The LORD will deliver us." Has any one of the [h]gods of the nations delivered its land from the hand of the king of Assyria? 19 Where *are* the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where *are* the gods of Sepharvaim? Indeed, have they delivered [i]Samaria from my hand? 20 Who among all the gods of these lands have delivered their countries from my hand, that the LORD should deliver Jerusalem from my hand?' "

21 But they [j]held their peace and answered him not a word; for the king's commandment was, "Do not answer him." 22 Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, who *was* over the household, Shebna the scribe, and Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, came to Hezekiah with *their* clothes torn, and told him the words of *the* Rabshakeh.

Isaiah Assures Deliverance

37 And [a]so it was, when King Hezekiah heard *it,* that he tore his clothes, covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD. 2 Then he sent Eliakim, who *was* over the household, Shebna the scribe, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz. 3 And they said to him, "Thus says Hezekiah: 'This day *is* a day of [b]trouble and rebuke and [l]blasphemy; for the children have come to birth, but *there is* no strength to bring them forth. 4 It may be that the LORD your God will hear the words of *the* Rabshakeh, whom his master the king of Assyria has sent to [c]reproach the living God, and will rebuke the words which the LORD your God has heard. Therefore lift up *your* prayer for the remnant that is left.' "

5 So the servants of King Hezekiah came to Isaiah. 6 And Isaiah said to them, "Thus you shall say to your master, 'Thus says the LORD: "Do not be afraid of the words which you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed Me. 7 Surely I will send a spirit upon him, and he shall hear a rumor and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land." ' "

Sennacherib's Threat and Hezekiah's Prayer

8 Then *the* Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah, for he heard that he had departed from Lachish. 9 And the king heard concerning Tirhakah king of Ethiopia, "He has come out to make war with you." So when he heard *it,* he sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying, 10 "Thus you shall speak to Hezekiah king of Judah, saying: 'Do not let your

16 [g]1 Kin. 4:25; Mic. 4:4; Zech. 3:10

18 [h]2 Kin. 19:12; Is. 37:12

19 [i]2 Kin. 17:6

21 [j]*were silent*

CHAPTER 37

1 [a]2 Kin. 19:1–37; Is. 37:1–38

3 [b]Is. 22:5; 26:16; 33:2 [l]*contempt*

4 [c]Is. 36:15, 18, 20

■ **36:15 trust . . . deliver.** These words testify to Hezekiah's public expression of faith in God.

trust in the LORD. This theme has been at the heart of Isaiah's preaching in chs. 7—35.

■ **36:16 Make peace.** Lit. "make a blessing." The Rabshakeh appeals for renewal of a political covenant with Assyria. In contrast, see 27:5.

eat . . . drink. He tempts them with food and drink (37:30 note) in the midst of a harsh siege (v. 12). The Assyrians project an ideal and happy life, but the Lord alone can fulfill what they promise.

■ **36:17 take you.** The phrase reflects the Assyrian policy of exiling a rebellious population (cf. 2 Kin. 15:29).

■ **37:1 tore his clothes . . . sackcloth.** These expressions of mourning or repentance signify humility, dependence, and need for God.

■ **37:2 Eliakim . . . Shebna.** See 22:15–25.

elders of the priests. That is, representatives of the leading priestly families (Jer. 19:1).

■ **37:3 trouble . . . blasphemy.** This is a time of adversity when the loyalty of people is tested (cf. 25:4; 26:16; 33:2).

birth . . . no strength. Hezekiah admits the futility of human strategies in a time of acute crisis (26:17, 18).

■ **37:4 the living God.** These words express Hezekiah's renewed faith and zeal for the Lord's name.

remnant. The country had been decimated (1:9 note; 6:11).

■ **37:7 return . . . fall.** See vv. 37, 38. Isaiah encouraged Hezekiah to trust the Lord, as he had encouraged Ahaz (7:4).

■ **37:8–13** Sennacherib renewed his attempt at persuading Hezekiah to submit to and depend on Assyria. By making folly of the gods of the nations, he challenged Hezekiah to stop trusting in the Lord.

■ **37:8 Libnah.** A city in the western hill country of Judah a few miles north of Lachish (36:2 note).

■ **37:9 king of Ethiopia.** Egypt was ruled by an Ethiopian dynasty at this time. Tirhakah commanded the Egyptian troops in 701 B.C. He became sole king about 689 B.C. For "Ethiopia" see 18:1 note.

■ **37:10, 11** Sennacherib assails the Lord's ability to deliver Judah (v. 4 note).

12 [d]Is. 36:18, 19
13 [e]Is. 49:23
16 [f]Is. 43:10, 11
17 [g]2 Chr. 6:40; Ps. 17:6; Dan. 9:18 [h]Ps. 74:22
18 [i]2 Kin. 15:29; 16:9; 17:6, 24; 1 Chr. 5:26
19 [j]Is. 40:19, 20
20 [k]Is. 33:22 [l]Ps. 83:18
25 [2]Or perhaps *Egypt*

God in whom you trust deceive you, saying, "Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria." 11 Look! You have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by utterly destroying them; and shall you be delivered? 12 Have the [d]gods of the nations delivered those whom my fathers have destroyed, Gozan and Haran and Rezeph, and the people of Eden who *were* in Telassar? 13 Where *is* the king of [e]Hamath, the king of Arpad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivah?' "

14 And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it; and Hezekiah went up to the house of the LORD, and spread it before the LORD. 15 Then Hezekiah prayed to the LORD, saying: 16 "O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, *the One* who dwells *between* the cherubim, You *are* God, You [f]alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. 17 [g]Incline Your ear, O LORD, and hear; open Your eyes, O LORD, and see; and [h]hear all the words of Sennacherib, which he has sent to reproach the living God. 18 Truly, LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations and their [i]lands, 19 and have cast their gods into the fire; for they *were* [j]not gods, but the work of men's hands—wood and stone. Therefore they destroyed them. 20 Now therefore, O LORD our God, [k]save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may [l]know that You *are* the LORD, You alone."

The Word of the LORD Concerning Sennacherib

21 Then Isaiah the son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah, saying, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'Because you have prayed to Me against Sennacherib king of Assyria, 22 this *is* the word which the LORD has spoken concerning him:

"The virgin, the daughter of Zion,
Has despised you, laughed you to scorn;
The daughter of Jerusalem
Has shaken *her* head behind your back!

23 "Whom have you reproached and blasphemed?
Against whom have you raised *your* voice,
And lifted up your eyes on high?
Against the Holy One of Israel.
24 By your servants you have reproached the Lord,
And said, 'By the multitude of my chariots
I have come up to the height of the mountains,
To the limits of Lebanon;
I will cut down its tall cedars
And its choice cypress trees;
I will enter its farthest height,
To its fruitful forest.
25 I have dug and drunk water,
And with the soles of my feet I have dried up
All the brooks of [2]defense.'

■ **37:12 fathers.** Sennacherib claims that his god is with him, because the Assyrian success went back several generations.

Gozan . . . Eden. Cities in Mesopotamia.

■ **37:13 Hamath . . . Ivah.** Cities in Aram (Syria).

■ **37:14–20** Hezekiah did not respond to Sennacherib's boast; instead, he turned to the Lord in prayer (38:2). Unlike Ahaz, Hezekiah confessed his complete trust in the Lord as King, Creator, and Redeemer. The theology of this prayer summarizes Isaiah's vision of God.

■ **37:16 dwells between the cherubim.** God is with His people and rules over them (1 Sam. 4:4; 2 Sam. 6:2; Ps. 80:1; 99:1), truths represented by His presence in the Most Holy Place of the temple, which contained the ark of the covenant with the wings of two cherubim above it.

You are God, You alone. Hezekiah attributes deity exclusively to the Lord (44:8; 45:5, 6, 14, 22; 46:9).

kingdoms. See note on 13:4.

made heaven and earth. There is a distinct emphasis in Isaiah's prophecies on Yahweh as the sovereign and absolute Creator of all (27:10, 11; 42:5; 45:12, 18).

■ **37:17 Incline Your ear . . . hear.** Unlike the gods of Assyria, the Lord sees, hears, and acts.

■ **37:19** On Isaiah's polemic against idolatry, see 2:8.

■ **37:21 the LORD God of Israel.** A formal title for the One whose covenant was with the twelve tribes of Israel.

■ **37:22 The virgin, the daughter.** Hebrew literary convention speaks of cities and people as young women (47:1; Lam. 2:10; Amos 5:2).

Zion. See note on 1:8.

despised . . . shaken her head. She expresses rejection and derision in this manner (Ps. 22:7; Jer. 18:16). This taunt song in vv. 22–29 is similar to the one in 14:4–21.

■ **37:23 reproached . . . on high.** Assyria had exalted herself against the Lord.

■ **37:24 come up to the height.** This poetic expression, emphasizing superiority and pride (14:13, 14), is usually reserved for deity.

■ **37:25 I have dug . . . dried up.** Absolute claims of authority over creation are an insult to God's prerogatives.

26 "Did you not hear [m]long ago
How I made it,
From ancient times that I formed it?
Now I have brought it to pass,
That you should be
For crushing fortified cities *into* heaps of ruins.
27 Therefore their inhabitants *had* little power;
They were dismayed and confounded;
They were *as* the grass of the field
And the green herb,
As the grass on the housetops
And grain blighted before it is grown.

28 "But I know your dwelling place,
Your going out and your coming in,
And your rage against Me.
29 Because your rage against Me and your tumult
Have come up to My ears,
Therefore [n]I will put My hook in your nose
And My bridle in your lips,
And I will [o]turn you back
By the way which you came." '

30 "This *shall be* a sign to you:

You shall eat this year such as grows of itself,
And the second year what springs from the same;
Also in the third year sow and reap,
Plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them.
31 And the remnant who have escaped of the house of Judah
Shall again take root downward,
And bear fruit upward.
32 For out of Jerusalem shall go a remnant,
And those who escape from Mount Zion.
The [p]zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

33 "Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the king of Assyria:

'He shall not come into this city,
Nor shoot an arrow there,
Nor come before it with shield,
Nor build a siege mound against it.
34 By the way that he came,
By the same shall he return;
And he shall not come into this city,'
Says the LORD.
35 'For I will [q]defend this city, to save it
For My own sake and for My servant [r]David's sake.' "

26 [m]Is. 25:1; 40:21; 45:21

29 [n]2 Kin. 19:35–37; 2 Chr. 32:21; Is. 30:28; Ezek. 38:4 [o]Ezek. 38:4; 39:2

32 [p]2 Kin. 19:31; Is. 9:7; 59:17; Joel 2:18; Zech. 1:14

35 [q]2 Kin. 20:6; Is. 31:5; 38:6 [r]1 Kin. 11:13

■ **37:26 I have brought it to pass.** Assyria is nothing but a tool to advance God's plans.

crushing fortified cities. Assyria accomplished God's will among the kingdoms of this world (10:5–19; cf. Ps. 37:1, 2; Mic. 4:11–13). See note on 27:10.

■ **37:28 I know.** God is sovereign over Assyria. They can never escape His scrutiny (cf. Ps. 139).

■ **37:29 rage . . . tumult.** God has seen what Assyria has done, holds her responsible, and decides her punishment.

hook. Assyrian monuments show their captives pierced with hooks or rings.

■ **37:30 sign.** The overthrow of Assyria and the restoration of a remnant was a witness to God's faithfulness in working out His plans (7:11 note).

eat the fruit. What Assyria had promised (36:16), the Lord alone can fulfill.

■ **37:31 remnant.** See note on 1:9.

root . . . fruit. These events would fulfill God's promise to restore His vineyard (27:6 note). This restoration began in 701 B.C. and still continues, as all who are in Jesus Christ are grafted into the vine and become part of God's vineyard (John 15:1–8).

■ **37:35 defend . . . save.** See note on 31:5. Sennacherib did not succeed in his siege of Jerusalem. God was faithful to the promise made to David (8:8, 10; 2 Sam. 7:16).

servant. See note on 20:3.

36 [s]2 Kin. 19:35; Is. 10:12, 33, 34 [3]Or *Angel* [4]Lit. *struck*

38 [t]Ezra 4:2

CHAPTER 38

1 [a]2 Kin. 20:1–6, 9–11; 2 Chr. 32:24; Is. 38:1–8 [b]2 Sam. 17:23

3 [c]Neh. 13:14 [d]2 Kin. 18:5, 6; Ps. 26:3 [1]*whole* or *peaceful*

6 [e]2 Kin. 19:35–37; 2 Chr. 32:21; Is. 31:5; 37:35

7 [f]Judg. 6:17, 21, 36–40; 2 Kin. 20:8; Is. 7:11

11 [g]Ps. 27:13; 116:9 [2]Heb. YAH, YAH [3]LXX omits *among the inhabitants of the world* [4]So with some Heb. mss.; MT, Vg. *rest;* Tg. *land*

12 [h]Job 7:6

Sennacherib's Defeat and Death

36 Then the [s]angel[3] of the LORD went out, and [4]killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when *people* arose early in the morning, there were the corpses—all dead. 37 So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed and went away, returned *home,* and remained at Nineveh. 38 Now it came to pass, as he was worshiping in the house of Nisroch his god, that his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer struck him down with the sword; and they escaped into the land of Ararat. Then [t]Esarhaddon his son reigned in his place.

Hezekiah's Life Extended

38 In [a]those days Hezekiah was sick and near death. And Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amoz, went to him and said to him, "Thus says the LORD: [b]'Set your house in order, for you shall die and not live.' "

2 Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed to the LORD, 3 and said, [c]"Remember now, O LORD, I pray, how I have walked before You in truth and with a [1]loyal heart, and have done *what is* good in Your [d]sight." And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

4 And the word of the LORD came to Isaiah, saying, 5 "Go and tell Hezekiah, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of David your father: "I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will add to your days fifteen years. 6 I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria, and [e]I will defend this city." ' 7 And this *is* [f]the sign to you from the LORD, that the LORD will do this thing which He has spoken: 8 Behold, I will bring the shadow on the sundial, which has gone down with the sun on the sundial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward." So the sun returned ten degrees on the dial by which it had gone down.

9 This is the writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he had been sick and had recovered from his sickness:

10 I said,
"In the prime of my life
I shall go to the gates of Sheol;
I am deprived of the remainder of my years."
11 I said,
"I shall not see [2]YAH,
The LORD [g]in the land of the living;
I shall observe man no more [3]among the inhabitants of [4]the world.
12 [h]My life span is gone,
Taken from me like a shepherd's tent;
I have cut off my life like a weaver.
He cuts me off from the loom;
From day until night You make an end of me.
13 I have considered until morning—
Like a lion,
So He breaks all my bones;
From day until night You make an end of me.

■ **37:36 angel of the LORD.** Jerusalem's deliverance came by supernatural means, as did the death of the firstborn in Egypt (Ex. 12:12; cf. 2 Sam. 24:16).

■ **37:38 the house of Nisroch.** Sennacherib's death in the temple of Nisroch contrasts with the life Hezekiah found in the temple of the Lord (vv. 1, 14).

struck him down. Twenty years later he was murdered by his own sons (681 B.C.).

Ararat. This is a mountainous region in the extreme eastern part of modern Turkey.

Esarhaddon. He was king over Assyria from 681–669 B.C.

■ **38:1 In those days.** This expression refers to the general time of the siege of Jerusalem by the Assyrians (701 B.C.; 36:1 note).

■ **38:2 prayed.** In this second prayer (cf. 37:14–20) the king places his confidence in God's righteousness.

■ **38:3 Remember . . . good.** This petition is a moving expression of loyalty to Yahweh (33:14–16).

in truth . . . a loyal heart. See 10:20 and note.

wept bitterly. Hezekiah was apparently without a male heir. He lived an additional fifteen years (v. 5). Manasseh, his successor to the throne, was twelve when Hezekiah died (2 Kin. 20:21—21:1).

■ **38:5 fifteen years.** This period ran from 701–686 B.C.

■ **38:6 deliver . . . defend.** See 37:33–35.

■ **38:7 sign.** See 7:11–14; 37:30.

■ **38:9 the writing of Hezekiah.** Verses 10–20 are a hymn combining elements of lament (vv. 10–15) and thanksgiving (vv. 16–20; 2 Chr. 29:30; Prov. 25:1).

■ **38:10 my life . . . my years.** Hezekiah expressed his anguish over the reality and sting of death (Ps. 55:4).

■ **38:11 I shall not see YAH.** Hezekiah did not want to leave this life in which he served God. See 14:9–11 note; Phil. 1:24.

■ **38:12 Taken . . . make an end of me.** Hezekiah offered many metaphors for vexation with the brevity of life, as if God were his enemy (cf. Ps. 22; 32:3, 4).

14 Like a crane *or* a swallow, so I chattered;
[i]I mourned like a dove;
My eyes fail *from looking* upward.
O [5]LORD, I am oppressed;
[6]Undertake for me!

15 "What shall I say?
[7]He has both spoken to me,
And He Himself has done *it.*
I shall walk carefully all my years
[j]In the bitterness of my soul.
16 O Lord, by these *things men* live;
And in all these *things is* the life of my spirit;
So You will restore me and make me live.
17 Indeed *it was* for *my own* peace
That I had great bitterness;
But You have lovingly *delivered* my soul from the pit of corruption,
For You have cast all my sins behind Your back.
18 For [k]Sheol cannot thank You,
Death cannot praise You;
Those who go down to the pit cannot hope for Your truth.
19 The living, the living man, he shall praise You,
As I *do* this day;
[l]The father shall make known Your truth to the children.

20 "The LORD *was ready* to save me;
Therefore we will sing my songs with stringed instruments
All the days of our life, in the house of the LORD."

21 Now [m]Isaiah had said, "Let them take a lump of figs, and apply *it* as a poultice on the boil, and he shall recover."

22 And [n]Hezekiah had said, "What *is* the sign that I shall go up to the house of the LORD?"

14 [i]Is. 59:11; Ezek. 7:16; Nah. 2:7 [5]So with Bg.; MT, DSS *Lord* [6]*Be my surety*

15 [j]Job 7:11; 10:1; Is. 38:17 [7]So with MT, Vg.; DSS, Tg. *And shall I say to Him;* LXX omits first half of this verse

18 [k]Ps. 6:5; 30:9; 88:11; 115:17; [Eccl. 9:10]

19 [l]Deut. 4:9; 6:7; Ps. 78:3, 4

21 [m]2 Kin. 20:7

22 [n]2 Kin. 20:8

CHAPTER 39

1 [a]2 Kin. 20:12–19; 2 Chr. 32:31; Is. 39:1–8 [1]*Berodach-Baladan,* 2 Kin. 20:12

2 [b]2 Chr. 32:25, 31; Job 31:25

3 [c]Deut. 28:49; Jer. 5:15

The Babylonian Envoys

39 At [a]that time [1]Merodach-Baladan the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters and a present to Hezekiah, for he heard that he had been sick and had recovered. 2 [b]And Hezekiah was pleased with them, and showed them the house of his treasures—the silver and gold, the spices and precious ointment, and all his armory—all that was found among his treasures. There was nothing in his house or in all his dominion that Hezekiah did not show them.

3 Then Isaiah the prophet went to King Hezekiah, and said to him, "What did these men say, and from where did they come to you?"

So Hezekiah said, "They came to me from a [c]far country, from Babylon."

4 And he said, "What have they seen in your house?"

So Hezekiah answered, "They have seen all that *is* in my house; there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shown them."

■ **38:14, 15 I am oppressed . . . bitterness.** He is determined to remain faithful and to abandon himself to the Lord's mysterious will, painful though it is.

■ **38:17 pit of corruption.** Hebrew *sheol;* see 14:6–11 note.

■ **38:18 thank . . . praise.** Hezekiah's emphasis is on communal and personal praise in response to God's acts of salvation in this life. Praise is offered only in the land of the living.

■ **38:19 father . . . to the children.** The story of God's acts of redemption were to be told from generation to generation (cf. Ex. 12:25–27).

■ **38:20 save me . . . All the days of our life.** Hope is alive (cf. Ps. 6:9; 22:22–24), as Hezekiah expects to join in the communal praise (vv. 18, 19).

stringed instruments. Musical accompaniment assisted the singing of psalms (cf. Ps. 33:1–3; 150).

house of the LORD. This was the place specially designed by God for worship from the time of Solomon until the time of the church.

■ **38:21 poultice.** All healing is of God. He may mediate it through medicine.

■ **39:1 At that time.** That is, some time after Hezekiah's illness (38:1 note).

■ **39:2 silver . . . treasures.** These arms and wealth evidence Hezekiah's ability to support Babylon in its rebellion against Assyria.

■ **39:3 Isaiah . . . Hezekiah.** Isaiah came to speak for God and questioned Hezekiah.

■ **39:4 my treasures.** His action suggests he was trusting his might and political alliance with Babylon, not the Lord.

6 [d]2 Kin. 24:13; 25:13–15; Jer. 20:5

7 [e]Dan. 1:1–7

8 [f]1 Sam. 3:18

CHAPTER 40

2 [a]Is. 61:7 [1]Lit. *to the heart of*

3 [b]Matt. 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:4–6; John 1:23 [c][Mal. 3:1; 4:5, 6] [d]Ps. 68:4 [2]So with MT, Tg., Vg.; LXX omits *in the desert*

4 [e]Is. 45:2 [3]Or *a plain*

5 [f]Is. 35:2

5 Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Hear the word of the LORD of hosts: 6 'Behold, the days are coming [d]when all that *is* in your house, and what your fathers have accumulated until this day, shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left,' says the LORD. 7 'And they shall take away *some* of your [e]sons who will descend from you, whom you will beget; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.' "

8 So Hezekiah said to Isaiah, [f]"The word of the LORD which you have spoken *is* good!" For he said, "At least there will be peace and truth in my days."

God's People Are Comforted

40 "Comfort, yes, comfort My people!"
Says your God.
2 "Speak [1]comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her,
That her warfare is ended,
That her iniquity is pardoned;
[a]For she has received from the LORD's hand
Double for all her sins."

3 [b]The voice of one crying in the wilderness:
[c]"Prepare the way of the LORD;
[d]Make straight [2]in the desert
A highway for our God.
4 Every valley shall be exalted
And every mountain and hill brought low;
[e]The crooked places shall be made [3]straight
And the rough places smooth;
5 The [f]glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
And all flesh shall see *it* together;
For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

■ **39:5 Hear the word.** This phrase introduces the prophetic charge and judgment.

LORD of hosts. See note on 1:9.

■ **39:6 carried to Babylon.** Isaiah predicts the Babylonian exile.

■ **39:7 your sons** See 2 Kin. 24:15.

eunuchs. See Dan. 1:3–6.

■ **39:8 word.** See note on v. 5.

good . . . in my days. This response has a negative note, as the king shows little concern for his own descendants or for his people. Though an end did come to the Babylonian exile, the prophetic word is clear that "there is no peace . . . for the wicked" (48:22; 57:21). God's peace will extend to the children of Zion (66:12, 13).

■ **40:1—55:13** Isaiah originally addressed these words to the future exiles in Babylon to encourage them to flee from there and return by faith to the promised land (e.g., 48:20, 21). The encouragement partially arises from their supernatural character (e.g., 41:21–27). These prophecies, delivered more than a century and a half beforehand (Introduction: Interpretive Difficulties), astonish their audience by predicting Israel's (i.e., Judah's) immediate deliverance from Babylon by Cyrus (e.g., 44:24—45:13), the coming of the suffering Christ to save them from their sins after they return to the land (42:1–7; 49:1–13; 50:4–11; 52:13—53:12), and Israel's final salvation in the last days (51:6). The near, more remote, and most remote prophecies merge together on the canvas. From Isaiah's perspective, the restoration after the Exile inaugurates the new age, and this first taste of salvation through God's servant, Cyrus, coalesces with the greater salvation that the Christ, God's servant, will bring His people. Today, the elect have even more confidence in words of prophecy because these have been fulfilled in Christ and are being fulfilled in His Church (2 Pet. 1:19).

■ **40:1 Comfort . . . comfort.** The verbs are plural in form. God is addressing His heavenly court and the prophetic messengers who participate in it (v. 6; 44:26). Other heralds will be encouraged to spread the good news (vv. 9–11; 52:7). The repetition is for emphasis and occurs in 51:9, 17; 52:1, 11; 57:14; 62:10.

My people. Though they have rebelled, they are still treated as the people of God. The phrase occurs frequently in Isaiah (1:3; 3:12, 15; 43:20; 51:4, 16; 53:8; 58:1; 65:10, 22). See 43:1 note.

■ **40:2 warfare . . . iniquity.** Isaiah refers to the exile of Israel and Judah of which he has spoken repeatedly. The suffering came on account of sin. See note on 27:9.

Double for all her sins. God has judged the punishment to be sufficient and is ready to forgive (43:25; 44:22; 48:9).

■ **40:3 voice.** Though the voice may have included earlier prophets, such as Isaiah, it finds fulfillment in the ministry of John the Baptist (Matt. 3:3; Mark 1:3, 4; Luke 1:76; 3:4, 5; John 1:23).

wilderness . . . desert. These are metaphors for alienation and anguish (14:17; 27:10; 64:10). God alone can transform the desert into a blooming and fruitful oasis, a figure for the fullness and joy of His salvation (32:15, 16; 35:1, 6; 41:18, 19; 43:19, 20; 48:21; 51:3).

Prepare . . . Make straight. "Prepare" means to "clear away obstacles" (57:14). God will remove all obstacles at His coming, but He expects His people to prepare for the kingdom (62:10) and requires the nations to assist the progress of His salvation.

way . . . A highway. See note on 11:16. Here these are figures for human hearts that must be prepared through repentance (35:8–10; Luke 3:3–9). When that happens, God's glory appears on earth.

■ **40:4 valley . . . rough places.** At the Lord's appearance (6:4 note), nature submits to His will. He removes all obstacles and prepares a road by which the royal procession advances in the establishment of the kingdom.

■ **40:5 revealed.** God's kingdom is "revealed" in acts of salvation and judgment, especially in Jesus Christ (Luke 2:30, 31; John 1:14). The restoration from exile was a manifestation of God's glory.

all flesh . . . together. The revelation of His kingdom is public and visible in creation, in Christ, in the church, and in the new earth (Gen. 9:17; Matt. 2:1–11; 16:27; 24:30; Acts 28:28; 2 Cor. 3:18).

mouth. See note on 1:20. This affirmation is expanded in vv. 6–8.

6 The voice said, "Cry out!"
And [f]he said, "What shall I cry?"

[g]"All flesh *is* grass,
And all its loveliness *is* like the flower of the field.
7 The grass withers, the flower fades,
Because the breath of the LORD blows upon it;
Surely the people *are* grass.
8 The grass withers, the flower fades,
But [h]the word of our God stands forever."

9 O Zion,
You who bring good tidings,
Get up into the high mountain;
O Jerusalem,
You who bring good tidings,
Lift up your voice with strength,
Lift *it* up, be not afraid;
Say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!"

10 Behold, the Lord GOD shall come [5]with a strong *hand,*
And [i]His arm shall rule for Him;
Behold, [j]His reward *is* with Him,
And His [6]work before Him.
11 He will [k]feed His flock like a shepherd;
He will gather the lambs with His arm,
And carry *them* in His bosom,
And gently lead those who are with young.

12 [l]Who has measured the [7]waters in the hollow of His hand,
Measured heaven with a [8]span
And calculated the dust of the earth in a measure?
Weighed the mountains in scales
And the hills in a balance?
13 [m]Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD,
Or *as* His counselor has taught Him?
14 With whom did He take counsel, and *who* instructed Him,
And [n]taught Him in the path of justice?
Who taught Him knowledge,
And showed Him the way of understanding?

15 Behold, the nations *are* as a drop in a bucket,
And are counted as the small dust on the scales;
Look, He lifts up the isles as a very little thing.
16 And Lebanon *is* not sufficient to burn,
Nor its beasts sufficient for a burnt offering.
17 All nations before Him *are* as [o]nothing,
And [p]they are counted by Him less than nothing and worthless.

6 [g]Job 14:2; James 1:10; 1 Pet. 1:24, 25 [f]So with MT, Tg.; DSS, LXX, Vg. *I*

8 [h][John 12:34]

10 [i]Is. 59:16, 18 [j]Is. 62:11; Rev. 22:12 [5]*in strength* [6]*recompense*

11 [k]Jer. 31:10; [Ezek. 34:23, 31]; Mic. 5:4; [John 10:11, 14–16; Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 2:25]

12 [l]Prov. 30:4 [7]So with MT, LXX, Vg.; DSS adds *of the sea;* Tg. adds *of the world* [8]A span= 1/2 cubit, 9 inches; or the width of His hand

13 [m]Job 21:22; Rom. 11:34; [1 Cor. 2:16]

14 [n]Job 36:22, 23

17 [o]Dan. 4:35 [p]Ps. 62:9

■ **40:6 voice.** An angelic voice addresses Isaiah (6:6–9).

■ **40:7 breath.** His wrath is likened to the destructive east wind (Ps. 103:16; Jer. 4:11; Ezek. 17:10).

■ **40:9 Zion.** See note on 1:8.

good tidings. That is, the gospel. God has come to rescue His enslaved people.

■ **40:10 shall come.** He arrives to inaugurate His kingdom on earth (35:4 note; 43:15; 44:6; 52:7–10).

arm. This metaphor describes the power of God as manifested in acts of deliverance and vengeance (v. 11; 48:14; 51:5, 9; 53:1; 59:16; 63:5, 12; Ex. 15:16; Ps. 44:3; 89:13; 98:1; 136:12).

reward. The spoils of victory here are the delivered people themselves. The rescued exiles both foreshadow and merge into the messianic community.

■ **40:11 flock . . . lead.** These are the expressions of the tender, shepherding care of the divine King (Ps. 23:1–4; 78:52; 80:1; Jer. 31:10; Ezek. 34:11–16; Mic. 2:12; John 10:11).

■ **40:15 nations . . . isles.** The Creator is sovereign over all human powers—which are as nothing (2:22).

■ **40:16 Lebanon.** Famous for its dense cedar forests (2:13 note).

18 To whom then will you [q]liken God?
Or what likeness will you compare to Him?
19 [r]The workman molds an image,
The goldsmith overspreads it with gold,
And the silversmith casts silver chains.
20 Whoever *is* too impoverished for *such* [9]a contribution
Chooses a tree *that* will not rot;
He seeks for himself a skillful workman
[s]To prepare a carved image *that* will not totter.

21 [t]Have you not known?
Have you not heard?
Has it not been told you from the beginning?
Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?
22 *It is* He who sits above the circle of the earth,
And its inhabitants *are* like grasshoppers,
Who [u]stretches out the heavens like a curtain,
And spreads them out like a [v]tent to dwell in.
23 He [1]brings the [w]princes to nothing;
He makes the judges of the earth useless.

24 Scarcely shall they be planted,
Scarcely shall they be sown,
Scarcely shall their stock take root in the earth,
When He will also blow on them,
And they will wither,
And the whirlwind will take them away like stubble.

25 "To[x] whom then will you liken Me,
Or *to whom* shall I be equal?" says the Holy One.
26 Lift up your eyes on high,
And see who has created these *things,*
Who brings out their host by number;
[y]He calls them all by name,
By the greatness of His might
And the strength of *His* power;
Not one is missing.

27 [z]Why do you say, O Jacob,
And speak, O Israel:
"My way is hidden from the LORD,
And my just claim is passed over by my God"?
28 Have you not known?
Have you not heard?
The everlasting God, the LORD,
The Creator of the ends of the earth,
Neither faints nor is weary.

18 [q]Ex. 8:10; 15:11; 1 Sam. 2:2; Is. 46:5; [Mic. 7:18]; Acts 17:29
19 [r]Ps. 115:4–8; Is. 41:7; 44:10; Hab. 2:18, 19
20 [s]1 Sam. 5:3, 4; Is. 41:7; 46:7; Jer. 10:3 [9]*an offering*
21 [t]Ps. 19:1; Is. 37:26; Acts 14:17; Rom. 1:19
22 [u]Job 9:8; Ps. 104:2; Is. 42:5; 44:24; Jer. 10:12 [v]Job 36:29; Ps. 19:4
23 [w]Job 12:21; Ps. 107:40; Is. 34:12; [1 Cor. 1:26–29] [1]*reduces*
25 [x][Deut. 4:15]; Is. 40:18; [John 14:9; Col. 1:15]
26 [y]Ps. 147:4
27 [z]Is. 54:7, 8

■ **40:18 compare.** The Lord is incomparable (v. 25; 46:5). See "The Spiritual Nature of God" at 66:1.

■ **40:19 silver chains.** Possibly chains that kept the idol from toppling over. On Isaiah's polemic against idolatry, see 2:8.

■ **40:21 not known . . . not understood.** This charge is directed at rejection of God's revelation (52:6 note).

beginning . . . foundations. God's glory and power are revealed in nature (Rom. 1:20).

■ **40:22 circle.** This is either the horizon, or the hemisphere of the sky over the earth.

tent. God's creation is compared to a tent He has pitched (42:5; 44:24; 51:13; Ps. 18:11; 19:4).

■ **40:24 planted . . . whirlwind.** This verse develops the imagery introduced in vv. 6, 7.

stubble. See notes on 17:13; 29:5.

■ **40:26 Lift . . . see.** God holds people responsible for discerning the revelation in creation (Rom. 1:18–32).

calls . . . strength. The Lord knows and upholds His creation.

■ **40:27 Jacob . . . Israel.** Isaiah has in mind the remnant in exile. See note on 41:8.

hidden . . . passed over. In His anger God hid His face from them (49:14; 54:8), but in His grace He is powerful to deliver (8:17 note).

■ **40:28 known . . . heard.** See note on v. 21; "The Self-existence of God" at Ps. 90:2.

everlasting God. The Creator is sovereign over time and space (9:6; 40:22).

[a] His understanding is unsearchable.
29 He gives power to the weak,
And to *those who have* no might He increases strength.
30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary,
And the young men shall utterly fall,
31 But those who [b] wait on the LORD
[c] Shall renew *their* strength;
They shall mount up with wings like eagles,
They shall run and not be weary,
They shall walk and not faint.

Israel Assured of God's Help

41 "Keep [a] silence before Me, O coastlands,
And let the people renew *their* strength!
Let them come near, then let them speak;
Let us [b] come near together for judgment.

2 "Who raised up one [c] from the east?
Who in righteousness called him to His feet?
Who [d] gave the nations before him,
And made *him* rule over kings?
Who gave *them* as the dust *to* his sword,
As driven stubble to his bow?
3 Who pursued them, *and* passed [1] safely
By the way *that* he had not gone with his feet?
4 [e] Who has performed and done *it,*
Calling the generations from the beginning?
'I, the LORD, am [f] the first;
And with the last I *am* [g] He.' "

5 The coastlands saw *it* and feared,
The ends of the earth were afraid;
They drew near and came.
6 [h] Everyone helped his neighbor,
And said to his brother,
[2] "Be of good courage!"
7 [i] So the craftsman encouraged the [j] goldsmith;[3]
He who smooths *with* the hammer *inspired* him who strikes the anvil,
Saying, [4] "It *is* ready for the soldering";
Then he fastened it with pegs,
[k] *That* it might not totter.

8 "But you, Israel, *are* My servant,
Jacob whom I have [l] chosen,

28 [a] Ps. 147:5; Eccl. 11:5; Rom. 11:33

31 [b] Is. 30:15; 49:23 [c] [Job 17:9]; Ps. 103:5; [2 Cor. 4:8–10, 16]

CHAPTER 41

1 [a] Hab. 2:20; Zech. 2:13 [b] Is. 1:18

2 [c] Is. 46:11 [d] Gen. 14:14; Is. 45:1, 13

3 [1] Lit. *in peace*

4 [e] Is. 41:26 [f] Rev. 1:8, 17; 22:13 [g] Is. 43:10; 44:6

6 [h] Is. 40:19 [2] Lit. *Be strong*

7 [i] Is. 44:13 [j] Is. 40:19 [k] Is. 40:20 [3] *refiner* [4] Or *The soldering is good*

8 [l] Deut. 7:6; 10:15; Ps. 135:4; [Is. 43:1]

■ **40:31 wait on.** See notes on 8:17; 26:8, 9.

mount up . . . run . . . walk. These verbs give a vivid picture of the spiritual transformation that comes through faith.

■ **41:1 coastlands . . . people.** See notes on 24:13, 16; 40:15.

silence . . . come near together. All nations are called upon to acknowledge the Lord's sovereignty and discern His hand in history.

their strength. The prophet exhorts the nations to accept the strength mediated by faith (40:31).

■ **41:2 one from the east.** Namely, Cyrus the Great of Persia (reigned 550–530 B.C.; v. 25; 44:28; 45:1 and notes).

righteousness. Cyrus was victorious in establishing a new order (1:21 note; 44:24—45:5, 13; 46:11).

gave . . . made. The victories of Cyrus were the Lord's doing on behalf of Israel (43:3).

nations . . . kings. The nations are under the Lord's authority and they must acknowledge His name to participate in His plan of redemption (45:1; 49:22, 23; 60:3, 16).

■ **41:3 pursued . . . passed.** Cyrus's conquests were rapid (cf. 46:11).

■ **41:4 beginning.** God has ordered human history.

I, the LORD . . . I am He. This is a most significant formula of divine self-identification (41:13; 42:8; 43:3, 10, 13, 15; 44:24; 45:3, 5, 6; 46:4; 48:17; 49:23; 51:15; 60:22; note the use of "I am" in John 6:35; 8:12, 58; 9:5; 10:7, 9; 11, 14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1, 5).

first . . . last. These words give assurance that everything is always under the Lord's control (44:6; 48:12; cf. Heb. 13:8; Rev. 1:8, 17; 2:8; 21:6; 22:13).

■ **41:5, 6 feared.** Fear leads to rebellion in response to the Lord's challenge of v. 1.

■ **41:7** On Isaiah's polemic against idolatry, see 2:8.

■ **41:8 Israel . . . Jacob.** These are parallel expressions for the godly children of Abraham (v. 14; 40:27; 42:24; 43:1, 22, 28; 44:1, 5, 21, 23; 45:4; 46:3; 48:1, 12; cf. Luke 1:54).

chosen. See note on 14:1.

The descendants of Abraham My [m]friend.
9 *You* whom I have taken from the ends of the earth,
And called from its farthest regions,
And said to you,
'You *are* My servant,
I have chosen you and have not cast you away:
10 [n]Fear not, [o]for I *am* with you;
Be not dismayed, for I *am* your God.
I will strengthen you,
Yes, I will help you,
I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'

11 "Behold, all those who were incensed against you
Shall be [p]ashamed and disgraced;
They shall be as nothing,
And those who strive with you shall perish.
12 You shall seek them and not find them—
[5]Those who contended with you.
Those who war against you
Shall be as nothing,
As a nonexistent thing.
13 For I, the LORD your God, will hold your right hand,
Saying to you, 'Fear not, I will help you.'

14 "Fear not, you [q]worm Jacob,
You men of Israel!
I will help you," says the LORD
And your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.
15 "Behold, [r]I will make you into a new threshing sledge with sharp teeth;
You shall thresh the mountains and beat *them* small,
And make the hills like chaff.
16 You shall [s]winnow them, the wind shall carry them away,
And the whirlwind shall scatter them;
You shall rejoice in the LORD,
And [t]glory in the Holy One of Israel.

17 "The poor and needy seek water, but *there is* none,
Their tongues fail for thirst.
I, the LORD, will hear them;
I, the God of Israel, will not [u]forsake them.
18 I will open [v]rivers in desolate heights,
And fountains in the midst of the valleys;
I will make the [w]wilderness a pool of water,
And the dry land springs of water.
19 I will plant in the wilderness the cedar and the acacia tree,

8 [m]2 Chr. 20:7; James 2:23
10 [n]Is. 41:13, 14; 43:5 [o][Deut. 31:6]
11 [p]Ex. 23:22; Is. 45:24; 60:12; Zech. 12:3
12 [5]Lit. *Men of your strife*
14 [q]Job 25:6; Ps. 22:6
15 [r]Mic. 4:13; Hab. 3:12; [2 Cor. 10:4]
16 [s]Jer. 51:2 [t]Is. 45:25
17 [u]Ps. 94:14; Rom. 11:2
18 [v]Is. 35:6, 7; 43:19; 44:3 [w]Ps. 107:35

■ **41:10 Fear not.** See notes on 35:4; 10:24.

I am with you. The Lord is Immanuel (8:8, 10; 43:2, 5; cf. Acts 18:9, 10).

I am your God. The basic promise for the covenant (vv. 13, 14; 43:1, 5; 44:2, 8; 51:12; Gen. 17:7; 21:17; 26:24; Deut. 20:1; 31:6, 8; Lev. 26:12; Jer. 32:38; Ezek. 37:27; 2 Cor. 6:16).

strengthen . . . uphold. The Lord is present in graciously delivering, exalting, and vindicating His children (v. 13; 42:1; 44:2; 49:8; 50:7). See note on 40:31.

righteous right hand. He establishes order on earth by His power, as He did at the Exodus (63:12; Ex. 15:6).

■ **41:11 ashamed.** See note on 1:29.

■ **41:14 worm.** The same word occurs at Job 25:6 and Ps. 22:6.

Redeemer. The Hebrew term designates the family protector. For a distressed family member, among other things, he avenges a murder (Num. 35:19) and redeems family property and those who have become slaves (Lev. 25:23–49; Ruth 2:20 note). See also 35:9, 10 and note.

the Holy One of Israel. See note on 1:4. The Lord, the Holy God, stoops to deliver His own people (43:14, 15; 45:11; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7; 54:5; 57:15).

■ **41:15 mountains . . . hills.** These represent the many enemies of Israel (vv. 11, 12; cf. 42:15).

■ **41:17 poor . . . needy.** These are the returning exiles and all who seek God's favor (11:4 note; Ps. 9:18 note).

■ **41:18, 19** An abundance of water ("rivers . . . springs") and vegetation ("cedar . . . cypress") pictures a transformation of creation (12:3; 35:1 and note; 43:18–20; 49:9–11; 55:13).

The myrtle and the oil tree;
I will set in the [x]desert the cypress tree *and* the pine
And the box tree together,
20 [y]That they may see and know,
And consider and understand together,
That the hand of the LORD has done this,
And the Holy One of Israel has created it.

The Futility of Idols

21 "Present your case," says the LORD.
"Bring forth your strong *reasons,*" says the [z]King of Jacob.
22 "Let[a] them bring forth and show us what will happen;
Let them show the [b]former things, what they *were,*
That we may [c]consider them,
And know the latter end of them;
Or declare to us things to come.
23 [c]Show the things that are to come hereafter,
That we may know that you *are* gods;
Yes, [d]do good or do evil,
That we may be dismayed and see *it* together.
24 Indeed [e]you *are* nothing,
And your work *is* nothing;
He who chooses you *is* an abomination.

25 "I have raised up one from the north,
And he shall come;
From the [7]rising of the sun [f]he shall call on My name;
[g]And he shall come against princes as *though* mortar,
As the potter treads clay.
26 [h]Who has declared from the beginning, that we may know?
And former times, that we may say, '*He is* righteous'?
Surely *there is* no one who shows,
Surely *there is* no one who declares,
Surely *there is* no one who hears your words.
27 [i]The first time [j]*I said* to Zion,
'Look, there they are!'
And I will give to Jerusalem one who brings good tidings.
28 [k]For I looked, and *there was* no man;
I looked among them, but *there was* no counselor,
Who, when I asked of them, could answer a word.
29 [l]Indeed they *are* all [8]worthless;
Their works *are* nothing;
Their molded images *are* wind and confusion.

19 [x]Is. 35:1
20 [y]Job 12:9; Is. 66:14
21 [z]Is. 43:15
22 [a]Is. 45:21 [b]Is. 43:9 [c]Lit. *set our heart on them*
23 [c]Is. 42:9; 44:7, 8; 45:3; [John 13:19] [d]Jer. 10:5
24 [e]Ps. 115:8; Is. 44:9; [Rom. 3:10–20; 1 Cor. 8:4]
25 [f]Ezra 1:2 [g]Is. 41:2; Jer. 50:3 [7]East
26 [h]Is. 43:9
27 [i]Is. 41:4 [j]Is. 40:9; Nah. 1:15
28 [k]Is. 63:5
29 [l]Is. 41:24 [8]So with MT, Vg.; DSS, Syr., Tg. *nothing;* LXX omits first line

■ **41:20 created.** See note on 4:5.

■ **41:21 case . . . reasons.** God renews the challenge issued in v. 1.

■ **41:22 will happen . . . latter end.** The Lord alone plans, declares, and executes. See note at 11:2.

former things. See 42:9; 43:9; 46:9; 48:3. These include past prophecies of events, especially God's abandonment of Israel and Judah as recorded in chs. 1—35.

things to come. See 42:23; 44:7; 45:11; 46:10. These are prophecies of the Lord's favor and the full establishment of His kingdom, as in chs. 40—66.

■ **41:23 do good or do evil.** God taunts the pagan gods for their inability to act in any direction.

■ **41:24 nothing . . . abomination.** God condemns those who turn away from Him.

■ **41:25 raised up . . . he shall come.** The Lord shows His sovereignty over the nations.

north . . . rising of the sun. Cyrus came from Persia in the east and conquered Media in 549 B.C., becoming master of territories north of Babylon. He executed the Lord's will (45:4, 5; 2 Chr. 36:23; Ezra 1:1–4).

potter. See note on 27:11.

■ **41:27 one who brings.** This probably refers to Isaiah (40:1 note).

good tidings. The gospel of God's grace (40:9 note).

■ **41:28 no man . . . no counselor.** The nations and their idols are impotent.

■ **41:29 worthless . . . wind and confusion.** The Lord's assessment of idols is that they are empty, worthless (40:18–20; 41:7, 21–24; 44:9).

CHAPTER 42

1 [a]Is. 43:10; 49:3, 6; Matt. 12:18; [Phil. 2:7] [b]Matt. 3:17; 17:5; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22; Eph. 1:6 [c][Is. 11:2]; Matt. 3:16; [Luke 4:18, 19, 21]; John 3:34 [1]*Chosen*

3 [2]*dimly burning* [3]*extinguish*

4 [d][Gen. 49:10]

5 [e]Is. 44:24; Zech. 12:1 [f]Job 12:10; 33:4; Is. 57:16; Dan. 5:23; Acts 17:25

6 [g]Is. 43:1 [h]Is. 49:8 [i]Is. 49:6; Luke 2:32; [Acts 10:45; 13:47; Gal. 3:14]

7 [j]Is. 35:5 [k]Is. 61:1; Luke 4:18; [2 Tim. 2:26; Heb. 2:14] [l]Is. 9:2

8 [m]Ex. 20:3–5; Is. 48:11

The Servant of the LORD

42 "Behold! [a]My Servant whom I uphold,
My [1]Elect One *in whom* My soul [b]delights!
[c]I have put My Spirit upon Him;
He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles.
2 He will not cry out, nor raise *His voice,*
Nor cause His voice to be heard in the street.
3 A bruised reed He will not break,
And [2]smoking flax He will not [3]quench;
He will bring forth justice for truth.
4 He will not fail nor be discouraged,
Till He has established justice in the earth;
[d]And the coastlands shall wait for His law."

5 Thus says God the LORD,
[e]Who created the heavens and stretched them out,
Who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it,
[f]Who gives breath to the people on it,
And spirit to those who walk on it:
6 "I,[g] the LORD, have called You in righteousness,
And will hold Your hand;
I will keep You [h]and give You as a covenant to the people,
As [i]a light to the Gentiles,
7 [j]To open blind eyes,
To [k]bring out prisoners from the prison,
Those who sit in [l]darkness from the prison house.
8 I *am* the LORD, that *is* My name;
And My [m]glory I will not give to another,
Nor My praise to carved images.
9 Behold, the former things have come to pass,
And new things I declare;
Before they spring forth I tell you of them."

■ **42:1–9** This is the first of four "Servant Songs" in chs. 40—55 celebrating the Servant of the Lord (49:1–7; 50:4–11; 52:13—53:12; cf. ch. 61).

■ **42:1 Servant.** See note on 20:3. The servant imagery is fulfilled in Jesus (Matt. 12:15–21) and is also applicable to Israel (41:8 note) before His coming, and to the church later (1 Pet. 2:21–25). Israel as "Servant" includes only the faithful, not the unfaithful Israel (vv. 18–22).

uphold. See note on 41:10.

Elect. See note on 14:1.

delights. The Servant pleases God and is an object of His love and favor (60:10; 62:4; Matt. 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 9:35).

justice to the Gentiles. God institutes His universal kingdom of justice and righteousness. "Justice" is emphatically repeated three times in vv. 1–4.

■ **42:2 not cry out . . . raise.** The Servant does not clamor for attention, but speaks in a spirit of gentleness and patience.

■ **42:3 bruised reed.** This metaphor would be appropriate for the poor and needy (Ps. 9:18 note). Rather than break the weak, the Servant will heal them.

smoking flax. This represents people who are close to losing faith and hope.

■ **42:4 justice . . . law.** The Servant will practice godliness on earth (cf. 2:2–4). He will be greater than Moses (Deut. 18:15–18; Acts 3:22–26), mediating a new covenant that enables people to keep His law (v. 6; 2 Cor. 3:3; Heb. 8:7–13).

wait. See 8:17 note.

■ **42:5 created the heavens . . . earth.** God is above all creation as the Creator of everything (4:5 note).

breath . . . spirit. The Creator and Sustainer of life (Ps. 104:30; Acts 17:24, 25) will enable the Servant to transform the earth with new, spiritual life.

■ **42:6 called . . . keep.** These are expressions parallel to v. 1.

covenant to the people. Jesus Christ, as God's Servant, brought the new covenant to His people (see 53:4–6; Jer. 31:31–34; Heb. 8:6–13; 9:15). The covenant is also called the "covenant of peace" (54:10), the "everlasting covenant" (55:3; 61:8), and the "new covenant" (Jer. 31:31).

light to the Gentiles. The recipients of God's light are a new community of light-bearers in a dark world (9:2; 49:6; 51:4; 60:1–3; Luke 2:30–32; Acts 26:17, 18, 23).

■ **42:7 To open . . . darkness.** The Babylonian exile is described as a kind of dark prison. Israel's salvation from exile prefigures a spiritual deliverance through Christ from the blindness, bondage, and darkness of sin (5:30; 29:18; 51:14 and notes).

■ **42:8 glory.** See "The Glory of God" at Ezek. 1:28.

■ **42:9 former things.** These "former things" include the judgments prophesied against Damascus, Samaria, Nineveh, and Judah (41:22 note).

new things. These "new things" include renewal of the covenant, restoration to the land, the messianic kingdom, inclusion of the Gentiles, and the new heaven and earth (41:22 note).

declare . . . tell. God plans, proclaims, and executes. His word will come to pass (11:2 note; 40:8).

Praise to the LORD

10 [n]Sing to the LORD a new song,
And His praise from the ends of the earth,
[o]You who go down to the sea, and [4]all that is in it,
You coastlands and you inhabitants of them!
11 Let the wilderness and its cities lift up *their voice,*
The villages *that* Kedar inhabits.
Let the inhabitants of Sela sing,
Let them shout from the top of the mountains.
12 Let them give glory to the LORD,
And declare His praise in the coastlands.
13 The LORD shall go forth like a mighty man;
He shall stir up *His* zeal like a man of war.
He shall cry out, [p]yes, shout aloud;
He shall prevail against His enemies.

Promise of the LORD's Help

14 "I have held My peace a long time,
I have been still and restrained Myself.
Now I will cry like a woman in [5]labor,
I will pant and gasp at once.
15 I will lay waste the mountains and hills,
And dry up all their vegetation;
I will make the rivers coastlands,
And I will dry up the pools.
16 I will bring the blind by a way they did not know;
I will lead them in paths they have not known.
I will make darkness light before them,
And crooked places straight.
These things I will do for them,
And not forsake them.
17 They shall be [q]turned back,
They shall be greatly ashamed,
Who trust in carved images,
Who say to the molded images,
'You *are* our gods.'

18 "Hear, you deaf;
And look, you blind, that you may see.
19 [r]Who *is* blind but My servant,
Or deaf as My messenger *whom* I send?
Who *is* blind as *he who is* perfect,
And blind as the LORD's servant?
20 Seeing many things, [s]but you do not observe;
Opening the ears, but he does not hear."

10 [n]Ps. 33:3; 40:3; 98:1 [o]Ps. 107:23
[4]Lit. *its fullness*
13 [p]Is. 31:4
14 [5]*childbirth*
17 [q]Ps. 97:7; Is. 1:29; 44:11; 45:16
19 [r]Is. 43:8; Ezek. 12:2; [John 9:39, 41]
20 [s]Rom. 2:21

■ **42:10 new song.** The redeemed will sing a new song as Moses and Miriam did when they had witnessed God's acts of salvation (Ex. 15:1, 21; cf. 12:1–6 and notes; Ps. 149:1; Rev. 5:9; 14:3).

ends of the earth. Wherever God's children may be found (11:12).

■ **42:11 Kedar.** See note on 21:16 (60:7; Ps. 120:5; Jer. 2:10; 49:28, 29).

Sela. See note on 16:1.

■ **42:12 glory.** The Lord receives acclamation from His subjects (v. 8; 24:14–16 note; 1 Pet. 2:9).

■ **42:13 zeal.** Assurance comes from knowing that when the Lord's zeal is stirred, He will accomplish His plan (9:7 note).

mighty man . . . man of war. Isaiah describes the Lord as a Divine Warrior in whom hope lies (1:9; 5:26 and notes).

cry out. The Hebrew word here is different from the one in v. 2. This is a battle cry or call to arms, not a cry of distress.

■ **42:16 bring . . . not forsake.** God promises to be with His people and lead them, as He did Israel in the wilderness (Ex. 13:21, 22).

■ **42:18 deaf . . . blind.** They are "deaf" because they did not listen (v. 23), and "blind" because they refused to see the hand of God in their history (v. 20; 48:3–6).

■ **42:19 My servant.** The Lord exclaims at the blindness and deafness of Israel, who unaccountably were as weak spiritually as their neighbors.

22 [6]Or *trapped in caves*

24 [f]Is. 65:2

25 [u]2 Kin. 25:9 [v]Is. 1:3; 5:13; Hos. 7:9 [w]Is. 29:13

CHAPTER 43

1 [a]Is. 43:5; 44:6 [b]Is. 42:6; 45:4

2 [c][Ps. 66:12; 91:3] [d][Deut. 31:6]; Jer. 30:11 [e]Dan. 3:25

3 [f][Prov. 11:8; 21:18]

4 [g]Is. 63:9

5 [h]Is. 41:10; 44:2; Jer. 30:10; 46:27, 28 [i]Is. 54:7

6 [j]Is. 49:12

Israel's Obstinate Disobedience

21 The LORD is well pleased for His righteousness' sake;
He will exalt the law and make *it* honorable.
22 But this *is* a people robbed and plundered;
All of them are [6]snared in holes,
And they are hidden in prison houses;
They are for prey, and no one delivers;
For plunder, and no one says, "Restore!"

23 Who among you will give ear to this?
Who will listen and hear for the time to come?
24 Who gave Jacob for plunder, and Israel to the robbers?
Was it not the LORD,
He against whom we have sinned?
[f]For they would not walk in His ways,
Nor were they obedient to His law.
25 Therefore He has poured on him the fury of His anger
And the strength of battle;
[u]It has set him on fire all around,
[v]Yet he did not know;
And it burned him,
Yet he did not take *it* to [w]heart.

The Redeemer of Israel

43 But now, thus says the LORD, who created you, O Jacob,
And He who formed you, O Israel:
"Fear not, [a]for I have redeemed you;
[b]I have called *you* by your name;
You *are* Mine.
2 [c]When you pass through the waters, [d]I *will be* with you;
And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you.
When you [e]walk through the fire, you shall not be burned,
Nor shall the flame scorch you.
3 For I *am* the LORD your God,
The Holy One of Israel, your Savior;
[f]I gave Egypt for your ransom,
Ethiopia and Seba in your place.
4 Since you were precious in My sight,
You have been honored,
And I have [g]loved you;
Therefore I will give men for you,
And people for your life.
5 [h]Fear not, for I *am* with you;
I will bring your descendants from the east,
And [i]gather you from the west;
6 I will say to the [j]north, 'Give them up!'

■ **42:21 exalt the law.** High regard for God's law will extend His righteous kingdom on earth (v. 4 note).

■ **42:22 robbed and plundered . . . in prison houses.** These conditions came about because they rebelled against the Lord (v. 24).

■ **42:24 Jacob . . . Israel.** See note on 41:8.

■ **42:25 battle.** God in effect fought against His own people through the Assyrian and Babylonian devastation of Samaria and Judah.

■ **43:1–7** God will establish a new community.

■ **43:1 created.** See note on 4:5.

formed. See note on 27:10–11.

Fear not. See note at 10:24; 35:4.

redeemed. See note on 35:8, 9.

called . . . name. The Lord called them to be His people and He knows them by name (v. 3 note; 45:3; 49:1; 62:2; John 10:3; Rev. 2:17). The basic blessing of God's covenant is expressed in Jer. 30:22, "You shall be My people, and I will be your God." See also Ex. 6:7; Lev. 11:45; Jer. 11:4.

■ **43:2 waters . . . flame.** These words describe the affliction through which God will bring His people to safety (Ps. 66:6, 12).

■ **43:3 Egypt . . . Ethiopia . . . Seba.** Seba is probably South Arabia, or Eritrea. For Ethiopia, see Ps. 68:31 note. The Lord chose Israel above these nations (Ps. 147:20; Amos 3:1, 2) and transferred their land to His people (Deut. 4:20, 37, 38; Josh. 24:13; Ps. 78:55).

■ **43:4 precious . . . honored.** God's people are exalted by election (49:5; Ex. 19:5; Deut. 7:6–8).

And to the south, 'Do not keep them back!'
Bring My sons from afar,
And My daughters from the ends of the earth—
7 Everyone who is [k]called by My name,
Whom [l]I have created for My glory;
I have formed him, yes, I have made him."

8 [m]Bring out the blind people who have eyes,
And the [n]deaf who have ears.
9 Let all the nations be gathered together,
And let the people be assembled.
[o]Who among them can declare this,
And show us former things?
Let them bring out their witnesses, that they may be justified;
Or let them hear and say, "*It is* truth."
10 "You[p] *are* My witnesses," says the LORD,
[q]"And My servant whom I have chosen,
That you may know and [r]believe Me,
And understand that I *am* He.
Before Me there was no God formed,
Nor shall there be after Me.
11 I, *even* I, [s]*am* the LORD,
And besides Me *there is* no savior.
12 I have declared and saved,
I have proclaimed,
And *there was* no [t]foreign *god* among you;
[u]Therefore you *are* My witnesses,"
Says the LORD, "that I *am* God.
13 [v]Indeed before the day *was,* I *am* He;
And *there is* no one who can deliver out of My hand;
I work, and who will [w]reverse it?"

14 Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer,
The Holy One of Israel:
"For your sake I will send to Babylon,
And bring them all down as fugitives—
The Chaldeans, who rejoice in their ships.
15 I *am* the LORD, your Holy One,
The Creator of Israel, your [x]King."

16 Thus says the LORD, who [y]makes a way in the sea
And a [z]path through the mighty waters,
17 Who [a]brings forth the chariot and horse,
The army and the power
(They shall lie down together, they shall not rise;
They are extinguished, they are quenched like a wick):
18 "Do[b] not remember the former things,
Nor consider the things of old.
19 Behold, I will do a [c]new thing,

7 [k]Is. 63:19; James 2:7 [l]Ps. 100:3; Is. 29:23; [John 3:2, 3; 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:10]
8 [m]Is. 6:9; 42:19; Ezek. 12:2 [n]Is. 29:18
9 [o]Is. 41:21, 22, 26
10 [p]Is. 44:8 [q]Is. 55:4 [r]Is. 41:4; 44:6
11 [s]Is. 45:21; Hos. 13:4
12 [t]Deut. 32:16; Ps. 81:9 [u]Is. 44:8
13 [v]Ps. 90:2; Is. 48:16 [w]Job 9:12; Is. 14:27
15 [x]Is. 41:20, 21
16 [y]Ex. 14:16, 21, 22; Ps. 77:19; Is. 51:10 [z]Josh. 3:13
17 [a]Ex. 14:4–9, 25
18 [b]Jer. 16:14
19 [c]Is. 42:9; 48:6; [2 Cor. 5:17; Rev. 21:5]

■ **43:8 blind . . . deaf.** Here again is the community of rebels. See notes on 29:18; 42:18, 19. Spiritually "blind" and "deaf" Israel fulfills the Lord's prophecies in spite of itself.

■ **43:9 former things.** See 41:22 note.

■ **43:10 servant.** See notes on 20:3; 41:8; 42:1.

■ **43:13 before the day was.** The Lord alone from old willed the redemption of His people (40:21; 41:4).

deliver out of My hand. See Deut. 32:39.

■ **43:14 Redeemer.** See 35:9; 41:14 and notes.

■ **43:16 sea . . . mighty waters.** Isaiah refers to the crossing of the Red Sea (Ex. 14; 15).

■ **43:17 chariot and horse, The army and the power.** The prophet recalls the chariots of Egypt that were destroyed before the face of the Lord (cf. 31:1).

■ **43:19 new thing.** The exodus from Egypt is less important than the new era of redemption (42:9 note).

wilderness . . . desert. See note on 40:3.

rivers. See note on 41:18.

Now it shall spring forth;
Shall you not know it?
[d]I will even make a road in the wilderness
And rivers in the desert.
20 The beast of the field will honor Me,
The jackals and the ostriches,
Because [e]I give waters in the wilderness
And rivers in the desert,
To give drink to My people, My chosen.
21 [f]This people I have formed for Myself;
They shall declare My [g]praise.

Pleading with Unfaithful Israel

22 "But you have not called upon Me, O Jacob;
And you [h]have been weary of Me, O Israel.
23 [i]You have not brought Me the sheep for your burnt offerings,
Nor have you honored Me with your sacrifices.
I have not caused you to serve with grain offerings,
Nor wearied you with incense.
24 You have bought Me no sweet cane with money,
Nor have you satisfied Me with the fat of your sacrifices;
But you have burdened Me with your sins,
You have [j]wearied Me with your iniquities.

25 "I, *even* I, *am* He who [k]blots out your transgressions [l]for My own sake;
[m]And I will not remember your sins.
26 Put Me in remembrance;
Let us contend together;
State your *case,* that you may be [l]acquitted.
27 Your first father sinned,
And your [2]mediators have transgressed against Me.
28 Therefore I will profane the princes of the sanctuary;
[n]I will give Jacob to the curse,
And Israel to reproaches.

God's Blessing on Israel

44 "Yet hear me now, O Jacob My servant,
And Israel whom I have chosen.
2 Thus says the LORD who made you
And formed you from the womb, *who* will help you:
'Fear not, O Jacob My servant;
And you, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen.

19 [d]Ex. 17:6; Num. 20:11; Deut. 8:15; Ps. 78:16; Is. 35:1, 6
20 [e]Is. 48:21
21 [f]Ps. 102:18; Is. 42:12; [Luke 1:74, 75; Eph. 1:5, 6; 1 Pet. 2:9] [g]Jer. 13:11
22 [h]Mic. 6:3; Mal. 1:13; 3:14
23 [i]Amos 5:25
24 [j]Ps. 95:10; Is. 1:14; 7:13; Ezek. 6:9; Mal. 2:17
25 [k]Is. 44:22; Jer. 50:20; [Acts 3:19] [l]Ezek. 36:22 [m]Is. 1:18; Jer. 31:34
26 [1]*justified*
27 [2]*interpreters*
28 [n]Ps. 79:4; Jer. 24:9; Dan. 9:11; Zech. 8:13

■ **43:20 beast . . . ostriches.** These creatures are associated with desolate areas (34:11–15). See note on 13:20–22.

waters. This recalls God's provision in the wilderness (Ex. 15:22–26). See note on 1:30.

My people. See notes on vv. 1, 3.

■ **43:22 not called . . . been weary.** Instead of presenting offerings and sacrifices, the people were hardened in their sins.

■ **43:23 have not brought Me the sheep.** The people followed more than one religious practice, but these were not necessarily offered to God. On the emptiness of sacrifices which are mere external rituals, see Jer. 7:21–23 note.

■ **43:24 sweet cane.** An aromatic plant, possibly sugar cane.

■ **43:25 I, even I.** A repetition for emphasis.

blots . . . remember. God forgives sin, as Israel had experienced after the incident of the golden calf (Ex. 34:6, 7; cf. Luke 5:21). The Lord graciously promises to forgive and to establish His word (37:35; 42:21; 48:9, 11).

■ **43:26 State your case.** They stood condemned, unable to refute God's charge.

■ **43:27 first father.** Jacob was the father of the twelve tribes (Hos. 12:2, 3).

mediators. These are the religious leaders, including prophets and priests.

■ **43:28 princes . . . reproaches.** Judah was disgraced by the destruction of the temple and the exile of her people (63:18; cf. 2 Kin. 25:18–21).

■ **44:1 servant.** See notes on 20:3; 41:8; 42:1.

chosen. See notes on 14:1; 43:3.

■ **44:2 formed.** See note on 27:11.

from the womb. God likens Himself to a mother who has conceived and will give birth (v. 24; 42:14; 66:9).

Fear not. See notes on 10:24; 35:4.

Jeshurun. A poetic name for Israel (Deut. 32:15), meaning "upright one."

3 For I will pour water on him who is thirsty,
And floods on the dry ground;
I will pour My Spirit on your descendants,
And My blessing on your offspring;
4 They will spring up among the grass
Like willows by the watercourses.'
5 One will say, 'I *am* the LORD's';
Another will call *himself* by the name of Jacob;
Another will write *with* his hand, 'The LORD's,'
And name *himself* by the name of Israel.

There Is No Other God

6 "Thus says the LORD, the King of Israel,
And his Redeemer, the LORD of hosts:
[a]'I *am* the First and I *am* the Last;
Besides Me *there is* no God.
7 And [b]who can proclaim as I do?
Then let him declare it and set it in order for Me,
Since I appointed the ancient people.
And the things that are coming and shall come,
Let them show these to them.
8 Do not fear, nor be afraid;
[c]Have I not told you from that time, and declared *it?*
[d]You *are* My witnesses.
Is there a God besides Me?
Indeed [e]*there is* no other Rock;
I know not *one.*' "

Idolatry Is Foolishness

9 [f]Those who make an image, all of them *are* useless,
And their precious things shall not profit;
They *are* their own witnesses;
[g]They neither see nor know, that they may be ashamed.
10 Who would form a god or mold an image
[h]*That* profits him nothing?
11 Surely all his companions would be [i]ashamed;
And the workmen, they *are* mere men.
Let them all be gathered together,
Let them stand up;
Yet they shall fear,
They shall be ashamed together.

12 [j]The blacksmith with the tongs works one in the coals,
Fashions it with hammers,
And works it with the strength of his arms.
Even so, he is hungry, and his strength fails;
He drinks no water and is faint.

CHAPTER 44

6 [a]Is. 41:4; [Rev. 1:8, 17; 22:13]

7 [b]Is. 41:4, 22, 26

8 [c]Is. 41:22 [d]Is. 43:10, 12 [e]Deut. 4:35; 32:39; 1 Sam. 2:2; 2 Sam. 22:32; Is. 45:5; Joel 2:27

9 [f]Is. 41:24 [g]Ps. 115:4

10 [h]Is. 41:29; Jer. 10:5; Hab. 2:18; Acts 19:26

11 [i]Ps. 97:7; Is. 1:29; 42:17

12 [j]Is. 40:19; Jer. 10:3–5

■ **44:3 pour My Spirit . . . descendants.** This passage develops the promises in 28:6; 32:15. The Spirit lives in the children of the covenant today (Joel 2:28, 29; Acts 2:38, 39).

blessing. The Spirit will also confirm God's promises. For the connection between water and the Spirit see Mark 1:8–10.

■ **44:5 One . . . Another.** Many will participate in the new age of restoration, as Gentiles and Jews together will confess the name of the Lord (cf. Ps. 87:4–6).

■ **44:6–20** The Lord confronts the idols. On Isaiah's polemic against idolatry (vv. 9–20), see 2:8 note.

■ **44:6** See theological note "One and Three: The Trinity."

Redeemer. See note on 35:9, 10.

First . . . Last. See note on 41:4.

■ **44:8 Rock.** See 8:14, 15 note; Deut. 32:4, 15, 31.

■ **44:9 useless . . . not profit.** See 41:29 note.

their own witnesses. The "witnesses" could be the idols or their makers. Neither has any power of sight or understanding (Ps. 115:8).

■ **44:11 gathered together . . . stand.** The setting is a court of law (41:21).

■ **44:12** An idol may be a work of art. But even the finest craftsman's mortality is revealed in his hunger and thirst. In contrast, see 40:28.

13 The craftsman stretches out *his* rule,
He marks one out with chalk;
He fashions it with a plane,
He marks it out with the compass,
And makes it like the figure of a man,
According to the beauty of a man, that it may remain in the house.

One and Three: The Trinity

The Old Testament constantly insists that there is only one God, the self-revealed Creator, who must be worshiped and loved exclusively (Deut. 6:4–5; Is. 44:6—45:25). The New Testament agrees (Mark 12:29–30; 1 Cor. 8:4; Eph. 4:6; 1 Tim. 2:5), but speaks of three personal agents, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, working together to bring about salvation (Rom. 8; Eph. 1:3–14; 2 Thess. 2:13–14; 1 Pet. 1:2). The historic formulation of the Trinity (from the Latin word *trinitas,* meaning "threeness") is not an attempt to explain it; that would be beyond us. It does provide a boundary and safeguard for our thoughts about this mystery, which confronts us with perhaps the most difficult thought that the human mind can know. It is not easy; but it is true.

The doctrine springs from the historical facts of redemption recorded and explained in the New Testament. Jesus prayed to His Father and taught His disciples to do the same. Yet He convinced them that He was personally divine. Belief in His divinity and in the rightness of offering Him worship and prayer is basic to New Testament faith (John 20:28–31, cf. 1:1–18; Acts 7:59; Rom. 9:5; 10:9–13; 2 Cor. 12:7–9; Phil. 2:5–6; Col. 1:15–17; 2:9; Heb. 1:1–12; 1 Pet. 3:15). Jesus promised to send "another Helper" or "Paraclete" (from the Greek; see text note at John 14:16) to carry on His work as the first Helper (John 14:16,17). A "Paraclete" is an advocate, helper, ally, and supporter (John 14:26; 15:26–27; 16:7–15). The promised Helper was the Holy Spirit, who came at Pentecost to fulfill His ministry. From the start He was recognized as the third divine Person: to lie to Him, said Peter not long after Pentecost, is to lie to God (Acts 5:3–4).

Christ prescribed baptism "in the name (singular: one God, one name) of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"—three Persons who are the one God to whom Christians commit themselves (Matt. 28:19). So we meet the three Persons in the account of Jesus' own baptism: the Father acknowledged the Son, and the Spirit showed His presence in the Son's life and ministry (Mark 1:9–11). The blessing of 2 Cor. 13:14 is trinitarian, as is the prayer for grace and peace from the Father, the Spirit, and Jesus Christ in Rev. 1:4–5. John includes the Spirit between the Father and the Son only because he teaches that the Spirit is divine in the very same sense as are the Father and the Son. These are some of the more striking examples of trinitarian teaching in the New Testament. Though the technical language of later theology is not found there, trinitarian faith and thinking are present in all its pages. In this sense the Trinity is a biblical doctrine.

Basically the doctrine is that the unity of the one God is complex. The three personal "subsistences" (as they are called) are coequal and coeternal centers of self-awareness, each being "I" in relation to two who are "You," and each having the full divine essence of God, the specific existence that belongs to God alone. God is not one person who plays three separate roles; this is the error called "modalism." Nor are there three gods who only seem to be one because they always act together; this is "tritheism." The theologian B. B. Warfield put it simply: "when we have said these three things, then—that there is but one God, that the Father and the Son and the Spirit is each God, that the Father and the Son and the Spirit is each a distinct person—we have enunciated the doctrine of the Trinity in its completeness." This summarizes what was revealed through the words and works of Jesus, and is the reality underlying the salvation of the New Testament.

Practically speaking, the doctrine of the Trinity requires us to give equal honor to each of the three Persons in the unity of the one God. Moreover, knowing the doctrine establishes personal faith no less than it enriches a healthy sense of unity with other Christians. □

■ **44:13 like the figure of a man.** The carpenter makes his god in his own image (Deut. 4:16; Rom. 1:22, 23).

14 He cuts down cedars for himself,
And takes the cypress and the oak;
He [l]secures *it* for himself among the trees of the forest.
He plants a pine, and the rain nourishes *it.*

15 Then it shall be for a man to burn,
For he will take some of it and warm himself;
Yes, he kindles *it* and bakes bread;
Indeed he makes a god and worships *it;*
He makes it a carved image, and falls down to it.
16 He burns half of it in the fire;
With this half he eats meat;
He roasts a roast, and is satisfied.
He even warms *himself* and says,
"Ah! I am warm,
I have seen the fire."
17 And the rest of it he makes into a god,
His carved image.
He falls down before it and worships *it,*
Prays to it and says,
"Deliver me, for you *are* my god!"

18 [k]They do not know nor understand;
For [l]He has [2]shut their eyes, so that they cannot see,
And their hearts, so that they cannot [m]understand.
19 And no one [n]considers in his heart,
Nor *is there* knowledge nor understanding to say,
"I have burned half of it in the fire,
Yes, I have also baked bread on its coals;
I have roasted meat and eaten *it;*
And shall I make the rest of it an abomination?
Shall I fall down before a block of wood?"
20 He feeds on ashes;
[o]A deceived heart has turned him aside;
And he cannot deliver his soul,
Nor say, "*Is there* not a [p]lie in my right hand?"

Israel Is Not Forgotten

21 "Remember these, O Jacob,
And Israel, for you *are* My servant;
I have formed you, you *are* My servant;
O Israel, you will not be [q]forgotten by Me!
22 [r]I have blotted out, like a thick cloud, your transgressions,
And like a cloud, your sins.
Return to Me, for [s]I have redeemed you."

23 [t]Sing, O heavens, for the LORD has done *it!*
Shout, you lower parts of the earth;
Break forth into singing, you mountains,
O forest, and every tree in it!
For the LORD has redeemed Jacob,
And [u]glorified Himself in Israel.

14 [l]Lit. *appropriates*

18 [k]Is. 45:20 [l][Ps. 81:12]; Is. 6:9, 10; 29:10; 2 Thess. 2:11 [m]Jer. 10:14 [2]Lit. *smeared over*

19 [n]Is. 46:8

20 [o]Job 15:31; Hos. 4:12; Rom. 1:21, 22; 2 Thess. 2:11; 2 Tim. 3:13 [p]Is. 57:11; 59:3, 4, 13; Rom. 1:25

21 [q]Is. 49:15

22 [r]Is. 43:25 [s]Is. 43:1; 1 Cor. 6:20; [1 Pet. 1:18, 19]

23 [t]Ps. 69:34; Is. 42:10; 49:13; Jer. 51:48; Rev. 18:20 [u]Is. 49:3; 60:21

■ **44:18 know . . . understand.** They are utterly foolish (v. 9; 6:9, 10).

■ **44:19 an abomination . . . block of wood.** The prophet employs ridicule to expose the foolishness of idolatry. See "Mankind's Guilty Knowledge of God" at Rom. 1:19.

■ **44:20 lie.** The conclusion: idolatry is a deception, a hoax.

■ **44:22 redeemed.** The Lord alone is the Redeemer (35:9, 10; 41:14 and notes).

■ **44:23 heavens . . . every tree.** All creation will praise God for His salvation of Israel.

glorified. God will glorify the redeemed, who in turn will lead many to praise the Lord for His mighty acts (4:2 note; 49:3; 55:5; 60:21; 61:3).

24 [v]Is. 43:14 [w]Is. 43:1 [x]Job 9:8 [3]By Himself

25 [y]Is. 47:13 [z]Jer. 50:36 [a]2 Sam. 15:31; Job 5:12–14; Ps. 33:10; Is. 29:14; Jer. 51:57; 1 Cor. 1:20, 27

26 [b]Zech. 1:6; Matt. 5:18

27 [c]Jer. 50:38; 51:36

28 [d]2 Chr. 36:22; Ezra 1:1; Is. 45:13 [e]Ezra 6:7

CHAPTER 45

1 [a]Is. 44:28 [b]Ps. 73:23; Is. 41:13 [c]Dan. 5:30 [d]Job 12:21; Is. 45:5 [1]*strengthened* or *sustained*

2 [e]Is. 40:4 [f]Ps. 107:16 [2]Tg. *I will trample down the walls;* Vg. *I will humble the great ones of the earth* [3]DSS, LXX *mountains*

3 [g]Is. 41:23 [h]Ex. 33:12

4 [i]Is. 44:1

Judah Will Be Restored

24 Thus says the LORD, [v]your Redeemer,
And [w]He who formed you from the womb:
"I *am* the LORD, who makes all *things,*
[x]Who stretches out the heavens [3]all alone,
Who spreads abroad the earth by Myself;
25 Who [y]frustrates the signs [z]of the babblers,
And drives diviners mad;
Who turns wise men backward,
[a]And makes their knowledge foolishness;
26 [b]Who confirms the word of His servant,
And performs the counsel of His messengers;
Who says to Jerusalem, 'You shall be inhabited,'
To the cities of Judah, 'You shall be built,'
And I will raise up her waste places;
27 [c]Who says to the deep, 'Be dry!
And I will dry up your rivers';
28 Who says of [d]Cyrus, '*He is* My shepherd,
And he shall perform all My pleasure,
Saying to Jerusalem, [e]"You shall be built,"
And to the temple, "Your foundation shall be laid." '

Cyrus, God's Instrument

45 "Thus says the LORD to His anointed,
To [a]Cyrus, whose [b]right hand I have [1]held—
[c]To subdue nations before him
And [d]loose the armor of kings,
To open before him the double doors,
So that the gates will not be shut:
2 'I will go before you
[e]And[2] make the [3]crooked places straight;
[f]I will break in pieces the gates of bronze
And cut the bars of iron.
3 I will give you the treasures of darkness
And hidden riches of secret places,
[g]That you may know that I, the LORD,
Who [h]call *you* by your name,
Am the God of Israel.
4 For [i]Jacob My servant's sake,

■ **44:25 diviners.** Divination was strictly forbidden in Israel (2:6; 8:19 and notes).

■ **44:26 word . . . counsel.** These refer to the Lord's revelations of His plan (11:2 note).

servant. See notes on 20:3; 41:8; 42:1.

her waste places. These are the regions devastated by Babylon. The restoration of Judah was the beginning of a new stage in the history of redemption.

■ **44:27 deep . . . rivers.** Possibly a reference to the crossing of the Red Sea (43:16, 19 and notes). The prophecy may have found a literal fulfillment when Cyrus diverted the water of the Euphrates River and marched his army through the gates that allowed it to flow through the city of Babylon (45:2 note).

■ **44:28 My shepherd.** Kings were often called shepherds (2 Sam. 5:2; Jer. 3:15; cf. Mic. 5:4). Cyrus ruled by God's decree.

Jerusalem . . . temple. These were rebuilt by Cyrus's royal decree (Ezra 1:2–4; 6:3–5).

■ **45:1 His anointed.** This title is not used elsewhere of anyone outside Israel, and its application to Cyrus would have shocked Isaiah's audience.

right hand I have held. He rules by Yahweh's authority (41:2; 48:14; cf. Ps. 2:8, 9; 110:1).

nations . . . kings. See note on 41:2.

■ **45:2 break . . . cut.** Nothing can withstand the Lord's servant (cf. Ps. 107:16).

gates. The prophecy may have had a literal fulfillment when Cyrus used the gates that allowed the Euphrates to flow through Babylon (44:27 note).

■ **45:3 darkness . . . secret places.** Precious metals came from deep mines (Job 28:1–6). Cyrus plundered the fabulous wealth of Lydia in 546 B.C.

call you by your name. The Lord has raised up Cyrus and knows him (compare 43:1 note).

■ **45:4 servant's.** See notes at 20:3; 41:8; 42:1.

elect. See note on 14:1.

named you. As God's "shepherd" (44:28) and "anointed" (v. 1), Cyrus has a title of honor.

have not known Me. Cyrus remained an unbeliever.

And Israel My elect,
I have even called you by your name;
I have named you, though you have not known Me.
5 I *am* the LORD, and *there is* no other;
There is no God besides Me.
I will gird you, though you have not known Me,
6 That they may know from the rising of the sun to its setting
That *there is* none besides Me.
I *am* the LORD, and *there is* no other;
7 I form the light and create darkness,
I make peace and create calamity;
I, the LORD, do all these *things*.'

8 "Rain down, you heavens, from above,
And let the skies pour down righteousness;
Let the earth open, let them bring forth salvation,
And let righteousness spring up together.
I, the LORD, have created it.

9 "Woe to him who strives with his Maker!
Let the potsherd *strive* with the potsherds of the earth!
Shall the clay say to him who forms it, 'What are you making?'
Or shall your handiwork *say*, 'He has no hands'?
10 Woe to him who says to *his* father, 'What are you begetting?'
Or to the woman, 'What have you brought forth?' "

11 Thus says the LORD,
The Holy One of Israel, and his Maker:
"Ask Me of things to come concerning My sons;
And concerning the work of My hands, you command Me.
12 I have made the earth,
And created man on it.
I—My hands—stretched out the heavens,
And all their host I have commanded.
13 I have raised him up in righteousness,
And I will direct all his ways;
He shall build My city
And let My exiles go free,
Not for price nor reward,"
Says the LORD of hosts.

The LORD, the Only Savior

14 Thus says the LORD:

"The labor of Egypt and merchandise of Cush
And of the Sabeans, men of stature,
Shall come over to you, and they shall be yours;
They shall walk behind you,
They shall come over in chains;
And they shall bow down to you.
They will make supplication to you, *saying*, 'Surely God *is* in you,
And *there is* no other;
There is no other God.' "

5 /Deut. 4:35; 32:39; Is. 44:8 *k*Is. 45:14, 18 /Ps. 18:32

6 *m*Ps. 102:15; Is. 37:20; Mal. 1:11 *n*[Is. 11:9; 52:10]

7 *o*Is. 31:2; 47:11; Amos 3:6

8 *p*Ps. 85:11

9 *q*Is. 64:8 *r*Jer. 18:6; Rom. 9:20, 21

11 *s*Is. 8:19 *t*Jer. 31:9 *u*Is. 29:23; 60:21; 64:8

12 *v*Is. 42:5; Jer. 27:5 *w*Gen. 1:26 *x*Gen. 2:1; Neh. 9:6

13 *y*Is. 41:2 *z*2 Chr. 36:22; Is. 44:28 *a*[Rom. 3:24] *d*Or *make all his ways straight*

14 *b*Ps. 68:31; 72:10, 11; Is. 14:1; 49:23; 60:9, 10, 14, 16; Zech. 8:22, 23 *c*Ps. 149:8 *d*Jer. 16:19; Zech. 8:20–23; 1 Cor. 14:25 *e*Is. 45:5

■ **45:7 form.** See note on 27:11.

light . . . darkness. The Lord asserts His power over two fundamental poles of reality, as described in Gen. 1:3, 4. The parallel terms "peace" and "calamity" include the political realities that Cyrus was going to disturb in fulfilling the counsel of God.

■ **45:8 heavens . . . earth.** Creation must prepare itself for the Lord's act of redemption, described by two synonyms: "righteousness" and "salvation" (12:2; 26:17, 18 and notes).

■ **45:13 Not for price.** Although the Lord gave Cyrus a handsome reward (v. 3) for ransoming His people (43:3), this was not the reason Cyrus liberated them.

■ **45:14 Egypt . . . Cush . . . Sabeans.** See 43:3 note; Ps. 68:31. The nations will come to worship the one God (Zech. 8:23; Eph. 3:6).

15 Truly You *are* God, [f]who hide Yourself,
O God of Israel, the Savior!
16 They shall be [g]ashamed
And also disgraced, all of them;
They shall go in confusion together,
Who are makers of idols.
17 [h]*But* Israel shall be saved by the LORD
With an [i]everlasting salvation;
You shall not be ashamed or [j]disgraced
Forever and ever.

18 For thus says the LORD,
[k]Who created the heavens,
Who is God,
Who formed the earth and made it,
Who has established it,
Who did not create it [5]in vain,
Who formed it to be [l]inhabited:
[m]"I *am* the LORD, and *there is* no other.
19 I have not spoken in [n]secret,
In a dark place of the earth;
I did not say to the seed of Jacob,
'Seek Me [6]in vain';
[o]I, the LORD, speak righteousness,
I declare things that are right.

20 "Assemble yourselves and come;
Draw near together,
You *who have* escaped from the nations.
[p]They have no knowledge,
Who carry the wood of their carved image,
And pray to a god *that* cannot save.
21 Tell and bring forth *your case;*
Yes, let them take counsel together.
[q]Who has declared this from ancient time?
Who has told it from that time?
Have not I, the LORD?
[r]And *there is* no other God besides Me,
A just God and a Savior;
There is none besides Me.

22 "Look to Me, and be saved,
[s]All you ends of the earth!
For I *am* God, and *there is* no other.
23 [t]I have sworn by Myself;
The word has gone out of My mouth *in* righteousness,
And shall not return,
That to Me every [u]knee shall bow,

15 [f]Ps. 44:24; Is. 57:17
16 [g]Is. 44:11
17 [h]Is. 26:4; [Rom. 11:26] [i]Is. 51:6 [j]Is. 29:22
18 [k]Is. 42:5 [l]Gen. 1:26; Ps. 115:16; Acts 17:26 [m]Is. 45:5 [5]Or *empty, a waste*
19 [n]Deut. 30:11 [o]Ps. 19:8; Is. 45:23; 63:1 [6]Or *in a waste place*
20 [p]Is. 44:9; 46:7; Jer. 10:5
21 [q]Is. 41:22; 43:9 [r]Is. 44:8
22 [s]Ps. 22:27; 65:5
23 [t]Gen. 22:16; Is. 62:8; [Heb. 6:13] [u]Rom. 14:11; [Phil. 2:10]

■ **45:15 God, who hide Yourself.** God is said to hide Himself when He seems not to be present to help His people (8:17; 54:8). He is also "hidden" in the sense that He is unaccountable to anyone, and His ways are often mysterious (55:8, 9; Ps. 77:19 note; Rom. 9:20; 11:33, 34).

■ **45:17 everlasting salvation . . . Forever and ever.** God is unlike people and idols, who can never secure the future for themselves or for others (cf. Heb. 5:9).

■ **45:18 in vain.** This word is translated "without form" in Gen. 1:2. This was the beginning, not the end of creation. In the same way God does not invite people to seek Him to no purpose. He will carry through with what He has begun (55:11; 66:9) and answer those who seek Him (55:3; Matt. 11:28; Heb. 11:6).

■ **45:19 in secret, In a dark place.** The Lord's revelation is unlike pagan oracles that were obscure and ambiguous. The Lord's revelation is clear and public, though the outworking of His promises may not conform to human expectations (48:16).

■ **45:22 ends of the earth.** See v. 14 and note.

■ **45:23 I have sworn by Myself.** God's promises are guaranteed by His name (14:24; 62:8; Gen. 22:16; Ex. 32:13; Heb. 6:13–18).

every knee . . . Every tongue. This is the goal of redemptive history (v. 14 and note; Rom. 14:11; 1 Cor. 15:25; Phil. 2:10, 11).

[r]Every tongue shall take an oath.
24 He shall say,
[7][s]'Surely in the LORD I have [w]righteousness and strength.
To Him *men* shall come,
And [x]all shall be ashamed
Who are incensed against Him.
25 [y]In the LORD all the descendants of Israel
Shall be justified, and [z]shall glory.' "

Dead Idols and the Living God

46 Bel [a]bows down, Nebo stoops;
Their idols were on the beasts and on the cattle.
Your carriages *were* heavily loaded,
[b]A burden to the weary *beast.*
2 They stoop, they bow down together;
They could not deliver the burden,
[c]But have themselves gone into captivity.

3 "Listen to Me, O house of Jacob,
And all the remnant of the house of Israel,
[d]Who have been upheld *by Me* from [1]birth,
Who have been carried from the womb:
4 Even to *your* old age, [e]I *am* He,
And *even* to gray hairs [f]I will carry *you!*
I have made, and I will bear;
Even I will carry, and will deliver *you.*

5 "To[g] whom will you liken Me, and make *Me* equal
And compare Me, that we should be alike?
6 [h]They lavish gold out of the bag,
And weigh silver on the scales;
They hire a [i]goldsmith, and he makes it a god;
They prostrate themselves, yes, they worship.
7 [j]They bear it on the shoulder, they carry it
And set it in its place, and it stands;
From its place it shall not move.
Though [k]*one* cries out to it, yet it cannot answer
Nor save him out of his trouble.

8 "Remember this, and [2]show yourselves men;
[l]Recall to mind, O you transgressors.
9 [m]Remember the former things of old,
For I *am* God, and [n]*there is* no other;
I am God, and *there is* none like Me,
10 [o]Declaring the end from the beginning,
And from ancient times *things* that are not *yet* done,
Saying, [p]'My counsel shall stand,
And I will do all My pleasure,'
11 Calling a bird of prey [q]from the east,
The man [r]who executes My counsel, from a far country.
Indeed [s]I have spoken *it;*
I will also bring it to pass.

23 [v]Deut. 6:13; Ps. 63:11; Is. 19:18; 65:16

24 [w]Is. 54:17; [Jer. 23:5; 1 Cor. 1:30] [x]Is. 41:11 [7]Or *Only in the* LORD *are all righteousness and strength*

25 [y]Is. 45:17 [z]1 Cor. 1:31

CHAPTER 46

1 [a]Is. 21:9; Jer. 50:2 [b]Jer. 10:5

2 [c]Judg. 18:17, 18, 24; 2 Sam. 5:21; Jer. 48:7; Hos. 10:5, 6

3 [d]Deut. 32:11; Ps. 71:6; Is. 63:9 [1]Lit. *the belly*

4 [e]Mal. 3:6 [f]Ps. 48:14

5 [g]Is. 40:18, 25

6 [h]Is. 40:19; 41:6; Jer. 10:4 [i]Is. 44:12

7 [j]Is. 45:20; 46:1; Jer. 10:5 [k]Is. 45:20

8 [l]Is. 44:19 [2]*be men,* take courage

9 [m]Deut. 32:7; Is. 42:9; 65:17 [n]Is. 45:5, 21

10 [o]Is. 45:21; 48:3 [p]Ps. 33:11; Prov. 19:21; 21:30; Is. 14:24; 25:1; Acts 5:39; Heb. 6:17

11 [q]Is. 41:2, 25 [r]Is. 44:28 [s]Num. 23:19

■ **46:1, 2 Bel . . . Nebo.** Babylonian gods.

bows . . . stoops. The idols were dead weight, a lifeless burden on the animals that had to carry them. On Isaiah's polemic against idolatry, see 2:8.

■ **46:3 remnant.** See note on 1:9.

birth . . . womb. The Lord's care is like that of a mother for her children (44:2 note; 49:5; cf. Deut. 1:31; Hos. 11:3, 4).

■ **46:4 old age . . . gray hairs.** The Lord is constant in His care (Ps. 71:9, 18).

I am He. See note on 41:4.

■ **46:9 former . . . of old.** See notes on 41:22; 42:9.

■ **46:11 east . . . man.** This is Cyrus; see 41:2.

I have purposed *it;*
I will also do it.

12 "Listen to Me, you [t]stubborn-hearted,
[u]Who *are* far from righteousness:
13 [v]I bring My righteousness near, it shall not be far off;
My salvation [w]shall not [3]linger.
And I will place [x]salvation in Zion,
For Israel My glory.

The Humiliation of Babylon

47 "Come [a]down and [b]sit in the dust,
O virgin daughter of [c]Babylon;
Sit on the ground without a throne,
O daughter of the Chaldeans!
For you shall no more be called
Tender and [1]delicate.
2 [d]Take the millstones and grind meal.
Remove your veil,
Take off the skirt,
Uncover the thigh,
Pass through the rivers.
3 [e]Your nakedness shall be uncovered,
Yes, your shame will be seen;
[f]I will take vengeance,
And I will not arbitrate with a man."

4 *As for* [g]our Redeemer, the LORD of hosts *is* His name,
The Holy One of Israel.

5 "Sit in [h]silence, and go into darkness,
O daughter of the Chaldeans;
[i]For you shall no longer be called
The Lady of Kingdoms.
6 [j]I was angry with My people;
[k]I have profaned My inheritance,
And given them into your hand.
You showed them no mercy;
[l]On the elderly you laid your yoke very heavily.
7 And you said, 'I shall be [m]a lady forever,'
So that you did not [n]take these *things* to heart,
[o]Nor remember the latter end of them.

8 "Therefore hear this now, *you who are* given to pleasures,
Who dwell securely,
Who say in your heart, 'I *am,* and *there is* no one else besides me;
I shall not sit *as* a widow,
Nor shall I know the loss of children';
9 But these two *things* shall come to you

12 [t]Ps. 76:5; Is. 48:4; Zech. 7:11, 12; Mal. 3:13 [u][Rom. 10:3]

13 [v][Rom. 1:17] [w]Hab. 2:3 [x]Is. 62:11; Joel 3:17; [1 Pet. 2:6] [3]*delay*

CHAPTER 47

1 [a]Jer. 48:18 [b]Is. 3:26 [c]Is. 14:18–23; Jer. 25:12; 50:1—51:64 [1]*dainty*

2 [d]Ex. 11:5; Jer. 25:10

3 [e]Is. 3:17; 20:4 [f][Rom. 12:19]

4 [g]Jer. 50:34

5 [h]1 Sam. 2:9 [i]Is. 13:19; [Dan. 2:37]; Rev. 17:18

6 [j]2 Sam. 24:14 [k]Is. 43:28 [l]Deut. 28:49, 50

7 [m]Rev. 18:7 [n]Is. 42:25; 46:8 [o]Deut. 32:29; Jer. 5:31; Ezek. 7:2, 3

■ **46:12 stubborn-hearted.** These are the transgressors of v. 8. As some in the first exodus looked back to Egypt (Num. 14:3), so also some in the second exodus longed for Babylon.

■ **46:13 Zion.** See note on 1:8.

■ **47:1–15** An oracle regarding the fall of Babylon, never to rise again.

■ **47:1–3** Babylon, the queen of nations, is commanded to descend from her throne and become a menial slave girl. By contrast, Zion, a captive slave girl, will be commanded to ascend her throne (52:1, 2).

■ **47:1 virgin daughter of Babylon.** The city of Babylon and its inhabitants.

■ **47:2 Remove . . . Pass through.** All Babylon's privileges and status will be removed. She will be humiliated.

■ **47:4 Redeemer.** See notes on 35:9; 41:14.

■ **47:7 a lady forever.** Her boast was based on her contempt for the truths that God ruled history and that He would judge her for her cruelties (v. 6; Rev. 18:7). Her society and politics had no regard for God.

■ **47:9 moment, in one day.** Babylon's losses will occur suddenly.

loss of children, and widowhood. Bereft of husband and children, she has no hope for the future and is consigned to slavery and extinction. Contrast 49:21–23; 54:1–6.

[p]In a moment, in one day:
The loss of children, and widowhood.
They shall come upon you in their fullness
Because of the multitude of your sorceries,
For the great abundance of your enchantments.

10 "For you have trusted in your wickedness;
You have said, 'No one [q]sees me';
Your wisdom and your knowledge have [2]warped you;
And you have said in your heart,
'I *am,* and *there is* no one else besides me.'
11 Therefore evil shall come upon you;
You shall not know from where it arises.
And trouble shall fall upon you;
You will not be able [3]to put it off.
And [r]desolation shall come upon you [s]suddenly,
Which you shall not know.

12 "Stand now with your enchantments
And the multitude of your sorceries,
In which you have labored from your youth—
Perhaps you will be able to profit,
Perhaps you will prevail.
13 [t]You are wearied in the multitude of your counsels;
Let now [u]the[4] astrologers, the stargazers,
And [5]the monthly prognosticators
Stand up and save you
From what shall come upon you.
14 Behold, they shall be [v]as stubble,
The fire shall [w]burn them;
They shall not deliver themselves
From the power of the flame;
It shall not *be* a coal to be warmed by,
Nor a fire to sit before!
15 Thus shall they be to you
With whom you have labored,
[x]Your merchants from your youth;
They shall wander each one to his [6]quarter.
No one shall save you.

Israel Refined for God's Glory

48 "Hear this, O house of Jacob,
Who are called by the name of Israel,
And have come forth from the wellsprings of Judah;
Who swear by the name of the LORD,
And make mention of the God of Israel,
But [a]not in truth or in righteousness;
2 For they call themselves [b]after the holy city,
And [c]lean on the God of Israel;
The LORD of hosts *is* His name:

3 "I have [d]declared the former things from the beginning;
They went forth from My mouth, and I caused them to hear it.

9 [p]Ps. 73:19; 1 Thess. 5:3; Rev. 18:8

10 [q]Is. 29:15; Ezek. 8:12; 9:9 [2]*led you astray*

11 [r]Is. 13:6; Jer. 51:8, 43; Luke 17:27; 1 Thess. 5:3 [s]Is. 29:5 [3]Lit. *to cover it* or *atone for it*

13 [t]Is. 57:10 [u]Is. 8:19; 44:25; 47:9; Dan. 2:2, 10 [4]Lit. *viewers of the heavens* [5]Lit. *those giving knowledge for new moons*

14 [v]Is. 5:24; Nah. 1:10; Mal. 4:1 [w][Is. 10:17]; Jer. 51:58

15 [x]Rev. 18:11 [6]*own side* or *way*

CHAPTER 48

1 [a]Is. 58:2; Jer. 4:2; 5:2

2 [b]Is. 52:1; 64:10 [c]Is. 10:20; Jer. 7:4; 21:2; Mic. 3:11; Rom. 2:17

3 [d]Is. 44:7, 8; 46:10

■ **47:10 wisdom . . . knowledge.** These are Babylon's traditions of religion, magic, and divination. See note on 44:25.

I am. In brazen self-deification, Babylon usurps the name of God (45:5, 6, 18, 21, 22; 46:9).

■ **47:13 counsels . . . stargazers.** Babylon depended on omens from the heavenly bodies for her decisions (Dan. 2:2).

■ **47:14 stubble . . . flame.** See Rev. 18:17–19. Babylon's astrologers (v. 13) practiced their craft to save Babylon from these prophecies, but they cannot even save themselves (Dan. 2:10–13).

■ **48:1 Hear.** This final and urgent appeal was designed to lead deaf and blind Israel (vv. 6, 8; cf. 42:18–20; 46:3–12; 51:1) to recognize God's ways in creation and in history (v. 12, 16).

■ **48:3 former things.** See notes on 41:22; 42:9.

Suddenly I did *them,* [e]and they came to pass.
4 Because I knew that you *were* [f]obstinate,
And [f]your neck *was* an iron sinew,
And your brow bronze,
5 Even from the beginning I have declared *it* to you;
Before it came to pass I proclaimed *it* to you,
Lest you should say, 'My idol has done them,
And my carved image and my molded image
Have commanded them.'

6 "You have heard;
See all this.
And will you not declare *it?*
I have made you hear new things from this time,
Even hidden things, and you did not know them.
7 They are created now and not from the beginning;
And before this day you have not heard them,
Lest you should say, 'Of course I knew them.'
8 Surely you did not hear,
Surely you did not know;
Surely from long ago your ear was not opened.
For I knew that you would deal very treacherously,
And were called [g]a transgressor from the womb.

9 "For[h] My name's sake [i]I will [2]defer My anger,
And *for* My praise I will restrain it from you,
So that I do not cut you off.
10 Behold, [j]I have refined you, but not as silver;
I have tested you in the [k]furnace of affliction.
11 For My own sake, for My own sake, I will do *it;*
For [l]how should *My name* be profaned?
And [m]I will not give My glory to another.

God's Ancient Plan to Redeem Israel

12 "Listen to Me, O Jacob,
And Israel, My called:
I *am* He, [n]I *am* the [o]First,
I *am* also the Last.
13 Indeed [p]My hand has laid the foundation of the earth,
And My right hand has stretched out the heavens;
When [q]I call to them,
They stand up together.

14 "All of you, assemble yourselves, and hear!
Who among them has declared these *things?*
[r]The LORD loves him;
[s]He shall do His pleasure on Babylon,
And His arm *shall be against* the Chaldeans.
15 I, *even* I, have spoken;
Yes, [t]I have called him,
I have brought him, and his way will prosper.

3 [e]Josh. 21:45; Is. 42:9
4 [f]Ex. 32:9; Deut. 31:27; Ezek. 2:4; 3:7 [1]Heb. *hard*
8 [g]Deut. 9:7, 24; Ps. 58:3; Is. 46:3, 8
9 [h]Ps. 79:9; 106:8; Is. 43:25; Ezek. 20:9, 14, 22, 44 [i][Neh. 9:30, 31]; Ps. 78:38; Is. 30:18; 65:8 [2]*delay*
10 [j]Ps. 66:10; Jer. 9:7 [k]Deut. 4:20; 1 Kin. 8:51; Jer. 11:4
11 [l]Lev. 22:2, 32; Deut. 32:26, 27; Ezek. 20:9 [m]Is. 42:8
12 [n]Deut. 32:39 [o]Is. 44:6; [Rev. 22:13]
13 [p]Ex. 20:11; Ps. 102:25; Is. 42:5; 45:12, 18; Heb. 1:10–12 [q]Is. 40:26
14 [r]Is. 45:1 [s]Is. 44:28; 47:1–15
15 [t]Is. 45:1, 2

■ **48:5 from the beginning . . . Before it came to pass.** The Lord alone decrees and executes His will according to His word.

■ **48:6 heard; See.** The evidence speaks for itself, if only they would believe God's word.

new things . . . hidden things. An era of salvation and kingdom righteousness began with the restoration from exile, but these prophecies look forward to Christ's coming and the growth of His kingdom in its fullness (45:15; Rev. 1:19).

■ **48:10 refined . . . tested.** The Exile was a period of refining (1:22, 25; compare Ezek. 22:18–22; 1 Pet. 1:7).

■ **48:12 I am He.** Contrast Babylon's boast in 47:8, 10.

■ **48:14 The LORD loves him.** That is, Cyrus (41:2, 25; 45:4; 46:11 and notes).

■ **48:15 called . . . prosper.** The status and special success of Cyrus is given by the Lord.

16 "Come near to Me, hear this:
[u]I have not spoken in secret from the beginning;
From the time that it was, I *was* there.
And now [v]the Lord GOD and His Spirit
[3]Have sent Me."

17 Thus says [w]the LORD, your Redeemer,
The Holy One of Israel:
"I *am* the LORD your God,
Who teaches you to profit,
[x]Who leads you by the way you should go.
18 [y]Oh, that you had heeded My commandments!
[z]Then your peace would have been like a river,
And your righteousness like the waves of the sea.
19 [a]Your descendants also would have been like the sand,
And the offspring of your body like the grains of sand;
His name would not have been cut off
Nor destroyed from before Me."

20 [b]Go forth from Babylon!
Flee from the Chaldeans!
With a voice of singing,
Declare, proclaim this,
Utter it to the end of the earth;
Say, "The LORD has [c]redeemed
His servant Jacob!"
21 And they [d]did not thirst
When He led them through the deserts;
He [e]caused the waters to flow from the rock for them;
He also split the rock, and the waters gushed out.

22 "*There*[f] *is* no peace," says the LORD, "for the wicked."

The Servant, the Light to the Gentiles

49 "Listen, [a]O coastlands, to Me,
And take heed, you peoples from afar!
[b]The LORD has called Me from the womb;
From the [1]matrix of My mother He has made mention of My name.
2 And He has made [c]My mouth like a sharp sword;
[d]In the shadow of His hand He has hidden Me,
And made Me [e]a polished shaft;
In His quiver He has hidden Me."

3 "And He said to me,
[f]'You *are* My servant, O Israel,
[g]In whom I will be glorified.'

16 [u]Is. 45:19 [v]Is. 61:1; Zech. 2:8, 9, 11 [3]Heb. verb is sing.; or *Has sent Me and His Spirit*

17 [w]Is. 43:14 [x]Ps. 32:8; Is. 49:9, 10

18 [y]Deut. 5:29; Ps. 81:13 [z]Deut. 28:1–14; Ps. 119:165; Is. 32:16–18; 66:12

19 [a]Gen. 22:17; Is. 10:22; 44:3, 4; 54:3; Jer. 33:22; Hos. 1:10

20 [b]Jer. 50:8; 51:6, 45; Zech. 2:6, 7; Rev. 18:4 [c][Ex. 19:4–6]

21 [d][Is. 41:17, 18] [e]Ex. 17:6; Ps. 105:41

22 [f][Is. 57:21]

CHAPTER 49

1 [a]Is. 41:1 [b]Jer. 1:5; Matt. 1:20; Luke 1:35; John 1:14; 10:36 [1]Lit. *inward parts*

2 [c]Is. 11:4; Hos. 6:5; [Heb. 4:12]; Rev. 1:16; 2:12 [d]Is. 51:16 [e]Ps. 45:5

3 [f][Is. 41:8; 42:1; Zech. 3:8] [g]Is. 44:23; Matt. 12:18; [John 13:31, 32; 14:13; 15:8; 17:4; Eph. 1:6]

■ **48:16 I was there.** Christ appears to be speaking in this verse. As commonly translated, He reveals that His Spirit inspired the prophets (Rev. 19:10), and that He came into the world sent by the Father and the Spirit. Salvation is the work of the triune God.

■ **48:17 Redeemer.** See note on 35:9; 41:14.

■ **48:18 Oh, that you had heeded.** God reveals a compassionate longing for His people to find their peace in living for Him. As Dante said, "In His will is our peace."

river . . . waves of the sea. These similes represent abundant life (66:12; Amos 5:24).

righteousness. See note on 1:21. Peace and righteousness go together (v. 22; 26:3 note; 32:17; 54:13, 14; 60:17; Ps. 85:10; Heb. 7:2).

■ **48:19 descendants . . . sand.** This is the promise first made to Abraham (Gen. 12:2; 22:17).

■ **48:21 thirst . . . gushed out.** The prophet remembers the exodus from Egypt and how God provided for His people then (41:17–20; 43:19–21; 44:3; cf. Ex. 17:6; Ps. 105:41).

■ **48:22 no peace.** See v. 18 note.

■ **49:1–7** This is the second of the four "Servant Songs" (42:1–9; 49:1–7; 50:4–11; 52:13—53:12).

■ **49:1 called . . . name.** The faithful servant is called "Israel" (v. 3; 43:1; 44:2, 24; 45:3 and notes). He is distinct from unfaithful Israel (vv. 5, 6; 42:18; 46:12; 48:1 and notes).

■ **49:2 mouth.** The servant conquers through preaching (11:4 note; 51:16 note; 61:1). God's words are effective (40:8; 45:19; 55:10, 11).

sharp sword . . . polished shaft. These metaphors portray the effectiveness of the word (Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12; Rev. 1:16; 2:12, 16; 19:15).

■ **49:3 servant.** See notes on 20:3; 41:8; 42:1.

4 [h][Ezek. 3:19] [2]justice [3]recompense

5 [i]Matt. 23:37; [Rom. 11:25–29] [4]Qr., DSS, LXX *gathered to Him;* Kt. *not gathered*

6 [j]Is. 42:6; 51:4; [Luke 2:32]; Acts 13:47; [Gal. 3:14]

7 [k][Ps. 22:6; Is. 53:3; Matt. 26:67; 27:41]; Mark 15:29; Luke 23:35 [l][Is. 52:15] [5]Lit. *his* or *its* [6]Lit. *who is despised of soul*

8 [m]Ps. 69:13; 2 Cor. 6:2 [n]Is. 42:6 [7]*favorable* [8]*keep* [9]*inheritances*

9 [o]Is. 61:1; Zech. 9:12; Luke 4:18

10 [p]Is. 33:16; 48:21; Rev. 7:16 [q]Ps. 121:6 [r]Ps. 23:2; Is. 40:11; 48:17

4 [h]Then I said, 'I have labored in vain,
I have spent my strength for nothing and in vain;
Yet surely my [2]just reward *is* with the LORD,
And my [3]work with my God.' "

5 "And now the LORD says,
Who formed Me from the womb *to be* His Servant,
To bring Jacob back to Him,
So that Israel [i]is [4]gathered to Him
(For I shall be glorious in the eyes of the LORD,
And My God shall be My strength),
6 Indeed He says,
'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant
To raise up the tribes of Jacob,
And to restore the preserved ones of Israel;
I will also give You as a [j]light to the Gentiles,
That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.' "

7 Thus says the LORD,
The Redeemer of Israel, [5]their Holy One,
[k]To Him [6]whom man despises,
To Him whom the nation abhors,
To the Servant of rulers:
[l]"Kings shall see and arise,
Princes also shall worship,
Because of the LORD who is faithful,
The Holy One of Israel;
And He has chosen You."

8 Thus says the LORD:

"In an [m]acceptable[7] time I have heard You,
And in the day of salvation I have helped You;
I will [8]preserve You [n]and give You
As a covenant to the people,
To restore the earth,
To cause them to inherit the desolate [9]heritages;
9 That You may say [o]to the prisoners, 'Go forth,'
To those who *are* in darkness, 'Show yourselves.'

"They shall feed along the roads,
And their pastures *shall be* on all desolate heights.
10 They shall neither [p]hunger nor thirst,
[q]Neither heat nor sun shall strike them;
For He who has mercy on them [r]will lead them,

■ **49:4 labored in vain.** The servant's complaint is fulfilled in Christ's rejection and suffering (42:2 note).

reward. See 40:10; Gen. 15:1. The servant will be vindicated (50:8) and rewarded after His death and resurrection (53:8–10).

■ **49:5 formed.** See note on 27:11.

bring . . . gathered. One purpose of the Servant is to reconcile the Jews with God.

■ **49:6 light to the Gentiles.** A second purpose of the Servant is to bring the gospel to the nations (Luke 2:32; Acts 13:47; 26:23). He fulfills the call of Abraham (Gen. 12:3; 22:18) and of Israel (Ex. 19:5, 6). Today the ascended Christ brings the gospel to the nations through His body, the church (Matt. 28:18–20; 1 Pet. 2:9, 10).

■ **49:7 Redeemer.** See note on 41:14.

Servant of rulers. Paradoxically, the king who humbles himself to become the Servant of rulers will Himself receive their homage (4:2; 45:24; 52:15).

■ **49:8 an acceptable time.** This time stands in contrast to the day of vengeance (12:2; 34:8 and notes; cf. 35:4; 59:17, 18; 61:2; 63:4; 2 Cor. 6:2).

restore . . . inherit. This restoration began with the return from exile (44:26; 45:8 note).

■ **49:9 prisoners.** See notes on 42:7; 51:14; 61:1.

darkness. See note on 5:30.

feed . . . pastures. The servant is the Shepherd and King of Israel (40:11).

■ **49:10 guide.** Isaiah alludes to the exodus from Egypt (42:16; 48:21; Ex. 15:13).

Even by the springs of water He will guide them.
11 [s]I will make each of My mountains a road,
And My highways shall be elevated.
12 Surely [t]these shall come from afar;
Look! Those from the north and the west,
And these from the land of Sinim."

13 [u]Sing, O heavens!
Be joyful, O earth!
And break out in singing, O mountains!
For the LORD has comforted His people,
And will have mercy on His afflicted.

God Will Remember Zion

14 [v]But Zion said, "The LORD has forsaken me,
And my Lord has forgotten me."

15 "Can[w] a woman forget her nursing child,
[l]And not have compassion on the son of her womb?
Surely they may forget,
[x]Yet I will not forget you.
16 See, [y]I have inscribed you on the palms *of My hands;*
Your walls *are* continually before Me.
17 Your [2]sons shall make haste;
Your destroyers and those who laid you waste
Shall go away from you.
18 [z]Lift up your eyes, look around and see;
All these gather together *and* come to you.
As I live," says the LORD,
"You shall surely clothe yourselves with them all [a]as an ornament,
And bind them *on you* as a bride *does.*

19 "For your waste and desolate places,
And the land of your destruction,
[b]Will even now be too small for the inhabitants;
And those who swallowed you up will be far away.
20 [c]The children you will have,
[d]After you have lost the others,
Will say again in your ears,
'The place *is* too small for me;
Give me a place where I may dwell.'
21 Then you will say in your heart,
'Who has begotten these for me,
Since I have lost my children and am desolate,
A captive, and wandering to and fro?
And who has brought these up?
There I was, left alone;
But these, where *were* they?' "

22 [e]Thus says the Lord GOD:

"Behold, I will lift My hand in an oath to the nations,
And set up My [3]standard for the peoples;

11 [s]Is. 40:4
12 [t]Is. 43:5, 6
13 [u]Is. 44:23
14 [v]Is. 40:27
15 [w]Ps. 103:13; Mal. 3:17 [x]Rom. 11:29 [l]Lit. *From having compassion*
16 [y]Ex. 13:9; Song 8:6; Hag. 2:23
17 [2]DSS, LXX, Tg., Vg. *builders*
18 [z]Is. 60:4; John 4:35 [a]Prov. 17:6
19 [b]Is. 54:1, 2; Zech. 10:10
20 [c]Is. 60:4 [d][Matt. 3:9; Rom. 11:11]
22 [e]Is. 60:4 [3]*banner*

■ **49:11 road . . . highways.** See note on 11:16.

■ **49:12 come from afar . . . west.** The salvation of true Israel is in view here (11:11 note).

Sinim. To the east, possibly China, but the exact location is uncertain.

■ **49:13 Sing.** See note on 14:7.

■ **49:14 forsaken . . . forgotten.** God seems to have abandoned Judah during the Exile (40:27; 54:7).

■ **49:16 walls.** See note on 26:1.

■ **49:19 too small.** The prophecy of vv. 19–21 looks beyond the return at the time of Cyrus. Nehemiah built only a small city. The prophecy is fulfilled in the new Israel, the church (54:1–3; Zech. 2:4, 5).

■ **49:22 nations.** These "nations" are not just Babylon; as had been the case at the time of Cyrus (v. 19 note; cf. Rom. 11:26).

They shall bring your sons in *their* [d]arms,
And your daughters shall be carried on *their* shoulders;
23 [f]Kings shall be your foster fathers,
And their queens your nursing mothers;
They shall bow down to you with *their* faces to the earth,
And [g]lick up the dust of your feet.
Then you will know that I *am* the LORD,
[h]For they shall not be ashamed who wait for Me."

24 [i]Shall the prey be taken from the mighty,
Or the captives [5]of the righteous be delivered?

25 But thus says the LORD:

"Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away,
And the prey of the terrible be delivered;
For I will contend with him who contends with you,
And I will save your children.
26 I will [j]feed those who oppress you with their own flesh,
And they shall be drunk with their own [k]blood as with sweet wine.
All flesh [l]shall know
That I, the LORD, *am* your Savior,
And your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob."

22 [d]Lit. *bosom*
23 [f]Ps. 72:11; Is. 52:15 [g]Ps. 72:9; Mic. 7:17 [h]Ps. 34:22; [Rom. 5:5]
24 [i]Matt. 12:29; Luke 11:21, 22 [5]So with MT, Tg.; DSS, Syr., Vg. *of the mighty;* LXX *unjustly*
26 [j]Is. 9:20 [k]Rev. 14:20 [l]Ps. 9:16; Is. 60:16

CHAPTER 50

1 [a]Deut. 24:1; Jer. 3:8 [b]Deut. 32:30; 2 Kin. 4:1; Neh. 5:5 [c]Is. 52:3
2 [d]Ps. 106:9; Nah. 1:4
3 [e]Ex. 10:21 [f]Is. 13:10; Rev. 6:12
4 [g]Ex. 4:11

The Servant, Israel's Hope

50 Thus says the LORD:

"Where *is* [a]the certificate of your mother's divorce,
Whom I have put away?
Or which of My [b]creditors *is it* to whom I have sold you?
For your iniquities [c]you have sold yourselves,
And for your transgressions your mother has been put away.
2 Why, when I came, *was there* no man?
Why, when I called, *was there* none to answer?
Is My hand shortened at all that it cannot redeem?
Or have I no power to deliver?
Indeed with My [d]rebuke I dry up the sea,
I make the rivers a wilderness;
Their fish stink because *there is* no water,
And die of thirst.
3 [e]I clothe the heavens with blackness,
[f]And I make sackcloth their covering."

4 "The[g] Lord GOD has given Me
The tongue of the learned,
That I should know how to speak

■ **49:23 Kings.** Nations that formerly oppressed Israel will serve Christ and His Church, the true Israel, and in doing so find salvation (Gen. 12:3).

lick up the dust. On the "Black Obelisk" of Shalmaneser III, Jehu, King of Israel, is shown bowing to the ground before the Assyrian ruler.

wait. See 40:31 and note.

■ **49:25 contend . . . save.** The Lord takes up the case of the needy and is just in His retribution (v. 26; Rev. 16:6; 18:20).

■ **49:26 know.** See note on 52:6.

Mighty One. Isaiah reveals the vindication of the people of God. God Himself will fight for His people and redeem them from all adversity.

■ **50:1 certificate of . . . divorce.** Had the Lord issued such a divorce, He could not have taken Israel back (Deut. 24:1–4; Jer. 3:1, 8).

mother's. The inhabitants of Jerusalem who were taken into the Babylonian exile are here figuratively described as God's wife.

creditors. Had the Lord sold Israel to creditors, He would have lost authority over their destiny (cf. 2 Kin. 4:1; Neh. 5:5).

For your iniquities. Since Israel was sold in payment for the debt of her sins, the Redeemer had the responsibility to buy them back (41:14; 52:3).

■ **50:4–11** This is the third of four "Servant Songs" (42:1–9; 49:1–7; 50:4–11; 52:13—53:12 notes). The reproach against believing Israel in the Exile (51:7) anticipates the rejection of Jesus Christ.

■ **50:4 word.** See notes on 45:23; 49:2.

weary. See Jer. 31:25.

A word in season to *him who is* [h]weary.
He awakens Me morning by morning,
He awakens My ear
To hear as the learned.
5 The Lord GOD [i]has opened My ear;
And I was not [j]rebellious,
Nor did I turn away.
6 [k]I gave My back to those who struck *Me,*
And [l]My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard;
I did not hide My face from shame and [m]spitting.

7 "For the Lord GOD will help Me;
Therefore I will not be disgraced;
Therefore [n]I have set My face like a flint,
And I know that I will not be ashamed.
8 [o]*He is* near who justifies Me;
Who will contend with Me?
Let us stand together.
Who *is* [l]My adversary?
Let him come near Me.
9 Surely the Lord GOD will help Me;
Who *is* he *who* will condemn Me?
[p]Indeed they will all grow old like a garment;
[q]The moth will eat them up.

10 "Who among you fears the LORD?
Who obeys the voice of His Servant?
Who [r]walks in darkness
And has no light?
[s]Let him trust in the name of the LORD
And rely upon his God.
11 Look, all you who kindle a fire,
Who encircle *yourselves* with sparks:
Walk in the light of your fire and in the sparks you have kindled—
[t]This you shall have from My hand:
You shall lie down [u]in torment.

The LORD Comforts Zion

51 "Listen to Me, [a]you who [l]follow after righteousness,
You who seek the LORD:
Look to the rock *from which* you were hewn,
And to the hole of the pit *from which* you were dug.
2 [b]Look to Abraham your father,
And to Sarah *who* bore you;
[c]For I called him alone,
And [d]blessed him and increased him."

3 For the LORD will [e]comfort Zion,
He will comfort all her waste places;
He will make her wilderness like Eden,

4 [h]Matt. 11:28

5 [i]Ps. 40:6; Is. 35:5 [j]Matt. 26:39; Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42; John 8:29; 14:31; 15:10; Acts 26:19; [Phil. 2:8; Heb. 5:8; 10:7]

6 [k]Matt. 27:26; John 18:22 [l]Matt. 26:67; 27:30; Mark 14:65; 15:19 [m]Lam. 3:30

7 [n]Ezek. 3:8, 9; Luke 9:51

8 [o]Acts 2:24; [Rom. 8:32–34] [l]Lit. *master of My judgment*

9 [p]Job 13:28; Ps. 102:26; Heb. 1:11 [q]Is. 51:6, 8

10 [r]Ps. 23:4 [s]2 Chr. 20:20

11 [t][John 9:39] [u]Ps. 16:4

CHAPTER 51

1 [a][Rom. 9:30–32] [l]*pursue*

2 [b]Rom. 4:1–3; Heb. 11:11 [c]Gen. 12:1 [d]Gen. 24:35; Deut. 1:10; Ezek. 33:24

3 [e]Is. 40:1; 52:9; Ps. 102:13

■ **50:6 back.** Jesus Christ suffered such injustice as part of His obedience to God (53:5, 11, 12; Matt. 27:26; John 19:1).

plucked out the beard. This is an act of humiliation (2 Sam. 10:4, 5; Neh. 13:25).

■ **50:7 My face like a flint.** Resolved and determined in the face of opposition (cf. Ezek. 3:8, 9; Jer. 1:18; Luke 9:51).

not be ashamed. Not put to shame by defeat.

■ **50:11 who kindle a fire.** The general sense is that they undertake plans relying on their own strength, rather than God's, and bring themselves to ruin as a result.

■ **51:1 rock . . . pit.** They are asked to remember their descent from Abraham and Sarah (Deut. 26:5; compare Ezek. 16:6). Their origin was modest.

■ **51:3 Eden.** For this "garden of the LORD," see Gen. 2:8; Ezek. 28:13; 31:8, 9. The promise here is a transformation from curse to blessing.

Joy and gladness. In Zion joy will replace sorrow (v. 11). The people in effect will regain the lost paradise of God (9:3; 12:3 and notes).

3 [f]Gen. 13:10; Joel 2:3
4 [g]Is. 2:3 [h]Is. 42:6
5 [i]Is. 46:13 [j]Ps. 67:4 [k]Is. 60:9 [l][Rom. 1:16]
6 [m]Is. 40:26 [n]Ps. 102:25, 26; Is. 13:13; 34:4; Matt. 24:35; Heb. 1:10–12; 2 Pet. 3:10 [o]Is. 24:19, 20; 50:9; Heb. 1:10–12 [p]Is. 45:17 [2]*broken*
7 [q]Ps. 37:31; Jer. 31:33; [Heb. 10:16] [r]Is. 25:8; 54:4; [Matt. 5:11, 12; 10:28; Acts 5:41]
8 [s]Is. 50:9
9 [t]Ps. 44:23 [u]Ps. 93:1 [v]Ps. 44:1 [w]Job 26:12; Ps. 89:10; Is. 30:7 [x]Ps. 87:4 [y]Ps. 74:13; Is. 27:1
10 [z]Ex. 14:21; Is. 63:11–13
11 [a]Is. 35:10; Jer. 31:11, 12
12 [b]2 Cor. 1:3

And her desert [f]like the garden of the LORD;
Joy and gladness will be found in it,
Thanksgiving and the voice of melody.

4 "Listen to Me, My people;
And give ear to Me, O My nation:
[g]For law will proceed from Me,
And I will make My justice rest
[h]As a light of the peoples.
5 [i]My righteousness *is* near,
My salvation has gone forth,
[j]And My arms will judge the peoples;
[k]The coastlands will wait upon Me,
And [l]on My arm they will trust.
6 [m]Lift up your eyes to the heavens.
And look on the earth beneath.
For [n]the heavens will vanish away like smoke,
[o]The earth will grow old like a garment,
And those who dwell in it will die in like manner;
But My salvation will be [p]forever,
And My righteousness will not be [2]abolished.

7 "Listen to Me, you who know righteousness,
You people [q]in whose heart *is* My law:
[r]Do not fear the reproach of men,
Nor be afraid of their insults.
8 For [s]the moth will eat them up like a garment,
And the worm will eat them like wool;
But My righteousness will be forever,
And My salvation from generation to generation."

9 [t]Awake, awake, [u]put on strength,
O arm of the LORD!
Awake [v]as in the ancient days,
In the generations of old.
[w]*Are* You not *the arm* that cut [x]Rahab apart,
And wounded the [y]serpent?

10 *Are* You not *the One* who [z]dried up the sea,
The waters of the great deep;
That made the depths of the sea a road
For the redeemed to cross over?
11 So [a]the ransomed of the LORD shall return,
And come to Zion with singing,
With everlasting joy on their heads.
They shall obtain joy and gladness;
Sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

12 "I, *even* I, *am* He [b]who comforts you.
Who *are* you that you should be afraid

■ **51:4 law . . . a light.** The servant establishes justice in the last days (2:2–4; 42:1–4, 6; 49:6). See "God Is Light: Divine Holiness and Justice" at Lev. 11:44.

■ **51:5 near.** The day of the Lord is always imminent (46:13; Zeph. 1:14; 1 Thess. 5:4–11; James 5:8).

■ **51:6 like smoke . . . like a garment.** The present creation is destined to be replaced (50:9; Ps. 68:2; 102:3, 26; Hos. 13:3; see also Is. 24:4; 34:4; Heb. 1:10–12; 2 Pet. 3:10).

■ **51:7 in whose heart is My law.** Notice the spiritual reality of the covenant (Jer. 31:31–34; Ezek. 36:27) in contrast to the state of the people in 29:13.

■ **51:9 Awake, awake.** The command implies that the Lord has appeared to be asleep (40:27, 28; Ps. 44:23).

Rahab. See note on 30:7. The spiritual enemies of God's salvation are portrayed as the forces of chaos and evil. Such forces are overcome by God, not Israel or any other human power.

■ **51:12 I, even I.** This is emphatic as in v. 15. The double pronoun corresponds to the double command, "Awake, awake" (v. 9).

grass. See 37:27; Ps. 129:6 note.

[c] Of a man *who* will die,
And of the son of a man *who* will be made [d] like grass?
13 And [e] you forget the LORD your Maker,
[f] Who stretched out the heavens
And laid the foundations of the earth;
You have feared continually every day
Because of the fury of the oppressor,
When *he has* prepared to destroy.
[g] And where *is* the fury of the oppressor?
14 The captive exile hastens, that he may be loosed,
[h] That he should not die in the pit,
And that his bread should not fail.
15 But I *am* the LORD your God,
Who [i] divided the sea whose waves roared—
The LORD of hosts *is* His name.
16 And [j] I have put My words in your mouth;
[k] I have covered you with the shadow of My hand,
[l] That I may [3] plant the heavens,
Lay the foundations of the earth,
And say to Zion, 'You *are* My people.' "

God's Fury Removed

17 [m] Awake, awake!
Stand up, O Jerusalem,
You who [n] have drunk at the hand of the LORD
The cup of His fury;
You have drunk the dregs of the cup of trembling,
And drained *it* out.
18 *There is* no one to guide her
Among all the sons she has brought forth;
Nor *is there any* who takes her by the hand
Among all the sons she has brought up.
19 [o] These two *things* have come to you;
Who will be sorry for you?—
Desolation and destruction, famine and sword—
[p] By whom will I comfort you?
20 [q] Your sons have fainted,
They lie at the head of all the streets,
Like an antelope in a net;
They are full of the fury of the LORD,
The rebuke of your God.

21 Therefore please hear this, you afflicted,
And drunk [r] but not with wine.
22 Thus says your Lord,
The LORD and your God,
Who [s] pleads the cause of His people:
"See, I have taken out of your hand
The cup of trembling,
The dregs of the cup of My fury;
You shall no longer drink it.
23 [t] But I will put it into the hand of those who afflict you,

12 [c] Ps. 118:6; Is. 2:22 [d] Is. 40:6, 7; James 1:10; 1 Pet. 1:24
13 [e] Deut. 6:12; 8:11; Is. 17:10; Jer. 2:32 [f] Ps. 104:2 [g] Job 20:7
14 [h] Zech. 9:11
15 [i] Job 26:12
16 [j] Deut. 18:18; Is. 59:21; John 3:34 [k] Ex. 33:22; Is. 49:2 [l] Is. 65:17 [3] *establish*
17 [m] Is. 52:1 [n] Job 21:20; Is. 29:9; Jer. 25:15; Rev. 14:10; 16:19
19 [o] Is. 47:9 [p] Amos 7:2
20 [q] Lam. 2:11
21 [r] Lam. 3:15
22 [s] Is. 3:12, 13; 49:25; Jer. 50:34
23 [t] Is. 14:2; Jer. 25:17, 26–28; Zech. 12:2

■ **51:15 divided the sea whose waves roared.** See 51:9, 10 note. This power over the sea is representative of His power over all creation (Job 26:12; Ps. 107:25; Jer. 31:35).

■ **51:16 My words in your mouth.** The remnant prefigures the Servant, Jesus Christ (49:2 note).

■ **51:17 Awake, awake.** Double imperatives are also found in vv.1, 9; 52:1, 11 (cf. Eph. 5:14). See note on v. 9.

cup of His fury. An image of God's judgment (63:6; Ps. 75:8; Jer. 25:15–31; Ezek. 23:31–34; John 18:11; Rev. 14:10; 16:19).

■ **51:20 antelope in a net.** The graceful animal depicts Jerusalem, surrounded by the enemy and in danger of dying.

■ **51:23 those who afflict you.** Preeminently the Babylonians (Lam. 1:4, 5).

Who have said to [4]you,
'Lie down, that we may walk over you.'
And you have laid your body like the ground,
And as the street, for those who walk over."

God Redeems Jerusalem

52 Awake, awake!
Put on your strength, O Zion;
Put on your beautiful garments,
O Jerusalem, the holy city!
For the uncircumcised [a]and the unclean
Shall no longer come to you.
2 [b]Shake yourself from the dust, arise;
Sit down, O Jerusalem!
[c]Loose yourself from the bonds of your neck,
O captive daughter of Zion!

3 For thus says the LORD:

[d]"You have sold yourselves for nothing,
And you shall be redeemed [e]without money."

4 For thus says the Lord GOD:

"My people went down at first
Into [f]Egypt to [1]dwell there;
Then the Assyrian oppressed them without cause.
5 Now therefore, what have I here," says the LORD,
"That My people are taken away for nothing?
Those who rule over them
[2]Make them wail," says the LORD,
"And My name *is* [g]blasphemed continually every day.
6 Therefore My people shall know My name;
Therefore *they shall know* in that day
That I *am* He who speaks:
'Behold, *it is* I.' "

7 [h]How beautiful upon the mountains
Are the feet of him who brings good news,
Who proclaims peace,
Who brings glad tidings of good *things,*
Who proclaims salvation,
Who says to Zion,
[i]"Your God reigns!"
8 Your watchmen shall lift up *their* voices,
With their voices they shall sing together;
For they shall see eye to eye
When the LORD brings back Zion.
9 Break forth into joy, sing together,

23 [4]Lit. *your soul*

CHAPTER 52

1 [a]Neh. 11:1; Is. 48:2; 64:10; Zech. 14:20, 21; Matt. 4:5; [Rev. 21:2–27]

2 [b]Is. 3:26 [c]Is. 9:4; 10:27; 14:25; Zech. 2:7

3 [d]Ps. 44:12; Jer. 15:13 [e]Is. 45:13

4 [f]Gen. 46:6 [1]As resident aliens

5 [g]Ezek. 36:20, 23; Rom. 2:24 [2]DSS *Mock;* LXX *Marvel and wail;* Tg. *Boast themselves;* Vg. *Treat them unjustly*

7 [h]Is. 40:9; 61:1; Nah. 1:15; Rom. 10:15; Eph. 6:15 [i]Ps. 93:1; Is. 24:23

■ **52:1 beautiful garments.** Jerusalem is magnificently dressed as a royal wife (61:10; Rev. 3:4, 5, 18; 4:4; compare 47:1–3).

the uncircumcised and the unclean. The wicked will have no share in the city of God (48:22; Nah. 1:15; Rev. 21:27; 22:14, 15).

■ **52:3 sold yourselves for nothing.** The idols gave Israel nothing.

without money. Salvation is free (45:13; 55:1).

■ **52:4 dwell.** Israel was dependent on Egypt's promised hospitality, but Egypt betrayed that trust.

■ **52:6 know My name.** The phrase alludes to Ex. 3:13, 14; 6:2. The Lord glorifies His name through inspiring Isaiah's prophecies and bringing them to pass.

■ **52:7 feet.** Messengers run from the scene of battle across the hills to Zion with the good news that God reigns. They prefigure the evangelists will who announce the gospel of Jesus Christ (Rom. 10:15; Eph. 6:15).

■ **52:9 waste places of Jerusalem.** Restoration, after the Babylonian exile of the sixth century B.C. began with the rebuilding of Jerusalem's ruins (Ezra 3:8–13; Neh. 6:15—7:3). In the same sense, Christ is rebuilding His people who were being destroyed by sin (1 Pet. 2:5).

You waste places of Jerusalem!
For the LORD has comforted His people,
He has redeemed Jerusalem.
10 [j]The LORD has [3]made bare His holy arm
In the eyes of [k]all the nations;
And all the ends of the earth shall see
The salvation of our God.

11 [l]Depart! Depart! Go out from there,
Touch no unclean *thing;*
Go out from the midst of her,
[m]Be clean,
You who bear the vessels of the LORD.
12 For [n]you shall not go out with haste,
Nor go by flight;
[o]For the LORD will go before you,
[p]And the God of Israel *will be* your rear guard.

The Sin-Bearing Servant

13 Behold, [q]My Servant shall [4]deal prudently;
[r]He shall be exalted and [5]extolled and be very high.
14 Just as many were astonished at you,
So His [s]visage[6] was marred more than any man,
And His form more than the sons of men;
15 [t]So shall He [7]sprinkle many nations.

10 [j]Ps. 98:1–3 [k]Luke 3:6 [3]Revealed His power

11 [l]Is. 48:20; Jer. 50:8; Zech. 2:6, 7; 2 Cor. 6:17 [m]Lev. 22:2; [Is. 1:16]

12 [n]Ex. 12:11, 33; Deut. 16:3 [o]Mic. 2:13 [p]Ex. 14:19, 20; Is. 58:8

13 [q]Is. 42:1 [r]Is. 57:15; Phil. 2:9 [4]*prosper* [5]Lit. *be lifted up*

14 [s]Ps. 22:6, 7; Matt. 26:67; 27:30; John 19:3 [6]*appearance*

15 [t]Num. 19:18–21; Ezek. 36:25 [7]Or *startle*

■ **52:11 who bear the vessels.** These people represent all of Zion and serve God as priests. They must be consecrated for holy service and remain undefiled (2 Cor. 6:17; Heb. 12:14; 1 Pet. 2:1–12; Rev. 18:4).

■ **52:12 not . . . with haste.** The contrast is with the exodus from Egypt. Ex. 12:11 and Deut. 16:3 are the only other passages where this phrase occurs.

before you . . . rear guard. An allusion to the pillar of cloud and fire that protected Israel in their flight from Egypt (42:16; 58:8; Ex. 13:21, 22; 14:19, 20). God's presence guides His people into the fullness and brilliance of His everlasting kingdom (4:5, 6; 49:10).

■ **52:13—53:12** This is the last of the four "Servant Songs" (42:1–9; 49:1–7; 50:4–11; 52:13—53:12). The "Suffering Servant" is Jesus Christ. This passage is quoted or referred to many times in the New Testament. Christ's suffering in the place of His sheep gives them eternal life.

■ **52:13–15** The Lord vindicates and glorifies His servant.

■ **52:13 deal prudently.** The Servant will discern and perform God's will, and as a result achieve His glorious purpose (Luke 24:26; 1 Pet. 5:10).

■ **52:14 astonished . . . marred.** Christ was disfigured by the abuse He suffered from Roman soldiers.

■ **52:15 sprinkle.** Participation in the benefits of a sacrifice is indicated by the sprinkling of blood. See Ex. 24:8 and note; Lev. 4:1–5:13 note; and Heb. 9:19 note.

The Suffering Servant (53:12)

Jesus fulfills Isaiah's prophecy of the Suffering Servant.

The Prophecy	The Fulfillment
He will be exalted (52:13)	Philippians 2:9
He will be disfigured by suffering (52:14; 53:2)	Mark 15:17, 19
He will be widely rejected (53:1, 3)	John 12:37–38
He will bear our sins and sorrows (53:4)	Romans 4:25; 1 Peter 2:24, 25
He will make a blood atonement (53:5)	Romans 3:25
He will be our substitute (53:6, 8)	2 Corinthians 5:21
He will voluntarily accept our guilt and punishment (53:7)	John 10:11
He will be buried in a rich man's tomb (53:9)	John 19:38–42
He will justify many from their sin (53:10, 11)	Romans 5:15–19
He will die with transgressors (53:12)	Mark 15:27, 28; Luke 22:37

Kings shall shut their mouths at Him;
For [a]what had not been told them they shall see,
And what they had not heard they shall consider.

53 Who [a]has believed our report?
And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?
2 For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant,
And as a root out of dry ground.
He has no [1]form or [2]comeliness;
And when we see Him,
There is no [3]beauty that we should desire Him.
3 [b]He is despised and [4]rejected by men,
A Man of [5]sorrows and [c]acquainted with [6]grief.
And we hid, as it were, *our* faces from Him;
He was despised, and [d]we did not esteem Him.

4 Surely [e]He has borne our [7]griefs
And carried our [8]sorrows;
Yet we [9]esteemed Him stricken,
[1]Smitten by God, and afflicted.
5 But He *was* [f]wounded[2] for our transgressions,
He was [3]bruised for our iniquities;
The chastisement for our peace *was* upon Him,
And by His [g]stripes[4] we are healed.
6 All we like sheep have gone astray;
We have turned, every one, to his own way;
And the LORD [5]has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed and He was afflicted,
Yet [h]He opened not His mouth;
[i]He was led as a lamb to the slaughter,
And as a sheep before its shearers is silent,
So He opened not His mouth.
8 He was [j]taken from [6]prison and from judgment,
And who will declare His generation?
For [k]He was cut off from the land of the living;
For the transgressions of My people He was stricken.
9 [l]And [7]they made His grave with the wicked—
But with the rich at His death,
Because He had done no violence,
Nor *was any* [m]deceit in His mouth.

10 Yet it pleased the LORD to [8]bruise Him;
He has put *Him* to grief.

15 [a]Rom. 15:21; [Eph. 3:5, 9]; 1 Pet. 1:2

CHAPTER 53

1 [a]John 12:38; Rom. 10:16

2 [1]Stately form [2]*splendor* [3]Lit. *appearance*

3 [b]Ps. 22:6; [Is. 49:7; Matt. 27:30, 31; Luke 18:31–33; 23:18] [c][Heb. 4:15] [d][John 1:10, 11] [4]Or *forsaken* [5]Lit. *pains* [6]Lit. *sickness*

4 [e][Matt. 8:17; Heb. 9:28; 1 Pet. 2:24] [7]Lit. *sicknesses* [8]Lit. *pains* [9]*reckoned* [1]*Struck down*

5 [f][Is. 53:10; Rom. 4:25; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4] [g][1 Pet. 2:24, 25] [2]Or *pierced through* [3]*crushed* [4]Blows that cut in

6 [5]Lit. *has caused to land on Him*

7 [h]Matt. 26:63; 27:12–14; Mark 14:61; 15:5; Luke 23:9; John 19:9 [i]Acts 8:32, 33; Rev. 5:6

8 [j]Matt. 27:11–26; Luke 23:1–25 [k][Dan. 9:26] [6]*confinement*

9 [l]Matt. 27:57–60; Luke 23:33 [m]1 Pet. 2:22; 1 John 3:5 [7]Lit. *he* or *He*

10 [8]*crush*

■ **53:1 our report.** The gospel proclaimed by the believing remnant.

■ **53:2 root out of dry ground.** His origins were not promising (Zech. 4:10; John 1:46).

■ **53:3 despised and rejected.** See 49:7; Ps. 22:6; Lam. 1:1–3; 2:15, 16.

■ **53:4 Smitten by God.** They believed this about the Servant because the Law said, "he who is hanged is accursed of God" (Deut. 21:23; Gal. 3:13). The onlookers thought Christ was suffering only what He deserved, but His experience of pain and anguish was for His people (1 Pet. 2:24). The extremity of His suffering shows that His compassion is real and not theoretical (Heb. 2:17, 18).

■ **53:5 we are healed.** The sufferings of Christ remove the penalty that His people would otherwise owe, and as a result He will undo the effects of sin in them. Death itself will be undone at last (1 Cor. 15:26).

■ **53:6 All we.** Even as we all sinned, so He died for all of us (2 Cor. 5:14, 15). See "Definite Redemption" at John 10:15.

sheep . . . astray. See 1 Pet. 2:25. See "Original Sin and Total Depravity" at Ps. 51:5.

laid. The guilt of our sins was transferred to Jesus, and He offered Himself as a sacrifice in our place. As Paul wrote, God "made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us" (2 Cor. 5:21).

■ **53:7 lamb . . . sheep.** Christ is the Lamb of God (John 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:7; Rev. 5:6) in obedience and submission to God (cf. Matt. 26:63; 27:12, 14; 1 Pet. 2:23).

■ **53:8 from prison and from judgment.** He was put to death as a result of injustice. See "The Atonement" at Rom. 3:25.

■ **53:9 wicked . . . rich.** Although people supposed that Jesus was dying as a common criminal, through the intervention of Joseph of Arimathea Jesus was buried in honor. His suffering for sinners had been successfully completed.

violence . . . deceit. He was wise and righteous (1 Pet. 2:22), but died a criminal's death (Luke 23:33).

■ **53:10 it pleased the LORD.** This amazing statement is true because Christ was delivered up "by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23).

When You make His soul [n]an offering for sin,
He shall see *His* seed, He shall prolong *His* days,
And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.
11 [o]He shall see the labor of His soul, *and* be satisfied.
By His knowledge [p]My righteous [p]Servant shall [q]justify many,
For He shall bear their iniquities.
12 [r]Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great,
[s]And He shall divide the [t]spoil with the strong,
Because He [t]poured out His soul unto death,
And He was [u]numbered with the transgressors,
And He bore the sin of many,
And [v]made intercession for the transgressors.

A Perpetual Covenant of Peace

54 "Sing, O [a]barren,
You *who* have not borne!
Break forth into singing, and cry aloud,
You *who* have not labored with child!
For more *are* the children of the desolate
Than the children of the married woman," says the LORD.
2 "Enlarge[b] the place of your tent,
And let them stretch out the curtains of your dwellings;
Do not spare;
Lengthen your cords,
And strengthen your stakes.
3 For you shall expand to the right and to the left,
And your descendants will [c]inherit the nations,
And make the desolate cities inhabited.

4 "Do[d] not fear, for you will not be ashamed;
Neither be disgraced, for you will not be put to shame;
For you will forget the shame of your youth,
And will not remember the reproach of your widowhood anymore.
5 [e]For your Maker *is* your husband,
The LORD of hosts *is* His name;
And your Redeemer *is* the Holy One of Israel;
He is called [f]the God of the whole earth.
6 For the LORD [g]has called you
Like a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit,
Like a youthful wife when you were refused,"
Says your God.
7 "For[h] a mere moment I have forsaken you,
But with great mercies [i]I will gather you.

10 [n]John 1:29; Acts 2:24; [2 Cor. 5:21]

11 [o][1 John 2:1] [p]Is. 42:1 [q][Acts 13:38, 39; Rom. 5:15–18] [s]So with MT, Tg., Vg.; DSS, LXX *From the labor of His soul He shall see light*

12 [r]Ps. 2:8 [s]Col. 2:15 [t]Is. 50:6; [Rom. 3:25] [u]Matt. 27:38; Mark 15:28; Luke 22:37; 2 Cor. 5:21 [v]Luke 23:34 [t]*plunder*

CHAPTER 54

1 [a]Gal. 4:27

2 [b]Is. 49:19, 20

3 [c]Is. 14:2; 49:22, 23; 60:9

4 [d]Is. 41:10

5 [e]Jer. 3:14; Hos. 2:19 [f]Zech. 14:9; Rom. 3:29

6 [g]Is. 62:4

7 [h]Ps. 30:5; Is. 26:20; 60:10; 2 Cor. 4:17 [i][Is. 43:5; 56:8]

seed. The seed are those who come to life through His death (John 12:24; Gal. 3:29).

■ **53:11 knowledge.** This is a reference to His insight into the divine plan (52:13 note).

righteous. See Rom. 5:19.

justify. "Justify" means "to declare righteous." Christ's righteousness is imputed to His people (53:6 note), and in return He accepted their guilt so as to "bear their iniquities." See "Justification and Merit" at Gal. 3:11.

■ **53:12 Therefore I.** The Lord divides the spoils of victory with His triumphant Servant (52:13).

poured out His soul. He gave Himself for the sins of others (v. 4; Luke 22:37; Phil. 2:7, 8; Heb. 9:28; 1 Pet. 2:24).

intercession. He prayed for sinners (Luke 23:34; Heb. 7:25).

■ **54:1 Sing.** See note on 14:7.

barren . . . desolate. In exile, Judah and Israel felt forsaken by God and did not experience His blessing.

more are the children. The New Testament applies this verse to "the Jerusalem above . . . which is the mother of us all" (Gal. 4:26, 27; Heb. 12:22). See 49:21; 53:10.

■ **54:2 Enlarge . . . strengthen.** The tent is enlarged in anticipation of a great increase in the number of occupants (cf. 26:15; 33:20; 49:19 note; contrast Jer. 10:20).

■ **54:3 inherit . . . inhabited.** The expansion will be so great that they will possess the cities of their enemies (11:14 note; Gen. 22:17; 28:14).

■ **54:4 shame of your youth.** Israel's infidelity led to its oppression by Egypt and Assyria (52:4; Jer. 31:19).

reproach of your widowhood. This figure represents the Babylonian exile (vv. 6–8).

■ **54:5 Redeemer . . . Holy One of Israel.** See 41:14 notes.

God of the whole earth. The titles in v. 5 show that God did not give up Zion out of weakness or necessity (50:1–3).

■ **54:6 forsaken.** See note on 49:14.

8 *i*Is. 55:3; Jer. 31:3

9 *k*Gen. 8:21; 9:11; [2 Pet. 3:6, 7] *l*Is. 12:1; Ezek. 39:29

10 *m*Ps. 46:2; Is. 51:6; Matt. 5:18 *n*2 Sam. 23:5; Ps. 89:33, 34; Is. 55:3; 59:21; 61:8

11 *o*1 Chr. 29:2; Job 28:16; Rev. 21:18, 19

13 *p*Jer. 31:34; [John 6:45; 1 Cor. 2:10]; 1 Thess. 4:9; [1 John 2:20] *q*Ps. 119:165

15 *r*Is. 41:11–16

16 *1*Or *weapon* *2*destroyer

17 *s*Is. 17:12–14; 29:8 *t*Is. 45:24, 25; 54:14

CHAPTER 55

1 *a*[Matt. 5:6; John 4:14; 7:37; Rev. 21:6; 22:17] *b*[Matt. 13:44; Rev. 3:18]

8 With a little wrath I hid My face from you for a moment;
*i*But with everlasting kindness I will have mercy on you,"
Says the LORD, your Redeemer.

9 "For this *is* like the waters of *k*Noah to Me;
For as I have sworn
That the waters of Noah would no longer cover the earth,
So have I sworn
That I would not be angry with *l*you, nor rebuke you.

10 For *m*the mountains shall depart
And the hills be removed,
*n*But My kindness shall not depart from you,
Nor shall My covenant of peace be removed,"
Says the LORD, who has mercy on you.

11 "O you afflicted one,
Tossed with tempest, *and* not comforted,
Behold, I will lay your stones with *o*colorful gems,
And lay your foundations with sapphires.

12 I will make your pinnacles of rubies,
Your gates of crystal,
And all your walls of precious stones.

13 All your children *shall be* *p*taught by the LORD,
And *q*great *shall be* the peace of your children.

14 In righteousness you shall be established;
You shall be far from oppression, for you shall not fear;
And from terror, for it shall not come near you.

15 Indeed they shall surely assemble, *but* not because of Me.
Whoever assembles against you shall *r*fall for your sake.

16 "Behold, I have created the blacksmith
Who blows the coals in the fire,
Who brings forth an *1*instrument for his work;
And I have created the *2*spoiler to destroy.

17 No weapon formed against you shall *s*prosper,
And every tongue *which* rises against you in judgment
You shall condemn.
This *is* the heritage of the servants of the LORD,
*t*And their righteousness *is* from Me,"
Says the LORD.

An Invitation to Abundant Life

55 "Ho! *a*Everyone who thirsts,
Come to the waters;
And you who have no money,
*b*Come, buy and eat.
Yes, come, buy wine and milk
Without money and without price.

■ **54:9 waters of Noah.** At the time of the Flood the Lord made a covenant with creation, symbolized by the rainbow (Gen. 9:1–17).

■ **54:10 mountains . . . hills.** In our experience the mountains and hills seem permanent and unchanging, but the commitment of God to His people will remain when they are gone (51:6; Ps. 46:2, 3; Matt. 24:35; Heb. 1:10–12).

■ **54:11 tempest.** This metaphor represents the day of the Lord's wrath.

lay . . . sapphires. These metaphors describe the beauty and glory of Zion, the city of God (Rev. 21:19).

■ **54:17 heritage.** This heritage is the covenant and its promises, especially the promise of God's protection and righteousness (1:21 note).

■ **55:1 Everyone.** This address follows logically on the previous section (vv. 13, 17) and expresses the worldwide applicability of the gospel.

thirsts . . . no money. The thirst is for spiritual things that money cannot buy (52:3; Deut. 8:3; Ps. 42:2; 63:1; Prov. 9:5, 6; Matt. 5:6; John 7:37, 38; Rev. 21:6; 22:17).

waters. Isaiah frequently describes the new era of salvation, God's kingdom and its divine blessings in terms of an abundance of water (1:30, 31 note).

buy . . . Without money. This paradox signifies that salvation is a free gift for anyone who desires it (Matt. 11:28; Rom. 10:13; Titus 3:5).

wine and milk. These are symbols of complete satisfaction.

2 Why do you [1]spend money for *what is* not bread,
And your wages for *what* does not satisfy?
Listen carefully to Me, and eat *what is* good,
And let your soul delight itself in abundance.
3 Incline your ear, and [c]come to Me.
Hear, and your soul shall live;
[d]And I will make an everlasting covenant with you—
The [e]sure mercies of David.
4 Indeed I have given him *as* [f]a witness to the people,
[g]A leader and commander for the people.
5 [h]Surely you shall call a nation you do not know,
[i]And nations *who* do not know you shall run to you,
Because of the LORD your God,
And the Holy One of Israel;
[j]For He has glorified you."

6 [k]Seek the LORD while He may be [l]found,
Call upon Him while He is near.
7 [m]Let the [2]wicked forsake his way,
And the unrighteous man [n]his thoughts;
Let him return to the LORD,
[o]And He will have mercy on him;
And to our God,
For He will abundantly pardon.

8 "For[p] My thoughts *are* not your thoughts,
Nor *are* your ways My ways," says the LORD.
9 "For[q] *as* the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are My ways higher than your ways,
And My thoughts than your thoughts.

10 "For [r]as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven,
And do not return there,
But water the earth,
And make it bring forth and bud,
That it may give seed to the sower
And bread to the eater,
11 [s]So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth;
It shall not return to Me [3]void,
But it shall accomplish what I please,
And it shall [t]prosper *in the thing* for which I sent it.

12 "For[u] you shall go out with joy,
And be led out with peace;
The mountains and the hills
Shall [v]break forth into singing before you,

2 [1]Lit. *weigh out silver*

3 [c]Matt. 11:28 [d]Is. 54:8; 61:8; Jer. 32:40 [e]2 Sam. 7:8; Ps. 89:28; [Acts 13:34]

4 [f][John 18:37; Rev. 1:5] [g][Jer. 30:9; Ezek. 34:23; Dan. 9:25]

5 [h]Is. 52:15; Eph. 2:11, 12 [i]Is. 60:5 [j]Is. 60:9

6 [k]Matt. 5:25; 25:11; John 7:34; 8:21; 2 Cor. 6:2; [Heb. 3:13] [l]Ps. 32:6; Is. 49:8

7 [m]Is. 1:16 [n]Is. 59:7; Zech. 8:17 [o]Ps. 130:7; Jer. 3:12 [2]Lit. *man of iniquity*

8 [p]2 Sam. 7:19

9 [q]Ps. 103:11

10 [r]Deut. 32:2

11 [s]Is. 45:23; Matt. 24:35 [t]Is. 46:9–11 [3]*empty,* without fruit

12 [u]Is. 35:10 [v]Ps. 98:8

■ **55:3 everlasting covenant.** In the covenant as given to David God promised him a permanent throne and lasting dynasty (2 Sam. 7:12–16; 1 Kin. 8:23–26; Ps. 89:27–37). David's royal house will rule over the nations. These elements are fulfilled in Christ and His church (4:2; 7:14; 9:6; 11:1, 2 and notes).

you. The promises of the Davidic covenant are now extended to all who come to God.

■ **55:4 given him as a witness.** This was accomplished especially by raising Jesus Christ of the house of David from the dead (Acts 13:34).

■ **55:7 wicked . . . unrighteous.** God requires living faith, as indicated in repentance and change of behavior (James 2:18; 1 John 1:3–5).

mercy . . . abundantly pardon. The prophet repeats the invitation of 1:18 with great boldness and directness.

■ **55:8 My thoughts are not your thoughts.** Specifically, God's thoughts concerning grace exceed human imagination (64:4; 1 Cor. 2:9; Eph. 3:20; Rom. 11:33). See "God Sees and Knows: Divine Omniscience" at Prov. 15:3.

■ **55:10, 11 rain.** The rain falls abundantly and of its own accord, and in a familiar but mysterious way produces plants and useful crops, evidently for the purpose of supplying people's needs—the divine purpose in this is applied figuratively to the Word of God, to distinguish it from fallible human thoughts and plans.

■ **55:12 go out.** The exodus from Babylon, like the exodus from Egypt, is a picture of how God delivers His people from their sins (48:20, 21; 52:11, 12; John 10:3; Col. 1:13).

singing . . . clap. Creation rejoices in God's acts of redemption (44:23; 49:13; Ps. 96:11–13).

12 [w]1 Chr. 16:33

13 [x]Is. 41:19 [y]Mic. 7:4 [z]Jer. 13:11

CHAPTER 56

1 [a]Is. 46:13; Matt. 3:2; 4:17; Rom. 13:11, 12

2 [b]Ex. 20:8–11; 31:13–17; Is. 58:13; Jer. 17:21, 22; Ezek. 20:12, 20

3 [c]Is. 14:1; [Eph. 2:12–19] [d]Deut. 23:1; Jer. 38:7; Acts 8:27

5 [e]1 Tim. 3:15 [f][1 John 3:1, 2] [f]Lit. *him*

7 [g][Is. 2:2, 3; 60:11; Mic. 4:1, 2] [h]Matt. 21:13; Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46 [i][Rom. 12:1; Heb. 13:15; 1 Pet. 2:5] [j]Is. 60:7 [k]Matt. 21:13 [l][Mal. 1:11]

8 [m]Ps. 147:2; Is. 11:12; 27:12; 54:7 [n]Is. 60:3–11; 66:18–21; [John 10:16]

And [w]all the trees of the field shall clap *their* hands.

13 [x]Instead of [y]the thorn shall come up the cypress tree,
And instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree;
And it shall be to the LORD [z]for a name,
For an everlasting sign *that* shall not be cut off."

Salvation for the Gentiles

56 Thus says the LORD:

"Keep justice, and do righteousness,
[a]For My salvation *is* about to come,
And My righteousness to be revealed.

2 Blessed *is* the man *who* does this,
And the son of man *who* lays hold on it;
[b]Who keeps from defiling the Sabbath,
And keeps his hand from doing any evil."

3 Do not let [c]the son of the foreigner
Who has joined himself to the LORD
Speak, saying,
"The LORD has utterly separated me from His people";
Nor let the [d]eunuch say,
"Here I am, a dry tree."

4 For thus says the LORD:
"To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths,
And choose what pleases Me,
And hold fast My covenant,

5 Even to them I will give in [e]My house
And within My walls a place [f]and a name
Better than that of sons and daughters;
I will give [f]them an everlasting name
That shall not be cut off.

6 "Also the sons of the foreigner
Who join themselves to the LORD, to serve Him,
And to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants—
Everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath,
And holds fast My covenant—

7 Even them I will [g]bring to My holy mountain,
And make them joyful in My [h]house of prayer.
[i]Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices
Will be [j]accepted on My altar;
For [k]My house shall be called a house of prayer [l]for all nations."

8 The Lord GOD, [m]who gathers the outcasts of Israel, says,
[n]"Yet I will gather to him
Others besides those who are gathered to him."

■ **55:13 Instead of the thorn . . . tree.** Judgment is replaced by salvation (5:6; 32:13; 41:19).

everlasting sign. Compare the rainbow in Gen. 9:8–17.

■ **56:1—66:24** These prophecies are addressed to the exiles returned from Babylon before the rebuilding of the temple in 520 B.C. (64:8–12). They still suffer from idolatry, hypocrisy and indifference. Isaiah prophesies concerning their responsibilities toward the coming glorious kingdom and the certainty of its arrival.

■ **56:1 about to come.** See 50:8; 51:5; Phil. 4:5.

■ **56:2 Sabbath.** Keeping this day holy (Ex. 31:13–17) signifies loyalty to the Lord and to His covenant (58:13; Ezek. 20:20).

■ **56:3 eunuch.** Eunuchs were normally excluded from the covenant community (Deut. 23:1). The Ethiopian eunuch of Acts 8:26–39 fulfilled this promise through faith in Jesus, the Servant of Is. 53.

■ **56:5 everlasting name.** That is, everlasting life in God's temple (v. 7; 2:2; Ps. 23:6; Acts 8:27, 36–38).

■ **56:7 house of prayer.** Being here means being included in the covenant and enjoying the life of communion with God (2:2–4; Ps. 15:1; cf. 1 Kin. 8:41–43; Mark 11:17).

■ **56:8 gathers the outcasts . . . Others.** The Lord gathers Jews and non-Jews into one community (John 10:16).

Israel's Irresponsible Leaders

9 [o]All you beasts of the field, come to devour,
All you beasts in the forest.
10 His watchmen *are* [p]blind,
They are all ignorant;
[q]They *are* all dumb dogs,
They cannot bark;
[2]Sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber.
11 Yes, *they are* [r]greedy[3] dogs
Which [s]never[4] have enough.
And they *are* shepherds
Who cannot understand;
They all look to their own way,
Every one for his own gain,
From his *own* territory.
12 "Come," *one says,* "I will bring wine,
And we will fill ourselves with intoxicating [t]drink;
[u]Tomorrow will be [v]as today,
And much more abundant."

Israel's Futile Idolatry

57 The righteous perishes,
And no man takes *it* to heart;
[a]Merciful men *are* taken away,
[b]While no one considers
That the righteous is taken away from [1]evil.
2 He shall enter into peace;
They shall rest in [c]their beds,
Each one walking *in* his uprightness.

3 "But come here,
[d]You sons of the sorceress,
You offspring of the adulterer and the harlot!
4 Whom do you ridicule?
Against whom do you make a wide mouth
And stick out the tongue?
Are you not children of transgression,
Offspring of falsehood,
5 Inflaming yourselves with gods [e]under every green tree,
[f]Slaying the children in the valleys,
Under the clefts of the rocks?
6 Among the smooth [g]*stones* of the stream
Is your portion;
They, they, *are* your lot!
Even to them you have poured a drink offering,
You have offered a grain offering.
Should I receive comfort in [h]these?

9 [o]Jer. 12:9

10 [p]Matt. 15:14 [q]Phil. 3:2 [2]Or *Dreaming*

11 [r]Is. 28:7; Ezek. 13:19; [Mic. 3:5, 11] [s]Ezek. 34:2–10 [3]Lit. *strong of soul* [4]Lit. *do not know satisfaction*

12 [t]Is. 28:7 [u]Ps. 10:6; Prov. 23:35; Is. 22:13; Luke 12:19; 1 Cor. 15:32 [v]2 Pet. 3:4

CHAPTER 57

1 [a]Ps. 12:1 [b]1 Kin. 14:13 [1]Lit. *the face of evil*

2 [c]2 Chr. 16:14

3 [d]Is. 1:4; Matt. 16:4

5 [e]2 Kin. 16:4 [f]2 Kin. 23:10; Ps. 106:37, 38; Jer. 7:31; Ezek. 16:20

6 [g]Jer. 3:9; Hab. 2:19 [h]Jer. 5:9, 29; 9:9

■ **56:9 beasts of the field.** A metaphor for hostile nations (18:6; Ezek. 34:5, 8, 25).

■ **56:10 watchmen.** They warn the city of approaching danger. The prophets were called to be spiritual watchmen (21:6; Jer. 6:17; Ezek. 3:17; 33:2–7).

blind. See note on 29:18.

dogs. In the Near East, dogs are considered to be unclean, undesirable scavengers. Here they are a figure for those with insatiable greed.

■ **56:11 shepherds.** That is, rulers (v. 10 note; Ezek. 34:1–6; contrast 40:11 note).

■ **56:12 come . . . Tomorrow.** See 22:13 and note; Luke 12:19; James 4:13.

■ **57:3 sorceress.** See 2:6 note; Deut. 18:10.

■ **57:4 ridicule . . . tongue.** The ungodly are filled with sarcasm and criticism (cf. 5:18, 19; 28:9, 10; 37:3).

■ **57:5 children.** Child sacrifice was practiced in the worship of the Ammonite god Molech (v. 9 note; cf. 2 Kin. 23:10; Ps. 106:37, 38; Jer. 7:31; Ezek. 20:28, 31).

valleys . . . clefts. These are secret, hiding places (2:21; 7:19 note). The implication is that their practices are shameful.

7 [i]Jer. 3:6; Ezek. 16:16 [j]Ezek. 23:41

8 [k]Ezek. 16:26 [2]Lit. *cut* [3]Lit. *hand,* a euphemism

9 [l]Hos. 7:11 [m]Ezek. 23:16, 40

10 [n]Jer. 2:25; 18:12

11 [o]Prov. 29:25; Is. 51:12, 13 [p]Ps. 50:21; Eccl. 8:11; Is. 42:14 [4]*remained silent*

14 [q]Is. 40:3; 62:10; Jer. 18:15

15 [r]Job 6:10; Luke 1:49 [s]Ps. 68:35; Zech. 2:13 [t]Ps. 34:18; 51:17; Is. 66:2

7 "On[i] a lofty and high mountain
You have set[j] your bed;
Even there you went up
To offer sacrifice.
8 Also behind the doors and their posts
You have set up your remembrance;
For you have uncovered yourself *to those other* than Me,
And have gone up to them;
You have enlarged your bed
And [2]made *a covenant* with them;
[k]You have loved their bed,
Where you saw *their* [3]nudity.
9 [l]You went to the king with ointment,
And increased your perfumes;
You sent your [m]messengers far off,
And *even* descended to Sheol.
10 You are wearied in the length of your way;
[n]*Yet* you did not say, 'There is no hope.'
You have found the life of your hand;
Therefore you were not grieved.

11 "And [o]of whom have you been afraid, or feared,
That you have lied
And not remembered Me,
Nor taken *it* to your heart?
Is it not because [p]I have [4]held My peace from of old
That you do not fear Me?
12 I will declare your righteousness
And your works,
For they will not profit you.
13 When you cry out,
Let your collection *of idols* deliver you.
But the wind will carry them all away,
A breath will take *them.*
But he who puts his trust in Me shall possess the land,
And shall inherit My holy mountain."

Healing for the Backslider

14 And one shall say,
[q]"Heap it up! Heap it up!
Prepare the way,
Take the stumbling block out of the way of My people."

15 For thus says the High and Lofty One
Who inhabits eternity, [r]whose name *is* Holy:
[s]"I dwell in the high and holy *place,*
[t]With him *who* has a contrite and humble spirit,

■ **57:7, 8 lofty and high mountain . . . nudity.** The people were involved in immoral and idolatrous practices at the hilltop shrines (Hos. 4:13). Their relation with these false gods is compared to sexual union.

■ **57:9 the king.** The name of their god, "Molech," is similar to the Hebrew word for "king" and is probably what is meant here.

sent . . . descended. Isaiah describes the energy they spent in willing service of their idols.

Sheol. This charge of visiting the realm of the dead (5:14 note) is either a figure of speech to express the depths to which they sank, or a reference to necromancy (communicating with the dead).

■ **57:10 the life of your hand.** They found a deceptive liveliness in immorality and idolatry that lead to death.

■ **57:12 righteousness.** This is sarcasm; the threat is to declare their sins (cf. 58:2, 3; 64:6).

■ **57:13 possess the land.** This promise is the blessing Jesus proclaimed to the meek (v. 15; Matt. 5:5).

■ **57:14 Prepare the way.** See notes on 11:16; 40:3.

stumbling block. Specifically, the idolatry and immorality described in vv. 3–13.

My people. See note on 40:1.

■ **57:15 High . . . Lofty One.** An epithet for the Lord (6:1).

high and holy place. The Lord is transcendent over creation.

contrite and humble spirit. Those who submit to God's law and repent under His judgment (Ps. 34:17, 18; 51:17; 1 Pet. 5:6).

[u] To revive the spirit of the humble,
And to revive the heart of the contrite ones.
16 [v] For I will not contend forever,
Nor will I always be angry;
For the spirit would fail before Me,
And the souls [w] *which* I have made.
17 For the iniquity of [x] his covetousness
I was angry and struck him;
[y] I hid and was angry,
[z] And he went on [5] backsliding in the way of his heart.
18 I have seen his ways, and [a] will heal him;
I will also lead him,
And restore comforts to him
And to [b] his mourners.

19 "I create [c] the fruit of the lips:
Peace, peace [d] to *him who is* far off and to *him who is* near,"
Says the LORD,
"And I will heal him."
20 [e] But the wicked *are* like the troubled sea,
When it cannot rest,
Whose waters cast up mire and dirt.

21 "*There*[f] *is* no peace,"
Says my God, "for the wicked."

Fasting that Pleases God

58 "Cry aloud, [1] spare not;
Lift up your voice like a trumpet;
[a] Tell My people their transgression,
And the house of Jacob their sins.
2 Yet they seek Me daily,
And delight to know My ways,
As a nation that did righteousness,
And did not forsake the ordinance of their God.
They ask of Me the ordinances of justice;
They take delight in approaching God.
3 'Why[b] have we fasted,' *they say,* 'and You have not seen?
Why have we [c] afflicted our souls, and You take no notice?'

"In fact, in the day of your fast you find pleasure,
And [2] exploit all your laborers.
4 [d] Indeed you fast for strife and debate,
And to strike with the fist of wickedness.
You will not fast as *you do* this day,
To make your voice heard on high.
5 Is [e] it a fast that I have chosen,
[f] A day for a man to afflict his soul?

15 [u] Ps. 147:3; Is. 61:1–3

16 [v] Ps. 85:5; 103:9; [Mic. 7:18] [w] Num. 16:22; Job 34:14; Heb. 12:9

17 [x] Is. 2:7; 56:11; Jer. 6:13 [y] Is. 8:17; 45:15; 59:2 [z] Is. 9:13 [5] Or *turning back*

18 [a] Jer. 3:22 [b] Is. 61:2

19 [c] Is. 6:7; 51:16; 59:21; Heb. 13:15 [d] Acts 2:39; Eph. 2:17

20 [e] Job 15:20; Prov. 4:16; Jude 13

21 [f] Is. 48:22

CHAPTER 58

1 [a] Mic. 3:8 [1] *do not hold back*

3 [b] Mal. 3:13–18; Luke 18:12 [c] Lev. 16:29; 23:27 [2] Lit. *drive hard*

4 [d] 1 Kin. 21:9

5 [e] Zech. 7:5 [f] Lev. 16:29

■ **57:16 not contend forever.** In God's grace, judgment will end and God will create salvation (54:9; 57:18, 19; Ps. 130:3, 4).

■ **57:18 heal . . . restore comforts.** The Lord is physician (30:26 note), guide (49:10 note), and evangelist (40:1 note).

mourners. Those who lament Jerusalem's destruction (64:10–12; 25:8 note).

■ **57:20 troubled sea.** The wicked are constantly in motion, restless, and causing problems (Jude 13).

■ **58:3 fasted . . . exploit.** Despite their religiosity they were not concerned with justice for others (cf. 1:15–17; 59:2; Hos. 6:4–6; Amos 5:23, 24; Zech. 7:8–12). Instead of setting the day aside so that all can fast and pray, they wanted to rest while others worked.

■ **58:4 strife . . . strike.** These actions are expressions of their pride and hatred.

heard on high. God does not hear prayer when it is not in the spirit of love.

■ **58:5 fast that I have chosen.** See 1:10–15; Amos 5:21–23; Mic. 6:7, 8.

bow down . . . sackcloth and ashes. Conventional acts of mourning ceremonies that accompany fasting (Joel 1:13, 14). God looks for expressions of inner humility and brokenness before Him, rather than devotion to rituals (Matt. 6:16).

Is it to bow down his head like a bulrush,
And [g]to spread out sackcloth and ashes?
Would you call this a fast,
And an acceptable day to the LORD?

6 "*Is* this not the fast that I have chosen:
To [h]loose the bonds of wickedness,
[i]To undo the [3]heavy burdens,
[j]To let the oppressed go free,
And that you break every yoke?
7 *Is it* not [k]to share your bread with the hungry,
And that you bring to your house the poor who are [4]cast out;
[l]When you see the naked, that you cover him,
And not hide yourself from [m]your own flesh?
8 [n]Then your light shall break forth like the morning,
Your healing shall spring forth speedily,
And your righteousness shall go before you;
[o]The glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.
9 Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer;
You shall cry, and He will say, 'Here I *am*.'

"If you take away the yoke from your midst,
The [5]pointing of the finger, and [p]speaking wickedness,
10 *If* you extend your soul to the hungry
And satisfy the afflicted soul,
Then your light shall dawn in the darkness,
And your [6]darkness shall *be* as the noonday.
11 The LORD will guide you continually,
And satisfy your soul in drought.
And strengthen your bones;
You shall be like a watered garden,
And like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.
12 Those from among you
[q]Shall build the old waste places;
You shall raise up the foundations of many generations;
And you shall be called the Repairer of the Breach,
The Restorer of [7]Streets to Dwell In.

13 "If [r]you turn away your foot from the Sabbath,
From doing your pleasure on My holy day,
And call the Sabbath a delight,
The holy *day* of the LORD honorable,
And shall honor Him, not doing your own ways,

5 [g]Esth. 4:3; Job 2:8; Dan. 9:3
6 [h]Luke 4:18, 19 [i]Neh. 5:10–12 [j]Jer. 34:9 [3]Lit. *bonds of the yoke*
7 [k]Ezek. 18:7; Matt. 25:35 [l]Job 31:19–22; James 2:14–17 [m]Gen. 29:14; Neh. 5:5 [4]*wandering*
8 [n]Job 11:17 [o]Ex. 14:19; Is. 52:12
9 [p]Ps. 12:2; Is. 59:13 [5]Lit. *sending out of*
10 [6]Or *gloom*
12 [q]Is. 61:4 [7]Lit. *Paths*
13 [r]Ex. 31:16, 17; 35:2, 3; Is. 56:2, 4, 6; Jer. 17:21–27

■ **58:6 fast that I have chosen.** This verse presents a different idea of fasting: to rescue the oppressed and provide for the needy (Matt. 25:34–40).

■ **58:7 own flesh.** Relatives, and secondarily people from the same tribe or area (1 Tim. 5:8).

■ **58:8 Then.** This word connects human responsibility and the coming of God's kingdom.

light . . . glory. The glorious kingdom of God (9:2; 60:1–3; Luke 1:78, 79) will dawn with God's blessing and protection (2:5 note), and with His healing (30:26 note). It is the establishment of a new order (1:21 note), with the presence of the God of glory (4:2 note).

glory . . . rear guard. Like the pillar of cloud and fire in the desert (4:5, 6; Ex. 13:21; 14:20).

■ **58:9 call . . . cry.** Then God will answer prayer (30:19; 65:24); in contrast see v. 4 note.

Here I am. Typically this is a courteous answer given by a person who is ready to hear a message or follow instructions (e.g., Gen. 22:1, 7; Ex. 3:4; 1 Sam. 3:4).

yoke . . . speaking wickedness. These expressions represent oppression, contempt, and improper speech (Prov. 6:13).

■ **58:10 Then.** See v. 8 note. The dawning of the new age brings ever greater brightness (2:5; 5:30 and notes).

■ **58:11 watered garden . . . spring.** They will be greatly blessed and productive (1:30, 31 note; cf. John 7:38).

■ **58:12 build the old waste places.** The restored exiles were in need of the spiritual and economic resources to rebuild Judah (44:26, 28; 61:4; Ezek. 36:10; Amos 9:14, 15; Hag. 1:2–9; Acts 15:15–17).

■ **58:13 Sabbath . . . holy day.** The Lord does not reject ritual as such. This day is the sign of the covenant (56:2 note).

own ways . . . own words. Their goals were social prestige, financial gain, and political importance (contrast 33:15 and note).

Nor finding your own pleasure,
Nor speaking *your own* words,
14 [s]Then you shall delight yourself in the LORD;
And I will cause you to [t]ride on the high hills of the earth,
And feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father.
[u]The mouth of the LORD has spoken."

Separated from God

59 Behold, the LORD's hand is not [a]shortened,
That it cannot save;
Nor His ear heavy,
That it cannot hear.
2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God;
And your sins have hidden *His* face from you,
So that He will [b]not hear.
3 For [c]your hands are defiled with [1]blood,
And your fingers with iniquity;
Your lips have spoken lies,
Your tongue has muttered perversity.

4 No one calls for justice,
Nor does *any* plead for truth.
They trust in [d]empty words and speak lies;
[e]They conceive [2]evil and bring forth iniquity.
5 They hatch vipers' eggs and weave the spider's web;
He who eats of their eggs dies,
And *from* that which is crushed a viper breaks out.

6 [f]Their webs will not become garments,
Nor will they cover themselves with their works;
Their works *are* works of iniquity,
And the act of violence *is* in their hands.
7 [g]Their feet run to evil,
And they make haste to shed [h]innocent blood;
[i]Their thoughts *are* thoughts of iniquity;
Wasting and [j]destruction *are* in their paths.
8 The way of [k]peace they have not known,
And *there is* no justice in their ways;
[l]They have made themselves crooked paths;
Whoever takes that way shall not know peace.

Sin Confessed

9 Therefore justice is far from us,
Nor does righteousness overtake us;
[m]We look for light, but there is darkness!
For brightness, *but* we walk in blackness!
10 [n]We grope for the wall like the blind,
And we grope as if *we had* no eyes;
We stumble at noonday as at twilight;
We are as dead *men* in desolate places.
11 We all growl like bears,
And [o]moan sadly like doves;
We look for justice, but *there is* none;
For salvation, *but* it is far from us.

14 [s]Job 22:26; Is. 61:10 [t]Deut. 32:13; 33:29; Is. 33:16; Hab. 3:19 [u]Is. 1:20; 40:5; Mic. 4:4

CHAPTER 59

1 [a]Num. 11:23; Is. 50:2; Jer. 32:17

2 [b]Is. 1:15

3 [c]Is. 1:15, 21; Jer. 2:30, 34; Ezek. 7:23; Hos. 4:2 [1]*bloodshed*

4 [d]Is. 30:12; Jer. 7:4 [e]Job 15:35; Ps. 7:14; Is. 33:11 [2]*trouble*

6 [f]Job 8:14

7 [g]Prov. 1:16; Rom. 3:15 [h]Prov. 6:17 [i]Is. 55:7 [j]Rom. 3:16, 17

8 [k]Is. 57:20, 21 [l]Ps. 125:5; Prov. 2:15

9 [m]Jer. 8:15

10 [n]Deut. 28:29; Job 5:14; Amos 8:9

11 [o]Is. 38:14; Ezek. 7:16

■ **59:5 vipers' eggs . . . spider's web.** The comparison indicates wickedness that wants to grow and to ensnare others.

■ **59:7 run . . . make haste.** They no longer hesitate to break God's laws (Prov. 1:16); their actions result in discord and chaos (Rom. 3:15–17).

■ **59:8 not know peace.** Those who deny others peace will themselves be kept from it (48:22; 57:21).

■ **59:10 grope . . . stumble.** These words describe the experience of one cursed (Deut. 28:29; Job 5:14).

12 [p] Is. 24:5; 58:1
13 [q] Matt. 12:34
15 [r] Is. 5:23; 10:2; 29:21; 32:7 [3] Lit. *it was evil in His eyes*
16 [s] Is. 41:28; 63:5; 64:7; Ezek. 22:30 [t] Mark 6:6 [u] Ps. 98:1; Is. 63:5
17 [v] Eph. 6:14, 17; 1 Thess. 5:8
18 [w] Is. 63:6; Rom. 2:6
19 [x] Ps. 113:3; Mal. 1:11 [y] Rev. 12:15
20 [z] Rom. 11:26
21 [a] [Heb. 8:10; 10:16]

CHAPTER 60

1 [a] Eph. 5:14

12 For our [p] transgressions are multiplied before You,
And our sins testify against us;
For our transgressions *are* with us,
And *as for* our iniquities, we know them:
13 In transgressing and lying against the LORD,
And departing from our God,
Speaking oppression and revolt,
Conceiving and uttering [q] from the heart words of falsehood.
14 Justice is turned back,
And righteousness stands afar off;
For truth is fallen in the street,
And equity cannot enter.
15 So truth fails,
And he *who* departs from evil makes himself a [r] prey.

The Redeemer of Zion

Then the LORD saw *it,* and [3] it displeased Him
That *there was* no justice.
16 [s] He saw that *there was* no man,
And [t] wondered that *there was* no intercessor;
[u] Therefore His own arm brought salvation for Him;
And His own righteousness, it sustained Him.
17 [v] For He put on righteousness as a breastplate,
And a helmet of salvation on His head;
He put on the garments of vengeance for clothing,
And was clad with zeal as a cloak.
18 [w] According to *their* deeds, accordingly He will repay,
Fury to His adversaries,
Recompense to His enemies;
The coastlands He will fully repay.
19 [x] So shall they fear
The name of the LORD from the west,
And His glory from the rising of the sun;
When the enemy comes in [y] like a flood,
The Spirit of the LORD will lift up a standard against him.

20 "The [z] Redeemer will come to Zion,
And to those who turn from transgression in Jacob,"
Says the LORD.

21 "As [a] for Me," says the LORD, "this *is* My covenant with them: My Spirit who *is* upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouth of your descendants, nor from the mouth of your descendants' descendants," says the LORD, "from this time and forevermore."

The Gentiles Bless Zion

60 Arise, [a] shine;
For your light has come!

■ **59:16 no intercessor.** No one was available to help, except the Messiah (53:12; Rom. 5:7).

righteousness. This "righteousness" is His victorious salvation (46:13; 51:6, 8; 56:1).

■ **59:17 put on . . . clad.** The Lord of Hosts will accomplish what no one else could do (42:13; 49:25; 52:10; Ex. 15:3).

breastplate . . . helmet. Today, Christians put on this armor of God (Eph. 6:13–17).

■ **59:20 Redeemer.** He will come in the person of Jesus Christ. This promise is quoted by Paul (Rom. 11:26, 27). See note on 35:9, 10.

■ **59:21 covenant.** The Lord's covenant of grace is renewed (42:6 note).

Spirit. The role of the Spirit of God is mentioned several times in the Old Testament (32:15; 44:3; Jer. 31:31–34; Ezek. 37:14; Zech. 12:10). The Spirit works "by and with the Word in our hearts" (*Westminster Confession* 1.5). His continuing presence with His people was secured with the revelation of the New Testament (John 16:7, 13; 2 Cor. 5:5; Gal. 3:14; 4:6).

■ **60:1 Arise.** The imperative (feminine singular) is addressed to Zion (v. 14).

shine. Zion receives and reflects God's light (Luke 1:78, 79; Eph. 5:14; Rev. 21:23, 24).

And [b]the glory of the LORD is risen upon you.
2 For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth,
And deep darkness the people;
But the LORD will arise over you,
And His glory will be seen upon you.
3 The [c]Gentiles shall come to your light,
And kings to the brightness of your rising.

4 "Lift[d] up your eyes all around, and see:
They all gather together, [e]they come to you;
Your sons shall come from afar,
And your daughters shall be nursed at *your* side.
5 Then you shall see and become radiant,
And your heart shall swell with joy;
Because [f]the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you,
The wealth of the Gentiles shall come to you.
6 The multitude of camels shall cover your *land,*
The dromedaries of Midian and [g]Ephah;
All those from [h]Sheba shall come;
They shall bring [i]gold and incense,
And they shall proclaim the praises of the LORD.
7 All the flocks of [j]Kedar shall be gathered together to you,
The rams of Nebaioth shall minister to you;
They shall ascend with [k]acceptance on My altar,
And [l]I will glorify the house of My glory.

8 "Who *are* these *who* fly like a cloud,
And like doves to their roosts?
9 [m]Surely the coastlands shall wait for Me;
And the ships of Tarshish *will come* first,
[n]To bring your sons from afar,
[o]Their silver and their gold with them,
To the name of the LORD your God,
And to the Holy One of Israel,
[p]Because He has glorified you.

10 "The[q] sons of foreigners shall build up your walls,
[r]And their kings shall minister to you;
For [s]in My wrath I struck you,
[t]But in My favor I have had mercy on you.
11 Therefore your gates [u]shall be open continually;
They shall not be shut day or night,

1 [b]Mal. 4:2
3 [c]Is. 49:6, 23; Rev. 21:24
4 [d]Is. 49:18 [e]Is. 49:20–22
5 [f][Rom. 11:25–27]
6 [g]Gen. 25:4 [h]Gen. 25:3; Ps. 72:10 [i]Is. 61:6; Matt. 2:11
7 [j]Gen. 25:13 [k]Is. 56:7 [l]Is. 60:13; Hag. 2:7, 9
9 [m]Ps. 72:10 [n][Gal. 4:26] [o]Jer. 3:17 [p]Is. 55:5
10 [q]Is. 14:1, 2; 61:5; Zech. 6:15 [r]Is. 49:23; Rev. 21:24 [s]Is. 57:17 [t]Is. 54:7, 8
11 [u]Is. 26:2; 60:18; 62:10; Rev. 21:25, 26

■ **60:2 darkness shall cover . . . LORD will arise.** Although the world is in darkness, God's light shines on His people (John 1:15; Col. 1:13; 1 Pet. 2:9).

His glory. See 4:5; 40:5; John 1:14; Rev. 21:11.

■ **60:3 Gentiles shall come.** See 11:1; 42:16; 49:6. The prophecy has been fulfilled day by day since the coming of the gospel (Acts 9:15; 11:18).

kings to the brightness. They come to Christ (42:6; 49:6). The wise men who came to see Jesus were Gentiles if not "kings" in some sense.

■ **60:5 wealth . . . shall come.** The prophecy began to be fulfilled with Darius's contribution to the temple (Ezra 6:8, 9). It has a much greater fulfillment through the ascended Christ, who rules in the hearts of His people.

■ **60:6 Midian.** A desert tribe famous for caravans and trade (Gen. 37:28, 36; Judg. 6;5, 6).

Ephah. A tribe related to Midian (Gen. 25:4).

Sheba. This country was renowned for its wealth (1 Kin. 10:1, 2).

■ **60:7 Kedar.** See note on 21:16.

Nebaioth. Related to the Ishmaelites (Gen. 25:13), and later known as Nabateans. Their capital was at Petra, 50 miles south of the Dead Sea.

■ **60:9 coastlands shall wait for Me.** So also in 43:5–7, 14; 49:18; 51:5.

ships of Tarshish. See note on 23:5. The resumption of maritime trade is another way the glory of the new age is described in terms of Solomon's splendor (1 Kin. 10:22).

silver and gold. See Hag. 2:7–9.

■ **60:10 foreigners.** As Hiram, king of Tyre, helped build the first temple (1 Kin. 5), and Cyrus and Darius, kings of Persia, the second (Ezra 6), so also today people of many nations are building up the church, the temple of the Lord (Eph. 2:11–22).

kings shall minister. The exiles were promised that foreign kings would depart (49:17); now it is asserted that foreign kings will serve Mount Zion and worship God. In His wrath against kings, God will remember mercy and save some of them.

■ **60:11 gates . . . day or night.** Instead of attacking, the nations will bring tribute (Rev. 21:25–26).

That *men* may bring to you the wealth of the Gentiles,
And their kings in procession.
12 [v]For the nation and kingdom which will not serve you shall perish,
And *those* nations shall be utterly ruined.

13 "The[w] glory of Lebanon shall come to you,
The cypress, the pine, and the box tree together,
To beautify the place of My sanctuary;
And I will make [x]the place of My feet glorious.
14 Also the sons of those who afflicted you
Shall come [y]bowing to you,
And all those who despised you shall [z]fall prostrate at the soles of your feet;
And they shall call you The City of the LORD,
[a]Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

15 "Whereas you have been forsaken and hated,
So that no one went through *you,*
I will make you an eternal excellence,
A joy of many generations.
16 You shall drink the milk of the Gentiles,
[b]And milk the breast of kings;
You shall know that [c]I, the LORD, *am* your Savior
And your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.

17 "Instead of bronze I will bring gold,
Instead of iron I will bring silver,
Instead of wood, bronze,
And instead of stones, iron.
I will also make your officers peace,
And your magistrates righteousness.
18 Violence shall no longer be heard in your land,
Neither [l]wasting nor destruction within your borders;
But you shall call [d]your walls Salvation,
And your gates Praise.

God the Glory of His People

19 "The [e]sun shall no longer be your light by day,
Nor for brightness shall the moon give light to you;
But the LORD will be to you an everlasting light,
And [f]your God your glory.
20 [g]Your sun shall no longer go down,
Nor shall your moon withdraw itself;
For the LORD will be your everlasting light,
And the days of your mourning shall be ended.
21 [h]Also your people *shall* all *be* righteous;
[i]They shall inherit the land forever,
[j]The branch of My planting,
[k]The work of My hands,
That I may be glorified.

12 [v]Is. 14:2; Zech. 14:17; Matt. 21:44
13 [w]Is. 35:2 [x]1 Chr. 28:2; Ps. 132:7
14 [y]Is. 45:14 [z]Is. 49:23; Rev. 3:9 [a][Heb. 12:22; Rev. 14:1]
16 [b]Is. 49:23 [c]Is. 43:3
18 [d]Is. 26:1 [l]*devastation*
19 [e]Rev. 21:23; 22:5 [f]Is. 41:16; 45:25; Zech. 2:5
20 [g]Amos 8:9
21 [h]Is. 52:1; Rev. 21:27 [i]Ps. 37:11; Matt. 5:5 [j]Is. 61:3; [Matt. 15:13; John 15:2] [k]Is. 29:23; [Eph. 2:10]

■ **60:12 perish.** See Gen. 12:3; Heb. 2:3.

■ **60:13 sanctuary.** Precious wood glorified Solomon's temple as well (1 Kin. 6:15–18). This provides another connection between the former and latter glory (vv. 6, 9 and notes).

place of My feet. At first this expression referred to the ark of the covenant (Ps. 132:7; 1 Chr. 28:2); later, to the temple (Ezek. 43:7); and, finally, to the whole world (66:1).

■ **60:16 milk the breasts of kings.** This is figurative language for the wealth brought by kings to Zion.

■ **60:17 gold . . . silver . . . bronze . . . iron.** Bronze and iron were important alloys used for making tools and weapons. Each material is replaced by one stronger and more valuable. By analogy, the cultural and social life of the country will be raised beyond what Solomon knew. Whatever the interim fulfillments of this prophecy, it looks ultimately to the splendor of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:9–27; see also Ps. 48).

■ **60:18 walls.** God's salvation and Israel's praise constitute the defense of the spiritual temple, Christ and His church (26:1 note; cf. Zech. 2:4, 5).

■ **60:19 everlasting light.** This is God's presence with His people (v. 1 note; Rev. 21:11, 23; 22:5).

22 [f]A little one shall become a thousand,
And a small one a strong nation.
I, the LORD, will hasten it in its time."

The Good News of Salvation

61 "The [a]Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon Me,
Because the LORD [b]has anointed Me
To preach good tidings to the poor;
He has sent Me [c]to [f]heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim [d]liberty to the captives,
And the opening of the prison to *those who are* bound;
2 [e]To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD,
And [f]the day of vengeance of our God;
[g]To comfort all who mourn,
3 To [2]console those who mourn in Zion,
[h]To give them beauty for ashes,
The oil of joy for mourning,
The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness;
That they may be called trees of righteousness,
[i]The planting of the LORD, [j]that He may be glorified."

4 And they shall [k]rebuild the old ruins,
They shall raise up the former desolations,
And they shall repair the ruined cities,
The desolations of many generations.
5 [l]Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks,
And the sons of the foreigner
Shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers.
6 [m]But you shall be named the priests of the LORD,
They shall call you the servants of our God.
[n]You shall eat the riches of the Gentiles,
And in their glory you shall boast.
7 [o]Instead of your shame *you shall have* double *honor,*
And *instead of* confusion they shall rejoice in their portion.
Therefore in their land they shall possess double;
Everlasting joy shall be theirs.

8 "For [p]I, the LORD, love justice;
[q]I hate robbery [3]for burnt offering;
I will direct their work in truth,
[r]And will make with them an everlasting covenant.
9 Their descendants shall be known among the Gentiles,
And their offspring among the people.
All who see them shall acknowledge them,
[s]That they *are* the posterity *whom* the LORD has blessed."

10 [t]I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,
My soul shall be joyful in my God;

22 [f]Matt. 13:31, 32

CHAPTER 61

1 [a]Is. 11:2; Matt. 3:17; Luke 4:18, 19; John 1:32; 3:34 [b]Ps. 45:7; Matt. 11:5; Luke 7:22 [c]Ps. 147:3 [d]Is. 42:7; [Acts 10:43] [f]Lit. *bind up*

2 [e]Lev. 25:9 [f]Is. 34:8; Mal. 4:1, 3; [2 Thess. 1:7] [g]Is. 57:18; Jer. 31:13; Matt. 5:4

3 [h]Ps. 30:11 [i]Is. 60:21; [Jer. 17:7, 8] [j][John 15:8] [2]Lit. *appoint*

4 [k]Is. 49:8; 58:12; Ezek. 36:33; Amos 9:14

5 [l][Eph. 2:12]

6 [m]Ex. 19:6 [n]Is. 60:5, 11

7 [o]Is. 40:2; Zech. 9:12

8 [p]Ps. 11:7 [q]Is. 1:11, 13 [r]Gen. 17:7; Ps. 105:10; Is. 55:3; Jer. 32:40 [3]Or *in*

9 [s]Is. 65:23

10 [t]Hab. 3:18

■ **61:1 Spirit.** See 11:2; 42:1; 48:16 and notes; Luke 3:22; 4:18, 19. The prophecy was fulfilled in the ministry of Christ. Isaiah is included (62:1) as a shadow or forerunner of Jesus.

poor. See Ps. 9:18 note; Luke 7:22.

proclaim liberty. This phrase may be an allusion to the liberation of slaves in the Year of Jubilee (Lev. 25:10).

■ **61:2 the acceptable year.** Through His death and resurrection, Jesus inaugurated the "day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2) in which the gospel is preached all over the world, and those who were estranged can find peace in Him (Eph. 2:12, 13; 3:5; 2 Tim. 1:10).

day of vengeance. Jesus closed the book before reading this portion of Isaiah's oracle (Luke 4:18–20). The time of healing belongs to His first coming; the time of judgment to the second (1 Thess. 1:10). See note on 34:8.

■ **61:6 riches of the Gentiles.** See note on 60:5.

■ **61:7 shame . . . confusion.** These words describe the experience of the Babylonian exile of the sixth century B.C. (30:3; 50:4–6).

■ **61:8 everlasting covenant.** See notes on 42:6; 55:3.

■ **61:9 descendants.** The blessings of the covenant are extended to the children (59:21).

All who see . . . blessed. This alludes to the promise to Abraham (41:8; 51:2; Gen. 12:2, 3).

■ **61:10 I.** Zion is represented here as having received the blessings

For [u]He has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
He has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
[v]As a bridegroom decks *himself* with ornaments,
And as a bride adorns *herself* with her jewels.
11 For as the earth brings forth its bud,
As the garden causes the things that are sown in it to spring forth,
So the Lord GOD will cause [w]righteousness and [x]praise to spring forth before all the nations.

Assurance of Zion's Salvation

62 For Zion's sake I will not [1]hold My peace,
And for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,
Until her righteousness goes forth as brightness,
And her salvation as a lamp *that* burns.
2 [a]The Gentiles shall see your righteousness,
And all [b]kings your glory.
[c]You shall be called by a new name,
Which the mouth of the LORD will name.
3 You shall also be [d]a crown of glory
In the hand of the LORD,
And a royal diadem
In the hand of your God.
4 [e]You shall no longer be termed [f]Forsaken,[2]
Nor shall your land any more be termed [g]Desolate;[3]
But you shall be called [4]Hephzibah, and your land [5]Beulah;
For the LORD delights in you,
And your land shall be married.
5 For *as* a young man marries a virgin,
So shall your sons marry you;
And *as* the bridegroom rejoices over the bride,
[h]*So* shall your God rejoice over you.

6 [i]I have set watchmen on your walls, O Jerusalem;
They shall [6]never hold their peace day or night.
You who [7]make mention of the LORD, do not keep silent,
7 And give Him no rest till He establishes
And till He makes Jerusalem [j]a praise in the earth.

8 The LORD has sworn by His right hand
And by the arm of His strength:
"Surely I will no longer [k]give your grain
As food for your enemies;
And the sons of the foreigner shall not drink your new wine,
For which you have labored.
9 But those who have gathered it shall eat it,
And praise the LORD;
Those who have brought it together shall drink it [l]in My holy courts."

10 Go through,
Go through the gates!

10 [u]Ps. 132:9, 16 [v]Is. 49:18; Rev. 21:2

11 [w]Ps. 72:3; 85:11 [x]Is. 60:18; 62:7

CHAPTER 62

1 [1]*keep silent*

2 [a]Is. 60:3 [b]Ps. 102:15, 16; 138:4, 5; 148:11, 13 [c]Is. 62:4, 12; 65:15

3 [d]Is. 28:5; Zech. 9:16; 1 Thess. 2:19

4 [e]Hos. 1:10; 1 Pet. 2:10 [f]Is. 49:14; 54:6, 7 [g]Is. 54:1 [2]Heb. *Azubah* [3]Heb. *Shemamah* [4]Lit. *My Delight Is in Her* [5]Lit. *Married*

5 [h]Is. 65:19

6 [i]Is. 52:8; Jer. 6:17; Ezek. 3:17; 33:7 [6]*not be silent* [7]*remember*

7 [j]Is. 60:18; 61:11; Jer. 33:9; Zeph. 3:19, 20

8 [k]Lev. 26:16; Deut. 28:31, 33; Judg. 6:3–6; Is. 1:7; Jer. 5:17

9 [l]Deut. 12:12; 14:23, 26

described in v. 3, for example, joy and the garments of praise. To be "clothed" with something is a common figure for a change in status or condition (52:1; Zech. 3:3–5; Matt. 22:11).

■ **62:1 lamp that burns.** This picture of salvation as a welcoming light is developed in 58:8; 60:1–3.

■ **62:2 Gentiles . . . kings.** They witness the confirmation of the promises (2:2–4; 41:2 note; 52:10; 60:3; 61:11).

a new name. Like new clothes (61:10 note), the new name signifies a renewed relationship and enhanced privilege (vv. 4, 12; cf. 1:26; 56:5; 60:14, 18; cf. Gen. 17:5, 15; Rev. 2:17; 3:12).

■ **62:3 crown of glory.** The Lord shares His glory with His people.

■ **62:6 watchmen.** A figure for prophets (56:10 note).

■ **62:8 has sworn.** See note on 14:24.

by His right hand And by the arm of His strength. That is, by Himself (40:10 note; 41:10; 51:9; 52:10; 53:1).

food for your enemies. The curse (Lev. 26:16; Deut. 28:33) will be replaced by blessing.

■ **62:10 Go through, Go through . . . Build up, Build up.** These imperatives emphatically encourage the people to worship.

[m] Prepare the way for the people;
Build up,
Build up the highway!
Take out the stones,
[n] Lift up a banner for the peoples!

11 Indeed the LORD has proclaimed
To the end of the world:
[o] "Say to the daughter of Zion,
'Surely your salvation is coming;
Behold, His [p] reward *is* with Him,
And His [q] work before Him.' "
12 And they shall call them The Holy People,
The Redeemed of the LORD;
And you shall be called Sought Out,
A City Not Forsaken.

10 [m] Is. 40:3; 57:14 [n] Is. 11:12

11 [o] Zech. 9:9; Matt. 21:5; John 12:15 [p] Is. 40:10; [Rev. 22:12] [q] *recompense*

CHAPTER 63

1 [r] Or *adorned*

2 [a] [Rev. 19:13, 15]

3 [b] Lam. 1:15; Rev. 14:19, 20; 19:15

4 [c] Is. 34:8; 35:4; 61:2; Jer. 51:6

5 [d] Is. 41:28; 59:16 [e] [John 16:32] [f] Ps. 98:1; Is. 59:16

The LORD in Judgment and Salvation

63 Who *is* this who comes from Edom,
With dyed garments from Bozrah,
This *One who is* [r] glorious in His apparel,
Traveling in the greatness of His strength?—

"I who speak in righteousness, mighty to save."

2 Why [a] *is* Your apparel red,
And Your garments like one who treads in the winepress?

3 "I have [b] trodden the winepress alone,
And from the peoples no one *was* with Me.
For I have trodden them in My anger,
And trampled them in My fury;
Their blood is sprinkled upon My garments,
And I have stained all My robes.
4 For the [c] day of vengeance *is* in My heart,
And the year of My redeemed has come.
5 [d] I looked, but [e] *there was* no one to help,
And I wondered
That *there was* no one to uphold;
Therefore My own [f] arm brought salvation for Me;
And My own fury, it sustained Me.
6 I have trodden down the peoples in My anger,
Made them drunk in My fury,
And brought down their strength to the earth."

God's Mercy Remembered

7 I will mention the lovingkindnesses of the LORD
And the praises of the LORD,
According to all that the LORD has bestowed on us,

gates. These lead into the court of the sanctuary (v. 9).

■ **62:12 Holy People.** See 4:3; Ex. 19:6; 1 Pet. 2:9, 10.

Redeemed. See note on 35:9.

■ **63:1 Edom.** This nation is representative of the ungodly and proud nations (34:1–17, especially v. 5; Obad. 14, 15; Lam. 4:21, 22; Joel 3:19; Mal. 1:2–5).

Bozrah. An important city in Edom 30 miles southeast of the Dead Sea.

■ **63:3 winepress . . . stained.** This verse presents an extended metaphor for the day of the Lord (Lam. 1:15; Joel 3:13; Rev. 14:17–20; 19:15). The winepress represents the battle, and the juice pressed out represents the casualties of war.

■ **63:4 the year of My redeemed.** This phrase alludes to the laws concerning slaves and property in the Jubilee year (Lev. 25). This idea of redemption is developed throughout Isaiah, but especially in 61:1—63:6 (34:8; 35:9 and notes).

has come. The future is already seen through faith.

■ **63:7 I will mention.** Isaiah will proclaim aloud (Ps. 51:13–15; 89:1; 145:7) the Lord's mighty acts of the past, described as His "lovingkindnesses."

And the great goodness toward the house of Israel.
Which He has bestowed on them according to His mercies,
According to the multitude of His lovingkindnesses.
8 For He said, "Surely they *are* My people,
Children *who* will not lie."
So He became their Savior.
9 [g] In all their affliction He was [2] afflicted,
[h] And the Angel of His Presence saved them;
[i] In His love and in His pity He redeemed them;
And [j] He bore them and carried them
All the days of old.
10 But they [k] rebelled and [l] grieved His Holy Spirit;
[m] So He turned Himself against them as an enemy,
And He fought against them.

11 Then he [n] remembered the days of old,
Moses *and* his people, *saying:*
"Where *is* He who [o] brought them up out of the sea
With the [3] shepherd of His flock?
[p] Where *is* He who put His Holy Spirit within them,
12 Who led *them* by the right hand of Moses,
[q] With His glorious arm,
[r] Dividing the water before them
To make for Himself an everlasting name,
13 [s] Who led them through the deep,
As a horse in the wilderness,
That they might not stumble?"

14 As a beast goes down into the valley,
And the Spirit of the LORD causes him to rest,
So You lead Your people,
[t] To make Yourself a glorious name.

A Prayer of Penitence

15 [u] Look down from heaven,
And see [v] from Your habitation, holy and glorious.
Where *are* Your zeal and Your strength,
The yearning [w] of Your heart and Your mercies toward me?
Are they restrained?
16 [x] Doubtless You *are* our Father,
Though Abraham [y] was ignorant of us,
And Israel does not acknowledge us.
You, O LORD, *are* our Father;
Our Redeemer from Everlasting *is* Your name.
17 O LORD, why have You [z] made us stray from Your ways,
And hardened our heart from Your fear?
Return for Your servants' sake,
The tribes of Your inheritance.

9 [g] Judg. 10:16 [h] Ex. 14:19 [i] Deut. 7:7 [j] Ex. 19:4
[2] Kt., LXX, Syr. *not afflicted*
10 [k] Ex. 15:24 [l] Num. 14:11; Ps. 78:40; Acts 7:51; 1 Cor. 10:1–11 [m] Ex. 23:21; Ps. 106:40
11 [n] Ps. 106:44, 45 [o] Ex. 14:30 [p] Num. 11:17, 25, 29; Hag. 2:5 [3] MT, Vg. *shepherds*
12 [q] Ex. 15:6 [r] Ex. 14:21, 22; Josh. 3:16; Is. 11:15; 51:10
13 [s] Ps. 106:9
14 [t] 2 Sam. 7:23
15 [u] Deut. 26:15; Ps. 80:14 [v] Ps. 33:14 [w] Jer. 31:20; Hos. 11:8
16 [x] Deut. 32:6 [y] Job 14:21
17 [z] Is. 6:9, 10; John 12:40

■ **63:8 Children who will not lie.** These are faithful children of God (Ex. 4:22; Deut. 14:1), unlike the rebellious children described in 1:2–4.

■ **63:9 affliction.** Israel's sufferings in Egypt (Ex. 2:23–25).

Angel of His Presence. See Ex. 14:19; 23:20–23.

carried. Cf. Ex. 19:4; Deut. 1:31; 32:10–12.

■ **63:10 grieved His Holy Spirit.** Rebellion against God's word brought the patience of God's Spirit to an end (cf. Ps. 106:33; Acts 7:51; Eph. 4:30). Divine patience is long suffering, but it will not restrain God's judgment forever.

■ **63:11 days of old.** That is, the period of the Exodus and wilderness wanderings.

shepherd of His flock. Moses was this shepherd. Jesus is our shepherd (Heb. 3:1–6; 13:20).

■ **63:16 our Father.** God has always been the Father of His people (64:8; Ex. 4:22, 23; Jer. 3:4, 19); they are His children by adoption (Deut. 32:6; Rom. 8:15).

Abraham. See 51:2.

■ **63:17 made us stray.** God makes those who reject Him stray (Rom. 1:20–25; 2 Thess. 2:10–12), and may confirm them in their sin (6:10; Ex. 4:21; Ps. 95:8).

18 [a]Your holy people have possessed *it* but a little while;
[b]Our adversaries have trodden down Your sanctuary.
19 We have become *like* those of old, over whom You never ruled,
Those who were never called by Your name.

64 Oh, that You would [f]rend the heavens!
That You would come down!
That the mountains might shake at Your [a]presence—
2 As fire burns brushwood,
As fire causes water to boil—
To make Your name known to Your adversaries,
That the nations may tremble at Your presence!
3 When [b]You did awesome things *for which* we did not look,
You came down,
The mountains shook at Your presence.
4 For since the beginning of the world
[c]*Men* have not heard nor perceived by the ear,
Nor has the eye seen any God besides You,
Who acts for the one who waits for Him.
5 You meet him who rejoices and does righteousness,
Who remembers You in Your ways.
You are indeed angry, for we have sinned—
[d]In these ways we continue;
And we need to be saved.

6 But we are all like an unclean *thing,*
And all [e]our righteousnesses *are* like [2]filthy rags;
We all [f]fade as a leaf,
And our iniquities, like the wind,
Have taken us away.
7 And *there is* no one who calls on Your name,
Who stirs himself up to take hold of You;
For You have hidden Your face from us,
And have [3]consumed us because of our iniquities.

8 But now, O LORD,
You *are* our Father;
We *are* the clay, and You our [g]potter;
And all we *are* the work of Your hand.
9 Do not be furious, O LORD,
Nor remember iniquity forever;
Indeed, please look—we all *are* Your people!
10 Your holy cities are a wilderness,
Zion is a wilderness,
Jerusalem a desolation.
11 Our holy and beautiful [4]temple,
Where our fathers praised You,
Is burned up with fire;
And all [h]our pleasant things [5]are laid waste.

18 [a]Deut. 7:6 [b]Ps. 74:3–7; Is. 64:11

CHAPTER 64

1 [a]Ex. 19:18; Ps. 18:9; 144:5; Mic. 1:3, 4; [Hab. 3:13] [f]*tear open*
3 [b]Ex. 34:10
4 [c]Ps. 31:19
5 [d]Mal. 3:6
6 [e][Phil. 3:9] [f]Ps. 90:5, 6; Is.1:30 [2]Lit. *a filthy garment*
7 [3]Lit. *caused us to melt*
8 [g]Is. 29:16; 45:9; Jer. 18:6; [Rom. 9:20, 21]
11 [h]Ezek. 24:21 [4]Lit. *house* [5]*have become a ruin*

■ **63:18 Our adversaries.** The Babylonians (Ps. 74:4–8).

■ **63:19 called by Your name.** To signify ownership (Deut. 28:10; Jer. 14:9).

■ **64:1 That You would come.** With eloquence Isaiah pleads with God to make His presence unmistakably clear, especially in the fires of judgment (4:4, 5 and notes; Ex. 19:18; Heb. 12:18).

■ **64:3 awesome things.** An allusion to God's appearance on Mount Sinai after the Exodus (Ex. 19:16–18; Deut. 10:21; Ps. 66:3–6; 106:22; see Ezek. 32:6–8 note).

■ **64:6 unclean.** Unfit to be in God's presence (Lev. 13:45, 46; Hag. 2:13, 14).

filthy rags. Garments stained by menstruation (Lev. 15:19; Ezek. 36:17; cf. Phil. 4:7, 8). No one is sinless in God's sight (6:5; Job 15:14–16).

■ **64:8 our Father.** See note on 63:16.

clay . . . work of Your hand. See notes on 22:11; 27:11; cf. Rom. 9:20, 21.

■ **64:9** Compare the promises of 43:25; 54:7, 8.

■ **64:10 holy cities.** The cities of Judah.

■ **64:11 our fathers.** The speakers are at least a generation removed from the fall of the temple in 586 B.C.

12 [i]Will You restrain Yourself because of these *things,* O LORD?
[j]Will You [k]hold Your peace, and afflict us very severely?

The Righteousness of God's Judgment

65 "I was [a]sought by *those who* did not ask *for Me;*
I was found by *those who* did not seek Me.
I said, 'Here I am, here I am,'
To a nation *that* [b]was not called by My name.
2 [c]I have stretched out My hands all day long to a [d]rebellious people,
Who [e]walk in a way *that is* not good,
According to their own thoughts;
3 A people [f]who provoke Me to anger continually to My face;
[g]Who sacrifice in gardens,
And burn incense on altars of brick;
4 [h]Who sit among the graves,
And spend the night in the tombs;
[i]Who eat swine's flesh,
And the broth of [l]abominable things is *in* their vessels;
5 [j]Who say, 'Keep to yourself,
Do not come near me,
For I am holier than you!'
These [2]*are* smoke in My nostrils,
A fire that burns all the day.

6 "Behold, [k]*it is* written before Me:
[l]I will not keep silence, [m]but will repay—
Even repay into their bosom—
7 Your iniquities and [n]the iniquities of your fathers together,"
Says the LORD,
[o]"Who have burned incense on the mountains
[p]And blasphemed Me on the hills;
Therefore I will measure their former work into their bosom."

8 Thus says the LORD:

"As the new wine is found in the cluster,
And *one* says, 'Do not destroy it,
For [q]a blessing *is* in it,'
So will I do for My servants' sake,
That I may not destroy them [r]all.
9 I will bring forth descendants from Jacob,
And from Judah an heir of My mountains;
My [s]elect shall inherit it,
And My servants shall dwell there.
10 [t]Sharon shall be a fold of flocks,

12 [i]Is. 42:14 [j]Ps. 83:1 [k]*keep silent*

CHAPTER 65

1 [a]Rom. 9:24; 10:20 [b]Is. 63:19
2 [c]Rom. 10:21 [d]Is. 1:2, 23 [e]Is. 42:24
3 [f]Deut. 32:21 [g]Is. 1:29
4 [h]Deut. 18:11 [i]Lev. 11:7; Is. 66:17 [l]Unclean meats, Lev. 7:18; 19:7
5 [j]Matt. 9:11; Luke 7:39; 18:9–12 [2]Cause My wrath to smoke
6 [k]Deut. 32:34 [l]Ps. 50:3 [m]Ps. 79:12
7 [n]Ex. 20:5 [o]Ezek. 18:6 [p]Is. 57:7; Ezek. 20:27, 28
8 [q]Joel 2:14 [r]Is. 1:9; Amos 9:8, 9
9 [s]Matt. 24:22
10 [t]Is. 33:9

■ **65:1 Here I am.** This is repeated for emphasis. God's presence is salvation.

a nation that was not called by My name. That is, Gentiles (42:1; 49:6). Paul quotes this prophecy in Rom. 10:20. God's salvation does not conform to human expectations; it originates in His free decision. See Rom. 9:11, 12, 25, 26; 10:30, 31; 11:6, 17 on this important principle.

■ **65:2 stretched out My hands.** Unlike the people whose "hands are full of blood" (1:15), the Lord reached out with love.

■ **65:3 to My face.** They did not hide their offensive, idolatrous acts.

sacrifices in gardens. These sacrifices were associated with fertility religions (1:29 note).

■ **65:4 sit among the graves.** They go there to consult the spirits of the dead (8:19; 29:4).

swine's flesh. Eating pork was prohibited (66:3, 17; Lev. 11:7, 8; Deut. 14:8).

■ **65:5 smoke . . . fire.** They are a constant annoyance to God.

■ **65:6 repay.** The principle of retribution applies in God's judgment (Obad. 15; Gal. 6:7; 1 Pet. 1:17; Rev. 20:12, 13; 22:12).

■ **65:8 new wine.** The new wine in the cluster is the remnant for whose sake the whole is preserved (Matt. 13:29). The remnant is among both Israel (1:9 note) and the nations (56:6; cf. Gen. 18:22–33).

■ **65:9 elect . . . inherit.** The kingdom will be theirs (14:1 note; 57:13; cf. Obad. 19–21).

■ **65:10 Sharon.** This fertile plain south of Mt. Carmel, on the Mediterranean coast. It is a picture of how the Lord will transform creation (33:9; 35:1, 2 and notes).

And [u]the Valley of Achor a place for herds to lie down,
For My people who have [v]sought Me.

11 "But you *are* those who forsake the LORD,
Who forget [w]My holy mountain,
Who prepare [x]a table for [3]Gad,
And who furnish a drink offering for [4]Meni.
12 Therefore I will number you for the sword,
And you shall all bow down to the slaughter;
[y]Because, when I called, you did not answer;
When I spoke, you did not hear,
But did evil before My eyes,
And chose *that* in which I do not delight."

13 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:

"Behold, My servants shall eat,
But you shall be hungry;
Behold, My servants shall drink,
But you shall be thirsty;
Behold, My servants shall rejoice,
But you shall be ashamed;
14 Behold, My servants shall sing for joy of heart,
But you shall cry for sorrow of heart,
And [z]wail for [5]grief of spirit.
15 You shall leave your name [a]as a curse to [b]My chosen;
For the Lord GOD will slay you,
And [c]call His servants by another name;
16 [d]So that he who blesses himself in the earth
Shall bless himself in the God of truth;
And [e]he who swears in the earth
Shall swear by the God of truth;
Because the former troubles are forgotten,
And because they are hidden from My eyes.

The Glorious New Creation

17 "For behold, I create [f]new heavens and a new earth;
And the former shall not be remembered or [6]come to mind.
18 But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create;
For behold, I create Jerusalem *as* a rejoicing,
And her people a joy.
19 [g]I will rejoice in Jerusalem,
And joy in My people;
The [h]voice of weeping shall no longer be heard in her,
Nor the voice of crying.

20 "No more shall an infant from there *live but a few* days,
Nor an old man who has not fulfilled his days;
For the child shall die one hundred years old,

10 [u]Josh. 7:24; Hos. 2:15 [v]Is. 55:6

11 [w]Is. 56:7 [x]Ezek. 23:41; [1 Cor. 10:21] [3]Lit. *Troop* or *Fortune;* a pagan deity [4]Lit. *Number* or *Destiny;* a pagan deity

12 [y]2 Chr. 36:15, 16; Prov. 1:24; Is. 41:28; 50:2; 66:4; Jer. 7:13

14 [z]Matt. 8:12; Luke 13:28 [5]Or *a broken spirit*

15 [a]Jer. 29:22; Zech. 8:13 [b]Is. 65:9, 22 [c][Acts 11:26]

16 [d]Ps. 72:17; Jer. 4:2 [e]Deut. 6:13; Zeph. 1:5

17 [f]Is. 51:16; 66:22; [2 Pet. 3:13]; Rev. 21:1 [6]Lit. *come upon the heart*

19 [g]Is. 62:4, 5 [h]Is. 35:10; 51:11; Rev. 7:17; 21:4

Valley of Achor. South of Jericho (Josh. 7:24; Hos. 2:15).

■ **65:11 Gad . . . Meni.** Syrian gods; see text notes.

■ **65:15 as a curse.** This is an even worse fate than being forgotten.

another name. See note on 62:2.

■ **65:16 God of truth.** the Hebrew word translated "truth" is "amen"; see 2 Cor. 1:20; Rev. 3:14; also John 14:6; 1 John 5:20.

■ **65:17 new heavens and a new earth.** This prophecy awaits the Second Coming of Christ (2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1). In the meantime through faith the saints experience in part the blessing of the age to come (42:9; 43:19 and notes). See "Heaven" at Rev. 21:1.

the former. The adversities and disgrace brought on by sin (41:22 note).

■ **65:18 create Jerusalem.** It will be altogether new with no remembrance of the old (Rev. 21:1, 2).

■ **65:20 infant . . . old man.** Premature death of infants or persons in mid-career can provoke the thought that life is meaningless. Such early death, as also the transfer of one person's reward to another person who did not earn it (v. 22), is part of God's judgment on sin. God promises to remove this curse from His people (Amos 5:11 note).

20 [h]Eccl. 8:12, 13; Is. 3:11; 22:14
21 [i]Ezek. 28:26; 45:4; Hos. 11:11; Amos 9:14
22 [k]Is. 62:8, 9 [l]Ps. 92:12 [m]Is. 65:9, 15
23 [n]Hos. 9:12 [o]Is. 61:9; [Jer. 32:38, 39; Acts 2:39]
24 [p]Ps. 91:15; Is. 58:9 [q]Is. 30:19; Dan. 9:20–23
25 [r]Is. 11:6–9 [s]Gen. 3:14; Mic. 7:17

CHAPTER 66

1 [a]1 Kin. 8:27; 2 Chr. 6:18; Ps. 11:4; Matt. 5:34; Acts 17:24
2 [b]Ps. 34:18; [Is. 57:15; 61:1; Matt. 5:3, 4; Luke 18:13, 14] [c]Ps. 34:18; 51:17
3 [d][Is. 1:10–17; 58:1–7; Mic. 6:7, 8] [e]Deut. 23:18
4 [f]Prov. 1:24; Is. 65:12; Jer. 7:13

[i]But the sinner *being* one hundred years old shall be accursed.
21 [j]They shall build houses and inhabit *them;*
They shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.
22 They shall not build and another inhabit;
They shall not plant and [k]another eat;
For [l]as the days of a tree, *so shall be* the days of My people,
And [m]My elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.
23 They shall not labor in vain,
[n]Nor bring forth children for trouble;
For [o]they *shall be* the descendants of the blessed of the LORD,
And their offspring with them.
24 "It shall come to pass
That [p]before they call, I will answer;
And while they are still speaking, I will [q]hear.
25 The [r]wolf and the lamb shall feed together,
The lion shall eat straw like the ox,
[s]And dust *shall be* the serpent's food.
They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,"
Says the LORD.

True Worship and False

66 Thus says the LORD:
[a]"Heaven *is* My throne,
And earth *is* My footstool.
Where *is* the house that you will build Me?
And where *is* the place of My rest?
2 For all those *things* My hand has made,
And all those *things* exist,"
Says the LORD.
[b]"But on this *one* will I look:
[c]On *him who is* poor and of a contrite spirit,
And who trembles at My word.
3 "He[d] who kills a bull *is as if* he slays a man;
He who sacrifices a lamb, *as if* he [e]breaks a dog's neck;
He who offers a grain offering, *as if he offers* swine's blood;
He who burns incense, *as if* he blesses an idol.
Just as they have chosen their own ways,
And their soul delights in their abominations,
4 So will I choose their delusions,
And bring their fears on them;
[f]Because, when I called, no one answered,
When I spoke they did not hear;
But they did evil before My eyes,
And chose *that* in which I do not delight."

The LORD Vindicates Zion

5 Hear the word of the LORD,
You who tremble at His word:

■ **65:25 dust shall be the serpent's food.** This alludes to Gen. 3:14. The curse on Satan is carried out.

■ **66:1** See theological note "The Spiritual Nature of God."

■ **66:3–4** The Lord hates empty religious expressions as much as paganism (Jer. 7:21–23 note).

■ **66:3 slays a man.** This may be an allusion to child sacrifice (cf. Jer. 7:31; Ezek. 23:39).

breaks a dog's neck. Only certain animals were prescribed for sacrifice. The dog was not even permitted for food (56:10 note; Lev. 11:26).

swine's blood. See 65:4.

■ **66:5 who hated you.** The opposition reflected in ch. 65 between God's servants and nominal Israel has intensified.

Let . . . joy. Such an expression of praise by rebellious people is hypocritical righteousness.

shall be ashamed. Humiliation is the fate of the persecutors. See v. 10 for the fate of the persecuted.

"Your brethren who [g]hated you,
Who cast you out for My name's sake, said,
[h]'Let the LORD be glorified,
That [i]we may see your joy.'
But they shall be ashamed."

6 The sound of noise from the city!
A voice from the temple!
The voice of the LORD,
Who fully repays His enemies!

7 "Before she was in labor, she gave birth;
Before her pain came,

5 [g]Ps. 38:20; Is. 60:15; [Luke 6:22, 23] [h]Is. 5:19 [i][2 Thess. 1:10; Titus 2:13]

The Spiritual Nature of God

"God is Spirit," said Jesus to the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:24). Though fully personal, God does not live in and through a body as we do, and so is not subject to the limits of space and time. Although nothing created can be omnipresent, God is everywhere in His fullness continually. All created things are limited by time; but for God there is no "present moment" into which He is locked as we are.

Theologians refer to God's freedom from limits and bounds as His infinity and His immensity (1 Kin. 8:27; Is. 40:12–26; 66:1). God upholds everything in being, and He has everything everywhere always before His mind, in its own relation to His all-inclusive plan and purpose for every thing and every person in His world (Dan. 4:34–35; Eph. 1:11).

God is immutable, or unchangeable. Nothing can increase or diminish God's perfection, and He does not change for the better or the worse. Because He is not in time He is not subject to change as creatures are (2 Pet. 3:8). Yet He is active in His world all the time, constantly making new things spring forth (Is. 42:9; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rev. 21:5). In all His works He expresses His perfect character with perfect consistency. True to His unchangeable character, He will fulfill every word He has spoken and the plans He has made (Num. 23:19; Ps. 33:11; Mal. 3:6; James 1:16–18). His immutability explains why, when people change their attitude to Him, He changes His attitude to them (Gen. 6:5–7; Ex. 32:9–14; 1 Sam. 15:11; Jon. 3:10).

God's unchangeable perfection does not mean He is impassive and unfeeling, but what He feels is a matter of His own choice, and is included in the unity of His infinite being. God is not driven by His reaction to events or the presence of feelings that arise within Him. But many scriptures represent God as having emotions, such as joy, sorrow, anger, and delight. It is a great mistake to forget that God feels—though of necessity in a way that transcends a finite being's experience of emotion.

All God's thoughts and actions involve the whole of Him; He is undivided in Himself, not composed of parts. This attribute is called His simplicity. God is not distracted, divided by competing interests, or obliged to ration His attention. He simultaneously gives total and undivided attention, not just to one thing at a time, but to everything and everyone anywhere in space or time (cf. Matt. 10:29–30).

The God who is Spirit must be worshiped in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). Worship "in spirit" means worship from a heart renewed by the Holy Spirit. No rituals, ceremony, or devotional formality is true worship without a willing heart, which the Holy Spirit alone can prepare. "In truth" means on the basis of God's revelation culminating in the incarnate Word, Jesus Christ, who is the truth (John 14:6). In the Spirit, "the LORD is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth," wherever they may be (Ps. 145:18; cf. Heb. 4:14–16). Through the revelation of Christ, God invites limited, sinful creatures to claim Him who is the eternal, unchangeable God, as their own God. God is committed to His people through a covenant of divine promises as sure as His own faithfulness (Heb. 6:17, 18).

■ **66:7 Before . . . birth.** The birth of the new community will be sudden, and no human effort will contribute to it. Christ laid the foundation of the church in His lifetime, especially in the week of His death and resurrection (John 2:19).

She delivered a male child.
8 Who has heard such a thing?
Who has seen such things?
Shall the earth be made to give birth in one day?
Or shall a nation be born at once?
For as soon as Zion was in labor,
She gave birth to her children.
9 Shall I bring to the time of birth, and not cause delivery?" says the LORD.
"Shall I who cause delivery shut up *the womb?*" says your God.
10 "Rejoice with Jerusalem,
And be glad with her, all you who love her;
Rejoice for joy with her, all you who mourn for her;
11 That you may feed and be satisfied
With the consolation of her bosom,
That you may drink deeply and be delighted
With the abundance of her glory."

12 For thus says the LORD:

"Behold, [j]I will extend peace to her like a river,
And the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream.
Then you shall [k]feed;
On *her* sides shall you be [l]carried,
And be dandled on *her* knees.
13 As one whom his mother comforts,
So I will [m]comfort you;
And you shall be comforted in Jerusalem."

The Reign and Indignation of God

14 When you see *this,* your heart shall rejoice,
And [n]your bones shall flourish like grass;
The hand of the LORD shall be known to His servants,
And *His* indignation to His enemies.
15 [o]For behold, the LORD will come with fire
And with His chariots, like a whirlwind,
To render His anger with fury,
And His rebuke with flames of fire.
16 For by fire and by [p]His sword
The LORD will judge all flesh;
And the slain of the LORD shall be [q]many.

17 "Those [r]who sanctify themselves and purify themselves,
To go to the gardens
[1]After an *idol* in the midst,
Eating swine's flesh and the abomination and the mouse,
Shall [2]be consumed together," says the LORD.

18 "For I *know* their works and their [s]thoughts. It shall be that I will [t]gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see My glory. 19 [u]I will set a sign among them; and those

12 [j]Is. 48:18; 60:5 [k]Is. 60:16 [l]Is. 49:22; 60:4
13 [m]Is. 51:3; [2 Cor. 1:3, 4]
14 [n]Ezek. 37:1
15 [o]Is. 9:5; [2 Thess. 1:8]
16 [p]Is. 27:1 [q]Is. 34:6
17 [r]Is. 65:3–8 [1]Lit. *After one* [2]*come to an end*
18 [s]Is. 59:7 [t]Is. 45:22–25; Jer. 3:17
19 [u]Luke 2:34

■ **66:9** The purposes of God will not be frustrated, or begun only to be left unfinished.

■ **66:11 feed . . . satisfied.** See note on 60:16.

■ **66:12 her.** Mother Jerusalem (vv. 8, 10).

■ **66:13 mother.** The Lord likens His tender love to that of a mother.

■ **66:15 fire . . . whirlwind.** These depict lightning and storm clouds respectively (Deut. 33:26; Ps. 18:10; Jer. 4:13), common accompaniments of God's appearance (10:17, 18; 29:6; Ezek. 32:6–8 note). Isaiah prayed for God to come in this way to bring judgment (64:1–3).

■ **66:16 sword.** The Lord appears as a warrior (27:1; 34:5; Rev. 19:11–18). See notes on 9:6; 13:4; 40:10; 42:13.

■ **66:17 gardens . . . swine's flesh . . . abomination.** See v. 3; 65:2–5.

■ **66:18 their works and their thoughts.** Probably the works and thought of those to be gathered.

all nations and tongues. There will be universal acknowledgement of the Lord's kingdom (Zech. 8:23; Rev. 7:9, 10).

glory. This is God's glory in His temple (Ezek. 11:22, 23; 44:4).

among them who escape I will send to the nations: *to* Tarshish and [3]Pul and Lud, who draw the bow, and Tubal and Javan, *to* the coastlands afar off who have not heard My fame nor seen My glory. [v]And they shall declare My glory among the Gentiles. 20 Then they shall [w]bring all your brethren [x]for an offering to the LORD out of all nations, on horses and in chariots and in litters, on mules and on camels, to My holy mountain Jerusalem," says the LORD, "as the children of Israel bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the LORD. 21 And I will also take some of them for [y]priests *and* Levites," says the LORD.

22 "For as [z]the new heavens and the new earth
Which I will make shall remain before Me," says the LORD,
"So shall your descendants and your name remain.
23 And [a]it shall come to pass
That from one New Moon to another,
And from one Sabbath to another,
[b]All flesh shall come to worship before Me," says the LORD.

24 "And they shall go forth and look
Upon the corpses of the men
Who have transgressed against Me.
For their [c]worm does not die,
And their fire is not quenched.
They shall be an abhorrence to all flesh."

19 [v]Mal. 1:11 [3]So with MT, Tg.; LXX *Put* (cf. Jer. 46:9)
20 [w]Is. 49:22 [x]Is. 18:7; [Rom. 15:16]
21 [y]Ex. 19:6; Is. 61:6; 1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6
22 [z]Is. 65:17; Heb. 12:26, 27; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1
23 [a]Zech. 14:16 [b]Zech. 14:17–21
24 [c]Is. 14:11; Mark 9:44, 46, 48

■ **66:19 sign.** This "sign" is probably remarkable acts of judgment on the false worshipers as the remnant is delivered form among them.

who escape. The true worshipers who survive persecution (v. 5; Matt. 24:9–14) bring God's glory to the nations (v. 18).

Tarshish. See note on 23:5.

Pul and Lud. In North Africa.

Tubal. South of the Black Sea in modern Turkey (Ezek. 38:2, 3; 39:1).

Javan. The people of Asia Minor or Greece (Ezek. 27:13, 19; Joel 3:6).

declare . . . Gentiles. The Gentiles will submit themselves to the Lord and rejoice in His mighty acts (24:16 note).

■ **66:20 all your brethren.** The Gentiles will bring dispersed Israel back to the temple (43:5; 60:4, 9; Rom. 11:11–14).

■ **66:22 new heavens . . . new earth.** See note on 65:17 (cf. 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21:1).

your descendants and your name. The people of God will never again suffer reproach, but will enjoy everlasting glory (43:1 note; 65:18, 19; cf. Jer. 31:35, 36).

■ **66:23 New Moon . . . Sabbath.** There will be universal worship of God at His appointed time (cf. Zech. 14:16).

■ **66:24 worm . . . fire.** Jerusalem's garbage dump became symbolic of perpetual punishment and anguish (30:33 note; Mark 9:47, 48).

The Book of

JEREMIAH

Author Jeremiah prophesied during the reigns of the last kings of Judah: Josiah (640–609 B.C.), Jehoahaz (609), Jehoiakim (609–598), Jehoiachin (598–597) and Zedekiah (597–586). The kingdom of Judah ended in the exile of most of its people to Babylon, chiefly as a result of two invasions by King Nebuchadnezzar (597 and 586 B.C.), though the first deportations occurred as early as 605 (Dan. 1:1 note). The northern kingdom, Israel, had been conquered by the Assyrians a century before Jeremiah began his ministry. Assyria itself fell to Babylon in 612 B.C., and the northern kingdom was never restored. Jeremiah announced the coming judgment of God on His people and lived to see his prophecy fulfilled.

This prophet was also a priest, from the priestly town of Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin (1:1 note). A lonely figure because of his unpopular message (15:17), he was divinely forbidden to marry as a sign of the imminent cessation of normal life (16:2). He also found himself opposed to the authorities in the land and to all classes of people (26:8). As a result, his life was in serious danger more than once (11:18–23; 18:18; 26:8; 36:19; 38:6). His message placed him in the thick of political events. He was sought out especially by King Zedekiah for his comments on the likely outcome of the final onslaught of the approaching Babylonian armies (37:3, 17). Politically, it was a turbulent time as Egypt and Babylon contested the region. Jeremiah repeatedly prophesied a Babylonian victory, proclaiming that the Lord was using Nebuchadnezzar as His scourge. When Jerusalem fell, the Babylonian commander had a special commission from Nebuchadnezzar himself for the care of the prophet, whose fame had spread to the heart of the empire (39:11–14).

Date and Occasion The background to the prophecy is the long struggle in Judah between the idolatrous worship of foreign gods, deeply embedded since the reign of Manasseh (696–642 B.C.), and the worship of the Lord, which Josiah attempted to restore in his reform (see 2 Kin. 22; 23). The reform began in 628 B.C. (see 2 Chr. 34:3 note) and was given fresh impetus by the discovery of the Book of the Law in 621 B.C. (2 Kin. 22:8). Jeremiah's call came in 626 B.C. (1:2 note). His early ministry coincides with Josiah's reform. Jeremiah testifies, however, to the reform's failure to make significant impact on the people's lives, as the religious abuses of Manasseh reemerged under Josiah's successors.

Characteristics and Themes Jeremiah's message moved through phases that do not correspond exactly to the structure of the book: (a) He called Judah to repent and avoid judgment that would otherwise come (e.g., 7:1–15). (b) He announced that the time for repentance was past, since judgment was now determined against the people (19:10, 11 notes). Judgment is the dominant note in the book, and is understood as the invocation of the final curse of the covenant, namely, loss of the Promised Land (Lev. 26:31–33; Deut. 28:49–68). (c) The Lord would save His people, or a remnant of them, through the exile (24:4–7 notes). Though the Babylonians would prevail over Judah at the Lord's command, this would be for a limited time only—Babylon, in its turn, would also fall (25:9, 11, 12). This prophecy was fulfilled in 539 B.C., when Babylon was defeated by an alliance of Persians and Medes under Cyrus, paving the way for the exiles of Judah to return (50:3; 51:1, 27, 28; 2 Chr. 36:20–23). This promise of eventual deliverance was Jeremiah's answer to the false prophets who had constantly challenged his message of judgment (28:1–4).

Jeremiah also had a message of salvation, but only on the other side of judgment (29:11–14). That message is crystallized in the prophecy of the new covenant (central text: 31:31–34). The new covenant prophecy is built around the main ingredients of the Mosaic covenant at Sinai: it spoke of God's desire to have a relationship with His chosen people, and of the requirement upon them to return His love with obedience (Ex. 19:3–6; Deut. 7:6–11). The new covenant speaks of the empowerment of God's people to obey Him (31:33 note, 32:40 note). Although it is promised in national terms (31:31 and note), it is something new, which the New Testament shows to be fulfilled in the greater "Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16) through Christ (22:30 note; 23:5 note; 30:9; 31:33 note; 33:18 note).

Jeremiah reveals his personal involvement with his message more fully than the other prophets (but cf. Is. 22:4; Mic. 1:8, 9), and he feels the agony of the people at the approach of the Babylonian armies, even before they feel it themselves (4:19–21; 10:19–22; 14:19–22). He also feels the passion of the Lord concerning the sin he witnesses (8:21—9:3 notes). His role is mediatorial in nature. This role is most poignant in the series of passages often referred to as the prophet's "Confessions" (11:18–20; 12:1–4; 15:10–18; 17:14–18; 18:19–23; 20:7–18). In these he expresses his anguish at the great burden of his prophetic calling, prays for vengeance on his personal enemies, and even accuses the Lord of having forced or deceived him (15:18; 20:7). Some of these prayers elicit answers from the Lord containing rebuke

and reassurance (11:21–23; 12:5, 6; 15:19–21). The reassurance to Jeremiah in 15:19–21 is later echoed in a prayer of Ephraim, which receives its own answer (31:18–20). The Lord's good intention toward Jeremiah, therefore, becomes an earnest of His intended faithfulness to the whole people, through and beyond the imminent judgment.

The book contains various materials that make reading it as a continually unfolding narrative difficult. Much of Jeremiah comprises poetic oracles spoken by the prophet (e.g., chs. 2—6). At other times an argument is developed in a style that is sermonic or prosaic (e.g., 7:1–15). There is also third-person narrative about the prophet himself, presumably penned by someone else (e.g., 37—45), and ch. 52 happens to be an editorial appendix (see the last sentence of 51:64). The composition is therefore complicated, as might be expected from the length of Jeremiah's ministry alone (25:3), and conveys the full breadth and force of Jeremiah's ministry from the perspective of the fulfillment of his repeated warnings of coming punishment.

If the work was completed during the Exile, the latest historical point reached in the book, the purpose would be to chasten the exiles by encouraging them to ponder the meaning of their exile. At the same time it seeks to engender hope, since the prophet who had pronounced judgment, and had been proven right, had also preached a message of Judah's eventual restoration to the land and the nation's privileged relationship with God. Jeremiah evidently was assisted by Baruch in compiling the book, and Baruch may also have recorded the third-person narratives.

A clue to the procedure by which the various prophesies and sermons might have become a book is found in 36:4–6, where Baruch writes down all the words "from Jeremiah's mouth" (text note, v. 4). When the scroll is destroyed by Jehoiakim, the Lord commands Jeremiah to rewrite the scroll, with more words added. Reference is also made in 51:60 to Jeremiah recording his prophesies in a book.

The contents of the book are not arranged in chronological order, but rather thematically. Chapters 21—24 are framed by prophecies concerning each of Josiah's successors up to (but excluding) Zedekiah. Similarly chs. 35; 36 refer back to the reign of Jehoiakim, after scenes which involved Zedekiah. □

Outline of Jeremiah

I. The Call of the Prophet (ch. 1)
II. Oracles Chiefly of Judgment on Judah (chs. 2—20)
  A. Calls to Repent and Images of Judgment (chs. 2—6)
  B. The Lord's Freedom to Judge His People (chs. 7—10)
  C. The Covenant Broken: First Confessions (chs. 11—13)
  D. The Drought; Jeremiah as Intercessor (chs. 14; 15)
  E. Signs of Coming Judgment and a Confession (16:1—17:18)
  F. A Sermon About the Sabbath (17:19–27)
  G. The Potter, the Lord's Purposes, and the Trials of Jeremiah (chs. 18—20)
III. The End of the Davidic Dynasty; Salvation Only Through Exile (chs. 21—24)
  A. Judgment Against Kings (chs. 21; 22)
  B. Judgment Against Prophets (ch. 23)
  C. The Remaining Figs (ch. 24)
IV. The Necessity of Babylonian Dominance over the Nations (chs. 25—29)
  A. Seventy Years of Captivity (ch. 25)
  B. Arrest and Trial of Jeremiah (ch. 26)
  C. The False Prophets (chs. 27—29)
V. Promises of Restoration (chs. 30—33)
  A. Return to the Land (ch. 30)
  B. The New Covenant (ch. 31)
  C. Certainty of the Lord's Deliverance (chs. 32; 33)
VI. Jerusalem's Last Days (chs. 34—39)
  A. Rejection of the Word of the Lord (chs. 34—36)
  B. Imprisonments of Jeremiah (chs. 37; 38)
  C. The Fall of Jerusalem (ch. 39)
VII. The Aftermath of the Fall of Jerusalem (chs. 40—45)
  A. The Governorship and Assassination of Gedaliah (40:1—41:10)
  B. The Flight to Egypt; Prophecies There (41:11—44:30)
  C. The Promise to Baruch (ch. 45)

VIII. Oracles of Judgment Against the Nations (chs. 46—51)
- A. Against Egypt (ch. 46)
- B. Against Philistia (ch. 47)
- C. Against Moab (ch. 48)
- D. Against Ammon (49:1–6)
- E. Against Edom (49:7–22)
- F. Against Damascus (49:23–27)
- G. Against Arabian Tribes (49:28–33)
- H. Against Elam (49:34–39)
- I. Against Babylon (chs. 50; 51)

IX. Appendix: the Fall of Jerusalem (ch. 52)

CHAPTER 1

1 [a]Josh. 21:18

2 [b]2 Kin. 21:24 [c]Jer. 25:3

3 [d]2 Kin. 23:34 [e]Jer. 39:2 [f]Jer. 52:12 [g]2 Kin. 25:8

5 [h]Is. 49:1, 5 [i]Ex. 33:12 [j][Luke 1:15] [1]*set you apart* [2]*appointed*

6 [k]Ex. 4:10; 6:12, 30

7 [l]Num. 22:20, 38

8 [m]Ezek. 2:6; 3:9 [n]Ex. 3:12

9 [o]Is. 6:7

THE words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the priests who *were* [a]in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin, 2 to whom the word of the LORD came in the days of [b]Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, [c]in the thirteenth year of his reign. 3 It came also in the days of [d]Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, [e]until the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah, king of Judah, [f]until the carrying away of Jerusalem captive [g]in the fifth month.

The Prophet Is Called

4 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying:

5 "Before I [h]formed you in the womb [i]I knew you;
Before you were born I [j]sanctified[1] you;
I [2]ordained you a prophet to the nations."

6 Then said I:

[k]"Ah, Lord GOD!
Behold, I cannot speak, for I *am* a youth."

7 But the LORD said to me:

"Do not say, 'I *am* a youth,'
For you shall go to all to whom I send you,
And [l]whatever I command you, you shall speak.
8 [m]Do not be afraid of their faces,
For [n]I *am* with you to deliver you," says the LORD.

9 Then the LORD put forth His hand and [o]touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me:

■ **1:1–19** God calls Jeremiah to his prophetic ministry of announcing divine judgment on Judah for idolatry.

■ **1:1–3** Jeremiah prophesied over a forty-year period up to the Babylonian exile of the people of Judah. During this time the word of the Lord came to him repeatedly (25:3).

■ **1:1 priests who were in Anathoth.** Anathoth was a priestly city from early times (Josh. 21:17, 18); cf. 11:21–23. Jeremiah was both a prophet and a priest.

■ **1:2 to whom the word of the LORD came.** This phrase often opens prophetic books (cf. Hos. 1:1; Joel 1:1; Mic. 1:1). Jeremiah's recorded words, therefore, are God's words.

Josiah. He was a godly king who undertook a major religious reform beginning in 628 B.C. (2 Kin. 22; 23; 2 Chr. 34; 35); Jeremiah approves of him (22:15, 16), though he makes few specific references to the reform.

thirteenth year. That is, 626 B.C.

■ **1:5 I formed you . . . knew you.** God's creation and election of Jeremiah belong together (for the verb "know" in the sense of "choose," see Gen. 18:19; Amos 3:2). This setting apart before birth is the ground of Jeremiah's prophetic standing. Compare also Moses, whose birth narrative (Ex. 2) has the same meaning, and Paul (Gal. 1:15).

to the nations. Jeremiah's message is chiefly for Judah, but he has words of judgment for other nations as well (25:8–37; 46—51).

■ **1:6 I cannot speak.** Moses made a similar protest (Ex. 4:10).

youth. This denotes a disqualifying immaturity (1 Kin. 3:7).

■ **1:8 Do not be afraid.** The reassurance necessarily recurs (10:5; 30:10; cf. Is. 43:1; Luke 12:32).

I am with you. These words are the Lord's essential promise to His people (Ex. 3:12; Is. 7:14; Matt. 1:23; 28:20).

■ **1:9 touched my mouth.** This indicates that Jeremiah was consecrated to speak the Lord's words (Is. 6:7).

"Behold, I have [p]put My words in your mouth.
10 [q]See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms,
To [r]root out and to pull down,
To destroy and to throw down,
To build and to plant."

11 Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, "Jeremiah, what do you see?"
And I said, "I see a [3]branch of an almond tree."
12 Then the LORD said to me, "You have seen well, for I am [4]ready to perform My word."
13 And the word of the LORD came to me the second time, saying, "What do you see?"
And I said, "I see [s]a boiling pot, and it is facing away from the north."
14 Then the LORD said to me:

"Out of the [t]north calamity shall break forth
On all the inhabitants of the land.
15 For behold, I am [u]calling
All the families of the kingdoms of the north," says the LORD;
"They shall come and [v]each one set his throne
At the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem,
Against all its walls all around,
And against all the cities of Judah.
16 I will utter My judgments
Against them concerning all their wickedness,
Because [w]they have forsaken Me,
Burned [x]incense to other gods,
And worshiped the works of their own [y]hands.

17 "Therefore [z]prepare yourself and arise,
And speak to them all that I command you.

9 [p]Ex. 4:11–16; Deut. 18:18; Is. 51:16

10 [q]1 Kin. 19:17 [r]Jer. 18:7–10; Ezek. 22:18; [2 Cor. 10:4, 5]

11 [3]Lit. *rod*

12 [4]Lit. *watching*

13 [s]Ezek. 11:3; 24:3

14 [t]Jer. 6:1

15 [u]Jer. 6:22; 25:9 [v]Is. 22:7; Jer. 39:3

16 [w]Deut. 28:20; Jer. 17:13 [x]Is. 65:3, 4; Jer. 7:9 [y]Is. 37:19; Jer. 2:28

17 [z]1 Kin. 18:46; 2 Kin. 4:29; Job 38:3; Luke 12:35; [1 Pet. 1:13]

words in your mouth. See Ex. 4:15; 2 Pet. 1:21.

■ **1:10 root out . . . plant.** The images stress Jeremiah's message of destruction, while also foreshadowing the Lord's reconstruction. The narrative of his call prepares for the prophet's ministry in all its variety. God's word accomplishes God's purposes (Is. 55:11).

■ **1:11 word.** The term can also designate revelatory visions (Amos 7:8).

■ **1:13, 14 boiling . . . break forth.** The second vision, like the first, affirms the inevitability of the imminent judgment on Judah. Jeremiah must himself believe the message in order to proclaim it.

■ **1:14 north.** Though Babylon lay to the east, their route of march would bring them from the north.

■ **1:16 judgments.** Judgment is a work of God, in relation to His covenant people (11:2), in which He implements the curses of the covenant (Deut. 28:15–68).

forsaken Me . . . other gods. Judah's basic sin is apostasy; the central issue in the book is faithfulness to God.

Burned incense. See note on 11:13.

works of their own hands. Ironic polemic (Is. 46:6).

■ **1:17 prepare yourself.** Lit. "gird up your loins," adjust the robe in preparation for battle or other activities (1 Kin. 18:46; 1 Pet. 1:13).

The Call of Jeremiah (1:9, 10)

Who?	The son of Hilkiah (1:1)
Where?	Anathoth in Benjamin (1:1)
When?	The reign of Josiah, 626 B.C. (1:2)
Why?	Ordained a prophet to the nations (1:5)
Origin?	Decided before his birth (1:5)
Jeremiah's response	"I am a youth" (1:6)
God corrects him	"I am with you" (1:7, 8)
God enables him	Given words of power (1:9, 10)

The dramatic character of Jeremiah's call highlights the principle that when God calls a person to a task, He also equips that person for the task. Like Jeremiah, we list our weaknesses and limitations. But God promises His enabling presence. Like Jeremiah, we anticipate fearful situations. But God promises His deliverance. God does not call us to a task He cannot help us to fulfill.

17 [a]Ezek. 2:6

18 [b]Is. 50:7; Jer. 6:27; 15:20

CHAPTER 2

2 [a]Ezek. 16:8; Hos. 2:15 [b]Deut. 2:7; Jer. 2:6 [1]*followed*

3 [c][Ex. 19:5, 6; Deut. 7:6; 14:2] [d]James 1:18; Rev. 14:4 [e]Jer. 12:14 [f]Gen. 12:3; Is. 41:11; Jer. 30:15, 16; 50:7

5 [g]Is. 5:4; Mic. 6:3 [h]2 Kin. 17:15; Jer. 8:19; [Jon. 2:8]; Rom. 1:21 [2]*vanities* or *futilities*

6 [i]Ex. 20:2; Is. 63:11 [j]Deut. 8:15; 32:10

7 [k]Num. 13:27 [l]Num. 35:33; Is. 24:5; Hos. 4:3

[a] Do not be dismayed before their faces,
Lest I dismay you before them.
18 For behold, I have made you this day
[b] A fortified city and an iron pillar,
And bronze walls against the whole land—
Against the kings of Judah,
Against its princes,
Against its priests,
And against the people of the land.
19 They will fight against you,
But they shall not prevail against you.
For I *am* with you," says the LORD, "to deliver you."

God's Case Against Israel

2 Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2 "Go and cry in the hearing of Jerusalem, saying, 'Thus says the LORD:

"I remember you,
The kindness of your [a] youth,
The love of your betrothal,
[b] When you [1] went after Me in the wilderness,
In a land not sown.
3 [c] Israel *was* holiness to the LORD,
[d] The firstfruits of His increase.
[e] All that devour him will offend;
Disaster will [f] come upon them," says the LORD.' "

4 Hear the word of the LORD, O house of Jacob and all the families of the house of Israel.
5 Thus says the LORD:

[g] "What injustice have your fathers found in Me,
That they have gone far from Me,
[h] Have followed [2] idols,
And have become idolaters?
6 Neither did they say, 'Where *is* the LORD,
Who [i] brought us up out of the land of Egypt,
Who led us through [j] the wilderness,
Through a land of deserts and pits,
Through a land of drought and the shadow of death,
Through a land that no one crossed
And where no one dwelt?'
7 I brought you into [k] a bountiful country,
To eat its fruit and its goodness.
But when you entered, you [l] defiled My land
And made My heritage an abomination.
8 The priests did not say, 'Where *is* the LORD?'

■ **1:18 kings . . . land.** Jeremiah's accusation will embrace the whole society of Judah, from greatest to least.

■ **2:1—6:30** Jeremiah uses a number of vivid images (such as comparing Judah to a wild donkey and a prostitute) to indict Judah for unfaithfulness to God (2:1—3:5) and to warn of certain judgment if the nation will not repent and return to God (3:6—6:30).

■ **2:2 Jerusalem.** In Hebrew cities are personified as feminine (7:29 note).

kindness. On the Hebrew word (*hesed*), see Ps. 36:5 note.

youth . . . betrothal. Israel's early relationship with the Lord in the desert after the exodus from Egypt is remembered as pure and devoted, like a bride's with her groom. See Hos. 2:14–16 for a similar image.

■ **2:3 holiness . . . firstfruits.** These terms are drawn from the life of worship. As holy, Israel was dedicated to the Lord (Ezek. 22:26); a "first-fruit" is something belonging specifically to the Lord (Deut. 26:2; Hos. 9:10).

will offend. The offense resulted from unauthorized handling of holy things.

■ **2:7 defiled My land . . . My heritage.** See Deut. 21:23. God's holy people (Deut. 7:6) dwell in the land He gave them for a heritage. The land can be defiled, or in religious terms be made "unclean," by sin, because it remains God's possession. See Lev. 25:23.

■ **2:8 priests.** These may also be "those who handle the law," (18:18; Deut. 31:9), or the latter may be a scribal group (8:8).

rulers. Lit. "shepherds," a figure often used for rulers (23:1–4).

prophets. These prophets were an official group that Jeremiah frequently opposes for their apostasy (23:9–40; 28).

And those who handle the [m]law did not know Me;
The rulers also transgressed against Me;
[n]The prophets prophesied by Baal,
And walked after *things that* do not profit.

9 "Therefore [o]I will yet [3]bring charges against you," says the LORD,
"And against your children's children I will bring charges.
10 For pass beyond the coasts of [4]Cyprus and see,
Send to [5]Kedar and consider diligently,
And see if there has been such *a* [p]*thing.*
11 [q]Has a nation changed *its* gods,
Which *are* [r]not gods?
[s]But My people have changed their Glory
For *what* does not profit.
12 Be astonished, O heavens, at this,
And be horribly afraid;
Be very desolate," says the LORD.
13 "For My people have committed two evils:
They have forsaken Me, the [t]fountain of living waters,
And hewn themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water.

14 "*Is* Israel [u]a servant?
Is he a homeborn *slave?*
Why is he plundered?
15 [v]The young lions roared at him, *and* growled;
They made his land waste;
His cities are burned, without inhabitant.
16 Also the people of [6]Noph and [w]Tahpanhes
Have [7]broken the crown of your head.
17 [x]Have you not brought this on yourself,
In that you have forsaken the LORD your God
When [y]He led you in the way?
18 And now why take [z]the road to Egypt,
To drink the waters of [a]Sihor?
Or why take the road to [b]Assyria,
To drink the waters of [8]the River?
19 Your own wickedness will [c]correct you,
And your backslidings will rebuke you.
Know therefore and see that *it is* an evil and bitter *thing*
That you have forsaken the LORD your God,
And the [9]fear of Me *is* not in you,"
Says the Lord GOD of hosts.

20 "For of old I have [d]broken your yoke *and* burst your bonds;
And [e]you said, 'I will not [f]transgress,'

8 [m]Rom. 2:20 [n]Jer. 23:13

9 [o]Jer. 2:35; Ezek. 20:35, 36; Mic. 6:2 [3]*contend with*

10 [p]Jer. 18:13 [4]Heb. *Kittim,* representatative of western cultures [5]In northern Arabian desert, representative of eastern cultures

11 [q]Mic. 4:5 [r]Ps. 115:4; Is. 37:19 [s]Ps. 106:20; Rom. 1:23

13 [t]Ps. 36:9; Jer. 17:13; [John 4:14]

14 [u][Ex. 4:22]

15 [v]Is. 1:7; Jer. 50:17

16 [w]2 Kin. 23:29–37; Jer. 43:7–9 [6]Memphis in ancient Egypt [7]Or *grazed*

17 [x]Jer. 4:18 [y]Deut. 32:10

18 [z]Is. 30:1–3 [a]Josh. 13:3 [b]Hos. 5:13 [8]The Euphrates

19 [c]Is. 3:9; Jer. 4:18; Hos. 5:5 [9]*dread*

20 [d]Lev. 26:13 [e]Ex. 19:8; Josh. 24:18; Judg. 10:16; 1 Sam. 12:10 [f]Kt. *serve*

■ **2:9 I will yet bring charges.** The courtroom metaphor is resumed (v. 5; Hos. 4:1; Mic. 6:1, 2).

■ **2:10 Cyprus . . . Kedar.** These locations represent west and east respectively. The appeal takes its meaning from the special position of Israel, namely their covenant with the Lord, and Jeremiah's assertion that the nation's gods are impotent.

■ **2:12 O heavens.** See also Is. 1:2. Heaven and earth serve as witnesses of the covenant (Deut. 30:19; 31:28; 32:1).

■ **2:13 two evils.** Jeremiah stresses the seriousness of Judah's sin.

waters. God alone provides life-giving water (Is. 55:1; John 4:10, 7:37–39).

broken cisterns. The gods they took for themselves were useless, empty.

■ **2:15 young lions.** These are Israel's enemies (4:7), announcing desolation.

■ **2:16 Noph . . . Tahpanhes.** Egyptian cities. Egypt and Babylon fought over who would own Israel, 609 to 605 B.C.

crown. Possibly, a reference to Josiah, who was killed by Pharaoh Necho at the battle of Megiddo in 609 B.C. (2 Kin. 23:29).

■ **2:18 Egypt . . . Assyria.** One of Israel's and Judah's besetting sins was to seek help from political alliances, rather than the Lord (Hos. 12:1).

waters. Note the boasts of the Assyrian field commander to be a more reliable provider of basic needs than the Lord (2 Kin. 18:31).

■ **2:20 high hill . . . green tree.** See Deut. 12:2; 1 Kin. 14:23. These were typical sites of shrines to the gods of Canaan.

harlot. Judah is portrayed as a harlot, unfaithful to the Lord (Ezek. 23:1–8; Hos. 3:1–5; 4:10–14).

When [f]on every high hill and under every green tree
You lay down, [g]playing the harlot.
21 Yet I had [h]planted you a noble vine, a seed of highest quality.
How then have you turned before Me
Into [i]the degenerate plant of an alien vine?
22 For though you wash yourself with lye, and use much soap,
Yet your iniquity is [j]marked[2] before Me," says the Lord GOD.

23 "How[k] can you say, 'I am not [3]polluted,
I have not gone after the Baals'?
See your way in the valley;
Know what you have done:
You are a swift dromedary breaking loose in her ways,
24 A wild donkey used to the wilderness,
That sniffs at the wind in her desire;
In her time of mating, who can turn her away?
All those who seek her will not weary themselves;
In her month they will find her.
25 Withhold your foot from being unshod, and your throat from thirst.
But you said, [l]'There is no hope.
No! For I have loved [m]aliens, and after them I will go.'

26 "As the thief is ashamed when he is found out,
So is the house of Israel ashamed;
They and their kings and their princes, and their priests and their [n]prophets,
27 Saying to a tree, 'You *are* my father,'
And to a [o]stone, 'You gave birth to me.'
For they have turned *their* back to Me, and not *their* face.
But in the time of their [p]trouble
They will say, 'Arise and save us.'
28 But [q]where *are* your gods that you have made for yourselves?
Let them arise,
If they [r]can save you in the time of your [4]trouble;
For [s]*according to* the number of your cities
Are your gods, O Judah.

29 "Why will you plead with Me?
You all have transgressed against Me," says the LORD.
30 "In vain I have [t]chastened your children;
They [u]received no correction.
Your sword has [v]devoured your prophets
Like a destroying lion.

31 "O generation, see the word of the LORD!
Have I been a wilderness to Israel,
Or a land of darkness?
Why do My people say, 'We [5]are lords;
[w]We will come no more to You'?
32 Can a virgin forget her ornaments,

20 [f]Deut. 12:2; Is. 57:5, 7; Jer. 3:6 [g]Ex. 34:15
21 [h]Ex. 15:17; Ps. 44:2; 80:8; Is. 5:2 [i]Deut. 32:32; Is. 5:4
22 [j]Job 14:16, 17; Jer. 17:1, 2; Hos. 13:12 [2]*stained*
23 [k]Prov. 30:12 [3]*defiled*
25 [l]Is. 57:10; Jer. 18:12 [m]Jer. 3:13
26 [n]Is. 28:7; Jer. 5:31
27 [o]Jer. 3:9 [p]Judg. 10:10; Is. 26:16; Hos. 5:15
28 [q]Deut. 32:37; Judg. 10:14 [r]Is. 45:20 [s]2 Kin. 17:30, 31; Jer. 11:13 [4]Or *evil*
30 [t]Is. 9:13 [u]Is. 1:5; Jer. 5:3; 7:28 [v]Neh. 9:26; Jer. 26:20–24; Acts 7:52; 1 Thess. 2:15
31 [w]Deut. 32:15; Jer. 2:20, 25 [5]*have dominion*

■ **2:21 noble vine . . . alien vine.** The "vine" metaphor is frequently used for Israel (12:10; Ps. 80:8–16; Is. 5:1–7; Ezek. 17:1–10). Jesus Christ is the true vine, and those who abide in Him are the branches (John 15:1–8).

alien. Lit. "foreign." Foreignness here connotes pagan religious practices.

■ **2:22 wash.** Sin is only effectively washed away when there is repentance toward the Lord Himself as the One who cleanses, through the blood of the everlasting covenant (Is. 53:4–6; Heb. 9:11–15; 13:20).

■ **2:23 the valley.** Probably this refers to the Hinnom Valley, immediately south of Jerusalem, where abominable worship practices occurred (7:31).

dromedary. A young camel, characteristically irresolute, ready to follow any fresh impulse.

■ **2:24 wild donkey . . . desire.** This metaphor is a picture of lust.

■ **2:28 your gods that . . . number of your cities.** The association of gods with particular localities is a distinguishing feature of pagan religion.

■ **2:32 virgin . . . bride.** Such forgetfulness is so unlikely as to be virtually impossible.

My people have forgotten Me. See Is. 1:2, 3.

Or a bride her attire?
Yet My people [x]have forgotten Me days without number.

33 "Why do you beautify your way to seek love?
Therefore you have also taught
The wicked women your ways.
34 Also on your skirts is found
[y]The blood of the lives of the poor innocents.
I have not found it by [6]secret search,
But plainly on all these things.
35 [z]Yet you say, 'Because I am innocent,
Surely His anger shall turn from me.'
Behold, [a]I will plead My case against you,
[b]Because you say, 'I have not sinned.'
36 [c]Why do you gad about so much to change your way?
Also [d]you shall be ashamed of Egypt [e]as you were ashamed of Assyria.
37 Indeed you will go forth from him
With your hands on [f]your head;
For the LORD has rejected your trusted allies,
And you will [g]not prosper by them.

Israel Is Shameless

3 "They say, 'If a man divorces his wife,
And she goes from him
And becomes another man's,
[a]May he return to her again?'
Would not that [b]land be greatly polluted?
But you have [c]played the harlot with many lovers;
[d]Yet return to Me," says the LORD.

2 "Lift up your eyes to [e]the desolate heights and see:
Where have you not [1]lain *with men?*
[f]By the road you have sat for them
Like an Arabian in the wilderness;
[g]And you have polluted the land
With your harlotries and your wickedness.
3 Therefore the [h]showers have been withheld,
And there has been no latter rain.
You have had a [i]harlot's forehead;
You refuse to be ashamed.
4 Will you not from this time cry to Me,
'My Father, You *are* [j]the guide of [k]my youth?
5 [l]Will He remain angry forever?
Will He keep it to the end?'
Behold, you have spoken and done evil things,
As you were able."

A Call to Repentance

6 The LORD said also to me in the days of Josiah the king: "Have you seen what [m]backsliding Israel has done? She has [n]gone up on every high mountain and under every green tree, and there played the harlot. 7 [o]And I said, after she had done all these *things,* 'Return to Me.' But she did not return. And her treacherous [p]sister Judah saw it. 8 Then I saw that [q]for all the causes for

32 [x]Ps. 106:21; Is. 17:10; Jer. 3:21; 13:25; Hos. 8:14

34 [y]2 Kin. 21:16; 24:4; Ps. 106:38; Jer. 7:6; 19:4 [6]*digging*

35 [z]Jer. 2:23, 29; Mal. 2:17; 3:8 [a]Jer. 2:9 [b][Prov. 28:13; 1 John 1:8, 10]

36 [c]Jer. 31:22; Hos. 5:13; 12:1 [d]Is. 30:3 [e]2 Chr. 28:16

37 [f]2 Sam. 13:19; Jer. 14:3, 4 [g]Jer. 37:7–10

CHAPTER 3

1 [a]Deut. 24:1–4 [b]Jer. 2:7 [c]Jer. 2:20; Ezek. 16:26 [d]Jer. 4:1; [Zech. 1:3]

2 [e]Deut. 12:2; Jer. 2:20; 3:21; 7:29 [f]Prov. 23:28 [g]Jer. 2:7 [1]Kt. *been violated*

3 [h]Lev. 26:19; Jer. 14:3–6 [i]Zeph. 3:5

4 [j]Ps. 71:17; Prov. 2:17 [k]Jer. 2:2; Hos. 2:15

5 [l]Ps. 103:9; [Is. 57:16]; Jer. 3:12

6 [m]Jer. 7:24 [n]Jer. 2:20

7 [o]2 Kin. 17:13 [p]Jer. 3:11; Ezek. 16:47, 48

8 [q]Ezek. 23:9

■ **2:34 blood . . . poor.** This refers to the persecution of the weak by the strong (a great theme of Amos; Amos 2:6–8; 4:1).

■ **2:37 hands on your head.** A posture for captives of war.

■ **3:1 divorces his wife.** The bridal metaphor (2:2) now becomes one of divorce. The underlying law is Deut. 24:1–4; the finality of divorce is the background of the argument here.

■ **3:6 Josiah the king.** See Introduction: Author; Date and Occasion and note on 1:2.

Israel. The northern kingdom was destroyed in 722 B.C.

played the harlot. See "Syncretism and Idolatry" at Hos. 2:13.

■ **3:8 certificate of divorce.** See note on v. 1. Israel was "divorced" by being deported by Assyria (722 B.C.), an exile from which she did not return.

which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had [r]put her away and given her a certificate of divorce; [s]yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also. 9 So it came to pass, through her casual harlotry, that she [t]defiled the land and committed adultery with [u]stones and trees. 10 And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah has not turned to Me [v]with her whole heart, but in pretense," says the LORD.

11 Then the LORD said to me, [w]"Backsliding Israel has shown herself more righteous than treacherous Judah. 12 Go and proclaim these words toward [x]the north, and say:

'Return, backsliding Israel,' says the LORD;
'I will not cause My anger to fall on you.
For I *am* [y]merciful,' says the LORD;
'I will not remain angry forever.
13 [z]Only acknowledge your iniquity.
That you have transgressed against the LORD your God,
And have [a]scattered your [2]charms
To [b]alien deities [c]under every green tree,
And you have not obeyed My voice,' says the LORD.

14 "Return, O backsliding children," says the LORD; [d]"for I am married to you. I will take you, [e]one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to [f]Zion. 15 And I will give you [g]shepherds according to My heart, who will [h]feed you with knowledge and understanding.

16 "Then it shall come to pass, when you are multiplied and [i]increased in the land in those days," says the LORD, "that they will say no more, 'The ark of the covenant of the LORD.' [j]It shall not come to mind, nor shall they remember it, nor shall they visit *it,* nor shall it be made anymore.

17 "At that time Jerusalem shall be called The Throne of the LORD, and all the nations shall be gathered to it, [k]to the name of the LORD, to Jerusalem. No more shall they [l]follow[3] the dictates of their evil hearts.

18 "In those days [m]the house of Judah shall walk with the house of Israel, and they shall come together out of the land of [n]the north to [o]the land that I have given as an inheritance to your fathers.

19 "But I said:

'How can I put you among the children
And give you [p]a pleasant land,
A beautiful heritage of the hosts of nations?'

"And I said:

'You shall call Me, [q]"My Father,"
And not turn away from Me.'
20 Surely, *as* a wife treacherously departs from her [4]husband,
So [r]have you dealt treacherously with Me,
O house of Israel," says the LORD.

21 A voice was heard on [s]the desolate heights,
Weeping *and* supplications of the children of Israel.

8 [r]2 Kin. 17:6; Is. 50:1 [s]Ezek. 23:11
9 [t]Jer. 2:7 [u]Is. 57:6; Jer. 2:27
10 [v]Jer. 12:2; Hos. 7:14
11 [w]Ezek. 16:51, 52
12 [x]2 Kin. 17:6 [y]Ps. 86:15; Jer. 12:15; 31:20; 33:26
13 [z]Lev. 26:40; Deut. 30:1, 2; [Prov. 28:13; 1 John 1:9] [a]Ezek. 16:15 [b]Jer. 2:25 [c]Deut. 12:2 [2]Lit. *ways*
14 [d]Jer. 31:32; Hos. 2:19, 20 [e]Jer. 31:6 [f][Rom. 11:5]
15 [g]Jer. 23:4; 31:10; [Ezek. 34:23]; Eph. 4:11 [h]Acts 20:28
16 [i]Is. 49:19; Jer. 23:3 [j]Is. 65:17
17 [k]Is. 60:9 [l]Deut. 29:19; Jer. 7:24 [3]*walk after the stubbornness* or *imagination*
18 [m]Is. 11:13; Jer. 50:4; Ezek. 37:16–22; Hos. 1:11 [n]Jer. 31:8 [o]Amos 9:15
19 [p]Ps. 106:24 [q]Is. 63:16; Jer. 3:4
20 [r]Is. 48:8 [4]Lit. *companion*
21 [s]Is. 15:2

■ **3:9 stones and trees.** This is a reference to idols. See "Syncretism and Idolatry" at Hos. 2:13.

■ **3:12 toward the north.** To those already deported by Assyria.

Return, backsliding Israel. This call implies both repentance and a physical return to their territory; these two aspects go together in Jeremiah's message of salvation. See note on 29:14.

I will not remain angry forever. This statement answers the question of v. 5; cf. 31:20.

■ **3:13 scattered your charms.** Another use of the prostitution metaphor; see 2:20.

■ **3:14 married to you.** Lit. "I am your husband." Although Israel was bound to be faithful to God as her true "husband," Jeremiah exposes her sin of spiritual adultery, her attachment to the gods of the nations. See Hos. 2:16, 17.

take . . . one . . . two. God will save a remnant from among the exiles (23:3 note; Is. 10:20–22 note).

■ **3:16 multiplied and increased.** These same words appear in reverse order in Gen. 1:28 ("Be fruitful and multiply"). God will make a new beginning with His people.

in those days. A future messianic age is now in view (cf. Is. 2:1–5).

The ark . . . shall not come to mind. The importance of the ark will be diminished because the Lord will be present in a new way.

■ **3:17 Throne.** No longer is the ark the Lord's throne (Ex. 25:22; 1 Sam. 4:4), but Jerusalem itself: the Lord rules the whole earth from the midst of His people (Zech. 2:10–12).

■ **3:20 wife treacherously departs.** See 3:1; Hos. 1—3.

For they have perverted their way;
They have forgotten the LORD their God.

22 "Return, you backsliding children,
And I will [t]heal your backslidings."

"Indeed we do come to You,
For You are the LORD our God.
23 [u]Truly, in vain *is salvation hoped for* from the hills,
And from the multitude of mountains;
[v]Truly, in the LORD our God
Is the salvation of Israel.
24 [w]For shame has devoured
The labor of our fathers from our youth—
Their flocks and their herds,
Their sons and their daughters.
25 We lie down in our shame,
And our [5]reproach covers us.
[x]For we have sinned against the LORD our God,
We and our fathers,
From our youth even to this day,
And [y]have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God."

4 [a]"If you will return, O Israel," says the LORD,
"Return to Me;
And if you will put away your abominations out of My sight,
Then you shall not be moved.
2 [b]And you shall swear, 'The LORD lives,'
[c]In truth, in [1]judgment, and in righteousness;
[d]The nations shall bless themselves in Him,
And in Him they shall [e]glory."

3 For thus says the LORD to the men of Judah and Jerusalem:

[f]"Break up your [2]fallow ground,
And [g]do not sow among thorns.
4 [h]Circumcise yourselves to the LORD,
And take away the foreskins of your hearts,
You men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem,
Lest My fury come forth like fire,
And burn so that no one can quench *it,*
Because of the evil of your doings."

An Imminent Invasion

5 Declare in Judah and proclaim in Jerusalem, and say:

[i]"Blow the trumpet in the land;
Cry, 'Gather together,'
And say, [j]'Assemble yourselves,
And let us go into the fortified cities.'
6 Set up the [3]standard toward Zion.
Take refuge! Do not delay!
For I will bring disaster from the [k]north,
And great destruction."

22 [t]Jer. 30:17; 33:6; Hos. 6:1; 14:4

23 [u]Ps. 121:1, 2 [v]Ps. 3:8; Prov. 21:31; Jer. 17:14; 31:7; Jon. 2:9

24 [w]Jer. 11:13; 14:20; Hos. 9:10

25 [x]Ezra 9:6, 7 [y]Jer. 22:21 [5]*disgrace*

CHAPTER 4

1 [a]Jer. 3:1, 22; 15:19; Joel 2:12

2 [b]Deut. 10:20; Is. 45:23; 65:16; Jer. 12:16 [c]Is. 48:1; Zech. 8:8 [d][Gen. 22:18]; Ps. 72:18; Is. 65:16; Jer. 3:17; [Gal. 3:8] [e]Is. 45:25; Jer. 9:24; 1 Cor. 1:31; 2 Cor. 10:17 [1]*justice*

3 [f]Hos. 10:12 [g]Matt. 13:7 [2]*untilled*

4 [h]Deut. 10:16; 30:6; Jer. 9:25, 26; [Rom. 2:28, 29; Col. 2:11]

5 [i]Jer. 6:1; Hos. 8:1 [j]Josh. 10:20; Jer. 8:14

6 [k]Jer. 1:13–15; 6:1, 22; 50:17 [3]*banner*

■ **3:22 Return . . . backsliding.** This summons parallels Hos. 14:4. The call to repentance goes further: the Lord Himself will enable the people to return (Deut. 30:6).

■ **3:24 devoured . . . daughters.** This loss of possessions and family is the antithesis of blessing (Deut. 7:13). Children were often sacrificed to pagan gods (7:31).

■ **4:4 Circumcise . . . hearts.** The outward signs of ownership by the Lord are nothing unless they correspond to an inner reality. Only God can circumcise the heart (31:31–34; Deut. 10:16; 30:6).

■ **4:5 Blow the trumpet.** A traditional method of warning (cf. Joel 2:1; Amos 3:6). Jeremiah begins to announce destruction at the hand of a foe from the north. Fear will drive country-dwellers to the cities for safety.

7 [l] The lion has come up from his thicket,
And [m] the destroyer of nations is on his way.
He has gone forth from his place
[n] To make your land desolate.
Your cities will be laid waste,
Without inhabitant.
8 For this, [o] clothe yourself with sackcloth,
Lament and wail.
For the fierce anger of the LORD
Has not turned back from us.

9 "And it shall come to pass in that day," says the LORD,
"*That* the heart of the king shall perish,
And the heart of the princes;
The priests shall be astonished,
And the prophets shall wonder."

10 Then I said, "Ah, Lord GOD!
[p] Surely You have greatly deceived this people and Jerusalem,
[q] Saying, 'You shall have peace,'
Whereas the sword reaches to the [4] heart."

11 At that time it will be said
To this people and to Jerusalem,
[r] "A dry wind of the desolate heights *blows* in the wilderness
Toward the daughter of My people—
Not to fan or to cleanse—
12 A wind too strong for these will come for Me;
Now [s] I will also speak judgment against them."

13 "Behold, he shall come up like clouds,
And [t] his chariots like a whirlwind.
[u] His horses are swifter than eagles.
Woe to us, for we are plundered!"

14 O Jerusalem, [v] wash your heart from wickedness,
That you may be saved.
How long shall your evil thoughts lodge within you?
15 For a voice declares [w] from Dan
And proclaims [5] affliction from Mount Ephraim:
16 "Make mention to the nations,
Yes, proclaim against Jerusalem,
That watchers come from a [x] far country
And raise their voice against the cities of Judah.
17 [y] Like keepers of a field they are against her all around,
Because she has been rebellious against Me," says the LORD.
18 "Your [z] ways and your doings
Have procured these *things* for you.
This *is* your wickedness,
Because it is bitter,
Because it reaches to your heart."

7 [l] 2 Kin. 24:1; Dan. 7:4 [m] Jer. 25:9; Ezek. 26:7–10 [n] Is. 1:7; 6:11; Jer. 2:15

8 [o] Is. 22:12; Jer. 6:26

10 [p] 2 Kin. 25:10–12; Ezek. 14:9; 2 Thess. 2:11 [q] Jer. 5:12; 14:13 [4] Lit. *soul*

11 [r] Jer. 51:1; Ezek. 17:10; Hos. 13:15

12 [s] Jer. 1:16

13 [t] Is. 5:28 [u] Deut. 28:49; Lam. 4:19; Hos. 8:1; Hab. 1:8

14 [v] Prov. 1:22; Is. 1:16; Jer. 13:27; James 4:8

15 [w] Jer. 8:16; 50:17 [5] Or *wickedness*

16 [x] Is. 39:3; Jer. 5:15

17 [y] 2 Kin. 25:1, 4

18 [z] Ps. 107:17; Is. 50:1; Jer. 2:17, 19

■ **4:8 sackcloth . . . wail.** Traditional actions of indicating grief; cf. Jon. 3:5.

■ **4:9 in that day.** A day of reckoning, when the things prophesied will come to pass (cf. Is. 2:11, 12).

■ **4:11 dry wind.** The sirocco winds blew from across the desert and caused tremendous damage to crops.

■ **4:13 clouds . . . whirlwind . . . eagles.** These comparisons drawn from nature indicate the strength and speed of the enemy.

■ **4:17 Like keepers of a field.** It is as if Judah's enemies already own the land.

Sorrow for the Doomed Nation

19 O my [a]soul, my soul!
I am pained in my very heart!
My heart makes a noise in me;
I cannot hold my peace,
Because you have heard, O my soul,
The sound of the trumpet,
The alarm of war.
20 [b]Destruction upon destruction is cried,
For the whole land is plundered.
Suddenly [c]my tents are plundered,
And my curtains in a moment.
21 How long will I see the [6]standard,
And hear the sound of the trumpet?

22 "For My people *are* foolish,
They have not known Me.
They *are* [7]silly children,
And they have no understanding.
[d]They *are* wise to do evil,
But to do good they have no knowledge."

23 [e]I beheld the earth, and indeed *it was* [f]without form, and void;
And the heavens, they *had* no light.
24 [g]I beheld the mountains, and indeed they trembled,
And all the hills moved back and forth.
25 I beheld, and indeed *there was* no man,
And [h]all the birds of the heavens had fled.
26 I beheld, and indeed the fruitful land *was* a [i]wilderness,
And all its cities were broken down
At the presence of the LORD,
By His fierce anger.

27 For thus says the LORD:

"The whole land shall be desolate;
[j]Yet I will not make a full end.
28 For this [k]shall the earth mourn,
And [l]the heavens above be black,
Because I have spoken.
I have [m]purposed and [n]will not relent,
Nor will I turn back from it.
29 The whole city shall flee from the noise of the horsemen and bowmen.
They shall go into thickets and climb up on the rocks.
Every city *shall be* forsaken,
And not a man shall dwell in it.

30 "And *when* you *are* plundered,
What will you do?
Though you clothe yourself with crimson,
Though you adorn *yourself* with ornaments of gold,

19 [a]2 Kin. 25:11; 2 Chr. 36:20; Is. 15:5; 16:11; 21:3; 22:4; Jer. 9:1, 10; 20:9
20 [b]Ps. 42:7; Ezek. 7:26 [c]Jer. 10:20
21 [6]*banner*
22 [d]Jer. 9:3; 13:23; Rom. 16:19; 1 Cor. 14:20 [7]*foolish*
23 [e]Is. 24:19 [f]Gen. 1:2
24 [g]Is. 5:25; Jer. 10:10; Ezek. 38:20
25 [h]Jer. 9:10; 12:4; Zeph. 1:3
26 [i]Jer. 9:10
27 [j]Jer. 5:10, 18; 30:11; 46:28
28 [k]Jer. 12:4, 11; 14:2; Hos. 4:3 [l]Is. 5:30; 50:3; Joel 2:30, 31 [m]Is. 46:10, 11; [Dan. 4:35] [n][Num. 23:19]; Jer. 7:16; 23:30; 30:24

■ **4:21 How long.** This cry is common in psalms of lament (e.g., Ps. 13:1).

■ **4:22 wise.** Original wickedness is strengthened by habit and practice (9:5).

■ **4:23 without form, and void . . . heavens . . . had no light.** Compare Gen. 1:2, 14, 15. Creation itself is undone by His judgment.

■ **4:25 no man.** The same phrase is used in Gen. 2:5. Again creation is returned to its original chaos.

■ **4:26 fruitful land . . . a wilderness.** Covenant blessings are now reversed (Deut. 8:7–16).

■ **4:30 adorn yourself . . . paint.** A vivid repetition of the harlot metaphor.

lovers . . . seek your life. These lines express the ironic truth of Judah's self-deception.

30 [o]2 Kin. 9:30; Ezek. 23:40 [p]Jer. 22:20, 22; Lam. 1:2, 19; Ezek. 23:9, 10, 22

31 [q]Is. 1:15; Lam. 1:17 [s]*childbirth* [g]*faint*

CHAPTER 5

1 [a]Ezek. 22:30 [b]Gen. 18:23–32 [c]Gen. 18:26 [l]*justice*

2 [d]Is. 48:1; Titus 1:16 [e]Jer. 4:2 [f]Jer. 7:9

3 [g]2 Kin. 25:1; [2 Chr. 16:9; Jer. 16:17] [h]Is. 1:5; 9:13; Jer. 2:30 [i]Is. 9:13; Jer. 7:28; Zeph. 3:2

4 [j]Is. 27:11; Jer. 8:7; Hos. 4:6

5 [k]Mic. 3:1 [l]Ex. 32:25; Ps. 2:3; Jer. 2:20

6 [m]Jer. 4:7 [n]Ps. 104:20; Ezek. 22:27; Hab. 1:8; Zeph. 3:3 [o]Hos. 13:7

7 [p]Josh. 23:7; Jer. 12:16; Zeph. 1:5 [q]Deut. 32:21; Jer. 2:11; Gal. 4:8

[o]Though you enlarge your eyes with paint,
In vain you will make yourself fair;
[p]*Your* lovers will despise you;
They will seek your life.

31 "For I have heard a voice as of a woman in [s]labor,
The anguish as of her who brings forth her first child,
The voice of the daughter of Zion bewailing herself;
She [q]spreads her hands, *saying,*
'Woe *is* me now, for my soul is [g]weary
Because of murderers!'

The Justice of God's Judgment

5 "Run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem;
See now and know;
And seek in her open places
[a]If you can find a man,
[b]If there is *anyone* who executes [l]judgment,
Who seeks the truth,
[c]And I will pardon her.
2 [d]Though they say, '*As* [e]the LORD lives,'
Surely they [f]swear falsely."

3 O LORD, *are* not [g]Your eyes on the truth?
You have [h]stricken them,
But they have not grieved;
You have consumed them,
But [i]they have refused to receive correction.
They have made their faces harder than rock;
They have refused to return.

4 Therefore I said, "Surely these *are* poor.
They are foolish;
For [j]they do not know the way of the LORD,
The judgment of their God.
5 I will go to the great men and speak to them,
For [k]they have known the way of the LORD,
The judgment of their God."

But these have altogether [l]broken the yoke
And burst the bonds.
6 Therefore [m]a lion from the forest shall slay them,
[n]A wolf of the deserts shall destroy them;
[o]A leopard will watch over their cities.
Everyone who goes out from there shall be torn in pieces,
Because their transgressions are many;
Their backslidings have increased.

7 "How shall I pardon you for this?
Your children have forsaken Me
And [p]sworn by *those* [q]*that are* not gods.

■ **4:31 daughter of Zion.** Jerusalem is personified (Lam. 1:6 note).

Woe . . . murderers. We hear her pathetic dying breath.

■ **5:1 If you can find . . . pardon her.** This search is an allusion to Abraham's prayer for Sodom (Gen. 18:22–32) and an implicit answer to Jeremiah's prayer for the city (later forbidden; 7:16). But the city is totally corrupt.

■ **5:3 made their faces harder than rock.** The people's determination not to repent is the chief frustration of the prophet (cf. Ezek. 3:7–9).

■ **5:6 lion . . . wolf . . . leopard.** Such breach of God's covenant brings the covenant curses on the people (Lev. 26:22).

■ **5:7 I had fed them . . . adultery.** The motive for following false gods was the delusion that the gods of the land of Canaan had the power to make it fertile. The Lord claims the land's fertility as His own sphere (Hos. 2:8, 9 notes).

[r]When I had fed them to the full,
Then they committed adultery
And assembled themselves by troops in the harlots' houses.
8 [s]They were *like* well-fed lusty stallions;
Every one neighed after his neighbor's wife.
9 Shall I not punish *them* for these *things?*" says the LORD.
"And shall I not [t]avenge Myself on such a nation as this?

10 "Go up on her walls and destroy,
But do not [2]make a [u]complete end.
Take away her branches,
For they *are* not the LORD's.
11 For [v]the house of Israel and the house of Judah
Have dealt very treacherously with Me," says the LORD.

12 [w]They have lied about the LORD,
And said, [x]"*It is* not He.
[y]Neither will [3]evil come upon us,
Nor shall we see sword or famine.
13 And the prophets become wind,
For the word *is* not in them.
Thus shall it be done to them."

14 Therefore thus says the LORD God of hosts:

"Because you speak this word,
[z]Behold, I will make My words in your mouth fire,
And this people wood,
And it shall devour them.
15 Behold, I will bring a [a]nation against you [b]from afar,
O house of Israel," says the LORD.
"It *is* a mighty nation,
It *is* an ancient nation,
A nation whose language you do not know,
Nor can you understand what they say.
16 Their quiver *is* like an open tomb;
They *are* all mighty men.
17 And they shall eat up your [c]harvest and your bread,
Which your sons and daughters should eat.
They shall eat up your flocks and your herds;
They shall eat up your vines and your fig trees;
They shall destroy your fortified cities,
In which you trust, with the sword.

18 "Nevertheless in those days," says the LORD, "I [d]will not [4]make a complete end of you.
19 And it will be when you say, [e]'Why does the LORD our God do all these *things* to us?' then you shall answer them, 'Just as you have [f]forsaken Me and served foreign gods in your land, so [g]you shall serve aliens in a land *that is* not yours.'

7 [r]Deut. 32:15
8 [s]Jer. 13:27; 29:23; Ezek. 22:11
9 [t]Jer. 9:9
10 [u]Jer. 4:27 [2]*completely destroy*
11 [v]Jer. 3:6, 7, 20
12 [w]2 Chr. 36:16; Jer. 4:10 [x]Is. 28:15; 47:8; Jer. 23:17 [y]Jer. 14:13 [3]*disaster*
14 [z]Is. 24:6; Jer. 1:9; 23:29; Hos. 6:5; Zech. 1:6
15 [a]Deut. 28:49; Is. 5:26; Jer. 1:15; 6:22 [b]Is. 39:3; Jer. 4:16
17 [c]Lev. 26:16; Deut. 28:31, 33; Jer. 8:16; 50:7, 17
18 [d]Jer. 30:11; Amos 9:8 [4]*completely destroy*
19 [e]Deut. 29:24–29; 1 Kin. 9:8, 9; Jer. 13:22; 16:10–13 [f]Jer. 1:16; 2:13 [g]Deut. 28:48; Jer. 16:13

■ **5:8 lusty stallions . . . neighed.** Religious prostitution slips over into actual adultery. See a similar description in 2:23, 24.

■ **5:9 Shall I not.** Again the courtroom metaphor is used; an appeal to witnesses is implied. The Lord's justice must be accomplished.

■ **5:10 not . . . complete end.** This hint that punishment will not be final is one of several such clues in the early part of the book (12:14–17; 16:14, 15; and 23:3 note).

are not the LORD's. In the same breath Judah's covenant status is annulled (Hos. 1:9 note). The apparently irreconcilable needs of judgment and salvation are both evident here.

■ **5:12 They have lied.** Wrong belief about God is related to every kind of untruth (9:3–6).

It is not He . . . famine. These words summarize the message of the false prophets. See 28:2–4.

■ **5:13 wind.** Jeremiah counters that those false prophets who claim to have the Spirit (Hebrew *ruah*) are but wind (also *ruah*).

■ **5:17 eat . . . eat . . . eat.** That Judah's enemies will consume the bounty of the land is a reversal of covenant blessing. See Deut. 7:13 for the promise of the very things now to be lost.

20 "Declare this in the house of Jacob
And proclaim it in Judah, saying,
21 'Hear this now, O [h]foolish people,
Without [5]understanding,
Who have eyes and see not,
And who have ears and hear not:
22 [i]Do you not fear Me?' says the LORD.
'Will you not tremble at My presence,
Who have placed the sand as the [j]bound of the sea,
By a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass beyond it?
And though its waves toss to and fro,
Yet they cannot prevail;
Though they roar, yet they cannot pass over it.
23 But this people has a defiant and rebellious heart;
They have revolted and departed.
24 They do not say in their heart,
"Let us now fear the LORD our God,
[k]Who gives rain, both the [l]former and the latter, in its season.
[m]He reserves for us the appointed weeks of the harvest."
25 [n]Your iniquities have turned these *things* away,
And your sins have withheld good from you.

26 'For among My people are found wicked *men;*
They [o]lie in wait as one who sets snares;
They set a trap;
They catch men.
27 As a cage is full of birds,
So their houses *are* full of deceit.
Therefore they have become great and grown rich.
28 They have grown [p]fat, they are sleek;
Yes, they [6]surpass the deeds of the wicked;
They do not plead [q]the cause,
The cause of the fatherless;
[r]Yet they prosper,
And the right of the needy they do not defend.
29 [s]Shall I not punish *them* for these *things?*' says the LORD.
'Shall I not avenge Myself on such a nation as this?'

30 "An astonishing and [t]horrible thing
Has been committed in the land:
31 The prophets prophesy [u]falsely,
And the priests rule by their *own* power;
And My people [v]love *to have it* so.
But what will you do in the end?

Impending Destruction from the North

6 "O you children of Benjamin,
Gather yourselves to flee from the midst of Jerusalem!
Blow the trumpet in Tekoa,

21 [h]Is. 6:9; Jer. 6:10; Ezek. 12:2; Matt. 13:14; John 12:40; Acts 28:26; Rom. 11:8 [5]Lit. *heart*

22 [i]Deut. 28:58; Ps. 119:120; Jer. 2:19; 10:7; [Rev. 15:4] [j]Job 26:10

24 [k]Ps. 147:8; Jer. 14:22; [Matt. 5:45]; Acts 14:17 [l]Deut. 11:14; Joel 2:23; James 5:7 [m][Gen. 8:22]

25 [n]Jer. 3:3

26 [o]Ps. 10:9; Prov. 1:11; Jer. 18:22; Hab. 1:15

28 [p]Deut. 32:15 [q]Is. 1:23; Jer. 7:6; 22:3; Zech. 7:10 [r]Job 12:6; Ps. 73:12 [6]Or *pass over* or *overlook*

29 [s]Jer. 5:9; Mal. 3:5

30 [t]Jer. 23:14; Hos. 6:10; 2 Tim. 4:3

31 [u]Jer. 14:14; Ezek. 13:6 [v]Mic. 2:11

■ **5:21 foolish.** See Prov. 1:7.

Who have eyes . . . hear not. See note on Is. 6:10.

■ **5:22 Do you not fear.** Jeremiah argues from God's power in creation (Job 38—41; Rom. 1:18–20).

■ **5:26 wicked men . . . catch men.** The nature of wickedness is to entice even the innocent into it. Prov. 2:12–19 describes its blandishments.

■ **5:27, 28 become great and grown rich.** Jeremiah moves from specifically religious sins to social evils, for the two are closely related.

fat . . . sleek. This description symbolizes self-centered wealth, cf. Ps. 73:7.

fatherless . . . needy. Ps. 9:18 note.

■ **6:1 Benjamin.** This territory bordering Jerusalem to the north was part of the southern kingdom of Judah.

Tekoa. A city in Judah, the home of Amos (Amos 1:1).

Beth Haccerem. An unknown location in Judah.

north. See note on 1:14.

And set up a signal-fire in [a]Beth Haccerem;
[b]For disaster appears out of the north,
And great destruction.
2 I have likened the daughter of Zion
To a lovely and delicate woman.
3 The [c]shepherds with their flocks shall come to her.
They shall pitch *their* tents against her all around.
Each one shall pasture in his own place."

4 "Prepare[d] war against her;
Arise, and let us go up [e]at noon.
Woe to us, for the day goes away,
For the shadows of the evening are lengthening.
5 Arise, and let us go by night,
And let us destroy her palaces."

6 For thus has the LORD of hosts said:

"Cut down trees,
And build a mound against Jerusalem.
This *is* the city to be punished.
She *is* full of oppression in her midst.
7 [f]As a fountain [1]wells up with water,
So she wells up with her wickedness.
[g]Violence and plundering are heard in her.
Before Me continually *are* [2]grief and wounds.
8 Be instructed, O Jerusalem,
Lest [h]My soul depart from you;
Lest I make you desolate,
A land not inhabited."

9 Thus says the LORD of hosts:

"They shall thoroughly glean as a vine the remnant of Israel;
As a grape-gatherer, put your hand back into the branches."

10 To whom shall I speak and give warning,
That they may hear?
Indeed their [i]ear *is* uncircumcised,
And they cannot give heed.
Behold, [j]the word of the LORD is a reproach to them;
They have no delight in it.
11 Therefore I am full of the fury of the LORD.
[k]I am weary of holding *it* in.
"I will pour it out [l]on the children outside,
And on the assembly of young men together;
For even the husband shall be taken with the wife,
The aged with *him who is* full of days.

CHAPTER 6

1 [a]Neh. 3:14 [b]Jer. 4:6

3 [c]2 Kin. 25:1–4; Jer. 4:17; 12:10

4 [d]Jer. 51:27; Joel 3:9 [e]Jer. 15:8; Zeph. 2:4

7 [f]Is. 57:20 [g]Ps. 55:9 [1]*gushes* [2]*sickness*

8 [h]Ezek. 23:18; Hos. 9:12

10 [i]Ex. 6:12; Jer. 5:21; 7:26; [Acts 7:51] [j]Jer. 8:9; 20:8

11 [k]Jer. 20:9 [l]Jer. 9:21

■ **6:2 daughter of Zion . . . lovely and delicate.** See note on 2:2. Though a personification of Jerusalem (4:31 note), the simile has in mind the city's refined women (Is. 3:16–26).

■ **6:3 shepherds with their flocks.** These "shepherds" are enemy officers with their troops, taking possession of the land (cf. 4:15).

■ **6:4, 5 at noon . . . by night.** These are unusual times to attack: the enemy's strength is such that he is free to attack whenever he likes.

■ **6:6** A new oracle is addressed to the Babylonians, the Lord's instrument of judgment.

oppression. The rich and powerful of Jerusalem have oppressed their own people.

■ **6:7 wells up . . . wickedness.** Judah cannot help pouring out her wickedness, because that is her true nature (cf. Matt. 7:16).

■ **6:9 thoroughly glean . . . the remnant.** Farmers were not supposed to glean everything, but to leave something behind for the poor (Deut. 24:19–22); Babylon, however, may "glean" Judah completely (contrast 5:10). The Lord has deeper purposes behind the permission He gives (23:3 note). The curse was not absolute, for God did spare a remnant to fulfill His covenant of redemption (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes). See note on 11:23.

12 And [m]their houses shall be turned over to others,
Fields and wives together;
For I will stretch out My hand
Against the inhabitants of the land," says the LORD.
13 "Because from the least of them even to the greatest of them,
Everyone *is* given to [n]covetousness;
And from the prophet even to the [o]priest,
Everyone deals falsely.
14 They have also [p]healed the [3]hurt of My people [4]slightly,
[q]Saying, 'Peace, peace!'
When *there is* no peace.
15 Were they [r]ashamed when they had committed abomination?
No! They were not at all ashamed;
Nor did they know how to blush.
Therefore they shall fall among those who fall;
At the time I punish them,
They shall be cast down," says the LORD.

16 Thus says the LORD:

"Stand in the ways and see,
And ask for the [s]old paths, where the good way *is,*
And walk in it;
Then you will find [t]rest for your souls.
But they said, 'We will not walk *in it.*'
17 Also, I set [u]watchmen over you, *saying,*
[v]'Listen to the sound of the trumpet!'
But they said, 'We will not listen.'
18 Therefore hear, you nations,
And know, O congregation, what *is* among them.
19 [w]Hear, O earth!
Behold, I will certainly bring [x]calamity on this people—
[y]The fruit of their thoughts,
Because they have not heeded My words
Nor My law, but rejected it.
20 [z]For what purpose to Me
Comes frankincense [a]from Sheba,
And [b]sweet cane from a far country?
[c]Your burnt offerings *are* not acceptable,
Nor your sacrifices sweet to Me."

21 Therefore thus says the LORD:

"Behold, I will lay stumbling blocks before this people,
And the fathers and the sons together shall fall on them.
The neighbor and his friend shall perish."

22 Thus says the LORD:

"Behold, a people comes from the [d]north country,
And a great nation will be raised from the farthest parts of the earth.

12 [m]Deut. 28:30; Jer. 8:10; 38:22
13 [n]Is. 56:11; Jer. 8:10; 22:17 [o]Jer. 5:31; 23:11; Mic. 3:5, 11
14 [p]Jer. 8:11–15; Ezek. 13:10 [q]Jer. 4:10; 23:17 [3]Lit. *crushing* [4]Superficially
15 [r]Jer. 3:3; 8:12
16 [s]Is. 8:20; Jer. 18:15; Mal. 4:4; Luke 16:29 [t]Matt. 11:29
17 [u]Is. 21:11; 58:1; Jer. 25:4; Ezek. 3:17; Hab. 2:1 [v]Deut. 4:1
19 [w]Is. 1:2 [x]Jer. 19:3, 15 [y]Prov. 1:31
20 [z]Ps. 40:6; 50:7–9; Is. 1:11; 66:3; Amos 5:21; Mic. 6:6, 7 [a]Is. 60:6 [b]Is. 43:24 [c]Jer. 7:21–23
22 [d]Jer. 1:15; 10:22; 50:41–43

■ **6:14 Peace.** More than absence of war, it is individual and social well-being that is the consequence of covenant-keeping.

Peace, peace. The easily welcomed message of false prophets cannot bring true peace (Mic. 2:6), whose counterpart is righteousness.

■ **6:16 old paths.** This figure describes the traditional religious life of the Israelites from the time of Moses.

■ **6:17 watchmen.** That is, the prophets (Is. 21:11; Ezek. 3:17; Hab. 2:1).

■ **6:18 hear, you nations . . . O congregation.** See 2:4; Mic. 1:2.

■ **6:20 frankincense . . . sweet cane.** These were expensive ingredients used in religious rituals (Ex. 30:23–38).

burnt offerings are not acceptable. This indictment is important in the psalms and prophets (Ps. 40:6–8; Is. 1:11–15; Mic. 6:6–8). See Matt. 23:23.

23 They will lay hold on bow and spear;
They *are* cruel and have no mercy;
Their voice [e]roars like the sea;
And they ride on horses,
As men of war set in array against you, O daughter of Zion."

24 We have heard the report of it;
Our hands grow feeble.
[f]Anguish has taken hold of us,
Pain as of a woman in [5]labor.
25 Do not go out into the field,
Nor walk by the way.
Because of the sword of the enemy,
Fear *is* on every side.
26 O daughter of my people,
[g]Dress in sackcloth
[h]And roll about in ashes!
[i]Make mourning *as for* an only son, most bitter lamentation;
For the plunderer will suddenly come upon us.

27 "I have set you *as* an assayer *and* [j]a fortress among My people,
That you may know and test their way.
28 [k]They *are* all stubborn rebels, [l]walking as slanderers.
They are [m]bronze and iron,
They *are* all corrupters;
29 The bellows blow fiercely,
The lead is consumed by the fire;
The smelter refines in vain,
For the wicked are not drawn off.
30 *People* will call them [n]rejected silver,
Because the LORD has rejected them."

23 [e]Is. 5:30
24 [f]Jer. 4:31; 13:21; 49:24 [5]*childbirth*
26 [g]Jer. 4:8 [h]Jer. 25:34; Mic. 1:10 [i]Amos 8:10; [Zech. 12:10]
27 [j]Jer. 1:18
28 [k]Jer. 5:23 [l]Jer. 9:4 [m]Ezek. 22:18
30 [n]Is. 1:22; Jer. 7:29

CHAPTER 7

2 [a]Jer. 17:19; 26:2
3 [b]Jer. 4:1; 18:11; 26:13
4 [c]Jer. 7:8; Mic. 3:11
5 [d]1 Kin. 6:12; Jer. 21:12; 22:3 [1]*justice*
6 [e]Deut. 6:14, 15; Jer. 13:10
7 [f]Deut. 4:40 [g]Jer. 3:18
8 [h]Jer. 5:31; 14:13, 14
9 [i]1 Kin. 18:21; Hos. 4:1, 2; Zeph. 1:5 [j]Ex. 20:3; Jer. 7:6; 19:4

Trusting in Lying Words

7 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, 2 [a]"Stand in the gate of the LORD's house, and proclaim there this word, and say, 'Hear the word of the LORD, all *you of* Judah who enter in at these gates to worship the LORD!' " 3 Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: [b]"Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. 4 [c]Do not trust in these lying words, saying, 'The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD *are* these.'

5 "For if you thoroughly amend your ways and your doings, if you thoroughly [d]execute [1]judgment between a man and his neighbor, 6 *if* you do not oppress the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, [e]or walk after other gods to your hurt, 7 [f]then I will cause you to dwell in this place, in [g]the land that I gave to your fathers forever and ever.

8 "Behold, you trust in [h]lying words that cannot profit. 9 [i]Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal, and [j]walk after other gods whom you do not know,

■ **6:23 lay hold on bow and spear . . . on horses.** See the description of Babylon in Hab. 1:6–11. Though the Babylonians are God's instrument, He does not approve their cruelty.

■ **6:27 assayer.** Elsewhere in the book, the Lord Himself is the One who tests both the people (9:7; 17:10; 20:12) and Jeremiah (11:20; 12:3). The prophet acts as God's agent here.

■ **6:29, 30 lead . . . silver.** Lead was used in the process of refining silver. The process of refining Judah has yielded nothing of value.

■ **7:2 gate.** Probably this is the gate leading to the inner court of the temple. Jeremiah stands in the central place of Judah's worship to proclaim its falsehood. The power of this action is heightened by his being himself a priest.

all you of Judah . . . to worship the LORD. Possibly this prophecy was delivered on one of the great annual feasts (Ex. 23:14–18), when all Israel was required to be present.

■ **7:3 this place.** The Promised Land. The force of Jeremiah's appeal here, perhaps a shock to complacent Judah, was that they could not take the land for granted.

■ **7:4 lying words . . . The temple of the LORD.** The repetition gives emphasis. The hypocrisy of their professed trust in the Lord and His temple is exposed at its lowest ebb.

■ **7:5, 6 if you . . . to your hurt.** The conditional language echoes the Mosaic covenant (Deut. 14:28, 29; Deut. 13:1–3).

shed innocent blood. This plea is not an exaggeration (19:4).

■ **7:9 Will you steal.** Notice the allusion to five of the Ten Commandments (compare Hos. 4:2), with a climactic stress on the first (Ex. 20:3).

10 [k]Ezek. 23:39 [l]Jer. 7:11, 14; 32:34; 34:15
11 [m]Is. 56:7 [n]Matt. 21:13
12 [o]Josh. 18:1 [p]Deut. 12:11 [q]1 Sam. 4:10
13 [r]2 Chr. 36:15 [s]Prov. 1:24
14 [t]1 Sam. 4:10, 11
15 [u]2 Kin. 17:23 [v]Ps. 78:67
16 [w]Ex. 32:10; Jer. 11:14 [x]Jer. 15:1
18 [y]Jer. 44:17 [z]Jer. 19:13
19 [a]Deut. 32:16, 21
21 [b]Jer. 6:20
22 [c][Hos. 6:6]
23 [d]Deut. 6:3 [e][Ex. 19:5, 6]
24 [f]Ps. 81:11 [g]Deut. 29:19 [h]Jer. 32:33 [2]*walked in* [3]*stubbornness* or *imagination* [4]Lit. *they were*
25 [i]2 Chr. 36:15
26 [j]Jer. 11:8 [k]Neh. 9:17 [l]Jer. 16:12
27 [m]Ezek. 2:7
28 [n]Jer. 5:3 [o]Jer. 9:3
29 [p]Mic. 1:16
30 [q]Dan. 9:27; 11:31 [5]*defile*
31 [r]2 Kin. 23:10

10 [k]and *then* come and stand before Me in this house [l]which is called by My name, and say, 'We are delivered to do all these abominations'? 11 Has [m]this house, which is called by My name, become a [n]den of thieves in your eyes? Behold, I, even I, have seen *it,*" says the LORD.

12 "But go now to [o]My place which *was* in Shiloh, [p]where I set My name at the first, and see [q]what I did to it because of the wickedness of My people Israel. 13 And now, because you have done all these works," says the LORD, "and I spoke to you, [r]rising up early and speaking, but you did not hear, and I [s]called you, but you did not answer, 14 therefore I will do to the house which is called by My name, in which you trust, and to this place which I gave to you and your fathers, as I have done to [t]Shiloh. 15 And I will cast you out of My sight, [u]as I have cast out all your brethren—[v]the whole posterity of Ephraim.

16 "Therefore [w]do not pray for this people, nor lift up a cry or prayer for them, nor make intercession to Me; [x]for I will not hear you. 17 Do you not see what they do in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? 18 [y]The children gather wood, the fathers kindle the fire, and the women knead dough, to make cakes for the queen of heaven; and *they* [z]pour out drink offerings to other gods, that they may provoke Me to anger. 19 [a]Do they provoke Me to anger?" says the LORD. "*Do they* not *provoke* themselves, to the shame of their own faces?"

20 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, My anger and My fury will be poured out on this place—on man and on beast, on the trees of the field and on the fruit of the ground. And it will burn and not be quenched."

21 Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: [b]"Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices and eat meat. 22 [c]For I did not speak to your fathers, or command them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices. 23 But this is what I commanded them, saying, [d]'Obey My voice, and [e]I will be your God, and you shall be My people. And walk in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.' 24 [f]Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but [g]followed[2] the counsels *and* the [3]dictates of their evil hearts, and [h]went[4] backward and not forward. 25 Since the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt until this day, I have even [i]sent to you all My servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending *them.* 26 [j]Yet they did not obey Me or incline their ear, but [k]stiffened their neck. [l]They did worse than their fathers.

27 "Therefore [m]you shall speak all these words to them, but they will not obey you. You shall also call to them, but they will not answer you.

Judgment on Obscene Religion

28 "So you shall say to them, 'This *is* a nation that does not obey the voice of the LORD their God [n]nor receive correction. [o]Truth has perished and has been cut off from their mouth. 29 [p]Cut off your hair and cast *it* away, and take up a lamentation on the desolate heights; for the LORD has rejected and forsaken the generation of His wrath.' 30 For the children of Judah have done evil in My sight," says the LORD. [q]"They have set their abominations in the house which is called by My name, to [5]pollute it. 31 And they have built the [r]high places of Tophet, which *is* in

■ **7:10 this house which is called by My name.** See Deut. 12:5; 1 Kin. 8:43, where the "place" is identified as the Jerusalem temple.

delivered. False worship yields false security.

■ **7:12 Shiloh . . . My name.** Shiloh was a central place of worship for all Israel before David made Jerusalem the capital (Josh. 18:1; 1 Sam. 1:9). Now that Shiloh was no more (probably destroyed by the Philistines), it was a good proof of Jeremiah's point that even a place where the Lord had made His name to dwell was not immune to His judgment.

■ **7:13 you did not hear.** This is an important theme in the book (6:17; 11:7, 8; 25:3; cf. 2 Kin. 17:13, 14).

■ **7:16 Therefore do not pray.** Such prohibition is ominous because one of the prophetic roles was to intercede (Abraham served as an intercessor, Gen. 20:7; and Moses, Ex. 32:11–14). The prohibition is repeated at 11:14 (compare 15:1; 1 John 5:16).

■ **7:18 children . . . fathers . . . women.** A picture of the universal hold idolatry had on the people.

queen of heaven. A Babylonian name for the goddess Ishtar (44:19, 25).

■ **7:20 on man and on beast . . . fruit of the ground.** Breakdown in the relationship between God and His people affects all creation (see Hos. 2:18).

■ **7:21–23 burnt offerings . . . sacrifices.** Sacrifices without the inner worship of the heart were of no interest to God; the people might as well eat the sacrifices themselves if they offered them that way. This prophetic condemnation of empty ritual is all the more remarkable because the sacrificial system revealed to Moses was still in force. Jeremiah is not alone in speaking this way; see 1 Sam. 15:23; Is. 1:11–15; Hos. 6:6; Amos 5:21–25; Mic. 6:6–8.

■ **7:24 followed . . . their evil hearts.** This portrayal of Judah strongly suggests a native disposition towards evil in the human heart.

■ **7:29 Cut off your hair.** This command is in the grammatical feminine, and personifies Jerusalem as a woman (2:1); the shaving of her head is a sign of mourning or humility.

■ **7:30 in the house.** This verse is evidence of the presence of a foreign cult in the temple itself, as under Manasseh (2 Kin. 21:7). Josiah had removed the abomination, but it had returned, possibly in the time of Jehoiakim (Introduction: Author; Date and Occasion). Ezekiel also knows of such defilement (Ezek. 8:3–12). Such practices explain Jeremiah's reference to Judah's persistent rebelliousness.

■ **7:31 high places.** The usual name for pagan cult centers (2 Kin. 23:8, 9).

the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to [s]burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, [t]which I did not command, nor did it come into My heart.

32 "Therefore behold, [u]the days are coming," says the LORD, "when it will no more be called Tophet, or the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter; [v]for they will bury in Tophet until there is no room. 33 The [w]corpses of this people will be food for the birds of the heaven and for the beasts of the earth. And no one will frighten *them away.* 34 Then I will cause to [x]cease from the cities of Judah and from the streets of Jerusalem the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride. For [y]the land shall be desolate.

8 "At that time," says the LORD, "they shall bring out the bones of the kings of Judah, and the bones of its princes, and the bones of the priests, and the bones of the prophets, and the bones of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, out of their graves. 2 They shall spread them before the sun and the moon and all the host of heaven, which they have loved and which they have served and after which they have walked, which they have sought and [a]which they have worshiped. They shall not be gathered [b]nor buried; they shall be like refuse on the face of the earth. 3 Then [c]death shall be chosen rather than life by all the [l]residue of those who remain of this evil family, who remain in all the places where I have driven them," says the LORD of hosts.

The Peril of False Teaching

4 "Moreover you shall say to them, 'Thus says the LORD:

"Will they fall and not rise?
Will one turn away and not return?
5 Why has this people [d]slidden back,
Jerusalem, in a perpetual backsliding?
[e]They hold fast to deceit,
[f]They refuse to return.
6 [g]I listened and heard,
But they do not speak aright.
[h]No man repented of his wickedness,
Saying, 'What have I done?'
Everyone turned to his own course,
As the horse rushes into the battle.

7 "Even [i]the stork in the heavens
Knows her appointed times;
And the turtledove, the swift, and the swallow
Observe the time of their coming.
But [j]My people do not know the judgment of the LORD.

8 "How can you say, 'We *are* wise,
[k]And the law of the LORD *is* with us'?
Look, the false pen of the scribe certainly works falsehood.
9 [l]The wise men are ashamed,
They are dismayed and taken.
Behold, they have rejected the word of the LORD;
So [m]what wisdom do they have?
10 Therefore [n]I will give their wives to others,

31 [s]Lev. 18:21; 2 Kin. 17:17; Ps. 106:38 [t]Deut. 17:3

32 [u]Jer. 19:6 [v]2 Kin. 23:10; Jer. 19:11

33 [w]Jer. 9:22; 19:11; Ezek. 6:5

34 [x]Is. 24:7, 8; Jer. 16:9; 25:10; Ezek. 26:13; Hos. 2:11; Rev. 18:23 [y]Lev. 26:33; Is. 1:7; Jer. 4:27

CHAPTER 8

2 [a]2 Kin. 23:5; Jer. 19:13; Ezek. 8:16; Zeph. 1:5; Acts 7:42 [b]Jer. 22:19

3 [c]Job 3:21, 22; 7:15, 16; Jon. 4:3; Rev. 9:6 [l]*remnant*

5 [d]Jer. 7:24 [e]Jer. 9:6 [f]Jer. 5:3

6 [g]Ps. 14:2; [Is. 30:18; Mal. 3:16; 2 Pet. 3:9] [h]Ezek. 22:30; Mic. 7:2; Rev. 9:20

7 [i]Prov. 6:6–8; Song 2:12; Is. 1:3; Matt. 16:2, 3 [j]Jer. 5:4; 9:3

8 [k]Rom. 2:17

9 [l]Is. 19:11; Jer. 6:15; [1 Cor. 1:27] [m]Is. 44:25; Jer. 4:22

10 [n]Deut. 28:30; Amos 5:11; Zeph. 1:13

Tophet. Lit. "place of fire." This was in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, where children were sacrificed to the foreign god Molech. Offering the firstborn child was practiced in the ancient world, but in Israel the firstborn child was to be "redeemed" by substituting an animal for sacrifice (Ex. 13:2; 34:19, 20). Child sacrifice was expressly forbidden (Lev. 18:21; 20:2–5). See also 2 Kin. 23:10 and note.

Valley of the Son of Hinnom. Southwest of Jerusalem; its equivalent name in Greek is *Gehenna*, or "hell" (Matt. 5:22 note).

■ **7:33 corpses.** See 1 Kin. 14:11 and note. Exhuming remains (8:1) inflicted an even greater dishonor (2 Kin. 23:16, 18) than leaving a corpse exposed to scavengers.

■ **8:2 spread them before the sun . . . moon . . . host of heaven.** The irony in this curse is that they worshiped these heavenly bodies (2 Kin. 21:3–5). Is. 40:25, 26 declares the Creator to be greater than these created things.

■ **8:6 turned.** Instead of turning away from their sins, they turned toward them in a headlong rush.

■ **8:8 wise . . . scribe.** The wise are a group, perhaps the same group as the "scribes." See 2 Sam. 8:17; Ezra 7:6 and notes.

■ **8:9 The wise . . . what wisdom.** Unlike the wisdom expounded in Proverbs, the wisdom of these scribes is empty, having no real knowledge of the Lord's word. See Deut. 4:6.

And their fields to those who will inherit *them:*
Because from the least even to the greatest
Everyone is given to [o]covetousness;
From the prophet even to the priest
Everyone deals falsely.
11 For they have [p]healed the hurt of the daughter of My people [2]slightly,
Saying, [q]'Peace, peace!'
When *there is* no peace.
12 Were they [r]ashamed when they had committed abomination?
No! They were not at all ashamed,
Nor did they know how to blush.
Therefore they shall fall among those who fall;
In the time of their punishment
They shall be cast down," says the LORD.

13 "I will surely [3]consume them," says the LORD.
"No grapes *shall be* [s]on the vine,
Nor figs on the [t]fig tree,
And the leaf shall fade;
And *the things* I have given them shall [u]pass away from them." ' "

14 "Why do we sit still?
[v]Assemble yourselves,
And let us enter the fortified cities,
And let us be silent there.
For the LORD our God has put us to silence
And given us [w]water[4] of gall to drink,
Because we have sinned against the LORD.

15 "*We* [x]looked for peace, but no good *came;*
And for a time of health, and there was trouble!
16 The snorting of His horses was heard from [y]Dan.
The whole land trembled at the sound of the neighing of His [z]strong ones;
For they have come and devoured the land and all that is in it,
The city and those who dwell in it."

17 "For behold, I will send serpents among you,
Vipers which cannot be [a]charmed,
And they shall bite you," says the LORD.

The Prophet Mourns for the People

18 I would comfort myself in sorrow;
My heart *is* faint in me.
19 Listen! The voice,
The cry of the daughter of my people
From [b]a far country:
"*Is* not the LORD in Zion?
Is not her King in her?"

"Why have they provoked Me to anger
With their carved images—
With foreign idols?"

10 [o]Is. 56:11; 57:17; Jer. 6:13

11 [p]Jer. 6:14 [q]Ezek. 13:10 [2]Superficially

12 [r]Ps. 52:1, 7; Is. 3:9; Jer. 3:3; 6:15; Zeph. 3:5

13 [s]Jer. 5:17; 7:20; Joel 1:17 [t]Matt. 21:19; Luke 13:6 [u]Deut. 28:39, 40 [3]Or *take them away*

14 [v]Jer. 4:5 [w]Deut. 29:18; Ps. 69:21; Jer. 9:15; Lam. 3:19; Matt. 27:34 [4]Bitter or poisonous water

15 [x]Jer. 14:19

16 [y]Judg. 18:29; Jer. 4:15 [z]Jer. 47:3

17 [a]Ps. 58:4, 5

19 [b]Is. 39:3; Jer. 5:15

■ **8:13 No grapes . . . on the vine.** The vine symbolizes Judah (2:21). However, the language also suggests a loss of fertility, a blessing of God that the people had attributed to other gods (Hos. 2:8, 9).

■ **8:14 Assemble yourselves.** The word is the same as for "consuming" the harvest in v. 13 (see text note). Ironically, what they intend as a gathering for safety will be a gathering for judgment.

■ **8:17 serpents . . . Vipers.** This may be taken literally, as a kind of plague (compare the "water of gall," v. 14; Num. 21:6), or as a figure of speech for the enemy.

■ **8:18 I would comfort myself in sorrow.** The Hebrew in this phrase is problematic. Possibly it means "my grief has overwhelmed me."

20 "The harvest is past,
The summer is ended,
And we are not saved!"

21 [c]For the hurt of the daughter of my people I am hurt.
I am [d]mourning;
Astonishment has taken hold of me.
22 *Is there* no [e]balm in Gilead,
Is there no physician there?
Why then is there no recovery
For the health of the daughter of my people?

9 Oh, [a]that my head were waters,
And my eyes a fountain of tears,
That I might weep day and night
For the slain of the daughter of my people!
2 Oh, that I had in the wilderness
A lodging place for travelers;
That I might leave my people,
And go from them!
For [b]they *are* all adulterers,
An assembly of treacherous men.

3 "And *like* their bow [c]they have bent their tongues *for* lies.
They are not valiant for the truth on the earth.
For they proceed from [d]evil to evil,
And they [e]do not know Me," says the LORD.
4 "Everyone[f] take heed to his [1]neighbor,
And do not trust any brother;
For every brother will utterly supplant,
And every neighbor will [g]walk with slanderers.
5 Everyone will [h]deceive his neighbor,
And will not speak the truth;
They have taught their tongue to speak lies;
They weary themselves to commit iniquity.
6 Your dwelling place *is* in the midst of deceit;
Through deceit they refuse to know Me," says the LORD.

7 Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts:

"Behold, [i]I will refine them and [2]try them;
[j]For how shall I deal with the daughter of My people?
8 Their tongue *is* an arrow shot out;
It speaks [k]deceit;
One speaks [l]peaceably to his neighbor with his mouth,
But [3]in his heart he [4]lies in wait.
9 [m]Shall I not punish them for these *things*?" says the LORD.
"Shall I not avenge Myself on such a nation as this?"

21 [c]Jer. 9:1 [d]Jer. 14:2; Joel 2:6; Nah. 2:10

22 [e]Gen. 37:25; Jer. 46:11

CHAPTER 9

1 [a]Is. 22:4; Jer. 10:19; Lam. 2:18

2 [b]Jer. 5:7, 8; 23:10; Hos. 4:2

3 [c]Ps. 64:3; Is. 59:4; Jer. 9:8; Hos. 4:1, 2 [d]Jer. 4:22; 13:23 [e]Judg. 2:10; 1 Sam. 2:12; Jer. 4:22; Hos. 4:1; 1 Cor. 15:34

4 [f]Ps. 12:2; Prov. 26:24, 25; Jer. 9:8; Mic. 7:5, 6 [g]Ps. 15:3; Prov. 10:18; Jer. 6:28 [1]*friend*

5 [h]Ps. 36:3, 4; Is. 59:4

7 [i]Is. 1:25; Jer. 6:27; Mal. 3:3 [j]Hos. 11:8 [2]*test*

8 [k]Ps. 12:2 [l]Ps. 55:21 [3]Inwardly he [4]*sets his ambush*

9 [m]Is. 1:24; Jer. 5:9, 29

■ **8:21 I am hurt. I am mourning.** Jeremiah participates in the suffering of the people (14:2).

■ **8:22 no balm in Gilead.** Gilead was known for its medicinal products (46:11).

no physician . . . no recovery. For the healing metaphor, and false healers, see 8:11. The desire for a physician is an appeal to God as such; He will come at the right time in the Person of Christ, the Great Physician (30:17; cf. Luke 4:18, 19).

■ **9:1 That I might weep.** Jeremiah's sympathy for the people will be shared later by Jesus (Luke 19:41).

■ **9:3 like their bow . . . their tongues.** This is a military simile; their bow is falsehood, and they go out wielding it, as if to battle.

says the LORD. God concurs in Jeremiah's estimation of the moral condition of the people (vv. 1, 2). The Lord's attitude is expressed through the prophet.

■ **9:8 peaceably.** Such peace (Hebrew *shalom*) would be a true basis for society, and a product of covenant faithfulness; its opposite is falsehood, unfortunately the actual basis of the society.

10 I will take up a weeping and wailing for the mountains,
And [n]for the [5]dwelling places of the wilderness a lamentation,
Because they are burned up,
So that no one can pass through;
Nor can *men* hear the voice of the cattle.
[o]Both the birds of the heavens and the beasts have fled;
They are gone.

11 "I will make Jerusalem [p]a heap of ruins, [q]a den of jackals.
I will make the cities of Judah desolate, without an inhabitant."

12 [r]Who *is* the wise man who may understand this? And *who is he* to whom the mouth of the LORD has spoken, that he may declare it? Why does the land perish *and* burn up like a wilderness, so that no one can pass through?

13 And the LORD said, "Because they have forsaken My law which I set before them, and have [s]not obeyed My voice, nor walked according to it, 14 but they have [t]walked according to the [6]dictates of their own hearts and after the Baals, [u]which their fathers taught them," 15 therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Behold, I will [v]feed them, this people, [w]with wormwood, and give them [7]water of gall to drink. 16 I will [x]scatter them also among the Gentiles, whom neither they nor their fathers have known. [y]And I will send a sword after them until I have consumed them."

The People Mourn in Judgment

17 Thus says the LORD of hosts:

"Consider and call for [z]the mourning women,
That they may come;
And send for skillful wailing women,
That they may come.
18 Let them make haste
And take up a wailing for us,
That [a]our eyes may run with tears,
And our eyelids gush with water.
19 For a voice of wailing is heard from Zion:
'How we are plundered!
We are greatly ashamed,
Because we have forsaken the land,
Because we have been cast out of [b]our dwellings.' "

20 Yet hear the word of the LORD, O women,
And let your ear receive the word of His mouth;
Teach your daughters wailing,
And everyone her neighbor a lamentation.
21 For death has come through our windows,
Has entered our palaces,
To kill off [c]the children—[8]*no longer to be* outside!
And the young men—[9]*no longer* on the streets!

22 Speak, "Thus says the LORD:

'Even the carcasses of men shall fall [d]as refuse on the open field,
Like cuttings after the harvester,
And no one shall gather *them.*' "

10 [n]Jer. 4:26; Hos. 4:3 [o]Jer. 4:25; Hos. 4:3 [5]Or *pastures*
11 [p]Is. 25:2; Jer. 19:3, 8; 26:9 [q]Is. 13:22; 34:13
12 [r]Ps. 107:43; Is. 42:23; Hos. 14:9
13 [s]Jer. 3:25; 7:24
14 [t]Jer. 7:24; 11:8; Rom. 1:21–24 [u]Gal. 1:14; 1 Pet. 1:18 [6]*stubbornness* or *imagination*
15 [v]Ps. 80:5 [w]Deut. 29:18; Jer. 8:14; 23:15; Lam. 3:15 [7]Bitter or poisonous water
16 [x]Lev. 26:33; Deut. 28:64; Jer. 15:2–4 [y]Lev. 26:33; Jer. 44:27; Ezek. 5:2
17 [z]2 Chr. 35:25; Job 3:8; Eccl. 12:5; Amos 5:16; Matt. 9:23
18 [a]Is. 22:4; Jer. 9:1; 14:17
19 [b]Lev. 18:28
21 [c]2 Chr. 36:17; Jer. 6:11; 18:21; Ezek. 9:5, 6 [8]Lit. *from outside* [9]Lit. *from the square*
22 [d]Ps. 83:10; Is. 5:25; Jer. 8:1, 2

■ **9:10 I will take up a weeping.** Jeremiah weeps particularly for the desolation of the land God had given His people to be rich and populated, but which is desolate. See Mic. 1:8.

■ **9:11 a den of jackals.** The lack of inhabitants marks the curse on the land in this common theme (Ps. 44:19; Is. 13:21, 22).

■ **9:12 wise . . . understand.** This language is reminiscent of the concept of wisdom as God-given knowledge (Prov. 1:2–5). The idea of wisdom as a recommendation of Israel among the nations (Deut. 4:6) has now been overturned.

■ **9:13 which I set before them.** See Deut. 4:8.

■ **9:17 mourning women.** The weeping theme is taken up again (vv. 1, 10), with the Old Testament's clearest allusion to professional wailing women, employed to lead in mourning for the dead (Amos 5:16).

■ **9:21 death.** The actions of death are poetically personified.

children . . . young men. See 6:11; Lam. 5:13–15 and notes.

23 Thus says the LORD:

e"Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom,
Let not the mighty *man* glory in his fmight;
Nor let the rich *man* glory in his riches;
24 But glet him who glories glory in this,
That he understands and knows Me,
That I *am* the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, 1judgment, and righteousness
in the earth.
hFor in these I delight," says the LORD.

25 "Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "that iI will punish all *who are* circumcised with the uncircumcised— 26 Egypt, Judah, Edom, the people of Ammon, Moab, and all *who are* in the jfarthest corners, who dwell in the wilderness. For all *these* nations *are* uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel *are* kuncircumcised in the heart."

23 e[Eccl. 9:11; Is. 47:10]; Ezek. 28:3–7 fPs. 33:16–18

24 gPs. 20:7; 44:8; Is. 41:16; Jer. 4:2; 1 Cor. 1:31; 2 Cor. 10:17; [Gal. 6:14] hIs. 61:8; Mic. 7:18 1*justice*

25 i[Jer. 4:4; Rom. 2:28, 29]

26 jJer. 25:23 kLev. 26:41; Jer. 4:4; 6:10; Ezek. 44:7; [Rom. 2:28]

Idols and the True God

10 Hear the word which the LORD speaks to you, O house of Israel.
2 Thus says the LORD:

True Knowledge of God

In 1 Tim. 6:20–21 Paul warns Timothy against "what is falsely called knowledge—by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith." Paul's attack is against religious tendencies that developed into Gnosticism in the second century A.D. Teachers of such ideas told believers to see their Christian commitment as only a first step along the road to "knowledge" (*gnosis* in Greek), and urged them to take more steps along that road. These teachers viewed the material order as worthless and considered the body to be a prison for the soul. Their answer to human spiritual need was illumination, that is, to attain a certain "knowledge" reserved for the few. They denied that sin was part of the problem, and the "knowledge" they offered made use of celestial passwords and disciplines of mysticism and detachment. To them, Jesus was a supernatural teacher, but a human being only in appearance; they denied the Incarnation and the Atonement. They replaced Christ's call to a life of holy love with asceticism or licentiousness. Paul's letters to Timothy (1 Tim. 1:3–4; 4:1–7; 6:20–21; 2 Tim. 3:1–9); Jude 4, 8–19; 2 Pet. 2, and the first two letters of John (1 John 1:5–10; 2:9–11, 18–29; 3:7–10; 4:1–6; 5:1–12; 2 John 7–11) explicitly oppose beliefs and practices that would later be recognized as Gnosticism.

By contrast, Scripture speaks of "knowing" God as the spiritual person's ideal: namely, the fullness of a faith relationship that brings salvation and eternal life, generating love, hope, obedience, and joy (Ex. 33:13; Jer. 31:34; 8:8–12); Dan. 11:32; John 17:3; Gal. 4:8, 9; Phil. 3:8–11; 2 Tim. 1:12; Heb. 8:8–12). The dimensions of this knowledge are intellectual (knowing the truth about God; Deut. 7:9; Ps. 100:3); volitional (trusting, obeying, and worshiping God); and moral (practicing justice and love; Jer. 22:16; 1 John 4:7–8). Faith's knowledge focuses on Jesus Christ, the incarnate God and the mediator between God and man. Faith seeks specifically to know Christ and His power (Phil. 3:8–14). The knowledge fostered by God's covenant agreement with us is reciprocal, with affection on both sides: we know God as ours because He knows us as His (John 10:14; Gal. 4:9; 2 Tim. 2:19). □

■ **9:24** See theological note "True Knowledge of God."

understands and knows Me. See v. 12, which introduced the idea of wisdom into this chapter. In the end wisdom is knowing God, not abstractly, but personally.

lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness. These three characteristic qualities of the Lord are revealed and exercised in the covenant.

■ **9:25, 26 circumcised with the uncircumcised.** See 4:4. Israel is outwardly circumcised, but inwardly uncircumcised. The surrounding nations practiced circumcision, but not as a covenant sign of belonging to the Lord. Because Israel and Judah are uncircumcised in their hearts, they are effectively in the same condition as the nations. See Rom. 2:25–29; 4:9–12; 9:8; Gal. 5:6; 6:15.

■ **10:2 dismayed.** Terror characterizes the worship of false gods.

CHAPTER 10

2 [a][Lev. 18:3; 20:23; Deut. 12:30]

3 [b]Is. 40:19; 45:20 [1]Lit. *vanity*

4 [c]Is. 41:7

5 [d]Ps. 115:5; Is. 46:7; Jer. 10:5; 1 Cor. 12:2 [e]Ps. 115:7; Is. 46:1, 7 [f]Is. 41:23, 24

6 [g]Ex. 15:11; Deut. 33:26; Ps. 86:8, 10; Is. 46:5–9; Jer. 10:16

7 [h]Jer. 5:22; Rev. 15:4 [i]Ps. 89:6

8 [j]Ps. 115:8; Hab. 2:18 [2]*vain teaching*

9 [k]Dan. 10:5 [l]Ps. 115:4

10 [m]1 Tim. 6:17 [n]Ps. 10:16

11 [o]Ps. 96:5 [p]Is. 2:18; Zeph. 2:11

12 [q]Gen. 1:1, 6, 7; Jer. 51:15 [r]Ps. 93:1 [s]Job 9:8; Ps. 104:2; Is. 40:22

[a]"Do not learn the way of the Gentiles;
Do not be dismayed at the signs of heaven,
For the Gentiles are dismayed at them.
3 For the customs of the peoples *are* [1]futile;
For [b]*one* cuts a tree from the forest,
The work of the hands of the workman, with the ax.
4 They decorate it with silver and gold;
They [c]fasten it with nails and hammers
So that it will not topple.
5 They *are* upright, like a palm tree,
And [d]they cannot speak;
They must be [e]carried,
Because they cannot go *by themselves.*
Do not be afraid of them,
For [f]they cannot do evil,
Nor can they do any good."

6 Inasmuch as *there is* none [g]like You, O LORD
(You *are* great, and Your name *is* great in might),
7 [h]Who would not fear You, O King of the nations?
For this is Your rightful due.
For [i]among all the wise *men* of the nations,
And in all their kingdoms,
There is none like You.
8 But they are altogether [j]dull-hearted and foolish;
A wooden idol *is* a [2]worthless doctrine.
9 Silver is beaten into plates;
It is brought from Tarshish,
And [k]gold from Uphaz,
The work of the craftsman
And of the hands of the metalsmith;
Blue and purple *are* their clothing;
They *are* all [l]the work of skillful *men.*
10 But the LORD *is* the true God;
He *is* [m]the living God and the [n]everlasting King.
At His wrath the earth will tremble,
And the nations will not be able to endure His indignation.

11 Thus you shall say to them: [o]"The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth [p]shall perish from the earth and from under these heavens."

12 He [q]has made the earth by His power,
He has [r]established the world by His wisdom,
And [s]has stretched out the heavens at His discretion.

Worship of heavenly bodies (8:2 and note) carries with it special fears because of unusual phenomena. A biblical understanding of creation takes away these fears, accepting such phenomena as God's created order (Gen. 1; Is. 40:26).

■ **10:3 futile.** This word, used elsewhere by Jeremiah for idols (cf. v. 8), conveys their emptiness (2:5).

■ **10:4 silver and gold.** Although some idols were cast in precious metals (Ex. 32:4; Neh. 9:18), more often they were carved out of wood and decorated with gold or silver as described here (Is. 40:18–20). The most common household idols were molded from clay and fired like pottery (Judg. 18:17; Is. 30:22; 42:17).

■ **10:7 fear.** The biblical fear of God involves more than the dread of God's judgment. It includes awe, reverence, and adoration in response to God's majesty and holiness (Ps. 2:11, 12).

O King. This appellation counters claims to kingship by false deities, such as Bel Marduk in Babylon (cf. Is. 46:1; 43:15).

wise men. Their wisdom is contrasted with the Lord's (v. 12).

■ **10:8 dull-hearted . . . foolish . . . worthless doctrine.** The language is like that of wisdom literature.

■ **10:9 Tarshish . . . Uphaz.** The former is in Spain; Uphaz has not been identified.

■ **10:10 true . . . living God.** See Deut. 5:26.

everlasting King. See note on v. 7; also Ex. 15:18; 2 Sam. 7:13. The eternity of God's kingdom is affirmed, even though the house of David is about to come to its historical end.

wrath . . . indignation. Cf. Ps. 97:5.

■ **10:12 power . . . wisdom . . . discretion.** The power of the true God in creation is appealed to again in the argument against foreign gods. For creation by God's wisdom, see Prov. 8:22–31, a passage that foreshadows Christ as the pre-existent wisdom of God (Col. 1:15; 2:3).

13 [t]When He utters His voice,
There is a [3]multitude of waters in the heavens:
[u]"And He causes the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth.
He makes lightning for the rain,
He brings the wind out of His treasuries."

14 [v]Everyone is [w]dull-hearted, without knowledge;
[x]Every metalsmith is put to shame by an image;
[y]For his molded image *is* falsehood,
And *there is* no breath in them.
15 They *are* futile, a work of errors;
In the time of their punishment they shall perish.
16 [z]The Portion of Jacob *is* not like them,
For He *is* the Maker of all *things*,
And [a]Israel *is* the tribe of His inheritance;
[b]The LORD of hosts *is* His name.

The Coming Captivity of Judah

17 [c]Gather up your wares from the land,
O [4]inhabitant of the fortress!

18 For thus says the LORD:

"Behold, I will [d]throw out at this time
The inhabitants of the land,
And will distress them,
[e]That they may find *it so*."

19 [f]Woe is me for my hurt!
My wound is severe.
But I say, [g]"Truly this *is* an infirmity,
And [h]I must bear it."
20 [i]My tent is plundered,
And all my cords are broken;
My children have gone from me,
And they *are* [j]no more.
There is no one to pitch my tent anymore,
Or set up my curtains.

21 For the shepherds have become dull-hearted,
And have not sought the LORD;
Therefore they shall not prosper,
And all their flocks shall be [k]scattered.
22 Behold, the noise of the report has come,
And a great commotion out of the [l]north country,
To make the cities of Judah desolate, a [m]den of jackals.

23 O LORD, I know the [n]way of man *is* not in himself;
It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.
24 O LORD, [o]correct me, but with justice;
Not in Your anger, lest You bring me to nothing.

13 [t]Job 38:34 [u]Ps. 135:7 [3]Or *noise*

14 [v]Jer. 51:17 [w]Prov. 30:2 [x]Is. 42:17; 44:11 [y]Hab. 2:18

16 [z]Ps. 16:5; Jer. 51:19; Lam. 3:24 [a]Deut. 32:9; Ps. 74:2 [b]Is. 47:4

17 [c]Jer. 6:1 [4]Or *you who dwell under siege*

18 [d]1 Sam. 25:29; 2 Chr. 36:20 [e]Ezek. 6:10

19 [f]Jer. 8:21 [g]Ps. 77:10 [h]Mic. 7:9

20 [i]Jer. 4:20; Lam. 2:4 [j]Jer. 31:15; Lam. 1:5

21 [k]Jer. 23:2

22 [l]Jer. 5:15 [m]Jer. 9:11

23 [n]Prov. 16:1; 20:24

24 [o]Ps. 6:1; 38:1; Jer. 30:11

■ **10:13 When He utters . . . out of His treasuries.** See Ps. 29:3, 4; 135:5–7. The Lord's control of the rain directly counters claims made for the Canaanite god Baal (see 1 Kin. 17:1).

■ **10:16 Portion of Jacob . . . His inheritance.** For the Lord as one's portion or inheritance see Num. 18:20; Ps. 16:5. Originally this referred specifically to the Levites, but later it is used more broadly to describe what God promised Israel in His covenant with them.

■ **10:19 Woe is me . . . severe.** See Jeremiah's cry in 4:19–21. The medical metaphor is a favorite in Jeremiah (6:7; 14:17; 30:12, 13, 15, 17).

■ **10:20 My children have gone.** The sorrows of losing children fill in the picture of the desolation of exile (16:3–5).

■ **10:23 I know . . . his own steps.** This thought is found also in the wisdom literature (Prov. 16:9).

25 [p]Ps. 79:6, 7 [q]Job 18:21 [r]Jer. 8:16

CHAPTER 11

3 [a]Deut. 27:26

4 [b]Deut. 4:20 [c]Lev. 26:3

5 [d]Ps. 105:9 [e]Ex. 3:8 [f]Heb. *Amen*

6 [g][Rom. 2:13]

7 [g]Jer. 35:15

8 [h]Jer. 7:26 [i]Jer. 13:10 [2]*walked in the stubbornness* or *imagination*

9 [j]Ezek. 22:25

10 [k]Ezek. 20:18

11 [l]Prov. 1:28 [3]Lit. *go out*

12 [m]Deut. 32:37

13 [n]Jer. 2:28

14 [o]Ex. 32:10

15 [p]Ps. 50:16 [q]Ezek. 16:25 [r][Titus 1:15]

25 [p]Pour out Your fury on the Gentiles, [q]who do not know You,
And on the families who do not call on Your name;
For they have eaten up Jacob,
[r]Devoured him and consumed him,
And made his dwelling place desolate.

The Broken Covenant

11 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, 2 "Hear the words of this covenant, and speak to the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem; 3 and say to them, 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel: [a]"Cursed *is* the man who does not obey the words of this covenant 4 which I commanded your fathers in the day I brought them out of the land of Egypt, [b]from the iron furnace, saying, [c]'Obey My voice, and do according to all that I command you; so shall you be My people, and I will be your God,' 5 that I may establish the [d]oath which I have sworn to your fathers, to give them [e]'a land flowing with milk and honey,' as *it is* this day." ' "

And I answered and said, [f]"So be it, LORD."

6 Then the LORD said to me, "Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying: 'Hear the words of this covenant [g]and do them. 7 For I earnestly exhorted your fathers in the day I brought them up out of the land of Egypt, until this day, [g]rising early and exhorting, saying, "Obey My voice." 8 [h]Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but [i]everyone [2]followed the dictates of his evil heart; therefore I will bring upon them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded *them* to do, but *which* they have not done.' "

9 And the LORD said to me, [j]"A conspiracy has been found among the men of Judah and among the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 10 They have turned back to [k]the iniquities of their forefathers who refused to hear My words, and they have gone after other gods to serve them; the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken My covenant which I made with their fathers."

11 Therefore thus says the LORD: "Behold, I will surely bring calamity on them which they will not be able to [3]escape; and [l]though they cry out to Me, I will not listen to them. 12 Then the cities of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem will go and [m]cry out to the gods to whom they offer incense, but they will not save them at all in the time of their trouble. 13 For *according to* the number of your [n]cities were your gods, O Judah; and *according to* the number of the streets of Jerusalem you have set up altars to *that* shameful thing, altars to burn incense to Baal.

14 "So [o]do not pray for this people, or lift up a cry or prayer for them; for I will not hear *them* in the time that they cry out to Me because of their trouble.

15 "What[p] has My beloved to do in My house,
Having [q]done lewd deeds with many?
And [r]the holy flesh has passed from you.

■ **10:25** This verse closely resembles Ps. 79:6, 7 and may be a citation of it. Yet in its new context it may not be as well motivated as in the psalm. The chapter ends with a plea for the Lord to punish the Gentiles, even though its main burden has been to show that Judah deserves as severe a judgment.

■ **11:1—13:27** Judah's idolatry is a violation of the covenant and will result in captivity as part of the curses of the covenant.

■ **11:2 words.** The commands of God in the Mosaic covenant (Deut. 1:1). The Mosaic covenant, unlike the covenant of Noah and the new covenant, depended on Israel's faithfulness rather than the Lord's (Heb. 8:6; Introduction: Characteristics and Themes).

covenant. A covenant is a solemn agreement between two or more parties. It is the kind of relationship into which God freely entered first with all mankind (Gen. 9:1–17), then with Abraham, as the father of Israel (Gen. 17:1–21), then with Israel at Sinai (Ex. 19—24), then with David (2 Sam. 7:12–16; Ps. 89:3), and finally with the whole people of God in the new covenant (31:31–34 notes).

■ **11:3 Cursed is the man.** See Deut. 27:15–26.

■ **11:5 establish the oath which I have sworn.** The covenant with Abraham was in the form of a divine promise (Gen. 15:17–21; cf. Deut. 4:31). Under the terms of the Mosaic covenant, the temporal blessings of the Abrahamic covenant were administered on the basis of Israel's obedience (Ex. 19—24). Under the terms of the new covenant, the eternal blessings of the Abrahamic covenant are administered on the basis of Christ's obedience, while the believer's obedience proves the vitality of their professed faith (James 2:14–26).

a land flowing with milk and honey. See Ex. 3:8; Deut. 6:3.

So be it. The "So be it" (Hebrew *amen*) indicates acceptance of the terms laid down. See Deut. 27:15–26.

■ **11:9 conspiracy.** This could be resistance to Jeremiah's words, or to Josiah's reform.

■ **11:10 house . . . with their fathers.** Again, the covenant is traced back to the promise to the patriarchs (v. 5 and note). Judah's present breach of it is consistent with the pattern of Israel's history (see especially Judges).

■ **11:13 burn incense.** Incense was used in pagan worship and also in worship of the Lord (1:16; 7:9; 18:15; Ex. 30:7–9).

■ **11:15 My beloved.** Judah, also in 12:7. The term of endearment is in line with the courtship and bridal imagery of 2:2; 3:1.

in My house. See 7:10, 11; Ezek. 8:6–13.

holy flesh . . . rejoice. The Hebrew is difficult; the criticism, however, is of unacceptable worship that produces a falsely based joy in God's salvation.

When you do evil, then you [s]rejoice.
16 The LORD called your name,
[t]Green Olive Tree, Lovely *and* of Good Fruit.
With the noise of a great tumult
He has kindled fire on it,
And its branches are broken.

17 "For the LORD of hosts, [u]who planted you, has pronounced doom against you for the evil of the house of Israel and of the house of Judah, which they have done against themselves to provoke Me to anger in offering incense to Baal."

Jeremiah's Life Threatened

18 Now the LORD gave me knowledge *of it,* and I know *it;* for You showed me their doings.
19 But I *was* like a docile lamb brought to the slaughter; and I did not know that they had devised schemes against me, *saying,* "Let us destroy the tree with its fruit, [v]and let us cut him off from [w]the land of the living, that his name may be remembered no more."

20 But, O LORD of hosts,
You who judge righteously,
[x]Testing the [4]mind and the heart,
Let me see Your [y]vengeance on them,
For to You I have revealed my cause.

21 "Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the men of [z]Anathoth who seek your life, saying, [a]'Do not prophesy in the name of the LORD, lest you die by our hand'— 22 therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Behold, I will punish them. The young men shall die by the sword, their sons and their daughters shall [b]die by famine; 23 and there shall be no remnant of them, for I will bring catastrophe on the men of Anathoth, *even* [c]the year of their punishment.' "

Jeremiah's Question

12 Righteous [a]*are* You, O LORD, when I plead with You;
Yet let me talk with You about *Your* judgments.
[b]Why does the way of the wicked prosper?
Why are those happy who deal so treacherously?
2 You have planted them, yes, they have taken root;
They grow, yes, they bear fruit.
[c]You *are* near in their mouth
But far from their [1]mind.

3 But You, O LORD, [d]know me;
You have seen me,
And You have [e]tested my heart toward You.
Pull them out like sheep for the slaughter,
And prepare them for [f]the day of slaughter.
4 How long will [g]the land mourn,
And the herbs of every field wither?
[h]The beasts and birds are consumed,
[i]For the wickedness of those who dwell there,
Because they said, "He will not see our final end."

15 [s]Prov. 2:14
16 [t]Ps. 52:8; [Rom. 11:17]
17 [u]Is. 5:2; Jer. 2:21; 12:2
19 [v]Ps. 83:4; Jer. 18:18 [w]Ps. 27:13
20 [x]1 Sam. 16:7; 1 Chr. 28:9; Ps. 7:9 [y]Jer. 15:15 [4]Most secret parts, lit. *kidneys*
21 [z]Jer. 1:1; 12:5, 6 [a]Is. 30:10; Amos 2:12; Mic. 2:6
22 [b]Jer. 9:21
23 [c]Jer. 23:12; Hos. 9:7; Mic. 7:4

CHAPTER 12

1 [a]Ezra 9:15; Ps. 51:4; Jer. 11:20 [b]Job 12:6; Jer. 5:27, 28; Hab. 1:4; Mal. 3:15
2 [c]Is. 29:13; Ezek. 33:31; Matt. 15:8; Mark 7:6 [1]Most secret parts, lit. *kidneys*
3 [d]Ps. 17:3 [e]Ps. 7:9; 11:5; Jer. 11:20 [f]Jer. 17:18; 50:27; James 5:5
4 [g]Jer. 23:10; Hos. 4:3 [h]Jer. 9:10; Hos. 4:3; Hab. 3:17 [i]Ps. 107:34

■ **11:19 like a docile lamb brought to the slaughter.** A simile drawing on the practice of sacrifice (see Ps. 44:11). Jeremiah often uses the language of the "lament" psalms (see Introduction to Psalms). As a type of Christ, the sufferings of Christ are prefigured in Jeremiah's life (Is. 53:7).

tree with its fruit. Meaning Jeremiah and his message, or an emphatic reference to his life.

cut him off . . . remembered no more. Not to be remembered, by having no children, was the worst of fates. Those who tried to cut off Jeremiah's remembrance are themselves forgotten, while through his prophecy, Jeremiah is remembered today.

■ **11:21 the men of Anathoth.** They are from Jeremiah's own town (1:1). The details of the plot reveal that his worst opposition comes from those closest to him (Ps. 69:7–9; Matt. 10:36, citing Mic. 7:6). In this respect also Jeremiah resembles Christ (John 7:2–5; Acts 1:15–20).

■ **11:23 no remnant.** This threat of total extinction contrasts the fate of Jeremiah's personal enemies with that of Judah in general (see 4:27; 5:10; 6:9, and notes).

5 *i*Josh. 3:15; 1 Chr. 12:15 *2*Or *thicket*

6 *k*Gen. 37:4–11; Job 6:15; Ps. 69:8; Jer. 9:4, 5 *l*Ps. 12:2; Prov. 26:25 *3*Or *abundantly* *4*Lit. *good*

8 *m*Hos. 9:15; Amos 6:8

9 *n*Lev. 26:22 *5*inheritance

10 *o*Jer. 6:3; 23:1 *p*Ps. 80:8–16; Is. 5:1–7 *q*Is. 63:18 *6*Lit. *shepherds* or *pastors* *7*desired *portion* of land

11 *r*Jer. 10:22; 22:6 *s*Is. 42:25

13 *t*Lev. 26:16; Deut. 28:38; Mic. 6:15; Hag. 1:6 *8*Or *strained*

14 *u*Jer. 2:3; 50:11, 12; Zech. 2:8 *v*Deut. 30:3; Ps. 106:47; Is. 11:11–16; Jer. 32:37

15 *w*Jer. 31:20; Lam. 3:32; Ezek. 28:25 *x*Amos 9:14

16 *y*[Jer. 4:2]; Zeph. 1:5

The LORD Answers Jeremiah

5 "If you have run with the footmen, and they have wearied you,
Then how can you contend with horses?
And *if* in the land of peace,
In which you trusted, *they wearied you,*
Then how will you do in *i*the *2*floodplain of the Jordan?
6 For even *k*your brothers, the house of your father,
Even they have dealt treacherously with you;
Yes, they have called *3*a multitude after you.
*l*Do not believe them,
Even though they speak *4*smooth words to you.

7 "I have forsaken My house, I have left My heritage;
I have given the dearly beloved of My soul into the hand of her enemies.
8 My heritage is to Me like a lion in the forest;
It cries out against Me;
Therefore I have *m*hated it.
9 My *5*heritage *is* to Me *like* a speckled vulture;
The vultures all around *are* against her.
Come, assemble all the beasts of the field,
*n*Bring them to devour!

10 "Many *o*rulers*6* have destroyed *p*My vineyard,
They have *q*trodden My portion underfoot;
They have made My *7*pleasant portion a desolate wilderness.
11 They have made it *r*desolate;
Desolate, it mourns to Me;
The whole land is made desolate,
Because *s*no one takes *it* to heart.
12 The plunderers have come
On all the desolate heights in the wilderness,
For the sword of the LORD shall devour
From *one* end of the land to the *other* end of the land;
No flesh shall have peace.
13 *t*They have sown wheat but reaped thorns;
They have *8*put themselves to pain *but* do not profit.
But be ashamed of your harvest
Because of the fierce anger of the LORD."

14 Thus says the LORD: "Against all My evil neighbors who *u*touch the inheritance which I have caused My people Israel to inherit—behold, I will *v*pluck them out of their land and pluck out the house of Judah from among them. 15 *w*Then it shall be, after I have plucked them out, that I will return and have compassion on them *x*and bring them back, everyone to his heritage and everyone to his land. 16 And it shall be, if they will learn carefully the ways of My people, *y*to swear by My name, 'As the LORD lives,' as they taught My people to swear by Baal, then they

■ **12:6 your brothers, the house of your father.** See 11:21–23.

■ **12:7 heritage.** God's "heritage" includes both the land given to Israel (Deut. 4:21), and the people themselves. See vv. 8, 9; 2:7.

dearly beloved. See 11:15 and note.

■ **12:8 like a lion.** This first of a series of similes (cf. vv. 9, 10) shows how Judah's nature has been changed.

I have hated it. As often in the Bible, "hate" is the only alternative to love (Mal. 1:2, 3).

■ **12:10 rulers.** That is, foreign rulers.

pleasant portion. See Is. 5:7.

■ **12:12 No flesh shall have peace.** The verse exposes the lie of false proclamations of peace (6:14).

■ **12:14 evil neighbors.** Though Judah's enemies are used by the Lord to punish her, they themselves will be judged.

pluck out. When God judges Judah's enemies by removing them from their own lands, He also will deliver and restore Judah, the theme to be developed in Jer. 30—33.

■ **12:15 after I have plucked them out . . . his land.** This prophecy is an astonishing turn in the thought, anticipating a restoration and salvation of all peoples. Jeremiah looks forward to the inclusion of the Gentiles in God's salvation (46:26; 48:47; 49:6) as do other prophets (e.g., Is. 42:6).

■ **12:16 they shall be established . . . My people.** See Is. 19:25 for an equally surprising use of "My people"—for Egypt.

shall be [z]established in the midst of My people. 17 But if they do not [a]obey, I will utterly pluck up and destroy that nation," says the LORD.

Symbol of the Linen Sash

13 Thus the LORD said to me: "Go and get yourself a linen sash, and put it [1]around your waist, but do not put it in water." 2 So I got a [2]sash according to the word of the LORD, and put *it* around my waist.

3 And the word of the LORD came to me the second time, saying, 4 "Take the [3]sash that you acquired, which *is* [4]around your waist, and arise, go to the [5]Euphrates, and hide it there in a hole in the rock." 5 So I went and hid it by the Euphrates, as the LORD commanded me.

6 Now it came to pass after many days that the LORD said to me, "Arise, go to the Euphrates, and take from there the sash which I commanded you to hide there." 7 Then I went to the Euphrates and dug, and I took the [6]sash from the place where I had hidden it; and there was the sash, ruined. It was profitable for nothing.

8 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 9 "Thus says the LORD: 'In this manner [a]I will ruin the pride of Judah and the great [b]pride of Jerusalem. 10 This evil people, who [c]refuse to hear My words, who [d]follow[7] the dictates of their hearts, and walk after other gods to serve them and worship them, shall be just like this sash which is profitable for nothing. 11 For as the sash clings to the waist of a man, so I have caused the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah to cling to Me,' says the LORD, 'that [e]they may become My people, [f]for renown, for praise, and for [g]glory; but they would [h]not hear.'

Symbol of the Wine Bottles

12 "Therefore you shall speak to them this word: 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel: "Every bottle shall be filled with wine." '

"And they will say to you, 'Do we not certainly know that every bottle will be filled with wine?'

13 "Then you shall say to them, 'Thus says the LORD: "Behold, I will fill all the inhabitants of this land—even the kings who sit on David's throne, the priests, the prophets, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem—[i]with drunkenness! 14 And [j]I will dash them [8]one against another, even the fathers and the sons together," says the LORD. "I will not pity nor spare nor have mercy, but will destroy them." ' "

Pride Precedes Captivity

15 Hear and give ear:
Do not be proud,
For the LORD has spoken.
16 [k]Give glory to the LORD your God
Before He causes [l]darkness,
And before your feet stumble
On the dark mountains,
And while you are [m]looking for light,
He turns it into [n]the shadow of death
And makes *it* dense darkness.
17 But if you will not hear it,
My soul will [o]weep in secret for *your* pride;
My eyes will weep bitterly
And run down with tears,
Because the LORD's flock has been taken captive.

18 Say to [p]the king and to the queen mother,
"Humble yourselves;

16 [z][Eph. 2:20, 21; 1 Pet. 2:5]

17 [a]Ps. 2:8–12; Is. 60:12

CHAPTER 13

1 [1]Lit. *upon your loins*

2 [2]*waistband*

4 [3]*waistband* [4]Lit. *upon your loins* [5]Heb. *Perath*

7 [6]*waistband*

9 [a]Lev. 26:19 [b][Is. 2:10–17; 23:9]; Zeph. 3:11

10 [c]Jer. 16:12 [d]Jer. 7:24; 16:12 [7]*walk in the stubbornness* or *imagination*

11 [e][Ex. 19:5, 6; Deut. 32:10, 11] [f]Jer. 33:9 [g]Is. 43:21 [h]Ps. 81:11; Jer. 7:13, 24, 26

13 [i]Ps. 60:3; 75:8; Is. 51:17; 63:6; Jer. 25:27; 51:7, 57

14 [j]2 Chr. 36:17; Ps. 2:9; Is. 9:20, 21; Jer. 19:9–11 [8]Lit. *a man against his brother*

16 [k]Josh. 7:19; Ps. 96:8; Mal. 2:2 [l]Is. 5:30; 8:22; Amos 8:9 [m]Is. 59:9 [n]Ps. 44:19; Jer. 2:6

17 [o]Ps. 119:136; Jer. 9:1; 14:17; Luke 19:41, 42

18 [p]2 Kin. 24:12; Jer. 22:26

■ **13:1 linen sash.** The "sash" symbolizes the close relationship between God and His people.

■ **13:4 Euphrates.** A nearer location may actually be intended (possibly Parah, Josh. 18:23, close to Anathoth), whose similarity of name nevertheless suggested the Euphrates and therefore the Babylonian exile.

■ **13:7 ruined . . . profitable for nothing.** Its ruin depicts the corruption of the people, no longer fit for a relationship with the Lord.

■ **13:11 caused the whole house . . . to cling to Me.** The Lord spells out the meaning of the symbolic act as an illustration of His covenant with all Israel.

■ **13:12 filled with wine.** Wine is here used as a symbol of God's wrath (25:15–29).

■ **13:18 to the king and to the queen mother.** Probably Jehoiachin and his mother Nehushta (2 Kin. 24:8). This prophecy is thus close to

Sit down,
For your rule shall collapse, the crown of your glory."
19 The cities of the South shall be shut up,
And no one shall open *them;*
Judah shall be carried away captive, all of it;
It shall be wholly carried away captive.
20 Lift up your eyes and see
Those who come from the [q]north.
Where *is* the flock *that* was given to you,
Your beautiful sheep?
21 What will you say when He punishes you?
For you have taught them
To be chieftains, to be head over you.
Will not [r]pangs seize you,
Like a woman in [g]labor?
22 And if you say in your heart,
[s]"Why have these things come upon me?"
For the greatness of your iniquity
[t]Your skirts have been uncovered,
Your heels [l]made bare.
23 Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots?
Then may you also do good who are accustomed to do evil.
24 "Therefore I will [u]scatter them [v]like stubble
That passes away by the wind of the wilderness.
25 [w]This is your lot,
The portion of your measures from Me," says the LORD,
"Because you have forgotten Me
And trusted in [x]falsehood.
26 Therefore [y]I will uncover your skirts over your face,
That your shame may appear.
27 I have seen your adulteries
And your *lustful* [z]neighings,
The lewdness of your harlotry,
Your abominations [a]on the hills in the fields.
Woe to you, O Jerusalem!
Will you still not be made clean?"

Sword, Famine, and Pestilence

14 The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah concerning the droughts.

2 "Judah mourns,
And [a]her gates languish;
They [b]mourn for the land,
And [c]the cry of Jerusalem has gone up.
3 Their nobles have sent their lads for water;

20 [q]Jer. 10:22; 46:20
21 [r]Jer. 6:24 [g]*childbirth*
22 [s]Jer. 16:10 [t]Is. 47:2; Ezek. 16:37; Nah. 3:5 [l]Lit. *suffer violence*
24 [u]Lev. 26:33; Jer. 9:16; Ezek. 5:2, 12 [v]Ps. 1:4; Hos. 13:3
25 [w]Job 20:29; Ps. 11:6; Matt. 24:51 [x]Jer. 10:14
26 [y]Lam. 1:8; Ezek. 16:37; Hos. 2:10
27 [z]Jer. 5:7, 8 [a]Is. 65:7; Jer. 2:20; Ezek. 6:13

CHAPTER 14

2 [a]2 Kin. 25:3; Is. 3:26 [b]Jer. 8:21 [c]1 Sam. 5:12; Jer. 11:11; 46:12; Zech. 7:13

the time of Nebuchadnezzar's attack on Jerusalem in 597 B.C. (Introduction: Author; Date and Occasion).

your rule shall collapse. See 22:24–26. This judgment spells the end of the historical Davidic dynasty, and seems in conflict with the promise to David (2 Sam. 7). However, see 33:14–26 for the future fulfillment of the Davidic covenant.

■ **13:19 The cities of the South.** These cities along the southern border were important defense against allies of Babylon (like Moab; 2 Kin. 24:2), but were unable to prevent the sack of Judah. They symbolize Judah's pride (v. 17), shown to be hollow.

■ **13:20 the north.** See 4:6. Judah is vulnerable from both north and south (v. 19).

■ **13:22 Your skirts . . . made bare.** A picture of public shame, as of a prostitute.

■ **13:23 Can the Ethiopian . . . its spots.** A rhetorical question. It is typical of Jeremiah to assert Judah's inability to repent and obey the Lord—hence his new covenant theology (31:31–34 and notes). See "The Freedom and Bondage of the Will" at 17:9.

■ **13:25 lot.** The word "lot" recalls the lot cast for the division of the land (Josh. 14:2). Now it signifies expulsion from the same land.

■ **14:1—15:21** The people are so hardened in their sin that God will not answer even Jeremiah's prayer for deliverance from the punishment of drought. In answer to Jeremiah's question whether God has rejected Judah completely (14:19), God replies that the coming judgment is inevitable because of Judah's sin, but He assures Jeremiah of personal deliverance from his enemies.

■ **14:3 covered their heads.** A sign of mourning.

They went to the cisterns *and* found no water.
They returned with their vessels empty;
They were [d]ashamed and confounded
[e]And covered their heads.
4 Because the ground is parched,
For there was [f]no rain in the land,
The plowmen were ashamed;
They covered their heads.
5 Yes, the deer also gave birth in the field,
But [g]left because there was no grass.
6 And [h]the wild donkeys stood in the desolate heights;
They sniffed at the wind like jackals;
Their eyes failed because *there was* no grass."

7 O LORD, though our iniquities testify against us,
Do it [i]for Your name's sake;
For our backslidings are many,
We have sinned against You.
8 [j]O the Hope of Israel, his Savior in time of trouble,
Why should You be like a stranger in the land,
And like a traveler *who* turns aside to tarry for a night?
9 Why should You be like a man astonished,
Like a mighty one [k]*who* cannot save?
Yet You, O LORD, [l]*are* in our midst,
And we are called by Your name;
Do not leave us!

10 Thus says the LORD to this people:

[m]"Thus they have loved to wander;
They have not restrained their feet.
Therefore the LORD does not accept them;
[n]He will remember their iniquity now,
And punish their sins."

11 Then the LORD said to me, [o]"Do not pray for this people, for *their* good. 12 [p]When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and [q]when they offer burnt offering and grain offering, I will not accept them. But [r]I will consume them by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence."

13 [s]Then I said, "Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, the prophets say to them, 'You shall not see the sword, nor shall you have famine, but I will give you [2]assured [t]peace in this place.' "

14 And the LORD said to me, [u]"The prophets prophesy lies in My name. [v]I have not sent them, commanded them, nor spoken to them; they prophesy to you a false vision, [3]divination, a worthless thing, and the [w]deceit of their heart. 15 Therefore thus says the LORD concerning the prophets who prophesy in My name, whom I did not send, [x]and who say, 'Sword and famine shall not be in this land'—'By sword and famine those prophets shall be consumed! 16 And the people to whom they prophesy shall be cast out in the streets of Jerusalem because of the famine and the

3 [d]Job 6:20; Ps. 40:14 [e]2 Sam. 15:30
4 [f]Jer. 3:3; Ezek. 22:24
5 [g]*abandoned* her young
6 [h]Job 39:5, 6; Jer. 2:24
7 [i]Ps. 25:11; Jer. 14:21
8 [j]Jer. 17:13
9 [k]Is. 59:1 [l]Ex. 29:45; Lev. 26:11; Ps. 46:5; Jer. 8:19
10 [m]Jer. 2:23–25 [n][Jer. 44:21–23]; Hos. 8:13
11 [o]Ex. 32:10; Jer. 7:16; 11:14
12 [p]Prov. 1:28; [Is. 1:15; 58:3–6]; Ezek. 8:18; Mic. 3:4; Zech. 7:13 [q]Jer. 6:20 [r]Jer. 9:16
13 [s]Jer. 4:10 [t]Jer. 8:11; 23:17 [2]*true*
14 [u]Jer. 27:10 [v]Jer. 29:8, 9 [w]Jer. 23:16; Ezek. 12:24 [3]Telling the future by signs and omens
15 [x]Jer. 5:12; Ezek. 14:10

■ **14:4 no rain.** The Lord either gives or withholds the rain (Deut. 11:10–15, 28:12).

■ **14:8 Hope.** The Hebrew word also means "pool," a striking word in time of drought.

Savior. Or Deliverer, as in battle.

■ **14:9 called by Your name.** This calling explains the meaning of "for Your name's sake" in v. 7. The Lord's honor is at stake in the fortunes of His people.

■ **14:10 says the LORD.** God responds directly to the prayer of vv. 7–9.

this people. Perhaps significantly, God does not use "My people."

■ **14:11 Do not pray.** See 7:16 and note. Here the prohibition follows the intercession in vv. 7–9.

■ **14:12 fast . . . burnt offering and grain offering.** Ritual for its own sake does not move God (7:21–23 note).

sword . . . famine . . . pestilence. The first of fifteen appearances of this combination in Jeremiah (e.g., 15:2). This is a typical summation of the horrors that judgment can bring (Deut. 32:24, 25).

■ **14:13 the prophets.** That is, those who falsely prophesy peace (6:1–4; 8:11). Jeremiah pleads on behalf of the people—that they have been misled.

■ **14:16 And the people.** The prophet's plea (v. 13) misses its mark: the people should have tested the prophets by their prophecies (Deut. 13:2, 3; 18:21, 22).

no one to bury. See 7:33.

sword; [x]they will have no one to bury them—them nor their wives, their sons nor their daughters—for I will pour their wickedness on them.'

17 "Therefore you shall say this word to them:

[y]'Let my eyes flow with tears night and day,
And let them not cease;
[z]For the virgin daughter of my people
Has been broken with a mighty stroke, with a very severe blow.
18 If I go out to [a]the field,
Then behold, those slain with the sword!
And if I enter the city,
Then behold, those sick from famine!
Yes, both prophet and [b]priest go about in a land they do not know.' "

The People Plead for Mercy

19 [c]Have You utterly rejected Judah?
Has Your soul loathed Zion?
Why have You stricken us so that [d]*there is* no healing for us?
[e]We looked for peace, but *there was* no good;
And for the time of healing, and there was trouble.
20 We acknowledge, O LORD, our wickedness
And the iniquity of our [f]fathers,
For [g]we have sinned against You.
21 Do not abhor *us,* for Your name's sake;
Do not disgrace the throne of Your glory.
[h]Remember, do not break Your covenant with us.
22 [i]Are there any among [j]the idols of the nations that can cause [k]rain?
Or can the heavens give showers?
[l]*Are* You not He, O LORD our God?
Therefore we will wait for You,
Since You have made all these.

The LORD Will Not Relent

15 Then the LORD said to me, [a]"*Even* if [b]Moses and [c]Samuel stood before Me, My [l]mind *would* not *be* favorable toward this people. Cast *them* out of My sight, and let them go forth. 2 And it shall be, if they say to you, 'Where should we go?' then you shall tell them, 'Thus says the LORD:

[d]"Such as *are* for death, to death;
And such as *are* for the sword, to the sword;
And such as *are* for the famine, to the famine;
And such as *are* for the [e]captivity, to the captivity." '

3 "And I will [f]appoint over them four forms *of destruction,*" says the LORD: "the sword to slay, the dogs to drag, [g]the birds of the heavens and the beasts of the earth to devour and destroy. 4 I will hand them over to [h]trouble, to all kingdoms of the earth, because of [i]Manasseh the son of Hezekiah, king of Judah, for what he did in Jerusalem.

5 "For who will have pity on you, O Jerusalem?
Or who will bemoan you?
Or who will turn aside to ask how you are doing?

16 [x]Ps. 79:2, 3; Jer. 7:32; 15:2, 3

17 [y]Jer. 9:1; 13:17; Lam. 1:16 [z]Is. 37:22; Jer. 8:21; Lam. 1:15; 2:13

18 [a]Jer. 6:25; Lam. 1:20; Ezek. 7:15 [b]Jer. 23:11

19 [c]Jer. 6:30; 7:29; 12:7; Lam. 5:22 [d]Jer. 15:18 [e]Job 30:26; Jer. 8:15; 1 Thess. 5:3

20 [f]Neh. 9:2; Ps. 32:5; Jer. 3:25 [g]Ps. 106:6; Jer. 8:14; 14:7; Dan. 9:8

21 [h]Ps. 106:45

22 [i]Zech. 10:1 [j]Deut. 32:21 [k]1 Kin. 17:1; Jer. 5:24 [l]Ps. 135:7

CHAPTER 15

1 [a]Ps. 99:6; Ezek. 14:14 [b]Ex. 32:11–14; Num. 14:13–20; Ps. 99:6 [c]1 Sam. 7:9 [l]Lit. *soul was not toward*

2 [d]Jer. 43:11; Ezek. 5:2, 12; Zech. 11:9; [Rev. 13:10] [e]Jer. 9:16; 16:13

3 [f]Lev. 26:16, 21, 25; Jer. 12:3; Ezek. 14:21 [g]Jer. 7:33

4 [h]Deut. 28:25 [i]2 Kin. 24:3, 4

■ **14:19 We looked for peace.** Because of the false prophets' teaching (v. 13 and note).

■ **14:21 the throne of Your glory.** The temple is in view (see 2 Kin. 19:15; but cf. 1 Kin. 8:27).

Your covenant. Jeremiah recalls the covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Gen. 15:12–21; 26:3–5; 28:13–15; Lev. 26:42–45).

■ **15:1 Moses and Samuel.** God calls to mind two great intercessors for Israel (Ex. 32:11–14; 1 Sam. 12:23). Note also Elijah in 1 Kin. 17:1. Prayer for the people is again prohibited (7:16; 11:14), and the prayer just offered (vv. 19–22) is specifically rejected.

■ **15:3 sword . . . dogs . . . birds . . . beasts.** See 7:33 note; 1 Kin. 21:23.

■ **15:4 Manasseh.** A son of the reformer King Hezekiah (2 Kin. 20:21) and one of the most wicked kings. Even after the reforms of his grandson Josiah, Judah's punishment and exile continues to be linked to him (2 Kin. 23:26). See Introduction: Author; Date and Occasion.

6 [j]You have forsaken Me," says the LORD,
"You have [k]gone backward.
Therefore I will stretch out My hand against you and destroy you;
[l]I am [2]weary of relenting!
7 And I will winnow them with a winnowing fan in the gates of the land;
I will [m]bereave *them* of children;
I will destroy My people,
Since they [n]do not return from their ways.
8 Their widows will be increased to Me more than the sand of the seas;
I will bring against them,
Against the mother of the young men,
A plunderer at noonday;
I will cause anguish and terror to fall on them [o]suddenly.

9 "She[p] languishes who has borne seven;
She has breathed her last;
[q]Her sun has gone down
While *it was* yet day;
She has been ashamed and confounded.
And the remnant of them I will deliver to the sword
Before their enemies," says the LORD.

Jeremiah's Dejection

10 [r]Woe is me, my mother,
That you have borne me,
A man of strife and a man of contention to the whole [3]earth!
I have neither lent for interest,
Nor have men lent to me for interest.
Every one of them curses me.

11 The LORD said:

"Surely it will be well with your remnant;
Surely I will cause [s]the enemy to intercede with you
In the time of adversity and in the time of affliction.
12 Can anyone break iron,
The northern iron and the bronze?
13 Your wealth and your treasures
I will give as [t]plunder without price,
Because of all your sins,
Throughout your territories.
14 And I will [4]make *you* cross over with your enemies
[u]Into a land *which* you do not know;
For a [v]fire is kindled in My anger,
Which shall burn upon you."

15 O LORD, [w]You know;
Remember me and [5]visit me,
And [x]take vengeance for me on my persecutors.
In Your enduring patience, do not take me away.
Know that [y]for Your sake I have suffered rebuke.

6 [j]Jer. 2:13 [k]Is. 1:4; Jer. 7:24 [l]Jer. 20:16; Zech. 8:14 [2]*tired*

7 [m]Jer. 18:21; Hos. 9:12–16 [n]Is. 9:13; Jer. 5:3; Amos 4:10, 11

8 [o]Is. 29:5

9 [p]1 Sam. 2:5; Is. 47:9 [q]Jer. 6:4; Amos 8:9

10 [r]Job 3:1; Jer. 20:14 [3]Or *land*

11 [s]Jer. 40:4, 5

13 [t]Ps. 44:12; Is. 52:3

14 [u]Deut. 28:36, 64; Jer. 16:13 [v]Deut. 32:22; Ps. 21:9; Jer. 17:4 [4]So with MT, Vg.; LXX, Syr., Tg. *cause you to serve* (cf. 17:4)

15 [w]Jer. 12:3 [x]Jer. 20:12 [y]Ps. 69:7–9; Jer. 20:8 [5]*attend to*

■ **15:6 gone backward.** See 3:22.

I am weary of relenting. Such promises as in 31:20 are for the moment in the background.

■ **15:7 winnow.** See 4:11, where the metaphor is used slightly differently. Here it means punishment (cf. Is. 41:16).

■ **15:9 who has borne seven.** A picture of blessing (Ps. 127:5) is reversed.

remnant . . . to the sword. Even the remnant left by the destruction is threatened with death, Compare Is. 6:13, where a similar thought is finally softened by the promise of the "seed."

■ **15:12 Can anyone break iron.** How could Jeremiah expect to change Judah's stubborn heart? See 13:23 and note.

■ **15:14 cross over with your enemies.** This prophecy is fulfilled for Jeremiah at 43:4–7.

16 [z]Ezek. 3:1, 3; Rev. 10:9 [a][Job 23:12; Ps. 119:72]

17 [b]Ps. 26:4, 5

18 [c]Job 34:6; Jer. 10:19; 30:15; Mic. 1:9 [d]Job 6:15 [6]Or *cannot be trusted*

19 [e]Jer. 4:1; Zech. 3:7 [f]1 Kin. 17:1; Jer. 15:1 [g]Jer. 6:29; Ezek. 22:26; 44:23

20 [h]Jer. 1:18; 6:27; Ezek. 3:9 [i]Ps. 46:7; Is. 41:10; Jer. 1:8, 19; 20:11; 37:21; 38:13; 39:11, 12

CHAPTER 16

4 [a]Jer. 15:2 [b]Jer. 22:18; 25:33 [c]Jer. 14:16; 19:11 [d]Ps. 83:10; Jer. 8:2; 9:22 [e]Ps. 79:2; Is. 18:6; Jer. 7:33; 34:20

5 [f]Ezek. 24:17, 22, 23

6 [g]Jer. 22:18 [h]Lev. 19:28; Deut. 14:1; Jer. 41:5; 47:5 [i]Is. 22:12; Jer. 7:29

7 [j]Prov. 31:6

16 Your words were found, and I [z]ate them,
And [a]Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart;
For I am called by Your name,
O LORD God of hosts.
17 [b]I did not sit in the assembly of the mockers,
Nor did I rejoice;
I sat alone because of Your hand,
For You have filled me with indignation.
18 Why is my [c]pain perpetual
And my wound incurable,
Which refuses to be healed?
Will You surely be to me [d]like an unreliable stream,
As waters *that* [6]fail?

The LORD Reassures Jeremiah

19 Therefore thus says the LORD:

[e]"If you return,
Then I will bring you back;
You shall [f]stand before Me;
If you [g]take out the precious from the vile,
You shall be as My mouth.
Let them return to you,
But you must not return to them.
20 And I will make you to this people a fortified bronze [h]wall;
And they will fight against you,
But [i]they shall not prevail against you;
For I *am* with you to save you
And deliver you," says the LORD.
21 "I will deliver you from the hand of the wicked,
And I will redeem you from the grip of the terrible."

Jeremiah's Life-Style and Message

16 The word of the LORD also came to me, saying, 2 "You shall not take a wife, nor shall you have sons or daughters in this place." 3 For thus says the LORD concerning the sons and daughters who are born in this place, and concerning their mothers who bore them and their fathers who begot them in this land: 4 "They shall die [a]gruesome deaths; they shall not be [b]lamented nor shall they be [c]buried, *but* they shall be [d]like refuse on the face of the earth. They shall be consumed by the sword and by famine, and their [e]corpses shall be meat for the birds of heaven and for the beasts of the earth."

5 For thus says the LORD: [f]"Do not enter the house of mourning, nor go to lament or bemoan them; for I have taken away My peace from this people," says the LORD, "lovingkindness and mercies. 6 Both the great and the small shall die in this land. They shall not be buried; [g]neither shall men lament for them, [h]cut themselves, nor [i]make themselves bald for them. 7 Nor shall *men* break *bread* in mourning for them, to comfort them for the dead; nor shall *men* give them the cup of consolation to [j]drink for their father or their mother. 8 Also you shall not go into the house of feasting to sit with them, to eat and drink."

■ **15:16 Your words . . . I ate them.** This verse recalls the sweet side of the bittersweet task of receiving God's words (Ezek. 3:1–3).

I am called by Your name. This phrase is applied to the people in 14:9.

■ **15:17 I sat alone.** No doubt this is literally true, partly due to celibacy (16:2). But there can also be a profound sense of loneliness for the unwelcome prophet; note Elijah in 1 Kin. 19:10 and our Lord Jesus in Matt. 26:37, 38.

■ **15:18 wound incurable.** The wound is Judah's in 14:17. The whole phrase is applied to Judah in 30:12, together with a promise of healing (30:16, 17). See also 10:19, where it is used of Jeremiah.

an unreliable stream. Contrast 2:13; and cf. 20:7.

■ **16:1—17:18** Jeremiah is prohibited from marrying and taking part in other normal activities as a sign of coming judgment (ch. 16). A sharp contrast is drawn between the destinies of those who trust in man and in God (17:1–18).

■ **16:2 You shall not take a wife.** The prohibition is related exclusively to Jeremiah's role as a prophet of Judah's fate (1 Cor. 7:26). Jeremiah will be childless, a sign that there is no immediate future for Judah.

■ **16:4 sword and by famine.** See note on 14:12.

■ **16:8 shall not go into . . . feasting.** After v. 2 and v. 5, there is yet a third symbolic prohibition.

9 For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Behold, [k]I will cause to cease from this
place, before your eyes and in your days, the voice of [l]mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice
of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride.
10 "And it shall be, when you show this people all these words, and they say to you, [l]'Why has
the LORD pronounced all this great disaster against us? Or what *is* our iniquity? Or what *is* our
sin that we have committed against the LORD our God?' 11 then you shall say to them, [m]'Because
your fathers have forsaken Me,' says the LORD; 'they have walked after other gods and have
served them and worshiped them, and have forsaken Me and not kept My law. 12 And you have
done [n]worse than your fathers, for behold, [o]each one [2]follows the dictates of his own evil heart,
so that no one listens to Me. 13 [p]Therefore I will cast you out of this land [q]into a land that you do
not know, neither you nor your fathers; and there you shall serve other gods day and night,
where I will not show you favor.'

God Will Restore Israel

14 "Therefore behold, the [r]days are coming," says the LORD, "that it shall no more be said,
'The LORD lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt,' 15 but, 'The LORD
lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of the [s]north and from all the lands
where He had driven them.' For [t]I will bring them back into their land which I gave to their fa-
thers.
16 "Behold, I will send for many [u]fishermen," says the LORD, "and they shall fish them; and
afterward I will send for many hunters, and they shall hunt them from every mountain and every
hill, and out of the holes of the rocks. 17 For My [v]eyes *are* on all their ways; they are not hidden
from My face, nor is their iniquity hidden from My eyes. 18 And first I will repay [w]double for
their iniquity and their sin, because [x]they have defiled My land; they have filled My inheritance
with the carcasses of their detestable and abominable idols."

19 O LORD, [y]my strength and my fortress,
[z]My refuge in the day of affliction,
The Gentiles shall come to You
From the ends of the earth and say,
"Surely our fathers have inherited lies,
Worthlessness and [a]unprofitable *things*."
20 Will a man make gods for himself,
[b]Which *are* not gods?

21 "Therefore behold, I will this once cause them to know,
I will cause them to know
My hand and My might;
And they shall know that [c]My name *is* the LORD.

Judah's Sin and Punishment

17 "The sin of Judah *is* [a]written with a [b]pen of iron;
With the point of a diamond *it is* [c]engraved
On the tablet of their heart,
And on the horns of your altars,
2 While their children remember

9 [k]Is. 24:7, 8; Jer. 7:34; 25:10; Ezek. 26:13; Hos. 2:11; Rev. 18:23 [l]*rejoicing*

10 [l]Deut. 29:24; 1 Kin. 9:8; Jer. 5:19

11 [m]Deut. 29:25; 1 Kin. 9:9; 2 Chr. 7:22; Neh. 9:26–29; Jer. 22:9

12 [n]Jer. 7:26 [o]Jer. 3:17; 18:12 [2]*walks after the stubbornness* or *imagination*

13 [p]Deut. 4:26; 28:36, 63 [q]Jer. 15:14

14 [r]Is. 43:18; Jer. 23:7, 8; [Ezek. 37:21–25]

15 [s]Jer. 3:18 [t]Jer. 24:6; 30:3; 32:37

16 [u]Amos 4:2; Hab. 1:15

17 [v]2 Chr. 16:9; Job 34:21; Ps. 90:8; Prov. 5:21; Jer. 23:24; 32:19; Zech. 4:10; [Luke 12:2; 1 Cor. 4:5]; Heb. 4:13

18 [w]Is. 40:2; Jer. 17:18; Rev. 18:6 [x][Ezek. 43:7]

19 [y]Ps. 18:1, 2; Is. 25:4 [z]Jer. 17:17 [a]Is. 44:10

20 [b]Ps. 115:4–8; Is. 37:19; Jer. 2:11; 5:7; Hos. 8:4–6; Gal. 4:8

21 [c]Ex. 15:3; Ps. 83:18; Is. 43:3; Jer. 33:2; Amos 5:8

CHAPTER 17

1 [a]Jer. 2:22 [b]Job 19:24 [c]Prov. 3:3; 7:3; Is. 49:16; 2 Cor. 3:3

■ **16:9 cause to cease . . . bridegroom and . . . bride.** See also 7:34. Such sounds are typical of times of peace and hope (Matt. 24:38, 39; contrast 33:10, 11).

■ **16:12 done worse than your fathers.** Though the present generation shares guilt with its forefathers (14:20), it is responsible for its own sin (31:29, 30; Ezek. 18:2–4).

■ **16:13 cast you out of this land.** That is, God will send them into exile (see Deut. 28:36, 64).

serve other gods. With a punishment to fit the crime, they would finally discover that these gods can provide no benefit.

■ **16:16 fishermen . . . hunters.** Judah is pictured as the prey of the Lord.

every mountain and every hill . . . holes of the rocks. There will be no escape (23:24; Is. 2:19).

■ **16:17 My eyes are on all.** See "God Sees and Knows: Divine Omniscience" at Prov. 15:3.

■ **16:21 know that My name is the LORD.** Knowing the Lord's name here means recognizing His authority and power through His acts of judgment.

■ **17:1 On the tablet of their heart.** This metaphor recalls tablets for writing laws. See 31:33, where the law will be written on the heart, and Prov. 3:3; 7:3. In the new covenant, Christ writes the law on His people's hearts by His Spirit (2 Cor. 3:3).

on the horns of your altars. These altars should commemorate atonement for sin, but where the sin is unforgiven they continue to remind God of the sin itself.

■ **17:2 Their altars and their wooden images.** See 2:20 note; Ex. 34:13; Deut. 7:5.

Their altars and their [d]wooden[f] images
By the green trees on the high hills.
3 O My mountain in the field,
I will give as plunder your wealth, all your treasures,
And your high places of sin within all your borders.
4 And you, even yourself,
Shall let go of your heritage which I gave you;
And I will cause you to serve your enemies
In [e]the land which you do not know;
For [f]you have kindled a fire in My anger *which* shall burn forever."

5 Thus says the LORD:

[g]"Cursed *is* the man who trusts in man
And makes [h]flesh his [2]strength,
Whose heart departs from the LORD.
6 For he shall be [i]like a shrub in the desert,
And [j]shall not see when good comes,
But shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness,
[k]*In* a salt land *which is* not inhabited.

7 "Blessed[l] *is* the man who trusts in the LORD,
And whose hope is the LORD.
8 For he shall be [m]like a tree planted by the waters,
Which spreads out its roots by the river,
And will not [3]fear when heat comes;
But its leaf will be green,
And will not be anxious in the year of drought,
Nor will cease from yielding fruit.

9 "The [n]heart *is* deceitful above all *things,*
And [4]desperately wicked;
Who can know it?
10 I, the LORD, [o]search the heart,
I test the [5]mind,
[p]Even to give every man according to his ways,
According to the fruit of his doings.

11 "*As* a partridge that [6]broods but does not hatch,
So is he who gets riches, but not by right;
It [q]will leave him in the midst of his days,
And at his end he will be [r]a fool."

12 A glorious high throne from the beginning
Is the place of our sanctuary.
13 O LORD, [s]the hope of Israel,
[t]All who forsake You shall be ashamed.

2 [d]Judg. 3:7 [f]Heb. *Asherim,* Canaanite deities
4 [e]Jer. 16:13 [f]Is. 5:25; Jer. 15:14
5 [g]Ps. 146:3; Is. 30:1, 2; 31:1 [h]Is. 31:3 [2]Lit. *arm*
6 [i]Jer. 48:6 [j]Job 20:17 [k]Deut. 29:23; Job 39:6
7 [l]Ps. 2:12; 34:8; 125:1; 146:5; Prov. 16:20; [Is. 30:18]; Jer. 39:18
8 [m]Job 8:16; [Ps. 1:3; Ezek. 31:3–9] [3]Or, Tg. *see*
9 [n][Eccl. 9:3]; Matt. 15:19; [Mark 7:21, 22] [4]Or *incurably sick*
10 [o]1 Sam. 16:7; 1 Chr. 28:9; Ps. 7:9; 139:23, 24; Prov. 17:3; Jer. 11:20; 20:12; Rom. 8:27; Rev. 2:23 [p]Ps. 62:12; Jer. 32:19; Rom. 2:6 [5]Most secret parts, lit. *kidneys*
11 [q]Ps. 55:23 [r]Luke 12:20 [6]Sits on eggs
13 [s]Jer. 14:8 [t][Ps. 73:27; Is. 1:28]

■ **17:3 My mountain.** Mount Zion, where the temple was, was plundered by Nebuchadnezzar (52:17–23).

■ **17:4 heritage which I gave you.** The Promised Land (2:7).

■ **17:7 trusts . . . hope.** The Lord repays trust because He is by nature trustworthy (Is. 7:9). The close similarity between vv. 7, 8 and Ps. 1:1–3 suggests that trust in the Lord entails obedience to His law.

■ **17:8 a tree planted by the waters.** This image is a potent symbol of strength in a dry country (Is. 44:4).

■ **17:9 The heart.** In the Old Testament, the "heart" is more than the seat of emotion. It represents the basis of character, including the mind and the will (4:19; Prov. 4:23; 16:23). See theological note "The Freedom and Bondage of the Will."

■ **17:10 mind.** Lit. "kidneys." In ancient Hebrew idiom, these organs represented the seat of the emotions.

■ **17:11 As a partridge . . . by right.** It was commonly believed that partridges would steal the eggs of other birds, but the hatchlings would return to their natural parent. In the same way a person will not be able to retain riches unjustly gained.

And at his end . . . fool. On the transience of riches, see Prov. 23:4, 5.

■ **17:12 A glorious high throne.** See note on 14:21; Ps. 99:1.

from the beginning. This implies that Zion was chosen as God's throne even before the temple was built (Ex. 15:17).

■ **17:13 written in the earth.** They will soon be forgotten. Contrast the thought of Ex. 32:32.

"Those who depart from Me
Shall be [u]written in the earth,
Because they have forsaken the LORD,
The [v]fountain of living waters."

Jeremiah Prays for Deliverance

14 Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed;
Save me, and I shall be saved,
For [w]You *are* my praise.
15 Indeed they say to me,
[x]"Where *is* the word of the LORD?
Let it come now!"
16 As for me, [y]I have not hurried away from *being* a shepherd *who* follows You,
Nor have I desired the woeful day;
You know what came out of my lips;
It was right there before You.
17 Do not be a terror to me;
[z]You *are* my hope in the day of doom.
18 [a]Let them be ashamed who persecute me,
But [b]do not let me be put to shame;
Let them be dismayed,
But do not let me be dismayed.
Bring on them the day of doom,
And [c]destroy[7] them with double destruction!

13 [u]Luke 10:20 [v]Jer. 2:13
14 [w]Deut. 10:21; Ps. 109:1
15 [x]Is. 5:19; Ezek. 12:22; 2 Pet. 3:4
16 [y]Jer. 1:4–12
17 [z]Jer. 16:19; Nah. 1:7
18 [a]Ps. 35:4; 70:2; Jer. 15:10; 18:18 [b]Ps. 25:2 [c]Jer. 11:20 [7]Lit. *crush*

Hallow the Sabbath Day

19 Thus the LORD said to me: "Go and stand in the gate of the children of the people, by which the kings of Judah come in and by which they go out, and in all the gates of Jerusalem; 20 and

The Freedom and Bondage of the Will

Proper understanding of the freedom of the will in the fallen human condition is assisted by distinguishing free *agency* from free *will*.

Free *agency* is a mark of humanity as such. All humans are free agents in the sense that they make their own decisions about what they will do, choosing as they please in the light of their conscience, inclinations, and thoughts. They are answerable to God and to the rest of humanity for their choices. Adam was a free agent before the Fall, and afterwards. He continued to have desires and thoughts and to put them into action through his will. Similarly, we are free agents now; we will continue to be so after the resurrection. The glorified saints exercise their wills, but they are confirmed in grace, so that they cannot sin. Their choices are the product of human free agency, made in accordance with their nature, but now these choices are good and right. The transformation of their hearts is complete and they desire to do what is right.

Free *will* has been defined by Christian teachers from the second century on as the ability to choose any at all of the moral options offered in a given situation. Augustine taught that this possibility was lost through the Fall. The loss is part of the burden of original sin. After the Fall, our natural hearts are not inclined toward God; they are in bondage to sin and cannot be freed from this slavery except by the grace of regeneration. Such an understanding of the fallen will is taught by Paul in Rom. 6:16–23.

Only a will that has been set free is able to choose righteousness freely and heartily. A permanent love of righteousness, that is, an inclination of the heart to the way of living that pleases God, is one aspect of the freedom that Christ gives (John 8:34–36; Gal. 5:1, 13). □

■ **17:15 Where is the word of the LORD.** With this taunt Jeremiah is accused of being a false prophet (Deut. 18:21, 22). See Mic. 7:10; 2 Pet. 3:2–4.

■ **17:18 dismayed . . . dismayed.** Prayer for judgment upon his enemies is common in Jeremiah (11:20; 12:3; 15:15). The words are reminiscent of his call (1:17).

■ **17:20 who enter by these gates.** The message is given at the gates because of their role in commerce (see Neh. 13:15, 19).

say to them, [d]'Hear the word of the LORD, you kings of Judah, and all Judah, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who enter by these gates. 21 Thus says the LORD: [e]"Take heed to yourselves, and bear no burden on the Sabbath day, nor bring *it* in by the gates of Jerusalem; 22 nor carry a burden out of your houses on the Sabbath day, nor do any work, but hallow the Sabbath day, as I [f]commanded your fathers. 23 [g]But they did not obey nor incline their ear, but [8]made their neck stiff, that they might not hear nor receive instruction.

24 "And it shall be, [h]if you heed Me carefully," says the LORD, "to bring no burden through the gates of this city on the [i]Sabbath day, but hallow the Sabbath day, to do no work in it, 25 [j]then shall enter the gates of this city kings and princes sitting on the throne of David, riding in chariots and on horses, they and their princes, accompanied by the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and this city shall remain forever. 26 And they shall come from the cities of Judah and from [k]the places around Jerusalem, from the land of Benjamin and from [l]the [9]lowland, from the mountains and from [m]the [l]South, bringing burnt offerings and sacrifices, grain offerings and incense, bringing [n]sacrifices of praise to the house of the LORD.

27 "But if you will not heed Me to hallow the Sabbath day, such as not carrying a burden when entering the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, then [o]I will kindle a fire in its gates, [p]and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be [q]quenched." ' "

The Potter and the Clay

18 The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying: 2 "Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause you to hear My words." 3 Then I went down to the potter's house, and there he was, making something at the [1]wheel. 4 And the vessel that he [2]made of clay was [3]marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make.

5 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: 6 "O house of Israel, [a]can I not do with you as this potter?" says the LORD. "Look, [b]as the clay *is* in the potter's hand, so *are* you in My hand, O house of Israel! 7 The instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to [c]pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy *it*, 8 [d]if that nation against whom I have spoken turns from its evil, [e]I will relent of the disaster that I thought to bring upon it. 9 And the instant I speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant *it*, 10 if it does evil in My sight so that it does not obey My voice, then I will relent concerning the good with which I said I would benefit it.

11 "Now therefore, speak to the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, 'Thus says the LORD: "Behold, I am fashioning a disaster and devising a plan against you. [f]Return now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings [g]good." ' "

God's Warning Rejected

12 And they said, [h]"That is hopeless! So we will walk according to our own plans, and we will every one [4]obey the [i]dictates[5] of his evil heart."

13 Therefore thus says the LORD:

[j]"Ask now among the Gentiles,
Who has heard such things?
The virgin of Israel has done [k]a very horrible thing.
14 Will *a man* [6]leave the snow water of Lebanon,
Which comes from the rock of the field?
Will the cold flowing waters be forsaken for strange waters?

20 [c]Jer. 19:3, 4
21 [e]Neh. 13:19
22 [f]Ex. 20:8; 31:13
23 [g]Jer. 7:24, 26 [8]Were stubborn
24 [h]Jer. 11:4; 26:3 [i]Ex. 16:23–30; 20:8–10
25 [j]Jer. 22:4
26 [k]Jer. 33:13 [l]Zech. 7:7 [m]Judg. 1:9 [n]Ps. 107:22; 116:17 [9]Heb. *shephelah* [1]Heb. *Negev*
27 [o]Lam. 4:11 [p]2 Kin. 25:9 [q]Jer. 7:20

CHAPTER 18

3 [1]Potter's wheel
4 [2]*was making* [3]*ruined*
6 [a]Rom. 9:20, 21 [b]Is. 64:8
7 [c]Jer. 1:10
8 [d][Ezek. 18:21; 33:11] [e]Jer. 26:3
11 [f]2 Kin. 17:13 [g]Jer. 7:3–7
12 [h]Jer. 2:25 [i]Jer. 3:17; 23:17 [4]Lit. *do* [5]*stubbornness* or *imagination*
13 [j]Jer. 2:10, 11 [k]Jer. 5:30
14 [6]*forsake*

■ **17:22 hallow the Sabbath . . . fathers.** Specific appeal is made to the Sabbath commandment (Ex. 20:8–11; Deut. 5:12–15; Neh. 10:31; Is. 56:2).

■ **17:25, 26** This prophecy presents a picture (partly repeated in 22:4) of the restoration of the Davidic dynasty, the social structure, and the worship, that all centered on the temple. See also 23:5, 6; 30:9; 33:14–26. All that is threatened for Judah, therefore, can be reversed.

■ **18:1—20:18** Just as a potter remolds a marred pot, God will remold His people by disciplining them in exile (18:1–17). Jeremiah portrays God's judgment by breaking a clay jar (ch. 19), and is mistreated because of his unpopular message (18:18–23; ch. 20).

■ **18:2 the potter's house.** Apparently in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, near the Potsherd Gate (19:2); hence the command to "go down." See also 7:31.

■ **18:4 made it again into another vessel.** The potter has freedom with respect to his plans. The spoiling of his first intention is not final.

■ **18:6 O house of Israel.** The analogy with Israel follows. The use of the term "Israel" recalls God's historic purposes of election for the whole people, to which Judah was now heir.

■ **18:7, 8** The potter illustration (vv. 2–4) shows that the Lord's purposed judgment may be revoked by that nation's repentance.

■ **18:13 very horrible thing.** One of the strong terms used for idolatry (v. 15; cf. 5:30).

■ **18:14 Will a man leave.** As it would be against nature to turn from cold, running water to polluted, standing water, so it is hard to understand why anyone would turn from God to idolatry.

15 "Because My people have forgotten [l]Me,
They have burned incense to worthless idols.
And they have caused themselves to stumble in their ways,
From the [m]ancient paths,
To walk in pathways and not on a highway,
16 To make their land [n]desolate *and* a perpetual [o]hissing;
Everyone who passes by it will be astonished
And shake his head.
17 [p]I will scatter them [q]as with an east wind before the enemy;
[r]I will [7]show them the back and not the face
In the day of their calamity."

Jeremiah Persecuted

18 Then they said, [s]"Come and let us devise plans against Jeremiah; [t]for the law shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise, nor the word from the prophet. Come and let us attack him with the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words."

19 Give heed to me, O LORD,
And listen to the voice of those who contend with me!
20 [u]Shall evil be repaid for good?
For they have [v]dug a pit for my life.
Remember that I [w]stood before You
To speak good [8]for them,
To turn away Your wrath from them.
21 Therefore [x]deliver up their children to the famine,
And pour out their *blood*
By the force of the sword;
Let their wives *become* widows
And [y]bereaved of their children.
Let their men be put to death,
Their young men *be* slain
By the sword in battle.
22 Let a cry be heard from their houses,
When You bring a troop suddenly upon them;
For they have dug a pit to take me,
And hidden snares for my feet.
23 Yet, LORD, You know all their counsel
Which is against me, to slay *me.*
[z]Provide no atonement for their iniquity,
Nor blot out their sin from Your sight;
But let them be overthrown before You.
Deal *thus* with them
In the time of Your [a]anger.

The Sign of the Broken Flask

19 Thus says the LORD: "Go and get a potter's earthen flask, and *take* some of the elders of the people and some of the elders of the priests. 2 And go out to [a]the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, which *is* by the entry of the Potsherd Gate; and proclaim there the words that I will tell you, 3 [b]and say, 'Hear the word of the LORD, O kings of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem.

15 [l]Jer. 2:13, 32 [m]Jer. 6:16

16 [n]Jer. 19:8 [o]1 Kin. 9:8; Lam. 2:15; Mic. 6:16

17 [p]Jer. 13:24 [q]Ps. 48:7 [r]Jer. 2:27 [7]So with LXX, Syr., Tg., Vg.; MT *look them in*

18 [s]Jer. 11:19 [t]Lev. 10:11; Mal. 2:7; [John 7:48]

20 [u]Ps. 109:4 [v]Ps. 35:7; 57:6; Jer. 5:26 [w]Jer. 14:7—15:1 [8]*concerning*

21 [x]Ps. 109:9–20; Jer. 11:22; 14:16 [y]Jer. 15:7, 8; Ezek. 22:25

23 [z]Neh. 4:5; Ps. 35:14; 109:14; Is. 2:9; Jer. 11:20 [a]Jer. 7:20

CHAPTER 19

2 [a]Josh. 15:8; 2 Kin. 23:10; Jer. 7:31; 32:35

3 [b]Jer. 17:20

■ **18:15 burned incense.** See note on 11:13.

ancient paths . . . pathways and not on a highway. See note on 6:16. The "pathways" are narrow, insufficient and dangerous.

■ **18:17 east wind.** Cf. 4:11.

the back and not the face. The meaning is withheld favor (2:27). He will turn His back on them.

■ **18:20 evil be repaid for good.** Cf. Ps. 35:12; 1 Pet. 2:19–24.

dug a pit. They had murderous intention (v. 22). See Jeremiah's actual experiences in 37:16; 38:6.

stood before You . . . for them. See note on 15:1.

■ **19:2 Valley of the Son of Hinnom.** See note on 18:2.

Potsherd Gate. A gate on the south of the city, possibly the Dung Gate (Neh. 2:13).

■ **19:3 catastrophe . . . ears will tingle.** The words closely resemble 2 Kin. 21:12, which also concerns judgment on Judah and Jerusalem. The judgment is severe and shocking to anyone who hears of it.

3 [c]1 Sam. 3:11
4 [d]Is. 65:11 [e]2 Kin. 21:12
5 [f]Jer. 7:31; 32:35 [g]Lev. 18:21
6 [h]Josh. 15:8
7 [i]Lev. 26:17 [j]Ps. 79:2
8 [k]Jer. 18:16; 49:13; 50:13
9 [l]Lev. 26:29
10 [m]Jer. 51:63, 64
11 [n]Is. 30:14 [o]Jer. 7:32 [p]*restored*
13 [q]2 Kin. 23:10 [r]Zeph. 1:5 [s]Jer. 7:18
14 [s]2 Chr. 20:5
15 [t]Neh. 9:17, 29

CHAPTER 20

1 [a]Ezra 2:37, 38 [b]1 Chr. 24:14
2 [c]Jer. 37:13
3 [1]Lit. *Fear on Every Side*
4 [d]Jer. 21:4–10
5 [e]2 Kin. 20:17 [f]Is. 39:6
6 [g]Jer. 14:13–15

Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Behold, I will bring such a catastrophe on this place, that whoever hears of it, his ears will [c]tingle.

4 "Because they [d]have forsaken Me and made this an alien place, because they have burned incense in it to other gods whom neither they, their fathers, nor the kings of Judah have known, and have filled this place with [e]the blood of the innocents 5[f](they have also built the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire *for* burnt offerings to Baal, [g]which I did not command or speak, nor did it come into My mind), 6 therefore behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "that this place shall no more be called Tophet or [h]the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter. 7 And I will make void the counsel of Judah and Jerusalem in this place, [i]and I will cause them to fall by the sword before their enemies and by the hands of those who seek their lives; their [j]corpses I will give as meat for the birds of the heaven and for the beasts of the earth. 8 I will make this city [k]desolate and a hissing; everyone who passes by it will be astonished and hiss because of all its plagues. 9 And I will cause them to eat the [l]flesh of their sons and the flesh of their daughters, and everyone shall eat the flesh of his friend in the siege and in the desperation with which their enemies and those who seek their lives shall drive them to despair."'

10 [m]"Then you shall break the flask in the sight of the men who go with you, 11 and say to them, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: [n]"Even so I will break this people and this city, as *one* breaks a potter's vessel, which cannot be [p]made whole again; and they shall [o]bury *them* in Tophet till *there is* no place to bury. 12 Thus I will do to this place," says the LORD, "and to its inhabitants, and make this city like Tophet. 13 And the houses of Jerusalem and the houses of the kings of Judah shall be defiled [q]like the place of Tophet, because of all the houses on whose [r]roofs they have burned incense to all the host of heaven, and [s]poured out drink offerings to other gods."' "

14 Then Jeremiah came from Tophet, where the LORD had sent him to prophesy; and he stood in [s]the court of the Lord's house and said to all the people, 15 "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: 'Behold, I will bring on this city and on all her towns all the doom that I have pronounced against it, because [t]they have stiffened their necks that they might not hear My words.' "

The Word of God to Pashhur

20 Now [a]Pashhur the son of [b]Immer, the priest who *was* also chief governor in the house of the LORD, heard that Jeremiah prophesied these things. 2 Then Pashhur struck Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks that *were* in the high [c]gate of Benjamin, which *was* by the house of the LORD.

3 And it happened on the next day that Pashhur brought Jeremiah out of the stocks. Then Jeremiah said to him, "The LORD has not called your name Pashhur, but [1]Magor-Missabib. 4 For thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will make you a terror to yourself and to all your friends; and they shall fall by the sword of their enemies, and your eyes shall see *it.* I will [d]give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall carry them captive to Babylon and slay them with the sword. 5 Moreover I [e]will deliver all the wealth of this city, all its produce, and all its precious things; all the treasures of the kings of Judah I will give into the hand of their enemies, who will plunder them, seize them, and [f]carry them to Babylon. 6 And you, Pashhur, and all who dwell in your house, shall go into captivity. You shall go to Babylon, and there you shall die, and be buried there, you and all your friends, to whom you have [g]prophesied lies.' "

■ **19:9 eat the flesh . . . of his friend.** Such a horror had occurred during the siege of 586 B.C. (Lam. 2:20 and note).

■ **19:10 Then you shall break the flask.** The climax of the scene is another symbolic prophetic action (see 13:1–11 and notes). The earthenware flask shatters on impact (Ps. 2:9). The metaphor was familiar in the ancient world.

■ **19:11 cannot be made whole again.** Judah, hardened in sin, cannot be reshaped, but only destroyed.

they shall bury . . . no place to bury. See 7:32.

■ **19:13 defiled like the place.** Josiah had defiled Tophet (2 Kin. 23:10).

host of heaven. See 8:2 and note; also 2 Kin. 23:4, 5.

■ **20:1 Pashhur.** The name was apparently common (see 21:1; 38:1—each text possibly referring to a different man). Note that senior priests had been among Jeremiah's audience in the valley (19:1), and Pashhur was perhaps among them.

■ **20:2 struck Jeremiah.** Pashhur's duties as governor of the temple included restraining those whose actions disrupted temple worship (29:26; Deut. 25:2, 3). Jeremiah's prayer in 15:18 shows that faithful prophetic preaching was dangerous.

the prophet. This title affirms Jeremiah's status as a true prophet, despite the legal action against him.

■ **20:3 Magor-Missabib.** See text note and 6:25. The people should be afraid to be associated with Pashhur, because he is a highly visible example of why the Lord's anger was falling on them. He had openly abused God's prophet.

Jeremiah's Unpopular Ministry

7 O LORD, You [2]induced me, and I was persuaded;
[h]You are stronger than I, and have prevailed.
[i]I am [3]in derision daily;
Everyone mocks me.
8 For when I spoke, I cried out;
[j]I shouted, "Violence and plunder!"
Because the word of the LORD was made to me
A reproach and a derision daily.
9 Then I said, "I will not make mention of Him,
Nor speak anymore in His name."
But *His word* was in my heart like a [k]burning fire
Shut up in my bones;
I was weary of holding *it* back,
And [l]I could not.
10 [m]For I heard many [4]mocking:
"Fear on every side!"
"Report," *they say,* "and we will report it!"
[n]All my acquaintances watched for my stumbling, *saying,*
"Perhaps he can be induced;
Then we will prevail against him,
And we will take our revenge on him."

11 But the LORD *is* [o]with me as a mighty, awesome One.
Therefore my persecutors will stumble, and will not [p]prevail.
They will be greatly ashamed, for they will not prosper.
Their [q]everlasting confusion will never be forgotten.
12 But, O LORD of hosts,
You who [r]test the righteous,
And see the [5]mind and heart,
[s]Let me see Your vengeance on them;
For I have pleaded my cause before You.

13 Sing to the LORD! Praise the LORD!
For [t]He has delivered the life of the poor
From the hand of evildoers.

14 [u]Cursed *be* the day in which I was born!
Let the day not be blessed in which my mother bore me!
15 Let the man *be* cursed
Who brought news to my father, saying,
"A male child has been born to you!"
Making him very glad.
16 And let that man be like the cities
Which the LORD [v]overthrew, and did not relent;
Let him [w]hear the cry in the morning
And the shouting at noon,
17 [x]Because he did not kill me from the womb,
That my mother might have been my grave,
And her womb always enlarged *with me.*
18 [y]Why did I come forth from the womb to [z]see [6]labor and sorrow,
That my days should be consumed with shame?

7 [h]Jer. 1:6, 7 [i]Job 12:4; Lam. 3:14 [2]*enticed* or *persuaded* [3]Lit. *a laughingstock all the day*
8 [j]Jer. 6:7
9 [k]Job 32:18–20; Ps. 39:3; Jer. 4:19; 23:9; [Ezek. 3:14]; Acts 4:20 [l]Job 32:18; Jer. 6:11; Acts 18:5
10 [m]Ps. 31:13 [n]Job 19:19; Ps. 41:9; 55:13, 14; Luke 11:53, 54 [4]*slandering*
11 [o]Jer. 1:18, 19 [p]Jer. 15:20; 17:18 [q]Jer. 23:40
12 [r]Ps. 7:9; 11:5; 17:3; 139:23; [Jer. 11:20; 17:10] [s]Ps. 54:7; 59:10; Jer. 15:15 [5]Most secret parts, lit. *kidneys*
13 [t]Ps. 35:9, 10; 109:30, 31
14 [u]Job 3:3; Jer. 15:10
16 [v]Gen. 19:25 [w]Jer. 18:22
17 [x]Job 3:10, 11
18 [y]Job 3:20; Jer. 15:10 [z]Lam. 3:1 [6]*toil*

■ **20:7 induced me . . . was persuaded.** Jeremiah had not foreseen the trials that his task would bring, and he receives his call (especially perhaps 1:7, 8) as an overpowering compulsion (4:10).

■ **20:8 For when I spoke . . . plunder.** A compulsion he cannot control makes him utter his message of coming wrath.

■ **20:9 a burning fire.** Jeremiah's reluctance was profound, but God's word in him exerted a pressure he could not resist (see Amos 3:8; 1 Cor. 9:16; 2 Cor. 5:14).

■ **20:14 Cursed.** The Spirit has permitted this record of Jeremiah's despair to be preserved. The prophet's words are like Job's (Job 3:1–26).

■ **20:16 the cities . . . overthrew.** Sodom and Gomorrah, whose fate was proverbial (Is. 1:9; Amos 4:11).

CHAPTER 21

1 [a]2 Kin. 24:17, 18 [b]Jer. 38:1 [c]2 Kin. 25:18

2 [d]Jer. 37:3, 7 [f]Heb. *Nebuchadrezzar,* and so elsewhere in the book

4 [e]Is. 13:4 [2]Or *Babylonians,* and so elsewhere in the book

5 [f]Is. 63:10 [g]Ex. 6:6

7 [h]Jer. 37:17; 39:5; 52:9 [i]2 Chr. 36:17

8 [j]Deut. 30:15, 19

9 [k]Jer. 38:2 [l]Jer. 39:18 [3]Lit. *falls away to*

10 [m]Amos 9:4 [n]Jer. 38:3 [o]Jer. 34:2, 22; 37:10

12 [p]Zech. 7:9 [q]Ps. 101:8 [4]*Dispense justice*

13 [r][Ezek. 13:8] [s]Jer. 49:4 [5]*dweller*

14 [t]Is. 3:10, 11 [u]2 Chr. 36:19 [6]*deeds*

CHAPTER 22

2 [a]Jer. 17:20

Jerusalem's Doom Is Sealed

21 The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD when [a]King Zedekiah sent to him [b]Pashhur the son of Melchiah, and [c]Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah, the priest, saying,
2 [d]"Please inquire of the LORD for us, for [f]Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon makes war against us. Perhaps the LORD will deal with us according to all His wonderful works, that *the king* may go away from us."

3 Then Jeremiah said to them, "Thus you shall say to Zedekiah, 4 'Thus says the LORD God of Israel: "Behold, I will turn back the weapons of war that *are* in your hands, with which you fight against the king of Babylon and the [2]Chaldeans who besiege you outside the walls; and [e]I will assemble them in the midst of this city. 5 I [f]Myself will fight against you with an [g]outstretched hand and with a strong arm, even in anger and fury and great wrath. 6 I will strike the inhabitants of this city, both man and beast; they shall die of a great pestilence. 7 And afterward," says the LORD, [h]"I will deliver Zedekiah king of Judah, his servants and the people, and such as are left in this city from the pestilence and the sword and the famine, into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of those who seek their life; and he shall strike them with the edge of the sword. [i]He shall not spare them, or have pity or mercy." '

8 "Now you shall say to this people, 'Thus says the LORD: "Behold, [j]I set before you the way of life and the way of death. 9 He who [k]remains in this city shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence; but he who goes out and [3]defects to the Chaldeans who besiege you, he shall [l]live, and his life shall be as a prize to him. 10 For I have [m]set My face against this city for adversity and not for good," says the LORD. [n]"It shall be given into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall [o]burn it with fire." '

Message to the House of David

11 "And concerning the house of the king of Judah, *say,* 'Hear the word of the LORD, 12 O house of David! Thus says the LORD:

[p]"Execute[4] judgment [q]in the morning;
And deliver *him who is* plundered
Out of the hand of the oppressor,
Lest My fury go forth like fire
And burn so that no one can quench *it,*
Because of the evil of your doings.

13 "Behold, [r]I *am* against you, O [5]inhabitant of the valley,
And rock of the plain," says the LORD,
"Who say, [s]'Who shall come down against us?
Or who shall enter our dwellings?'
14 But I will punish you according to the [t]fruit of your [6]doings," says the LORD;
"I will kindle a fire in its forest,
And [u]it shall devour all things around it." ' "

22 Thus says the LORD: "Go down to the house of the king of Judah, and there speak this word, 2 and say, [a]'Hear the word of the LORD, O king of Judah, you who sit on the

■ **21:1—24:10** These chapters narrate the end of the Davidic dynasty, making it clear that disaster and exile are God's judgment on the sins of Judah's kings and people. Jeremiah denounces false prophets who lead the people astray (ch. 23), but also sounds a note of hope as God promises to gather a remnant of His people from captivity under the leadership of "a Branch of righteousness" from David's house (23:3–8). The twin messages of judgment and future restoration are repeated in Jeremiah's vision of two baskets of figs (ch. 24).

■ **21:1 Zedekiah.** The name means "the LORD is my righteousness."

sent to him. Zedekiah maintains a vacillating dependence on Jeremiah without the moral courage to obey his warnings (37:3, 21; 38:5, 14, 19, 24–26).

Pashhur. Not necessarily the same Pashhur as in 20:1 (see note) or 38:1.

Zephaniah. A priest and the son of Maaseiah (29:25, 29; 37:3; 52:24), not the same as the prophet Zephaniah (Zeph. 1:1).

■ **21:2 inquire.** A request for guidance.

Nebuchadnezzar. King of Babylon, 605–562 B.C. His name is formed with "Nabu" (or "Nebo"), a Babylonian god (Is. 46:1; Dan. 1:1).

makes war against us. Zedekiah was a vassal of Nebuchadnezzar (37:1), and rebelled against him in 589 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem in 588.

■ **21:5 I Myself will fight against you . . . outstretched hand . . . strong arm.** The language depicts the Lord's power in war, horrifyingly turned against His people (Deut. 4:34; 5:15; 7:19; Amos 5:18).

anger . . . fury . . . great wrath. See Deut. 29:23.

■ **21:12 Execute judgment.** See 9:24. This requirement of justice (see text note) was expected both of the king and the messianic King (23:5; 2 Sam. 8:15; 1 Kin. 3:28; Ps. 72:1, 2).

■ **22:2 O king of Judah.** A word for any of the kings, serving as the prelude to a demonstration of their virtually unbroken failure.

throne of David, you and your servants and your people who enter these gates! 3 Thus says the LORD: [b]"Execute[1] judgment and righteousness, and deliver the plundered out of the hand of the oppressor. Do no wrong and do no violence to the stranger, the [c]fatherless, or the widow, nor shed innocent blood in this place. 4 For if you indeed do this thing, [d]then shall enter the gates of this house, riding on horses and in chariots, accompanied by servants and people, kings who sit on the throne of David. 5 But if you will not [2]hear these words, [e]I swear by Myself," says the LORD, "that this house shall become a desolation." ' "

6 For thus says the LORD to the house of the king of Judah:

"You *are* [f]Gilead to Me,
The head of Lebanon;
Yet I surely will make you a wilderness,
Cities *which* are not inhabited.
7 I will prepare destroyers against you,
Everyone with his weapons;
They shall cut down [g]your choice cedars
[h]And cast *them* into the fire.

8 And many nations will pass by this city; and everyone will say to his neighbor, [i]'Why has the LORD done so to this great city?' 9 Then they will answer, [j]'Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD their God, and worshiped other gods and served them.' "

10 Weep not for [k]the dead, nor bemoan him;
Weep bitterly for him [l]who goes away,
For he shall return no more,
Nor see his native country.

Message to the Sons of Josiah

11 For thus says the LORD concerning [m]Shallum[3] the son of Josiah, king of Judah, who reigned instead of Josiah his father, [n]who went from this place: "He shall not return here anymore, 12 but he shall die in the place where they have led him captive, and shall see this land no more.

13 "Woe[o] to him who builds his house by unrighteousness
And his [4]chambers by injustice,
[p]*Who* uses his neighbor's service without wages
And gives him nothing for his work,
14 Who says, 'I will build myself a wide house with spacious [5]chambers,
And cut out windows for it,
Paneling *it* with cedar
And painting *it* with vermilion.'

15 "Shall you reign because you enclose *yourself* in cedar?
Did not your father eat and drink,
And do justice and righteousness?
Then [q]*it was* well with him.
16 He [6]judged the cause of the poor and needy;
Then *it was* well.
Was not this knowing Me?" says the LORD.
17 "Yet[r] your eyes and your heart *are* for nothing but your covetousness,

3 [b]Is. 58:6; Jer. 21:12; [Mic. 6:8]; Zech. 7:9; 8:16; Matt. 23:23 [c]Jer. 7:6; Zech. 7:10 [1]*Dispense justice*

4 [d]Jer. 17:25

5 [e]Matt. 23:38; Heb. 6:13, 17 [2]Obey

6 [f]Gen. 37:25; Num. 32:1; Song 4:1

7 [g]Is. 37:24 [h]Jer. 21:14

8 [i]Deut. 29:24–26; 1 Kin. 9:8, 9; 2 Chr. 7:20–22; Jer. 16:10

9 [j]2 Kin. 22:17; 2 Chr. 34:25; Jer. 11:3

10 [k]2 Kin. 22:20 [l]Jer. 14:17; 22:11; Lam. 3:48

11 [m]1 Chr. 3:15 [n]2 Kin. 23:34; 2 Chr. 36:4; Ezek. 19:4 [3]Or *Jehoahaz*

13 [o]2 Kin. 23:35; Jer. 17:11; Ezek. 22:13 [p]Lev. 19:13; Deut. 24:14, 15; Mic. 3:10; Hab. 2:9; James 5:4 [4]Lit. *roof chambers, upper chambers*

14 [5]Lit. *roof chambers, upper chambers*

15 [q]2 Kin. 23:25; Ps. 128:2; Is. 3:10; Jer. 7:23; 42:6

16 [6]Defended

17 [r]Jer. 6:13; 8:10; Ezek. 19:6; [Luke 12:15–20]

■ **22:5 I swear by Myself.** See Gen. 22:16; Is. 45:23 and notes.

■ **22:6 Gilead . . . Lebanon.** These were fertile regions (cf. 8:22 and note). Lebanon was well-watered and rich in forests, especially cedar, which was used for the Jerusalem temple (1 Kin. 5:6–10).

■ **22:7 prepare.** Lit. "consecrate." Language normally used of war undertaken by God for His people is used, shockingly, of a foreign army arrayed against God's people (6:4, 5; 21:4, 5).

■ **22:10 the dead . . . him who goes away.** That is, Josiah and his son Shallum (v. 11; also called Jehoahaz, 1 Chr. 3:15 text note). Shallum reigned briefly and was exiled to Egypt in 609 B.C. (2 Kin. 23:30–34). This saying probably dates from that year.

■ **22:15 Shall you reign . . . well with him.** The contrast is between kingship seen as the exercise of justice (Josiah) and kingship as an opportunity for getting wealth (Jehoiakim).

■ **22:16 Was not this knowing Me.** See Ps. 9:18 note. Knowing the Lord requires being faithful to His commands (Mic. 6:6–8; John 14:15, 17).

■ **22:17 your.** That is, Jehoiakim.

covetousness . . . innocent blood . . . oppression. Jehoiakim was guilty of all the evils Jeremiah condemns (6:13; 7:6; 19:4; 21:12; and cf. 26:20–23).

For shedding innocent blood,
And practicing oppression and violence."

18 Therefore thus says the LORD concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah:

s"They shall not lament for him,
Saying, t'Alas, my brother!' or 'Alas, my sister!'
They shall not lament for him,
Saying, 'Alas, master!' or 'Alas, his glory!'
19 u He shall be buried with the burial of a donkey,
Dragged and cast out beyond the gates of Jerusalem.

20 "Go up to Lebanon, and cry out,
And lift up your voice in Bashan;
Cry from Abarim,
For all your lovers are destroyed.
21 I spoke to you in your prosperity,
But you said, 'I will not hear.'
v This *has been* your manner from your youth,
That you did not obey My voice.
22 The wind shall eat up all w your 7rulers,
And your lovers shall go into captivity;
Surely then you will be ashamed and humiliated
For all your wickedness.
23 O inhabitant of Lebanon,
Making your nest in the cedars,
How gracious will you be when pangs come upon you,
Like x the pain of a woman in 8labor?

Message to Coniah

24 "*As* I live," says the LORD, y"though 9Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, z were the 1signet on My right hand, yet I would pluck you off; 25 a and I will give you into the hand of those who seek your life, and into the hand *of those* whose face you fear—the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and the hand of the 2Chaldeans. 26 b So I will cast you out, and your mother who bore you, into another country where you were not born; and there you shall die. 27 But to the land to which they desire to return, there they shall not return.

28 "Is this man 3Coniah a despised, broken idol—
c A vessel in which *is* no pleasure?
Why are they cast out, he and his descendants,
And cast into a land which they do not know?
29 d O earth, earth, earth,
Hear the word of the LORD!
30 Thus says the LORD:

18 s Jer. 16:4, 6 t 1 Kin. 13:30
19 u 1 Kin. 21:23, 24; 2 Chr. 36:6; Jer. 36:30; Dan. 1:2
21 v Jer. 3:24, 25; 32:30
22 w Jer. 23:1 7 Lit. *shepherds*
23 x Jer. 6:24 8 *childbirth*
24 y 2 Kin. 24:6, 8; 1 Chr. 3:16; 2 Chr. 36:9; Jer. 37:1 z Song 8:6; Is. 49:16; Hag. 2:23 9 Or *Jeconiah* or *Jehoiachin* 1 *signet ring*
25 a 2 Kin. 24:15, 16; Jer. 34:20 2 Or *Babylonians*
26 b 2 Kin. 24:15; Jer. 10:18; 16:13
28 c Ps. 31:12; Jer. 48:38; Hos. 8:8 3 See note at v. 24
29 d Deut. 32:1; Is. 1:2; 34:1; Mic. 1:2

■ **22:19 burial of a donkey.** The extreme shame of no burial. See 7:33; 8:1, 2 and notes; cf. 15:3.

■ **22:20 Lebanon . . . Bashan . . . Abarim.** These mountainous regions lie to the north, northeast, and southeast respectively. Jerusalem is pictured as wailing for help to former allies, themselves now powerless before Babylon, leaving Jerusalem to cry alone.

■ **22:23 inhabitant of Lebanon.** In the present context this phrase is a figure for Jerusalem, related to the close trade connections between Jerusalem and Lebanon. The temple and palace were built with cedar from Lebanon (v. 6 note). The name connotes the pride and false sense of security of Judah.

■ **22:24–30** This oracle is against Jehoiachin (here called "Coniah"; see text note on v. 24), in whose reign the first major deportations to Babylon occurred.

■ **22:24 signet.** This represents the identity of the owner, and to reject it is shocking. Later, the same language is used to promise a renewal of the Davidic kingdom (Hag. 2:23).

■ **22:26 you . . . and your mother.** See 13:18 and note.

into another country. This reference to exile in Babylon is fulfilled in 597 B.C. (29:2; 2 Kin. 24:15).

■ **22:29 O earth, earth, earth.** In this address to the land we hear the Lord's grief over His inheritance, defiled by Judah's sin (2:7 and note; 12:4).

■ **22:30 Write this man down as childless.** Though Jehoiachin had children (1 Chr. 3:17, 18), none of them would reign as king over Judah. Promises of future Davidic kingship (e.g., 23:5, 6) were fulfilled beyond the scope of the historical Israelite and Judean kingdoms—in Christ the Son of Man (Dan. 7:13 and note), and the greater son of David (Matt. 22:41–46). Even the promise to Zerubbabel (Hag. 2:23), Jehoiachin's grandson (1 Chr. 3:19), finds fulfillment in Christ, since Zerubbabel never reigned as king. Israel was abandoned until Christ came (Mic. 5:3).

'Write this man down as [e]childless,
A man *who* shall not prosper in his days;
For [f]none of his descendants shall prosper,
Sitting on the throne of David,
And ruling anymore in Judah.' "

The Branch of Righteousness

23 "Woe [a]to the shepherds who destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture!" says the LORD. 2 Therefore thus says the LORD God of Israel against the shepherds who feed My people: "You have scattered My flock, driven them away, and not attended to them. [b]Behold, I will attend to you for the evil of your doings," says the LORD. 3 "But [c]I will gather the remnant of My flock out of all countries where I have driven them, and bring them back to their folds; and they shall be fruitful and increase. 4 I will set up [d]shepherds over them who will feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be dismayed, nor shall they be lacking," says the LORD.

5 "Behold, [e]*the* days are coming," says the LORD,
"That I will raise to David a Branch of righteousness;
A King shall reign and [1]prosper,
[f]And execute [2]judgment and righteousness in the [3]earth.
6 [g]In His days Judah will be saved,
And Israel [h]will dwell safely;
Now [i]this *is* His name by which He will be called:

[4]THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

7 "Therefore, behold, [j]*the* days are coming," says the LORD, "that they shall no longer say, 'As the LORD lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of Egypt,' 8 but, 'As the LORD lives who brought up and led the descendants of the house of Israel from the north country [k]and from all the countries where I had driven them.' And they shall dwell in their own [l]land."

False Prophets and Empty Oracles

9 My heart within me is broken
Because of the prophets;
[m]All my bones shake.
I am like a drunken man,
And like a man whom wine has overcome,
Because of the LORD,
And because of His holy words.
10 For [n]the land is full of adulterers;
For [o]because of a curse the land mourns.
[p]The pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up.
Their course of life is evil,
And their might *is* not right.

11 "For [q]both prophet and priest are profane;
Yes, [r]in My house I have found their wickedness," says the LORD.

30 [e]1 Chr. 3:16, 17; Matt. 1:12 [f]Ps. 94:20; Jer. 36:30

CHAPTER 23

1 [a]Is. 56:9–12; Jer. 10:21

2 [b]Ex. 32:34

3 [c]Is. 11:11, 12, 16; Jer. 32:37

4 [d]Jer. 3:15; [Ezek. 34:23]

5 [e]Is. 4:2; 11:1; 40:10, 11; Jer. 33:14; [Dan. 9:24; Zech. 6:12]; Matt. 1:1, 6; Luke 3:31; [John 1:45; 7:42] [f]Ps. 72:2; Is. 9:7; 32:1, 18; [Dan. 9:24] [1]*act wisely* [2]*justice* [3]*land*

6 [g]Deut. 33:28; Jer. 30:10; Zech. 14:11 [h]Jer. 32:37 [i]Is. 45:24; Jer. 33:16; [Dan. 9:24; Rom. 3:22; 1 Cor. 1:30] [4]Heb. *YHWH Tsidkenu*

7 [j]Is. 43:18, 19; Jer. 16:14

8 [k]Is. 43:5, 6; Ezek. 34:13; Amos 9:14, 15 [l]Gen. 12:7; Jer. 16:14, 15; 31:8

9 [m]Jer. 8:18; Hab. 3:16

10 [n]Jer. 9:2 [o]Hos. 4:2; Mal. 3:5 [p]Ps. 107:34; Jer. 9:10

11 [q]Jer. 6:13; Zeph. 3:4 [r]Jer. 7:30; 32:34; Ezek. 8:11; 23:39

■ **23:3 I will.** The failure of the kings requires the Lord Himself to take control in a new way (24:7 note).

remnant. The gathering of the remnant shows the continuing care of the Lord for His people and His determination to fulfill His covenantal purposes. In the present context, the doctrine of the remnant suggests first of all the breaking off of certain of Judah's branches (vv. 1, 2; cf. Rom. 11:17–24) following the king's neglect and the due punishment (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes).

bring them back to their folds. The Lord Himself is now the Shepherd (Ps. 23).

■ **23:4 I will set up shepherds over them.** Under the Shepherd there will be true shepherds, who will faithfully administer the kingdom in the new age (Mic. 5:5).

■ **23:5, 6 raise to David.** This messianic promise is a fulfillment of the promise to David (2 Sam. 7:12; Matt. 1:1, 17).

■ **23:5 Branch of righteousness.** A messianic term; see Is. 4:2; 11:1; and Zech. 6:12, where Zerubbabel is a type of Christ.

execute judgment and righteousness. See note on 21:12.

■ **23:6 Judah . . . Israel.** The reunification of Judah and Israel marks the messianic age (Ezek. 37:15–22).

safely. The blessings of the messianic kingdom will include deliverance from the political and military turmoil surrounding Judah.

name. Names were understood as designations of character, not arbitrary labels of identification. See "Immanuel" in Is. 7:14 and the names in Is. 9:6.

THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. *Righteous rule is the hallmark of* the Messiah's reign.

■ **23:9 the prophets.** See "Prophets" at Deut. 18:18.

12 "Therefore[s] their way shall be to them
Like slippery *ways;*
In the darkness they shall be driven on
And fall in them;
For I [t]will bring disaster on them.
The year of their punishment," says the LORD.
13 "And I have seen [5]folly in the prophets of Samaria:
[u]They prophesied by Baal
And [v]caused My people Israel to err.
14 Also I have seen a horrible thing in the prophets of Jerusalem:
[w]They commit adultery and walk in lies;
They also [x]strengthen the hands of evildoers,
So that no one turns back from his wickedness.
All of them are like [y]Sodom to Me,
And her inhabitants like Gomorrah.

15 "Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts concerning the prophets:

'Behold, I will feed them with [z]wormwood,
And make them drink the water of gall;
For from the prophets of Jerusalem
[6]Profaneness has gone out into all the land.' "

16 Thus says the LORD of hosts:

"Do not listen to the words of the prophets who prophesy to you.
They make you worthless;
[a]They speak a vision of their own heart,
Not from the mouth of the LORD.
17 They continually say to those who despise Me,
'The LORD has said, [b]"You shall have peace" ';
And *to* everyone who [c]walks according to the [7]dictates of his own heart, they say,
[d]'No evil shall come upon you.' "

18 For [e]who has stood in the counsel of the LORD,
And has perceived and heard His word?
Who has marked His word and heard *it?*
19 Behold, a [f]whirlwind of the LORD has gone forth in fury—
A violent whirlwind!
It will fall violently on the head of the wicked.
20 The [g]anger of the LORD will not turn back
Until He has executed and performed the thoughts of His heart.
[h]In the latter days you will understand it perfectly.

21 "I[i] have not sent these prophets, yet they ran.
I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.
22 But if they had stood in My counsel,
And had caused My people to hear My words,
Then they would have [j]turned them from their evil way
And from the evil of their doings.

12 [s]Ps. 35:6; [Prov. 4:19]; Jer. 13:16 [t]Jer. 11:23
13 [u]1 Kin. 18:18–21; Jer. 2:8 [v]Is. 9:16 [5]Lit. *distastefulness*
14 [w]Jer. 29:23 [x]Jer. 23:22; Ezek. 13:22, 23 [y]Gen. 18:20; Deut. 32:32; Is. 1:9, 10
15 [z]Deut. 29:18; Jer. 9:15 [6]Or *Pollution*
16 [a]Jer. 14:14; Ezek. 13:3, 6
17 [b]Jer. 8:11; Ezek. 13:10; Zech. 10:2 [c]Deut. 29:19; Jer. 3:17 [d]Jer. 5:12; Amos 9:10; Mic. 3:11 [7]*stubbornness* or *imagination*
18 [e]Job 15:8, 9; [Jer. 23:22; 1 Cor. 2:16]
19 [f]Jer. 25:32; 30:23; Amos 1:14
20 [g]2 Kin. 23:26, 27; Jer. 30:24 [h]Gen. 49:1
21 [i]Jer. 14:14; 23:32; 27:15
22 [j]Jer. 25:5

■ **23:14 They commit adultery . . . his wickedness.** Right belief and right action are inseparable in the Old Testament; it is no accident that those who have not heard God's word actively encourage evil. See 29:21–23.

like Sodom . . . like Gomorrah. See 20:16; Is. 1:9 and notes. The comparison of Jerusalem to Sodom and Gomorrah is shocking.

■ **23:18 stood in the counsel of the LORD.** The Hebrew word translated "counsel" here and in v. 22 may also be translated "council," depending on whether the emphasis is on God's deliberations with the heavenly "council" (1 Kin. 22:19–22; Job 1:6) or on the "counsel" resulting from those deliberations. The word is translated "secret" in Amos 3:7.

■ **23:21 I have not sent.** See 14:14.

yet they ran . . . prophesied. They are a picture of zeal in their self-serving propagation of falsehood. See "Prophets" at Deut. 18:18.

■ **23:22 counsel.** See note on v. 18.

23 "*Am* I a God near at hand," says the LORD,
"And not a God afar off?
24 Can anyone [k]hide himself in secret places,
So I shall not see him?" says the LORD;
[l]"Do I not fill heaven and earth?" says the LORD.

25 "I have heard what the prophets have said who prophesy lies in My name, saying, 'I have dreamed, I have dreamed!' 26 How long will *this* be in the heart of the prophets who prophesy lies? Indeed *they are* prophets of the deceit of their own heart, 27 who try to make My people forget My name by their dreams which everyone tells his neighbor, [m]as their fathers forgot My name for Baal.

28 "The prophet who has a dream, let him tell a dream;
And he who has My word, let him speak My word faithfully.
What *is* the chaff to the wheat?" says the LORD.
29 "*Is* not My word like a [n]fire?" says the LORD,
"And like a hammer *that* breaks the rock in pieces?

30 "Therefore behold, [o]I *am* against the prophets," says the LORD, "who steal My words every one from his neighbor. 31 Behold, I *am* [p]against the prophets," says the LORD, "who use their

24 [k][Ps. 139:7]; Amos 9:2, 3 [l][1 Kin. 8:27]; Ps. 139:7

27 [m]Judg. 3:7

29 [n]Jer. 5:14

30 [o]Deut. 18:20; Ps. 34:16; Jer. 14:14, 15; Ezek. 13:8, 9

31 [p]Ezek. 13:9

Omnipresence and Omnipotence

God is present in all places; however, we should not think of Him as filling space, for He has no physical dimensions. It is as spirit that He is everywhere. Although it surpasses the understanding of body-bound creatures like ourselves, God Himself is present everywhere in His majesty and power. Needy souls praying to Him anywhere in the world are in His sight and receive His personal attention. Belief in God's omnipresence is apparent in Ps. 139:7–10; Jer. 23:23, 24; Acts 17:24–28. When Paul speaks of the ascended Christ as filling all things (Eph. 4:8), Christ's availability everywhere in the fullness of His power is certainly part of the meaning. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are omnipresent, though the personal presence of the glorified Son is not physical (in the body).

"I know that You can do everything, and that no purpose of Yours can be withheld" (Job 42:2). Job testifies that God is omnipotent. He is all-powerful, almighty. God has power to do everything that in His perfect wisdom and goodness He wills to do. Omnipotence does not mean that God can do literally everything: God cannot sin, lie, change His nature or deny the demands of His holy character (Num. 23:19; 1 Sam. 15:29; 2 Tim. 2:13; Heb. 6:18; James 1:13, 17). He cannot make a square circle, for the notion of a square circle is self-contradictory; He cannot cease to be God. But all that He wills and promises He can and will do.

Was it excessive for David to say, "I will love You, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold" (Ps. 18:1, 2)? Was it excessive for another psalmist to declare, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Ps. 46:1)? It would have been a fault to say such things if God were less than omnipresent and omnipotent. But the knowledge of God's greatness, including His omnipresence and omnipotence, produces great faith and high praise.

■ **23:23 at hand . . . afar.** The point is that nothing, near or far, can escape God's knowledge (Ps. 139:2; Amos 9:2, 3).

■ **23:24** See theological note "Omnipresence and Omnipotence."

■ **23:25 dreamed . . . dreamed.** The dream was one way in which a revelation might come to a prophet (Num. 12:6; cf. Joel 2:28); yet such claims should always be treated with due suspicion and tested against the rest of God's revelation (Deut. 13:1–3).

■ **23:28 dream . . . word . . . chaff . . . wheat.** The false dream is to the true prophetic word as chaff is to wheat; only the wheat has any value.

■ **23:29 fire . . . hammer.** There can be no mistaking the true word, because of its inevitable effects (Amos 3:8).

■ **23:30 who steal My words.** For a case of prophetic jealousy, see 1 Kin. 22:24.

■ **23:31 says the LORD . . . and say, 'He says.'** The false prophets disguise their own words as words from God by using the prophetic formula.

tongues and say, 'He says.' 32 Behold, I *am* against those who prophesy false dreams," says the LORD, "and tell them, and cause My people to err by their [q]lies and by [r]their recklessness. Yet I did not send them or command them; therefore they shall not [s]profit this people at all," says the LORD.

33 "So when these people or the prophet or the priest ask you, saying, 'What is [t]the [8]oracle of the LORD?' you shall then say to them, [9]'What oracle?' I will even forsake you," says the LORD. 34 "And *as for* the prophet and the priest and the people who say, 'The [1]oracle of the LORD!' I will even punish that man and his house. 35 Thus every one of you shall say to his neighbor, and every one to his brother, 'What has the LORD answered?' and, 'What has the LORD spoken?' 36 And the [2]oracle of the LORD you shall mention no more. For every man's word will be his oracle, for you have [u]perverted the words of the living God, the LORD of hosts, our God. 37 Thus you shall say to the prophet, 'What has the LORD answered you?' and, 'What has the LORD spoken?' 38 But since you say, 'The [3]oracle of the LORD!' therefore thus says the LORD: 'Because you say this word, "The oracle of the LORD!" and I have sent to you, saying, "Do not say, 'The oracle of the LORD!' " 39 therefore behold, I, even I, [v]will utterly forget you and forsake you, and the city that I gave you and your fathers, and *will cast you* out of My presence. 40 And I will bring [w]an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual [x]shame, which shall not be forgotten.' "

The Sign of Two Baskets of Figs

24 The [a]LORD showed me, and there were two baskets of figs set before the temple of the LORD, after Nebuchadnezzar [b]king of Babylon had carried away captive [c]Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and the princes of Judah with the craftsmen and smiths, from Jerusalem, and had brought them to Babylon. 2 One basket *had* very good figs, like the figs *that are* first ripe; and the other basket *had* very bad figs which could not be eaten, they were so [d]bad.

3 Then the LORD said to me, "What do you see, Jeremiah?"

And I said, "Figs, the good figs, very good; and the bad, very bad, which cannot be eaten, they are so bad."

4 Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 5 "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: 'Like these good figs, so will I [f]acknowledge those who are carried away captive from Judah, whom I have sent out of this place for *their own* good, into the land of the Chaldeans. 6 For I will set My eyes on them for good, and [e]I will bring them back to this land; [f]I will build them and not pull *them* down, and I will plant them and not pluck *them* up. 7 Then I will give them [g]a heart to know Me, that I *am* the LORD; and they shall be [h]My people, and I will be their God, for they shall return to Me [i]with their whole heart.

8 'And as the bad [j]figs which cannot be eaten, they are so bad'—surely thus says the LORD—'so will I give up Zedekiah the king of Judah, his princes, the [k]residue of Jerusalem who remain in this land, and [l]those who dwell in the land of Egypt. 9 I will deliver them to [m]trouble into all the kingdoms of the earth, for *their* harm, [n]*to be* a reproach and a byword, a taunt and a curse, in all places where I shall drive them. 10 And I will send the sword, the famine, and the pestilence among them, till they are [2]consumed from the land that I gave to them and their fathers.' "

Seventy Years of Desolation

25 The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah, [a]in the fourth year of [b]Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah (which *was* the first year of Nebuchad-

32 [q]Lam. 2:14; 3:37 [r]Zeph. 3:4 [s]Jer. 7:8

33 [t]Mal. 1:1 [8]*burden, prophecy* [9]LXX, Tg., Vg. *'You are the burden.'*

34 [1]*burden, prophecy*

36 [u]Deut. 4:2 [2]*burden, prophecy*

38 [3]*burden,* prophecy

39 [v]Hos. 4:6

40 [w]Jer. 20:11 [x]Mic. 3:5–7

CHAPTER 24

1 [a]Amos 7:1, 4; 8:1 [b]2 Kin. 24:12–16 [c]Jer. 22:24–28; 29:2

2 [d]Jer. 29:17

5 [f]*regard*

6 [e]Jer. 12:15; 29:10 [f]Jer. 32:41; 33:7; 42:10

7 [g][Deut. 30:6] [h]Jer. 30:22; 31:33; 32:38 [i]Jer. 29:13

8 [j]Jer. 29:17 [k]Jer. 39:9 [l]Jer. 44:1,26–30

9 [m]Deut. 28:25, 37 [n]Ps. 44:13, 14

10 [2]*destroyed*

CHAPTER 25

1 [a]Jer. 36:1 [b]2 Kin. 24:1, 2

■ **23:39 forget . . . forsake.** Some Hebrew manuscripts and ancient versions read, "I will surely lift you up and cast you away," a difference of only the location of a dot above a letter. That reading makes a play on words, since in the Hebrew, "oracle" and "lift up" sound almost the same. They talk without authority about God's "oracle," and God's response will be to "lift them up."

■ **24:1–10** A vision of two baskets of figs, one representing those exiled to Babylon, and the other those who would resist exile and with it the Lord's purpose of judgment and salvation. This prophecy reveals that it is too late to avert the exile by repentance (21:9).

■ **24:1 Jeconiah . . . to Babylon.** The first large deportation was in 597 B.C. (2 Kin. 24:14–16).

■ **24:2 very good figs . . . very bad figs.** There is in Judah a remnant who will be preserved for God's purposes ("good figs"), but their leaders are so corrupt that they are beyond redemption and can only be destroyed by judgment ("bad figs," vv. 8–10).

■ **24:5–7** The "good figs" symbolize the exiles, those whom God preserves through the due punishment for Judah's sin, and in whom henceforth His purposes will be accomplished.

■ **24:7 I will give them a heart to know Me.** The Lord's answer to His people's inability to maintain the covenant relationship is for He Himself to intervene and create in them a new capacity for knowing Him.

they shall be My people, and I will be their God. Use of the basic covenant formula (32:38; Lev. 26:12) shows that this answer is nothing less than a new covenant. The theology introduced here is developed at 31:31–34.

■ **25:1—29:32** Jeremiah predicts seventy years of Babylonian captivity for Judah as judgment for persistent sin, and warns the neighboring na-

nezzar king of Babylon), [2] which Jeremiah the prophet spoke to all the people of Judah and to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying: [3] [c]"From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, even to this day, this *is* the twenty-third year in which the word of the LORD has come to me; and I have spoken to you, rising early and speaking, [d]but you have not listened. [4] And the LORD has sent to you all His servants the prophets, [e]rising early and sending *them,* but you have not listened nor inclined your ear to hear. [5] They said, [f]'Repent now everyone of his evil way and his evil doings, and dwell in the land that the LORD has given to you and your fathers forever and ever. [6] Do not go after other gods to serve them and worship them, and do not provoke Me to anger with the works of your hands; and I will not harm you.' [7] Yet you have not listened to Me," says the LORD, "that you might [g]provoke Me to anger with the works of your hands to your own hurt.

[8] "Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Because you have not heard My words, [9] behold, I will send and take [h]all the families of the north,' says the LORD, 'and Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, [i]My servant, and will bring them against this land, against its inhabitants, and against these nations all around, and will utterly destroy them, and [j]make them an astonishment, a hissing, and perpetual desolations. [10] Moreover I will [l]take from them the [k]voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, [l]the sound of the millstones and the light of the lamp. [11] And this whole land shall be a desolation *and* an astonishment, and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy [m]years.

[12] 'Then it will come to pass, [n]when [2]seventy years are completed, *that* I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their iniquity,' says the LORD; [o]'and I will make it a perpetual desolation. [13] So I will bring on that land all My words which I have pronounced against it, all that is written in this book, which Jeremiah has prophesied concerning all the nations. [14] [p](For many nations [q]and great kings shall [r]be served by them also; [s]and I will repay them according to their deeds and according to the works of their own hands.)' "

Judgment on the Nations

[15] For thus says the LORD God of Israel to me: "Take this [t]wine cup of [3]fury from My hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send you, to drink it. [16] And [u]they will drink and stagger and go mad because of the sword that I will send among them."

[17] Then I took the cup from the LORD's hand, and made all the nations drink, to whom the LORD had sent me: [18] Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, its kings and its princes, to make them [v]a desolation, an astonishment, a hissing, and [w]a curse, as *it is* this day; [19] Pharaoh king of Egypt, his servants, his princes, and all his people; [20] all the mixed multitude, all the kings of [x]the land of Uz, all the kings of the land of the [y]Philistines (namely, Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, and [z]the remnant of Ashdod); [21] [a]Edom, Moab, and the people of Ammon; [22] all the kings of [b]Tyre, all the kings of Sidon, and the kings of the coastlands which *are* across the [c]sea; [23] [d]Dedan, Tema, Buz, and all *who are* in the farthest corners; [24] all the kings of Arabia and all the kings of the [e]mixed

3 [c]Jer. 1:2 [d]Jer. 7:13; 11:7, 8, 10

4 [e]Jer. 7:13, 25

5 [f]Jer. 18:11

7 [g]Deut. 32:21

9 [h]Jer. 1:15 [i]Is. 45:1 [j]Jer. 18:16

10 [k]Rev. 18:23 [l]Eccl. 12:4 [l]Lit. *cause to perish from them*

11 [m]Jer. 29:10

12 [n]Ezra 1:1 [o]Is. 13:20 [2]Beginning circa 605 B.C. (2 Kin. 24:1) and ending circa 536 B.C. (Ezra 1:1)

14 [p]Jer. 50:9; 51:27, 28 [q]Jer. 51:27 [r]Jer. 27:7 [s]Jer. 50:29; 51:6, 24

15 [t]Rev. 14:10 [3]*wrath*

16 [u]Nah. 3:11

18 [v]Jer. 25:9, 11 [w]Jer. 24:9

20 [x]Job 1:1 [y]Jer. 47:1–7 [z]Is. 20:1

21 [a]Jer. 49:7

22 [b]Jer. 47:4 [c]Jer. 49:23

23 [d]Jer. 49:7, 8

24 [e]Ezek. 30:5

tions as well of judgment at the hands of Babylon (ch. 25). His message meets opposition from false prophets, priests, and the people (chs. 26—29).

■ **25:1 fourth year of Jehoiakim.** Babylon began its attacks in Palestine and Judah became a Babylonian vassal state in 605 B.C.

■ **25:3 thirteenth year of Josiah.** See 1:2 and notes.

■ **25:4 rising early.** Jeremiah's persistence was part of a long prophetic mission to Israel. Like his predecessors, his ministry failed to obtain the desired response (7:13 and note).

■ **25:9 families of the north.** Babylon and her allies (1:15; 6:1).

Nebuchadnezzar . . . My servant. See also 27:6. He is God's "servant" in the sense of being appointed as an agent of His judgment. In the same way Cyrus is called God's "anointed" for the purpose of releasing the exiles to return to their land (Is. 45:1).

nations all around. See vv. 19–26. The judgment on Judah is only the beginning of a general judgment.

■ **25:11, 12 seventy years.** See 29:10. This period may be counted in round figures from 605 B.C. (v. 1; Dan. 1:1) to 538 B.C., when the exiles began to return home following Cyrus's decree (2 Chr. 36:20–23). The seventy years allow the Lord's word of judgment to have full effect before new salvation can be experienced.

punish the king of Babylon. This prophecy is developed further in chs. 50; 51. The agent of punishment is in turn punished for her own sins (50:18; cf. Is. 10:5–7, 12).

■ **25:13 in this book.** In the Septuagint (the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament) the "oracles against the nations" from chs. 46—51 occur after this phrase. Those oracles appear in different orders in the Hebrew and Greek versions.

■ **25:14 many nations and great kings.** Possibly Persia and its allies, but more likely a general statement of the principle that agents of God's judgment are themselves subject to judgment (vv. 11, 12 note).

■ **25:18 Jerusalem and . . . Judah.** God's judgment is first visited upon His chosen people, as befits those who are most privileged (25:29; Amos 3:2).

■ **25:20 Ashkelon . . . remnant of Ashdod.** This list of Philistine cities omits Gath, apparently already destroyed (Amos 1:6–8). Ashdod had been partially destroyed by the Egyptians during the seventh century. See also 47:1–7.

■ **25:21 Edom, Moab, and . . . Ammon.** See 49:7–22; 48:1—49:6.

■ **25:22 Tyre . . . Sidon.** The principal cities of Phoenicia, both ports on the Mediterranean coast. See Ezek. 28:1–23.

■ **25:23 Dedan, Tema.** Tribes living in northern Arabia (Is. 21:13, 14). Buz was probably also an Arabian tribal group.

■ **25:24 Arabia.** See 49:28–33.

multitude who dwell in the desert; [25] all the kings of Zimri, all the kings of [f]Elam, and all the kings of the [g]Medes; [26] [h]all the kings of the north, far and near, one with another; and all the kingdoms of the world which *are* on the face of the earth. Also the king of [4]Sheshach shall drink after them.

[27] "Therefore you shall say to them, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: [i]"Drink, [j]be drunk, and vomit! Fall and rise no more, because of the sword which I will send among you." ' [28] And it shall be, if they refuse to take the cup from your hand to drink, then you shall say to them, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: "You shall certainly drink! [29] For behold, [k]I begin to bring calamity on the city [l]which is called by My name, and should you be utterly unpunished? You shall not be unpunished, for [m]I will call for a sword on all the inhabitants of the earth," says the LORD of hosts.'

[30] "Therefore prophesy against them all these words, and say to them:

'The LORD will [n]roar from on high,
And utter His voice from [o]His holy habitation;
He will roar mightily against [p]His fold.
He will give [q]a shout, as those who tread *the grapes,*
Against all the inhabitants of the earth.
[31] A noise will come to the ends of the earth—
For the LORD has [r]a controversy with the nations;
[s]He will plead His case with all flesh.
He will give those *who are* wicked to the sword,' says the LORD."

[32] Thus says the LORD of hosts:

"Behold, disaster shall go forth
From nation to nation,
And [t]a great whirlwind shall be raised up
From the farthest parts of the earth.

[33] [u]"And at that day the slain of the LORD shall be from *one* end of the earth even to the *other* end of the earth. They shall not be [v]lamented, [w]or gathered, or buried; they shall become refuse on the ground.

[34] "Wail,[x] shepherds, and cry!
Roll about *in the ashes,*
You leaders of the flock!
For the days of your slaughter and your dispersions are fulfilled;
You shall fall like a precious vessel.
[35] And the shepherds will have no [5]way to flee,
Nor the leaders of the flock to escape.
[36] A voice of the cry of the shepherds,
And a wailing of the leaders to the flock *will be heard.*
For the LORD has plundered their pasture,
[37] And the peaceful dwellings are cut down
Because of the fierce anger of the LORD.
[38] He has left His lair like the lion;
For their land is desolate
Because of the fierceness of the Oppressor,
And because of His fierce anger."

25 [f]Gen. 10:22; Is. 11:11; Jer. 49:34 [g]Is. 13:17; Jer. 51:11, 28
26 [h]Jer. 50:9 [4]A code word for Babylon, Jer. 51:41
27 [i]Jer. 25:16; Hab. 2:16 [j]Is. 63:6
29 [k][Prov. 11:31]; Is. 10:12; Jer. 13:13; Ezek. 9:6; [Luke 23:31; 1 Pet. 4:17] [l]Dan. 9:18 [m]Ezek. 38:21
30 [n]Is. 42:13; Joel 3:16; Amos 1:2 [o]Ps. 11:4 [p]1 Kin. 9:3; Ps. 132:14 [q]Is. 16:9; Jer. 48:33
31 [r]Hos. 4:1; Mic. 6:2 [s]Is. 66:16; Joel 3:2
32 [t]Jer. 23:19; 30:23
33 [u]Is. 34:2, 3; 66:16 [v]Jer. 16:4, 6; Ezek. 39:4, 17 [w]Ps. 79:3; Jer. 8:2; Rev. 11:9
34 [x]Jer. 4:8; 6:26; Ezek. 27:30
35 [5]Or *refuge*

■ **25:25 Zimri.** Unknown.

Medes. Having themselves been defeated by Cyrus, the Medes participated with the Persians in the conquest.

■ **25:26 Sheshach.** This word is an allusion to Babylon based on the word "Babel," using a familiar code that substitutes for each consonant the corresponding one from the alphabet written in reverse. In English, ABC would become ZYX.

■ **25:29 city which is called by My name.** That is, Jerusalem; see notes on 7:10–15. The Lord would not punish His own people while ignoring the wickedness of other nations. An important factor in the theology of judgment against the nations is that the honor of God's own name is at stake in the fate of His people.

■ **25:31 a controversy.** A legal action in which the Lord claims His right to punish the guilty (2:9 note).

■ **25:37 peaceful dwellings.** "Dwellings" is the same Hebrew word as "fold" in v. 30.

■ **25:38 like the lion.** See note on 2:15. Here Jeremiah refers to the Lord (Amos 3:8).

Jeremiah Saved from Death

CHAPTER 26

26 In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, this word came from the LORD, saying, 2 "Thus says the LORD: 'Stand in [a]the court of the LORD's house, and speak to all the cities of Judah, which come to worship *in* the LORD's house, [b]all the words that I command you to speak to them. [c]Do not diminish a word. 3 [d]Perhaps everyone will listen and turn from his evil way, that I may [e]relent concerning the calamity which I purpose to bring on them because of the evil of their doings.' 4 And you shall say to them, 'Thus says the LORD: [f]"If you will not listen to Me, to walk in My law which I have set before you, 5 to heed the words of My servants the prophets [g]whom I sent to you, both rising up early and sending *them* (but you have not heeded), 6 then I will make this house like [h]Shiloh, and will make this city [i]a curse to all the nations of the earth." ' "

7 So the priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of the LORD. 8 Now it happened, when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking all that the LORD had commanded *him* to speak to all the people, that the priests and the prophets and all the people seized him, saying, "You will surely die! 9 Why have you prophesied in the name of the LORD, saying, 'This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be [j]desolate, without an inhabitant'?" And all the people were gathered against Jeremiah in the house of the LORD.

10 When the princes of Judah heard these things, they came up from the king's house to the house of the LORD and sat down in the entry of the New Gate of the LORD's *house.* 11 And the priests and the prophets spoke to the princes and all the people, saying, [l]"This man deserves to [k]die! For he has prophesied against this city, as you have heard with your ears."

12 Then Jeremiah spoke to all the princes and all the people, saying: "The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city with all the words that you have heard. 13 Now therefore, [l]amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God; then the LORD will relent concerning the doom that He has pronounced against you. 14 As for me, here [m]I am, in your hand; do with me as seems good and [2]proper to you. 15 But know for certain that if you put me to death, you will surely bring innocent blood on yourselves, on this city, and on its inhabitants; for truly the LORD has sent me to you to speak all these words in your hearing."

16 So the princes and all the people said to the priests and the prophets, "This man does not deserve to die. For he has spoken to us in the name of the LORD our God."

17 [n]Then certain of the elders of the land rose up and spoke to all the assembly of the people, saying: 18 [o]"Micah of Moresheth prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and spoke to all the people of Judah, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts:

> [p]"Zion shall be plowed *like* a field,
> Jerusalem shall become [q]heaps of ruins,
> And the mountain of the [3]temple
> Like the [4]bare hills of the forest." '

19 Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah ever put him to death? [r]Did he not fear the LORD and [s]seek the LORD's favor? And the LORD [t]relented concerning the doom which He had pronounced against them. [u]But we are doing great evil against ourselves."

20 Now there was also a man who prophesied in the name of the LORD, Urijah the son of Shemaiah of Kirjath Jearim, who prophesied against this city and against this land according to all the words of Jeremiah. 21 And when Jehoiakim the king, with all his mighty men and all the

2 [a]2 Chr. 24:20, 21; Jer. 19:14 [b]Deut. 4:2; Jer. 43:1; Ezek. 3:10; Matt. 28:20; [Rev. 22:19] [c]Acts 20:27

3 [d]Is. 1:16–19; Jer. 36:3–7 [e]Jer. 18:8; Jon. 3:9

4 [f]Lev. 26:14, 15; Deut. 28:15; 1 Kin. 9:6; Is. 1:20; Jer. 17:27; 22:5

5 [g]Jer. 25:4; 29:19

6 [h]1 Sam. 4:10, 11; Ps. 78:60; Jer. 7:12, 14 [i]2 Kin. 22:19; Is. 65:15; Jer. 24:9

9 [j]Jer. 9:11

11 [k]Jer. 38:4 [l]Lit. *A judgment of death to this man*

13 [l]Jer. 7:3; [Joel 2:13]; Jon. 3:8

14 [m]Jer. 38:5 [2]*right*

17 [n]Acts 5:34

18 [o]Mic. 1:1 [p]Mic. 3:12 [q]Neh. 4:2; Ps. 79:1; Jer. 9:11 [3]Lit. *house* [4]Lit. *high places*

19 [r]2 Chr. 32:26; Is. 37:1, 4, 15–20 [s]2 Kin. 20:1–19 [t]Ex. 32:14; 2 Sam. 24:16; Jer. 18:8 [u][Acts 5:39]

■ **26:1 In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim.** Possibly his first year (609–608 B.C.). The fuller account of the temple sermon (7:1–15) is not dated. This date formula brings Jehoiakim into the foreground as one who rejects Jeremiah's words (ch. 36).

■ **26:2 the court.** Probably the inner courtyard.

■ **26:8 You will surely die.** This phrase was used in handing down the sentence for capital crimes (Ex. 21:15–17; Deut. 18:20). Jeremiah is evidently held to be a false prophet because of the people's belief that God's temple could never be destroyed.

■ **26:10 the princes of Judah.** These persons had legal duties in the royal administration; their arrival indicates that a formal proceeding against Jeremiah is about to begin.

New Gate. The gates were the normal place for court hearings (Ruth 4:1; Prov. 31:23).

■ **26:16 This man does not deserve to die.** Contrast v. 11. This verdict is a remarkable vindication of Jeremiah's authenticity as a prophet.

■ **26:18, 19 Micah of Moresheth.** His precedent is cited in support of the judgment just given, because as a result of his prophecy that Jerusalem would fall (Mic. 3:12), the people repented of their sin. King Hezekiah prayed for Jerusalem and avoided defeat by the Assyrians in 701 B.C. (cf. Is. 37:14–38).

■ **26:20–23** The story of Urijah shows that Jeremiah was not alone in his preaching; it also stresses that Jeremiah's escape is not the most important point of this chapter, but rather the opposition in Judah to the word of God. Urijah died; Jeremiah lived, to complete his God-ordained ministry. Compare the various fates of the heroes of faith in Heb. 11:32–38.

princes, heard his words, the king sought to put him to death; but when Urijah heard *it,* he was afraid and fled, and went to Egypt. 22 Then Jehoiakim the king sent men to Egypt: Elnathan the son of Achbor, and *other* men *who went* with him to Egypt. 23 And they brought Urijah from Egypt and brought him to Jehoiakim the king, who killed him with the sword and cast his dead body into the graves of the [5]common people.

24 Nevertheless [v]the hand of Ahikam the son of Shaphan was with Jeremiah, so that they should not give him into the hand of the people to put him to death.

Symbol of the Bonds and Yokes

27 In[1] the beginning of the reign of [2]Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, [a]king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, 2 "Thus says the LORD to me: 'Make for yourselves bonds and yokes, [b]and put them on your neck, 3 and send them to the king of Edom, the king of Moab, the king of the Ammonites, the king of Tyre, and the king of Sidon, by the hand of the messengers who come to Jerusalem to Zedekiah king of Judah. 4 And command them to say to their masters, "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel—thus you shall say to your masters: 5 [c]'I have made the earth, the man and the beast that *are* on the ground, by My great power and by My outstretched arm, and [d]have given it to whom it seemed proper to Me. 6 [e]And now I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, [f]My servant; and [g]the beasts of the field I have also given him to serve him. 7 [h]So all nations shall serve him and his son and his son's son, [i]until the time of his land comes; [j]and then many nations and great kings shall make him serve them. 8 And it shall be, *that* the nation and kingdom which will not serve Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, and which will not put its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, that nation I will punish,' says the LORD, 'with the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand. 9 Therefore do not listen to your prophets, your diviners, your [3]dreamers, your soothsayers, or your sorcerers, who speak to you, saying, "You shall not serve the king of Babylon." 10 For they prophesy a [k]lie to you, to remove you far from your land; and I will drive you out, and you will perish. 11 But the nations that bring their necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon and serve him, I will let them remain in their own land,' says the LORD, 'and they shall till it and dwell in it.' " ' "

12 I also spoke to [l]Zedekiah king of Judah according to all these words, saying, "Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people, and live! 13 [m]Why will you die, you and your people, by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, as the LORD has spoken against the nation that will not serve the king of Babylon? 14 Therefore [n]do not listen to the words of the prophets who speak to you, saying, 'You shall not serve the king of Babylon,' for they prophesy [o]a lie to you; 15 for I have [p]not sent them," says the LORD, "yet they prophesy a lie in My name, that I may drive you out, and that you may perish, you and the prophets who prophesy to you."

16 Also I spoke to the priests and to all this people, saying, "Thus says the LORD: 'Do not listen to the words of your prophets who prophesy to you, saying, "Behold, [q]the vessels of the LORD's house will now shortly be brought back from Babylon"; for they prophesy a lie to you. 17 Do not listen to them; serve the king of Babylon, and live! Why should this city be laid waste?

23 [5]Lit. *sons of the people*

24 [v]2 Kin. 22:12–14; Jer. 39:14; 40:5–7

CHAPTER 27

1 [a]Jer. 27:3, 12, 20; 28:1 [1]LXX omits v. 1. [2]So with MT, Tg., Vg.; some Heb. mss., Arab., Syr. *Zedekiah* (cf. 27:3, 12; 28:1)

2 [b]Jer. 28:10, 12; Ezek. 4:1; 12:3; 24:3

5 [c]Ps. 115:15; 146:6; Is. 45:12 [d]Deut. 9:29; Ps. 115:16; Jer. 32:17; Dan. 4:17, 25, 32

6 [e]Jer. 28:14 [f]Jer. 25:9; 43:10; Ezek. 29:18, 20 [g]Jer. 28:14; Dan. 2:38

7 [h]2 Chr. 36:20 [i]Jer. 25:12; 50:27; [Dan. 5:26]; Zech. 2:8, 9 [j]Jer. 25:14

9 [3]Lit. *dreams*

10 [k]Jer. 23:16, 32; 28:15

12 [l]Jer. 28:1; 38:17

13 [m][Prov. 8:36]; Jer. 27:8; 38:23; [Ezek. 18:31]

14 [n]Jer. 23:16 [o]Jer. 14:14; 23:21; 29:8, 9; Ezek. 13:22

15 [p]Jer. 23:21; 29:9

16 [q]2 Kin. 24:13; 2 Chr. 36:7, 10; Jer. 28:3; Dan. 1:2

■ **26:22 Elnathan the son of Achbor.** Contrast his action on Jeremiah's behalf in 36:12, 25—an evidence of shifting roles, which must have made Jeremiah's safety seem precarious.

■ **26:23 graves of the common people.** The cemetery was located in the Kidron Valley, east of Jerusalem (2 Kin. 23:6).

■ **26:24 Ahikam the son of Shaphan was with Jeremiah.** An official under Josiah (2 Kin. 22:12, 14), his support may have been decisive in Jeremiah's deliverance.

■ **27:1 In the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim.** The name "Jehoiakim" in the traditional Hebrew Masoretic Text is apparently a copyist's error influenced by 26:1. Other Hebrew manuscripts and some ancient versions read "Zedekiah," who is the king named elsewhere in this chapter (vv. 3, 12). Zedekiah was a son of Josiah (1 Chr. 3:15). These events occurred in the fourth year of Zedekiah's reign, 593 B.C. (28:1 note).

■ **27:3 Edom . . . Sidon.** See 25:21, 22; these nations too are under the Lord's judgment.

messengers who come . . . to Zedekiah. Probably they had come to discuss rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar, in league with Egypt.

■ **27:5 I have made the earth . . . given it to whom it seemed proper.** With an argument from creation, the Lord claims rights over all nations. See Dan. 2:38; 4:25 (also Nebuchadnezzar).

great power and . . . My outstretched arm. See 21:5.

■ **27:9 prophets . . . sorcerers.** All these serve merely to bolster the political system, in this case with an exhortation not to submit to Babylon. These false prophets and other classes are forbidden in Israel (14:14; Lev. 19:26; Deut. 18:10, 11).

■ **27:11 I will let them remain in their own land.** Judah and its neighbors could still avoid total exile by accepting God's judgment of submission to Babylon.

■ **27:12 serve him . . . and live.** Jeremiah pleads with Judah to accept dominion by Babylon and the exile of some of its leaders (Jehoiachin and those taken in 597 B.C., 2 Kin. 24:15, 16) as part of God's plan for her ultimate salvation (24:5).

■ **27:16 Behold.** This false message was proclaimed by Hananiah (28:1–3).

vessels of the LORD's house. These vessels were carried off, some in 605 B.C. (Dan. 1:1, 2), some in 597 B.C. (2 Kin. 24:13).

18 But if they *are* prophets, and if the word of the LORD is with them, let them now make intercession to the LORD of hosts, that the vessels which are left in the house of the LORD, *in* the house of the king of Judah, and at Jerusalem, do not go to Babylon.'

19 "For thus says the LORD of hosts [r]concerning the pillars, concerning the Sea, concerning the carts, and concerning the remainder of the vessels that remain in this city, 20 which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon did not take, when he carried away [s]captive Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, from Jerusalem to Babylon, and all the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem— 21 yes, thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, concerning the [t]vessels that remain in the house of the LORD, and in the house of the king of Judah and of Jerusalem: 22 'They shall be [u]carried to Babylon, and there they shall be until the day that I [v]visit them,' says the LORD. 'Then [w]I will bring them up and restore them to this place.' "

Hananiah's Falsehood and Doom

28 And [a]it happened in the same year, at the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the [b]fourth year *and* in the fifth month, *that* Hananiah the son of [c]Azur the prophet, who *was* from Gibeon, spoke to me in the house of the LORD in the presence of the priests and of all the people, saying, 2 "Thus speaks the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saying: 'I have broken [d]the yoke of the king of Babylon. 3 [e]Within two full years I will bring back to this place all the vessels of the LORD's house, that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon [f]took away from this place and carried to Babylon. 4 And I will bring back to this place [l]Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, with all the captives of Judah who went to Babylon,' says the LORD, 'for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon.' "

5 Then the prophet Jeremiah spoke to the prophet Hananiah in the presence of the priests and in the presence of all the people who stood in the house of the LORD, 6 and the prophet Jeremiah said, [g]"Amen! The LORD do so; the LORD perform your words which you have prophesied, to bring back the vessels of the LORD's house and all who were carried away captive, from Babylon to this place. 7 Nevertheless hear now this word that I speak in your hearing and in the hearing of all the people: 8 The prophets who have been before me and before you of old prophesied against many countries and great kingdoms—of war and disaster and pestilence. 9 As for [h]the prophet who prophesies of [i]peace, when the word of the prophet comes to pass, the prophet will be known *as* one whom the LORD has truly sent."

10 Then Hananiah the prophet took the [j]yoke off the prophet Jeremiah's neck and broke it. 11 And Hananiah spoke in the presence of all the people, saying, "Thus says the LORD: 'Even so I will break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon [k]from the neck of all nations within the space of two full years.' " And the prophet Jeremiah went his way.

12 Now the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, after Hananiah the prophet had broken the yoke from the neck of the prophet Jeremiah, saying, 13 "Go and tell Hananiah, saying, 'Thus says the LORD: "You have broken the yokes of wood, but you have made in their place yokes of iron." 14 For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: [l]"I have put a yoke of iron on the neck of all these nations, that they may serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and they shall serve him. [m]I have given him the beasts of the field also." ' "

15 Then the prophet Jeremiah said to Hananiah the prophet, "Hear now, Hananiah, the LORD has not sent you, but [n]you make this people trust in a [o]lie. 16 Therefore thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will cast you from the face of the earth. This year you shall [p]die, because you have taught [q]rebellion against the LORD.' "

17 So Hananiah the prophet died the same year in the seventh month.

19 [r]1 Kin. 7:15; 2 Kin. 25:13–17; Jer. 52:17, 20, 21

20 [s]2 Kin. 24:14, 15; 2 Chr. 36:10, 18; Jer. 24:1

21 [t]Jer. 20:5

22 [u]2 Kin. 25:13; 2 Chr. 36:18 [v]2 Chr. 36:21; Jer. 29:10; 32:5 [w]Ezra 1:7; 7:19

CHAPTER 28

1 [a]Jer. 27:1 [b]Jer. 51:59 [c]Ezek. 11:1

2 [d]Jer. 27:12

3 [e]Jer. 27:16 [f]2 Kin. 24:13; Dan. 1:2

4 [l]*Jehoiachin,* 2 Kin. 24:12

6 [g]1 Kin. 1:36; Ps. 41:13; Jer. 11:5

9 [h]Deut. 18:22 [i]Jer. 23:17; Ezek. 13:10, 16

10 [j]Jer. 27:2

11 [k]Jer. 27:7

14 [l]Deut. 28:48; Jer. 27:7, 8 [m]Jer. 27:6

15 [n]Jer. 20:6; 29:31; Lam. 2:14; Ezek. 13:22; Zech. 13:3 [o]Jer. 27:10; 29:9

16 [p]Jer. 20:6 [q]Deut. 13:5; Jer. 29:32

■ **27:22 They shall be carried . . . day that I visit them.** The fate of exile for a fixed time (25:11; 27:7) is now applied to the temple vessels.

■ **28:1 In the same year . . . the fourth year.** Since Zedekiah's reign began in 597 B.C., the events recounted here and in ch. 27 (27:1 note) occurred in 593 B.C.

■ **28:2 yoke.** Hananiah directly challenges Jeremiah's message (27:16–22).

■ **28:3 Within two full years.** Since just over four years had already passed (v. 1), Hananiah predicts they will be gone no more than seven years. Contrast Jeremiah's seventy years (25:11, 12).

■ **28:6 Amen.** Jeremiah's first response reflects his love for the land and people. But the message God had revealed to him gave him no confidence in this hope.

■ **28:8 before me and before you.** Jeremiah includes Hananiah with himself among the prophets and reminds him that the Lord's message has been principally judgment.

■ **28:13 yokes of wood . . . yokes of iron.** The Lord's will could not be frustrated by Hananiah's symbolic act. Hananiah dramatizes Judah's resistance, that can only make the inevitable servitude harsher.

■ **28:16 cast.** The same Hebrew word as "sent" (v. 15), an ironic play on words since this "sending" is to his death.

rebellion. The rebellion was ostensibly against Babylon, but really against God (Deut. 13:5).

CHAPTER 29

Jeremiah's Letter to the Captives

29 Now these *are* the words of the letter that Jeremiah the prophet sent from Jerusalem to the remainder of the elders who were [a]carried away captive—to the priests, the prophets, and all the people whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive from Jerusalem to Babylon. 2 (This happened after [b]Jeconiah[1] the king, the [c]queen mother, the [2]eunuchs, the princes of Judah and Jerusalem, the craftsmen, and the smiths had departed from Jerusalem.) 3 *The letter was sent* by the hand of Elasah the son of [d]Shaphan, and Gemariah the son of Hilkiah, whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent to Babylon, to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, saying,

4 Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all who were carried away captive, whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem to Babylon:

5 Build houses and dwell *in them;* plant gardens and eat their fruit. 6 Take wives and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons and give your daughters to husbands, so that they may bear sons and daughters—that you may be increased there, and not diminished. 7 And seek the peace of the city where I have caused you to be carried away captive, [e]and pray to the LORD for it; for in its peace you will have peace. 8 For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let your prophets and your diviners who are in your midst [f]deceive you, nor listen to your dreams which you cause to be dreamed. 9 For they prophesy [g]falsely to you in My name; I have not sent them, says the LORD.

10 For thus says the LORD: After [h]seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to [i]return to this place. 11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. 12 Then you will [j]call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will [k]listen to you. 13 And [l]you will seek Me and find *Me,* when you search for Me [m]with all your heart. 14 [n]I will be found by you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back from your captivity; [o]I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive.

15 Because you have said, "The LORD has raised up prophets for us in Babylon"—
16 [p]therefore thus says the LORD concerning the king who sits on the throne of David, concerning all the people who dwell in this city, and concerning your brethren who have not gone out with you into captivity— 17 thus says the LORD of hosts: Behold, I will send on them the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, and will make them like [q]rotten figs that cannot be eaten, they are so bad. 18 And I will pursue them with the sword, with famine, and with pestilence; and I [r]will deliver them to trouble among all the kingdoms of the earth—to be [s]a curse, an astonishment, a hissing, and a reproach among all the nations where I have driven them, 19 because they have not heeded My words, says the LORD, which [t]I sent to them by My servants the prophets, rising up early and sending *them;* neither would you heed, says the LORD. 20 Therefore hear the word of the LORD, all you of the captivity, whom I have sent from Jerusalem to Babylon.

21 Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, concerning Ahab the son of Kolaiah, and Zedekiah the son of Maaseiah, who prophesy a [u]lie to you in My name: Behold, I will deliver them into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he shall slay them before your eyes. 22 [v]And because of them a curse shall be taken up by all the captivity of Judah who *are* in Babylon, saying, "The LORD make you like Zedekiah and Ahab, [w]whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire"; 23 because [x]they have done disgraceful things in Israel, have committed adultery with their neighbors' wives, and have spoken lying words in My name, which I have not commanded them. Indeed I [y]know, and *am* a witness, says the LORD.

1 *Jehoiachin,* 2 Kin. 24:12; 2 Chr. 36:10 2 *Or officers*

a Jer. 27:20
b 2 Kin. 24:12–16; 2 Chr. 36:9, 10; Jer. 22:24–28
c 2 Kin. 24:12, 15; Jer. 13:18
d 2 Chr. 34:8
e Ezra 6:10; Neh. 1:4–11; Dan. 9:16; 1 Tim. 2:2
f Jer. 14:14; 23:21; 27:14, 15; Eph. 5:6
g Jer. 28:15; 37:19
h 2 Chr. 36:21–23; Ezra 1:1–4; Jer. 25:12; 27:22; Dan. 9:2; Zech. 7:5
i [Jer. 24:6, 7]; Zeph. 2:7
j Ps. 50:15; Jer. 33:3; Dan. 9:3
k Ps. 145:19
l Lev. 26:39–42; Deut. 30:1–3
m 1 Chr. 22:19; 2 Chr. 22:9; Jer. 24:7
n [Deut. 4:7]; Ps. 32:6; 46:1; [Is. 55:6, 7]; Jer. 24:7
o Is. 43:5, 6; Jer. 23:8; 32:37
p Jer. 38:2, 3, 17–23
q Jer. 24:3, 8–10
r Deut. 28:25; 2 Chr. 29:8; Jer. 15:4; 24:9; 34:17; Ezek. 12:15
s Jer. 26:6; 42:18
t Jer. 25:4; 26:5; 35:15
u Jer. 14:14, 15; Lam. 2:14; 2 Pet. 2:1
v Gen. 48:20; Is. 65:15
w Dan. 3:6, 21
x Jer. 23:14
y [Prov. 5:21; Jer. 16:17]; Mal. 3:5; [Heb. 4:13]

■ **29:3 Elasah the son of Shaphan.** Possibly he was from the same family that had defended Jeremiah (26:24).

■ **29:5 Build houses and dwell in them.** An act of commitment to their new lives, showing acceptance of the Lord's judgment (cf. Ezek. 8:1).

■ **29:7 peace.** Peace (6:14 and note) is the chief covenantal blessing. The peace lightly promised by the false prophets (8:11) gives way to a true peace (see also John 14:27).

pray . . . for it. The Lord's blessing can come on any nation through the prayer and action of His people; compare Abraham (Gen. 20:17), Joseph (Gen. 37—50), and Daniel (Dan. 1—6).

■ **29:14** This verse echoes Deut. 30:3–5 (similar in turn to Deut. 4:29, 30).

bring you back from your captivity. The phrase implies a restoration of the relationship between the Lord and His people. See 30:3, 18; 31:23; 32:44; 33:7, 11, 26; 48:47; 49:6, 39.

■ **29:16 the king.** That is, Zedekiah. That Zedekiah still ruled in Jerusalem, albeit as a Babylonian vassal, may have been a focus of false hope for the exiles.

■ **29:22 in the fire.** A method of execution particularly associated in the Old Testament with the rule of Nebuchadnezzar (Dan. 3:6).

24 You shall also speak to Shemaiah the Nehelamite, saying, 25 Thus speaks the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saying: You have sent letters in your name to all the people who *are* at Jerusalem, [z]to Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest, and to all the priests, saying, 26 "The LORD has made you priest instead of Jehoiada the priest, so that there should be [a]officers *in* the house of the LORD over every man *who* is [b]demented and considers himself a prophet, that you should [c]put him in prison and in the stocks. 27 Now therefore, why have you not rebuked Jeremiah of Anathoth who makes himself a prophet to you? 28 For he has sent to us *in* Babylon, saying, 'This *captivity is* long; build houses and dwell *in them,* and plant gardens and eat their fruit.' "

29 Now Zephaniah the priest read this letter in the hearing of Jeremiah the prophet. 30 Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying: 31 Send to all those in captivity, saying, Thus says the LORD concerning Shemaiah the Nehelamite: Because Shemaiah has prophesied to you, [d]and I have not sent him, and he has caused you to trust in a [e]lie— 32 therefore thus says the LORD: Behold, I will punish Shemaiah the Nehelamite and his [3]family: he shall not have anyone to dwell among this people, nor shall he see the good that I will do for My people, says the LORD, [f]because he has taught rebellion against the LORD.

Restoration of Israel and Judah

30 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, 2 "Thus speaks the LORD God of Israel, saying: 'Write in a book for yourself all the words that I have spoken to you. 3 For behold, the days are coming,' says the LORD, 'that [a]I will bring back from captivity My people Israel and Judah,' says the LORD. [b]'And I will cause them to return to the land that I gave to their fathers, and they shall possess it.' "

4 Now these *are* the words that the LORD spoke concerning Israel and Judah.

5 "For thus says the LORD:

'We have heard a voice of trembling,
Of [1]fear, and not of peace.
6 Ask now, and see,
Whether a [2]man is ever in [3]labor with child?
So why do I see every man *with* his hands on his loins
[c]Like a woman in labor,
And all faces turned pale?
7 [d]Alas! For that day *is* great,
[e]So that none *is* like it;
And it *is* the time of Jacob's trouble,
But he shall be saved out of it.

8 'For it shall come to pass in that day,'
Says the LORD of hosts,
'*That* I will break his yoke from your neck,
And will burst your bonds;
Foreigners shall no more enslave them.
9 But they shall serve the LORD their God,
And [f]David their king,
Whom I will [g]raise up for them.

10 'Therefore [h]do not fear, O My servant Jacob,' says the LORD,
'Nor be dismayed, O Israel;
For behold, I will save you from afar,

25 [z]2 Kin. 25:18; Jer. 21:1

26 [a]Jer. 20:1 [b]2 Kin. 9:11; Hos. 9:7; Mark 3:21; John 10:20; Acts 26:24; [2 Cor. 5:13] [c]Jer. 20:1, 2; Acts 16:24

31 [d]Jer. 28:15 [e]Ezek. 13:8–16, 22, 23

32 [f]Jer. 28:16 [3]*descendants,* lit. *seed*

CHAPTER 30

3 [a]Ps. 53:6; Jer. 29:14; 30:18; 32:44; Ezek. 39:25; Amos 9:14; Zeph. 3:20 [b]Jer. 16:15; Ezek. 20:42; 36:24

5 [1]*dread*

6 [c]Jer. 4:31; 6:24 [2]Lit. *male can give birth* [3]*childbirth*

7 [d][Is. 2:12]; Hos. 1:11; Joel 2:11; Amos 5:18; Zeph. 1:14 [e]Lam. 1:12; Dan. 9:12; 12:1

9 [f]Is. 55:3; Ezek. 34:23; 37:24; Hos. 3:5 [g][Luke 1:69; Acts 2:30; 13:23]

10 [h]Is. 41:13; 43:5; 44:2; Jer. 46:27, 28

■ **29:28 is long.** Jeremiah prophesied that the Exile would last seventy years (v. 10; 25:11, 12).

build houses . . . plant gardens. Shemaiah cites Jeremiah's letter (v. 5).

■ **29:31, 32** The threat to Shemaiah parallels that made against Hananiah (28:15, 16).

■ **30:1—33:26** *These chapters contain promises of restoration and of the new covenant (31:31–34). The certainty of restoration is portrayed in Jeremiah's purchase of a field (ch. 32).*

■ **30:6 Whether a man . . . woman in labor.** The anguish of childbirth is a picture of the suffering under the Babylonian armies (4:19, 31).

■ **30:7 that day.** The day of the Lord; see Amos 5:18; 8:9. Amos's generation expected it as a day of deliverance, but had to learn that it would bring judgment.

■ **30:10 do not fear, O My servant Jacob.** See Is. 41:8, 10; 43:1; 44:1, 2.

no one shall make him afraid. Contrast v. 5. This promise is a fulfillment of covenant blessing (Lev. 26:6).

And your seed [i]from the land of their captivity.
Jacob shall return, have rest and be quiet,
And no one shall make *him* afraid.
11 For I *am* with [j]you,' says the LORD, 'to save you;
[k]Though I make a full end of all nations where I have scattered you,
[l]Yet I will not make a complete end of you.
But I will correct you [m]in justice,
And will not let you go altogether unpunished.'

12 "For thus says the LORD:

[n]'Your affliction *is* incurable,
Your wound *is* severe.
13 *There is* no one to plead your cause,
That you may be bound up;
[o]You have no healing medicines.
14 [p]All your lovers have forgotten you;
They do not seek you;
For I have wounded you with the wound [q]of an enemy,
With the chastisement [r]of a cruel one,
For the multitude of your iniquities,
[s]*Because* your sins have increased.
15 Why [t]do you cry about your affliction?
Your sorrow *is* incurable.
Because of the multitude of your iniquities,
Because your sins have increased,
I have done these things to you.

16 'Therefore all those who devour you [u]shall be devoured;
And all your adversaries, every one of them, shall go into [v]captivity;
Those who plunder you shall become [w]plunder,
And all who prey upon you I will make a [x]prey.
17 [y]For I will restore health to you
And heal you of your wounds,' says the LORD,
'Because they called you an outcast *saying:*
"This *is* Zion;
No one seeks her." '

18 "Thus says the LORD:

'Behold, I will bring back the captivity of Jacob's tents,
And [z]have mercy on his dwelling places;
The city shall be built upon its own [4]mound,
And the palace shall remain according to its own plan.
19 Then [a]out of them shall proceed thanksgiving
And the voice of those who make merry;
[b]I will multiply them, and they shall not diminish;
I will also glorify them, and they shall not be small.
20 Their children also shall be [c]as before,
And their congregation shall be established before Me;
And I will punish all who oppress them.
21 Their nobles shall be from among them,
[d]And their governor shall come from their midst;
Then I will [e]cause him to draw near,

10 [i]Jer. 3:18
11 [j][Is. 43:2–5] [k]Amos 9:8 [l]Jer. 4:27; 46:27, 28 [m]Ps. 6:1; Is. 27:8; Jer. 10:24; 46:28
12 [n]2 Chr. 36:16; Jer. 15:18
13 [o]Jer. 8:22
14 [p]Jer. 22:20, 22; Lam. 1:2 [q]Job 13:24; 16:9; 19:11 [r]Job 30:21 [s]Jer. 5:6
15 [t]Jer. 15:18
16 [u]Ex. 23:22; Is. 41:11; Jer. 10:25 [v]Is. 14:2; Joel 3:8 [w]Is. 33:1; Ezek. 39:10 [x]Jer. 2:3
17 [y]Ex. 15:26; Ps. 107:20; Is. 30:26; Jer. 33:6
18 [z]Ps. 102:13 [4]*ruins*
19 [a]Ps. 126:1, 2; Is. 51:11; Jer. 31:4; Zeph. 3:14 [b]Is. 49:19–21; Jer. 23:3; 33:22; Zech. 10:8
20 [c]Is. 1:26
21 [d]Gen. 49:10 [e]Num. 16:5; Ps. 65:4

■ **30:20 as before.** This is probably an allusion to the time of David (v. 9).
congregation. A technical term denoting the political or religious assembly of the covenant people.

■ **30:21 Their nobles . . . governor . . . from their midst.** Whereas Judah is being ruled by a foreign power during its exile, Jeremiah looks forward to the restoration of its political independence and special relationship with the Lord (v. 22).

And he shall approach Me;
For who *is* this who pledged his heart to approach Me?' says the LORD.
22 'You shall be [f]My people,
And I will be your God.' "

23 Behold, the [g]whirlwind of the LORD
Goes forth with fury,
A [5]continuing whirlwind;
It will fall violently on the head of the wicked.
24 The fierce anger of the LORD will not return until He has done it,
And until He has performed the intents of His heart.

[h]In the latter days you will consider it.

The Remnant of Israel Saved

31 "At [a]the same time," says the LORD, [b]"I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they shall be My people."
2 Thus says the LORD:

"The people who survived the sword
Found grace in the wilderness—
Israel, when [c]I went to give him rest."

3 The LORD has appeared [1]of old to me, *saying:*
"Yes, [d]I have loved you with [e]an everlasting love;
Therefore with lovingkindness I have [f]drawn you.
4 Again [g]I will build you, and you shall be rebuilt,
O virgin of Israel!
You shall again be adorned with your [h]tambourines,
And shall go forth in the dances of those who rejoice.
5 [i]You shall yet plant vines on the mountains of Samaria;
The planters shall plant and [2]eat *them* as ordinary food.
6 For there shall be a day
When the watchmen will cry on Mount Ephraim,
[j]'Arise, and let us go up *to* Zion,
To the LORD our God.' "

7 For thus says the LORD:

[k]"Sing with gladness for Jacob,
And shout among the chief of the nations;
Proclaim, give praise, and say,
'O LORD, save Your people,
The remnant of Israel!'
8 Behold, I will bring them [l]from the north country,
And [m]gather them from the ends of the earth,

22 [f]Ex. 6:7; Jer. 32:38; Ezek. 36:28; Hos. 2:23; Zech. 13:9

23 [g]Jer. 23:19, 20; 25:32 [5]Or *sweeping*

24 [h]Gen. 49:1

CHAPTER 31

1 [a]Jer. 30:24 [b]Jer. 30:22

2 [c]Ex. 33:14; Num. 10:33; Deut. 1:33; Josh. 1:13; Ps. 95:11; Is. 63:14

3 [d]Deut. 4:37; 7:8; Mal. 1:2 [e]Is. 43:4; Rom. 11:28 [f]Hos. 11:4 [1]Lit. *from afar*

4 [g]Jer. 33:7 [h]Ex. 15:20; Judg. 11:34; Ps. 149:3

5 [i]Ps. 107:37; Is. 65:21; Ezek. 28:26; Amos 9:14 [2]Lit. *treat them as common*

6 [j][Is. 2:3; Jer. 31:12; 50:4, 5; Mic. 4:2]

7 [k]Is. 12:5, 6

8 [l]Jer. 3:12, 18; 23:8 [m]Deut. 30:4; Is. 43:6; Ezek. 20:34, 41; 34:13

■ **31:2 people who survived the sword.** The remnant through whom God's purposes will continue (v. 7; 6:9 note; 23:3 note). Contrast 15:2.

wilderness. Judah's exile in Babylon and subsequent restoration are sometimes compared with Israel's wanderings in the wilderness prior to entering the Promised Land (see Is. 40:3, 4; 43:19, 20). Like the first exodus, this restoration will be a demonstration of the Lord's power to save.

■ **31:3 of old.** This phrase probably carries forward the allusion to Sinai from the preceding verse (Ex. 19—24).

loved . . . everlasting love. The Lord's love for Israel was the ground of His election of them (Deut. 7:6, 7). The everlasting character of the covenant is affirmed in Gen. 17:7.

lovingkindness. See note on 9:24; contrast 16:5. This verse provides another sign of the reestablishment of the broken covenant.

■ **31:4 virgin of Israel.** Contrast 18:13–15, where Israel's "virginity" has been squandered. See also 2:20, 22. In the new covenant the stain of defilement is finally cleansed.

dances. Such dances are acts of religious celebration (Judg. 21:19, 20).

■ **31:5 plant vines . . . and eat them.** This promise signifies the covenant blessing of fertility (Deut. 7:13; 28:4; contrast Deut. 28:30).

Samaria. The capital of the northern kingdom of Israel, or the northern kingdom as a whole. Its people were deported by Assyria in 722 B.C.

■ **31:6 watchmen.** Perhaps they were responsible for knowing the times of annual feasts, by observing the moon.

Mount Ephraim . . . let us go up to Zion. Not as previously, to the apostate northern shrines of Jeroboam at Bethel and Dan (1 Kin. 12:26–33), but in renewed relationship with the Lord.

Among them the blind and the lame,
The woman with child
And the one who labors with child, together;
A great throng shall return there.
9 [n]They shall come with weeping,
And with supplications I will lead them.
I will cause them to walk [o]by the rivers of waters,
In a straight way in which they shall not stumble;
For I am a Father to Israel,
And Ephraim *is* My [p]firstborn.

10 "Hear the word of the LORD, O nations,
And declare *it* in the [3]isles afar off, and say,
'He who scattered Israel [q]will gather him,
And keep him as a shepherd *does* his flock.'
11 For [r]the LORD has redeemed Jacob,
And ransomed him [s]from the hand of one stronger than he.
12 Therefore they shall come and sing in [t]the height of Zion,
Streaming to [u]the goodness of the LORD—
For wheat and new wine and oil,
For the young of the flock and the herd;
Their souls shall be like a [v]well-watered garden,
[w]And they shall sorrow no more at all.

13 "Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance,
And the young men and the old, together;
For I will turn their mourning to joy,
Will comfort them,
And make them rejoice rather than sorrow.
14 I will [4]satiate the soul of the priests with abundance,
And My people shall be satisfied with My goodness, says the LORD."

Mercy on Ephraim

15 Thus says the LORD:

[x]"A voice was heard in [y]Ramah,
Lamentation *and* bitter [z]weeping,
Rachel weeping for her children,
Refusing to be comforted for her children,
Because [a]they *are* no more."

16 Thus says the LORD:

"Refrain your voice from [b]weeping,
And your eyes from tears;
For your work shall be rewarded, says the LORD,
And they shall come back from the land of the enemy.
17 There is [c]hope in your future, says the LORD,
That *your* children shall come back to their own border.

18 "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself:
'You have [d]chastised me, and I was chastised,
Like an untrained bull;

9 [n][Ps. 126:5; Jer. 50:4] [o]Is. 35:8; 43:19; 49:10, 11 [p]Ex. 4:22

10 [q]Is. 40:11; Ezek. 34:12–14 [3]Or *coastlands*

11 [r]Is. 44:23; 48:20; Jer. 15:21; 50:19 [s]Is. 49:24

12 [t]Ezek. 17:23 [u]Hos. 3:5 [v]Is. 58:11 [w]Is. 35:10; 65:19; [John 16:22; Rev. 21:4]

14 [4]Fill to the full

15 [x]Matt. 2:17, 18 [y]Josh. 18:25; Judg. 4:5; Is. 10:29; Jer. 40:1 [z]Gen. 37:35 [a]Jer. 10:20

16 [b][Is. 25:8; 30:19]

17 [c]Jer. 29:11

18 [d]Job 5:17; Ps. 94:12

■ **31:9 lead . . . rivers of waters.** See Ps. 23:2; Is. 48:21; 49:10.

straight way. See Is. 40:4.

Father . . . firstborn. See 3:4; 31:20; Ex. 4:22; Hos. 11:1–4.

■ **31:11 redeemed . . . ransomed.** These verbs are closely related synonyms in Hebrew. The word translated "redeemed" means "to set free by paying a ransom," and it is used of the Lord's act of liberating Israel from Egypt (Deut. 7:8; 9:26). The second verb ("ransomed") is a technical term related to the responsibility of a "close relative" to purchase or "redeem" property which would otherwise be alienated from a family (32:8; Ruth 2:20 note). It is also used of God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt (Ex. 6:6, 7). The way that God has redeemed us to Himself through the ransom of Christ (cf. 1 Tim. 2:5, 6) is explained in the New Testament (see "The Atonement" at Rom. 3:25).

■ **31:15 A voice . . . in Ramah . . . Rachel weeping.** Ramah was in the region assigned to the tribe of Benjamin. Rachel weeps over the destruction of the north in 722 B.C. The words are quoted in Matt. 2:18 concerning Herod's slaughter of the innocents.

[e]Restore me, and I will return,
For You *are* the LORD my God.
19 Surely, [f]after my turning, I repented;
And after I was instructed, I struck myself on the thigh;
I was [g]ashamed, yes, even humiliated,
Because I bore the reproach of my youth.'
20 *Is* Ephraim My dear son?
Is he a pleasant child?
For though I spoke against him,
I earnestly remember him still;
[h]Therefore My [5]heart yearns for him;
[i]I will surely have mercy on him, says the LORD.

21 "Set up signposts,
Make landmarks;
[j]Set your heart toward the highway,
The way in *which* you went.
[6]Turn back, O virgin of Israel,
Turn back to these your cities.
22 How long will you [k]gad about,
O you [l]backsliding daughter?
For the LORD has created a new thing in the earth—
A woman shall encompass a man."

Future Prosperity of Judah

23 Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "They shall again use this speech in the land of Judah and in its cities, when I bring back their captivity: [m]'The LORD bless you, O home of justice, *and* [n]mountain of holiness!' 24 And there shall dwell in Judah itself, and [o]in all its cities together, farmers and those going out with flocks. 25 For I have [7]satiated the weary soul, and I have replenished every sorrowful soul."

26 After this I awoke and looked around, and my sleep was [p]sweet to me.

27 "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, that [q]I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man and the seed of beast. 28 And it shall come to pass, *that* as I have [r]watched over them [s]to pluck up, to break down, to throw down, to destroy, and to afflict, so I will watch over them [t]to build and to plant, says the LORD. 29 [u]In those days they shall say no more:

'The fathers have eaten sour grapes,
And the children's teeth are set on edge.'

30 [v]But every one shall die for his own iniquity; every man who eats the sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge.

A New Covenant

31 "Behold, the [w]days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— 32 not according to the covenant that I made with

18 [e]Ps. 80:3, 7, 19; Jer. 17:4; Lam. 5:21; [Acts 3:26]

19 [f]Deut. 30:2 [g]Ezek. 36:31; [Zech. 12:10]

20 [h]Gen. 43:30; Deut. 32:36; Judg. 10:16; Is. 63:15; Hos. 11:8 [i]Is. 57:18; Jer. 3:12; 12:15; [Hos. 14:4]; Mic. 7:18 [5]Lit. *inward parts*

21 [j]Jer. 50:5 [6]Or *Return*

22 [k]Jer. 2:18, 23, 36 [l]Jer. 3:6, 8, 11, 12, 14, 22

23 [m]Ps. 122:5–8; Is. 1:26 [n][Zech. 8:3]

24 [o]Jer. 33:12

25 [7]*fully satisfied*

26 [p]Prov. 3:24

27 [q]Ezek. 36:9–11; Hos. 2:23

28 [r]Jer. 44:27; Dan. 9:14 [s]Jer. 1:10; 18:7 [t]Jer. 24:6

29 [u]Lam. 5:7; Ezek. 18:2, 3

30 [v]Deut. 24:16; 2 Chr. 25:4; Is. 3:11; [Ezek. 18:4, 20; Gal. 6:5, 7]

31 [w]Heb. 8:8–12; 10:16, 17

■ **31:21 Set up signposts.** Israel must remind itself to return not only to its land, but more importantly to God.

■ **31:22 new thing.** See Is. 42:9.

A woman . . . a man. The saying is obscure, but possibly the picture is of a mother protecting her son, that is, of security.

■ **31:27 sow . . . seed.** Both words are from the same Hebrew root. This makes an allusion to the promise of Gen. 15:18, where the Hebrew for "seed" is translated "descendants."

■ **31:29 The fathers . . . set on edge.** This proverb was used by the exiles to blame previous generations for the disaster of the Exile (Ezek. 18:2), possibly based on a misunderstanding of Ex. 20:5; Num. 14:18.

■ **31:30 every one shall die for his own iniquity.** The principle that each person is judged individually is elaborated at length in Ezek. 18:4–32 (cf. Deut. 24:16). The point is that this generation fully deserves the punishment, even though the nation's guilt has been continuous (7:13; 11:7, 8).

■ **31:31–34** Picking up themes first expounded by Moses in Deut. 30:1–10, Jeremiah prophesies that God will make a new covenant with His people. As the making of the old covenant (Ex. 19—24) followed the redemption from Egypt (Ex. 12—15), so the making of the new covenant will follow the redemption from sins (v. 34).

■ **31:31, 32** The new covenant will stand in contrast to the old covenant, in that the new cannot be broken as the old was (v. 32; Heb. 8:7, 8). The guarantee that it will not be broken is the grace mediated by Christ through His death and resurrection (Heb. 9:12–15; 10:1–4, 10–18).

■ **31:31 new covenant.** See "God's Covenant of Grace" at Gen. 12:1. See also 1 Cor. 11:25; 2 Cor. 3:6; Heb. 9:15; 12:24.

with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. Using both names stresses the unity of God's covenant people.

■ **31:32 not . . . My covenant which they broke.** The new covenant

their fathers in the day *that* [x]I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, [8]though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. 33 [y]But this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: [z]I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their [9]hearts; [a]and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34 No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for [b]they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For [c]I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

35 Thus says the LORD,
[d]Who gives the sun for a light by day,
The ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night,
Who disturbs [e]the sea,
And its waves roar
[f](The LORD of hosts *is* His name):

36 "If [g]those ordinances depart
From before Me, says the LORD,
Then the seed of Israel shall also cease
From being a nation before Me forever."

37 Thus says the LORD:

[h]"If heaven above can be measured,
And the foundations of the earth searched out beneath,
I will also [i]cast off all the seed of Israel
For all that they have done, says the LORD.

38 "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, that the city shall be built for the LORD [j]from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate. 39 [k]The surveyor's line shall again extend straight forward over the hill Gareb; then it shall turn toward Goath. 40 And the whole valley of the dead bodies and of the ashes, and all the fields as far as the Brook Kidron, [l]to the corner of the Horse Gate toward the east, [m]*shall be* holy to the LORD. It shall not be plucked up or thrown down anymore forever."

Jeremiah Buys a Field

32 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD [a]in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar. 2 For then the king of

32 [x]Deut. 1:31 [8]So with MT, Tg., Vg.; LXX, Syr. *and I turned away from them*

33 [y]Jer. 32:40 [z]Ps. 40:8 [a]Jer. 24:7; 30:22; 32:38 [9]Lit. *inward parts*

34 [b][John 6:45] [c][Rom. 11:27]

35 [d]Gen. 1:14–18 [e]Is. 51:15 [f]Jer. 10:16

36 [g]Ps. 148:6

37 [h]Jer. 33:22 [i][Rom. 11:2–5, 26, 27]

38 [j]Zech. 14:10

39 [k]Zech. 2:1, 2

40 [l]Neh. 3:28 [m][Joel 3:17]

CHAPTER 32

1 [a]Jer. 39:1, 2

will make good the deficiencies of the old, which lay in the people's inability to keep it (11:10; 2 Cor. 3:14; Heb. 8:7).

a husband to them. See 2:2; 3:14 note. Cf. Christ's relationship to the church (Eph. 5:25–27; Rev. 19:7; 21:2, 9).

■ **31:33** Under the old covenant, the law of God was engraved on tablets of stone and placed in the Most Holy Place; under the new covenant God will write His law on the hearts of His people. The people then are like the temple in that the law of God is within them, but with the difference that they are a living temple, made of living stones (2 Cor. 3:3; 1 Pet. 2:5). See "God's Covenant of Grace" at Gen. 12:1.

after those days. The prophet speaks of a time after exile, without being specific. The New Testament shows that the time arrived with Christ, the Messiah.

I will. God will take the initiative to renew His people.

My law. The law of Moses required obedience from the heart (Deut. 6:6) but provided no enablement for that obedience (Deut. 5:29; 29:4). It did mediate forgiveness and hope, especially through the sacrifices. The law was a system of "types and shadows," that is, of significant elements foreshadowing Christ and inviting trust in God through Him.

I will be their God, and they . . . My people. This declaration is the summary of God's blessings promised in His covenant (Lev. 26:12; cf. 7:23).

■ **31:34 Know the LORD.** See "True Knowledge of God" at 9:24.

For I will forgive. The basis of the promises in vv. 32, 33 will be a new work of redemption that secures the forgiveness of sins (see Heb. 10:1–17).

remember no more. The continuing cycle of sacrifices under the old covenant provided a constant reminder of sins (Heb. 10:3, 4, 11). The words "no more" underscore that the satisfaction made for sins in the redemption to come will be perfect, making any further sacrifices unnecessary.

■ **31:35, 36 gives the sun . . . moon and the stars.** The enduring order of the heavenly bodies is made the measure of God's commitment to His people (33:20, 21, 25, 26).

■ **31:38 the city.** Jerusalem.

Tower of Hananel . . . Corner Gate. Opposite ends of the city, signifying its entirety (see 2 Chr. 26:9; Zech. 14:10, 11). The restoration of Jerusalem will be the first sign of the fulfillment of the new covenant promise.

■ **31:39 Gareb . . . Goath.** Unidentified locations in Jerusalem.

■ **31:40 valley.** That is, the Valley of the Son of Hinnom (7:31 note).

■ **32:1 tenth year of Zedekiah.** That is, 587 B.C. This chapter recounts the first of several exchanges between Jeremiah and Zedekiah in this period. See 21:3–7; 34:1–7; 37:3–8, 17–20; 38:14–28.

Babylon's army besieged Jerusalem, and Jeremiah the prophet was shut up [b]in the court of the prison, which *was in* the king of Judah's house. 3 For Zedekiah king of Judah had shut him up, saying, "Why do you [c]prophesy and say, 'Thus says the LORD: [d]"Behold, I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall take it; 4 and Zedekiah king of Judah [e]shall not escape from the hand of the Chaldeans, but shall surely be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon, and shall speak with him [f]face to face, and see him [f]eye to eye; 5 then he shall [g]lead Zedekiah to Babylon, and there he shall be [h]until I visit him," says the LORD; [i]"though you fight with the Chaldeans, you shall not succeed" '?"

6 And Jeremiah said, "The word of the LORD came to me, saying, 7 'Behold, Hanamel the son of Shallum your uncle will come to you, saying, "Buy my field which *is* in Anathoth, for the [j]right of redemption *is* yours to buy *it*." ' 8 Then Hanamel my uncle's son came to me in the court of the prison according to the word of the LORD, and said to me, 'Please buy my field that *is* in Anathoth, which *is* in the country of Benjamin; for the right of inheritance *is* yours, and the redemption yours; buy *it* for yourself.' Then I knew that this was the word of the LORD. 9 So I bought the field from Hanamel, the son of my uncle who *was* in Anathoth, and [k]weighed *out to* him the money—seventeen shekels of silver. 10 And I signed the [2]deed and sealed *it,* took witnesses, and weighed the money on the scales. 11 So I took the purchase deed, *both* that which was sealed *according* to the law and custom, and that which was open; 12 and I gave the purchase deed to [l]Baruch the son of Neriah, son of Mahseiah, in the presence of Hanamel my uncle's *son,* and in the presence of the [m]witnesses who signed the purchase deed, before all the Jews who sat in the court of the prison.

13 "Then I charged [n]Baruch before them, saying, 14 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Take these deeds, both this purchase deed which is sealed and this deed which is open, and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may last many days." 15 For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Houses and fields and vineyards shall be [o]possessed again in this land." '

Jeremiah Prays for Understanding

16 "Now when I had delivered the purchase deed to Baruch the son of Neriah, I prayed to the LORD, saying: 17 'Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, [p]You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. [q]There is nothing too [3]hard for You. 18 *You* show [r]lovingkindness to thousands, and repay the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them—the Great, [s]the Mighty God, whose name *is* [t]the LORD of hosts. 19 *You are* [u]great in counsel and mighty in [4]work, for Your [v]eyes *are* open to all the ways of the sons of men, [w]to give everyone according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doings. 20 You have set signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, to this day, and in Israel and among *other* men; and You have made Yourself [x]a name, as it is this day. 21 You [y]have brought Your people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs and wonders, with a strong hand and an outstretched arm, and with great terror; 22 You have given them this land, of which You swore to their fathers to give them—[z]"a land flowing with milk and honey." 23 And they came in and took possession of it, but [a]they have not obeyed Your voice or walked in Your law. They have done nothing of all that You commanded them to do; therefore You have caused all this calamity to come upon them.

24 'Look, the siege mounds! They have come to the city to take it; and the city has been given into the hand of the Chaldeans who fight against it, because of [b]the sword and famine and pestilence. What You have spoken has happened; there You see *it!* 25 And You have said to me, O Lord GOD, "Buy the field for money, and take witnesses"!—yet the city has been given into the hand of the Chaldeans.' "

God's Assurance of the People's Return

26 Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying, 27 "Behold, I *am* the LORD, the [c]God of all flesh. Is there anything too hard for Me? 28 Therefore thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will

2 [b]Jer. 33:1; 37:21; 39:14

3 [c]Jer. 26:8, 9 [d]Jer. 21:3–7; 34:2

4 [e]Jer. 34:3; 38:18, 23; 39:5; 52:9 [f]Jer. 39:5 [1]Lit. *mouth to mouth*

5 [g]Ezek. 12:12, 13 [h]Jer. 27:22 [i]Jer. 21:4; 33:5

7 [j]Ruth 4:4

9 [k]Zech. 11:12

10 [2]Lit. *book*

12 [l]Jer. 36:4 [m]Is. 8:2

13 [n]Jer. 36:4

15 [o][Jer. 31:5, 12, 14]

17 [p]2 Kin. 19:15 [q]Luke 18:27 [3]*difficult*

18 [r]Deut. 5:9, 10 [s][Is. 9:6] [t]Jer. 10:16

19 [u]Is. 28:29 [v]Prov. 5:21 [w]Jer. 17:10 [4]*deed*

20 [x]Is. 63:12

21 [y]Ex. 6:6

22 [z]Ex. 3:8, 17

23 [a][Neh. 9:26]

24 [b]Jer. 14:12

27 [c][Num. 16:22]

■ **32:7 Anathoth.** This village was Jeremiah's hometown; see 1:1.

right of redemption is yours to buy it. Hanamel may be selling because of debt, and asking Jeremiah to be the "close relative" who redeems (31:11 note). By normal standards, it is absurd to buy a field when the whole land is about to be lost.

■ **32:9 seventeen shekels of silver.** This amount is probably a normal price, though under the circumstances the field was worthless.

■ **32:15 Houses and fields and vineyards . . . in this land.** The significance of the purchase is that Judah will again possess its historic land and enjoy normal life in it. It therefore symbolizes that aspect of the new covenant promise (29:14 and note; 31:38–40).

■ **32:20 signs and wonders.** See Ex. 7:3.

and among other men. This confession stresses God's rule over the whole world.

■ **32:21** This description is repeated from Deut. 26:8. See also v. 20; Ex. 15:14–16.

29 [d]2 Chr. 36:19 [e]Jer. 19:13
30 [f]Jer. 2:7; 3:25; 7:22–26
31 [g]2 Kin. 23:27; 24:3
32 [h]Dan. 9:8 [i]Jer. 23:14
33 [j]Jer. 2:27; 7:24 [k]Jer. 7:13
34 [l]Jer. 7:10–12, 30; 23:11 [5]The temple
35 [m]Jer. 7:31; 19:5 [n]Lev. 18:21 [o]Jer. 7:31
37 [p]Deut. 30:3 [q]Jer. 33:16
38 [r][Jer. 24:7; 30:22; 31:33]
39 [s][Ezek. 11:19]
40 [t]Is. 55:3 [u][Jer. 31:33]
41 [v]Deut. 30:9 [w]Amos 9:15 [6]*truly*
42 [x]Jer. 31:28
43 [y]Jer. 33:10
44 [z]Jer. 17:26 [a]Jer. 33:7, 11 [7]Heb. *shephelah* [8]Heb. *Negev*

give this city into the hand of the Chaldeans, into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he shall take it. 29 And the Chaldeans who fight against this city shall come and [d]set fire to this city and burn it, with the houses [e]on whose roofs they have offered incense to Baal and poured out drink offerings to other gods, to provoke Me to anger; 30 because the children of Israel and the children of Judah [f]have done only evil before Me from their youth. For the children of Israel have provoked Me only to anger with the work of their hands,' says the LORD. 31 'For this city has been to Me *a provocation of* My anger and My fury from the day that they built it, even to this day; [g]so I will remove it from before My face 32 because of all the evil of the children of Israel and the children of Judah, which they have done to provoke Me to anger—[h]they, their kings, their princes, their priests, [i]their prophets, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 33 And they have turned to Me the [j]back, and not the face; though I taught them, [k]rising up early and teaching *them,* yet they have not listened to receive instruction. 34 But they [l]set their abominations in [5]the house which is called by My name, to defile it. 35 And they built the high places of Baal which *are* in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to [m]cause their sons and their daughters to pass through *the fire* to [n]Molech, [o]which I did not command them, nor did it come into My mind that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.'

36 "Now therefore, thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning this city of which you say, 'It shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: 37 Behold, I will [p]gather them out of all countries where I have driven them in My anger, in My fury, and in great wrath; I will bring them back to this place, and I will cause them [q]to dwell safely. 38 They shall be [r]My people, and I will be their God; 39 then I will [s]give them one heart and one way, that they may fear Me forever, for the good of them and their children after them. 40 And [t]I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from doing them good; but [u]I will put My fear in their hearts so that they will not depart from Me. 41 Yes, [v]I will rejoice over them to do them good, and [w]I will [6]assuredly plant them in this land, with all My heart and with all My soul.'

42 "For thus says the LORD: [x]'Just as I have brought all this great calamity on this people, so I will bring on them all the good that I have promised them. 43 And fields will be bought in this land [y]of which you say, "*It is* desolate, without man or beast; it has been given into the hand of the Chaldeans." 44 Men will buy fields for money, sign deeds and seal *them,* and take witnesses, in [z]the land of Benjamin, in the places around Jerusalem, in the cities of Judah, in the cities of the mountains, in the cities of the [7]lowland, and in the cities of the [8]South; for [a]I will cause their captives to return,' says the LORD."

Excellence of the Restored Nation

33 Moreover the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah a second time, while he was still [a]shut up in the court of the prison, saying, 2 "Thus says the LORD [b]who made it, the LORD who formed it to establish it [c](the [1]LORD *is* His name): 3 [d]'Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and [2]mighty things, which you do not know.'

4 "For thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the houses of this city and the houses of the kings of Judah, which have been pulled down *to fortify* against [e]the siege mounds and the sword: 5 'They come to fight with the Chaldeans, but *only* to [f]fill their places with the dead bodies of men whom I will slay in My anger and My fury, all for whose wickedness I have hidden My face from this city. 6 Behold, [g]I will bring it health and healing; I will heal them and reveal to them the abundance of peace and truth. 7 And [h]I will cause the captives of Judah and the captives of Israel to return, and will rebuild those places [i]as at the first. 8 I will [j]cleanse them from all their iniquity by which they have sinned against Me, and I will pardon all their iniquities by which they have sinned and by which they have transgressed against Me. 9 [k]Then it shall be to

CHAPTER 33

1 [a]Jer. 32:2, 3
2 [b]Is. 37:26 [c]Ex. 15:3 [1]Heb. *YHWH*
3 [d]Jer. 29:12 [2]*inaccessible*
4 [e]Is. 22:10
5 [f]2 Kin. 23:14
6 [g]Jer. 30:17
7 [h]Jer. 30:3; 32:44 [i]Is. 1:26
8 [j]Zech. 13:1
9 [k]Is. 62:7

■ **32:29 offered incense to Baal.** Typical elements in Jeremiah's accusation against Judah (1:16; 7:18; 19:13; cf. Deut. 31:29).

■ **32:33 have not listened.** See 2:30; 5:3; 7:24; 11:8.

■ **32:35 Molech.** "Molech" is probably the title of a god (rather than a proper name) who was worshiped by the Phoenicians, Moabites, Ammonites, and others in a ritual involving child sacrifice (Lev. 18:21; 20:2–5; 2 Kin. 23:10).

■ **32:37** Jeremiah reaffirms Moses' promise of restoration from exile (Deut. 30:3–5). The suddenness and improbability of this promise, following the tirade of vv. 26–35, is explained by the rhetorical question "Is there anything too hard for Me?" (v. 27; cf. v. 17).

■ **32:40 everlasting covenant.** See 31:31–36 and notes.

■ **32:44 Benjamin . . . South.** These regions represent the territorial extent of Judah at the time of the Exile (17:26; 33:13).

■ **33:2 who made it.** See note on 10:12. God's creation is here the ground of His power both to judge and to save (32:17).

■ **33:3 great and mighty things.** A similar phrase in Is. 48:6 also speaks of salvation as new creation. See Dan. 2:47.

■ **33:6 Behold.** The change in the Lord's purpose is not motivated by any change in Judah, but by His decision. See 30:8, 16; 32:36, for similar transitions.

Me a name of joy, a praise, and an honor before all nations of the earth, who shall hear all the good that I do to them; they shall [l]fear and tremble for all the goodness and all the prosperity that I provide for it.'

10 "Thus says the LORD: 'Again there shall be heard in this place—[m]of which you say, "It *is* desolate, without man and without beast"—in the cities of Judah, in the streets of Jerusalem that are desolate, without man and without inhabitant and without beast, 11 the [n]voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of those who will say:

> [o]"Praise the LORD of hosts,
> For the LORD *is* good,
> For His mercy *endures* forever"—

and of those *who will* bring [p]the sacrifice of praise into the house of the LORD. For I will cause the captives of the land to return as at the first,' says the LORD.

12 "Thus says the LORD of hosts: [q]'In this place which is desolate, without man and without beast, and in all its cities, there shall again be a dwelling place of shepherds causing *their* flocks to lie down. 13 [r]In the cities of the mountains, in the cities of the lowland, in the cities of the South, in the land of Benjamin, in the places around Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, the flocks shall again [s]pass under the hands of him who counts *them,*' says the LORD.

14 [t]'Behold, the days are coming,' says the LORD, 'that [u]I will perform that good thing which I have promised to the house of Israel and to the house of Judah:

15 'In those days and at that time
I will cause to grow up to David
A [v]Branch of righteousness;
He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the earth.
16 In those days Judah will be saved,
And Jerusalem will dwell safely.
And this *is the name* by which she will be called:

[3]THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.'

17 "For thus says the LORD: 'David shall never [w]lack a man to sit on the throne of the house of Israel; 18 nor shall the [x]priests, the Levites, lack a man to [y]offer burnt offerings before Me, to [4]kindle grain offerings, and to sacrifice continually.' "

The Permanence of God's Covenant

19 And the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying, 20 "Thus says the LORD: 'If you can break My covenant with the day and My covenant with the night, so that there will not be day and night in their season, 21 then [z]My covenant may also be broken with David My servant, so that he shall not have a son to reign on his throne, and with the Levites, the priests, My ministers. 22 As [a]the host of heaven cannot be numbered, nor the sand of the sea measured, so will I [b]multiply the descendants of David My servant and the [c]Levites who minister to Me.' "

23 Moreover the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying, 24 "Have you not considered what these people have spoken, saying, 'The two families which the LORD has chosen, He has also cast them off'? Thus they have [d]despised My people, as if they should no more be a nation before them.

25 "Thus says the LORD: 'If [e]My covenant *is* not with day and night, *and if* I have not

9 [l]Is. 60:5

10 [m]Jer. 32:43

11 [n]Jer. 7:34; 16:9; 25:10; Rev. 18:23 [o]1 Chr. 16:8; 2 Chr. 5:13; Ezra 3:11; Ps. 136:1; Is. 12:4 [p]Lev. 7:12; Ps. 107:22; 116:17; Heb. 13:15

12 [q]Is. 65:10; [Jer. 31:24; 50:19; Ezek. 34:12–15; Zeph. 2:6, 7]

13 [r]Jer. 17:26; 32:44 [s]Lev. 27:32; [Luke 15:4]

14 [t]Jer. 23:5; 31:27, 31 [u]Is. 32:1; Jer. 29:10; 32:42; Ezek. 34:23–25; Hag. 2:6–9

15 [v]Is. 4:2; 11:1; Jer. 23:5; Zech. 3:8; 6:12, 13

16 [3]Heb. *YHWH Tsidkenu;* cf. Jer. 23:5, 6

17 [w]2 Sam. 7:16; 1 Kin. 2:4; Ps. 89:29; [Luke 1:32]

18 [x]Num. 3:5–10; Deut. 18:1; 24:8; Josh. 3:3; Ezek. 44:15 [y][Rom. 12:1; 15:16; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9; Rev. 1:6] [4]*burn*

21 [z]2 Sam. 23:5; 2 Chr. 7:18; 21:7; Ps. 89:34

22 [a]Gen. 15:5; 22:17; Jer. 31:37 [b]Jer. 30:19; Ezek. 36:10, 11 [c]Is. 66:21; Jer. 33:18

24 [d]Neh. 4:2–4; Esth. 3:6–8; Ps. 44:13, 14; 83:4; Ezek. 36:2

25 [e]Gen. 8:22; Jer. 33:20

■ **33:11 joy . . . gladness . . . bridegroom . . . bride.** Contrast 7:34; 16:9. These circumstances will be brought about by the new covenant.

■ **33:17** This promise is not finally to restore the monarchy, but to inaugurate the messianic kingdom (23:5; 30:9; 2 Sam. 7:12–16; cf. 1 Kin. 2:4).

■ **33:18 the priests, the Levites.** The priest's role was essential to the administration of the covenant (Ex. 28; 29; Deut. 10:8; 18:1). They also had a covenant of their own with the Lord (Num. 25:12, 13; 1 Sam. 2:30, 35). The promise of a perpetual priestly ministry is fulfilled by Christ Himself (Heb. 5:6–10; 7:11–25).

■ **33:20, 21 covenant with the day and . . . night.** The permanence of the institutions now envisaged is in stark contrast with 7:1–15. Such permanence is only comprehensible in the framework of the new covenant—though the need for faithfulness is never set aside (32:40 and note).

■ **33:22 cannot be numbered . . . sand of the sea.** In these promises concerning the messianic kingdom, the promises to Abraham are also fulfilled (Gen. 22:17; contrast 15:8).

■ **33:24 two families.** The reference to these "families" is ambiguous. It could refer to the kingdoms of Israel and Judah (v. 14) or to the royal family of David and the priestly family of Levi (vv. 17, 18).

25 [f]Ps. 74:16; 104:19

26 [g]Jer. 31:37 [h]Rom. 11:1, 2

CHAPTER 34

1 [a]2 Kin. 25:1; Jer. 32:1, 2; 39:1; 52:4 [b]Jer. 1:15; 25:9; Dan. 2:37, 38

2 [c]2 Chr. 36:11, 12; Jer. 22:1, 2; 37:1, 2 [d]2 Kin. 25:9; Jer. 21:10; 32:3, 28

3 [e]2 Kin. 25:4, 5; Jer. 21:7; 52:7–11 [f]2 Kin. 25:6, 7; Jer. 32:4; 39:5, 6 [f]Lit. *mouth to mouth*

5 [g]2 Chr. 16:14; 21:19 [h]Dan. 2:46 [i]Jer. 22:18

7 [j]2 Kin. 18:13; 19:8; 2 Chr. 11:5, 9

8 [k]Ex. 21:2; Lev. 25:10; Neh. 5:1–13; Is. 58:6; Jer. 34:14, 17

9 [l]Neh. 5:11 [m]Lev. 25:39–46

13 [n]Ex. 24:3, 7, 8; Deut. 5:2, 3, 27; Jer. 31:32

14 [o]Ex. 21:2; 23:10; Deut. 15:12; 1 Kin. 9:22 [z]Or *sold himself*

15 [p]2 Kin. 23:3; Neh. 10:29 [q]Jer. 7:10 [s]Lit. *today*

16 [r]Ex. 20:7; Lev. 19:12

17 [s]Lev. 26:34, 35; Esth. 7:10; Dan. 6:24; [Matt. 7:2; Gal. 6:7]; James 2:13 [t]Jer. 32:24, 36 [u]Deut. 28:25, 64; Jer. 29:18

[f]appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth, [26] [g]then I will [h]cast away the descendants of Jacob and David My servant, *so* that I will not take *any* of his descendants *to be* rulers over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For I will cause their captives to return, and will have mercy on them.' "

Zedekiah Warned by God

34 The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, [a]when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army, [b]all the kingdoms of the earth under his dominion, and all the people, fought against Jerusalem and all its cities, saying, [2] "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: 'Go and [c]speak to Zedekiah king of Judah and tell him, "Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, [d]I will give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire. [3] And [e]you shall not escape from his hand, but shall surely be taken and delivered into his hand; your eyes shall see the eyes of the king of Babylon, he shall speak with you [f]face[f] to face, and you shall go to Babylon.' " ' [4] Yet hear the word of the LORD, O Zedekiah king of Judah! Thus says the LORD concerning you: 'You shall not die by the sword. [5] You shall die in peace; as in [g]the ceremonies of your fathers, the former kings who were before you, [h]so they shall burn incense for you and [i]lament for you, *saying,* "Alas, lord!" For I have pronounced the word, says the LORD.' "

[6] Then Jeremiah the prophet spoke all these words to Zedekiah king of Judah in Jerusalem, [7] when the king of Babylon's army fought against Jerusalem and all the cities of Judah that were left, against Lachish and Azekah; for *only* [j]these fortified cities remained of the cities of Judah.

Treacherous Treatment of Slaves

[8] *This is* the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, after King Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people who *were* at Jerusalem to proclaim [k]liberty to them: [9] [l]that every man should set free his male and female slave—a Hebrew man or woman—[m]that no one should keep a Jewish brother in bondage. [10] Now when all the princes and all the people, who had entered into the covenant, heard that everyone should set free his male and female slaves, that no one should keep them in bondage anymore, they obeyed and let *them* go. [11] But afterward they changed their minds and made the male and female slaves return, whom they had set free, and brought them into subjection as male and female slaves.

[12] Therefore the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, [13] "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: 'I made a [n]covenant with your fathers in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, saying, [14] "At the end of [o]seven years let every man set free his Hebrew brother, who [z]has been sold to him; and when he has served you six years, you shall let him go free from you." But your fathers did not obey Me nor incline their ear. [15] Then you [s]recently turned and did what was right in My sight—every man proclaiming liberty to his neighbor; and you [p]made a covenant before Me [q]in the house which is called by My name. [16] Then you turned around and [r]profaned My name, and every one of you brought back his male and female slaves, whom you had set at liberty, at their pleasure, and brought them back into subjection, to be your male and female slaves.'

[17] "Therefore thus says the LORD: 'You have not obeyed Me in proclaiming liberty, every one to his brother and every one to his neighbor. [s]Behold, I proclaim liberty to you,' says the LORD—[t]'to the sword, to pestilence, and to famine! And I will deliver you to [u]trouble among all the kingdoms of the earth. [18] And I will give the men who have transgressed My covenant, who

■ **33:26 Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.** The new covenant is a fulfillment of the covenant with Abraham that embraced all peoples (Gen. 12:3). See note on v. 22.

■ **34:1—36:32** These chapters narrate scenes of rejection of the word of the Lord that led to final judgment on Judah. King Zedekiah is condemned for going back on his promise to free slaves (ch. 34), and the people of Judah are reproved for failing to learn a lesson from the example of the faithful Rechabites (ch. 35). King Jehoiakim rejects Jeremiah's message and burns the prophet's scroll (ch. 36).

■ **34:1 all the kingdoms . . . fought against Jerusalem.** It was required that vassal nations join in battle with their overlord.

■ **34:4, 5 not die by the sword . . . die in peace.** Zedekiah's precise fate was left obscure in 21:4–7; 32:3–5; but see 52:11. The point here is that he will not die in battle.

■ **34:7 Lachish and Azekah.** These were fortified cities of Judah (2 Chr. 11:5, 9). The verse gives a glimpse of the last days of Judah. Jerusalem knew the enemy was closing in as the outlying cities fell one by one. A pottery fragment dating from 588 B.C. carried this message to the commander at Lachish: "we are watching for the signals of Lachish . . . we cannot see Azekah."

■ **34:8 proclaim liberty to them.** According to Ex. 21:2–11; Lev. 25:39–55; Deut. 15:12–18, slaves were to be released in the last year of a seven-year cycle. Zedekiah's "covenant" (or solemn undertaking) reflects his ambivalence between listening to Jeremiah and his own political advisers.

■ **34:15, 16 turned . . . turned around.** These two verbs effectively portray Judah's fickleness (3:6, 14 notes).

profaned My name. The blatant disregard for the law regarding the release of slaves is a repudiation of the Lord Himself (note the analogy between the "covenants" of vv. 8, 13).

■ **34:18 cut the calf . . . between the parts of it.** See Gen. 15:18 and note. This sort of action accompanied making a covenant. It illustrated the penalty that would fall on a person who broke the covenant.

have not performed the words of the covenant which they made before Me, when [v]they cut the calf in two and passed between the parts of it— [19] the princes of Judah, the princes of Jerusalem, the [4]eunuchs, the priests, and all the people of the land who passed between the parts of the calf— [20] I will [w]give them into the hand of their enemies and into the hand of those who seek their life. Their [x]dead bodies shall be for meat for the birds of the heaven and the beasts of the earth. [21] And I will give Zedekiah king of Judah and his princes into the hand of their enemies, into the hand of those who seek their life, and into the hand of the king of Babylon's army [y]which has gone back from you. [22] [z]Behold, I will command,' says the LORD, 'and cause them to return to this city. They will fight against it [a]and take it and burn it with fire; and [b]I will make the cities of Judah a desolation without inhabitant.' "

The Obedient Rechabites

35 The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, saying, [2] "Go to the house of the [a]Rechabites, speak to them, and bring them into the house of the LORD, into one of [b]the chambers, and give them wine to drink."

[3] Then I took Jaazaniah the son of Jeremiah, the son of Habazziniah, his brothers and all his sons, and the whole house of the Rechabites, [4] and I brought them into the house of the LORD, into the chamber of the sons of Hanan the son of Igdaliah, a man of God, which *was* by the chamber of the princes, above the chamber of Maaseiah the son of Shallum, [c]the keeper of the [1]door. [5] Then I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites bowls full of wine, and cups; and I said to them, "Drink wine."

[6] But they said, "We will drink no wine, for [d]Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, commanded us, saying, 'You shall drink [e]no wine, you nor your sons, forever. [7] You shall not build a house, sow seed, plant a vineyard, nor have *any of these;* but all your days you shall dwell in tents, [f]that you may live many days in the land where you are sojourners.' [8] Thus we have [g]obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, in all that he charged us, to drink no wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, or our daughters, [9] nor to build ourselves houses to dwell in; nor do we have vineyard, field, or seed. [10] But we have dwelt in tents, and have obeyed and done according to all that Jonadab our father commanded us. [11] But it came to pass, when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up into the land, that we said, 'Come, let us [h]go to Jerusalem for fear of the army of the Chaldeans and for fear of the army of the Syrians.' So we dwell at Jerusalem."

[12] Then came the word of the LORD to Jeremiah, saying, [13] "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: 'Go and tell the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, "Will you not [i]receive instruction to [2]obey My words?" says the LORD. [14] "The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, which he commanded his sons, not to drink wine, are performed; for to this day they drink none, and obey their father's commandment. [j]But although I have spoken to you, [k]rising early and speaking, you did not [3]obey Me. [15] I have also sent to you all My [l]servants the prophets, rising up early and sending *them,* saying, [m]'Turn now everyone from his evil way, amend your doings, and do not go after other gods to serve them; then you will [n]dwell in the land which I have given you and your fathers.' But you have not inclined your ear, nor obeyed Me. [16] Surely the sons of Jonadab the son of Rechab have performed the commandment of their [o]father, which he commanded them, but this people has not obeyed Me." '

[17] "Therefore thus says the LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel: 'Behold, I will bring on Judah and on all the inhabitants of Jerusalem all the doom that I have pronounced against them; [p]because I have spoken to them but they have not heard, and I have called to them but they have not answered.' "

[18] And Jeremiah said to the house of the Rechabites, "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: 'Because you have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts and done according to all that he commanded you, [19] therefore thus says the LORD of hosts,

18 [v]Gen. 15:10, 17

19 [4]Or *officers*

20 [w]2 Kin. 25:19–21; Jer. 22:25 [x]Deut. 28:26; 1 Sam. 17:44, 46; 1 Kin. 14:11; 16:4; Ps. 79:2; Jer. 7:33; 16:4; 19:7

21 [y]Jer. 37:5–11; 39:4–7

22 [z]Jer. 37:8, 10 [a]Jer. 38:3; 39:1, 2, 8; 52:7, 13 [b]Jer. 9:11; 44:2, 6

CHAPTER 35

2 [a]2 Sam. 4:2; 2 Kin. 10:15; 1 Chr. 2:55 [b]1 Kin. 6:5, 8; 1 Chr. 9:26, 33

4 [c]2 Kin. 12:9; 25:18; 1 Chr. 9:18, 19 [1]Lit. *threshold*

6 [d]2 Kin. 10:15, 23 [e]Lev. 10:9; Num. 6:2–4; Judg. 13:7, 14; Prov. 31:4; Ezek. 44:21; Luke 1:15

7 [f]Ex. 20:12; Eph. 6:2, 3

8 [g][Prov. 1:8, 9; 4:1, 2, 10; 6:20; Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:20]

11 [h]Jer. 4:5–7; 8:14

13 [i][Is. 28:9–12]; Jer. 6:10; 17:23; 32:33 [2]*listen to*

14 [j]2 Chr. 36:15 [k]Jer. 7:13; 25:3 [3]*listen to*

15 [l]Jer. 26:4, 5; 29:19 [m][Is. 1:16, 17]; Jer. 18:11; 25:5, 6; [Ezek. 18:30–32]; Acts 26:20 [n]Jer. 7:7; 25:5, 6

16 [o][Heb. 12:9]

17 [p]Prov. 1:24; Is. 65:12; 66:4; Jer. 7:13

■ **35:2 house of the Rechabites.** Most of what is known of this clan is in this chapter.

house of the LORD . . . chambers. These rooms were used for storage (1 Kin. 6:5; Neh. 13:4, 5).

■ **35:3 Jeremiah.** One of two persons other than the prophet himself named "Jeremiah," mentioned in the book (see 52:1).

■ **35:4 man of God.** Another name for a prophet (1 Kin. 12:22).

■ **35:6, 7** The vow taken by Jonadab the son of Rechab commits his descendants to a nomadic life, with impermanent lodging and abstaining from wine. This life was a voluntary commitment not required by the Mosaic law (Deut. 6:10, 11; 7:13).

■ **35:19 shall not lack a man to stand before Me.** See 33:17, 18. Such a promise might be expected for a king, and even for priests, but not for the obscure Rechabites. It is used here to contrast ominously with what Jehoiakim and the Davidic dynasty can expect.

19 [q][Ex. 20:12]; Jer. 15:19; [Luke 21:36; Eph. 6:2, 3]

CHAPTER 36

1 [a]2 Kin. 24:1; 2 Chr. 36:5–7; Jer. 25:1, 3; 45:1; Dan. 1:1

2 [b]Is. 8:1; Ezek. 2:9; Zech. 5:1 [c]Jer. 30:2; Hab. 2:2 [d]Jer. 25:15 [e]Jer. 25:3

3 [f]Jer. 26:3; Ezek. 12:3 [g][Deut. 30:2, 8; 1 Sam. 7:3]; Is. 55:7; Jer. 18:8; Jon. 3:8

4 [h]Jer. 32:12 [i]Jer. 45:1 [1]Lit. *from Jeremiah's mouth*

6 [j]Lev. 16:29; 23:27–32; Acts 27:9 [2]Lit. *from my mouth*

10 [k]Jer. 26:10 [3]Lit. *ears*

12 [l]Jer. 41:1 [m]Jer. 26:22

17 [4]Lit. *with his mouth*

the God of Israel: "Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not lack a man to [q]stand before Me forever." ' "

The Scroll Read in the Temple

36 Now it came to pass in the [a]fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, *that* this word came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying: 2 "Take a [b]scroll of a book and [c]write on it all the words that I have spoken to you against Israel, against Judah, and against [d]all the nations, from the day I spoke to you, from the days of [e]Josiah even to this day. 3 It [f]may be that the house of Judah will hear all the adversities which I purpose to bring upon them, that everyone may [g]turn from his evil way, that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin."

4 Then Jeremiah [h]called Baruch the son of Neriah; and [i]Baruch wrote on a scroll of a book, [1]at the instruction of Jeremiah, all the words of the LORD which He had spoken to him. 5 And Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying, "I *am* confined, I cannot go into the house of the LORD. 6 You go, therefore, and read from the scroll which you have written [2]at my instruction, the words of the LORD, in the hearing of the people in the LORD's house on [j]the day of fasting. And you shall also read them in the hearing of all Judah who come from their cities. 7 It may be that they will present their supplication before the LORD, and everyone will turn from his evil way. For great *is* the anger and the fury that the LORD has pronounced against this people." 8 And Baruch the son of Neriah did according to all that Jeremiah the prophet commanded him, reading from the book the words of the LORD in the LORD's house.

9 Now it came to pass in the fifth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, in the ninth month, *that* they proclaimed a fast before the LORD to all the people in Jerusalem, and to all the people who came from the cities of Judah to Jerusalem. 10 Then Baruch read from the book the words of Jeremiah in the house of the LORD, in the chamber of Gemariah the son of Shaphan the scribe, in the upper court at the [k]entry of the New Gate of the LORD's house, in the [3]hearing of all the people.

The Scroll Read in the Palace

11 When Michaiah the son of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan, heard all the words of the LORD from the book, 12 he then went down to the king's house, into the scribe's chamber; and there all the princes were sitting—[l]Elishama the scribe, Delaiah the son of Shemaiah, [m]Elnathan the son of Achbor, Gemariah the son of Shaphan, Zedekiah the son of Hananiah, and all the princes. 13 Then Michaiah declared to them all the words that he had heard when Baruch read the book in the hearing of the people. 14 Therefore all the princes sent Jehudi the son of Nethaniah, the son of Shelemiah, the son of Cushi, to Baruch, saying, "Take in your hand the scroll from which you have read in the hearing of the people, and come." So Baruch the son of Neriah took the scroll in his hand and came to them. 15 And they said to him, "Sit down now, and read it in our hearing." So Baruch read *it* in their hearing.

16 Now it happened, when they had heard all the words, that they looked in fear from one to another, and said to Baruch, "We will surely tell the king of all these words." 17 And they asked Baruch, saying, "Tell us now, how did you write all these words—[4]at his instruction?"

18 So Baruch answered them, "He proclaimed with his mouth all these words to me, and I wrote *them* with ink in the book."

19 Then the princes said to Baruch, "Go and hide, you and Jeremiah; and let no one know where you are."

The King Destroys Jeremiah's Scroll

20 And they went to the king, into the court; but they stored the scroll in the chamber of Elishama the scribe, and told all the words in the hearing of the king. 21 So the king sent Jehudi to bring the scroll, and he took it from Elishama the scribe's chamber. And Jehudi read it in the

■ **36:1 fourth year of Jehoiakim.** That is, 605 B.C., the year of Nebuchadnezzar's first move against Jerusalem (25:1 note).

■ **36:2 Take a scroll . . . and write on it.** The present account is an important guide to understanding how prophetic books were written. Jeremiah's oracles were spoken over a long period (25:3), and are here gathered into a collection (Is. 8:16 and note).

■ **36:4 Baruch.** This is the second mention of Jeremiah's scribe (32:12). His activity suggests that he had a role in compiling the Book of Jeremiah.

■ **36:5 I am confined.** This statement probably means he was banned from the temple area because of his unpopularity with the authorities (26:2–11).

■ **36:9 in the fifth year . . . the ninth month.** That is, December, 604 B.C.

■ **36:21 Jehudi.** Baruch is no longer the reader, presumably being in hiding (v. 19). The absence of Jeremiah and Baruch focuses Jehoiakim's response on the words themselves.

hearing of the king and in the hearing of all the princes who stood beside the king. 22 Now the king was sitting in [n]the winter house in the ninth month, with *a fire* burning on the hearth before him. 23 And it happened, when Jehudi had read three or four columns, *that the king* cut it with the scribe's knife and cast *it* into the fire that *was* on the hearth, until all the scroll was consumed in the fire that *was* on the hearth. 24 Yet they were [o]not afraid, nor did they [p]tear their garments, the king nor any of his servants who heard all these words. 25 Nevertheless Elnathan, Delaiah, and Gemariah implored the king not to burn the scroll; but he would not listen to them. 26 And the king commanded Jerahmeel [5]the king's son, Seraiah the son of Azriel, and Shelemiah the son of Abdeel, to seize Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet, but the LORD hid them.

Jeremiah Rewrites the Scroll

27 Now after the king had burned the scroll with the words which Baruch had written [6]at the instruction of Jeremiah, the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying: 28 "Take yet another scroll, and write on it all the former words that were in the first scroll which Jehoiakim the king of Judah has burned. 29 And you shall say to Jehoiakim king of Judah, 'Thus says the LORD: "You have burned this scroll, saying, [q]'Why have you written in it that the king of Babylon will certainly come and destroy this land, and cause man and beast to [r]cease from here?' " 30 Therefore thus says the LORD concerning Jehoiakim king of Judah: [s]"He shall have no one to sit on the throne of David, and his dead body shall be [t]cast out to the heat of the day and the frost of the night. 31 I will punish him, his [7]family, and his servants for their iniquity; and I will bring on them, on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and on the men of Judah all the doom that I have pronounced against them; but they did not heed." ' "

32 Then Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah, who wrote on it [8]at the instruction of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire. And besides, there were added to them many similar words.

Zedekiah's Vain Hope

37 Now King [a]Zedekiah the son of Josiah reigned instead of Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon made king in the land of Judah. 2 [b]But neither he nor his servants nor the people of the land gave heed to the words of the LORD which He spoke by the prophet Jeremiah.

3 And Zedekiah the king sent Jehucal the son of Shelemiah, and [c]Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah, the priest, to the prophet Jeremiah, saying, [d]"Pray now to the LORD our God for us." 4 Now Jeremiah was coming and going among the people, for they had not *yet* put him in prison. 5 Then [e]Pharaoh's army came up from Egypt; and when the Chaldeans who were besieging Jerusalem heard news of them, they departed from Jerusalem.

6 Then the word of the LORD came to the prophet Jeremiah, saying, 7 "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Thus you shall say to the king of Judah, [f]who sent you to Me to inquire of Me: "Behold, Pharaoh's army which has come up to help you will return to Egypt, to their own land. 8 [g]And the Chaldeans shall come back and fight against this city, and take it and burn it with fire." ' 9 Thus says the LORD: 'Do not deceive yourselves, saying, "The Chaldeans will surely depart from us," for they will not depart. 10 [h]For though you had defeated the whole army of the Chaldeans who fight against you, and there remained *only* wounded men among them, they would rise up, every man in his tent, and burn the city with fire.' "

Jeremiah Imprisoned

11 And it happened, when the army of the Chaldeans left *the siege* of Jerusalem for fear of Pharaoh's army, 12 that Jeremiah went out of Jerusalem to go into the land of Benjamin to claim his property there among the people. 13 And when he was in the Gate of Benjamin, a captain of the guard *was* there whose name *was* Irijah the son of Shelemiah, the son of Hananiah; and he seized Jeremiah the prophet, saying, "You are defecting to the Chaldeans!"

22 [n]Judg. 3:20; Amos 3:15

24 [o][Ps. 36:1]; Jer. 36:16 [p]Gen. 37:29, 34; 2 Sam. 1:11; 1 Kin. 21:27; 2 Kin. 19:1, 2; 22:11; Is. 36:22; 37:1; Jon. 3:6

26 [5]Or *son of Hammelech*

27 [6]Lit. *from Jeremiah's mouth*

29 [q]Jer. 32:3 [r]Jer. 25:9–11; 26:9

30 [s]Jer. 22:30 [t]Jer. 22:19

31 [7]Lit. *seed*

32 [8]Lit. *from Jeremiah's mouth*

CHAPTER 37

1 [a]2 Kin. 24:17; 1 Chr. 3:15; 2 Chr. 36:10; Jer. 22:24

2 [b]2 Kin. 24:19, 20; 2 Chr. 36:12–16; [Prov. 29:12]

3 [c]Jer. 21:1, 2; 29:25; 52:24 [d]1 Kin. 13:6; Jer. 42:2; Acts 8:24

5 [e]2 Kin. 24:7; Jer. 37:7; Ezek. 17:15

7 [f]Is. 36:6; Jer. 21:2; Ezek. 17:17

8 [g]2 Chr. 36:19; Jer. 34:22

10 [h]Lev. 26:36–38; Is. 30:17; Jer. 21:4, 5

■ **36:23 all the scroll was consumed in the fire.** The contrast with Josiah could not be stronger (2 Kin. 22:11–13).

■ **36:28 Take yet another scroll.** God's word cannot be invalidated by the destruction of a scroll.

■ **36:30 Jehoiakim . . . shall have no one to sit on the throne of David.** His son Jehoiachin's rule lasted only a few months (22:30 note; 2 Kin. 24:8).

■ **37:1—39:18** These chapters recount Jeremiah's last warnings before the fall of Jerusalem and his imprisonment for his unpopular message. His repeated advice to surrender to the Babylonians is ignored, and he remains imprisoned until the fall of Jerusalem.

■ **37:1 Zedekiah . . . reigned instead of Coniah.** See 2 Kin. 24:17–18. The year was 597 B.C.

■ **37:5 Egypt . . . Chaldeans.** See 34:10, 11. Egypt and Babylon were in contention for the region. Many in Judah were looking to Egypt for support (24:8); the Babylonians would have withdrawn to counter the Egyptian advance.

14 [1]*a lie*

15 [i]Jer. 20:2; [Matt. 21:35] [j]Gen. 39:20; 2 Chr. 16:10; 18:26; Jer. 38:26; Acts 5:18

16 [k]Jer. 38:6

17 [l]2 Kin. 25:4–7; Jer. 21:7; Ezek. 12:12, 13; 17:19–21

21 [m]Jer. 32:2; 38:13, 28 [n]2 Kin. 25:3; Jer. 38:9; 52:6

CHAPTER 38

1 [a]Jer. 37:3 [b]Jer. 21:1 [c]Jer. 21:8 [1]*Jehucal,* Jer. 37:3

2 [d]Jer. 21:9

3 [e]Jer. 21:10; 32:3 [f]Jer. 34:2

4 [g]Jer. 26:11 [2]Is discouraging [3]Well-being; lit. *peace*

6 [h]Jer. 37:21; Lam. 3:55 [4]Or *son of Hammelech*

7 [i]Jer. 39:16 [5]Or *officers*

9 [j]Jer. 37:21

13 [k]Neh. 3:25; Jer. 37:21; Acts 23:35; 24:27; 28:16, 30

14 Then Jeremiah said, [l]"False! I am not defecting to the Chaldeans." But he did not listen to him.

So Irijah seized Jeremiah and brought him to the princes. 15 Therefore the princes were angry with Jeremiah, and they struck him [i]and put him in prison in the [j]house of Jonathan the scribe. For they had made that the prison.

16 When Jeremiah entered [k]the dungeon and the cells, and Jeremiah had remained there many days, 17 then Zedekiah the king sent and took him *out.* The king asked him secretly in his house, and said, "Is there *any* word from the LORD?"

And Jeremiah said, "There is." Then he said, "You shall be [l]delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon!"

18 Moreover Jeremiah said to King Zedekiah, "What offense have I committed against you, against your servants, or against this people, that you have put me in prison? 19 Where now *are* your prophets who prophesied to you, saying, 'The king of Babylon will not come against you or against this land'? 20 Therefore please hear now, O my lord the king. Please, let my petition be accepted before you, and do not make me return to the house of Jonathan the scribe, lest I die there."

21 Then Zedekiah the king commanded that they should commit Jeremiah [m]to the court of the prison, and that they should give him daily a piece of bread from the bakers' street, [n]until all the bread in the city was gone. Thus Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison.

Jeremiah in the Dungeon

38 Now Shephatiah the son of Mattan, Gedaliah the son of Pashhur, [a]Jucal[1] the son of Shelemiah, and [b]Pashhur the son of Malchiah [c]heard the words that Jeremiah had spoken to all the people, saying, 2 "Thus says the LORD: [d]'He who remains in this city shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence; but he who goes over to the Chaldeans shall live; his life shall be as a prize to him, and he shall live.' 3 Thus says the LORD: [e]'This city shall surely be [f]given into the hand of the king of Babylon's army, which shall take it.' "

4 Therefore the princes said to the king, "Please, [g]let this man be put to death, for thus he [2]weakens the hands of the men of war who remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, by speaking such words to them. For this man does not seek the [3]welfare of this people, but their harm."

5 Then Zedekiah the king said, "Look, he *is* in your hand. For the king can *do* nothing against you." 6 [h]So they took Jeremiah and cast him into the dungeon of Malchiah [4]the king's son, which *was* in the court of the prison, and they let Jeremiah down with ropes. And in the dungeon *there was* no water, but mire. So Jeremiah sank in the mire.

7 [i]Now Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, one of the [5]eunuchs, who was in the king's house, heard that they had put Jeremiah in the dungeon. When the king was sitting at the Gate of Benjamin, 8 Ebed-Melech went out of the king's house and spoke to the king, saying: 9 "My lord the king, these men have done evil in all that they have done to Jeremiah the prophet, whom they have cast into the dungeon, and he is likely to die from hunger in the place where he is. For *there is* [j]no more bread in the city." 10 Then the king commanded Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, saying, "Take from here thirty men with you, and lift Jeremiah the prophet out of the dungeon before he dies." 11 So Ebed-Melech took the men with him and went into the house of the king under the treasury, and took from there old clothes and old rags, and let them down by ropes into the dungeon to Jeremiah. 12 Then Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian said to Jeremiah, "Please put these old clothes and rags under your armpits, under the ropes." And Jeremiah did so. 13 So they pulled Jeremiah up with ropes and lifted him out of the dungeon. And Jeremiah remained [k]in the court of the prison.

■ **37:15 they struck him.** This is the second mention of such punishment (20:2).

■ **37:21 the court of the prison.** The court was less severe than the "dungeon" (v. 16; see 32:2). Zedekiah here shows a measure of respect for God's prophet.

■ **38:6 dungeon.** This was likely a cistern, a deep pit with only a small opening in the top. Whether it was empty from water shortage or disuse is not clear. They may have hoped Jeremiah would die there.

■ **38:7 Ebed-Melech.** The name means "king's servant" and he would have held a position of responsibility in Zedekiah's household.

king was sitting at the Gate of Benjamin. Probably he was hearing civil suits (2 Sam. 15:2–4).

■ **38:12 rags . . . under the ropes.** Here is a touching glimpse of Ebed-Melech's kindness.

Zedekiah's Fears and Jeremiah's Advice

14 Then Zedekiah the king sent and had Jeremiah the prophet brought to him at the third entrance of the house of the LORD. And the king said to Jeremiah, "I will [l]ask you something. Hide nothing from me."

15 Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, "If I declare *it* to you, will you not surely put me to death? And if I give you advice, you will not listen to me."

16 So Zedekiah the king swore secretly to Jeremiah, saying, "*As* the LORD lives, [m]who made our very souls, I will not put you to death, nor will I give you into the hand of these men who seek your life."

17 Then Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, "Thus says the LORD, the God of hosts, the God of Israel: 'If you surely [n]surrender[6] [o]to the king of Babylon's princes, then your soul shall live; this city shall not be burned with fire, and you and your house shall live. 18 But if you do not [7]surrender to the king of Babylon's princes, then this city shall be given into the hand of the Chaldeans; they shall burn it with fire, and [p]you shall not escape from their hand.' "

19 And Zedekiah the king said to Jeremiah, "I am afraid of the Jews who have [q]defected to the Chaldeans, lest they deliver me into their hand, and they [r]abuse me."

20 But Jeremiah said, "They shall not deliver *you.* Please, obey the voice of the LORD which I speak to you. So it shall be [s]well with you, and your soul shall live. 21 But if you refuse to [8]surrender, this *is* the word that the LORD has shown me: 22 'Now behold, all the [t]women who are left in the king of Judah's house *shall be* surrendered to the king of Babylon's princes, and those *women* shall say:

"Your close friends have [9]set upon you
And prevailed against you;
Your feet have sunk in the mire,
And they have [t]turned away again."

23 'So they shall surrender all your wives and [u]children to the Chaldeans. [v]You shall not escape from their hand, but shall be taken by the hand of the king of Babylon. And you shall cause this city to be burned with fire.' "

24 Then Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, "Let no one know of these words, and you shall not die. 25 But if the princes hear that I have talked with you, and they come to you and say to you, 'Declare to us now what you have said to the king, and also what the king said to you; do not hide *it* from us, and we will not put you to death,' 26 then you shall say to them, [w]'I presented my request before the king, that he would not make me return [x]to Jonathan's house to die there.' "

27 Then all the princes came to Jeremiah and asked him. And he told them according to all these words that the king had commanded. So they stopped speaking with him, for the conversation had not been heard. 28 Now [y]Jeremiah remained in the court of the prison until the day that Jerusalem was taken. And he was *there* when Jerusalem was taken.

The Fall of Jerusalem

39 In the [a]ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army came against Jerusalem, and besieged it. 2 In the [b]eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, on the ninth *day* of the month, the [1]city was penetrated.

3 [c]Then all the princes of the king of Babylon came in and sat in the Middle Gate: Nergal-Shrezer, Samgar-Nebo, Sarsechim, [2]Rabsaris, Nergal-Sarezer, [3]Rabmag, with the rest of the princes of the king of Babylon.

4 [d]So it was, when Zedekiah the king of Judah and all the men of war saw them, that they fled and went out of the city by night, by way of the king's garden, by the gate between the two walls. And he went out by way of the [4]plain. 5 But the Chaldean army pursued them and [e]overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho. And when they had captured him, they brought him up to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, to [f]Riblah in the land of Hamath, where he pronounced

14 [l]Jer. 21:1, 2; 37:17

16 [m]Num. 16:22; Is. 57:16; Zech. 12:1; [Acts 17:25, 28]

17 [n]2 Kin. 24:12 [o]Jer. 39:3 [6]Lit. *go out*

18 [p]Jer. 32:4; 34:3 [7]Lit. *go out*

19 [q]Jer. 39:9 [r]1 Sam. 31:4

20 [s]Jer. 40:9

21 [8]Lit. *go out*

22 [t]Jer. 8:10 [9]Or *misled* [t]Deserted you

23 [u]Jer. 39:6; 41:10 [v]Jer. 39:5

26 [w]Jer. 37:20 [x]Jer. 37:15

28 [y][Ps. 23:4]; Jer. 37:21; 39:14

CHAPTER 39

1 [a]2 Kin. 25:1–12; Jer. 52:4; Ezek. 24:1, 2

2 [b]Jer. 1:3 [1]*city wall was breached*

3 [c]Jer. 1:15; 38:17 [2]A title, probably *Chief Officer;* also v. 13 [3]A title, probably *Troop Commander;* also v. 13

4 [d]2 Kin. 25:4; Is. 30:16; Jer. 52:7; Amos 2:14 [4]Or *Arabah;* the Jordan Valley

5 [e]Jer. 21:7; 32:4; 38:18, 23 [f]2 Kin. 23:33; Jer. 52:9, 26, 27

■ **38:14 third entrance.** This entrance is not mentioned elsewhere, but perhaps was for the private use of the king. The whole encounter breathes secrecy.

■ **38:22 women . . . surrendered to the king of Babylon's princes.** The loss of a harem was a humiliating consequence for a king defeated in war.

Your close friends. Lit. "men of your peace." These "friends" included the officials who had counseled war (vv. 1, 4), and the false prophets (8:11). The expression ironically confirms Jeremiah's criticism of them.

■ **39:1 tenth month.** January, 588 B.C. (52:4; 2 Kin. 25:1).

■ **39:2 ninth day.** That is, July, 586 B.C. (52:5–7; 2 Kin. 25:2–4); the siege had lasted two and a half years.

■ **39:3 sat in the Middle Gate.** This fulfills 1:15. The officials' names are formed with those of Babylonian gods (Nebo, Nergal).

judgment on him. 6 Then the king of Babylon killed the sons of Zedekiah before his [g]eyes in Riblah; the king of Babylon also killed all the [h]nobles of Judah. 7 Moreover [i]he put out Zedekiah's eyes, and bound him with bronze [5]fetters to carry him off to Babylon. 8 [j]And the Chaldeans burned the king's house and the houses of the people with [k]fire, and broke down the [l]walls of Jerusalem. 9 [m]Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive to Babylon the remnant of the people who remained in the city and those who [n]defected to him, with the rest of the people who remained. 10 But Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard left in the land of Judah the [o]poor people, who had nothing, and gave them vineyards and fields [6]at the same time.

Jeremiah Goes Free

11 Now Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon gave charge concerning Jeremiah to Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, saying, 12 "Take him and look after him, and do him no [p]harm; but do to him just as he says to you." 13 So Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard sent Nebushasban, Rabsaris, Nergal-Sharezer, Rabmag, and all the king of Babylon's chief officers; 14 then they sent *someone* [q]to take Jeremiah from the court of the prison, and committed him [r]to Gedaliah the son of [s]Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, that he should take him home. So he dwelt among the people.

15 Meanwhile the word of the LORD had come to Jeremiah while he was shut up in the court of the prison, saying, 16 "Go and speak to [t]Ebed-Melech the Ethiopian, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Behold, [u]I will bring My words upon this city for adversity and not for good, and they shall be *performed* in that day before you. 17 But I will deliver you in that day," says the LORD, "and you shall not be given into the hand of the men of whom you *are* afraid. 18 For I will surely deliver you, and you shall not fall by the sword; but [v]your life shall be as a prize to you, [w]because you have put your trust in Me," says the LORD.' "

Jeremiah with Gedaliah the Governor

40 The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD [a]after Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had let him go from Ramah, when he had taken him bound in chains among all who were carried away captive from Jerusalem and Judah, who were carried away captive to Babylon.

2 And the captain of the guard took Jeremiah and [b]said to him: "The LORD your God has pronounced this doom on this place. 3 Now the LORD has brought *it,* and has done just as He said. [c]Because you *people* have sinned against the LORD, and not obeyed His voice, therefore this thing has come upon you. 4 And now look, I free you this day from the chains that [1]*were* on your hand. [d]If it seems good to you to come with me to Babylon, come, and I will look after you. But if it seems wrong for you to come with me to Babylon, remain here. See, [e]all the land *is* before you; wherever it seems good and convenient for you to go, go there."

5 Now while Jeremiah had not yet gone back, *Nebuzaradan said,* "Go back to [f]Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, [g]whom the king of Babylon has made governor over the cities of Judah, and dwell with him among the people. Or go wherever it seems convenient for you to go." So the captain of the guard gave him rations and a gift and let him go. 6 [h]Then Jeremiah went to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, to [i]Mizpah, and dwelt with him among the people who were left in the land.

7 [j]And when all the captains of the armies who *were* in the fields, they and their men, heard that the king of Babylon had made Gedaliah the son of Ahikam governor in the land, and had committed to him men, women, children, and [k]the poorest of the land who had not been carried away captive to Babylon, 8 then they came to Gedaliah at Mizpah—[l]Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, [m]Johanan and Jonathan the sons of Kareah, Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth, the sons of Ephai the Netophathite, and [n]Jezaniah[2] the son of a [o]Maachathite, they and their men. 9 And Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, took an oath before them and their men, saying, "Do not be afraid to serve the Chaldeans. Dwell in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be [p]well with you. 10 As for me, I will indeed dwell at Mizpah and serve the Chaldeans who come to us. But you, gather wine and summer fruit and oil, put *them* in your vessels, and dwell in your

6 [g]Deut. 28:34 [h]Jer. 34:19–21
7 [i]2 Kin. 25:7; Jer. 52:11; Ezek. 12:13 [5]*chains*
8 [j]2 Kin. 25:9; Jer. 38:18; 52:13 [k]Jer. 21:10 [l]2 Kin. 25:10; Neh. 1:3; Jer. 52:14
9 [m]2 Kin. 25:8, 11, 12, 20 [n]Jer. 38:19
10 [o]Jer. 40:7 [6]Lit. *on that day*
12 [p]Jer. 1:18, 19; 15:20, 21
14 [q]Jer. 38:28 [r]Jer. 40:5 [s]2 Kin. 22:12, 14; 2 Chr. 34:20; Jer. 26:24
16 [t]Jer. 38:7, 12 [u]Jer. 21:10; [Dan. 9:12; Zech. 1:6]
18 [v]Jer. 21:9; 45:5 [w]1 Chr. 5:20; Ps. 37:40; [Jer. 17:7, 8]

CHAPTER 40

1 [a]Jer. 39:9, 11
2 [b]Jer. 50:7
3 [c]Deut. 29:24, 25; Jer. 50:7; Dan. 9:11; [Rom. 2:5]
4 [d]Jer. 39:12 [e]Gen. 20:15 [1]Or *are*
5 [f]Jer. 39:14 [g]2 Kin. 25:22; Jer. 41:10
6 [h]Jer. 39:14 [i]Judg. 20:1; 1 Sam. 7:5; 2 Chr. 16:6
7 [j]2 Kin. 25:23, 24 [k]Jer. 39:10
8 [l]Jer. 41:1–10 [m]Jer. 41:11; 43:2 [n]Jer. 42:1 [o]Deut. 3:14; Josh. 12:5; 2 Sam. 10:6 [2]*Jaazaniah,* 2 Kin. 25:23
9 [p]Jer. 27:11; 38:17–20

■ **39:11, 12 Nebuchadnezzar . . . gave charge concerning Jeremiah.** How much of the prophet's message the king knew is not clear; he probably regarded him as a Babylonian sympathizer (though see 25:12).

■ **40:5 Gedaliah.** See 26:24. Gedaliah is receptive to Jeremiah's understanding of events.

■ **40:10 gather wine and summer fruit and oil.** At the moment of judgment, we are given a glimpse of future blessing in the land. Contrast the drought conditions during parts of Jeremiah's earlier preaching (14:1–6 and notes).

cities that you have taken." 11 Likewise, when all the Jews who *were* in Moab, among the Ammonites, in Edom, and who *were* in all the countries, heard that the king of Babylon had left a remnant of Judah, and that he had set over them Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, 12 then all the Jews [q]returned out of all places where they had been driven, and came to the land of Judah, to Gedaliah at Mizpah, and gathered wine and summer fruit in abundance.

13 Moreover Johanan the son of Kareah and all the captains of the forces that *were* in the fields came to Gedaliah at Mizpah, 14 and said to him, [3]"Do you certainly know that [r]Baalis the king of the Ammonites has sent Ishmael the son of Nethaniah to murder you?" But Gedaliah the son of Ahikam did not believe them.

15 Then Johanan the son of Kareah spoke secretly to Gedaliah in Mizpah, saying, "Let me go, please, and I will kill Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and no one will know *it.* Why should he murder you, so that all the Jews who are gathered to you would be scattered, and the [s]remnant in Judah perish?"

16 But Gedaliah the son of Ahikam said to Johanan the son of Kareah, "You shall not do this thing, for you speak falsely concerning Ishmael."

Insurrection Against Gedaliah

41 Now it came to pass in the seventh month [a]*that* Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, of the royal [1]family and of the officers of the king, came with ten men to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, at [b]Mizpah. And there they ate bread together in Mizpah. 2 Then Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and the ten men who were with him, arose and [c]struck Gedaliah the son of [d]Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, with the sword, and killed him whom the king of Babylon had made [e]governor over the land. 3 Ishmael also struck down all the Jews who were with him, *that is,* with Gedaliah at Mizpah, and the Chaldeans who were found there, the men of war.

4 And it happened, on the second day after he had killed Gedaliah, when as yet no one knew *it,* 5 that certain men came from Shechem, from Shiloh, and from Samaria, eighty men [f]with their beards shaved and their clothes torn, having cut themselves, with offerings and incense in their hand, to bring *them* to [g]the house of the LORD. 6 Now Ishmael the son of Nethaniah went out from Mizpah to meet them, weeping as he went along; and it happened as he met them that he said to them, "Come to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam!" 7 So it was, when they came into the midst of the city, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah [h]killed them *and cast them* into the midst of a [2]pit, he and the men who were with him. 8 But ten men were found among them who said to Ishmael, "Do not kill us, for we have treasures of wheat, barley, oil, and honey in the field." So he desisted and did not kill them among their brethren. 9 Now the [3]pit into which Ishmael had cast all the dead bodies of the men whom he had slain, because of Gedaliah, *was* [i]the same one Asa the king had made for fear of Baasha king of Israel. Ishmael the son of Nethaniah filled it with *the* slain. 10 Then Ishmael carried away captive all the [j]rest of the people who *were* in Mizpah, [k]the king's daughters and all the people who remained in Mizpah, [l]whom Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had committed to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam. And Ishmael the son of Nethaniah carried them away captive and departed to go over to [m]the Ammonites.

11 But when [n]Johanan the son of Kareah and all the captains of the forces that *were* with him heard of all the evil that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah had done, 12 they took all the men and went to fight with Ishmael the son of Nethaniah; and they found him by [o]the great pool that *is* in Gibeon. 13 So it was, when all the people who *were* with Ishmael saw Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces who *were* with him, that they were glad. 14 Then all the people whom Ishmael had carried away captive from Mizpah turned around and came back, and went to Johanan the son of Kareah. 15 But Ishmael the son of Nethaniah escaped from Johanan with eight men and went to the Ammonites.

12 [q]Jer. 43:5

14 [r]Jer. 41:10 [3]Or *Certainly you know that*

15 [s]Jer. 42:2

CHAPTER 41

1 [a]2 Kin. 25:25 [b]Jer. 40:6, 10 [1]Lit. *seed*

2 [c]2 Sam. 3:27; 20:9, 10; 2 Kin. 25:25; Ps. 41:9; 109:5; John 13:18 [d]Jer. 26:24 [e]Jer. 40:5

5 [f]Lev. 19:27, 28; Deut. 14:1; Is. 15:2 [g]1 Sam. 1:7; 2 Kin. 25:9; Neh. 10:34, 35

7 [h]Ps. 55:23; Is. 59:7; Ezek. 22:27; 33:24, 26 [2]Or *cistern*

9 [i]1 Kin. 15:22; 2 Chr. 16:6 [3]Or *cistern*

10 [j]Jer. 40:11, 12 [k]Jer. 43:6 [l]Jer. 40:7 [m]Jer. 40:14

11 [n]Jer. 40:7, 8, 13–16

12 [o]2 Sam. 2:13

■ **41:1 And there they ate bread together.** This hospitality emphasizes the treachery of Ishmael the son of Nethaniah.

■ **41:5 from Shechem . . . Shiloh . . . Samaria.** These cities were important religious centers in the former northern kingdom that fell in 722 B.C. The men are a remnant of Israel's population who had made pilgrimages to Jerusalem for the great feasts (in accordance with Ex. 23:14–17). The time of year (the "seventh month," see v. 1) was the Feast of Tabernacles.

with their beards shaved . . . cut themselves. These actions are signs of mourning for the fall of Jerusalem.

the house of the LORD. Although the temple had been destroyed, the temple mount was still regarded as holy.

■ **41:7 the city.** That is, Mizpah (v. 6).

■ **41:10 the king's daughters.** Members of Zedekiah's court, not just the king's own daughters.

Ammonites. Part of the former alliance against Babylon (27:3), the Ammonite action is itself under God's judgment (27:8; 49:1–6).

■ **41:11—44:30** Jeremiah is taken to Egypt by Jewish survivors fleeing from possible Babylonian reprisals.

■ **41:15 escaped . . . with eight men.** Two men were presumably lost in the skirmish (v. 2).

16 [p]Jer. 40:11, 12; 43:4–7

17 [q]2 Sam. 19:37, 38 [r]Jer. 43:7

18 [s]Jer. 40:5

CHAPTER 42

1 [a]Jer. 40:8, 13; 41:11

2 [b]Jer. 15:11 [c]Is. 37:4 [d]Lev. 26:22

3 [e]Ezra 8:21

4 [f]1 Kin. 22:14 [g]1 Sam. 3:17, 18

5 [h]Gen. 31:50

6 [i]Ex. 24:7 [j]Jer. 7:23 [1]Lit. *good* [2]Lit. *evil*

10 [k]Jer. 24:6; 31:28; 33:7 [l][Jer. 18:8]

11 [m]Rom. 8:31

12 [n]Ps. 106:46

13 [o]Jer. 44:16

14 [p]Jer. 41:17; 43:7

15 [q]Deut. 17:16 [r]Luke 9:51 [3]Or *surely*

16 [s]Ezek. 11:8

17 [t]Jer. 44:14, 28

18 [u]Jer. 7:20 [v]Is. 65:15

19 [w]Deut. 17:16 [4]*warned*

20 [5]Lit. *used deceit against your souls*

21 [x]Is. 30:1–7

22 [y]Ezek. 6:11

16 Then Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that were with him, took from Mizpah all the [p]rest of the people whom he had recovered from Ishmael the son of Nethaniah after he had murdered Gedaliah the son of Ahikam—the mighty men of war and the women and the children and the eunuchs, whom he had brought back from Gibeon. 17 And they departed and dwelt in the habitation of [q]Chimham, which is near Bethlehem, as they went on their way to [r]Egypt, 18 because of the Chaldeans; for they were afraid of them, because Ishmael the son of Nethaniah had murdered Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, [s]whom the king of Babylon had made governor in the land.

The Flight to Egypt Forbidden

42 Now all the captains of the forces, [a]Johanan the son of Kareah, Jezaniah the son of Hoshaiah, and all the people, from the least to the greatest, came near 2 and said to Jeremiah the prophet, [b]"Please, let our petition be acceptable to you, and [c]pray for us to the LORD your God, for all this remnant (since we are left *but* [d]a few of many, as you can see), 3 that the LORD your God may show us [e]the way in which we should walk and the thing we should do."

4 Then Jeremiah the prophet said to them, "I have heard. Indeed, I will pray to the LORD your God according to your words, and it shall be, *that* [f]whatever the LORD answers you, I will declare *it* to you. I will [g]keep nothing back from you."

5 So they said to Jeremiah, [h]"Let the LORD be a true and faithful witness between us, if we do not do according to everything which the LORD your God sends us by you. 6 Whether *it is* [1]pleasing or [2]displeasing, we will [i]obey the voice of the LORD our God to whom we send you, [j]that it may be well with us when we obey the voice of the LORD our God."

7 And it happened after ten days that the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah. 8 Then he called Johanan the son of Kareah, all the captains of the forces which *were* with him, and all the people from the least even to the greatest, 9 and said to them, "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, to whom you sent me to present your petition before Him: 10 'If you will still remain in this land, then [k]I will build you and not pull *you* down, and I will plant you and not pluck *you* up. For I [l]relent concerning the disaster that I have brought upon you. 11 Do not be afraid of the king of Babylon, of whom you are afraid; do not be afraid of him,' says the LORD, [m]'for I *am* with you, to save you and deliver you from his hand. 12 And [n]I will show you mercy, that he may have mercy on you and cause you to return to your own land.'

13 "But if [o]you say, 'We will not dwell in this land,' disobeying the voice of the LORD your God, 14 saying, 'No, but we will go to the land of [p]Egypt where we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor be hungry for bread, and there we will dwell'— 15 Then hear now the word of the LORD, O remnant of Judah! Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: 'If you [q]wholly[3] set [r]your faces to enter Egypt, and go to dwell there, 16 then it shall be *that* the [s]sword which you feared shall overtake you there in the land of Egypt; the famine of which you were afraid shall follow close after you there *in* Egypt; and there you shall die. 17 So shall it be with all the men who set their faces to go to Egypt to dwell there. They shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence. And [t]none of them shall remain or escape from the disaster that I will bring upon them.'

18 "For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: 'As My anger and My fury have been [u]poured out on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so will My fury be poured out on you when you enter Egypt. And [v]you shall be an oath, an astonishment, a curse, and a reproach; and you shall see this place no more.'

19 "The LORD has said concerning you, O remnant of Judah, [w]'Do not go to Egypt!' Know certainly that I have [4]admonished you this day. 20 For you [5]were hypocrites in your hearts when you sent me to the LORD your God, saying, 'Pray for us to the LORD our God, and according to all that the LORD your God says, so declare to us and we will do *it*.' 21 And I have this day declared *it* to you, but you have [x]not obeyed the voice of the LORD your God, or anything which He has sent you by me. 22 Now therefore, know certainly that you [y]shall die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence in the place where you desire to go to dwell."

■ **42:10 If you will still remain in this land.** This promise of blessing for the remnant left behind during the Exile was a new theme in Jeremiah's message (24:8; 40:6).

■ **42:13–16** The Lord's word is still against seeking refuge in Egypt (Deut. 17:16). The issue, as ever, is false trust and the delusion of safety in human power and calculation (22:20, 22; 30:14).

Jeremiah Taken to Egypt

43 Now it happened, when Jeremiah had stopped speaking to all the people all the [a]words of the LORD their God, for which the LORD their God had sent him to them, all these words, [2] [b]that Azariah the son of Hoshaiah, Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the proud men spoke, saying to Jeremiah, "You speak falsely! The LORD our God has not sent you to say, 'Do not go to Egypt to dwell there.' [3] But [c]Baruch the son of Neriah has [1]set you against us, to deliver us into the hand of the Chaldeans, that they may put us to death or carry us away captive to Babylon." [4] So Johanan the son of Kareah, all the captains of the forces, and all the people would [d]not obey the voice of the LORD, to remain in the land of Judah. [5] But Johanan the son of Kareah and all the captains of the forces took [e]all the remnant of Judah who had returned to dwell in the land of Judah, from all nations where they had been driven— [6] men, women, children, [f]the king's daughters, [g]and every person whom Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had left with Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, and Jeremiah the prophet and Baruch the son of Neriah. [7] [h]So they went to the land of Egypt, for they did not obey the voice of the LORD. And they went as far as [i]Tahpanhes.

[8] Then the [j]word of the LORD came to Jeremiah in Tahpanhes, saying, [9] "Take large stones in your hand, and hide them in the sight of the men of Judah, in the [2]clay in the brick courtyard which *is* at the entrance to Pharaoh's house in Tahpanhes; [10] and say to them, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: "Behold, I will send and bring Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, [k]My servant, and will set his throne above these stones that I have hidden. And he will spread his royal pavilion over them. [11] [l]When he comes, he shall strike the land of Egypt *and deliver* to death [m]*those appointed* for death, and to captivity *those appointed* for captivity, and to the sword *those appointed* for the sword. [12] [3]I will kindle a fire in the houses of [n]the gods of Egypt, and he shall burn them and carry them away captive. And he shall array himself with the land of Egypt, as a shepherd puts on his garment, and he shall go out from there in peace. [13] He shall also break the sacred pillars of [4]Beth Shemesh that *are* in the land of Egypt; and the houses of the gods of the Egyptians he shall burn with fire." ' "

CHAPTER 43

1 [a]Jer. 42:9–18
2 [b]Jer. 42:1
3 [c]Jer. 36:4; 45:1 [1]Or *incited*
4 [d]2 Kin. 25:26
5 [e]Jer. 40:11, 12
6 [f]Jer. 41:10 [g]Jer. 39:10; 40:7
7 [h]Jer. 42:19 [i]Jer. 2:16; 44:1
8 [j]Jer. 44:1–30
9 [2]Or *mortar*
10 [k]Jer. 25:9; 27:6; Ezek. 29:18, 20
11 [l]Is. 19:1–25; Jer. 25:15–19; 44:13; 46:1, 2, 13–26; Ezek. 29:19, 20 [m]Jer. 15:2; Zech. 11:9
12 [n]Ex. 12:12; Is. 19:1; Jer. 46:25; Ezek. 30:13 [3]So with MT, Tg.; LXX, Syr., Vg. *He*
13 [4]Lit. *House of the Sun,* ancient On, later called Heliopolis

■ **43:7, 8 Egypt.** Jeremiah's prophetic ministry continues even in Egypt.

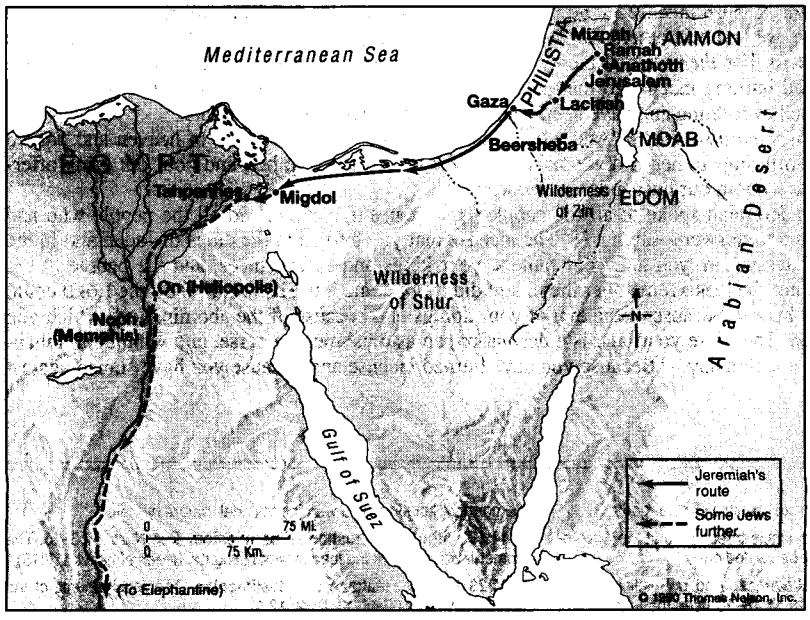
Tahpanhes. See 2:16. Tahpanhes was located in the eastern Nile delta.

■ **43:9 Take large stones . . . hide them.** A symbolic action whose interpretation follows. The action was designed to show that the word would surely come to pass.

■ **43:10 Nebuchadnezzar . . . My servant.** See note on 25:9.

■ **43:13 sacred pillars.** Probably obelisks, characteristic examples of Egyptian architecture.

Beth Shemesh. Probably this was ancient Heliopolis (the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew *Beth Shemesh,* "city of the sun").



Jeremiah's Journey to Egypt. With the fall of Jerusalem to Nebuchadnezzar, Jeremiah was taken in chains to Ramah and released. He went on to Mizpah to support the people left in the land. When the governor was killed, he prophesied against leaving the land but was taken with the remnant to Tahpanhes in Egypt. His further prophecies to Jews living in Migdol, Noph, and Tahpanhes may have contributed to Jewish settlements being established deeper in Egypt, as far as Yeb (Elephantine).

CHAPTER 44

1 [a]Ex. 14:2; Jer. 46:14 [b]Jer. 43:7; Ezek. 30:18 [c]Is. 19:13; Jer. 2:16; 46:14; Ezek. 30:13, 16; Hos. 9:6 [d]Is. 11:11; Ezek. 29:14; 30:14 [1]Ancient Memphis

2 [e]Is. 6:11; Jer. 4:7; 9:11; 34:22; Mic. 3:12

3 [f]Jer. 19:4 [g]Deut. 13:6; 32:17

4 [h]2 Chr. 36:15; Jer. 7:25; 25:4; 26:5; 29:19; Zech. 7:7

6 [2]Or *became a ruin*

7 [i]Num. 16:38; Jer. 7:19; [Ezek. 33:11]; Hab. 2:10

8 [j]2 Kin. 17:15–17; Jer. 25:6, 7; 44:3; 1 Cor. 10:21, 22 [k]1 Kin. 9:7, 8; 2 Chr. 7:20; Jer. 42:18

10 [l]2 Chr. 36:12; Jer. 6:15; 8:12; Dan. 5:22 [m][Prov. 28:14] [3]Lit. *crushed*

11 [n]Lev. 17:10; 20:5, 6; Jer. 21:10; Amos 9:4 [4]*destroying*

12 [o]Jer. 42:15–17, 22 [p]Is. 65:15; Jer. 42:18

13 [q]Jer. 43:11

14 [r]Jer. 22:26, 27 [s][Is. 4:2; 10:20]; Jer. 44:28; [Rom. 9:27] [5]Lit. *lift up their soul*

16 [t]Jer. 6:16

17 [u]Num. 30:12; Deut. 23:23; Judg. 11:36 [v]2 Kin. 17:16; Jer. 7:18 [6]Lit. *bread*

19 [w]Jer. 7:18

22 [x]Jer. 25:11, 18, 38

Israelites Will Be Punished in Egypt

44 The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the Jews who dwell in the land of Egypt, who dwell at [a]Migdol, at [b]Tahpanhes, at [c]Noph,[1] and in the country of [d]Pathros, saying, 2 "Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: 'You have seen all the calamity that I have brought on Jerusalem and on all the cities of Judah; and behold, this day they *are* [e]a desolation, and no one dwells in them, 3 because of their wickedness which they have committed to provoke Me to anger, in that they went [f]to burn incense *and* to [g]serve other gods whom they did not know, they nor you nor your fathers. 4 However [h]I have sent to you all My servants the prophets, rising early and sending *them,* saying, "Oh, do not do this abominable thing that I hate!" 5 But they did not listen or incline their ear to turn from their wickedness, to burn no incense to other gods. 6 So My fury and My anger were poured out and kindled in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem; and they [2]are wasted *and* desolate, as it is this day.'

7 "Now therefore, thus says the LORD, the God of hosts, the God of Israel: 'Why do you commit *this* great evil [i]against yourselves, to cut off from you man and woman, child and infant, out of Judah, leaving none to remain, 8 in that you [j]provoke Me to wrath with the works of your hands, burning incense to other gods in the land of Egypt where you have gone to dwell, that you may cut yourselves off and be [k]a curse and a reproach among all the nations of the earth? 9 Have you forgotten the wickedness of your fathers, the wickedness of the kings of Judah, the wickedness of their wives, your own wickedness, and the wickedness of your wives, which they committed in the land of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? 10 They have not been [l]humbled,[3] to this day, nor have they [m]feared; they have not walked in My law or in My statutes that I set before you and your fathers.'

11 "Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: 'Behold, [n]I will set My face against you for catastrophe and for [4]cutting off all Judah. 12 And I will take the remnant of Judah who have set their faces to go into the land of Egypt to dwell there, and [o]they shall all be consumed *and* fall in the land of Egypt. They shall be consumed by the sword *and* by famine. They shall die, from the least to the greatest, by the sword and by famine; and [p]they shall be an oath, an astonishment, a curse and a reproach! 13 [q]For I will punish those who dwell in the land of Egypt, as I have punished Jerusalem, by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence, 14 so that none of the remnant of Judah who have gone into the land of Egypt to dwell there shall escape or survive, lest they return to the land of Judah, to which they [r]desire[5] to return and dwell. For [s]none shall return except those who escape.' "

15 Then all the men who knew that their wives had burned incense to other gods, with all the women who stood by, a great multitude, and all the people who dwelt in the land of Egypt, in Pathros, answered Jeremiah, saying: 16 "*As for* the word that you have spoken to us in the name of the LORD, [t]we will not listen to you! 17 But we will certainly do [u]whatever has gone out of our own mouth, to burn incense to the [v]queen of heaven and pour out drink offerings to her, as we have done, we and our fathers, our kings and our princes, in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. For *then* we had plenty of [6]food, were well-off, and saw no trouble. 18 But since we stopped burning incense to the queen of heaven and pouring out drink offerings to her, we have lacked everything and have been consumed by the sword and by famine."

19 *The women also said,* [w]"And when we burned incense to the queen of heaven and poured out drink offerings to her, did we make cakes for her, to worship her, and pour out drink offerings to her without our husbands' *permission?*"

20 Then Jeremiah spoke to all the people—the men, the women, and all the people who had given him *that* answer—saying: 21 "The incense that you burned in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, you and your fathers, your kings and your princes, and the people of the land, did not the LORD remember them, and did it *not* come into His mind? 22 So the LORD could no longer bear *it,* because of the evil of your doings *and* because of the abominations which you committed. Therefore your land is a desolation, an astonishment, a curse, and without an inhabitant, [x]as *it is* this day. 23 Because you have burned incense and because you have sinned against

- **44:4 this abominable thing.** Idolatrous worship of other gods.
- **44:7 none to remain.** Possibly this oracle threatens that the restoration promised in 5:10 and 23:3 may not be carried out.
- **44:9 Have you forgotten the wickedness.** And by implication the judgment that resulted. Similarly, 2 Kin. 17:18–20 uses the judgment of the northern kingdom as a warning to Judah before her fall.
- **44:19 without our husbands' permission.** See Num. 30:6–15. The women evidently took the lead in worshiping the queen of heaven (7:18).
- **44:23 law . . . statutes . . . testimonies.** The requirements of the Mosaic covenant (Deut. 11:1, 32; 12:1).

the LORD, and have not obeyed the voice of the LORD or walked in His law, in His statutes or in His testimonies, [y]therefore this calamity has happened to you, as *at* this day."

24 Moreover Jeremiah said to all the people and to all the women, "Hear the word of the LORD, all Judah who *are* in the land of Egypt! 25 Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, saying: 'You and your wives have spoken with your mouths and fulfilled with your hands, saying, "We will surely keep our vows that we have made, to burn incense to the queen of heaven and pour out drink offerings to her." You will surely keep your vows and perform your vows!' 26 Therefore hear the word of the LORD, all Judah who dwell in the land of Egypt: 'Behold, [z]I have sworn by My [a]great name,' says the LORD, 'that [b]My name shall no more be named in the mouth of any man of Judah in all the land of Egypt, saying, "The Lord GOD lives." 27 Behold, I will watch over them for adversity and not for good. And all the men of Judah who *are* in the land of Egypt [c]shall be consumed by the sword and by famine, until there is an end to them. 28 Yet [d]a small number who escape the sword shall return from the land of Egypt to the land of Judah; and all the remnant of Judah, who have gone to the land of Egypt to dwell there, shall know whose words will stand, Mine or theirs. 29 And this *shall be* a sign to you,' says the LORD, 'that I will punish you in this place, that you may know that My words will surely [e]stand against you for adversity.'

30 "Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, [f]I will give Pharaoh Hophra king of Egypt into the hand of his enemies and into the hand of those who seek his life, as I gave [g]Zedekiah king of Judah into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, his enemy who sought his life.' "

Assurance to Baruch

45 The [a]word that Jeremiah the prophet spoke to [b]Baruch the son of Neriah, when he had written these words in a book [1]at the instruction of Jeremiah, in the [c]fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, saying, 2 "Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, to you, O Baruch: 3 'You said, "Woe is me now! For the LORD has added grief to my sorrow. I [d]fainted in my sighing, and I find no rest." '

4 "Thus you shall say to him, 'Thus says the LORD: "Behold, [e]what I have built I will break down, and what I have planted I will pluck up, that is, this whole land. 5 And do you seek great things for yourself? Do not seek *them;* for behold, [f]I will bring adversity on all flesh," says the LORD. "But I will give your [g]life to you as a prize in all places, wherever you go." ' "

Judgment on Egypt

46 The word of the LORD which came to Jeremiah the prophet against [a]the nations. 2 Against [b]Egypt.

[c]Concerning the army of Pharaoh Necho, king of Egypt, which was by the River Euphrates in Carchemish, and which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon [d]defeated in the [e]fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah:

3 "Order[1] the [2]buckler and shield,
And draw near to battle!
4 Harness the horses,
And mount up, you horsemen!
Stand forth with *your* helmets,
Polish the spears,
[f]Put on the armor!
5 Why have I seen them dismayed *and* turned back?
Their mighty ones are beaten down;

23 [y]1 Kin. 9:9; Neh. 13:18; Jer. 44:2; Dan. 9:11, 12

26 [z]Gen. 22:16; Deut. 32:40, 41; Jer. 22:5; Amos 6:8; Heb. 6:13 [a]Jer. 10:6 [b]Neh. 9:5; Ps. 50:16; Ezek. 20:39

27 [c]Jer. 1:10; 31:28; Ezek. 7:6

28 [d]Is. 10:19; 27:12, 13

29 [e][Ps. 33:11]

30 [f]Jer. 46:25, 26; Ezek. 29:3; 30:21 [g]2 Kin. 25:4–7; Jer. 39:5

CHAPTER 45

1 [a]Jer. 36:1, 4, 32 [b]Jer. 32:12, 16; 43:3 [c]Jer. 25:1; 36:1; 46:2 [1]Lit. *from Jeremiah's mouth*

3 [d]Ps. 6:6; 69:3; [2 Cor. 4:1, 16; Gal. 6:9]

4 [e]Is. 5:5; Jer. 1:10; 11:17; 18:7–10; 31:28

5 [f]Jer. 25:17–26 [g]Jer. 21:9; 38:2; 39:18

CHAPTER 46

1 [a]Jer. 25:15

2 [b]Jer. 25:17–19; Ezek.29:2—32:32 [c]2 Kin. 23:33–35 [d]2 Kin. 23:29; 24:7; 2 Chr. 35:20 [e]Jer. 45:1

3 [1]*Set in order* [2]A small shield

4 [f]Is. 21:5; Jer. 51:11, 12; Joel 3:9; Nah. 2:1; 3:14

■ **44:29, 30** Pharaoh Hophra (reigned 589–570 B.C.) was killed by his enemies during a military revolt; his death is used as a sign that all the Lord's prophecies against the refugees in Egypt would come to pass.

■ **45:1–5** This chapter contains God's promise to Baruch to spare his life, made many years earlier.

■ **45:1 fourth year of Jehoiakim.** The year in which Baruch prepared the first scroll of Jeremiah's words for public reading (36:1–3).

■ **45:3 my sorrow.** Baruch had evidently suffered along with Jeremiah as a result of Jeremiah's prophetic commission (cf. 11:18–23). See 36:19; 43:3.

rest. See Deut. 12:9; Ps. 95:11.

■ **46:1—51:64** This section of Jeremiah comprises a series of judgment oracles against the surrounding nations.

■ **46:2 Carchemish.** Nebuchadnezzar defeated Pharaoh Necho at the battle of Carchemish on the upper Euphrates River in 605 B.C. and brought to a close Egypt's political and military influence over Palestine and Syria.

fourth year of Jehoiakim. See 36:1; 45:1. The ascendancy of Babylon over Egypt was critical for Judah in her final years.

■ **46:3, 4 Order the buckler . . . Put on the armor.** These orders to the Egyptian army mock her military pretensions.

They have speedily fled,
And did not look back,
For [g]fear *was* all around," says the LORD.
6 "Do not let the swift flee away,
Nor the mighty man escape;
They will [h]stumble and fall
Toward the north, by the River Euphrates.

7 "Who *is* this coming up [i]like a flood,
Whose waters move like the rivers?
8 Egypt rises up like a flood,
And *its* waters move like the rivers;
And he says, 'I will go up *and* cover the earth,
I will destroy the city and its inhabitants.'
9 Come up, O horses, and rage, O chariots!
And let the mighty men come forth:
[3]The Ethiopians and [4]the Libyans who handle the shield,
And the Lydians [j]who handle *and* bend the bow.
10 For this *is* [k]the day of the Lord GOD of hosts,
A day of vengeance,
That He may avenge Himself on His adversaries.
[l]The sword shall devour;
It shall be [5]satiated and made drunk with their blood;
For the Lord GOD of hosts [m]has a sacrifice
In the north country by the River Euphrates.

11 "Go[n] up to Gilead and take balm,
[o]O virgin, the daughter of Egypt;
In vain you will use many medicines;
[p]You shall not be cured.
12 The nations have heard of your [q]shame,
And your cry has filled the land;
For the mighty man has stumbled against the mighty;
They both have fallen together."

Babylonia Will Strike Egypt

13 The word that the LORD spoke to Jeremiah the prophet, how Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon would come *and* [r]strike the land of Egypt.

14 "Declare in Egypt, and proclaim in [s]Migdol;
Proclaim in [6]Noph and in [t]Tahpanhes;
Say, 'Stand fast and prepare yourselves,
For the sword devours all around you.'
15 Why are your valiant *men* swept away?
They did not stand
Because the LORD drove them away.
16 He made many fall;
Yes, [u]one fell upon another.
And they said, 'Arise!
[v]Let us go back to our own people
And to the land of our nativity
From the oppressing sword.'

5 [g]Jer. 49:29
6 [h]Jer. 46:12, 16; Dan. 11:19
7 [i]Is. 8:7, 8; Jer. 47:2; Dan. 11:22
9 [j]Is. 66:19 [3]Heb. *Cush* [4]Heb. *Put*
10 [k]Is. 13:6; Joel 1:15 [l]Deut. 32:42; Is. 31:8; Jer. 12:12 [m]Is. 34:6; Zeph. 1:7; Ezek. 39:17 [5]Filled to the full
11 [n]Jer. 8:22 [o]Is. 47:1; Jer. 31:4, 21 [p]Ezek. 30:21
12 [q]Jer. 2:36; Nah. 3:8–10
13 [r]Is. 19:1; Jer. 43:10, 11; Ezek. 29:1–21
14 [s]Jer. 44:1 [t]Ezek. 30:18 [6]Ancient Memphis
16 [u]Lev. 26:36, 37; Jer. 46:6 [v]Jer. 51:9

■ **46:6 by the River Euphrates.** That is, at Carchemish (v. 2 note).

■ **46:9 Ethiopians . . . Libyans . . . Lydians.** Mercenaries from Africa and Greece testify to Egypt's power.

■ **46:11 Gilead.** See note on 8:22.

virgin, the daughter of Egypt. Suggesting vulnerability and innocence, though it could be meant ironically. See its use in connection with Israel in 14:17; 18:13.

■ **46:14 Migdol . . . Noph . . . Tahpanhes.** See 2:16; 43:8; 44:1.

■ **46:15 Why are your valiant men swept away.** The Septuagint (Greek) reading is preferred by many interpreters: "Why has Apis run away?" Apis was the sacred bull of ancient Egypt, worshiped as an incarnation of the god Ptah, especially at Noph (Memphis, v. 14).

17 They cried there,
'Pharaoh, king of Egypt, *is but* a noise.
He has passed by the appointed time!'

18 "*As* I live," says the King,
[w]Whose name *is* the LORD of hosts,
"Surely as Tabor *is* among the mountains
And as Carmel by the sea, *so* he shall come.
19 O [x]you daughter dwelling in Egypt,
Prepare yourself [y]to go into captivity!
For [z]Noph shall be waste and desolate, without inhabitant.

20 "Egypt *is* a very pretty [z]heifer,
But destruction comes, it comes [a]from the north.
21 Also her mercenaries are in her midst like [g]fat bulls,
For they also are turned back,
They have fled away together.
They did not stand,
For [b]the day of their calamity had come upon them,
The time of their punishment.
22 [c]Her noise shall go like a serpent,
For they shall march with an army
And come against her with axes,
Like those who chop wood.

23 "They shall [d]cut down her forest," says the LORD,
"Though it cannot be searched,
Because they *are* innumerable,
And more numerous than [e]grasshoppers.
24 The daughter of Egypt shall be ashamed;
She shall be delivered into the hand
Of [f]the people of the north."

25 The LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, says: "Behold, I will bring punishment on [g]Amon of [g]No,[f] and Pharaoh and Egypt, [h]with their gods and their kings—Pharaoh and those who [i]trust in him. 26[j]And I will deliver them into the hand of those who seek their lives, into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and the hand of his servants. [k]Afterward it shall be inhabited as in the days of old," says the LORD.

God Will Preserve Israel

27 "But[l] do not fear, O My servant Jacob,
And do not be dismayed, O Israel!
For behold, I will [m]save you from afar,
And your offspring from the land of their captivity;
Jacob shall return, have rest and be at ease;
No one shall make *him* afraid.
28 Do not fear, O Jacob My servant," says the LORD,
"For I *am* with you;
For I will make a complete end of all the nations
To which I have driven you,
But I will not make [n]a complete end of you.

18 [w]Is. 47:4; Jer. 48:15; Mal. 1:14

19 [x]Jer. 48:18 [y]Is. 20:4 [z]Ancient Memphis

20 [z]Hos. 10:11 [a]Jer. 1:14

21 [b][Ps. 37:13]; Jer. 50:27 [g]Lit. *calves of the stall*

22 [c][Is. 29:4]

23 [d]Is. 10:34 [e]Judg. 6:5; 7:12; Joel 2:25

24 [f]Jer. 1:15

25 [g]Ezek. 30:14–16; Nah. 3:8 [h]Ex. 12:12; Jer. 43:12, 13; Ezek. 30:13; Zeph. 2:11 [i]Is. 30:1–5; 31:1–3 [g]A sun god [f]Ancient Thebes

26 [j]Jer. 44:30; Ezek. 32:11 [k]Ezek. 29:8–14

27 [l]Is. 41:13, 14; 43:5; 44:2; Jer. 30:10, 11 [m]Is. 11:11; Jer. 23:3, 4; Mic. 7:12

28 [n]Jer. 10:24; Amos 9:8, 9

■ **46:18 As I live.** See Gen. 22:15.

the King. For God as King, see 8:19; 10:7, 10; 48:15; 51:57; Deut. 33:5. In the oracles against the nations, God's true kingship is contrasted with the vain pretensions of earthly kings.

Tabor . . . Carmel. These mountains in northern Israel stood at the eastern and western boundaries of the strategic Plain of Megiddo.

■ **46:20 heifer.** This may be an ironic allusion to Egyptian worship of the bull Apis (v. 15 note).

destruction. That is, Nebuchadnezzar.

from the north. See 6:1.

■ **46:25 Amon of No.** Amon was the chief Egyptian god. Thebes (see text note) is in the south, suggesting even deeper penetration by Babylon.

I will rightly [o]correct you,
For I will not leave you wholly unpunished."

Judgment on Philistia

47 The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet [a]against the Philistines, [b]before Pharaoh attacked Gaza.

2 Thus says the LORD:

"Behold, [c]waters rise [d]out of the north,
And shall be an overflowing flood;
They shall overflow the land and all that is in it,
The city and those who dwell within;
Then the men shall cry,
And all the inhabitants of the land shall wail.
3 At the [e]noise of the stamping hooves of his strong horses,
At the rushing of his chariots,
At the rumbling of his wheels,
The fathers will not look back for *their* children,
[f]Lacking courage,
4 Because of the day that comes to plunder all the [f]Philistines,
To cut off from [g]Tyre and Sidon every helper who remains;
For the LORD shall plunder the Philistines,
[h]The remnant of the country of [i]Caphtor.[2]
5 [j]Baldness has come upon Gaza,
[k]Ashkelon is cut off
With the remnant of their valley.
How long will you cut yourself?

6 "O you [l]sword of the LORD,
How long until you are quiet?
Put yourself up into your scabbard,
Rest and be still!
7 How can [3]it be quiet,
Seeing the LORD has [m]given it a charge
Against Ashkelon and against the seashore?
There He has [n]appointed it."

Judgment on Moab

48 Against [a]Moab.
Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel:

"Woe to [b]Nebo!
For it is plundered,
[c]Kirjathaim is shamed *and* taken;
[l]The high stronghold is shamed and dismayed—
2 [d]No more praise of Moab.
In [e]Heshbon they have devised evil against her:
'Come, and let us cut her off as a nation.'
You also shall be cut down, O [f]Madmen![2]
The sword shall pursue you;
3 A voice of crying *shall be* from [g]Horonaim:
'Plundering and great destruction!'

28 [o]Jer. 30:11

CHAPTER 47

1 [a]Is. 14:29–31; Ezek. 25:15–17; Zeph. 2:4, 5; Zech. 9:6 [b]Amos 1:6
2 [c]Is. 8:7, 8; Jer. 46:7, 8 [d]Jer. 1:14
3 [e]Judg. 5:22; Jer. 8:16; Nah. 3:2 [f]Lit. *From sinking hands*
4 [f]Is. 14:29–31 [g]Is. 23:1–18; Jer. 25:22; Ezek. 26:1–21; 28:20–24; Amos 1:9, 10; Zech. 9:2–4 [h]Ezek. 25:16; Amos 1:8 [i]Gen. 10:14; Deut. 2:23; Amos 9:7 [2]Crete
5 [j]Jer. 48:37; Mic. 1:16; Zeph. 2:4 [k]Judg. 1:18; Jer. 25:20; Amos 1:7, 8; Zech. 9:5
6 [l]Deut. 32:41; Judg. 7:20; Jer. 12:12; Ezek. 21:3–5
7 [m]Is. 10:6; Ezek. 14:17 [n]Mic. 6:9 [3]Lit. *you*

CHAPTER 48

1 [a]Is. 15:1—16:14; 25:10; Ezek. 25:8–11; Amos 2:1–3; Zeph. 2:8–11 [b]Is. 15:2 [c]Num. 32:37; Jer. 48:23; Ezek. 25:9 [l]Heb. *Misgab*
2 [d]Is. 16:14 [e]Is. 15:4; Jer. 49:3 [f]Is. 10:31 [2]A city of Moab
3 [g]Is. 15:5; Jer. 48:5, 34

■ **47:4 Tyre and Sidon.** These Phoenician cities afforded natural protection to the Philistines farther down the Mediterranean coast, though it is not known whether alliances ever existed between them.

Caphtor. The Philistines' place of origin, usually identified as Crete.

■ **48:1–47** This chapter records the oracle against Moab; cf. Is. 15; 16; Ezek. 25:8–11; Amos 2:1–3. Moab was an enemy of Israel (Judg. 3:12–14; 2 Kin. 3:4–27). It was an ally of Judah against Babylon (27:3), but supplied troops for Nebuchadnezzar against Jehoiakim (2 Kin. 24:2). Its defeat by Nebuchadnezzar may have come in 582 B.C. following a rebellion.

■ **48:1 Nebo . . . Kirjathaim.** Originally these towns were allocated to the tribe of Reuben (Num. 32:3, 37, 38; Josh. 13:15, 19).

■ **48:2 Heshbon.** This village was also assigned to Reuben (Num. 32:37; Josh. 13:17).

4 "Moab is destroyed;
[3]Her little ones have caused a cry to be heard;
5 [h]For in the Ascent of Luhith they ascend with continual weeping;
For in the descent of Horonaim the enemies have heard a cry of destruction.

6 "Flee, save your lives!
And be like [4]the [i]juniper in the wilderness.
7 For because you have trusted in your works and your [j]treasures,
You also shall be taken.
And [k]Chemosh shall go forth into captivity,
His [l]priests and his princes together.
8 And [m]the plunderer shall come against every city;
No one shall escape.
The valley also shall perish,
And the plain shall be destroyed,
As the LORD has spoken.

9 "Give[n] wings to Moab,
That she may flee and get away;
For her cities shall be desolate,
Without any to dwell in them.
10 [o]Cursed *is* he who does the work of the LORD deceitfully,
And cursed *is* he who keeps back his sword from blood.

11 "Moab has been at ease from [5]his youth;
He [p]has settled on his dregs,
And has not been emptied from vessel to vessel,
Nor has he gone into captivity.
Therefore his taste remained in him,
And his scent has not changed.

12 "Therefore behold, the days are coming," says the LORD,
"That I shall send him [6]wine-workers
Who will tip him over
And empty his vessels
And break the bottles.
13 Moab shall be ashamed of [q]Chemosh,
As the house of Israel [r]was ashamed of [s]Bethel, their confidence.

14 "How can you say, [t]'We *are* mighty
And strong men for the war'?
15 Moab is plundered and gone up *from* her cities;
Her chosen young men have [u]gone down to the slaughter," says [v]the King,
Whose name *is* the LORD of hosts.

16 "The calamity of Moab *is* near at hand,
And his affliction comes quickly.
17 Bemoan him, all you who are around him;
And all you who know his name,
Say, [w]'How the strong staff is broken,
The beautiful rod!'

18 "O [x]daughter inhabiting [y]Dibon,
Come down from *your* glory,

4 [3]So with MT, Tg., Vg.; LXX *Proclaim it in Zoar*
5 [h]Is. 15:5
6 [i]Jer. 17:6 [4]Or *Aroer*, a city of Moab
7 [j]Ps. 52:7; Is. 59:4; Jer. 9:23; [1 Tim. 6:17] [k]Num. 21:29; Judg. 11:24; Jer. 48:13 [l]Jer. 49:3
8 [m]Jer. 6:26
9 [n]Ps. 55:6
10 [o]Judg. 5:23; 1 Sam. 15:3, 9; 1 Kin. 20:42
11 [p]Zeph. 1:12 [5]Heb. uses masc. and fem. pronouns interchangeably in this chapter.
12 [6]Lit. *tippers* of wine bottles
13 [q]1 Kin. 11:7 [r]Hos. 10:6 [s]1 Kin. 12:29; 13:32–34; Hos. 8:5, 6
14 [t]Is. 16:6
15 [u][Is. 40:30, 31]; Jer. 50:27 [v]Jer. 46:18; 51:57; Mal. 1:14
17 [w]Is. 9:4; 14:4, 5
18 [x]Is. 47:1 [y]Num. 21:30; Josh. 13:9, 17; Is. 15:2; Jer. 48:22

■ **48:7 Chemosh.** A god of Moab worshiped by Solomon (1 Kin. 11:7, 33; 2 Kin. 23:13). Images of "defeated" gods were often carried off into exile.

■ **48:8 the plunderer.** Probably Nebuchadnezzar.

■ **48:11, 12** The wine left to age represents Moab's complacency. Their ease and security will vanish as quickly as a bottle empties when overturned.

■ **48:13 Bethel.** Possibly a reference to the name El Bethel used for the Lord in Jeroboam's apostate worship at Bethel (1 Kin. 12:28–30). That cult had not prevented the Assyrians from plundering the land in 722 B.C. (2 Kin. 18:9–12).

And sit in thirst;
For the plunderer of Moab has come against you,
He has destroyed your strongholds.
19 O inhabitant of [z]Aroer,
[a]Stand by the way and watch;
Ask him who flees
And her who escapes;
Say, 'What has happened?'
20 Moab is shamed, for he is broken down.
[b]Wail and cry!
Tell it in [c]Arnon, that Moab is plundered.

21 "And judgment has come on the plain country:
On Holon and Jahzah and Mephaath,
22 On Dibon and Nebo and Beth Diblathaim,
23 On Kirjathaim and Beth Gamul and Beth Meon,
24 On [d]Kerioth and Bozrah,
On all the cities of the land of Moab,
Far or near.
25 [e]The [7]horn of Moab is cut off,
And his [f]arm is broken," says the LORD.

26 "Make[g] him drunk,
Because he exalted *himself* against the LORD.
Moab shall wallow in his vomit,
And he shall also be in derision.
27 For [h]was not Israel a derision to you?
[i]Was he found among thieves?
For whenever you speak of him,
You shake *your head in* [j]*scorn.*
28 You who dwell in Moab,
Leave the cities and [k]dwell in the rock,
And be like [l]the dove *which* makes her nest
In the sides of the cave's mouth.

29 "We have heard the [m]pride of Moab
(He *is* exceedingly proud),
Of his loftiness and arrogance and [n]pride,
And of the haughtiness of his heart."

30 "I know his wrath," says the LORD,
"But it *is* not right;
[o]His [8]lies have made nothing right.
31 Therefore [p]I will wail for Moab,
And I will cry out for all Moab;
[9]I will mourn for the men of Kir Heres.
32 [q]O vine of Sibmah! I will weep for you with the weeping of [r]Jazer.
Your plants have gone over the sea,
They reach to the sea of Jazer.
The plunderer has fallen on your summer fruit and your vintage.
33 [s]Joy and gladness are taken
From the plentiful field
And from the land of Moab;
I have caused wine to [t]fail from the winepresses;
No one will tread with joyous shouting—
Not joyous shouting!

19 [z]Deut. 2:36; Josh. 12:2; Is. 17:2 [a]1 Sam. 4:13, 14, 16
20 [b]Is. 16:7 [c]Num. 21:13
24 [d]Jer. 48:41; Amos 2:2
25 [e]Ps. 75:10; Zech. 1:19–21 [f]Ezek. 30:21 [7]Strength
26 [g]Jer. 25:15
27 [h]Zeph. 2:8 [i]Jer. 2:26 [j]Lam. 2:15; [Mic. 7:8–10]
28 [k]Ps. 55:6, 7 [l]Song 2:14
29 [m]Is. 16:6; Zeph. 2:8, 10 [n]Jer. 49:16
30 [o]Is. 16:6; Jer. 50:36 [8]*idle talk*
31 [p]Is. 15:5; 16:7, 11 [9]So with DSS, LXX, Vg.; MT *He*
32 [q]Is. 16:8, 9 [r]Num. 21:32; Is. 16:10
33 [s]Is. 16:10; Jer. 25:10; Joel 1:12 [t]*cease*

■ **48:19 Aroer.** Southeast of Dibon, this border fortress on the Arnon River (v. 20) is here pictured anxiously watching the flight of the refugees.

■ **48:20 Arnon.** That is, in the region along the Arnon. It was the most important river in Moab.

■ **48:28 dwell in the rock.** See Is. 2:10.

■ **48:32 Sibmah . . . Jazer . . . the sea.** See Is. 16:8.

34 "From[t] the cry of Heshbon to [u]Elealeh and to Jahaz
They have uttered their voice,
[v]From Zoar to Horonaim,
Like [2]a three-year-old heifer;
For the waters of Nimrim also shall be desolate.

35 "Moreover," says the LORD,
"I will cause to cease in Moab
[w]The one who offers *sacrifices* in the [3]high places
And burns incense to his gods.
36 Therefore [x]My heart shall wail like flutes for Moab,
And like flutes My heart shall wail
For the men of Kir Heres.
Therefore [y]the riches they have acquired have perished.

37 "For [z]every head *shall be* bald, and every beard clipped;
On all the hands *shall be* cuts, and [a]on the loins sackcloth—
38 A general lamentation
On all the [b]housetops of Moab,
And in its streets;
For I have [c]broken Moab like a vessel in which *is* no pleasure," says the LORD.
39 "They shall wail:
'How she is broken down!
How Moab has turned her back with shame!'
So Moab shall be a derision
And a dismay to all those about her."

40 For thus says the LORD:

"Behold, [d]one shall fly like an eagle,
And [e]spread his wings over Moab.
41 Kerioth is taken,
And the strongholds are surprised;
[f]The mighty men's hearts in Moab on that day shall be
Like the heart of a woman in birth pangs.
42 And Moab shall be destroyed [g]as a people,
Because he exalted *himself* against the LORD.
43 [h]Fear and the pit and the snare *shall be* upon you,
O inhabitant of Moab," says the LORD.
44 "He who flees from the fear shall fall into the pit,
And he who gets out of the pit shall be caught in the [i]snare.
For upon Moab, upon it [j]I will bring
The year of their punishment," says the LORD.

45 "Those who fled stood under the shadow of Heshbon
Because of exhaustion.
But [k]a fire shall come out of Heshbon,
A flame from the midst of [l]Sihon,
And [m]shall devour the brow of Moab,
The crown of the head of the sons of tumult.
46 [n]Woe to you, O Moab!
The people of Chemosh perish;
For your sons have been taken captive,
And your daughters captive.

34 [t]Is. 15:4–6 [u]Num. 32:3, 37 [v]Is. 15:5, 6 [2]Or *The Third Eglath,* an unknown city, Is. 15:5

35 [w]Is. 15:2; 16:12 [3]Places for pagan worship

36 [x]Is. 15:5; 16:11 [y]Is. 15:7

37 [z]Is. 15:2, 3; Jer. 16:6; 41:5; 47:5 [a]Gen. 37:34; Is. 15:3; 20:2

38 [b]Is. 15:3 [c]Jer. 22:28

40 [d]Deut. 28:49; Jer. 49:22; Hos. 8:1; Hab. 1:8 [e]Is. 8:8

41 [f]Is. 13:8; 21:3; Jer. 30:6; Mic. 4:9, 10

42 [g]Ps. 83:4; Jer. 48:2

43 [h]Is. 24:17, 18; Lam. 3:47

44 [i]1 Kin. 19:17; Is. 24:18; Amos 5:19 [j]Jer. 11:23

45 [k]Num. 21:28, 29 [l]Num. 21:21, 26; Ps. 135:11 [m]Num. 24:17

46 [n]Num. 21:29

■ **48:38 housetops of Moab.** It was customary to offer incense upon rooftops as an act of worship (2 Kin. 23:12).

■ **48:40 eagle.** This would be Nebuchadnezzar (Ezek. 17:3).

■ **48:45, 46** Derived from Num. 21:28, 29, but Jeremiah redirects Balaam's prophecy against the Amorites by applying it to Moab.

Sihon. He was an Amorite ruler in Moses' time, with his capital at Heshbon (Num. 21:21–30).

47 [o]Jer. 49:6, 39

CHAPTER 49

1 [a]Deut. 23:3, 4; 2 Chr. 20:1; Jer. 25:21; Ezek. 21:28–32; 25:1–7 [b]Amos 1:13–15; Zeph. 2:8–11 [1]Heb. *Malcam,* lit. *their king;* an Ammonite god, 1 Kin. 11:5; *Molech,* Lev. 18:21

2 [c]Amos 1:13–15 [d]Ezek. 25:5 [2]Lit. *daughters*

3 [e]Jer. 48:2 [f]Is. 32:11; Jer. 48:37 [g]Jer. 48:7 [3]See v. 1

4 [h]Jer. 9:23 [i]Jer. 3:14 [j]Jer. 48:7 [k]Jer. 21:13 [4]Lit. *Your valley is flowing*

6 [l]Jer. 48:47

7 [m]Gen. 25:30; 32:3; Is. 34:5, 6; Jer. 25:21; Ezek. 25:12–14; 35:1–15; Joel 3:19; Amos 1:11, 12; Obad. 1–9, 15, 16 [n]Gen. 36:11; Job 2:11 [o]Is. 19:11 [p]Jer. 8:9

8 [q]Is. 21:13; Jer. 25:23

47 "Yet I will bring back the captives of Moab
[o]In the latter days," says the LORD.

Thus far *is* the judgment of Moab.

Judgment on Ammon

49 Against the [a]Ammonites.
Thus says the LORD:

"Has Israel no sons?
Has he no heir?
Why *then* does [1]Milcom inherit [b]Gad,
And his people dwell in its cities?
2 [c]Therefore behold, the days are coming," says the LORD,
"That I will cause to be heard an alarm of war
In [d]Rabbah of the Ammonites;
It shall be a desolate mound,
And her [2]villages shall be burned with fire.
Then Israel shall take possession of his inheritance," says the LORD.

3 "Wail, O [e]Heshbon, for Ai is plundered!
Cry, you daughters of Rabbah,
[f]Gird yourselves with sackcloth!
Lament and run to and fro by the walls;
For [3]Milcom shall go into captivity
With his [g]priests and his princes together.
4 Why [h]do you boast in the valleys,
[4]Your flowing valley, O [i]backsliding daughter?
Who trusted in her [j]treasures, [k]*saying,*
'Who will come against me?'
5 Behold, I will bring fear upon you,"
Says the Lord GOD of hosts,
"From all those who are around you;
You shall be driven out, everyone headlong,
And no one will gather those who wander off.
6 But [l]afterward I will bring back
The captives of the people of Ammon," says the LORD.

Judgment on Edom

7 [m]Against Edom.
Thus says the LORD of hosts:

[n]"*Is* wisdom no more in Teman?
[o]Has counsel perished from the prudent?
Has their wisdom [p]vanished?
8 Flee, turn back, dwell in the depths, O inhabitants of [q]Dedan!
For I will bring the calamity of Esau upon him,
The time *that* I will punish him.

■ **49:1–6** A prophecy against the Ammonites. See Ezek. 25:1–7; Amos 1:13–15. Ammon, an old enemy of Israel (Judg. 11:4–33; 1 Sam. 11:1–11; 2 Sam. 10; 1 Kin. 4:13–19), was located in Trans-Jordan just north of Moab. Like Moab, it was part of an alliance against Babylon (27:3), and like Moab it supplied troops to Nebuchadnezzar against Judah (2 Kin. 24:2). Its hostility to Gedaliah (40:13—41:3) suggests a rebellion against Babylon, probably leading to an attack that virtually ended its existence as an autonomous nation.

■ **49:1 Milcom.** The chief god of the Ammonites (32:35 note; 1 Kin. 11:5).

■ **49:2 Rabbah.** This city is identified with modern Amman in Jordan.

■ **49:3 Heshbon.** As a border town, it may have belonged to Ammon at some time also (Judg. 11:26).

Ai. Not the city of Ai familiar from the events of Josh. 8. Its location is not known.

■ **49:7–22** A prophecy against Edom. See also 27:3; Is. 21:11, 12; Ezek. 25:12–14; Amos 1:11, 12; Obad. 1–16. Edom was an old enemy of Israel (2 Sam. 8:13, 14) and had caused special bitterness by assisting Babylon against Judah.

■ **49:7 Teman.** A region of Edom representing the whole.

■ **49:8 Esau.** The brother of Jacob, whose name was another designation for Edom (Gen. 25:29, 30). See also Obad. 10.

9 [r]If grape-gatherers came to you,
Would they not leave *some* gleaning grapes?
If thieves by night,
Would they not destroy until they have enough?
10 [s]But I have made Esau bare;
I have uncovered his secret places,
And he shall not be able to hide himself.
His descendants are plundered,
His brethren and his neighbors,
And [t]he *is* no more.
11 Leave your fatherless children,
I will preserve *them* alive;
And let your widows trust in Me."

12 For thus says the LORD: "Behold, [u]those whose judgment *was* not to drink of the cup have assuredly drunk. And *are* you the one who will altogether go unpunished? You shall not go unpunished, but you shall surely drink *of it.* 13 For [v]I have sworn by Myself," says the LORD, "that [w]Bozrah shall become a desolation, a reproach, a [5]waste, and a curse. And all its cities shall be perpetual [6]wastes."

14 [x]I have heard a message from the LORD,
And an ambassador has been sent to the nations:
"Gather together, come against her,
And rise up to battle!

15 "For indeed, I will make you small among nations,
Despised among men.
16 Your fierceness has deceived you,
The [y]pride of your heart,
O you who dwell in the clefts of the rock,
Who hold the height of the hill!
[z]Though you make your [a]nest as high as the eagle,
[b]I will bring you down from there," says the LORD.

17 "Edom also shall be an astonishment;
[c]Everyone who goes by it will be astonished
And will hiss at all its plagues.
18 [d]As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah
And their neighbors," says the LORD,
"No one shall remain there,
Nor shall a son of man dwell in it.

19 "Behold,[e] he shall come up like a lion from [f]the [7]floodplain of the Jordan
Against the dwelling place of the strong;
But I will suddenly make him run away from her.
And who *is* a chosen *man that* I may appoint over her?
For [g]who *is* like Me?
Who will arraign Me?
And [h]who *is* that shepherd
Who will withstand Me?"

20 [i]Therefore hear the counsel of the LORD that He has taken against Edom,
And His purposes that He has proposed against the inhabitants of Teman:
Surely the least of the flock shall [8]draw them out;
Surely He shall make their dwelling places desolate with them.
21 [j]The earth shakes at the noise of their fall;
At the cry its noise is heard at the Red Sea.
22 Behold, [k]He shall come up and fly like the eagle,

9 [r]Obad. 5, 6
10 [s]Obad. 5, 6; Mal. 1:3 [t]Is. 17:14
12 [u]Jer. 25:29; Obad. 16
13 [v]Gen. 22:16; Is. 45:23; Jer. 44:26; Amos 6:8 [w]Gen. 36:33; 1 Chr. 1:44; Is. 34:6; 63:1; Amos 1:12 [5]*ruin* [6]*ruins*
14 [x]Obad. 1–4
16 [y]Jer. 48:29 [z]Obad. 3, 4 [a]Job 39:27; Is. 14:13–15 [b]Amos 9:2
17 [c]Jer. 18:16; 49:13; 50:13; Ezek. 35:7
18 [d]Gen. 19:24, 25; Deut. 29:23; Jer. 50:40; Amos 4:11; Zeph. 2:9
19 [e]Jer. 50:44 [f]Josh. 3:15; Jer. 12:5 [g]Ex. 15:11; Is. 46:9 [h]Job 41:10 [7]Or *thicket*
20 [i]Is. 14:24, 27; Jer. 50:45 [8]Or *drag them away*
21 [j]Jer. 50:46; Ezek. 26:15, 18
22 [k]Jer. 48:40, 41

■ **49:13 Bozrah.** The capital of Edom.
■ **49:22 eagle.** Probably Nebuchadnezzar (as 48:40), though the Edomites were also conquered decisively by Arabs during the sixth century B.C.

And spread His wings over Bozrah;
The heart of the mighty men of Edom in that day shall be
Like the heart of a woman in birth pangs.

Judgment on Damascus

23 [l]Against Damascus.

[m]"Hamath and Arpad are shamed,
For they have heard bad news.
They are fainthearted;
[n]*There is* [o]trouble on the sea;
It cannot be quiet.
24 Damascus has grown feeble;
She turns to flee,
And fear has seized *her.*
[p]Anguish and sorrows have taken her like a woman in [l]labor.
25 Why is [p]the city of praise not deserted, the city of My joy?
26 [q]Therefore her young men shall fall in her streets,
And all the men of war shall be cut off in that day," says the LORD of hosts.
27 "I[r] will kindle a fire in the wall of Damascus,
And it shall consume the palaces of Ben-Hadad."

Judgment on Kedar and Hazor

28 [s]Against Kedar and against the kingdoms of Hazor, which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon shall strike.
Thus says the LORD:

"Arise, go up to Kedar,
And devastate [t]the men of the East!
29 Their [u]tents and their flocks they shall take away.
They shall take for themselves their curtains,
All their vessels and their camels;
And they shall cry out to them,
[v]'Fear *is* on every side!'

30 "Flee, get far away! Dwell in the depths,
O inhabitants of Hazor!" says the LORD.
"For Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has taken counsel against you,
And has conceived a plan against you.

31 "Arise, go up to [w]the wealthy nation that dwells securely," says the LORD,
"Which has neither gates nor bars,
[x]Dwelling alone.
32 Their camels shall be for booty,
And the multitude of their cattle for plunder.
I will [y]scatter to all winds those [z]in the farthest corners,
And I will bring their calamity from all its sides," says the LORD.

23 [l]Is. 17:1–3; Amos 1:3, 5; Zech. 9:1, 2 [m]Jer. 39:5; Zech. 9:2 [n][Is. 57:20] [o]*anxiety*
24 [p]Is. 13:8; Jer. 4:31; 6:24; 48:21 [l]*childbirth*
25 [p]Jer. 33:9
26 [q]Jer. 50:30; Amos 4:10
27 [r]Amos 1:4
28 [s]Gen. 25:13; Ps. 120:5; Is. 21:16, 17; Jer. 2:10; Ezek. 27:21 [t]Judg. 6:3; Job 1:3
29 [u]Ps. 120:5 [v]Jer. 46:5
31 [w]Ezek. 38:11 [x]Num. 23:9; Deut. 33:28; Mic. 7:16
32 [y]Ezek. 5:10 [z]Lit. *cut off at the corner,* Jer. 9:26; 25:23

■ **49:23–27** A prophecy against Syria, or Aram. Syria impinged chiefly on the northern kingdom of Israel in the Assyrian period (1 Kin. 20; Amos 1:3–5). The three states named here had fallen to Assyria in the eighth century B.C.

■ **49:23 Damascus . . . Hamath . . . Arpad.** These are major Aramean city-states.

■ **49:28–33** A prophecy against Arabian kingdoms. Arab nomadic tribes posed a periodic threat to settled communities (Judg. 6:1–6). The present prophecy may have been occasioned by an Arab uprising against Nebuchadnezzar in 598 B.C.

■ **49:28 Kedar.** An Arab tribe well-known in the Old Testament period (Gen. 25:13; Is. 21:16, 17; 42:11).

Hazor. Also in the Arabian desert, and not the well-known Hazor in northern Israel; this name may have designated a number of Arab settlements including Teman, Buz, and Dedan (25:23, 24).

men of the East. Another designation for Arab tribal peoples (Judg. 6:3; 7:12; Job 1:3).

■ **49:31 dwells securely . . . neither gates nor bars.** These nomadic peoples typically lived in unwalled towns, not depending on fortified cities. See the description of Laish in Judg. 18:7. They were no match for a well-armed invader.

33 "Hazor [z]shall be a dwelling for jackals, a desolation forever;
No one shall reside there,
Nor son of man dwell in it."

Judgment on Elam

34 The word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet against [a]Elam, in the [b]beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, saying, 35 "Thus says the LORD of hosts:

'Behold, I will break [c]the [3]bow of Elam,
The foremost of their might.
36 Against Elam I will bring the four winds
From the four quarters of heaven,
And scatter them toward all those winds;
There shall be no nations where the outcasts of Elam will not go.
37 For I will cause Elam to be dismayed before their enemies
And before those who seek their life.
[d]I will bring disaster upon them,
My fierce anger,' says the LORD;
'And I will send the sword after them
Until I have consumed them.
38 I will [e]set My throne in Elam,
And will destroy from there the king and the princes,' says the LORD.

39 'But it shall come to pass [f]in the latter days:
I will bring back the captives of Elam,' says the LORD."

Judgment on Babylon and Babylonia

50 The word that the LORD spoke [a]against Babylon *and* against the land of the Chaldeans by Jeremiah the prophet.

2 "Declare among the nations,
Proclaim, and [1]set up a standard;
Proclaim—do not conceal *it*—
Say, 'Babylon is [b]taken, [c]Bel is shamed.
[2]Merodach is broken in pieces;
[d]Her idols are humiliated,
Her images are broken in pieces.'
3 [e]For out of the north [f]a nation comes up against her,
Which shall make her land desolate,
And no one shall dwell therein.
They shall [3]move, they shall depart,
Both man and beast.

4 "In those days and in that time," says the LORD,
"The children of Israel shall come,
[g]They and the children of Judah together;
[h]With continual weeping they shall come,
[i]And seek the LORD their God.

33 [z]Jer. 9:11; 10:22; Zeph. 2:9, 12–15; Mal. 1:3

34 [a]Gen. 10:22; Jer. 25:25; Ezek. 32:24; Dan. 8:2 [b]2 Kin. 24:17, 18; Jer. 28:1

35 [c]Ps. 46:9; Is. 22:6 [3]Power

37 [d]Jer. 9:16

38 [e]Jer. 43:10

39 [f]Jer. 48:47

CHAPTER 50

1 [a]Gen. 10:10; 11:9; 2 Kin. 17:24; Is. 13:1; 47:1; Dan. 1:1; Rev. 14:8

2 [b]Is. 21:9 [c]Is. 46:1; Jer. 51:44 [d]Jer. 43:12, 13 [1]*lift* [2]Or *Marduk;* a Babylonian god

3 [e]Jer. 51:48; Dan. 5:30, 31 [f]Is. 13:17, 18, 20 [3]Or *wander*

4 [g]Ezra 2:1; Is. 11:12, 13; Jer. 3:18; 31:31; 33:7; Hos. 1:11 [h]Ezra 3:12, 13; [Ps. 126:5]; Jer. 31:9; [Zech. 12:10] [i]Hos. 3:5

■ **49:34–39** A prophecy against Elam, an important power to the east of Babylon, subjugated by Assyria, but resurgent in the Babylonian period. The prophecy possibly relates to a Babylonian containment campaign against Elam in 595 B.C.

■ **50:1—51:64** The prophecy against Babylon (cf. Is. 13:1—14:23; 21:1–9) is the climax of the book. The previous prophecies have served Jeremiah's purpose of showing that Babylon would prevail over "all nations" (27:7) for a period. Babylon has appeared up to this point as the instrument of God's wrath. Finally, however (as in 25:17–26), "the word of the LORD" is uttered against Babylon itself, to show that its own time of judgment must come (25:11, 12). The Hebrew text of Jeremiah has placed the prophecy (actually delivered in 593 B.C.; see 51:59 note) at this point in the book so that the judgment on Babylon may occupy the climactic position. The relative length of the prophecy also shows how important Babylon is in the theology of the book.

■ **50:2 Bel . . . Merodach.** Merodach or "Marduk" was the creator and chief deity in Babylonian myth. He was also called Bel, an early form of the word "Baal" ("lord"). See also Is. 46:1.

■ **50:3 out of the north a nation.** See 1:14; 6:1. The tables are now turned on Babylon. The nation in question is not specified, but see 51:27, 28.

5 They shall ask the way to Zion,
With their faces toward it, *saying,*
'Come and let us join ourselves to the LORD
In [j]a perpetual covenant
That will not be forgotten.'

6 "My people have been [k]lost sheep.
Their shepherds have led them [l]astray;
They have turned them away *on* [m]the mountains.
They have gone from mountain to hill;
They have forgotten their resting place.
7 All who found them have [n]devoured them;
And [o]their adversaries said, [p]'We have not offended,
Because they have sinned against the LORD, [q]the habitation of justice,
The LORD, [r]the hope of their fathers.'

8 "Move[s] from the midst of Babylon,
Go out of the land of the Chaldeans;
And be like the [4]rams before the flocks.
9 [t]For behold, I will raise and cause to come up against Babylon
An assembly of great nations from the north country,
And they shall array themselves against her;
From there she shall be captured.
Their arrows *shall be* like *those* of [5]an expert warrior;
[u]None shall return in vain.
10 And Chaldea shall become plunder;
[v]All who plunder her shall be satisfied," says the LORD.

11 "Because[w] you were glad, because you rejoiced,
You destroyers of My heritage,
Because you have grown fat [x]like a heifer threshing grain,
And you [6]bellow like bulls,
12 Your mother shall be deeply ashamed;
She who bore you shall be ashamed.
Behold, the least of the nations *shall be* a [y]wilderness,
A dry land and a desert.
13 Because of the wrath of the LORD
She shall not be inhabited,
[z]But she shall be wholly desolate.
[a]Everyone who goes by Babylon shall be horrified
And hiss at all her plagues.

14 "Put[b] yourselves in array against Babylon all around,
All you who bend the bow;
Shoot at her, spare no arrows,
For she has sinned against the LORD.
15 Shout against her all around;
She has [c]given her hand,
Her foundations have fallen,
[d]Her walls are thrown down;
For [e]it *is* the vengeance of the LORD.
Take vengeance on her.
As she has done, so do to her.
16 Cut off the sower from Babylon,
And him who handles the sickle at harvest time.

5 [j]Jer. 31:31
6 [k]Is. 53:6; [Ezek. 34:15, 16]; Matt. 9:36; 10:6; 1 Pet. 2:25 [l]Jer. 23:1; Ezek. 34:2 [m][Jer. 2:20; 3:6, 23]
7 [n]Ps. 79:7 [o]Jer. 40:2, 3; Zech. 11:5 [p]Jer. 2:3; Dan. 9:16 [q][Ps. 90:1; 91:1] [r]Ps. 22:4; Jer. 14:8; 17:13
8 [s]Is. 48:20; Jer. 51:6, 45; Zech. 2:6, 7; [Rev. 18:4] [4]*male goats*
9 [t]Jer. 15:14; 51:27 [u]2 Sam. 1:22 [5]So with some Heb. mss., LXX, Syr.; MT, Tg., Vg. *a warrior who makes childless*
10 [v][Rev. 17:16]
11 [w]Is. 47:6 [x]Hos. 10:11 [6]Or *neigh like steeds*
12 [y]Jer. 51:43
13 [z]Jer. 25:12 [a]Jer. 49:17
14 [b]Jer. 51:2
15 [c]1 Chr. 29:24; 2 Chr. 30:8; Lam. 5:6; Ezek. 17:18 [d]Jer. 51:58 [e]Jer. 51:6, 11

■ **50:5 perpetual covenant.** See 31:31–34; 32:40; 33:20, 21.

■ **50:9 I will raise . . . against Babylon . . . from the north country.** Cyrus is mentioned in Is. 41:25; 45:1. Members of the alliance are named in 51:27, 28.

■ **50:12 Your mother.** The city of Babylon is personified. **least of the nations.** She had seemed invincible (Is. 14:12–17).

For fear of the oppressing sword
[f]Everyone shall turn to his own people,
And everyone shall flee to his own land.

17 "Israel *is* like [g]scattered sheep;
[h]The lions have driven *him* away.
First [i]the king of Assyria devoured him;
Now at last this [j]Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has broken his bones."

18 Therefore thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel:

"Behold, I will punish the king of Babylon and his land,
As I have punished the king of [k]Assyria.
19 [l]But I will bring back Israel to his home,
And he shall feed on Carmel and Bashan;
His soul shall be satisfied on Mount Ephraim and Gilead.
20 In those days and in that time," says the LORD,
[m]"The iniquity of Israel shall be sought, but *there shall be* none;
And the sins of Judah, but they shall not be found;
For I will pardon those [n]whom I preserve.

21 "Go up against the land of Merathaim, against it,
And against the inhabitants of [o]Pekod.
[p]Waste and utterly destroy them," says the LORD,
"And do [p]according to all that I have commanded you.
22 [q]A sound of battle *is* in the land,
And of great destruction.
23 How [r]the hammer of the whole earth has been cut apart and broken!
How Babylon has become a desolation among the nations!
I have laid a snare for you;
24 You have indeed been [s]trapped, O Babylon,
And you were not aware;
You have been found and also caught,
Because you have [t]contended against the LORD.
25 The LORD has opened His armory,
And has brought out [u]the weapons of His indignation;
For this *is* the work of the Lord GOD of hosts
In the land of the Chaldeans.
26 Come against her from the farthest border;
Open her storehouses;
Cast her up as heaps of ruins,
And destroy her utterly;
Let nothing of her be left.
27 Slay all her [v]bulls,
Let them go down to the slaughter.
Woe to them!
For their day has come, the time of [w]their punishment.
28 The voice of those who flee and escape from the land of Babylon
[x]Declares in Zion the vengeance of the LORD our God,
The vengeance of His temple.

16 [f]Is. 13:14; Jer. 51:9

17 [g]2 Kin. 24:10, 14 [h]Jer. 2:15 [i]2 Kin. 15:29; 17:6; 18:9–13 [j]2 Kin. 24:10–14; 25:1–7

18 [k]Is. 10:12; Ezek. 31:3, 11, 12; Nah. 3:7, 18, 19

19 [l]Is. 65:10; Jer. 33:12; Ezek. 34:13

20 [m]Num. 23:21; Is. 43:25; [Jer. 31:34; Mic. 7:19] [n]Is. 1:9

21 [o]Ezek. 23:23 [p]2 Sam. 16:11; 2 Kin. 18:25; 2 Chr. 36:23; Is. 10:6; 44:28; 48:14 [7]Or *Attack* with the sword

22 [q]Jer. 51:54

23 [r]Is. 14:6; Jer. 51:20–24

24 [s]Jer. 51:8, 31; Dan. 5:30 [t][Is. 45:9]

25 [u]Is. 13:5

27 [v]Ps. 22:12; Is. 34:7; Jer. 46:21 [w]Ps. 37:13; Jer. 48:44; Ezek. 7:7

28 [x]Ps. 149:6–9; Jer. 51:10

■ **50:19 Carmel . . . Bashan . . . Mount Ephraim and Gilead.** These are the most fertile parts of Israel.

■ **50:21 Merathaim . . . Pekod.** These words are puns on Babylonian place-names (Marratu, Puqudu). The Hebrew words mean "double rebellion" and "punishment."

■ **50:24 trapped . . . you were not aware.** The Persian defeat of Babylon was unexpected.

■ **50:27 bulls.** That is, Babylon's army (46:15 note).

■ **50:28 those who flee.** Jewish escapees from Babylon returned to Jerusalem.

vengeance of His temple. The burning of the temple (52:13) was the definitive destruction of Jerusalem. The Lord ties His vengeance on Babylon specifically to that.

29 "Call together the archers against Babylon.
All you who bend the bow, encamp against it all around;
Let none of them [s]escape.
[y]Repay her according to her work;
According to all she has done, do to her;
[z]For she has been proud against the LORD,
Against the Holy One of Israel.
30 [a]Therefore her young men shall fall in the streets,
And all her men of war shall be cut off in that day," says the LORD.
31 "Behold, I *am* against you,
O most haughty one!" says the Lord GOD of hosts;
"For your day has come,
[g]The time *that* I will punish you.
32 The most [b]proud shall stumble and fall,
And no one will raise him up;
[c]I will kindle a fire in his cities,
And it will devour all around him."

33 Thus says the LORD of hosts:

"The children of Israel *were* oppressed,
Along with the children of Judah;
All who took them captive have held them fast;
They have refused to let them go.
34 [d]Their Redeemer *is* strong;
[e]The LORD of hosts *is* His name.
He will thoroughly plead their [f]case,
That He may give rest to the land,
And disquiet the inhabitants of Babylon.

35 "A sword *is* against the Chaldeans," says the LORD,
"Against the inhabitants of Babylon,
And [g]against her princes and [h]her wise men.
36 A sword *is* [i]against the soothsayers, and they will be fools.
A sword *is* against her mighty men, and they will be dismayed.
37 A sword *is* against their horses,
Against their chariots,
And against all [j]the mixed peoples who *are* in her midst;
And [k]they will become like women.
A sword *is* against her treasures, and they will be robbed.
38 [l]A [l]drought *is* against her waters, and they will be dried up.
For it *is* the land of carved images,
And they are insane with *their* idols.

39 "Therefore[m] the wild desert beasts shall dwell *there* with the jackals,
And the ostriches shall dwell in it.
[n]It shall be inhabited no more forever,
Nor shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation.
40 [o]As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah
And their neighbors," says the LORD,
"*So* no one shall reside there,
Nor son of man [p]dwell in it.

41 "Behold,[q] a people shall come from the north,
And a great nation and many kings
Shall be raised up from the ends of the earth.
42 [r]They shall hold the bow and the lance;

29 [y]Ps. 137:8; Jer. 51:56; [2 Thess. 1:6]; Rev. 18:6 [z][Is. 47:10] [s]Qr., some Heb. mss., LXX, Tg. add *to her*
30 [a]Is. 13:18; Jer. 49:26; 51:4
31 [g]So with MT, Tg.; LXX, Vg. *The time of your punishment*
32 [b]Is. 26:5; Mal. 4:1 [c]Jer. 21:14
34 [d]Prov. 23:11; Is. 43:14; Jer. 15:21; 31:11; Rev. 18:8 [e]Is. 47:4 [f]Jer. 51:36; Mic. 7:9
35 [g]Dan. 5:30 [h]Is. 47:13; Jer. 51:57
36 [i]Is. 44:25; Jer. 48:30
37 [j]Jer. 25:20; Ezek. 30:5 [k]Jer. 51:30; Nah. 3:13
38 [l]Is. 44:27; Jer. 51:36; Rev. 16:12 [l]So with MT, Tg., Vg.; Syr. *sword;* LXX omits *A drought is*
39 [m]Is. 13:21, 22; 34:14; Jer. 51:37; Rev. 18:2 [n]Is. 13:20; Jer. 25:12
40 [o]Gen. 19:24, 25; Is. 13:19; Jer. 49:18; [Luke 17:28–30]; 2 Pet. 2:6; Jude 7 [p]Is. 13:20
41 [q]Is. 13:2–5; Jer. 6:22; 25:14; 51:27
42 [r]Jer. 6:23

■ **50:29 the Holy One of Israel.** This name for God is frequent in Isaiah. ■ **50:34 Redeemer.** See note on 31:11.

[s]They *are* cruel and shall not show mercy.
[t]Their voice shall roar like the sea;
They shall ride on horses,
Set in array, like a man for the battle,
Against you, O daughter of Babylon.

43 "The king of Babylon has [u]heard the report about them,
And his hands grow feeble;
Anguish has taken hold of him,
Pangs as of a woman in [v]childbirth.

44 "Behold,[w] he shall come up like a lion from the [2]floodplain of the Jordan
Against the dwelling place of the strong;
But I will make them suddenly run away from her.
And who *is* a chosen *man that* I may appoint over her?
For who *is* like Me?
Who will arraign Me?
And [x]who *is* that shepherd
Who will withstand Me?"

45 Therefore hear [y]the counsel of the LORD that He has taken against Babylon,
And His [z]purposes that He has proposed against the land of the Chaldeans:
[a]Surely the least of the flock shall draw them out;
Surely He will make their dwelling place desolate with them.
46 [b]At the noise of the taking of Babylon
The earth trembles,
And the cry is heard among the nations.

The Utter Destruction of Babylon

51 Thus says the LORD:

"Behold, I will raise up against [a]Babylon,
Against those who dwell in [1]Leb Kamai,
[b]A destroying wind.
2 And I will send [c]winnowers to Babylon,
Who shall winnow her and empty her land.
[d]For in the day of doom
They shall be against her all around.
3 Against *her* [e]let the archer bend his bow,
And lift himself up against *her* in his armor.
Do not spare her young men;
[f]Utterly destroy all her army.
4 Thus the slain shall fall in the land of the Chaldeans,
[g]And *those* thrust through in her streets.
5 For Israel is [h]not forsaken, nor Judah,
By his God, the LORD of hosts,
Though their land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel."

6 [i]Flee from the midst of Babylon,
And every one save his life!
Do not be cut off in her iniquity,
For [j]this *is* the time of the LORD's vengeance;
[k]He shall recompense her.
7 [l]Babylon *was* a golden cup in the LORD's hand,
That made all the earth drunk.
[m]The nations drank her wine;
Therefore the nations [n]are deranged.
8 Babylon has suddenly [o]fallen and been destroyed.
[p]Wail for her!
[q]Take balm for her pain;
Perhaps she may be healed.

42 [s]Is. 13:18 [t]Is. 5:30
43 [u]Jer. 51:31 [v]Jer. 6:24
44 [w]Jer. 49:19–21 [x]Job 41:10; Jer. 49:19 [2]Or *thicket*
45 [y][Ps. 33:11; Is. 14:24]; Jer. 51:10, 11 [z]Jer. 51:29 [a]Jer. 49:19, 20
46 [b]Rev. 18:9

CHAPTER 51

1 [a]Is. 47:1; Jer. 50:1 [b]2 Kin. 19:7; Jer. 4:11; Hos. 13:15 [1]Lit. *The Midst of Those Who Rise Up Against Me;* a code word for Chaldea, Babylonia
2 [c]Is. 41:16; Jer. 15:7; Matt. 3:12 [d]Jer. 50:14
3 [e]Jer. 50:14, 29 [f]Jer. 50:21
4 [g]Jer. 49:26; 50:30, 37
5 [h][Is. 54:7, 8; Jer. 33:24–26; 46:28]
6 [i]Jer. 50:8; Rev. 18:4 [j]Jer. 50:15 [k]Jer. 25:14
7 [l]Jer. 25:15; Hab. 2:16; Rev. 17:4 [m]Rev. 14:8 [n]Jer. 25:16
8 [o]Is. 21:9; Jer. 50:2; Rev. 14:8; 18:2 [p][Is. 48:20]; Rev. 18:9, 11, 19 [q]Jer. 46:11

9 We would have healed Babylon,
But she is not healed.
Forsake her, and [r]let us go everyone to his own country;
[s]For her judgment reaches to heaven and is lifted up to the skies.
10 The LORD has [t]revealed our righteousness.
Come and let us [u]declare in Zion the work of the LORD our God.

11 [v]Make[2] the arrows bright!
Gather the shields!
[w]The LORD has raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes.
[x]For His plan *is* against Babylon to destroy it,
Because it *is* [y]the vengeance of the LORD,
The vengeance for His temple.
12 [z]Set up the standard on the walls of Babylon;
Make the guard strong,
Set up the watchmen,
Prepare the ambushes.
For the LORD has both devised and done
What He spoke against the inhabitants of Babylon.
13 [a]O you who dwell by many waters,
Abundant in treasures,
Your end has come,
The measure of your covetousness.
14 [b]The LORD of hosts has sworn by Himself:
"Surely I will fill you with men, [c]as with locusts,
And they shall lift [d]up a shout against you."

15 [e]He has made the earth by His power;
He has established the world by His wisdom,
And [f]stretched out the heaven by His understanding.
16 When He utters *His* voice—
There is a multitude of waters in the heavens:
[g]"He causes the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth;
He makes lightnings for the rain;
He brings the wind out of His treasuries."

17 [h]Everyone is dull-hearted, without knowledge;
Every metalsmith is put to shame by the carved image;
[i]For his molded image *is* falsehood,
And *there is* no breath in them.
18 They *are* futile, a work of errors;
In the time of their punishment they shall perish.
19 The Portion of Jacob *is* not like them,
For He *is* the Maker of all things;
And *Israel is* the tribe of His inheritance.
The LORD of hosts *is* His name.

20 "You[j] *are* My battle-ax *and* weapons of war:
For with you I will break the nation in pieces;
With you I will destroy kingdoms;
21 With you I will break in pieces the horse and its rider;
With you I will break in pieces the chariot and its rider;
22 With you also I will break in pieces man and woman;

9 [r]Is. 13:14; Jer. 46:16; 50:16 [s]Ezra 9:6; Rev. 18:5
10 [t]Ps. 37:6; Mic. 7:9 [u]Is. 40:2]; Jer. 50:28
11 [v]Jer. 46:4, 9; Joel 3:9, 10 [w]Is. 13:17 [x]Jer. 50:45 [y]Jer. 50:28 [2]*Polish the arrows!*
12 [z]Nah. 2:1; 3:14
13 [a]Rev. 17:1, 15
14 [b]Jer. 49:13; Amos 6:8 [c]Jer. 51:27; Nah. 3:15 [d]Jer. 50:15
15 [e]Gen. 1:1, 6; Jer. 10:12–16 [f]Job 9:8; Ps. 104:2; Is. 40:22
16 [g]Ps. 135:7; Jer. 10:13
17 [h][Is. 44:18–20]; Jer. 10:14 [i]Jer. 50:2
20 [j]Is. 10:5, 15; Jer. 50:23

■ **51:11 Medes.** Babylon was conquered by an alliance of Medes and Persians (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes). See also Is. 13:17; 21:2.

■ **51:13 by many waters.** Babylon was renowned for its irrigation channels, fed by the Euphrates River.

■ **51:14 sworn by Himself.** See Gen. 22:16 and note.

■ **51:20 You are My battle-ax.** Apparently addressed to Babylon; vv. 20–23 should be taken together with vv. 24–26. Babylon was God's "hammer" (50:23) against the nations, but later Babylon's own sin would cause it to be judged.

With you I will break in pieces [k]old and young;
With you I will break in pieces the young man and the maiden;
23 With you also I will break in pieces the shepherd and his flock;
With you I will break in pieces the farmer and his yoke of oxen;
And with you I will break in pieces governors and rulers.

24 "And[l] I will repay Babylon
And all the inhabitants of Chaldea
For all the evil they have done
In Zion in your sight," says the LORD.

25 "Behold, I *am* against you, [m]O destroying mountain,
Who destroys all the earth," says the LORD.
"And I will stretch out My hand against you,
Roll you down from the rocks,
[n]And make you a burnt mountain.
26 They shall not take from you a stone for a corner
Nor a stone for a foundation,
[o]But you shall be desolate forever," says the LORD.

27 [p]Set up a banner in the land,
Blow the trumpet among the nations!
[q]Prepare the nations against her,
Call [r]the kingdoms together against her:
Ararat, Minni, and Ashkenaz.
Appoint a general against her;
Cause the horses to come up like the bristling locusts.
28 Prepare against her the nations,
With the kings of the Medes,
Its governors and all its rulers,
All the land of his dominion.
29 And the land will tremble and sorrow;
For every [s]purpose of the LORD shall be performed against Babylon,
[t]To make the land of Babylon a desolation without inhabitant.
30 The mighty men of Babylon have ceased fighting,
They have remained in their strongholds;
Their might has failed,
[u]They became *like* women;
They have burned her dwelling places,
[v]The bars of her *gate* are broken.
31 [w]One runner will run to meet another,
And one messenger to meet another,
To show the king of Babylon that his city is taken on *all* sides;
32 [x]The passages are blocked,
The reeds they have burned with fire,
And the men of war are terrified.

33 For thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel:

"The daughter of Babylon *is* [y]like a threshing floor
When [z]*it is* time to thresh her;
Yet a little while
[a]And the time of her harvest will come."

22 [k]2 Chr. 36:17; Is. 13:15, 16
24 [l]Jer. 50:15, 29
25 [m]Is. 13:2; Zech. 4:7 [n]Rev. 8:8
26 [o]Jer. 50:26, 40
27 [p]Is. 13:2; Jer. 50:2; 51:12 [q]Jer. 25:14 [r]Jer. 50:41, 42
29 [s]Jer. 50:45 [t]Is. 13:19, 20; 47:11; Jer. 50:13; 51:26, 43
30 [u]Is. 19:16; Jer. 48:41 [v]Is. 45:1, 2; Lam. 2:9; Amos 1:5; Nah. 3:13
31 [w]Jer. 50:24
32 [x]Jer. 50:38
33 [y]Is. 21:10; Dan. 2:35; Amos 1:3; Mic. 4:13 [z]Is. 41:15; Hab. 3:12 [a]Is. 17:15; Hos. 6:11; Joel 3:13; Rev. 14:15

■ **51:27 Ararat, Minni, and Ashkenaz.** Assyrian administrative districts in Armenia.

■ **51:30 burned her dwelling places.** Babylon's sacking of Judah (cf. 21:10) is being revenged by her Median conquerors.

■ **51:33 daughter of Babylon.** This figure both personifies Babylon and alludes to its women, made vulnerable by defeat. See 50:42; Lam. 1:6 and note.

34 "Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon
Has [b]devoured me, he has crushed me;
He has made me an [c]empty vessel,
He has swallowed me up like a monster;
He has filled his stomach with my delicacies,
He has spit me out.
35 Let the violence *done* to me and my flesh *be* upon Babylon,"
The inhabitant of Zion will say;
"And my blood be upon the inhabitants of Chaldea!"
Jerusalem will say.

36 Therefore thus says the LORD:

"Behold, [d]I will plead your case and take vengeance for you.
[e]I will dry up her sea and make her springs dry.
37 [f]Babylon shall become a heap,
A dwelling place for jackals,
[g]An astonishment and a hissing,
Without an inhabitant.
38 They shall roar together like lions,
They shall growl like lions' whelps.
39 In their excitement I will prepare their feasts;
[h]I will make them drunk,
That they may rejoice,
And sleep a perpetual sleep
And not awake," says the LORD.
40 "I will bring them down
Like lambs to the slaughter,
Like rams with male goats.

41 "Oh, how [i]Sheshach[3] is taken!
Oh, how [j]the praise of the whole earth is seized!
How Babylon has become desolate among the nations!
42 [k]The sea has come up over Babylon;
She is covered with the multitude of its waves.
43 [l]Her cities are a desolation,
A dry land and a wilderness,
A land where [m]no one dwells,
Through which no son of man passes.
44 I will punish [n]Bel[4] in Babylon,
And I will bring out of his mouth what he has swallowed;
And the nations shall not stream to him anymore.
Yes, [o]the wall of Babylon shall fall.

45 "My[p] people, go out of the midst of her!
And let everyone deliver [5]himself from the fierce anger of the LORD.
46 And lest your heart faint,
And you fear [q]for the rumor that *will be* heard in the land
(A rumor will come *one* year,
And after that, in *another* year
A rumor *will come,*
And violence in the land,
Ruler against ruler),
47 Therefore behold, the days are coming
That I will bring judgment on the carved images of Babylon;

34 [b]Jer. 50:17 [c]Is. 24:1–3
36 [d][Ps. 140:12]; Jer. 50:34 [e]Jer. 50:38
37 [f]Is. 13:22; Jer. 50:39; [Rev. 18:2] [g]Jer. 25:9, 11
39 [h]Jer. 51:57
41 [i]Jer. 25:26 [j]Is. 13:19; Jer. 49:25; [Dan. 4:30] [3]A code word for Babylon, Jer. 25:26
42 [k]Is. 8:7, 8; Jer. 51:55; Dan. 9:26
43 [l]Jer. 50:39, 40 [m]Is. 13:20
44 [n]Jer. 50:2; Is. 46:1 [o]Jer. 50:15 [4]A Babylonian god
45 [p]Is. 48:20; [Jer. 50:8, 28; 51:6; Rev. 18:4] [5]Lit. *his soul*
46 [q]2 Kin. 19:7; Is. 13:3–5

■ **51:36 plead . . . vengeance.** See 50:15. The metaphors of revenge and courtroom judgment are mixed here.

■ **51:44 what he has swallowed.** He "swallowed" the nations taken into exile and their treasures. Judah's treasures were restored by Cyrus's decree (Ezra 1:5–11).

wall of Babylon. An enormously wide double wall, further protected by an intervening moat.

Her whole land shall be ashamed,
And all her slain shall fall in her midst.
48 Then [r]the heavens and the earth and all that *is* in them
Shall sing joyously over Babylon;
[s]For the plunderers shall come to her from the north," says the LORD.

49 As Babylon *has caused* the slain of Israel to fall,
So at Babylon the slain of all the earth shall fall.
50 [t]You who have escaped the sword,
Get away! Do not stand still!
[u]Remember the LORD afar off,
And let Jerusalem come to your mind.

51 [v]We are ashamed because we have heard reproach.
Shame has covered our faces,
For strangers [w]have come into the [6]sanctuaries of the LORD's house.

52 "Therefore behold, the days are coming," says the LORD,
"That I will bring judgment on her carved images,
And throughout all her land the wounded shall groan.
53 [x]Though Babylon were to [7]mount up to heaven,
And though she were to fortify the height of her strength,
Yet from Me plunderers would come to her," says the LORD.

54 [y]The sound of a cry *comes* from Babylon,
And great destruction from the land of the Chaldeans,
55 Because the LORD is plundering Babylon
And silencing her loud voice,
Though her waves roar like great waters,
And the noise of their voice is uttered,
56 Because the plunderer comes against her, against Babylon,
And her mighty men are taken.
Every one of their bows is broken;
[z]For the LORD *is* the God of recompense,
He will surely repay.

57 "And I will make drunk
Her princes and [a]wise men,
Her governors, her deputies, and her mighty men.
And they shall sleep a perpetual sleep
And not awake," says [b]the King,
Whose name *is* the LORD of hosts.

58 Thus says the LORD of hosts:

"The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly [c]broken,[8]
And her high gates shall be burned with fire;
[d]The people will labor in vain,
And the nations, because of the fire;
And they shall be weary."

Jeremiah's Command to Seraiah

59 The word which Jeremiah the prophet commanded Seraiah the son of [e]Neriah, the son of Mahseiah, when he went with Zedekiah the king of Judah to Babylon in the fourth year of his

48 [r]Is. 44:23; 48:20; 49:13; Rev. 18:20 [s]Jer. 50:3, 41

50 [t]Jer. 44:28 [u][Deut. 4:29–31]; Ezek. 6:9

51 [v]Ps. 44:15; 79:4 [w]Ps. 74:3–8; Jer. 52:13; Lam. 1:10 [6]*holy places*

53 [x]Gen. 11:4; Job 20:6; [Ps. 139:8–10; Is. 14:12–14]; Jer. 49:16; Amos 9:2; Obad. 4 [7]*ascend*

54 [y]Jer. 50:22

56 [z]Ps. 94:1; Jer. 50:29

57 [a]Jer. 50:35 [b]Jer. 46:18; 48:15

58 [c]Jer. 50:15 [d]Hab. 2:13 [8]Lit. *laid utterly bare*

59 [e]Jer. 32:12

■ **51:51** The exiles express their grief over the occupation of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C., perhaps feeling that this defilement can never be cleansed.

■ **51:53 Though Babylon were to mount up to heaven.** Probably this is a reference to its lofty ziggurats, symbols of its religious pride (Gen. 11:4).

■ **51:58 high gates.** The Ishtar Gate was known for its great height.

will labor . . . the nations. The labor of subject nations in building Babylon's fortifications will be of no use when God brings His judgment.

■ **51:59 Seraiah the son of Neriah.** An official in Zedekiah's administration, he was responsible for this expedition's billeting en route. He is the brother of Baruch, Jeremiah's scribe (32:12).

reign. And Seraiah *was* the quartermaster. 60 So Jeremiah [f]wrote in a book all the evil that would come upon Babylon, all these words that are written against Babylon. 61 And Jeremiah said to Seraiah, "When you arrive in Babylon and see it, and read all these words, 62 then you shall say, 'O LORD, You have spoken against this place to cut it off, so that [g]none shall remain in it, neither man nor beast, but it shall be desolate forever.' 63 Now it shall be, when you have finished reading this book, [h]*that* you shall tie a stone to it and throw it out into the Euphrates. 64 Then you shall say, 'Thus Babylon shall sink and not rise from the catastrophe that I will bring upon her. And they shall be weary.' "

Thus far *are* the words of Jeremiah.

The Fall of Jerusalem Reviewed

52 Zedekiah *was* [a]twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother's name *was* Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of [b]Libnah. 2 He also did evil in the sight of the LORD, according to all that Jehoiakim had done. 3 For because of the anger of the LORD *this* happened in Jerusalem and Judah, till He finally cast them out from His presence. Then Zedekiah [c]rebelled against the king of Babylon.

4 Now it came to pass in the [d]ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, on the tenth *day* of the month, *that* Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army came against Jerusalem and encamped against it; and *they* built a siege wall against it all around. 5 So the city was besieged until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah. 6 By the fourth month, on the ninth day of the month, the famine had become so severe in the city that there was no food for the people of the land. 7 Then the city wall was broken through, and all the men of war fled and went out of the city at night by way of the gate between the two walls, which *was* by the king's garden, even though the Chaldeans *were* near the city all around. And they went by way of the [i]plain.

8 But the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king, and they overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho. All his army was scattered from him. 9 [e]So they took the king and brought him up to the

60 [f]Is. 30:8; Jer. 36:2

62 [g]Is. 13:20; 14:22, 23; Jer. 50:3, 39

63 [h]Jer. 19:10, 11; Rev. 18:21

CHAPTER 52

1 [a]2 Kin. 24:18; 2 Chr. 36:11 [b]Josh. 10:29; 2 Kin. 8:22; Is. 37:8

3 [c]2 Chr. 36:13

4 [d]2 Kin. 25:1; Jer. 39:1; Ezek. 24:1, 2; Zech. 8:19

7 [i]Or *Arabah;* the Jordan Valley

9 [e]2 Kin. 25:6; Jer. 32:4; 39:5

went with Zedekiah . . . to Babylon in the fourth year of his reign. That is, in 593 B.C. The expedition may have been in response to a summons to explain Zedekiah's part in the uprising against Nebuchadnezzar (27:3 note).

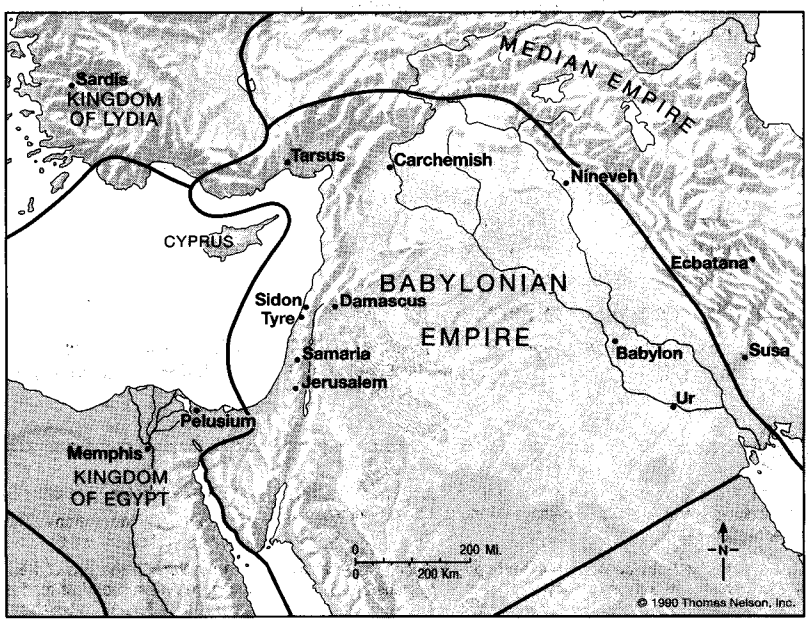
■ **51:60 a book.** It may have contained the prophecies in chs. 50 and 51. See 36:2.

■ **51:63, 64** This final symbolic act (13:1–11 note) reinforced the last word of Jeremiah, that Babylon would fall.

■ **52:1–34** The final chapter of Jeremiah is an appendix describing the fall of Jerusalem and reminding the reader that Jeremiah's prophecies were fulfilled. Despite its message of divine judgment for sin, the Book of Jeremiah ends (like 2 Kings) on a hopeful note by calling attention to the mercy shown to King Jehoiachin of Judah while in Babylonian exile (52:31–34; cf. 2 Kin. 25:27–30).

■ **52:1 Jeremiah of Libnah.** Not Jeremiah the prophet, who was from Anathoth (1:1).

(Medo-) Babylonian Empire (560 B.C.). In 605 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar's two-year siege of Carchemish proved successful, and most of the Assyrian Empire rapidly became the Babylonian Empire. In 587 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar conquered all of Judah, besieging and destroying Jerusalem and the Jewish temple in the process. At its zenith in 560 B.C. Babylon ruled the entire fertile crescent and Arabia, although Egypt regained autonomy.



king of Babylon at Riblah in the land of Hamath, and he pronounced judgment on him. 10 [f]Then the king of Babylon killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes. And he killed all the princes of Judah in Riblah. 11 He also [g]put out the eyes of Zedekiah; and the king of Babylon bound him in [2]bronze fetters, took him to Babylon, and put him in prison till the day of his death.

The Temple and City Plundered and Burned

12 [h]Now in the fifth month, on the tenth *day* of the month ([i]which *was* the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon), [j]Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard, *who* served the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. 13 He burned the house of the LORD and the king's house; all the houses of Jerusalem, that is, all the houses of the great, he burned with fire. 14 And all the army of the Chaldeans who *were* with the captain of the guard broke down all the walls of Jerusalem all around. 15 [k]Then Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive *some* of the poor people, the rest of the people who remained in the city, the defectors who had deserted to the king of Babylon, and the rest of the craftsmen. 16 But Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard left *some* of the poor of the land as vinedressers and farmers.

17 [l]The [m]bronze pillars that *were* in the house of the LORD, and the carts and the bronze Sea that *were* in the house of the LORD, the Chaldeans broke in pieces, and carried all their bronze to Babylon. 18 They also took away [n]the pots, the shovels, the trimmers, the [3]bowls, the spoons, and all the bronze utensils with which the priests ministered. 19 The basins, the firepans, the bowls, the pots, the lampstands, the spoons, and the cups, whatever *was* solid gold and whatever *was* solid silver, the captain of the guard took away. 20 The two pillars, one Sea, the twelve bronze bulls which *were* under *it, and* the carts, which King Solomon had made for the house of the LORD—[o]the bronze of all these articles was beyond measure. 21 Now *concerning* the [p]pillars: the height of one pillar *was* eighteen [4]cubits, a measuring line of twelve cubits could measure its circumference, and its thickness *was* [5]four fingers; *it was* hollow. 22 A capital of bronze *was* on it; and the height of one capital *was* five cubits, with a network and pomegranates all around the capital, all of bronze. The second pillar, with pomegranates was the same. 23 There were ninety-six pomegranates on the sides; [q]all the pomegranates, all around on the network, *were* one hundred.

The People Taken Captive to Babylonia

24 [r]The captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest, [s]Zephaniah the second priest, and the three doorkeepers. 25 He also took out of the city an [6]officer who had charge of the men of war, seven men of the king's close associates who were found in the city, the principal scribe of the army who mustered the people of the land, and sixty men of the people of the land who were found in the midst of the city. 26 And Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard took these and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah. 27 Then the king of Babylon struck them and put them to death at Riblah in the land of Hamath. Thus Judah was carried away captive from its own land.

28 [t]These *are* the people whom Nebuchadnezzar carried away captive: [u]in the seventh year, [v]three thousand and twenty-three Jews; 29 [w]in the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar he carried away captive from Jerusalem eight hundred and thirty-two persons; 30 in the twenty-third year of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive of the Jews seven hundred and forty-five persons. All the persons *were* four thousand six hundred.

Jehoiachin Released from Prison

31 [x]Now it came to pass in the thirty-seventh year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-fifth *day* of the month, *that* [7]Evil-Merodach king of Babylon, in the first *year* of his reign, [y]lifted[8] up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah and brought him out of prison. 32 And he spoke kindly to him and gave him a more prominent seat than those of the kings who *were* with him in Babylon. 33 So [9]Jehoiachin changed from his prison garments, [z]and he ate bread regularly before the king all the days of his life. 34 And as for his provisions, there was a regular ration given him by the king of Babylon, a portion for each day until the day of his death, all the days of his life.

10 [f]Ezek. 12:13

11 [g]Ezek. 12:13 [2]*shackles*

12 [h]2 Kin. 25:8–21 [i]Jer. 52:29 [j]Jer. 39:9

15 [k]Jer. 39:9

17 [l]Jer. 27:19 [m]1 Kin. 7:15, 23, 27, 50

18 [n]Ex. 27:3; 1 Kin. 7:40, 45; 2 Kin. 25:14 [3]*basins*

20 [o]1 Kin. 7:47; 2 Kin. 25:16

21 [p]1 Kin. 7:15; 2 Kin. 25:17; 2 Chr. 3:15 [4]18 inches each [5]3 inches

23 [q]1 Kin. 7:20

24 [r]2 Kin. 25:18; 1 Chr. 6:14; Ezra 7:1 [s]Jer. 21:1; 29:25

25 [6]Lit. *eunuch*

28 [t]2 Kin. 24:2 [u]2 Kin. 24:12 [v]2 Kin. 24:14

29 [w]2 Kin. 25:11; Jer. 39:9

31 [x]2 Kin. 25:27–30 [y]Gen. 40:13, 20; Ps. 3:3; 27:6 [7]Or *Awil- Marduk;* lit. *The Man of Marduk* [8]Showed favor to

33 [z]2 Sam. 9:7, 13; 1 Kin. 2:7 [9]Lit. *he*

■ **52:12 the tenth day.** 2 Kin. 25:8 has the "seventh day." One or the other text could be a copyist's error.

■ **52:22 five.** 2 Kin. 25:17 has "three." See note on v. 12.

■ **52:25 seven.** 2 Kin. 25:19 has "five." See note on v. 12.

■ **52:28–30** These verses refer to the two main deportations of Jews to Babylon, in 597 B.C. ("the seventh year") and 586 B.C. (the "eighteenth year"; "nineteenth" v. 12 is due to an alternate way of counting). A third, smaller deportation is also mentioned. The numbers here are smaller than those in 2 Kin. 24:14, 16, and may count only adult males.

■ **52:31 twenty-fifth.** 2 Kin. 25:27 has "twenty-seventh." See note on v. 12.

The Book of

LAMENTATIONS

Author The Book of Lamentations is traditionally attributed to the prophet Jeremiah. This has been true at least since the time of the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament (c. 250 B.C.), where a note about the prophet's authorship of the book appears as a heading before the first verse. The idea of Jeremiah as the author may have been encouraged by 2 Chr. 35:25, where we are told that the prophet composed laments for King Josiah. There is no direct evidence in the book itself that Jeremiah was its author, although passages in the work distinctly recall his character and language, especially ch. 3 (Lam. 3:48–51; Jer. 14:17). However, since the book consists of five different poems that vary somewhat in style, sometimes seeming to be spoken by an individual (ch. 3) and sometimes by a community (ch. 5), it may be that the poems come from different pens.

Date and Occasion The link between Lamentations and Jeremiah remains plausible, however, not only because of similar expressions, but also because of the setting and theme of the poems. The setting is clearly Judah, particularly Jerusalem, and almost certainly the period after the fall of the kingdom of Judah to the Babylonians in 586 B.C. and before the restoration of exiles in 538 B.C. The lament concerning the loss of Judah's king (2:2, 9), in distinction from other devastations of Jerusalem, fixes this occasion for the laments.

A setting during the period of the Babylonian exile makes Lamentations a fitting sequel to the Book of Jeremiah. As Jeremiah had foretold the fall of Jerusalem, Lamentations expresses the pain of the event itself.

Characteristics and Themes The five chapters of the book are five poems. These poems take the form of laments, such as appear in other books of the Old Testament, principally the Psalms. Laments (both of the community and the individual) have certain typical characteristics, of which the most common are: (a) complaint about adversity, which the Lord either tolerated or even caused; (b) confession of trust; (c) appeal for deliverance, on the grounds of the Lord's character and His covenant; and (d) certainty of a hearing, often with an assurance that the enemies and persecutors will in turn experience the wrath of God (Ps. 74). The Book of Lamentations has these typical marks, though it represents a unique set of variations upon them. It is sometimes compared with a particular kind of lament, the funeral lament (Amos 5:1–3), but it does not quite fit this category, because Jerusalem is not uniformly portrayed as "dead."

The clearest evidence for meter in Hebrew poetry is the Book of Lamentations, which seems to use a line of five beats divided three-two. This meter is called *qinah,* after the Hebrew name for Lamentations. It is most often found in poetry of this sorrowful kind.

A second poetic form found in Lamentations is the acrostic, in which lines or sets of lines are arranged according to the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Each line or group of lines begins with the succeeding letter. This method may indicate that the poet is giving a complete treatment of the subject matter. The acrostic also provides a form for the literary expression of grief, allowing the writer to deal with themes that are almost too deep for words.

The purpose of Lamentations cannot be stated in a single word. In a sense its production was itself a way of coming to terms with the destruction of Zion. The center of gravity is the wrath of God against His people. God's wrath is taken to be just. Judah had sinned, and the prophets had given God's warning. Amos had spoken long before of a day of the Lord against His people (Amos 5:18), a day that now had come (Lam. 1:12). Lamentations does not express total perplexity, as Job may at times appear to do. Instead, it justifies God's punishment of Judah and offers a vindication of the prophets who had predicted it.

Lamentations is anything but a work of passive resignation. God's wrath is accepted, but not without great emotional resistance. Could God behave like the enemy of His own people, and drive them to terrors that are painful even to describe (2:4, 5, 20–22)? Although the writer understands the justice of God, the agony and bewilderment of the event can be freely expressed. The book retains its power in times of anguish and sorrow.

Yet in his anguish this poet of the Exile is able to affirm that God is still merciful and faithful (3:22–36). This is the covenant God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whose faithfulness to the patriarchs was a continuing foundation for new appeals to Israel and Judah to put their trust in Him (Mic. 7:20). Lamentations may be counted, perhaps with Abraham himself, as one of the supreme examples in the Old Testament of faith in God. Jeremiah had prophesied that there would be a definite end to the Babylonian exile (Jer. 25:11). Lamentations looks for such an end, and even hopes that Judah's enemies will be judged for their crimes against her. In this hope there is an understanding of the sovereignty of God over all the nations, the sovereignty that embraces all mysteries (3:37–39). In the days before His own cry of abandonment (Matt. 27:46) and the mystery of His redemptive suffering, Jesus made His own lament over

Jerusalem (Matt. 23:37–39; Luke 13:34, 35). The solemnity and compassion of His words expresses the goodness and severity of God that undergirds the gospel (Rom. 11:22, 23).

Lamentations points beyond the humiliation of Jerusalem to the humiliation and exaltation of Christ. With this anchor, the world can know that God is good, and He will do good in His time ". . . to those who wait for Him" (3:25). □

Outline of Lamentations

I. Jerusalem Once Great But Now Devastated (ch. 1)
II. The Lord's Anger with Judah (ch. 2)
III. The Grief of the Community (ch. 3)
IV. Zion's Degradation (ch. 4)
V. Disaster and Petition (ch. 5)

Jerusalem in Affliction

CHAPTER 1

HOW lonely sits the city
That was full of people!
[a]*How* like a widow is she,
Who *was* great among the nations!
The [b]princess among the provinces
Has become a [1]slave!

2 She [c]weeps bitterly in the [d]night,
Her tears *are* on her cheeks;
Among all her lovers
She has none to comfort *her.*
All her friends have dealt treacherously with her;
They have become her enemies.

3 [e]Judah has gone into captivity,
Under affliction and hard servitude;
[f]She dwells among the [2]nations,
She finds no [g]rest;
All her persecutors overtake her in dire straits.

4 The roads to Zion mourn
Because no one comes to the [3]set feasts.

1 [a]Is. 47:7–9 [b]1 Kin. 4:21; Ezra 4:20; Jer. 31:7 [1]Lit. *forced laborer*

2 [c]Jer. 13:17 [d]Job 7:3

3 [e]Jer. 52:27 [f]Lam. 2:9 [g]Deut. 28:65 [2]*Gentiles*

4 [3]*appointed*

■ **1:1–22** The chosen city of Zion, once exalted, has been humbled.

■ **1:1 How lonely.** The first verse sets the theme of the lament: Jerusalem's loss of greatness. The city, once favored, is desolate from the Babylonians' plundering (Is. 1:21–26).

widow. Widowhood and solitude (Jer. 15:17) are typical pictures of abandonment.

slave. Slavery is contrary to God's ultimate design for Israel. They had become a nation when God delivered them from slavery in Egypt so that they could serve him (Deut. 6:20–25; Jer. 2:14; Deut. 15:12–18). The blessings of living in the Promised Land and serving according to the Law were replaced with the punishments of exile and forced labor (Deut. 28:47–50), because the people had often broken the covenant they accepted when they left Egypt (Ex. 24:7, 8).

■ **1:2 lovers.** This is a word often used in irony for Judah's idolatrous neighbors with whom she willingly consorted (Jer. 3:1).

none to comfort. See also vv. 7, 9, 16. This should be compared with the comfort promised in Is. 40:1. Here there is no limit to the effects of the Babylonian ravages.

■ **1:3** For the fall of Judah, see 2 Kin. 24:20—25:30; Jer. 39—45, 52.

captivity. This is the ultimate humiliation for the covenant people (Deut. 28:63–68).

no rest. The covenant had promised rest from enemies (Deut. 12:9; 2 Sam. 7:1, cf, Deut. 28:65).

■ **1:4** The regular worship life of ancient Israel is pictured here.

roads to Zion. People who lived at a distance would travel these roads in pilgrimage to the temple (Ps. 84:5).

set feasts. The main yearly gatherings for worship were Passover, Pentecost, and Harvest (Ex. 23:14–17; Lev. 23:4–44). Jerusalem would be crowded, and priests presided over the vibrant celebrations.

virgins are afflicted. This is a sign of defeat; contrast Jer. 31:13.

All her gates are [h]desolate;
Her priests sigh,
Her virgins are afflicted,
And she *is* in bitterness.

5 Her adversaries [i]have become [4]the master,
Her enemies prosper;
For the LORD has afflicted her
[j]Because of the multitude of her transgressions.
Her [k]children have gone into captivity before the enemy.

6 And from the daughter of Zion
All her splendor has departed.
Her princes have become like deer
That find no pasture,
That [5]flee without strength
Before the pursuer.

7 In the days of her affliction and roaming,
Jerusalem [l]remembers all her pleasant things
That she had in the days of old.
When her people fell into the hand of the enemy,
With no one to help her,
The adversaries saw her
And mocked at her [6]downfall.

8 [m]Jerusalem has sinned gravely,
Therefore she has become [7]vile.
All who honored her despise her
Because [n]they have seen her nakedness;
Yes, she sighs and turns away.

9 Her uncleanness *is* in her skirts;
She [o]did not consider her destiny;
Therefore her collapse was awesome;
She had no comforter.
"O LORD, behold my affliction,
For *the* enemy is exalted!"

10 The adversary has spread his hand
Over all her [8]pleasant things;
For she has seen [p]the nations enter her [9]sanctuary,
Those whom You commanded
[q]Not to enter Your assembly.

11 All her people sigh,
[r]They [1]seek bread;
They have given their [2]valuables for food to restore life.

4 [h]Is. 27:10 **5** [i]Deut. 28:43 [j]Jer. 30:14, 15; Dan. 9:7, 16 [k]Jer. 52:28 [4]Lit. *her head*

6 [5]Lit. *are gone*

7 [l]Ps. 137:1 [6]Vg. *Sabbaths*

8 [m][1 Kin. 8:46] [n]Jer. 13:22; Ezek. 16:37; Hos. 2:10 [7]LXX, Vg. *moved* or *removed*

9 [o]Deut. 32:29; Is. 47:7; Jer. 5:31

10 [p]Ps. 74:4–8; Is. 64:10, 11; Jer. 51:51 [q]Deut. 23:3; Neh. 13:1 [8]*desirable* [9]*holy place,* the temple

11 [r]Jer. 38:9; 52:6 [1]*hunt food* [2]*desirable things*

■ **1:5 enemies prosper.** See other complaints in Jer. 12:1; Ps. 73. Here the complaint comes with a confession of sin. As the prophets foretold, Judah's unfaithfulness brought her to grief.

■ **1:6 daughter of Zion.** This phrase personifies Jerusalem (Jer. 6:2); yet perhaps it also alludes to the women of the city, who feel its anguish most keenly.

■ **1:7 Jerusalem remembers.** Again the bitter present contrasts with an earlier, happier time, possibly that of David and Solomon.

■ **1:8 Jerusalem has sinned.** The idea of sin as the cause of the Exile is developed, first with images of ritual impurity.

vile. The word probably refers to menstruation (Lev. 15:19–33). The consequence of Judah's sin was similar, if not more severe: being cut off from God's worship, and perhaps also public humiliation (cf. Jer. 13:22, 26).

■ **1:9 uncleanness.** This intensifies the image of ritual uncleanness.

O LORD, behold. Zion is personified for the first time, introducing an element of appeal to the Lord, a normal part of the lament form (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes).

■ **1:10 sanctuary.** The temple was intended to attract the nations to worship the God of Israel (1 Kin. 8:41–43), but now it has brought invaders who desecrate it.

■ **1:11 All . . . life.** The picture of desolation becomes vivid, with its intimation of food shortages.

"See, O LORD, and consider,
For I am scorned."

12 "*Is it* nothing to you, all you who [3]pass by?
Behold and see
[s]If there is any sorrow like my sorrow,
Which has been brought on me,
Which the LORD has inflicted
In the day of His fierce anger.

13 "From above He has sent fire into my bones,
And it overpowered them;
He has [t]spread a net for my feet
And turned me back;
He has made me desolate
And faint all the day.

14 "The[u] yoke of my transgressions was [4]bound;
They were woven together by His hands,
And thrust upon my neck.
He made my strength fail;
The Lord delivered me into the hands of *those whom* I am not able to withstand.

15 "The Lord has trampled underfoot all my mighty *men* in my midst;
He has called an assembly against me
To crush my young men;
[v]The Lord trampled *as* in a winepress
The virgin daughter of Judah.

16 "For these *things* I weep;
My eye, [w]my eye overflows with water;
Because the comforter, who should restore my life,
Is far from me.
My children are desolate
Because the enemy prevailed."

17 [x]Zion [5]spreads out her hands,
But no one comforts her;
The LORD has commanded concerning Jacob
That those [y]around him *become* his adversaries;
Jerusalem has become an unclean thing among them.

18 "The LORD is [z]righteous,
For I [a]rebelled against His [6]commandment.
Hear now, all peoples,
And behold my sorrow;
My virgins and my young men
Have gone into captivity.

12 [s]Dan. 9:12 [3]Lit. *pass by this way*
13 [t]Ezek. 12:13; 17:20
14 [u]Deut. 28:48 [4]So with MT, Tg.; LXX, Syr., Vg. *watched over*
15 [v]Is. 63:3; [Rev. 14:19]
16 [w]Ps. 69:20; Eccl. 4:1; Jer. 13:17; Lam. 2:18
17 [x][Is. 1:15]; Jer. 4:31 [y]2 Kin. 24:2–4; Jer. 12:9 [5]Prays
18 [z]Neh. 9:33; Ps. 119:75; Dan. 9:7, 14 [a]1 Sam. 12:14, 15; Jer. 4:17 [6]Lit. *mouth*

■ **1:12 all you who pass by . . . like my sorrow.** The sufferer imagines that their suffering is unprecedented. Yet no one seems to sympathize.

the day of His fierce anger. The expression here is a grim confirmation of the prophecy of Amos that on the day of the Lord His anger would be against His own people (Amos 5:18).

■ **1:13 He has sent fire.** Zion knows that the Lord Himself has afflicted them (Ps. 88:13–18).

■ **1:15 The Lord has trampled.** The Lord, formerly a warrior on Israel's behalf (Deut. 9:1–3), has turned His might against His own people.

■ **1:16 the comforter . . . is far from me.** There is no one to help, no one to comfort—a dominant theme in these verses (2, 7, 9, 17).

■ **1:17 Jacob.** A historic name for Israel, derived from the name of their ancestor (Gen. 32:38).

those around him become his adversaries. The presence of Judah as an unclean thing among the nations falsifies her intended role as a witness to the holiness of God (Ex. 19:5, 6).

■ **1:18 The LORD is righteous.** Zion justifies the Lord's punishment by an admission of sin. Yet the thought shifts quickly again to her slavery.

19 "I called for my lovers,
But they deceived me;
My priests and my elders
Breathed their last in the city,
While they sought food
To restore their life.

20 "See, O LORD, that I *am* in distress;
My [b]soul[7] is troubled;
My heart is overturned within me,
For I have been very rebellious.
[c]Outside the sword bereaves,
At home *it is* like death.

21 "They have heard that I sigh,
But no one comforts me.
All my enemies have heard of my trouble;
They are [d]glad that You have done *it.*
Bring on [e]the day You have [8]announced,
That they may become like me.

22 "Let[f] all their wickedness come before You,
And do to them as You have done to me
For all my transgressions;
For my sighs *are* many,
And my heart *is* faint."

God's Anger with Jerusalem

2 How the Lord has covered the daughter of Zion
With a [a]cloud in His anger!
[b]He cast down from heaven to the earth
[c]The beauty of Israel,
And did not remember [d]His footstool
In the day of His anger.

2 The Lord has swallowed up and has [e]not pitied
All the dwelling places of Jacob.
He has thrown down in His wrath
The strongholds of the daughter of Judah;
He has brought *them* down to the ground;
[f]He has profaned the kingdom and its princes.

3 He has cut off in fierce anger
Every [1]horn of Israel;

20 [b]Job 30:27; Is. 16:11; Jer. 4:19; Lam. 2:11; Hos. 11:8 [c]Deut. 32:25; Ezek. 7:15 [7]Lit. *inward parts*

21 [d]Ps. 35:15; Jer. 48:27; 50:11; Lam. 2:15; Obad. 12 [e]Is. 13; [Jer. 46] [8]*proclaimed*

22 [f]Neh. 4:4, 5; Ps. 109:15; 137:7, 8; Jer. 30:16

CHAPTER 2

1 [a][Lam. 3:44] [b]Matt. 11:23 [c]2 Sam. 1:19 [d]1 Chr. 28:2; Ps. 99:5; Ezek. 43:7

2 [e]Ps. 21:9; Lam. 3:43 [f]Ps. 89:39, 40; Is. 43:28

3 [1]Strength

■ **1:19 lovers.** They fail in time of need.

■ **1:21 my enemies.** Zion appeals to the Lord because of the enemies' gloating. Their insults are deeply offensive to Judah's status as God's covenant people—and therefore to God Himself.

day. The day of the Lord now becomes a day of terror for Zion's enemies. Zion's lament follows the prophetic pattern, where the enemies who administer God's judgment finally come to suffer judgment themselves (Jer. 25:15–38).

■ **1:22 Let . . . transgressions.** Zion finally asserts that her enemies merit judgment as much as she does.

my sighs. The petition to punish, however, does not diminish Zion's deep distress.

■ **2:1–22** The second lament over Zion's loss of glory begins and the prophet portrays the Lord's anger with her.

■ **2:1 How.** Cf. 1:1 and note.

He cast down . . . The beauty. Israel's fall into disfavor is compared to a falling star (Is. 14:12).

And did not remember. Judah is astonished that the promise to David is now apparently void (cf. Ps. 89, especially vv. 38–51). Isaiah had assured the people that God would protect Zion (e.g., Is. 37:35), and the people of Judah had absolutized these promises. They forgot their obligation to keep the terms of God's covenant with them (Ex. 24:1–3).

His footstool. Used normally for the ark of the covenant (1 Chr. 28:2; Ps. 132:7), or the earth (Is. 66:1), it is here applied to Zion (cf. Ps. 99:5).

■ **2:2 strongholds.** The strength of the fortified cities of Judah had symbolized God's blessing in response to Judah's covenant faithfulness (2 Chr. 10:4–12).

■ **2:3 horn.** A metaphor for strength and prosperity (contrast v. 17). The language used makes vivid the contrasts (a) between Judah and the enemies, as well as (b) between Judah's life as it should be and as it is.

[g] He has drawn back His right hand
From before the enemy.
[h] He has blazed against Jacob like a flaming fire
Devouring all around.

4 [i] Standing like an enemy, He has bent His bow;
With His right hand, like an adversary,
He has slain [j] all *who were* pleasing to His eye;
On the tent of the daughter of Zion,
He has poured out His fury like fire.

5 [k] The Lord was like an enemy.
He has swallowed up Israel,
He has swallowed up all her palaces;
[l] He has destroyed her strongholds,
And has increased mourning and lamentation
In the daughter of Judah.

6 He has done violence [m] to His [2] tabernacle,
[n] *As if it were* a garden;
He has destroyed His place of assembly;
The LORD has caused
The appointed feasts and Sabbaths to be forgotten in Zion.
In His burning indignation He has [o] spurned the king and the priest.

7 The Lord has spurned His altar,
He has [p] abandoned His sanctuary;
He has [3] given up the walls of her palaces
Into the hand of the enemy.
[q] They have made a noise in the house of the LORD
As on the day of a set feast.

8 The LORD has [4] purposed to destroy
The [r] wall of the daughter of Zion.
[s] He has stretched out a line;
He has not withdrawn His hand from destroying;
Therefore He has caused the rampart and wall to lament;
They languished together.

9 Her gates have sunk into the ground;
He has destroyed and [t] broken her bars.
[u] Her king and her princes *are* among the [5] nations;
[v] The Law *is* no *more,*
And her [w] prophets find no [6] vision from the LORD.

10 The elders of the daughter of Zion
[x] Sit on the ground *and* keep silence;

3 [g] Ps. 74:11; Jer. 21:4, 5 [h] Ps. 89:46

4 [i] Is. 63:10 [j] Ezek. 24:25

5 [k] Jer. 30:14 [l] 2 Kin. 25:9; Jer. 52:13; Lam. 2:2

6 [m] Ps. 80:12; 89:40; Is. 5:5; Jer. 7:14 [n] Is. 1:8; Jer. 52:13 [o] Is. 43:28 [2] Lit. *booth*

7 [p] Ezek. 24:21 [q] Ps. 74:3–8 [3] *delivered*

8 [r] Jer. 52:14 [s] [2 Kin. 21:13; Is. 34:11; Amos 7:7–9] [4] *determined*

9 [t] Jer. 51:30 [u] Deut. 28:36; 2 Kin. 24:15; 25:7; Lam. 1:3; 4:20 [v] 2 Chr. 15:3 [w] Ps. 74:9; Mic. 3:6 [5] *Gentiles* [6] Prophetic revelation

10 [x] Job 2:13; Is. 3:26

■ **2:4 like an enemy.** 1:15 note.

poured out His fury. This holy war imagery is classically used of God's judgment on the nations (Ps. 69:24).

bent His bow. Deut. 32:42. The harmful arrows that were meant for God's enemies (Deut. 32:42) are now aimed at His people (Hos. 5:10; Jer. 6:11; 7:20).

■ **2:5 daughter of Judah.** See note on 1:6.

■ **2:6 His tabernacle . . . His place of assembly.** These are references to the temple.

The LORD has caused . . . Sabbaths to be forgotten. 1:4 note. This can be rendered "The LORD has made appointed feasts and Sabbaths forgotten things in Zion," an ironic justice since the people had first forgotten the Sabbaths themselves (Amos 8:5; Jer. 17:19–27).

■ **2:7 His altar . . . His sanctuary.** God's judgment destroys not only the place of His dwelling, but the means of Israel's approach to Him in worship. The shouts of triumphant enemies replace the cry of worshiping assemblies.

■ **2:8 stretched out a line.** This was done as if to survey the city for destruction (Is. 34:11; Amos 7:7, 8).

■ **2:9 Law . . . prophets . . . vision.** Not only are the religious institutions destroyed, but the Lord withholds revelation. The prophetic vision that accompanies preaching of the law has ceased (Jer. 8:8–10; 18:18; 1 Sam. 3:1).

■ **2:10 The elders . . . dust . . . sackcloth . . . Bow their heads.** These are the conventional gestures of mourning (Job 2:12, 13; and Lam. 1:4).

[7] They [y]throw dust on their heads
And [z]gird themselves with sackcloth.
The virgins of Jerusalem
Bow their heads to the ground.

11 [a]My eyes fail with tears,
My [8]heart is troubled;
[b]My [9]bile is poured on the ground
Because of the destruction of the daughter of my people,
Because [c]the children and the infants
Faint in the streets of the city.

12 They say to their mothers,
"Where *is* grain and wine?"
As they swoon like the wounded
In the streets of the city,
As their life is poured out
In their mothers' bosom.

13 How shall I [d]console[1] you?
To what shall I liken you,
O daughter of Jerusalem?
What shall I compare with you, that I may comfort you,
O virgin daughter of Zion?
For your ruin *is* spread wide as the sea;
Who can heal you?

14 Your [e]prophets have seen for you
False and deceptive visions;
They have not [f]uncovered your iniquity,
To bring back your captives,
But have envisioned for you false [g]prophecies and delusions.

15 All who [2]pass by [h]clap *their* hands at you;
They hiss [i]and shake their heads
At the daughter of Jerusalem:
"*Is* this the city that is called
[j]'The perfection of beauty,
The joy of the whole earth'?"

16 [k]All your enemies have opened their mouth against you;
They hiss and gnash *their* teeth.
They say, [l]"We have swallowed *her* up!
Surely this *is* the [m]day we have waited for;
We have found *it,* [n]we have seen *it!*"

17 The LORD has done what He [o]purposed;
He has fulfilled His word

10 [y]Job 2:12; Ezek. 27:30 [z]Is. 15:3; Jon. 3:6–8 [7]A sign of mourning

11 [a]Ps. 6:7; Lam. 3:48 [b]Job 16:13; Ps. 22:14 [c]Lam. 4:4 [8]Lit. *inward parts* [9]Lit. *liver*

13 [d]Lam. 1:12; Dan. 9:12 [1]Or *bear witness to*

14 [e]Jer. 2:8; 23:25–29; 29:8, 9; 37:19; Ezek. 13:2 [f]Is. 58:1; Ezek. 23:36; Mic. 3:8 [g]Jer. 23:33–36; Ezek. 22:25, 28

15 [h]1 Kin. 9:8; Job 27:23; Jer. 18:16; Ezek. 25:6; Nah. 3:19 [i]2 Kin. 19:21; Ps. 44:14 [j][Ps. 48:2; 50:2]; Ezek. 16:14 [2]Lit. *pass by this way*

16 [k]Job 16:9, 10; Ps. 22:13; Lam. 3:46 [l]Ps. 56:2; 124:3; Jer. 51:34 [m]Lam. 1:21; [Obad. 12–15] [n]Ps. 35:21

17 [o]Lev. 26:16

■ **2:11 My eyes fail with tears.** Compare the poet's natural suffering because of the agony of his people with the experiences of Jeremiah (Jer. 4:19), and note the pictures of desolation that accompany the prophet's expressions of anguish (Jer. 4:31).

■ **2:11, 12 children and the infants . . . their mothers.** The prophet is especially moved by the sight of suffering children.

■ **2:13 How shall I console you.** The meaning seems to be, "What can I tell you about suffering, you who have suffered so much?" No ready answers occur to someone who witnesses sorrows like these.

comfort. See note on 1:2.

■ **2:14 deceptive visions.** The thought advances from v. 9; prophets are now said to have prophesied falsely. The complex problem of false prophecy is a recurrent theme of the prophets (Jer. 5:12, 13; 23:9–40; 28). Deut. 18:21, 22 furnishes one criterion by which prophets may be judged true or false.

■ **2:15 perfection of beauty . . . joy of the whole earth.** The beauty of the chosen place is extravagantly expressed (Ps. 50:2; 48:2), but by scoffers who mock the ruin and agony of Jerusalem.

■ **2:16 swallowed her up.** In vv. 2 and 5, God Himself is said to have swallowed up the people. As this verse makes clear, He did this using Judah's enemies for His agents. The verse also shows how the nations proudly attribute their victory over Judah to their own strength.

■ **2:17 fulfilled His word . . . commanded in days of old.** God's

Which He commanded in days of old.
He has thrown down and has not pitied,
And He has caused an enemy to [p]rejoice over you;
He has exalted the [3]horn of your adversaries.

18 Their heart cried out to the Lord,
"O wall of the daughter of Zion,
[q]Let tears run down like a river day and night;
Give yourself no relief;
Give [4]your eyes no rest.

19 "Arise, [r]cry out in the night,
At the beginning of the watches;
[s]Pour out your heart like water before the face of the Lord.
Lift your hands toward Him
For the life of your young children,
Who faint from hunger [t]at the head of every street."

20 "See, O LORD, and consider!
To whom have You done this?
[u]Should the women eat their offspring,
The children [5]they have cuddled?
Should the priest and prophet be slain
In the sanctuary of the Lord?

21 "Young[v] and old lie
On the ground in the streets;
My virgins and my young men
Have fallen by the [w]sword;
You have slain *them* in the day of Your anger,
You have slaughtered *and* not pitied.

22 "You have invited as to a feast day
[x]The terrors that surround me.
In the day of the LORD's anger
There was no refugee or survivor.
[y]Those whom I have borne and brought up
My enemies have [z]destroyed."

The Prophet's Anguish and Hope

3 I *am* the man *who* has seen affliction by the rod of His wrath.
2 He has led me and made *me* walk

17 [p]Ps. 38:16 [3]Strength

18 [q]Jer. 14:17; Lam. 1:16 [4]Lit. *the daughter of your eye*

19 [r]Ps. 119:147 [s]1 Sam. 1:15; Ps. 42:4; 62:8 [t]Is. 51:20

20 [u]Lev. 26:29; Deut. 28:53; Jer. 19:9; Lam. 4:10; Ezek. 5:10 [5]Vg. *a span long*

21 [v]2 Chr. 36:17; Jer. 6:11 [w]Jer. 18:21

22 [x]Ps. 31:13; Is. 24:17; Jer. 6:25 [y]Hos. 9:12 [z]Jer. 16:2–4; 44:7

purposes of judgment were declared in the curses of the covenant (Lev. 26:23–39; Deut. 28:15–68); the present fate of Judah has happened in accordance with God's known purposes.

horn. See note on v. 3.

■ **2:18 O wall.** There is irony in this futile cry to the city wall, a symbol of the nation's imagined strength.

day and night. Cf. Deut. 28:67.

■ **2:19 children.** See note on v. 12.

■ **2:20 Should the women . . . offspring.** The theme of the suffering of innocent children reaches the height of pathos (Jer. 19:9). Its power as an appeal to God is enhanced by the knowledge that God knows motherly affection (Is. 66:13). As extreme in its own way is the outrage of sacrilege: the Lord's anointed ones are killed in His sanctuary.

priest and prophet. For the sins of priests and prophets, see 4:13.

■ **2:21 Young and old.** The horror of death in youth is contrasted with the blessing of attaining a good age (Job 42:17).

■ **2:22 a feast day . . . terrors.** This contrast between summoning to the joy of a feast and summoning to disaster is starkly powerful.

terrors. See Jer. 6:25; 20:10.

day of the LORD's anger. The poem ends where it began, without alleviation of the dark picture.

■ **3:1–66** As an individual expresses the grief of the community, hope and consolation are sustained by a knowledge of God's compassionate love.

■ **3:1 I am the man.** This chapter is an acrostic with three verses for each letter of the Hebrew alphabet. On the author's possible identity as Jeremiah, and the acrostic form in Hebrew poetry, see the Introduction, and further below. For portrayals of the Lord Himself as the One who has afflicted the speaker, see Job 19:21; Ps. 88:7, 15; Jer. 15:17, 18. In this poem an individual expresses the grief of his community (vv. 22, 40–47).

■ **3:2 In darkness and not in light.** Contrast Is. 9:2. Darkness is a

CHAPTER 3

In darkness and not *in* light.
3 Surely He has turned His hand against me
Time and time again throughout the day.

4 He has aged [a]my flesh and my skin,
And [b]broken my bones.
5 He has besieged me
And surrounded *me* with bitterness and [1]woe.
6 [c]He has set me in dark places
Like the dead of long ago.

7 [d]He has hedged me in so that I cannot get out;
He has made my chain heavy.
8 Even [e]when I cry and shout,
He shuts out my prayer.
9 He has blocked my ways with hewn stone;
He has made my paths crooked.

10 [f]He *has been* to me a bear lying in wait,
Like a lion in [2]ambush.
11 He has turned aside my ways and [g]torn me in pieces;
He has made me desolate.
12 He has bent His bow
And [h]set me up as a target for the arrow.

13 He has caused [i]the [3]arrows of His quiver
To pierce my [4]loins.
14 I have become the [j]ridicule of all my people—
[k]Their taunting song all the day.
15 [l]He has filled me with bitterness,
He has made me drink wormwood.

16 He has also broken my teeth [m]with gravel,
And [5]covered me with ashes.
17 You have moved my soul far from peace;
I have forgotten [6]prosperity.
18 [n]And I said, "My strength and my hope
Have perished from the LORD."

19 Remember my affliction and roaming,
[o]The wormwood and the [7]gall.
20 My soul still remembers
And [8]sinks within me.
21 This I recall to my mind,
Therefore I have [p]hope.

4 [a]Job 16:8 [b]Ps. 51:8; Is. 38:13
5 [1]*hardship* or *weariness*
6 [c][Ps. 88:5, 6; 143:3]
7 [d]Job 3:23; 19:8; Hos. 2:6
8 [e]Job 30:20; Ps. 22:2
10 [f]Is. 38:13 [2]Lit. *secret places*
11 [g]Job 16:12, 13; Jer. 15:3; Hos. 6:1
12 [h]Job 7:20; 16:12; Ps. 38:2
13 [i]Job 6:4 [3]Lit. *sons of* [4]Lit. *kidneys*
14 [j]Ps. 22:6, 7; 123:4; Jer. 20:7 [k]Job 30:9; Ps. 69:12; Lam. 3:63
15 [l]Jer. 9:15
16 [m][Prov. 20:17] [5]Lit. *bent me down in*
17 [6]Lit. *good*
18 [n]Ps. 31:22
19 [o]Jer. 9:15; Lam. 3:5, 15 [7]*bitterness*
20 [8]Lit. *bowed down*
21 [p]Ps. 130:7

metaphor for the distress experienced as the absence of God; light stands for the opposite: salvation and blessing. The day of the Lord is described in these terms at Amos 5:18.

■ **3:4 skin . . . bones.** These are pictures of physical distress, perhaps due to age or illness (Job 13:28; Is. 38:13).

■ **3:5 bitterness and woe.** Emotional and physical effects of distress go hand in hand.

■ **3:6 the dead of long ago.** The distresses and diseases of life diminish its fullness, culminating in death. In his weakened condition, the prophet considers himself to have little more participation in life than if he were actually dead. From the perspective of the living, the dead exist not at all, or as shadows (Prov. 2:18; 9:18 and notes). For other pictures of death in the Old Testament, see Job 3:11–19; Ps. 6:5; 115:17; Is. 14:18, 19. Against this background the Old Testament is eloquent in its testimony to resurrection beyond the grave (Job 19:25–27; Ps. 16:9–11; 49:15; 73:24).

■ **3:8 shuts out my prayer.** For unheard prayer see Ps. 10:1; 13:1; 22:1, 2.

■ **3:10–12 a bear . . . the arrow.** Some of the hazards that could actually overtake the traveler are vivid ways of expressing terror and distress.

■ **3:14 the ridicule.** See Jer. 20:7.

■ **3:17 peace . . . prosperity.** These conditions, the sum of blessing, are totally absent.

■ **3:18 My strength . . . LORD.** The expression of hopelessness in the poem reaches its climax here.

■ **3:20 remembers.** The poet's experience is a symbol of the people's; see the language in 1:7.

■ **3:21 This I recall to my mind.** Memory that once discouraged now encourages (Ps. 77:3–9, 10–15). The memory of God's devotion to His people brings hope out of hopelessness.

22 [q]*Through* the LORD's mercies we are not consumed,
Because His compassions [r]fail not.
23 *They are* new [s]every morning;
Great *is* Your faithfulness.
24 "The LORD *is* my [t]portion," says my soul,
"Therefore I [u]hope in Him!"

25 The LORD *is* good to those who [v]wait for Him,
To the soul *who* seeks Him.
26 *It is* good that *one* should [w]hope [x]and wait quietly
For the salvation of the LORD.
27 [y]*It is* good for a man to bear
The yoke in his youth.

28 [z]Let him sit alone and keep silent,
Because *God* has laid *it* on him;
29 [a]Let him put his mouth in the dust—
There may yet be hope.
30 [b]Let him give *his* cheek to the one who strikes him,
And be full of reproach.

31 [c]For the Lord will not cast off forever.
32 Though He causes grief,
Yet He will show compassion
According to the multitude of His mercies.
33 For [d]He does not afflict [g]willingly,
Nor grieve the children of men.

34 To crush under one's feet
All the prisoners of the earth,
35 To turn aside the justice *due* a man
Before the face of the Most High,
36 Or subvert a man in his cause—
[e]The Lord does not approve.

37 Who *is* he [f]*who* speaks and it comes to pass,
When the Lord has not commanded *it?*

22 [q][Mal. 3:6] [r]Ps. 78:38; [Jer. 3:12; 30:11]
23 [s]Is. 33:2; Zeph. 3:5
24 [t]Ps. 16:5; 73:26; 119:57; Jer. 10:16 [u]Jer. 17:17; Mic. 7:7
25 [v]Ps. 130:6; Is. 30:18
26 [w][Rom. 4:16–18] [x]Ex. 14:13; Ps. 37:7; Is. 7:4
27 [y]Ps. 94:12
28 [z]Jer. 15:17
29 [a]Job 42:6
30 [b]Job 16:10; Is. 50:6; [Matt. 5:39; 26:67]; Mark 14:65; Luke 22:63
31 [c]Ps. 77:7; 94:14; [Is. 54:7–10]
33 [d][Ps. 119:67, 71, 75; Is. 28:21; Ezek. 33:11; Heb. 12:10] [g]Lit. *from His heart*
36 [e][Jer. 22:3; Hab. 1:13]
37 [f][Ps. 33:9–11]

■ **3:22–24** The climactic point of the poem and the book is reached here. The lament form often has turning points where the experience of rejection by God turns unexpectedly to confidence, based on a knowledge of His character and of His past mercies. See the confessions of trust and hope in Ps. 22.

■ **3:22, 23** See "God Is Love: Divine Goodness and Faithfulness" at Ps. 136:1.

■ **3:22 mercies.** On the Hebrew word (*hesed*) see Ps. 36:5 note. The plural form, used here, recalls many acts or perhaps the riches of divine love.

compassions. God's covenant devotion is always joined with His compassion, a term of profound emotion. We are not consumed because God's compassion is not consumed. God's wrath toward His people will end because His compassion cannot end (4:22; Hos. 11:8).

■ **3:23 every morning.** God's love will bring the morning of salvation (Ps. 90:14; Mal. 4:2; Luke 1:78).

faithfulness. The unqualified reliability of God makes Him worthy of faith (Hab. 2:4).

■ **3:24 my portion.** This phrase recalls the territorial allocations to the Israelite tribes. The priests and Levites, who were landless, had the Lord as their portion (Num. 18:20; cf. Ps. 73:26).

■ **3:25 The LORD . . . seeks Him.** God is always good to those who seek, hope, and wait for Him (cf. 1 Chr. 28:9). The threefold "good" in this context (cf. vv. 26, 27) focuses on God's goodness.

■ **3:27 in his youth.** The reference is apparently to Jeremiah's suffering in early and middle life, possibly signifying a relief from it in old age. Perhaps the community, like an individual, should hope for the yoke to be lifted with the passage of time.

■ **3:28–30 Let him . . . reproach.** The prophet exhorts the afflicted to bear present suffering, in the light of the affirmation in the next verses.

sit alone. Cf. 1:1.

■ **3:30 Let him give his cheek.** The humiliation of Israel foreshadows Christ's humiliation (Is. 50:6; Matt. 26:67).

■ **3:31–33** Since God is compassionate, the present experience of His wrath must be short-lived (Ps. 30:5; Is. 54:7; Hos. 6:1). Again, compassion is joined to God's unfailing love (Hebrew *hesed*, 3:22). God does not afflict men "willingly," that is, "cheerfully," or "from His heart" (text note) even in judgment.

■ **3:34–36** The implication of these verses is that God cannot approve such things (Job 8:3). Of course, God has approved these very things, since He has brought them to pass. This is the problem of judgment and affliction that the poet faces.

■ **3:37, 38** All that happens is by God's word (Gen. 1:3), calamity as well as good (Amos 3:6).

38 [g]Is. it not from the mouth of the Most High
That [g]woe and well-being proceed?
39 [h]Why should a living man [1]complain,
[i]A man for the punishment of his sins?

40 Let us search out and examine our ways,
And turn back to the LORD;
41 [j]Let us lift our hearts and hands
To God in heaven.
42 [k]We have transgressed and rebelled;
You have not pardoned.

43 You have covered *Yourself* with anger
And pursued us;
You have slain *and* not pitied.
44 You have covered Yourself with a cloud,
That prayer should not pass through.
45 You have made us an [l]offscouring and refuse
In the midst of the peoples.

46 [m]All our enemies
Have opened their mouths against us.
47 [n]Fear and a snare have come upon us,
[o]Desolation and destruction.
48 [p]My eyes overflow with rivers of water
For the destruction of the daughter of my people.

49 [q]My eyes flow and do not cease,
Without interruption,
50 Till the LORD from heaven
[r]Looks down and sees.
51 My eyes bring suffering to my soul
Because of all the daughters of my city.

52 My enemies [s]without cause
Hunted me down like a bird.
53 They [2]silenced my life [t]in the pit
And [u]threw [3]stones at me.
54 [v]The waters flowed over my head;
[w]I said, "I am cut off!"

55 [x]I called on Your name, O LORD,
From the lowest [y]pit.

38 [g]Job 2:10; [Is. 45:7]; Jer. 32:42; Amos 3:6; [James 3:10, 11]
39 [h]Prov. 19:3 [i]Jer. 30:15; Mic. 7:9; [Heb. 12:5, 6] [1]Or *murmur*
41 [j]Ps. 86:4
42 [k]Neh. 9:26; Jer. 14:20; Dan. 9:5
45 [l]1 Cor. 4:13
46 [m]Job 30:9, 10; Ps. 22:6–8; Lam. 2:16
47 [n]Is. 24:17, 18; Jer. 48:43, 44 [o]Is. 51:19
48 [p]Jer. 4:19; 14:17; Lam. 2:11
49 [q]Ps. 77:2; Jer. 14:17
50 [r]Ps. 80:14; Is. 63:15; Lam. 5:1
52 [s]Ps. 35:7, 19
53 [t]Jer. 37:16 [u]Dan. 6:17 [2]LXX *put to death* [3]Lit. *a stone on*
54 [v]Ps. 69:2; Jon. 2:3–5 [w]Is. 38:10
55 [x]Ps. 130:1; Jon. 2:2 [y]Jer. 38:6–13

■ **3:39** Since all things take place by the word of the Lord, no living man can complain when God brings calamity as punishment for sin.

the punishment of his sins. The sin of the people is an important part of the prophet's answer to the problem of judgment and affliction (dreadful though God's judgment is, 2:20–22). The phrase in Hebrew implies that sin and consequent punishment belong inescapably together.

■ **3:40–47** Notice that the speaker is plural throughout this section.

■ **3:40–42 Let us search out . . . transgressed.** This is a call to repentance, acknowledging sin. The impulse to confess sins seems to give way soon to renewed lamentation, following the statement, "You have not pardoned" (v. 42). The confession could have been superficial or hypocritical. In any case the penalties were not lifted.

■ **3:43–45 You have covered . . . midst of the peoples.** Here the prophet parodies the actions of God at the Exodus. Then God's anger helped Israel; it was their enemies who were slain without pity; and the cloud was a sign of favor. Israel was precious among the nations, not "an offscouring and refuse."

■ **3:48–66** The speech now reverts to the singular again.

rivers of water. There are strong echoes of Jeremiah in this close association between the people's grief and the poet's grief. A link is suggested between the suffering of the people and of the poet.

■ **3:49 My eyes flow.** These words reflect familiar lament language (Ps. 6:6; 42:3; Jer. 9:1; 18).

■ **3:52 enemies without cause.** Ps. 35:19; John 15:25.

■ **3:53 in the pit.** Ps. 28:1; 88:6. The life of Jeremiah may be in view again in these verses (Jer. 38:6).

■ **3:55 I called . . . pit.** See Ps. 16:10, 11; 30:1; and the experience of Jonah (Jon. 2:2–7). Christ's suffering as the righteous Servant of the Lord brings this recurring theme of the suffering prophets and their rescue by the Lord to its highest fulfillment.

56 [z]You have heard my voice:
"Do not hide Your ear
From my sighing, from my cry for help."
57 You [a]drew near on the day I called on You,
And said, [b]"Do not fear!"

58 O Lord, You have [c]pleaded the case for my soul;
[d]You have redeemed my life.
59 O LORD, You have seen [4]*how* I am wronged;
[e]Judge my case.
60 You have seen all their vengeance,
All their [f]schemes against me.

61 You have heard their reproach, O LORD,
All their schemes against me,
62 The lips of my enemies
And their whispering against me all the day.
63 Look at their [g]sitting down and their rising up;
I *am* their taunting song.

64 [h]Repay them, O LORD,
According to the work of their hands.
65 Give them [5]a veiled heart;
Your curse *be* upon them!
66 In Your anger,
Pursue and destroy them
[i]From under the heavens of the [j]LORD.

The Degradation of Zion

4 How the gold has become dim!
How changed the fine gold!
The stones of the sanctuary are [1]scattered
At the head of every street.

2 The precious sons of Zion,
[2]Valuable as fine gold,
How they are [3]regarded [a]as clay pots,
The work of the hands of the potter!

3 Even the jackals present their breasts
To nurse their young;
But the daughter of my people *is* cruel,
[b]Like ostriches in the wilderness.

4 The tongue of the infant clings
To the roof of its mouth for thirst;

56 [z]Ps. 3:4

57 [a]James 4:8 [b]Is. 41:10, 14; Dan. 10:12

58 [c]Ps. 35:1; Jer. 51:36 [d]Ps. 71:23

59 [e]Ps. 9:4 [4]Lit. *my wrong*

60 [f]Jer. 11:19

63 [g]Ps. 139:2

64 [h]Ps. 28:4; Jer. 11:20; 2 Tim. 4:14

65 [5]A Jewish tradition *sorrow of*

66 [i]Deut. 25:19; Jer. 10:11 [j]Ps. 8:3

CHAPTER 4

1 [1]Lit. *poured out*

2 [a]Is. 30:14; Jer. 19:11; [2 Cor. 4:7] [2]Lit. *Weighed against* [3]*reckoned*

3 [b]Job 39:14–17

■ **3:56 You have heard my voice.** The turning point of the lament arrives when the poet is reassured that the Lord has heard his prayer (Ps. 6:8–10).

■ **3:57 Do not fear.** This is a common exhortation in Isaiah (e.g., Is. 41:10; cf. Mark 6:50).

■ **3:58–66** This section takes up the biblical theme of innocent, vicarious suffering that reaches its consummation in Christ's death for those who brought it upon Him.

■ **3:58–60 the case . . . redeemed my life . . . my case.** In Jer. 50:34 the Lord is the Redeemer of Judah and pleads their case. Here the Lord pleads against them, because they have turned against His prophet.

■ **3:64–66 Repay them.** The note of revenge is present in Jer. 12:1, as in Ps. 77:6, 7.

■ **4:1–22** This chapter, containing the most vivid portrayal of Judah's agonies, laments Zion's punishment, but gives assurances that the punishment will cease.

■ **4:1 the gold . . . The stones of the sanctuary.** The gold and the rich furnishings of Solomon's temple were laid waste by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kin. 25:9).

■ **4:2 The precious sons . . . fine gold.** The idea of gold is quickly transferred to the people themselves, more valuable than the temple's riches. As God's "special treasure" (Ex. 19:5) they had been exceedingly precious; now they are the most common clay.

■ **4:3 Even the jackals.** Is. 1:2, 3.

ostriches. These birds were a proverbial figure for the callousness of parents towards their children (Job 39:16). This indifference is a theme of the chapter (v. 10), developed from 2:20.

4 [c]Ps. 22:15
5 [d]Job 24:8
6 [e]Ezek. 16:48 [f]Gen. 19:25; Jer. 20:16
7 [4]Or *nobles* [5]Or *purer* [6]Lit. *polishing*
8 [g]Job 19:20; Ps. 102:5
9 [h]Lev. 26:39; Ezek. 24:23 [i]Jer. 16:4
10 [j]Lev. 26:29; Deut. 28:57; 2 Kin. 6:29; Jer. 19:9; Lam. 2:20; Ezek. 5:10 [k]Is. 49:15 [l]Deut. 28:57 [7]*boiled*
11 [m]Jer. 7:20; Lam. 2:17; Ezek. 22:31 [n]Deut. 32:22; Jer. 21:14
12 [o]Jer. 21:13
13 [p]Jer. 5:31; Ezek. 22:26, 28; Zeph. 3:4

[c]The young children ask for bread,
But no one breaks *it* for them.

5 Those who ate delicacies
Are desolate in the streets;
Those who were brought up in scarlet
[d]Embrace ash heaps.

6 The punishment of the iniquity of the daughter of my people
Is greater than the punishment of the [e]sin of Sodom,
Which was [f]overthrown in a moment,
With no hand to help her!

7 Her [4]Nazirites were [5]brighter than snow
And whiter than milk;
They were more ruddy in body than rubies,
Like sapphire in their [6]appearance.

8 *Now* their appearance is blacker than soot;
They go unrecognized in the streets;
[g]Their skin clings to their bones,
It has become as dry as wood.

9 *Those* slain by the sword are better off
Than *those* who die of hunger;
For these [h]pine away,
Stricken *for lack* of the fruits of the [i]field.

10 The hands of the [j]compassionate women
Have [7]cooked their [k]own children;
They became [l]food for them
In the destruction of the daughter of my people.

11 The LORD has fulfilled His fury,
[m]He has poured out His fierce anger.
[n]He kindled a fire in Zion,
And it has devoured its foundations.

12 The kings of the earth,
And all inhabitants of the world,
Would not have believed
That the adversary and the enemy
Could [o]enter the gates of Jerusalem—

13 [p]Because of the sins of her prophets
And the iniquities of her priests,

■ **4:5 delicacies.** The picture of someone rich and delicately bred falling suddenly into dire want and danger is echoed often in the prophets (Amos 4:1–3; 6:1; Jer. 6:2).

■ **4:6 punishment.** The Hebrew word can be translated "punishment" or "iniquity" according to the context, because the two ideas are so intimately linked. The connection is strong in this chapter, where the intense suffering of Judah is linked repeatedly to her unnatural sin.

Sodom. The prophets often use Sodom as an archetype of divine judgment on sin (Deut. 29:23; Is. 1:10; Jer. 23:14; Ezek. 16:46; Hos. 11:8; Amos 4:11; Luke 17:28–30). The comparison with Sodom holds good both for the sins of the city and the dreadful judgment that fell upon it.

■ **4:7 Nazirites.** Num. 6:1–21, note.

whiter . . . ruddy. These are colors often associated with the human body.

■ **4:8 Now.** Ironically, in the prevailing difficulties, no one is marked out as special; all distinctions have been obliterated.

■ **4:9 Those slain . . . better off.** The misery of the people is desperate and wretched. Death by famine is not a summary, instant judgment; in its lingering it exposes the horrors of God's judgment to a dreadful degree (Deut. 28:54–57).

■ **4:10 women . . . children.** See v. 3.

■ **4:11 fury.** The focus returns to God's wrath; there is an explanation even for these ills in Judah's sin.

■ **4:12 The kings of the earth.** Possibly this phrase refers to the assumed impregnability of Zion, reinforced by the dramatic failure of the Assyrians to take the city following Sennacherib's conquest of the rest of Judah in 701 B.C. (2 Kin. 18:13—19:37).

■ **4:13 prophets . . . priests.** See note on 2:20 and Jer. 5:30, 31; Mic. 3:9–12.

[q]Who shed in her midst
The blood of the just.

14 They wandered blind in the streets;
[r]They have defiled themselves with blood,
[s]So that no one would touch their garments.

15 They cried out to them,
"Go away, [t]unclean!
Go away, go away,
Do not touch us!"
When they fled and wandered,
Those among the nations said,
"They shall no longer dwell *here.*"

16 The [s]face of the LORD scattered them;
He no longer regards them.
[u]*The people* do not respect the priests
Nor show favor to the elders.

17 Still [v]our eyes failed us,
Watching vainly for our help;
In our watching we watched
For a nation *that* could not save *us.*

18 [w]They [g]tracked our steps
So that we could not walk in our streets.
[x]Our end was near;
Our days were over,
For our end had come.

19 Our pursuers were [y]swifter
Than the eagles of the heavens.
They pursued us on the mountains
And lay in wait for us in the wilderness.

20 The [z]breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the LORD,
[a]Was caught in their pits,
Of whom we said, "Under his shadow
We shall live among the nations."

21 Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of [b]Edom,
You who dwell in the land of Uz!
[c]The cup shall also pass over to you
And you shall become drunk and make yourself naked.

13 [q]Jer. 2:30; 26:8, 9; Matt. 23:31

14 [r]Jer. 2:34 [s]Num. 19:16

15 [t]Lev. 13:45, 46

16 [u]Lam. 5:12 [s]Tg. *anger*

17 [v]2 Kin. 24:7

18 [w]2 Kin. 25:4 [x]Ezek. 7:2, 3, 6; Amos 8:2 [g]Lit. *hunted*

19 [y]Deut. 28:49

20 [z]Gen. 2:7 [a]Jer. 52:9; Ezek. 12:13

21 [b]Ps. 83:3–6 [c]Jer. 25:15; Obad. 10

■ **4:14 wandered blind in the streets.** Deut. 28:28, 29.

defiled themselves with blood. God, in His wrath, had made Zion's priests and prophets ritually unclean. Elsewhere (Is. 59:3) the phrase refers to blood spilled by the guilty. Ironically, the blood that defiles these blind wanderers is their own.

■ **4:15 unclean.** Lev. 13:45.

When they fled. The curse of Deut. 28:65–66 is fulfilled.

■ **4:17 a nation.** Israel and Judah characteristically sought help in political alliances rather than in the Lord (Is. 7; 30:1–5; Jer. 24).

■ **4:19 eagles.** Jer. 4:13.

■ **4:20 the anointed of the LORD.** This is a reference to hope in the Davidic king, especially following Josiah's reform (2 Kin. 22; 23). This reform, though religious, had also asserted Judah's independence and seemed to confirm the ancient promise to David (2 Sam. 7). The last king of Judah, deported by Nebuchadnezzar, was Zedekiah (2 Kin. 25:7). Yet Jeremiah promised final salvation through the righteous Branch of David, the Messiah (Jer. 23:5–8).

■ **4:21, 22 O daughter of Edom.** This is one of Israel's historic enemies. Her enmity was the more scandalous because of an ancient affinity of blood; Edom was another name for Jacob's brother, Esau (Gen. 25:30). But the nation of Edom will also fall in its turn (Obad. and Jer. 49:7–22).

The punishment of your iniquity is accomplished. That is, "Your guilt will end." Because of God's mercy and compassion the guilt of His people will be ended, and they, in contrast to Edom, will be delivered. See Is. 40:2 and Jer. 49:7–22.

22 [d]The *punishment of* your iniquity [f]is accomplished,
O daughter of Zion;
He will no longer send you into captivity.
[e]He will punish your iniquity,
O daughter of Edom;
He will uncover your sins!

A Prayer for Restoration

5 Remember, [a]O LORD, what has come upon us;
Look, and behold [b]our reproach!
2 [c]Our inheritance has been turned over to aliens,
And our houses to foreigners.
3 We have become orphans and waifs,
Our mothers *are* like [d]widows.

4 We pay for the water we drink,
And our wood comes at a price.
5 [e]*They* pursue at our [f]heels;
We labor *and* have no rest.
6 [f]We have given our hand [g]*to* the Egyptians
And the [h]Assyrians, to be satisfied with bread.

7 [i]Our fathers sinned *and are* no more,
But we bear their iniquities.
8 Servants rule over us;
There is none to deliver *us* from their hand.
9 We get our bread *at the risk* of our lives,
Because of the sword in the wilderness.

10 Our skin is hot as an oven,
Because of the fever of famine.
11 They [j]ravished the women in Zion,
The maidens in the cities of Judah.
12 Princes were hung up by their hands,
And elders were not respected.
13 Young men [k]ground at the millstones;
Boys staggered under *loads of* wood.

22 [d]Is. 40:2; Jer. 33:7, 8] [e]Ps. 137:7 [f]*has been completed*

CHAPTER 5

1 [a]Ps. 89:50 [b]Ps. 79:4; Lam. 2:15
2 [c]Ps. 79:1
3 [d]Ex. 22:24; Jer. 15:8; 18:21
5 [e]Deut. 28:48; Jer. 28:14 [f]Lit. *necks*
6 [f]Gen. 24:2 [g]Hos. 9:3; 12:1 [h]Jer. 2:18; Hos. 5:13
7 [i]Jer. 31:29
11 [j]Is. 13:16; Zech. 14:2
13 [k]Judg. 16:21

■ **5:1–22** Rehearsing the continuing effects of Zion's degradation, the poet makes a final plea for restoration.

■ **5:1 Remember . . . us.** This is a typical opening for a communal lament. Zion no longer appears in the immediate throes of siege and plunder (as in ch. 4), but at a later stage of affliction, when the sudden violation of the land has given way to harsh and humiliating oppression.

■ **5:2 Our inheritance.** The land as a whole is Israel's inheritance from God (Deut. 4:21; 12:9), while the territory of Judah is given specifically to the tribe of that name (Josh. 15:20–63).

aliens . . . foreigners. God had given the land to Israel, and had even directed them to expel the foreigners. Now this was turned upside down.

■ **5:3 orphans . . . widows.** Their position was precarious and dependent. Israel was commanded to show care for them, because their condition denied them normal access to the land's goods (Deut. 14:28, 29).

■ **5:4 We pay for the water.** This necessity is an ironic reversal of Deut. 6:10, 11, and especially Josh. 9:21–23.

■ **5:5 no rest.** This condition is another reversal of a blessing promised in Deuteronomy (Deut. 12:9; Lam. 1:3).

■ **5:6 Egyptians . . . Assyrians.** This kind of submission was not only humiliating but dangerous (2 Kin. 18:14).

■ **5:7 Our fathers sinned . . . we bear their iniquities.** A similar description of solidarity between generations is found in Ex. 20:5 and in the books of 1 and 2 Kings, with their records of guilt accumulated over the generations. Passages such as Ezek. 18 (notes; Jer. 31:29, 30) address those who questioned the justice of being judged for sins they did not commit. Ezekiel answers that those who share in their father's judgment have shared in their father's sins: each generation bears the guilt of its own sins, not of those of previous generations only.

■ **5:8 Servants.** When Babylonian servants command Israel there has been an ironic distortion of the true relationships between God, Israel, and the nations. Israel is in truth a nation freed from slavery (Deut. 15:12–18); but those who do not serve the true God must be in bondage. See 1:1 and note.

■ **5:9 sword in the wilderness.** This possibly speaks of desert robbers who took advantage of the weakened community.

■ **5:11–13** Here are pictures of shame.

maidens. The loss of virginity outside marriage brought shame on a woman and her family, and possibly additional serious consequences (Deut. 22:13–21).

hung up. This was a form of torture or of execution by exposure.

ground at the millstones. This was degrading toil for a young man (Judg. 16:21).

14 The elders have ceased *gathering at* the gate,
And the young men from their [l]music.

15 The joy of our heart has ceased;
Our dance has turned into [m]mourning.
16 [n]The crown has fallen *from* our head.
Woe to us, for we have sinned!
17 Because of this our heart is faint;
[o]Because of these *things* our eyes grow dim;
18 Because of Mount Zion which is [p]desolate,
With foxes walking about on it.

19 You, O LORD, [q]remain forever;
[r]Your throne from generation to generation.
20 [s]Why do You forget us forever,
And forsake us for so long a time?
21 [t]Turn us back to You, O LORD, and we will be [2]restored;
Renew our days as of old,
22 Unless You have utterly rejected us,
And are very angry with us!

14 [l]Is. 24:8; Jer. 7:34
15 [m]Jer. 25:10; Amos 8:10
16 [n]Job 19:9; Ps. 89:39; Jer. 13:18
17 [o]Ps. 6:7
18 [p]Is. 27:10
19 [q]Ps. 9:7; Hab. 1:12 [r]Ps. 45:6
20 [s]Ps. 13:1; 44:24
21 [t]Ps. 80:3, 7, 19; Jer. 31:18
[2]*returned*

■ **5:14** This verse conveys something of the state of normal life in Judah by describing what has ceased. The "gate," which had legal and social functions, is now deserted. The light-hearted pleasures of the "young men" have been replaced by the harsh life depicted in the preceding verses.

■ **5:16 The crown.** Some take this to refer to Jerusalem in particular (Lam. 1:1; 2:15; 5:18). Probably it represents the glory of Israel and Judah among the nations (Ex. 19:6).

Woe . . . sinned. See note on v. 7.

■ **5:18 Mount Zion . . . desolate.** The poet comes full circle from 1:1, resuming the theme of the scandal of the chosen city of God lying destroyed and abandoned.

■ **5:19 You, O LORD, remain forever.** Though the "royalty" of the people (v. 16) is no more, that of the Lord remains forever.

■ **5:20 Why.** The note of lament is struck again. There is no easy exit from the pain that has been expressed; but the affirmation of God's sovereignty is made in the midst of that pain (v. 19). The logic of vv. 19, 20 is paralleled in Ps. 89, vv. 1–37 praising God's sovereignty and vv. 38–51 asking "How long" (Ps. 89:46).

■ **5:21 Turn us back . . . restored.** These two words are from the same Hebrew verb. Its use is ambiguous, since the restoration could be either a physical return of exiles to the land or a return that is moral and religious (repentance). The ambiguity is necessary, because the prophets never envisage a restoration to the land that is separate from repentance towards God. For an exact parallel of this thought, see Jer. 31:18.

■ **5:22 Unless.** The poet declines to finish the lament on a high note. Nevertheless, the final note is not one of despair but of petition. The five poems in the book come to us out of the acute grief of the judgment experienced, but they also point to the compassion of God as grounds for future deliverance.

The Road to Renewal (5:21)

Sin → Suffering (1:8)
Sorrow → Repentance (1:20)
Prayer → Hope (3:19–24)
Faith → Restoration (5:21)

The Book of

EZEKIEL

Author We have no information about the prophet Ezekiel beyond what is known from the book bearing his name. Nebuchadnezzar had captured Jerusalem in 597 B.C. and carried away King Jehoiachin, the royal family, and the leading citizens and craftsmen (2 Kin. 24:14). Ezekiel was among this first group of deportees. His wife died during the captivity shortly before Jerusalem was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. (24:15–18). If the prophet was thirty years old when he began his prophetic ministry (1:1), and this date corresponds to the fifth year of the exile of Jehoiachin (1:2, 3), Ezekiel was about twenty-six when he was carried into exile. The last date recorded in the book (April 26, 571 B.C., 29:17) shows that Ezekiel's ministry spanned at least twenty-three years, until he was about fifty. The circumstances of his death are not known.

Ezekiel was a priest (1:3). Priests ordinarily began their temple service at age thirty. However, in the year he would have begun his temple service Ezekiel was living in Babylon, seven hundred miles from Jerusalem. It was at this significant age in his life that God called Ezekiel to be a prophet. His prophetic endowment was recognized by the leaders among the exiles (8:1; 20:1).

"Ezekiel" means "God makes strong, hardens" (see note on 3:8). God addresses Ezekiel many times by the phrase "Son of man," meaning "person, human being." The phrase in this book emphasizes human frailty and insignificance as compared with the transcendence of God (contrast its use as a messianic title in Dan. 7:13; Matt. 26:64; Mark 14:62; Rev. 14:14).

Date and Occasion Ezekiel witnessed much of the decline and fall of the Assyrian Empire. In place of the Assyrians the armies of Babylon under King Nebuchadnezzar were emerging as the dominant power in the ancient Near East. The city of Babylon was located in the region of Chaldea, and so the names "Chaldeans" and "Babylonians" are used interchangeably by biblical writers. The Babylonians and the armies of Pharaoh Necho of Egypt periodically fought over the territory formerly subject to the Assyrians along the coast of Syria and Israel; the kings of Judah in Jerusalem were caught in the middle.

Jehoiakim was placed on the throne of Jerusalem by Pharaoh Necho (2 Kin. 23:34) in 609 B.C. After the Egyptians were defeated by the Babylonians at Carchemish in 605 B.C., Jehoiakim switched his allegiance and became a vassal of Nebuchadnezzar. He remained a Babylonian vassal for three years, and then switched his allegiance back to Egypt (2 Kin. 24:1). Jehoiakim died in the same month Nebuchadnezzar set out on an expedition to punish him. He was succeeded by his son Jehoiachin, who was left to face Nebuchadnezzar's wrath. After a brief siege, Jehoiachin was taken into captivity with much of the population of Jerusalem, including Ezekiel, in 597 B.C. (2 Kin. 24:8–12). Ezekiel settled with a colony of Jewish captives, possibly near Tel Abib, on "the River Chebar" (1:1), a canal flowing into the Euphrates southeast of Babylon.

Nebuchadnezzar installed Zedekiah, Jehoiachin's uncle, as ruler of Judah. He ruled until the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. Though in this way Zedekiah became the last king of Judah, Jehoiachin was considered the last legitimate ruler from the Davidic line. Dates in the Book of Ezekiel are all in terms of the years of Jehoiachin's exile. The reign of Zedekiah was characterized by a similar vacillation between Egypt and Babylon (17:15–19).

The exiles and many of those remaining in Jerusalem hoped that the Exile would be short, that those who had been deported would soon be returned to the city, and that Jerusalem would be spared further disaster. There were false prophets who wrongly encouraged this belief. Since the Lord had chosen Jerusalem as His dwelling and had Himself defended the city in the past, people believed Jerusalem was inviolable. Ezekiel had to warn the exiles that a worse fate was yet in store for Jerusalem.

No other prophetic book contains as many chronological notices. Ezekiel was conscious of the relevance of his message to the immediate historical situation. The chronology for the latter half of the first millennium B.C. (including the time of Ezekiel) is known from chronological records in the Bible and other documents in a variety of languages from the ancient Near East. Astronomical observations recorded by ancient scribes enable us to correlate the ancient and modern calendars with a high degree of confidence. The Book of Ezekiel contains indications of the date at more than a dozen places (1:1, 2; 8:1; 20:1; 24:1, etc.). These dates fall between 593 and 573 B.C.

Characteristics and Themes The Book of Ezekiel may be divided into three parts. In the first two, Ezekiel announces judgment on Jerusalem (1—24) and foreign nations (25—32). The first years of Ezekiel's ministry were concerned with the immediate prospects of Jerusalem. It is only after a messenger arrived reporting the destruction of Jerusalem (33:21, 22) that Ezekiel's preaching became dominated by the promises of restoration and mercy for the future (33—48). This

three-part structure (judgment against Israel, judgment against foreign nations, grace and mercy for Israel) can be found also in Isaiah and Zephaniah.

Ezekiel is the only prophetic book that is entirely autobiographical, written in the first person from the vantage point of the prophet himself. The work also contains a larger number of symbolic actions than any other prophetic book (3:22–26; 4:1–14; 5:1–4; 12:10–20; 21:6, 7, 18–24; 24:15–24; 37:15–28). See note on 4:1–3. Ezekiel identified closely with his own message: he suffered in his body the consequences of representing God before the nation and of representing the nation under God's judgment. Ezekiel also uses many parables (chs. 15; 16; 17; 19; 23) and proverbs (12:21, 22; 16:44; 18:2, 3). The prophecy of Ezekiel had a profound effect on the Book of Revelation; many themes from this prophet recur in that book.

Several themes in Ezekiel's teaching are used with some frequency.

1. The Holiness and Transcendence of God. Revelation to Ezekiel is often mediated by an angelic guide (chs. 8; 40—48). When Ezekiel does see a vision of God, it is "the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD," God Himself remaining transcendent and hidden (1:28 note). God is Judge, all-knowing and all-powerful, surrounded in splendor and ruling over the affairs of nations.

God is holy. Sin is an affront to His holiness and must be judged. Israel is a rebellious nation, but the Exile is designed to produce a purged nation, a remnant ready to live in obedience before God (6:8; 9:8; 11:12, 13; 12:16; 14:22, 23).

2. The Grace and Mercy of God. God's judgment of Judah and Jerusalem does not frustrate His purpose in electing Israel. God will show mercy to a remnant; these will inherit His promises afresh and enjoy restoration to their land. God will again be in their midst (48:35; cf. 11:20; 14:11; 36:23, 27, 28). The nation will again live under a Davidic prince (37:24, 25; 45:7) who will rule righteously (34:23). God will give to His people a new heart and a new spirit (36:24–28).

3. The Sovereignty of God. God rules over the affairs and destiny not only of Israel, but also of all other nations (chs. 25—32). The words God spoke through the prophet will be performed.

4. Individual Responsibility. The Exile had come about in part as a result of the cumulative guilt of generations of Israelites who had lived in rebellion against God and His law. While guilt always has a corporate dimension, Ezekiel, more than any prophet before him, emphasized the individual consequences of disobedience and transgression. See notes on 18:1–32; 33:1–20. □

Outline of Ezekiel

I. Judgment on Judah and Jerusalem (chs. 1—24)
  A. The Prophet's Call (chs. 1—3)
  B. Symbolic Actions About the Destruction of Jerusalem (chs. 4; 5)
  C. Oracle Against the Mountains of Israel (ch. 6)
  D. The End (ch. 7)
  E. A Vision of Judgment in Jerusalem (chs. 8—11)
  F. Oracles About the Sins of Israel and Jerusalem (chs. 12—24)
    1. Two Symbolic Actions (12:1–20)
    2. Popular Proverbs (12:21–28)
    3. False Prophets and Prophetesses (ch. 13)
    4. Consequences of Idolatry (ch. 14)
    5. Parable of the Vine (ch. 15)
    6. Jerusalem as Child and Harlot (ch. 16)
    7. Parable of Two Eagles (ch. 17)
    8. Individual Responsibility (ch. 18)
    9. Dirge Allegory for Israel's Kings (ch. 19)
    10. A Review of the Nation's History and Her Future (ch. 20)
    11. Babylon, God's Sword (ch. 21)
    12. The Sins of Jerusalem (ch. 22)
    13. A Parable of Two Sisters (ch. 23)
    14. A Cooking Pot (24:1–14)
    15. The Death of Ezekiel's Wife (24:15–27)

II. Oracles Against Foreign Nations (chs. 25—32)
- A. Ammon (25:1–7)
- B. Moab (25:8–11)
- C. Edom (25:12–14)
- D. Philistia (25:15–17)
- E. Tyre (26:1—28:19)
- F. Sidon (28:20–26)
- G. Egypt (chs. 29—32)

III. Blessing for Judah and Jerusalem (chs. 33—48)
- A. Ezekiel the Watchman (ch. 33)
- B. The Shepherds of Israel (ch. 34)
- C. Against Edom (ch. 35)
- D. A Prophecy to the Mountains of Israel (ch. 36)
- E. The Valley of Dry Bones (37:1–14)
- F. Two Sticks Becoming One (37:15–28)
- G. Gog and Magog (chs. 38, 39)
- H. A Vision of a Restored Jerusalem (chs. 40—48)
  1. The Plan of the New Temple (chs. 40—42)
  2. Regulations for the New Temple (chs. 43; 44)
  3. The Holy District in the Land (45:1–8)
  4. Regulations for Offerings (45:9—46:24)
  5. A Life-giving River (47:1–12)
  6. Boundaries and Allotment of the Land (47:13—48:29)
  7. The City Gates (48:30–35)

CHAPTER 1

Ezekiel's Vision of God

NOW it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth *month,* on the fifth *day* of the month, as I *was* among the captives by [a]the River Chebar, *that* [b]the heavens were opened and I saw [c]visions[1] of God. 2 On the fifth *day* of the month, which *was* in the fifth year of King Jehoiachin's captivity, 3 the word of the LORD came expressly to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the [2]Chaldeans by the River Chebar; and [d]the hand of the LORD was upon him there.

4 Then I looked, and behold, [e]a whirlwind was coming [f]out of the north, a great cloud with raging fire engulfing itself; and brightness *was* all around it and radiating out of its midst like the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire. 5 [g]Also from within it *came* the likeness of four living creatures. And [h]this *was* their appearance: they had [i]the likeness of a man. 6 Each one had four faces, and each one had four wings. 7 Their [3]legs *were* straight, and the soles of their feet

1 [a]Ezek. 3:15, 23; 10:15 [b]Rev. 4:1; 19:11 [c]Ezek. 8:3 [1]So with MT, LXX, Vg.; Syr., Tg. *a vision*

3 [d]Ezek. 3:14, 22 [2]Or *Babylonians,* and so elsewhere in the book

4 [e]Jer. 23:19; 25:32 [f]Jer. 1:14

5 [g]Rev. 4:6–8 [h]Ezek. 10:8 [i]Ezek. 10:14 7 [3]Lit. *feet*

■ **1:1 thirtieth year.** July, 593 B.C. The book appears to have a double superscription, one in the first person (v. 1) and the other in the third (vv. 2–3). The dates in the Book of Ezekiel are normally calculated from the year of the captivity of Jehoiachin (cf. 40:1). But the first date in the book specifies a "thirtieth" year (v. 1) and immediately refers to the "fifth year" (v. 2) of Jehoiachin. Probably the "thirtieth" year is Ezekiel's age at the time of his prophetic call, coinciding with the "fifth" year of Jehoiachin. A candidate for the priesthood ordinarily assumed the full responsibilities of the office at age thirty (Num. 4:3). Instead of achieving this important goal, Ezekiel was living in exile far from the temple in Jerusalem, unable to fulfill his calling as a priest.

River Chebar. The Jews living outside their homeland commonly established places of worship along streams of water (Ps. 137:1; Acts 16:13). Two cuneiform texts from Nippur mention a *naru kabari* (meaning "Great River") that is probably the Chebar; it was a large irrigation canal that brought water from the Euphrates below Babylon.

■ **1:4—3:15** Ezekiel's inaugural vision should be compared with the call narratives of Moses (Ex. 3), Isaiah (Is. 6), and Jeremiah (Jer. 1). Like Moses, the model prophet (Deut. 18:15, 18), those who followed him would ordinarily begin their prophetic careers by being admitted to the divine presence. In the heavenly council they hear the words of God. The prophets report such experiences not so much as autobiography but because their admission to the divine council was the basis for their claim to prophetic authority. It was a qualification that distinguished the true prophet from the false (1 Kin. 22:19–28; Jer. 23:16–18).

■ **1:4 whirlwind.** For the whirlwind or storm as a mode of theophany, see 2 Kin. 2:1, 11; Job 38:1; 40:6; Ps. 77:18; 83:15; 148:8; Is. 29:6; 66:15; Jer. 4:13; 23:19; 30:23; Nah. 1:3; Zech. 9:14.

■ **1:5** When these "living creatures" appear again they are identified as "cherubim" (10:1, 15, 17, 20). There are points of similarity with the seraphim that attend God in Isaiah's call (Is. 6:2, 3), and with John's vision of the divine throne (Rev. 4:6–9). Their wings "touched one another" (v. 9) like the wings of the cherubim over the ark in the Most Holy Place of the temple (1 Kin. 6:27; 2 Chr. 3:11–12). Chronicles describes the ark as the divine chariot (1 Chr. 28:18).

were like the soles of calves' feet. They sparkled [j]like the color of burnished bronze. 8 [k]The hands of a man *were* under their wings on their four sides; and each of the four had faces and wings. 9 Their wings touched one another. *The creatures* did not turn when they went, but each one went straight [l]forward.

10 As for [m]the likeness of their faces, *each* [n]had the face of a man; each of the four had [o]the face of a lion on the right side, [p]each of the four had the face of an ox on the left side, [q]and each of the four had the face of an eagle. 11 Thus *were* their faces. Their wings stretched upward; two *wings* of each one touched one another, and [r]two covered their bodies. 12 And [s]each one went straight forward; they went wherever the spirit wanted to go, and they did not turn when they went.

13 As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance *was* like burning coals of fire, [t]like the appearance of torches going back and forth among the living creatures. The fire was bright, and out of the fire went lightning. 14 And the living creatures ran back and forth, [u]in appearance like a flash of lightning.

15 Now as I looked at the living creatures, behold, [v]a wheel *was* on the earth beside each living creature with its four faces. 16 [w]The appearance of the wheels and their workings *was* [x]like the color of beryl, and all four had the same likeness. The appearance of their workings *was,* as it were, a wheel in the middle of a wheel. 17 When they moved, they went toward any one of four directions; they did not turn aside when they went. 18 As for their rims, they were so high they were awesome; and their rims *were* [y]full of eyes, all around the four of them. 19 [z]When the living creatures went, the wheels went beside them; and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up. 20 Wherever the spirit wanted to go, they went, *because* there the spirit went; and the wheels were lifted together with them, [a]for the spirit of the [4]living creatures *was* in the wheels. 21 When those went, *these* went; when those stood, *these* stood; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up together with them, for the spirit of the [5]living creatures *was* in the wheels.

22 [b]The likeness of the [6]firmament above the heads of the [7]living creatures *was* like the color of an awesome [c]crystal, stretched out [d]over their heads. 23 And under the firmament their wings *spread out* straight, one toward another. Each one had two which covered one side, and each one had two which covered the other side of the body. 24 [e]When they went, I heard the noise of their wings, [f]like the noise of many waters, like [g]the voice of the Almighty, a tumult like the noise of an army; and when they stood still, they let down their wings. 25 A voice came from above the firmament that *was* over their heads; whenever they stood, they let down their wings.

26 [h]And above the firmament over their heads *was* the likeness of a throne, [i]in appearance like a sapphire stone; on the likeness of the throne *was* a likeness with the appearance of a man high above [j]it. 27 Also from the appearance of His waist and upward [k]I saw, as it were, the color of amber with the appearance of fire all around within it; and from the appearance of His waist and downward I saw, as it were, the appearance of fire with brightness all around. 28 [l]Like the appearance of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day, so *was* the appearance of the brightness all around it. [m]This *was* the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD.

Ezekiel Sent to Rebellious Israel

So when I saw *it,* [n]I fell on my face, and I heard a voice of One speaking.

2 And He said to me, "Son of man, [a]stand on your feet, and I will speak to you." 2 Then [b]the Spirit entered me when He spoke to me, and set me on my feet; and I heard Him who spoke

7 [j]Dan. 10:6
8 [k]Ezek. 10:8, 21
9 [l]Ezek. 1:12; 10:20–22
10 [m]Rev. 4:7 [n]Num. 2:10 [o]Num. 2:3 [p]Num. 2:18 [q]Num. 2:25
11 [r]Is. 6:2
12 [s]Ezek. 10:11, 22
13 [t]Rev. 4:5
14 [u][Matt. 24:27]
15 [v]Ezek. 10:9
16 [w]Ezek. 10:9, 10 [x]Dan. 10:6
18 [y]Ezek. 10:12
19 [z]Ezek. 10:16, 17
20 [a]Ezek. 10:17 [4]Lit. *living creature;* LXX, Vg. *spirit of life;* Tg. *creatures*
21 [5]See note at v. 20
22 [b]Ezek. 10:1 [c]Rev. 4:6 [d]Ezek. 10:1 [6]Or *expanse* [7]So with LXX, Tg., Vg.; MT *living creature*
24 [e]Ezek. 3:13; 10:5 [f]Rev. 1:15 [g]Job 37:4, 5
26 [h]Ezek. 10:1 [i]Ex. 24:10, 16 [j]Ezek. 8:2
27 [k]Ezek. 8:2
28 [l]Rev. 4:3; 10:1 [m]Ezek. 3:23; 8:4 [n]Dan. 8:17

CHAPTER 2

1 [a]Dan. 10:11
2 [b]Ezek. 3:24

■ **1:10 faces.** The four faces probably represent the heads of four realms of creation. Man is supreme and faces outward. The ox is the head of domestic animals; the lion of wild animals; and the eagle of birds. The creatures apparently were in a square with the human faces looking outward to the four cardinal directions, making the other faces visible from the sides.

■ **1:13, 14 coals of fire . . . torches . . . lightning.** Fire is a regular component of the theophanies (manifestations or appearances of God) in the Old Testament (Gen. 15:17; Ex. 3:2; 13:21, 22; 14:24; 19:18; 24:17; Num. 11:1; Deut. 1:33; 4:11, 12, 24, 33, 36; 5:22–26; 9:3; Ps. 18:8; 78:14, 21).

■ **1:24 noise.** A distinctive loud sound accompanies theophanies involving the divine army (2 Sam. 5:24; 2 Kin. 7:6; Is. 13:4; 66:6; Joel 2:5; cf. Gen. 3:8; Ex. 19:19; Is. 6:4). See particularly 3:12, 13; 10:5.

■ **1:27 brightness.** The light radiating from the divine presence is overwhelming (Dan. 7:9), for God dwells "in unapproachable light" (1 Tim. 6:16). No one has seen God, and Ezekiel does not dare to describe Him. He can speak only of "the appearance of the likeness of the glory" of the Lord (1:28), a way of speaking essentially three steps removed from a direct description of God.

■ **1:28 rainbow.** The rainbow not only reflects the splendor around God but testifies to His dominion over the sea and His promise to Noah (Gen. 9:16, 17). See theological note "The Glory of God."

■ **2:1–8** In other call narratives, after the person comes into the divine presence, God announces the commission, normally with a statement that God is sending that person (2:3; Ex. 3:10; Judg. 6:14; Is. 6:8; Jer. 1:7).

■ **2:1 Son of man.** God addresses Ezekiel this way more than ninety

to me. 3 And He said to me: "Son of man, I am sending you to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that has [c]rebelled against Me; [d]they and their fathers have transgressed against Me to this very day. 4 [e]For *they are* [f]impudent and stubborn children. I am sending you to them, and you shall say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD.' 5 [f]As for them, whether they hear or whether they refuse—for they *are* a [g]rebellious house—yet they [h]will know that a prophet has been among them.

6 "And you, son of man, [i]do not be afraid of them nor be afraid of their words, though [j]briers and thorns *are* with you and you dwell among scorpions; [k]do not be afraid of their words or dismayed by their looks, [l]though they *are* a rebellious house. 7 [m]You shall speak My words to them, whether they hear or whether they refuse, for they *are* rebellious. 8 But you, son of man, hear what I say to you. Do not be rebellious like that rebellious house; open your mouth and [n]eat what I give you."

9 Now when I looked, there was [o]a hand stretched out to me; and behold, [p]a scroll of a book *was* in it. 10 Then He spread it before me; and *there was* writing on the inside and on the outside, and written on it *were* lamentations and mourning and woe.

3 Moreover He said to me, "Son of man, eat what you find; [a]eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel." 2 So I opened my mouth, and He caused me to eat that scroll.

3 [c]Ezek. 5:6; 20:8, 13, 18 [d]Jer. 3:25

4 [e]Ezek. 3:7 [f]Lit. *stiff-faced and hard-hearted sons*

5 [f]Ezek. 3:11, 26, 27 [g]Ezek. 3:26 [h]Ezek. 33:33

6 [i]Jer. 1:8, 17 [j]Mic. 7:4 [k][1 Pet. 3:14] [l]Ezek. 3:9, 26, 27

7 [m]Jer. 1:7, 17

8 [n]Rev. 10:9

9 [o][Ezek. 8:3] [p]Ezek. 3:1

CHAPTER 3

1 [a]Ezek. 2:8, 9

The Glory of God

God's goal is His glory, but this needs careful explanation, for it is easily misunderstood. It points to a purpose, not of divine egoism, but of divine love. Certainly, God asks to be praised for His praiseworthiness and exalted for His greatness and goodness; He asks to be appreciated for what He is. But the glory that is His goal is a two-sided, two-stage relationship: on the one side He reveals His glory in acts of free generosity, and on the other, His people respond with adoration, giving Him glory with thanksgiving for what they have seen and received. Human beings were made for this reciprocal fellowship of love, and Christ's redemption makes it possible for those who had fallen. Human nature is fulfilled through seeing God's glory and returning praise to Him, just as God has pleasure in revealing His goodness to those who receive it (Zeph. 3:14–17).

"Glory" in the Old Testament is associated with value, riches, splendor, and dignity. When Moses asked to see God's glory, God proclaimed to Moses His name; that is, He revealed to Moses something of His nature, character, and power (Ex. 33:18—34:7; theological note "'This Is My Name': God's Self-disclosure" at Ex. 3:15). Accompanying the proclamation was an awe-inspiring physical manifestation, a bright cloud like a burning fire (Ex. 24:17). This glory of God's presence is often called the "Shekinah" or the "Shekinah glory." It appeared at significant moments as a sign of God's active presence (Ex. 33:22; 34:5; cf. 16:10; 24:17; 40:34; Lev. 9:23–24; 1 Kin. 8:10–11; Ezek. 1:28; 8:4; 9:3; 10:4; 11:22–23; Matt. 17:5; Luke 2:9; cf. Acts 1:9; 1 Thess. 4:17; Rev. 1:7). New Testament writers proclaim that the glory of God is now revealed in Jesus Christ (John 1:14–18; 2 Cor. 4:3–6; Heb. 1:1–3).

God is glorified in the acts of salvation, because they exhibit His incomparable condescension, His inexhaustible love, and His limitless power. "Salvation is of the LORD" (Jon. 2:9), and those He saves have contributed nothing to their salvation except their need (Is. 42:8; 48:11). The praise for salvation belongs to no one except God. This is why Reformation theology was so insistent on the principle, "Glory to God *alone*" (*soli Deo gloria*), and why we need to maintain that principle with equal zeal today. □

times in this book. The phrase means "person, human being" and emphasizes the humanity and frailty of the prophet, all the more when it stands in such proximity to a vision of God's glory. This use of the phrase in Ezekiel should be distinguished from its use in the Gospels as the favorite self-designation of Jesus. Jesus uses the phrase to designate Himself as the "Son of Man" known from Dan. 7:13, 14.

■ **2:2 Spirit.** In the Old Testament the Spirit of God is preeminently the Spirit of prophecy, the Spirit who makes the prophet a channel of revelation (Num. 11:25, 26, 29; 1 Sam. 10:6; 19:20; Joel 2:28; Zech. 7:12).

■ **2:6 briers . . . thorns . . . scorpions.** These metaphors refer to those who are going to persecute Ezekiel for bringing an unpopular message from God (1 Kin. 18:4; Jer. 20:7–18; Matt. 23:29–31, 34, 37).

■ **2:9—3:3** In other accounts of the prophetic call, once the commission is given God often provides a sign to confirm it (Ex. 3:12; Jer. 1:11–14). Moses had said that God would put His word into the mouths of the prophets (Deut. 18:18), and here that is seen in a graphic way. What food is to the body, so the word of God would be for Ezekiel's ministry.

■ **2:10 inside . . . outside.** Scrolls were ordinarily written only on one side, but see also Zech. 5:3; Rev. 5:1.

lamentations and mourning and woe. Most of the first half of the Book of Ezekiel is oracles of judgment against Judah (chs. 1—24) and foreign nations (chs. 25—32).

3 And He said to me, "Son of man, feed your belly, and fill your stomach with this scroll that I give you." So I [b]ate, and it was in my mouth [c]like honey in sweetness.

4 Then He said to me: "Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak with My words to them. 5 For you *are* not sent to a people of unfamiliar speech and of hard language, *but* to the house of Israel, 6 not to many people of unfamiliar speech and of hard language, whose words you cannot understand. Surely, [d]had I sent you to them, they would have listened to you. 7 But the house of Israel will not listen to you, [e]because they will not listen to Me; [f]for all the house of Israel *are* [1]impudent and hard-hearted. 8 Behold, I have made your face strong against their faces, and your forehead strong against their foreheads. 9 [g]Like adamant stone, harder than flint, I have made your forehead; [h]do not be afraid of them, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they *are* a rebellious house."

10 Moreover He said to me: "Son of man, receive into your heart all My words that I speak to you, and hear with your ears. 11 And go, get to the captives, to the children of your people, and speak to them and tell them, [i]'Thus says the Lord GOD,' whether they hear, or whether they refuse."

12 Then [j]the Spirit lifted me up, and I heard behind me a great thunderous voice: "Blessed *is* the [k]glory of the LORD from His place!" 13 *I* also *heard* the [l]noise of the wings of the living creatures that touched one another, and the noise of the wheels beside them, and a great thunderous noise. 14 So the Spirit lifted me up and took me away, and I went in bitterness, in the [2]heat of my spirit; but [m]the hand of the LORD was strong upon me. 15 Then I came to the captives at Tel Abib, who dwelt by the River Chebar; and [n]I sat where they sat, and remained there astonished among them seven days.

Ezekiel Is a Watchman

16 Now it [o]came to pass at the end of seven days that the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 17 [p]"Son of man, I have made you [q]a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore hear a word from My mouth, and give them [r]warning from Me: 18 When I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, that same wicked *man* [s]shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. 19 Yet, if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; [t]but you have delivered your soul.

20 "Again, when a [u]righteous *man* turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die; because you did not give him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered; but his blood I will require at your hand. 21 Nevertheless if you warn the righteous *man* that the righteous should not sin, and he does not sin, he shall surely live because he took warning; also you will have delivered your soul."

22 [v]Then the hand of the LORD was upon me there, and He said to me, "Arise, go out [w]into the plain, and there I shall talk with you."

23 So I arose and went out into the plain, and behold, [x]the glory of the LORD stood there, like the glory which I [y]saw by the River Chebar; [z]and I fell on my face. 24 Then [a]the Spirit entered me and set me on my feet, and spoke with me and said to me: "Go, shut yourself inside your house. 25 And you, O son of man, surely [b]they will put ropes on you and bind you with them, so that you cannot go out among them. 26 [c]I will make your tongue cling to the roof of your mouth,

3 [b]Rev. 10:9 [c]Ps. 19:10; 119:103

6 [d]Jon. 3:5–10; Matt. 11:21

7 [e]John 15:20, 21 [f]Ezek. 2:4 [1]Lit. *strong of forehead*

9 [g]Is. 50:7; Jer. 1:18; Mic. 3:8 [h]Jer. 1:8, 17; Ezek. 2:6

11 [i]Ezek. 2:5, 7

12 [j]1 Kin. 18:12; Ezek. 8:3; Acts 8:39 [k]Ezek. 1:28; 8:4

13 [l]Ezek. 1:24; 10:5

14 [m]2 Kin. 3:15; Ezek. 1:3; 8:1 [2]Or *anger*

15 [n]Job 2:13; Ps. 137:1

16 [o]Jer. 42:7

17 [p]Ezek. 33:7–9 [q]Is. 52:8; 56:10; Jer. 6:17 [r][Lev. 19:17; Prov. 14:25]; Is. 58:1

18 [s]Ezek. 33:6; [John 8:21, 24]

19 [t]Is. 49:4, 5; Ezek. 14:14, 20; Acts 18:6; 20:26; 1 Tim. 4:16

20 [u]Ps. 125:5; Ezek. 18:24; 33:18; Zeph. 1:6

22 [v]Ezek. 1:3 [w]Ezek. 8:4

23 [x]Ezek. 1:28; Acts 7:55 [y]Ezek. 1:1 [z]Ezek. 1:28

24 [a]Ezek. 2:2

25 [b]Ezek. 4:8

26 [c]Ezek. 24:27; Luke 1:20, 22

■ **3:7 to you . . . to Me.** The Lord identifies His messengers with Himself (cf. Luke 10:16; John 13:20).

■ **3:8 made your face strong.** Ezekiel's name in Hebrew means "God makes strong, hardens."

■ **3:12 Spirit lifted me up.** Ezekiel more than once describes his visionary experiences in terms of transport by the Spirit (3:12, 14; 8:3; 11:1, 24; 40:1–3; 43:5). See 2 Kin. 2:11, 16; 2 Cor. 12:1, 2.

■ **3:15 Tel Abib.** Precise location not known.

astonished. The Bible records similar periods of silence or incapacity on the part of others (Ezra 9:4; Job 2:13; Jer. 23:9; Dan. 8:27; Acts 9:9).

■ **3:16 word of the LORD.** This phrase occurs over fifty times in Ezekiel, more than in any other prophetic book.

■ **3:17 watchman.** Ezekiel will elaborate on his role as a watchman in 33:1–9. Being a watchman meant he was responsible for those he ministered to and had to warn them of any impending threat. Failure to issue the warning would make him accountable for any misfortune that resulted. People in a city would not ignore the cry of an ordinary watchman, yet they would not listen to Ezekiel (vv. 6, 7; cf. Is. 22:1–14).

■ **3:22 hand of the LORD.** Ezekiel uses this phrase to describe how revelation came to him (v. 14; 8:1; 33:22; 37:1; 40:1).

plain. The word means an open area between mountains and can be translated either "valley" or "plain." The term also occurs in Ezekiel's vision of the "valley" of dry bones (37:1).

■ **3:26 you shall be mute.** The length and nature of Ezekiel's speechlessness is one of the most debated issues in the book. Whatever its beginning, it lasted until word reached the exiles that the city of Jerusalem had been destroyed (24:27; 33:22; cf. 29:21). The prophet was not

so that you shall be mute and [d]not be [3]one to rebuke them, [e]for they *are* a rebellious house.
27 [f]But when I speak with you, I will open your mouth, and you shall say to them, [g]'Thus says the Lord GOD.' He who hears, let him hear; and he who refuses, let him refuse; for they *are* a rebellious house.

The Siege of Jerusalem Portrayed

4 "You also, son of man, take a clay tablet and lay it before you, and portray on it a city, Jerusalem. 2 [a]Lay siege against it, build a [b]siege wall against it, and heap up a mound against it; set camps against it also, and place battering rams against it all around. 3 Moreover take for yourself an iron plate, and set it *as* an iron wall between you and the city. Set your face against it, and it shall be [c]besieged, and you shall lay siege against it. [d]This *will be* a sign to the house of Israel.

4 "Lie also on your left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it. *According* to the number of the days that you lie on it, you shall bear their iniquity. 5 For I have laid on you the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days; [e]so you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. 6 And when you have completed them, lie again on your right side; then you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days. I have laid on you a day for each year.

7 "Therefore you shall set your face toward the siege of Jerusalem; your arm *shall be* uncovered, and you shall prophesy against it. 8 [f]And surely I will [1]restrain you so that you cannot turn from one side to another till you have ended the days of your siege.

9 "Also take for yourself wheat, barley, beans, lentils, millet, and spelt; put them into one vessel, and make bread of them for yourself. *During* the number of days that you lie on your side, three hundred and ninety days, you shall eat it. 10 And your food which you eat *shall be* by weight, twenty shekels a day; from time to time you shall eat it. 11 You shall also drink water by measure, one-sixth of a hin; from time to time you shall drink. 12 And you shall eat it *as* barley cakes; and bake it using fuel of human waste in their sight."

13 Then the LORD said, "So [g]shall the children of Israel eat their defiled bread among the Gentiles, where I will drive them."

14 So I said, [h]"Ah, Lord GOD! Indeed I have never defiled myself from my youth till now; I have never eaten [i]what died of itself or was torn by beasts, nor has [j]abominable[2] flesh ever come into my mouth."

15 Then He said to me, "See, I am giving you cow dung instead of human waste, and you shall prepare your bread over it."

16 Moreover He said to me, "Son of man, surely I will cut off the [k]supply of bread in Jerusalem; they shall [l]eat bread by weight and with anxiety, and shall [m]drink water by measure and with dread, 17 that they may lack bread and water, and be dismayed with one another, and [n]waste away because of their iniquity.

26 [d]Hos. 4:17; Amos 8:11 [e]Ezek. 2:5–7 [3]Lit. *one who rebukes*

27 [f]Ex. 4:11, 12; Ezek. 24:27; 33:22 [g]Ezek. 3:11

CHAPTER 4

2 [a]Jer. 6:6; Ezek. 21:22 [b]2 Kin. 25:1

3 [c]Jer. 39:1, 2; Ezek. 5:2 [d]Ezek. 12:6, 11; 24:24, 27

5 [e]Num. 14:34

8 [f]Ezek. 3:25 [1]Lit. *put ropes on*

13 [g]Dan. 1:8; Hos. 9:3

14 [h]Acts 10:14 [i]Ex. 22:31; Lev. 17:15; 22:8; Ezek. 44:31 [j]Deut. 14:3; Is. 65:4; 66:17 [2]Ritually unclean flesh, Lev. 7:18

16 [k]Lev. 26:26; Ps. 105:16; Is. 3:1; Ezek. 5:16; 14:13 [l]Ezek. 4:10, 11; 12:19 [m]Ezek. 4:11

17 [n]Lev. 26:39; Ezek. 24:23

completely mute, but spoke only when he received revelation from God. Ezekiel delivered many oracles to the exiles in the six years between his call and the destruction of Jerusalem.

■ **4:1–3** The prophets of Israel used props like the clay tablet as illustrations for their points; these object lessons are usually called "symbolic actions" (1 Kin. 11:30; 22:11; 2 Kin. 13:17; Is. 20:2–4; Jer. 13:1–14; 19:1–10). In several places in Mesopotamia bricks or clay tablets have been found with maps or architectural drawings inscribed on them. The prophet depicts the siege that was laid against Jerusalem in 586 B.C. and ended with its destruction.

■ **4:3 iron plate.** The large flat griddle on which bread was baked in an oven. Since the prophet represented God in this miniature drama, the iron plate standing on edge represented the wall between God and Jerusalem. Their prayers would not reach Him, and He would not intervene on their behalf.

■ **4:4 lay the iniquity.** The dual nature of the prophetic office—representing God to the people and the people to God—is seen in the second half of the symbolic action. Now the prophet represents the people and bears their sin (cf. Ex. 32:30–32; Rom. 9:3).

■ **4:5, 6 three hundred and ninety.** The time period to which the figures 390 and 40 refer are hard to interpret. Each day represented one year (v. 6; cf. Num. 14:34; Dan. 9:24–27). It may be that the 40 days do not follow the 390 days (for a total of 430), but are concurrent with them. Some regard the total of 430 years as a symbolic reference to the length of Israel's sojourn in Egypt (Ex. 12:40–41).

■ **4:8 restrain.** Lying on his side while bound (see text note) probably means that Ezekiel was immobile a part of each day. For example, he still had to prepare his meals (vv. 8–13).

■ **4:9–11** Ezekiel must exist on siege rations while he enacts the siege of Jerusalem. These rations reflect the privations during a siege (Deut. 28:52–57; 2 Kin. 6:25; 7:12; Jer. 15:2; 19:9).

■ **4:10 twenty shekels.** About eight ounces.

■ **4:11 one-sixth of a hin.** This water ration is 0.6 liter or just over a pint. See note on 45:24.

■ **4:12–15** Ceremonial cleanness was all but impossible to observe during a siege, even for a priest like Ezekiel. Human excrement was considered impure (Deut. 23:13), and the prophet is repulsed by God's command to him, protesting that he had never violated the dietary laws restricting the kinds of food Israel was permitted to eat (44:31; Ex. 22:31; Lev. 7:19–24; 11:8, 39, 40; 22:8; Deut. 14:3, 8). God permitted him to substitute cattle manure, still a widely used fuel in parts of the Near East.

A Sword Against Jerusalem

5 "And you, son of man, take a sharp sword, take it as a barber's razor, [a]and pass *it* over your head and your beard; then take scales to weigh and divide the hair. 2 [b]You shall burn with fire one-third in the midst of [c]the city, when [d]the days of the siege are finished; then you shall take one-third and strike around *it* with the sword, and one-third you shall scatter in the wind; I will draw out a sword after [e]them. 3 [f]You shall also take a small number of them and bind them in the edge of your *garment.* 4 Then take some of them again and [g]throw them into the midst of the fire, and burn them in the fire. From there a fire will go out into all the house of Israel.

5 "Thus says the Lord GOD: 'This *is* Jerusalem; I have set her in the midst of the nations and the countries all around her. 6 She has rebelled against My judgments by doing wickedness more than the nations, and against My statutes more than the countries that *are* all around her; for they have refused My judgments, and they have not walked in My statutes.' 7 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Because you have [i]multiplied *disobedience* more than the nations that *are* all around you, have not walked in My statutes [h]nor kept My judgments, [z]nor even done according to the judgments of the nations that *are* all around you'— 8 therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Indeed I, even I, *am* against you and will execute judgments in your midst in the sight of the nations. 9 [j]And I will do among you what I have never done, and the like of which I will never do again, because of all your abominations. 10 [k]Therefore fathers [l]shall eat *their* sons in your midst, and sons shall eat their fathers; and I will execute judgments among you, and all of you who remain I will [m]scatter to all the winds.'

11 'Therefore, *as* I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'surely, because you have [n]defiled My sanctuary with all your [o]detestable things and with all your abominations, therefore I will also diminish *you;* [p]My eye will not spare, nor will I have any pity. 12 [q]One-third of you shall die of the pestilence, and be consumed with famine in your midst; and one-third shall fall by the sword all around you; and [r]I will scatter another third to all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after [s]them.

13 'Thus shall My anger [t]be spent, and I will [u]cause My fury to rest upon them, [v]and I will be avenged; [w]and they shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken *it* in My zeal, when I have spent My fury upon them. 14 Moreover [x]I will make you a waste and a reproach among the nations that *are* all around you, in the sight of all who pass by.

15 'So [3]it shall be a [y]reproach, a taunt, a [z]lesson, and an astonishment to the nations that *are* all around you, when I execute judgments among you in anger and in fury and in [a]furious rebukes. I, the LORD, have spoken. 16 When I [b]send against them the terrible arrows of famine which shall be for destruction, which I will send to destroy you, I will increase the famine upon you and cut off your [c]supply of bread. 17 So I will send against you famine and [d]wild beasts, and they will bereave you. [e]Pestilence and blood shall pass through you, and I will bring the sword against you. I, the LORD, have spoken.' "

Judgment on Idolatrous Israel

6 Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying: 2 "Son of man, [a]set your face toward the [b]mountains of Israel, and prophesy against them, 3 and say, 'O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD! Thus says the Lord GOD to the mountains, to the hills, to the ravines, and to the valleys: "Indeed I, *even* I, will bring a sword against you, and [c]I will destroy your [1]high places. 4 Then your altars shall be desolate, your incense altars shall be broken, and [d]I will cast

CHAPTER 5

1 [a]Is. 7:20

2 [b]Ezek. 5:12 [c]Ezek. 4:1 [d]Ezek. 4:8, 9 [e]Lev. 26:25

3 [f]Jer. 40:6; 52:16

4 [g]Jer. 41:1, 2; 44:14

7 [h]Jer. 2:10, 11 [i]Or *raged* [z]So with MT, LXX, Tg., Vg.; many Heb. mss., Syr. *but have done* (cf. 11:12)

9 [j][Amos 3:2]

10 [k]Jer. 19:9 [l]Zech. 2:6; 7:14

11 [m][Jer. 7:9–11] [n]Ezek. 11:21 [o]Ezek. 7:4, 9; 8:18; 9:10

12 [p]Ezek. 6:12 [q]Jer. 9:16 [r]Jer. 43:10, 11; 44:27

13 [s]Lam. 4:11 [t]Ezek. 21:17 [u][Is. 1:24 [v]Ezek. 36:6; 38:19

14 [w]Lev. 26:31

15 [x]Jer. 24:9 [y][Is. 26:9] [z]Ezek. 5:8; 25:17 [3]LXX, Syr., Tg., Vg. *you*

16 [a]Deut. 32:23 [b]Lev. 26:26

17 [c]Lev. 26:22 [d]Ezek. 38:22

CHAPTER 6

2 [a]Ezek. 20:46; 21:2; 25:2 [b]Ezek. 36:1

3 [c]Lev. 26:30 [1]Places for pagan worship

4 [d]Lev. 26:30

■ **5:1 razor.** God had prohibited Israelite men from shaving or cutting parts of their beard (Lev. 19:27). This law was reiterated for priests (Lev. 21:5), and Ezekiel was a priest (1:1). Cutting facial hair could be a matter of great personal shame (2 Sam. 10:4–5; Is. 7:20; 50:6) or a sign of mourning (Ezra 9:3; Is. 15:2; Jer. 7:29; 41:5; 48:37).

■ **5:10–13** Ezekiel interprets the symbolism of vv. 1–4: the hairs burned in fire represent those who will die of plague or disease during the siege; the hairs struck with the sword represent those who will die in battle and the aftermath of the siege; the hairs dispersed by the wind represent those who will be carried into exile. It is striking that Ezekiel does not elaborate on the significance of the few hairs retained in the folds of his garment; they symbolize the survivors who will remain in Jerusalem (Jer. 40:7–12).

■ **5:10 eat their sons.** Cannibalism could be a consequence of a protracted siege (2 Kin. 6:26–29; Lam. 2:20). Moses had warned that this would happen if the nation did not obey (Deut. 28:53–57).

■ **6:1–3** Ezekiel's address to the mountains and hills of Jerusalem as if they were in sight has prompted some to suggest that for part of his ministry Ezekiel was in Israel instead of with the exiles in Babylon. However, though the hills and mountains of Israel were his metaphorical audience, the real audience was the exiles themselves. Compare Ezekiel's prophecy regarding the people of Edom addressed to Mount Seir (ch. 35).

■ **6:3 high places.** The Canaanites normally worshiped their gods on hilltops. God commanded the Israelites to eradicate the high places when they came into the land (Num. 33:52; Deut. 12:1–3; 33:29). However, the high places continued to flourish long after the temple was built (16:16; Jer. 7:31; 19:5; 32:35; 48:35). The people worshiped Canaanite gods there or converted the pagan shrines for use in a combination of Canaanite practices and their own. The continued existence of the high places was a particular offense to the writer of the Book of Kings (1 Kin. 11:7; 12:31, 32; 13:2, 32; 14:23; 2 Kin. 12:3; 14:4; 15:4, 35; 17:29; 23:5, 8, 13, 15, 19, 20).

down your slain *men* before your idols. 5 And I will lay the corpses of the children of Israel before their idols, and I will scatter your bones all around your altars. 6 In all your dwelling places the cities shall be laid waste, and the [2]high places shall be desolate, so that your altars may be laid waste and made desolate, your idols may be broken and made to cease, your incense altars may be cut down, and your works may be abolished. 7 The slain shall fall in your midst, and [e]you shall know that I *am* the LORD.

8 [f]"Yet I will leave a remnant, so that you may have *some* who escape the sword among the nations, when you are [g]scattered through the countries. 9 Then those of you who escape will [h]remember Me among the nations where they are carried captive, because [i]I was crushed by their adulterous heart which has departed from Me, and [j]by their eyes which play the harlot after their idols; [k]they will loathe themselves for the evils which they committed in all their abominations. 10 And they shall know that I *am* the LORD; I have not said in vain that I would bring this calamity upon them."

11 'Thus says the Lord GOD: [l]"Pound[3] your fists and stamp your feet, and say, 'Alas, for all the evil abominations of the house of Israel! [m]For they shall fall by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence. 12 He who is far off shall die by the pestilence, he who is near shall fall by the sword, and he who remains and is besieged shall die by the famine. [n]Thus will I spend My fury upon them. 13 Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD, when their slain are among their idols all around their altars, [o]on every high hill, [p]on all the mountaintops, [q]under every green tree, and under every thick oak, wherever they offered sweet incense to all their idols. 14 So I will [r]stretch out My hand against them and make the land desolate, yes, more desolate than the wilderness toward [s]Diblah, in all their dwelling places. Then they shall know that I *am* the LORD.' " ' "

Judgment on Israel Is Near

7 Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2 "And you, son of man, thus says the Lord GOD to the land of Israel:

[a]'An end! The end has come upon the four corners of the land.
3 Now the end *has come* upon you,
And I will send My anger against you;
I will judge you [b]according to your ways,
And I will repay you for all your abominations.
4 [c]My eye will not spare you,
Nor will I have pity;
But I will repay your ways,
And your abominations will be in your midst;
[d]Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD!'

5 "Thus says the Lord GOD:

'A disaster, a singular [e]disaster;
Behold, it has come!
6 An end has come,
The end has come;
It has dawned for you;
Behold, it has come!
7 [f]Doom has come to you, you who dwell in the land;
[g]The time has come,

6 [2]Places for pagan worship
7 [e]Ezek. 7:4, 9
8 [f]Jer. 44:28; Ezek. 5:2, 12; 12:16; 14:22 [g]Ezek. 5:12
9 [h][Deut. 4:29]; Ps. 137; Jer. 51:50 [i]Ps. 78:40; Is. 7:13; 43:24; Hos. 11:8 [j]Num. 15:39; Ezek. 20:7, 24 [k]Lev. 26:39; Job 42:6; Ezek. 20:43; 36:31
11 [l]Ezek. 21:14 [m]Ezek. 5:12 [3]Lit. *Strike your hands*
12 [n]Lam. 4:11, 22; Ezek. 5:13
13 [o]Jer. 2:20; 3:6 [p]1 Kin. 14:23; 2 Kin. 16:4; Ezek. 20:28; Hos. 4:13 [q]Is. 57:5
14 [r]Is. 5:25; Ezek. 14:13; 20:33, 34 [s]Num. 33:46

CHAPTER 7

2 [a]Ezek. 7:3, 5, 6; 11:13; Amos 8:2, 10; [Matt. 24:6, 13, 14]
3 [b][Rom. 2:6]
4 [c]Ezek. 5:11 [d]Ezek. 12:20
5 [e]2 Kin. 21:12, 13; Nah. 1:9
7 [f]Ezek. 7:10 [g]Zeph. 1:14, 15

■ **6:5 corpses.** The shrines would be desecrated by the presence of dead bodies (9:7; Num. 19:16, 18; 1 Kin. 13:2; 2 Kin. 23:14–16; 2 Chr. 23:14, 15; 34:5).

■ **6:7 you shall know that I am the LORD.** Ezekiel makes frequent use of this "recognition formula" (cf. 7:4, 9; 11:10, 12; 12:20). The Lord reveals Himself as the Ruler of history by announcing events beforehand.

■ **6:8 escape.** Ezekiel introduces the remnant theme (9:8; 11:12, 13; 12:16; 14:22, 23; 20:39–44). The remnant is a group or individual who has experienced some calamity, ordinarily in judgment for sin, and has survived. This group of survivors becomes the nucleus for the continuation of the group: they embody the future hopes of the people, and they inherit the promises of God afresh. The Exile was to be a period of purging and refining so that a pure people would emerge from it.

■ **6:14 Diblah.** This locality is otherwise unknown, although the context seems to require a well-known place. The Hebrew letters for "d" and "r" were occasionally confused by scribes, and some manuscripts read "Awaits," a site in northern Lebanon where Pharaoh Necho and Nebuchadnezzar based some of their operations (2 Kin. 23:33; 25:6) in the last years of Judah. Ezekiel's audience would have understood the reference. From the wilderness to Awaits would mean from the southern to the northern boundaries of Judah and Israel.

■ **7:7 A day.** The prophets of the Old Testament often speak of "the day" or "the day of the LORD" (30:3–9; Is. 2:12–17; 13:6–10; 34:8–12; 61:1–3; 63:3–6; Joel 2; 3; Amos 5:18–20; Obad. 8, 15; Zeph. 1:1—2:3; Zech. 14; Mal. 4:1–3). This was the day when the Lord would come to judge His enemies and to vindicate His name. Depending on the context

A day of trouble *is* near,
And not of rejoicing in the mountains.
8 Now upon you I will soon [h]pour out My fury,
And spend My anger upon you;
I will judge you according to your ways,
And I will repay you for all your abominations.

9 'My eye will not spare,
Nor will I have pity;
I will [i]repay you according to your ways,
And your abominations will be in your midst.
Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD who strikes.

10 'Behold, the day!
Behold, it has come!
[j]Doom has gone out;
The rod has blossomed,
Pride has budded.
11 [k]Violence has risen up into a rod of wickedness;
None of them *shall remain,*
None of their multitude,
None of [2]them;
[l]Nor *shall there be* wailing for them.
12 The time has come,
The day draws near.

'Let not the buyer [i]rejoice,
Nor the seller [m]mourn,
For wrath *is* on their whole multitude.
13 For the seller shall not return to what has been sold,
Though he may still be alive;
For the vision concerns the whole multitude,
And it shall not turn back;
No one will strengthen himself
Who lives in iniquity.

14 'They have blown the trumpet and made everyone ready,
But no one goes to battle;
For My wrath *is* on all their multitude.
15 [n]The sword *is* outside,
And the pestilence and famine within.
Whoever *is* in the field
Will die by the sword;
And whoever *is* in the city,
Famine and pestilence will devour him.

16 'Those who [o]survive will escape and be on the mountains
Like doves of the valleys,
All of them mourning,
Each for his iniquity.
17 Every [p]hand will be feeble,
And every knee will be *as* weak *as* water.
18 They will also [q]be girded with sackcloth;
Horror will cover them;
Shame *will be* on every face,
Baldness on all their heads.

8 [h]Ezek. 20:8, 21

9 [i]Lit. *give*

10 [j]Ezek. 7:7

11 [k]Jer. 6:7 [l]Jer. 16:5, 6; Ezek. 24:16, 22 [2]Or *their wealth*

12 [i]Prov. 20:14; 1 Cor. 7:30 [m]Is. 24:2

15 [n]Deut. 32:25; Jer. 14:18; Lam. 1:20; Ezek. 5:12

16 [o]Ezra 9:15; Is. 37:31; Ezek. 6:8; 14:22

17 [p]Is. 13:7; Jer. 6:24; Ezek. 21:7; Heb. 12:12

18 [q]Is. 3:24; 15:2, 3; Jer. 48:37; Ezek. 27:31; Amos 8:10

in which it was spoken by the prophet, the day of the Lord could mean joy or sorrow for Israel. In the New Testament, see Rom. 2:16; 1 Cor. 1:8; 5:5; 2 Cor. 1:14; Phil. 1:6, 10; 2:16; 2 Tim. 1:12, 18; 4:8; Heb. 10:25; 2 Pet. 2:9; 3:12; Rev. 16:14.

19 'They will throw their silver into the streets,
And their gold will be like refuse;
Their 'silver and their gold will not be able to deliver them
In the day of the wrath of the LORD;
They will not satisfy their souls.
Nor fill their stomachs,
Because it became their stumbling block of iniquity.

20 'As for the beauty of his ornaments,
He set it in majesty;
[s]But they made from it
The images of their abominations—
Their detestable things;
Therefore I have made it
Like refuse to them.

21 I will give it as 'plunder
Into the hands of strangers,
And to the wicked of the earth as spoil;
And they shall defile it.

22 I will turn My face from them,
And they will defile My secret place;
For robbers shall enter it and defile it.

23 'Make a chain,
For [u]the land is filled with crimes of blood,
And the city is full of violence.

24 Therefore I will bring the [v]worst of the Gentiles,
And they will possess their houses;
I will cause the pomp of the strong to cease,
And their holy places shall be [w]defiled.

25 [3]Destruction comes;
They will seek peace, but *there shall be* none.

26 [x]Disaster will come upon disaster,
And rumor will be upon rumor.
[y]Then they will seek a vision from a prophet;
But the law will perish from the priest,
And counsel from the elders.

27 'The king will mourn,
The prince will be clothed with desolation,
And the hands of the common people will tremble.
I will do to them according to their way,
And according to what they deserve I will judge them;
Then they shall know that I *am* the LORD!' "

Abominations in the Temple

8 And it came to pass in the sixth year, in the sixth *month,* on the fifth *day* of the month, as I sat in my house with [a]the elders of Judah sitting before me, that [b]the hand of the Lord GOD fell upon me there. 2 [c]Then I looked, and there was a likeness, like the appearance of fire—from the appearance of His waist and downward, fire; and from His waist and upward, like the appearance of brightness, [d]like the color of amber. 3 He [e]stretched out the form of a hand, and took

19 [r]Prov. 11:4; Jer. 15:13; Zeph. 1:18
20 [s]Jer. 7:30
21 [t]2 Kin. 24:13; Jer. 20:5
23 [u]2 Kin. 21:16
24 [v]Ezek. 21:31; 28:7 [w]2 Chr. 7:20; Ezek. 24:21
25 [3]Lit. *Shuddering*
26 [x]Deut. 32:23; Is. 47:11; Jer. 4:20 [y]Ps. 74:9; Lam. 2:9; Ezek. 20:1, 3; Mic. 3:6

CHAPTER 8

1 [a]Ezek. 14:1; 20:1; 33:31 [b]Ezek. 1:3; 3:22
2 [c]Ezek. 1:26, 27 [d]Ezek. 1:4, 27
3 [e]Dan. 5:5

■ **7:22–27** Because the Lord had chosen Jerusalem as His dwelling and had miraculously fought on behalf of the city in the past (2 Kin. 18; 19; 2 Chr. 32; Is. 36:37), Judah had come to accept the notion that the city was inviolable as a theological truth. Ezekiel's contemporary, Jeremiah, was also warning the inhabitants of the city not to trust in the existence of the temple as a guarantee of their own security (Jer. 7:1–15; 26:1–19).

■ **8:1–18** The prophet sees four different types of idolatry flourishing in the city: (a) worship of the "image of jealousy" (vv. 5, 6); (b) worship of "beasts" (vv. 7–13); (c) the "Tammuz" cult (vv. 14, 15); and (d) worship of the "sun" (v. 16). All segments of society were involved: the elders (vv. 11, 12), the women (v. 14), and the priests (v. 16).

■ **8:3 to Jerusalem.** It is not necessary to conclude that Ezekiel went physically to Jerusalem. His visionary experience of transport is not unlike other visionary experiences in the Bible (3:12, 14; 37:1; 40:1; 2 Cor. 12:2).

north gate. This led from the outer to the inner court of the temple.

me by a lock of my hair; and [f]the Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven, and [g]brought me in visions of God to Jerusalem, to the door of the north gate of the inner *court,* [h]where the seat of the image of jealousy *was,* which [i]provokes[1] to jealousy. 4 And behold, the [j]glory of the God of Israel *was* there, like the vision that I [k]saw in the plain.

5 Then He said to me, "Son of man, lift your eyes now toward the north." So I lifted my eyes toward the north, and there, north of the altar gate, was this image of jealousy in the entrance.

6 Furthermore He said to me, "Son of man, do you see what they are doing, the great [l]abominations that the house of Israel commits here, to make Me go far away from My sanctuary? Now turn again, you will see greater abominations." 7 So He brought me to the door of the court; and when I looked, there was a hole in the wall. 8 Then He said to me, "Son of man, dig into the wall"; and when I dug into the wall, there was a door.

9 And He said to me, "Go in, and see the wicked abominations which they are doing there." 10 So I went in and saw, and there—every [m]sort of [n]creeping thing, abominable beasts, and all the idols of the house of Israel, [2]portrayed all around on the walls. 11 And there stood before them [o]seventy men of the elders of the house of Israel, and in their midst stood Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan. Each man had a censer in his hand, and a thick cloud of incense went up. 12 Then He said to me, "Son of man, have you seen what the elders of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the room of his idols? For they say, [p]'The LORD does not see us, the LORD has forsaken the land.' "

13 And He said to me, "Turn again, *and* you will see greater abominations that they are doing." 14 So He brought me to the door of the north gate of the LORD's house; and to my dismay, women were sitting there weeping for [3]Tammuz.

15 Then He said to me, "Have you seen *this,* O son of man? Turn again, you will see greater abominations than these." 16 So He brought me into the inner court of the LORD's house; and there, at the door of the temple of the LORD, [q]between the porch and the altar, [r]*were* about twenty-five men [s]with their backs toward the temple of the LORD and their faces toward the east, and they were worshiping [t]the sun toward the east.

17 And He said to me, "Have you seen *this,* O son of man? Is it a trivial thing to the house of Judah to commit the abominations which they commit here? For they have [u]filled the land with violence; then they have returned to provoke Me to anger. Indeed they put the branch to their nose. 18 [v]Therefore I also will act in fury. My [w]eye will not spare nor will I have pity; and though they [x]cry in My ears with a loud voice, I will not hear them."

The Wicked Are Slain

9 Then He called out in my hearing with a loud voice, saying, "Let those who have charge over the city draw near, each *with* a [1]deadly weapon in his hand." 2 And suddenly six men

3 [f]Ezek. 3:14 [g]Ezek. 11:1, 24; 40:2 [h]Ezek. 5:11 [i]Deut. 32:16, 21 [1]Arouses the LORD's jealousy

4 [j]Ezek. 3:12; 9:3 [k]Ezek. 1:28; 3:22, 23

6 [l]2 Kin. 23:4, 5

10 [m]Ex. 20:4 [n]Rom. 1:23 [2]Or *carved*

11 [o]Num. 11:16, 25

12 [p]Ezek. 9:9

14 [3]A Sumerian fertility god similar to the Gr. god Adonis

16 [q]Joel 2:17 [r]Ezek. 11:1 [s]Jer. 2:27; 32:33 [t]Deut. 4:19

17 [u]Ezek. 9:9

18 [v]Ezek. 5:13; 16:42; 24:13 [w]Ezek. 5:11; 7:4, 9; 9:5, 10 [x]Mic. 3:4

CHAPTER 9

1 [1]Or *destroying*

■ **8:5 image of jealousy.** The image is defined in v. 3 as something that "provokes to jealousy," that is, provokes the anger of the God who is jealous for His own honor (Ex. 20:5). God's glory belonged there (v. 4); the idol did not. This idol was probably an Asherah, an image of a Canaanite goddess who was possibly viewed as Yahweh's consort. Manasseh put an image of this kind in the temple (2 Kin. 21:7).

■ **8:10 beasts.** Worshiping beasts was worshiping the creature rather than the Creator (Rom. 1:25). Animals over which man was to rule and have dominion had become the object of veneration (Gen. 1:28).

■ **8:11 Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan.** Shaphan had been instrumental in Josiah's reform (2 Kin. 22:3–14; 2 Chr. 34:8, 15–20). Burning incense in the temple precincts was a rite reserved for the priests (Ex. 30:1–10; Num. 16:40; 18:1–7; 2 Chr. 26:16–21).

■ **8:14 Tammuz.** At the time of Ezekiel, Tammuz was worshiped both as a fertility god and the lord of the underworld. Rites used in worship of Tammuz were tied to the annual cycles of death and rebirth of vegetation. When plants withered under the heat of the summer sun, Tammuz was thought to have died and descended to the underworld; mourning rites marked his passing. The reappearance of vegetation was viewed as the return of Tammuz; fertility rites sought to ensure the productivity of the land.

■ **8:16 twenty-five men.** These were probably priests since access to the area between the altar and the portico of the temple was ordinarily restricted to priests. The temple faced east. Rather than face the temple to lament and mourn their sins and to intercede for the nation as they should have done (9:4; Joel 2:17), these men literally turned their backs on the house of God and worshiped the rising sun instead (2 Kin. 21:5; 23:11). Astral cults were common in the ancient Near East.

■ **8:17 violence.** The sins denounced in this chapter are primarily in reference to corrupt religious practice, but not exclusively. Corrupt religion is inevitably accompanied by corrupt relations between people, so that the entire land is described as full of violence or lawlessness. This theme is further developed in 9:9 and 11:6.

branch to their nose. Some Assyrian reliefs show people holding branches before their faces in a gesture of reverence and worship; this may be a reference to that ritual gesture.

■ **9:1 each with a deadly weapon.** The idolatry of the nation would not go unpunished (cf. 2 Chr. 15:12, 13). Though the slayers are described as men (vv. 1, 2), they are probably angelic warriors (Ex. 12:23–30; 1 Chr. 21:15–20) assigned to the execution of the idolaters.

■ **9:2 clothed with linen.** Linen garments were worn by priests (Ex. 28:31–42), but angels and those in the presence of God were also so described (Dan. 10:5; 12:6, 7; Rev. 15:6; 19:8, 14).

a writer's inkhorn. This man is a scribe, apparently charged with keeping the heavenly record (Ex. 32:32, 33; Ps. 69:28; 139:16; Dan. 12:1; Phil. 4:3; Rev. 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27). Ezekiel's vision is a reminder that idolaters have no place in the city of God (1 Cor. 5:11; 6:9; Eph. 5:5; Rev. 21:8; 22:15).

came from the direction of the upper gate, which faces north, each with his [2]battle-ax in his hand. [a]One man among them *was* clothed with linen and had a writer's inkhorn [3]at his side. They went in and stood beside the bronze altar.

[3] Now [b]the glory of the God of Israel had gone up from the cherub, where it had been, to the threshold of the [4]temple. And He called to the man clothed with linen, who *had* the writer's inkhorn at his side; [4] and the LORD said to him, "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put [c]a mark on the foreheads of the men [d]who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it."

[5] To the others He said in my [5]hearing, "Go after him through the city and [e]kill;[6] [f]do not let your eye spare, nor have any pity. [6] [g]Utterly[7] slay old *and* young men, maidens and little children and women; but [h]do not come near anyone on whom *is* the mark; and [i]begin at My sanctuary." [j]So they began with the elders who *were* before the [8]temple. [7] Then He said to them, "Defile the [9]temple, and fill the courts with the slain. Go out!" And they went out and killed in the city.

[8] So it was, that while they were killing them, I was left *alone;* and I [k]fell on my face and cried out, and said, [l]"Ah, Lord GOD! Will You destroy all the remnant of Israel in pouring out Your fury on Jerusalem?"

[9] Then He said to me, "The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah *is* exceedingly great, and [m]the land is full of bloodshed, and the city full of perversity; for they say, [n]'The LORD has forsaken the land, and [o]the LORD does not see!' [10] And as for Me also, My [p]eye will neither spare, nor will I have pity, *but* [q]I will recompense their deeds on their own head."

[11] Just then, the man clothed with linen, who *had* the inkhorn at his side, reported back and said, "I have done as You commanded me."

The Glory Departs from the Temple

10 And I looked, and there in the [a]firmament[1] that was above the head of the cherubim, there appeared something like a sapphire stone, having the appearance of the likeness of a throne. [2] [b]Then He spoke to the man clothed with linen, and said, "Go in among the wheels, under the cherub, fill your hands with [c]coals of fire from among the cherubim, and [d]scatter *them* over the city." And he went in as I watched.

[3] Now the cherubim were standing on the [2]south side of the [3]temple when the man went in, and the [e]cloud filled the inner court. [4] [f]Then the glory of the LORD went up from the cherub, *and paused* over the threshold of the [4]temple; and [g]the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the LORD's [h]glory. [5] And the [i]sound of the wings of the cherubim was heard *even* in the outer court, like [j]the voice of Almighty God when He speaks.

[6] Then it happened, when He commanded the man clothed in linen, saying, "Take fire from among the wheels, from among the cherubim," that he went in and stood beside the wheels. [7] And the cherub stretched out his hand from among the cherubim to the fire that *was* among the cherubim, and took *some of it* and put *it* into the hands of the *man* clothed with linen, who took *it* and went out. [8] [k]The cherubim appeared to have the form of a man's hand under their wings.

[9] [l]And when I looked, there were four wheels by the cherubim, one wheel by one cherub and another wheel by each other cherub; the wheels appeared *to have* the color of a [m]beryl stone. [10] *As for* their appearance, all four looked alike—as it were, a wheel in the middle of a wheel. [11] [n]When they went, they went toward *any of* their four directions; they did not turn aside when they went, but followed in the direction the head was facing. They did not turn aside when they went. [12] And their whole body, with their back, their hands, their wings, and the wheels that the four had, *were* [o]full of eyes all around. [13] As for the wheels, they were called in my [5]hearing, "Wheel."

[14] [p]Each one had four faces: the first face *was* the face of a cherub, the second face the face of

2 [a]Lev. 16:4 [2]Lit. *shattering weapon* [3]Lit. *upon his loins*
3 [b]Ezek. 3:23; 8:4; 10:4, 18; 11:22, 23 [4]Lit. *house*
4 [c]Rev. 7:2, 3; 9:4; 14:1 [d]Jer. 13:17
5 [e]Ezek. 7:9 [f]Ezek. 5:11 [5]Lit. *ears* [6]Lit. *strike*
6 [g]2 Chr. 36:17 [h]Rev. 9:4 [i]Jer. 25:29 [j]Ezek. 8:11, 12, 16 [7]Lit. *Slay to destruction* [8]Lit. *house*
7 [9]Lit. *house*
8 [k]Josh. 7:6 [l]Ezek. 11:13
9 [m]2 Kin. 21:16 [n]Ezek. 8:12 [o]Is. 29:15
10 [p]Ezek. 5:11; 7:4; 8:18 [q]Ezek. 11:21

CHAPTER 10

1 [a]Ezek. 1:22, 26 [1]*expanse*
2 [b]Dan. 10:5 [c]Ezek. 1:13 [d]Rev. 8:5
3 [e]1 Kin. 8:10, 11 [2]Lit. *right* [3]Lit. *house*
4 [f]Ezek. 1:28 [g]Ezek. 43:5 [h]Ezek. 11:22, 23 [4]Lit. *house*
5 [i]Ezek. 1:24 [j][Ps. 29:3]
8 [k]Ezek. 1:8; 10:21
9 [l]Ezek. 1:15 [m]Ezek. 1:16
11 [n]Ezek. 1:17
12 [o]Rev. 4:6, 8
13 [5]Lit. *ears*
14 [p]Ezek. 1:6, 10, 11

■ **9:3 the glory.** The glory cloud that revealed the divine presence was understood to dwell above the Most Holy Place in the temple; now the cloud has begun a journey visually portraying the way in which God will forsake Jerusalem (10:18, 19; 11:22, 23).

■ **9:4 mark.** The mark on the foreheads in this vision may have influenced John in Rev. 7:3; 14:9. The mark placed on the foreheads was the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet, *tau.* At the time of Ezekiel, *tau* was written like the English "X." Early Christian interpreters saw in this slanted cross an anticipation of the cross of Christ. Compare also the marking of the doorposts and lintels in the Passover narrative (Ex. 12:21–23).

■ **9:9 bloodshed.** The indictments in ch. 8 had concentrated on idolatry and cultic offenses; here the issue is not the relationship between God and people, but relations among people. The prophet is elaborating on the violence and lawlessness mentioned in 8:17.

■ **10:1 cherubim.** See 1:5 note.

■ **10:7 stretched out his hand.** The cherub reaches inside the pillar of fire to retrieve the flames that will devour the city (v. 2).

■ **10:12 eyes.** See Deut. 11:12; 2 Chr. 16:9; Prov. 15:3; Zech. 3:9; 4:10; Rev. 4:8.

■ **10:14 cherub.** This face was an ox or bull in the earlier vision (1:10).

a man, the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle. 15 And the cherubim were lifted up. This *was* [q]the living creature I saw by the River Chebar. 16 [r]When the cherubim went, the wheels went beside them; and when the cherubim lifted their wings to mount up from the earth, the same wheels also did not turn from beside them. 17 [s]When [6]*the cherubim* stood still, *the wheels* stood still, and when [7]*one* was lifted up, [8]*the other* lifted itself up, for the spirit of the living creature *was* in them.

18 Then [t]the glory of the LORD [u]departed from the threshold of the [9]temple and stood over the cherubim. 19 And [v]the cherubim lifted their wings and mounted up from the earth in my sight. When they went out, the wheels *were* beside them; and they stood at the door of the [w]east gate of the LORD's house, and the glory of the God of Israel *was* above them.

20 [x]This *is* the living creature I saw under the God of Israel [y]by the River Chebar, and I knew they *were* cherubim. 21 [z]Each one had four faces and each one four wings, and the likeness of the hands of a man *was* under their wings. 22 And [a]the likeness of their faces *was* the same *as* the faces which I had seen by the River Chebar, their appearance and their persons. [b]They each went straight forward.

15 [q]Ezek. 1:3, 5

16 [r]Ezek. 1:19

17 [s]Ezek. 1:12, 20, 21 [6]Lit. *they* [7]Lit. *they were* [8]Lit. *they lifted them*

18 [t]Ezek. 10:4 [u]Hos. 9:12 [9]Lit. *house*

19 [v]Ezek. 11:22 [w]Ezek. 11:1

20 [x]Ezek. 1:22 [y]Ezek. 1:1

21 [z]Ezek. 1:6, 8; 10:14; 41:18, 19

22 [a]Ezek. 1:10 [b]Ezek. 1:9, 12

Judgment on Wicked Counselors

11 Then [a]the Spirit lifted me up and brought me to [b]the East Gate of the LORD's house, which faces eastward; and there [c]at the door of the gate were twenty-five men, among whom I saw Jaazaniah the son of Azzur, and Pelatiah the son of Benaiah, princes of the people. 2 And He said to me: "Son of man, these *are* the men who devise iniquity and give wicked [1]counsel in this city, 3 who say, '*The time is* not [d]near to build houses; [e]this *city is* the [2]caldron, and we *are* the meat.' 4 Therefore prophesy against them, prophesy, O son of man!"

5 Then [f]the Spirit of the LORD fell upon me, and said to me, "Speak! 'Thus says the LORD: "Thus you have said, O house of Israel; for [g]I know the things that come into your mind. 6 [h]You have multiplied your slain in this city, and you have filled its streets with the slain." 7 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: [i]"Your slain whom you have laid in its midst, they *are* the meat, and this *city is* the caldron; [j]but I shall bring you out of the midst of it. 8 You have [k]feared the sword; and I will bring a sword upon you," says the Lord GOD. 9 "And I will bring you out of its midst, and deliver you into the hands of strangers, and [l]execute judgments on you. 10 [m]You shall fall by the sword. I will judge you at [n]the border of Israel. [o]Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD. 11 [p]This *city* shall not be your [3]caldron, nor shall you be the meat in its midst. I will judge you at the border of Israel. 12 And you shall know that I *am* the LORD; for you have not walked in My statutes nor executed My judgments, but [q]have done according to the customs of the Gentiles which *are* all around you.'" "

13 Now it happened, while I was prophesying, that [r]Pelatiah the son of Benaiah died. Then [s]I fell on my face and cried with a loud voice, and said, "Ah, Lord GOD! Will You make a complete end of the remnant of Israel?"

CHAPTER 11

1 [a]Ezek. 3:12, 14 [b]Ezek. 10:19 [c]Ezek. 8:16

2 [1]Advice

3 [d]2 Pet. 3:4 [e]Jer. 1:13 [2]Pot

5 [f]Ezek. 2:2; 3:24 [g][Jer. 16:17; 17:10]

6 [h]Ezek. 7:23; 22:2–6, 9, 12, 27

7 [i]Mic. 3:2, 3 [j]Ezek. 11:9

8 [k]Jer. 42:16

9 [l]Ezek. 5:8

10 [m]Jer. 39:6; 52:10 [n]2 Kin. 14:25 [o]Ps. 9:16

11 [p]Ezek. 11:3, 7 [3]Pot

12 [q]Deut. 12:30, 31

13 [r]Acts 5:5 [s]Ezek. 9:8

16 [t]Is. 8:14

God Will Restore Israel

14 Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 15 "Son of man, your brethren, your relatives, your countrymen, and all the house of Israel in its entirety, *are* those about whom the inhabitants of Jerusalem have said, 'Get far away from the LORD; this land has been given to us as a possession.' 16 Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Although I have cast them far off among the Gentiles, and although I have scattered them among the countries, [t]yet I shall be a

■ **11:1 twenty-five men.** These men appear to be political leaders, not priests, and so would not be the same as the twenty-five sun worshipers in 8:16.

Jaazaniah the son of Azzur. Not the same person as Jaazaniah the son of Shaphan (8:11).

■ **11:3 caldron . . . meat.** The leadership of Jerusalem had already been deported by Nebuchadnezzar in 597 B.C.; this deportation included much of the royal family, the leaders of the military, and the craftsmen, leaving only "the poorest people of the land" (2 Kin. 24:13–16). Those who rose to prominence in the absence of the earlier ruling class appear to have had delusions of grandeur. The analogy they used of a caldron and meat seems to mean that they considered those who had been deported from the city as the waste parts of a butchered animal, while they were the best parts.

■ **11:7 meat.** The prophet makes clear that the best part, the "meat" of the city, was the ones who had been killed. The new leaders had considered themselves to be this best part (v. 3 note).

■ **11:13 Pelatiah.** This name means "Yahweh provides escape." When this man dies suddenly and unexpectedly during Ezekiel's vision, Ezekiel fears that all hope of escape died with him. The prophet intercedes with the Lord once again on behalf of the remnant. See note on 6:8; cf. 9:8.

■ **11:15 relatives.** In case of emergency, such as bankruptcy, a person's close relatives had an obligation to preserve the family and property (Ruth 2:20 note). If these relatives were far away, the property would not be safe.

■ **11:16 sanctuary.** Since the exiles were far from the temple in Jerusalem, God Himself would substitute as their sanctuary. Jesus later would take the place of the temple (Matt. 26:61; 27:40; John 2:19), and through the Spirit His followers would become His temple (1 Cor. 3:16, 17; 2 Cor. 6:16; 1 Pet. 2:5).

16 [d]*holy place*

17 [u]Jer. 3:12, 18; 24:5

18 [v]Ezek. 37:23

19 [w]Jer. 32:39 [x]Ezek. 18:31 [y]Zech. 7:12 [5]Lit. *you* (pl.)

20 [z]Ps. 105:45 [a]Jer. 24:7

21 [b]Ezek. 9:10

22 [c]Ezek. 1:19

23 [d]Ezek. 8:4; 9:3 [e]Zech. 14:4 [f]Ezek. 43:2

24 [g]Ezek. 8:3 [6]Or *Babylon*, and so elsewhere in the book

CHAPTER 12

2 [a]Ezek. 2:3, 6–8 [b]Jer. 5:21 [c]Ezek. 2:5

6 [d]Ezek. 4:3; 24:24

9 [e]Ezek. 2:5 [f]Ezek. 17:12; 24:19

10 [g]Mal. 1:1 [7]*oracle, prophecy*

11 [h]Ezek. 12:6 [i]2 Kin. 25:4, 5, 7

12 [j]Jer. 39:4; 52:7

13 [k]Jer. 52:9 [l]Jer. 52:11

14 [m]Ezek. 5:10 [n]Ezek. 5:2, 12

15 [o]Ezek. 6:7, 14; 12:16, 20

16 [p]Ezek. 6:8–10

little [d]sanctuary for them in the countries where they have gone." ' [17]Therefore say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: [u]"I will gather you from the peoples, assemble you from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you the land of Israel." ' [18]And they will go there, and they will take away all its [v]detestable things and all its abominations from there. [19]Then [w]I will give them one heart, and I will put [x]a new spirit within [5]them, and take [y]the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, [20][z]that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; [a]and they shall be My people, and I will be their God. [21]But *as for those* whose hearts follow the desire for their detestable things and their abominations, [b]I will recompense their deeds on their own heads," says the Lord GOD.

[22]So the cherubim [c]lifted up their wings, with the wheels beside them, and the glory of the God of Israel *was* high above them. [23]And [d]the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city and stood [e]on the mountain, [f]which *is* on the east side of the city.

[24]Then [g]the Spirit took me up and brought me in a vision by the Spirit of God into [6]Chaldea, to those in captivity. And the vision that I had seen went up from me. [25]So I spoke to those in captivity of all the things the LORD had shown me.

Judah's Captivity Portrayed

12 Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying: [2]"Son of man, you dwell in the midst of [a]a rebellious house, which [b]has eyes to see but does not see, and ears to hear but does not hear; [c]for they *are* a rebellious house.

[3]"Therefore, son of man, prepare your belongings for captivity, and go into captivity by day in their sight. You shall go from your place into captivity to another place in their sight. It may be that they will consider, though they *are* a rebellious house. [4]By day you shall bring out your belongings in their sight, as though going into captivity; and at evening you shall go in their sight, like those who go into captivity. [5]Dig through the wall in their sight, and carry your belongings out through it. [6]In their sight you shall bear *them* on *your* shoulders *and* carry *them* out at twilight; you shall cover your face, so that you cannot see the ground, [d]for I have made you a sign to the house of Israel."

[7]So I did as I was commanded. I brought out my belongings by day, as though going into captivity, and at evening I dug through the wall with my hand. I brought *them* out at twilight, *and* I bore *them* on *my* shoulder in their sight.

[8]And in the morning the word of the LORD came to me, saying, [9]"Son of man, has not the house of Israel, [e]the rebellious house, said to you, [f]'What are you doing?' [10]Say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "This [g]burden[7] *concerns* the prince in Jerusalem and all the house of Israel who are among them." ' [11]Say, [h]'I *am* a sign to you. As I have done, so shall it be done to them; [i]they shall be carried away into captivity.' [12]And [j]the prince who *is* among them shall bear *his belongings* on *his* shoulder at twilight and go out. They shall dig through the wall to carry *them* out through it. He shall cover his face, so that he cannot see the ground with *his* eyes. [13]I will also spread My [k]net over him, and he shall be caught in My snare. [l]I will bring him to Babylon, *to* the land of the Chaldeans; yet he shall not see it, though he shall die there. [14][m]I will scatter to every wind all who *are* around him to help him, and all his troops; and [n]I will draw out the sword after them.

[15][o]"Then they shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I scatter them among the nations and disperse them throughout the countries. [16][p]But I will spare a few of their men from the sword, from famine, and from pestilence, that they may declare all their abominations among the Gentiles wherever they go. Then they shall know that I *am* the LORD."

■ **11:22–24** At the close of his vision Ezekiel sees the glory cloud depart from the city of Jerusalem and move east across the Kidron Valley to the Mount of Olives as it departs from the city. But God had not forsaken the city forever. Ezekiel later describes the glory of God returning to Jerusalem (ch. 43).

■ **12:1–16** This is another symbolic action (4:1–3 note); the prophet enacts the exile of his countrymen in Jerusalem.

■ **12:2 rebellious.** See 2:3–8; 3:9, 26, 27.

eyes . . . ears. Compare Deut. 29:4; Prov. 20:12; Is. 6:9–10; 32:3; Jer. 5:21; Matt. 13:15, 16; Mark 8:18; Acts 28:26, 27; Rom. 11:8. The entire section makes frequent allusion to seeing (vv. 4–7, 12, 13).

■ **12:4 evening.** Taking place under cover of darkness, this would be a furtive escape, like digging through the wall of a house (v. 5). Ezekiel portrays Zedekiah's abortive effort to escape from Nebuchadnezzar (vv. 10, 11; 2 Kin. 25:3–7).

■ **12:6 cover.** Covering the face was a gesture of shame or grief (24:17, 22; Lev. 13:45; 2 Sam. 19:4; Esth. 6:12; 7:8; Ps. 44:15; 69:7). In this context it suggests that the exiles will never see Jerusalem again, and more particularly, that Zedekiah will lose his sight (vv. 12, 13; 2 Kin. 25:7).

■ **12:13 My net.** God is described as a hunter or fowler (17:20; 32:3; Job 19:6; Is. 8:14; 24:18; 51:20; Jer. 50:24; Lam. 1:13; Hos. 7:12).

Judgment Not Postponed

17 Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 18 "Son of man, [q]eat your bread with [2]quaking, and drink your water with trembling and anxiety. 19 And say to the people of the land, 'Thus says the Lord GOD to the inhabitants of Jerusalem *and* to the land of Israel: "They shall eat their bread with anxiety, and drink their water with dread, so that her land may [r]be emptied of all who are in it, [s]because of the violence of all those who dwell in it. 20 Then the cities that are inhabited shall be laid waste, and the land shall become desolate; and you shall know that I *am* the LORD." ' "

21 And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 22 "Son of man, what *is* this proverb *that* you *people* have about the land of Israel, which says, [t]'The days are prolonged, and every vision fails'? 23 Tell them therefore, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "I will lay this proverb to rest, and they shall no more use it as a proverb in Israel." But say to them, [u]"The days are at hand, and the [3]fulfillment of every vision. 24 For [v]no more shall there be any [w]false[4] vision or flattering divination within the house of Israel. 25 For I *am* the LORD. I speak, and [x]the word which I speak will come to pass; it will no more be postponed; for in your days, O rebellious house, I will say the word and [y]perform it," says the Lord GOD.' "

26 Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 27 [z]"Son of man, look, the house of Israel is saying, 'The vision that he sees *is* [a]for many days *from now,* and he prophesies of times far off.' 28 [b]Therefore say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "None of My words will be postponed any more, but the word which I speak [c]will be done," says the Lord GOD.' "

Woe to Foolish Prophets

13 And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, prophesy [a]against the prophets of Israel who prophesy, and say to [b]those who prophesy out of their own [c]heart,[1] 'Hear the word of the LORD!' "

3 Thus says the Lord GOD: "Woe to the foolish prophets, who follow their own spirit and have seen [2]nothing! 4 O Israel, your prophets are [d]like foxes in the deserts. 5 You [e]have not gone up into the [3]gaps to build a wall for the house of Israel to stand in battle on the day of the LORD. 6 [f]They have envisioned futility and false divination, saying, 'Thus says the LORD!' But the LORD has [g]not sent them; yet they hope that the word may [4]be confirmed. 7 Have you not seen a futile vision, and have you not spoken false divination? You say, 'The LORD says,' but I have not spoken."

8 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Because you have spoken nonsense and envisioned lies, therefore I *am* indeed against you," says the Lord GOD. 9 "My hand will be [h]against the prophets who envision futility and who [i]divine lies; they shall not be in the assembly of My people, [j]nor be written in the record of the house of Israel, [k]nor shall they enter into the land of Israel. [l]Then you shall know that I *am* the Lord GOD.

10 "Because, indeed, because they have seduced My people, saying, [m]'Peace!' when *there is* no peace—and one builds a wall, and they [n]plaster[5] it with untempered *mortar*— 11 say to those

18 [q]Ezek. 4:16 [2]*shaking*

19 [r]Zech. 7:14 [s]Ps. 107:34

22 [t]Ezek. 11:3; 12:27

23 [u]Zeph. 1:14 [3]Lit. *word*

24 [v]Ezek. 13:6 [w]Lam. 2:14 [4]Lit. *vain*

25 [x][Luke 21:33] [y][Is. 14:24]

27 [z]Ezek. 12:22 [a]Dan. 10:14

28 [b]Ezek. 12:23, 25 [c]Jer. 4:7

CHAPTER 13

2 [a]Ezek. 22:25–28 [b]Ezek. 13:17 [c]Jer. 14:14; 23:16, 26 [1]Inspiration

3 [2]No vision

4 [d]Song 2:15

5 [e]Ps. 106:23 [3]*breaches*

6 [f]Ezek. 22:28 [g]Jer. 27:8–15 [4]Come true

9 [h]Jer. 23:30 [i]Jer. 20:3–6 [j]Ezra 2:59, 62 [k]Jer. 20:3–6 [l]Ezek. 11:10, 12

10 [m]Jer. 6:14; 8:11 [n]Ezek. 22:28 [5]Or *whitewash*

■ **12:17–20** This is another symbolic action (see Introduction). The food and water of Ezekiel are presumably the siege rations he was allotted in 4:9–11. The prophet's physical weakness and trembling represented the lot of those in Jerusalem.

■ **12:21—14:11** These passages are united by a concern with false prophecy. The Old Testament uses a number of criteria for distinguishing true from false prophecy. These criteria focus on what the message was, how it was received, and who received it. (a) The preeminent criterion for true or false prophecy is the fulfillment of the prophet's words (Deut. 18:21, 22). His message must not contradict earlier revelation (Deut. 13:1–5). The message of a true prophet often ran against popular sentiment, and the prophets were persecuted because of their unpopular pronouncements (Jer. 20:7–10; 38:1–13; cf. Matt. 23:34, 35). (b) Certain means of discerning God's will were forbidden (Deut. 18:9–14), such as divination, spiritism, and sorcery. However, prophets could receive revelation through dreams and visions (Num. 12:6–8). (c) The true prophet was admitted to God's confidence (Jer. 23:18). The experience of admission to God's counsel as if to a divine assembly was often reported in a call narrative (1:4—3:15 note). Finally, the prophet's character had to be consistent with the glory of the God he served.

■ **12:27 times far off.** The people scoff that the prophecy will not be fulfilled in their lifetimes. In the New Testament, a similar attitude of disbelief does not change the certainty of the return of Christ (2 Pet. 3:3, 4, 10; Rev. 10:6).

■ **13:4 foxes.** The prophet uses two images to describe the false prophets. They are like foxes in the desert (v. 4), separate from society and useless to it. In vv. 10, 11, they are compared to flimsy walls covered with whitewash (see v. 10 text note), untrustworthy and impermanent.

■ **13:5 not gone up into the gaps.** The focus is on the conduct of the false prophets: the true prophet so identified with God's people as to expose himself to risk on their behalf. When a wall was breached by an attacking army, the assignment of greatest danger was the task of repairing the gap. At such points, the false prophets were nowhere to be found. The Hebrew term for a gap is used to describe Moses, who "stood . . . in the breach" (Ps. 106:23) on behalf of Israel. Ultimately only Jesus Christ can stand in the breach between God and humanity (1 Tim. 2:5).

■ **13:9 record.** Probably the census list and civil register of Israel, the earthly counterpart of the heavenly records. See 9:2 note.

■ **13:10–12** The image of the gap in the wall (v. 5) may have prompted this further description of the actions of the false prophets. Their false visions and lying divinations were a wall of shoddy workmanship—when plastered over or whitewashed (v. 10 text note), it may have looked substantial, but it could not withstand the weather, much less the day of the Lord when God Himself would bring judgment on the city.

who plaster *it* with untempered *mortar,* that it will fall. [o]There will be flooding rain, and you, O great hailstones, shall fall; and a stormy wind shall tear *it* down. [12] Surely, when the wall has fallen, will it not be said to you, 'Where *is* the mortar with which you plastered *it?*' "

[13] Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "I will cause a stormy wind to break forth in My fury; and there shall be a flooding rain in My anger, and great hailstones in fury to consume *it.* [14] So I will break down the wall you have plastered with untempered *mortar,* and bring it down to the ground, so that its foundation will be uncovered; it will fall, and you shall be consumed in the midst of it. [p]Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD.

[15] "Thus will I accomplish My wrath on the wall and on those who have plastered it with untempered *mortar;* and I will say to you, 'The wall *is* no *more,* nor those who plastered it, [16] *that is,* the prophets of Israel who prophesy concerning Jerusalem, and who [q]see visions of peace for her when *there is* no peace,' " says the Lord GOD.

[17] "Likewise, son of man, [r]set your face against the daughters of your people, [s]who prophesy out of their own [6]heart; prophesy against them, [18] and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Woe to the *women* who sew *magic* charms [7]on their sleeves and make veils for the heads of people of every height to hunt souls! Will you [t]hunt the souls of My people, and keep yourselves alive? [19] And will you profane Me among My people [u]for handfuls of barley and for pieces of bread, killing people who should not die, and keeping people alive who should not live, by your lying to My people who listen to lies?"

[20] 'Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I *am* against your *magic* charms by which you hunt souls there like [8]birds. I will tear them from your arms, and let the souls go, the souls you hunt like birds. [21] I will also tear off your veils and deliver My people out of your hand, and they shall no longer be as prey in your hand. [v]Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD.

[22] "Because with [w]lies you have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and you have [x]strengthened the hands of the wicked, so that he does not turn from his wicked way to save his life. [23] Therefore [y]you shall no longer envision futility nor practice divination; for I will deliver My people out of your hand, and you shall know that I *am* the LORD." ' "

Idolatry Will Be Punished

14 Now [a]some of the elders of Israel came to me and sat before me. [2] And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, [3] "Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts, and put before them [b]that which causes them to stumble into iniquity. [c]Should I let Myself be inquired of at all by them?

[4] "Therefore speak to them, and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Everyone of the house of Israel who sets up his idols in his heart, and puts before him what causes him to stumble into iniquity, and then comes to the prophet, I the LORD will answer him who comes, according to the multitude of his idols, [5] that I may seize the house of Israel by their heart, because they are all estranged from Me by their idols." '

[6] "Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Repent, turn away from your idols, and [d]turn your faces away from all your abominations. [7] For anyone of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell in Israel, who separates himself from Me and sets up his idols in his heart and puts before him what causes him to stumble into iniquity, then comes to a prophet to inquire of him concerning Me, I the LORD will answer him by Myself. [8] [e]I will set My face against that man and make him a [f]sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of My people. [g]Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD.

[9] "And if the prophet is induced to speak anything, I the LORD [h]have induced that prophet, and I will stretch out My hand against him and destroy him from among My people Israel. [10] And they shall bear their iniquity; the punishment of the prophet shall be the same as the punishment

11 [o]Ezek. 38:22

14 [p]Ezek. 13:9, 21, 23; 14:8

16 [q]Jer. 6:14; 8:11; 28:9; Ezek. 13:10

17 [r]Ezek. 20:46; 21:2 [s]Ezek. 13:2; Rev. 2:20 [6]Inspiration

18 [t][2 Pet. 2:14] [7]Lit. *over all the joints of My hands;* Vg. *under every elbow;* LXX, Tg. *on all elbows of the hands*

19 [u]1 Sam. 2:15–17; Prov. 28:21; Mic. 3:5; Rom. 16:18; 1 Pet. 5:2

20 [8]Lit. *flying ones*

21 [v]Ezek. 13:9

22 [w]Jer. 28:15 [x]Jer. 23:14

23 [y]Ezek. 12:24; 13:6; Mic. 3:5, 6; Zech. 13:3

CHAPTER 14

1 [a]2 Kin. 6:32; Ezek. 8:1; 20:1; 33:31

3 [b]Ezek. 7:19; Zeph. 1:3 [c]2 Kin. 3:13; Is. 1:15; Jer. 11:11; Ezek. 20:3, 31

6 [d]1 Sam. 7:3; Neh. 1:9; Is. 2:20; 30:22; 55:6, 7; Ezek. 18:30

8 [e]Lev. 17:10; 20:3, 5, 6; Jer. 44:11; Ezek. 15:7 [f]Num. 26:10; Deut. 28:37; Ezek. 5:15 [g]Ezek. 6:7; 13:14

9 [h]1 Kin. 22:23; Job 12:16; Is. 66:4; Jer. 4:10; 2 Thess. 2:11

■ **13:17–23** The Bible mentions several true prophetesses, like Miriam, Deborah, Huldah, and Anna (Ex. 15:20; Judg. 4:4; 2 Kin. 22:14; 2 Chr. 34:22; Luke 2:36), and some false ones (Neh. 6:14; Rev. 2:20). The women mentioned in these verses are practitioners of magic and sorcery, activities specifically forbidden for Israel (12:21—14:11 note). They made their living by selling amulets and charms.

■ **14:3 causes them to stumble.** This is one of the prophet's favorite phrases (vv. 4, 7; 7:19; 44:12 and text note). It may refer to secret idolatry.

■ **14:9 I . . . have induced . . . I will stretch out My hand.** Numerous biblical passages integrate the sovereignty of God and the moral responsibility of human beings without allowing the predeterminate will of God to be used as an excuse for moral evil (Esth. 4:13, 14; Joel 2:32; Matt. 26:24, 25; Acts 2:23). In this section, idolaters without any intention of giving up their idolatry come to seek a prophetic word. By God's arrangement they find a prophet as false as they are, and both will come under God's judgment. The prophet who serves them, though induced by God, must bear the responsibility for his wrongdoing. See 1 Kin. 22:19–25.

of the one who inquired, 11 that the house of Israel may [i]no longer stray from Me, nor be profaned anymore with all their transgressions, [j]but that they may be My people and I may be their God," says the Lord GOD.' "

Judgment on Persistent Unfaithfulness

12 The word of the LORD came again to me, saying: 13 "Son of man, when a land sins against Me by persistent unfaithfulness, I will stretch out My hand against it; I will cut off its [k]supply of bread, send famine on it, and cut off man and beast from it. 14 [l]Even *if* these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver *only* themselves [m]by their righteousness," says the Lord GOD.

15 "If I cause [n]wild beasts to pass through the land, and they [1]empty it, and make it so desolate that no man may pass through because of the beasts, 16 *even* [o]*though* these three men *were* [2]in it, *as* I live," says the Lord GOD, "they would deliver neither sons nor daughters; only they would be delivered, and the land would be [p]desolate.

17 "Or *if* [q]I bring a sword on that land, and say, 'Sword, go through the land,' and I [r]cut off man and beast from it, 18 even [s]*though* these three men *were* in it, *as* I live," says the Lord GOD, "they would deliver neither sons nor daughters, but only they themselves would be delivered.

19 "Or *if* I send [t]a pestilence into that land and [u]pour out My fury on it in blood, and cut off from it man and beast, 20 even [v]*though* Noah, Daniel, and Job *were* in it, *as* I live," says the Lord GOD, "they would deliver neither son nor daughter; they would deliver *only* themselves by their righteousness."

21 For thus says the Lord GOD: "How much more it shall be when [w]I send My four [3]severe judgments on Jerusalem—the sword and famine and wild beasts and pestilence—to cut off man and beast from it? 22 [x]Yet behold, there shall be left in it a remnant who will be [y]brought out, *both* sons and daughters; surely they will come out to you, and [z]you will see their ways and their doings. Then you will be comforted concerning the disaster that I have brought upon Jerusalem, all that I have brought upon it. 23 And they will comfort you, when you see their ways and their doings; and you shall know that I have done nothing [a]without cause that I have done in it," says the Lord GOD.

The Outcast Vine

15 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: 2 "Son of man, how is the wood of the vine *better* than any other wood, the vine branch which is among the trees of the forest? 3 Is wood taken from it to make any object? Or can *men* make a peg from it to hang any vessel on? 4 Instead, [a]it is thrown into the fire for fuel; the fire devours both ends of it, and its middle is burned. Is it useful for *any* work? 5 Indeed, when it was whole, no object could be made from it. How much less will it be useful for *any* work when the fire has devoured it, and it is burned?

6 "Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Like the wood of the vine among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so I will give up the inhabitants of Jerusalem; 7 and [b]I will set My face against them. [c]They will go out from *one* fire, but *another* fire shall devour them. [d]Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I set My face against them. 8 Thus I will make the land desolate, because they have persisted in unfaithfulness,' says the Lord GOD."

God's Love for Jerusalem

16 Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, [a]cause Jerusalem to know her abominations, 3 and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD to Jerusalem: "Your [1]birth

11 [i]Ps. 119:67, 71; Jer. 31:18, 19; [Heb. 12:11]; 2 Pet. 2:15 [j]Ezek. 11:20; 37:27

13 [k]Lev. 26:26; 2 Kin. 25:3; Is. 3:1; Jer. 52:6; Ezek. 4:16; 5:16

14 [l]Jer. 15:1 [m][Prov. 11:4]

15 [n]Lev. 26:22; Num. 21:6; Ezek. 5:17; 14:21 [1]Lit. *bereave it* of children

16 [o]Ezek. 14:14, 18, 20 [p]Ezek. 15:8; 33:28, 29 [2]Lit. *in the midst of it*

17 [q]Lev. 26:25; Ezek. 5:12; 21:3, 4; 29:8; 38:21 [r]Ezek. 25:13; Zeph. 1:3

18 [s]Ezek. 14:14

19 [t]2 Sam. 24:15; Ezek. 38:22 [u]Ezek. 7:8

20 [v]Ezek. 14:14

21 [w]Ezek. 5:17; 33:27; Amos 4:6–10; Rev. 6:8 [3]Lit. *evil*

22 [x]2 Kin. 25:11, 12; Ezra 2:1; Ezek. 12:16; 36:20 [y]Ezek. 6:8 [z]Ezek. 20:43

23 [a]Jer. 22:8, 9

CHAPTER 15

4 [a][John 15:6]

7 [b]Lev. 26:17; [Ps. 34:16]; Jer. 21:10; Ezek. 14:8 [c]Is. 24:18 [d]Ezek. 7:4

CHAPTER 16

2 [a]Is. 58:1; Ezek. 20:4; 22:2

3 [1]*origin and your birth*

■ **14:14 Even if.** The prophet is apparently addressing the view held by some that the presence of a certain number of righteous people in Jerusalem would serve to protect the city (cf. Gen. 18:22–32).

Noah, Daniel, and Job. Though Noah was a righteous man and blameless among those of his generation (Gen. 6:9), the world was not spared because of his presence. Job too was blameless and upright (Job 1:1), but this did not spare his family. The identity of the "Daniel" mentioned is much debated. He is probably not Ezekiel's contemporary known from the Book of Daniel; the Hebrew spelling used here *(Dani'el)* is different from that used for the name of the prophet *(Daniyye'l)*. More probably this Daniel is a heroic figure mentioned in a text from ancient Ugarit. This story concerns a king named Dan'el known to some extent for his righteousness, wisdom (cf. 28:3), and pity. "Noah, Daniel, and Job" would then designate non-Israelite figures from remote times known for their uprightness. They could not save the world in their own day and even together could not save the city of Jerusalem (cf. v. 20).

■ **15:3 any object.** The wood of the vine was not fit for any worthwhile object, not even a lowly peg. God reminds the exiles that His choice of Israel as His people was not because of any intrinsic worth in them, but solely a matter of His grace (Deut. 7:6–8).

■ **15:4 burned.** The partial burning of Israel is probably a reference to the partial exile that had already taken place in 597 B.C. with the deportation of Jehoiachin and a large portion of the city's upper class, including Ezekiel. After this partial damage, the city is worth even less. The prophet Zechariah likens the Babylonian exile to a fire when he describes the high priest as "a brand plucked from the fire" (Zech. 3:2).

■ **16:1–63** Ezekiel tells the story of an unwanted child, her marriage,

3 [b]Ezek. 21:30 [c]Ezek. 16:45
4 [d]Hos. 2:3
5 [2]*abhorred*
7 [e]Ex. 1:7 [3]Lit. *a myriad*
8 [f]Ruth 3:9 [g]Gen. 22:16–18 [h]Ex. 24:6–8 [i][Ex. 19:5] [4]Or *the corner of My garment*
10 [5]Or *dolphin* or *dugong*
11 [j]Gen. 24:22, 47 [k]Prov. 1:9
12 [6]Lit. *ring*
13 [l]Deut. 32:13, 14 [m]Ps. 48:2
14 [n]Lam. 2:15
15 [o]Mic. 3:11 [p]Is. 1:21; 57:8
16 [q]Ezek. 7:20 [7]Places for pagan worship
19 [r]Hos. 2:8 [8]Or *a sweet aroma*
20 [s]Jer. 7:31
21 [t]Jer. 19:5
22 [u]Jer. 2:2 [v]Ezek. 16:4–6
24 [w]Jer. 11:13 [x]Jer. 2:20; 3:2 [9]Place for pagan worship
25 [y]Prov. 9:14

[b]and your nativity *are* from the land of Canaan; [c]your father *was* an Amorite and your mother a Hittite. 4 *As for* your nativity, [d]on the day you were born your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed in water to cleanse *you;* you were not rubbed with salt nor wrapped in swaddling cloths. 5 No eye pitied you, to do any of these things for you, to have compassion on you; but you were thrown out into the open field, when you yourself were [2]loathed on the day you were born.

6 "And when I passed by you and saw you struggling in your own blood, I said to you in your blood, 'Live!' Yes, I said to you in your blood, 'Live!' 7 [e]I made you [3]thrive like a plant in the field; and you grew, matured, and became very beautiful. *Your* breasts were formed, your hair grew, but you *were* naked and bare.

8 "When I passed by you again and looked upon you, indeed your time *was* the time of love; [f]so I spread [4]My wing over you and covered your nakedness. Yes, I [g]swore an oath to you and entered into a [h]covenant with you, and [i]you became Mine," says the Lord GOD.

9 "Then I washed you in water; yes, I thoroughly washed off your blood, and I anointed you with oil. 10 I clothed you in embroidered cloth and gave you sandals of [5]badger skin; I clothed you with fine linen and covered you with silk. 11 I adorned you with ornaments, [j]put bracelets on your wrists, [k]and a chain on your neck. 12 And I put a [6]jewel in your nose, earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown on your head. 13 Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your clothing *was of* fine linen, silk, and embroidered cloth. [l]You ate *pastry of* fine flour, honey, and oil. You were exceedingly [m]beautiful, and succeeded to royalty. 14 [n]Your fame went out among the nations because of your beauty, for it *was* perfect through My splendor which I had bestowed on you," says the Lord GOD.

Jerusalem's Harlotry

15 [o]"But you trusted in your own beauty, [p]played the harlot because of your fame, and poured out your harlotry on everyone passing by who *would have* it. 16 [q]You took some of your garments and adorned multicolored [7]high places for yourself, and played the harlot on them. *Such* things should not happen, nor be. 17 You have also taken your beautiful jewelry from My gold and My silver, which I had given you, and made for yourself male images and played the harlot with them. 18 You took your embroidered garments and covered them, and you set My oil and My incense before them. 19 Also [r]My food which I gave you—the pastry of fine flour, oil, and honey *which* I fed you—you set it before them as [8]sweet incense; and *so* it was," says the Lord GOD.

20 [s]"Moreover you took your sons and your daughters, whom you bore to Me, and these you sacrificed to them to be devoured. *Were* your *acts* of harlotry a small matter, 21 that you have slain My children and offered them up to them by causing them to pass through *the* [t]*fire?* 22 And in all your abominations and acts of harlotry you did not remember the days of your [u]youth, [v]when you were naked and bare, struggling in your blood.

23 "Then it was so, after all your wickedness—'Woe, woe to you!' says the Lord GOD— 24 *that* [w]you also built for yourself a shrine, and [x]made a [9]high place for yourself in every street. 25 You built your high places [y]at the head of every road, and made your beauty to be abhorred.

and infidelity. Hosea used marriage as an analogy of the covenant relationship between God and Israel (Hos. 1—3; see also Eph. 5:22–33; Rev. 19:7; 21:2, 9). Ezekiel's speech appears to have a judicial setting; he recounts God's charge against the nation from its earliest days to his own time.

■ **16:3 nativity.** Jerusalem was originally a pagan city; the first inhabitants are variously described as Amorites, Canaanites, Jebusites, and Hittites (v. 45; Gen. 10:15, 16; Josh. 10:5; Judg. 1:21; 19:10; 2 Sam. 5:6). In this respect the city was not unlike the patriarchs, who were of pagan Syrian stock (Deut. 26:5; Josh. 24:14).

■ **16:5 thrown out.** Undesired infants were often abandoned and left to die. The baby girl Ezekiel describes was abandoned before even being washed.

■ **16:7 grew.** The unwanted child grew to beautiful maturity. The onset of puberty appears with development of breasts (cf. 23:3) and the growth of hair; later the girl reaches the age of lovemaking (v. 8).

■ **16:8 spread My wing over you.** See text note. Covering a woman with one's garment is symbolic of entering into marital relations (Ruth 3:9). To "uncover" this relation is to violate it (Deut. 22:30).

I swore an oath. The covenant relationship of God with Israel had been sealed with the oath, "you shall be My people, and I will be your God" (36:28; Lev. 26:12; Jer. 11:4; 30:22; contrast Hos. 1:9). For the divine oath, see Gen. 15:7–21; 26:3; Deut. 1:8.

■ **16:9–14** The foundling has become a queen. She has received all the care she lacked when born and far more. Her life, status, wealth and beauty all derive from the gracious gift of the One who chose her.

■ **16:17** All that the foundling-become-queen had received from her loving husband and king is now turned to wantonness and promiscuity (cf. Deut. 6:10–12). Her actions demonstrate the irrationality of sin: there could be no sound reason for such behavior.

■ **16:20 sacrificed.** For the practice of child sacrifice in Israel and among neighboring states, see v. 36; 20:31; Gen. 22:2, 13; Lev. 18:21; 20:2–5; Deut. 12:31; 18:10; 2 Kin. 16:3; 17:17; 21:6; 23:10; Ps. 106:37, 38; Jer. 32:35; Mic. 6:7. In Jerusalem these practices were associated with the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, south of the city.

You offered yourself to everyone who passed by, and multiplied your acts of harlotry. 26 You also committed harlotry with [z]the Egyptians, your very fleshly neighbors, and increased your acts of harlotry to [a]provoke Me to anger.

27 "Behold, therefore, I stretched out My hand against you, diminished your [f]allotment, and gave you up to the will of those who hate you, [b]the daughters of the Philistines, who were ashamed of your lewd behavior. 28 You also played the harlot with the [c]Assyrians, because you were insatiable; indeed you played the harlot with them and still were not satisfied. 29 Moreover you multiplied your acts of harlotry as far as the land of the trader, [d]Chaldea; and even then you were not satisfied.

30 "How degenerate is your heart!" says the Lord GOD, "seeing you do all these *things,* the deeds of a brazen harlot.

Jerusalem's Adultery

31 [e]"You erected your shrine at the head of every road, and built your [2]high place in every street. Yet you were not like a harlot, because you scorned [f]payment. 32 *You are* an adulterous wife, *who* takes strangers instead of her husband. 33 Men make payment to all harlots, but [g]you made your payments to all your lovers, and [3]hired them to come to you from all around for your harlotry. 34 You are the opposite of *other* women in your harlotry, because no one solicited you to be a harlot. In that you gave payment but no payment was given you, therefore you are the opposite."

Jerusalem's Lovers Will Abuse Her

35 'Now then, O harlot, hear the word of the LORD! 36 Thus says the Lord GOD: "Because your filthiness was poured out and your nakedness uncovered in your harlotry with your lovers, and with all your abominable idols, and because of [h]the blood of your children which you gave to them, 37 surely, therefore, [i]I will gather all your lovers with whom you took pleasure, all those you loved, *and* all those you hated; I will gather them from all around against you and will uncover your nakedness to them, that they may see all your nakedness. 38 And I will judge you as [j]women who break wedlock or [k]shed blood are judged; I will bring blood upon you in fury and jealousy. 39 I will also give you into their hand, and they shall throw down your shrines and break down [l]your [4]high places. [m]They shall also strip you of your clothes, take your beautiful jewelry, and leave you naked and bare.

40 [n]"They shall also bring up an assembly against you, [o]and they shall stone you with stones and thrust you through with their swords. 41 They shall [p]burn your houses with fire, and [q]execute judgments on you in the sight of many women; and I will make you [r]cease playing the harlot, and you shall no longer hire lovers. 42 So [s]I will lay to rest My fury toward you, and My jealousy shall depart from you. I will be quiet, and be angry no more. 43 Because [t]you did not remember the days of your youth, but [5]agitated Me with all these *things,* surely [u]I will also recompense your [6]deeds on *your own* head," says the Lord GOD. "And you shall not commit lewdness in addition to all your abominations.

More Wicked than Samaria and Sodom

44 "Indeed everyone who quotes proverbs will use *this* proverb against you: 'Like mother, like daughter!' 45 You *are* your mother's daughter, [7]loathing husband and children; and you *are* the [v]sister of your sisters, who loathed their husbands and children; [w]your mother *was* a Hittite and your father an Amorite.

26 [z]Ezek. 16:26; 20:7, 8 [a]Deut. 31:20

27 [b]Ezek. 16:57 [f]Allowance of food

28 [c]Jer. 2:18, 36

29 [d]Ezek. 23:14–17

31 [e]Ezek. 16:24, 39 [f]Is. 52:3 [2]Place for pagan worship

33 [g]Hos. 8:9, 10 [3]Or *bribed*

36 [h]Jer. 2:34

37 [i]Lam. 1:8

38 [j]Lev. 20:10 [k]Gen. 9:6

39 [l]Ezek. 16:24, 31 [m]Hos. 2:3 [4]Places for pagan worship

40 [n]Ezek. 23:45–47 [o]John 8:5, 7

41 [p]Deut. 13:16 [q]Ezek. 5:8; 23:10, 48 [r]Ezek. 23:27

42 [s]Ezek. 5:13; 21:17

43 [t]Ps. 78:42 [u]Ezek. 9:10; 11:21; 22:31 [5]So with LXX, Syr., Tg., Vg.; MT *were agitated with Me* [6]Lit. *way*

45 [v]Ezek. 23:2–4 [w]Ezek. 16:3 [7]Or *despising*

■ **16:26 harlotry.** Israel's failure to obey God was not a matter of overt idolatry alone. Foreign alliances were also regarded as evidence of a failure to trust God in the face of political difficulty. Such alliances were a breach of Israel's exclusive allegiance to the Lord (cf. 23:7; 29:16; Is. 7; 8; 30; 31; Jer. 2:36, 37; 22:20–22; Hos. 7:11–13). The writer of Chronicles emphasizes this point particularly (2 Chr. 14:9–15; 16:1–9; 19:1, 2; 20; 25:6–8; 28).

■ **16:37 gather them . . . against you.** She sought the loyalty and affection of her lovers; but instead, they become the instruments of her humiliation and punishment. Though the nations were used by God to punish His people, they would bear the guilt of the sins they committed (ch. 25; Is. 10:5, 12; Zech. 1:14, 15); see note on 14:9.

uncover your nakedness. Public degradation by exposing the nakedness of prostitutes or adulteresses is also mentioned in Jer. 13:22, 26; Hos. 2:10; Nah. 3:5.

■ **16:38 I will bring blood.** For the wrath of a jealous husband, see Prov. 6:34. The wealth and garments of the woman will be taken, and she will be left as naked as she was when the story began. She would be covered not with the blood of childbirth (v. 6) but the blood from her wounds. Adultery was a capital offense, punishable by stoning (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:21–24; cf. John 7:53—8:11).

■ **16:41 burn.** See 23:47; cf. Jer. 32:29; 34:22; 37:8; 38:18. A large part of Jerusalem was burned by the Babylonian army (Jer. 39:8).

■ **16:44 proverbs.** Ezekiel more than once refers to popular proverbs (12:21–28; 18).

■ **16:45 Hittite . . . Amorite.** The moral depravity of the Hittites and Amorites is assumed; cf. v. 3.

46 [x]Deut. 32:32; Is. 1:10

47 [y]2 Kin. 21:9; Ezek. 5:6, 7

48 [z]Is. 3:9; Lam. 4:6; Matt. 10:15; 11:24; Rev. 11:8

49 [a]Gen. 13:10; Is. 22:13; Amos 6:4–6

50 [b]Gen. 13:13; 18:20; 19:5 [c]Gen. 19:24 [g]Vg. *you saw;* LXX *he saw;* Tg. *as was revealed to Me*

51 [d]Ezek. 23:11 [e]Jer. 3:8–11; Matt. 12:41

53 [f]Is. 1:9; [Ezek. 16:60] [g]Jer. 20:16

54 [h]Ezek. 14:22

57 [i]2 Kin. 16:5; 2 Chr. 28:18; Is. 7:1; Ezek. 5:14, 15; 22:4 [j]Ezek. 16:27 [g]Heb. *Aram;* so with MT, LXX, Tg., Vg.; many Heb. mss., Syr. *Edom*

58 [k]Ezek. 23:49

59 [l]Ezek. 17:13 [m]Deut. 29:12

60 [n]Lev. 26:42–45; Ps. 106:45 [o]Is. 55:3; Jer. 32:40; 50:5; Ezek. 37:26

61 [p]Jer. 50:4, 5; Ezek. 20:43; 36:31 [q]Is. 54:1; 60:4; [Gal. 4:26] [r]Jer. 31:31

62 [s]Hos. 2:19, 20

63 [t]Ezek. 36:31, 32; Dan. 9:7, 8 [u]Ps. 39:9; [Rom. 3:19]

CHAPTER 17

2 [a]Ezek. 20:49; 24:3

3 [b]Jer. 48:40; Ezek. 17:12; Hos. 8:1 [c]2 Kin. 24:12

5 [d]Deut. 8:7–9

46 "Your elder sister *is* Samaria, who dwells with her daughters to the north of you; and [x]your younger sister, who dwells to the south of you, *is* Sodom and her daughters. 47 You did not walk in their ways nor act according to their abominations; but, as *if that were* too little, [y]you became more corrupt than they in all your ways.

48 "*As* I live," says the Lord GOD, "neither [z]your sister Sodom nor her daughters have done as you and your daughters have done. 49 Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: She and her daughter had pride, [a]fullness of food, and abundance of idleness; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. 50 And they were haughty and [b]committed abomination before Me; therefore [c]I took them away as [g]I saw *fit.*

51 "Samaria did not commit [d]half of your sins; but you have multiplied your abominations more than they, and [e]have justified your sisters by all the abominations which you have done. 52 You who judged your sisters, bear your own shame also, because the sins which you committed were more abominable than theirs; they are more righteous than you. Yes, be disgraced also, and bear your own shame, because you justified your sisters.

53 [f]"When I bring back their captives, the captives of Sodom and her daughters, and the captives of Samaria and her daughters, then *I will also bring back* [g]the captives of your captivity among them, 54 that you may bear your own shame and be disgraced by all that you did when [h]you comforted them. 55 When your sisters, Sodom and her daughters, return to their former state, and Samaria and her daughters return to their former state, then you and your daughters will return to your former state. 56 For your sister Sodom was not a byword in your mouth in the days of your pride, 57 before your wickedness was uncovered. It was like the time of the [i]reproach of the daughters of [g]Syria and all *those* around her, and of [j]the daughters of the Philistines, who despise you everywhere. 58 [k]You have paid for your lewdness and your abominations," says the LORD. 59 For thus says the Lord GOD: "I will deal with you as you have done, who [l]despised [m]the oath by breaking the covenant.

An Everlasting Covenant

60 "Nevertheless I will [n]remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish [o]an everlasting covenant with you. 61 Then [p]you will remember your ways and be ashamed, when you receive your older and your younger sisters; for I will give them to you for [q]daughters, [r]but not because of My covenant with you. 62 [s]And I will establish My covenant with you. Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD, 63 that you may [t]remember and be ashamed, [u]and never open your mouth anymore because of your shame, when I provide you an atonement for all you have done," says the Lord GOD.' "

The Eagles and the Vine

17 And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, pose a riddle, and speak a [a]parable to the house of Israel, 3 and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD:

[b]"A great eagle with large wings and long pinions,
Full of feathers of various colors,
Came to Lebanon
And [c]took from the cedar the highest branch.
4 He cropped off its topmost young twig
And carried it to a land of trade;
He set it in a city of merchants.
5 Then he took some of the seed of the land
And planted it in [d]a fertile field;

■ **16:49 Sodom.** Readers of the Bible often think of the sins of Sodom as mainly sexual (Gen. 19:5–9), but Ezekiel indicts the city for materialism and neglect of the poor and needy. Jesus made a similar comparison with Capernaum in Matt. 11:23, 24. The sins of Jerusalem exceeded those of her sisters, the nearby cities.

■ **16:60 everlasting covenant.** Jerusalem would once again have primacy over her sisters, but not on the basis of the previous covenant relationship between God and the city. There will be a new covenant, a new relationship between God and the city in the future. God Himself would atone for her sins.

■ **17:1–24** This oracle has no date, but probably came between the dates given in 8:1 and 20:1, the sixth and seventh years of the exile of Jehoiachin (592–590 B.C.). Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem in 588 B.C. and removed Zedekiah from the throne in 586 B.C. (v. 20).

■ **17:3 eagle.** Ezekiel propounds an allegory. The great eagle is the imperial might of Babylon, represented by Nebuchadnezzar.

cedar. The lofty cedar represents the kingdom of Judah and the dynasty of David, that had endured by this time over three hundred years.

■ **17:4 topmost young twig.** The removal of the topmost twig refers to the exile and captivity of Jehoiachin in Babylon. The exiles continued to regard Jehoiachin as the legitimate king of Judah.

He placed *it* by abundant waters
And set it [e]like a willow tree.
6 And it grew and became a spreading vine [f]of low stature;
Its branches turned toward him,
But its roots were under it.
So it became a vine,
Brought forth branches,
And put forth shoots.

7 "But there was [f]another great eagle with large wings and many feathers;
And behold, [g]this vine bent its roots toward him,
And stretched its branches toward him,
From the garden terrace where it had been planted,
That he might water it.
8 It was planted in [2]good soil by many waters,
To bring forth branches, bear fruit,
And become a majestic vine." '

9 "Say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD:

"Will it thrive?
[h]Will he not pull up its roots,
Cut off its fruit,
And leave it to wither?
All of its spring leaves will wither,
And no great power or many people
Will be needed to pluck it up by its roots.
10 Behold, *it is* planted,
Will it thrive?
[i]Will it not utterly wither when the east wind touches it?
It will wither in the garden terrace where it grew." ' "

11 Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 12 "Say now to [j]the rebellious house: 'Do you not know what these *things mean?*' Tell *them,* 'Indeed [k]the king of Babylon went to Jerusalem and took its king and princes, and led them with him to Babylon. 13 [l]And he took the king's offspring, made a covenant with him, [m]and put him under oath. He also took away the mighty of the land, 14 that the kingdom might be [n]brought low and not lift itself up, *but* that by keeping his covenant it might stand. 15 But [o]he rebelled against him by sending his ambassadors to Egypt, [p]that they might give him horses and many people. [q]Will he prosper? Will he who does such *things* escape? Can he break a covenant and still be delivered?

16 '*As* I live,' says the Lord GOD, 'surely [r]in the place *where* the king *dwells* who made him king, whose oath he despised and whose covenant he broke—with him in the midst of Babylon he shall die. 17 [s]Nor will Pharaoh with *his* mighty army and great company do anything in the war, [t]when they heap up a siege mound and build a [3]wall to cut off many persons. 18 Since he despised the oath by breaking the covenant, and in fact [u]gave[4] his hand and still did all these *things,* he shall not escape.' "

19 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "*As* I live, surely My oath which he despised, and My covenant which he broke, I will recompense on his own head. 20 I will [v]spread My net over him, and he shall be taken in My snare. I will bring him to Babylon and [w]try him there for the [5]treason which he committed against Me. 21 [x]All his [6]fugitives with all his troops shall fall by the

5 [e]Is. 44:4
6 [f]Ezek. 17:14
7 [g]Ezek. 17:15 [1]So with LXX, Syr., Vg.; MT, Tg. *one*
8 [2]Lit. *a good field*
9 [h]2 Kin. 25:7
10 [i]Ezek. 19:12; Hos. 13:15
12 [j]Ezek. 2:3–5; 12:9 [k]2 Kin. 24:11–16; Ezek. 1:2; 17:3
13 [l]2 Kin. 24:17; Jer. 37:1; Ezek. 17:5 [m]2 Chr. 36:13
14 [n]Ezek. 29:14
15 [o]2 Kin. 24:20; 2 Chr. 36:13; Jer. 52:3; Ezek. 17:7 [p]Deut. 17:16; Is. 31:1, 3; 36:6, 9 [q]Ezek. 17:9
16 [r]Jer. 52:11; Ezek. 12:13
17 [s]Jer. 37:7; Ezek. 29:6 [t]Jer. 52:4; Ezek. 4:2 [3]Or *siege wall*
18 [u]1 Chr. 29:24; Lam. 5:6 [4]Took an oath
20 [v]Ezek. 12:13 [w]Jer. 2:35; Ezek. 20:36 [5]Lit. *unfaithful act*
21 [x]Ezek. 12:14 [6]So with MT, Vg.; many Heb. mss., Syr. *choice men;* Tg. *mighty men;* LXX omits *All his fugitives*

■ **17:6 vine.** Nebuchadnezzar replaced the cedar with the far more humble and lowly vine, a reference to his installation of Zedekiah on the throne in Jerusalem after deporting Jehoiachin (2 Kin. 24:15–17). Nebuchadnezzar had done much for Zedekiah, just as the vine had fertile soil, abundant water, and prospered.

■ **17:7 another great eagle.** The turning of the vine toward another great eagle represents Zedekiah's shift in allegiance from Nebuchadnezzar to Egypt (vv. 15–17), with the result that the vine itself would be uprooted and destroyed.

■ **17:10 east wind.** See note on 19:12.

■ **17:15 Egypt.** Although the Old Testament histories do not mention Zedekiah's appeal to Egypt for help, Jeremiah does mention it (Jer. 37:5–11; 44:30). One of the Lachish letters, written on broken pottery in the last days of the kingdom of Judah, reports that a commander of the army went down to Egypt, perhaps to ask for help. See 16:26; 29:6, 7; 30:20–26.

■ **17:20, 21** See 2 Kin. 25:4–7.

sword, and those who remain shall be [y]scattered to every wind; and you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken."

Israel Exalted at Last

22 Thus says the Lord GOD: "I will take also *one* of the highest [z]branches of the high cedar and set *it* out. I will crop off from the topmost of its young twigs [a]a tender one, and will [b]plant *it* on a high and prominent mountain. 23 [c]On the mountain height of Israel I will plant it; and it will bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a majestic cedar. [d]Under it will dwell birds of every sort; in the shadow of its branches they will dwell. 24 And all the trees of the field shall know that I, the LORD, [e]have brought down the high tree and exalted the low tree, dried up the green tree and made the dry tree flourish; [f]I, the LORD, have spoken and have done *it.*"

A False Proverb Refuted

18 The word of the LORD came to me again, saying, 2 "What do you mean when you use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying:

'The [a]fathers have eaten sour grapes,
And the children's teeth are set on edge'?

3 "*As* I live," says the Lord GOD, "you shall no longer use this proverb in Israel.

4 "Behold, all souls are [b]Mine;
The soul of the father
As well as the soul of the son is Mine;
[c]The soul who sins shall die.
5 But if a man is just
And does what is lawful and right;
6 [d]If he has not eaten [l]on the mountains,
Nor lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel,
Nor [e]defiled his neighbor's wife,
Nor approached [f]a woman during her impurity;
7 If he has not [g]oppressed anyone,
But has restored to the debtor his [h]pledge;
Has robbed no one by violence,
But has [i]given his bread to the hungry
And covered the naked with [j]clothing;
8 If he has not [2]exacted [k]usury
Nor taken any increase,
But has withdrawn his hand from iniquity
And [l]executed true [3]judgment between man and man;
9 *If* he has walked in My statutes
And kept My judgments faithfully—
He *is* just;
He shall surely [m]live!"
Says the Lord GOD.

21 [y]Ezek. 12:15; 22:15

22 [z][Is. 11:1; Jer. 23:5; Zech. 3:8] [a]Is. 53:2 [b][Ps. 2:6]

23 [c][Is. 2:2, 3]; Ezek. 20:40; [Mic. 4:1] [d]Ezek. 31:6; Dan. 4:12

24 [e]Ezek. 37:3; Amos 9:11; Luke 1:52; [Rom. 11:23, 24] [f]Ezek. 22:14

CHAPTER 18

2 [a]Jer. 31:29; Lam. 5:7

4 [b]Num. 16:22; 27:16; Is. 42:5; 57:16 [c]Ezek. 18:20; [Rom. 6:23]

6 [d]Ezek. 22:9 [e]Lev. 18:20; 20:10 [f]Lev. 18:19; 20:18 [l]At the mountain shrines

7 [g]Ex. 22:21; Lev. 19:15; 25:14 [h]Ex. 22:26; Deut. 24:12 [i]Deut. 15:7, 11; Ezek. 18:16; [Matt. 25:35–40]; Luke 3:11 [j]Is. 58:7

8 [k]Ex. 22:25; Lev. 25:36; Deut. 23:19; Neh. 5:7; Ps. 15:5 [l]Deut. 1:16; Zech. 8:16 [2]Lent money at interest [3]*justice*

9 [m]Ezek. 20:11; Amos 5:4; [Hab. 2:4; Rom. 1:17]

■ **17:22 twigs.** The Bible often uses a branch or tree as a symbol of royalty (Dan. 4:9–12, 19–22), particularly as a figure of the Messiah. The messianic Branch belongs to the house of David (Is. 4:2; 11:1; 53:2; 60:21; Jer. 23:5; 33:15; Zech. 6:12). Ezekiel announces that someday God would take a descendant of Jehoiachin (cf. vv. 3, 4 and 12, 13) and restore him to kingship in Judah.

■ **17:23 birds.** Rather than be threatened by other kingdoms (birds like the eagles), this splendid cedar would become a haven for birds of all kinds (cf. Dan. 4:12, 21). The tree would be fruitful (2 Kin. 19:30; Is. 11:1; 37:31; Jer. 17:8; cf. John 15:4, 5, 8, 16).

■ **18:1–32** The Exile was not the result of the sins of a single generation. Rather, the continued disobedience of Israel through many generations, "since the day their fathers came out of Egypt, even to this day" (2 Kin. 21:15), finally brought judgment on Judah. The cumulative guilt of the nation was being judged by God in the events that led up to the destruction of Jerusalem. The response of the exiles was to question the justice of God. The popular proverb (v. 2; cf. Jer. 31:29) in effect said, "It's not our fault—we are being punished for what we did not do. Our fathers sinned, and we are the ones who are paying the price." Ezekiel replies by emphasizing that God responds according to the acts of each individual and generation. The exiles cannot evade their guilt; they were suffering for their own sins as well.

■ **18:6 not eaten.** Eating at the mountain shrines would refer to sacrificial meals at the high places (6:13; 20:28; 22:9; cf. Ex. 32:5, 6).

her impurity. The law prohibited sexual intercourse during a woman's period (22:10; Lev. 15:16–33; 18:19).

■ **18:7 pledge.** See vv. 12, 16; Ex. 22:26; Deut. 24:10–13, 17; Prov. 20:16; Amos 2:8. An ostracon (a piece of broken pottery with writing on it) of the late seventh century B.C. records the complaint of a field worker to a village official that his employer had taken his garment and kept it.

10 "If he begets a son *who is* a robber
Or [n]a shedder of blood,
Who does any of these *things*
11 And does none of those *duties,*
But has eaten [4]on the mountains
Or defiled his neighbor's wife;
12 If he has oppressed the poor and needy,
Robbed by violence,
Not restored the pledge,
Lifted his eyes to the idols,
Or [o]committed abomination;
13 If he has exacted usury
Or taken increase—
Shall he then live?
He shall not live!
If he has done any of these abominations,
He shall surely die;
[p]His blood shall be upon him.

14 "*If,* however, he begets a son
Who sees all the sins which his father has done,
And considers but does not do likewise;
15 [q]*Who* has not eaten [5]on the mountains,
Nor lifted his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel,
Nor defiled his neighbor's wife;
16 Has not oppressed anyone,
Nor withheld a pledge,
Nor robbed by violence,
But has given his bread to the hungry
And covered the naked with clothing;
17 *Who* has withdrawn his hand from [6]the poor
And not received usury or increase,
But has executed My judgments
And walked in My statutes—
He shall not die for the iniquity of his father;
He shall surely live!

18 "*As for* his father,
Because he cruelly oppressed,
Robbed his brother by violence,
And did what *is* not good among his people,
Behold, [r]he shall die for his iniquity.

Turn and Live

19 "Yet you say, 'Why [s]should the son not bear the guilt of the father?' Because the son has done what is lawful and right, and has kept all My statutes and observed them, he shall surely live. 20 [t]The soul who sins shall die. [u]The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. [v]The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, [w]and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.

21 "But [x]if a wicked man turns from all his sins which he has committed, keeps all My statutes, and does what is lawful and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die. 22 [y]None of the transgressions which he has committed shall be remembered against him; because of the righteousness which he has done, he shall [z]live. 23 [a]Do I have any pleasure at all that the wicked should die?" says the Lord GOD, "*and* not that he should turn from his ways and live?

10 [n]Gen. 9:6; Ex. 21:12; Num. 35:31

11 [4]At the mountain shrines

12 [o]2 Kin. 21:11; Ezek. 8:6, 17

13 [p]Lev. 20:9, 11–13, 16, 27; Ezek. 3:18; Acts 18:6

15 [q]Ezek. 18:6 [5]At the mountain shrines

17 [6]So with MT, Tg., Vg.; LXX *iniquity* (cf. v. 8)

18 [r]Ezek. 3:18

19 [s]Ex. 20:5; Deut. 5:9; 2 Kin. 23:26; 24:3, 4

20 [t]2 Kin. 14:6; 22:18–20; Ezek. 18:4 [u]Deut. 24:16; 2 Kin. 14:6; 2 Chr. 25:4; Jer. 31:29, 30 [v]1 Kin. 8:32; Is. 3:10, 11; [Matt. 16:27] [w]Rom. 2:6–9

21 [x]Ezek. 18:27; 33:12, 19

22 [y]Is. 43:25; Jer. 50:20; Ezek. 18:24; 33:16; Mic. 7:19 [z][Ps. 18:20–24]

23 [a]Lam. 3:33; [Ezek. 18:32; 33:11; 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9]

■ **18:10 a son who is a robber.** Having a righteous father did not mean the unrighteous son would escape punishment for his sin.

■ **18:14 his father.** Conversely, having an unrighteous father would not bring judgment on a righteous son (v. 10 note; Deut. 24:16; 2 Kin. 14:6).

24 [b]1 Sam. 15:11; 2 Chr. 24:2, 17–22; Ezek. 3:20; 18:26; 33:18 [c][2 Pet. 2:20]

25 [d]Ezek. 18:29; 33:17, 20; Mal. 2:17; 3:13–15

26 [e]Ezek. 18:24

27 [f]Ezek. 18:21

28 [g]Ezek. 18:14

29 [h]Ezek. 18:25

30 [i]Ezek. 7:3; 33:20 [j]Matt. 3:2; Rev. 2:5

31 [k]Is. 1:16; 55:7; Eph. 4:22, 23 [l]Ps. 51:10; Jer. 32:39; Ezek. 11:19; 36:26

32 [m]Lam. 3:33; Ezek. 33:11; [2 Pet. 3:9] [n][Prov. 4:2, 5, 6]

CHAPTER 19

1 [a]Ezek. 26:17; 27:2

3 [b]Ezek. 19:2; 2 Kin. 23:31, 32

4 [c]2 Kin. 23:33, 34; 2 Chr. 36:4

5 [d]2 Kin. 23:34

6 [e]2 Kin. 24:8, 9 [f]Ezek. 19:3

7 [1]LXX *He stood in insolence;* Tg. *He destroyed its palaces;* Vg. *He learned to make widows*

8 [g]2 Kin. 24:2, 11

24 "But [b]when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and does according to all the abominations that the wicked *man* does, shall he live? [c]All the righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered; because of the unfaithfulness of which he is guilty and the sin which he has committed, because of them he shall die.

25 "Yet you say, [d]'The way of the Lord is not fair.' Hear now, O house of Israel, is it not My way which is fair, and your ways which are not fair? 26 [e]When a righteous *man* turns away from his righteousness, commits iniquity, and dies in it, it is because of the iniquity which he has done that he dies. 27 Again, [f]when a wicked *man* turns away from the wickedness which he committed, and does what is lawful and right, he preserves himself alive. 28 Because he [g]considers and turns away from all the transgressions which he committed, he shall surely live; he shall not die. 29 [h]Yet the house of Israel says, 'The way of the Lord is not fair.' O house of Israel, is it not My ways which are fair, and your ways which are not fair?

30 [i]"Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways," says the Lord GOD. [j]"Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, so that iniquity will not be your ruin. 31 [k]Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourselves a [l]new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O house of Israel? 32 For [m]I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies," says the Lord GOD. "Therefore turn and [n]live!"

Israel Degraded

19 "Moreover [a]take up a lamentation for the princes of Israel, 2 and say:

'What *is* your mother? A lioness:
She lay down among the lions;
Among the young lions she nourished her cubs.
3 She brought up one of her cubs,
And [b]he became a young lion;
He learned to catch prey,
And he devoured men.
4 The nations also heard of him;
He was trapped in their pit,
And they brought him with chains to the land of [c]Egypt.

5 'When she saw that she waited, *that* her hope was lost,
She took [d]another of her cubs *and* made him a young lion.
6 [e]He roved among the lions,
And [f]became a young lion;
He learned to catch prey;
He devoured men.
7 [1]He knew their desolate places,
And laid waste their cities;
The land with its fullness was desolated
By the noise of his roaring.
8 [g]Then the nations set against him from the provinces on every side,
And spread their net over him;

■ **18:24 commits iniquity.** God will not allow Himself to be merely an escape hatch in times of trouble; He cannot be looked to as Savior without also being received as Lord.

■ **18:30–32** This is a summary statement. Sin can never be taken lightly in one's relationship with God. Yet within the solemn warnings about the gravity of sin and the threat it represents, there remains the assurance that God does not desire or delight in the death of the wicked (2 Pet. 3:9). Repentance is the way to life (2 Chr. 6:37–39; Is. 30:15; 59:20; Jer. 18:8; Matt. 4:17; Mark 1:4, 15; Luke 13:3, 5; 15:7, 10; 24:47; Acts 3:19; 17:30; 2 Cor. 7:10).

■ **18:31 get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit.** As Ezekiel himself recognized, the new heart and spirit were the gift of God (36:26) and not the product of human effort (cf. Eph. 2:8, 9). Ezekiel exhorts his audience to seek these not through their own merit but by repentance (v. 32).

■ **19:1–14** Ezekiel presents another allegory in the kind of Hebrew poetry ordinarily used for funeral dirges and laments. This kind of poetry in Hebrew has a particular meter that Ezekiel's audience would recognize. The same rhythm is used in 26:17, 18; 27:12–19; 28:12–19; 32:2–8.

■ **19:2 lioness.** The lioness represents the nation of Israel or the city of Jerusalem, which produced these cubs, or kings; for the image of Jerusalem as a mother, see Ps. 87:5; Is. 50:1; 54:1; Gal. 4:26, 27. The lion as an image is frequently associated with Davidic kingship (Gen. 49:9; Mic. 5:8). The New Testament looks for "the Lion of the tribe of Judah" to reestablish the kingdom of God (Rev. 5:5).

■ **19:4 Egypt.** Jehoahaz reigned for only three months before he was taken to Egypt as a captive of Pharaoh Necho in 609 B.C. (2 Kin. 23:31–34; 2 Chr. 36:2–4).

■ **19:5 another.** Ezekiel omits any description of the reign of Jehoiakim and proceeds to his son Jehoiachin. Second Kings does not mention any exile for Jehoiakim (2 Kin. 23:36—24:7; cf. 2 Chr. 36:5–8); he apparently died in Jerusalem.

[h] He was trapped in their pit.
9 [i] They put him in a cage with [2] chains,
And brought him to the king of Babylon;
They brought him in nets,
That his voice should no longer be heard on [j] the mountains of Israel.
10 'Your mother *was* [k] like a vine in your [3] bloodline,
Planted by the waters,
[l] Fruitful and full of branches
Because of many waters.
11 She had strong branches for scepters of rulers.
[m] She towered in stature above the thick branches,
And was seen in her height amid the [4] dense foliage.
12 But she was [n] plucked up in fury,
She was cast down to the ground,
And the [o] east wind dried her fruit.
Her strong branches were broken and withered;
The fire consumed them.
13 And now she *is* planted in the wilderness,
In a dry and thirsty land.
14 [p] Fire has come out from a rod of her branches
And devoured her fruit,
So that she has no strong branch— a scepter for ruling.' "

[q] This *is* a lamentation, and has become a lamentation.

The Rebellions of Israel

20 It came to pass in the seventh year, in the fifth *month*, on the tenth *day* of the month, *that* [a] certain of the elders of Israel came to inquire of the LORD, and sat before me. 2 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 3 "Son of man, speak to the elders of Israel, and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Have you come to inquire of Me? *As* I live," says the Lord GOD, [b] "I will not be inquired of by you." ' 4 Will you judge them, son of man, will you judge *them?* Then [c] make known to them the abominations of their fathers.

5 "Say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "On the day when [d] I chose Israel and raised My hand in an oath to the descendants of the house of Jacob, and made Myself [e] known to them in the land of Egypt, I raised My hand in an oath to them, saying, [f] 'I *am* the LORD your God.' 6 On that day I raised My hand in an oath to them, [g] to bring them out of the land of Egypt into a land that I had searched out for them, [h] 'flowing with milk and honey,' [i] the glory of all lands. 7 Then I said to them, 'Each of you, [j] throw away [k] the abominations which are before his eyes, and do not defile yourselves with [l] the idols of Egypt. I *am* the LORD your God.' 8 But they rebelled against Me and would not [l] obey Me. They did not all cast away the abominations which were before their eyes, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt. Then I said, 'I will [m] pour out My fury on them and fulfill My anger against them in the midst of the land of Egypt.' 9 [n] But I acted for My name's sake, that it should not be profaned before the Gentiles among whom they *were,* in whose sight I had made Myself [o] known to them, to bring them out of the land of Egypt.

10 "Therefore I [p] made them go out of the land of Egypt and brought them into the wilderness. 11 [q] And I gave them My statutes and [2] showed them My judgments, [r] 'which, *if* a man does, he

8 [h] Ezek. 19:4

9 [i] 2 Chr. 36:6 [j] Ezek. 6:2 [2] Or *hooks*

10 [k] Ezek. 17:6 [l] Deut. 8:7–9 [3] Lit. *blood,* so with MT, Syr., Vg.; LXX *like a flower on a pomegranate tree;* Tg. *in your likeness*

11 [m] Dan. 4:11 [4] Or *many branches*

12 [n] Jer. 31:27, 28 [o] Hos. 13:5

14 [p] Judg. 9:15 [q] Lam. 2:5

CHAPTER 20

1 [a] Ezek. 8:1, 11, 12; 14:1

3 [b] Ezek. 7:26; 14:3

4 [c] Ezek. 16:2; 22:2

5 [d] Ex. 6:6–8 [e] Deut. 4:34 [f] Ex. 20:2

6 [g] Jer. 32:22 [h] Ex. 3:8 [i] Jer. 11:5; 32:22

7 [j] Ezek. 18:31 [k] 2 Chr. 15:8 [l] Lev. 18:3

8 [m] Ezek. 7:8 [l] Lit. *listen to*

9 [n] Num. 14:13 [o] Josh. 2:10; 9:9, 10

10 [p] Ex. 13:18

11 [q] Neh. 9:13 [r] Lev. 18:5 [2] Lit. *made known to*

■ **19:9 Babylon.** Jehoiakim had rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar, and the wrath of the Babylonian king was directed against his son Jehoiachin. Ezekiel describes his deportation to Babylon in 597 B.C. (2 Kin. 24:8–16; 2 Chr. 36:9, 10). Jehoiachin was imprisoned until the reign of Evil-Merodach (562–560 B.C.; 2 Kin. 25:27–30).

■ **19:12 east wind.** This is just as in 17:9, 10. The east wind is an instrument of Yahweh's will (Ex. 10:13; 14:21; Ps. 78:26; Hos. 13:15; Jon. 4:8). The east wind brought the desert heat and would wither the vine.

■ **19:14 no strong branch.** The end of the kingdom of Judah is described as a time when the vine was uprooted and no branch was left to make a ruler's scepter. For the use of a branch as a symbol of the messianic king, see note on 17:22.

■ **20:1 year.** Once again the elders gather to seek instruction from the prophet, about a year later than the date last mentioned (8:1; cf. 14:1). The date would be the tenth of Ab (August, 591 B.C.), five years to the day before Jerusalem was put to the torch (Jer. 52:12).

■ **20:5 raised My hand in an oath.** This phrase is repeated several times in the chapter (vv. 5, 6, 15, 23, 28, 42). God had pledged Himself to Israel and would perform His promises. See Ex. 3:6–10; 6:2–8.

■ **20:8 idols of Egypt.** The Pentateuch does not record details about the religious life of the Israelites during their slavery in Egypt, but it is safe to infer that they had assimilated the religion of the culture there as they did later in Canaan. The incident with the golden calf (Ex. 32) should be understood against the background of idolatry in Egypt. See 23:3; Josh. 24:14.

■ **20:11 statutes.** The law was God's gracious gift to Israel; it was a way of life (Deut. 4:40; 32:46, 47; Josh. 1:7, 8).

shall live by them.' 12 Moreover I also gave them My [s]Sabbaths, to be a sign between them and Me, that they might know that I *am* the LORD who sanctifies them. 13 Yet the house of Israel [t]rebelled against Me in the wilderness; they did not walk in My statutes; they [u]despised My judgments, [v]'which, *if* a man does, he shall live by them'; and they greatly [w]defiled My Sabbaths. Then I said I would pour out My fury on them in the [x]wilderness, to consume them. 14 [y]But I acted for My name's sake, that it should not be profaned before the Gentiles, in whose sight I had brought them out. 15 So [z]I also raised My hand in an oath to them in the wilderness, that I would not bring them into the land which I had given *them,* [a]'flowing with milk and honey,' [b]the glory of all lands, 16 [c]because they despised My judgments and did not walk in My statutes, but profaned My Sabbaths; for [d]their heart went after their idols. 17 [e]Nevertheless My eye spared them from destruction. I did not make an end of them in the wilderness.

18 "But I said to their children in the wilderness, 'Do not walk in the statutes of your fathers, nor observe their judgments, nor defile yourselves with their idols. 19 I *am* the LORD your God: [f]Walk in My statutes, keep My judgments, and do them; 20 [g]hallow My Sabbaths, and they will be a sign between Me and you, that you may know that I *am* the LORD your God.'

21 "Notwithstanding, [h]the children rebelled against Me; they did not walk in My statutes, and were not careful to observe My judgments, [i]'which, *if* a man does, he shall live by them'; but they profaned My Sabbaths. Then I said I would pour out My fury on them and fulfill My anger against them in the wilderness. 22 Nevertheless I [3]withdrew My hand and acted for My name's sake, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the Gentiles, in whose sight I had brought them out. 23 Also I raised My hand in an oath to those in the wilderness, that [j]I would scatter them among the Gentiles and disperse them throughout the countries, 24 [k]because they had not executed My judgments, but had despised My statutes, profaned My Sabbaths, and [l]their eyes were fixed on their fathers' idols.

25 "Therefore [m]I also gave them up to statutes *that were* not good, and judgments by which they could not live; 26 and I pronounced them unclean because of their ritual gifts, in that they caused all [4]their firstborn to pass [n]through *the fire,* that I might make them desolate and that they [o]might know that I am the LORD." '

27 "Therefore, son of man, speak to the house of Israel, and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "In this too your fathers have [p]blasphemed Me, by being unfaithful to Me. 28 When I brought them into the land *concerning* which I had raised My hand in an oath to give them, and [q]they saw all the high hills and all the thick trees, there they offered their sacrifices and provoked Me with their offerings. There they also sent up their [r]sweet aroma and poured out their drink offerings. 29 Then I said to them, 'What *is* this [5]high place to which you go?' So its name is called [6]Bamah to this day." ' 30 Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Are you defiling yourselves in the manner of your [s]fathers, and committing harlotry according to their [t]abominations? 31 For when you offer [u]your gifts and make your sons pass through the fire, you defile yourselves with all your idols, even to this day. So shall I be inquired of by you, O house of Israel? *As* I live," says the Lord GOD, "I will [v]not be inquired of by you. 32 [w]What you have in your mind shall never be, when you say, 'We will be like the Gentiles, like the families in other countries, serving wood and stone.'

God Will Restore Israel

33 "*As* I live," says the Lord GOD, "surely with a mighty hand, [x]with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out, I will rule over you. 34 I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you

12 [s]Deut. 5:12
13 [t]Num. 14:22 [u]Prov. 1:25 [v]Lev. 18:5 [w]Ex. 16:27 [x]Num. 14:29
14 [y]Ezek. 20:9, 20
15 [z]Num. 14:28 [a]Ex. 3:8 [b]Ezek. 20:6
16 [c]Ezek. 20:13, 24 [d]Amos 5:25
17 [e][Ps. 78:38]
19 [f]Deut. 5:32
20 [g]Jer. 17:22
21 [h]Num. 25:1 [i]Lev. 18:5
22 [3]Refrained from judgment
23 [j]Lev. 26:33
24 [k]Ezek. 20:13, 16 [l]Ezek. 6:9
25 [m]Rom. 1:24
26 [n]Jer. 32:35 [o]Ezek. 6:7; 20:12, 20 [4]Lit. *that open the womb*
27 [p]Rom. 2:24
28 [q]Ezek. 6:13 [r]Ezek. 16:19
29 [5]Place for pagan worship [6]Lit. *High Place*
30 [s]Judg. 2:19 [t]Jer. 7:26; 16:12
31 [u]Ezek. 16:20; 20:26 [v]Ezek. 20:3
32 [w]Ezek. 11:5
33 [x]Jer. 21:5

■ **20:12 Sabbaths.** The Sabbath (vv. 13, 16, 21, 24) is singled out as a law unique to Israel, one that most clearly distinguished it from the nations. The Sabbath is often cited as an important example that stands for the whole law (22:8, 26; 23:38; 44:24; cf. Neh. 13:18; Is. 56:2, 4, 6; Jer. 17:19–27).

■ **20:13 rebelled.** The first generation in the wilderness rebelled against God (Ex. 17:2; Num. 14:18; 16; 17; 20:10, 24; 25; 26:9; 27:14; Deut. 1:26, 43; 9:7; 31:27).

defiled My Sabbaths. See Num. 15:32–36.

■ **20:23 scatter.** The threat of exile existed even before the people entered the land (Lev. 26:32–35; Deut. 28:64–67; Ps. 106:26). Moses predicted that they would rebel against the Lord once in the land (Deut. 31:27, 29).

■ **20:26 their firstborn.** The law was God's gracious gift (v. 11 note), but when perverted it brought death. Ezekiel appears to regard the practice of child sacrifice in ancient Israel as a perversion of their laws regarding the firstborn (Ex. 13:1, 11–16; 22:29; 34:19, 20; Num. 18:15, 16). Every firstborn belonged to the Lord, but children were not to be sacrificed.

■ **20:29 high place.** Second Kings measures almost every ruler of Judah in terms of what he or she did about the high places around Jerusalem.

■ **20:32–38** The desire to be like the surrounding nations (v. 32) reflects 1 Sam. 8:20; the people had rejected God (1 Sam. 8:7, 8). But just as God would not abandon earlier generations of His chosen people, so now He promises a new exodus and a return to the wilderness experience (vv. 33–35). Just as only the faithful and obedient from those in the wilderness generation crossed into the land (Num. 14:30, 38), so too God would again purge the nation to bring a faithful people into the land (vv. 36–38).

out of the countries where you are scattered, with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out. 35 And I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples, and there [y]I will plead My case with you face to face. 36 [z]Just as I pleaded My case with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will plead My case with you," says the Lord GOD.

37 "I will make you [a]pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the [b]covenant; 38 [c]I will purge the rebels from among you, and those who transgress against Me; I will bring them out of the country where they dwell, but [d]they shall not enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I *am* the LORD.

39 "As for you, O house of Israel," thus says the Lord GOD: [e]"Go, serve every one of you his idols—and hereafter—if you will not obey Me; [f]but profane My holy name no more with your gifts and your idols. 40 For [g]on My holy mountain, on the mountain height of Israel," says the Lord GOD, "there [h]all the house of Israel, all of them in the land, shall serve Me; there [i]I will accept them, and there I will require your offerings and the firstfruits of your [7]sacrifices, together with all your holy things. 41 I will accept you as a [j]sweet aroma when I bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you have been scattered; and I will be hallowed in you before the Gentiles. 42 [k]Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD, [l]when I bring you into the land of Israel, into the country *for* which I raised My hand in an oath to give to your fathers. 43 And [m]there you shall remember your ways and all your doings with which you were defiled; and [n]you shall [8]loathe yourselves in your own sight because of all the evils that you have committed. 44 [o]Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have dealt with you [p]for My name's sake, not according to your wicked ways nor according to your corrupt doings, O house of Israel," says the Lord GOD.' "

Fire in the Forest

45 Furthermore the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 46 [q]"Son of man, set your face toward the south; [9]preach against the south and prophesy against the forest land, the [r]South, 47 and say to the forest of the South, 'Hear the word of the LORD! Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, [r]I will kindle a fire in you, and it shall devour [s]every green tree and every dry tree in you; the blazing flame shall not be quenched, and all faces [t]from the south to the north shall be scorched by it. 48 All flesh shall see that I, the LORD, have kindled it; it shall not be quenched." ' "

49 Then I said, "Ah, Lord GOD! They say of me, 'Does he not speak [u]parables?' "

Babylon, the Sword of God

21 And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2 [a]"Son of man, set your face toward Jerusalem, [b]preach[1] against the holy places, and prophesy against the land of Israel; 3 and say to the land of Israel, 'Thus says the LORD: "Behold, I *am* [c]against you, and I will draw My sword out of its sheath and cut off both [d]righteous and wicked from you. 4 Because I will cut off both righteous and wicked from you, therefore My sword shall go out of its sheath against all flesh [e]from south *to* north, 5 that all flesh may know that I, the LORD, have drawn My sword out of its sheath; it [f]shall not return anymore." ' 6 [g]Sigh therefore, son of man, with [2]a breaking heart, and sigh with bitterness before their eyes. 7 And it shall be when they say to you, 'Why are you sighing?' that you shall answer, 'Because of the news; when it comes, every heart will melt, [h]all hands will be feeble, every spirit will faint, and all knees will be weak *as* water. Behold, it is coming and shall be brought to pass,' says the Lord GOD."

35 [y]Jer. 2:9, 35; Ezek. 17:20

36 [z]Num. 14:21–23, 28

37 [a]Lev. 27:32 [b]Ps. 89:30–34

38 [c]Ezek. 34:17 [d]Jer. 44:14

39 [e]Amos 4:4 [f]Is. 1:13–15

40 [g]Is. 2:2, 3 [h]Ezek. 37:22 [i]Zech. 8:20–22 [7]*offerings*

41 [j]Phil. 4:18

42 [k]Ezek. 36:23; 38:23 [l]Ezek. 11:17; 34:13; 36:24

43 [m]Ezek. 16:61 [n]Lev. 26:39 [8]Or *despise*

44 [o]Ezek. 24:24 [p]Ezek. 36:22

46 [q]Ezek. 21:2 [9]*proclaim*, lit. *drop* [r]Heb. *Negev*

47 [r]Jer. 21:14 [s]Luke 23:31 [t]Ezek. 21:4

49 [u]Ezek. 12:9; 17:2

CHAPTER 21

2 [a]Ezek. 20:46 [b]Amos 7:16 [1]*proclaim*, lit. *drop*

3 [c]Ezek. 5:8 [d]Job 9:22

4 [e]Ezek. 20:47

5 [f][Is. 45:23; 55:11]

6 [g]Is. 22:4 [2]Emotional distress, lit. *the breaking of your loins*

7 [h]Ezek. 7:17

■ **20:35 wilderness of the peoples.** Possibly this refers to the desolation of exile, which Israel was about to experience. Israel was going to be judged in a "desert" just as the wilderness generation had been.

■ **20:37 pass under the rod.** The phrase alludes to the practice of counting off animals for the tithe (Lev. 27:32, 33); it suggests that a tenth would be left (cf. Is. 6:13).

■ **20:38 purge.** The goal of the periodic catastrophes that befell Israel was commonly to produce a purified, purged, and faithful remnant (6:8 note).

■ **20:40 holy mountain.** Zion. The faithful remnant would worship at God's holy mountain. The glory of the grace of God is that He deals with us in mercy and not as our sins deserve (20:44; Ezra 9:13; Job 33:27; Ps. 103:10; Lam. 3:22, 23, 31–33).

■ **20:45–48** This short prophecy against the South is explained in 21:1–5. Here and in 21:4 disaster comes "from south to north," and the disaster cannot be stopped (v. 48; 21:5). The threat was issued in Babylon, and Israel is described as lying to the south. Disaster is usually portrayed as coming from the north (Is. 14:31; 41:25; Jer. 1:13–15; 4:6; 6:1; 10:22; 25:9; 47:2; 50:9; 51:48; Joel 2:20).

■ **20:49 They say of me.** Ridicule and mocking were often a prophet's lot (2 Chr. 36:16; Matt. 20:19; 27:29).

■ **21:1–32** The oracles of this chapter all use the figure of a sword (21:1–7, 8–27, 28–32). The Old Testament frequently describes God as a warrior. His sword was ordinarily wielded against Israel's enemies (Deut. 32:41; Is. 31:8; 34:5–8; 66:16; Jer. 25:31; 50:35–37; Zeph. 2:12). But now the sword was given to the Babylonians and would be wielded against Judah and Jerusalem (vv. 2, 12).

8 Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 9 "Son of man, prophesy and say, 'Thus says the LORD!' Say:

[i]'A sword, a sword is sharpened
And also polished!
10 Sharpened to make a dreadful slaughter,
Polished to flash like lightning!
Should we then make mirth?
It despises the scepter of My son,
As it does all wood.
11 And He has given it to be polished,
That it may be handled;
This sword is sharpened, and it is polished
To be given into the hand of [j]the slayer.'

12 "Cry and wail, son of man;
For it will be against My people,
Against all the princes of Israel.
Terrors including the sword will be against My people;
Therefore [k]strike *your* thigh.

13 "Because *it is* [l]a testing,
And what if *the sword* despises even the scepter?
[m]*The scepter* shall be no *more*,"

says the Lord GOD.

14 "You therefore, son of man, prophesy,
And [n]strike *your* hands together.
The third time let the sword do double *damage*.
It *is* the sword *that* slays,
The sword that slays the great *men*,
That enters their [o]private chambers.
15 I have set the point of the sword against all their gates,
That the heart may melt and many may stumble.
Ah! [p]*It is* made bright;
It is grasped for slaughter:

16 "Swords[q][3] at the ready!
Thrust right!
Set your blade!
Thrust left—
Wherever your [4]edge is ordered!

17 "I also will [r]beat My fists together,
And [s]I will cause My fury to rest;
I, the LORD, have spoken."

18 The word of the LORD came to me again, saying: 19 "And son of man, appoint for yourself two ways for the sword of the king of Babylon to go; both of them shall go from the same land. Make a sign; put *it* at the head of the road to the city. 20 Appoint a road for the sword to go to

9 [i]Deut. 32:41; Ezek. 5:1; 21:15, 28

11 [j]Ezek. 21:19

12 [k]Jer. 31:19

13 [l]Job 9:23; 2 Cor. 8:2 [m]Ezek. 21:27

14 [n]Num. 24:10; Ezek. 6:11 [o]1 Kin. 20:30

15 [p]Ezek. 21:10, 28

16 [q]Ezek. 14:17 [3]Lit. *Sharpen yourself!* or *Unite yourself!* [4]Lit. *face*

17 [r]Ezek. 22:13 [s]Ezek. 5:13; 16:42; 24:13

■ **21:9 A sword.** Probably Ezekiel is once again using some form of symbolic action (4:1–3 note). The prophet may have been whirling, cutting, and slashing with a sword in a dramatic dance as part of the oracle.

■ **21:10, 13 scepter.** These verses along with v. 27 are united in part by their allusions to Judah's scepter (Gen. 49:10). A wooden scepter was nothing against an iron sword, and Judah was no contest for Nebuchadnezzar.

■ **21:18–23** Nebuchadnezzar would be coming from the north, approaching a fork in the road. Ezekiel probably drew a map something like an inverted "Y" scratched in the dirt or on a clay tablet (4:1–3 note). Coming from the north, the left fork in the road would take the Babylonian armies down the "King's Highway," a major highway passing through Jordan. The right fork would take the Babylonians down the "Via Maris," an important international highway on the coastal plain west of Jerusalem. These highways met near Damascus.

[t]Rabbah of the Ammonites, and to Judah, into fortified Jerusalem. 21 For the king of Babylon stands at the parting of the road, at the fork of the two roads, to use divination: he shakes the arrows, he consults the [s]images, he looks at the liver. 22 In his right hand is the divination for Jerusalem: to set up battering rams, to call for a slaughter, to [u]lift the voice with shouting, [v]to set battering rams against the gates, to heap up a *siege* mound, and to build a wall. 23 And it will be to them like a false divination in the eyes of those who [w]have sworn oaths with them; but he will bring their iniquity to remembrance, that they may be taken.

24 "Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Because you have made your iniquity to be remembered, in that your transgressions are uncovered, so that in all your doings your sins appear—because you have come to remembrance, you shall be taken in hand.

25 'Now to you, O [x]profane, wicked prince of Israel, [y]whose day has come, whose iniquity *shall* end, 26 thus says the Lord GOD:

"Remove the turban, and take off the crown;
Nothing *shall remain* the same.
[z]Exalt the humble, and humble the exalted.
27 [6]Overthrown, overthrown,
I will make it overthrown!
[a]It shall be no *longer,*
Until He comes whose right it is,
And I will give it *to* [b]*Him.*" '

A Sword Against the Ammonites

28 "And you, son of man, prophesy and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD [c]concerning the Ammonites and concerning their reproach,' and say:

'A sword, a sword *is* drawn,
Polished for slaughter,
For consuming, for flashing—
29 While they [d]see false visions for you,
While they divine a lie to you,
To bring you on the necks of the wicked, the slain
[e]Whose day has come,
Whose iniquity *shall* end.

30 'Return[f] *it* to its sheath.
[g]I will judge you
In the place where you were created,
[h]In the land of your [7]nativity.
31 I will [i]pour out My indignation on you;
I will [j]blow against you with the fire of My wrath,
And deliver you into the hands of brutal men *who are* skillful to [k]destroy.
32 You shall be fuel for the fire;
Your blood shall be in the midst of the land.
[l]You shall not be remembered,
For I the LORD have spoken.' "

Sins of Jerusalem

22 Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2 "Now, son of man, [a]will you judge, will you judge [b]the bloody city? Yes, show her all her abominations! 3 Then say,

20 [t]Deut. 3:11; Jer. 49:2; Ezek. 25:5; Amos 1:14

21 [s]Heb. *teraphim*

22 [u]Jer. 51:14 [v]Ezek. 4:2

23 [w]Ezek. 17:16, 18

25 [x]2 Chr. 36:13; Jer. 52:2; Ezek. 12:10; 17:19 [y]Ezek. 21:29

26 [z]Luke 1:52

27 [a]Gen. 49:10; [Luke 1:32, 33; John 1:49] [b]Ps. 2:6; 72:7, 10; [Jer. 23:5, 6; Ezek. 34:24; 37:24] [6]Or *Distortion, Ruin*

28 [c]Jer. 25:21; 49:1–6; Ezek. 25:1–7; Amos 1:13; Zeph. 2:8–11

29 [d]Jer. 27:9; Ezek. 12:24; 13:6–9; 22:28 [e]Job 18:20; Ps. 37:17; Is. 10:3; Ezek. 7:2, 3, 7

30 [f]Jer. 47:6, 7 [g]Gen. 15:14 [h]Ezek. 16:3 [7]Or *origin*

31 [i]Ezek. 7:8 [j]Ps. 18:15; Is. 30:33; Ezek. 22:20, 21; Hag. 1:9 [k]Jer. 6:22, 23; 51:20, 21; Hab. 1:6–10

32 [l]Ezek. 25:10

CHAPTER 22

2 [a]Ezek. 20:4 [b]Nah. 3:1

■ **21:21 divination.** The Babylonian king used several ways to obtain guidance from the gods. (a) The images (Hebrew *teraphim*) were religious objects used in worship. (b) Divination by examining the contours and markings on the livers of sacrificed birds or sheep (hepatoscopy) was a common practice in ancient times. (c) Arrows were used as a means of casting lots.

■ **21:23 sworn oaths.** Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem by January, 588 B.C.

■ **21:25 prince.** The profane and wicked prince is Zedekiah, the last king of Judah (17:1–10 note).

■ **21:28 Ammonites.** From vv. 18–23 it might seem that the Babylonians would attack Jerusalem but spare Ammon. This third and last sword song explains that Ammon too would taste God's wrath in the fury of the Babylonians (Jer. 49:1–6). Ammon was allied with Jerusalem and Egypt against the Babylonians in 589 B.C. However, when Jerusalem came under attack, Ammon took advantage of her former ally (Jer. 27:3; 40:11, 14; 41:10, 15; cf. 2 Kin. 24:2).

■ **22:2 bloody city.** This first of three oracles in ch. 22 revolves around repeated references to blood (vv. 2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 12, 13; cf. v. 27). The city is indicted for both moral and ritual crimes.

'Thus says the Lord GOD: "The city sheds [c]blood in her own midst, that her time may come; and she makes idols within herself to defile herself. [4] You have become guilty by the blood which you have [d]shed, and have defiled yourself with the idols which you have made. You have caused your days to draw near, and have come to *the end of* your years; [e]therefore I have made you a reproach to the nations, and a mockery to all countries. [5] *Those* near and *those* far from you will mock you as [f]infamous *and* full of tumult.

[6] "Look, [f]the princes of Israel: each one has used his [2]power to shed blood in you. [7] In you they have [g]made light of father and mother; in your midst they have [h]oppressed the stranger; in you they have mistreated the [3]fatherless and the widow. [8] You have despised My holy things and [i]profaned My Sabbaths. [9] In you are [j]men who slander to cause bloodshed; [k]in you are those who eat on the mountains; in your midst they commit lewdness. [10] In you men [l]uncover their fathers' nakedness; in you they violate women who are [m]set apart during their impurity. [11] One commits abomination [n]with his neighbor's wife; [o]another lewdly defiles his daughter-in-law; and another in you violates his sister, his father's [p]daughter. [12] In you [q]they take bribes to shed blood; [r]you take usury and increase; you have made profit from your neighbors by extortion, and [s]have forgotten Me," says the Lord GOD.

[13] "Behold, therefore, I [t]beat My fists at the dishonest profit which you have made, and at the bloodshed which has been in your midst. [14] [u]Can your heart endure, or can your hands remain strong, in the days when I shall deal with you? [v]I, the LORD, have spoken, and will do *it.* [15] [w]I will scatter you among the nations, disperse you throughout the countries, and [x]remove your filthiness completely from you. [16] You shall defile yourself in the sight of the nations; then [y]you shall know that I *am* the LORD." ' "

Israel in the Furnace

[17] The word of the LORD came to me, saying, [18] "Son of man, [z]the house of Israel has become dross to Me; they *are* all bronze, tin, iron, and lead, in the midst of a [a]furnace; they have become dross from silver. [19] Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Because you have all become dross, therefore behold, I will gather you into the midst of Jerusalem. [20] *As men* gather silver, bronze, iron, lead, and tin into the midst of a furnace, to blow fire on it, to [b]melt *it;* so I will gather *you* in My anger and in My fury, and I will leave *you there* and melt you. [21] Yes, I will gather you and blow on you with the fire of My wrath, and you shall be melted in its midst. [22] As silver is melted in the midst of a furnace, so shall you be melted in its midst; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have [c]poured out My fury on you.' "

Israel's Wicked Leaders

[23] And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, [24] "Son of man, say to her: 'You *are* a land that is [d]not [4]cleansed or rained on in the day of indignation.' [25] [e]The conspiracy of her [5]prophets in her midst is like a roaring lion tearing the prey; they [f]have devoured [6]people; [g]they have taken treasure and precious things; they have made many widows in her midst. [26] [h]Her priests have [7]violated My law and [i]profaned My holy things; they have not [j]distinguished between the holy and unholy, nor have they made known *the difference* between the unclean and the clean; and they have hidden their eyes from My Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them. [27] Her [k]princes in her midst *are* like wolves tearing the prey, to shed blood, to destroy [8]people, and to get dishonest gain. [28] [l]Her prophets plastered them with untempered *mortar,* [m]seeing false visions, and divining [n]lies for them, saying, 'Thus says the Lord GOD,' when the LORD had not spoken. [29] The people of the land have used oppressions, committed robbery, and mistreated the poor and needy; and they wrongfully [o]oppress the stranger. [30] [p]So I sought for a man among them who would [q]make a wall, and [r]stand in the gap before Me on behalf of the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one. [31] Therefore I have [s]poured out My indignation on

3 [c]Ezek. 24:6, 7
4 [d]2 Kin. 21:16 [e]Deut. 28:37
5 [f]Lit. *defiled of name*
6 [f]Is. 1:23 [2]Lit. *arm*
7 [g]Lev. 20:9 [h]Ex. 22:22 [3]Lit. *orphan*
8 [i]Lev. 19:30
9 [j]Lev. 19:16 [k]Ezek. 18:6, 11
10 [l]Lev. 18:7, 8 [m]Lev. 18:19; 20:18
11 [n]Ezek. 18:11 [o]Lev. 18:15 [p]Lev. 18:9
12 [q]Ex. 23:8 [r]Ex. 22:25 [s]Ezek. 23:35
13 [t]Ezek. 21:17
14 [u]Ezek. 21:7 [v]Ezek. 17:24
15 [w]Deut. 4:27 [x]Ezek. 23:27, 48
16 [y]Ps. 9:16
18 [z]Is. 1:22 [a]Prov. 17:3
20 [b]Is. 1:25
22 [c]Ezek. 20:8, 33
24 [d]Ezek. 24:13 [4]So with MT, Syr., Vg.; LXX *showered upon*
25 [e]Hos. 6:9 [f]Matt. 23:14 [g]Mic. 3:11 [5]So with MT, Vg.; LXX *princes;* Tg. *scribes* [6]Lit. *souls*
26 [h]Mal. 2:8 [i]1 Sam. 2:29 [j]Lev. 10:10 [7]Lit. *done violence to*
27 [k]Is. 1:23 [8]Lit. *souls*
28 [l]Ezek. 13:10 [m]Ezek. 13:6, 7 [n]Jer. 23:25–32
29 [o]Ex. 23:9
30 [p]Jer. 5:1 [q]Ezek. 13:5 [r]Ps. 106:23
31 [s]Ezek. 22:22

■ **22:7 father and mother.** They abused their own parents (Deut. 5:16; Mic. 7:6; Rom. 1:30; Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:20; 2 Tim. 3:2).

the stranger . . . the fatherless and the widow. See Ps. 9:18 note. Other references: Deut. 10:18; 14:29; 24:17; 26:12, 13; 27:19; Ps. 68:5; 72:4; 146:9; Is. 1:17; 10:1, 2; Jer. 7:6, 7; 22:3; Zech. 7:10; Mal. 3:5).

■ **22:11 abomination.** For the range of forbidden sexual relations, see Lev. 18:6–23; 20:10–21.

■ **22:18 furnace.** The periodic outpouring of divine judgment on Israel was designed to purge her of sin and to produce a pure people (6:8 note). Israel's experience in Egypt was likened to time in a furnace (Deut. 4:20; 1 Kin. 8:51; Jer. 11:4), and the Exile would be a refiner's furnace for Israel. Refining is a common image in the Bible (Ps. 66:10; 119:119; Prov. 17:3; 25:4; Is. 1:25; 48:10; Jer. 9:7; Zech. 13:9; Mal. 3:2, 3; 1 Cor. 3:12–15; 1 Pet. 1:7).

■ **22:21 blow.** God blows on the flame, the divine breath serving as a bellows to heat the fire hotter. The fear is that no silver will emerge from the furnace—only dross.

■ **22:30 gap.** See 13:5 note.

them; I have consumed them with the fire of My wrath; and I have recompensed [f]their deeds on their own heads," says the Lord GOD.

Two Harlot Sisters

23 The word of the LORD came again to me, saying:

2 "Son of man, there were [a]two women,
The daughters of one mother.
3 [b]They committed harlotry in Egypt,
They committed harlotry in [c]their youth;
Their breasts were there embraced,
Their virgin bosom was there pressed.
4 Their names: [1]Oholah the elder and [2]Oholibah [d]her sister;
[e]They were Mine,
And they bore sons and daughters.
As for their names,
Samaria *is* Oholah, and Jerusalem *is* Oholibah.

The Older Sister, Samaria

5 "Oholah played the harlot even though she was Mine;
And she lusted for her lovers, the neighboring [f]Assyrians,
6 *Who were* clothed in purple,
Captains and rulers,
All of them desirable young men,
Horsemen riding on horses.
7 Thus she committed her harlotry with them,
All of them choice men of Assyria;
And with all for whom she lusted,
With all their idols, she defiled herself.
8 She has never given up her harlotry *brought* [g]from Egypt,
For in her youth they had lain with her,
Pressed her virgin bosom,
And poured out their immorality upon her.

9 "Therefore I have delivered her
Into the hand of her lovers,
Into the hand of the [h]Assyrians,
For whom she lusted.
10 They uncovered her nakedness,
Took away her sons and daughters,
And slew her with the sword;
She became a byword among women,
For they had executed judgment on her.

The Younger Sister, Jerusalem

11 "Now [i]although her sister Oholibah saw *this,* [j]she became more corrupt in her lust than she, and in her harlotry more corrupt than her sister's harlotry.

12 "She lusted for the neighboring [k]Assyrians,
[l]Captains and rulers,

31 [f]Ezek. 9:10; [Rom. 2:8, 9]

CHAPTER 23

2 [a]Jer. 3:7, 8; Ezek. 16:44–46

3 [b]Lev. 17:7; Josh. 24:14; Jer. 3:9 [c]Ezek. 16:22

4 [d]Jer. 3:6, 7 [e]Ezek. 16:8, 20 [1]Lit. *Her Own Tabernacle* [2]Lit. *My Tabernacle Is in Her*

5 [f]2 Kin. 15:19; 16:7; 17:3; Ezek. 16:28; Hos. 5:13; 8:9, 10

8 [g]Ex. 32:4; 1 Kin. 12:28; 2 Kin. 10:29; 17:16; Ezek. 23:3, 19

9 [h]2 Kin. 17:3

11 [i]Jer. 3:8 [j]Jer. 3:8–11; Ezek. 16:51, 52

12 [k]2 Kin. 16:7, 8; Ezek. 16:28 [l]Ezek. 23:6, 23

■ **23:1–49** Ezekiel propounds another allegory. The two sisters are a tale of two cities: "Oholah" is Samaria, the capital of the northern kingdom, and "Oholibah" is Jerusalem, capital of the southern kingdom.

■ **23:3 harlotry.** Though Ezekiel emphasized that each individual and generation would bear responsibility for its own sin (18:1–32 note), he also describes a cumulative guilt and a deferred punishment. The indictment of the two kingdoms begins with their prostitution in Egypt (16:26; 20:5–9).

■ **23:4 Mine.** The sisters had a covenant relationship with the Lord.

■ **23:5 lovers.** Israel's oath of exclusive allegiance to the Lord would be broken by foreign alliances as well as by idolatry (vv. 5–10; 16:26 note; cf. Hos. 8:9). Prostitution did not secure the admiration or affection of the Assyrian lovers—quite the contrary (vv. 9, 10). Ultimately Assyria destroyed the northern kingdom (2 Kin. 17:5, 6).

Clothed most gorgeously,
Horsemen riding on horses,
All of them desirable young men.
13 Then I saw that she was defiled:
Both *took* the same way.
14 But she increased her harlotry;
She looked at men portrayed on the wall,
Images of [m]Chaldeans portrayed in vermilion,
15 Girded with belts around their waists,
Flowing turbans on their heads,
All of them looking like captains,
In the manner of the Babylonians of Chaldea,
The land of their nativity.
16 [n]As soon as her eyes saw them,
She lusted for them
And sent [o]messengers to them in Chaldea.

17 "Then the [3]Babylonians came to her, into the bed of love,
And they defiled her with their immorality;
So she was defiled by them, [p]and alienated herself from them.
18 She revealed her harlotry and uncovered her nakedness.
Then [q]I [r]alienated Myself from her,
As I had alienated Myself from her sister.

19 "Yet she multiplied her harlotry
In calling to remembrance the days of her youth,
[s]When she had played the harlot in the land of Egypt.
20 For she lusted for her [4]paramours,
Whose flesh *is like* the flesh of donkeys,
And whose issue *is like* the issue of horses.
21 Thus you called to remembrance the lewdness of your youth,
When the [t]Egyptians pressed your bosom
Because of your youthful breasts.

Judgment on Jerusalem

22 "Therefore, Oholibah, thus says the Lord GOD:

[u]'Behold, I will stir up your lovers against you,
From whom you have alienated yourself,
And I will bring them against you from every side:
23 The Babylonians,
All the Chaldeans,
[v]Pekod, Shoa, Koa,
[w]All the Assyrians with them,
All of them desirable young men,
Governors and rulers,
Captains and men of renown,
All of them riding on horses.
24 And they shall come against you
With chariots, wagons, and war-horses,
With a horde of people.
They shall array against you
Buckler, shield, and helmet all around.

14 [m]Jer. 50:2; Ezek. 8:10; 16:29
16 [n]2 Kin. 24:1 [o]Is. 57:9
17 [p]Ezek. 23:22, 28 [3]Lit. *sons of Babel*
18 [q]Jer. 6:8 [r]Ps. 78:59; 106:40; Jer. 12:8
19 [s]Lev. 18:3; Ezek. 23:2
20 [4]Illicit lovers
21 [t]Ezek. 16:26
22 [u]Ezek. 16:37–41; 23:28
23 [v]Jer. 50:21 [w]Ezek. 23:12

■ **23:14 increased.** Judah entered alliances of her own with the Babylonians (2 Kin. 20:12–18; 23:29; Is. 39:1). There were also overtures to Egypt (23:19–21).

■ **23:23 Pekod, Shoa, Koa.** Probably Aramean tribes east of the Tigris River.

'I will delegate judgment to them,
And they shall judge you according to their judgments.
25 I will set My [x]jealousy against you,
And they shall deal furiously with you;
They shall remove your nose and your ears,
And your remnant shall fall by the sword;
They shall take your sons and your daughters,
And your remnant shall be devoured by fire.
26 [y]They shall also strip you of your clothes
And take away your beautiful jewelry.

27 'Thus [z]I will make you cease your lewdness and your [a]harlotry
Brought from the land of Egypt,
So that you will not lift your eyes to them,
Nor remember Egypt anymore.'

28 "For thus says the Lord GOD: 'Surely I will deliver you into the hand of [b]those you hate, into the hand *of those* [c]from whom you alienated yourself. 29 [d]They will deal hatefully with you, take away all you have worked for, and [e]leave you naked and bare. The nakedness of your harlotry shall be uncovered, both your lewdness and your harlotry. 30 I will do these *things* to you because you have [f]gone as a harlot after the Gentiles, because you have become defiled by their idols. 31 You have walked in the way of your sister; therefore I will put her [g]cup in your hand.'

32 "Thus says the Lord GOD:

'You shall drink of your sister's cup,
The deep and wide one;
[h]You shall be laughed to scorn
And held in derision;
It contains much.
33 You will be filled with drunkenness and sorrow,
The cup of horror and desolation,
The cup of your sister Samaria.
34 You shall [i]drink and drain it,
You shall break its [j]shards,
And tear at your own breasts;
For I have spoken,'
Says the Lord GOD.

35 "Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:

'Because you [k]have forgotten Me and [l]cast Me behind your back,
Therefore you shall bear the *penalty*
Of your lewdness and your harlotry.' "

Both Sisters Judged

36 The LORD also said to me: "Son of man, will you [m]judge Oholah and Oholibah? Then [n]declare to them their abominations. 37 For they have committed adultery, and [o]blood *is* on their hands. They have committed adultery with their idols, and even sacrificed their sons [p]whom they bore to Me, passing them through *the fire,* to devour *them.* 38 Moreover they have done this to Me: They have [q]defiled My sanctuary on the same day and [r]profaned My Sabbaths. 39 For after they had slain their children for their idols, on the same day they came into My sanctuary to profane it; and indeed [s]thus they have done in the midst of My house.

40 "Furthermore you sent for men to come from afar, [t]to whom a messenger *was* sent; and there they came. And you [u]washed yourself for them, [v]painted your eyes, and adorned yourself with ornaments. 41 You sat on a stately [w]couch, with a table prepared before it, [x]on which you

25 [x]Ex. 34:14; Ezek. 5:13; 8:17, 18; Zeph. 1:18
26 [y]Is. 3:18–23; Ezek. 16:39
27 [z]Ezek. 16:41; 22:15 [a]Ezek. 23:3, 19
28 [b]Jer. 21:7–10; Ezek.16:37–41 [c]Ezek. 23:17
29 [d]Deut. 28:48; Ezek. 23:25, 26, 45–47 [e]Ezek. 16:39
30 [f]Ezek. 6:9
31 [g]2 Kin. 21:13; Jer. 7:14, 15; 25:15; Ezek. 23:33
32 [h]Ezek. 22:4, 5
34 [i]Ps. 75:8; Is. 51:17 [j]Earthenware fragments
35 [k]Is. 17:10; Jer. 3:21; Ezek. 22:12; Hos. 8:14; 13:6 [l]1 Kin. 14:9; Jer. 2:27; 32:33; Neh. 9:26
36 [m]Jer. 1:10; Ezek. 20:4; 22:2 [n]Is. 58:1; Ezek. 16:2; Mic. 3:8
37 [o]Ezek. 16:38 [p]Ezek. 16:20, 21, 36, 45; 20:26, 31
38 [q]2 Kin. 21:4, 7; Ezek. 5:11; 7:20 [r]Ezek. 22:8
39 [s]2 Kin. 21:2–8
40 [t]Is. 57:9 [u]Ruth 3:3 [v]2 Kin. 9:30; Jer. 4:30
41 [w]Esth. 1:6; Is. 57:7; Amos 2:8; 6:4 [x]Prov. 7:17; Ezek. 16:18, 19; Hos. 2:8

■ **23:29 naked and bare.** See 16:35–41.
■ **23:31–34** The cup is a common metaphor in the Bible. In many cases it is symbolic of God's blessings (Ps. 16:5; 23:5; 116:13; 1 Cor. 10:16). It can also represent the anger of God (Ps. 75:7, 8; Is. 51:17–20; Jer. 25:15–29; 49:12; 51:7; Lam. 4:21; Hab. 2:16; Zech. 12:2; Rev. 14:9–11). This cup of wrath is mentioned by Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:39, 42) and appears in John's account of Jesus' death (John 18:11; 19:28–30).

had set My incense and My oil. 42 The sound of a carefree multitude *was* with her, and [6]Sabeans *were* brought from the wilderness with men of the common sort, who put bracelets on their [7]wrists and beautiful crowns on their heads. 43 Then I said concerning *her who had grown* old in adulteries, 'Will they commit harlotry with her now, and she *with them?*' 44 Yet they went in to her, as men go in to a woman who plays the harlot; thus they went in to Oholah and Oholibah, the lewd women. 45 But righteous men will [x]judge them after the manner of adulteresses, and after the manner of women who shed blood, because they *are* adulteresses, and [y]blood *is* on their hands.

46 "For thus says the Lord GOD: [z]'Bring up an assembly against them, give them up to trouble and plunder. 47 [a]The assembly shall stone them with stones and [g]execute them with their swords; [b]they shall slay their sons and their daughters, and burn their houses with fire. 48 Thus [c]I will cause lewdness to cease from the land, [d]that all women may be taught not to practice your lewdness. 49 They shall repay you for your lewdness, and you shall [e]pay for your idolatrous sins. [f]Then you shall know that I *am* the Lord GOD.' "

Symbol of the Cooking Pot

24 Again, in the ninth year, in the tenth month, on the tenth *day* of the month, the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, write down the name of the day, this very day—the king of Babylon started his siege against Jerusalem [a]this very day. 3 [b]And utter a parable to the rebellious house, and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD:

[c]"Put on a pot, set *it* on,
And also pour water into it.
4 Gather pieces *of meat* in it,
Every good piece,
The thigh and the shoulder.
Fill *it* with choice [f]cuts;
5 Take the choice of the flock.
Also pile *fuel* bones under it,
Make it boil well,
And let the cuts simmer in it."

6 'Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:

"Woe to [d]the bloody city,
To the pot whose scum *is* in it,
And whose scum is not gone from it!
Bring it out piece by piece,
On which no [e]lot has fallen.
7 For her blood is in her midst;
She set it on top of a rock;
[f]She did not pour it on the ground,
To cover it with dust.
8 That it may raise up fury and take vengeance,
[g]I have set her blood on top of a rock,
That it may not be covered."

9 'Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:

42 [6]Or *drunkards* [7]Lit. *hands*
45 [x]Ezek. 16:38 [y]Ezek. 23:37
46 [z]Ezek. 16:40
47 [a]Lev. 20:10; Ezek. 16:40 [b]2 Chr. 36:17, 19; Ezek. 24:21 [g]Lit. *cut down*
48 [c]Ezek. 22:15 [d]Deut. 13:11; Ezek. 22:15; 2 Pet. 2:6
49 [e]Is. 59:18; Ezek. 23:35 [f]Ezek. 20:38, 42, 44; 25:5

CHAPTER 24

2 [a]2 Kin. 25:1; Jer. 39:1; 52:4
3 [b]Ezek. 17:12 [c]Jer. 1:13; Ezek. 11:3
4 [f]Lit. *bones*
6 [d]2 Kin. 24:3, 4; Ezek. 22:2, 3, 27; Mic. 7:2; Nah. 3:1 [e]2 Sam. 8:2; Joel 3:3; Obad. 11; Nah. 3:10
7 [f]Lev. 17:13; Deut. 12:16
8 [g][Matt. 7:2]

■ **24:1–14** Ezekiel provides another allegory. The image is a cooking pot, and two oracles applying it are introduced by the same phrase, "Woe to the bloody city" (vv. 6, 9).

■ **24:1 year.** The date is ordinarily identified as January 15, 588 B.C. (see also 2 Kin. 25:1; Jer. 52:4). The beginning of the siege of the city was commemorated with a fast among the exiles (Zech. 8:19). God revealed to the prophet information about events taking place hundreds of miles away in Jerusalem.

■ **24:3 pot.** Ezekiel has already used the image of a cooking pot in 11:2–12 (cf. Jer. 1:13, 14; Mic. 3:3). From this initial description it appears that preparations are being made for a festive meal; the best of meats are to be cooked.

■ **24:6 scum.** The prophet looks at the corrosion (lit. "rust") in the pot and likens it to the bloodshed and guilt in the city. Though its occupants were removed piece by piece and dispersed to the far corners of the world, the guilt of the city remained like scum in the bottom of the pot. Compare the denunciation of the bloodshed in the city in 22:1–16; 36:18; 2 Kin. 21:16; 24:4; Is. 26:21; 59:7; Lam. 4:13; Hos. 4:2; Joel 3:21; Mic. 3:10.

■ **24:7 cover.** Blood, shed and uncovered, cried out to be avenged; note the same concept in Gen. 4:10; Job 16:18.

[h]"Woe to the bloody city!
I too will make the pyre great.
10 Heap on the wood,
Kindle the fire;
Cook the meat well,
Mix in the spices,
And let the [2]cuts be burned up.

11 "Then set the pot empty on the coals,
That it may become hot and its bronze may burn,
That [i]its filthiness may be melted in it,
That its scum may be consumed.
12 She has [3]grown weary with [4]lies,
And her great scum has not gone from her.
Let her scum *be* in the fire!
13 In your [j]filthiness *is* lewdness.
Because I have cleansed you, and you were not cleansed,
You will [k]not be cleansed of your filthiness anymore,
[l]Till I have caused My fury to rest upon you.
14 [m]I, the LORD, have spoken *it;*
[n]It shall come to pass, and I will do *it;*
I will not hold back,
[o]Nor will I spare,
Nor will I relent;
According to your ways
And according to your deeds
[5]They will judge you,"
Says the Lord GOD.' "

The Prophet's Wife Dies

15 Also the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 16 "Son of man, behold, I take away from you the desire of your eyes with one stroke; yet you shall [p]neither mourn nor weep, nor shall your tears run down. 17 Sigh in silence, [q]make no mourning for the dead; [r]bind your turban on your head, and [s]put your sandals on your feet; [t]do not cover *your* [6]lips, and do not eat man's bread *of sorrow.*"

18 So I spoke to the people in the morning, and at evening my wife died; and the next morning I did as I was commanded.

19 And the people said to me, [u]"Will you not tell us what these *things signify* to us, that you behave so?"

20 Then I answered them, "The word of the LORD came to me, saying, 21 'Speak to the house of Israel, "Thus says the Lord GOD: 'Behold, [v]I will profane My sanctuary, [7]your arrogant boast, the desire of your eyes, the [8]delight of your soul; [w]and your sons and daughters whom you left behind shall fall by the sword. 22 And you shall do as I have done; [x]you shall not cover *your* [9]lips nor eat man's bread *of sorrow.* 23 Your turbans shall be on your heads and your sandals on your feet; [y]you shall neither mourn nor weep, but [z]you shall pine away in your iniquities and mourn with one another. 24 Thus [a]Ezekiel is a sign to you; according to all that he has done you shall do; [b]and when this comes, [c]you shall know that I *am* the Lord GOD.' "

25 'And you, son of man—*will it* not *be* in the day when I take from them [d]their stronghold, their joy and their glory, the desire of their eyes, and [1]that on which they set their minds, their sons and their daughters: 26 on that day [e]one who escapes will come to you to let *you* hear *it* with *your* ears; 27 [f]on that day your mouth will be opened to him who has escaped; you shall speak and no longer be mute. Thus you will be a sign to them, and they shall know that I *am* the LORD.' "

9 [h]Ezek. 24:6; Nah. 3:1; Hab. 2:12

10 [2]Lit. *bones*

11 [i]Ezek. 22:15

12 [3]Or *wearied Me* [4]Or *toil*

13 [j]Ezek. 23:36–48 [k]Jer. 6:28–30; Ezek. 22:24 [l]Ezek. 5:13; 8:18; 16:42

14 [m][1 Sam. 15:29] [n]Num. 23:19; Ps. 33:9; Is. 55:11 [o]Ezek. 5:11 [5]LXX, Syr., Tg., Vg. *I*

16 [p]Jer. 16:5

17 [q]Jer. 16:5 [r]Lev. 10:6; 21:10 [s]2 Sam. 15:30 [t]Mic. 3:7 [6]Lit. *moustache*

19 [u]Ezek. 12:9; 37:18

21 [v]Jer. 7:14; Lam. 2:7; Ezek. 7:20, 24 [w]Jer. 6:11; 16:3, 4; Ezek. 23:25, 47 [7]Lit. *the pride of your strength* [8]Lit. *compassion*

22 [x]Jer. 16:6, 7 [9]Lit. *moustache*

23 [y]Job 27:15; Ps. 78:64 [z]Lev. 26:39; Ezek. 33:10

24 [a]Is. 20:3; Ezek. 4:3; 12:6, 11; Luke 11:29, 30 [b]Jer. 17:15; John 13:19; 14:29 [c]Ezek. 6:7; 25:5

25 [d]Ps. 48:2; 50:2; Ezek. 24:21 [1]Lit. *the lifting up of their soul*

26 [e]Ezek. 33:21

27 [f]Ezek. 3:26; 33:22

■ **24:11 hot.** The caldron is emptied in an effort to cleanse it, but the scum is so resistant that even heating the caldron white-hot will not purify it. God will destroy the city.

■ **24:16, 17** Customary mourning included lamenting and crying, removing headgear and covering the head with dust and ashes (Josh. 7:6; 1 Sam. 4:12; Job 2:12), removing sandals (2 Sam. 15:30; Is. 20:2), and covering the head or face (Esth. 6:12; Jer. 14:3, 4). Ezekiel would do none of these things; the ordinary practices associated with mourning were not sufficient to represent the depth of his sorrow.

■ **24:27 no longer be mute.** See 3:26 and note. Ezekiel's message would be vindicated when word reached the exiles that Jerusalem has been destroyed, and he would be released from the silence God had imposed on him.

CHAPTER 25

2 [a]Ezek. 35:2 [b]Jer. 49:1

3 [c]Ezek. 26:2

4 [f]Lit. *sons*

5 [d]Ezek. 21:20 [e]Is. 17:2 [f]Ezek. 24:24

6 [g]Job 27:23 [h]Ezek. 36:5

7 [i]Ezek. 35:3

8 [j]Amos 2:1, 2 [k]Ezek. 35:2, 5

9 [l]Jer. 48:23

10 [m]Ezek. 25:4 [n]Ezek. 21:32

12 [o]Obad. 10–14

13 [2]Or *even to Dedan they shall fall*

14 [p]Is. 11:14

15 [q]Jer. 25:20 [r]2 Chr. 28:18 [3]Lit. *spite in soul* [4]Or *perpetual*

16 [s]Zeph. 2:4 [t]1 Sam. 30:14 [u]Jer. 47:4

17 [v]Ezek. 5:15 [w]Ps. 9:16

Proclamation Against Ammon

25 The word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, [a]set your face [b]against the Ammonites, and prophesy against them. 3 Say to the Ammonites, 'Hear the word of the Lord GOD! Thus says the Lord GOD: [c]"Because you said, 'Aha!' against My sanctuary when it was profaned, and against the land of Israel when it was desolate, and against the house of Judah when they went into captivity, 4 indeed, therefore, I will deliver you as a possession to the [1]men of the East, and they shall set their encampments among you and make their dwellings among you; they shall eat your fruit, and they shall drink your milk. 5 And I will make [d]Rabbah [e]a stable for camels and Ammon a resting place for flocks. [f]Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD."

6 'For thus says the Lord GOD: "Because you [g]clapped *your* hands, stamped your feet, and [h]rejoiced in heart with all your disdain for the land of Israel, 7 indeed, therefore, I will [i]stretch out My hand against you, and give you as plunder to the nations; I will cut you off from the peoples, and I will cause you to perish from the countries; I will destroy you, and you shall know that I *am* the LORD."

Proclamation Against Moab

8 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Because [j]Moab and [k]Seir say, 'Look! The house of Judah *is* like all the nations,' 9 therefore, behold, I will clear the territory of Moab of cities, of the cities on its frontier, the glory of the country, Beth Jeshimoth, Baal Meon, and [l]Kirjathaim. 10 [m]To the men of the East I will give it as a possession, together with the Ammonites, that the Ammonites [n]may not be remembered among the nations. 11 And I will execute judgments upon Moab, and they shall know that I *am* the LORD."

Proclamation Against Edom

12 'Thus says the Lord GOD: [o]"Because of what Edom did against the house of Judah by taking vengeance, and has greatly offended by avenging itself on them," 13 therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "I will also stretch out My hand against Edom, cut off man and beast from it, and make it desolate from Teman; [2]Dedan shall fall by the sword. 14 [p]I will lay My vengeance on Edom by the hand of My people Israel, that they may do in Edom according to My anger and according to My fury; and they shall know My vengeance," says the Lord GOD.

Proclamation Against Philistia

15 'Thus says the Lord GOD: [q]"Because [r]the Philistines dealt vengefully and took vengeance with [3]a spiteful heart, to destroy because of the [4]old hatred," 16 therefore thus says the Lord GOD: [s]"I will stretch out My hand against the Philistines, and I will cut off the [t]Cherethites [u]and destroy the remnant of the seacoast. 17 I will [v]execute great vengeance on them with furious rebukes; [w]and they shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I lay My vengeance upon them." ' "

■ **25:1—32:32** Between warnings of the destruction of Jerusalem (chs. 1—24) and prophecies of hope and restoration (chs. 33—48), Ezekiel includes a section of oracles against foreign nations. Israel's prophets played an important role in the nation's warfare, often providing oracles concerning particular battles (1 Sam. 22:5; 1 Kin. 20:13, 14, 22; 22:5–23; 2 Kin. 3:11; 9:6, 7; 20:14; 2 Chr. 16:7; 20:14–20; 28:9; Jer. 28:8; 38:14). Archaeological evidence from the cultures surrounding Israel shows that they conducted ritual denunciations or rites of symbolic destruction. The nations denounced here by Ezekiel include most of the states of the ancient Near East, with Babylon as a notable exception (38:2 note).

■ **25:1–7** Ezekiel had already spoken against Ammon (21:28–32). Israel's relationship with the Ammonites was long and varied, primarily a record of conflict. Oracles against Ammon are also found in Jer. 49:1–6; Amos 1:13–15; Zeph. 2:8, 9.

■ **25:5 you shall know.** See note on 6:7.

■ **25:6, 7 Because . . . therefore.** The punishment fits the crime: rejoicing at the harm done to Jerusalem, the Ammonites themselves become prey to a foreign power. Though many of the small states in the area escaped the destruction during the Babylonian invasion of 587–586 B.C., sources outside the Bible indicate that Nebuchadnezzar decimated Ammon and Moab in 582 B.C. The prophet makes the same point in 21:28–32.

■ **25:8 Moab.** Israel's relationships with Moab were largely a history of conflict; other prophets include oracles against this nation (Is. 15; 16; Jer. 48; Amos 2:1–3; Zeph. 2:8, 9). Moab would share Ammon's fate.

■ **25:12 Edom.** Edom made incursions into Judah at the time of Jerusalem's fall (35:15; 36:5; Ps. 137:7–9; Lam. 4:21, 22). The enmity between Israel and Edom is traced in the Bible to the relationship between Jacob and Esau (Gen. 25:23, 30). Ezekiel includes a second oracle against Edom in ch. 35; other prophets make pronouncements against this state in Is. 34:5–11; Jer. 49:7–22; Amos 1:11, 12; Obad.; Mal. 1:3–5.

■ **25:15 Philistines.** The nations mentioned thus far were east of the Jordan River and the Dead Sea. The Philistines occupied the coastal plain west of Judah, controlling a long segment of the vital international coastal highway. Conflicting territorial claims and competing strategic interests made for a history of unfriendly relations with Israel. Ezekiel had already spoken of this enmity (16:27, 57). Other prophets also include oracles against the Philistines (Is. 14:29–31; Jer. 47; Joel 3:4–6; Amos 1:6–8; Zeph. 2:4–7; Zech. 9:5–7). The Philistines were Israel's most prominent enemy in the time of the judges and of Saul, David, and Solomon.

■ **25:16 Cherethites.** The Philistines appear to have entered Canaan in the latter half of the second millennium B.C. as part of the large migration of peoples known from Egyptian records as the "sea peoples." One group of Philistines was identified as "Cherethites," probably associating them with Crete. See 1 Sam. 30:14 note.

Proclamation Against Tyre

26 And it came to pass in the eleventh year, on the first *day* of the month, *that* the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, [a]because Tyre has said against Jerusalem, [b]'Aha! She is broken who *was* the gateway of the peoples; now she is turned over to me; I shall be filled; she is laid waste.'

3 "Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Behold, I *am* against you, O Tyre, and will cause many nations to come up against you, as the sea causes its waves to come up. 4 And they shall destroy the walls of Tyre and break down her towers; I will also scrape her dust from her, and [c]make her like the top of a rock. 5 It shall be *a place for* spreading nets [d]in the midst of the sea, for I have spoken,' says the Lord GOD; *'it shall become plunder for the nations.* 6 *Also her daughter villages* which *are* in the fields shall be slain by the sword. [e]Then they shall know that I am the LORD.'

7 "For thus says the Lord GOD: 'Behold, I will bring against Tyre from the north [f]Nebuchadnezzar[f] king of Babylon, [g]king of kings, with horses, with chariots, and with horsemen, and an army with many people. 8 He will slay with the sword your daughter *villages* in the fields; he will [h]heap up a siege mound against you, build a wall against you, and raise a [2]defense against you. 9 He will direct his battering rams against your walls, and with his axes he will break down your towers. 10 Because of the abundance of his horses, their dust will cover you; your walls will shake at the noise of the horsemen, the wagons, and the chariots, when he enters your gates, as men enter a city that has been breached. 11 With the hooves of his [i]horses he will trample all your streets; he will slay your people by the sword, and your strong pillars will fall to the ground. 12 They will plunder your riches and pillage your merchandise; they will break down your walls and destroy your pleasant houses; they will lay your stones, your timber, and your soil in the [j]midst of the water. 13 [k]I will put an end to the sound of [l]your songs, and the sound of your harps shall be heard no more. 14 [m]I will make you like the top of a rock; you shall be *a place for* spreading nets, and you shall never be rebuilt, for I the LORD have spoken,' says the Lord GOD.

15 "Thus says the Lord GOD to Tyre: 'Will the coastlands not [n]shake at the sound of your fall, when the wounded cry, when slaughter is made in the midst of you? 16 Then all the [o]princes of the sea will [p]come down from their thrones, lay aside their robes, and take off their embroidered garments; they will clothe themselves with trembling; [q]they will sit on the ground, [r]tremble *every* moment, and [s]be astonished at you. 17 And they will take up a [t]lamentation for you, and say to you:

"How you have perished,
O one inhabited by seafaring men,
O renowned city,
Who was [u]strong at sea,
She and her inhabitants,
Who caused their terror *to be* on all her inhabitants!
18 Now [v]the coastlands tremble on the day of your fall;
Yes, the coastlands by the sea are troubled at your departure." '

19 "For thus says the Lord GOD: 'When I make you a desolate city, like cities that are not inhabited, when I bring the deep upon you, and great waters cover you, 20 then I will bring you down [w]with those who descend into the Pit, to the people of old, and I will make you dwell in

CHAPTER 26

2 [a]2 Sam. 5:11; Is. 23:1; Jer. 25:22; Amos 1:9; Zech. 9:2 [b]Ezek. 25:3
4 [c]Ezek. 26:14
5 [d]Ezek. 27:32
6 [e]Ezek. 25:5
7 [f]Jer. 27:3–6; Ezek. 29:18 [g]Ezra 7:12; Is. 10:8; Jer. 52:32; Dan. 2:37, 47 [1]Heb. *Nebuchadrezzar*, and so elsewhere in the book
8 [h]Jer. 52:4; Ezek. 21:22 [2]Lit. *a large shield*
11 [i]Hab. 1:8
12 [j]Ezek. 27:27, 32
13 [k]Is. 14:11; 24:8; Jer. 7:34; 25:10; Amos 6:5 [l]Is. 23:16; Ezek. 28:13; Rev. 18:22
14 [m]Ezek. 26:4, 5
15 [n]Jer. 49:21; Ezek. 27:28
16 [o]Is. 23:8 [p]Jon. 3:6 [q]Job 2:13 [r]Ezek. 32:10; Hos. 11:10 [s]Ezek. 27:35
17 [t]Ezek. 27:2–36; Rev. 18:9 [u]Josh. 19:29; Is. 23:4
18 [v]Ezek. 26:15
20 [w]Ezek. 32:18

■ **26:1—28:26** Ezek. 26—28 is devoted to oracles against Israel's Phoenician neighbors, primarily Tyre (26:1—28:19), but also Sidon (28:20–26). The chapters are divided into subsections, each introduced with the phrase "the word of the LORD came to me" (26:1; 27:1; 28:1, 11, 20). There was occasional military conflict between Israel and the Phoenicians, but the Bible mentions Tyre and Sidon primarily as the source of pagan cults, especially the Baal worship of Jezebel, a Phoenician princess (Judg. 10:6; 1 Kin. 11:1, 5, 33; 16:31; 2 Kin. 23:13). The Phoenicians provided Israel with trade and expert labor (2 Sam. 5:11; 1 Kin. 5:1, 6; 7:13, 14; 9:11; 2 Chr. 2:3, 13, 14; Ezra 3:7; Neh. 13:16; Acts 12:20). Other prophetic books also include oracles against Tyre and Sidon (Is. 23; Joel 3:4–6; Amos 1:9, 10; Zech. 9:2–4).

■ **26:2 be filled.** The kingdom of Judah at times controlled trade routes leading through the coastal plains to Egypt, as well as Arabia and Africa via the port of Ezion Geber. Tyre would profit if Jerusalem lost control of these trade routes.

■ **26:7 Tyre.** Shortly after the fall of Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Tyre. The part of the city on the mainland fell quickly in 585 B.C., but the island fortress defied the armies of Babylon for thirteen years, until 572 B.C. (29:17, 18).

■ **26:19, 20 waters . . . Pit.** Waters and a pit are common biblical metaphors for death or the realm of the dead (waters: Ex. 15:5, 8, 10; Job 26:5; Ps. 32:6; 69:2, 14; Lam. 3:54. Pit: 31:14, 16; 32:18, 23, 24, 30; Job 33:18–30; Ps. 30:3, 9; 55:23; 88:4–6; 103:4; 143:7; Prov. 1:12; Is. 14:15; 38:18). These two images are combined in 28:8; Ps. 69:15; Jon. 2:5, 6. The prophet describes the mythological waters of chaos engulfing the island and its inhabitants (28:2 note).

the lowest part of the earth, in places desolate from antiquity, with those who go down to the Pit, so that you may never be inhabited; and I shall establish glory [x]in the land of the living. 21 [y]I will make you a terror, and you *shall be* no *more;* [z]though you are sought for, you will never be found again,' says the Lord GOD."

20 [x]Ezek. 32:23

21 [y]Ezek. 27:36; 28:19 [z]Ps. 37:10, 36; Ezek. 28:19

CHAPTER 27

Lamentation for Tyre

27 The word of the LORD came again to me, saying, 2 "Now, son of man, [a]take up a lamentation for Tyre, 3 and say to Tyre, [b]'You who [1]are situated at the entrance of the sea, [c]merchant of the peoples on many coastlands, thus says the Lord GOD:

"O Tyre, you have said,
[d]'I *am* perfect in beauty.'
4 Your borders *are* in the midst of the seas.
Your builders have perfected your beauty.
5 They [2]made all *your* planks of fir trees from [e]Senir;
They took a cedar from Lebanon to make you a mast.
6 *Of* [f]oaks from Bashan they made your oars;
The company of Ashurites have inlaid your planks
With ivory from [g]the coasts of [3]Cyprus.
7 Fine embroidered linen from Egypt was what you spread for your sail;
Blue and purple from the coasts of Elishah was what covered you.

8 "Inhabitants of Sidon and Arvad were your oarsmen;
Your wise men, O Tyre, were in you;
They became your pilots.
9 Elders of [h]Gebal and its wise men
Were in you to caulk your seams;
All the ships of the sea
And their oarsmen were in you
To market your merchandise.

10 "Those from Persia, [4]Lydia, and [5]Libya
Were in your army as men of war;
They hung shield and helmet in you;
They gave splendor to you.
11 Men of Arvad with your army *were* on your walls *all* around,
And the men of Gammad were in your towers;
They hung their shields on your walls *all* around;
They made [i]your beauty perfect.

12 [j]"Tarshish *was* your merchant because of your many luxury goods. They gave you silver, iron, tin, and lead for your goods. 13 [k]Javan, Tubal, and Meshech *were* your traders. They bartered [l]human lives and vessels of bronze for your merchandise. 14 Those from the house of [m]Togarmah traded for your wares with horses, steeds, and mules. 15 The men of [n]Dedan *were* your traders; many isles *were* the market of your hand. They brought you ivory tusks and ebony as payment. 16 Syria *was* your merchant because of the abundance of goods you made. They gave you for your wares emeralds, purple, embroidery, fine linen, corals, and rubies. 17 Judah and the land of Israel *were* your traders. They traded for your merchandise wheat of [o]Minnith,

1 Lit. *sit* or *dwell*

2 [a]Ezek. 26:17

3 [b]Ezek. 26:17; 28:2 [c]Is. 23:3 [d]Ezek. 28:12

5 [e]Deut. 3:9; 1 Chr. 5:23; Song 4:8 [2]*built*

6 [f]Is. 2:12, 13; Zech. 11:2 [g]Gen. 10:4; Is. 23:1, 12; Jer. 2:10 [3]Heb. *Kittim,* western lands, especially Cyprus

9 [h]Josh. 13:5; 1 Kin. 5:18; Ps. 83:7

10 [4]Heb. *Lud* [5]Heb. *Put*

11 [i]Ezek. 27:3

12 [j]Gen. 10:4; 2 Chr. 20:36; Ezek. 38:13

13 [k]Gen. 10:2; Is. 66:19; Ezek. 27:19 [l]Joel 3:3–6; Rev. 18:13

14 [m]Gen. 10:3; Ezek. 38:6

15 [n]Gen. 10:7; Is. 21:13

17 [o]Judg. 11:33; 1 Kin. 5:9, 11; Ezra 3:7; Acts 12:20

■ **27:3–6** The island city of Tyre is compared to a luxurious ship made of the finest materials and manned by an experienced crew.

■ **27:5 Senir.** The Amorite name for Mount Hermon (Deut. 3:9).

■ **27:7 Elishah.** Probably in Cyprus.

■ **27:8 Arvad.** An island city about two miles off the Mediterranean coast north of Byblos.

■ **27:9 Gebal.** Another name for Byblos on the Mediterranean coast north of Tyre.

■ **27:11 Gammad.** Probably in northern Syria.

■ **27:13 Tubal, and Meshech.** These peoples (32:26; 38:2, 3; 39:1; Gen. 10:2; 1 Chr. 1:5) were in Asia Minor, in the northeast corner of the Mediterranean. They are also known from Assyrian inscriptions.

human lives. For Tyre's involvement in the slave trade, see Joel 3:4–6.

■ **27:14 Togarmah.** A region of northeast Asia Minor (modern Turkey).

■ **27:17 were your traders.** Tyre was a maritime power and probably not self-sufficient in agriculture. The Bible several times mentions her trade with Israel for foodstuffs (1 Kin. 5:9–11; 2 Chr. 2:10; Ezra 3:7; Acts 12:20).

Minnith. A town east of the Jordan near Rabbah in Ammon (modern Amman), though the site has not been identified precisely (Judg. 11:33).

millet, honey, oil, and [p]balm. 18 Damascus *was* your merchant because of the abundance of goods you made, because of your many luxury items, with the wine of Helbon and with white wool. 19 Dan and Javan paid for your wares, [6]traversing back and forth. Wrought iron, cassia, and cane were among your merchandise. 20 [q]Dedan *was* your merchant in saddlecloths for riding. 21 Arabia and all the princes of [r]Kedar *were* your regular merchants. They traded with you in lambs, rams, and goats. 22 The merchants of [s]Sheba and Raamah *were* your merchants. They traded for your wares the choicest spices, all kinds of precious stones, and gold. 23 [t]Haran, Canneh, Eden, the merchants of [u]Sheba, Assyria, *and* Chilmad *were* your merchants. 24 These *were* your merchants in choice items—in purple clothes, in embroidered garments, in chests of multicolored apparel, in sturdy woven cords, which were in your marketplace.

25 "The [v]ships of Tarshish were carriers of your merchandise.
You were filled and very glorious [w]in the midst of the seas.
26 Your oarsmen brought you into many waters,
But [x]the east wind broke you in the midst of the seas.

27 "Your [y]riches, wares, and merchandise,
Your mariners and pilots,
Your caulkers and merchandisers,
All your men of war who *are* in you,
And the entire company which *is* in your midst,
Will fall into the midst of the seas on the day of your ruin.
28 The [z]common-land[7] will shake at the sound of the cry of your pilots.

29 "All [a]who handle the oar,
The mariners,
All the pilots of the sea
Will come down from their ships *and* stand on the [8]shore.
30 They will make their voice heard because of you;
They will cry bitterly and [b]cast dust on their heads;
They [c]will roll about in ashes;
31 They will [d]shave themselves completely bald because of you,
Gird themselves with sackcloth,
And weep for you
With bitterness of heart *and* bitter wailing.
32 In their wailing for you
They will [e]take up a lamentation,
And lament for you:
[f]'What *city is* like Tyre,
Destroyed in the midst of the sea?

33 'When[g] your wares went out by sea,
You satisfied many people;
You enriched the kings of the earth
With your many luxury goods and your merchandise.
34 But [h]you are broken by the seas in the depths of the waters;
[i]Your merchandise and the entire company will fall in your midst.
35 [j]All the inhabitants of the isles will be astonished at you;
Their kings will be greatly afraid,
And *their* countenance will be troubled.

17 [p]Jer. 8:22
19 [6]LXX, Syr. *from Uzal*
20 [q]Gen. 25:3
21 [r]Gen. 25:13; Is. 60:7; Jer. 49:28
22 [s]Gen. 10:7; 1 Kin. 10:1, 2; Ps. 72:10; Is. 60:6; Ezek. 38:13
23 [t]Gen. 11:31; 2 Kin. 19:12; Is. 37:12 [u]Gen. 25:3
25 [v]Ps. 48:7; Is. 2:16 [w]Ezek. 27:4
26 [x]Ps. 48:7; Jer. 18:17; Acts 27:14
27 [y][Prov. 11:4]
28 [z]Ezek. 26:15 [7]*open lands* or *pasturelands*
29 [a]Rev. 18:17 [8]Lit. *land*
30 [b]1 Sam. 4:12; 2 Sam. 1:2; Job 2:12; Lam. 2:10; Rev. 18:19 [c]Esth. 4:1, 3; Jer. 6:26; Jon. 3:6
31 [d]Is. 15:2; Jer. 16:6; Ezek. 29:18
32 [e]Ezek. 26:17 [f]Ezek. 26:4, 5; Rev. 18:18
33 [g]Rev. 18:19
34 [h]Ezek. 26:19 [i]Ezek. 27:27
35 [j]Is. 23:6; Ezek. 26:15, 16

■ **27:18 Helbon.** A town northwest of Damascus. Akkadian texts and Greek historians mention the wine from this region.

■ **27:19 Dan and Javan.** There is a much debated textual difficulty here and translators differ on how to render these names.

■ **27:22 Raamah.** A region in southern Arabia (Gen. 10:7; 1 Chr. 1:9).

■ **27:23 Canneh.** Probably a city in northern Syria otherwise spelled "Calneh" (Amos 6:2) or "Calno" (Is. 10:9).

Eden. Beth Eden, a city located between the Euphrates and Balikh rivers (2 Kin. 19:12; Is. 37:12; Amos 1:5).

Chilmad. This name is otherwise unknown and may be a copyist's error for the words "all of Media."

■ **27:25–36** No one thought Tyre could be defeated. But her strength, her wealth, and her skill were no match for seas that obeyed the command of God. Tyre's fate would be a warning to all other nations that watched from the shore.

36 The merchants among the peoples [k]will hiss at you;
[l]You will become a horror, and *be* no [m]more forever.' " ' "

Proclamation Against the King of Tyre

28 The word of the LORD came to me again, saying, 2 "Son of man, say to the prince of Tyre, 'Thus says the Lord GOD:

"Because your heart *is* [a]lifted[l] up,
And [b]you say, 'I *am* a god,
I sit *in* the seat of gods,
[c]In the midst of the seas,'
[d]Yet you *are* a man, and not a god,
Though you set your heart as the heart of a god
3 (Behold, [e]you *are* wiser than Daniel!
There is no secret that can be hidden from you!
4 With your wisdom and your understanding
You have gained [f]riches for yourself,
And gathered gold and silver into your treasuries;
5 [g]By your great wisdom in trade you have increased your riches,
And your heart is lifted up because of your riches),"

6 'Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:

"Because you have set your heart as the heart of a god,
7 Behold, therefore, I will bring [h]strangers against you,
[i]The most terrible of the nations;
And they shall draw their swords against the beauty of your wisdom,
And defile your splendor.
8 They shall throw you down into the [j]Pit,
And you shall die the death of the slain
In the midst of the seas.

9 "Will you still [k]say before him who slays you,
'I *am* a god'?
But you *shall be* a man, and not a god,
In the hand of him who slays you.
10 You shall die the death of [l]the uncircumcised
By the hand of aliens;
For I have spoken," says the Lord GOD.' "

Lamentation for the King of Tyre

11 Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 12 "Son of man, [m]take up a lamentation for the king of Tyre, and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord GOD:

[n]"You *were* the seal of perfection,
Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.
13 You were in [o]Eden, the garden of God;
Every precious stone *was* your covering:

36 [k]Jer. 18:16; Zeph. 2:15 [l]Ezek. 26:2 [m]Ps. 37:10, 36; Ezek. 28:19

CHAPTER 28

2 [a]Jer. 49:16; Ezek. 31:10 [b]Is. 14:14; 47:8; Ezek. 28:9; 2 Thess. 2:4 [c]Ezek. 27:3, 4 [d]Is. 31:3; Ezek. 28:9 [l]Proud

3 [e]Ezek. 14:14; Dan. 1:20; 2:20–23, 28; 5:11, 12; Zech. 9:3

4 [f]Ezek. 27:33; Zech. 9:1–3

5 [g]Ps. 62:10; Zech. 9:3

7 [h]Ezek. 26:7 [i]Ezek. 7:24; 21:31; 30:11; Hab. 1:6–8

8 [j]Is. 14:15

9 [k]Ezek. 28:2

10 [l]1 Sam. 17:26, 36; Ezek. 31:18; 32:19, 21, 25, 27

12 [m]Ezek. 27:2 [n]Ezek. 27:3; 28:3

13 [o]Gen. 2:8; Is. 51:3; Ezek. 31:8, 9; 36:35

■ **28:2 a god . . . in the midst of the seas.** In the ancient Near East, the watery depths of the primeval ocean are a standard symbol for the powers of chaos and death. Archaeologists have discovered more than one mythical creation account in which "the Sea" appears as a dragon or sea monster to be killed by the gods. The threat of chaos to the created order is subdued and the gods rule the waves. In the Bible the sea is no threat to God; it obeys His commands. Ezekiel describes how the king of Tyre had become proud of the city's wealth and power, and had begun to flatter himself as a god ruling over the sea (cf. Ps. 29:10; Rev. 17:1, 15). But the sea would swallow him (v. 8; 29:3 note).

■ **28:3 Daniel.** See 14:14 note.

■ **28:12 a lamentation.** See note on 19:1–14.

king of Tyre. Ethbaal ruled Tyre at this time. The prophet describes the way God had favored Ethbaal by portraying the king as a primeval being, a figure like Adam, the crown and epitome of creation, living in the garden paradise that God had made. He remained there until wickedness was found in him (v. 15). Some take the prophet to be comparing the king of Tyre to Satan, a glorious being who fell from grace (1 Tim. 3:6).

■ **28:13, 14 garden . . . mountain.** The prophet joins two images for the dwelling place of God, a garden (Gen. 2; 3) and a mountain (20:40; Ex. 19:23; Deut. 33:2; Ps. 43:3; 48:1; 87:1; 99:9; Is. 27:13; 56:7; 57:13; 66:20). The temple was built on a mountain and was decorated with floral motifs (40:16–37; 41:18–20, 25–27; 1 Kin. 6:29, 32, 35; 7:18, 20, 22, 36, 42; 2 Chr. 3:5).

The sardius, topaz, and diamond,
Beryl, onyx, and jasper,
Sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold.
The workmanship of [p]your timbrels and pipes
Was prepared for you on the day you were created.

14 "You *were* the anointed [q]cherub who covers;
I established you;
You were on [r]the holy mountain of God;
You walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones.
15 You *were* perfect in your ways from the day you were created,
Till [s]iniquity was found in you.

16 "By the abundance of your trading
You became filled with violence within,
And you sinned;
Therefore I cast you as a profane thing
Out of the mountain of God;
And I destroyed you, [t]O covering cherub,
From the midst of the fiery stones.

17 "Your [u]heart was [z]lifted up because of your beauty;
You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor;
I cast you to the ground,
I laid you before kings,
That they might gaze at you.

18 "You defiled your sanctuaries
By the multitude of your iniquities,
By the iniquity of your trading;
Therefore I brought fire from your midst;
It devoured you,
And I turned you to ashes upon the earth
In the sight of all who saw you.
19 All who knew you among the peoples are astonished at you;
[v]You have become a horror,
And *shall be* no [w]more forever." ' "

Proclamation Against Sidon

20 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 21 "Son of man, [x]set your face [y]toward Sidon, and prophesy against her, 22 and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD:

[z]"Behold, I *am* against you, O Sidon;
I will be glorified in your midst;
And [a]they shall know that I *am* the LORD,
When I execute judgments in her and am [b]hallowed in her.
23 [c]For I will send pestilence upon her,
And blood in her streets;
The wounded shall be judged in her midst
By the sword against her on every side;
Then they shall know that I *am* the LORD.

24 "And there shall no longer be a pricking brier or [d]a painful thorn for the house of Israel from among all *who are* around them, who [e]despise them. Then they shall know that I *am* the Lord GOD."

13 [p]Ezek. 26:13
14 [q]Ex. 25:20; Ezek. 28:16 [r]Is. 14:13; Ezek. 20:40
15 [s][Is. 14:12]
16 [t]Ezek. 28:14
17 [u]Ezek. 28:2, 5 [z]Proud
19 [v]Ezek. 26:21 [w]Ezek. 27:36
21 [x]Ezek. 6:2; 25:2; 29:2 [y]Gen. 10:15, 19; Is. 23:2, 4, 12; Ezek. 27:8; 32:30
22 [z]Ex. 14:4, 17; Ezek. 39:13 [a]Ps. 9:16 [b]Ezek. 28:25
23 [c]Ezek. 38:22
24 [d]Num. 33:55; Josh. 23:13; Is. 55:13; Ezek. 2:6 [e]Ezek. 16:57; 25:6, 7

■ **28:21–23** Sidon was commonly paired with her trading partner Tyre, twenty-five miles south on the Mediterranean coast.

25 [f]Ps. 106:47; Is. 11:12, 13; Jer. 32:37; Ezek. 11:17; 20:41; 34:13; 37:21 [g]Ezek. 28:22

26 [h]Jer. 23:6; Ezek. 36:28 [i]Is. 65:21; Jer. 32:15, 43, 44; Amos 9:13, 14 [j]Jer. 31:5; Amos 9:14 [3]*securely*

CHAPTER 29

2 [a]Ezek. 28:21 [b]Is. 19:1; Jer. 25:19; 46:2, 25; Ezek. 30:1—32:32; Joel 3:19

3 [c]Jer. 44:30; Ezek. 28:22; 29:10 [d]Ps. 74:13, 14; Is. 37:1; 51:9; Ezek. 32:2 [e]Ezek. 28:2 [1]The Nile

4 [f]2 Kin. 19:28; Is. 37:29; Ezek. 38:4

5 [g]Ezek. 32:4–6 [h]Jer. 8:2; 16:4; 25:33 [i]Jer. 7:33; 34:20; Ezek. 39:4 [2]Lit. *face of the field* [3]So with MT, LXX, Vg.; some Heb. mss., Tg. *buried*

6 [j]2 Kin. 18:21; Is. 36:6; Ezek. 17:15

7 [k]Jer. 37:5, 7, 11; Ezek. 17:17 [4]So with MT, Vg.; LXX, Syr. *hand*

8 [l]Jer. 46:13; Ezek. 14:17; 32:11–13

9 [m]Ezek. 30:7, 8

10 [n]Ezek. 30:12

Israel's Future Blessing

25 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "When I have [f]gathered the house of Israel from the peoples among whom they are scattered, and am [g]hallowed in them in the sight of the Gentiles, then they will dwell in their own land which I gave to My servant Jacob. 26 And they will [h]dwell [3]safely there, [i]build houses, and [j]plant vineyards; yes, they will dwell securely, when I execute judgments on all those around them who despise them. Then they shall know that I *am* the LORD their God." ' "

Proclamation Against Egypt

29 In the tenth year, in the tenth *month,* on the twelfth *day* of the month, the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, [a]set your face against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and prophesy against him, and [b]against all Egypt. 3 Speak, and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD:

[c]"Behold, I *am* against you,
O Pharaoh king of Egypt,
O great [d]monster who lies in the midst of his rivers,
[e]Who has said, 'My [1]River *is* my own;
I have made *it* for myself.'
4 But [f]I will put hooks in your jaws,
And cause the fish of your rivers to stick to your scales;
I will bring you up out of the midst of your rivers,
And all the fish in your rivers will stick to your scales.
5 I will leave you in the wilderness,
You and all the fish of your rivers;
You shall fall on the [2]open [g]field;
[h]You shall not be picked up or [3]gathered.
[i]I have given you as food
To the beasts of the field
And to the birds of the heavens.

6 "Then all the inhabitants of Egypt
Shall know that I *am* the LORD,
Because they have been a [j]staff of reed to the house of Israel.
7 [k]When they took hold of you with the hand,
You broke and tore all their [4]shoulders;
When they leaned on you,
You broke and made all their backs quiver."

8 'Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "Surely I will bring [l]a sword upon you and cut off from you man and beast. 9 And the land of Egypt shall become [m]desolate and waste; then they will know that I *am* the LORD, because he said, 'The River *is* mine, and I have made *it.*' 10 Indeed, therefore, I *am* against you and against your rivers, [n]and I will make the land of Egypt utterly

■ **28:25 gathered.** God would bring His people back to their land. Israel would flourish since the nations that had been her adversaries had been eliminated.

■ **28:26 vineyards.** The prophets often describe God's future blessing of Israel in terms of agricultural prosperity (36:29, 30; 1 Kin. 4:25; Is. 65:21, 22; Jer. 32:15; Joel 3:18; Amos 9:13–15; Mic. 4:4; Zech. 3:10).

■ **29:1—32:32** The proclamations against foreign nations in chs. 25—28 were directed largely against lesser states and immediate neighbors of Israel. However, these four chapters are directed against Egypt, one of the great empires of the ancient world. The chapters contain seven prophecies against Egypt; all are dated (29:1, 17; 30:20; 31:1; 32:1, 17) except the oracle beginning in 30:1.

■ **29:1 year.** This was in 587 B.C., about a year after Nebuchadnezzar had laid siege to Jerusalem. See note on 24:1.

■ **29:3 monster.** Egypt is likened to a sea monster (vv. 3–5). The term used can designate both the abundant crocodiles of the Nile and the sea monster that represented chaos in the mythology of the ancient Near East. The Bible calls this mythological creature "monster," "Leviathan," or "Rahab" (32:2; Job 3:8; 7:12; 9:13 text note; 41:1; Ps. 74:13, 14; 89:10; Is. 27:1; 30:7; 51:9; cf. Rev. 12:15; 20:2). "Rahab" is also used as a poetic designation of Egypt (Ps. 87:4; Is. 30:7). In the mythology of the cultures surrounding Israel this sea monster was a god who rivaled other gods, but in the Bible it was simply another creature living in submission to the command of Yahweh.

■ **29:4 hooks.** God would pluck this monster from the sea as easily as anglers haul in fish; He would leave it rotting on the shore. See note on 28:2.

■ **29:5 food To the beasts.** The birds and animals had been given to mankind as food (Gen. 1:30; 9:2, 3); the reversal of this relationship is a proverbial curse (32:4; Deut. 28:26; Ps. 79:2; Jer. 7:33; 15:3; 16:4; 19:7; 34:20).

■ **29:6 reed.** Ezekiel's description of Egypt as a splintered reed recalls the Assyrian field commander's similar comments to Hezekiah (2 Kin. 18:21).

■ **29:10 Migdol to Syene.** That is, from north to south (see also 30:6).

waste and desolate, [o]from [5]Migdol *to* Syene, as far as the border of Ethiopia. 11 [p]Neither foot of man shall pass through it nor foot of beast pass through it, and it shall be uninhabited forty years. 12 [q]I will make the land of Egypt desolate in the midst of the countries *that are* desolate; and among the cities *that are* laid waste, her cities shall be desolate forty years; and I will [r]scatter the Egyptians among the nations and disperse them throughout the countries."

13 'Yet, thus says the Lord GOD: "At the [s]end of forty years I will gather the Egyptians from the peoples among whom they were scattered. 14 I will bring back the captives of Egypt and cause them to return to the land of Pathros, to the land of their origin, and there they shall be a [t]lowly kingdom. 15 It shall be the lowliest of kingdoms; it shall never again exalt itself above the nations, for I will diminish them so that they will not rule over the nations anymore. 16 No longer shall it be [u]the confidence of the house of Israel, but will remind them of *their* iniquity when they turned to follow them. Then they shall know that I *am* the Lord GOD." ' "

Babylonia Will Plunder Egypt

17 And it came to pass in the twenty-seventh year, in the first *month,* on the first *day* of the month, *that* the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 18 "Son of man, [v]Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon caused his army to labor strenuously against Tyre; every head *was* made [w]bald, and every shoulder rubbed raw; yet neither he nor his army received wages from Tyre, for the labor which they expended on it. 19 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Surely I will give the land of Egypt to [x]Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; he shall take away her wealth, carry off her spoil, and remove her pillage; and that will be the wages for his army. 20 I have given him the land of Egypt *for* his labor, because they [y]worked for Me,' says the Lord GOD.

21 'In that day [z]I will cause the [6]horn of the house of Israel to spring forth, and I will [a]open your mouth to speak in their midst. Then they shall know that I *am* the LORD.' "

Egypt and Her Allies Will Fall

30 The word of the LORD came to me again, saying, 2 "Son of man, prophesy and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD:

[a]"Wail, 'Woe to the day!'
3 For [b]the day *is* near,
Even the day of the LORD *is* near;
It will be a day of clouds, the time of the Gentiles.
4 The sword shall come upon Egypt,
And great anguish shall be in [1]Ethiopia,
When the slain fall in Egypt,
And they [c]take away her wealth,
And [d]her foundations are broken down.

5 "Ethiopia, [2]Libya, [3]Lydia, [e]all the mingled people, Chub, and the men of the lands who are allied, shall fall with them by the sword."

6 'Thus says the LORD:

"Those who uphold Egypt shall fall,
And the pride of her power shall come down.
[f]From [4]Migdol *to* Syene
Those within her shall fall by the sword,"
Says the Lord GOD.

10 [o]Ezek. 30:6 [5]Or *the tower*

11 [p]Jer. 43:11, 12; 46:19; Ezek. 32:13

12 [q]Jer. 25:15–19; 27:6–11; Ezek. 30:7, 26 [r]Jer. 46:19; Ezek. 30:23, 26

13 [s]Is. 19:23; Jer. 46:26

14 [t]Ezek. 17:6, 14

16 [u]Is. 30:2, 3; 36:4, 6; Lam. 4:17; Ezek. 17:15; 29:6

18 [v]Jer. 25:9; 27:6; Ezek. 26:7–12 [w]Jer. 48:37; Ezek. 27:31

19 [x]Jer. 43:10–13; Ezek. 30:10

20 [y]Is. 10:6, 7; 45:1–3; Jer. 25:9

21 [z]1 Sam. 2:10; Ps. 92:10; 132:17 [a]Ezek. 24:27; Amos 3:7, 8; [Luke 21:15] [6]Strength

CHAPTER 30

2 [a]Is. 13:6; 15:2; Ezek. 21:12; Joel 1:5, 11, 13

3 [b]Ezek. 7:7, 12; Joel 2:1; Obad. 15; Zeph. 1:7

4 [c]Ezek. 29:19 [d]Jer. 50:15 [1]Heb. *Cush*

5 [e]Jer. 25:20, 24 [2]Heb. *Put* [3]Heb. *Lud*

6 [f]Ezek. 29:10 [4]Or *the tower*

Migdol was in northern Egypt, a site on the route of the Exodus (Ex. 14:2; Num. 33:7; Jer. 44:1; 46:14). Syene was in southern Egypt at the first cataract on the Nile. It was the terminal point for deep water navigation of the Nile and represented Egypt's southern frontier.

■ **29:11 forty years.** It is difficult to fix a definite historical period of forty years for an Egyptian exile; the number may have been symbolic rather than intended as a definite period.

■ **29:17 year.** This oracle was delivered in April, 571 B.C., sixteen years after the preceding oracle (29:1). It is the latest date mentioned in the book.

■ **29:18 wages from Tyre.** Nebuchadnezzar's siege of Tyre had lasted for thirteen years (26:7 note). The siege was long and expensive, and the rewards did not repay the effort.

■ **29:21 horn.** A horn is a common symbol for political power in the Bible (Deut. 33:17; 1 Sam. 2:10; 2 Sam. 22:3; Ps. 18:2; 75:4, 5, 10; 89:24; 92:10; 112:9; 132:17; 148:14; Jer. 48:25; Lam. 2:3, 17; Dan. 7:7, 8, 20, 21; Zech. 1:18–21; Rev. 17:12). This oracle against Egypt ends by finding hope for Israel; compare 28:24–26.

open your mouth. See notes on 24:27 and 33:22.

■ **30:1–19** This is the only one of Ezekiel's oracles against Egypt that is not dated. It may have been given between January and April, 587 B.C. (29:1; 30:20).

7 [g]Jer. 25:18–26; Ezek. 29:12
9 [h]Is. 18:1, 2 [5]Or *secure*
10 [i]Ezek. 29:19
11 [j]Ezek. 28:7; 31:12
12 [k]Is. 19:5, 6 [l]Is. 19:4
13 [m]Is. 19:1; Jer. 43:12; 46:25; Zech. 13:2 [n]Zech. 10:11 [o]Is. 19:16 [6]Ancient Memphis
14 [p]Is. 11:11; Jer. 44:1, 15; Ezek. 29:14 [q]Ps. 78:12, 43; Is. 19:11, 13 [r]Jer. 46:25; Ezek. 30:15, 16; Nah. 3:8–10 [7]Ancient Thebes
15 [s]Jer. 46:25 [8]Ancient Pelusium [9]Ancient Thebes
16 [t]Ezek. 30:8
17 [1]Ancient On, Heliopolis
18 [u]Jer. 2:16 [2]*Tahpanhes,* Jer. 43:7 [3]So with many Heb. mss., Bg., LXX, Syr., Tg., Vg.; MT *refrained*
19 [v][Ps. 9:16]; Ezek. 5:8; 25:11
21 [w]Jer. 48:25

7 "They[g] shall be desolate in the midst of the desolate countries,
And her cities shall be in the midst of the cities *that are* laid waste.
8 Then they will know that I *am* the LORD,
When I have set a fire in Egypt
And all her helpers are destroyed.
9 On that day [h]messengers shall go forth from Me in ships
To make the [5]careless Ethiopians afraid,
And great anguish shall come upon them,
As on the day of Egypt;
For indeed it is coming!"

10 'Thus says the Lord GOD:

[i]"I will also make a multitude of Egypt to cease
By the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.
11 He and his people with him, [j]the most terrible of the nations,
Shall be brought to destroy the land;
They shall draw their swords against Egypt,
And fill the land with the slain.
12 [k]I will make the rivers dry,
And [l]sell the land into the hand of the wicked;
I will make the land waste, and all that is in it,
By the hand of aliens.
I, the LORD, have spoken."

13 'Thus says the Lord GOD:

"I will also [m]destroy the idols,
And cause the images to cease from [6]Noph;
[n]There shall no longer be princes from the land of Egypt;
[o]I will put fear in the land of Egypt.
14 I will make [p]Pathros desolate,
Set fire to [q]Zoan,
[r]And execute judgments in [7]No.
15 I will pour My fury on [8]Sin, the strength of Egypt;
[s]I will cut off the multitude of [9]No,
16 And [t]set a fire in Egypt;
Sin shall have great pain,
No shall be split open,
And Noph *shall be in* distress daily.
17 The young men of [1]Aven and Pi Beseth shall fall by the sword,
And these *cities* shall go into captivity.
18 [u]At [2]Tehaphnehes the day shall also be [3]darkened,
When I break the yokes of Egypt there.
And her arrogant strength shall cease in her;
As for her, a cloud shall cover her,
And her daughters shall go into captivity.
19 Thus I will [v]execute judgments on Egypt,
Then they shall know that I *am* the LORD." ' "

Proclamation Against Pharaoh

20 And it came to pass in the eleventh year, in the first *month,* on the seventh *day* of the month, *that* the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 21 "Son of man, I have [w]broken the arm of

■ **30:14 Zoan.** In the eastern Nile delta; also known as Tanis.

■ **30:15 Sin.** A fortress on the Mediterranean coast (text note), it was Egypt's northeastern frontier.

■ **30:17 Aven.** Near the southern vertex of the Nile delta, Aven was an important religious center for Egypt (text note).

Pi Beseth. Mentioned only here in the Bible; it was in the eastern delta and was a capital city during the twenty-third and twenty-second dynasties (950–725 B.C.).

■ **30:20 year.** April, 587 B.C.

■ **30:21 arm.** Pharaoh Hophra had sent an army to the assistance of

Pharaoh king of Egypt; and see, [x]it has not been bandaged for healing, nor a [4]splint put on to bind it, to make it strong enough to hold a sword. 22 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Surely I *am* [y]against Pharaoh king of Egypt, and will [z]break his arms, both the strong one and the one that was broken; and I will make the sword fall out of his hand. 23 [a]I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and disperse them throughout the countries. 24 I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon and put My sword in his hand; but I will break Pharaoh's arms, and he will groan before him with the groanings of a mortally wounded *man.* 25 Thus I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, but the arms of Pharaoh shall fall down; [b]they shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I put My sword into the hand of the king of Babylon and he stretches it out against the land of Egypt. 26 [c]I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations and disperse them throughout the countries. Then they shall know that I *am* the LORD.' "

Egypt Cut Down Like a Great Tree

31 Now it came to pass in the [a]eleventh year, in the third *month,* on the first *day* of the month, *that* the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, say to Pharaoh king of Egypt and to his multitude:

[b]'Whom are you like in your greatness?
3 [c]Indeed Assyria *was* a cedar in Lebanon,
With fine branches that shaded the forest,
And of high stature;
And its top was among the thick boughs.
4 [d]The waters made it grow;
Underground waters gave it height,
With their rivers running around the place where it was planted,
And sent out [f]rivulets to all the trees of the field.

5 'Therefore [e]its height was exalted above all the trees of the field;
Its boughs were multiplied,
And its branches became long because of the abundance of water,
As it sent them out.
6 All the [f]birds of the heavens made their nests in its boughs;
Under its branches all the beasts of the field brought forth their young;
And in its shadow all great nations [2]made their home.

7 'Thus it was beautiful in greatness and in the length of its branches,
Because its roots reached to abundant waters.
8 The cedars in the [g]garden of God could not hide it;
The fir trees were not like its boughs,
And the [3]chestnut trees were not like its branches;
No tree in the garden of God was like it in beauty.
9 I made it beautiful with a multitude of branches,
So that all the trees of Eden envied it,
That *were* in the garden of God.'

10 "Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: 'Because you have increased in height, and it set its top among the thick boughs, and [h]its heart was [4]lifted up in its height, 11 therefore I will deliver it into the hand of the [i]mighty one of the nations, and he shall surely deal with it; I have driven it

21 [x]Jer. 46:11 [4]Lit. *bandage*
22 [y]Jer. 46:25; Ezek. 29:3 [z]Ps. 37:17
23 [a]Ezek. 29:12; 30:17, 18, 26
25 [b]Ps. 9:16
26 [c]Ezek. 29:12

CHAPTER 31

1 [a]Jer. 52:5, 6; Ezek. 30:20; 32:1
2 [b]Ezek. 31:18
3 [c]Is. 10:33, 34; Ezek. 17:3, 4, 22; 31:16; Dan. 4:10, 20–23
4 [d]Jer. 51:36; Ezek. 29:3–9 [f]Or *channels*
5 [e]Dan. 4:11
6 [f]Ezek. 17:23; 31:13; Dan. 4:12, 21; Matt. 13:32 [2]Lit. *dwelled*
8 [g]Gen. 2:8, 9; 13:10; Is. 51:3; Ezek. 28:13; 31:16, 18 [3]Or *plane,* Heb. *armon*
10 [h]2 Chr. 32:25; Is. 10:12; 14:13, 14; Ezek. 28:17; Dan. 5:20 [4]Proud
11 [i]Ezek. 30:10; Dan. 5:18, 19

Zedekiah, but it was repulsed (Jer. 37:1–10; cf. Ezek. 17:15–17; 29:6, 7). The "arm" is a figure for military power. The exiles living in Babylon and the people in Jerusalem had hoped that Pharaoh would defeat Babylon, but this prophecy denies them. Instead, Babylon will break the arm of Pharaoh, leaving him unable to handle a sword, and useless as an ally for Israel.

■ **31:1 year.** June, 587 B.C., a few months after the preceding oracle (30:20). Jerusalem was besieged and within weeks of being destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar.

■ **31:3 Assyria.** The prophet uses the fate of Assyria as a warning to Egypt, for the once powerful Assyrian Empire had collapsed between 640 and 609 B.C. Some scholars think it unlikely that in an oracle against Egypt the primary focus should fall on Assyria (vv. 3–17). They suggest that a copyist's error has altered one of the consonants in the text, and translate "Assyria" as "cypress" or "to what can I compare you," a better parallel with the last clause in v. 2. With this correction, the whole passage is about Egypt.

cedar. Ezekiel has already used a similar symbol (ch. 17). Great trees can tower hundreds of feet and live for thousands of years; they provide an apt metaphor for kingdoms and dynasties (17:22–24). Much of the description of this tree resembles Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Dan. 4:1–12, 19–27. The lavishness of Ezekiel's description of this tree compares with the extravagance of his description of Tyre as a richly appointed merchant ship (27:3–11).

out for its wickedness. 12 And aliens, [j]the most terrible of the nations, have cut it down and left it; its branches have fallen [k]on the mountains and in all the valleys; its boughs lie [l]broken by all the rivers of the land; and all the peoples of the earth have gone from under its shadow and left it.

13 'On [m]its ruin will remain all the birds of the heavens,
And all the beasts of the field will come to its branches—

14 'So that no trees by the waters may ever again exalt themselves for their height, nor set their tops among the thick boughs, that no tree which drinks water may ever be high enough to reach up to them.

'For [n]they have all been delivered to death,
[o]To the depths of the earth,
Among the children of men who go down to the Pit.'

15 "Thus says the Lord GOD: 'In the day when it [p]went down to [5]hell, I caused mourning. I covered the deep because of it. I restrained its rivers, and the great waters were held back. I caused Lebanon to [6]mourn for it, and all the trees of the field wilted because of it. 16 I made the nations [q]shake at the sound of its fall, when I [r]cast it down to [7]hell together with those who descend into the Pit; and [s]all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water, [t]were comforted in the depths of the earth. 17 They also went down to hell with it, with those *slain* by the sword; and *those who were* its *strong* arm [u]dwelt in its shadows among the nations.

18 [v]'To which of the trees in Eden will you then be likened in glory and greatness? Yet you shall be brought down with the trees of Eden to the depths of the earth; [w]you shall lie in the midst of the uncircumcised, with *those* slain by the sword. This *is* Pharaoh and all his multitude,' says the Lord GOD."

Lamentation for Pharaoh and Egypt

32 And it came to pass in the twelfth year, in the [a]twelfth *month,* on the first *day* of the month, *that* the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, [b]take up a lamentation for Pharaoh king of Egypt, and say to him:

[c]'You are like a young lion among the nations,
And [d]you *are* like a monster in the seas,
[e]Bursting forth in your rivers,
Troubling the waters with your feet,
And [f]fouling their rivers.'

3 "Thus says the Lord GOD:

'I will therefore [g]spread My net over you with a company of many people,
And they will draw you up in My net.
4 Then [h]I will leave you on the land;
I will cast you out on the open fields,
[i]And cause to [l]settle on you all the birds of the heavens.
And with you I will fill the beasts of the whole earth.
5 I will lay your flesh [j]on the mountains,
And fill the valleys with your carcass.

6 'I will also water the land with the flow of your blood,
Even to the mountains;

12 [j]Ezek. 28:7; 30:11; 32:12 [k]Ezek. 32:5; 35:8 [l]Ezek. 30:24, 25
13 [m]Is. 18:6; Ezek. 32:4
14 [n]Ps. 82:7 [o]Ezek. 32:18
15 [p]Ezek. 32:22, 23 [5]Or *Sheol* [6]Lit. *be darkened*
16 [q]Ezek. 26:15; Hag. 2:7 [r]Is. 14:15; Ezek. 32:18 [s]Is. 14:8; Hab. 2:17 [t]Ezek. 32:31 [7]Or *Sheol*
17 [u]Lam. 4:20
18 [v]Ezek. 32:19 [w]Jer. 9:25, 26; Ezek. 28:10; 32:19, 21

CHAPTER 32

1 [a]Ezek. 31:1; 33:21
2 [b]Ezek. 27:2 [c]Jer. 4:7; Ezek. 19:2–6; Nah. 2:11–13 [d]Is. 27:1; Ezek. 29:3 [e]Jer. 46:7, 8 [f]Ezek. 34:18
3 [g]Ezek. 12:13; 17:20
4 [h]Ezek. 29:5 [i]Is. 18:6; Ezek. 31:13 [l]Lit. *sit* or *dwell*
5 [j]Ezek. 31:12

■ **32:1 year.** March, 585 B.C., two months after the exiles would have received news of the destruction of Jerusalem (33:21).

■ **32:2 monster.** In the pagan mythology of the ancient Near East, the orderly universe emerges from chaos after a titanic battle between a god and a great sea monster or dragon called "Sea." After the battle, parts of the universe are created from the carcass of the dead monster. Ezekiel refers to this myth in several places (28:2 note; 29:3–5). Here Ezekiel compares Egypt to the great sea monster, terrible but destined to be defeated by the Lord.

■ **32:6–8** The language of this section is similar to that used to describe the day of the Lord in Is. 13:10; Joel 2:30, 31; 3:15; Amos 8:9. See note on 7:7. The appearance of God as a divine warrior is accompanied by convulsions in the created order. The universe dissolves into the chaos that existed before creation, when the heavens were dark (38:18–23 note). Here the extravagant imagery is not meant literally but is used in connection with the death of a Pharaoh.

And the riverbeds will be full of you.
7 When *I* put out your light,
[k]I will cover the heavens, and make its stars dark;
I will cover the sun with a cloud,
And the moon shall not give her light.
8 All the [2]bright lights of the heavens I will make dark over you,
And bring darkness upon your land,'
Says the Lord GOD.

9 'I will also trouble the hearts of many peoples, when I bring your destruction among the nations, into the countries which you have not known. 10 Yes, I will make many peoples astonished at you, and their kings shall be horribly afraid of you when I brandish My sword before them; and [l]they shall tremble *every* moment, every man for his own life, in the day of your fall.'
11 [m]"For thus says the Lord GOD: 'The sword of the king of Babylon shall come upon you. 12 By the swords of the mighty warriors, all of them [n]the most terrible of the nations, I will cause your multitude to fall.

[o]'They shall plunder the pomp of Egypt,
And all its multitude shall be destroyed.
13 Also I will destroy all its animals
From beside its great waters;
[p]The foot of man shall muddy them no more,
Nor shall the hooves of animals muddy them.
14 Then I will make their waters [3]clear,
And make their rivers run like oil,'
Says the Lord GOD.

15 'When I make the land of Egypt desolate,
And the country is destitute of all that once filled it,
When I strike all who dwell in it,
[q]Then they shall know that I *am* the LORD.

16 'This *is* the [r]lamentation
With which they shall lament her;
The daughters of the nations shall lament her;
They shall lament for her, for Egypt,
And for all her multitude,'
Says the Lord GOD."

Egypt and Others Consigned to the Pit

17 It came to pass also in the twelfth year, on the fifteenth *day* of the month, [s]*that* the word of the LORD came to me, saying:

18 "Son of man, wail over the multitude of Egypt,
And [t]cast them down to the depths of the earth,
Her and the daughters of the famous nations,
With those who go down to the Pit:
19 'Whom [u]do you surpass in beauty?
[v]Go down, be placed with the uncircumcised.'

20 "They shall fall in the midst of *those* slain by the sword;
She is delivered to the sword,
[w]Drawing her and all her multitudes.

7 [k]Is. 13:10; Joel 2:31; 3:15; Amos 8:9; Matt. 24:29; Mark 13:24; Luke 21:25; Rev. 6:12, 13; 8:12
8 [2]Or *shining*
10 [l]Ezek. 26:16
11 [m]Jer. 46:26; Ezek. 30:4
12 [n]Ezek. 28:7; 30:11; 31:12 [o]Ezek. 29:19
13 [p]Ezek. 29:11
14 [3]Lit. *sink;* settle, grow clear
15 [q]Ex. 7:5; 14:4, 18; Ps. 9:16; Ezek. 6:7
16 [r]2 Sam. 1:17; 2 Chr. 35:25; Jer. 9:17; Ezek. 26:17
17 [s]Ezek. 32:1; 33:21
18 [t]Ezek. 26:20; 31:14
19 [u]Jer. 9:25, 26; Ezek. 31:2, 18 [v]Ezek. 28:10
20 [w]Ps. 28:3

■ **32:11 sword.** God threatens to subdue the sea monster Egypt by bringing the armies of Babylon against her. The "sword of the king of Babylon" was in effect the sword of the Lord (ch. 21; 30:25).

■ **32:17 year.** Probably the spring of 585 B.C.

■ **32:18 depths of the earth.** The prophet describes the descent of Egypt into the underworld. The proud empire becomes just one more among the many states that preceded her (Assyria, v. 22; Elam, v. 24; Meshech and Tubal, v. 26; Edom, v. 29; Sidon and "the princes of the north," v. 30). The underworld ("Sheol" or "the grave") was commonly portrayed as a vast burial chamber where the dead had a shadowy and joyless existence. See note on Is. 14:9–11; also Gen. 37:35; Job 3:17–19; 7:9; 10:20–22; 17:13–16; Ps. 88:5, 11; 115:17; Prov. 1:12; 9:18; Eccl. 9:10; Is. 5:14; 38:18; Hab. 2:5.

21 [x] The strong among the mighty
Shall speak to him out of the midst of hell
With those who help him:
'They have [y] gone down,
They lie with the uncircumcised, slain by the sword.'

22 "Assyria[z] *is* there, and all her company,
With their graves all around her,
All of them slain, fallen by the sword.
23 [a] Her graves are set in the recesses of the Pit,
And her company is all around her grave,
All of them slain, fallen by the sword,
Who [b] caused terror in the land of the living.

24 "There *is* [c] Elam and all her multitude,
All around her grave,
All of them slain, fallen by the sword,
Who have [d] gone down uncircumcised to the lower parts of the earth,
[e] Who caused their terror in the land of the living;
Now they bear their shame with those who go down to the Pit.
25 They have set her [f] bed in the midst of the slain,
With all her multitude,
With her graves all around it,
All of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword;
Though their terror was caused
In the land of the living,
Yet they bear their shame
With those who go down to the Pit;
It was put in the midst of the slain.

26 "There *are* [g] Meshech and Tubal and all their multitudes,
With all their graves around it,
All of them [h] uncircumcised, slain by the sword,
Though they caused their terror in the land of the living.
27 [i] They do not lie with the mighty
Who are fallen of the uncircumcised,
Who have gone down to hell with their weapons of war;
They have laid their swords under their heads,
But their iniquities will be on their bones,
Because of the terror of the mighty in the land of the living.
28 Yes, you shall be broken in the midst of the uncircumcised,
And lie with *those* slain by the sword.

29 "There *is* [j] Edom,
Her kings and all her princes,
Who despite their might
Are laid beside *those* slain by the sword;
They shall lie with the uncircumcised,
And with those who go down to the Pit.
30 [k] There *are* the princes of the north,
All of them, and all the [l] Sidonians,
Who have gone down with the slain
In shame at the terror which they caused by their might;
They lie uncircumcised with *those* slain by the sword,
And bear their shame with those who go down to the Pit.

21 [x] Is. 1:31; 14:9, 10; Ezek. 32:27 [y] Ezek. 32:19, 25
22 [z] Ezek. 31:3, 16
23 [a] Is. 14:15 [b] Ezek. 32:24–27, 32
24 [c] Gen. 10:22; 14:1; Is. 11:11; Jer. 25:25; 49:34–39 [d] Ezek. 32:21 [e] Ezek. 32:23
25 [f] Ps. 139:8
26 [g] Gen. 10:2; Ezek. 27:13; 38:2, 3; 39:1 [h] Ezek. 32:19
27 [i] Is. 14:18, 19
29 [j] Is. 9:25, 26; 34:5, 6; Jer. 49:7–22; Ezek. 25:12–14
30 [k] Jer. 1:15; 25:26; Ezek. 38:6, 15; 39:2 [l] Jer. 25:22; Ezek. 28:21–23

■ **32:26 Meshech and Tubal.** See 27:13 note.

31 "Pharaoh will see them
And be [m]comforted over all his multitude,
Pharaoh and all his army,
Slain by the sword,"
Says the Lord GOD.

32 "For I have caused My terror in the land of the living;
And he shall be placed in the midst of the uncircumcised
With *those* slain by the sword,
Pharaoh and all his multitude,"
Says the Lord GOD.

The Watchman and His Message

33 Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, speak to [a]the children of your people, and say to them: [b]'When I bring the sword upon a land, and the people of the land take a man from their territory and make him their [c]watchman, 3 when he sees the sword coming upon the land, if he blows the trumpet and warns the people, 4 then whoever hears the sound of the trumpet and does [d]not take warning, if the sword comes and takes him away, [e]his blood shall be on his *own* head. 5 He heard the sound of the trumpet, but did not take warning; his blood shall be upon himself. But he who takes warning will [f]save his life. 6 But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet, and the people are not warned, and the sword comes and takes *any* person from among them, [f]he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at the watchman's hand.'

7 [g]"So you, son of man: I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore you shall hear a word from My mouth and warn them for Me. 8 When I say to the wicked, 'O wicked *man,* you shall surely die!' and you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked *man* shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. 9 Nevertheless if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have [2]delivered your soul.

10 "Therefore you, O son of man, say to the house of Israel: 'Thus you say, "If our transgressions and our sins *lie* upon us, and we [h]pine[3] away in them, [i]how can we then live?" ' 11 Say to them: '*As* I live,' says the Lord GOD, [j]'I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked [k]turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For [l]why should you die, O house of Israel?'

The Fairness of God's Judgment

12 "Therefore you, O son of man, say to the children of your people: 'The [m]righteousness of the righteous man shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression; as for the wickedness of the wicked, [n]he shall not fall because of it in the day that he turns from his wickedness; nor shall the righteous be able to live because of *his righteousness* in the day that he sins.' 13 When I say to the righteous *that* he shall surely live, [o]but he trusts in his own righteousness and commits iniquity, none of his righteous works shall be remembered; but because of the iniquity that he has committed, he shall die. 14 Again, [p]when I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' if he turns from his sin and does [4]what is lawful and [5]right, 15 *if* the wicked [q]restores the pledge, [r]gives back what he has stolen, and walks in [s]the statutes of life without committing iniquity, he shall surely live; he shall not die. 16 [t]None of his sins which he has committed shall be remembered against him; he has done what is lawful and right; he shall surely live.

17 [u]"Yet the children of your people say, 'The way of the LORD is not [6]fair.' But it is their way which is not fair! 18 [v]When the righteous turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, he shall die because of it. 19 But when the wicked turns from his wickedness and does what is lawful and right, he shall live because of it. 20 Yet you say, [w]'The way of the LORD is not [7]fair.' O house of Israel, I will judge every one of you according to his own ways."

31 [m]Ezek. 14:22; 31:16

CHAPTER 33

2 [a]Ezek. 3:11 [b]Ezek. 14:17 [c]2 Sam. 18:24, 25; 2 Kin. 9:17; Hos. 9:8

4 [d]2 Chr. 25:16; Jer. 6:17; Zech. 1:4 [e]Ezek. 18:13; 35:9; [Acts 18:6]

5 [1]Or *deliver his soul*

6 [f]Ezek. 33:8

7 [g]Is. 62:6; Ezek. 3:17–21

9 [2]Or *saved your life*

10 [h]Lev. 26:39; Ezek. 24:23 [i]Is. 49:14; Ezek. 37:11 [3]Or *waste away*

11 [j][2 Sam. 14:14; Lam. 3:33]; Ezek. 18:23, 32; Hos. 11:8; [2 Pet. 3:9] [k]Ezek. 18:21, 30; [Hos. 14:1, 4; Acts 3:19] [l][Is. 55:6, 7]; Jer. 3:22; Ezek. 18:30, 31; Hos. 14:1; [Acts 3:19]

12 [m]Ezek. 3:20; 18:24, 26 [n][2 Chr. 7:14]; Ezek. 8:21; 33:19

13 [o]Ezek. 3:20; 18:24

14 [p][Is. 55:7]; Jer. 18:7, 8; Ezek. 3:18, 19; 18:27; Hos. 14:1, 4 [4]*justice* [5]*righteousness*

15 [q]Ezek. 18:7 [r]Ex. 22:1–4; Lev. 6:2, 4, 5; Num. 5:6, 7; Luke 19:8 [s]Lev. 18:5; Ps. 119:59; 143:8; Ezek. 20:11, 13, 21

16 [t][Is. 1:18; 43:25]; Ezek. 18:22

17 [u]Ezek. 18:25, 29 [6]Or *equitable*

18 [v]Ezek. 18:26

20 [w]Ezek. 18:25, 29 [7]Or *equitable*

■ **33:1–20** This chapter marks the beginning of the second part of Ezekiel. The first part of the book is primarily about Jerusalem in the past and present; the second part focuses on the future of the City of God. This part of the book begins by repeating two important themes: first, a reiteration of Ezekiel's call as watchman (vv. 1–9; cf. 3:16–21); and second, the doctrine of individual moral responsibility (vv. 10–20; ch. 18). The exiles hear the news of the destruction of Jerusalem in v. 21; the remainder of Ezekiel's utterances about Jerusalem do not anticipate judgment and destruction, but rather restoration.

21 [x]Ezek. 1:2 [y]Ezek. 24:26 [z]2 Kin. 25:4 [a]Lit. *struck down*

22 [a]Ezek. 1:3; 8:1; 37:1 [b]Ezek. 24:27

24 [c]Ezek. 34:2 [d]Ezek. 36:4 [e]Is. 51:2 [f][Matt. 3:9] [g]Ezek. 11:15

25 [h]Lev. 3:17; 7:26; 17:10–14; 19:26 [i]Ezek. 18:6 [j]Ezek. 22:6, 9 [k]Deut. 29:28

26 [l]Ezek. 18:6; 22:11

27 [m]Ezek. 33:24 [n]Ezek. 39:4 [o]1 Sam. 13:6

28 [p]Jer. 44:2, 6, 22 [q]Ezek. 7:24; 24:21 [r]Ezek. 6:2, 3, 6 [s]Lit. *pride of her strength*

30 [s]Is. 29:13

31 [t]Ezek. 14:1 [u]Ezek. 8:1 [v]Is. 58:2 [w]Ps. 78:36, 37 [x][Matt. 13:22]

32 [y][Matt. 7:21–28]

33 [z]1 Sam. 3:20 [a]Ezek. 2:5

CHAPTER 34

2 [a]Zech. 11:17

3 [b]Zech. 11:16 [c]Ezek. 33:25, 26

4 [d]Zech. 11:16 [e]Luke 15:4 [f][1 Pet. 5:3] [g]*harshness* or *rigor*

5 [g]Ezek. 33:21 [h]Matt. 9:36 [i]Is. 56:9

6 [j]1 Pet. 2:25

The Fall of Jerusalem

21 And it came to pass in the twelfth year [x]of our captivity, in the tenth *month,* on the fifth *day* of the month, [y]*that* one who had escaped from Jerusalem came to me and said, [z]"The city has been [a]captured!"

22 Now [a]the hand of the LORD had been upon me the evening before the man came who had escaped. And He had [b]opened my mouth; so when he came to me in the morning, my mouth was opened, and I was no longer mute.

The Cause of Judah's Ruin

23 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: 24 "Son of man, [c]they who inhabit those [d]ruins in the land of Israel are saying, [e]'Abraham was only one, and he inherited the land. [f]But we *are* many; the land has been given to us as a [g]possession.'

25 "Therefore say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: [h]"You eat *meat* with blood, you [i]lift up your eyes toward your idols, and [j]shed blood. Should you then possess the [k]land? 26 You rely on your sword, you commit abominations, and you [l]defile one another's wives. Should you then possess the land?" '

27 "Say thus to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "*As* I live, surely [m]those who *are* in the ruins shall fall by the sword, and the one who *is* in the open field [n]I will give to the beasts to be devoured, and those who *are* in the strongholds and [o]caves shall die of the pestilence. 28 [p]For I will make the land most desolate, [q]her [r]arrogant strength shall cease, and [r]the mountains of Israel shall be so desolate that no one will pass through. 29 Then they shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have made the land most desolate because of all their abominations which they have committed." '

Hearing and Not Doing

30 "As for you, son of man, the children of your people are talking about you beside the walls and in the doors of the houses; and they [s]speak to one another, everyone saying to his brother, 'Please come and hear what the word is that comes from the LORD.' 31 So [t]they come to you as people do, they [u]sit before you *as* My people, and they [v]hear your words, but they do not do them; [w]for with their mouth they show much love, *but* [x]their hearts pursue their *own* gain. 32 Indeed you *are* to them as a very lovely song of one who has a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument; for they hear your words, but they do [y]not do them. 33 [z]And when this comes to pass—surely it will come—then [a]they will know that a prophet has been among them."

Irresponsible Shepherds

34 And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD to the shepherds: [a]"Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? 3 [b]You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you [c]slaughter the fatlings, *but* you do not feed the flock. 4 [d]The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor [e]sought what was lost; but with [f]force and [f]cruelty you have ruled them. 5 [g]So they were [h]scattered because *there was* no shepherd; [i]and they became food for all the beasts of the field when they were scattered. 6 My sheep [j]wandered through all the mountains, and on every high hill; yes, My flock was scattered over the whole face of the earth, and no one was seeking or searching *for them.*"

■ **33:21 year.** Jerusalem was destroyed by fire in the fifth month of the eleventh year of Jehoiachin's rule (2 Kin. 25:8–10; Jer. 52:12–14). If news did not reach the exiles until the twelfth year, tenth month, it took over a year and a half for the news to travel a distance covered by Ezra in four months (Ezra 7:9). A few Hebrew texts and one ancient translation of the Bible read "eleventh" year instead of "twelfth"; the difference is only one letter in Hebrew, and "twelfth" could be the mistake of a copyist.

■ **33:22 opened my mouth.** The prophet had been silent for a sustained period; see notes on 3:26 and 24:27. Now that the news of Jerusalem's destruction has reached the exiles, his mouth is opened, and Ezekiel addresses (a) those who remained in Judah after the destruction of the city (vv. 23–29) and (b) his fellow exiles (vv. 30–33).

■ **33:25 eat meat with blood.** This practice was forbidden in Gen. 9:4; Lev. 7:26, 27; 17:10; Deut. 12:16, 23.

■ **33:26 wives.** See 18:6, 11, 15.

■ **33:30 talking about you.** Ezekiel had been ignored and even ridiculed, but now that events had confirmed the truth of his words, he had become popular with the people. But they still were not hearing, still not listening so as to repent and obey (v. 11).

■ **33:32 lovely song.** Now the exiles had begun to see Ezekiel as a source of entertainment. Hearing him seemed to be a way of passing an idle evening or afternoon (cf. 20:49 note).

■ **34:2–10** Sheep that are weak, injured, or ill are the special care of a good shepherd, but Israel's kings often ignored this basic rule. See Ps. 9:18 note.

7 Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: 8 "*As* I live," says the Lord GOD, "surely because My flock became a prey, and My flock [k]became food for every beast of the field, because *there was* no shepherd, nor did My shepherds search for My flock, [l]but the shepherds fed themselves and did not feed My flock"— 9 therefore, O shepherds, hear the word of the LORD! 10 Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I *am* [m]against the shepherds, and [n]I will require My flock at their hand; I will cause them to cease feeding the sheep, and the shepherds shall [o]feed themselves no more; for I will [p]deliver My flock from their mouths, that they may no longer be food for them."

God, the True Shepherd

11 'For thus says the Lord GOD: "Indeed I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. 12 As a [q]shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep, so will I seek out My sheep and deliver them from all the places where they were scattered on [r]a cloudy and dark day. 13 And [s]I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land; I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, [z]in the valleys and in all the inhabited places of the country. 14 [t]I will feed them in good pasture, and their fold shall be on the high mountains of Israel. [u]There they shall lie down in a good fold and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. 15 I will feed My flock, and I will make them lie down," says the Lord GOD. 16 [v]"I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick; but I will destroy [w]the fat and the strong, and feed them [x]in judgment."

17 'And *as for* you, O My flock, thus says the Lord GOD: [y]"Behold, I shall judge between sheep and sheep, between rams and goats. 18 *Is it* too little for you to have eaten up the good pasture, that you must tread down with your feet the [3]residue of your pasture—and to have drunk of the clear waters, that you must foul the residue with your feet? 19 And *as for* My flock, they eat what you have trampled with your feet, and they drink what you have fouled with your feet."

20 'Therefore thus says the Lord GOD to them: [z]"Behold, I Myself will judge between the fat and the lean sheep. 21 Because you have pushed with side and shoulder, butted all the weak ones with your horns, and scattered them abroad, 22 therefore I will save My flock, and they shall no longer be a prey; and I will judge between sheep and sheep. 23 I will establish one [a]shepherd over them, and he shall feed them—[b]My servant David. He shall feed them and be their shepherd. 24 And [c]I, the LORD, will be their God, and My servant David [d]a prince among them; I, the LORD, have spoken.

25 [e]"I will make a covenant of peace with them, and [f]cause wild beasts to cease from the land; and they [g]will dwell safely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. 26 I will make them and the places all around [h]My hill [i]a blessing; and I will [j]cause showers to come down in their season; there shall be [k]showers of blessing. 27 Then [l]the trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase. They shall be safe in their land; and they shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have [m]broken the bands of their yoke and delivered them from the hand of those who [n]enslaved them. 28 And they shall no longer be a prey for the nations, nor shall beasts of the land devour them; but [o]they shall dwell safely, and no one shall make *them* afraid. 29 I will raise up for them a [p]garden[4] of renown, and they shall [q]no longer be consumed with hunger in the land, [r]nor bear the shame of the Gentiles anymore. 30 Thus they shall know that [s]I, the LORD their God, *am* with them, and they, the house of Israel, *are* [t]My people," says the Lord GOD.' "

8 [k]Ezek. 34:5, 6 [l]Ezek. 34:2, 10

10 [m]Jer. 21:13; 52:24–27 [n]Heb. 13:17 [o]Ezek. 34:2, 8 [p]Ezek. 13:23

12 [q]Jer. 31:10 [r]Ezek. 30:3

13 [s]Jer. 23:3 [z]Or *by the streams*

14 [t][John 10:9] [u]Jer. 33:12

16 [v]Mic. 4:6 [w]Is. 10:16 [x]Jer. 10:24

17 [y][Matt. 25:32]

18 [3]*remainder*

20 [z]Ezek. 34:17

23 [a][Is. 40:11] [b]Jer. 30:9

24 [c]Ex. 29:45 [d]Ezek. 37:24, 25

25 [e]Ezek. 37:26 [f]Is. 11:6–9 [g]Jer. 23:6

26 [h]Is. 56:7 [i]Zech. 8:13 [j]Lev. 26:4 [k]Ps. 68:9

27 [l]Is. 4:2 [m]Jer. 2:20 [n]Jer. 25:14

28 [o]Jer. 30:10

29 [p][Is. 11:1] [q]Ezek. 36:29 [r]Ezek. 36:3, 6, 15 [4]Lit. *planting place*

30 [s]Ezek. 34:24 [t]Ezek. 14:11; 36:28

■ **34:11 I Myself.** Having set aside the unfaithful undershepherds, God Himself takes the role of shepherd (Luke 15:3–7).

■ **34:12 cloudy and dark day.** This language is ordinarily associated with the day of the Lord (7:7 note; Joel 2:1, 2; Zeph. 1:15; Is. 60:2; Jer. 13:16; 23:12; Amos 5:18–20).

■ **34:17 rams and goats.** God's judgment is not confined to the shepherds, but will include the livestock. Some of the animals in the herd had been bullying others; these probably represent members of the upper classes of Jerusalem society who had oppressed the poor. There was a similar situation in the restoration community (Neh. 5).

■ **34:23 David.** This promise of restoration (vv. 6, 10–16) looks forward to a messianic kingdom. God's Servant, One like David, would rule in peace, righteousness, and prosperity exceeding that known during the rule of the historical David. No descendant of David in the restoration period fulfilled Ezekiel's prophetic description of Israel's future. The New Testament identifies Jesus as the Good Shepherd (vv. 2–10 note).

■ **34:24 prince.** See note on 37:24.

■ **34:25 covenant of peace.** The verses that follow spell out what this covenant entails. It includes safety and agricultural bounty in the land. The imagery is of paradise restored.

safely. Wild animals were a constant danger (Lev. 26:6; Deut. 33:20; Judg. 14:5, 6; 1 Sam. 17:34–37; 1 Kin. 13:24–28; 20:36; 2 Kin. 2:24; 17:25, 26; Ps. 7:2; 10:9; 17:12; Prov. 28:15; Is. 31:4; Jer. 5:6; Lam. 3:10; Hos. 13:8; Amos 3:4, 8, 12; 5:19; Mic. 5:8; cf. Is. 11:6–9; 65:25).

■ **34:26 a blessing.** Agricultural prosperity is a common theme in Old Testament portrayals of the blessed future of God's people (vv. 25–29); see note on 28:26.

■ **34:30 Thus they shall know.** See note on 6:7.

with them . . . My people. The essence of God's covenant with Israel was that the Lord would be their God, and they would be His people (11:20; 36:28; Ex. 6:7; Lev. 26:12; Deut. 7:6; 14:2; 27:9; 29:13; Ps. 50:7; Is. 51:22; Jer. 7:23; 11:4; 30:22; Joel 2:27).

31 [u]Ps. 100:3

CHAPTER 35

2 [a]Ezek. 25:12–14 [b]Amos 1:11

3 [c]Ezek. 6:14 [f]Lit. *a desolation and a waste*

5 [d]Ezek. 25:12 [e]Ps. 137:7 [2]Or *everlasting*

6 [f]Is. 63:1–6 [g]Ps. 109:17 [3]Or *bloodshed*

7 [h]Judg. 5:6 [4]Lit. *a waste and a desolation*

9 [i]Jer. 49:13 [j]Ezek. 36:11 [5]Lit. *desolated forever*

10 [k]Ps. 83:4–12 [l][Ps. 48:1–3; 132:13, 14]

11 [m][James 2:13]

12 [n]Ps. 9:16 [o]Zeph. 2:8 [p]Is. 52:5

13 [q][1 Sam. 2:3] [r]Ezek. 36:3 [6]Lit. *made yourself great*

14 [s]Is. 65:13, 14

15 [t]Obad. 12, 15 [u]Lam. 4:21

CHAPTER 36

1 [a]Ezek. 6:2, 3

2 [b]Ezek. 25:3; 26:2 [c]Deut. 32:13 [d]Ezek. 35:10 [7]Or *everlasting*

3 [e]Deut. 28:37 [f]Ezek. 35:13

4 [g]Ezek. 34:8, 28 [h]Ps. 79:4 [2]Or *ravines*

5 [i]Deut. 4:24 [j]Ezek. 35:10, 12 [3]Lit. *scorning souls*

6 [k]Ps. 74:10; 123:3, 4

31 "You are My [u]flock, the flock of My pasture; you *are* men, *and* I *am* your God," says the Lord GOD.

Judgment on Mount Seir

35 Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2 "Son of man, set your face against [a]Mount Seir and [b]prophesy against it, 3 and say to it, 'Thus says the Lord GOD:

"Behold, O Mount Seir, I *am* against you;
[c]I will stretch out My hand against you,
And make you [1]most desolate;
4 I shall lay your cities waste,
And you shall be desolate.
Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD.

5 [d]"Because you have had an [2]ancient hatred, and have shed *the blood of* the children of Israel by the power of the sword at the time of their calamity, [e]*when* their iniquity *came to an* end, 6 therefore, *as* I live," says the Lord GOD, "I will prepare you for [f]blood, and blood shall pursue you; [g]since you have not hated [3]blood, therefore blood shall pursue you. 7 Thus I will make Mount Seir [4]most desolate, and cut off from it the [h]one who leaves and the one who returns. 8 And I will fill its mountains with the slain; on your hills and in your valleys and in all your ravines those who are slain by the sword shall fall. 9 [i]I will make you [5]perpetually desolate, and your cities shall be uninhabited; [j]then you shall know that I *am* the LORD.

10 "Because you have said, 'These two nations and these two countries shall be mine, and we will [k]possess them,' although [l]the LORD was there, 11 therefore, *as* I live," says the Lord GOD, "I will do [m]according to your anger and according to the envy which you showed in your hatred against them; and I will make Myself known among them when I judge you. 12 [n]Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD. I have [o]heard all your [p]blasphemies which you have spoken against the mountains of Israel, saying, 'They are desolate; they are given to us to consume.' 13 Thus [q]with your mouth you have [6]boasted against Me and multiplied your [r]words against Me; I have heard *them.*"

14 'Thus says the Lord GOD: [s]"The whole earth will rejoice when I make you desolate. 15 [t]As you rejoiced because the inheritance of the house of Israel was desolate, [u]so I will do to you; you shall be desolate, O Mount Seir, as well as all of Edom—all of it! Then they shall know that I *am* the LORD." '

Blessing on Israel

36 "And you, son of man, prophesy to the [a]mountains of Israel, and say, 'O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the LORD! 2 Thus says the Lord GOD: "Because [b]the enemy has said of you, 'Aha! [c]The [1]ancient heights [d]have become our possession,' " ' 3 therefore prophesy, and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Because they made *you* desolate and swallowed you up on every side, so that you became the possession of the rest of the nations, [e]and you are taken up by the lips of [f]talkers and slandered by the people"— 4 therefore, O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord GOD! Thus says the Lord GOD to the mountains, the hills, the [2]rivers, the valleys, the desolate wastes, and the cities that have been forsaken, which [g]became plunder and [h]mockery to the rest of the nations all around— 5 therefore thus says the Lord GOD: [i]"Surely I have spoken in My burning jealousy against the rest of the nations and against all Edom, [j]who gave My land to themselves as a possession, with wholehearted joy *and* [3]spiteful minds, in order to plunder its open country." '

6 "Therefore prophesy concerning the land of Israel, and say to the mountains, the hills, the rivers, and the valleys, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I have spoken in My jealousy and My fury, because you have [k]borne the shame of the nations." 7 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: "I

■ **35:2 Mount Seir.** Edom was located along the margin of arable land southeast of the Dead Sea; Seir was the chief mountain range in the country. Mount Seir was used as a synonym for Edom (v. 15; Gen. 32:3; 36:8, 9; Deut. 2:8; Judg. 5:4; 2 Chr. 25:14).

■ **35:10 two nations.** Israel and Judah.

we will possess them. Contrast Deut. 2:2–6, a passage forbidding Israel to take the territory of Edom because God had given it to the descendants of Esau.

■ **36:1–38** The prophecy of judgment directed against Mount Seir (ch. 35) is followed by a prophecy of restoration directed to the mountains of Israel.

■ **36:2 ancient heights.** This phrase refers to the land God promised Israel, or if taken strictly, to the heights of Zion (17:23; 34:14; Deut. 32:13; Ps. 48:2; 78:69; Is. 58:14; Jer. 31:12).

have [l]raised My hand in an oath that surely the nations that *are* around you shall [m]bear their own shame. 8 But you, O mountains of Israel, you shall shoot forth your branches and yield your fruit to My people Israel, for they are about to come. 9 For indeed I *am* for you, and I will turn to you, and you shall be tilled and sown. 10 I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, all of it; and the cities shall be inhabited and [n]the ruins rebuilt. 11 [o]I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and [4]bear young; I will make you inhabited as in former times, and do [p]better *for you* than at your beginnings. [q]Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD. 12 Yes, I will cause men to walk on you, My people Israel; [r]they shall take possession of you, and you shall be their inheritance; no more shall you [s]bereave them *of children.*"

13 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Because they say to you, [t]"You devour men and bereave your nation *of children,*' 14 therefore you shall devour men no more, nor bereave your nation anymore," says the Lord GOD. 15 [u]Nor will I let you hear the taunts of the nations anymore, nor bear the reproach of the peoples anymore, nor shall you cause your nation to stumble anymore," says the Lord GOD.' "

The Renewal of Israel

16 Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying: 17 "Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their own land, [v]they defiled it by their own ways and deeds; to Me their way was like [w]the uncleanness of a woman in her customary impurity. 18 Therefore I poured out My fury on them [x]for the blood they had shed on the land, and for their idols *with which* they had defiled it. 19 So I [y]scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed throughout the countries; I judged them [z]according to their ways and their deeds. 20 When they came to the nations, wherever they went, they [a]profaned My holy name—when they said of them, 'These *are* the people of the LORD, *and* yet they have gone out of His land.' 21 But I had concern [b]for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations wherever they went.

22 "Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "I do not do *this* for your sake, O house of Israel, [c]but for My holy name's sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went. 23 And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I *am* the LORD," says the Lord GOD, "when I am [d]hallowed in you before their eyes. 24 For [e]I will take you from among the nations, gather you out of all countries, and bring you into your own land. 25 [f]Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you [g]from all your filthiness and from all your idols. 26 I will give you a [h]new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 I will put My [i]Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do *them.* 28 [j]Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; [k]you shall be My people, and I will be your God. 29 I will [l]deliver you from all your uncleannesses. [m]I will call for the grain and multiply it, and [n]bring no famine upon you. 30 [o]And I will multiply the fruit of your trees and the increase of your fields, so that you need never again bear the reproach of famine among the nations. 31 Then [p]you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that *were* not good; and you [q]will [5]loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities and your abominations. 32 [r]Not for your sake do I do *this,*" says the Lord GOD, "let it be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel!"

33 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will also enable *you* to dwell in the cities, [s]and the ruins shall be rebuilt. 34 The desolate land shall be tilled instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass by. 35 So they will say, 'This land that

7 [f]Ezek. 20:5 [m]Jer. 25:9, 15, 29
10 [n]Amos 9:14
11 [o]Jer. 31:27; 33:12 [p]Is. 51:3 [q]Ezek. 35:9; 37:6, 13 [4]Lit. *be fruitful*
12 [r]Obad. 17 [s]Jer. 15:7
13 [t]Num. 13:32
15 [u]Ezek. 34:29
17 [v]Jer. 2:7 [w]Lev. 15:19
18 [x]Ezek. 16:36, 38; 23:37
19 [y]Deut. 28:64 [z][Rom. 2:6]
20 [a]Rom. 2:24
21 [b]Ezek. 20:9, 14
22 [c]Ps. 106:8
23 [d]Ezek. 20:41; 28:22
24 [e]Ezek. 34:13; 37:21
25 [f]Heb. 9:13, 19; 10:22 [g]Jer. 33:8
26 [h]Ezek. 11:19
27 [i]Ezek. 11:19; 37:14
28 [j]Ezek. 28:25; 37:25 [k]Jer. 30:22
29 [l][Rom. 11:26] [m]Ps. 105:16 [n]Ezek. 34:27, 29
30 [o]Ezek. 34:27
31 [p]Ezek. 16:61, 63 [q]Ezek. 6:9; 20:43 [5]*despise*
32 [r]Deut. 9:5
33 [s]Ezek. 36:10

■ **36:12 children.** Israel will prosper and be more populous than she had been before the recent disaster (vv. 11, 12; cf. Zech. 2:4). The prophets often describe God's future blessing on the land in terms of a multitude of children (37:25; Is. 49:20; 54:1; 59:21; Jer. 30:20; 31:17; Zech. 8:5).

■ **36:17 Impurity.** See 18:6 note.

■ **36:25 sprinkle.** The sprinkling or pouring of water refers to the ritual purifications for removing religious defilement (Ex. 30:17–21; Lev. 14:52; Num. 19:17–19). It is also used as a symbol for the gift of God's Spirit, in the anointing of kings and priests and in the prophetic call (Joel 2:28, 29). The outpouring of God's Spirit is a sign of the messianic age (37:14; 39:29; Is. 42:1; 44:3; 59:21). This rich symbolism attaches to baptism in the New Testament. The language of vv. 25–27 is closely paralleled in Ps. 51:7–11.

■ **36:26 new heart . . . new spirit.** See 11:19 and note on 18:31. Instead of a heart of stone, unable to respond to God with love and obedience, God will provide a new heart and a new spirit. Note that these come as the result of divine initiative and not human attainment. Jeremiah describes the new covenant in the same way (Jer. 31:33; and Prov. 3:3; 7:3; Rom. 2:15, 29; 2 Cor. 3:3).

■ **36:27 My Spirit.** The new spirit would be the Spirit of God transforming those in whom He dwells and enabling them to obey the law of God. Cf. Rom. 7:6; 8:2–17; Gal. 5:16–18, 22; 1 John 3:24.

■ **36:33 ruins shall be rebuilt.** See Is. 44:26; 58:12; 61:4.

■ **36:35 Eden.** Israel as a nation was God's garden; see notes on 28:13, 14; 40:16; 47:1, 2.

was desolate has become like the garden of [f]Eden; and the wasted, desolate, and ruined cities *are now* fortified *and* inhabited.' 36 Then the nations which are left all around you shall know that I, the LORD, have rebuilt the ruined places *and* planted what was desolate. [u]I, the LORD, have spoken *it,* and I will do *it.*"

37 'Thus says the Lord GOD: [v]"I will also let the house of Israel inquire of Me to do this for them: I will [w]increase their men like a flock. 38 Like a [6]flock *offered as* holy *sacrifices,* like the flock at Jerusalem on its [7]feast days, so shall the ruined cities be filled with flocks of men. Then they shall know that I *am* the LORD." ' "

The Dry Bones Live

37 The [a]hand of the LORD came upon me and brought me out [b]in the Spirit of the LORD, and set me down in the midst of the valley; and it *was* full of bones. 2 Then He caused me to pass by them all around, and behold, *there were* very many in the open valley; and indeed *they were* very dry. 3 And He said to me, "Son of man, can these bones live?"

So I answered, "O Lord GOD, [c]You know."

4 Again He said to me, "Prophesy to these bones, and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD! 5 Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: "Surely I will [d]cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live. 6 I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. [e]Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD." ' "

7 So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to bone. 8 Indeed, as I looked, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them over; but *there was* no breath in them.

9 Also He said to me, "Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the [1]breath, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: [f]"Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live." ' " 10 So I prophesied as He commanded me, [g]and [2]breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army.

11 Then He said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the [h]whole house of Israel. They indeed say, [i]'Our bones are dry, our hope is lost, and we ourselves are cut off!' 12 Therefore prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, [j]O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and [k]bring you into the land of Israel. 13 Then you shall know that I *am* the LORD, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves. 14 I [l]will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken *it* and performed *it,*" says the LORD.' "

One Kingdom, One King

15 Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 16 "As for you, son of man, [m]take a stick for yourself and write on it: 'For Judah and for [n]the children of Israel, his companions.' Then take another stick and write on it, 'For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and *for* all the house of Israel, his companions.' 17 Then [o]join them one to another for yourself into one stick, and they will become one in your hand.

18 "And when the children of your people speak to you, saying, [p]'Will you not show us what

35 [t]Joel 2:3

36 [u]Ezek. 17:24; 22:14; 37:14

37 [v]Ezek. 14:3; 20:3, 31 [w]Ezek. 36:10

38 [6]Lit. *holy flock* [7]*appointed feasts*

CHAPTER 37

1 [a]Ezek. 1:3 [b]Ezek. 3:14; 8:3; 11:24

3 [c][1 Sam. 2:6]

5 [d]Ps. 104:29, 30

6 [e]Joel 2:27; 3:17

9 [f][Ps. 104:30] [1]Breath of life

10 [g]Rev. 11:11 [2]Breath of life

11 [h]Ezek. 36:10 [i]Ps. 141:7

12 [j]Is. 26:19; 66:14 [k]Ezek. 36:24

14 [l]Ezek. 36:27

16 [m]Num. 17:2, 3 [n]2 Chr. 11:12, 13, 16; 15:9; 30:11, 18

17 [o]Hos. 1:11

18 [p]Ezek. 12:9; 24:19

■ **37:1–14** Interpreters have long discussed the relationship between Ezekiel's vision and the general resurrection at the end of time. The Old Testament does not present a complete doctrine of resurrection; this awaited the coming of Christ (Job 14:14; 19:25, 26; Dan. 12:2; see also 1 Kin. 17:17–24; 2 Kin. 4:8–37; 13:21). Ezekiel's vision gave an immediate hope to the exiles longing to be restored to their own country (37:14), and it has a more permanent application to the general resurrection.

■ **37:1 Spirit.** The words "breath," "Spirit," and "wind" in this passage represent the same Hebrew word, adjusted by translations to the requirements of context (vv. 1, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 14).

valley. This is the same term used in 3:22; see note there. Since this word is only used in Ezekiel in these two passages, the locale of this vision may have been the same as that for the prophet's call. Some have suggested that the vision was in the environs of Jerusalem, possibly the Kidron Valley east of the city (47:1–6; Joel 3:12; Zech. 14:4).

■ **37:4 Prophesy.** The prophetic word was like God's word at creation. God spoke, and new life was created (Gen. 1). Ezekiel's words are similarly efficacious in this vision, for they are also God's words.

■ **37:9 breath.** The infusion of the breath of life recalls Gen. 2:7.

■ **37:12 graves.** The vision began with exposed and unburied bones (v. 2), but now broadens to include the opening of graves.

■ **37:14 you shall know.** Israel's restoration would be God's own testimony to His power and rule.

■ **37:16 a stick.** The prophet performs another symbolic action (4:1–3 note). Two sticks, one bearing the name of the southern kingdom Judah and the other bearing the name of the northern kingdom Ephraim, are held end to end in one of the prophet's hands so that they appeared to be joined.

■ **37:18–23** The prophet interprets his symbolic actions (vv. 16, 17). Joseph's two sons were Ephraim and Manasseh; these two tribes were the central part of the northern kingdom, so much so that the northern kingdom (Israel) was sometimes designated simply as "Ephraim" (2 Chr. 25:7, 10; Is. 7:2, 9, 17; 11:13; 17:3; Jer. 31:20; Hos. 4:17; 6:4; 8:9; 9:8; 10:6; Zech. 9:13). It fell to the Assyrians almost a century and a half before the exile of Judah, and was dispersed among other nations and assimilated to them. This passage looks back to the united monarchy under David and Solomon, and forward to a future ideal restoration (33:24; Jer. 3:18; 23:5, 6; Hos. 1:11; Amos 9:11).

you *mean* by these?'— 19 [q]say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Surely I will take [r]the stick of Joseph, which *is* in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel, his companions; and I will join them with it, with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they will be one in My hand." ' 20 And the sticks on which you write will be in your hand [s]before their eyes.

21 "Then say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Surely [t]I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, wherever they have gone, and will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land; 22 and [u]I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel; and [v]one king shall be king over them all; they shall no longer be two nations, nor shall they ever be divided into two kingdoms again. 23 [w]They shall not defile themselves anymore *with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor* with any of their transgressions; but [x]I will deliver them from all their dwelling places in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them. Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God.

24 "[y]David My servant *shall be* king over them, and [z]they shall all have one shepherd; [a]they shall also walk in My judgments and observe My statutes, and do them. 25 [b]Then they shall dwell in the land that I have given to Jacob My servant, where your fathers dwelt; and they shall dwell there, they, their children, and their children's children, [c]forever; and [d]My servant David *shall be* their prince forever. 26 Moreover I will [3]make [e]a covenant of peace with them, and it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; I will establish them and [f]multiply them, and I will set My [g]sanctuary in their midst forevermore. 27 [h]My tabernacle also shall be with them; indeed I will be [i]their God, and they shall be My people. 28 [j]The nations also will know that I, the LORD, [k]sanctify Israel, when My sanctuary is in their midst forevermore." ' "

19 [q]Zech. 10:6 [r]Ezek. 37:16, 17

20 [s]Ezek. 12:3

21 [t]Ezek. 36:24

22 [u]Jer. 3:18 [v]Ezek. 34:23

23 [w]Ezek. 36:25 [x]Ezek. 36:28, 29

24 [y]Is. 40:11 [z][John 10:16] [a]*Ezek. 36:27*

25 [b]Ezek. 36:28 [c]Is. 60:21 [d]John 12:34

26 [e]Is. 55:3 [f]Ezek. 36:10 [g][2 Cor. 6:16] [3]Lit. *cut*

27 [h][John 1:14] [i]Ezek. 11:20

28 [j]Ezek. 36:23 [k]Ezek. 20:12

Gog and Allies Attack Israel

38 Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 2 [a]"Son of man, [b]set your face against [c]Gog, of the land of [d]Magog, [1]the prince of Rosh, [e]Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him, 3 and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I *am* against you, O Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal. 4 [f]I will turn you around, put hooks into your jaws, and [g]lead you

CHAPTER 38

2 [a]Ezek. 39:1 [b]Ezek. 35:2, 3 [c]Rev. 20:8 [d]Gen. 10:2 [e]Ezek. 32:26 [1]Tg., Vg., Aquila *the chief prince of Meshech,* also v. 3

4 [f]2 Kin. 19:28 [g]Is. 43:17

■ **37:24 king.** Ezekiel is reluctant to use the word "king" in reference to any of the historical rulers of Jerusalem, preferring instead to call them "prince" (v. 25; 12:10, 12; 19:1; 21:12, 25; 22:6; 34:24). Here, however, he describes the future Davidic ruler as "king" (v. 22, 24), possibly a subtle way of distinguishing this future ruler from the others. The New Testament reveals that this shepherd-king is Jesus (34:2–10, 23 and notes), who reigns over the renewed people of God forever (v. 25; 34:31; John 10:11, 14; Matt. 2:2; Acts 5:31).

■ **37:25–28 forever . . . forevermore.** The repetition of "forever" (vv. 25, 26, 28) indicates that the reunification in view is eschatological, that is, an event to occur in the last days.

■ **37:26 covenant of peace.** See 34:25 and note.

everlasting covenant. This eternal covenant took effect through the offering of Christ's blood (Heb. 13:20).

■ **37:27 their God . . . My people.** See note on 34:30.

■ **37:28 sanctuary is in their midst forevermore.** Ezekiel looks for a renewed city of God (chs. 40—48). More than six hundred years later John had a similar vision (Rev. 21), but of a city that needed no temple building (Rev. 21:22).

■ **38:1—39:29** Before his description of the future city of God, the prophet first describes the defeat and removal of its foes. Gog, the prince of Magog (see note on v. 2), sums up the final opposition to the kingdom and people of God. God comes as a divine warrior, fighting for His people and visiting an apocalyptic defeat on His foes, preparing the way for the vision of the renewed city (chs. 40—48).

■ **38:2 Gog.** The identity of Gog is uncertain. He is often identified with Gyges, the king of Lydia, a land in Anatolia (modern Turkey). In Akkadian texts from the seventh century Gyges is known as an Assyrian vassal; later legend credited him with the invention of coinage. The name "Gog" is phonetically similar to the Akkadian word for "Gyges," but an identification of the two is by no means certain.

Magog. This land ruled by Gog is also otherwise unknown from extant geographical lists or citations in ancient literature; it may mean no more than "land of Gog."

prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal. Though the identification of Gog and Magog remain uncertain, the identification of Meshech and Tubal is not in doubt (27:13 note). From the ancient historians Herodotus and Josephus, as well as Assyrian documents from the twelfth to the eighth centuries B.C., they are known to be tribes from central and eastern Anatolia (modern Turkey). Considerable misunderstanding has resulted from misguided speculation regarding these geographical terms. Some have identified these locations with other sites known from contemporary geography and have made them part of conjectures about later political events. Meshech and Tubal are said to be Moscow and Tobolsk, two Russian cities far distant from the region Ezekiel mentions. The Hebrew word translated "prince" (v. 2) is *ro'sh,* and some have said that this means "Russia." Even if this word is a geographical name and not to be translated "prince," it is not "Russia." The name "Russia" was brought into the region north of Kiev by the Vikings in the Middle Ages, and was not in use in Ezekiel's time.

In describing the threats to Israel's existence, the Bible commonly refers to foes coming from the north (Is. 41:25; Jer. 1:13–15; 4:6; 6:22; 10:22; 13:20; 15:12; 25:9, 26; 46:10, 20, 24; 50:3, 9, 41, 49; Ezek. 26:7; 38:6, 15; 39:2; Dan. 11; Zech. 2:6; 6:6–8; cf. Is. 5:26–29; 13:1–13; Heb. 1:5–11; Nah. 2:2–10; 3:1–3). References to these northern foes before the Babylonian exile in the sixth century B.C. usually point to Assyria, Babylon, and Persia, Israel's traditional enemies. During and after the Babylonian exile, the foes from the north take on a more symbolic and apocalyptic coloring. In his description of conflict at the end of time, Ezekiel mentions tribes on the fringes of kingdoms to the north as an embodiment of the foes from the north that already figured in Israel's eschatology (their understanding of the last days). Rather than add to speculation about future history, modern readers should understand that Ezekiel himself uses these nations as symbolic references to all powers arrayed against God's people. Ezekiel contains many oracles against foreign nations (Ezek. 29—32), but there is none specifically against Babylon, where he and the exiles were held in captivity. Some have suggested that Magog, Meshech, and Tubal are veiled references to Babylon, the immediate enemy. Gog and Magog recur in John's apocalyptic description of future conflict between good and evil (Rev. 20:8).

out, with all your army, horses, and horsemen, [h]all splendidly clothed, a great company *with* bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords. 5 Persia, [2]Ethiopia, and [3]Libya are with them, all of them *with* shield and helmet; 6 [i]Gomer and all its troops; the house of [j]Togarmah *from* the far north and all its troops—many people *are* with you.

7 [k]"Prepare yourself and be ready, you and all your companies that are gathered about you; and be a guard for them. 8 [l]After many days [m]you will be visited. In the latter years you will come into the land of those brought back from the sword [n]*and* gathered from many people on [o]the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate; they were brought out of the nations, and now all of them [p]dwell safely. 9 You will ascend, coming [q]like a storm, covering the [r]land like a cloud, you and all your troops and many peoples with you."

10 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "On that day it shall come to pass *that* thoughts will arise in your mind, and you will make an evil plan: 11 You will say, 'I will go up against a land of [s]unwalled villages; I will [t]go to a peaceful people, [u]who dwell [4]safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates'— 12 to take plunder and to take booty, to stretch out your hand against the waste places *that are again* inhabited, [v]and against a people gathered from the nations, who have acquired livestock and goods, who dwell in the midst of the land. 13 [w]Sheba, [x]Dedan, the merchants [y]of Tarshish, and all [z]their young lions will say to you, 'Have you come to take plunder? Have you gathered your army to take booty, to carry away silver and gold, to take away livestock and goods, to take great plunder?' " ' 14 "Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say to Gog, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: [a]"On that day when My people Israel [b]dwell safely, will you not know *it?* 15 [c]Then you will come from your place out of the far north, you and many peoples with you, all of them riding on horses, a great company and a mighty army. 16 You will come up against My people Israel like a cloud, to cover the land. It will be in the latter days that I will bring you against My land, so that the nations may [d]know Me, when I am [e]hallowed in you, O Gog, before their eyes." 17 Thus says the Lord GOD: "Are *you* he of whom I have spoken in former days by My servants the prophets of Israel, who prophesied for years in those days that I would bring you against them?

Judgment on Gog

18 "And it will come to pass at the same time, when Gog comes against the land of Israel," says the Lord GOD, "*that* My fury will show in My face. 19 For [f]in My jealousy [g]*and* in the fire of My wrath I have spoken: [h]'Surely in that day there shall be a great [5]earthquake in the land of Israel, 20 so that [i]the fish of the sea, the birds of the heavens, the beasts of the field, all creeping things that creep on the earth, and all men who *are* on the face of the earth shall shake at My presence. [j]The mountains shall be thrown down, the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground.' 21 I will [k]call for [l]a sword against Gog throughout all My mountains," says the Lord GOD, [m]"Every man's sword will be against his brother. 22 And I will [n]bring him to judgment with [o]pestilence and bloodshed; [p]I will rain down on him, on his troops, and on the many peoples who *are* with him, flooding rain, [q]great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. 23 Thus I will magnify Myself and [r]sanctify Myself, [s]and I will be known in the eyes of many nations. Then they shall know that I *am* the LORD." '

Gog's Armies Destroyed

39 "And [a]you, son of man, prophesy against Gog, and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I *am* against you, O Gog, [1]the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal; 2 and I will [b]turn you around and lead you on, [c]bringing you up from the far north, and bring you against the

4 [n]Ezek. 23:12
5 [2]Heb. *Cush* [3]Heb. *Put*
6 [i]Gen. 10:2 [j]Ezek. 27:14
7 [k]Is. 8:9, 10
8 [l]Is. 24:22 [m]Is. 29:6 [n]Ezek. 34:13 [o]Ezek. 36:1, 4 [p]Ezek. 34:25; 39:26
9 [q]Is. 28:2 [r]Jer. 4:13
11 [s]Zech. 2:4 [t]Jer. 49:31 [u]Ezek. 38:8 [4]*securely*
12 [v]Ezek. 38:8
13 [w]Ezek. 27:22 [x]Ezek. 27:15, 20 [y]Ezek. 27:12 [z]Ezek. 19:3, 5
14 [a]Is. 4:1 [b]Ezek. 38:8, 11
15 [c]Ezek. 39:2
16 [d]Ezek. 35:11 [e]Ezek. 28:22
19 [f]Ezek. 36:5, 6 [g]Ps. 89:46 [h]Rev. 16:18 [5]Lit. *shaking*
20 [i]Hos. 4:3 [j]Jer. 4:24
21 [k]Ps. 105:16 [l]Ezek. 14:17 [m]1 Sam. 14:20
22 [n]Is. 66:16 [o]Ezek. 5:17 [p]Ps. 11:6 [q]Rev. 16:21
23 [r]Ezek. 36:23 [s]Ezek. 37:28; 38:16

CHAPTER 39

1 [a]Ezek. 38:2, 3 [1]Tg., Vg., Aquila *the chief prince of Meshech*
2 [b]Ezek. 38:8 [c]Ezek. 38:15

■ **38:5 Ethiopia.** See Is. 68:31 note.

■ **38:6 Gomer.** This is probably a group from the area north of the Black Sea, known to the Assyrians as the Gimirrai and to the Greeks as the Cimmerians. Gog leads a coalition of nations from the south and the north. The picture is of a total mobilization against the people of God. Compare the divine summons to war in Joel 3:9–11.

house of Togarmah. See 27:14 note.

■ **38:9 like a cloud.** An innumerable foe assembles (Jer. 4:13; Joel 2:2).

■ **38:11 peaceful people.** Compare the strategy in Judg. 18:7, 8. Though Gog plotted against Israel, in reality God was bringing them to their own destruction (vv. 4, 16).

■ **38:13 Sheba.** The southwestern corner of the Arabian peninsula (modern Yemen). The Sabeans were famous for trading (23:42; 27:22; 1 Kin. 10:1, 2; Job 6:19; Joel 3:8).

Dedan. A territory in southern Edom (25:13; 27:20; Jer. 25:23; 49:8).

■ **38:17 he of whom I have spoken.** Gog is not specifically mentioned in any other Old Testament prophecy. Ezekiel refers to earlier prophecies describing a foe from the north (v. 2 note).

■ **38:18–23** God Himself will be Israel's defender. In passages describing the appearance of God as a divine warrior, the prophets commonly speak of a corresponding convulsion in the created order; creation dissolves into primeval chaos (32:6–8 note; Is. 13:13; 24:18–20; Jer. 4:23–26; Joel 2:10, 30, 31; Hag. 2:6, 7, 21; 3:16; cf. Judg. 5:4; Ps. 18:8; 46:3; 77:16–19).

mountains of Israel. 3 Then I will knock the bow out of your left hand, and cause the arrows to fall out of your right hand. 4 [d]You shall [2]fall upon the mountains of Israel, you and all your troops and the peoples who *are* with you; [e]I will give you to birds of prey of every sort and *to* the beasts of the field to be devoured. 5 You shall [3]fall on [4]the open field; for I have spoken," says the Lord GOD. 6 [f]"And I will send fire on Magog and on those who live [5]in security in [g]the coastlands. Then they shall know that I *am* the LORD. 7 [h]So I will make My holy name known in the midst of My people Israel, and I will not *let them* [i]profane My holy name anymore. [j]Then the nations shall know that *I am* the LORD, the Holy One in Israel. 8 [k]Surely it is coming, and it shall be done," says the Lord GOD. "This *is* the day [l]of which I have spoken.

9 "Then those who dwell in the cities of Israel will go out and set on fire and burn the weapons, both the shields and bucklers, the bows and arrows, the [6]javelins and spears; and they will make fires with them for seven years. 10 They will not take wood from the field nor cut down *any* from the forests, because they will make fires with the weapons; [m]and they will plunder those who plundered them, and pillage those who pillaged them," says the Lord GOD.

The Burial of Gog

11 "It will come to pass in that day *that* I will give Gog a burial place there in Israel, the valley of those who pass by east of the sea; and it will obstruct travelers, because there they will bury Gog and all his multitude. Therefore they will call *it* the Valley of [7]Hamon Gog. 12 For seven months the house of Israel will be burying them, [n]in order to cleanse the land. 13 Indeed all the people of the land will be burying, and they will gain [o]renown for it on the day that [p]I am glorified," says the Lord GOD. 14 "They will set apart men regularly employed, with the help of [8]a search party, to pass through the land and bury those bodies remaining on the ground, in order [q]to cleanse it. At the end of seven months they will make a search. 15 The search party will pass through the land; and *when anyone* sees a man's bone, he shall [9]set up a marker by it, till the buriers have buried it in the Valley of Hamon Gog. 16 *The* name of *the* city *will* also *be* [l]Hamonah. Thus they shall [r]cleanse the land." '

A Triumphant Festival

17 "And as for you, son of man, thus says the Lord GOD, [s]'Speak to every sort of bird and to every beast of the field:

[t]"Assemble yourselves and come;
Gather together from all sides to My [u]sacrificial meal
Which I am sacrificing for you,
A great sacrificial meal [v]on the mountains of Israel,
That you may eat flesh and drink blood.
18 [w]You shall eat the flesh of the mighty,
Drink the blood of the princes of the earth,
Of rams and lambs,
Of goats and bulls,
All of them [x]fatlings of Bashan.
19 You shall eat fat till you are full,
And drink blood till you are drunk,
At My sacrificial meal
Which I am sacrificing for you.
20 [y]You shall be filled at My table
With horses and riders,

4 [d]Ezek. 38:4, 21 [e]Ezek. 33:27 [2]Be slain

5 [3]Be slain [4]Lit. *the face of the field*

6 [f]Ezek. 38:22; Amos 1:4, 7, 10; Nah. 1:6 [g]Ps. 72:10; Is. 66:19; Jer. 25:22 [5]*securely* or *confidently*

7 [h]Ezek. 39:25 [i]Lev. 18:21; Ezek. 36:23 [j]Ezek. 38:16

8 [k]Rev. 16:17; 21:6 [l]Ezek. 38:17

9 [6]Lit. *hand staffs*

10 [m]Is. 14:2; 33:1; Mic. 5:8; Hab. 2:8

11 [7]Lit. *The Multitude of Gog*

12 [n]Deut. 21:23; Ezek. 39:14, 16

13 [o]Jer. 33:9; Zeph. 3:19, 20 [p]Ezek. 28:22

14 [q]Ezek. 39:12 [8]Lit. *those who pass through*

15 [9]*build*

16 [r]Ezek. 39:12 [l]Lit. *Multitude*

17 [s]Is. 56:9; [Jer. 12:9]; Ezek. 39:4; Rev. 19:17, 18 [t]Is. 18:6 [u]Is. 34:6, 7; Jer. 46:10; Zeph. 1:7 [v]Ezek. 39:4

18 [w]Ezek. 29:5; Rev. 19:18 [x]Deut. 32:14; Ps. 22:12

20 [y]Ps. 76:5, 6; Ezek. 38:4; Hag. 2:22

■ **39:9 burn the weapons.** The prophet uses a vivid image to describe how large the enemy army will be and how total its defeat: the Israelites will gather the weapons of the vanquished and have sufficient firewood to last for seven years (Ps. 46:9).

■ **39:11 burial place.** Gog's hordes will be buried on the borders of Israel, near the Dead Sea. After seven months of work burial details will still be searching for bodies (vv. 14, 15).

■ **39:14 cleanse.** Contact with a corpse rendered one ceremonially unclean (Lev. 11:24–28, 39; 22:4), so the land would require cleansing.

■ **39:15 Hamon Gog.** The valley will be named "Valley of the Hordes of Gog."

■ **39:17 sacrificial meal.** See note on 29:5. Usually sacrifice meant that animals became food. Here the image is reversed: the human enemies are sacrificed, and the animals eat. By such a reversal of the created order (Gen. 1:30; 9:2, 3) the prophet shows the universe dissolving into chaos under God's judgment (38:18–23 note). The same image is used in Rev. 19:17, 18 (Is. 34:6, 7; Jer. 46:10; Zeph. 1:7–9).

■ **39:18 Bashan.** A region east of the Sea of Galilee known for its fine cattle (Deut. 32:14; Ps. 22:12; Amos 4:1).

■ **39:19 eat fat . . . drink blood.** These parts of a sacrificial animal were ordinarily offered to God (44:15; Lev. 3:17).

20 [z]Rev. 19:18

21 [a]Ezek. 36:23; 38:23 [b]Ex. 7:4

22 [c]Ex. 39:7, 28

23 [d]Ezek. 36:18–20, 23 [e]Is. 1:15; 59:2 [f]Lev. 26:25

24 [g]Ezek. 36:19

25 [h]Ezek. 34:13; 36:24 [i]Hos. 1:11

26 [j]Dan. 9:16 [k]Lev. 26:5, 6

27 [l]Ezek. 28:25, 26 [m]Ezek. 36:23, 24; 38:16

28 [n]Ezek. 34:30 [2]Lit. *there*

29 [o]Is. 54:8, 9 [p][Joel 2:28]

CHAPTER 40

1 [a]Ezek. 33:21 [b]Ezek. 1:3; 3:14, 22; 37:1 [1]Lit. *struck*

2 [c]Ezek. 1:1; 3:14; 8:3; 37:1. [d]Rev. 21:10

3 [e]Dan. 10:6 [f]Ezek. 47:3 [g]Rev. 11:1; 21:15

4 [h]Ezek. 44:5 [i]Ezek. 43:10 [2]Lit. *set your heart*

5 [j]Ezek. 42:20 [3]Lit. *house* [4]A royal cubit of about 21 inches

6 [k]Ezek. 43:1

[z] With mighty men
And with all the men of war," says the Lord GOD.

Israel Restored to the Land

21 [a]"I will set My glory among the nations; all the nations shall see My judgment which I have executed, and [b]My hand which I have laid on them. 22 [c]So the house of Israel shall know that I *am* the LORD their God from that day forward. 23 [d]The Gentiles shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity; because they were unfaithful to Me, therefore [e]I hid My face from them. I [f]gave them into the hand of their enemies, and they all fell by the sword. 24 [g]According to their uncleanness and according to their transgressions I have dealt with them, and hidden My face from them." '

25 "Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: [h]'Now I will bring back the captives of Jacob, and have mercy on the [i]whole house of Israel; and I will be jealous for My holy name— 26 [j]after they have borne their shame, and all their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to Me, when they [k]dwelt safely in their *own* land and no one made *them* afraid. 27 [l]When I have brought them back from the peoples and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and I [m]am hallowed in them in the sight of many nations, 28 [n]then they shall know that I *am* the LORD their God, who sent them into captivity among the nations, but also brought them back to their land, and left none of them [2]captive any longer. 29 [o]And I will not hide My face from them anymore; for I shall have [p]poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel,' says the Lord GOD."

A New City, a New Temple

40 In the twenty-fifth year of our captivity, at the beginning of the year, on the tenth *day* of the month, in the fourteenth year after [a]the city was [1]captured, on the very same day [b]the hand of the LORD was upon me; and He took me there. 2 [c]In the visions of God He took me into the land of Israel and [d]set me on a very high mountain; on it toward the south *was* something like the structure of a city. 3 He took me there, and behold, *there was* a man whose appearance *was* [e]like the appearance of bronze. [f]He had a line of flax [g]and a measuring rod in his hand, and he stood in the gateway.

4 And the man said to me, [h]"Son of man, look with your eyes and hear with your ears, and [2]fix your mind on everything I show you; for you *were* brought here so that I might show *them* to you. [i]Declare to the house of Israel everything you see." 5 Now there was [j]a wall all around the outside of the [3]temple. In the man's hand was a measuring rod six [4]cubits *long, each being a* cubit and a handbreadth; and he measured the width of the wall structure, one rod; and the height, one rod.

The Eastern Gateway of the Temple

6 Then he went to the gateway which faced [k]east; and he went up its stairs and measured the threshold of the gateway, *which was* one rod wide, and the other threshold *was* one rod wide.

■ **39:23 went into captivity.** The Babylonian exile did not show that God had failed in His promises—to the contrary, it demonstrated to Israel and to the nations alike that His sovereignty was universal. Though God afflicted His people, He had not abandoned them (vv. 25–29). After describing how God would crush His enemies (chs. 38; 39), the prophet turns to a description of the glorious restoration of the people of God (chs. 40—48).

■ **39:25 bring back . . . Jacob.** With the enemy destroyed, the prophet turns to God's purposes for His people, their restoration and blessedness.

■ **39:29 poured out My Spirit.** See 36:25 note; 11:19; 18:31; 37:14; Joel 2:28.

■ **40:1—48:35** Ezekiel's vision of the restored city combines many strands of biblical tradition. Ezekiel weaves together the familiar understanding of Jerusalem as the city where God had chosen to dwell with references to Mount Sinai and the Garden of Eden.

An angel leads the prophet on a tour of the city, beginning at the gates to the outer court of the temple (40:6–27) and ending after several chapters with a division of land among the twelve tribes (47:13—48:35). Interpretations of these chapters vary widely. Many have seen in these passages a blueprint and building specifications for a normal city that was to be built (43:10, 11). However, elements of the prophetic vision seem to go beyond a literal understanding (e.g., 47:1–12). Other interpreters understand Ezekiel's temple vision as a largely symbolic description of the way God would bless His people, with the temple preeminently standing for the presence of God in the midst of His people. Through the use of vision and symbol (40:2; Num. 12:6), the prophet describes a point in the future when the presence of God among His people would transcend anything Israel had experienced in history.

■ **40:2 high mountain.** Presumably Mount Zion, site of the temple in Jerusalem (17:22–24; 20:40; cf. Ps. 48:1, 2; Is. 2:2; Mic. 4:1). The prophet would tour the holy mountain just as the psalmist had (Ps. 48:12, 13).

■ **40:3 a man.** The prophet is conducted on his tour of the city by an angelic guide (cf. Zech. 1:14).

measuring rod. See 2 Kin. 21:13; Amos 7:7, 8; Zech. 2:1, 2; Rev. 21:10, 15.

■ **40:4 Declare . . . everything you see.** John received similar instructions (Rev. 1:11).

■ **40:5 cubits.** There were at least two standard cubits, the short cubit of about 17.4 inches, and the long cubit used here, of about 20.4 inches (43:13; 2 Chr. 3:3). The rod was about ten feet long.

■ **40:6 went up its stairs.** The temple was approached by steps to a raised platform that was the outer court. More steps led to a higher platform that was the inner court (vv. 34, 37). A flight of stairs led from there to the temple building (v. 49; 41:8). The higher the elevation and the closer to the inner sanctuary, the greater the degree of sanctity.

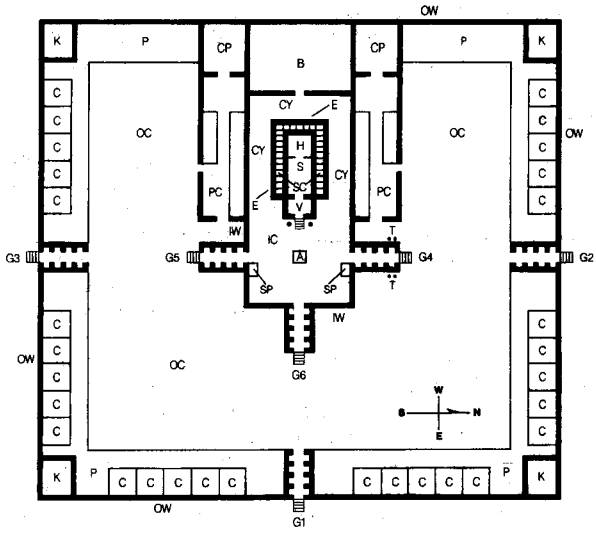
7 Each gate chamber *was* one rod long and one rod wide; between the gate chambers *was a space of* five cubits; and the threshold of the gateway by the vestibule of the inside gate *was* one rod.
8 He also measured the vestibule of the inside gate, one rod. 9 Then he measured the vestibule of the gateway, eight cubits; and the gateposts, two cubits. The vestibule of the gate *was* on the inside. 10 In the eastern gateway *were* three gate chambers on one side and three on the other; the three *were* all the same size; also the gateposts were of the same size on this side and that side.
11 He measured the width of the entrance to the gateway, ten cubits; *and* the length of the gate, thirteen cubits. 12 *There was* a [5]space in front of the gate chambers, one cubit *on this side* and one cubit on that side; the gate chambers *were* six cubits on this side and six cubits on that side.
13 Then he measured the gateway from the roof of *one* gate chamber to the roof of the other; the width *was* twenty-five cubits, as door faces door. 14 He measured the gateposts, sixty cubits high,

12 [5]Lit. *border*

■ **40:9 vestibule.** These gateways resemble gates of the Solomonic period unearthed in excavations at Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer (1 Kin. 9:15). The way through the center of the gate was flanked by three guardrooms on each side.

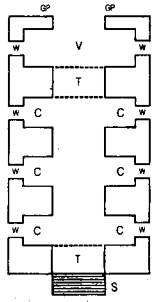
Ezekiel's Temple (40:5)

Ezekiel's restored temple is not a blueprint, but a vision that stresses the purity and spiritual vitality of the ideal place of worship and those who will worship there. It is not intended for an earthly, physical fulfillment, but expresses the truth found in the name of the new city: THE LORD IS THERE (Ezek. 48:35). God will dwell in the new temple and among His people.



The Temple Complex

OW Wall of outer court (40:5)
G1 Eastern outer gateway (40:6–16)
OC Outer court (40:17)
C Chambers in outer court (40:17)
P Pavement (40:17, 18)
G2 Northern outer gateway (40:20–22)
G4 Northern inner gateway (40:23, 35–37)
G3 Southern outer gateway (40:24–26)
G5 Southern inner gateway (40:27–31)
IC Inner court (40:32)
G6 Eastern inner gateway (40:32–34)
T Tables for killing sacrifices (40:38–43)
SP Chambers for singers and priests (40:44–46)
A Altar (40:47; 43:13–27)
V Vestibule of temple (40:48, 49)
S Sanctuary or holy place (41:1, 2)
H Most Holy Place (41:3, 4)
SC Side chambers (41:5–7)
E Elevation around temple (41:8)
CY Separating courtyard (41:10)
B Building at west end (41:12)
PC Priest's chambers (42:1–14)
IW Wall of inner court (42:10)
CP Priest's cooking places (46:19, 20)
K Kitchens (46:21–24)



The Gateway

S Steps (40:6)
T Thresholds (40:6, 7)
C Gate chambers (40:7, 10, 12)
W Windows (40:16)
V Vestibule (40:8, 9)
GP Gateposts (40:10, 14)

and the court all around the gateway *extended* to the gatepost. 15 *From* the front of the entrance gate to the front of the vestibule of the inner gate *was* fifty cubits. 16 *There were* [l]beveled window *frames* in the gate chambers and in their intervening archways on the inside of the gateway all around, and likewise in the vestibules. *There were* windows all around on the inside. And on each gatepost *were* [m]palm trees.

16 [l]1 Kin. 6:4; Ezek. 41:16, 26 [m]1 Kin. 6:29, 32, 35; 2 Chr. 3:5; Ezek. 40:22, 26, 31, 34, 37; 41:18–20, 25, 26

The Outer Court

17 Then he brought me into [n]the outer court; and *there were* [o]chambers and a pavement made all around the court; [p]thirty chambers faced the pavement. 18 The pavement was by the side of the gateways, corresponding to the length of the gateways; *this was* the lower pavement. 19 Then he measured the width from the front of the lower gateway to the front of the inner court exterior, one hundred cubits toward the east and the north.

17 [n]Ezek. 10:5; 42:1; 46:21; Rev. 11:2 [o]1 Kin. 6:5; 2 Chr. 31:11; Ezek. 40:38 [p]Ezek. 45:5

The Northern Gateway

20 On the outer court was also a gateway facing north, and he measured its length and its width. 21 Its gate chambers, three on this side and three on that side, its gateposts and its archways, had the same measurements as the first gate; its length *was* fifty cubits and its width twenty-five cubits. 22 Its windows and those of its archways, and also its palm trees, *had* the same measurements as the gateway facing east; it was ascended by seven steps, and its archway *was* in front of it. 23 A gate of the inner court was opposite the northern gateway, just as the eastern *gateway;* and he measured from gateway to gateway, one hundred cubits.

30 [q]Ezek. 40:21, 25, 33, 36

The Southern Gateway

24 After that he brought me toward the south, and there a gateway was facing south; and he measured its gateposts and archways according to these same measurements. 25 *There were* windows in it and in its archways all around like those windows; its length *was* fifty cubits and its width twenty-five cubits. 26 Seven steps led up to it, and its archway *was* in front of them; and it had palm trees on its gateposts, one on this side and one on that side. 27 *There was* also a gateway on the inner court, facing south; and he measured from gateway to gateway toward the south, one hundred cubits.

Gateways of the Inner Court

28 Then he brought me to the inner court through the southern gateway; he measured the southern gateway according to these same measurements. 29 Also its gate chambers, its gateposts, and its archways *were* according to these same measurements; *there were* windows in it and in its archways all around; *it was* fifty cubits long and twenty-five cubits wide. 30 *There were* archways all around, [q]twenty-five cubits long and five cubits wide. 31 Its archways faced the outer court, palm trees *were* on its gateposts, and going up to it *were* eight steps.

32 And he brought me into the inner court facing east; he measured the gateway according to these same measurements. 33 Also its gate chambers, its gateposts, and its archways *were* according to these same measurements; and *there were* windows in it and in its archways all around; *it was* fifty cubits long and twenty-five cubits wide. 34 Its archways faced the outer court, and palm trees *were* on its gateposts on this side and on that side; and going up to it *were* eight steps.

35 Then he brought me to the north gateway and measured *it* according to these same measurements— 36 also its gate chambers, its gateposts, and its archways. It had windows all around; its length *was* fifty cubits and its width twenty-five cubits. 37 Its gateposts faced the outer court, palm trees *were* on its gateposts on this side and on that side, and going up to it *were* eight steps.

Where Sacrifices Were Prepared

38 *There was* a chamber and its entrance by the gateposts of the gateway, where they [r]washed the burnt offering. 39 In the vestibule of the gateway *were* two tables on this side and two tables

38 [r]2 Chr. 4:6

■ **40:16 palm trees.** See also vv. 22, 31, 34, 37. The decoration in Israel's ancient sanctuaries was mainly botanical; varieties of trees and plants decorated the sacred area (Ex. 25:34; 37:19; 1 Kin. 6:18, 29, 32, 35). In this respect the sanctuaries of Israel suggested the beauty of the Garden of Eden and set before Israel the goal of again dwelling in God's garden (28:13, 14 note).

■ **40:17 outer court.** Worshipers were admitted to the outer court, but only priests and Levites could enter the inner court. The text does not specify the use of the thirty rooms on the perimeter of the outer court (cf. Jer. 35:2).

■ **40:20–27** The northern and southern gates were the same as the eastern gate (vv. 5–16).

■ **40:28 inner court.** The inner court was separated from the outer court by a wall; it too had three gateways (vv. 28–37).

■ **40:38 washed.** Animals offered for sacrifice were slaughtered in the gateways to the inner court (43:13–27). When the animals had been slaughtered, the parts were washed (Lev. 1:9, 13; 2 Chr. 4:6) and hung on hooks (v. 43).

on that side, on which to slay the burnt offering, [s]the sin offering, and [t]the trespass offering. 40 At the outer side of the vestibule, as one goes up to the entrance of the northern gateway, *were* two tables; and on the other side of the vestibule of the gateway *were* two tables. 41 Four tables *were* on this side and four tables on that side, by the side of the gateway, eight tables on which they slaughtered *the sacrifices.* 42 *There were* also four tables of hewn stone for the burnt offering, one cubit and a half long, one cubit and a half wide, and one cubit high; on these they laid the instruments with which they slaughtered the burnt offering and the sacrifice. 43 Inside *were* hooks, a handbreadth wide, fastened all around; and the flesh of the sacrifices *was* on the tables.

Chambers for Singers and Priests

44 Outside the inner gate *were* the chambers for [u]the singers in the inner court, one facing south at the side of the northern gateway, and the other facing north at the side of the southern gateway. 45 Then he said to me, "This chamber which faces south *is* for [v]the priests who have charge of the temple. 46 The chamber which faces north *is* for the priests [w]who have charge of the altar; these *are* the sons of [x]Zadok, from the sons of Levi, who come near the LORD to minister to Him."

Dimensions of the Inner Court and Vestibule

47 And he measured the court, one hundred cubits long and one hundred cubits wide, foursquare. The altar *was* in front of the temple. 48 Then he brought me to the [y]vestibule of the temple and measured the doorposts of the vestibule, five cubits on this side and five cubits on that side; and the width of the gateway was three cubits on this side and three cubits on that side. 49 [z]The length of the vestibule *was* twenty cubits, and the width eleven cubits; and by the steps which led up to it *there were* [a]pillars by the doorposts, one on this side and another on that side.

Dimensions of the Sanctuary

41 Then he [a]brought me into the [1]sanctuary and measured the doorposts, six cubits wide on one side and six cubits wide on the other side—the width of the tabernacle. 2 The width of the entryway *was* ten cubits, and the side walls of the entrance *were* five cubits on this side and five cubits on the other side; and he measured its length, forty cubits, and its width, twenty cubits.

3 Also he went inside and measured the doorposts, two cubits; and the entrance, six cubits *high;* and the width of the entrance, seven cubits. 4 [b]He measured the length, twenty cubits; and the width, twenty cubits, beyond the sanctuary; and he said to me, "This *is* the Most Holy *Place.*"

The Side Chambers on the Wall

5 Next, he measured the wall of the [2]temple, six cubits. The width of each side chamber all around the temple *was* four cubits on every side. 6 [c]The side chambers *were* in three stories, one above the other, thirty chambers in each story; they rested on [3]ledges which *were* for the side chambers all around, that they might be supported, but [d]not fastened to the wall of the temple. 7 As one went up from story to story, the side chambers [e]became wider all around, because their supporting ledges in the wall of the temple ascended like steps; therefore the width of the structure increased as one went up *from* the lowest *story* to the highest by way of the middle one. 8 I also saw an elevation all around the temple; it was the foundation of the side chambers, [f]a full rod, *that is,* six cubits *high.* 9 The thickness of the outer wall of the side chambers *was* five cubits, and so also the remaining terrace by the place of the side chambers of the [4]temple. 10 And between *it and* the *wall* chambers was a width of twenty cubits all around the temple on every

39 [s]Lev. 4:2, 3 [t]Lev. 5:6; 6:6; 7:1

44 [u]1 Chr. 6:31, 32; 16:41–43; 25:1–7

45 [v]Lev. 8:35; Num. 3:27, 28, 32, 38; 18:5; 1 Chr. 9:23; 2 Chr. 13:11; Ps. 134:1

46 [w]Lev. 6:12, 13; Num. 18:5; Ezek. 44:15 [x]1 Kin. 2:35; Ezek. 43:19; 44:15, 16

48 [y]1 Kin. 6:3; 2 Chr. 3:4

49 [z]1 Kin. 6:3 [a]1 Kin. 7:15–22; 2 Chr. 3:17; Jer. 52:17–23; [Rev. 3:12]

CHAPTER 41

1 [a]Ezek. 40:2, 3, 17 [1]Heb. *heykal;* the main room in the temple, the holy place, Ex. 26:33

4 [b]1 Kin. 6:20; 2 Chr. 3:8

5 [2]Lit. *house*

6 [c]1 Kin. 6:5–10 [d]1 Kin. 6:6, 10 [3]Lit. *the wall*

7 [e]1 Kin. 6:8

8 [f]Ezek. 40:5

9 [4]Lit. *house*

■ **40:46 Zadok.** See 44:15 note.

■ **40:48—41:4** Like Solomon's temple before it, the temple of Ezekiel's vision had three rooms: a vestibule or portico (40:48, 49); an outer sanctuary (41:1, 2); and the inner sanctuary or Most Holy Place (41:3, 4). The temple building was higher than the surrounding courtyard and reached by stairways leading to the portico (40:6 note). The increase in height represented increasing sanctity as one approached the inner room.

■ **40:49 pillars.** The pillars presumably resembled Jachin and Boaz, the pillars that stood outside Solomon's temple (1 Kin. 7:15–22).

■ **41:3 he went inside.** Access to the Most Holy Place was restricted to the high priest on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16; cf. Heb. 9:11–14); the angel could enter this room, but Ezekiel could not.

■ **41:4 twenty cubits.** The Most Holy Place in the tabernacle and in Solomon's temple as well was a cube, equal in length, width, and height (cf. Rev. 21:16).

■ **41:5–12** Rooms were built around the north, west, and south sides of the temple building. Probably they were used to store equipment and the wealth of the temple (cf. 42:13; 1 Kin. 6:5–10). The second and third stories were offset so that each was a cubit wider than the level below.

side. 11 The doors of the side chambers opened on the terrace, one door toward the north and another toward the south; and the width of the terrace *was* five cubits all around.

The Building at the Western End

12 The building that faced the separating courtyard at its western end *was* seventy cubits wide; the wall of the building *was* five cubits thick all around, and its length ninety cubits.

Dimensions and Design of the Temple Area

13 So he measured the temple, one [g]hundred cubits long; and the separating courtyard with the building and its walls *was* one hundred cubits long; 14 also the width of the eastern face of the temple, including the separating courtyard, *was* one hundred cubits. 15 He measured the length of the building behind it, facing the separating courtyard, with its [h]galleries on the one side and on the other side, one hundred cubits, as well as the inner [5]temple and the porches of the court, 16 their doorposts and [i]the beveled window frames. And the galleries all around their three stories opposite the threshold were paneled with [j]wood from the ground to the windows—the windows were covered— 17 from the space above the door, even to the inner [6]room, as well as outside, and on every wall all around, inside and outside, by measure.

18 And *it was* made [k]with cherubim and [l]palm trees, a palm tree between cherub and cherub. *Each* cherub had two faces, 19 [m]so that the face of a man *was* toward a palm tree on one side, and the face of a young lion toward a palm tree on the other side; thus *it was* made throughout the temple all around. 20 From the floor to the space above the door, and on the wall of the sanctuary, cherubim and palm trees *were* carved.

21 The [n]doorposts of the temple *were* square, *as was* the front of the sanctuary; their appearance was similar. 22 [o]The altar *was* of wood, three cubits high, and its length two cubits. Its corners, its length, and its sides *were* of wood; and he said to me, "This *is* [p]the table that *is* [q]before the LORD."

23 [r]The temple and the sanctuary had two doors. 24 The doors had two [s]panels *apiece,* two folding panels: two *panels* for one door and two panels for the other *door.* 25 Cherubim and palm trees *were* carved on the doors of the temple just as they *were* carved on the walls. A wooden canopy *was* on the front of the vestibule outside. 26 *There were* [t]beveled window *frames* and palm trees on one side and on the other, on the sides of the vestibule—also on the side chambers of the temple and on the canopies.

The Chambers for the Priests

42 Then he [a]brought me out into the outer court, by the way toward the [b]north; and he brought me into [c]the chamber which *was* opposite the separating courtyard, and which *was* opposite the building toward the north. 2 Facing the length, *which was* one hundred cubits (the width was fifty cubits), was the north door. 3 Opposite the inner court of twenty *cubits,* and opposite the [d]pavement of the outer court, *was* [e]gallery against gallery in three *stories.* 4 In front of the chambers, toward the inside, *was* a walk ten cubits wide, at a distance of one cubit; and their doors faced north. 5 Now the upper chambers *were* shorter, because the galleries took away *space* from them more than from the lower and middle stories of the building. 6 For they *were* in three *stories* and did not have pillars like the pillars of the courts; therefore *the upper level* was [f]shortened more than the lower and middle levels from the ground up. 7 And a wall which *was* outside ran parallel to the chambers, at the front of the chambers, toward the outer court; its length *was* fifty cubits. 8 The length of the chambers toward the outer court *was* fifty cubits, whereas that facing the temple *was* one [f]hundred cubits. 9 At the lower chambers *was* the entrance on the east side, as one goes into them from the outer court.

10 Also *there were* chambers in the thickness of the wall of the court toward the east, opposite the separating courtyard and opposite the building. 11 [g]*There was* a walk in front of them also, and their appearance *was* like the chambers which *were* toward the north; they *were* as long and as wide as the others, and all their exits and entrances *were* according to plan. 12 And corre-

13 [g]Ezek. 40:47
15 [h]Ezek. 42:3, 5 [5]Or *sanctuary*
16 [i]1 Kin. 6:4; Ezek. 40:16, 25 [j]1 Kin. 6:15
17 [6]Lit. *house;* the Most Holy Place
18 [k]1 Kin. 6:29; 2 Chr. 3:7 [l]2 Chr. 3:5; Ezek. 40:16
19 [m]Ezek. 1:10; 10:14
21 [n]1 Kin. 6:33; Ezek. 40:9, 14, 16; 41:1
22 [o]Ex. 30:1–3; 1 Kin. 6:20; Rev. 8:3 [p]Ex. 25:23, 30; Lev. 24:6; Ezek. 23:41; 44:16; Mal. 1:7, 12 [q]Ex. 30:8
23 [r]1 Kin. 6:31–35
24 [s]1 Kin. 6:34
26 [t]Ezek. 40:16

CHAPTER 42

1 [a]Ezek. 41:1 [b]Ezek. 40:20 [c]Ezek. 41:12, 15
3 [d]Ezek. 40:17 [e]Ezek. 41:15, 16; 42:5
6 [f]Or *narrowed*
8 [f]Ezek. 41:13, 14
11 [g]Ezek. 42:4

■ **41:22 altar.** The table of showbread is described as an altar only here. Ezekiel probably does so because the bread was consumed by priests like part of a sacrificial meal, and because the incense set out with the bread was viewed as a memorial offering (Lev. 24:5–9; 1 Sam. 21:3–6).

■ **42:1–14** These rooms should not be confused with those built on the perimeter of the temple building itself (41:5–12 note). These were along the north and south sides of the wall separating the inner and outer courts.

sponding to the doors of the chambers that *were* facing south, as one enters them, *there was* a door in front of the walk, the way directly in front of the wall toward the east.

13 Then he said to me, "The north chambers *and* the south chambers, which *are* opposite the separating courtyard, *are* the holy chambers where the priests who approach the LORD [h]shall eat the most holy offerings. There they shall lay the most holy offerings—[i]the grain offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering—for the place *is* holy. 14 [j]When the priests enter them, they shall not go out of the holy *chamber* into the outer court; but there they shall leave their garments in which they minister, for they *are* holy. They shall put on other garments; then they may approach *that* which *is* for the people."

Outer Dimensions of the Temple

15 Now when he had finished measuring the inner [2]temple, he brought me out through the gateway that faces toward the [k]east, and measured it all around. 16 He measured the east side with the [3]measuring rod, five hundred rods by the measuring rod all around. 17 He measured the north side, five hundred rods by the measuring rod all around. 18 He measured the south side, five hundred rods by the measuring rod. 19 He came around to the west side *and* measured five hundred rods by the measuring rod all around. 20 He measured it on the four sides; [l]it had a wall all around, [m]five hundred *cubits* long and five hundred wide, to separate the holy areas from the [4]common.

The Temple, the LORD's Dwelling Place

43 Afterward he brought me to the gate, the gate [a]that faces toward the east. 2 [b]And behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east. [c]His voice *was* like the sound of many waters; [d]and the earth shone with His glory. 3 *It was* [e]like the appearance of the vision which I saw—like the vision which I saw when [1]I came [f]to destroy the city. The visions *were* like the vision which I saw [g]by the River Chebar; and I fell on my face. 4 [h]And the glory of the LORD came into the [2]temple by way of the gate which faces toward the east. 5 [i]The Spirit lifted me up and brought me into the inner court; and behold, [j]the glory of the LORD filled the [3]temple.

6 Then I heard *Him* speaking to me from the temple, while [k]a man stood beside me. 7 And He said to me, "Son of man, *this is* [l]the place of My throne and [m]the place of the soles of My feet, [n]where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever. [o]No more shall the house of Israel defile My holy name, they nor their kings, by their [4]harlotry or with [p]the carcasses of their kings on their high places. 8 [q]When they set their threshold by My threshold, and their doorpost by My doorpost, with a wall between them and Me, they defiled My holy name by the abominations which they committed; therefore I have consumed them in My anger. 9 Now let them put their harlotry and the carcasses of their kings far away from Me, and I will dwell in their midst forever.

10 "Son of man, [r]describe the [5]temple to the house of Israel, that they may be ashamed of their iniquities; and let them measure the pattern. 11 And if they are ashamed of all that they have done, make known to them the design of the [6]temple and its arrangement, its exits and its entrances, its entire design and all its [s]ordinances, all its forms and all its laws. Write *it* down in their sight, so that they may keep its whole design and all its ordinances, and [t]perform them. 12 This *is* the law of the [7]temple: The whole area surrounding [u]the mountaintop *is* most holy. Behold, this *is* the law of the temple.

13 [h]Lev. 6:16, 26; 24:9 [i]Lev. 2:3, 10; 6:14, 17, 25

14 [j]Ezek. 44:19

15 [k]Ezek. 40:6; 43:1 [2]Lit. *house*

16 [3]About 10.5 feet, Ezek. 40:5

20 [l]Ezek. 40:5 [m]Ezek. 45:2 [4]Or *profane*

CHAPTER 43

1 [a]Ezek. 10:19; 46:1

2 [b]Ezek. 11:23 [c]Rev. 1:15; 14:2 [d]Rev. 18:1

3 [e]Ezek. 1:4–28 [f]Jer. 1:10 [g]Ezek. 1:28; 3:23 [1]Some Heb. mss., Vg. *He*

4 [h]Ezek. 10:19; 11:23 [2]Lit. *house*

5 [i]Ezek. 3:12, 14; 8:3 [j]1 Kin. 8:10, 11 [3]Lit. *house*

6 [k]Ezek. 1:26; 40:3

7 [l]Ps. 99:1 [m]1 Chr. 28:2 [n]Joel 3:17 [o]Ezek. 39:7 [p]Lev. 26:30 [4]Unfaithful idolatry

8 [q]Ezek. 8:3; 23:39; 44:7

10 [r]Ezek. 40:4 [5]Lit. *house*

11 [s]Ezek. 44:5 [t]Ezek. 11:20 [6]Lit. *house*

12 [u]Ezek. 40:2 [7]Lit. *house*

■ **42:20 wall.** The outer wall separated the sacred precincts from the secular; see note on 40:7.

five hundred cubits. The 500 cubits is the sum of the lengths of the north outer gateway (50), part of the outer court (100), the north inner gateway (50), the inner court (100), the south inner gateway (50), part of the outer court (100), and the south outer gateway (50).

■ **43:1–5** The prophet had an earlier vision of the glory of the Lord departing from the city (10:18–22; 11:22–24); now in his vision he witnesses its return. The glory comes from the east, the direction to which it had departed (11:23). The glory of the Lord had filled the tabernacle and Solomon's temple when they were dedicated (Ex. 40:34, 35; 1 Kin. 8:10, 11; 2 Chr. 5:13, 14; 7:1, 2; cf. Is. 60:1–3). See note on 11:22–24. The temple of the restoration period, built by Zerubbabel, was not built according to Ezekiel's vision; it was smaller than Solomon's temple (Ezra 3:12, 13; Hag. 2:3). Yet Haggai prophesied that the glory of Zerubbabel's temple would exceed that of Solomon's (Hag. 2:7–9), because God's presence would be there.

■ **43:7 throne.** The Jerusalem temple was understood as the place where God had His throne; He was enthroned above the ark in the Most Holy Place (1 Sam. 4:4; 2 Sam. 6:2; 2 Kin. 19:15; 1 Chr. 13:6; Ps. 80:1; 99:1; 132:13, 14; Is. 6:1; 37:16).

■ **43:10 pattern.** The patterns for Israel's past sanctuaries had come from God; so too the plans for the temple in Ezekiel's vision were of divine origin. See note on 40:1—48:35. Like Moses who gave Israel the laws for the tabernacle, Ezekiel saw the promise only from a distance, in a vision (Num. 27:12, 13; Deut. 32:52; 34:4).

■ **43:12 law of the temple.** Ezekiel's temple vision is the only body of ritual law in the Bible not from the mouth of Moses. Like Moses, Ezekiel had received this law on a high mountain (40:2; Ex. 25:9, 40).

Dimensions of the Altar

13 "These are the measurements of the [v]altar in cubits [w](the [g]*cubit is* one cubit and a handbreadth): the base one cubit high and one cubit wide, with a rim all around its edge of one span. This *is* the height of the altar: 14 from the base on the ground to the lower ledge, two cubits; the width of the ledge, one cubit; from the smaller ledge to the larger ledge, four cubits; and the width of the ledge, *one* cubit. 15 The altar hearth *is* four cubits high, with four [x]horns extending upward from the [y]hearth. 16 The altar hearth *is* twelve cubits long, twelve wide, [y]square at its four corners; 17 the ledge, fourteen *cubits* long and fourteen wide on its four sides, with a rim of half a cubit around it; its base, one cubit all around; and [z]its steps face toward the east."

Consecrating the Altar

18 And He said to me, "Son of man, thus says the Lord GOD: 'These *are* the ordinances for the altar on the day when it is made, for sacrificing [a]burnt offerings on it, and for [b]sprinkling blood on it. 19 You shall give [c]a young bull for a sin offering to [d]the priests, the Levites, who are of the seed of [e]Zadok, who approach Me to minister to Me,' says the Lord GOD. 20 You shall take some of its blood and put *it* on the four horns of the altar, on the four corners of the ledge, and on the rim around it; thus you shall cleanse it and make atonement for it. 21 Then you shall also take the bull of the sin offering, and [f]burn it in the appointed place of the [f]temple, [g]outside the sanctuary. 22 On the second day you shall offer a kid of the goats without blemish for a sin offering; and they shall cleanse the altar, as they cleansed *it* with the bull. 23 When you have finished cleansing *it,* you shall offer a young bull without blemish, and a ram from the flock without blemish. 24 When you offer them before the LORD, [h]the priests shall throw salt on them, and they will offer them up *as* a burnt offering to the LORD. 25 Every day for [i]seven days you shall prepare a goat *for* a sin offering; they shall also prepare a young bull and a ram from the flock, both without blemish. 26 Seven days they shall make atonement for the altar and purify it, and so [2]consecrate [3]*it.* 27 [j]When these days are over it shall be, on the eighth day and thereafter, that the priests shall offer your burnt offerings and your peace offerings on the altar; and I will [k]accept you,' says the Lord GOD."

The East Gate and the Prince

44 Then He brought me back to the outer gate of the sanctuary [a]which faces toward the east, but it *was* shut. 2 And the LORD said to me, "This gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter by it, [b]because the LORD God of Israel has entered by it; therefore it shall be shut. 3 *As for* the [c]prince, *because* he *is* the prince, he may sit in it to [d]eat bread before the LORD; he shall enter by way of the vestibule of the gateway, and go out the same way."

Those Admitted to the Temple

4 Also He brought me by way of the north gate to the front of the [f]temple; so I looked, and [e]behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD; [f]and I fell on my face. 5 And the

13 [v]Ex. 27:1–8; 2 Chr. 4:1 [w]Ezek. 41:8 [g]A royal cubit of about 21 inches

15 [x]Ex. 27:2; Lev. 9:9; 1 Kin. 1:50 [y]Heb. *ariel*

16 [y]Ex. 27:1

17 [z]Ex. 20:26

18 [a]Ex. 40:29 [b]Lev. 1:5, 11; [Heb. 9:21, 22]

19 [c]Ex. 29:10; Lev. 8:14; Ezek. 45:18, 19 [d]Ezek. 44:15, 16 [e]1 Kin. 2:35; Ezek. 40:46

21 [f]Ex. 29:14; Lev. 4:12 [g]Heb. 13:11 [f]Lit. *house*

24 [h]Lev. 2:13; Num. 18:19; [Mark 9:49, 50; Col. 4:6]

25 [i]Ex. 29:35; Lev. 8:33

26 [2]Lit. *fill its hands* [3]LXX, Syr. *themselves*

27 [j]Lev. 9:1–4 [k]Ezek. 20:40, 41; [Rom. 12:1; 1 Pet. 2:5]

CHAPTER 44

1 [a]Ezek. 43:1

2 [b]Ezek. 43:2–4

3 [c]Gen. 31:54; Ex. 24:9–11; [1 Cor. 10:18] [d]Ezek. 46:2, 8

4 [e]Is. 6:3; Ezek. 3:23; 43:5 [f]Ezek. 1:28; 43:3 [f]Lit. *house*

■ **43:13 cubits.** See note on 40:5.

altar. The altar was built as a series of platforms, each smaller than the one below, similar to a step-pyramid or ziggurat. The ancient rabbis had many discussions about this altar since its construction contradicted the command that the altar should not have steps (Ex. 20:24–26).

■ **43:18 sprinkling blood.** See Ex. 29:16; Lev. 4:6; 5:9.

■ **43:19 seed of Zadok.** See note on 44:15.

■ **43:21 outside.** See Ex. 29:14; Lev. 4:12, 21; 8:17; 9:11; 16:27. The writer of Hebrews interprets these instructions as an aspect of Christ's offering of Himself (Heb. 13:11–13).

■ **44:1 shut.** The prophet had been in the inner court (43:5), but is now taken to the eastern gate. That gate will remain closed because the glory of the Lord had entered the temple through it (v. 2; 43:4; cf. Ps. 24:7–10). That the gate is closed may also imply that the Lord will never leave the temple again (43:7, 9). The so-called Golden Gate in the eastern wall of the Old City of Jerusalem is walled shut. This gate from the Byzantine period (A.D. 300—650) was restored in the Crusader period (A.D. 1000–1100). It is no doubt positioned above the remains of gates from earlier periods. The gate was walled shut during the Muslim rule of Suleiman the Magnificent in the sixteenth century. Since this part of Ezekiel plays a role in Muslim eschatology, it may have provided a reason for walling up the gate. However, all the gates to the south and east of the temple platform were closed at this time in order to control access to the mosques on the platform above.

■ **44:3 prince.** Since the gate is closed, the gateway becomes a room; in this room the prince will be allowed to eat his portion of sacrificial meals. This provision has never been put into effect for any king of Israel. In Ezekiel's vision it represents the special relationship the promised king would maintain with the temple. See note on 37:24.

■ **44:4–9** While some portions of the Old Testament emphasize restrictions on the participation of foreigners in Israel's worship (Ex. 12:43; Lev. 22:25; Neh. 9:2; Jer. 51:51), other passages anticipate the participation of foreigners (47:22, 23; 1 Kin. 8:41, 43; 2 Chr. 6:32, 33; Is. 56:3, 6; cf. Zech. 14:21; Eph. 2:12, 19). Similar restrictions on foreigners characterize other writings from the period after the Babylonian exile (Ezra 4:1–3; 10:10–44; Neh. 13:1–9; Hag. 2:14). In the New Testament period there was a written warning at the entrance to the temple prohibiting Gentiles from entering the temple on pain of death (cf. Acts 21:26–30). In the New Israel of the new covenant, the church, all such distinctions between Jew and Gentile have been removed. Part of Christ's purpose was to destroy these barriers (Matt. 10:18; Luke 2:32; Acts 9:15; 10:28, 45; 11:1, 18; 13:46–48; Rom. 1:5, 16; 2:10; 3:29; 10:12; 15:16; Gal. 3:8, 28; Eph. 2:11–18; 3:6).

LORD said to me, [a]"Son of man, [2]mark well, see with your eyes and hear with your ears, all that I say to you concerning all the [h]ordinances of the house of the LORD and all its laws. Mark well who may enter the house and all who go out from the sanctuary.

6 "Now say to the [i]rebellious, to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "O house of Israel, [j]let Us have no more of all your abominations. 7 [k]When you brought in [l]foreigners, [m]uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in My sanctuary to defile it—My house—and when you offered [n]My food, [o]the fat and the blood, then they broke My covenant because of all your abominations. 8 And you have not [p]kept charge of My holy things, but you have set *others* to keep charge of My sanctuary for you." 9 Thus says the Lord GOD: [q]"No foreigner, uncircumcised in heart or uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter My sanctuary, including any foreigner who *is* among the children of Israel.

Laws Governing Priests

10 [r]"And the Levites who went far from Me, when Israel went astray, who strayed away from Me after their idols, they shall bear their iniquity. 11 Yet they shall be ministers in My sanctuary, [s]*as* gatekeepers of the house and ministers of the house; [t]they shall slay the burnt offering and the sacrifice for the people, and [u]they shall stand before them to minister to them. 12 Because they ministered to them before their idols and [v]caused[3] the house of Israel to fall into iniquity, therefore I have [w]raised My hand in an oath against them," says the Lord GOD, "that they shall bear their iniquity. 13 [x]And they shall not come near Me to minister to Me as priest, nor come near any of My holy things, nor into the Most Holy *Place;* but they shall [y]bear their shame and their abominations which they have committed. 14 Nevertheless I will make them [z]keep charge of the temple, for all its work, and for all that has to be done in it.

15 [a]"But the priests, the Levites, [b]the sons of Zadok, who kept charge of My sanctuary [c]when the children of Israel went astray from Me, they shall come near Me to minister to Me; and they [d]shall stand before Me to offer to Me the [e]fat and the blood," says the Lord GOD. 16 "They shall [f]enter My sanctuary, and they shall come near [g]My table to minister to Me, and they shall keep My charge. 17 And it shall be, whenever they enter the gates of the inner court, that [h]they shall put on linen garments; no wool shall come upon them while they minister within the gates of the inner court or within the house. 18 [i]They shall have linen turbans on their heads and linen trousers on their bodies; they shall not clothe themselves with *anything that causes* sweat. 19 When they go out to the outer court, to the *outer* court to the people, [j]they shall take off their garments in which they have ministered, leave them in the holy chambers, and put on other garments; and in their holy garments they shall [k]not sanctify the people.

20 [l]"They shall neither shave their heads, nor let their hair grow [m]long, but they shall keep their hair well trimmed. 21 [n]No priest shall drink wine when he enters the inner court. 22 They shall not take as wife a [o]widow or a divorced woman, but take virgins of the descendants of the house of Israel, or widows of priests.

23 "And [p]they shall teach My people *the difference* between the holy and the unholy, and cause them to [q]discern between the unclean and the clean. 24 [r]In controversy they shall stand as judges, *and* judge it according to My judgments. They shall keep My laws and My statutes in all My appointed meetings, [s]and they shall hallow My Sabbaths.

25 "They shall not defile *themselves* by coming near a dead person. Only for father or mother, for son or daughter, for brother or unmarried sister may they defile themselves. 26 [t]After he is cleansed, they shall count seven days for him. 27 And on the day that he goes to the sanctuary to minister in the sanctuary, [u]he must offer his sin offering [v]in the inner court," says the Lord GOD.

28 "It shall be, in regard to their inheritance, *that* I [w]*am* their inheritance. You shall give them no [x]possession in Israel, for I *am* their possession. 29 [y]They shall eat the grain offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering; [z]every dedicated thing in Israel shall be theirs. 30 The [a]best[4]

5 [g]Ezek. 40:4 [h]Ezek. 43:10, 11 [2]Lit. *set your heart*

6 [i]Ezek. 2:5 [j]1 Pet. 4:3

7 [k]Acts 21:28 [l]Lev. 22:25 [m]Lev. 26:41 [n]Lev. 21:17 [o]Lev. 3:16

8 [p]Lev. 22:2

9 [q]Ezek. 44:7

10 [r]2 Kin. 23:8

11 [s]1 Chr. 26:1–19 [t]2 Chr. 29:34; 30:17 [u]Num. 16:9

12 [v]Is. 9:16 [w]Ps. 106:26 [3]Lit. *became a stumbling block of iniquity to the house of Israel*

13 [x]2 Kin. 23:9 [y]Ezek. 32:30

14 [z]Num. 18:4

15 [a]Ezek. 40:46 [b][1 Sam. 2:35] [c]Ezek. 44:10 [d]Deut. 10:8 [e]Ezek. 44:7

16 [f]Num. 18:5, 7, 8 [g]Ezek. 41:22

17 [h]Ex. 28:39–43; 39:27–29

18 [i]Ex. 28:40; 39:28

19 [j]Ezek. 42:14 [k]Lev. 6:27

20 [l]Lev. 21:5 [m]Num. 6:5

21 [n]Lev. 10:9

22 [o]Lev. 21:7, 13, 14

23 [p]Mal. 2:6–8 [q]Lev. 20:25

24 [r]Deut. 17:8, 9 [s]Ezek. 22:26

26 [t]Num. 6:10; 19:11, 13–19

27 [u]Lev. 5:3, 6 [v]Ezek. 44:17

28 [w]Num. 18:20 [x]Ezek. 45:4

29 [y]Lev. 7:6 [z]Lev. 27:21, 28

30 [a]Num. 3:13; 18:12 [4]Lit. *first*

■ **44:10–14** Though foreigners had served in the temple in the past (Josh. 9:3, 6, 21), they will no longer be allowed to enter. The tasks they had performed belonged to the Levites (Num. 1:50–53; 3:6, 8, 28–32; 1 Chr. 23:24–32; 2 Chr. 8:14, 15). Priestly families that had engaged in idolatry before the Babylonian exile (8:6) will now join their fellow Levites in the more menial tasks of the temple and as assistants to the priests. The priesthood itself will be restricted to the line of Zadok (v. 15; 40:45, 46).

■ **44:15 Zadok.** Zadok had served as high priest alongside Abiathar during the reign of David (2 Sam. 15:24–29; 20:25). Abiathar was dismissed because he had supported Adonijah against Solomon (1 Kin. 1:7; 2:26), but Zadok had supported Solomon and became the only high priest. The priesthood had earlier been restricted among the Levites to the descendants of Aaron (Ex. 28:1; Lev. 8:2–7; 9:1–24; Num. 20:25–28; 1 Chr. 6:48–53), and Ezekiel foresees a further restriction to one family from Aaron.

■ **44:24 judges.** For the judicial role of the priests, see 1 Chr. 26:29; 2 Chr. 19:8–11.

■ **44:25 dead person.** Contact with death made a person unclean; priests, and especially the high priest, had to avoid such contact (Lev. 21:1–12).

of all firstfruits of any kind, and every sacrifice of any kind from all your sacrifices, shall be the priest's; also you [b]shall give to the priest the first of your ground meal, [c]to cause a blessing to rest on your house. 31 The priests shall not eat anything, bird or beast, that [d]died naturally or was torn *by wild beasts.*

The Holy District

45 "Moreover, when you [a]divide the land by lot into inheritance, you shall [b]set apart a district for the LORD, a holy section of the land; its length *shall be* twenty-five thousand *cubits,* and the width ten thousand. It *shall be* holy throughout its territory all around. 2 Of this there shall be a square plot for the sanctuary, [c]five hundred by five hundred *rods,* with fifty cubits around it for an open space. 3 So this is the district you shall measure: twenty-five thousand *cubits* long and ten thousand wide; [d]in it shall be the sanctuary, the Most Holy *Place.* 4 It shall be [e]a holy *section* of the land, belonging to the priests, the ministers of the sanctuary, who come near to minister to the LORD; it shall be a place for their houses and a holy place for the sanctuary. 5 [f]*An area* twenty-five thousand *cubits* long and ten thousand wide shall belong to the Levites, the ministers of the [1]temple; they shall have [g]twenty[2] chambers as a possession.

Properties of the City and the Prince

6 [h]"You shall appoint as the property of the city *an area* five thousand *cubits* wide and twenty-five thousand long, adjacent to the district of the holy *section;* it shall belong to the whole house of Israel.

7 [i]"The prince shall have *a section* on one side and the other of the holy district and the city's property; and bordering on the holy district and the city's property, extending westward on the west side and eastward on the east side, the length *shall be* side by side with one of the *tribal* portions, from the west border to the east border. 8 The land shall be his possession in Israel; and [j]My princes shall no more oppress My people, but they shall give *the rest of* the land to the house of Israel, according to their tribes."

Laws Governing the Prince

9 Thus says the Lord GOD: [k]"Enough, O princes of Israel! [l]Remove violence and plundering, execute justice and righteousness, and stop dispossessing My people," says the Lord GOD. 10 "You shall have [m]honest scales, an honest ephah, and an honest bath. 11 The ephah and the bath shall be of the same measure, so that the bath contains one-tenth of a homer, and the ephah one-tenth of a homer; their measure shall be according to the homer. 12 The [n]shekel *shall be* twenty gerahs; twenty shekels, twenty-five shekels, *and* fifteen shekels shall be your mina.

13 "This *is* the offering which you shall offer: you shall give one-sixth of an ephah from a homer of wheat, and one-sixth of an ephah from a homer of barley. 14 The ordinance concerning oil, the bath of oil, *is* one-tenth of a bath from a kor. A kor *is* a homer or ten baths, for ten baths *are* a homer. 15 And one lamb shall be given from a flock of two hundred, from the rich pastures of Israel. These shall be for grain offerings, burnt offerings, and peace offerings, [o]to make atonement for them," says the Lord GOD. 16 "All the people of the land shall give this offering for the prince in Israel. 17 Then it shall be the [p]prince's part *to give* burnt offerings, grain offerings, and drink offerings, at the feasts, the New Moons, the Sabbaths, and at all the appointed seasons of the house of Israel. He shall prepare the sin offering, the grain offering, the burnt offering, and the peace offerings to make atonement for the house of Israel."

30 [b]Num. 15:20; Neh. 10:37 [c]Prov. 3:9; [Mal. 3:10]

31 [d]Ex. 22:31; Lev. 22:8; Deut. 14:21; Ezek. 4:14

CHAPTER 45

1 [a]Num. 26:52–56; Ezek. 47:22 [b]Ezek. 48:8, 9

2 [c]Ezek. 42:20

3 [d]Ezek. 48:10

4 [e]Ezek. 48:10, 11

5 [f]Ezek. 48:13 [g]Ezek. 40:17 [1]Lit. *house* [2]So with MT, Tg., Vg.; LXX *a possession, cities of dwelling*

6 [h]Ezek. 48:15

7 [i]Ezek. 48:21

8 [j][Is. 11:3–5]; Jer. 22:17; Ezek. 22:27

9 [k]Ezek. 44:6 [l]Jer. 22:3; Zech. 8:16

10 [m]Lev. 19:36; Deut. 25:15; Prov. 16:11; Amos 8:4–6; Mic. 6:10, 11

12 [n]Ex. 30:13; Lev. 27:25; Num. 3:47

15 [o]Lev. 1:4; 6:30

17 [p]Ezek. 46:4–12

■ **44:31 eat.** The prohibition against eating meat of an animal found dead applied to all Israel (Lev. 11:39, 40; Deut. 14:21).

■ **45:1–8** The allocation of the land will be taken up in greater detail in ch. 47. The concern here is the sacred precincts. Ezekiel describes a sacred area in the middle of the land, a square about 8 miles (25,000 cubits) on a side, further subdivided into three strips of land (cf. Rev. 21:16). The northern zone (about 25 square miles) was set aside for the use of the Levites. The center zone contained the sanctuary and was set apart for the priests. The southern zone, about half the size of the other two, was given to the city itself. The area east and west of the 8-mile square was given to the prince, while the area north and south will be divided among the other tribes. Interestingly, in Ezekiel's vision the temple itself was outside the city proper.

■ **45:10 honest.** Apparently the use of false weights and balances was common (Lev. 19:35, 36; Deut. 25:13–16; Prov. 11:1; Amos 8:5; Mic. 6:10–12).

ephah . . . bath. The ephah was a dry measure of about five gallons. The bath was a liquid measure of about six gallons.

■ **45:11 homer.** Ten baths or ephahs made a homer, or about fifty gallons.

■ **45:12 shekel . . . mina.** A shekel was about two-fifths of an ounce; a mina of sixty shekels would be about a pound and a half. The mina was normally fifty shekels.

■ **45:17 prince's part.** Israel's princes were also responsible to make offerings on behalf of the people (vv. 13–17). The people would give offerings in kind to the prince, who in turn provided them to the sanctuary (cf. 2 Chr. 30:24). See notes on 37:24; 44:3.

Keeping the Feasts

18 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "In the first *month,* on the first *day* of the month, you shall take a young bull without blemish and [q]cleanse the sanctuary. 19 [r]The priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering and put *it* on the doorposts of the [3]temple, on the four corners of the ledge of the altar, and on the gateposts of the gate of the inner court. 20 And so you shall do on the seventh *day* of the month [s]for everyone who has sinned unintentionally or in ignorance. Thus you shall make atonement for the temple.

21 [t]"In the first *month,* on the fourteenth day of the month, you shall observe the Passover, a feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten. 22 And on that day the prince shall prepare for himself and for all the people of the land [u]a bull *for* a sin offering. 23 On the [v]seven days of the feast he shall prepare a burnt offering to the LORD, seven bulls and seven rams without blemish, daily for seven days, [w]and a kid of the goats daily *for* a sin offering. 24 [x]And he shall prepare a grain offering of one ephah for each bull and one ephah for each ram, together with a hin of oil for each ephah.

25 "In the seventh *month,* on the fifteenth day of the month, at the [y]feast, he shall do likewise for seven days, according to the sin offering, the burnt offering, the grain offering, and the oil."

The Manner of Worship

46 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "The gateway of the inner court that faces toward the east shall be shut the six [a]working days; but on the Sabbath it shall be opened, and on the day of the New Moon it shall be opened. 2 [b]The prince shall enter by way of the vestibule of the gateway from the outside, and stand by the gatepost. The priests shall prepare his burnt offering and his peace offerings. He shall worship at the threshold of the gate. Then he shall go out, but the gate shall not be shut until evening. 3 Likewise the people of the land shall worship at the entrance to this gateway before the LORD on the Sabbaths and the New Moons. 4 The burnt offering that [c]the prince offers to the LORD on the [d]Sabbath day *shall be* six lambs without blemish, and a ram without blemish; 5 [e]and the grain offering *shall be one* ephah for a ram, and the grain offering for the lambs, [1]as much as he wants to give, as well as a hin of oil with every ephah. 6 On the day of the New Moon *it shall be* a young bull without blemish, six lambs, and a ram; they shall be without blemish. 7 He shall prepare a grain offering of an ephah for a bull, an ephah for a ram, [2]as much as he wants to give for the lambs, and a hin of oil with every ephah. 8 [f]When the prince enters, he shall go in by way of the vestibule of the gateway, and go out the same way.

9 "But when the people of the land [g]come before the LORD on the appointed feast days, whoever enters by way of the north [h]gate to worship shall go out by way of the south gate; and whoever enters by way of the south gate shall go out by way of the north gate. He shall not return by way of the gate through which he came, but shall go out through the opposite gate. 10 The prince shall then be in their midst. When they go in, he shall go in; and when they go out, he shall go out. 11 At the festivals and the appointed feast days [i]the grain offering shall be an ephah for a bull, an ephah for a ram, as much as he wants to give for the lambs, and a hin of oil with every ephah.

12 "Now when the prince makes a voluntary burnt offering or voluntary peace offering to the LORD, the gate that faces toward the east [j]shall then be opened for him; and he shall prepare his burnt offering and his peace offerings as he did on the Sabbath day. Then he shall go out, and after he goes out the gate shall be shut.

13 [k]"You shall daily make a burnt offering to the LORD *of* a lamb of the first year without blemish; you shall prepare it [3]every morning. 14 And you shall prepare a grain offering with it

18 [q]Lev. 16:16, 33; Ezek. 43:22, 26

19 [r]Lev. 16:18–20; Ezek. 43:20 [3]Lit. *house*

20 [s]Lev. 4:27; Ps. 19:12

21 [t]Ex. 12:18; Lev. 23:5, 6; Num. 9:2, 3; 28:16, 17; Deut. 16:1

22 [u]Lev. 4:14

23 [v]Lev. 23:8 [w]Num. 28:15, 22, 30; 29:5, 11, 16, 19

24 [x]Num. 28:12–15; Ezek. 46:5, 7

25 [y]Lev. 23:34; Num. 29:12; Deut. 16:13; 2 Chr. 5:3; 7:8, 10

CHAPTER 46

1 [a]Ex. 20:9

2 [b]Ezek. 44:3

4 [c]Ezek. 45:17 [d]Num. 28:9, 10

5 [e]Num. 28:12; Ezek. 45:24; 46:7, 11 [1]Lit. *the gift of his hand*

7 [2]Lit. *as much as his hand can reach*

8 [f]Ezek. 44:3; 46:2

9 [g]Ex. 23:14–17; 34:23; Deut. 16:16, 17; Ps. 84:7; Mic. 6:6 [h]Ezek. 48:31, 33

11 [i]Ezek. 46:5, 7

12 [j]Ezek. 44:3; 46:1, 2, 8

13 [k]Ex. 29:38; Num. 28:3–5 [3]Lit. *morning by morning*

■ **45:18–25** These regulations cover aspects of the ceremonial observances in the first month (New Year's Day, vv. 18–20) and seventh month (Passover, vv. 21–24, and Tabernacles, v. 25). This legislation may have represented modifications of earlier liturgical practice. Once again, like Moses, Ezekiel provides religious and ceremonial law to Israel (see notes on 43:10, 12).

■ **45:19 altar.** Compare the consecration of the altar in Ex. 29:35–37.

■ **45:24 hin.** A liquid measure of about one gallon.

■ **46:2 prince.** The prince will be allowed to enter as far as the inner threshold of the eastern gate into the inner courtyard on festival days; on other days he will enter and leave with the ordinary people (vv. 9, 10) unless he is making a freewill offering (v. 12). The prince has special privileges with reference to the eastern gate in the outer courtyard (44:1 note; 44:3 note). From his vantage point at the threshold of the inner gate, the prince will have a full view of the inner courtyard and the great altar; but entry to the inner court is restricted to priests and Levites.

■ **46:4 burnt offering.** The specifications for this offering differ from the Sabbath offerings in Num. 28:9, where two lambs and no ram are required.

■ **46:6 day of the New Moon.** The first day of the month. The specifications again differ from earlier legislation (Num. 28:11).

■ **46:13 daily.** Whereas most of the preceding regulations concerned offerings on particular days of the Old Testament liturgical calendar, God was to be worshiped in Israel every day (vv. 13–15). The provisions for these daily offerings differ from earlier practice (Num. 28:3–8; 2 Kin. 16:15; 1 Chr. 16:40; 2 Chr. 13:11; 31:3).

15 [f]Ex. 29:42; Num. 28:6
17 [m]Lev. 25:10
18 [n]Ezek. 45:8
19 [o]Ezek. 42:13
20 [p]2 Chr. 35:13 [q]Lev. 2:4, 5, 7 [r]Ezek. 44:19
23 [4]Lit. *boiling places*
24 [s]Ezek. 46:20 [5]Lit. *house of those who boil* [6]Lit. *house*

every morning, a sixth of an ephah, and a third of a hin of oil to moisten the fine flour. This grain offering is a perpetual ordinance, to be made regularly to the LORD. 15 Thus they shall prepare the lamb, the grain offering, and the oil, *as* a [f]regular burnt offering every morning."

The Prince and Inheritance Laws

16 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "If the prince gives a gift *of some* of his inheritance to any of his sons, it shall belong to his sons; it is their possession by inheritance. 17 But if he gives a gift of some of his inheritance to one of his servants, it shall be his until [m]the year of liberty, after which it shall return to the prince. But his inheritance shall belong to his sons; it shall become theirs. 18 Moreover [n]the prince shall not take any of the people's inheritance by evicting them from their property; he shall provide an inheritance for his sons from his own property, so that none of My people may be scattered from his property." ' "

How the Offerings Were Prepared

19 Now he brought me through the entrance, which *was* at the side of the gate, into the holy [o]chambers of the priests which face toward the north; and there a place *was* situated at their extreme western end. 20 And he said to me, "This *is* the place where the priests shall [p]boil the trespass offering and the sin offering, *and* where they shall [q]bake the grain offering, so that they do not bring *them* out into the outer court [r]to sanctify the people."

21 Then he brought me out into the outer court and caused me to pass by the four corners of the court; and in fact, in every corner of the court *there was another* court. 22 In the four corners of the court *were* enclosed courts, forty *cubits* long and thirty wide; all four corners *were* the same size. 23 *There was* a row *of building stones* all around in them, all around the four of them; and [4]cooking hearths were made under the rows of stones all around. 24 And he said to me, "These *are* the [5]kitchens where the ministers of the [6]temple shall [s]boil the sacrifices of the people."

The Healing Waters and Trees

47 Then he brought me back to the door of the [f]temple; and there was [a]water, flowing from under the threshold of the temple toward the east, for the front of the temple faced east; the water was flowing from under the right side of the temple, south of the altar. 2 He brought me out by way of the north gate, and led me around on the outside to the outer gateway that faces [b]east; and there was water, running out on the right side.

3 And when [c]the man went out to the east with the line in his hand, he measured one thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the water *came up to my* ankles. 4 Again he measured one thousand and brought me through the waters; the water *came up to my* knees. Again he measured one thousand and brought me through; the water *came up to my* waist. 5 Again he measured one thousand, *and it was* a river that I could not cross; for the water was too deep, water in which one must swim, a river that could not be crossed. 6 He said to me, "Son of man, have you seen *this?*" Then he brought me and returned me to the bank of the river.

7 When I returned, there, along the bank of the river, *were* very many [d]trees on one side and

CHAPTER 47

1 [a]Ps. 46:4; Is. 30:25; 55:1; [Jer. 2:13]; Joel 3:18; Zech. 13:1; 14:8; [Rev. 22:1, 17] [7]Lit. *house*
2 [b]Ezek. 44:1, 2
3 [c]Ezek. 40:3
7 [d][Is. 60:13, 21; 61:3; Ezek. 47:12; Rev. 22:2]

■ **46:16–18** In redeeming Israel from Egypt and later Babylon, God removed them from the place of bondage, but also secured for them an inheritance in their own land. The land was supposed to be inalienable (Lev. 25:14–17, 23, 24; 1 Kin. 21), representing the permanence of the redemption and inheritance that God had provided (1 Pet. 1:4).

■ **46:16 sons.** Ezekiel envisaged the restoration of Davidic rule. See notes on 37:24; 44:3.

■ **46:17 year of liberty.** This is most likely a reference to the Year of Jubilee (Lev. 25:8–17; 27:24; Is. 61:1, 2).

■ **46:20 bake.** Old Testament worship combined sacrifice and prayer with eating and social activity. These regulations specify the places where the Levites would prepare offerings for the sacrificial meals that are eaten by worshipers.

■ **47:1, 2** The courtyard of the tabernacle had a large basin or laver where the priests washed (Ex. 30:17–21). In Solomon's temple there was a much larger Sea (1 Kin. 7:23–26). This Sea too was used for ritual washing (2 Chr. 4:6), but in addition it symbolized the primeval ocean, no longer as a menacing symbol of chaos (28:2 note), but subjected by God to the service of His temple. In Ezekiel's temple vision, these earlier basins are replaced by a life-giving river (Rev. 21:1; 22:1, 2). The tabernacle laver and the temple Sea stood south of the altar in the sanctuary courtyard; the river too originates from south of the altar. This passage should be compared with others that speak of a river in the city of God (Ps. 46:4), or describe the eruption of a stream in the city (Joel 3:18; Zech. 14:3–8). Since the temple in part symbolized paradise, Ezekiel's river recalls the rivers issuing from the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:10–14).

■ **47:3–12** The river brings life everywhere it goes, transforming Israel into a paradisal garden. Jerusalem is built on a geological watershed on top of a ridge of hills. Rain falling there flows into the Kidron Valley and makes its way into the Dead Sea. Jesus appealed to the images used in this passage to describe Himself. He told the Samaritan woman that He was the source of life-giving water (John 4:10–14). When the disciples were surprised that Jesus was talking with a Samaritan woman, He spoke to them of an unending harvest that had already begun (John 4:27–38), in effect drawing on Ezekiel's picture of trees bearing twelve crops a year. John also records Jesus' saying that He is the source of streams of living water, adding the comment that Jesus was speaking of God's Spirit (John 7:37–39).

the other. 8 Then he said to me: "This water flows toward the eastern region, goes down into the [2]valley, and enters the sea. *When it* reaches the sea, *its* waters are healed. 9 And it shall be *that* every living thing that moves, wherever [3]the rivers go, will live. There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everything will live wherever the river goes. 10 It shall be *that* fishermen will stand by it from En Gedi to En Eglaim; they will be *places* for spreading their nets. Their fish will be of the same kinds as the fish [e]of the Great Sea, exceedingly many. 11 But its swamps and marshes will not be healed; they will be given over to salt. 12 [f]Along the bank of the river, on this side and that, will grow all *kinds of* trees used for food; [g]their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit *every month, because their water flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their* leaves for [h]medicine."[4]

Borders of the Land

13 Thus says the Lord GOD: "These *are* the [i]borders by which you shall divide the land as an inheritance among the twelve tribes of Israel. [j]Joseph *shall have two* portions. 14 You shall inherit it equally with one another; for I [k]raised My hand in an oath to give it to your fathers, and this land shall [l]fall to you as your inheritance.

15 "This *shall be* the border of the land on the north: from the Great Sea, *by* [m]the road to Hethlon, as one goes to [n]Zedad, 16 [o]Hamath, [p]Berothah, Sibraim (which *is* between the border of Damascus and the border of Hamath), to Hazar Hatticon (which *is* on the border of Hauran). 17 Thus the boundary shall be from the Sea to [q]Hazar Enan, the border of Damascus; and as for the north, northward, it is the border of Hamath. *This is* the north side.

18 "On the east side you shall mark out the border from between Hauran and Damascus, and between Gilead and the land of Israel, along the Jordan, and along the eastern side of the sea. *This is* the east side.

19 "The south side, toward the [5]South, *shall be* from Tamar to [r]the waters of [6]Meribah by Kadesh, along the brook to the Great Sea. *This is* the south side, toward the South.

20 "The west side *shall be* the Great Sea, from the *southern* boundary until one comes to a point opposite Hamath. This *is* the west side.

21 "Thus you shall [s]divide this land among yourselves according to the tribes of Israel. 22 It shall be that you will divide it by [t]lot as an inheritance for yourselves, [u]and for the strangers who dwell among you and who bear children among you. [v]They shall be to you as native-born among the children of Israel; they shall have an inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel. 23 And it shall be *that* in whatever tribe the stranger dwells, there you shall give *him* his inheritance," says the Lord GOD.

Division of the Land

48 "Now these *are* the names of the tribes: [a]From the northern border along the road to Hethlon at the entrance of Hamath, to Hazar Enan, the border of Damascus northward,

8 [2]Or *Arabah*, the Jordan Valley

9 [3]Lit. *two rivers*

10 [e]Num. 34:3; Josh. 23:4; Ezek. 48:28

12 [f]Ezek. 47:7; [Rev. 22:2] [g]Job 18:16; [Ps. 1:3; Jer. 17:8] [h][Rev. 22:2] [4]Or *healing*

13 [i]Num. 34:1–29 [j]Gen. 48:5; 1 Chr. 5:1; Ezek. 48:4, 5

14 [k]Gen. 12:7; 13:15; 15:7; 17:8; 26:3; 28:13; Deut. 1:8; Ezek. 20:5, 6, 28, 42 [l]Ezek. 48:29

15 [m]Ezek. 48:1 [n]Num. 34:7, 8

16 [o]Num. 34:8 [p]2 Sam. 8:8

17 [q]Num. 34:9; Ezek. 48:1

19 [r]Num. 20:13; Deut. 32:51; Ps. 81:7; Ezek. 48:28 [5]Heb. *Negev* [6]Lit. *Strife*

21 [s]Ezek. 45:1

22 [t]Num. 26:55, 56 [u][Eph. 3:6; Rev. 7:9, 10] [v][Acts 11:18; 15:9; Gal. 3:28; Eph. 2:12–14; Col. 3:11]

CHAPTER 48

1 [a]Ezek. 47:15

■ **47:10 En Gedi.** On the western shore of the Dead Sea (Josh. 15:62; 1 Sam. 23:29; 2 Chr. 20:2).

En Eglaim. Near the northwest corner of the Dead Sea.

■ **47:11 swamps and marshes.** That the swamps and marshes would be left for salt may show familiarity with the tradition that the shallow southern reaches of the Dead Sea were the sites of the ancient cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:27–29).

■ **47:13 Joseph shall have two portions.** In Ezekiel's vision the land would be divided equally among the twelve tribes. Since the tribe of Levi received its territorial inheritance inside the sacred precincts of Jerusalem (45:1–8 note), the number twelve was maintained by substituting for Joseph the two sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh (Gen. 48:1–6).

■ **47:14 your inheritance.** This is the land God promised to the patriarchs (Gen. 12:7; 15:18–21; 22:17; 28:4), and that was possessed during the reigns of David and Solomon (1 Kin. 8:65; 1 Chr. 13:5; 2 Chr. 9:26).

■ **47:15 border.** The boundaries detailed here (vv. 15–20) mention a number of sites that are not known, but they roughly correspond to other such lists (Num. 34:1–12; 1 Kin. 8:65). However, the allocation of the land (ch. 48) is quite different from the historical boundaries of the tribes. The eastern and western boundaries are easy to identify: on the east, the boundary began in the headwaters of the Jordan south of Damascus, down the Jordan River, and along the western shore of the Dead Sea; on the west, the border was the Mediterranean Sea. The northern and southern borders are more difficult to establish: in the north, the line began near Tyre and proceeded east to a point north of the Sea of Galilee; in the south, it ran from a point below the Dead Sea to the Brook of Egypt (the Wadi el-Arish) on the Mediterranean coast.

■ **48:1–29** In Ezekiel's vision the allotment of the land among the tribes is different from what it was historically. Each tribe is allotted a horizontal strip of land connecting with the eastern and western borders. The status of Jacob's wives and of the individual tribes seem to be the determining factors in the arrangement of the tribes; cf. Num. 2; 3. The northernmost tribes (Dan, Asher, and Naphtali) were traditionally located in the north; the southernmost tribe (Gad, v. 27) was historically a northern tribe. These four tribes are the sons of Leah's servant Zilpah and Rachel's servant Bilhah (Gen. 30:3–8, 10–13); as such they are located at the outer extremities of the tribal allotments in Ezekiel's vision.

Judah is the closest tribe north of the sacred area in the center of the land (vv. 8–22; 45:1–8). Judah was historically a southern tribe; by presenting the tribe of David as part of the northern tribes, Ezekiel may be saying in effect that the North will "have a share in David" (2 Sam. 20:1; 1 Kin. 12:16; 2 Chr. 10:16). Judah is in the place of honor that would have belonged to the firstborn Reuben; Reuben is immediately north of

1 [b]Josh. 19:40–48
2 [c]Josh. 19:24–31
3 [d]Josh. 19:32–39
4 [e]Josh. 13:29–31; 17:1–11, 17, 18
5 [f]Josh. 16:5–10; 17:8–10, 14–18
6 [g]Josh. 13:15–23
7 [h]Josh. 15:1–63; 19:9

in the direction of Hamath, *there shall be* one *section for* [b]Dan from its east to its west side; [2] by the border of Dan, from the east side to the west, one *section for* [c]Asher; [3] by the border of Asher, from the east side to the west, one *section for* [d]Naphtali; [4] by the border of Naphtali, from the east side to the west, one *section for* [e]Manasseh; [5] by the border of Manasseh, from the east side to the west, one *section for* [f]Ephraim; [6] by the border of Ephraim, from the east side to the west, one *section for* [g]Reuben; [7] by the border of Reuben, from the east side to the west, one *section for* [h]Judah; [8] by the border of Judah, from the east side to the west, shall be [i]the district which you shall set apart, twenty-five thousand *cubits* in width, and *in* length the same as one of the *other* portions, from the east side to the west, with the [j]sanctuary in the center.

8 [i]Ezek. 45:1–6 [j][Is. 12:6; 33:20–22]

Judah. Next are the two tribes of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, descendants of Jacob through the favored wife Rachel.

The nearest tribe south of the sacred area is Benjamin. Its favored place reflects the favored status of Rachel and balances the favored position of the Joseph tribes in the north. The remaining three southern tribes (Simeon, Issachar, and Zebulun) are the descendants of Leah; Issachar, Zebulun, and Benjamin historically held allotments in the north.

■ **48:8–22** This description is an elaboration of 45:1–8.

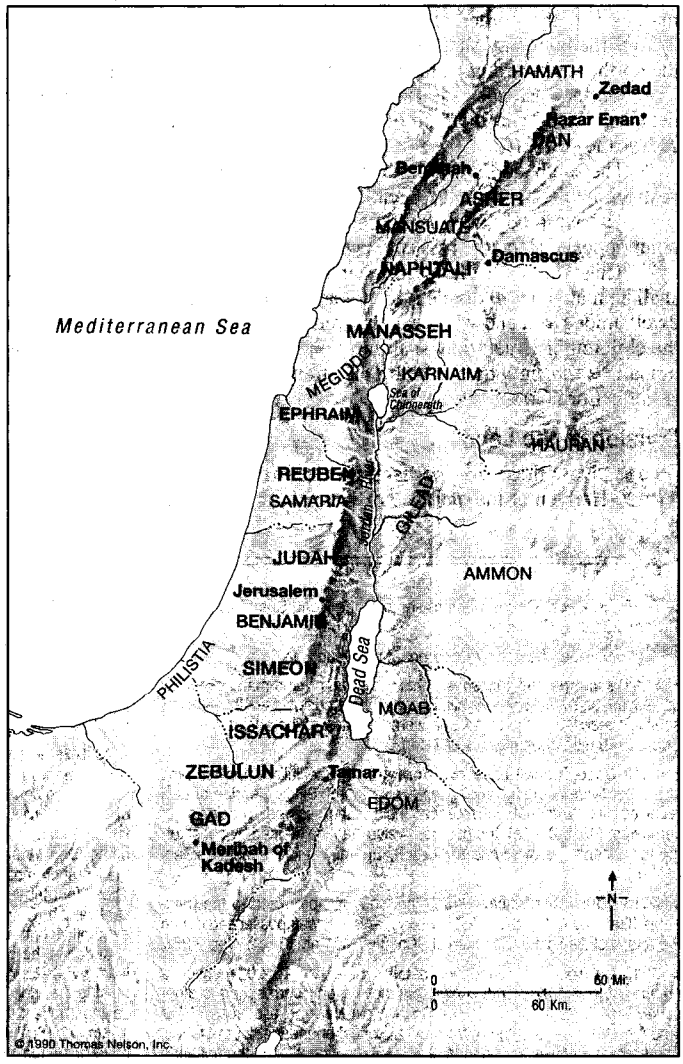
Ezekiel's Vision of the Restoration of the Land. The boundaries of the restored nation of Israel approach the boundaries of the land as it was under David and Solomon. However, the area east of the Jordan—Gilead and Transjordan—will not be a part of this new inheritance. It was not part of the land that had been promised.

The tribes are not arranged as they were historically when the land was divided under Joshua (Josh. 13—19). God will do something new in the restoration.

The central portion of the land around Jerusalem will be set apart for religion and government.

To the north of the central district are seven tribes—Dan, Asher, Naphtali, Manasseh, Ephraim, Reuben, Judah.

To the south are the remaining five tribes—Benjamin, Simeon, Issachar, Zebulun, Gad.



9 "The district that you shall set apart for the LORD *shall be* twenty-five thousand *cubits* in length and ten thousand in width. 10 To these—to the priests—the holy district shall belong: on the north twenty-five thousand *cubits in length,* on the west ten thousand in width, on the east ten thousand in width, and on the south twenty-five thousand in length. The sanctuary of the LORD shall be in the center. 11 [k]*It shall be* for the priests of the sons of Zadok, who are sanctified, who have kept My charge, who did not go astray when the children of Israel went astray, [l]as the Levites went astray. 12 And *this* district of land that is set apart shall be to them a thing most [m]holy by the border of the Levites.

13 "Opposite the border of the priests, the [n]Levites *shall have an area* twenty-five thousand *cubits in length and ten thousand in width; its entire length shall be* twenty-five thousand and its width ten thousand. 14 [o]And they shall not sell or exchange any of it; they may not alienate this best *part* of the land, for *it is* holy to the LORD.

15 [p]"The five thousand *cubits* in width that remain, along the edge of the twenty-five thousand, shall be [q]for general use by the city, for dwellings and common-land; and the city shall be in the center. 16 These *shall be* its measurements: the north side four thousand five hundred *cubits,* the south side four thousand five hundred, the east side four thousand five hundred, and the west side four thousand five hundred. 17 The common-land of the city shall be: to the north two hundred and fifty *cubits,* to the south two hundred and fifty, to the east two hundred and fifty, and to the west two hundred and fifty. 18 The rest of the length, alongside the district of the holy *section, shall be* ten thousand *cubits* to the east and ten thousand to the west. It shall be adjacent to the district of the holy *section,* and its produce shall be food for the workers of the city. 19 [r]The workers of the city, from all the tribes of Israel, shall cultivate it. 20 The entire district *shall be* twenty-five thousand *cubits* by twenty-five thousand *cubits,* foursquare. You shall set apart the holy district with the property of the city.

21 [s]"The rest *shall belong* to the prince, on one side and on the other of the holy district and of the city's property, next to the twenty-five thousand *cubits* of the *holy* district as far as the eastern border, and westward next to the twenty-five thousand as far as the western border, adjacent to the *tribal* portions; *it shall belong* to the prince. It shall be the holy district, [t]and the sanctuary of the [t]temple *shall be* in the center. 22 Moreover, apart from the possession of the Levites and the possession of the city *which are* in the midst of what *belongs* to the prince, *the area* between the border of Judah and the border of [u]Benjamin shall belong to the prince.

23 "As for the rest of the tribes, from the east side to the west, Benjamin *shall have* one *section;* 24 by the border of Benjamin, from the east side to the west, [v]Simeon *shall have* one *section;* 25 by the border of Simeon, from the east side to the west, [w]Issachar *shall have* one *section;* 26 by the border of Issachar, from the east side to the west, [x]Zebulun *shall have* one *section;* 27 by the border of Zebulun, from the east side to the west, [y]Gad *shall have* one *section;* 28 by the border of Gad, on the south side, toward the [z]South, the border shall be from Tamar *to* [z]the waters of [3]Meribah *by* Kadesh, along the brook to the [a]Great Sea. 29 [b]This *is* the land which you shall divide by lot as an inheritance among the tribes of Israel, and these *are* their portions," says the Lord GOD.

The Gates of the City and Its Name

30 "These *are* the exits of the city. On the north side, measuring four thousand five hundred *cubits* 31 [c](the gates of the city *shall be* named after the tribes of Israel), the three gates northward: one gate for Reuben, one gate for Judah, and one gate for Levi; 32 on the east side, four thousand five hundred *cubits,* three gates: one gate for Joseph, one gate for Benjamin, and one gate for Dan; 33 on the south side, measuring four thousand five hundred *cubits,* three gates: one gate for Simeon, one gate for Issachar, and one gate for Zebulun; 34 on the west side, four thousand five hundred *cubits* with their three gates: one gate for Gad, one gate for Asher, and one gate for Naphtali. 35 All the way around *shall be* eighteen thousand *cubits;* [d]and the name of the city from *that* day *shall be:* [e]THE[4] LORD *IS* THERE."

11 [k]Ezek. 40:46; 44:15 [l]Ezek. 44:10, 12

12 [m]Ezek. 45:4

13 [n]Ezek. 45:5

14 [o]Ex. 22:29; Lev. 27:10, 28, 33; Ezek. 44:30

15 [p]Ezek. 45:6 [q]Ezek. 42:20

19 [r]Ezek. 45:6

21 [s]Ezek. 34:24; 45:7; 48:22 [t]Ezek. 48:8, 10 [t]Lit. *house*

22 [u]Josh. 18:21–28

24 [v]Josh. 19:1–9

25 [w]Josh. 19:17–23

26 [x]Josh. 19:10–16

27 [y]Josh. 13:24–28

28 [z]Gen. 14:7; 2 Chr. 20:2; Ezek. 47:19 [a]Ezek. 47:10, 15, 19, 20 [2]Heb. *Negev* [3]Lit. *Strife*

29 [b]Ezek. 47:14, 21, 22

31 [c][Rev. 21:10–14]

35 [d]Jer. 23:6; 33:16 [e]Is. 12:6; 14:32; 24:23; Jer. 3:17; 8:19; 14:9; Ezek. 35:10; Joel 3:21; Zech. 2:10; Rev. 21:3; 22:3 [4]Heb. *YHWH Shammah*

■ **48:11 sons of Zadok.** See note on 44:15.

■ **48:30–35** The city has twelve gates named for the twelve tribes (cf. Rev. 21:12–14). Since one gate is named after Levi, Ephraim and Manasseh are replaced by their father Joseph.

■ **48:35 THE LORD IS THERE.** From the beginning of the Old Testament God had revealed His intention to be with His people. He walked and spoke with them in the Garden of Eden and dwelled in sanctuaries built in their midst. The promise of a child named Immanuel pointed to a day when God would be "with us" (Is. 7:14). The New Testament ends in much the same way as the Book of Ezekiel ends. John too describes the city of God, and a time when God will live with human beings (Rev. 21:3); he ends with the prayer, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20).

The Book of

DANIEL

Author The authorship and date of the Book of Daniel have been matters of considerable debate among biblical scholars. The dispute centers on the way Daniel's prophecies and visions look forward to a succession of four ancient empires, beginning with the Babylonian (chs. 2; 7; 11). Daniel describes in great detail the historical relations between the Seleucid and Ptolemaic kingdoms just prior to and during the time of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (ch. 11). To account for this detailed knowledge, many scholars conclude that the book must have been written by an unknown author about 170 B.C., during the lifetime of Antiochus IV Epiphanes and not during the time of Daniel, who was taken to Babylon in 605 B.C. However, representations in the book itself indicate that Daniel was its author (9:2; 10:2) and that it was written shortly after the capture of Babylon by Cyrus in 539 B.C. Also, Jesus quotes the prediction of "the abomination of desolation" found in this book as having been "spoken of by Daniel the prophet" (Matt. 24:15).

Date and Occasion The arguments that have been offered for dating the Book of Daniel during the time of Antiochus IV Epiphanes involve three basic issues: (a) the nature of Old Testament prophecy; (b) historical problems; and (c) the Hebrew and Aramaic language in the book. Each of these topics needs to be considered in turn.

Generally speaking, the prophets of Israel were primarily concerned with the religious and social circumstances confronting their contemporaries, rather than with predicting events in the distant future. When the prophets did predict future events, it was normally of incidents in the near term, such as Jeremiah's prophecies about the imminent fall of Jerusalem to the Babylonians. Daniel's vision concerning the "king of the North" and the "king of the South" parallels exactly the history of relations between the Seleucid and Ptolemaic empires existing at the time of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (11:2–39 and notes), while the description of the circumstances surrounding the death of the king (11:40—12:3) does not correspond to what is otherwise known about Antiochus's death. On this basis some scholars argue that the Book of Daniel was written in Antiochus's time, shortly before his death. However, the idea that Israelite prophets did not predict events in the more distant future depends on the assumption that the prophecies in Daniel are late, as also those of Isaiah concerning Cyrus (Is. 44:28; 45:1). It may also be the result of a rejection of prophecy in general.

Interpreters of the Book of Daniel who favor a late date of writing also propose that there are serious historical problems in the narratives about Daniel's experiences in Babylon, particularly concerning Belshazzar's relationship to Nebuchadnezzar (5:2 note) and the identity of "Darius the Mede" (6:1 note). They identify the four kingdoms foreseen by Daniel (chs. 2; 7) as the Babylonians, the Medes, the Persians, and finally the Greeks (including the Seleucids and Ptolemies). This identification is difficult because there is no evidence for a Median kingdom in an interval between the Babylonian and Persian kingdoms. Cyrus, the Persian king (550–530 B.C.), conquered the Medes in 549 B.C. and the Babylonians in 539 B.C. (5:1, 31 notes).

On the other hand, scholars who date the book in the time of Daniel interpret the sequence of kingdoms as the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek, and finally Roman empires. They point to the reference to "the Medes and Persians" in 5:28 as evidence that Daniel considered them as together constituting one kingdom.

Concerning the date of the language used in Daniel, it first must be noted that a large segment (2:4—7:28) is written in Aramaic rather than Hebrew. The reason for the change of language is not known. Some scholars have argued that the Aramaic is of a late type, pointing to the use of several Greek loanwords for musical instruments (3:5 note) as other evidence of a late date. Neither argument is convincing. There is abundant evidence of contacts between the Greeks and the Near East prior to the time of Alexander the Great. Such contacts are sufficient to explain the appearance of the Greek loanwords. The Aramaic and Hebrew of Daniel can be dated anywhere between the late sixth and early second centuries B.C. In other words, the language does not lend much weight to either the early or the late date proposal.

Interpretive Difficulties The authorship and date of Daniel are not the only interpretive difficulties posed by the book. There are significant variations in overall approach to the book. These variations fall into three main categories. The first approach is taken by those who conclude that the book was written in the time of Antiochus Epiphanes. According to this view all references to events before the time of Antiochus are ordinary history, written after the events described. The only genuine prediction in the book would be of the anticipated death of Antiochus and the expected intervention of God to establish His kingdom. However, Antiochus did not die in the manner depicted (11:36—12:3 note) and the kingdom did not materialize as apparently anticipated. See notes on 2:44; 7:14, 18.

A second, more traditional view finds the primary

stress of the predictions of the book to be on the First Advent of Christ. This approach is usually associated with an amillennial or postmillennial eschatological position.

A third view finds one focus of the book to be primarily on Antiochus Epiphanes and the persecution of God's people during his reign. The other focus is on the divine intervention in human affairs at the end of time when God's kingdom is established. Stress does not fall on the First Advent of Christ (chs. 2; 9 notes), but rather on Antiochus and the Second Coming of Christ. This approach is usually associated with a premillennial eschatological position. Within this approach there are many differences in the interpretation of details by various commentators.

Characteristics and Themes

Daniel contains two different types of material. Six historical narratives are found in chs. 1—6, while four visions are found in chs. 7—12. The visions are almost exclusively predictive. Among the six narratives, ch. 2 contains a vision given to Nebuchadnezzar and Daniel's interpretation of it.

Reflection on the content of the historical narratives reveals that they are not a connected historical discourse, but are independent units placed together for a specific purpose. The narratives do not give a history of Israel under Babylonian or Persian rule, nor do they give a biographical history of Daniel or his friends. The common thread is an emphasis on the way the absolute sovereignty of God operates in the affairs of all nations (2:47; 3:17, 18; 4:28–37; 5:18–31; 6:25–28). Jerusalem may be destroyed with its temple in ruins, God's people may be in exile, and wicked rulers may seem triumphant, but God remains supreme. God is greater than all circumstances, and His people should be true to Him in whatever situation they find themselves. Depiction of this truth is the controlling principle of Dan. 1—6.

Nebuchadnezzar's vision in ch. 2 shows that history is not under the control of other gods, nor can its mystery be discovered by human manipulation. History is under the control of the God who is utterly free to direct it and to reveal it as He pleases (Rev. 5:9). According to His sovereign pleasure He will intervene among the kingdoms of this world and establish a universal kingdom that will endure forever.

The visions (chs. 7—12) contain predictions of times in the future when this truth will be of particular importance for God's people. Although the Jews were persecuted during the time of their subjection to Babylonian and Persian rulers, there was no widespread and systematic attempt to abolish their faith. This did not happen until the time of Antiochus IV, who named himself "Epiphanes," meaning "God manifest," and ruled in the Seleucid Empire from 175–164 B.C. Antiochus tried to force the Jews to accept the culture of Hellenism and to abandon their religious practices. Many Jews submitted, but others refused and suffered severe persecution. One of the major reasons for writing the Book of Daniel was to prepare God's people for the time of Antiochus Epiphanes and to give them encouragement for this period of persecution. At the same time the book looks beyond the time of Antiochus Epiphanes to the coming of Christ. It is Christ who will destroy all human kingdoms and establish His eternal kingdom of righteousness and peace.

In addition to these overarching themes of Daniel, certain key concepts are relevant to discussion of the book. One of these is the "time of trouble" (12:1), commonly taken to be the "great tribulation" that is to precede the Second Advent of Christ (Matt. 24:21; Luke 21:23; Rev. 2:22; 7:14). Matthew links this trouble with "the abomination of desolation" (Matt. 24:15) predicted by Daniel (cf. Dan. 9:27; 12:11) and fulfilled by the Antichrist (the "man of sin" in 2 Thess. 2:3, 4).

The "Antichrist" may also be included in Daniel's theology (Dan. 7:8, 20–22, 24–27; 11:36–45). The word does not occur outside the letters of John (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3; 2 John 7), but references to a person of satanic hatred who appears in the final days of human history before Christ's Second Advent are found in both testaments. The Antichrist sets up the "abomination of desolation" (Dan. 11:31; Matt. 24:15), exalts himself as a god (Dan. 11:36–39; 2 Thess. 2:3, 4) and is ultimately destroyed by Christ upon His return (Dan. 11:45; 2 Thess. 2:8 [cf. Is. 11:4]; Rev. 19:20).

The idea of the millennium also occurs in discussions of Daniel. The term "millennium" is derived from the Latin word for "one thousand" and designates the thousand-year period described in Rev. 20. The nature of the thousand years is understood differently by three general schools of interpretation, classified as follows: (a.) Premillennialists believe that the thousand years is a worldwide kingdom of peace and righteousness on earth to be established on earth after the Second Coming of Christ (Is. 2:1–5; 11:1–10). (b.) Postmillennialists believe that the thousand years is a period of peace and righteousness to be established through the worldwide preaching of the gospel, resulting in the conditions described in passages such as Is. 2:1–5; 11:1–10. (c.) Amillennialists consider the thousand years as a figurative reference to the present age of the gospel. Accordingly, the millennium is not viewed as a future political order, but the spiritual kingdom of Christ's rule in the church.

In the postmillennial and amillennial views, the number "one thousand" is usually taken figuratively to mean a large unit of time rather than precisely 1,000 years. □

Outline of Daniel

I. The Narratives (chs. 1—6)
  A. God's Vindication of Daniel and His Friends for Their Faithfulness (ch. 1)
  B. Daniel's Interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's Dream (ch. 2)
  C. God's Deliverance of Daniel's Friends from the Fiery Furnace (ch. 3)
  D. God's Judgment on Nebuchadnezzar (ch. 4)
  E. God's Judgment on Belshazzar (ch. 5)
  F. God's Deliverance of Daniel from the Lions' Den (ch. 6)
II. Daniel's Visions (chs. 7—12)
  A. Vision of the Four Beasts and the Establishment of God's Kingdom (ch. 7)
  B. Vision of the Ram and the Goat (ch. 8)
  C. Vision of the Seventy Weeks (ch. 9)
  D. Vision of the Angel and the Future History of God's People (chs. 10—12)
    1. The Angel's Message to Daniel (10:1—11:1)
    2. Near Eastern History from the Time of Daniel to Antiochus IV Epiphanes (11:2–20)
    3. The Rule of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (11:21–35)
      a. His Accession and Character (11:21–24)
      b. His Career (11:25–31)
      c. The Destiny of God's People During His Rule (11:32–35)
    4. The Rule of the Antichrist (11:36—12:3)
      a. His Character (11:36–39)
      b. His Activities (11:40–45)
      c. The Destiny of God's People During His Rule (12:1–3)
    5. A Final Message to Daniel (12:4–13)

CHAPTER 1

1 [a]2 Kin. 24:1, 2

2 [b]Jer. 27:19, 20 [c]Zech. 5:11 [d]2 Chr. 36:7 [f]The temple

3 [e]Is. 39:7

4 [f]Lev. 24:19, 20 [g]Acts 7:22 [z]Lit. *writing* or *book*

Daniel and His Friends Obey God

IN the third year of the reign of [a]Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it. [2] And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with [b]some of the articles of [f]the house of God, which he carried [c]into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; [d]and he brought the articles into the treasure house of his god.

[3] Then the king instructed Ashpenaz, the master of his eunuchs, to bring [e]some of the children of Israel and some of the king's descendants and some of the nobles, [4] young men [f]in whom *there was* no blemish, but good-looking, gifted in all wisdom, possessing knowledge and quick to understand, who *had* ability to serve in the king's palace, and [g]whom they might teach the language and [z]literature of the Chaldeans. [5] And the king appointed for them a daily provision of

■ **1:1 the third year.** Jehoiakim's third year was 605 B.C. In that year Nebuchadnezzar defeated a coalition of Assyria and Egypt at Carchemish and initiated Babylon's rise to international power. After the battle of Carchemish, Nebuchadnezzar advanced against Jehoiakim (2 Kin. 24:1, 2; 2 Chr. 36:5–7) and took some Judeans captive, including Daniel. This was the first of three invasions of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar. The second was in 597 B.C. (2 Kin. 24:10–14), and the third in 587 B.C. (2 Kin. 25:1–24). In the Book of Jeremiah, Nebuchadnezzar's attack is dated to Jehoiakim's fourth year instead of the third (Jer. 25:1; 46:2). The difference of one year occurs because in the Babylonian chronology, which Daniel apparently used, the king's reign was officially counted from the first day of the succeeding new year, rather than from the actual date of his accession to the throne.

Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar led the Babylonians to victory at Carchemish as crown prince and commander of the army. Shortly after this victory, he assumed the Babylonian throne when his father Nabopolassar died (626–605 B.C.). Nebuchadnezzar's reign (605–562 B.C.) is the historical context for much of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel.

■ **1:2 the Lord gave . . . into his hand.** Israel's defeat by the Babylonians is not to be explained simply by analysis of military and political factors. God was at work in the affairs of the nations, and He used the Babylonians to judge His own people for their transgressions (2 Kin. 17:15, 18–20; 21:12–15; 24:3, 4).

the treasure house of his god. Marduk was the chief god of the Babylonian pantheon (cf. Jer. 50:2 and text notes).

■ **1:4 literature of the Chaldeans.** Babylonian literature was written in wedge-shaped characters impressed with a stylus on soft clay tablets that were later fired to make them permanent. Thousands of these tablets have been discovered by archaeologists. The Babylonians worshiped many gods, and their culture was filled with magic, sorcery, and astrology. The common language of Babylon was Aramaic (2:4 and note).

■ **1:5 of the king's delicacies.** Jehoiachin later received such a provision under the rule of the Babylonian king, Evil-Merodach (2 Kin. 25:27–30).

the king's delicacies and of the wine which he drank, and three years of training for them, so that at the end of *that time* they might [h]serve before the king. 6 Now from among those of the sons of Judah were Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. 7 [i]To them the chief of the eunuchs gave names: [j]he gave Daniel *the name* Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abed-Nego.

8 But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself [k]with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. 9 Now [l]God had brought Daniel into the favor and [3]goodwill of the chief of the eunuchs. 10 And the chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, "I fear my lord the king, who has appointed your food and drink. For why should he see your faces looking worse than the young men who *are* your age? Then you would endanger my head before the king."

11 So Daniel said to [4]the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, 12 "Please test your servants for ten days, and let them give us vegetables to eat and water to drink. 13 Then let our appearance be examined before you, and the appearance of the young men who eat the portion of the king's delicacies; and as you see fit, *so* deal with your servants." 14 So he consented with them in this matter, and tested them ten days.

15 And at the end of ten days their features appeared better and fatter in flesh than all the young men who ate the portion of the king's delicacies. 16 Thus [5]the steward took away their portion of delicacies and the wine that they were to drink, and gave them vegetables.

17 As for these four young men, [m]God gave them [n]knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; and Daniel had [o]understanding in all visions and dreams.

18 Now at the end of the days, when the king had said that they should be brought in, the chief of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. 19 Then the king [6]interviewed them, and among them all none was found like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah; therefore [p]they served before the king. 20 [q]And in all matters of wisdom *and* understanding about which the king examined them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians *and* astrologers who *were* in all his realm. 21 [r]Thus Daniel continued until the first year of King Cyrus.

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

2 Now in the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; [a]and his spirit was *so* troubled that [b]his sleep left him. 2 [c]Then the king gave the command to call the magicians, the astrologers, the sorcerers, and the Chaldeans to tell the king his dreams. So they came and stood before the king. 3 And the king said to them, "I have had a dream, and my spirit is anxious to [1]know the dream."

5 [h]Dan. 1:19

7 [i]2 Kin. 24:17 [j]Dan. 2:26; 4:8; 5:12

8 [k]Hos. 9:3

9 [l]Gen. 39:21 [3]*kindness*

11 [4]Or *Melzar*

16 [5]Or *Melzar*

17 [m][James 1:5–7] [n]Acts 7:22 [o]2 Chr. 26:5

19 [p]Gen. 41:46 [6]Lit. *talked with them*

20 [q]1 Kin. 10:1

21 [r]Dan. 6:28; 10:1

CHAPTER 2

1 [a]Gen. 40:5–8; 41:1, 8 [b]Esth. 6:1

2 [c]Ex. 7:11

3 [1]Or *understand*

■ **1:6 Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.** In these Hebrew names, the component *el* means "God," and *yah* is a form of God's name "Yahweh" (Ps. 50:1 note). Hence: Daniel means "my judge is God"; Hananiah, "Yahweh is gracious"; Mishael, "Who is what God is?" and Azariah, "Yahweh has helped."

■ **1:7 Belteshazzar . . . Shadrach . . . Meshach . . . Abed-Nego.** Suggestions for the meanings of these names include: Belteshazzar, "May Bel protect his life"; Shadrach, "the command of Aku," (the Sumerian moon god); Meshach, "Who is what Aku is?" and Abed-Nego, "servant of Nebo" (a Babylonian god). Bel is another name for Marduk, the chief Babylonian god (cf. 4:8).

■ **1:8 he would not defile himself.** The reason for Daniel's conclusion that he and his friends would be defiled by the king's food is not given. Perhaps it involved violation of the dietary laws of Moses (Lev. 11; 17).

■ **1:15 their features appeared better.** The obedience of Daniel and his friends to God, and their refusal to compromise their faith in a heathen environment, were rewarded with God's blessing (cf. Deut. 8:3; Matt. 4:4).

■ **1:17 God gave them knowledge.** God's blessing was not limited to physical well-being, but also included outstanding intellectual development during their three years of Babylonian education.

visions and dreams. With a view to what follows in the book (chs. 2; 4; 5), Daniel is distinguished from his companions in his ability to interpret dreams and visions, much as Joseph was in the court of Pharaoh (Gen. 40:8; 41:16).

■ **1:18 at the end of the days.** That is, after the three years mentioned in v. 5.

■ **1:20 the magicians and astrologers.** The term translated "magicians" is also used in Gen. 41:8, 24 and Ex. 7:11. The word translated "astrologers" occurs only here and in 2:2 and can be rendered "conjurer" or "soothsayer." Whatever means these royal advisers used to gain knowledge, Daniel and his friends were able to demonstrate superior insight on the matters they were questioned about.

■ **1:21 until the first year of King Cyrus.** Babylon fell to Cyrus in 539 B.C., or sixty-six years after Daniel had been taken captive to Babylon. Daniel lived through the entire period of the Babylonian captivity. Cyrus issued a decree in the first year of his reign permitting the Israelites to return from captivity, and to take with them the vessels from the temple that had been seized by Nebuchadnezzar (Ezra 1:7–11). The statement does not mean that Daniel died in the first year of Cyrus (10:1).

■ **2:1 in the second year.** Since the Babylonian system started counting Nebuchadnezzar's reign officially from the beginning of the year succeeding his actual succession, his "second year" could mean the end of Daniel's three years of training (1:5). Otherwise the events took place during his training.

his sleep left him. It was widely believed in the ancient Near East that the gods spoke to human beings in dreams.

■ **2:2 magicians . . . astrologers.** See note on 1:20.

sorcerers . . . Chaldeans. "Sorcerers" practiced divination or witchcraft (Ex. 22:18; Deut. 18:10; Is. 47:9, 12; Jer. 27:9). Here "Chaldeans" probably means a class of soothsayers and astrologers, rather than the name of an ethnic group (as in 1:4; 3:8; 5:30; 9:1).

4 [d]1 Kin. 1:31; Dan. 3:9; 5:10; 6:6, 21 [2]The original language of Daniel 2:4b through 7:28 is Aramaic.

5 [e]2 Kin. 10:27; Ezra 6:11; Dan. 3:29 [3]The command

6 [f]Dan. 5:16

9 [4]Situation [5]Or *declare to me*

11 [g]Gen. 41:39; Dan. 5:11 [6]Or *rare*

13 [h]Dan. 1:19, 20

15 [7]Or *harsh*

18 [i][Dan. 9:9; Matt. 18:19]

19 [j]Num. 12:6; Job 33:15; [Prov. 3:32]; Amos 3:7

20 [k]Ps. 113:2 [l][1 Chr. 29:11, 12; Job 12:13; Ps. 147:5; Jer. 32:19; Matt. 6:13; Rom. 11:33]

21 [m]Ps. 31:15; Esth. 1:13; Dan. 2:9; 7:25 [n]Job 12:18; [Ps. 75:6, 7; Jer. 27:5; Dan. 4:35] [o]1 Kin. 3:9, 10; 4:29; [James 1:5]

22 [p]Job 12:22; Ps. 25:14; [Prov. 3:22] [q]Job 26:6; Ps. 139:12; [Is. 45:7; Jer. 23:24; Heb. 4:13] [r][Ps. 36:9]; Dan. 5:11, 14; [1 Tim. 6:16; James 1:17; 1 John 1:5]

23 [s]Ps. 21:2, 4; Dan. 2:18, 29, 30 [8]Lit. *word*

4 Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic, [d]"O[2] king, live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will give the interpretation."

5 The king answered and said to the Chaldeans, "My [3]decision is firm: if you do not make known the dream to me, and its interpretation, you shall be [e]cut in pieces, and your houses shall be made an ash heap. 6 [f]However, if you tell the dream and its interpretation, you shall receive from me gifts, rewards, and great honor. Therefore tell me the dream and its interpretation."

7 They answered again and said, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will give its interpretation."

8 The king answered and said, "I know for certain that you would gain time, because you see that my decision is firm: 9 if you do not make known the dream to me, *there is only* one decree for you! For you have agreed to speak lying and corrupt words before me till the [4]time has changed. Therefore tell me the dream, and I shall know that you can [5]give me its interpretation."

10 The Chaldeans answered the king, and said, "There is not a man on earth who can tell the king's matter; therefore no king, lord, or ruler has *ever* asked such things of any magician, astrologer, or Chaldean. 11 *It is* a [6]difficult thing that the king requests, and there is no other who can tell it to the king [g]except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh."

12 For this reason the king was angry and very furious, and gave the command to destroy all the wise *men* of Babylon. 13 So the decree went out, and they began killing the wise *men;* and they sought [h]Daniel and his companions, to kill *them.*

God Reveals Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

14 Then with counsel and wisdom Daniel answered Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, who had gone out to kill the wise *men* of Babylon; 15 he answered and said to Arioch the king's captain, "Why is the decree from the king so [7]urgent?" Then Arioch made the decision known to Daniel.

16 So Daniel went in and asked the king to give him time, that he might tell the king the interpretation. 17 Then Daniel went to his house, and made the decision known to Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, his companions, 18 [i]that they might seek mercies from the God of heaven concerning this secret, so that Daniel and his companions might not perish with the rest of the wise *men* of Babylon. 19 Then the secret was revealed to Daniel [j]in a night vision. So Daniel blessed the God of heaven.

20 Daniel answered and said:

[k]"Blessed be the name of God forever and ever,
[l]For wisdom and might are His.
21 And He changes [m]the times and the seasons;
[n]He removes kings and raises up kings;
[o]He gives wisdom to the wise
And knowledge to those who have understanding.
22 [p]He reveals deep and secret things;
[q]He knows what *is* in the darkness,
And [r]light dwells with Him.

23 "I thank You and praise You,
O God of my fathers;
You have given me wisdom and might,
And have now made known to me what we [s]asked of You,
For You have made known to us the king's [8]demand."

■ **2:4 Aramaic.** From here until the end of ch. 7 the text is written in Aramaic rather than Hebrew. Ezra 4:8—6:18; 7:12–26 are also written in Aramaic. There has been much speculation about why these verses are in Aramaic, but no generally accepted conclusion has been reached.

■ **2:5 make known the dream.** Nebuchadnezzar formulated a test to see whether the advisers to the court had access to hidden knowledge, as they claimed. If they could not tell him the dream, then he would have no confidence in their interpretation (cf. v. 9).

■ **2:11 a difficult thing.** The wise men confess that they cannot do what the king asks. Only the gods have such power, but the gods, they protest, do not reveal such things to anyone (cf. Ex. 8:18, 19).

■ **2:18 seek mercies from the God of heaven.** Daniel also realized that human wisdom was insufficient to meet the king's demand (v. 11 note). Only divine revelation could provide the answer.

■ **2:20** See theological note "The Wisdom and Will of God."

■ **2:21 He removes kings and raises up kings.** Daniel alludes to the content of the dream.

■ **2:22 He reveals deep and secret things.** Job 28 is a carefully drawn picture of wisdom as "hidden from the eyes of all" (Job 28:21) and inaccessible without God.

Daniel Explains the Dream

24 Therefore Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to destroy the wise *men* of Babylon. He went and said thus to him: "Do not destroy the wise *men* of Babylon; take me before the king, and I will tell the king the interpretation."

25 Then Arioch quickly brought Daniel before the king, and said thus to him, "I have found a man of the [g]captives of Judah, who will make known to the king the interpretation."

26 The king answered and said to Daniel, whose name *was* Belteshazzar, "Are you able to make known to me the dream which I have seen, and its interpretation?"

27 Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, "The secret which the king has demanded, the wise *men,* the astrologers, the magicians, and the soothsayers cannot declare to the king. 28 [t]But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets, and He has made known to King Nebuchadnezzar [u]what will be in the latter days. Your dream, and the visions of your head upon your bed, were these: 29 As for you, O king, thoughts came *to* your *mind while* on your bed, *about* what would come to pass after this; [v]and He who reveals secrets has made known to you

25 [g]Lit. *sons of the captivity*

28 [t]Gen. 40:8; Amos 4:13 [u]Gen. 49:1; Is. 2:2; Dan. 10:14; Mic. 4:1

29 [v][Dan. 2:22, 28]

The Wisdom and Will of God

Wisdom in Scripture means choosing the best and noblest end at which to aim, along with the most appropriate and effective means of achieving that end. Old Testament wisdom literature, including Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and certain of the Psalms (Ps. 19; 37; 104; 107; 147; 148), dealt not only with the life of worship or religious exercise in the restricted sense, but also with everyday moral behavior in family, social, and business concerns. In the New Testament the letter of James might also be considered "wisdom literature" in its plain-spoken description of practical Christian living. In light of the wisdom literature of Scripture, Christian wisdom means making the "fear of God"—reverent worship and service of Him—the goal of life (Prov. 1:7; 9:10; Eccl. 12:13).

God's wisdom is seen in His works of creation, preservation, and redemption: it is His choice of His own glory as His goal (Ps. 46:10; Is. 42:8; 48:11), and His decision to achieve it first by creating a marvelous variety of things and people (Ps. 104:24; Prov. 3:19, 20), second by kindly providences of all sorts (Ps. 145:13–16; Acts 14:17), and third by the redemptive "wisdom" of "Christ crucified" (1 Cor. 1:18—2:16) and the resulting Christian church in the world (Eph. 3:10).

The outworking of God's wisdom involves the expression of His will in two different senses. In the first sense, God's will is "His eternal purpose, according to the counsel of His will, whereby, for His own glory, He hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass" (*Westminster Shorter Catechism,* Q. 7). This "eternal purpose" is God's decreed will, referred to in Eph. 1:11. In the second sense, the will of God is His command, that is, His instruction given in Scripture, concerning how people should believe and behave. This is sometimes called His "preceptive will," and is spoken of in Rom. 12:2; Eph. 5:17; Col. 1:9; 1 Thess. 4:3–6. Some of its requirements are rooted in His holy character, which we are to imitate; such are the principles of the Decalogue, and the two great commandments (Ex. 20:1–17; Matt. 22:37–40; cf. Eph. 4:32—5:2). Some of its requirements spring simply from the divine institution. Such were circumcision and the sacrificial and purity laws of the Old Testament, and such are baptism and the Lord's Supper today. But all, in their respective times, bind the conscience, and God's plan of events (His "eternal purpose") already includes the "good works" of obedience that those who believe will perform (Eph. 2:10).

It is sometimes difficult, even impossible, for mortal humans to understand how obedience, putting us at a disadvantage in the world, is part of a predestined plan of furthering both God's glory and our good (Rom. 8:28). But we glorify God by believing that it is so, because He who cannot lie has said it. One day we will see it to be so, because His wisdom is perfect and never fails. □

■ **2:24 Do not destroy the wise men.** Daniel urges the king to be merciful to the wise men even though their inability to know the dream has been exposed.

■ **2:28 a God in heaven who reveals secrets.** Just as Joseph had done in Egypt (Gen. 40:8; 41:16), so also Daniel attributes his knowledge of the dream to God. Daniel's God revealed to this young man what astrology, magic, and the occult could not discover.

in the latter days. This expression seems to range in meaning from the "end time," technically called the "eschaton" (Ezek. 38:16), to simply the future in general (Gen. 49:1; Deut. 4:30; 31:29).

what will be. 30 [w]But as for me, this secret has not been revealed to me because I have more wisdom than anyone living, but for *our* sakes who make known the interpretation to the king, [x]and that you may [1]know the thoughts of your heart.

31 "You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor *was* excellent, stood before you; and its form *was* awesome. 32 [y]This image's head *was* of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and [2]thighs of bronze, 33 its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of [3]clay. 34 You watched while a stone was cut out [z]without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. 35 [a]Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became [b]like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that [c]no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image [d]became a great mountain [e]and filled the whole earth.

36 "This *is* the dream. Now we will tell the interpretation of it before the king. 37 [f]You, O king, *are* a king of kings. [g]For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; 38 [h]and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given *them* into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all—[i]you *are* this head of gold. 39 But after you shall arise [j]another kingdom [k]inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. 40 And [l]the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, *that kingdom* will break in pieces and crush all the others. 41 Whereas you saw the feet and toes, partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; yet the strength of the iron shall be in it, just as you saw the iron mixed with ceramic clay. 42 And *as* the toes of the feet *were* partly of iron and partly of clay, [m]*so* the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly [4]fragile. 43 As you saw iron mixed with ceramic clay, they will mingle with the seed of men; but they will not adhere to one another, just as iron does not mix with clay. 44 And in the days of these kings [n]the God of heaven will set up a kingdom [o]which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; [p]it shall [5]break in pieces and [6]consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. 45 [q]Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold—the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure."

Daniel and His Friends Promoted

46 [r]Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell on his face, prostrate before Daniel, and commanded that they should present an offering [s]and incense to him. 47 The king answered Daniel, and said, "Truly [t]your God *is* the God of [u]gods, the Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, since you could reveal this secret." 48 [v]Then the king promoted Daniel [w]and gave him many great gifts; and he made him ruler over the whole province of Babylon, and [x]chief administrator over all the wise *men* of Babylon. 49 Also Daniel petitioned the king, [y]and he set Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego over the affairs of the province of Babylon; but Daniel [z]*sat* in [7]the gate of the king.

30 [w]Acts 3:12 [x]Dan. 2:47 [1]Understand

32 [y]Dan. 2:38, 45 [2]Or *sides*

33 [3]Or *baked clay,* also vv. 34, 35, 42

34 [z][Zech. 4:6]

35 [a][Rev. 16:14] [b]Hos. 13:3 [c]Ps. 37:10, 36 [d][Is. 2:2, 3] [e]Ps. 80:9

37 [f]Jer. 27:6, 7 [g]Ezra 1:2

38 [h]Dan. 4:21, 22 [i]Dan. 2:32

39 [j]Dan. 5:28, 31 [k]Dan. 2:32

40 [l]Dan. 7:7, 23

42 [m]Dan. 7:24 [4]Or *brittle*

44 [n]Dan. 2:28, 37 [o][Luke 1:32, 33] [p]Is. 60:12 [5]Or *crush* [6]Lit. *put an end to*

45 [q]Dan. 2:35

46 [r]Acts 10:25; 14:13 [s]Ezra 6:10

47 [t]Dan. 3:28, 29; 4:34–37 [u][Deut. 10:17]

48 [v][Prov. 14:35; 21:1] [w]Dan. 2:6 [x]Dan. 4:9; 5:11

49 [y]Dan. 1:7; 3:12 [z]Esth. 2:19, 21; 3:2 [7]The king's court

■ **2:32, 33 gold . . . iron . . . clay.** There is a progressive decrease in the value of the materials in the image from the head to the feet.

■ **2:34 its feet of iron and clay.** Some interpreters view the mixture of iron and clay in the feet of the image as representing a second phase of the fourth kingdom different from the legs of solid iron (cf. vv. 41–43).

■ **2:37–40 king of kings . . . fourth kingdom.** The four kingdoms have been widely understood since Josephus (1st century A.D.) to be the empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. Others understand them to be Babylon, Media, Persia, and Greece, a sequence in agreement with the critical view that the book was written, after the facts, by a living witness during the period of Greek ascendency in the Middle East. However, the animal symbols in 7:4–7 historically fit the former structure of a combined Medo-Persian Empire, leaving Greece as the third and Rome as the fourth kingdom. Darius's appeal to the single "law of the Medes and Persians" (6:12; cf. 5:28) agrees with the first order of empires.

■ **2:43 they will mingle . . . but . . . not adhere.** The elements of the fourth kingdom cannot preserve their union. One possible interpretation of the image is that the iron represents the culture and laws of imperial Rome, while the clay represents the divergent political and social traditions of its many parts. The fourth kingdom, though strong, is temporary.

■ **2:44 these kings.** The most natural interpretation is that the kings are the rulers of the four powers making up the image just described. The other possibility is that they are a sequence of several rulers of the fourth kingdom only.

a kingdom which shall never be destroyed. The eternal kingdom is the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ (Is. 9:7; Luke 1:33; Heb. 1:8; Rev. 11:15). This kingdom was inaugurated and preached at the First Coming of Christ (Mark 1:15; Matt. 12:28; 24:14), but does not come in its fullness until His Second Advent. See "The Kingdom of God" at Luke 17:20.

■ **2:46 King Nebuchadnezzar fell . . . prostrate before Daniel.** In a reversal of roles, Daniel is exalted to a position of honor by the Lord's intervention on his behalf. For the king's reaction, compare Acts 14:11; Rev. 22:8.

■ **2:47 God of gods.** Nebuchadnezzar's statement does not necessarily mean that he recognized Israel's God as the only God. His exclamation is that Israel's God is superior to other gods.

Lord of kings. Nebuchadnezzar confesses that Israel's God is supreme over human rulers and kingdoms. This is the unifying theme of Dan. 1—6 (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes).

■ **2:48 the whole province of Babylon.** The Babylonian Empire was divided into provinces. Daniel was appointed ruler (cf. 3:2) of the province where the capital city was. Joseph and Mordecai also rose as Jews to political power in a foreign land. See Gen. 41:37–44 (Joseph) and Esth. 8:1, 2 (Mordecai).

The Image of Gold

3 Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height *was* [1]sixty cubits *and* its width six cubits. He set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. 2 And King Nebuchadnezzar sent *word* to gather together the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. 3 So the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces gathered together for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. 4 Then a herald cried [2]aloud: "To you it is commanded, [a]O peoples, nations, and languages, 5 *that* at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, *and* psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, you shall fall down and worship the gold image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up; 6 and whoever does not fall down and worship shall [b]be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace."

7 So at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the horn, flute, harp, *and* lyre, in symphony with all kinds of music, all the people, nations, and languages fell down *and* worshiped the gold image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

Daniel's Friends Disobey the King

8 Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans [c]came forward and accused the Jews. 9 They spoke and said to King Nebuchadnezzar, [d]"O king, live forever! 10 You, O king, have made a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, *and* psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the gold image; 11 and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. 12 [e]There are certain Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego; these men, O king, have [f]not paid due regard to you. They do not serve your gods or worship the gold image which you have set up."

13 Then Nebuchadnezzar, in [g]rage and fury, gave the command to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. So they brought these men before the king. 14 Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying to them, "*Is it* true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, *that* you do not serve my gods or worship the gold image which I have set up? 15 Now if you are ready at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, *and* psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, and you fall down and worship the image which I have made, [h]*good!* But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. [i]And who *is* the god who will deliver you from my hands?"

16 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, [j]we have no need to answer you in this matter. 17 If that *is the case,* our [k]God whom we serve is able to [l]deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver *us* from your hand, O king. 18 But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we [m]worship the gold image which you have set up."

CHAPTER 3

1 [1]About 90 feet

4 [a]Dan. 4:1; 6:25 [2]Lit. *with strength*

6 [b]Jer. 29:22; Ezek. 22:18–22; Matt. 13:42, 50; Rev. 9:2; 13:15; 14:11

8 [c]Ezra 4:12–16; Esth. 3:8, 9; Dan. 6:12, 13

9 [d]Dan. 2:4; 5:10; 6:6, 21

12 [e]Dan. 2:49 [f]Dan. 1:8; 6:12, 13

13 [g]Dan. 2:12; 3:19

15 [h]Ex. 32:32; Luke 13:9 [i]Ex. 5:2; 2 Kin. 18:35; Is. 36:18–20; Dan. 2:47

16 [j][Matt. 10:19]

17 [k]Job 5:19; [Ps. 27:1, 2; Is. 26:3, 4]; Jer. 1:8; 15:20, 21; Dan. 6:19–22 [l]1 Sam. 17:37; Jer. 1:8; 15:20, 21; 42:11; Dan. 6:16, 19–22; Mic. 7:7; 2 Cor. 1:10

18 [m]Job 13:15

■ **3:1 an image of gold.** Although the narrow proportions could suggest an obelisk rather than a statue, the monument is called an "image." It was probably a figure standing on a pedestal. The gold was probably plating, the fabrication of the image being much like that described in Is. 40:19; 41:7; Jer. 10:3–9.

the plain of Dura. Probably about six miles south of Babylon.

■ **3:2 satraps . . . officials.** The precise responsibilities of these different officials are not known. Five of the seven terms are of Persian origin, perhaps indicating that Daniel did not finish writing the account until after the beginning of Persian rule in 539 B.C.

■ **3:5 horn . . . psaltery.** Of the six terms for musical instruments, the three translated "harp," "psaltery," and "symphony" are borrowed from Greek. This is not surprising since the international exchange of musicians and musical instruments at royal courts had a long history. The presence of these three Greek terms in Daniel does not establish that the account was written after the time of Alexander the Great, as is sometimes argued.

■ **3:6 a burning fiery furnace.** Furnaces or kilns were used in Babylon for firing bricks (Gen. 11:3). Execution by burning was not unknown (Jer. 29:22; cf. Herodotus 1:86; 4:69; 2 Macc. 7).

■ **3:8 Chaldeans.** See 2:2 note; here "Chaldeans" probably indicates nationality. The informers were prejudiced against the Jews (v. 12; cf. Esth. 3:5, 6), possibly because they were jealous of the Jews' privileged position.

■ **3:12 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego.** See note on 1:7. Daniel was either not present or was exempted by his high position from having to demonstrate his loyalty (2:48, 49).

■ **3:15 who is the god.** From Nebuchadnezzar's polytheistic perspective there was no god capable of such deliverance. Unwittingly, Nebuchadnezzar challenged the power of the God of Israel.

■ **3:17, 18 He will deliver . . . But if not.** These verses express the central theme of the chapter. The idea is not that God will always protect His people from physical harm (Is. 43:1, 2). He may do that and certainly is able to. The central idea is that God's people should be obedient to Him whatever the consequences.

22 [3]Or *harsh*

24 [4]High officials

25 [n][Ps. 91:3–9]; Is. 43:2 [o]Job 1:6; 38:7; [Ps. 34:7]; Dan. 3:28 [5]Or *a son of the gods*

26 [p][Dan. 4:2, 3, 17, 34, 35] [6]Lit. *door*

27 [q][Is. 43:2]; Heb. 11:34

28 [r][Ps. 34:7, 8]; Is. 37:36; [Jer. 17:7]; Dan. 6:22, 23; Acts 5:19; 12:7 [7]Or *angel*

29 [s]Dan. 6:26 [t]Dan. 2:46, 47; 4:34–37 [u]Ezra 6:11; Dan. 2:5 [v]Dan. 6:27

30 [8]Lit. *caused to prosper*

CHAPTER 4

1 [a]Ezra 4:17; Dan. 3:4; 6:25

2 [b]Dan. 3:26

3 [c]2 Sam. 7:16; Ps. 89:35–37; Dan. 6:27; 7:13, 14; [Luke 1:31–33]

Saved in Fiery Trial

19 Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the expression on his face changed toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. He spoke and commanded that they heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated. 20 And he commanded certain mighty men of valor who *were* in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, *and* cast *them* into the burning fiery furnace. 21 Then these men were bound in their coats, their trousers, their turbans, and their *other* garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. 22 Therefore, because the king's command was [3]urgent, and the furnace exceedingly hot, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. 23 And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

24 Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste *and* spoke, saying to his [4]counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?"

They answered and said to the king, "True, O king."

25 "Look!" he answered, "I see four men loose, [n]walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like [o]the[5] Son of God."

Nebuchadnezzar Praises God

26 Then Nebuchadnezzar went near the [6]mouth of the burning fiery furnace *and* spoke, saying, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, servants of the [p]Most High God, come out, and come *here*." Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego came from the midst of the fire. 27 And the satraps, administrators, governors, and the king's counselors gathered together, and they saw these men [q]on whose bodies the fire had no power; the hair of their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of fire was not on them.

28 Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent His [r]Angel[7] and delivered His servants who trusted in Him, and they have frustrated the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God! 29 [s]Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the [t]God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be [u]cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made an ash heap; [v]because there is no other God who can deliver like this."

30 Then the king [8]promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego in the province of Babylon.

Nebuchadnezzar's Second Dream

4 Nebuchadnezzar the king,

[a]To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth:

Peace be multiplied to you.

2 I thought it good to declare the signs and wonders [b]that the Most High God has worked for me.

3 [c]How great *are* His signs,
And how mighty His wonders!

■ **3:25 the Son of God.** How Nebuchadnezzar recognized the fourth person in the furnace as a divine being is not explained (v. 28 note). Perhaps the miraculous appearance was itself sufficient reason for the conclusion.

■ **3:26 the Most High God.** This is a title expressing God's universal authority. As in v. 29 and 2:47, such a confession on the lips of a pagan is not an acknowledgment that Daniel's Lord is the only God, but only that He is supreme over other gods (4:2, 17, 34). To a Jew it means there is only one God (4:24–32; 5:18, 21; 7:18–27).

■ **3:28 Angel.** The "Angel" may be identified with the Angel of the Lord (Gen. 16:7); if so, it is a visible manifestation of God Himself (Ex. 3:2). God promised His presence when Israel walked through fire (Is. 43:1–3).

■ **4:1 Nebuchadnezzar the king.** This final incident in the Book of Daniel associated with Nebuchadnezzar must be placed late in the king's 43-year reign when his building projects were completed and his power was at its height (cf. vv. 4, 30). He represents the most powerful kingdom on earth (vv. 10–12 note) as opposed to the rule of the Most High God. Babylonian records of long periods of absence and blasphemous acts by King Nabonidus (ruled 556 to 539 B.C.; 5:1 note) resemble in some ways Daniel's account of Nebuchadnezzar. Another composition called the "Prayer of Nabonidus" was discovered among the Dead Sea Scrolls, documents hidden before A.D. 70 by a Jewish community at Qumran and found in 1947. This "Prayer" is also similar to what Daniel says about Nebuchadnezzar. Nabonidus is separated from society for seven years and restored with the help of a Jewish exile following confession of his sins. However, his affliction is described as a form of skin disease rather than mental illness.

■ **4:2 the Most High God.** See notes on 2:47; 3:26.

■ **4:3 How great.** Nebuchadnezzar's confession in this verse and in vv.

His kingdom *is* [d]an everlasting kingdom,
And His dominion *is* from generation to generation.

4 I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at rest in my house, and flourishing in my palace. 5 I saw a dream
which made me afraid, [e]and the thoughts on my bed and the visions of my head [f]troubled
me. 6 Therefore I issued a decree to bring in all the wise *men* of Babylon before me, that
they might make known to me the interpretation of the dream. 7 [g]Then the magicians, the
astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers came in, and I told them the dream; but
they did not make known to me its interpretation. 8 But at last Daniel came before me
[h](his name *is* Belteshazzar, according to the name of my god; [i]in him *is* the Spirit of the
Holy God), and I told the dream before him, *saying:* 9 "Belteshazzar, [j]chief of the
magicians, because I know that the Spirit of the Holy God *is* in you, and no secret troubles
you, explain to me the visions of my dream that I have seen, and its interpretation.

10 "These *were* the visions of my head *while* on my bed:

I was looking, and behold,
[k]A tree in the midst of the earth,
And its height was great.
11 The tree grew and became strong;
Its height reached to the heavens,
And it could be seen to the ends of all the earth.
12 Its leaves *were* lovely,
Its fruit abundant,
And in it *was* food for all.
[l]The beasts of the field found shade under it,
The birds of the heavens dwelt in its branches,
And all flesh was fed from it.

13 "I saw in the visions of my head *while* on my bed, and there was [m]a watcher, [n]a holy one,
coming down from heaven. 14 He cried [l]aloud and said thus:

[o]'Chop down the tree and cut off its branches,
Strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit.
[p]Let the beasts get out from under it,
And the birds from its branches.
15 Nevertheless leave the stump and roots in the earth,
Bound with a band of iron and bronze,
In the tender grass of the field.
Let it be wet with the dew of heaven,
And *let* him graze with the beasts
On the grass of the earth.
16 Let his heart be changed from *that of* a man,
Let him be given the heart of a beast,
And let seven [q]times[2] pass over him.

17 'This decision *is* by the decree of the watchers,
And the sentence by the word of the holy ones,

3 [d][Dan. 2:44; 4:34; 6:26]
5 [e]Dan. 2:28, 29 [f]Dan. 2:1
7 [g]Dan. 2:2
8 [h]Dan. 1:7 [i]Is. 63:11; Dan. 2:11; 4:18; 5:11, 14
9 [j]Dan. 2:48; 5:11
10 [k]Ezek. 31:3; Dan. 4:20
12 [l]Jer. 27:6; Ezek. 17:23; 31:6; Lam. 4:20
13 [m][Dan. 4:17, 23] [n]Deut. 33:2; Ps. 89:7; Dan. 8:13; Zech. 14:5; Jude 14
14 [o]Ezek. 31:10–14; Dan. 4:23; [Matt. 3:10; 7:19; Luke 13:7–9] [p]Ezek. 31:12, 13; Dan. 4:12 [l]Lit. *with strength*
16 [q]Dan. 11:13; 12:7 [2]Possibly *years*

34, 35 communicates the central theme of the Book of Daniel, namely, the absolute sovereignty of the God of Israel.

■ **4:6, 7** See notes on 1:20; 2:2.

■ **4:8 Belteshazzar.** See note on 1:7.

the Spirit of the Holy God. The Holy Spirit was the immediate author of the extraordinary power of Daniel to know and to interpret secrets (2:19 note). Nebuchadnezzar's words agree with this, although he may have been thinking of another god known to him rather than the God of Daniel.

■ **4:10–12 A tree.** See Ezek. 31 for an extensive description of Assyria using the imagery of a tree. Similar imagery is used both of righteous and wicked individuals and nations Ps. 1:3; 37:35; 52:8; 92:12; Jer. 11:16, 17; 17:8.

■ **4:11 its height reached to the heavens.** The term "heavens" is a key term in this chapter. Although Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom reaches from earth to heaven, the heavens condemn his pride and remind him that his power and even his sanity are gifts from God.

■ **4:13 watcher.** A name used of an angel only here in the Old Testament.

■ **4:16 the heart of a beast.** The mental illness in which a person imagines himself to be an animal is called "zoanthropy" (a compound of the Greek words for "animal" and "man").

let seven times pass over him. This means seven periods of unspecified duration (cf. vv. 23, 25), such as seasons, years, or months.

17 [r]Ps. 9:16; 83:18 [s]Dan. 2:21; 4:25, 32; 5:21 [t]Jer. 27:5–7; Ezek. 29:18–20; Dan. 2:37; 5:18 [u]1 Sam. 2:8; Dan. 11:21

18 [v]Gen. 41:8, 15; Dan. 5:8, 15 [w]Dan. 4:8, 9; 5:11, 14

19 [x]Dan. 4:8 [y]Jer. 4:19; Dan. 7:15, 28; 8:27 [z]2 Sam. 18:32; Jer. 29:7; Dan. 4:24; 10:16 [3]*be for* [4]*for*

20 [a]Dan. 4:10–12

22 [b]Dan. 2:37, 38 [c]Jer. 27:6–8

23 [d]Dan. 4:13–15 [e]Dan. 5:21 [5]Possibly *years*

25 [f]Dan. 4:32; 5:21 [g]Ps. 106:20 [h]Ps. 83:18; Dan. 4:2, 17, 32 [i]Jer. 27:5 [6]Possibly *years*

26 [j]Matt. 21:25; Luke 15:18 [7]God

27 [k][Prov. 28:13]; Is. 55:7; Ezek. 18:21, 22; [Rom. 2:9–11; 1 Pet. 4:8] [l][Ps. 41:1–3]; Is. 58:6, 7, 10 [m]1 Kin. 21:29 [8]*prolonging*

29 [9]Or *upon*

30 [n]Prov. 16:18; Is. 13:19; Dan. 5:20

31 [o]Dan. 5:5; Luke 12:20 [p]Dan. 4:24

32 [q][Dan. 4:25] [t]Possibly *years*

In order [r]that the living may know
[s]That the Most High rules in the kingdom of men,
[t]Gives it to whomever He will,
And sets over it the [u]lowest of men.'

18 "This dream I, King Nebuchadnezzar, have seen. Now you, Belteshazzar, declare its interpretation, [v]since all the wise *men* of my kingdom are not able to make known to me the interpretation; but you *are* able, [w]for the Spirit of the Holy God *is* in you."

Daniel Explains the Second Dream

19 Then Daniel, [x]whose name was Belteshazzar, was astonished for a time, and his thoughts [y]troubled him. *So* the king spoke, and said, "Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its interpretation trouble you."

Belteshazzar answered and said, "My lord, *may* [z]the dream [3]concern those who hate you, and its interpretation [4]concern your enemies!

20 [a]"The tree that you saw, which grew and became strong, whose height reached to the heavens and which *could be seen* by all the earth, 21 whose leaves *were* lovely and its fruit abundant, in which *was* food for all, under which the beasts of the field dwelt, and in whose branches the birds of the heaven had their home— 22 [b]it *is* you, O king, who have grown and become strong; for your greatness has grown and reaches to the heavens, [c]and your dominion to the end of the earth.

23 [d]"And inasmuch as the king saw a watcher, a holy one, coming down from heaven and saying, 'Chop down the tree and destroy it, but leave its stump and roots in the earth, *bound* with a band of iron and bronze in the tender grass of the field; let it be wet with the dew of heaven, [e]and let him graze with the beasts of the field, till seven [5]times pass over him'; 24 this is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree of the Most High, which has come upon my lord the king: 25 They shall [f]drive you from men, your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make you [g]eat grass like oxen. They shall wet you with the dew of heaven, and seven [6]times shall pass over you, [h]till you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and [i]gives it to whomever He chooses.

26 "And inasmuch as they gave the command to leave the stump *and* roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be assured to you, after you come to know that [j]Heaven[7] rules. 27 Therefore, O king, let my advice be acceptable to you; [k]break off your sins by *being* righteous, and your iniquities by showing mercy to *the* poor. [l]Perhaps there may be [m]a [8]lengthening of your prosperity."

Nebuchadnezzar's Humiliation

28 All *this* came upon King Nebuchadnezzar. 29 At the end of the twelve months he was walking [9]about the royal palace of Babylon. 30 The king [n]spoke, saying, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?"

31 [o]While the word *was still* in the king's mouth, [p]a voice fell from heaven: "King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom has departed from you! 32 And [q]they shall drive you from men, and your dwelling *shall be* with the beasts of the field. They shall make you eat grass like oxen; and seven [t]times shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses."

■ **4:22 it is you, O king.** With this statement, much like Nathan's to David (2 Sam. 12:7), Daniel applies the dream to Nebuchadnezzar.

■ **4:25 your dwelling shall be with the beasts.** With graphic detail Daniel explains how Nebuchadnezzar's mind will fail. He will be deprived of his throne, and he will lose his dignity as a human being created to rule animals and not to imitate them.

the Most High rules. The purpose of Nebuchadnezzar's humiliation was to compel him to recognize God's sovereignty.

■ **4:26 your kingdom shall be assured to you.** Nebuchadnezzar was promised that in spite of the severity and length of his illness, he would regain his throne when he acknowledged God's sovereignty.

Heaven rules. See text note. This is the first time in the Bible where "Heaven" is used as a substitute for "God" (4:37). Compare Matt. 5:3 with Luke 6:20.

33 That very hour the word was fulfilled concerning Nebuchadnezzar; he was driven from men and ate grass like oxen; his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair had grown like eagles' *feathers* and his nails like birds' *claws*.

Nebuchadnezzar Praises God

34 And [r]at the end of the [2]time I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted my eyes to heaven, and my understanding returned to me; and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him [s]who lives forever:

For His dominion *is* [t]an everlasting dominion,
And His kingdom *is* from generation to generation.
35 [u]All the inhabitants of the earth *are* reputed as nothing;
[v]He does according to His will in the army of heaven
And *among* the inhabitants of the earth.
[w]No one can restrain His hand
Or say to Him, [x]"What have You done?"

36 At the same time my reason returned to me, [y]and for the glory of my kingdom, my honor and splendor returned to me. My counselors and nobles resorted to me, I was [z]restored to my kingdom, and excellent majesty was [a]added to me. 37 Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, [b]praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, [c]all of whose works *are* truth, and His ways justice. [d]And those who walk in pride He is able to put down.

Belshazzar's Feast

5 Belshazzar the king [a]made a great feast for a thousand of his lords, and drank wine in the presence of the thousand. 2 While he tasted the wine, Belshazzar gave the command to bring

34 [r]Dan. 4:26 [s]Ps. 102:24–27; Dan. 6:26; 12:7; [Rev. 4:10] [t][Ps. 10:16]; Dan. 2:44; 7:14; Mic. 4:7; [Luke 1:33] [2]Lit. *days*

35 [u]Ps. 39:5; Is. 40:15, 17 [v]Ps. 115:3; 135:6; Dan. 6:27 [w]Job 34:29; Is. 43:13 [x]Job 9:12; Is. 45:9; Jer. 18:6; Rom. 9:20; [1 Cor. 2:16]

36 [y]Dan. 4:26 [z]2 Chr. 20:20 [a]Job 42:12; [Prov. 22:4; Matt. 6:33]

37 [b]Dan. 2:46, 47; 3:28, 29 [c]Deut. 32:4; [Ps. 33:4]; Is. 5:16; [Rev. 15:3] [d]Ex. 18:11; Job 40:11, 12; Dan. 5:20

CHAPTER 5

1 [a]Esth. 1:3; Is. 22:12–14

God Reigns: Divine Sovereignty

The assertion of God's absolute sovereignty in creation, providence, and salvation is basic to biblical belief and biblical praise. The vision of God reigning from His throne is recurrent (1 Kin. 22:19; Is. 6:1; Ezek. 1:26; Dan. 7:9; Rev. 4:2; cf. Ps. 11:4; 45:6; 47:8, 9; Heb. 12:2; Rev. 3:21). We are constantly told in explicit terms that the Lord (Yahweh) reigns as king, exercising dominion over great and small alike (Ex. 15:18; Ps. 47; 93; 96:10; 97; 99:1–5; 146:10; Prov. 16:33; 21:1; Is. 24:23; 52:7; Dan. 4:34, 35; 5:21–28; 6:26; Matt. 10:29–31). God's dominion is total: He wills as He chooses, and carries out all that He wills, and none can stay His hand, or thwart His plans. He exercises His rule in the normal course of life, as well as in more remarkable interventions or miracles.

God's rational creatures, angelic and human, have free agency, that is, the power of personal decision as to what they will do. We would not be moral beings, answerable to God the Judge, if it were not so. Nor would it be possible to distinguish, as Scripture does, between the bad purposes of human agents and the good purposes of God, who sovereignly overrules human action as a planned means to His own goals (Gen. 50:20; Acts 2:23; 13:26–39). Yet the fact of free agency confronts us with mystery. God's control over our free actions, actions chosen by ourselves, is as complete as it is over anything else; but how this can be we do not know. Despite this control, God is not, and cannot be, the author of sin. God has conferred responsibility on moral agents for their thoughts, words, and deeds, according to His justice.

Ps. 93 teaches that God's sovereign rule (a) guarantees the stability of the world against all the forces of chaos (vv. 1–4), (b) confirms the trustworthiness of all God's utterances and directives (v. 5), and (c) calls for the worship of His people (v. 5). The whole psalm expresses joy, hope, and confidence in the Almighty. □

■ **4:34, 35, 37** Although Nebuchadnezzar confesses God's sovereignty, he does not confess a belief that the God of Israel is the only God. See theological note "God Reigns: Divine Sovereignty."

■ **4:37 King of heaven.** This unique title brings together the theme of the chapter: the rule of God from heaven (vv. 3, 26 and notes).

■ **5:1 Belshazzar the king.** The name "Belshazzar" means "Bel, protect the king" (not to be confused with "Belteshazzar," the Babylonian name given to Daniel, 1:7 note). From Babylonian sources we know that

the gold and silver vessels [b]which his [1]father Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple which *had been* in Jerusalem, that the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them. [3] Then they brought the gold [c]vessels that had been taken from the temple of the house of God which *had been* in Jerusalem; and the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines drank from them. [4] They drank wine, [d]and praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze and iron, wood and stone.

[5] [e]In the same hour the fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall of the king's palace; and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. [6] Then the king's countenance changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his hips were loosened and his [f]knees knocked against each other. [7] [g]The king cried [2]aloud to bring in [h]the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. The king spoke, saying to the wise *men* of Babylon, "Whoever reads this writing, and tells me its interpretation, shall be clothed with purple and *have* a chain of gold around his neck; [i]and he shall be the third ruler in the kingdom." [8] Now all the king's wise *men* came, [j]but they could not read the writing, or make known to the king its interpretation. [9] Then King Belshazzar was greatly [k]troubled, his countenance was changed, and his lords were [3]astonished.

[10] The queen, because of the words of the king and his lords, came to the banquet hall. The queen spoke, saying, "O king, live forever! Do not let your thoughts trouble you, nor let your countenance change. [11] [l]There is a man in your kingdom in whom *is* the Spirit of the Holy God. And in the days of your [4]father, light and understanding and wisdom, like the wisdom of the gods, were found in him; and King Nebuchadnezzar your [4]father—your father the king—made him chief of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, *and* soothsayers. [12] Inasmuch as an excellent spirit, knowledge, understanding, interpreting dreams, solving riddles, and [5]explaining enigmas were found in this Daniel, [m]whom the king named Belteshazzar, now let Daniel be called, and he will give the interpretation."

The Writing on the Wall Explained

[13] Then Daniel was brought in before the king. The king spoke, and said to Daniel, "*Are* you that Daniel [6]who is one of the captives from Judah, whom my [7]father the king brought from Judah? [14] I have heard of you, that [n]the [8]Spirit of God *is* in you, and *that* light and understanding and excellent wisdom are found in you. [15] Now [o]the wise *men,* the astrologers, have been brought in before me, that they should read this writing and make known to me its interpretation, but they could not give the interpretation of the thing. [16] And I have heard of you, that you can give interpretations and [9]explain enigmas. [p]Now if you can read the writing and make known to me its interpretation, you shall be clothed with purple and *have* a chain of gold around your neck, and shall be the third ruler in the kingdom."

[17] Then Daniel answered, and said before the king, "Let your gifts be for yourself, and give

2 [b]2 Kin. 24:13; 25:15; Ezra 1:7–11; Jer. 52:19; Dan. 1:2 [1]Or *ancestor*

3 [c]2 Chr. 36:10

4 [d]Is. 42:8; Dan. 5:23; Rev. 9:20

5 [e]Dan. 4:31

6 [f]Ezek. 7:17; 21:7

7 [g]Dan. 4:6, 7; 5:11, 15 [h]Is. 47:13 [i]Dan. 6:2, 3 [2]Lit. *with strength*

8 [j]Gen. 41:8; Dan. 2:27; 4:7; 5:15

9 [k]Job 18:11; Is. 21:2–4; Jer. 6:24; Dan. 2:1; 5:6 [3]*perplexed*

11 [l]Dan. 2:48; 4:8, 9, 18 [4]Or *ancestor*

12 [m]Dan. 1:7; 4:8 [5]Lit. *untying knots*

13 [6]Lit. *who is of the sons of the captivity* [7]Or *ancestor*

14 [n]Dan. 4:8, 9, 18; 5:11, 12 [8]Or *spirit of the gods*

15 [o]Dan. 5:7, 8

16 [p]Dan. 5:7, 29 [9]Lit. *untie knots*

Belshazzar was placed in charge of affairs in Babylon while his father, Nabonidus, the last king of Babylon, spent extensive periods of time at Tema in Arabia. The events of this chapter took place in 539 B.C., the year of Babylon's fall to the Persians, forty-two years after the death of Nebuchadnezzar in 563 B.C.

■ **5:2 While he tasted the wine.** Under the influence of wine Belshazzar committed a sacrilegious act.

his father. The immediate father of Belshazzar was Nabonidus, not Nebuchadnezzar. It is not unusual for the terms "father" (vv. 11, 13, 18) and "son" (v. 22) to be used as equivalents for "ancestor" (text note) and "descendant."

■ **5:4 praised the gods.** The temple vessels were defiled, not only by being put to profane use, but also by being used to honor the false gods of Babylon.

■ **5:7 the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers.** See notes on 1:20; 2:2; cf. 2:27; 4:7.

tells me its interpretation. Once again a king requires Daniel's assistance to understand a message from God meant for him (2:5 note).

third ruler. That is, close in power to Nabonidus and Belshazzar (5:1 note). "Third ruler" is an official designation of a high office, but not necessarily the literal third in line to the throne.

■ **5:10 The queen.** It is unlikely that this was a wife of Belshazzar, since she was already present at the banquet (vv. 2, 3). Probably she is to be identified as the "queen mother," one of very few women to have significant power in ancient royal courts (cf. 1 Kin. 15:3; 2 Kin. 11:1–3; 24:12; Jer. 13:18).

■ **5:11 the Spirit of the Holy God.** See note on 4:8. It is not surprising that the queen mother was more familiar with Daniel's life and prominence than was Belshazzar. Daniel would be in his eighties by 539 B.C. He had been brought to Babylon as a young man sixty-six years before (605 B.C., 1:1 note).

■ **5:12 found in this Daniel.** This divine endowment can be understood as the presence of God's Spirit in an individual, or simply as the possession of a remarkable spirit characteristic of that individual.

Belteshazzar. See note on 1:7.

■ **5:16 third ruler in the kingdom.** See note on v. 7.

■ **5:17 Let your gifts be for yourself.** Daniel may reject Belshazzar's offer of reward because he is conscious that it is only by God's mercy that he is able to respond to the king's request, and he does not want to use his God-given role as a means of personal profit (cf. Gen. 14:23; 1 Sam. 9:7 note). But why then did he accept them earlier (2:48) and later (v. 29)? Some interpreters believe he is here avoiding royal pressure to modify the ominous message (Num. 22:18; Mic. 3:5, 11).

your rewards to another; yet I will read the writing to the king, and make known to him the interpretation. 18 O king, [q]the Most High God gave Nebuchadnezzar your [1]father a kingdom and majesty, glory and honor. 19 And because of the majesty that He gave him, [r]all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him. Whomever he wished, he [s]executed; whomever he wished, he kept alive; whomever he wished, he set up; and whomever he wished, he put down. 20 [t]But when his heart was lifted up, and his spirit was hardened in pride, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and they took his glory from him. 21 Then he was [u]driven from the sons of men, his heart was made like the beasts, and his dwelling *was* with the wild donkeys. They fed him with grass like oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, [v]till he [2]knew that the Most High God rules in the kingdom of men, and appoints over it whomever He chooses.

22 "But you his son, Belshazzar, [w]have not humbled your heart, although you knew all this. 23 [x]And you have [3]lifted yourself up against the Lord of heaven. They have brought the [y]vessels of [4]His house before you, and you and your lords, your wives and your concubines, have drunk wine from them. And you have praised the gods of silver and gold, bronze and iron, wood and stone, [z]which do not see or hear or know; and the God who *holds* your breath in His hand [a]and owns all your ways, you have not glorified. 24 Then the [5]fingers of the hand were sent from Him, and this writing was written.

25 "And this is the inscription that was written:

[6]MENE, MENE, [7]TEKEL, [8]UPHARSIN.

26 This *is* the interpretation of *each* word. MENE: God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it; 27 TEKEL: [b]You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting; 28 PERES: Your kingdom has been divided, and given to the [c]Medes and [d]Persians."[9] 29 Then Belshazzar gave the command, and they clothed Daniel with purple and *put* a chain of gold around his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him [e]that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom.

Belshazzar's Fall

30 [f]That very night Belshazzar, king of the Chaldeans, was slain. 31 [g]And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, *being* about sixty-two years old.

The Plot Against Daniel

6 It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom one hundred and twenty satraps, to be over the whole kingdom; 2 and over these, three governors, of whom Daniel *was* one, that the satraps might give account to them, so that the king would suffer no loss. 3 Then this Daniel

18 [q]Dan. 2:37, 38; 4:17, 22, 25 [1]Or *ancestor*

19 [r]Jer. 27:7 [s]Dan. 2:12, 13; 3:6

20 [t]Dan. 4:30, 37

21 [u]Dan. 4:32, 33 [v]Ezek. 17:24 [2]Recognized

22 [w]2 Chr. 33:23; 36:12

23 [x]Dan. 5:3, 4 [y]Ex. 40:9 [z]Ps. 115:5, 6 [a][Jer. 10:23] [3]Exalted [4]The temple

24 [5]Lit. *palm*

25 [6]Lit. *a mina* (50 shekels) from the verb "to number" [7]Lit. *a shekel* from the verb "to weigh" [8]Lit. *and half-shekels* from the verb "to divide"; pl. of *Peres*, v. 28

27 [b]Ps. 62:9

28 [c]Dan. 5:31; 9:1 [d]Dan. 6:28 [9]Aram. *Paras*, consonant with *Peres*

29 [e]Dan. 5:7, 16

30 [f]Jer. 51:31, 39, 57

31 [g]Dan. 2:39; 9:1

■ **5:18 Nebuchadnezzar your father.** See note on v. 2.

■ **5:21–28** See "God Reigns: Divine Sovereignty" at 4:34.

■ **5:21 Most High God rules.** This statement summarizes the book's theology (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes).

■ **5:22 But you his son.** See note on v. 2.

although you knew all this. Because the king is without excuse, even more than his father, the time of mercy is past (contrast a different case at 1 Tim. 1:13).

■ **5:24 Then.** The writing on the wall is God's answer to the arrogant challenge presented by Belshazzar's pride and his defiance of the God who had shown His existence and sovereignty in the time of Nebuchadnezzar.

■ **5:25 MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN.** Aramaic, like Hebrew, is usually written without vowels, and this very short inscription would have been ambiguous.

■ **5:26 MENE.** The Aramaic word could be a verb meaning "numbered" or a noun meaning "mina," a unit of money. Daniel read it as the verb to signify that the length of Belshazzar's reign had been determined by God and was about to end (Jer. 50:18).

■ **5:27 TEKEL.** This word is also either a verb or a noun. Daniel read it as a verb meaning "weighed," signifying that Belshazzar failed to measure up to God's standards of righteousness.

■ **5:28 PERES.** If those present at the banquet understood the three terms as nouns indicating various units of money (*mina*, or sixty shekels; *tekel*, one shekel; *peres*, a half-shekel), it is not surprising that they could not understand the inscription.

Medes and Persians. See Introduction: Date and Occasion.

■ **5:29 Belshazzar gave the command.** Like Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar honors Daniel (2:48), but unlike his predecessor, he does not honor Daniel's God (2:46, 47).

■ **5:30 Belshazzar . . . was slain.** It is not known just how Belshazzar died. However, the Greek historians Herodotus and Xenophon report that Babylon was taken in a surprise attack by the Persians while the Babylonians were engaged in revelling and dancing.

■ **5:31 Darius the Mede.** It has long been alleged that this and other references to Darius the Mede in the Book of Daniel (6:1, 6, 9, 25, 28; 9:1; 11:1) are historical errors. For this discussion see note on 6:1.

sixty-two. The mina probably weighed sixty shekels. This, with the shekel and two half-shekels (v. 25 note) came to sixty-two; since this is Darius's age, he may have been referred to in the prophecy.

■ **6:1 Darius.** See note on 5:31. Darius the Mede is not referred to in surviving historical sources outside the Scripture, and there is no interval between Belshazzar and Nabonidus (5:1 note) and the accession of Cyrus of Persia. Commentators have suggested that "Darius the Mede" could be: a throne name for Cyrus, the founder of the Persian Empire (v. 28 note); a title; or a designation for Gobryas, a general who had defected from Nebuchadnezzar to Cyrus and later captured Babylon. Cyrus made Gobryas governor over the territories the Persians took from the Babylonians.

■ **6:3 an excellent spirit was in him.** See 1:17; 4:8; 5:12.

distinguished himself above the governors and satraps, [a]because an excellent spirit *was* in him; and the king gave thought to setting him over the whole realm. 4 [b]So the governors and satraps sought to find *some* charge against Daniel concerning the kingdom; but they could find no charge or fault, because he *was* faithful; nor was there any error or fault found in him. 5 Then these men said, "We shall not find any charge against this Daniel unless we find *it* against him concerning the law of his God."

6 So these governors and satraps thronged before the king, and said thus to him: [c]"King Darius, live forever! 7 All the governors of the kingdom, the administrators and satraps, the counselors and advisors, have [d]consulted together to establish a royal statute and to make a firm decree, that whoever petitions any god or man for thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. 8 Now, O king, establish the decree and sign the writing, so that it cannot be changed, according to the [e]law of the Medes and Persians, which [f]does not alter." 9 Therefore King Darius signed the written decree.

Daniel in the Lions' Den

10 Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open [g]toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees [g]three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.

11 Then these men assembled and found Daniel praying and making supplication before his God. 12 [h]And they went before the king, and spoke concerning the king's decree: "Have you not signed a decree that every man who petitions any god or man within thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions?"

The king answered and said, "The thing *is* true, [i]according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which [2]does not alter."

13 So they answered and said before the king, "That Daniel, [j]who is [3]one of the captives from Judah, [k]does not show due regard for you, O king, or for the decree that you have signed, but makes his petition three times a day."

14 And the king, when he heard *these* words, [l]was greatly displeased with himself, and set *his* heart on Daniel to deliver him; and he [4]labored till the going down of the sun to deliver him. 15 Then these men [5]approached the king, and said to the king, "Know, O king, that *it is* [m]the law of the Medes and Persians that no decree or statute which the king establishes may be changed."

16 So the king gave the command, and they brought Daniel and cast *him* into the den of lions. *But* the king spoke, saying to Daniel, "Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you." 17 [n]Then a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, [o]and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signets of his lords, that the purpose concerning Daniel might not be changed.

Daniel Saved from the Lions

18 Now the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; and no [6]musicians were brought before him. [p]Also his sleep [7]went from him. 19 Then the [q]king arose very early in the morning and went in haste to the den of lions. 20 And when he came to the den, he cried out with a [8]lamenting voice to Daniel. The king spoke, saying to Daniel, "Daniel, servant of the living God, [r]has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?"

CHAPTER 6

3 [a]Dan. 5:12

4 [b]Eccl. 4:4

6 [c]Neh. 2:3; Dan. 2:4; 6:21

7 [d]Ps. 59:3; 62:4; 64:2–6

8 [e]Esth. 1:19; 8:8; Dan. 6:12, 15 [f]Lit. *does not pass away*

10 [g]1 Kin. 8:29, 30, 46–48; Ps. 5:7; Jon. 2:4 [g]Ps. 55:17; Acts 2:1, 2, 15; [Phil. 4:6]; 1 Thess. 5:17, 18

12 [h]Dan. 3:8–12; Acts 16:19–21 [i]Esth. 1:19; Dan. 6:8, 15 [2]Lit. *does not pass away*

13 [j]Dan. 1:6; 5:13 [k]Esth. 3:8; Dan. 3:12; Acts 5:29 [3]Lit. *of the sons of the captivity*

14 [l]Mark 6:26 [4]*strove*

15 [m]Esth. 8:8; Ps. 94:20, 21; Dan. 6:8, 12 [5]Lit. *thronged before*

17 [n]Lam. 3:53 [o]Matt. 27:66

18 [p]Esth. 6:1; Ps. 77:4; Dan. 2:1 [6]Exact meaning unknown [7]Or *fled*

19 [q]Dan. 3:24

20 [r]Gen. 18:14; Num. 11:23; Jer. 32:17; Dan. 3:17; [Luke 1:37] [8]Or *grieved*

■ **6:5 the law of his God.** Unintentionally, Daniel's adversaries affirm not only his moral integrity but also the visible nature of his piety and commitment to the God of Israel.

■ **6:7 have consulted.** The false implication is that Daniel concurred with the proposal. These officials are hypocritical in their seeming devotion to Darius. Their scheme is an attempt to manipulate him for their own designs.

any god or man . . . except you. The proposal would appear to Darius to be more political than religious, and would serve to consolidate his authority over newly conquered territories.

■ **6:8 the law of the Medes and Persians.** The unchangeableness of their law is also attested in extrabiblical writings. The effect of the decree was to create a conflict for Daniel between allegiance to God and obedience to human government.

■ **6:10 down on his knees.** Standing may have been a regular posture in prayer (1 Chr. 23:30; Neh. 9:2–5), while kneeling, a mark of humility, occurred in circumstances of particular solemnity (1 Kin. 8:54; Ezra 9:5; Ps. 95:6; Luke 22:41; Acts 7:60; 9:40).

as was his custom. Evidently Daniel's prayer habits were public knowledge.

■ **6:13 one of the captives from Judah.** This ethnic identification of Daniel is perhaps indicative of prejudice towards the Jews on the part of the other officials (3:8).

■ **6:14 set his heart on Daniel to deliver him.** Darius immediately perceived that he had been victimized by the intrigue of his own officials in order to trap Daniel. His loyalty to Daniel remained unshaken.

■ **6:16 Your God . . . will deliver you.** Against his own will Darius was forced to comply with the decree. Nevertheless, he is confident that Daniel's God will intervene on behalf of His faithful servant.

■ **6:17 sealed it with his own signet ring.** Signet rings and cylinder seals were used by the Assyrians, Babylonians, and Persians. The ring or cylinder was pressed into soft clay to leave the mark of the owner of the seal. Breaking seals was a violation of the law.

21 Then Daniel said to the king, [s]"O king, live forever! 22 [t]My God sent His angel and [u]shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you."

23 Now the king was exceedingly glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no injury whatever was found on him, [v]because he believed in his God.

Darius Honors God

24 And the king gave the command, [w]and they brought those men who had accused Daniel, and they cast *them* into the den of lions—them, [x]their children, and their wives; and the lions overpowered them, and broke all their bones in pieces before they ever came to the bottom of the den.

25 [y]Then King Darius wrote:

To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth:

Peace be multiplied to you.

26 [z]I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom *men must* [a]tremble and fear before the God of Daniel.

[b]For He *is* the living God,
And steadfast forever;
His kingdom *is the one* which shall not be [c]destroyed,
And His dominion *shall endure* to the end.
27 He delivers and rescues,
[d]And He works signs and wonders
In heaven and on earth,
Who has delivered Daniel from the [g]power of the lions.

28 So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius [e]and in the reign of [f]Cyrus the Persian.

Vision of the Four Beasts

7 In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, [a]Daniel [l]had a dream and [b]visions of his head *while* on his bed. Then he wrote down the dream, telling [2]the main facts.

2 Daniel spoke, saying, "I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of heaven were stirring up the Great Sea. 3 And four great beasts [c]came up from the sea, each different from the other. 4 The first *was* [d]like a lion, and had eagle's wings. I watched till its wings were plucked off; and it was lifted up from the earth and made to stand on two feet like a man, and a [e]man's heart was given to it.

5 [f]"And suddenly another beast, a second, like a bear. It was raised up on one side, and *had* three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. And they said thus to it: 'Arise, devour much flesh!'

21 [s]Dan. 2:4; 6:6

22 [t]Num. 20:16; Is. 63:9; Dan. 3:28; Acts 12:11; [Heb. 1:14] [u]Ps. 91:11–13; 2 Tim. 4:17; Heb. 11:33

23 [v]Heb. 11:33

24 [w]Deut. 19:18, 19; Esth. 7:10 [x]Deut. 24:16; 2 Kin. 14:6; Esth. 9:10

25 [y]Ezra 1:1, 2; Esth. 3:12; 8:9; Dan. 4:1

26 [z]Ezra 6:8–12; 7:13; Dan. 3:29 [a]Ps. 99:1 [b]Dan. 4:34; 6:20; Hos. 1:10; Rom. 9:26 [c]Dan. 2:44; 4:3; 7:14, 27; [Luke 1:33]

27 [d]Dan. 4:2, 3 [g]Lit. *hand*

28 [e]Dan. 1:21 [f]Ezra 1:1, 2

CHAPTER 7

1 [a]Num. 12:6; [Amos 3:7] [b][Dan. 2:28] [l]Lit. *saw* [2]Lit. *the head* or *chief of the words*

3 [c]Dan. 7:17; Rev. 13:1; 17:8

4 [d]Deut. 28:49; 2 Sam. 1:23; Jer. 48:40; Ezek. 17:3; Hab. 1:8 [e]Dan. 4:16, 34

5 [f]Dan. 2:39

■ **6:22 My God sent His angel.** Possibly, although not necessarily in the context, this was the Angel of the Lord. See note on 3:28.

■ **6:23 the king . . . commanded.** Darius could rescue Daniel without violating the decree since its demands had been fulfilled.

■ **6:26 a decree.** Compare 2:47; 3:28, 29; 4:2, 3, 34–37; 5:18–29. As in the previous narratives, God displays His sovereign control of nature and history, kingdoms and kings. The decree is an eloquent testimony to "the living God" and His indestructible kingdom. It is an official acknowledgment of Daniel's God, although it does not necessarily reflect personal faith on the part of Darius.

■ **6:28 Daniel prospered.** Although the government changed hands, God's favor sustained Daniel and continued his authority.

■ **7:1 the first year of Belshazzar.** See note on 5:1. Belshazzar's administration under Nabonidus may have begun at the same time as the accession of his father (556 B.C.) or a few years later. In either case the visions of chs. 7 and 8 are chronologically between the events of chs. 4 and 5.

■ **7:2 Great Sea.** The sea is a common figure for the restlessness and dangerous turmoil of sinful men and nations (see v. 17; cf. Is. 17:12, 13; 57:20).

■ **7:3 four great beasts.** These four "beasts" represent four kingdoms (vv. 17, 23), corresponding closely to the four kingdoms of Nebuchadnezzar's dream in ch. 2. For identification of the four kingdoms, see note on 2:37–40 and Introduction: Date and Occasion.

■ **7:4 like a lion.** The "lion" with "eagle's wings" is an appropriate symbol for the Babylonian Empire (cf. Jer. 50:44; Ezek. 17:3, 12). Winged lions with human faces were common in Babylonian art and were placed at the entrances of important public buildings.

wings were plucked off. Perhaps this is a reference to Nebuchadnezzar's humiliation and later restoration after a seven-year period of insanity (ch. 4).

■ **7:5 another beast . . . like a bear.** The Medo-Persian kingdom is symbolized as a "beast" with a voracious appetite. The raised side may represent the superior status of Persia, and the "three ribs" likely represent Persia's conquests over Lydia, (546 B.C.), Babylon (539 B.C.), and Egypt (525 B.C.). See note on 8:3.

6 [g]Dan. 8:8, 22

7 [h]Dan. 2:40 [i]Dan. 2:41; Rev. 12:3; 13:1

8 [j]Dan. 8:9 [k]Rev. 9:7 [l]Ps. 12:3; Rev. 13:5, 6 [3]Lit. *great things*

9 [m][Rev. 20:4] [n]Ps. 90:2 [o]Ps. 104:2; Rev. 1:14 [p]Ezek. 1:15 [4]Or *set up*

10 [q]Ps. 50:3; Is. 30:33; 66:15 [r]Deut. 33:2; 1 Kin. 22:19; Ps. 68:17; Rev. 5:11 [s]Dan. 12:1; [Rev. 20:11–15] [5]Or *judgment*

11 [t][Rev. 19:20; 20:10] [6]Lit. *great*

13 [u]Ezek. 1:26; [Matt. 24:30; 26:64; Mark 13:26; 14:62; Luke 21:27; Rev. 1:7, 13; 14:14]

14 [v]Ps. 2:6–8; Dan. 7:27; [Matt. 28:18; John 3:35, 36; 1 Cor. 15:27; Eph. 1:22; Phil. 2:9–11; Rev. 1:6; 11:15] [w]Dan. 3:4 [x]Ps. 145:13; Mic. 4:7; [Luke 1:33]; John 12:34; Heb. 12:28

6 "After this I looked, and there was another, like a leopard, which had on its back four wings of a bird. The beast also had [g]four heads, and dominion was given to it.

7 "After this I saw in the night visions, and behold, [h]a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, exceedingly strong. It had huge iron teeth; it was devouring, breaking in pieces, and trampling the residue with its feet. It *was* different from all the beasts that *were* before it, [i]and it had ten horns. 8 I was considering the horns, and [j]there was another horn, a little one, coming up among them, before whom three of the first horns were plucked out by the roots. And there, in this horn, *were* eyes like the eyes [k]of a man, [l]and a mouth speaking [3]pompous words.

Vision of the Ancient of Days

9 "I[m] watched till thrones were [4]put in place,
And [n]the Ancient of Days was seated;
[o]His garment *was* white as snow,
And the hair of His head *was* like pure wool.
His throne *was* a fiery flame,
[p]Its wheels a burning fire;
10 [q]A fiery stream issued
And came forth from before Him.
[r]A thousand thousands ministered to Him;
Ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him.
[s]The [5]court was seated,
And the books were opened.

11 "I watched then because of the sound of the [6]pompous words which the horn was speaking; [t]I watched till the beast was slain, and its body destroyed and given to the burning flame. 12 As for the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.

13 "I was watching in the night visions,
And behold, [u]*One* like the Son of Man,
Coming with the clouds of heaven!
He came to the Ancient of Days,
And they brought Him near before Him.
14 [v]Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom,
That all [w]peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him.
His dominion *is* [x]an everlasting dominion,
Which shall not pass away,
And His kingdom *the one*
Which shall not be destroyed.

■ **7:6 another, like a leopard.** The Greek Empire is symbolized by the "leopard," known for its quickness. Alexander the Great (356–323 B.C.) conquered the Persian Empire with great speed. Alexander died suddenly at age thirty-three, and the empire he established was divided into four parts (Macedonia under Cassander, Thrace and Asia Minor under Lysimachus, Syria under Seleucus, and Egypt under Ptolemy).

■ **7:7 a fourth beast.** This unidentified "beast" symbolizes Rome, the kingdom that ultimately assimilated the various parts of the divided Greek kingdom.

it had ten horns. The "ten horns" symbolize ten kings or kingdoms associated with the Roman Empire (v. 24). Some interpreters suggest that a second phase of the fourth kingdom, a revived Roman Empire is to be expected, from which the ten horns will come, at once or one after the other (2:44 note; cf. Rev. 13:1–10; 17:3, 12).

■ **7:8 another horn, a little one.** The ten horns are prior in time to the "little horn" which uproots three of them, symbolizing another phase of the fourth kingdom. Many interpreters suggest that the little horn represents the Antichrist (2 Thess. 2:3, 4, 8). This would be the first reference in Scripture to the Antichrist.

■ **7:9 the Ancient of Days was seated.** The title "Ancient of Days" occurs in the Bible only in this chapter (vv. 13, 22). It is a designation for God on the throne and judgment.

His throne . . . Its wheels. The depiction of God's throne resembles Ezekiel's vision of the throne chariot of God (Ezek. 1:15–28).

■ **7:11, 12** A contrast is drawn between the complete destruction of the fourth kingdom and the measure of continuance granted the preceding kingdoms as their people and customs were absorbed into the succeeding kingdoms.

■ **7:13 One like the Son of Man.** The Aramaic for "Son of Man" would otherwise mean "a human being" as opposed to the preceding "beasts." The equivalent is used for Daniel in 8:17 and many times for Daniel's contemporary, Ezekiel (e.g., Ezek. 2:1, 3, 6). But, in contrast to the "beasts" who misruled the earth, this One will rule as God intended before humanity's fall (Gen. 1:26–28; Ps. 8:4–6). The expression "Son of Man" is used sixty-nine times in the synoptic Gospels and twelve times in the Gospel of John to refer to Christ. It is the title Jesus most often used of Himself.

Coming with the clouds of heaven. Elsewhere in the Old Testament it is only God who comes on the clouds (Ps. 104:3; Is. 19:1). Accordingly, the "Son of Man" originates in heaven and comes by divine initiative.

■ **7:14 all peoples . . . should serve Him.** The "Son of Man" is Christ, the Messiah. Jesus referred this passage to Himself, and doing so caused the religious leaders of His day to accuse Him of blasphemy (Matt. 26:64, 65; Mark 14:62–64).

an everlasting dominion. He is given God's sovereignty and exercises the rule symbolized by the stone that fell in Nebuchadnezzar's dream (2:34, 35, 44, 45).

Daniel's Visions Interpreted

15 "I, Daniel, was grieved in my spirit [7]within *my* body, and the visions of my head troubled
me. 16 I came near to one of those who stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told
me and made known to me the interpretation of these things: 17 'Those great beasts, which are
four, *are* four [8]kings *which* arise out of the earth. 18 But [y]the saints of the Most High shall re-
ceive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.'
19 "Then I wished to know the truth about the fourth beast, which was different from all the
others, exceedingly dreadful, *with* its teeth of iron and its nails of bronze, *which* devoured, broke
in pieces, and trampled the residue with its feet; 20 and the ten horns that *were* on its head, and
the other *horn* which came up, before which three fell, namely, that horn which had eyes and a
mouth which spoke [9]pompous words, whose appearance *was* greater than his fellows.
21 "I was watching; [z]and the same horn was making war against the saints, and prevailing
against them, 22 until the Ancient of Days came, [a]and a judgment was made *in favor* of the saints
of the Most High, and the time came for the saints to possess the kingdom.
23 "Thus he said:

'The fourth beast shall be
[b]A fourth kingdom on earth,
Which shall be different from all *other* kingdoms,
And shall devour the whole earth,
Trample it and break it in pieces.
24 [c]The ten horns *are* ten kings
Who shall arise from this kingdom.
And another shall rise after them;
He shall be different from the first *ones,*
And shall subdue three kings.
25 [d]He shall speak *pompous* words against the Most High,
Shall [e]persecute[f] the saints of the Most High,
And shall [f]intend to change times and law.
Then [g]*the saints* shall be given into his hand
[h]For a time and times and half a time.

26 'But[i] the court shall be seated,
And they shall [j]take away his dominion,
To consume and destroy *it* forever.
27 Then the [k]kingdom and dominion,
And the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven,
Shall be given to the people, the saints of the Most High.
[l]His kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom,
[m]And all dominions shall serve and obey Him.'

28 "This *is* the end of the [2]account. As for me, Daniel, [n]my thoughts greatly troubled me, and
my countenance changed; but I [o]kept the matter in my heart."

Vision of a Ram and a Goat

8 In[1] the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar a vision appeared *to* me—to me, Daniel—
after the one that appeared to me [a]the first time. 2 I saw in the vision, and it so happened

15 [7]Lit. *in the midst of its sheath*

17 [8]Representing their kingdoms, v. 23

18 [y]Ps. 149:5–9; Is. 60:12–14; Dan. 7:14; [2 Tim. 2:11; Rev. 2:26, 27; 20:4; 22:5]

20 [9]Lit. *great things*

21 [z]Rev. 11:7; 13:7; 17:14

22 [a][Rev. 1:6]

23 [b]Dan. 2:40

24 [c]Dan. 7:7; Rev. 13:1; 17:12

25 [d]Is. 37:23; Dan. 11:36; Rev. 13:1–6 [e]Rev. 17:6 [f]Dan. 2:21† [g]Rev. 13:7; 18:24 [h]Dan. 12:7; Rev. 12:14 [f]Lit. *wear out*

26 [i][Dan. 2:35; 7:10, 22] [j]Rev. 19:20

27 [k]Is. 54:3; Dan. 7:14, 18, 22; Rev. 20:4 [l]2 Sam. 7:16; Ps. 89:35–37; Is. 9:7; Dan. 2:44; 4:34; 7:14; [Luke 1:33, 34]; John 12:34; [Rev. 11:15; 22:5] [m]Ps. 2:6–12; 22:27; 72:11; 86:9; Is. 60:12; Rev. 11:1

28 [n]Dan. 8:27 [o]Luke 2:19, 51 [2]Lit. *word*

CHAPTER 8

1 [a]Dan. 7:1 [1]The Hebrew language resumes in Dan. 8:1.

■ **7:18 the saints of the Most High.** See vv. 21, 22, 25, 27. The "saints" are not angels, but believers in God, who will share in Christ's kingdom (Matt. 19:28; 1 Cor. 6:1–3; 2 Tim. 2:12; Rev. 22:5).

■ **7:21 making war against the saints.** Daniel gives additional information about the hostility of the little horn, possibly the Antichrist (v. 8), toward the people of God (cf. Rev. 13:7).

■ **7:22 until the Ancient of Days came.** Although the Antichrist will prevail for a time against God's people, in the end he will fall under the judgment of God (Zech. 14:1–4; Rev. 13:7–17; 19:20).

■ **7:25 For a time and times and half a time.** The word "time" is the same word used in 4:16 and 4:23, and as there may mean one year. Some interpreters take this verse to refer to the last half of the seventieth week of ch. 9 (see 9:27). Others do not assign a specific duration to the expression, but take it to be a period of time that is shortened because God intervenes.

■ **7:27 the saints of the Most High.** See note on v. 18.

■ **8:1—12:13** Daniel resumes writing in Hebrew for the last five chapters. He used Aramaic in 2:4 to 7:28 (2:4 note).

■ **8:1 In the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar.** That is, two years after Daniel's dream in ch. 7 (7:1 note).

■ **8:2 I saw . . . that I.** Daniel had a visionary journey like that of Ezekiel (Ezek. 3:10–15).

in Shushan, the citadel. In Daniel's time Shushan (or Susa) was the capital of Elam, about 230 miles east of Babylon. It is not clear whether Elam was independent, or aligned with Babylon or Media. Later, how-

2 [b]Neh. 1:1; Esth. 1:2; 2:8 [2]Or *Susa* [3]Or *fortified palace*
3 [c]Dan. 7:5
4 [d]Dan. 5:19 [4]Lit. *stand before him*
5 [e]Dan. 8:8, 21; 11:3
7 [5]Lit. *struck*
8 [f]Dan. 7:6; 8:22; 11:4
9 [g]Dan. 11:21

while I was looking, that I *was* in [b]Shushan,[2] the [3]citadel, which *is* in the province of Elam; and I saw in the vision that I was by the River Ulai. [3] Then I lifted my eyes and saw, and there, standing beside the river, was a ram which had two horns, and the two horns *were* high; but one *was* [c]higher than the other, and the higher *one* came up last. [4] I saw the ram pushing westward, northward, and southward, so that no animal could [4]withstand him; nor *was there any* that could deliver from his hand, [d]but he did according to his will and became great.

[5] And as I was considering, suddenly a male goat came from the west, across the surface of the whole earth, without touching the ground; and the goat *had* a notable [e]horn between his eyes. [6] Then he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing beside the river, and ran at him with furious power. [7] And I saw him confronting the ram; he was moved with rage against him, [5]attacked the ram, and broke his two horns. There was no power in the ram to withstand him, but he cast him down to the ground and trampled him; and there was no one that could deliver the ram from his hand.

[8] Therefore the male goat grew very great; but when he became strong, the large horn was broken, and in place of it [f]four notable ones came up toward the four winds of heaven. [9] [g]And

ever, as one of three royal cities, Susa was the diplomatic and administrative center of the Persian Empire (cf. Neh. 1:1; Esth. 1:2).

the River Ulai. This canal near Susa connected two rivers that flowed into the Persian Gulf.

■ **8:3 a ram which had two horns.** According to v. 20, the ram and its horns represent the kings of the Medo-Persian Empire.

one was higher than the other, and . . . came up last. Medo-Persian history clarifies the symbolism. The Medes became independent of Assyria after 612 B.C. The Persians were under the control of the Medes, but eventually rose to prominence when Cyrus of Anshan defeated his Median overlord in 550 B.C. Cyrus (reigned 559–530 B.C.) called himself "King of the World."

■ **8:4 pushing westward, northward, and southward.** That is, his back was toward the east from where he had come (Is. 41:2). Cyrus first took Asia Minor, then northern and southern Mesopotamia. Subsequent rulers extended Medo-Persian control far to the East.

became great. The Persian Empire became larger than any previous empire in ancient Near Eastern history.

■ **8:5 from the west . . . the goat had a notable horn.** According to v. 21, the goat represents Greece and the large horn between his eyes is the first king. The symbolism clearly depicts the rise of the Greek Empire under Alexander the Great (356–323 B.C.).

across . . . the whole earth, without touching the ground. These words describe the amazing speed and extent of Alexander's conquests (7:6 note). In only three years he defeated the powerful Persian Empire.

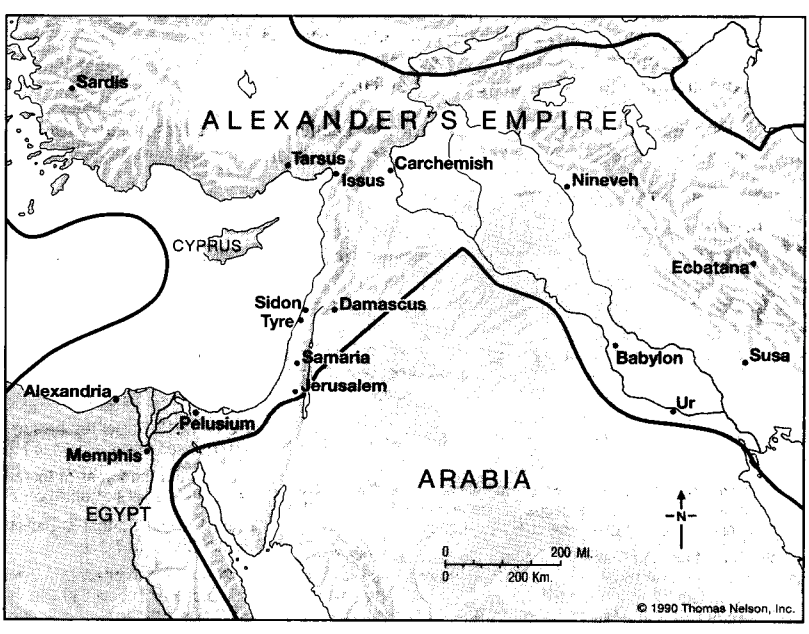
■ **8:8 the male goat grew very great.** Alexander's empire quickly exceeded the Persian Empire in size. By 327 B.C. Alexander had moved east into what is today Afghanistan and then on to the Indus River.

the large horn was broken. Alexander died in Babylon at the age of thirty-three.

in place of it four notable ones came up. According to v. 22, these horns are four kingdoms that emerged from Alexander's empire but were inferior to it in strength. After a time of internal struggle, four of Alexander's generals took portions of the Greek Empire as their own kingdoms. See note on 7:6.

■ **8:9 a little horn.** According to v. 23, this "little horn" symbolizes a wicked ruler who will arise in one of the four Greek kingdoms after a long interval of time ("in the latter time of their kingdom"). The descriptions of

Alexander's Greek Empire (323 B.C.). In 334 B.C. Alexander, son of Philip II of Macedon, began a military quest to destroy the Persian Empire. Moving from west to east, he was victorious in battle at Issus in 333 B.C. against the Persian Darius III. Moving south, Alexander defeated the Phoenicians at Tyre in 332 B.C., swept through Palestine, and conquered Egypt in 331 B.C. Reengaging Darius III near Nineveh, Alexander defeated him again. Alexander's campaign continued east into India, securing vast territory for the Greek Empire. He died in Babylon in 323 B.C.



out of one of them came a little horn which grew exceedingly great toward the south, [h]toward the east, and toward the [i]Glorious *Land.* 10[j]And it grew up to [k]the host of heaven; and [l]it cast down *some* of the host and *some* of the stars to the ground, and trampled them. 11[m]He even exalted *himself* as high as [n]the Prince of the host; [o]and by him [p]the daily *sacrifices* were taken away, and the place of [q]His sanctuary was cast down. 12 Because of transgression, [q]an army was given over *to the horn* to oppose the daily *sacrifices;* and he cast [r]truth down to the ground. He [s]did *all this* and prospered.

13 Then I heard [t]a holy one speaking; and *another* holy one said to that certain *one* who was speaking, "How long *will* the vision *be, concerning* the daily *sacrifices* and the transgression [7]of desolation, the giving of both the sanctuary and the host to be trampled underfoot?"

14 And he said to me, "For two thousand three hundred [s]days; then the sanctuary shall be cleansed."

Gabriel Interprets the Vision

15 Then it happened, when I, Daniel, had seen the vision and [u]was seeking the meaning, that suddenly there stood before me [v]one having the appearance of a man. 16 And I heard a man's voice [w]between *the banks of* the Ulai, who called, and said, [x]"Gabriel, make this *man* understand the vision." 17 So he came near where I stood, and when he came I was afraid and [y]fell on my face; but he said to me, "Understand, son of man, that the vision *refers* to the time of the end."

18 [z]Now, as he was speaking with me, I was in a deep sleep with my face to the ground; [a]but he touched me, and stood me upright. 19 And he said, "Look, I am making known to you what shall happen in the latter time of the indignation; [b]for at the appointed time the end *shall be.* 20 The ram which you saw, having the two horns—*they are* the kings of Media and Persia. 21 And the [9]male goat *is* the [l]kingdom of Greece. The large horn that *is* between its eyes [c]*is* the first king. 22[d]As for the broken *horn* and the four that stood up in its place, four kingdoms shall arise out of that nation, but not with its power.

23 "And in the latter time of their kingdom,
When the transgressors have reached their fullness,

9 [h]Dan. 11:25 [i]Ps. 48:2

10 [j]Dan. 11:28 [k]Is. 14:13 [l]Rev. 12:4

11 [m]Dan. 8:25; 11:36, 37 [n]Josh. 5:14 [o]Dan. 11:31; 12:11 [p]Ex. 29:38 [q]The temple

12 [q]Dan. 11:31 [r]Is. 59:14 [s]Dan. 8:4; 11:36

13 [t]Dan. 4:13, 23 [7]Or *making desolate*

14 [s]Lit. *evening-mornings*

15 [u]1 Pet. 1:10 [v]Ezek. 1:26

16 [w]Dan. 12:6, 7 [x]Luke 1:19, 26

17 [y]Rev. 1:17

18 [z]Luke 9:32 [a]Ezek. 2:2

19 [b]Hab. 2:3

21 [c]Dan. 11:3 [9]*shaggy male* [l]Lit. *king,* representing his kingdom, Dan. 7:17, 23

22 [d]Dan. 11:4

the actions of this ruler (vv. 9–14; 23–25) indicate that he is Antiochus IV Epiphanes, ruler of the Seleucid kingdom from 175–164 B.C. This horn must be distinguished from the "little one" of 7:8 if that chapter refers to the Roman period and not the Greek.

toward the Glorious Land. That is, toward Palestine.

■ **8:10 the host of heaven.** The "host of heaven" or the "stars" (cf. Jer. 33:22) symbolize the people of God (cf. 12:3; Gen. 15:5) or a heavenly army (Is. 14:13; also see 2 Macc. 9:10). The attack against the people of God amounts to an attack against heaven itself.

cast down some of the host and . . . stars to the ground, and trampled them. This is a symbolic depiction of the severe persecution of God's people under Antiochus IV Epiphanes, who attempted to abolish their traditional worship and way of life and forcibly Hellenize them (see 11:21–35 and 1 Macc. 1:10–64 for additional details; see also Introduction to the Intertestamental Period).

■ **8:11 as high as the Prince of the host.** The "Prince" is to be understood as God (see v. 25 where the designation is "Prince of princes"). Antiochus IV took the name Epiphanes ("God manifest") and thought of himself as a manifestation of Zeus.

by him the daily sacrifices were taken away. See vv. 12, 13 and 11:31. Antiochus IV summarily forbade all ceremonies and worship of God in the Jerusalem temple and in the cities of Judah.

the place of His sanctuary was cast down. Antiochus IV entered the Most Holy Place and plundered the silver and gold vessels. He erected an altar to the Olympian Zeus on the altar of God in the temple court and there sacrificed pigs (11:31 note).

■ **8:12 cast truth down to the ground.** Among his transgressions, Antiochus IV destroyed copies of Scripture (1 Macc. 1:56, 57).

He did all this and prospered. The vision depicts the apparent success of the wicked acts of Antiochus IV, the little horn.

■ **8:14 For two thousand three hundred days.** "Days" is literally "evening-morning"; cf. the "vision of the evenings and mornings" in v. 26. Some interpreters understand it simply as a reference to the evening and morning sacrifices as separate offerings (cf. Ex. 29:38–42). On this basis it would represent 1150 days, but these paired sacrifices were traditionally considered a single offering. Others understand it as simply an expression for 2300 days. Since the persecutions by Antiochus IV could be linked with any one of a number of incidents beginning as early as 171 B.C. and ending with the rededication of the temple in 164 B.C., it is difficult to say which understanding of the phrase is to be preferred. The multiple of the number twenty-three may simply be symbolic for a fixed period as in extrabiblical apocalypses (cf. the "sixty-nine" [23 x 3] weeks in 9:25, 26).

then the sanctuary shall be cleansed. The temple was cleansed and rededicated under the leadership of Judas Maccabeus in December, 164 B.C. (11:34 note; cf. Zech. 9:13–17).

■ **8:16 Gabriel.** This angel is mentioned four times in Scripture (9:21; Luke 1:19, 26). The name means "mighty one of God" or "God is mighty."

■ **8:17 son of man.** See note on 7:13. The "strong man of God" is speaking to this distinguished "mortal."

the time of the end. See also v. 19 ("at the appointed time the end shall be"). This expression is not necessarily eschatological (referring to the end of history). It occurs in 11:27, 35 in contexts that are clearly not eschatological. Here it may refer to the end of the persecutions of Antiochus IV.

■ **8:19 the indignation.** The "time of the indignation" may refer to the period of God's judgment on Israel during their subjection to the Babylonians, Persians, and Greeks.

■ **8:20 ram.** See notes on vv. 3, 4.

■ **8:21 goat . . . horn.** See notes on vv. 5, 8.

■ **8:22 the four.** See note on v. 8.

■ **8:23–25** See notes on vv. 9–14. Some interpreters perceive the Antichrist in the descriptions of the "little horn" of this chapter. Antiochus IV is viewed as a type pointing forward to a later manifestation of satanic power in the person of the Antichrist.

A king shall arise,
[e]Having fierce [2]features,
Who understands sinister schemes.
24 His power shall be mighty, [f]but not by his own power;
He shall destroy [3]fearfully,
[g]And shall prosper and thrive;
[h]He shall destroy the mighty, and *also* the holy people.

25 "Through[i] his cunning
He shall cause deceit to prosper under his [4]rule;
[j]And he shall exalt *himself* in his heart.
He shall destroy many in *their* prosperity.
[k]He shall even rise against the Prince of princes;
But he shall be [l]broken without *human* [4]means.

26 "And the vision of the evenings and mornings
Which was told is true;
[m]Therefore seal up the vision,
For *it refers* to many days *in the future.*"

27 [n]And I, Daniel, fainted and was sick for days; afterward I arose and went about the king's business. I was [5]astonished by the vision, but no one understood it.

Daniel's Prayer for the People

9 In the first year [a]of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the lineage of the Medes, who was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans— 2 in the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years *specified* by the word of the LORD through [b]Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.

3 [c]Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes. 4 And I prayed to the LORD my God, and made confession, and said, "O [d]Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with those who keep His commandments, 5 [e]we have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments. 6 [f]Neither have we heeded Your servants the prophets, who spoke in Your name to our kings and our princes, to our fathers and all the people of the land. 7 O Lord, [g]righteousness *belongs* to You, but to us shame of face, as *it is* this day—to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those near and those far off in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of the unfaithfulness which they have committed against You.

8 "O Lord, to us *belongs* shame of face, to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, because we have sinned against You. 9 [h]To the Lord our God *belong* mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against Him. 10 We have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in His laws,

23 [e]Deut. 28:50 [2]Lit. *countenance*
24 [f]Rev. 17:13 [g]Dan. 11:36 [h]Dan. 7:25 [3]Or *extraordinarily*
25 [i]Dan. 11:21 [j]Dan. 8:11–13; 11:36; 12:7 [k]Dan. 11:36; Rev. 19:19, 20 [l]Job 34:20; Lam. 4:6 [4]Lit. *hand*
26 [m]Ezek. 12:27; Dan. 12:4, 9; Rev. 22:10
27 [n]Dan. 7:28; 8:17; Hab. 3:16 [5]*amazed*

CHAPTER 9

1 [a]Dan. 1:21
2 [b]2 Chr. 36:21; Ezra 1:1; Jer. 25:11, 12; 29:10; Zech. 7:5
3 [c]Neh. 1:4; Dan. 6:10; 10:15
4 [d]Ex. 20:6
5 [e]1 Kin. 8:47, 48; Neh. 9:33; Ps. 106:6; Is. 64:5–7; Jer. 14:7
6 [f]2 Chr. 36:15; Jer. 44:4, 5
7 [g]Neh. 9:33
9 [h][Neh. 9:17; Ps. 130:4, 7]

■ **8:25 Prince of princes.** This is a reference to God (v. 11 note).

without human means. Antiochus IV died of a physical or nervous disorder in 164 B.C. For accounts of his death, see 1 Macc. 6:1–16 and 2 Macc. 9.

■ **8:26 seal up the vision.** The term "seal" can mean to authenticate or certify something, or to close up for confidentiality and safekeeping. The second sense seems best in this context (6:17 note).

it refers to many days in the future. As indicated by the italics, the words "in the future" have been supplied by the translators. The conquests of Alexander (333–323 B.C.) occurred more than two centuries after Daniel's vision (c. 550 B.C.). The activities of Antiochus IV were about a century and a half after Alexander (171–164 B.C.).

■ **9:1–27** Daniel recounts the revelation he received concerning the prophecy of Jeremiah about the seventy years of Jerusalem's desolation (Jer. 25:11, 12; 29:10). Significantly, the revelation follows Daniel's prayer confessing the sinfulness of God's people and the justice of Jerusalem's desolation, and seeking the favor of God for the restoration of the city and the temple.

■ **9:1 the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus.** See note on 6:1. The word "Ahasuerus" (not the same person mentioned in Esth. 1:1) may be a royal title rather than a personal name. The first year of Darius was 539 B.C.

■ **9:2 seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.** Interpreters differ on the dates of the beginning and ending of the seventy-year period, and on whether it is to be understood as a round number for a human lifetime or exactly seventy years. Some date the period from 586 B.C. (the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar) to 516 B.C., when the restoration of the temple was completed under Zerubbabel (Ezra 6:13–18). Others date the beginning of the period to the year of Daniel's own captivity (605 B.C., 1:1 note), which would suggest that Daniel recognized the end of the seventy years was imminent.

■ **9:4–19** Daniel's prayer is rooted in a covenantal understanding of the Lord's relation to His people (blessing for obedience, cursing for disobedience, especially vv. 5, 7, 11, 12, 14; cf. Lev. 26:14–45; Deut. 28:15–68; 30:1–5). For a similar prayer, see Neh. 9. The prayer has four parts: (a) worship (v. 4); (b) a confession of sin (vv. 5–11); (c) recognition of the justice of God in His judgment on sin (vv. 11–14); and (d) a plea for God's mercy based on concern for His name, kingdom, and will (vv. 15–19). The prayer is grounded on God's promises (v. 2) and offered in a spirit of contrition and humility (v. 3). It is a model for the appropriate elements of effective prayer.

which He set before us by His servants the prophets. 11 Yes, [i]all Israel has transgressed Your law, and has departed so as not to obey Your voice; therefore the curse and the oath written in the [j]Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against Him. 12 And He has [k]confirmed His words, which He spoke against us and against our judges who judged us, by bringing upon us a great disaster; [l]for under the whole heaven such has never been done as what has been done to Jerusalem.

13 [m]"As *it is* written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come upon us; [n]yet we have not made our prayer before the LORD our God, that we might turn from our iniquities and understand Your truth. 14 Therefore the LORD has [o]kept the disaster in mind, and brought it upon us; for [p]the LORD *our God is righteous in all the works which He does, though we have not obeyed His* voice. 15 And now, O Lord our God, [q]who brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and made Yourself [r]a name, as *it is* this day—we have sinned, we have done wickedly!

16 "O Lord, [s]according to all Your righteousness, I pray, let Your anger and Your fury be turned away from Your city Jerusalem, [t]Your holy mountain; because for our sins, [u]and for the iniquities of our fathers, [v]Jerusalem and Your people [w]*are* a reproach to all *those* around us. 17 Now therefore, our God, hear the prayer of Your servant, and his supplications, [x]and [y]for the Lord's sake [1]cause Your face to shine on [2]Your sanctuary, [z]which is desolate. 18 [a]O my God, incline Your ear and hear; open Your eyes [b]and see our desolations, and the city [c]which is called by Your name; for we do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies. 19 O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and act! Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name."

The Seventy-Weeks Prophecy

20 Now while I *was* speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God, 21 yes, while I *was* speaking in prayer, the man [d]Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, [3]being caused to fly swiftly, reached me about the time of the evening offering. 22 And he informed *me,* and talked with me, and said, "O Daniel, I have now come forth to give you skill to understand. 23 At the beginning of your supplications the [4]command went out, and I have come to tell *you,* for you *are* greatly [e]beloved; therefore [f]consider the matter, and understand the vision:

24 "Seventy [5]weeks are determined
For your people and for your holy city,
To finish the transgression,
[6]To make an end of sins,
[g]To make reconciliation for iniquity,
[h]To bring in everlasting righteousness,
To seal up vision and prophecy,
[i]And to anoint [7]the Most Holy.

25 "Know therefore and understand,
That from the going forth of the command

11 [i]Is. 1:3–6 [j]Lev. 26:14
12 [k]Zech. 1:6 [l]Lam. 1:12; 2:13
13 [m]Deut. 28:15–68 [n]Is. 9:13
14 [o]Jer. 31:28; 44:27 [p]Neh. 9:33
15 [q]Neh. 1:10 [r]Neh. 9:10
16 [s]1 Sam. 12:7 [t]Zech. 8:3 [u]Ex. 20:5 [v]Lam. 2:16 [w]Ps. 79:4
17 [x]Num. 6:24–26 [y]Lam. 5:18 [z][John 16:24] [1]Be gracious [2]The temple
18 [a]Is. 37:17 [b]Ex. 3:7 [c]Jer. 25:29
21 [d]Dan. 8:16 [3]Or *being weary with weariness*
23 [e]Dan. 10:11, 19 [f]Matt. 24:15 [4]Lit. *word*
24 [g][Is. 53:10] [h]Rev. 14:6 [i]Ps. 45:7 [5]Lit. *sevens,* and so throughout the chapter [6]So with Qr., LXX, Syr., Vg.; Kt., Theodotion *To seal up* [7]The Most Holy Place

■ **9:21 Gabriel.** See note on 8:16.

■ **9:24–27** The interpretation of these verses is disputed at many points. There are two fundamental approaches to the interpretation of the "weeks" (lit. "sevens"): symbolic periods of time or literal periods of time. In the symbolic view the seventy years of punishment (v. 2) are multiplied seven times in accordance with the covenantal curses (Lev. 26:18, 21, 24, 28). *Jubilees,* a Jewish book from the period between the Testaments, also structures the whole of history into periods of 490 years. Adherents of the literal view fall into three categories. As with other prophecies in Daniel, some commentators interpret the verses with reference to the time of Antiochus IV. Other interpreters may be divided into two groups: (a) those who interpret the passage as having its primary focus on events associated with the First Advent of Christ and shortly thereafter (first-advent view); (b) those who interpret the passage as having reference to events associated with both the first and second advents of Christ with an unstated time interval between the two (second-advent view). Within each of these categories individual interpreters differ on details.

■ **9:24 Seventy weeks.** Most interpreters view the units of "seventy weeks" as representing 490 years (9:24–27 note). These so-called seventy weeks of years are then divided into three subunits of 49 years ("seven weeks," v. 25); 434 years ("sixty-two weeks," v. 26); and 7 years ("one week," v. 27). Interpreters differ over whether these subunits are to be viewed as a continuous sequence or as having time intervals between them.

■ **9:25 the going forth of the command.** The Hebrew term translated "command" may mean simply "word." This ambiguity has given rise to two primary interpretations for the beginning of the "seventy weeks": (a) some interpreters understand it to be the decree issued by Artaxerxes I in the seventh year of his reign, or 457 B.C. (Ezra 7:12–26). Forty-nine years later (408 B.C.) the streets and wall around Jerusalem had been completed (v. 25). (b) Other commentators understand the "sev-

To restore and build Jerusalem
Until [j]Messiah [k]the Prince,
There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks;
The [8]street shall be built again, and the [9]wall,
Even in troublesome times.

26 "And after the sixty-two weeks
[l]Messiah shall [l]be cut off, [m]but not for Himself;
And [n]the people of the prince who is to come
[o]Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary.
The end of it *shall be* with a flood,
And till the end of the war desolations are determined.
27 Then he shall confirm [p]a [2]covenant with [q]many for one week;
But in the middle of the week
He shall bring an end to sacrifice and offering.
And on the wing of abominations shall be one who makes desolate,
[r]Even until the consummation, which is determined,
Is poured out on the [3]desolate."

25 [j]Luke 2:1, 2; John 1:41; 4:25 [k]Is. 55:4 [8]Or *open square* [9]Or *moat*

26 [l][Is. 53:8]; Matt. 27:50; Mark 9:12; 15:37; [Luke 23:46; 24:26]; John 19:30; Acts 8:32 [m][1 Pet. 2:21] [n]Matt. 22:7 [o]Matt. 24:2; Mark 13:2; Luke 19:43, 44 [l]Suffer the death penalty

27 [p]Is. 42:6 [q][Matt. 26:28] [r]Dan. 11:36 [2]Or *treaty* [3]Or *desolator*

Vision of the Glorious Man

CHAPTER 10

10 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a message was revealed to Daniel, whose [a]name was called Belteshazzar. The message *was* true, [1]but the appointed time *was* long; and he understood the message, and had understanding of the vision. 2 In those days I, Daniel, was mourning three full weeks. 3 I ate no [2]pleasant food, no meat or wine came into my mouth, nor did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

4 Now on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, that *is,* the [3]Tigris, 5 I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in [b]linen, whose waist *was* [c]girded with gold of Uphaz! 6 His body *was* like beryl, his face like the appearance of

1 [a]Dan. 1:7 [1]Or *and of great conflict;*

3 [2]*desirable*

4 [3]Heb. *Hiddekel*

5 [b]Ezek. 9:2; 10:2 [c]Rev. 1:13; 15:6

enty weeks" to begin in 587 B.C., the time of Jeremiah's prediction (his "word") that Jerusalem would be rebuilt (Jer. 31:38; 32:15, 37, 44). Forty-nine years later would be 538 B.C., the year that Cyrus permitted the Jews to fulfill Jeremiah's prophecy by returning to Palestine (Ezra 1:1–4).

Until Messiah. Advocates of interpretation (a) above understand "Messiah" to be a reference to Jesus. Linking the "seven weeks" (49 years) and the "sixty-two weeks" (434 years) as a continuous sequence yields 483 years, to run from 457 B.C. to A.D. 27, or approximately the beginning of Christ's three-year public ministry. Others take the 483 years to begin with the "command" of Artaxerxes I in the twentieth year of his reign (Neh. 2:1), 444 B.C., instead of the seventh year of his reign (Ezra 7:12–26) in 457 B.C. Using a 360-day lunar year (as in the Jewish calendar), this approach reaches a date for the crucifixion in A.D. 33. This date for the crucifixion is possible but not certain. Advocates of interpretation (b) above understand "Messiah" to refer to Cyrus (also called the Lord's "anointed," Is. 45:1). This view separates the "seven weeks" and the "sixty-two weeks." The "seven weeks" elapse between the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. and the decree of Cyrus in 538 B.C. The "sixty-two weeks" (434 years) is the time when the city is to be rebuilt, somewhere between 538 B.C. and A.D. 70 (when Jerusalem was destroyed). With this view, a time interval is required between the two periods of "weeks."

■ **9:26 after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off.** Many interpreters understand this to refer to the crucifixion of Christ. According to view (b) above, the "Messiah" of v. 26 is Christ, and the "Messiah" of v. 25 is Cyrus.

the people of the prince. Many interpreters agree that the assailants are the armies of Titus who destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Some adherents of the second-advent view (9:24–27 note), however, argue that while the assailants are the armies of Titus, the "prince" himself is the Antichrist. This identification provides a transition to the second-advent interpretation of v. 27.

■ **9:27 he shall confirm a covenant with many for one week.** Advocates of the first-advent view (9:24–27 note) understand that "Messiah" will "confirm a covenant," that is, live out His public ministry. Advocates of the second-advent view posit a time interval between vv. 26 and 27 and understand that the "prince" will "confirm a covenant." The "prince" is identified as Antichrist, who will establish a covenant with Jewish people regathered in the land of Israel during a "tribulation" period (12:1; Matt. 24:21; Rev. 7:14) of seven years (the seventieth "week").

an end to sacrifice. According to advocates of the first-advent view (9:24–27 note) this refers to the termination of the Old Testament sacrificial system brought about by the death of Christ. According to advocates of the second-advent view this is a reference to the Antichrist's prohibition of "sacrifice and offering" (perhaps standing for religious practice in general) by the regathered Jewish people after three-and-a-half years (Rev. 11:2; 12:6, 14) of the tribulation period.

one who makes desolate. According to the first-advent view (9:24–27 note) this describes the destruction of Jerusalem that occurred in A.D. 70. According to the second-advent view it describes a catastrophe that will come upon Jerusalem in connection with the activities of the Antichrist. Phrases similar to "an abomination that makes desolate" occur in Dan. 8:13; 11:31; 12:11 (notes) as well as 1 Macc. 1:54. Dan. 8:13 and 1 Macc. 1:54 are clearly references to the activities of Antiochus IV. Jesus refers to this "abomination" in His prophecy of events yet future (Matt. 24:15; Mark 13:14).

■ **10:1—12:13** The prophet reveals a final vision concerning the future reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, but looking beyond his reign to another that culminates at the end of the age.

■ **10:1 the third year of Cyrus.** That is, 537 B.C. See note on 1:21. The repatriated exiles returned to the land to rebuild the temple (Ezra 1:1–4; 3:8), but would soon have to cease their efforts temporarily (Ezra 4:24).

■ **10:2 mourning.** Daniel probably mourns because of the state of Jerusalem (Neh. 1:4; Is. 61:3–4; 64:8–12; 66:10).

■ **10:5 a certain man clothed in linen.** Vv. 5, 6 give a detailed description of an angel, perhaps the one who spoke to Gabriel (8:16), or Gabriel himself (9:21). His appearance is much like that of the glory of the Lord (Ezek. 1:26–28; Rev. 1:12–16). For other references to angels, see Judg. 13:6; Ezek. 9:2, 3; 10:2; Luke 24:4.

lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, [d]and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude.

7 And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision; but a great terror fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. 8 Therefore I was left alone when I saw this great vision, and no strength remained in me; for my [4]vigor was turned to [5]frailty in me, and I retained no strength. 9 Yet I heard the sound of his words; and while I heard the sound of his words I was in a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground.

Prophecies Concerning Persia and Greece

10 [e]Suddenly, a hand touched me, which made me tremble on my knees and *on* the palms of my hands. 11 And he said to me, "O Daniel, [f]man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you." While he was speaking this word to me, I stood trembling.

12 Then he said to me, [g]"Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, [h]your words were heard; and I have come because of your words. 13 [i]But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me twenty-one days; and behold, [j]Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, for I had been left alone there with the kings of Persia. 14 Now I have come to make you understand what will happen to your people [k]in the latter days, [l]for the vision *refers* to *many* days yet *to come*."

15 When he had spoken such words to me, [m]I [6]turned my face toward the ground and became speechless. 16 And suddenly, [n]*one* having the likeness of the [7]sons of men [o]touched my lips; then I opened my mouth and spoke, saying to him who stood before me, "My lord, because of the vision [p]my sorrows have [8]overwhelmed me, and I have retained no strength. 17 For how can this servant of my lord talk with you, my lord? As for me, no strength remains in me now, nor is any breath left in me."

18 Then again, *the one* having the likeness of a man touched me and strengthened me. 19 [q]And he said, "O man greatly beloved, [r]fear not! Peace *be* to you; be strong, yes, be strong!"

So when he spoke to me I was strengthened, and said, "Let my lord speak, for you have strengthened me."

20 Then he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? And now I must return to fight [s]with the prince of Persia; and when I have gone forth, indeed the prince of Greece will come. 21 But I will tell you what is noted in the Scripture of Truth. (No one upholds me against these, [t]except Michael your prince.

11 "Also [a]in the first year of [b]Darius the Mede, I, *even* I, stood up to confirm and strengthen him.) 2 And now I will tell you the truth: Behold, three more kings will arise in Persia, and the fourth shall be far richer than *them* all; by his strength, through his riches, he shall stir up all against the realm of Greece. 3 Then [c]a mighty king shall arise, who shall rule with great dominion, and [d]do according to his will. 4 And when he has arisen, [e]his kingdom shall be broken

6 [d][Rev. 1:15]

8 [4]Lit. *splendor* [5]Lit. *ruin*

10 [e]Dan. 9:21

11 [f]Dan. 9:23

12 [g]Rev. 1:17 [h]Dan. 9:3, 4, 22, 23; Acts 10:4

13 [i]Dan. 10:20 [j]Dan. 10:21; 12:1; Jude 9; [Rev. 12:7]

14 [k]Gen. 49:1; Deut. 31:29; Dan. 2:28 [l]Dan. 8:26; 10:1

15 [m]Dan. 8:18; 10:9 [6]Lit. *set*

16 [n]Dan. 8:15 [o]Jer. 1:9; Dan. 10:10 [p]Dan. 10:8, 9 [7]Theodotion, Vg. *the son;* LXX *a hand* [8]Or *turned upon*

19 [q]Dan. 10:11 [r]Judg. 6:23; Is. 43:1; Dan. 10:12

20 [s]Dan. 10:13

21 [t]Dan. 10:13; Jude 9; [Rev. 12:7]

CHAPTER 11

1 [a]Dan. 9:1 [b]Dan. 5:31

3 [c]Dan. 7:6; 8:5 [d]Dan. 8:4; 11:16, 36

4 [e]Jer. 49:36; Ezek. 37:9; Dan. 7:2; 8:8; Zech. 2:6; Rev. 7:1

■ **10:7 great terror.** See Is. 6:5; Luke 5:8.

■ **10:12 I have come because of your words.** The vision and revelation that Daniel received came as a direct response to his prayers.

■ **10:13 the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me.** This "prince" is an evil but powerful spiritual being (cf. Is. 24:21; Luke 11:14–26) affecting Persian rule.

Michael. "Michael" is elsewhere in Scripture depicted as a commander of the holy angels (Jude 9; Rev. 12:7; cf. 2 Kin. 6:15–17). Here is a glimpse of spiritual battles waged in "heavenly places" and affecting events on earth (cf. Eph. 6:12; Rev. 12:7–9). The power of fallen angels is limited by God, as is made clear here and elsewhere in Scripture (Job 1:12; 2:6).

■ **10:20 the prince of Persia.** See note on v. 13.

the prince of Greece. This angel affects the affairs of the Greek kingdom (v. 13 note). Although both Persia and Greece would rule over God's people, Daniel must understand that their power is limited by the power of God.

■ **10:21 the Scripture of Truth.** This is a metaphor standing for God's knowledge and control of all history.

No one . . . except Michael. Michael's interest to protect Israel (v. 13 note; cf. 12:1) corresponds with the interest of the messenger, who is directly concerned with God's purposes.

■ **11:1 in the first year of Darius the Mede.** Two years earlier (10:1 note) the angel who was speaking to Daniel had given assistance to Michael (10:13 note), perhaps in connection with the Persian decree to permit the Jews to return to their homeland.

■ **11:2—12:4** The revelation given to Daniel in 11:2—12:4 is in three parts: 11:2–20 depicts Near Eastern history from the time of Daniel until the time of Antiochus IV Epiphanes; 11:21–35 describes the rule of Antiochus IV; and 11:36—12:4 apparently describes the time of the Antichrist.

■ **11:2 three more kings.** They are Cambyses, 529–523 B.C.; Pseudo-Smerdis (Gaumata), 523–522 B.C.; and Darius I, 522–486 B.C.

the fourth. Xerxes I, 485–464 B.C., known in the Old Testament as Ahasuerus.

his riches. See Esth. 1:4.

against the realm of Greece. Xerxes waged a number of campaigns against Greece beginning in 480 B.C.

■ **11:3 a mighty king shall arise.** Alexander the Great, 336–323 B.C. See notes on 7:6; 8:5, 8.

■ **11:4 his kingdom shall be broken up.** See notes on 7:6; 8:8.

up and divided toward the four winds of heaven, but not among his posterity [f] nor according to his dominion with which he ruled; for his kingdom shall be uprooted, even for others besides these.

Warring Kings of North and South

5 "Also the king of the South shall become strong, as well as *one* of his princes; and he shall gain power over him and have dominion. His dominion *shall be* a great dominion. 6 And at the end of *some* years they shall join forces, for the daughter of the king of the South shall go to the king of the North to make an agreement; but she shall not retain the power of her [1] authority, and neither he nor his [1] authority shall stand; but she shall be given up, with those who brought her, and with him who begot her, and with him who strengthened her in *those* times. 7 But from a branch of her roots *one* shall arise in his place, who shall come with an army, enter the fortress of the king of the North, and deal with them and prevail. 8 And he shall also carry their gods captive to Egypt, with their [2] princes *and* their precious articles of silver and gold; and he shall continue *more* years than the king of the North.

9 "Also *the king of the North* shall come to the kingdom of the king of the South, but shall return to his own land. 10 However his sons shall stir up strife, and assemble a multitude of great forces; and *one* shall certainly come [g] and overwhelm and pass through; then he shall return [h] to his fortress and stir up strife.

4 [f] Dan. 8:22
6 [1] Lit. *arm*
8 [2] Or *molded images*
10 [g] Is. 8:8; Jer. 46:7, 8; 51:42; Dan. 9:26; 11:26, 40 [h] Dan. 11:7

■ **11:5 the king of the South.** Ptolemy I Soter, 322–285 B.C.

one of his princes. Seleucus I Nicator, 312–280 B.C. Seleucus broke with Ptolemy, became king of Babylon, and controlled territories from the Indus River in the east to Syria in the west.

■ **11:6–20** These verses contain detailed predictions of relations between the king of the North (the Seleucid kingdom) and the king of the South (the Ptolemaic kingdom). The section concerns events involving Laodice and Berenice (vv. 6–9), the career of Antiochus III (vv. 10–19), and the reign of Seleucus IV (v. 20).

■ **11:6 the daughter of the king.** Berenice, the daughter of Ptolemy II Philadelphus, 285–246 B.C.

to make an agreement. This is a marriage alliance (about 250 B.C.) between Antiochus II Theos (261–246 B.C.) of Syria and Ptolemy II of Egypt.

neither he nor his authority shall stand. Laodice, the former wife of Antiochus II, led a conspiracy that resulted in the death by poisoning of Berenice, Antiochus II, and their infant son.

■ **11:7 a branch of her roots.** Ptolemy III Euergetes, 246–221 B.C., the brother of Berenice (v. 6 note).

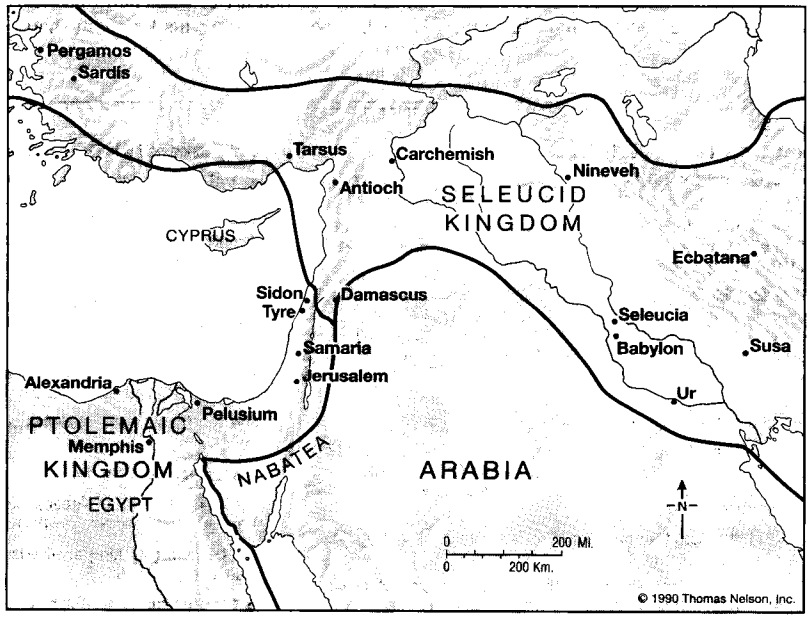
enter the fortress. Ptolemy III attacked the Seleucid kingdom, executed Laodice (v. 6 note), and returned to Egypt with considerable booty.

■ **11:9 the king of the North.** Seleucus II Callinicus (246–226 B.C.), the son of Laodice, led an unsuccessful campaign against the Ptolemaic kingdom in 240 B.C.

■ **11:10 his sons.** Seleucus III Ceraunus, 226–223 B.C.; Antiochus III the Great, 223–187 B.C.

shall stir up strife. Antiochus III began to fight against the Ptolemies in 219 B.C. and for a time gained control of Palestine and western Syria.

his fortress. This probably refers to Raphia, a Ptolemaic fortress in southern Palestine, where a major battle was fought in 217 B.C.



Ptolemaic Control of Palestine (270 B.C.). Alexander's death resulted in the breakup of his empire into smaller kingdoms ruled by his generals. Two of those generals, Ptolemy and Seleucus, became established in the regions around Palestine. By 275 B.C. the Ptolemies were controlling Egypt, Palestine, Cyrene, Phoenicia, Cyprus, and the coast of Asia Minor. The Seleucids controlled Mesopotamia, Syria, and most of Asia Minor and Iran.

11 "And the king of the South shall be [i]moved with rage, and go out and fight with him, with the king of the North, who shall muster a great multitude; but the [j]multitude shall be given into the hand of his *enemy*. 12 When he has taken away the multitude, his heart will be [3]lifted up; and he will cast down tens of thousands, but he will not prevail. 13 For the king of the North will return and muster a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come at the end of some years with a great army and much equipment.

14 "Now in those times many shall rise up against the king of the South. Also, [4]violent men of your people shall exalt themselves [5]in fulfillment of the vision, but they shall [k]fall. 15 So the king of the North shall come and [l]build a siege mound, and take a fortified city; and the [6]forces of the South shall not withstand *him.* Even his choice troops *shall have* no strength to resist. 16 But he who comes against him [m]shall do according to his own will, and [n]no one shall stand against him. He shall stand in the Glorious Land with destruction in his [7]power.

17 "He shall also [o]set his face to enter with the strength of his whole kingdom, and [8]upright ones with him; thus shall he do. And he shall give him the daughter of women to destroy it; but she shall not stand *with him,* [p]or be for him. 18 After this he shall turn his face to the coastlands, and shall take many. But a ruler shall bring the reproach against them to an end; and with the reproach removed, he shall turn back on him. 19 Then he shall turn his face toward the fortress of his own land; but he shall [q]stumble and fall, [r]and not be found.

20 "There shall arise in his place one who imposes taxes *on* the glorious kingdom; but within a few days he shall be destroyed, but not in anger or in battle. 21 And in his place [s]shall arise a vile

11 [i]Prov. 16:14 [j][Ps. 33:10, 16]

12 [3]Proud

14 [k]Job 9:13 [4]Or *robbers,* lit. *sons of breakage* [5]Lit. *to establish*

15 [l]Jer. 6:6; Ezek. 4:2; 17:17 [6]Lit. *arms*

16 [m]Dan. 8:4, 7 [n]Josh. 1:5 [7]Lit. *hand*

17 [o]2 Kin. 12:17; 2 Chr. 20:3; Ezek. 4:3, 7 [p]Dan. 9:26 [8]Or *bring equitable terms*

19 [q]Ps. 27:2; Jer. 46:6 [r]Job 20:8; Ps. 37:36; Ezek. 26:21

21 [s]Dan. 7:8

■ **11:11 the king of the South.** Ptolemy IV Philopator, 221–203 B.C.

with the king of the North. Antiochus III. Antiochus suffered great losses, over 14,000 men, at the battle of Raphia in 217 B.C.

■ **11:13 the king of the North.** In alliance with Philip V of Macedon, Antiochus III raised an even larger army to invade the Ptolemaic kingdom. Ptolemy IV died under mysterious circumstances and was succeeded by Ptolemy V Epiphanes, 203–181 B.C., his four-year-old son.

■ **11:15 take a fortified city.** The victory of Antiochus III over the Egyptian general Scopas at Sidon in 198 B.C. marked the end of Ptolemaic rule in Palestine.

■ **11:16 the Glorious Land.** Palestine. See vv. 41, 45; 8:9.

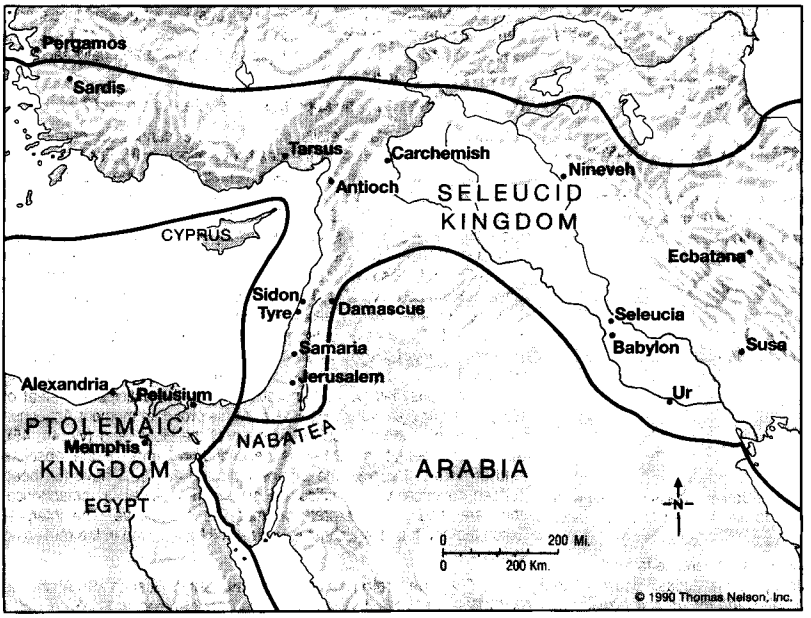
■ **11:17 she shall not stand with him, or be for him.** After Cleopatra was given in marriage to Ptolemy V by her father Antiochus III, she aligned herself with the Egyptian cause, seeking Roman help against her father's attempt to take coastal cities in Asia Minor that were controlled by Egypt.

■ **11:18 a ruler.** The Roman general Lucius Cornelius Scipio, who defeated Antiochus III in several battles and forced him to cede Asia Minor to Roman control (the Peace of Apamea, 188 B.C.). At this time the second son of Antiochus III, who became Antiochus IV Epiphanes, was taken hostage to Rome.

■ **11:20 in his place one.** Seleucus IV Philopator, 187–175 B.C. (the older son of Antiochus III).

taxes on the glorious kingdom. For an account of Heliodorus's attempt to collect these taxes for Seleucus, see 2 Macc. 3:7–40.

■ **11:21 a vile person.** Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–164 B.C.), who was not the legitimate successor of his brother Seleucus IV, since Seleucus IV had a son. See notes on 8:9–14.



Seleucid Control of Palestine (190 B.C.). Antiochus III, king of Syria, expanded the boundaries of the Seleucid kingdom in numerous battles with the Ptolemies. In 221 B.C. he captured part of Palestine, only to lose most of it in 217 B.C. Returning in 201 B.C., he finally defeated the Ptolemies in 198 B.C. with the aid and support of the Jews. Palestine enjoyed freedom from Egyptian domination until 175 B.C., when a new leader, Antiochus IV, became king of Syria. His oppression of the Jews led to the Maccabean Revolt in 167 B.C. and eventual Jewish autonomy in 164 B.C.

person, to whom they will not give the honor of royalty; but he shall come in peaceably, and seize the kingdom by intrigue. 22 With the [g]force of a [t]flood they shall be swept away from before him and be broken, [u]and also the prince of the covenant. 23 And after the league *is made* with him [v]he shall act deceitfully, for he shall come up and become strong with a small *number of* people. 24 He shall enter peaceably, even into the richest places of the province; and he shall do *what* his fathers have not done, nor his forefathers: he shall disperse among them the plunder, [1]spoil, and riches; and he shall devise his plans against the strongholds, but *only* for a time.

25 "He shall stir up his power and his courage against the king of the South with a great army. And the king of the South shall be stirred up to battle with a very great and mighty army; but he shall not stand, for they shall devise plans against him. 26 Yes, those who eat of the portion of his delicacies shall destroy him; his army shall [2]be swept away, and many shall fall down slain. 27 Both these kings' hearts *shall be* bent on evil, and they shall speak lies at the same table; but it shall not prosper, for the end *will* still *be* at the [w]appointed time. 28 While returning to his land with great riches, his heart shall be *moved* against the holy covenant; so he shall do *damage* and return to his own land.

The Northern King's Blasphemies

29 "At the appointed time he shall return and go toward the south; but it shall not be like the former or the latter. 30 [x]For ships from [3]Cyprus shall come against him; therefore he shall be grieved, and return in rage against the holy covenant, and do *damage.*

"So he shall return and show regard for those who forsake the holy covenant. 31 And [4]forces shall be mustered by him, [y]and they shall defile the sanctuary fortress; then they shall take away the daily *sacrifices,* and place *there* the abomination of desolation. 32 Those who do wickedly against the covenant he shall [5]corrupt with flattery; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and carry out *great exploits.* 33 And those of the people who understand shall instruct many; yet *for many* days they shall fall by sword and flame, by captivity and plundering. 34 Now when they fall, they shall be aided with a little help; but many shall join with them by [6]intrigue. 35 And *some* of those of understanding shall fall, [z]to refine them, purify *them,* and make *them* white, *until* the time of the end; because *it is* still for the appointed time.

36 "Then the king shall do according to his own will: he shall [a]exalt and magnify himself above every god, shall speak blasphemies against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the wrath has been accomplished; for what has been determined shall be done. 37 He shall regard neither the [7]God of his fathers nor the desire of women, [b]nor regard any god; for he shall exalt

22 [t]Dan. 9:26 [u]Dan. 8:10, 11 [g]Lit. *arms*

23 [v]Dan. 8:25

24 [1]*booty*

26 [2]Or *overflow*

27 [w]Dan. 8:19; Hab. 2:3

30 [x]Gen. 10:4; Num. 24:24; Is. 23:1, 12; Jer. 2:10 [3]Heb. *Kittim,* western lands, especially Cyprus

31 [y]Dan. 8:11–13; 12:11 [4]Lit. *arms*

32 [5]*pollute*

34 [6]Or *slipperiness, flattery*

35 [z][Deut. 8:16; Prov. 17:3]; Dan. 12:10; Zech. 13:9; Mal. 3:2, 3

36 [a]Dan. 7:8, 25

37 [b]Is. 14:13; 2 Thess. 2:4 [7]Or *gods*

■ **11:22 also the prince of the covenant.** Perhaps this is a reference to the assassination in 171 B.C. of the high priest Onias III by supporters of Antiochus IV based in Jerusalem (see 2 Macc. 4:32–43).

■ **11:25 the king of the South.** Ptolemy VI Philometor, 181–146 B.C., son of Ptolemy V and Cleopatra, and the nephew of Antiochus (v. 17 note).

he shall not stand. Antiochus IV defeated Ptolemy VI at Pelusium, on the border of Egypt (cf. 1 Macc. 1:16–19).

■ **11:28 While returning . . . his heart shall be moved against the holy covenant.** In response to intrigues in Jerusalem against his supporters, Antiochus IV plundered the temple when he returned from Egypt to Syrian Antioch (cf. 1 Macc. 1:20–28).

■ **11:29 toward the south.** Antiochus IV invaded Egypt again in 168 B.C.

■ **11:30 ships from Cyprus shall come.** Roman armies under Gaius Popilius Laenas forced Antiochus IV to retreat from Egypt.

in rage against the holy covenant. Antiochus IV determined to exterminate Jewish religion. See note on 8:11.

■ **11:31 the abomination of desolation.** The desecration of the temple in December, 168 B.C. by Antiochus IV (cf. 1 Macc. 1:54, 59; 2 Macc. 6:2). See notes on 8:11; 9:27; 12:11.

■ **11:32 the people who know their God.** Daniel speaks of those who opposed the Hellenizers and were ready to die for their faith (1 Macc. 1:60–63).

■ **11:34 they shall be aided.** Possibly this is a reference to Mattathias, an elderly priest, and his five sons (John, Simon, Judas, Eleazar, and Jonathan) who waged a guerrilla war against the forced hellenization of the Jews. Mattathias died in 166 B.C. His sons, known as the Maccabees, carried on the struggle. Victory was achieved under Judas Maccabeus in December, 164 B.C., when the temple was cleansed and daily sacrifices were restored (1 Macc. 4:36–39).

■ **11:35 the end . . . the appointed time.** See note on 8:17.

■ **11:36—12:3** Certain details in 11:36—12:3 cannot be harmonized with the events surrounding the death of Antiochus IV. For this reason some interpreters understand these verses to describe the Antichrist, who like Antiochus IV will persecute God's people just prior to the Second Advent of Christ (cf. 12:1–3). These verses describe the character of the Antichrist, his activities, and the destiny of God's people. This understanding requires a time interval between the events depicted in 11:21–35 and those in 11:36—12:3. Consequently, other interpreters have understood vv. 36–39 as a summary of Antiochus's religious policies; vv. 40–45 as a description of how his ambition leads to his defeat; and 12:1–3 as an anticipation of his defeat. The anticipated invasion of the Holy Land may be presented as a parallel to Nebuchadnezzar's earlier invasion, using the names of the nations of that time, sparing Israel's old enemies (v. 41), and climaxing in the anticipated defeat of Egypt itself (vv. 42, 43; cf. Ezek. 29). At his proudest moment Antiochus is destroyed at Mount Zion in the heart of the Holy Land (vv. 44, 45). Antiochus's defeat in 12:1–3 is described in terms of the absolute end of history. Because the prophecies in 11:40—12:3 have not been fulfilled historically, it is difficult to discern how literal or metaphorical they are, and their interpretation must be speculative. The interpretation that the future Antichrist is in view will be followed in the remaining notes.

■ **11:36 till the wrath has been accomplished.** Just as with Antiochus IV (8:17 note; 11:35), the time of persecution is subject to God's control.

himself above *them* all. 38 But in their place he shall honor a god of fortresses; and a god which his fathers did not know he shall honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and pleasant things. 39 Thus he shall act against the strongest fortresses with a foreign god, which he shall acknowledge, *and* advance *its* glory; and he shall cause them to rule over many, and divide the land for [g]gain.

The Northern King's Conquests

40 "At the [c]time of the end the king of the South shall attack him; and the king of the North shall come against him [d]like a whirlwind, with chariots, [e]horsemen, and with many ships; and he shall enter the countries, overwhelm *them,* and pass through. 41 He shall also enter the Glorious Land, and many *countries* shall be overthrown; but these shall escape from his hand: [f]Edom, Moab, and the [g]prominent people of Ammon. 42 He shall stretch out his hand against the countries, and the land of [g]Egypt shall not escape. 43 He shall have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over all the precious things of Egypt; also the Libyans and Ethiopians *shall follow* [h]at his heels. 44 But news from the east and the north shall trouble him; therefore he shall go out with great fury to destroy and annihilate many. 45 And he shall plant the tents of his palace between the seas and [i]the glorious holy mountain; [j]yet he shall come to his end, and no one will help him.

Prophecy of the End Time

12 "At that time Michael shall stand up,
The great prince who stands *watch* over the sons of your people;
[a]And there shall be a time of trouble,
Such as never was since there was a nation,
Even to that time.
And at that time your people [b]shall be delivered,
Every one who is found [c]written in the book.
2 And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake,
[d]Some to everlasting life,
Some to shame [e]*and* everlasting [f]contempt.
3 Those who are wise shall [f]shine
Like the brightness of the firmament,
[g]And those who turn many to righteousness
[h]Like the stars forever and ever.

4 "But you, Daniel, [i]shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall [j]run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase."

5 Then I, Daniel, looked; and there stood two others, one on this riverbank and the other on that [k]riverbank. 6 And *one* said to the man clothed in [l]linen, who *was* above the waters of the river, [m]"How long shall the fulfillment of these wonders *be?*"

7 Then I heard the man clothed in linen, who *was* above the waters of the river, when he [n]held up his right hand and his left hand to heaven, and swore by Him [o]who lives forever, [p]that *it shall be* for a time, times, and half *a time;* [q]and when the power of [r]the holy people has been completely shattered, all these *things* shall be finished.

8 Although I heard, I did not understand. Then I said, "My lord, what *shall be* the end of these *things?*"

9 And he said, "Go *your way,* Daniel, for the words *are* closed up and sealed till the time of the end. 10 [s]Many shall be purified, made white, and refined, [t]but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall understand, but [u]the wise shall understand.

39 [g]profit

40 [c]Dan. 11:27, 35; 12:4, 9 [d]Is. 21:1 [e]Ezek. 38:4; Rev. 9:16

41 [f]Is. 11:14 [g]Lit. *chief of the sons of Ammon*

42 [g]Joel 3:19

43 [h]Ex. 11:8

45 [i]Ps. 48:2 [j]Rev. 19:20

CHAPTER 12

1 [a]Is. 26:20; Jer. 30:7; Ezek. 5:9; Dan. 9:12; Matt. 24:21; Mark 13:19 [b]Rom. 11:26 [c]Ex. 32:32; Ps. 56:8

2 [d][Matt. 25:46; John 5:28, 29; Acts 24:15] [e][Is. 66:24; Rom. 9:21] [f]Lit. *abhorrence*

3 [f]Prov. 3:35; Dan. 11:33, 35; Matt. 13:43 [g]Prov. 11:30; [James 5:19, 20] [h]1 Cor. 15:41

4 [i]Is. 8:16; Dan. 12:9; Rev. 22:10 [j]Amos 8:12

5 [k]Dan. 10:4

6 [l]Ezek. 9:2; Dan. 10:5 [m]Dan. 8:13; 12:8; Matt. 24:3; Mark 13:4

7 [n]Deut. 32:40 [o]Dan. 4:34 [p]Dan. 7:25; Rev. 12:14 [q]Luke 21:24 [r]Dan. 8:24

10 [s]Zech. 13:9 [t]Is. 32:6, 7; Rev. 22:11 [u]Dan. 12:3; Hos. 14:9; John 7:17; 8:47

■ **11:40 At the time of the end.** Here "end" carries an eschatological sense and refers to the end of this present age (8:17 note).

■ **11:41 Glorious Land.** Palestine (cf. vv. 16, 45; 8:9).

■ **11:45 his end.** See Joel 3; Zech. 14:1–4; 2 Thess. 2:8; Rev. 16:13–16; 19:11–21.

■ **12:1 Michael.** See note on 10:13.

a time of trouble. This unparalleled time of trouble is sometimes identified with the "great tribulation" predicted by Jesus (Matt. 24:21; Mark 13:19).

your people shall be delivered. This deliverance is not necessarily from martyrdom (v. 2), but from the power of Satan, understood as his attempts to destroy people's faith during the time of distress.

■ **12:2 everlasting life . . . and everlasting contempt.** This verse is a clear prediction of the bodily resurrection of the godly and ungodly for the final judgment (Matt. 25:46; John 5:28, 29).

■ **12:4 seal the book.** Sealing the book preserves it unaltered as it awaits fulfillment (8:26 note).

■ **12:7 a time, times, and half a time.** See note on 7:25.

11 "And from the time *that* the daily *sacrifice* is taken away, and the abomination of desolation is set up, *there shall be* one thousand two hundred and ninety days. 12 Blessed *is* he who waits, and comes to the one thousand three hundred and thirty-five days.

13 "But you, go *your way* till the end; [v]for you shall rest, [w]and will arise to your inheritance at the end of the days."

13 [v]Is. 57:2; Rev. 14:13 [w]Ps. 1:5

■ **12:11 the abomination of desolation is set up.** See third note on 9:27. The similar activity of Antiochus IV prefigured this activity of the Antichrist (8:13).

one thousand two hundred and ninety days. The significance of these time frames is obscure. Three and one-half years is 1260 days of a 360-day year, or 1278 days of a 365-day year.

The Book of

HOSEA

Author Little is known about the background and training of the author of this book, the prophet Hosea, son of Beeri (1:1). Though it is not clearly stated in the book, Hosea's familiarity with the geography (4:15; 5:1, 8; 6:8, 9; 9:15; 10:5; 12:11) and history of the northern kingdom of Israel (5:13; 7:7, 11; 8:4, 9–14) suggests that he was a native of the northern kingdom.

Date and Occasion The Book of Hosea came from his prophetic ministry, which embraced the critical years of religious decline and decay in the northern kingdom, from about 750 B.C. until a few years before the fall of Samaria in 722 B.C. Hosea's preaching focused on Israel's breach of her covenantal relationship with God, mixing the pure worship of the Lord with the idolatry of the surrounding peoples (religious syncretism), and on the impending judgment. However, Hosea's proclamation of the nature of God's love sounds a more positive note in the book. For a discussion of Hosea's marriage and family life, see "Interpretive Difficulties" below.

During her final years, the northern kingdom of Israel was in a state of political and social decline. The economic prosperity and political security that the nation experienced during the reign of Jeroboam II (c. 793–753 B.C.) was followed by a period of political and social chaos and religious decline under the next six kings, who reigned for a combined period of twenty-five years (2 Kin. 15:8—17:41). Four of these kings were assassinated by those who usurped their thrones (Zechariah, Shallum, Pekahiah, and Pekah); one became a political prisoner (Hoshea, 2 Kin. 17:3, 4); and only one was succeeded by his son (Menahem, 2 Kin. 15:23).

Hosea's preaching reflects both the relative calm the kingdom experienced under Jeroboam II (2:5, 8, 13) and the later turmoil in domestic (7:3–7; 13:10, 11) and foreign affairs (7:8–12; 12:1). The Syro-Ephraimite war in particular (735–732 B.C.; 2 Kin. 15:27–30; 16:5–9; Is. 7:1–9) seems to stand behind Hosea's message in 5:8–10. Pekah of Israel had formed an alliance with Rezin of Syria in order to resist the expanding Assyrian empire ruled by Tiglath-Pileser III. Pekah then attacked Judah, which had refused to join the alliance with Syria. Assyria responded to Judah's request for assistance by attacking Syria's capital, Damascus, and systematically subjugating extensive territory in the northern kingdom of Israel.

The northern kingdom's political vacillation between Egypt and Assyria is also reflected in the text (5:13; 7:11; 8:9, 10; 9:3; 11:5; 12:1). This vacillation brought a further attack by the Assyrians, the arrest of King Hoshea, the siege of Samaria, and finally the end of the northern kingdom. Although this end is expected by Hosea, the fall of Samaria in 722 B.C. had not yet occurred at the time of his prophecy (13:16).

The northern kingdom was in a state of spiritual decline during the final phase of its history. The ancient faith of Israel, which Hosea describes so beautifully using analogies of marital and parental love (2:14–23; 11:1–4), had become polluted by elements of the Canaanite fertility religion. Such fertility cults focused especially on the worship of Baal, a god thought to be the giver of rain and fertility. The Israelites incorporated elements of the Canaanite fertility religion into the orthodox faith, notably sexual rites that included ritual prostitution and drunken orgies (4:10–13). The worship of the Lord and the worship of Baal (whose name lit. means "lord" or "master") became intermingled and even identified (2:5–13). Religious corruption evidenced itself not only in this popular, syncretistic form of religion, sometimes called a "baalized" form of Yahweh worship, but also in the lives of the religious leaders. Through corruption, greed, and hardness of heart they not only neglected to instruct the people in the true faith, but also tolerated, and in some cases even sponsored, syncretistic religion (4:4–13; 5:1; 6:9).

Interpretive Difficulties The question of how to interpret the personal events of Hosea's life that symbolically parallel his prophetic message has long perplexed readers of the Book of Hosea. Are the details given in chs. 1 and 3 about Hosea's family life to be understood literally or allegorically? Because of the moral perplexity posed by the holy God's command that Hosea marry a prostitute, throughout the ages there always have been interpreters who have understood the details of Hosea's married life allegorically. Others, arguing that 1:2 refers to the future, reason that Gomer became a prostitute only after the birth of their first child. Still others, advocating a modified literal reading, argue that Gomer was not a common prostitute but rather a woman involved in cultic prostitution related to the fertility religion of Baal. However, the prophet's actual marriage to an unfaithful wife would make the analogy with the Lord's relationship to Israel most vivid, and this seems to be what the text intends.

Similarly, questions have been asked about Hosea's children. Their names, like that of the child born to Isaiah and the prophetess in Is. 8:1–4, are intended to have symbolic significance (cf. Is. 7:3; Ezek. 23). The names given to Hosea's children (Jezreel, Lo-Ruhamah, and

Lo-Ammi; 1:4, 6, 9 and notes) purposely illustrate Hosea's message about God's increasing displeasure with wayward Israel, but also convey the message of hope, renewal, love, and restoration (2:21–23 notes).

A related problem centers on the relationship between ch. 1, which presents a third-person account of Hosea's marriage to Gomer and the birth of their children, and ch. 3, which is an account in the first person of God's instructions to Hosea about loving an unfaithful woman. Although these chapters have most often been regarded as a chronologically sequential account of a single marriage, some argue that two different women and marriages are described in these chapters. Still others have suggested that the chapters are not sequential, but rather describe the same episode. Textual and translation difficulties in the Hebrew text stand behind these different views. For example, the word "again" in 3:1 stands between "said" and "go" in the Hebrew, and it could mean either "The LORD said again" or "The LORD said, 'Go again.' " Although these debates continue, the profound meaning of the prophet's marriage(s) as a picture of the Lord's relationship with Israel is clear.

Characteristics and Themes

Hosea's book is not about Hosea, but about God and His relationship to His covenant people, Israel. God emphasizes His uniqueness and sovereignty (12:9; 13:4). Because of His unique holiness (11:9), adoration of Him is the only proper response (3:5), and He tolerates no rival claim. As Sovereign, all is under His rule, whether fertility (2:8), Israel's history (5:14, 15), or the nations (10:10).

A number of themes recur throughout the book, themes that continue to carry religious significance for the community of faith today (14:9 note). The theme of covenantal unfaithfulness, movingly symbolized by Hosea's relationship with his promiscuous wife, permeates the book. Closely related to this theme is that of repentance. Hosea calls wayward Israel to return to the Lord in order to reestablish the intimate relationship she earlier had experienced with Him in the wilderness period (2:7, 14, 19, 20). Promises of restoration, such as those in 1:11 and 2:23, will be fulfilled under the new covenant through Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:8; Eph. 2:4–10). The themes of unfaithfulness and repentance summon those within the covenant community to repent and to renew their love relationship with the Lord.

Another important theme in the book centers around what it means to "know" or "acknowledge" God (2:20; 4:1; 5:4; 6:3, 6; 13:4). This seems to be a technical term for covenant intimacy, loyalty, and obedience. The book teaches that true knowledge of God is not merely the possession of correct information about Him, but includes the intimacy typical of marriage and family life, an intimacy evidenced in worship, lifestyle, and loyalty to the covenant LORD. Hosea also warns that sin can delude people into thinking that they know and understand God, when in fact they are far from Him (8:2).

A polemic against religious syncretism (the mixture of true and false religion) also pervades the book (2:2–13; 4:10–19; 5:4; 9:1, 10). Over and over again Hosea points to the sin of the northern kingdom, which tried to wed the worship of the covenant LORD to Canaanite religion with its deification of sex and nature. The impossibility of such a marriage warns the church to remain loyal in a culture that encourages compromise and acceptance of principles and beliefs incompatible with biblical doctrine. Moreover, Hosea's vivid depictions of sin remind believers about the nature and consequences of human sin: it incurs divine judgment (9:9; 13:12); it causes severe crises in nature and society (4:3); and it corrupts the human personality. People become like the objects of their love (9:10).

Hosea's message is enhanced through his effective use of imagery. The strongest and most extended metaphors derive from the human experience of intimacy. Using the image of human marriage (chs. 1—3) and family life (11:1–4, 10), Hosea depicts God and His relationship with His people. In other figurative images God is compared to moth and rot (5:12), winter and spring rains (6:3), a lion (5:14; 11:10; 13:7–8), a leopard (13:7), a bear (13:8), and a cypress tree (14:8). □

Outline of Hosea

I. Superscription (1:1)
II. The Lesson from Hosea's Family Life (1:2—3:5)
  A. Hosea's Wife and Children: A Parable of Judgment (1:2—2:1)
  B. Unfaithfulness and Punishment (2:2–13)
  C. Reconciliation and Restoration (2:14–23)
  D. Redeeming Wife and Nation (ch. 3)

III. Hosea's Prophetic Message (chs. 4—14)
A. The Charge of Failure to Acknowledge God (4:1—6:3)
1. The Lord's Case Against Israel (ch. 4)
2. Charges Against the Priests and People (ch. 5)
3. Call to Repentance (6:1–3)
B. The Charge of Breaking God's Covenant (6:4—11:11)
1. Unfaithfulness and Decadence (6:4—7:16)
2. Announcement of Judgment (ch. 8)
3. Guilt and Punishment (chs. 9; 10)
4. God's Unfailing Love (ch. 11)
C. The Charge of Faithlessness Toward the Lord (11:12—14:9)
1. Israel the Deceiver (11:12—12:14)
2. The End of Compassion (ch. 13)
3. Return and the Promise of Renewal (ch. 14)

CHAPTER 1

THE word of the LORD that came to Hosea the son of Beeri, in the days of [a]Uzziah, [b]Jotham, [c]Ahaz, *and* [d]Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of [e]Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.

The Family of Hosea

2 When the LORD began to speak by Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea:

[f]"Go, take yourself a wife of harlotry
And children of harlotry,
For [g]the land has committed great [f]harlotry
By departing from the LORD."

3 So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.
4 Then the LORD said to him:

"Call his name Jezreel,
For in a little *while*
[h]I will avenge the bloodshed of Jezreel on the house of Jehu,
[i]And bring an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel.
5 [j]It shall come to pass in that day
That I will break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel."

1 [a]2 Chr. 26; Is. 1:1; Amos 1:1 [b]2 Kin. 15:5, 7, 32–38; 2 Chr. 27; Mic. 1:1 [c]2 Kin. 16:1–20; 2 Chr. 28 [d]2 Kin. 18—20; 2 Chr. 29:1—32:33; Mic. 1:1 [e]2 Kin. 13:13; 14:23–29; Amos 1:1

2 [f]Hos. 3:1 [g]Deut. 31:16; Judg. 2:17; Ps. 73:27; Jer. 2:13; Ezek. 16:1–59; 23:1–49 [f]Spiritual adultery

4 [h]2 Kin. 10:11 [i]2 Kin. 15:8–10; 17:6, 23; 18:11

5 [j]2 Kin. 15:29

■ **1:1** Hosea introduces his prophecy, naming himself as God's messenger. His name probably means "He [God] has saved."

Uzziah . . . Jeroboam. Whereas four kings of Judah are named, Uzziah (also called Azariah, 792–740 B.C.), Jotham (750–735 B.C.), Ahaz (735–715 B.C.), and Hezekiah (715–686 B.C.), the only northern king recorded is Jeroboam II (c. 793–753 B.C.). Perhaps the writer thought that the northern kings who reigned between Jeroboam II and the fall of the north in 722 (four were assassins) were not worthy of mention.

■ **1:2 a wife of harlotry.** See Introduction: Interpretive Difficulties. On the theme of marital and covenantal unfaithfulness, see Introduction: Characteristics and Themes.

the land has committed great harlotry. Hosea's wife and children, together with all the inhabitants of the land, are deemed unfaithful.

■ **1:3 Gomer.** Her name has no symbolic significance, unlike the names of her children.

him. This pronoun is omitted in vv. 6, 8, but its absence does not necessarily imply that Hosea was not the father there also, since the indirect object may be implied.

■ **1:4 Jezreel.** Lit. "God sows" or "plants." This is the name of a beautiful and fertile valley between the mountain ranges of Samaria and Galilee (the site of Gideon's victory over the Midianites, Judg. 6:33), and of a town at the valley's southern end, where Jehu came to power through violence (1 Kin. 21:1; 2 Kin. 9; 10). This valley became the place of judgment in 733 B.C. (2 Kin. 15:29). This punishment through military defeat suggests the theme of covenant breaking since it reflects the curses recorded in Lev. 26:17; Deut. 28:25, 49–57. Yet Jezreel is also a sign of blessing and fertility in Hos. 2:22.

the house of Jehu. Jeroboam II was from the house of Jehu, a dynasty established through the bloodbath at Jezreel (2 Kin. 9:14–37; cf. 1 Kin. 19:16, 17) and ending with the murder of Zechariah (2 Kin. 15:8–10).

■ **1:5 bow of Israel.** Israel's military strength, symbolized by the bow (Gen. 49:24; 1 Sam. 2:4; Ezek. 39:3), was broken by the Assyrian army under Tiglath-Pileser III, who conquered the northern territories of Israel.

6 [k]2 Kin. 17:6 [2]Lit. *No-Mercy* [3]Or *That I may forgive them at all*

7 [l]2 Kin. 19:29–35; Is. 30:18; 37:36, 37 [m]Ps. 44:3–7; [Zech. 4:6]

9 [4]Lit. *Not-My-People*

10 [n]Gen. 22:17; 32:12; Jer. 33:22 [o]1 Pet. 2:10 [p]Rom. 9:26 [q]Is. 63:16; 64:8; [John 1:12] [5]Heb. *lo-ammi*, v. 9

11 [r]Is. 11:11–13; Jer. 3:18; 50:4; [Ezek. 34:23; 37:15–28]

CHAPTER 2

1 [1]Heb. *Ammi*, Hos. 1:9, 10 [2]Heb. *Ruhamah*, Hos. 1:6

2 [a]Is. 50:1 [b]Ezek. 16:25 [3]Or *Contend with* [4]Or *contend*

6 And she conceived again and bore a daughter. Then *God* said to him:

"Call her name [2]Lo-Ruhamah,
[k]For I will no longer have mercy on the house of Israel,
[3]But I will utterly take them away.
7 [l]Yet I will have mercy on the house of Judah,
Will save them by the LORD their God,
And [m]will not save them by bow,
Nor by sword or battle,
By horses or horsemen."

8 Now when she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, she conceived and bore a son. 9 Then *God* said:

"Call his name [4]Lo-Ammi,
For you *are* not My people,
And I will not be your *God.*

The Restoration of Israel

10 "Yet [n]the number of the children of Israel
Shall be as the sand of the sea,
Which cannot be measured or numbered.
[o]And it shall come to pass
In the place where it was said to them,
'You *are* [5]not My [p]people,'
There it shall be said to them,
'*You are* [q]sons of the living God.'
11 [r]Then the children of Judah and the children of Israel
Shall be gathered together,
And appoint for themselves one head;
And they shall come up out of the land,
For great *will be* the day of Jezreel!

2 Say to your brethren, [1]'My people,'
And to your sisters, [2]'Mercy *is shown.*'

God's Unfaithful People

2 "Bring[3] charges against your mother, [4]bring charges;
For [a]she *is* not My wife, nor *am* I her Husband!
Let her put away her [b]harlotries from her sight,
And her adulteries from between her breasts;

■ **1:6 Lo-Ruhamah.** Lit. "she has received no compassion." The child's name signifies the imminent withdrawal of the compassion God had shown to Israel in spite of her covenant unfaithfulness.

■ **1:7 I will have mercy.** A reference to Jerusalem's miraculous deliverance from the Assyrians in 701 B.C. (Is. 37:14, 33–38; 2 Kin. 19:32–37).

■ **1:9 Lo-Ammi.** The name of the third child, meaning "not My people," marks the high point of God's judgment, as God cancels the ancient covenantal formula (Ex. 6:7; Lev. 26:12; Deut. 26:17–19) and declares that the covenant is not in effect (v. 10 notes).

I will not be your God. Lit. "I am not 'I AM' to you," a reference to the divine name for God used in Ex. 3:14.

■ **1:10—2:1** The increasingly severe prophecies of judgment symbolized in the names of the three children are now dramatically reversed.

■ **1:10 sand of the sea.** A clear reference to the ancient patriarchal promise of innumerable descendants (Gen. 22:17; 32:12; cf. Gen. 13:16; 15:5; 26:24; 28:14).

You are not My people. The promise of restoration to these people was fulfilled at least in part when remnants of the north were joined with the south during the reign of Hezekiah (2 Chr. 30:11, 18) and after the Exile (1 Chr. 9:3; Ezra 8:35). The New Testament applies this promise to the church, the true Israel, composed of both Jews and Gentiles (Rom. 9:24–26; 1 Pet. 2:9, 10). For the apostles, the remnant of ethnic Israel was evidently a model for the remnant of the nations: what applied to the former applied to the latter.

sons of the living God. This unique expression suggests the kind of intimate relationship God desires with Israel, in which God gives life (as opposed to the lifeless relationship Israel had with Baal). In Is. 40:18–20; 44:9–20; 46:5–11, dead idols are contrasted with the living God. The living relationship is now provided in Jesus Christ (Matt. 16:16; Rom. 9:26).

■ **1:11 one head.** This reveals the completeness of reconciliation between both kingdoms and the Lord. Ultimately, this reunion takes place under Christ, the son of David (Matt. 1:23; 2:6, 15).

they shall come up out of the land. Israel's restoration began in the return from exile. The phrase may also refer to resurrection from death (Ps. 71:20; Is. 43:6).

the day of Jezreel. See note on 1:4.

■ **2:1 brethren . . . sisters.** The hostile siblings, Israel and Judah, will be fully reconciled, and the horrible indictments contained in the names Lo-Ammi and Lo-Ruhamah will be reversed.

■ **2:2 Bring charges.** God brings a case against Israel in which the children are to accuse their mother.

Let her put away. Repentance and reconciliation are the final goals of God's judgment (vv. 9–23).

3 Lest [c]I strip her naked
And expose her, as in the day she was [d]born,
And make her like a wilderness,
And set her like a dry land,
And slay her with [e]thirst.

4 "I will not have mercy on her children,
For they *are* the [f]children of harlotry.
5 For their mother has played the harlot;
She who conceived them has behaved shamefully.
For she said, 'I will go after my lovers,
[g]Who give *me* my bread and my water,
My wool and my linen,
My oil and my drink.'

6 "Therefore, behold,
[h]I will hedge up your way with thorns,
And [5]wall her in,
So that she cannot find her paths.
7 She will [6]chase her lovers,
But not overtake them;
Yes, she will seek them, but not find *them.*
Then she will say,
[i]'I will go and return to my [j]first husband,
For then *it was* better for me than now.'
8 For she did not [k]know
That I gave her grain, new wine, and oil,
And multiplied her silver and gold—
Which they prepared for Baal.

9 "Therefore I will return and take away
My grain in its time
And My new wine in its season,
And will take back My wool and My linen,
Given to cover her nakedness.
10 Now [l]I will uncover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers,
And no one shall deliver her from My hand.
11 [m]I will also cause all her mirth to cease,
Her feast days,
Her New Moons,
Her Sabbaths—
All her appointed feasts.

12 "And I will destroy her vines and her fig trees,
Of which she has said,

3 [c]Jer. 13:22, 26; Ezek. 16:37–39 [d]Ezek. 16:4–7, 22 [e]Jer. 14:3; Amos 8:11–13

4 [f]John 8:41

5 [g]Ezek. 23:5; Hos. 2:8, 12

6 [h]Job 19:8; Lam. 3:7, 9 [5]Lit. *wall up her wall*

7 [i]Luke 15:17, 18 [j]Is. 54:5–8; Jer. 2:2; 3:1; Ezek. 16:8; 23:4 [6]Or *pursue*

8 [k]Is. 1:3; Ezek. 16:19

10 [l]Ezek. 16:37

11 [m]Jer. 7:34; 16:9; Hos. 3:4; Amos 5:21; 8:10

■ **2:3 strip her naked.** If repentance does not take place, the unfaithful wife (Gomer/Israel) will be publicly exposed (v. 10) and left destitute, punishments traditional for an adulteress (Ezek. 16:37–39; Nah. 3:5–7), though less severe than the death penalty (Deut. 22:22).

■ **2:4 children of harlotry.** God's love and mercy (1:6) will also be withdrawn from the children who, like their mother, are charged with promiscuity.

■ **2:5 their mother has played the harlot.** The unfaithful mother (Israel) looked to Canaanite fertility religion and not to the Lord (v. 8) to provide the staples of life.

■ **2:7 She will chase . . . seek.** The woman's active initiative, representing all Israel, is stressed.

my first husband. The early period of intimacy is remembered fondly (cf. 11:1–4).

■ **2:8 grain, new wine . . . silver and gold.** The Lord's agricultural and commercial gifts (Deut. 7:13; 11:14; 28:1–12) were credited to Baal. In texts discovered at the ancient north Syrian city of Ugarit, Baal is seen as the god of the storm and worshiped as the provider of rain and fertility.

■ **2:9–13 Therefore.** Though not punished with death (v. 3 note; cf. Ezek. 16:37–40), the unfaithful and forgetful lover is severely chastised through a series of dramatic reversals in which God's gifts are withdrawn: failed harvests, exposure, and the end of festivals.

■ **2:9 take back.** The Hebrew indicates a forceful, snatching action.

■ **2:11 Sabbaths.** The Hebrew *shabbat* is derived from the verb meaning "stop" or "cease," making a sarcastic pun.

appointed feasts. The festivals had become occasions for religious syncretism, in which the worship of the Lord and Baal were intermingled. See Introduction: Date and Occasion.

■ **2:12 wages . . . lovers have given.** The prostitute's wages, which were in fact gifts from the Lord (v. 8), were to be destroyed.

14 [z]Lit. *to her heart*
15 [n]Josh. 7:26

'These *are* my wages that my lovers have given me.'
So I will make them a forest,
And the beasts of the field shall eat them.
13 I will punish her
For the days of the Baals to which she burned incense.
She decked herself with her earrings and jewelry,
And went after her lovers;
But Me she forgot," says the LORD.

God's Mercy on His People

14 "Therefore, behold, I will allure her,
Will bring her into the wilderness,
And speak [z]comfort to her.
15 I will give her her vineyards from there,
And [n]the Valley of Achor as a door of hope;
She shall sing there,

Syncretism and Idolatry

Though there is only one God and only one true faith, that taught in the Bible, the apostate world (Rom. 1:18–25) has always been full of religions. The age-old urge toward syncretism (the assimilation of one religion's beliefs and practices into another) is still with us. Indeed, it has been revived in our time through renewed attempts to unify all religions and through persistent amalgams of Eastern and Western ideas that rise and fall in popularity.

The pressure to compromise is not new. After entering Canaan, Israel was constantly tempted to absorb into the worship of Yahweh the Canaanite worship of fertility gods and goddesses, if not to make images of Yahweh Himself—both practices being forbidden in the law (Ex. 20:3–6). The spiritual issue was whether Israel would remember that the covenant God was all-sufficient for them and that He claimed their exclusive allegiance, making the worship of other gods a spiritual adultery (Jer. 3; Ezek. 16; Hos. 2). This was a test the nation often failed.

Syncretism was widespread in the Roman Empire during the first centuries of Christianity. Polytheism was rife and all manner of mystery cults flourished. Early Christian teachers fought diligently to keep the faith from being assimilated to Gnosticism, a kind of theosophy that had no use for Christ's Incarnation and Atonement, since it saw the root problem of man as ignorance rather than sin. Neoplatonism and Manichaeism also saw the way of salvation mainly as a matter of ascetical detachment and escape from the physical world. Christian resistance to these movements was successful, and the classic formulations of the Trinity and the Incarnation in the creeds are a permanent legacy of these struggles.

Scripture condemns all idolatry as evil. Idols are mocked as delusive non-entities (Ps. 115:4–7; Is. 44:9–20), but they nevertheless enslave their worshipers in blind superstition (Is. 44:20). Paul adds that demons operate through idols, making them a spiritual menace (1 Cor. 8:4–6; 10:19–21). Biblical warnings against idolatry (e.g., 1 Cor. 10:14; 1 John 5:19–21) need to be taken to heart in the post-Christian Western culture, which is prepared to fill the spiritual vacuum that people feel by embracing religious syncretism, witchcraft, and experiments with the occult. □

■ **2:13 jewelry.** On pagan goddesses, jewelry emphasized erotic areas of the anatomy.

her lovers. In vv. 7, 10, 12 these are probably synonymous with the Baals. The essence of the charge against Israel was that she had forgotten the Lord, whom she should have loved (cf. 4:6; 13:4–6). See theological note "Syncretism and Idolatry."

■ **2:14 into the wilderness.** There Israel is to love God alone (v. 16; cf. Jer. 2:2).

speak comfort to her. Lit. "speak to the heart," an idiom used elsewhere for wooing, speaking kindly, and coaxing (Gen. 34:3; Judg. 19:3; Ruth 2:13).

■ **2:15 Valley of Achor.** Lit. "Valley of Trouble," this area was located near Jericho and was the site of the stoning of Achan (Josh. 7:24–26). Though associated with sin and death, this valley was to be transformed into a "door of hope."

sing. Lit. "answer" or "respond."

As in [o]the days of her youth,
[p]As in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt.

16 "And it shall be, in that day,"
Says the LORD,
"*That* you will call Me [8]'My Husband,'
And no longer call Me [9]'My Master,'
17 For [q]I will take from her mouth the names of the Baals,
And they shall be remembered by their name no more.
18 In that day I will make a [r]covenant for them
With the beasts of the field,
With the birds of the air,
And *with* the creeping things of the ground.
Bow and sword of battle [s]I will shatter from the earth,
To make them [t]lie down safely.

19 "I will betroth you to Me forever;
Yes, I will betroth you to Me
In righteousness and justice,
In lovingkindness and mercy;
20 I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness,
And [u]you shall know the LORD.

21 "It shall come to pass in that day
That [v]I will answer," says the LORD;
"I will answer the heavens,
And they shall answer the earth.
22 The earth shall answer
With grain,
With new wine,
And with oil;
They shall answer [1]Jezreel.
23 Then [w]I will sow her for Myself in the earth,
[x]And I will have mercy on *her who had* [2]not obtained mercy;
Then [y]I will say to *those who were* [3]not My people,
'You *are* [4]My people!'
And they shall say, '*You are* my God!' "

15 [o]Jer. 2:1–3; Ezek. 16:8–14 [p]Ex. 15:1

16 [8]Heb. *Ishi* [9]Heb. *Baali*

17 [q]Ex. 23:13; Josh. 23:7; Ps. 16:4

18 [r]Job 5:23; Is. 11:6–9; Ezek. 34:25 [s]Is. 2:4; Ezek. 39:1–10 [t]Lev. 26:5; Is. 32:18; Jer. 23:6; Ezek. 34:25

20 [u][Jer. 31:33, 34]; Hos. 6:6; 13:4; [John 17:3]

21 [v]Is. 55:10; Zech. 8:12; [Mal. 3:10, 11]

22 [1]Lit. *God Will Sow*

23 [w]Jer. 31:27; Amos 9:15 [x]Hos. 1:6 [y]Hos. 1:10; Zech. 13:9; Rom. 9:25, 26; [Eph. 2:11–22]; 1 Pet. 2:10 [2]Heb. *lo-ruhamah* [3]Heb. *lo-ammi* [4]Heb. *ammi*

■ **2:16 My Master.** The Hebrew word *ba'al* can mean "master" or "husband," as well as refer to the pagan god Baal. In the future, Israel will be so zealous to stamp out anything associated with Baal worship that the word *ba'al* itself, in all its senses, will be avoided (v. 17).

■ **2:18 I will make a covenant.** Taking up the same theme in a later time, Jeremiah explains the covenant as entailing a new heart (Jer. 31:31–34).

With the beasts. The future kingdom is secure and peaceful, free from the threat of wild animals (Is. 11:6–9) and invasions (Ps. 46:9; Is. 2:4; Mic. 4:3). Wild animals were a threat, particularly after invading armies ravaged the land. The language may be figurative for a transformed humanity, with the resulting peace and security attending the renewal inaugurated by Christ at His First Advent and completed at His return.

■ **2:19 betroth.** Betrothal was the final step in the courtship process and involved paying a bride-price to the bride's father. Here the qualities of righteousness, justice, love, mercy, and faithfulness are a sort of bride-price that guarantees the permanence of the relationship.

righteousness. God's righteousness is expressed both in His fairness and in the salvation He bestows on His people (10:12; Amos 5:7).

justice. This term can denote the legal decisions and relationships by which justice and fairness are established and restored (5:11; 6:5; 10:4; Amos 5:15, 24; Mic. 6:8).

lovingkindness. See note on Ex. 15:13.

mercy. The term can refer to compassion, heartfelt sensitivity, and love (1:6; Gen. 43:14; Deut. 13:17; 2 Sam. 24:14).

■ **2:20 faithfulness.** This quality includes dependability, truthfulness, and steadfastness in relationships (Ps. 88:11; 89:1, 2, 5, 8, 24; 92:2; 98:3), and is synonymous with "truth" in 4:1. Christ, by His active obedience, provided these covenant virtues for His people. By the Holy Spirit He inscribes His own nature on their hearts (2 Cor. 3:3).

know. The essence of the new covenant relationship involves knowing the Lord intimately (Jer. 31:34). Today Christ mediates this new covenant and renders the old covenant relationship obsolete (Heb. 8:7–13).

■ **2:21 answer.** The Lord will graciously answer Israel's cry, as she learns again to answer His appeals (v. 15 note).

the heavens. The Lord will show that He, not the storm-god Baal, commands the cycles of nature whereby the land becomes fertile and produces the crops that were earlier withheld (v. 9). See Introduction: Date and Occasion.

■ **2:22 Jezreel.** See note on 1:4.

■ **2:23** The promises of restoration come to a climax as Jezreel is redeemed (v. 22; cf. 1:4, 5), Lo-Ruhamah is shown God's love (1:6), and Lo-Ammi becomes God's people (1:9).

You are my God. See Rom. 9:23–26 and 1 Pet. 2:9, 10 regarding the fulfillment of these promises.

CHAPTER 3

1 [a]Jer. 3:20 [f]Lit. *friend* or *husband*

3 [b]Deut. 21:13

4 [c]Hos. 10:3 [d]Ex. 28:4–12; 1 Sam. 23:9–12 [e]Gen. 31:19, 34; Judg. 17:5; 18:14, 17; [1 Sam. 15:23]

5 [f]Jer. 50:4 [g]Jer. 30:9; Ezek. 34:24 [h][Is. 2:2, 3]; Jer. 31:9

CHAPTER 4

1 [a]Is. 1:18; Hos. 12:2; Mic. 6:2 [b]Jer. 4:22 [f]A legal complaint

2 [z]Lit. *touching*

3 [c]Is. 24:4; 33:9; Jer. 4:28; 12:4; Amos 5:16; 8:8 [d]Zeph. 1:3

Israel Will Return to God

3 Then the LORD said to me, "Go again, love a woman *who is* loved by a [a]lover[f] and is committing adultery, just like the love of the LORD for the children of Israel, who look to other gods and love *the* raisin cakes *of the pagans.*"

2 So I bought her for myself for fifteen *shekels* of silver, and one and one-half homers of barley. 3 And I said to her, "You shall [b]stay with me many days; you shall not play the harlot, nor shall you have a man—so, too, *will* I *be* toward you."

4 For the children of Israel shall abide many days [c]without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred pillar, without [d]ephod or [e]teraphim. 5 Afterward the children of Israel shall return and [f]seek the LORD their God and [g]David their king. They shall fear the LORD and His goodness in the [h]latter days.

God's Charge Against Israel

4 Hear the word of the LORD,
You children of Israel,
For the LORD *brings* a [a]charge[f] against the inhabitants of the land:

"There is no truth or mercy
Or [b]knowledge of God in the land.
2 *By* swearing and lying,
Killing and stealing and committing adultery,
They break all restraint,
With bloodshed [z]upon bloodshed.
3 Therefore [c]the land will mourn;
And [d]everyone who dwells there will waste away

■ **3:1–5** Hosea recounts his reconciliation with his wife Gomer as an anticipation of God's reconciliation with Israel.

■ **3:1 love . . . just like the love.** God's apparently unreasonable request is patterned after His own loyal, protective, and bountiful love for undeserving Israel.

raisin cakes. These delicacies, made from raisins pressed together, were associated with special occasions (2 Sam. 6:19), and may have been used in Baal worship as an aphrodisiac (cf. Song 2:5).

■ **3:2 bought.** Christ similarly fulfilled this picture of love in action when He redeemed His saints from the slave market of sin.

shekels. The payment, roughly half in silver and half in produce, amounted to about thirty shekels and approximated the price of a slave in Ex. 21:32. The New Testament teaches that the actual cost of redemption was Christ's blood (1 Pet. 1:18).

■ **3:4 many days.** The waiting period until the coming of Christ, the great and final King of the Davidic dynasty (v. 5).

without king . . . teraphim. Israel's basic political and religious institutions, both legitimate (sacrifice and ephod, Ex. 28:31) and illegitimate (sacred stones or pillars, Deut. 16:21–22; idols or teraphim, Zech. 10:2), were going to be removed as punishment.

■ **3:5 return and seek.** Many Israelites repented with a full desire for intimacy with God at Pentecost (Acts 2:38–41).

David. This reference points to Jesus Christ, Son of David (1:11 note; 2 Sam. 7:12–16; Matt. 1:1; Rom. 1:3).

the latter days. See note on Mic. 4:1.

■ **4:1–19** In this striking example of a prophetic lawsuit against Israel for violating the terms of the covenant, Hosea gives an overview of the Lord's case against Israel and then focuses on the consequences of their rejection of the knowledge of God.

■ **4:1 truth . . . knowledge.** See notes on 2:19, 20.

■ **4:2 swearing . . . bloodshed.** These sins constituted violations of the foundational covenant document—the Decalogue (Ex. 20:2–17; Deut. 5:6–21).

■ **4:3 the land will mourn.** Human sin results in crises within the natural order that endanger all of life (Lev. 18:28; Is. 24:4, 5).

Israel's Apostasy and Hosea's Marriage (3:1)

The stages of Israel's relationship with God are depicted in the prophecies of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, as well as in Hosea's relationship with Gomer.

Stage	Israel's Prophets	Hosea's Marriage
Betrothal	Jeremiah 2:2	Hosea 1:2
Marriage	Ezekiel 16:8–14	Hosea 1:3
Adultery	Jeremiah 5:7; Ezekiel 16:15–34	Hosea 3:1
Estrangement	Jeremiah 3:8–10; Ezekiel 16:35–52	Hosea 3:3, 4
Restoration	Ezekiel 16:53–63	Hosea 3:5

With the beasts of the field
And the birds of the air;
Even the fish of the sea will be taken away.

4 "Now let no man contend, or rebuke another;
For your people *are* like those [e]who contend with the priest.
5 Therefore you shall stumble [f]in the day;
The prophet also shall stumble with you in the night;
And I will destroy your mother.
6 [g]My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.
Because you have rejected knowledge,
I also will reject you from being priest for Me;
[h]Because you have forgotten the law of your God,
I also will forget your children.

7 "The more they increased,
The more they sinned against Me;
[i]I[3] will change [4]their glory into shame.
8 They eat up the sin of My people;
They set their [5]heart on their iniquity.
9 And it shall be: [j]like people, like priest.
So I will punish them for their ways,
And [6]reward them for their deeds.
10 For [k]they shall eat, but not have enough;
They shall commit harlotry, but not increase;
Because they have ceased obeying the LORD.

The Idolatry of Israel

11 "Harlotry, wine, and new wine [l]enslave the heart.
12 My people ask counsel from their [m]wooden *idols,*
And their [7]staff informs them.
For [n]the spirit of harlotry has caused *them* to stray,
And they have played the harlot against their God.
13 [o]They offer sacrifices on the mountaintops,
And burn incense on the hills,
Under oaks, poplars, and terebinths,
Because their shade *is* good.
[p]Therefore your daughters commit harlotry,
And your brides commit adultery.

4 [e]Deut. 17:12
5 [f]Jer. 15:8; Hos. 2:2, 5
6 [g]Is. 5:13 [h]Ezek. 22:26
7 [i]1 Sam. 2:30; Mal. 2:9 [3]So with MT, LXX, Vg.; scribal tradition, Syr., Tg. *They will change* [4]So with MT, LXX, Syr., Tg., Vg.; scribal tradition *My glory*
8 [5]Desires
9 [j]Is. 24:2; Jer. 5:30, 31; 2 Tim. 4:3, 4 [6]*repay*
10 [k]Lev. 26:26; Is. 65:13; Mic. 6:14; Hag. 1:6
11 [l]Prov. 20:1; Is. 5:12; 28:7
12 [m]Jer. 2:27 [n]Is. 44:19, 20 [7]Diviner's rod
13 [o]Is. 1:29; 57:5, 7; Jer. 2:20; Ezek. 6:13; 20:28 [p]Amos 7:17; [Rom. 1:28–32]

■ **4:4–10** Attention shifts to the sins of the priests, whose failure to instruct the nation in God's law has corrupted Israel (v. 6; Deut. 31:9–13; 33:10).

■ **4:4 let no man contend.** Or, "let no man bring a charge." According to the Mosaic law, the priests were entrusted with the task of rendering legal judgments (Deut. 17:9–13). But because of the general lack of knowledge and respect for God's law in Israel of Hosea's time, there was no point in bringing charges against another, because the verdicts would not be honored (the people were "like those who contend with the priest"; i.e., did not respect his decisions and teaching).

■ **4:5 your mother.** The nation of Israel (2:2, 5; Is. 50:1).

■ **4:6 My people.** The nation will lose her covenant relationship with God through lack of covenant knowledge (vv. 8, 12).

knowledge. Knowledge of God is inseparable from the law of God (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes). The priests, who were responsible for teaching the law—and their descendants—were to be punished for ignoring or forgetting the law (vv. 4–10 note).

■ **4:7 I will change their glory.** Or, "they will change their glory" (text note). Ultimately, the Lord is Israel's glory (Is. 60:19; Jer. 2:11). In Rom. 1:23, Paul condemns the sin of exchanging God's glory for something corruptible.

shame. Idols or false gods (Deut. 32:16, 17).

■ **4:8 They eat up the sin of My people.** Taken literally, the priests, who ate portions of the animals sacrificed for sin, encouraged the people to sin. Then the priests would have more to eat (Lev. 6:26). Taken figuratively, the priests were gratified by the people's sin.

■ **4:9 like people, like priest.** No one is spared from judgment (cf. Is. 24:1–3).

■ **4:10 eat . . . commit harlotry.** Food will not satisfy (v. 8), and illicit sex will not produce increase. They have left the Lord, the source of life, to practice harlotry (vv. 12, 18; 2:4; 6:10; 9:1).

■ **4:11 enslave the heart.** Lit. "take away the [people's] heart," i.e., their ability to judge and think clearly (cf. Prov. 31:4, 5).

■ **4:12 their wooden idols.** Lit. "their wood." This may refer to the Asherah pole beside a Canaanite shrine (Deut. 16:21; Judg. 6:25–32), to some other deity (Hab. 2:18, 19), or to a sacred tree thought to give oracles (Judg. 9:37).

staff. Probably a divining rod, or perhaps a small figurine of Asherah.

spirit of harlotry. Their spiritual adultery is caused by an intoxicating and seductive power that draws them continuously into sin ("a perverse spirit," Is. 19:14; "spirit of deep sleep," Is. 29:10).

14 "I will not punish your daughters when they commit harlotry,
Nor your brides when they commit adultery;
For *the men* themselves go apart with harlots,
And offer sacrifices with a [q]ritual harlot.
Therefore people *who* do not understand will be trampled.

15 "Though you, Israel, play the harlot,
Let not Judah offend.
[r]Do not come up to Gilgal,
Nor go up to [s]Beth[8] Aven,
[t]Nor swear an oath, *saying,* 'As the LORD lives'—

16 "For Israel [u]is stubborn
Like a stubborn calf;
Now the LORD will let them forage
Like a lamb in [9]open country.

17 "Ephraim *is* joined to idols,
[v]Let him alone.

18 Their drink [1]is rebellion,
They commit harlotry continually.
[w]Her [2]rulers [3]dearly love dishonor.

19 [x]The wind has wrapped her up in its wings,
And [y]they shall be ashamed because of their sacrifices.

14 [q]Deut. 23:18

15 [r]Hos. 9:15; 12:11 [s]1 Kin. 12:29; Josh. 7:2; Hos. 10:8 [t]Jer. 5:2; 44:26; Amos 8:14 [8]Lit. *House of Idolatry* or *Wickedness*

16 [u]Jer. 3:6; 7:24; 8:5; Zech. 7:11 [9]Lit. *a large place*

17 [v]Matt. 15:14

18 [w]Mic. 3:11 [1]Or *has turned aside* [2]Lit. *shields* [3]Heb. difficult; a Jewish tradition *shamefully love, 'Give!'*

19 [x]Jer. 51:1 [y]Is. 1:29

Impending Judgment on Israel and Judah

CHAPTER 5

5 "Hear this, O priests!
Take heed, O house of Israel!
Give ear, O house of the king!
For [1]yours *is* the judgment,
Because [a]you have been a snare to Mizpah
And a net spread on Tabor.

2 The revolters are [b]deeply involved in slaughter,
Though I rebuke them all.

3 [c]I know Ephraim,
And Israel is not hidden from Me;
For now, O Ephraim, [d]you commit harlotry;
Israel is defiled.

4 "They[2] do not direct their deeds
Toward turning to their God,

1 [a]Hos. 6:9 [1]Or *to you*

2 [b]Is. 29:15; Hos. 4:2; 6:9

3 [c]Amos 3:2; 5:12 [d]Hos. 4:17

4 [2]Or *Their deeds will not allow them to turn*

■ **4:14 I will not punish.** Not that God refused to punish the harlots and adulteresses at all (since the people as a whole will be judged), but that He would not allow them to be punished while the men who patronized them went free (cf. Gen. 38:24–26).

■ **4:15–19** The theme of prophetic lawsuit against Israel continues as further charges of covenant disobedience are leveled (4:1–19 note).

■ **4:15 Gilgal.** This important Israelite sanctuary near Jericho was situated across the Jordan from Baal Peor. From the time of the conquest, Gilgal was an important place of worship (Josh. 4:19—5:12; 1 Sam. 10:8; 11:12–15). Later in Israel's history, Gilgal became associated with wicked and syncretistic religious practices (9:15; 12:11; Amos 4:4).

Beth Aven. See text note. This was a contemptuous nickname for Bethel ("House of God"), the important royal sanctuary (Amos 4:4; 5:5; 7:13; 1 Kin. 12:28–33).

As the LORD lives. This orthodox oath (Judg. 8:19; Ruth 3:13; 1 Sam. 14:39) was forbidden here because they were lying (v. 2), or because it was being misused by associating the Lord with Baal worship.

■ **4:16 stubborn calf.** Israel was kicking against all of the Lord's efforts to care for them (cf. Jer. 31:18).

■ **4:17 Ephraim.** Because Ephraim was by far the largest of the ten northern tribes, the northern kingdom of Israel was sometimes called Ephraim (Deut. 33:17 note).

Let him alone. The plural verb here may indicate an address to other prophets.

■ **4:19 wind . . . wings.** A wordplay on the Hebrew word meaning "wind" or "spirit" is probably intended. Not only was a destructive storm wind of divine judgment about to sweep away the people (Job 1:19), but "the spirit of harlotry" (v. 12; 5:4) was leading them to ruin.

■ **5:1 priests . . . house of Israel . . . house of the king.** The fate of the northern kingdom was bound up with that of its leaders. The priests were responsible to teach the law (4:6), and the royal house was responsible for administering justice.

snare. The leaders trapped their foolish subjects.

Mizpah. Probably this is the Mizpah in Benjamin, where Samuel judged (1 Sam. 7:5, 6; 10:17–24), not Mizpah in Gilead (Gen. 31:48, 49).

Tabor. A famous mountain site located on the northeastern edge of the Jezreel Valley (Judg. 4:6). These and other northern sites had become high places of the pagan cult of Baal.

■ **5:3 Ephraim.** See note on 4:17.

■ **5:4 spirit of harlotry.** See note on 4:12. They "do not know the LORD" truly (4:1, 6), nor can they return or repent (cf. Jer. 13:23).

For [e]the spirit of harlotry is in their midst,
And they do not know the LORD.
5 The [f]pride of Israel testifies to his face;
Therefore Israel and Ephraim stumble in their iniquity;
Judah also stumbles with them.

6 "With their flocks and herds
[g]They shall go to seek the LORD,
But they will not find *Him;*
He has withdrawn Himself from them.
7 They have [h]dealt treacherously with the LORD,
For they have begotten [3]pagan children.
Now a New Moon shall devour them and their heritage.

8 "Blow[i] the ram's horn in Gibeah,
The trumpet in Ramah!
[j]Cry aloud *at* [k]Beth Aven,
'*Look* behind you, O Benjamin!'
9 Ephraim shall be desolate in the day of rebuke;
Among the tribes of Israel I make known what is sure.

10 "The princes of Judah are like those who [l]remove a landmark;
I will pour out My wrath on them like water.
11 Ephraim is [m]oppressed *and* broken in judgment,
Because he willingly walked by [n]*human* precept.
12 Therefore I *will be* to Ephraim like a moth,
And to the house of Judah [o]like rottenness.

13 "When Ephraim saw his sickness,
And Judah *saw* his [p]wound,
Then Ephraim went [q]to Assyria
And sent to King Jareb;
Yet he cannot cure you,
Nor heal you of your wound.
14 For [r]I *will be* like a lion to Ephraim,
And like a young lion to the house of Judah.
[s]I, *even* I, will tear *them* and go away;
I will take *them* away, and no one shall rescue.
15 I will return again to My place
Till they [4]acknowledge their offense.

4 [e]Hos. 4:12
5 [f]Hos. 7:10
6 [g]Prov. 1:28; Is. 1:15; Jer. 11:11; Ezek. 8:18; Mic. 3:4; John 7:34
7 [h]Is. 48:8; Jer. 3:20; Hos. 6:7 [3]Lit. *strange*
8 [i]Hos. 8:1; Joel 2:1 [j]Is. 10:30 [k]Josh. 7:2
10 [l]Deut. 19:14; 27:17
11 [m]Deut. 28:33 [n]Mic. 6:16
12 [o]Prov. 12:4
13 [p]Jer. 30:12–15 [q]2 Kin. 15:19; Hos. 7:11; 10:6
14 [r]Ps. 7:2; Lam. 3:10; Hos. 13:7, 8 [s]Ps. 50:22
15 [4]Lit. *become guilty* or *bear punishment*

■ **5:5 testifies.** The sins of the people testify against them in the Lord's covenant lawsuit against His people (ch. 4 note).

■ **5:6 With their flocks . . . to seek.** The Lord will not be found through the offering of their ritual sacrifices (4:13; 1 Sam. 15:21–23; Is. 1:11–17; Mic. 6:6–8).

■ **5:7 pagan children.** Like an unfaithful wife and mother, Israel gives birth to children that were literally and religiously illegitimate (4:6, 13, 14).

New Moon. The festivals brought judgment, instead of the Lord's blessing on their wombs and crops as they had imagined would happen (cf. Is. 1:13, 14).

■ **5:8 Blow . . . Cry aloud.** These commands sound the watchman's cry to warn of an approaching enemy (Judah) from the south (cf. 8:1). The Syro-Ephraimite war described in 2 Kin. 16:5–9 and 2 Chr. 28:5–21 seems to stand behind this warning. See Introduction: Date and Occasion.

Gibeah . . . Ramah . . . Beth Aven. These Benjamite towns lie in a straight line running north from Jerusalem: Gibeah, three miles; Ramah, five miles; Beth Aven (Bethel), eleven miles. At various times in their history they were claimed by one or the other kingdom (1 Kin. 15:16–22).

■ **5:10 remove a landmark.** The boundary lines dividing the Promised Land were considered sacred to the Lord (Deut. 19:14; 27:17; Job 24:2; Prov. 22:28; 23:10). See note on Num. 27:1–11.

■ **5:12 moth . . . rottenness.** Like a moth, or possibly like an infection (some suggest that the Hebrew word translated "moth" means "pus"), God will bring inexorable and unpleasant decay upon sinful Ephraim.

■ **5:13 sickness . . . wound.** Instead of turning to the Lord for healing their miseries inflicted by an enemy (cf. Is. 1:5–9; Jer. 30:12, 13), Israel turned to Assyria. Assyrian records speak of the tribute paid by Israel's kings, Menahem and Hoshea (cf. 2 Kin. 15:17–20; 17:3).

■ **5:14 I will be like a lion.** Even with Assyrian help, Israel is helpless prey before the powerful lion, the Lord (13:7; Amos 1:2; 3:8).

■ **5:15 I will return . . . My place.** In His anger, God removes His saving presence from the people until they truly repent (3:5).

Then they will seek My face;
In their affliction they will earnestly seek Me."

A Call to Repentance

CHAPTER 6

6 Come,[a] and let us return to the LORD;
For [b]He has torn, but [c]He will heal us;
He has stricken, but He will [f]bind us up.
2 [d]After two days He will revive us;
On the third day He will raise us up,
That we may live in His sight.
3 [e]Let us know,
Let us pursue the knowledge of the LORD.
His going forth is established [f]as the morning;
[g]He will come to us [h]like the rain,
Like the latter *and* former rain to the earth.

Impenitence of Israel and Judah

4 "O Ephraim, what shall I do to you?
O Judah, what shall I do to you?
For your faithfulness is like a morning cloud,
And like the early dew it goes away.
5 Therefore I have hewn *them* by the prophets,
I have slain them by [i]the words of My mouth;
And [2]your judgments *are like* light *that* goes forth.
6 For I desire [j]mercy[3] and [k]not sacrifice,
And the [l]knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

7 "But like [4]men they transgressed the covenant;
There they dealt treacherously with Me.
8 [m]Gilead *is* a city of evildoers
And [5]defiled with blood.
9 As bands of robbers lie in wait for a man,
So the company of [n]priests [o]murder on the way to Shechem;
Surely they commit [p]lewdness.
10 I have seen a horrible thing in the house of Israel:

1 [a]Is. 1:18; Acts 10:43 [b]Deut. 32:39; Hos. 5:14 [c]Jer. 30:17; Hos. 14:4 [f]Bandage
2 [d]Luke 24:46; Acts 10:40; [1 Cor. 15:4]
3 [e]Is. 54:13 [f]2 Sam. 23:4 [g]Ps. 72:6; Joel 2:23 [h]Job 29:23
5 [i][Jer. 23:29] [2]Or *the judgments on you*
6 [j]Matt. 9:13; 12:7 [k]Is. 1:12, 13; [Mic. 6:6–8] [l][John 17:3] [3]Or *faithfulness* or *loyalty*
7 [4]Or *Adam*
8 [m]Hos. 12:11 [5]Lit. *foot-tracked*
9 [n]Hos. 5:1 [o]Jer. 7:9, 10; Hos. 4:2 [p]Ezek. 22:9; 23:27; Hos. 2:10

■ **6:1–3** This song of repentance responds with the imagery of 5:11–14, but seems superficial in tone (v. 4).

■ **6:1 let us.** The priests may be quoted here, much as Israel was quoted in 2:7.

return. The call to return to the Lord is one of the central messages of the book (2:7; 3:5; 5:4, 15). True repentance and conversion bring reconciliation that includes healing of wounds (cf. Deut. 32:39).

■ **6:2 two days . . . the third.** This may simply denote a short period of time. Some, who view this as a prediction of Christ's resurrection, understand Paul to allude to this verse in 1 Cor. 15:4.

live in His sight. See Ps. 16:11.

■ **6:3 pursue the knowledge of the LORD.** Like the call to return (v. 1), the call to true knowledge of the Lord is central to Hosea's message (2:8, 20; 4:1, 6; 5:4; 6:6). See Introduction: Characteristics and Themes.

as the morning . . . like the rain. These similes compare God's reliability to the recurrent events of nature.

■ **6:4 morning cloud . . . early dew.** Continuing the use of images from nature, God laments the temporary, transitory quality of Israel and Judah's covenant love, in contrast with His own faithfulness (v. 3).

■ **6:5 light.** Like the light of the sun whose rising dispels the darkness, God's justice consistently and inevitably goes forth (cf. Ps. 37:6), exposing the sins of those who have broken the covenant.

■ **6:6 more than burnt offerings.** Covenant faithfulness or loyalty, not mere ritual, were required of the covenant people (Mic. 6:6–8 and notes).

■ **6:7–10** These verses catalogue a number of crimes associated with specific places that were infamous in Hosea's day. Though the details are now lost, the record serves to indict the whole nation (v. 10).

■ **6:7 like men.** See text note. Several possible interpretations of this reference have been proposed: (a) the first man, Adam (Gen. 3); (b) a place identified with the ancient site Tell ed-Damiyeh on the Jordan River (Josh. 3:16), parallel to Gilead and Shechem (vv. 8, 9) and suggested by "there" in the second half of the verse; and (c) mankind. Because the elements of a covenant were present in God's relationship with Adam, the doctrine of God's covenant with Adam does not depend upon the interpretation of this text. See note on Gen. 3.

■ **6:8 Gilead.** This was a mountainous region in the northern Transjordan, but the word may refer to the city of Ramoth Gilead.

evildoers. The term is used frequently in the Psalms to indicate the enemies of the righteous and of the Lord.

defiled with blood. This may allude to the fifty men of Gilead involved in the assassination of Pekahiah (2 Kin. 15:25).

■ **6:9 Shechem.** An important religious and political center, Shechem was located between Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal (Deut. 27:4, 12–14; Josh. 8:30; 20:7; 24:1; Judg. 9:6; 1 Kin. 12:1).

■ **6:10 horrible thing.** The phrase suggests a religious sin, or the involvement of priests or prophets in gross wrongdoing (Jer. 5:30, 31; 18:13–15; 23:14).

harlotry. A common figure here for religious infidelity (text note; 7:4 and note).

There *is* the [6]harlotry of Ephraim;
Israel is defiled.
11 Also, O Judah, a harvest is appointed for you,
When I return the captives of My people.

7 "When I would have healed Israel,
Then the iniquity of Ephraim was uncovered,
And the wickedness of Samaria.
For [a]they have committed fraud;
A thief comes in;
A band of robbers [1]takes spoil outside.
2 They [2]do not consider in their hearts
That [b]I remember all their wickedness;
Now their own deeds have surrounded them;
They are before My face.
3 They make a [c]king glad with their wickedness,
And princes [d]with their lies.

4 "They[e] *are* all adulterers.
Like an oven heated by a baker—
He ceases stirring *the fire* after kneading the dough,
Until it is leavened.
5 In the day of our king
Princes have made *him* sick, [3]inflamed with [f]wine;
He stretched out his hand with scoffers.
6 They prepare their heart like an oven,
While they lie in wait;
[4]Their baker sleeps all night;
In the morning it burns like a flaming fire.
7 They are all hot, like an oven,
And have devoured their judges;
All their kings have fallen.
[g]None among them calls upon Me.

8 "Ephraim [h]has mixed himself among the peoples;
Ephraim is a cake unturned.
9 [i]Aliens have devoured his strength,
But he does not know *it;*
Yes, gray hairs are here and there on him,
Yet he does not know *it.*

10 [6]Spiritual adultery

CHAPTER 7

1 [a]Ezek. 23:4–8; Hos. 5:1 [1]*plunders*

2 [b]Ps. 25:7; Jer. 14:10; 17:1; Hos. 8:13; 9:9; Amos 8:7 [2]Lit. *do not say to*

3 [c]Hos. 1:1 [d]Mic. 7:3; [Rom. 1:32]

4 [e]Jer. 9:2; 23:10

5 [f]Is. 28:1, 7 [3]Lit. *with the heat of*

6 [4]So with MT, Vg.; Syr., Tg. *Their anger;* LXX *Ephraim*

7 [g]Is. 64:7

8 [h]Ps. 106:35

9 [i]Is. 1:7; 42:25; Hos. 8:7

■ **6:11 harvest.** A metaphor for God's judgment (Jer. 51:33; Joel 3:13; Matt. 13:39–43).

■ **7:1 Ephraim . . . Samaria.** Both terms refer to the northern kingdom, of which Samaria was the capital (4:17 note).

■ **7:2 They do not consider.** They have deceived even themselves (cf. Gal. 6:7).

■ **7:3 king . . . princes.** The royal leaders should have provided moral leadership, but savored instead the evil and treachery of those around them (2 Kin. 15:8–30).

■ **7:4 adulterers.** They left the Lord, to whom they were allied in the covenant, and joined themselves with other gods and other foreign allies (2:4; 4:12–14; Jer. 9:2; 23:10–14). See Introduction: Characteristics and Themes.

Like an oven. The figures of an oven, a baker, and fire present a graphic word picture of the self-propagating passion, treachery, and wickedness that infested the political life of Israel during its last days and led to the series of violent assassinations of its kings (2 Kin. 15:8–30). The assassination of Pekah by Hoshea (2 Kin. 15:30) may be the occasion of the remarks in vv. 4–7.

■ **7:5 day of our king.** A royal celebration became an occasion for drunkenness, which in turn fueled wickedness (1 Kin. 16:9, 10; Prov. 31:4, 5; Amos 6:6).

■ **7:6 They prepare.** Those plotting against the king, perhaps the priests (6:9).

■ **7:7 judges . . . kings.** Even amid unrest that saw four kings assassinated within twenty years (2 Kin. 15:8–30), none of the leaders called upon God.

■ **7:8 mixed himself among the peoples.** A reference to Israel's shifting alliances with Egypt, Philistia, Aram, and Assyria.

a cake unturned. In this sarcastic figure for foolish national policy, Israel is compared to a useless half-baked cake because she refused to turn to the Lord.

■ **7:9 devoured his strength.** They made Ephraim poor by exacting tribute.

he does not know it. This repeated phrase stresses Israel's ignorance of how politically weak and drained she had become. Lack of knowledge of God is here followed by lack of self-knowledge.

10 And the [j]pride of Israel testifies to his face,
But [k]they do not return to the LORD their God,
Nor seek Him for all this.

Futile Reliance on the Nations

11 "Ephraim[l] also is like a silly dove, without [5]sense—
[m]They call to Egypt,
They go to [n]Assyria.
12 Wherever they go, I will [o]spread My net on them;
I will bring them down like birds of the air;
I will chastise them
[p]According to what their congregation has heard.

13 "Woe to them, for they have fled from Me!
Destruction to them,
Because they have transgressed against Me!
Though [q]I redeemed them,
Yet they have spoken lies against Me.
14 [r]They did not cry out to Me with their heart
When they wailed upon their beds.

"They [6]assemble together for grain and new [s]wine,
[7]They rebel against Me;
15 Though I disciplined *and* strengthened their arms,
Yet they devise evil against Me;
16 They return, *but* not [8]to the Most High;
[t]They are like a treacherous bow.
Their princes shall fall by the sword
For the [u]cursings of their tongue.
This *shall be* their derision [v]in the land of Egypt.

The Apostasy of Israel

8 "*Set* the [1]trumpet to your mouth!
He shall come [a]like an eagle against the house of the LORD,
Because they have transgressed My covenant
And rebelled against My law.
2 [b]Israel will cry to Me,
'My God, [c]we know You!'

10 [j]Hos. 5:5 [k]Is. 9:13
11 [l]Hos. 11:11 [m]Is. 30:3 [n]Hos. 5:13; 8:9 [5]Lit. *heart*
12 [o]Ezek. 12:13 [p]Lev. 26:14; Deut. 28:15; 2 Kin. 17:13
13 [q]Ex. 18:8; Mic. 6:4
14 [r]Job 35:9, 10; Ps. 78:36; Jer. 3:10; Zech. 7:5 [s]Judg. 9:27; Amos 2:8 [6]So with MT, Tg.; Vg. *thought upon;* LXX *slashed themselves for* (cf. 1 Kin. 18:28) [7]So with MT, Syr., Tg.; LXX omits *They rebel against Me;* Vg. *They departed from Me*
16 [t]Ps. 78:57 [u]Ps. 73:9; Dan. 7:25; Mal. 3:13, 14 [v]Deut. 28:68; Ezek. 23:32; Hos. 8:13; 9:3 [8]Or *upward*

CHAPTER 8

1 [a]Deut. 28:49; Jer. 4:13 [1]*ram's horn,* Heb. *shophar*
2 [b]Ps. 78:34; Hos. 5:15; 7:14 [c]Titus 1:16

■ **7:10 pride.** Israel's blindness is attributed to stubborn arrogance that testifies against her (5:5). Turning back to the Lord was Israel's only hope (2:7; 3:5; 5:4; 6:1; Amos 4:6–12).

■ **7:11 silly dove.** The dove was reputed to be witless and easy to trap.

Egypt . . . Assyria. Like a dove, Israel fluttered from one nation to another seeking security and protection: Menahem submitted to Assyria and paid a vast tribute (2 Kin. 15:17–20); Pekah formed a coalition with Syria-Damascus against Assyria (2 Kin. 15:29, 37; 16:5); and Hoshea shifted his allegiance from Assyria to Egypt (2 Kin. 17:3, 4).

■ **7:12 My net.** The Lord's net of judgment will come down upon flitting Israel.

■ **7:13 redeemed.** This term from commercial law meaning "buy back" (Lev. 27:27–31) is used also of Israel's deliverance from bondage (13:14; Ex. 15:13; Deut. 7:8; 9:26; Mic. 6:4).

lies. This may refer to the false ideas about the Lord that had been imported into Israel's religion, to insincere words of repentance (6:1–3), or more generally to the broken promises of the covenant.

■ **7:14 with their heart.** A responsible and loyal response, as suggested by a similar expression used in a contemporary Assyrian treaty.

wailed upon their beds. This phrase could mean that they cried out to their gods on the beds of fertility-cult prostitution. If "assemble" is replaced with "slash themselves" (text note), this self-mutilation was yet another appeal to pagan gods (Deut. 14:1; 1 Kin. 18:26–29).

■ **7:16 treacherous bow.** See Ps. 78:57.

cursings of their tongue. These were directed against God and His prophets (6:5).

Egypt. The Egyptians would soon mock at the fall of those who only intermittently solicited their help.

■ **8:1 trumpet.** The urgent call for alarm (5:8) reports that Assyria, like an eagle (Deut. 28:49, 50; Is. 10:5, 6; Jer. 4:13; 48:40; Lam. 4:19; Hab. 1:8), is rapidly approaching to administer God's judgment.

the house of the LORD. This expression can refer to the land as well as the temple (9:15).

My covenant . . . My law. Rebellion against the terms of the covenant was tantamount to rebellion against God Himself (4:6; 6:6, 7; 7:13; 8:12).

■ **8:2 we know You.** As they cry for help, the Israelites claim to know God, but their actions belie their words (6:1). See Introduction: Characteristics and Themes.

3 Israel has rejected the good;
The enemy will pursue him.

4 "They[d] set up kings, but not by Me;
They made princes, but I did not acknowledge *them.*
From their silver and gold
They made idols for themselves—
That they might be cut off.
5 Your [2]calf [3]is rejected, O Samaria!
My anger is aroused against them—
[e]How long until they attain to innocence?
6 For from Israel *is* even this:
A [f]workman made it, and it *is* not God;
But the calf of Samaria shall be broken to pieces.

7 "They[g] sow the wind,
And reap the whirlwind.
The stalk has no bud;
It shall never produce meal.
If it should produce,
[h]Aliens would swallow it up.
8 [i]Israel is swallowed up;
Now they are among the Gentiles
[j]Like a vessel in which *is* no pleasure.
9 For they have gone up to Assyria,
Like [k]a wild donkey alone by itself;
Ephraim [l]has hired lovers.
10 Yes, though they have hired among the nations,
Now [m]I will gather them;
And they shall [4]sorrow a little,
Because of the [5]burden of [n]the king of princes.

11 "Because Ephraim has made many altars for sin,
They have become for him altars for sinning.
12 I have written for him [o]the great things of My law,
But they were considered a strange thing.
13 *For* the sacrifices of My offerings [p]they sacrifice flesh and eat *it,*
[q]*But* the LORD does not accept them.
[r]Now He will remember their iniquity and punish their sins.
They shall return to Egypt.

14 "For[s] Israel has forgotten [t]his Maker,
And has built [6]temples;

4 [d]1 Kin. 12:20; 2 Kin. 15:23, 25; Hos. 13:10, 11

5 [e]Ps. 19:13; Jer. 13:27 [2]Golden calf image [3]Or *has rejected you*

6 [f]Is. 40:19

7 [g]Prov. 22:8 [h]Hos. 7:9

8 [i]2 Kin. 17:6; Jer. 51:34 [j]Jer. 22:28; 25:34

9 [k]Hos. 7:11; 12:1; Jer. 2:24 [l]Ezek. 16:33, 34

10 [m]Ezek. 16:37; 22:20 [n]Is. 10:8; Ezek. 26:7; Dan. 2:37 [4]Or *begin to diminish* [5]Or *oracle* or *proclamation*

12 [o][Deut. 4:6–8]; Ps. 119:18; 147:19, 20

13 [p]Zech. 7:6 [q]Jer. 14:10; Hos. 6:6; 9:4; 1 Cor. 4:5 [r]Hos. 9:9; Amos 8:7; Luke 12:2

14 [s]Deut. 32:18; [Hos. 2:13; 4:6; 13:6] [t]Is. 29:23 [6]Or *palaces*

■ **8:3 the good.** This comprehensive term describes all the blessings under God's covenant; it may even refer to the "Good One," God Himself (Amos 5:14, 15; Mic. 6:8).

■ **8:4 kings . . . princes.** Israel's independence from God in the political sphere was apparent in their refusal to consult God in their choice of leaders. This led to a series of conspiracies and violent assassinations (7:3–7; 2 Kin. 15:8–30). See Introduction: Date and Occasion.

idols. In making gods of silver and gold, Israel expressed her defiant rejection of the good (v. 5; Ex. 20:3–6; 34:17; Lev. 19:4).

■ **8:5 calf.** A symbol of fertility and strength, the bull was frequently worshiped in the ancient Near East. Yet the golden calf of Samaria was established as an idol representing the Lord by Jeroboam I (1 Kin. 12:26–30; cf. Ex. 32) and is itself here described as the object of worship (10:5 note).

■ **8:7 sow the wind . . . reap the whirlwind.** This proverbial saying emphasizes the dire cause-and-effect relationship between sin and punishment (10:13; Job 4:8; Prov. 11:18; 22:8; Gal. 6:7–9).

■ **8:9 gone up to Assyria.** Probably a reference to Hoshea's submission to Assyria in his attempt to keep the power that he had seized following his murder of Pekah (7:11; 2 Kin. 15:30; 17:3). See Introduction: Date and Occasion.

wild donkey. Using a wordplay between the Hebrew for "wild donkey" and "Ephraim," Hosea condemns Ephraim (Israel) for stubbornly rejecting the Lord's company.

■ **8:10 I will gather them.** This gathering is for judgment, not restoration (Joel 3:2; Zeph. 3:8).

the king of princes. The king of Assyria (Is. 10:8).

■ **8:11 altars for sin.** Although built to atone for sin, northern altars instead became places to sin.

■ **8:13 return to Egypt.** God threatens them with captivity, here symbolized by the land where Israel earlier had been enslaved (9:3; Ex. 1:8–14; Deut. 28:68).

■ **8:14 temples . . . palaces.** Israel's confidence that buildings and fortifications bring spiritual, political, or military security was misguided.

fire. See Amos 1:4, 7, 10, 12, 14.

Judah also has multiplied [u]fortified cities;
But [v]I will send fire upon his cities,
And it shall devour his [7]palaces."

14 [u]Num. 32:17; 2 Kin. 18:13 [v]Jer. 17:27 [7]Or *citadels*

CHAPTER 9

Judgment of Israel's Sin

9 Do[a] not rejoice, O Israel, with joy like *other* peoples,
For you have played the harlot against your God.
You have made love *for* [b]hire on every threshing floor.
2 The threshing floor and the winepress
Shall not feed them,
And the new wine shall fail in her.

3 They shall not dwell in [c]the LORD's land,
[d]But Ephraim shall return to Egypt,
And [e]shall eat unclean *things* in Assyria.
4 They shall not offer wine *offerings* to the LORD,
Nor [f]shall their [g]sacrifices be pleasing to Him.
It shall be like bread of mourners to them;
All who eat it shall be defiled.
For their bread *shall be* for their *own* life;
It shall not come into the house of the LORD.

5 What will you do in the appointed day,
And in the day of the feast of the LORD?
6 For indeed they are gone because of destruction.
Egypt shall gather them up;
Memphis shall bury them.
[h]Nettles shall possess their valuables of silver;
Thorns *shall be* in their tents.

7 The [i]days of punishment have come;
The days of recompense have come.
Israel knows!
The prophet *is* a [j]fool,
[k]The spiritual man *is* insane,
Because of the greatness of your iniquity and great enmity.
8 The [l]watchman of Ephraim *is* with my God;
But the prophet *is* a [l]fowler's snare in all his ways—
Enmity in the house of his God.
9 [m]They are deeply corrupted,

1 [a]Is. 22:12, 13; Hos. 10:5 [b]Jer. 44:17
3 [c][Lev. 25:23]; Jer. 2:7 [d]Hos. 7:16; 8:13 [e]Ezek. 4:13
4 [f]Jer. 6:20 [g]Hos. 8:13; Amos 5:22
6 [h]Is. 5:6; 7:23; Hos. 10:8
7 [i]Is. 10:3; Jer. 10:15; Mic. 7:4; Luke 21:22 [j]Lam. 2:14; [Ezek. 13:3, 10] [k]Mic. 2:11
8 [l]Jer. 6:17; 31:6; Ezek. 3:17; 33:7 [7]One who catches birds in a trap or snare
9 [m]Hos. 10:9

■ **9:1–9** Because of divine judgment on her covenant disobedience, Israel would not enjoy the fruit of the land (Deut. 28:18), nor celebrate the annual agricultural feasts (Deut. 16:1–17 and notes).

■ **9:1 threshing floor.** The flat, open area used for threshing wheat and barley was also a place where Israel prostituted itself by indulging in sensual activities related to the fertility worship of Baal. See Introduction: Date and Occasion.

■ **9:2 winepress.** This device was used for both wine and oil.

■ **9:3 the LORD's land.** Also called the Lord's "house" (8:1; 9:15), the Promised Land is owned by the Lord and not by Baal—or even by Israel (Lev. 25:23 and note).

return to Egypt. See note on 8:13.

unclean things. Other nations and the food they produced were considered unclean (Ezek. 4:13; Amos 7:17).

■ **9:4 bread of mourners.** Food in the house of mourners was unclean because of contact with a dead body (Num. 19:11–22; Deut. 26:14).

house of the LORD. They would not be able to sanctify their food through sacrifice while in exile.

■ **9:5 appointed day . . . feast of the LORD.** A probable reference to the annual fall harvest Feast of Booths or Tabernacles (Lev. 23:33–43; Deut. 16:13–15).

■ **9:6 destruction.** The Assyrian invasions.

Memphis shall bury them. Here poetically paired with Egypt, this Egyptian city was known for its great cemeteries, tombs, and pyramids.

valuables of silver . . . tents. The abandoned tents and valuables may have been religious shrines and idols, or their personal property in general.

■ **9:7 prophet is a fool.** In their sin, the Israelites consider the Lord's prophets to be foolish and idle talkers.

spiritual man. Used in parallel with "prophet," this is probably another expression for "man of God" (1 Sam. 10:6; 1 Kin. 18:12; 22:21–28; 2 Kin. 2:9, 16).

insane. The Hebrew word indicates a nonsensical babbler or madman (1 Sam. 21:13–15; 2 Kin. 9:11; Jer. 29:26).

■ **9:8 watchman . . . fowler's snare.** The prophets kept watch over Israel (5:8; Jer. 6:1; Ezek. 3:17; 33:1–7). But the one who sounded the alarm now found himself hunted like an animal and an object of hostility.

the house of his God. The land (8:1 note).

■ **9:9 Gibeah.** This town was infamous for the gang rape of the Levite's concubine and the war that followed (Judg. 19—21). The gravity of Is-

As in the days of [n]Gibeah.
He will remember their iniquity;
He will punish their sins.

10 "I found Israel
Like grapes in the [o]wilderness;
I saw your fathers
As the [p]firstfruits on the fig tree in its first season.
But they went to [q]Baal Peor,
And [z]separated themselves *to that* shame;
[r]They became an abomination like the thing they loved.
11 *As for* Ephraim, their glory shall fly away like a bird—
No birth, no pregnancy, and no conception!
12 Though they bring up their children,
Yet I will bereave them to the last man.
Yes, [s]woe to them when I depart from them!
13 Just [t]as I saw Ephraim like Tyre, planted in a pleasant place,
So Ephraim will bring out his children to the murderer."

14 Give them, O LORD—
What will You give?
Give them [u]a miscarrying womb
And dry breasts!

15 "All their wickedness *is* in [v]Gilgal,
For there I hated them.
Because of the evil of their deeds
I will drive them from My house;
I will love them no more.
[w]All their princes *are* rebellious.
16 Ephraim is [x]stricken,
Their root is dried up;
They shall bear no fruit.
Yes, were they to bear children,
I would kill the darlings of their womb."

17 My God will [y]cast them away,
Because they did not obey Him;
And they shall be [z]wanderers among the nations.

Israel's Sin and Captivity

10 Israel [a]empties *his* vine;
He brings forth fruit for himself.

9 [n]Judg. 19:22

10 [o]Jer. 2:2 [p]Is. 28:4; Mic. 7:1 [q]Num. 25:3; Ps. 106:28 [r]Ps. 81:12 [z]Or *dedicated*

12 [s]Deut. 31:17; Hos. 7:13

13 [t]Ezek. 26—28

14 [u]Luke 23:29

15 [v]Hos. 4:15; 12:11 [w]Is. 1:23; Hos. 5:2

16 [x]Hos. 5:11

17 [y]2 Kin. 17:20; [Zech. 10:6] [z]Lev. 26:33

CHAPTER 10

1 [a]Nah. 2:2

rael's former sins also shows how deeply they require a complete renewal of their nature.

■ **9:10 grapes in the wilderness.** An unusual and delicious find.

firstfruits on the fig tree. The early fig that ripens on the previous year's sprouts is not only very tender but quite uncommon (cf. Is. 28:4). These images stress how exceptional and pleasing was the Lord's initial covenant relationship with Israel.

Baal Peor. A reference to Israel's sexual and spiritual adultery in the wilderness (Num. 25 and notes)—behavior that was paralleled by Hosea's contemporaries.

became an abomination. By joining themselves to Baal, the god of shame, the Israelites themselves became detestable.

■ **9:11 glory.** This could be her political and military power. But the context suggests that it is her large population. The blessing on Joseph and Ephraim had made them fruitful (Gen. 48:16; 49:22–26).

No birth. The practice of fertility religion generated a fertility curse, not a blessing (Deut. 28:18).

■ **9:14 Give them.** Hosea responds in prayer asking that God's fertility blessings be withdrawn (Gen. 49:25; Ex. 23:26; Deut. 28:4, 11). The prophet can only agree with God's righteous judgment.

■ **9:15 Gilgal.** See note on 4:15; cf. 12:11.

drive them from My house. Notice how this parallels God's banishment of the Canaanites (Ex. 23:29, 30; 33:2; Josh. 24:18; Judg. 6:9). See note on 8:1.

■ **9:16 Ephraim . . . fruit.** "Ephraim" sounds like "fruit" in Hebrew, and the wordplay ironically underscores the tragedy of Ephraim's fruitlessness (Gen. 41:52). The name of this leading northern tribe is often used for the entire northern kingdom of Israel.

■ **9:17 My God.** Unlike the people who have turned away from God, the prophet remains faithful to the covenant.

wanderers. Having wandered from God (7:13), the Israelites, like Cain, are destined to be restless wanderers (Gen. 4:12).

■ **10:1–8** In this section, unlike the preceding and following sections, the Lord does not speak but is spoken about.

According to the multitude of his fruit
[b]He has increased the altars;
According to the bounty of his land
They have embellished *his* sacred pillars.
2 Their heart is [c]divided;[1]
Now they are held guilty.
He will break down their altars;
He will ruin their sacred pillars.

3 For now they say,
"We have no king,
Because we did not fear the LORD.
And as for a king, what would he do for us?"
4 They have spoken words,
Swearing falsely in making a covenant.
Thus judgment springs up [d]like hemlock in the furrows of the field.

5 The inhabitants of Samaria fear
Because of the [e]calf[2] of Beth Aven.
For its people mourn for it,
And [3]its priests shriek for it—
Because its [f]glory has departed from it.
6 *The idol* also shall be carried to Assyria
As a present for King [g]Jareb.
Ephraim shall receive shame,
And Israel shall be ashamed of his own counsel.

7 *As for* Samaria, her king is cut off
Like a twig on the water.
8 Also the [h]high places of [4]Aven, [i]the sin of Israel,
Shall be destroyed.
The thorn and thistle shall grow on their altars;
[j]They shall say to the mountains, "Cover us!"
And to the hills, "Fall on us!"

9 "O Israel, you have sinned from the days of [k]Gibeah;
There they stood.
The [l]battle in Gibeah against the children of [5]iniquity
Did not [6]overtake them.
10 When *it is* My desire, I will chasten them.
[m]Peoples shall be gathered against them
When I bind them [7]for their two transgressions.
11 Ephraim *is* [n]a trained heifer

1 [b]Jer. 2:28; Hos. 8:11; 12:11
2 [c]1 Kin. 18:21; Zeph. 1:5; [Matt. 6:24] [1]Divided in loyalty
4 [d]Deut. 31:16, 17; 2 Kin. 17:3, 4; Amos 5:7
5 [e]1 Kin. 12:28, 29; Hos. 8:5, 6; 13:2 [f]Hos. 9:11 [2]Lit. *calves,* images [3]*idolatrous priests*
6 [g]Hos. 5:13
8 [h]Hos. 4:15 [i]Deut. 9:21; 1 Kin. 13:34 [j]Is. 2:19; Luke 23:30; Rev. 6:16 [4]Lit. *Idolatry* or *Wickedness*
9 [k]Hos. 9:9 [l]Judg. 20 [5]So with many Heb. mss., LXX, Vg.; MT *unruliness* [6]Or *overcome*
10 [m]Jer. 16:16 [7]Or *in their two habitations*
11 [n][Jer. 50:11; Hos. 4:16; Mic. 4:13]

■ **10:1 multitude of his fruit . . . increased the altars.** Israel gives the credit for prosperity to their idols, and they devote more resources to the pagan cult whenever their prosperity increases.

■ **10:2 heart is divided.** The covenant required single-minded devotion to the Lord (Deut. 6:5); Israel's divided loyalties called forth the judgment predicted in the covenant curses pronounced by Moses (Deut. 29:14–29).

■ **10:3 no king.** Whether the king is still on the throne and is about to be deposed, or has already been deposed, without God's blessing he is useless.

■ **10:4 Swearing.** The king's commitments could be covenants as a vassal to Assyria, which are deemed false because they were ratified by invoking Assyrian deities (cf. v. 6). More likely, the broken obligations in view are those of the king to his people (2 Sam. 3:21; 5:3), chief of which to maintain justice.

hemlock. Or "gall," as the Hebrew term is translated in Amos 6:12.

■ **10:5 Samaria.** The capital city of the northern kingdom.

calf of Beth Aven. The calf and its priests (2 Kin. 23:5; Zeph. 1:4) were probably not representative of a foreign deity. Rather, they exemplified a highly perverse form of worshiping the Lord in Israel (8:5 note; 13:2 note; 1 Kin. 12:31–33).

mourn . . . shriek. Hosea mocks the pious emotions that the people manifest for an idol.

■ **10:8 high places of Aven.** See text note and 4:13, 14.

Cover us . . . Fall on us. The words speak of overwhelming devastation from the Lord. The people would rather die than face further judgments from Him. The passage is quoted by Jesus in Luke 23:30 and alluded to in Rev. 6:16.

■ **10:9 Gibeah.** See note on 9:9.

■ **10:10 two transgressions.** This may refer to the past sin at Gibeah and the present sin of Israel, to Israel's religious sin and political faithlessness, or simply to Israel's repeated and unyielding transgressions.

■ **10:11 Ephraim . . . Judah.** Both kingdoms are in view.

That loves to thresh *grain;*
But I harnessed her fair neck,
I will make Ephraim [8]pull *a plow.*
Judah shall plow;
Jacob shall break his clods."

12 Sow for yourselves righteousness;
Reap in mercy;
[o]Break up your fallow ground,
For *it is* time to seek the LORD,
Till He [p]comes and rains righteousness on you.

13 [q]You have plowed wickedness;
You have reaped iniquity.
You have eaten the fruit of lies,
Because you trusted in your own way,
In the multitude of your mighty men.
14 Therefore tumult shall arise among your people,
And all your fortresses shall be plundered
As Shalman plundered Beth Arbel in the day of battle—
A mother dashed in pieces upon *her* children.
15 Thus it shall be done to you, O Bethel,
Because of your great wickedness.
At dawn the king of Israel
Shall be cut off utterly.

God's Continuing Love for Israel

11 "When Israel *was* a [1]child, I loved him,
And out of Egypt [a]I called My [b]son.
2 [2]*As* they called them,
So they [c]went [3]from them;
They sacrificed to the Baals,
And burned incense to carved images.

3 "I[d] taught Ephraim to walk,
Taking them by [4]their arms;

11 [8]Lit. *to ride*

12 [o]Jer. 4:3 [p]Hos. 6:3

13 [q][Job 4:8; Prov. 22:8; Gal. 6:7, 8]

CHAPTER 11

1 [a]Matt. 2:15 [b]Ex. 4:22, 23 [1]Or *youth*

2 [c]2 Kin. 17:13–15 [2]So with MT, Vg.; LXX *Just as I called them;* Tg. interprets as *I sent prophets to a thousand of them.* [3]So with MT, Tg., Vg.; LXX *from My face*

3 [d]Deut. 1:31; 32:10, 11 [4]Some Heb. mss., LXX, Syr., Vg. *My arms*

trained heifer . . . loves to thresh. A positive image of Israel's original calling as a teachable, unmuzzled animal threshing the harvested grain and free to eat as it worked (cf. 11:4; Deut. 25:4; Prov. 12:10; Jer. 50:11). Jesus also offers an easy yoke to His disciples (Matt. 11:28–30).

fair neck. That is, a strong neck capable of arduous work. Israel had not fulfilled the Lord's expectations. The easy yoke of covenant blessings would be replaced by the hard yoke of covenant curses in order to teach them obedience.

■ **10:12 mercy.** See note on Ex. 15:13. Sowing that which is right and good brings a harvest of blessing from the Lord.

Break up your fallow ground. When virgin and fallow ground is plowed, it produces a particularly abundant harvest.

rains righteousness. God must give the harvest (1 Cor. 3:6, 7).

■ **10:13 plowed wickedness.** Instead of cultivating a fruitful relationship with God, Israel has planted, reaped, and eaten wickedness and dishonesty (8:7; Gal. 6:7–9).

Because you trusted in . . . your mighty men. The punishment God will bring (a military defeat) is directly related to Israel's sin of depending on its own military power and not on the Lord (Jer. 9:23, 24).

■ **10:14 Shalman plundered Beth Arbel.** Hosea's audience must have remembered this now unknown event as particularly brutal. Shalman has been identified variously as Shalmaneser III of Assyria (859–824 B.C.), Shalmaneser V (727–722 B.C.), and Salamanu, a contemporary Moabite king. Beth Arbel is usually identified with the site of Irbid in Gilead.

■ **10:15 Bethel.** Often ironically called "Beth Aven" by Hosea (4:15 note; 5:8; 10:5).

At dawn. The time for battle to begin.

■ **11:1–11** In language even more tender than the story of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11–32), God, the loving parent, proclaims His compassion for Israel. In spite of rebellion, God's election cannot be defeated. Beyond judgment there is hope.

■ **11:1 loved.** The language of love is used to describe both the father-son relationship and the covenantal relationship between a suzerain and vassal in ancient Near-Eastern treaties (Deut. 6:5; 7:8, 13; 10:15; 23:5).

out of Egypt I called My son. Here and in v. 4 reference is made to God's deliverance of Israel from slavery in Egypt (Ex. 4:22). Jesus, as the true Israel, was also brought out of Egypt in accordance with this prophecy (Matt. 2:15).

■ **11:2 they called . . . from them.** See text notes. The Hebrew of this verse is difficult to translate. The meaning may be that the pagans or their gods, the Baals, tempted Israel, causing the nation to depart from the Lord. Alternatively, those who called may be the prophets, whose messages were ignored as Israel went after other gods.

■ **11:3 I taught Ephraim to walk.** Probably a reference to God's tender leading of Israel through the wilderness to the Promised Land.

I healed them. God spared Israel from harm during the formative wilderness period (Ex. 15:26).

But they did not know that [e]I healed them.
4 I drew them with [5]gentle cords,
With bands of love,
And [f]I was to them as those who take the yoke from their [6]neck.
[g]I stooped *and* fed them.

5 "He shall not return to the land of Egypt;
But the Assyrian shall be his king,
Because they refused to repent.
6 And the sword shall slash in his cities,
Devour his districts,
And consume *them,*
Because of their own counsels.
7 My people are bent on [h]backsliding from Me.
Though [7]they call [8]to the Most High,
None at all exalt *Him.*

8 "How[i] can I give you up, Ephraim?
How can I hand you over, Israel?
How can I make you like[j] Admah?
How can I set you like Zeboiim?
My heart [9]churns within Me;
My sympathy is stirred.
9 I will not execute the fierceness of My anger;
I will not again destroy Ephraim.
[k]For I *am* God, and not man,
The Holy One in your midst;
And I will not [l]come with terror.

10 "They shall walk after the LORD.
[l]He will roar like a lion.
When He roars,
Then *His* sons shall come trembling from the west;
11 They shall come trembling like a bird from Egypt,
[m]Like a dove from the land of Assyria.
[n]And I will let them dwell in their houses,"
Says the LORD.

God's Charge Against Ephraim

12 "Ephraim has encircled Me with lies,
And the house of Israel with deceit;

3 [e]Ex. 15:26
4 [f]Lev. 26:13 [g]Ex. 16:32; Ps. 78:25 [5]Lit. *cords of a man* [6]Lit. *jaws*
7 [h]Jer. 3:6, 7; 8:5 [7]The prophets [8]Or *upward*
8 [i]Jer. 9:7 [j]Gen. 14:8; 19:24, 25; Deut. 29:23 [9]Lit. *turns over*
9 [k]Num. 23:19 [l]Or *enter a city*
10 [l]Is. 31:4; [Joel 3:16]; Amos 1:2
11 [m]Is. 11:11; 60:8; Hos. 7:11 [n]Ezek. 28:25, 26; 34:27, 28

■ **11:4 cords . . . bands . . . yoke . . . fed.** The imagery apparently returns to Israel as a work animal (10:11), but here God pampers the creature.

■ **11:5 He shall not . . . Egypt.** The Hebrew word for "not" here seems to indicate that Israel will not return to Egypt (symbolic for bondage, 8:13 note), but such a reading appears to conflict with 8:13; 9:3; and 11:11. Some render this phrase as a rhetorical question ("shall he not return?"), while others emend the Hebrew word for "not" to mean "to it." Another reading, however, is indicated by the context of divine mercy in this passage (vv. 4, 8). Israel shall not return to Egypt (i.e., to her status before God called her as His covenant people, Deut. 4:34), but she will be punished for her sins by Assyria.

Egypt . . . Assyrian. See notes on 8:13; 9:3. Though deserved, the effect of this judgment is tempered in v. 11.

■ **11:6 his cities.** With fortified cities they were self-reliant (8:14).

districts. Some suggest that this difficult Hebrew word refers to people, specifically to false prophets who supplied the military counsel mentioned later in the verse.

■ **11:8 How can I give you up.** God now speaks directly to Israel. The contrast with vv. 5–7 heightens the impact of this deeply personal declaration of relentless compassion.

Admah . . . Zeboiim. These two cities on the plain near the southern end of the Dead Sea (Gen. 10:19; 14:2, 8) were destroyed along with Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:23–25), thus becoming examples of God's wrath (Deut. 29:23; Jer. 49:18).

■ **11:9 Holy One.** Holiness denotes God's difference from humans. Men seek revenge, but God works salvation.

■ **11:10 They shall walk after the LORD.** Restoration, not destruction, is the goal of God's judgment of His covenant people.

■ **11:11** God compassionately tempers the effect of the judgment pronounced in v. 5.

from Egypt . . . Assyria. Again Egypt and Assyria are paired to symbolize the judgment of God's people through exile (8:13 note; 9:3; 11:5).

■ **11:12—12:14** This section accuses Israel of betrayal and pronounces judgment. Recurrent themes are the past treachery of Israel (artistically linked with episodes from the life of Jacob) and the rejection of the word of the Lord as spoken by the prophets.

But Judah still walks with God,
Even with the [2]Holy One *who is* faithful.

12 "Ephraim [a]feeds on the wind,
And pursues the east wind;
He daily increases lies and [1]desolation.
[b]Also they make a [2]covenant with the Assyrians,
And [c]oil is carried to Egypt.

2 "The[d] LORD also *brings* a [3]charge against Judah,
And will punish Jacob according to his ways;
According to his deeds He will recompense him.
3 He took his brother [e]by the heel in the womb,
And in his strength he [f]struggled with God.
4 Yes, he struggled with the Angel and prevailed;
He wept, and sought favor from Him.
He found Him *in* [g]Bethel,
And there He spoke to us—
5 That is, the LORD God of hosts.
The LORD *is* His [h]memorable name.
6 [i]So you, by *the help of* your God, return;
Observe mercy and justice,
And wait on your God continually.

7 "A cunning [4]Canaanite!
[j]Deceitful scales *are* in his hand;
He loves to oppress.
8 And Ephraim said,
[k]'Surely I have become rich,
I have found wealth for myself;
In all my labors
They shall find in me no iniquity that *is* sin.'

9 "But I *am* the LORD your God,
Ever since the land of Egypt;
[l]I will again make you dwell in tents,
As in the days of the appointed feast.

12 [2]Or *holy ones*

CHAPTER 12

1 [a]Job 15:2, 3; Hos. 8:7 [b]2 Kin. 17:4; Hos. 8:9 [c]Is. 30:6 [1]*ruin* [2]Or *treaty*
2 [d]Hos. 4:1; Mic. 6:2 [3]A legal complaint
3 [e]Gen. 25:26 [f]Gen. 32:24–28
4 [g][Gen. 28:12–19; 35:9–15]
5 [h]Ex. 3:15
6 [i]Hos. 14:1; Mic. 6:8
7 [j]Prov. 11:1; Amos 8:5; Mic. 6:11 [4]Or *merchant*
8 [k]Ps. 62:10; Hos. 13:6; Rev. 3:17
9 [l]Lev. 23:42

■ **11:12 encircled.** The northern kingdom has God under siege.

Judah still walks with God. The Hebrew is difficult to translate. As rendered here, Judah is viewed positively and contrasted with Ephraim (i.e., Israel). But some translate the phrase to speak of Judah as "unruly against God," and thus like Ephraim.

■ **12:1 feeds on.** See Prov. 15:14; Is. 44:20.

wind . . . east wind. These images of futility (Job 15:2; Eccl. 1:14) and destruction (13:15; Jer. 18:17) are applied to Israel's alliances with Assyria (5:13; 7:11; 8:9; 14:3; 2 Kin. 17:3) and Egypt (7:16 note; 2 Kin. 17:4). Such alliances were not merely poor foreign policy, but expressions of faithlessness against the Lord.

lies. Examples of deception included Israel's vacillation between Assyria and Egypt (7:11), and playing off the latter against the former (2 Kin. 17:3, 4).

oil. Gifts were often given when making covenants.

■ **12:2 charge.** See text note. As in 4:1, the Lord acts as plaintiff, judge, and prosecutor in a court scene, bringing a covenant lawsuit against His people. He calls for punishment (v. 2) but also reconciliation (v. 6).

Jacob. That is, Israel (10:11; cf. Gen. 32:28).

■ **12:3 took.** The Hebrew here is the root for "Jacob" (Gen. 25:26) and is translated "supplanted" in Gen. 27:36.

■ **12:4 struggled with the Angel.** The Hebrew root for "struggled" is given as the source of the name "Israel" in Gen. 32:28. In tenaciously seeking God's blessing, Jacob set a positive example for the nation (v. 6).

Bethel. The place where God made Himself known to Jacob (Gen. 28:12–19; 35:1–15). See note on 4:15.

■ **12:5 LORD God of hosts.** A doxology, similar to those in Amos (Amos 4:13; 5:8, 9; 9:5, 6), here reminds Israel that the covenant God of the patriarchs (the LORD) is the God of hosts, the commander of Israel's armies, and sovereign over all creation (Zech. 1:3 note).

■ **12:6 return.** Like Jacob, who returned to Bethel to fulfill his vow (Gen. 35:1–15), Israel must return to the Lord.

■ **12:7 Canaanite.** This Hebrew word also means "merchant" (text note), so well known were the Canaanites for trading. The merchant Ephraim was not merely dishonest, but pagan.

■ **12:9 I am the LORD your God . . . Egypt.** The statement is one of self-presentation; it introduces an expression of the divine will to the covenant people (Ex. 20:2; Deut. 5:6).

tents . . . appointed feast. A reference to the Feast of Tabernacles, when the people lived in booths in memory of Israel's time in the wilderness after leaving Egypt (Lev. 23:43). Just as Israel was judged with forty years of desert wandering (Num. 14:33), so here Israel is threatened with the "wilderness" of exile from the land.

10 [m]I have also spoken by the prophets,
And have multiplied visions;
I have given [5]symbols [6]through the witness of the prophets."

11 Though [n]Gilead *has* idols—
Surely they are [7]vanity—
Though they sacrifice bulls in [o]Gilgal,
Indeed their altars *shall be* heaps in the furrows of the field.

12 Jacob [p]fled to the country of Syria;
[q]Israel served for a spouse,
And for a wife he tended *sheep.*
13 [r]By a prophet the LORD brought Israel out of Egypt,
And by a prophet he was preserved.
14 Ephraim [s]provoked *Him* to anger most bitterly;
Therefore his Lord will leave the guilt of his bloodshed upon him,
[t]And return his reproach upon him.

Relentless Judgment on Israel

13 When Ephraim spoke, trembling,
He exalted *himself* in Israel;
But when he offended through Baal *worship,* he died.
2 Now they sin more and more,
And have made for themselves molded images,
Idols of their silver, according to their skill;
All of it *is* the work of craftsmen.
They say of them,
"Let [1]the men who sacrifice [2]kiss the calves!"
3 Therefore they shall be like the morning cloud
And like the early dew that passes away,
[a]Like chaff blown off from a threshing floor
And like smoke from a chimney.

4 "Yet [b]I *am* the LORD your God
Ever since the land of Egypt,

10 [m]2 Kin. 17:13; Jer. 7:25 [5]Or *parables* [6]Lit. *by the hand*

11 [n]Hos. 6:8 [o]Hos. 9:15 [7]*worthless*

12 [p]Gen. 28:5; Deut. 26:5 [q]Gen. 29:20, 28

13 [r]Ex. 12:50, 51; 13:3; Ps. 77:20; Is. 63:11, 12; Mic. 6:4

14 [s]Ezek. 18:10–13 [t]Dan. 11:18; Mic. 6:16

CHAPTER 13

2 [1]Or *those who offer human sacrifice* [2]Worship with kisses

3 [a]Ps. 1:4; Is. 17:13; Dan. 2:35

4 [b]Is. 43:11

■ **12:10 spoken by the prophets.** No one could plead ignorance as an excuse (6:5; 12:13).

visions. A mode of revelation to the prophets (Num. 12:6; Job 33:14–16).

symbols. These "parables" (text note) were figures of speech bearing divine messages (2 Sam. 12:1–4; Ps. 78:2; Is. 5:1–7; Ezek. 17:2–10).

■ **12:11 Gilead.** This region east of the Jordan, bordered by Moab on the south and Bashan on the north, was a place of illegal sacrifices, bloodshed, and idolatry. It was conquered by Assyria in 734–732 B.C. (2 Kin. 15:29; Hos. 6:8).

Gilgal. See note on 4:15.

heaps in the furrows. Large stones struck by the farmer's plow were piled in heaps.

■ **12:12 country of Syria.** Padan Aram (Gen. 28:2, 5).

served . . . tended. Hosea compares Jacob's service to secure a wife from a foreign country with God's rescue of His people from Egypt. The same Hebrew word lies behind "tended" in v. 12 and "preserved" in v. 13.

■ **12:13 prophet . . . prophet.** The first prophet is clearly Moses (Deut. 18:15; 34:10–12) and the second probably is as well. The preserving prophet could, however, be a later prophet such as Samuel (Jer. 15:1) or Elijah (1 Kin. 19:9–18).

■ **12:14 Ephraim provoked.** Again God's covenant faithfulness (v. 13) is contrasted with Israel's faithlessness. The Lord had been provoked by the worship of pagan gods (Deut. 32:21), but here even more offenses seem involved.

bloodshed. This is a reference either to murder itself (4:2; 5:2; 6:8) or, as in ancient legal texts, to any capital crime. The verse concludes the lawsuit, and is parallel in structure to v. 2, which introduces the section. Covenant election entails covenant responsibility.

■ **13:1** This begins an announcement of judgment for sins past (v. 1) and present (v. 2).

Ephraim. See note on 4:17.

Baal worship. See 2:7, 8, 17; 9:10; 11:2.

he died. Because of its idolatry, the northern kingdom (Ephraim) could be regarded as dead in trespasses and sins (cf. Eph. 2:1).

■ **13:2 molded images . . . idols . . . calves.** The collective picture is of small statues of calves molded of bronze and overlaid with silver (Ex. 32:4, 8; 34:17; Lev. 19:4; Deut. 19:16). The calf idol was Canaanite and linked with Baal worship, but the idolaters probably also associated it in their own minds with the Lord (8:5, 6; 10:5 and notes).

kiss. See text note. This was an act of devotion, adoration, or appeasement (1 Kin. 19:18).

■ **13:3 cloud . . . dew.** See 6:4.

■ **13:4** See note on 12:9.

you shall know no God but Me. This stands in contrast with the idolatry of v. 2. The statement, reminding Israel that the covenant relationship is exclusive, is cast in the language of the first commandment (Ex. 20:2, 3; Deut. 5:6, 7), but with the added idea of "knowing" God. Other so-called gods were worshiped, but only the one true God could be "known." See Introduction: Characteristics and Themes. Further linkage to the

And you shall know no God but Me;
For [c]*there is* no savior besides Me.
5 [d]I [3]knew you in the wilderness,
[e]In the land of [4]great drought.
6 [f]When they had pasture, they were filled;
They were filled and their heart was exalted;
Therefore they forgot Me.

7 "So [g]I will be to them like a lion;
Like [h]a leopard by the road I will lurk;
8 I will meet them [i]like a bear deprived *of her cubs;*
I will tear open their rib cage,
And there I will devour them like a lion.
The [5]wild beast shall tear them.

9 "O Israel, [6]you are destroyed,
But [7]your help *is* from Me.
10 [8]I will be your King;
[j]Where *is any other,*
That he may save you in all your cities?
And your judges to whom [k]you said,
'Give me a king and princes'?
11 [l]I gave you a king in My anger,
And took *him* away in My wrath.

12 "The[m] iniquity of Ephraim *is* bound up;
His sin *is* stored up.
13 [n]The sorrows of a woman in childbirth shall come upon him.
He *is* an unwise son,
For he should not stay long where children are born.

14 "I will ransom them from the [9]power of [1]the grave;
I will redeem them from death.

4 [c]Is. 43:11; 45:21, 22; [1 Tim. 2:5]

5 [d]Deut. 2:7; 32:10 [e]Deut. 8:15 [3]Cared for you [4]Lit. *droughts*

6 [f]Deut. 8:12, 14; 32:13–15; Jer. 5:7

7 [g]Lam. 3:10; Hos. 5:14 [h]Jer. 5:6

8 [i]2 Sam. 17:8; Prov. 17:12 [5]Lit. *beast of the field*

9 [6]Lit. *it* or *he destroyed you* [7]Lit. *in your help*

10 [j]Deut. 32:38 [k]1 Sam. 8:5, 6 [8]LXX, Syr., Tg., Vg. *Where is your king?*

11 [l]1 Sam. 8:7; 10:17–24

12 [m]Deut. 32:34, 35; Job 14:17; [Rom. 2:5]

13 [n]Is. 13:8; Mic. 4:9, 10

14 [9]Lit. *hand* [1]Or *Sheol*

covenant requirements of the Decalogue is evident in the description of Israel's idolatry (vv. 1, 2), a clear violation of the second commandment (Ex. 20:4–6; Deut. 5:8–10).

■ **13:5 I knew you.** Israel is represented in corporate solidarity by the Hebrew singular word for "you." This form of the pronoun emphasizes the personal nature of God's covenant relationship with His people. See Introduction: Characteristics and Themes; Gen. 17:7 note.

wilderness. During the difficult wilderness wanderings God knew and was preparing His people. Similarly, God will use the "wilderness" of exile to reclaim Israel (2:14–16).

■ **13:6** The verse describes a step-by-step process of descent in morals and worship (Deut. 32:10–18; Jer. 2).

forgot. This pitiful climax stands in sharp contrast to the former days of knowledge (vv. 4, 5 and notes; cf. Deut. 8:11–20).

■ **13:7–9** This startling comparison of God to ferocious wild beasts that devour the flock echoes the covenant curses for disobedience (Lev. 26:21, 22; Deut. 32:24; Ezek. 14:21). These images depict the severity of divine judgment (5:14; Prov. 17:12; Jer. 5:6).

■ **13:9 your help.** Israel's destruction is explained here in terms of the nation's rebellion against its Helper. There is no help like God (Ex. 18:4; Deut. 33:26–29; Ps. 10:14; 54:4; 115:9–11; 121:2–8; 146:5). To oppose Him is to invite destruction.

■ **13:10 Give me a king.** On Israel's request for a monarchy, see 1 Sam. 8. Asking for a king meant that they had rejected God as King (1 Sam. 13:9, 10). Their sense of security in having a king was a delusion.

■ **13:11 gave . . . took.** Though describing past action, the Hebrew verb tense suggests an ongoing process of giving and taking. The king is not specified. Perhaps this is a reference to the royal assassinations of Hosea's time (3:4; 7:7; 8:4; 10:3; cf. 2 Kin. 15:8–31; 17:1–6), to an early king such as Saul (who was alive when kingship was first requested), or even to all of the kings of the north (all twenty of whom "did evil in the sight of the LORD").

■ **13:12** Lest they be diminished or forgotten, transgressions are figuratively tied up and then stored in a safe place for future retribution (7:2; 9:9; Deut. 32:34, 35; Job 14:17).

Ephraim. See note on 4:17.

■ **13:13** The predicament of Israel facing certain judgment is vividly compared to that of a mother and child during an unsuccessful birth (cf. 2 Kin. 19:3). This complex word picture compares Israel both to the mother (who faces sorrow and certain death) and to the child (who stubbornly refuses to be safely delivered).

an unwise son. Israel is depicted as a fetus that fails to position itself properly in the womb for delivery. This surprising figure relates to the theme of failure to acknowledge God (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes).

■ **13:14 I will . . . I will.** See text notes. For some interpreters, the context of judgment in vv. 12 and 15 indicates that these two lines should be rendered as rhetorical questions ("Shall I ransom . . . Shall I redeem"), with the implied answer "No." On this reading, the following two clauses ("O Death . . . O Grave") then summon the weapons of death to destroy Israel. However, it is better to regard the verse as anticipating the positive spirit of 14:4–7. As such, this verse is one of the great Old Testament affirmations of God's power over the last enemy, death (cf. 1 Cor. 15:55). Whereas the old Israel of Hosea's time did not avail itself of the divine power over death, the true spiritual Israel (Christ with His church) experiences it. Final triumph over God's last enemy is assured by the death of Christ and His resurrection from the grave.

14 [o][1 Cor. 15:54, 55] [p]Jer. 15:6 [2]LXX *where is your punishment?* [3]Or *Sheol* [4]LXX *where is your sting?*

15 [q]Gen. 41:6; Jer. 4:11, 12; Ezek. 17:10; 19:12

16 [r]2 Kin. 18:12 [s]2 Kin. 15:16 [5]LXX *shall be disfigured*

CHAPTER 14

1 [a]Hos. 12:6; [Joel 2:13]

2 [b][Ps. 51:16, 17; Hos. 6:6; Heb. 13:15] [1]Lit. *bull calves;* LXX *fruit*

3 [c]Hos. 7:11; 10:13; 12:1 [d][Ps. 33:17]; Is. 31:1 [e]Ps. 10:14; 68:5

4 [f]Jer. 14:7 [g][Eph. 1:6]

5 [h]Job 29:19; Prov. 19:12; Is. 26:19 [2]Lit. *bud* or *sprout* [3]Lit. *strike*

[o]O Death, [2]I will be your plagues!
O [3]Grave, [4]I will be your destruction!
[p]Pity is hidden from My eyes."

15 Though he is fruitful among *his* brethren,
[q]An east wind shall come;
The wind of the LORD shall come up from the wilderness.
Then his spring shall become dry,
And his fountain shall be dried up.
He shall plunder the treasury of every desirable prize.
16 Samaria [5]is held guilty,
For she has [r]rebelled against her God.
They shall fall by the sword,
Their infants shall be dashed in pieces,
And their women with child [s]ripped open.

Israel Restored at Last

14 O Israel, [a]return to the LORD your God,
For you have stumbled because of your iniquity;
2 Take words with you,
And return to the LORD.
Say to Him,
"Take away all iniquity;
Receive *us* graciously,
For we will offer the [b]sacrifices[1] of our lips.
3 Assyria shall [c]not save us,
[d]We will not ride on horses,
Nor will we say anymore to the work of our hands, '*You are* our gods.'
[e]For in You the fatherless finds mercy."

4 "I will heal their [f]backsliding,
I will [g]love them freely,
For My anger has turned away from him.
5 I will be like the [h]dew to Israel;
He shall [2]grow like the lily,
And [3]lengthen his roots like Lebanon.

Pity is hidden from My eyes. The Hebrew for "pity" can have the sense of "repentance" or "regret." God will not "repent" (i.e., change His mind) of His intention to vanquish death for His people.

■ **13:15 Though he is fruitful.** This is Ephraim, whose name is from the same Hebrew root as "fruitful" (9:16 note).

east . . . wind of the LORD. See 12:1 and note. Here this destructive force is a symbol for Assyria as God's weapon of judgment against Israel (Introduction: Date and Occasion; Is. 10:5, 6).

■ **13:16 Samaria.** The capital city and driving force behind the northern kingdom's rebellion.

fall . . . dashed . . . ripped. Figurative language for destruction (vv. 3, 8, 15) here gives way to chilling expressions of hard reality.

■ **14:1–3** The prophet speaks to the people, urging repentance before conveying God's promise of blessing (vv. 4–8).

■ **14:1 return.** This thematic exhortation to return (2:7; 3:5; 6:1; 7:10; 12:6) is now addressed to those who have already fallen because of their sins.

■ **14:2 Take words.** Words of confession accompanied by obedience please God, not half-hearted sacrifices (5:6; 6:6; 8:11–13). A precise wording for confession is suggested in vv. 2, 3.

the sacrifices of our lips. Or, "fruit of our lips" (text note). The Hebrew words for "bull calves" (here rendered "sacrifices") and "fruit" are similar. See Prov. 12:14; 13:2; Heb. 13:15.

■ **14:3 Assyria . . . horses . . . gods.** Israel was to give up trusting in foreign political powers (5:13; 7:11; 12:1), in her own military strength (10:13; cf. Ps. 33:16, 17), and in idolatrous and syncretistic religion (2:8, 13; 3:1; 4:12; 8:5, 6; 10:5, 6; 13:2).

fatherless finds mercy. This alludes to the earlier theme of loss and restoration of love illustrated by Hosea's marriage and his daughter, Lo-Ruhamah (1:6; 2:2–4, 14–23). See Introduction: Characteristics and Themes.

■ **14:4 I will heal.** The promise of healing began to be realized when Israel returned from its sixth-century exile in Babylon. It finds much greater fulfillment in Jesus Christ and His church, and is consummated at His Second Coming.

backsliding. Israel's characteristic unfaithfulness (4:10–12; 5:4; 7:4; 11:7) will be healed by the great Healer, whose anger is now turned away.

love them freely. In this love song, we hear again the deep affection of God for His elect. This undeserved love is what the New Testament calls grace (Rom. 5:15; Eph. 2:5, 8).

■ **14:5–7** In this section, resplendent with the language of love, colorful metaphors drawn from plant life—a blossoming lily (Song 2:1, 16), a deeply rooted, sprouting and fragrant cedar of Lebanon (Ps. 92:12; 104:16), a splendid olive tree (Ps. 52:8; Jer. 11:16), a shade tree (Song 2:3; Ezek. 17:22, 23), flourishing grain (2:8, 22), a flowering vine (10:1; Is. 5:1–7) and the fruit of the vine—depict a vigorous, renowned, stable, and prosperous Israel flourishing under God, who is likened to the life-giving dew (Deut. 33:13).

6 His branches shall [4]spread;
[i]His beauty shall be like an olive tree,
And [j]his fragrance like Lebanon.
7 [k]Those who dwell under his shadow shall return;
They shall be revived *like* grain,
And [5]grow like a vine.
Their [6]scent *shall be* like the wine of Lebanon.

8 "Ephraim *shall say,* 'What have I to do anymore with idols?'
I have heard and observed him.
I *am* like a green cypress tree;
[l]Your fruit is found in Me."

9 Who *is* wise?
Let him understand these things.
Who is prudent?
Let him know them.
For [m]the ways of the LORD *are* right;
The righteous walk in them,
But transgressors stumble in them.

6 [i]Ps. 52:8; 128:3 [j]Gen. 27:27 [4]Lit. *go*
7 [k]Dan. 4:12 [5]Lit. *bud* or *sprout* [6]Lit. *remembrance*
8 [l][John 15:4]
9 [m][Ps. 111:7, 8; Prov. 10:29]; Zeph. 3:5

■ **14:8 green cypress tree.** Like a tree renowned as a symbol of life (cf. Gen. 3:22; Rev. 22:2), God will give fruit to fruitless Ephraim (9:16 note).

■ **14:9 Who is wise.** This epilogue challenges every generation to consider carefully the ways of the Lord that are presented in the book (cf. Ps. 1; 18:21; Prov. 10:29). The choices that Israel faced are also set before the reader: wisdom or folly; discipleship or rebellion; life or death. The wise will "choose life" (Deut. 30:19, 20).

The Book of

JOEL

Author The prophet Joel is identified only as "Joel the son of Pethuel" (1:1). Joel's keen interest in Jerusalem, particularly in the temple and its functionaries (e.g., 1:9, 13, 14; 2:14–17, 32; 3:1, 6, 16, 17), suggests that he lived in Jerusalem and ministered as a temple prophet. Although he does not appear to have been a priest (1:9, 13; 2:17), Joel prayed on the people's behalf (1:19, 20).

Date and Occasion Since the Book of Joel contains no clear indications of when it was written, it is difficult to date the work. The book's vocabulary, linguistic parallels to other prophetic books, historical allusions, location in the canon, and other clues have been used in effort to date the work. Some scholars date the book in the ninth century B.C., and others to the period just prior to the Jewish exile in Babylon during the sixth century B.C. But most scholars now prefer a date following this exile, some suggesting the early postexilic period (c. 520–500 B.C.), and others proposing a later date in the fifth or even the fourth century B.C. A date after the exile seems most convincing, although there is good reason to conclude with Calvin that the date of the book simply cannot be known with certainty.

Characteristics and Themes The unity of Joel was challenged by biblical critics of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These critics thought that the section describing events of the author's time (1:1—2:17) and the section dealing with future occurrences (2:18—3:21) were written by different authors. Today, however, most scholars accept the book's essential unity. Such features as the repeated theme of the "day of the LORD" (1:15; 2:1, 2, 11, 31; 3:14) and other identical or closely similar phrases shared by both sections (2:2 and 2:31; 2:10–11 and 3:16; 2:10 and 3:15; 2:11 and 31; 2:17 and 3:2; 2:27 and 3:17) point to the book's unity.

Interpreters throughout the ages have been faced with the question of whether to interpret the locusts in the Book of Joel literally or figuratively. Historically, the majority of interpreters have understood the locusts as symbols of future enemies (e.g., one manuscript of the Septuagint [Greek Old Testament] understood the four kinds of locusts to symbolize the Egyptians, Assyrians, Greeks, and Romans). But present-day interpreters see these creatures, at least in ch. 1, as actual locusts. Joel indeed moves quickly from an accurate description of a real devastation by locusts in ch. 1 to a description of the dreadful locust-like army of the Lord that blends the literal and figurative in ch. 2. It seems then that the destruction by locusts that Joel had seen became the vehicle for his prophecy proclaiming the need to repent in view of the coming day of the Lord.

The central message of the Book of Joel concerns the coming day of the Lord. Joel introduces that day in the context of the then-present destruction of the land's vegetation, a destruction that was a sign of judgment against the covenant community. Only their return to God would avert the imminent day of the Lord that would "come as destruction from the Almighty" (1:15). In this first instance then, Joel, like Amos (Amos 5:18–20; cf. Zeph. 1:7–13), declares that the day of the Lord is a day of judgment against God's own people. Similarly, in ch. 2 the day of the Lord is described as a "great and very terrible" day (2:11), "a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and darkness" (2:2) in which the Lord leads His army against Israel. However, in the second part of the book, Joel introduces a second prophetic tradition about the day of the Lord, namely, that the day of the Lord is a day of judgment against the enemies of His people, whom He will protect and bless (Ezek. 25—32; Jer. 46—51; Is. 13). On the day of the Lord, the nations will be accountable for their crimes against the Lord's people and will be judged accordingly (3:2–16, 19). But the people of the Lord's inheritance will enjoy His protection and be spiritually and physically blessed (2:28–32; 3:16–18, 20, 21).

Repentance is a key theme in Joel's prophetic message. The call to repentance is given not merely to a select number of the covenant community, but rather to all the Lord's people who are called to return to Him: young and old, men and women, leaders and followers, and even those who might otherwise be exempted from community responsibilities (nursing mothers and newlyweds, 1:13, 14; 2:15–17). The return to God that Joel calls for involves the whole person. Such repentance is to be manifested externally through such actions as mourning, weeping, crying out to the Lord, and fasting (1:13, 14; 2:15–17). But merely external or ritual manifestations of repentance are not adequate, and the Lord calls the people to show the sincerity of their repentance by returning to the Lord their God "with all your heart" (2:12, 13). Joel also reminds God's people that motivation for repentance lies firmly in the nature of God: "He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness" (2:13). Joel stresses that the hope of restoration lies ultimately in God, who exercises His sovereign freedom and grace in granting repentance and forgiveness to the people.

The Book of Joel has had an important place in the life of the church. The New Testament indicates that Jesus and His followers were familiar with the writings of Joel. The book's influence is most evident in the New Testament passages that speak of the end times. They use Joel's vivid images to describe the day of the Lord and the plague of locusts (e.g., Mark 13:24; Luke 21:25; Rev. 6:9; 9:2). Also important are the promises in Joel 2:28–32, which Peter quotes at Pentecost, claiming they have reached their fulfillment in the event of Pentecost (Acts 2:16–21). Paul in Rom. 10:13 also refers to the prophecy; he uses Joel 2:32 to show that "there is no distinction between Jew and Greek." Salvation is offered to all peoples. As Joel had said: "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved" (2:32).

The church has continued to find the teaching in the Book of Joel on the day of the Lord to be an important source of hope and comfort on the one hand, and a word of warning on the other. In times of distress and trouble, Christians have found the promises about the ultimate blessing, protection, and vindication of the Lord's covenant community to be consoling and inspiring. At the same time, Joel's graphic depiction of the dreadful aspects of the day of the Lord has served as a reminder of God's holiness and judgment and as a continuing call to wholehearted repentance and holiness of life. □

Outline of Joel

I. Superscription (1:1)
II. Crises Demanding Repentance (1:2—2:17)
  A. Recent Devastation by Locust and Drought (1:2–20)
  B. Future Assault by the Lord's Army (2:1–17)
III. Responses of the Covenant God (2:18—3:21)
  A. Physical Renewal of the Land (2:18–27)
  B. Spiritual Renewal of the Lord's People (2:28–32)
  C. Final Judgment (ch. 3)
    1. Judgment of the Nations (3:1–15)
    2. Blessing on God's People (3:16–21)

THE word of the LORD that came to [a]Joel the son of Pethuel.

CHAPTER 1

1 [a]Acts 2:16

2 [b]Jer. 30:7; Joel 2:2

3 [c]Ex. 10:2; Ps. 78:4; Is. 38:19

The Land Laid Waste

2 Hear this, you elders,
And give ear, all you inhabitants of the land!
[b]Has *anything like* this happened in your days,
Or even in the days of your fathers?
3 [c]Tell your children about it,
Let your children *tell* their children,
And their children another generation.

■ **1:1 The word of the LORD.** This short and simple title announces that what follows is the Lord's word, and compares most closely with Jon. 1:1. Compare with the more extended titles in Jer. 1:2; Ezek. 1:3; Hos. 1:1; Mic. 1:1; Zeph. 1:1; Hag. 1:1; Zech. 1:1; Mal. 1:1.

Joel. His name means "the LORD is God."

Pethuel. The only occurrence of this name in the Bible.

■ **1:2—2:17** Two crises confront Judah with the consequences of their sins: (a) the recent devastation of the land by locust (1:4–8) and drought (1:10–12, 16–20); and (b) the imminent assault on the land by the army of the Lord (2:1–17). If the people would be delivered from these calamities, they must repent of their sins and return to the Lord.

■ **1:2–20** Joel appeals to elders (v. 2), drunkards (v. 5), farmers (v. 11), and priests (v. 13) to ponder the meaning of the recent locust plague and drought, and to repent.

■ **1:2 Hear . . . give ear.** This series of commands calls the people to recognize the personal and spiritual significance of the locust invasion. The repetition of thought in the first and second lines and in the third and fourth lines illustrates the parallelism typical of Hebrew poetry.

elders. This term designates the community and religious leaders. The same term used in 2:28 seems to refer to age, hence the translation "old men."

all you inhabitants of the land. The entire population of Judah and Jerusalem is called to listen.

■ **1:3 Tell . . . children . . . another generation.** God's judgments, as well as His mercies, are to be passed on to future generations (cf. Deut. 4:9; 6:7; 32:7; Ps. 78:1–8).

4 [d]Deut. 28:38; Joel 2:25; Amos 4:9 [e]Is. 33:4 [f]Exact identity of these locusts unknown

4 [d]What the chewing [f]locust left, the [e]swarming locust has eaten;
What the swarming locust left, the crawling locust has eaten;
And what the crawling locust left, the consuming locust has eaten.

5 [f]Is. 5:11; 28:1; Hos. 7:5 [g]Is. 32:10

5 Awake, you [f]drunkards, and weep;
And wail, all you drinkers of wine,
Because of the new wine,
[g]For it has been cut off from your mouth.

■ **1:4 locust.** The poetic repetitions in every line emphasize the thoroughness of the locusts' destruction. The variety in the names of the locusts may refer to their different stages of development, although color differences or differences in type and regional origin may be reflected here and in 2:25. When locusts were understood as an instrument of divine punishment, repentance was the appropriate response (Deut. 28:38; Amos 7:1; Is. 33:4).

■ **1:5 Awake . . . weep.** The first call to respond is given to the drunkards. These represent the attitude of many who are oblivious to things that have spiritual significance. Only the alert are able to respond rightly to God's judgment.

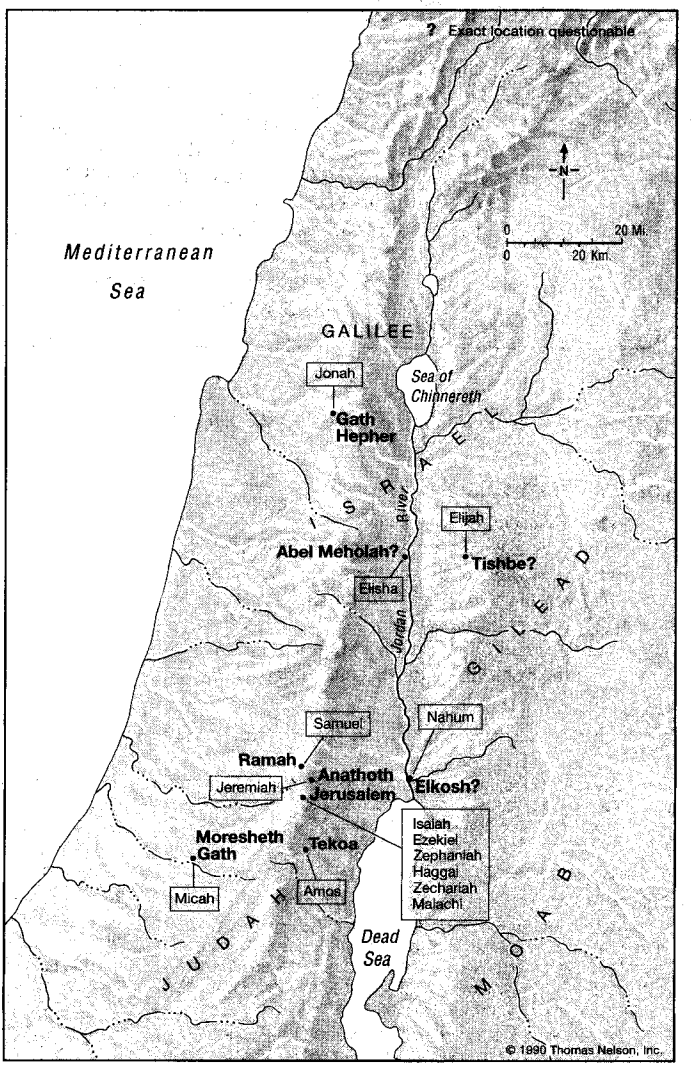
The Prophets of Israel and Judah. During the early monarchy Elijah and Elisha had homes in the northern kingdom. Samuel's hometown of Ramah was the base of his yearly circuit as prophet and judge.

Among the writing prophets, only Hosea and Jonah were from the North. Hosea's home location is unknown. Jonah was from Gath Hepher, but his ministry extended beyond his home to the foreign city Nineveh.

Some prophets had homes in the South but prophesied to the North. Amos from Tekoa preached against the northern kingdom's worship at Bethel. Micah's message addressed Israel as well as Judah.

The messages of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Zephaniah, Ezekiel, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi span a long time period, but all concern either Jerusalem's destruction, fall, or later rebuilding.

Geographical information is lacking for Joel, Obadiah, and Habakkuk. All that is known about Nahum is the location of his home in Elkosh.



6 For [h]a nation has come up against My land,
Strong, and without number;
[i]His teeth *are* the teeth of a lion,
And he has the fangs of a [2]fierce lion.
7 He has [j]laid waste My vine,
And [3]ruined My fig tree;
He has stripped it bare and thrown *it* away;
Its branches are made white.

8 [k]Lament like a virgin girded with sackcloth
For [l]the husband of her youth.
9 [m]The grain offering and the drink offering
Have been cut off from the house of the LORD;
The priests [n]mourn, who minister to the LORD.
10 The field is wasted,
[o]The land mourns;
For the grain is ruined,
[p]The new wine is dried up,
The oil fails.

11 [q]Be ashamed, you farmers,
Wail, you vinedressers,
For the wheat and the barley;
Because the harvest of the field has perished.
12 [r]The vine has dried up,
And the fig tree has withered;
The pomegranate tree,
The palm tree also,
And the apple tree—
All the trees of the field are withered;
Surely [s]joy has withered away from the sons of men.

Mourning for the Land

13 [t]Gird yourselves and lament, you priests;
Wail, you who minister before the altar;
Come, lie all night in sackcloth,
You who minister to my God;
For the grain offering and the drink offering
Are withheld from the house of your God.
14 [u]Consecrate a fast,
Call [v]a sacred assembly;
Gather the elders

6 [h]Prov. 30:25; Joel 2:2, 11, 25 [i]Rev. 9:8 [2]Or *lioness*
7 [j]Is. 5:6; Amos 4:9 [3]Or *splintered*
8 [k]Is. 22:12 [l]Prov. 2:17; Jer. 3:4
9 [m]Hos. 9:4; Joel 1:13; 2:14 [n]Joel 2:17
10 [o]Jer. 12:11; Hos. 3:4 [p]Is. 24:7
11 [q]Jer. 14:3, 4; Amos 5:16
12 [r]Joel 1:10; Hab. 3:17 [s]Is. 16:10; 24:11; Jer. 48:33
13 [t]Jer. 4:8; Ezek. 7:18
14 [u]2 Chr. 20:3; Joel 2:15, 16 [v]Lev. 23:36

■ **1:6 My land.** Personal pronouns are used throughout the book and point to the covenant relationship that binds the Lord, not only to the land and its vines and fig trees, but also to His people (1:7; 2:13, 14, 17, 18, 23, 26, 27; 3:2, 3, 17).

Strong . . . lion. The locusts are compared to an invading nation that has the consuming passion of a lion (cf. 2:4–9; Rev. 9:7–9). Locusts and armies were often compared in ancient times. Mythical literature from the ancient city of Ugarit likens a large army to locusts (cf. Judg. 6:5; Prov. 30:27; Jer. 51:14, 27; Nah. 3:15–17).

■ **1:7 vine . . . fig tree.** The locusts' teeth effectively stripped the most valuable trees of the Lord's land.

■ **1:8 Lament.** The mourning is to be like that of a young woman who has lost her beloved before marriage.

sackcloth. This coarsely woven material was often made of goat's hair and worn during times of mourning. See v. 13; Gen. 37:34; 2 Sam. 3:31; 1 Kin. 21:27; Is. 32:11, 12.

■ **1:9 grain offering . . . drink offering.** These offerings, which were to be offered twice daily (Ex. 29:38–42; Lev. 2:1, 2; 23:13), were lacking because the crops were destroyed.

■ **1:10 grain . . . new wine . . . oil.** The ingredients needed for the daily offerings traditionally appear in this order (2:19; Hos. 2:8).

dried up. Drought accompanied the locust invasion.

■ **1:12 vine . . . fig . . . pomegranate . . . palm . . . apple.** Five kinds of trees are noted, leading up to the climactic statement that all the trees of the field are dried up.

joy has withered. In an agricultural economy, human joy withers along with the vegetation.

■ **1:13 lament . . . sackcloth.** The priests are given precise instructions about how to respond personally to God's judgment.

■ **1:14 Consecrate a fast.** The priests are also to provide leadership in the community by proclaiming a public fast so that the entire nation could stop all regular activities for a time (probably for a day, Judg. 20:26; 1 Sam. 14:24; Jer. 36:6–9) to acknowledge God's judgment and to repent.

And [w]all the inhabitants of the land
Into the house of the LORD your God,
And cry out to the LORD.

15 [x]Alas for the day!
For [y]the day of the LORD *is* at hand;
It shall come as destruction from the Almighty.
16 Is not the food [z]cut off before our eyes,
[a]Joy and gladness from the house of our God?
17 The seed shrivels under the clods,
Storehouses are in shambles;
Barns are broken down,
For the grain has withered.
18 How [b]the animals groan!
The herds of cattle are restless,
Because they have no pasture;
Even the flocks of sheep [4]suffer punishment.

19 O LORD, [c]to You I cry out;
For [d]fire has devoured the [5]open pastures,
And a flame has burned all the trees of the field.
20 The beasts of the field also [e]cry out to You,
For [f]the water brooks are dried up,
And fire has devoured the [6]open pastures.

The Day of the LORD

2 Blow [a]the [f]trumpet in Zion,
And [b]sound an alarm in My holy mountain!
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble;
For [c]the day of the LORD is coming,
For it is at hand:
2 [d]A day of darkness and gloominess,
A day of clouds and thick darkness,
Like the morning *clouds* spread over the mountains.
[e]A people *come,* great and strong,
[f]The like of whom has never been;
Nor will there ever be any *such* after them,
Even for many successive generations.

3 A fire devours before them,
And behind them a flame burns;

14 [w]2 Chr. 20:13

15 [x][Is. 13:9; Jer. 30:7]; Amos 5:16 [y]Is. 13:6; Ezek. 7:2–12

16 [z]Is. 3:1; Amos 4:6 [a]Deut. 12:7; Ps. 43:4

18 [b]1 Kin. 8:5; Jer. 12:4; 14:5, 6; Hos. 4:3 [4]LXX, Vg. *are made desolate*

19 [c][Ps. 50:15]; Mic. 7:7 [d]Jer. 9:10; Amos 7:4 [5]Lit. *pastures of the wilderness*

20 [e]Job 38:41; Ps. 104:21; 147:9; Joel 1:18 [f]1 Kin. 17:7; 18:5 [6]Lit. *pastures of the wilderness*

CHAPTER 2

1 [a]Jer. 4:5; Joel 2:15; Zeph. 1:16 [b]Num. 10:5 [c]Joel 1:15; 2:11, 31; 3:14; [Obad. 15]; Zeph. 1:14 [f]*ram's horn*

2 [d]Joel 2:10, 31; Amos 5:18; Zeph. 1:15 [e]Joel 1:6; 2:11, 25 [f]Ex. 10:14; Lam. 1:12; Dan. 9:12; 12:1; Joel 1:2

■ **1:15 the day of the LORD.** A thematic phrase in Joel (1:15; 2:1, 11, 31; 3:14) and in other Old Testament prophetic books (Is. 13:6, 9; Ezek. 13:5; Amos 5:18, 20; Obad. 15; Zeph. 1:7, 14; Mal. 4:5). Here (and in 2:1, 11) it refers to a day of the Lord's wrath against Israel, though later in the book it refers to the Lord's wrath against the nations and blessing of the Lord's people (2:31; 3:14). The magnitude of the devastation points to an even more ominous day of judgment.

destruction from the Almighty. This phrase could be translated "might from the Almighty," capturing the sense of the Hebrew wordplay *shod* ("destruction") from *shaddai* ("the Almighty"; Is. 13:6).

■ **1:16–18** Joel reinforces his point about the nearness of the day of the Lord by reminding his audience again of God's judgment, the signs of which could be seen in the drought conditions all around them.

■ **1:19 to You I cry out.** The prophet himself begins the lamentation. The devastation is from the Lord, and He is the source of restoration.

■ **1:20 beasts of the field.** Even the animals join Joel in his cry (Job 38:41; Ps. 104:21; 147:9).

fire has devoured. Divine judgment is often depicted as fire (Deut. 32:22; Ps. 50:3; 97:3). The metaphor describes the effects of drought (cf. 2:3, where the "fire" of locust devastation is depicted).

■ **2:1–17** Joel urges "all the inhabitants of the land" (v. 1) to prepare for an imminent assault by the army of the Lord. A contrite heart among the people may bring God's compassion and blessing (v. 14).

■ **2:1 the trumpet.** The ram's horn (Hebrew *shophar*) was used in warfare and to signal danger. All trembled at the trumpet blast signaling the coming of the day of the Lord (Amos 3:6; Zeph. 1:14–16).

Zion . . . My holy mountain. Jerusalem.

■ **2:2 day of darkness and gloominess.** This vivid word picture of the coming day of the Lord (cf. Zeph. 1:15; Amos 5:18, 20) corresponds to descriptions of the Lord's appearances in the past (Deut. 4:11; 5:22, 23; Ps. 97:2).

people . . . great and strong. Complex metaphors of an army and locust invasion combine to depict the judgment and devastation to occur (1:6 note).

■ **2:3 desolate wilderness.** The invaders raze the land. The bold contrast between "the Garden of Eden" and this wilderness (Gen. 13:10; Is. 51:3; Ezek. 28:13–19; 31:8, 9, 16–18; 36:35) highlights the horror of the inescapable invasion.

The land *is* like [g]the Garden of Eden before them,
[h]And behind them a desolate wilderness;
Surely nothing shall escape them.
4 [i]Their appearance is like the appearance of horses;
And like [2]swift steeds, so they run.
5 [j]With a noise like chariots
Over mountaintops they leap,
Like the noise of a flaming fire that devours the stubble,
Like a strong people set in battle array.

6 Before them the people writhe in pain;
[k]All faces [3]are drained of color.
7 They run like mighty men,
They climb the wall like men of war;
Every one marches in formation,
And they do not break [1]ranks.
8 They do not push one another;
Every one marches in his own [4]column.
Though they lunge between the weapons,
They are not [5]cut down.
9 They run to and fro in the city,
They run on the wall;
They climb into the houses,
They [m]enter at the windows [n]like a thief.

10 [o]The earth quakes before them,
The heavens tremble;
[p]The sun and moon grow dark,
And the stars diminish their brightness.
11 [q]The LORD gives voice before His army,
For His camp is very great;
[r]For strong *is the One* who executes His word.
For the [s]day of the LORD *is* great and very terrible;
[t]Who can endure it?

A Call to Repentance

12 "Now, therefore," says the LORD,
[u]"Turn to Me with all your heart,
With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning."
13 So [v]rend your heart, and not [w]your garments;
Return to the LORD your God,
For He *is* [x]gracious and merciful,
Slow to anger, and of great kindness;
And He relents from doing harm.
14 [y]Who knows *if* He will turn and relent,
And leave [z]a blessing behind Him—
[a]A grain offering and a drink offering
For the LORD your God?

3 [g]Gen. 2:8; Is. 51:3; Ezek. 36:35 [h]Ex. 10:5, 15; Ps. 105:34, 35; Zech. 7:14

4 [i]Rev. 9:7 [2]Or *horsemen*

5 [j]Rev. 9:9

6 [k]Is. 13:8; Jer. 8:21; Lam. 4:8; Nah. 2:10 [3]LXX, Tg., Vg. *gather blackness*

7 [l]Prov. 30:27

8 [4]Lit. *highway* [5]Halted by losses

9 [m]Jer. 9:21 [n]John 10:1

10 [o]Ps. 18:7; Joel 3:16; Nah. 1:5 [p]Is. 13:10; 34:4; Jer. 4:23; Ezek. 32:7, 8; Joel 2:31; 3:15; Matt. 24:29; Rev. 8:12

11 [q]Jer. 25:30; Joel 3:16; Amos 1:2 [r]Jer. 50:34; Rev. 18:8 [s]Jer. 30:7; Amos 5:18; Zeph. 1:15 [t][Mal. 3:2]

12 [u][Deut. 4:29]; Jer. 4:1; Ezek. 33:11; Hos. 12:6; 14:1

13 [v][Ps. 34:18; 51:17; Is. 57:15] [w]Gen. 37:34; 2 Sam. 1:11; Job 1:20; Jer. 41:5 [x][Ex. 34:6]

14 [y]Josh. 14:12; 2 Sam. 12:22; 2 Kin. 19:4; Jer. 26:3; Jon. 3:9 [z]Hag. 2:19 [a]Joel 1:9, 13

■ **2:5** Again the army of judgment is figuratively depicted as a locust invasion (1:6 note; cf. Rev. 9:1–11).

■ **2:7–9** The army is disciplined, ruthless, and successful. The "city" (v. 9) is finally overrun (cf. the Egyptian plague of locusts in Ex. 10:6).

■ **2:10 earth . . . stars.** Such divine judgments are accompanied by a shaking and breakdown of the natural order. All creation is disturbed (v. 31; Jer. 4:23–26; Ezek. 32:7, 8; Nah. 1:5; Hab. 3:6, 10).

■ **2:11 His army.** The relentless army is the Lord's. He commands and His forces obey. The day of the Lord is great (2:31; Zeph. 1:14), dreadful (Mal. 4:5), and unbearable (Mal. 3:2, Nah. 1:6).

■ **2:12 Turn to Me.** The Lord invites His people to escape by returning to Him with the whole heart.

fasting . . . weeping . . . mourning. The visible signs of repentance (Ezra 10:1–6; Esth. 4:3; Jon. 3:5–9).

■ **2:13 not your garments.** See "Legalism" at Matt. 23:4.

gracious . . . great kindness. The call to return to the Lord is based on the Lord's dramatic self-revelation of His character to Moses in Ex. 34:6, 7, a description frequently repeated throughout the Old Testament (e.g., Num. 14:18; Ps. 86:15; 103:8; 145:8; Neh. 9:17; Jon. 4:2).

■ **2:14 Who knows if He will turn and relent.** God's sovereignty and freedom in forgiveness are seen in vv. 13, 14 (cf. Ex. 33:19; 2 Sam. 12:22; Lam. 3:29; Jon. 3:9; Zeph. 2:3). See note on Gen. 6:6.

15 [b]Blow the [6]trumpet in Zion.
[c]Consecrate a fast,
Call a sacred assembly;
16 Gather the people,
[d]Sanctify the congregation,
Assemble the elders,
Gather the children and nursing babes;
[e]Let the bridegroom go out from his chamber,
And the bride from her dressing room.
17 Let the priests, who minister to the LORD,
Weep [f]between the porch and the altar;
Let them say, [g]"Spare Your people, O LORD,
And do not give Your heritage to reproach,
That the nations should [7]rule over them.
[h]Why should they say among the peoples,
'Where *is* their God?' "

The Land Refreshed

18 Then the LORD will [i]be zealous for His land,
And pity His people.
19 The LORD will answer and say to His people,
"Behold, I will send you [j]grain and new wine and oil,
And you will be satisfied by them;
I will no longer make you a reproach among the nations.

20 "But [k]I will remove far from you [l]the northern *army,*
And will drive him away into a barren and desolate land,
With his face toward the eastern sea
And his back [m]toward the western sea;
His stench will come up,
And his foul odor will rise,
Because he has done [8]monstrous things."

21 Fear not, O land;
Be glad and rejoice,
For the LORD has done [9]marvelous things!
22 Do not be afraid, you beasts of the field;
For [n]the open pastures are springing up,
And the tree bears its fruit;
The fig tree and the vine yield their strength.
23 Be glad then, you children of Zion,
And [o]rejoice in the LORD your God;
For He has given you the [1]former rain faithfully,
And He [p]will cause the rain to come down for you—

15 [b]Num. 10:3; 2 Kin. 10:20 [c]Joel 1:14 [6]*ram's horn*

16 [d]Ex. 19:10 [e]Ps. 19:5

17 [f]Matt. 23:35 [g]Ex. 32:11, 12; [Is. 37:20]; Amos 7:2, 5 [h]Ps. 42:10 [7]Or *speak a proverb against them*

18 [i][Is. 60:10; 63:9, 15]

19 [j]Jer. 31:12; Hos. 2:21, 22; Joel 1:10; [Mal. 3:10]

20 [k]Ex. 10:19 [l]Jer. 1:14, 15 [m]Deut. 11:24 [8]Lit. *great*

21 [9]Lit. *great*

22 [n]Joel 1:19

23 [o]Deut. 11:14; Is. 41:16; Jer. 5:24; Hab. 3:18; Zech. 10:7 [p]Lev. 26:4; Hos. 6:3; Zech. 10:1; James 5:7 [1]Or *teacher of righteousness*

■ **2:15, 16** Further instructions for returning to the Lord include a fast and an assembly (v. 15), a gathering and consecration of all the people, including the elders, children, nursing infants, and even those about to marry (v. 16). The staccato quality of the Hebrew poetry in these verses emphasizes the urgency of the situation.

■ **2:17** Specific instructions are also given to the priests who are to weep and offer prayers of intercession.

between the porch and the altar. This site in the temple was the usual place for priestly intercession (1 Kin. 8:22; Ezek. 8:16).

Your heritage. The priestly lament appeals to the Lord's sense of ownership and pride in His covenant people (Deut. 9:26, 29; Ps. 44:11–14; 74:2; 79:10; 115:2; Mic. 7:10).

■ **2:18—3:21** The Lord, the God of the covenant, promises to renew the land and His people, as they respond in repentance to the crises of 1:2—2:17. The redemptive renewal of God's people will someday lead to the final devastation of Zion's enemies and the final exaltation of Zion itself.

■ **2:18–27** Repentance will bring renewed fruitfulness to the land.

■ **2:18 Then.** A change in subject, mood, and tense takes place at this point as the Lord promises restoration.

■ **2:19** The prayers of God's people will be answered.

■ **2:20 northern army.** Some interpreters have understood this to be a reference to the locusts of ch.1. More likely it refers to a large and mighty army that becomes the Lord's instrument of judgment. Unlike most locust invasions (which came from the east or south), foreign military invasions often came from the north. Cf. the references to the enemy from the north in Jer. 1:14, 15; 4:6; 6:1, 22; Ezek. 38:6, 15; 39:2.

■ **2:21–24** Even the land and the wild animals are urged not to be afraid, and they are exhorted to be glad and rejoice with the people of Zion in the agricultural abundance from the Lord.

The former rain,
And the latter rain in the first *month.*
24 The threshing floors shall be full of wheat,
And the vats shall overflow with new wine and oil.

25 "So I will restore to you the years [q]that the swarming [2]locust has eaten,
The crawling locust,
The consuming locust,
And the chewing locust,
My great army which I sent among you.
26 You shall [r]eat in plenty and be satisfied,
And praise the name of the LORD your God,
Who has dealt wondrously with you;
And My people shall never be put to [s]shame.
27 Then you shall know that I *am* [t]in the midst of Israel:
[u]I *am* the LORD your God
And there is no other.
My people shall never be put to shame.

God's Spirit Poured Out

28 "And[v] it shall come to pass afterward
That [w]I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh;
[x]Your sons and your [y]daughters shall prophesy,
Your old men shall dream dreams,
Your young men shall see visions.
29 And also on *My* [z]menservants and on *My* maidservants
I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

30 "And [a]I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth:
Blood and fire and pillars of smoke.
31 [b]The sun shall be turned into darkness,
And the moon into blood,
[c]Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD.
32 And it shall come to pass
That [d]whoever calls on the name of the LORD
Shall be [3]saved.
For [e]in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be [4]deliverance,
As the LORD has said,
Among [f]the remnant whom the LORD calls.

God Judges the Nations

3 "For behold, [a]in those days and at that time,
When I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem,

25 [q]Joel 1:4–7; 2:2–11 [2]Exact identity of these locusts unknown

26 [r]Lev. 26:5; Deut. 11:15; Is. 62:9 [s]Is. 45:17

27 [t]Lev. 26:11, 12; [Joel 3:17, 21] [u][Is. 45:5, 6]

28 [v]Ezek. 39:29; Acts 2:17–21 [w]Zech. 12:10 [x]Is. 54:13 [y]Acts 21:9

29 [z][1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:28]

30 [a]Matt. 24:29; Mark 13:24, 25; Luke 21:11, 25, 26; Acts 2:19

31 [b]Is. 13:9, 10; 34:4; Joel 2:10; 3:15; Matt. 24:29; Mark 13:24; Luke 21:25; Acts 2:20; Rev. 6:12, 13 [c]Is. 13:9; Zeph. 1:14–16; [Mal. 4:1, 5, 6]

32 [d]Jer. 33:3; Acts 2:21; Rom. 10:13 [e]Is. 46:13; [Rom. 11:26] [f]Is. 11:11; Jer. 31:7; [Mic. 4:7]; Rom. 9:27 [3]Or *delivered* [4]Or *salvation*

CHAPTER 3

1 [a]Jer. 30:3; Ezek. 38:14

■ **2:25** See note on 1:4.

■ **2:26** Abundance should lead to praise (cf. Deut. 8:10; Hos. 13:5, 6).

■ **2:27** Restoration leads to a new realization that the Lord is in Israel, that He is the covenant God and there is no other.

■ **2:28–32** Joel prophesies concerning the unprecedented outpouring of God's Spirit that will occur before the coming of the day of the Lord.

■ **2:28, 29** Moses had earlier prayed that Israel as a whole would be a nation of prophets (Num. 11:29), and Joel also predicted this as part of Israel's glorious future. Peter proclaimed that the vision began to find fulfillment at Pentecost with the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:16–21), who empowers believers to bear witness to Jesus Christ (Acts 1:8). By introducing this prophecy with "the last days" (Acts 2:17), Peter links it with other prophecies regarding Israel's messianic future and so teaches that Pentecost inaugurates the promised new age (cf. 1 Pet. 1:10–12).

■ **2:28 afterward.** Joel gives notice of more distant promises.

pour out. Though the word here refers primarily to the pouring out of liquids (Gen. 9:6; Ex. 4:9), it is also used of the Holy Spirit (Ezek. 39:29; Zech. 12:10) who is given to all who believe without distinction as to sex, age, or social position (1 Cor. 12:13).

prophesy . . . dream dreams . . . see visions. See Num. 12:6; Jer. 31:31–34; Ezek. 36:26–29.

■ **2:30, 31** The universal scope of events heralding "the great and awesome day of the LORD" is emphasized. See also Is. 13:10; Ezek. 32:7, 8; Amos 8:9; Zeph. 1:14–17.

■ **2:32 calls on the name of the LORD.** A reference to the worship of the Lord (Gen. 12:8; Ps. 105:1). Salvation is only found in returning to the true and exclusive worship of God.

remnant. These are those called by the Lord who have responded in faith.

■ **3:1–21** Joel prophesies the coming of that day of the Lord in which God will with finality judge Zion's enemies and make Zion a source of everlasting blessing.

2 [b]Is. 66:18; Mic. 4:12; Zech. 14:2 [c]Is. 66:16; Jer. 25:31; Ezek. 38:22
3 [d]Obad. 11; Nah. 3:10
4 [e]Is. 14:29–31; Jer. 47:1–7; Ezek. 25:15–17; Amos 1:6–8; Zech. 9:5–7 [1]Or *render Me repayment* [2]Or *repay Me* [3]Or *repayment*
5 [4]Lit. *precious good things*
7 [f]Is. 43:5, 6; Jer. 23:8; Zech. 9:13 [5]Or *repayment*
8 [g]Ezek. 23:42 [h]Jer. 6:20 [6]Lit. *Shebaites*, Is. 60:6; Ezek. 27:22
9 [i]Jer. 6:4; Ezek. 38:7; Mic. 3:5
10 [j][Is. 2:4; Mic. 4:3] [k]Zech. 12:8 [7]*pruning knives*
11 [l]Ps. 103:20; Is. 13:3
12 [m][Ps. 96:13]; Is. 2:4

2 [b]I will also gather all nations,
And bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat;
And I [c]will enter into judgment with them there
On account of My people, My heritage Israel,
Whom they have scattered among the nations;
They have also divided up My land.
3 They have [d]cast lots for My people,
Have given a boy *as payment* for a harlot,
And sold a girl for wine, that they may drink.

4 "Indeed, what have you to do with Me,
[e]O Tyre and Sidon, and all the coasts of Philistia?
Will you [1]retaliate against Me?
But if you [2]retaliate against Me,
Swiftly and speedily I will return your [3]retaliation upon your own head;
5 Because you have taken My silver and My gold,
And have carried into your temples My [4]prized possessions.
6 Also the people of Judah and the people of Jerusalem
You have sold to the Greeks,
That you may remove them far from their borders.

7 "Behold, [f]I will raise them
Out of the place to which you have sold them,
And will return your [5]retaliation upon your own head.
8 I will sell your sons and your daughters
Into the hand of the people of Judah,
And they will sell them to the [g]Sabeans,[6]
To a people [h]far off;
For the LORD has spoken."

9 [i]Proclaim this among the nations:
"Prepare for war!
Wake up the mighty men,
Let all the men of war draw near,
Let them come up.
10 [j]Beat your plowshares into swords
And your [7]pruning hooks into spears;
[k]Let the weak say, 'I *am* strong.' "
11 Assemble and come, all you nations,
And gather together all around.
Cause [l]Your mighty ones to go down there, O LORD.

12 "Let the nations be wakened, and come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat;
For there I will sit to [m]judge all the surrounding nations.

■ **3:1 in those days.** In parallel with "at that time," this announcement marks the beginning of a further series of promises for God's people (Jer. 33:15; 50:4, 20).

■ **3:2** Restoration will include the judgment of Israel's enemies ("all nations") for their injustices against God's people and land.

Valley of Jehoshaphat. This place is identified as the "valley of decision" in v. 14. Its name is symbolic, the location unknown.

scattered . . . divided. Following deportation of the people, the land was redistributed to others. The particular historical event referred to here is not clear. The deportations of 722, 701, 598, and 586 B.C., or even smaller deportations involving border wars (e.g., Amos 1:9, 10) are possibilities.

■ **3:3** Following the casting of lots for prisoners (Obad. 11; Nah. 3:10), defenseless children were traded and sold for purposes of debauchery (Amos 2:6).

■ **3:4 against Me.** The legal charge against Tyre and Sidon (coastal Phoenicia) and the regions of Philistia (coastal Palestine, Josh. 13:2, 3) concerns their involvement in capturing and trading Israelites as prisoners of war. Both regions had sold Israelites as slaves to the Greeks (v. 6) and to Edom (Amos 1:6, 9).

■ **3:5 My silver and My gold.** The land's silver and gold, as well as its inhabitants, belonged to the Lord (Hag. 2:8).

■ **3:7 them.** God's restored people will inflict His punishment on Tyre, Sidon, and Philistia.

■ **3:8 Sabeans.** These were merchants from the distant land of Sheba (1 Kin. 10:1–13; Jer. 6:20).

■ **3:9–12** Joel issues a bitterly ironic invitation to battle to those nations who will be defeated by the Lord.

■ **3:10 plowshares . . . pruning hooks.** Cf. Is. 2:4; Mic. 4:3.

■ **3:11 there.** The Valley of Jehoshaphat (v. 2 note) is the place of the great battle (v. 14 note).

13 [n]Put in the sickle, for [o]the harvest is ripe.
Come, go down;
For the [p]winepress is full,
The vats overflow—
For their wickedness *is* great."

14 Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision!
For [q]the day of the LORD *is* near in the valley of decision.
15 The sun and moon will grow dark,
And the stars will diminish their brightness.
16 The LORD also will roar from Zion,
And utter His voice from Jerusalem;
The heavens and earth will shake;
[r]But the LORD will be a shelter for His people,
And the strength of the children of Israel.

17 "So you shall know that I *am* the LORD your God,
Dwelling in Zion My [s]holy mountain.
Then Jerusalem shall be holy,
And no aliens shall ever pass through her again."

God Blesses His People

18 And it will come to pass in that day
That the mountains shall drip with new wine,
The hills shall flow with milk,
And all the brooks of Judah shall be flooded with water;
A [t]fountain shall flow from the house of the LORD
And water the Valley of [s]Acacias.

19 "Egypt shall be a desolation,
And Edom a desolate wilderness,
Because of violence *against* the people of Judah,
For they have shed innocent blood in their land.
20 But Judah shall abide forever,
And Jerusalem from generation to generation.
21 For I will [u]acquit them of the guilt of bloodshed, whom I had not acquitted;
For the LORD dwells in Zion."

13 [n]Matt. 13:39; Rev. 14:15 [o]Jer. 51:33; Hos. 6:11 [p]Is. 63:3; Lam. 1:5; Rev. 14:19
14 [q]Joel 2:1
16 [r]Is. 51:5, 6
17 [s]Obad. 16; Zech. 8:3
18 [t]Ps. 46:4; Ezek. 47:1; Zech. 14:8; [Rev. 22:1] [s]Heb. *Shittim*
21 [u]Is. 4:4

■ **3:13** Like grain ready to be cut down with the sickle (Is. 17:5) and like grapes waiting to be pressed (Is. 63:3), the wicked nations are ripe for a harvest of judgment (cf. Rev. 14:15, 18, 20).

winepress is full . . . vats overflow. The full winepress and overflowing vats emphasize the enormous wickedness of the nations massed in the valley for judgment.

■ **3:14 valley of decision.** The Valley of Jehoshaphat is now identified as the "valley of decision" where the Lord's judgment will be passed upon multitudes.

near. The imminence of the day of the Lord as a day of judgment is again underlined (1:15; 2:1, 31).

■ **3:15 sun . . . moon . . . stars.** Nature responds to the appearance of the Lord on the day of judgment (2:10, 31; Amos 5:18).

■ **3:16 LORD also will roar.** The Lord's voice is so powerful that even the earth and the sky tremble (Ps. 29:3–9; Jer. 25:30; Amos 1:2).

shelter . . . strength. Yet in the midst of the extraordinary manifestations of the Lord's anger against the nations, the Lord protects His covenant people (Is. 25:4; Ps. 46:1).

■ **3:17 Dwelling in Zion.** Judah's experience of the Lord's protection in the midst of His wrath deepened her knowledge of the reality of God's presence in her midst (in Zion, the Lord's holy and inviolable hill, Ps. 46:4; Is. 8:18; 52:1, 2; Zech. 2:10; 8:3; Rev. 21:3). Cf. 2:27.

■ **3:18** The final scene of the drama is one of paradisal prosperity and blessing (cf. 2:19–26).

fountain shall flow. The temple itself will be the source of a life-giving stream (Ezek. 47:1–12; Ps. 46:4; Rev. 22:1, 2), which will water even the dry and barren valley where acacia trees grow.

■ **3:19 Egypt . . . Edom.** Egypt (1 Kin. 14:25, 26; 2 Kin. 23:29) and Edom (Obad. 9–14), here representing all of Israel's enemies, are in ruins after this judgment.

■ **3:20 abide forever.** In contrast to her enemies, Judah and Jerusalem are blessed and promised perpetual habitation of the land (Jer. 17:25; Zech. 12:6) because "the LORD dwells in Zion" (v. 21).

The Book of

AMOS

Author

Tekoa in Judah, a village some five miles south of Bethlehem, was the home of the prophet Amos (1:1). He was a man of several trades: shepherd (1:1), livestock breeder, and dresser of sycamore-fig trees (7:14). Although his background was rural and apparently isolated from centers of learning, Amos clearly knew the surrounding nations and was acquainted with international history (1:3—2:3). He was also familiar with both the history of God's covenant people and the covenant itself, as his numerous references to the Law make clear. Amos had not studied to be a prophet (7:14), but the Lord sovereignly called him to this office. He ministered primarily to the northern kingdom of Israel (7:15), although his prophecies also addressed the sins of Judah (2:4, 5; cf. 9:11).

Date and Occasion

Amos's prophetic ministry took place during the reigns of Uzziah (sometimes called Azariah) of Judah (792–740 B.C.) and Jeroboam II of Israel (793–753 B.C.). During Jeroboam's reign there was peace between Judah and Israel. He had restored the boundaries of Israel in accordance with the prophecy of Jonah son of Amittai (2 Kin. 14:25). The northern kingdom had become wealthy and was enjoying a false sense of security, encouraged by the weakness of Egypt, Babylon, and especially Assyria, which had entered a temporary decline after the death of Adad-nirari III (810–783 B.C.). Israel faced no serious threat from Assyrian arms for about forty years.

Under Tiglath-Pileser III (745–727 B.C.), Assyria gained strength and expanded to the north and west. Judah soon became an Assyrian vassal, and the state of Damascus, which had stood between Israel and Assyria, became part of the Assyrian empire (2 Kin. 16:7–9).

Tiglath-Pileser III was succeeded by his son, Shalmaneser V (727–722 B.C.), who continued his father's policy of westward expansion, and forced Hoshea, king of Israel, to become his vassal. Hoshea rebelled, however, and mistakenly relied on Egypt for help, which never came. Then Shalmaneser besieged Samaria; after three years the Israelite capital fell (722 B.C.) and the northern kingdom of Israel came to an end (2 Kin. 17:3–6).

Characteristics and Themes

Amos may have delivered the prophecies of this book at different places in the northern kingdom, such as Samaria and Bethel. It is certain only that he fulfilled some of his prophetic ministry at Bethel (7:12, 13). Unlike the messages of earlier prophets (with the possible exception of Joel), the words of Amos were preserved in writing, like those of his contemporaries Isaiah and Hosea. It was essential that these great covenant lawsuit messages be preserved, both as reminders of Israel's history, and for the promises of restoration and redemption they contained.

Amos attacks two major areas of sin commonly indicted by the prophets: idolatry and social injustice. Israel's root problem was its false religion—"having a form of godliness but denying its power" (2 Tim. 3:5). Although Israel maintained the ritual formalities of the law, and even exceeded them (4:4, 5), idolatry was commonplace (2 Kin. 17:9–17; Amos 5:26), as were violence and injustice (2:6–8; 4:1).

The God we encounter in Amos is the same Creator who made man in His image. He is God, and there is no other. He does not tolerate idolatry, which in reality is the worship of demons (Deut. 32:16, 17; 1 Cor. 10:20). The Lord is sovereign and is able to raise up one nation against another in judgment (1:3—2:3), a process that will continue until His return. God is also the Judge of His covenant people Israel, willing to raise up another nation against them (6:14). But for all this, He is a loving God who desires the life, not the death, of His people. Above all, He desires that they should "seek Me and live" (5:4; 1 Tim. 2:3, 4).

The Lord sent warnings to Israel in the form of hunger, thirst, blight, locusts, plagues, and military defeat, but the people had refused to see His hand in these (4:6–11). Judgment must follow (4:12—5:20), and this punishment is portrayed in a series of verbal and visionary prophecies predicting wholesale destruction and exile. But the Lord chastises those He loves, and His judgment is really a sign of faithfulness to His covenant people. He promises to restore "the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down" (9:11), and the ultimate future of His people is portrayed in a concluding description that resembles Eden in its fruitfulness and blessedness (9:13–15). □

Outline of Amos

I. Superscription and Introduction (1:1, 2)
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V. Restoration and Blessing (9:11–15)
  A. Restoration of David's Dynasty (9:11, 12)
  B. Blessing of Abundance (9:13–15)

CHAPTER 1

THE words of Amos, who was among the [a]sheepbreeders of [b]Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of [c]Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of [d]Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the [e]earthquake.

2 And he said:

"The LORD [f]roars from Zion,
And utters His voice from Jerusalem;

1 [a]2 Kin. 3:4; Amos 7:14 [b]2 Sam. 14:2 [c]2 Chr. 26:1–23 [d]Amos 7:10 [e]Zech. 14:5

2 [f]Joel 3:16

■ **1:1** Amos introduces himself and his prophecy, specifying the time when God's word came to him.

The words of Amos. The prophet's messages are introduced with this formula (cf. Jer. 1:1). The phrase has a covenant background (Deut. 1:1, "These are the words which Moses spoke."). Specifically, Amos the prophet is God's covenant lawsuit messenger, bringing God's suit against disobedient Israel.

sheepbreeders. The Hebrew term probably refers to keepers of a particular kind of sheep known for its unusually fine wool. The king of Moab is identified as one owning such sheep (2 Kin. 3:4).

Tekoa. This village was five miles south of Bethlehem. Because of its good pastureland it supported many shepherds with their flocks.

the earthquake. Since this was a memorable event in an earthquake-prone region, it would have been remembered as an act of divine judgment, as in Zech. 14:5.

■ **1:2 The LORD.** See notes on Ex. 3:15.

roars. Or, "will roar," since the action is future. As a shepherd, Amos could have known well the terrifying roar of a lion on the attack (1 Sam. 17:34–37). The Lord Himself roars from Zion to announce His judgment (Jer. 25:30; Joel 3:16). These opening words of judgment set the tone for what follows.

pastures . . . withers. The Lord's judgment will affect the whole land, from the pastures to the forested top of Carmel, rich in orchards and vineyards (Lev. 26:19; Deut. 28:23, 24).

The pastures of the shepherds mourn,
And the top of [g]Carmel withers."

Judgment on the Nations

3 Thus says the LORD:

"For three transgressions of [h]Damascus, and for four,
I will not turn away its *punishment,*
Because they have [i]threshed Gilead with implements of iron.
4 [j]But I will send a fire into the house of Hazael,
Which shall devour the palaces of [k]Ben-Hadad.
5 I will also break the *gate* [l]bar of Damascus,
And cut off the inhabitant from the Valley of Aven,
And the one who [1]holds the scepter from [2]Beth Eden.
The people of Syria shall go captive to Kir,"
Says the LORD.

6 Thus says the LORD:

"For three transgressions of [m]Gaza, and for four,
I will not turn away its *punishment,*
Because they took captive the whole captivity
To deliver *them* up to Edom.
7 [n]But I will send a fire upon the wall of Gaza,
Which shall devour its palaces.
8 I will cut off the inhabitant [o]from Ashdod,
And the one who holds the scepter from Ashkelon;

2 [g]1 Sam. 25:2; Is. 33:9
3 [h]Is. 8:4; 17:1–3; Jer. 49:23–27; Zech. 9:1 [i]2 Kin. 10:32, 33
4 [j]Jer. 49:27; 51:30 [k]1 Kin. 20:1; 2 Kin. 6:24
5 [l]2 Kin. 14:28; Is. 8:4; Jer. 51:30; Lam. 2:9 [1]Rules [2]Lit. *House of Eden*
6 [m]1 Sam. 6:17; Jer. 47:1, 5; Zeph. 2:4
7 [n]Jer. 47:1
8 [o]Jer. 47:5; Zeph. 2:4

■ **1:3—2:16** This series of prophecies begins with six Gentile nations: Syria, Philistia, Phoenicia, Edom, Ammon, and Moab. Then the oracles dramatically turn against Judah (2:4–5) and Israel (2:6–16).

■ **1:3 For three transgressions . . . for four.** This refrain, repeated with each prophecy, is an example of parallelism using ascending numbers for emphasis (cf. Ps. 62:11; Mic. 5:5). This standard device in ancient Near Eastern poetry is not intended literally, but means "for many transgressions."

Damascus. David defeated and garrisoned this royal city of Syria (2 Sam. 8:6). During Solomon's reign Damascus broke free, with Rezon as king (1 Kin. 11:23–25).

implements of iron. The threshing sledge was a wooden board with teeth of iron or basalt fixed on the underside. An ox would pull the sledge over the grain while the driver stood on it. The Syrians are accused of having treated Gilead with extreme cruelty (2 Kin. 13:7).

■ **1:4 I will send a fire.** This refrain in each of the messages is also found in Hosea (8:14) and Jeremiah (17:27; 21:14; 29:27; 50:32). Fire was widely understood in the ancient Near East to be an instrument of divine judgment. It was often used in warfare, and was considered one way that a god purged a rebellious people. This pagan understanding also reflects a truth revealed in Scripture: the true God will in fact judge by fire (2 Pet. 3:7 note).

Hazael. The king of Syria (c. 841–801 B.C.), whose reign was predicted by the prophet Elisha (2 Kin. 8:13).

palaces. These seem to have been fortified citadel-palaces of the nobility.

Ben-Hadad. This is a throne name, like "Pharaoh" in Egypt. Probably the third king with this name is meant. The first assisted Judah's king Asa against Israel's Baasha (1 Kin. 15:18–20). The second, Ben-Hadad II, was assassinated by the usurper Hazael (2 Kin. 8:14, 15). Hazael's son, Ben-Hadad III, was contemporary with Jehoahaz of Israel (2 Kin. 13:25). It was he who made Israel's army "like the dust at threshing" (2 Kin. 13:7).

■ **1:5 cut off.** The verb is often used to indicate annihilation by war (Josh. 23:4; Is. 10:7).

the inhabitant. Lit. "the one who sits," probably the king. The Hebrew word is used of God sitting or enthroned as King in Ps. 2:4; 22:3 ("enthroned"); 29:10.

Valley of Aven. Lit. "Valley of Wickedness." Possibly it refers to ancient Syrian Heliopolis, now called Baalbek, in the Beqaa Valley of Lebanon. It was apparently a center for sun worship.

Beth Eden. This was probably a district about 200 miles northeast of Damascus (not to be confused with the Garden of Eden, Gen. 2:8 note), and ruled by a Syrian vassal king. The point of the parallelism between the Valley of Aven and Beth Eden is to indicate that not only Damascus, but its territories as well, will be undone.

Syria . . . to Kir. The original home of the Syrians (9:7), Kir will become their place of exile.

■ **1:6 Gaza.** The southernmost of the five Philistine royal cities, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron, Gath, and Gaza. Located between Egypt and Canaan, Gaza was a natural center for trade.

whole captivity. That is, an entire group of exiles (also v. 9). The Philistine trade included slaves. Prisoners of war usually became slaves, but here a whole population was sold into slavery. The apparent reference is to the capture and sale of Israelites during the reign of Jehoram (2 Chr. 21:16, 17; Joel 3:3, 6).

to Edom. This ancient brother of Israel (Gen. 25:30) received Israelites as slaves from the Philistines. For its role in this unbrotherly sin, Gaza, which stands for Philistia as a whole, is now sentenced.

■ **1:8 Ashdod.** A strong and prosperous Philistine city, located eighteen miles northeast of Gaza.

Ashkelon. This third royal city lay halfway between Gaza and Ashdod on the Mediterranean coast.

Ekron. The precise location of this Philistine royal city is uncertain; a number of sites northeast of Ashdod have been suggested. Gath, the fifth royal city, is not mentioned because it had already been defeated by Hazael (2 Kin. 12:17), and again by Sargon II (722–705 B.C.). Assyria was the primary instrument of judgment against all these cities, and all four are subsequently mentioned in Assyrian annals as vassals of Esarhaddon (681–669) and Ashurbanipal (668–627).

I will [p]turn My hand against Ekron,
And [q]the remnant of the Philistines shall perish,"
Says the Lord GOD.

9 Thus says the LORD:

"For three transgressions of [r]Tyre, and for four,
I will not turn away its *punishment,*
Because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom,
And did not remember the covenant of brotherhood.
10 But I will send a fire upon the wall of Tyre,
Which shall devour its palaces."

11 Thus says the LORD:

"For three transgressions of [s]Edom, and for four,
I will not turn away its *punishment,*
Because he pursued his [t]brother with the sword,
And cast off all pity;
His anger tore perpetually,
And he kept his wrath forever.
12 But [u]I will send a fire upon Teman,
Which shall devour the palaces of Bozrah."

13 Thus says the LORD:

"For three transgressions of [v]the people of Ammon, and for four,
I will not turn away its *punishment,*
Because they ripped open the women with child in Gilead,
That they might enlarge their territory.
14 But I will kindle a fire in the wall of [w]Rabbah,
And it shall devour its palaces,
[x]Amid shouting in the day of battle,
And a tempest in the day of the whirlwind.
15 [y]Their king shall go into captivity,
He and his princes together,"
Says the LORD.

8 [p]Ps. 81:14 [q]Is. 14:29–31; Jer. 47:1–7; Ezek. 25:16; Joel 3:4–8; Zeph. 2:4–7; Zech. 9:5–7

9 [r]Is. 23:1–18; Jer. 25:22; Ezek. 26:2–4; Joel 3:4–8

11 [s]Is. 21:11; Jer. 49:8; Ezek. 25:12–14; Mal. 1:2–5 [t]Num. 20:14–21; 2 Chr. 28:17; Obad. 10–12

12 [u]Jer. 49:7, 20; Obad. 9, 10

13 [v]Jer. 49:1; Ezek. 25:2; Zeph. 2:8, 9

14 [w]Deut. 3:11; 1 Chr. 20:1; Jer. 49:2 [x]Ezek. 21:22; Amos 2:2

15 [y]Jer. 49:3

■ **1:9 Tyre.** One of two major Phoenician cities (the other is Sidon) mentioned in the Canaanite Amarna letters (14th century B.C.). The name itself means "flint." Tyre was built on a large rock in the sea and was considered virtually impregnable until the fourth century B.C., when Alexander the Great conquered the city by building a causeway out to the city.

delivered up the whole captivity. See notes on v. 6.

did not remember the covenant. This phrase denotes the keeping of covenant obligations and is a standard phrase in ancient international covenants or treaties (cf. Gen. 9:15; Ex. 2:24; Lev. 26:42). Tyre did not keep its treaties with Israel.

of brotherhood. In the ancient Near East, kings entering into treaties styled themselves "brothers." So Hiram of Tyre called Solomon "my brother" (1 Kin. 9:13; cf. 1 Kin. 5:12), against a background of treaty relations with David (2 Sam. 5:11). Later, Ahab continued the close relation with Phoenicia by marrying Jezebel, daughter of Ethbaal, the king of Sidon (1 Kin. 16:31).

■ **1:11 pursued his brother with the sword.** See note on v. 6. These events of the reign of Jehoram include Edom's revolt and collusion with the Philistines and Arabs, who attacked Judah and entered Jerusalem, plundering the palace and deporting the royal household (2 Chr. 21:16, 17; Obad. 10–14).

■ **1:12 Teman.** Teman was a grandson of Esau (Gen. 36:11, 15). His descendant clan apparently gave its name to a region in the south of Edom, and to a village some fifteen miles from Petra. Here, the region is meant. Teman was famous for wisdom (Job 2:11; Jer. 49:7).

Bozrah. The northernmost Edomite city, some 35 miles north of Petra. By mentioning its northernmost and southernmost regions, Amos consigns all of Edom to destruction.

■ **1:13 the people of Ammon.** The Ammonites descended from Ben-Ammi, who was the offspring of the trickery and incest of Lot's younger daughter (Gen. 19:34–38). They lived between Aram and Moab.

ripped open the women with child. This particular atrocity was practiced by others, including Hazael of Syria (2 Kin. 8:12), Menahem of Israel (2 Kin. 15:16), and Assyria (Hos. 13:16). The apparent purpose was to eliminate descendants who might try to reclaim the land.

enlarge their territory. Ancient Near Eastern kings typically boasted that they extended the borders of their land. By doing so they fancied that they carried out the desire of their gods.

■ **1:14 Rabbah.** A short form of the fuller reference, "Rabbah of the people of Ammon" (Deut. 3:11; 2 Sam. 12:26). This location is the modern Amman, in Jordan.

tempest . . . whirlwind. In Scripture, the figure of a violent and destructive storm is often used for the tumult of battle, as well as for the anger of God, or indeed for both at once (Ps. 83:15; Is. 5:28; 17:13; 29:6; 66:15; Jer. 4:13; 23:19; 25:32).

■ **1:15 He and his princes together.** According to regular Assyrian practice, a conquered king, his household, and his officials would be taken together into exile. Under Shalmaneser III (858–824 B.C.), Assyria conquered Ammon, making it an Assyrian vassal.

CHAPTER 2

1 [a]Is. 15:1–16; Jer. 25:21; Ezek. 25:8–11; Zeph. 2:8–11 [b]2 Kin. 3:26, 27

2 [c]Jer. 48:24, 41

3 [d]Num. 24:17; Jer. 48:7

4 [e]2 Kin. 17:19; Hos. 12:2; Amos 3:2 [f]Lev. 26:14 [g]Is. 9:15, 16; 28:15; Jer. 16:19; Hab. 2:18 [h]Jer. 9:14; 16:11, 12; Ezek. 20:13, 16, 18

5 [i]Jer. 17:27; Hos. 8:14

6 [j]Judg. 2:17–20; 2 Kin. 17:7–18; 18:12; Ezek. 22:1–13, 23–29 [k]Is. 29:21 [l]Joel 3:3; Amos 4:1; 5:11; 8:6; Mic. 2:2; 3:3

7 [m]Amos 5:12 [n]Lev. 18:6–8; Ezek. 22:11 [o]Lev. 20:3; Ezek. 36:20–22 [p]Or *trample on*

2 Thus says the LORD:

[a]"For three transgressions of Moab, and for four,
I will not turn away its *punishment,*
Because he [b]burned the bones of the king of Edom to lime.
2 But I will send a fire upon Moab,
And it shall devour the palaces of [c]Kerioth;
Moab shall die with tumult,
With shouting *and* trumpet sound.
3 And I will cut off [d]the judge from its midst,
And slay all its princes with him,"
Says the LORD.

Judgment on Judah

4 Thus says the LORD:

"For three transgressions of [e]Judah, and for four,
I will not turn away its *punishment,*
[f]Because they have despised the law of the LORD,
And have not kept His commandments.
[g]Their lies lead them astray,
Lies [h]which their fathers followed.
5 [i]But I will send a fire upon Judah,
And it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem."

Judgment on Israel

6 Thus says the LORD:

"For three transgressions of [j]Israel, and for four,
I will not turn away its *punishment,*
Because [k]they sell the righteous for silver,
And the [l]poor for a pair of sandals.
7 They [l]pant after the dust of the earth *which is* on the head of the poor,
And [m]pervert the way of the humble.
[n]A man and his father go in to the *same* girl,
[o]To defile My holy name.

■ **2:1 burned the bones of the king of Edom.** According to Hebrew tradition, these are the bones of the Moabite king Mesha. Such burning indicated special contempt, and was thought to deprive the dead of peace in the afterlife. Josiah burned the bones of false priests on the altar at Bethel (2 Kin. 23:15, 16).

■ **2:2 Kerioth.** Probably the name of a major Moabite city and religious center (Jer. 48:41). The exact site is uncertain. Alternatively, the Hebrew word could be taken to mean "cities," as the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) translators understood it.

trumpet. This is the ram's horn (Hebrew *shophar*), the signal horn of ancient warfare.

■ **2:3 I will cut off.** See note on 1:5.

■ **2:4 Judah.** The five oracles against pagan nations are concluded, and the southern kingdom of Judah is now addressed. Divine judgment moves ever closer to the northern kingdom of Israel, where Amos himself prophesied (v. 6).

despised the law . . . commandments. For rejecting God's revealed covenant law, and so God Himself, they were particularly worthy of judgment (Ex. 15:26; Deut. 4:39, 40). Judah's covenant privileges implied greater responsibility (cf. Luke 12:48).

their fathers followed. Lit. "their fathers walked after." The ancient Near Eastern idiom "to walk after" meant to follow in obedience as a vassal or servant. Judah was following lies, and serving as the vassal of false gods or demons (Deut. 32:17; Rom. 6:16; 1 Cor. 10:20).

■ **2:5 I will send a fire.** See note on 1:4.

Jerusalem. The name means "city of peace." The Hebrew word for "peace" (*shalom*) denotes not only the absence of war, but also prosperity and wholeness. Because Judah had not sought integrity in the Lord, they would see destruction, not peace. This prophecy was fulfilled over 150 years later, when Nebuchadnezzar II conquered Jerusalem and burned every notable building, including the king's house (2 Kin. 25:8–10).

■ **2:6 Israel.** The indictment of the northern kingdom begins—Israel is guilty of social injustice, sexual immorality, and religious abuses (vv. 6–8).

sell the righteous for silver. A reference to the corrupt judicial system. Judges were willing to convict the innocent upon payment of a bribe.

the poor. The Lord had a special concern that their rights be protected (Ex. 23:6; Jer. 5:28), but they were being sold into slavery even for insignificant debts (here symbolized by a pair of sandals). Indigent slavery in Israel was legal, but was carefully limited by the law of Moses (Ex. 21:2; Deut. 15:12; 1 Pet. 2:18 and notes).

■ **2:7 go in to the same girl.** Amos decries uncontrolled sexual passion. Such behavior was contrary to God's original intention (Gen. 2:21–24; Matt. 19:4–6), and it profaned God's holy name (Lev. 18:24). The Mosaic law prohibited sexual union among persons closely related by blood (Lev. 18:6–18); while the Mosaic law does not mention this specific situation (the sharing of a common prostitute), the basic principle would still apply.

8 They lie down [p]by every altar on clothes [q]taken in pledge,
And drink the wine of [2]the condemned *in* the house of their god.

9 "Yet *it was* I *who* destroyed the [r]Amorite before them,
Whose height *was* like the [s]height of the cedars,
And he *was as* strong as the oaks;
Yet I [t]destroyed his fruit above
And his roots beneath.
10 Also *it was* [u]I *who* brought you up from the land of Egypt,
And [v]led you forty years through the wilderness,
To possess the land of the Amorite.
11 I raised up some of your sons as [w]prophets,
And some of your young men as [x]Nazirites.
Is it not so, O you children of Israel?"
Says the LORD.
12 "But you gave the Nazirites wine to drink,
And commanded the prophets [y]saying,
'Do not prophesy!'

13 "Behold,[z] I am [3]weighed down by you,
As a cart full of sheaves [4]is weighed down.
14 [a]Therefore [5]flight shall perish from the swift,
The strong shall not strengthen his power,
[b]Nor shall the mighty [6]deliver himself;
15 He shall not stand who handles the bow,
The swift of foot shall not [7]escape,
Nor shall he who rides a horse deliver himself.
16 The most [8]courageous men of might
Shall flee naked in that day,"
Says the LORD.

8 [p]1 Cor. 8:10 [q]Ex. 22:26 [2]Or *those punished by fines*

9 [r]Gen. 15:16; Num. 21:25; Deut. 2:31; Josh. 10:12 [s]Ezek. 31:3 [t]Is. 5:24; Ezek. 17:9; [Mal. 4:1]

10 [u]Ex. 12:51; Amos 3:1; 9:7 [v]Deut. 2:7

11 [w]Num. 12:6 [x]Num. 6:2, 3; Judg. 13:5

12 [y]Is. 30:10; Jer. 11:21; Amos 7:13, 16; Mic. 2:6

13 [z]Is. 1:14 [3]Or *tottering under* [4]Or *totters*

14 [a]Jer. 46:6 [b]Ps. 33:16; Jer. 9:23 [5]Or *the place of refuge* [6]Lit. *save his soul* or *life*

15 [7]Or *save*

16 [8]Lit. *strong of his heart among the mighty*

Authority of the Prophet's Message

3 Hear this word that the LORD has spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying:

■ **2:8 lie down . . . on clothes.** They engaged in fertility cult prostitution beside the altars, further profaning the Lord's name. There were many altars in Israel, including those at Bethel (3:14), Dan (8:14), and Gilgal (Hos. 12:11). Their sins of sexual license and idolatry were compounded in that they slept on clothing taken as pledges for loans to the poor. Such garments were not to be kept overnight (Ex. 22:26; Deut. 24:12, 13).

wine of the condemned. Wine taken from the poor as payment for unjustly imposed fines. Perhaps the drinking accompanied the sexual indulgence just mentioned.

■ **2:9 I . . . destroyed the Amorite.** Faithful to His covenant promises (Gen. 15:16–21), the Lord had driven out the Canaanites (simply called "Amorites" here) from the Promised Land. See note on Gen. 10:16.

like . . . the cedars. The description recalls the report of the twelve spies (Num. 13:32, 33), but also God's wrath against all that is lofty and proud (Is. 2:12–18).

fruit above . . . roots beneath. A poetic expression for complete destruction.

■ **2:10 from the land of Egypt.** By reminding them of His covenant faithfulness (cf. Gen. 50:24; Ex. 3:8), the Lord presses His case against Israel's unfaithfulness.

■ **2:11 I raised up . . . prophets.** The Lord sovereignly raised up prophets (Deut. 18:15–22), judges (Judg. 2:18), priests (1 Sam. 2:35), and kings (2 Sam. 7:12). The prophets served as covenant lawsuit messengers, sent to recall the people to obedience.

Nazirites. See note on Num. 6:1–21. The Old Testament mentions Samson by name as a Nazirite (Judg. 13:4, 5). Samuel was probably a Nazirite as well (1 Sam. 1:11 note).

■ **2:12 But you.** In contrast with the Lord's faithfulness, Israel sought to defeat God's purposes by commanding His messengers not to prophesy, and by making the Nazirites drink wine (in violation of their vow). They showed contempt for both the Lord and His law.

■ **2:13 I am weighed down by you.** Or perhaps, "I will press you down" (the Hebrew is difficult to translate). Just as a cart bogs down from the pressure of its contents and so becomes immovable, so Israel will be unable to flee (v. 14).

■ **2:14 the swift, The strong.** A vivid picture of helplessness: the fleet of foot will not escape and the strong will not stand their ground.

■ **2:15 bow . . . foot . . . horse.** All units of the army will fail before God's anger.

■ **2:16 Shall flee naked.** Even the bravest warriors not only cast away armor and weapons but also every impediment, including clothing, in the panic of their useless flight. Such naked flight is an utter humiliation.

in that day. This phrase often indicates the Lord's day of judgment (Zeph. 1:7 note). Here it refers the approaching day of Assyrian conquest.

■ **3:1–15** God prosecutes a lawsuit against Israel through His servant Amos.

■ **3:1 Hear this word.** This solemn command occurs again at 4:1 and 5:1, and echoes commands to hear and obey the Lord in the original covenantal documents (Deut. 4:1; 5:1; 6:3). It occurs regularly in covenant lawsuit material (Jer. 2:4; Hos. 4:1).

CHAPTER 3

2 "You[a] only have I known of all the families of the earth;
[b]Therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities."

3 Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?
4 Will a lion roar in the forest, when he has no prey?
Will a young lion [1]cry out of his den, if he has caught nothing?
5 Will a bird fall into a snare on the earth, where there is no [2]trap for it?
Will a snare spring up from the earth, if it has caught nothing at all?
6 If a [3]trumpet is blown in a city, will not the people be afraid?
[c]If there is calamity in a city, will not the LORD have done *it?*

7 Surely the Lord GOD does nothing,
Unless [d]He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.
8 A lion has roared!
Who will not fear?
The Lord GOD has spoken!
[e]Who can but prophesy?

Punishment of Israel's Sins

9 "Proclaim in the palaces at [4]Ashdod,
And in the palaces in the land of Egypt, and say:
'Assemble on the mountains of Samaria;
See great tumults in her midst,
And the [5]oppressed within her.
10 For they [f]do not know to do right,'
Says the LORD,
'Who store up violence and [6]robbery in their palaces.' "

11 Therefore thus says the Lord GOD:

"An adversary *shall be* all around the land;
He shall sap your strength from you,
And your palaces shall be plundered."

2 [a]Gen. 18:19; Ex. 19:5, 6; Deut. 7:6; Ps. 147:19] [b]Jer. 14:10; Ezek. 20:36; Dan. 9:12; Matt. 11:22; [Rom. 2:9]
4 [1]Lit. *give his voice*
5 [2]Or *bait* or *lure*
6 [c]Is. 45:7 [3]*ram's horn*
7 [d]Gen. 6:13; 18:17; [Jer. 23:22]; Dan. 9:22; [John 15:15]
8 [e]Jer. 20:9; [Mic. 3:8]; Acts 4:20; 1 Cor. 9:16
9 [4]So with MT; LXX *Assyria* [5]Or *oppression*
10 [f]Ps. 14:4; Jer. 4:22; Amos 5:7; 6:12 [6]Or *devastation*

■ **3:2 you only have I known.** In addition to cognition (Gen. 4:9), the Hebrew word for "know" has a wide range of meaning, including sexual relations (Gen. 4:1). Here the term denotes God's sovereign choice, or election, of Israel as the object of His loving concern (Gen. 18:19; cf. Deut. 7:7, 8).

Therefore. The Lord's covenant graces include punishment for sins precisely because He loves His people too much to allow them to sin without discipline (Prov. 3:11, 12).

■ **3:3–6** Amos presents a series of questions, to which the answer in every case is quite clear. Their purpose is to emphasize that the message of Amos comes from the Lord.

■ **3:3 walk.** To "walk together" with someone here means to agree with their destination and route. Implicitly, the prophet "walks" with the Lord.

■ **3:4 roar.** A silent hunter, the lion roars only after its victim's fate is sealed. Just as there is reason for the lion's roar, so also there must be a cause behind the prophet's utterance.

■ **3:5 trap.** See text note. No bird would be caught in an unbaited trap.

■ **3:6 trumpet.** See note on 2:2. Siege was a fearful prospect in the ancient world, for it often resulted in starvation of the populace, followed by all the horrors of conquest: rape, pillage, slaughter, and burning.

calamity. Lit. "evil." The Old Testament teaches that the Lord is the Creator of peace and of calamity (Is. 45:7). This does not mean that God is the author of evil, but rather that He sovereignly brings disaster or adversity on individuals and nations as just punishment. The curses pronounced in Gen. 3:14–19 show that the Lord brings such punishment.

■ **3:7 God does nothing, Unless He reveals.** The God who acts also reveals Himself and interprets His actions to and through the prophets. God revealed His plans for Sodom and Gomorrah to Abraham, the first "prophet" so designated in Scripture (Gen. 18:17; 20:7).

His servants the prophets. Moses, the supreme Old Testament prophet, was called "the servant of the LORD" (Deut. 34:5). Subsequent prophets were characterized by the similar phrase, "My servants the prophets" (Jer. 7:25; Ezek. 38:17; cf. Dan. 9:10).

■ **3:8 Who can but prophesy.** Just as a lion's voice evokes fear, so the voice of the Lord compels the prophets to proclaim His word (Deut. 18:18; cf. 1 Cor. 9:16).

■ **3:9 Proclaim.** The command is in the plural, and is apparently directed at the Lord's servants the prophets.

Ashdod . . . Egypt. Amos poetically summons the pagan nobility to look upon the injustice that reigns in Samaria. Israel (the northern kingdom) should have been more righteous, not less, than her pagan neighbors; it is ironic that these pagans should be called as witnesses to Israel's misbehavior.

mountains of Samaria. Samaria was surrounded by mountains, from which the spectators are asked to view her.

tumults. Or, "turmoil," as the word is translated in 2 Chr. 15:5. Such conditions result from sin and are the opposite of "peace" (Hebrew *shalom*).

■ **3:10 violence and robbery.** The ill-gotten gains from their violent and thieving behavior. The rich have plundered and looted the poor.

■ **3:11 adversary.** Assyria. The thought of this verse echoes the substance of the covenant curse for disobedience (Deut. 28:52).

12 Thus says the LORD:

"As a shepherd [7]takes from the mouth of a lion
Two legs or a piece of an ear,
So shall the children of Israel be taken out
Who dwell in Samaria—
In the corner of a bed and [8]on the edge of a couch!
13 Hear and testify against the house of Jacob,"
Says the Lord GOD, the God of hosts,
14 "That in the day I punish Israel for their transgressions,
I will also visit *destruction* on the altars of [g]Bethel;
And the horns of the altar shall be cut off
And fall to the ground.
15 I will [9]destroy [h]the winter house along with [i]the summer house;
The [j]houses of ivory shall perish,
And the great houses shall have an end,"
Says the LORD.

4 Hear this word, you [a]cows of Bashan, who *are* on the mountain of Samaria,
Who oppress the [b]poor,
Who crush the needy,
Who say to [f]your husbands, "Bring *wine,* let us [c]drink!"
2 [d]The Lord GOD has sworn by His holiness:
"Behold, the days shall come upon you
When He will take you away [e]with fishhooks,
And your posterity with fishhooks.
3 [f]You will go out *through* broken *walls,*
Each one straight ahead of her,
And you will [2]be cast into Harmon,"
Says the LORD.

4 "Come[g] to Bethel and transgress,
At [h]Gilgal multiply transgression;
[i]Bring your sacrifices every morning,
[j]Your tithes every three [3]days.

12 [7]Or *snatches* [8]Heb. uncertain, possibly *on the cover*

14 [g]2 Kin. 23:15; Hos. 10:5–8, 14, 15; Amos 4:4

15 [h]Jer. 36:22 [i]Judg. 3:20 [j]1 Kin. 22:39; Ps. 45:8 [9]Lit. *strike*

CHAPTER 4

1 [a]Ps. 22:12; Ezek. 39:18 [b]Amos 2:6 [c]Prov. 23:20 [f]Lit. *their masters* or *lords*

2 [d]Ps. 89:35 [e]Jer. 16:16; Ezek. 29:4; Hab. 1:15

3 [f]Ezek. 12:5 [2]Or *cast them*

4 [g]Ezek. 20:39; Amos 3:14 [h]Hos. 4:15 [i]Num. 28:3; Amos 5:21, 22 [j]Deut. 14:28 [3]Or *years,* Deut. 14:28

■ **3:12 a shepherd takes . . . a piece.** According to ancient laws, shepherds were to demonstrate their diligence by rescuing a portion of a sheep taken by wild beasts (cf. Gen. 31:39 and note). The sheep of Israel will only be saved in a mutilated condition—in fact, the nation would be destroyed.

on the edge of a couch. The rich reclined idly on couches (as the Romans later did at their banquets), enjoying the luxury they extorted from the poor (6:4).

■ **3:13 Hear and testify.** The command here (in the plural) may be to the pagans who have been summoned as witnesses, or to the Lord's messengers, who were commanded to summon the pagan witnesses (v. 9 note).

■ **3:14 in the day . . . for their transgressions.** The phrasing here recalls the original covenant documents (Ex. 32:34).

altars of Bethel. Jeroboam I had made a golden calf for Israel to worship at Bethel in the north, as an alternative to worship at Jerusalem in the south, and had installed an altar there (1 Kin. 12:25–33). Both altar and sanctuary were later destroyed by Josiah (2 Kin. 23:15).

horns of the altar. A fugitive could gain asylum by grasping the horns of the altar (1 Kin. 1:49–51), though this privilege was not always observed (1 Kin. 2:28–35). Even this last resort for sinful Israel will be cut off.

■ **3:15 winter house . . . summer house.** The possession of both a summer and a winter house was a great luxury, affordable only by kings and the very wealthy. The Lord would destroy these multiple houses and decorated mansions. Assyria, God's instrument of judgment (Is. 10:5, 6), was expert at such destruction and plunder, as the vast wealth of Nineveh amply testified (Nah. 2:9).

■ **4:1–13** Through His servant Amos, God prosecutes a second covenant lawsuit against Israel.

■ **4:1 Hear this word.** See 3:1 and note.

cows of Bashan. The wealthy women of Samaria, who had been raised and cared for like the prime cattle of Bashan, a fertile area east of the Jordan River (Deut. 3:1 note).

■ **4:2 sworn by His holiness.** The same phrase occurs once elsewhere, in Ps. 89:35. No oath can be greater or more final (Heb. 6:13, 14).

fishhooks. The Assyrians frequently led prisoners by ropes attached to rings or hooks in their noses or lips.

■ **4:3 cast into Harmon.** This location is now unknown.

■ **4:4 Bethel . . . Gilgal.** These were important sites in the earlier history of Israel; Bethel was a sanctuary during the period of the judges, and Samuel judged both there and at Gilgal (1 Sam. 7:16). They were also centers of syncretistic worship during the period of the divided kingdom (5:5).

every three days. Although the Hebrew word for "day" can stand for a year (text note) or for an unspecified longer period (Gen. 1:5 note), three literal days seem to be meant here. Israel's religious observances go even beyond what the law required. Though enthusiastic about ritual, they had no living relationship with God.

5 [k]Lev. 7:13 [l]Lev. 22:18; Deut. 12:6

6 [m]2 Chr. 28:22; Is. 26:11; Jer. 5:3; Hag. 2:17 [4]Hunger

9 [n]Deut. 28:22; Hag. 2:17 [o]Joel 1:4, 7; Amos 7:1, 2

10 [p]Ex. 9:3, 6; Lev. 26:25; Deut. 28:27, 60; Ps. 78:50

11 [q]Gen. 19:24, 25; Deut. 29:23; Is. 13:19; Jer. 49:18; Lam. 4:6

5 [k]Offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven,
Proclaim *and* announce [l]the freewill offerings;
For this you love,
You children of Israel!"
Says the Lord GOD.

Israel Did Not Accept Correction

6 "Also I gave you [4]cleanness of teeth in all your cities.
And lack of bread in all your places;
[m]Yet you have not returned to Me,"
Says the LORD.

7 "I also withheld rain from you,
When *there were* still three months to the harvest.
I made it rain on one city,
I withheld rain from another city.
One part was rained upon,
And where it did not rain the part withered.
8 So two *or* three cities wandered to another city to drink water,
But they were not satisfied;
Yet you have not returned to Me,"
Says the LORD.

9 "I[n] blasted you with blight and mildew.
When your gardens increased,
Your vineyards,
Your fig trees,
And your olive trees,
[o]The locust devoured *them;*
Yet you have not returned to Me,"
Says the LORD.

10 "I sent among you a plague [p]after the manner of Egypt;
Your young men I killed with a sword,
Along with your captive horses;
I made the stench of your camps come up into your nostrils;
Yet you have not returned to Me,"
Says the LORD.

11 "I overthrew *some* of you,
As God overthrew [q]Sodom and Gomorrah,
And you were like a firebrand plucked from the burning;

■ **4:5 sacrifice . . . with leaven.** The covenant law made it clear that they were not to burn leavened bread as a sacrifice (Lev. 2:11; 6:17; 7:12). Amos sarcastically urges them to continue in their disobedience.

For this you love. In the ancient Near East, the term *to love* had special significance in covenants: the vassal's "love" for the sovereign entailed obedience (Deut. 6:5; cf. John 14:15). The nation's disobedience made it apparent that Israel loved rituals and idolatry rather than the Lord.

■ **4:6–11** This section reviews what the Lord did in punishment to warn His people and draw their attention back to Him. The emphatic phrase "Also I" indicates the change of subject. All the disasters mentioned were threatened in the covenant (Deut. 28). Israel should have understood this and repented. But as the refrain repeats, "you have not returned to Me" (4:6, 8, 9, 10, 11).

■ **4:6 cleanness of teeth.** Their teeth were clean because they had nothing to eat. The covenant had threatened hunger and want as a penalty for disobedience (Deut. 28:47, 48).

■ **4:7, 8 rain.** The winter rains from October through February were essential for the crops to begin their growth. The spring or "latter" rains of March and April would provide for mature growth (Jer. 5:24). The Lord had promised these rains, if Israel would obey His commands (Lev. 26:3, 4), but also warned that He would withhold them if they disobeyed (Lev. 26:18, 19; Deut. 28:23, 24).

■ **4:9 blight and mildew.** The Lord had threatened these in the covenant law (Deut. 28:22; cf. Hag. 2:17).

locust. The Hebrew word for this destructive insect probably derives from the verb meaning "to cut" (cf. Joel 1:4; 2:25). Ironically, the punishment described here is just what the Lord had inflicted on Egypt (Ps. 105:34–35), whose Pharaoh rebelled against God. Rebellious Israel has received the same punishment, and like Pharaoh has not repented.

■ **4:10 plague . . . Egypt.** The Lord had threatened a plague in His covenant with Israel (Deut. 28:21), along with all the diseases of Egypt (Deut. 28:21, 60, 61).

killed with a sword. Yet another covenant curse fulfilled (Ex. 22:24).

■ **4:11 overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.** Similar or identical phrases are used in prophecies against Babylon (Is. 13:19; Jer. 50:40) and Edom (Jer. 49:18). The devastation of Sodom and Gomorrah provided a symbol of God's judgment against sin (Gen. 19:24, 25; Deut. 29:23 note); here God promises to overthrow Israel with equal thoroughness.

Yet you have not returned to Me,"
Says the LORD.

12 "Therefore thus will I do to you, O Israel;
Because I will do this to you,
[r]Prepare to meet your God, O Israel!"

13 For behold,
He who forms mountains,
And creates the [5]wind,
[s]Who declares to man what [6]his thought *is*,
And makes the morning darkness,
[t]Who treads the high places of the earth—
[u]The LORD God of hosts *is* His name.

A Lament for Israel

5 Hear this word which I [a]take up against you, a lamentation, O house of Israel:

2 The virgin of Israel has fallen;
She will rise no more.
She lies forsaken on her land;
There is no one to raise her up.

3 For thus says the Lord GOD:

"The city that goes out by a thousand
Shall have a hundred left,
And that which goes out by a hundred
Shall have ten left to the house of Israel."

A Call to Repentance

4 For thus says the LORD to the house of Israel:

[b]"Seek Me [c]and live;
5 But do not seek [d]Bethel,
Nor enter Gilgal,
Nor pass over to [e]Beersheba;
For Gilgal shall surely go into captivity,
And [f]Bethel shall come to nothing.

12 [r]Jer. 5:22

13 [s]Ps. 139:2; Dan. 2:28 [t]Mic. 1:3 [u]Is. 47:4; Jer. 10:16 [5]Or *spirit* [6]Or *His*

CHAPTER 5

1 [a]Jer. 7:29; 9:10, 17; Ezek. 19:1

4 [b][Deut. 4:29; 2 Chr. 15:2; Jer. 29:13] [c][Is. 55:3]

5 [d]1 Kin. 12:28, 29; Amos 4:4 [e]Gen. 21:31–33; Amos 8:14 [f]Hos. 4:15

a firebrand plucked from the burning. Despite God's repeated mercy to His people (e.g., 2 Kin. 13:3–5; cf. Zech. 3:2), they remained ungrateful and unrepentant.

■ **4:12 Because I will do this to you.** Or, "because this is what I have done to you." The Hebrew is ambiguous. It either warns about the future, or cites the past as a reason to fear.

Prepare . . . God. The phrase comes from Ex. 19:15–17, where, after three days of sanctification, the people met the Lord at Sinai. Then they met a God who was graciously forging a covenant with them. Now they would meet a God who was coming to judge their covenant disobedience.

■ **4:13 who forms . . . declares . . . makes . . . treads.** This verse is in the form of an ancient Near Eastern divine or royal title: a series of titles or epithets used to describe the deeds or powers of a god or king. Here they describe the great King, who is abundantly able to carry out the curses He originally threatened in the covenant (cf. Is. 44:24–28).

LORD God of hosts. See note on Zech. 1:3.

■ **5:1 Hear this word.** See 3:1 and note.

lamentation. As though in mourning for the dead, Amos pours out a lament for Israel. This literary device is frequently used in Old Testament prophecy (e.g., Jer. 7:29; Ezek. 19:1; 26:17; 27:2; 32:2).

■ **5:2 virgin of Israel.** This kind of personification is used of Israel (cf. Jer. 18:13; 2 Kin. 19:21) and of other nations such as Babylon (Is. 47:1) and Egypt (Jer. 46:11).

fallen. This term is used in other laments (e.g., 2 Sam. 1:19, 25, 27; 3:34; Lam. 2:21).

■ **5:3 a thousand . . . ten.** The drastic military reversals described here perhaps echo the prophecy of such disasters in the covenant, which the Lord warned would come because of idolatry (Deut. 32:15–18, 28–30).

■ **5:4 Seek Me and live.** The Lord had promised to meet those who would seek Him, even in exile (Deut. 4:29; cf. Lam. 3:25). Tragically, the Lord's people often did not seek Him (Is. 9:13; Jer. 10:21).

■ **5:5 Bethel . . . Gilgal.** See note on 4:4.

Beersheba. This ancient holy place (Gen. 21:31–33; 26:23–25; 46:1–5) was located 50 miles south-southwest of Jerusalem. People from the north evidently went there on pilgrimage (8:14). In the seventh century B.C., Josiah destroyed the high places "from Geba to Beersheba" during his reform (2 Kin. 23:8).

Gilgal . . . captivity. The words form an alliterative wordplay in Hebrew.

6 [g]Seek the LORD and live,
Lest He break out like fire *in* the house of Joseph,
And devour *it,*
With no one to quench *it* in Bethel—
7 You who [h]turn justice to wormwood,
And lay righteousness to rest in the earth!"

8 He made the [i]Pleiades and Orion;
He turns the shadow of death into morning
[j]And makes the day dark as night;
He [k]calls for the waters of the sea
And pours them out on the face of the earth;
[l]The LORD *is* His name.
9 He [1]rains ruin upon the strong,
So that fury comes upon the fortress.

10 [m]They hate the one who rebukes in the gate,
And they [n]abhor the one who speaks uprightly.
11 [o]Therefore, because you [2]tread down the poor
And take grain [3]taxes from him,
Though [p]you have built houses of hewn stone,
Yet you shall not dwell in them;
You have planted [4]pleasant vineyards,
But you shall not drink wine from them.
12 For I [q]know your manifold transgressions
And your mighty sins:
[r]Afflicting the just *and* taking bribes;
[s]Diverting the poor *from justice* at the gate.
13 Therefore [t]the prudent keep silent at that time,
For it *is* an evil time.

14 Seek good and not evil,
That you may live;

6 [g]Is. 55:3, 6, 7; Amos 5:14]
7 [h]Amos 6:12
8 [i]Job 9:9; 38:31 [j]Ps. 104:20 [k]Job 38:34 [l][Amos 4:13]
9 [1]Or *flashes forth destruction*
10 [m]Is. 29:21; 66:5; Amos 5:15 [n]1 Kin. 22:8; Is. 59:15; Jer. 17:16–18
11 [o]Amos 2:6 [p]Deut. 28:30, 38, 39; Mic. 6:15; Zeph. 1:13; Hag. 1:6 [2]*trample* [3]Or *tribute* [4]*desirable*
12 [q]Hos. 5:3 [r]Is. 1:23; 5:23; Amos 2:6 [s]Is. 29:21
13 [t]Amos 6:10

■ **5:6 fire.** See note on 1:4.

house of Joseph. Ephraim and Manasseh, the tribes descending from Joseph (Gen. 48:15 note), whose tribal areas contained Bethel (Ephraim) and Gilgal (Manasseh). These northern sanctuaries would be destroyed. Beersheba, in the south, would escape the fire of judgment that swept through the northern kingdom.

no one to quench it. The Lord's judgment fire cannot be extinguished (Is. 1:31; Jer. 4:4; Matt. 3:12).

■ **5:7 justice . . . righteousness.** These often occur together in the Old Testament as qualities of life the Lord desires (v. 24; Is. 5:7).

■ **5:8 made . . . turns . . . pours.** See note on 4:13. This majestic description of the Lord contrasts starkly with the previous verse.

Pleiades. A star cluster in the constellation Taurus, with six or seven prominent stars visible to the unaided eye.

Orion. In classical mythology, the constellation Orion is "the Hunter." In Job also, the Pleiades and Orion are named together as evidences of God's incomparable power and wisdom (Job 9:9; 38:31).

■ **5:10 They hate . . . they abhor.** This verse contrasts with vv. 11, 12, which are in the second person. Such shifts of person are common in ancient Near Eastern writings of all kinds, and no significant difference of tone seems intended here.

who rebukes . . . who speaks uprightly. A reference to those who reprove falsehood in court and bear true witness there. Israel had come to hate such men, presumably because they threatened practices of corruption and dishonest gain (2:6 and note).

in the gate. Much of a city's legal business was transacted in its gate, a large passageway with adjoining rooms.

■ **5:11 houses of hewn stone.** These were costly to build, in contrast to the mud brick houses in which most people lived (cf. Is. 9:10).

You shall not dwell . . . you shall not drink. The curse of futility (failure to enjoy the fruit of one's labor) had fallen on the Canaanites as Israel dispossessed them from their cities (Deut. 6:10, 11). Now Israel will suffer the same fate, according to the words of Deut. 25:30 (cf. Is. 65:21–23; 1 Cor. 15:58).

■ **5:12 For I know.** Israel must realize that the Lord knows what they perhaps imagine He does not know (cf. Ps. 73:11; Job 22:13, 14).

bribes. The Hebrew term can refer to a common bribe (1 Sam. 12:3) or to a ransom for loss of life (Ex. 21:30). In view here may be the taking of a ransom for the life of a murderer, which was against the law (Num. 35:31).

■ **5:13 an evil time.** This phrase explains why the prudent will be silent: the times will be so bad that the truth will not be tolerated.

■ **5:14 Seek good and not evil.** For this thought of effective repentance, see Is. 1:16–17. In 5:4 they were commanded to "Seek Me"; only God is good (Matt. 19:17).

That you may live. Obedience to the Lord would bring them security and prosperity (Deut. 28:1–14); but the verse points to a deeper truth, that to know God is life itself (John 17:3).

God . . . with you. This is the deepest need of God's people, expressed prophetically in the name *Immanuel* ("God with us," Is. 7:14; cf. Matt. 1:23).

As you have spoken. Israel complacently claimed that the Lord was with them, despite their rebelliousness, simply because He had made a covenant with them (cf. Matt. 3:9).

So the LORD God of hosts will be with you,
[u] As you have spoken.
15 [v] Hate evil, love good;
Establish justice in the gate.
[w] It may be that the LORD God of hosts
Will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.

The Day of the LORD

16 Therefore the LORD God of hosts, the Lord, says this:

"*There shall be* wailing in all streets,
And they shall say in all the highways,
'Alas! Alas!'
They shall call the farmer to mourning,
[x] And skillful lamenters to wailing.
17 In all vineyards *there shall be* wailing,
For [y] I will pass through you,"
Says the LORD.

18 [z] Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD!
For what good *is* [a] the day of the LORD to you?
It *will be* darkness, and not light.
19 It *will be* [b] as though a man fled from a lion,
And a bear met him!
Or *as though* he went into the house,
Leaned his hand on the wall,
And a serpent bit him!
20 *Is* not the day of the LORD darkness, and not light?
Is it not very dark, with no brightness in it?

21 "I [c] hate, I despise your feast days,
And [d] I do not savor your sacred assemblies.
22 [e] Though you offer Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings,
I will not accept *them,*
Nor will I regard your fattened peace offerings.
23 Take away from Me the noise of your songs,
For I will not hear the melody of your stringed instruments.
24 [f] But let justice run down like water,
And righteousness like a mighty stream.

14 [u] Mic. 3:11

15 [v] Ps. 97:10; Rom. 12:9 [w] Joel 2:14

16 [x] 2 Chr. 35:25; Jer. 9:17

17 [y] Ex. 12:12

18 [z] Is. 5:19; Jer. 17:15; Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11, 31 [a] Is. 5:30; Joel 2:2

19 [b] Job 20:24; Is. 24:17, 18; Jer. 48:44

21 [c] Is. 1:11–16; Amos 4:4, 5; 8:10 [d] Lev. 26:31; Jer. 14:12; Hos. 5:6

22 [e] Is. 66:3; Mic. 6:6, 7

24 [f] Jer. 22:3; Ezek. 45:9; Hos. 6:6; Mic. 6:8

■ **5:15 justice in the gate.** See note on v. 10.

remnant of Joseph. The northern kingdom of Israel was dominated by the tribe of Ephraim, descendants of one of Joseph's sons (Deut. 33:17 note). Though Israel was relatively prosperous and strong, the phrase anticipates the future, after God's judgment, when He would graciously restore a remnant of the people.

■ **5:17 all vineyards.** The laments over Israel will be taken up in every part of the land, since every part will be punished.

I will pass through. The same verb appears at Ex. 12:12, where the Lord speaks of His impending judgment on Egypt. Ironically, because Israel has become as pagan as Egypt, He must now "pass through" Israel in judgment as well (7:2 note).

■ **5:18–27** This second portion of ch. 5 treats the day of the Lord and His rejection of Israel.

■ **5:18 the day of the LORD.** Ultimately, this is the great and terrible "day of the LORD" when He comes in judgment (cf. Is. 2:12; 13:6–13; Obad. 15; Zeph. 1:7, 14). Every Old Testament judgment was also a "day of the LORD," and anticipated that final day. Joel described it as a day of terrible judgment and destruction (Joel 1:15–20; 2:11), although it would also be accompanied by a redemptive outpouring of God's Spirit (Joel 2:28–32).

darkness, and not light. The Lord alone has power to make day as dark as night, both literally and figuratively, in judgment (v. 8).

■ **5:19 lion . . . bear.** Amos vividly portrays the futility of trying to escape the Lord's judgment (Is. 24:17, 18).

■ **5:20 brightness.** In addition to denoting physical light, the Hebrew word for "brightness" is associated with the Lord (Ps. 18:12; Is. 4:5) and with the righteous (Prov. 4:18, 19; Is. 60:3; 62:1). There will be no light of righteousness in the land, and no brightness from the Lord's favorable countenance. Judgment will be black and total, engulfing the whole land.

■ **5:21–24** For a similar condemnation of empty ritual and sacrifice without repentance, see Mic. 6:6–8 (cf. Matt. 5:23, 24; 1 Cor. 13:3).

■ **5:21 I hate, I despise.** Two Hebrew words here combine to express the attitude more forcefully than either could by itself. The result can be translated, "I reject with utter hatred."

I do not savor. The language refers to burnt offerings. In the Mosaic covenant, the Lord declares that if His people were disobedient, He would "not smell the fragrance" of their offerings (Lev. 26:31).

■ **5:24 justice . . . righteousness.** See note on v. 7.

mighty stream. Or, "ever-flowing stream." The streams, or wadis, of the Middle East are rocky watercourses through which torrents rush in the

25 "Did[g] you offer Me sacrifices and offerings
In the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?
26 You also carried [5]Sikkuth[6] [h]your king
And [6]Chiun, your idols,
The star of your gods,
Which you made for yourselves.
27 Therefore I will send you into captivity [i]beyond Damascus,"
Says the LORD, [j]whose name *is* the God of hosts.

Warnings to Zion and Samaria

CHAPTER 6

6 Woe [a]to you *who are* at [b]ease in Zion,
And [c]trust in Mount Samaria,
Notable persons in the [d]chief nation,
To whom the house of Israel comes!
2 [e]Go over to [f]Calneh and see;
And from there go to [g]Hamath the great;
Then go down to Gath of the Philistines.
[h]*Are you* better than these kingdoms?
Or is their territory greater than your territory?

3 *Woe to* you who [i]put far off the day of [j]doom,
[k]Who cause [l]the seat of violence to come near;
4 Who lie on beds of ivory,
Stretch out on your couches,
Eat lambs from the flock
And calves from the midst of the stall;
5 [m]Who sing idly to the sound of stringed instruments,
And invent for yourselves [n]musical instruments [o]like David;
6 Who [p]drink wine from bowls,
And anoint yourselves with the best ointments,
[q]But are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.

25 [g]Deut. 32:17; Josh. 24:14; Neh. 9:18–21; Acts 7:42, 43

26 [h]1 Kin. 11:33 [5]LXX, Vg. *tabernacle of Moloch* [6]A pagan deity

27 [i]2 Kin. 17:6; Amos 7:11, 17; Mic. 4:10 [j]Amos 4:13

1 [a]Luke 6:24 [b]Ps. 123:4; Is. 32:9–11; Zeph. 1:12 [c]Is. 31:1; Jer. 49:4 [d]Ex. 19:5; Amos 3:2

2 [e]Jer. 2:10 [f]Gen. 10:10; Is. 10:9 [g]1 Kin. 8:65; 2 Kin. 18:34 [h]Nah. 3:8

3 [i]Is. 56:12; Ezek. 12:27; Amos 9:10; Matt. 24:37–39 [j]Amos 5:18 [k]Amos 5:12 [l]Ps. 94:20

5 [m]Is. 5:12; Amos 5:23 [n]1 Chr. 15:16; 16:42 [o]1 Chr. 23:5

6 [p]Amos 2:8; 4:1 [q]Gen. 37:25

rainy season, but which are dry at other times. The Lord desires righteousness that is like His own, dependable and strong.

■ **5:25 Did you offer.** Offerings had been brought to the Lord during the wilderness wanderings (Ex. 18:12; Lev. 9:8–24). The question emphasizes that such offerings were not of primary importance to the Lord. Rather, He wants worship in spirit and in truth accompanied by true repentance.

■ **5:26 carried Sikkuth . . . Chiun.** Sikkuth (or Sakkuth) was an Assyrian deity associated with the planet Saturn. Chiun (or Kaiwan) was a Babylonian term for Saturn. Amos here refers to idols associated with astral deities that were carried in cultic processions. The Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) translated the Hebrew for "Sikkuth your king" as "tabernacle of Moloch" (the Hebrew letters are similar), a reading quoted by Stephen in Acts 7:43.

Which you made for yourselves. Old Testament attacks against idolatry often focus on the merely man-made nature of the idols (Is. 44:9–20; Jer. 10:1–5; Mic. 5:13).

■ **5:27 beyond Damascus.** Banishment beyond Damascus in Syria implied exile to Assyria, as the prophet's audience well understood. Exile far from home was one of the original covenant curses (Deut. 28:36, 64).

■ **6:1 Zion . . . Mount Samaria.** Zion (Jerusalem) and Samaria were the capitals of Judah and Israel respectively. Like his contemporaries Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah, Amos was given prophecies that addressed both the southern and northern kingdoms (Hos. 6:4–11; Mic. 1:5).

chief nation. The same ironic Hebrew phrase occurs also at Num. 24:20 (referring to Amalek). Israel had become powerful and prosperous under Jeroboam II, and might fancy herself the first among the nations.

■ **6:2 Calneh.** The identity of this city is uncertain, but it may be the Calno mentioned in Is. 10:9, which was conquered by Sargon II of Assyria in 710 B.C.

Hamath the great. Located north of Dan on the Orontes River in Syria, it was restored to Israelite control by Jeroboam II (2 Kin. 14:23–25).

Gath. One of the five major Philistine cities (1:6 note), Judah's Uzziah had recaptured Gath from Syrian control (2 Kin. 12:17; 2 Chr. 26:6).

Are you better . . . is their territory greater. The precise historical context and meaning of this verse is debated. Some suggest that Calneh, Hamath, and Gath had been conquered, and that Israel should therefore not expect to escape conquest either. Others contend that Amos mentions other flourishing capitals of the region to show that Israel was as great as they, perhaps implying that Israel's territory is not so small that aggressors will ignore it and attack these other cities instead.

■ **6:3 seat of violence.** Israel has enthroned violence, such as extortion and abuse of the poor, as a way of life, while also denying that the day of judgment is coming.

■ **6:4 ivory.** A symbol of wealth and luxury (3:15; 1 Kin. 10:22).

calves . . . stall. Choice calves were kept in stalls and fattened for special occasions. Such was the normal fare for the wealthy of Samaria.

■ **6:5 like David.** An ironic comparison with David's musical interests. Unlike their frivolous endeavors, David composed many psalms to the glory of the Lord (2 Sam. 23:1).

■ **6:6 from bowls.** That is, from large bowls or basins. The same Hebrew word is used for the large bowls before the altar at the temple (Num. 7:13; Zech. 14:20). The prophet's hyperbole vividly portrays the excesses of the city.

Joseph. See note on 5:6.

7 Therefore they shall now go [r]captive as the first of the captives,
And those who recline at banquets shall be removed.

8 [s]The Lord GOD has sworn by Himself,
The LORD God of hosts says:
"I abhor [t]the pride of Jacob,
And hate his palaces;
Therefore I will deliver up *the* city
And all that is in it."

9 Then it shall come to pass, that if ten men remain in one house, they shall die. 10 And when [1]a relative *of the dead,* with one who will burn *the bodies,* picks up the [2]bodies to take them out of the house, he will say to one inside the house, "*Are there* any more with you?"
Then someone will say, "None."
And he will say, [u]"Hold your tongue! [v]For we dare not mention the name of the LORD."

11 For behold, [w]the LORD gives a command:
[x]He will break the great house into bits,
And the little house into pieces.

12 Do horses run on rocks?
Does *one* plow *there* with oxen?
Yet [y]you have turned justice into gall,
And the fruit of righteousness into wormwood,
13 You who rejoice over [3]Lo Debar,
Who say, "Have we not taken [4]Karnaim for ourselves
By our own strength?"

14 "But, behold, [z]I will raise up a nation against you,
O house of Israel,"
Says the LORD God of hosts;
"And they will afflict you from the [a]entrance of Hamath
To the Valley of the Arabah."

7 [r]Amos 5:27

8 [s]Gen. 22:16; Jer. 51:14; Amos 4:2; 8:7; Heb. 6:13–17 [t]Ps. 47:4; Ezek. 24:21; Amos 8:7

10 [u]Amos 5:13 [v]Amos 8:3 [1]Lit. *his loved one* or *uncle* [2]Lit. *bones*

11 [w]Is. 55:11 [x]2 Kin. 25:9; Amos 3:15

12 [y]1 Kin. 21:7–13; Is. 59:13, 14; Hos. 10:4; Amos 5:7, 11, 12

13 [3]Lit. *Nothing* [4]Lit. *Horns,* a symbol of strength

14 [z]Jer. 5:15 [a]Num. 34:7, 8; 1 Kin. 8:65; 2 Kin. 14:25

■ **6:7 first of the captives.** This phrase is a Hebrew wordplay on the earlier phrase, "chief nation" (v. 1). Israel fancied herself the chief of nations, but would find herself leading the exiles.

■ **6:8–14** A series of judgment pronouncements follows the indictments of vv. 1–7.

■ **6:8 sworn by Himself.** Similar to oaths in Gen. 22:16; Ex. 32:13; Is. 45:23, here indicating that the judicial sentence is unalterable (Heb. 6:13 note).

pride of Jacob. This refers both to Israel's pride and to that in which they took pride—their military strength. The word translated "palaces" has the sense of "fortified palace" or "citadel."

■ **6:9 ten men . . . one house.** The meaning seems to be that small remnants hoping to escape will be found and killed.

■ **6:10 relative . . . one who will burn.** Lit. "a man's kinsman and his burner," probably one and the same individual. Fear of epidemics may have required cremation instead of burial. Or the burning mentioned could be a fire in honor of the dead (Jer. 34:5).

dare not mention the name of the LORD. Previously, one might mention or invoke the Lord's name for help, since He was the God of Israel's covenant. But on the day of judgment one may not do this, because the God of the covenant is coming in judgment (cf. Is. 48:1).

■ **6:11 gives a command.** The Lord is rousing Assyria, His instrument of judgment, to come against Israel (cf. Is. 10:5, 6).

great house . . . little house. Both the great houses of the wealthy and the small houses of the poor will be shattered by the coming judgment. Here, as often in Hebrew, the word for "house" can also mean "household" or "family."

■ **6:12 Do horses run on rocks.** Obviously not; no one runs a horse in such treacherous footing. Neither would one plow on rocks. But Israel's injustice is just as absurd. A suggested reading of the second question, "Does one plow the sea with oxen," requires a different word division in the Hebrew and is attested by no ancient version. It is better to take "rocks" as understood, although not explicitly stated, in the second query.

■ **6:13 Lo Debar . . . Karnaim.** Lo Debar was a border town in Gilead; Karnaim a city on the plain of Bashan on the way to Damascus. Both were apparently retaken from Hazael by Jehoash (2 Kin. 10:32, 33; 13:25), but later conquered by Assyria (2 Kin. 15:29). The names respectively mean "nothing" and "a pair of horns." A wordplay is intended, by which Amos says that Israel rejoices in the conquest of nothing (the conquest of Lo Debar, soon to be taken by Assyria, was short-lived), and boasts of having taken "a pair of horns" (symbolic of military strength in the ancient Near East) by their own strength. Their conquests amount to nothing, and their strength will melt away before the Lord's judgment.

■ **6:14 a nation.** Assyria.

Hamath . . . Valley of the Arabah. The northern and southern boundaries of the kingdom as restored by Jeroboam II (2 Kin. 14:25).

CHAPTER 7

1 [1]Lit. *beginning of the sprouting of*

2 [a]Is. 51:19 [2]Or *How shall Jacob stand*

3 [b]Deut. 32:36; Jer. 26:19; Hos. 11:8; Amos 5:15; Jon. 3:10; [James 5:16]

4 [3]*to contend* [4]Lit. *portion*

5 [c]Amos 7:2, 3

8 [d]2 Kin. 21:13; Is. 28:17; 34:11; Lam. 2:8 [e]Mic. 7:18

9 [f]Gen. 46:1; Hos. 10:8; Mic. 1:5 [g]2 Kin. 15:8–10; Amos 7:11 [5]Places of pagan worship [6]Or *holy places*

Vision of the Locusts

7 Thus the Lord GOD showed me: Behold, He formed locust swarms at the [1]beginning of the late crop; indeed *it was* the late crop after the king's mowings. 2 And so it was, when they had finished eating the grass of the land, that I said:

"O Lord GOD, forgive, I pray!
[a]Oh,[2] that Jacob may stand,
For he *is* small!"
3 *So* [b]the LORD relented concerning this.
"It shall not be," said the LORD.

Vision of the Fire

4 Thus the Lord GOD showed me: Behold, the Lord GOD called [3]for conflict by fire, and it consumed the great deep and devoured the [4]territory. 5 Then I said:

"O Lord GOD, cease, I pray!
[c]Oh, that Jacob may stand,
For he *is* small!"
6 *So* the LORD relented concerning this.
"This also shall not be," said the Lord GOD.

Vision of the Plumb Line

7 Thus He showed me: Behold, the Lord stood on a wall *made* with a plumb line, with a plumb line in His hand. 8 And the LORD said to me, "Amos, what do you see?"
And I said, "A plumb line."
Then the Lord said:

"Behold, [d]I am setting a plumb line
In the midst of My people Israel;
[e]I will not pass by them anymore.
9 [f]The [5]high places of Isaac shall be desolate,
And the [6]sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste.
[g]I will rise with the sword against the house of Jeroboam."

■ **7:1—8:3** This long section contains four visions (7:1–3; 7:4–6; 7:7–9; 8:1–3) and an autobiographical section related to the third vision (7:10–17). The first two visions have the structure: (a) the Lord gives the vision; (b) Amos intercedes; (c) the Lord relents. Conversation between the Lord and His prophet is an integral part of the visionary experience.

■ **7:1 locust swarms.** This Hebrew word, occurring only here and in Nah. 3:17, denotes swarming locusts just hatched.

late crop . . . king's mowings. This verse seems to indicate that the first crop (the "king's mowings") represented the king's share (cf. 5:11; 1 Kin. 12:4), while the farmer and his family depended on the second harvest for survival. Destruction of this second crop by locusts placed the population at risk of starvation.

■ **7:2 eating the grass of the land.** The Hebrew word for "grass" is general; all vegetation was destroyed, not just crops. In Hebrew, the whole phrase echoes the description of the locust plague in Ex. 10:12, 15 ("every herb of the land"). The Lord would punish Israel just as He punished Egypt before the Exodus.

■ **7:3 relented.** Moved by intercessory appeal, the Lord is willing to change His mind, or relent, concerning an intended punishment (cf. Ex. 32:12, 14; Joel 2:13; Jon. 3:10; Jer. 18:8). See note on Gen. 6:6.

■ **7:4 conflict by fire.** See note on 1:4; Is. 66:15–16.

great deep . . . territory. The "great deep" could be the Mediterranean Sea, although the same phrase is also used of the chaotic subterranean waters (Gen. 7:11 note), and of the Red Sea at Israel's crossing (Is. 51:10). The prospect of a fire that will devour sea and land echoes the covenant judgment warning in Deut. 32:22. The language exceeds what happened in the Old Testament, but foreshadows the Last Judgment (cf. 2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 21:1), of which all previous judgments are but types.

■ **7:7 He showed me.** This and the fourth vision (8:1–3) have the same structure: (a) the Lord gives the vision; (b) the Lord questions Amos; (c) Amos replies; (d) the Lord explains and judges. Similarly structured visionary experiences are recorded at Jer. 1:11, 12, 13–16.

a wall made with a plumb line. Most interpret this image to portray Israel being judged to see if they measured up to God's standard. Others, following another analysis of the words (the word translated "plumb" resembles the Accadian word for "tin"), render this "a wall of tin." The same "wall" symbolism in Egyptian literature stands for military capability (cf. "bronze wall," Jer. 15:20; and "iron wall," Ezek. 4:3). The use of an Accadian (Assyrian) word for the metal indicates the source of the military power that the Lord will use to judge Israel.

with a plumb line in His hand. See note above. Many interpret this phrase as a reference to God's covenant law, His standard of judgment. Others render this phrase "with tin in his hand," a probable reference to Assyrian power, anticipating that He will put "tin" (i.e., Assyrian power) in the midst of His people (v. 8).

■ **7:8 not pass by them.** No longer will the Lord pass over their transgressions (Mic. 7:18).

■ **7:9 high places . . . sanctuaries.** These high places were traditional sites of Canaanite idolatrous worship (Deut. 12:2; 2 Kin. 17:10–12). The sanctuaries were for idolatrous or syncretistic worship.

sword . . . house of Jeroboam. Jeroboam himself might not die by the sword, but his household or family would be affected. Although Jeroboam apparently died a natural death (2 Kin. 14:29), his son Zechariah was murdered (2 Kin. 15:10).

Amaziah's Complaint

10 Then Amaziah the [h]priest of [i]Bethel sent to [j]Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, "Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel. The land is not able to [7]bear all his words. 11 For thus Amos has said:

'Jeroboam shall die by the sword,
And Israel shall surely be led away [k]captive
From their own land.'"

12 Then Amaziah said to Amos:

"Go, you seer!
Flee to the land of Judah.
There eat bread,
And there prophesy.
13 But [l]never again prophesy at Bethel,
[m]For it *is* the king's [8]sanctuary,
And it *is* the royal [9]residence."

14 Then Amos answered, and said to Amaziah:

"I *was* no prophet,
Nor *was* I [n]a son of a prophet,
But I *was* a [o]sheepbreeder
And a tender of sycamore fruit.
15 Then the LORD took me [l]as I followed the flock,
And the LORD said to me,
'Go, [p]prophesy to My people Israel.'
16 Now therefore, hear the word of the LORD:
You say, 'Do not prophesy against Israel,
And [q]do not [2]spout against the house of Isaac.'

17 "Therefore[r] thus says the LORD:

10 [h]1 Kin. 12:31, 32; 13:33 [i]1 Kin. 13:32; Amos 4:4 [j]2 Kin. 14:23 [7]Or *endure*

11 [k]Amos 5:27; 6:7

13 [l]Amos 2:12; Acts 4:18 [m]1 Kin. 12:29, 32; Amos 7:9 [8]Or *holy place* [9]Lit. *house*

14 [n]1 Kin. 20:35; 2 Kin. 2:5; 2 Chr. 19:2 [o]2 Kin. 3:4; Amos 1:1; Zech. 13:5

15 [p]Amos 3:8 [l]Lit. *from behind*

16 [q]Deut. 32:2; Ezek. 21:2; Mic. 2:6 [2]Lit. *drip*

17 [r]Jer. 28:12; 29:21, 32

■ **7:10–17** This autobiographical section apparently relates to the third vision, telling the reaction of Amaziah to the prophecies of Amos.

■ **7:10 the priest of Bethel.** Amaziah was probably the chief priest at the shrine of Bethel.

Amos has conspired. The political implications of the prophet's preaching are apparent. Jeremiah too was wrongly considered a traitor because of his prophecies against Judah (Jer. 26:11; 37:11–13; 38:1–6).

■ **7:11 Jeroboam shall die by the sword.** Probably an allusion to the prophecy in v. 9. Amaziah misquotes Amos so as to make Jeroboam feel more personally threatened.

■ **7:12 There eat bread . . . prophesy.** Probably this means "earn your living by prophesying there in Judah." Although it was appropriate for a prophet to be paid for his work (1 Sam. 9:6–8; but cf. Mic. 3:5, 11), Amaziah accuses Amos of being merely a prophet for hire. Amaziah's commands here are an example of the sin of commanding the prophets not to prophesy (2:12).

■ **7:13 king's sanctuary . . . royal residence.** From the time when Jeroboam I established idolatry at Bethel (3:14 note) the kings of Israel had a major influence on the cult. Amaziah is concerned for the sanctuary of his earthly king, rather than for the sanctuary of the great King, the Lord. Ironically, Amaziah is the religious official concerned to protect earthly interests—the very charge which he brought against Amos (v. 12). A future generation of priests would likewise put to death Jesus, the greatest of the prophets, out of a wrong concern to protect their own kingdom and temple (John 11:48).

■ **7:14 no prophet . . . son of a prophet.** Amos was not originally a prophet, nor one of the so-called "sons of the prophets" (i.e., disciples of the prophets; 1 Kin. 20:35; 2 Kin. 2:3, 5, 7, 15). He was not a paid professional prophet.

sheepbreeder. See note on 1:1.

tender of sycamore fruit. One who treated the fruit by appropriate cutting to ensure superior sweetness once the fruit was ripe. Amos was skilled in more than one trade (1:1 note).

■ **7:15 the LORD took me . . . My people Israel.** Amos flatly rejects Amaziah's accusation (7:12) and stresses his divine call to prophesy. The same phrasing is used for the Lord's choice of David as king (2 Sam. 7:8). The prophet's allusion to David's call indicates that the Lord has the sovereign right to choose both kings and prophets—and that His prophets have every right to prophesy at the "king's royal residence" (v. 13).

■ **7:16 Do not prophesy.** See 2:12 and note; 7:12, 13.

■ **7:17 wife shall be a harlot.** Either by being ravished at the fall of the city, or out of desperation after the loss of family and wealth (cf. Deut. 28:30).

Your sons and daughters. Sons and daughters were often punished along with parents for covenant transgressions (Deut. 28:32, 53; Jer. 5:17; Ezek. 24:21); violent death was a typical covenant punishment (Is. 3:25; Jer. 39:18).

die in a defiled land. Exile would be especially distasteful for the priest Amaziah: by living in a pagan land he would become ritually unclean. See note on Lev. 11—16.

Israel . . . land. Amos sarcastically quotes Amaziah's own words from v. 11 back at him.

17 [s]Is. 13:16; Lam. 5:11; Hos. 4:13; Zech. 14:2
[t]2 Kin. 17:6; Ezek. 4:13; Hos. 9:3

CHAPTER 8

2 [a]Ezek. 7:2
[b]Amos 7:8

3 [c]Amos 5:23
[d]Amos 6:9, 10

4 [f]Or *trample on,* Amos 2:7

5 [e]Ex. 31:13–17; Neh. 13:15 [f]Mic. 6:10, 11 [g]Lev. 19:35, 36; Deut. 25:13–15 [2]Lit. *open*

6 [h]Amos 2:6

7 [i]Deut. 33:26, 29; Ps. 68:34; Amos 6:8 [j]Ps. 10:11; Hos. 7:2; 8:13

8 [k]Hos. 4:3 [l]Jer. 46:7, 8; Amos 9:5 [3]The Nile; some Heb. mss., LXX, Tg., Syr., Vg. *River* (cf. 9:5); MT *the light*

[s] "Your wife shall be a harlot in the city;
Your sons and daughters shall fall by the sword;
Your land shall be divided by *survey* line;
You shall die in a [t]defiled land;
And Israel shall surely be led away captive
From his own land.' "

Vision of the Summer Fruit

8 Thus the Lord GOD showed me: Behold, a basket of summer fruit. 2 And He said, "Amos, what do you see?"
So I said, "A basket of summer fruit."
Then the LORD said to me:

[a]"The end has come upon My people Israel;
[b]I will not pass by them anymore.
3 And [c]the songs of the temple
Shall be wailing in that day,"
Says the Lord GOD—
"Many dead bodies everywhere,
[d]They shall be thrown out in silence."

4 Hear this, you who [f]swallow up the needy,
And make the poor of the land fail,

5 Saying:

"When will the New Moon be past,
That we may sell grain?
And [e]the Sabbath,
That we may [2]trade wheat?
[f]Making the ephah small and the shekel large,
Falsifying the scales by [g]deceit,
6 That we may buy the poor for [h]silver,
And the needy for a pair of sandals—
Even sell the bad wheat?"

7 The LORD has sworn by [i]the pride of Jacob:
"Surely [j]I will never forget any of their works.
8 [k]Shall the land not tremble for this,
And everyone mourn who dwells in it?
All of it shall swell like [3]the River,
Heave and subside
[l]Like the River of Egypt.

■ **8:2 summer fruit.** The Hebrew words for "summer fruit" and "end" are similar, and are skillfully brought together here for effect. The vision of summer fruit indicates that the "end has come" for Israel.

not pass by them. See note on 7:8.

■ **8:3 that day.** See note on 5:18.

songs . . . wailing. The Lord would no longer tolerate the noise of the temple songs (5:23), which would turn to the wailing of bereavement when the Lord came in judgment.

Many dead bodies. An abundance of corpses was typical in defeated cities in the ancient Near East, especially when conquered by the Assyrians (Nah. 3:3).

■ **8:4–14** God charges Israel with social injustice, commercial dishonesty, and indifference to holy days.

■ **8:5 New Moon . . . Sabbath.** The New Moon festival was celebrated every fourth week, with various offerings (Num. 28:11–15). The Sabbath, observed every week, was founded on God's acts of creation (Ex. 20:8–11) and redemption (Deut. 5:12 note). Work was forbidden on these days.

ephah small . . . scales. Such dishonest business practices were against the Lord's law, and would result in His judgment (Lev. 19:36; Deut. 25:14).

■ **8:6 silver . . . sandals.** See notes on 2:6.

the bad wheat. Lit. "the refuse of the wheat." The estate owners sold even the chaff, which fell to the floor when the wheat was threshed, mixing it with the wheat and cheating the buyer.

■ **8:7 the pride of Jacob.** See note on 6:8. Here the phrase may refer to the Lord Himself, or to the land of Israel, which is elsewhere called "our inheritance . . . the excellence of Jacob" (Ps. 47:4).

■ **8:8 Heave and subside.** Each year the Nile rose and overflowed its banks, flooding the countryside and leaving rich deposits of silt. The imagery is used here to depict a coming flood of judgment—the upheaval of the Assyrian invasion (cf. Is. 8:7, 8).

9 "And it shall come to pass in that day," says the Lord GOD,
[m]"That I will make the sun go down at noon,
And I will darken the earth in [4]broad daylight;
10 I will turn your feasts into [n]mourning,
[o]And all your songs into lamentation;
[p]I will bring sackcloth on every waist,
And baldness on every head;
I will make it like mourning for an only *son,*
And its end like a bitter day.

11 "Behold, the days are coming," says the Lord GOD,
"That I will send a famine on the land,
Not a famine of bread,
Nor a thirst for water,
But [q]of hearing the words of the LORD.
12 They shall wander from sea to sea,
And from north to east;
They shall run to and fro, seeking the word of the LORD,
But shall [r]not find *it.*

13 "In that day the fair virgins
And strong young men
Shall faint from thirst.
14 Those who [s]swear by [t]the [5]sin of Samaria,
Who say,
'As your god lives, O Dan!'
And, 'As the way of [u]Beersheba lives!'
They shall fall and never rise again."

9 [m]Job 5:14; Is. 13:10; 59:9, 10; Jer. 15:9; [Mic. 3:6]; Matt. 27:45; Mark 15:32; Luke 23:44 [4]Lit. *a day of light*

10 [n]Lam. 5:15; Ezek. 7:18 [o]Is. 15:2, 3; Jer. 48:37; Ezek. 27:31 [p]Jer. 6:26; [Zech. 12:10]

11 [q]1 Sam. 3:1; 2 Chr. 15:3; Ps. 74:9; Ezek. 7:26; Mic. 3:6

12 [r]Hos. 5:6

14 [s]Hos. 4:15 [t]Deut. 9:21 [u]Amos 5:5 [5]Or *Ashima,* a Syrian goddess

The Destruction of Israel

9 I saw the Lord standing by the altar, and He said:

"Strike the [1]doorposts, that the thresholds may shake,
And [a]break them on the heads of them all.
I will slay the last of them with the sword.
[b]He who flees from them shall not get away,
And he who escapes from them shall not be delivered.

CHAPTER 9

1 [a]Ps. 68:21; Hab. 3:13 [b]Amos 2:14 [1]Capitals of the pillars

■ **8:9 that day.** See note on 5:18.

I will make . . . I will darken. Though such idolatry was strictly prohibited by the covenant (Deut. 4:19), Judah and Israel engaged in star and sun worship (5:26 note; 2 Kin. 23:5, 11). The assertions here affirm that He alone is God, and the sun merely one of His creations (Gen. 1:16 and notes).

the earth. Or, "the land," since the land of Israel was to be punished. The phrase directly recalls the plague of darkness that the Lord brought upon the land of Egypt (cf. Ex. 10:21, 22; Ps. 105:28). Here again, the Lord is about to judge Israel with a judgment similar to that of Egypt.

■ **8:10 sackcloth.** This coarse material was worn as a sign of mourning to indicate that the pleasures of life no longer mattered to the mourner (Gen. 37:34; 2 Sam. 3:31).

baldness on every head. Shaving the head was a sign of mourning. It was prohibited in the covenant (Lev. 21:5; Deut. 14:1), perhaps because it was a pagan practice of bodily disfigurement that disgraced God's image (Is. 15:2, 3; Ezek. 27:30, 31). Ironically, it was prophesied for Israel and Judah (cf. Is. 3:24; Mic. 1:16).

bitter. A term describing the ultimate consequences of sin (2 Sam. 2:26; Prov. 5:4).

■ **8:11 a famine . . . of hearing the words.** This curse stems from the covenant law (Deut. 32:20; Hos. 3:4). So also in the period of the judges, when sin abounded (Judg. 21:25), "the word of the LORD was rare" (1 Sam. 3:1).

■ **8:12 from sea to sea.** A standard phrase in the ancient Near East denoting "the ends of the earth," this literally meant "from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf."

■ **8:13 fair virgins . . . strong young men.** Even the young and robust will be at the end of their strength (cf. Is. 51:20).

thirst. The focus is on physical extremity (cf. 4:7, 8), though spiritual thirst may be in view as well (v. 11).

■ **8:14 swear by the sin.** See text note. To swear by a god in the ancient Near East implied the recognition and worship of that god. Israelites were commanded to swear only by the Lord (Deut. 6:13; 10:20; cf. Jer. 5:7; Zeph. 1:5).

■ **9:1–6** In the other four visions, Amos was an intercessor or respondent to the Lord's questions (7:1—8:3 note; 7:7 note). In this vision, however, Amos has no active role, but simply records what he sees.

■ **9:1 Strike . . . of them all.** See text note. The command seems to be for an angel (cf. 2 Sam. 24:16; 2 Kin. 19:35) to destroy the temple, bringing it down on the heads of those within (cf. Judg. 16:29, 30).

2 Though[c] they dig into [2]hell,
From there My hand shall take them;
[d]Though they climb up to heaven,
From there I will bring them down;
3 And though they [e]hide themselves on top of Carmel,
From there I will search and take them;
Though they hide from My sight at the bottom of the sea,
From there I will command the serpent, and it shall bite them;
4 Though they go into captivity before their enemies,
From there [f]I will command the sword,
And it shall slay them.
[g]I will set My eyes on them for harm and not for good."

5 The Lord GOD of hosts,
He who touches the earth and it [h]melts,
[i]And all who dwell there mourn;
All of it shall swell like [3]the River,
And subside like the River of Egypt.
6 He who builds His [j]layers[4] in the sky,
And has founded His strata in the earth;
Who [k]calls for the waters of the sea,
And pours them out on the face of the earth—
[l]The LORD *is* His name.

7 "*Are* you not like the [5]people of Ethiopia to Me,
O children of Israel?" says the LORD.
"Did I not bring up Israel from the land of Egypt,
The [m]Philistines from [n]Caphtor,[6]
And the Syrians from [o]Kir?

8 "Behold, [p]the eyes of the Lord GOD *are* on the sinful kingdom,
And I [q]will destroy it from the face of the earth;
Yet I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob,"
Says the LORD.

9 "For surely I will command,
And will [7]sift the house of Israel among all nations,
As *grain* is sifted in a sieve;
[r]Yet not the smallest [8]grain shall fall to the ground.

2 [c]Ps. 139:8; Jer. 23:24 [d]Job 20:6; Jer. 51:53; Obad. 4; Matt. 11:23 [2]Or *Sheol*
3 [e]Jer. 23:24
4 [f]Lev. 26:33 [g]Lev. 17:10; Jer. 21:10; 39:16; 44:11
5 [h]Ps. 104:32; 144:5; Is. 64:1; Mic. 1:4 [i]Amos 8:8 [3]The Nile
6 [j]Ps. 104:3, 13 [k]Amos 5:8 [l]Amos 4:13; 5:27 [4]Or *stairs*
7 [m]Jer. 47:4 [n]Deut. 2:23 [o]Amos 1:5 [5]Lit. *sons of the Ethiopians* [6]Crete
8 [p]Jer. 44:27; Amos 9:4 [q]Jer. 5:10; 30:11; [Joel 2:32]; Amos 3:12; [Obad. 16, 17]
9 [r][Is. 65:8–16] [7]*shake* [8]Lit. *pebble*

■ **9:2 hell . . . heaven.** This pair poetically expresses the comprehensiveness of God's dominion (Ps. 139:7–12; Is. 7:11).

■ **9:3 Carmel.** See 1:2 and note.

bottom of the sea. In contrast with the height of Mount Carmel. Since Carmel was on the coast of Israel, further flight would lead one into the sea.

serpent. This sea monster is perhaps the Leviathan of Is. 27:1. The Lord's sovereignty over all creation is poetically asserted; none can escape His justice.

■ **9:4 captivity.** One of the covenant curses for disobedience (Deut. 28:41).

■ **9:5, 6** This section constitutes a short divine title (4:13 note), identifying the Lord as Judge.

■ **9:5 touches . . . melts.** For similar expressions of the Lord's awesome power, see Ps. 46:6; 104:32; Nah. 1:5.

swell . . . subside. See note on 8:8.

■ **9:6 layers.** This can be rendered "palace" or "temple" (cf. Rev. 11:19). The Hebrew word means "steps" or "stairs" (text note), such as those used to enter the temple, particularly the temple of the end time (Ezek. 40:6, 22, 26, 31, 34).

strata. Lit. "vault." Here it perhaps means the arch or vault of heaven (Ex. 24:10 note).

The LORD is His name. An exact repetition of the phrase in 5:8.

■ **9:7 like the people of Ethiopia.** Lit. "like the sons of Cushites," the dark-skinned tribes south of Egypt (Gen. 10:6). Sinful Israel has rejected the covenant and is no more privileged than the Ethiopians.

Egypt . . . Caphtor . . . Kir. By making Israel's Exodus from Egypt poetically parallel (and hence implicitly equal) to His dealings with other nations, God tells Israel that she has become no better than the pagans.

Caphtor. Crete.

Syrians from Kir. See note on 1:5.

■ **9:8 sinful kingdom.** Israel.

not utterly destroy. A graciously chosen remnant will survive.

■ **9:9 sift . . . among all the nations.** The Lord would scatter His people among the nations, first by means of Assyria, which often resettled conquered peoples in different parts of its empire.

As grain is sifted. Figuratively separating the wheat (the faithful) from the chaff (the sinners), the experience of exile will serve to purify the nation of Israel (v. 10).

10 All the sinners of My people shall die by the sword,
[s]Who say, 'The calamity shall not overtake nor confront us.'

Israel Will Be Restored

11 "On[t] that day I will raise up
The [g]tabernacle of David, which has fallen down,
And [r]repair its damages;
I will raise up its ruins,
And rebuild it as in the days of old;
12 [u]That they may possess the remnant of [v]Edom,[2]
And all the Gentiles who are called by My name,"
Says the LORD who does this thing.

13 "Behold, [w]the days are coming," says the LORD,
"When the plowman shall overtake the reaper,
And the treader of grapes him who sows seed;
[x]The mountains shall drip with sweet wine,
And all the hills shall flow *with it.*
14 [y]I will bring back the captives of My people Israel;
[z]They shall build the waste cities and inhabit *them;*
They shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them;
They shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them.
15 I will plant them in their land,
[a]And no longer shall they be pulled up
From the land I have given them,"
Says the LORD your God.

10 [s][Is. 28:15]; Jer. 5:12; Amos 6:3

11 [t]Acts 15:16–18 [g]Lit. *booth;* a figure of a deposed dynasty [r]Lit. *wall up its breaches*

12 [u]Obad. 19 [v]Num. 24:18; Is. 11:14 [2]LXX *mankind*

13 [w]Lev. 26:5 [x]Joel 3:18

14 [y]Ps. 53:6; Is. 60:4; Jer. 30:3, 18 [z]Is. 61:4

15 [a]Is. 60:21; Ezek. 34:28; 37:25

■ **9:10 calamity shall not overtake.** Denial of judgment, like denial of guilt, is characteristic of sin.

■ **9:11–15** Amos concludes with an oracle of promised restoration ordered as follows: (a) reconstruction (v. 11); (b) conquest (v. 12); (c) fruitful abundance (v. 13); (d) rebuilding and replanting (v. 14); (e) enduring security (9:15). Amos assures his readers that once the judgment of exile is past, restoration is as certain as was dispersion.

■ **9:11 On that day.** The day of the Lord is here depicted as the time of Israel's deliverance (Zeph. 1:7 note).

tabernacle. See text note. The "booth" represents the dynasty of David which, to the eyes of the prophet, was as good as fallen. But the tabernacle of David will be rebuilt. In Jesus, the greater Son of David, the dynasty of David has been reestablished (Acts 15:16, 17).

■ **9:12 Edom.** Though subject to divine judgment (1:11, 12), a remnant of Edom will be brought under the redemptive kingship of David's Son. Edom, indeed all the nations, will benefit from coming under the dominion of this future King (Ps. 2:8). In Acts 15:16, 17, James applies this passage to God's taking a people for Himself from among the Gentiles and including them in the church.

And all the Gentiles. The addition of this phrase suggests that "the remnant of Edom" represents the redeemed from all nations.

who are called by My name. This phrase tells us that some, not all, from every Gentile group will come under the dominion of David's Son. Only those who bear God's name among all the nations will be included. The phrase (lit. "upon whom My name is called") indicates subordination to the Name and sometimes is used of Israel's subordination to God's covenant lordship (Deut. 28:10; Jer. 14:9). Amos foresees that the Lord will take possession of the remnant of all nations and will reign over them in a covenantal relationship through His messianic King (Acts 15:13–17).

■ **9:13** A prediction of abundance, indeed more than abundance, follows the prophecies of disaster and desolation. The culmination of the Lord's redemptive work through David's Son is portrayed in terms of endless cycles of fruitfulness, reminiscent of Eden but surpassing it (cf. Joel 3:18).

■ **9:14 bring back the captives.** Lit. "turn the captivity of my people," a recurring phrase in the prophetic covenant lawsuits (Jer. 29:14; Ezek. 16:53; Hos. 6:11).

build . . . inhabit . . . plant . . . drink. These blessings reverse the earlier futility curses (5:11 and note).

■ **9:15 I will plant them.** The Lord promises lasting safety for His people. God's covenant with David had promised an eternal kingship (v. 11; 2 Sam. 7:10). David's greater Son, Jesus Christ, will guarantee redeemed Israel's permanent blessedness.

the land I have given them. See note on Gen. 13:15. The phrasing harks back to God's covenant with Abraham and his descendants (Gen. 12:1, 7; 13:14–17; 15:18; 17:8). The physical Promised Land is but a type of the New Israel's life in Christ; it points forward to the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb. 11:13–16; 12:22–24). The covenant land promise finds final fulfillment in the new heavens and the new earth (Rev. 21:1—22:6).

The Book of

OBADIAH

Author We know little of the prophet other than his name, which means "servant of the LORD." The name itself is not unusual in the Old Testament. The value and authority of the message rests on the foundation that "the LORD has spoken" (v. 18), and not on the fame or prominence of the messenger.

Date and Occasion Students of this prophecy have long debated the date of its composition. The prophet has in view a military assault on Jerusalem in which the Edomites gleefully took part (vv. 11–14), but he does not provide information that clearly dates the catastrophe. Some date the book in relation to an invasion of Judah by Philistines and Arabs during King Jehoram's reign (848–841 B.C.), in which it is presumed that the Edomites participated (2 Kin. 8:20–22; 2 Chr. 21:8–10, 16, 17).

Others relate the events prompting this prophecy to the invasions of Judah by the Babylonians, which resulted eventually in her collapse in 586 B.C. Both Scripture (Ps. 137; Ezek. 35:1–15) and Jewish tradition explicitly mention the Edomites' involvement in this final catastrophe, and the text of Obadiah seems to refer more naturally to this event.

Although the striking similarities between vv. 1–9 of this prophecy and Jer. 49:7–22 must be more than an impressive coincidence, they do not resolve the problem of dating Obadiah. We know that Jeremiah prophesied from about 626 B.C. until after 586; but whether one prophet quotes the other, or whether both prophets used an earlier source, is uncertain.

Characteristics and Themes The prophecy is "concerning Edom" (v. 1) and is repeatedly addressed to that nation, but it was given to the covenant community as holy Scripture. The purpose, therefore, more than to warn Edom of imminent judgment, is to reassure God's people of His triumphant justice at work for them. Edom prospered, Judah lay defeated, and the moral order of the world appeared to have been overthrown by lawless forces. But the prophet Obadiah was raised up with a message of God's sovereign justice in order to strengthen His people's weakened faith. It is the righteous purpose of God, not the evil will of men, that determines history.

When the church suffers at the hands of God's enemies, she needs to return to the prophecy of Obadiah and renew her faith in the just God revealed there. He cares for His persecuted people, and behind their present circumstances He is always at work for them. □

Outline of Obadiah

I. God's Declaration of War on Edom (vv. 1–14)
  A. Superscription; Call to the Nations (v. 1)
  B. God's Resolve to Humiliate Proud Edom (vv. 2–4)
  C. God's Resolve to Loot Prosperous Edom (vv. 5–7)
  D. Edom's Vulnerability to God's Judgment (vv. 8, 9)
  E. Edom's Cruel Indifference to Judah's Trouble (vv. 10–14)
II. God's Promise of a New Moral Order (vv. 15–21)
  A. Vengeance Against the Nations and Edom (vv. 15, 16)
  B. Deliverance for Jerusalem (vv. 17, 18)
  C. Land Possessed by the Lord's People (vv. 19–21)

The Coming Judgment on Edom

THE vision of Obadiah.

Thus says the Lord GOD [a]concerning Edom
[b](We have heard a report from the LORD,
And a messenger has been sent among the nations, *saying,*
"Arise, and let us rise up against her for battle"):

2 "Behold, I will make you small among the nations;
You shall be greatly despised.
3 The [c]pride of your heart has deceived you,
You who dwell in the clefts of the rock,
Whose habitation is high;
[d]*You* who say in your heart, 'Who will bring me down to the ground?'
4 [e]Though you ascend *as* high as the eagle,
And though you [f]set your nest among the stars,
From there I will bring you down," says the LORD.

5 "If [g]thieves had come to you,
If robbers by night—
Oh, how you will be cut off!—
Would they not have stolen till they had enough?
If grape-gatherers had come to you,
[h]Would they not have left *some* gleanings?

6 "Oh, how Esau shall be searched out!
How his hidden treasures shall be sought after!
7 All the men in your confederacy
Shall force you to the border;
[i]The men at peace with you
Shall deceive you *and* prevail against you.
Those who eat your bread shall lay a [1]trap for you.
[j]No[2] one is aware of it.

8 "Will[k] I not in that day," says the LORD,
"Even destroy the wise *men* from Edom,
And understanding from the mountains of Esau?
9 Then your [l]mighty men, O [m]Teman, shall be dismayed,

1 [a]Is. 21:11; Ezek. 25:12; Joel 3:19; Mal. 1:3 [b]Jer. 49:14–16; Obad. 1–4

3 [c]Is. 16:6; Jer. 49:16 [d]Is. 14:13–15; Rev. 18:7

4 [e]Job 20:6 [f]Hab. 2:9; Mal. 1:4

5 [g]Jer. 49:9 [h]Deut. 24:21

7 [i]Jer. 38:22 [j]Is. 19:11; Jer. 49:7
[1]Or *wound* or *plot*
[2]Or *There is no understanding in him*

8 [k][Job 5:12–14]; Is. 29:14

9 [l]Ps. 76:5 [m]Gen. 36:11; 1 Chr. 1:45; Job 2:11; Jer. 49:7

■ **1 vision.** A supernatural revelation to the prophet's inner sight or hearing. Obadiah introduces the message he received from the Lord about Edom.

Thus says the Lord GOD. God revealed the content of the prophecy (cf. 2 Pet. 1:21). This raises the moral quality of its severity above human vengefulness to the purity of divine justice.

Edom. The bitterness between Edom and Israel began in the patriarchal period. God blessed Isaac and Rebekah with twin sons, Esau and Jacob (Gen. 25:21–26; cf. Mal. 1:2, 3; Rom. 9:10–13). The personal rivalry between Jacob and Esau (Gen. 27), from whom the nations of Israel and Edom descended, developed into longstanding national conflict (Ex. 15:13–15; Num. 20:14–21; 1 Sam. 14:47; 2 Sam. 8:13, 14; 1 Kin. 11:14, 15; 2 Kin. 8:20–22; 14:7). Edom also symbolically represents the enemies of God's people (Is. 63:1–6).

let us rise up against her. Speaking for his people, the prophet sees divine significance in the news of a conspiracy against Edom. Behind the human plot the Sovereign Lord is at work. That such news reached Obadiah's ears in connection with this vision was no coincidence; it was a token of the prophecy's fulfillment.

■ **2–14** God declares war on Edom, resolving to humiliate (vv. 2–4) and loot (vv. 5–7) that nation. No wise statesman or brave warrior in Edom will withstand the divine assault (vv. 8–10). Edom, which had been cruelly indifferent to Judah's woes (vv. 11–14), will fall.

■ **3 clefts of the rock.** The Hebrew word for "rock" (*sela'*) was also the name of a fortress city in the rocky heights of Edom. The rugged mountain terrain of Edom deterred invasion from without and encouraged complacency within.

■ **3, 4** Edom's arrogant question ("Who will bring me down?") is answered with God's solemn resolve ("I will bring you down").

■ **4 as high as the eagle . . . among the stars.** A hyperbolic depiction of the Edomites' false sense of security. Despite Edom's apparent safety, no one can rise above God. Though Edom seemed invincible, God called Israel to realize that no earthly power can evade His sovereign justice.

■ **7** The conspiring nations of v. 1 turn out to be Edom's own allies. It is a matter of justice that Edom should be betrayed by friends, having stabbed "brother Jacob" (v. 10) in the back.

■ **8–10** Though wise and mighty, Edom will be no match for the Lord.

To the end that everyone from the mountains of Esau
May be cut off by slaughter.

Edom Mistreated His Brother

10 "For [n]violence against your brother Jacob,
Shame shall cover you,
And [o]you shall be cut off forever.
11 In the day that you [p]stood on the other side—
In the day that strangers carried captive his forces,
When foreigners entered his gates
And [q]cast lots for Jerusalem—
Even you *were* as one of them.
12 "But you should not have [r]gazed[3] on the day of your brother
[4]In the day of his captivity;
Nor should you have [s]rejoiced over the children of Judah
In the day of their destruction;
Nor should you have spoken proudly
In the day of distress.
13 You should not have entered the gate of My people
In the day of their calamity.
Indeed, you should not have [5]gazed on their affliction
In the day of their calamity,
Nor laid *hands* on their substance
In the day of their calamity.
14 You should not have stood at the crossroads
To cut off those among them who escaped;
Nor should you have [6]delivered up those among them who remained
In the day of distress.

15 "For[t] the day of the LORD upon all the nations *is* near;
[u]As you have done, it shall be done to you;
Your [7]reprisal shall return upon your own head.
16 [v]For as you drank on My holy mountain,
So shall all the nations drink continually;
Yes, they shall drink, and swallow,
And they shall be as though they had never been.

Israel's Final Triumph

17 "But on Mount Zion there [w]shall be [8]deliverance,
And there shall be holiness;
The house of Jacob shall possess their possessions.
18 The house of Jacob shall be a fire,
And the house of Joseph [x]a flame;

10 [n]Gen. 27:41; Ezek. 25:12; Amos 1:11 [o]Ezek. 35:9; Joel 3:19

11 [p]Ps. 83:5–8; Amos 1:6, 9 [q]Joel 3:3; Nah. 3:10

12 [r]Mic. 4:11; 7:10 [s][Prov. 17:5]; Ezek. 35:15; 36:5 [3]Gloated over [4]Lit. *On the day he became a foreigner*

13 [5]Gloated over

14 [6]Handed over to the enemy

15 [t]Ezek. 30:3; [Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11, 31; Amos 5:18, 20] [u]Jer. 50:29; 51:56; Hab. 2:8 [7]Or *reward*

16 [v]Joel 3:17

17 [w]Is. 14:1, 2; Joel 2:32; Amos 9:8 [8]Or *salvation*

18 [x]Is. 5:24; 9:18, 19; Zech. 12:6

■ **9 Teman.** The personal name of a descendant of Esau (Gen. 36:11), which was also used for the Edomite nation.

■ **11, 12** Edom is doomed because they broke the law of brotherly compassion by joining, in malicious merriment, with God's enemies as they destroyed Judah. The interplay between "your brother" in v. 10 and the invading "strangers" and "foreigners" here is powerful. The exploitation of a brother's adversity showed that Edom's true loyalty was toward getting ahead in the world, in disregard of moral and spiritual absolutes. The seeds of Edom's moral character were sown by their ancestor Esau, who showed that he cared more for earthly enjoyment than for God's kingdom by despising his birthright of covenant blessings and marrying Hittite wives (Gen. 25:29–34; 26:34, 35; cf. 27:46—28:1). Translated into New Testament terms, Edom embodies the spirit of "the world" (1 John 2:15–17).

■ **15–18** The day of divine retribution will destroy all God's enemies and vindicate His people, through whom He will execute judgment.

■ **15 day of the LORD upon all the nations.** For the day of the Lord, see Is. 2:11, 12. Now the prophet sets the judgment of Edom against the larger backdrop of God's moral reckoning with all nations. This episode with Edom is only a small preview of God's judgment; He will not stop until He has cleansed His world of all His enemies. The connection between Edom and the rest of the nations is their shared rebellion against God.

■ **16** The Edomites' drunken revelry on the sacred temple mount in Jerusalem is answered in kind with the cup of God's wrath forced to the lips of Edom and all the nations that have desecrated the things of God.

■ **17 there shall be holiness.** No longer the victim of pillaging armies, Mount Zion will again be holy, pure, cleansed for God.

But the house of Esau *shall be* stubble;
They shall kindle them and devour them,
And no survivor shall *remain* of the house of Esau,"
For the LORD has spoken.

19 The [g]South [y]shall possess the mountains of Esau,
[z]And the Lowland shall possess Philistia.
They shall possess the fields of Ephraim
And the fields of Samaria.
Benjamin *shall possess* Gilead.
20 And the captives of this host of the children of Israel
Shall possess the land of the Canaanites
As [a]far as Zarephath,
The captives of Jerusalem who are in Sepharad
[b]Shall possess the cities of the [f]South.
21 Then [c]saviors[2] shall come to Mount Zion
To judge the mountains of Esau,
And the [d]kingdom shall be the LORD's.

19 [y]Is. 11:14; Amos 9:12 [z]Zeph. 2:7 [g]Heb. *Negev*

20 [a]1 Kin. 17:9; Luke 4:26 [b]Jer. 32:44 [f]Heb. *Negev*

21 [c][James 5:20] [d]Ps. 22:28; [Dan. 2:44; 7:14; Zech. 14:9; Rev. 11:15] [2]*deliverers*

■ **18 no survivor.** Those "who remained" (v. 14) of Judah will rise up like a blazing fire of divine wrath to consume Edom, leaving her not a single survivor. Although powerful in Obadiah's day, from God's perspective Edom is as good as dead.

the LORD has spoken. Like a signature, this clause emphasizes the finality of God's intentions. He has committed Himself.

■ **19, 20** God's exiled people will return to occupy the land of their inheritance, the boundaries of which will be restored and expanded.

■ **19** God promises His people that the boundaries of the Davidic kingdom will be restored in the south ("the mountains of Esau"), the west ("Philistia"), the north ("the fields of Ephraim and . . . of Samaria"), and the east ("Gilead").

■ **20** The boundaries of the Davidic kingdom will not only be restored (v. 19), but also extend to reach northward to Zarephath, between Tyre and Sidon.

Sepharad. The location is uncertain. Proposals include Sardis in Asia Minor, Spain, and Media. God prompts His exiled people to believe that no earthly deportation can remove them beyond the reach of His love.

■ **21 saviors.** God's people, transformed from fugitives (v. 14) into deliverers (text note), will reign over what was once enemy-held territory.

the kingdom shall be the LORD's. While all created reality is the Lord's right now (Ps. 47:2; 145:13), Obadiah is making a different point here—that the kingdom will be the Lord's in that He will judge His enemies and deliver His people with finality. God will be all in all, and His glorious, triumphant people will reign forever with Him. In this promise, Judah found hope for a future without Edomite persecution; here too the church finds hope for the future, when "the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ" (Rev. 11:15).

The Book of

JONAH

Author This fifth book of the twelve Minor Prophets takes its name from its principal character, Jonah the son of Amittai (1:1). Of Amittai, nothing is known. Outside of this composition Jonah is mentioned only in 2 Kin. 14:25, as "Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet who was from Gath Hepher," the proclaimer of God's blessing to the northern kingdom of Israel during the reign of Jeroboam II (793–753 B.C.). In accordance with that prophecy, Jeroboam extended the borders of his kingdom beyond the frontier of Syria. The divine message to Nineveh found in this book was spoken through this same Jonah, although the author of the written narrative is unknown.

Date and Occasion Based on 2 Kin. 14:25, the events recorded in the Book of Jonah should be assigned to the eighth century B.C. Determining the chronology of the book's composition is a difficult task, however, and the book has been dated between the eighth and late third centuries B.C. It should be noted that there is no compelling evidence precluding an eighth-century date for the composition of the narrative (3:3 note).

The reign of Jeroboam II provides the setting for the Jonah story. This monarch was one of the strong military leaders of Israel's history. According to 2 Kin. 14:25–28, he imposed his authority on the territories of Damascus and Hamath, thereby restoring Israel's northern frontier to where it had been in the days of Solomon (1 Kin. 8:65). It is clear that Jeroboam's reign, together with that of his Judean contemporary Azariah (also called Uzziah, 792–740 B.C.), ushered in a period of remarkable peace and prosperity. As both Elisha and Jonah had prophesied (2 Kin. 13:19–25; 14:25), the northern kingdom enjoyed territorial expansion at the expense of Syria. By the outward appearances of population growth, territorial expansion, and commercial activity, Israel was indeed blessed by God.

However, this was not the picture that was painted a few years later by the prophets Hosea and Amos, when the kingdom fell into a state of social, moral, and religious decay. Their messages consisted, in part, of indictment and judgment of the nation for mixing the prescribed worship of the Lord with the idolatry of the surrounding peoples (religious syncretism) and for social injustice (Hos. 2:1–13; 4:1—5:14; Amos 2:6–16; 3:9–15).

Despite the narrative's focus on the prophet, the Book of Jonah is a story about the mercy and love of God. The Lord was the God of Israel, and that nation had been the special recipient of His covenant mercy and salvation. But Jonah, along with many of his countrymen, had responded with a national pride and ethnic particularism that blinded him to the grand scope of God's grace. Jonah was to learn, along with the nation, that Israel did not have a monopoly on the redemptive love of God (Acts 10:34, 35; Rom. 3:29). The story affirms the words of Ps. 145:8: "The LORD is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and great in mercy."

Interpretive Difficulties Some scholars have challenged the literary unity of the book, suggesting theories of composite authorship or of substantial changes by a later editor. More recently, questions have been raised with regard to the authenticity of Jonah's thanksgiving psalm in 2:2–9. Such arguments for the literary disunity in the composition are not convincing.

As for the interpretation of the Jonah story proper, four distinct approaches have been suggested: allegory, midrash, parable, and historical narrative.

Allegory is a method of teaching truths or principles by means of symbolic fictional narrative. A good example is John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress,* an exciting fictional story that conveys the truth that the Christian life is a spiritual pilgrimage. However, the text of Jonah lacks any compelling indication that would call for such an allegorical understanding.

Midrash is a type of commentary on Scripture classically carried on by Jewish scholars during the first thousand years of the Christian era. Jonah is treated by some as a type of early midrash, or commentary, on passages like Ex. 34:6, 7 (cf. Jon. 4:2), a commentary in which the events depicted are not necessarily historical. Such an approach fails to reckon with credible defenses of the book's historicity, and appears to conflict with Christ's witness regarding Jonah's experiences (Matt. 12:39–42; Luke 11:29–32).

The interpretation of the Book of Jonah as a parable is perhaps the most common. A parable is a brief and usually fictitious story that conveys moral, religious, or spiritual truths. Parables are best illustrated by the teachings of Jesus (e.g., Matt. 13:45, 46; Luke 10:29–37; 15:11–32). Nathan's parable in 2 Sam. 12:1–4 is a good Old Testament example. This view understands the Jonah narrative as a moral story with a teaching aim. There are a number of objections, however, to understanding the Book of Jonah as a parable, such as the unusual complexity and length of the story. This

interpretation also deprives the book of its historical foundation.

In spite of its shocking surprises and sensational elements, Jonah should be understood as historical and prophetic narrative. The story centers on a specific figure and was written as a historical composition. Jewish tradition regarded the narrative as history, and Christ's allusions to the story (Matt. 12:38–41; Luke 11:29–32) lend further support to the historicity of the work. Jesus did not understand the Jonah story as a mere parable, but a narrative firmly rooted in historical reality.

Nevertheless, some scholars challenge the historical interpretation on several grounds, including the impossibility of the prophet's healthy survival inside the fish, the unlikelihood of the Ninevites' dramatic repentance, the size of Nineveh at the time, and the plant's fast rate of growth. Although some of these objections raise legitimate questions, most of the criticisms spring from assumptions that deny God's sovereignty in nature and history, including His ability to intervene supernaturally in the created order.

Characteristics and Themes

In addition to teaching the ethnic universality of God's mercy and love, the theme of God's universal sovereignty over man and creation is maintained throughout the book. God is presented as Creator, the Maker of land and sea (1:9). Creation responds obediently to His every command (1:4, 15, 17; 2:10; 4:6–8). Like the Assyrians of Isaiah's day (Is. 10:5–7), creation serves the will of the Creator.

In the New Testament, Jonah's theme of God's mercy on the nations is used by Jesus as a rebuke to unrepentant Israel (Matt. 12:38–41; Luke 11:29–32). If the Ninevites repented at the preaching of the prophet Jonah, who was rescued from confinement in the huge fish, how much more should Israel repent at the preaching of Jesus, the Son of Man, who will be resurrected from the tomb. In a sense, then, Jesus magnifies God's mercy on the Gentiles in order to rouse Israel to envy and repentance; the apostle Paul would do the same by his preaching to the Gentiles (Rom. 11:11–14). □

Outline of Jonah

I. Jonah Disobedient and Delivered (chs. 1; 2)
  A. The Lord Commissions Jonah (1:1, 2)
  B. The Prophet Flees from the Lord (1:3)
  C. The Lord Pursues Jonah: The Great Storm (1:4–16)
  D. The Lord Preserves Jonah (1:17)
  E. Jonah's Thanksgiving and Deliverance (ch. 2)
II. Jonah Obedient and Delivered (chs. 3; 4)
  A. The Lord Commissions Jonah a Second Time (3:1, 2)
  B. The Prophet Responds in Obedience (3:3)
  C. Jonah Preaches; Nineveh Repents and Is Delivered (3:4–10)
  D. Jonah's Anger at God's Compassion (4:1–4)
  E. A Lesson in Divine Love (4:5–11)

Jonah's Disobedience

CHAPTER 1

NOW the word of the LORD came to [a]Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, 2 "Arise, go to [b]Nineveh, that [c]great city, and cry out against it; for [d]their wickedness has come up before Me." 3 But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to [e]Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare, and went down into it, to go with them to [f]Tarshish [g]from the presence of the LORD.

1 [a]2 Kin. 14:25
2 [b]Is. 37:37 [c]Gen. 10:11, 12 [d]Gen. 18:20
3 [e]Josh. 19:46 [f]Is. 23:1 [g]Gen. 4:16

■ **1:1—2:10** The book of the prophet Jonah falls into two main divisions, each introduced by the sentence, "Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah." The first division comprises two sections: the call, flight, and judgment of Jonah (ch. 1), and the thanksgiving psalm (ch. 2).

■ **1:1–17** This passage depicts Jonah's disobedient response to the commission as a prophet to go to Nineveh, but does not tell us Jonah's reason for fleeing from God (which is not revealed until 4:2). Here we witness Jonah's interaction with the Gentile sailors, which involves a theme prominent in the book's second division—the Lord's mercy to Gentiles. Despite Jonah's disobedience and hypocrisy, the sailors do not despise Jonah's God, but see the clear hand of the God of Israel and respond in worship. In contrast with Jonah, the Gentile sailors are careful to avoid personal sin before God (v. 14). The prophet of God is judged, but the Gentiles are spared, an event that foreshadows the response and sparing of the Ninevites in the book's second division.

■ **1:1 Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah.** With some variations,

4 [h]Ps. 107:25 [i]Lit. *hurled*

5 [j]1 Sam. 24:3 [2]Lit. *from upon them*

6 [k]Ps. 107:28 [l]Joel 2:14

7 [l]Josh. 7:14; 1 Sam. 14:41, 42; Prov. 16:33

8 [m]Josh. 7:19; 1 Sam. 14:43

9 [n][Neh. 9:6]; Ps. 146:6; Acts 17:24 [3]Heb. *YHWH*

12 [o]John 11:50 [4]Lit. *hurl*

13 [p][Prov. 21:30]

14 [q]Deut. 21:8 [r]Ps. 115:3; [Dan. 4:35]

15 [s][Ps. 89:9; 107:29]; Luke 8:24

16 [t]Mark 4:41; Acts 5:11

17 [u][Matt. 12:40; Luke 11:30]

The Storm at Sea

4 But [h]the LORD [i]sent out a great wind on the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship was about to be broken up.

5 Then the mariners were afraid; and every man cried out to his god, and threw the cargo that *was* in the ship into the sea, to lighten [2]the load. But Jonah had gone down [j]into the lowest parts of the ship, had lain down, and was fast asleep.

6 So the captain came to him, and said to him, "What do you mean, sleeper? Arise, [j]call on your God; [k]perhaps your God will consider us, so that we may not perish."

7 And they said to one another, "Come, let us [l]cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this trouble *has come* upon us." So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah. 8 Then they said to him, [m]"Please tell us! For whose cause *is* this trouble upon us? What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are you?"

9 So he said to them, "I *am* a Hebrew; and I fear [3]the LORD, the God of heaven, [n]who made the sea and the dry *land*."

Jonah Thrown into the Sea

10 Then the men were exceedingly afraid, and said to him, "Why have you done this?" For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them. 11 Then they said to him, "What shall we do to you that the sea may be calm for us?"—for the sea was growing more tempestuous.

12 And he said to them, [o]"Pick me up and [4]throw me into the sea; then the sea will become calm for you. For I know that this great tempest *is* because of me."

13 Nevertheless the men rowed hard to return to land, [p]but they could not, for the sea continued to grow more tempestuous against them. 14 Therefore they cried out to the LORD and said, "We pray, O LORD, please do not let us perish for this man's life, and [q]do not charge us with innocent blood; for You, O LORD, [r]have done as it pleased You." 15 So they picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea, [s]and the sea ceased from its raging. 16 Then the men [t]feared the LORD exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice to the LORD and took vows.

Jonah's Prayer and Deliverance

17 Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And [u]Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

wording like this is used some 112 times in the Old Testament to describe the giving of a divine message to a prophet.

Jonah the son of Amittai. The recipient of the Lord's revelation is Jonah ("dove"), the son of Amittai ("loyal" or "faithful"). This designation identifies the prophet as the historical character of 2 Kin. 14:25, who proclaimed that Jeroboam II (793–753 B.C.) would recover territory from the Syrians to the north. Contrast Jonah's message to Jeroboam's kingdom with the words of Amos and Hosea, who prophesied during the period of Israel's spiritual decline in the latter part of the same century (Introduction: Date and Occasion).

■ **1:2 go to . . . Nineveh.** The Lord's sovereignty over all the nations is implicit in the command to Jonah. He is the Judge of all the earth (Gen. 18:25). The last capital of the Assyrian Empire, Nineveh was located on the east side of the Tigris River directly opposite the modern city of Mosul in northern Iraq. The site has been extensively excavated and boasts a long and rich history.

cry out against it. Jonah understood that his pronouncement of the Lord's judgment on the feared and hated Assyrian Empire was reversible (4:2 note). He knew that his message offered the opportunity for repentance.

their wickedness has come up before Me. In the later prophecy of Nahum (seventh century B.C.), the Assyrian capital of Nineveh is the focus of divine wrath and is depicted as the embodiment of evil and cruelty (Nah. 3:1–7). The Assyrian war machine was guilty of horrendous atrocities; in 612 B.C. that empire would itself fall victim to a cruel destroyer.

■ **1:3 Tarshish.** Precise identification of this Tarshish is difficult, though it is often identified with the mining port of Tartessus in southern Spain. Sometimes, however, the term designates distant Mediterranean coastlands in general.

from the presence of the LORD. Because God is present even "in the uttermost parts of the sea" (Ps. 139:9), escape was impossible.

■ **1:4 the LORD sent out a great wind on the sea.** Jonah's God is the Creator and Lord of the sea (Gen. 1:10, 21; Ex. 14:21; Mark 4:41).

■ **1:7 let us cast lots.** The casting of lots was a common form of divination in the ancient world, a device used to discover the will of the gods. This method of discerning the will of the true God was not forbidden in ancient Israel, for the Lord ruled even over lots (Num. 26:55; Josh. 18:6–10; Neh. 10:34; Prov. 16:33; Acts 1:24–26).

■ **1:9 I am a Hebrew.** See note on Gen. 14:13. Jonah identifies himself in ethnic terms. The term "Hebrew" was used by Israelites to identify themselves to foreigners (Gen. 40:15; Ex. 1:19; 3:18; 10:3).

I fear the LORD. Jonah also identifies himself in religious terms. The Lord his God is not just a personal, family, or national deity. He is the supreme and sovereign God, the Creator of land and sea.

the God of heaven. An old title (Gen. 24:3, 7) also commonly used in the Persian period after the Exile (2 Chr. 36:23; Ezra 1:2; Neh. 1:4, 5; 2:4).

■ **1:17 the LORD had prepared.** Lit. "the LORD appointed." The same Hebrew word also occurs in 4:6–8; each instance indicates a startling example of God's sovereignty over the natural world.

a great fish. The species of whale or fish that swallowed Jonah cannot be identified with certainty. Suggestions have included the sperm whale or a large shark. The fish was God's instrument to rescue Jonah from the depths of the sea ("the belly of Sheol," 2:2).

three days and three nights. Jesus referred to the Book of Jonah in order to communicate truths regarding His own message and mission

2 Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the fish's belly. 2 And he said:

"I [a]cried out to the LORD because of my affliction,
[b]And He answered me.

"Out of the belly of Sheol I cried,
And You heard my voice.
3 [c]For You cast me into the deep,
Into the heart of the seas,
And the floods surrounded me;
[d]All Your billows and Your waves passed over me.
4 [e]Then I said, 'I have been cast out of Your sight;
Yet I will look again [f]toward Your holy temple.'
5 The [g]waters surrounded me, *even* to my soul;
The deep closed around me;
Weeds were wrapped around my head.
6 I went down to the [f]moorings of the mountains;
The earth with its bars *closed* behind me forever;
Yet You have brought up my [h]life from the pit,
O LORD, my God.

7 "When my soul fainted within me,
I remembered the LORD;
[i]And my prayer went *up* to You,
Into Your holy temple.

8 "Those who regard [j]worthless idols
Forsake their own [2]Mercy.
9 But I will [k]sacrifice to You
With the voice of thanksgiving;
I will pay what I have [l]vowed.
[m]Salvation *is* of the [n]LORD."

CHAPTER 2

2 [a]1 Sam. 30:6; Ps. 120:1; Lam. 3:55 [b]Ps. 65:2

3 [c]Ps. 88:6 [d]Ps. 42:7

4 [e]Ps. 31:22; Jer. 7:15 [f]1 Kin. 8:38; 2 Chr. 6:38; Ps. 5:7

5 [g]Ps. 69:1; Lam. 3:54

6 [h]Job 33:28; [Ps. 16:10; Is. 38:17] [f]*foundations* or *bases*

7 [i]2 Chr. 30:27; Ps. 18:6

8 [j]2 Kin. 17:15; Ps. 31:6; Jer. 10:8 [2]Or *Loving-kindness*

9 [k]Ps. 50:14, 23; Jer. 33:11; Hos. 14:2 [l]Job 22:27; [Eccl. 5:4, 5] [m]Ps. 3:8; [Is. 45:17] [n][Jer. 3:23]

(Matt. 12:38–41; 16:4; Luke 11:29–32). He speaks of the "sign of the prophet Jonah" not only with reference to the three days and three nights that Jonah was in the fish (Matt. 12:39, 40), but also with regard to the efficacy of Jonah's preaching. Without benefit of a miraculous sign, the Ninevites recognized Jonah's message as one with divine authority, and they responded in repentance.

■ **2:1–10** Jonah's response to God's judgment is framed in the form of a thanksgiving psalm (v. 9). The cry of the prophet focuses on the desperate character of his situation by using terms typical in poetic descriptions of death or nearness to death. In his plight he looks to the Lord's holy temple, the physical token of the Lord's saving presence with His people. The psalm is a moving testimony to the heart of Israel's faith and to the heart of the prophet, but he still had much to learn. His vision of God's mercy was still narrow.

■ **2:1 Jonah prayed.** Consistent with Old Testament narrative style, the Jonah story is interrupted with a poem (vv. 2–9), a psalm of thanksgiving and celebration for the Lord's deliverance and mercy. The literary structure is typical of a thanksgiving psalm: (a) petition for deliverance (2:2); (b) review of crisis (2:3–6); (c) review of deliverance (2:6, 7); and (d) praise for deliverance (2:8, 9).

■ **2:2 I cried out . . . And He answered me.** Using the poetic device of parallelism, Jonah's psalm is introduced in two couplets that tell of the prophet's prayer and the Lord's answer. Jonah acknowledges that he was rescued "out of the belly of Sheol" (a watery grave in the depths of the sea).

■ **2:3–6** These verses contain a vivid recollection of the near-death crisis, its causes, and results. Jonah's plight was the Lord's judgment on his disobedience. The brush with a watery grave is presented with graphic imagery: entanglement in seaweed, the silence of deep water, and waves swelling high above the victim.

■ **2:4 I have been cast out of Your sight.** For the prophet, the ultimate horror of death was separation from the presence of the Lord (Ps. 88:4, 5, 10–12).

Yet I will look again toward Your holy temple. The Jerusalem temple was the earthly location of the divine presence. Jonah longed for the communion with God that the temple afforded. The prophet now laments losing the same divine presence that he earlier had sought to escape (1:3, 10).

■ **2:6 I went down.** Jonah was at death's door. His slow, silent descent through the depths, like a journey to the underworld, had brought him to "the gates of death" (Ps. 9:13).

You have brought up my life from the pit. Here "pit" is used to describe the realm of death (Job 33:22, 24; Ps. 49:9; Is. 51:14). Despite the hopelessness of the circumstances, the repentant prophet is rescued from the realm of the dead and restored to communion with God.

■ **2:7 I remembered the LORD.** The context indicates that this prayer was answered; the importance and effectiveness of prayer are again emphasized, as in v. 2 (cf. Heb. 4:16).

■ **2:8 Those who regard worthless idols.** Recalling the ineffectiveness of the sailors' prayers and of their gods (1:5), Jonah condemns those who put their faith in idols.

■ **2:9 Salvation is of the LORD.** Like Joshua before him (Josh. 24:14, 15), Jonah declares his loyalty to the Lord and extols Him as the only source of salvation and deliverance. In imparting salvation to Jonah, the Lord moved the prophet from disobedience to repentance; in imparting salvation to the Ninevites, He will move them from idolatry to faith (3:5–10); in imparting salvation to the Gentiles now He sovereignly moves them to faith and repentance (Acts 11:17, 18).

10 So the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry *land.*

Jonah Preaches at Nineveh

3 Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, 2 "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach to it the message that I tell you." 3 So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, [f]a three-day journey *in extent.* 4 And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day's walk. Then [a]he cried out and said, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!"

The People of Nineveh Believe

5 So the [b]people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them. 6 Then word came to the king of Nineveh; and he arose from his throne and laid aside his robe, covered *himself* with sackcloth [c]and sat in ashes. 7 [d]And he caused *it* to be proclaimed and published throughout Nineveh by the decree of the king and his [2]nobles, saying,

> Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; do not let them eat, or drink water. 8 But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily to God; yes, [e]let every one turn from his evil way and from [f]the violence that is in his hands. 9 [g]Who can tell *if* God will turn and relent, and turn away from His fierce anger, so that we may not perish?

10 [h]Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it.

Jonah's Anger and God's Kindness

4 But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry. 2 So he prayed to the LORD, and said, "Ah, LORD, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I [a]fled

CHAPTER 3

3 [f]Exact meaning unknown

4 [a][Deut. 18:22]

5 [b][Matt. 12:41; Luke 11:32]

6 [c]Job 2:8

7 [d]2 Chr. 20:3; Dan. 3:29; Joel 2:15 [2]Lit. *great ones*

8 [e]Is. 58:6 [f]Is. 59:6

9 [g]2 Sam. 12:22; Joel 2:14; Amos 5:15

10 [h]Ex. 32:14; Jer. 18:8; Amos 7:3, 6

CHAPTER 4

2 [a]Jon. 1:3

■ **2:10 the LORD spoke . . . it vomited Jonah.** Again creation responds obediently to the sovereign commands of the Creator (1:4, 15, 17). The fish, which might have been God's weapon of death, by grace became God's tool of deliverance.

■ **3:1—4:11** In this second division of the book Jonah preaches the message God commanded, and the people of Nineveh respond with genuine repentance (ch. 3). When the Lord turns from threatened judgment, we learn the real reason why Jonah had fled the first time: he feared that God would show mercy to the hated Assyrians (4:2). In the object lessons that follow, the wideness of the Lord's mercy and compassion is revealed (4:5–11).

■ **3:3 Jonah arose and went.** Having learned that the call of God is irrevocable (cf. Rom. 11:29), Jonah responded to the Lord's renewed commission. Though he obeyed God this time, Jonah was "displeased" with the prospect of Ninevite repentance (4:1, 2).

Nineveh was. Some have suggested that the use of the past tense ("was") indicates that the city was no longer in existence at the time of writing. Given the city's destruction in 612 B.C. by the Medes and Babylonians, this interpretation would date the narrative sometime after the late seventh century B.C. The past tense does not preclude an eighth-century date, however, for it may simply indicate the status of the city when the prophet arrived.

an exceedingly great city, a three-day journey. The Hebrew is difficult to translate. Many commentators interpret these phrases as a reference to the physical size of Nineveh. Archaeological exploration has shown that the city was between seven and eight miles in circumference with an estimated population of 120,000 people. Others suggest that the first formula should be translated "a very important city," or more lit. as "a city important to God" (emphasizing its significance rather than size). This latter reading fits the context better. The second expression (lit. "journey of three days") could indicate the duration of visit appropriate (in terms of ancient Near Eastern diplomatic protocol) for an emissary to such an important city.

■ **3:5 the people of Nineveh believed.** Jonah's worst fears were realized when the people believed, repented, proclaimed a fast, and adorned themselves in sackcloth (the traditional mourning garb of the ancient Near East). The repentance was swift and city-wide.

■ **3:6 the king of Nineveh.** Apparently a reference to the mighty king of Assyria. Although it is highly unlikely that Assyrian records would note this unusual occurrence, some scholars have associated this event with the religious reforms of Adad-nirari III (810–783 B.C.). The reign of Assurdan III (772–755 B.C.) has also been suggested.

he arose . . . and sat in ashes. The king's response was as immediate and spontaneous as that of his subjects. Royal authority gave way to penitent humility. He exchanged his robes for sackcloth, his throne for a bed of ashes (cf. Job 42:6; Is. 58:5).

■ **3:7 decree of the king.** With the royal edict mandating prayer, mourning rites, and a fast for man and beast, Nineveh's repentance was complete. The inclusion of animals points to the thorough and genuine nature of their repentance. Later, it was customary among the Persians to include domestic animals in the rites of mourning.

■ **3:8 let every one turn from . . . violence.** This royal admonition addressed the most prominent of Nineveh's sins. Physical violence and social injustice were hallmarks of the Assyrian Empire (Nah. 3:1).

■ **3:9** The king gives personal and corporate expression to the hope that genuine repentance will avert the divine judgment. The structure of 3:5–9 conforms to the typical Old Testament pattern of reporting corporate repentance (Jer. 36:3; Joel 2): (a) threat of judgment, (b) penitent response, and (c) divine decision to withhold punishment.

■ **3:10 God saw their works.** The prophetic warning (v. 4) had an implied condition, namely, that judgment was imminent—if the city did not repent. In turning "from their evil way" the Ninevites met that condition. The Lord's change of mind (i.e., His sovereign choice to make His own action depend upon human response) is fully compatible with God's sovereignty and immutability, since He ordains the means as well as the ends of His sovereign will (Jer. 18:7–10). See note on Gen. 6:6.

■ **4:1–11** The book concludes with angry Jonah receiving a lesson in divine mercy and compassion from God Himself. Strikingly, we are not told how Jonah responded to this instruction. Instead, we are left with the

previously to Tarshish; for I know that You *are* a [b]gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm. 3 [c]Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for [d]*it is* better for me to die than to live!"

4 Then the LORD said, "*Is it* right for you to be angry?"

5 So Jonah went out of the city and sat on the east side of the city. There he made himself a shelter and sat under it in the shade, till he might see what would become of the city. 6 And the LORD God prepared a [1]plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be shade for his head to deliver him from his misery. So Jonah [2]was very grateful for the plant. 7 But as morning dawned the next day God prepared a worm, and it *so* damaged the plant that it withered. 8 And it happened, when the sun arose, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat on Jonah's head, so that he grew faint. Then he wished death for himself, and said, [e]"*It is* better for me to die than to live."

9 Then God said to Jonah, "*Is it* right for you to be angry about the plant?"

And he said, "*It is* right for me to be angry, even to death!"

10 But the LORD said, "You have had pity on the plant for which you have not labored, nor made it grow, which [3]came up in a night and perished in a night. 11 And should I not pity Nineveh, [f]that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons [g]who cannot discern between their right hand and their left—and much livestock?"

2 [b]Ex. 34:6; Num. 14:18; Ps. 86:5, 15; Joel 2:13

3 [c]1 Kin. 19:4; Job 6:8, 9 [d]Jon. 4:8

6 [1]Heb. *kikayon*, exact identity unknown [2]Lit. *rejoiced with great joy*

8 [e]Jon. 4:3

10 [3]Lit. *was a son of a night*

11 [f]Jon. 1:2; 3:2, 3 [g]Deut. 1:39; Is. 7:16

contrast between Jonah's resentful attitude and God's great mercy to the Ninevites.

■ **4:1 it displeased Jonah exceedingly.** The Hebrew is particularly vivid (lit. "it was evil to Jonah as a great wrong"). Jonah's emotion is expressed in the strongest language possible: his greatest fear was that the Lord would bestow forgiveness on Israel's most hated enemy.

■ **4:2 You are a gracious . . . relents from doing harm.** The reason for Jonah's initial flight to Tarshish is revealed. Despite his blatant disobedience and narrow-mindedness, Jonah understood the character of God. Here he echoes a liturgical formula describing God's mercy to an undeserving Israel (e.g., Ex. 34:6; Num. 14:18; Neh. 9:17; Ps. 103:8; Joel 2:13). Only here and in Joel 2:13 does the reference to divine repentance ("who relents from doing harm") conclude the formula (3:10 note), an inclusion appropriate to the context of Nineveh's repentance and deliverance.

■ **4:5 Jonah went out . . . made himself a shelter.** Grateful for his own deliverance, Jonah still refuses to accept that of the Ninevites. Hoping that the Lord will execute judgment, Jonah leaves the city for a vantage point from which to view the destruction of the city.

■ **4:6 the LORD God prepared a plant.** See note on 1:17. Probably because of the shortage of timber in this dry region, Jonah's shelter was not adequate to provide protection from the hot Near Eastern sun. The type of vegetation provided is uncertain; some suggest the castor oil plant, which grows quickly to a height of 15 feet.

■ **4:7, 8** The same divine hand that in mercy had provided the great fish and the shade now brings a worm to kill the plant, and a hot east wind (likely the feared scirocco of the Mediterranean world) to torment the bitter prophet.

■ **4:9–11** The divine intention of the object lessons is now revealed. God's magnificent compassion for the people and animals He created and sustained (v. 11) is contrasted with Jonah's petty concern for the plant (v. 10). The reader recalls the compassion of Jesus as He looked upon the multitudes (Matt. 9:36; Mark 6:34; 8:2), and His statement in Matt. 10:29 that not a sparrow will fall to the ground apart from the will of the Father. In its infancy, the largely Jewish New Testament church would again wrestle with this issue of the wideness of God's mercy, as the Lord opened the hearts of the Gentiles to obey the gospel (Acts 11:18; 15:14; 28:28).

The Book of

MICAH

Author Micah is identified by his hometown of Moresheth (1:1, 14), implying that he was an outsider to Jerusalem. Prophesying in the same period with Isaiah, he helped shape Israel's character and policies. Micah's inspired preaching (3:8) against injustice eventually brought Hezekiah to repentance and so saved Jerusalem (Jer. 26:17–19).

Date and Occasion Micah preached during the reigns of Jotham (750–735 B.C.), Ahaz (735–715 B.C.), and Hezekiah (715–686 B.C.), a time of Assyrian expansion and dominance in the ancient Near East. The northern kingdom of Israel was gradually overrun by the Assyrians, with the capital of Samaria finally falling in 722 B.C. to the Assyrian king Shalmaneser V (727–722 B.C.). Ahaz of Judah allied himself with Assyria and modeled the worship at Jerusalem after Assyrian practices (2 Kin. 16:7–18). Ahaz's son Hezekiah later revolted, and much of Judah was overrun by the Assyrian king Sennacherib, though Jerusalem itself was miraculously spared (2 Kin. 18:17—19:37).

Within Israel and Judah during this time, a shocking contrast between the extremely rich and the oppressed poor developed due to the exploitation of Israel's middle class (2:8, 9) by greedy landholders (2:1–5). The oppressors were supported by Israel's corrupt political and religious leaders (ch. 3). Because of this failed leadership, the whole nation became morally corrupt and ripe for judgment (6:9–16; 7:1–7).

God raised up Assyria as His wrathful rod against His sinful people (Is. 10:5–11). As Micah predicted (1:2–7), Samaria did fall to the invading Assyrians. Judah felt the force of divine judgment when Sennacherib marched through the Shephelah (Judah's western foothills) and up to the gate of Jerusalem, as Micah had also foretold (1:8–16).

Characteristics and Themes Micah arranges his nineteen prophecies into three cycles (Outline), each of which begins with prophecies of judgment and ends with a prophecy or prophecies of salvation, and each of which begins with the same Hebrew word rendered "hear" (1:2; 3:1; 6:1). The middle cycle has three prophecies of judgment (ch. 3) and seven of salvation (chs. 4; 5). The prophet uses word plays to predict judgment (see notes) and achieves vividness and immediacy by quoting his subjects (e.g., the false prophets trying to silence him, 2:6, 7; and the converted Gentiles going up to Jerusalem to worship, 4:2).

Micah primarily is a book of judgment proclaimed. The prophet declares that the holy and righteous God will no longer tolerate the persistent evil of His people (1:3). Many of Israel's sins are mentioned, ranging from idolatry and sorcery (5:12–14) to deceit and fraudulent dealings (6:10, 11). But Micah heaps special condemnation on those who oppressed the poor by seizing lands that God had intended as an inheritance for all His people (2:1–5; Num. 27:1–11 note). Judah's leaders, both political and spiritual, are also condemned for their oppression of the people and for their disregard of justice and truth (ch. 3).

Fundamental to Micah's proclamation of both judgment and restoration are the terms of the covenant relationship between God and His people. While God faithfully fulfilled His responsibilities under the covenant (6:1–5), the people wallowed in disobedience, and now the covenant curses were to be applied (6:13–16).

Despite his prevailing tone of impending punishment, Micah also looks beyond the judgment to future restoration and blessing. This too is rooted in God's covenant relationship with His people (Gen. 17:2 note). Faithful to His covenant promises to the patriarchs (7:20), the Lord will preserve a remnant of His people (2:12; 4:7; 5:3, 7, 8), and will raise up a Ruler out of Bethlehem in Judah—the Messiah Himself (5:1–5). Throughout the prophecies of salvation, Micah recognizes that Israel's restoration depends solely on the Lord's merciful forgiveness and sovereign initiative, not on the works of their hands (7:18, 19). □

Outline of Micah

I. Superscription (1:1)
II. First Cycle: Judgment and Deliverance (1:2—2:13)
  A. Judgment on Samaria (1:2–7)
  B. Judgment on Judah (1:8–16)
  C. Sentencing of Greedy Landholders (2:1–5)
  D. Judgment Against False Prophets (2:6–11)
  E. A Remnant Restored (2:12, 13)
III. Second Cycle: Degradation and Exaltation (chs. 3—5)
  A. Evil Rulers Condemned (3:1–4)
  B. False Prophets Denounced (3:5–8)
  C. Zion to Be Leveled (3:9–12)
  D. Zion to Be Restored and Exalted (4:1–8)
  E. From Present Distress to Future Salvation (4:9–13)
  F. The Messianic Ruler (5:1–6)
  G. The Remnant of Jacob Among the Gentiles (5:7–9)
  H. The Lord Judges His People and the Nations (5:10–15)
IV. Third Cycle: Hope in Darkness (chs. 6; 7)
  A. The Lord's Allegation (6:1–8)
  B. Covenant Curses Fulfilled (6:9–16)
  C. Lament for a Broken and Corrupt Nation (7:1–7)
  D. Hymn of Victory (7:8–20)

CHAPTER 1

THE word of the LORD that came to [a]Micah of Moresheth in the days of [b]Jotham, Ahaz, *and* Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.

The Coming Judgment on Israel

2 Hear, all you peoples!
Listen, O earth, and all that is in it!
Let the Lord GOD be a witness against you,
The Lord from [c]His holy temple.

3 For behold, the LORD is coming out of His place;
He will come down
And tread on the high places of the earth.
4 [d]The mountains will melt under Him,
And the valleys will split
Like wax before the fire,
Like waters poured down a steep place.
5 All this is for the transgression of Jacob

1 [a][2 Pet. 1:21]; Jer. 26:18 [b]2 Kin. 15:5, 7, 32–38; 2 Chr. 27:1–9; Is. 1:1; Hos. 1:1
2 [c][Ps. 11:4]
4 [d]Amos 9:5

■ **1:1 Micah of Moresheth.** The name Micah is an abbreviated form of *Micayahu* ("Who is like Yahweh?"). The town of Moresheth was located near Gath in the Shephelah, or foothills, of Judah.

which he saw. The divine message to Micah took the form of a supernatural revelation to the prophet's inner sight or hearing.

■ **1:2–7** This prophecy has four parts: summons of the nations to trial (v. 2); a symbolic vision of God overthrowing creation (vv. 3, 4); an accusation against Israel's capitals (v. 5); and the divine sentence for Samaria to be destroyed (vv. 6, 7).

■ **1:2 all you peoples . . . against you.** God's judgment of Samaria (vv. 6, 7) exemplifies and prefigures His judgment against all people who commit idolatry and social crimes.

■ **1:3–5** Behind the march of the Assyrian army the prophet saw the hand of God (cf. Is. 10:5, 6). The depth of divine judgment against Jerusalem and Samaria is vividly portrayed in terms of a destruction of the created order itself.

■ **1:3 high places.** Whoever controlled Israel's heights controlled the land.

■ **1:4 fire . . . down a steep place.** These words link the symbolic vision with the historical overthrow of Samaria (vv. 6, 7), which was located on a hill (1 Kin. 16:24).

■ **1:5 Jacob . . . Israel.** "Jacob" and "Israel" often occur together in Micah, referring to the entire covenant people; sometimes "Jacob" represents the people as a whole (2:12; 3:1, 8, 9). The second occurrence of "Jacob" in this verse points to the northern kingdom (Israel) as distinct from Judah. In this book "Israel" designates Judah as representing the whole nation.

And for the sins of the house of Israel.
What *is* the transgression of Jacob?
Is it not Samaria?
And what *are* the [e]high places of Judah?
Are they not Jerusalem?

6 "Therefore I will make Samaria [f]a heap of ruins in the field,
Places for planting a vineyard;
I will pour down her stones into the valley,
And I will [g]uncover her foundations.
7 All her carved images shall be beaten to pieces,
And all her [h]pay as a harlot shall be burned with the fire;
All her idols I will lay desolate,
For she gathered *it* from the pay of a harlot,
And they shall return to the [i]pay of a harlot."

Mourning for Israel and Judah

8 Therefore I will wail and howl,
I will go stripped and naked;
[j]I will make a wailing like the jackals
And a mourning like the ostriches,
9 For her wounds *are* incurable.
For [k]it has come to Judah;
It has come to the gate of My people—
To Jerusalem.

10 [l]Tell *it* not in Gath,
Weep not at all;
In [l]Beth Aphrah
Roll yourself in the dust.
11 Pass by in naked shame, you inhabitant of [2]Shaphir;
The inhabitant of [3]Zaanan does not go out.
Beth Ezel mourns;
Its place to stand is taken away from you.

12 For the inhabitant of [4]Maroth [5]pined for good,
But [m]disaster came down from the LORD
To the gate of Jerusalem.
13 O inhabitant of [n]Lachish,
Harness the chariot to the swift steeds
(She *was* the beginning of sin to the daughter of Zion),
For the transgressions of Israel were [o]found in you.

5 [e]Deut. 32:13; 33:29; Amos 4:13
6 [f]2 Kin. 19:25; Mic. 3:12 [g]Ezek. 13:14
7 [h]Hos. 2:5 [i]Deut. 23:18; Is. 23:17
8 [j]Ps. 102:6
9 [k]2 Kin. 18:13; Is. 8:7, 8
10 [l]2 Sam. 1:20 [l]Lit. *House of Dust*
11 [2]Lit. *Beautiful* [3]Lit. *Going Out*
12 [m]Is. 59:9–11; Jer. 14:19; Amos 3:6 [4]Lit. *Bitterness* [5]Lit. *was sick*
13 [n]Josh. 10:3; 2 Kin. 14:19; 18:14; Is. 36:2 [o]Ezek. 23:11

■ **1:7 pay as a harlot.** Ancient Near Eastern fertility religions involved ritual prostitution, an activity strictly forbidden to Israel (Deut. 23:17). The wealth paid to them and used to make idols will be taken by the Assyrians and used in the same way.

■ **1:8–16** This lament has three parts: an introduction, stating Micah's resolve to mourn Judah's exile (vv. 8, 9); a main body, with a series of wordplays on the names of Judah's stronghold (text notes) predicting Judah's fall and exile (vv. 10–15); and a conclusion, calling the house of David to join in mourning rites because it will go into exile (v. 16).

■ **1:8 stripped and naked.** A symbolic act referring to the threat of captivity (Is. 20:2–4).

■ **1:9 gate.** Assyria's King Sennacherib reached Jerusalem's gate but did not take the city (v. 12; Introduction: Date and Occasion).

■ **1:10 Tell it not in Gath.** Micah's lament over the fall of David's house recalls David's lament over the fall of Saul's house under similar circumstances (2 Sam. 1:20).

Roll yourself in the dust. A vivid expression of grief over a humiliating defeat (Jer. 6:26).

■ **1:11 Zaanan . . . out.** See text note. Despite its name, this town will cower behind its wall and not "go out" into battle.

Beth Ezel. Lit. "adjoining house," the Hebrew word *'Ezel* resembles a verb meaning "withdraw" or "withhold." This town will withhold its protection from Judah because it has been annexed by the conqueror.

■ **1:12 Maroth.** See text note. Though it longed for good, this town would experience the bitterness of defeat.

■ **1:13 Lachish . . . chariot . . . steeds.** A major fortress town of Judah located southwest of Jerusalem, Lachish would have housed a contingent of chariots. Here the reference to "swift steeds" (the Hebrew term resembles "Lachish") perhaps implies that the chariots were to be used for flight rather than for fighting.

the beginning of sin. The precise nature of this sin is not explained. Many suggest that it involved the import of Egyptian horses for use in war (5:10; Deut. 17:16; 1 Kin. 10:28, 29), inducing Israel to rely on her military strength rather than on the Lord.

daughter of Zion. A personification of Jerusalem.

14 Therefore you shall [p]give presents to [6]Moresheth Gath;
The houses of [q]Achzib[7] *shall be* a lie to the kings of Israel.
15 I will yet bring an heir to you, O inhabitant of [r]Mareshah;[8]
The glory of Israel shall come to [s]Adullam.[9]
16 Make yourself [t]bald and cut off your hair,
Because of your [u]precious children;
Enlarge your baldness like an eagle,
For they shall go from you into [v]captivity.

Woe to Evildoers

2 Woe to those who devise iniquity,
And [1]work out evil on their beds!
At [a]morning light they practice it,
Because it is in the power of their hand.
2 They [b]covet fields and take *them* by violence,
Also houses, and seize *them.*
So they oppress a man and his house,
A man and his inheritance.

3 Therefore thus says the LORD:

"Behold, against this [c]family I am devising [d]disaster,
From which you cannot remove your necks;
Nor shall you walk haughtily,
For this *is* an evil time.
4 In that day *one* shall take up a proverb against you,
And [e]lament with a bitter lamentation, saying:
'We are utterly destroyed!
He has changed the [2]heritage of my people;
How He has removed *it* from me!
To [3]a turncoat He has divided our fields.' "

5 Therefore you will have no [4]one to determine boundaries by lot
In the assembly of the LORD.

Lying Prophets

6 "Do not prattle," *you say to those* who [5]prophesy.
So they shall not prophesy [6]to you;
[7]They shall not return insult for insult.
7 *You who are* named the house of Jacob:
"Is the Spirit of the LORD restricted?

14 [p]2 Sam. 8:2 [q]Josh. 15:44 [6]Lit. *Possession of Gath* [7]Lit. *Lie*
15 [r]Josh. 15:44 [s]2 Chr. 11:7 [8]Lit. *Inheritance* [9]Lit. *Refuge*
16 [t]Job 1:20 [u]Lam. 4:5 [v]2 Kin. 17:6; Amos 7:11, 17; [Mic. 4:10]

CHAPTER 2

1 [a]Hos. 7:6, 7 [1]Plan
2 [b]Is. 5:8
3 [c]Ex. 20:5; Jer. 8:3; Amos 3:1, 2 [d]Amos 5:13
4 [e]2 Sam. 1:17 [2]Lit. *portion* [3]Lit. *one turning back,* an apostate
5 [4]Lit. *one casting a surveyor's line*
6 [5]Or *preach,* lit. *drip* words [6]Lit. *to these* [7]Vg. *He shall not take shame*

■ **1:14 presents.** The dowry given by a father to his daughter as she departed for her husband's house (1 Kin. 9:16). The inhabitants of Moresheth Gath would depart into exile.

Achzib shall be a lie. See text note. The town's name closely resembles the Hebrew term for "deceitful," a word used for the "unreliable stream" in Jer. 15:18. The town of Achzib will disappoint the king of Judah.

■ **1:15 glory of Israel . . . Adullam.** As David had fled to the cave at Adullam (2 Sam. 23:13), so also the leaders ("glory") of Israel will flee. The body of the lament (vv. 10–15) begins and ends with literary references to David's career (v. 10 note).

■ **2:1–5** This prophecy has three parts: (a) the accusation—evil and violent men unethically seize sacred property and destroy its owners (vv. 1, 2); (b) the sentence—the Lord sentences them to exile (v. 3) and loss of their lands to invaders (v. 4); (c) the conclusion—the robbers are cut off from the covenant people (v. 5). The accusation and sentence are linked by a play on words involving "who devise iniquity" (v. 1) and "I am devising disaster" (v. 3), which are virtually identical expressions in Hebrew. As the powerful took fields away from Israel's men (vv. 1, 2), so the Lord will send an enemy army to wrest the Promised Land from them (vv. 4, 5).

■ **2:2 inheritance.** A family's property was a permanent, sacred trust from God (Lev. 25:10, 13). See note on Num. 27:1–11.

■ **2:5 assembly.** After the Babylonian exile the land would be redistributed (cf. Num. 26:55; Josh. 18:8–10), but neither the oppressors nor their descendants would then be present to claim an inheritance.

■ **2:6–11** In this prophecy Micah defends his message against those who seek to silence him. Micah rebuffs their command to cease (v. 6). Then the Lord accuses the powerful of exploiting the defenseless (vv. 8, 9), and sentences them to exile because they have defiled the land (v. 10). Finally, the people are condemned for desiring false prophets who would tell them what they wish to hear (v. 11).

■ **2:6** The Hebrew of v. 6 is difficult to translate. Some suggest that Micah confronts false prophets who support the land robbers and who have sought to silence him. In support of this interpretation, the Hebrew phrase rendered "you say to those who prophesy" could be translated "they prophesy." Others argue that the greedy and corrupt leaders themselves have tried to silence the prophet.

Are these His doings?
Do not My words do good
To him who walks uprightly?

8 "Lately My people have risen up as an enemy—
You pull off the robe with the garment
From those who trust *you,* as they pass by,
Like men returned from war.
9 The women of My people you cast out
From their pleasant houses;
From their children
You have taken away My glory forever.

10 "Arise and depart,
For this *is* not *your* [f]rest;
Because it is [g]defiled, it shall destroy,
Yes, with utter destruction.
11 If a man should walk in a false spirit
And speak a lie, *saying,*
'I will [g]prophesy to you [g]of wine and drink,'
Even he would be the [h]prattler of this people.

Israel Restored

12 "I[i] will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob,
I will surely gather the remnant of Israel;
I will put them together [j]like sheep of [l]the fold,
Like a flock in the midst of their pasture;
[k]They shall make a loud noise because of *so many* people.
13 The one who breaks open will come up before them;
They will break out,
Pass through the gate,
And go out by it;
[l]Their king will pass before them,
[m]With the LORD at their head."

Wicked Rulers and Prophets

3 And I said:

"Hear now, O heads of Jacob,
And you [a]rulers of the house of Israel:
[b]*Is it* not for you to know justice?
2 You who hate good and love evil;
Who strip the skin from [l]My people,
And the flesh from their bones;
3 Who also [c]eat the flesh of My people,
Flay their skin from them,
Break their bones,
And chop *them* in pieces

10 [f]Deut. 12:9 [g]Lev. 18:25
11 [h]Is. 30:10; Jer. 5:30, 31; 2 Tim. 4:3, 4 [g]Or *preach,* lit. *drip* [g]*concerning*
12 [i][Mic. 4:6, 7] [j]Jer. 31:10 [k]Ezek. 33:22; 36:37 [l]Heb. *Bozrah*
13 [l][Hos. 3:5] [m]Is. 52:12

CHAPTER 3

1 [a]Ezek. 22:27 [b]Ps. 82:1–5; Jer. 5:4, 5
2 [l]Lit. *them*
3 [c]Ps. 14:4; 27:2; Zeph. 3:3

■ **2:8, 9 robe . . . pleasant houses . . . children.** The oppressed belong to Israel's middle class (Introduction: Date and Occasion).

■ **2:8 Like men returned from war.** Expecting peace in their homeland where they felt most secure, Israel's people were plundered instead.

■ **2:12, 13** This prophecy of a remnant preserved like sheep in a pen recalls the remnant of Judah sheltered within Jerusalem while Sennacherib overran much of the land. The Lord then delivered them by decimating the Assyrian army (2 Kin. 18:17—19:37). Such provisional deliverances of God's chosen remnant anticipate the greater triumph of the Shepherd-King (5:2–5).

■ **2:12 Jacob . . . Israel.** A reference to Judah as representing the whole nation (1:5 note).

■ **3:1–12** The three prophecies of this chapter announce the rejection and punishment of Israel's incompetent, corrupt leadership. First, the leaders' treatment of the oppressed people is likened to cannibalism (vv. 1–4). Second, the false prophets who led the people astray are condemned (vv. 5–7) and contrasted with Micah, who prophesies true revelations from God (v. 8). Finally, the corrupt political and religious leaders are condemned and their complacency castigated (vv. 9–12).

■ **3:1 And I said.** An editorial addition, indicating that Micah edited his own book (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes).

Jacob . . . Israel. See note on 1:5.

Like *meat* for the pot,
[d]Like flesh in the caldron."

4 Then [e]they will cry to the LORD,
But He will not hear them;
He will even hide His face from them at that time,
Because they have been evil in their deeds.

5 Thus says the LORD [f]concerning the prophets
Who make my people stray;
Who chant [2]"Peace"
[3]While they [g]chew with their teeth,
But who prepare war against him
[h]Who puts nothing into their mouths:
6 "Therefore[i] you shall have night without [4]vision,
And you shall have darkness without divination;
The sun shall go down on the prophets,
And the day shall be dark for[j] them.
7 So the seers shall be ashamed,
And the diviners abashed;
Indeed they shall all cover their lips;
[k]For *there is* no answer from God."

8 But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the LORD,
And of justice and might,
[l]To declare to Jacob his transgression
And to Israel his sin.
9 Now hear this,
You heads of the house of Jacob
And rulers of the house of Israel,
Who abhor justice
And [5]pervert all equity,
10 [m]Who build up Zion with [n]bloodshed
And Jerusalem with iniquity:
11 [o]Her heads judge for a bribe,
[p]Her priests teach for pay,
And her prophets divine for [6]money.
[q]Yet they lean on the LORD, and say,
"Is not the LORD among us?
No harm can come upon us."
12 Therefore because of you
Zion shall be [r]plowed *like* a field,
[s]Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins,
And [t]the mountain of the [7]temple
Like the bare hills of the forest.

The LORD's Reign in Zion

4 Now [a]it shall come to pass in the latter days
That the mountain of the LORD's house

3 [d]Ezek. 11:3, 6, 7

4 [e]Ps. 18:41; Prov. 1:28; Is. 1:15; Jer. 11:11

5 [f]Is. 56:10, 11; Jer. 6:13; Ezek. 13:10, 19 [g]Matt. 7:15 [h]Ezek. 13:18 [2]All is well [3]For those who feed them

6 [i]Is. 8:20–22; 29:10–12 [j]Is. 29:10; [Jer. 23:33–40]; Ezek. 13:23 [4]Prophetic revelation

7 [k]Amos 8:11

8 [l]Is. 58:1

9 [5]Lit. *twist*

10 [m]Jer. 22:13, 17 [n]Ezek. 22:27; Hab. 2:12

11 [o]Is. 1:23; Mic. 7:3 [p]Jer. 6:13 [q]Is. 48:2; Jer. 7:4 [6]Lit. *silver*

12 [r]Jer. 26:18 [s]Ps. 79:1; Jer. 9:11 [t]Mic. 4:1, 2 [7]Lit. *house*

CHAPTER 4

1 [a]Is. 2:2–4; Ezek. 17:22; Dan. 2:28; 10:14; Hos. 3:5

■ **3:4 not hear.** Just as the magistrates refused to hear the cries of the oppressed, so God will refuse to hear their cry in the time of judgment.

■ **3:5 Peace . . . chew with their teeth.** See text notes. These false prophets were opportunists, tailoring their pronouncements of peace and security to the desires of those who fed them. See Jer. 28.

■ **3:6, 7** Those who had prophesied falsely will be judged and shamed by God's silence.

■ **3:12 Zion . . . forest.** This prophecy was given in the days of Hezekiah (Jer. 26:17–19). Because Hezekiah repented in 701 B.C., the judgment was delayed until 586 B.C.

■ **4:1 the latter days.** Micah's prophetic vision shifts from impending judgment in the short term to the "latter days," when the messianic reign of God is established in Zion. The expression points to a new epoch, which, though in the hidden future, decisively alters the course of history. Here it refers to the messianic age, begun at Christ's First Advent (Acts 2:7; Heb. 1:2) and consummated in the new heaven and earth (Rev. 21; 22).

mountain of the LORD's house. Earthly Mount Zion prefigured the heavenly reality to which the church indeed has now come (Heb. 12:22–24). As part of the old covenant, the earthly religious center has been eclipsed by the coming new order (Heb. 8:13).

Shall be established on the top of the mountains,
And shall be exalted above the hills;
And peoples shall flow to it.
2 Many nations shall come and say,
"Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
To the house of the God of Jacob;
He will teach us His ways,
And we shall walk in His paths."
For out of Zion the law shall go forth,
And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
3 He shall judge between many peoples,
And rebuke strong nations afar off;
They shall beat their swords into [b]plowshares,
And their spears into [1]pruning hooks;
Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
[c]Neither shall they learn war anymore.

4 [d]But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree,
And no one shall make *them* afraid;
For the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken.
5 For all people walk each in the name of his god,
But [e]we will walk in the name of the LORD our God
Forever and ever.

Zion's Future Triumph

6 "In that day," says the LORD,
[f]"I will assemble the lame,
[g]I will gather the outcast
And those whom I have afflicted;
7 I will make the lame [h]a remnant,
And the outcast a strong nation;
So the LORD [i]will reign over them in Mount Zion
From now on, even forever.
8 And you, O tower of the flock,
The stronghold of the daughter of Zion,
To you shall it come,
Even the former dominion shall come,
The kingdom of the daughter of Jerusalem."

9 Now why do you cry aloud?
[j]*Is there* no king in your midst?
Has your counselor perished?
For [k]pangs have seized you like a woman in [2]labor.
10 Be in pain, and labor to bring forth,
O daughter of Zion,
Like a woman in birth pangs.
For now you shall go forth from the city,
You shall dwell in the field,

3 [b]Is. 2:4; Joel 3:10 [c]Ps. 72:7 [1]*pruning knives*
4 [d]1 Kin. 4:25; Zech. 3:10
5 [e]Zech. 10:12
6 [f]Ezek. 34:16 [g]Ps. 147:2
7 [h]Mic. 2:12 [i][Is. 9:6; 24:23; Luke 1:33; Rev. 11:15]
9 [j]Jer. 8:19 [k]Is. 13:8; Jer. 30:6 [2]*childbirth*

on the top of the mountains. Pagan gods also had sacred mountains with temples. By being raised above them, God's eternal house (here symbolized by the temple on Mount Zion) will be established among the nations as the center of true worship.

■ **4:6 In that day.** See note on v. 1.

And. Perhaps better translated "even."

■ **4:7 remnant.** Just as God preserved a remnant that survived Sennacherib's invasion (2:12, 13 note), so also a remnant would survive the later Babylonian exile.

strong nation. A prophecy that finds final fulfillment in the church (1 Pet. 2:9, 10).

■ **4:8 tower.** Jerusalem (i.e., the heavenly Jerusalem, Heb. 12:22) will become a fortified tower around which the inhabitants will gather for protection.

■ **4:9–13** This prophecy explains that Israel's present distress (the "now" of vv. 9, 11) will bring glorious salvation—liberation from the later Babylonian exile (vv. 9, 10) and release from Sennacherib's siege (vv. 11, 12).

■ **4:10 Like a woman in birth pangs.** The pain of judgment (exile, loss of king and land) for the remnant must precede the birth of the messianic age that will follow.

And to [l]Babylon you shall go.
There you shall be delivered;
There the [m]LORD will [n]redeem you
From the hand of your enemies.

11 [o]Now also many nations have gathered against you,
Who say, "Let her be defiled,
And let our eye [p]look upon Zion."
12 But they do not know [q]the thoughts of the LORD,
Nor do they understand His counsel;
For He will gather them [r]like sheaves to the threshing floor.

13 "Arise[s] and [t]thresh, O daughter of Zion;
For I will make your horn iron,
And I will make your hooves bronze;
You shall [u]beat in pieces many peoples;
[v]I will consecrate their gain to the LORD,
And their substance to [w]the Lord of the whole earth."

5 Now gather yourself in troops,
O daughter of troops;
He has laid siege against us;
They will [a]strike the judge of Israel with a rod on the cheek.

The Coming Messiah

2 "But you, [b]Bethlehem [c]Ephrathah,
Though you are little [d]among the [e]thousands of Judah,
Yet out of you shall come forth to Me
The One to be [f]Ruler in Israel,
[g]Whose goings forth *are* from of old,
From [l]everlasting."

3 Therefore He shall give them up,
Until the time *that* [h]she who is in labor has given birth;
Then [i]the remnant of His brethren
Shall return to the children of Israel.
4 And He shall stand and [j]feed[2] *His flock*
In the strength of the LORD,
In the majesty of the name of the LORD His God;
And they shall abide,
For now He [k]shall be great
To the ends of the earth;
5 And this *One* [l]shall be peace.

Judgment on Israel's Enemies

When the Assyrian comes into our land,
And when he treads in our palaces,
Then we will raise against him

10 [l]2 Chr. 36:20; Amos 5:27 [m][Is. 45:13; Mic. 7:8–12] [n]Ezra 1:1–3; 2:1; Ps. 18:17

11 [o]Lam. 2:16 [p]Obad. 12

12 [q][Is. 55:8, 9] [r]Is. 21:10

13 [s]Jer. 51:33; [Zech. 12:1–8; 14:14] [t]Is. 41:15 [u]Dan. 2:44 [v]Is. 18:7 [w]Zech. 4:14

CHAPTER 5

1 [a]1 Kin. 22:24; Job 16:10; Lam. 3:30; Matt. 27:30; Mark 15:19

2 [b]Is. 11:1; Matt. 2:6; Luke 2:4, 11; John 7:42 [c]Gen. 35:19; 48:7; Ruth 4:11 [d]1 Sam. 23:23 [e]Ex. 18:25 [f][Gen. 49:10; Is. 9:6] [g]Ps. 90:2; [John 1:1] [l]Lit. *the days of eternity*

3 [h]Hos. 11:8; Mic. 4:10 [i]Mic. 4:7; 7:18

4 [j][Is. 40:11; 49:9; Ezek. 34:13–15, 23, 24]; Mic. 7:14 [k]Ps. 72:8; Is. 52:13; Zech. 9:10; [Luke 1:32] [2]*shepherd*

5 [l][Is. 9:6]; Luke 2:14; [Eph. 2:14; Col. 1:20]

■ **4:11 many nations.** The Assyrian imperial army consisted of mercenaries from many nations.

■ **5:1–6** This prophecy also moves from present distress (v. 1) to the Messiah's advent and victory (vv. 2–6).

■ **5:1 cheek.** This insult to Israel's leader signifies that Jerusalem will fall to its Babylonian attackers, and all power to resist will be gone (cf. 2 Kin. 25:4–7).

■ **5:2 Bethlehem Ephrathah.** The town of David's birth (1 Sam. 16:1–13). Though the Davidic line of kings would temporarily cease (v. 3), God would yet raise up a ruler from David's family who would reign forever—Jesus Christ Himself (2 Sam. 7:12–17).

■ **5:3 He shall give them up.** Israel was without a Davidic king from the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. until the Advent of Christ.

she who is in labor. A reference either to Mary, the mother of Jesus, or to the faithful remnant (see 4:10).

remnant of His brethren. Thousands of Israelites were converted after Pentecost (Acts 2:41, 47).

■ **5:5 the Assyrian.** Assyria, the besieging nation of v. 1, here represents all enemies opposed to God's kingdom.

Seven . . . eight. Seven is the number of perfection. There will be a more than sufficient supply of leaders to expand Christ's kingdom.

Seven shepherds and eight princely men.
6 They shall [3]waste with the sword the land of Assyria,
And the land of [m]Nimrod at its entrances;
Thus He shall [n]deliver *us* from the Assyrian,
When he comes into our land
And when he treads within our borders.

7 Then [o]the remnant of Jacob
Shall be in the midst of many peoples,
[p]Like dew from the LORD,
Like showers on the grass,
That [4]tarry for no man
Nor [5]wait for the sons of men.
8 And the remnant of Jacob
Shall be among the Gentiles,
In the midst of many peoples,
Like a [q]lion among the beasts of the forest,
Like a young lion among flocks of sheep,
Who, if he passes through,
Both treads down and tears in pieces,
And none can deliver.
9 Your hand shall be lifted against your adversaries,
And all your enemies shall be [6]cut off.

10 "And it shall be in that day," says the LORD,
"That I will [r]cut[7] off your [s]horses from your midst
And destroy your [t]chariots.
11 I will cut off the cities of your land
And throw down all your strongholds.
12 I will cut off sorceries from your hand,
And you shall have no [u]soothsayers.
13 [v]Your carved images I will also cut off,
And your sacred pillars from your midst;
You shall [w]no more worship the work of your hands;
14 I will pluck your [8]wooden images from your midst;
Thus I will destroy your cities.
15 And I will [x]execute vengeance in anger and fury
On the nations that have not [9]heard."

God Pleads with Israel

6 Hear now what the LORD says:

"Arise, plead your case before the mountains,
And let the hills hear your voice.

6 [m]Gen. 10:8–11 [n]Is. 14:25; Luke 1:71 [3]*devastate*

7 [o]Mic. 5:3 [p]Gen. 27:28; Deut. 32:2; Ps. 72:6; Hos. 14:5 [4]*wait* [5]*delay*

8 [q]Gen. 49:9; Num. 24:9

9 [6]*destroyed*

10 [r]Zech. 9:10 [s]Deut. 17:16 [t]Is. 2:7; 22:18; Hos. 14:3 [7]*destroy*

12 [u]Deut. 18:10–12; Is. 2:6

13 [v]Zech. 13:2 [w]Is. 2:8

14 [8]Heb. *Asherim*, Canaanite deities

15 [x][2 Thess. 1:8] [9]*obeyed*

■ **5:6 Nimrod.** A reference to Babylon (Gen. 10:8 note).

■ **5:7–9** This oracle has two parts: a prophecy that the remnant will become God's instrument of life and death (vv. 7, 8), and a petition for God to defeat all His foes (v. 9 and note). These statements find fulfillment in the church (2 Cor. 2:14–16).

■ **5:7 tarry for . . . wait for.** As rain proceeds from the divine initiative, so the remnant depends on God to refresh the earth.

■ **5:9 Your hand shall.** This verse is perhaps better translated as a petition for divine victory ("Let your hand be lifted against").

■ **5:10–15** God will cleanse His nation (vv. 10–14) and cut off the pagan nations (v. 15). God's salvation cannot come otherwise than by stripping His nation of all vain and false military confidence (vv. 10, 11), sorceries (v. 12), and idolatry (v. 13).

■ **5:15 vengeance.** God's vengeance takes place when He secures His sovereignty by delivering His people and punishing their guilty oppressors. Only the sovereign Lord Himself has the ultimate right to use force to protect His kingdom, and the exercise of force by an individual or community without divine authorization springs from unbelief (Deut. 32:35; Rom. 12:19–21).

■ **6:1–8** A classic example of the prophetic covenant lawsuit, in which the Lord pleads the terms of the covenant against His disobedient people. The message opens with a judgment scene in which the Lord is plaintiff, Micah is His envoy, the mountains are witnesses, and Israel is the accused (vv. 1, 2). God's own covenant faithfulness is then attested as He first gives Israel opportunity to voice any complaints (v. 3) and then recounts His mighty acts of deliverance (vv. 4, 5). The demand for covenant righteousness is then proclaimed—a righteousness consisting not merely in empty ritual but in heartfelt obedience (vv. 6–8).

■ **6:1 Arise, plead your case.** The Lord commands Micah, as His representative, to prosecute God's case against the people. Micah obeys the command in v. 2.

mountains. The Lord used the enduring mountains as witnesses to the covenant mediated by Moses (Deut. 4:26; 30:19 and note; 31:28; 32:1).

2 [a]Hear, O you mountains, [b]the LORD's complaint,
And you strong foundations of the earth;
For [c]the LORD has a complaint against His people,
And He will [1]contend with Israel.

3 "O My people, what [d]have I done to you?
And how have I [e]wearied you?
Testify against Me.
4 [f]For I brought you up from the land of Egypt,
I redeemed you from the house of bondage;
And I sent before you Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.
5 O My people, remember now
What [g]Balak king of Moab counseled,
And what Balaam the son of Beor answered him,
From [2]Acacia Grove to Gilgal,
That you may know [h]the righteousness of the LORD."

6 With what shall I come before the LORD,
And bow myself before the High God?
Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings,
With calves a year old?
7 [i]Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams,
Ten thousand [j]rivers of oil?
[k]Shall I give my firstborn *for* my transgression,
[3]The fruit of my body *for* the sin of my soul?

8 He has [l]shown you, O man, what *is* good;
And what does the LORD require of you
But [m]to do justly,
To love [4]mercy,
And to walk humbly with your God?

Punishment of Israel's Injustice

9 The LORD's voice cries to the city—
Wisdom shall see Your name:

"Hear the rod!
Who has appointed it?
10 Are there yet the treasures of wickedness
In the house of the wicked,
And the short measure *that is* an abomination?
11 Shall I count pure *those* with [n]the wicked scales,
And with the bag of deceitful weights?
12 For her rich men are full of [o]violence,
Her inhabitants have spoken lies,
And [p]their tongue is deceitful in their mouth.

CHAPTER 6

2 [a]Ps. 50:1, 4 [b][Is. 1:18]; Hos. 12:2 [c][Is. 1:18] [1]*bring charges against*

3 [d]Is. 5:4; Jer. 2:5, 31 [e]Is. 43:22, 23; Mal. 1:13

4 [f][Deut. 4:20]

5 [g]Num. 22:5, 6; Josh. 24:9 [h]Judg. 5:11 [2]Heb. *Shittim*, Num. 25:1; Josh. 2:1; 3:1

7 [i]Ps. 50:9; Is. 1:11 [j]Job 29:6 [k]Lev. 18:21; 20:1–5; 2 Kin. 16:3; Jer. 7:31; Ezek. 23:37 [3]My own child

8 [l][Deut. 10:12; 1 Sam. 15:22]; Hos. 6:6; 12:6 [m]Gen. 18:19; Is. 1:17 [4]Or *lovingkindness*

11 [n]Lev. 19:36; Hos. 12:7

12 [o]Is. 1:23; 5:7; Amos 6:3, 4; Mic. 2:1, 2 [p]Jer. 9:2–6, 8; Hos. 7:13; Amos 2:4

■ **6:4, 5** These verses are framed by references to Egypt (from which Israel was delivered) and Gilgal (where Israel entered the Promised Land, Josh. 4:19). All God's saving acts during Israel's formative period are included: the Passover and Exodus, guidance by the pillar of fire and cloud, miraculous provision of food and water, the provision of able leaders ("Moses, Aaron, and Miriam"), and victory over enemies. God's wonderful provision for His people during this period foreshadowed the church's experience with Christ (John 6:33; 1 Cor. 5:7; 10:1–4).

■ **6:5 remember.** This command means not merely mental recall of past events, but that those events are to be means of actualizing them in the present. By faith such knowledge of the past is applied to present situations.

■ **6:6, 7** Through the rhetorical escalation of sacrifices ("calves . . . thousands of rams . . . rivers of oil . . . my firstborn") Micah displays the absurdity of Israel's dependence on empty ritual and sacrifice to earn divine favor. Such reliance showed a profound misunderstanding of God's grace, for Israel's salvation was free and not earned (vv. 4, 5). Moreover, Israel's covenant obligations entailed social justice and mercy, not mere liturgy (v. 8). See also Amos 5:21–24.

■ **6:8 humbly.** Or, "prudently."

■ **6:9–16** This prophecy consists of an address to Jerusalem (v. 9), an accusation of falsity in business dealings and speech (vv. 10–12), and a judicial sentence of disease and ruin (v. 13–15). The covenantal context is apparent as the punishment reflects the covenant curses specified in the Mosaic law (v. 15; Lev. 26:20; Deut. 28:40, 51).

13 "Therefore I will also [q]make *you* sick by striking you,
By making *you* desolate because of your sins.
14 [r]You shall eat, but not be satisfied;
[5]Hunger *shall be* in your midst.
[6]You may carry *some* away, but shall not save *them;*
And what you do rescue I will give over to the sword.

15 "You shall [s]sow, but not reap;
You shall tread the olives, but not anoint yourselves with oil;
And *make* sweet wine, but not drink wine.
16 For the statutes of [t]Omri are [u]kept;
All the works of Ahab's house *are done;*
And you walk in their counsels,
That I may make you a [7]desolation,
And your inhabitants a hissing.
Therefore you shall bear the [v]reproach of [8]My people."

Sorrow for Israel's Sins

7 Woe is me!
For I am like those who gather summer fruits,
Like those who [a]glean vintage grapes;
There is no cluster to eat
Of the first-ripe fruit *which* [b]my soul desires.
2 The [c]faithful[1] *man* has perished from the earth,
And *there is* no one upright among men.
They all lie in wait for blood;
[d]Every man hunts his brother with a net.

3 That they may successfully do evil with both hands—
The prince asks *for gifts,*
The judge *seeks* a [e]bribe,
And the great *man* utters his evil desire;
So they scheme together.
4 The best of them *is* [f]like a brier;
The most upright *is sharper* than a thorn hedge;
The day of your watchman and your punishment comes;
Now shall be their perplexity.

5 [g]Do not trust in a friend;
Do not put your confidence in a companion;
Guard the doors of your mouth
From her who lies in your [h]bosom.
6 For [i]son dishonors father,
Daughter rises against her mother,
Daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;
A man's enemies *are* the men of his own household.
7 Therefore I will look to the LORD;
I will [j]wait for the God of my salvation;
My God will hear me.

13 [q]Lev. 26:16; Ps. 107:17
14 [r]Lev. 26:26 [5]Or *Emptiness* or *Humiliation* [6]Tg., Vg. *You shall take hold*
15 [s]Deut. 28:38–40; Amos 5:11; Zeph. 1:13; Hag. 1:6
16 [t]1 Kin. 16:25, 26 [u]1 Kin. 16:30; 21:25, 26; 2 Kin. 21:3; Hos. 5:11 [v]Is. 25:8 [7]Or *object of horror* [8]So with MT, Tg., Vg.; LXX *nations*

CHAPTER 7

1 [a]Is. 17:6 [b]Is. 28:4; Hos. 9:10
2 [c]Ps. 12:1; Is. 57:1 [d]Hab. 1:15 [1]Or *loyal*
3 [e]Amos 5:12; Mic. 3:11
4 [f]Is. 55:13; Ezek. 2:6
5 [g]Jer. 9:4 [h]Deut. 28:56
6 [i]Matt. 10:36; Mark 3:21; Luke 8:19; John 7:5
7 [j]Ps. 130:5; Is. 25:9; Lam. 3:24, 25

■ **7:1–7** Micah laments that no righteous are found (vv. 1–4) and bemoans the resulting social and national confusion that is both the result and punishment of their sin (vv. 4–6). Particularly striking is the description of the breakdown of family order. Micah concludes, however, with the confidence that beyond God's judgment lies salvation (v. 7).

■ **7:1 I . . . gather summer fruits.** In his search for the righteous, Micah compares himself to a vinedresser searching for choice fruit after the best of the season is past.

■ **7:2 no one upright.** This verse explains the allegory of v. 1.

■ **7:4 watchman.** A metaphor for the prophets who announced the coming judgment (Ezek. 3:17; 33:7).

■ **7:5, 6** This passage was later used in Jewish extrabiblical apocalyptic literature to describe the conflict that will accompany the final day of the Lord, and Jesus quoted v. 6 in describing the conflict that results from His coming (Matt. 10:35–39; Luke 12:51–53).

Israel's Confession and Comfort

8 [k]Do not rejoice over me, my enemy;
[l]When I fall, I will arise;
When I sit in darkness,
The LORD *will be* a light to me.
9 [m]I will bear the indignation of the LORD,
Because I have sinned against Him,
Until He pleads my [n]case
And executes justice for me.
He will bring me forth to the light;
I will see His righteousness.
10 Then *she who is* my enemy will see,
And [o]shame will cover her who said to me,
[p]"Where is the LORD your God?"
My eyes will see her;
Now she will be trampled down
Like mud in the streets.

11 *In* the day when your [q]walls are to be built,
In that day [2]the decree shall go far and wide.
12 *In* that day [r]they[3] shall come to you
From Assyria and the [4]fortified cities,
From the [5]fortress to [6]the River,
From sea to sea,
And mountain *to* mountain.
13 Yet the land shall be desolate
Because of those who dwell in it,
And [s]for the fruit of their deeds.

God Will Forgive Israel

14 Shepherd Your people with Your staff,
The flock of Your heritage,
Who dwell [7]solitarily *in* a [t]woodland,
In the midst of Carmel;
Let them feed *in* Bashan and Gilead,
As in days of old.

15 "As[u] in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt,
I will show [8]them [v]wonders."

16 The nations [w]shall see and be ashamed of all their might;
[x]They shall put *their* hand over *their* mouth;
Their ears shall be deaf.
17 They shall lick the [y]dust like a serpent;
[z]They shall crawl from their holes like [9]snakes of the earth.
[a]They shall be afraid of the LORD our God,
And shall fear because of You.

8 [k]Prov. 24:17; Obad. 12; [Acts 10:43] [l]Ps. 37:24; [Prov. 24:16]; 2 Cor. 4:9

9 [m]Lam. 3:39, 40; [2 Cor. 5:21] [n]Jer. 50:34

10 [o]Ps. 35:26 [p]Ps. 42:3

11 [q]Is. 54:11; [Amos 9:11] [2]Or *the boundary shall be extended*

12 [r][Is. 11:16; 19:23–25] [3]Lit. *he,* collective of the captives [4]Heb. *arey mazor,* possibly *cities of Egypt* [5]Heb. *mazor,* possibly *Egypt* [6]The Euphrates

13 [s]Jer. 21:14

14 [t]Is. 37:24 [7]Alone

15 [u]Ps. 68:22; 78:12 [v]Ex. 34:10 [8]Lit. *him,* collective for the captives

16 [w]Is. 26:11 [x]Job 21:5

17 [y]Ps. 72:9; [Is. 49:23] [z]Ps. 18:45 [a]Jer. 33:9 [9]Lit. *crawlers*

■ **7:8–20** This concluding hymn consists of four stanzas: (a) Lady Jerusalem in her fallen status confesses her sin and her faith in the Lord (vv. 8–10); (b) the prophet promises that she will become a sheepfold offering salvation to the world under judgment (vv. 11–13); (c) Micah prays that the Lord will again miraculously shepherd His people (v. 14), which the Lord promises to do (v. 15), and Micah then prophesies that the unbelieving enemy will be conquered (vv. 16, 17); and (d) the people celebrate God's forgiveness and faithfulness with a hymn of praise (vv. 18–20).

■ **7:8 darkness.** A dungeon without light is an apt figure for a city under divine judgment.

■ **7:9 I will see His righteousness.** The Lord's righteousness will be manifested in faithful Israel's salvation (vv. 8, 9) and her unbelieving enemy's destruction (v. 10).

■ **7:11 the day.** See 4:1, 6; 5:10–15. The last day is symbolically depicted by the restoration of Jerusalem's city walls (v. 11) and the extension of the boundaries of the land to limits prophesied by Moses and enjoyed under David and Solomon (v. 12; Gen. 15:18; Ex. 23:31; Deut. 11:24; 1 Kin. 4:21, 25). See text notes on vv. 11, 12.

■ **7:13 land shall be desolate.** Outside the elect's secure borders is universal judgment. The Last Judgment is ultimately in view.

■ **7:16 hand over their mouth . . . be deaf.** These are signs of humiliation in the face of overwhelming divine power. They will no longer taunt Israel or listen to the vain boasts of others.

18 [b]Who *is* a God like You,
[c]Pardoning iniquity
And passing over the transgression of [d]the remnant of His heritage?

[e]He does not retain His anger forever,
Because He delights *in* [f]mercy.[1]
19 He will again have compassion on us,
And will subdue our iniquities.

You will cast all [2]our sins
Into the depths of the sea.
20 [g]You will give truth to Jacob
And [3]mercy to Abraham,
[h]Which You have sworn to our fathers
From days of old.

18 [b]Ex. 15:11 [c]Ex. 34:6, 7, 9; Is. 43:25; Jer. 50:20 [d]Mic. 4:7 [e]Ps. 103:8, 9, 13; [Is. 57:16] [f][Ezek. 33:11] [1]Or *lovingkindness*

19 [2]Lit. *their*

20 [g]Luke 1:72, 73 [h]Ps. 105:9 [3]Or *lovingkindness*

■ **7:18 Who is a God like You.** Micah, whose name means "Who is like the LORD" (1:1 note), perhaps employs a wordplay on his own name to emphasize God's pardoning grace.

■ **7:19 cast . . . sea.** As God began Israel's journey by casting the Egyptians into the Red Sea (v. 15; cf. Ex. 15:1–5), He will conclude her history by casting His people's iniquities into the depths.

■ **7:20 give truth.** Or, "show faithfulness." God's loving fidelity to the fathers is the basis of the church's hope (Rom. 4:17; Gal. 3:7–9, 29).

The Book of

NAHUM

Author Nahum means "comfort." His name is followed by the designation "the Elkoshite," probably a reference to the location of his birth or where he prophesied. Attempts to provide a closer identification of Elkosh have been unsuccessful. Proposals have included locations near ancient Nineveh, in Galilee (the name "Capernaum" perhaps derives from the Hebrew for "village of Nahum"), and in Judah. The internal witness of the book supports Judah as the general vicinity of Nahum's prophetic activity (1:15).

As is the case in most prophetic books, the person of the prophet recedes behind his message. Nahum has been incorrectly regarded as a narrow nationalist who, inspired by feelings of hatred and vengeance, proclaimed a message of judgment against Nineveh, and at the same time extended the promise of unconditional salvation to his own people, Judah. But this view overlooks that this book reflects the usual literary form of prophecies against foreign nations, and is to be compared with similar proclamations in Is. 13—23; Jer. 46—51; Amos 1; 2; and Obadiah.

As a true prophet of Yahweh, Nahum was profoundly aware that the Lord, the incomparable and all-powerful God, held universal dominion over the kingdoms of this world. Like his predecessor Isaiah, Nahum was also a gifted poet. Using a wealth of imagery and pictorial language, the prophet portrays the total destruction of Nineveh by an anonymous enemy, and so voices the universal relief and joy of all who suffered under the oppressive regime of a merciless tyrant.

Date and Occasion Nahum's prophecy can be dated between the capture of Thebes by the Assyrian ruler Ashurba-nipal in 663 B.C., which Nahum reports as a past event (3:8), and the fall of Nineveh in 612 B.C., which Nahum prophetically foretells (3:5–7).

During this period of the seventh century B.C., two major crises arose in the Assyrian empire. One came from the threat of the Medes and the advancing Scythians (642–638 B.C.). The other, larger crisis was the Babylonian revolt (652–648 B.C.) under the leadership of Ashurbanipal's elder brother who was supported by the Elamites and peoples from the Iranian highlands. Ripple effects of this revolt were experienced as far away as Palestine and Syria. Eventually the revolt was suppressed by bitter warfare that shook the whole empire. A date for Nahum's prophetic activities before or during this period of upheaval is attractive. Because the destruction of Thebes was apparently still fresh in the memory of his audience, a plausible date for Nahum's prophecy therefore falls between 660–650 B.C., in the days of King Manasseh of Judah, a loyal vassal of Assyria.

Characteristics and Themes

The Book of Nahum has a double title (1:1). It is called a "burden against Nineveh" and the "book of the vision of Nahum." "Burden" often indicates a divine message of judgment against a foreign nation (Is. 13:1; Mal. 1:1 note). "Vision" refers to a supernatural revelation to the prophet's inner sight or hearing. At times a prophet was instructed to write down a specific message (Is. 8:1, 2; 30:8) or even "all the words" that the Lord required him to speak (Jer. 36). The written form then provided a strong additional witness to the certainty of the fulfillment of those divine pronouncements. The prophecy's double title is solid confirmation of the authenticity of this oracle of doom against Nineveh and the inescapability of God's imminent judgment on the Assyrian kingdom.

This often neglected and disparaged book provides us with an important key for understanding past, present, and future history. Events do not occur as mere happenstance, but every particular of history is determined by the will, purpose, and power of God. In the opening hymn (1:2–8) and especially in 1:2, 3 (the "text" of Nahum's sermon), we learn that the Lord's government of history is in accordance with His character as the covenant God. He demands undivided submission everywhere and from everyone. Rejection of Him and of His law leads not only to the necessary consequences of chaos in society and in nature, but inevitably evokes His personal displeasure, resulting in just retribution.

God's patience must never be misunderstood as weakness. Corporate or individual sin will not be left unpunished. God ultimately ordains all the events of history. Nahum proclaimed the impending destruction of Nineveh as God's righteous judgment, and he invited his people to a joyful celebration of this event long before it took place.

Nineveh was a wicked, imperialistic, and deceitful metropolis with an arrogant and unscrupulous lust for power and domination manifested in merciless warmongering (3:1–4). In addition to its military exploits, Nineveh was condemned for its ruthless trade practices and insatiable materialism (3:16). Against this evil city Nahum delivered his message of divine vengeance and retribution (1:14; 3:5–7). No earthly power that defied God's law would finally escape His judgment.

Judgment, however, is not the Lord's final word. God's retributive judgment is also redemptive in that it furthers His loving purposes for His people and His

covenant promises to them (1:15; 2:2). He destroys the forces of evil with the purpose of creating a new world of freedom (1:13), peace, and lasting comfort. "He knows those who trust in Him" and cares for them (1:7). Those familiar with the message in the "book of the vision of Nahum" will better understand the necessity of the Cross of Jesus Christ, the Son of the jealous and avenging God. They will be able to proclaim from this book the glorified Christ, to whom all authority in heaven and on earth has been given (Matt. 28:18) and who is now guiding history toward that Great Day when He will hand over the kingdom to His Father, after He has destroyed all opposing powers, so "that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:24–28).□

Outline of Nahum

I. Superscription (1:1)
II. Nineveh's Just and Merciful Judge (1:2–14)
  A. The Lord's Jealousy and Power (1:2–8)
  B. Woe for the Wicked (1:9–14)
III. Nineveh Powerless Before the Lord's Army (1:15—2:13)
  A. Good News for Judah (1:15—2:2)
  B. Nineveh Captured and Plundered (2:3–10)
  C. Nineveh's Power Broken by the Lord (2:11–13)
IV. Nineveh's Irreversible Destruction (ch. 3)
  A. Judgment of the Wicked City Prophesied (3:1–7)
  B. Nineveh's Fate like That of Thebes (3:8–11)
  C. The Finality of Divine Judgment (3:12–19)

CHAPTER 1

1 [a]2 Kin. 19:36; Jon. 1:2; Nah. 2:8; Zeph. 2:13 [f]*oracle, prophecy*

2 [b]Ex. 20:5; Josh. 24:19

3 [c]Ex. 34:6, 7; Neh. 9:17; Ps. 103:8 [d][Job 9:4] [e]Ps. 18:17

4 [f]Josh. 3:15, 16; Ps. 106:9; Is. 50:2; Matt. 8:26

THE [f]burden [a]against Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.

God's Wrath on His Enemies

2 God *is* [b]jealous, and the LORD avenges;
The LORD avenges and *is* furious.
The LORD will take vengeance on His adversaries,
And He reserves *wrath* for His enemies;
3 The LORD *is* [c]slow to anger and [d]great in power,
And will not at all acquit *the wicked.*

[e]The LORD has His way
In the whirlwind and in the storm,
And the clouds *are* the dust of His feet.
4 [f]He rebukes the sea and makes it dry,

■ **1:1** Title of the book. See Introduction: Author; Date and Occasion.

■ **1:2–14** The introductory hymn (vv. 2–8), which in the Hebrew forms an incomplete acrostic poem, movingly describes the Lord as the universal Judge with power to accomplish His will.

■ **1:2, 3** The Lord's character forms the key to what follows.

■ **1:2 jealous.** This attribute refers to God's passionate reaction against any infringement on His holiness or any attempt to share His glory. His jealousy demands undivided loyalty and reveals itself as wrath against rejection of Him or His lordship.

avenges . . . avenges . . . take vengeance. True to His nature, the universal Judge leaves no sin unpunished and metes out the just deserts of the wicked. The threefold repetition of the Hebrew word for "avenge" strongly emphasizes an inescapable and appropriate retribution.

adversaries . . . enemies. This terminology is typical of the Psalms and of holy-war imagery.

■ **1:3 slow to anger.** A well-known confession of God's patience with sinners (Ex. 34:6, "longsuffering"; Jon. 4:2).

great in power . . . not at all acquit. God's patience never implies that He is weak or that He condones evil (Gen. 18:25).

■ **1:3–6** The prophet offers a poetic portrayal of the power of the Lord as manifested in His control of nature at Creation and on other occasions of intervention on behalf of His people (Ps. 18:7–15; Ex. 14:21, 22; Matt. 8:26). The godly Israelite recognized the Lord's work in nature. But nature is not confused with God or worshiped as God; it is the theater of His revelation.

■ **1:4 He rebukes.** These words vividly portray the power of God in subjecting the forces of nature, as during creation or at the crossing of the Red Sea (Ex. 14).

And dries up all the rivers.
[g] Bashan and Carmel wither,
And the flower of Lebanon wilts.
5 The mountains quake before Him,
The hills melt,
And the earth [2] heaves at His presence,
Yes, the world and all who dwell in it.

6 Who can stand before His indignation?
And [h] who can endure the fierceness of His anger?
His fury is poured out like fire,
And the rocks are thrown down by Him.

7 [i] The LORD *is* good,
A stronghold in the day of trouble;
And [j] He knows those who trust in Him.
8 But with an overflowing flood
He will make an utter end of its place,
And darkness will pursue His enemies.

9 [k] What do you [3] conspire against the LORD?
[l] He will make an utter end *of it.*
Affliction will not rise up a second time.
10 For while tangled [m] *like* thorns,
[n] And while drunken *like* drunkards,
[o] They shall be devoured like stubble fully dried.
11 From you comes forth *one*
Who plots evil against the LORD,
A [4] wicked counselor.

12 Thus says the LORD:

"Though *they are* [5] safe, and likewise many,
Yet in this manner they will be [p] cut down
When he passes through.
Though I have afflicted you,
I will afflict you no more;
13 For now I will break off his yoke from you,
And burst your bonds apart."

14 The LORD has given a command concerning you:
[6] "Your name shall be perpetuated no longer.

4 [g] Is. 33:9

5 [2] Tg. *burns*

6 [h] Jer. 10:10; [Mal. 3:2]

7 [i] Ps. 25:8; 37:39, 40; 100:5; [Jer. 33:11]; Lam. 3:25 [j] Ps. 1:6; John 10:14; 2 Tim. 2:19

9 [k] Ps. 2:1; Nah. 1:11 [l] 1 Sam. 3:12 [3] Or *devise*

10 [m] 2 Sam. 23:6; Mic. 7:4 [n] Is. 56:12; Nah. 3:11 [o] Is. 5:24; 10:17; Mal. 4:1

11 [4] Lit. *counselor of Belial*

12 [p] [Is. 10:16–19, 33, 34] [5] Or *at peace* or *complete*

14 [6] Lit. *No more of your name shall be fruitful*

sea . . . rivers. Used here as poetic parallels (Is. 50:2; Ps. 74:12–15). The abundant vegetation of the fertile "Bashan," "Carmel," and "Lebanon" withers when the hot desert wind, sent by the Lord, blows over it.

■ **1:5** The displeasure of the approaching Lord fills the earth and its creatures with terror. All creation seems threatened by chaos when even the seemingly permanent things ("the mountains . . . the earth") tremble and disappear.

■ **1:6** The rhetorical questions emphasize the irresistibility of God's anger. Divine wrath is compared to fire (Deut. 4:24; Heb. 12:29).

■ **1:7 good.** The term denotes the Lord's benevolence as the source of all true human well-being and prosperity, and is particularly a confession of His abundant covenant blessings and kindness (Ps. 73:1). The Lord's people experience His awesome power as holy love. When help is needed He is an impregnable fortress (Ps. 46).

■ **1:8 flood . . . darkness.** Striking images of severe judgment.

■ **1:9–14** The downfall of the wicked, represented by Nineveh, culminates in the comfort of God's people, Judah.

■ **1:9 conspire.** All Assyrian strategies will be futile. Their struggle and their plans are now against the Lord, who has decided on their destruction, and will bring it about once and for all.

■ **1:11 Who plots evil.** Perhaps a reference to Ashurbanipal (Introduction: Date and Occasion).

wicked. See text note. The word suggests something demonic.

■ **1:12–14** A comforting divine message assures God's people that the downfall of Assyria implies the end of their humiliation.

■ **1:12 Thus says the LORD.** A well-known prophetic-messenger formula.

■ **1:13 break off his yoke . . . burst your bonds.** Vivid poetic images of emancipation (Jer. 2:20; Ps. 2:3).

■ **1:14 command.** The word emphasizes authority and certainty.

Your name. Complete extinction and loss of power and prestige await the Assyrians.

house of your gods. The temple and other objects of Assyria's trust and pride will also be destroyed.

Out of the house of your gods
I will cut off the carved image and the molded image.
I will dig your [g]grave,
For you are [r]vile."[7]

15 Behold, on the mountains
The [s]feet of him who brings good tidings,
Who proclaims peace!
O Judah, keep your appointed feasts,
Perform your vows.
For the [8]wicked one shall no more pass through you;
He is [t]utterly cut off.

The Destruction of Nineveh

2 He[1] who scatters has come up before your face.
Man the fort!
Watch the road!
Strengthen *your* flanks!
Fortify *your* power mightily.

2 For the LORD will restore the excellence of Jacob
Like the excellence of Israel,
For the emptiers have emptied them out
And ruined their vine branches.

3 The shields of his mighty men *are* made red,
The valiant men *are* in scarlet.
The chariots *come* with flaming torches
In the day of his preparation,
And [2]the spears are brandished.
4 The chariots rage in the streets,
They jostle one another in the broad roads;
They seem like torches,
They run like lightning.

5 He remembers his nobles;
They stumble in their walk;
They make haste to her walls,

14 [q]Ezek. 32:22, 23 [r]Nah. 3:6 [7]Or *contemptible*

15 [s]Is. 40:9; 52:7; Rom. 10:15 [t]Is. 29:7, 8 [8]Lit. *one of Belial*

CHAPTER 2

1 [1]Vg. *He who destroys*

3 [2]Lit. *the cypresses are shaken;* LXX, Syr. *the horses rush about;* Vg. *the drivers are stupefied*

grave. The term represents the final undoing of Nineveh, its king, and its people in 612 B.C.

■ **1:15—2:13** This section is written in the prophetic present tense. Events still future are pictured as if already present, and events even more distantly future are portrayed as occurring at the same time with those happening much earlier. This vivid prophecy of judgment is a poetic "vision" (1:1; cf. Num. 12:6–8), and is not a precise and detailed historical account of events that took place later, in 612 B.C.

■ **1:15** See Is. 52:7. The approach of a herald of "good tidings," whose feet tread "the mountains" of Judah, initiates a new period of grateful service to the Lord. The good news is summarized in the meaningful word "peace" (Hebrew *shalom*), signifying not only the end of hostilities but also the return to normal, abundant living conditions and general well-being.

keep . . . vows. Periods of national crisis or foreign oppression often made celebration of the important temple feasts difficult, if not impossible. The "vows" made in the previous period of distress should now be fulfilled (Ps. 116:14, 17–19).

■ **2:1** In sharp contrast to the call for Judah to celebrate is the ironic exhortation of Nineveh to prepare for an attack.

scatters. The Assyrians, who destroyed many nations, including Israel, by scattering them over the face of the earth, will now experience a similar fate. In August, 612 B.C., the combined forces of the Medes and Babylonians destroyed Nineveh, and shortly afterward the Assyrian Empire collapsed.

■ **2:2 excellence of Israel.** God will restore the oppressed people to the happiness implied by the name "Israel." Jacob received this new name as a sign of his spiritual maturity and his willing acceptance of the destiny God intended for him from the beginning (Gen. 32:27, 28).

■ **2:3 his mighty men.** Probably a reference to the Lord's army (v. 2.). The warriors and chariots of the attackers fulfill His purposes. The armies of Assyria herself had earlier been God's instruments to accomplish His purposes of judgment (Is. 10:5–7).

red . . . scarlet. These terms emphasize the awe-inspiring appearance of the approaching army, whether the color refers to their actual robes or to the blood stains on them.

spears are brandished. See text note. The Hebrew is difficult but conveys the general impression of ready eagerness for war.

■ **2:4** Nineveh is a beehive of frantic soldiers.

streets. Possibly open fields or plains outside the city; if so, the verse speaks of the approaching army and its chariots of war.

■ **2:5** This may refer to the Assyrian king and his nobles, especially the military commanders. Alternatively, this verse may describe the attackers and their frenzied siege of Nineveh (the Hebrew word here rendered "defense" usually refers to a movable structure shielding the besiegers of a city).

And the defense is prepared.
6 The gates of the rivers are opened,
And the palace is dissolved.
7 [3]It is decreed:
She shall be led away captive,
She shall be brought up;
And her maidservants shall lead *her* as with the voice of doves,
Beating their breasts.

8 Though Nineveh of old *was* like a pool of water,
Now they flee away.
[4]"Halt! Halt!" *they cry;*
But no one turns back.
9 [5]Take spoil of silver!
Take spoil of [a]gold!
There is no end of treasure,
Or wealth of every desirable prize.
10 She is empty, desolate, and waste!
The heart melts, and the knees shake;
Much pain *is* in every side,
And all their faces [6]are drained of color.
11 Where *is* the dwelling of the [b]lions,
And the feeding place of the young lions,
Where the lion walked, the lioness *and* lion's cub,
And no one made *them* afraid?
12 The lion tore in pieces enough for his cubs,
[7]Killed for his lionesses,
[c]Filled his caves with prey,
And his dens with [8]flesh.

13 "Behold, [d]I *am* against you," says the LORD of hosts, "I will burn [9]your chariots in smoke, and the sword shall devour your young lions; I will cut off your prey from the earth, and the voice of your [e]messengers shall be heard no more."

The Woe of Nineveh

3 Woe to the [a]bloody city!
It *is* all full of lies *and* robbery.

7 [3]Heb. *Huzzab*

8 [4]Lit. *Stand*

9 [a]Ezek. 7:19; Zeph. 1:18 [5]*Plunder*

10 [6]LXX, Tg., Vg. *gather blackness;* Joel 2:6

11 [b]Job 4:10, 11; Ezek. 19:2–7

12 [c]Is. 10:6; Jer. 51:34 [7]Lit. *Strangled* [8]Torn flesh

13 [d]Jer. 21:13; Ezek. 5:8; Nah. 3:5 [e]2 Kin. 18:17–25; 19:9–13, 23 [9]Lit. *her*

CHAPTER 3

1 [a]Ezek. 22:2, 3; 24:6–9; Hab. 2:12

■ **2:6 gates of the rivers.** The city of Nineveh was located on the bank of the Tigris River, and a smaller river flowed through the city. Conflicting ancient accounts ascribe the fall of Nineveh to flooding when the enemy redirected the dams and sluices of the water system. The description in Nahum is manifestly poetic, however. The term "gates" could simply refer to the five gates opening (cf. 3:13) in the direction of the Tigris River with its tributaries and canals. The location of the palace precluded the possibility of collapse by flooding.

palace. The seat of political and military organization.

■ **2:7 She.** Nineveh is personified as a woman, a queen, going into exile. Her "maidservants," the inhabitants of the city, mourn the fate of their mistress.

■ **2:8 pool of water.** This striking image is often taken to portray Nineveh's full population and prosperity. Now it drains away.

■ **2:10 heart melts . . . faces are drained.** The merciless devastation creates terror and paralysis among the once-mighty Ninevites.

■ **2:11–13** This closing section is a taunt song in which the striking image of a pride of lions that met with destruction is employed to describe the imminent reversal of Nineveh's fortunes. God is the author of Nineveh's humiliation and disappearance.

■ **2:11 Where.** This rhetorical question emphasizes how the famous city will be reduced to oblivion.

dwelling of the lions. An apt image for Nineveh as the home of the aggressive and ruthless Assyrians.

■ **2:13** The real secret of Nineveh's full and final downfall is revealed. Confrontation with Israel's almighty covenant God is fatal to the Assyrian Empire.

I am against you. The opposite of the good tidings of salvation, "I am with you" (Ex. 3:12; Josh. 1:5; Is. 43:2, 5).

messengers. The voices of the Assyrian envoys dictating terms and exacting tribute will be permanently silenced from the face of the earth.

■ **3:1–19** The expression of woe that opens this chapter controls its mood until the last verse. The various parts all contribute to its literary unity, and together they emphasize the irreversible doom of Nineveh. The prophet no longer focuses on Israel and Judah alone, but places the fate of Nineveh in a universal perspective.

■ **3:1–7** These vivid scenes of violence, death, and destruction confirm the city's expected doom. The charges against Nineveh (vv. 1–4) and her penalties (vv. 5–7) are set forth in stark detail.

■ **3:1 bloody city.** The phrase emphasizes the merciless cruelty openly boasted by the Assyrians in their official records.

lies. Deceitful diplomacy characterized their international dealings (Is. 36:16, 17).

robbery. See 2:12, 13. Friendly negotiations serve as a cover for rapacious behavior. In their insatiable lust for more they constantly move from one victim to another.

Its [1]victim never departs.
2 The noise of a whip
And the noise of rattling wheels,
Of galloping horses,
Of [2]clattering chariots!
3 Horsemen charge with bright sword and glittering spear.
There is a multitude of slain,
A great number of bodies,
Countless corpses—
They stumble over the corpses—
4 Because of the multitude of [3]harlotries of the [4]seductive harlot,
[b]The mistress of sorceries,
Who sells nations through her harlotries,
And families through her sorceries.

5 "Behold, I *am* [c]against you," says the LORD of hosts;
[d]"I will lift your skirts over your face,
I will show the nations your nakedness,
And the kingdoms your shame.
6 I will cast abominable filth upon you,
Make you [e]vile,[5]
And make you [f]a spectacle.
7 It shall come to pass *that* all who look upon you
[g]Will flee from you, and say,
[h]'Nineveh is laid waste!
[i]Who will bemoan her?'
Where shall I seek comforters for you?"

8 [j]Are you better than [k]No[6] Amon
That was situated by the [7]River,
That had the waters around her,
Whose rampart *was* the sea,
Whose wall *was* the sea?
9 Ethiopia and Egypt *were* her strength,
And *it was* boundless;
[l]Put and Lubim were [8]your helpers.
10 Yet she *was* carried away,
She went into captivity;
[m]Her young children also were dashed to pieces
[n]At the head of every street;
They [o]cast lots for her honorable men,
And all her great men were bound in chains.
11 You also will be [p]drunk;

1 [1]Lit. *prey*
2 [2]*bounding* or *jolting*
4 [b]Is. 47:9–12; Rev. 18:2, 3 [3]Spiritual unfaithfulness [4]Lit. *goodly charm*, in a bad sense
5 [c]Jer. 50:31; Ezek. 26:3; Nah. 2:13 [d]Is. 47:2, 3; Jer. 13:26
6 [e]Nah. 1:14 [f]Heb. 10:33 [5]*despicable*
7 [g]Rev. 18:10 [h]Jon. 3:3; 4:11 [i]Is. 51:19; Jer. 15:5
8 [j]Amos 6:2 [k]Jer. 46:25; Ezek. 30:14–16 [6]Ancient Thebes; Tg., Vg. *populous Alexandria* [7]Lit. *rivers*, the Nile and the surrounding canals
9 [l]Gen. 10:6; Jer. 46:9; Ezek. 27:10 [8]LXX *her*
10 [m]Ps. 137:9; Is. 13:16; Hos. 13:16 [n]Lam. 2:19 [o]Joel 3:3; Obad. 11
11 [p]Is. 49:26; Jer. 25:27; Nah. 1:10

■ **3:2, 3** These poetic verses provide one of the most vivid portrayals of a battle scene in the Old Testament. The staccato beat, economy of words, and gruesome detail all contribute to create an image of the Assyrian armies in action, reducing whole populations to "countless corpses" (v. 3).

■ **3:4** With a change of imagery, Nineveh is likened to a beautiful and seductive "harlot" for whose favor "nations" and "families" are sacrificed. Service of the gods, warfare, and commerce were closely intertwined. Seduction by Nineveh's power and pomp implied apostasy from true religion and subjection to her "sorceries," a term probably indicating the totality of pagan religion (Is. 47:12, 13).

■ **3:5** Retribution by the universal Judge is inevitable. See 2:13.

lift your skirts. The public humiliation by which harlots were punished.

■ **3:6** The image of the harlot is continued. She will be made an object of scorn and an example to deter others from doing the same.

■ **3:7 Nineveh . . . laid waste.** The sight is so terrible that people will retreat from it in horror. So dreadful and truly deserved will be the disaster that no one will be found to mourn or comfort the nation in its downfall.

■ **3:8 No Amon.** See text note. The city of the god Amon, better known as Thebes. This ancient and magnificent metropolis of Upper Egypt fell to the Assyrians in 663 B.C. Located on the Nile some 400 miles upstream from Memphis, it may have had moats and canals as defenses. There is probably a figurative element in Nahum's emphasis on the sea. In Scripture, a river or sea is often an emblem for strength that only God can overcome (Ex. 15; Ps. 114:3–5; Is. 23:3, 4; Matt. 8:27).

■ **3:9 Put.** Traditionally identified with Libya.

■ **3:11 drunk.** Apparently a figurative reference to the cup of the Lord's anger, from which all who defy Him are forced to drink (Is. 51:17–23). Nineveh in her distress tries to hide and find refuge, but only the Lord provides refuge in times of trouble (1:7). Compared to Him even the most powerful are weak and vulnerable (vv. 12–17).

You will be hidden;
You also will seek refuge from the enemy.

12 All your strongholds *are* [q]fig trees with ripened figs:
If they are shaken,
They fall into the mouth of the eater.
13 Surely, [r]your people in your midst *are* women!
The gates of your land are wide open for your enemies;
Fire shall devour the [s]bars of your *gates.*

14 Draw your water for the siege!
[t]Fortify your strongholds!
Go into the clay and tread the mortar!
Make strong the brick kiln!
15 There the fire will devour you,
The sword will cut you off;
It will eat you up like a [u]locust.

Make yourself many—like the locust!
Make yourself many—like the *swarming* locusts!
16 You have multiplied your [v]merchants more than the stars of heaven.
The locust plunders and flies away.
17 [w]Your commanders *are* like *swarming* locusts,
And your generals like great grasshoppers,
Which camp in the hedges on a cold day;
When the sun rises they flee away,
And the place where they *are* is not known.

18 [x]Your shepherds slumber, O [y]king of Assyria;
Your nobles rest *in the dust.*
Your people are [z]scattered on the mountains,
And no one gathers them.
19 Your injury *has* no healing,
[a]Your wound is severe.
[b]All who hear news of you
Will clap *their* hands over you,
For upon whom has not your wickedness passed continually?

12 [q]Rev. 6:12, 13
13 [r]Is. 19:16; Jer. 50:37; 51:30 [s]Ps. 147:13; Jer. 51:30
14 [t]Nah. 2:1
15 [u]Joel 1:4
16 [v]Rev. 18:3, 11–19
17 [w]Rev. 9:7
18 [x]Ex. 15:16; Ps. 76:5, 6; Is. 56:10; Jer. 51:57 [y]Jer. 50:18; Ezek. 31:3 [z]1 Kin. 22:17; Is. 13:14
19 [a]Jer. 46:11; Mic. 1:9 [b]Job 27:23; Lam. 2:15; Zeph. 2:15

■ **3:12 fig trees.** This telling image emphasizes that the normally impregnable fortresses are now not only desirable but easy to take.

■ **3:13** In the face of the approaching army all the Assyrian troops are like women (i.e., not trained for warfare). All barriers to slow the enemy's advance, such as gates and bars, have been removed.

■ **3:14** Frantic efforts must be made to "fortify . . . strongholds" and to prepare for a lengthy period of siege. The imperatives are ironic; vv. 14–17 reflect the mood of a derisive taunt song.

■ **3:15** Even the most strenuous efforts to avoid invasion are useless. The city and its people succumb to fire and sword.

■ **3:16 merchants.** Assyria's international trade and commerce brought people and wealth to Nineveh. Under pressure from outside, the self-interest of these traders becomes clear. Having gathered like locusts, they seize what they can and disappear.

■ **3:17 commanders . . . generals.** These two terms are rare in Hebrew and may be Assyrian loan-words. They probably represent important officials in the government of the vast empire. When things become dangerous they run away. Riches, power, and organization fail miserably as the nation collapses.

sun rises. The appearance of the Lord's judgment will scatter His enemies as dramatically as the heat of day rouses and disperses sleeping locusts (cf. Ps. 84:11; Mal. 4:1–3).

■ **3:18, 19** The finality of divine judgment on the cruel oppressor leads to universal rejoicing. These verses are reminiscent of funeral dirges and taunt songs of the period.

■ **3:18 shepherds.** A well-known metaphor for leaders indicates the subordinate rulers of the Assyrian king.

slumber . . . rest. Striking euphemisms for death.

Your people . . . gathers them. The pastoral image is extended to the people (or perhaps the army) as a flock of sheep. In the absence of shepherds, the people are scattered (cf. 1 Kin. 22:17).

■ **3:19** The "news" of Nineveh's incurable "wound" and fatal "injury" is received with general applause. The God of Israel, to whom alone vengeance belongs (Deut. 32:35; Rom. 12:19), has finally put an end to the continual wickedness that had caused such injustice and suffering. The vision of Nahum had its initial fulfillment in 612 B.C. but still awaits its final realization at the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Book of

HABAKKUK

Author

Our only reliable information about Habakkuk and his prophetic activity comes from this book. The meaning of his name is uncertain. It may be connected with a Hebrew word meaning "to embrace," or with the name of an Assyrian plant, the *hambakuku.* The former may refer to his closeness to the Lord; the latter may suggest the penetration of Assyrian culture into Judean society. The reference in 1:1 to Habakkuk as "the prophet" may imply that he was well known. His use of the cultic and wisdom traditions of Israel in his preaching have given rise to the doubtful notion that he was a prophet attached to the temple in Jerusalem, though the suggestion that he worked in Jerusalem is attractive. We can be sure, however, that in this book we meet a true prophet with a burning zeal for the glory of the Lord. His "burden" or "oracle" (1:1 and text note) is remarkable in that it is not, in the first place, a word directed to the people, but an answer to his own painful questions.

Date and Occasion

Objective evidence for dating Habakkuk's prophetic activity is provided by 1:6. The reference to the Chaldeans, or Neo-Babylonians, as the threatening new world power indicates a period after the collapse of the Assyrian Empire (612–605 B.C.) but before the Chaldean armies of Nebuchadnezzar II captured Jerusalem and deported the young king Jehoiachin to Babylon in 597 B.C. (2 Kin. 24:8–17). Habakkuk apparently ministered during Jehoiakim's reign (609–598 B.C.) and was a younger contemporary of Jeremiah.

An important event during this period was the battle of Carchemish in 605 B.C., when Pharaoh Necho II and his Egyptian army, who had come to assist the Assyrians against Babylon, were soundly defeated by Nebuchadnezzar II. Soon afterward, Judah also, like the other previously independent kingdoms of Syro-Palestine, became subject to the powerful Neo-Babylonians. Habakkuk's inspired vision therefore may be dated to the period between 605 and 600 B.C. when the Babylonians became the dominant force on the international scene, mercilessly sweeping aside all opposition (1:5–17).

This time of international threat coincided with a period of increasing moral and spiritual deterioration in Judah. The evil reign of Jehoiakim formed a sad contrast to that of his father, the good king Josiah (Jer. 22:13–19; 26:20–23). As they insolently flouted the covenant laws, the people of Judah increasingly lost their unique character (1:2–4).

Characteristics and Themes

Prophets were not only inspired preachers of divine messages to the people of God; they also shared the Lord's burden for His broken world and His deep concern for His wayward people. In this respect, Habakkuk closely resembles Jeremiah. But even more than with Jeremiah, Habakkuk's dialogue with God and his persistent prayers (2:1, 2; 3:2, 16) take the place of prophetic preaching as the heart of the message.

Habakkuk, a man with a burning passion for the honor of God (1:12; 3:3), experienced a profound spiritual crisis because of the Lord's seeming indifference to appalling spiritual conditions among His people (1:2–4). The absence of covenant life and obedience was dangerous to the people of God, but even more it was a rejection of the covenant Lord and an insult to Him. Because only divine intervention could change this deadly situation, Habakkuk was persistent in his appeal to the heavenly Judge, even when it seemed to be in vain (1:2). In response, the Lord revealed that the Chaldeans now appearing on the scene of history (1:6) would be His instruments of judgment. This cure seemed even worse than the disease and only added to the prophet's distress (1:12–17). How could the holy God, who cannot tolerate wrong (1:13), use such wicked people to fulfill His purposes? Does God really distinguish between good and evil in His sovereignty over history?

Convinced that the events of history were not determined by blind fate but by the righteous and holy God of Israel, Habakkuk expectantly waited on the Lord until he received an answer to his painful questions (2:1). The Lord's reply came in the vision introduced in 2:2, 3, which provides a true perspective on history and gives the divine promise about its outcome. This answer does not resolve all the painful questions, but it does teach God's people the way of covenant life in the here and now (2:3, 4). That way is to persevere in hope, waiting with confidence for the fulfillment of the Lord's unfailing promise. Although God's ways may be inscrutable, His purposes are consistent. They culminate in real life for the faithful, but woe and death for the self-sufficient and arrogant (2:4). The Lord's presence in His temple affirms His Lordship over history and assures us that in the end, His legitimate claim to the whole world will be universally acknowledged (2:14, 20; Is. 45:21–25; 1 Cor. 15:24–28).

The revelation of the Lord's sovereignty over history transforms Habakkuk's complaint into a hymn of joy (3:2–20). Instead of passively waiting for divine intervention, he now prayed positively that the Lord would act in accord with the deeds and qualities He displayed in the Exodus and at Sinai. Anticipating the future,

Habakkuk in his prayer celebrates the Lord's coming (3:3–7), his judgment against nature and the nations (3:8–12), and His triumph over all opposition (3:13–15). From this perspective of faith, even the threat of severe calamity could not dampen Habakkuk's overwhelming joy in expectation of the coming salvation, a salvation guaranteed by the Lord's faithfulness to Himself and to His revelation (3:17–19).

Paul uses Hab. 2:4 as a foundational text for his proclamation of the gospel (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; cf. Heb. 10:35–39). Like Habakkuk (ch. 1), Paul knew that sin is incompatible with God's holiness and that the fatal tension between these opposites could only be resolved by divine intervention. The prophetic word to Habakkuk (ch. 2) reveals in principle the way God would deal with the incompatibility of sin and holiness. The Cross of Christ and the final Judgment are fulfillments of this revelation. Like Habakkuk, Paul also affirmed that true life was only possible in a relationship of total dependence on the Lord. Such dependence, based on the faithfulness of our God, transforms our existence in this world, filling our lives with joy in the certainty of God's faithfulness to His promises (2:3; 3:17–19).

For this reason, Habakkuk can be called a forefather of the Reformation. The key concepts of his preaching, as taken over by Paul, deeply influenced Luther and Calvin, and eventually became watchwords of the Reformation. Only the perspective of faith, or persevering and obedient trust in God, provides for meaningful existence in the world during the present period, between the "already" of initial fulfillment of God's promises and the "not yet" of their final realization.□

Outline of Habakkuk

I. Superscription (1:1)
II. First Complaint: Departure from Covenant Life by God's People (1:2–4)
III. First Response: The Lord Sends the Babylonians (1:5–11)
IV. Second Complaint: Why the Wicked Babylonians? (1:12–17)
V. Second Response: Life for the Faithful but Woe for the Wicked (ch. 2)
  A. The Crucial Distinction Revealed (2:1–5)
  B. From Woe to Worship (2:6–20)
VI. The Prayer of the Prophet (ch. 3)
  A. Superscription; Invocation (3:1, 2)
  B. Divine Self-Revelation (3:3–15)
  C. Faith's Expectation and Jubilation (3:16–19)

CHAPTER 1

THE [1]burden which the prophet Habakkuk saw.

1 [1]*oracle, prophecy*

The Prophet's Question

2 O LORD, how long shall I cry,
[a]And You will not hear?
Even cry out to You, [b]"Violence!"

2 [a]Lam. 3:8 [b]Mic. 2:1, 2; 3:1–3

■ **1:1 burden.** Or, "oracle" (text note); it is often a technical term for a prophecy of judgment against a foreign nation (Is. 13:1; 15:1; Nah. 1:1; Mal. 1:1 note).

the prophet Habakkuk. See Introduction: Author.

saw. The divine message took the form of a supernatural revelation to the prophet's inner sight or hearing (Mic. 1:1).

■ **1:2–4** Habakkuk's first complaint: The prophet was grieved and shocked by how God's people continually departed from covenant life. They no longer lived like a chosen and saved people (Ex. 19:4–6). But Habakkuk is even more concerned about the Lord's apparent inactivity. Breach of the covenant was to bring curses and judgment (Deut. 28:15–68). He therefore appealed to the Lord in language reminiscent of the psalms of individual complaint to redress a seemingly hopeless situation. Habakkuk's passionate dialogue and anguished wrestling with the Lord dominate the first part of the book (1:2—2:20).

■ **1:2 how long.** The impatient question, characteristic of the psalms of lament (Ps. 13:2; 62:3; Jer. 47:6), indicates both importunity and perseverance in the prophet's appeal to the Lord, the final Judge in matters of covenant disobedience.

shall I cry. This indicates the loud cry of someone in deep distress (Ps. 22:24; 30:2).

Violence. This term summarizes the deliberate, brutal, and insensitive infringement of the rights and privileges of members of the covenant community.

You will not save. *Habakkuk painfully observes the Lord's seeming indifference and inactivity in the face of undeserved suffering.*

And You will [c]not save.
3 Why do You show me iniquity,
And cause *me* to see [2]trouble?
For plundering and violence *are* before me;
There is strife, and contention arises.
4 Therefore the law is powerless,
And justice never goes forth.
For the [d]wicked surround the righteous;
Therefore perverse judgment proceeds.

The LORD's Reply

5 "Look[e] among the nations and watch—
Be utterly astounded!
For *I will* work a work in your days
Which you would not believe, though it were told *you.*
6 For indeed I am [f]raising up the Chaldeans,
A bitter and hasty [g]nation
Which marches through the breadth of the earth,
To possess dwelling places *that are* not theirs.
7 They are terrible and dreadful;
Their judgment and their dignity proceed from themselves.
8 Their horses also are [h]swifter than leopards,
And more fierce than evening wolves.
Their [3]chargers [4]charge ahead;
Their cavalry comes from afar;
They fly as the [i]eagle *that* hastens to eat.

9 "They all come for violence;
Their faces are set *like* the east wind.
They gather captives like sand.
10 They scoff at kings,
And princes are scorned by them.
They deride every stronghold,
For they heap up earthen *mounds* and seize it.
11 Then *his* [5]mind changes, and he transgresses;
He commits offense,
[j]*Ascribing* this power to his god."

The Prophet's Second Question

12 Are You not [k]from everlasting,
O LORD my God, my Holy One?

2 [c][Job 21:5–16]
3 [2]Or *toil*
4 [d]Jer. 12:1
5 [e]Is. 29:14; Ezek. 12:22–28
6 [f]Deut. 28:49, 50; 2 Kin. 24:2; 2 Chr. 36:17; Jer. 4:11–13; Mic. 4:10 [g]Ezek. 7:24; 21:31
8 [h]Jer. 4:13 [i]Job 9:26; 39:29, 30; Lam. 4:19; Ezek. 17:3; Hos. 8:1; Matt. 24:28; Luke 17:37 [3]Lit. *horsemen* [4]Lit. *spring about*
11 [j]Dan. 5:4 [5]Lit. *spirit* or *wind*
12 [k]Deut. 33:27; Ps. 90:2; 93:2; Mal. 3:6

■ **1:3 Why.** The question continues the complaint (cf. Lam. 5:20).

trouble. Lit. "labor" or "toil" (text note) that leads to distress, exhaustion, and despondency.

strife, and contention. Unchecked wickedness results in a divided community riddled with suspicions, accusations, and personal attacks.

■ **1:4 the law is powerless.** Lit. "the law is numb." The word for "law" (Hebrew *torah*) denotes the divinely revealed standard for covenant life. The power and influence of the wicked had rendered the law ineffectual.

the wicked. Those in Israel who spurned the Lord's will and law.

■ **1:5–11** God's first response: The Lord will send the Babylonians to judge His people. He uses strange instruments against His unfaithful people—the terrifying Babylonians (cf. Is. 10:5, 6).

■ **1:5 astounded . . . not believe.** God's method—the victory of the wicked over those "more righteous" (v. 13)—would pose a stumbling block to faith among Habakkuk's audience.

■ **1:6 I am raising up.** The sovereign God of Israel controls every power in history, including the aggressive Chaldeans.

Chaldeans. Also called Babylonians, or Neo-Babylonians, the Chaldeans rose to power as the Assyrian Empire fell. Nineveh, capital of Assyria, was destroyed in 612 B.C. The Chaldeans ruled until their capital, Babylon, was destroyed by the Persians in 539.

■ **1:7 judgment . . . from themselves.** This describes the arrogance of the coming enemy whose standards of action and honor were entirely selfish.

■ **1:8, 9** Vivid images portray the speed and resolution of these fierce and overpowering warriors.

■ **1:10 They scoff at kings.** The intimidating Babylonian armies look at obstacles as challenges and treat their opposition with contempt.

heap up earthen mounds. Siege ramps built by attackers to gain access to a fortified city's walls.

■ **1:11 Ascribing this power to his god.** Or, "this his power is his god." Pride, especially the deification of one's own power, is offensive to God, the only One who deserves our worship.

■ **1:12–17** Habakkuk's second complaint: The Lord's plan to use the wicked Babylonians to punish Israel seems to be in flagrant opposition to God's own revealed character.

We shall not die.
O LORD, [l]You have appointed them for judgment;
O Rock, You have marked them for [m]correction.
13 *You are* of purer eyes than to behold evil,
And cannot look on wickedness.
Why do You look on those who deal treacherously,
And hold Your tongue when the wicked devours
A *person* more righteous than he?
14 *Why* do You make men like fish of the sea,
Like creeping things *that have* no ruler over them?

15 They take up all of them with a hook,
They catch them in their net,
And gather them in their dragnet.
Therefore they rejoice and are glad.
16 Therefore [n]they sacrifice to their net,
And burn incense to their dragnet;
Because by them their share *is* [o]sumptuous
And their food plentiful.
17 Shall they therefore empty their net,
And continue to slay nations without pity?

2 I will [a]stand my watch
And set myself on the rampart,
And watch to see what He will say to me,
And what I will answer when I am corrected.

The Just Live by Faith

2 Then the LORD answered me and said:

[b]"Write the vision
And make *it* plain on tablets,
That he may run who reads it.
3 For [c]the vision *is* yet for an appointed time;
But at the end it will speak, and it will [d]not lie.
Though it tarries, [e]wait for it;

12 [l]Is. 10:5–7; Mal. 3:5 [m]Jer. 25:9
16 [n]Deut. 8:17 [o]Lit. *fat*

CHAPTER 2

1 [a]Is. 21:8, 11
2 [b]Is. 8:1
3 [c]Dan. 8:17, 19; 10:14 [d]Ezek. 12:24, 25 [e][Heb. 10:37, 38]

■ **1:12 from everlasting.** As the eternal God of history and Lord of His people, He is free to choose the agents of chastisement.

my God, my Holy One. A personal relationship to the incomparable God, the Holy One, turns confusion into conviction that the present anguish will not be the end.

O Rock. This ancient Mosaic name for God emphasizes divine dependability and protection (Deut. 32:4 note).

■ **1:14 Why do You.** A bold accusation by Habakkuk. If the Lord tolerates the evil actions of the Babylonians, He becomes responsible for the fate of their victims.

men like fish. Imagery of Babylon as a fisherman catching helpless fish is developed in vv. 14–17. Fishing was an important activity in Babylonia, which was located in the region of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers and was bordered on the south by the Persian Gulf. Some ancient Near Eastern wall reliefs portray victorious rulers carrying captives in fishnets.

no ruler over them. There was no one to protect them. Kings in the ancient Near East were seen as the protectors of their people (1 Sam. 8:20). An implicit accusation may also be present here, since the Lord was the ultimate King and protector of His people (Deut. 33:5; Is. 63:18, 19).

■ **1:16 sacrifice.** The instruments of their success are idolized and worshiped (v. 11 note).

■ **2:1–20** Habakkuk receives an answer to his painful questions of 1:12–17. God will show that He is just and the justifier of those who have faith in Him. The final outcome of history will be worship of the one holy and just King (v. 20). The destiny of nations and individuals alike will be determined by their attitude toward God as it has found expression in persevering and faithful dependence or haughty rejection (Ps. 1; 2:2, 3).

■ **2:1** Habakkuk's anguished questioning drove him to the fount of all wisdom to wait for an answer. His words express his determination to wait for an answer. God is sovereign in word as well as in deed—His revelation cannot be forced.

watch . . . rampart. Military terms figuratively depict the prophet as a watchman on the lookout for a word from God.

■ **2:2 Write . . . make it plain.** In order that it might be preserved and transmitted (cf. Jer. 30:2; Nah. 1:1).

vision. See note on 1:1.

That he may run who reads it. Perhaps a figure (though some suggest that Habakkuk actually wrote an oracle on large tablets) indicating that Habakkuk's prophecy was to be publicized. Either the writing was to be so clear that a courier could run with the tablets to read them, or that its clarity should enable passersby to read without difficulty (i.e., "that one may read it swiftly").

■ **2:3 appointed time . . . not tarry.** A fixed period must elapse before the prophecy will be fulfilled, but this should not be regarded as failure or deception. Rather, this time can be endured with the Lord's guarantee of approaching fulfillment. Judgment on the Babylonians came (long after Habakkuk's vision) through Cyrus on October 29, 539 B.C.

Because it will [f]surely come,
It will not tarry.

4 "Behold the proud,
His soul is not upright in him;
But the [g]just shall live by his faith.

Woe to the Wicked

5 "Indeed, because he transgresses by wine,
He is a proud man,
And he does not stay at home.
Because he [h]enlarges his desire as [i]hell,
And he *is* like death, and cannot be satisfied,
He gathers to himself all nations
And heaps up for himself all peoples.

6 "Will not all these [i]take up a proverb against him,
And a taunting riddle against him, and say,
'Woe to him who increases
What is not his—how long?
And to him who loads himself with [2]many pledges'?
7 Will not [3]your creditors rise up suddenly?
Will they not awaken who oppress you?
And you will become their booty.
8 [j]Because you have plundered many nations,

3 [f]Ps. 27:13, 14; [James 5:7, 8; 2 Pet. 3:9]
4 [g][John 3:36]; Rom. 1:17; Heb. 10:38
5 [h]Prov. 27:20; 30:16; Is. 5:11–15 [i]Or *Sheol*
6 [i]Mic. 2:4 [2]Syr., Vg. *thick clay*
7 [3]Lit. *those who bite you*
8 [j]Is. 33:1; Jer. 27:7; Ezek. 39:10; Zech. 2:8

■ **2:4** The Lord now discloses the essential distinction He makes between the wicked, the Babylonians, and the righteous, the remnant of Judah. The wicked take paths that lead to death and defeat; the righteous by faith take a path that leads to life and victory. In brief, this distinction and the promise it contains for the righteous constitute the word of comfort to Habakkuk. It also marks the turning point in his personal struggle over the Lord's use of the wicked Babylonians as a rod of judgment against His people.

the proud. The Babylonian king and kingdom, the embodiment of wickedness in the world. Habakkuk has earlier described their arrogance (1:7, 10, 11).

by his faith. Or, "by his faithfulness." In context here, the Hebrew word denotes steadfast reliance on the Lord, a trust that perseveres. In the midst of a land filled with wickedness (1:2–4) and subject to the wrath of God, the Lord promises that a righteous remnant in Judah will trust in the God who remembers mercy in His wrath (3:2). The Hebrew recalls the words of Gen. 15:6 and applies them to Habakkuk's situation. By faith Abraham waited patiently for the fulfillment of God's promises (Heb. 6:15), and now Habakkuk and the remnant must wait patiently too (v. 3; 3:16). Here Paul found scriptural proof for the doctrine of justification by faith (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11), and Habakkuk's word of comfort has been a key text for Protestant Reformation faith since the sixteenth century.

■ **2:5 transgresses by wine . . . proud man.** The arrogance and insatiability of the Babylonians is compared to a drunkard besotted with wine.

hell . . . death. It was proverbial that death was like a devouring mouth always ready for more to die (Prov. 1:12; 27:20; 30:15, 16).

■ **2:6–20** This section of woes forms a distinct literary unit. Prophetic judgments are presented here in a taunt song, a poetic form that mocks the defeated.

■ **2:6–8** The first woe. Those who plunder others will themselves be plundered.

■ **2:6 all these.** Judah and all those that suffered under the Babylonian oppressor. The prophecies of woe in vv. 6–20 are depicted in such general and proverbial terms that they acquire a universal applicability to the struggle of the persecuted righteous against the wicked.

Woe. The Hebrew word is apparently an interjection derived from the funeral lament (sometimes rendered "Alas," 1 Kin. 13:30), but is often used in prophecies of judgment.

many pledges. The heavy tribute exacted by the Babylonians is figuratively depicted as articles taken in security for debts.

■ **2:8 blood.** The violence and bloodshed through which the Babylonians gained their plunder cries out to be avenged (v. 11; cf. Gen. 4:10).

Living by Faith (2:4)

The prophet's response to the difficult questions put to him: The just shall live by faith.

Question 1:	Why does God not respond to the wrong and injustice in the land (1:2–4)?
Answer:	He is about to respond by using Babylon as a tool of judgment (1:5–11).
Question 2:	Why does God use the wicked Babylonians to punish those more righteous than themselves (1:12, 13)?
Answer:	God has chosen this plan of action (2:2, 3). The just person will live by faith in God (2:4). Woe to the unrighteous (2:6–20).

All the remnant of the people shall plunder you,
Because of men's [4]blood
And the violence of the land *and* the city,
And of all who dwell in it.

9 "Woe to him who covets evil gain for his house,
That he may [k]set his nest on high,
That he may be delivered from the [5]power of disaster!
10 You give shameful counsel to your house,
Cutting off many peoples,
And sin *against* your soul.
11 For the stone will cry out from the wall,
And the beam from the timbers will answer it.

12 "Woe to him who builds a town with bloodshed,
Who establishes a city by iniquity!
13 Behold, *is it* not of the LORD of hosts
That the peoples labor [6]to feed the fire,
And nations weary themselves in vain?
14 For the earth will be filled
With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD,
As the waters cover the sea.

15 "Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbor,
[7]Pressing *him to* your [l]bottle,
Even to make *him* drunk,
That you may look on [8]his nakedness!
16 You are filled with shame instead of glory.
You also—drink!
And [9]be exposed as uncircumcised!
The cup of the LORD's right hand *will be* turned against you,
And utter shame will be on your glory.
17 For the violence *done to* Lebanon will cover you,
And the plunder of beasts *which* made them afraid,
Because of men's blood
And the violence of the land *and* the city,
And of all who dwell in it.

18 "What profit is the image, that its maker should carve it,
The molded image, a teacher of lies,
That the maker of its mold should trust in it,
To make mute idols?
19 Woe to him who says to wood, 'Awake!'

8 [4]Or *bloodshed*

9 [k]Jer. 49:16; Obad. 4 [5]Lit. *hand of evil*

13 [6]Lit. *for what satisfies fire,* for what is of no lasting value

15 [l]Hos. 7:5 [7]Lit. *Attaching* or *Joining* [8]Lit. *their*

16 [9]DSS, LXX *reel!;* Syr., Vg. *fall fast asleep!*

■ **2:9–11** The second woe condemns those who sought security and economic gain at the expense of others.

■ **2:9 nest on high.** Birds of prey often make their nests in high and inaccessible places. Likewise the Babylonians considered their position in world history to be secure (Is. 14:13, 14; 47:7).

■ **2:11 stone will . . . answer it.** A striking personification. This cry against injustice emerges from building materials stolen from others or purchased with unjust gain.

■ **2:12–14** The third woe pronounces judgment on the ruthless but futile efforts of the tyrant to perpetuate his fame.

■ **2:12 builds a town with bloodshed.** Babylonian inscriptions confirm the high premium placed on building activities. Nebuchadnezzar, who used subjugated peoples as forced laborers, took special pride in his building of Babylon (Dan. 4:30). Such projects involved loss of life and were paid for with the spoils of war.

■ **2:13 of the LORD . . . in vain.** God sovereignly ensures that the efforts of the proud to perpetuate their own glory amount to nothing. Instead, the "earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD" (v. 14).

■ **2:15–17** The fourth woe pronounces judgment on Babylon's sadistic and humiliating treatment of others.

■ **2:16 cup of the LORD's right hand.** This biblical metaphor indicates divine retribution (Is. 51:17–23). What the Babylonians did to others will be done to them (vv. 7, 8).

■ **2:17 violence done to Lebanon.** Military campaigns usually caused extensive damage to plants and animals. Trees supplied building material and firewood (Deut. 20:19, 20); wild and domestic animals were killed for food. Many cedar trees were lost during the Babylonian campaign against Lebanon (Is. 14:8). God's concern for His creation should be noted.

■ **2:18–20** The fifth woe denounces idolatry, the worship of false gods, as futile and foolish (Is. 44:9–17; 57:12, 13).

To silent stone, 'Arise! It shall teach!'
Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver,
Yet in it there is no breath at all.

20 "But[m] the LORD is in His holy temple.
Let all the earth keep silence before Him."

The Prophet's Prayer

3 A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet, on [1]Shigionoth.

2 O LORD, I have heard Your speech *and* was afraid;
O LORD, revive Your work in the midst of the years!
In the midst of the years make *it* known;
In wrath remember mercy.

3 God came from Teman,
The Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah

His glory covered the heavens,
And the earth was full of His praise.
4 *His* brightness was like the light;
He had rays *flashing* from His hand,
And there His power *was* hidden.
5 Before Him went pestilence,
And fever followed at His feet.

6 He stood and measured the earth;
He looked and startled the nations.
[a]And the everlasting mountains were scattered,
The perpetual hills bowed.
His ways *are* everlasting.
7 I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction;
The curtains of the land of Midian trembled.

8 O LORD, were *You* displeased with the rivers,
Was Your anger against the rivers,
Was Your wrath against the sea,
That You rode on Your horses,
Your chariots of salvation?
9 Your bow was made quite ready;

20 [m]Zeph. 1:7; Zech. 2:13

CHAPTER 3

1 [1]Exact meaning unknown

6 [a]Nah. 1:5

■ **2:20 temple.** Lit. "palace," the heavenly sanctuary from which the Lord, the Great King, rules His world (Ps. 11:4).

Let all the earth keep silence. A sharp contrast is drawn between the silent idols (v. 19) and the living God, before whom all others must keep silence. The woes of judgment on the proud and wicked culminate in the universal silence of worship in the glorious presence of the incomparable God (v. 14; Ps. 46:10).

■ **3:1–19** This chapter records the persevering prayer of Habakkuk. In moving hymnic style, Habakkuk responds (vv. 16–19) to the Lord's revelation (2:2–5) of His imminent intervention in history on behalf of His people (vv. 3–15). As the Babylonians represented the proud and wicked on their way to ruin, Habakkuk now exemplifies the righteous faithful persevering and already rejoicing in hope of the Lord's promise of life.

■ **3:1 prayer.** Here perhaps a synonym for hymn (Ps. 72:20). The musical and liturgical notations in the heading, text, and conclusion of this prayer are like those commonly found in the psalms. See Introduction to Psalms: Characteristics and Themes.

■ **3:2** The invocation or prologue to the hymn.

heard Your speech. Or, "heard the report of Your deeds." Habakkuk's patience in standing before the Lord (2:1 note) was rewarded by a vision based on God's mighty deeds in the past.

revive Your work. Be present and active as You were in the time of Moses.

■ **3:3–15** Habakkuk's prayer portrays a theophany, or visible self-manifestation of God, using imagery that is found in the traditional descriptions of God's appearances at the Exodus from Egypt, at the giving of the covenant law at Sinai, and during the conquest of Canaan (Ex. 15:1–18; Deut. 33:2, 3; Judg. 5:4, 5; Ps. 18:10; 68:7, 8, 24; 77:16–20).

■ **3:3 Teman.** The name of Esau's grandson represents the land of Edom (Amos 1:12 note).

Mount Paran. A mountain in the wilderness of the Sinai peninsula (Deut. 33:2).

■ **3:5 pestilence, And fever.** Habakkuk pictures ominous dimensions of God's coming in judgment (Deut. 28:21, 22).

■ **3:7 Cushan . . . Midian.** These are possibly alternative names for one people or area, perhaps for nomads from the Sinai peninsula.

■ **3:8–11** The prophet now directly addresses God. The approaching Lord is the invincible Divine Warrior who demonstrates His lordship over the cosmos. Similar poetic imagery is known from Canaanite and other mythologies.

Oaths were sworn over *Your* [2]arrows. Selah

You divided the earth with rivers.
10 The mountains saw You *and* trembled;
The overflowing of the water passed by.
The deep uttered its voice,
And [b]lifted its hands on high.
11 The [c]sun and moon stood still in their habitation;
At the light of Your arrows they went,
At the shining of Your glittering spear.

12 You marched through the land in indignation;
You [3]trampled the nations in anger.
13 You went forth for the salvation of Your people,
For salvation with Your Anointed.
You struck the head from the house of the wicked,
By laying bare from foundation to neck. Selah

14 You thrust through with his own arrows
The head of his villages.
They came out like a whirlwind to scatter me;
Their rejoicing was like feasting on the poor in secret.
15 [d]You walked through the sea with Your horses,
Through the heap of great waters.

16 When I heard, [e]my body trembled;
My lips quivered at *the* voice;
Rottenness entered my bones;
And I trembled in myself,
That I might rest in the day of trouble.
When he comes up to the people,
He will invade them with his troops.

A Hymn of Faith

17 Though the fig tree may not blossom,
Nor fruit be on the vines;
Though the labor of the olive may fail,
And the fields yield no food;
Though the flock may be cut off from the fold,
And there be no herd in the stalls—
18 Yet I will [f]rejoice in the LORD,
I will joy in the God of my salvation.

9 [2]Lit. *tribes* or *rods*, cf. v. 14
10 [b]Ex. 14:22
11 [c]Josh. 10:12–14
12 [3]Or *threshed*
15 [d]Ps. 77:19; Hab. 3:8
16 [e]Ps. 119:120
18 [f]Is. 41:16; 61:10

■ **3:11 stood still.** See Josh. 10:12, 13.

■ **3:12–15** The Lord of nature also has absolute power over the forces of history. He comes to deliver His people and judge the wicked.

■ **3:12 trampled.** Or, "threshed" (text note). An agricultural image derived from the way grain was threshed by violent beating or trampling (Amos 1:3 note).

■ **3:13 You went forth.** In the past the Lord came out of His sanctuary for the salvation of His people in distress. This is what Habakkuk expects Him to do again.

For salvation . . . Anointed. Or, "to save Your Anointed." Possibly a synonym for the chosen people of Israel (cf. Ps. 105:15), but more probably a reference to the Davidic kingship as it came to final expression in the Messiah (Ps. 132:10).

■ **3:15 through the sea.** Habakkuk refers again to the Exodus history in which God displayed His undisputed dominion over natural and historical forces.

■ **3:16** Together with v. 2, this verse encloses the hymn of vv. 3–15 with autobiographical references at beginning and end.

my body trembled. Habakkuk describes in physical terms the profound effect that the divine self-revelation had on him (cf. Jer. 4:19). The Lord answered his painful questions and will hear his prayer.

That I might . . . of trouble. Or, "I wait quietly for the day of trouble." Awed by the divine majesty, Habakkuk may rest in the assurance that the Lord will judge the wicked.

■ **3:17, 18** Even when crops and herds fail (a horrifying thought in the context of an agricultural economy), and society lives with hunger and poverty, Habakkuk's trusting expectation will not be crushed. Hope and trust transform his fear of the future into the desire to rejoice always in God his Savior (Rom. 8:35–39).

19 [g]2 Sam. 22:34; Ps. 18:33 [h]Deut. 32:13; 33:29 [i]Heb. *YHWH Adonai*

19 [i]The LORD God is my strength;
He will make my feet like [g]deer's *feet,*
And He will make me [h]walk on my high hills.

To the Chief Musician. With my stringed instruments.

■ **3:19 The LORD God is my strength.** Total dependence on the sovereign covenant Lord is Habakkuk's key to life.

deer's feet . . . walk on my high hills. This striking figure portrays the strength and confidence the Lord imparts to the righteous (Is. 40:29–31).

Chief Musician. See note on v. 1.

The Book of

ZEPHANIAH

Author Zephaniah's lineage is traced back to the fourth generation, which is unique in the prophetic literature. This may indicate that the Hezekiah (715–686 B.C.) mentioned in the fourth generation is the well-known king of Judah by that name. The name Zephaniah, which means "Yahweh [the LORD] hides," is used of a priest who was a contemporary of Jeremiah (21:1; 29:25) and of other persons in the Old Testament (Zech. 6:10, 14). Though the prophet employs priestly vocabulary at several points (1:4–5, 7–9; 3:4, 18), there is no conclusive evidence to indicate he was officially associated with the temple.

Date and Occasion Zephaniah prophesied in the southern kingdom of Judah when Josiah (640–609 B.C.) was king. However, there is some question as to whether the prophet's ministry preceded or followed Josiah's great reform of the nation's worship in 621 B.C. Zephaniah's denunciation of continuing syncretistic worship (mixing the idolatry of the surrounding peoples with the worship of the LORD) and of Baal worship points to a date prior to Josiah's reforms. All that can be said with certainty is that Nineveh had not yet been destroyed (2:13–15); therefore the prophet's message was spoken prior to its destruction in 612 B.C. Zephaniah would have been a contemporary of Jeremiah, whose call came in Josiah's thirteenth year (627 B.C.). If his ministry is dated in the earlier part of Josiah's reign, then he was instrumental in bringing about Josiah's reforms since the sins he attacked (1:4–6) are those abolished by Josiah's reforms (2 Kin. 23:4; 2 Chr. 34:1–7).

Characteristics and Themes The focal point of the prophet's message is the day of the Lord, in which a foreign enemy, the Lord's sword of judgment (2:12; Is. 10:5), would inflict severe destruction upon Jerusalem (1:4, 10, 11; 2:1). This enemy has been variously identified as the Scythians, the Assyrians, or the Babylonians, depending on when the book is dated. Zephaniah's treatment of this subject is extensive. The day is near (1:7) and will be a day in which the wrath and anger of Israel's sovereign Lord will be directed against the wicked (1:15, 18; 2:2, 3). It is a day of darkness and gloom (1:15). So determined is the Lord to root out evil that He conducts a thorough search to ensure that the wicked will be found and destroyed (1:12). In that day pride will be vanquished (3:11), and the humble of the land (the remnant) saved (3:12, 17). The Gentiles also will come to faith in the true and living God and will "call on the name of the LORD" (3:9; Joel 2:32).

A less obvious point, but one that is alluded to throughout Zephaniah, is the prophet's recognition of the importance of the Lord's covenant with His people. Although Zephaniah never uses the word "covenant," some passages echo details of previous covenantal encounters and provisions. Certainly the complaints against Judah reflect the Lord's anger at their neglect of the covenant obligations.

Like many of the other prophets, the book begins with a message of universal judgment (1:2, 3) and ends with an oracle of salvation in which both the nations (3:9) and the revitalized remnant of Israel (3:12, 13) are brought into a saving relationship with the Lord (3:19, 20). Zephaniah sees the judgment as transforming the world by bringing all people's works, both good and evil, under divine scrutiny. The restorative nature of God's wrath is indicated by the change of tone from the warnings of 1:2, 3 ("I will utterly consume everything") to the hope expressed in 3:14–17. Also, the prophet's terminology indicates his awareness of the messages of his predecessors (cf. 1:7 and Hab. 2:20; Zeph. 1:14 and Joel 1:15; Zeph. 1:7 and Is. 34:6). □

Outline of Zephaniah

I. Superscription (1:1)
II. Prophecies of Judgment (1:2–6)
  A. Against All Nations (1:2, 3)
  B. Against Judah (1:4–6)
III. The Day of the Lord: Accusation and Judgment (1:7–18)

IV. The Call to Repentance (2:1–3)
V. Prophecies Against the Nations (2:4–15)
A. Philistia (2:4–7)
B. Moab and Ammon (2:8–11)
C. Ethiopia (2:12)
D. Assyria (2:13–15)
VI. Accusation Against Jerusalem (3:1–5)
VII. Judgment Against All Nations (3:6–8)
VIII. The Purification and Restoration of Judah's Remnant (3:9–20)

CHAPTER 1

1 [a]2 Kin. 22:1, 2; 2 Chr. 34:1–33; Jer. 1:2; 22:11

2 [1]Lit. *make a complete end of,* Jer. 8:13

3 [b]Hos. 4:3 [2]Idols [3]*ground*

4 [c]2 Kin. 23:5; Hos. 10:5 [4]Fulfilled in 2 Kin. 23:4, 5 [5]Heb. *chemarim*

5 [d]2 Kin. 23:12; Jer. 19:13 [e]Josh. 23:7 [6]Or *Malcam,* an Ammonite god, 1 Kin. 11:5; Jer. 49:1; *Molech,* Lev. 18:21

6 [f]Is. 1:4; Jer. 2:13 [g]Hos. 7:7

7 [h]Hab. 2:20; Zech. 2:13 [i]Is. 13:6

THE word of the LORD which came to Zephaniah the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hezekiah, in the days of [a]Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah.

The Great Day of the LORD

2 "I will [1]utterly consume everything
From the face of the land,"
Says the LORD;
3 "I[b] will consume man and beast;
I will consume the birds of the heavens,
The fish of the sea,
And the [2]stumbling blocks along with the wicked.
I will cut off man from the face of the [3]land,"
Says the LORD.

4 "I will stretch out My hand against Judah,
And against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem.
[4]I will cut off every trace of Baal from this place,
The names of the [c]idolatrous[5] priests with the *pagan* priests—
5 Those [d]who worship the host of heaven on the housetops;
Those who worship and swear *oaths* by the LORD,
But who *also* swear [e]by [6]Milcom;
6 [f]Those who have turned back from *following* the LORD,
And [g]have not sought the LORD, nor inquired of Him."

7 [h]Be silent in the presence of the Lord GOD;
[i]For the day of the LORD *is* at hand,

■ **1:1** Superscription. See Introduction: Author; Date and Occasion.

word of the LORD. The phrase refers to revelation received from the Lord and communicated through a prophet.

■ **1:2–6** The prophet begins with an announcement of universal judgment (vv. 2, 3), and quickly particularizes it against Judah and Jerusalem (v. 4). Three specific sins are denounced: idolatry (v. 4), syncretism (v. 5), and religious indifference (v. 6).

■ **1:3 consume man.** See Matt. 13:41, 42. The coming judgment is compared to that of the Genesis flood by use of the phrases "man and beast" and "birds of the heavens" (cf. Gen. 6:7; 7:23). This prophecy will be consummated at the end of history (2 Pet. 3:3–7).

■ **1:4 stretch out My hand.** This phrase refers to the power of God unleashed against His antagonists (2:13; Ex. 3:20; Deut. 4:34; Is. 5:25).

trace of Baal. All that remains of Baal worship will be destroyed. This statement may mean that a religious renewal was already underway and that Baal worship was in decline.

■ **1:5 Those who worship the host of heaven.** Baal worship and the worship of the stars were sins that had contributed to the demise of the northern kingdom in the eighth century B.C. (2 Kin. 17:16). Altars were apparently erected upon the roofs of the houses (2 Kin. 23:12; Jer. 19:13).

Milcom. Or, "Molech" (text note). Worship of this Ammonite god, which involved the hideous practice of child sacrifice, was strictly forbidden (Lev. 18:21 note; 20:2–5; cf. 1 Kin. 11:5; 2 Kin. 23:10; Jer. 32:35).

■ **1:6 sought the LORD.** See 2:3.

■ **1:7 Be silent.** See Hab. 2:20; Zech. 2:13; Ps. 46:10. The prophet calls for trustful submission to the sovereign, covenant God. The command to "be silent" is often linked to being in the presence of the holy God (Hab. 2:20; Zech. 2:13).

the day of the LORD. This term occurs frequently in the Old Testament prophets. It can refer to any specific time when the Divine Warrior, the Lord of Hosts, is glorious in victory: against Babylon through the Medes (Is. 13:1—14:27), against Egypt through Babylon (Ezek. 30:2–4), or against Israel through Assyria (Is. 10:5, 6, 20, 24). This day of the Lord's vengeance against the wicked is also depicted as the time of Israel's deliverance (Is. 34:2—35:10), when the Lord decisively defeats all of Israel's opposition (2:2, 9; 3:8–20; Joel 3:14–16). It is also the day of final judgment (Amos 5:18–20). See notes on Ezek. 7:7 and Amos 5:18.

the LORD has prepared a sacrifice. The imminent judgment coming upon Judah is compared to sacrifices. The nation is a sacrificial lamb (Is. 34:6; Jer. 46:10; Ezek. 39:17–19).

invited His guests. Or, "consecrated His guests" (text note). The invited

For [j]the LORD has prepared a sacrifice;
He has [7]invited His guests.

8 "And it shall be,
In the day of the LORD's sacrifice,
That I will punish [k]the princes and the king's children,
And all such as are clothed with foreign apparel.
9 In the same day I will punish
All those who [l]leap over the threshold,
Who fill their masters' houses with violence and deceit.

10 "And there shall be on that day," says the LORD,
"The sound of a mournful cry from [m]the Fish Gate,
A wailing from the Second Quarter,
And a loud crashing from the hills.
11 [n]Wail, you inhabitants of [8]Maktesh!
For all the merchant people are cut down;
All those who handle money are cut off.

12 "And it shall come to pass at that time
That I will search Jerusalem with lamps,
And punish the men
Who are [o]settled[9] in complacency,
[p]Who say in their heart,
'The LORD will not do good,
Nor will He do evil.'
13 Therefore their goods shall become booty,
And their houses a desolation;
They shall build houses, but not inhabit *them;*
They shall plant vineyards, but [q]not drink their wine."

14 [r]The great day of the LORD *is* near;
It is near and hastens quickly.
The noise of the day of the LORD is bitter;
There the mighty men shall cry out.
15 [s]That day *is* a day of wrath,
A day of trouble and distress,
A day of devastation and desolation,
A day of darkness and gloominess,
A day of clouds and thick darkness,
16 A day of [t]trumpet and alarm
Against the fortified cities
And against the high towers.

7 [j]Deut. 28:26; Is. 34:6; Jer. 46:10; Ezek. 39:17–19 [7]Lit. *set apart, consecrated*

8 [k]Jer. 39:6

9 [l]1 Sam. 5:5

10 [m]2 Chr. 33:14; Neh. 3:3; 12:39

11 [n]James 5:1 [8]A market district of Jerusalem, lit. *Mortar*

12 [o]Jer. 48:11; Amos 6:1 [p]Ps. 94:7 [9]Lit. *on their lees;* like the dregs of wine

13 [q]Deut. 28:39

14 [r]Jer. 30:7; Joel 2:1, 11

15 [s]Is. 22:5

16 [t]Is. 27:13; Jer. 4:19

guests may be the nations who serve as the divine instrument of judgment (Is. 10:5–10; Hab. 1:6). Alternatively, the invited guests (the covenant people) are themselves the sacrificial offerings. The consecration of guests is necessary to maintain the holiness of the Lord (Ex. 19:10; 24:9–11), and recalls elements of the covenant ritual at Mount Sinai (vv. 15, 16 note).

■ **1:8 the princes.** The sons of the king and other royal officials. Their lack of commitment to the covenant is evidenced by their adoption of foreign customs and attire, a sign of religious disloyalty.

■ **1:9 threshold.** The threshold of a pagan sanctuary. Probably a Philistine religious practice was being imitated (1 Sam. 5:5).

■ **1:11 merchant.** Cries of anguish come from all parts of the city, depicting the extent of the evil and the judgment. The wealthier merchant class is singled out for their greed and corrupt business practices (Amos 8:4–6).

■ **1:12 I will search.** There is no escape from the divine scrutiny (Ps. 139; Amos 9:1–4).

settled in complacency. See text note. The prophet draws a word picture from the wine-making process. Like the sediment of wine, which settles and thickens if left undisturbed, the citizens of Jerusalem have become settled (confirmed) in their indifference toward God. Because they are thoroughly complacent toward God, they regard Him as morally indifferent toward good or evil.

■ **1:14–18** Zephaniah elaborates further on the day of the Lord, setting the stage for his strong plea for repentance in 2:1–3.

■ **1:15, 16** The day of the Lord is presented in frightful images recalling the theophany that accompanied the establishment of the Mosaic covenant at Mount Sinai (Ex. 19:16), the terms of which Judah has broken. Some suggest that "day of the LORD" here can be regarded as the day of His covenant, when the Lord establishes His covenant or enforces its provisions.

17 [u]Deut. 28:29
18 [v]Ezek. 7:19

CHAPTER 2

1 [a]2 Chr. 20:4; Joel 1:14; 2:16 [f]Or *shameless*
3 [b]Ps. 105:4; Amos 5:6 [c]Ps. 76:9 [d]Joel 2:14; Amos 5:14, 15
4 [e]Jer. 47:1, 5; Amos 1:7, 8; Zech. 9:5 [f]Jer. 6:4
5 [g]Ezek. 25:15–17 [h]Josh. 13:3
6 [i]Is. 17:2 [z]Underground huts or cisterns, lit. *excavations*
7 [j][Mic. 5:7, 8]

17 "I will bring distress upon men,
And they shall [u]walk like blind men,
Because they have sinned against the LORD;
Their blood shall be poured out like dust,
And their flesh like refuse."

18 [v]Neither their silver nor their gold
Shall be able to deliver them
In the day of the LORD's wrath;
But the whole land shall be devoured
By the fire of His jealousy,
For He will make speedy riddance
Of all those who dwell in the land.

A Call to Repentance

2 Gather[a] yourselves together, yes, gather together,
O [f]undesirable nation,
2 Before the decree is issued,
Or the day passes like chaff,
Before the LORD's fierce anger comes upon you,
Before the day of the LORD's anger comes upon you!
3 [b]Seek the LORD, [c]all you meek of the earth,
Who have upheld His justice.
Seek righteousness, seek humility.
[d]It may be that you will be hidden
In the day of the LORD's anger.

Judgment on Nations

4 For [e]Gaza shall be forsaken,
And Ashkelon desolate;
They shall drive out Ashdod [f]at noonday,
And Ekron shall be uprooted.
5 Woe to the inhabitants of [g]the seacoast,
The nation of the Cherethites!
The word of the LORD *is* against you,
O [h]Canaan, land of the Philistines:
"I will destroy you;
So there shall be no inhabitant."

6 The seacoast shall be pastures,
With [z]shelters for shepherds [i]and folds for flocks.
7 The coast shall be for [j]the remnant of the house of Judah;
They shall feed *their* flocks there;

■ **1:17 they shall walk like blind men.** One of the covenant curses found in Deut. 28:28, 29.

they have sinned. The reason for the Lord's judgment of Judah is stated in general terms. See note on 3:1–5.

■ **1:18 Neither their silver nor their gold.** See Ps. 49:6–9; Prov. 11:4; Matt. 16:26; Luke 12:13–21.

jealousy. See Ex. 20:5; 34:14; Deut. 4:24. God's jealousy presupposes His covenant love. He has redeemed a people to make them His "special treasure" (Ex. 19:5). God's covenant love demands the absolute loyalty of His people.

■ **2:1–3** As the Lord's representatives to enforce the covenant, the prophets often warned God's people (Is. 1:16–20; 55:1–6; Hos. 2:4, 5; 4:15; Amos 4:12; 5:5, 6; Mic. 6:8).

■ **2:1 Gather yourselves together.** They are called to assemble in order to hear (cf. Is. 34:1; Jer. 4:5; Joel 2:15, 16; 3:11). The call to hear these severe warnings is itself an act of divine grace, for the warnings are designed to elicit repentance.

■ **2:3 Seek the LORD.** See 1:6 and Is. 55:6, 7. Here this seeking of the Lord is further defined as "Seek righteousness, seek humility." A similar pattern is evident in Amos, where the prophet commands, "Seek the LORD" and later "Seek good and not evil" (Amos 5:6, 14).

It may be that you will be hidden. The prophet's tentative words here express both his hope that the "meek" remnant (v. 3) will find refuge from the Lord's wrath (cf. Is. 55:7), and his pessimism that the "undesirable nation" (v. 1) will repent. Cf. Amos 5:15.

■ **2:4–15** This section consists of four prophecies of judgment directed against the foreign nations. Such messages were to assure God's own people that His sovereign purposes extended over their enemies (1:5, 6) and that these nations were also morally accountable for their actions (Amos 1:3—2:3; Mic. 1:2).

■ **2:5 Woe.** The same word of doom later pronounced upon Jerusalem (3:1). It often introduces a prophecy of judgment.

■ **2:7** The judgment of the nations will be accompanied by God's preservation of a remnant from His people (Deut. 32:27 note). Other references in Zephaniah to the remnant occur in v. 9 and 3:9–12.

In the houses of Ashkelon they shall lie down at evening.
For the LORD their God will [k]intervene[3] for them,
And [l]return their captives.

8 "I[m] have heard the reproach of Moab,
And [n]the insults of the people of Ammon,
With which they have reproached My people,
And [o]made arrogant threats against their borders.
9 Therefore, as I live,"
Says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel,
"Surely [p]Moab shall be like Sodom,
And [q]the people of Ammon like Gomorrah—
[r]Overrun[4] with weeds and saltpits,
And a [5]perpetual desolation.
The residue of My people shall plunder them,
And the remnant of My people shall possess them."

10 This they shall have [s]for their pride,
Because they have reproached and made arrogant threats
Against the people of the LORD of hosts.
11 The LORD *will be* awesome to them,
For He will reduce to nothing all the gods of the earth;
[t]*People* shall worship Him,
Each one from his place,
Indeed all [u]the shores of the nations.

12 "You[v] Ethiopians also,
You shall be slain by [w]My sword."

13 And He will stretch out His hand against the north,
[x]Destroy Assyria,
And make Nineveh a desolation,
As dry as the wilderness.
14 The herds shall lie down in her midst,
[y]Every beast of the nation.
Both the [z]pelican and the bittern
Shall lodge on the capitals *of* her *pillars;*
Their voice shall sing in the windows;
Desolation *shall be* at the threshold;
For He will lay bare the [a]cedar work.
15 This is the rejoicing city
[b]That dwelt securely,
[c]That said in her heart,
"I *am it,* and *there is* none besides me."
How has she become a desolation,
A place for beasts to lie down!
Everyone who passes by her
[d]Shall hiss and [e]shake his fist.

7 [k]Luke 1:68 [l]Jer. 29:14 [3]Lit. *visit them*

8 [m]Jer. 48:27; Amos 2:1–3 [n]Ezek. 25:3; Amos 1:13 [o]Jer. 49:1

9 [p]Is. 15:1–9; Jer. 48:1–47 [q]Amos 1:13 [r]Deut. 29:23 [4]Lit. *Possessed by nettles* [5]Or *permanent ruin*

10 [s]Is. 16:6

11 [t]Mal. 1:11 [u]Gen. 10:5

12 [v]Is. 18:1–7; Ezek. 30:4, 5 [w]Ps. 17:13

13 [x]Is. 10:5–27; 14:24–27; Mic. 5:5, 6

14 [y]Is. 13:21 [z]Is. 14:23; 34:11 [a]Jer. 22:14

15 [b]Is. 47:8 [c]Rev. 18:7 [d]Lam. 2:15 [e]Nah. 3:19

return their captives. Or, "restore their fortunes." This widely employed phrase refers to Israel's future salvation beyond the judgment (Deut. 30:3; Ps. 14:7; Jer. 30:3, 18; 32:44; Amos 9:14). Sometimes it refers to the physical return of exiles; in other instances a more general restoration of fortunes is indicated (e.g., Job 42:10).

■ **2:9 Sodom . . . Gomorrah.** These ancient cities symbolize sin and serve as types of God's final judgment on sinners (Gen. 18:20 note; Is. 1:9; Amos 4:11; Matt. 10:5; 2 Pet. 2:6).

■ **2:11 worship Him . . . all the shores of the nations.** See 3:9, 10; Ps. 72:8–11; Is. 56:67.

■ **2:12 My sword.** See Is. 10:5.

■ **2:13 Destroy Assyria.** Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, fell to the Babylonians and Medes in 612 B.C. This verse suggests that Zephaniah prophesied prior to that date (Introduction: Date and Occasion).

■ **2:15 I am . . . none besides me.** This boast is phrased in language similar to what the sovereign Lord alone rightly may use (Deut. 4:39; Is. 45:5, 6; 47:10). Such self-deification meets with ruin, and those who boasted become objects of scorn.

CHAPTER 3

3 [a]Ezek. 22:27 [b]Jer. 5:6; Hab. 1:8

4 [c]Hos. 9:7 [d]Ezek. 22:26; Mal. 2:7, 8 [1]Or *profaned*

5 [e]Jer. 3:3 [2]Lit. *Morning by morning*

7 [f]Jer. 8:6 [g]Gen. 6:12 [3]They were eager

8 [h]Prov. 20:22; Mic. 7:7; Hab. 2:3 [i]Is. 66:18; Ezek. 38:14–23; Joel 3:2; Mic. 4:12; Matt. 25:32 [j]Zeph. 1:18 [4]LXX, Syr. *for witness;* Tg. *for the day of My revelation for judgment;* Vg. *for the day of My resurrection that is to come*

The Wickedness of Jerusalem

3 Woe to her who is rebellious and polluted,
To the oppressing city!
2 She has not obeyed *His* voice,
She has not received correction;
She has not trusted in the LORD,
She has not drawn near to her God.

3 [a]Her princes in her midst *are* roaring lions;
Her judges *are* [b]evening wolves
That leave not a bone till morning.
4 Her [c]prophets are insolent, treacherous people;
Her priests have [1]polluted the sanctuary,
They have done [d]violence to the law.
5 The LORD *is* righteous in her midst,
He will do no unrighteousness.
[2]Every morning He brings His justice to light;
He never fails,
But [e]the unjust knows no shame.

6 "I have cut off nations,
Their fortresses are devastated;
I have made their streets desolate,
With none passing by.
Their cities are destroyed;
There is no one, no inhabitant.
7 [f]I said, 'Surely you will fear Me,
You will receive instruction'—
So that her dwelling would not be cut off,
Despite everything for which I punished her.
But [3]they rose early and [g]corrupted all their deeds.

A Faithful Remnant

8 "Therefore [h]wait for Me," says the LORD,
"Until the day I rise up [4]for plunder;
My determination *is* to [i]gather the nations
To My assembly of kingdoms,
To pour on them My indignation,
All My fierce anger;
All the earth [j]shall be devoured
With the fire of My jealousy.

■ **3:1–5** The references here to prophets, priests, the sanctuary, and the law indicate that the prophet is addressing Jerusalem. The general accusation of 1:17 now becomes specific. Jerusalem's sins were particularly heinous because they were committed against the righteous covenant God who had graciously revealed Himself to His people (v. 5; Amos 2:4, 10–12; 3:2).

■ **3:2 She has not obeyed His voice.** Lit. "she listens to no voice." The people ignored God's voice revealed in the law (Deut. 31:9–13), through the prophets (Jer. 7:23–28; Hag. 1:12), and through the sages (Prov. 1:8).

She has not received correction. See v. 7. Failure to receive correction leads to death (Prov. 5:23), but openness to it leads to life (Prov. 6:23; Jer. 2:30; 5:3; 7:28; 32:33; 35:13; Ps. 50:17).

drawn near. The Hebrew verb here means "to approach God properly in worship" (cf. Lev. 10:3). Worship must come from the heart, not just the mouth (cf. Is. 29:13; John 4:24).

■ **3:3, 4** See Mic. 3:9, 10.

■ **3:3 princes in her midst.** See note on v. 5.

roaring lions. The images of the unclean lion and wolf here describe the predatory and fierce nature of those corrupt government officials, whose proper office was to protect and give stability to society.

■ **3:4 Her prophets . . . Her priests.** For similar condemnations of Israel's spiritual leaders, see Hos. 4:5, 6; Is. 28:7; Jer. 5:31; 6:13; Mic. 3:5–8, 11.

■ **3:5 in her midst.** Zephaniah contrasts the presence of the righteous Lord within Jerusalem and the presence of corrupt and unrighteous leadership within her (v. 3). The essence of God's covenant commitment is the promise of His presence with His people (Ex. 29:42–46 note; Num. 14:14; Is. 43:2). Here, God's presence threatens judgment (Hos. 11:9), but the same phrase in 3:17 signifies salvation.

■ **3:6–8** Attention shifts from Jerusalem to the nations. The prophet notes God's previous judgment of the nations (v. 6), which should have been a lesson to Jerusalem (v. 7), before turning to the future judgment that awaits (v. 8).

■ **3:7 You will receive instruction.** See v. 2.

9 "For then I will restore to the peoples [k]a pure [5]language,
That they all may call on the name of the LORD,
To serve Him with one accord.
10 [l]From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia
My worshipers,
The daughter of My dispersed ones,
Shall bring My offering.
11 In that day you shall not be shamed for any of your deeds
In which you transgress against Me;
For then I will take away from your midst
Those who [m]rejoice in your pride,
And you shall no longer be haughty
In My holy mountain.
12 I will leave in your midst
[n]A meek and humble people,
And they shall trust in the name of the LORD.
13 [o]The remnant of Israel [p]shall do no unrighteousness
[q]And speak no lies,
Nor shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth;
For [r]they shall feed *their* flocks and lie down,
And no one shall make *them* afraid."

Joy in God's Faithfulness

14 [s]Sing, O daughter of Zion!
Shout, O Israel!
Be glad and rejoice with all *your* heart,
O daughter of Jerusalem!
15 The LORD has taken away your judgments,
He has cast out your enemy.
[t]The King of Israel, the LORD, [u]*is* in your midst;
You shall [6]see disaster no more.

16 In that day [v]it shall be said to Jerusalem:
"Do not fear;
Zion, [w]let not your hands be weak.
17 The LORD your God [x]in your midst,

9 [k]Is. 19:18; 57:19 [5]Lit. *lip*
10 [l]Ps. 68:31; Is. 18:1; Acts 8:27
11 [m]Is. 2:12; 5:15; Matt. 3:9
12 [n]Is. 14:32; Zech. 13:8, 9
13 [o]Is. 10:20–22; [Mic. 4:7] [p]Is. 60:21 [q]Zech. 8:3, 16; Rev. 14:5 [r]Ezek. 34:13–15, 28
14 [s]Is. 12:6
15 [t][John 1:49] [u]Ezek. 48:35; [Rev. 7:15] [6]So with Heb. mss., LXX, Bg.; MT, Vg. *fear*
16 [v]Is. 35:3, 4 [w]Job 4:3; Heb. 12:12
17 [x]Zeph. 3:5, 15

■ **3:9–20** The dramatic reversal: Judgment is the prelude to restoration and purification both in Israel and among the nations (vv. 9, 12, 13). In a closing hymn of praise (3:14–20) the prophet sings of the future reign of the Lord, His victory over His enemies, and His love for and presence with His people. The church may sing this song now in celebration of Christ's victory on the Cross (Col. 2:15) and in anticipation of His triumph when He returns (2 Thess. 1:5–10).

■ **3:9 restore . . . a pure language.** See text note. To purify the lips is either to cleanse from sin in general (Is. 6:5) or to remove the names of foreign gods from the lips of a worshiper (Hos. 2:17).

to the peoples. The Gentiles will also call on His name (Is. 52:15; 65:1; 66:18).

all may call on the name of the LORD. In contrast with the idolaters of 1:5, 6. See Gen. 4:26; 1 Kin. 18:24; Jer. 10:25; Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21; Rom. 10:12, 13.

■ **3:11 rejoice in your pride.** See Is. 2:12–18.

■ **3:12 meek and humble.** These are contrasted with the proud and haughty of v. 11.

■ **3:13 remnant.** See note on 2:7.

shall do no unrighteousness. The remnant will be like God. Identical words are used of the Lord in v. 5. A primary goal of salvation is ever-increasing conformity to the image of God (Matt. 5:48; 1 Pet. 1:15, 16).

And speak no lies. In contrast with the deceitful idolaters of 1:9.

feed their flocks and lie down. A common prophetic phrase (Is. 49:9; Mic. 7:14; Jer. 50:19; Ezek. 34:14) portraying the security that comes from trusting God and acknowledging His kingship (v. 15).

no one shall make them afraid. See Mic. 4:4.

■ **3:14 daughter of Zion.** This personification of Jerusalem is based on the practice among poets of personifying places and objects in terms of grammatical gender. The word for "city" in Hebrew is feminine, and the prophet speaks of Zion as "daughter."

■ **3:15 your judgments . . . your enemy.** The basis for the rejoicing in v. 14 is explained: both the judgments against God's people and the enemies that threaten them are overcome. This prophecy finds final fulfillment in Jesus Christ, who satisfied God's judgment against sin and overcame the enemies of God through His death on the Cross (Rom. 3:23–25; Col. 2:15 note).

The King of Israel . . . in your midst. See John 1:49. The promise of God's dwelling in the midst of His people points forward to Christ, the King of Israel (John 1:49) and incarnate glory of God (Ex. 26 note; John 1:14 note).

■ **3:17 He will rejoice over you with gladness.** This delight is grounded in the character of God, who "delights in mercy" (Mic. 7:18).

He will quiet you with His love. The phrase translated "quiet you" may also be rendered "is quiet" or "rests." In the larger context God has been revealed as the Warrior "mighty to save." The former war cry (1:14) is

The Mighty One, will save;
[y] He will rejoice over you with gladness,
He will quiet *you* with His love,
He will rejoice over you with singing."

18 "I will gather those who [z] sorrow over the appointed assembly,
Who are among you,
To whom its reproach *is* a burden.
19 Behold, at that time
I will deal with all who afflict you;
I will save the [a] lame,
And gather those who were driven out;
I will appoint them for praise and fame
In every land where they were put to shame.
20 At that time [b] I will bring you back,
Even at the time I gather you;
For I will give you [7] fame and praise
Among all the peoples of the earth,
When I return your captives before your eyes,"
Says the LORD.

17 [y] Deut. 30:9; Is. 62:5; 65:19; Jer. 32:41
18 [z] Lam. 2:6
19 [a] [Ezek. 34:16; Mic. 4:6, 7]
20 [b] Is. 11:12; Ezek. 28:25; Amos 9:14
[7] Lit. *a name*

now quieted by victory and the loving relationship between God and His people. The Lord's purging and transforming work of grace creates a renewed people who acknowledge His rule and trust in His name (v. 12).

■ **3:19 for praise and fame.** See v. 20. The phrase goes back to Deut. 26:18, 19, where Israel as the Lord's special people is privileged to represent Him and be the tangible means whereby praise, honor, and glory are given to the Lord (cf. Is. 43:7; Jer. 13:11; 33:9). Paul sees the church in this role (Titus 2:14), as does Peter (1 Pet. 2:9–12).

The Book of

HAGGAI

Author The name "Haggai" means "festal," perhaps indicating that the prophet was born during a feast, but our knowledge of this prophet comes only from the Book of Haggai itself and from what the Book of Ezra mentions. The prophets Haggai and Zechariah cooperated to encourage the Jews who had returned from their sixth-century B.C. exile in Babylon to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem (Ezra 5:1; 6:14).

Date and Occasion Haggai and Zechariah share a common historical background, both having begun their ministries in "the second year of King Darius" (520 B.C.). The Jews had returned to Palestine under the edict of the Persian king Cyrus in 538 B.C. and had begun to rebuild the temple. Opposition from the outside and discouragement from within caused them to abandon the project for about sixteen or seventeen years (Ezra 4:1–4). When Haggai and Zechariah began their work in 520 B.C., further opposition came from Tattenai, the Persian governor of Trans-Euphrates, which included Palestine (Ezra 5). But Darius I (Hystaspes), who ruled Persia from 522 to 486 B.C., reissued Cyrus' edict so that the temple was rebuilt within four years (Ezra 6:13–15). The second temple was dedicated on March 12, 516 B.C.

As for Haggai's messages themselves, we learn from his book that they were delivered between August and December of 520 B.C.

Characteristics and Themes Haggai consists of four messages headed by the phrase "the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet" (1:1; 2:1; 2:10; 2:20). These four alternate between calls to repentance in light of God's curses on their land (1:1–11; 2:10–19) and promises of greater blessings on the temple and of the Messiah through the Davidic line (2:1–9; 2:20–23).

Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi use the title "LORD of hosts" more than ninety times (fourteen times in Haggai). This title has military connotations (God as the leader of Israel's armies, 1 Sam. 17:45), but also highlights God's glory (Ps. 24:10) and sovereign kingship over all creation (Amos 4:13).

Although Haggai is the second shortest book in the Old Testament, it is rich with profitable teaching for the church. Through Haggai His messenger (1:13), the Lord calls upon the unfaithful remnant of His covenant people to repent and rebuild His temple. God's concern is based upon His own sovereign pleasure and His desire to be honored (1:8). The people's lack of concern to build the temple showed their deeper lack of desire for God's special presence. They were under the curses of the covenant (1:6, 9, 11 and notes) but did not realize it. In response to Haggai's ministry, the Lord stirred up the spirit of the people (1:14), and they obeyed (1:12).

Haggai reaffirms that the Lord is with His people, just as when He brought them out of Egypt (1:13; 2:4, 5). Haggai's ministry was based on the expectation that God would renew His covenant promises to Israel when He brought them back into the land from captivity in Babylon. Haggai's words draw on those of earlier prophets at a number of points (2:7, 8 and notes). The rebuilding of the temple was an important part of that renewal, and Haggai developed that hope by associating the temple with the coming times of the Messiah (2:9, 23 and notes). The Messiah as God's anointed representative on earth would bring His glory, peace, and prosperity to God's people (2:9). Zerubbabel prefigures that Messiah in Haggai's day, but ultimately only Jesus the Messiah would fulfill the promise made to Zerubbabel to be God's royal ruler ("signet ring") on earth (2:23). Today we are the recipients of these promises and look forward to the final visible enthronement of Christ as Ruler, when once again the Lord will shake heaven and earth (Heb. 12:26). □

Outline of Haggai

I. The First Message: A Call to Rebuild the Temple (ch. 1)
  A. The People's Indifference and Poverty (1:1–11)
  B. The People's Response: Repentance (1:12–15)
II. The Second Message: God's Greater Temple and Blessings (2:1–9)
  A. Encouragement from God's Presence (2:1–5)
  B. Encouragement from God's Promise of Blessing (2:6–9)

III. The Third Message: God's Blessing for a Defiled People (2:10–19)
A. The Cause of Their Defilement (2:10–14)
B. The Results of Their Defilement: Covenant Curses (2:15–17)
C. God's Determination to Bless Them (2:18, 19)
IV. The Fourth Message: God's Victory for His People (2:20–23)
A. God's Overthrow of the Nations (2:20–22)
B. The Enthronement of God's Ruler (2:23)

CHAPTER 1

The Command to Build God's House

1 IN [a]the second year of King Darius, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came by [b]Haggai the prophet to [c]Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to [d]Joshua the son of [e]Jehozadak, the high priest, saying, 2 "Thus speaks the LORD of hosts, saying: 'This people says, "The time has not come, the time that the LORD's house should be built." ' "

3 Then the word of the LORD [f]came by Haggai the prophet, saying, 4 "*Is it* [g]time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, and this [1]temple *to lie* in ruins?" 5 Now therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts: [h]"Consider your ways!

6 "You have [i]sown much, and bring in little;
You eat, but do not have enough;
You drink, but you are not filled with drink;
You clothe yourselves, but no one is warm;
And [j]he who earns wages,
Earns wages *to put* into a bag with holes."

7 Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Consider your ways! 8 Go up to the [k]mountains and bring wood and build the [2]temple, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified," says the LORD. 9 [l]"*You* looked for much, but indeed *it came to* little; and when you brought it home, [m]I blew it away. Why?" says the LORD of hosts. "Because of My house that *is in* ruins, while every one of you runs to his own house. 10 Therefore [n]the heavens above you withhold the dew, and the earth withholds its fruit. 11 For I [o]called for a drought on the land and the mountains, on the grain and

1 [a]Ezra 4:24; Hag. 2:10; Zech. 1:1, 7 [b]Ezra 5:1; 6:14 [c]1 Chr. 3:19; Ezra 2:2; Neh. 7:7; Zech. 4:6; Matt. 1:12, 13 [d]Ezra 5:2, 3; Zech. 6:11 [e]1 Chr. 6:15
3 [f]Ezra 5:1
4 [g]2 Sam. 7:2 [1]Lit. *house*
5 [h]Lam. 3:40
6 [i]Deut. 28:38–40; Hos. 8:7; Hag. 1:9, 10; 2:16, 17 [j]Zech. 8:10
8 [k]Ezra 3:7 [2]Lit. *house*
9 [l]Hag. 2:16 [m]Hag. 2:17
10 [n]Lev. 26:19; Deut. 28:23; 1 Kin. 8:35; Joel 1:18–20
11 [o]1 Kin. 17:1; 2 Kin. 8:1

■ **1:1 sixth month . . . first day.** Each of Haggai's sermons is carefully dated. This one occurred probably on August 29, 520 B.C. Haggai's message is addressed publicly to the leaders so that the people could respond as well (1:12).

Zerubbabel. He is likely the same person as Sheshbazzar (cf. Ezra 1:8), since both are said to have rebuilt the temple. Sheshbazzar could be an official Persian name. Zerubbabel was the grandson of King Jehoiachin (1 Chr. 3:19) and a descendant of David (2:23 note).

Joshua the son of Jehozadak. See 1 Chr. 6:15. A descendant of Zadok the priest. Under Persian rule, Zerubbabel had responsibility over the daily civil affairs of the region. As high priest, Joshua dealt with religious matters.

■ **1:2 This people.** An expression of implied displeasure (2:14). Verses 2–11 indict the spiritual indifference and misplaced priorities of God's people.

The time has not come. Their objection was not to the rebuilding itself, but to the timing of it. The objections may have been economic, because their land was in trouble (cf. vv. 10, 11), or religious, because according to Ezek. 37:24–27 the Messiah would rebuild the temple, or because according to Jer. 25:11–14, the nation must serve a foreign king seventy years. The original temple was destroyed in 586 B.C., and they may have falsely reasoned that they should not start building the new temple until 516 B.C. Such excuses showed that they were not pursuing God's kingdom and righteousness (cf. Matt. 6:33).

the LORD's house. The temple was the dwelling place of God's special presence with His people (1 Kin. 8:27–30). Today God is graciously present in His temple, the church (1 Cor. 3:16, 17).

■ **1:4 paneled houses.** Haggai reveals the hypocrisy of their objections by a rhetorical question. The houses probably had elaborate wooden walls and ceilings (1 Kin. 7:3; Jer. 22:14). They were living in comparative luxury while God's house lay in ruins.

■ **1:6 sown much, and bring in little.** Their economic and social hardship was the effect of God's covenant curse on their disobedience (Deut. 11:8–15; 28:29, 38–40; Lev. 26:20). God frustrated their efforts because of their lack of concern for His glory.

■ **1:8 take pleasure in it and be glorified.** God's purpose in the enterprise was the special joy He would take in this edifice and the appropriate honor He would thereby receive from His people. Their lack of concern for rebuilding indicated their lack of spiritual health.

■ **1:9 runs to his own house.** The focus of their lives was on building personal fortunes rather than building God's kingdom.

■ **1:11 a drought.** The drought on Judah's crops was God's curse on their agriculture, in keeping with His covenant (1:6 note; Deut. 7:13). The Hebrew word translated "ruins" in v. 9 sounds like the Hebrew word for "drought" here. Haggai's play on words reinforces the point that the drought was God's response to their neglect of His house.

the new wine and the oil, on whatever the ground brings forth, on men and livestock, and on [p]all the labor of *your* hands."

The People's Obedience

12 [q]Then Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the LORD their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him; and the people feared the presence of the LORD. 13 Then Haggai, the LORD's messenger, spoke the LORD's message to the people, saying, [r]"I *am* with you, says the LORD." 14 So [s]the LORD stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, [t]governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; [u]and they came and worked on the house of the LORD of hosts, their God, 15 on the twenty-fourth day of the sixth month, in the second year of King Darius.

The Coming Glory of God's House

2 In the seventh *month,* on the twenty-first of the month, the word of the LORD came [1]by Haggai the prophet, saying: 2 "Speak now to Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people, saying: 3 [a]'Who is left among you who saw this [2]temple in its former glory? And how do you see it now? In comparison with it, [b]*is this* not in your eyes as nothing? 4 Yet now [c]be strong, Zerubbabel,' says the LORD; 'and be strong, Joshua, son of Jehozadak, the high priest; and be strong, all you people of the land,' says the LORD, 'and work; for I *am* with you,' says the LORD of hosts. 5 [d]'*According to* the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt, so [e]My Spirit remains among you; do not fear!'

6 "For thus says the LORD of hosts: [f]'Once more (it *is* a little while) [g]I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; 7 and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to [h]the [3]Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this [4]temple with [i]glory,' says the LORD of hosts. 8 'The silver *is*

11 [p]Hag. 2:17

12 [q]Ezra 5:2

13 [r][Matt. 28:20; Rom. 8:31]

14 [s]2 Chr. 36:22; Ezra 1:1 [t]Hag. 2:21 [u]Ezra 5:2, 8; Neh. 4:6

CHAPTER 2

1 [1]Lit. *by the hand of*

3 [a]Ezra 3:12, 13 [b]Zech. 4:10 [2]Lit. *house*

4 [c]Deut. 31:23; 1 Chr. 22:13; 28:20; Zech. 8:9; Eph. 6:10

5 [d]Ex. 29:45, 46 [e][Neh. 9:20]; Is. 63:11, 14

6 [f]Heb. 12:26 [g][Joel 3:16]

7 [h]Gen. 49:10; Mal. 3:1 [i]1 Kin. 8:11; Is. 60:7; Zech. 2:5 [3]Or *desire of all nations* [4]Lit. *house*

■ **1:12 remnant.** A common term used by the prophets for those of God's people who remain faithful to Him in the midst of unbelief (Is. 10:22; cf. Zech. 13:9). Paul later points to a faithful remnant in Israel—the Jews who embraced Christ (Rom. 11:5).

voice of the LORD . . . words of Haggai. They recognized God's word through the voice of the prophet. God's word accomplishes its intended purpose (Is. 55:1; Heb. 4:12).

■ **1:13 I am with you.** As the people repented of their sin they received the greatest assurance possible, the presence of God. God's gracious presence with His people is the heart of the covenant relationship (Zech. 8:8 note).

■ **1:14 stirred up the spirit.** God Himself brought about the response of His people by His presence with them. Haggai emphasizes the internal response by the threefold repetition of "spirit." God's Spirit worked efficaciously through His word, in order to achieve His sovereign purpose (cf. Is. 55:11).

■ **1:15 twenty-fourth day of the sixth month.** Probably September 21, 520 B.C.

■ **2:1–9** The Lord again spoke to the people, this time encouraging them to continue building. Reports about the magnificence of the now-destroyed temple of Solomon were apparently a source of discouragement (v. 3). The Lord first assured them of His continued presence with them—a promise for the present (vv. 4, 5). Second, He assured them about the future goal of their project (vv. 6–9). Though it appeared humble in comparison, the glory of this temple would finally far outstrip Solomon's temple because it would be graced by the presence of the Messiah Himself (v. 9 note).

■ **2:1 seventh month . . . twenty-first.** October 17, 520 B.C. According to Lev. 23:33–43, this was the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, during which God's people were to rejoice in God's provision for them in the wilderness and the blessings of the harvest. There was not much to rejoice in, however, since their harvest was meager (1:11).

■ **2:2 the remnant of the people.** Haggai's first sermon was addressed to the leaders because they had to initiate the work. The people are included here because this message is intended to encourage them about the task at hand.

■ **2:3 this temple in its former glory.** Verses 1–3 suggest that the people were discouraged by the new temple's relative lack of splendor (cf. 2 Chr. 3; 4) and by the difficulty of the task ahead of them.

■ **2:4 be strong.** Threefold repetition adds emphasis to the command. Similar commands accompanied the building of Solomon's temple (1 Chr. 22:13; 28:20; cf. Gal. 6:9).

I am with you. The Lord's presence and His sustaining strength guarantee the ultimate success of their labors.

■ **2:5 that I covenanted with you.** God's covenant promises, made with His people in the Exodus from Egypt, now assure them of His presence (cf. Ex. 33:12–17; Num. 11:16–17). His mighty Spirit is present, just as in the days of the great deliverance from Egypt.

■ **2:6 Once more . . . I will shake.** As is common in the prophets, the near and distant future are telescoped, or compressed together. Here references to the glory of the second temple are juxtaposed with a picture of the final universal judgment on the cosmos. While this shaking may be prefigured by political events occurring shortly after the time of Haggai (e.g., the defeat of Persia by the Greeks), the ultimate shaking of the created order is still to come (Heb. 12:26–28).

■ **2:7 Desire of All Nations.** See text note. Though the Hebrew term translated "Desire" could refer to a person (i.e., the Messiah), the immediate context here favors a reference to the things desired by all nations (i.e., the things precious to them). Verse 8 speaks of such precious things, and the decree of King Darius, during whose reign Haggai ministered, alludes to precious things being contributed to the temple building project (Ezra 6:3–5, 8–9). Here Haggai probably echoes Isaiah's promise of an Israel made rich by the wealth of the nations (Is. 60:5). In other words, he speaks of the Messianic age.

fill this temple with glory. God's intention is to honor Himself by manifesting His glorious presence before "all nations." As God's presence fills the temple, the nations come to the light (Is. 2:3–5; 60:3).

■ **2:8 The silver . . . the gold.** As the sovereign possessor of all things (cf. Ps. 24:1; 50:9–12), God will bring about both His own glorification and His people's inheritance of the nations' wealth (Is. 60:5). See note on v. 7.

Mine, and the gold *is* Mine,' says the LORD of hosts. 9*j* 'The glory of this latter [5]temple shall be greater than the former,' says the LORD of hosts. 'And in this place I will give *k*peace,' says the LORD of hosts."

The People Are Defiled

10 On the twenty-fourth *day* of the ninth *month,* in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came by Haggai the prophet, saying, 11 "Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Now, *l*ask the priests *concerning the* law, saying, 12 "If one carries holy meat in the fold of his garment, and with the edge he touches bread or stew, wine or oil, or any food, will it become holy?" ' "

Then the priests answered and said, "No."

13 And Haggai said, "If *one who is* *m*unclean *because* of a dead body touches any of these, will it be unclean?"

So the priests answered and said, "It shall be unclean."

14 Then Haggai answered and said, *n*" 'So is this people, and so is this nation before Me,' says the LORD, 'and so is every work of their hands; and what they offer there is unclean.

Promised Blessing

15 'And now, carefully *o*consider from this day forward: from before stone was laid upon stone in the temple of the LORD— 16 since those *days,* *p*when *one* came to a heap of twenty ephahs, there were *but* ten; when *one* came to the wine vat to draw out fifty baths from the press, there were *but* twenty. 17 *q*I struck you with blight and mildew and hail *r*in all the labors of your hands; *s*yet you did not *turn* to Me,' says the LORD. 18 'Consider now from this day forward, from the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, from *t*the day that the foundation of the LORD's temple was laid—consider it: 19 *u*Is the seed still in the barn? As yet the vine, the fig tree, the pomegranate, and the olive tree have not yielded *fruit. But* from this day I will *v*bless *you.*' "

Zerubbabel Chosen as a Signet

20 And again the word of the LORD came to Haggai on the twenty-fourth day of the month, saying, 21 "Speak to Zerubbabel, *w*governor of Judah, saying:

x'I will shake heaven and earth.
22 *y*I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms;
I will destroy the strength of the Gentile kingdoms.
*z*I will overthrow the chariots
And those who ride in them;

9 *i*[John 1:14] *k*Ps. 85:8, 9; Luke 2:14; [Eph. 2:14]
[5]Lit. *house*

11 *l*Lev. 10:10, 11; Deut. 33:10; Mal. 2:7

13 *m*Lev. 22:4–6; Num. 19:11, 22

14 *n*[Titus 1:15]

15 *o*Hag. 1:5, 7; 2:18

16 *p*Hag. 1:6, 9; Zech. 8:10

17 *q*Deut. 28:22; 1 Kin. 8:37; Amos 4:9 *r*Hag. 1:11 *s*Jer. 5:3; Amos 4:6–11

18 *t*Ezra 5:1, 2, 16; Zech. 8:9

19 *u*Zech. 8:12 *v*Ps. 128:1–6; Jer. 31:12, 14; [Mal. 3:10]

21 *w*Ezra 5:2; Hag. 1:1, 14; Zech. 4:6–10 *x*Hag. 2:6, 7; [Heb. 12:26, 27]

22 *y*[Dan. 2:44; Rev. 19:11–21] *z*Ps. 46:9; Ezek. 39:20; Mic. 5:10; Zech. 9:10

■ **2:9 glory.** This promise of greater glory is realized in Christ, the greatest manifestation of God's presence and glory (Mal. 3:1; John 1:14). Christ gives His glory to His church, the new temple of God (Eph. 2:21; 3:20, 21).

In this place I will give peace. This peace (Hebrew *shalom*) means more than the absence of conflict. It implies prosperity and a sense of total well-being. Christ gives peace to believers now (John 14:27), but ultimate fulfillment awaits the time when the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of the New Jerusalem (Rev. 21:22).

■ **2:10 twenty-fourth day of the ninth month.** The sequence of time is important for interpreting the third message, which begins on a note of judgment (vv. 10–14). The people had repented and begun the work on Sept. 21, 520 B.C. (1:15), and Haggai brought a message of encouragement on Oct. 17 of the same year (2:1–9). Here, on Dec. 18, he brings another message of condemnation. The people had not yet seen the deeper issue—their defilement before the holy God. This is consistent with Zechariah's call to return to the Lord, issued *after* they began working on the temple (Zech. 1:3–6).

■ **2:11–14** This portion of Haggai's third sermon, emphasizing the extensive defilement of the people and their efforts, builds on an object lesson taken from the Mosaic ceremonial law. The questions directed to the priests show that while ceremonial holiness is not transferable (v. 12), ceremonial defilement is (v. 13). Haggai then applies the lesson of the preceding questions to his hearers (v. 14). They defiled the work of the temple and their offerings because their estrangement from God was deeper than they realized. The mere presence of a rebuilt temple would not render them holy as a people (cf. Jer. 7:3–7); God demands genuine change of heart and life, not mere outward conformity.

■ **2:15 now.** This word signals a transition from indictment to blessing. In spite of their past defilement, the holy God was determined to bless them (v. 19).

■ **2:17 I struck . . . hail.** This verse draws on Amos 4:9. Such natural disasters and lack of agricultural productivity, the bitter fruit of disobedience to the Lord's covenant (1:6 note; Deut. 28:22), were God's way of getting His people's attention.

■ **2:19 I will bless you.** God's grace overcomes the sin and defilement of His people. Though He chastises them, in the end mercy triumphs over judgment.

■ **2:20–23** This last of Haggai's sermons, given the same day as the previous address (v. 10), returns to the theme of the latter-day glory of the temple (v. 6 note). Again future events are telescoped as Haggai interweaves mention of the coming Messiah (v. 23) with references to the shaking of the cosmos and the final victory of God over the nations (vv. 21, 22).

■ **2:22 I will overthrow.** The military and political powers of the nations finally submit to God's lordship (Dan. 2:44; 7:27).

The horses and their riders shall come down,
Every one by the sword of his brother.

23 'In that day,' says the LORD of hosts, 'I will take you, Zerubbabel My servant, the son of Shealtiel,' says the LORD, [a]'and will make you like a signet *ring;* for [b]I have chosen you,' says the LORD of hosts."

23 [a]Song 8:6; Jer. 22:24 [b]Is. 42:1; 43:10

■ **2:23 In that day.** See note on Zech. 12:3.

My servant. Zerubbabel was God's chosen representative to accomplish His work. Isaiah spoke of a greater Servant who would come, whom Zerubbabel foreshadows (Is. 42:10). Jesus is both the descendant of Zerubbabel (Matt. 1:12) and the Servant of God (Acts 4:27, 30).

signet ring. This was a symbol of authority and power. Jeremiah uses the term to refer to one who is precious to God (Jer. 22:24).

The Book of

ZECHARIAH

Author Scholars differ widely on the authorship of the Zechariah. The author is identified in 1:1 as "Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo." It has traditionally been held that this man was a sixth-century contemporary of Haggai and that the entire book was written by him. However, critical scholars have for some time argued that there were essentially two books (chs. 1—8 and 9—14). The first part is considered to be from the sixth century prophet himself, while the second part is assigned to a later time, usually the Maccabean era of the second century B.C. Various literary and historical arguments have been used to arrive at these conclusions, but all are tentative at best. There are no compelling reasons to conclude that Zechariah was not indeed the sole author of the book.

Date and Occasion The historical background of Zechariah is the same as that of Haggai (Introduction to Haggai), but their ministries differed in emphasis. Haggai's work centered on the rebuilding of the temple, while Zechariah's was largely designed to encourage God's people about the welfare of Jerusalem and its long-term future.

Characteristics and Themes Zechariah contains a variety of literary forms. The visions of the first part are similar to the visions of Ezekiel and Daniel, in part because later prophecy in Israel employed more visions. The book is often taken to be an example of early apocalyptic literature (Introduction to Daniel: Characteristics and Themes), and certainly methods and themes characteristic of such literature are present in Zechariah. In ch. 14 a description of a final war against Jerusalem is given in which God comes as a victorious warrior to save His people from their enemies. Similarly, the visions of the horsemen (1:7–11), the four chariots (6:1–8), and the woman in the basket (5:5–11) might also be viewed as apocalyptic.

Our understanding of the teaching of Zechariah is greatly helped when we recognize that the prophet gives pictures of the future in snapshot fashion, in which the pictures are not placed in any particular sequence. When we read a passage, we see only what is happening in that snapshot, not how it relates to other snapshots. Further, the prophet portrays even the present blessings that Christians enjoy in terms of the imagery and customs of Old Testament life.

Zechariah's visions combine the present and future in an interwoven fabric that is impossible to tear apart. That is why it is often difficult to ascertain what time period the prophet has in mind. The promises (e.g., 2:5, 11) relate to both the immediate audience in Zechariah's day and also to the distant future. This "telescoping," or compression of the near and distant future, is a common feature of the prophetic writings.

The welfare and future of Jerusalem as the holy city is a pervasive theme in Zechariah. Several of the visions develop this theme (1:7–17; 2:1–13; 5:1–4 and notes). Chapter 8 presents a picture of Jerusalem, with God in her midst, dwelling in beautiful tranquility. The book ends with a chapter developing this theme (ch. 14). Zechariah's focus on Jerusalem reflects the theme of the ideal Zion longed for in the Old Testament (Ps. 46; 48; 132).

Zechariah gives many explicit pictures of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. A pattern established between the Old Testament and the New Testament is that of Jesus as Messiah fulfilling promises the Lord spoke about Himself in the Old Testament. God's promises of what He will accomplish are realized through His Anointed One. This explains the frequent citations in the New Testament from this book. The Messiah is portrayed as the King who comes riding into Jerusalem in 9:9, 10, a passage quoted by Matthew at Jesus' triumphal entry (Matt. 21:1–11). Christ's betrayal and death are spoken of in 13:7. Zechariah also develops the messianic figure of "the BRANCH," who combines the offices of priest and king (3:8 note; 6:12 note).

The era of the Messiah is touched on in other passages, even where the Messiah is not explicitly mentioned. The promise in 2:5, 10 of God's dwelling in the midst of His people is realized in Christ (John 1:14 and note). Similarly, the Feast of Tabernacles celebrated in 14:16–20 will find its fullest expression in the kingdom of the Messiah when the new Jerusalem comes down from heaven (Rev. 21:1–3). □

Outline of Zechariah

I. Encouragement for the Present (chs. 1—8)
  A. Call to Repentance (1:1–6)
  B. The Eight Night Visions (1:7—6:8)
    1. The Man Among the Myrtle Trees (1:7–17)
    2. Four Horns and Four Craftsmen (1:18–21)
    3. A Man with a Measuring Line (ch. 2)
    4. Clean Garments for the High Priest (ch. 3)
    5. The Gold Lampstand and the Two Olive Trees (ch. 4)
    6. The Flying Scroll (5:1–4)
    7. The Woman in a Basket (5:5–11)
    8. Four Chariots (6:1–8)
  C. Appendix: The Crowning of Joshua as a Prophecy of the Coming Branch (6:9–15)
  D. Social Problems and the Transformation of Jerusalem (chs. 7; 8)
    1. The Question Concerning Fasting (7:1–7)
    2. The Failure to Do Justice and Show Mercy (7:8–14)
    3. God's Blessings on Future Jerusalem (8:1–15)
    4. The Question of Fasting Answered (8:16–19)
    5. Extension of God's Blessings to Mankind (8:20–23)
II. The Future of God's Kingdom (chs. 9—14)
  A. The First Prophetic Oracle (chs. 9—11)
    1. The Coming of God the King from the North (9:1–8)
    2. The King's Arrival in Jerusalem (9:9, 10)
    3. The Coming of God the King from the South (9:11–17)
    4. The Shepherd-King's Destruction of Idols (ch. 10)
    5. A Poem on the Destruction of Proud Nations (11:1–3)
    6. A Picture of God's Shepherd (11:4–17)
  B. The Second Prophetic Oracle (chs. 12—14)
    1. God's Judgment on the Nations and the Salvation of Jerusalem (12:1–9)
    2. The Mourning of God's People in Jerusalem (12:10–14)
    3. The Cleansing of the Land of Judah (13:1–6)
    4. The Stricken Shepherd (13:7–9)
    5. The War Against Jerusalem (14:1–15)
    6. The Final Celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles (14:16–20)

A Call to Repentance

CHAPTER 1

IN the eighth month [a]of the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came [b]to Zechariah the son of Berechiah, the son of [c]Iddo the prophet, saying, 2 "The LORD has been very angry with your fathers. 3 Therefore say to them, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: "Return [d]to Me," says the LORD of hosts, "and I will return to you," says the LORD of hosts. 4 "Do not be like your

1 [a]Zech. 7:1 [b]Matt. 23:35 [c]Neh. 12:4, 16

3 [d][Mal. 3:7–10]

■ **1:1–6** Zechariah sets the stage for the record of night visions that follows in 1:7—6:8.

■ **1:1 the eighth month of the second year of Darius.** October-November of 520 B.C. Compare the dates in Hag. 1:1, 15 to see how the two prophets ministered during the same time. Zechariah began his ministry two months *after* the returnees from Babylon began to rebuild the temple.

Zechariah the son of Berechiah. See Introduction: Author; Date and Occasion. His name means "the LORD remembers."

■ **1:2 The LORD has been very angry.** Verses 2–6 are a preface to the eight night visions of 1:7—6:8. This section shows that although the people had responded to Haggai's call to rebuild the temple, their hearts were still far from God. The Lord is still very angry with them.

■ **1:3 the LORD of hosts.** A divine title used extensively by the postexilic prophets Zechariah, Haggai, and Malachi. It has military connotations (God as leader of Israel's armies, 1 Sam. 17:45), but it also highlights God's sovereign kingship over all creation.

Return to Me . . . I will return. Repentance involves a total turning away *from* sin and a turning *to* God. God's return would then bless His people with His presence (1:16; 2:11).

■ **1:4 the former prophets.** The preexilic prophets (e.g., Isaiah, Jeremiah).

4 [e]2 Chr. 36:15, 16 [f]Is. 31:6
6 [g][Is. 55:11] [h]Lam. 1:18; 2:17
8 [i][Rev. 6:4] [j][Zech. 6:2–7]
9 [k]Zech. 4:4, 5, 13; 6:4
10 [l][Heb. 1:14]

fathers, [e]to whom the former prophets preached, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: [f]"Turn now from your evil ways and your evil deeds." ' But they did not hear nor heed Me," says the LORD.

5 "Your fathers, where *are* they?
And the prophets, do they live forever?
6 Yet surely [g]My words and My statutes,
Which I commanded My servants the prophets,
Did they not overtake your fathers?

"So they returned and said:

[h]'Just as the LORD of hosts determined to do to us,
According to our ways and according to our deeds,
So He has dealt with us.' " ' "

Vision of the Horses

7 On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, which is the month Shebat, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to Zechariah the son of Berechiah, the son of Iddo the prophet: 8 I saw by night, and behold, [i]a man riding on a red horse, and it stood among the myrtle trees in the hollow; and behind him *were* [j]horses: red, sorrel, and white. 9 Then I said, [k]"My lord, what *are* these?" So the angel who talked with me said to me, "I will show you what they *are*."

10 And the man who stood among the myrtle trees answered and said, [l]"These *are the ones* whom the LORD has sent to walk to and fro throughout the earth."

they did not hear nor heed Me. Their fathers showed obstinacy and rebellion (2 Kin. 17:13–15). As a consequence, the curses of the covenant (Deut. 28:15–68) came upon them for their disobedience.

says the LORD. The Hebrew expression means an utterance that gives the prophets insight into the plan and will of God (Ps. 110:1).

■ **1:6 My servants the prophets.** See note on Is. 20:3.

they returned. See Neh. 9:1—10:27.

determined to do. The Hebrew word suggests that God's punishment of the preexilic fathers was in accord with a plan.

■ **1:7–17** These verses record the first of eight night visions that Zechariah saw in the course of one night (v. 8). The visions are organized so that the first and last (6:1–8) correspond to one another in the imagery of horses and chariots. This first one emphasizes God's commitment to His covenant people; He is the rebuilder of Jerusalem and its protector against pagan forces in the outside world. The vision calls God's people to look beyond their present circumstances and place their trust in the promises of God.

■ **1:8 red horse . . . red, sorrel, and white.** The significance of these colors is uncertain.

■ **1:9 angel who talked with me.** This interpreting angel (1:19; 2:3; 3:1; 4:1) should be distinguished from the "Angel of the Lord" (v. 12 note; 3:1). See theological note "Angels."

Zechariah's Visions (1:7)

The visions of Zechariah had historical meaning for his day, but they also have meaning for all time. God will save His people and bring judgment on the wicked.

Vision	Significance
Man and horses among the myrtle trees (1:8)	The Lord will again be merciful to Jerusalem (1:14, 16, 17).
Four horns, four craftsmen (1:18–20)	Those who scattered Judah are cast out (1:21).
Man with measuring line (2:1)	God will be a protective wall of fire around Jerusalem (2:3–5).
Cleansing of Joshua (3:4)	The Servant, the Branch, comes to save (3:8, 9).
Golden lampstand and olive trees (4:2, 3)	The Lord empowers Israel by His Spirit (4:6).
Flying scroll (5:1)	Dishonesty is cursed (5:3).
Woman in the basket (5:6, 7)	Wickedness will be removed (5:8, 9).
Four chariots (6:1)	The spirits of heaven execute judgment on the whole earth (6:5, 7).

11 [m]So they answered the Angel of the LORD, who stood among the myrtle trees, and said, "We have walked to and fro throughout the earth, and behold, all the earth is [l]resting quietly."

The LORD Will Comfort Zion

12 Then the Angel of the LORD answered and said, "O LORD of hosts, [n]how long will You not have mercy on Jerusalem and on the cities of Judah, against which You were angry [o]these seventy years?"

13 And the LORD answered the angel who talked to me, *with* [p]good *and* comforting words.

14 So the angel who spoke with me said to me, [2]"Proclaim, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts:

"I am [q]zealous[3] for Jerusalem
And for Zion with great [4]zeal.

11 [m][Ps. 103:20, 21] [l]Lit. *sitting and quiet*

12 [n]Ps. 74:10 [o]Jer. 25:11, 12; 29:10

13 [p]Jer. 29:10

14 [q]Zech. 8:2 [2]Lit. *Cry out* [3]Or *jealous* [4]Or *jealousy*

Angels

Angels (the Greek *angelos* means "messenger") are one of two sorts of personal beings created by God, humanity being the other. Multitudinous in number (Matt. 26:53; Rev. 5:11), angels are intelligent moral agents. They are not embodied nor ordinarily visible, although they are able to manifest themselves in what appears as a physical form (Gen. 18:2—19:22; John 20:12, 13; Acts 12:7–10). They do not marry, and are not subject to death (Matt. 22:30; Luke 20:35, 36). They can move from one point in space to another, and many can be focussed in a tiny area (Luke 8:30, where the reference is to fallen angels).

Like human beings, the angels were originally under probation, and some of them fell into sin. The many who passed the test are now evidently confirmed in a state of holiness and immortal glory. Heaven is their dwelling place (Matt. 18:10; 22:30; Rev. 5:11), where they constantly worship God (Ps. 103:20, 21; 148:2) and from where they go out at God's command to render service to Christians (Heb. 1:14). These are the "holy" and "elect" angels (Matt. 25:31; Mark 8:38; Luke 9:26; Acts 10:22; 1 Tim. 5:21; Rev. 14:10), to whom God's work of grace in Christ continues to display an increasing measure of the divine wisdom and glory (Eph. 3:10; 1 Pet. 1:12).

Holy angels protect believers (Ps. 34:7; 91:11, 12), little ones in particular (Matt. 18:10), and they constantly observe what goes on in the church (1 Cor. 11:10). It is implied that they have a special ministry to believers at the time of their death (Luke 16:22), but we know no details about this. The world may watch Christians in the hopes of seeing them fall, but the angels watch to see the triumph of grace in their lives.

The mysterious "Angel of the LORD" or "Angel of God," who appears often in the early parts of the Old Testament, is sometimes identified with God, and other times distinguished from God (Gen. 16:7–13; 18:1–33; 22:11–18; 24:7, 40; 31:11–13; 32:24–30; 48:15–16; Ex. 3:2–6; 14:19; 23:20–23; 32:34—33:5; Num. 22:22–35; Josh. 5:13–15; Judg. 2:1–5; 6:11–23; 9:13–23). In certain instances at least, this Angel is in some sense God acting as His own messenger, and is commonly seen as a preincarnate appearance of God the Son.

Angelic activity was prominent at the great turning points in the divine plan of salvation (the days of the patriarchs, the time of the Exodus and giving of the law, the period of the Exile and restoration, and the birth, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ). Angels will be prominent again when Christ returns (Matt. 25:31; Mark 8:38).

■ **1:11 all the earth is resting quietly.** The self-assured nations stand in contrast to the Jewish state struggling under Persian rule. Yet God assures His people that these proud nations will experience judgment (cf. Obadiah's words about Edom's false security, Obad. 3, 4, 8).

■ **1:12 the Angel of the LORD.** See note on Gen. 16:7. Many, though not all, scholars identify this Angel with the "man riding on a red horse" (v. 8).

seventy years. A reference to the prophecy of Jer. 25:11, 12 where the Babylonian exile was announced.

■ **1:13 good and comforting words.** Words that reflect God's love for His people and reaffirm God's commitment not to forsake His people (Heb. 13:5).

■ **1:14 I am zealous for Jerusalem.** See text note. The first expression of the theme of God's jealousy in the book (8:2). God's zealous love for His chosen people moves Him to act in their behalf. A similar theme is expressed in Zeph. 3:9–20.

15 [r]Is. 47:6

16 [s][Is. 12:1; 54:8; Zech. 2:10; 8:3] [t]Ezra 6:14, 15; Hag. 1:4; Zech. 4:9 [u]2 Chr. 36:23; Ezra 1:2, 3; Is. 44:28 [v]Zech. 2:1–3

17 [w][Is. 40:1, 2; 51:3] [x]Is. 14:1; Zech. 2:12 [5]Or *overflow with good*

18 [y][Lam. 2:17]

19 [z]Ezra 4:1, 4, 7 [6]Kingdoms or powers

21 [a][Ps. 75:10] [b]Ps. 75:4, 5 [7]Lit. *these*

CHAPTER 2

1 [a]Jer. 31:39; Ezek. 40:3; 47:3; Zech. 1:16

2 [b]Rev. 11:1

4 [c]Jer. 31:27

5 [d][Is. 26:1] [e][Is. 60:19]

6 [f]Is. 48:20 [g]Deut. 28:64

7 [h]Is. 48:20; Jer. 51:6; [Rev. 18:4]

15 I am exceedingly angry with the nations at ease;
For [r]I was a little angry,
And they helped—*but* with evil *intent.*"

16 'Therefore thus says the LORD:

[s]"I am returning to Jerusalem with mercy;
My [t]house [u]shall be built in it," says the LORD of hosts,
"And [v]a *surveyor's* line shall be stretched out over Jerusalem." '

17 "Again proclaim, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts:

"My cities shall again [5]spread out through prosperity;
[w]The LORD will again comfort Zion,
And [x]will again choose Jerusalem." ' "

Vision of the Horns

18 Then I raised my eyes and looked, and there *were* four [y]horns. 19 And I said to the angel who talked with me, "What *are* these?"

So he answered me, [z]"These *are* the [6]horns that have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem."

20 Then the LORD showed me four craftsmen. 21 And I said, "What are these coming to do?"

So he said, "These *are* the [a]horns that scattered Judah, so that no one could lift up his head; but [7]*the craftsmen* are coming to terrify them, to cast out the horns of the nations that [b]lifted up *their* horn against the land of Judah to scatter it."

Vision of the Measuring Line

2 Then I raised my eyes and looked, and behold, [a]a man with a measuring line in his hand. 2 So I said, "Where are you going?"

And he said to me, [b]"To measure Jerusalem, to see what *is* its width and what *is* its length."

3 And there *was* the angel who talked with me, going out; and another angel was coming out to meet him, 4 who said to him, "Run, speak to this young man, saying: [c]'Jerusalem shall be inhabited *as* towns without walls, because of the multitude of men and livestock in it. 5 For I,' says the LORD, 'will be [d]a wall of fire all around her, [e]and I will be the glory in her midst.' "

Future Joy of Zion and Many Nations

6 "Up, up! Flee [f]from the land of the north," says the LORD; "for I have [g]spread you abroad like the four winds of heaven," says the LORD. 7 "Up, Zion! [h]Escape, you who dwell with the daughter of Babylon."

■ **1:15 I am exceedingly angry with the nations.** Notice the contrast with v. 2 where God's past anger with His own people is expressed. Here God's love for His own (v. 14 above) moves Him to protect them by bringing judgment on the nations who have persecuted His people beyond measure.

■ **1:17 The LORD will again . . . choose Jerusalem.** A common theme in the visions (2:12; 3:2). God's choice of His people distinguishes them from the pagan nations. The result of His choice is to bring them prosperity ("My cities shall again spread out through prosperity").

■ **1:18–21** The second vision focuses on the four horns. The "horn" was a symbol of power and pride in the ancient Near East (Ps. 75:4, 5). This vision is the counterpart of the first: Zion will be rebuilt and the nations destroyed. The identification of the four horns could be the same as those of Daniel's prophecies (Dan. 2:36–45; 7:17–28), and so correspond either to Babylonia, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome, or to Assyria, Babylon, Egypt, and Persia (10:10, 11). The horns could also have a greater significance and refer to "the four corners of the earth" (Rev. 20:8).

■ **1:21 cast out the horns of the nations.** The four craftsmen come to overthrow the power of the nations. This is symbolic of God's judgment coming on the nations that have persecuted His people, a fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham that He would curse those who cursed Abraham's descendants (Gen. 12:3).

■ **2:1–5** Zechariah's third vision describes a man with a measuring line. This vision stresses God's protection of His people with His own personal presence (v. 5 notes). Jerusalem's walls were probably not rebuilt yet, and the city was subject to attack from roving bands.

■ **2:1 a measuring line.** An implement that became a symbol of rebuilding in Jeremiah's portrayal of a restored Jerusalem (Jer. 31:39).

■ **2:4 without walls.** The Old Testament prophets envision a time when Jerusalem will be the center of worship for the nations (v. 11; 8:20–23; Is. 2:1–4), and the city will overflow with people.

multitude of men and livestock. See note on v. 11.

■ **2:5 a wall of fire all around her.** The day of full restoration is portrayed by the prophets as a second Exodus with the imagery of the pillar of fire (Is. 4:5, 6). As Israel was once protected from her enemies by God Himself, so He will again guard her from oppressors.

the glory. God's presence is far more than protection; it is the source of all blessing for His people. The essence of the renewed covenant is, "I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (Jer. 31:33).

■ **2:6–13** In this section the prophet speaks to the Jews in Babylon (vv. 6–9) and in Jerusalem (vv. 10–13).

■ **2:6 I have spread you abroad.** A reference to God's judgment of Judah in the Exile as punishment for covenant disobedience (Deut. 28:36, 49, 50). The time of judgment is over; the time of restoration has come (v. 7).

8 For thus says the LORD of hosts: "He sent Me after glory, to the nations which plunder you;
for he who [i]touches you touches the [l]apple of His eye. 9 For surely I will [j]shake My hand against
them, and they shall become [2]spoil for their servants. Then [k]you will know that the LORD of
hosts has sent Me.
10 [l]"Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion! For behold, I am coming and I [m]will dwell in your
midst," says the LORD. 11 [n]"Many nations shall be joined to the LORD [o]in that day, and they shall
become [p]My people. And I will dwell in your midst. Then [q]you will know that the LORD of hosts
has sent Me to you. 12 And the LORD will [r]take possession of Judah as His inheritance in the
Holy Land, and will again choose Jerusalem. 13 [s]Be silent, all flesh, before the LORD, for He is
aroused [t]from His holy habitation!"

Vision of the High Priest

3 Then he showed me [a]Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the LORD, and
[b]Satan[1] standing at his right hand to oppose him. 2 And the LORD said to Satan, [c]"The LORD
rebuke you, Satan! The LORD who [d]has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! [e]*Is* this not a brand
plucked from the fire?"
3 Now Joshua was clothed with [f]filthy garments, and was standing before the Angel.
4 Then He answered and spoke to those who stood before Him, saying, "Take away the filthy
garments from him." And to him He said, "See, I have removed your iniquity from you, [g]and I
will clothe you with rich robes."
5 And I said, "Let them put a clean [h]turban on his head."
So they put a clean turban on his head, and they put the clothes on him. And the Angel of the
LORD stood by.

The Coming Branch

6 Then the Angel of the LORD admonished Joshua, saying, 7 "Thus says the LORD of hosts:

'If you will walk in My ways,
And if you will [i]keep My command,
Then you shall also [j]judge My house,
And likewise have charge of My courts;
I will give you places to walk
Among these who [k]stand here.

8 'Hear, O Joshua, the high priest,
You and your companions who sit before you,

8 [f]Deut. 32:10; Ps. 17:8 [1]Lit. *pupil*
9 [j]Is. 19:16 [k]Zech. 4:9 [2]*booty* or *plunder*
10 [l]Is. 12:6 [m][Lev. 26:12]
11 [n][Is. 2:2, 3] [o]Zech. 3:10 [p]Ex. 12:49 [q]Ezek. 33:33
12 [r][Deut. 32:9]; Ps. 33:12; Jer. 10:16
13 [s]Hab. 2:20; Zeph. 1:7 [t]Ps. 68:5

CHAPTER 3

1 [a]Ezra 5:2; Hag. 1:1; Zech. 6:11 [b]1 Chr. 21:1; Job 1:6; Ps. 109:6; [Rev. 12:9, 10] [1]Lit. *the Adversary*
2 [c]Mark 9:25; [Jude 9] [d][Rom. 8:33] [e]Amos 4:11; Jude 23
3 [f]Ezra 9:15; Is. 64:6
4 [g]Gen. 3:21; Is. 61:10
5 [h]Ex. 29:6
7 [i]Lev. 8:35; Ezek. 44:16 [j]Deut. 17:9, 12 [k]Zech. 3:4

■ **2:8 the apple of His eye.** See note on Deut. 32:10.

■ **2:10 I will dwell in your midst.** This promise assumes the sanctification of the people and land through the blood of the everlasting covenant (3:9 notes; 8:8 note; Heb. 13:20).

■ **2:11 Many nations.** The extent of the vision transcends anything the Jews could accomplish in their day. The vision captures a time when salvation will not be limited to the Jewish nation but will extend God's grace to the world. That day has come in Christ's inauguration of the kingdom of God.

■ **2:12 in the Holy Land.** An expression used only here in the Scriptures. Judah will be holy because God will dwell there. Zechariah is envisioning the fullest realization of God's promise to Abraham (Gen. 12:3; 15:5).

■ **2:13 Be silent.** All mankind should revere God because of the great salvation declared in this chapter (Hab. 2:20).

He is aroused. For the purpose of judgment. God will both judge the nations that oppressed His people and provide a safe home for His people.

■ **3:1–10** The fourth vision concerns Joshua, the high priest (Ezra 3:2 text note), and deals particularly with the problem of an impure priesthood. It begins by showing God's solution to the problem (vv. 4, 5) and ends by showing how God wipes away the sin of all His people (vv. 8, 9).

■ **3:1** A courtroom scene similar to that in Job (Job 1:6–12). Satan has come to accuse Joshua of his unworthiness for the priesthood. The Hebrew term *Satan* means "adversary" or "accuser" (text note); here it may be descriptive (i.e., not a proper name).

standing. Joshua assumes the position of the priest who ministers in the presence of God. Accusation is a favorite ploy of Satan against believers. It differs from the conviction of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit convicts of sin in order to move us to repentance and forgiveness. Satan's goal is destruction, not redemption.

■ **3:2 brand plucked from the fire.** The fire is a metaphor for the Exile from which the people of God have been snatched. Amos 4:11 also uses the same expression to speak of the danger from which God redeems His people.

■ **3:3 filthy garments.** Here we see the basis of Satan's accusations that Joshua is unworthy. If the high priest is unclean, who can make atonement for sin? If he cannot make the atonement, how can the people be forgiven? The answer is given in a twofold manner below.

■ **3:4 Take away the filthy garments.** God makes Joshua fit for the priesthood by giving new garments. In this way Joshua is a type of the coming BRANCH (v. 8), who will fulfill a priestly function and provide clothing of righteousness for us from His own merit.

■ **3:5 a clean turban.** The turban was part of the high priest's dress. A new clean turban completes the restored garments, indicating that God has taken away the reproach on the priesthood (Ex. 28:36–38).

■ **3:8 they are a wondrous sign.** See text note. These men foreshadow the coming Servant because they are priests, and He will act as a priest by making atonement for sin (v. 9 note).

For they are [l]a[2] wondrous sign:
For behold, I am bringing forth [m]My Servant the [n]BRANCH.
9 For behold, the stone
That I have laid before Joshua:
[o]Upon the stone *are* [p]seven eyes.
Behold, I will engrave its inscription,'
Says the LORD of hosts,
'And [q]I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day.
10 [r]In that day,' says the LORD of hosts,
'Everyone will invite his neighbor
[s]Under his vine and under his fig tree.' "

8 [l]Ps. 71:7 [m]Is. 42:1 [n]Is. 11:1; 53:2; Jer. 23:5; 33:15; Zech. 6:12 [2]Lit. *men of a sign* or *wonder*
9 [o][Zech. 4:10; Rev. 5:6] [p]Ps. 118:22 [q]Jer. 31:34; 50:20; Zech. 3:4
10 [r]Zech. 2:11 [s]1 Kin. 4:25; Is. 36:16; Mic. 4:4

CHAPTER 4

Vision of the Lampstand and Olive Trees

4 Now [a]the angel who talked with me came back and wakened me, [b]as a man who is wakened out of his sleep. 2 And he said to me, "What do you see?"

So I said, "I am looking, and there *is* [c]a lampstand of solid gold with a bowl on top of it, [d]and on the *stand* seven lamps with seven pipes to the seven lamps. 3 [e]Two olive trees *are* by it, one at the right of the bowl and the other at its left." 4 So I answered and spoke to the angel who talked with me, saying, "What *are* these, my lord?"

5 Then the angel who talked with me answered and said to me, "Do you not know what these are?"

And I said, "No, my lord."

6 So he answered and said to me:

"This *is* the word of the LORD to [f]Zerubbabel:
[g]'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,'
Says the LORD of hosts.
7 'Who *are* you, [h]O great mountain?
Before Zerubbabel *you shall become* a plain!
And he shall bring forth [i]the capstone
[j]With shouts of "Grace, grace to it!" ' "

8 Moreover the word of the LORD came to me, saying:

1 [a]Zech. 1:9; 2:3 [b]Dan. 8:18
2 [c]Rev. 1:12 [d]Ex. 25:37; [Rev. 4:5]
3 [e]Rev. 11:3, 4
6 [f]Hag. 1:1 [g]Is. 30:1; Hos. 1:7; Hag. 2:4, 5
7 [h]Ps. 114:4, 6; Is. 40:4; Jer. 51:25; Nah. 1:5; Zech. 14:4, 5; [Matt. 21:21] [i]Ps. 118:22 [j]Ezra 3:10, 11, 13; Ps. 84:11

My Servant. A title of honor initially used for Moses (Num. 12:6–8). The term also was used as a title in Isaiah, sometimes for Israel (Is. 41:8; 44:1, 2) and sometimes (as here) for the Messiah, the Servant who would redeem His people (Is. 42:1–7; 52:13).

the BRANCH. A Messianic title combining the offices of priest and king (6:12 note; Is. 4:2 and note).

■ **3:9 the stone.** Possibly a reference to the Messiah. Several Old Testament passages about the stone were interpreted as messianic in the New Testament (Ps. 118:22; Is. 8:14; 28:16; Matt. 21:42; 1 Pet. 2:6–8).

seven eyes. The mixture of images is difficult to interpret but these eyes are symbols of God's omniscient and watchful care (also used in 4:10).

remove the iniquity of that land. God will take away His people's sin through the BRANCH. The priestly system in the Old Testament was not intended actually to cover sin but only to prefigure the One who would truly deal with man's sin (Heb. 10:1–18).

in one day. The Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:30; 23:28) was an annual reminder of sin (Heb. 9:7–10), but Christ on a single day (Good Friday) once for all made atonement for the sins of God's people (Heb. 9:11–14).

■ **3:10 Under his vine . . . fig tree.** An expression for peace and prosperity (1 Kin. 4:25; Mic. 4:4). The ultimate state of God's kingdom is in view.

■ **4:1–14** The fifth vision describes a golden lampstand and two olive trees. The main problem addressed in the visions is how the work of rebuilding the temple will be completed. God's answer is that Joshua and Zerubbabel are only finite and limited human beings. The power for completing the task will come from God Himself.

■ **4:2 lampstand of solid gold.** The lampstand was probably used to remind the people of the lampstand in the tabernacle and the temple (Ex. 25:31), although its shape was different. The lampstand may also have symbolized the responsibility of the postexilic Jewish community to be a "light to the Gentiles" (Is. 42:6; 49:6).

seven lamps . . . seven pipes. The numbers in this verse are somewhat confusing but they probably mean that there were seven lamps on the stand with one bowl to hold the lamp oil. Seven tubes from the bowl fed the lamps, while the bowl itself was filled from the olive trees (v. 12).

■ **4:3 Two olive trees.** See v. 14 and note.

■ **4:4 What are these.** Zechariah's focus is on the olive trees, not on the lampstand. Here his question does not receive an immediate reply. It is answered in v. 14.

■ **4:6** The key verse for understanding the vision.

Zerubbabel. Even though the vision includes Joshua as one of the olive trees, the focus is on Zerubbabel, as is evident from the repetition of his name in vv. 6, 7, 9, 10.

Not by might . . . power. That is, military strength or any other form of power (apart from God). God's people were repeatedly told not to depend on military power and foreign alliances to accomplish their calling (Is. 31:1–3; Ps. 20:7–9).

by My Spirit. The Spirit of God is often portrayed in the prophets as the One who enables God's servants to do God's work and overcome obstacles. Even the coming Servant of the Lord, the Messiah, is described in such terms (Is. 11:2; 42:1; 61:1).

■ **4:7 the capstone.** The last and most important stone, which presumably would ceremonially be put in place in the completed temple.

Grace, grace to it. The temple is completed amid shouts that ask for God's favor to rest on it. The phrase is repeated for emphasis (Is. 40:1 note).

9 "The hands of Zerubbabel
[k]Have laid the foundation of this [l]temple;
His hands [l]shall also finish *it.*
Then [m]you will know
That the [n]LORD of hosts has sent Me to you.
10 For who has despised the day of [o]small things?
For these seven rejoice to see
The [2]plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel.
[p]They are the eyes of the LORD,
Which scan to and fro throughout the whole earth."

11 Then I answered and said to him, "What *are* these [q]two olive trees—at the right of the lampstand and at its left?" 12 And I further answered and said to him, "What *are these* two olive branches that *drip* [3]into the receptacles of the two gold pipes from which the golden *oil* drains?"

13 Then he answered me and said, "Do you not know what these *are?*"

And I said, "No, my lord."

14 So he said, [r]"These *are* the two [4]anointed ones, [s]who stand beside the Lord of the whole earth."

Vision of the Flying Scroll

5 Then I turned and raised my eyes, and saw there a flying [a]scroll.

2 And he said to me, "What do you see?"

So I answered, "I see a flying scroll. Its length *is* twenty cubits and its width ten cubits."

3 Then he said to me, "This *is* the [b]curse that goes out over the face of the whole earth: 'Every thief shall be expelled,' according *to* this side of *the scroll;* and, 'Every perjurer shall be expelled,' according *to* that side of it."

4 "I will send out *the curse,*" says the LORD of hosts;
"It shall enter the house of the [c]thief
And the house of [d]the one who swears falsely by My name.
It shall remain in the midst of his house
And consume [e]it, with its timber and stones."

Vision of the Woman in a Basket

5 Then the angel who talked with me came out and said to me, "Lift your eyes now, and see what this *is* that goes forth."

6 So I asked, "What *is* it?" And he said, "It *is* a [1]basket that is going forth."

9 [k]Ezra 3:8–10; 5:16; Hag. 2:18 [l]Ezra 6:14, 15; Zech. 6:12, 13 [m]Zech. 2:9, 11; 6:15 [n]Is. 43:16]; Zech. 2:8 [1]Lit. *house*

10 [o]Neh. 4:2–4; Amos 7:2, 5; Hag. 2:3 [p]2 Chr. 16:9; Prov. 15:3; Zech. 3:9 [2]Lit. *plummet stone*

11 [q]Zech. 4:3; Rev. 11:4

12 [3]Lit. *into the hands of*

14 [r]Rev. 11:4 [s]Zech. 3:1–7 [4]Lit. *sons of fresh oil*

CHAPTER 5

1 [a]Jer. 36:2; Ezek. 2:9; Rev. 5:1

3 [b]Mal. 4:6

4 [c]Ex. 20:15; Lev. 19:11 [d]Ex. 20:7; Lev. 19:12; Is. 48:1; Jer. 5:2; Zech. 8:17; Mal. 3:5 [e]Lev. 14:34, 35; Job 18:15

6 [1]Heb. *ephah,* a measuring container, and so elsewhere

■ **4:10 the day of small things.** It would have been easy to be discouraged with the meager results and progress. We find the people of Judah discouraged at the laying of the foundation of the second temple (Ezra 3:10–12) and also at the rebuilding in Haggai's day (520 B.C.; Hag. 2:3). The question in this verse reminds us not to judge God's work by human standards.

eyes of the LORD. See note on 3:9.

■ **4:14 These . . . anointed ones.** See text note. "These" refers to Zerubbabel and Joshua. As God's chosen leaders they would be supplied by the Holy Spirit with the necessary strength to finish the temple. Together they foreshadow the Messiah, in whom the offices of priest and king (as well as prophet) will be joined in one Person (6:12 note). The total vision teaches both that God is the source of strength for doing His work and that He bestows His Spirit upon His chosen people for the work He has called them to do.

Lord of the whole earth. God is sovereign over all the affairs of men (Is. 40:15, 23, 24). Similarly, the title "Lord Almighty" shows that all the powers of the cosmos are at His disposal (1:3 note).

■ **5:1–4** The sixth vision concerns a flying scroll. It teaches that the Lord who loves and restores His people is also righteous and will punish wickedness. This vision and the one to follow are warnings, but also encouragements that God will deal with the problem of sin in the land.

■ **5:2 twenty cubits . . . ten cubits.** A large open scroll for all to read its words. As the context implies, the words on it are words of the law. Its large size was appropriate for its task of going out over the whole land to deal with every sin (v. 3).

■ **5:3 curse.** The curse contained in the Law (Deut. 28:15–68). As in Hag. 1:1–11, the prophet emphasizes that the obedience of God's people brings blessings, while disobedience brings God's curses.

Every thief . . . Every perjurer. The curse was probably not directed at just two sins, but these are representative of the iniquity of the whole land. False swearing violates the third commandment and the first table of the law (one's duty to God). Theft violates the eighth commandment, found in the second table of the law (one's duty to neighbor). The Ten Commandments summarize the whole moral law and are a revelation of God's own character.

■ **5:4 consume it.** God's word will accomplish its intended purpose (Is. 55:11). Those who break God's law will surely suffer the consequences of their sin that this curse brings. Scripture many times emphasizes the certainty of judgment (Rom. 2:3; 1 Thess. 5:1–3; Heb. 2:3).

■ **5:5–11** The seventh vision, of the woman in the measuring basket, stresses God's sovereign removal of wickedness from the land (v. 11 note). God's holy nature cannot tolerate sin in His people.

■ **5:6 a basket.** See text note. The *ephah* was a unit of dry measure equivalent to about 21 quarts (Judg. 6:19; Ruth 2:17). Clearly, such a basket would not contain an adult, but precise realism is not necessarily characteristic of prophetic visions (Num. 12:6–8 and notes).

8 [2]Lit. *stone*

9 [f]Lev. 11:13, 19; Ps. 104:17; Jer. 8:7

10 [g]Zech. 5:5

11 [h]Jer. 29:5, 28 [i]Gen. 10:10; Is. 11:11; Dan. 1:2 [3]Babylon

He also said, "This *is* their resemblance throughout the earth: [7] Here *is* a lead disc lifted up, and this *is* a woman sitting inside the basket"; [8] then he said, "This *is* Wickedness!" And he thrust her down into the basket, and threw the lead [2]cover over its mouth. [9] Then I raised my eyes and looked, and there *were* two women, coming with the wind in their wings; for they had wings like the wings of a [f]stork, and they lifted up the basket between earth and heaven.

[10] So I said to the [g]angel who talked with me, "Where are they carrying the basket?"

[11] And he said to me, "To [h]build a house for it in [i]the land of [3]Shinar; when it is ready, *the basket* will be set there on its base."

Vision of the Four Chariots

CHAPTER 6

2 [a]Zech. 1:8; Rev. 6:4 [b]Rev. 6:5

4 [c]Zech. 5:10

5 [d][Ps. 104:4; Heb. 1:7, 14] [e]1 Kin. 22:19; Dan. 7:10; Zech. 4:14; Luke 1:19

6 [f]Jer. 1:14; Ezek. 1:4 [1]The chariot

7 [g]Gen. 13:17; Zech. 1:10

8 [h]Eccl. 10:4

11 [i]Ex. 29:6 [j]Ezra 3:2; Hag. 1:1; Zech. 3:1 [2]Lit. *crowns*

12 [k]John 1:45 [l]Is. 4:2; 11:1; Jer. 23:5; 33:15; Zech. 3:8 [m][Matt. 16:18; Eph. 2:20; Heb. 3:3] [3]Lit. *sprout up*

6 Then I turned and raised my eyes and looked, and behold, four chariots *were* coming from between two mountains, and the mountains *were* mountains of bronze. [2] With the first chariot *were* [a]red horses, with the second chariot [b]black horses, [3] with the third chariot white horses, and with the fourth chariot dappled horses—strong *steeds*. [4] Then I answered [c]and said to the angel who talked with me, "What *are* these, my lord?"

[5] And the angel answered and said to me, [d]"These *are* four spirits of heaven, who go out from *their* [e]station before the Lord of all the earth. [6] [1]The one with the black horses is going to [f]the north country, the white are going after them, and the dappled are going toward the south country." [7] Then the strong *steeds* went out, eager to go, that they might [g]walk to and fro throughout the earth. And He said, "Go, walk to and fro throughout the earth." So they walked to and fro throughout the earth. [8] And He called to me, and spoke to me, saying, "See, those who go toward the north country have given rest to My [h]Spirit in the north country."

The Command to Crown Joshua

[9] Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying: [10] "Receive *the gift* from the captives—from Heldai, Tobijah, and Jedaiah, who have come from Babylon—and go the same day and enter the house of Josiah the son of Zephaniah. [11] Take the silver and gold, make [i]an[2] elaborate crown, and set *it* on the head of [j]Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest. [12] Then speak to him, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, saying:

> "Behold, [k]the Man whose name *is* the [l]BRANCH!
> From His place He shall [3]branch out,
> [m]And He shall build the temple of the LORD;

resemblance. The Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) reads "iniquity" here, a reading that may better fit the context, and has considerable support from ancient versions.

throughout the earth. The wickedness of the people was not limited to specific acts of sin (as one might conclude from the previous vision) but had infected the lives of all God's people.

■ **5:7 a woman.** Wickedness is personified by a woman, perhaps because the Hebrew word used for "wickedness" is grammatically feminine, or because Israel's idolatry was often characterized by the prophets as prostitution (Ezek. 16:25; Hos. 2:2).

■ **5:9 two women . . . wind in their wings.** These are God's agents for removing wickedness out of the land. God's covenant faithfulness removes the sin of His people far from them (Ps. 103:11, 12; Mic. 7:19).

■ **5:11 Shinar.** This older word for Babylon is used possibly to evoke the Tower of Babel as a symbol of opposition to God (Gen. 11:2). Shinar, not Jerusalem, is the appropriate place for iniquity, since Jerusalem is the dwelling place of the Holy One of Israel (2:10–13; 8:3).

■ **6:1–8** The last vision, the four chariots, recalls the four horses of the first vision (v. 1 note; cf. 1:7–17). The four chariots are symbolic of the "four spirits of heaven" (v. 5), but beyond that the order and color of the horses may not have any special significance. The author of Revelation uses similar imagery in his portrayal of the four horsemen (Rev. 6:1–6).

■ **6:1 mountains of bronze.** The mountains probably symbolize the gate to heaven, though some suggest that the bronze reflects the bronze pillars of the temple (1 Kin. 7:13–22). In the first vision the riders went from the presence of God (1:10). Here the chariots are God's emissaries of judgment who emerge from between the bronze mountains.

■ **6:5 four spirits of heaven.** The Hebrew word for "spirit" can mean "wind." Zechariah may be intentionally drawing on that ambiguity to say that as the winds cover the earth, so the angels of God cover the earth with God's presence (cf. v. 8 note).

the LORD of all the earth. The sovereign God commands His heavenly hosts to do His will (4:14 note).

■ **6:7 eager to go . . . throughout the earth.** The eager horses portray the immediacy of God's judgment.

■ **6:8 north country.** The north is here representative of Israel's enemies because the geography of Palestine demanded that anyone attacking from the east, including the Persians, had to come by way of the north.

rest to My Spirit. If the north country were judged by God, then all other lands were securely under His judgment, and His protection of His people was complete. His Spirit could therefore rest.

■ **6:9–15** This section is an appendix to the visions, offering additional comments on the fourth and fifth visions. It especially brings together the usually separate offices of priest and ruler in one Person—the Messiah (v. 13).

■ **6:12 the BRANCH.** A messianic title, the importance of which explains its occurrence here and in 3:8. Isaiah first used the term to denote the Messiah (Is. 4:2). Jeremiah then developed it as a title for the Davidic descendant who would rule on David's throne (Jer. 23:5, 6; 33:15, 16). Zechariah joins the royal and priestly offices in this title. Early Jewish interpreters saw it as a messianic title. All this shows the preparation in the Old Testament for the truth that Christ is our High Priest (Heb. 4:14; 7:24; 9:11) and our King (Heb. 1:8; Matt. 22:41–46). He is our Savior and our Lord.

13 Yes, He shall build the temple of the LORD.
He [n]shall bear the glory,
And shall sit and rule on His throne;
So [o]He shall be a priest on His throne,
And the counsel of peace shall be between [4]them both." '

14 "Now the [5]elaborate crown shall be [p]for a memorial in the temple of the LORD [6]for Helem, Tobijah, Jedaiah, and Hen the son of Zephaniah. 15 Even [q]those from afar shall come and build the temple of the LORD. Then you shall know that the LORD of hosts has sent Me to you. And *this* shall come to pass if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God."

Obedience Better than Fasting

7 Now in the fourth year of King Darius it came to pass *that* the word of the LORD came to Zechariah, on the fourth day of the ninth month, Chislev, 2 when [1]*the people* sent [2]Sherezer, with Regem-Melech and his men, *to* [3]the house of God, [4]to pray before the LORD, 3 *and* to [a]ask the priests who *were* in the house of the LORD of hosts, and the prophets, saying, "Should I weep in [b]the fifth month and [5]fast as I have done for so many years?"

4 Then the word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying, 5 "Say to all the people of the land, and to the priests: 'When you [c]fasted and mourned in the fifth [d]and seventh *months* [e]during those seventy years, did you really fast [f]for Me—for Me? 6 [g]When you eat and when you drink, do you not eat and drink *for yourselves? 7 Should you* not *have obeyed* the words which the LORD proclaimed through the [h]former prophets when Jerusalem and the cities around it were inhabited and prosperous, and [i]the [6]South and the Lowland were inhabited?' "

Disobedience Resulted in Captivity

8 Then the word of the LORD came to Zechariah, saying, 9 "Thus says the LORD of hosts:

[j]'Execute true justice,
Show [7]mercy and compassion
Everyone to his brother.
10 [k]Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless,
The alien or the poor.
[l]Let none of you plan evil in his heart
Against his brother.'

11 "But they refused to heed, [m]shrugged[8] their shoulders, and [n]stopped[9] their ears so that they could not hear. 12 Yes, they made their [o]hearts like flint, [p]refusing to hear the law and the words which the LORD of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets. [q]Thus great wrath

13 [n]Is. 22:24 [o]Ps. 110:4 [4]Both offices

14 [p]Ex. 12:14 [5]Lit. *crowns* [6]So with MT, Tg., Vg.; Syr. *for Heldai* (cf. v. 10); LXX *for the patient ones*

15 [q]Is. 57:19

CHAPTER 7

2 [1]Lit. *they*, cf. v. 5 [2]Or *Sar-Ezer* [3]Heb. *Bethel* [4]Or *to entreat the favor of*

3 [a]Mal. 2:7 [b]Zech. 8:19 [5]Lit. *consecrate myself*

5 [c][Is. 58:1–9] [d]Jer. 41:1 [e]Zech. 1:12 [f][Rom. 14:6]

6 [g]1 Chr. 29:22

7 [h]Zech. 1:4 [i]Jer. 17:26 [6]Heb. *Negev*

9 [j]Jer. 7:28 [7]Or *lovingkindness*

10 [k]Ex. 22:22 [l]Mic. 2:1

11 [m]Neh. 9:29 [n]Jer. 17:23 [8]Lit. *gave a stubborn* or *rebellious shoulder* [9]Lit. *made their ears heavy*

12 [o]Ezek. 11:19 [p]Neh. 9:29, 30 [q]Dan. 9:11, 12

■ **6:13 He shall build the temple of the LORD.** The Messiah in His kingly function will build the temple. This was to encourage the Jews of Zechariah's day, but its fulfillment can be found in Jesus, who promised to build His church as a temple (John 2:19–21; 1 Cor. 3:16, 17; Eph. 2:19–21).

■ **6:15 those from afar.** These are the nations who join in the Messiah's task of rebuilding the temple. This reflects Haggai's teaching that the nations will bring their wealth to the temple (Hag. 2:7 note). Since the church of Christ is the temple in this age, Gentiles build the temple by building the church, the living body of Christ on earth (1 Pet. 2:5).

■ **7:1–14** This chapter deals with a question from the residents of the land about continuing to fast. The question shows their lack of understanding of the real issue of obedience. Zechariah answers that obedience is better than sacrifice (cf. 1 Sam. 15:22).

■ **7:1 fourth year . . . fourth day . . . ninth month.** December 7, 518 B.C., a little more than two years after the visions in chs. 1–6.

■ **7:2 sent . . . to pray before the LORD.** A delegation came from Bethel to inquire whether they should continue to fast in mourning for the destruction of the temple. The temple was destroyed in the fifth month (586 B.C.), according to 2 Kin. 25:8–15. The question is answered by the prophet in 8:18, 19. Chapter 7 shows that the restored community in Jerusalem was outwardly religious but was missing the fruits of true religion. True religion should result in good deeds (James 1:26, 27). See notes on vv. 9, 10.

■ **7:5 seventh.** The fast that mourned the assassination of Gedaliah, the governor of Judah appointed by the Babylonians (2 Kin. 25:25 note).

seventy years. It had been sixty-eight years since the destruction of the temple; Zechariah here speaks in round numbers.

did you really fast for Me. Zechariah's emphatic question points out the hypocrisy of their fasting: their fasts were motivated by self-interest rather than a desire to please God.

■ **7:7 the South.** See note on Gen. 12:9.

■ **7:9 Execute true justice.** Zechariah calls on the people to do what their fathers did not. True justice meant applying God's word to the problems, both personal and social, confronting the restoration community. They must deliver the oppressed and punish the oppressor.

■ **7:10 the widow or the fatherless, The alien or the poor.** These groups were easily exploited. God loves them (Ex. 22:21; Deut. 10:18) and ordered provision for their care (Deut. 24:17–22). God also pronounces curses on those who exploit them (Deut. 27:19). Injustices done to these groups are mentioned in Ps. 94:6; and Is. 10:1, 2.

plan evil in his heart. The outward problem of mistreating others springs from inward hatred and disregard for others (Matt. 5:21, 22).

13 [r]Prov. 1:24–28; Is. 1:15; Jer. 11:11; Mic. 3:4

14 [s]Lev. 26:33; Deut. 4:27; 28:64; Neh. 1:8

came from the LORD of hosts. 13 Therefore it happened, *that* just as He proclaimed and they would not hear, so [r]they called out and I would not listen," says the LORD of hosts. 14 "But [s]I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations which they had not known. Thus the land became desolate after them, so that no one passed through or returned; for they made the pleasant land desolate."

CHAPTER 8

Jerusalem, Holy City of the Future

8 Again the word of the LORD of hosts came, saying, 2 "Thus says the LORD of hosts:

2 [a]'I am [1]zealous for Zion with great [2]zeal;
With great [3]fervor I am zealous for her.'

3 "Thus says the LORD:

[b]'I will return to Zion,
And [c]dwell in the midst of Jerusalem.
Jerusalem [d]shall be called the City of Truth,
[e]The Mountain of the LORD of hosts,
[f]The Holy Mountain.'

4 "Thus says the LORD of hosts:

[g]'Old men and old women shall again sit
In the streets of Jerusalem,
Each one with his staff in his hand
Because of [4]great age.
5 The streets of the city
Shall be [h]full of boys and girls
Playing in its streets.'

6 "Thus says the LORD of hosts:

'If it is [5]marvelous in the eyes of the remnant of this people in these days,
[i]Will it also be marvelous in My eyes?'
Says the LORD of hosts.

7 "Thus says the LORD of hosts:

'Behold, [j]I will save My people from the land of the [6]east
And from the land of the [7]west;

2 [a]Joel 2:18; Nah. 1:2; Zech. 1:14 [1]Or *jealous* [2]Or *jealousy* [3]Lit. *heat* or *rage*

3 [b]Zech. 1:16 [c]Zech. 2:10, 11 [d]Is. 1:21 [e]Is. 2:2, 3] [f]Jer. 31:23

4 [g]1 Sam. 2:31; Is. 65:20 [4]Lit. *many days*

5 [h]Jer. 30:19, 20

6 [i][Gen. 18:14; Luke 1:37] [5]Or *wonderful*

7 [j]Ps. 107:3; Is. 11:11; Ezek. 37:21 [6]Lit. *rising sun* [7]Lit. *setting sun*

■ **7:13 I would not listen.** God's judgment, the Babylonian exile, was in proportion to their disobedience. The prophets repeatedly emphasize that formal acts of worship are nullified by disobedience. See especially 1 Sam. 15:22 and Is. 1:13–15.

■ **7:14 they made the pleasant land desolate.** The disobedience of their forefathers brought about God's judgment. Zechariah wants the people to understand that continued disobedience will be rewarded with judgment.

■ **8:1–23** This chapter is a picture of the ultimate state of the kingdom of God, when God brings His final and fullest blessings on His people. Similar to Isaiah's portrayal of the future (Is. 65:17; 66:5–24), it gave the postexilic Jews hope that the Lord was still determined to bless them. Since the coming of Christ into the world, the beginning of these blessings is seen, but their full realization awaits the new heavens and new earth (Rev. 21:1).

■ **8:2 I am zealous . . . for her.** See text notes. God's zeal, or jealousy, for His people (not *of* them) is born of His covenant love and commitment to them (1:14), which in turn demands their wholehearted loyalty to Him.

■ **8:3 City of Truth.** The Hebrew word for "truth" means "faithfulness to God's law." Faithful observance of God's law was rarely true of Israel, even in Zechariah's day. The prophet foresees a time when God's people will reflect His character in their dealings with one another (vv. 16, 17). See also Ex. 34:6, 7.

Holy Mountain. Mount Zion will be holy because God's presence will dwell there in a special way. The prophets repeatedly emphasize the day of salvation as a day of renewal of God's presence (2:5, 11).

■ **8:4, 5** A picture of God's covenant blessings, in which God's blessing of long life (Ex. 20:12) and the joy of children playing reflect a state of *shalom*, total well-being.

■ **8:6 marvelous.** The Hebrew word denotes something beyond human strength and understanding, typically with reference to a divine action. For other examples of this emphasis see Gen. 18:14 ("hard") and Judg. 13:18.

remnant. Those faithful to God in the midst of disobedience. Paul speaks of "a remnant according to the election of grace" in Rom. 11:5. The elect of God are preserved to serve Him faithfully. See notes on Is. 1:9 and Mic. 2:12.

■ **8:7 save My people . . . the west.** The covenant renewal of God's people involved restoration from foreign lands. See Deut. 30:1–5; Jer. 30:8–11.

8 I will [k]bring them *back*,
And they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem.
[l]They shall be My people
And I will be their God,
[m]In truth and righteousness.'

9 "Thus says the LORD of hosts:

[n]'Let your hands be strong,
You who have been hearing in these days
These words by the mouth of [o]the prophets,
Who *spoke* in [p]the day the foundation was laid
For the house of the LORD of hosts,
That the temple might be built.
10 For before these days
There were no [q]wages for man nor any hire for beast;
There was no peace from the enemy for whoever went out or came in;
For I set all men, everyone, against his neighbor.

11 [r]But now I *will* not *treat* the remnant of this people as in the former days,' says the LORD of hosts.

12 'For[s] the [g]seed *shall be* prosperous,
The vine shall give its fruit,
[t]The ground shall give her increase,
And [u]the heavens shall give their dew—
I will cause the remnant of this people
To possess all these.
13 And it shall come to pass
That just as you were [v]a curse among the nations,
O house of Judah and house of Israel,
So I will save you, and [w]you shall be a blessing.
Do not fear,
Let your hands be strong.'

14 "For thus says the LORD of hosts:

[x]'Just as I determined to [g]punish you
When your fathers provoked Me to wrath,'
Says the LORD of hosts,
[y]'And I would not relent,
15 So again in these days
I am determined to do good
To Jerusalem and to the house of Judah.
Do not fear.
16 These *are* the things you shall [z]do:
[a]Speak each man the truth to his neighbor;
Give judgment in your gates for truth, justice, and peace;
17 [b]Let none of you think evil in [t]your heart against your neighbor;
And do not love a false oath.
For all these *are things* that I hate,'
Says the LORD."

8 [k]Zeph. 3:20; Zech. 10:10 [l][Jer. 30:22; 31:1, 33; Zech. 13:9] [m]Jer. 4:2

9 [n]1 Chr. 22:13; Is. 35:4; Hag. 2:4 [o]Ezra 5:1, 2; 6:14; Zech. 4:9 [p]Hag. 2:18

10 [q]Hag. 1:6, 9

11 [r][Ps. 103:9]; Is. 12:1; Hag. 2:15–19

12 [s]Joel 2:22 [t]Ps. 67:6 [u]Hag. 1:10 [g]Lit. *seed of peace*

13 [v]Jer. 42:18 [w]Gen. 12:2; Ruth 4:11, 12; Is. 19:24, 25; Ezek. 34:26; [Zeph. 3:20]

14 [x]Jer. 31:28 [y][2 Chr. 36:16] [g]Lit. *bring calamity to you*

16 [z]Zech. 7:9, 10 [a]Ps. 15:2; [Prov. 12:17–19]; Zech. 8:3; [Eph. 4:25]

17 [b]Prov. 3:29; Jer. 4:14; Zech. 7:10 [t]Lit. *his*

■ **8:8 They shall be My people . . . their God.** This personal relationship is the essence of God's covenant with Abraham and his descendants (Gen. 17:7 and note), and of the new covenant (Jer. 31:33). It is the source of all other covenant blessings.

■ **8:12 seed . . . heavens.** The blessings of God's final renewal are expressed in agricultural terms appropriate to the covenant promise of land. Because old Israel's life in the land is a type of New Israel's life in Christ (Gen. 13:15 note), today Christians experience the blessings of God's covenant renewal through Jesus (Matt. 26:28; 1 Cor. 11:25) and look forward to the total renewal of God's covenant blessings in the new heavens and earth (Rev. 21:1—22:5).

■ **8:15 determined.** See note on 1:6.

■ **8:16, 17** The people are called on to order their lives in keeping with God's ethical standards. The godly behavior described here contrasts with the ungodliness that characterized much of Israel's history; truth and righteousness will reign in this final era of blessing (Amos 5:24).

18 Then the word of the LORD of hosts came to me, saying, 19 "Thus says the LORD of hosts:

[c]'The fast of the fourth *month,*
[d]The fast of the fifth,
[e]The fast of the seventh,
[f]And the fast of the tenth,
Shall be [g]joy and gladness and cheerful feasts
For the house of Judah.
[h]Therefore love truth and peace.'

20 "Thus says the LORD of hosts:

'Peoples shall yet come,
Inhabitants of many cities;
21 The inhabitants of one *city* shall go to another, saying,
[i]"Let us continue to go and pray before the LORD,
And seek the LORD of hosts.
I myself will go also."
22 Yes, [j]many peoples and strong nations
Shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem,
And to pray before the LORD.'

23 "Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'In those days ten men [k]from every language of the nations shall [l]grasp the [2]sleeve of a Jewish man, saying, "Let us go with you, for we have heard [m]*that* God *is* with you." ' "

Israel Defended Against Enemies

9 The [f]burden of the word of the LORD
Against the land of Hadrach,
And [a]Damascus its resting place
(For [b]the eyes of men
And all the tribes of Israel
Are on the LORD);
2 Also *against* [c]Hamath, *which* borders on it,
And *against* [d]Tyre and [e]Sidon, though they are very [f]wise.

3 For Tyre built herself a tower,
Heaped up silver like the dust,

19 [c]Jer. 52:6 [d]Jer. 52:12 [e]2 Kin. 25:25; Jer. 41:1, 2 [f]Jer. 52:4 [g]Esth. 8:17 [h]Zech. 8:16; Luke 1:74, 75

21 [i][Is. 2:2, 3; Mic. 4:1, 2]

22 [j]Is. 60:3; 66:23; [Zech. 14:16–21]

23 [k]Is. 3:6 [l][Is. 45:14] [m]1 Cor. 14:25 [2]Lit. *wing,* corner of a garment

CHAPTER 9

1 [a]Is. 17:1; Jer. 23:33 [b]Amos 1:3–5 [f]*oracle, prophecy*

2 [c]Jer. 49:23 [d]Is. 23; Jer. 25:22; 47:4; Ezek. 26; Amos 1:9, 10 [e]1 Kin. 17:9 [f]Ezek. 28:3

■ **8:19** This verse relates to the question in 7:3 and its reply. The fasts mentioned commemorated various aspects of Jerusalem's destruction.

fourth. The fast commemorating the fall of the walls of Jerusalem, the beginning of the end for the city. (2 Kin. 25:3, 4). See notes on 7:2, 5.

tenth. Nebuchadnezzar began his siege of Jerusalem in the tenth month (2 Kin. 25:1; Jer. 39:1–10).

■ **8:20–23** These verses depict a great pilgrimage by the Gentile nations to Jerusalem, implying the extension of God's salvation beyond the borders of Israel (14:16–20; Is. 2:1–4; Mic. 4:1–3; Mal. 1:5).

■ **8:22 strong nations.** See Is. 2:2–4; Mic. 4:3.

■ **8:23 ten men from every language.** Emphasis is laid on the great numbers (v. 22, "many peoples") of Gentiles that will come to worship the true God. Revelation 5:9 speaks of the redeemed from "every tribe and tongue and people and nation." Salvation then is worldwide, not in the sense that every human being is redeemed, but that the children of God are chosen from every language and ethnic group of the world.

God is with you. The attraction of worship is the presence of God in the midst of His people (1 Cor. 14:24, 25).

■ **9:1—11:17** The prophet turns his attention to the future of God's kingdom, developing his theme in two lengthy oracles (chs. 9—11; 12—14). The first prophecy of the book's latter half focuses on the coming of God the King in judgment. The opening verses (9:1–8) portray God as an avenging warrior who comes to take possession of His land by destroying all the pagan enemies who lie in His path (cf. Is. 9:6 note). He comes from the north to Jerusalem (cf. 9:14–17, where God is pictured as coming from the south to Jerusalem), an event that leads to the proclamation of 9:9. Some interpret the picture of a northern invasion as describing Alexander the Great's conquest of Palestine in 333 B.C. That may be, but its greater meaning concerns God Himself coming to avenge His people. See Introduction: Characteristics and Themes.

■ **9:1 burden of the word of the LORD.** This precise phrase is used three times in the Old Testament (here; 12:1; Mal. 1:1). "Burden" implies that the prophet was under strong compulsion to deliver the message from God.

land of Hadrach. Known as Hatarikka in Assyrian cuneiform inscriptions, this is the northernmost city listed in vv. 1–8. The description here is rather general and a specific fulfillment ought not to be sought.

Damascus. The capital of Syria, Israel's neighbor to the north.

the eyes of men . . . on the LORD. All people, and especially God's people, are looking to this mighty King as He approaches with His justice.

■ **9:2 Hamath.** Located on the Orontes River north of Damascus.

Tyre and Sidon. Phoenician cities on the Mediterranean coast. Both were commercial centers throughout the biblical period. Their description as "very wise" may relate to shrewdness in business. Judgment of these cities is a common prophetic theme (Jer. 47:1–7; Ezek. 28:11–23).

And gold like the mire of the streets.
4 Behold, [g]the LORD will cast her out;
He will destroy [h]her power in the sea,
And she will be devoured by fire.

5 Ashkelon shall see *it* and fear;
Gaza also shall be very sorrowful;
And [i]Ekron, for He dried up her expectation.
The king shall perish from Gaza,
And Ashkelon shall not be inhabited.

6 "A[2] mixed race shall settle [j]in Ashdod,
And I will cut off the pride of the [k]Philistines.
7 I will take away the blood from his mouth,
And the abominations from between his teeth.
But he who remains, even he *shall be* for our God,
And shall be like a leader in Judah,
And Ekron like a Jebusite.
8 [l]I will camp around My house
Because of the army,
Because of him who passes by and him who returns.
No more shall an oppressor pass through them,
For now I have seen with My eyes.

The Coming King

9 "Rejoice [m]greatly, O daughter of Zion!
Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem!
Behold, [n]your King is coming to you;
He *is* just and having salvation,
Lowly and riding on a donkey,
A colt, the foal of a donkey.
10 I [o]will cut off the chariot from Ephraim
And the horse from Jerusalem;
The [p]battle bow shall be cut off.
He shall speak peace to the nations;
His dominion *shall be* [q]'from sea to sea,
And from the River to the ends of the earth.'

God Will Save His People

11 "As for you also,
Because of the blood of your covenant,
I will set your [r]prisoners free from the waterless pit.
12 Return to the stronghold,
[s]You prisoners of hope.
Even today I declare
That I will restore [t]double to you.

4 [g]Is. 23:1 [h]Ezek. 26:17

5 [i]Zeph. 2:4, 5

6 [j]Amos 1:8; Zeph. 2:4 [k]Ezek. 25:15–17 [2]Lit. *An illegitimate one*

8 [l][Ps. 34:7]

9 [m]Zeph. 3:14, 15; Zech. 2:10 [n][Ps. 110:1; Is. 9:6, 7; Jer. 23:5, 6]; Matt. 21:5; Mark 11:7, 9; Luke 19:38; John 12:15

10 [o]Hos. 1:7; Mic. 5:10 [p]Ps. 46:9; Is. 2:4; Hos. 2:18; Mic. 4:3 [q]Ps. 72:8

11 [r]Is. 42:7

12 [s]Is. 49:9; Jer. 17:13; Heb. 6:18–20 [t]Is. 61:7

■ **9:5 Ashkelon . . . Gaza . . . Ekron.** Strong cities of Philistia will not be able to withstand the power of the approaching warrior God. These cities are marked out for judgment many times in the Old Testament (Is. 14:28–32; Ezek. 25:15–17; Amos 1:6–8).

■ **9:9, 10** This important Old Testament prophecy finds fulfillment both in Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Matt. 21:1–11; John 12:12–16) and in His messianic reign (v. 10 note).

■ **9:9 O daughter of Zion.** A common title for God's holy city and people (Is. 1:8 note; 62:11; Zeph. 3:14).

your King. The royal descendant of David promised repeatedly (2 Sam. 7:12–14; Ps. 132:11; Is. 9:7; 11:1–5; Jer. 23:5, 6; 33:15–22; Ezek. 34:23, 24; 37:24, 25).

on a donkey. A sign of His humility. See note on Matt. 21:1–11.

■ **9:10 the chariot . . . the horse.** Implements of war will be abolished in the peaceful reign of the righteous King (Is. 2:1–4; 11:6–9). The Old Testament often predicts universal peace in the time of the messianic King (Is. 57:19; Mic. 4:1–5; cf. Eph. 2:12–18).

dominion . . . to the ends of the earth. The universal, sovereign rule of God is foundational to Old Testament religion (Ps. 72:8; 96:3–5; Dan. 2:44–47; 7:13, 14, 27). Christ is the One who brings the Father's universal dominion to earth (Matt. 12:28; Phil. 2:9–11; Rev. 19:11–16).

■ **9:11 blood of your covenant.** A reference to the provision in God's covenant for covering sin (Ex. 24:8; Matt. 26:28).

13 For I have bent Judah, My *bow*,
Fitted the bow with Ephraim,
And raised up your sons, O Zion,
Against your sons, O Greece,
And made you like the sword of a mighty man."

14 Then the LORD will be seen over them,
And [u]His arrow will go forth like lightning.
The Lord GOD will blow the trumpet,
And go [v]with whirlwinds from the south.
15 The LORD of hosts will [w]defend them;
They shall devour and subdue with slingstones.
They shall drink *and* roar as if with wine;
They shall be filled *with blood* like [3]basins,
Like the corners of the altar.
16 The LORD their God will [x]save them in that day,
As the flock of His people.
For [y]they *shall be like* the [4]jewels of a crown,
[z]Lifted like a banner over His land—
17 For [a]how great is [5]its goodness
And how great [5]its [b]beauty!
[c]Grain shall make the young men thrive,
And new wine the young women.

Restoration of Judah and Israel

10 Ask [a]the LORD for [b]rain
In [c]the time of the [1]latter rain.
The LORD will make [2]flashing clouds;
He will give them showers of rain,
Grass in the field for everyone.

2 For the [d]idols[3] speak delusion;
The diviners envision [e]lies,
And tell false dreams;
They [f]comfort in vain.
Therefore *the people* wend their way like [g]sheep;
They are [4]in trouble [h]because *there is* no shepherd.

3 "My anger is kindled against the [i]shepherds,
[j]And I will punish the [5]goatherds.
For the LORD of hosts [k]will visit His flock,
The house of Judah,
And [l]will make them as His royal horse in the battle.
4 From him comes [m]the cornerstone,

14 [u]Ps. 18:14; Hab. 3:11 [v]Is. 21:1
15 [w]Is. 37:35; Zech. 12:8 [3]Sacrificial basins
16 [x]Jer. 31:10, 11 [y]Is. 62:3; Mal. 3:17 [z]Is. 11:12 [4]Lit. *stones*
17 [a][Ps. 31:19] [b][Ps. 45:1–16] [c]Joel 3:18 [5]Lit. *His*

CHAPTER 10

1 [a][Jer. 14:22] [b][Deut. 11:13, 14] [c][Joel 2:23] [1]Spring rain [2]Or *lightning flashes*
2 [d]Jer. 10:8 [e]Jer. 27:9; [Ezek. 13] [f]Job 13:4 [g]Jer. 50:6, 17 [h]Ezek. 34:5–8; Matt. 9:36; Mark 6:34 [3]Heb. *teraphim* [4]*afflicted*
3 [i]Jer. 25:34–36; Ezek. 34:2; Zech. 11:17 [j]Ezek. 34:17 [k]Luke 1:68 [l]Song 1:9 [5]Leaders
4 [m]Is. 28:16

■ **9:13 O Greece.** Lit. "O, Javan" (Gen. 10:2). This reference does not necessarily refer to the Maccabean wars (second century B.C.) of the intertestamental period, or indicate that the author lived in that period. Greece may be used as a symbol of the pagan nations that war against God's people.

■ **9:14 whirlwinds from the south.** The God of Israel is now portrayed as coming from the southern region of the desert riding on the storm clouds (2 Sam. 22:8–16; Ps. 29). Since Mount Sinai was the place He appeared when He brought the people out of Egypt, the Old Testament sometimes depicts God as coming from that region.

■ **9:15 drink and roar as if with wine.** God's people will be exuberant with a holy joy because of God's victory and presence (Acts 2:13–21; Eph. 5:18).

■ **9:16 the flock . . . jewels of a crown.** God's people rest secure as sheep under His care (13:7; Ezek. 34:11–24; 37:24), and will become glorious as a result of God's presence (2 Cor. 3:18).

■ **10:1–12** This chapter is a rebuke to the people, and especially the leaders, of Judah for seeking wisdom and advice from idols (v. 2). God's answer to their waywardness is that He Himself will be their shepherd. The Messiah is often portrayed (like David) as a Shepherd-King (Ezek. 34; Jer. 23:1–8).

■ **10:1 Ask the LORD for rain.** See note on 8:12.

■ **10:2 idols . . . diviners.** The idols are household idols (Gen. 31:19). Occult attempts to tell the future are forbidden for God's people (Deut. 18:9–14), who are to derive their wisdom from the word of God (Prov. 1:7).

there is no shepherd. Israel's and Judah's leaders were often rebuked for their godless leadership of God's people (Ezek. 34:1–10).

■ **10:3 royal horse.** Judah will be strong like a horse arrayed for battle because of God's help (v. 6).

■ **10:4 cornerstone . . . tent peg . . . battle bow.** Symbolic references to the Messiah. Jesus was from the tribe of Judah (Heb. 7:14) and

From him [n]the tent peg,
From him the battle bow,
From him every [o]ruler together.
5 They shall be like mighty men,
Who [o]tread down *their enemies*
In the mire of the streets in the battle.
They shall fight because the LORD is with them,
And the riders on horses shall be put to shame.

6 "I will strengthen the house of Judah,
And I will save the house of Joseph.
[p]I will bring them back,
Because I [q]have mercy on them.
They shall be as though I had not cast them aside;
For I *am* the LORD their God,
And I [r]will hear them.
7 *Those of* Ephraim shall be like a mighty man,
And their [s]heart shall rejoice as if with wine.
Yes, their children shall see *it* and be glad;
Their heart shall rejoice in the LORD.
8 I will [t]whistle for them and gather them,
For I will redeem them;
[u]And they shall increase as they once increased.

9 "I[v] will [7]sow them among the peoples,
And they shall [w]remember Me in far countries;
They shall live, together with their children,
And they shall return.
10 [x]I will also bring them back from the land of Egypt,
And gather them from Assyria.
I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon,
[y]Until no *more room* is found for them.
11 [z]He shall pass through the sea with affliction,
And strike the waves of the sea:
All the depths of [8]the River shall dry up.
Then [a]the pride of Assyria shall be brought down,
And [b]the scepter of Egypt shall depart.

12 "So I will strengthen them in the LORD,
And [c]they shall walk up and down in His name,"
Says the LORD.

Desolation of Israel

11 Open [a]your doors, O Lebanon,
That fire may devour your cedars.
2 Wail, O cypress, for the [b]cedar has fallen,
Because the mighty *trees* are ruined.

4 [n]Is. 22:23 [6]Or *despot*
5 [o]Ps. 18:42
6 [p]Jer. 3:18; Ezek. 37:21 [q]Hos. 1:7; Zech. 1:16 [r]Zech. 13:9
7 [s]Ps. 104:15
8 [t]Is. 5:26 [u]Is. 49:19; Ezek. 36:37; Zech. 2:4
9 [v]Hos. 2:23 [w]Deut. 30:1 [7]Or *scatter*
10 [x]Is. 11:11; Hos. 11:11 [y]Is. 49:19, 20
11 [z]Is. 11:15 [8]Is. 14:25; Zeph. 2:13 [b]Ezek. 30:13 [8]The Nile
12 [c]Mic. 4:5

CHAPTER 11

1 [a]Zech. 10:10
2 [b]Ezek. 31:3

came in fulfillment of the promise of a ruler who would conquer every other ruler. See notes on Gen. 49:10 and Mic. 5:2.

■ **10:6 I am the LORD their God.** Another strong reaffirmation of the covenant bond between God and His people. God saves His people because of His eternal commitment to them (8:8 note; Jer. 31:33).

■ **10:8 whistle for them.** As the shepherd whistles for his flock (cf. Is. 7:18), so God will recall the exiles from foreign lands (Deut. 30:1–10).

as they once increased. As the Israelites had earlier multiplied (Ex. 1:7), in fulfillment of God's covenant promise to Abraham (Gen. 15:5; 17:6).

■ **10:10–12** God's mighty act in summoning the exiles is depicted in language recalling Israel's Exodus from Egypt (Is. 43:16, 17).

■ **10:12 walk . . . in His name.** Following His guidance and wisdom in all that they do (Deut. 6:4–9; Mic. 4:5).

■ **11:1–3** Scholars debate whether this small poetic section belongs with what precedes (chs. 9—10, God's judgment against the nations) or with what follows (11:4–17, God's judgment against Israel for their rejection of the Shepherd). The metaphors of large oaks, dense forests, and ravaging lions are drawn from the plants and animals of the Jordan Valley. The language is consistent with a number of judgments in Israel's history, but the preeminent judgment comes to those nations and individuals who reject the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ (Acts 4:24–28).

■ **11:2 cedar.** Often used as a symbol of Lebanon (1 Kin. 5:6; Ps. 104:16).

Bashan. The fertile area northeast of the Dead Sea (Deut. 3:1 note).

Wail, O oaks of Bashan,
[c] For the thick forest has come down.
3 *There is* the sound of wailing [d] shepherds!
For their glory is in ruins.
There is the sound of roaring lions!
For the [f] pride of the Jordan is in ruins.

Prophecy of the Shepherds

4 Thus says the LORD my God, "Feed the flock for slaughter, 5 whose owners slaughter them and [e] feel no guilt; those who sell them [f] say, 'Blessed be the LORD, for I am rich'; and their shepherds do [g] not pity them. 6 For I will no longer pity the inhabitants of the land," says the LORD. "But indeed I will give everyone into his neighbor's hand and into the hand of his king. They shall [2] attack the land, and I will not deliver *them* from their hand."

7 So I fed the flock for slaughter, [3] in particular [h] the poor of the flock. I took for myself two staffs: the one I called [4] Beauty, and the other I called [5] Bonds; and I fed the flock. 8 I [6] dismissed the three shepherds [i] in one month. My soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me. 9 Then I said, "I will not feed you. [j] Let what is dying die, and what is perishing perish. Let those that are left eat each other's flesh." 10 And I took my staff, [7] Beauty, and cut it in two, that I might break the covenant which I had made with all the peoples. 11 So it was broken on that day. Thus [k] the [8] poor of the flock, who were watching me, knew that it *was* the word of the LORD. 12 Then I said to them, "If it is [9] agreeable to you, give *me* my wages; and if not, refrain." So they [l] weighed out for my wages thirty *pieces* of silver.

13 And the LORD said to me, "Throw it to the [m] potter"—that princely price they set on me. So I took the thirty *pieces* of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD for the potter. 14 Then I cut in two my other staff, [l] Bonds, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.

15 And the LORD said to me, [n] "Next, take for yourself the implements of a foolish shepherd. 16 For indeed I will raise up a shepherd in the land *who* will not care for those who are cut off, nor seek the young, nor heal those that are broken, nor feed those that still stand. But he will eat the flesh of the fat and tear their hooves in [o] pieces.

17 "Woe [p] to the worthless shepherd,
Who leaves the flock!
A sword *shall be* against his arm
And against his right eye;
His arm shall completely wither,
And his right eye shall be totally blinded."

2 [c] Is. 32:19
3 [d] Jer. 25:34–36 [f] Or *floodplain, thicket*
5 [e] [Jer. 2:3]; 50:7 [f] Hos. 12:8 [g] Ezek. 34:2, 3
6 [2] Lit. *strike*
7 [h] Zeph. 3:12 [3] So with MT, Tg., Vg.; LXX *for the Canaanites* [4] Or *Grace* [5] Or *Unity*
8 [i] Hos. 5:7 [6] Or *destroyed,* lit. *cut off*
9 [j] Jer. 15:2
10 [7] Or *Grace*
11 [k] Zeph. 3:12 [8] So with MT, Tg., Vg.; LXX *the Canaanites*
12 [l] Ex. 21:32 [9] *good in your sight*
13 [m] Matt. 27:3–10
14 [l] Or *Unity*
15 [n] Is. 56:11
16 [o] Ezek. 34:1–10
17 [p] Jer. 23:1

■ **11:4–17** The actors are difficult to identify with certainty in this section, although the general teaching is clear. The prophet is appointed to be a good shepherd, but because he is rejected he forsakes the flock (v. 9). As a good shepherd, the prophet is a type of the coming messianic Shepherd, Jesus Christ, who came as *the* Good Shepherd and laid down His life for the sheep (John 10:11–18).

■ **11:4 Feed.** A command given to Zechariah.

the flock for slaughter. The people of Israel.

■ **11:6 I will no longer pity.** These words were appropriate before the Babylonian exile (Jer. 13:14; 15:5; 21:7); they occur here because of the continued rebellion of the people (Matt. 21:33–46).

■ **11:7 Beauty.** Or, "grace" (text note). This word is also used of God Himself (Ps. 27:4; 90:17). The staff is symbolic of the grace that God has shown His people in His covenant (v. 10).

Bonds. Or, "unity" (text note). The unity of the divided nation (v. 14) was promised in the new covenant (Jer. 30:3; 31:27, 31; 33:7).

■ **11:8 the three shepherds.** These shepherds are difficult to identify. They could be symbolic of all leaders who fail to meet God's standards. In time the Good Shepherd of God's choice will depose all other rulers (Rev. 2:27).

■ **11:9** The prophet as shepherd expresses his disgust with the rebellion and disobedience of the flock.

■ **11:10 covenant . . . with all the peoples.** The divinely imposed obligation on the nations not to injure God's people Israel (cf. Ezek. 34:25; Hos. 2:18). With the removal of God's favor toward Israel, the nations could afflict the flock of God.

■ **11:12 thirty pieces of silver.** Apparently the price of a slave (Ex. 21:32). Jewish officials paid Judas thirty shekels of silver to betray Jesus (Matt. 26:14–16).

■ **11:13 threw them into the house of the LORD.** A prophecy fulfilled when Judas threw down the thirty pieces of silver on the floor of the temple (Matt. 27:1–10; cf. Jer. 19:1–13).

■ **11:14 break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.** The dissolution of the covenant nation because they rejected the Good Shepherd.

■ **11:15–17** With the rejection of the Good Shepherd, worthless leaders take His place (cf. Ezek. 34:1–10). The loss of "arm" and "right eye" indicates the loss of power and insight necessary for leadership (v. 17). Some suggest that this prophecy refers to the Jewish leaders who led the nation into disastrous rebellions against Rome after the death of Christ (A.D. 66–74, 132–35).

The Coming Deliverance of Judah

12 The [1]burden of the word of the LORD against Israel. Thus says the LORD, [a]who stretches out the heavens, lays the foundation of the earth, and [b]forms the spirit of man within him: 2 "Behold, I will make Jerusalem [c]a cup of [2]drunkenness to all the surrounding peoples, when they lay siege against Judah and Jerusalem. 3 [d]And it shall happen in that day that I will make Jerusalem [e]a very heavy stone for all peoples; all who would heave it away will surely be cut in pieces, though all nations of the earth are gathered against it. 4 In that day," says the LORD, [f]"I will strike every horse with confusion, and its rider with madness; I will open My eyes on the house of Judah, and will strike every horse of the peoples with blindness. 5 And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, 'The inhabitants of Jerusalem *are* my strength in the LORD of hosts, their God.' 6 In that day I will make the governors of Judah [g]like a firepan in the woodpile, and like a fiery torch in the sheaves; they shall devour all the surrounding peoples on the right hand and on the left, but Jerusalem shall be inhabited again in her own place—Jerusalem.

7 "The LORD will save the tents of Judah first, so that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem shall not become greater than that of Judah. 8 In that day the LORD will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem; the one who is feeble among them in that day shall be like David, and the house of David *shall be* like God, like the Angel of the LORD before them. 9 It shall be in that day *that* I will seek to [h]destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

Mourning for the Pierced One

10 [i]"And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will [j]look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him [k]as one mourns for *his* only *son,* and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn. 11 In that day there shall be a great [l]mourning in Jerusalem, [m]like the mourning at Hadad Rimmon in the plain of [3]Megiddo. 12 [n]And the land shall mourn, every family by itself: the family of the house of David by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of the house of [o]Nathan by itself, and their wives by themselves; 13 the family of the house of Levi by itself, and their wives by themselves; the family of Shimei by itself, and their wives by themselves; 14 all the families that remain, every family by itself, and their wives by themselves.

Idolatry Cut Off

13 "In that [a]day [b]a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for [c]uncleanness.

2 "It shall be in that day," says the LORD of hosts, "*that* I will [d]cut off the names of the idols from the land, and they shall no longer be remembered. I will also cause [e]the prophets and the unclean spirit to depart from the land. 3 It shall come to pass *that* if anyone still prophesies, then his father and mother who begot him will say to him, 'You shall [f]not live, because you have spoken lies in the name of the LORD.' And his father and mother who begot him [g]shall thrust him through when he prophesies.

4 "And it shall be in that day *that* [h]every prophet will be ashamed of his vision when he

CHAPTER 12

1 [a]Is. 42:5; 44:24 [b]Num. 16:22; [Eccl. 12:7; Is. 57:16]; Heb. 12:9 [1]*oracle, prophecy*

2 [c]Is. 51:17 [2]Lit. *reeling*

3 [d]Zech. 12:4, 6, 8; 13:1 [e]Matt. 21:44

4 [f]Ps. 76:6; Ezek. 38:4

6 [g]Is. 10:17, 18; Obad. 18; Zech. 11:1

9 [h]Hag. 2:22

10 [i]Jer. 31:9; 50:4; Ezek. 39:29; [Joel 2:28, 29] [j]John 19:34, 37; 20:27; [Rev. 1:7] [k]Jer. 6:26; Amos 8:10

11 [l][Matt. 24:30]; Acts 2:37; [Rev. 1:7] [m]2 Kin. 23:29 [3]Heb. *Megiddon*

12 [n][Matt. 24:30; Rev. 1:7] [o]Luke 3:31

CHAPTER 13

1 [a]Acts 10:43; [Rev. 21:6, 7] [b]Ps. 36:9; [Heb. 9:14; 1 John 1:7] [c]Num. 19:17; Is. 4:4; Ezek. 36:25

2 [d]Ex. 23:13; Hos. 2:17 [e]Jer. 23:14, 15; 2 Pet. 2:1

3 [f]Deut. 18:20; [Ezek. 14:9] [g]Deut. 13:6–11; [Matt. 10:37]

4 [h]Jer. 6:15; 8:9; [Mic. 3:6, 7]

■ **12:1—14:21** The second oracle of the book's latter half focuses on God's judgment of the nations, climaxing with the salvation of Jerusalem and the final celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles.

■ **12:1 burden of the word of the LORD.** See note on 9:1.

■ **12:2 a cup of drunkenness.** A common Old Testament image of God's wrath as a cup from which the nations will drink (Is. 51:17; Jer. 25:15–17, 27–29; Ezek. 23:32–34).

■ **12:3 in that day.** The day of the Lord (14:1). This phrase occurs numerous times in chs. 12—14, and indicates the fullness of God's judgment of the world and the final salvation of His people.

Jerusalem a very heavy stone. The earthly Jerusalem of Zechariah's day was a type of the church, the heavenly Jerusalem in which we now live by faith (Heb. 12:22–24).

■ **12:6 firepan . . . fiery torch.** More images of Judah's devouring power.

■ **12:10 Spirit of grace and supplication.** This describes God's gracious Spirit who produces humility in God's people. The Old Testament prophets emphasize that God's renewal of the covenant (Jer. 31:31–33) entailed renewal through His Spirit (Is. 59:21; Ezek. 36:26, 27; 39:29; Joel 2:28, 29).

look on Me whom they pierced. Probably this means "look to the Messiah as the source of salvation." Many passages in John's Gospel speak of faith as "seeing" (John 6:40). The one looked upon in faith is none other than God Himself, who is pierced in the Person of His incarnate Son, the Messiah (John 1:14 and note; 19:37).

■ **13:1 In that day.** See note on 12:3.

fountain . . . for sin and for uncleanness. The picture of a cleansing fountain indicates the abundance of forgiveness (cf. Jer. 2:13). Ultimately we find that abundance of forgiveness in Jesus and the Spirit (John 7:37–39).

■ **13:3 lies in the name of the LORD.** False prophecy includes both prophecy in the name of a false god and presumptuous speech in the name of the Lord (Deut. 13; 18:20–22). False prophets were to die by the sword (Deut. 13:12–15).

■ **13:4 a robe of coarse hair.** False prophets will deny that they were prophets for fear of punishment, and will refuse to wear the traditional clothing symbolic of the prophet (2 Kin. 1:8; Matt. 3:4).

prophesies; they will not wear [i]a robe of coarse hair to deceive. [5][j]But he will say, 'I *am* no prophet, I *am* a farmer; for a man taught me to keep cattle from my youth.' [6] And *one* will say to him, 'What are these wounds between your [l]arms?' Then he will answer, '*Those* with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.'

The Shepherd Savior

7 "Awake, O sword, against [k]My Shepherd,
Against the Man [l]who is My Companion,"
Says the LORD of hosts.
[m]"Strike the Shepherd,
And the sheep will be scattered;
Then I will turn My hand against [n]the little ones.
8 And it shall come to pass in all the land,"
Says the LORD,
"*That* [o]two-thirds in it shall be cut off *and* die,
[p]But *one*-third shall be left in it:
9 I will bring the *one*-third [q]through the fire,
Will [r]refine them as silver is refined,
And test them as gold is tested.
[s]They will call on My name,
And I will answer them.
[t]I will say, 'This *is* My people';
And each one will say, 'The LORD *is* my God.' "

The Day of the LORD

14 Behold, [a]the day of the LORD is coming,
And your [l]spoil will be divided in your midst.
2 For [b]I will gather all the nations to battle against Jerusalem;
The city shall be taken,
The houses [2]rifled,
And the women ravished.
Half of the city shall go into captivity,
But the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city.

3 Then the LORD will go forth
And fight against those nations,
As He fights in the day of battle.
4 And in that day His feet will stand [c]on the Mount of Olives,
Which faces Jerusalem on the east.
And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two,
From east to west,
[d]*Making* a very large valley;
Half of the mountain shall move toward the north
And half of it toward the south.

4 [i]2 Kin. 1:8; Is. 20:2; Matt. 3:4
5 [j]Amos 7:14
6 [l]Or *hands*
7 [k]Is. 40:11; Ezek. 34:23, 24; 37:24; Mic. 5:2, 4 [l][John 10:30] [m]Matt. 26:31, 56, 67; Mark 14:27; 1 Pet. 5:4; Rev. 7:16, 17 [n]Luke 12:32
8 [o]Is. 6:13; Ezek. 5:2, 4, 12 [p][Rom. 11:5]
9 [q]Is. 48:10; Ezek. 20:38; Mal. 3:3 [r]1 Pet. 1:6, 7 [s]Ps. 50:15; Zeph. 3:9; [Zech. 12:10] [t]Jer. 30:22; Hos. 2:23

CHAPTER 14

1 [a][Is. 13:6, 9; Joel 2:1; Mal. 4:1] [l]*plunder* or *booty*
2 [b]Joel 3:2; Zech. 12:2, 3 [2]Or *plundered*
4 [c]Ezek. 11:23; Acts 1:9–12 [d]Joel 3:12

■ **13:6 wounds between your arms.** Probably wounds that were self-inflicted during idolatrous worship. Several Old Testament texts suggest that such practices were customary in pagan worship (Lev. 19:28; 21:5; Deut. 14:1; 1 Kin. 18:28). The accused prophet contends that his wounds were inflicted by friends, and were not the result of idolatrous worship.

■ **13:7–9** These verses envision God's chosen Shepherd who suffers at the hand of God (v. 7). Out of this judgment emerges the true people of God (v. 9). No clearer picture of Jesus and His suffering church is given in the Old Testament. See the notes below.

■ **13:7 Strike the Shepherd.** Astonishingly, God strikes His own chosen Shepherd. Jesus is the Shepherd who is stricken and afflicted (Matt. 26:31–35; Mark 14:27–31; Luke 22:31–34).

the sheep. God's people suffer along with their Shepherd (2 Cor. 1:5 note).

against the little ones. Possibly an indication of God's judgment against His sheep. The Hebrew word rendered "against" could also be translated "upon," indicating God's protection of the "little ones" in the midst of suffering.

■ **13:8 two-thirds . . . one-third.** The judgment sifts the true believers from the untrue. A common prophetic theme is that God's judgment will distinguish between the proud and humble (Zeph. 3:11, 12), between the true and false sheep (Ezek. 34:17–22).

■ **14:1 the day of the LORD is coming.** The Old Testament prophets proclaimed a "day of the Lord" for judgment and deliverance, both of which are present in this passage (Introduction to Zephaniah: Characteristics and Themes).

5 Then you shall flee *through* My mountain valley,
For the mountain valley shall reach to Azal.
Yes, you shall flee
As you fled from the [e]earthquake
In the days of Uzziah king of Judah.

[f]Thus the LORD my God will come,
And [g]all the saints with [3]You.

6 It shall come to pass in that day
That there will be no light;
The [4]lights will diminish.
7 It shall be one day
[h]Which is known to the LORD—
Neither day nor night.
But at [i]evening time it shall happen
That it will be light.

8 And in that day it shall be
That living [j]waters shall flow from Jerusalem,
Half of them toward [5]the eastern sea
And half of them toward [6]the western sea;
In both summer and winter it shall occur.
9 And the LORD shall be [k]King over all the earth.
In that day it shall be—
[l]"The LORD *is* one,"
And His name one.

10 All the land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. [7]*Jerusalem* shall be raised up and [m]inhabited in her place from Benjamin's Gate to the place of the First Gate and the Corner Gate, [n]and *from* the Tower of Hananel to the king's winepresses.

11 *The people* shall dwell in it;
And [o]no longer shall there be utter destruction,
[p]But Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.

12 And this shall be the plague with which the LORD will strike all the people who fought against Jerusalem:

Their flesh shall [8]dissolve while they stand on their feet,
Their eyes shall dissolve in their sockets,
And their tongues shall dissolve in their mouths.

13 It shall come to pass in that day
That [q]a great panic from the LORD will be among them.
Everyone will seize the hand of his neighbor,

5 [e]Is. 29:6; Amos 1:1 [f][Ps. 96:13]; Is. 66:15, 16; Matt. 24:30, 31; 25:31; Jude 14 [g]Joel 3:11 [3]Or *you;* LXX, Tg., Vg. *Him*

6 [4]Lit. *glorious ones*

7 [h]Matt. 24:36 [i]Is. 30:26

8 [j]Ezek. 47:1–12; Joel 3:18; [John 7:38; Rev. 22:1, 2] [5]The Dead Sea [6]The Mediterranean Sea

9 [k][Jer. 23:5, 6; Rev. 11:15] [l][Eph. 4:5, 6]; Deut. 6:4

10 [m]Jer. 30:18; Zech. 12:6 [n]Neh. 3:1; Jer. 31:38 [7]Lit. *She*

11 [o]Jer. 31:40 [p]Jer. 23:6; Ezek. 34:25–28; Hos. 2:18

12 [8]Lit. *decay*

13 [q]1 Sam. 14:15, 20

■ **14:5 Azal.** Clearly a place close to Jerusalem; its precise location is unknown.

saints. Lit. "holy ones," an expression found also in the New Testament (Jude 14; cf. Matt. 25:31). These are God's chosen servants, the angelic host (perhaps humans as well), coming to Jerusalem to liberate it from pagan aggressors. This day of battle ushers in the eternal bliss of God's special presence among His people.

■ **14:7 one day . . . it will be light.** God Himself will be the light of the city (Is. 60:19, 20; Rev. 21:25; 22:5). Natural light from the heavenly bodies will have ceased (v. 6).

■ **14:8 living waters . . . from Jerusalem.** As the result of the Lord's presence, a refreshing stream of running water brings healing to those who seek refuge in the Lord. Such water symbolizes the blessings of salvation (Is. 55:1–5; Ezek. 47:1–12; John 4:10–14). Believers in Jesus receive the living water only He can give (John 7:37–39; Rev. 22:1).

■ **14:9 King over all the earth.** With the final victory, God's sovereignty over all is manifested.

The LORD is one, And His name one. These words clearly draw on Deut. 6:4, Israel's foundational confession (Mark 12:29 note). Only on this day of victory will the full meaning of this confession be understood.

■ **14:10** This extensive geographical description is designed to stress that the whole land of God's people will be claimed by God Himself.

■ **14:12 plague.** This fearful plague recalls the plagues on Egypt (Ex. 7—12), as well as the covenant curses proclaimed by God upon disobedience (Lev. 26:16; Deut. 28:22).

And raise [r]his hand against his neighbor's hand;
14 Judah also will fight at Jerusalem.
[s]And the wealth of all the surrounding nations
Shall be gathered together:
Gold, silver, and apparel in great abundance.

15 [t]Such also shall be the plague
On the horse *and* the mule,
On the camel and the donkey,
And on all the cattle that will be in those camps.
So *shall* this plague *be.*

The Nations Worship the King

16 And it shall come to pass *that* everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall [u]go up from year to year to [v]worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep [w]the Feast of Tabernacles. 17 [x]And it shall be *that* whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain. 18 If the family of [y]Egypt will not come up and enter in, [z]they *shall have* no *rain;* they shall receive the plague with which the LORD strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. 19 This shall be the [g]punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.

20 In that day [a]"HOLINESS TO THE LORD" shall be *engraved* on the bells of the horses. The [b]pots in the LORD's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. 21 Yes, [f]every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holiness to the LORD of hosts. Everyone who sacrifices shall come and take them and cook in them. In that day there shall no longer be a [c]Canaanite [d]in the house of the LORD of hosts.

13 [r]Judg. 7:22; 2 Chr. 20:23; Ezek. 38:21
14 [s]Ezek. 39:10, 17
15 [t]Zech. 14:12
16 [u][Is. 2:2, 3; 60:6–9; 66:18–21; Mic. 4:1, 2] [v]Is. 27:13 [w]Lev. 23:34–44; Neh. 8:14; Hos. 12:9; John 7:2
17 [x]Is. 60:12
18 [y]Is. 19:21 [z]Deut. 11:10
19 [g]Lit. *sin*
20 [a]Ex. 28:36; 39:30; Is. 23:18; Jer. 2:3 [b]Ezek. 46:20
21 [c]Is. 35:8; Ezek. 44:9; Joel 3:17; Rev. 21:27; 22:15 [d][Eph. 2:19–22] [f]Or *on every pot . . . shall be engraved "HOLINESS TO THE LORD OF HOSTS"*

■ **14:15 shall be the plague** The plague will extend even to the animals belonging to the heathen enemies of God. Zechariah is emphasizing that the destruction of God's enemies will be final and complete. Even now Christians enjoy victory in faith (1 John 5:4) and await the final subjugation of God's enemies by Christ (1 Cor. 15:24–28).

■ **14:16–20** The last part of the book pictures the universal blessing that God will bestow in the final state.

■ **14:16 everyone who is left.** The people in the pagan nations are not all destroyed. Some are converted and come to worship the true and living God in Jerusalem (6:15; 8:23 and notes).

Feast of Tabernacles. The worship of the Gentiles is expressed in terms of this feast because it was one of joy and thankfulness to God for His blessings (Lev. 23:33–36, 39–43; Num. 29:12–34; Deut. 16:13–15). The feast occurred during the fall harvest season and therefore could symbolize the ingathering of the Gentiles.

■ **14:20 HOLINESS TO THE LORD.** Originally inscribed on the high priest's turban (Ex. 28:36–38) to express dedication, the phrase is now applied to everything in Jerusalem, horses' bells and cooking pots, because God's presence sanctifies all around Him.

The Book of

MALACHI

Author The authorship of Malachi is a subject of debate. Scholars are divided as to whether the name "Malachi" is a personal name or a title. Both the Aramaic Targum and the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament translation) suggest something other than a personal name. The former identifies Malachi with Ezra. The latter translates the phrase "by Malachi" as "by the hand of his angel [or 'messenger']." The main arguments against viewing "Malachi" as the personal name of the prophet are the absence of specific data concerning his father and the lack of any mention of his place of birth. In addition, the phrase "burden of the word," which occurs in 1:1; Zech. 9:1; 12:1, is alleged to be an anonymous addition to those texts. Nevertheless, these are not compelling reasons for rejecting Malachi as a personal name. In the case of every other Old Testament prophetic book, a personal name is given. As with many of the prophets, we know little about the prophet's personal circumstances. But Malachi was "God's messenger," and the message he brought was from God (cf. Amos 3:7, 8).

Date and Occasion Malachi is to be dated about the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. The reference to the "governor" (1:8) locates the book in the Persian period, and Malachi's emphasis on the law (Mal. 4:4) would indicate the time of Ezra's ministry of restoring the prominence and authority of the law (Ezra 7:14, 25, 26; Neh. 8:18). Some date the book between the coming of Ezra (458 B.C.) and the coming of Nehemiah (445 B.C.). Others place Malachi in the period between Nehemiah's two visits to Jerusalem, about 433 B.C.

Also important is the recognition that the conditions and problems that confronted Ezra and Nehemiah are also found in the prophecy of Malachi. All three spoke out against marriage to foreign wives (e.g., 2:11–15; Neh. 13:23–27). They condemned neglect of the tithe (e.g., 3:8–10; Neh. 13:10–14). They castigated the evils of a degenerate priesthood (e.g., 1:6—2:9; Neh. 13:7, 8), and criticized social sins (e.g., 3:5; Neh. 5:1–13).

Characteristics and Themes The covenant theme is prominent in Malachi. Explicit references include: the covenant of Levi (2:5–9), the covenant of the fathers (2:10), the marriage covenant (2:14), and the Messenger of the covenant (3:1). In addition to these direct references, the book begins with a rehearsal of God's covenant love (1:2–5). The seriousness of priestly incompetence and unfaithfulness is seen in the resulting erosion of covenant faithfulness among the common people, who broke faith in their marriages (2:10–16) and in their social and economic relationships (3:5), "profaning the covenant" (2:10). Unless they repent (3:7) they are under God's curse (3:9; Lev. 26:14–46; Deut. 28:15–68).

Malachi spoke to a disillusioned, discouraged, and doubting people whose experience did not harmonize with their understanding of the glorious promises found in the earlier prophets. Their vision of the coming messianic age did not materialize. Instead they experienced poverty, drought, and economic adversity, and they became disillusioned with God and their faith. Malachi's word confronts a people skeptical of the promises and therefore indifferent in their commitment to live in the light of those promises and to worship and serve the Lord with all their hearts. The book may serve as a catechism for times of doubt and disappointment, when the professing people of God are tempted to break faith with their covenant God. The prophet's ministry is to light the lamp of faith in a disheartened people by reminding them of God's electing love (1:2) and to set forth the continuing obligations of the covenant to those who truly know God (3:16–18).

One of the distinguishing features of this book is its "disputational" style. This is seen in the accusation by the covenant Lord against His people. The accusation is met by a cynical questioning of the charges. In response to the defiant response of the people, the prophet elaborates and defines the charges initially made. The book should be studied in the light of the structure, evident in the outline below, of six disputational dialogues. The structure reveals the role of this prophet as a covenant lawsuit advocate for God.

The uncommonly frequent use of the first person ("I") by the Lord in addressing the people lends an added sense of urgency and intimacy to the message of the book (1:2, 6, 14; 2:2; 3:5, 6, 10, 17; 4:5). □

Outline of Malachi

I. Israel Doubts God's Love for Them (1:1–5)
II. Degeneration of the Priesthood (1:6—2:9)
  A. Contempt for God at the Altar (1:6–14)
  B. Neglect of God's Law (2:1–9)
III. Israel's Failure in Marriage Practices (2:10–16)
  A. Marriage to Idolatrous Wives (2:10–12)
  B. Divorce of Israelite Wives (2:13–16)
IV. God's Response to Sin (2:17—3:5)
  A. The Guilty Weary God with Excuses (2:17)
  B. The Purifying Work of the Messenger (3:1–5)
V. God's Desire to Bless (3:6–12)
  A. His Unchanging Promise to Forgive the Repentant (3:6, 7)
  B. Israel Robs God (3:8–12)
VI. Distinction Between the Righteous and the Wicked (3:13—4:6)
  A. The Harsh Words and Attitudes of the Cynical (3:13–15)
  B. The Godly Conduct of the Faithful (3:16–18)
  C. The Day of the Lord (4:1–6)

CHAPTER 1

1 [1]*oracle, prophecy* [2]Lit. *by the hand of*

2 [a]Deut. 4:37; 7:8; 23:5; Is. 41:8, 9; [Jer. 31:3]; John 15:12 [b]Rom. 9:13

3 [c]Jer. 49:18; Ezek. 35:9, 15

THE [1]burden of the word of the LORD to Israel [2]by Malachi.

Israel Beloved of God

2 "I[a] have loved you," says the LORD.
"Yet you say, 'In what way have You loved us?'
Was not Esau Jacob's brother?"
Says the LORD.
"Yet [b]Jacob I have loved;
3 But Esau I have hated,
And [c]laid waste his mountains and his heritage
For the jackals of the wilderness."

4 Even though Edom has said,
"We have been impoverished,
But we will return and build the desolate places,"

■ **1:1–5** Israel is not convinced that God loves them. This section is God's response to that cynical doubt. The Lord reminds Israel that Jacob, their ancestor, was chosen by God while Esau, Edom's forefather, was rejected. Therefore, although Israel has experienced the Lord's wrath for just a little while, Edom is a "people against whom the LORD will have indignation forever" (1:4). Furthermore, while Israel is heir of the everlasting promises of their covenant Lord, Edom will never rise again. The Lord's judgment on Edom will be cause for praise in Israel.

■ **1:1 burden of the word.** See text note; Is. 13:1; Nah. 1:1; Hab. 1:1; Zech. 9:1; 12:1. Normally used in prophecies of judgment, "burden" may point to the urgency felt by the prophet in issuing his proclamation. On this urgency, see also Jer. 20:9; Amos 3:8.

■ **1:2 I have loved you.** God's electing love is sovereign and unconditional. It is expounded principally in Deuteronomy where the verbs "to choose" and "to love" are parallel (Deut. 7:6–8). God's love is manifested in the covenant He initiates with His people. The nearness of God to Israel was to be the source of awe and amazement (Deut. 4:7, 8). God's love begins in eternity (Jer. 31:3) and is manifested in His covenantal dealings with Abraham, Moses, and David (Gen. 12:1–4; Ex. 19:5, 6; 2 Sam. 7). God's election of Jacob continued to have relevance for His dealings with Israel in the period of Malachi's ministry. Properly understood, God's love does not lead to moral complacency but to moral zeal. However, Israel's complacency and their cynicism about God's love led to the moral crises that Malachi addresses. See theological note "The Purpose of God: Predestination and Foreknowledge."

Jacob. One of the titles for God in the Psalms is "the God of Jacob" (Ps. 20:1; 46:7; 75:9; 76:6; 84:8). God's electing love is unique because He loves sinners, those who by nature were the objects of His displeasure and wrath (Luke 15:2; Rom. 5:6–8; Eph. 2:1–3). The history of Jacob and Esau in Genesis clearly points to God's choice of Jacob despite his lack of merit (Gen. 25:21–34; 27:1–40; Rom. 9:10–13).

■ **1:3 hated.** Although there is a usage of the verb "hate" which means "to love less" (Gen. 29:31 text note; Luke 14:26), the context immediately following suggests that here "hate" means active rejection, displeasure, and disfavor manifested in retributive justice. It is not merely that Esau (Edom) suffers the absence or lessening of blessing, but that he receives judgment. For this usage of "hate," see Ps. 5:5; Is. 61:8; Hos. 9:15; Amos 5:21; Mal. 2:16. See "Election and Reprobation" at Rom. 9:18.

laid waste. The reference is most likely to the occupation of Edom by the Nabatean Arabs. In Amos 9:12 Edom is representative of all the nations who come under the saving influence of God's promise.

Thus says the LORD of hosts:

"They may build, but I will [d]throw down;
They shall be called the Territory of Wickedness,
And the people against whom the LORD will have indignation forever.
5 Your eyes shall see,
And you shall say,
[e]'The LORD is magnified beyond the border of Israel.'

Polluted Offerings

6 "A son [f]honors *his* father,
And a servant *his* master.
[g]If then I am the Father,
Where *is* My honor?

4 [d]Jer. 49:16–18

5 [e]Ps. 35:27; Mic. 5:4

6 [f][Ex. 20:12]; Prov. 30:11, 17; [Matt. 15:4–8; Eph. 6:2, 3] [g][Is. 63:16; 64:8]; Jer. 31:9; Luke 6:46

The Purpose of God: Predestination and Foreknowledge

"Predestination" is a word often used to signify God's foreordaining of all the events of world history—past, present, and future. This usage is quite appropriate. In Scripture and historic Protestant theology, however, "predestination" refers specifically to God's decision, made in eternity before the world existed, regarding the final destinies of individual persons. In general, the New Testament speaks of the predestination, or election, of particular sinners for salvation and eternal life (Rom. 8:29; Eph. 1:4, 5, 11), although Scripture also on occasion ascribes to God an advance decision about those who are finally not saved (Rom. 9:6–29; 1 Pet. 2:8; Jude 4). For this reason it is usual in Protestant theology to define predestination as including both God's decision to save some from sin (election) and the corresponding decision not to save others (reprobation).

It is sometimes asserted that God's choice of individuals for salvation is based on His foreknowledge that they would choose Christ as their Savior. Foreknowledge in this case means passive foresight by God of what individuals will do apart from His foreordaining their action. But there are weighty objections to the view that election is based on passive foresight.

"Foreknow" in Rom. 8:29; 11:2 (cf. 1 Pet. 1:2; 20) indicates not only an advance recognition, but also an advance choice by God of His people. It does not express the idea of a spectator's passive anticipation of what will happen spontaneously. God's "knowledge" of His people in Scripture implies a special relationship of loving choice (Gen. 18:19).

Since all are naturally dead in sin (cut off from the life of God and unresponsive to Him), no one who hears the gospel will ever come to repentance and faith without the inner renewal that only God can impart (Eph. 2:4–10). Jesus said, "No one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father" (John 6:65, cf. 6:44; 10:25–28). Sinners choose Christ because God chose them first, and moved them to their choice by graciously renewing their hearts.

Though all human acts are free in the sense of an immediate self-determination, such acts are also the outworking of God's eternal purpose and foreordination. We have difficulty understanding precisely *how* divine sovereignty and human freedom and responsibility are compatible, but Scripture everywhere assumes that they are so (Acts 2:23; 4:28 and notes).

Christians should thank God for their conversion, look to Him to keep them in His grace, and wait with confidence for His final triumph, according to His plan. See "Election and Reprobation" at Rom. 9:18 and "Effectual Calling and Conversion" at 2 Thess. 2:14.□

■ **1:5 beyond the border of Israel.** God is the sovereign Lord of history, whose redemptive purposes are accomplished both inside and outside ancient Israel (v. 11; Gen. 12:3).

■ **1:6—2:9** A major reason for the Lord's anger with Israel is the priesthood's attitude toward God's name at the altar and toward God's law in teaching and judging. At the altar they offered diseased or imperfect animals in sacrifice, thereby reversing the intent of their labors and bringing curse and defilement where they should have brought blessing and cleansing. In their teaching and judging they violated the covenant with Levi (2:8), showing partiality and causing many to stumble.

■ **1:6 honor.** God is in Himself infinitely glorious, and He must receive the recognition of His people (Ps. 29:1, 2; 57:5, 11).

despise. The opposite of honoring and fearing the Lord (cf. 2 Sam. 12:9, 10). The word is used often in Proverbs (1:7; 15:20; 23:22).

And if I *am* a Master,
Where *is* My reverence?
Says the LORD of hosts
To you priests who despise My name.
[h] Yet you say, 'In what way have we despised Your name?'

7 "You offer [i] defiled food on My altar,
But say,
'In what way have we defiled You?'
By saying,
[j] 'The table of the LORD is [3] contemptible.'
8 And [k] when you offer the blind as a sacrifice,
Is it not evil?
And when you offer the lame and sick,
Is it not evil?
Offer it then to your governor!
Would he be pleased with you?
Would he [l] accept [4] you favorably?"
Says the LORD of hosts.

9 "But now entreat God's favor,
That He may be gracious to us.
[m] *While* this is being *done* by your hands,
Will He accept you favorably?"
Says the LORD of hosts.
10 "Who *is there* even among you who would shut the doors,
[n] So that you would not kindle fire *on* My altar in vain?
I have no pleasure in you,"
Says the LORD of hosts,
[o] "Nor will I accept an offering from your hands.
11 For [p] from the rising of the sun, even to its going down,
My name *shall be* great [q] among the Gentiles;
[r] In every place [s] incense *shall be* offered to My name,
And a pure offering;
[t] For My name shall be great among the nations,"
Says the LORD of hosts.

12 "But you profane it,
In that you say,
[u] 'The table of the [5] LORD is defiled;
And its fruit, its food, *is* contemptible.'
13 You also say,
'Oh, what a [v] weariness!'
And you sneer at it,"
Says the LORD of hosts.
"And you bring the stolen, the lame, and the sick;
Thus you bring an offering!
[w] Should I accept this from your hand?"
Says the LORD.

6 [h] Mal. 2:14
7 [i] Deut. 15:21 [j] Ezek. 41:22 [3] Or *to be despised*
8 [k] Lev. 22:22; Deut. 15:19–23 [l] [Job 42:8] [4] Lit. *lift up your face*
9 [m] Hos. 13:9
10 [n] 1 Cor. 9:13 [o] Is. 1:11
11 [p] Is. 59:19 [q] Is. 60:3, 5 [r] 1 Tim. 2:8 [s] Rev. 8:3 [t] Is. 66:18, 19
12 [u] Mal. 1:7 [5] So with Bg.; MT *Lord*
13 [v] Is. 43:22 [w] Lev. 22:20

■ **1:7 defiled food.** The reference is to animal sacrifices (v. 8). "Defiled" means ceremonially unclean and therefore unacceptable. God is not offended merely by ceremonial imperfections but by the attitude of contempt behind such imperfect sacrifices (Gen. 4:3–5 and notes; Heb. 11:4).

The table of the LORD. This phrase, and the similar phrase in v. 12 (text note), occur only here in the Old Testament, both times referring to the altar.

■ **1:8 the lame and sick.** The law expressly prohibited such offerings (Lev. 22:22; Deut. 15:21).

■ **1:11 My name shall be great among the Gentiles.** God promises the future triumph of His glorious kingdom. "From the rising of the sun even to its going down," and similar phrases, often point to God's future judgment of the world and the restoration of His order (Ps. 50:1; Is. 45:6; 59:19).

In every place. The imperfect sacrifices being offered during the prophet's time (vv. 7, 8) are contrasted with the pure offerings of worship in the future (Is. 2:2–4; 66:19–21; Zech. 14:16–21). The promise of this verse is being fulfilled even now as Christ gathers His kings and priests from among the nations (Rev. 5:9, 10), and it will be consummated in the future as the nations gather to worship God in purity (Rev. 21:27).

14 "But cursed *be* [x]the deceiver
Who has in his flock a male,
And takes a vow,
But sacrifices to the Lord [y]what is blemished—
For [z]I *am* a great King,"
Says the LORD of hosts,
"And My name *is to be* feared among the nations.

Corrupt Priests

2 "And now, O [a]priests, this commandment is for you.
[2b]If you will not hear,
And if you will not take *it* to heart,
To give glory to My name,"
Says the LORD of hosts,
"I will send a curse upon you,
And I will curse your blessings.
Yes, I have cursed them [c]already,
Because you do not take *it* to heart.

3 "Behold, I will rebuke your descendants
And spread [d]refuse on your faces,
The refuse of your solemn feasts;
And *one* will [e]take you away [f]with it.
4 Then you shall know that I have sent this commandment to you,
That My covenant with Levi may continue,"
Says the LORD of hosts.
5 "My[g] covenant was with him, *one* of life and peace,
And I gave them to him [g]*that he might* fear *Me;*
So he feared Me
And was reverent before My name.
6 [h]The[2] law of truth was in his mouth,
And [3]injustice was not found on his lips.
He walked with Me in peace and equity,
And [i]turned many away from iniquity.

7 "For[j] the lips of a priest should keep knowledge,
And *people* should seek the law from his mouth;
[k]For he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.
8 But you have departed from the way;
You [l]have caused many to stumble at the law.
[m]You have corrupted the covenant of Levi,"
Says the LORD of hosts.
9 "Therefore [n]I also have made you contemptible and base
Before all the people,

14 [x]Mal. 1:8 [y]Lev. 22:18–20 [z]Ps. 47:2

CHAPTER 2

1 [a]Mal. 1:6

2 [b][Lev. 26:14, 15; Deut. 28:15] [c]Mal. 3:9

3 [d]Ex. 29:14 [e]1 Kin. 14:10 [f]Lit. *to it*

5 [f]Num. 25:12; Ezek. 34:25 [g]Deut. 33:9

6 [h]Deut. 33:10 [i]Jer. 23:22; [James 5:20] [2]Or *True instruction* [3]Or *unrighteousness*

7 [j]Num. 27:21; Deut. 17:8–11; Jer. 18:18 [k][Gal. 4:14]

8 [l]Jer. 18:15 [m]Num. 25:12, 13; Neh. 13:29; Ezek. 44:10

9 [n]1 Sam. 2:30

■ **1:14 cursed be the deceiver.** Laws regulating voluntary offerings required the giving of a perfect offering. This text implies an attempt to deceive the Lord (cf. Ps. 76:11).

I am a great King. God is not only their Father (1:6; Ex. 4:22) and their Master, but also their King. The idea of God as King arose early in Old Testament religion (Num. 23:21; 24:7; Deut. 33:5). See Ps. 93—100.

■ **2:2 I will send a curse upon you.** See Deut. 28:20.

I will curse your blessings. The blessings are either the physical and material blessings promised to the priests who received the peoples' tithes (Num. 18:21), or the pronouncements of blessing uttered by the priests at the time of the sacrifices (Num. 6:24–27), which then would become a curse.

■ **2:5 one of life and peace.** The central thrust of Deuteronomy is to show the connection between covenant obedience and life. Commitment to God leads to a full life. Some see in "covenant of . . . peace" an allusion to the covenant with Phinehas mentioned in Num. 25:10–13.

■ **2:7 lips of a priest should keep knowledge.** See Ezra 7:10; Hos. 4:6. The connection between the true knowledge of the Lord and priestly instruction in the law is set forth vividly in 2 Chr. 15:3: "For a long time Israel has been without the true God, without a teaching priest, and without law."

■ **2:8 you have departed from the way.** See Neh. 13:29. The priests' attitudes and actions set a bad example for the people. They abandoned their true calling, both to teach and practice the truth.

■ **2:9 shown partiality in the law.** The basis for this censure is the character of God. God "shows no partiality nor takes a bribe" (Deut. 10:17; cf. Lev. 19:15). Possibly the priests were favoring the rich and powerful of society.

Because you have not kept My ways
But have shown [o]partiality in the law."

Treachery of Infidelity

10 [p]Have we not all one Father?
[q]Has not one God created us?
Why do we deal treacherously with one another
By profaning the covenant of the fathers?
11 Judah has dealt treacherously,
And an abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem,
For Judah has [r]profaned
The LORD's holy *institution* which He loves:
He has married the daughter of a foreign god.
12 May the LORD cut off from the tents of Jacob
The man who does this, being [s]awake and aware,
Yet [s]who brings an offering to the LORD of hosts!

13 And this is the second thing you do:
You cover the altar of the LORD with tears,
With weeping and crying;
So He does not regard the offering anymore,
Nor receive *it* with goodwill from your hands.
14 Yet you say, "For what reason?"
Because the LORD has been witness
Between you and [t]the wife of your youth,
With whom you have dealt treacherously;
[u]Yet she is your companion
And your wife by covenant.
15 But [v]did He not make *them* one,
Having a remnant of the Spirit?
And why one?
He seeks [w]godly offspring.
Therefore take heed to your spirit,
And let none deal treacherously with the wife of his youth.

16 "For [x]the LORD God of Israel says
That He hates divorce,
For it covers one's garment with violence,"
Says the LORD of hosts.
"Therefore take heed to your spirit,
That you do not deal treacherously."

9 [o]Deut. 1:17; Mic. 3:11; 1 Tim. 5:21
10 [p]Jer. 31:9; 1 Cor. 8:6; [Eph. 4:6] [q]Job 31:15
11 [r]Ezra 9:1, 2; Neh. 13:23
12 [s]Neh. 13:29 [t]Talmud, Vg. *teacher and student*
14 [t]Prov. 5:18; Jer. 9:2; Mal. 3:5 [u]Prov. 2:17
15 [v]Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:4, 5 [w]Ezra 9:2; [1 Cor. 7:14]
16 [x]Deut. 24:1; [Matt. 5:31; 19:6–8]

■ **2:10–16** Lack of faithfulness toward God leads to breakdowns in human relationships. Malachi addresses two problems. Marriage to idolatrous wives (vv. 10–12) and the divorcing of Israelite wives (vv. 13–16) are sternly rebuked.

■ **2:10 one Father.** Some interpret this as referring to Abraham (Is. 51:2). More likely it refers to God (1:6; Ex. 4:22, 23; Deut. 32:6; Is. 63:16; 64:8; Jer. 3:4, 19; 31:9).

■ **2:11 dealt treacherously.** This verb is used five times in vv. 10–16. It is used in Jer. 3:20 to refer to marital unfaithfulness.

an abomination. The Hebrew word here, prominently employed in Deuteronomy, refers to idolatrous religious practices (Deut. 7:25, 26; 12:31; 13:14; 18:12). It can also refer to sexual transgression (Lev. 18:22, 26, 29, 30; Deut. 24:4).

profaned The LORD's holy institution. The Hebrew word translated "holy institution" can also be understood as referring to the people themselves ("holy seed," Is. 6:13; Ezra 9:2). It is the people who are loved by God and who defile themselves by disobedience in their marriage practices.

married the daughter of a foreign god. This phrase refers to marrying a woman still committed to a foreign god—an idolater outside the covenant (cf. Gen. 24:3, 4; Ex. 34:12–16; Deut. 7:3, 4; Josh. 23:12; 1 Kin. 11:1–10). The prohibition against marriage with unbelievers continues in the New Testament (1 Cor. 7:39; 2 Cor. 6:14).

■ **2:14 wife of your youth.** See v. 15; Prov. 5:18.

your wife by covenant. God's covenant faithfulness is to be mirrored in the marriage relationships of His people (Prov. 2:17; Eph. 5:22–33).

■ **2:15 one.** See Gen. 2:24.

■ **2:16 He hates divorce.** See Is. 50:1; Deut. 24:1–4; theological note "Marriage and Divorce."

garment. Entering into marriage and obtaining a wife is sometimes portrayed as covering with a garment (Ruth 3:9 text note; Ezek. 16:8 text note).

17 [y]You have wearied the LORD with your words;
Yet you say,
"In what way have we wearied *Him?*"
In that you say,
[z]"Everyone who does evil
Is good in the sight of the LORD,

17 [y]Is. 43:22, 24
[z]Is. 5:20; Zeph. 1:12

Marriage and Divorce

Marriage is an exclusive relationship in which a man and a woman commit themselves to each other in covenant for life, and on the basis of this solemn vow become "one flesh" (Gen. 2:24; Mal. 2:14; Matt. 19:4–6).

The *Westminster Confession* (XXIV.2) states: "Marriage was ordained for the mutual help of husband and wife, for the increase of mankind with a legitimate issue, and of the church with an holy seed; and for preventing of uncleanness" (sexual license and immorality; Gen. 1:28; 2:18; 1 Cor. 7:2–9). God's ideal for marriage is that the man and the woman should complete each other (Gen. 2:23) and share in the creative work of making new people. Marriage is for Christians and non-Christians, but it is God's will that His people should marry only fellow believers (1 Cor. 7:39; cf. 2 Cor. 6:14; Ezra 9; 10; Neh. 13:23–27). Intimacy in its deepest dimension is impossible when the partners are not united in faith.

Paul uses Christ's relationship to His church to explain what Christian marriage is, so as to highlight the husband's special responsibility as the wife's leader and protector, and the wife's calling to accept her husband in that role (Eph. 5:21–33). The distinction of roles does not imply that the wife is an inferior person. As God's image-bearers, both man and wife have equal dignity and value, and they must fulfill their roles with a mutual respect grounded in recognition of this fact.

God hates divorce (Mal. 2:16), yet He provided a procedure for it that would protect the divorced wife (Deut. 24:1–4). This provision was made "because of the hardness of your hearts" (Matt. 19:8). The most natural understanding of Jesus' teaching (Matt. 5:31, 32; 19:8, 9) is that adultery, the sin of marital unfaithfulness, destroys the marriage covenant and warrants divorce (though reconciliation would be preferable), and that he who divorces his wife for any lesser reason becomes guilty of adultery when he remarries, and drives the woman into adultery if she remarries. The principle is that all cases of divorce and remarriage involve a disruption of God's ideal for the sexual relationship. When asked when divorce is lawful, Jesus replied that divorce is always deplorable (Matt. 19:3–6), but He did not deny that hearts continue to be hard, and that divorce, though an evil, may sometimes be permitted.

Paul says that a Christian who is deserted by an unbelieving partner is not "under bondage" (1 Cor. 7:15). This evidently means that the Christian may regard the relationship as finished. Whether this confers the right of remarriage has been disputed, and Reformed opinion has long been divided on the matter.

The *Westminster Confession* (XXIV.5, 6) states with cautious wisdom what Reformed Christians, reflecting on the Scriptures noted above, have down the centuries found themselves agreed on regarding divorce:

> In the case of adultery after marriage, it is lawful for the innocent party to sue out a divorce, and, after the divorce, to marry another, as if the offending party were dead.
>
> Although the corruption of man be such as is apt to study arguments unduly to put asunder those whom God hath joined together in marriage; yet, nothing but adultery, or such wilful desertion as can no way be remedied by the church, or civil magistrate, is cause sufficient of dissolving the bond of marriage: wherein, a public and orderly course of proceeding is to be observed; and the persons concerned in it not left to their own wills, and discretion, in their own case. □

■ **2:17—3:5** Religious cynics charge the Lord with injustice. God responds with the promise that He will send a messenger to prepare the way before Him and then return to His temple. His presence among a wicked people requires judgment and gracious refinement (3:2, 3). He will change the Levites' hearts and they will then offer sacrifices in righteousness once again. The judgment will be exacting (3:5). The Lord Himself will be the chief witness for the prosecution of His people.

CHAPTER 3

1 [a]Matt. 11:10; Mark 1:2; Luke 1:76; 7:27; John 1:23; 2:14, 15 [b][Is. 40:3] [c]Is. 63:9 [d]Hab. 2:7

2 [e]Jer. 10:10; Joel 2:11; Nah. 1:6; [Mal. 4:1] [f]Is. 33:14; Ezek. 22:14; Rev. 6:17 [g]Is. 4:4; Zech. 13:9; [Matt. 3:10–12; 1 Cor. 3:13–15]

3 [h]Is. 1:25; Dan. 12:10; Zech. 13:9 [i][1 Pet. 2:5] [j]Or *refine*

And He delights in them,"
Or, "Where *is* the God of justice?"

The Coming Messenger

3 "Behold, [a]I send My messenger,
And he will [b]prepare the way before Me.
And the Lord, whom you seek,
Will suddenly come to His temple,
[c]Even the Messenger of the covenant,
In whom you delight.
Behold, [d]He is coming,"
Says the LORD of hosts.

2 "But who can endure [e]the day of His coming?
And [f]who can stand when He appears?
For [g]He *is* like a refiner's fire
And like launderers' soap.

3 [h]He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver;
He will purify the sons of Levi,
And [j]purge them as gold and silver,
That they may [i]offer to the LORD
An offering in righteousness.

■ **2:17 wearied the LORD.** See Is. 43:24. In Malachi the offenses revolve around the cynical rejection of God's moral government and the attendant insolent spirit that constantly puts God on trial.

■ **3:1–5** This section rebuts the two cynical statements of 2:17. The allegation that God does not differentiate between good and evil is answered in v. 2 by referring to the refining and purifying ministry of the Messenger of the covenant. The second statement, "Where is the God of justice?" (2:17), is answered in v. 5. The Jews were looking for the Lord to judge the nations, but instead the Lord will come near to *them* for judgment (v. 5).

■ **3:1 My messenger.** See 4:5; also Is. 40:3 (where "prepare the way" also occurs). It was the practice in the Near East to send messengers in advance of a visiting king to announce his coming and to remove all hindrances or obstacles. This messenger (Matt. 11:10) will be the last of his kind to appear before the coming of the Lord, who is "the Messenger of the covenant."

suddenly. This word is almost always associated in Scripture with an unhappy and calamitous circumstance (Num. 12:4; Is. 47:11; cf. 2 Pet. 3:10).

the Messenger of the covenant. A person distinct from "My messenger," He will purify the sacrifices, the priests, and the nation (vv. 2–5). This "Messenger of the covenant" is the Messiah, and this prophecy is fulfilled in Jesus who alone has performed the perfect sacrifice on behalf of His people.

■ **3:3 He will purify the sons of Levi.** The priests had been instrumental in leading the people astray. The work of purification will begin with them, and it will spread from them to the whole of the nation. The Levites were the pattern for the nation, which was to be "a kingdom of priests" (Ex. 19:6).

offering in righteousness. See 1:11, "a pure offering." Because of the work of the Messenger of the covenant, proper worship will again be offered, since the hearts and lives of the offerers will be purified (Ps. 4:5; Zeph. 3:9).

The Coming of Christ (3:1)

Malachi's Prophecy	Confirmed in the New Testament
As Messenger of the covenant, Christ comes to His temple (3:1) and purifies His people (3:3).	Christ cleanses the temple (John 2:14–17) and purifies His own people (Titus 2:14).
His coming brings judgment (4:1).	Christ's coming brings judgment as well as salvation (Matt. 3:10–12; Rev. 20:11–15).
As the Sun of Righteousness, Christ heals His people (4:2).	Christ heals the multitudes; ultimately all sickness will pass away (Matt. 12:15; Rev. 21:4).
His forerunner prepares for the coming of the Lord (3:1; 4:5).	John the Baptist announces Christ (Matt. 11:10–14).

4 "Then [j]the offering of Judah and Jerusalem
Will be [2]pleasant to the LORD,
As in the days of old,
As in former years.
5 And I will come near you for judgment;
I will be a swift witness
Against sorcerers,
Against adulterers,
[k]Against perjurers,
Against those who [l]exploit wage earners and [m]widows and orphans,
And against those who turn away an alien—
Because they do not fear Me,"
Says the LORD of hosts.

6 "For I *am* the LORD, [n]I do not change;
[o]Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob.
7 Yet from the days of [p]your fathers
You have gone away from My ordinances
And have not kept *them.*
[q]Return to Me, and I will return to you,"
Says the LORD of hosts.
[r]"But you said,
'In what way shall we return?'

Do Not Rob God

8 "Will a man rob God?
Yet you have robbed Me!
But you say,
'In what way have we robbed You?'
[s]In tithes and offerings.
9 You are cursed with a curse,
For you have robbed Me,
Even this whole nation.
10 [t]Bring all the tithes into the [u]storehouse,
That there may be food in My house,
And try Me now in this,"
Says the LORD of hosts,
"If I will not open for you the [v]windows of heaven
And [w]pour out for you *such* blessing
That *there will* not *be room* enough *to receive it.*

11 "And I will rebuke [x]the devourer for your sakes,
So that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground,

4 [j]Mal. 1:11
[2]*pleasing*
5 [k]Lev. 19:12; Zech. 5:4; [James 5:12] [l]Lev. 19:13; James 5:4 [m]Ex. 22:22
6 [n][Num. 23:19; Rom. 11:29; James 1:17] [o][Lam. 3:22]
7 [p]Acts 7:51 [q]Zech. 1:3 [r]Mal. 1:6
8 [s]Neh. 13:10–12
10 [t]Prov. 3:9, 10 [u]1 Chr. 26:20 [v]Gen. 7:11 [w]2 Chr. 31:10
11 [x]Amos 4:9

■ **3:5 And I will come near you for judgment.** This section began with the religious cynics accusing the Lord of injustice. It ends with a covenant lawsuit in which the Lord brings charges against His people. The specific sins mentioned in v. 5 are clearly forbidden in the law of God. The root cause of these sins is that "they do not fear Me."

■ **3:6–12** The people were not only bringing defective offerings but also were withholding the tithe, apparently due to the field's meager returns. But withholding the tithe is stealing from the Lord. As a consequence the righteous Lord withheld blessing. Their sin also evidenced a lack of trust in the Lord to provide for their needs if they kept His commands. So the Lord urges them to put Him to the test. If they did so the consequent provision would be so great that the nations would see the difference and pronounce Israel blessed.

■ **3:6 I do not change.** The immutability, or unchangeable character, of God is seen in His purpose to bless His elect people. Thus they are not destroyed (Ex. 34:6, 7; Jer. 30:11).

■ **3:7 Return to Me, and I will return to you.** The command to repent is connected with a promise (cf. Zech. 1:3; James 4:8). Sin separates man from God and causes God to hide His face (Is. 59:2).

■ **3:8 tithes.** The word means a tenth. The practice of tithing is mentioned in the accounts of Abraham (Gen. 14:20) and Jacob (Gen. 28:22), and was codified in the law of Moses (Lev. 27:30; Num. 18:26; Deut. 14:22–29).

offerings. Portions of the animal sacrifices to which the priests were entitled (Ex. 29:27, 28; Lev. 9:22).

■ **3:10 storehouse.** This term refers to a room in the temple designated for the storage of gifts (2 Chr. 31:11 text note; Neh. 10:38, 39; 12:44; 13:12).

try Me. This is a reversal of the ordinary biblical pattern, in which God typically tests human beings (Ps. 11:5; 26:2; 66:10; Prov. 17:3; Jer. 11:20; 12:3; 17:10). Only in a few instances are humans invited to test God (i.e., to prove His claims and justify His commands, Is. 7:11, 12; 1 Kin. 18:22–46).

windows of heaven. See Gen. 7:11.

Nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field,"
Says the LORD of hosts;
12 And all nations will call you blessed,
For you will be [y]a delightful land,"
Says the LORD of hosts.

The People Complain Harshly

13 "Your[z] words have been [3]harsh against Me,"
Says the LORD,
"Yet you say,
'What have we spoken against You?'
14 [a]You have said,
'It is useless to serve God;
What profit *is it* that we have kept His ordinance,
And that we have walked as mourners
Before the LORD of hosts?
15 So now [b]we call the proud blessed,
For those who do wickedness are [4]raised up;
They even [c]tempt God and go free.' "

A Book of Remembrance

16 Then those [d]who feared the LORD [e]spoke to one another,
And the LORD listened and heard *them;*
So [f]a book of remembrance was written before Him
For those who fear the LORD
And who [5]meditate on His name.

17 "They[g] shall be Mine," says the LORD of hosts,
"On the day that I make them My [h]jewels.[6]
And [i]I will spare them
As a man spares his own son who serves him."
18 [j]Then you shall again discern
Between the righteous and the wicked,
Between one who serves God
And one who does not serve Him.

The Great Day of God

4 "For behold, [a]the day is coming,
Burning like an oven,
And all [b]the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be [c]stubble.
And the day which is coming shall burn them up,"
Says the LORD of hosts,
"That will [d]leave them neither root nor branch.

12 [y]Dan. 8:9

13 [z]Mal. 2:17 [3]Lit. *strong*

14 [a]Job 21:14

15 [b]Ps. 73:12 [c]Ps. 95:9 [4]Lit. *built*

16 [d]Ps. 66:16 [e]Heb. 3:13 [f]Ps. 56:8 [5]Or *esteem*

17 [g]Ex. 19:5; Deut. 7:6; Is. 43:21; [1 Pet. 2:9] [h]Is. 62:3 [i]Ps. 103:13 [6]Lit. *special treasure*

18 [j][Ps. 58:11]

CHAPTER 4

1 [a]Ps. 21:9; [Nah. 1:5, 6; Mal. 3:2, 3; 2 Pet. 3:7] [b]Mal. 3:18 [c]Is. 5:24; Obad. 18 [d]Amos 2:9

■ **3:13—4:6** The last section returns to the prophecy in 3:1–5 concerning the forerunner (Matt. 11:10) and the coming of God. In various ways the beginning of the section is reminiscent of a lament psalm. The complaints, however, are interpreted as hard words against the Lord. Yet there were those who sensed the same injustices without concluding that it was futile to serve the Lord. The first group spoke hard words and brought the Lord's response; the latter feared the Lord and caused Him to write words of remembrance concerning them. He promised that they would be His special possession in the great day of the Lord.

A reference to "the day" (v. 17) again introduces the last day of judgment, a day of destruction for the wicked but healing for the righteous. The final verses return to the promised forerunner and exhort the people to keep the law of Moses.

■ **3:14 useless.** The word means "empty" or "in vain."

profit. The Hebrew term usually refers to unjust gain. Greed is inconsistent with a desire for God's truth (Ps. 119:36).

■ **3:16 Then.** The conversation and conduct of those who feared God is occasioned by the preceding words of murmuring and is placed in contrast to them.

book of remembrance. This exact phrase is found only here, but references to a special book are found elsewhere (Ex. 32:32; Ps. 69:28; Dan. 7:10).

■ **3:17 They shall be Mine.** This phrase refers to the remnant described in v. 16.

My jewels. In the early stage of Old Testament revelation the nation of Israel is called God's "special treasure" (Ex. 19:5; Deut. 7:6; 14:2).

■ **4:1 shall burn them up.** Two images of fire are used in Malachi to describe the Lord: a refining fire (3:2) and a destroying fire (4:1).

root nor branch. The wicked are compared to a tree (Amos 2:9) that will be consumed down to the roots, totally destroyed.

But to you who [e]fear My name
The [f]Sun of Righteousness shall arise
With healing in His wings;
And you shall go out
And grow fat like stall-fed calves.
3 [g]You shall trample the wicked,
For they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet
On the day that I do *this,*"
Says the LORD of hosts.

4 "Remember the [h]Law of Moses, My servant,
Which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel,
With [i]*the* statutes and judgments.
5 Behold, I will send you [j]Elijah the prophet
[k]Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD.
6 And he will turn
The hearts of the fathers to the children,
And the hearts of the children to their fathers,
Lest I come and [l]strike the earth with [m]a curse."

2 [e]Mal. 3:16 [f]Matt. 4:16; Luke 1:78; Acts 10:43; 2 Cor. 4:6; Eph. 5:14
3 [g]Mic. 7:10
4 [h]Ex. 20:3 [i]Deut. 4:10
5 [j][Matt. 11:14; 17:10–13; Mark 9:11–13; Luke 1:17]; John 1:21 [k]Joel 2:31
6 [l]Zech. 14:12 [m]Zech. 5:3

■ **4:2 Sun of Righteousness.** An expression unique to Malachi (cf. Ps. 84:12). The Davidic king will reign in righteousness (Is. 32:1) and will be called "a Branch of righteousness" (Jer. 23:5, 6).

healing. The Bible considers physical sickness and spiritual sickness or sin to be analogous. Salvation is often compared to bodily healing (Ex. 15:26; 2 Chr. 7:14; Ps. 103:3; Is. 53:5; Jer. 17:14).

■ **4:5 Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet.** The literary connection of this verse with 3:1 indicates that "Elijah" is the same person as "My messenger." Both verses begin with the word "Behold," and use the same form of the verb "to send." In both cases the mission is to bring repentance in advance of the coming day of the Lord. The New Testament identifies this "Elijah" as John the Baptist (Matt. 11:14; 17:10; Mark 9:11–13; Luke 1:17).

■ **4:6 turn The hearts of the fathers to the children.** Repentance and turning to God will be seen in the restoration of family relationships (Luke 1:17).

Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse. Malachi began with the announcement of God's electing love, yet the book ends with the threat of a curse. Malachi's dual thrust of mercy and judgment is echoed by Paul's pronouncement, "Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God" (Rom. 11:22).

roduction to the

INTERTESTAMENTAL PERIOD

As the history of the Old Testament drew to a close, the Hebrew community was chastened, divided, and expectant. It was chastened because the people recognized the grievous sin that led the Lord to judge them. It was divided. Many Jews had returned from exile and were worshiping God in Jerusalem, but many more had stayed in Persia, and still others had settled in Egypt and elsewhere. This scattering of the Jewish population is called the "Diaspora." But most of all, the people had not abandoned faith and hope. They knew the covenant promises of God to Abraham. They remembered the mighty arm of the Lord who redeemed His people from Egypt. And in them was developing an expectation for the Messiah who would accomplish God's saving purposes for His people and bring them the new Exodus they longed for.

Turning the page from the Book of Malachi to the first chapter of the New Testament is a leap of more than four hundred years. The Jews witnessed drastic changes in the surrounding cultures; inevitably, they too underwent serious internal transformation. The Persian Empire had given way to the whirlwind conquests of Alexander the Great. In the last third of the fourth century B.C., Alexander brought Greek culture, or "Hellenism," to the places he conquered, including much of the Middle East. After this, the affairs of the Jewish people were largely determined by confrontation with Greek culture.

The Ptolemies. Alexander the Great died in 323 B.C., and Palestine came under the rule of one of his Greek generals, Ptolemy, who also ruled Egypt. Little is known about life in Judea under the Ptolemies. Apparently, the Jews retained considerable freedom to practice their religion as well as a measure of self-rule under their own high priest. His office originally had a strictly religious purpose, but in the absence of a Jewish king, the office became the Jews' major political symbol. At the same time the community felt increasing pressure to adopt Greek ways of life.

The Jewish colony in Alexandria, Egypt, seems to have flourished under the Ptolemies. Being in the capital city of a pagan culture, however, the colony had a direct need to reckon with the new environment. Some Jewish intellectuals wanted to teach Gentiles the history of the Hebrews. Others attempted to combine biblical religion with Greek philosophy, a process that culminated some time later in the allegorical interpretations of Philo of Alexandria. Among various literary productions, the translation of the Pentateuch from Hebrew into Greek was completed late in the third century B.C. This work, along with the later translations of the other Old Testament books, is called the Septuagint (commonly abbreviated with the Roman numeral "LXX"), named for the seventy scholars who according to tradition participated in the original translation. The New Testament authors wrote in Greek, and they often used the Septuagint when quoting the Old Testament.

The Seleucids. Another of Alexander's generals, Seleucus, became ruler of an empire that eventually extended from the western coast of Asia Minor (modern Turkey) to Babylon and beyond in the east. The Seleucid Empire established its capital in Antioch of Syria, north of Palestine, and presented a continual challenge to the Ptolemaic rulers. Finally, in 198 B.C., the Seleucid ruler Antiochus III was able to occupy Palestine.

No doubt the Jews were affected immediately by this change, but it was with the accession of Antiochus IV in 175 B.C. that Judea entered one of the most difficult periods ever faced by any Hebrew community. Also known as Epiphanes ("God manifest"), Antiochus IV began to feel the threat of the Romans, who were slowly but surely advancing to the east. In an attempt to strengthen and unify his empire, Antiochus stepped up the process of Hellenizing Palestine.

Some Jews welcomed this development and embraced the new culture, in effect rejecting their religious identity. Such apostasy strengthened the resolve of other Jews to resist the policies of Antiochus. He did not understand the character of Judaism, and unleashed the terrors of religious persecution. Copies of the Hebrew Scriptures were burned, observance of the Sabbath was prohibited, circumcision was outlawed—and violators were put to death. In 167 B.C., Antiochus desecrated the Jewish temple by setting up a statue of Zeus and sacrificing pigs to it. Many Jews regarded this blasphemy as the fulfillment of the prophecy foretelling "the abomination of desolation" (Dan. 11:31; 12:11; cf. 9:27).

Shortly after this desecration, the Maccabean Revolt broke out. Under the leadership of Judas Maccabeus, or Judas the "Hammer," small bands of Jewish guerrilla fighters faced and repeatedly defeated large Seleucid armies. The Jews occupied Jerusalem and rededicated the Temple in 164 B.C. This event is still celebrated today in the Jewish feast of Hannukah. The history of these and some subsequent events is related in 1 Maccabees, one of the group of books known as the Apocrypha (or in the Roman Catholic Church, the Deuterocanonicals).

The Hasmoneans. Having tasted victory, the Jews were not happy with simply regaining the right to practice their religion. They fought to regain political freedom as well—something they had not enjoyed since their return from exile in Babylon in the sixth century B.C. After the death of Judas, his brothers Jonathan and

Simon continued the war until 142, when Judea became independent and the Hasmonean dynasty was established. The name is derived from Hashmon, an ancestor of the Maccabees.

But the struggle with Hellenization was not over. Even before independence, Jonathan Maccabeus had taken over the office of high priest, despite his not belonging to the proper family (the line of Zadok). According to many scholars, it was this event that led a group of strict Jews to turn away from their nation and establish the Essene community of Qumran, near the Dead Sea. Considering themselves the true Israel, this community developed a monastic lifestyle. They interpreted the Old Testament prophecies as being fulfilled in their midst, and looked forward to a final and imminent war that would destroy God's enemies. An extensive collection of their literature—the Dead Sea Scrolls—was discovered in 1947.

The Hasmonean (Maccabean) rulers dominated the priesthood. They progressively adopted Greek ways of life. In general, they received the support of the Sadducees, an aristocratic group that sought to preserve political stability. This conservative "party" acknowledged only the Pentateuch as fully authoritative (while other books had a lesser authority) and on those grounds resisted the doctrine of the resurrection (cf. Matt. 22:23–33; Acts 23:6–8). The historical origin of the Sadducees, as well as that of the Pharisees, cannot be pinpointed. Both groups are first mentioned by the historian Josephus in connection with the rule of John Hyrcanus I (134–104 B.C.).

The Pharisees, though not primarily a political group, may be regarded as the party of the opposition for much of this period. They protested the inroads of Hellenization in Jewish life, developed an extensive oral tradition, and generally sought to preserve the purity regulations of Judaism. By means of their interpretations of the law, however, they altered many of the biblical requirements. This practice in effect lowered the standards of God's holiness and helped foster the illusion that people could please God by their own efforts (Mark 7:1–13; Luke 18:9–14).

The Romans. In spite of some periods of prosperity, the Hasmonean dynasty, torn by internal strife, was unable to resist the advance of the Romans. In 63 B.C., the Roman general Pompey occupied Jerusalem. Continuing unrest led the Romans to make Herod the king of Judea. He was an Idumean by birth, but also a Jewish proselyte. He ruled from 37 B.C. until his death in 4 B.C.

Herod was obedient to Rome and ruled efficiently. His building projects, such as the construction of an artificial port in Caesarea—an astonishing engineering feat—made him famous in the ancient world. Of particular importance was his rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem, an ambitious venture that began in 20 B.C. and continued until long after his death (John 2:20). These and other accomplishments earned him his name "Herod the Great." Unfortunately, Herod's vices overshadowed his strengths. Egotistical, jealous, and distrustful, Herod at times was a madman, going so far as to murder some of his own children.

As the New Testament story begins, the Jews are subjected to a foreign power, ruled by an able but despotic figure, and still waiting for a salvation yet unfulfilled. □

THE

NEW TESTAMENT

Introduction to the

GOSPELS AND ACTS

Historical Background. When Jesus was born, Herod the Great was ruler of Judea and Samaria. Herod died in 4 B.C. and his kingdom passed to his son Archelaus (Matt. 2:19–22). Archelaus was guilty of misrule and was banished in A.D. 6. As a result, Judea and Samaria came directly under Roman administration through a series of governors or prefects, later known as procurators. Pontius Pilate was procurator of Judea during the ministry of Jesus.

The province of Galilee, where Jesus lived, had been given by Herod the Great to another of his sons, Herod Antipas (Matt. 14:1–12; Luke 23:6–15). In A.D. 39 Galilee passed to Herod Agrippa, a grandson of Herod the Great. A childhood friend of Agrippa was now the Roman emperor Claudius, and he made Agrippa king of Judea and Samaria as well. Agrippa was popular with the Jews, but his reign was short. He persecuted the apostles, and when he did not refuse to be praised as if he were a god, he was punished with sickness and died (A.D. 44; Acts 12:1–4, 19–23).

Agrippa's territory reverted to Roman governors, though a small portion was given to Agrippa II (Acts 25:13—26:32). Tensions between Judea and Rome increased during this period and led to a revolt in A.D. 66. The ensuing war was disastrous for the Jewish nation. In A.D. 70 Jerusalem was destroyed with terrible suffering.

The Character of New Testament Narrative. Like the historical writings of the Old Testament, the Gospels and Acts do not provide us with every historical detail we might be interested in. The events included were carefully selected to present clearly and powerfully the message of the gospel.

It has long been noticed that the Gospels are not ordinary biographies. Two of them say nothing about Jesus' birth, and only one event from His youth has been recorded (Luke 2:41–52). Unlike what one would expect from a biography, a large proportion of each Gospel is devoted to the last week of Jesus' ministry. In the Book of Acts, only two apostles, Peter and Paul, are prominent. Moreover, the author gives about as much space to two "unproductive" years of imprisonment in Paul's life as he does to the apostle's three missionary journeys, which lasted at least seven years. Clearly, these books were not written to satisfy our curiosity but to proclaim a message.

When reading the New Testament narratives, therefore, we should make a special effort to determine why particular events were included. A detail that may seem insignificant at first sight (e.g., Paul's vow recorded in Acts 18:18) may subsequently prove quite important (Acts 21:20–24). Moreover, it is significant that God has given us four Gospels and not only one. Since many events in Jesus' life are recorded in more than one Gospel, we can discern their significance by reading about them in several books, each of which has its own theological points of emphasis.

The Synoptic Problem. Even a quick reading of the four Gospels reveals that three of them (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) are alike, especially when contrasted with John. With a few important exceptions, the events and teachings included in John (e.g., chs. 3; 9; 11; 14) are not found in the first three Gospels, while these three have much material in common and share a similar perspective. For these reasons, the first three Gospels are called the "Synoptics."

A more detailed comparison, however, reveals a wide variety of differences as well as similarities. Sometimes the material recorded is exactly alike, while at other times there are minor verbal differences. In some cases the order of events is the same, but often it is not. From a literary point of view, these facts raise difficult questions. How did the Gospels originate? Did their authors use each other's work, and did they have other materials available to them?

The prevailing answer to these questions is that Mark was the first Gospel and that Matthew and Luke followed its outline (Mark 2:1–22; cf. Matt. 9:2–17; Luke 5:18–38). But Matthew and Luke have in common some important material not found in Mark (e.g., Matt. 7:24–27; Luke 6:47–49). This is explained by the suggestion that a second document, no longer extant, was used by these two writers. This solution is known as the "Two-Source Theory." In addition, clearly Matthew and Luke each had access to much unique information found only in their Gospels.

This proposal cannot account for all the facts, and alternate theories have been suggested. Some argue for the priority of Matthew rather than Mark; a few suggest that Luke was written first. Some have even argued that John was first. A number of scholars emphasize an oral tradition that must have preceded the writing of these documents, downplaying their literary interdependence. Most New Testament specialists continue to use the Two-Source approach as a working hypothesis but recognize that many questions remain unanswered.

Ultimately, God's guidance through inspiration was the controlling factor. God used historical developments as well as the personal research of the Gospel writers to accomplish His purposes (cf. Luke 1:1–4). Scholarly work on history and literature should therefore not be despised, since it often sheds light on the text. On the other hand, our confidence in the truth of Scripture does not rest on the ability of specialists to sort out literary problems, but on God's power to fulfill His promises (Is. 55:10, 11; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17).□

The Gospel According to

MATTHEW

Author Although this Gospel does not name its author, some early manuscripts have the inscription "according to Matthew," and Eusebius (c. A.D. 260–340) tells us that the early church father Papias (c. A.D. 60–130) spoke of Matthew as having arranged the "oracles" about Jesus. Subsequent tradition is unanimous that the disciple Matthew, also called Levi (9:9–13; Mark 2:13–17), was the author of this Gospel, and not until the eighteenth century was this tradition doubted.

There are some problems with the tradition. First, Papias apparently said that Matthew "arranged the oracles in the Hebrew dialect." This statement seems to indicate that Matthew wrote in Hebrew or Aramaic, and scholars point out that Matthew does not read like a translation from these languages. It is also quite similar to Mark (see "Introduction to the Gospels and Acts"), which was certainly written in Greek. It is possible that Matthew wrote in both Hebrew and Greek, much as Calvin wrote works in both Latin and French.

Secondly, since Papias did not say "gospel" but "oracles," some have identified these "oracles" as one of the sources lying behind our Gospels. But Eusebius appears to have understood "oracles" to mean "gospel," and Irenaeus (writing about A.D. 180) speaks of a "gospel" by Matthew written "for the Hebrews in their own dialect."

Other objections to Matthew's authorship are more speculative. Some suggest that the Gospel may have been the product of a group of writers ("school"). Its alleged dependence on Mark and supposedly late composition (see "Date and Occasion") are given as reasons to doubt Matthew's authorship. But these objections do not disprove the tradition that Matthew was the sole author.

Since the author did not identify himself, he probably thought that it was not essential for his readers to know his name. Working through the human author was the primary Author, the Holy Spirit.

Date and Occasion The earliest reference to the Gospel of Matthew is probably in the *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans* by Ignatius of Antioch (c. A.D. 110). Almost no one dates the book later than A.D. 100. Some scholars have dated it as early as A.D. 50, but many critics date it after the destruction of Jerusalem, usually between 80 and 100. Their reasons include the assumption that Jesus could not have predicted such future events as the destruction of Jerusalem, the view that the Gospel's trinitarian theology (28:19) and exalted christology (11:27) are late ideas that developed in a Hellenistic environment, and the assertion that the word "Rabbi" (mentioned in 23:5–10) was not used as a title before A.D. 70.

Some of these reasons, such as that Jesus could not have predicted the future or that a high christology is Hellenistic and therefore late, are highly dubious and reflect a rejection of supernatural revelation. Further, there is some evidence in the context of the book that Matthew was written before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The Gospel warns against the Sadducees, a group that rapidly declined from prominence after A.D. 70 and ultimately ceased to exist. The language used to describe the destruction of Jerusalem in ch. 24 reflects Old Testament prophecies of the divine judgment that Jesus foresaw as connected with the coming of His kingdom. There is no need to explain the content of ch. 24 as the author's memory of a historical event.

The writer of this Gospel probably used the Gospel of Mark. Assuming that Mark was composed with the help of the apostle Peter in Rome, an appropriate date for Matthew would be between A.D. 64 and 70.

Antioch in Syria is the most likely location for the writing of the Gospel and for the church for which it was originally composed. Ignatius, the earliest writer to quote Matthew, was bishop of Antioch. The congregation in Antioch was of mixed Jewish and Gentile origin (Acts 15), and this would account for the problems of legalism and antinomianism that Matthew particularly addresses.

Characteristics and Themes Like all the Gospels, Matthew's purpose is to convey authoritative teaching by and about Jesus, whose coming marks the fulfillment of God's promises and the presence of God's kingdom. Matthew makes no division between history and theology. His history is the basis of the theology, and the theology gives its proper meaning to the history.

Matthew makes extensive use of "fulfillment" references to the Old Testament. His citations are not presented as isolated predictions and fulfillments, but as proof of the fulfillment of all the expectations of the Old Testament. This concern affects the way Matthew stresses certain elements in the history. Matthew shows us the illegality of the Sanhedrin's actions in the trial of Jesus (26:57–68), the distortion of the Old Testament by the scribes and Pharisees (15:1–9), and the covenantal nature of God's dealing with His people.

Also distinctive to Matthew is his presentation of the teaching of Jesus in five major discourses: ethics, discipleship and mission, the kingdom of heaven, the church, and the end time. These five divisions may have

been patterned after the five books of Moses, to present Jesus as the Prophet like Moses of Deut. 18:18. Most scholars today recognize the five teaching discourses as the key to Matthew's basic design, especially since each discourse ends with an expression such as, "And when Jesus had ended these sayings" (7:28). Further, there seems to be a relationship between each discourse and the narrative preceding it. Also note that the narrative portions deal primarily with the question of the King's identity, while the discourse material tends to focus on the King's people.

Interpretive Difficulties Scholars today are in general agreement that both Matthew and Luke made use of the Gospel of Mark in writing their own Gospels (see "Introduction to the Gospels and Acts"). However, Matthew and Luke do not follow Mark at every point in the order of events of Jesus' life, or the order of His teachings. Matthew and Luke have some material in common not found in Mark, but here too they differ in its placement within Jesus' ministry.

To understand the chronology of the Gospels it is important to note that Mark's own account is not a complete diary. John reports that Jesus visited Jerusalem several times during a period of about three years, while in Mark the events are presented in what appears to be one year ending with a single, climactic visit to Jerusalem. In other words, the Holy Spirit had already led Mark in selecting and presenting the events of Jesus' ministry in a particular way. Matthew and Luke similarly were led by the Spirit in their own selection and presentation of events.

The Gospels do not simply present a schedule of Jesus' activities. Nor are they modern, technical biographies that follow methods unknown in their own day. The three Synoptic Gospels are individual and complementary works; they are not three incomplete attempts to do the same task. They are spiritual books; together with the Gospel of John they offer Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word, to all generations. □

Outline of Matthew

I. Prologue (chs. 1; 2)
- A. The Genealogy of the King (1:1–17)
- B. The Birth of the King (1:18—2:23)
  - 1. Announcement to Joseph and Child's Birth (1:18–25)
  - 2. Adoration by the Wise Men (2:1–12)
  - 3. "Out of Egypt I Called My Son" (2:13–23)

II. The Kingdom Comes (chs. 3–7)
- A. Initiating the Kingdom in Jesus (3:1—4:11)
  - 1. Jesus Baptized by John (ch. 3)
  - 2. The Temptation in the Wilderness (4:1–11)
- B. Announcing the Kingdom (4:12–25)
- C. First Discourse: Sermon on the Mount (chs. 5—7)
  - 1. The Beatitudes (5:1–12)
  - 2. Interpreting the Law for the Kingdom (5:13–48)
  - 3. Piety in the Kingdom: Charity, Prayer and Fasting (6:1–18)
  - 4. A Heart for the Kingdom (6:19–34)
  - 5. Standards of Judgment in the Kingdom (ch. 7)

III. The Works of the Kingdom (chs. 8—10)
- A. Healing the Sick and Calling Disciples (chs. 8; 9)
- B. Second Discourse: Kingdom Mission (ch. 10)

IV. The Nature of the Kingdom (chs. 11—13)
- A. The Identity of John and of Jesus (chs. 11; 12)
  - 1. Responding to the Works of Jesus and John (ch. 11)
  - 2. Jesus, Lord of the Sabbath (12:1–13)
  - 3. The Beginning of Opposition to Jesus (12:14–50)
- B. Third Discourse: Kingdom Parables (ch. 13)

V. The Authority of the Kingdom (chs. 14—18)
A. Jesus' Character and Authority (chs. 14—17)
1. The Death of John the Baptist (14:1–12)
2. Feeding the Multitudes and the Leaven of the Pharisees (14:13—16:12)
3. Revealing the Son of God and His Mission (16:13—17:27)
B. Fourth Discourse: Character and Authority of the Church (ch. 18)
VI. Kingdom Blessings and Kingdom Judgments (chs. 19—25)
A. From Galilee to Jerusalem (chs. 19; 20)
1. Family Life Within the Kingdom (19:1–15)
2. Entering the Kingdom (19:16—20:16)
3. Opening the Eyes of the Spiritually and Physically Blind (20:17–34)
B. The King Enters Jerusalem (chs. 21—23)
1. Triumphal Entry and Cleansing the Temple (21:1–22)
2. Parables of Resistance to the King (21:23—22:14)
3. Conflict with the Pharisees and Sadducees (22:15—23:39)
C. Fifth Discourse: Kingdom Judgment (chs. 24; 25)
1. Signs of the End of the Age (24:1–31)
2. Parables Counseling Vigilance (24:32—25:46)
VII. Passion and Resurrection (chs. 26—28)
A. Betrayal and Arrest (26:1–56)
1. Preparing for Jesus' Death (26:1–16)
2. Last Supper and Gethsemane (26:17–56)
B. The Trial and Execution of the King (26:57—27:56)
1. Religious Trial Before the Sanhedrin (26:57–75)
2. Civil Trial Before Pilate (27:1–26)
3. The Crucifixion (27:27–56)
C. Burial and Resurrection (27:57—28:20)
1. Guarding the Tomb (27:57–66)
2. The Resurrection (28:1–15)
3. The Great Commission (28:16–20)

The Genealogy of Jesus Christ

THE book of the [a]genealogy[1] of Jesus Christ, [b]the Son of David, [c]the Son of Abraham:
2 [d]Abraham begot Isaac, [e]Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot [f]Judah and his brothers.
3 [g]Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, [h]Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram.
4 Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon.
5 Salmon begot [i]Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse,
6 and [j]Jesse begot David the king.

CHAPTER 1

1 [a]Luke 3:23 [b]John 7:42 [c]Gen. 12:3; 22:18 [1]Lit. *generation*
2 [d]Gen. 21:2, 12 [e]Gen. 25:26; 28:14 [f]Gen. 29:35

3 [g]Gen. 38:27; 49:10 [h]Ruth 4:18–22 5 [i]Ruth 2:1; 4:1–13 6 [j]1 Sam. 16:1

■ **1:1 book of the genealogy.** The same phrase is used at Gen. 2:4; 5:1 in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament in common use following 150 B.C. Here it may refer not only to the genealogy immediately following, but to the account of Jesus' birth or the Gospel as a whole also.

Christ. This title comes from the Greek word *Christos*, meaning "anointed." "Messiah" represents the Hebrew word for "anointed"; see note on 1 Sam. 2:10. In the Old Testament, anointing with oil could be performed for the office of prophet, priest, or king (Ex. 29:7; 1 Sam. 16:13; 1 Kin. 19:16). The Old Testament promises the coming of the righteous Servant of the Lord (Is. 42:1–9), who will be a prophet like Moses (Deut. 18:18, 19), a priest like Melchizedek (Ps. 110:4), and a king like David, the Lord's anointed (Is. 55:3–5; Jer. 30:9; Ezek. 34:24; Hos. 3:5; Zech. 12:8). Matthew reveals that Jesus is the Christ, the promised King and Deliverer.

■ **1:2** The specifics of this genealogy differ from the one found in Luke; see note on Luke 3:23–38.

■ **1:3–16** Women are not usually named in Near Eastern genealogies, but they are intrinsic to God's purpose in sending Christ. The five women named in Jesus' genealogy all remind us that God often does the unexpected and chooses the unlikely. Tamar (v. 3) reminds us of Judah's failures (Gen. 38:6–30); Rahab (v. 5) was a harlot (Josh. 2); Ruth was a Moabite (Ruth 1:4) and thus subject to a special curse (Deut. 23:3–5); Uriah's wife Bathsheba (v. 6) was David's downfall (2 Sam. 11). Mary fulfills Is. 7:14 (v. 23), and the even more important promise of Gen. 3:15 (Gal. 4:4).

[k]David the king begot Solomon by her [2]*who had been the wife* of Uriah. 7 [l]Solomon begot Rehoboam, Rehoboam begot [m]Abijah, and Abijah begot [3]Asa. 8 Asa begot [n]Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Joram, and Joram begot [o]Uzziah. 9 Uzziah begot Jotham, Jotham begot [p]Ahaz, and Ahaz begot Hezekiah. 10 [q]Hezekiah begot Manasseh, Manasseh begot [4]Amon, and Amon begot [r]Josiah. 11 [s]Josiah begot [5]Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were [t]carried away to Babylon.

12 And after they were brought to Babylon, [u]Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot [v]Zerubbabel. 13 Zerubbabel begot Abiud, Abiud begot Eliakim, and Eliakim begot Azor. 14 Azor begot Zadok, Zadok begot Achim, and Achim begot Eliud. 15 Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Matthan, and Matthan begot Jacob. 16 And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of [w]Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.

17 So all the generations from Abraham to David *are* fourteen generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon *are* fourteen generations, and from the captivity in Babylon until the Christ *are* fourteen generations.

Christ Born of Mary

18 Now the [x]birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child [y]of the Holy Spirit. 19 Then Joseph her husband, being [6]a just *man,* and not wanting [z]to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. 20 But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, [a]for that which is [7]conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. 21 [b]And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name [8]JESUS, [c]for He will save His people from their sins."

22 So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: 23 [d]*"Behold,*[9] *the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,"* which is translated, "God with us."

24 Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, 25 and [l]did not know her till she had brought forth [e]her[2] firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.

Wise Men from the East

2 Now after [a]Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, [l]wise men [b]from the East came to Jerusalem, 2 saying, [c]"Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen [d]His star in the East and have come to worship Him."

3 When Herod the king heard *this,* he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 And when he had gathered all [e]the chief priests and [f]scribes of the people together, [g]he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.

5 So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet:

6 *'But*[h] *you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,*
Are not the least among the rulers of Judah;

6 [k]2 Sam. 7:12; 12:24 [2]Words in italic type have been added for clarity. They are not found in the original Greek.
7 [l]1 Chr. 3:10 [m]2 Chr. 11:20 [3]NU *Asaph*
8 [n]1 Chr. 3:10 [o]2 Kin. 15:13
9 [p]2 Kin. 15:38
10 [q]2 Kin. 20:21 [r]1 Kin. 13:2 [4]NU *Amos*
11 [s]1 Chr. 3:15, 16 [t]2 Kin. 24:14–16 [5]Or *Coniah* or *Jehoiachin*
12 [u]1 Chr. 3:17 [v]Ezra 3:2
16 [w]Matt. 13:55
18 [x]Luke 1:27 [y]Luke 1:35
19 [z]Deut. 24:1 [6]*an upright*
20 [a]Luke 1:35 [7]Lit. *begotten*
21 [b]Luke 1:31; 2:21 [c]John 1:29 [8]Lit. *Savior*
23 [d]Is. 7:14 [9]Words in oblique type in the New Testament are quoted from the Old Testament.
25 [e]Luke 2:7, 21 [f]Kept her a virgin [2]NU *a Son*

CHAPTER 2

1 [a]Luke 2:4–7 [b]Gen. 25:6 [f]Gr. *magoi*
2 [c]Luke 2:11 [d][Num. 24:17]
4 [e]2 Chr. 36:14 [f]2 Chr. 34:13 [g]Mal. 2:7
6 [h]Mic. 5:2

■ **1:17 fourteen generations.** Matthew organizes the genealogy into three groups of fourteen to show that God has a purpose in history. The early history leading to David, the monarchy leading to the Exile in Babylon, and the history of Israel after the Exile all lead up to, and point to Christ. Jeconiah (Jehoiachin) is included in both the second and third groups of fourteen; this enumeration is in keeping with Matthew's abbreviation of the genealogy (v. 5 cf. Josh. 2; v. 8 cf. 2 Chr. 21:4—26:13).

■ **1:19 Joseph . . . was minded to put her away.** Engagement was almost as binding as marriage, and infidelity during betrothal made divorce almost obligatory.

■ **1:21 Jesus.** The Greek equivalent of "Joshua," meaning "Yahweh is salvation," or "Yahweh saves." Often in names only the first syllable of God's name is used (e.g., Eli*jah;* Isa*iah;* Jo*shua*).

■ **1:23 virgin.** See note on Is. 7:14. Jesus' conception by a virgin is miraculous, announcing that God will soon redeem His people and is present with them. This quotation is the first of a number of Old Testament references Matthew uses to show that Jesus fulfills the Old Testament (2:6, 15, 18, 23 and notes). In the entire Gospel there are twelve such fulfillment formulas, and more than fifty Old Testament quotations. See "The Virgin Birth of Jesus" at Luke 1:27.

■ **2:1 in the days of Herod the king.** Herod the Great is known to have died in 4 B.C. Therefore Jesus was actually born in about 5 or 6 B.C. according to the standard dating of the Gregorian calendar.

wise men. The "Magi" were not kings, but priests or court advisers, such as Joseph or Daniel. They were probably from Mesopotamia, the region of ancient Babylon, although other locations east of Palestine have been suggested. There are numerous accounts of ancient astrologers interpreting astronomical phenomena as heralding the birth of kings.

■ **2:2 star.** This may have been a planetary conjunction, a supernova, or something purely supernatural. Whatever the case, it alludes to the star of Jacob (Num. 24:17), which was prophesied by another Gentile, Balaam.

■ **2:6** The second line of the quotation in Matthew appears to say the opposite of the second line of Mic. 5:2 ("you are little"), but the sense is that though Bethlehem appears to be insignificant, it is in truth important. The religious experts concluded from the prophets that the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem, but not one of them bothered to make the short journey with the Magi to see Christ.

For out of you shall come a Ruler
[i] Who will shepherd My people Israel.'"

[7] Then Herod, when he had secretly called the [2]wise men, determined from them what time the [j]star appeared. [8] And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found *Him,* bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also."

[9] When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. [10] When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. [11] And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, [k]they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

[12] Then, being divinely warned [l]in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.

The Flight into Egypt

[13] Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him."

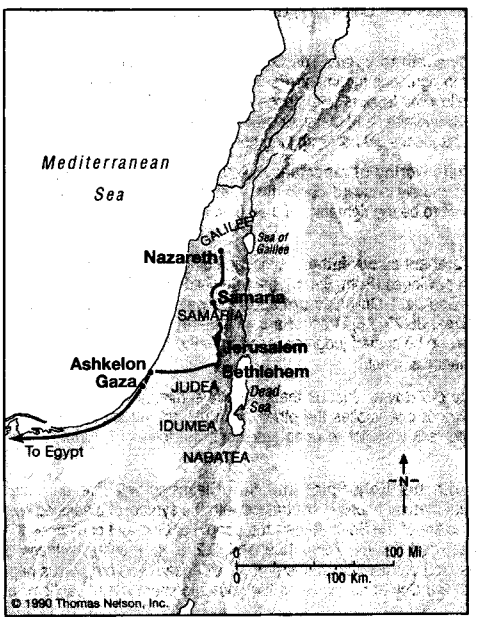
[14] When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, [15] and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, [m]*"Out of Egypt I called My Son."*

Massacre of the Innocents

[16] Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. [17] Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying:

18 *"[n]A voice was heard in Ramah,*
Lamentation, weeping, and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children,

6 [f]Gen. 49:10; [Rev. 2:27]
7 [j]Num. 24:17 [2]Gr. *magoi*
11 [k]Ps. 72:10; Is. 60:6
12 [l][Job 33:15, 16]; Matt. 1:20
15 [m]Num. 24:8; Hos. 11:1
18 [n]Jer. 31:15



■ **2:11 house.** Jesus was no longer in a stable (Luke 2:7). This visit was some time after the birth (v. 1), perhaps a year or more (cf. v. 16). Although the Magi could scarcely have realized the full symbolic value of their gifts, Matthew records them to show the fulfillment of Old Testament passages where the Gentiles bring their wealth to Israel's king (Ps. 72:10; Is. 60:6).

■ **2:15 fulfilled.** Hos. 11:1 refers to God's calling His son Israel out of Egypt in the Exodus. Matthew means that the history of God's redemption of Israel points forward to Jesus, the true Son of God.

■ **2:18** Matthew is quoting from Jer. 31:15, from a prophecy about the return of Israel from exile. Rachel, the mother, represents all Israel in her weeping, and the departure of Christ to Egypt is like the departure of Rachel's sons, Joseph and Benjamin, to Egypt (Gen. 37:28; 43:15).

The Journeys of Jesus' Birth. The decree of Caesar Augustus required Mary and Joseph, who were from Nazareth, to register for the census in the Judean city of Bethlehem (Luke 2:1–5). After the wise men from the East had visited to worship the Child, Joseph heeded the warning of the angel of the Lord and took his family to Egypt, where they remained until the death of Herod the Great.

Refusing to be comforted,
Because they are no more."

The Home in Nazareth

19 Now when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in
Egypt, 20 [o]saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for
those who [p]sought the young Child's life are dead." 21 Then he arose, took the young Child and
His mother, and came into the land of Israel.

22 But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea instead of his father Herod, he
was afraid to go there. And being warned by God in a [q]dream, he turned aside [r]into the region of
Galilee. 23 And he came and dwelt in a city called [s]Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled [t]which was
spoken by the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

3 In those days [a]John the Baptist came preaching [b]in the wilderness of Judea, 2 and saying,
"Repent, for [c]the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" 3 For this is he who was spoken of by the
prophet Isaiah, saying:

[d]*"The voice of one crying in the wilderness:*
[e]*'Prepare the way of the LORD;*
Make His paths straight.'"

4 Now [f]John himself was clothed in camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist; and his
food was [g]locusts and [h]wild honey. 5 [i]Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the
Jordan went out to him 6 [j]and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins.

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to
them, [k]"Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from [l]the wrath to come? 8 Therefore bear
fruits worthy of repentance, 9 and do not think to say to yourselves, [m]'We have Abraham as *our*
father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.
10 And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. [n]Therefore every tree which does not bear
good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 11 [o]I indeed baptize you with water unto repen-

20 [o]Luke 2:39 [p]Matt. 2:16
22 [q]Matt. 2:12, 13, 19 [r]Luke 2:39
23 [s]John 1:45, 46 [t]Judg. 13:5

CHAPTER 3

1 [a]Mark 1:3–8 [b]Josh. 14:10
2 [c]Dan. 2:44
3 [d]Is. 40:3 [e]Luke 1:76
4 [f]Mark 1:6 [g]Lev. 11:22 [h]1 Sam. 14:25, 26
5 [i]Mark 1:5
6 [j]Acts 19:4, 18
7 [k]Matt. 12:34 [l][1 Thess. 1:10]
9 [m]John 8:33
10 [n]Matt. 7:19
11 [o]Luke 3:16

■ **2:23 He shall be called a Nazarene.** The Old Testament has no verse exactly corresponding to this, but note that Matthew introduces this reference to the prophets in more general terms than his other quotations. Nazareth was Christ's home, but Matthew's point is probably that Jesus would be despised, as people from Nazareth were (John 1:46; 7:42, 52). Is. 11:1 refers to the Messiah as a "Branch" (Hebrew *netzer*) from the roots of Jesse; this verse may have been in mind.

■ **3:2 Repent.** The first command of both John the Baptist and Jesus (4:17). Repentance is not just sorrow for sin but a decisive change, a turning away from sin and to a life of obedience. "Repent" translates the Old Testament call to Israel to "return" to faithfulness to the covenant. It does not mean self-punishment, depression, or remorse. Judas was sorrowful and distressed (27:3) but he did not repent. See "Repentance" at Acts 26:20.

kingdom of heaven. The message of John the Baptist introduces the theme of Jesus' teaching. Mark and Luke call it the "kingdom of God" (4:17; cf. Mark 1:15). The kingdom or the reign of God is what the Old Testament prophets awaited: God's display of His sovereignty in the redemption of His people. John and Jesus proclaimed that the time of waiting was over and the King Himself had come. With the death and resurrection of Jesus and the spread of the good news to all nations, the Old Testament promises of God have been largely fulfilled for us, although we still await their complete realization when Christ returns in judgment (ch. 13 and notes).

is at hand. The beginning of God's work is the basis for the command to repent.

■ **3:3 this is he.** John the Baptist proclaims the coming of the Lord, using Is. 40:3. John's ministry pointed forward, like the Old Testament prophets, to a greater One who would follow (11:7–11; Acts 19:4, 5).

■ **3:6 baptized.** Christian baptism is not identical with the baptism of John for, although it retains the symbolism of repentance and purification (Acts 22:16; Eph. 5:26), it is performed in the name of the triune God (28:19) and symbolizes our union with Christ in His death and resurrection (Rom. 6:3–6; 1 Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:27; Col. 2:12). See note on Mark 1:4.

■ **3:7 the wrath to come.** The Old Testament promised the coming of the Lord in righteous judgment (Ps. 96:13; Zeph. 2:1, 2; Mal. 3:2). John will not allow the leaders to suppose that the cup of God's wrath is only for Israel's enemies, and that their own nation will escape. John was later puzzled that Jesus did not bring judgment (11:2, 3 and note).

■ **3:8 fruits worthy of repentance.** Acts indicating an inner righteousness, not merely outward conformity. Since the Pharisees considered themselves to be the righteous of their day, the words of John must have cut deep.

■ **3:9 Abraham as our father.** Although being Jewish includes outward covenant privileges (Rom. 9:4, 5), the true children of God are so only by virtue of God's act. Only God can apply the water that changes hearts of stone (Ezek. 36:25, 26). Neither a Jew by birth nor a Christian by birth can expect to be spared judgment apart from the fruit that gives evidence of repentance and faith.

■ **3:10 is cut down.** Just as the kingdom is imminent, so is judgment; the coming of one implies the other. John did not yet know that Jesus' immediate task was not to bring judgment, but to bear it Himself (11:2 note).

■ **3:11 with the Holy Spirit and fire.** Cleansing with fire describes God's supernatural baptism, contrasted with the symbol of cleansing with water. The fire of the Spirit renews the people of God and consumes the wicked as chaff (Is. 4:4; Zech. 13:9; Mal. 3:2, 3; 4:1). John's witness to Jesus as the Lord who has come (v. 3) is extended. As Lord, Jesus baptizes with the Spirit and executes the Last Judgment. See "Baptism" at Rom. 6:3.

tance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. [p]He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit [l]and fire. 12 [q]His winnowing fan *is* in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will [r]burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

John Baptizes Jesus

13 [s]Then Jesus came [t]from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. 14 And John *tried to* prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?"

15 But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit *it to be so* now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed Him.

16 [u]When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and [z]He saw [v]the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. 17 [w]And suddenly a voice *came* from heaven, saying, [x]"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Satan Tempts Jesus

4 Then [a]Jesus was led up by [b]the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. 3 Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

4 But He answered and said, "It is written, [c]*'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'*"

5 Then the devil took Him up [d]into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, 6 and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written:

[e]*'He shall give His angels charge over you,'*

and,

[f]*'In their hands they shall bear you up,*
Lest you dash your foot against a stone.'"

7 Jesus said to him, "It is written again, [g]*'You shall not [l]tempt the LORD your God.'*"

8 Again, the devil took Him up on an exceedingly high mountain, and [h]showed Him all the

11 [p][Is. 4:4; John 20:22; Acts 2:3, 4; 1 Cor. 12:13] [l]M omits *and fire*

12 [q]Mal. 3:3 [r]Mal. 4:1; Matt. 13:30

13 [s]Matt. 3:13–17; Mark 1:9–11; Luke 3:21, 22; John 1:31–34 [t]Matt. 2:22

16 [u]Mark 1:10 [v][Is. 11:2]; Luke 3:22; John 1:32; Acts 7:56 [z]Or *he*

17 [w]John 12:28 [x]Ps. 2:7; Is. 42:1; Mark 1:11; Luke 1:35; 9:35; Col. 1:13

CHAPTER 4

1 [a]Matt. 4:1–11; Mark 1:12; Luke 4:1 [b]Ezek. 3:14; Acts 8:39

4 [c]Deut. 8:3

5 [d]Neh. 11:1, 18; Dan. 9:24; Matt. 27:53

6 [e]Ps. 91:11 [f]Ps. 91:12

7 [g]Deut. 6:16 [l]*test*

8 [h][Matt. 16:26; 1 John 2:15–17]

■ **3:13–15** John was reluctant to baptize Jesus because he recognized that Jesus was the one person who had no need for repentance. But in order for "all righteousness" to be fulfilled, Jesus had to be identified with His people as the bearer of their sins (2 Cor. 5:21). Ultimately John's baptism pointed to Jesus, for only Jesus' death on a cross, which He called a "baptism" (Luke 12:50), could take away sins. Jesus' identification with His people included His baptism and death, His anointment with the Spirit, and His victory over temptation. See "The Baptism of Jesus" at Mark 1:9.

■ **3:15 righteousness.** God's kingdom (His sovereign rule in salvation and judgment) is defined by His righteousness. Jesus teaches the perfect righteousness that God requires (5:20, 48); He also secures God's righteousness for sinners. His baptism points to His death as "a ransom for many" (20:28) and shows the perfect obedience in which He fulfills all righteousness (Jer. 23:5, 6). Remission of sins and the gift of righteousness are received through faith in Jesus (8:10; 23:23; cf. 21:32). Those who lack God's righteousness, but hunger and thirst for it, will be filled (5:6; 6:33). Jesus calls those burdened with the load of self-righteousness to find their rest in Him (11:28—12:8).

■ **3:16, 17** The testimony from heaven confirms Jesus' identification as the Servant of the Lord (Is. 42:1; cf. Ex. 4:22) and connects this with the messianic kingship (Ps. 2:7).

■ **3:16 like a dove.** The Spirit's appearance in the form of a dove reminds us of the Spirit's creative activity in Gen. 1:2 and may point to the beginning of the new creation through the ministry of Jesus (1:1 note).

■ **4:1 tempted.** Although God Himself tempts no one (James 1:13), our temptations are included in His sovereign plan for our good. If we overcome, we are strengthened; if we succumb, we recognize more clearly our need for further sanctification and grace.

The temptation of Jesus (vv. 1–11) parallels the testing of Israel in the desert. The forty days correspond to the forty years of wandering (cf. Num. 14:34). This event recalls Deut. 8:1–5, used by Jesus in response to one of the temptations. The experience of Israel in the desert was the type or shadow of Jesus' temptation in the "wilderness" after His baptism.

The temptations appeal to common motivations: physical drives, pride, and the desire for possessions (1 John 2:16). But each is pointed specially at the Messiah. Satan appeals to Jesus in terms of His divine rights: "If You are the Son of God" (vv. 3, 6; cf. 27:40). The third temptation offers Jesus a path to kingship that avoids the Cross. Jesus was tempted in every way just as we are (Heb. 4:15), but He did not sin. He represents us before God as a "merciful and faithful High Priest" (Heb. 2:17) because He knows through His human nature what it is to endure temptation. See "The Sinlessness of Jesus" at Heb. 4:15.

■ **4:3 Son of God.** See note on 16:16.

■ **4:4 by every word.** In Deut. 8:3 this refers to God's word of direction in the wilderness and His provision of manna. Jesus will not abandon His trust in God to provide. Jesus replied to each of Satan's temptations with a reference to Scripture. The "sword of the Spirit" is God's Word (Eph. 6:17), and Jesus relied on Scripture for victory in His spiritual struggle. See "The Word of God: Scripture as Revelation" at Ex. 32:16.

■ **4:5 pinnacle of the temple.** Part of the temple wall was on the edge of the Kidron Valley with an enormous drop from the top to the bottom.

■ **4:6** Satan quotes Scripture, but he uses Ps. 91:11, 12 in a way exactly opposite to the original meaning. Ps. 91 is an exhortation to trust in God; Satan attempts to replace trust with a test, casting doubt on God's faithfulness. Presumption is not too great a faith but no faith at all. See "Satan" at Job 1:6.

kingdoms of the world and their glory. 9 And he said to Him, "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me."

10 Then Jesus said to him, [2]"Away with you, Satan! For it is written, *'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'*"

11 Then the devil [j]left Him, and behold, [k]angels came and ministered to Him.

Jesus Begins His Galilean Ministry

12 [l]Now when Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, He departed to Galilee. 13 And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali, 14 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

15 *"The [m]land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali,*
By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan,
Galilee of the Gentiles:
16 *[n]The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light,*
And upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death
Light has dawned."

17 [o]From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, [p]"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven [3]is at hand."

Four Fishermen Called as Disciples

18 [q]And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon [r]called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. 19 Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and [s]I will make you fishers of men." 20 [t]They immediately left *their* nets and followed Him.

21 [u]Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James *the son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. He called them, 22 and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him.

Jesus Heals a Great Multitude

23 And Jesus went about all Galilee, [v]teaching in their synagogues, preaching [w]the gospel of the kingdom, [x]and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people. 24 Then [4]His fame went throughout all Syria; and they [y]brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them. 25 [z]Great multitudes followed Him—from Galilee, and *from* [5]Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan.

The Beatitudes

5 And seeing the multitudes, [a]He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. 2 Then He opened His mouth and [b]taught them, saying:

10 [i]Deut. 6:13; 10:20 [2]M *Get behind Me*
11 [j][James 4:7] [k][Heb. 1:14]
12 [l]John 4:43
15 [m]Is. 9:1, 2
16 [n]Luke 2:32
17 [o]Mark 1:14, 15 [p]Matt. 3:2; 10:7 [3]*has drawn near*
18 [q]Mark 1:16–20 [r]John 1:40–42
19 [s]Luke 5:10
20 [t]Mark 10:28
21 [u]Mark 1:19
23 [v]Matt. 9:35 [w][Matt. 24:14] [x]Mark 1:34
24 [y]Luke 4:40 [4]Lit. *the report of Him*
25 [z]Mark 3:7, 8 [5]Lit. *Ten Cities*

CHAPTER 5

1 [a]Mark 3:13
2 [b][Matt. 7:29]

■ **4:10** Jesus rejects idolatry with all the zeal of true worship. He commands Satan to depart, for He has conquered the "strong man" (12:29).

■ **4:15 Galilee of the Gentiles.** Matthew stresses Jesus' focus on the nation of Israel during His earthly ministry (10:5, 6). However, his observation that Jesus' ministry fulfills Is. 9:2 shows that the commission to go to the Gentiles in Matt. 28:19 is not an afterthought; the ultimate goal always included the nations.

■ **4:17 From that time.** This phrase, which also occurs in 16:21, marks a turning point from the period of preparation to the period of Jesus' public ministry.

Repent. See "Repentance" at Acts 26:20.

■ **4:23 teaching . . . preaching . . . healing.** Teaching involved communicating the nature and purpose of God's kingdom, as seen in the Sermon on the Mount (chs. 5—7) and the parables of the kingdom (ch. 13). Preaching was proclaiming the good news that God's kingdom was near, that His sovereign purposes in history were finally being realized. Healing, as well as teaching and preaching, was a sign that this kingdom had come (11:5).

■ **4:24 Syria.** In Roman usage, "Syria" applied to virtually the whole of Palestine with the exception of Galilee (cf. Luke 2:2). A Galilean would probably have understood "Syria" to refer to the territory just north of Galilee, from the Mediterranean to Damascus.

epileptics. The only other use of this word in the New Testament is in 17:15, where it is applied to a demon-possessed boy who is exhibiting symptoms of epileptic seizures.

■ **5:1—7:29** The Sermon on the Mount is the first of five great blocks of Jesus' teaching in Matthew (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes). It is the classic statement of the ethics of the kingdom of God. The early church favored a literal interpretation but fully applied the sermon only to special classes of Christians, especially monastics. Others, such as the Anabaptists, have attempted to apply it literally to every Christian. Still others have viewed it as legalistic, as a provisional, temporary code, or as a heightening of the law of Moses with the aim of inducing repentance (Luther). Finally, some have argued that the demands of the sermon are not to be understood literally, but that Jesus was concerned with inward disposition rather than outward conduct, or that the severity of the sermon is intended to compel a decision by the hearers either for or against God's demands on their lives.

We must recognize that the sermon is directed to the disciples and

3 "Blessed[c] *are* the poor in spirit,
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
4 [d]Blessed *are* those who mourn,
For they shall be comforted.
5 [e]Blessed *are* the meek,
For [f]they shall inherit the [1]earth.
6 Blessed *are* those who [g]hunger and thirst for righteousness,
[h]For they shall be filled.
7 Blessed *are* the merciful,
[i]For they shall obtain mercy.
8 [j]Blessed *are* the pure in heart,
For [k]they shall see God.
9 Blessed *are* the peacemakers,
For they shall be called sons of God.
10 [l]Blessed *are* those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake,
For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 [m]"Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of [n]evil against you falsely for My sake. 12 [o]Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great *is* your reward in heaven, for [p]so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Believers Are Salt and Light

13 "You are the salt of the earth; [q]but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.

14 [r]"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do they [s]light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all *who are* in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, [t]that they may see your good works and [u]glorify your Father in heaven.

Christ Fulfills the Law

17 [v]"Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. 18 For assuredly, I say to you, [w]till heaven and earth pass away, one [2]jot or one [3]tittle

3 [c]Luke 6:20–23
4 [d]Rev. 21:4
5 [e]Ps. 37:11 [f][Rom. 4:13] [1]Or *land*
6 [g]Luke 1:53 [h][Is. 55:1; 65:13]
7 [i]Ps. 41:1
8 [j]Ps. 15:2; 24:4 [k]1 Cor. 13:12
10 [l]1 Pet. 3:14
11 [m]Luke 6:22 [n]1 Pet. 4:14
12 [o]1 Pet. 4:13, 14 [p]Acts 7:52
13 [q]Luke 14:34
14 [r][John 8:12]
15 [s]Luke 8:16
16 [t]1 Pet. 2:12 [u][John 15:8]
17 [v]Rom. 10:4
18 [w]Luke 16:17 [2]Gr. *iota*, Heb. *yod*, the smallest letter [3]The smallest stroke in a Heb. letter

through them to the whole church today. The sermon addresses both inward motives and outward conduct (5:21, 22, 27, 28). These legitimate demands are so strict (5:48) that no one can completely obey them, and we are therefore driven to the grace and mercy of God. In some cases Jesus uses obviously intentional exaggeration to illustrate the absolute requirements of God's law (5:29, 30).

■ **5:1 went up on a mountain.** The content of this sermon is similar to the sermon on the plain recorded in Luke 6.

was seated. It was customary for teachers to sit while teaching (Luke 4:20).

■ **5:3 Blessed.** This means more than the emotional state represented by the word "happy." It includes spiritual well-being, having the approval of God, and thus a happier destiny (Ps. 1).

poor in spirit. Those with the greater spiritual need are more likely to perceive their need and depend on God alone and not their own goodness. Paul notes the same principle in Rom. 9:30, 31. The parallel in Luke 6:20 omits "in spirit." This has led many to suppose Jesus primarily spoke of the materially poor. Material poverty and recognition of spiritual need often go together (Ps. 9:18 note), but the two kinds of poverty are not identical.

■ **5:4 those who mourn.** The context indicates that these are mourning over sin and evil, especially their own, and over the failure of mankind to give proper glory to God.

■ **5:5 the meek.** This beatitude resembles and is perhaps based on Ps. 37:11. The meekness in view is spiritual meekness, an attitude of humility and submission to God. Our pattern for meekness is Jesus (the same Greek word is translated "gentle" in 11:29), who submits to the will of His Father.

inherit the earth. The ultimate fulfillment of the promise to Abraham, whom Paul calls "heir of the world" (Rom. 4:13; cf. Heb. 11:16).

■ **5:6 hunger . . . for righteousness.** Those who seek God's righteousness receive what they desire, not those who are confident of their own righteousness.

■ **5:8 they shall see God.** Because God is a spirit, His divine essence is invisible (Col. 1:15; 1 Tim. 1:17; 6:16). Nevertheless, believers will "see" God through the insight of faith, and Jesus assured His disciples that in seeing Him they had "seen the Father" (John 14:9). In the glorified state, God's children will "see Him as He is" (1 John 3:2).

■ **5:9 peacemakers.** Spiritual peace, not the cessation of physical violence between nations, is in view. Although the term is usually understood to mean those who help others find peace with God, this peace can also be understood as those who have made their own peace with God and are called His children. The principle is extended in vv. 44, 45—the children of God make peace, even with their enemies.

■ **5:13 salt.** The primary value of salt was not as a flavoring but as a preservative. Disciples are to hinder the world's corruption. The salt deposits along the Dead Sea contain not just sodium chloride but a variety of other minerals as well. This salt can become good for nothing when the rain washes out its saltiness over the years. See "Christians in the World" at Col. 2:20.

■ **5:14** See Is. 60:1–3.

■ **5:16** See "The Mission of the Church in the World" at John 20:21.

■ **5:17 Law or the Prophets.** A way of referring to the whole Old Testament.

not come to destroy. The correctives of vv. 21–48 should be read in the light of this opening remark. In fulfilling the law, Jesus does not alter, replace, or nullify the former commands; rather, He establishes their true intent and purpose in His teaching and accomplishes them in His obedient life. The Law, as well as the Prophets, points forward to Christ. See "The Law of God" at Ex. 20:1.

■ **5:18 tittle.** A tiny extension on certain letters in the Hebrew alphabet.

will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. 19[x]Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches *them,* he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds [y]*the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

Murder Begins in the Heart

21"You have heard that it was said to those [4]of old, [z]'*You shall not murder,* and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' 22But I say to you that [a]whoever is angry with his brother [5]without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, [b]'Raca!'[6] shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, [7]'You fool!' shall be in danger of [8]hell fire. 23Therefore [c]if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24[d]leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. 25[e]Agree with your adversary quickly, [f]while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. 26Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny.

Adultery in the Heart

27"You have heard that it was said [9]to those of old, [g]'*You shall not commit adultery.*' 28But I say to you that whoever [h]looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29[i]If your right eye causes you to [1]sin, [j]pluck it out and cast *it* from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. 30And if your right hand causes you to [2]sin, cut it off and cast *it* from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

Marriage Is Sacred and Binding

31"Furthermore it has been said, [k]'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' 32But I say to you that [l]whoever divorces his wife for any reason except [3]sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.

Jesus Forbids Oaths

33"Again you have heard that [m]it was said to those of [4]old, [n]'You shall not swear falsely, but [o]shall perform your oaths to the Lord.' 34But I say to you, [p]do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is [q]God's throne; 35nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of [r]the great King. 36Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one

19 [x][James 2:10]
20 [y][Rom. 10:3]
21 [z]Ex. 20:13; Deut. 5:17 [4]*in ancient times*
22 [a][1 John 3:15] [b][James 2:20; 3:6] [5]NU omits *without a cause* [6]Lit., in Aram., *Empty head* [7]Gr. *More* [8]Gr. *Gehenna*
23 [c]Matt. 8:4
24 [d][Job 42:8]
25 [e]Luke 12:58, 59 [f][Is. 55:6]
27 [g]Ex. 20:14; Deut. 5:18 [9]NU, M omit *to those of old*
28 [h]Prov. 6:25
29 [i]Mark 9:43 [j][Col. 3:5] [1]Lit. *stumble* or *offend*
30 [2]Lit. *stumble* or *offend*
31 [k]Deut. 24:1
32 [l][Luke 16:18] [3]Or *fornication*
33 [m]Matt. 23:16 [n]Lev. 19:12 [o]Deut. 23:23 [4]*ancient times*
34 [p]James 5:12 [q]Is. 66:1
35 [r]Ps. 48:2

till all is fulfilled. The full manifestation of God's kingdom (chs. 24; 25) for which believers are to pray (6:10).

■ **5:20 unless your righteousness exceeds.** Jesus did not criticize the Pharisees for their strict observance of the law but for their emphasis on outward conformity to it without a proper inner attitude (ch. 23). By focusing on externals they avoided the real intent of the law and so obscured its real demands. The Qumran texts refer to the Pharisees as "seekers after smooth things" because they accommodated and compromised the law to fit the realities of life. Such accommodation removed awareness of the need for grace and dependence on God. In the following verses, Jesus restores the true nature of God's law as demanding total and radical holiness. Jesus demands a deeper obedience, not disregard of God's commands.

■ **5:21 You have heard that it was said.** Not the teaching of God's law itself, with its promises, but the teaching of the law by scribes and Pharisees (see note on v. 43).

■ **5:22 You fool.** Apparently Jewish law had sanctions against the specific insult *Raca,* but Jesus shows that any verbal abuse makes one liable to eternal damnation.

hell. This is *Gehenna,* the "valley of Hinnom," a trash dump outside Jerusalem where fires burned constantly. It was notorious as the location of human sacrifices by fire during the reigns of Ahaz and Manasseh (2 Chr. 28:3; 33:6). Jeremiah called it the "Valley of Slaughter" a symbol of God's fearful judgment (Jer. 7:32). See "Hell" at Mark 9:43.

■ **5:25 Agree . . . quickly.** While vv. 23, 24 deal with the reconciliation of an offended brother, vv. 25, 26 appear to address the problem of conflict in larger society—in this case legal conflict. Christians are to work for reconciliation in all areas of life.

■ **5:29 pluck it out.** The severity of the demand illustrates the radical nature of Jesus' ethic and our radical need. Jesus is not advocating self-mutilation; not the eyes or hands cause lust, but the heart and mind. Christians must not only avoid the act of adultery ("hand"), but also those things that would lead to a lustful attitude ("eye").

■ **5:32** See 19:3–10 and notes; "Marriage and Divorce" at Mal. 2:16.

■ **5:34 do not swear.** Some have understood Jesus' prohibition of oaths to be universal, but Jesus Himself submitted to oath (26:63), and Paul invoked God as his witness in Rom. 1:9. God Himself takes an oath so that we might be encouraged (Heb. 6:17). Jesus is addressing a narrow and misleading legalism that required a specific oath to make spoken words binding. The implication of such an approach to honesty is that we do not need to be truthful except under oath. Jesus demands an integrity of speech as though everything were under oath. He also prohibited the implicit idolatry of swearing by anything less than God. See "Honest Speech, Oaths, and Vows" at Neh. 5:12.

hair white or black. 37 [s]But let [5]your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.

Go the Second Mile

38 "You have heard that it was said, [t]*'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.'* 39 [u]But I tell you not to resist an evil person. [v]But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. 40 If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have *your* cloak also. 41 And whoever [w]compels you to go one mile, go with him two. 42 Give to him who asks you, and [x]from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.

Love Your Enemies

43 "You have heard that it was said, [y]*'You shall love your neighbor* [z]and hate your enemy.' 44 [6]But I say to you, [a]love your enemies, bless those who curse you, [b]do good to those who hate you, and pray [c]for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, 45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for [d]He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. 46 [e]For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet your [7]brethren only, what do you do more *than others?* Do not even the [8]tax collectors do so? 48 [f]Therefore you shall be perfect, just [g]as your Father in heaven is perfect.

Do Good to Please God

6 "Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven. 2 Therefore, [a]when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. 3 But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret [b]will Himself reward you [1]openly.

The Model Prayer

5 "And when you pray, you shall not be like the [2]hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. 6 But you, when you pray, [c]go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who *is* in the secret *place;* and your Father who sees in secret will reward you [3]openly. 7 And when you pray, [d]do not use vain repetitions as the heathen *do.* [e]For they think that they will be heard for their many words.

8 "Therefore do not be like them. For your Father [f]knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. 9 In this [g]manner, therefore, pray:

37 [s][Col. 4:6] [5]Lit. *your word be yes yes*

38 [t]Ex. 21:24; Lev. 24:20; Deut. 19:21

39 [u]Luke 6:29 [v]Is. 50:6

41 [w]Matt. 27:32

42 [x]Luke 6:30–34

43 [y]Lev. 19:18 [z]Deut. 23:3–6

44 [a]Luke 6:27 [b][Rom. 12:20] [c]Acts 7:60 [6]NU *But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you*

45 [d]Job 25:3

46 [e]Luke 6:32

47 [7]M *friends* [8]NU *Gentiles*

48 [f][Col. 1:28; 4:12] [g]Eph. 5:1

CHAPTER 6

2 [a]Rom. 12:8

4 [b]Luke 14:12–14 [1]NU omits *openly*

5 [2]*pretenders*

6 [c]2 Kin. 4:33 [3]NU omits *openly*

7 [d]Eccl. 5:2 [e]1 Kin. 18:26

8 [f][Rom. 8:26, 27]

9 [g]Luke 11:2–4

■ **5:38 An eye for an eye.** The original intent of Ex. 21:24, Lev. 24:20, and Deut. 19:21 is that punishment should be equitable and should fit the crime. These limitations prohibited exacting a greater vengeance (such as Lamech boasted in Gen. 4:23) or having different penalties for different social classes. Jesus contradicted those who saw in this principle grounds for personal vengeance.

■ **5:39 not to resist.** In context this means "do not seek restitution in court." The slap on the right cheek is a backhanded one—an insult as well as injury. Jesus' remarks may refer back to the words of the Servant of the Lord in Is. 50:6.

■ **5:41 whoever compels.** The possibility of a Roman soldier coercing a person to serve as a guide or burden carrier was real. Even if compelled by force to do something for someone, one can demonstrate freedom by volunteering more than was demanded rather than begrudging the service.

■ **5:43 hate your enemy.** This is not in the Old Testament, but was a false conclusion in scribal teaching drawn from the narrow understanding of "neighbor" as simply one's fellow Jew. Jesus shows that the true intent of Lev. 19:18 extends even to one's enemies (Luke 10:29–37).

■ **5:45** See "Providence" at Prov. 16:33.

■ **5:48 be perfect.** The standard that God demands of His people is His own perfect character. God's perfection includes the love of benevolent grace (v. 45). Although perfection is not attainable in this life, it is the goal of those who have become children of the Father (Phil. 3:12, 13).

■ **6:1 charitable deeds.** Jesus affirms the positive value of such acts, but only when done in submission to God and love for Him, rather than in seeking *human* personal glory.

■ **6:2 hypocrites.** In the New Testament, the hypocrite is one who claims to have a relationship with God and to love righteousness, but is self-seeking and even self-deceived. The hypocrites denounced in ch. 23 were unaware of their hypocrisy.

■ **6:5 pray.** See "Prayer" at Luke 11:2.

■ **6:7 do not use vain repetitions.** This prohibition does not contradict the principle that one should keep asking God for what is believed to be His will (Luke 18), but corrects the idea that God is impressed with quantity of words.

■ **6:9** This prayer is a model of brevity, asking first for God to be glorified and then for the needs of human life.

Our Father. See "Adoption" at Gal. 4:5.

Hallowed be Your name. Not just that God's creatures may keep it holy, but that God may Himself hallow it by being the holy Judge and Savior.

[h] Our Father in heaven.
Hallowed be Your [i] name.
10 Your kingdom come.
[j] Your will be done
On earth [k] as *it is* in heaven.
11 Give us this day our [l] daily bread
12 And [m] forgive us our debts.
As we forgive our debtors.
13 [n] And do not lead us into temptation,
But [o] deliver us from the evil one.
[4] For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

14 [p] "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But [q] if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Fasting to Be Seen Only by God

16 "Moreover, [r] when you fast, do not be like the [5] hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. 17 But you, when you fast [s] anoint your head and wash your face, 18 so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who *is* in the secret *place;* and your Father who sees in secret will reward you [6] openly.

Lay Up Treasures in Heaven

19 [t] "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 [u] but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The Lamp of the Body

22 [v] "The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is [7] good, your whole body will be full of light. 23 But if your eye is [8] bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great *is* that darkness!

You Cannot Serve God and Riches

24 [w] "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. [x] You cannot serve God and [9] mammon.

Do Not Worry

25 "Therefore I say to you, [y] do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? 26 [z] Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 Which of you by worrying can add one [1] cubit to his [2] stature?

9 [h] [Matt. 5:9, 16] [i] Mal. 1:11
10 [j] Matt. 26:42 [k] Ps. 103:20
11 [l] Prov. 30:8
12 [m] [Matt. 18:21, 22]
13 [n] [2 Pet. 2:9] [o] John 17:15 [4] NU omits the rest of v. 13.
14 [p] Mark 11:25
15 [q] Matt. 18:35
16 [r] Is. 58:3–7 [5] *pretenders*
17 [s] Ruth 3:3
18 [6] NU, M omit *openly*
19 [t] Prov. 23:4
20 [u] Matt. 19:21
22 [v] Luke 11:34, 35 [7] Clear, or healthy
23 [8] Evil, or unhealthy
24 [w] Luke 16:9, 11, 13 [x] [Gal. 1:10] [9] Lit., in Aram., *riches*
25 [y] Luke 12:22
26 [z] Luke 12:24
27 [1] About 18 inches [2] *height*

■ **6:11 daily bread.** The Greek word translated "daily" is known only from this prayer. It has been understood to mean "daily," "necessary," "future," or "tomorrow's" bread. There are three basic interpretations for it. The sacramental view is that it refers to the bread received in the Lord's Supper. Another view is that it symbolizes life in the coming kingdom, making the petition equivalent to "Your kingdom come" in v. 10. A third view takes it as a request for God's provision for our physical needs. This last view is perhaps the best, and this theme is developed in vv. 19–34 (Prov. 30:8).

■ **6:12 debts.** Spiritual debts are in view. Christians forgive others in response to God's forgiveness (18:32, 33); but if they do not forgive others, they cannot claim God's forgiveness for themselves (vv. 14, 15).

■ **6:13 do not lead us into temptation.** The forgiven pray this petition because they trust God and they distrust themselves. The Father may test us (4:1; Deut. 8:2), but He will not allow us to be tempted beyond our capacity (1 Cor. 10:13).

■ **6:17 anoint your head.** This symbolized rejoicing (Ps. 23:5; 45:7; 104:15; Is. 61:3), but it was also part of daily routine except when fasting (Dan. 10:3). Not to anoint oneself could be an attempt to appear more pious than others.

■ **6:19** "Rust" refers not only to ordinary corrosion but also to mildew, wood rot, and the like. Every material thing is subject to decay or loss.

■ **6:23 light that is in you.** The "good eye" looks to God as its "master" (v. 24) and fills the person with the "light" of God's will. The "bad eye" looks to "treasures on earth" (v. 19) and admits only the "darkness" of greed and self-interest. The person's whole life will be determined by the kind of "light" the "eye" lets in.

■ **6:26 they neither sow nor reap.** The point is not that birds are idle—an adult bird does not stay in its nest with open beak—but that birds do not worry about what the future holds. Anxious worry shows a lack of trust in God's knowledge and care (vv. 32, 33). See "Providence" at Prov. 16:33.

■ **6:27 stature.** The Greek word can also be translated "life span." Since adding eighteen inches to one's height would hardly be a slight

28 "So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; 29 and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not [3]arrayed like one of these. 30 Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, *will He* not much more *clothe* you, O you of little faith?

31 "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But [a]seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day *is* its own trouble.

Do Not Judge

7 "Judge[1] [a]not, that you be not judged. 2 For with what [2]judgment you judge, you will be judged; [b]and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. 3 [c]And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? 4 Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank *is* in your own eye? 5 Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

6 [d]"Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.

Keep Asking, Seeking, Knocking

7 [e]"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For [f]everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 9 [g]Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? 11 If you then, [h]being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him! 12 Therefore, [i]whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for [j]this is the Law and the Prophets.

The Narrow Way

13 [k]"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 14 [3]Because narrow *is* the gate and [4]difficult *is* the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

You Will Know Them by Their Fruits

15 [l]"Beware of false prophets, [m]who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. 16 [n]You will know them by their fruits. [o]Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? 17 Even so, [p]every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor *can* a bad tree bear good fruit. 19 [q]Every tree

29 [3]*dressed*
33 [a][1 Tim. 4:8]

CHAPTER 7

1 [a]Rom. 14:3 [1]Condemn
2 [b]Luke 6:38 [2]Condemnation
3 [c]Luke 6:41
6 [d]Prov. 9:7, 8
7 [e][Mark 11:24]
8 [f]Prov. 8:17
9 [g]Luke 11:11
11 [h]Gen. 6:5; 8:21
12 [i]Luke 6:31 [j]Gal. 5:14
13 [k]Luke 13:24
14 [3]NU, M *How narrow . . . !* [4]*confined*
15 [l]Jer. 23:16 [m]Mic. 3:5
16 [n]Matt. 7:20; 12:33 [o]Luke 6:43
17 [p]Matt. 12:33
19 [q][John 15:2, 6]

achievement (cf. Luke 12:25, 26), it may be better to understand "cubit" as a figure of speech for a short period of time; hence, "can add a moment to your lifetime."

■ **6:33 seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.** We are to make God's sovereign rule, and a right relationship with Him, the highest priority in life (see 3:15 note on "righteousness"). Worry is inconsistent with this priority; it doubts the sovereignty or goodness of God and distracts from the true goals of life. God will meet all the needs of those who risk all for Him.

■ **7:1 Judge not.** Jesus prohibits one kind of judging, but approves a different kind. Condemning others for their faults is failure to exercise forgiveness (6:14, 15); only a gentle and humble criticism that first recognizes one's own greater faults can help. There is also a necessary, discerning kind of judgment that does not condemn but distinguishes unbelief from belief (v. 6). The method of discernment is given in v. 16.

■ **7:6 what is holy.** A reference to the evidences of the kingdom, such as the healings and the exorcisms, which may explain why Jesus did no miracles for unbelievers. But "what is holy" would also include the preaching of the kingdom; believers should not continue to preach to people who have rejected the gospel with contempt and scorn (10:14; 15:14). The Book of Acts illustrates the principle in practice (Acts 13:44–51; 18:5, 6; 28:17–28).

■ **7:11 being evil.** The general sinfulness of humanity is assumed here, since even those who call God "Father" are said to be evil.

good things. These gifts from the Father are the things Jesus has been describing as necessary for disciples: righteousness, sincerity, purity, humility, and wisdom. Those who know their own need will ask God for them. The parallel in Luke 11:13 focuses on the one greatest gift—the Holy Spirit.

■ **7:12 do also to them.** Often called the "Golden Rule," this principle was stated by a number of ancient thinkers as, "Do not do to others what you do not want done to you." Jesus made it a positive obligation. Here it appears after the discussion of God's goodness and His willingness to give.

■ **7:14 difficult is the way.** Presenting a rosy picture of the Christian life and minimizing that it is filled with trouble does not follow the lead of our Lord (Acts 14:22). It may be that the "false prophets" of v. 15 are especially those who deny that the way is narrow and hard.

■ **7:15 sheep's clothing . . . ravenous wolves.** The message of false prophets may be attractive and even seem orthodox. The only way to know for sure is to allow time to see "their fruits" (vv. 16–20). Some of the false prophets' fruits are mentioned in the New Testament: controversies (1 Tim. 1:3), divisions (1 Tim. 6:3, 4), destruction of faith (2 Tim. 2:18), and self-destruction by heresy (2 Pet. 2:1).

21 [r]Luke 6:46 [s]Rom. 2:13
22 [t]Num. 24:4
23 [u][2 Tim. 2:19] [v]Ps. 5:5; 6:8
24 [w]Luke 6:47–49
28 [x]Matt. 13:54
29 [y][John 7:46]

CHAPTER 8

2 [a]Mark 1:40–45 [b]John 9:38
3 [c]Luke 4:27
4 [d]Mark 5:43 [e]Luke 5:14 [f]Deut. 24:8
5 [g]Luke 7:1–3 [h]Matt. 27:54
8 [i]Luke 15:19, 21 [j]Ps. 107:20
11 [k]Mal. 1:11

that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

I Never Knew You

21 "Not everyone who says to Me, [r]'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who [s]does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we [t]not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 And [u]then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; [v]depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

Build on the Rock

24 "Therefore [w]whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: 25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

26 "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: 27 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

28 And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that [x]the people were astonished at His teaching, 29 [y]for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

Jesus Cleanses a Leper

8 When He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. 2 [a]And behold, a leper came and [b]worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."

3 Then Jesus put out *His* hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately his leprosy [c]was cleansed.

4 And Jesus said to him, [d]"See that you tell no one; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that [e]Moses [f]commanded, as a testimony to them."

Jesus Heals a Centurion's Servant

5 [g]Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a [h]centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, 6 saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented."

7 And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him."

8 The centurion answered and said, "Lord, [i]I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only [j]speak a word, and my servant will be healed. 9 For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this *one,* 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does *it.*"

10 When Jesus heard *it,* He marveled, and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel! 11 And I say to you that [k]many will

■ **7:21 Lord, Lord.** The doubling of a name was an address of intimacy (Gen. 22:11; 1 Sam. 3:10; 2 Sam. 18:33; Luke 22:31). It is not claims or feelings of intimacy with Jesus that matter, nor is it simply good works, even miraculous ones; only doing the will of the Father matters. Genuine intimacy with the Father means knowing God and being known by God (1 Cor. 8:2, 3).

■ **7:25 the rain descended.** Storms in Palestine are infrequent but can be violent. Although the houses of the foolish and the wise may for a long time appear equally secure, when the storm comes the destruction of the foolish one's house is total (Is. 28:14–18). So it is with the life of those who ignore the words of Jesus.

■ **7:29 not as the scribes.** The scribes, like the later rabbis, taught by referring to what previous teachers had said. Their authority was the tradition. Jesus taught directly from Scripture with His own authority. See theological note "The Teaching of Jesus."

■ **8:1—9:38** The order of the miracles and events in these chapters differs from that found in Mark and Luke. Probably Matthew arranged them according to topic rather than chronology.

■ **8:2 leper.** A variety of skin diseases are referred to by the Greek word used here, probably not Hansen's disease (modern "leprosy"). Touching a leper made one ceremonially unclean (cf. Lev. 15:7), but in this case the leper is healed and becomes clean rather than Jesus becoming ritually defiled.

■ **8:4 tell no one.** The command to the leper to be silent was to prevent miracle seekers from hindering Jesus' main mission (Mark 1:45). By showing himself to the priest, the leper would fulfill the requirements of the Law and be able to rejoin Jewish society (Lev. 14:1–32).

■ **8:5 centurion.** A Roman military officer in charge of approximately one hundred men. This centurion had an appreciation for Jesus' authority that surpassed anything in Israel, an awareness of his own unworthiness, and faith that Jesus could overcome the difficulty of his unworthiness. Matthew, who often prefers a condensed style, does not mention the intermediaries that appear in the parallel account in Luke 7:1–10.

■ **8:10–12** The faith of the Gentile centurion provides the occasion for the prediction that Israel will be hardened and the gospel will be extended to the Gentiles.

■ **8:11 sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.** A reference to the messianic banquet theme of Is. 25:6–9. Gentiles now appear in place of the natural sons. This theme recurs in the parable of the wicked tenants (21:33–44, especially v. 43) and the banquet parable (22:1–14). Jesus' prediction is an early example of the principle developed by Paul in Rom. 9:30–32: Israel tries to pursue righteousness by works and does not obtain it, but Gentiles who know they deserve only condemnation seek God's mercy and obtain it.

come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. 12 But [l]the sons of the kingdom [m]will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." 13 Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way; and as you have believed, *so* let it be done for you." And his servant was healed that same hour.

12 [l][Matt. 21:43] [m]Luke 13:28

14 [n]Mark 1:29–31 [o]1 Cor. 9:5

15 [l]NU, M *Him*

Peter's Mother-in-Law Healed

14 [n]Now when Jesus had come into Peter's house, He saw [o]his wife's mother lying sick with a fever. 15 So He touched her hand, and the fever left her. And she arose and served [l]them.

The Teaching of Jesus

Jesus was Son of God incarnate, and His teaching, given Him by His Father (John 7:16–18; 12:49, 50), will stand forever (Mark 13:31), finally to judge its hearers (Matt. 7:24–27; John 12:48). The importance of paying attention to it cannot be overstressed. Jesus taught as Jewish rabbis generally did, by short sayings rather than in flowing discourses, and many of His most vital utterances are in parables, proverbs, and isolated pronouncements responding to questions and reacting to situations. All His public teaching was marked by an authority that brought amazement (Matt. 7:28, 29; Mark 1:27; John 7:46), but some of the teaching was enigmatical, requiring thought and spiritual insight ("ears to hear," Matt. 11:15; 13:9, 43; Luke 14:35), and baffling the complacent and casual. Jesus' reason for teaching so cryptically about His messianic role, His atonement, resurrection, and future reign, was partly that only events could make these things clear, and partly that He was calling people to be His disciples through His personal impact on them, and then teaching them about Himself within that relationship, rather than offering detailed theological instruction to the uncommitted (Matt. 11:25–27; Mark 4:11, 12). But Jesus' statements often are clear, and many of the fuller presentations in the epistles of the New Testament are best read as expansions and explanations of what Jesus said.

Jesus' teaching had three regular points of reference. The first was His divine Father, who had sent and was directing Him, and to whom His disciples must learn to relate as their Father in heaven. The second was to people, both individuals and groups, the recipients of His constant and many-faceted calls to repentance and a new life. The third was Himself, the Son of Man, and the Messiah of Israel.

Out of Jesus' witness to His Father, to people in their need, and to His own messianic role, three theological themes emerge:

1. The kingdom of God. This "kingdom" is the reality that came with Jesus as the fulfillment of God's plan for history, of which Old Testament prophets had often spoken (Is. 2:1–4; 9:6, 7; 11:1—12:6; 42:1–9; 49:1–7; Jer. 23:5, 6). The kingdom is present with Jesus, His miracles are signs of it (Matt. 11:12; 12:28; Luke 16:16; 17:20, 21). The kingdom takes command of a person's life when he or she submits in faith to the lordship of Christ, a momentous commitment that brings salvation and eternal life (Mark 10:17–27; John 5:24). The kingdom will be preached and grow (Matt. 13:31–33; 24:14) until the Son of Man, now reigning in heaven, reappears to gather His elect from every corner of the world.

2. The saving work of Jesus. Having come down from heaven at the Father's will to bring chosen sinners to glory, Jesus died for them, calls and draws them to Himself, forgives their sins, and keeps them safe until the day of resurrection (Luke 5:20, 23; 7:48; John 6:37–40, 44, 45; 10:14–18, 27–29; 12:32; 17:1–26).

3. The ethics of God's family. The new life comes to sinners as a gift of God's free grace and must be expressed in a new lifestyle. Those who have received grace must be thankful; those who are greatly loved must show great love to others; those who live because they are forgiven must themselves forgive; those who know God as their loving heavenly Father must accept His providence without bitterness, honoring Him at all times by trusting in His protecting care. In a word, God's children must be like their Father and their Savior, and be utterly unlike the world (Matt. 5:43–48; 6:12–15; 18:21–35; 20:26–28; 22:35–40). □

■ **8:12 darkness . . . weeping.** These figures of speech represent the grief and despair of those who are excluded from the kingdom.

16 [p]Mark 1:32–34; Luke 4:40, 41

17 [q]Is. 53:4; 1 Pet. 2:24

19 [r]Matt. 8:19–22; Luke 9:57, 58

21 [s]Luke 9:59, 60 [t]1 Kin. 19:20

24 [u]Mark 4:37; Luke 8:23–25

26 [v]Ps. 65:7; 89:9; 107:29

27 [2]Lit. *What sort of man is this*

28 [w]Mark 5:1–4; Luke 8:26–33 [3]NU *Gadarenes*

31 [4]NU *send us into*

Many Healed After Sabbath Sunset

16 [p]When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, 17 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

[q]"*He Himself took our infirmities*
And bore our sicknesses."

The Cost of Discipleship

18 And when Jesus saw great multitudes about Him, He gave a command to depart to the other side. 19 [r]Then a certain scribe came and said to Him, "Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go."

20 And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air *have* nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay *His* head."

21 [s]Then another of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, [t]let me first go and bury my father."

22 But Jesus said to him, "Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead."

Wind and Wave Obey Jesus

23 Now when He got into a boat, His disciples followed Him. 24 [u]And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He was asleep. 25 Then His disciples came to *Him* and awoke Him, saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!"

26 But He said to them, "Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?" Then [v]He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. 27 So the men marveled, saying, [2]"Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"

Two Demon-Possessed Men Healed

28 [w]When He had come to the other side, to the country of the [3]Gergesenes, there met Him two demon-possessed *men,* coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way. 29 And suddenly they cried out, saying, "What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?"

30 Now a good way off from them there was a herd of many swine feeding. 31 So the demons begged Him, saying, "If You cast us out, [4]permit us to go away into the herd of swine."

32 And He said to them, "Go." So when they had come out, they went into the herd of swine. And suddenly the whole herd of swine ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and perished in the water.

33 Then those who kept *them* fled; and they went away into the city and told everything, in-

■ **8:17 our infirmities.** Is. 53:4 uses "sicknesses" (see text note there) to represent the sin for which they are the curse (Is. 53:5). Jesus came to bear the curse as well as the guilt of sin, and in His ministry He demonstrated His power over physical suffering. Yet He has not promised to remove sickness from the world or the church before the Second Coming (8:20–23; 1 Cor. 15:26; Rev. 21:4).

■ **8:18–22** These two events show the radical commitment Jesus demands of disciples. Those who identify with Jesus will be "sojourners and pilgrims" in the world (1 Pet. 2:11). Honoring one's parents by providing a proper burial was a strict obligation in Jewish society, but Jesus demands a greater allegiance to Himself.

■ **8:20 Son of Man.** This title occurs only three times in the New Testament outside the Gospels (Acts 7:56; Rev. 1:13; 14:14). All of the many occurrences in the Gospels involve assertions made by Jesus about Himself and may be classified into three categories. "Son of Man" means "a human being," especially in statements about what is typical of humanity generally. This use is similar to God's calling Ezekiel "Son of man" (Ezek. 2:1 note), or Paul's reference to the human race as "the sons of men" (Eph. 3:5). Jesus also refers to Himself by this title when He predicts the suffering, death, and resurrection He accomplished for humanity (17:22, 23 note). Finally, it can refer to the apocalyptic "Son of Man" who appears at the Judgment of the end time (24:30; 26:64 note). This usage stems from Dan. 7:13, 14 where "One like the Son of Man" appears before the Ancient of Days and receives world dominion and worship. Jesus may have used "Son of Man" and avoided using "Messiah" because of popular conceptions that the Messiah would be a political and military leader.

■ **8:27 the winds and the sea obey Him.** Only God can still the seas and appear as Lord of the storm (Ps. 29:3, 4; 65:5–7; 89:9; 107:23–30).

■ **8:28 country of the Gergesenes.** This region is identified in Mark and Luke as the "country of the Gadarenes" (cf. text note); see note on Mark 5:1.

two demon-possessed men. Probably only one of these two demoniacs was exceedingly violent, and so Mark and Luke mention only that one. Matthew is concerned about the double witness of the testimony.

■ **8:29 Son of God.** See note on 16:16.

the time. The demons have an apparently legitimate complaint; it is not yet "the time," the Day of Judgment. But Jesus is present and is already breaking the powers of darkness (12:28).

■ **8:31 demons.** The Greek word translated "demons" is a broad term for "gods" (Acts 17:18), and supernatural beings. "Unclean spirits" (10:1) caused havoc with men, sometimes by possession. They are in league with Satan, the prince of demons (9:34; 12:24–28). Jesus throws out Satan's servants as a sign of the arrival of God's kingdom (12:28).

■ **8:32** Jesus permitted the demons to enter the pigs, perhaps because the Day of Judgment had not yet arrived. Subsequent events demonstrated the perverse values of the community, that preferred its pigs to the rescue of two human beings. Luke 8:31 reports the plea of the demons that they not be sent to the abyss.

cluding what *had happened* to the demon-possessed *men.* 34 And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus. And when they saw Him, [x]they begged *Him* to depart from their region.

Jesus Forgives and Heals a Paralytic

9 So He got into a boat, crossed over, [a]and came to His own city. 2 [b]Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. [c]When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you."

3 And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, "This Man blasphemes!"

4 But Jesus, [d]knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? 5 For which *is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise and walk'?* 6 But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"—then He said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." 7 And he arose and departed to his house.

8 Now when the multitudes saw *it,* they [e]marveled[f] and glorified God, who had given such power to men.

Matthew the Tax Collector

9 [f]As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." So he arose and followed Him.

10 [g]Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, *that* behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. 11 And when the Pharisees saw *it,* they said to His disciples, "Why does your Teacher eat with [h]tax collectors and [i]sinners?"

12 When Jesus heard *that,* He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. 13 But go and learn what *this* means: *'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.'* For I did not come to call the righteous, [k]but sinners, [2]to repentance."

Jesus Is Questioned About Fasting

14 Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, [l]"Why do we and the Pharisees fast [3]often, but Your disciples do not fast?"

15 And Jesus said to them, "Can [m]the [4]friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and [n]then they will fast. 16 No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for [5]the patch pulls away from the garment, and the tear is made worse. 17 Nor do they put new wine into old wineskins, or else the wineskins [6]break, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved."

A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed

18 [o]While He spoke these things to them, behold, a ruler came and worshiped Him, saying, "My daughter has just died, but come and lay Your hand on her and she will live." 19 So Jesus arose and followed him, and so *did* His [p]disciples.

20 [q]And suddenly, a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years came from behind and [r]touched the hem of His garment. 21 For she said to herself, "If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well." 22 But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, "Be of good

34 [x]Luke 5:8; Acts 16:39

CHAPTER 9

1 [a]Matt. 4:13; 11:23

2 [b]Luke 5:18–26 [c]Matt. 8:10

4 [d]Matt. 12:25

8 [e]John 7:15 [f]NU *were afraid*

9 [f]Luke 5:27

10 [g]Mark 2:15

11 [h]Matt. 11:19 [i][Gal. 2:15]

13 [j]Hos. 6:6 [k]1 Tim. 1:15 [2]NU omits *to repentance*

14 [l]Luke 5:33–35; 18:12 [3]NU brackets *often* as disputed.

15 [m]John 3:29 [n]Acts 13:2, 3; 14:23 [4]Lit. *sons of the bridechamber*

16 [5]Lit. *that which is put on*

17 [6]*burst*

18 [o]Luke 8:41–56

19 [p]Matt. 10:2–4

20 [q]Luke 8:43 [r]Matt. 14:36; 23:5

■ **9:2 your sins are forgiven.** Forgiveness is the prerogative of the one who has been offended, and for Jesus to forgive sins was to claim divine authority (Is. 43:25).

■ **9:5 which is easier.** Ultimately, forgiving sins is more difficult than performing a miracle, as the scribes would know since they recognized that only God can forgive sins. But the forgiveness of sins cannot be seen by observers. Jesus performs the lesser deed to prove the greater.

■ **9:11** Just as Jesus was not defiled by contact with lepers, so He was not defiled by contact with sinners. He is the Physician who heals spiritual as well as physical sickness. Those who thought they were well were puzzled by Jesus' activities and found Him offensive.

■ **9:14 disciples of John.** Although Luke notes that Pharisees asked about fasting, Mark includes both John's disciples and Pharisees among those who raised the question.

■ **9:15 then they will fast.** Jesus explained that because He was present as the Messiah, His disciples did not need to fast. Jesus recognizes a future time when the bridegroom will not be with them. This points out that, from the earliest stages of His ministry, Jesus anticipated a time between His initial coming in redemption and His final coming in the Judgment.

■ **9:17 new wine into old wineskins.** New wine continues to ferment and builds up pressure that would burst a used wineskin. The old patterns of fasting are inappropriate for the fullness of the kingdom that has now arrived.

■ **9:18–25** As usual, Matthew has a more condensed form of this story than Mark and Luke. Both the story of the ruler's daughter and the story of the woman with a hemorrhage illustrate the relation between the work of Jesus and the role of faith in the kingdom. The same point appears in the following accounts of the blind man and the mute demoniac. These works (raising the dead, healing the sick, etc.) are in response to faith, not because faith causes them, but because without faith in the King Himself they are not signs of the kingdom but only unaccountable events with no special meaning.

■ **9:22 your faith has made you well.** *Her faith made her well* because the blessings of the kingdom come to those who look to Jesus for the solution to their problems, not because of any power of faith in itself.

cheer, daughter; [s]your faith has made you well." And the woman was made well from that hour.

23 [t]When Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw [u]the flute players and the noisy crowd wailing, 24 He said to them, [v]"Make room, for the girl is not dead, but sleeping." And they ridiculed Him. 25 But when the crowd was put outside, He went in and [w]took her by the hand, and the girl arose. 26 And the [x]report of this went out into all that land.

Two Blind Men Healed

27 When Jesus departed from there, [y]two blind men followed Him, crying out and saying, [z]"Son of David, have mercy on us!"

28 And when He had come into the house, the blind men came to Him. And Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?"

They said to Him, "Yes, Lord."

29 Then He touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith let it be to you." 30 And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, saying, [a]"See *that* no one knows *it.*" 31 [b]But when they had departed, they [7]spread the news about Him in all that [8]country.

A Mute Man Speaks

32 [c]As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a man, mute and demon-possessed. 33 And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke. And the multitudes marveled, saying, "It was never seen like this in Israel!"

34 But the Pharisees said, [d]"He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons."

The Compassion of Jesus

35 Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, [e]teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease [9]among the people. 36 [f]But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were [1]weary and scattered, [g]like sheep having no shepherd. 37 Then He said to His disciples, [h]"The harvest truly *is* plentiful, but the laborers *are* few. 38 [i]Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

The Twelve Apostles

10 And [a]when He had called His twelve disciples to *Him,* He gave them power *over* unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease. 2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, [b]who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother; 3 Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the *son* of Alphaeus, and [1]Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus; 4 [c]Simon the [2]Cananite, and Judas [d]Iscariot, who also betrayed Him.

22 [s]Luke 7:50; 8:48; 17:19; 18:42

23 [t]Mark 5:38 [u]2 Chr. 35:25

24 [v]Acts 20:10

25 [w]Mark 1:31

26 [x]Matt. 4:24

27 [y]Matt. 20:29–34 [z]Luke 18:38, 39

30 [a]Matt. 8:4

31 [b]Mark 7:36 [7]Lit. *made Him known* [8]Lit. *land*

32 [c]Matt. 12:22, 24

34 [d]Luke 11:15

35 [e]Matt. 4:23 [9]NU omits *among the people*

36 [f]Mark 6:34 [g]Num. 27:17 [1]NU, M *harassed*

37 [h]Luke 10:2

38 [i]2 Thess. 3:1

CHAPTER 10

1 [a]Luke 6:13

2 [b]John 1:42

3 [1]NU omits *Lebbaeus, whose surname was*

4 [c]Acts 1:13 [d]John 13:2, 26 [2]NU *Cananaean*

■ **9:23 flute players and the noisy crowd.** Professional mourners and others who helped the bereaved express their grief.

■ **9:24 not dead, but sleeping.** Jesus was prophesying that He would raise her up from death (John 11:11–14).

■ **9:27–31** The healing of two blind men related here is similar to the account in 20:29–34, as well as to the healing of Bartimaeus narrated in Mark 10:46–52 (cf. Luke 18:35–43). Both Bartimaeus and the blind men in Matthew 9 and 20 express their faith by calling Jesus "Son of David," a messianic title. The similarities have suggested to some that both accounts in Matthew are based on the healing of Bartimaeus, but there are sufficient differences at least between the two accounts in Matthew as to indicate separate incidents.

■ **9:35–38** This paragraph summarizes the activity of Jesus in chs. 5—9 (teaching, preaching, healing) and introduces the mission discourse of ch. 10. The background is Ezek. 34:5, 6. Jesus is the true Shepherd who is concerned for His sheep (John 10), and He is identified with the "Lord God" of Ezek. 34:11–16.

■ **9:37 harvest.** Often a metaphor for the end-time activity of God. That the harvest is "plentiful" indicates that the "harvest" is not the harvest time but the crop (as in Luke 10:2). The emphasis here is on the proclamation of the gospel, the eschatological announcement that precedes judgment and urges people to repent and have faith. The "laborers" are not the angels sent to gather for judgment (13:49) but disciples who imitate Jesus by proclaiming the coming of the kingdom (10:7). Jesus does not yet command His disciples to go into the harvest as laborers, but to pray to God to send workers. No one can do the work of harvest without being called to it and equipped for it by God.

■ **10:2 apostles.** The Greek word *apostolos* designates an authorized representative or emissary whose word has the authority of the sender (see 2 Cor. 8:23 where it is translated "messengers," and 2 Cor. 1:1 note). Here the Twelve receive authority to do exactly what Jesus was doing (vv. 7, 8).

■ **10:3 Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus.** Or, "Lebbaeus, who was called Thaddaeus" (see text note and Mark 3:18). Probably he is the "Judas the son of James" mentioned in Luke 6:16 and Acts 1:13.

■ **10:4 Simon the Cananite.** Other manuscripts read, "Simon the Cananaean" (see text note), that is, a member of a revolutionary movement ("Simon called the Zealot," Luke 6:15). According to Josephus, the Zealots were a political party whose religious enthusiasm led them to advocate armed rebellion against Rome. Simon may have been associated with this movement previously and continued to be called "the Cananite" or "Zealot" to distinguish him from Simon Peter.

Sending Out the Twelve

5 These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: [e]"Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of [f]the Samaritans. 6 [g]But go rather to the [h]lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 [i]And as you go, preach, saying, [j]'The kingdom of heaven [3]is at hand.' 8 Heal the sick, [4]cleanse the lepers, [5]raise the dead, cast out demons. [k]Freely you have received, freely give. 9 [l]Provide neither gold nor silver nor [m]copper in your money belts, 10 nor bag for *your* journey, nor two tunics, nor sandals, nor staffs; [n]for a worker is worthy of his food.

11 [o]"Now whatever city or town you enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and stay there till you go out. 12 And when you go into a household, greet it. 13 [p]If the household is worthy, let your peace come upon it. [q]But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. 14 [r]And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, [s]shake off the dust from your feet. 15 Assuredly, I say to you, [t]it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!

Persecutions Are Coming

16 [u]"Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. [v]Therefore be wise as serpents and [w]harmless[6] as doves. 17 But beware of men, for [x]they will deliver you up to councils and [y]scourge you in their synagogues. 18 [z]You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. 19 [a]But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For [b]it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; 20 [c]for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.

21 [d]"Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father *his* child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. 22 And [e]you will be hated by all for My name's sake. [f]But he who endures to the end will be saved. 23 [g]When they persecute you in this city, flee to another. For assuredly, I say to you, you will not have [h]gone through the cities of Israel [i]before the Son of Man comes.

24 [j]"A disciple is not above *his* teacher, nor a servant above his master. 25 It is enough for a

5 [e]Matt. 4:15 [f]John 4:9
6 [g]Matt. 15:24 [h]Jer. 50:6
7 [i]Luke 9:2 [j]Matt. 3:2 [3]*has drawn near*
8 [k][Acts 8:18] [4]NU *raise the dead, cleanse the lepers* [5]M omits *raise the dead*
9 [l]1 Sam. 9:7 [m]Mark 6:8
10 [n]1 Tim. 5:18
11 [o]Luke 10:8
13 [p]Luke 10:5 [q]Ps. 35:13
14 [r]Mark 6:11 [s]Acts 13:51
15 [t]Matt. 11:22, 24
16 [u]Luke 10:3 [v]Eph. 5:15 [w][Phil. 2:14–16] [6]*innocent*
17 [x]Mark 13:9 [y]Acts 5:40; 22:19; 26:11
18 [z]2 Tim. 4:16
19 [a]Luke 12:11, 12; 21:14, 15 [b]Ex. 4:12

20 [c]2 Sam. 23:2 21 [d]Mic. 7:6 22 [e]Luke 21:17 [f]Mark 13:13 23 [g]Acts 8:1 [h][Mark 13:10] [i]Matt. 16:28 24 [j]John 15:20

■ **10:5—11:1** This section contains several lines of teaching regarding the Christian mission that are found in different places in the other Gospels. This does not mean Matthew invented the occasion. Matthew presents the teaching of Jesus in five major discourses, and he may have brought in relevant material delivered on other occasions. Particularly 10:17–22, which envisions a world mission and being "brought before governors and kings" (v. 18), seems to go beyond v. 5, that restricts the mission to Israel. Nevertheless, the future mission of the disciples to the whole world (28:18–20) is linked to this early experience of preaching to Israel, and Matthew's grouping of the material is appropriate.

■ **10:5 Do not go.** Although Jesus has already responded to Gentile faith (8:10), the focus of this first mission of the disciples, like that of Jesus before His passion and resurrection (15:24), was to the natural heirs of the kingdom. Jesus does not prohibit preaching to Gentiles encountered during the mission to Israel, but He did not send the disciples at this point into Gentile areas.

■ **10:7, 8 preach . . . Heal . . . raise.** The same signs of the kingdom that Jesus performed in chs. 8 and 9 will be done by His disciples.

■ **10:8 freely give.** The kingdom was given to the disciples freely; to peddle the message would insult God and obscure the nature of the gospel as a free gift. Nevertheless they will be sustained; they do not need extra travel money and provisions (vv. 9, 10). This is a model for Christian life in general.

■ **10:14, 15 shake off the dust from your feet.** That is, the dust on one's garment kicked up by the feet. Jews sometimes shook the dust off their clothing when returning from Gentile lands as a sign of contempt; Jesus uses it here as a sign of judgment. A town that did not receive the disciples did not receive Jesus, and became spiritually "pagan" and as subject to judgment as Sodom and Gomorrah (Acts 13:51).

■ **10:17–20** These verses anticipate a later, more extensive mission than the immediate occasion of v. 5 (10:5—11:1 note). Persecution will occur at the hands of both Jewish (v. 17) and Gentile (v. 18) authorities. But disciples are not to respond to this as pagans do, by hiring professional orators to defend them in court. The Holy Spirit will provide their defense (Acts 4:8).

■ **10:22 all.** Every sort of people. The allusion is to Mic. 7:6, which Jesus later quotes (v. 35).

■ **10:23 before the Son of Man comes.** There are several interpretations of the coming of the Son of Man referred to in this verse.

(a) The "coming" is the Second Coming of Christ to judge the earth. This view fits most of the other occurrences of the phrase (24:30; 25:31; 26:64; but see 16:28). The chief difficulty is that the note of urgency in v. 23 seems incompatible with a delay until the Last Judgment.

(b) The "coming" is the resurrection and ascension of Jesus or the sending of the Spirit at Pentecost. However, there is no evidence that the disciples were persecuted with the intensity assumed in vv. 17–22 prior to Jesus' resurrection or Pentecost.

(c) The phrase "before the Son of Man comes" is a way of saying, "before I rejoin you." But again the persecution described in vv. 17–22 did not occur during this time, and the purpose for the coming of the Son of Man elsewhere (to bring judgment) makes this meaning unlikely.

(d) The "coming" refers to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 as an act of judgment against the nation of Israel. This understanding retains the note of urgency and fits the experience of the church prior to A.D. 70. The other references to the coming of the Son of Man view it as a great and terrible display of God's judgment. Although these cannot be limited to the destruction of Jerusalem, that event was terrible in intensity and fell on what had been the central visible symbol of God's presence, the temple.

■ **10:25 Beelzebub.** Greek *beelzeboul*, a transliteration of a Hebrew or Aramaic name for the prince of demons (12:24–27). The name probably means "lord of heaven," and appears in the Old Testament in the intentionally distorted form Baal-Zebub ("lord of the flies") as a name for the god of Ekron (2 Kin. 1:2).

disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master. If [k]they have called the master of the house [7]Beelzebub, how much more *will they call* those of his household! [26]Therefore do not fear them. [l]For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known.

Jesus Teaches the Fear of God

[27]"Whatever I tell you in the dark, [m]speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach on the housetops. [28][n]And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather [o]fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in [8]hell. [29]Are not two [p]sparrows sold for a [9]copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. [30][q]But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. [31]Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

Confess Christ Before Men

[32][r]"Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, [s]him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. [33][t]But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.

Christ Brings Division

[34][u]"Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. [35]For I have come to [v]*set[l] a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law*'; [36]and [w]*'a man's enemies will be those of his own household.'* [37][x]He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. [38][y]And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. [39][z]He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

A Cup of Cold Water

[40][a]"He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. [41][b]He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. [42][c]And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold *water* in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward."

John the Baptist Sends Messengers to Jesus

11 Now it came to pass, when Jesus finished commanding His twelve disciples, that He departed from there to [a]teach and to preach in their cities.

[2][b]And when John had heard [c]in prison about the works of Christ, he [l]sent two of his disciples [3]and said to Him, "Are You [d]the Coming One, or do we look for another?"

[4]Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: [5][e]*The* blind see and *the* lame walk; *the* lepers are cleansed and *the* deaf hear; *the* dead are raised up and [f]*the* poor have the gospel preached to them. [6]And blessed is he who is not [g]offended because of Me."

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25 [k]John 8:48, 52 [7]NU, M *Beelzebul;* a Philistine deity, 2 Kin. 1:2, 3

26 [l]Mark 4:22

27 [m]Acts 5:20

28 [n]Luke 12:4 [o]Luke 12:5 [8]Gr. *Gehenna*

29 [p]Luke 12:6, 7 [9]Gr. *assarion,* a coin worth about 1/16 of a denarius

30 [q]Luke 21:18

32 [r]Luke 12:8 [s][Rev. 3:5]

33 [t]2 Tim. 2:12

34 [u][Luke 12:49]

35 [v]Mic. 7:6 [l]*alienate a man from*

36 [w]John 13:18

37 [x]Luke 14:26

38 [y][Mark 8:34]

39 [z]John 12:25

40 [a]Luke 9:48

41 [b]1 Kin. 17:10

42 [c]Mark 9:41

CHAPTER 11

1 [a]Luke 23:5

2 [b]Luke 7:18–35 [c]Matt. 4:12; 14:3 [l]NU *sent by his*

3 [d]John 6:14

5 [e]Is. 29:18; 35:4–6 [f]Is. 61:1

6 [g][Rom. 9:32]

■ **10:26–31** This injunction to fear God and not people is perhaps a development of Is. 8:12, 13. It is supported by three arguments: first, the acts of the wicked will be shown for what they are; second, although people can kill the body, God can punish soul and body; and third, God orders everything, down to the fall of a sparrow and the number of hairs on the head. The Bible consistently teaches that fear and reverence are appropriate responses to God.

■ **10:28 hell.** See note on 5:22.

■ **10:35 a man against his father.** Mic. 7:6 addresses the rebelliousness and strife characteristic of Israel during the time of Ahaz. Just as Israel's history foreshadows Jesus' history (2:15 note), its turmoil and strife foreshadow the strife that results from the coming of the Messiah, even to the division of families. Although coming to Christ brings peace to the heart (11:29), embracing the gospel also makes life more difficult in some respects, because Jesus demands allegiance that takes priority over the natural ties of life (vv. 37–39).

■ **10:38 take his cross.** This is to obey and identify with Jesus even unto death, not simply to bear some particular burden imposed by the Lord.

■ **10:41 prophet . . . righteous man.** This verse emphasizes the principle that receiving those who are emissaries of another is equivalent to receiving the person who sent them (v. 40).

■ **10:42 little ones.** While not excluding children, this phrase refers to all Jesus' disciples, who are to be like little children (18:1–6, 10, 14). Jesus' remark about reward underscores the importance of accepting and assisting even those believers who seem insignificant (25:40, 45).

■ **11:2 the works of Christ.** Since Matthew seldom uses "Christ" as a name for Jesus, this phrase probably means "when John heard in prison about the messianic deeds." John the Baptist had predicted that the Coming One would bring judgment, chopping down the trees of wickedness (3:10, 12). But Jesus allowed His own forerunner to be imprisoned by the wicked Herod.

■ **11:4–6** Jesus makes John's disciples witnesses of His miracles, miracles that directly fulfill Is. 35:5, 6.

7 [h]As they departed, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? [i]A reed shaken by the wind? 8 But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed, those who wear soft *clothing* are in kings' houses. 9 But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, [j]and more than a prophet. 10 For this is *he* of whom it is written:

> [k]'*Behold, I send My messenger before Your face,*
> *Who will prepare Your way before You.*'

11 "Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. 12 [l]And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. 13 [m]For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. 14 And if you are willing to receive *it,* he is [n]Elijah who is to come. 15 [o]He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

16 [p]"But to what shall I liken this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their companions, 17 and saying:

> 'We played the flute for you,
> And you did not dance;
> We mourned to you,
> And you did not [2]lament.'

18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' 19 The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a [3]winebibber, [q]a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' [r]But wisdom is justified by her [4]children."

Woe to the Impenitent Cities

20 [s]Then He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent: 21 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago [t]in sackcloth and ashes. 22 But I say to you, [u]it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. 23 And you, Capernaum, [v]who[5] are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. 24 But I say to you [w]that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you."

Jesus Gives True Rest

25 [x]At that time Jesus answered and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that [y]You have hidden these things from *the* wise and prudent [z]and have revealed them to babes. 26 Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. 27 [a]All things have been delivered to Me

7 [h]Luke 7:24 [i][Eph. 4:14]

9 [j]Matt. 14:5; 21:26; Luke 1:76; 20:6

10 [k]Mal. 3:1; Mark 1:2; Luke 1:76

12 [l]Luke 16:16

13 [m]Mal. 4:4–6

14 [n]Mal. 4:5; Matt. 17:10–13; Mark 9:11–13; Luke 1:17; John 1:21

15 [o]Matt. 13:9; Luke 8:8; Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13

16 [p]Luke 7:31

17 [2]Lit. *beat your breast*

19 [q]Matt. 9:10 [r]Luke 7:35; John 2:1–11 [3]*wine drinker* [4]NU *works*

20 [s]Luke 10:13–15, 18

21 [t]Jon. 3:6–8

22 [u]Matt. 10:15; 11:24

23 [v]Is. 14:13; Lam. 2:1; Ezek. 26:20; 31:14; 32:18, 24 [5]NU *will you be exalted to heaven? No, you will be*

24 [w]Matt. 10:15

25 [x]Luke 10:21, 22 [y]Ps. 8:2; 1 Cor. 1:19; [2 Cor. 3:14] [z]Matt. 16:17

27 [a]Matt. 28:18; Luke 10:22; John 3:35; 13:3; 1 Cor. 15:27

■ **11:9 more than a prophet.** John the Baptist was the immediate forerunner of the One to whom all the prophets pointed, and hence he pointed to Christ more clearly than all of them. As such, he himself was the object of prophecy, the one predicted in Mal. 3:1, the fulfillment of the Elijah prophecy of Mal. 4:5, 6 (v. 14), the herald of the Servant of the Lord (3:3; Is. 40:3).

■ **11:11 greater than he.** The least in the kingdom are greater than John because, standing after the Cross and Resurrection and having received the fullness of the Spirit, they participate in what the prophets saw from a distance (1 Pet. 1:10–12).

■ **11:12 suffers violence.** The kingdom is pressing ahead with force, although violent men, such as Herod who had imprisoned John the Baptist, are trying to overcome it by force. It is not the strong and forceful who obtain the kingdom but the weak and helpless (vv. 28–30), who know their own weakness and are ready to depend on God (cf. Luke 16:16 note).

■ **11:14 he is Elijah.** Jesus identifies John the Baptist as the Elijah prophesied by Malachi to come as the forerunner of the Messiah (Mal. 4:5). This identification required the eyes of faith ("if you are willing to receive it"). There may have been some misunderstanding that Elijah would be reincarnated, but John denied that he was Elijah (John 1:21). Gabriel's announcement was that John would come "in the spirit and power" of Elijah (Luke 1:17).

■ **11:19 Son of Man.** See note on 8:20.

wisdom is justified by her children. Jesus uses a proverb to make a point about Himself. The "children" in view are His own messianic deeds (vv. 2–5). The things done by Christ as the "wisdom from God" (1 Cor. 1:30) "justify" Him, or demonstrate that He is right (James 3:17, 18).

■ **11:25 You have hidden . . . and have revealed.** God is sovereign in choosing those to whom He will reveal His truth. No one can know God by worldly wisdom and learning (1 Cor. 1:26–31).

■ **11:27 delivered to Me.** Jesus here makes extraordinary claims. He claims that God's sovereign disposition of all things has been committed to Him. As in Dan. 7, the Son of Man has received all power and dominion. He claims that He alone knows the Father and the Father alone knows Him. Jesus' knowledge is equal to the Father's, and His sonship is unique. He claims that His sovereignty extends even to deciding who will know the Father. This idea parallels v. 25, but here it is Jesus who reveals the Father.

by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. [b]Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and *the one* to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him.* [28]Come to [c]Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. [29]Take My yoke upon you [d]and learn from Me, for I am [e]gentle and [e]lowly in heart, [f]and you will find rest for your souls. [30][g]For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light."

Jesus Is Lord of the Sabbath

12 At that time [a]Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. And His disciples were hungry, and began to [b]pluck heads of grain and to eat. [2]And when the Pharisees saw *it,* they said to Him, "Look, Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath!"

[3]But He said to them, "Have you not read [c]what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: [4]how he entered the house of God and ate [d]the showbread which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those who were with him, [e]but only for the priests? [5]Or have you not read in the [f]law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple [1]profane the Sabbath, and are blameless? [6]Yet I say to you that in this place there is [g]*One* greater than the temple. [7]But if you had known what *this* means, [h]*'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,'* you would not have condemned the guiltless. [8]For the Son of Man is Lord [2]even of the Sabbath."

Healing on the Sabbath

[9][i]Now when He had departed from there, He went into their synagogue. [10]And behold, there was a man who had a withered hand. And they asked Him, saying, [j]"Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"—that they might accuse Him.

[11]Then He said to them, "What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift *it* out? [12]Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." [13]Then He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched *it* out, and it was restored as whole as the other. [14]Then [k]the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him.

Behold, My Servant

[15]But when Jesus knew *it,* [l]He withdrew from there. [m]And great [3]multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all. [16]Yet He [n]warned them not to make Him known, [17]that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

27 [b]John 1:18; 6:46; 10:15

28 [c][John 6:35–37]

29 [d][Phil. 2:5] [e]Zech. 9:9 [f]Jer. 6:16 [e]*meek*

30 [g][1 John 5:3]

CHAPTER 12

1 [a]Luke 6:1–5 [b]Deut. 23:25

3 [c]1 Sam. 21:6

4 [d]Lev. 24:5 [e]Ex. 29:32

5 [f]Num. 28:9 [1]*desecrate*

6 [g][Is. 66:1, 2]

7 [h][Hos. 6:6]

8 [2]NU, M omit *even*

9 [i]Mark 3:1–6

10 [j]John 9:16

14 [k]Mark 3:6

15 [l]Mark 3:7 [m]Matt. 19:2 [3]NU brackets *multitudes* as disputed.

16 [n]Matt. 8:4; 9:30; 17:9

■ **11:28 Come to Me.** Jesus has the authority to invite people to Himself. He does not extend His invitation to the strong but to the weary and burdened. Jesus uses the language of the wisdom tradition, calling the burdened to Himself as the incarnate wisdom of God (v. 19 note).

■ **11:29, 30** Though the law had been given by God as a help to His people, the oral traditions of the scribes and Pharisees went far beyond the demands of God and became a heavy burden (12:2 note; 15:2). When the law was understood as a way of salvation, it became a "yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5:1). By contrast, the yoke of Jesus, while demanding, is "easy" because it is from One who is "gentle and lowly in heart" and can provide true rest for the soul. See "The Humble Obedience of Christ" at John 5:19.

■ **12:2 not lawful.** The Old Testament does not prohibit plucking grain on the Sabbath in order to eat—the disciples were not farmers engaged in the work of harvest. The Pharisees' objections were based on an oral tradition that failed to understand the true purpose of the Law. See "Christian Liberty" at Gal. 5:1.

Sabbath. The Sabbath is a symbol of God's sovereignty over the whole created universe (Ex. 20:8). It is a reminder of His redemption of His people (Deut. 5:12), and it is a representation of the hope of eternal rest at the Consummation (Heb. 4:9). Jesus as Lord of the Sabbath fulfills all aspects of the meaning of the Sabbath (Col. 2:16, 17).

■ **12:3–6** In His reply to the accusations of the Pharisees, Jesus uses two arguments from the lesser to the greater, both focusing on His own person and authority. David's transgression of the ceremonial law in an hour of need had been allowed, and now One with much greater authority was present. Similarly, the demands of temple worship excuse priests from certain requirements of the Law and now "One greater than the temple" is here (v. 6).

■ **12:6 One greater than the temple.** As the genuine needs of people are more important to God than ceremonial symbols, so the One in whom God dwells is greater than the symbolic dwelling place. Jesus, Immanuel ("God with us"), is the true temple, to whom the symbol pointed (John 1:14; 2:21). The disciples, being in the presence of Jesus, had a far greater service than the priests who served in the Jerusalem temple.

■ **12:7 I desire mercy.** Again quoting Hos. 6:6 (cf. 9:13), Jesus condemns the misuse of the law by the Pharisees. The Sabbath was given by God as a help to humanity, but the Pharisees were perverting this purpose by turning the Sabbath against those in need and making it a burden (Mark 2:27).

■ **12:8 Lord even of the Sabbath.** The Son of Man has received dominion over creation (8:20 note) and redemption (20:28). So too He has dominion over the Sabbath, the sign of God's sovereignty in creation and redemption (v. 2 note). The claims Jesus makes here doubtless shocked the Pharisees, furthering their resolve to kill Him (v. 14).

■ **12:9–14** Another example of Christ's lordship over the Sabbath. Again, there is no Old Testament prohibition of healing on the Sabbath, and it is always lawful to do good. Jesus does not teach that the Sabbath is abolished by the coming of the kingdom. He came not to destroy the law, but to fulfill it (5:17 note). The problem was not that the Pharisees observed the Sabbath but that they misinterpreted it, and turned what should have been a delight into a burden.

■ **12:16–21 warned them not to make Him known.** Is. 42:1–4 is cited as an explanation of why Jesus commanded people not to tell who He was. He came to proclaim and establish justice, but not by a showy display of power, and not by leading a political or military movement. Since the role of the Messiah was so misunderstood among the people, Jesus had to dampen the misguided enthusiasm that was bound to spring up.

18 *"Behold![o] My Servant whom I have chosen,*
My Beloved[p] in whom My soul is well pleased!
I will put My Spirit upon Him,
And He will declare justice to the Gentiles.
19 *He will not quarrel nor cry out,*
Nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets.
20 *A bruised reed He will not break,*
And smoking flax He will not quench,
Till He sends forth justice to victory;
21 *And in His name Gentiles will trust."*

A House Divided Cannot Stand

22 [q]Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the [4]blind and mute man both spoke and saw. 23 And all the multitudes were amazed and said, "Could this be the [r]Son of David?"

24 [s]Now when the Pharisees heard *it* they said, "This *fellow* does not cast out demons except by [5]Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons."

25 But Jesus [t]knew their thoughts, and said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. 26 If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? 27 And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast *them* out? Therefore they shall be your judges. 28 But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, [u]surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. 29 [v]Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house. 30 He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.

The Unpardonable Sin

31 "Therefore I say to you, [w]every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, [x]but the blasphemy *against* the Spirit will not be forgiven men. 32 Anyone who [y]speaks a word against the Son of Man, [z]it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the *age* to come.

A Tree Known by Its Fruit

33 "Either make the tree good and [a]its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by *its* fruit. 34 [b]Brood[6] of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? [c]For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. 35 A good man out of the good treasure [7]of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. 36 But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. 37 For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

The Scribes and Pharisees Ask for a Sign

38 [d]Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You."

39 But He answered and said to them, "An evil and [e]adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. 40 [f]For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three

18 [o]Is. 42:1–4; 49:3 [p]Matt. 3:17; 17:5

22 [q]Matt. 9:32; [Mark 3:11]; Luke 11:14, 15 [4]NU omits *blind and*

23 [r]Matt. 9:27; 21:9

24 [s]Matt. 9:34; Mark 3:22; Luke 11:15 [5]NU, M *Beelzebul,* a Philistine deity

25 [t]Matt. 9:4; John 2:25; Rev. 2:23

28 [u][Dan. 2:44; 7:14; Luke 1:33]; 11:20; [17:20, 21; 1 John 3:8]

29 [v]Is. 49:24; [Luke 11:21–23]

31 [w]Mark 3:28–30; Luke 12:10; [Heb. 6:4–6; 10:26, 29; 1 John 5:16] [x]Acts 7:51

32 [y]Matt. 11:19; 13:55; John 7:12, 52 [z]1 Tim. 1:13

33 [a]Matt. 7:16–18; Luke 6:43, 44; [John 15:4–7]

34 [b]Matt. 3:7; 23:33; Luke 3:7 [c]1 Sam. 24:13; Is. 32:6; [Matt. 15:18]; Luke 6:45; Eph. 4:29; [James 3:2–12] [6]*Offspring*

35 [7]NU, M omit *of his heart*

38 [d]Matt. 16:1; Mark 8:11; Luke 11:16; John 2:18; 1 Cor. 1:22

39 [e]Is. 57:3; Matt. 16:4; Mark 8:38; [Luke 11:29–32]; John 4:48

40 [f]Jon. 1:17; Luke 24:46; Acts 10:40; 1 Cor. 15:4

■ **12:24 Beelzebub.** See note on 10:25.

■ **12:29 binds the strong man.** By His victory over Satan in the wilderness (4:10 note) and exorcism of demons, Jesus demonstrated that He had bound the "strong man" and that Satan was powerless to prevent the coming of the kingdom. The binding of Satan was a symbol of the messianic age in Jewish apocalyptic literature (see also Rev. 20:2).

■ **12:31, 32** Speaking against the Spirit, calling the work of the Spirit the work of Satan, involves an explicit, willful, and decisive rejection of the very Power that can bring about repentance. The notion of the "unforgivable sin" has caused needless anxiety. Anyone who has been convicted of sin by the Spirit (John 16:8) and now believes the truth cannot possibly have committed it. See "The Unpardonable Sin" at Mark 3:29.

■ **12:36, 37** Jesus indicates that words, even carelessly spoken words, are eternally important. In the Bible verbal sins such as lies, gossip, or insults are condemned as severely as adultery and murder (5:22, 37; 2 Cor. 12:20; 1 Tim. 1:10; James 3:6; Rev. 21:8).

■ **12:38 sign.** That they should ask for a sign is incredible in the light of what they had already seen. Jesus does not do miracles on demand.

■ **12:39 sign of . . . Jonah.** Jonah was as good as dead and then restored to life again, and the Son of Man's rising from the dead (v. 40) is the greatest sign of all that the kingdom has come.

■ **12:40 three days and three nights.** An emphatic way of saying "three days."

41 gLuke 11:32 hJer. 3:11 iJon. 3:5
42 j1 Kin. 10:1–13
43 kLuke 11:24–26 l[1 Pet. 5:8]
45 m[2 Pet. 2:20–22]
46 nLuke 8:19–21 oJohn 2:12; 7:3, 5
47 pMatt. 13:55, 56
49 qJohn 20:17
50 rJohn 15:14

CHAPTER 13

1 sMark 4:1–12
2 bLuke 8:4 cLuke 5:3
3 dLuke 8:5
8 eGen. 26:12
9 fMatt. 11:15
11 gMark 4:10, 11 tsecret or *hidden truths*
12 hMatt. 25:29

nights in the heart of the earth. 41 gThe men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and hcondemn it, ibecause they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah *is* here. 42 jThe queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon *is* here.

An Unclean Spirit Returns

43 k"When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, lhe goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. 44 Then he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when he comes, he finds *it* empty, swept, and put in order. 45 Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; mand the last *state* of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation."

Jesus' Mother and Brothers Send for Him

46 While He was still talking to the multitudes, nbehold, His mother and obrothers stood outside, seeking to speak with Him. 47 Then one said to Him, "Look, pYour mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You."

48 But He answered and said to the one who told Him, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?" 49 And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, "Here are My mother and My qbrothers! 50 For rwhoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother."

The Parable of the Sower

13 On the same day Jesus went out of the house aand sat by the sea. 2 bAnd great multitudes were gathered together to Him, so that cHe got into a boat and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

3 Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: d"Behold, a sower went out to sow. 4 And as he sowed, some *seed* fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. 5 Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. 6 But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. 7 And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. 8 But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some ea hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. 9 fHe who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

The Purpose of Parables

10 And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?"

11 He answered and said to them, "Because git has been given to you to know the tmysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. 12 hFor whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. 13 Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see,

■ **12:43–45** Unless the Holy Spirit resides in the heart, unholy spirits may enter (Rom. 8:9). If people will not commit themselves to the King whose power they have experienced, their final state will be worse than if the kingdom had never come (Heb. 6:4–6).

■ **13:1–53** This collection of parables on the nature of the kingdom of heaven is the third great discourse in Matthew (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes).

■ **13:3 parables.** Although the term "parable" can have a broad range of meanings, Jesus' "parables" are His distinctive teaching through brief comparisons or narratives. They usually have one central point or idea. Most of Jesus' parables are clear, but they also contain a depth of meaning that only one with a right relationship to Jesus can comprehend. It is only to the disciples that Jesus gives the interpretation of the parable of the sower (vv. 18–23) and the parable of the tares (vv. 36–43). The ungodly miss this deeper meaning because their lack of a proper relationship with God has darkened their thoughts and hearts (Rom. 1:21).

■ **13:10 in parables.** See "The Teaching of Jesus" at Matt. 7:28.

■ **13:11–17** It is difficult to escape the note of election here. Even the ability to understand God's message, let alone respond to it, is the gift of God. The ears that hear are blessed by God.

■ **13:11 to you . . . to them.** The "mysteries" of the kingdom are the things that were indicated in veiled manner in the Old Testament, but are now made clear to the disciples by the coming of the King. See "Illumination and Conviction" at 1 Cor. 2:10.

■ **13:12** To those who have a relationship with Jesus, parables deepen understanding and foster that relationship, but to those who do not, parables increase the confusion and ignorance. Thus the function of parables is both to enlighten and to conceal.

■ **13:13 because seeing.** Mark 4:12 (cf. Luke 8:10) phrases this statement even more strongly, with "so that" rather than "because." For Mark Jesus' purpose in telling parables is to prevent understanding and to cause unbelief (Mark 4:11 note); in Matthew Jesus' parables are in response to people's unbelief and inability to understand. Though some argue that Matthew softens the note of divine sovereignty seen in Mark, the word "lest" in v. 15 indicates that God's sovereign choice lies behind the hardening of their hearts whether it precedes (Matthew) or follows (Mark) an encounter with Jesus' teaching. While in this passage Matthew highlights the moral responsibility of those who reject Christ, his inclusion of the reference to Is. 6:9, 10 illustrates the compatibility of God's sovereignty and human responsibility. The parables served as an instrument of judgment by hardening the impenitent.

and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. 14 And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says:

i 'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand,
And seeing you will see and not jperceive;
15 *For the hearts of this people have grown dull.*
Their ears kare hard of hearing,
And their eyes they have lclosed,
Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears,
Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn,
So that I 2should mheal them.'

16 But *n*blessed *are* your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; 17 for assuredly, I say to you *o*that many prophets and righteous *men* desired to see what you see, and did not see *it,* and to hear what you hear, and did not hear *it.*

The Parable of the Sower Explained

18 *p*"Therefore hear the parable of the sower: 19 When anyone hears the word *q*of the kingdom, and does not understand *it,* then the wicked *one* comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. 20 But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately *r*receives it with joy; 21 yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when *s*tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately *t*he stumbles. 22 Now *u*he who received seed *v*among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. 23 But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands *it,* who indeed bears *w*fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares

24 Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; 25 but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. 26 But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. 27 So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' 28 He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?' 29 But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but *x*gather the wheat into my barn."' "

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

31 Another parable He put forth to them, saying: *y*"The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, 32 which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a *z*tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches."

14 *i*Is. 6:9, 10; Ezek. 12:2; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; John 12:40; Acts 28:26, 27; Rom. 11:8; [2 Cor. 3:14, 15] *j*[John 3:36]

15 *k*Ps. 119:70; Zech. 7:11; 2 Tim. 4:4; Heb. 5:11 *l*Luke 19:42 *m*Acts 28:26, 27 *2*NU, M *would*

16 *n*[Prov. 20:12; Matt. 16:17]; Luke 10:23, 24; [John 20:29]

17 *o*John 8:56; Heb. 11:13; 1 Pet. 1:10, 11

18 *p*Mark 4:13–20; Luke 8:11–15

19 *q*Matt. 4:23

20 *r*Is. 58:2; Ezek. 33:31, 32; John 5:35

21 *s*[Acts 14:22] *t*Matt. 11:6; 2 Tim. 1:15

22 *u*Matt. 19:23; Mark 10:23; Luke 18:24; 1 Tim. 6:9; 2 Tim. 4:10 *v*Jer. 4:3

23 *w*[John 15:5]; Phil. 1:11; Col. 1:6

30 *x*Matt. 3:12

31 *y*[Is. 2:2, 3; Mic. 4:1]; Mark 4:30; Luke 13:18, 19

32 *z*Ps. 104:12; Ezek. 17:22–24; 31:3–9; Dan. 4:12

■ **13:19 of the kingdom.** See "The Kingdom of God" at Luke 17:20.

■ **13:22 deceitfulness of riches.** Wealth is a blessing from God, but it is a dangerous blessing if it captivates the heart.

■ **13:23 who hears the word and understands it.** Only hearing and understanding the word (obedience being implied) results in fruit. There are those who temporarily receive the word but who fall away to avoid earthly discomfort or lose their commitment in pursuit of earthly wealth (v. 22). Likewise there are differing levels of bearing fruit. There are ultimately only two kinds of ground, that which genuinely receives the word to bear fruit and that which does not.

■ **13:24–30** Again, Jesus Himself provides the interpretation (vv. 36–43). The field is the whole world, not just Israel or the church, and God withholds immediate judgment for the sake of the elect who are in the world. The righteous have had to live in the midst of the unrighteous from the beginning.

■ **13:31 like a mustard seed.** The mustard scrub can grow to a height of ten feet. The things of God may appear small in the world, yet have great results. Certainly the kingdom of heaven at that point in history appeared to be nothing in comparison with Rome, yet it would prove to be much greater.

■ **13:32** The picture of a tree with birds nesting in the branches recalls Ezek. 17:23, where the birds represent the Gentile nations taking refuge in the Messiah and enjoying the blessings of the covenant.

The Parable of the Leaven

33 [a]Another parable He spoke to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three [3]measures of meal till [b]it was all leavened."

Prophecy and the Parables

34 [c]All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them, 35 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying:

> [d]*"I will open My mouth in parables;*
> [e]*I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world."*

The Parable of the Tares Explained

36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field."

37 He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. 38 [f]The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are [g]the sons of the wicked *one.* 39 The enemy who sowed them is the devil, [h]the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. 40 Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. 41 The Son of Man will send out His angels, [i]and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, 42 [j]and will cast them into the furnace of fire. [k]There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. 43 [l]Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. [m]He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

The Parable of the Hidden Treasure

44 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and [n]sells all that he has and [o]buys that field.

The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price

45 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, 46 who, when he had found [p]one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

The Parable of the Dragnet

47 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and [q]gathered some of every kind, 48 which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away. 49 So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, [r]separate the wicked from among the just, 50 and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

51 [4]Jesus said to them, "Have you understood all these things?"

They said to Him, "Yes, [5]Lord."

52 Then He said to them, "Therefore every [6]scribe instructed [7]concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure [s]*things* new and old."

33 [a]Luke 13:20, 21 [b][1 Cor. 5:6; Gal. 5:9] [3]Gr. *sata,* same as a Heb. *seah;* approximately 2 pecks in all

34 [c]Mark 4:33, 34; John 10:6; 16:25

35 [d]Ps. 78:2 [e]Rom. 16:25, 26; 1 Cor. 2:7; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:26

38 [f]Matt. 24:14; 28:19; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47; Rom. 10:18; Col. 1:6 [g]Gen. 3:15; John 8:44; Acts 13:10

39 [h]Joel 3:13; Rev. 14:15

41 [i]Matt. 18:7; 2 Pet. 2:1, 2

42 [j]Matt. 3:12; Rev. 19:20; 20:10 [k]Matt. 8:12; 13:50

43 [l][Dan. 12:3; 1 Cor. 15:42, 43, 58] [m]Matt. 13:9

44 [n]Phil. 3:7, 8 [o][Is. 55:1; Rev. 3:18]

46 [p]Prov. 2:4; 3:14, 15; 8:10, 19

47 [q]Matt. 22:9, 10

49 [r]Matt. 25:32

51 [4]NU omits *Jesus said to them* [5]NU omits *Lord*

52 [s]Song 7:13 [6]A scholar of the Old Testament [7]Or *for*

■ **13:33 like leaven.** Although leaven or yeast is often a symbol of evil (16:11), here the point is that the kingdom permeates the world. Jesus' concerns extended beyond Israel to the whole world.

■ **13:34, 35** Parables reveal as well as conceal. Jesus quotes from Ps. 78:2, where the "parables" or "dark sayings" are a recital of the history of God's redemption of His people climaxing in the choice of David to shepherd Israel. The redemptive events themselves were not "secret," but their meaning was not obvious. The psalmist revealed their meaning.

■ **13:37 Son of Man.** See note on 8:20.

■ **13:41 gather out.** The final Judgment will not only be a separation of the ungodly from the godly, but of ungodliness from the godly. Note that the Son of Man will send *His* angels—Jesus clearly asserts divine authority.

■ **13:42 furnace of fire.** See "Hell" at Mark 9:43.

■ **13:43 shine forth as the sun.** An allusion to Dan. 12:3, a promise of the future resurrection.

■ **13:44, 45** Jesus made known the secret things of the kingdom by parables (v. 35), but they remain hidden for most people, who cannot see their value. But like the man who finds treasure or the trader in pearls, those who do perceive the value of the kingdom will sacrifice anything to obtain it (Phil. 3:8).

■ **13:52 every scribe.** See text note. These teachers were frequently castigated by Jesus (23:13–32), not because of their positions as teachers, but because of their hypocrisy.

instructed concerning the kingdom. The Greek phrase may also be rendered "has become a disciple of the kingdom." Since this saying immediately follows Jesus' asking the disciples if they understand, the implication is that the disciples will become teachers, and will, like a hospitable host, share with others the "treasures" they have received—an understanding of both the old redemptive history that points to Christ and the new redemptive acts that mark the presence of the kingdom.

Jesus Rejected at Nazareth

53 Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these parables, that He departed from there.
54 [t]When He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, "Where did this *Man* get this wisdom and *these* mighty works? 55 [u]Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And [v]His brothers [w]James, [g]Joses, Simon, and Judas? 56 And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this *Man* get all these things?" 57 So they [x]were offended at Him.

But Jesus said to them, [y]"A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house." 58 Now [z]He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

John the Baptist Beheaded

14 At that time [a]Herod the tetrarch heard the report about Jesus 2 and said to his servants, "This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him." 3 [b]For Herod had laid hold of John and bound him, and put *him* in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. 4 Because John had said to him, [c]"It is not lawful for you to have her." 5 And although he wanted to put him to death, he feared the multitude, [d]because they counted him as a prophet.

6 But when Herod's birthday was celebrated, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod. 7 Therefore he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask.

8 So she, having been prompted by her mother, said, "Give me John the Baptist's head here on a platter."

9 And the king was sorry; nevertheless, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he commanded *it* to be given to *her.* 10 So he sent and had John beheaded in prison. 11 And his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought *it* to her mother. 12 Then his disciples came and took away the body and buried it, and went and told Jesus.

Feeding the Five Thousand

13 [e]When Jesus heard *it,* He departed from there by boat to a deserted place by Himself. But when the multitudes heard it, they followed Him on foot from the cities. 14 And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He [f]was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick. 15 [g]When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food."

16 But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat."

17 And they said to Him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish."

18 He said, "Bring them here to Me." 19 Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, [h]He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes. 20 So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained. 21 Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Jesus Walks on the Sea

22 Immediately Jesus [i]made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. 23 [j]And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. [k]Now when evening came, He was alone there. 24 But the boat was now [2]in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary.

25 Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. 26 And when

54 [t]Ps. 22:22; Matt. 2:23; Mark 6:1; Luke 4:16; John 7:15

55 [u]Is. 49:7; Mark 6:3; [Luke 3:23]; John 6:42 [v]Matt. 12:46 [w]Mark 15:40 [g]NU *Joseph*

57 [x]Matt. 11:6; Mark 6:3, 4 [y]Luke 4:24; John 4:44

58 [z]Mark 6:5, 6; John 5:44, 46, 47

CHAPTER 14

1 [a]Mark 6:14–29; Luke 9:7–9

3 [b]Matt. 4:12; Mark 6:17; Luke 3:19, 20

4 [c]Lev. 18:16; 20:21

5 [d]Matt. 21:26; Luke 20:6

13 [e]Matt. 10:23; 12:15; Mark 6:32–44; Luke 9:10–17; John 6:1, 2

14 [f]Matt. 9:36; Mark 6:34

15 [g]Mark 6:35; Luke 9:12

19 [h]1 Sam. 9:13; Matt. 15:36; 26:26; Mark 6:41; 8:7; 14:22; Luke 24:30; Acts 27:35; [Rom. 14:6]

22 [i]*invited, strongly urged*

23 [j]Mark 6:46; Luke 9:28; John 6:15 [k]John 6:16

24 [2]NU *many furlongs away from the land*

■ **13:55 carpenter's son.** The Greek word translated "carpenter" is also a general term for any craftsman of worker. Joseph could have worked with wood or stone.

■ **13:58** Jesus' refusal to do many miracles in Nazareth was not because He needed the faith of people to empower Him, but because miracles are of little value to those without faith (cf. 1 Cor. 13:2).

■ **14:3 Herod . . . his brother Philip's wife.** See notes on Mark 6:14, 17. The genealogy of the Herods is confusing, with multiple marriages, marriages of close relatives, and reuse of similar names.

■ **14:6 the daughter of Herodias.** A daughter by an earlier marriage to Herod Philip. According to the Jewish historian Josephus, the daughter's name was Salome and she later married another son of Herod the Great, Philip the tetrarch of Iturea and Trachonitis (Luke 3:1).

■ **14:13 heard it.** According to v. 2, enough time had elapsed following the death of John the Baptist for reports of Jesus' miracles to come back to Herod. Jesus heard about Herod's renewed inquiries.

■ **14:15–21** As God provided manna for Israel in the desert, so Jesus provided bread for the people in a remote place. Jesus challenges the disciples to provide for the crowd, then makes them ministers of His provision (vv. 16, 19).

■ **14:25 fourth watch.** Between 3:00 and 6:00 A.M.

26 [k]Job 9:8
27 [l]Acts 23:11; 27:22, 25, 36 [3]*Take courage* [4]Lit. *I am*
30 [5]NU brackets *that* and *boisterous* as disputed.
31 [m]Matt. 6:30; 8:26
33 [n]Ps. 2:7 [6]NU omits *came and*
34 [o]Mark 6:53 [7]NU *to land at*
36 [p][Mark 5:24–34] [q][Luke 6:19]

CHAPTER 15

1 [a]Mark 7:1
2 [b]Mark 7:5
4 [c][Deut. 5:16] [d]Ex. 21:17
5 [e]Mark 7:11, 12
6 [1]NU omits *or mother* [2]NU *word*
7 [f]Mark 7:6
8 [g]Is. 29:13 [3]NU omits *draw near to Me with their mouth, And*
9 [h][Col. 2:18–22]
10 [i]Mark 7:14
11 [j][Acts 10:15]
13 [k][John 15:2]
14 [l]Luke 6:39
15 [m]Mark 7:17
16 [n]Matt. 16:9
17 [o][1 Cor. 6:13]
18 [p][James 3:6]
19 [q]Prov. 6:14

the disciples saw Him [k]walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear.

27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, [3]"Be of good [l]cheer! [4]It is I; do not be afraid."

28 And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water."

29 So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. 30 But when he saw [5]that the wind *was* boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!"

31 And immediately Jesus stretched out *His* hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of [m]little faith, why did you doubt?" 32 And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased.

33 Then those who were in the boat [6]came and worshiped Him, saying, "Truly [n]You are the Son of God."

Many Touch Him and Are Made Well

34 [o]When they had crossed over, they came [7]to the land of Gennesaret. 35 And when the men of that place recognized Him, they sent out into all that surrounding region, brought to Him all who were sick, 36 and begged Him that they might only [p]touch the hem of His garment. And [q]as many as touched *it* were made perfectly well.

Defilement Comes from Within

15 Then [a]the scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying, 2 [b]"Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread."

3 He answered and said to them, "Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition? 4 For God commanded, saying, [c]*'Honor your father and your mother'*; and, [d]*'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.'* 5 But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, [e]"Whatever profit you might have received from me *is* a gift *to God*"— 6 then he need not honor his father [1]or mother.' Thus you have made the [2]commandment of God of no effect by your tradition. 7 [f]Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying:

8 *'These [g] people [3]draw near to Me with their mouth,*
And honor Me with their lips,
But their heart is far from Me.
9 *And in vain they worship Me,*
[h] Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'"

10 [i]When He had called the multitude to *Himself*, He said to them, "Hear and understand: 11 [j]Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man."

12 Then His disciples came and said to Him, "Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?"

13 But He answered and said, [k]"Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. 14 Let them alone. [l]They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch."

15 [m]Then Peter answered and said to Him, "Explain this parable to us."

16 So Jesus said, [n]"Are you also still without understanding? 17 Do you not yet understand that [o]whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and is eliminated? 18 But [p]those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. 19 [q]For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.

■ **14:30** Cf. Ps. 69:1–3.

■ **14:33 Son of God.** This title recognizes the messiahship of Jesus and His display of divine power (16:16 note).

■ **15:2 tradition of the elders.** This oral law was regarded by the Pharisees as having equal authority with the written law. It was codified as the *Mishnah* in the second century. One of its treatises covers details of hand washing, such as how much water is to be used, how many rinsings are necessary, and so on.

■ **15:3–6** Jesus makes a sharp distinction between human traditions and the divine commands of Scripture. Cherished traditional understandings must not supplant or obscure the Bible itself, nor should customs be elevated to the level of divine law. See "Legalism" at Matt. 23:4.

■ **15:11 what comes out of the mouth.** What one says is a reflection or product of what is inside (12:36, 37 note).

20 These are *the things* which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man."

A Gentile Shows Her Faith

21 [r]Then Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon. 22 And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, [s]Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed."

23 But He answered her not a word.

And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, "Send her away, for she cries out after us."

24 But He answered and said, [t]"I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

25 Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, help me!"

26 But He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw *it* to the little [u]dogs."

27 And she said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table."

28 Then Jesus answered and said to her, "O woman, [v]great *is* your faith! Let it be to you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

Jesus Heals Great Multitudes

29 [w]Jesus departed from there, [x]skirted the Sea of Galilee, and went up on the mountain and sat down there. 30 [y]Then great multitudes came to Him, having with them *the* lame, blind, mute, [4]maimed, and many others; and they laid them down at Jesus' [z]feet, and He healed them. 31 So the multitude marveled when they saw *the* mute speaking, *the* [5]maimed made whole, *the* lame walking, and *the* blind seeing; and they [a]glorified the God of Israel.

Feeding the Four Thousand

32 [b]Now Jesus called His disciples to *Himself* and said, "I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way."

33 [c]Then His disciples said to Him, "Where could we get enough bread in the wilderness to fill such a great multitude?"

34 Jesus said to them, "How many loaves do you have?"

And they said, "Seven, and a few little fish."

21 [r]Mark 7:24–30

22 [s]Matt. 1:1; 22:41, 42

24 [t]Matt. 10:5, 6; [Rom. 15:8]

26 [u]Matt. 7:6; Phil. 3:2

28 [v]Luke 7:9

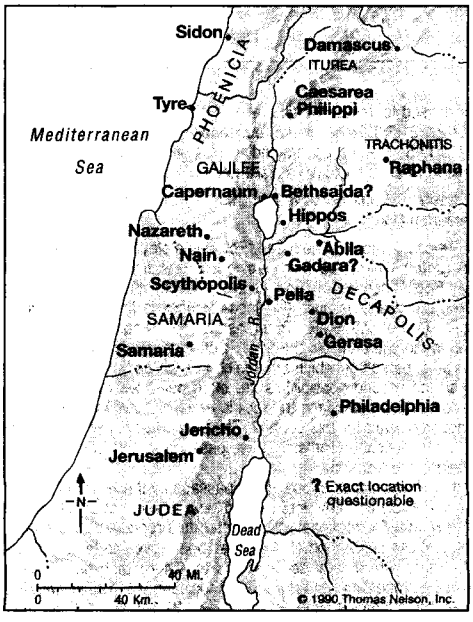
29 [w]Matt. 15:29–31; Mark 7:31–37 [x]Matt. 4:18

30 [y]Is. 35:5, 6; Matt. 11:5; Luke 7:22 [z]Mark 7:25; Luke 7:38; 8:41; 10:39 [4]*crippled*

31 [a]Luke 5:25, 26; 19:37, 38 [5]*crippled*

32 [b]Mark 8:1–10

33 [c]2 Kin. 4:43



Jesus' Ministry Beyond Galilee. In the region of Tyre and Sidon, Jesus cast out a demon from the daughter of a Syro-Phoenician woman (Mark 7:24–30). In the region of Caesarea Philippi Peter made his great declaration of faith in Jesus as God's Messiah (Matt. 16:13–19). Jesus returned to Galilee via the Decapolis region, crossing the Jordan River south of the Sea of Galilee.

■ **15:24 except to the lost sheep . . . of Israel.** Prior to the resurrection, the "wall of separation" (Eph. 2:14) still stood. Jesus came as the Messiah and heir to the throne of David. Jesus graciously responds only after it was clear that the woman had no presumption of deserving the blessing promised to Israel; rather, she hoped to benefit from the overflow of those blessings.

■ **15:26 throw it to the little dogs.** The context indicates that house pets rather than strays are in view. The expression is not equivalent to the common insult "Gentile dog."

■ **15:29–39** Mark indicates that these events took place in the Decapolis (Mark 7:31), a predominantly Gentile area. It follows the story of the Canaanite woman.

36 [c]Matt. 14:19; 26:27 [d]Luke 22:19

39 [f]Mark 8:10 [6]NU *Magadan*

CHAPTER 16

1 [a]Mark 8:11

3 [1]NU omits *Hypocrites*

4 [b]Matt. 12:39 [2]NU omits *the prophet*

5 [c]Mark 8:14

6 [d]Luke 12:1 [3]*yeast*

8 [4]NU *have no bread*

9 [e]Matt. 14:15–21

10 [f]Matt. 15:32–38

11 [5]*yeast*

12 [6]*teaching*

13 [g]Luke 9:18

14 [h]Matt. 14:2 [i]Matt. 21:11

15 [j]John 6:67

16 [k]Acts 8:37; 9:20

17 [l][Eph. 2:8] [m]Gal. 1:16

18 [n]John 1:42

35 So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. 36 And [d]He took the seven loaves and the fish and [e]gave thanks, broke *them* and gave *them* to His disciples; and the disciples *gave* to the multitude. 37 So they all ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets full of the fragments that were left. 38 Now those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children. 39 [f]And He sent away the multitude, got into the boat, and came to the region of [6]Magdala.

The Pharisees and Sadducees Seek a Sign

16 Then the [a]Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven. 2 He answered and said to them, "When it is evening you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red'; 3 and in the morning, 'It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.' [1]Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot *discern* the signs of the times. 4 [b]A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of [2]the prophet Jonah." And He left them and departed.

The Leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees

5 Now [c]when His disciples had come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. 6 Then Jesus said to them, [d]"Take heed and beware of the [3]leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees."

7 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "*It is* because we have taken no bread."

8 But Jesus, being aware of *it,* said to them, "O you of little faith, why do you reason among yourselves because you [4]have brought no bread? 9 [e]Do you not yet understand, or remember the five loaves of the five thousand and how many baskets you took up? 10 [f]Nor the seven loaves of the four thousand and how many large baskets you took up? 11 How is it you do not understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread?—*but* to beware of the [5]leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." 12 Then they understood that He did not tell *them* to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the [6]doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Peter Confesses Jesus as the Christ

13 When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, [g]"Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?"

14 So they said, [h]"Some *say* John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or [i]one of the prophets."

15 He said to them, "But who do [j]you say that I am?"

16 Simon Peter answered and said, [k]"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

17 Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, [l]for flesh and blood has not revealed *this* to you, but [m]My Father who is in heaven. 18 And I also say to you that [n]you

■ **16:1 a sign from heaven.** Jesus referred the Pharisees to a literal sign from heaven, the sky itself. His analogy shows that the problem was not lack of evidence, but an unwillingness to accept its significance. Jesus had performed many signs already.

■ **16:4 sign of . . . Jonah.** See note on 12:39.

■ **16:11 not . . . concerning bread.** Jesus frequently spoke in parables, but was misunderstood here by His disciples who thought He was speaking literally (v. 7). They should have realized from His feeding miracles that Jesus could provide food if that was what was needed, and so recognized that He was speaking metaphorically about the "leaven" (the doctrine, v. 12) of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Mark 8:15 note).

■ **16:12** False teaching, like leaven in dough, can quickly permeate the church and corrupt its holiness.

■ **16:13 Caesarea Philippi.** A small town at the foot of Mount Hermon, about twenty-five miles north of Galilee.

■ **16:15 who do you say that I am.** The "you" is plural; Peter answers on behalf of the Twelve.

■ **16:16 Christ.** Peter declares that Jesus is the Messiah and King prophesied in the Old Testament (1:1 note).

the Son of the living God. The meaning of the title "Son of God" is different from that of pagan literature. In the Old Testament, the anointed king was called a "son" of God (2 Sam. 7:14; Ps. 2:7). Israel as a whole is also God's "son" (Ex. 4:22), and Jesus fulfills this status of Israel (2:15 note). As applied to Jesus, the title reflects Jesus' unique relation to the Father (11:27; 21:38). He is acknowledged by the Father as "My beloved Son" (3:17; 17:5). Peter's understanding was given to him from above, going beyond what he could have discerned on his own.

■ **16:17 flesh . . . has not revealed this.** Recognition of who Jesus is must come from God.

■ **16:18 Peter . . . rock.** The name "Peter" is a play on the Greek word for "rock" (*petra*). There are four leading interpretations of this play on words: (a) Peter's confession that Jesus is "the Christ" (v. 16) is the rock upon which the church is built; (b) Jesus Himself is the rock, as Peter later testifies (1 Pet. 2:5–8); (c) Peter, as the representative apostle, is a foundation in the church (Eph. 2:20); (d) Peter represents by his confession the type of person on which the true church will be built.

The first and second possibilities are often defended by pointing out that Peter's name is *petros* and the rock is *petra.* But this linguistic difference is not significant for this context. The second possibility is unlikely because Jesus describes Himself in this passage as not the foundation but the builder of the church.

If it had not been for the abuse of this passage by the Roman Catholic Church, it is unlikely that any doubt would have arisen that the reference is to Peter. But the foundational rock is Peter as a representative apostle (v. 15 note) whose confession of Christ has been revealed to him by the Father. As Peter himself later declares (1 Pet. 2:4–8), all believers have become "living stones" by virtue of their association with Christ, with the apostles as the foundation (Eph. 2:20, 21; Rev. 21:14). When Peter says

are Peter, and [o]on this rock I will build My church, and [p]the gates of Hades shall not [7]prevail against it. 19 [q]And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth [8]will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."

20 [r]Then He commanded His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ.

Jesus Predicts His Death and Resurrection

21 From that time Jesus began [s]to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.

22 Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, [9]"Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!"

23 But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, [t]Satan! [u]You are [l]an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."

Take Up the Cross and Follow Him

24 [v]Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and [w]follow Me. 25 For [x]whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. 26 For what [y]profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or [z]what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 27 For [a]the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father [b]with His angels, [c]and then He will reward each according to his works.

Jesus Transfigured on the Mount

28 Assuredly, I say to you, [d]there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."

17 Now [a]after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; 2 and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. 3 And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. 4 Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, [l]let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

5 [b]While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, [c]"This is My beloved Son, [d]in whom I am well pleased.

18 [o][Eph. 2:20] [p]Is. 38:10 [7]*be victorious*

19 [q]Matt. 18:18 [8]*Or will have been bound . . . will have been loosed*

20 [r]Luke 9:21

21 [s]Luke 9:22; 18:31; 24:46

22 [9]Lit. *Merciful to You,* (May God be merciful)

23 [t]Matt. 4:10 [u][Rom. 8:7] [l]*a stumbling block*

24 [v][2 Tim. 3:12] [w][1 Pet. 2:21]

25 [x]John 12:25

26 [y]Luke 12:20, 21 [z]Ps. 49:7, 8

27 [a]Mark 8:38 [b][Dan. 7:10] [c]Rom. 2:6

28 [d]Luke 9:27

CHAPTER 17

1 [a]Mark 9:2–8

4 [l]NU *I will make*

5 [b]2 Pet. 1:17 [c]Mark 1:11 [d]Matt. 3:17; 12:18

that Jesus must not go to the cross, he is not called a foundation rock, but a stumbling stone (v. 23 and text note).

gates of Hades. In the Old Testament and other literature the "gates of Sheol" or the "gates of death" are equivalent to "death." Jesus is claiming that death itself will not overcome His people.

■ **16:19 keys of the kingdom.** This metaphor specifies how the apostles are foundational to the church; they have been given binding and loosing powers, or "keys," which lock and unlock doors. The apostles open the kingdom to those who share Peter's confession and exclude those who will not receive their testimony to Christ (10:14, 15). Through them Jesus reveals His own word of kingdom authority. The apostolic foundation of the church is laid in the written Word of God, the Scriptures, which are now the keys of Christ's authority in the church (Eph. 2:20; 3:5) through the power of the Spirit (18:18). See "Church Discipline and Excommunication" at Matt. 18:15.

■ **16:20 tell no one.** See 8:4. Popular conceptions of the Messiah were far from recognizing His suffering ministry. To allow His disciples to proclaim His messiahship openly might have instigated a political movement that would have hampered His real mission (John 6:15).

■ **16:21 From that time.** This phrase marks a new phase of Jesus' ministry (4:17 note). Matthew turns from the public preaching of Jesus in Galilee to His careful instruction of the disciples about His death and resurrection, His role as Messiah and theirs as disciples.

■ **16:24** See note on 10:38. Here Jesus adds the command to deny oneself. The call to discipleship demands that one completely abandon the natural desire to seek comfort, fame, or power.

■ **16:28 shall not taste death till.** Although this statement has been interpreted as referring to the Transfiguration (17:1, 2), the language implies a period longer than a week. Another possibility is the destruction of Jerusalem (10:23 note), but the context here is not specifically related to the judgment of Israel. The "coming" of the Son of Man more likely here relates to the entire process by which Jesus receives dominion, especially His resurrection, ascension, and sending of the Spirit. All these things happened during the lifetime of the disciples. The Transfiguration could also be the initial event in this process witnessed by the disciples.

■ **17:1 after six days.** Such an exact time reference is rare in the Gospels; it must have been included to make clear the connection between the confession at Caesarea Philippi and the Transfiguration. Now that the disciples have begun to recognize who Jesus is, He is ready to move toward the climax in Jerusalem. The Transfiguration is part of Jesus' preparation for that crisis. See "The Transfiguration of Jesus" at Mark 9:2.

■ **17:3 Moses and Elijah.** Since the Law and the Prophets testify to Jesus, Moses the lawgiver, and Elijah, one of the greatest prophets of Israel, are here privileged to appear with Jesus. According to Luke 9:31 they discussed Jesus' coming death.

■ **17:5 This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.** The words from heaven show the disciples how foolish Peter's suggestion was (v. 4), and they begin to realize who Jesus is. "My beloved Son," the designation also given at Jesus' baptism, is the term reserved by the Father for His "only begotten Son" (John 3:16).

Hear Him. The word of God spoken through Moses and the prophets pointed to Jesus. Now the final word is spoken by God's Son (Heb. 1:1–4).

5 [e][Deut. 18:15, 19; Acts 3:22, 23]

6 [f]2 Pet. 1:18

7 [g]Dan. 8:18

10 [h]Mal. 4:5; Matt. 11:14; 16:14; Mark 9:11

11 [i][Mal. 4:6]; Luke 1:17 [2]NU omits *first*

12 [j]Matt. 11:14; Mark 9:12, 13 [k]Matt. 14:3, 10 [l]Matt. 16:21

13 [m]Matt. 11:14

14 [n]Matt. 17:14–19; Mark 9:14–28; Luke 9:37–42

15 [3]Lit. *moonstruck*

17 [o]Deut. 32:5; Phil. 2:15 [4]*unbelieving*

18 [p]Luke 4:41

20 [q]Matt. 21:21; Mark 11:23; Luke 17:6; [1 Cor. 12:9] [5]NU *little faith*

21 [6]NU omits v. 21.

22 [r]Matt. 16:21; 26:57; Mark 8:31; Luke 9:22, 44; John 18:12 [7]NU *gathering together*

23 [s]Matt. 26:22; 27:50; Luke 23:46; 24:46; John 16:6; 19:30; Acts 10:40

24 [t]Mark 9:33 [8]NU *Capharnaum,* here and elsewhere [9]Lit. *double drachma*

25 [u][Is. 60:10–17]

27 [v]Gr. *stater,* the exact temple tax for two

CHAPTER 18

1 [a]Mark 9:33–37; Luke 9:46–48; 22:24–27

[e]Hear Him!" [6][f]And when the disciples heard *it,* they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. [7]But Jesus came and [g]touched them and said, "Arise, and do not be afraid." [8]When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

[9]Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, "Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead."

[10]And His disciples asked Him, saying, [h]"Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?"

[11]Jesus answered and said to them, "Indeed, Elijah is coming [2]first and will [i]restore all things. [12][j]But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they [k]did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise [l]the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands." [13][m]Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist.

A Boy Is Healed

[14][n]And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him and saying, [15]"Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is [3]an epileptic and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. [16]So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him."

[17]Then Jesus answered and said, "O [4]faithless and [o]perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me." [18]And Jesus [p]rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour.

[19]Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?"

[20]So Jesus said to them, "Because of your [5]unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, [q]if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. [21][6]However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting."

Jesus Again Predicts His Death and Resurrection

[22][r]Now while they were [7]staying in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men, [23]and they will kill Him, and the third day He will be raised up." And they were exceedingly [s]sorrowful.

Peter and His Master Pay Their Taxes

[24][t]When they had come to [8]Capernaum, those who received the [9]*temple* tax came to Peter and said, "Does your Teacher not pay the *temple* tax?"

[25]He said, "Yes."

And when he had come into the house, Jesus anticipated him, saying, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth take customs or taxes, from their sons or from [u]strangers?"

[26]Peter said to Him, "From strangers."

Jesus said to him, "Then the sons are free. [27]Nevertheless, lest we offend them, go to the sea, cast in a hook, and take the fish that comes up first. And when you have opened its mouth, you will find a [v]piece of money; take that and give it to them for Me and you."

Who Is the Greatest?

18 At [a]that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

■ **17:9 Tell . . . no one.** See note on 16:20.

■ **17:11 Elijah is coming.** See note on 11:14. The scribes were right but failed to recognize both Elijah and the Messiah when they came.

■ **17:17** Jesus, like Moses, came down from the mount of glory to encounter unbelief (Ex. 32:15–21).

■ **17:20 unbelief.** The disciples' shortage of faith (see text note) was not that they lacked confidence or did not expect success—they were apparently surprised by their failure—but because their expectation was not properly grounded in relationship to God. A tiny grain of true faith, rooted in submissiveness to God, is effective. Mark 9:29 makes this point even clearer by speaking of prayer as the key.

■ **17:22, 23** This statement is the second prediction of suffering and resurrection in Matthew (16:21–24). Jesus will undertake the suffering He describes as the Servant of the Lord (Is. 53). It appears that no one before Jesus had ever identified the Messiah, the Son of Man, and the Suffering Servant of the Old Testament as three aspects of the one Redeemer and King. The disciples are so overwhelmed by their difficulty in accepting the suffering of the Messiah that they apparently do not even hear the promise of the Resurrection. At least they did not initially believe it (Luke 24:25, 37, 38).

■ **17:24–27** The temple tax was prescribed in Ex. 30:13. The passage is not about paying taxes to the civil authority (22:21). Jesus' point is that the Christ and His disciples enjoy a relationship with God that frees them from the obligations imposed upon "strangers." Yet Jesus is willing to conform to previous requirements in order to avoid giving offense. Paul advised (Rom. 14:13–21) and practiced (Acts 16:3; 21:26) similar continued observance of some ritual requirements of the Old Testament law.

■ **18:1–35** This chapter is the fourth of the five great discourses in Matthew (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes).

2 Then Jesus called a little [b]child to Him, set him in the midst of them, 3 and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, [c]unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 [d]Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5 [e]Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me.

Jesus Warns of Offenses

6 [f]"Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea. 7 Woe to the world because of [1]offenses! For [g]offenses must come, but [h]woe to that man by whom the offense comes!

8 [i]"If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast *it* from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the everlasting fire. 9 And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast *it* from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into [2]hell fire.

The Parable of the Lost Sheep

10 "Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven [j]their angels always [k]see the face of My Father who is in heaven. 11 [l]For[3] the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.

12 [m]"What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying? 13 And if he should find it, assuredly, I say to you, he rejoices more over that *sheep* than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray. 14 Even so it is not the [n]will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

Dealing with a Sinning Brother

15 "Moreover [o]if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, [p]you have gained your brother. 16 But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that [q]*'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.'* 17 And if he refuses to hear them, tell *it* to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a [r]heathen and a tax collector.

18 "Assuredly, I say to you, [s]whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

19 [t]"Again[4] I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, [u]it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered [v]together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."

2 [b]Matt. 19:14
3 [c]Luke 18:16
4 [d][Matt. 20:27; 23:11]
5 [e][Matt. 10:42]
6 [f]Mark 9:42
7 [g][1 Cor. 11:19] [h]Matt. 26:24; 27:4, 5 [1]*enticements to sin*
8 [i]Matt. 5:29, 30
9 [2]Gr. *Gehenna*
10 [j][Heb. 1:14] [k]Luke 1:19
11 [l]Luke 9:56 [3]NU omits v. 11.
12 [m]Luke 15:4–7
14 [n][1 Tim. 2:4]
15 [o]Lev. 19:17 [p][James 5:20]
16 [q]Deut. 17:6; 19:15
17 [r][2 Thess. 3:6, 14]
18 [s][John 20:22, 23]
19 [t][1 Cor. 1:10] [u][1 John 3:22; 5:14] [4]NU, M *Again, assuredly, I say*
20 [v]Acts 20:7

■ **18:3 as little children.** Jesus makes this comparison not because children are supposed to be innocent, but because they are dependent upon others and willingly accept from them what they cannot provide for themselves.

■ **18:5 Whoever receives.** Since Jesus' followers must become "as little children," the "little child" represents any disciple. Response to Jesus' disciples is a response to Jesus Himself, and causing a disciple to sin is a grave offense (v. 6).

■ **18:7** Universal human depravity will result in inevitable offenses ("offenses must come"), but individual responsibility ("woe to that man by whom the offense comes") is not diminished by the commonplace occurrence of sin.

■ **18:8, 9** See notes on 5:1—7:29 and 5:29.

■ **18:10 their angels.** Scripture teaches that angels guard and minister to God's people (Ps. 91:11; Heb. 1:14) and that these spiritual beings may be assigned specific areas of responsibility (Dan. 12:1). Though this verse is sometimes interpreted to mean that each believer has a personal angelic guardian (Acts 12:15 and note), this popular belief goes beyond the biblical evidence. Nevertheless, God's care of His people through angels should be an encouragement to Christians.

■ **18:12–14** The concern for the one is not at the expense of the ninety-nine, but indicates God's commitment to each disciple, and His special concern for one straying or in danger. God elects, seeks out, and preserves not only His church as a whole, but each individual within the church. Ezek. 34:11–16 probably lies behind this parable.

■ **18:15 if your brother sins.** This three-stage procedure for dealing with a Christian in sin is at the heart of all church discipline. The goal is to bring about repentance while keeping general public awareness of the sin to a minimum. At no point is the matter to be broadcast to the world at large. See theological note "Church Discipline and Excommunication."

■ **18:17 church.** The use of the word "church" by Jesus may appear premature, but only if the "church" is divorced from its moorings in the Old Testament. In the Greek translation of the Old Testament (the Septuagint), the "assembly" of the people of God is called the *ekklesia*, or "church." Jesus' use of Deut. 19:15 in v. 16 implies that the church is equivalent to Old Testament Israel.

let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. Such individuals are to be cut off from fellowship and suspended from full social relations with other Christians. Paul applies this discipline in 1 Cor. 5 and 1 Tim. 1:20.

■ **18:18** See note on 16:19.

■ **18:19, 20** These verses should be taken in the larger context as still dealing with church discipline. V. 19 is a further application of v. 18, and v. 20 states that Jesus is present to validate the judicial activity of the church.

21 *Luke 17:4
22 *[Matt. 6:14; Mark 11:25]; Col. 3:13
25 *Ex. 21:2; Lev. 25:39; 2 Kin. 4:1; Neh. 5:5, 8

The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

21 Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? *Up to seven times?"

22 Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, *up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.
23 Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. 24 And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. 25 But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded *that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. 26 The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, 'Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.'

Church Discipline and Excommunication

Making Christian disciples involves a whole range of activities for nurture, instruction, and training. To produce mature disciples, Christian learning, devotion, worship, righteousness, and service, are all to be taught in a context of care and accountability (Matt. 28:20; John 21:15–17; 2 Tim. 2:14–26; Titus 2; Heb. 13:17) among the other believers. Not abstractly, but in this context Reformed theology has emphasized the importance of church discipline as the official procedures of the church permitting it to define its membership and maintain its standards of belief and practice, derived from the Bible.

Since believers are required to be holy, unspotted by the morals of the world, the church itself is separated from the world, and it is necessary to define the boundary between the world and the church. The New Testament clearly shows that in the whole context of church life judicial procedures have a significant place for the health of churches and individuals (1 Cor. 5:1–13; 2 Cor. 2:5–11; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14, 15; Titus 1:10–14; 3:9–11).

Jesus instituted church discipline by authorizing the apostles to prohibit or permit certain kinds of behavior; this is the power of "binding" and "loosing" sins (Matt. 18:18; John 20:23). The "keys of the kingdom," first given to Peter and defined as power to bind and loose (Matt. 16:19), have usually been understood as authority to oversee doctrine and impose discipline. This authority was given by Christ to the church in general and to its ordained leadership in particular.

The *Westminster Confession* (30.3) explains:

> Church censures are necessary, for the reclaiming and gaining of offending brethren, for deterring of others from the like offenses, for purging out of that leaven which might infect the whole lump, for vindicating the honor of Christ, and the holy profession of the gospel, and for preventing the wrath of God, which might justly fall upon the church, if they should suffer His covenant, and the seals thereof [the sacraments] to be profaned by notorious and obstinate offenders.

Church censures may have to escalate from admonition through exclusion from the Lord's Supper to expulsion from the congregation (excommunication), which is described as handing a person over to Satan, the prince of this world (Matt. 18:15–17; 1 Cor. 5:1–5, 11; 1 Tim. 1:20; Titus 3:10, 11). Public sins (that is, those that are open to the whole church's view) should be publicly corrected in the church's presence (1 Tim. 5:20; cf. Gal. 2:11–14). Jesus teaches a procedure for dealing privately with those who have given personal offence, in hope that it will not be necessary to ask for the church's public censure of them (Matt. 18:15–17).

The purpose of church censure in all its forms is not to punish for punishment's sake, but to call forth repentance and so recover the straying sheep. Ultimately, there is only one sin for which a church member is excommunicated—impenitence. When repentance is apparent, the church is to declare the sin remitted and receive the offender into fellowship once again. □

■ **18:23–35** See 5:7 and 7:2. Those who know God's mercy must operate on the principle of mercy. If they do not show mercy but insist on justice, they will not receive mercy, but justice. An unforgiving heart is an unforgiven heart and is subject to torment "until he should pay all" (v. 34; 6:12 note). A truly forgiving heart is one result of spiritual rebirth (John 3:3).

■ **18:24 talents.** A talent was the highest monetary unit of currency, equivalent to six thousand denarii or drachmas (v. 28 note). Such a sum of money was practically uncountable and illustrates the enormous debt of sin that all have incurred before God.

27 Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.

28 "But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took *him* by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!' 29 So his fellow servant fell down [5]at his feet and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you [6]all.' 30 And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. 31 So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. 32 Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you [z]all that debt because you begged me. 33 Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' 34 And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him.

35 [a]"So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother [7]his trespasses."

Marriage and Divorce

19 Now it came to pass, [a]when Jesus had finished these sayings, *that* He departed from Galilee and came to the region of Judea beyond the Jordan. 2 [b]And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them there.

3 The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for *just* any reason?"

4 And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who [f]made *them* at the beginning [c]*'made them male and female,'* 5 and said, [d]*'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and* [e]*the two shall become one flesh'*? 6 So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

7 They said to Him, [f]"Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?"

8 He said to them, "Moses, because of the [g]hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your [h]wives, but from the beginning it was not so. 9 [i]And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for [2]sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery."

10 His disciples said to Him, [j]"If such is the case of the man with *his* wife, it is better not to marry."

Jesus Teaches on Celibacy

11 But He said to them, [k]"All cannot accept this saying, but only *those* to whom it has been given: 12 For there are [3]eunuchs who were born thus from *their* mother's womb, and [l]there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He who is able to accept *it,* let him accept *it.*"

Jesus Blesses Little Children

13 [m]Then little children were brought to Him that He might put *His* hands on them and pray, but the disciples rebuked them. 14 But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not

29 [5]NU omits *at his feet* [6]NU, M omit *all*

32 [z]Luke 7:41–43

35 [a]Prov. 21:13; Matt. 6:12; Mark 11:26; James 2:13 [7]NU omits *his trespasses*

CHAPTER 19

1 [a]Matt. 19:1–9; Mark 10:1–12; John 10:40

2 [b]Matt. 12:15

4 [c]Gen. 1:27; 5:2; [Mal. 2:15] [f]NU *created*

5 [d]Gen. 2:24; Mark 10:5–9; Eph. 5:31 [e][1 Cor. 6:16; 7:2]

7 [f]Deut. 24:1–4; Matt. 5:31

8 [g]Heb. 3:15 [h]Mal. 2:16

9 [i][Matt. 5:32]; Mark 10:11; Luke 16:18; 1 Cor. 7:10 [2]Or *fornication*

10 [j][Prov. 21:19]

11 [k][1 Cor. 7:2, 7, 9, 17]

12 [l][1 Cor. 7:32] [3]Emasculated men

13 [m]Matt. 20:31; Mark 10:13; Luke 18:15

■ **18:28 a hundred denarii.** The Roman denarius was a daily wage for workers (20:2) and was equivalent to the Greek drachma (Acts 19:19). The sum owed by the second servant to the first is nothing compared to the debt of the first servant to the king; it was less than one part in a hundred thousand.

■ **19:3 Is it lawful.** The Pharisees' question may reflect the opinion of Hillel, a rabbi who allowed divorce for the slightest reasons on the basis of Deut. 24:1–4. He was opposed by another teacher, Shammai, who regarded only gross indecency as proper grounds. Jesus' answer transcends this debate about Deuteronomy and returns to the order of creation by God. Jesus views divorce as a fundamental denial of God's created order and the nature of marriage.

■ **19:7, 8** Hearing Jesus' view of marriage, the Pharisees thought they could set Him against Moses. But Jesus shows that Moses in Deut. 24:1–4 was not giving a justification for divorce, but making provisions in the event of divorce. Deut. 24:1–4 consists of a long introductory conditional statement ("and it happens"), ending with the prohibition for a man to remarry a woman he had earlier divorced. A hardness of heart with respect to marriage and divorce is specifically restrained by this case law.

■ **19:9 except for sexual immorality.** The Greek word for "sexual immorality" is fairly broad, including a number of sexual sins besides adultery. In this clause (present also in 5:32 but omitted in Mark 10:11), Jesus recognizes that marital infidelity potentially destroys the marital tie between spouses and is, therefore, ground for legal divorce. However, divorce is not mandatory and reconciliation (see 18:23–35 note) is preferable. See "Marriage and Divorce" at Mat. 2:16.

■ **19:10 it is better not to marry.** The disciples' reaction seems cynical. Jesus accepts their response and indicates that it may be better not to marry, but only for the sake of the kingdom, not because God has an unworkable view of marriage (cf. 1 Cor. 7:7–9).

■ **19:14 Let the little children come.** The disciples viewed children as a distraction from the work of Jesus, but He welcomes them as subjects of the kingdom and blesses them. Since entrance into the kingdom is by God's grace and not human achievement, dependent little ones have a

forbid them; for [n]of such is the kingdom of heaven." 15 And He laid *His* hands on them and departed from there.

Jesus Counsels the Rich Young Ruler

16 [o]Now behold, one came and said to Him, [p]"Good[q] Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?"

17 So He said to him, [5]"Why do you call Me good? [6]No one *is* [q]good but One, *that is,* God. But if you want to enter into life, [r]keep the commandments."

18 He said to Him, "Which ones?"

Jesus said, [s]"'*You shall not murder,*' '*You shall not commit adultery,*' '*You shall not steal,*' '*You shall not bear false witness,*' 19 [t]'*Honor your father and your mother,*' and, [u]'*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*'"

20 The young man said to Him, "All these things I have [v]kept [7]from my youth. What do I still lack?"

21 Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, [w]go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

With God All Things Are Possible

23 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "Assuredly, I say to you that [x]it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. 24 And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

25 When His disciples heard *it,* they were greatly astonished, saying, "Who then can be saved?"

26 But Jesus looked at *them* and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but [y]with God all things are possible."

27 Then Peter answered and said to Him, "See, [z]we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?"

28 So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, [a]you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. 29 [b]And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother [8]or wife or children or [9]lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. 30 [c]But many *who are* first will be last, and the last first.

The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard

20 "For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. 2 Now when he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. 3 And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, 4 and said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.' So they went. 5 Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did likewise. 6 And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing [f]idle, and said to them, 'Why have you been standing here idle all day?' 7 They said to him, 'Because no one hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, [z]and whatever is right you will receive.'

8 "So when evening had come, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, 'Call the labor-

14 [n]Matt. 18:3, 4

16 [o]Mark 10:17–30 [p]Luke 10:25 [q]NU omits *Good*

17 [q]Nah. 1:7 [r]Lev. 18:5 [5]NU *Why do you ask Me about what is good?* [6]NU *There is One who is good. But*

18 [s]Ex. 20:13–16

19 [t]Ex. 20:12–16; Deut. 5:16–20 [u]Lev. 19:18

20 [v][Phil. 3:6, 7] [7]NU omits *from my youth*

21 [w]Acts 2:45; 4:34, 35

23 [x][1 Tim. 6:9]

26 [y]Jer. 32:17

27 [z]Deut. 33:9

28 [a]Luke 22:28–30

29 [b]Mark 10:29, 30 [8]NU omits *or wife* [9]Lit. *fields*

30 [c]Luke 13:30

CHAPTER 20

6 [f]NU omits *idle*

7 [z]NU omits the rest of v. 7.

special title to covenant blessing (18:1–9). See "Infant Baptism" at Gen. 17:11.

■ **19:16 have eternal life.** This expression is equivalent to "enter the kingdom of God" (v. 24) and "be saved" (v. 25).

■ **19:21 sell what you have.** Jesus' instruction to the young man to sell all he had demonstrated that what he lacked was the attitude that abandons everything (16:24) for the sake of God's unearned grace (Phil. 3:7–9).

■ **19:23–26** Wealth was considered evidence of God's approval, and the rich would seem to be the likeliest candidates for the kingdom. Jesus turned this idea upside-down, and the result was not lost on the disciples: "Who then can be saved?" (v. 25).

■ **19:28 judging.** Governing, not sentencing to punishment.

■ **19:29 shall receive a hundredfold.** The blessings of salvation far exceed anything which one must forsake to obtain them (1 Cor. 2:9).

■ **19:30 first will be last.** Positions of honor or prestige in this life by no means assure heavenly approval; indeed, often the reverse will be true. Similarly, as the following parable illustrates (20:1–16), length of earthly labor may not correspond to one's heavenly reward.

■ **20:1–15** This parable is only a hard saying for those who fail to recognize their absolute dependence on grace for any good thing from God's hand. There is no room for a Christian to be jealous of the good gifts God has given to another.

■ **20:2 a denarius.** See note on 18:28.

ers and give them *their* wages, beginning with the last to the first.' 9 And when those came who *were hired* about the eleventh hour, they each received a denarius. 10 But when the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and they likewise received each a denarius. 11 And when they had received *it,* they [3]complained against the landowner, 12 saying, 'These last *men* have worked *only* one hour, and you made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the heat of the day.' 13 But he answered one of them and said, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? 14 Take *what is* yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man *the same* as to you. 15 [a]Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things? Or [b]is your eye evil because I am good?' 16 [c]So the last will be first, and the first last. [d]For[4] many are called, but few chosen."

Jesus a Third Time Predicts His Death and Resurrection

17 [e]Now Jesus, going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples aside on the road and said to them, 18 [f]"Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death, 19 [g]and deliver Him to the Gentiles to [h]mock and to [i]scourge and to [j]crucify. And the third day He will [k]rise again."

Greatness Is Serving

20 [l]Then the mother of [m]Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him.

21 And He said to her, "What do you wish?"

She said to Him, "Grant that these two sons of mine [n]may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom."

22 But Jesus answered and said, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink [o]the cup that I am about to drink, [5]and be baptized with [p]the baptism that I am baptized with?"

They said to Him, "We are able."

23 So He said to them, [q]"You will indeed drink My cup, [6]and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but *it is for those* for whom it is prepared by My Father."

24 [r]And when the ten heard *it,* they were greatly displeased with the two brothers. 25 But Jesus called them to *Himself* and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. 26 Yet [s]it shall not be so among you; but [t]whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. 27 [u]And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave— 28 [v]just as the [w]Son of Man did not come to be served, [x]but to serve, and [y]to give His life a ransom [z]for many."

Two Blind Men Receive Their Sight

29 [a]Now as they went out of Jericho, a great multitude followed Him. 30 And behold, [b]two blind men sitting by the road, when they heard that Jesus was passing by, cried out, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, [c]Son of David!"

31 Then the multitude [d]warned them that they should be quiet; but they cried out all the more, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, Son of David!"

32 So Jesus stood still and called them, and said, "What do you want Me to do for you?"

33 They said to Him, "Lord, that our eyes may be opened." 34 So Jesus had [e]compassion and touched their eyes. And immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him.

11 [3]*grumbled*

15 [a][Rom. 9:20, 21] [b]Deut. 15:9

16 [c]Matt. 19:30 [d]Matt. 22:14 [4]NU omits the rest of v. 16.

17 [e]Mark 10:32–34

18 [f]Matt. 16:21; 26:47–57

19 [g]Matt. 27:2 [h]Matt. 26:67, 68; 27:29, 41 [i]Matt. 27:26 [j]Acts 3:13–15 [k]Matt. 28:5, 6

20 [l]Mark 10:35–45 [m]Matt. 4:21; 10:2

21 [n][Matt. 19:28]

22 [o]Luke 22:42 [p]Luke 12:50 [5]NU omits *and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with*

23 [q][Acts 12:2] [6]NU omits *and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with*

24 [r]Mark 10:41

26 [s][1 Pet. 5:3] [t]Matt. 23:11

27 [u][Matt. 18:4]

28 [v]John 13:4 [w][Phil. 2:6, 7] [x]Luke 22:27 [y][Is. 53:10, 11] [z][Rom. 5:15; 19]

29 [a]Mark 10:46–52

30 [b]Matt. 9:27 [c][Ezek. 37:21–25]

31 [d]Matt. 19:13

34 [e]Matt. 9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 18:27

■ **20:16** See note on 19:30.

■ **20:17–19** This is Jesus' third prediction of His passion and resurrection (16:21 note; 17:22, 23 note).

■ **20:23 cup.** In the Old Testament the "cup" normally signifies the outpouring of God's wrath (Ps. 75:8; Is. 51:17, 22; Jer. 25:15, 16). That the disciples would drink this cup means they would experience suffering, but note that Jesus calls it "My cup." Because Jesus drank the cup of God's wrath for His own, believers do not drink the wrath they deserve. In and through Christ's suffering they have already undergone judgment. They are now justified in Christ and heirs of His glory (Rom. 8:17). Yet their privilege is to be identified with Christ in His sufferings (1 Pet. 2:21).

■ **20:28 ransom.** This term refers to the price paid to deliver someone from slavery or imprisonment. The price of freedom from sin and condemnation is Jesus' life, given for us (1 Pet. 1:18, 19). Since the elect are ransomed from the wrath of God, the ransom was offered to God Himself. Jesus drinks the cup of God's wrath (v. 23), not for His own sins, but as the means of ransoming many.

for many. The Greek preposition translated "for" can also be translated "in the place of." It expresses the substitutionary nature of Jesus' suffering. That Jesus says "many" here (cf. Is. 53:11, 12) rather than "all people" indicates a specific or definite focus to His redemptive activity. Nevertheless, it is "many" and not a "few." See notes on John 17:9; 1 Tim. 2:6.

■ **20:29 went out.** Luke says that they were entering Jericho rather than leaving. One possibility is that Matthew and Mark refer to the ruins of Old Testament Jericho, about a mile away from the newer town of Jericho built by Herod (Luke 18:35 note).

■ **20:30 two blind men.** Once again Matthew mentions two men where Mark and Luke mention only one (8:28 note).

CHAPTER 21

1 [a]Mark 11:1–10; Luke 19:29–38 [b][Zech. 14:4] [1]M *Bethsphage*

4 [2]NU omits *All*

5 [c]Is. 62:11; Zech. 9:9; John 12:15

6 [d]Mark 11:4

7 [e]2 Kin. 9:13 [3]NU *and He sat*

8 [f]Lev. 23:40; John 12:13

9 [g]Ps. 118:26; Matt. 23:39

10 [h]John 2:13, 15

11 [i][Deut. 18:15, 18]; Matt. 2:23; 16:14; Luke 4:16–29; John 6:14; 7:40; 9:17; [Acts 3:22, 23]

12 [j]Mal. 3:1; Mark 11:15–18; Luke 19:45–47; John 2:13–16 [k]Deut. 14:25 [4]NU omits *of God*

13 [l]Is. 56:7 [m]Jer. 7:11

15 [n]Matt. 1:1; John 7:42 [5]*angry*

16 [o]Ps. 8:2; Matt. 11:25

17 [p]Matt. 26:6; Mark 11:1, 11, 12; 14:3; Luke 19:29; 24:50; John 11:1, 18; 12:1

18 [q]Mark 11:12–14, 20–24

19 [r]Mark 11:13

The Triumphal Entry

21 Now [a]when they drew near Jerusalem, and came to [1]Bethphage, at [b]the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, [2] saying to them, "Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose *them* and bring *them* to Me. [3] And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, 'The Lord has need of them,' and immediately he will send them."

[4] [2]All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying:

[5] *"Tell[c] the daughter of Zion,*
'Behold, your King is coming to you,
Lowly, and sitting on a donkey,
A colt, the foal of a donkey.'"

[6] [d]So the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them. [7] They brought the donkey and the colt, [e]laid their clothes on them, [3]and set *Him* on them. [8] And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; [f]others cut down branches from the trees and spread *them* on the road. [9] Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying:

"Hosanna to the Son of David!
[g]*'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'*
Hosanna in the highest!"

[10] [h]And when He had come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, "Who is this?"
[11] So the multitudes said, "This is Jesus, [i]the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee."

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

[12] [j]Then Jesus went into the temple [4]of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the [k]money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. [13] And He said to them, "It is written, [l]*'My house shall be called a house of prayer,'* but you have made it a [m]*'den of thieves.'*"

[14] Then *the* blind and *the* lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them. [15] But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, "Hosanna to the [n]Son of David!" they were [5]indignant [16] and said to Him, "Do You hear what these are saying?"

And Jesus said to them, "Yes. Have you never read,

[o] *'Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants*
You have perfected praise'?"

[17] Then He left them and [p]went out of the city to Bethany, and He lodged there.

The Fig Tree Withered

[18] [q]Now in the morning, as He returned to the city, He was hungry. [19] [r]And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, "Let no fruit grow on you ever again." Immediately the fig tree withered away.

■ **21:1–11** Of the Synoptic Gospels, only Matthew mentions the colt's mother, probably to emphasize that it was a young colt, not yet weaned and therefore not yet ridden (cf. Mark 11:2), and because the quotation from Zech. 9:9 prophesies that the coming king would ride on "a colt, the foal of a donkey." Jesus chooses to make the fulfillment of prophecy unmistakable.

The Triumphal Entry is clearly a symbolic act. Zech. 9:9 was recognized as messianic by Jews, and the shout "Hosanna to the Son of David!" (v. 9) as well as the spreading of cloaks on the ground (cf. 2 Kin. 9:13) indicates that the crowd recognizes Jesus' claim to be the Messiah. Note David's proclamation of Solomon as his designated heir by having him ride into the city on a donkey (1 Kin. 1:33, 38, 44).

■ **21:7 set Him on them.** Jesus rode the colt (Mark 11:2). Perhaps "them" refers to the garments.

■ **21:9 Hosanna.** A Hebrew expression meaning, "Save, now."

■ **21:12, 13** John 1:13–17 recounts a cleansing of the temple early in Jesus' ministry rather than during the final week. Many scholars, both liberal and conservative, propose that either John or the Synoptic Gospels changed the occasion for theological or other reasons. Others conclude that Jesus drove out money changers on two separate occasions (Mark 11:15 note).

■ **21:13 den of thieves.** The phrase is from Jer. 7:11. Through the prophet the Lord denounced the idea that the physical temple guaranteed His blessing in spite of Judah's wickedness. This same superstitious notion prevailed in Jesus' time.

■ **21:16** Jesus' quotation of Ps. 8:2 to justify the children's praises is astounding, for Ps. 8 says that God ordained worship for Himself from the lips of children. Jesus indirectly claims the prerogative of deity.

■ **21:18–20** Matthew condenses an incident that took place on two separate days (cf. Mark 11:12–14, 20–26). The linking of this incident with

The Lesson of the Withered Fig Tree

20 [s]And when the disciples saw *it,* they marveled, saying, "How did the fig tree wither away so soon?"

21 So Jesus answered and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, [t]if you have faith and [u]do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, [v]but also if you say to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' it will be done. 22 And [w]whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."

Jesus' Authority Questioned

23 [x]Now when He came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people confronted Him as He was teaching, and [y]said, "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?"

24 But Jesus answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things: 25 The [z]baptism of [a]John—where was it from? From heaven or from men?"

And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' 26 But if we say, 'From men,' we [b]fear the multitude, [c]for all count John as a prophet." 27 So they answered Jesus and said, "We do not know."

And He said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

The Parable of the Two Sons

28 "But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go, work today in my [d]vineyard.' 29 He answered and said, 'I will not,' but afterward he regretted it and went. 30 Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, 'I *go,* sir,' but he did not go. 31 Which of the two did the will of *his* father?"

They said to Him, "The first."

Jesus said to them, [e]"Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you. 32 For [f]John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; [g]but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw *it,* you did not afterward [6]relent and believe him.

The Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers

33 "Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner [h]who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and [i]went into a far country. 34 Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. 35 [j]And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. 36 Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them. 37 Then last of all he sent his [k]son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' 38 But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, [l]'This is the heir. [m]Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.' 39 [n]So they took him and cast *him* out of the vineyard and killed *him.*

40 "Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?"

41 [o]They said to Him, [p]"He will destroy those wicked men miserably, [q]and lease *his* vineyard to other vinedressers who will [7]render to him the fruits in their seasons."

42 Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures:

> [r]'*The stone which the builders rejected*
> *Has become the chief cornerstone.*
> *This was the* LORD*'s doing,*
> *And it is marvelous in our eyes*'?

20 [s]Mark 11:20

21 [t]Matt. 17:20 [u]James 1:6 [v]1 Cor. 13:2

22 [w]Matt. 7:7–11; Mark 11:24; Luke 11:9; [John 15:7; James 5:16; 1 John 3:22; 5:14]

23 [x]Mark 11:27–33; Luke 20:1–8 [y]Ex. 2:14; Acts 4:7; 7:27

25 [z][John 1:29–34] [a]John 1:15–28

26 [b]Matt. 14:5; 21:46; Luke 20:6 [c]Matt. 14:5; Mark 6:20

28 [d]Matt. 20:1; 21:33

31 [e]Luke 7:29, 37–50

32 [f]Luke 3:1–12; 7:29 [g]Luke 3:12, 13 [6]*regret it*

33 [h]Ps. 80:9; Mark 12:1–12; Luke 20:9–19 [i]Matt. 25:14

35 [j]2 Chr. 24:21; 36:16; [Matt. 23:34, 37; Acts 7:52; 1 Thess. 2:15]; Heb. 11:36, 37

37 [k][John 3:16]

38 [l][Ps. 2:8; Heb. 1:2] [m][Ps. 2:2]; John 11:53; Acts 4:27

39 [n][Matt. 26:50]; Mark 14:46; Luke 22:54; John 18:12; [Acts 2:23]

41 [o]Luke 20:16 [p][Luke 21:24] [q][Matt. 8:11; Acts 13:46; Rom. 9; 10] [7]*give*

42 [r]Ps. 118:22, 23; Is. 28:16; Mark 12:10; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11; [Rom. 9:33]; Eph. 2:20; [1 Pet. 2:6, 7]

the cleansing of the temple hints at God's imminent punishment of Israel by the destruction of the city and the temple (Jer. 24:1–6).

■ **21:21, 22** This is similar to 17:20, but here the emphasis is on not doubting. Freedom from doubt arises from an awareness that something is truly God's will. True faith receives what it asks for; trust in God is not presumptive arrogance but submission to His will.

■ **21:33–46** This parable is based on Is. 5:1, 2 and possibly also Ps. 80:8–18. The meaning is clear: the landowner is God, the vineyard is the kingdom of God (v. 43), the servants are the prophets, the son is Jesus, the tenants are the Jews who oppose Jesus, the killing of the son is the Crucifixion, and the removal of the tenants is the transferral of the kingdom to a new people of God that includes Gentiles.

■ **21:42** In response to the challenge to His authority (v. 23), Jesus quotes Ps. 118:22, 23 as evidence that His authority is given by God rather than derived from human institutions.

43 [s]"Therefore I say to you, [s]the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. 44 And [t]whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, [u]it will grind him to powder."

45 Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they [s]perceived that He was speaking of them. 46 But when they sought to lay hands on Him, they [v]feared the multitudes, because [w]they took Him for a prophet.

The Parable of the Wedding Feast

22 And Jesus answered [a]and spoke to them again by parables and said: 2 "The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, 3 and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. 4 Again, he sent out other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, "See, I have prepared my dinner; [b]my oxen and fatted cattle *are* killed, and all things *are* ready. Come to the wedding."' 5 But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. 6 And the rest seized his servants, treated *them* [1]spitefully, and killed *them.* 7 But when the king heard *about it,* he was furious. And he sent out [c]his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. 8 Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not [d]worthy. 9 Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.' 10 So those servants went out into the highways and [e]gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding *hall* was filled with guests.

11 "But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there [f]who did not have on a wedding garment. 12 So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?' And he was [g]speechless. 13 Then the king said to the servants, 'Bind him hand and foot, [2]take him away, and cast *him* [h]into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

14 [i]"For many are called, but few *are* chosen."

The Pharisees: Is It Lawful to Pay Taxes to Caesar?

15 [j]Then the Pharisees went and plotted how they might entangle Him in *His* talk. 16 And they sent to Him their disciples with the [k]Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth; nor do You care about anyone, for You do not [3]regard the person of men. 17 Tell us, therefore, what do You think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?"

18 But Jesus [4]perceived their wickedness, and said, "Why do you test Me, *you* hypocrites? 19 Show Me the tax money."

So they brought Him a denarius.

20 And He said to them, "Whose image and inscription *is* this?"

21 They said to Him, "Caesar's."

And He said to them, [l]"Render[5] therefore to Caesar the things that are [m]Caesar's, and to God the things that are [n]God's." 22 When they had heard *these words,* they marveled, and left Him and went their way.

43 [s][Matt. 8:12]; Acts 13:46

44 [t]Is. 8:14, 15; Zech. 12:3; Luke 20:18; [Rom. 9:33]; 1 Pet. 2:8 [u][Is. 60:12; Dan. 2:44]

45 [s]*knew*

46 [v]Matt. 21:26; Mark 11:18, 32 [w]Matt. 21:11; Luke 7:16; John 7:40

CHAPTER 22

1 [a]Luke 14:16; [Rev. 19:7–9]

4 [b]Prov. 9:2

6 [1]*insolently*

7 [c][Dan. 9:26]

8 [d]Matt. 10:11

10 [e]Matt. 13:38, 47, 48; [Acts 28:28]

11 [f][2 Cor. 5:3; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10, 12; Rev. 3:4; 16:15; 19:8]

12 [g][Rom. 3:19]

13 [h]Matt. 8:12; 25:30; Luke 13:28 [2]NU omits *take him away, and*

14 [i]Matt. 20:16

15 [j]Mark 12:13–17; Luke 20:20–26

16 [k]Mark 3:6; 8:15; 12:13 [3]Lit. *look at the face of*

18 [4]*knew*

21 [l]Matt. 17:25 [m][Rom. 13:1–7; 1 Pet. 2:13–15] [n][1 Cor. 3:23; 6:19, 20; 12:27] [5]*Pay*

■ **21:44** This saying combines the prophecies of Is. 8:14 and Dan. 2:34, 44. Jesus claims to be the destroyer of earthly kingdoms, the founder of God's kingdom on earth, and at the same time points out that the Jewish leaders are, as prophesied, opposed to this kingdom. Jesus' quotation of Ps. 118 and the allusion to Is. 8:14 and Dan. 2 provide the ground for the "stone" as a reference to Christ that appears frequently in the New Testament (Acts 4:11; Rom. 9:33; 1 Pet. 2:6–8).

■ **22:1–14** Although there are similarities between this parable and Luke 14:16–24, there are few verbal parallels and some great differences. They should be understood as different parables given on different occasions. The first part of the parable (vv. 1–10) continues the theme begun in the previous chapter that the heirs of the kingdom have rejected it, and the kingdom has been offered to others. God's servants have the task of offering the gospel to all people (v. 9). The second part (vv. 11–14) affirms that receiving an invitation to God's kingdom does not guarantee inclusion; one must be properly clothed (cf. Zech. 3:3–5; Rev. 3:18; 19:8). Although everyone who hears the gospel has been invited, and although many may claim to be in the kingdom, only those clothed with Christ's righteousness are actually presentable to God. Only those who are chosen will be present at the marriage supper of the Lamb, and this election does not depend on any previous status (8:11, 12).

■ **22:13 outer darkness.** A description of eternal punishment. There will be no middle ground between heaven and hell.

■ **22:14 called . . . chosen.** See "Effectual Calling and Conversion" at 2 Thess. 2:14.

■ **22:17 taxes.** The hated poll tax symbolized submission to Rome. If Jesus simply advocated payment of the tax, He would alienate the people; if He encouraged nonpayment the Herodians would accuse Him of treason. Jesus' answer turns the question to a deeper issue, ultimate allegiance to God. The coin bearing the image of Caesar belongs to him; human beings made in the image of God belong to God.

■ **22:21 to Caesar.** See "Christians and Civil Government" at Rom. 13:1.

The Sadducees: What About the Resurrection?

23 [o]The same day the Sadducees, [p]who say there is no resurrection, came to Him and asked Him, 24 saying: "Teacher, [q]Moses said that if a man dies, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. 25 Now there were with us seven brothers. The first died after he had married, and having no offspring, left his wife to his brother. 26 Likewise the second also, and the third, even to the seventh. 27 Last of all the woman died also. 28 Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had her."

29 Jesus answered and said to them, "You are [6]mistaken, [r]not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. 30 For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but [s]are like angels [7]of God in heaven. 31 But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, 32 [t]*'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'*? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." 33 And when the multitudes heard *this,* [u]they were astonished at His teaching.

The Scribes: Which Is the First Commandment of All?

34 [v]But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. 35 Then one of them, [w]a lawyer, asked *Him a question,* testing Him, and saying, 36 "Teacher, which *is* the great commandment in the law?"

37 Jesus said to him, [x]" *'You shall love the* LORD *your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'* 38 This is *the* first and great commandment. 39 And *the* second *is* like it: [y]*'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'* 40 [z]On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

Jesus: How Can David Call His Descendant Lord?

41 [a]While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, 42 saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?"

They said to Him, *"The [b]Son* of David."

43 He said to them, "How then does David in the Spirit call Him *'Lord,'* saying:

44 *'The[c] LORD said to my Lord,*
"Sit at My right hand,
Till I make Your enemies Your footstool"'?

45 If David then calls Him *'Lord,'* how is He his Son?" 46 [d]And no one was able to answer Him a word, [e]nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore.

Woe to the Scribes and Pharisees

23 Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, 2 saying: [a]"The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. 3 Therefore whatever they tell you [f]to observe, *that* observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for [b]they say, and do not do. 4 [c]For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay *them* on men's shoulders; but they *themselves* will not move them with one of their fingers. 5 But all their works they do to [d]be seen by men. They

23 [o]Luke 20:27–40 [p]Acts 23:8
24 [q]Deut. 25:5
29 [r]John 20:9 [6]*deceived*
30 [s][1 John 3:2] [7]NU omits *of God*
32 [t]Ex. 3:6, 15
33 [u]Matt. 7:28
34 [v]Mark 12:28–31
35 [w]Luke 7:30; 10:25; 11:45, 46, 52; 14:3
37 [x]Deut. 6:5; 10:12; 30:6
39 [y]Lev. 19:18
40 [z][Matt. 7:12]
41 [a]Luke 20:41–44
42 [b]Matt. 1:1; 21:9
44 [c]Ps. 110:1
46 [d]Luke 14:6 [e]Mark 12:34

CHAPTER 23

2 [a]Neh. 8:4, 8
3 [b][Rom. 2:19] [f]NU omits *to observe*
4 [c]Luke 11:46
5 [d][Matt. 6:1–6, 16–18]

■ **22:31, 32 have you not read.** Jesus quotes from the Pentateuch (Ex. 3:6), a portion of Scripture particularly valued by the Sadducees. That God "is" (not "was") the God of the patriarchs proclaims the resurrection because "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." The eternal God calls His saints to an eternal relationship with Himself. All this implies that the patriarchs continue to live in the presence of God and will be resurrected in the future.

■ **22:37 shall love.** See "Love" at 1 Cor. 13:13.

■ **22:40 all the Law and the Prophets.** A way of referring to the entire Old Testament. Love fulfills the law because it sums up God's commandments and motivates obedience to them (Rom. 13:8–10; 1 Cor. 13). It does not dissolve God's norms for conduct, but illumines and deepens them (5:17; Rom. 8:4). See "The Law of God" at Ex. 20:1.

■ **22:42 What do you think.** The Pharisees had tested Jesus; now Jesus tests them. He focuses on the crucial issue—the identity of the Messiah (Christ)—and His quotation from Ps. 110 shows that the common view of the Messiah was too limited.

Christ. See note on 1:1.

■ **23:1–39** Some regard this chapter as another discourse (making six discourses rather than five; Introduction: Characteristics and Themes), or as part of the eschatological discourse in chs. 24; 25. However, it is not concluded by the phrase that closes the other discourses ("when Jesus had ended these sayings"). It continues Jesus' prophetic activity of delivering oracles of woe to the unfaithful leaders of Israel (vv. 13–36 note). It is related to the following discourse in that it provides the reason for the doom of Jerusalem, announced in the language of Old Testament prophecy.

■ **23:2 sit in Moses' seat.** Though Jesus elsewhere condemns the scribes and Pharisees for adding human tradition to the law and for evading the spirit of the law (vv. 13–32; 15:1–9), here He recognizes the legitimate teaching office that they occupied (Deut. 17:8–13).

■ **23:4** See theological note "Legalism."

■ **23:5 phylacteries.** See note on Ex. 13:9.

6 [e]Luke 11:43; 20:46 [2]Or *place of honor*
8 [f][James 3:1] [3]*Leader* [4]NU omits *the Christ*
9 [g][Mal. 1:6]
11 [h]Matt. 20:26, 27
12 [i]Luke 14:11; 18:14 [5]*put down* [6]*lifted up*
13 [j]Luke 11:52
14 [k]Mark 12:40 [7]NU omits v. 14.
15 [8]Gr. *Gehenna*
16 [l]Matt. 15:14; 23:24 [m][Matt. 5:33, 34]

make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments. 6 [e]They love the [2]best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, 7 greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi.' 8 [f]But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your [3]Teacher, [4]the Christ, and you are all brethren. 9 Do not call anyone on earth your father; [g]for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. 10 And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. 11 But [h]he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. 12 [i]And whoever exalts himself will be [5]humbled, and he who humbles himself will be [6]exalted.

13 "But [j]woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in *yourselves,* nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. 14 [7]Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! [k]For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation.

15 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of [8]hell as yourselves.

16 "Woe to you, [l]blind guides, who say, [m]'Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but

Legalism

The New Testament views Christian obedience as the practice of "good works." Christians are to be "rich in good works" (1 Tim. 6:18; cf. Matt. 5:16; Eph. 2:10; 2 Tim. 3:17; Titus 2:7, 14; 3:8, 14). A good deed is one done according to the right standard, God's revealed will; from a right motive, love for God and others; and with a right purpose, the glory of God.

Legalism is a distortion of obedience that can never produce good works in this sense. It skews motive and purpose, seeing good deeds as ways to earn God's favor. It can be arrogant and contemptuous of those who do not labor in the same way. Finally, legalism's self-advancing purpose squeezes humble kindness and compassion out of the heart.

In the New Testament we meet different kinds of legalism. Legalists among the Pharisees thought that because they were descended from Abraham they were guaranteed approval by God, while paradoxically they formalized daily observance of the law, down to minutest details, as the rule of life. In doing so they avoided what the law truly required. Judaizers were legalists who taught Christian believers that they must go on to become Jews by being circumcised and observing the religious calendar and ritual laws, and in this way gain favor with God. Jesus attacked the legalism of the Pharisees; Paul, the Judaizers.

The Pharisees that opposed Jesus thought of themselves as faithful keepers of the Mosaic law. Yet in emphasizing minor details they neglected what matters most (Matt. 23:23, 24). Their elaborate and misguided interpretations of the law denied its true spirit and aim (Matt. 15:3–9; 23:16–24). They substituted human tradition for God's authoritative law, binding consciences where God had left them free (Mark 2:16—3:6; 7:1–8). At heart they were hypocritical, seeking human approval for themselves and condemning others (Luke 20:45–47; Matt. 6:1–8; 23:2–7).

The Judaizers opposed by Paul added to the gospel requirements for salvation that obscured and denied the all-sufficiency of Christ (Gal. 3:1–3; 4:21; 5:2–6). The idea that there must be additional requirements to perfect the gospel was the root of their error. Paul opposed this idea no matter who advanced it (Col. 2:8–23), because it corrupted the way of salvation. Like Jesus, he would not tolerate those who brought new burdens to lay on the sheep. □

■ **23:8–10** In forbidding the use of the titles "Rabbi" (v. 8), "father" (v. 9), and "teachers" (lit. "leaders," v. 10), Jesus does not prohibit organization or the use of all titles in the church (cf. Acts 20:17; 1 Cor. 9:1; 1 Tim. 3:1, 2, 8, 12; Titus 1:5–7). His warning is against the temptation to accord human leaders the authority and prerogatives that belong to God alone—a temptation here exemplified by the use of pretentious forms of address.

■ **23:13–36** Luke 11:37–54 records an earlier proclamation of six woes. This series of seven woes was a prophetic pronouncement; it brought God's lawsuit against His people and announced the imminent realization of the covenant curses (cf. Is. 5:8–23; Hab. 2:6–20). Such warnings express God's concern for His people and His desire that they repent (vv. 37–39).

■ **23:13 hypocrites.** See note at 6:2.

shut up the kingdom. The teachers of the law and Pharisees did this by turning people away from Christ and His righteousness. The disciples are to do the opposite, freely proclaiming the gospel.

■ **23:15 hell.** See note at 5:22. Those who were legalists made converts like themselves, prejudiced against receiving the righteousness that is by faith.

■ **23:16 Whoever swears.** See 5:33–37. This way of taking oaths is like children making promises with their fingers crossed behind their backs. God desires truth in all our words (5:37).

whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obliged *to perform it.*' 17 Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold [n]or the temple that [g]sanctifies the gold? 18 And, 'Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obliged *to perform it.*' 19 Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift [o]or the altar that sanctifies the gift? 20 Therefore he who [l]swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it. 21 He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by [p]Him who [2]dwells in it. 22 And he who swears by heaven, swears by [q]the throne of God and by Him who sits on it.

23 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! [r]For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and [s]have neglected the weightier *matters* of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. 24 Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!

25 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! [t]For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and [3]self-indulgence. 26 Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also.

27 "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! [u]For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead *men's* bones and all uncleanness. 28 Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

29 [v]"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and [4]adorn the monuments of the righteous, 30 and say, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.'

31 "Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that [w]you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. 32 [x]Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' *guilt.* 33 Serpents, [y]brood[5] of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell? 34 [z]Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: [a]*some* of them you will kill and crucify, and [b]*some* of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, 35 [c]that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, [d]from the blood of righteous Abel to [e]the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. 36 Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

Jesus Laments over Jerusalem

37 [f]"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets [g]and stones those who are sent to her! How often [h]I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks [i]under *her* wings, but you were not willing! 38 See! Your house is left to you desolate; 39 for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, [j]*'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'*"

Jesus Predicts the Destruction of the Temple

24 Then [a]Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. 2 And Jesus said to them, "Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, [b]not *one* stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

17 [n]Ex. 30:29 [g]NU *sanctified*

19 [o]Ex. 29:37

20 [l]Swears an oath

21 [p]1 Kin. 8:13 [2]M *dwelt*

22 [q]Matt. 5:34

23 [r]Luke 11:42; 18:12 [s][Hos. 6:6]

25 [t]Luke 11:39 [3]M *unrighteousness*

27 [u]Acts 23:3

29 [v]Luke 11:47, 48 [4]*decorate*

31 [w][Acts 7:51, 52]

32 [x][1 Thess. 2:16]

33 [y]Matt. 3:7; 12:34 [5]*offspring*

34 [z]Luke 11:49 [a]Acts 7:54–60; 22:19 [b]2 Cor. 11:24, 25

35 [c]Rev. 18:24 [d]Gen. 4:8 [e]2 Chr. 24:20, 21

37 [f]Luke 13:34, 35 [g]2 Chr. 24:20, 21; 36:15, 16 [h]Deut. 32:11, 12 [i]Ps. 17:8; 91:4

39 [j]Ps. 118:26

CHAPTER 24

1 [a]Mark 13:1

2 [b]Luke 19:44

■ **23:24 gnat . . . camel.** The gnat was the smallest unclean animal and the camel was the largest. In Aramaic the two words sound similar.

■ **23:35 Abel . . . Zechariah.** Abel was the first person to be killed for righteousness' sake (Gen. 4:8). The identity of Zechariah is problematic, and all suggested solutions have difficulties. Zechariah the prophet was the "son of Berechiah," but there is no evidence that he was martyred. There was a Zechariah, son of Baruch, who was killed by Zealots as mentioned by Josephus (*Jewish Wars* 4:334–44). He was killed in the temple area, but probably not between the sanctuary and the altar. Zechariah, son of Jehoiada, is the last martyr mentioned in the Old Testament in the Hebrew canonical order (2 Chr. 24:20–22). He was killed in the temple courtyard by command of Joash. If not for the words "son of Berechiah," the Zechariah of 2 Chr. 24 would be most likely, since Abel and Zechariah are the first and last martyrs in the Hebrew canon. It is remotely possible that "son of Berechiah" was an insertion by an early copyist (Luke 11:51 does not have it).

whom you murdered. By persecuting Christ, the Pharisees became identified with their murderous ancestors.

■ **23:36** The punishment that "this generation" experienced was the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in A.D. 70. See note on 24:34.

■ **23:39 you shall see Me no more till.** Some interpret this verse as a promise of an end-time conversion of the Jews (Rom. 11:25–32 and note), though the context seems to point more to the judgment of national Israel and the extension of the promises to spiritual Israel, made up of Gentiles as well as Jews (v. 38; cf. 21:43).

■ **24:1—25:46** These two chapters are the last of Jesus' five great discourses in Matthew. Sometimes called the "Olivet discourse" because of its setting, most of the discourse is also recorded in Mark 13. The language is symbolic, and it deals with a number of events, not just a single incident.

There are three basic interpretive approaches to this discourse: first, all or most of ch. 24 (at least through v. 35) is concerned exclusively with the destruction of Jerusalem, and the "coming" of the Son of Man (24:30) is the exaltation of Jesus in heaven. Second, all of the sermon is about the Second Coming of Christ in judgment. Third, the sermon combines the destruction of Jerusalem and the judgment of the world in such a way that it is difficult to separate the references to the events surrounding the fall of Jerusalem and the Second Coming.

■ **24:2 not one stone.** This was fulfilled during the Roman conquest of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (Mark 13:2 note).

The Signs of the Times and the End of the Age

3 Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, [c]the disciples came to Him privately, saying, [d]"Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will be* the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?"

4 And Jesus answered and said to them: [e]"Take heed that no one deceives you. 5 For [f]many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' [g]and will deceive many. 6 And you will hear of [h]wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for [i]all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet. 7 For [j]nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be [j]famines, [2]pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. 8 All these *are* the beginning of sorrows.

9 [k]"Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. 10 And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. 11 Then [l]many false prophets will rise up and [m]deceive many. 12 And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow [n]cold. 13 [o]But he who endures to the end shall be saved. 14 And this [p]gospel of the kingdom [q]will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.

The Great Tribulation

15 [r]"Therefore when you see the [s]*'abomination of desolation,'* spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" [t](whoever reads, let him understand), 16 "then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 17 Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. 18 And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. 19 But [u]woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! 20 And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. 21 For [v]then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. 22 And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; [w]but for the [3]elect's sake those days will be shortened.

23 [x]"Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here *is* the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe *it.* 24 For [y]false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, [z]if possible, even the elect. 25 See, I have told you beforehand.

26 "Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; *or* 'Look, *He is* in the inner rooms!' do not believe *it.* 27 [a]For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. 28 [b]For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.

The Coming of the Son of Man

29 [c]"Immediately after the tribulation of those days [d]the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be

3 [c]Mark 13:3 [d][1 Thess. 5:1–3]
4 [e][Col. 2:8, 18]
5 [f]John 5:43 [g]Matt. 24:11
6 [h][Rev. 6:2–4] [i]NU omits *all*
7 [j]Hag. 2:22 [2]Rev. 6:5, 6 [2]NU omits *pestilences*
9 [k]Matt. 10:17
11 [l]2 Pet. 2:1 [m][1 Tim. 4:1]
12 [n][2 Thess. 2:3]
13 [o]Matt. 10:22
14 [p]Matt. 4:23 [q]Rom. 10:18
15 [r]Mark 13:14 [s]Dan. 9:27; 11:31; 12:11 [t]Dan. 9:23
19 [u]Luke 23:29
21 [v]Dan. 9:26
22 [w]Is. 65:8, 9 [3]*chosen ones'*
23 [x]Luke 17:23
24 [y][2 Thess. 2:9] [z][2 Tim. 2:19]
27 [a]Luke 17:24
28 [b]Luke 17:37
29 [c][Dan. 7:11] [d]Ezek. 32:7

■ **24:4–14** Wars, earthquakes, persecutions, and false prophets are all signs of Jesus' coming, but they indicate only the certainty of judgment, not its time (vv. 6, 8). Such signs characterize the entire period between His resurrection and His coming in judgment. Knowing when Jesus would return would lead His disciples to laziness and laxity in their watchfulness. The "when" (v. 3) that Jesus gives is task oriented: it is after the gospel has been preached to the nations (v. 14).

■ **24:8 sorrows.** Lit. "birth pains."

■ **24:14 all the world.** See "The Mission of the Church in the World" at John 20:21.

■ **24:15–21** Although some interpreters take this passage to refer exclusively to the Second Coming, there are unmistakable references to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, as is clear from the parallel account in Luke 21:20–24. The destruction of Jerusalem was a foretaste of the Last Judgment and so is a sign of the coming wrath. It stands as a unique declaration of the end of the old age, and so is a specific and uniquely important sign.

■ **24:15 abomination of desolation.** The phrase is from Daniel; in Dan. 9:27; 11:31 it refers to the desecration of the temple by Antiochus Epiphanes. In 168 B.C. Antiochus erected a pagan altar in the temple. According to Josephus, he also sacrificed swine there. Shortly before A.D. 70 the Zealots were in the temple precincts during the war with Rome, and their presence could have been considered a desecration. In A.D. 70 the Romans entered the temple with military standards, ceremonial insignia that were elements of their religion. They took away the sacred vessels, including the lampstand, and burned the temple. Sculptures of their troops carrying the vessels are visible on the Arch of Titus in Rome.

whoever reads . . . understand. Possibly not a comment by the evangelist but by Jesus. In either case, the sense is not "whoever reads this Gospel," but "whoever reads Daniel."

■ **24:16 flee to the mountains.** According to the early church historian Eusebius, the Christians did flee Jerusalem during the Jewish war in obedience to a prophecy.

■ **24:22 those days.** Although this verse is usually taken with vv. 15–21, it is also possible to understand it as reverting to the general "beginning of sorrows" of vv. 4–14.

■ **24:24 if possible.** Although the false prophets try to deceive the elect, there is no real possibility that they will succeed. God will keep the elect secure in His love (Rom. 8:31–39; cf. John 10:28, 29). See "Perseverance of the Saints" at Rom. 8:30.

■ **24:27 as the lightning.** The coming of Christ will be evident, unambiguous, and clear to all.

■ **24:28 wherever the carcass is.** The sign of Jesus' coming will be as clear as where carrion is, eagles gather.

■ **24:29–31** Some have understood these verses to represent the defeat

shaken. 30e Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, f and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31g And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His 4elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

The Parable of the Fig Tree

32 "Now learn h this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer *is* near. 33 So you also, when you see all these things, know i that 5it is near—at the doors! 34 Assuredly, I say to you, j this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. 35k Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

No One Knows the Day or Hour

36l "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of 6heaven, m but My Father only. 37 But as the days of Noah *were,* so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. 38n For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, 39 and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. 40o Then two *men* will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. 41 Two *women will be* grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. 42p Watch therefore, for you do not know what 7hour your Lord is coming. 43q But know this, that if the master of the house had known what 8hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. 44r Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.

The Faithful Servant and the Evil Servant

45s "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food 9in due season? 46t Blessed *is* that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. 47 Assuredly, I say to you that u he will make him ruler over all his goods. 48 But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master v is delaying l his coming,' 49 and begins to beat *his* fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, 50 the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for *him* and at an hour that he is w not aware of, 51 and will cut him in two and appoint *him* his portion with the hypocrites. x There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins

25 "Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet a the bridegroom. 2b Now five of them were wise, and five *were* foolish. 3 Those who *were* foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, 4 but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. 5 But while the bridegroom was delayed, c they all slumbered and slept.

6 "And at midnight d a cry was *heard:* 'Behold, the bridegroom l is coming; go out to meet him!' 7 Then all those virgins arose and e trimmed their lamps. 8 And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us *some* of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' 9 But the wise answered, saying, '*No,* lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for your-

30 e[Dan. 7:13, 14] f[Zech. 12:12]
31 g[1 Cor. 15:52] 4*chosen ones*
32 h[Luke 21:29]
33 i[James 5:9] 5Or *He*
34 j[Matt. 10:23; 16:28; 23:36]
35 k[Luke 21:33]
36 l[Acts 1:7] m[Zech. 14:7] 6NU adds *nor the Son*
38 n[Gen. 6:3–5]
40 o[Luke 17:34]
42 p[Matt. 25:13] 7NU *day*
43 q[Luke 12:39] 8Lit. *watch of the night*
44 r[1 Thess. 5:6]
45 s[Luke 12:42–46] 9*at the right time*
46 t[Rev. 16:15]
47 u[Matt. 25:21, 23]
48 v[2 Pet. 3:4–9] lNU omits *his coming*
50 w[Mark 13:32]
51 x[Matt. 8:12; 25:30]

CHAPTER 25

1 a[Eph. 5:29, 30]
2 b[Matt. 13:47; 22:10]
5 c[1 Thess. 5:6]
6 d[1 Thess. 4:16] lNU omits *is coming*
7 e[Luke 12:35]

of Satan's forces, the Son of Man's vindication, and the spread of the gospel to all the world, as having occurred symbolically at the destruction of Jerusalem. But the language of v. 31 is parallel to passages like 13:41; 16:27; and 25:31, as well as to passages such as 1 Cor. 15:52 and 1 Thess. 4:14–17. The passage most naturally refers to the Second Coming.

■ **24:30 sign.** Christ Himself, or the first moments of His appearing.

mourn. The mourning of the nations is an allusion to Zech. 12:10–12, and the coming on the clouds refers to Christ's assumption of dominion prophesied in Dan. 7:13, 14.

■ **24:34 this generation.** The phrase naturally means the people living as Jesus spoke. Some suggest it means "this race," or somewhat better, "this sort of people," that is, evil and adulterous people, 12:39.

all these things. That is, "all these things" referred to in v. 33, which are distinguished from the consummation itself. They are the "beginning of sorrows" (v. 8) and signs that point to the final coming of Christ, including the siege and fall of Jerusalem. All of the elements of this prophecy, except for the Second Coming itself, had occurred in some form before the disciples died (Luke 21:32 note).

■ **24:36 no one knows.** This remains true, and attempts to predict the time of the end are effectively stopped by it. See "The Humanity of Jesus" at 2 John 7.

■ **24:42 Watch.** An active state, not passive waiting, according to vv. 45–51.

is coming. See "The Return of Jesus Christ" at 1 Thess. 4:16.

■ **25:1–13** The delay of Christ's return distinguishes the wise from the foolish. Being ready means being prepared for a long delay; short-lived zeal is inadequate.

selves.' 10 And while they went to buy the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and [j]the door was shut.

11 "Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, [g]'Lord, Lord, open to us!' 12 But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, [h]I do not know you.'

13 [i]"Watch therefore, for you [j]know neither the day nor the hour [2]in which the Son of Man is coming.

The Parable of the Talents

14 [k]"For *the kingdom of heaven is* [l]like a man traveling to a far country, *who* called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. 15 And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, [m]to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. 16 Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. 17 And likewise he who *had received* two gained two more also. 18 But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. 19 After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them.

20 "So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.' 21 His lord said to him, 'Well *done,* good and faithful servant; you were [n]faithful over a few things, [o]I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into [p]the joy of your lord.' 22 He also who had received two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.' 23 His lord said to him, [q]'Well *done,* good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into [r]the joy of your lord.'

24 "Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. 25 And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, *there* you have *what is* yours.'

26 "But his lord answered and said to him, 'You [s]wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. 27 So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. 28 So take the talent from him, and give *it* to him who has ten talents.

29 [t]'For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. 30 And cast the unprofitable servant [u]into the outer darkness. [v]There will be weeping and [w]gnashing of teeth.'

The Son of Man Will Judge the Nations

31 [x]"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the [3]holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. 32 [y]All the nations will be gathered before Him, and [z]He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides *his* sheep from the goats. 33 And He will set the [a]sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. 34 Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, [b]inherit the kingdom [c]prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 [d]for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; [e]I was a stranger and you took Me in; 36 I *was* [f]naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; [g]I was in prison and you came to Me.'

37 "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed *You,* or thirsty and give *You* drink? 38 When did we see You a stranger and take *You* in, or naked and clothe *You?* 39 Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' 40 And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, [h]inasmuch as you did *it* to one of the least of these My brethren, you did *it* to Me.'

41 "Then He will also say to those on the left hand, [i]'Depart from Me, you cursed, [j]into the

10 [f]Luke 13:25
11 [g][Matt. 7:21–23]
12 [h][Hab. 1:13]
13 [i]Mark 13:35 [j]Matt. 24:36, 42 [2]NU omits the rest of v. 13.
14 [k]Luke 19:12–27 [l]Matt. 21:33
15 [m][Rom. 12:6]
21 [n][1 Cor. 4:2] [o][Luke 12:44; 22:29, 30] [p][Heb. 12:2]
23 [q]Matt. 24:45, 47; 25:21 [r][Ps. 16:11]
26 [s]Matt. 18:32
29 [t]Matt. 13:12
30 [u]Matt. 8:12; 22:13 [v]Matt. 7:23; 8:12; 24:51 [w]Ps. 112:10
31 [x][1 Thess. 4:16] [3]NU omits *holy*
32 [y][2 Cor. 5:10] [z]Ezek. 20:38
33 [a][John 10:11, 27, 28]
34 [b][Rom. 8:17] [c]Mark 10:40
35 [d]Is. 58:7 [e][Heb. 13:2]
36 [f][James 2:15, 16] [g]2 Tim. 1:16
40 [h]Mark 9:41
41 [i]Matt. 7:23 [j]Matt. 13:40, 42

■ **25:15 talents.** See notes on 18:24, 28. The English word "talent" meaning a natural endowment or special ability is derived from this parable.

■ **25:24 I knew you to be a hard man.** The third servant was unwilling to do the work of investing the talent for the benefit of another.

■ **25:31 Son of Man.** See note on 8:20.

■ **25:32 sheep.** The image of Christ's people as sheep is found in Ezek. 34 and is a part of Jesus' teaching (10:16; 18:12). The division concerns individuals, not nations.

■ **25:40 the least of these My brethren.** Christ's disciples (10:42; 12:48, 49; 18:14), not the poor and needy in general. The judgment of the nations depends on how they respond to Christians and to the gospel (10:40–42), not only because it is through the testimony of Christians that the Gentiles can hear and believe (Rom. 10:14), but also because Christ identifies with His people. Their suffering is His suffering, and compassion shown to them is compassion shown to Him.

■ **25:41** See theological note "The Final Judgment."

everlasting fire prepared for [k]the devil and his angels: 42 for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; 43 I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.'

44 "Then they also will answer [4]Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' 45 Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, [l]inasmuch as you did not do *it* to one of the least of these, you did not do *it* to Me.' 46 And [m]these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

The Plot to Kill Jesus

26 Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, *that* He said to His disciples, 2 [a]"You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified."

3 [b]Then the chief priests, [1]the scribes, and the elders of the people assembled at the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, 4 and [c]plotted to take Jesus by [2]trickery and kill *Him*. 5 But they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the [d]people."

41 [k][2 Pet. 2:4]
44 [4]NU, M omit *Him*
45 [l]Prov. 14:31
46 [m][Dan. 12:2]

CHAPTER 26

2 [a]Luke 22:1, 2
3 [b]John 11:47 [1]NU omits *the scribes*
4 [c]Acts 4:25–28 [2]*deception*
5 [d]Matt. 21:26

The Final Judgment

The certainty of final judgment is the background against which the New Testament message of saving grace is set. Paul no less than Jesus stresses this certainty. According to Paul, Jesus Christ saves us from "the wrath to come" (1 Thess. 1:10) on "the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (Rom. 2:5; cf. John 3:36; Rom. 5:9; Eph. 5:6; Col. 3:6; Rev. 6:17; 19:15). Throughout Scripture, God's "indignation," "anger," and "fury" are judicial; these words point to the holy Creator as the active Judge of sin. The message of coming judgment for all mankind, with Jesus Christ completing the work of His mediatorial kingdom by acting as Judge on His Father's behalf, runs throughout the New Testament (Matt. 13:40–43; 25:41–46; John 5:22–30; Acts 10:42; 2 Cor. 5:10; 2 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 9:27; 10:25–31; 12:23; 2 Pet. 3:7; Jude 6, 7; Rev. 20:11–15). When Christ comes again and history is completed, all people of all times will be raised for the judgment and take their place before Christ's throne. The event surpasses imagination, but the human imagination is not the measure of what God will do.

At the judgment every person will give an individual account to God, and God through Christ "will render to each one according to his deeds" (Rom. 2:6; cf. Ps. 62:12; Matt. 16:27; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 22:12). The regenerate, who as servants of Christ have learned to love righteousness and desire the glory of heaven, will be acknowledged, and on the basis of Christ's merit on their behalf they will be awarded the righteousness they seek. The rest will go to a destiny commensurate with the godless way of life they have chosen, a place assigned to them on the basis of their own demerit (Rom. 2:6–11). How much they knew of the will of God will determine the severity of their condemnation (Matt. 11:20–24; Luke 11:42–48; Rom. 2:12).

The judgment will demonstrate the perfect justice of God. In a world of sinners, where God has "allowed all nations to walk in their own ways" (Acts 14:16), evil is rampant, and doubts arise about how God, if He is sovereign, can be just, or, if He is just, can be sovereign. But God will be glorified in rendering just judgment, and the Last Judgment will answer every suspicion that He has ceased to care about righteousness (Ps. 50:16–21; Rev. 6:10; 16:5–7; 19:1–5).

For those who profess to belong to Christ, a review of their words and works (Matt. 12:36, 37) will show whether their profession is the fruit of an honest and good heart (Matt. 12:33–35), or a deceptive hypocrisy (Matt. 7:21–23). Everything will be exposed on Judgment Day (1 Cor. 4:5), and each person will receive from God what fairly belongs to them. Those whose professed faith did not express itself in a new life, marked by hatred of sin and love of righteousness, will be lost (Matt. 18:23–35; 25:34–46; James 2:14–26). Yet God has announced the day of judgment before the time, commanding everyone to repent and love life rather than death (Deut. 30:19; Luke 13:24).

■ **25:46 everlasting punishment.** See "Hell" at Mark 9:43.

■ **26:5 Not during the feast.** Although the officials expected to postpone the murder of Jesus until after Passover (Mark 14:1 note), God's purpose (v. 2) was for it to take place on or just before the feast (v. 17 note).

6 [e]Mark 14:3–9
8 [f]John 12:4
11 [g][Deut. 15:11] [h][John 13:33; 14:19; 16:5, 28; 17:11]
12 [i]John 19:38–42
14 [j]Mark 14:10, 11; Luke 22:3–6 [k]Matt. 10:4
15 [l]Zech. 11:12
17 [m]Ex. 12:6, 18–20
18 [n]Luke 9:51
20 [o]Mark 14:17–21
21 [p]John 6:70, 71; 13:21
23 [q]Ps. 41:9
24 [r]1 Cor. 15:3 [s]Luke 17:1 [t]John 17:12
26 [u]Mark 14:22–25 [v]1 Cor. 11:23–25 [w][1 Pet. 2:24] [3]M *gave thanks for*

The Anointing at Bethany

6 And when Jesus was in [e]Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, 7 a woman came to Him having an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil, and she poured *it* on His head as He sat *at the table.* 8 [f]But when His disciples saw *it,* they were indignant, saying, "Why this waste? 9 For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to *the* poor."

10 But when Jesus was aware of *it,* He said to them, "Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me. 11 [g]For you have the poor with you always, but [h]Me you do not have always. 12 For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did *it* for My [i]burial. 13 Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her."

Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus

14 [j]Then one of the twelve, called [k]Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests 15 and said, [l]"What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?" And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. 16 So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him.

Jesus Celebrates Passover with His Disciples

17 [m]Now on the first *day of the Feast* of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying to Him, "Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?"

18 And He said, "Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, 'The Teacher says, [n]"My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples." ' "

19 So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them; and they prepared the Passover.

20 [o]When evening had come, He sat down with the twelve. 21 Now as they were eating, He said, "Assuredly, I say to you, one of you will [p]betray Me."

22 And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and each of them began to say to Him, "Lord, is it I?"

23 He answered and said, [q]"He who dipped *his* hand with Me in the dish will betray Me. 24 The Son of Man indeed goes just [r]as it is written of Him, but [s]woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! [t]It would have been good for that man if he had not been born."

25 Then Judas, who was betraying Him, answered and said, "Rabbi, is it I?"

He said to him, "You have said it."

Jesus Institutes the Lord's Supper

26 [u]And as they were eating, [v]Jesus took bread, [3]blessed and broke *it,* and gave *it* to the disciples and said, "Take, eat; [w]this is My body."

■ **26:6–13** Mark 14:3–9 agrees with Matthew's account regarding the time (two days before Passover, v. 2) and the method of anointing (on Jesus' head). John 12:1–8 differs chronologically (six days before Passover), but although certain details are different (Mary anoints His feet), none conflict (John 12:3 note). These three accounts probably relate the same incident. Luke 7:36–38, however, bears only superficial similarity to this story.

■ **26:8 they were indignant.** John reports the hypocritical objection of Judas (John 12:4–6), and Matthew indicates that the others agreed with him.

■ **26:11 the poor.** Care for the poor is commanded by God, but the commandment cannot have a higher priority than Jesus, the One sent by the Author of the commandment. Similarly, God commands honor of father and mother, but not above honor to Jesus (10:37; 15:4–6; 19:29).

■ **26:17 the first day of the Feast.** The day of preparation for Passover, presumably 14 Nisan (the first month of the Jewish calendar). Jesus celebrated Passover that evening, 15 Nisan, and was crucified the next afternoon. The Gospel of John seems to present Jesus as crucified on the day before Passover (John 18:28; 19:14, 31), making the Lord's Supper not a Passover meal.

Calvin understood Preparation Day to be the day before Passover, and argued that the Jews according to some traditions combined the Passover with the weekly Sabbath (John 19:14 note). Then Matt. 27:62 would refer to the Preparation Day observed by the Jewish leadership. There is some difficulty, however, in seeing how Jesus' disciples could have had their lamb slaughtered in advance of the official schedule, and Mark 14:12 clearly indicates that Jesus arranged for Passover on the day when the lambs were customarily slaughtered. Whatever the solution, Matthew clearly identifies the meal that Jesus ate with His disciples on the eve of His crucifixion as the Passover meal.

■ **26:18 My time.** Again Jesus emphasizes that all the terrible events soon to take place were totally under God's control.

■ **26:24 Son of Man.** See 8:20 note.

as it is written of Him. Jesus' atoning death was no mere contrivance of the misguided authorities. The event and its circumstances, including betrayal by His friend (Ps. 41:9; 55:12–14), had been appointed by God since before the world was formed. Nevertheless, those who brought about Jesus' death remain responsible for their actions ("woe to that man;" cf. Acts 2:23).

■ **26:26–29** In the old covenant, the Passover meal was a memorial celebration of Israel's deliverance from Egypt. By transforming His last Passover meal to institute the Lord's Supper, Jesus shows the consistent focus on redemption throughout God's revelation. The Lord's Supper demonstrates the essential continuity between the old and the new covenants by revealing that the true meaning of the Passover lies in the deliverance effected by Jesus' death.

■ **26:26 this is My body.** In Roman Catholicism these words are quoted in support of the doctrine of transubstantiation, which teaches that the outward, physical attributes of the bread and wine remain unchanged, while the invisible essence is transformed into the body and blood of Christ. Calvin and the other Reformers recognized that the ele-

27 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, [x]"Drink from it, all of you. 28 For [y]this is My blood [z]of the [4]new covenant, which is shed [a]for many for the [5]remission of sins. 29 But [b]I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on [c]until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."

30 [d]And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial

31 Then Jesus said to them, [e]"All of you will [f]be [6]made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written:

> [g]*'I will strike the Shepherd,*
> *And the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'*

32 But after I have been raised, [h]I will go before you to Galilee."

33 Peter answered and said to Him, "Even if all are [7]made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble."

34 Jesus said to him, [i]"Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times."

35 Peter said to Him, "Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!"

And so said all the disciples.

The Prayer in the Garden

36 [j]Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, "Sit here while I go and pray over there." 37 And He took with Him Peter and [k]the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. 38 Then He said to them, [l]"My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me."

39 He went a little farther and fell on His face, and [m]prayed, saying, [n]"O My Father, if it is possible, [o]let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, [p]not as I will, but as You *will*."

40 Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "What! Could you not watch with Me one hour? 41 [q]Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. [r]The spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak."

42 Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, "O My Father, [s]if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done." 43 And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy.

44 So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. 45 Then He came to His disciples and said to them, "Are *you* still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour [9]is at hand, and the Son of Man is being [s]betrayed into the hands of sinners. 46 Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand."

Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane

47 And [t]while He was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and elders of the people.

48 Now His betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him." 49 Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" [u]and kissed Him.

50 But Jesus said to him, [v]"Friend, why have you come?"

Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him. 51 And suddenly, [w]one of those *who were* with Jesus stretched out *his* hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

52 But Jesus said to him, "Put your sword in its place, [x]for all who take the sword will [1]perish

27 [x]Mark 14:23

28 [y][Ex. 24:8] [z]Jer. 31:31 [a]Matt. 20:28 [4]NU omits *new* [5]*forgiveness*

29 [b]Mark 14:25 [c]Acts 10:41

30 [d]Mark 14:26–31

31 [e]John 16:32 [f][Matt. 11:6] [g]Zech. 13:7 [6]*caused to take offense at Me*

32 [h]Matt. 28:7, 10, 16

33 [7]*caused to take offense at You*

34 [i]John 13:38

36 [j]Mark 14:32–35

37 [k]Matt. 4:21; 17:1

38 [l]John 12:27

39 [m][Heb. 5:7–9] [n]John 12:27 [o]Matt. 20:22 [p]John 5:30; 6:38

41 [q]Luke 22:40, 46 [r][Gal. 5:17]

42 [s]NU *if this may not pass away unless*

45 [s]Matt. 17:22, 23; 20:18, 19 [9]*has drawn near*

47 [t]Acts 1:16

49 [u]2 Sam. 20:9

50 [v]Ps. 41:9; 55:13

51 [w]John 18:10

52 [x]Rev. 13:10 [1]M *die*

ments *represent* Christ's body and blood. Jesus uttered these words while physically present with His disciples, so a literal identification of the elements with His physical substance would not have occurred to them. The bread and wine are more than conventional symbols, however, for through the Holy Spirit they communicate *visibly* what is *read* and *heard* in the gospel (1 Cor. 10:16). See "The Lord's Supper" at 1 Cor. 11:23.

■ **26:28 My blood of the new covenant.** The Mosaic covenant was inaugurated with a sacrifice (Ex. 24:28), and the new covenant prophesied by Jeremiah (Jer. 31:31–34; cf. Luke 22:17–20; 1 Cor. 11:23–25) is inaugurated by the sacrifice of Christ, to which the Lord's Supper points. See "The Sacraments" at 28:19.

■ **26:31 I will strike the Shepherd.** In the context of Zech. 13:7, the Lord strikes the Shepherd, the Lord's "Companion," and God's "little ones" are scattered. Subsequently they are renewed and truly become God's people. The disciples' desertion of Jesus is representative of the nation's apostasy, as well as of the remnant that God will save.

■ **26:39 cup.** See 20:23 note. Jesus is horrified at the prospect of enduring His Father's wrath. Jesus had to face death knowing that His Father would not be with Him, but against Him in wrath of judgment.

■ **26:52 Put your sword in its place.** Jesus did not bring His kingdom with force, like earthly kings.

53 [y]Dan. 7:10
54 [z]Is. 50:6; 53:2–11
56 [a]Lam. 4:20 [b]John 18:15
57 [c]John 18:12, 19–24
58 [d]John 18:15, 16
59 [e]Ps. 35:11 [2]NU omits *the elders*
60 [f]Mark 14:55 [g]Deut. 19:15 [3]NU *but found none, even though many false witnesses came forward.* [4]NU omits *false witnesses*
61 [h]John 2:19
62 [i]Mark 14:60
63 [j]Is. 53:7 [k]Lev. 5:1
64 [l]Dan. 7:13 [m][Acts 7:55]
65 [n]2 Kin. 18:37 [o]John 10:30–36
66 [p]Lev. 24:16
67 [q]Is. 50:6; 53:3 [r]Luke 22:63–65 [5]Or *rods,*
68 [s]Mark 14:65
69 [t]John 18:16–18, 25–27
73 [u]Luke 22:59
74 [v]Mark 14:71 [6]*call down curses* [7]Swear oaths
75 [w]Matt. 26:34

CHAPTER 27

1 [a]John 18:28
2 [b]Acts 3:13 [1]NU omits *Pontius*

by the sword. 53 Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with [y]more than twelve legions of angels? 54 How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, [z]that it must happen thus?"

55 In that hour Jesus said to the multitudes, "Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and you did not seize Me. 56 But all this was done that the [a]Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled."

Then [b]all the disciples forsook Him and fled.

Jesus Faces the Sanhedrin

57 [c]And those who had laid hold of Jesus led *Him* away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. 58 But [d]Peter followed Him at a distance to the high priest's courtyard. And he went in and sat with the servants to see the end.

59 Now the chief priests, [2]the elders, and all the council sought [e]false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, 60 [3]but found none. Even though [f]many false witnesses came forward, they found none. But at last [g]two [4]false witnesses came forward 61 and said, "This *fellow* said, [h]'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.' "

62 [i]And the high priest arose and said to Him, "Do You answer nothing? What *is it* these men testify against You?" 63 But [j]Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, [k]"I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!"

64 Jesus said to him, "*It is as* you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, [l]hereafter you will see the Son of Man [m]sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven."

65 [n]Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, "He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His [o]blasphemy! 66 What do you think?"

They answered and said, [p]"He is deserving of death."

67 [q]Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and [r]others struck *Him* with [5]the palms of their hands, 68 saying, [s]"Prophesy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?"

Peter Denies Jesus, and Weeps Bitterly

69 [t]Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying, "You also were with Jesus of Galilee."

70 But he denied it before *them* all, saying, "I do not know what you are saying."

71 And when he had gone out to the gateway, another *girl* saw him and said to those *who were* there, "This *fellow* also was with Jesus of Nazareth."

72 But again he denied with an oath, "I do not know the Man!"

73 And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, "Surely you also are *one* of them, for your [u]speech betrays you."

74 Then [v]he began to [6]curse and [7]swear, *saying,* "I do not know the Man!"

Immediately a rooster crowed. 75 And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, [w]"Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." So he went out and wept bitterly.

Jesus Handed Over to Pontius Pilate

27 When morning came, [a]all the chief priests and elders of the people plotted against Jesus to put Him to death. 2 And when they had bound Him, they led Him away and [b]delivered Him to [1]Pontius Pilate the governor.

■ **26:54, 56 be fulfilled.** Jesus knows that the Scriptures prophesying salvation through His death must be fulfilled (Luke 22:37). Some commentators suggest that Zech. 13:7 is still in view (v. 31), but more probably that Jesus is referring broadly to His death and resurrection (see Luke 24:44–46).

■ **26:59–61** Apparently the Sanhedrin had difficulty finding false witnesses. Finally they used a charge that was a distortion of something Jesus had said (John 2:19). The numerous irregularities in this trial have often been pointed out. This is not evidence of historical unreliability, but of the extreme actions the Jewish leaders took to rid themselves of Jesus.

■ **26:63 I put You under oath.** Jesus did not answer, and Caiaphas comes to the point: does Jesus claim to be the Messiah sent from God?

■ **26:64 It is as you said.** Jesus' answer is reluctantly affirmative, probably because the high priest's understanding of the Messiah's role was so different from the role Jesus actually fulfilled. Jesus responds in the same way to a similar question from Pilate in 27:11.

hereafter you will see. Jesus probably speaks of the process of exaltation to the right hand of the Father that in a sense begins with His humiliation and death. The Jewish leaders would soon "see" in the resurrection reports of the soldiers (28:11–15) and Stephen's eyewitness testimony of the majesty of the exalted Christ (Acts 7:56) that the One whom they had killed was the Messiah He had claimed to be.

■ **26:69–75** Peter's three denials are recorded in all four Gospels (Mark 14:66–72; Luke 22:54–62; John 18:15–18, 25–27), although the accounts differ in certain details. Peter's oaths (vv. 72, 74) mean that he appealed to God to witness to something that was not true (see 5:33–37; Ex. 20:7). All the Gospels record this incident, showing how deeply it impressed the mind of the early church. It is a testimony both to human weakness and the greatness of God's mercy.

Judas Hangs Himself

3 [c]Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty [d]pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, 4 saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood."

And they said, "What *is that* to us? You see *to it!*"

5 Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and [e]departed, and went and hanged himself.

6 But the chief priests took the silver pieces and said, "It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because they are the price of blood." 7 And they consulted together and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. 8 Therefore that field has been called [f]the Field of Blood to this day.

9 Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, [g]"*And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of Him who was priced,* whom they of the children of Israel priced, 10 *and* [h]*gave them for the potter's field, as the* LORD *directed me.*"

Jesus Faces Pilate

11 Now Jesus stood before the governor. [i]And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?"

Jesus said to him, [j]"*It is as* you say." 12 And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, [k]He answered nothing.

13 Then Pilate said to Him, [l]"Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?" 14 But He answered him not one word, so that the governor marveled greatly.

Taking the Place of Barabbas

15 [m]Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to releasing to the multitude one prisoner whom they wished. 16 And at that time they had a notorious prisoner called [2]Barabbas. 17 Therefore, when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?" 18 For he knew that they had handed Him over because of [n]envy.

19 While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, "Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him."

20 [o]But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. 21 The governor answered and said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?"

They said, [p]"Barabbas!"

22 Pilate said to them, "What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?"

They all said to him, "Let Him be crucified!"

23 Then the governor said, [q]"Why, what evil has He done?"

But they cried out all the more, saying, "Let Him be crucified!"

24 When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather *that* a [3]tumult was rising, he [r]took water and washed *his* hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this [4]just Person. You see *to it.*"

25 And all the people answered and said, [s]"His blood *be* on us and on our children."

26 Then he released Barabbas to them; and when [t]he had [5]scourged Jesus, he delivered *Him* to be crucified.

3 [c]Matt. 26:14 [d]Matt. 26:15

5 [e]2 Sam. 17:23; Matt. 18:7; 26:24; John 17:12; Acts 1:18

8 [f]Acts 1:19

9 [g]Zech. 11:12

10 [h]Jer. 32:6–9; Zech. 11:12, 13

11 [i]Mark 15:2–5; Luke 23:2, 3; John 18:29–38 [j]John 18:37; 1 Tim. 6:13

12 [k]Ps. 38:13, 14; Matt. 26:63; John 19:9

13 [l]Matt. 26:62; John 19:10

15 [m]Mark 15:6–15; Luke 23:17–25; John 18:39—19:16

16 [2]NU *Jesus Barabbas*

18 [n]Matt. 21:38; [John 15:22–25]

20 [o]Mark 15:11; Luke 23:18; John 18:40; Acts 3:14

21 [p]Acts 3:14

23 [q]Acts 3:13

24 [r]Deut. 21:6–8 [3]*an uproar* [4]NU omits *just*

25 [s]Deut. 19:10; Josh. 2:19; 2 Sam. 1:16; 1 Kin. 2:32; Acts 5:28

26 [t][Is. 50:6; 53:5]; Matt. 20:19; Mark 15:15; Luke 23:16, 24, 25; John 19:1, 16 [5]*flogged* with a Roman scourge

■ **27:3 remorseful.** Judas's remorse is not the same as repentance (3:2 note).

■ **27:4** They cannot claim indifference to the question of "innocent blood" for which they paid the price (26:15). This attempt at passing responsibility is no more effective than Pilate's in v. 24.

■ **27:5 hanged himself.** See Acts 1:18 note.

■ **27:9 spoken by Jeremiah.** Most of the words in the quotation are from Zech. 11:12, 13, but the content is also closely related to Jer. 19:1–13, which is a prophecy of judgment for the shedding of innocent blood (Jer. 19:4). Jeremiah twice speaks of a potter (Jer. 19:1, 11), and Matthew's "Field of Blood" recalls his designation of Tophet as the "Valley of Slaughter" (Jer. 19:6), which also was to become a burial ground (Jer. 19:11). Matthew finds in Judas's and the priests' actions a fulfillment of the judgment prophecies of Zechariah and Jeremiah.

■ **27:14** Jesus' silence fulfills Is. 53:7.

■ **27:25 His blood be on us.** When Pilate seemed reluctant to act, the people were not afraid to say they would take the responsibility themselves. Their guilt, Pilate's guilt, and Judas's, is not determined by them but by God (cf. Acts 4:27). According to Ezekiel, descendants do not share the guilt of their parents unless they cooperate in their sins (Ezek. 18:20; cf. Acts 2:23, 39).

■ **27:26 scourged.** The Roman scourge was a multi-stranded whip to the ends of which bits of bone were tied. Prisoners often died from this punishment.

27 [u]Mark 15:16–20 [6]The governor's headquarters [7]*cohort*

28 [v]John 19:2 [w]Luke 23:11

29 [x]Is. 53:3 [8]Lit. *woven*

30 [y]Matt. 26:67

31 [z]Is. 53:7

32 [a]Heb. 13:12 [b]Mark 15:21

33 [c]John 19:17

34 [d]Ps. 69:21 [9]NU omits *sour*

35 [e]Luke 23:34 [f]Ps. 22:18 [1]NU, M omit the rest of v. 35.

36 [g]Matt. 27:54

37 [h]John 19:19

38 [i]Is. 53:9, 12

39 [j]Mark 15:29

40 [k]John 2:19 [l]Matt. 26:63

41 [2]M *scribes, the Pharisees, and the elders*

42 [m][John 3:14, 15] [3]NU omits *If* [4]NU, M *in Him*

43 [n]Ps. 22:8

44 [o]Luke 23:39–43

45 [p]Mark 15:33–41

46 [q][Heb. 5:7] [r]Ps. 22:1

48 [s]Ps. 69:21

50 [t]Luke 23:46 [u][John 10:18]

The Soldiers Mock Jesus

27 [u]Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the [6]Praetorium and gathered the whole [7]garrison around Him. 28 And they [v]stripped Him and [w]put a scarlet robe on Him. 29 [x]When they had [8]twisted a crown of thorns, they put *it* on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" 30 Then [y]they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head. 31 And when they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, put His *own* clothes on Him, [z]and led Him away to be crucified.

The King on a Cross

32 [a]Now as they came out, [b]they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. Him they compelled to bear His cross. 33 [c]And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, Place of a Skull, 34 [d]they gave Him [9]sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted *it,* He would not drink.

35 [e]Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots, [f]that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet:

> *[f]"They divided My garments among them,*
> *And for My clothing they cast lots."*

36 [g]Sitting down, they kept watch over Him there. 37 And they [h]put up over His head the accusation written against Him:

THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

38 [i]Then two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left.

39 And [j]those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads 40 and saying, [k]"You who destroy the temple and build *it* in three days, save Yourself! [l]If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross."

41 Likewise the chief priests also, mocking with the [2]scribes and elders, said, 42 "He [m]saved others; Himself He cannot save. [3]If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe [4]Him. 43 [n]He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, 'I am the Son of God.' "

44 [o]Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him with the same thing.

Jesus Dies on the Cross

45 [p]Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land. 46 And about the ninth hour [q]Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" that is, *[r]"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"*

47 Some of those who stood there, when they heard *that,* said, "This Man is calling for Elijah!" 48 Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, [s]filled *it* with sour wine and put *it* on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink.

49 The rest said, "Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to save Him."

50 And Jesus [t]cried out again with a loud voice, and [u]yielded up His spirit.

■ **27:28 robe.** Lit. "cloak," of a Roman soldier. Matthew calls the robe "scarlet," although Mark and John call it "purple." Matthew's detail emphasizes the indignity and may hint at the popular conception of the Messiah as a military and political deliverer.

■ **27:32–37** Crucifixion was a slow and agonizing death. Nails were probably driven through the wrists rather than the palms. The weight of the suspended body made breathing difficult and painful. Involuntary efforts by the legs to ease the pressure greatly increased pain in the feet. This ordeal continued until the exhausted victim could no longer breathe; this might take several days.

■ **27:34 gall.** Any of several bitter herbs; Mark mentions myrrh. Commentators often note that myrrh mixed with wine is a painkiller. But the offer of galled wine was probably not a gesture of compassion but of mockery, as in Ps. 69:21. Jesus' thirst would have been great, but the gall made the wine undrinkable.

■ **27:35 divided His garments.** This action fulfilled Ps. 22:18, as is made explicit in John 19:23, 24. The events surrounding the crucifixion of Jesus include numerous fulfillments of Ps. 22.

■ **27:37 THE KING OF THE JEWS.** The placard at the head of the cross specified the crime. Pilate was insulting the Jewish leaders, but the irony of its truth was apparent to the early church.

■ **27:38** The term translated "robbers" is the word Josephus uses for rebels. Robbers were not ordinarily crucified. Perhaps these two were cohorts of Barabbas (Mark 15:7).

■ **27:40** Again note the irony. Jesus *was* going to return after three days, and "rebuild" the temple of His body. Precisely because He was the Son of God, He would not come down from the cross.

■ **27:45 from the sixth hour until the ninth hour.** From noon to 3:00 P.M.

■ **27:46 why have You forsaken Me.** Jesus' desolate cry is a fulfillment of Ps. 22:1 showing the depth of His distress as He suffers separation from His Father. Later the apostles realized that Jesus was enduring the dreadful wrath of God's judgment on sin. This was all the more agonizing to One whose relationship with the Father was perfect in love. The cry is Aramaic, except the Hebrew "Eli." Mark gives the Aramaic "Eloi."

■ **27:48, 49** The fulfillment of Ps. 69:21 (v. 34 note).

51 Then, behold, [v]the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, 52 and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; 53 and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

54 [w]So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, [x]"Truly this was the Son of God!"

55 And many women [y]who followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, were there looking on from afar, 56 [z]among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and [5]Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.

Jesus Buried in Joseph's Tomb

57 Now [a]when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. 58 This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him. 59 When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, 60 and [b]laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed. 61 And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting [6]opposite the tomb.

Pilate Sets a Guard

62 On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, 63 saying, "Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, [c]'After three days I will rise.' 64 Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come [7]by night and steal Him *away,* and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead.' So the last deception will be worse than the first."

65 Pilate said to them, "You have a guard; go your way, make *it* as secure as you know how." 66 So they went and made the tomb secure, [d]sealing the stone and setting the guard.

He Is Risen

28 Now [a]after the Sabbath, as the first *day* of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene [b]and the other Mary came to see the tomb. 2 And behold, there was a great earthquake; for [c]an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone [1]from the door, and sat on it. 3 [d]His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. 4 And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like [e]dead *men.*

5 But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. 6 He is not here; for He is risen, [f]as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. 7 And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed [g]He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you."

8 So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word.

The Women Worship the Risen Lord

9 And [2]as they went to tell His disciples, behold, [h]Jesus met them, saying, "Rejoice!" So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. 10 Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go *and* tell [i]My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me."

The Soldiers Are Bribed

11 Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. 12 When they had assembled with the elders

51 [v]Ex. 26:31
54 [w]Mark 15:39 [x]Matt. 14:33
55 [y]Luke 8:2, 3
56 [z]Mark 15:40, 47; 16:9 [5]NU *Joseph*
57 [a]John 19:38–42
60 [b]Is. 53:9
61 [6]*in front of*
63 [c]Mark 8:31; 10:34
64 [7]NU omits *by night*
66 [d]Dan. 6:17

CHAPTER 28

1 [a]Luke 24:1–10 [b]Matt. 27:56, 61
2 [c]Mark 16:5 [1]NU omits *from the door*
3 [d]Dan. 7:9; 10:6
4 [e]Rev. 1:17
6 [f]Matt. 12:40; 16:21; 17:23; 20:19
7 [g]Mark 16:7
9 [h]John 20:14 [2]NU omits *as they went to tell His disciples*
10 [i]John 20:17

■ **27:51 veil . . . was torn.** The veil of the temple was the curtain separating the Most Holy Place from the rest of the sanctuary. It symbolized the unapproachability of God (Heb. 9:8). Jesus' death was His sacrifice at the heavenly altar (Heb. 9:12, 24, 25), which opened the way to God (Heb. 10:19, 20), removing the veil. Heaven had been opened through the royal priesthood of Christ (1 Pet. 2:9).

from top to bottom. Implying a divine action.

■ **27:52 were raised.** The resurrection of the "many . . . saints," although mentioned here to show the connection with the rending of the veil, occurred after Jesus' resurrection. This resurrection was a partial, symbolic fulfillment of Dan. 12:2. There is no way of knowing who these people were, or whether they died again or were translated directly to heaven.

■ **27:54 Truly this was the Son of God.** Although they may not have understood fully the phrase they used (16:16; Mark 15:39 and notes), the soldiers made an appropriate confession while the natural heirs of the covenant were deriding their Messiah.

■ **27:57 a rich man.** Joseph's gift of a tomb completes Jesus' fulfillment of Is. 53:9. See note on Luke 23:50, 51.

■ **27:62–66** Matthew includes this as background for 28:11–15.

■ **27:62 the next day.** The Sabbath. See note on John 19:14.

■ **28:6 is risen.** See "The Resurrection of Jesus" at Luke 24:2.

■ **28:10 My brethren.** All Jesus' disciples (12:49, 50; 25:40).

■ **28:11–15** This incident shows that clear evidence may have no effect

and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, [13] saying, "Tell them, 'His disciples came at night and stole Him *away* while we slept.' [14] And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure." [15] So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

The Great Commission

[16] Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain [j]which Jesus had appointed for them. [17] When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some [k]doubted.

[18] And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, [l]"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. [19] [m]Go [3]therefore and [n]make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20] [o]teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am [p]with you always, *even* to the end of the age." [4]Amen.

16 [j]Matt. 26:32; 28:7, 10
17 [k]John 20:24–29
18 [l][Dan. 7:13, 14]
19 [m]Mark 16:15 [n]Luke 24:47 [3]M omits *therefore*
20 [o][Acts 2:42] [p][Acts 4:31; 18:10; 23:11] [4]NU omits *Amen.*

on those who are committed to unbelief. That the story of the disciples stealing Jesus' body was still circulated in the days of Justin Martyr (c. 160) indicates something of the desperation felt by Jewish leaders in explaining the empty tomb.

■ **28:18** Jesus now has "all authority." The Son of Man has come before the Ancient of Days and received the promised dominion (Dan. 7:13, 14). The last stage of history has begun, but it will not be completed until Christ comes to earth in glory (26:64). See "Jesus' Heavenly Reign" at Acts 7:55.

■ **28:19 Go therefore.** The Great Commission is given on Christ's authority. Since Christ's dominion is universal, the gospel must go to the whole world. This commandment is the primary reason for evangelism and missions.

nations. The same Greek word often translated "Gentiles." The great promise that in Abraham all the nations would be blessed (Gen. 12:3) is ready to be fulfilled.

baptizing them. See note on 3:6. Those who become disciples are baptized in (lit. "into") the triune name. There is one name (not "names"), and one baptism; Father, Son, and Spirit are one God. Disciples are baptized "in" this name because they belong to God, having been brought into the new covenant that expresses the will of the triune God. See theological note "The Sacraments."

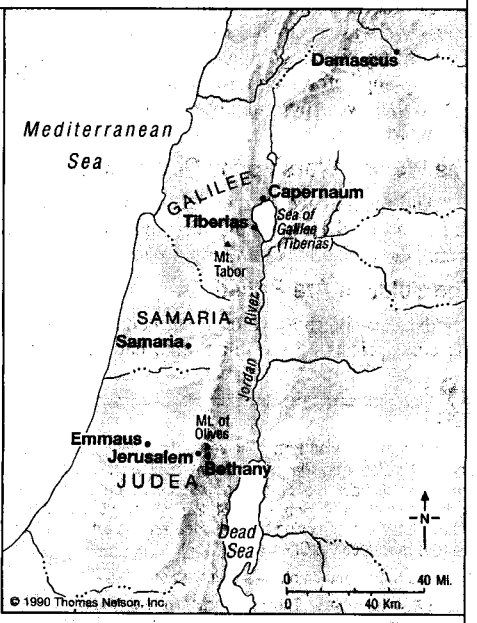
■ **28:20 teaching them to observe.** Disciples are not just taught what to believe, but how to obey. Jesus taught practical holiness.

I am with you always. Jesus was named Immanuel ("God with us") at His birth (1:23), and now He promises to be with His disciples to the end of the age. He is with them specifically in the responsibility of teaching His will to the world. See "The Mission of the Church in the World" at John 20:21.

The Appearances of the Risen Christ (28:7)

Central to Christian faith is the bodily resurrection of Jesus. By recording the resurrection appearances, the New Testament leaves no doubt about this event.

- In or around Jerusalem
  To Mary Magdalene
  (Mark 16:9; John 20:11–18)
  To other women
  (Matt. 28:8–10)
  To Peter
  (Luke 24:34)
  To ten disciples
  (Luke 24:36–43; John 20:19–25)
  To the Eleven, including Thomas
  (Mark 16:14; John 20:26–29)
  At His ascension
  (Mark 16:19, 20; Luke 24:50–53; Acts 1:4–12)
- To the disciples on the Emmaus road
  (Mark 16:12, 13; Luke 24:13–35)
- In Galilee
  (Matt. 28:16–20; John 21:1–24)
- To five hundred people
  (1 Cor. 15:6)
- To James and the apostles
  (1 Cor. 15:7)
- To Paul on the road to Damascus
  (Acts 9:1–6; 22:1–10; 26:12–18; 1 Cor. 15:8)



The Sacraments

Christ instituted two rites for His followers to observe: baptism, a once-for-all rite of initiation (Matt. 28:19; Gal. 3:27), and the Lord's Supper, a regular rite of remembrance (1 Cor. 11:23–26). These are called "sacraments" in the Western church, "mysteries" in the Eastern Orthodox church, or "ordinances." Scripture has no technical term for the two rites or the corresponding Old Testament observances, that is, circumcision of males as a rite of initiation (Gen. 17:9–14, 23–27) and the annual passover as a rite of remembrance (Ex. 12:1–27). Biblical teaching, however, warrants classifying them all together as signs and seals of a covenant relationship with God.

"Sacrament" is from a Latin word meaning sacred. Study of the Christian rites themselves leads to a definition of sacrament as a ritual action instituted by Christ in which signs perceived by the senses present to us the grace of God in Christ and the blessings of His covenant. They communicate and confirm these blessings to believers, who in receiving the sacraments respond to God's grace and declare their faith and allegiance to Him. The sacraments "put a visible difference between those that belong unto the Church and the rest of the world." They solemnly "engage [Christians] to the service of God in Christ, according to His Word" (*Westminster Confession*, XXVII.1).

It was a mistake of the medieval church to classify as sacraments five more rites (confirmation, penance, marriage, ordination, and extreme unction). These five are not seals of a covenant relationship with God. They were not instituted by Christ, and they do not have "any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God" (*Thirty-Nine Articles*, XXV).

The sacraments are means of grace, for God uses them to strengthen faith's confidence in His promises and to call forth acts of faith for receiving the good gifts signified. The efficacy of the sacraments is not from the faith or virtue of the minister, but from the faithfulness of God, who, having given the signs, is now pleased to use them. Christ and the apostles speak of the sign as if it were the thing signified, and as if receiving the former is the same as receiving the latter (Matt. 26:26–28; 1 Cor. 10:15–21; 1 Pet. 3:21, 22). As the preaching of the Word makes the gospel audible, so the sacraments make it visible.

Sacraments strengthen faith by correlating Christian beliefs with the testimony of our senses. *The Heidelberg Catechism* illustrates this in its answer to Question 75. The key words are "as sure as."

> Christ has commanded me . . . to eat of this broken bread and to drink of this cup in memory of Him, and therewith has given assurance: first, that His body was broken on the cross for me, and His blood shed for me, as sure as I see with my eyes the bread . . . broken for me and the cup communicated to me; and, further, that with His crucified body and shed blood He Himself feeds and nourishes my soul to eternal life, as sure as I take and taste the bread and cup . . . which are given me as sure tokens of the body and blood of Christ. □

The Gospel According to

MARK

Author All four Gospels are anonymous, and together they provide the church an authorized, collective witness of Jesus' person and work through the apostles—a theme often emphasized in Mark (3:14; 4:10; 5:37; 8:32 and notes). There is nothing inconsistent about the apostles' using fellow workers such as John Mark, whose name appears above this Gospel, to put this collective and individual witness into writing. For John Mark's relations with the apostles, see Acts 12:12, 25; 13:5, 13; Col. 4:10; 2 Tim. 4:11; Philem. 24.

Mark's authorship is established by certain external considerations. Although the title, "According to Mark," is not original, it appears in all the ancient canonical lists and many ancient manuscripts and is thought to have been added very early in the history of the text. Second, early church fathers such as Papias (A.D. 140), Justin Martyr (A.D. 150), Irenaeus (A.D. 185), and Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 195) all affirm that Mark wrote the second Gospel. Papias refers to Mark as Peter's "interpreter." Another reason to accept the authenticity of Marcan authorship is that in the second and third centuries of the church, books falsely claiming apostolic authorship usually claimed well-known apostles as their authors rather than secondary figures such as John Mark.

Within the text itself a veiled indication of Mark's connection with this Gospel may be seen in an otherwise apparently irrelevant notice of a "certain young man" who fled when Jesus was arrested. Some interpreters have suggested that this is Mark's way of referring to himself on that occasion (14:51 note). Possible evidence of Mark's position as Peter's "interpreter" (above) is the simplified chronological order of events in Mark that mirrors Peter's rehearsal of those events in the Book of Acts (Acts 3:13, 14; 10:36–43).

Date and Occasion If Mark was used by Matthew and Luke, it is the earliest of the Gospels and cannot be dated later than about A.D. 70. It is generally thought that Matthew and Luke were written about A.D. 80–90. However, if Luke and Acts were finished around A.D. 62, when the narrative of Acts ends, Mark would be even earlier. Beyond these considerations, an argument can be made that all the books of the New Testament were written before A.D. 70, the date of the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, and so come from the first, apostolic generation.

The church fathers held that Mark was addressed to the church in Rome or in Italy generally. This is supported by Mark's association with Peter, who in 1 Pet. 5:13 addresses Christians in "Babylon" (a probable reference to Rome), by the influence of Latin in the Greek text, and by the probable reference to members of the Roman church (15:21; cf. Rom. 16:13). The translation of Semitic terms (3:17; 5:41; 15:22) and careful explanation of Jewish customs (7:2–4; 15:42) suggests that a Gentile readership is anticipated, though not excluding Gentile converts to Judaism.

Characteristics and Themes

1. The Purpose of the Gospel. Mark's prime purpose is to present in writing the witness of the apostles to the facts of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Mark does not intend to write a full biography or even a complete account of Jesus' public ministry. The historical record is simplified, conforming to the basic structure of gospel proclamation: the beginning of Jesus' ministry with John the Baptist; Jesus' public ministry in Galilee and the surrounding regions; and His final journey to Jerusalem for the sacrifice of the cross. According to the Gospel of John, Jesus made at least five visits to Jerusalem (Mark 1:14 note). Matthew and Luke record more of Jesus' teaching than Mark, but Mark's goal is different. Using historical details, he presents an enlarged account of what the apostles preached about the cross of Christ (Acts 1:21, 22; 2:22–24; 1 Cor. 2:2).

2. Jesus as the True Israelite. Mark depicts Jesus as the true Israelite whose whole life demonstrates the necessity of submitting to the written Word of God (1:13 note; 12:35–37). In this, as more generally in service and in suffering (8:34—9:1), Jesus is presented and presents Himself as the model for His disciples.

3. Jesus as the Son of God. Mark presents the divinity of Jesus as Son of God and Son of Man (1:11; 2:10, 28; 3:11; 5:7; 9:7; 14:62; 15:39) shining through the ambiguous state of humiliation necessary for His earthly messianic calling. Mark also calls attention to the desire of Jesus to hide His true identity as Messiah and Son of God (the so-called "messianic secret") from those who would inevitably misinterpret it (1:34, 44; 3:12; 5:43; 7:36, 37; 8:26, 30; 9:9).

4. The Gospel as the Power of God. Mark emphasizes the importance of the preaching and teaching of the gospel message, not just as theological truth but as the "power of God" (12:24; cf. Rom. 1:16) over evil and sickness (1:27; cf. 16:15–18).

5. The Mission to the Gentiles. Mark shows Jesus' interest in the Gentiles and the validity of the church's mission to the Gentiles. This emphasis appears in the basic outline of the book, the care taken to explain Jewish terms and customs, the declaration that the temple was a "house of prayer for all nations" (11:17), and

the final confession of Christ from the mouth of a Gentile (15:39).

Interpretive Difficulties The question of the literary type of the Gospel of Mark has occupied scholars continuously, especially in the last two hundred years. The question is important because it determines the context for interpreting individual elements of the Gospel. Some believe that the Gospels are a unique type of literature corresponding to the unique Christian message. Others think the Gospels should be compared to Greek and Roman biographies that combine in one literary work extraordinary deeds and memorable teachings. The Gospels differ from such biographies, most notably in the emphasis they place on the last days and death of Jesus, and their silence about most of His adult life. It has been well said that the Gospels are Passion narratives with long introductions.

Mark himself situates the beginning of his Gospel in the Old Testament (1:1-4 and notes), and its basic point of reference is to be found there, especially in the Book of Exodus. Exodus is a covenant document whose focal point is the account of how the covenant was inaugurated under the leadership of Moses. This focus corresponds in the Gospels to the significance of the death of Jesus, in which He shed the blood of the new covenant (14:24 and note). The rest of Exodus concerns the career of Moses, the covenant mediator; a record of the signs that God performed through him to establish the faith of God's people in the midst of unbelieving Egypt; and a record of the covenant legislation. Jesus likewise has called forth a new people, demonstrating His authority through miracles and signs, and has given His teaching as the "new commandment" (John 13:34) of the new covenant. As a record of Jesus' life and teachings, Mark takes its place in the history of redemption as a canonical document of the New Testament. □

Outline of Mark

I. Prologue: The Inauguration of Jesus' Ministry (1:1–13)
  A. John's Witness to Jesus (1:1–8)
  B. Jesus' Baptism and the Father's Witness (1:9–11)
  C. Jesus' Temptation (1:12, 13)
II. The Public Ministry of Jesus in Galilee (1:14—6:44)
  A. The Early Ministry (1:14—3:12)
    1. Arrival in Galilee (1:14, 15)
    2. Call of the First Disciples (1:16–20)
    3. Exorcisms and Healings in Capernaum (1:21–34)
    4. Ministry in the Whole of Galilee (1:35–45)
    5. A Healing in Capernaum (2:1–12)
    6. Calling of Levi (2:13–17)
    7. Controversies with the Authorities (2:18—3:12)
  B. The Later Ministry (3:13—6:44)
    1. Calling of the Twelve (3:13–19)
    2. Controversies in Capernaum (3:20–35)
    3. Parables of the Kingdom (4:1–34)
    4. Incursion into the Decapolis (4:35—5:20)
    5. Return to Galilee (5:21—6:6)
    6. Mission of the Twelve in Galilee (6:7–30)
    7. Feeding of the Five Thousand in Galilee (6:31–44)
III. Ministry to Gentile Regions (6:45—9:32)
  A. Visit to Gennesaret (6:45—7:23)
  B. Ministry in Tyre, Sidon, and the Decapolis (7:24—8:9)
  C. Ministry to the Region of Caesarea Philippi (8:10—9:32)
IV. Return to Capernaum; Conclusion of the Galilean Ministry (9:33–50)
V. Final Journey to Judea and Jerusalem (ch. 10)
  A. Teaching on the Way to Jerusalem (10:1–45)
  B. A Healing in Jericho (10:46–52)

VI. The Passion (chs. 11—15)
A. Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem (11:1–11)
B. Cleansing of the Temple (11:12–26)
C. Controversies in the Temple Courts (11:27—12:44)
D. Prophecies on the Mount of Olives (ch. 13)
E. Anointing at Bethany (14:1–11)
F. Passover Meal in Jerusalem (14:12–31)
G. Arrest and Trial of Jesus (14:32—15:20)
H. Death and Burial of Jesus (15:21–47)
VII. Resurrection Appearances in Jerusalem (ch. 16)

CHAPTER 1

1 [a]Luke 3:22 [b]Matt. 14:33
2 [c]Mal. 3:1 [1]NU *Isaiah the prophet*
3 [d]Is. 40:3
4 [e]Matt. 3:1 [2]Or *because of forgiveness*
5 [f]Matt. 3:5
6 [g]Matt. 3:4
7 [h]John 1:27
8 [i]Acts 1:5; 11:16 [j]Is. 44:3

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

THE [a]beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, [b]the Son of God. 2 As it is written in [1]the Prophets:

[c]*"Behold, I send My messenger before Your face,*
Who will prepare Your way before You."
3 *"The*[d] *voice of one crying in the wilderness:*
'Prepare the way of the LORD;
Make His paths straight.'"

4 [e]John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance [2]for the remission of sins. 5 [f]Then all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.

6 Now John was [g]clothed with camel's hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. 7 And he preached, saying, [h]"There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose. 8 [i]I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you [j]with the Holy Spirit."

■ **1:1 The beginning.** Unlike Matthew and Luke, Mark does not contain an account of Jesus' birth. The "beginning" (cf. Gen. 1:1; John 1:1) is identified with the ministry of John the Baptist (cf. Acts 1:22) and with the Old Testament prophecies announcing John's coming.

gospel. A term from political or personal reporting and correspondence, meaning "good news." The Greeks used this word for events such as the birth of an emperor or a major military victory.

of Jesus Christ. This phrase can be understood as either "about Jesus Christ" or "from Jesus Christ." The gospel is "about" Jesus, but it is also "from" Him (Rom. 1:9; 1 Cor. 9:12; 2 Cor. 10:14). The Gospel of Mark claims divine authority and offers itself as the word of Christ through His apostles to the church (cf. Rev. 1:1).

Son of God. Mark presents Jesus at the beginning of the Gospel as the divine, eternal Son. See notes on 13:32; 14:36; 15:39; cf. Rom. 1:3.

■ **1:2 it is written.** By placing this citation of the Old Testament here, Mark intends to show the organic progress of revelation under the divine Lord of history. If the Old Testament is the Gospel's beginning and source, the Gospel revealed through Jesus Christ is the final and inspired interpretation of the Old Testament message.

in the Prophets. See text note. The citation is a chain of texts (Ex. 23:20; Mal. 3:1; Is. 40:3) concerning messengers that God had sent by way of preparation.

■ **1:4 John.** The Old Testament citations locate John the Baptist in the preplanned history of God's covenantal dealings with His people.

in the wilderness. John's preaching in the wilderness symbolically reminds Israel of her covenantal origins in the Exodus (cf. Jer. 2:2). The wilderness is the traditional meeting place between God and His people.

baptism of repentance. The Qumran community, with which John may have had contact in his youth, practiced ritual cleansings and baptisms. Also, converts to Judaism were baptized. John's innovation was to require a one-time baptism of Israelites already within the covenant community. For him to require such a gesture of radical repentance is a sign of the approach of the new covenant. See note on Matt. 3:6.

for the remission of sins. John does not actually bestow forgiveness of sins. Definitive forgiveness of sins belongs to the new covenant (Jer. 31:34), which the Messiah will bring.

■ **1:5 all . . . those.** This is literary exaggeration, indicating that the covenant people went out to John in a great crowd, no doubt as entire families (4:1; 6:44 and notes).

■ **1:6 camel's hair.** John's clothing and food identify him as a classic type of Old Testament prophet (2 Kin. 1:8; Zech. 13:4).

■ **1:7 he preached.** The identity of the One whom John announces and before whom he feels unworthy to kneel is evident from the Old Testament prophecies already cited. It is the "Lord" who "will suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant," having been preceded by "My messenger" (Mal. 3:1).

■ **1:8 Holy Spirit.** The new covenant brings renewal to the people of God (Jer. 31:33, 34; Ezek. 37:14) through the Son and the Spirit, whom the Son possesses in full measure (Is. 42:1; 61:1).

John Baptizes Jesus

9 [k]It came to pass in those days *that* Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 [l]And immediately, coming up [3]from the water, He saw the heavens [4]parting and the Spirit [m]descending upon Him like a dove. 11 Then a voice came from heaven, [n]"You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Satan Tempts Jesus

12 [o]Immediately the Spirit [5]drove Him into the wilderness. 13 And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; [p]and the angels ministered to Him.

9 [k]Matt. 3:13–17

10 [l]Matt. 3:16 [m]Acts 10:38 [3]NU *out of* [4]*torn open*

11 [n]Matt. 3:17; 12:18

12 [o]Matt. 4:1–11 [5]*sent Him out*

13 [p]Matt. 4:10, 11

The Baptism of Jesus

There is continuity between John's baptism of repentance (Mark 1:4) and the trinitarian baptism instituted by Jesus (Matt. 28:19). Both were symbols of cleansing, and had remission of sins in view (Mark 1:4; Acts 2:38). But they were not identical. Those baptized by John needed Christian baptism as well (Acts 19:5). Christian baptism is a sign of initiation pointing to a relationship with the Christ who has come; John's baptism was a preparatory rite, signifying readiness for the coming of the Christ and for His judgment (Matt. 3:7–12; Luke 3:7–18; Acts 19:4).

Jesus insisted that John, His cousin, must baptize Him, overriding John's protests (Matt. 3:13–15). In His role as Messiah, "born under the law" (Gal. 4:4), Jesus had to submit to all God's requirements for Israel, and to identify with those whose sins He had come to bear. His baptism proclaimed that He had come to take the sinner's place under God's judgment. It is in this sense that He was baptized "to fulfill all righteousness" (Matt. 3:15; cf. Is. 53:11).

At Christ's baptism there was a manifestation of the Trinity; the Father spoke from heaven, and a dove descended, as a sign of the Spirit's anointing. The significance of the dove descending and abiding was not that Jesus was being filled with the Spirit for the first time but that He was being marked as the bearer of the Spirit who would baptize with the Spirit (John 1:32, 33), and so bring in the age of the Spirit that was to fulfill Israel's hopes (Luke 4:1, 14, 18–21). □

■ **1:9 in those days.** According to John 2:20, one of Jesus' earliest acts following His baptism took place when the rebuilding of the temple was in its forty-sixth year. Since Herod began reconstruction in 19 B.C., Jesus was baptized in about A.D. 27.

baptized by John. Jesus knows this to be part of the divine plan "to fulfill all righteousness" (Matt. 3:15), by which, in His humanity, He identifies fully with the human condition, and begins the process of bearing the sins of humanity. See theological note "The Baptism of Jesus."

■ **1:10 immediately.** This important word (sometimes translated "straightway") is characteristic of Mark (twelve times in the rest of the New Testament, forty-two times in Mark). It perhaps suggests not speed but rather the sureness and inevitability of God's sovereign plan, recalling the "straight" (same root as "straightway") paths divinely prepared for Jesus' coming and ministry.

Spirit descending. This descent of the Spirit is a sign of Jesus' messiahship (v. 8 note). In Jesus' baptism, as later in Christian baptism (Matt. 28:19), all three Persons of the Trinity are involved. The initiative of the Father, the vicarious work of the Son, and the glorifying, enabling power of the Spirit are all present.

■ **1:11 You are My beloved Son.** The mystery of the person of Jesus finds expression in the divine declaration. He, the Second Person of the Godhead, is at the same time the representative believer and the one true and faithful "son" of Israel (Ex. 4:23), who pleases the Father, and whom the Father acknowledges as Son in both a personal and an official sense (Ps. 2:7; Is. 42:1). See note on v. 1.

1:12 the Spirit drove Him. The verb "drove" is strong, giving the idea of divine and scriptural necessity. The Spirit is driving Jesus out into the "wilderness," just as Israel, called "son" (Ex. 4:23) and "baptized into Moses . . . in the sea" (1 Cor. 10:2; cf. Ex. 14:13–31), was led by the Spirit in the pillars of cloud and fire (Ex. 14:19, 20) along the path of desert testing.

■ **1:13 forty days.** Possibly a symbolic reference to the forty years of Israel's wilderness experience (Deut. 1:3; cf. v. 12 note).

wild beasts. This detail emphasizes that the wilderness is a place of curse where the devil is master (Matt. 12:43; cf. Eph. 2:2). Jesus enters this domain and binds the strong man (see note on 3:23–27). This is a kind of reenactment of the testing of Adam. Although Adam was in a garden and was not threatened by wild beasts, he fell to Satan's tempting. In the wilderness, Jesus, the second Adam, begins His defeat of the devil and His work of redemption by passing the test of filial obedience.

angels ministered. Angels accompanied Israel in the Exodus (Ex. 14:19; 23:20; 32:34; 33:2). Jesus' experience in the wilderness is a type of that of the Christian in the world, which is experienced as Satan's domain (Eph. 6:12). See note on 10:30.

14 [q]Matt. 4:12 [r]Matt. 4:23 [6]NU omits *of the kingdom*

15 [s][Gal. 4:4] [t]Matt. 3:2; 4:17 [7]*has drawn near*

16 [u]Luke 5:2–11

17 [v]Matt. 13:47, 48

18 [w][Luke 14:26]

21 [x]Luke 4:31–37 [y]Matt. 4:23

22 [z]Matt. 7:28, 29; 13:54

23 [a][Matt. 12:43]

24 [b]Matt. 8:28, 29 [c]James 2:19 [d]Ps. 16:10

25 [e][Luke 4:39] [8]Lit. *Be muzzled*

26 [f]Mark 9:20

27 [9]NU *What is this? A new doctrine with authority! He* [1]*teaching*

28 [g]Matt. 4:24; 9:31

29 [h]Luke 4:38, 39

32 [i]Matt. 8:16, 17

Jesus Begins His Galilean Ministry

14 [q]Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, [r]preaching the gospel [6]of the kingdom of God, 15 and saying, [s]"The time is fulfilled, and [t]the kingdom of God [7]is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."

Four Fishermen Called as Disciples

16 [u]And as He walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. 17 Then Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become [v]fishers of men." 18 [w]They immediately left their nets and followed Him.

19 When He had gone a little farther from there, He saw James the *son* of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also *were* in the boat mending their nets. 20 And immediately He called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after Him.

Jesus Casts Out an Unclean Spirit

21 [x]Then they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the [y]synagogue and taught. 22 [z]And they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

23 Now there was a man in their synagogue with an [a]unclean spirit. And he cried out, 24 saying, "Let *us* alone! [b]What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I [c]know who You are—the [d]Holy One of God!"

25 But Jesus [e]rebuked him, saying, [8]"Be quiet, and come out of him!" 26 And when the unclean spirit [f]had convulsed him and cried out with a loud voice, he came out of him. 27 Then they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, [9]"What is this? What new [1]doctrine *is* this? For with authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him." 28 And immediately His [g]fame spread throughout all the region around Galilee.

Peter's Mother-in-Law Healed

29 [h]Now as soon as they had come out of the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. 30 But Simon's wife's mother lay sick with a fever, and they told Him about her at once. 31 So He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and immediately the fever left her. And she served them.

Many Healed After Sabbath Sunset

32 [i]At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed. 33 And the whole city was gathered together at the door. 34 Then He

■ **1:14 after John . . . to Galilee.** It is often claimed that the chronology of the first three (Synoptic) Gospels is irreconcilable with that of John for three main reasons: (a) the cleansing of the temple is placed in different periods of Jesus' ministry (11:15 note); (b) in the Synoptic Gospels Jesus is in Jerusalem only once, for the last week of His ministry, while in John He is there five times (c) in John Jesus has an early Judean ministry concurrent with that of John the Baptist (John 3:22–24), while in the Synoptic Gospels Jesus begins His ministry in Galilee. However, in saying that a Galilean ministry begins only after John the Baptist's arrest, Mark is not denying that there was an earlier Judean ministry; it is simply not part of his story.

■ **1:15 The time is fulfilled.** The past times, especially of God's acts of salvation for His people Israel, reach their climax in this present time of salvation through Jesus.

the kingdom of God is at hand. The kingdom of God is that final state of affairs where God's supreme reign is fully realized over the transformed universe and in the hearts of all His redeemed and glorified people. This kingdom is "at hand" in the sense that the coming of Jesus sets in motion all that will bring about its actualization. God requires repentance and belief in response to this news. See note on v. 4.

■ **1:16 Sea of Galilee.** An inland lake thirteen miles long and eight miles wide, otherwise known in the New Testament as the Lake of Gennesaret (Luke 5:1) or the Sea of Tiberias (John 5:1).

■ **1:17 Follow Me . . . fishers of men.** Mark immediately shows Jesus calling disciples to follow Him and to call others to Him. This first appointed ministry of the emerging church has as its primary goal seeking the lost. This emphasis on evangelism was not lost on the apostle Paul, who said, "Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:16).

■ **1:19 James . . . John.** Note that Jesus does not recruit His apostles and "fishers of men" from the religious intelligentsia but from ordinary walks of life.

■ **1:20 hired servants.** This detail suggests a small prosperous business.

■ **1:22 as one having authority.** Jesus' teaching is unlike that of the scribes because it is tied to His person (2:10) and to His interpretation of Scripture (12:35–40). Its content is new, announcing the coming of the kingdom (v. 15) and the defeat of Satan (v. 27).

■ **1:24 What have we to do with You.** This idiom distances the speaker from the person addressed. It occurs one other place in the New Testament (John 2:4).

Nazareth. Lit. "Nazarene." Nazareth, west of the Sea of Galilee, was Jesus' hometown.

Holy One of God. Jesus is described this way only in this incident (Luke 4:34). The demons quake in the presence of divine holiness.

■ **1:25 Be quiet.** This strong term emphasizes Jesus' power to establish His kingdom in the face of evil.

■ **1:29 James and John.** See v. 19.

■ **1:30 Simon's wife's mother.** Peter was married (see also 1 Cor. 9:5), showing that marriage is normal for Christian leaders. At the same time celibacy remains a legitimate possibility (Matt. 19:12; 1 Cor. 7:7, 8, 32).

■ **1:32 when the sun had set.** Jesus had already healed on the Sabbath day (v. 25). On this occasion the people waited till sunset, when the Sabbath ended, to carry their sick to Jesus.

healed many who were sick with various diseases, and [j]cast out many demons; and He [k]did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew Him.

Preaching in Galilee

35 Now [l]in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a [2]solitary place; and there He [m]prayed. 36 And Simon and those *who were* with Him searched for Him. 37 When they found Him, they said to Him, [n]"Everyone [o]is looking for You."

38 But He said to them, [p]"Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because [q]for this purpose I have come forth."

39 [r]And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and [s]casting out demons.

Jesus Cleanses a Leper

40 [t]Now a leper came to Him, imploring Him, kneeling down to Him and saying to Him, "If You are willing, You can make me clean."

41 Then Jesus, moved with [u]compassion, stretched out *His* hand and touched him, and said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed." 42 As soon as He had spoken, [v]immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed. 43 And He strictly warned him and sent him away at once, 44 and said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing those things [w]which Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

45 [x]However, he went out and began to proclaim *it* freely, and to spread the matter, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter the city, but was outside in deserted places; [y]and they came to Him from every direction.

Jesus Forgives and Heals a Paralytic

2 And again [a]He entered Capernaum after *some* days, and it was heard that He was in the house. 2 [1]Immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive *them,* not even near the door. And He preached the word to them. 3 Then they came to Him, bringing a [b]paralytic who was carried by four *men.* 4 And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying.

5 When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you."

6 And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, 7 "Why does this *Man* speak blasphemies like this? [c]Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

8 But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, "Why do you reason about these things in your hearts? 9 [d]Which is eas-

34 [j]Matt. 9:33; Luke 13:32 [k]Mark 3:12; Luke 4:41; Acts 16:17, 18

35 [l]Luke 4:42, 43 [m]Matt. 26:39, 44; Mark 6:46; Luke 5:16; 6:12; 9:28, 29; Heb. 5:7 [2]*deserted*

37 [n]Matt. 4:25; John 3:26; 12:19 [o][Heb. 11:6]

38 [p]Luke 4:43 [q][Is. 61:1, 2; Mark 10:45; John 16:28; 17:4, 8]

39 [r]Ps. 22:22; Matt. 4:23; 9:35; Mark 1:21; 3:1; Luke 4:44 [s]Mark 5:8, 13; 7:29, 30

40 [t]Matt. 8:2–4; Luke 5:12–14

41 [u]Luke 7:13

42 [v]Matt. 15:28; Mark 5:29

44 [w]Lev. 14:1–32

45 [x]Matt. 28:15; Luke 5:15 [y]Mark 2:2, 13; 3:7; Luke 5:17; John 6:2

CHAPTER 2

1 [a]Matt. 9:1

2 [1]NU omits *Immediately*

3 [b]Matt. 4:24; 8:6; Acts 8:7; 9:33

7 [c]Job 14:4; Is. 43:25; Dan. 9:9

9 [d]Matt. 9:5

■ **1:34 many demons.** The extent of demon possession in Galilee's Jewish population (v. 32 note) is startling, though the Gentile or pagan influence in Galilee must not be forgotten.

He did not allow the demons to speak. This is the first instance of what has been called the "messianic secret" (v. 43; 3:12; 4:10, 11; 5:19; 8:30; 9:9). The revelation of Jesus as the Messiah had to begin discreetly and proceed by stages so that the plan of God for the death of His Servant would not be jeopardized by any excesses of popular enthusiasm.

■ **1:35 solitary place.** Lit. "deserted place," the place where Jesus fights His spiritual battle (v. 12; cf. v. 3), and which is also, as with ancient Israel, a type of the present Christian walk (1 Cor. 10:1–11; Heb. 13:12, 13).

■ **1:38 for this purpose I have come.** Jesus states His program of evangelistic preaching with compelling clarity. He says in Luke 19:10, "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." And so He is on the move, touring Galilee several times (v. 39; 6:6; Luke 8:1).

■ **1:40 a leper.** Under the Mosaic law, certain skin diseases made a person ceremonially unclean, excluding him from communal life (Lev. 13:46).

■ **1:43 strictly warned.** See note on v. 34. The Greek verb expresses deep emotion, as in the case of Jesus before the tomb of Lazarus (John 11:33, 38).

■ **1:44 as a testimony.** Jesus respects the Mosaic law as the great high priest of another line (Heb. 7:11—8:13), but He is not bound or limited by it. Although touching the leper was a violation of the laws of ritual purity (Lev. 5:3), Jesus did so as He healed him.

■ **1:45 proclaim it freely.** This was not the time for unbridled proclamation (v. 34 note), though there would come a time in the history of redemption (after the Resurrection) when open preaching would be proper (Matt. 10:27; Luke 12:2, 3).

■ **2:1 house.** Jesus was from Nazareth, about twenty miles away, and Simon Peter's house (1:29) may have served as His home in Capernaum, a village more centrally located and with direct access to the Sea of Galilee.

■ **2:4 uncovered the roof.** Houses had flat roofs made of branches and dried clay supported by wooden beams.

2:5 your sins are forgiven. Jesus' response is extraordinary for two reasons. First, the man had come for physical healing, but Jesus speaks about the more profound illness of sin, of which physical illness generally is a consequence; and about the radical healing of forgiveness, of which this particular physical healing was a sign. Second, Jesus claims for Himself the power to forgive sins, which in all the Bible can be attributed only to God (Ex. 34:7; Is. 1:18). The teachers of the law immediately accuse Jesus of "blasphemies" (v. 7; 3:29 note), a proper conclusion if He were a mere man.

■ **2:9 Which is easier.** Jesus asks the scribes to reconsider their judgment in the light of His power to heal (cf. John 5:36; 10:25, 38), which is ultimately a divine power (Ps. 41:1; Jer. 3:22; Hos. 14:4).

ier, to say to the paralytic, '*Your* sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise, take up your bed and walk'? 10 But that you may know that the Son of Man has [2]power on earth to forgive sins"—He said to the paralytic, 11 "I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." 12 Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and [e]glorified God, saying, "We never saw *anything* like this!"

Matthew the Tax Collector

13 [f]Then He went out again by the sea; and all the multitude came to Him, and He taught them. 14 [g]As He passed by, He saw Levi the *son* of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, [h]"Follow Me." So he arose and [i]followed Him.

15 [j]Now it happened, as He was dining in *Levi's* house, that many tax collectors and sinners also sat together with Jesus and His disciples; for there were many, and they followed Him. 16 And when the scribes [3]and Pharisees saw Him eating with the tax collectors and sinners, they said to His disciples, "How *is it* that He eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners?"

17 When Jesus heard *it,* He said to them, [k]"Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call *the* righteous, but sinners, [4]to repentance."

Jesus Is Questioned About Fasting

18 [l]The disciples of John and of the Pharisees were fasting. Then they came and said to Him, "Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?"

19 And Jesus said to them, "Can the [5]friends of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast. 20 But the days will come when the bridegroom will be [m]taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days. 21 No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; or else the new piece pulls away from the old, and the tear is made worse. 22 And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine bursts the wineskins, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But new wine must be put into new wineskins."

Jesus Is Lord of the Sabbath

23 [n]Now it happened that He went through the grainfields on the Sabbath; and as they went His disciples began [o]to pluck the heads of grain. 24 And the Pharisees said to Him, "Look, why do they do what is [p]not lawful on the Sabbath?"

10 [2]*authority*

12 [e]Matt. 15:31; [Phil. 2:11]

13 [f]Matt. 9:9

14 [g]Matt. 9:9–13; Luke 5:27–32 [h]Matt. 4:19; 8:22; 19:21; John 1:43; 12:26; 21:22 [i]Luke 18:28

15 [j]Matt. 9:10

16 [3]NU *of the*

17 [k]Matt. 9:12, 13; 18:11; Luke 5:31, 32; 19:10 [4]NU omits *to repentance*

18 [l]Matt. 9:14–17; Luke 5:33–38

19 [5]Lit. *sons of the bridechamber*

20 [m]Acts 1:9; 13:2, 3; 14:23

23 [n]Matt. 12:1–8; Luke 6:1–5 [o]Deut. 23:25

24 [p]Ex. 20:10; 31:15

■ **2:10 Son of Man.** Jesus used this phrase regularly to designate Himself, associating Himself in His ministry with the heavenly "Son of Man" of Dan. 7:13, 14 (v. 28; 8:31; 9:31; 10:33, 45; 13:26). See note on Matt. 8:20.

■ **2:14 Levi the son of Alphaeus.** In the parallel account in Matt. 9:9–13 this person is named "Matthew." Since Matthew appears in Mark's list of apostles (3:18) and there is no mention of Levi, it appears that Levi was surnamed "Matthew," and it was by that name that he was best known in the early church.

tax office. Tax booths were set up on highways, bridges, and canals for tolls, and at the lakeside to tax fishing. See note on Luke 3:12.

he arose. The radical demand of Jesus' call and the unconditional obedience of the one who hears are thrown into sharp relief for the reader.

■ **2:15 sinners.** A term of disdain used by the Pharisees for all Jews who did not follow their traditions of legal purity.

sat together with. Contact with sinners would make Jesus a sinner, since rabbinic regulations specifically prohibited such table fellowship. On the other hand, the "sinners" would see in this a gesture of friendship and acceptance (14:20 note).

■ **2:16 Pharisees.** Theological descendants of the Hasidim, a second-century B.C. movement of piety, learning, and faithfulness to the Mosaic law against Greek pagan influence. At the time of Jesus, strict observance of the law, and especially ritual purity, was regulated by a body of ethical teachings known as "the tradition of the elders" (7:3), developed by the rabbis as an application of the law to specific situations. The difficulty of knowing this tradition and all its many subtle interpretations created a social and religious gap between a sanctimonious elite, "the righteous," and the general population, "the sinners."

■ **2:17 He said . . . I did not come.** Note the clear declaration of the priority of His mission (cf. 1:38). There is both truth and biting irony in Jesus' words. Tax collectors, prostitutes, and the like are indeed spiritually "sick," but Jesus does not really intend the Pharisees to think of themselves as "healthy" (cf. Luke 18:9–14). Jesus is breaking down the artificial categories of all legalistic, works-righteousness religion. Like the Old Testament (Ps. 14:1–3), Jesus teaches that all are sinners (7:1–8), and that righteousness is first and foremost a gift of God to repentant sinners (Ps. 51:1–18; Luke 19:9; Rom. 3:22).

■ **2:18 fasting.** The Mosaic law required only one fast annually, on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:29–31; cf. Acts 27:9, which calls this day "the Fast"). Nevertheless, as a sign of contrition and penitence associated with prayer, fasting was a part of Old Testament piety from the time of the judges (Judg. 20:26; 1 Kin. 21:27), sometimes becoming an empty ritual (Is. 58:3). The Pharisees and their adherents apparently fasted twice a week (Luke 18:12). Since the message of John the Baptist centered on repentance (Matt. 3:11), fasting was appropriate for his disciples. Jesus, whose own message included repentance, did not insist upon fasting.

■ **2:19 Jesus said to them.** The reason Jesus gives sets Him off from all that was before, for the "bridegroom" has now come, the "new" (vv. 21, 22) is present. By comparing Himself to the bridegroom, Jesus affirms the presence of the kingdom as a time for celebration, like a wedding. Jesus eats and drinks with publicans and sinners, bringing joy and salvation to them (Luke 19:6, 9).

■ **2:20 will fast.** The present celebration (v. 19) is provisional, for Jesus has yet to suffer and die, and "the bridegroom will be taken from them." See Acts 13:2; 14:23.

■ **2:21, 22** The images of new cloth and new wineskins again emphasize the new situation brought about by the coming of the kingdom and of its King, and seek to show through the symbols of unwise action the inappropriateness of fasting in this new situation.

■ **2:23 on the Sabbath.** The problem with the legalistic reasoning by

25 But He said to them, "Have you never read [q]what David did when he was in need and hungry, he and those with him: 26 how he went into the house of God *in the days* of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the showbread, [r]which is not lawful to eat except for the priests, and also gave some to those who were with him?"

27 And He said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the [s]Sabbath. 28 Therefore [t]the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath."

Healing on the Sabbath

3 And [a]He entered the synagogue again, and a man was there who had a withered hand. 2 So they [b]watched Him closely, whether He would [c]heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might [1]accuse Him. 3 And He said to the man who had the withered hand, [2]"Step forward." 4 Then He said to them, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they kept silent. 5 And when He had looked around at them with anger, being grieved by the [d]hardness of their hearts, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched *it* out, and his hand was restored [3]as whole as the other. 6 [e]Then the Pharisees went out and immediately plotted with [f]the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him.

A Great Multitude Follows Jesus

7 But Jesus withdrew with His disciples to the sea. And a great multitude from Galilee followed Him, [g]and from Judea 8 and Jerusalem and Idumea and beyond the Jordan; and those from Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they heard how [h]many things He was doing, came to Him. 9 So He told His disciples that a small boat should be kept ready for Him because of the multitude, lest they should crush Him. 10 For He healed [i]many, so that as many as had afflictions pressed about Him to [j]touch Him. 11 [k]And the unclean spirits, whenever they saw Him, fell down before Him and cried out, saying, [l]"You are the Son of God." 12 But [m]He sternly warned them that they should not make Him known.

The Twelve Apostles

13 [n]And He went up on the mountain and called to *Him* those He Himself wanted. And they came to Him. 14 Then He appointed twelve, [4]that they might be with Him and that He might

25 [q]1 Sam. 21:1–6
26 [r]Lev. 24:5–9
27 [s]Deut. 5:14
28 [t]Matt. 12:8

CHAPTER 3

1 [a]Luke 6:6–11
2 [b]Luke 14:1; 20:20 [c]Luke 13:14 [1]*bring charges against*
3 [2]Lit. *Arise into the midst*
5 [d]Zech. 7:12 [3]NU omits *as whole as the other*
6 [e]Mark 12:13 [f]Matt. 22:16
7 [g]Luke 6:17
8 [h]Mark 5:19
10 [i]Luke 7:21 [j]Matt. 9:21; 14:36
11 [k]Luke 4:41 [l]Matt. 8:29; 14:33
12 [m]Mark 1:25, 34
13 [n]Luke 9:1
14 [4]NU adds *whom He also named apostles*

certain Pharisees is illustrated in this incident. In reality the disciples were not stealing or doing farm work (Deut. 23:25). Their accusers counted even "plucking the heads of grain" as reaping, which was prohibited on the Sabbath (Ex. 34:21).

■ **2:25 He said to them, "Have you never read?"** Jesus' question suggests an ironic criticism of their knowledge of Scripture (John 3:10; 5:39, 47). Jesus does not justify Himself by laying Scripture aside. He rather shows His understanding of its depth and its proper application to human need.

David. Executing a divine mission (1 Sam. 21:5) as the Lord's anointed, David ate the consecrated bread normally reserved for the priests. Christ, as the Son of David allows His disciples to fulfill their physical needs so they might continue their mission of redemption, a work that is always lawful to be done.

■ **2:26 Abiathar.** According to 1 Sam. 21:1–6, it was Abiathar's father, Ahimelech, who gave David the consecrated bread. However, Abiathar was certainly alive, and perhaps even present, when the incident referred to occurred. So the phrase "in the days of Abiathar" is strictly correct. Probably Jesus referred to Abiathar because he was so well known as one of David's chief supporters.

■ **2:28 Lord of the Sabbath.** Again (cf. v. 10) Jesus declares His authority as the Son of Man who brings blessings, this time as the Mediator of the Old Testament Law concerning the Sabbath. This claim is made against traditions that had turned the life-promoting fourth commandment (Ex. 20:8–11) into a burden. Since the Sabbath was instituted at creation and not only under Moses, the Lord of the Sabbath is also Lord of creation.

■ **3:1 withered hand.** This was not a life and death illness, whose healing on the Sabbath would be permitted by the rules of the Pharisees (v. 4 note). Jesus' action would appear to be a deliberate provocation as well as an act of mercy.

■ **3:2 they watched Him closely.** The Pharisees (v. 6) make Jesus' action a test case, as Jesus evidently wanted them to do.

■ **3:4 Is it lawful.** Jesus anticipates their criticism by reiterating the Sabbath teaching He began in 2:25–28. The Pharisees held that only essential aid to the sick was lawful on the Sabbath. Jesus shows that their interpretation was against the spirit of the commandment, which existed for the promotion of "good" (2:27). The good that Jesus does in bringing redemption is required, not forbidden, by the divine law.

3:6 Herodians. A non-religious, political group supporting the dynasty of the Herods. They supported and depended upon the alliance with Rome. In collaborating with the Herodians, the Pharisees had moved far from the Old Testament ideal for the people of God (cf. Deut. 17:15). For more on this conspiracy, see 8:15; 12:13.

■ **3:8 great multitude.** The phrase is repeated twice (vv. 8, 9). Jesus' public ministry, in spite of the opposition of the ruling elite (v. 6), is becoming a mass movement. Jesus is so crowded that He must take refuge in a small boat (v. 9). People are coming to Galilee from everywhere to hear Him.

■ **3:11 whenever they saw Him.** Although the crowds are Jewish (cf. 7:26–29), Jesus is constantly meeting people possessed with evil spirits. In the presence of Jesus the true nature of the combat (Eph. 6:12) becomes evident. The demons are exposed, and they expose the true identity of Jesus, the Son of God (1:1; 15:39 and notes).

■ **3:12 sternly warned.** See 1:34, 43.

■ **3:13 those He Himself wanted.** Mark emphasizes that the choice of the apostles has its origin in Jesus' determined purpose.

■ **3:14 He appointed twelve.** In such a context, the significance of the number "twelve" could hardly be missed. Jesus was setting up the constitution of the renewed Israel (Matt. 19:28). See "The Apostles" at Acts 1:26.

that they might be with Him. A signal point of the uniqueness of the Twelve is the time they spend with the earthly Jesus, a time of preparation.

preach. Again (1:14, 17) the priority is a preaching mission coupled with exorcism. The time of preparation has a markedly practical emphasis.

send them out to preach, 15 and to have [5]power [6]to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons: 16 [7]Simon, [o]to whom He gave the name Peter; 17 James the *son* of Zebedee and John the brother of James, to whom He gave the name Boanerges, that is, "Sons of Thunder"; 18 Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the *son* of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Cananite; 19 and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him. And they went into a house.

A House Divided Cannot Stand

20 Then the multitude came together again, [p]so that they could not so much as eat bread. 21 But when His [q]own people heard *about this,* they went out to lay hold of Him, [r]for they said, "He is out of His mind."

22 And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, [s]"He has Beelzebub," and, "By the [t]ruler of the demons He casts out demons."

23 [u]So He called them to *Himself* and said to them in parables: "How can Satan cast out Satan? 24 If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25 And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. 26 And if Satan has risen up against himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but has an end. 27 [v]No one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. And then he will plunder his house.

The Unpardonable Sin

28 [w]"Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter; 29 but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation"— 30 because they [x]said, "He has an unclean spirit."

Jesus' Mother and Brothers Send for Him

31 [y]Then His brothers and His mother came, and standing outside they sent to Him, calling Him. 32 And a multitude was sitting around Him; and they said to Him, "Look, Your mother and Your brothers [8]are outside seeking You."

33 But He answered them, saying, "Who is My mother, or My brothers?" 34 And He looked around in a circle at those who sat about Him, and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers! 35 For whoever does the [z]will of God is My brother and My sister and mother."

The Parable of the Sower

4 And [a]again He began to teach by the sea. And a great multitude was gathered to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat *in it* on the sea; and the whole multitude was on the land facing the sea. 2 Then He taught them many things by parables, [b]and said to them in His teaching:

3 "Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. 4 And it happened, as he sowed, *that* some *seed* fell by the wayside; and the birds [1]of the air came and devoured it. 5 Some fell on stony ground,

15 [5]*authority* [6]NU omits *to heal sicknesses and*

16 [o]John 1:42 [7]NU *and He appointed the twelve: Simon . . .*

20 [p]Mark 6:31

21 [q]Mark 6:3 [r]John 7:5; 10:20

22 [s]Matt. 9:34; 10:25 [t][John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11]

23 [u]Matt. 12:25–29

27 [v][Is. 49:24, 25]

28 [w]Luke 12:10

30 [x]Matt. 9:34

31 [y]Matt. 12:46–50

32 [8]NU, M add *and Your sisters*

35 [z]Eph. 6:6

CHAPTER 4

1 [a]Luke 8:4–10

2 [b]Mark 12:38

4 [1]NU, M omit *of the air*

■ **3:18 Thaddaeus.** Mark and Matt. 10:2–4 list identical names for the Twelve. The parallel list in Luke 6:12–16 (cf. Acts 1:13) had "Judas" instead of "Thaddaeus." A possible explanation of this difference is that Thaddaeus had a second name, Judas.

Cananite. See note on Matt. 10:4.

■ **3:19 Iscariot.** Some believe that Judas was a political revolutionary because "Iscariot" may have been derived from the Latin *sicarius,* "assassin." More likely the word has a semitic origin—*ish* meaning "man (of)," and *Kerioth,* a town in Israel close to Hebron (Josh. 15:25).

■ **3:21 His own people.** Some interpreters identify these as Jesus' family, others propose associates, or friends. However, the group is possibly identified in v. 31 as "His brothers and His mother."

out of His mind. The phrase expresses an attitude of unbelief toward Jesus by those who humanly were closest to Him.

■ **3:22 Beelzebub.** Greek *beelzeboul,* the god of Ekron (2 Kin. 1:2; Matt. 10:25 note). The Pharisees use it as a name for Satan and accuse Jesus of casting out demons by the power of Satan.

■ **3:23–27 parables.** See note on 4:2. This parable illustrates Jesus' claim that the kingdom of God has come (Matt. 12:28), for one stronger than the "strong man" is here, able to bind Satan and to free people from his kingdom.

■ **3:29 blasphemes against the Holy Spirit.** For various forms of blasphemy, see 2:7; Ex. 22:28; Lev. 24:10–16; Ezek. 35:12, 13; John 10:33–36; Acts 6:11. The unforgivable blasphemy specified here is the act of deliberately associating the power and the work of Jesus, who is full of the Holy Spirit, with the work of Satan. This is to equate supreme spiritual good with supreme spiritual evil, hardening one's heart in a way that makes repentance, and therefore forgiveness, impossible. See theological note "The Unpardonable Sin."

■ **3:31 brothers . . . mother.** See v. 21 and note. Roman Catholic commentators, for whom the eternal virginity of Mary is a dogma, stress that "brother" can refer to wider family relations, pointing to Gen. 13:8; 14:16; Lev. 10:4; 1 Chr. 23:22. However, in Mark the term always seems to mean siblings from the same parents. Matt. 1:25 indicates that Mary and Joseph began normal marital relations after the birth of Jesus, giving added meaning to Luke's designation of Jesus as Mary's "firstborn" (Luke 2:7).

■ **3:35 whoever does the will of God.** The arrival of the kingdom of God changes human relationships. Those who oppose its progress, whether mothers or brothers, must be left; those in the kingdom become a person's closest associates, nearer and dearer than any others.

■ **4:2 parables.** See Matt. 13:3 note.

■ **4:3–8 a sower . . . to sow.** In first-century Palestine, sowing preceded plowing. Paths made by villagers and thorny areas had the seed plowed into them. Rocky places, covered by a thin layer of soil, only became visible after plowing.

where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of earth.
6 But when the sun was up it was scorched, and because it had no root it withered away. 7 And some *seed* fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no [2]crop.
8 But other *seed* fell on good ground and yielded a crop that sprang up, increased and produced: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."

9 And He said [3]to them, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

The Purpose of Parables

10 [c]But when He was alone, those around Him with the twelve asked Him about the parable.
11 And He said to them, "To you it has been given to [d]know the [4]mystery of the kingdom of God; but to [e]those who are outside, all things come in parables, 12 so that

[f] *'Seeing they may see and not perceive,*
And hearing they may hear and not understand;
Lest they should turn,
And their sins be forgiven them.'"

7 [2]Lit. *fruit*

9 [3]NU, M omit *to them*

10 [c]Matt. 13:10; Luke 8:9

11 [d][Matt. 11:25; 1 Cor. 2:10–16; 2 Cor. 4:6] [e][1 Cor. 5:12, 13; Col. 4:5; 1 Thess. 4:12; 1 Tim. 3:7] [4]*secret* or *hidden truths*

12 [f]Is. 6:9, 10; 43:8; Jer. 5:21; Ezek. 12:2; Matt. 13:14; Luke 8:10; John 12:40; Rom. 11:8

The Unpardonable Sin

Jesus' solemn warning about a kind of sin that will not be forgiven, either in this world or the next, is found in three Gospels: Matt. 12:31, 32; Mark 3:28–30; Luke 12:10. It is specifically "blasphemy against the Spirit." This blasphemy is an act performed by speaking, understood as an expression of the thoughts of the heart (Matt. 12:33–37; cf. Rom. 10:9, 10). In the particular context the opponents of Jesus were saying that the Power doing good works among them was not God but the devil. Jesus distinguishes between this blasphemy and other sins, both other sins of speech and other sins in general. As the Bible teaches, God forgave sins of incest, murder, lying, and even Paul's persecution of the church, which Paul did while "breathing threats and murder" against God's people (Acts 9:1).

What makes the unpardonable sin different from others is its relation to the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit's work to enlighten the mind of sinners (Eph. 1:17, 18); to reveal and teach the gospel (John 14:26), persuading souls to repent and believe the truth (cf. Acts 7:51). The Spirit not only explains the Word of God, but He opens the mind so that it is perceived (2 Cor. 3:16, 17). When His influence is deliberately and knowingly refused, in opposition to the light, then the irreversible sin can be committed as a voluntary, informed act of malice. In response there is a hardening of the heart from God that rules out repentance and faith (Heb. 3:12, 13). God permits the decision of the human will to be permanent in this case. God does not do this lightly or without cause, but in response to an offense against His love.

A person who wants to repent, that is, to reverse the sins they may be guilty of, has not suffered this hardening and has not committed the profound act of hatred that God has determined He will not forgive. Anyone who has been born again will not commit this sin, because the Spirit lives in that person, and God is not divided against Himself (1 John 3:9).

The other verses dealing with the unpardonable sin are Heb. 6:4–6; 10:26–29; and 1 John 5:16, 17. These show that the possibility of this sin depends on there being particular enlightenment and understanding from God and that it is not a common, everyday matter. Jesus said "all sins" and "whatever blasphemies" will be forgiven, excepting only this one sin. □

■ **4:9 He who has ears.** See also v. 23; Matt. 11:15; 13:9, 43; Luke 8:8; 14:35; Rev. 2:7; cf. Ps. 115:6. This phrase is a call for close attention.

■ **4:10 when He was alone.** Jesus was alone with His disciples, in particular with the Twelve (3:14 note) giving them special instruction. This aspect of Jesus' earthly ministry is in all the Gospels.

■ **4:11 mystery . . . parables.** See text note. The "mystery" refers to special divine revelation (Rom. 16:25; Eph. 1:9; 3:3, 9) the Old Testament notion of the prophet who by the Spirit is present in God's deliberative council. What he hears becomes his authoritative, divinely inspired message for the people (Ex. 24:15–18; Deut. 33:2; 1 Kin. 22:19; Is. 6:1–13; Jer. 23:18; Amos 3:7). Such revelation reaches its fulfillment in the gospel, which Paul will later call "the mystery of Christ" (Eph. 3:4; Col. 4:3) or "the mystery of the gospel" (Eph. 6:19). Here, the mystery of the kingdom is that the kingdom comes with Jesus, because He is the King. This "mystery," revealed to the disciples, is contrasted with "parables" told to "those who are outside." To those "outside," the parable is a riddle (contrast John 16:29), veiling their understanding as the Scripture had prophesied (v. 12, citing Is. 6:9, 10). To them Jesus remains a provocative enigma, as He will throughout His ministry.

14 [g]Matt. 13:18–23; Luke 8:11–15

19 [h]Luke 21:34 [i]Prov. 23:5; Eccl. 5:13; Luke 18:24; 1 Tim. 6:9, 10, 17

20 [j][John 15:2, 5; Rom. 7:4] [5]*receive*

21 [k]Matt. 5:15; Luke 8:16; 11:33

22 [l]Eccl. 12:14; Matt. 10:26, 27; Luke 12:3; [1 Cor. 4:5]

23 [m]Matt. 11:15; 13:9, 43; Mark 4:9; Luke 8:8; 14:35; Rev. 3:6, 13, 22; 13:9

24 [n]Matt. 7:2; Luke 6:38; 2 Cor. 9:6

25 [o]Matt. 13:12; 25:29; Luke 8:18; 19:26

26 [p][Matt. 13:24–30,36–43]; Luke 8:1 [6]*sow*

27 [q][2 Cor. 3:18; 2 Pet. 3:18]

28 [r][John 12:24]

29 [s][Mark 13:30, 39]; Rev. 14:15

30 [t]Matt. 13:31, 32; Luke 13:18, 19; [Acts 2:41; 4:4; 5:14; 19:20]

33 [u]Matt. 13:34, 35; [John 16:12]

34 [v]Luke 24:27, 45

35 [w]Matt. 8:18, 23–27; Luke 8:22, 25

The Parable of the Sower Explained

13 And He said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? 14 [g]The sower sows the word. 15 And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts. 16 These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; 17 and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble. 18 Now these are the ones sown among thorns; *they are* the ones who hear the word, 19 and the [h]cares of this world, [i]the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. 20 But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, [5]accept *it,* and bear [j]fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred."

Light Under a Basket

21 [k]Also He said to them, "Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Is it not to be set on a lampstand? 22 [l]For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light. 23 [m]If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear."

24 Then He said to them, "Take heed what you hear. [n]With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. 25 [o]For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him."

The Parable of the Growing Seed

26 And He said, [p]"The kingdom of God is as if a man should [6]scatter seed on the ground, 27 and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and [q]grow, he himself does not know how. 28 For the earth [r]yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head. 29 But when the grain ripens, immediately [s]he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

30 Then He said, [t]"To what shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what parable shall we picture it? 31 *It is* like a mustard seed which, when it is sown on the ground, is smaller than all the seeds on earth; 32 but when it is sown, it grows up and becomes greater than all herbs, and shoots out large branches, so that the birds of the air may nest under its shade."

Jesus' Use of Parables

33 [u]And with many such parables He spoke the word to them as they were able to hear *it.* 34 But without a parable He did not speak to them. And when they were alone, [v]He explained all things to His disciples.

Wind and Wave Obey Jesus

35 [w]On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side." 36 Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And

■ **4:13 all the parables.** This explanation of the function of parables applies to all parables. See note on Matt. 13:13.

■ **4:14–20** The "mystery" of the parable is not its moral teaching about the hardness of human hearts. The "mystery" is to be found in the paradox that the coming of God's reign is to be identified with a fragile seed. The Son of Man who exercises all authority on earth (2:11, 27) appears as Jesus of Nazareth. The coming of the kingdom is not equally visible to everyone, although it is a kingdom of power. Those on the outside have unreceptive hearts. For those with ears to hear, the parable unveils the "mystery" of redemption, hidden in the person and work of Christ Himself (1:34 note).

■ **4:19 deceitfulness of riches.** Cf. Eph. 4:22.

■ **4:22 there is nothing hidden . . . revealed.** During Christ's earthly ministry things are hidden, but the day will come, from the Resurrection on, when all will begin to be revealed (Matt. 10:26, 27; Luke 12:2, 3).

■ **4:24 With the same measure.** The future spread of the mystery of the kingdom will be rewarded in direct measure to one's faithfulness to that task.

■ **4:25 more will be given.** This principle is illustrated in the parables of the talents (Matt. 25:14–30) and of the minas (Luke 19:11–27).

■ **4:30–32** The parable of the mustard seed is again concerned with the kingdom's present manifestation in the person of Jesus.

■ **4:32 birds of the air.** In Dan. 4:21 the same metaphor refers to the world-wide dominion of Nebuchadnezzar.

■ **4:33, 34** See vv. 10–12.

■ **4:35 the other side.** According to 3:7, Jesus is in Galilee. The "other side" of the lake is the region of the Gadarenes in the Decapolis (5:1 note).

other little boats were also with Him. 37 And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling. 38 But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, [x]"Teacher, [y]do You not care that we are perishing?"

39 Then He arose and [z]rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, [a]"Peace,[7] be still!" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm. 40 But He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? [b]How[8] *is it* that you have no faith?" 41 And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!"

A Demon-Possessed Man Healed

5 Then [a]they came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the [1]Gadarenes. 2 And when He had come out of the boat, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an [b]unclean spirit, 3 who had *his* dwelling among the tombs; and no one could bind [2]him, not even with chains, 4 because he had often been bound with shackles and chains. And the chains had been pulled apart by him, and the shackles broken in pieces; neither could anyone tame him. 5 And always, night and day, he was in the mountains and in the tombs, crying out and cutting himself with stones.

6 When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and worshiped Him. 7 And he cried out with a loud voice and said, "What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I [c]implore[3] You by God that You do not torment me."

8 For He said to him, [d]"Come out of the man, unclean spirit!" 9 Then He asked him, "What *is* your name?"

And he answered, saying, "My name *is* Legion; for we are many." 10 Also he begged Him earnestly that He would not send them out of the country.

11 Now a large herd of [e]swine was feeding there near the mountains. 12 So all the demons begged Him, saying, "Send us to the swine, that we may enter them." 13 And [4]at once Jesus gave them permission. Then the unclean spirits went out and entered the swine (there were about two thousand); and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and drowned in the sea.

14 So those who fed the swine fled, and they told *it* in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that had happened. 15 Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one *who had been* [f]demon-possessed and had the legion, [g]sitting and [h]clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. 16 And those who saw it told them how it happened to him *who had been* demon-possessed, and about the swine. 17 Then [i]they began to plead with Him to depart from their region.

18 And when He got into the boat, [j]he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him. 19 However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, "Go home to your

38 [x][Matt. 23:8–10] [y]Ps. 44:23

39 [z]Mark 9:25; Luke 4:39 [a]Ps. 65:7; 89:9; 93:4; 104:6, 7; Matt. 8:26; Luke 8:24 [7]Lit. *Be quiet*

40 [b]Matt. 14:31, 32; Luke 8:25 [8]NU *Have you still no faith?*

CHAPTER 5

1 [a]Matt. 8:28–34; Luke 8:26–37 [1]NU *Gerasenes*

2 [b]Mark 1:23; 7:25; [Rev. 16:13, 14]

3 [2]NU adds *anymore*

7 [c]Matt. 26:63; Mark 1:24; Acts 19:13 [3]*adjure*

8 [d]Mark 1:25; 9:25; [Acts 16:18]

11 [e]Lev. 11:7, 8; Deut. 14:8; Luke 15:15, 16

13 [4]NU *He gave*

15 [f]Matt. 4:24; 8:16; Mark 1:32 [g]Luke 10:39 [h][Is. 61:10]

17 [i]Matt. 8:34; Acts 16:39

18 [j]Luke 8:38, 39

■ **4:37 great windstorm.** The Sea of Galilee is about 700 feet below sea level, thirteen miles long and eight miles wide. At its southern end is a deep, cliff-lined valley. The wind funnelling through the surrounding hills and through this valley can whip the lake into sudden violent storms.

■ **4:38 He was . . . asleep.** Jesus had been teaching all day, and was no doubt exhausted. Mark, like John (John 4:6; 11:35, 38), emphasizes the full humanity of Jesus.

■ **4:39 Peace, be still.** Lit. "be muzzled." Jesus has authority on earth to forgive sins (2:10), He is Lord of the Sabbath (2:28), He has authority in His teaching (1:22) and over the demons (1:27), and now He demonstrates His authority over nature. This calming of the storm resembles His exorcisms; there is the demonic expression of violence (1:26; 5:4, 13), the command to be "quiet" (1:25 note), and the resultant calm (5:15). Jesus binds "the strong man" (3:23–27) and reclaims from his power the physical creation.

■ **5:1 the country of the Gadarenes.** Gadara was six miles south of the lake (Matt. 8:28 note), Gerasa, some thirty miles southeast of the lake, occurs in other Greek manuscripts (see text note). There is also a village named Khersa on the eastern shore with the kind of cliffs and tombs described in the story. Jesus enters the Decapolis, a political association of ten independent Greek city-states, anticipating the future Gentile mission of the church. The Gentile character of the population is apparent since the Jews did not raise pigs, which were unclean under Mosaic law.

■ **5:2 out of the tombs.** This demon-possessed man was exiled from normal human contacts, separated from his village and family (v. 19).

■ **5:3 no one could bind him.** Violence and unusual physical strength leading to slow self-destruction (v. 5; 9:22) often seem to characterize the demon-possessed (v. 13; 1:26; 9:18, 20, 22, 26), but before the spiritual strength of Jesus the demons cower and flee.

■ **5:7 What have I to do with You.** See 1:24.

■ **5:9 What is your name.** Naming someone was believed to be a way of gaining power over them. The demons had already identified Jesus (v. 7; cf. 1:24, 34), but by this question Jesus reveals His superior power.

Legion. Jesus forces the demon to unmask himself. He is not one but many. A Roman legion was six thousand men.

■ **5:10 he begged.** The demon cowers before Jesus, even invoking God's name as a form of protection (v. 7), recognizing that Jesus has absolute power over him.

■ **5:13 Jesus gave them permission.** Jesus permits the demons to enter the pigs, who then hurl themselves over the cliff. This exorcism is a dramatic demonstration of Jesus' power over evil (vv. 14, 16) and of the presence of the kingdom in His ministry (Luke 11:20). See "Demons" at Deut. 32:17.

■ **5:15 sitting.** In comparison with his previous violent behavior and the recent destruction of the pigs, the man "sitting and clothed and in his right mind" gives eloquent expression to the peace and life-giving restoration that comes from Jesus' power (4:39; 9:26, 27).

■ **5:19 Go home.** This man becomes the first Gentile missionary. Jesus usually demands silence (1:34 note), but in this instance He allows the preparation for the future mission of the church to begin. Jesus will later

friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you." 20 And he departed and began to [k]proclaim in [5]Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all [l]marveled.

A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed

21 [m]Now when Jesus had crossed over again by boat to the other side, a great multitude gathered to Him; and He was by the sea. 22 [n]And behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue came, Jairus by name. And when he saw Him, he fell at His feet 23 and begged Him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter lies at the point of death. Come and [o]lay Your hands on her, that she may be healed, and she will live." 24 So *Jesus* went with him, and a great multitude followed Him and thronged Him.

25 Now a certain woman [p]had a flow of blood for twelve years, 26 and had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse. 27 When she heard about Jesus, she came behind *Him* in the crowd and [q]touched His garment. 28 For she said, "If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well."

29 Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in *her* body that she was healed of the [6]affliction. 30 And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that [r]power had gone out of Him, turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched My clothes?"

31 But His disciples said to Him, "You see the multitude thronging You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?' "

32 And He looked around to see her who had done this thing. 33 But the woman, [s]fearing and trembling, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. 34 And He said to her, "Daughter, [t]your faith has made you well. [u]Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction."

35 [v]While He was still speaking, *some* came from the ruler of the synagogue's *house* who said, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?"

36 As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not be afraid; only [w]believe." 37 And He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James. 38 Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and saw [7]a tumult and those who [x]wept and wailed loudly. 39 When He came in, He said to them, "Why make this commotion and weep? The child is not dead, but [y]sleeping."

40 And they ridiculed Him. [z]But when He had put them all outside, He took the father and the mother of the child, and those *who were* with Him, and entered where the child was lying. 41 Then He took the child by the hand, and said to her, "Talitha, cumi," which is translated, "Little girl, I say to you, arise." 42 Immediately the girl arose and walked, for she was twelve years *of age.* And they were [a]overcome with great amazement. 43 But [b]He commanded them strictly that no one should know it, and said that *something* should be given her to eat.

Jesus Rejected at Nazareth

6 Then [a]He went out from there and came to His own country, and His disciples followed Him. 2 And when the Sabbath had come, He began to teach in the synagogue. And many

20 [k]Ex. 15:2; Ps. 66:16 [l]Matt. 9:8, 33; John 5:20; 7:21; Acts 3:12; 4:13 [5]Lit. *Ten Cities*

21 [m]Matt. 9:1; Luke 8:40

22 [n]Matt. 9:18–26; Luke 8:41–56; Acts 13:15

23 [o]Matt. 8:15; Mark 6:5; 7:32; 8:23, 25; 16:18; Luke 4:40; Acts 9:17; 28:8

25 [p]Lev. 15:19, 25; Matt. 9:20

27 [q]Matt. 14:35, 36; Mark 3:10; 6:56

29 [6]*suffering*

30 [r]Luke 6:19; 8:46

33 [s][Ps. 89:7]

34 [t]Matt. 9:22; Mark 10:52; Acts 14:9 [u]1 Sam. 1:17; 20:42; 2 Kin. 5:19; Luke 7:50; 8:48; Acts 16:36; [James 2:16]

35 [v]Luke 8:49

36 [w][Mark 9:23; John 11:40]

38 [x]Mark 16:10; Acts 9:39 [7]*an uproar*

39 [y]John 11:4, 11

40 [z]Acts 9:40

42 [a]Mark 1:27; 7:37

43 [b][Matt. 8:4; 12:16–19; 17:9]; Mark 3:12

CHAPTER 6

1 [a]Matt. 13:54; Luke 4:16

command silence regarding a healing performed in the Decapolis, but to no avail (7:31–37).

■ **5:22 rulers of the synagogue.** Though he was a layman, a ruler's responsibilities were socially and religiously important, including not only the upkeep of the building but also the proper conduct of the service and the choice of Torah readings.

■ **5:25 flow of blood.** The woman's condition was not only physically debilitating but disqualified her not only from marriage (Lev. 20:18) but from religious life in general (Lev. 15:25–33).

■ **5:29 Immediately.** See 1:10 note.

■ **5:30 Who touched My clothes.** The touch of faith is felt by Jesus, even though in such a dense crowd many people were touching Him. The phrase "power had gone out of Him" occurs only here.

■ **5:32 He looked around.** For a woman who has been a social outcast for many years, the healing is only complete when Jesus has publicly identified her, commends her faith, and declares to all that she is healed (v. 34) and cleansed.

■ **5:37 Peter, James, and John.** Jesus built around Himself a hierarchy of closeness. There are numerous disciples (4:10) from whom twelve are appointed apostles (3:13–19), and within the Twelve some (Peter, James, John, and sometimes Andrew) enjoy Jesus' fullest intimacy, most notably at the Transfiguration (9:2–13) and in Gethsemane (14:32, 33).

■ **5:38 wailed.** In the Middle Eastern cultures, wailing is a customary expression of grief, sometimes calling for professional mourners.

■ **5:40 put them all outside.** Jesus is not interested in a grand spectacle of healing. Rather, He is concerned for the suffering of the girl, the faith of her parents, and the ultimate goal of His mission (v. 43).

■ **5:41 Talitha, cumi.** Aramaic was the popular language spoken in Palestine. Mark gives the translation for other Aramaic terms (3:17; 7:11, 34; 10:46; 14:36) in order to clarify his narrative for those unfamiliar with that language.

■ **5:43 commanded them strictly.** See notes on v. 19 and 1:34.

■ **6:1 His own country.** Nazareth, some twenty miles southwest from Capernaum and the Sea of Galilee.

His disciples. The Twelve (v. 7).

■ **6:2 Sabbath.** Although He is Lord of the Sabbath (2:28), Jesus observes weekly Sabbath worship (1:21; 3:1; Luke 4:16–30).

hearing *Him* were [b]astonished, saying, [c]"Where *did* this Man *get* these things? And what wisdom *is* this which is given to Him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands! [3] Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary, and [d]brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And are not His sisters here with us?" So they [e]were offended at Him.

[4] But Jesus said to them, [f]"A prophet is not without honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house." [5] [g]Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed *them.* [6] And [h]He marveled because of their unbelief. [i]Then He went about the villages in a circuit, teaching.

Sending Out the Twelve

[7] [j]And He called the twelve to *Himself,* and began to send them out [k]two *by* two, and gave them power over unclean spirits. [8] He commanded them to take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bag, no bread, no copper in *their* money belts— [9] but [l]to wear sandals, and not to put on two tunics.

[10] [m]Also He said to them, "In whatever place you enter a house, stay there till you depart from that place. [11] [n]And [l]whoever will not receive you nor hear you, when you depart from there, [o]shake off the dust under your feet as a testimony against them. [2]Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!"

[12] So they went out and preached that *people* should repent. [13] And they cast out many demons, [p]and anointed with oil many who were sick, and healed *them.*

John the Baptist Beheaded

[14] [q]Now King Herod heard *of Him,* for His name had become well known. And he said, "John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore [r]these powers are at work in him."

[15] [s]Others said, "It is Elijah."

And others said, "It is [3]the Prophet, [t]or like one of the prophets."

[16] [u]But when Herod heard, he said, "This is John, whom I beheaded; he has been raised from the dead!" [17] For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; for he had married her. [18] Because John had said to Herod, [v]"It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."

[19] Therefore Herodias [4]held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not; [20] for Herod [w]feared John, knowing that he *was* a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he [5]did many things, and heard him gladly.

[21] [x]Then an opportune day came when Herod [y]on his birthday gave a feast for his nobles, the high officers, and the chief *men* of Galilee. [22] And when Herodias' daughter herself came in and danced, and pleased Herod and those who sat with him, the king said to the girl, "Ask me whatever you want, and I will give *it* to you." [23] He also swore to her, [z]"Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half my kingdom."

2 [b]Matt. 7:28 [c]John 6:42

3 [d]Matt. 12:46 [e][Matt. 11:6]

4 [f]John 4:44

5 [g]Gen. 19:22; 32:25

6 [h]Is. 59:16 [i]Matt. 9:35

7 [j]Mark 3:13, 14 [k][Eccl. 4:9, 10]

9 [l][Eph. 6:15]

10 [m]Matt. 10:11

11 [n]Matt. 10:14 [o]Acts 13:51; 18:6 [1]NU *whatever place* [2]NU omits the rest of v. 11.

13 [p][James 5:14]

14 [q]Luke 9:7–9 [r]Luke 19:37

15 [s]Mark 8:28 [t]Matt. 21:11 [3]NU, M *a prophet, like one*

16 [u]Luke 3:19

18 [v]Lev. 18:16; 20:21

19 [4]*held a grudge*

20 [w]Matt. 14:5; 21:26 [5]NU *was very perplexed, yet*

21 [x]Matt. 14:6 [y]Gen. 40:20

23 [z]Esth. 5:3, 6; 7:2

astonished. See 1:22; 7:37; 10:26; 11:18.

■ **6:3 carpenter.** Could also mean "builder." Jesus' work in this occupation prior to His ministry might explain His use of building metaphors, especially in describing of His own essential ministry (14:58; 15:29; Matt. 7:24; 16:18; 21:33; Luke 12:18; 17:28). The remark concerning manual labor is probably not derogatory as such, for all rabbis were expected to have a trade. Paul had been trained as a rabbi and was a maker of tents or awnings (Acts 18:3; 22:3; 26:5; Phil. 3:5, 6). The accusation is that Jesus (who teaches "wisdom" in v. 2) is a common worker without religious or academic credentials.

son of Mary. See 3:31.

■ **6:4 own house.** Not only is Jesus rejected by the people of the town and the wider circle of relatives there, but also by His own family (3:31).

■ **6:7 the twelve.** Having already been appointed to be with Jesus (3:14 note) and receive special instruction concerning the mystery of His person and role (4:10, 11 notes), the Twelve are now permitted to share His ministry and authority.

send them out. The verb has the same root as the noun *apostle,* and underlines their link with Jesus as His personal representatives (3:14 note).

two by two. The biblical principle that testimony should be established by at least two witnesses (Num. 35:30; Deut. 17:6; 19:15; Matt. 18:16; John 8:17; 2 Cor. 13:1; 1 Tim. 5:19; Heb. 10:28) was also applied in the missionary activity of the early church in the ministries of Peter and John (Acts 3:1; 4:1), Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:2), and Paul and Silas (Acts 15:40).

■ **6:8 no bread.** Matt. 10:10 gives the reason, "for a worker is worthy of his food."

■ **6:11 shake off the dust.** Strict Jews shook the foreign dust from their feet after travel in pagan territories. Refusal of the gospel invites the same reaction.

■ **6:14 King Herod heard.** Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great, was "tetrarch" (ruler of a dependent state) of Galilee and Perea.

■ **6:15 one of the prophets.** Speculation about the identity of Jesus will lead to the accounts of the miraculous feedings (vv. 30–44; 8:1–9) and walking on water (vv. 47–52), all of which point to Jesus' personal divinity. But first Mark will relate the circumstances of the death of John the Baptist, with whom Herod and others had identified Jesus.

■ **6:17 his brother Philip's wife.** Herodias was a daughter of Aristobulus, one of the sons of Herod the Great. Other sons of Herod the Great included Herod Antipas and Herod Philip (by different wives). After marrying her half-uncle Herod Philip, Herodias left him for an adulterous relationship with his brother, Herod Antipas. Such were the loose morals, typical of the Herodian dynasty, against which John the Baptist preached (cf. Lev. 18:16, 20).

24 So she went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask?"

And she said, "The head of John the Baptist!"

25 Immediately she came in with haste to the king and asked, saying, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter."

26 [a]And the king was exceedingly sorry; *yet,* because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he did not want to refuse her. 27 Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded his head to be brought. And he went and beheaded him in prison, 28 brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother. 29 When his disciples heard *of it,* they came and [b]took away his corpse and laid it in a tomb.

Feeding the Five Thousand

30 [c]Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. 31 [d]And He said to them, "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." For [e]there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat. 32 [f]So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves.

33 But [g]the multitudes saw them departing, and many [g]knew Him and ran there on foot from all the cities. They arrived before them and came together to Him. 34 [h]And Jesus, when He came out, saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them, because they were like [i]sheep not having a shepherd. So [j]He began to teach them many things. 35 [k]When the day was now far spent, His disciples came to Him and said, "This is a deserted place, and already the hour *is* late. 36 Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves [7]bread; for they have nothing to eat."

37 But He answered and said to them, "You give them something to eat."

And they said to Him, [l]"Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread and give them *something* to eat?"

38 But He said to them, "How many loaves do you have? Go and see."

And when they found out they said, [m]"Five, and two fish."

39 Then He [n]commanded them to make them all sit down in groups on the green grass. 40 So they sat down in ranks, in hundreds and in fifties. 41 And when He had taken the five loaves and the two fish, He [o]looked up to heaven, [p]blessed and broke the loaves, and gave *them* to His disciples to set before them; and the two fish He divided among *them* all. 42 So they all ate and were filled. 43 And they took up twelve baskets full of fragments and of the fish. 44 Now those who had eaten the loaves were [8]about five thousand men.

Jesus Walks on the Sea

45 [q]Immediately He [9]made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while He sent the multitude away. 46 And when He had sent them away, He [r]departed to the mountain to pray. 47 Now when evening came, the boat was in the middle of the sea; and He *was* alone on the land. 48 Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them. Now about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea, and [s]would have passed them by. 49 And when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed it was a [t]ghost, and cried out; 50 for they all saw Him and were troubled. But immediately He

26 [a]Matt. 14:9

29 [b]1 Kin. 13:29, 30; Matt. 27:58–61; Acts 8:2

30 [c]Luke 9:10

31 [d]Matt. 14:13 [e]Mark 3:20

32 [f]Matt. 14:13–21; Luke 9:10–17; John 6:5–13

33 [g][Col. 1:6] [6]NU, M *they*

34 [h]Matt. 9:36; 14:14; [Heb. 5:2] [i]Num. 27:17; 1 Kin. 22:17; 2 Chr. 18:16; Zech. 10:2 [j][Is. 48:17;61:1–3]; Luke 9:11

35 [k]Matt. 14:15; Luke 9:12

36 [7]NU *something to eat* and omits the rest of v. 36.

37 [l]Num. 11:13, 22; 2 Kin. 4:43

38 [m]Matt. 14:17; Luke 9:13; John 6:9

39 [n]Matt. 15:35; Mark 8:6

41 [o]John 11:41, 42 [p]1 Sam. 9:13; Matt. 15:36; 26:26; Mark 8:7; Luke 24:30

44 [8]NU, M omit *about*

45 [q]Matt. 14:22–32; John 6:15–21 [9]*invited, strongly urged*

46 [r]Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16

48 [s]Luke 24:28

49 [t]Matt. 14:26; Luke 24:37

■ **6:31 by yourselves.** Being alone with Jesus, who then instructs them in the mystery of the kingdom (4:10, 11), is part of their preparation for future ministry (4:34; 9:2, 28; 13:3; cf. John 13:1; 16:29).

■ **6:34 was moved with compassion.** Jesus does what God promised to do in Ezek. 34:11, 14: "I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. . . . I will feed them in good pasture." Jesus acts as the Shepherd of God's people, like Moses (Num. 27:15–17; Ps. 77:20), David (Ps. 78:70–72), and God Himself (Ps. 23:1; 74:1; 78:52, 53; 80:1; Ezek. 34:15).

sheep not having a shepherd. Ancient Israel, abandoned by unfaithful leaders, was also described in this way (Jer. 50:6; Ezek. 34:1–10).

■ **6:40 in hundreds and in fifties.** This detail recalls the ordering of ancient Israel in the desert under Moses (Ex. 18:21).

■ **6:42 all ate and were filled.** This feeding story recalls the miraculous provision of manna in the desert under Moses (Ex. 16:1–36, especially v. 16). Jesus is the new Moses bringing the new covenant.

■ **6:43 they took up.** A further reference to the provision of manna where nothing was to be left till the morning (Ex. 16:19).

twelve baskets full. The number recalls the twelve tribes of ancient Israel and suggests the important role that the Twelve would play in the constitution of the New Israel (3:14 note).

■ **6:44 five thousand men.** Mark does not use the Greek word that means "human being," but a term distinguishing men from women, with perhaps the idea of "head of family" (Matt. 14:21 adds "besides women and children"). The crowd may have numbered between fifteen and twenty thousand.

■ **6:48 fourth watch.** Since the Romans divided the night into four periods, the fourth watch would be the three hours ending at dawn.

■ **6:49 a ghost.** Lit. "phantasm," used in the New Testament only here and Matt. 14:26. It has the connotation of superstitious imagination.

■ **6:50 It is I.** The Greek phrase (lit. "I am") is also the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) rendering of the divine name "I AM" revealed to Moses (Ex. 3:14; Deut. 32:39; Is. 41:4; 43:10, 13, 25; 45:18; 52:6; Hos. 13:4; Joel 2:27). This account has all the usual marks

talked with them and said to them, [u]"Be[l] of good cheer! It is I; do not be [v]afraid." [51] Then He went up into the boat to them, and the wind [w]ceased. And they were greatly [x]amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled. [52] For [y]they had not understood about the loaves, because their [z]heart was hardened.

Many Touch Him and Are Made Well

[53] [a]When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret and anchored there. [54] And when they came out of the boat, immediately [2]the people recognized Him, [55] ran through that whole surrounding region, and began to carry about on beds those who were sick to wherever they heard He was. [56] Wherever He entered, into villages, cities, or the country, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged Him that [b]they might just touch the [c]hem of His garment. And as many as touched Him were made well.

Defilement Comes from Within

7 Then [a]the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come from Jerusalem. [2] Now [1]when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is, with [b]unwashed hands, [2]they found fault. [3] For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash *their* hands [3]in a special way, holding the [c]tradition of the elders. [4] *When they come* from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and hold, *like* the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches.

[5] [d]Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?"

[6] He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you [e]hypocrites, as it is written:

> [f]'*This people honors Me with their lips,*
> *But their heart is far from Me.*
> 7 *And in vain they worship Me,*
> *Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.*'

[8] For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men—[4]the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do."

[9] He said to them, "*All too* well [g]you [5]reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition. [10] For Moses said, [h]'*Honor your father and your mother*'; and, [i]'*He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.*' [11] But you say, 'If a man says to his father or mother, [j]"Whatever profit you might have received from me *is* Corban"—' (that is, a gift *to God*), [12] then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, [13] making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do."

[14] [k]When He had called all the multitude to *Himself,* He said to them, "Hear Me, everyone,

50 [u]Matt. 9:2; John 16:33 [v]Is. 41:10 [1]*Take courage*

51 [w]Ps. 107:29 [x]Mark 1:27; 2:12; 5:42; 7:37

52 [y]Matt. 16:9–11; Mark 8:17, 18 [z]Is. 63:17; Mark 3:5; 16:14

53 [a]Matt. 14:34–36; John 6:24, 25

54 [2]Lit. *they*

56 [b]Matt. 9:20; Mark 5:27, 28; [Acts 19:12] [c]Num. 15:38, 39

CHAPTER 7

1 [a]Matt. 15:1–20

2 [b]Matt. 15:20 [1]NU omits *when* [2]NU omits *they found fault*

3 [c]Mark 7:5, 8, 9, 13; Gal. 1:14; 1 Pet. 1:18 [3]Lit. *with the fist*

5 [d]Matt. 15:2

6 [e]Matt. 23:13–29 [f]Is. 29:13

8 [4]NU omits the rest of v. 8.

9 [g]Prov. 1:25; Is. 24:5; Jer. 7:23, 24 [5]*set aside*

10 [h]Ex. 20:12; Deut. 5:16; Matt. 15:4 [i]Ex. 21:17; Lev. 20:9; Prov. 20:20

11 [j]Matt. 15:5; 23:18

14 [k]Matt. 15:10

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of biblical theophany narratives (various modes of visible, divine self-revelation), including human dread, divine identification, and words of assurance.

■ **6:52 they had not understood about the loaves.** This remark suggests that the miracle of the feeding contains the same mystery concerning Jesus as does His walking on water. Jesus, as to His humanity, is indeed the new Moses. But He is also, and at the same time, the God who provided bread from heaven (Ex. 16:4).

■ **6:53 Gennesaret.** A village on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee (Luke 5:1).

■ **6:56 His garment.** See note on 5:30.

■ **7:1 Pharisees.** See note on 2:16.

scribes. Scribes were teachers of the law, mostly Pharisees.

■ **7:2 defiled.** The disciples had not washed in the manner prescribed by "the tradition of the elders" (vv. 3, 4), and so were considered ceremonially unclean. Jesus is critical of these traditional expansions of the ceremonial law by the scribes and Pharisees because they had so extended their traditions as to permit actual transgression of the moral law (vv. 9–13). His cross will finally bring the ceremonial law to an end.

■ **7:3 wash.** By their tradition, the Pharisees extended the biblical injunctions for priestly washing at the moment of temple sacrifice (Ex. 30:19; 40:12) to the eating of bread by all Jews.

tradition of the elders. The Pharisees believed that in addition to the written words of the law, Moses received instructions for its interpretation and application. This oral law was passed on by word of mouth from teacher to teacher. In His arguments with them, Jesus consistently appeals to Scripture and always seeks to get back to its true meaning (vv. 6–8).

■ **7:5 Why do your disciples not.** The Pharisees and scribes are not genuinely interested in the meal practice of the disciples, but in why Jesus, as their teacher, does not require them to observe "the tradition" generally.

■ **7:6 Isaiah.** Jesus' motivation is to bring people back into conformity with Scripture.

■ **7:8 laying aside the commandment of God.** The verb "laying aside" can mean "cancel," "abandon," or "neglect." Jesus is not an antinomian. Like the psalmist, He is consumed with longing for the law of God (Ps. 119:20), which He fulfills, protects (Matt. 5:17–20), and defends. He is not even against tradition, but only against that which annuls Scripture.

■ **7:11 Corban.** A Hebrew and Aramaic word (which Mark translates for his Gentile readers), designating something as dedicated to a religious purpose. By a simple vow to reserve their possessions as a gift to God, a person could avoid responsibility to support their parents.

and [t]understand: 15 There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that [m]defile a man. 16 [n]If[6] anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!"

17 [o]When He had entered a house away from the crowd, His disciples asked Him concerning the parable. 18 So He said to them, [p]"Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, 19 because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, [7]*thus* purifying all foods?" 20 And He said, [q]"What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. 21 [r]For from within, out of the heart of men, [s]proceed evil thoughts, [t]adulteries, [u]fornications, murders, 22 thefts, [v]covetousness, wickedness, [w]deceit, [x]lewdness, an evil eye, [y]blasphemy, [z]pride, foolishness. 23 All these evil things come from within and defile a man."

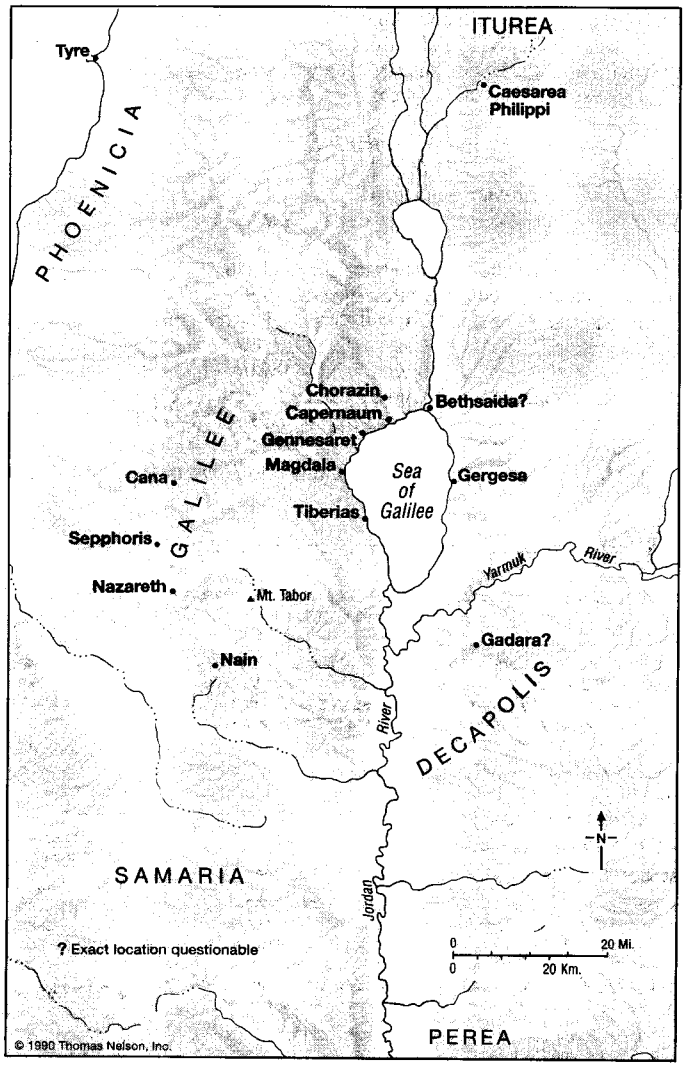
14 [t]Matt. 16:9, 11, 12
15 [m]Is. 59:3
16 [n]Matt. 11:15 [6]NU omits v. 16.
17 [o]Matt. 15:15
18 [p][Heb. 5:11–14]
19 [7]NU sets off the final phrase as Mark's comment that Jesus has declared all foods clean.
20 [q]Ps. 39:1 21 [r]Gen. 6:5; 8:21 [s][Gal. 5:19–21] [t]2 Pet. 2:14 [u]1 Thess. 4:3 22 [v]Luke 12:15 [w]Rom. 1:28, 29 [x]1 Pet. 4:3 [y]Rev. 2:9 [z]1 John 2:16

■ **7:20 What comes out of a man.** Jesus is generalizing about the natural and constant way in which fallen human nature expresses itself, and His list of vices (vv. 21, 22) is meant to bring horrifying self-knowledge (cf. Rom. 1:24–32; 2:17–24).
defiles. Jesus goes to the essence of the matter—uncleanness of the heart, of which ceremonial uncleanness is really a symbol.

Cities of the Galilean Ministry. Jesus began His public ministry at Cana, where He graced a wedding party with His presence and turned water into wine (John 2:1–11). In the synagogue of Nazareth, Jesus announced that He was the fulfillment of prophecy from the Book of Isaiah (Luke 4:16–22). But His hometown rejected Him, so He went to Capernaum, a prosperous fishing town situated along an international trade route. There He established a base of ministry.

In Capernaum He called Matthew to be His disciple (Mark 2:14) and healed a centurion's paralyzed servant (Matt. 8:5–13), as well as Peter's mother-in-law (Matt. 8:14, 15). The Sea of Galilee, with its fishing industry, was the setting for many miracles. At Nain, Jesus mercifully raised to life the only son of a widow (Luke 7:11–17).

Chorazin and Bethsaida were cities Jesus chastised for their unbelief (Matt. 11:21). The area of Gergesa was possibly where Jesus healed the demoniacs (Matt. 8:28–34).



A Gentile Shows Her Faith

24 [a]From there He arose and went to the region of Tyre [8]and Sidon. And He entered a house and wanted no one to know *it,* but He could not be [b]hidden. 25 For a woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit heard about Him, and she came and [c]fell at His feet. 26 The woman was a [9]Greek, a [1]Syro-Phoenician by birth, and she kept [2]asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter. 27 But Jesus said to her, "Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw *it* to the little dogs."

28 And she answered and said to Him, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children's crumbs."

29 Then He said to her, "For this saying go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter."

30 And when she had come to her house, she found the demon gone out, and her daughter lying on the bed.

Jesus Heals a Deaf-Mute

31 [d]Again, departing from the region of Tyre and Sidon, He came through the midst of the region of Decapolis to the Sea of Galilee. 32 Then [e]they brought to Him one who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and they begged Him to put His hand on him. 33 And He took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers in his ears, and [f]He spat and touched his tongue. 34 Then, [g]looking up to heaven, [h]He sighed, and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened."

35 [i]Immediately his ears were opened, and the [3]impediment of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke plainly. 36 Then [j]He commanded them that they should tell no one; but the more He commanded them, the more widely they proclaimed *it.* 37 And they were [k]astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well. He [l]makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

Feeding the Four Thousand

8 In those days, [a]the multitude being very great and having nothing to eat, Jesus called His disciples *to Him* and said to them, 2 "I have [b]compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. 3 And if I send them away hungry to their own houses, they will faint on the way; for some of them have come from afar."

4 Then His disciples answered Him, "How can one satisfy these people with bread here in the wilderness?"

5 [c]He asked them, "How many loaves do you have?"

And they said, "Seven."

6 So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And He took the seven loaves and gave thanks, broke *them* and gave *them* to His disciples to set before *them;* and they set *them* before the multitude. 7 They also had a few small fish; and [d]having blessed them, He said to set them also before *them.* 8 So they ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets of left-over fragments. 9 Now those who had eaten were about four thousand. And He sent them away, 10 [e]immediately got into the boat with His disciples, and came to the region of Dalmanutha.

24 [a]Matt. 15:21 [b]Mark 2:1, 2 [8]NU omits *and Sidon*

25 [c]Mark 5:22; John 11:32; Rev. 1:17

26 [9]*Gentile* [1]A Syrian of Phoenicia [2]*begging*

31 [d]Matt. 15:29; Mark 15:37; Luke 23:46; 24:46; Acts 10:40; 1 Cor. 15:4

32 [e]Matt. 9:32; Luke 11:14

33 [f]Mark 8:23; John 9:6

34 [g]Mark 6:41; John 11:41; 17:1 [h]John 11:33, 38

35 [i]Is. 35:5, 6 [3]Lit. *bond*

36 [j]Mark 5:43

37 [k]Mark 6:51; 10:26 [l]Matt. 12:22

CHAPTER 8

1 [a]Matt. 15:32–39; Mark 6:34–44; Luke 9:12

2 [b]Matt. 9:36; 14:14; Mark 1:41; 6:34

5 [c]Matt. 15:34; Mark 6:38; John 6:9

7 [d]Matt. 14:19; Mark 6:41

10 [e]Matt. 15:39

■ **7:24 Tyre.** Jesus moves north into a markedly Gentile region (cf. Matt. 11:21, 22), to the vicinity of the ancient Phoenician port city of Tyre (in modern Lebanon).

■ **7:26 Greek.** She was of Syrian descent but spoke Greek.

■ **7:27 first.** Though in Gentile territory, Jesus maintains the temporal priority of Israel ("the children") in the divine plan of salvation, as Paul does later (Rom. 1:16; 2:10; cf. Acts 1:8; 13:46, 47).

dogs. The term is certainly derogatory (Matt. 7:6; Phil. 3:2; Rev. 22:15), though the Greek word includes the nuance "little dogs" or "pets." It should be seen as an example of Jesus' colorful imagery of table fellowship to explain the plan of salvation, namely, that "salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22). The woman takes it in this sense, as her reply indicates.

■ **7:31 Decapolis.** See note on 5:1. Jesus remains in Gentile territory, first going north to Sidon and then southeast to the Decapolis.

■ **7:33 put His fingers in his ears.** These physical actions accompany the miracle of healing, but are not its cause.

■ **7:34 Ephphatha.** An Aramaic word translated by which Mark again translates for his Greek-speaking readers.

■ **7:35 spoke plainly.** For a deaf person, clearly expressed spoken language must usually be learned over a period of time.

■ **7:36 tell no one.** Regarding Jesus' command of secrecy, see notes on 1:34 and 5:19.

■ **8:1–10** A second miraculous feeding. Jesus later points to deep theological significance in the two feedings (8:18–21).

■ **8:2 I have compassion.** Since this feeding probably took place in the Decapolis (7:31), it is evident that Jesus extends His compassion from the lost sheep of the house of Israel (6:34) to the Gentiles, as His healing of the Syro-Phoenician woman's daughter (7:24–30) and His ministry in Gentile territory (7:31–37) would suggest. By His actions Jesus announces the world-wide mission of the future church.

■ **8:4 in the wilderness.** See note on 1:4. The disciples' question, in view of what Jesus had previously done in similar circumstances, justifies Jesus' reproach in vv. 17, 18.

■ **8:10 Dalmanutha.** Presumably on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, though its exact location is not known.

11 [f]Matt. 12:38; 16:1; Luke 11:16; John 2:18; 6:30; 1 Cor. 1:22

12 [g]Mark 7:34 [h]Matt. 12:39

14 [i]Matt. 16:5 [1]NU, M *they*

15 [j]Matt. 16:6; Luke 12:1 [2]*yeast*

17 [k]Mark 6:52; 16:14 [3]NU omits *still*

19 [l]Matt. 14:20; Mark 6:43; Luke 9:17; John 6:13

20 [m]Matt. 15:37

21 [n][Mark 6:52]

22 [o]Matt. 9:27; John 9:1 [p]Luke 18:15

23 [q]Mark 7:33

26 [r]Matt. 8:4; Mark 5:43; 7:36 [4]NU *"Do not even go into the town."*

27 [s]Matt. 16:13–16; Luke 9:18–20

28 [t]Matt. 14:2 [u]Mark 6:14, 15; Luke 9:7, 8

The Pharisees Seek a Sign

11 [f]Then the Pharisees came out and began to dispute with Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven, testing Him. 12 But He [g]sighed deeply in His spirit, and said, "Why does this generation seek a sign? Assuredly, I say to you, [h]no sign shall be given to this generation."

Beware of the Leaven of the Pharisees and Herod

13 And He left them, and getting into the boat again, departed to the other side. 14 [i]Now [l]the disciples had forgotten to take bread, and they did not have more than one loaf with them in the boat. 15 [j]Then He charged them, saying, "Take heed, beware of the [2]leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod."

16 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, *"It is* because we have no bread."

17 But Jesus, being aware of *it,* said to them, "Why do you reason because you have no bread? [k]Do you not yet perceive nor understand? Is your heart [3]still hardened? 18 Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember? 19 [l]When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments did you take up?"

They said to Him, "Twelve."

20 "Also, [m]when I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of fragments did you take up?"

And they said, "Seven."

21 So He said to them, "How *is it* [n]you do not understand?"

A Blind Man Healed at Bethsaida

22 Then He came to Bethsaida; and they brought a [o]blind man to Him, and begged Him to [p]touch him. 23 So He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the town. And when [q]He had spit on his eyes and put His hands on him, He asked him if he saw anything.

24 And he looked up and said, "I see men like trees, walking."

25 Then He put *His* hands on his eyes again and made him look up. And he was restored and saw everyone clearly. 26 Then He sent him away to his house, saying, [4]"Neither go into the town, [r]nor tell anyone in the town."

Peter Confesses Jesus as the Christ

27 [s]Now Jesus and His disciples went out to the towns of Caesarea Philippi; and on the road He asked His disciples, saying to them, "Who do men say that I am?"

28 So they answered, [t]"John the Baptist; but some *say,* [u]Elijah; and others, one of the prophets."

29 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

■ **8:11 Pharisees.** See note on 2:16.

sign from heaven. Jesus does not perform signs on demand, especially not for those "testing" Him (cf. 1:13; Matt. 4:1–11, where the same Greek verb is translated "tempting"). The Pharisees wanted a sign to confirm that Jesus was the political messiah they were expecting (v. 15 note).

■ **8:14 one loaf.** This narrative detail ties this passage and the two feeding miracles together.

■ **8:15 leaven of the Pharisees and . . . Herod.** Jesus uses an everyday ingredient of bread as a metaphor (Luke 12:1 note). What seems like an innocent, indeed legitimate request for a sign (on Herod's desire for miracles, see Luke 23:8) is actually a rejection of His ministry and all His previous signs. Jesus is warning His disciples against superficial conceptions of His role and preparing them for His teaching concerning the true meaning of His coming and of His cross (vv. 27, 31). Such teaching remained incomprehensible to many Jews (1 Cor. 1:22, 23).

■ **8:17 no bread.** The disciples' thoughts are still dominated by material concerns, leaving them blind to the true vocation of their master and open to being tempted by the "leaven" of the Pharisees.

■ **8:21 you do not understand.** Here Jesus' role in teaching and training the Twelve comes into the foreground of the narrative (3:14 note). His question to them is a reproach for failing to realize that the Lord who miraculously provided for five thousand and four thousand men with their families is capable of taking care of twelve men's physical needs. Indeed, they should know that Jesus is worthy of their total faith in all that He will reveal to them in the days to come.

■ **8:22 Bethsaida.** A fishing town on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee and home of Philip, Andrew, and Peter.

■ **8:23 spit on his eyes.** See note on 7:33.

■ **8:24 trees, walking.** The restoration of sight in this case is gradual.

■ **8:26 Neither go into the town.** Jesus had led him out of the town (v. 23), so it is likely that the message of this miracle was intended for His disciples. They must realize that Jesus is gradually healing their spiritual sight. While in v. 21 they still "do not understand" who Jesus is, they too, like the blind man (v. 25), are about to see "clearly" the mystery of His person (vv. 27–30).

■ **8:27 Caesarea Philippi.** A town at the foot of Mount Hermon and close to the source of the Jordan river. Herod the Great built a marble temple to Caesar Augustus there, and his son Philip changed the town's name from Paneas to Caesarea. To distinguish it from the other Caesarea, the well-known Mediterranean port, it was known as Philip's Caesarea.

■ **8:29 But who do you say that I am.** Again the preeminence of the Twelve in the revelation of the person of Jesus is emphasized (v. 21; 3:14). Jesus dismisses what people say (v. 27), but retains as divinely revealed truth the confession of the Twelve (Matt. 16:16, 17 and notes).

You are the Christ. Lit. "the anointed One" (1 Sam. 2:10; Matt. 1:1 and notes). This is the first time in Mark's narrative that the name "Christ" appears (it does appear in the title at 1:1). Peter's confession (as spokesperson for the Twelve), along with the Transfiguration that follows

Peter answered and said to Him, [v]"You are the Christ."
30 [w]Then He strictly warned them that they should tell no one about Him.

Jesus Predicts His Death and Resurrection

31 And [x]He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be [y]rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be [z]killed, and after three days rise again. 32 He spoke this word openly. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. 33 But when He had turned around and looked at His disciples, He [a]rebuked Peter, saying, "Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not [5]mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."

Take Up the Cross and Follow Him

34 When He had called the people to *Himself,* with His disciples also, He said to them, [b]"Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 35 For [c]whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. 36 For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? 37 Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 38 [d]For whoever [e]is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

Jesus Transfigured on the Mount

9 And He said to them, [a]"Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see [b]the kingdom of God [1]present with power."
2 [c]Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John, and led them up on a high mountain apart by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. 3 His clothes became shining, exceed-

29 [v]John 1:41; 4:42; 6:69; 11:27

30 [w]Matt. 8:4; 16:20

31 [x]Matt. 16:21; 20:19 [y]Mark 10:33 [z]Mark 9:31; 10:34

33 [a][Rev. 3:19] [5]*setting your mind on*

34 [b]Luke 14:27

35 [c]John 12:25

38 [d]Matt. 10:33 [e]2 Tim. 1:8, 9; 2:12

CHAPTER 9

1 [a]Luke 9:27 [b][Matt. 24:30] [1]*having come*

2 [c]Matt. 17:1–8

(9:2–13), are a high point in the revelation of Jesus' person and a turning point in His earthly ministry. From now on His teaching will concentrate on His impending death, and He will soon begin to travel to Jerusalem.

■ **8:30 tell no one.** See notes on 1:34; 5:19; cf. 9:9. Strangely, at this high point of revelation comes the order to keep it secret. But with hindsight the reason is clear. Jesus will not allow political notions of messiahship to compromise His true calling to be the suffering Messiah whose essentially moral and spiritual work of redemption will be total.

■ **8:31—10:52** This section recounts the turning point of Jesus' earthly ministry (8:29 note). It contains three predictions of Jesus' death and resurrection (8:31; 9:31; 10:33, 34); relates the beginning of His journey to Jerusalem, and gives sustained teaching on true messiahship and discipleship.

■ **8:31 Son of Man.** See note on 2:10.

must. Behind this small word is all the weight of scriptural prophecy and divinely ordained necessity (9:31; Luke 22:37; 24:7, 26, 44). Jesus' predictions concerning His death and resurrection come out of His understanding of the Old Testament Scriptures.

suffer many things. The prediction of the suffering Messiah comes particularly from Is. 52:13—53:12. See also Zech. 9:9; 12:10; 13:7; and the Old Testament generally for the theme of the righteous sufferer.

elders. Lay members of the Sanhedrin, the court that governed Jewish affairs. The court was composed of elders, chief priests, and teachers of the law (the scribes).

chief priests. Jesus predicts that the wealthy high-priestly families who were affiliated with the Sadducees will be involved in His death.

after three days. See Hos. 6:2. This is also a conventional expression for a short period.

rise again. See Is. 52:13; 53:10; cf. Ps. 110:1; Dan. 7:13, 14.

■ **8:32 He spoke . . . openly.** In contrast to His public teaching in parables (4:10, 11), the Twelve privately receive plain instruction (cf. John 16:25, 29). Jesus' clear, private teaching will become the basis of His disciples' public preaching after Easter (Acts 2:29; 4:13, 29, 31; 28:31).

Peter . . . began to rebuke Him. When even Peter, leader among the Twelve, fails to accept that the Messiah must suffer, one can appreciate the wisdom of Jesus' secrecy regarding His messianic office. Note Paul's remark that for many "the message of cross is foolishness" (1 Cor. 1:18; cf. Gal. 3:13).

■ **8:33 Get behind Me, Satan.** Satan is now at work even among Jesus' own disciples, not only in Judas but even in Peter, whose intervention would have annulled the plan of redemption and accomplished Satan's goal.

■ **8:34 take up his cross.** Condemned prisoners were generally made to carry the crossbar of their cross to the site of execution (cf. 15:21).

■ **8:37 exchange for his soul.** The same Greek word is translated here "soul" and in v. 35 "life." No monetary or material value can be placed on this (Ps. 49:7–9, to which Jesus is perhaps alluding).

■ **8:38 in the glory of His Father.** Though in the present time of humiliation "the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head" (Matt. 8:20), one day He will be revealed with divine splendor as the Son of God (12:6–11; 14:62; cf. Dan. 7:13).

■ **9:1 kingdom of God present with power.** See text note. The coming of the kingdom "with power" would seem to be associated with Jesus' resurrection since it will be witnessed by "some standing here," and it is also described as a coming "with power" (Rom. 1:4). The Transfiguration, which follows this utterance, is an intermediate and immediate fulfillment of Jesus' words, since it anticipates the manifestation of resurrection power and divine glory. See note on Matt. 16:28.

■ **9:2 after six days.** In Ex. 24:16, "six days" is also the period of preparation for receiving revelation and witnessing a vision of divine glory (a theophany; 6:50 note).

Peter, James, and John. These three can represent the Twelve just as Peter alone can (8:29; Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:14).

a high mountain. Both Moses (on Sinai; Ex. 24) and Elijah (on Horeb; 1 Kin. 19) were given a vision of God's theophanic presence on high mountains.

transfigured. Lit. "changed in form." This Greek verb is used by Paul to describe the present work of the Spirit in the inner life of the believer (Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18). That work will be completed when this same Spirit gives "life to your mortal bodies" as when He raised Jesus from the dead (Rom. 8:11), and as here in Jesus' momentary glorification. See theological note "The Transfiguration of Jesus."

ingly [d]white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them. [4] And Elijah appeared to them with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus. [5] Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah"— [6] because he did not know what to say, for they were greatly afraid.

[7] And a [e]cloud came and overshadowed them; and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is [f]My beloved Son. [g]Hear Him!" [8] Suddenly, when they had looked around, they saw no one anymore, but only Jesus with themselves.

[9] [h]Now as they came down from the mountain, He commanded them that they should tell no one the things they had seen, till the Son of Man had risen from the dead. [10] So they kept this word to themselves, questioning [i]what the rising from the dead meant.

[11] And they asked Him, saying, "Why do the scribes say [j]that Elijah must come first?"

[12] Then He answered and told them, "Indeed, Elijah is coming first and restores all things. And [k]how is it written concerning the Son of Man, that He must suffer many things and [l]be treated with contempt? [13] But I say to you that [m]Elijah has also come, and they did to him whatever they wished, as it is written of him."

A Boy Is Healed

[14] [n]And when He came to the disciples, He saw a great multitude around them, and scribes disputing with them. [15] Immediately, when they saw Him, all the people were greatly amazed, and running to *Him,* greeted Him. [16] And He asked the scribes, "What are you discussing with them?"

[17] Then [o]one of the crowd answered and said, "Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a

3 [d]Dan. 7:9; Matt. 28:3

7 [e]Ex. 40:34; 1 Kin. 8:10; Acts 1:9; Rev. 1:7 [f]Ps. 2:7; [Is. 42:1]; Matt. 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 1:35; 3:22; 2 Pet. 1:17 [g]Acts 3:22

9 [h]Matt. 17:9–13; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:6, 7, 46

10 [i]John 2:19–22

11 [j]Mal. 4:5; Matt. 17:10

12 [k]Ps. 22:6; Is. 53:3; Dan. 9:26 [l]Luke 23:11; Phil. 2:7

13 [m]Mal. 4:5; Matt. 11:14; 17:12; Luke 1:17

14 [n]Matt. 17:14–19; Luke 9:37–42

17 [o]Matt. 17:14; Luke 9:38

The Transfiguration of Jesus

Recorded in three of the Gospels (Matt. 17:1–8; Mark 9:2–8; Luke 9:28–36), and testified to by Peter and John (cf. 2 Pet. 1:16–18; John 1:14), the Transfiguration was a revelation of Jesus' deity. The transformation in Jesus' appearance as He prayed (Luke 9:29) was a momentary transition from the concealment of His divine glory that marked His days on earth to the manifestation of glory that will be revealed when He returns.

The bright light that shone from Jesus as His face changed (Luke 9:29) was the glory intrinsic to Him as the divine Son, "the brightness of His glory" (Heb. 1:3). The voice from the cloud confirmed the identification that the vision had already given.

The Transfiguration was also a significant event in the revelation of God's kingdom. Moses and Elijah represented the law and the prophets witnessing to Jesus and being superseded by Him. The "departure" (Greek *exodus*) of which they and Jesus talked (Luke 9:31 and text note) was Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension. These events were not just a way of leaving this world, but of redeeming His people, just as the Exodus from Egypt led by Moses was Israel's liberation from slavery. □

■ **9:4 Elijah . . . with Moses.** The Transfiguration ties the old covenant to the new, directly linking Moses and Elijah, representatives of the law and the prophets, with Jesus and His apostles, messengers of redemption's completion.

■ **9:5 let us make three tabernacles.** Peter perhaps wishes to capture and prolong the glory so as to avoid the suffering of which Jesus had already spoken (8:31–33).

■ **9:7 This is My beloved Son.** The heavenly declaration is a high point of divine revelation concerning the identity of Jesus. Just as God had revealed Himself in the theophany on Sinai as "the LORD God, merciful and gracious" (Ex. 34:6), so now He reveals Himself as the one who speaks through His beloved Son (John 1:17; 3:16; Heb. 1:2).

Hear Him. This phrase represents a rebuke to Peter as well as a declaration concerning the authority of the Son as revealer and prophet of the new covenant. These words echo Deut. 18:15, and identify Jesus as the great prophet like Moses.

■ **9:9 commanded them . . . tell no one.** See notes on 1:34; 8:30.

till the Son of Man had risen from the dead. Open, public testimony to Jesus' glory is to be withheld until after the full accomplishment of redemption.

■ **9:10 questioning what the rising from the dead meant.** The disciples' confusion arises from Jewish expectation of a general resurrection in the last days, but not an individual resurrection in the midst of history.

■ **9:12 Elijah is coming first.** Though John the Baptist is not personally Elijah risen from the dead (6:14–16; cf. John 1:21), Jesus teaches that Elijah was indeed the Old Testament type who prefigured the Baptist's ministry (cf. Luke 1:17).

■ **9:13 they did to him.** Just as Elijah suffered at the hands of Ahab and Jezebel (1 Kin. 19:1–10), so John suffered at the hands of Herod and Herodias (6:18 note). If John, who restored all things by calling the people of God to repentance and godliness, was put to death, should it be surprising (v. 12) that the Son of Man faces the same lot?

■ **9:17 has a mute spirit.** Demon possession is clearly distinguished from normal illness (7:31–37), though in both cases the person cannot speak. Compare 1:24, 25; 5:2–15.

mute spirit. [18] And wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid. So I spoke to Your disciples, that they should cast it out, but they could not."

[19] He answered him and said, "O [p]faithless[2] generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I [3]bear with you? Bring him to Me." [20] Then they brought him to Him. And [q]when he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming at the mouth.

[21] So He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?"

And he said, "From childhood. [22] And often he has thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us."

[23] Jesus said to him, [r]"If[4] you can believe, all things *are* possible to him who believes."

[24] Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; [s]help my unbelief!"

[25] When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He [t]rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!" [26] Then *the spirit* cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him. And he became as one dead, so that many said, "He is dead." [27] But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.

[28] [u]And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?"

[29] So He said to them, "This kind can come out by nothing but [v]prayer [5]and fasting."

Jesus Again Predicts His Death and Resurrection

[30] Then they departed from there and passed through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know *it*. [31] [w]For He taught His disciples and said to them, "The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of men, and they will [x]kill Him. And after He is killed, He will [y]rise the third day." [32] But they [z]did not understand this saying, and were afraid to ask Him.

Who Is the Greatest?

[33] [a]Then He came to Capernaum. And when He was in the house He asked them, "What was it you [6]disputed among yourselves on the road?" [34] But they kept silent, for on the road they had [b]disputed among themselves who *would be the* [c]greatest. [35] And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, [d]"If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all." [36] Then [e]He took a little child and set him in the midst of them. And when He had taken him in His arms, He said to them, [37] "Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me; and [f]whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me."

Jesus Forbids Sectarianism

[38] [g]Now John answered Him, saying, "Teacher, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow us."

19 [p]John 4:48 [2]*unbelieving* [3]*put up with*

20 [q]Mark 1:26

23 [r]John 11:40 [4]NU [a]*'If You can!' All things*

24 [s]Luke 17:5

25 [t]Mark 1:25

28 [u]Matt. 17:19

29 [v][James 5:16] [5]NU omits *and fasting*

31 [w]Luke 9:44 [x]Matt. 16:21; 27:50 [y]1 Cor. 15:4

32 [z]Luke 2:50; 18:34

33 [a]Matt. 18:1–5 [6]*discussed*

34 [b][Prov. 13:10] [c]Luke 22:24; 23:46; 24:46

35 [d]Luke 22:26, 27

36 [e]Mark 10:13–16

37 [f]Matt. 10:40

38 [g]Num. 11:27–29

■ **9:19 O faithless generation.** Jesus' impatience with the disciples' lack of faith, and frustration with the general scene of unbelief and impotence as He returns from the mount of Transfiguration, is reminiscent of Moses coming down from Mount Sinai to find unbelief and unfaithfulness in the Israelite camp (Ex. 32).

■ **9:25 the people came running.** The situation is still volatile. The blind enthusiasm of the crowd constantly places Jesus in the dilemma of compassionately wanting to minister to people's suffering, while not jeopardizing the overarching plan of redemption.

I command you. The spiritual power of Jesus causes the demon to cry out (v. 26). See "Demons" at Deut. 32:17.

■ **9:28 privately.** See note on 8:32.

■ **9:31 taught His disciples.** Again and again Jesus gives priority to the training of the Twelve. Jesus repeats, for emphasis and because the lesson was still unlearned, what He had previously taught in 8:31.

■ **9:33 house.** See note on 2:1.

■ **9:34 who would be the greatest.** Given the importance of honor in that society, such considerations played a significant role in people's minds (cf. 10:35–45). Jesus is bringing about a revolution in this way of thinking, though without destroying the notion of functional hierarchy. See note on 5:37.

■ **9:35 called the twelve.** Again the Twelve are singled out (3:14), and their position of leadership is explicitly recognized.

If anyone desires to be first. Jesus is not attacking leadership positions, but showing the way in which such roles should be exercised (i.e., as the "last . . . and servant of all"). This principle is exemplified by Jesus Himself who "did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (10:45). The self-giving manner in which Jesus fulfills His messianic role, which is the first and foremost role in the kingdom, provides the standard for His disciples in whatever secondary roles they might exercise in the kingdom of God.

■ **9:36 a little child.** Lit. "infant." The God-given dignity of every human being is exemplified by the little child. This weakest of human beings must be served in the same way as the greatest (9:35 note).

■ **9:38 does not follow us.** This phrase does not deny that the man was not a follower of Jesus; he was casting out demons in Jesus' name. Probably what is meant is that he does not recognize the authority of the Twelve. Without taking away the prerogatives of the Twelve, but sensing their pride and exclusivism (9:35 note; 10:35–45), Jesus refuses to denounce the one they are talking about. Instead He teaches that the support and fellowship of all who support His cause should be gratefully acknowledged.

39 [h]1 Cor. 12:3

40 [i][Matt. 12:30]; Luke 11:23 [7]M *you* [8]M *your*

41 [j]Matt. 10:42

42 [k]Matt. 18:6; Luke 17:1, 2; [1 Cor. 8:12] [9]To fall into sin

43 [l][Deut. 13:6]; Matt. 5:29, 30; 18:8, 9 [1]*crippled* [2]Gr. *Gehenna*

44 [m]Is. 66:24 [3]NU omits v. 44.

45 [4]Gr. *Gehenna* [5]NU omits the rest of v. 45 and all of v. 46.

46 [n]Is. 66:24

39 But Jesus said, "Do not forbid him, [h]for no one who works a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me. 40 For [i]he who is not against [7]us is on [8]our side. 41 [j]For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.

Jesus Warns of Offenses

42 [k]"But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me [9]to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea. 43 [l]If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter into life [1]maimed, rather than having two hands, to go to [2]hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched— 44 [3]where

[m] *'Their worm does not die*
And the fire is not quenched.'

45 And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame, rather than having two feet, to be cast into [4]hell, [5]into the fire that shall never be quenched— 46 where

[n] *'Their worm does not die*
And the fire is not quenched.'

Hell

The New Testament views hell as the final abode of those condemned to eternal punishment at the Last Judgment (Matt. 25:41–46; Rev. 20:11–15). It is described as a place of fire and darkness (Jude 7, 13), of "weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30), of destruction (2 Thess. 1:7–9; 2 Pet. 3:7; 1 Thess. 5:3) and torment (Rev. 20:10; Luke 16:23). These terms are probably symbolic rather than literal, but, if anything, the reality will be more terrible than the symbol. New Testament teaching about hell is meant to appall us and fill us with horror, persuading us that though heaven will be better than we could dream, so hell will be worse than we can imagine. These are the issues of eternity that must be realistically faced.

Hell is not so much the absence of God, as the consequence of His wrath and displeasure. God is like a consuming fire (Heb. 12:29), and His righteous condemnation for defying Him and clinging to the sins He loathes will be experienced in hell (Rom. 2:6, 8, 9, 12). According to Scripture, hell is unending (Jude 13; Rev. 20:10). There is no biblical warrant for speculations about a "second chance" after death, or an annihilation of the ungodly at some stage.

Those in hell will realize that they have sentenced themselves to be there because they have loved darkness rather than light, refusing to have their Creator as their Lord. They preferred the self-indulgence of sin to self-denying righteousness, rejecting the God that made them (John 3:18–21; Rom. 1:18, 24, 26, 28, 32; 2:8; 2 Thess. 2:9–11). General revelation confronts everyone with a certain evidence of God, and from this standpoint hell has a basis in God's respect for human choice. All receive what they chose, either to be with God forever, or to be without Him. Those who are in hell will know, not only that for their doings they deserve their punishment, but that in their hearts they chose it.

The purpose of the Bible's teaching about hell is to make us turn with gratitude to the grace of Christ that saves us from it (Matt. 5:29, 30; 13:48–50). For this reason God's warning to us is merciful; He has "no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live" (Ezek. 33:11).

■ **9:41 whoever gives . . . in My name.** All acts of mercy, care, and healing, done in Jesus' name (that is, with understanding and work and the purpose of serving Him) are eternally acknowledged as evidence of true discipleship.

■ **9:42 whoever causes . . . to stumble.** "Little ones" can refer either to the infants (v. 36), or to insignificant believers (v. 39). Derailing the faith of those of little worldly importance, for example, through an inconsiderate, egotistical use of power (v. 35 note), calls for the most severe punishment (v. 43).

■ **9:43 cut it off.** This admonition should be understood as a kind of exaggeration used in speech to make a point (cf. vv. 45–47). Jesus is talking about costly renunciations of sinful habits. See theological note "Hell."

■ **9:44–46** See text notes. Verses 44 and 46 do not appear in some early manuscripts, but the phrase is also found in v. 48.

47 And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into [o]hell fire— 48 where

o 'Their worm does not die
And the [p]fire is not quenched.'

Tasteless Salt Is Worthless

49 "For everyone will be [q]seasoned with fire, [r]and[7] every sacrifice will be seasoned with salt.
50 [s]Salt *is* good, but if the salt loses its flavor, how will you season it? [r]Have salt in yourselves, and [u]have peace with one another."

Marriage and Divorce

10 Then [a]He arose from there and came to the region of Judea by the other side of the Jordan. And multitudes gathered to Him again, and as He was accustomed, He taught them again.

2 [b]The Pharisees came and asked Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce *his* wife?" testing Him.

3 And He answered and said to them, "What did Moses command you?"

4 They said, [c]"Moses permitted *a man* to write a certificate of divorce, and to dismiss *her.*"

5 And Jesus answered and said to them, "Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you this [t]precept. 6 But from the beginning of the creation, God [d]*'made them male and female.'*
7 [e]*'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife,* 8 *and the two shall become one flesh'*; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. 9 Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

10 In the house His disciples also asked Him again about the same *matter.* 11 So He said to them, [f]"Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. 12 And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

Jesus Blesses Little Children

13 [g]Then they brought little children to Him, that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those who brought *them.* 14 But when Jesus saw *it,* He was greatly displeased and said to them, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for [h]of such is the kingdom of God. 15 Assuredly, I say to you, [i]whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will [j]by no means enter it." 16 And He took them up in His arms, laid *His* hands on them, and blessed them.

Jesus Counsels the Rich Young Ruler

17 [k]Now as He was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I [l]do that I may inherit eternal life?"

47 [o]Gr. *Gehenna*

48 [o]Is. 66:24 [p]Jer. 7:20; [Rev. 21:8]

49 [q][Matt. 3:11] [r]Lev. 2:13; Ezek. 43:24 [7]NU omits the rest of v. 49.

50 [s]Matt. 5:13; Luke 14:34 [r][Eph. 4:29]; Col. 4:6 [u]Rom. 12:18; 14:19; 2 Cor. 13:11; 1 Thess. 5:13; Heb. 12:14

CHAPTER 10

1 [a]Matt. 19:1–9; John 10:40; 11:7

2 [b]Matt. 19:3

4 [c]Deut. 24:1–4; Matt. 5:31; 19:7

5 [t]*command*

6 [d]Gen. 1:27; 5:2

7 [e]Gen. 2:24; [1 Cor. 6:16]; Eph. 5:31

11 [f]Ex. 20:14; [Matt. 5:32; 19:9]; Luke 16:18; [Rom. 7:3]; 1 Cor. 7:10, 11

13 [g]Matt. 19:13–15; Luke 18:15–17

14 [h][1 Cor. 14:20; 1 Pet. 2:2]

15 [i]Matt. 18:3, 4; 19:14; Luke 18:17 [j]Luke 13:28

17 [k]Matt. 19:16–30; Luke 18:18–30 [l]John 6:28; Acts 2:37

■ **9:49 seasoned with fire.** Salt is associated with sacrifice in Lev. 2:13; Ezek. 43:24. The saying may mean that by contrast to the fire of destruction just spoken of, believers will persevere through fire and be purified by it.

■ **9:50 Have salt in yourselves.** The image of salt describes true discipleship. Salt is a preservative. Jesus is telling His disciples to use humility and service to preserve the peace of the church, rather than dividing it through a desire to be great (v. 34).

■ **10:1 region of Judea.** The Roman province of Judea included most of central Palestine, with Jerusalem at its center. This journey into Judea begins the process that will lead Jesus to His death (Luke 9:51).

■ **10:2 Is it lawful . . . to divorce.** The question is vague, because Deut. 24:1–4 already indicates that the answer depends on the circumstances. Perhaps the Pharisees wanted to draw Jesus into the debate about Herod Antipas and his unlawful wife (6:17 note).

■ **10:6 from the beginning.** As usual, Jesus does not argue from "tradition" (7:3–12 notes) but seeks the intention of Scripture and its real requirements (see Matt. 5:20–22, 27, 28, 31, 32). Regarding marriage, Jesus shows that in the time of the new covenant, despite the continuing presence of sin, the conditions of life prior to the Fall will again be realized in an appropriate way (see Eph. 5:22–33).

■ **10:8 one flesh.** The creation order is to be maintained. Monogamous marriage is to be received and cherished.

■ **10:11 Whoever divorces.** This is a basic commandment about the inviolability of marriage. However, Jesus specifies one valid ground for divorce—marital infidelity (Matt. 5:32; 19:9). Paul seems to add another (1 Cor. 7:12–16).

■ **10:13 little children.** Lit. "infants" (9:36 note). They were young enough to be brought by their parents and taken by Jesus in His arms.

■ **10:14 do not forbid them.** Jesus is expressing the typical Old Testament notion of covenant solidarity. These small children belong in the kingdom, initially because of the faith of their parents, though they must exercise faith personally as soon as they can. Small children model true believers who know they have nothing to bring and everything to receive (v. 15).

■ **10:16 blessed them.** To receive God's blessing means to be called by God's name (Gen. 48:16; Num. 6:22–27) and to be included in the blessings of the covenant (Gen. 22:16–18; Deut. 7:13).

■ **10:17 one.** This man had great wealth (v. 22), was a ruler (Luke 18:18), and was young (Matt. 19:22). He had everything and yet lacked the most important thing—eternal life.

18 [m]1 Sam. 2:2

19 [n]Ex. 20:12–16; Deut. 5:16–20

20 [o]Phil. 3:6

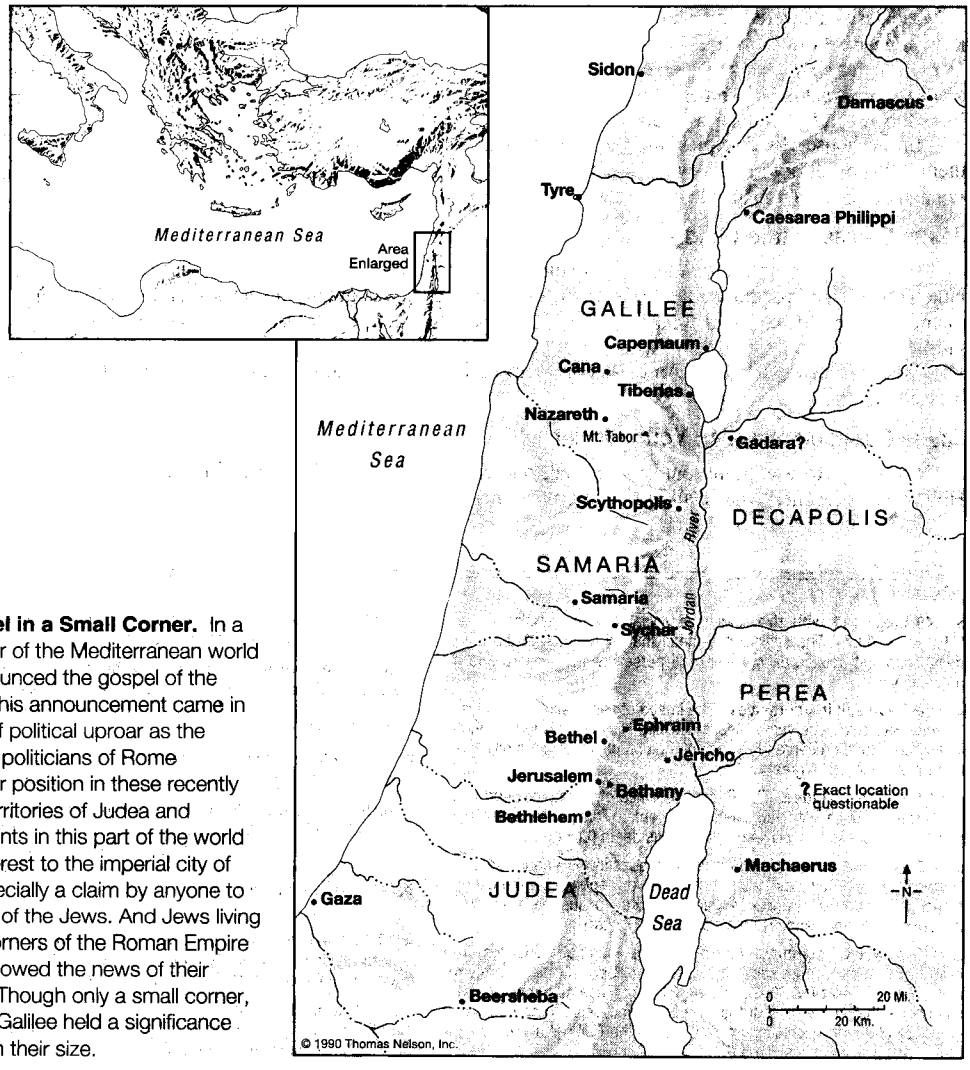
21 [p][Luke 12:33; 16:9] [q]Matt. 6:19, 20; 19:21 [r][Mark 8:34]

18 So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one *is* good but One, *that is,* [m]God.
19 You know the commandments: [n]'*Do not commit adultery,*' '*Do not murder,*' '*Do not steal,*' '*Do not bear false witness,*' 'Do not defraud,' '*Honor your father and your mother.*'"
20 And he answered and said to Him, "Teacher, all these things I have [o]kept from my youth."
21 Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, [p]sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have [q]treasure in heaven; and come, [r]take up the cross, and follow Me."
22 But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

what shall I do that I may inherit. The two verbs "do" and "inherit" placed together, the list of moral achievements, and the young man's understanding of goodness (v. 18 note) indicate a religious outlook based on works righteousness.

■ **10:18 Why do you call Me good.** Jesus' reply does not mean that He does not consider Himself good. He rather wants to show the man that "No one is good but One, that is, God," so that the man may realize that all his works do not make him good, and that he is not capable of earning eternal life.

■ **10:21 One thing you lack.** The young man's love of riches (v. 22) and refusal to give them up to follow Jesus shows that he has broken the greatest commandment of all: "Love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength" (Deut. 6:5; cf. Matt. 22:37). Lacking the total righteousness that God requires, he stands condemned.



The Gospel in a Small Corner. In a small corner of the Mediterranean world Jesus announced the gospel of the kingdom. This announcement came in the midst of political uproar as the armies and politicians of Rome jockeyed for position in these recently annexed territories of Judea and Galilee. Events in this part of the world were of interest to the imperial city of Rome, especially a claim by anyone to be the king of the Jews. And Jews living in the far corners of the Roman Empire certainly followed the news of their homeland. Though only a small corner, Judea and Galilee held a significance greater than their size.

With God All Things Are Possible

23 [s]Then Jesus looked around and said to His disciples, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!" 24 And the disciples were astonished at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, "Children, how hard it is [2]for those [t]who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God! 25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a [u]rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

26 And they were greatly astonished, saying among themselves, "Who then can be saved?"

27 But Jesus looked at them and said, "With men *it is* impossible, but not [v]with God; for with God all things are possible."

28 [w]Then Peter began to say to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You."

29 So Jesus answered and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother [3]or wife or children or [4]lands, for My sake and the gospel's, 30 [x]who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time—houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with [y]persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life. 31 [z]But many *who are* first will be last, and the last first."

Jesus a Third Time Predicts His Death and Resurrection

32 [a]Now they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was going before them; and they were amazed. And as they followed they were afraid. [b]Then He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them the things that would happen to Him: 33 "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him to the Gentiles; 34 and they will mock Him, and [5]scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again."

Greatness Is Serving

35 [c]Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, "Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask."

36 And He said to them, "What do you want Me to do for you?"

37 They said to Him, "Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory."

38 But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the [d]cup that I drink, and be baptized with the [e]baptism that I am baptized with?"

39 They said to Him, "We are able."

So Jesus said to them, [f]"You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized; 40 but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but *it is for those* [g]for whom it is prepared."

41 [h]And when the ten heard *it,* they began to be greatly displeased with James and John. 42 But

23 [s]Matt. 19:23; [Mark 4:19]; Luke 18:24

24 [t]Job 31:24; Ps. 52:7; 62:10; [Prov. 11:28; 1 Tim. 6:17] [2]NU omits *for those who trust in riches*

25 [u][Matt. 13:22; 19:24]

27 [v]Job 42:2; Jer. 32:17; Matt. 19:26; Luke 1:37

28 [w]Matt. 19:27; Luke 18:28

29 [3]NU omits *or wife* [4]Lit. *fields*

30 [x]2 Chr. 25:9; Luke 18:29, 30 [y]1 Thess. 3:3; 2 Tim. 3:12; [1 Pet. 4:12, 13]

31 [z]Matt. 19:30; 20:16; Luke 13:30

32 [a]Matt. 20:17–19; Luke 18:31–33 [b]Mark 8:31; 9:31; Luke 9:22; 18:31

34 [5]*flog Him* with a Roman scourge

35 [c][James 4:3]

38 [d]Matt. 26:39, 42; Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42; John 18:11 [e]Luke 12:50

39 [f]Matt. 10:17, 18, 21, 22; 24:9; John 16:33; Acts 12:2; Rev. 1:9

40 [g][Matt. 25:34; John 17:2, 6, 24; Rom. 8:30; Heb. 11:16]

41 [h]Matt. 20:24

■ **10:23 How hard it is for those who have riches.** The difficulty is not because riches in themselves are evil and disqualify those who possess them, but because the rich are tempted to depend upon their riches and may be unable to admit their need of God.

■ **10:25 camel . . . eye of a needle.** An excellent example of Jesus' colorful, proverbial language, here expressing the idea of impossibility (v. 27). The suggestion that there was a small gate, called "the needle's eye," through which camels could barely pass is unsupported and trivializes Jesus' image.

■ **10:26 Who then can be saved.** The disciples understood Jesus' meaning. No one can be saved by good works.

■ **10:27 With men it is impossible.** Salvation is from the Lord, through sovereign divine initiative (Ps. 3:8; 68:19, 20), not by human effort.

■ **10:28 we have left all.** While salvation cannot be earned, it imposes this radical condition.

■ **10:30 a hundredfold.** The phrase "this time" with its counterpart "the age to come" reflects the teaching of the rabbis about the two-tiered present evil age and the future age of the Messiah. The resurrection of Jesus significantly altered that view. In the period between the resurrection of Jesus and that of all believers the "two ages" exist side by side. The old is passing away, and the new is present, but not in its fullness. Hence there can be both a "hundredfold" blessing and persecution.

■ **10:33 Son of Man will be betrayed.** See note on 8:31.

Gentiles. The new element in this third prediction of the Passion is the mention of the Gentiles (that is, the Romans). The scourging and mockery He predicted are details of His death prophesied in the Scriptures (Ps. 22), and were normal Roman practice.

■ **10:35 James and John.** See 1:19 and 3:17. In Matt. 20:20 it is their mother who makes the request, so apparently the whole family was involved.

■ **10:37 sit . . . on Your right.** Jesus' teaching on greatness (9:34, 35 and notes) clearly had yet to change their attitudes.

■ **10:38 drink the cup.** An Old Testament symbol for suffering and wrath (Ps. 75:8; Is. 51:17–22; Jer. 25:15; Ezek. 23:31–34.

baptism. Here the word is a metaphor for experience of death-threatening judgment, with the hope of ultimate deliverance (Rom. 6:3–7; 1 Cor. 10:2; Col. 2:11–13).

■ **10:40 not Mine to give.** Jesus recognizes areas where only the Father has authority (13:32). Such places are decided in accordance with the principle that Jesus gives concerning service (9:35).

■ **10:41 displeased.** Perhaps the others were indignant, not because John and James failed to put Jesus' teaching into practice (9:35 note), but because they wanted the same high places. Jesus desires to eliminate in the Twelve, and by extension in all His disciples, such notions of power and authority.

42 [i]Luke 22:25

43 [j]Matt. 20:26, 28; Mark 9:35; Luke 9:48

45 [k]Luke 22:27; John 13:14; [Phil. 2:7, 8] [l]Matt. 20:28; [2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Tim. 2:5, 6; Titus 2:14]

46 [m]Matt. 20:29–34; Luke 18:35–43

47 [n]Jer. 23:5; Matt. 22:42; Rom. 1:3, 4; Rev. 22:16 [o]Matt. 15:22; Luke 17:13

51 [6]Lit. *My Great One*

52 [p]Matt. 9:22; Mark 5:34 [7]Lit. *saved you*

CHAPTER 11

1 [a]Matt. 21:1–9; Luke 19:29; John 2:13 [1]M *Bethsphage*

4 [2]NU, M *a*

8 [b]Matt. 21:8

9 [c]Ps. 118:25, 26; Matt. 21:9

Jesus called them to *Himself* and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. [43] [j]Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. [44] And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. [45] For even [k]the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and [l]to give His life a ransom for many."

Jesus Heals Blind Bartimaeus

[46] [m]Now they came to Jericho. As He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great multitude, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the road begging. [47] And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, [n]Son of David, [o]have mercy on me!"

[48] Then many warned him to be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

[49] So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called.

Then they called the blind man, saying to him, "Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you."

[50] And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus.

[51] So Jesus answered and said to him, "What do you want Me to do for you?"

The blind man said to Him, [6]"Rabboni, that I may receive my sight."

[52] Then Jesus said to him, "Go your way; [p]your faith has [7]made you well." And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road.

The Triumphal Entry

11 Now [a]when they drew near Jerusalem, to [1]Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples; [2] and He said to them, "Go into the village opposite you; and as soon as you have entered it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has sat. Loose it and bring *it.* [3] And if anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord has need of it,' and immediately he will send it here."

[4] So they went their way, and found [2]the colt tied by the door outside on the street, and they loosed it. [5] But some of those who stood there said to them, "What are you doing, loosing the colt?"

[6] And they spoke to them just as Jesus had commanded. So they let them go. [7] Then they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their clothes on it, and He sat on it. [8] [b]And many spread their clothes on the road, and others cut down leafy branches from the trees and spread *them* on the road. [9] Then those who went before and those who followed cried out, saying:

"Hosanna!
[c] *'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'*

■ **10:45 the Son of Man did not come to be served.** What finally breaks the stony hearts of Jesus' disciples is the example that He Himself gives. Jesus, the Son of Man who will inherit "dominion and glory and a kingdom" (Dan. 7:14), has come as a servant, fulfilling the prophecy of Is. 52:13—53:12.

ransom. A price paid to free the guilty from a sentence (Ex. 21:30), or debtors from their debt (Ex. 30:12; cf. Is. 53:10).

many. See Is. 53:12. In the Qumran writings (the Dead Sea Scrolls) this is a term for all the members of the community.

■ **10:46 Jericho.** Fifteen miles northeast of Jerusalem and 800 feet below sea level. See note on Luke 18:35.

son of Timaeus. The translation shows that Mark was writing for an audience unfamiliar with Semitic languages (5:31 note).

■ **10:47 Son of David.** A popular messianic title (11:10; 12:35) drawn from the Old Testament (Is. 11:1–3; Jer. 23:5, 6; Ezek. 34:23, 24).

■ **10:49 commanded him to be called.** One of the marks of Jesus' public ministry is the time He gives to suffering individuals in the midst of crowds (5:30–34).

■ **10:51 Rabboni.** Hebrew for "my master" (see text note; a heightened form of the usual title for teachers, "rabbi"), a recognition of and submission to Jesus' authority.

■ **11:1 when they drew near Jerusalem.** The journey (10:1 note) reaches its destination, and what is called Passion Week begins. Jesus' decision to come up to Jerusalem is clearly determined by His understanding of the Old Testament and His prophecies concerning His own death (8:31 note).

Bethphage. Hebrew for "house of unripe figs," a small village east of Jerusalem.

Bethany. Hebrew for "house of sadness," two or three miles east of Jerusalem.

Mount of Olives. East of Jerusalem and rising about two hundred feet higher than the temple mount, this high hill commands a spectacular view of Jerusalem and especially of the temple. In Jesus' time it was covered with olive trees, but was stripped of them by the Romans during the siege of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

■ **11:2 you will find.** This text witnesses to the supernatural knowledge of Jesus (cf. John 1:48–50).

colt. A young donkey (Matt. 21:2; John 12:15). The Old Testament prophesied Jesus' actions (Zech. 9:9), which in this case identify Him clearly as the Messiah. Zechariah prophesied the coming of a righteous and gentle King to bring salvation.

■ **11:8 clothes on the road.** A recognition of Jesus' royal dignity.

branches. See Ps. 118:27. This psalm celebrates the procession of the royal Messiah.

■ **11:9 Hosanna.** A Greek transliteration of the Aramaic words for "Save now . . . O LORD" (Ps. 118:25). The crowd is shouting phrases from that psalm.

10 Blessed *is* the kingdom of our father David
That comes [3]in the name of the Lord!
[d]Hosanna in the highest!"

11 [e]And Jesus went into Jerusalem and into the temple. So when He had looked around at all things, as the hour was already late, He went out to Bethany with the twelve.

The Fig Tree Withered

12 [f]Now the next day, when they had come out from Bethany, He was hungry. 13 [g]And seeing from afar a fig tree having leaves, He went to see if perhaps He would find something on it. When He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs. 14 In response Jesus said to it, "Let no one eat fruit from you ever again."

And His disciples heard *it.*

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

15 [h]So they came to Jerusalem. Then Jesus went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold [i]doves. 16 And He would not allow anyone to carry wares through the temple. 17 Then He taught, saying to them, "Is it not written, *[j]'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations'*? But you have made it a [k]*'den of thieves.'*"

18 And [l]the scribes and chief priests heard it and sought how they might destroy Him; for they feared Him, because [m]all the people were astonished at His teaching. 19 When evening had come, He went out of the city.

The Lesson of the Withered Fig Tree

20 [n]Now in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. 21 And Peter, remembering, said to Him, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree which You cursed has withered away."

22 So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God. 23 For [o]assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. 24 Therefore I say to you, [p]whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive *them,* and you will have *them.*

Forgiveness and Prayer

25 "And whenever you stand praying, [q]if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. 26 [4]But [r]if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."

10 [d]Ps. 148:1 [3]NU omits *in the name of the Lord*

11 [e]Matt. 21:12

12 [f]Matt. 21:18–22

13 [g]Matt. 21:19

15 [h]Mal. 3:1; Matt. 21:12–16; Luke 19:45–47; John 2:13–16 [i]Lev. 14:22

17 [j]Is. 56:7 [k]Jer. 7:11

18 [l]Ps. 2:2; Matt. 21:45, 46; Luke 19:47 [m]Matt. 7:28; Mark 1:22; 6:2; Luke 4:32

20 [n]Matt. 21:19–22

23 [o]Matt. 17:20; 21:21; Luke 17:6

24 [p]Matt. 7:7; Luke 11:9; [John 14:13; 15:7; 16:24; James 1:5, 6]

25 [q]Matt. 6:14; 18:23–35; Eph. 4:32; [Col. 3:13]

26 [r]Matt. 6:15; 18:35 [4]NU omits v. 26.

■ **11:11 He went out to Bethany.** In Matt. 21:12–22, Jesus proceeds to cleanse the temple upon His arrival and curses the fig tree the next day. In Mark, Jesus returns to Bethany for the night; in the morning He curses the fig tree and then cleanses the temple. Probably Matthew treats the material topically (no specific time reference for the cleansing is given in Matt. 21:12), while Mark, who places stories within stories (5:21–43; 6:7–30), treats it chronologically.

■ **11:13 not the season for figs.** See note on Matt. 21:18–20.

■ **11:14 Let no one eat fruit from you ever again.** Jesus curses this tree for making a display but having no fruit, just as He will judge the temple (vv. 15–17) and predict its destruction (13:2). This would indicate that the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem will no longer be a goal of redemptive history. Jeremiah used figs as a symbol of judgment on Jerusalem (Jer. 24).

■ **11:15 temple.** That is, the Gentile court, the outermost court in the complex of structures surrounding the temple proper. It was the only area where Gentiles were allowed (cf. v. 17).

began to drive out. John 2:12–22 describes the temple cleansing at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, while all three Synoptic Gospels report one occurring at the end. It is likely that Jesus cleansed the temple twice. John's account is carefully dated (John 2:20; Mark 1:9 note), and the accounts are by no means identical. In John, Jesus comes with His disciples, and His actions recall to their minds Ps. 69:9. In the Synoptic accounts, Jesus comes in triumphal messianic glory and justifies His actions by quoting Is. 56:7 and Jer. 7:11. Jesus was no doubt aware that the prophet Jeremiah twice cursed the temple (Jer. 7:1–14; 26:2–6).

money changers. This service was necessary because the temple tax and offerings had to be paid in the local currency, but it had become so corrupt that Jesus described the scene as "a den of thieves" (v. 17; Luke 19:45, 46 note). Jesus is also judging the Sadducean high-priestly families who were not attuned to the character of the Father whose house it was (cf. 12:18–27).

■ **11:16 not allow anyone to carry wares.** Not only had the court become a market, but it was being used as a shortcut by merchants of all kinds. Mark sees in Jesus' gesture a defense of Gentile rights and perhaps an indication of the future mission to the Gentiles.

■ **11:18 scribes and chief priests.** Jesus acted under the eyes of those He knew would kill Him (8:31).

astonished at His teaching. See note on 1:22.

■ **11:20 dried up from the roots.** This phrase indicates complete destruction (v. 14 note).

■ **11:25 anything against anyone.** See Matt. 5:23, 24.

■ **11:26** This verse is lacking in certain ancient manuscripts (see text note). A similar saying is found in Matt. 6:14, 15.

27 [s]Matt. 21:23–27; Luke 20:1–8

28 [t]John 5:27

30 [u][Mark 1:4, 5, 8]; Luke 7:29, 30

32 [v]Matt. 3:5; 14:5; Mark 6:20

CHAPTER 12

1 [a]Matt. 21:33–46; Luke 20:9–19
[1]*tenant farmers*

4 [2]NU omits *and at him they threw stones*

5 [b]2 Chr. 36:16

7 [3]*tenant farmers*

8 [c][Acts 2:23]

10 [d]Ps. 118:22, 23

12 [e]Matt. 21:45, 46; Mark 11:18; John 7:25, 30, 44

13 [f]Matt. 22:15–22; Luke 20:20–26

Jesus' Authority Questioned

27 Then they came again to Jerusalem. [s]And as He was walking in the temple, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to Him. 28 And they said to Him, "By what [t]authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority to do these things?"

29 But Jesus answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one question; then answer Me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things: 30 The [u]baptism of John—was it from heaven or from men? Answer Me."

31 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Why then did you not believe him?' 32 But if we say, 'From men' "—they feared the people, for [v]all counted John to have been a prophet indeed. 33 So they answered and said to Jesus, "We do not know."

And Jesus answered and said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

The Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers

12 Then [a]He began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard and set a hedge around *it,* dug *a place for* the wine vat and built a tower. And he leased it to [1]vinedressers and went into a far country. 2 Now at vintage-time he sent a servant to the vinedressers, that he might receive some of the fruit of the vineyard from the vinedressers. 3 And they took *him* and beat him and sent *him* away empty-handed. 4 Again he sent them another servant, [2]and at him they threw stones, wounded *him* in the head, and sent *him* away shamefully treated. 5 And again he sent another, and him they killed; and many others, [b]beating some and killing some. 6 Therefore still having one son, his beloved, he also sent him to them last, saying, 'They will respect my son.' 7 But those [3]vinedressers said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' 8 So they took him and [c]killed *him* and cast *him* out of the vineyard.

9 "Therefore what will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the vinedressers, and give the vineyard to others. 10 Have you not even read this Scripture:

> [d]*'The stone which the builders rejected*
> *Has become the chief cornerstone.*
> 11 *This was the* LORD*'s doing,*
> *And it is marvelous in our eyes'?* "

12 [e]And they sought to lay hands on Him, but feared the multitude, for they knew He had spoken the parable against them. So they left Him and went away.

The Pharisees: Is It Lawful to Pay Taxes to Caesar?

13 [f]Then they sent to Him some of the Pharisees and the Herodians, to catch Him in *His* words. 14 When they had come, they said to Him, "Teacher, we know that You are true, and

■ **11:27 chief priests.** See note on 11:18.

■ **11:28 By what authority.** The Jerusalem "authorities" seek to expose Jesus as an upstart, with no official status to act within the temple.

■ **11:30 was it from heaven.** Jesus' answer silences the officeholders and professional theologians, for it undercuts the claims of such "official" authority to be absolute. Prophetic authority cannot, by definition, have a human source (Gal. 1:11, 12). It is attested by God and demands submission. With Jesus' answer is an *unspoken* and ultimate question: "Do you recognize and submit to My authority?"

■ **12:1 them.** This pronoun apparently refers to the chief priests and scribes since it agrees with "they" in v. 12 (those who look for a way to arrest Him). This parable was also a provocation (11:18 note).

parables. See notes on 4:2, 11. Although it is incorrect to seek a special, symbolic meaning for every detail of the parable, the essential point is clear.

vineyard. The parable is based on the "Song of the Vineyard" (Is. 5:1–5), which pictures Israel and her unfaithfulness.

■ **12:2 servant.** Often a term for the prophets (Ex. 14:31; 2 Chr. 1:3; Is. 20:3; Amos 3:7), whom Jesus sees as those whom God had sent to call Israel to faithfulness and who often suffered death (Matt. 23:37).

vinedressers. Those with "official" authority over the people of God, in particular those for whom the parable is told.

■ **12:6 son, his beloved.** In the three Synoptic Gospels, the theme of Jesus as God's beloved son is rare (Mark 1:11; 9:7; cf. Matt. 16:16), but it is unmistakably present.

■ **12:9 give the vineyard to others.** Matt. 21:43 reads, "will be . . . given to a nation bearing the fruits of it," suggesting both the community of disciples forming around Jesus (Luke 22:29, 30) and the mission to the Gentiles (Matt. 8:11, 12; Rom. 9:22–26).

■ **12:10 The stone which the builders rejected.** Jesus cites Ps. 118:22, 23; that psalm celebrates the victory that God gives to His Messiah, establishing Him on His throne. Such is the faith of Jesus in His Father and in the Scripture, that in face of the death He has just predicted for Himself ("they took him and killed him," v. 8), He can rejoice in the promised victory.

■ **12:13 Pharisees and the Herodians.** The alliance between the Pharisees and the Herodians re-emerges (3:6). This alliance was possible because both parties accepted the Roman occupation, the former as divine punishment, the latter for political advantage.

■ **12:14 taxes to Caesar.** In addition to numerous customs taxes, tolls, and other charges (2:14 note), each Roman province was obliged to pay

[4]care about no one; for You do not [5]regard the person of men, but teach the [g]way of God in truth. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? [15] Shall we pay, or shall we not pay?"

But He, knowing their [h]hypocrisy, said to them, "Why do you test Me? Bring Me a denarius that I may see *it.*" [16] So they brought *it.*

And He said to them, "Whose image and inscription *is* this?" They said to Him, "Caesar's."

[17] And Jesus answered and said to them, [6]"Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to [i]God the things that are God's."

And they marveled at Him.

The Sadducees: What About the Resurrection?

[18] [j]Then *some* Sadducees, [k]who say there is no resurrection, came to Him; and they asked Him, saying: [19] "Teacher, [l]Moses wrote to us that if a man's brother dies, and leaves *his* wife behind, and leaves no children, his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. [20] Now there were seven brothers. The first took a wife; and dying, he left no offspring. [21] And the second took her, and he died; nor did he leave any offspring. And the third likewise. [22] So the seven had her and left no offspring. Last of all the woman died also. [23] Therefore, in the resurrection, when they rise, whose wife will she be? For all seven had her as wife."

[24] Jesus answered and said to them, "Are you not therefore [7]mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God? [25] For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but [m]are like angels in heaven. [26] But concerning the dead, that they [n]rise, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the *burning* bush *passage,* how God spoke to him, saying, [o]*'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'*? [27] He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living. You are therefore greatly [8]mistaken."

The Scribes: Which Is the First Commandment of All?

[28] [p]Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, [9]perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, "Which is the [1]first commandment of all?"

[29] Jesus answered him, "The [2]first of all the commandments *is:* [q]*'Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one.* [30] *And you shall [r]love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.'* [3]This *is* the first commandment. [31] And the second, like *it, is* this: [s]*'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'* There is no other commandment greater than [t]these."

[32] So the scribe said to Him, "Well *said,* Teacher. You have spoken the truth, for there is one God, [u]and there is no other but He. [33] And to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, [4]with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, [v]is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices."

14 [g]Acts 18:26 [4]Court no man's favor [5]Lit. *look at the face of men*

15 [h]Luke 12:1

17 [i][Eccl. 5:4, 5] [6]*Pay*

18 [j]Luke 20:27–38 [k]Acts 23:8

19 [l]Deut. 25:5

24 [7]Or *deceived*

25 [m][1 Cor. 15:42, 49, 52]

26 [n][Rev. 20:12, 13] [o]Ex. 3:6, 15

27 [8]Or *deceived*

28 [p]Matt. 22:34–40 [9]NU *seeing* [1]*foremost*

29 [q]Deut. 6:4, 5 [2]*foremost*

30 [r][Deut. 10:12; 30:6] [3]NU omits the rest of v. 30.

31 [s]Lev. 19:18 [t][Rom. 13:9]

32 [u]Deut. 4:39

33 [v][Hos. 6:6] [4]NU omits *with all the soul*

the imperial tribute. The same sum was exacted from all, rich and poor alike. This tax was very unpopular with the people.

■ **12:15 Why do you test Me.** His opponents' question was apparently an attempt to brand Jesus as a political revolutionary.

denarius. Numerous currencies were in circulation in Palestine. Jesus asks for the Roman denarius, about a day's wage, bearing on one side a picture of Caesar and on the other a scene glorifying his reign.

■ **12:17 Render to Caesar.** Jesus takes the occasion to affirm that Rome's political power is legitimate, as at His trial He declares that it is from God (John 19:11). The early church followed this teaching of Jesus (Rom. 13:1–7; Col. 1:16; 1 Tim. 2:1–6; Titus 3:1, 2; 1 Pet. 2:13–17).

■ **12:18 Sadducees.** The high-priestly families at the time of Jesus were members of this group. The Sadducees denied the resurrection, the existence of angels, and rejected the oral tradition of the Pharisees. Their name probably derives from Zadok, David's high priest (2 Sam. 8:17; 1 Chr. 15:11; 29:22) and appointed officer over the Aaronic priestly line (1 Chr. 27:17), who was given the exclusive right to be high priest (Ezek. 40:46; 43:19).

■ **12:19 Moses wrote.** The story they tell to Jesus (vv. 19–23) is based on the "kinsman-redeemer" law of Deut. 25:5–10, which provides for a family line to be perpetuated by the nearest of kin in the event of a premature death (Ruth 2:20 note).

■ **12:24 the power of God.** Probably refers to the ongoing work of God and His powerful manifestations in the future (including the resurrection) through His Messiah (Luke 22:69; Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:18, 24).

■ **12:25 neither marry.** The final resurrection is the transformation of the physical universe (Rom. 8:21; 1 Cor. 15:52, 53), and the creation mandate of marriage and reproduction (Gen. 1:27, 28; 2:24) will no longer be appropriate.

■ **12:26 the burning bush passage.** See Ex. 3:1–6. The God who appears with miraculous power in the theophany of the burning bush is the Lord not of "the dead," but of the "living," those united to Him in an eternal covenant of grace. The teaching about resurrection, Jesus implies, is not limited to certain Old Testament proof texts (e.g., Job 19:25–27; Ps. 16:9–11; 17:15; 73:24–26; Is. 26:19; 53:11; Ezek. 37:1–14; Dan. 12:2; Hos. 6:2; 13:14), but is grounded in the Person of the living and life-giving God.

■ **12:27 You are . . . greatly mistaken.** This strong phrase recalls Jesus' damning indictment of those whose father is not God but the devil (John 8:42–47).

■ **12:29 Hear, O Israel.** Again the debate is about Scripture. Jesus cites Deut. 6:4, known as the "Shema" (from the Hebrew for "hear"), the central confession of Israel's monotheistic faith.

■ **12:31 the second.** Jesus joins Lev. 19:18 to Deut. 6:4, 5, a text that James calls "the royal law" (James 2:8).

■ **12:33 burnt offerings.** The scribe approves Jesus' answer and adds a scriptural proof of his own (1 Sam. 15:22; Hos. 6:6).

34 [w]Matt. 22:46

35 [x]Matt. 22:41–46; Luke 20:41–44

36 [y]2 Sam. 23:2 [z]Ps. 110:1

37 [a][Acts 2:29–31]

38 [b]Mark 4:2 [c]Matt. 23:1–7; Luke 20:45–47 [d]Matt. 23:7; Luke 11:43

39 [e]Luke 14:7

40 [f]Matt. 23:14 [5]*for appearance' sake*

41 [g]Luke 21:1–4 [h]2 Kin. 12:9

42 [6]Gr. *lepta,* very small copper coins [7]A Roman coin

43 [i][2 Cor. 8:12]

44 [j]Deut. 24:6; [1 John 3:17]

CHAPTER 13

1 [a]Matt. 24:1; Luke 21:5–36

2 [b]Luke 19:44

34 Now when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, He said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God."
[w]But after that no one dared question Him.

Jesus: How Can David Call His Descendant Lord?

35 [x]Then Jesus answered and said, while He taught in the temple, "How *is it* that the scribes say that the Christ is the Son of David? 36 For David himself said [y]by the Holy Spirit:

[z] *'The LORD said to my Lord,*
"Sit at My right hand,
Till I make Your enemies Your footstool."'

37 Therefore David himself calls Him *'Lord';* how is He *then* his [a]Son?"
And the common people heard Him gladly.

Beware of the Scribes

38 Then [b]He said to them in His teaching, [c]"Beware of the scribes, who desire to go around in long robes, [d]*love* greetings in the marketplaces, 39 the [e]best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts, 40 [f]who devour widows' houses, and [5]for a pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation."

The Widow's Two Mites

41 [g]Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money [h]into the treasury. And many *who were* rich put in much. 42 Then one poor widow came and threw in two [6]mites, which make a [7]quadrans. 43 So He called His disciples to *Himself* and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that [i]this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; 44 for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, [j]her whole livelihood."

Jesus Predicts the Destruction of the Temple

13 Then [a]as He went out of the temple, one of His disciples said to Him, "Teacher, see what manner of stones and what buildings *are here!*"
2 And Jesus answered and said to him, "Do you see these great buildings? [b]Not *one* stone shall be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

■ **12:34 not far from the kingdom.** Compare the rich young ruler of 10:21 ("One thing you lack") and Nicodemus (John 3:1–21). In each case there is a need for new birth into eternal life (which is entering into the kingdom of God), something made possible by the death and resurrection of the Son of Man (John 3:3, 14, 15).

■ **12:35 temple.** See note on 11:15. In addition to the Gentile court, there was also the women's court, and the court of Israel that was reserved for Jewish men.

■ **12:36 David himself.** Jesus' interpretation hangs on the Davidic authorship of this psalm.

said by the Holy Spirit. Jesus ascribes to David's psalm full divine inspiration, as do His disciples later (Acts 1:16; 4:25).

■ **12:37 David himself calls Him "Lord."** Jesus argues that, while the Messiah is descended from David, His royal dignity and power far surpass those of David, for David addresses this King as "my Lord" (Ps. 110:1). This king is uniquely associated with the LORD (Ps. 110:2). Such clear and faithful interpretation of Scripture is heard "gladly" (cf. Luke 24:32).

■ **12:38 Beware of the scribes.** The superficiality of the scribes' messianic doctrine and exegesis brings Jesus to criticize their superficial lifestyle in general. A similar warning is found in 8:15.

■ **12:40 devour widows' houses.** It was considered improper for anyone to receive a salary for interpreting the Scriptures. Consequently, they relied upon and sometimes took advantage of the hospitality of the people, among whom widows were especially vulnerable.

long prayers. See Matt. 6:5, 6 for a similar judgment of ostentatious and hypocritical spirituality.

■ **12:41 treasury.** The offering boxes were situated in the women's court of the temple, which gave access to all.

■ **12:42 two mites.** This coin, the lepton, was the lowest denomination in circulation.

a quadrans. A Roman coin worth one sixty-fourth of a denarius (the denarius was one day's wage). Mark translates into Greek for Gentile readers (5:41 note).

■ **13:1–37** This chapter is known as the "Little Apocalypse" or the Olivet Discourse. It makes predictions in three areas: the coming destruction of the temple (vv. 1–4); future persecutions (vv. 5–25); and the coming of the Son of Man (vv. 26–37).

■ **13:1 what manner of stones and what buildings.** Herod the Great began rebuilding the temple in 19 B.C., using marble and gold as decorative materials. The outer court measured five hundred by three hundred yards. It was bordered by walls of massive white stones, some of which were sixteen feet long and three to four feet high. On top of these were magnificent, covered cloisters or walkways with richly carved wooden ceilings.

■ **13:2 Not one stone.** Jerusalem was sacked and the temple burned and destroyed in A.D. 70 by Titus, the Roman general (later emperor). The Arch of Titus commemorating his victory still stands in Rome.

The Signs of the Times and the End of the Age

3 Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, [c]Peter, [d]James, [e]John, and [f]Andrew asked Him privately, 4 [g]"Tell us, when will these things be? And what *will be* the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?"

5 And Jesus, answering them, began to say: [h]"Take heed that no one deceives you. 6 For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am *He,*' and will deceive many. 7 But when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be troubled; for *such things* must happen, but the end *is* not yet. 8 For nation will rise against nation, and [i]kingdom against kingdom. And there will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines [j]and troubles. *These are* the beginnings of [2]sorrows.

9 "But [k]watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will [3]be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them. 10 And [l]the gospel must first be preached to all the nations. 11 [m]But when they arrest *you* and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, [4]or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, [n]but the Holy Spirit. 12 Now [o]brother will betray brother to death, and a father *his* child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. 13 [p]And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But [q]he who [5]endures to the end shall be saved.

The Great Tribulation

14 [r]"So when you see the [s]*'abomination of desolation,'* [6]spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not" (**let the reader understand**), "then [t]let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 15 Let him who is on the housetop not go down into the house, nor enter to take anything out of his house. 16 And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. 17 [u]But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! 18 And pray that your flight may not be in winter. 19 [v]For *in* those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be. 20 And unless the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake, whom He chose, He shortened the days.

21 [w]"Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here *is* the Christ!' or, 'Look, *He is* there!' do not

3 [c]Matt. 16:18 [d]Mark 1:19 [e]Mark 1:19 [f]John 1:40

4 [g]Matt. 24:3

5 [h]Eph. 5:6

8 [i]Hag. 2:22 [j]Matt. 24:8 [1]NU omits *and troubles* [2]Lit. *birth pangs*

9 [k]Matt. 10:17, 18; 24:9 [3]NU, M *stand*

10 [l]Matt. 24:14

11 [m]Luke 12:11; 21:12–17 [n]Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31 [4]NU omits *or premeditate*

12 [o]Mic. 7:6

13 [p]Luke 21:17 [q]Matt. 10:22; 24:13 [5]*bears patiently*

14 [r]Matt. 24:15 [s]Dan. 9:27; 11:31; 12:11 [t]Luke 21:21 [6]NU omits *spoken of by Daniel the prophet*

17 [u]Luke 21:23

19 [v]Dan. 9:26; 12:1

21 [w]Luke 17:23; 21:8

■ **13:3 Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately.** Mark informs us that this teaching is part of the special instruction given to the Twelve (4:10, 11; 8:29).

■ **13:4 when will these things be.** The disciples' question has in view the predicted destruction of the temple. Jesus' reply seems to include both this particular event and the time leading to the coming of the Son of Man (v. 26; cf. Matt. 24:3). The events surrounding the destruction of the temple seem to anticipate and typify those associated with the Second Coming.

■ **13:6 many will come.** In A.D. 130, Bar Kokhba, the leader of a Jewish rebellion against the Romans, claimed to be and was accepted by his followers as the messiah, and the list has gone on since then.

I am He. This phrase is also the name of God (Ex. 3:14) and the title chosen by Jesus (John 8:28, 58).

■ **13:7 the end.** According to the parallel text (Matt. 24:3), "the end" is "the end of the age."

■ **13:8 sorrows.** See text note. The Jews expected a time of suffering before the coming of the Messiah and described it in this way, as does Paul in Rom. 8:22.

■ **13:9 councils.** Synagogue councils had the right to order floggings, limited to forty strokes (Deut. 25:1–3). The apostles suffered imprisonments and floggings (Acts 4:21; 5:18, 40; 2 Cor. 6:9; 11:23, 24).

■ **13:10 preached to all nations.** The time between the resurrection of Christ and His Second Coming is not simply a time of suffering and persecution, but a time of grace and of evangelism throughout the earth in fulfillment of the prophecy of Is. 49:6.

■ **13:11 what you will speak.** This is a promise of special assistance in time of need, rather than a reference to the ministry of the Spirit among the Twelve in establishing their proclamation of Jesus (John 14:25, 26; 15:26, 27; 16:12–15).

■ **13:13 endures to the end.** See note on v. 7. This statement may also mean the end of each person's life. Such perseverance is often associated with suffering (Rom. 8:18–25; 12:12; Heb. 10:32; 12:2; 1 Pet. 2:20).

shall be saved. Such steadfastness does not merit salvation but is the proof that true salvation, in one sense, has already taken place (Rom. 8:24).

■ **13:14 the abomination of desolation.** Dan. 11:31 predicts the coming of the king of the North who will desecrate the temple. That prediction was first fulfilled in 168 B.C. when Antiochus Epiphanes set up a pagan altar and sacrificed a pig in the Most Holy Place. In A.D. 70 the Old Testament text was definitively fulfilled when Titus, the Roman general (later emperor), sacked the temple.

let the reader understand. This phrase could either be an aside by Mark (indicating that he knew the destruction of the temple had already occurred), or Jesus' own wish that His hearers, as readers of the Old Testament, would realize that He was citing Dan. 9:25–27 and 11:31 (cf. 2:25; 12:10, 26).

flee to the mountains. When the Romans on their way to Jerusalem in A.D. 69 sacked Qumran, the members of their community hid their manuscripts in caves high up in the mountains overlooking the Dead Sea. Eusebius, the fourth-century church historian, states that the Christians left Jerusalem at that time and founded the church at Pella, east of the Jordan and forty to fifty miles north of Jerusalem.

■ **13:19 tribulation, such as has not been.** The Roman historian Tacitus and the Jewish historian Josephus describe the destruction of the temple as a catastrophe of supernatural dimensions, with armies appearing in the sky and a supernatural voice. According to Josephus the suffering was unparalleled.

■ **13:20 shortened.** This may refer to the limited period surrounding the destruction of the temple, or to a similar period before the Second Coming, or to both (v. 4 note).

the elect's sake. The people of God (vv. 22, 27).

■ **13:21 Look, here is the Christ.** See note on v. 6.

22 [x]Rev. 13:13, 14
[7]*chosen ones*
23 [y][2 Pet. 3:17]
24 [z]Zeph. 1:15
25 [a]Is. 13:10; 34:4
26 [b][Dan. 7:13, 14]
27 [8]*chosen ones*
28 [c]Luke 21:29
29 [9]Or *He*
31 [d]Is. 40:8
32 [e]Matt. 25:13
[f]Acts 1:7
33 [g]1 Thess. 5:6
34 [h]Matt. 24:45; 25:14 [i][Matt. 16:19]
35 [j]Matt. 24:42, 44

believe it. 22 For false christs and false prophets will rise and show signs and [x]wonders to deceive, if possible, even the [7]elect. 23 But [y]take heed; see, I have told you all things beforehand.

The Coming of the Son of Man

24 [z]"But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not
give its light; 25 the stars of heaven will fall, and the powers in the heavens will be [a]shaken.
26 [b]Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. 27 And
then He will send His angels, and gather together His [8]elect from the four winds, from the far-
thest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven.

The Parable of the Fig Tree

28 [c]"Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender, and
puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. 29 So you also, when you see these things hap-
pening, know that [9]it is near—at the doors! 30 Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no
means pass away till all these things take place. 31 Heaven and earth will pass away, but [d]My
words will by no means pass away.

No One Knows the Day or Hour

32 "But of that day and hour [e]no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but
only the [f]Father. 33 [g]Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is. 34 [h]*It is*
like a man going to a far country, who left his house and gave [i]authority to his servants, and to
each his work, and commanded the doorkeeper to watch. 35 [j]Watch therefore, for you do not
know when the master of the house is coming—in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of
the rooster, or in the morning— 36 lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping. 37 And what I say
to you, I say to all: Watch!"

The Plot to Kill Jesus

CHAPTER 14

1 [a]Luke 22:1, 2
[b]Ex. 12:1–27
[1]*deception*

14 After [a]two days it was the Passover and [b]*the Feast* of Unleavened Bread. And the chief
priests and the scribes sought how they might take Him by [1]trickery and put *Him* to
death. 2 But they said, "Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar of the people."

■ **13:22 signs and wonders.** Jesus associates these with messianic manifestations, even though He recognizes such manifestations to be fraudulent.

■ **13:24 in those days.** Since this is a technical Old Testament term for the last days (Jer. 3:16; Joel 3:1; Zech. 8:23), Jesus may be starting to speak of the end (cf. v. 7). According to some interpreters, in v. 26 the Second Coming is in view.

the sun will be darkened. Although these phrases often refer to the time of God's cosmic and final judgment (Is. 13:10; 34:4; Joel 2:10, 31), here they may signify another event so momentous that after it the world will never be the same again. Peter interprets Joel 2:31 in Acts 2:16–21 as a prophecy of the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost.

■ **13:26 coming in the clouds.** Clouds sometimes signify divine presence (Ex. 19:9; 24:15–18). If the first coming of the Son of Man is characterized by suffering and humiliation (8:31 note), His future coming at the end will be an open declaration of His divine glory. Such a coming recalls the visible manifestations of God (theophanies) in the Old Testament (Ex. 19:16; 34:5; Ezek. 1:4; 10:3, 4), with the difference that this one will be universal. But vv. 24–27 may point, not to Christ's appearance in universal judgment, but to human realization that Jesus is reigning in the kingdom of God (Dan. 7:13), a realization triggered by the fall of Jerusalem (God's final judgment on the city). Then v. 27 would refer to the worldwide spread of the gospel that followed that event. The "angels" there would be the messengers of the gospel (*angelos* is the Greek word for "messenger," either human or angelic). On this view, Jesus' first reference to the end (His Second Coming) is not until v. 32 ("that day").

■ **13:27 from the four winds.** A poetic way of affirming the universality of the new people of God.

■ **13:28 fig tree.** There does not seem to be any specific symbolic sense to this "fig tree" (such as the re-emergence of the nation of Israel), especially since the parallel passage (Luke 21:29) adds "and all the trees." Jesus is simply saying that just as there are signs of what is to come in the natural realm, so it is in the spiritual.

■ **13:30 this generation.** For the event of the destruction of the temple, the phrase refers to Jesus' own generation.

■ **13:31 Heaven and earth will pass away.** Jesus makes His words equal to the words of Scripture, with eternal value (cf. Matt. 5:18). See "The Teaching of Jesus" at Matt. 7:28.

■ **13:32 nor the Son.** Jesus was conscious of His unique relationship to the Father as the eternal Son, yet there was a limitation of His knowledge during His incarnation. What the Father had not revealed to Him about the future He did not know. In that sense the man Jesus (the Son with regard to His human nature) was not omniscient.

■ **13:35 in the evening.** See 6:48 note.

■ **14:1 After two days.** That is, "on the second (or 'next') day"; compare 8:31. Mark appears to place the plotting of the chief priests and scribes on Wednesday of Passion Week.

the Passover. The Passover was one of the most important of the Jewish feasts, since it celebrated the deliverance from Egypt when the angel of death "passed over" the homes of the people of Israel (Ex. 12:1–30). At the time of Jesus, the Passover was celebrated on the fifteenth day of the first month of the Jewish calendar (*Nisan,* which corresponds to the end of March and beginning of April). It was observed the last day before the first full moon after the spring equinox. From that day when the paschal lambs were killed and eaten, all leaven (symbolizing sin) was to be removed from the house, and only unleavened bread was to be eaten for seven days. This observance was known as the "Feast of Unleavened Bread" (14:12; Ex. 12:15–20), and was closely associated with Passover.

chief priests. See note on 8:31.

scribes. See note on 7:1.

■ **14:2 Not during the feast.** Being one of the Jewish pilgrimage

The Anointing at Bethany

3 [c]And being in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, as He sat at the table, a woman came having an alabaster flask of very costly [2]oil of spikenard. Then she broke the flask and poured *it* on His head. 4 But there were some who were indignant among themselves, and said, "Why was this fragrant oil wasted? 5 For it might have been sold for more than three hundred [d]denarii and given to the poor." And they [e]criticized[3] her sharply.

6 But Jesus said, "Let her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a good work for Me. 7 [f]For you have the poor with you always, and whenever you wish you may do them good; [g]but Me you do not have always. 8 She has done what she could. She has come beforehand to anoint My body for burial. 9 Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is [h]preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her."

Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus

10 [i]Then Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Him to them. 11 And when they heard *it,* they were glad, and promised to give him money. So he sought how he might conveniently betray Him.

Jesus Celebrates the Passover with His Disciples

12 [j]Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when they [4]killed the Passover *lamb,* His disciples said to Him, "Where do You want us to go and prepare, that You may eat the Passover?"

13 And He sent out two of His disciples and said to them, "Go into the city, and a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him. 14 Wherever he goes in, say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says, "Where is the guest room in which I may eat the Passover with My disciples?" ' 15 Then he will show you a large upper room, furnished *and* prepared; there make ready for us."

16 So His disciples went out, and came into the city, and found it just as He had said to them; and they prepared the Passover.

17 [k]In the evening He came with the twelve. 18 Now as they sat and ate, Jesus said, "Assuredly, I say to you, [l]one of you who eats with Me will betray Me."

19 And they began to be sorrowful, and to say to Him one by one, "*Is* it I?" [5]And another *said,* "*Is* it I?"

3 [c]Matt. 26:6; Luke 7:37; John 12:1, 3 [2]Perfume of pure nard

5 [d]Matt. 18:28; Mark 12:15 [e]Matt. 20:11; John 6:61 [3]*scolded*

7 [f]Deut. 15:11; Matt. 26:11; John 12:8 [g][John 7:33; 8:21; 14:2, 12; 16:10, 17, 28]

9 [h]Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:47

10 [i]Ps. 41:9; 55:12–14; Matt. 10:2–4

12 [j]Ex. 12:8; Matt. 26:17–19; Luke 22:7–13 [4]*sacrificed*

17 [k]Matt. 26:20–24; Luke 22:14, 21–23

18 [l]Ps. 41:9; Matt. 26:46; Mark 14:42; John 6:70, 71; 13:18

19 [5]NU omits the rest of v. 19.

feasts, the Passover drew enormous numbers of people to Jerusalem. Josephus estimated that the population of 50,000 increased to 3,000,000. Though his figures are generally considered greatly exaggerated (250,000 is more likely), there was a reason for the authorities' fears.

■ **14:3 Bethany.** See note on 11:1.

Simon the leper. No doubt no longer a leper, he may have been healed by Jesus. He was clearly an important member of the wider circle of disciples since Jesus chose to visit his house at this time.

sat. People reclined rather than sat at the table (Luke 22:14 note).

a woman. According to John 12:3, this woman was Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha. John also indicates that the meal occurred "six days before the Passover" (John 12:1), before Jesus had entered Jerusalem. Mark may have placed the account here to more closely associate this pre-anointing for burial (v. 8 note) with the plot to kill Jesus (v. 1), and was subsequently followed by Matthew (Matt. 26:3–13).

alabaster flask. Alabaster is a type of gypsum, in its pure form white or translucent, found in limestone deposits in caves and at the exit of springs. It was often used for making ointment jars, and was considered a luxury item.

spikenard. A rare perfume made from the root of a plant grown in the Himalayas. Its value of "three hundred denarii" (v. 5) was roughly equivalent to a year's wages.

broke the flask. To prevent loss, amounts suitable for a single application were sealed into flasks that were then broken at the neck at the time of use. According to John 12:3, the flask contained twelve ounces of perfume.

■ **14:6 a good work.** Jesus approves of what others see as a waste, for by this gesture she shows the inestimable worth of Jesus, of His death (v. 8), and of the profound communion that His sacrifice on the cross will establish. This gesture recalls the precious ointment poured over Aaron the high priest, which the psalmist compares to the priceless blessing of the fellowship of believers (Ps. 133).

■ **14:8 anoint My body for burial.** Jesus alludes to the anointing of dead bodies with spices and perfume that was widely practiced in Palestine at that time.

■ **14:10 Judas Iscariot.** Judas was to receive thirty silver coins (not even half the value of the perfume) for his betrayal of Jesus (v. 11).

the twelve. See note on 3:14.

■ **14:12 Unleavened Bread.** This feast symbolized the removal of sin in the life of Israelite believers (Ex. 12:14–20). The Passover meal fell on the first day of this feast (v. 1 note; Ex. 12:14, 15), the fourteenth day after the beginning of the Jewish year (Ex. 12:6).

killed the Passover lamb. Jesus died at Passover, the feast that celebrates how the blood of a lamb protected the Israelites in Egypt from God's wrath. Jesus' death shows the profound continuity in the divine plan of redemption (cf. 1 Cor. 5:7). In the order of these feasts is affirmed the priority of God's act of salvation (Passover and redemption) over against all our works of righteousness (Feast of Unleavened Bread and the believer's putting away of sin).

■ **14:13 man . . . carrying a pitcher of water.** Women usually carried water jars. For Jesus' knowledge of future and distant events, see 11:1, 2 and John 1:48. Jesus could and did exercise on earth divine powers of knowledge (13:32 note).

■ **14:17 with the twelve.** The Gospels record that those present at this high point in the ministry of Jesus were the Twelve He had chosen at the beginning (cf. 3:14). According to Luke 22:30, at this time Jesus announced their future ministry as judges of the new people of God. They were witnesses at the inauguration of the new covenant.

20 He answered and said to them, "It *is* one of the twelve, who dips with Me in the dish.
21 [m]The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had never been born."

Jesus Institutes the Lord's Supper

22 [n]And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke *it,* and gave *it* to them and said, "Take, [6]eat; this is My [o]body."
23 Then He took the cup, and when He had given thanks He gave *it* to them, and they all drank from it. 24 And He said to them, "This is My blood of the [7]new covenant, which is shed for many. 25 Assuredly, I say to you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."
26 [p]And when they had sung [8]a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial

27 [q]Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will be made to stumble [9]because of Me this night, for it is written:

> [r]'*I will strike the Shepherd,*
> *And the sheep will be scattered.*'

28 "But [s]after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee."
29 [t]Peter said to Him, "Even if all are made to [1]stumble, yet I *will* not *be.*"
30 Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you that today, *even* this night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times."
31 But he spoke more vehemently, "If I have to die with You, I will not deny You!"
And they all said likewise.

The Prayer in the Garden

32 [u]Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, "Sit here while I pray." 33 And He [v]took Peter, James, and John with Him, and He began to be troubled and deeply distressed. 34 Then He said to them, [w]"My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, *even* to death. Stay here and watch."
35 He went a little farther, and fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. 36 And He said, [x]"Abba, Father, [y]all things *are* possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; [z]nevertheless, not what I will, but what You *will.*"
37 Then He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "Simon, are you sleeping? Could you not watch one hour? 38 [a]Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. [b]The spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak."

21 [m]Matt. 26:24; Luke 22:22; Acts 1:16–20
22 [n]Matt. 26:26–29; Luke 22:17–20; 1 Cor. 11:23–25 [o][1 Pet. 2:24] [6]NU omits *eat*
24 [7]NU omits *new*
26 [p]Matt. 26:30 [8]Or *hymns*
27 [q]Matt. 26:31–35; Mark 14:50; John 16:32 [r][Is. 53:5, 10]; Zech. 13:7 [9]NU omits *because of Me this night*
28 [s]Matt. 28:16; Mark 16:7; John 21:1
29 [t]Matt. 26:33, 34; Luke 22:33, 34; John 13:37, 38 [1]*fall away*
32 [u]Matt. 26:36–46; Luke 22:40–46; John 18:1
33 [v]Mark 5:37; 9:2; 13:3
34 [w]Is. 53:3, 4; Matt. 26:38; John 12:27
36 [x]Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6 [y][Heb. 5:7] [z]Is. 50:5; John 5:30; 6:38
38 [a]Luke 21:36 [b][Rom. 7:18, 21–24; Gal. 5:17]

■ **14:20 one of the twelve.** Jesus' prediction of the betrayal comes from His intimate knowledge of Judas, and also from His understanding of the Scriptures (v. 21; Ps. 41:9).

dips with Me in the dish. Bread or meat was dipped into a central bowl of sauce. The detail emphasizes the deep personal betrayal, since table fellowship was a token of genuine friendship (cf. 2:16).

■ **14:21 as it is written.** See 8:31 note.

■ **14:22 as they were eating.** The sacramental meal of the new covenant is intrinsically related to and grows out of that of the old (note the parallelism with Ex. 24:9–11). Jesus takes two elements of the Passover meal, unleavened bread and wine, to express His new work of redemption. See "The Lord's Supper" at 1 Cor. 11:23.

■ **14:24 My blood.** In the original Passover the blood of the lamb protected the Israelites from death (Ex. 12:23, 30). The phrase "blood of the covenant" comes from Ex. 24:8, and recalls that biblical covenants are sealed in blood (Gen. 15:9–21; 17:9–14; Ex. 24:4–8).

shed for many. Jesus is alluding to Is. 53:12 where the Servant of the Lord "poured out His soul unto death" and "bore the sin of many."

■ **14:25 I will no longer drink.** Jesus is hereby predicting the imminence of His death.

drink it new. Jesus expresses His faith in God who will not abandon Him in death.

■ **14:26 sung a hymn.** This mention of singing is a reference to the Passover liturgy. Jesus and His disciples sing Ps. 115—118, the traditional close of the meal.

■ **14:28 to Galilee.** The angel at the tomb remembers this promise and alludes to Peter's denial (16:7).

■ **14:30 before the rooster crows twice.** For other examples of Jesus' knowledge of future events, see note on v. 13. The seemingly specific reference could also be a poetic way of saying "before dawn."

■ **14:33 Peter, James and John.** See note on 5:37.

troubled. This verb is unique to Mark, and each time expresses deep emotional distress (9:15; 16:5, 6).

■ **14:36 Abba.** A colloquial Aramaic word for "father," which expresses Jesus' close relation with God the Father. Mark records the Semitic word (5:41; 7:34; 11:9; 14:45; 15:22, 34).

cup. See note on 10:38.

■ **14:37 one hour.** In spite of noble intentions (14:29, 31), Peter is incapable of one hour of true discipleship.

■ **14:38 Watch.** This exhortation recalls the warning of 13:32–37 to watch and not fall asleep before the coming of the Son of Man. "Temptation" is the trap of Satan to cause God's people (in this case the Twelve) to fall and, if possible, to bring to nothing the plan of redemption.

39 Again He went away and prayed, and spoke the same words. 40 And when He returned, He found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy; and they did not know what to answer Him.

41 Then He came the third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? It is enough! [c]The hour has come; behold, the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. 42 [d]Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand."

Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane

43 [e]And immediately, while He was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders. 44 Now His betrayer had given them a signal, saying, "Whomever I [f]kiss, He is the One; seize Him and lead *Him* away safely."

45 As soon as he had come, immediately he went up to Him and said to Him, "Rabbi, Rabbi!" and kissed Him.

46 Then they laid their hands on Him and took Him. 47 And one of those who stood by drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

48 [g]Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? 49 I was daily with you in the temple [h]teaching, and you did not seize Me. But [i]the Scriptures must be fulfilled."

50 [j]Then they all forsook Him and fled.

A Young Man Flees Naked

51 Now a certain young man followed Him, having a linen cloth thrown around *his* naked *body*. And the young men laid hold of him, 52 and he left the linen cloth and fled from them naked.

Jesus Faces the Sanhedrin

53 [k]And they led Jesus away to the high priest; and with him were [l]assembled all the [m]chief priests, the elders, and the scribes. 54 But [n]Peter followed Him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. And he sat with the servants and warmed himself at the fire.

55 [o]Now the chief priests and all the council sought testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. 56 For many bore [p]false witness against Him, but their testimonies [2]did not agree.

57 Then some rose up and bore false witness against Him, saying, 58 "We heard Him say, [q]'I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.' " 59 But not even then did their testimony agree.

60 [r]And the high priest stood up in the midst and asked Jesus, saying, "Do You answer nothing? What *is it* these men testify against You?" 61 But [s]He kept silent and answered nothing.

41 [c]John 13:1; 17:1

42 [d]Matt. 26:46; Mark 14:18; Luke 9:44; John 13:21; 18:1, 2

43 [e]Ps. 3:1; Matt. 26:47–56; Luke 22:47–53; John 18:3–11

44 [f][Prov. 27:6]

48 [g]Matt. 26:55; Luke 22:52

49 [h]Matt. 21:23 [i]Ps. 22:6; Is. 53:7; Luke 22:37; 24:44

50 [j]Ps. 88:8; Zech. 13:7; Matt. 26:31; Mark 14:27

53 [k]Matt. 26:57–68; Mark 10:33; Luke 22:54; John 18:12, 13, 19–24 [l]Mark 15:1 [m]Matt. 16:21; 27:12; Luke 9:22; 23:23; John 7:32; 18:3; 19:6

54 [n]John 18:15

55 [o]Matt. 26:59

56 [p]Ex. 20:16; Ps. 27:12; 35:11; Prov. 6:16–19; 19:5 [2]*were not consistent*

58 [q]Matt. 26:61; Mark 15:29; John 2:19; [2 Cor. 5:1]

60 [r]Matt. 26:62; Mark 15:3–5

61 [s]Is. 53:7; John 19:9; Acts 8:32; [1 Pet. 2:23]

■ **14:43 multitude.** Probably a force sent by the Sanhedrin since the three categories of members of that body are mentioned (v. 53; 8:31 note).

■ **14:44 kiss.** A sign of respect that disciples showed to teachers. After eating from the same dish (v. 20 note) Judas now feigns submission and respect.

■ **14:48 as against a robber.** The Greek can mean either "robber" or "insurrectionist," but in view of the charges brought against Jesus at His trial (Luke 23:2), "insurrectionist" is better.

■ **14:49 the Scriptures must be fulfilled.** See note on 8:31. In view of v. 50, the passage Jesus had in mind may be Zech. 13:7 (see v. 27).

■ **14:51 young man.** Some interpreters have suggested that in this cryptic detail, as in the mention of the linen garment (a sign of wealth), there might be a veiled reference to Mark himself, since he was from a well-to-do family in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12).

■ **14:53—15:15** This section of the narrative concerns Jesus' trials before the Jews and the Romans. These trials were full of errors and irregularities, with the principles of justice subordinated to expediency and politics. The Jewish trial had three parts: a hearing before Annas (reported only in John 18:12–14, 19–23); a trial before the Sanhedrin, led by Caiaphas in his house (14:53–65); and an early morning session of the Sanhedrin (15:1). The Roman trial was likewise in three parts: before Pilate (15:2–5); before Herod Antipas, (reported only in Luke 23:6–12); and before Pilate again (15:6–15).

■ **14:54 courtyard of the high priest.** Normally the Sanhedrin held its sessions in the market area near the temple. This trial took place in the high priest's residence. The trial was irregular in time (at night) and place, and in its unusual haste.

■ **14:57 false witness.** Deut. 19:15–21 requires that for guilt to be established there must be two or three corroborating witnesses. False witnesses would receive the same punishment that the accused was threatened with. These regulations were not applied in the case of Jesus.

■ **14:58 I will destroy this temple made with hands.** The first three (Synoptic) Gospels do not record Jesus saying this. However, it is found in John's account of the temple cleansing (John 2:19). This would support the probability that Christ cleansed the temple twice, since the lapse of three years would help explain the false witnesses' garbled version.

■ **14:61 Christ.** From the Greek word meaning "anointed one." "Messiah" represents the Hebrew word of the same meaning (1 Sam. 2:10 note).

Son of the Blessed. "The Blessed" is an indirect substitute for "God," used by the Jews to avoid the risk of taking God's name in vain. The whole title means "Son of God," and in the context indicates royal messiahship rather than absolute divinity.

61 [t]Luke 22:67–71
62 [u]Luke 22:69
64 [v]John 10:33, 36 [w]John 19:7
65 [x]Is. 50:6; 52:14 [3]NU *received Him with slaps*
66 [y]John 18:16–18, 25–27
67 [z]John 1:45
69 [a]Matt. 26:71
70 [b]Luke 22:59 [c]Acts 2:7 [4]NU omits the rest of v. 70. [5]*accent*
72 [d]Matt. 26:75

CHAPTER 15

1 [a]Ps. 2:2 [b]Acts 3:13
2 [c]Matt. 27:11–14
3 [d]John 19:9
4 [e]Matt. 27:13 [f]NU *of which they accuse You*
5 [f]Is. 53:7
6 [g]Matt. 27:15–26
8 [2]NU *going up*

[t]Again the high priest asked Him, saying to Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?"

62 Jesus said, "I am. [u]And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven."

63 Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "What further need do we have of witnesses? 64 You have heard the [v]blasphemy! What do you think?"

And they all condemned Him to be deserving of [w]death.

65 Then some began to [x]spit on Him, and to blindfold Him, and to beat Him, and to say to Him, "Prophesy!" And the officers [3]struck Him with the palms of their hands.

Peter Denies Jesus, and Weeps

66 [y]Now as Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came. 67 And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked at him and said, "You also were with [z]Jesus of Nazareth."

68 But he denied it, saying, "I neither know nor understand what you are saying." And he went out on the porch, and a rooster crowed.

69 [a]And the servant girl saw him again, and began to say to those who stood by, "This is one of them." 70 But he denied it again.

[b]And a little later those who stood by said to Peter again, "Surely you are *one* of them; [c]for you are a Galilean, [4]and your [5]speech shows *it.*"

71 Then he began to curse and swear, "I do not know this Man of whom you speak!"

72 [d]A second time *the* rooster crowed. Then Peter called to mind the word that Jesus had said to him, "Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny Me three times." And when he thought about it, he wept.

Jesus Faces Pilate

15 Immediately, [a]in the morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council; and they bound Jesus, led *Him* away, and [b]delivered *Him* to Pilate. 2 [c]Then Pilate asked Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?"

He answered and said to him, "*It is as* you say."

3 And the chief priests accused Him of many things, but He [d]answered nothing. 4 [e]Then Pilate asked Him again, saying, "Do You answer nothing? See how many things [f]they testify against You!" 5 [f]But Jesus still answered nothing, so that Pilate marveled.

Taking the Place of Barabbas

6 Now [g]at the feast he was accustomed to releasing one prisoner to them, whomever they requested. 7 And there was one named Barabbas, *who was* chained with his fellow rebels; they had committed murder in the rebellion. 8 Then the multitude, [2]crying aloud, began to ask *him to do*

■ **14:62 I am.** See notes on 6:50; 13:6.

Son of Man. See note on 2:10. Jesus modifies the title "Messiah" in terms of the divine figure of Dan. 7.

clouds. See note on 13:26.

■ **14:63 tore his clothes.** A symbolic gesture expressing great sorrow or horror (Gen. 37:29; 2 Kin. 18:37; 19:1; Ezra 9:3; Jer. 36:24; Joel 2:13).

further need . . . of witnesses. The high priest makes the whole Sanhedrin witness to Jesus' blasphemy.

■ **14:64 blasphemy.** Jesus is condemned, not for insurrection, but for His claim to deity, the essence of His message. The prescribed punishment for blasphemy (insulting the honor of God's name) was death by stoning (Lev. 24:16), but at this time only Roman courts could order capital punishment. Jesus would die by a Roman punishment (John 18:31, 32 and notes).

■ **14:65 spit on Him.** In their agreement with the accusation of the high priest, all the members of the Sanhedrin "condemned Him" (v. 64), and some expressing their agreement with physical and personal violence. Spitting in the face indicated exclusion from the group (Num. 12:14, 15), as if by ritual defilement. At this point, the Sanhedrin broke decisively with the Messiah.

■ **14:67 of Nazareth.** See note on 1:24.

■ **14:70 Galilean.** The Jews of Judea held the Galilean Jews in contempt as culturally and religiously inferior. Peter's manner and accent gave him away, especially in the courtyard of a Sadducean aristocrat.

■ **15:1 Immediately, in the morning.** Probably at dawn. The purpose of the new meeting was apparently to draw up a civil charge (cf. Luke 23:2).

Pilate. The Apostles' Creed mentions Pilate as the representative of Rome who faced Jesus in this trial. Pilate was Roman governor of Judea from A.D. 26 to 36. As magistrate, only he had the legal right to pronounce capital sentences (14:64 note).

■ **15:2 King of the Jews.** This title is ambiguous. In a political sense, the Herods were kings and Jesus was not. Nevertheless Jesus was King of the Jews, offered to them as the fulfillment of their messianic hopes.

■ **15:4 Do You answer nothing.** Pilate apparently wanted to make Jesus realize that, before the law, silence meant consent.

■ **15:7 Barabbas.** Apparently he was an insurrectionist seeking the military overthrow of Rome. Matt. 27:16 (in some manuscripts) gives his first name as "Jesus," a common name of the period. The choice Pilate proposes to the crowd (v. 9) is unwittingly ironic: Jesus Barabbas, the would-be political savior of Israel, or Jesus of Nazareth, the true Savior of the world.

just as he had always done for them. 9 But Pilate answered them, saying, "Do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?" 10 For he knew that the chief priests had handed Him over because of envy.

11 But [h]the chief priests stirred up the crowd, so that he should rather release Barabbas to them. 12 Pilate answered and said to them again, "What then do you want me to do *with Him* whom you call the [i]King of the Jews?"

13 So they cried out again, "Crucify Him!"

14 Then Pilate said to them, "Why, [j]what evil has He done?"

But they cried out all the more, "Crucify Him!"

15 [k]So Pilate, wanting to gratify the crowd, released Barabbas to them; and he delivered Jesus, after he had scourged *Him,* to be [l]crucified.

The Soldiers Mock Jesus

16 [m]Then the soldiers led Him away into the hall called [3]Praetorium, and they called together the whole garrison. 17 And they clothed Him with purple; and they twisted a crown of thorns, put it on His *head,* 18 and began to salute Him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" 19 Then they [n]struck Him on the head with a reed and spat on Him; and bowing the knee, they worshiped Him. 20 And when they had [o]mocked Him, they took the purple off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him out to crucify Him.

The King on a Cross

21 [p]Then they compelled a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, the father of Alexander and Rufus, as he was coming out of the country and passing by, to bear His cross. 22 [q]And they brought Him to the place Golgotha, which is translated, Place of a Skull. 23 [r]Then they gave Him wine mingled with myrrh to drink, but He did not take *it.* 24 And when they crucified Him, [s]they divided His garments, casting lots for them to determine what every man should take.

25 Now [t]it was the third hour, and they crucified Him. 26 And [u]the inscription of His [4]accusation was written above:

THE KING OF THE JEWS.

27 [v]With Him they also crucified two robbers, one on His right and the other on His left. 28 [5]So the Scripture was fulfilled which says, [w]"*And He was numbered with the transgressors.*"

11 [h]Acts 3:14
12 [i]Mic. 5:2
14 [j]1 Pet. 2:21–23
15 [k]Matt. 27:26 [l]Is. 53:8]
16 [m]Matt. 27:27–31 [3]The governor's headquarters
19 [n]Is. 50:6; 52:14; 53:5]
20 [o]Luke 22:63; 23:11
21 [p]Matt. 27:32
22 [q]John 19:17–24
23 [r]Matt. 27:34
24 [s]Ps. 22:18
25 [t]John 19:14
26 [u]Matt. 27:37 [4]*crime*
27 [v]Luke 22:37
28 [w]Is. 53:12 [5]NU omits v. 28.

■ **15:13 Crucify.** Of Persian origin and adopted by the Romans, this cruel and shameful form of capital punishment was used mainly against rebellious slaves and insurrectionists. Metal spikes were driven through the wrists or hands (John 20:25) and heels of the victim who suffered terrible pain. Death usually resulted over the course of days from the effects of the injuries, hunger, dehydration, and exposure. Breaking the condemned's legs (John 19:33) caused rapid death by asphyxiation, since the legs could no longer lift the body to help the person breathe. As Paul notes, the crucifixion of Jesus brought Him publicly under the curse of God (Gal. 3:13; cf. Deut. 21:23).

■ **15:15 scourged.** In Roman custom flogging preceded crucifixion.

■ **15:16 Praetorium.** Originally the word for a military headquarters or barracks generally. In the Gospels it refers to an official residence (cf. Acts 23:35).

whole garrison. Lit. "cohort" or tenth part of a Roman legion of nominally six hundred men.

■ **15:17 clothed Him with purple.** Purple was expensive and hard to produce, and for this reason was a mark of high rank (Esth. 1:6; Prov. 31:22; Luke 16:19; Rev. 17:4), especially of royalty (2 Chr. 2:7, 14; 3:14; Song 3:10).

crown of thorns. Jesus bore the divine curse (v. 13 note) on the ground, which produced thorns after Adam sinned (Gen. 3:17, 18). The soldiers used the crown to ridicule the idea that Jesus was a king.

■ **15:18 Hail.** This salutation and the homage paid (v. 19) are mockeries of the respect due to royalty.

■ **15:21 Cyrenian.** Cyrene was an important city in what is today Libya. There was a large Jewish settlement in Cyrene going back several hundred years (Acts 6:9).

Alexander and Rufus. Simon's sons may have been members of the Christian community to which Mark wrote, probably at Rome (cf. Rom. 16:13).

bear His cross. Usually the condemned man would carry the crossbeam, weighing thirty to forty pounds. Simon, in taking up the cross of Jesus, became a visual image of the true discipleship that Jesus demands (8:34).

■ **15:22 Place of a Skull.** An ominous name, possibly referring to the shape of the hill where executions were carried out.

■ **15:23 wine mingled with myrrh.** A primitive form of painkiller. Myrrh was an expensive spice used as a cosmetic. It was offered to Jesus at His birth as a gift for a king (Matt. 2:11), and used in His burial by Nicodemus (John 19:39, 40).

■ **15:24 divided His garments.** These were the spoils reserved for the execution squad. This seemingly unimportant detail is a fulfillment of Ps. 22:18, a psalm that describes the agony of a violent and undeserved death (Ps. 22:16).

■ **15:25 third hour.** About 9:00 A.M.

■ **15:26 His accusation.** Called the *titulus* in Latin, this was a sign carried before the prisoner on the way to execution, and affixed to the cross over his head.

■ **15:27 two robbers.** Though the Greek word often means "robber," it can also mean "insurrectionist" (14:48 note) or more generally "criminal." Since robbery was not punishable by crucifixion (v. 13 note), one of the latter two meanings is more probable here.

■ **15:28** This verse is lacking in the most ancient manuscripts, although it is present in the vast majority of existing manuscripts. It is possible that early copyists inserted the citation of Is. 53:12, relying on the parallel passage of Luke 22:37.

29 [x]Ps. 22:6, 7; 69:7 [y]Ps. 109:25 [z]John 2:19–21

31 [a]Luke 18:32 [b]John 11:43, 44

32 [c]Matt. 27:44 [6]M *believe Him*

33 [d]Luke 23:44–49

34 [e]Ps. 22:1

36 [f]John 19:29 [g]Ps. 69:21

37 [h]Matt. 27:50

38 [i]Ex. 26:31–33

39 [j]Luke 23:47 [7]NU *He thus breathed His last*

40 [k]Matt. 27:55 [l]Ps. 38:11

41 [m]Luke 8:2, 3

42 [n]John 19:38–42

43 [o]Luke 2:25, 38; 23:51

29 And [x]those who passed by blasphemed Him, [y]wagging their heads and saying, "Aha! [z]*You* who destroy the temple and build *it* in three days, 30 save Yourself, and come down from the cross!"

31 Likewise the chief priests also, [a]mocking among themselves with the scribes, said, "He saved [b]others; Himself He cannot save. 32 Let the Christ, the King of Israel, descend now from the cross, that we may see and [6]believe."

Even [c]those who were crucified with Him reviled Him.

Jesus Dies on the Cross

33 Now [d]when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. 34 And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which is translated, [e]"*My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?*"

35 Some of those who stood by, when they heard *that,* said, "Look, He is calling for Elijah!" 36 Then [f]someone ran and filled a sponge full of sour wine, put *it* on a reed, and [g]offered *it* to Him to drink, saying, "Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to take Him down."

37 [h]And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last.

38 Then [i]the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. 39 So [j]when the centurion, who stood opposite Him, saw that [7]He cried out like this and breathed His last, he said, "Truly this Man was the Son of God!"

40 [k]There were also women looking on [l]from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses, and Salome, 41 who also [m]followed Him and ministered to Him when He was in Galilee, and many other women who came up with Him to Jerusalem.

Jesus Buried in Joseph's Tomb

42 [n]Now when evening had come, because it was the Preparation Day, that is, the day before the Sabbath, 43 Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who [o]was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, coming and taking courage, went in to Pilate and asked for the body of

■ **15:29** See note on 14:58.

■ **15:30 come down.** This is both an insult and a diabolical temptation similar to those proposed to Jesus at the beginning of His ministry (Matt. 4:2–6). The devil is still seeking to subvert the work of redemption at the very moment of its accomplishment, when Jesus is at His greatest physical weakness (14:38).

■ **15:33 sixth hour.** Noon.

darkness. This recalls the darkness in Egypt, which lasted three days before the death of the firstborn sons (Ex. 10:22). See also the prophecy of Amos 8:9, 10 where the Lord promises to "darken the earth in broad daylight," in a time "like mourning for an only son."

ninth hour. About 3:00 P.M.

■ **15:34 Eloi . . . sabachthani.** This is the first verse of Ps. 22 in Aramaic. Even in the jaws of death, Jesus' life is determined by what is written in Scripture.

■ **15:35 Elijah.** Some mistook the word *"Eloi"* for "Elijah," perhaps because in some circles it was believed that Elijah would return (6:15; 8:28).

■ **15:36 sour wine.** A cheap wine that has almost become vinegar. Unlike the offer of wine and myrrh (v. 23), there is no humanitarian desire to relieve the suffering here, but rather a cruel intention to prolong it by reviving Jesus, in order to see if "Elijah" would come at His call.

■ **15:37 cried out with a loud voice.** Jesus had been hanging on the cross for six hours (vv. 25, 34). Crucifixion could last two or three days (v. 13 note).

■ **15:38 the veil of the temple was torn in two.** The death of Jesus is the final and definitive sacrifice for sin (Heb. 7:27). The old dispensation of the covenant of grace is brought to a decisive end. No longer would the high priest need to enter into the Most Holy Place behind the veil to atone for the sins of the people (Ex. 26:31–33; cf. Heb. 9:1–10). Jesus is the new and eternal High Priest (Heb. 8:1), and also the perfect sacrificial victim (Heb. 9:14) who obtains for His people "eternal redemption" (Heb. 9:12).

■ **15:39 centurion.** A Roman officer responsible for one hundred men. This centurion was apparently responsible for the detachment that put Jesus to death. He was well placed to observe the death of Jesus.

Son of God. The Greek could be translated "a son of God." A Roman would not see in this term the Old Testament Messiah nor the eternal Son of the Trinity, but rather the Hellenistic idea of a human being favored by the gods. Nevertheless, the confession stands as the goal and climax of Mark's Gospel, filled with the content of the Christian message (cf. 1:1).

■ **15:40 Mary Magdalene.** That is, from Magdala on the southwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee (cf. 16:9; Luke 8:2).

Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joses. Known only from this incident (cf. Matt. 27:56).

Salome. Mother of James and John (Matt. 27:56; cf. 20:20, 21).

■ **15:41 many other women.** All the men had fled, except the beloved disciple (John 19:26, 35).

■ **15:42 Preparation Day.** The day before the Sabbath (Friday; John 19:14 note). Food was prepared before sunset, when the Sabbath began. Joseph would have to buy the linen, make arrangements for Jesus' burial, and ready the tomb (vv. 43–46) in the three hours remaining between Jesus' death and sunset.

■ **15:43 Joseph of Arimathea.** Perhaps from Ramah in Judea, twenty miles northwest of Jerusalem, the city of the prophet Samuel (1 Sam. 1:1). See note on Luke 23:50, 51.

council. The Sanhedrin (8:31 note).

kingdom of God. See note on 1:15. Joseph was no doubt a pious Pharisee, but also a secret follower of Jesus.

coming and taking courage. This is apparently Joseph's first act of faith, but it comes at a time when all Jesus' own disciples had fled. Joseph puts himself in conflict with the decision of the Sanhedrin, and jeopardizes his entire future.

Jesus. 44 Pilate marveled that He was already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him if He had been dead for some time. 45 So when he found out from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph. 46[p] Then he bought fine linen, took Him down, and wrapped Him in the linen. And he laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock, and rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. 47 And Mary Magdalene and Mary *the mother* of Joses observed where He was laid.

He Is Risen

16 Now [a] when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, Mary *the mother* of James, and Salome [b] bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. 2 [c] Very early in the morning, on the first *day* of the week, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. 3 And they said among themselves, "Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?" 4 But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away—for it was very large. 5 [d] And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a long white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed.

6 [e] But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him. 7 But go, tell His disciples—and Peter—that He is going [1] before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, [f] as He said to you."

8 So they went out [2] quickly and fled from the tomb, for they trembled and were amazed. [g] And they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.

Mary Magdalene Sees the Risen Lord

9 [3] Now when *He* rose early on the first *day* of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, [h] out of whom He had cast seven demons. 10 [i] She went and told those who had been with Him, as they mourned and wept. 11 [j] And when they heard that He was alive and had been seen by her, they did not believe.

Jesus Appears to Two Disciples

12 After that, He appeared in another form [k] to two of them as they walked and went into the country. 13 And they went and told *it* to the rest, *but* they did not believe them either.

The Great Commission

14 [l] Later He appeared to the eleven as they sat at the table; and He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they did not believe those who had seen Him after He had risen.

46 [p] Matt. 27:59, 60

CHAPTER 16

1 [a] John 20:1–8 [b] Luke 23:56

2 [c] Luke 24:1

5 [d] John 20:11, 12

6 [e] Matt. 28:6

7 [f] Matt. 26:32; 28:16, 17 [1] *ahead of*

8 [g] Matt. 28:8 [2] NU, M omit *quickly*

9 [h] Luke 8:2 [3] Vv. 9–20 are bracketed in NU as not in the original text. They are lacking in Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus, although nearly all other mss. of Mark contain them.

10 [i] Luke 24:10

11 [j] Luke 24:11, 41

12 [k] Luke 24:13–35

14 [l] 1 Cor. 15:5

■ **15:44 Pilate marveled.** Pilate's surprise again confirms the unusual character of Jesus' death (v. 37 note).

■ **15:46 tomb . . . hewn out of the rock.** According to Matt. 27:60, the tomb belonged to Joseph and his family. Such a family burial site would consist of an ornately painted vestibule from which a passageway would lead to individual benches or shelves cut into the rock where the bodies were laid. The tomb would be sealed by a heavy stone that was rolled along a groove cut into the rock at the entrance.

■ **16:1 Sabbath was past.** At sunset (6:00 P.M.) on Saturday evening, a time appropriate for buying spices but not for visiting tombs.

anoint. Anointing was a way of showing affection (14:8 note), as in the West today one sends flowers.

■ **16:3 Who will roll away the stone.** They had seen the "very large" (v. 4) stone put in its place (15:46 note).

■ **16:5 entering the tomb.** They entered the vestibule of the burial chamber, at the far end of which was the individual niche (a bench or shelf) where Jesus' body had been laid (15:46 note).

young man. Matt. 28:2 says the women met an angel at the tomb.

■ **16:6 of Nazareth.** See note on 1:24.

He is risen. If the Gospel of Mark reaches its climax in the confession that Jesus is the Son of God (15:39 note), a second climax is reached with the declaration of His resurrection, which attests that His preaching concerning the coming of the kingdom in power is true. See notes on 1:15 and 9:1; "The Resurrection of Jesus" at Luke 24:2.

■ **16:7 and Peter.** These two words make all the difference in the enormous role that Peter would play in the subsequent history of redemption. By them Mark indicates, as he brings his Gospel to an end (16:9–20 note), that Jesus' work of preparation of the Twelve will not be lost.

He is going before. See note on 14:28.

■ **16:8 afraid.** If vv. 9–20 are not original (see below), then the Gospel of Mark ends with this sentence. This would be a surprising conclusion for a document that purports to be a "gospel," a proclamation of "good news." An opposing consideration is that the word translated "afraid" also means "reverential fear," and the same state of mind is produced in the disciples at the sight of Jesus' transfiguration (9:6), a type of the future resurrection. But the women's initial silence was really disobedience (v. 7).

■ **16:9–20** Scholars differ regarding whether these verses were originally part of this Gospel. Some important early Greek manuscripts lack these verses, other manuscripts have vv. 9–20 (known as the "Longer Ending"), and still others have a "Shorter Ending" (roughly one verse long). A few manuscripts have both the "Shorter Ending" and the "Longer Ending." Because of these differences, some scholars believe that vv. 9–20 were added later and not written by Mark. On the other hand, the verses are cited by writers from the late second century and are found in the overwhelming majority of existing Greek manuscripts of the Gospel of Mark. For other scholars, these facts establish the authenticity of the passage.

■ **16:9 Mary Magdalene.** See note on 15:40.

■ **16:12 two of them.** Compare Luke 24:13–35.

15 [m]Matt. 28:19 [n][Col. 1:23]
16 [o][John 3:18, 36] [p][John 12:48]
17 [q]Acts 5:12 [r]Luke 10:17 [s][Acts 2:4] [4]*have believed*
18 [t]Acts 28:3–6 [u]James 5:14 [5]NU *and in their hands they will*

15 [m]And He said to them, "Go into all the world [n]and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 [o]He who believes and is baptized will be saved; [p]but he who does not believe will be condemned. 17 And these [q]signs will follow those who [4]believe: [r]In My name they will cast out demons; [s]they will speak with new tongues; 18 [t]they[5] will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; [u]they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."

Christ Ascends to God's Right Hand

19 So then, [v]after the Lord had spoken to them, He was [w]received up into heaven, and [x]sat down at the right hand of God. 20 And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with *them* [y]and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.

19 [v]Acts 1:2, 3 [w]Luke 9:51; 24:51 [x][Ps. 110:1] 20 [y][Heb. 2:4]

- **16:15 Go into all the world.** Compare Matt. 28:19.
- **16:16 baptized.** See "Infant Baptism" at Gen. 17:11.
- **16:17 signs.** All of the things predicted here (except drinking deadly poison) are recorded in the New Testament, especially in Acts. See also Rom. 15:19; Heb. 2:3, 4. Stories about some of the apostles surviving being forced to drink poison are found in early Christian literature outside the Bible.
- **16:19 right hand of God.** A position symbolizing the authority that Jesus shares with God the Father (14:62; Phil. 2:9; cf. Ps. 110:1).
- **16:20 confirming the word through . . . signs.** See note on v. 17.

The Gospel According to

LUKE

Author It is commonly accepted that Luke and Acts have a single author; the style and vocabulary are similar and both books are addressed to Theophilus. Although the author never names himself, several passages using the pronoun "we" suggest that the author was a companion of Paul on some of his travels (Acts 16:10–17; 20:5–16; 21:1–18; 27:1—28:16). Among the persons named in the letters Paul wrote from Rome (where the "we" sections end), the most likely candidate is Luke. In agreement with this, tradition unanimously ascribes the book to Luke (see "Introduction to Acts").

The preface to Luke shows that the writer was not an eyewitness of the events recorded in the Gospel. All of Luke and Acts shows that Luke was a man of culture who had searched out the information he needed, but was not one of the original followers of Jesus. It is sometimes urged against Luke's authorship that his theology, especially in Acts, does not agree with Paul. But there is no reason why Luke should repeat what Paul said, and no evidence that he had read Paul's letters. Nor is it likely that Luke was one of Paul's converts. The writer does not contradict Paul, and we must allow for a certain independence. The objection reduces to the notion that Luke writes in his own way.

Nothing is certainly known about Luke other than what we can glean from his two books. According to tradition he came from Antioch and was a physician (Col. 4:14). An argument has been made that Luke uses medical language. However, it seems that physicians in New Testament times did not have a technical language of their own, and Luke's vocabulary does not go beyond what was used by lay people. But there is nothing inconsistent with the tradition that he was a physician, and the author certainly shows an interest in the sick.

Date and Occasion Luke and Acts may have been written about A.D. 63. Acts ends with Paul still under house arrest in Rome, and it is reasonable to think that if Luke knew of Paul's release or death he would have mentioned it. Luke notes that the prophecy of Agabus was fulfilled (Acts 11:28); he would surely have done the same with Jesus' prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem (Luke 21:20) if he was writing after A.D. 70. Acts mentions nothing that must be dated after A.D. 62 and shows no knowledge of Paul's letters. All these factors argue for an early date.

Some interpreters argue for a date of A.D. 75–85, saying that some of Luke's wording presupposes the destruction of Jerusalem, which occurred in A.D. 70 (e.g., 19:43; 21:20, 24). But these passages speak of what was customary in sieges of the time, and not much can be made of them if no more is said than that Jesus predicted that current policies meant disaster in due course. A few critics have argued for a date in the second century, but there seems to be no good reason for this. With the information at our disposal a date in the early 60s is reasonable.

Luke tells us in the preface that his purpose is to provide an accurate, well-ordered account of the basic Christian message, to enable his reader to "know the certainty" of the things he has learned (1:4). Both the Gospel and Acts are dedicated to the "most excellent Theophilus." Such a dedication is common in books intended for a wider audience.

Characteristics and Themes

Luke was clearly a cultured person, able to write in a variety of styles. His opening paragraph is classical in style, while in other places his language resembles the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament). Clearly he saw this as a suitable style for the religious writing in which he was engaged.

His main interest is salvation history, the story of what God has done in Jesus to bring salvation to sinners. Luke makes it clear that this salvation is available for sinful people. He has a strong concern for the disreputable, who were neglected in contemporary religion but could find peace in God's salvation. Luke records a number of predictions of the suffering and death of Christ and devotes much space to it. He is sometimes said to have little interest in eschatology (the last things). This is scarcely fair to Luke, for the thought that the kingdom of God will come in power at the end time is certainly present (12:35–48; 17:22–37; 21:25–36).

Luke concerns himself with many people who would be neglected by most writers of his day—children, women, and the poor. Though these were commonly regarded as having no great significance, Luke demonstrates Jesus' special concern for them.

Prominent in the literary structure of the Gospel is Luke's description of Jesus' journey toward Jerusalem and the sacrifice of the Cross (9:51—19:44). The sovereignty of God in Jesus' ministry and death is highlighted as Jesus moves toward the city where He must die for sinners (9:22; 17:25; 18:31–33; cf. Acts 4:28).

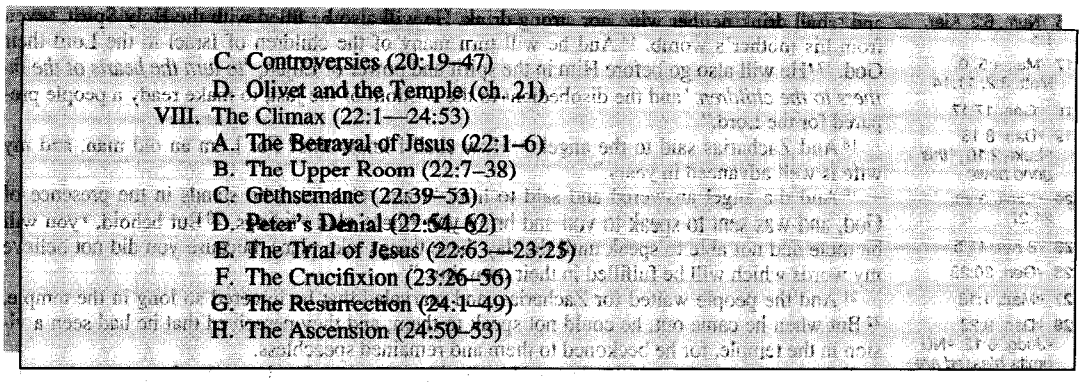
The importance of prayer is stressed. Luke records that Jesus prayed before crucial occasions of His ministry. Nine of Jesus' prayers are included in the Gospel

(seven of them found only in Luke), along with parables on prayer found only in Luke.

Expressions of joy often accompany the good news of the Messiah in Luke. Only this Gospel includes the magnificent songs of joy that accompanied the birth of the Messiah (1:46–55, 68–79; 2:14, 29–32). □

Outline of Luke

I. Preface (1:1–4)
II. The Infancy Stories (1:5—2:52)
III. The Ministry of John the Baptist (3:1–20)
IV. Introduction to Jesus' Ministry (3:21—4:13)
  A. Baptism (3:21, 22)
  B. Genealogy (3:23–38)
  C. Temptation (4:1–13)
V. Jesus in Galilee (4:14—9:50)
  A. The Sermon at Nazareth (4:14–30)
  B. Teaching and Healing in Galilee (4:31—5:39)
  C. The Sabbath (6:1–11)
  D. Choosing the Twelve (6:12–16)
  E. The Sermon on the Plain (6:17–49)
  F. Healing Miracles (7:1–17)
  G. John the Baptist's Questions and His Greatness (7:18–35)
  H. Jesus and Women (7:36—8:3)
  I. Teaching in Parables (8:4–18)
  J. Jesus' Mighty Works (8:19–56)
  K. Training of the Twelve (9:1–50)
    1. Mission of the Twelve (9:1–9)
    2. The Miraculous Feeding of the Multitude (9:10–17)
    3. Discipleship and the Transfiguration (9:18–50)
VI. Jesus' Journey from Galilee to Jerusalem (9:51—19:44)
  A. More Teaching on Discipleship (9:51—10:42)
  B. Prayer (11:1–13)
  C. Evil Spirits (11:14–26)
  D. Blessedness and Judgment (11:27—13:9)
  E. Teaching About the Kingdom (13:10—14:35)
    1. The Power of the Kingdom (13:10–21)
    2. Entering the Kingdom (13:22–35)
    3. Dinner with a Pharisee (14:1–24)
    4. Discipleship (14:25–35)
  F. Three Parables About the Lost (ch. 15)
  G. Teaching About Money and Service (16:1—17:10)
  H. Ten Men with Leprosy (17:11–19)
  I. The Coming Kingdom (17:20—19:10)
    1. The Coming Unannounced (17:20–37)
    2. Parables About Prayer (18:1–14)
    3. Jesus and the Children (18:15–17)
    4. The Rich Young Ruler (18:18–30)
    5. A Prophecy of Jesus' Death and Resurrection (18:31–34)
    6. Sight to the Blind (18:35–43)
    7. Zacchaeus (19:1–10)
  J. Parable of the Minas (19:11–27)
  K. Jesus Enters Jerusalem (19:28–44)
VII. Jesus in Jerusalem (19:45—21:38)
  A. Cleansing the Temple (19:45, 46)
  B. Teaching in the Temple (19:47—20:18)



Dedication to Theophilus

INASMUCH as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those [a]things which [1]have been fulfilled among us, [2]just as those who [b]from the beginning were [c]eyewitnesses and ministers of the word [d]delivered them to us, [3]it seemed good to me also, having [2]had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, [e]most excellent Theophilus, [4][f]that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed.

John's Birth Announced to Zacharias

[5]There was [g]in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, [h]of the division of [i]Abijah. His [j]wife *was* of the daughters of Aaron, and her name *was* Elizabeth. [6]And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. [7]But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years.

[8]So it was, that while he was serving as priest before God in the order of his division, [9]according to the custom of the priesthood, [3]his lot fell [k]to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. [10][l]And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense. [11]Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of [m]the altar of incense. [12]And when Zacharias saw *him,* [n]he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

[13]But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and [o]you shall call his name John. [14]And you will have joy and gladness, and [p]many will rejoice at his birth. [15]For he will be [q]great in the sight of the Lord,

CHAPTER 1

1 [a]John 20:31 [1]Or *are most surely believed*

2 [b]Acts 1:21, 22 [c]Acts 1:2 [d]Heb. 2:3

3 [e]Acts 1:1 [2]Lit. *accurately followed*

4 [f][John 20:31]

5 [g]Matt. 2:1 [h]1 Chr. 24:1, 10 [i]Neh. 12:4 [j]Lev. 21:13, 14

9 [k]Ex. 30:7, 8 [3]*he was chosen by lot*

10 [l]Lev. 16:17

11 [m]Ex. 30:1

12 [n]Luke 2:9

13 [o]Luke 1:57, 60, 63

14 [p]Luke 1:58

15 [q][Luke 7:24–28]

■ **1:1–4** The opening paragraph is written in Greek reminiscent of the classical style, the kind of opening expected in a literary book written for a wide circulation. Luke addresses Theophilus and explains why he has written.

■ **1:1 many.** Many writings of the early church have been lost.

fulfilled. The purpose of God had been worked out in the things about which they wrote.

■ **1:2 eyewitnesses.** There was reliable evidence for what was written, although Luke distinguishes himself from those who were eyewitnesses.

■ **1:3 having had perfect understanding.** Or, "having followed with great care." His investigation had been thorough.

from the very first. He had gone back to the start of the Christian movement, the events surrounding the birth of Jesus Himself.

most excellent. An address for a person of rank (Acts 23:26; 24:3).

■ **1:4 the certainty.** The Christian faith is well grounded.

instructed. The Greek word is the source of the English word "catechism."

■ **1:5 Herod.** *Herod the Great, who reigned 37–4 B.C.*

the division. There was only one temple, and priests served it on a rotating roster. The division of Abijah was the eighth of the twenty-four divisions (1 Chr. 24:10); each ministered for a week twice a year.

■ **1:6 blameless.** The expression does not mean that they never sinned but that they were godly and upright people. It must have been a serious disappointment to have no children, for children were regarded as God's reward for faithful service (Ps. 127:3–5).

■ **1:7 well advanced in years.** Priests had no retirement age.

■ **1:9** The large number of priests serving the one temple meant that a priest's opportunities for taking part in the ritual were few. He might not offer incense more than once in his life (some priests never had the privilege). This was the high point in Zacharias's career. He would go into the Holy Place with other priests, but they would withdraw leaving him alone to perform the offering.

■ **1:11 the right side.** Probably the south side; the angel would have been between the incense altar and the golden lampstand.

■ **1:13 your prayer.** This may have been a prayer for a son, but more probably at such a moment it was prayer for the redemption of Israel. Either way, the answer to the prayer would be seen in the birth of a son.

John. The name means "the Lord is gracious."

■ **1:15 wine.** That he would not drink alcoholic beverages leads many to think he would be a Nazirite, but Luke does not say this, and there is no reference to the hair being left uncut. More probably John had a unique position, neither priest nor Nazirite. He is the only person in the New Testament said to have been filled with the Holy Spirit from birth.

and [r]shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, [s]even from his mother's womb. 16 And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. 17 [t]He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, *'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,'* and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

18 And Zacharias said to the angel, [u]"How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years."

19 And the angel answered and said to him, "I am [v]Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you [4]these glad [w]tidings. 20 But behold, [x]you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time."

21 And the people waited for Zacharias, and marveled that he lingered so long in the temple. 22 But when he came out, he could not speak to them; and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple, for he beckoned to them and remained speechless.

23 So it was, as soon as [y]the days of his service were completed, that he departed to his own house. 24 Now after those days his wife Elizabeth conceived; and she hid herself five months, saying, 25 "Thus the Lord has dealt with me, in the days when He looked on *me,* to [z]take away my reproach among people."

Christ's Birth Announced to Mary

26 Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27 to a virgin [a]betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name *was* Mary. 28 And having come in, the angel said to her, [b]"Rejoice, highly favored *one,* [c]the Lord *is* with you; [5]blessed *are* you among women!"

29 But [6]when she saw *him,* [d]she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. 30 Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found [e]favor with God. 31 [f]And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and [g]shall

15 [r]Num. 6:3 [s]Jer. 1:5
17 [t]Mal. 4:5, 6; Matt. 3:2; 11:14
18 [u]Gen. 17:17
19 [v]Dan. 8:16 [w]Luke 2:10 [4]*this good news*
20 [x]Ezek. 3:26; 24:27
23 [y]2 Kin. 11:5
25 [z]Gen. 30:23
27 [a]Matt. 1:18
28 [b]Dan. 9:23 [c]Judg. 6:12 [5]NU omits *blessed are you among women*
29 [d]Luke 1:12 [6]NU omits *when she saw him*
30 [e]Luke 2:52
31 [f]Is. 7:14 [g]Luke 2:21

■ **1:17 In the spirit and power of Elijah.** See Mal. 3:1; 4:5.

turn the hearts of the fathers to the children. He will restore unity to broken families, undoing the effects of sin (Ex. 34:7).

make ready. The climax is that John would prepare the way for the Lord. This is the reason he is especially remembered.

■ **1:19 Gabriel.** Gabriel and Michael are the only two angels named in the Bible. That Gabriel stands in God's presence shows his greatness—such a one should be believed. The Greek verb translated "bring glad tidings" is the usual term for "preaching the gospel." Zacharias receives a sign: he will be silent until the boy is born.

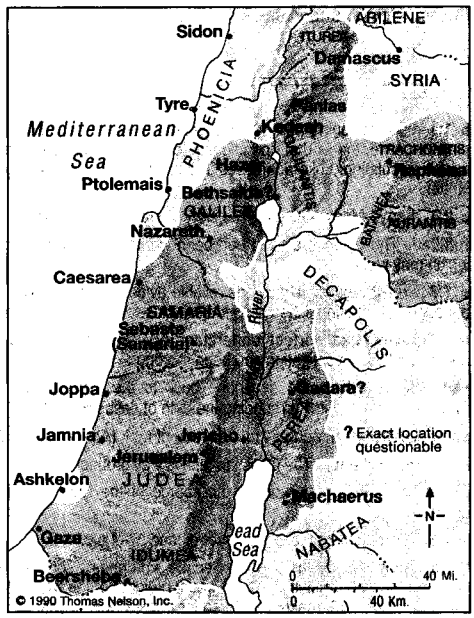
■ **1:21 temple.** The holy place. The people were in the temple court, waiting for Zacharias to come out and pronounce the blessing. Offering incense did not take long, so the delay was puzzling. When Zacharias did not speak but made gestures (v. 22), the people concluded that he had seen a vision.

■ **1:24** As the angel had promised, Elizabeth became pregnant. Childlessness was considered a divine punishment, but Elizabeth would bear this reproach no more (cf. Gen. 30:23).

■ **1:27 betrothed.** More binding than a modern engagement, this was virtually a form of marriage. The couple did not live together, but a divorce was needed to break the relationship. See theological note "The Virgin Birth of Jesus."

■ **1:28, 29** Mary was humbled and puzzled that the angel should say she was "highly favored" (a correct translation of the word sometimes rendered "full of grace"). The word indicates that Mary received grace, not that she was the source of grace to others.

■ **1:31 JESUS.** The name means "Yahweh is salvation."



Herod's Kingdom at Jesus' Birth. At the death of Herod the Great, his kingdom was divided among his three sons. Philip ruled in the northeast areas of Gaulanitis, Iturea, Trachonitis, Batanea, and Auranitis. Herod Antipas ruled in Galilee and Perea. Archelaus ruled Judea, Samaria, and Idumea, but only until A.D. 6. After that, Roman procurators, appointed by Caesar, ruled these regions.

call His name JESUS. 32 He will be great, [h]and will be called the Son of the Highest; and [i]the Lord God will give Him the [j]throne of His [k]father David. 33 [l]And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."

34 Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I [7]do not know a man?"

35 And the angel answered and said to her, [m]"*The* Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called [n]the Son of God. 36 Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. 37 For [o]with God nothing will be impossible."

38 *Then Mary said,* "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

32 [h]Mark 5:7 [i]2 Sam. 7:12, 13, 16 [j]2 Sam. 7:14–17 [k]Matt. 1:1

33 [l][Dan. 2:44]

34 [7]Am a virgin

35 [m]Matt. 1:20 [n][Heb. 1:2, 8]

37 [o]Jer. 32:17

39 [p]Josh. 21:9

41 [q]Acts 6:3

42 [r]Judg. 5:24

45 [s]John 20:29 [8]Or *believed that there*

Mary Visits Elizabeth

39 Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, [p]to a city of Judah, 40 and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. 41 And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was [q]filled with the Holy Spirit. 42 Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, [r]"Blessed *are* you among women, and blessed *is* the fruit of your womb! 43 But why *is* this *granted* to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44 For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. 45 [s]Blessed *is* she who [8]believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord."

The Virgin Birth of Jesus

Matt. 1:18–25 and Luke 1:26–56; 2:4–7, two complementary but independent stories, agree in their record of Jesus' birth as the result of a miraculous conception. His mother Mary became pregnant by the Holy Spirit's creative action before she had any relationship with a man (Matt. 1:20; Luke 1:35).

Most Christians accepted the virgin birth without hesitation until the nineteenth century. Then it became a pivotal issue in the debate about Christian supernaturalism and the divinity of Jesus. Modernism, hoping to reinterpret Jesus as no more than a uniquely godly and insightful teacher, surrounded the virgin birth with a spirit of unnecessary skepticism.

In reality, the virgin birth belongs with the rest of the New Testament message about Jesus. The eternal dignity and glory that Jesus had before the world began (John 1:1–9) made it natural that He should enter into incarnate life in a way that proclaimed the glorious role He was coming to fulfill (Matt. 1:21–23; Luke 1:31–35).

Matthew and Luke are interested in how through this unique birth as a human being Jesus came to fulfill God's purposes of redemption, especially in tasting human sorrow and dying for sinners. They are less concerned with the virginal conception as a physical wonder or an apologetic weapon.

It is impossible to say whether the virgin birth was the only way Jesus could have come to earth and identified with His people. As it is, it testifies to Jesus' deity, setting Him apart from all others. It is appropriate that He should be born in this unusual way, since He was not implicated in sin, like all others since the Fall. Mary was not an exception in this respect, any more than David or Peter, though her sins are not recorded as theirs were. Through His death, Jesus became her Savior and the Savior of the rest of the church with her. □

■ **1:32 great.** There is a fuller meaning here than when the term was applied to John (v. 15). Jesus will be "the Son of the Highest."

the throne of His father. Luke points to the Messiah as a descendant of David (2 Sam. 7:12–16; Ps. 89:29).

■ **1:33** The kingdom having no end is the kingdom of God.

■ **1:34** Mary perceived that the angel was not talking about the children she would have in the course of her marriage to Joseph. She understood the angel to mean something miraculous—birth without a human father. *The virgin conception is a distinctively Christian idea. Greek parallels* sometimes cited relate stories of gods having sexual intercourse with women.

■ **1:36 your relative.** Elizabeth, and therefore Mary, was a descendant of Aaron (v. 5). The reference to "His father David" (v. 32) shows that Mary was also of Davidic descent. One of her parents was evidently descended from Aaron and the other from David.

■ **1:39 with haste.** Mary must have left right away. Elizabeth was six months pregnant (v. 36); Mary stayed for three months and apparently went home before John's birth (vv. 56, 57).

■ **1:41 *filled with the Holy Spirit.*** *The Holy Spirit enabled Elizabeth to* pay tribute to the faith of Mary (v. 45).

The Song of Mary

46 And Mary said:

"My soul magnifies the Lord,
47 And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.
48 For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant;
For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.
49 For He who is mighty has done great things for me,
And holy *is* His name.
50 And His mercy *is* on those who fear Him
From generation to generation.
51 He has shown strength with His arm;
He has scattered *the* proud in the imagination of their hearts.
52 He has put down the mighty from *their* thrones,
And exalted *the* lowly.
53 He has filled *the* hungry with good things,
And *the* rich He has sent away empty.
54 He has helped His servant Israel,
In remembrance of *His* mercy,
55 As He spoke to our fathers,
To Abraham and to his seed forever."

56 And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her house.

Birth of John the Baptist

57 Now Elizabeth's full time came for her to be delivered, and she brought forth a son. 58 When her neighbors and relatives heard how the Lord had shown great mercy to her, they rejoiced with her.

Circumcision of John the Baptist

59 So it was, on the eighth day, that they came to circumcise the child; and they would have called him by the name of his father, Zacharias. 60 His mother answered and said, "No; he shall be called John."

61 But they said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who is called by this name." 62 So they made signs to his father—what he would have him called.

63 And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, saying, "His name is John." So they all marveled. 64 Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue *loosed,* and he spoke, praising God. 65 Then fear came on all who dwelt around them; and all these sayings were discussed throughout all the hill country of Judea. 66 And all those who heard *them* kept *them* in their hearts, saying, "What kind of child will this be?" And the hand of the Lord was with him.

Zacharias' Prophecy

67 Now his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying:

68 "Blessed *is* the Lord God of Israel,
For He has visited and redeemed His people,
69 And has raised up a horn of salvation for us

46 1 Sam. 2:1–10; Ps. 34:2, 3; Hab. 3:18 Declares the greatness of
47 Ps. 35:9; Hab. 3:18 1 Tim. 1:1; 2:3; Titus 1:3; 2:10; 3:4; Jude 25
48 1 Sam. 1:11; Ps. 138:6 Luke 11:27
49 Ps. 71:19; 126:2, 3 Ps. 111:9; Rev. 4:8
50 Gen. 17:7; Ex. 20:6; 34:6, 7; Ps. 103:17
51 Ps. 98:1; 118:15; Is. 40:10 Ps. 33:10; [1 Pet. 5:5]
52 1 Sam. 2:7, 8
53 [Matt. 5:6]
54 Is. 41:8 Ps. 98:3; [Jer. 31:3]
55 Gen. 17:19; Ps. 132:11; [Gal. 3:16] [Rom. 11:28] Gen. 17:7
58 [Rom. 12:15]
59 Gen. 17:12; Lev. 12:3; Luke 2:21; Phil. 3:5
60 Luke 1:13, 63.
66 Luke 2:19 Gen. 39:2; Acts 11:21
67 Joel 2:28
68 1 Kin. 1:48; Ps. 106:48 Ex. 3:16
69 2 Sam. 22:3; Ps. 132:17; Ezek. 29:21

■ **1:46–55** This song of praise, called the *Magnificat* from its opening word in Latin, is revolutionary in its concern for the poor and despised of this world, and its rejection of the rich and proud.

■ **1:48 maidservant.** The word means "a slave" and expresses humility. Mary emphasizes God's mercy to the poor and His holiness and power.

■ **1:51–53** The acts of God referred to are not necessarily in the past. Mary rejects accepted ideas of privilege for the rich as she speaks of what God will do for the poor (Ps. 9:18 note).

■ **1:54 helped.** God's help through the Messiah is probably in mind.

■ **1:55 Abraham.** A reference to the covenant between God and Israel.

■ **1:59 the eighth day.** Jewish circumcision was on the eighth day (Gen. 17:12), but this is the earliest evidence for the custom of naming on that day.

■ **1:63 writing tablet.** A writing tablet was a board covered with wax that could be written on with a pointed instrument.

■ **1:65 fear.** The emotion of awe and reverence appropriate to the presence of God.

■ **1:68 Blessed.** A common way of beginning a thanksgiving (Ps. 72:18; 124:6).

redeemed. God's people are not rescued without cost.

■ **1:69 horn.** The horn was a symbol of strength.

In the house of His servant David,
70 [t]As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets,
Who *have been* [u]since the world began,
71 That we should be saved from our enemies
And from the hand of all who hate us,
72 [v]To perform the mercy *promised* to our fathers
And to remember His holy covenant,
73 [w]The oath which He swore to our father Abraham:
74 To grant us that we,
Being delivered from the hand of our enemies,
Might [x]serve Him without fear,
75 [y]In holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life.

76 "And you, child, will be called the [z]prophet of the Highest;
For [a]you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways,
77 To give [b]knowledge of salvation to His people
By the remission of their sins,
78 Through the tender mercy of our God,
With which the [1]Dayspring from on high [2]has visited us;
79 [c]To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death,
To [d]guide our feet into the way of peace."

80 So [e]the child grew and became strong in spirit, and [f]was in the deserts till the day of his manifestation to Israel.

Christ Born of Mary

2 And it came to pass in those days *that* a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2 [a]This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. 3 So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city.

4 Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to [b]the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, [c]because he was of the house and lineage of David, 5 to be registered with Mary, [d]his betrothed [1]wife, who was with child. 6 So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. 7 And [e]she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a [2]manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Glory in the Highest

8 Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And [3]behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the

70 [t]Jer. 23:5; Rom. 1:2 [u]Acts 3:21
72 [v]Lev. 26:42
73 [w]Gen. 12:3; 22:16–18; [Heb. 6:13]
74 [x][Rom. 6:18; Heb. 9:14]
75 [y]Jer. 32:39; [Eph. 4:24; 2 Thess. 2:13]
76 [z]Matt. 3:3; 11:9; Mark 3:2, 3; Luke 3:4; John 1:23 [a]Is. 40:3; Mal. 3:1; Matt. 11:10
77 [b][Jer. 31:34; Mark 1:4]; Luke 3:3
78 [1]Lit. *Dawn;* the Messiah [2]NU *shall visit*
79 [c]Is. 9:2; Matt. 4:16; [Acts 26:18; 2 Cor. 4:6; Eph. 5:14] [d][John 10:4; 14:27; 16:33]
80 [e]Luke 2:40 [f]Matt. 3:1

CHAPTER 2

2 [a]Dan. 9:25; Acts 5:37
4 [b]1 Sam. 16:1; Mic. 5:2 [c]Matt. 1:16
5 [d][Matt. 1:18] [1]NU omits *wife*
7 [e]Matt. 1:25; Luke 1:31 [2]*feed trough*
9 [3]NU omits *behold*

His servant David. This phrase shows that Zacharias is talking about Jesus, not John.

■ **1:72 His holy covenant.** There are several covenants in the Old Testament, but that with Abraham was always seen as specially significant (Gen. 17).

■ **1:76 you, child.** Zacharias turns his attention to John and says he will be the forerunner of the Lord.

■ **1:78 the Dayspring.** This refers to the Messiah (Mal. 4:2). The Greek means simply "rising," and some think of a shoot from Jesse (Is. 11:1). But the word is commonly used of the "rising" of the sun, and so a reference to the dawn is more likely.

■ **1:80 in the deserts.** John grew up in the wilderness and may have had contact with religious communities like that at Qumran, an ascetic community whose writings, the Dead Sea Scrolls, were discovered in 1946.

■ **2:1–3** Luke dates the birth of Jesus by the common method of referring to the political rulers (3:1). There is no other record of a worldwide census under Augustus, but he did reorganize the administration of the empire and conducted censuses for taxation purposes. Quirinius was governor of Syria when a census was carried out in A.D. 6 and may have been there earlier (10–7 B.C.). It seems to have been the custom to conduct a census at intervals of fourteen years. Luke may be referring to a census preceding the well-known and unpopular census taken by Quirinius in A.D. 6.

■ **2:3 to be registered.** People went to their ancestral homes for registration. This would have made it easier to list families.

■ **2:5 his betrothed wife.** See note on 1:27.

■ **2:7** The birth of the baby is described simply. "Swaddling cloths" were strips of cloth used to wrap a baby. That the Child was put in a manger may mean that the birth was in a stable. There is a tradition that Jesus was born in a cave, which could have been used as a stable. Mangers were often outdoors, so it is possible that Jesus was born in the open air. Another possibility is that the place was the home of a poor family, where the animals would be under the same roof.

there was no room for them in the inn. This may mean that the innkeeper did not want to have them there.

■ **2:8 shepherds living out in the fields.** Animals to be used for the temple sacrifices were kept in the open, even in winter. The presence of shepherds outdoors does not prove that Jesus was born in a warm time of year. Shepherds were a despised class because their work prevented them from keeping the ceremonial law, and as they moved about the country it was common for them to be regarded as thieves. They were considered unreliable and were not allowed to give evidence in the courts.

■ **2:9 angel.** An angel is a messenger. In the New Testament, an "angel" is usually a supernatural messenger from God.

Lord shone around them, [j]and they were greatly afraid. 10 Then the angel said to them, [g]"Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy [h]which will be to all people. 11 [i]For there is born to you this day in the city of David [j]a Savior, [k]who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this *will be* the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a [4]manger."

13 [l]And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:

14 "Glory[m] to God in the highest,
And on earth [n]peace, [o]goodwill[5] toward men!"

15 So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, "Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us." 16 And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. 17 Now when they had seen *Him,* they made [6]widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. 18 And all those who heard *it* marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. 19 [p]But Mary kept all these things and pondered *them* in her heart. 20 Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and [q]praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.

Circumcision of Jesus

21 [r]And when eight days were completed [7]for the circumcision of the Child, His name was called [s]JESUS, the name given by the angel [t]before He was conceived in the womb.

Jesus Presented in the Temple

22 Now when [u]the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present *Him* to the Lord 23 [v](as it is written in the law of the Lord, [w]*"Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the LORD"*), 24 and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, [x]*"A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."*

Simeon Sees God's Salvation

25 And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, [y]waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. 26 And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not [z]see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. 27 So he came [a]by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, 28 he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said:

29 "Lord, [b]now You are letting Your servant depart in peace,
According to Your word;
30 For my eyes [c]have seen Your salvation
31 Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples,

9 [f]Luke 1:12
10 [g]Luke 1:13, 30 [h]Gen. 12:3
11 [i]Is. 9:6 [j]Matt. 1:21 [k]Acts 2:36
12 [4]*feed trough*
13 [l]Dan. 7:10
14 [m]Luke 19:38 [n]Is. 57:19 [o][Eph. 2:4, 7] [5]NU *toward men of goodwill*
17 [6]NU omits *widely*
19 [p]Gen. 37:11
20 [q]Luke 19:37
21 [r]Lev. 12:3 [s][Matt. 1:21] [t]Luke 1:31 [7]NU *for His circumcision*
22 [u]Lev. 12:2–8
23 [v]Deut. 18:4 [w]Ex. 13:2, 12, 15
24 [x]Lev. 12:2, 8
25 [y]Mark 15:43
26 [z][Heb. 11:5]
27 [a]Matt. 4:1
29 [b]Gen. 46:30
30 [c][Is. 52:10]

■ **2:10** The angel began by reassuring the frightened men (cf. 1:13, 30), and went on to use strong terms for the great joy and the good news he was telling them.

to all people. The Greek phrase normally refers to the whole people of Israel.

■ **2:11** Jesus is called "Savior" only twice in the four Gospels (cf. John 4:42). "Christ" means "Messiah," while "Lord" is regularly used in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) for God's own name, conventionally translated with small capitals ("LORD"). The most outstanding terms are used for the new Baby.

■ **2:12** The sign would enable them to find the Baby and it would prove to them the truth of what the angel said.

■ **2:13 the heavenly host.** "Host" is a military term, and it is remarkable that an army should announce peace (v. 14). The "peace" is peace with God, a peace that Christ would bring.

■ **2:14 goodwill toward men.** Several ancient manuscripts read "among men of His pleasure," emphasizing the divine initiative.

■ **2:20** Luke often mentions praise to God (5:25, 26; 7:16; 13:13).

■ **2:21–24** Jesus was circumcised on the eighth day as the law prescribed (Gen. 17:12; cf. Gal. 4:4, 5). The need for purification arose from the mother's being ceremonially unclean for seven days after the birth of a son. For another thirty-three days she was to keep away from holy things (these times were doubled for a daughter, Lev. 12:1–5). The mother was then to offer a lamb plus a dove or pigeon. If she was poor her offering was two doves or pigeons (Lev. 12:6–8). Mary gave the offering of the poor. The first male child of every mother was presented to the Lord (Ex. 13:2).

■ **2:25 the Consolation of Israel.** This title for the Messiah refers to the comfort that He would bring.

■ **2:28–32 blessed God.** Simeon's blessing is often called the "Nunc Dimittis" from its opening words in Latin.

■ **2:30 Your salvation.** This phrase signifies the Child who would bring God's salvation to humanity.

■ **2:31 all peoples.** This phrase is plural and refers to the Gentiles as well as Israel (v. 10 note).

32 [d]A light to *bring* revelation to the Gentiles,
And the glory of Your people Israel."

33 [g]And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him. 34 Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this *Child* is destined for the [e]fall and rising of many in Israel, and for [f]a sign which will be spoken against 35 (yes, [g]a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

Anna Bears Witness to the Redeemer

36 Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of [h]Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; 37 and this woman *was* a widow [9]of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served *God* with fastings and prayers [i]night and day. 38 And coming in that instant she gave thanks to [j]the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who [j]looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

The Family Returns to Nazareth

39 So when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their *own* city, Nazareth. 40 [k]And the Child grew and became strong [2]in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

The Boy Jesus Amazes the Scholars

41 His parents went to [l]Jerusalem [m]every year at the Feast of the Passover. 42 And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the [n]custom of the feast. 43 When they had finished the [o]days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And [3]Joseph and His mother did not know *it;* 44 but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day's journey, and sought Him among *their* relatives and acquaintances. 45 So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him. 46 Now so it was *that* after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. 47 And [p]all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. 48 So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously."

49 And He said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be [q]about [r]My Father's business?" 50 But [s]they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them.

Jesus Advances in Wisdom and Favor

51 Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was [4]subject to them, but His mother [t]kept all these things in her heart. 52 And Jesus [u]increased in wisdom and stature, [v]and in favor with God and men.

32 [d]Acts 10:45; 13:47; 28:28

33 [g]NU *And His father and mother*

34 [e][1 Pet. 2:7, 8] [f]Acts 4:2; 17:32; 28:22

35 [g]Ps. 42:10

36 [h]Josh. 19:24

37 [i]1 Tim. 5:5 [9]NU *until she was eighty-four*

38 [j]Mark 15:43 [j]NU *God*

40 [k]Luke 1:80; 2:52 [2]NU omits *in spirit*

41 [l]John 4:20 [m]Deut. 16:1, 16

42 [n]Ex. 23:14, 15

43 [o]Ex. 12:15 [3]NU *His parents*

47 [p]Matt. 7:28; 13:54; 22:33

49 [q]John 9:4 [r][Luke 4:22, 32]

50 [s]John 7:15, 46

51 [t]Dan. 7:28 [4]*obedient*

52 [u][Col. 2:2, 3] [v]1 Sam. 2:26

■ **2:34 fall and rising.** If the "fall and rising" applies to one group, then it means they must be humbled in repentance before they can rise into salvation. If it describes two groups, then it indicates that those who reject Jesus will fall eternally, but those who accept Him will rise to be with God.

■ **2:35 sword.** The sword imagery means that all this will not be without cost to Mary as she sees her Son rejected and crucified.

■ **2:36 Anna.** Prophets were rare in Israel in those days, but the aged Anna was a prophetess.

■ **2:41** The Passover was one of three feasts that had to be observed in Jerusalem (Ex. 23:14–17; 34:23).

■ **2:42 twelve years old.** Jesus may have gone up with His parents every year, but Jewish custom specified that a boy should be taken to the feast a year or two before he was thirteen, when he would be made a "son of the commandment" and become an adult member of the Jewish religious community.

■ **2:43–45** Luke does not say why Jesus stayed behind or how Joseph and Mary came to leave Him behind, but in a large caravan it would be easy to assume that a boy was with friends. If later custom was followed, the women and small children went ahead and the men followed. Each parent might think a twelve-year-old boy was with the other.

■ **2:46–48** The temple courts were commonly used for teaching. Jesus both listened and asked questions, showing a determination to learn. In Jewish education there was an emphasis on discussion of problems, which is perhaps behind the reference to "His understanding and answers" (v. 47). But Joseph and Mary did not understand (v. 50); there is reproach in Mary's words.

■ **2:49 My Father's business.** Already at twelve years of age, Jesus was conscious of a special relationship to the heavenly Father. The Jews did not speak in this way, but said "our Father" or added "in heaven" or the like.

■ **2:51 was subject.** Despite His understanding of His relationship to the heavenly Father, Jesus was a dutiful Son on earth and was obedient (text note) to Joseph and Mary as He grew. Mary did not understand it all, but she did not forget.

■ **2:52 increased.** Luke notes Jesus' well-rounded personal development: intellectual, social, and spiritual.

CHAPTER 3

1 [a]Matt. 27:2

2 [b]John 11:49; 18:13; Acts 4:6 [c]Luke 1:13 [f]NU, M *in the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas*

3 [d]Matt. 3:1; Mark 1:4 [e]Luke 1:77

4 [f]Is. 40:3–5; Matt. 3:3; Mark 1:3

6 [g]Ps. 98:2; Is. 52:10; Luke 2:10; [Rom. 10:8–18]

7 [h]Matt. 3:7; 12:34; 23:33 [2]*Offspring*

8 [i][2 Cor. 7:9–11]

9 [j]Matt. 7:19; Luke 13:6–9

10 [k]Luke 3:12, 14; [Acts 2:37, 38; 16:30, 31]

11 [l]Luke 11:41; 2 Cor. 8:14; James 2:15, 16; [1 John 3:17; 4:20] [m]Is. 58:7; [1 Tim. 6:17, 18]

12 [n]Matt. 21:32; Luke 7:29

13 [o]Luke 19:8

14 [p]Ex. 20:16; 23:1; Lev. 19:11 [3]Lit. *shake down* for money

16 [q]Matt. 3:11, 12; Mark 1:7, 8

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

3 Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, [a]Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, 2 [f]while [b]Annas and Caiaphas were high priests, the word of God came to [c]John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. 3 [d]And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance [e]for the remission of sins, 4 as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying:

[f]"The voice of one crying in the wilderness:
'Prepare the way of the LORD;
Make His paths straight.
5 *Every valley shall be filled*
And every mountain and hill brought low;
The crooked places shall be made straight
And the rough ways smooth;
6 *And [g]all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"*

John Preaches to the People

7 Then he said to the multitudes that came out to be baptized by him, [h]"Brood[2] of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Therefore bear fruits [i]worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as *our* father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. 9 And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore [j]every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

10 So the people asked him, saying, [k]"What shall we do then?"

11 He answered and said to them, [l]"He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none; and he who has food, [m]let him do likewise."

12 Then [n]tax collectors also came to be baptized, and said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?"

13 And he said to them, [o]"Collect no more than what is appointed for you."

14 Likewise the soldiers asked him, saying, "And what shall we do?"

So he said to them, "Do not [3]intimidate anyone [p]or accuse falsely, and be content with your wages."

15 Now as the people were in expectation, and all reasoned in their hearts about John, whether he was the Christ *or* not, 16 John answered, saying to all, [q]"I indeed baptize you with water; but

■ **3:1** Luke's lengthy chronological reference comes at the beginning of John's ministry, probably about A.D. 27–29.

Pontius Pilate. In his will, Herod the Great left Judea to his son Archelaus, and other territories to his sons Philip and Antipas. But Archelaus ruled so badly that the Romans removed him in A.D. 6 and appointed their own governor. Pontius Pilate was the fifth governor of Judea, serving there from A.D. 26–36.

tetrarch. A tetrarch was a kind of petty prince. "Herod" here is Herod Antipas. Philip's region was northeast of the Sea of Galilee. Nothing more is known of Lysanias, but Abilene was north of the other regions.

■ **3:2** The Jews had only one high priest at a time. Annas had been deposed by the Romans who appointed instead Caiaphas, his son-in-law. The Romans saw to it that Caiaphas exercised the official functions, but many Jews still considered Annas the true high priest.

the word of God came. John's message was not his own but the dynamic word of God Himself.

■ **3:3 baptism of repentance.** The Jews baptized Gentiles if they wished to become part of the people of God. The sting in John's practice was his call on Jews to undergo a rite they saw as fit only for Gentiles. John looked for a change of heart in Jews. See notes on Matt. 3:6; Mark 1:4.

■ **3:4–6** All four Gospels apply Is. 40:3 to John and agree that John saw himself as only a herald. But only Luke adds Is. 40:4, 5, emphasizing the thought of God's salvation.

■ **3:7, 8** A strong warning is directed at those who claimed Abraham as father. Being a Jew would not deliver one from the coming wrath.

■ **3:9 ax is laid to the root.** This phrase points to certain and speedy judgment.

fire. A symbol of judgment.

■ **3:11** The tunic was an undergarment; normally only one was worn. John suggests that the man who owns two should give the spare to someone without one, and so also with food.

■ **3:12 tax collectors.** Roman taxes were collected by agents who bid for the rights to collect taxes in a city. They would pay the Romans what they bid and collect more for their own salaries. There was a strong temptation for them to enrich themselves by collecting much more than what was reasonable. Jewish tax collectors were despised as collaborators with the occupying Roman forces. They were excluded from the religious life of the synagogue and the temple.

■ **3:14** Like tax collectors, soldiers were tempted to use their position to enrich themselves. John enjoins honesty on all. All four Gospels have an account of the ministry of John the Baptist as he called people to repent in preparation for the coming of Jesus. Luke alone tells us what John said to questioners who were unclear about what it would mean for them.

■ **3:15** Messianic speculations were in the air, but John said clearly he was no messiah. A greater One was coming.

■ **3:16 not worthy to loose.** In the rabbinic schools a student did not pay his teacher. He was required to perform services, but not the loosing of the sandal, which was considered too menial. John took a lowly place.

One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will [r]baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. [17] His winnowing fan *is* in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and [s]gather the wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire."

[18] And with many other exhortations he preached to the people. [19] [t]But Herod the tetrarch, being rebuked by him concerning Herodias, his [4]brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done, [20] also added this, above all, that he shut John up in prison.

John Baptizes Jesus

[21] When all the people were baptized, [u]it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened. [22] And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, "You are My beloved Son; in You I am [v]well pleased."

The Genealogy of Jesus Christ

[23] Now Jesus Himself began *His ministry at* [w]about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) [x]*the* son of Joseph, *the son* of Heli, [24] *the son* of Matthat, *the son* of Levi, *the son* of Melchi, *the son* of Janna, *the son* of Joseph, [25] *the son* of Mattathiah, *the son* of Amos, *the son* of Nahum, *the son* of Esli, *the son* of Naggai, [26] *the son* of Maath, *the son* of Mattathiah, *the son* of Semei, *the son* of Joseph, *the son* of Judah, [27] *the son* of Joannas, *the son* of Rhesa, *the son* of [y]Zerubbabel, *the son* of Shealtiel, *the son* of Neri, [28] *the son* of Melchi, *the son* of Addi, *the son* of Cosam, *the son* of Elmodam, *the son* of Er, [29] *the son* of Jose, *the son* of Eliezer, *the son* of Jorim, *the son* of Matthat, *the son* of Levi, [30] *the son* of Simeon, *the son* of Judah, *the son* of Joseph, *the son* of Jonan, *the son* of Eliakim, [31] *the son* of Melea, *the son* of Menan, *the son* of Mattathah, *the son* of [z]Nathan, [a]*the son* of David, [32] [b]*the son* of Jesse, *the son* of Obed, *the son* of Boaz, *the son* of Salmon, *the son* of Nahshon, [33] *the son* of Amminadab, *the son* of Ram, *the son* of Hezron, *the son* of Perez, *the son* of Judah, [34] *the son* of Jacob, *the son* of Isaac, *the son* of Abraham, [c]*the son* of Terah, *the son* of Nahor, [35] *the son* of Serug, *the son* of Reu, *the son* of Peleg, *the son* of Eber, *the son* of Shelah, [36] [d]*the son* of Cainan, *the son* of [e]Arphaxad, [f]*the son* of Shem, *the son* of Noah, *the son* of Lamech, [37] *the son* of Methuselah, *the son* of Enoch, *the son* of Jared, *the son* of Mahalalel, *the son* of Cainan, [38] *the son* of Enosh, *the son* of Seth, *the son* of Adam, [g]*the son* of God.

Satan Tempts Jesus

4 Then [a]Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and [b]was led by the Spirit [1]into the wilderness, [2] being [2]tempted for forty days by the devil. And [c]in those days He ate nothing, and afterward, when they had ended, He was hungry.

[3] And the devil said to Him, "If You are [d]the Son of God, command this stone to become bread."

[4] But Jesus answered him, saying, "It is written, [e]'*Man shall not live by bread alone,* [3]*but by every word of God.*'"

[5] [4]Then the devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the

16 [r]John 7:39; 20:22

17 [s]Matt. 13:24–30

19 [t]Mark 6:17 [4]NU *brother's wife*

21 [u]Matt. 3:13–17

22 [v]2 Pet. 1:17

23 [w][Num. 4:3, 35, 39, 43, 47] [x]John 6:42

27 [y]Ezra 2:2; 3:8

31 [z]Zech. 12:12 [a]2 Sam. 5:14; 7:12

32 [b]Ruth 4:18–22

34 [c]Gen. 11:24, 26–30; 12:3

36 [d]Gen. 11:12 [e]Gen. 10:22, 24; 11:10–13 [f]Gen. 5:6–32; 9:27; 11:10

38 [g]Gen. 5:1, 2

CHAPTER 4

1 [a]Matt. 4:1–11 [b]Luke 2:27 [1]NU *in*

2 [c]Ex. 34:28 [2]*tested*

3 [d]John 20:31

4 [e]Deut. 8:3 [3]NU omits *but by every word of God*

5 [4]NU *And taking Him up, he showed Him*

fire. The baptism with fire points to judgment (v. 9 note). The winnowing fan (v. 17) is another symbol for judgment. Workers used the fan to throw harvested grain into the wind, letting the grains fall directly to the ground and the chaff blow away. When the threshing floor was cleared, the chaff would be burned.

■ **3:19, 20** Herod Antipas divorced his wife and married his niece Herodias who was married to his own brother (Mark 6:17 note). John denounced this scandalous deed, and Herod imprisoned him in the fortress of Machaerus, east of the Dead Sea.

■ **3:21** Jesus identified Himself with sinners by undergoing their baptism. See "The Baptism of Jesus" at Mark 1:9.

■ **3:22** All four Gospels tell us that the Holy Spirit came upon Jesus at this time. Doves were important in the Old Testament sacrificial system. Within that culture, they were regarded as affectionate and gentle. In the Scripture the dove is used often in imagery and comparisons, not always with the same meaning. See also Gen. 1:2; 8:8–12.

■ **3:23–38** Luke's genealogy differs from that in Matthew (Matt. 1:2–17) in going all the way back to Adam rather than just to Abraham. Some of the names differ and the order is different. Some suggest that Matthew has Joseph's line and Luke Mary's, but Luke specifically starts with "Joseph." It may be that Matthew is giving not direct ancestors but those who would have been legally in line for the throne of David. Both evangelists emphasize that Jesus was of Davidic descent.

■ **4:1** Jesus was "filled with the Holy Spirit . . . and was led by the Spirit," showing that the temptation was in the plan of God. Right at the beginning, Jesus faced the question of what sort of Messiah He was to be.

■ **4:3–13** The devil seeks to deflect Jesus from His divinely appointed mission. In His victory over Satan, Jesus binds the strong man and proceeds to plunder his possessions (11:21, 22). Luke's account highlights the parallel between Jesus' temptation and the trials of Israel in the wilderness. Jesus was tempted for forty days in the desert, and Israel wandered for forty years in the wilderness (Num. 14:34). Israel failed the test of obedience, while Jesus was fully obedient to the Father.

■ **4:5–8** This temptation comes third in Matthew. The reason for the different order is not known. The temptation is for Jesus to set up a mighty world empire, but at the cost of worshiping Satan. Again Jesus rejects the temptation by citing Scripture (Deut. 6:13).

world in a moment of time. 6 And the devil said to Him, "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for [f]*this* has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. 7 Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours."

8 And Jesus answered and said to him, [5]"Get behind Me, Satan! [6]For it is written, [g]'*You shall worship the* LORD *your God, and Him only you shall serve.*'"

9 [h]Then he brought Him to Jerusalem, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here. 10 For it is written:

[i]'*He shall give His angels charge over you,*
To keep you,'

11 and,

[j]'*In their hands they shall bear you up,*
Lest you dash your foot against a stone.'"

12 And Jesus answered and said to him, "It has been said, [k]'*You shall not* [7]*tempt the* LORD *your God.*'"

13 Now when the devil had ended every [8]temptation, he departed from Him [l]until an opportune time.

Jesus Begins His Galilean Ministry

14 [m]Then Jesus returned [n]in the power of the Spirit to [o]Galilee, and [p]news of Him went out through all the surrounding region. 15 And He [q]taught in their synagogues, [r]being glorified by all.

Jesus Rejected at Nazareth

16 So He came to [s]Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, [t]He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. 17 And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:

18 "*The*[u] *Spirit of the* LORD *is upon Me,*
Because He has anointed Me
To preach the gospel to the poor;
He has sent Me [9]*to heal the brokenhearted,*
To proclaim liberty to the captives
And recovery of sight to the blind,
To [v]*set at liberty those who are* [l]*oppressed;*
19 *To proclaim the acceptable year of the* LORD."

20 Then He closed the book, and gave *it* back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. 21 And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is [w]fulfilled in your hearing." 22 So all bore witness to Him, and [x]marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, [y]"Is this not Joseph's son?"

23 He said to them, "You will surely say this proverb to Me, 'Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we have heard done in [z]Capernaum,[2] do also here in [a]Your country.'" 24 Then He said, "Assuredly, I say to you, no [b]prophet is accepted in his own country. 25 But I tell you truly, [c]many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a great famine throughout all the land; 26 but to none of them was Eli-

6 [f][John 12:31; 14:30; Rev. 13:2, 7]

8 [g]Deut. 6:13; 10:20; Matt. 4:10 [5]NU omits *Get behind Me, Satan* [6]NU, M omit *For*

9 [h]Matt. 4:5–7

10 [i]Ps. 91:11

11 [j]Ps. 91:12

12 [k]Deut. 6:16 [7]*test*

13 [l][John 14:30; Heb. 4:15; James 4:7] [8]*testing*

14 [m]Matt. 4:12 [n]John 4:43 [o]Acts 10:37 [p]Matt. 4:24

15 [q]Ps. 22:22; Matt. 4:23 [r]Is. 52:13

16 [s]Matt. 2:23; 13:54; Mark 6:1 [t]Mark 1:21; John 18:20; Acts 13:14–16; 17:2

18 [u]Is. 49:8, 9; 61:1, 2; Matt. 11:5; 12:18; John 3:34 [v][Dan. 9:24] [9]NU omits *to heal the brokenhearted* [l]*downtrodden*

21 [w]Matt. 1:22, 23; Acts 13:29

22 [x][Ps. 45:2]; Matt. 13:54; Mark 6:2; Luke 2:47; [John 1:14, 17] [y]John 6:42

23 [z]Matt. 4:13; 11:23 [a]Matt. 13:54; Mark 6:1 [2]NU *Capharnaum,* here and elsewhere

24 [b]Matt. 13:57; Mark 6:4; John 4:44

25 [c]1 Kin. 17:9; James 5:17

■ **4:9 the pinnacle.** This may have been the top of the temple wall overlooking the Kidron Valley or perhaps the highest point of the temple itself. Jesus was tempted to make a public display of miraculous power, but He responds by quoting Scripture (v. 12). The passage quoted (Deut. 6:16) again recalls Israel's experience in the wilderness.

■ **4:14** Jesus carried out an extensive ministry before going back to Nazareth.

■ **4:16–20** This account is the oldest known report of the order of worship in a synagogue service. The service included a reading from the Law and one from the Prophets. Jesus or the ruler of the synagogue may have chosen Is. 61:1, 2 and 58:6. It was customary to stand for the reading as a mark of respect for God's Word, and to sit for the sermon. The reading chosen shows a strong concern for the poor (1:51–53 note; Ps. 9:18 note).

■ **4:21–27** By presenting the rejection at Nazareth at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, Luke highlights certain main characteristics of that ministry: (a) the response of wonder at His teachings coupled with persistent unbelief and rejection (vv. 22, 28); (b) His ministry as the fulfillment of Scripture (v. 21); (c) His concern for the poor and oppressed (vv. 18, 19); and (d) His ultimate aim of including Gentiles among the people of God (vv. 26, 27).

jah sent except to [3]Zarephath, *in the region* of Sidon, to a woman *who was* a widow. 27 [d]And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian."

28 So all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were [e]filled with [4]wrath, 29 [f]and rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff. 30 Then [g]passing through the midst of them, He went His way.

Jesus Casts Out an Unclean Spirit

31 Then [h]He went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and was teaching them on the Sabbaths. 32 And they were [i]astonished at His teaching, [j]for His word was with authority. 33 [k]Now in the synagogue there was a man who had a spirit of an unclean demon. And he cried out with a loud voice, 34 saying, "Let *us* alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? [l]I know who You are—[m]the Holy One of God!"

35 But Jesus rebuked him, saying, [5]"Be quiet, and come out of him!" And when the demon had thrown him in *their* midst, it came out of him and did not hurt him. 36 Then they were all amazed and spoke among themselves, saying, "What a word this *is!* For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits, and they come out." 37 And the report about Him went out into every place in the surrounding region.

Peter's Mother-in-Law Healed

38 [n]Now He arose from the synagogue and entered Simon's house. But Simon's wife's mother was [6]sick with a high fever, and they [o]made request of Him concerning her. 39 So He stood over her and [p]rebuked the fever, and it left her. And immediately she arose and served them.

Many Healed After Sabbath Sunset

40 [q]When the sun was setting, all those who had any that were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them. 41 [r]And demons also came out of many, crying out and saying, [s]"You are [7]the Christ, the Son of God!"

And He, [t]rebuking *them,* did not allow them to [8]speak, for they knew that He was the Christ.

Jesus Preaches in Galilee

42 [u]Now when it was day, He departed and went into a deserted place. And the crowd sought Him and came to Him, and tried to keep Him from leaving them; 43 but He said to them, "I must [v]preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent." 44 [w]And He was preaching in the synagogues of [9]Galilee.

Four Fishermen Called as Disciples

5 So[a] it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to [b]hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, 2 and saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing *their* nets. 3 Then He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He [c]sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat.

26 [3]Gr. *Sarepta*

27 [d]2 Kin. 5:1–14

28 [e]Luke 6:11 [4]*rage*

29 [f]Luke 17:25; John 8:37; 10:31

30 [g]John 8:59; 10:39

31 [h]Is. 9:1; Matt. 4:13; Mark 1:21

32 [i]Matt. 7:28, 29 [j]Luke 4:36; [John 6:63; 7:46; 8:26, 28, 38, 47; 12:49, 50]

33 [k]Mark 1:23

34 [l]Luke 4:41 [m]Ps. 16:10; Is. 49:7; Dan. 9:24; Luke 1:35

35 [5]Lit. *Be muzzled*

38 [n]Matt. 8:14, 15; Mark 1:29–31 [o]Mark 5:23 [6]*afflicted with*

39 [p]Luke 8:24

40 [q]Matt. 8:16, 17; Mark 1:32–34

41 [r]Mark 1:34; 3:11; Acts 8:7 [s]Mark 8:29 [t]Mark 1:25, 34; 3:11; Luke 4:34, 35 [7]NU omits *the Christ* [8]Or *say that they knew*

42 [u]Mark 1:35–38; Luke 9:10

43 [v]Mark 1:14; [John 9:4]

44 [w]Matt. 4:23; 9:35; Mark 1:39 [9]NU *Judea*

CHAPTER 5

1 [a]Matt. 4:18–22; Mark 1:16–20; John 1:40–42 [b]Acts 13:44

3 [c]John 8:2

■ **4:32 astonished.** In contrast to the Pharisees and teachers of the law, who appealed to tradition and previous teachers, Jesus astonished people because He did not cite authorities.

■ **4:33** There are few examples of demon possession in the Old Testament or in the New Testament outside the Gospels. In Scripture such possession is primarily part of the opposition of evil to the coming of God's Son.

■ **4:33–35** This demon was cast out on the Sabbath. Luke tells of four other cures Jesus did on the Sabbath (v. 38; 6:6; 13:14; 14:1), and there are two in John (John 5:8, 9; 9:14).

■ **4:34** The demon recognized Jesus as the "Holy One of God"—a term that denotes Jesus' special relationship to God and His empowerment by the Spirit (John 6:69). Luke makes it clear that part of the mission of Jesus was to defeat the powers of evil.

■ **4:38, 39** Matthew and Mark both report this miracle, but only Luke mentions a high fever, which may indicate his medical interest. That Jesus "rebuked the fever" may mean that He saw Satan behind it in some way.

■ **4:41 You are the Christ, the Son of God.** Again it is the demons who discern that Jesus is the Son of God. People might see in Him no more than another man, but the forces of evil recognized Him. "The Christ" means "the anointed One," the Messiah (see 1 Sam. 2:10 note).

■ **4:43 I must.** This phrase points to the divine compulsion in the mission of Jesus. The kingdom was central.

kingdom of God. This is Luke's first mention of the kingdom of God, Jesus' most frequent topic for preaching.

■ **5:1 Lake of Gennesaret.** The Sea of Galilee; see Mark 1:16 note.

■ **5:2 washing their nets.** After each fishing trip the nets were checked, mended, and cleaned for the next trip. The boats were not in use, so Jesus could sit in Simon's boat and escape the crowd.

■ **5:3 He sat.** The normal posture for teaching (4:16–20 note).

4 [d]John 21:6

5 [e]John 21:3 [f]Ps. 33:9

8 [g]2 Sam. 6:9; 1 Kin. 17:18

9 [h]Mark 5:42; 10:24, 26

10 [i]Matt. 4:19; Mark 1:17

11 [j]Matt. 4:20; 19:27; [Mark 1:18; 8:34, 35; Luke 9:59–62]; John 12:26 [1]*left behind*

12 [k]Matt. 8:2–4; Mark 1:40–44 [l]Lev. 13:14 [2]*begged*

13 [m]Matt. 20:34; Luke 8:44; John 5:9

14 [n]Matt. 8:4; Luke 17:14 [o]Lev. 13:1–3; 14:2–32

15 [p]Mark 1:45 [q]Matt. 4:25; Mark 3:7; John 6:2

16 [r]Luke 9:10 [s]Matt. 14:23; Mark 1:35; Luke 6:12; 9:18; 11:1

17 [3]NU *with Him to heal*

18 [t]Matt. 9:2–8; Mark 2:3–12

19 [u]Matt. 15:30

21 [v]Matt. 9:3; 26:65; Mark 2:6, 7; John 10:33 [w]Ps. 32:5; 130:4; Is. 43:25

22 [x]Luke 9:47; John 2:25

24 [y]Mark 2:11; 5:41; Luke 7:14

25 [z]Luke 17:15, 18; Acts 3:8

26 [a]Luke 1:65; 7:16

4 When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, [d]"Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch."

5 But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught [e]nothing; nevertheless [f]at Your word I will let down the net." 6 And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking. 7 So they signaled to *their* partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. 8 When Simon Peter saw *it,* he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, [g]"Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"

9 For he and all who were with him were [h]astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; 10 and so also *were* James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid. [i]From now on you will catch men." 11 So when they had brought their boats to land, [j]they [1]forsook all and followed Him.

Jesus Cleanses a Leper

12 [k]And it happened when He was in a certain city, that behold, a man who was full of [l]leprosy saw Jesus; and he fell on *his* face and [2]implored Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."

13 Then He put out *His* hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." [m]Immediately the leprosy left him. 14 [n]And He charged him to tell no one, "But go and show yourself to the priest, and make an offering for your cleansing, as a testimony to them, [o]just as Moses commanded."

15 However, [p]the report went around concerning Him all the more; and [q]great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities. 16 [r]So He Himself *often* withdrew into the wilderness and [s]prayed.

Jesus Forgives and Heals a Paralytic

17 Now it happened on a certain day, as He was teaching, that there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by, who had come out of every town of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was *present* [3]to heal them. 18 [t]Then behold, men brought on a bed a man who was paralyzed, whom they sought to bring in and lay before Him. 19 And when they could not find how they might bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the housetop and let him down with *his* bed through the tiling into the midst [u]before Jesus.

20 When He saw their faith, He said to him, "Man, your sins are forgiven you."

21 [v]And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, "Who is this who speaks blasphemies? [w]Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

22 But when Jesus [x]perceived their thoughts, He answered and said to them, "Why are you reasoning in your hearts? 23 Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Rise up and walk'? 24 But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins"—He said to the man who was paralyzed, [y]"I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house."

25 Immediately he rose up before them, took up what he had been lying on, and departed to his own house, [z]glorifying God. 26 And they were all amazed, and they [a]glorified God and were filled with fear, saying, "We have seen strange things today!"

■ **5:5 all night.** Night was the preferred time for fishing.

■ **5:6 great number.** This catch was the reward of obedience, not the result of skill or technique.

■ **5:8 sinful man.** Suddenly aware that he was in the presence of One who exercised the power of God, Peter was conscious of his sinfulness (cf. Gen. 18:27; Job 42:6; Is. 6:5).

■ **5:12** Several skin diseases were called leprosy. They made a person ceremonially unclean, and could be disfiguring or fatal. Quarantine was the only defense against spread of the disease.

■ **5:14** The priest was a kind of health inspector who could certify that the leper was cured. The priest would also offer the appropriate sacrifices to end the ritual defilement (Lev. 14).

■ **5:17 Pharisees.** Josephus indicates that there were more than six thousand Pharisees. They saw themselves as God's "separated ones" and sought to serve Him well. Many were godly, but their emphasis on outward acts and ritual taboos made others hard and formal. Such men opposed Jesus vigorously.

teachers of the law. Scribes whose work centered on interpreting the law of God. Many were Pharisees.

■ **5:19 up on the housetop.** Houses often had flat roofs and outside stairs.

■ **5:20 their faith.** This includes the friends as well as the paralyzed man. Jesus begins with forgiveness, not healing.

■ **5:21 Who is this.** See note on Mark 2:5.

■ **5:24 that you may know.** Jesus links the power to forgive with the power to heal (Mark 2:9 note).

the Son of Man. Jesus' favorite self-designation, used many times in the Gospels and in them only by Jesus Himself. It refers to His heavenly origin and vocation (Dan. 7:13, 14). See note on Matt. 8:20.

Matthew the Tax Collector

27 [b]After these things He went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, [c]"Follow Me." 28 So he left all, rose up, and [d]followed Him.

29 [e]Then Levi gave Him a great feast in his own house. And [f]there were a great number of tax collectors and others who sat down with them. 30 [4]And their scribes and the Pharisees [5]complained against His disciples, saying, [g]"Why do You eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?"

31 Jesus answered and said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. 32 [h]I have not come to call *the* righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

Jesus Is Questioned About Fasting

33 Then they said to Him, [i]"Why[6] do the disciples of John fast often and make prayers, and likewise those of the Pharisees, but Yours eat and drink?"

34 And He said to them, "Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast while the [j]bridegroom is with them? 35 But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them; then they will fast in those days."

36 [k]Then He spoke a parable to them: "No one [7]puts a piece from a new garment on an old one; otherwise the new makes a tear, and also the piece that was *taken* out of the new does not match the old. 37 And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; or else the new wine will burst the wineskins and be spilled, and the wineskins will be ruined. 38 But new wine must be put into new wineskins, [8]and both are preserved. 39 And no one, having drunk old *wine,* [9]immediately desires new; for he says, 'The old is [l]better.' "

Jesus Is Lord of the Sabbath

6 Now [a]it happened [l]on the second Sabbath after the first that He went through the grainfields. And His disciples plucked the heads of grain and ate *them,* rubbing *them* in *their* hands. 2 And some of the Pharisees said to them, "Why are you doing [b]what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?"

3 But Jesus answering them said, "Have you not even read this, [c]what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: 4 how he went into the house of God, took and ate the showbread, and also gave some to those with him, [d]which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat?" 5 And He said to them, "The Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath."

Healing on the Sabbath

6 [e]Now it happened on another Sabbath, also, that He entered the synagogue and taught. And a man was there whose right hand was withered. 7 So the scribes and Pharisees watched Him closely, whether He would [f]heal on the Sabbath, that they might find an [g]accusation against Him. 8 But He [h]knew their thoughts, and said to the man who had the withered hand, "Arise and stand here." And he arose and stood. 9 Then Jesus said to them, "I will ask you one thing: [i]Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or [2]to destroy?" 10 And when He had looked around at them all, He said to [3]the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he did so, and his hand was restored [4]as whole as the other. 11 But they were filled with rage, and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.

27 [b]Matt. 9:9–17 [c]John 12:26; 21:19, 22

28 [d]Mark 10:28

29 [e]Matt. 9:9, 10 [f]Luke 15:1

30 [g]Luke 15:2 [4]NU *But the Pharisees and their scribes,* [5]*grumbled*

32 [h]1 Tim. 1:15

33 [i]Matt. 9:14 [6]NU omits *Why do,* making the verse a statement

34 [j]John 3:29

36 [k]Mark 2:21, 22 [7]NU *tears a piece from a new garment and puts it on an old one*

38 [8]NU omits *and both are preserved*

39 [9]NU omits *immediately* [l]NU *good*

CHAPTER 6

1 [a]Matt. 12:1–8 [l]NU *on a Sabbath that He went*

2 [b]Ex. 20:10

3 [c]1 Sam. 21:6

4 [d]Lev. 24:9

6 [e]Mark 3:1–6

7 [f]Luke 13:14; 14:1–6 [g]Luke 20:20

8 [h]Matt. 9:4

9 [i]John 7:23 [2]M *to kill*

10 [3]NU, M *him* [4]NU omits *as whole as the other*

■ **5:27 tax collector.** See note on 3:12.

■ **5:28 left all.** Levi would never be able to go back to tax collecting; his action was final.

■ **5:30** The Pharisees would have been outside. They regarded table fellowship with sinners as especially defiling.

■ **5:33** The only fast prescribed in the law was on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 23:27), but religious people fasted on other days (e.g., Zech. 7:3, 5). Jesus did not command fasts, though He Himself fasted (4:2) and permitted it among His followers (Matt. 6:16–18).

■ **5:36–38** Making a patch from a new garment for an old one spoils both—the new by having the patch torn from it, the old because the patch does not match. New wine in old wineskins ferments and bursts the skins; both wine and skins are lost.

■ **6:1 Sabbath.** A principal source of controversy between Jesus and the Pharisees was the right use of the Sabbath. They hedged it with repressive regulations so as to avoid the possibility of breaking the Sabbath. Jesus did not so much argue that the regulations should be relaxed as that they had misunderstood the Sabbath—it was a day on which good deeds should be done.

plucked the heads of grain. This was permitted in the law (Deut. 23:25); that it was done on the Sabbath was seen by the Pharisees as unlawful.

■ **6:4 the showbread.** Prepared in a special way for use in temple service, this bread was to be eaten only by priests (Lev. 24:5–9). In a time of need David used it for his companions (1 Sam. 21:3–6).

■ **6:5 Lord of the Sabbath.** The Sabbath was instituted by God (Gen. 2:3; Ex. 20:8–11), but Jesus is Lord over it. Jesus claims divine authority to interpret the law.

■ **6:9 is it lawful.** Jesus presents a choice between doing good and doing evil on the Sabbath, not between doing good and doing nothing. He saw the failure to do good as in itself evil.

12 *i*Matt. 14:23; Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16; 9:18; 11:1
13 *k*John 6:70 *l*Matt. 10:1
14 *m*John 1:42
16 *n*Jude 1 *o*Luke 22:3–6
17 *p*Matt. 4:25; Mark 3:7, 8
19 *q*Matt. 9:21; 14:36; Mark 3:10 *r*Mark 5:27, 28; Luke 8:44–47 *s*Mark 5:30; Luke 8:46
20 *t*Matt. 5:3–12; [11:5]; Luke 6:20–23; [James 2:5]
21 *u*Is. 55:1; 65:13; Matt. 5:6 *v*[Rev. 7:16] *w*[Is. 61:3; Rev. 7:17] *x*Ps. 126:5 *5satisfied*
22 *y*Matt. 5:11; 1 Pet. 2:19; 3:14; 4:14 *z*[John 16:2]
23 *a*Matt. 5:12; Acts 5:41; [Col. 1:24]; James 1:2 *b*Acts 7:51
24 *c*Amos 6:1; Luke 12:21; James 5:1–6 *d*Luke 12:21 *e*Matt. 6:2, 5, 16; Luke 16:25
25 *f*[Is. 65:13] *g*[Prov. 14:13] *h*James 4:9
26 *i*[John 15:19; 1 John 4:5] *6*NU, M omit *to you* *7*M omits *all*
27 *j*Ex. 23:4; Prov. 25:21; Matt. 5:44; Rom. 12:20
28 *k*Rom. 12:14 *l*Luke 23:24; Acts 7:60
29 *m*Matt. 5:39–42

The Twelve Apostles

12 Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued
all night in *j*prayer to God. 13 And when it was day, He called His disciples to *Himself;* *k*and
from them He chose *l*twelve whom He also named apostles: 14 Simon, *m*whom He also named
Peter, and Andrew his brother; James and John; Philip and Bartholomew; 15 Matthew and
Thomas; James the *son* of Alphaeus, and Simon called the Zealot; 16 Judas *n*the *son* of James,
and *o*Judas Iscariot who also became a traitor.

Jesus Heals a Great Multitude

17 And He came down with them and stood on a level place with a crowd of His disciples
*p*and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the seacoast of Tyre
and Sidon, who came to hear Him and be healed of their diseases, 18 as well as those who were
tormented with unclean spirits. And they were healed. 19 And the whole multitude *q*sought to
*r*touch Him, for *s*power went out from Him and healed *them* all.

The Beatitudes

20 Then He lifted up His eyes toward His disciples, and said:

t"Blessed *are you* poor,
For yours is the kingdom of God.
21 *u*Blessed *are you* who hunger now,
For you shall be *v*filled.*5*
*w*Blessed *are you* who weep now,
For you shall *x*laugh.
22 *y*Blessed are you when men hate you,
And when they *z*exclude you,
And revile *you,* and cast out your name as evil,
For the Son of Man's sake.
23 *a*Rejoice in that day and leap for joy!
For indeed your reward *is* great in heaven,
For *b*in like manner their fathers did to the prophets.

Jesus Pronounces Woes

24 "But*c* woe to you *d*who are rich,
For *e*you have received your consolation.
25 *f*Woe to you who are full,
For you shall hunger.
*g*Woe to you who laugh now,
For you shall mourn and *h*weep.
26 *i*Woe *6*to you when *7*all men speak well of you,
For so did their fathers to the false prophets.

Love Your Enemies

27 *j*"But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 *k*bless
those who curse you, and *l*pray for those who spitefully use you. 29 *m*To him who strikes you on

■ **6:12 continued all night in prayer.** Prolonged prayer preceded the important choice of the Twelve.

■ **6:13 apostles.** The word means a "messenger," someone sent (see 2 Cor. 1:1 note). It is not often used in the Gospels ("the twelve" is more common) but is frequent in Acts and the Epistles. Until now Luke has spoken of "Simon," but from this point on he usually calls him "Peter."

■ **6:17 a level place.** This phrase accounts for the sermon being called "The Sermon on the Plain." Luke describes a ministry of teaching and healing that had wide appeal.

■ **6:20–49** There are many similarities to the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5—7), and some see this as a variant account of the same sermon. But this sermon is much shorter, and Luke has parallels to other parts of Matt. 5—7 elsewhere. It is more likely that Jesus used much the same material on a number of occasions, a practice common among preachers.

■ **6:20 Blessed.** This term implies more than "fortunate" or "happy;" it is a religious term and means those who enjoy the favor of God.

are you poor. Luke is especially concerned with the blessings that the gospel brings to the poor (see notes on 1:46–55, 51–53; Ps. 9:18 note). Poverty can be a curse (Prov. 30:8, 9), and disciples know that they must rely on God for all things. They have no resources of their own and are "poor," but God blesses them with "the kingdom."

■ **6:21** The hungry realize their need and look to God for satisfaction.

■ **6:22, 23** A blessing for the persecuted is most unexpected. It is not suffering in general that is pronounced blessed, but suffering "for the Son of Man's sake."

■ **6:24–26** The "woes" correspond to the blessings of the previous verses. Those who do not realize their spiritual poverty but rely on their own achievement will reap disaster in the end. The term "woe" often introduces a prophetic oracle of doom (e.g., Ezek. 34:2).

the *one* cheek, offer the other also. [n] And from him who takes away your cloak, do not withhold *your* tunic either. 30 [o] Give to everyone who asks of you. And from him who takes away your goods do not ask *them* back. 31 [p] And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise.

32 [q] "But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. 33 And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. 34 [r] And if you lend *to those* from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back. 35 But [s] love your enemies, [t] do good, and [u] lend, [s] hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and [v] you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. 36 [w] Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.

Do Not Judge

37 [x] "Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. [y] Forgive, and you will be forgiven. 38 [z] Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your [a] bosom. For [b] with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."

39 And He spoke a parable to them: [c] "Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall into the ditch? 40 [d] A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher. 41 [e] And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the plank in your own eye? 42 Or how can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me remove the speck that *is* in your eye,' when you yourself do not see the plank that *is* in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck that is in your brother's eye.

A Tree Is Known by Its Fruit

43 [f] "For a good tree does not bear bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. 44 For [g] every tree is known by its own fruit. For *men* do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush. 45 [h] A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil [9] treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out [i] of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

Build on the Rock

46 [j] "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say? 47 [k] Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: 48 He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was [1] founded on the rock. 49 But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it [2] fell. And the ruin of that house was great."

Jesus Heals a Centurion's Servant

7 Now when He concluded all His sayings in the hearing of the people, He [a] entered Capernaum. 2 And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear to him, was sick and ready to die. 3 So when he heard about Jesus, he sent elders of the Jews to Him, pleading with Him to come and heal his servant. 4 And when they came to Jesus, they begged Him earnestly, saying that the

29 [n] [1 Cor. 6:7]

30 [o] Deut. 15:7, 8; Prov. 3:27; 21:26; Matt. 5:42

31 [p] Matt. 7:12

32 [q] Matt. 5:46

34 [r] Matt. 5:42

35 [s] [Rom. 13:10] [t] Heb. 13:16 [u] Lev. 25:35–37; Ps. 37:26 [v] Matt. 5:46 [s] *expecting*

36 [w] Matt. 5:48; Eph. 4:32

37 [x] Matt. 7:1–5; Rom. 14:4; [1 Cor. 4:5] [y] Matt. 18:21–35

38 [z] [Prov. 19:17; 28:27] [a] Ps. 79:12; Is. 65:6, 7; Jer. 32:18 [b] Matt. 7:2; Mark 4:24; James 2:13

39 [c] Matt. 15:14; 23:16; Rom. 2:19

40 [d] Matt. 10:24; [John 13:16; 15:20]

41 [e] Matt. 7:3

43 [f] Matt. 7:16–18, 20

44 [g] Matt. 12:33

45 [h] Matt. 12:35 [i] Prov. 15:2, 28; 16:23; 18:21; Matt. 12:34 [9] NU omits *treasure of his heart*

46 [j] Mal. 1:6; Matt. 7:21; 25:11; Luke 13:25

47 [k] Matt. 7:24–27; [John 14:21]; James 1:22–25

48 [1] NU *well built*

49 [2] NU *collapsed*

CHAPTER 7

1 [a] Matt. 8:5–13

■ **6:30** A disciple must be free from the love of possessions.

■ **6:31** Jesus is the first to give the "Golden Rule" in this positive form; see note on Matt. 7:12.

■ **6:32–34** The world's standards are not to guide the followers of Jesus.

■ **6:35 sons of the Most High.** God's people are to be like God, as merciful as He is.

■ **6:37 Judge not, and you shall not be judged.** Jesus elsewhere teaches that His disciples must sometimes judge what others do (Matt. 18:15–17), and that the character of a person's heart can be recognized from the actions that flow from it (vv. 43–45; Matt. 7:15, 16). What He warns against here is the hypocrisy of those who condemn others for what they themselves are guilty of (vv. 41, 42), and the failure to show mercy (v. 36).

you will be forgiven. Such forgiveness is not a reward, but unless we forgive others we do not have genuine repentance and faith, and so exclude ourselves from forgiveness.

■ **6:46–49** To call Jesus "Lord" is to say that He should be obeyed.

■ **7:2 centurion's.** Nominally in command of a hundred men, though the actual number varied. The centurions in the New Testament are all men of good character (7:4; 23:47; Acts 10:2; 27:43).

servant. The Greek word means "slave." This centurion was a humane person, concerned for his slaves.

■ **7:3 elders of the Jews.** That leading men among the Jews would plead for him shows the regard in which the centurion was held.

one for whom He should do this was deserving, 5 "for he loves our nation, and has built us a synagogue."

6 Then Jesus went with them. And when He was already not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him, saying to Him, "Lord, do not trouble Yourself, for I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof. 7 Therefore I did not even think myself worthy to come to You. But [b]say the word, and my servant will be healed. 8 For I also am a man placed under [c]authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does *it*."

9 When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him, and turned around and said to the crowd that followed Him, "I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!" 10 And those who were sent, returning to the house, found the servant well [f]who had been sick.

Jesus Raises the Son of the Widow of Nain

11 Now it happened, the day after, *that* He went into a city called Nain; and many of His disciples went with Him, and a large crowd. 12 And when He came near the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the city was with her. 13 When the Lord saw her, He had [d]compassion on her and said to her, [e]"Do not weep." 14 Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried *him* stood still. And He said, "Young man, I say to you, [f]arise." 15 So he who was dead [g]sat up and began to speak. And He [h]presented him to his mother.

16 [i]Then fear [2]came upon all, and they [j]glorified God, saying, [k]"A great prophet has risen up among us"; and, [l]"God has visited His people." 17 And this report about Him went throughout all Judea and all the surrounding region.

John the Baptist Sends Messengers to Jesus

18 [m]Then the disciples of John reported to him concerning all these things. 19 And John, calling two of his disciples to *him,* sent *them* to [3]Jesus, saying, "Are You [n]the Coming One, or [4]do we look for another?"

20 When the men had come to Him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to You, saying, 'Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?' " 21 And that very hour He cured many of [5]infirmities, afflictions, and evil spirits; and to many blind He gave sight.

22 [o]Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: [p]that *the* blind [q]see, *the* lame [r]walk, *the* lepers are [s]cleansed, *the* deaf [t]hear, *the* dead are raised, [u]*the* poor have the gospel preached to them. 23 And blessed is *he* who is not [6]offended because of Me."

24 [v]When the messengers of John had departed, He began to speak to the multitudes concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? 25 But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed those who are gorgeously appareled and live in luxury are in kings' courts. 26 But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. 27 This is *he* of whom it is written:

7 [b]Ps. 33:9; 107:20

8 [c][Mark 13:34]

10 [f]NU omits *who had been sick*

13 [d]Lam. 3:32; John 11:35; [Heb. 4:15] [e]Luke 8:52

14 [f]Mark 5:41; Luke 8:54; John 11:43; Acts 9:40; [Rom. 4:17]

15 [g]Matt. 11:5; Luke 8:55; John 11:44 [h]1 Kin. 17:23; 2 Kin. 4:36

16 [i]Luke 1:65 [j]Luke 5:26 [k]Luke 24:19; John 4:19; 6:14; 9:17 [l]Luke 1:68 [2]*seized them all*

18 [m]Matt. 11:2–19

19 [n][Mic. 5:2; Zech. 9:9; Mal. 3:1–3] [3]NU *the Lord* [4]*should we expect*

21 [5]*illnesses*

22 [o]Matt. 11:4 [p]Is. 35:5 [q]John 9:7 [r]Matt. 15:31 [s]Luke 17:12–14 [t]Mark 7:37 [u][Is. 61:1–3; Luke 4:18]

23 [6]*caused to stumble*

24 [v]Matt. 11:7

■ **7:5 loves our nation.** This attitude was unusual in a conqueror.

built us a synagogue. The centurion was interested in Jewish worship. He may even have been a "God-fearer," a Gentile who attached himself to the synagogue and worshiped God, but without being circumcised and becoming a Jewish proselyte.

■ **7:6–8** In Matt. 6:8, the man comes in person. Matthew appears to mean that what a man does through agents he does himself. For Luke, the messengers were important in that they show the man's humility (vv. 6, 7).

■ **7:8 under authority.** The centurion was familiar with authority exercised at a distance.

■ **7:9 marveled.** Only twice is Jesus said to have marveled: here at the faith of a foreigner (cf. Matt. 8:10), and in Mark 6:6 at unbelief in Nazareth.

■ **7:13 saw her.** The mother would have been walking in front of the bier, so Jesus would have met her first. Nobody asked Him to help, but out of compassion He took action.

■ **7:15** The first of Jesus' three miracles of raising the dead (8:40–56; John 11:1–44). Such miracles were powerful messianic signs (v. 22). These "resurrections" differ from the resurrection of Christ, however, for these three were reunited with their mortal bodies only to die once more. As the first to be clothed with an imperishable, spiritual body (1 Cor. 15:42–44), Jesus is indeed the "firstborn from the dead" (Col. 1:18; cf. 1 Cor. 15:20).

■ **7:16 A great prophet.** Inadequate, but probably the highest title they knew. They recognized the presence of God's power among them.

■ **7:18, 19** John had borne witness to Jesus (3:16–17), so questions like these are unexpected. Some think his faith had failed in the harsh conditions of Herod's prison, others that his patience had given out and he was suggesting that Jesus should actively bring in the kingdom. More probably he looked for Jesus to bring judgment, a note that John had stressed in his own ministry. He could not understand why Jesus did not punish sinners, but constantly performed deeds of mercy. Would somebody else come to carry out the threats of judgment?

■ **7:21–23** See Is. 35:5, 6; 61:1.

■ **7:24–28** Jesus praises John as the greatest of men, cast in the mold of the prophets of Israel and unmoved by expediency or luxury. Yet as a prophet he belonged to an era that was being withdrawn as the kingdom of God was introduced. In this sense he was less than those who were in the kingdom.

[w] 'Behold, I send My messenger before Your face,
Who will prepare Your way before You.'

28 For I say to you, among those born of women there is [7] not a [x] greater prophet than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."

29 And when all the people heard *Him,* even the tax collectors [8] justified God, [y] having been baptized with the baptism of John. 30 But the Pharisees and [9] lawyers rejected [z] the will of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.

31 [1] And the Lord said, [a] "To what then shall I liken the men of this generation, and what are they like? 32 They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another, saying:

'We played the flute for you,
And you did not dance;
We mourned to you,
And you did not weep.'

33 For [b] John the Baptist came [c] neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, 'He has a demon.' 34 The Son of Man has come [d] eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look, a glutton and a [2] winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' 35 [e] But wisdom is justified by all her children."

A Sinful Woman Forgiven

36 [f] Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee's house, and sat down to eat. 37 And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that *Jesus* sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, 38 and stood at His feet behind *Him* weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped *them* with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed *them* with the fragrant oil. 39 Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw *this,* he spoke to himself, saying, [g] "This Man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman *this is* who is touching Him, for she is a sinner."

40 And Jesus answered and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you."

So he said, "Teacher, say it."

41 "There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred [h] denarii, and the other fifty. 42 And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?"

43 Simon answered and said, "I suppose the *one* whom he forgave more."

And He said to him, "You have rightly judged." 44 Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no [i] water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped *them* with the hair of her head. 45 You gave Me no [j] kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. 46 [k] You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. 47 [l] Therefore I say to you, her sins, *which are* many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loves little."

48 Then He said to her, [m] "Your sins are forgiven."

49 And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, [n] "Who is this who even forgives sins?"

50 Then He said to the woman, [o] "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

27 [w] Is. 40:3; Mal. 3:1; Matt. 11:10; Mark 1:2

28 [x] [Luke 1:15] [7] NU *none greater than John;*

29 [y] Matt. 3:5; Luke 3:12 [8] *declared the righteousness of*

30 [z] Acts 20:27 [9] *the experts in the law*

31 [a] Matt. 11:16 [1] NU, M omit *And the Lord said*

33 [b] Matt. 3:1 [c] [Matt. 3:4]; Luke 1:15

34 [d] Luke 15:2 [2] An excessive drinker

35 [e] Matt. 11:19

36 [f] Matt. 26:6; Mark 14:3; John 11:2

39 [g] Luke 15:2

41 [h] Matt. 18:28; Mark 6:37

44 [i] Gen. 18:4; 19:2; 43:24; Judg. 19:21; 1 Tim. 5:10

45 [j] Rom. 16:16

46 [k] 2 Sam. 12:20; Ps. 23:5; Eccl. 9:8; Dan. 10:3

47 [l] [1 Tim. 1:14]

48 [m] Matt. 9:2; Mark 2:5

49 [n] Matt. 9:3; [Mark 2:7]; Luke 5:21

50 [o] Matt. 9:22; Mark 5:34; 10:52; Luke 8:48; 18:42

■ **7:32 like children.** Jesus compares that generation with children at play, who sometimes reject whatever games anyone might suggest.

■ **7:37, 38** At a dinner like this the house would be open and people could come in and watch. A sinful woman (perhaps a prostitute) would not have been welcome; it took courage for her to come. Guests at dinner reclined on couches. Leaning on the left side, they took the food with their right hands.

■ **7:37 alabaster.** A translucent stone used to make containers for costly perfumes.

■ **7:38 weeping.** The woman's tears and her anointing of Jesus' feet demonstrated penitence and humility.

■ **7:39 This Man . . . would know.** A Pharisee would have no contact with sinful people, and was sure that no prophet would have such contact either. As Jesus did not dismiss the woman, Simon thought that He either did not know that she was sinful or did not care. In either case, in Simon's view Jesus could not be a prophet.

■ **7:44–46** Simon had omitted the courtesies normally given to guests. But the woman made up for this.

■ **7:47 for.** The woman was forgiven because of faith (v. 50). Her love showed that she understood what God's forgiveness meant for her.

■ **7:48–50** Again Jesus authoritatively declares sins to be forgiven, an act that arouses comment (cf. 5:20, 21). But His concern is for the woman.

CHAPTER 8

1 [1]*proclaiming the good news*

2 [a]Matt. 27:55; Mark 15:40, 41; Luke 23:49, 55 [b]Matt. 27:56; Mark 16:9 [2]*sicknesses*

3 [3]NU, M *them* [4]*possessions*

4 [c]Matt. 13:2–9; Mark 4:1–9

8 [d]Matt. 11:15; Mark 7:16; Luke 14:35; Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22; 13:9 [5]Lit. *fruit*

9 [e]Matt. 13:10–23; Mark 4:10–20

10 [f]Is. 6:9; Matt. 13:14; Acts 28:26 [6]*secret* or *hidden truths*

11 [g]Matt. 13:18; Mark 4:14; [1 Pet. 1:23] [h]Luke 5:1; 11:28

13 [7]*testing*

14 [i]Matt. 19:23; 1 Tim. 6:9, 10

15 [j][Rom. 2:7; Heb. 10:36–39; James 5:7, 8] [8]*endurance*

16 [k]Matt. 5:15; Mark 4:21; Luke 11:33 [l]Matt. 5:14

17 [m]Matt. 10:26; Luke 12:2; [1 Cor. 4:5] [n][Eccl. 12:14; 2 Cor. 5:10]

18 [o]Matt. 25:29 [p]Matt. 13:12 [9]*thinks that he has*

Many Women Minister to Jesus

8 Now it came to pass, afterward, that He went through every city and village, preaching and [1]bringing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. And the twelve *were* with Him, [2]and [a]certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and [2]infirmities—Mary called Magdalene, [b]out of whom had come seven demons, [3]and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who provided for [3]Him from their [4]substance.

The Parable of the Sower

[4][c]And when a great multitude had gathered, and they had come to Him from every city, He spoke by a parable: [5]"A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it. [6]Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture. [7]And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it. [8]But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded [5]a crop a hundredfold." When He had said these things He cried, [d]"He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

The Purpose of Parables

[9][e]Then His disciples asked Him, saying, "What does this parable mean?"

[10]And He said, "To you it has been given to know the [6]mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest *it is given* in parables, that

[f]'Seeing they may not see,
And hearing they may not understand.'

The Parable of the Sower Explained

[11][g]"Now the parable is this: The seed is the [h]word of God. [12]Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. [13]But the ones on the rock *are those* who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of [7]temptation fall away. [14]Now the ones *that* fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, [i]riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. [15]But the ones *that* fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep *it* and bear fruit with [j]patience.[8]

The Parable of the Revealed Light

[16][k]"No one, when he has lit a lamp, covers it with a vessel or puts *it* under a bed, but sets *it* on a lampstand, that those who enter may see the [l]light. [17][m]For nothing is secret that will not be [n]revealed, nor *anything* hidden that will not be known and come to light. [18]Therefore take heed how you hear. [o]For whoever has, to him *more* will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he [9]seems to [p]have will be taken from him."

■ **8:2** Rabbis refused to teach women, so Jesus' acceptance of them into His group of followers was unusual.

Magdalene. From the town of Magdala.

■ **8:3 from their substance.** This provides a glimpse of the way Jesus and His band were supported throughout His ministry.

■ **8:4 parable.** From this point, parables feature more prominently. Crowds were coming to Jesus but He looked for more than casual contact. Parables required people to think carefully about what He was saying.

■ **8:5** Seed was sown first, then plowed into the soil. Pathways through the fields would not be plowed, and seed that fell there was wasted; it could not sink into the ground.

■ **8:6 on rock.** That is, rock covered with a layer of soil too shallow to hold sufficient moisture.

■ **8:7 thorns.** That is, hardy, fast-growing weeds.

■ **8:8 a hundredfold.** Matthew and Mark speak of thirtyfold and sixtyfold, but Luke emphasizes abundance far beyond what any crop could be expected to produce.

■ **8:10 mysteries.** The kingdom of God involves truths that are beyond human insights and wisdom but that God has now made known.

the rest. These are the people to whom Isaiah's prophecy refers—they do not respond to Jesus' teaching. They hear the story but do not understand the meaning.

that. Jesus teaching in parables has a twofold purpose—to reveal the mysteries of the kingdom to those who have "ears to hear" (v. 8) and to conceal the truth of the kingdom from those who do not. See notes on Matt. 13:13; Mark 4:11.

■ **8:13 who believe for a while.** One test of a true and living faith is perseverance. Those who finally depart from the way of truth reveal that they were never actually part of God's family (1 John 2:19).

■ **8:16–18** The whole purpose of lighting a lamp is that it may give light. The teaching Jesus gives is to be made known and in the end, on Judgment Day, nothing can be kept hidden. Therefore it is important to hear the teaching in the right way. All those who do this will find that their stock of truth keeps growing. To neglect what we have is to lose it.

Jesus' Mother and Brothers Come to Him

19 [q]Then His mother and brothers came to Him, and could not approach Him because of the crowd. 20 And it was told Him *by some,* who said, "Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see You."

21 But He answered and said to them, "My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it."

Wind and Wave Obey Jesus

22 [r]Now it happened, on a certain day, that He got into a boat with His disciples. And He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side of the lake." And they launched out. 23 But as they sailed He fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling *with water,* and were in [1]jeopardy. 24 And they came to Him and awoke Him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!"

Then He arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water. And they ceased, and there was a calm. 25 But He said to them, [s]"Where is your faith?"

And they were afraid, and marveled, saying to one another, [t]"Who can this be? For He commands even the winds and water, and they obey Him!"

A Demon-Possessed Man Healed

26 [u]Then they sailed to the country of the [2]Gadarenes, which is opposite Galilee. 27 And when He stepped out on the land, there met Him a certain man from the city who had demons [3]for a long time. And he wore no clothes, nor did he live in a house but in the tombs. 28 When he saw Jesus, he [v]cried out, fell down before Him, and with a loud voice said, [w]"What have I to do with [x]You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me!" 29 For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had often seized him, and he was kept under guard, bound with chains and shackles; and he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the wilderness.

30 Jesus asked him, saying, "What is your name?"

And he said, "Legion," because many demons had entered him. 31 And they begged Him that He would not command them to go out [y]into the abyss.

32 Now a herd of many [z]swine was feeding there on the mountain. So they begged Him that He would permit them to enter them. And He permitted them. 33 Then the demons went out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the lake and drowned.

34 When those who fed *them* saw what had happened, they fled and told *it* in the city and in the country. 35 Then they went out to see what had happened, and came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had departed, [a]sitting at the [b]feet of Jesus, clothed and in his [c]right mind. And they were afraid. 36 They also who had seen *it* told them by what means he who had been demon-possessed was [4]healed. 37 [d]Then the whole multitude of the surrounding region of the [5]Gadarenes [e]asked Him to [f]depart from them, for they were seized with great [g]fear. And He got into the boat and returned.

38 Now [h]the man from whom the demons had departed begged Him that he might be with Him. But Jesus sent him away, saying, 39 "Return to your own house, and tell what great things

19 [q]Ps. 69:8; Matt. 12:46–50; Mark 3:31–35

22 [r]Matt. 8:23–27; Mark 4:36–41

23 [1]*danger*

25 [s]Luke 9:41 [t]Luke 4:36; 5:26

26 [u]Matt. 8:28–34; Mark 5:1–17 [2]NU *Gerasenes*

27 [3]NU *and for a long time wore no clothes*

28 [v]Mark 1:26; 9:26 [w]Mark 1:23, 24 [x]Luke 4:41

31 [y]Rom. 10:7; [Rev. 20:1, 3]

32 [z]Lev. 11:7; Deut. 14:8

35 [a][Matt. 11:28] [b]Matt. 28:9; Mark 7:25; Luke 10:39; 17:16; John 11:32 [c][2 Tim. 1:7]

36 [4]*delivered*

37 [d]Matt. 8:34 [e]Mark 1:24; Luke 4:34 [f]Job 21:14; Acts 16:39 [g]Luke 5:26 [5]NU *Gerasenes*

38 [h]Mark 5:18–20

■ **8:19 brothers.** Those who believe that Mary remained a virgin all her life regard these as cousins, or as children of Joseph by an earlier marriage. But there is little evidence for this view.

■ **8:21** Jesus' words are not a repudiation of His earthly family; He took care of Mary even as He hung on the cross (John 19:26, 27). His point is that the service of God, and His work as Messiah, is more important than any natural relation.

■ **8:22, 23** The Sea of Galilee is seven hundred feet below sea level and bounded by mountains. Cool air can sweep down and whip up sudden storms. Jesus' sleep followed the labors of a busy day.

■ **8:26 Gadarenes.** It is not clear what place name should be read here (see text note; Matt. 8:28; Mark 5:1 note). Both Gadara and Gerasa were towns situated some miles from the lake.

■ **8:27** Demon possession took many forms. This man was deranged.

■ **8:28** Like the demoniac of 4:34, this one knew who Jesus was (contrast the disciples in v. 25).

■ **8:30 Legion.** There may have been a great number of demons in the man (a Roman legion had about six thousand soldiers).

■ **8:31 the abyss.** The place of confinement for evil spirits (Rev. 20:1–3).

■ **8:32, 33** Jesus permitted but did not order the demons to enter the swine.

■ **8:37** Fear caused these people to reject the most wonderful opportunity of their lives. They may have been afraid of the power they saw in the healing or upset by the loss of a herd of swine.

■ **8:38, 39** With Jesus gone it was important that the man work for God in that region. Notice that what "God has done" is identified with what Jesus had done.

God has done for you." And he went his way and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.

A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed

40 So it was, when Jesus returned, that the multitude welcomed Him, for they were all waiting for Him. 41 [i]And behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue. And he fell down at Jesus' feet and begged Him to come to his house, 42 for he had an only daughter about twelve years of age, and she [j]was dying.

But as He went, the multitudes thronged Him. 43 [k]Now a woman, having a [l]flow of blood for twelve years, who had spent all her livelihood on physicians and could not be healed by any, 44 came from behind and [m]touched the border of His garment. And immediately her flow of blood stopped.

45 And Jesus said, "Who touched Me?"

When all denied it, Peter [6]and those with him said, "Master, the multitudes throng and press You, [7]and You say, 'Who touched Me?' "

46 But Jesus said, "Somebody touched Me, for I perceived [n]power going out from Me." 47 Now when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling; and falling down before Him, she declared to Him in the presence of all the people the reason she had touched Him and how she was healed immediately.

48 And He said to her, "Daughter, [8]be of good cheer; [o]your faith has made you well. [p]Go in peace."

49 [q]While He was still speaking, someone came from the ruler of the synagogue's *house,* saying to him, "Your daughter is dead. Do not trouble the [9]Teacher."

50 But when Jesus heard *it,* He answered him, saying, "Do not be afraid; [r]only believe, and she will be made well." 51 When He came into the house, He permitted no one to go [1]in except [2]Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the girl. 52 Now all wept and mourned for her; but He said, [s]"Do not weep; she is not dead, [t]but sleeping." 53 And they ridiculed Him, knowing that she was dead.

54 But He [3]put them all outside, took her by the hand and called, saying, "Little girl, [u]arise." 55 Then her spirit returned, and she arose immediately. And He commanded that she be given *something* to eat. 56 And her parents were astonished, but [v]He charged them to tell no one what had happened.

Sending Out the Twelve

9 Then [a]He called His twelve disciples together and [b]gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. 2 [c]He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. 3 [d]And He said to them, "Take nothing for the journey, neither staffs nor bag nor bread nor money; and do not have two tunics apiece.

4 [e]"Whatever house you enter, stay there, and from there depart. 5 [f]And whoever will not re-

41 [i]Matt. 9:18–26; Mark 5:22–43
42 [j]Luke 7:2
43 [k]Matt. 9:20 [l]Luke 15:19–22
44 [m]Mark 6:56; Luke 5:13
45 [6]NU omits *and those with him* [7]NU omits the rest of v. 45.
46 [n]Mark 5:30; Luke 6:19
48 [o]Mark 5:34; Luke 7:50 [p]John 8:11 [8]NU omits *be of good cheer*
49 [q]Mark 5:35 [9]NU adds *anymore*
50 [r][Mark 11:22–24]
51 [1]NU adds *with Him* [2]NU, M *Peter, John, and James*
52 [s]Luke 7:13 [t][John 11:11, 13]
54 [u]Luke 7:14; John 11:43 [3]NU omits *put them all outside*
56 [v]Matt. 8:4; 9:30; Mark 5:43

CHAPTER 9

1 [a]Matt. 10:1, 2; Mark 3:13; 6:7 [b]Mark 16:17, 18; [John 14:12]
2 [c]Matt. 10:7, 8; Mark 6:12; Luke 10:1, 9
3 [d]Matt. 10:9–15; Mark 6:8–11; Luke 10:4–12; 22:35
4 [e]Matt. 10:11; Mark 6:10
5 [f]Matt. 10:14

■ **8:41 a ruler of the synagogue.** The man who would arrange the service, choosing those who would read Scripture or lead in prayer.

■ **8:43 having a flow of blood.** The woman's condition would make her ceremonially unclean (Lev. 15:25), cutting her off from many social relationships.

■ **8:44 the border of His garment.** Perhaps the tassel prescribed in Num. 15:37–40.

■ **8:45** The woman's cure needed to be known publicly in order for her to be taken back into normal social life. Jesus was careful to arrange this.

■ **8:48 Daughter.** She is the only woman Jesus calls "Daughter," a tender statement.

■ **8:52** Luke does not explain who "all" these people were. They would certainly include relatives and friends, probably people from the neighborhood and professional mourners (including flute players, Matt. 9:23). Mourning was normally demonstrative, and there would have been much wailing. Jesus forbade it all and said that the girl was "sleeping." This does not mean that she had not died, but that Jesus was prepared to waken her from death.

■ **8:54 arise.** Luke describes the miracle simply (Mark 5:41 retains the Aramaic words Jesus used, but Luke translates them).

■ **8:56** The effect of the miracle was astonishment. This time Jesus forbade publicity; He often did not want news of His miracles to spread (Mark 1:34 note).

■ **9:1, 2** The Twelve were evidently not together all the time (some had homes and families). But for this important mission Jesus gathered them all. He equipped them with power over demons (see "Demons" at Deut. 32:17) and sickness, and commissioned them to continue His work of preaching and healing.

■ **9:3** They were to take the barest minimum, relying on God's provision.

neither staffs. No complete explanation has been given as to why Mark 6:8 allows a staff; perhaps both are ways of saying "Go as you are; make no special preparation."

bag. The bag a traveler would take to carry belongings and provisions for his journey.

■ **9:4** They would rely on hospitality, but staying in one house limited the time they spent in any one place.

■ **9:5 shake off the very dust from your feet.** Strict Jews removed defiling dust from their feet when they returned from Gentile lands. The disciples' action symbolically said that those who rejected the preachers did not belong to God's people.

ceive you, when you go out of that city, [g]shake off the very dust from your feet as a testimony against them."

6 [h]So they departed and went through the towns, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.

Herod Seeks to See Jesus

7 [i]Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by Him; and he was perplexed, because it was said by some that John had risen from the dead, 8 and by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the old prophets had risen again. 9 Herod said, "John I have beheaded, but who is this of whom I hear such things?" [j]So he sought to see Him.

Feeding the Five Thousand

10 [k]And the apostles, when they had returned, told Him all that they had done. [l]Then He took them and went aside privately into a deserted place belonging to the city called Bethsaida. 11 But when the multitudes knew *it,* they followed Him; and He received them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who had need of healing. 12 [m]When the day began to wear away, the twelve came and said to Him, "Send the multitude away, that they may go into the surrounding towns and country, and lodge and get provisions; for we are in a deserted place here."

13 But He said to them, "You give them something to eat."

And they said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish, unless we go and buy food for all these people." 14 For there were about five thousand men.

Then He said to His disciples, "Make them sit down in groups of fifty." 15 And they did so, and made them all sit down.

16 Then He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He [n]blessed and broke *them,* and gave *them* to the disciples to set before the multitude. 17 So they all ate and were [l]filled, and twelve baskets of the leftover fragments were taken up by them.

Peter Confesses Jesus as the Christ

18 [o]And it happened, as He was alone praying, *that* His disciples joined Him, and He asked them, saying, "Who do the crowds say that I am?"

19 So they answered and said, [p]"John the Baptist, but some *say* Elijah; and others *say* that one of the old prophets has risen again."

20 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

[q]Peter answered and said, "The Christ of God."

Jesus Predicts His Death and Resurrection

21 [r]And He strictly warned and commanded them to tell this to no one, 22 saying, [s]"The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day."

Take Up the Cross and Follow Him

23 [t]Then He said to *them* all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross [2]daily, and follow Me. 24 [u]For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. 25 [v]For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost? 26 [w]For whoever is ashamed of Me and My

5 [g]Luke 10:11; Acts 13:51

6 [h]Mark 6:12; Luke 8:1

7 [i]Matt. 14:1, 2; Mark 6:14

9 [j]Luke 23:8

10 [k]Mark 6:30 [l]Matt. 14:13

12 [m]Matt. 14:15; Mark 6:35; John 6:1, 5

16 [n]Luke 22:19; 24:30

17 [l]*satisfied*

18 [o]Matt. 16:13–16; Mark 8:27–29

19 [p]Matt. 14:2

20 [q]Matt. 16:16; John 6:68, 69

21 [r]Matt. 8:4; 16:20; Mark 8:30

22 [s]Matt. 16:21; 17:22; Luke 18:31–33; 23:46; 24:46

23 [t]Matt. 10:38; 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 14:27 [2]M omits *daily*

24 [u]Matt. 10:39; Luke 17:33; [John 12:25]

25 [v]Matt. 16:26; Mark 8:36; [Luke 16:19–31]; Acts 1:18, 25

26 [w][Rom. 1:16]

■ **9:7 Herod.** Herod Antipas, who ruled Galilee.

John had risen from the dead. This became Herod's view (Mark 6:16), but at this time he simply believed that John was dead; Herod himself had ordered him beheaded.

■ **9:8 Elijah.** See the prophecy of Mal. 4:5.

■ **9:10–17** The one miracle, apart from the Resurrection, found in all four Gospels.

■ **9:10 took them . . . aside.** They retired to a private place, evidently to report to Jesus and relax after the preaching tour.

Bethsaida. This must mean in the vicinity of Bethsaida, for it was "a deserted place" (v. 12).

■ **9:11 received them.** This was a gracious act when Jesus was looking for time to rest.

■ **9:20 who do you say.** This question distinguishes the disciples from the crowds; the word "you" is emphatic.

Christ. This word means "anointed" (1 Sam. 2:10; Matt. 1:1 and notes); Christ is the One God has chosen above all others, the One who will bring salvation. Peter's answer is more than a penetrating assessment; it is not a human discovery but a revelation from God (Matt. 16:17).

■ **9:21 strictly warned.** The disciples would almost certainly have been misunderstood if they had told anyone; people would have thought they were proclaiming a political deliverer. Jesus went on to explain the Messiah must suffer, be rejected, die, and be raised on the third day (v. 22).

■ **9:23–25** To take up the cross means to renounce selfish ambition; it is a death to a whole way of life.

words, of him the Son of Man will be [x]ashamed when He comes in His *own* glory, and *in His* Father's, and of the holy angels.

Jesus Transfigured on the Mount

[27][y]But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the kingdom of God."

[28][z]Now it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, that He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray. [29]As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe *became* white *and* glistening. [30]And behold, two men talked with Him, who were [a]Moses and [b]Elijah, [31]who appeared in glory and spoke of His [3]decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. [32]But Peter and those with him [c]were heavy with sleep; and when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him. [33]Then it happened, as they were parting from Him, *that* Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three [4]tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah"—not knowing what he said.

[34]While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were fearful as they entered the [d]cloud. [35]And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, [e]"This is [5]My beloved Son. [f]Hear Him!" [36]When the voice had ceased, Jesus was found alone. [g]But they kept quiet, and told no one in those days any of the things they had seen.

A Boy Is Healed

[37][h]Now it happened on the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, that a great multitude met Him. [38]Suddenly a man from the multitude cried out, saying, "Teacher, I implore You, look on my son, for he is my only child. [39]And behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out; it convulses him so that he foams *at the mouth;* and it departs from him with great difficulty, bruising him. [40]So I implored Your disciples to cast it out, but they could not."

[41]Then Jesus answered and said, "O [6]faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you and [7]bear with you? Bring your son here." [42]And as he was still coming, the demon threw him down and convulsed *him.* Then Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the child, and gave him back to his father.

Jesus Again Predicts His Death

[43]And they were all amazed at the majesty of God.

But while everyone marveled at all the things which Jesus did, He said to His disciples, [44][i]"Let these words sink down into your ears, for the Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men." [45][j]But they did not understand this saying, and it was hidden from them so that they did not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this saying.

26 [x]Matt. 10:33; Mark 8:38; Luke 12:9; 2 Tim. 2:12

27 [y]Matt. 16:28; Mark 9:1; Acts 7:55, 56; Rev. 20:4

28 [z]Matt. 17:1–8; Mark 9:2–8

30 [a]Heb. 11:23–29 [b]2 Kin. 2:1–11

31 [3]Death, lit. *departure*

32 [c]Dan. 8:18; 10:9; Matt. 26:40, 43; Mark 14:40

33 [4]*tents*

34 [d]Ex. 13:21; Acts 1:9

35 [e]Ps. 2:7; [Is. 42:1; Matt. 3:17; 12:18]; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22 [f]Acts 3:22 [5]NU *My Son, the Chosen One*

36 [g]Matt. 17:9; Mark 9:9

37 [h]Matt. 17:14–18; Mark 9:14–27

41 [6]*unbelieving* [7]*put up with*

44 [i]Matt. 17:22; Mark 10:33; 14:53; Luke 22:54; John 18:12

45 [j]Mark 9:32; Luke 2:50; 18:34

■ **9:27 see the kingdom of God.** Suggestions as to the meaning of this phrase include the Transfiguration, Jesus' resurrection and ascension, Pentecost, the spread of the gospel, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the Second Advent. See note on Matt. 16:28.

■ **9:28 the mountain.** The location of the Transfiguration is not known. Mount Tabor is the traditional site, but it is a long way from Caesarea Philippi and a military post was located there at that time. Mount Hermon is a more likely suggestion. See "The Transfiguration of Jesus" at Mark 9:2.

■ **9:30 two men.** Moses was the giver of the law, and Elijah represents the prophets.

■ **9:31 His decease.** Lit. His "exodus" (2 Pet. 1:15 has the same Greek word). Only Luke reports the subject of this conversation. That Jesus' death was discussed during this revelation of glory shows its centrality for His mission. It was by His death that glory would come to sinners.

■ **9:32 heavy with sleep.** The Transfiguration may have taken place at night, since v. 37 refers to "the next day" and Jesus sometimes prayed all night (6:12).

■ **9:33 three tabernacles.** Peter suggests building structures of some kind, perhaps to enable the experience to be prolonged.

■ **9:34 the cloud.** As in the Old Testament, the cloud is associated with the presence of God.

■ **9:35 My beloved Son.** This designation emphasizes the divine relationship, and the command "Hear Him" His divine authority. Both set Jesus apart as different from and superior to Moses and Elijah.

■ **9:37–40** The contrast between the glory on the mountaintop and the disciples' inability to defeat the forces of evil on the plain is striking. They had cast out demons previously (vv. 1–6; cf. Mark 9:29).

■ **9:41 faithless and perverse generation.** These words are apparently addressed to the crowds that had come without faith, evidently expecting Jesus to be able to do nothing. In contrast, the boy's father had faith even though it was imperfect (Mark 9:24).

■ **9:44** The word "your" is emphatic. Over against the general unbelief, the disciples are to be different. Jesus then predicts His betrayal and death in general terms, but they did not understand.

■ **9:45 it was hidden.** This may mean that they were actively prevented from understanding, or simply that before the Resurrection it seemed contradictory to the disciples that salvation could come by way of Jesus' death.

Who Is the Greatest?

46 [k]Then a dispute arose among them as to which of them would be greatest. 47 And Jesus, [l]perceiving the thought of their heart, took a [m]little child and set him by Him, 48 and said to them, [n]"Whoever receives this little child in My name receives Me; and [o]whoever receives Me [p]receives Him who sent Me. [q]For he who is least among you all will be great."

Jesus Forbids Sectarianism

49 [r]Now John answered and said, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow with us."

50 But Jesus said to him, "Do not forbid *him,* for [s]he who is not against [8]us is on [9]our side."

A Samaritan Village Rejects the Savior

51 Now it came to pass, when the time had come for [t]Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, 52 and sent messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him. 53 But [u]they did not receive Him, because His face was *set* for the journey to Jerusalem. 54 And when His disciples [v]James and John saw *this,* they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, [1]just as [w]Elijah did?"

55 But He turned and rebuked them, [2]and said, "You do not know what manner of [x]spirit you are of. 56 [3]For [y]the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save *them.*" And they went to another village.

The Cost of Discipleship

57 [z]Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, *that* someone said to Him, "Lord, I will follow You wherever You go."

58 And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air *have* nests, but the Son of Man [a]has nowhere to lay *His* head."

59 [b]Then He said to another, "Follow Me."

46 [k]Matt. 18:1–5

47 [l]Matt. 9:4 [m]Luke 18:17

48 [n]Matt. 18:5 [o]John 12:44 [p]John 13:20 [q]Eph. 3:8

49 [r]Mark 9:38–40

50 [s]Luke 11:23 [8]NU *you* [9]NU *your*

51 [t]Mark 16:19

53 [u]John 4:4, 9

54 [v]Mark 3:17 [w]2 Kin. 1:10, 12 [1]NU omits *just as Elijah did*

55 [x][2 Tim. 1:7] [2]NU omits the rest of v. 55.

56 [y]John 3:17; 12:47 [3]NU omits *For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them.*

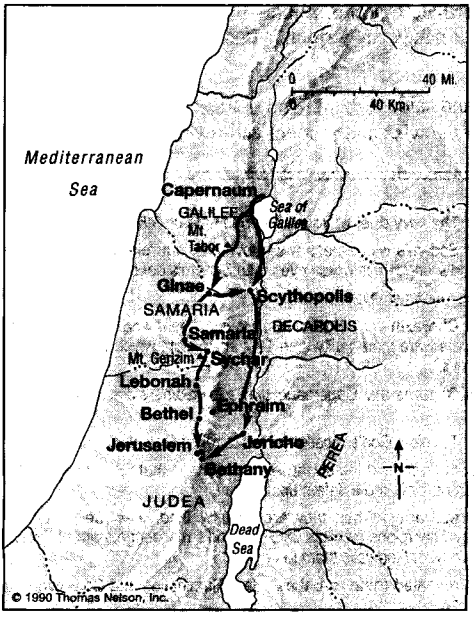
57 [z]Matt. 8:19–22

58 [a]Luke 2:7; 8:23

59 [b]Matt. 8:21, 22

■ **9:46 be greatest.** Luke contrasts the disciples' wish to have the best place for themselves with Jesus' concern for others.

■ **9:47 little child.** Children were typically considered unimportant. To be concerned with them and to take the lowest place is to be truly great.



■ **9:49, 50** For John, it was not enough to do miracles in Jesus' name; it was necessary to "follow with us." Jesus is saying that there is no neutrality in the struggle against evil. Those not against us are for us, a test we should apply to others. In 11:23 we find a test we should apply to ourselves.

■ **9:51** From this point to 19:44, Luke gives an account of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem. There is no parallel to this unit as a whole in the other Gospels, though there are parallels to some of the individual sections. Luke presents the solemn progress to the capital city where Jesus would die for sinners in accordance with the will of God. On the way He gives the disciples teaching that would be important for them when they were left to carry on as Christian leaders without His physical presence.

■ **9:52, 53** Jesus and His disciples would be enough to strain the resources of a small village if they dropped in unexpectedly. Jesus gave due notice but was met with the traditional hostility of the Samaritans for the Jews.

■ **9:54** The disciples had zeal for their task but did not understand the mercy of God.

■ **9:59 bury my father.** The father may have been alive. The words would then indicate that the potential disciple wanted to continue to care for his father until his death. If the father was dead, Jesus' words are all the more shocking, since filial piety demanded that a son should look after the burial arrangements for his father. Either way, Jesus is saying that the demands of the kingdom override all earthly loyalties.

Jewish Pilgrimage from Galilee to Jerusalem. Galilean Jews often traveled to the temple in Jerusalem. The most direct route from Capernaum was to Ginae on through Samaria, Sychar, Lebonah, and Bethel. Some Jews, however, in order to avoid any travel in Samaria at all, went south from Scythopolis along the west bank of the Jordan River to Jericho.

61 [c]1 Kin. 19:20
62 [d]2 Tim. 4:10

CHAPTER 10

1 [a]Mark 6:7 [f]NU *seventy-two others*
2 [b]John 4:35 [c]2 Thess. 3:1
3 [d]Matt. 10:16
4 [e]Luke 9:3–5 [f]2 Kin. 4:29
5 [g]Matt. 10:12
7 [h]Matt. 10:11 [i]1 Cor. 10:27 [j]1 Tim. 5:18
9 [k]Mark 3:15 [l]Matt. 3:2; 10:7
11 [m]Acts 13:51 [z]NU *our feet*
12 [n]Matt. 10:15; 11:24 [3]NU, M omit *But*
13 [o]Matt. 11:21–23 [p]Ezek. 3:6
15 [q]Matt. 11:23 [r]Is. 14:13–15 [s]Ezek. 26:20 [4]NU *will you be exalted to heaven? You will be thrust down to Hades!*
16 [t]John 13:20 [u]1 Thess. 4:8 [v]John 5:23
17 [w]Luke 10:1 [5]NU *seventy-two*
18 [x]John 12:31
19 [y]Mark 16:18
20 [z]Is. 4:3 [6]NU, M omit *rather*
21 [a]Matt. 11:25–27

But he said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father."

60 Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God."

61 And another also said, "Lord, [c]I will follow You, but let me first go *and* bid them farewell who are at my house."

62 But Jesus said to him, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is [d]fit for the kingdom of God."

The Seventy Sent Out

10 After these things the Lord appointed [1]seventy others also, and [a]sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go. 2 Then He said to them, [b]"The harvest truly *is* great, but the laborers *are* few; therefore [c]pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. 3 Go your way; [d]behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves. 4 [e]Carry neither money bag, knapsack, nor sandals; and [f]greet no one along the road. 5 [g]But whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house.' 6 And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on it; if not, it will return to you. 7 [h]And remain in the same house, [i]eating and drinking such things as they give, for [j]the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not go from house to house. 8 Whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you. 9 [k]And heal the sick there, and say to them, [l]'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' 10 But whatever city you enter, and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, 11 [m]'The very dust of your city which clings to [2]us we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near you.' 12 [3]But I say to you that [n]it will be more tolerable in that Day for Sodom than for that city.

Woe to the Impenitent Cities

13 [o]"Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! [p]For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. 14 But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. 15 [q]And you, Capernaum, [4]who are [r]exalted to heaven, [s]will be brought down to Hades. 16 [t]He who hears you hears Me, [u]he who rejects you rejects Me, and [v]he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me."

The Seventy Return with Joy

17 Then [w]the [5]seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name."

18 And He said to them, [x]"I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. 19 Behold, [y]I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. 20 Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but [6]rather rejoice because [z]your names are written in heaven."

Jesus Rejoices in the Spirit

21 [a]In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from *the* wise and prudent and revealed them to babes.

■ **10:1 seventy others.** This mission is found only in Luke, but the instructions are similar to some of those given earlier to the Twelve (9:1–6; Matt. 10:5–15; Mark 6:7–13). The Greek manuscripts are divided between 70 and 72 as the number sent out (see text note), and there is no way of being sure which is original. Both represent the number of the nations of the world in Gen. 10 (the Hebrew text has 70 names, the Greek has 72).

two by two. Jesus had sent out the Twelve in pairs (Mark 6:7). This gave mutual support and also the testimony of two witnesses (cf. Deut. 17:6).

■ **10:3 lambs among wolves.** See "Christians in the World" at Col. 2:20.

■ **10:4 sandals.** This is probably not a command to go barefoot, but a prohibition against carrying an extra pair of sandals.

greet no one. The customary greetings were elaborate, and to avoid them would be highly unusual.

■ **10:6 it will return to you.** God's peace comes only to those who respond.

■ **10:11 The very dust of your city.** See note on 9:5.

■ **10:12** Sodom's wickedness was proverbial, but rejecting the preachers of God's kingdom is worse even than Sodom's deeds.

that Day. Judgment Day.

■ **10:13 Chorazin . . . Bethsaida.** Having heard and rejected Jesus, these towns were more guilty than Tyre and Sidon, which were infamous for their evil.

■ **10:15 Capernaum.** Capernaum was a town where Jesus did much of His work.

■ **10:16** To reject God's messengers is to reject God also.

■ **10:18** In its context the saying seems to mean that the ministry of the preachers had inflicted a defeat upon Satan.

■ **10:19 authority.** When they are sent by God, they are safe from snakes and scorpions (cf. Acts 28:3–5). God's messengers are protected as they do what God calls them to do.

■ **10:21 revealed them to babes.** See "Illumination and Conviction" at 1 Cor. 2:10.

Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. 22 [b]All[7] things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and [c]no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and *the one* to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him.*"

23 Then He turned to *His* disciples and said privately, [d]"Blessed *are* the eyes which see the things you see; 24 for I tell you [e]that many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see, and have not seen *it,* and to hear what you hear, and have not heard *it.*"

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

25 And behold, a certain [8]lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, [f]"Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

26 He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading *of it?*"

27 So he answered and said, [g]"'*You shall love the* LORD *your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,*' and [h]'*your neighbor as yourself.*'"

28 And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and [i]you will live."

29 But he, wanting to [j]justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

30 Then Jesus answered and said: "A certain *man* went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among [9]thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded *him,* and departed, leaving *him* half dead. 31 Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, [k]he passed by on the other side. 32 Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. 33 But a certain [l]Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had [m]compassion. 34 So he went to *him* and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 On the next day, [n]when he departed, he took out two [n]denarii, gave *them* to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.' 36 So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?"

37 And he said, "He who showed mercy on him."

Then Jesus said to him, [o]"Go and do likewise."

Mary and Martha Worship and Serve

38 Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named [p]Martha welcomed Him into her house. 39 And she had a sister called Mary, [q]who also [r]sat at [2]Jesus' feet and heard His word. 40 But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me."

41 And [3]Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. 42 But [s]one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."

The Model Prayer

11 Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, *that* one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."

2 So He said to them, "When you pray, say:

22 [b]Matt. 28:18; John 3:35; 5:27; 17:2 [c][John 1:18; 6:44, 46] [7]M *And turning to the disciples He said, "All*

23 [d]Matt. 13:16, 17

24 [e]1 Pet. 1:10, 11

25 [f]Matt. 19:16–19; 22:35 [8]*expert in the law*

27 [g]Deut. 6:5 [h]Lev. 19:18; Matt. 19:19

28 [i]Lev. 18:5; Neh. 9:29; Ezek. 20:11, 13, 21; Matt. 19:17; Rom. 10:5

29 [j]Luke 16:15

30 [9]*robbers*

31. [k]Ps. 38:11

33 [l]John 4:9 [m]Luke 15:20

35 [n]Matt. 20:2 [n]NU omits *when he departed*

37 [o]Prov. 14:21; [Matt. 9:13; 12:7]

38 [p]John 11:1; 12:2, 3

39 [q][1 Cor. 7:32–40] [r]Luke 8:35; Acts 22:3 [2]NU *the Lord's*

41 [3]NU *the Lord*

42 [s][Ps. 27:4; John 6:27]

■ **10:22** The relationship of Jesus and the Father is unique. Knowledge of it does not come to the world by natural means.

■ **10:23, 24** The greatest of prophets and kings in earlier days had not seen the Messiah, as these disciples had (cf. 7:24–28 note).

■ **10:25 lawyer.** An expert in the law of God (see text note), and so a religious man. Yet he was not genuinely looking for information but for something that would enable him to accuse Jesus.

■ **10:27** The lawyer showed insight; Jesus summed up the law in much the same way (Matt. 22:37–40).

■ **10:28 do this.** God's will is the way of life.

■ **10:29–37** The parable answers the question "Who is my neighbor," not the question concerning what one must do to be saved. The Jews had various ideas about the "neighbor," but they confined it to Israel.

■ **10:33, 34** Listeners would expect a priest and a Levite to be followed by a lay Israelite in an anti-clerical story. The Samaritan is totally unexpected, as is his kindness. Oil and wine were common remedies of that time and expressed the Samaritan's compassion.

■ **10:35 two denarii.** See Matt. 18:28 note. The coins would have paid for the man's board for several days.

■ **10:38 a certain village.** Bethany, about two miles from Jerusalem (John 11:1).

■ **10:40, 41** Martha's preparations may have been unnecessarily elaborate. Mary knew that listening to Jesus was an extraordinary opportunity, to be given preference over other concerns (see Mark 19:7).

■ **11:1 Lord, teach us to pray.** Religious teachers were expected to teach their disciples how to pray.

■ **11:2–4** This form of the "Lord's Prayer" differs slightly from that in Matt. 6:9–13. In Matthew, the prayer is given in a sermon; here it is given in answer to a question.

■ **11:2 Father.** This corresponds to the Aramaic *Abba,* the usual word for addressing a father in the family.

name. Names are representative of the person. The petition is that people will reverence God.

CHAPTER 11

2 [a]Matt. 6:9–13 [1]NU omits *Our* [2]NU omits *in heaven* [3]NU omits the rest of v. 2.

4 [b][Eph. 4:32] [4]NU omits *But deliver us from the evil one*

[a] Our[1] Father [2]in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.
Your kingdom come.
[3] Your will be done
On earth as *it is* in heaven.
3 Give us day by day our daily bread.
4 And [b]forgive us our sins,
For we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us.
And do not lead us into temptation.
[4]But deliver us from the evil one."

A Friend Comes at Midnight

5 And He said to them, "Which of you shall have a friend, and go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; 6 for a friend of mine has come to me on his journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; 7 and he will answer from within and say, 'Do not trouble me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give to you'? 8 I say

Prayer

God made us and redeemed us for fellowship with Himself, and prayer is an important part of that relationship. God speaks to us in and through the contents of the Bible, which the Holy Spirit opens up and applies to us and enables us to understand. We then speak to God about Himself, ourselves, and people in His world, shaping what we say as response to what He has said. This unique form of two-way conversation continues as long as life lasts.

The Bible teaches us how to pray both privately (Matt. 6:5–8) and in company with each other (Acts 1:14; 4:24). In prayer, God's people express adoration and praise; confess their sins and ask for forgiveness; give thanks for God's goodness; and make petitions for themselves and others. The Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:9–13; Luke 11:2–4) includes adoration, petition, and confession; the Psalter provides models of these three and of petition and intercession as well.

In petition the persons praying make their requests known to God, expressing their faith and dependence on Him for all things. Petition is the dimension of prayer most often highlighted through the Bible. As with the other aspects of prayer, petitions should ordinarily be directed to the Father, as the Lord's Prayer shows; but prayer may be directed to Christ, as in the days of His incarnation (Rom. 10:8–13; 2 Cor. 12:7–9), and to the Holy Spirit (Rev. 1:4).

Jesus teaches that petition to the Father is to be made in His name (John 14:13, 14; 15:16; 16:23, 24). This means invoking His mediation, as the One who secures our access to the Father, and looking to Him for support, as our intercessor in the Father's presence.

We may pray to God with fervent persistence when we bring our needs to Him (Luke 11:5–13; 18:1–8), and know that He will answer our prayers. But God knows what is best in a way that we do not, and He may deny our specific requests. If He denies us, it is because He has something better for us, as when Christ refused to heal Paul's thorn in the flesh (2 Cor. 12:7–9). To say, "Your will be done," surrendering our own preference to the Father's wisdom, as Jesus did in Gethsemane (Matt. 26:39–44), is an explicit way of expressing faith in the goodness of what God has planned.

In intercession, we represent to God the needs and concerns of others. In doing this we exercise God-given love for them. Moses is a model for such a prayer in the Old Testament. In the New Testament it is at the center of what Jesus came to do, as John 17 reveals. The same prayer shows that the glory of God gives the ultimate purpose of intercession. In the same way, the Lord's Prayer puts God's glory first, making God's name the guide for our petitions and confessions as well. □

kingdom come. Jesus taught often about God's kingdom, and the prayer asks for it to be established. See theological note "Prayer."

■ **11:4 forgive us . . . For we also forgive.** Sinners need the forgiveness of sins each day. If people do not forgive others they are not in a condition to receive forgiveness themselves.

■ **11:7** In a one-room house the whole family would sleep on a raised platform, and for one person to get up would disturb them all.

■ **11:8** Friendship is not enough to make him get up, but persistence is.

to you, [c]though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs.

Keep Asking, Seeking, Knocking

9 [d]"So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; [e]seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 11 If a son asks for [5]bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if *he asks* for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? 12 Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? 13 If you then, being evil, know how to give [g]good gifts to your children, how much more will *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

A House Divided Cannot Stand

14 [h]And He was casting out a demon, and it was mute. So it was, when the demon had gone out, that the mute spoke; and the multitudes marveled. 15 But some of them said, [i]"He casts out demons by [6]Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons."

16 Others, testing *Him,* [j]sought from Him a sign from heaven. 17 [k]But [l]He, knowing their thoughts, said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and a house *divided* against a house falls. 18 If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? Because you say I cast out demons by Beelzebub. 19 And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast *them* out? Therefore they will be your judges. 20 But if I cast out demons [m]with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. 21 [n]When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace. 22 But [o]when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, and divides his [7]spoils. 23 [p]He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters.

An Unclean Spirit Returns

24 [q]"When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' 25 And when he comes, he finds *it* swept and put in order. 26 Then he goes and takes with *him* seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and [r]the last *state* of that man is worse than the first."

Keeping the Word

27 And it happened, as He spoke these things, that a certain woman from the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, [s]"Blessed *is* the womb that bore You, and *the* breasts which nursed You!"

28 But He said, [t]"More than that, blessed *are* those who hear the word of God and keep it!"

Seeking a Sign

29 [u]And while the crowds were thickly gathered together, He began to say, "This is an evil generation. It seeks a [v]sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah [8]the prophet.

8 [c][Luke 18:1–5]

9 [d]Ps. 50:14, 15; Jer. 33:3; [Matt. 7:7; 21:22; Mark 11:24; John 15:7; James 1:5, 6; 1 John 3:22; 5:14, 15] [e]Is. 55:6

11 [f]Matt. 7:9 [5]NU omits *bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for*

13 [g]James 1:17

14 [h]Matt. 9:32–34; 12:22, 24

15 [i]Matt. 9:34; 12:24 [6]NU, M *Beelzebul*

16 [j]Matt. 12:38; 16:1; Mark 8:11

17 [k]Matt. 12:25–29; Mark 3:23–27 [l]Matt. 9:4; John 2:25

20 [m]Ex. 8:19

21 [n]Matt. 12:29; Mark 3:27

22 [o][Is. 53:12; Col. 2:15] [7]*plunder*

23 [p]Matt. 12:30; Mark 9:40

24 [q]Matt. 12:43–45; Mark 1:27; 3:11; 5:13; Acts 5:16; 8:7

26 [r]John 5:14; [Heb. 6:4–6; 10:26; 2 Pet. 2:20]

27 [s]Luke 1:28, 48

28 [t]Ps. 1:1, 2; 112:1; 119:1, 2; Is. 48:17, 18; [Matt. 7:21; Luke 8:21]; James 1:25

29 [u]Matt. 12:38–42 [v]1 Cor. 1:22 [8]NU omits *the prophet*

- **11:13 you . . . being evil.** Universal sinfulness is presupposed.
- **11:14, 15** Jesus' enemies did not deny that He expelled demons, but ascribed His power to Beelzebub, the name of a heathen god (2 Kin. 1:2; Matt. 10:25 note).
- **11:17, 18** Unity is strength; Satan is not casting out his own workers.
- **11:20 the finger of God.** As in Ex. 8:19, this figure describes the work of God Himself; Matt. 12:28 reads "the Spirit of God." Both statements bring out the truth that Jesus did not cast out demons by Beelzebub. The power of God was at work in Him. This points to a further truth: in the coming of Jesus the kingdom of God has come. The miracles He performs are evidence for those who have eyes to see that God is at work.
- **11:21, 22** Satan is like a strong man in complete control of his house, the people under his power. But Jesus is stronger than Satan and overthrows him. This parable teaches that the kingdom of God is not simply a matter of helpful teaching; it comes with power to overcome Satan.
- **11:23** There can be no neutrality. The message of the kingdom brings the possibility of overcoming evil, and anyone who rejects this message accepts the ways of evil. There is no middle course.
- **11:24 house from which I came.** The demon talks about the place he left as if he still owned it.
- **11:25 swept and put in order.** The man has cleaned up his life, but nothing more. His life is empty, and therefore open to any evil influence.
- **11:28 More than that.** Jesus does not deny that Mary was blessed; He is saying that hearing and obeying God's word is more important.
- **11:29 a sign.** Here Jesus responds to the demand for a "sign from heaven" (v. 16). Such a request could only have been motivated by unbelief, especially in view of the many demonstrations of messianic power already performed by Jesus (7:20–23). For Luke, Jesus' own presence is a "sign" of God's redemptive activity (2:34; 11:30).

30 [w]Jon. 1:17; 2:10; 3:3–10; Luke 24:46; Acts 10:40; 1 Cor. 15:4

31 [x]1 Kin. 10:1–9; 2 Chr. 9:1–8 [y][Is. 9:6; Rom. 9:5]

32 [z]Jon. 3:5

33 [a]Matt. 5:15; Mark 4:21; Luke 8:16 [b]Matt. 5:15

34 [c]Matt. 6:22, 23 [g]Clear, or healthy [f]Evil, or unhealthy

38 [d]Matt. 15:2; Mark 7:2, 3

39 [e]Matt. 23:25 [f]Gen. 6:5; Titus 1:15 [2]Lit. *eager grasping* or *robbery*

40 [g]Gen. 1:26, 27

41 [h]Is. 58:7; Dan. 4:27; [Luke 12:33; 16:9] [3]Or *what is inside*

42 [i]Matt. 23:23 [j][Mic. 6:7, 8] [k]John 5:42

43 [l]Matt. 23:6; Mark 12:38, 39; Luke 14:7; 20:46 [4]Or *places of honor*

44 [m]Matt. 23:27 [n]Ps. 5:9 [5]NU omits *scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites*

46 [o]Matt. 23:4

47 [p]Matt. 23:29; Acts 7:52

49 [q]Prov. 1:20; Matt. 23:34

30 For as [w]Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so also the Son of Man will be to this generation. 31 [x]The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a [y]greater than Solomon *is* here. 32 The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for [z]they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah *is* here.

The Lamp of the Body

33 [a]"No one, when he has lit a lamp, puts *it* in a secret place or under a [b]basket, but on a lampstand, that those who come in may see the light. 34 [c]The lamp of the body is the eye. Therefore, when your eye is [g]good, your whole body also is full of light. But when *your eye* is [f]bad, your body also *is* full of darkness. 35 Therefore take heed that the light which is in you is not darkness. 36 If then your whole body *is* full of light, having no part dark, *the* whole *body* will be full of light, as when the bright shining of a lamp gives you light."

Woe to the Pharisees and Lawyers

37 And as He spoke, a certain Pharisee asked Him to dine with him. So He went in and sat down to eat. 38 [d]When the Pharisee saw *it,* he marveled that He had not first washed before dinner.

39 [e]Then the Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees make the outside of the cup and dish clean, but [f]your inward part is full of [2]greed and wickedness. 40 Foolish ones! Did not [g]He who made the outside make the inside also? 41 [h]But rather give alms of [3]such things as you have; then indeed all things are clean to you.

42 [i]"But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and [j]pass by justice and the [k]love of God. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. 43 [l]Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the [4]best seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces. 44 [m]Woe to you, [5]scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! [n]For you are like graves which are not seen, and the men who walk over *them* are not aware *of them.*"

45 Then one of the lawyers answered and said to Him, "Teacher, by saying these things You reproach us also."

46 And He said, "Woe to you also, lawyers! [o]For you load men with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers. 47 [p]Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. 48 In fact, you bear witness that you approve the deeds of your fathers; for they indeed killed them, and you build their tombs. 49 Therefore the wisdom of God also said, [q]'I will send them prophets and apostles, and *some* of them they will kill and persecute,' 50 that the blood of all the prophets which was shed from the foun-

■ **11:30** Just as Jonah's three days inside the fish was a sign to the people of Nineveh, so Jesus' resurrection after three days in the tomb would be a sign to the Jews of His day.

■ **11:31 The queen of the South.** That is, the Queen of Sheba (in southern Arabia) who made a long and difficult journey to hear Solomon (1 Kin. 10).

■ **11:32 men of Nineveh.** The Ninevites who repented when Jonah preached (Jon. 3:6–10). In both cases the argument is from the lesser to the greater. People responded to Solomon and to Jonah; much more should they respond to the Son of God.

■ **11:34 The lamp of the body.** When the eye is functioning correctly the body receives the benefit of light ("is full of light"; cf. Ps. 18:28). The people seeking a sign did not need more light, but better receptiveness to the light they already had. What God was doing in Jesus was plain enough.

■ **11:38 washed before dinner.** Such washing was not for reasons of hygiene, but ceremonial purity. The hands made contact with all sorts of things, some of which may have been ritually defiling. Scrupulous Jews purified themselves by washing their hands before eating so that defiled hands would not contaminate their food.

■ **11:39, 40** Pharisees were scrupulous about the rules for outward ceremonial cleanness. Yet people could keep them all and still be defiled inwardly.

■ **11:41 give alms.** Lit. "Give the inner things as alms" (see text note). Jesus is saying that there must be a right inner attitude when one gives to the poor and, when the inside is right, all is clean.

■ **11:42 woe.** See note on 6:24–26.

tithe. Tithing was intended as a joyful and thankful offering expressing love for God, but the Pharisees, by counting up stalks of mint and the like, had turned it into a burdensome duty.

■ **11:43 greetings.** Elaborate salutations that showed the recipients to be important people.

■ **11:44 graves which are not seen.** Touching a grave made a person ceremonially defiled (Num. 19:16), so graves were whitewashed to warn people. An unmarked grave was a hidden source of ritual impurity.

■ **11:45 lawyers.** See note on 10:25.

■ **11:46 burdens hard to bear.** The legal experts added to the law many regulations meant to ensure that the law itself would not be broken, but which imposed a heavy burden.

■ **11:47 tombs of the prophets.** They saw themselves as honoring those great men of God, but building tombs could not hide their complicity with those who killed them (v. 48).

■ **11:49 I will send . . . persecute.** The source of the quotation has not been discovered. Jesus Himself may be saying that this is the way God's wisdom works out.

■ **11:50, 51** Jesus' own generation was guilty, for in rejecting Jesus it rejected the prophets who had spoken of Him. Thus, these people shared

dation of the world may be required of this generation, 51 [r]from the blood of Abel to [s]the blood of Zechariah who perished between the altar and the temple. Yes, I say to you, it shall be required of this generation.

52 [t]"Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter in yourselves, and those who were entering in you hindered."

53 [6]And as He said these things to them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to assail *Him* vehemently, and to cross-examine Him about many things, 54 lying in wait for Him, [7]and [u]seeking to catch Him in something He might say, [8]that they might accuse Him.

Beware of Hypocrisy

12 In [a]the meantime, when an innumerable multitude of people had gathered together, so that they trampled one another, He began to say to His disciples first *of all,* [b]"Beware of the [1]leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. 2 [c]For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known. 3 Therefore whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken in the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops.

Jesus Teaches the Fear of God

4 [d]"And I say to you, [e]My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. 5 But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, [f]fear Him!

6 "Are not five sparrows sold for two [2]copper coins? And [g]not one of them is forgotten before God. 7 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

Confess Christ Before Men

8 [h]"Also I say to you, whoever confesses Me [i]before men, him the Son of Man also will confess before the angels of God. 9 But he who [j]denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God.

10 "And [k]anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but to him who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven.

11 [l]"Now when they bring you to the synagogues and magistrates and authorities, do not worry about how or what you should answer, or what you should say. 12 For the Holy Spirit will [m]teach you in that very hour what you ought to say."

The Parable of the Rich Fool

13 Then one from the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."

14 But He said to him, [n]"Man, who made Me a judge or an arbitrator over you?" 15 And He said to them, [o]"Take heed and beware of [3]covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses."

51 [r]Gen. 4:8; 2 Chr. 36:16 [s]2 Chr. 24:20, 21

52 [t]Matt. 23:13

53 [6]NU *And when He left there*

54 [u]Mark 12:13 [7]NU omits *and seeking* [8]NU omits *that they might accuse Him*

CHAPTER 12

1 [a]Matt. 16:6; Mark 8:15 [b]Matt. 16:12; Luke 11:39 [1]*yeast*

2 [c]Matt. 10:26; Mark 4:22; Luke 8:17; [1 Cor. 4:5]

4 [d]Is. 51:7, 8, 12, 13; Jer. 1:8; Matt. 10:28 [e][John 15:13–15]

5 [f]Ps. 119:120

6 [g]Matt. 6:26 [2]Gr. *assarion,* a coin worth about 1/16 of a denarius

8 [h]1 Sam. 2:30; Matt. 10:32; [Mark 8:38; Rom. 10:9; 2 Tim. 2:12; 1 John 2:23] [i]Ps. 119:46

9 [j]Matt. 10:33; [Mark 8:38; 2 Tim. 2:12]

10 [k][Matt. 12:31, 32; Mark 3:28; 1 John 5:16]

11 [l]Matt. 6:25; 10:19; Mark 13:11

12 [m][John 14:26]

14 [n][John 18:36]

15 [o][1 Tim. 6:6–10] [3]NU *all covetousness*

in the guilt for the deaths of righteous men. Abel was the first person murdered (Gen. 4:8), while Zechariah's murder is recorded in 2 Chr. 24:21–22 (see Matt. 23:35 note).

■ **11:52 taken away the key of knowledge.** Through their traditional interpretation of the law, the "lawyers" had made it impossible for ordinary people to understand the true meaning of the law. The Pharisees and lawyers themselves also used their traditions to evade the demands of the law (cf. Mark 7:5–13).

■ **12:1 innumerable.** The word strictly means "ten thousands" but was used generally of any large number. Jesus' teaching was addressed primarily to His disciples, though the crowds would also have heard and profited.

leaven. People were familiar with the way a little leaven slowly permeates and transforms a large mass of dough. Jesus elsewhere uses the figure of leaven to illustrate the hidden working of God's kingdom (13:21), but here it describes the negative influence of the Pharisees (Mark 8:15 note).

■ **12:2, 3** On Judgment Day everything will be brought into the open; all hypocrisy will be unmasked.

■ **12:3 inner rooms.** Mud brick walls could be dug through, so storerooms where valuables could be kept were well away from outside walls (and therefore secret).

■ **12:5 power to cast into hell.** Only God has this power. The word translated "hell" here is *Gehenna,* the place of final punishment (not *Hades,* a general word for the place of all the dead). *Gehenna* derives from Hebrew words meaning "valley of Hinnom," located outside Jerusalem (Matt. 5:22 note).

■ **12:6 five sparrows sold for two copper coins.** The "copper coins" are the assarion, equal to one-sixteenth of a denarius (a typical day's wage). Five sparrows sold for roughly an hour's pay, but God remembers them all.

■ **12:10** Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit attributes to Satan the work of the Holy Spirit through Christ in the face of overwhelming moral evidence to the contrary. Such deliberate rejection of the truth is a decisive rejection of the One (the Holy Spirit) who can bring a person to repentance and faith; such sin makes forgiveness impossible. See "The Unpardonable Sin" at Mark 3:29.

■ **12:13** The rule for inheritance was given in Deut. 21:17, and cases in dispute were often settled by rabbis. This man clearly wanted only a decision in his favor; he was not seeking a just arbitration.

19 [p]Eccl. 11:9 [q][Eccl. 2:24; 3:13; 5:18; 8:15]
20 [r]Ps. 52:7 [s]Ps. 39:6
21 [t][James 2:5; 5:1–5]
22 [u]Matt. 6:25–33
24 [v]Job 38:41
26 [4]*do you worry*
27 [w]1 Kin. 10:4–7 [5]*clothed*
28 [x]Matt. 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; 16:8
30 [y]Matt. 6:31, 32
31 [z]Matt. 6:33 [6]NU *His kingdom, and these things*
32 [a][Matt. 11:25, 26]
33 [b]Matt. 19:21 [c]Luke 11:41 [d]Matt. 6:20
35 [e][1 Pet. 1:13] [f][Matt. 25:1–13]
37 [g]Matt. 24:46
39 [h]Rev. 3:3; 16:15 [7]NU *not have allowed*
40 [i]Mark 13:33
42 [j]Matt. 24:45, 46; 25:21 [8]*at the right time*
44 [k]Matt. 24:47; 25:21

16 Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. 17 And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' 18 So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, [p]"Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; [q]eat, drink, *and* be merry." ' 20 But God said to him, 'Fool! This night [r]your soul will be required of you; [s]then whose will those things be which you have provided?'

21 "So *is* he who lays up treasure for himself, [t]and is not rich toward God."

Do Not Worry

22 Then He said to His disciples, "Therefore I say to you, [u]do not worry about your life, what you will eat; nor about the body, what you will put on. 23 Life is more than food, and the body *is more* than clothing. 24 Consider the ravens, for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and [v]God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds? 25 And which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? 26 If you then are not able to do *the* least, why [4]are you anxious for the rest? 27 Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, even [w]Solomon in all his glory was not [5]arrayed like one of these. 28 If then God so clothes the grass, which today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more *will He clothe* you, O *you* of [x]little faith?

29 "And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind. 30 For all these things the nations of the world seek after, and your Father [y]knows that you need these things. 31 [z]But seek [6]the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you.

32 "Do not fear, little flock, for [a]it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. 33 [b]Sell what you have and give [c]alms; [d]provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches nor moth destroys. 34 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The Faithful Servant and the Evil Servant

35 [e]"Let your waist be girded and [f]*your* lamps burning; 36 and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately. 37 [g]Blessed *are* those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down *to eat,* and will come and serve them. 38 And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find *them* so, blessed are those servants. 39 [h]But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would [7]have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. 40 [i]Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.'

41 Then Peter said to Him, "Lord, do You speak this parable *only* to us, or to all *people?*"

42 And the Lord said, [j]"Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom *his* master will make ruler over his household, to give *them their* portion of food [8]in due season? 43 Blessed *is* that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. 44 [k]Truly, I say to you that he

■ **12:22–34** Jesus provides four weighty arguments against anxiety. First, concern for worldly goods is foolish because life itself is more important (v. 23). Second, God will take care of His own, just as He cares for the birds of the air (v. 24). Third, anxiety accomplishes nothing (vv. 25, 26). Finally, as heirs of the inexhaustible riches of the kingdom of God, believers should not worry about earthly details (vv. 32, 33). Jesus calls His followers to order their priorities correctly by focusing their hearts on the kingdom (v. 34).

■ **12:25 one cubit to his stature.** Or, "make his life any longer."

■ **12:27 lilies.** It is not certain what precise flower is meant.

Solomon. Solomon was proverbial for his wealth and splendor.

■ **12:31 seek the kingdom.** The disciples were already in the kingdom. Therefore they should concentrate their energies on the interests of that kingdom.

■ **12:33 Sell what you have and give alms.** Central to this verse is the contrast between earthly goods that are perishable and a source of anxiety, and the treasures of the kingdom of God that are a lasting source of peace. Some of Jesus' followers had at least moderate wealth (10:38; John 19:27), and He is not demanding that all His disciples be poor. But they must be generous and not set their hearts on earthly possessions (v. 34).

■ **12:35 girded.** That is, to be ready for service. Long robes hindered free movement and were kept above the knees with a belt when necessary.

■ **12:37 gird himself.** This is a reversal of roles, the master taking the place of the servant (cf. 22:27).

■ **12:38 second watch, or . . . third.** The Jews divided the night into three watches (Judg. 7:19), and the Romans into four. Jesus uses the Jewish division here. These servants watch for their master throughout the night.

■ **12:42 faithful and wise steward.** The steward was a slave put in charge of the whole estate by the owner. The owner was free from the burden of administration and the steward had considerable authority.

■ **12:44 all that he has.** The reward of faithful service is the opportunity to perform higher service.

will make him ruler over all that he has. 45[l]But if that servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat the male and female servants, and to eat and drink and be drunk, 46the master of that servant will come on a [m]day when he is not looking for *him,* and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two and appoint *him* his portion with the unbelievers. 47And [n]that servant who [o]knew his master's will, and did not prepare *himself* or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many *stripes.* 48[p]But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.

Christ Brings Division

49[q]"I came to send fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! 50But [r]I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how distressed I am till it is [s]accomplished! 51[t]Do *you* suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, [u]but rather division. 52[v]For from now on five in one house will be divided: three against two, and two against three. 53[w]Father will be divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."

Discern the Time

54Then He also said to the multitudes, [x]"Whenever *you see* a cloud rising out of the west, immediately you say, 'A shower is coming'; and so it is. 55And when you see the [y]south wind blow, you say, 'There will be hot weather'; and there is. 56Hypocrites! You can discern the face of the sky and of the earth, but how *is it* you do not discern [z]this time?

Make Peace with Your Adversary

57"Yes, and why, even of yourselves, do you not judge what is right? 58[a]When you go with your adversary to the magistrate, make every effort [b]along the way to settle with him, lest he drag you to the judge, the judge deliver you to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison. 59I tell you, you shall not depart from there till you have paid the very last mite."

Repent or Perish

13 There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had [l]mingled with their sacrifices. 2And Jesus answered and said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all *other* Galileans, because they suffered such things? 3I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. 4Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all *other* men who dwelt in Jerusalem? 5I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish."

The Parable of the Barren Fig Tree

6He also spoke this parable: [a]"A certain *man* had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. 7Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, 'Look, for

45 [l]Matt. 24:48; 2 Pet. 3:3, 4

46 [m]1 Thess. 5:3

47 [n]Num. 15:30; Deut. 25:2; [John 9:41; 15:22; Acts 17:30] [o][James 4:17]

48 [p][Lev. 5:17]; Num. 15:29; [1 Tim. 1:13]

49 [q]Luke 12:51

50 [r]Matt. 20:18, 22, 23; Mark 10:38 [s]John 12:27; 19:30

51 [t]Matt. 10:34–36 [u]Mic. 7:6; John 7:43; 9:16; 10:19; Acts 14:4

52 [v]Matt. 10:35; Mark 13:12

53 [w]Matt. 10:21, 36

54 [x]Matt. 16:2, 3

55 [y]Job 37:17

56 [z]Luke 19:41–44

58 [a]Prov. 25:8; Matt. 5:25, 26 [b][Ps. 32:6; Is. 55:6]

CHAPTER 13

1 [l]*mixed*

6 [a]Is. 5:2; Matt. 21:19

■ **12:45, 46** The punishment for failure to make proper use of opportunities for service is severe.

■ **12:47, 48** People are punished for failing to do right as well as for doing wrong. Ignorance can be blameworthy when there is the opportunity to know what is required. God makes His people's duty plain (Rom. 1:20; 2:14, 15).

■ **12:49 fire.** The fire of judgment.

■ **12:50 baptism.** Jesus' death is also a "baptism," another image that points to death (to "baptize" a city was to subject it to near total destruction). Liturgically, baptism came to symbolize death to an old way of life and rising to a new way. Jesus accepted His own death as the divine plan for bringing salvation to sinners.

accomplished. On the cross, Jesus spoke of the completion of His work (John 19:30).

■ **12:54–56** The people could discern that a west wind (from the Mediterranean) meant rain and a south wind (from the desert) meant heat. But they did not discern what God was doing in their midst.

■ **12:57–59** In legal matters, anyone with a bad case does well to secure an out-of-court settlement before the case comes to trial. Sinners should be reconciled to God now; they will perish if they wait until Judgment Day.

■ **13:1 Pilate.** To kill people in the act of worship is a grave offense. This incident, not recorded elsewhere, no doubt contributed to Pilate's reputation for cruelty.

■ **13:2** Disaster was commonly held to be the result of sin (John 9:1, 2), but Jesus denies that these Galileans were especially sinful.

■ **13:3 all likewise perish.** All are sinners, so Jesus calls on His hearers to repent—otherwise they will perish. The Galileans had had no time to repent at the time of their deaths, and Jesus' unrepentant hearers might also face deaths that would give them no time to prepare. See "Repentance" at Acts 26:20.

■ **13:4** This incident is unknown to us apart from this passage.

■ **13:6–9** A vineyard was fertile soil for a fig tree and "three years" points to an established tree. It was unlikely that it would ever bear fruit, but it was given one more chance. That God does not punish sinners immediately does not mean that He approves of their sin. Rather, His patience shows He is merciful and they should repent while there is time.

three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it [2]use up the ground?' [8] But he answered and said to him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize *it.* [9] [3]And if it bears fruit, *well.* But if not, after that you can [b]cut it down.' "

A Spirit of Infirmity

[10] Now He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. [11] And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way [4]raise *herself* up. [12] But when Jesus saw her, He called *her* to *Him* and said to her, "Woman, you are loosed from your [c]infirmity." [13] [d]And He laid *His* hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

[14] But the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because Jesus had [e]healed on the Sabbath; and he said to the crowd, [f]"There are six days on which men ought to work; therefore come and be healed on them, and [g]not on the Sabbath day."

[15] The Lord then answered him and said, [5]"Hypocrite! [h]Does not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or donkey from the stall, and lead *it* away to water it? [16] So ought not this woman, [i]being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound—think of it—for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath?" [17] And when He said these things, all His adversaries were put to shame; and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were [j]done by Him.

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

[18] [k]Then He said, "What is the kingdom of God like? And to what shall I compare it? [19] It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and put in his garden; and it grew and became a [6]large tree, and the birds of the air nested in its branches."

The Parable of the Leaven

[20] And again He said, "To what shall I liken the kingdom of God? [21] It is like [7]leaven, which a woman took and hid in three [l]measures[8] of meal till it was all leavened."

The Narrow Way

[22] [m]And He went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. [23] Then one said to Him, "Lord, are there [n]few who are saved?"

And He said to them, [24] [o]"Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for [p]many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. [25] [q]When once the Master of the house has risen up and [r]shut the door, and you begin to stand outside and knock at the door, saying, [s]'Lord, Lord, open for us,' and He will answer and say to you, [t]'I do not know you, where you are from,' [26] then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in Your presence, and You taught in our streets.' [27] [u]But He will say, 'I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. [v]Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.' [28] [w]There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, [x]when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out. [29] They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down in the

7 [2]*waste*

9 [b][John 15:2] [3]NU *And if it bears fruit after that, well. But if not, you can*

11 [4]*straighten up*

12 [c]Luke 7:21; 8:2

13 [d]Mark 16:18; Acts 9:17

14 [e][Luke 6:6–11; 14:1–6]; John 5:16 [f]Ex. 20:9; 23:12 [g]Matt. 12:10; Mark 3:2; Luke 6:7; 14:3

15 [h][Matt. 7:5; 23:13]; Luke 14:5 [5]NU, M *Hypocrites*

16 [i]Luke 19:9

17 [j]Mark 5:19, 20

18 [k]Matt. 13:31, 32; Mark 4:30–32

19 [6]NU omits *large*

21 [l]Matt. 13:33 [7]*yeast* [8]Gr. *sata,* same as Heb. *seah;* approximately 2 pecks in all

22 [m]Matt. 9:35; Mark 6:6

23 [n][Matt. 7:14; 20:16]

24 [o][Matt. 7:13] [p][John 7:34; 8:21; 13:33; Rom. 9:31]

25 [q][Ps. 32:6]; Is. 55:6 [r]Matt. 25:10; Rev. 22:11 [s]Luke 6:46 [t]Matt. 7:23; 25:12

27 [u][Matt. 7:23; 25:41] [v]Ps. 6:8; [Matt. 25:41]; Titus 1:16

28 [w]Matt. 8:12; 13:42; 24:51 [x]Matt. 8:11

■ **13:10 on the Sabbath.** The right use of the Sabbath was a continuing dispute between Jesus and His enemies.

■ **13:11–13** The woman did not ask for healing. Jesus took the initiative.

■ **13:14 ruler of the synagogue.** See note on 8:41.

■ **13:15 Hypocrite.** The Jews cared for their animals and looked after them on the Sabbath as on other days, but this ruler of the synagogue objects to Jesus' act of compassion for this woman.

■ **13:21 three measures.** A large amount; Luke says "three *sata*" (see text note), the amount used by Sarah (Gen. 18:6).

■ **13:22** See note on 9:51. Luke presents Jesus making unhurried progress toward Jerusalem where the climax would be reached. On the way He continued to serve the people.

■ **13:23 few.** The Jews generally agreed that all Israel (except for a few especially sinful people) would be in the number of the saved.

■ **13:24 Strive.** This does not mean that salvation is by works; it is a strong way of saying that people must be in earnest about salvation.

narrow gate. Jesus does not say what the narrow gate is, but clearly He is speaking of the way into salvation.

■ **13:25 shut the door.** There is a limit to the offer of salvation; it must be accepted while the offer is present.

I do not know you. See Matt. 7:23; 25:12.

■ **13:26, 27** To have had social fellowship with Jesus and to have heard His teaching were not enough.

■ **13:28 weeping . . . gnashing.** There will be weeping in grief and gnashing of teeth in anger as they see the great ones with whom they had always classed themselves in bliss, while they themselves are thrown out.

■ **13:29 east . . . south.** The saved will be people from all over the world.

sit down. This imagery of the messianic banquet describes the great joy there will be in the kingdom (14:15; Rev. 19:9). There will be a complete reversal of many ideas strongly held among humankind (v. 30).

kingdom of God. 30[y]And indeed there are last who will be first, and there are first who will be last."

31[9]On that very day some Pharisees came, saying to Him, "Get out and depart from here, for Herod wants to kill You."

32 And He said to them, "Go, tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third *day* [z]I shall be [1]perfected.' 33 Nevertheless I must journey today, tomorrow, and the *day* following; for it cannot be that a prophet should perish outside of Jerusalem.

Jesus Laments over Jerusalem

34[a]"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen *gathers* her brood under *her* wings, but you were not willing! 35 See! [b]Your house is left to you desolate; and [2]assuredly, I say to you, you shall not see Me until *the time* comes when you say, [c]*'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'*"

A Man with Dropsy Healed on the Sabbath

14 Now it happened, as He went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath, that they watched Him closely. 2 And behold, there was a certain man before Him who had dropsy. 3 And Jesus, answering, spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, [a]"Is it lawful to heal on the [1]Sabbath?"

4 But they kept silent. And He took *him* and healed him, and let him go. 5 Then He answered them, saying, [b]"Which of you, having a [2]donkey or an ox that has fallen into a pit, will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day?" 6 And they could not answer Him regarding these things.

Take the Lowly Place

7 So He told a parable to those who were invited, when He noted how they chose the best places, saying to them: 8 "When you are invited by anyone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in the best place, lest one more honorable than you be invited by him; 9 and he who invited you and him come and say to you, 'Give place to this man,' and then you begin with shame to take the lowest place. 10[c]But when you are invited, go and sit down in the lowest place, so that when he who invited you comes he may say to you, 'Friend, go up higher.' Then you will have glory in the presence of those who sit at the table with you. 11[d]For whoever exalts himself will be [3]humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

12 Then He also said to him who invited Him, "When you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid. 13 But when you give a feast, invite [e]*the* poor, *the* [4]maimed, *the* lame, *the* blind. 14 And you will be [f]blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just."

30 [y][Matt. 19:30; 20:16]; Mark 10:31

31 [9]NU *In that very hour*

32 [z]Luke 24:46; Acts 10:40; 1 Cor. 15:4; [Heb. 2:10; 5:9; 7:28] [1]Resurrected

34 [a]Matt. 23:37–39; 2 Chr. 24:20, 21; 36:15, 16

35 [b]Lev. 26:31, 32; Ps. 69:25; Is. 1:7; Jer. 22:5; Dan. 9:27; Mic. 3:12 [c]Ps. 118:26; Matt. 21:9; Mark 11:10; Luke 19:38; John 12:13 [2]NU, M omit *assuredly*

CHAPTER 14

3 [a]Matt. 12:10 [1]NU adds *or not*

5 [b][Ex. 23:5; Deut. 22:4]; Luke 13:15 [2]NU, M *son*

10 [c]Prov. 25:6, 7

11 [d]Job 22:29; Ps. 18:27; Prov. 29:23; Matt. 23:12; Luke 18:14; James 4:6; [1 Pet. 5:5] [3]*put down*

13 [e]Neh. 8:10, 12 [4]*crippled*

14 [f][Matt. 25:34–40]

■ **13:31 depart from here.** Jesus may have been in Perea where Herod ruled. The Pharisees preferred to see Him in Judea where they had more influence.

■ **13:32 that fox.** The Jews used the metaphor of a "fox" to mean worthless and sly. Jesus is unmoved by Herod's threats and says He will continue with His ministry. There is a limit to His time as the reference to the third day shows.

■ **13:33 must.** There was a compelling divine necessity to what Jesus was doing. Notice also the further reference to the certainty that Jerusalem was the place where He would die (cf. 9:31).

■ **13:34, 35** This lament over the city was probably uttered as Jesus reached the city (Matt. 23:37, 38), and is included here by Luke because of its relevance to what Jesus has just said.

■ **13:34 How often.** Jesus must have been in Jerusalem more often than the Synoptic Gospels explicitly report; the Gospel of John records several visits.

■ **13:35 Your house.** This may mean the temple or the city as a whole. **desolate.** The inevitable result of faithlessness.

when you say. See note on Matt. 23:39.

■ **14:1 watched Him closely.** Evidently to detect any violation of Sabbath observance.

■ **14:2 dropsy.** A disease in which fluid collected in the cavities of the body (mentioned only here in the New Testament).

■ **14:3 Is it lawful.** The law of Moses did not forbid healing on the Sabbath, but the "traditions of the elders" (Mark 2:16 note) did prohibit medical treatment unless the condition was life threatening.

■ **14:5 a donkey or an ox.** See text note. The Jews would pull a child or an animal out of a well on the Sabbath, though technically this was work. Their acts in an emergency showed that deeds of mercy were lawful on the Sabbath, and Jesus had performed a deed of mercy.

■ **14:10** Jesus is not giving worldly advice but advocating genuine humility, as v. 11 shows (cf. 18:14; Matt. 23:12).

15 [g]Rev. 19:9 [5]M *dinner*
16 [h]Matt. 22:2–14
17 [i]Prov. 9:2, 5
21 [6]*crippled*
24 [j][Matt. 21:43; 22:8; Acts 13:46]
26 [k]Deut. 13:6; 33:9; Matt. 10:37 [l]Rom. 9:13 [m]Rev. 12:11
27 [n]Matt. 16:24; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23; [2 Tim. 3:12]
28 [o]Prov. 24:27
33 [p]Matt. 19:27
34 [q]Matt. 5:13; [Mark 9:50]
35 [7]*rubbish heap*

CHAPTER 15

1 [a][Matt. 9:10–13]
2 [b]Acts 11:3; Gal. 2:12 [1]*welcomes*
4 [c]Matt. 18:12–14; 1 Pet. 2:25
6 [d][Rom. 12:15] [e][Luke 19:10; 1 Pet. 2:10, 25]

The Parable of the Great Supper

15 Now when one of those who sat at the table with Him heard these things, he said to Him, [g]"Blessed *is* he who shall eat [5]bread in the kingdom of God!"

16 [h]Then He said to him, "A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, 17 and [i]sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.' 18 But they all with one *accord* began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.' 19 And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.' 20 Still another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' 21 So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here *the* poor and *the* [6]maimed and *the* lame and *the* blind.' 22 And the servant said, 'Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.' 23 Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel *them* to come in, that my house may be filled. 24 For I say to you [j]that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper.' "

Leaving All to Follow Christ

25 Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, 26 [k]"If anyone comes to Me [l]and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, [m]yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. 27 And [n]whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. 28 For [o]which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has *enough* to finish *it*— 29 lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see *it* begin to mock him, 30 saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' 31 Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? 32 Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. 33 So likewise, whoever of you [p]does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.

Tasteless Salt Is Worthless

34 [q]"Salt *is* good; but if the salt has lost its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? 35 It is neither fit for the land nor for the [7]dunghill, *but* men throw it out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

The Parable of the Lost Sheep

15 Then [a]all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. 2 And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, "This Man [1]receives sinners [b]and eats with them." 3 So He spoke this parable to them, saying:

4 [c]"What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? 5 And when he has found *it,* he lays *it* on his shoulders, rejoicing. 6 And when he comes home, he calls together *his* friends and neighbors, saying to them, [d]'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep [e]which

■ **14:15 Blessed is he.** A pious and conventional utterance, perhaps meant to change the subject.

■ **14:16, 17** Evidently those invited accepted the invitation; none is said to have declined. A second invitation when all was ready was customary (cf. Esth. 5:8; 6:14).

■ **14:18–20** The excuses are transparently dishonest. No one buys a field or oxen without prior inspection, and if anyone did there was no hurry—the field and the oxen would be there tomorrow. The man who had married might cite Deut. 24:5, but that freed a man from military service, not social contacts.

■ **14:21–24** This parable is a prophecy of the extension of the gospel to those the Pharisees thought unworthy. The "poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind" (v. 21) represent the despised Jews who were not able to observe the traditional laws of ritual purity (sometimes called "the people of the land"), while those outside the city along the "highways and hedges" (v. 23) represent the Gentiles. The parable concludes with a warning to the elite of Israel who reject the Messiah that they will not be given a second chance.

■ **14:26 hate.** This means to love less (cf. Gen. 29:31, 33; Deut. 21:15–17, where "unloved" translates a word meaning "hated"). Discipleship means loving the Master so much that all other loves are hatred by comparison.

■ **14:27 bear his cross.** See note on 9:23–25.

■ **14:28** Calculating the cost is important before undertaking any serious project. The "tower" could be a watch tower or a farm building. That one must "sit down" points to a careful and unhurried process.

■ **14:34 salt.** Salt was a flavoring agent and a preservative. The salt in use at that time was far from pure and it was possible for the sodium chloride to leach out of it, leaving a residue that was useless.

■ **15:1 tax collectors.** See note on 3:12.

sinners. People who were immoral or who followed occupations that the scribes held to be incompatible with keeping God's law. A rabbinic rule stated that "one must not associate with an ungodly man," and the rabbis would not even teach such a person. Notice that ch. 14 ends with "let him hear" and ch. 15 begins with these "sinners" gathering around to hear Jesus.

■ **15:3** The rabbis taught that God would welcome a penitent sinner, but these parables teach that God seeks out the sinner.

was lost!' [7] I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents *f*than over ninety-nine *2*just persons who *g*need no repentance.

The Parable of the Lost Coin

[8] "Or what woman, having ten silver *3*coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds *it?* [9] And when she has found *it,* she calls *her* friends and neighbors together, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost!' [10] Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

The Parable of the Lost Son

[11] Then He said: "A certain man had two sons. [12] And the younger of them said to *his* father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls *to me.*' So he divided to them *h*his livelihood. [13] And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with *4*prodigal living. [14] But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. [15] Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. [16] And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the *5*pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him *anything.*

[17] "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! [18] I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, *i*I have sinned against heaven and before you, [19] and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants." '

[20] "And he arose and came to his father. But *j*when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. [21] And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven *k*and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

[22] "But the father said to his servants, *6*'Bring out the best robe and put *it* on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on *his* feet. [23] And bring the fatted calf here and kill *it,* and let us eat and be merry; [24] *l*for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry.

[25] "Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. [26] So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. [27] And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.'

[28] "But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. [29] So he answered and said to *his* father, 'Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. [30] But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.'

[31] "And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. [32] It was

7 *f*[Luke 5:32] *g*[Mark 2:17] *2*upright

8 *3*Gr. *drachma,* a valuable coin often worn in a ten-piece garland by married women

12 *h*Mark 12:44

13 *4*wasteful

16 *5*carob pods

18 *i*Ex. 9:27; 10:16; Num. 22:34; Josh. 7:20; 1 Sam. 15:24, 30; 26:21; 2 Sam. 12:13; 24:10, 17; Ps. 51:4; Matt. 27:4

20 *j*[Jer. 3:12]; Matt. 9:36; [Acts 2:39; Eph. 2:13, 17]

21 *k*Ps. 51:4

22 *6*NU *Quickly bring*

24 *l*Matt. 8:22; Luke 9:60; 15:32; Rom. 11:15; [Eph. 2:1, 5; 5:14; Col. 2:13; 1 Tim. 5:6]

■ **15:8 silver coins.** The drachma (occurs only here in the New Testament) was the Greek equivalent of the Roman denarius, about a day's wage for a laborer. The ten coins may have been the woman's life savings, or they may have been strung together as a headdress (see text note).

light a lamp. Houses had no windows or perhaps small ones, so a lamp was needed even in the daytime.

■ **15:11–32** The parable of the prodigal son could be called the "parable of the waiting father." While the repentance of the son is important to the parable, the father's willingness to forgive and his unexpected actions (v. 20 note, 22–23) are a striking illustration of the fatherly love of God for wayward human beings.

■ **15:11, 12** The firstborn son was entitled to two-thirds of his father's property (Deut. 21:17). Sometimes the father would give the capital (which meant that he could not dispose of it himself, though the son could sell it) and retain the income (if the son sold the capital, the buyer could not take possession until the father's death). But to give the capital to one of the sons as in this parable was unusual.

■ **15:15** Swine were unclean (Lev. 11:7); no Jew would take this job willingly.

■ **15:20** The father was apparently watching intently for his son's return. It was undignified for an older man to lift up his robes and run.

■ **15:22, 23** The father's actions indicate complete forgiveness and restoration of relationship. The "best robe" is a mark of distinction and the ring signifies authority (Gen. 41:42; Esth. 3:10; 8:2). Because slaves did not wear shoes, the sandals point to the status of a free man. The fatted calf was reserved for special occasions.

■ **15:25** The older son's attitude illustrates the judgmental spirit of the Pharisees who were annoyed at the presence of "sinners" (vv. 1–3).

■ **15:28** As with the younger son (v. 20), the father takes the initiative in restoring the relationship. The parable as a whole points to the sovereign love of God who actively seeks out unworthy sinners, those who do not seek Him (19:10).

■ **15:29 serving you.** This statement indicates that the older brother viewed his relationship with the father as the reward for meritorious behavior. Like the father's loving response to the undeserving younger son, salvation is not a reward for good works but entirely the gracious gift of God (Eph. 2:8, 9).

■ **15:31 all that I have is yours.** The property settlement remains unchanged. The attitude of the older son (v. 29 note) has caused him to lose sight of the relationship he does have with his father.

32 [m]Luke 15:24

CHAPTER 16

1 [1]*squandering*

2 [a][Rom. 14:12]

6 [2]Gr. *batos,* same as Heb. *bath;* 8 or 9 gallons each

7 [3]Gr. *koros,* same as Heb. *kor;* 10 or 12 bushels each

8 [b][Eph. 5:8]

9 [c]Dan. 4:27 [4]Lit., in Aram., *wealth* [5]NU *it fails*

10 [d]Matt. 25:21

12 [e][1 Pet. 1:3, 4]

13 [f]Matt. 6:24

14 [g]Matt. 23:14 [6]Lit. *turned up their nose at*

15 [h]Luke 10:29 [i][Matt. 6:2, 5, 16] [j]Ps. 7:9 [k]1 Sam. 16:7

16 [l]Matt. 3:1–12; 4:17; 11:12, 13

17 [m]Is. 40:8; 51:6 [7]The smallest stroke in a Heb. letter

18 [n]1 Cor. 7:10, 11

right that we should make merry and be glad, [m]for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.' "

The Parable of the Unjust Steward

16 He also said to His disciples: "There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was [1]wasting his goods. [2]So he called him and said to him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an [a]account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.'

[3]"Then the steward said within himself, 'What shall I do? For my master is taking the stewardship away from me. I cannot dig; I am ashamed to beg. [4]I have resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.'

[5]"So he called every one of his master's debtors to *him,* and said to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' [6]And he said, 'A hundred [2]measures of oil.' So he said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.' [7]Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' So he said, 'A hundred [3]measures of wheat.' And he said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.' [8]So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than [b]the sons of light.

[9]"And I say to you, [c]make friends for yourselves by unrighteous [4]mammon, that when [5]you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home. [10][d]He who *is* faithful in *what is* least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in *what is* least is unjust also in much. [11]Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true *riches?* [12]And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your [e]own?

[13][f]"No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."

The Law, the Prophets, and the Kingdom

[14]Now the Pharisees, [g]who were lovers of money, also heard all these things, and they [6]derided Him. [15]And He said to them, "You are those who [h]justify yourselves [i]before men, but [j]God knows your hearts. For [k]what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.

[16][l]"The law and the prophets *were* until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it. [17][m]And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one [7]tittle of the law to fail.

[18][n]"Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced from *her* husband commits adultery.

■ **16:1 steward.** The man who ran the estate, freeing the owner from being involved in every detail. Because he was not closely supervised it was easy for him to be dishonest or lazy.

■ **16:6** The steward may simply have been dishonest, but Jews were forbidden to take usury and one way around the regulation was to overcharge. The man might have borrowed four hundred gallons of oil and had the bill made out for eight hundred (see text note), the extra being the equivalent of a high rate of interest. By significantly reducing the amount of interest the debtor owed, the steward would have obliged the debtor to assist him personally (v. 4), at least for a time, without diminishing the principal owed to his own master.

■ **16:8** With the original bills destroyed, the owner was in an awkward position. It would be difficult to establish his claim to the full amount, which included the interest. His praise of the shrewdness of his steward was a recognition that he had been outwitted. Jesus uses the parable to illustrate that worldly people often use what they have to further their own worldly ends more wisely than the people of the light do to further the quite different aims of God's kingdom.

■ **16:9** Jesus' disciples are to use what wealth they have, not for selfish purposes, but to "make friends" (alms for the poor are probably in view here).

receive you. The text does not explicitly specify who is doing the receiving. Possibilities include the poor who have been helped in this life, or perhaps God Himself. In either case, salvation by works is not being taught (15:29 note). The loving help given to others in this life is a sign of genuine discipleship and salvation already enjoyed rather than a meritorious ground of salvation.

■ **16:11 true riches.** Heavenly treasures.

■ **16:12** If "what is your own" is the "true riches" mentioned in v. 11, then Jesus is saying that faithfulness as a steward in this life determines one's reward in the heavenly kingdom (Matt. 25:34).

■ **16:13 servant.** A household slave.

■ **16:16 The law and the prophets.** A reference to the entire Old Testament.

were until John. Luke here indicates that the ministry of John the Baptist signaled the great turning point of redemptive history (Matt. 11:11 note).

everyone is pressing into it. A difficult statement to translate and interpret. Some suggest that Jesus is exhorting His followers by describing the zeal necessary for entering the kingdom (13:24). Others suggest that "pressing" is meant in a negative sense, depicting hostile powers fighting against the kingdom (Matt. 11:12 note).

■ **16:17 tittle.** A tiny projection on some Hebrew letters; it was the smallest part of a letter. The entire law comes from God, and it is as sure as its Author.

■ **16:18** Jewish men at that time could divorce their wives easily and for slight cause. Jesus had a higher view of marriage; the law's provision for divorce (Deut. 24:1–4) was because of hardness of heart (Mark 10:5). He sees such casual divorce as causing adultery (Matt. 5:31, 32; 19:9). See "Marriage and Divorce" at Mal. 2:16.

The Rich Man and Lazarus

19 "There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and [s]fared sumptuously every day. 20 But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, 21 desiring to be fed with [g]the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to [o]Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. 23 And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

24 "Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and [p]cool my tongue; for I [q]am tormented in this flame.' 25 But Abraham said, 'Son, [r]remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. 26 And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.'

27 "Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, 28 for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' 29 Abraham said to him, [s]'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' 30 And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' 31 But he said to him, [t]'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, [u]neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.' "

Jesus Warns of Offenses

17 Then He said to the disciples, [a]"It is impossible that no [1]offenses should come, but [b]woe *to him* through whom they do come! 2 It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should [2]offend one of these little ones. 3 Take heed to yourselves. [c]If your brother sins [3]against you, [d]rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. 4 And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns [4]to you, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him."

Faith and Duty

5 And the apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith."

6 [e]So the Lord said, "If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you. 7 And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and sit down to eat'? 8 But will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself [f]and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink'? 9 Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded [5]him? I think not. 10 So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are [g]unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.' "

19 [s]*lived in luxury*
21 [g]NU *what fell*
22 [o]Matt. 8:11
24 [p]Zech. 14:12 [q][Mark 9:42–48]
25 [r]Luke 6:24
29 [s]Acts 15:21; 17:11
31 [t][John 5:46] [u]John 12:10, 11

CHAPTER 17

1 [a][1 Cor. 11:19] [b][2 Thess. 1:6] [1]*stumbling blocks*
2 [2]*cause one of these little ones to stumble*
3 [c][Matt. 18:15, 21] [d][Prov. 17:10] [3]NU omits *against you*
4 [4]M omits *to you*
6 [e][Mark 9:23; 11:23]
8 [f][Luke 12:37]
9 [5]NU omits the rest of v. 9; M omits *him*
10 [g]Rom. 3:12; 11:35

■ **16:19 a certain rich man.** This man is sometimes called "Dives," from the Latin word meaning "rich."

purple and fine linen. The expensive clothing of the rich. Purple would be used for the outer garment and linen for the undergarment.

■ **16:20 Lazarus.** The only character given a name in Jesus' parables.

■ **16:22** Jesus says nothing about the religious condition of either, but it is implied that Lazarus was right with God whereas the rich man was not.

Abraham's bosom. The image of "bosom" relates to being the guest of honor at a banquet (see John 13:23).

■ **16:23 in Hades.** The usual Greek name for the place of the dead. In the New Testament it is not used with reference to the righteous. Here it is clearly a place of torment. See "Hell" at Mark 9:43.

■ **16:24** Even in Hades the rich man is arrogant, thinking that he can have Lazarus sent to do his bidding.

■ **16:25** The address "Son" is tender, but it cannot alter the facts. A great chasm separates them, and there is a whole new order with a complete reversal of earthly values.

your good things. The rich man had received what he saw as good things. He could have chosen the things of God, but he preferred physical pleasures.

■ **16:27, 28** For the first time the rich man thinks of someone else, though he still remains within his own family. And he still assumes that Lazarus may be sent to do his bidding.

■ **16:29 Moses and the prophets.** A reference to the Old Testament as a whole. The rich man assumed that the appearance of Lazarus would be effective. Jesus is saying that they have the witness of the Word of God; having rejected it, they will not accept another.

■ **17:1 offenses.** The Greek word originally designated the bait stick of a trap; it came to mean anything that trips people up and traps them.

■ **17:2 little ones.** Children or humble believers (cf. 10:21), who are helpless apart from God's aid.

■ **17:5, 6** Apparently the apostles thought great faith would be needed to be so forgiving. Jesus points to what even small faith can bring about. More important than the quantity of faith is the object of faith—a great and powerful God.

11 *h*Luke 9:51, 52; John 4:4
12 *i*Lev. 13:46; Num. 5:2
14 *j*Lev. 13:1–59; 14:1–32; Matt. 8:4; Luke 5:14
15 *k*Luke 5:25; 18:43
16 *l*2 Kin. 17:24; Luke 9:52, 53; John 4:9
19 *m*Matt. 9:22; Mark 5:34; 10:52; Luke 7:50; 8:48; 18:42
21 *n*Luke 17:23 *o*[Rom. 14:17] *p*NU reverses *here* and *there* *q*in your midst

Ten Lepers Cleansed

11 Now it happened *h*as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. 12 Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, *i*who stood afar off. 13 And they lifted up *their* voices and said, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!"

14 So when He saw *them,* He said to them, *j*"Go, show yourselves to the priests." And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed.

15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice *k*glorified God, 16 and fell down on *his* face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a *l*Samaritan.

17 So Jesus answered and said, "Were there not ten cleansed? But where *are* the nine? 18 Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?" 19 *m*And He said to him, "Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well."

The Coming of the Kingdom

20 Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God does not come with observation; 21 *n*nor will they say, *p*'See here!' or 'See there!' For indeed, *o*the kingdom of God is *q*within you."

The Kingdom of God

The theme of the kingdom of God runs through both Testaments, focusing God's purpose for world history. In the Old Testament God declared that He would exercise His kingship (His sovereignty, Dan. 4:34, 35) by ruling over people's lives and circumstances through His chosen King, the Davidic Messiah (Is. 9:6, 7) in a golden age of blessing. This kingdom came with Jesus and is known wherever the lordship of Jesus is acknowledged. Jesus is enthroned in heaven as ruler over all things (Matt. 28:18; Col. 1:13), King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 17:14; 19:16). The golden age of blessing is an era of salvation from sin and fellowship with God leading to a future state of complete joy in a reconstructed universe. The kingdom is present in its beginnings but future in its fullness; in one sense here already, but in the richest sense still to come (Luke 11:20; 16:16; 17:21; 22:16, 18, 29, 30).

The kingdom came bringing mercy but also judgment, just as John the Baptist, its forerunner, had said (Matt. 3:1–12). Those who received Jesus' word and put their destiny in His hands found mercy, while those who would not were judged.

The task of the church is to make the invisible kingdom visible through faithful Christian living and witness. The gospel of Christ is still the gospel of the kingdom (Matt. 4:23; 24:14; Acts 20:25; 28:23, 31), the good news of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. The church makes its message credible by manifesting the reality of kingdom life.

The coming of the kingdom meant a new stage in God's redemptive program. All that was typical, temporary, and imperfect in the arrangements God made for Israel's communion with Him became things of the past. God's Israel, the seed of Abraham, was revealed as the company of believers in Jesus (Gal. 3:16, 26–29). The Spirit was poured out, and a new way of life became a reality for this world. A new internationalism of global church fellowship and global evangelism was born (Matt. 28:19, 20; Eph. 2:11–18; 3:6, 14, 15; Col. 1:28, 29; Rev. 5:9, 10; 7:9). □

■ **17:12 lepers.** People with leprosy were required by law to keep away from healthy people (Lev. 13:46); these came as close as they dared and called out loudly.

■ **17:14** See note on 5:14.

as they went. Jesus' command, when nothing had yet happened to the men, was a test of faith. They were healed as they went in obedience to Jesus' word.

■ **17:15, 16** Gratitude brought one man straight back, praising God for what had happened. That he was a Samaritan made this all the more interesting, for he would not be expected to show much gratitude to a Jewish healer.

■ **17:20–37** Jesus' answer to questions regarding the coming of the kingdom of God points to the dynamic character of that kingdom. In this passage, Jesus presents the kingdom both as present reality (v. 21) and as yet to be fully revealed (vv. 22–37). Jesus often presented the kingdom as a hidden and growing reality (Matt. 13:31–33), which is both present and future. In the earthly ministry of Jesus, the kingdom is already present (11:20), but the full reality of the kingdom is yet to be manifested (cf. 19:11). Christians are to pray for the full realization of God's kingdom (11:2). See theological note "The Kingdom of God."

■ **17:21 the kingdom of God is within you.** That is, the kingdom is present as an inner reality, something hidden in people's hearts (cf. Rom. 14:17). Translating "in your midst" (text note) would point to the presence of the kingdom in the person of Jesus.

22 Then He said to the disciples, [p]"The days will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see *it*. 23 [q]And they will say to you, [8]'Look here!' or 'Look there!' Do not go after *them* or follow *them*. 24 [r]For as the lightning that flashes out of one *part* under heaven shines to the other *part* under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in His day. 25 [s]But first He must suffer many things and be [t]rejected by this generation. 26 [u]And as it [v]was in the [w]days of [x]Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: 27 They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the [y]day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and [z]destroyed them all. 28 [a]Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; 29 but on [b]the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed *them* all. 30 Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man [c]is revealed.

31 "In that day, he [d]who is on the housetop, and his [9]goods *are* in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back. 32 [e]Remember Lot's wife. 33 [f]Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. 34 [g]I tell you, in that night there will be two [1]*men* in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left. 35 [h]Two *women* will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left. 36 [2]Two *men* will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left."

37 And they answered and said to Him, [i]"Where, Lord?"

So He said to them, "Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together."

The Parable of the Persistent Widow

18 Then He spoke a parable to them, that men [a]always ought to pray and not lose heart, 2 saying: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor [1]regard man. 3 Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, [2]'Get justice for me from my adversary.' 4 And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man, 5 [b]yet because this widow troubles me I will [3]avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.' "

6 Then the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said. 7 And [c]shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? 8 I tell you [d]that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"

The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector

9 Also He spoke this parable to some [e]who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 10 "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee [f]stood and prayed thus with himself, [g]'God, I thank You that I am not

22 [p]Matt. 9:15
23 [q]Matt. 24:23 [8]NU reverses *here* and *there*
24 [r]Matt. 24:27
25 [s]Mark 8:31; 9:31; 10:33 [t]Luke 9:22
26 [u]Matt. 24:37–39 [v][Gen. 6:5–7] [w][Gen. 6:8–13] [x]1 Pet. 3:20
27 [y]Gen. 7:1–16 [z]Gen. 7:19–23
28 [a]Gen. 19
29 [b]Gen. 19:16, 24, 29
30 [c][2 Thess. 1:7]
31 [d]Mark 13:15 [9]*possessions*
32 [e]Gen. 19:26
33 [f]Matt. 10:39; 16:25
34 [g][1 Thess. 4:17] [1]Or *people*
35 [h]Matt. 24:40, 41
36 [2]NU, M omit v. 36.
37 [i]Matt. 24:28

CHAPTER 18

1 [a]Luke 11:5–10
2 [1]*respect*
3 [2]*Avenge me on*
5 [b]Luke 11:8 [3]*vindicate*
7 [c]Rev. 6:10
8 [d]Heb. 10:37

9 [e]Luke 10:29; 16:15 11 [f]Ps. 135:2 [g]Is. 1:15; 58:2

■ **17:22 one of the days of the Son of Man.** A probable reference to the full manifestation of the kingdom at the Second Coming of Christ (vv. 26, 30). Christians long for the coming of Christ and for the peace and justice that the Second Coming will bring.

■ **17:23–25** Though some will seek after false messiahs (21:8, 9), the final coming of Christ will be so public that everybody will know.

■ **17:25 must suffer many things.** The word "must" is important; it indicates the sovereign purpose of God (Acts 4:27, 28).

■ **17:26–29** People in the times of Noah and Lot carried on with the normal life of this world (Jesus does not speak of their sins) and neglected their opportunity. Noah and Lot were sinners, but they heeded God's warning and were saved. They were not wholly taken up with the things of this life.

■ **17:32** Lot's wife came close to deliverance, but her backward look doomed her (Gen. 19:26).

■ **17:33** Jesus repeats the teaching of 9:24 that the selfish and self-affirming life means spiritual death.

■ **17:34, 35** Close proximity to some saved person will not help in the day of Christ's coming.

■ **17:37 Wherever the body is.** Jesus apparently uses a popular proverb to teach that just as dead bodies attract vultures, so the spiritually dead invite judgment.

■ **18:1–8** The preceding verses (17:22–37) and the reference to the Second Coming in v. 8 indicate that persistence in prayer for the coming of Christ and His final triumph over evil, even when that coming is seemingly delayed, is particularly in view (1 Cor. 16:22; Rev. 22:20). On the general principle concerning the importance of continued prayer in all matters, see 11:5–8 and notes.

■ **18:3** The widow was a helpless person with nothing but right on her side. She wanted justice, not revenge.

■ **18:5 weary me.** A picturesque expression, lit. "give me a black eye." The judge may be afraid that the woman will ruin his reputation by making him seem unable to help his clients, and compelling them to beg at his door.

■ **18:7** If even an "unjust" judge (v. 6) will do what is right, how much more God?

bears long. God will not keep putting them off like the judge in this parable; any delay will have a reason.

■ **18:8 speedily.** This is in God's time (2 Pet. 3:8), not ours.

will He really find faith. This does not mean that there will be no believers, but that faith will not be characteristic of all.

■ **18:10** Private prayer could be offered in the temple at any time of day, not only in formal services.

■ **18:11 stood.** A common posture for prayer.

like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' 13 And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise *his* eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other; [h]for everyone who exalts himself will be [4]humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Jesus Blesses Little Children

15 [i]Then they also brought infants to Him that He might touch them; but when the disciples saw *it,* they rebuked them. 16 But Jesus called them to *Him* and said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for [j]of such is the kingdom of God. 17 [k]Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it."

Jesus Counsels the Rich Young Ruler

18 [l]Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

19 So Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one *is* good but [m]One, *that is,* God. 20 You know the commandments: [n]*'Do not commit adultery,' 'Do not murder,' 'Do not steal,' 'Do not bear false witness,'* [o]*'Honor your father and your mother.'*"

21 And he said, "All [p]these things I have kept from my youth."

22 So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, "You still lack one thing. [q]Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

23 But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich.

With God All Things Are Possible

24 And when Jesus saw that he became very sorrowful, He said, [r]"How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! 25 For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

26 And those who heard it said, "Who then can be saved?"

27 But He said, [s]"The things which are impossible with men are possible with God."

28 [t]Then Peter said, "See, we have left [5]all and followed You."

29 So He said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, [u]there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, 30 [v]who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life."

Jesus a Third Time Predicts His Death and Resurrection

31 [w]Then He took the twelve aside and said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things [x]that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be [6]accomplished. 32 For [y]He will be delivered to the Gentiles and will be mocked and insulted and spit upon. 33 They will scourge *Him* and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again."

14 [h]Job 22:29; Matt. 23:12; Luke 14:11; [James 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5] [4]*put down*

15 [i]Matt. 19:13–15; Mark 10:13–16

16 [j]Matt. 18:3; 1 Cor. 14:20; 1 Pet. 2:2

17 [k]Matt. 18:3; 19:14; Mark 10:15

18 [l]Matt. 19:16–29; Mark 10:17–30

19 [m]Ps. 86:5; 119:68

20 [n]Ex. 20:12–16; Deut. 5:16–20; Mark 10:19; Rom. 13:9 [o]Eph. 6:2; Col. 3:20

21 [p]Phil. 3:6

22 [q]Matt. 6:19, 20; 19:21; [1 Tim. 6:19]

24 [r]Prov. 11:28; Matt. 19:23; Mark 10:23

27 [s]Job 42:2; Jer. 32:17; Zech. 8:6; Matt. 19:26; Luke 1:37

28 [t]Matt. 19:27 [5]NU *our own*

29 [u]Deut. 33:9

30 [v]Job 42:10

31 [w]Matt. 16:21; 17:22; 20:17; Mark 10:32; Luke 9:51 [x]Ps. 22; [Is. 53] [6]*fulfilled*

32 [y]Matt. 26:67; 27:2, 29, 41; Mark 14:65; 15:1, 19, 20, 31; Luke 23:1; John 18:28; Acts 3:13

■ **18:12 fast twice a week.** The only fast prescribed in the law of Moses was on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:29–31; 23:27), though voluntary fasting could accompany prayer (Ps. 35:13), penitence (1 Kin. 21:27), and mourning (2 Sam. 1:12). By the time of Christ, Jewish oral tradition had increased the number of fasts expected of the pious. Fasting can be a useful religious exercise (5:33–35; Acts 13:2, 3), but Jesus roundly condemned the practice when it was seen as a way of meriting God's favor (vv. 11, 12) or when it became an ostentatious display (Matt. 6:16–18; cf. Is. 58:1–6).

■ **18:13 raise his eyes to heaven.** Looking upward was usual while praying, but this man was too conscious of unworthiness to do this. He simply asked for mercy as he acknowledged his sin.

■ **18:14 justified.** The Pharisee relied on his own merits, not having discovered that no human righteousness is sufficient before a God who demands perfection (Matt. 5:48). The tax collector relied on God's mercy and found it.

■ **18:18 ruler.** A general term meaning someone from the upper classes.

Good Teacher. This was not a usual form of address in Judaism; it was mere flattery. The man assumed that his deeds would bring him to eternal life.

■ **18:19 Why do you call Me good.** Jesus challenges the ruler's flattery by reminding him that true goodness is an attribute of God alone. That his flattery was indeed insincere is shown by his failure to do what the "Good Teacher" taught him (v. 23).

■ **18:22 Sell all.** This challenge revealed that the young man had not really understood the commandments. When he was faced with the choice, it became clear that his possessions came before God.

■ **18:23–25** See note on Mark 10:25. The wealthy are tempted to rely on earthly things, together with those whose wealth is achievement in intellectual, artistic, or other fields. Great achievers often find it difficult to rely wholly on the mercy of God.

■ **18:26, 27** If the rich with all their advantages cannot easily be saved, who can be? The answer is that salvation, for rich or poor, is always the gift of God.

■ **18:28–30** Jesus' answer to Peter means that God's gifts surpass anything we can give up for Him. It does not mean that we can make sacrifices as a means of getting a better reward.

■ **18:31–34** In His predictions of the Passion (cf. 5:35; 9:22, 43–45; 12:50; 13:32, 33; 17:25), this is the first time Jesus speaks of being handed over to the Gentiles.

[z]But they understood none of these things; this saying was hidden from them, and they did not know the things which were spoken.

A Blind Man Receives His Sight

35 [a]Then it happened, as He was coming near Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the road begging. 36 And hearing a multitude passing by, he asked what it meant. 37 So they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. 38 And he cried out, saying, "Jesus, [b]Son of David, have mercy on me!"

39 Then those who went before warned him that he should be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

40 So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be brought to Him. And when he had come near, He asked him, 41 saying, "What do you want Me to do for you?"

He said, "Lord, that I may receive my sight."

42 Then Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; [c]your faith has made you well." 43 And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, [d]glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw *it,* gave praise to God.

Jesus Comes to Zacchaeus' House

19 Then *Jesus* entered and passed through [a]Jericho. 2 Now behold, *there was* a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. 3 And he sought to [b]see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature. 4 So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that *way.* 5 And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up [1]and saw him, and said to him, "Zacchaeus, [2]make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house." 6 So he [3]made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. 7 But when they saw *it,* they all [4]complained, saying, [c]"He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner."

8 Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the [d]poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by [e]false accusation, [f]I restore fourfold."

34 [z]Mark 9:32; Luke 2:50; 9:45; [John 10:6; 12:16]

35 [a]Matt. 20:29–34; Mark 10:46–52

38 [b]Matt. 9:27

42 [c]Luke 17:19

43 [d]Luke 5:26; Acts 4:21; 11:18

CHAPTER 19

1 [a]Josh. 6:26; 1 Kin. 16:34

3 [b]John 12:21

5 [1]NU omits *and saw him* [2]*hurry*

6 [3]*hurried*

7 [c]Matt. 9:11; Luke 5:30; 15:2 [4]*grumbled*

8 [d][Ps. 41:1] [e]Luke 3:14 [f]Ex. 22:1; Lev. 6:5; Num. 5:7; 1 Sam. 12:3; 2 Sam. 12:6

■ **18:35 coming near Jericho.** Luke implies Jesus was entering Jericho, whereas Matthew and Mark say the incident occurred as they "went out" of Jericho (Matt. 20:30; Mark 10:46). There seem to have been two "Jerichos" about a mile apart: the ruins of the Old Testament city conquered by Joshua (Josh. 6), and a city built by Herod the Great. The encounter may have happened as Jesus was leaving the old city and entering the new.

a certain blind man. Matthew mentions two blind men (cf. Matt. 8:28 and note), while Luke and Mark mention only one (named Bartimaeus, Mark 10:46); he may have been the spokesman for the two.

■ **18:38 Son of David.** A messianic title.

■ **18:42 your faith.** Faith was the means by which the gift was received.

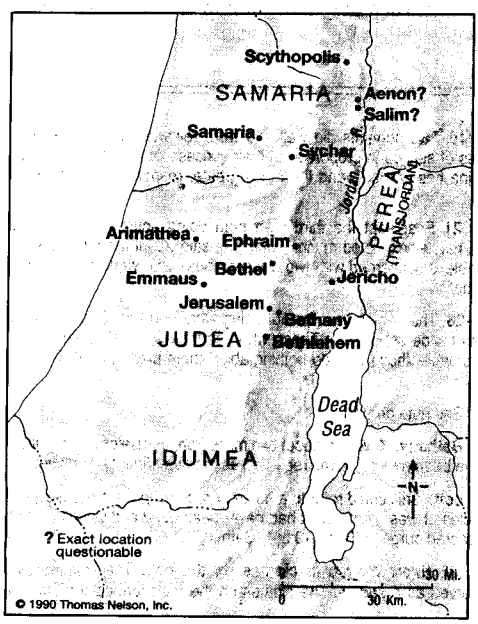
has made you well. This might be translated "has saved you," which would fit in with his following Jesus and praising God.

■ **19:2 chief tax collector.** The term is found nowhere else, but clearly it means the head of the local taxing agents. Jericho was near a major trade route and famous balsam groves. There was much to tax, and Zacchaeus was accordingly quite rich.

■ **19:4 sycamore tree.** A tree frequently planted by the roadside; it was easy to climb.

■ **19:8 I restore.** The verb is in the present tense for vividness and emphasis.

fourfold. The law required the amount plus a fifth (Lev. 6:5; Num. 5:7); Zacchaeus was going far beyond what the law demanded.



Last Journey to Jerusalem. During Jesus' last trip to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51–56), He was turned away by an unfriendly Samaritan village. Thus, instead of passing through Samaria, He apparently took a longer route from Scythopolis, crossing to the east bank of the Jordan River to travel south. Recrossing the Jordan River near Jericho, He ascended the mountain to Bethany and finally arrived at Jerusalem.

9 [g]Luke 3:8; 13:16; [Rom. 4:16; Gal. 3:7] [h][Luke 13:16]

10 [i]Matt. 18:11; [Luke 5:32; Rom. 5:8]

11 [j]Acts 1:6

12 [k]Matt. 25:14–30; Mark 13:34

13 [5]Gr. *mna*, same as Heb. *minah*, each worth about three months' salary

14 [l][John 1:11]

17 [m]Matt. 25:21, 23 [n]Luke 16:10

21 [o]Matt. 25:24 [6]*a severe*

22 [p]2 Sam. 1:16; Job 15:6; [Matt. 12:37] [q]Matt. 25:26

26 [r]Matt. 13:12; 25:29; Mark 4:25; Luke 8:18

28 [s]Mark 10:32

29 [t]Matt. 21:1; Mark 11:1 [u]Matt. 26:6; John 12:1 [v]John 8:1; Acts 1:12 [7]M *Bethsphage*

32 [w]Luke 22:13

35 [x]2 Kin. 9:13; Matt. 21:7; Mark 11:7

9 And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because [g]he also is [h]a son of Abraham; 10 [i]for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

The Parable of the Minas

11 Now as they heard these things, He spoke another parable, because He was near Jerusalem and because [j]they thought the kingdom of God would appear immediately. 12 [k]Therefore He said: "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return. 13 So he called ten of his servants, delivered to them ten [5]minas, and said to them, 'Do business till I come.' 14 [l]But his citizens hated him, and sent a delegation after him, saying, 'We will not have this *man* to reign over us.'

15 "And so it was that when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants, to whom he had given the money, to be called to him, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. 16 Then came the first, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned ten minas.' 17 And he said to him, [m]'Well *done*, good servant; because you were [n]faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities.' 18 And the second came, saying, 'Master, your mina has earned five minas.' 19 Likewise he said to him, 'You also be over five cities.'

20 "Then another came, saying, 'Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. 21 [o]For I feared you, because you are [6]an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.' 22 And he said to him, [p]'Out of your own mouth I will judge you, *you* wicked servant. [q]You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. 23 Why then did you not put my money in the bank, that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?'

24 "And he said to those who stood by, 'Take the mina from him, and give *it* to him who has ten minas.' 25 (But they said to him, 'Master, he has ten minas.') 26 'For I say to you, [r]that to everyone who has will be given; and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. 27 But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay *them* before me.' "

The Triumphal Entry

28 When He had said this, [s]He went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. 29 [t]And it came to pass, when He drew near to [7]Bethphage and [u]Bethany, at the mountain called [v]Olivet, *that* He sent two of His disciples, 30 saying, "Go into the village opposite *you*, where as you enter you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Loose it and bring *it here*. 31 And if anyone asks you, 'Why are you loosing *it?*' thus you shall say to him, 'Because the Lord has need of it.' "

32 So those who were sent went their way and found *it* just [w]as He had said to them. 33 But as they were loosing the colt, the owners of it said to them, "Why are you loosing the colt?"

34 And they said, "The Lord has need of him." 35 Then they brought him to Jesus. [x]And they

■ **19:9 salvation.** Jesus has just said that it is hard for a rich person to be saved (18:24, 25); the salvation of Zacchaeus shows it is not impossible (18:27). See "Salvation" at Acts 4:12.

a son of Abraham. This phrase may point to Zacchaeus as one of the lost sheep of Israel, to whom Jesus felt a special mission (cf. 13:16; Matt. 10:6; 15:24).

■ **19:10 the Son of Man.** Jesus' favorite way of referring to Himself (5:24 note).

■ **19:11** Jesus' journey to Jerusalem was nearing its end, and some thought He would set up a magnificent earthly kingdom there.

■ **19:12** The parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14–29) resembles this one, but there the amounts are larger and vary in size, testing the servants for their fitness for larger tasks. Here the amounts are small and the same for all (v. 13). The parable teaches that everyone has one basic task—to serve God faithfully.

a far country. Herod's sons were examples of noblemen who went to Rome hoping to be made king.

■ **19:13 ten minas.** Each servant received one mina, the equivalent of one hundred drachmas (15:8 note), or several months' wages.

■ **19:14** When Herod's son Archelaus went to Rome seeking his kingdom, his Jewish subjects sent a delegation to ask that he not be made king over them.

■ **19:16–19** Two servants did well and were rewarded with further opportunities of service in proportion to their success. Notice their modesty ("your mina has earned") and the much greater responsibility allotted to them.

■ **19:20, 21** Fear kept the third man from doing anything, though he knew his master expected much. Nothing is said about the other seven. The parable is concerned with two classes: those who worked and those who did not.

■ **19:22–26** The punishment for not using what one has is to lose it, a principle of wide application. Those who use their spiritual opportunities find more, while those who do nothing about them lose what ability they did have.

■ **19:28** See note on 9:51.

■ **19:29 Bethany.** A village about two miles from Jerusalem. Bethphage must have been nearby; it was regarded as the outer limit of Jerusalem.

■ **19:30 colt.** This could refer to a horse or a donkey; the other Gospels make it clear it was a donkey. It had never been used and was therefore fit for a sacred purpose (Num. 19:2; 1 Sam. 6:7).

■ **19:35, 36 threw their own clothes on the colt.** The clothing evidently served as a saddle. The clothes on the road formed a triumphal carpet.

threw their own clothes on the colt, and they set Jesus on him. 36 And as He went, *many* spread their clothes on the road.

37 Then, as He was now drawing near the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to [y]rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen, 38 saying:

[z]" *'Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD!'*
[a]Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"

39 And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples."

40 But He answered and said to them, "I tell you that if these should keep silent, [b]the stones would immediately cry out."

Jesus Weeps over Jerusalem

41 Now as He drew near, He saw the city and [c]wept over it, 42 saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this [d]your day, the things *that* [e]*make* for your [f]peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. 43 For days will come upon you when your enemies will [g]build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, 44 [h]and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and [i]they will not leave in you one stone upon another, [j]because you did not know the time of your visitation."

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

45 [k]Then He went into the temple and began to drive out those who [g]bought and sold in it, 46 saying to them, "It is written, [l]*'My house* [g]*is a house of prayer,'* but you have made it a [m]*'den of thieves.'*"

47 And He [n]was teaching daily in the temple. But [o]the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people sought to destroy Him, 48 and were unable to do anything; for all the people were very attentive to [p]hear Him.

Jesus' Authority Questioned

20 Now [a]it happened on one of those days, as He taught the people in the temple and preached the gospel, *that* the chief priests and the scribes, together with the elders, confronted *Him* 2 and spoke to Him, saying, "Tell us, [b]by what authority are You doing these things? Or who is he who gave You this authority?"

3 But He answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one thing, and answer Me: 4 The [c]baptism of John—was it from heaven or from men?"

5 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say, 'Why

37 [y]Luke 13:17; 18:43

38 [z]Ps. 118:26; Luke 13:35 [a]Luke 2:14; [Eph. 2:14]

40 [b]Hab. 2:11

41 [c]Is. 53:3; John 11:35

42 [d]Ps. 95:7, 8; Heb. 3:13 [e][Luke 1:77–79; Acts 10:36] [f][Rom. 5:1]

43 [g]Is. 29:3, 4; Jer. 6:3, 6; Luke 21:20

44 [h]1 Kin. 9:7, 8; Mic. 3:12 [i]Matt. 24:2; Mark 13:2; Luke 21:6 [j][Dan. 9:24; Luke 1:68, 78; 1 Pet. 2:12]

45 [k]Mal. 3:1; Matt. 21:12, 13; Mark 11:11, 15–17; John 2:13–16 [g]NU *were selling, saying*

46 [l]Is. 56:7 [m]Jer. 7:11 [g]NU *shall be*

47 [n]Luke 21:37; 22:53 [o]Mark 11:18; Luke 20:19; John 7:19; 8:37

48 [p]Luke 21:38

CHAPTER 20

1 [a]Matt. 21:23–27; Mark 11:27–33

2 [b]Acts 4:7; 7:27

4 [c]John 1:26, 31

■ **19:37** This entry into Jerusalem fulfilled prophecy (Zech. 9:9) and was a public claim to messiahship, but messiahship of a distinctive kind, since the donkey was the animal of a man of peace. A conquering king would ride a horse. The people seem to have recognized the kingship, but not to have seen the emphasis on peace.

■ **19:38** A quotation from Ps. 118:26, but with an explicit reference to the King. Luke alone has the words "peace" and "glory." He does not have "Hosanna," which his Gentile readers might not have understood.

■ **19:39 rebuke Your disciples.** The Pharisees would not have wanted anything that disturbed the peace and brought trouble from the Romans.

■ **19:41, 42** Only Luke records Jesus' lament as He drew near the city. Jesus knew that the excitement of the crowds did not correspond to genuine spiritual perception and that the actions being pursued would inevitably bring war, not peace.

■ **19:43 build an embankment.** A description of a typical siege of a city. The embankment was erected as a protection for the invaders and a base from which to launch attacks.

■ **19:44** The city will be completely destroyed. The people must live with their rejection of God's Messiah.

■ **19:45, 46** All four Gospels speak of Jesus driving traders out of the temple precincts, but the first three place it at the end of Jesus' ministry and John at the beginning. There were probably two cleansings (Mark 11:15 note). The merchants in the temple courts were money changers and sellers of sacrificial animals. Only coins from Tyre were accepted in the temple, and money had to be changed before an offering could be made. It was convenient to have them close to the temple, but their presence in the temple courts themselves made true worship difficult. The traders would have been in the court of the Gentiles, the only place Gentiles could go to pray.

■ **19:47, 48** The temple was a normal place for teaching. Jesus' opposition now includes a new group—"the leaders of the people." Evidently prominent lay people had now joined the priests and the scribes.

■ **20:1 preached the gospel.** Jesus was bringing God's good news at the very time His enemies were plotting against Him.

chief priests . . . scribes . . . elders. This appears to be a delegation from the Sanhedrin.

■ **20:2 these things.** Things such as driving the traders out of the temple.

■ **20:3, 4** Jesus was not avoiding their question. John had testified that Jesus was the Messiah. If they answered Jesus' question, they would have the answer to their own.

■ **20:5, 6** Notice that they were not concerned with the truth, but with the consequences of their possible answers.

5 [1]NU, M omit *then*

6 [d]Matt. 14:5; 21:26; Mark 6:20; Luke 7:24–30

9 [e]Ps. 80:8; Matt. 21:33–46; Mark 12:1–12 [2]*tenant farmers*

10 [f]2 Kin. 17:13, 14; 2 Chr. 36:15, 16; [Acts 7:52; 1 Thess. 2:15] [3]Lit. *the season*

14 [g][Heb. 1:1–3] [h]Matt. 27:21–23 [i]John 11:47, 48

15 [j]Luke 23:33; Acts 2:22, 23; 3:15

16 [k][John 1:11–13]; Rom. 11:1, 11; 1 Cor. 6:15; Gal. 2:17; 3:21; 6:14

17 [l]Ps. 118:22; Matt. 21:42; 1 Pet. 2:7, 8

18 [m]Is. 8:14, 15 [n][Dan. 2:34, 35, 44, 45]; Matt. 21:44

19 [4]M *were afraid—for*

20 [o]Matt. 22:15

21 [p]Matt. 22:16; Mark 12:14

23 [5]NU omits *Why do you test Me?*

25 [q]Matt. 17:24–27; Rom. 13:7; [1 Pet. 2:13–17] [6]*Pay*

[1]then did you not believe him?' [6]But if we say, 'From men,' all the people will stone us, [d]for they are persuaded that John was a prophet." [7]So they answered that they did not know where *it was* from.

[8]And Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

The Parable of the Wicked Vinedressers

[9]Then He began to tell the people this parable: [e]"A certain man planted a vineyard, leased it to [2]vinedressers, and went into a far country for a long time. [10]Now at [3]vintage-time he [f]sent a servant to the vinedressers, that they might give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the vinedressers beat him and sent *him* away empty-handed. [11]Again he sent another servant; and they beat him also, treated *him* shamefully, and sent *him* away empty-handed. [12]And again he sent a third; and they wounded him also and cast *him* out.

[13]"Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my beloved son. Probably they will respect *him* when they see him.' [14]But when the vinedressers saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, 'This is the [g]heir. Come, [h]let us kill him, that the inheritance may be [i]ours.' [15]So they cast him out of the vineyard and [j]killed *him.* Therefore what will the owner of the vineyard do to them? [16]He will come and destroy those vinedressers and give the vineyard to [k]others."

And when they heard *it* they said, "Certainly not!"

[17]Then He looked at them and said, "What then is this that is written:

> [l]*'The stone which the builders rejected*
> *Has become the chief cornerstone'*?

[18]Whoever falls on that stone will be [m]broken; but [n]on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder."

[19]And the chief priests and the scribes that very hour sought to lay hands on Him, but they [4]feared the people—for they knew He had spoken this parable against them.

The Pharisees: Is It Lawful to Pay Taxes to Caesar?

[20][o]So they watched *Him,* and sent spies who pretended to be righteous, that they might seize on His words, in order to deliver Him to the power and the authority of the governor.

[21]Then they asked Him, saying, [p]"Teacher, we know that You say and teach rightly, and You do not show personal favoritism, but teach the way of God in truth: [22]Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?"

[23]But He perceived their craftiness, and said to them, [5]"Why do you test Me? [24]Show Me a denarius. Whose image and inscription does it have?"

They answered and said, "Caesar's."

[25]And He said to them, [q]"Render[6] therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."

[26]But they could not catch Him in His words in the presence of the people. And they marveled at His answer and kept silent.

■ **20:7, 8** Jesus will not talk about authority to men who refuse to reply to an important religious question, the answer to which they already know.

■ **20:9–12** The tenants are a vivid picture of the nation that persistently rejected the messengers of God who were sent to call them to repentance.

■ **20:13** Normally a landowner confronted with persistent refusal to pay and with abuse of his messengers would have taken strong measures. But just as this landowner keeps giving the tenants the opportunity for repentance, so God continues to reach out to sinners.

■ **20:14 This is the heir.** The tenants had refused to acknowledge an owner by paying rent, and they apparently reasoned that with the heir out of the way, they could establish their own title to the land. Jesus is making the point that the nation had behaved outrageously toward God.

■ **20:17** Jesus quotes Ps. 118:22, which points to a complete reversal of accepted values.

chief cornerstone. Lit. "the head of the corner." It may be a large stone in the foundation, laid at the corner and determining the position of two walls. Or it may be the stone at the top of the corner binding the building together.

■ **20:19** The religious teachers were hostile to Jesus but could find no legal way of harming him.

■ **20:20 the governor.** Clearly the "spies" hoped Jesus would say something that would make the Romans arrest Him.

■ **20:21** The flattering approach was doubtless meant to put Jesus off guard.

■ **20:22 Is it lawful.** This means "Is it in accordance with God's law?" (it was required by Roman law). From the point of view of the questioners the answer had to put Jesus at odds with either the Romans or the Jews, who resented the taxes.

■ **20:24 a denarius.** Jesus asked for the silver coin that was the proper coinage for paying the tax, roughly equivalent to a day's wage (15:8 note). It bore an image of the emperor with his titles of honor. There was only one answer to Jesus' question, and it opened the way for His unexpected reply. Jesus could not be accused of disloyalty to either the Jews or the Romans. He made it clear that there are duties owed to God, but also duties to the state.

The Sadducees: What About the Resurrection?

27 [r]Then some of the Sadducees, [s]who deny that there is a resurrection, came to *Him* and asked Him, 28 saying: "Teacher, Moses wrote to us *that* if a man's brother dies, having a wife, and he dies without children, his brother should take his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. 29 Now there were seven brothers. And the first took a wife, and died without children. 30 And the second [7]took her as wife, and he died childless. 31 Then the third took her, and in like manner the seven [8]also; and they left no children, and died. 32 Last of all the woman died also. 33 Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife does she become? For all seven had her as wife."

34 Jesus answered and said to them, "The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. 35 But those who are [t]counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; 36 nor can they die anymore, for [u]they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, [v]being sons of the resurrection. 37 But even Moses showed in the *burning* bush *passage* that the dead are raised, when he called the Lord [w]*'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.'* 38 For He is not the God of the dead but of the living, for [x]all live to Him."

39 Then some of the scribes answered and said, "Teacher, You have spoken well." 40 But after that they dared not question Him anymore.

Jesus: How Can David Call His Descendant Lord?

41 And He said to them, [y]"How can they say that the Christ is the Son of David? 42 Now David himself said in the Book of Psalms:

[z] *'The LORD said to my Lord,*
"Sit at My right hand,
43 *Till I make Your enemies Your footstool."'*

44 Therefore David calls Him *'Lord'*; [a]how is He then his Son?"

Beware of the Scribes

45 [b]Then, in the hearing of all the people, He said to His disciples, 46 [c]"Beware of the scribes, who desire to go around in long robes, [d]love greetings in the marketplaces, the best seats in the synagogues, and the best places at feasts, 47 [e]who devour widows' houses, and for a [f]pretense make long prayers. These will receive greater condemnation."

The Widow's Two Mites

21 And He looked up [a]and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury, 2 and He saw also a certain [b]poor widow putting in two [c]mites.[1] 3 So He said, "Truly I say to you [d]that this poor widow has put in more than all; 4 for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings [2]for God, but she out of her poverty put in [e]all the livelihood that she had."

27 [r]Matt. 22:23–33; Mark 12:18–27 [s]Acts 23:6, 8

30 [7]NU omits the rest of v. 30.

31 [8]NU, M *also left no children*

35 [t]Phil. 3:11

36 [u][1 Cor. 15:42, 49, 52; 1 John 3:2] [v]Rom. 8:23

37 [w]Ex. 3:1–6, 15; Acts 7:30–32

38 [x][Rom. 6:10, 11; 14:8, 9; Heb. 11:16]

41 [y]Matt. 22:41–46; Mark 12:35–37

42 [z]Ps. 110:1; Acts 2:34, 35

44 [a]Acts 13:22, 23; Rom. 1:3; 9:4, 5

45 [b]Matt. 23:1–7; Mark 12:38–40

46 [c]Matt. 23:5 [d]Luke 11:43; 14:7

47 [e]Matt. 23:14 [f][Matt. 6:5, 6]

CHAPTER 21

1 [a]Mark 12:41–44

2 [b][2 Cor. 6:10] [c]Mark 12:42 [1]Gr. *lepta*, very small copper coins

3 [d][2 Cor. 8:12]

4 [e][2 Cor. 8:12] [2]NU omits *for God*

■ **20:27 Sadducees.** Luke mentions the Sadducees only here. None of their writings survive, so we know them only as their opponents saw them. They were conservative and aristocratic, and counted the high priests among their ranks. They rejected the oral tradition of the Pharisees and found no basis for a doctrine of resurrection in the Old Testament.

■ **20:28–33** When a Jew died childless his brother was required to marry the widow, and the first son would become the heir of the deceased (Deut. 25:5–10). The Sadducees clearly thought that their story made nonsense of the doctrine of resurrection.

■ **20:34–36** The Sadducees assumed that if there were an afterlife it would be something like a repetition of this life. Jesus denies this. Marriage is an essential part of this life but not of the next; therefore, their question was invalid.

■ **20:36 equal to the angels.** At the Resurrection there will be a change in nature, and believers will have resurrection bodies like that of Christ (1 Cor. 15:35–58 and notes). Jesus' point is not that human beings will be exactly like angels, but that the mode of existence of angels, and in particular their immortality, provides a clue to the post-resurrection existence of believers, who will also be immortal (1 Cor. 15:42, 52–55). Marriage and procreation will no longer be necessary or appropriate to immortal bodies. See "Resurrection and Glorification" at 1 Cor. 15:21.

■ **20:37 the burning bush passage.** Before the addition of chapter and verse divisions, passages in Scripture were referred to by their content. Jesus draws an interesting proof that people live after this life from a well-known part of Scripture (Mark 12:26 note).

■ **20:41 How can they say.** Earlier generations were regarded as greater and wiser than the present one, and this opened the way for Jesus to pose a question of His own. By popular definition, David was more important than any of his descendants. How could David call the Messiah his "Lord" (Ps. 110:1)? Jesus is teaching that the Messiah is not simply the Son of David; He is the Son of God and so David's Lord. Jesus' messiahship may be understood in part from His title "Son of David," but there are other aspects as well. He could not be regarded simply as "David" all over again.

■ **20:45–47** See note on Mark 12:40.

■ **21:1 the treasury.** In the court of the women there were thirteen trumpet-shaped collection boxes with inscriptions showing the use to which donations would be put.

■ **21:2 poor.** An unusual word (only here in New Testament) meaning "very poor." Her total livelihood (v. 4) was two copper coins of the lowest value (see text note).

5 [f]Mark 13:1 [3]*decorated*
6 [g]Luke 19:41–44
8 [h]Eph. 5:6 [4]NU omits *Therefore* [5]*follow*
9 [i]Rev. 6:4
10 [j]Matt. 24:7
11 [k]Rev. 6:12
12 [l][Rev. 2:10] [m]Acts 4:3; 5:18; 12:4; 16:24 [n]Acts 25:23 [o]1 Pet. 2:13
13 [p][Phil. 1:12–14, 28]
14 [q]Luke 12:11 [6]*say in defense*
15 [r]Acts 6:10 [7]*withstand*
16 [s]Mic. 7:6 [t]Acts 7:59; 12:2
17 [u]Matt. 10:22
18 [v]Matt. 10:30
20 [w]Mark 13:14
22 [x][Dan. 9:24–27]
23 [y]Matt. 24:19
24 [z][Dan. 9:27; 12:7]
25 [a][2 Pet. 3:10–12]
26 [b]Matt. 24:29
27 [c]Rev. 1:7; 14:14
28 [d][Rom. 8:19, 23]

Jesus Predicts the Destruction of the Temple

5 [f]Then, as some spoke of the temple, how it was [3]adorned with beautiful stones and donations, He said, 6 "These things which you see—the days will come in which [g]not *one* stone shall be left upon another that shall not be thrown down."

The Signs of the Times and the End of the Age

7 So they asked Him, saying, "Teacher, but when will these things be? And what sign *will there be* when these things are about to take place?"

8 And He said: [h]"Take heed that you not be deceived. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am *He*,' and, 'The time has drawn near.' [4]Therefore do not [5]go after them. 9 But when you hear of [i]wars and commotions, do not be terrified; for these things must come to pass first, but the end *will not come* immediately."

10 [j]Then He said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. 11 And there will be great [k]earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven. 12 [l]But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute *you,* delivering *you* up to the synagogues and [m]prisons. [n]You will be brought before kings and rulers [o]for My name's sake. 13 But [p]it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. 14 [q]Therefore settle *it* in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will [6]answer; 15 for I will give you a mouth and wisdom [r]which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or [7]resist. 16 [s]You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put [t]*some* of you to death. 17 And [u]you will be hated by all for My name's sake. 18 [v]But not a hair of your head shall be lost. 19 By your patience possess your souls.

The Destruction of Jerusalem

20 [w]"But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. 21 Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. 22 For these are the days of vengeance, that [x]all things which are written may be fulfilled. 23 [y]But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. 24 And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles [z]until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

The Coming of the Son of Man

25 [a]"And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; 26 men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, [b]for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 27 Then they will see the Son of Man [c]coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28 Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because [d]your redemption draws near."

- **21:5 beautiful stones.** See note on Mark 13:2.
- **21:6** This was fulfilled during the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.
- **21:8 I am He.** False teachers will claim to be the Christ.
- **21:9 the end.** The end of all things. Some sections of this discourse refer to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 and others to Jesus' coming at the end of the age (Mark 13:4 note).
- **21:12 synagogues.** Synagogues were centers for discipline as well as places of worship.
- **21:13** Trouble for the church also means opportunity to bear witness.
- **21:16–19** This passage is a strong affirmation of God's overriding control. For some of His followers there will be a martyr's death, for others deliverance. Either way, God is bringing His purposes to pass.
- **21:20 Jerusalem.** This section refers to the destruction of the city, not the end time (v. 9 note).
- **21:21 flee to the mountains.** People would normally flee to a walled city for shelter from an invading army, but Jerusalem is doomed. People must run away from it, not try to enter it.
- **21:22 vengeance.** Not meaningless suffering, but the divine penalty.
- **21:23 woe.** The siege of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 in fact brought extreme suffering.
- **21:24 the times of the Gentiles.** This may mean the time when the Gentiles will have their triumph over Israel, or the time when the gospel is preached to the Gentiles, or both.

  fulfilled. A divine purpose will be worked out (cf. Rom. 11:1–32).
- **21:25, 26** Attention moves to the Second Coming of Christ (v. 9 note). It will be preceded by signs that will puzzle many.
- **21:27 coming.** Jesus' return will be a coming in splendor to reign.
- **21:28 redemption.** This word means deliverance on payment of a price. Jesus paid the price at Calvary, and He here looks forward to the final fulfillment of what that deliverance means.

The Parable of the Fig Tree

29 [e]Then He spoke to them a parable: "Look at the fig tree, and all the trees. 30 When they are already budding, you see and know for yourselves that summer is now near. 31 So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near. 32 Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all things take place. 33 [f]Heaven and earth will pass away, but My [g]words will by no means pass away.

The Importance of Watching

34 "But [h]take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down with [g]carousing, drunkenness, and [i]cares of this life, and that Day come on you unexpectedly. 35 For [j]it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth. 36 [k]Watch therefore, and [l]pray always that you may [g]be counted [m]worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and [n]to stand before the Son of Man."

37 [o]And in the daytime He was teaching in the temple, but [p]at night He went out and stayed on the mountain called Olivet. 38 Then early in the morning all the people came to Him in the temple to hear Him.

The Plot to Kill Jesus

22 Now [a]the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called Passover. 2 And [b]the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might kill Him, for they feared the people.

3 [c]Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the [d]twelve. 4 So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Him to them. 5 And they were glad, and [e]agreed to give him money. 6 So he promised and sought opportunity to [f]betray Him to them in the absence of the multitude.

Jesus and His Disciples Prepare the Passover

7 [g]Then came the Day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover must be [1]killed. 8 And He sent Peter and John, saying, "Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat."

9 So they said to Him, "Where do You want us to prepare?"

10 And He said to them, "Behold, when you have entered the city, a man will meet you carrying a pitcher of water; follow him into the house which he enters. 11 Then you shall say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says to you, "Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?" ' 12 Then he will show you a large, furnished upper room; there make ready."

13 So they went and [h]found it just as He had said to them, and they prepared the Passover.

Jesus Institutes the Lord's Supper

14 [i]When the hour had come, He sat down, and the [2]twelve apostles with Him. 15 Then He said to them, "With *fervent* desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; 16 for I say to you, I will no longer eat of it [j]until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."

17 Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, "Take this and divide *it* among your-

29 [e]Mark 13:28

33 [f]Matt. 24:35 [g]Is. 40:8

34 [h]1 Thess. 5:6 [i]Luke 8:14 [g]*dissipation*

35 [j]Rev. 3:3; 16:15

36 [k]Matt. 24:42; 25:13 [l]Luke 18:1 [m]Luke 20:35 [n][Eph. 6:13] [g]NU *have strength to*

37 [o]John 8:1, 2 [p]Luke 22:39

CHAPTER 22

1 [a]Matt. 26:2–5

2 [b]John 11:47

3 [c]Mark 14:10, 11 [d]Matt. 10:2–4

5 [e]Zech. 11:12

6 [f]Ps. 41:9

7 [g]Matt. 26:17–19 [1]Sacrificed

13 [h]Luke 19:32

14 [i]Mark 14:17 [2]NU omits *twelve*

16 [j][Rev. 19:9]

■ **21:30** The appearance of leaves on the trees announces that summer is at hand. So the signs tell us that the kingdom is near.

■ **21:32 generation.** The Greek word usually means all the people alive at a given time, but it can also mean all of a certain kind of people (e.g., wicked or righteous). The term can also mean "race"; if this is the meaning here it signifies that the Jews will continue to the end.

■ **21:36 Watch . . . pray.** Watchfulness and prayer are Christian duties to the end of time.

to stand before the Son of Man. This signifies salvation at the last day.

■ **21:37, 38** Jesus' last days were spent teaching in Jerusalem, while at night He stayed on the Mount of Olives nearby.

■ **22:1 the Feast . . . Passover.** Strictly speaking, Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were different but immediately successive festivals (Num. 28:26, 27), but by New Testament times the names were used interchangeably. The feast commemorated the great deliverance of Israel from Egypt (Ex. 12:17; Mark 14:1 note).

■ **22:2 chief priests.** The chief priests had the political power among the Jews and they, not the Pharisees, led the final opposition to Jesus.

■ **22:3–6** Satan took control of Judas (John 13:2), and it was Judas who sought the chief priests, not they who sought him. The "captains" of the temple guard were mostly Levites.

■ **22:7 Passover.** According to Ex. 12:5 the animal could be a lamb or a young goat. It would be killed at twilight (Ex. 12:6).

■ **22:8–12** Jesus was ready to die, but at the time of His own choosing. This may be the reason for the way Jesus made arrangements for the feast. None of the disciples knew where they would eat it.

■ **22:10 carrying a pitcher.** A man carrying a pitcher of water would stand out, because pitchers were used by women, and men carried water in skins.

■ **22:14 sat down.** Or "reclined," the normal posture at such a meal. The diners leaned on their left elbows, facing the table with their feet away from it, and ate with the right hand.

■ **22:15, 16** Jesus had intense desire for fellowship with His disciples at the Passover.

■ **22:17 Then He took the cup.** At the Passover meal, each person would drink four cups of red wine. The wine was diluted, usually three parts of water to one of wine.

selves; 18 for [k]I say to you, [3]I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes."

19 [l]And He took bread, gave thanks and broke *it,* and gave *it* to them, saying, "This is My [m]body which is given for you; [n]do this in remembrance of Me."

20 Likewise He also *took* the cup after supper, saying, [o]"This cup *is* the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you. 21 [p]But behold, the hand of My betrayer *is* with Me on the table. 22 [q]And truly the Son of Man goes [r]as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom He is betrayed!"

23 [s]Then they began to question among themselves, which of them it was who would do this thing.

The Disciples Argue About Greatness

24 [t]Now there was also a dispute among them, as to which of them should be considered the greatest. 25 [u]And He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called 'benefactors.' 26 [v]But not so *among* you; on the contrary, [w]he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. 27 [x]For who *is* greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? *Is* it not he who sits at the table? Yet [y]I am among you as the One who serves.

28 "But you are those who have continued with Me in [z]My trials. 29 And [a]I bestow upon you a kingdom, just as My Father bestowed *one* upon Me, 30 that [b]you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, [c]and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial

31 [d]And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, [d]Satan has asked for you, that he may [e]sift *you* as wheat. 32 But [f]I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to *Me,* [g]strengthen your brethren."

33 But he said to Him, "Lord, I am ready to go with You, both to prison and to death."

34 [h]Then He said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster shall not crow this day before you will deny three times that you know Me."

Supplies for the Road

35 [i]And He said to them, "When I sent you without money bag, knapsack, and sandals, did you lack anything?"

So they said, "Nothing."

36 Then He said to them, "But now, he who has a money bag, let him take *it,* and likewise a knapsack; and he who has no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one. 37 For I say to you that this which is written must still be [5]accomplished in Me: [j]*'And He was numbered with the transgressors.'* For the things concerning Me have an end."

18 [k]Mark 14:25 [3]NU adds *from now on*
19 [l]Matt. 26:26 [m][1 Pet. 2:24] [n]1 Cor. 11:23–26
20 [o]1 Cor. 10:16
21 [p]John 13:21, 26, 27
22 [q]Matt. 26:24 [r]Acts 2:23
23 [s]John 13:22, 25
24 [t]Mark 9:34
25 [u]Mark 10:42–45
26 [v][1 Pet. 5:3] [w]Luke 9:48
27 [x][Luke 12:37] [y]Phil. 2:7
28 [z][Heb. 2:18; 4:15]
29 [a]Matt. 24:47
30 [b][Matt. 8:11] [c][Rev. 3:21]
31 [d]1 Pet. 5:8 [e]Amos 9:9 [4]NU omits *And the Lord said*
32 [f][John 17:9, 11, 15] [g]John 21:15–17
34 [h]John 13:37, 38
35 [i]Matt. 10:9
37 [j]Is. 53:12 [5]*fulfilled*

■ **22:18 until the kingdom of God comes.** This is an important aspect of the Lord's Supper as a sacrament; it points forward to the Second Coming of Christ (1 Cor. 11:26).

■ **22:19 This is My body.** There has been much discussion of these words (Matt. 26:26 note). The verb "is" in this instance does not mean "is identical with," but something more like "represents," "signifies," or perhaps "conveys." One Reformed communion service instructs the worshiper to "feed on Him in thy heart" when the bread is received. See "The Lord's Supper" at 1 Cor. 11:23.

do this. The one thing Jesus commanded His followers to do as a remembrance of Him referred to His death, underlining the centrality of the Cross for the Christian faith.

■ **22:20 the new covenant.** By His death, Jesus offers the sacrifice that ratifies the new covenant of Jer. 31:31.

■ **22:22, 23** Jesus immediately speaks of betrayal by one of those at the table. That Judas was enjoying table fellowship with Jesus made his crime all the worse. Jesus would fulfill prophecy and go as it had been decreed, but this does not lessen the guilt of the one who betrayed Him.

■ **22:24–27** Only Luke has the account of this dispute that showed how far even the Twelve were from understanding what Jesus had come to do.

■ **22:25 benefactors.** A number of kings in antiquity took the title "Benefactor," often with little justification. The disciples must serve, as Jesus did.

■ **22:28–30** That the disciples should serve rather than seek greatness does not mean they will go unnoticed. Jesus makes it clear that He knows how they have stood with Him, and that there will be a place for them in the kingdom. They are promised a wonderful future that includes judging the tribes of Israel (v. 30).

■ **22:31 Simon, Simon.** The repetition gives solemnity and emphasis. It is a form of intimate, personal address.

asked for you. The word "you" is plural. Satan had asked permission to trouble all the disciples. Notice that Satan has no power to act outside the area God allows him.

■ **22:32 you.** Here the word "you" is singular. When Peter has come through the trial he is to strengthen others.

■ **22:35, 36** The future will not be as easy for the disciples as the past.

■ **22:36 sword.** This is probably not meant literally (cf. vv. 49–51; Matt. 26:51, 52), but is a way of saying that they face a dangerous future. Jesus Himself faces the fulfillment of Is. 53:12 and His followers will surely experience resistance and persecution.

38 So they said, "Lord, look, here *are* two swords."
And He said to them, "It is enough."

The Prayer in the Garden

39 *k*Coming out, *l*He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him. 40 *m*When He came to the place, He said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation."

41 *n*And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, 42 saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless *o*not My will, but Yours, be done." 43 *6*Then *p*an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. 44 *q*And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

45 When He rose up from prayer, and had come to His disciples, He found them sleeping from sorrow. 46 Then He said to them, "Why *r*do you sleep? Rise and *s*pray, lest you enter into temptation."

Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane

47 And while He was still speaking, *t*behold, a multitude; and he who was called *u*Judas, one of the twelve, went before them and drew near to Jesus to kiss Him. 48 But Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a *v*kiss?"

49 When those around Him saw what was going to happen, they said to Him, "Lord, shall we strike with the sword?" 50 And *w*one of them struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear.

51 But Jesus answered and said, "Permit even this." And He touched his ear and healed him.

52 *x*Then Jesus said to the chief priests, captains of the temple, and the elders who had come to Him, "Have you come out, as against a *y*robber, with swords and clubs? 53 When I was with you daily in the *z*temple, you did not try to seize Me. But this is your *a*hour, and the power of darkness."

Peter Denies Jesus, and Weeps Bitterly

54 *b*Having arrested Him, they led *Him* and brought Him into the high priest's house. *c*But Peter followed at a distance. 55 *d*Now when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them. 56 And a certain servant girl, seeing him as he sat by the fire, looked intently at him and said, "This man was also with Him."

57 But he denied *7*Him, saying, "Woman, I do not know Him."

58 *e*And after a little while another saw him and said, "You also are of them."

But Peter said, "Man, I am not!"

59 *f*Then after about an hour had passed, another confidently affirmed, saying, "Surely this *fellow* also was with Him, for he is a *g*Galilean."

60 But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are saying!"

Immediately, while he was still speaking, *8*the rooster crowed. 61 And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then *h*Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, *i*"Before the rooster *9*crows, you will deny Me three times." 62 So Peter went out and wept bitterly.

39 *k*John 18:1 *l*Luke 21:37
40 *m*Mark 14:32–42
41 *n*Matt. 26:39
42 *o*John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 8:29
43 *p*Matt. 4:11 *6*NU brackets vv. 43 and 44 as not in the original text.
44 *q*[Heb. 5:7]
46 *r*Luke 9:32 *s*Luke 22:40
47 *t*John 18:3–11 *u*Acts 1:16, 17
48 *v*[Prov. 27:6]
50 *w*Matt. 26:51
52 *x*Matt. 26:55 *y*Luke 23:32
53 *z*Luke 19:47, 48 *a*[John 12:27]
54 *b*Matt. 26:57 *c*John 18:15
55 *d*Mark 14:66–72
57 *7*NU *it*
58 *e*John 18:25
59 *f*Mark 14:70 *g*Acts 1:11; 2:7
60 *8*NU, M *a rooster*
61 *h*Matt. 26:75 *i*John 13:38 *9*NU adds *today*

■ **22:38 enough.** The disciples take the words about the sword literally, and Jesus' reply means, "Enough of that sort of talk."

■ **22:40 the place.** Gethsemane (Mark 14:32), an olive grove (John 18:1).

■ **22:41** Luke's account does not mention Peter, James, and John (who slept while Jesus prayed). Luke's emphasis is on Jesus' prayer, not the disciples' failings. People generally prayed standing (18:11, 13), but at this solemn time Jesus knelt.

■ **22:42 this cup.** A symbol of suffering and divine anger (Is. 51:17; Ezek. 23:33).

not My will. As One who had taken upon Himself a complete human nature, it was natural for Jesus to shrink from the horror of the Cross, a horror magnified by His knowledge that in dying He would be forsaken by God and experience the weight of divine anger on sin. Nevertheless, Jesus is determined to follow the will of His Father.

■ **22:43, 44** Luke alone tells of the angel who strengthened Jesus and of the sweat "like great drops of blood."

■ **22:47 kiss.** The kiss was a common greeting (1 Thess. 5:26), and to use it in this way was a horrible form of betrayal.

■ **22:53 your hour.** A furtive arrest at night suits this effort of the forces of spiritual darkness (cf. Eph. 6:12; Col. 1:13).

■ **22:54 the high priest's house.** Jesus was taken first to the high priest who had ordered His arrest. All four Gospels give more space to the trial than to the Crucifixion. They are answering questions about why the Jews condemned Jesus and why the Romans executed Him, and bringing out His identity as the Son of God and King of the Jews.

■ **22:55–62** All four Gospels say that the first challenge came from a slave girl, but the second variously from the same girl (Mark 14:69), a different girl (Matt. 26:71), or a man (Luke 22:58). Servants were around a fire in a courtyard; a challenge from any of them would be taken up by the others and there would have been several voices challenging Peter. The threefold denial fulfills the prediction of v. 34.

63 /Ps. 69:1, 4, 7–9 kIs. 50:6

64 /Zech. 13:7 rNU *And having blindfolded Him, they asked Him*

66 mMatt. 27:1 nActs 4:26

67 oMatt. 26:63–66 pLuke 20:5–7

68 qNU omits *also* rNU omits the rest of v. 68.

69 sHeb. 1:3; 8:1

70 tMatt. 26:64; 27:11

71 uMark 14:63

CHAPTER 23

1 aJohn 18:28 bLuke 3:1; 13:1

2 cActs 24:2 dActs 17:7 eMatt. 17:27 fJohn 19:12 rNU *our*

3 g1 Tim. 6:13

4 h[1 Pet. 2:22]

5 iJohn 7:41

6 qNU omits *of Galilee*

7 jLuke 3:1; 9:7; 13:31

8 kLuke 9:9 lMatt. 14:1

9 mJohn 19:9

11 nIs. 53:3 rtroops

12 oActs 4:26, 27

13 pMark 15:14

14 qLuke 23:1, 2 rLuke 23:4

Jesus Mocked and Beaten

63 jNow the men who held Jesus mocked Him and kbeat Him. 64 lAnd having blindfolded Him, they lstruck Him on the face and asked Him, saying, "Prophesy! Who is the one who struck You?" 65 And many other things they blasphemously spoke against Him.

Jesus Faces the Sanhedrin

66 mAs soon as it was day, nthe elders of the people, both chief priests and scribes, came together and led Him into their council, saying, 67 o"If You are the Christ, tell us."

But He said to them, "If I tell you, you will pby no means believe. 68 And if I qalso ask *you,* you will by no means answer rMe or let *Me* go. 69 sHereafter the Son of Man will sit on the right hand of the power of God."

70 Then they all said, "Are You then the Son of God?"

So He said to them, t"You *rightly* say that I am."

71 uAnd they said, "What further testimony do we need? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth."

Jesus Handed Over to Pontius Pilate

23 Then athe whole multitude of them arose and led Him to bPilate. 2 And they began to caccuse Him, saying, "We found this *fellow* dperverting lthe nation, and eforbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying fthat He Himself is Christ, a King."

3 gThen Pilate asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?"

He answered him and said, "*It is as* you say."

4 So Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowd, h"I find no fault in this Man."

5 But they were the more fierce, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from iGalilee to this place."

Jesus Faces Herod

6 When Pilate heard qof Galilee, he asked if the Man were a Galilean. 7 And as soon as he knew that He belonged to jHerod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time. 8 Now when Herod saw Jesus, khe was exceedingly glad; for he had desired for a long *time* to see Him, because lhe had heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him. 9 Then he questioned Him with many words, but He answered him mnothing. 10 And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him. 11 nThen Herod, with his rmen of war, treated Him with contempt and mocked *Him,* arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate. 12 That very day oPilate and Herod became friends with each other, for previously they had been at enmity with each other.

Taking the Place of Barabbas

13 pThen Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people, 14 said to them, q"You have brought this Man to me, as one who misleads the people. And indeed, rhav-

■ **22:63–65** Jesus was evidently left to a guard of soldiers who made sport of Him.

■ **22:66–71** No single Gospel gives a complete account of Jesus' trial. It is clear that there were two main stages: the Jews tried Him before the Sanhedrin and obtained a verdict that He was a blasphemer and deserved to die. However, only the Romans had the right to execute Him, and they would not execute a man for blasphemy. There had to be a further trial before the Romans for a violation of Roman law.

■ **22:66 day.** Jewish trials had to be held in the daytime. Luke's description of those present points to the Sanhedrin.

■ **22:67–69** Luke does not speak of a formal accusation or of a trial according to proper procedure. The Sanhedrin simply required Jesus to incriminate Himself according to their understanding of the Messiah. This He declines to do, as they would not believe Him. But He does say that a change is coming ("Hereafter," v. 69) and that He will be in the place of highest honor in heaven.

■ **22:71** Jesus had conceded to the Sanhedrin's charge that He claimed to be the Son of God, and as far as they were concerned He was guilty of blasphemy (cf. Matt. 26:65). Persuading the Romans would require a different charge, but for the Sanhedrin the matter was over. Jesus was guilty in their eyes, and it remained only to secure His execution.

■ **23:1 the whole multitude.** All the members of the Sanhedrin were not needed, but their united front would impress Pilate with their seriousness.

■ **23:2 perverting the nation.** A curiously imprecise charge.

forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar. Jesus did the opposite (20:25).

saying that He . . . is Christ, a King. Jesus specifically refused to use the title (22:67, 68). All the charges were false.

■ **23:3** The words "It is" are not in the Greek. In one sense Jesus was King of the Jews, but in the sense in which Pilate understood the title He was not. His answer means something like "So you say" (cf. John 18:33–38). From this reply Pilate concluded that Jesus was no revolutionary (v. 4).

■ **23:5–7** In the Roman Empire, a trial was usually held in the province where the offense was committed, but it could be transferred to the province from which the accused came. Pilate seized on this to send Jesus to Herod. Only Luke mentions this.

■ **23:9 answered him nothing.** Herod was the only person to whom Jesus refused to speak.

■ **23:11** Herod mocked Jesus, not taking the charge seriously.

ing examined *Him* in your presence, I have found no fault in this Man concerning those things of which you accuse Him; 15 no, neither did Herd, for [d]I sent you back to him; and indeed nothing deserving of death has been done by Him. 16 [e]I will therefore chastise Him and release *Him*" 17 [f](for[5] it was necessary for him to release one to them at the feast).

18 And [u]they all cried out at once, saying, "Away with this *Man,* and release to us Barabbas"— 19 who had been thrown into prison for a certain rebellion made in the city, and for murder.

20 Pilate, therefore, wishing to release Jesus, again called out to them. 21 But they shouted, saying, "Crucify *Him,* crucify Him!"

22 Then he said to them the third time, "Why, what evil has He done? I have found no reason for death in Him. I will therefore chastise Him and let *Him* go."

23 But they were insistent, demanding with loud voices that He be crucified. And the voices of these men [6]and of the chief priests prevailed. 24 So [v]Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they requested. 25 [w]And he released [7]to them the one they requested, who for rebellion and murder had been thrown into prison; but he delivered Jesus to their will.

The King on a Cross

26 [x]Now as they led Him away, they laid hold of a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, who was coming from the country, and on him they laid the cross that he might bear *it* after Jesus.

27 And a great multitude of the people followed Him, and women who also mourned and lamented Him. 28 But Jesus, turning to them, said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. 29 [y]For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, 'Blessed *are* the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!' 30 Then they will begin [z]*'to say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" and to the hills, "Cover us!"'* 31 [a]For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?"

32 [b]There were also two others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death. 33 And [c]when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left. 34 [8]Then Jesus said, "Father, [d]forgive them, for [e]they do not know what they do."

And [f]they divided His garments and cast lots. 35 And [g]the people stood looking on. But even the [h]rulers with them sneered, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God."

36 The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him [i]sour wine, 37 and saying, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself."

38 [j]And an inscription also was [9]written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew:

THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

39 [k]Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, [l]"If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us."

40 But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our

15 [d]NU *he sent Him back to us*

16 [e]John 19:1

17 [f]John 18:39 [5]NU omits v. 17.

18 [u]Acts 3:13–15

23 [6]NU omits *and of the chief priests*

24 [v]Mark 15:15

25 [w]Is. 53:8 [7]NU, M omit *to them*

26 [x]Matt. 27:32

29 [y]Matt. 24:19

30 [z]Hos. 10:8; Rev. 6:16, 17; 9:6

31 [a][Jer. 25:29]

32 [b]Is. 53:9, 12

33 [c]John 19:17–24

34 [d]1 Cor. 4:12 [e]Acts 3:17 [f]Matt. 27:35 [8]NU brackets the first sentence as a later addition.

35 [g]Ps. 22:17 [h]Matt. 27:39

36 [i]Ps. 69:21

38 [j]John 19:19 [9]NU omits *written* and *in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew*

39 [k]Mark 15:32 [l]NU *Are You not the Christ? Save*

■ **23:16 I will . . . chastise Him.** Under Roman law a person might be beaten and warned to be more careful in the future. Pilate was evidently hoping that this would placate the Jews and enable him to release One he knew was innocent.

■ **23:17** The custom of releasing a prisoner at Passover is not attested outside the Gospels, but this sort of thing was widely done at this time and there is nothing improbable about it.

■ **23:18 Barabbas.** The crowds clamored for Barabbas, a man otherwise unknown. His name means "son of the father," and Luke reports that his crimes were rebellion and murder.

■ **23:26 Simon a Cyrenian.** It was customary for the condemned to carry the horizontal crossbeam to the site of the crucifixion. Jesus started to carry His cross (John 19:17), but He would have been weakened by the heavy scourging that usually preceded crucifixion (Mark 15:15). The soldiers conscripted a passer-by named Simon from Cyrene in North Africa. His sons apparently were known in the church (Mark 15:21 note).

■ **23:27–31** Only Luke records this incident. There must have been many supporters of Jesus in Jerusalem, only a comparatively small number could crowd around the judgment hall where the opposition was concentrated.

■ **23:28 Daughters of Jerusalem.** These were local people, not pilgrims from Galilee. Jesus is concerned for them, not Himself, and turns their attention to the terrible troubles that would come upon the land (21:20–24).

■ **23:31** Evidently a proverbial saying, possibly meaning that if Jesus (who was innocent) was crucified, what would happen to the Jews (who were guilty)?

■ **23:33 Calvary.** From the Latin word *calvaria,* "a skull." All four Gospels say that Jesus was crucified between two criminals; in His death He "was numbered with the transgressors" (Is. 53:12).

■ **23:34 them.** Both Jews and Romans.

His garments. The clothing of a crucified person was given to those who carried out the execution. In this way they fulfilled Ps. 22:18.

■ **23:35** The rulers, not the people, were sneering. They speak of "the Christ" and "the Chosen One," although Jesus seems not to have used either title much.

41 [f][Heb. 7:26]
42 [z]NU *"Jesus, remember me*
43 [m][Rev. 2:7]
44 [n]Matt. 27:45–56 [3]NU adds *already*
45 [o]Matt. 27:51 [4]NU *obscured* [5]*the middle*
46 [p]Ps. 31:5 [q]John 19:30
47 [r]Mark 15:39
49 [s]Ps. 38:11
50 [t]Matt. 27:57–61
51 [u]Luke 2:25, 38 [6]NU *who was waiting*
53 [v]Mark 15:46
54 [w]Matt. 27:62
55 [x]Luke 8:2 [y]Mark 15:47
56 [z]Mark 16:1 [a]Ex. 20:10

CHAPTER 24

1 [a]John 20:1–8 [b]Luke 23:56 [7]NU omits *and certain other women with them*
2 [c]Mark 16:4
3 [d]Mark 16:5
4 [e]John 20:12 [2]NU omits *greatly*
6 [f]Luke 9:22

deeds; but this Man has done [1]nothing wrong." 42 Then he said [2]to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom."

43 And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in [m]Paradise."

Jesus Dies on the Cross

44 [n]Now it [3]was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. 45 Then the sun was [4]darkened, and [o]the veil of the temple was torn in [5]two. 46 And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, "Father, [p]*'into Your hands I commit My spirit.'*" [q]Having said this, He breathed His last.

47 [r]So when the centurion saw what had happened, he glorified God, saying, "Certainly this was a righteous Man!"

48 And the whole crowd who came together to that sight, seeing what had been done, beat their breasts and returned. 49 [s]But all His acquaintances, and the women who followed Him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

Jesus Buried in Joseph's Tomb

50 [t]Now behold, *there was* a man named Joseph, a council member, a good and just man. 51 He had not consented to their decision and deed. *He was* from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, [u]who[6] himself was also waiting for the kingdom of God. 52 This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. 53 [v]Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a tomb *that was* hewn out of the rock, where no one had ever lain before. 54 That day was [w]the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew near.

55 And the women [x]who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and [y]they observed the tomb and how His body was laid. 56 Then they returned and [z]prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath [a]according to the commandment.

He Is Risen

24 Now [a]on the first *day* of the week, very early in the morning, they, [1]and certain *other women* with them, came to the tomb [b]bringing the spices which they had prepared. 2 [c]But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. 3 [d]Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. 4 And it happened, as they were [2]greatly perplexed about this, that [e]behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. 5 Then, as they were afraid and bowed *their* faces to the earth, they said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? 6 He is not here, but is risen! [f]Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, 7 saying, 'The

■ **23:42 into Your kingdom.** This request indicates some measure of trust. The man was confident that Jesus was not about to be annihilated in death but was going to a heavenly kingdom.

■ **23:43 Paradise.** A Persian word for "garden," which came to mean the place of the righteous dead (2 Cor. 12:4; Rev. 2:7).

■ **23:44 about the sixth hour.** About noon.

darkness. Not an eclipse, because Passover occurs at the time of the full moon. This was a supernatural darkness.

■ **23:45 the veil.** A curtain separating the Most Holy Place from the rest of the temple. Jesus' death opened the way into the presence of God.

■ **23:46** Matthew and Mark stress how terrible Jesus' death was. Luke does not deny this, but records Jesus' words showing that His death was in accordance with the will of the Father.

breathed His last. This is not the usual way of referring to death. None of the Gospels employs standard terminology for Jesus' death.

■ **23:47 a righteous Man.** The way He died showed Him to be "righteous." Matthew and Mark have "Son of God"; in this context, the two terms have much the same meaning (Mark 15:39 note).

■ **23:48 beat their breasts.** A sign of grief. The crowd had come to be entertained, but Jesus' death disturbed them. Luke does not say what effect the death had on the disciples who witnessed it.

■ **23:50, 51** Joseph of Arimathea is mentioned in all four Gospels as taking the leading role in Jesus' burial. The location of Arimathea is uncertain (Mark 15:43 note). Joseph was a member of the Sanhedrin and must have been absent when the vote to execute Jesus was taken, for "all" agreed to this (Mark 14:64). That he was "waiting for the kingdom of God" (v. 51) means that he was a follower of Jesus.

■ **23:53 linen.** The linen cloth was a shroud (placed over the linen strips mentioned in John 19:40).

a tomb . . . hewn out of the rock. A rock tomb generally held several bodies (Mark 15:46 note), but this one was empty.

■ **23:54 the Preparation.** Friday, the day on which people prepared for the Sabbath (John 19:14 note).

■ **23:55, 56** There was not time on Friday to do all that Jesus' followers would have liked for His burial. The women took note of where the body was laid, evidently to know where to come when the Sabbath was over to complete the burial. Joseph and Nicodemus placed a considerable quantity of myrrh and aloes with the body as they laid it in the tomb (John 19:38, 39), but the women wanted to make their own contribution.

■ **24:1–53** Each Gospel deals with the Resurrection in its own way, though none describes how it happened. Some things are clear in all four: the empty tomb, the slowness of the disciples to believe that the Resurrection had happened, and the prominence of women in the first appearances. But each Gospel also has something that does not appear in the others. Luke includes the account of the walk to Emmaus and related events.

■ **24:1 the first day of the week.** This began at sunset on Saturday. The women would have had the hours of darkness to complete their preparations before setting out for the tomb at daybreak.

■ **24:2** See theological note "The Resurrection of Jesus."

■ **24:2, 3** A stone tomb would be closed by rolling a stone in front of the opening (Mark 15:46 note). Matthew notes that a seal was placed on the stone (Matt. 27:66).

Son of Man must be [g]delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.' "

[8] And [h]they remembered His words. [9] [i]Then they returned from the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. [10] It was Mary Magdalene, [j]Joanna, Mary *the mother* of James, and the other *women* with them, who told these things to the apostles. [11] [k]And their words seemed to them like [3]idle tales, and they did not believe them. [12] [l]But Peter arose and ran to the tomb; and stooping down, he saw the linen cloths [4]lying by themselves; and he departed, marveling to himself at what had happened.

The Road to Emmaus

[13] [m]Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was [5]seven miles from Jerusalem. [14] And they talked together of all these things which had happened. [15] So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that [n]Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. [16] But [o]their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him.

[17] And He said to them, "What kind of conversation *is* this that you have with one another as you [6]walk and are sad?"

[18] Then the one [p]whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, "Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?"

[19] And He said to them, "What things?"

So they said to Him, "The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, [q]who was a Prophet [r]mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, [20] [s]and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. [21] But we were hoping [t]that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened. [22] Yes, and [u]certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, aston-

7 [g]Luke 9:44; 11:29, 30; 18:31–33
8 [h]John 2:19–22
9 [i]Mark 16:10
10 [j]Luke 8:3
11 [k]Luke 24:25
[3]*nonsense*
12 [l]John 20:3–6
[4]NU omits *lying*
13 [m]Mark 16:12
[5]Lit. *60 stadia*
15 [n][Matt. 18:20]
16 [o]John 20:14; 21:4
17 [6]NU *walk? And they stood still, looking sad.*
18 [p]John 19:25
19 [q]Matt. 21:11
[r]Acts 7:22
20 [s]Acts 13:27, 28
21 [t]Luke 1:68; 2:38
22 [u]Mark 16:10

The Resurrection of Jesus

Jesus' resurrection was a divine act involving all three Persons of the Godhead (John 10:17, 18; Acts 13:30–35; Rom. 1:4). It was not just a revival of the broken physical body that was taken down from the cross and buried. It was a transformation of Jesus' humanity that enabled Him to appear, vanish, and move unseen from one location to another (Luke 24:31, 36). It was the creative renewing of His body, to become the body that is now fully glorified and deathless (Phil. 3:21; Heb. 7:16, 24). The Son of God in heaven lives in and through His body, and will do so forever. In 1 Cor. 15:50–54, Paul envisages that Christians who are alive on earth at the moment of Christ's return will undergo a similar transformation. Those who have died in Christ before His return will likewise be transformed never to die again.

Christianity rests on the certainty of Jesus' resurrection as an occurrence in history. The Gospels have it as their goal, with the empty tomb and resurrection appearances, and Acts insists on it (Acts 1:3; 2:24–35; 3:15; 4:10; 5:30–32; 13:33–37). Paul regarded the Resurrection as indisputable proof that the message about Jesus as Judge and Savior is true (Acts 17:31; 1 Cor. 15:1–11, 20).

Jesus' resurrection demonstrated His victory over death (Acts 2:24; 1 Cor. 15:54–57), vindicated Him as righteous (John 16:10) and indicated His divine identity (Rom. 1:4). It led on to His ascension, and His present heavenly reign. It guarantees the believer's present forgiveness and justification (Rom. 4:25; 1 Cor. 15:17), and it is the hope of eternal life in Christ for the believer (John 11:25, 26; Rom. 6; Eph. 1:18—2:10; Col. 2:9–15; 3:1–4). □

■ **24:9 all the rest.** This indefinite expression shows that there was a large band of Jesus' followers in Jerusalem at this time. Many would have been Galileans in Jerusalem for the Passover.

■ **24:10** Mary Magdalene was the first to see the risen Lord (Mark 16:9; John 20:10–18). She is mentioned in all four Gospels in connection with the Crucifixion and the Resurrection, but otherwise we hear of her only in 8:2.

■ **24:11 they did not believe them.** In general the testimony of women was not highly regarded by first-century Jews.

■ **24:13 Emmaus.** The exact site is not known.

■ **24:16 their eyes were restrained.** This appears to mean that God prevented them from recognizing Jesus at this time.

■ **24:18** Cleopas is not mentioned elsewhere.

■ **24:20 chief priests and our rulers.** The disciples place the principal responsibility for Jesus' death on their own people, not the Romans.

■ **24:21 redeem.** The word means to set free by paying a price. Clearly, the two were thinking of the political deliverance of their nation.

ished us. 23 When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive. 24 And [v]certain of those *who were* with us went to the tomb and found *it* just as the women had said; but Him they did not see."

25 Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 [w]Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His [x]glory?" 27 And beginning at [y]Moses and [z]all the Prophets, He [7]expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

The Disciples' Eyes Opened

28 Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and [a]He [8]indicated that He would have gone farther. 29 But [b]they constrained Him, saying, [c]"Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." And He went in to stay with them.

30 Now it came to pass, as [d]He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke *it,* and gave it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.

32 And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?" 33 So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those *who were* with them gathered together, 34 saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and [e]has appeared to Simon!" 35 And they told about the things *that had happened* on the road, and how He was [9]known to them in the breaking of bread.

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

36 [f]Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, "Peace to you." 37 But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen [g]a spirit. 38 And He said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? 39 Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. [h]Handle Me and see, for a [i]spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have."

40 [1]When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. 41 But while they still did not believe [j]for joy, and marveled, He said to them, [k]"Have you any food here?" 42 So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish [2]and some honeycomb. 43 [l]And He took *it* and ate in their presence.

The Scriptures Opened

44 Then He said to them, [m]"These *are* the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and *the* Prophets and *the* Psalms concerning Me." 45 And [n]He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.

The Ascension

46 Then He said to them, [o]"Thus it is written, [3]and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, 47 and that repentance and [p]remission of sins should be preached in His name [q]to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 And [r]you are witnesses of these things. 49 [s]Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city [4]of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."

24 [v]Luke 24:12

26 [w]Acts 17:2, 3 [x][1 Pet. 1:10–12]

27 [y][Deut. 18:15] [z][Is. 7:14; 9:6] [7]*explained*

28 [a]Mark 6:48 [8]*acted as if*

29 [b]Gen. 19:2, 3 [c][John 14:23]

30 [d]Matt. 14:19

34 [e]1 Cor. 15:5

35 [9]*recognized*

36 [f]Mark 16:14

37 [g]Mark 6:49

39 [h]John 20:20, 27 [i][1 Cor. 15:50]

40 [1]Some printed New Testaments omit v. 40. It is found in nearly all Gr. mss.

41 [j]Gen. 45:26 [k]John 21:5

42 [2]NU omits *and some honeycomb*

43 [l]Acts 10:39–41

44 [m]Matt. 16:21; 17:22; 20:18

45 [n]Acts 16:14

46 [o]Acts 17:3 [3]NU *that the Christ should suffer and rise*

47 [p]Acts 5:31; 10:43; 13:38; 26:18 [q][Jer. 31:34]

48 [r][Acts 1:8]

49 [s]Joel 2:28 [4]NU omits *of Jerusalem*

■ **24:26 to have suffered . . . to enter . . . glory.** See vv. 44–47. Peter gives a similar outline of the message of the Old Testament in 1 Pet. 1:10, 11.

■ **24:27** See 24:44 note.

■ **24:30 took bread . . . gave it to them.** These were actions a host would perform at a meal (cf. 22:19).

■ **24:31 opened.** This was apparently by divine action (cf. v. 16).

■ **24:34** They had not believed the women (v. 11), but an appearance to Simon Peter was convincing.

■ **24:36** The sudden appearance of Jesus among them, although the doors were locked (John 20:19), indicates that the risen Lord was not limited as ordinary human beings are.

■ **24:39 My hands and My feet.** That is, to see the nail marks.

24:42 broiled fish. The risen Christ ate and drank, proving that He was not merely a visionary appearance.

■ **24:44 all things must be fulfilled.** Notice the word "must." It is no accident that Scripture is fulfilled, for it reveals the purposes of God.

the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms. The threefold division of the Hebrew Bible. Jesus is saying that every part of Scripture bears witness to Him.

■ **24:45 open their understanding.** Jesus showed them the way to understand the Bible. Christ's death and resurrection were foretold in Scripture (v. 26 note). In addition, the calling of people to repentance and remission of sin were foretold (v. 47). These are based on Christ's atoning work. See "The Mission of the Church in the World" at John 20:21.

■ **24:48 witnesses.** The preachers are not to produce some novel concepts of their own, but to bear witness to what God has done.

■ **24:49** The risen Jesus will send what His Father has promised, the gift of the Holy Spirit (Joel 2:28–32; Acts 2:1–4).

50 And He led them out [t]as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them.
51 [u]Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. 52 [v]And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, 53 and were continually [w]in the temple [5]praising and blessing God. [6]Amen.

50 [t]Acts 1:12
51 [u]Mark 16:19
52 [v]Matt. 28:9

53 [w]Acts 2:46 [5]NU omits *praising and* [6]NU omits *Amen.*

The Ascension of Jesus

Jesus' ascension was His Father's act of withdrawing Him from His disciples' gaze upward (a sign of exaltation) into a cloud (a sign of God's presence, Acts 1:9–11). This act was not a form of space travel, but the next step following the Resurrection of Jesus' return from death to the height of glory. Jesus foretold the Ascension (John 6:62; 14:2, 12; 16:5, 10, 17, 28; 17:5; 20:17), and Luke described it (Luke 24:50–53; Acts 1:6–11). Paul celebrates it and affirms Christ's consequent lordship (Eph. 1:20; 4:8–10; Phil. 2:9–11; 1 Tim. 3:16), and Hebrews applies this truth for encouragement of the faint-hearted (Heb. 1:3; 4:14; 9:24). Jesus Christ is Lord of the universe, a source of enormous encouragement to all believers.

The Ascension was from one standpoint the restoration of the glory that the Son had before the Incarnation, from another the glorifying of human nature in a way that had never happened before, and from a third the start of a reign that had not existed in this form before. The Ascension establishes three facts:

1. Christ's personal ascendancy. Ascension means accession. To sit at the Father's right hand is to occupy the position of ruler on God's behalf (Matt. 28:18; 1 Cor. 15:27; Eph. 1:20–22; 1 Pet. 3:22).

2. Christ's spiritual omnipresence. In the heavenly sanctuary of the heavenly Zion (Heb. 9:24; 12:22–24), Jesus is accessible to all who invoke His name (Heb. 4:14), and powerful to help them, anywhere in the world (Heb. 4:16; 7:25; 13:6–8).

3. Christ's heavenly ministry. The reigning Lord intercedes for His people (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25). Though requesting from the Father is part of what He does (John 14:16), the essence of Christ's intercession is intervention in our interest rather than supplication on our behalf (as if His position were one of sympathy without status or authority). In sovereignty He now lavishes upon us the benefits that His suffering won for us. From His throne He sends the Holy Spirit constantly to enrich His people (John 16:7–14; Acts 2:33) and equip them for service (Eph. 4:8–12). □

■ **24:50** Luke gives no time indication here, but later he states that the Ascension took place forty days after the Resurrection (Acts 1:3).

Bethany. A village on the Mount of Olives about two miles east of Jerusalem (John 11:18).

■ **24:51 He was parted from them.** Luke's account of the Ascension is a brief but fitting conclusion to his Gospel, which is an account of "all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up" (Acts 1:1, 2). Luke provides a more detailed ascension account at the beginning of his second book (Acts 1:9–11). The Ascension marks the end of the work Jesus came to do on earth and the beginning of what He continues to do in and through the church. See theological note "The Ascension of Jesus."

■ **24:52 they worshiped Him.** Whatever their view of Jesus in earlier days, they now recognized His divinity and worshiped Him. The separation did not bring sadness, but "great joy."

■ **24:53** The Gospel ends as it began, in Jerusalem with the worship of God.

The Gospel According to

JOHN

Author

The author of this Gospel was almost certainly a Jew. He displays an intimate knowledge of Jewish customs, festivals, and beliefs. His detailed geographical knowledge suggests that he was a native of Palestine, and it appears that he was an eyewitness of many of the events recorded in his Gospel (19:35).

Although the work is anonymous, it contains some hints about its authorship. This is the only Gospel that refers to one of the apostles with the expression the disciple "whom Jesus loved" (13:23) rather than by name. This disciple is the one identified as the eyewitness who "testifies of these things, and wrote these things" (21:24). Moreover, any careful reader would notice that John, son of Zebedee, who was one of the most prominent disciples, is not mentioned by name in the Gospel. It is difficult to explain this omission unless one assumes that the Gospel was written by John and that he refrained from identifying himself.

Early church tradition, such as the writings of Irenaeus in the second century, consistently and explicitly attributes this Gospel to the apostle John. Modern doubts about the reliability of that tradition have led many scholars to reject John's authorship of the book, but no other view gives as satisfactory an account of the facts.

Date and Occasion

Early church tradition suggests that John wrote the Gospel toward the end of his life, around A.D. 90. Some scholars of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, having abandoned authorship by John, argued that the Gospel was as late as the middle of the second century. The discoveries of the Rylands papyrus (a manuscript fragment dated to about A.D. 125, containing a few lines from John 18) and of the Dead Sea Scrolls (which improved our understanding of Palestine in the first century) have led most scholars to return to the Gospel's traditional date. Some specialists have gone further and dated it before A.D. 70.

The author himself describes his purpose for writing: "that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (20:31).

Interpretive Difficulties

A special challenge to interpreters of John's Gospel is the relation between seeing "signs" and belief. The author places great emphasis on the unique significance of Jesus' miracles because they reveal much about His Person and work (20:30, 31). But some passages seem to suggest that belief based solely upon having personally seen the signs is not a good thing. In 4:48, for instance, Jesus rebukes His hearers, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe." This passage brings to mind the statement of Thomas in 20:25, "Unless I see . . . I will not believe." Therefore, many readers have concluded that an ideal faith has no interest in miracles. The problem with this conclusion is twofold. First, if faith resulting from miracles is not good, why does Jesus perform miracles? Second, why does John link these signs to faith in Christ (20:31)?

To believe in Jesus means not only to acknowledge His ability to perform miracles, but also to accept what those miracles as "signs" reveal about His Person and work. The evangelist indicates that the written record of Jesus' signs is sufficient testimony for those who are not eyewitnesses. This understanding is implied by what Jesus said to Thomas, "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (20:29). Paul's formulation gives a similar relation between faith and sight: "we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7; cf. Rom. 8:24, 25).

Faith can be produced and encouraged by the signs Jesus performed. But the goal of this faith is to apprehend Jesus in His fullness, not merely as a miracle worker. Jesus is revealed by His "signs" as the eternal Word of God, one in glory with the Father and the Spirit. It is not necessary to be an eyewitness of the signs; the record of them is sufficient to convey their power for eliciting and strengthening faith in Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God.

Characteristics and Themes

The teachings of Jesus recorded in John tend to be lengthy discussions of a single topic, in contrast to the pithy, proverb-like sayings usually found in the other three Gospels. The teaching material is often embedded in conversations, as Jesus interacts with individual people or groups in discussion. There are almost no parables in this Gospel.

Jesus' interaction with those who did not receive Him although they were "His own" (1:11) is an important focus of the public ministry (chs. 1—12). Jesus appears often in Jerusalem at the time of the Jewish feasts. These feasts have special importance because of the way Jesus relates His own work to what the feasts signify (7:37–39). Despite this ministry, His nation did not receive Him, a fact that John explains as the result of human sin. Jesus is rejected, not because He is a stranger, but because people love darkness rather than light.

The Gospel of John makes use of sharp contrasts: light and darkness (1:4–9), love and hatred (15:17, 18),

from above and from below (8:23), life and death (6:57, 58), truth and falsehood (8:32–47). Other distinctive features are the theme of misunderstanding (2:21; 6:51–58 and notes), the use of twofold or double meanings (3:14; 6:62 and notes), and the role of the "I am" sayings (6:35 note).

John highlights the reality of sin in various ways, but especially by emphasizing our total dependence on God for salvation. Just as our physical birth was not the result of our own effort or will, so our spiritual birth is not due to us, but to God's will and the power of His Spirit (1:12, 13; 3:5–8). Sinful men and women are unable to come to Jesus for salvation unless they are drawn by the Father (6:44). But when they come to Jesus, they have "everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment" (5:24); they belong to the Father, and He will not let them die (10:27–29).

One of the most striking distinctives of this Gospel is the Prologue (1:1–18) that presents Jesus as the eternal Logos, or Word, the One who reveals the Father. Christ reveals the Father because He shares in the Father's deity. He is the One who made the universe (1:3). He met the needs of the Israelites in the wilderness, and now He provides spiritual water and bread (4:13, 14; 6:35). In short, He is one with the Father, the "I AM" (5:18; 8:58; 10:30–33; cf. Ex. 3:14). □

Outline of John

I. Prologue (1:1–18)
II. Public Ministry (1:19—12:50)
  A. John the Baptist's Witness (1:19–34)
  B. Calling of First Disciples (1:35–51)
  C. First Miracle: Changing Water to Wine at Cana (2:1–12)
  D. Cleansing the Temple at Jerusalem (2:13–25)
  E. Nicodemus (3:1–21)
  F. Testimony of John the Baptist (3:22–36)
  G. Jesus in Samaria (4:1–42)
    1. Journey to Sychar (4:1–6)
    2. Samaritan Woman at the Well (4:7–30)
    3. Spiritual Food (4:31–38)
    4. Samaritan Belief (4:39–42)
  H. Healing Official's Son in Cana of Galilee (4:43–54)
  I. Visit to Jerusalem (ch. 5)
    1. Healing at Pool of Bethesda (5:1–15)
    2. Jesus and the Father (5:16–47)
  J. The One Sent from the Father (ch. 6)
    1. Feeding of the Five Thousand (6:1–15)
    2. Jesus Walks on Water (6:16–21)
    3. Discourse and Controversy: Jesus the Bread of Life (6:22–71)
  K. Jesus Attends the Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem (chs. 7; 8)
    1. Journey to Jerusalem (7:1–13)
    2. Is Jesus the Messiah? (7:14–52)
    3. The Woman Caught in Adultery (7:53—8:11)
    4. Jesus Testifies Concerning Himself (8:12–59)
  L. Healing of Man Born Blind (ch. 9)
  M. Good Shepherd Discourse (10:1–21)
  N. Jesus Attends the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem (10:22–39)
  O. Ministry Across the Jordan (10:40–42)
  P. Lazarus Raised from the Dead (11:1–54)
  Q. Conclusion of the Public Ministry (11:55—12:50)
    1. Anointing at Bethany (11:55—12:11)
    2. Triumphal Entry (12:12–19)
    3. Gentiles Come to Jesus (12:20–36)
    4. Unbelief of the Jews (12:37–50)

III. The Passion Week (chs. 13—19)
A. Jesus' Private Ministry to the Disciples (chs. 13—17)
1. Footwashing; Betrayal Foretold (ch. 13)
2. Farewell Discourse (chs. 14—16)
3. Intercessory Prayer (ch. 17)
B. Arrest and Trial (ch. 18)
C. Crucifixion, Death, and Burial (ch. 19)
IV. The Resurrection (ch. 20)
V. Epilogue (ch. 21)
A. The Miraculous Catch of Fish (21:1–14)
B. Peter Reinstated (21:15–25)

CHAPTER 1

1 [a]1 John 1:1 [b]Rev. 19:13 [c][John 17:5] [d][1 John 5:20]
2 [e]Gen. 1:1
3 [f][Col. 1:16, 17]
4 [g][1 John 5:11] [h]John 8:12; 9:5; 12:46
5 [i][John 3:19] [j]Or *overcome*
6 [k]Matt. 3:1–17
7 [l]John 3:25–36; 5:33–35 [m][John 3:16]

The Eternal Word

IN the beginning [a]was the Word, and the [b]Word was [c]with God, and the Word was [d]God. 2 [e]He was in the beginning with God. 3 [f]All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. 4 [g]In Him was life, and [h]the life was the light of men. 5 And [i]the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not [j]comprehend it.

John's Witness: The True Light

6 There was a [k]man sent from God, whose name *was* John. 7 This man came for a [l]witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might [m]believe. 8 He was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that [n]Light. 9 [o]That [2]was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.

10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and [p]the world did not know Him. 11 [q]He came to His [3]own, and His [4]own did not receive Him. 12 But [r]as many as received

8 [n]Is. 9:2; 49:6 9 [o]Is. 49:6 [2]Or *That was the true Light which, coming into the world, gives light to every man.* 10 [p]Heb. 1:2 11 [q][Luke 19:14] [3]His own things or domain [4]His own people 12 [r]Gal. 3:26

■ **1:1–18** This "Prologue" to the Gospel is a preface to the narrative beginning at v. 19.

■ **1:1 the Word.** The term "Word" (Greek *logos*) designates God the Son with respect to His deity; "Jesus" and "Christ" refer to His incarnation and saving work. During the first three centuries, doctrines of the Person of Christ focused intensely on His position as the Logos. In Greek philosophy, the Logos was "reason" or "logic" as an abstract force that brought order and harmony to the universe. But in John's writings such qualities of the Logos are gathered in the Person of Christ. In Neo-Platonic philosophy and the Gnostic heresy (second and third centuries A.D.), the Logos was seen as one of many intermediate powers between God and the world. Such notions are far removed from the simplicity of John's Gospel.

In this verse the Word is expressly affirmed to be God. The Word existed already "in the beginning" (a clear reference to the opening words of the Bible), which is a way of denoting the eternity that is unique to God. John states clearly, "the Word was God." Some have observed that the word translated "God" here has no definite article, and argued on this basis that it means "a god" rather than "God." This is a misunderstanding; the article is omitted because of the word order in the Greek sentence (the predicate "God" has been placed first for emphasis). The New Testament never endorses the idea of "a god," an expression that implies polytheism and is in sharp conflict with the consistent monotheism of the Bible. In the New Testament, the Greek word for "God" occurs often without the definite article, depending on the requirements of Greek grammar.

That "the Word was with God," indicates a distinction of Persons within the unity of the Godhead. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not successive forms of appearance of one Person, but are eternal Persons present from "the beginning" (v. 2). "With" suggests a relationship of close personal intimacy. See "One and Three: The Trinity" at Is. 44:6.

■ **1:3 All things were made through Him.** This verse also emphasizes the deity of the Word, since creation belongs to God alone. See also v. 10; Col. 1:16–17; "God the Creator" at Ps. 148:5.

■ **1:4 In Him was life.** Another affirmation of deity: the Son as well as the Father has "life in Himself" (5:26).

■ **1:5 did not comprehend it.** See text note. It is characteristic of the style of this Gospel to emphasize contrasting concepts (see Introduction). The plot of this Gospel could be seen in terms of a struggle between the forces of faith and unbelief.

■ **1:7, 9 all . . . every man.** The universal relevance of the gospel is asserted (v. 7) as well as the enlightening activity of God's common grace (v. 9). God's saving activity is not restricted to any particular people.

■ **1:9 the true Light.** In this Gospel, "truth" and "true" are often employed to signify what is everlasting or heavenly, as opposed to the merely temporal or earthly. See notes on 4:24; 6:32; "Mankind's Guilty Knowledge of God" at Rom. 1:19.

■ **1:11 did not receive Him.** Jesus' public ministry was one of rejection by "His own people" (see text notes).

■ **1:12** See text note. Fallen human beings are not children of God by nature; this is the privilege only of those who have faith, a faith generated in them by the sovereign action of God (v. 13). See "Adoption" at Gal. 4:5.

Him, to them He gave the [5]right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:
13 [r]who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

The Word Becomes Flesh

14 [s]And the Word [t]became [u]flesh and dwelt among us, and [v]we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, [w]full of grace and truth.

15 [x]John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, [y]'He who comes after me [6]is preferred before me, [z]for He was before me.' "

16 [7]And of His [a]fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. 17 For [b]the law was given through Moses, *but* [c]grace and [d]truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 [e]No one has seen God at any time. [f]The only begotten [g]Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared *Him.*

A Voice in the Wilderness

19 Now this is [g]the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?"

20 [h]He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ."

21 And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?"

He said, "I am not."

"Are you [i]the Prophet?"

And he answered, "No."

22 Then they said to him, "Who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?"

23 He said: [j]"I *am*

> [k] *'The voice of one crying in the wilderness:*
> *"Make straight the way of the LORD,"'*

as the prophet Isaiah said."

24 Now those who were sent were from the Pharisees. 25 And they asked him, saying, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"

26 John answered them, saying, [l]"I baptize with water, [m]but there stands One among you

12 [5]*authority*

13 [r][1 Pet. 1:23]

14 [s]Rev. 19:13 [t]Gal. 4:4 [u]Heb. 2:11 [v]Is. 40:5 [w][John 8:32; 14:6; 18:37]

15 [x]John 3:32 [y][Matt. 3:11] [z][Col. 1:17] [6]*ranks higher than I*

16 [a][Col. 1:19; 2:9] [7]NU *For*

17 [b][Ex. 20:1] [c][Rom. 5:21; 6:14] [d][John 8:32; 14:6; 18:37]

18 [e]Ex. 33:20 [f]1 John 4:9 [g]NU *God*

19 [g]John 5:33

20 [h]Luke 3:15

21 [i]Deut. 18:15, 18

23 [j]Matt. 3:3 [k]Is. 40:3

26 [l]Matt. 3:11 [m]Mal. 3:1

■ **1:13 who were born.** Early Latin versions understood this to describe the virgin birth of Christ. However, the plural verb "were born" shows that this verse is about the new birth of Christian believers (cf. 3:3, 5, 7, 8). This new birth takes place by the action of the Spirit giving life to those who were "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1). The new birth, often called "regeneration," is explained more fully in 3:1–21. Paul uses the metaphor of a resurrection from death in sin rather than the image of rebirth (Rom. 6:4–6; Eph. 2:5, 6; Col. 2:13; 3:1; cf. John 5:24). God's work of salvation is wholly sovereign and gracious, but the reality of the human response in believing and receiving is never cancelled. See "Election and Reprobation" at Rom. 9:18.

■ **1:14 the Word became flesh.** This is the climactic assertion of the Prologue. To some of John's contemporaries, spirit and the divine were utterly opposed to matter and flesh. To others, the gods were thought to visit the earth disguised as human beings (Acts 14:11). But here a chasm is bridged: the eternal Word of God did not merely appear to be a human being, but actually became flesh. He took to Himself a full and genuine human nature. See theological note "Jesus Christ, God and Man."

dwelt among us. "Dwelt" means "pitched His tent." This not only indicates the temporary nature of Jesus' earthly existence, but does so in a way that recalls ancient Israel's tabernacle, where God could be found (Ex. 40:34, 35).

we beheld His glory. His "glory" is beheld, even as God's was in the wilderness (Ex. 16:1–10; 33:18–23), in the tabernacle (Ex. 40:34–35), and later in the temple (1 Kin. 8:1–11). There may also be a reference to the Transfiguration, since John witnessed it (Matt. 17:1–5). "Glory" applies supremely to God, who is the Creator and Ruler of the universe, and before whom all knees must bow. The Son has the divine glory by right (17:5). The Reformers declared their faith with the motto, *Soli Deo Gloria* ("To God alone the glory").

the only begotten. This phrase translates a single Greek word and explicitly points to the eternal generation of the Son in the Trinity. Another possibility is to translate "only Son," without the idea of begetting, but referring to the uniqueness of the Son.

full of grace and truth. These words correspond to Old Testament terms describing God's covenant mercy that are often translated "mercy and truth" (Gen. 24:27; Ps. 25:10; Prov. 16:6; cf. Ex. 34:6; Ps. 26:3). The Word made flesh fully manifests the gracious covenant-making and covenant-keeping character of God.

■ **1:15** John the Baptist's ministry preceded the public ministry of Jesus (Matt. 3), yet the Word, being eternal, existed before John (cf. 8:58).

■ **1:16 grace.** This word, frequent in Paul's epistles, appears in John's writings only in this passage and as a customary greeting in Rev. 1:4; 22:21. It emphasizes that salvation is a gift. The Reformation expressed this with the motto *Sola Gratia* ("by grace alone").

■ **1:17 Moses . . . Jesus Christ.** There is both contrast and comparison. Grace and truth truly existed in Moses' day, but they were fully revealed in the coming of Christ.

■ **1:18 No one has seen God.** It is fundamental that God is invisible and without form (1 Tim. 6:16). Yet Christ reveals God. He brings the invisible and the visible together in a way that has no parallel or analogy.

■ **1:19 testimony of John.** John the Baptist's testimony to those who question him reveals that his role was to prepare the world for Christ.

■ **1:21 Are you Elijah.** In Matt. 11:14 Jesus, clearly referring to Mal. 4:5, tells the crowd that John is "Elijah who is to come." John comes in the "spirit and power of Elijah" (Luke 1:17), but the Baptist here affirms that he is not Elijah himself.

the Prophet. There were different expectations among first-century Jews concerning the "Prophet like me" that Moses announced in Deut. 18:15. Here the priests and Levites want to know whether John considers himself to be this Prophet.

■ **1:23** In quoting Is. 40:3, John applies to Christ what is said of Yahweh in that passage. The same truth appears even more clearly in Mark 1:1–3.

Jesus Christ, God and Man

Trinity and Incarnation belong together. The doctrine of the Trinity declares that Christ is truly divine; the doctrine of the Incarnation declares that the same Christ is also fully human. Together they proclaim the full reality of the Savior revealed in the New Testament, the Son who came from the Father's side at the Father's will to become the sinner's substitute on the cross (Matt. 20:28; 26:36–46; John 1:29; 3:13–17; Rom. 5:8; 8:32; 2 Cor. 5:19–21; 8:9; Phil. 2:5–8).

The doctrine of the Trinity was defined at the Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325), when the church countered the Arian idea that Jesus was God's first and noblest creature by affirming that He was of the same "substance" or "essence" as the Father. The distinction between Father and Son is within the divine unity, so that the Son is God in the same sense as the Father is. In saying that Son and Father are "of one substance," and that the Son is "begotten, not made" (echoing "only begotten," John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18), the Nicene Creed unequivocally recognized the deity of Jesus Christ.

The church's confession of the doctrine of the Incarnation was expressed at the Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451), where the church countered both the Nestorian idea that Jesus was two "persons," not one, and the Eutychian idea that Jesus' divinity had swallowed up His humanity. Rejecting both, the Council affirmed that Jesus is one person in two natures (that is, with two sets of capacities for experience, expression, and action). The two natures are united in Him without mixture, confusion, separation, or division, and each nature retains its own attributes. In other words, all that is in us, as well as all that is in God, is and always will be truly and distinguishably present in the one Christ. Thus the Chalcedonian formula strongly affirms the full humanity of the Lord.

The Incarnation, the mysterious miracle at the heart of historic Christianity, is central in the New Testament witness. Jesus came first to the Jews, whose central affirmation of faith is that there is only one God. The apostles were Israelites, yet they and the writers of the New Testament taught that Jesus the Messiah should be worshiped and trusted. This is to say that He is God no less than He is man. It is amazing that this testimony could prevail among them.

John's Gospel opens its eye-witness narratives (John 1:14; 19:35; 21:24) with the declaration that Jesus is the eternal divine Logos, agent of creation and source of life and light (vv. 1–5, 9). Through becoming "flesh," the Logos was revealed as the Son of God and the source of "grace and truth," "the only begotten of the Father" (vv. 14, 18). The Gospel is punctuated with "I am" statements that have special significance because "I am" was used as a divine name on account of the Greek translation of Ex. 3:14; when John reveals Jesus as the "I am," the claim to deity is explicit. Examples of this are John 8:28, 58, and the seven declarations of Jesus as (a) the bread of life, giving spiritual food (6:35, 48, 51); (b) the light of the world, banishing darkness (8:12; 9:5); (c) the door for the sheep, giving access to God (10:7, 9); (d) the good shepherd, protecting from peril (10:11, 14); (e) the resurrection and life, overcoming death (11:25); (f) the way, truth, and life, guiding to the Father (14:6); (g) the true vine, nurturing for fruitfulness (15:1, 5). Climactically, Thomas worships Jesus as "My Lord and my God" (20:28). Jesus pronounces His blessing on all who share Thomas's faith (20:29–31).

Paul says about Jesus that "in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9; cf. 1:19). Paul hails Jesus the Son as the Father's image and as His agent in creating and upholding everything (Col. 1:15–17). Paul declares Him to be "Lord," to whom one must pray for salvation just as one calls on Yahweh (Joel 2:32; Rom. 10:9–13). Jesus is "God over all" (Rom. 9:5), our "God and Savior" (Titus 2:13). Paul prays to Him personally (2 Cor. 12:8, 9), and looks to Him as a source of divine grace (2 Cor. 13:14). The testimony is explicit: faith in Jesus' deity is basic to Paul's theology and religion.

The writer to the Hebrews, revealing the perfection of Christ's high priesthood, declares the full deity and unique dignity of the Son of God (Heb. 1:3, 6, 8–12). He then celebrates Christ's full humanity (ch. 2). The high priesthood that he describes Christ as exercising depends on the conjunction of an endless, unfailing divine life with a full human experience of temptation and suffering (Heb. 2:14–17; 4:14—5:2; 7:13–28; 12:2, 3). The New Testament forbids worship of angels (Col. 2:18; Rev. 22:8, 9), but commands worship of Jesus. Outspokenly it presents the divine-human Savior as the proper object of faith, hope, and love. A religion without this emphasis cannot be Christianity. □

whom you do not know. 27 [n]It is He who, coming after me, [o]is preferred before me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose."

28 These things were done [p]in [q]Bethabara beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

The Lamb of God

29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! [r]The Lamb of God [s]who takes away the sin of the world! 30 This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who [t]is preferred before me, for He was before me.' 31 I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, [u]therefore I came baptizing with water."

32 [v]And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. 33 I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, [w]this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' 34 And I have seen and testified that this is the [x]Son of God."

The First Disciples

35 Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. 36 And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, [y]"Behold the Lamb of God!"

37 The two disciples heard him speak, and they [z]followed Jesus. 38 Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, "What do you seek?"

They said to Him, "Rabbi" (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), "where are You staying?"

39 He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour).

40 One of the two who heard John *speak,* and followed Him, was [a]Andrew, Simon Peter's

27 [n]Acts 19:4 [o]*ranks higher than I*
28 [p]Judg. 7:24 [q]NU, M *Bethany*
29 [r]Rev. 5:6–14 [s][1 Pet. 2:24]
30 [t]*ranks higher than I*
31 [u]Matt. 3:6
32 [v]Mark 1:10
33 [w]Matt. 3:11
34 [x]John 11:27
36 [y]John 1:29
37 [z]Matt. 4:20, 22
40 [a]Matt. 4:18

■ **1:29 Behold! The Lamb of God.** Compare v. 36. Whether "the Lamb" is the Passover lamb or the Servant lamb of Is. 53:7 cannot be easily determined. There is some evidence that the two figures were combined very early in Christian thought.

who takes away the sin of the world. The "world" designates humanity in its hostility to God, as elsewhere in this Gospel. Although not all persons without exception will be saved, the sacrifice is the only atonement for human sin, and its effectiveness is not limited by time or place (3:16 note).

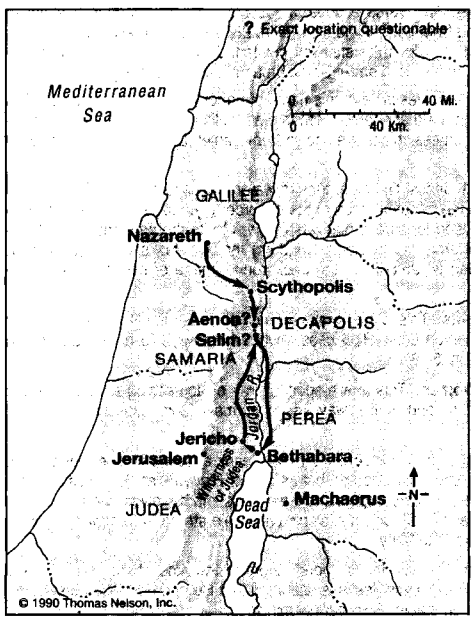
■ **1:31 I did not know Him.** Though John the Baptist may have had previous personal contact with Jesus (cf. Luke 1:39–45), he did not know who Jesus was (the Lamb and Son of God) until the Spirit identified Him (v. 32). See "The Baptism of Jesus" at Mark 1:9.

■ **1:33 who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.** The Old Testament anticipated the time of redemption as the time when the Spirit would be poured out on God's people. Paul refers to Jesus as the second Adam who became "a life-giving spirit," (1 Cor. 15:45 note). It is after Jesus returns to heaven that He sends this heavenly Helper to dwell with His people on earth (14:26; 16:7). The baptism of the Holy Spirit occurs with the new birth that constitutes helpless sinners as sons and daughters of God (vv. 12, 13; 1 Cor. 12:13). This baptism also empowers them for Christian service (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8).

■ **1:34 this is the Son of God.** This is John's way of reporting the heavenly voice that accompanied the heaven-sent Spirit, as recorded in Matt. 3:17, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." While "son of God" was used variously by Jews (2 Sam. 7:14; Ps. 2:7) and Gentiles (Mark 15:39 note), the Baptist's witness, that of the last of the prophets of the old order (Matt. 11:11–14) is clear. Jesus is *the* Son of God, the "only begotten of the Father" (v. 14).

■ **1:35–51** Jesus calls His first disciples. Since the apostles had unique authority from Christ to bear witness, the witness on which the church would be established (Eph. 2:20), it was necessary that they be particularly identified as having been selected by Christ Himself (cf. 15:16).

■ **1:37 they followed.** Traditionally, the students of a Jewish rabbi walked behind him. Jesus' disciples followed Him physically, but more is in view. Following Jesus takes on deeper levels of meaning throughout this Gospel (13:36–38; cf. 21:15–22).



Baptism and Temptation. Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee to be baptized by John the Baptist. Though John had been baptizing in the Jordan River near Aenon and Salim (John 3:23), the exact location of Jesus' baptism is uncertain. Immediately after, Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness of Judea below Jericho. Following His temptation there, Jesus returned to Galilee.

brother. 41 He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the [3]Messiah" (which is translated, the Christ). 42 And he brought him to Jesus.

Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, "You are Simon the son of [4]Jonah. [y]You shall be called Cephas" (which is translated, [5]A Stone).

Philip and Nathanael

43 The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found [z]Philip and said to him, "Follow Me." 44 Now [a]Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. 45 Philip found [b]Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom [c]Moses in the law, and also the [d]prophets, wrote—Jesus [e]of Nazareth, the [f]son of Joseph."

46 And Nathanael said to him, [g]"Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"

Philip said to him, "Come and see."

47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, "Behold, [h]an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!"

48 Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?"

Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you."

49 Nathanael answered and said to Him, "Rabbi, [i]You are the Son of God! You are [j]the King of Israel!"

50 Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these." 51 And He said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, [k]hereafter[6] you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

Water Turned to Wine

2 On the third day there was a [a]wedding in [b]Cana of Galilee, and the [c]mother of Jesus was there. 2 Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. 3 And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine."

4 Jesus said to her, [d]"Woman, [e]what does your concern have to do with Me? [f]My hour has not yet come."

5 His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do *it.*"

41 [3]Lit. *Anointed One*

42 [y]Matt. 16:18 [4]NU *John* [5]Gr. *Petros,* usually translated *Peter*

43 [z]John 6:5; 12:21, 22; 14:8, 9

44 [a]John 12:21

45 [b]John 21:2 [c]Luke 24:27 [d][Zech. 6:12] [e][Matt. 2:23] [f]Luke 3:23

46 [g]John 7:41, 42, 52

47 [h]Ps. 32:2; 73:1

49 [i]Matt. 14:33 [j]Matt. 21:5

51 [k]Gen. 28:12 [6]NU omits *hereafter*

CHAPTER 2

1 [a][Heb. 13:4] [b]John 4:46 [c]John 19:25

4 [d]John 19:26 [e]2 Sam. 16:10 [f]John 7:6, 8, 30; 8:20

■ **1:45 of whom Moses . . . the prophets, wrote.** Philip recognizes that all the Old Testament, both Law and Prophets, anticipated a great redemptive work of God to be accomplished by a special anointed One. The Old Testament anticipation of Christ and His work was affirmed by Christ Himself (Luke 24:25–27, 44–47) and was central in the preaching of the apostles (Acts 2:29–32; 3:18, 21, 24; 7:52, 53; 8:30–35; 26:22, 23; 28:23).

the son of Joseph. This does not imply a denial of the virgin birth, of which Philip may not in any case have been aware; it is simply a reference identifying Jesus by His town and family (Matt. 1:24).

■ **1:46 Can anything good come out of Nazareth.** Nathanael apparently expresses contemporary skepticism that a prophet could arise from Galilee (7:52). Nazareth was an insignificant village, not mentioned in the Old Testament or other Jewish literature of the time.

■ **1:47 an Israelite indeed.** The phrase is probably meant to call to mind Israel as the people of God, to whom the Messiah was promised. This phrase also alludes to vv. 50, 51, where Nathanael is promised an experience similar to that of the first person named Israel (Gen. 28:12; 32:28), whose deceitful character was transformed by God.

■ **1:49 Rabbi, You are the Son of God.** Nathanael's confession may seem like an overreaction to Jesus' supernatural knowledge. But Philip had already indicated to Nathanael that Jesus was the One anticipated by the Law and the Prophets (v. 45). Nathanael comes to Jesus looking for reasons to believe or disbelieve, and he finds Jesus' knowledge convincing.

King of Israel. This is a title for the Messiah, used in shouts of praise at the Triumphal Entry (12:13), similar to the announcement of the wise men (Matt. 2:2) and to the inscription on the cross (19:19).

■ **1:50 greater things than these.** Jesus' earthly miracles are signs of His redemptive power and work. The miracles are to be appreciated, not merely for themselves, but for the redemptive realities they promise. Greater than such works is the salvation Christ brings (v. 51).

■ **1:51 heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending.** This verse alludes to Jacob's vision of a ladder or stairway stretching from earth to heaven (Gen. 28:12). Jesus presents Himself as the reality to which the stairway pointed. Jacob saw in a dream the reunion of heaven and earth; Christ brought it about in reality.

Son of Man. Jesus uses this name often for Himself. It emphasizes His human nature that enabled Him to die for His people. It also refers to the heavenly, messianic figure known from Daniel (Dan. 7:13; see Matt. 8:20 note).

■ **2:1–11** Jesus' first sign: turning water into wine at Cana. This miracle signifies the transformation of the old order (symbolized by the stone water jars used for ceremonial washing, v. 6) into the new (the wine standing for eternal life in God's kingdom) through Jesus Christ (cf. 2 Cor. 5:17). See Is. 25:6–9 for the background image of salvation as a banquet.

■ **2:3 wine.** This is the normal term employed in the New Testament for the fermented drink. Paul uses it when he says, "Do not be drunk with wine" (Eph. 5:18).

■ **2:4 Woman.** This is a respectful way of addressing a woman within that culture and is the way Jesus normally addresses women (4:21; 8:10).

what does your concern . . . Me. Jesus answers Mary's request, not because she is His mother, but as part of His work as the Messiah. This indicates that Mary's special role as Jesus' mother gives her no authority to intervene in Christ's messianic career—a strong argument against offering prayer to Mary.

My hour. Usually Jesus' "hour" refers to the time of His suffering and death (12:27). Here Jesus is asserting that He and not Mary must determine the timetable of His earthly ministry.

[6] Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, [g]according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece. [7] Jesus said to them, "Fill the waterpots with water." And they filled them up to the brim. [8] And He said to them, "Draw *some* out now, and take *it* to the master of the feast." And they took *it*. [9] When the master of the feast had tasted [h]the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom. [10] And he said to him, "Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the *guests* have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!"

[11] This [i]beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, [j]and [l]manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.

[12] After this He went down to [k]Capernaum, He, His mother, [l]His brothers, and His disciples; and they did not stay there many days.

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

[13] [m]Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. [14] [n]And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers [2]doing business. [15] When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. [16] And He said to those who sold doves, "Take these things away! Do not make [o]My Father's house a house of merchandise!" [17] Then His disciples remembered that it was written, [p]*"Zeal for Your house [3]has eaten Me up."*

[18] So the Jews answered and said to Him, [q]"What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?"

[19] Jesus answered and said to them, [r]"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

[20] Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?"

[21] But He was speaking [s]of the temple of His body. [22] Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, [t]His disciples remembered that He had said this [4]to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.

The Discerner of Hearts

[23] Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the [u]signs which He did. [24] But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, be-

6 [g]Matt. 15:2; [Mark 7:3; Luke 11:39]; John 3:25

9 [h]John 4:46

11 [i]John 4:54 [j][John 1:14] [l]*revealed*

12 [k]Matt. 4:13; John 4:46 [l]Matt. 12:46; 13:55

13 [m]Ex. 12:14; Deut. 16:1–6; John 5:1; 6:4; 11:55

14 [n]Mal. 3:1; Matt. 21:12; Mark 11:15, 17; Luke 19:45 [2]Lit. *sitting*

16 [o]Luke 2:49

17 [p]Ps. 69:9 [3]NU, M *will eat*

18 [q]Matt. 12:38; John 6:30

19 [r]Matt. 26:61; 27:40; [Mark 14:58; 15:29]; Luke 24:46; Acts 6:14; 10:40; 1 Cor. 15:4

21 [s][1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16; Col. 2:9; Heb. 8:2]

22 [t]Luke 24:8; John 2:17; 12:16; 14:26 [4]NU, M omit *to them*

23 [u][John 5:36; Acts 2:22]

■ **2:11 manifested His glory.** The theme of Christ's glory had already been introduced (1:14 note). In the Old Testament, God manifested His glory in a variety of miraculous events, and John's comment indicates that he wants his readers to recognize Jesus' deity.

and His disciples believed in Him. See also v. 23 and 20:31, where John's purpose for writing the book is disclosed.

■ **2:12–23** Jesus is the final and full expression of what was only a shadow in the Old Testament (Heb. 10:1). Here He indicates that God is present in Him. The temple in Jerusalem could be destroyed, but not the temple that Jesus would rebuild in three days, His own body that was to be raised from the dead. John's record of the temple cleansing immediately after the miracle at Cana (vv. 1–11 note) offers an important key to the whole of Jesus' ministry. In these events are signaled replacement of the old order (water of ceremonial cleansing, Herod's temple) with the new (the wine of salvation, Is. 25:6–9; the risen Lamb as the new temple, Rev. 21:22).

Matthew, Mark, and Luke report a cleansing of the temple in the week of Jesus' crucifixion. In spite of some similarities, these are best viewed as different incidents (Mark 11:15 note). It is noteworthy that Jesus' statement about destroying the temple, which John alone records (v. 19), probably was the basis for the accusation by the false witnesses (Matt. 26:61; Mark 14:58), and again for the taunting comment of some spectators at the crucifixion (Matt. 27:40; Mark 15:29). The first three Gospels confirm the historical character of John's narrative. An echo of the same thought is found in the accusation against Stephen (Acts 6:14).

■ **2:12 His brothers.** See Matt. 12:46.

■ **2:15 a whip of cords.** Jesus fulfills the prophecy of Mal. 3:1–4. He comes suddenly to the temple and purifies the sons of Levi, as a demonstration of His zeal for God and for keeping God's ordinances holy.

■ **2:20 forty-six years.** The sentence itself does not indicate whether the temple was finished or was still under construction after these years of building. The first century Jewish historian Josephus (*Antiquities*, 15.380) says that the temple was begun in the eighteenth year of Herod the Great (around 19 B.C.) and was not completed until the reign of Herod Agrippa (A.D. 63), indicating that construction was still continuing in Jesus' time.

will You raise it up in three days. The Jews (and the disciples, v. 22) misunderstand Jesus' ambiguous statement. Such initial misunderstanding is common in John's Gospel (e.g., 3:4; 6:52). Those who "receive" Jesus (1:12) are led on to full understanding, but those who reject Him remain at the level of complete misunderstanding (1:5).

■ **2:22 His disciples remembered.** During His final instruction of the disciples before His arrest, Jesus promised that what He had taught them would be brought to their remembrance by the Holy Spirit (14:25, 26). The ability to predict events otherwise unknowable is evidence of divine authority. This applies to the prophecies of the Old Testament and to the predictions made by Jesus, especially about His resurrection.

■ **2:23 believed in His name.** In biblical times the "name" summed up a person's character, activity, and place in God's purpose. The faith of those mentioned here remained superficial, however, because they came to it only because "they saw the signs" (see Introduction: Interpretive Difficulties). For that reason, Jesus "did not commit Himself to them" (v. 24).

■ **2:24, 25** Although Jesus did not exercise divine omniscience in the days of His flesh (11:34; Mark 13:32), He often displayed supernatural knowledge, important for His redemptive work, that indicated the divine endorsement of His claims and mission (1:48; Matt. 9:4; 17:27; Mark 11:2–4; 14:13–16).

24 vRev. 2:23
25 wMatt. 9:4

cause He vknew all *men,* 25 and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for wHe knew what was in man.

CHAPTER 3

The New Birth

2 aJohn 7:50; 19:39
bJohn 9:16, 33
c[Acts 10:38]
3 d[1 Pet. 1:23] fOr *from above*
5 e[Acts 2:38]

3 There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. 2 aThis man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for bno one can do these signs that You do unless cGod is with him."

3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, dunless one is born fagain, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

4 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"

5 Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, eunless one is born of water and the Spirit, he

Regeneration: The New Birth

Regeneration is the act of God alone, in which He renews the human heart, making it alive when it was dead. In regeneration, God acts at the origin and deepest point of the human person. This means that there is no preparation, no preceding disposition in a sinner that requests or contributes to the new life given by God.

Regeneration is necessary because all descendants of Adam and Eve have inherited their sin and are morally unable to do what is good. Paul wrote to the Ephesians that people are by nature dead in trespasses and sins. In this state, they are without God and without hope in the world. Not in response to their merit, but freely and in love, God speaks the word that raises the dead.

The classic verses of John 3 that use the language of being "born again" or being "born from above" give the outlines of regeneration their sharpest edge. Jesus says that unless you are born again, you cannot see the kingdom of heaven. Without the grace of God, sinners cannot find the door, let alone force their way in. Elsewhere Jesus said, "Without me, you can do nothing"; and in speaking about salvation, "Without God, nothing is possible."

Jesus showed surprise that Nicodemus was puzzled by the demand to be born again. Nicodemus should have understood from the Old Testament that he was a sinner, and in need of new life; and he must have known the prophets, who promised that God would remove their hearts of flesh and replace them with hearts ready to do God's will. God would raise the dead, give sight to the blind, and preach the good news to those who could not save themselves.

Regeneration is the gift of God's grace. It is the immediate, supernatural work of the Holy Spirit wrought in us. Its effect is to quicken us to spiritual life from spiritual death. It changes the disposition of our souls, inclining our hearts to God. The fruit of regeneration is faith. Regeneration precedes faith.

Infants can be born again, although the faith that they exercise cannot be as visible as that of adults. For many Christians, the moment that they were born again is clearly known; but for others, it may not be, especially if they received new life in childhood. We are responsible to know whether we are spiritually alive, not the time and place we were born again. □

■ **3:1–21** This is the first of many teaching discourses recorded by John. Typically on being asked a question, Jesus answers in a way that steers the discussion into a deeper realm, often through misunderstandings that are corrected for those becoming true disciples. The new understanding reveals Jesus more fully.

■ **3:2 by night.** This might betray a fear of being seen, or it might be a sign of deference to Jesus, a rabbi who should not be distracted during the day. Understood symbolically, Nicodemus is a person living in the darkness of this world, who now encounters the light (8:12; cf. 9:4; 11:10; 13:30).

a teacher . . . from God. Nicodemus understands that God attests His messengers through giving them power to perform miracles, but this understanding falls far short of Jesus' true identity.

■ **3:3 born again.** See text note. The translation "born from above" accords well with the discussion of "earthly" and "heavenly" things in v. 12, and the discussion of ascending and descending in v. 13. This is the meaning of the Greek adverb in other places in this Gospel (19:11, 23). Nicodemus apparently understood it to mean "a second time." It is possible that both meanings are intended—a new birth that is a birth from above. See theological note "Regeneration: The New Birth."

■ **3:5 born of water and the Spirit.** Some suggest that the "water" is the release of fluid that accompanies physical birth, but linguistic consid-

cannot enter the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is [f]flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' 8 [g]The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

9 Nicodemus answered and said to him, [h]"How can these things be?"

10 Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? 11 [i]Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and [j]you do not receive Our witness. 12 If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? 13 [k]No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, *that is,* the Son of Man [2]who is in heaven. 14 [l]And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so [m]must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever [n]believes in Him should [3]not perish but [o]have eternal life. 16 [p]For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten [q]Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. 17 [r]For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

18 [s]"He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 And this is the condemnation, [t]that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20 For [u]everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. 21 But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been [v]done in God."

John the Baptist Exalts Christ

22 After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He remained with them [w]and baptized. 23 Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near [x]Salim, because there was much water there. [y]And they came and were baptized. 24 For [z]John had not yet been thrown into prison.

25 Then there arose a dispute between *some* of John's disciples and the Jews about purifica-

6 [f]1 Cor. 15:50
8 [g]Eccl. 11:5
9 [h]John 6:52, 60
11 [i][Matt. 11:27] [j]John 3:32; 8:14
13 [k]Eph. 4:9 [2]NU omits *who is in heaven*
14 [l]Num. 21:9 [m]John 8:28; 12:34; 19:18
15 [n]John 6:47 [o]John 3:36 [3]NU omits *not perish but*
16 [p]Rom. 5:8 [q][Is. 9:6]
17 [r]Luke 9:56
18 [s]John 5:24; 6:40, 47; 20:31
19 [t][John 1:4, 9–11]
20 [u]Eph. 5:11, 13
21 [v]1 Cor. 15:10
22 [w]John 4:1, 2
23 [x]1 Sam. 9:4 [y]Matt. 3:5, 6
24 [z]Matt. 4:12; 14:3

erations pc to understanding "water" and "Spirit" as referring to a single spiritual birth. Many interpreters understand "water" here as the water of baptism, but such a reference, before Christian baptism was instituted, would have been meaningless to Nicodemus. Others find a reference to John's baptism, but Jesus nowhere makes John's baptism a requirement for salvation. Probably, the statement refers to Old Testament passages in which the terms "water" and "Spirit" are linked to express the pouring out of God's Spirit in the end times (Is. 32:15; 44:3; Ezek. 36:25–27). The presence of such rich Old Testament imagery accounts for Jesus' reproof of Nicodemus (v. 10): as a "teacher of Israel," he should have understood.

■ **3:6–8** This passage emphasizes the priority and sovereignty of God in the work of salvation. It does not exclude the reality of human response in repentance and faith.

■ **3:11 I say to you . . . you do not receive Our witness.** The first "you" is singular (Nicodemus) and the second "you" is plural (you and those whom you represent).

■ **3:13 the Son of Man.** See note at Matt. 8:20.

who is in heaven. It could be said that in His divine nature Christ continued to dwell "in heaven" even during His life on earth. The point is that He has authority to speak of heavenly things. Later in the Gospel, Jesus' origin "from heaven" becomes a chief matter of dispute (6:41, 42).

■ **3:14 Moses.** Num. 21:4–9 records the story of the rebellious Israelites, who murmured and complained. God sent fiery serpents into their midst to punish them. Then God told Moses to put a bronze serpent on a pole, with the promise that whoever looked at it would live.

must . . . be lifted up. Here is a key term in this Gospel (8:28; 12:32, 34) which carries the double meaning of crucifixion and exaltation. Christ's death on the cross, His resurrection, and His glorification together reveal the glory of God. The word "must" points to God's sovereign purpose. The crucifixion was the keystone of God's eternal plan to save His people (Acts 4:27, 28).

■ **3:16 God so loved the world.** Some have insisted that God sent Jesus to die for the purpose of bringing salvation to everyone without exception, but only as a possibility. However, Jesus makes clear that the salvation of those whom the Father "gives Me," and only those, is not a mere possibility but an absolute certainty; "and they come to Me" (6:37–40; 10:14–18; 17:9). The point made by "the world" is that Christ's saving work is not limited to one time or place but applies to the elect from all over the world. Those who do not receive the remedy God has provided in Christ will perish. It remains true that anyone who believes will not die (be separated from God) but live in God's presence forever. See "God Is Love: Divine Goodness and Faithfulness" at Ps. 136:1.

■ **3:17 to condemn the world.** Jesus elsewhere says that judgment does attend His coming into the world (9:39). His point is not that He will not judge, but that the time is not ready. The world was already under threat of judgment before He came, but with His coming salvation became a reality offered to a hostile world (Matt. 23:37; Rom. 5:8).

■ **3:18** Unbelief is not the only basis for condemnation, but it constitutes the climax of rebellion by resisting even God's gracious offer of salvation in Christ. Jesus comes into a world that is already condemned because of its rejection of God's self-revelation (Rom. 1:18–32).

■ **3:19 men loved darkness rather than light.** Jesus gives the reason for the world's rejection of Him: He is the light who exposes whether a person is righteous or not.

■ **3:21 he who does the truth comes to the light.** Jesus speaks of "doing" the truth. This indicates that "truth" is a matter of both thought and practice. Living by the truth is contrasted with doing what is evil (v. 20).

■ **3:22–36** There are three sections here. In vv. 22–24 we are told that Jesus and His disciples went into Judea, where John was. In vv. 25–30 the Baptist affirms once more that his entire role is to prepare for Christ. Verses 31–36 appear to be a continuation of the Baptist's words, or possibly a comment by the Gospel writer.

■ **3:24 John . . . not yet . . . into prison.** See Matt. 14:3–12; Mark 6:17–29.

tion. 26 And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, [a]to whom you have testified—behold, He is baptizing, and all [b]are coming to Him!"

27 John answered and said, [c]"A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven. 28 You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, [d]'I am not the Christ,' but, [e]'I have been sent before Him.' 29 [f]He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but [g]the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. 30 [h]He must increase, but I *must* decrease. 31 [i]He who comes from above [j]is above all; [k]he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. [l]He who comes from heaven is above all. 32 And [m]what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony. 33 He who has received His testimony [n]has certified that God is true. 34 [o]For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit [p]by measure. 35 [q]The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand. 36 [r]He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the [s]wrath of God abides on him."

A Samaritan Woman Meets Her Messiah

4 Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and [a]baptized more disciples than John 2 (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples), 3 He left Judea and departed again to Galilee. 4 But He needed to go through Samaria.

5 So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that [b]Jacob [c]gave to his son Joseph. 6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from *His* journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

7 A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink." 8 For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.

26 [a]John 1:7, 15, 27, 34 [b]Mark 2:2; 3:10; 5:24

27 [c]1 Cor. 3:5, 6; 4:7

28 [d]John 1:19–27 [e]Mal. 3:1

29 [f][2 Cor. 11:2] [g]Song 5:1

30 [h][Is. 9:7]

31 [i]John 3:13; 8:23 [j]Matt. 28:18 [k]1 Cor. 15:47 [l]John 6:33

32 [m]John 3:11; 15:15

33 [n]1 John 5:10

34 [o]John 7:16 [p]John 1:16

35 [q][Heb. 2:8]

36 [r]John 3:16, 17; 6:47 [s]Rom. 1:18

CHAPTER 4

1 [a]John 3:22, 26

5 [b]Gen. 33:19 [c]Gen. 48:22

■ **3:26 baptizing.** See "Baptism" at Rom. 6:3.

■ **3:27 A man can receive.** God is the Author of all that we receive (1 Cor. 4:7).

■ **3:31 He who comes from above.** Jesus is distinguished from all other humans who are "of the earth" (v. 13 note).

■ **3:32 no one receives His testimony.** John repeats the idea of 1:10, 11, that neither His own nation nor the world at large was ready to receive Christ. The barrier is the sin and blindness that God alone can penetrate (v. 3; 1:5).

■ **3:33 He who has received.** The world refused the light, but John immediately mentions those who are coming to the light, especially himself as the first exponent of the truth. John's preaching is the culmination of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New (1:15; Matt. 11:11).

■ **3:34 for God does not give the Spirit by measure.** These words could certainly apply to the Spirit-empowered earthly ministry of Jesus (Luke 3:22; 4:1). But it is also possible that they refer to the fullness of the Spirit that Jesus gives to those who serve Him, and some ancient and modern commentators have understood the text this way. Later, Jesus is the agent who sends the Spirit (15:26).

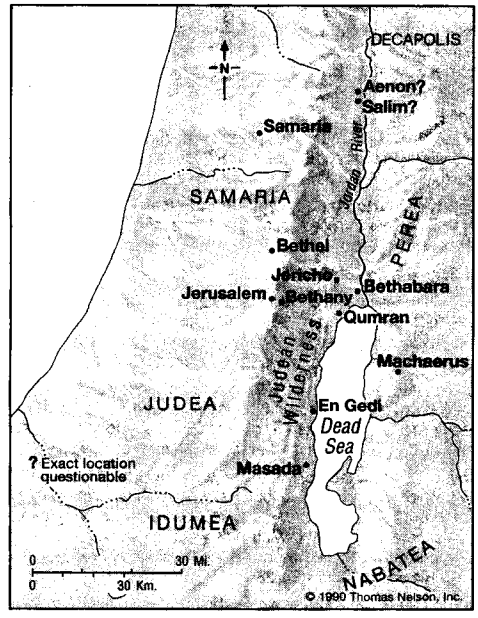
■ **3:35 The Father loves the Son.** See 5:20.

■ **4:1–42** The background of this incident is the profound contempt that the Jews and the Samaritans felt for each other (v. 9). Not surprisingly, the Samaritans responded with enmity toward the Jews. When traveling between Galilee and Judea, many Jews would cross the Jordan twice rather than pass through Samaria. Jesus did not follow this practice (Luke 9:52).

■ **4:6 wearied.** Jesus experienced fatigue and even exhaustion by virtue of His human nature (Matt. 8:24). See "The Humanity of Jesus" at 2 John 7.

the sixth hour. Noon.

Region of John the Baptist. Little is known about John the Baptist's life until he appeared preaching in the Judean wilderness. He may have had some connection with the Essene groups, such as the Qumran community. He baptized in the Jordan River near Aenon and Salim (John 3:23), and also near an unidentified town called Bethabara (John 1:28). His preaching against Herod Antipas led to John's imprisonment at Machaerus.



9 Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For [d]Jews have no dealings with [e]Samaritans.

10 Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the [f]gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you [g]living water."

11 The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? 12 Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?"

13 Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, 14 but [h]whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him [i]will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

15 [j]The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw."

16 Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here."

17 The woman answered and said, "I have no husband."

Jesus said to her, "You have well said, 'I have no husband,' 18 for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly."

19 The woman said to Him, "Sir, [k]I perceive that You are a prophet. 20 Our fathers worshiped on [l]this mountain, and you *Jews* say that in [m]Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship."

21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming [n]when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. 22 You worship [o]what you do not know; we know what we worship, for [p]salvation is of the Jews. 23 But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will [q]worship the Father in [r]spirit [s]and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. 24 [t]God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

25 The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah [u]is coming" (who is called Christ). "When He comes, [v]He will tell us all things."

26 Jesus said to her, [w]"I who speak to you am *He*."

The Whitened Harvest

27 And at this *point* His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, "What do You seek?" or, "Why are You talking with her?"

28 The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, 29 "Come, see a Man [x]who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" 30 Then they went out of the city and came to Him.

9 [d]Acts 10:28 [e]2 Kin. 17:24; Matt. 10:5, 6; Luke 9:52; 10:33; 17:16; John 8:48

10 [f][Rom. 5:15] [g]Is. 12:3; 44:3; Jer. 2:13; Zech. 13:1; 14:8; John 7:38

14 [h][John 6:35, 58] [i]John 7:37, 38

15 [j]John 6:34, 35; 17:2, 3; [Rom. 6:23; 1 John 5:20]

19 [k]Matt. 21:11; Luke 7:16, 39; 24:19; John 6:14; 7:40; 9:17

20 [l]Gen. 12:6–8; 33:18, 20; Judg. 9:7 [m]Deut. 12:5, 11; 1 Kin. 9:3; 2 Chr. 7:12; Ps. 122:1–9

21 [n][Mal. 1:11]; 1 Tim. 2:8

22 [o][2 Kin. 17:28–41] [p][Is. 2:3; Luke 24:47; Rom. 3:1; 9:4, 5]

23 [q]Matt. 18:20; [Heb. 13:10–14] [r]Phil. 3:3 [s][John 1:17]

24 [t]2 Cor. 3:17

25 [u]Deut. 18:15 [v]John 4:29, 39

26 [w]Dan. 9:25; Matt. 26:63, 64; Mark 14:61, 62

29 [x]John 4:25

■ **4:9 Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.** This phrase could also be translated, "Jews use nothing in common with Samaritans," referring to the legislation that forbade a Jew to eat or drink with Samaritans, who were more lax in their understanding of ritual cleanness. The surprise was not so much that Jesus would speak with a Samaritan, but that He would drink from a Samaritan vessel.

■ **4:10 the gift of God.** This expression emphasizes that salvation is not earned but given (Eph. 2:8). Jesus Himself is the gift of God (3:16; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 5:25).

living water. In the Old Testament, living or running water was employed figuratively as a reference to divine activity (Jer. 2:13; Zech. 14:8). See also v. 14 and 7:37–39.

■ **4:11** Like the Jews and Nicodemus before her, the Samaritan woman misunderstands the key terms Jesus uses (v. 15; 2:19–21; 3:3–10).

■ **4:13 will thirst again.** Jesus contrasts temporary with eternal satisfaction, teaching that all earthly pleasures, even if legitimate, are fading.

■ **4:14** "I shall give" expresses the divine origin of the blessing: "springing up" is its great abundance; "everlasting life" is its endless duration.

■ **4:18 you have had five husbands.** Jesus' knowledge of the Samaritan woman's previous life is like His knowledge of Nathanael (1:48).

■ **4:20 Our fathers worshiped on this mountain.** Some time after the northern kingdom fell to Assyria (721 B.C.), a split arose between the Jews in Jerusalem and the Israelites living in Samaria. These Samaritans later built a temple on Mount Gerizim, which was destroyed about 130 B.C. They continue to worship on Mount Gerizim even into modern times.

■ **4:23 the hour is coming, and now is.** See 6:25. The time is soon coming when divisions between Jews and Samaritans will be removed (v. 21), and the temple worship will be superseded. The time "now is" because Jesus is present and has begun the work leading to the presence of the Holy Spirit in the church (7:39; 20:22).

■ **4:24 must worship in spirit and truth.** "True" worship is contrasted with the worship regulated by the temporary provisions of the law, especially the separation of Jews and Gentiles and the requirement of temple worship at Jerusalem. The ceremonial and sacrificial aspects of the law were not false; they were temporary and provisional. Worship "in spirit" is worship in the Holy Spirit. He continues the work begun by Jesus (14:16–18; Acts 2:33). Prominent marks of the age of the Spirit are the removal of the barrier between Jews and Gentiles, and the ability of Christians to worship without the need for a temple of any kind.

■ **4:26 I . . . am He.** This is the one occasion before His trial when Jesus is recorded designating Himself as the Messiah. Perhaps the political overtones associated with this title made it unwise for Jesus to use it often (cf. 6:14, 15).

■ **4:27 marveled.** The disciples' attitude reflects both the contempt of the Jews for the Samaritans and the male chauvinism that regarded giving instruction to a woman as a waste of time.

■ **4:30 they went out.** The witness of the woman was more effective than the visit of the twelve apostles.

34 [y]Ps. 40:7, 8; Heb. 10:9 [z]Job 23:12; [John 6:38; 17:4; 19:30]

35 [a]Gen. 8:22 [b]Matt. 9:37; Luke 10:2

36 [c]Dan. 12:3; Rom. 6:22 [d]1 Thess. 2:19

37 [e]1 Cor. 3:5–9

38 [f]Jer. 44:4; [1 Pet. 1:12]

39 [g]John 4:29

41 [h]Luke 4:32; [John 6:63]

42 [i]John 17:8; 1 John 4:14 [j]NU omits *the Christ*

44 [l]Matt. 13:57; Mark 6:4; Luke 4:24

45 [k]John 2:13, 23; 3:2 [l]Deut. 16:16

46 [m]John 2:1, 11 [2]*royal official*

48 [n]John 6:30; Rom. 15:19; 1 Cor. 1:22; 2 Cor. 12:12; [2 Thess. 2:9]; Heb. 2:4

CHAPTER 5

1 [a]Lev. 23:2; Deut. 16:16 [b]John 2:13

2 [c]Neh. 3:1, 32; 12:39 [j]NU *Bethzatha*

3 [2]*withered* [3]NU omits the rest of v. 3 and all of v. 4.

31 In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, "Rabbi, eat."

32 But He said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know."

33 Therefore the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought Him *anything* to eat?"

34 Jesus said to them, [y]"My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to [z]finish His work. 35 Do you not say, 'There are still four months and *then* comes [a]the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, [b]for they are already white for harvest! 36 [c]And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that [d]both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. 37 For in this the saying is true: [e]'One sows and another reaps.' 38 I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; [f]others have labored, and you have entered into their labors."

The Savior of the World

39 And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him [g]because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all that I *ever* did." 40 So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. 41 And many more believed because of His own [h]word.

42 Then they said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of what you said, for [i]we ourselves have heard *Him* and we know that this is indeed [j]the Christ, the Savior of the world."

Welcome at Galilee

43 Now after the two days He departed from there and went to Galilee. 44 For [l]Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country. 45 So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, [k]having seen all the things He did in Jerusalem at the feast; [l]for they also had gone to the feast.

A Nobleman's Son Healed

46 So Jesus came again to Cana of Galilee [m]where He had made the water wine. And there was a certain [2]nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum. 47 When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and implored Him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. 48 Then Jesus said to him, [n]"Unless you *people* see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe."

49 The nobleman said to Him, "Sir, come down before my child dies!"

50 Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your son lives." So the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way. 51 And as he was now going down, his servants met him and told *him,* saying, "Your son lives!"

52 Then he inquired of them the hour when he got better. And they said to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him." 53 So the father knew that *it was* at the same hour in which Jesus said to him, "Your son lives." And he himself believed, and his whole household.

54 This again *is* the second sign Jesus did when He had come out of Judea into Galilee.

A Man Healed at the Pool of Bethesda

5 After [a]this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus [b]went up to Jerusalem. 2 Now there is in Jerusalem [c]by the Sheep *Gate* a pool, which is called in Hebrew, [j]Bethesda, having five porches. 3 In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, [2]paralyzed, [3]waiting for the moving of the water. 4 For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever

■ **4:37 One sows and another reaps.** Jesus makes it clear that His disciples have a responsibility distinct from His own. They will harvest what Jesus sowed. The saying may deliberately anticipate 12:23, 24.

■ **4:42 the Savior of the world.** They recognized that Jesus was more than a prophet (vv. 19, 29, 39); He is the Savior (1 John 4:14).

■ **4:44 no honor in his own country.** "His own country" is probably Galilee rather than Judea (cf. v. 3). Galilee is considered to be the place of Jesus' origin in this Gospel (1:46; 2:1; 7:42, 52). Though the Galileans "received Him" (v. 45), the text indicates that Jesus was displeased with their need to "see signs and wonders" in order to believe (v. 48; see Introduction: Interpretive Difficulties).

■ **4:46 nobleman.** See text note. An officer in the service of Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee (cf. Matt. 14:1–12; Luke 23:7).

■ **4:50 your son lives.** This was a word with power to heal, not merely a prophecy that he would recover.

■ **4:52 the seventh hour.** 1:00 P.M.

■ **4:54 second sign.** While Jesus had performed many other signs (2:23), this is the second that took place at Cana in Galilee (cf. 2:11). The repetition three times of "your son lives" (vv. 50, 51, 53) shows the purpose of the sign is to reveal that Jesus has the power to give life. Corresponding to this repetition is the progression of the official's faith (vv. 48, 50, 53). This focus on life through the power of Jesus' word prepares the reader for the following discourse on life through the Son (5:19–30).

■ **5:1 a feast of the Jews.** Probably one of the pilgrimage feasts that were observed in Jerusalem, either Tabernacles, Passover, or Pentecost.

disease he had. 5 Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. 6 When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been *in that condition* a long time, He said to him, "Do you want to be made well?"

7 The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me."

8 Jesus said to him, [d]"Rise, take up your bed and walk." 9 And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked.

And [e]that day was the Sabbath. 10 The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, "It is the Sabbath; [f]it is not lawful for you to carry your bed."

11 He answered them, "He who made me well said to me, 'Take up your bed and walk.' "

12 Then they asked him, "Who is the Man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk'?" 13 But the one who was [g]healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in *that* place. 14 Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, "See, you have been made well. [h]Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you."

15 The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

Honor the Father and the Son

16 For this reason the Jews [i]persecuted Jesus, [j]and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath. 17 But Jesus answered them, [k]"My Father has been working until now, and I have been working."

18 Therefore the Jews [l]sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, [m]making Himself equal with God. 19 Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, [n]the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. 20 For [o]the Father loves the Son, and [p]shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel. 21 For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to *them,* [q]even so the Son gives life to whom He will. 22 For the Father judges no one, but [r]has committed all judgment to the Son, 23 that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. [s]He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

Life and Judgment Are Through the Son

24 "Most assuredly, I say to you, [t]he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, [u]but has passed from death into life. 25 Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when [v]the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. 26 For [w]as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have [x]life in Himself, 27 and [y]has given Him authority to execute judgment also, [z]because He is the Son of Man. 28 Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in

8 [d]Luke 5:24
9 [e]John 9:14
10 [f]Jer. 17:21, 22
13 [g]Luke 13:14; 22:51
14 [h]John 8:11
16 [i]John 8:37; 10:39 [j]NU omits *and sought to kill Him*
17 [k][John 9:4; 17:4]
18 [l]John 7:1, 19 [m]John 10:30
19 [n]John 5:30; 6:38; 8:28; 12:49; 14:10
20 [o]Matt. 3:17 [p][Matt. 11:27]
21 [q][John 11:25]
22 [r][Acts 17:31]
23 [s]1 John 2:23
24 [t]John 3:16, 18; 6:47 [u][1 John 3:14]
25 [v][Col. 2:13]
26 [w]Ps. 36:9 [x]1 Cor. 15:45
27 [y][Acts 10:42; 17:31] [z]Dan. 7:13

■ **5:5 an infirmity.** The exact disease is not specified, but the event indicates that it hindered the man's movement and walking.

■ **5:8 take up your bed.** Jewish tradition had interpreted the Sabbath prohibition against work to forbid carrying burdens. Jeremiah protested against loading and unloading on the Sabbath (Jer. 17:21, 22).

■ **5:9 the man was made well.** It is not stated that faith in Jesus was required of the man, as was the case in many of Jesus' miracles (Matt. 9:22; 13:58; Mark 6:5, 6). The focus here is on Jesus' power.

■ **5:14 a worse thing.** The "worse thing" is left indefinite. The point of the admonition is not necessarily that the man had brought his illness on himself by some specific sin. Some sins can provoke God to physical and temporal judgment (1 Cor. 11:28–32), but illness is not necessarily related to particular sins (9:3).

■ **5:17–47** Jesus debates the Jews regarding His relation to the Sabbath and to God. Jesus does not argue with His opponents about whether they understand the Sabbath legislation correctly. His interest is whether they understand who He is. Jesus claims to be God by indicating some of His divine prerogatives (vv. 17–30) and shows the basis for His claim (vv. 31–47).

■ **5:17 My Father . . . and I have been working.** Jesus does not dispute with the Jews whether they are right to criticize the lame man. He denies that they can criticize Him, because He is only doing what His Father does. The Jews understood Him to be saying this, since they accused Him of making Himself equal with God (v. 18).

■ **5:18 making Himself equal with God.** Jesus represented Himself as One who had the same authority over the Sabbath as the Author of the Sabbath (Luke 6:5), which was given not only at Sinai but in the creation order itself.

■ **5:19 the Son can do nothing.** This does not express personal inability, but emphasizes the complete unity of purpose and action in the Trinity. See theological note "The Humble Obedience of Christ."

■ **5:20 greater works than these.** There is a greater work than healing the sick. This work, according to v. 21, is raising the dead.

■ **5:21 the Father raises the dead.** A clear affirmation of what is expressed less clearly in the Old Testament. Jesus agrees with the Pharisees against the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection (Matt. 22:23). Raising the dead is possible only for God, yet Jesus claims the power for Himself (v. 25).

■ **5:23 honor.** Here "honor" is the holy fear of God awakened by the knowledge of coming judgment (v. 22). The Son, no less than the Father, is One to whom all will give an account.

■ **5:24 everlasting life.** Salvation is not only an object of hope for the future, but a present reality for the believer; such a one "has passed from death into life" (cf. 6:47).

■ **5:26 life in Himself.** See "The Self-existence of God" at Ps. 90:2.

28 [z][1 Thess. 4:15–17]

29 [a]Is. 26:19 [b]Dan. 12:2

30 [c]John 5:19 [d]Matt. 26:39

31 [e]John 8:14 [5]*valid* as testimony

32 [f][Matt. 3:17]

which all who are in the graves will hear His voice 29[a] and come forth—[b]those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation. 30[c] I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because [d]I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.

The Fourfold Witness

31 [e]"If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not [5]true. 32[f] There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the witness which He witnesses of Me is true. 33 You have sent to John, [g]and he has borne witness to the truth. 34 Yet I do not receive testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be saved. 35 He was the burning and [h]shining lamp, and [i]you were

33 [g][John 1:15, 19, 27, 32] 35 [h]2 Pet. 1:19 [i]Mark 6:20

The Humble Obedience of Christ

Humility in Scripture does not mean pretending to be worthless and refusing positions of responsibility, but knowing and keeping the place God has appointed for one. Being humble is a matter of accepting God's arrangement, whether it means the high exposure of leadership (Moses was humble as a leader, Num. 12:3), or the obscurity of being a servant. When Jesus said that He was "lowly in heart" (Matt. 11:29), He meant that He was following the Father's plan for His earthly life.

The three Persons of the Trinity are eternal and self-existent, having equally all aspects and attributes of deity, and always acting together. But the Persons are distinct in their mutual relationships. Something of what this means is revealed in the humble submission of Christ to the Father's will, and also in the way that the Holy Spirit is sent by the Father and the Son to confirm the work of salvation in human hearts.

The Father's will for Christ is sometimes called the covenant of redemption. It is called a "covenant" because it is an agreement between two parties. The *Westminster Confession* summarizes the agreement (the Father's purpose, accepted by the Son) as follows:

> It pleased God, in His eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, His only-begotten Son, to be the Mediator between God and man, the Prophet, Priest, and King; the Head and Saviour of His Church, the Heir of all things, and Judge of the world: unto whom He did, from all eternity, give a people to be His seed, and to be by Him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified, and glorified (*Westminster Confession*, VIII.1).

Christ fulfilled this covenant through two stages called His "humiliation" and His "exaltation." In His humiliation, He left behind the eternal glory that was His, taking on a perfect and complete human nature: body, soul, and spirit. Through His incarnation He lived a life of poverty and suffering. He was rejected by His nation, finally to die the shameful death of a common criminal (2 Cor. 8:9; Gal. 3:13; Phil 2:6–8).

In His exaltation, Christ rose from the dead, ascended to heaven, and reigns as King over the world and the church. Together with the Father, He has sent the Holy Spirit to complete the work of redemption that He won for us.

The redemptive obedience of Christ has two sides, called "active" and "passive." In His active obedience, Christ fulfilled the positive commandments of God on behalf of His people, serving God and doing good. This positive righteousness is granted as a gift through faith to believers, securing for them a righteous standing before God. In His passive obedience, Christ paid the penalty owed by sinners to God. He did this by suffering death on the cross. "Passive" means "permitting" or "allowing," not being inactive, detached, or unfeeling. Jesus came to do the Father's will, not to avoid it, and His heart was wholly conformed to it. □

■ **5:29 resurrection.** See "Resurrection and Glorification" at 1 Cor. 15:21.

■ **5:31–47** Jesus addresses four types of testimony that establish His claims: the testimony of John the Baptist; of Jesus' own works; of God the Father; and of Scripture, especially Moses.

■ **5:31 My witness is not true.** Jesus' testimony would not be false even if He alone spoke it. By "not true," He means not permitted in court according to the Mosaic law (Deut. 17:6; 19:15; see text note).

willing for a time to rejoice in his light. 36 But [j]I have a greater witness than John's; for [k]the works which the Father has given Me to finish—the very [l]works that I do—bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me. 37 And the Father Himself, who sent Me, [m]has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, [n]nor seen His form. 38 But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe. 39 [o]You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and [p]these are they which testify of Me. 40 [q]But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

41 [r]"I do not receive honor from men. 42 But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you. 43 I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive. 44 [s]How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek [t]the honor that *comes* from the only God? 45 Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; [u]there is *one* who accuses you—Moses, in whom you trust. 46 For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; [v]for he wrote about Me. 47 But if you [w]do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"

Feeding the Five Thousand

6 After [a]these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is *the Sea* of [b]Tiberias. 2 Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were [c]diseased.[1] 3 And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples.

4 [d]Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near. 5 [e]Then Jesus lifted up *His* eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to [f]Philip, "Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" 6 But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do.

7 Philip answered Him, [g]"Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little."

8 One of His disciples, [h]Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, 9 "There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, [i]but what are they among so many?"

10 Then Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. 11 And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed *them* [2]to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted. 12 So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, "Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost." 13 Therefore they gathered *them* up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten. 14 Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, "This is truly [j]the Prophet who is to come into the world."

36 [j]1 John 5:9 [k]John 3:2; 10:25; 17:4 [l]John 9:16; 10:38

37 [m]Matt. 3:17 [n]1 John 4:12

39 [o]Is. 8:20; 34:16 [p]Luke 24:27

40 [q][John 1:11; 3:19]

41 [r]1 Thess. 2:6

44 [s]John 12:43 [t][Rom. 2:29]

45 [u]Rom. 2:12

46 [v]Deut. 18:15, 18

47 [w]Luke 16:29, 31

CHAPTER 6

1 [a]Mark 6:32 [b]John 6:23; 21:1

2 [c]Matt. 4:23; 8:16; 9:35; 14:36; 15:30; 19:2 [1]*sick*

4 [d]Deut. 16:1

5 [e]Matt. 14:14 [f]John 1:43

7 [g]Num. 11:21, 22

8 [h]John 1:40

9 [i]2 Kin. 4:43

11 [2]NU omits *to the disciples, and the disciples*

14 [j]Gen. 49:10

■ **5:36 the very works that I do.** This is the principle acknowledged by Nicodemus (3:2). The power given by God to work miracles is a sign of His approval (10:25, 38), although not every wonderful work is a miracle in this sense (Ex. 7:11, 12; Matt. 7:22, 23; 24:24; Rev. 13:13).

■ **5:37, 38 His voice . . . His word.** These terms probably refer to Scripture, which is God's "voice" and "word," but which the unbelievers did not receive.

■ **5:39 the Scriptures . . . testify of Me.** Jesus agrees that the Old Testament leads to eternal life (cf. 2 Tim. 3:15), while going on to reveal that this life is in Him, the Author of eternal life. The searching of those who refuse to find Christ in the Scriptures is futile, because it lacks the enlightenment of the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:6).

■ **5:45 one who accuses you.** Moses will accuse those who do not believe in Christ, because Moses wrote about Him. Jesus does not refer to any single text in Moses (such as Deut. 18:15), but to what "he wrote" (v. 46) in a general way. This is similar to what Jesus told His disciples after the resurrection on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:27, 44–46), as well as to the preaching of the apostles (Acts 3:18; 17:2, 3; 18:28; 26:22, 23; 28:23).

■ **6:1–71** This chapter is a major turning point in chs. 2—12. It reveals the identity of Jesus as One sent from the Father (vv. 38, 44, 46, 50, 51, 57); it graphically distinguishes belief and unbelief through the illustration of eating Jesus' flesh and blood (vv. 53–58); and it chronicles the growing rejection, motivated by unbelief, that confronted Jesus (vv. 41, 42, 60–66). The signs in this chapter call to mind corresponding saving events in the history of Israel. They indicate that Jesus fulfills the typology of the Passover, the Exodus, and the provision of food in the desert.

■ **6:1–4** Jesus leaves Jerusalem and travels to the far side of the Sea of Galilee, around the time of the Passover. This feast was established in Ex. 12:43–51 to commemorate how God "passed over" the Israelites and killed the Egyptians. The Old Testament passages read during the Passover in Jesus' time probably included Gen. 1—8, Ex. 11—16, and Num. 6—14. There are strong similarities between these texts and Jesus' comments in this discourse.

■ **6:1 Sea of Tiberias.** Another name for the Sea of Galilee, in honor of the town of Tiberias, built by Herod between A.D. 20–30.

■ **6:2 His signs.** John has reported only one healing in Galilee, of the official's son (4:46–54). Jesus must have done other such miracles as well (cf. 21:25).

■ **6:3 Jesus went up on the mountain.** This detail may be intended to suggest a comparison of Jesus and Moses, who went up on Mount Sinai (v. 14 note).

■ **6:5–15** The feeding of the five thousand. Jesus brings food to a multitude, as Moses did in the wilderness (Num. 11).

■ **6:5 that these may eat.** Reminiscent of Num. 11:13, where Moses asks God a similar question.

■ **6:7 Two hundred denarii.** A denarius was about one day's wage (Matt. 20:2).

■ **6:10 five thousand.** The figure does not include women and children (Matt. 14:21; cf. 2 Kin. 4:42–44).

■ **6:14 the Prophet.** That is, the Prophet like Moses (Deut. 18:15).

15 [k][John 18:36]
16 [l]Matt. 14:23
19 [m]Matt. 17:6 [3]Lit. *25 or 30 stadia*
20 [n]Is. 43:1, 2
22 [4]NU omits *that* [5]NU omits *which His disciples had entered*
24 [o]Luke 4:42
27 [p]Matt. 6:19 [q]John 4:14 [r]Acts 2:22
29 [s][1 John 3:23]
30 [t]Matt. 12:38; 16:1
31 [u]Ex. 16:15 [v]Ex. 16:4, 15; Neh. 9:15; Ps. 78:24
32 [w]John 3:13, 16
34 [x]John 4:15
35 [y]John 6:48, 58 [z]John 4:14; 7:37 [a]Is. 55:1, 2
36 [b]John 6:26, 64; 15:24 [c]John 10:26
37 [d]John 6:45 [e]2 Tim. 2:19 [6]*certainly not*
38 [f]Matt. 26:39 [g]John 4:34
39 [h]John 10:28; 17:12; 18:9

Jesus Walks on the Sea

15 Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him [k]king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone.

16 [l]Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea, 17 got into the boat, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was already dark, and Jesus had not come to them. 18 Then the sea arose because a great wind was blowing. 19 So when they had rowed about [3]three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near the boat; and they were [m]afraid. 20 But He said to them, [n]"It is I; do not be afraid." 21 Then they willingly received Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land where they were going.

The Bread from Heaven

22 On the following day, when the people who were standing on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other boat there, except [4]that one [5]which His disciples had entered, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with His disciples, but His disciples had gone away alone— 23 however, other boats came from Tiberias, near the place where they ate bread after the Lord had given thanks— 24 when the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they also got into boats and came to Capernaum, [o]seeking Jesus. 25 And when they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, "Rabbi, when did You come here?"

26 Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. 27 [p]Do not labor for the food which perishes, but [q]for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, [r]because God the Father has set His seal on Him."

28 Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?"

29 Jesus answered and said to them, [s]"This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."

30 Therefore they said to Him, [t]"What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do? 31 [u]Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, [v]*'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'*"

32 Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but [w]My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

34 [x]Then they said to Him, "Lord, give us this bread always."

35 And Jesus said to them, [y]"I am the bread of life. [z]He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never [a]thirst. 36 [b]But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet [c]do not believe. 37 [d]All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and [e]the one who comes to Me I will [6]by no means cast out. 38 For I have come down from heaven, [f]not to do My own will, [g]but the will of Him who sent Me. 39 This is the will of the Father who sent Me, [h]that of all He

■ **6:15 to make Him king.** The kingship of the Messiah was to be spiritual, not political. While accepting the title "King of Israel" (1:49), Jesus refused the offer of Satan (Matt. 4:8, 9; Luke 4:5, 6) and the misguided efforts of the people.

■ **6:16–21** This miracle is recorded in Matt. 14:22–33 and in Mark 6:47–51. It should not be confused with the calming of the storm found in Matt. 8:23–27; Mark 4:36–41; and Luke 8:22–25.

■ **6:21 immediately.** Some understand this to be an additional miracle; others take it to mean that after Jesus' entrance into the boat, no further difficulties were encountered.

■ **6:26 not because you saw the signs.** Although they saw the miracle of the loaves and fishes, they did not recognize it as a sign identifying Jesus as the Messiah. It was merely as an opportunity for a meal to them.

■ **6:27** Jesus points to the spiritual meaning of the miracle, which is to set God's seal of approval on His ministry and to identify Him as the Son of Man, the promised Messiah.

■ **6:31** They expected that the coming of the Messiah would be marked by a miracle as great as or greater than the giving of the manna in the desert.

■ **6:32 the true bread from heaven.** The word "true" has a special meaning. Jesus refers to what is everlasting, as opposed to something merely representative. The bread God provided through Moses (Ex. 16; Num. 11) was only material and temporary, not spiritual and eternal. See note at 4:24.

■ **6:33 He who comes down from heaven.** This is Jesus Christ, whose incarnation is described as "coming down" (vv. 38, 41, 42, 50, 51, 58; 3:13, 31; Eph. 4:9–10).

gives life to the world. Christ provides eternal life to those who are dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1). They are chosen not only from the Jews but from the whole world. Jesus does not here teach universal salvation, but the universal relevance and appeal of His saving work (3:16 note).

■ **6:34 give us this bread.** They misinterpreted Jesus' statement by taking it on a purely physical level, as Nicodemus (3:4) and the Samaritan woman (4:15) had done.

■ **6:35 I am the bread of life.** This is the first of seven such "I am" sayings in this Gospel (8:12; 9:5; 10:7, 9, 11, 14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1, 5). The expression looks back to Ex. 3:14 and is an implicit claim to deity (8:58, 59 and notes).

■ **6:37 All that the Father gives Me.** God leads to faith all whom He plans to redeem. The redemption of the elect is certain. The Son promises acceptance to anyone who truly believes.

■ **6:38 not to do My own will.** The will of the Son and the will of the Father agree; there is no competition or disagreement. Jesus' submission to the Father shows this agreement.

■ **6:39 lose nothing, but should raise.** The Father's will is more than that Jesus should make an offer to lost sinners. He will at last raise up all

has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. 40 And this is the will of Him who sent Me, [i]that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

Rejected by His Own

41 The Jews then [7]complained about Him, because He said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven." 42 And they said, [j]"Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, 'I have come down from heaven'?"

43 Jesus therefore answered and said to them, [8]"Do not murmur among yourselves. 44 [k]No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me [l]draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. 45 It is written in the prophets, [m]*'And they shall all be taught by God.'* [n]Therefore everyone who [9]has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me. 46 [o]Not that anyone has seen the Father, [p]except He who is from God; He has seen the Father. 47 Most assuredly, I say to you, [q]he who believes [r]in Me has everlasting life. 48 [r]I am the bread of life. 49 [s]Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. 50 [t]This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. 51 I am the living bread [u]which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and [v]the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world."

52 The Jews therefore [w]quarreled among themselves, saying, "How can this Man give us *His* flesh to eat?"

53 Then Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless [x]you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. 54 [y]Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. 55 For My flesh is [2]food indeed, and My blood is [3]drink indeed. 56 He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood [z]abides in Me, and I in him. 57 As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. 58 [a]This is the bread which came down from heaven—not [b]as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever."

59 These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum.

Many Disciples Turn Away

60 [c]Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard *this,* said, "This is a [4]hard saying; who can understand it?"

61 When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples [5]complained about this, He said to them, "Does this [6]offend you? 62 [d]*What* then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was

40 [i]John 3:15, 16; 4:14; 6:27, 47, 54

41 [7]*grumbled*

42 [j]Matt. 13:55

43 [8]*Stop grumbling*

44 [k]Song 1:4 [l][Phil. 1:29; 2:12, 13]

45 [m]Is. 54:13 [n]John 6:37 [9]M *hears and has learned*

46 [o]John 1:18 [p]Matt. 11:27

47 [q][John 3:16, 18] [r]NU omits *in Me*

48 [r]John 6:33, 35

49 [s]John 6:31, 58

50 [t]John 6:51, 58

51 [u]John 3:13 [v]Heb. 10:5

52 [w]John 7:43; 9:16; 10:19

53 [x]Matt. 26:26

54 [y]John 4:14; 6:27, 40

55 [2]NU *true food* [3]NU *true drink*

56 [z][1 John 3:24; 4:15, 16]

58 [a]John 6:49–51 [b]Ex. 16:14–35

60 [c]John 6:66 [4]*difficult*

61 [5]*grumbled* [6]*make you stumble*

62 [d]Acts 1:9; 2:32, 33

who are given Him by the Father and lose not one from that group. God graciously perseveres with true believers, ensuring their final salvation. See "Perseverance of the Saints" at Rom. 8:30.

■ **6:41 The Jews then complained about Him.** This response is similar to that of the Israelites in the wilderness, who complained against Moses and Aaron (Ex. 16:7; 17:3; Num. 11:1).

came down from heaven. Jesus' origin establishes His identity as Messiah and Son of God (vv. 29, 33, 38; 1:1, 2, 14, 18, 45, 46; 3:2, 13, 17, 31; 5:36–38). Those confronted with this revelation must respond either in belief or in rejection. There is no middle ground.

■ **6:44 unless the Father who sent Me draws him.** Jesus teaches that no one can respond positively to His warning and invitation apart from the Father's work of drawing the individual to Jesus. The heart is naturally hard and will not accept God's invitation, unless a special work of God's grace takes place (v. 65). See "Effectual Calling and Conversion" at 2 Thess. 2:14.

■ **6:45 they shall all be taught by God.** In its original context Is. 54:13 is a promise of final redemption. Jesus indicates in the next sentence that those who participate in this redemption are those who come to Him, thereby identifying Himself as the One in whom that final redemption comes.

everyone who has heard . . . comes to Me. Whoever wishes may come, and they come because they have "learned from the Father," who draws them (v. 44).

■ **6:51–58** Jesus' hearers continue to misunderstand His statements, taking them on a purely physical level (cf. v. 34). Understood literally, what Jesus said would be highly objectionable since it would involve cannibalism and a use of blood that was strictly forbidden in the Law (Gen. 9:4; Lev. 7:26, 27; 17:10–14; Deut. 12:23, 24). Jesus uses the language of eating and drinking to illustrate the intimacy of the union between Christ and the believer. This spiritual union, by which Christ imparts new life to the believer, is portrayed later in the Gospel as the union of a vine and its branches (15:1–8). It is sometimes called the "mystical union," and is a recurrent topic in Paul's letters (Gal. 2:20; Eph. 1:3–14).

Though some see here a reference to the Lord's Supper, a mention of that sacrament at this point would have been incomprehensible to Jesus' listeners. This passage is best understood as pointing to the spiritual reality the Lord's Supper also signifies—union with Christ and all the benefits of salvation received through Him.

■ **6:51 the living bread.** See note on v. 32.

the world. See note on 4:42.

■ **6:53 unless you eat . . . and drink.** Apart from personal union with the Savior there is no salvation. See "The Lord's Supper" at 1 Cor. 11:23.

■ **6:60 many of His disciples.** These disciples took offense at Jesus' words, refused to listen to Jesus' explanation, and were unwilling to accept the message of salvation by grace.

■ **6:61, 64, 70.** Three examples of supernatural knowledge (cf. 2:24, 25).

■ **6:62 see the Son of Man ascend.** Like "lifted up" (3:14 note), "ascend" here probably refers to the events beginning with Christ's being "lifted up" on the cross and climaxing in His exaltation at the right hand of the Father. If many of His disciples grumbled at the hard sayings of vv. 53–58, what would their response be to the scandal of the crucifixion? See "The Ascension of Jesus" at Luke 24:51.

before? 63 [e]It is the Spirit who gives life; the [f]flesh profits nothing. The [g]words that I speak to you are spirit, and *they* are life. 64 But [h]there are some of you who do not believe." For [i]Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him. 65 And He said, "Therefore [j]I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father."

66 [k]From that *time* many of His disciples went [7]back and walked with Him no more. 67 Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Do you also want to go away?"

68 But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have [l]the words of eternal life. 69 [m]Also we have come to believe and know that You are the [8]Christ, the Son of the living God."

70 Jesus answered them, [n]"Did I not choose you, the twelve, [o]and one of you is a devil?" 71 He spoke of [p]Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon, for it was he who would [q]betray Him, being one of the twelve.

Jesus' Brothers Disbelieve

7 After these things Jesus walked in Galilee; for He did not want to walk in Judea, [a]because the [1]Jews sought to kill Him. 2 [b]Now the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was at hand. 3 [c]His brothers therefore said to Him, "Depart from here and go into Judea, that Your disciples also may see the works that You are doing. 4 For no one does anything in secret while he himself seeks to be known openly. If You do these things, show Yourself to the world." 5 For [d]even His [e]brothers did not believe in Him.

6 Then Jesus said to them, [f]"My time has not yet come, but your time is always ready. 7 [g]The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me [h]because I testify of it that its works are evil. 8 You go up to this feast. I am not [2]yet going up to this feast, [i]for My time has not yet fully come." 9 When He had said these things to them, He remained in Galilee.

The Heavenly Scholar

10 But when His brothers had gone up, then He also went up to the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret. 11 Then [j]the Jews sought Him at the feast, and said, "Where is He?" 12 And [k]there was much complaining among the people concerning Him. [l]Some said, "He is good"; others said, "No, on the contrary, He deceives the people." 13 However, no one spoke openly of Him [m]for fear of the Jews.

14 Now about the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and [n]taught. 15 [o]And the Jews marveled, saying, "How does this Man know letters, having never studied?"

16 [3]Jesus answered them and said, [p]"My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me. 17 [q]If any-

63 [e]2 Cor. 3:6 [f]John 3:6 [g][John 6:68; 14:24] **64** [h]John 6:36 [i]John 2:24, 25; 13:11 **65** [j]John 6:37, 44, 45 **66** [k]Luke 9:62 [7]Or *away;* lit. *to the back* **68** [l]Acts 5:20 **69** [m]Luke 9:20 [8]NU *Holy One of God.* **70** [n]Luke 6:13 [o][John 13:27] **71** [p]John 12:4; 13:2, 26 [q]Matt. 26:14–16

CHAPTER 7

1 [a]John 5:18; 7:19, 25; 8:37, 40 [1]The ruling authorities **2** [b]Lev. 23:34 **3** [c]Matt. 12:46 **5** [d]Ps. 69:8 [e]Mark 3:21 **6** [f]John 2:4; 8:20 **7** [g][John 15:19] [h]John 3:19 **8** [i]John 8:20 [2]NU omits *yet* **11** [j]John 11:56 **12** [k]John 9:16; 10:19 [l]Luke 7:16

13 [m][John 9:22; 12:42; 19:38] **14** [n]Mark 6:34 **15** [o]Matt. 13:54 **16** [p]John 3:11 [3]NU, M *So Jesus* **17** [q]John 3:21; 8:43

where He was before. A reference to the eternal preexistence of the living Word (1:1–3).

■ **6:63 the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing.** This makes it plain that a merely physical understanding of Jesus' words was utterly mistaken. Note the close cooperation of the Father (vv. 37–40, 44–46, 57; 65), the Son, and the Holy Spirit (v. 63) shown in this passage.

■ **6:65 no one can come to Me unless.** It is impossible for anyone to come to Christ without the enabling call of God. The sinner's moral inability to choose Christ must be overcome by the gracious and sovereign power of the Spirit (3:5–21).

■ **6:66–71** A crucial turning point in this Gospel. Many disciples, together with the crowds, reject Christ in unbelief, while His remaining disciples (as exemplified by Peter's confession) deepen their faith in Him.

■ **6:67 Do you . . . go away.** Jesus' question elicits the firm confession of Peter as the spokesman for the Twelve. A parallel situation is found in Matt. 16:13–20; Mark 8:27–29; Luke 9:18–20.

■ **7:2 Feast of Tabernacles.** The longest festival of the Jewish year (lasting seven days), this feast followed the Jewish New Year and the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur,* Lev. 23; Deut. 16). It was a celebration of God's gracious provision for the Israelites in the desert and the completion of the year's harvest. There was a ceremonial water-drawing (commemorating the provision of water in the desert, Num. 20:2–13) and a lamp-lighting ritual. The first of these ceremonies provides the setting for Jesus' proclamation in vv. 37, 38, the second for His statement in 8:12.

■ **7:3, 5, 10 His brothers.** Cf. 2:12; Matt. 12:46. Some of the brothers later believed in Jesus (Acts 1:14).

■ **7:6 My time.** See vv. 8, 30; 2:4; 8:20; 12:23; 13:1; 17:1; Matt. 26:18; Mark 14:41. Such passages show the concern of Jesus to conform to God's schedule.

■ **7:7 The world.** Humanity in its opposition to God and His purpose.

evil. Evildoers resent being unmasked by the good (3:19, 20).

■ **7:8 I am not yet going up to this feast.** Jesus does indeed later go to the Feast. His brothers have asked Him to present Himself openly to the crowds. But Jesus asserts that He is "not yet" ready to appear in such a public way.

■ **7:13 for fear of the Jews.** This is not a reference to all those who were natural descendants of Abraham. Rather, the term refers to Jewish leaders and officials who were hostile toward Jesus.

■ **7:15 having never studied.** Jesus was not known to have been taught by any rabbi, yet His knowledge and wisdom astounded those who heard Him (cf. 3:2; Matt. 7:28; Luke 2:47).

■ **7:16 His who sent Me.** Jesus indicates the source of His teaching. His message is not original with Himself but comes from His Father.

■ **7:17 shall know.** A true perception of the divine nature of Christ's teaching is granted to those who earnestly desire to do God's will (Ps. 25:14).

one wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or *whether* I speak on My own *authority.* 18 [r]He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who [s]seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and [t]no unrighteousness is in Him. 19 [u]Did not Moses give you the law, yet none of you keeps the law? [v]Why do you seek to kill Me?"

20 The people answered and said, [w]"You have a demon. Who is seeking to kill You?"

21 Jesus answered and said to them, "I did one work, and you all marvel. 22 [x]Moses therefore gave you circumcision (not that it is from Moses, [y]but from the fathers), and you circumcise a man on the Sabbath. 23 If a man receives circumcision on the Sabbath, so that the law of Moses should not be broken, are you angry with Me because [z]I made a man completely well on the Sabbath? 24 [a]Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."

Could This Be the Christ?

25 Now some of them from Jerusalem said, "Is this not He whom they seek to [b]kill? 26 But look! He speaks boldly, and they say nothing to Him. [c]Do the rulers know indeed that this is [4]truly the Christ? 27 [d]However, we know where this Man is from; but when the Christ comes, no one knows where He is from."

28 Then Jesus cried out, as He taught in the temple, saying, [e]"You both know Me, and you know where I am from; and [f]I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me [g]is true, [h]whom you do not know. 29 [5]But [i]I know Him, for I am from Him, and He sent Me."

30 Therefore [j]they sought to take Him; but [k]no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come. 31 And [l]many of the people believed in Him, and said, "When the Christ comes, will He do more signs than these which this *Man* has done?"

Jesus and the Religious Leaders

32 The Pharisees heard the crowd murmuring these things concerning Him, and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take Him. 33 Then Jesus said [6]to them, [m]"I shall be with you a little while longer, and *then* I [n]go to Him who sent Me. 34 You [o]will seek Me and not find *Me,* and where I am you [p]cannot come."

35 Then the Jews said among themselves, "Where does He intend to go that we shall not find Him? Does He intend to go to [q]the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? 36 What is this thing that He said, 'You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come'?"

The Promise of the Holy Spirit

37 [r]On the last day, that great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, [s]"If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. 38 [t]He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, [u]out

18 [r]John 5:41 [s]John 8:50 [t][2 Cor. 5:21]
19 [u]Deut. 33:4 [v]Matt. 12:14
20 [w]John 8:48, 52
22 [x]Lev. 12:3 [y]Gen. 17:9–14
23 [z]John 5:8, 9, 16
24 [a]Prov. 24:23
25 [b]Matt. 21:38; 26:4
26 [c]John 7:48 [4]NU omits *truly*
27 [d]Luke 4:22
28 [e]John 8:14 [f]John 5:43 [g]Rom. 3:4 [h]John 1:18; 8:55
29 [i]Matt. 11:27 [5]NU, M omit *But*
30 [j]Mark 11:18 [k]John 7:32, 44; 8:20; 10:39
31 [l]Matt. 12:23
33 [m]John 13:33 [n][1 Pet. 3:22] [6]NU, M omit *to them*
34 [o]Hos. 5:6 [p][Matt. 5:20]
35 [q]James 1:1
37 [r]Lev. 23:36 [s][Is. 55:1]
38 [t]Deut. 18:15 [u]Is. 12:3; 43:20; 44:3; 55:1

■ **7:18 from himself.** A contrast is established between self-seeking messengers and Jesus, whose guiding principle is to be true to His mission (12:49). See 1:14, 17; 14:6; 18:37; 2 Cor. 11:10; Rev. 3:7, 14; 19:11—passages where Christ and His message are identified with truth. This is also said of God the Father (7:28; 8:26; 17:3; Ps. 31:5; Is. 65:16; Rom. 3:4; 1 Thess. 1:9; 1 John 5:20; Rev. 6:10; 15:3; 16:7) and of the Holy Spirit (14:17; 15:26; 16:13; 1 John 4:6; 5:6). The same applies to the Scripture and apostolic preaching (17:17; Ps. 119:30, 43, 138, 142, 151, 160; Eph. 1:13; Col. 1:5; 2 Tim. 2:15; James 1:18). This is in sharp contrast with Satan who is "a liar" (8:44).

■ **7:19 Moses . . . the law.** The blessing of having received the law as the revelation of God's will (cf. Ps. 103:7; Rom. 3:2; 9:4) becomes a bane through disobedience (Rom. 7:7–12).

■ **7:20 have a demon.** Compare 8:48–52; 10:19–20; Matt. 12:24.

■ **7:21 I did one work.** Jesus refers to the one deed He had done in their region, the healing of the lame man (5:1–15).

■ **7:22 circumcision.** Circumcision was prescribed in the law of Moses (Lev. 12:3), but it was previously instituted by God in the days of Abraham (Gen. 17:10–14). The regulation that it had to be performed on the eighth day was commonly regarded as taking precedence over the law of rest on the Sabbath.

■ **7:23 completely well.** Jesus calls attention to the inconsistency of His accusers. There were a number of activities permitted on the Sabbath, including circumcision. He compares these activities with the work of healing.

■ **7:27 we know where this Man is from.** The people knew that Jesus was from Galilee (vv. 41, 52), and this seemed to conflict with the prevailing view that the Messiah would come from Bethlehem (v. 42; Matt. 2:5, 6) or that His origin would be unknown. Jesus in response points to His divine origin rather than an earthly location. In failing to acknowledge His divine mission they showed their ignorance of God's plan, in spite of the miracles, which were proof of God's endorsement (v. 31).

■ **7:30 they sought to take Him.** The plots against Christ's life could not succeed until God's own time had come.

■ **7:34 You will seek Me and not find Me.** This is not in contradiction with Matt. 7:7. There Jesus is speaking about a thirst for God (cf. v. 37) that only the Holy Spirit creates in someone; but here He is referring to an effort to find Him geographically, which would be futile since He would be in heaven. Note the contrast between unbelievers (v. 34) and believers (14:3).

■ **7:35 Where does He intend to go.** The Jews were puzzled as to Christ's origin and so could not understand His destination, which was heaven. They understood it merely in geographical terms and were not pleased at the thought that He would exercise His ministry among the Greeks, heathens that they despised.

■ **7:37, 38** At the climax of the feast, Jesus repeated dramatically the message He had given to the Samaritan woman (4:10–14) making clear that coming to Him meant believing in Him.

■ **7:38 as the Scripture has said.** What follows is not an exact quotation from the Old Testament, but there are several Old Testament pas-

of his heart will flow rivers of living water." 39 [v]But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those [7]believing in Him would receive; for the [8]Holy Spirit was not yet *given,* because Jesus was not yet [w]glorified.

Who Is He?

40 Therefore [9]many from the crowd, when they heard this saying, said, "Truly this is [x]the Prophet." 41 Others said, "This is [y]the Christ."

But some said, "Will the Christ come out of Galilee? 42 [z]Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, [a]where David was?" 43 So [b]there was a division among the people because of Him. 44 Now [c]some of them wanted to take Him, but no one laid hands on Him.

Rejected by the Authorities

45 Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why have you not brought Him?"

46 The officers answered, [d]"No man ever spoke like this Man!"

47 Then the Pharisees answered them, "Are you also deceived? 48 Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him? 49 But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed."

50 Nicodemus [e](he who came to [1]Jesus [2]by night, being one of them) said to them, 51 [f]"Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?"

52 They answered and said to him, "Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for [g]no prophet [3]has arisen out of Galilee."

An Adulteress Faces the Light of the World

53 [4]And everyone went to his *own* house.

8 But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.

2 Now [1]early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came to Him; and He sat down and [a]taught them. 3 Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, 4 they said to Him, "Teacher, [2]this woman was caught in [b]adultery, in the very act. 5 [c]Now [3]Moses, in the law, commanded us [4]that such should be stoned. But what do You [5]say?" 6 This they said, testing Him, that they [d]might have *something* of which to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with *His* finger, [6]as though He did not hear.

7 So when they continued asking Him, He [7]raised Himself up and said to them, [e]"He who is

39 [v]Is. 44:3 [w]John 12:16; 13:31; 17:5 [7]NU *who believed* [8]NU omits *Holy*
40 [x]Deut. 18:15, 18 [9]NU *some*
41 [y]John 4:42; 6:69
42 [z]Mic. 5:2 [a]1 Sam. 16:1, 4
43 [b]John 7:12
44 [c]John 7:30
46 [d]Luke 4:22
50 [e]John 3:1, 2; 19:39 [1]Lit. *Him* [2]NU *before*
51 [f]Deut. 1:16, 17; 19:15
52 [g][Is. 9:1, 2] [3]NU *is to rise*
53 [4]NU brackets 7:53 through 8:11 as not in the original text. They are present in over 900 mss. of John.

CHAPTER 8

2 [a]John 8:20; 18:20 [1]M *very early*
4 [b]Ex. 20:14 [2]M *we found this woman*
5 [c]Lev. 20:10 [3]M *in our law Moses commanded* [4]NU, M *to stone such* [5]M adds *about her*
6 [d]Matt. 22:15 [6]NU, M omit *as though He did not hear*
7 [e]Deut. 17:7 [7]M *He looked up*

sages that connect water with the end-time gift of the Spirit (e.g., Is. 44:3; Ezek. 36:25–27) and the blessings of the present (messianic) age (e.g., Is. 12:3; 58:11). Jesus fulfills the meaning of the Feast of Tabernacles (v. 2 note).

rivers. This implies great abundance, benefitting not only believers, but also those around them.

■ **7:39 the Holy Spirit was not yet given.** Jesus is referring to the blessing of Pentecost. Of course, the Holy Spirit was present in the Old Testament period, but at Pentecost He entered into a more intimate relationship with believers (14:17; 1 Cor. 6:19). This is the Messiah's gift to His people: He baptizes with the Spirit (Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16), but this blessing in its full measure and glory must await the ascension of Christ who will pour out the Spirit from heaven upon His people (16:7; cf. Eph. 4:8).

■ **7:40 the Prophet.** A reference to Deut. 18:15. It is interesting to observe the testimony of those outside the group of disciples who were not blinded by prejudice. They understood that Jesus could be "the Prophet" promised by Moses. They knew that His miracles were worthy of the Messiah they expected (v. 31). Some called him "the Christ" (v. 41), and they testified that no one ever spoke like Him (v. 46).

■ **7:41–43** Dispute over the identity of Jesus continues to focus on His origin (cf. vv. 25–36 and notes). The people's questioning remains trapped within the limits of this world (3:1–15; 4:1–26).

■ **7:45–52** The strong prejudice of the chief priests and Pharisees is apparent in their condemnation of the temple guards (vv. 47, 48), of the crowd (v. 49), and even of Nicodemus, one of their number (v. 52).

■ **7:52** Galilee was held in contempt by the Sanhedrin as a mixed-race region where the law was not zealously observed.

■ **7:53—8:11** These verses are not present in some Greek manuscripts, and in others they appear at different locations, such as after 7:36, or even in Luke.

■ **8:5 the law.** The punishment prescribed by law for adultery was death (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22). Stoning was not specified, except in one case (Deut. 22:24).

■ **8:6 testing Him.** If Jesus told them to carry out the stoning, He would violate the Roman law by which the Romans reserved to themselves the execution of the death penalty in occupied lands (18:31). If Jesus told them to release the woman, He would appear to condone adultery and violate the law of Moses.

wrote. This is the only passage where Jesus is said to write. Nothing is said about what He wrote.

■ **8:7** Jesus' challenge showed the accusers to be disqualified as judges. Their purpose was not to enforce Moses' law but to entrap Jesus, and they were using this woman as a pawn to achieve their wicked design.

without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first." [8] And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. [9] Then those who heard *it,* [f]being[g] convicted by *their* conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest *even* to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. [10] When Jesus had raised Himself up [g]and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers [f]of yours? Has no one condemned you?"

[11] She said, "No one, Lord."

And Jesus said to her, [g]"Neither do I condemn you; go [2]and [h]sin no more."

[12] Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, [i]"I am the light of the world. He who [j]follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

Jesus Defends His Self-Witness

[13] The Pharisees therefore said to Him, [k]"You bear witness of Yourself; Your witness is not [3]true."

[14] Jesus answered and said to them, "Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but [l]you do not know where I come from and where I am going. [15] [m]You judge according to the flesh; [n]I judge no one. [16] And yet if I do judge, My judgment is true; for [o]I am not alone, but I *am* with the Father who sent Me. [17] [p]It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true. [18] I am One who bears witness of Myself, and [q]the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me."

[19] Then they said to Him, "Where is Your Father?"

Jesus answered, [r]"You know neither Me nor My Father. [s]If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also."

[20] These words Jesus spoke in [t]the treasury, as He taught in the temple; and [u]no one laid hands on Him, for [v]His hour had not yet come.

Jesus Predicts His Departure

[21] Then Jesus said to them again, "I am going away, and [w]you will seek Me, and [x]will die in your sin. Where I go you cannot come."

[22] So the Jews said, "Will He kill Himself, because He says, 'Where I go you cannot come'?"

[23] And He said to them, [y]"You are from beneath; I am from above. [z]You are of this world; I am not of this world. [24] [a]Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; [b]for if you do not believe that I am *He,* you will die in your sins."

[25] Then they said to Him, "Who are You?"

And Jesus said to them, "Just what I [c]have been saying to you from the beginning. [26] I have many things to say and to judge concerning you, but [d]He who sent Me is true; and [e]I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him."

[27] They did not understand that He spoke to them of the Father.

[28] Then Jesus said to them, "When you [f]lift[4] up the Son of Man, [g]then you will know that I am *He,* and [h]*that* I do nothing of Myself; but [i]as My Father taught Me, I speak these things.

28 [f]John 3:14; 12:32; 19:18 [g][Rom. 1:4] [h]John 5:19, 30 [i]John 3:11 [4]Crucify

9 [f]Rom. 2:22 [g]NU, M omit *being convicted by their conscience*

10 [g]NU omits *and saw no one but the woman;* M *He saw her and said,* [f]NU, M omit *of yours*

11 [g][John 3:17] [h][John 5:14] [2]NU, M add *from now on*

12 [j]John 1:4; 9:5; 12:35 [l]1 Thess. 5:5

13 [k]John 5:31 [3]*valid* as testimony

14 [l]John 7:28; 9:29

15 [m]John 7:24 [n][John 3:17; 12:47; 18:36]

16 [o]John 16:32

17 [p]Deut. 17:6; 19:15

18 [q]John 5:37

19 [r]John 16:3 [s]John 14:7

20 [t]Mark 12:41, 43 [u]John 2:4; 7:30 [v]John 7:8

21 [w]John 7:34; 13:33 [x]John 8:24

23 [y]John 3:31 [z]1 John 4:5

24 [a]John 8:21 [b][Mark 16:16]

25 [c]John 4:26

26 [d]John 7:28 [e]John 3:32; 15:15

■ **8:11 condemn.** This is a legal term referring to the sentence of a court. Jesus indicates that no such lawful procedures have been followed and therefore there is no basis for the capital punishment proposed. Jesus admonished the woman not to go on sinning.

■ **8:12 I am the light of the world.** In Jesus' time, candles were used as part of the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles. During this feast, the rock that provided water in the wilderness and the pillar of fire that provided light and guidance were remembered (Ex. 13:21). The rock pointed to Jesus (1 Cor. 10:4), and He also is the light to which the pillar of fire as a type pointed. Since God is light (1 John 1:5), Jesus' words amount to a claim of deity. Again, "I am" points back to Ex. 3:14 (6:35 note).

■ **8:13 Your witness is not true.** See text note. This discussion, which runs through v. 19, pivots on the question of valid testimony. The Pharisees say that Jesus' testimony is not legally acceptable because it lacks corroboration (Deut. 17:6; 19:15).

■ **8:14 I know where I came from.** Since Jesus knows where He "came from" (heaven), He knows that His testimony is valid and true. Jesus' origin is again the point of conflict (7:41–43, 52 and notes).

■ **8:16 I am not alone.** Since the Father is His witness, Christ's testimony is legally acceptable. In any case, one who has the witness of God needs nothing more.

■ **8:19** The Pharisees misunderstood Jesus' claim as a reference to His physical father, and they may have been eager to challenge Him as a child allegedly born out of wedlock. In speaking of His Father, however, Jesus was not talking about Joseph but about God. Knowledge of the Father comes through the Son (1:18; 14:9; 1 John 5:20). The Pharisees' blindness to Jesus shows that their technical knowledge of the law did not give them the knowledge of God.

■ **8:21 I am going away.** Jesus speaks of His death, resurrection, and ascension.

die in your sin. Jesus clearly states the two destinies of humanity. Not all will be saved; some cannot go where Jesus is going. The only way of salvation is to believe (v. 24; 3:16, 18).

■ **8:24, 28 I am He.** Here Jesus applies Old Testament language for Yahweh to Himself (Ex. 3:14; Is. 43:10), an identification that becomes unambiguous in v. 58.

■ **8:28 lift up.** See note at 3:14.

29 [i]John 14:10 [k]John 8:16; 16:32 [l]John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38
30 [m]John 7:31; 10:42; 11:45
31 [n][John 14:15, 23]
32 [o][John 1:14, 17; 14:6] [p][Rom. 6:14, 18, 22]
33 [q][Matt. 3:9]
34 [r]2 Pet. 2:19
35 [s]Gal. 4:30
36 [t]Gal. 5:1
37 [u]John 7:19
38 [v][John 3:32; 5:19, 30; 14:10, 24] [5]NU *heard from*
39 [w]Matt. 3:9 [x][Rom. 2:28]
40 [y]John 8:37 [z]John 8:26
41 [a]Is. 63:16
42 [b]1 John 5:1 [c]John 16:27; 17:8, 25 [d]Gal. 4:4
43 [e][John 7:17]
44 [f]Matt. 13:38 [g]1 John 2:16, 17 [h][1 John 3:8–10, 15] [i][Jude 6]

29 And [i]He who sent Me is with Me. [k]The Father has not left Me alone, [l]for I always do those things that please Him." 30 As He spoke these words, [m]many believed in Him.

The Truth Shall Make You Free

31 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you [n]abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. 32 And you shall know the [o]truth, and [p]the truth shall make you free."

33 They answered Him, [q]"We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How *can* You say, 'You will be made free'?"

34 Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, [r]whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. 35 And [s]a slave does not abide in the house forever, *but* a son abides forever. 36 [t]Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.

Abraham's Seed and Satan's

37 "I know that you are Abraham's descendants, but [u]you seek to kill Me, because My word has no place in you. 38 [v]I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have [5]seen with your father."

39 They answered and said to Him, [w]"Abraham is our father."

Jesus said to them, [x]"If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham. 40 [y]But now you seek to kill Me, a Man who has told you the truth [z]which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this. 41 You do the deeds of your father."

Then they said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; [a]we have one Father—God."

42 Jesus said to them, [b]"If God were your Father, you would love Me, for [c]I proceeded forth and came from God; [d]nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. 43 [e]Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. 44 [f]You are of *your* father the devil, and the [g]desires of your father you want to [h]do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and [i]does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources,* for he is a liar and the father of it. 45 But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. 46 Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not be-

■ **8:30 believed in Him.** From what is said later (vv. 33, 37, 39), it is apparent that their profession was superficial. True believers are those who abide in His word (v. 31). Perseverance distinguishes those who are truly born of God (15:2, 6; 1 John 2:19).

■ **8:32 you shall know the truth.** Holding to the teaching of Christ who is the truth (14:6) leads one to the truth that sets a person free from slavery to sin. Salvation is not obtained by intellectual knowledge as the Gnostics imagined, but by a vital relationship with Jesus Christ and a commitment to the truth He revealed (18:37).

■ **8:33 We . . . have never been in bondage.** The Jews had been enslaved in Egypt and later were ruled by the Philistines, the Assyrians, and others. Since they could hardly deny this, they were probably saying that they had been a nation under God since the Exodus, no matter what else had happened to them. It is also possible that they were speaking about the time of the Romans, when they had certain liberties, including official recognition as a religion.

■ **8:34 whoever commits sin is a slave.** Jesus describes the gravity of sin and the predicament of humanity under sin. His hearers did not understand the freedom He offered them as they did not understand the bondage they were in. See "The Freedom and Bondage of the Will" at Jer. 17:9.

■ **8:36 if the Son makes you free.** Regeneration (the new birth) is the work of the Holy Spirit (3:3–8), accomplished on the basis of Christ's death and resurrection on our behalf (3:14–16).

free indeed. Jesus was not speaking of political freedom, nor merely a freedom by which we are relieved from physical bondage. True freedom is to serve God, to fulfill the purposes of those specially created in God's image. Sin deprives us of this fulfillment because sin clouds our minds, degrades our feelings, and enslaves our wills. This is what the Reformers called "total depravity"; its only remedy is the grace of God in spiritual rebirth (3:3). See "Christian Liberty" at Gal. 5:1.

■ **8:37 Abraham's descendants.** God is interested in spiritual descent rather than physical ancestry. It does not matter how good a person's ancestors have been if he or she is walking in the path of disobedience (Ezek. 18). Likewise it does not matter how bad a person's ancestors have been if that person is renewed by God's Spirit and walks in the way of faith.

■ **8:40 Abraham did not do this.** Abraham was obedient to God's direction even when it was painful for him. Jesus' audience claimed to be Abraham's descendants, but Jesus shows they are not like their ancestor in the essential matter of obedience. True sonship is not defined by biology but by obedience.

■ **8:41 born of fornication.** This may well have been a sarcastic suggestion that Jesus was illegitimate.

Father—God. The Jews seldom addressed God as "Father." The fatherhood of God is a leading feature of Christ's teaching. God is the Father of those who are saved and received into God's household by adoption. God is the Father of the Son in a unique sense (1:14 note; 3:16; 20:17).

■ **8:42 you would love Me.** The unity between Father and Son is so profound that no one can belong to the Father and reject the Son. Again Jesus' origin is a point of contention (7:41–43 note).

■ **8:44 You are of your father the devil.** The relation of truth and righteousness has been prominent in this Gospel. People love darkness (error) rather than light (truth), because their deeds are evil (3:10). A frightful contrast is apparent here; there are just two options: God or Satan. By God's grace, Abraham (vv. 39–41) had walked in the way of faith and obedience. Those who rejected Jesus were doing the opposite.

you want. Sinners desire to do what is evil. Only a supernatural act of grace can redirect a person's will to desire the good.

He was a murderer . . . a liar. Among all the sins that could be mentioned as characteristic of Satan, murder and lying are singled out: lying because it is the direct opposite of "truth," the central emphasis of this section (vv. 32–47); and murder because they desired to kill Jesus (v. 40). Satan contrasts sharply with Jesus who is "the truth, and the life" (14:6) and the giver of life (10:10, 28).

■ **8:46 Which of you convicts Me of sin.** No one can convict Jesus of sin, or prove any charge against Him. Jesus is free of all sin (2 Cor. 5:21), "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Heb. 7:26), doing always what pleases the Father (v. 29).

lieve Me? 47 [j]He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God."

Before Abraham Was, I AM

48 Then the Jews answered and said to Him, "Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and [k]have a demon?"

49 Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and [l]you dishonor Me. 50 And [m]I do not seek My *own* glory; there is One who seeks and judges. 51 Most assuredly, I say to you, [n]if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death."

52 Then the Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You [o]have a demon! [p]Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word he shall never taste death.' 53 Are You greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. [q]Who do You make Yourself out to be?"

54 Jesus answered, [r]"If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. [s]It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is [6]your God. 55 Yet [t]you have not known Him, but I know Him. And if I say, 'I do not know Him,' I shall be a liar like you; but I do know Him and [u]keep His word. 56 Your father Abraham [v]rejoiced to see My day, [w]and he saw *it* and was glad."

57 Then the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?"

58 Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, [x]before Abraham was, [y]I AM."

59 Then [z]they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, [a]going[7] through the midst of them, and so passed by.

A Man Born Blind Receives Sight

9 Now as *Jesus* passed by, He saw a man who was blind from birth. 2 And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Rabbi, [a]who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

3 Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, [b]but that the works of God should be revealed in him. 4 [c]I[1] must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is [d]day; *the* night is

47 [j]1 John 4:6
48 [k]John 7:20; 10:20
49 [l]John 5:41
50 [m]John 5:41; 7:18
51 [n]John 5:24; 11:26
52 [o]John 7:20; 10:20 [p]Zech. 1:5
53 [q]John 10:33; 19:7
54 [r]John 5:31, 32 [s]Acts 3:13 [6]NU, M *our*
55 [t]John 7:28, 29 [u][John 15:10]
56 [v]Luke 10:24 [w]Heb. 11:13
58 [x]Mic. 5:2 [y]Rev. 1:8
59 [z]John 10:31; 11:8 [a]Luke 4:30 [7]NU omits the rest of v. 59.

CHAPTER 9

2 [a]John 9:34
3 [b]John 11:4

4 [c][John 4:34; 5:19, 36; 17:4] [d]John 11:9, 10; 12:35 [1]NU *We*

■ **8:47 you do not hear.** Sin paralyzes our spiritual senses. Only an act of God's grace enables a sinner to hear His voice (cf. v. 43; 10:3, 4, 16, 27).

■ **8:48 a Samaritan.** A term of insult, possibly implying that Jesus was born out of wedlock (v. 41 note).

have a demon. When cornered by the truth, Jesus' enemies turn to blasphemy (Matt. 12:24, 31).

■ **8:49 I do not have a demon.** Jesus' conduct, in honoring the Father and not seeking self-glory, is the opposite of what a demon-possessed person would do. Jesus is not afraid to refer the matter to God's judgment (cf. 17:4).

■ **8:51 if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death.** Death, as eternal separation from fellowship with God, is the judicial punishment for sin (Rom. 6:23). Since Jesus died as the substitute for His people, those who belong to Him are freed from the penalty of sin because Christ endured it for them.

never. In extending the promise beyond this life, Jesus lays claim to a divine prerogative. The Jews understood the statement as promising avoidance of physical death (v. 52). Earlier statements made clear what Jesus meant (5:24–29).

■ **8:53 Are You greater than our father Abraham.** Abraham and the prophets, great as they were in the history of redemption, could not take away death. Only Christ has triumphed over the grave.

■ **8:54 My honor.** Lit. "glory." In the days of His earthly ministry, Jesus did not seek honor even though it belonged to Him as the Son of God. Christ's glory was visible to those who had eyes to see it (1:14). It was apparent in His resurrection and ascension (1 Tim. 3:16), and will be seen fully at His Second Coming.

■ **8:56 Abraham . . . saw it and was glad.** Abraham saw Christ's day as he embraced in faith many promises given to him by God, promises that demanded the coming of Christ to be fulfilled. Since the context of the discussion has been Satan as a murderer and Jesus as one whose death delivers from death, it may have special reference to God's providing the ram as a substitute when Abraham was prepared to sacrifice Isaac. This statement shows clearly that even in Old Testament times, believers were saved through faith in Christ presented to them in the foreshadowing given by God to reveal His redemptive plan (cf. Acts 4:12).

■ **8:57 fifty years old.** Jesus was closer to thirty (Luke 3:23).

■ **8:58 before Abraham was, I AM.** This is a clear reference to Jesus' eternal preexistence. Since this is an attribute of God alone, this text is a forceful statement of Jesus' deity. The present tense of the verb suggests the eternal present of God's eternity. "I AM" is also reminiscent of God's name in Ex. 3:14 (vv. 24, 28 note). See "Jesus Christ, God and Man" at 1:14.

■ **8:59 they took up stones.** The Jews would not accept Christ's claim to be God, but treated it as blasphemy, for which stoning was required in the law (Lev. 24:16; cf. John 10:31; Matt. 26:65).

■ **9:2 who sinned.** Many Jews, like Job's friends, believed that every temporal misfortune was God's punishment for some specific sin. With a congenital affliction the explanation could be that the sin had been committed in the womb, or by the parents whose sinful act victimized their child. Jesus dismisses these as improper explanations (v. 3), but this is not to say that certain trials are not the God-ordained punishment for certain sins (e.g., the life of David after His adultery and murder, 2 Sam. 12—21). Neither does Jesus here dismiss the biblical doctrine of original sin (Rom. 5:12–21), which teaches that all suffering is the consequence of our corporate sin and rebellion in Adam. But it is unwise and uncharitable to judge that the sufferings of others are specifically punitive (Matt. 7:1). The question put to Jesus presents a false dilemma. Only two possibilities were given as reasons for the man's affliction, his own sin or the sin of his parents. Jesus offers a third option (v.3).

■ **9:3 that the works of God should be revealed.** Some of our sufferings, like the trials of Job, are for God's glory, either through our resulting refinement or through a spectacular healing as in the present case. God's purpose is not always presently known to us, but we have God's assurance that His purpose is good (Rom. 8:28).

coming when no one can work. 5 As long as I am in the world, [e]I am the light of the world."

6 When He had said these things, [f]He spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva; and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. 7 And He said to him, "Go, wash [g]in the pool of Siloam" (which is translated, Sent). So [h]he went and washed, and came back seeing.

8 Therefore the neighbors and those who previously had seen that he was [2]blind said, "Is not this he who sat and begged?"

9 Some said, "This is he." Others *said,* [3]"He is like him."

He said, "I am *he.*"

10 Therefore they said to him, "How were your eyes opened?"

11 He answered and said, [i]"A Man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and said to me, 'Go to [4]the pool of Siloam and wash.' So I went and washed, and I received sight."

12 Then they said to him, "Where is He?"

He said, "I do not know."

The Pharisees Excommunicate the Healed Man

13 They brought him who formerly was blind to the Pharisees. 14 Now it was a Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. 15 Then the Pharisees also asked him again how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I see."

16 Therefore some of the Pharisees said, "This Man is not from God, because He does not [5]keep the Sabbath."

Others said, [j]"How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" And [k]there was a division among them.

17 They said to the blind man again, "What do you say about Him because He opened your eyes?"

He said, [l]"He is a prophet."

18 But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind and received his sight, until they called the parents of him who had received his sight. 19 And they asked them, saying, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?"

20 His parents answered them and said, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; 21 but by what means he now sees we do not know, or who opened his eyes we do not know. He is of age; ask him. He will speak for himself." 22 His parents said these *things* because [m]they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already that if anyone confessed *that* He *was* Christ, he [n]would be put out of the synagogue. 23 Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

24 So they again called the man who was blind, and said to him, [o]"Give God the glory! [p]We know that this Man is a sinner."

25 He answered and said, "Whether He is a sinner *or not* I do not know. One thing I know: that though I was blind, now I see."

26 Then they said to him again, "What did He do to you? How did He open your eyes?"

27 He answered them, "I told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear *it* again? Do you also want to become His disciples?"

28 Then they reviled him and said, "You are His disciple, but we are Moses' disciples. 29 We know that God [q]spoke to [r]Moses; *as for* this *fellow,* [s]we do not know where He is from."

30 The man answered and said to them, [t]"Why, this is a marvelous thing, that you do not know where He is from; yet He has opened my eyes! 31 Now we know that [u]God does not hear sinners;

5 [e][John 1:5, 9; 3:19; 8:12; 12:35, 46]

6 [f]Mark 7:33; 8:23

7 [g]Neh. 3:15; Is. 8:6; Luke 13:4; John 9:11 [h]2 Kin. 5:14

8 [2]NU *a beggar*

9 [3]NU *"No, but he is like him."*

11 [i]John 9:6, 7 [4]NU omits *the pool of*

16 [j]John 3:2; 9:33 [k]John 7:12, 43; 10:19 [5]*observe*

17 [l][John 4:19; 6:14]

22 [m]John 7:13; 12:42; 19:38; Acts 5:13 [n]John 16:2

24 [o]Josh. 7:19; 1 Sam. 6:5; Ezra 10:11; Rev. 11:13 [p]John 9:16

29 [q]Ex. 19:19, 20; 33:11; 34:29; Num. 12:6–8 [r][John 5:45–47] [s]John 7:27, 28; 8:14

30 [t]John 3:10

31 [u]Job 27:9; 35:12; Ps. 18:41; Prov. 1:28; 15:29; 28:9; Is. 1:15; Jer. 11:11; 14:12; Ezek. 8:18; Mic. 3:4; Zech. 7:13; [James 5:16]

■ **9:6 He spat on the ground.** In Mark 8:23–25, Jesus also used saliva in the course of a healing. It was not a medical agent, but provided an opportunity for the man to show his faith by obeying Jesus' command (v. 7).

■ **9:9 He is like him.** The miracle was so amazing that onlookers could not believe it was the same man.

■ **9:12 I do not know.** As the story develops, the healed man moves forward in the path of faith. Here, he does not know where Jesus is; later he asserts that Jesus is a prophet (v. 17); later still he raises doubts about the accusation that Jesus is a sinner (v. 25); and finally, after meeting Jesus again, he acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God and worships Him (vv. 35–38). These steps of faith illustrate what the author of the Gospel wants for his readers (20:31).

■ **9:16 Sabbath.** Instead of being grateful for this supernatural work of God's grace, the Pharisees began to haggle about the observance of the Sabbath. Their concern was specifically about their traditional interpretation of what the fourth commandment required. Not one of the actions involved (spitting, applying mud, going as far as Siloam, washing one's face, healing a blind man) was forbidden by the law. Rather than question their own understanding of the law, they rejected Jesus and His ministry.

■ **9:18–23** An inquiry with the blind man's parents establishes the reality of his blindness and the cure.

■ **9:24–34** A second investigation with the healed man brings no new facts to light, but the investigators' position is hardened. The Pharisees call Jesus a "sinner" (v. 24) whose origin is unknown (v. 29), and they excommunicate the man whose replies only irritate them (vv. 27, 30). His replies are to the point: The man born blind had been healed, and "God does not hear sinners" (v. 31).

but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him. 32 Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind. 33 [v]If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing."

34 They answered and said to him, [w]"You were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us?" And they [6]cast him out.

True Vision and True Blindness

35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had [x]found him, He said to him, "Do you [y]believe in [z]the Son of [7]God?"

36 He answered and said, "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?"

37 And Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him and [a]it is He who is talking with you."

38 Then he said, "Lord, I believe!" And he [b]worshiped Him.

39 And Jesus said, [c]"For judgment I have come into this world, [d]that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind."

40 Then *some* of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, [e]and said to Him, "Are we blind also?"

41 Jesus said to them, [f]"If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, 'We see.' Therefore your sin remains.

Jesus the True Shepherd

10 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. 2 But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by [a]name and leads them out. 4 And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. 5 Yet they will by no means follow a [b]stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers." 6 Jesus used this illustration, but they did not understand the things which He spoke to them.

Jesus the Good Shepherd

7 Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 All who *ever* came [1]before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. 9 [c]I am

33 [v]John 3:2; 9:16

34 [w]Ps. 51:5; John 9:2 [6]Excommunicated him

35 [x]John 5:14 [y]John 1:7; 16:31 [z]Matt. 14:33; 16:16; Mark 1:1; John 10:36; 1 John 5:13 [7]NU *Man*

37 [a]John 4:26

38 [b]Matt. 8:2

39 [c][John 3:17; 5:22, 27; 12:47] [d]Matt. 13:13; 15:14

40 [e][Rom. 2:19]

41 [f]John 15:22, 24

CHAPTER 10

3 [a]John 20:16

5 [b][2 Cor. 11:13–15]

8 [1]M omits *before Me*

9 [c][John 14:6; Eph. 2:18]

■ **9:35–38** In this second encounter with Jesus, the healed man's faith moves from a general confidence in Jesus' godly mission to a joyful acceptance of Him as the Messiah, worthy to be worshiped.

■ **9:39–41** In this epilogue Jesus brings to light the impact of His coming: those who falsely imagine they have special insight into the things of God become blind opponents of God's ways, and those who seem less informed are able to see when the Spirit of God opens their eyes and leads them to faith.

■ **9:39 For judgment I have come.** The First Coming of Christ did not bring in the Last Judgment (3:17; 12:47), but He confronted people with the obligation to decide for or against Him (Matt. 12:30; Luke 11:23). Until the Second Coming of Christ, this is still the age of redemption during which the blind are made to see, and those dead in trespasses and sins are raised to newness of life (Eph. 2:4).

■ **9:41 We see.** The opponents lacked the elementary humility of acknowledging that they were sinners.

■ **10:1–42** This chapter is divided into three sections: the good shepherd discourse (vv. 1–21), the discourse with the Jews at the Feast of Dedication (vv. 22–38), and a closing section (vv. 39–42). The chapter is unified by the teaching on the certain character of Christ's saving activity.

■ **10:1** For God as the Shepherd of His people, see Gen. 48:15; 49:24; Ps. 23:1; 28:9; 78:52; 80:1; Is. 40:11; Jer. 31:10; Ezek. 34:11–16. A prophecy in Zech. 13:7 concerning "the Shepherd" of Israel was applied by Jesus to Himself (Matt. 26:31). Jesus here presents His ministry as the work of a shepherd. In other parts of the New Testament, Jesus is referred to as the "great Shepherd" (Heb. 13:20) and "the Chief Shepherd" (1 Pet. 5:4); and Rev. 7:17 says that "the Lamb . . . will shepherd them."

the sheepfold. A fenced enclosure with one entrance. Thieves and predators might climb over the fence to steal or even kill the sheep (vv. 8, 10).

■ **10:2 enters by the door.** The shepherd does not need to climb over the fence, but is admitted by the watchman. The language here implies that several flocks are kept in one fold, and that a proper shepherd attended to his own sheep.

■ **10:3 the sheep hear.** The shepherd knows his sheep "by name" and the sheep recognize their shepherd's voice and come to him. This is a vivid image of how God has marked some people to be His in the midst of fallen humanity.

■ **10:4 know his voice.** Electing grace is also effective grace: Jesus, who knows the sheep, reveals Himself to them in such a way that they will respond. He does not force them to follow Him, but through the work of regeneration He makes them willing.

■ **10:5 they will by no means follow a stranger.** This comforting promise does not exclude the need to warn believers against deceitful teachers (Mark 13:22, 23; 2 Tim. 3:5; 4:2–5; 1 John 2:26).

■ **10:6 they did not understand.** In some cases the disciples themselves did not understand what Jesus was teaching (Matt. 13:10–17, 36; 15:15).

■ **10:7 I am the door.** Jesus changes the metaphor from "shepherd" to "door." As the "door of the sheep," Jesus is the One through whom eternal life is received (cf. 14:6; Matt. 7:13, 14). The "I am" phrase here continues the series of seven such expressions in this Gospel (6:35 note).

■ **10:8 thieves and robbers.** This does not refer to the Old Testament prophets sent by God (Matt. 21:34–36; 23:29–36), but to anyone who falsely claimed to be the Messiah.

■ **10:9 If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved.** *This guarantees that* salvation is given to those who trust in Christ (Acts 16:31; Rom. 10:9, 10). In 14:6, it is made plain that these only are saved. Christ is necessary and sufficient for salvation (3:36).

go in and out. The sheep would come into the fold for safety and go out under their shepherd's guidance for pasture.

11 [d]Is. 40:11
12 [e]Zech. 11:16, 17
[2]*hired man*
14 [f]2 Tim. 2:19
[g]2 Tim. 1:12
15 [h]Matt. 11:27

the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. 10 The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.

11 [d]"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. 12 But a [2]hireling, *he who is* not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and [e]leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. 13 The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd; and [f]I know My *sheep,* and [g]am known by My own. 15 [h]As the Father knows Me, even so I know the

Definite Redemption

Definite redemption, also called "particular redemption," or "limited atonement," is the historic Reformed doctrine about the intention of the triune God in the death of Jesus Christ. Without questioning the infinite worth of Christ's sacrifice or the genuineness of God's sincere invitation to all who hear the gospel (Rev. 22:17), the doctrine states that Christ in dying intended to accomplish what He did accomplish: to take away the sins of God's elect, and to ensure that they would all be brought to faith through regeneration and preserved through faith for glory. Christ did not intend to die in this efficacious sense for everyone. The proof of that, as Scripture and experience unite to teach us, is that not all are saved.

In discussing the atonement, some say that Christ died for all, and that all without exception will be saved. This is an actual universalism. A second doctrine is that Christ died for all, but that His death has no saving effect without an added faith and repentance not foreseen in His death. In other words, He died for the general purpose of making salvation possible, but the salvation of particular individuals was not included in His death. This is a hypothetical universalism. The third doctrine is that although Christ's death was infinite in value, it was offered to save only some, those who were known beforehand. This is the limited or definite atonement.

Scripture does not teach that all will be saved, ruling out actual universalism. The other two views do not differ about how many will be saved, but about the purpose for which Christ died. Scripture addresses this question. The New Testament teaches that God chose for salvation a great number of the fallen race and sent Christ into the world to save them (John 6:37–40; 10:27–29; 11:51, 52; Rom. 8:28–39; Eph. 1:3–14; 1 Pet. 1:20). Christ is said to have died for a particular people, with the clear implication that His death secured their salvation (John 10:15–18, 27–29; Rom. 5:8–10; 8:32; Gal. 2:20; 3:13, 14; 4:4, 5; 1 John 4:9, 10; Rev. 1:4–6; 5:9, 10). Before He died, Christ prayed for those the Father had given Him, and not for the world (John 17:9, 20). Jesus' prayer lifted up those for whom He was going to die, and He promised them that He would not fail to save them. Such passages present the idea of a definite atonement. The Old Testament, with its emphasis on the election of grace, provides strong support.

The free offer of the gospel, and the commandment to preach the good news everywhere, is not inconsistent with the teaching that Christ died for His elect people. All who come to Christ will find mercy (John 6:35, 47–51, 54–57; Rom. 1:16; 10:8–13). The gospel offers Christ, who knows His sheep, He died for them; He calls them by name, and they hear Him. This is the gospel that He commanded His disciples to preach in all the world, in order to save sinners. □

■ **10:10 that they may have life . . . abundantly.** The life that Jesus gives is unique because it is eternal, and He gives this life in ever-growing abundance to His redeemed.

■ **10:11 good shepherd.** Jesus now returns to the illustration with which the chapter started (vv. 2–5).

gives His life. Jesus as Shepherd does more than risk His life (cf. 1 Sam. 17:34–36), He gives His life, enduring death on behalf of sinners. This is intimated in the name "Lamb of God" declared by John the Baptist (1:29) and in other statements by Jesus Himself (2:19; 3:14; 6:51).

for the sheep. This sacrifice is for "the sheep." It is for those whom the Father has given Him (17:2, 6, 24), the elect. It is they who through the death of Jesus Christ on their behalf will be justified and enjoy fellowship with God.

■ **10:12 a hireling.** Jesus sharpens the picture by contrasting His sacrificial service with the cowardly abandonment of the sheep by those who are controlled by self-interest. Thieves rob the sheep; hired hands abandon the sheep; Christ lays down His life for the sheep.

■ **10:14 I know My sheep, and am known by My own.** This is placed in parallel with the intimacy between the Father and the Son (v. 15; cf. 17:21–23). It is clear that "know" here, as so often in Scripture, means more than a mental grasp; it includes personal understanding and a commitment of will. To say that God "knows" a person in this way refers to His gracious redemptive commitment to that individual.

■ **10:15** See theological note "Definite Redemption."

Father; [i]and I lay down My life for the sheep. [16] And [j]other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; [k]and there will be one flock *and* one shepherd.

[17] "Therefore My Father [l]loves Me, [m]because I lay down My life that I may take it again. [18] No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I [n]have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. [o]This command I have received from My Father."

[19] Therefore [p]there was a division again among the Jews because of these sayings. [20] And many of them said, [q]"He has a demon and is [3]mad. Why do you listen to Him?"

[21] Others said, "These are not the words of one who has a demon. [r]Can a demon [s]open the eyes of the blind?"

The Shepherd Knows His Sheep

[22] Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter. [23] And Jesus walked in the temple, [t]in Solomon's porch. [24] Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, "How long do You keep us in [4]doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly."

[25] Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. [u]The works that I do in My Father's name, they [v]bear witness of Me. [26] But [w]you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, [5]as I said to you. [27] [x]My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. [28] And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. [29] [y]My Father, [z]who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of My Father's hand. [30] [a]I and *My* Father are one."

Renewed Efforts to Stone Jesus

[31] Then [b]the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. [32] Jesus answered them, "Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?"

[33] The Jews answered Him, saying, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for [c]blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, [d]make Yourself God."

[34] Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your law, [e]*'I said, "You are gods"'*? [35] If He

15 [f][John 15:13; 19:30]

16 [j]Is. 42:6; 56:8 [k]Eph. 2:13–18

17 [l]John 5:20 [m][Heb. 2:9]

18 [n][John 2:19; 5:26] [o][John 6:38; 14:31; 17:4; Acts 2:24, 32]

19 [p]John 7:43; 9:16

20 [q]John 7:20 [3]*insane*

21 [r][Ex. 4:11] [s]John 9:6, 7, 32, 33

23 [t]Acts 3:11; 5:12

24 [4]Suspense

25 [u]John 5:36; 10:38 [v]Matt. 11:4

26 [w][John 8:47] [5]NU omits *as I said to you*

27 [x]John 10:4, 14

29 [y]John 14:28 [z][John 17:2, 6, 12, 24]

30 [a]John 17:11, 21–24

31 [b]John 8:59

33 [c]Matt. 9:3 [d]John 5:18

34 [e]Ps. 82:6

■ **10:16 other sheep.** The gospel is not confined to Israel, but extends to the rest of the world.

■ **10:17 My Father loves Me.** The self-sacrifice of the Son is an act of loving obedience to the Father that reveals the love among the three Persons of the Trinity.

■ **10:17, 18 I . . . take it again.** The resurrection of Christ is described as the act of each of the three Persons of the Trinity: the Son, the Father (Acts 2:32; 3:15; 4:10; Gal. 1:1), and the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:10–11).

■ **10:18 No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself.** This is a claim to deity, as even His enemies understood (v. 33), because God alone is the Author and Giver of life. The verse also underscores that Christ was not a victim but freely offered Himself for sinners. See "The Humble Obedience of Christ" at 5:19.

■ **10:19 division.** See 7:43; 9:16.

■ **10:20** See 7:20.

■ **10:22 Feast of Dedication.** This festival, now called Hanukkah, is celebrated in December. It commemorates the restoration of the temple in the time of Judas Maccabeus and the Jewish revolt against Antiochus Epiphanes (164 B.C.).

■ **10:23 Solomon's porch.** A portico with roof and supporting columns on the east side of the court of the Gentiles in Herod's temple (Acts 3:11; 5:12).

■ **10:24 If You are the Christ.** This was the key question arising from Jesus' ministry. The disciples had reached that conclusion (6:69; Matt. 16:16; Mark 8:29; Luke 9:20). The question will be raised again at Jesus' trial, and the high priest will regard Jesus' answer as blasphemy (Matt. 26:63–65; Mark 14:61–64; Luke 22:67–71).

■ **10:25 I told you.** Jesus had affirmed this to the Samaritan woman (4:26) and to the man born blind (9:37), and He had accepted the confession of the disciples (v. 24 note; 1:49). In His discussions with the Jewish authorities, He had implied as much (8:28, 58). Here He again affirms His messianic identity absolutely.

The works. Jesus had referred to His works as evidence of the trustworthiness of His claims (5:36), and He pressed this point later before the disciples (14:11; 15:24). The man born blind had reasoned the same way (9:32, 33).

■ **10:26 you do not believe.** They closed their eyes to the clear evidence.

because you are not of My sheep. Only those who are Christ's, whom the Father has given Him, come to faith. Others are so blinded by their sinful prejudice that they refuse to believe. Only the regenerate, who have been "born again" (3:3, 7) believe.

■ **10:27 My sheep.** They listen to Jesus (vv. 3–5), and they follow Him (v. 4). These believers show renewal in the new direction and commitment of their lives.

■ **10:28** The Lord gives His sheep the endless life of fellowship with God (17:2–3). He protects them from perishing, according to the infallibility of divine grace; and He allows no one to snatch them from His hand. The saints persevere because God preserves them. The sheep are not able to snatch themselves out of God's hand because the divine Shepherd will keep all of His true sheep from eternally straying (cf. 17:12). The solemn warnings of Scripture against apostasy are not intended to cause doubts about God's perseverance with those He has saved (cf. 1 John 2:19). See "Perseverance of the Saints" at Rom. 8:30.

■ **10:29 My Father's hand.** The hand of the Shepherd is also the Father's hand, and the supreme power of God is the ultimate guarantee of the sheep's safety.

■ **10:30 one.** Not identical Persons but one in essence (the Greek word for "one" is neuter). The Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit possess alike the fullness of the divine nature. This essential unity underlies their unity in the redemptive purpose. The verse indicates more than unity of purpose.

■ **10:31–33** The Jews understood Jesus' claim to deity, and were preparing to stone Him for blasphemy (8:59).

■ **10:34–38** In the Old Testament, human judges (see text note at Ps. 82:6) could be called "gods" because they were viewed as acting in God's place in dispensing justice. The Hebrew word *'elohim* is used not

called them gods, *f*to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture *g*cannot be broken), 36 do you say of Him *h*whom the Father sanctified and *i*sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' *j*because I said, 'I am *k*the Son of God'? 37 *l*If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; 38 but if I do, though you do not believe Me, *m*believe the works, that you may know and *n*believe *o*that the Father *is* in Me, and I in Him." 39 *p*Therefore they sought again to seize Him, but He escaped out of their hand.

The Believers Beyond Jordan

40 And He went away again beyond the Jordan to the place *q*where John was baptizing at first, and there He stayed. 41 Then many came to Him and said, "John performed no sign, *r*but all the things that John spoke about this Man were true." 42 And many believed in Him there.

The Death of Lazarus

11 Now a certain *man* was sick, Lazarus of Bethany, the town of *a*Mary and her sister Martha. 2 *b*It was *that* Mary who anointed the Lord with fragrant oil and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. 3 Therefore the sisters sent to Him, saying, "Lord, behold, he whom You love is sick."

4 When Jesus heard *that,* He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

5 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. 6 So, when He heard that he was sick, *c*He stayed two more days in the place where He was. 7 Then after this He said to *the* disciples, "Let us go to Judea again."

8 *The* disciples said to Him, "Rabbi, lately the Jews sought to *d*stone You, and are You going there again?"

9 Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? *e*If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the *f*light of this world. 10 But *g*if one walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him." 11 These things He said, and after that He said to them, "Our friend Lazarus *h*sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up."

12 Then His disciples said, "Lord, if he sleeps he will get well." 13 However, Jesus spoke of his death, but they thought that He was speaking about taking rest in sleep.

14 Then Jesus said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. 15 And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe. Nevertheless let us go to him."

16 Then *i*Thomas, who is called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him."

35 *f*Matt. 5:17, 18 *g*1 Pet. 1:25
36 *h*John 6:27 *i*John 3:17 *j*John 5:17, 18 *k*Luke 1:35
37 *l*John 10:25; 15:24
38 *m*John 5:36 *n*John 14:10, 11 *o*NU *understand*
39 *p*John 7:30, 44
40 *q*John 1:28
41 *r*[John 1:29, 36; 3:28–36; 5:33]

CHAPTER 11

1 *a*Luke 10:38, 39; John 11:5, 19
2 *b*Matt. 26:7
6 *c*John 10:40
8 *d*John 8:59; 10:31
9 *e*Luke 13:33; John 9:4; 12:35 *f*Is. 9:2
10 *g*John 12:35
11 *h*Deut. 31:16; [Dan. 12:2]; Matt. 9:24; Acts 7:60; [1 Cor. 15:18, 51]
16 *i*Matt. 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15; John 14:5; 20:26–28; Acts 1:13

only to refer to the one true God but also to denote false gods, angels, and, very rarely, men exercising divine functions. Jesus' argument may be understood as follows: "Rather than taking offense because this word is used of Me, you should examine My credentials that prove My Father has sent Me into this world."

■ **10:34 your law.** The quotation is found in Ps. 82:6. The term "law" was not restricted to the Pentateuch, or *Torah,* but referred to any part of the Old Testament as also having legal authority (15:25).

■ **10:35 to whom the word of God came.** This is not a reference to the writing of Scripture, but to the divine appointment of the judges.

the Scripture cannot be broken. A strong statement of the authority of Scripture. In this serious confrontation that was to end in His death, Jesus did not hesitate to base His whole argument on one word of a minor psalm of Asaph. See "The Authority of Scripture" at 2 Tim. 3:16.

■ **10:37 the works of My Father.** The miracles and the whole course of His life attested to the correctness of Jesus' claim of a heavenly origin and mission. See "Miracles" at 1 Kin. 17:22.

■ **10:38 the Father is in Me, and I in Him.** This mutual indwelling is characteristic of relationships within the Trinity.

■ **10:39 He escaped.** John does not give us details but makes it plain that nothing could happen to Jesus until God's appointed hour (7:44; 8:59).

■ **11:1–54** The miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead is a climax to all the preceding signs that have revealed God's glory through Jesus. Here death itself, the final enemy of humanity, is successfully confronted by the One who is Himself the Resurrection and the Life. Yet even this glorious sign divides those who witness it. Those who reject the glory revealed commit themselves to pursuing Jesus' death (vv. 46–50).

■ **11:1 Lazarus.** Not the Lazarus of Luke 16:20. Lazarus is named only in John's Gospel.

■ **11:2 that Mary.** Mary's anointing of Jesus is related in 12:1–8.

■ **11:3 he whom You love is sick.** This was a distress call, apparently sent shortly before Lazarus died.

■ **11:4 This sickness is not unto death.** In so speaking, Jesus is not denying that Lazarus will be dead for four days, but denying that death will finally triumph.

■ **11:6 two more days.** A delay the sisters would have a hard time understanding.

■ **11:8 the Jews sought to stone You.** Jesus' death did not happen by accident or miscalculation; it was what He came to do. Jesus and His disciples knew that if He went to Jerusalem His life would be at risk.

■ **11:11 sleeps.** In the New Testament death is frequently represented as sleep (Acts 7:60; 1 Cor. 15:51; 1 Thess. 4:13). This is a common way of talking about death and says nothing in favor of the doctrine of "soul-sleep" for departed saints. Scripture is clear that conscious awareness continues after death.

■ **11:16 that we may die with Him.** The hostility toward Jesus has now reached the point that the disciples are convinced that a trip to Jerusalem will result in Jesus' death. If they cannot talk Him out of the trip, they are at least willing to die with Him.

I Am the Resurrection and the Life

17 So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days. 18 Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about [1]two miles away. 19 And many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.

20 Now Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house. 21 Now Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But even now I know that [j]whatever You ask of God, God will give You."

23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

24 Martha said to Him, [k]"I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

25 Jesus said to her, "I am [l]the resurrection and the life. [m]He who believes in Me, though he may [n]die, he shall live. 26 And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

27 She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, [o]I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

Jesus and Death, the Last Enemy

28 And when she had said these things, she went her way and secretly called Mary her sister, saying, "The Teacher has come and is calling for you." 29 As soon as she heard *that,* she arose quickly and came to Him. 30 Now Jesus had not yet come into the town, but [2]was in the place where Martha met Him. 31 [p]Then the Jews who were with her in the house, and comforting her, when they saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out, followed her, [3]saying, "She is going to the tomb to weep there."

32 Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she [q]fell down at His feet, saying to Him, [r]"Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died."

33 Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. 34 And He said, "Where have you laid him?"

They said to Him, "Lord, come and see."

35 [s]Jesus wept. 36 Then the Jews said, "See how He loved him!"

37 And some of them said, "Could not this Man, [t]who opened the eyes of the blind, also have kept this man from dying?"

Lazarus Raised from the Dead

38 Then Jesus, again groaning in Himself, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a [u]stone lay against it. 39 Jesus said, "Take away the stone."

Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been *dead* four days."

40 Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would [v]see the glory of God?" 41 Then they took away the stone [4]*from the place* where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up *His* eyes and said, "Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. 42 And I know that You always hear Me, but [w]because of the people who are standing by I said *this,* that they may believe that You sent Me." 43 Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud

16 [1]Lit. *15 stadia*

22 [j][John 9:31; 11:41]

24 [k][Luke 14:14; John 5:29]

25 [l]John 5:21; 6:39, 40, 44; [Rev. 1:18] [m]John 3:16, 36; 1 John 5:10 [n]1 Cor. 15:22; [Heb. 9:27]

27 [o]Matt. 16:16; Luke 2:11; John 4:42; 6:14, 69

30 [2]NU *was still*

31 [p]John 11:19, 33 [3]NU *supposing that she was going*

32 [q]Mark 5:22; 7:25; Rev. 1:17 [r]John 11:21

35 [s]Luke 19:41

37 [t]John 9:6, 7

38 [u]Matt. 27:60, 66; Mark 15:46; Luke 24:2; John 20:1

40 [v][John 11:4, 23]

41 [4]NU omits *from the place where the dead man was lying*

42 [w]John 12:30; 17:21

■ **11:17 four days.** This reference to the duration of time in the tomb, repeated in v. 39, is designed to show that Lazarus was really dead, and not merely sick.

■ **11:21 If You had been here.** The first statement of each sister (cf. v. 32).

■ **11:22 even now.** Martha still expected some miracle, although it seemed that her brother was beyond recovery. When Jesus speaks of resurrection, she relates it to the distant future, the "last day" (v. 24). Martha's faith was better informed than the Sadducees, who said there is no resurrection (Matt. 22:23).

■ **11:25 I am the resurrection and the life.** This is repeated in part in 14:6 (Acts 3:15; Heb. 7:16). Life for the believer does not end at death, but continues eternally as an endless life of fellowship with God. This is true for those who, like Lazarus, were in the tomb as well as for those who are still alive. See note on 6:35.

■ **11:27 You are the Christ.** The conversation elicits from Martha a confession of faith that parallels that of Peter (Matt. 16:16).

■ **11:28 The Teacher.** A characterization of Jesus' ministry. He did not disdain, as others often did, to teach a woman (Luke 10:39, 42).

■ **11:33 He . . . was troubled.** The outward expression of sorrow did not leave Jesus unmoved. He shed tears (v. 35) in sympathy for the bereaved.

■ **11:34 Where have you laid him.** John's Gospel teaches both the deity of Christ (1:1, 18) and His full humanity. As the Mediator, Christ acted within the limits of His sinless humanity, without laying aside His deity. He experienced human emotions and could express ignorance of fact. See "The Humanity of Christ" at 2 John 7.

■ **11:37 Could not this Man.** The questions raised are what sort of power Jesus has and when He will choose to use it. Lazarus was allowed to die and the sisters to mourn, in order that God's glory might be manifested (v. 4; 9:3). The healing of the blind man is remembered as clearly supernatural.

■ **11:41 Father, I thank You.** Jesus offers thanks for the answer to His prayer. He is careful to relate this miracle to His mission as Messiah.

■ **11:43 Lazarus, come forth.** The dead cannot hear, but Jesus wanted those present to see that God's voice can raise the dead (5:28, 29). This divine call that gives life to the dead vividly illustrates God's call to the spiritually dead that raises them to spiritual life (Eph. 2:5).

voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" 44 And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with [x]graveclothes, and [y]his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Loose him, and let him go."

The Plot to Kill Jesus

45 Then many of the Jews who had come to Mary, [z]and had seen the things Jesus did, believed in Him. 46 But some of them went away to the Pharisees and [a]told them the things Jesus did. 47 [b]Then the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered a council and said, [c]"What shall we do? For this Man works many signs. 48 If we let Him alone like this, everyone will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation."

49 And one of them, [d]Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all, 50 [e]nor do you consider that it is expedient for [5]us that one man should die for the people, and not that the whole nation should perish." 51 Now this he did not say on his own *authority;* but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, 52 and [f]not for that nation only, but [g]also that He would gather together in one the children of God who were scattered abroad.

53 Then, from that day on, they plotted to [h]put Him to death. 54 [i]Therefore Jesus no longer walked openly among the Jews, but went from there into the country near the wilderness, to a city called [j]Ephraim, and there remained with His disciples.

55 [k]And the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went from the country up to Jerusalem before the Passover, to [l]purify themselves. 56 [m]Then they sought Jesus, and spoke among themselves as they stood in the temple, "What do you think—that He will not come to the feast?" 57 Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a command, that if anyone knew where He was, he should report *it,* that they might [n]seize Him.

The Anointing at Bethany

12 Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, [a]where Lazarus was [1]who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead. 2 [b]There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him. 3 Then [c]Mary took a pound of very costly oil of [d]spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.

4 But one of His disciples, [e]Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son,* who would betray Him, said, 5 "Why was this fragrant oil not sold for [2]three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" 6 This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and [f]had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.

7 But Jesus said, "Let her alone; [3]she has kept this for the day of My burial. 8 For [g]the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always."

The Plot to Kill Lazarus

9 Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, [h]whom He had raised from the dead. 10 [i]But the chief

44 [x]John 19:40 [y]John 20:7
45 [z]John 2:23; 10:42; 12:11, 18
46 [a]John 5:15
47 [b]Ps. 2:2 [c]Acts 4:16
49 [d]Luke 3:2
50 [e]John 18:14 [5]NU *you*
52 [f]Is. 49:6 [g][Eph. 2:14–17]
53 [h]Matt. 26:4
54 [i]John 4:1, 3; 7:1 [j]2 Chr. 13:19
55 [k]John 2:13; 5:1; 6:4 [l]Num. 9:10, 13; 31:19, 20
56 [m]John 7:11
57 [n]Matt. 26:14–16

CHAPTER 12

1 [a]John 11:1, 43 [1]NU omits *who had been dead*
2 [b]Mark 14:3; Luke 10:38–41
3 [c]John 11:2 [d]Song 1:12
4 [e]John 13:26
5 [2]About one year's wages for a worker
6 [f]John 13:29
7 [3]NU *that she may keep*
8 [g]Mark 14:7
9 [h]John 11:43, 44
10 [i]Luke 16:31

■ **11:45–47** This work of God had a double result: faith in some, and resistance and unbelief in others (cf. 2 Cor. 3:15, 16).

■ **11:48** The Sanhedrin, which had supreme religious authority in the land, feared that Jesus' ministry would provoke a popular uprising that the Romans would crush by force of arms.

■ **11:49 Caiaphas.** He was a Sadducee and the son-in-law of Annas, who had been deposed as high priest by the Romans but had considerable influence over the religious leaders (18:13).

■ **11:50** Caiaphas callously suggests that executing an innocent person may be excused if it secures an advantage for the nation. He had forgotten the message of Prov. 17:15.

■ **11:51 he prophesied.** In the purposes of God, Caiaphas unknowingly uttered a prophecy. It was a blessing that Jesus died, because His death was necessary for the salvation, not only of Jews, but of the elect of the whole world.

■ **11:54–57** The increasing hostility of the Jewish leaders led Jesus to withdraw for a time from Jerusalem.

■ **12:1–11** The anointing of Jesus recounted in Luke 7:36–50 is a different incident from this anointing by Mary, which is related also in Matt. 26:6–12 and Mark 14:3–9.

■ **12:3 costly oil.** Judas evaluates this at a year's wages (v. 5), almost three times as much as Judas accepted to betray Jesus.

anointed the feet of Jesus. Matthew and Mark indicate that she poured some perfume on His head, which would be the common practice. To attend to His feet and wipe them with her hair was a tribute of humility and devotion.

■ **12:4–6** Judas (and the other disciples, Matt. 26:8) objected strongly, calling the act a waste of money. His remarks were inconsiderate of Jesus and cruel toward Mary. The interest in the poor is unmasked as artificial.

■ **12:7 Let her alone.** Jesus defends Mary while hinting at the nearness of His death. For this pivotal point of God's redemptive work, no expense is too great.

■ **12:8 always . . . not . . . always.** There would always be poverty in a fallen world, together with the responsibilities of ministering to the poor as an expression of God's love. The opportunity of being present with Jesus and serving Him during His time on earth would not be repeated.

■ **12:9, 10** Instead of recognizing God's hand in Lazarus's resurrection, the chief priests plotted to kill both Jesus and Lazarus.

priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, 11 *j*because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.

The Triumphal Entry

12 *k*The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, 13 took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out:

"Hosanna!
l *'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'*
The King of Israel!"

14 *m*Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written:

15 *"Fear*[n] *not, daughter of Zion;*
Behold, your King is coming,
Sitting on a donkey's colt."

16 *o*His disciples did not understand these things at first; *p*but when Jesus was glorified, *q*then they remembered that these things were written about Him and *that* they had done these things to Him.

17 Therefore the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness. 18 *r*For this reason the people also met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign. 19 The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, *s*"You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!"

The Fruitful Grain of Wheat

20 Now there *t*were certain Greeks among those *u*who came up to worship at the feast. 21 Then they came to Philip, *v*who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus."

22 Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus.

23 But Jesus answered them, saying, *w*"The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. 24 Most assuredly, I say to you, *x*unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much [4]*y*grain. 25 *y*He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. 26 If anyone serves Me, let him *z*follow Me; and *a*where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him *My* Father will honor.

Jesus Predicts His Death on the Cross

27 *b*"Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? *c*But for this purpose I came to this hour. 28 Father, glorify Your name."

11 *j*John 11:45; 12:18
12 *k*Matt. 21:4–9; Mark 11:7–10; Luke 19:35–38
13 *l*Ps. 118:25, 26
14 *m*Matt. 21:7
15 *n*Is. 40:9; Zech. 9:9
16 *o*Luke 18:34 *p*John 7:39; 12:23 *q*[John 14:26]
18 *r*John 12:11
19 *s*John 11:47, 48
20 *t*Mark 7:26; Acts 17:4 *u*1 Kin. 8:41, 42; Acts 8:27
21 *v*John 1:43, 44; 14:8–11
23 *w*Matt. 26:18, 45; John 13:32; Acts 3:13
24 *x*[Rom. 14:9]; 1 Cor. 15:36 [4]Lit. *fruit*
25 *y*Matt. 10:39; Mark 8:35; Luke 9:24
26 *z*[Matt. 16:24] *a*John 14:3; 17:24; [1 Thess. 4:17]
27 *b*[Matt. 26:38, 39]; Mark 14:34; Luke 12:50; John 11:33 *c*Luke 22:53; John 18:37

■ **12:11 many of the Jews.** The religious leaders were losing popularity: Nicodemus seemed to have defected (7:50–52); some Jews had believed in Christ, however superficially (8:30 note); some were impressed by the healing of the man born blind (10:21); Jesus seemed to be gaining followers across the Jordan (10:41, 42); and now Lazarus's resurrection was leading still more to faith in Him (vv. 17, 18; 11:45). All this prepared for the acclaim that Jesus would receive at His triumphal entry, which led the Pharisees to say, "the world has gone after Him" (v. 19).

■ **12:13 Hosanna.** The salutation was borrowed in part from Ps. 118:25, 26, to which was added the reference to "The King of Israel." This was particularly disquieting to the Jewish leaders, who feared a popular uprising under Jesus' leadership.

■ **12:14, 15** The precise circumstances had been prophesied in Zech. 9:9. This prophecy is noted also in Matthew, and was understood in retrospect by the disciples.

■ **12:20 certain Greeks.** An ironic footnote to the statement of the Pharisees in v. 19. These "Greeks" were probably not Jews of the dispersion (the Greek word is different from that translated "Hellenists" in Acts 6:1). Rather, they were perhaps proselytes or, more probably, Gentile "God-fearers" (as they were called) who participated in synagogue worship but did not undergo circumcision and full reception into the Jewish religion (Acts 8:27; 13:26; 17:4).

■ **12:23 The hour has come.** In contrast to earlier statements that His time had not yet come (2:4; 7:6, 8, 30; 8:20), this is the first of a number of statements that Christ's death and resurrection are at hand (v. 27; 13:1; 16:32; 17:1). The cross and burial themselves are described elsewhere as His humiliation (Phil. 2:8). This humiliation is the way by which Christ the Mediator, following the days of His resurrection on earth, must enter the glory of His ascension to the Father's right hand (13:31, 32; cf. Phil. 2:8, 9).

■ **12:24 a grain of wheat.** Jesus uses the growth of wheat from a seed as an explanation of His own work. His death in a certain time and place will open the doors of salvation for people of every age and nation.

■ **12:25 He who loves his life.** Those who are absorbed by the interests of life on earth encounter ruin, while those detached from worldly interests will through Christ's work attain to eternal life (Matt. 10:39; Luke 17:33). It is in the service of Christ and in union with Him that the truth of this statement is experienced (ch. 14).

■ **12:27 Now My soul is troubled.** Jesus is greatly troubled by the prospect of bearing the wrath of His holy Father in the place of sinners. Nevertheless He accepts His role and reasserts His commitment to it.

■ **12:28 a voice came from heaven.** In three places in the Gospels the Father speaks directly from heaven about Jesus: at His baptism (Matt. 3:17), at the Transfiguration (Matt. 17:5), and here. For the benefit of the

28 [d]Matt. 3:17; 17:5; Mark 1:11; 9:7; Luke 3:22; 9:35

30 [e]John 11:42

31 [f]Matt. 12:29; Luke 10:18; [Acts 26:18; 2 Cor. 4:4]

32 [g]John 3:14; 8:28 [h][Rom. 5:18; Heb. 2:9] [5]Crucified

33 [i]John 18:32; 21:19

34 [j]Ps. 89:36, 37; Is. 9:6, 7; Mic. 4:7

35 [k][John 1:9; 7:33; 8:12] [l]Jer. 13:16; [Gal. 6:10]; Eph. 5:8 [m]John 11:10; [1 John 2:9–11]

36 [n]Luke 16:8; John 8:12 [o]John 8:59

37 [p]John 11:47

38 [q]Is. 53:1; Rom. 10:16

40 [r]Is. 6:9, 10 [s]Matt. 13:14

41 [t]Is. 6:1 [6]NU *because*

42 [u]John 7:13; 9:22

43 [v]John 5:41, 44

44 [w]Mark 9:37 [x][John 3:16, 18, 36; 11:25, 26] [y][John 5:24]

[d]Then a voice came from heaven, *saying,* "I have both glorified *it* and will glorify *it* again."

29 Therefore the people who stood by and heard *it* said that it had thundered. Others said, "An angel has spoken to Him."

30 Jesus answered and said, [e]"This voice did not come because of Me, but for your sake. 31 Now is the judgment of this world: now [f]the ruler of this world will be cast out. 32 And I, [g]if I am [5]lifted up from the earth, will draw [h]all *peoples* to Myself." 33 [i]This He said, signifying by what death He would die.

34 The people answered Him, [j]"We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever; and how *can* You say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this Son of Man?"

35 Then Jesus said to them, "A little while longer [k]the light is with you. [l]Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; [m]he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going. 36 While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become [n]sons of light." These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and [o]was hidden from them.

Who Has Believed Our Report?

37 But although He had done so many [p]signs before them, they did not believe in Him, 38 that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke:

> [q]*"Lord, who has believed our report?*
> *And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?"*

39 Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again:

> 40 *"He[r] has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts,*
> [s]*Lest they should see with their eyes,*
> *Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn,*
> *So that I should heal them."*

41 [t]These things Isaiah said [6]when he saw His glory and spoke of Him.

Walk in the Light

42 Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but [u]because of the Pharisees they did not confess *Him,* lest they should be put out of the synagogue; 43 [v]for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

44 Then Jesus cried out and said, [w]"He who believes in Me, [x]believes not in Me [y]but in Him

disciples (v. 30), the Father places His seal of approval upon Jesus' saving work.

■ **12:29 the people . . . heard it.** A situation similar to the circumstances of Paul's conversion, where those who accompanied him heard a noise but could not distinguish the words (Acts 9:7; 22:9).

■ **12:31 Now is the judgment of this world.** By His coming death, Jesus will end the power of sin over Adam's race, judging and condemning it.

the ruler of this world. Satan (cf. 14:30; 16:11; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2; 1 John 4:4; 5:19). Satan has power in fact, not by right. When God destroys Satan's power, He is not violating his rights, or breaking any agreement made with him.

■ **12:32 lifted up.** This refers to the Crucifixion (v. 33), but also to the glorification of Christ. As Mediator, He will be "lifted up" to the right hand of God (3:14 note).

will draw all peoples. The Cross exerts a universal attraction, and people of all nationalities, Gentiles as well as Jews, will be saved through it. "All" means all kinds of people without distinction, not all members of the human race without exception.

■ **12:34 the law.** One of the terms used for the whole Old Testament Scripture (10:34; 15:25). This is a possible reference to Ps. 89:36; 110:4; Is. 9:7; Ezek. 37:25; Dan. 7:14; Mic. 5:2.

The Son of Man. They understood this title to be a claim to be the promised Messiah.

lifted up. They understood this to be a reference to hanging or crucifixion, and on the basis of scriptures such as Ps. 89:36, 37 they could not reconcile Christ's death with their view of the Messiah.

■ **12:35 the light.** Jesus is the "light" (v. 46; 1:4–9; 8:12; 9:5). His impending death will bring a period of darkness.

■ **12:38 the word of Isaiah . . . might be fulfilled.** Jesus' earthly public ministry was a fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy, which was largely one of judgment upon unbelieving Israel. Jesus pronounces the judgment, previously announced by Isaiah, that must precede the coming kingdom.

■ **12:39 they could not believe.** No one will truly believe unless God opens that person's understanding by a supernatural work of the Spirit (3:3–7).

■ **12:41 saw His glory.** Isaiah had received a vision of the glory of the enthroned God (Is. 6:1) and prophesied about the divine Suffering Servant (Is. 52:13—53:12).

■ **12:42 many believed in Him.** Isaiah's announced judgment came true, yet even some leaders (e.g., Joseph and Nicodemus, 19:38–40) were believers despite the threat of excommunication by their unbelieving peers.

■ **12:44 believes in Me . . . Him who sent Me.** The close relationship of Jesus with the Father (cf. 17:21–23) is stressed in three respects: to believe in Christ is to believe in the Father; to see Christ is to see the Father (v. 45); to hear Christ is to hear the Father (v. 50). On the other hand, rejection of Christ and His words is also a rejection of the Father and His words. This rejection results in judgment, although the leading purpose of Christ's incarnation was the salvation of His own and not the condemnation of those who do not believe.

who sent Me. 45 And [z]he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me. 46 [a]I have come *as* a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness. 47 And if anyone hears My words and does not [7]believe, [b]I do not judge him; for [c]I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. 48 [d]He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—[e]the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day. 49 For [f]I have not spoken on My own *authority;* but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, [g]what I should say and what I should speak. 50 And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I [h]speak."

Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet

13 Now [a]before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that [b]His hour had come that He should depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He [c]loved them to the end.

2 And [1]supper being ended, [d]the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's *son,* to betray Him, 3 Jesus, knowing [e]that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He [f]had come from God and [g]was going to God, 4 [h]rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. 5 After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe *them* with the towel with which He was girded. 6 Then He came to Simon Peter. And *Peter* said to Him, [i]"Lord, are You washing my feet?"

7 Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing you [j]do not understand now, [k]but you will know after this."

8 Peter said to Him, "You shall never wash my feet!"

Jesus answered him, [l]"If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me."

9 Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, not my feet only, but also *my* hands and *my* head!"

10 Jesus said to him, "He who is bathed needs only to wash *his* feet, but is completely clean; and [m]you are clean, but not all of you." 11 For [n]He knew who would betray Him; therefore He said, "You are not all clean."

12 So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, "Do you [2]know what I have done to you? 13 [o]You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for *so* I am. 14 [p]If I then, *your* Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, [q]you also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 For [r]I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. 16 [s]Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. 17 [t]If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

45 [z][John 14:9]

46 [a]John 1:4, 5; 8:12; 12:35, 36

47 [b]John 5:45 [c]John 3:17 [7]NU *keep them*

48 [d][Luke 10:16] [e]Deut. 18:18, 19

49 [f]John 8:38 [g]Deut. 18:18

50 [h]John 5:19; 8:28

CHAPTER 13

1 [a]Matt. 26:2 [b]John 12:23; 17:1 [c]John 15:9

2 [d]Luke 22:3 [1]NU *during supper*

3 [e]Acts 2:36 [f]John 8:42; 16:28 [g]John 17:11; 20:17

4 [h][Luke 22:27]

6 [i]Matt. 3:14

7 [j]John 12:16; 16:12 [k]John 13:19

8 [l][1 Cor. 6:11]

10 [m][John 15:3]

11 [n]John 6:64; 18:4

12 [2]*understand*

13 [o]Matt. 23:8, 10

14 [p]Luke 22:27 [q][Rom. 12:10]

15 [r][1 Pet. 2:21–24]

16 [s]Matt. 10:24

17 [t][James 1:25]

■ **12:48 the word that I have spoken.** See "The Teaching of Jesus" at Matt. 7:28.

■ **13:1—17:26** These five chapters recount the ministry of Jesus to the disciples in the upper room, a ministry accompanied by a meal. The other Gospels indicate that the Lord's Supper was instituted on this occasion, but John does not say so, perhaps because he viewed the institution as sufficiently covered in the three Synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

The relationship between the Synoptic accounts and John's Gospel has been extensively discussed by many commentators. The Synoptic Gospels all state that the meal alluded to in 13:2 was the Passover meal (Matt. 26:17–30; Mark 14:12–26; Luke 22:7–23). John, on the other hand, implies that the meal took place on the eve of the Passover, and that Jesus died at the precise time when the Passover lambs were being slaughtered (13:1, 29; 18:28; 19:14, 31, 42). Among scholars who accept the truthfulness of John and the Synoptic Gospels, several possible solutions have been proposed. See notes on 19:14; Matt. 26:17.

■ **13:1 He loved them to the end.** Great emphasis is placed in chs. 13—17 on Christ's love. This love is illustrated in the moving scene of the foot-washing in which the Son of God does not disdain performing the most menial tasks of a servant (Phil. 2:7, 8).

■ **13:2** A vivid contrast between self-serving Judas and self-giving Jesus.

■ **13:3 Jesus, knowing.** Jesus' humble conduct was not because He forgot His rank as incarnate God the Son. His act demonstrates that rank and privilege are not occasions for arrogance, but are higher credentials for service.

■ **13:5 wash the disciples' feet.** Foot-washing was a common element of hospitality in a dusty country where people wore sandals (cf. Luke 7:44). This task was usually performed by the lowliest member of the household.

■ **13:6–10** Peter, with his usual impulsiveness (Luke 5:8; Matt. 16:22; Acts 10:14), objected to Jesus' action of washing His feet. He could not understand the humility of Christ. Jesus answers that whatever Peter's own expectations may have been, Peter must accept Jesus in the path that God has chosen for the Messiah to follow (Is. 55:7–9; Matt. 16:23).

■ **13:11 He knew.** John emphasizes that Judas's betrayal was not an unforeseen development, but that Jesus proceeded in full awareness of coming events and of Judas's role in them. Judas's action was his own free and responsible decision—yet carried out according to the plan of God.

■ **13:13 Teacher and Lord.** This double title gives special significance to the claim of Christ over the disciples' lives. Later, they would call Him "Lord" in acknowledgement of His deity (20:28).

■ **13:15 I have given you an example.** The humility of Christ is a pattern for His disciples. Instead of aspiring to dominate, they must be eager to serve (Matt. 20:26–28; Phil. 2:5–8; 1 Pet. 2:21).

■ **13:17 if you do them.** Intellectual perception is not enough, but must be backed up by commitment of life. This does not mean that our works are the basis of our acceptance by God, but that they are the evidence of a true faith. Trust and obedience are inseparable.

18 [u]John 15:25; 17:12 [v]Ps. 41:9 [3]NU *My bread has*

19 [w]John 14:29; 16:4

20 [x]Matt. 10:40

21 [y]Luke 22:21 [z]John 12:27 [a]1 John 2:19

23 [b]John 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20 [4]*reclining*

25 [5]NU, M add *thus*

26 [c]John 6:70, 71; 12:4

27 [d]Luke 22:3

29 [e]John 12:6

31 [f]John 12:23 [g][1 Pet. 4:11]

32 [h]John 12:23

33 [i]John 12:35; 14:19; 16:16–19 [j][John 7:34; 8:21]

34 [k]1 Thess. 4:9

35 [l]1 John 2:5

36 [m]John 13:33; 14:2; 16:5 [n]2 Pet. 1:14

Jesus Identifies His Betrayer

18 "I do not speak concerning all of you. I know whom I have chosen; but that the [u]Scripture may be fulfilled, '[v]*He who eats* [3]*bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me.*' 19 [w]Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am *He.* 20 [x]Most assuredly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me."

21 [y]When Jesus had said these things, [z]He was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, [a]one of you will betray Me." 22 Then the disciples looked at one another, perplexed about whom He spoke.

23 Now [b]there was [4]leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. 24 Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask who it was of whom He spoke.

25 Then, leaning [5]back on Jesus' breast, he said to Him, "Lord, who is it?"

26 Jesus answered, "It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped *it.*" And having dipped the bread, He gave *it* to [c]Judas Iscariot, *the son* of Simon. 27 [d]Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, "What you do, do quickly." 28 But no one at the table knew for what reason He said this to him. 29 For some thought, because [e]Judas had the money box, that Jesus had said to him, "Buy *those things* we need for the feast," or that he should give something to the poor.

30 Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately. And it was night.

The New Commandment

31 So, when he had gone out, Jesus said, [f]"Now the Son of Man is glorified, and [g]God is glorified in Him. 32 If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and [h]glorify Him immediately. 33 Little children, I shall be with you a [i]little while longer. You will seek Me; [j]and as I said to the Jews, 'Where I am going, you cannot come,' so now I say to you. 34 [k]A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 [l]By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial

36 Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, where are You going?"

Jesus answered him, "Where I [m]am going you cannot follow Me now, but [n]you shall follow Me afterward."

■ **13:18 not . . . all of you.** Jesus chose Judas to be one of the Twelve, but He did not bring him to salvation. Judas was not one of the elect (Matt. 26:24), yet he was in no way coerced into his betrayal.

fulfilled. Jesus remarks on the fulfillment of Scripture in many details of His life. The quotation from Ps. 41:9 is a possible reference to the treason of Ahithophel (2 Sam. 15:31).

■ **13:19 before it comes.** The truth of a prior prediction was the mark of a true prophet, and false prediction was a sure way to discern a false prophet (Deut. 18:18–22).

I am *He.* The word "He" is supplied here for the English text (as denoted by italics). The original Greek reads "I am," a claim to deity derived from Ex. 3:14.

■ **13:21 troubled in spirit.** Compare 11:33; 12:27. From the beginning Jesus knew what Judas would do, but His soul still felt it as the time approached.

■ **13:22 perplexed.** Judas had hidden his betrayal so carefully that the other disciples had no inkling of it. Each one began to fear that he might be the weak link (Matt. 26:22). Judas, too, mouthed the question (Matt. 26:25), but the disciples apparently did not hear Jesus' response.

■ **13:23 leaning on Jesus' bosom.** In a formal banquet people were not seated but reclined at the table (Luke 22:14 note). John's position would not be unusual on such an occasion.

whom Jesus loved. This reference appears in 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20, and has generally been understood to be John, the author of the Gospel. The remark does not imply a lack of love for the other disciples, but indicates a special affinity for John (19:26, 27).

■ **13:26 a piece of bread.** This was apparently a favor reserved for a guest of honor.

■ **13:27 Satan entered him.** Judas's refusal to respond to Jesus' appeal opened up his heart to the control of Satan. He was still a responsible agent, but had surrendered to the dominion of evil (cf. 8:34).

do quickly. Jesus is still in control of the timetable and makes no further effort to check Judas on his fateful way.

■ **13:31, 32 glorified.** The verb is repeated five times. One could have expected the opposite word ("humiliated"), for in the language of Paul, Jesus was on the threshold of His deepest humiliation, hanging on the Cross under the divine curse (Gal. 3:13). But John focuses on the revelation of God's glory through Christ so as to bring out the glory of God revealed especially in the Cross.

■ **13:33 You will seek Me.** This restriction is a temporary one. In time His disciples will go where Jesus is, when He has prepared a place for them (14:2).

■ **13:34 A new commandment.** There is nothing new about the command to love, since Lev. 19:18 teaches to "love your neighbor as yourself." The new element is the change from "neighbor" to "one another" and the change from "as yourself" to "as I have loved you." Christian love has Christ's sacrificial love as its model, and the community of believers as the primary (though by no means exclusive) place in which it is expressed (cf. Matt. 25:40; Gal. 6:10; Eph. 5:25). See "Love" at 1 Cor. 13:13.

■ **13:36 you shall follow Me afterward.** This is a prophecy about the martyrdom of Peter (21:18, 19).

37 Peter said to Him, "Lord, why can I not follow You now? I will [o]lay down my life for Your sake."

38 Jesus answered him, "Will you lay down your life for My sake? Most assuredly, I say to you, the rooster shall not [p]crow till you have denied Me three times.

The Way, the Truth, and the Life

14 "Let [a]not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father's house are many [1]mansions; if *it were* not *so,* [2]I would have told you. [b]I go to prepare a place for you. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, [c]I will come again and receive you to Myself; that [d]where I am, *there* you may be also. 4 And where I go you know, and the way you know."

5 [e]Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?"

6 Jesus said to him, "I am [f]the way, [g]the truth, and [h]the life. [i]No one comes to the Father [j]except through Me.

The Father Revealed

7 [k]"If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him."

8 Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us."

9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? [l]He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10 Do you not believe that [m]I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you [n]I do not speak on My own *authority;* but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. 11 Believe Me that I *am* in the Father and the Father in Me, [o]or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.

The Answered Prayer

12 [p]"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater *works* than these he will do, because I go to My Father. 13 [q]And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be [r]glorified in the Son. 14 If you [3]ask anything in My name, I will do *it.*

37 [o]Mark 14:29–31

38 [p]John 18:25–27

CHAPTER 14

1 [a][John 14:27; 16:22, 24]

2 [b]John 13:33, 36 [1]Lit. *dwellings* [2]NU *would I have told you that I go* or *I would have told you; for I go*

3 [c][Acts 1:11] [d][John 12:26]

5 [e]Matt. 10:3

6 [f][Heb. 9:8; 10:19, 20] [g][John 1:14, 17; 8:32; 18:37] [h][John 11:25] [i]1 Tim. 2:5 [j][John 10:7–9]

7 [k]John 8:19

9 [l]Col. 1:15

10 [m]John 10:38; 14:11, 20 [n]John 5:19; 14:24

11 [o]John 5:36; 10:38

12 [p]Luke 10:17

13 [q]Matt. 7:7 [r]John 13:31

14 [3]NU *ask Me*

■ **13:37 I will lay down my life for Your sake.** Peter was undoubtedly sincere, but he did not know himself.

■ **13:38 the rooster shall not crow.** The expression "crows twice" (as reported in Mark 14:30) refers to the same confirmation of Peter's denials.

■ **14:1 Let not your heart be troubled.** This passage of supreme comfort is offered by Jesus in an hour darkened by the shadow of Judas's treachery and Peter's failure, only a few hours away from the agony of Gethsemane and death on the cross (13:21). Yet the statement conveys a sense of sublime peace, and is intended to minister to the fears of the disciples rather than to Jesus' own needs.

■ **14:2 many mansions.** See text note. While the road is narrow and the gate small that lead to life (Matt. 7:14), it is also true that the number of Abraham's children is like the sand on the shore and the stars in the sky (Gen. 22:17), "a great multitude which no one could number" (Rev. 7:9).

prepare a place for you. Christ prepares the place in heaven for His own, and the Holy Spirit prepares the redeemed on earth for their place in heaven. See "Heaven" at Rev. 21:1.

■ **14:3 receive you to Myself.** In 1:51, Jesus has compared Himself to a ladder between heaven and earth. He is the One who takes His people to heaven.

■ **14:6 the life.** Not existence as such, but existence in fulfillment of God's design that we should be His living temple (1:4).

except through Me. This is a strong affirmation that Christ alone is the way of salvation. To imagine and proclaim other ways is to mislead people and forget the necessity of His coming and redemption (Acts 4:12; Rom. 10:14, 15; 1 John 5:12).

■ **14:7 If you had known Me.** All the blessings previously named are summed up in the knowledge of God, which is more than a mere mental grasp, as it involves wholehearted commitment.

■ **14:8 show us the Father.** Philip's request shows misunderstanding, a theme throughout the Gospel (2:21 note), but it opens the way for the development that follows.

■ **14:9 has seen the Father.** Jesus is not denying the distinction of Persons in God. He is reminding Philip that He is the one who reveals God.

■ **14:10 I am in the Father, and the Father in Me.** This is the reciprocal indwelling announced in 10:38 and developed here, also in v. 20, and again in 17:21. Three great unities are proclaimed in Scripture: the unity of the three Persons of the Trinity; the unity of the divine and human natures of Christ; and the unity of Christ and His people in redemption.

■ **14:11** See "Miracles" at 1 Kin. 17:22.

■ **14:12 greater works than these.** History proves that Jesus is not affirming that each believer will do greater miracles than He did. The church's work in the power of the Holy Spirit will be "greater" than Jesus' works in number and territory.

■ **14:13 whatever you ask in My name.** This does not guarantee that God will do whatever we ask if only we add to our prayer the words "in Christ's name." To pray in Christ's name is to identify with the purpose of Christ to the extent that our will has become identified with the will of God (1 John 5:14). Those who do not obtain what they specifically request are often surprised by a different but better answer—and "no" is sometimes the best answer. See "Prayer" at Luke 11:2.

that the Father may be glorified in the Son. The close relationship of the Persons of the Trinity is shown in Jesus' teaching on prayer.

15 [s]1 John 5:3 [4]NU *you will keep*

16 [t]Rom. 8:15 [5]*Comforter,* Gr. *Parakletos*

17 [u][1 John 4:6; 5:7] [v][1 Cor. 2:14] [w][1 John 2:27]

18 [x][Matt. 28:20] [y][John 14:3, 28]

19 [z]John 16:16, 22 [a][1 Cor. 15:20]

20 [b]John 10:38; 14:11

21 [c]1 John 2:5 [6]*reveal*

22 [d]Luke 6:16

23 [e]Rev. 3:20; 21:3

24 [f]John 5:19

26 [g]Luke 24:49 [h]John 15:26 [i]1 Cor. 2:13 [j]John 2:22; 12:16 [7]*Comforter,* Gr. *Parakletos*

27 [k][Phil. 4:7]

28 [l]John 14:3, 18 [m]John 16:16 [n][Phil. 2:6] [8]NU omits *I said*

29 [o]John 13:19

Jesus Promises Another Helper

15 [s]"If you love Me, [4]keep My commandments. 16 And I will pray the Father, and [t]He will give you another [5]Helper, that He may abide with you forever— 17 [u]the Spirit of truth, [v]whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you [w]and will be in you. 18 [x]I will not leave you orphans; [y]I will come to you.

Indwelling of the Father and the Son

19 "A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but [z]you will see Me. [a]Because I live, you will live also. 20 At that day you will know that [b]I *am* in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. 21 [c]He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and [6]manifest Myself to him."

22 [d]Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?"

23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, [e]and We will come to him and make Our home with him. 24 He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and [f]the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.

The Gift of His Peace

25 "These things I have spoken to you while being present with you. 26 But [g]the [7]Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will [h]send in My name, [i]He will teach you all things, and bring to your [j]remembrance all things that I said to you. 27 [k]Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. 28 You have heard Me [l]say to you, 'I am going away and coming *back* to you.' If you loved Me, you would rejoice because [8]I said, [m]'I am going to the Father,' for [n]My Father is greater than I.

29 "And [o]now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may be-

■ **14:15 keep.** The proof of love to Christ is not an oral profession but living obedience.

■ **14:16 I will pray the Father, and He will give.** Both the Father and the Son are active in sending the Holy Spirit. He is the Spirit of God, the Spirit of the Father (Gen. 1:2; Is. 11:2; Matt. 10:20), and the Spirit of Christ, the Son (Rom. 8:9; Gal. 4:6; Phil. 1:19; 1 Pet. 1:11).

another Helper. See text note. The Greek word translated "Helper" was used in legal language for an advocate for the defense (1 John 2:1), and more generally for one called upon for help. Jesus was such a help for the disciples; and after His ascension the Holy Spirit would take over this work. The term emphasizes the personality of the Holy Spirit as distinct from the Father and the Son, and also His unity with them in the work of redemption.

■ **14:17 the Spirit of truth.** Here also the Spirit is in equality with the Father (Is. 65:16) and the Son (v. 6). The "Spirit of truth" is the authority behind the Bible: see "The Authentication of Scripture" at 2 Cor. 4:6.

the world. Sinful humanity as contrasted with God's redeemed people (15:18, 19; 17:9; 1 John 2:15–17; 4:5; 5:4, 5, 19).

with you and will be in you. The Spirit lives in believers (1 Cor. 3:16, 17; 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:21).

■ **14:18 I will come to you.** Jesus refers primarily to the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, since the mutual indwelling, "you in Me, and I in you" (v. 20), will not await the Second Coming of Christ. But these words are also appropriate for the hope of the church. Jesus will return to take the redeemed with Him (vv. 3, 19, 28; Acts 1:11).

■ **14:19 Because I live, you will live also.** This emphasizes again the truth of 11:25, 26. Life is to be found only in Jesus Christ (v. 6; 1:4).

■ **14:20 I am in My Father.** See notes on v. 10 and 10:38. The mutual indwelling in the Trinity is paralleled by the mutual indwelling of Christ and the believer.

■ **14:21 he who loves Me will be loved.** Just as there is reciprocal indwelling, there is also the deepest mutuality of love (v. 15 note).

■ **14:22 to us, and not to the world.** The disciple understood Jesus correctly, but he was probably hoping also for a political triumph that would be visible to all.

■ **14:23 Our home.** As the Holy Spirit indwells the believer, so also the Father and the Son (Rom. 8:9–11; Rev. 3:20).

■ **14:26 the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send.** In 15:26, it is the Son who sends the Spirit. The Father and Son concur in this sending. See theological note "The Holy Spirit."

will teach you all things. All things that they needed to know for their mission (16:13).

bring to your remembrance all things. This statement shows the divine intention in the teaching work of the Holy Spirit: the Spirit's teaching agrees with the teaching of Jesus Himself. He will ensure that the words of Jesus will be preserved for the instruction of the church (Matt. 24:35). These promises given to the apostles were fulfilled in the preaching of the apostles and in the completion of the New Testament Scriptures. They continue to be fulfilled as God's people learn from the inspired Scripture.

■ **14:27 Peace.** This was a common Hebrew salutation used in greeting or farewell. Jesus gives it a new and deeper sense that reappears in the salutations of the New Testament letters. Jesus' peace is true reconciliation with God, purchased with His death (Acts 10:36; Rom. 5:1; 14:17; Eph. 2:14–17; Phil. 4:7; Col. 3:15). It is the supreme remedy for all fears (v. 1), and the legacy Jesus left for His heirs.

■ **14:28 you would rejoice.** The Lord's departure and return are necessary to complete His mediatorial work (v. 3); they are the end of His humiliation and the revelation of His glory.

My Father is greater than I. This statement must be understood in light of the witness of this Gospel to the full deity of the Son, His equality and oneness with the Father (v. 9; 1:1; 10:30). The Son voluntarily veiled His divine glory to follow the way of humble obedience (Phil. 2:6–11).

■ **14:29 I have told you.** The fulfillment of Jesus' prophecies will be a convincing proof that He was sent by God.

lieve. 30 I will no longer talk much with you, [p]for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has [q]nothing in Me. 31 But that the world may know that I love the Father, and [r]as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here.

30 [p]John 12:31 [q]Heb. 4:15
31 [r]John 10:18

The True Vine

15 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2 [a]Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He [l]takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit He prunes, that it may

CHAPTER 15

2 [a]Matt. 15:13 [l]Or *lifts up*

The Holy Spirit

Before Jesus' death, He promised that He and the Father would send to His disciples "another Helper" (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7). The Greek word translated "Helper" is *parakletos*. It means a lawyer or assistant in a legal question. In a wider context it means a person who provides encouragement, counsel, and strength. Jesus will send "another" Helper, One like Himself who will carry on after Him the teaching and testimony that He began (John 16:7–15).

The work of such a Helper is work carried out by a personal Being. The Old Testament reveals much about the Spirit's activity in creation (Gen. 1:2; Ps. 33:6), revelation (Is. 61:1–3; Mic. 3:8), empowerment (Ex. 31:2–6; Judg. 15:14, 15; Is. 11:2), and inward renewal (Ps. 51:10–12; Ezek. 36:25–27). But it was for the New Testament to reveal clearly the Spirit as a distinct divine Person, coequal with the Father and the Son. The Spirit is said to speak (Acts 1:16; 8:29; 10:19; 13:2), teach (John 14:26), witness (John 15:26), search (1 Cor. 2:10), will (1 Cor. 12:11), and intercede (Rom. 8:26, 27). All these are the acts of an individual Person.

The divinity of the Spirit appears from the way the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are named together in benedictions (2 Cor. 13:14; Rev. 1:4–6) and in the formula of baptism (Matt. 28:19). To lie to the Spirit is to lie to God (Acts 5:3, 4). The Spirit is called "seven Spirits" in Rev. 1:4; 3:1; 4:5; 5:6 as an expression of His fullness and the diversity of His work in the church in many places, represented by the seven churches in Asia (Rev. 1:11–20). This divine perfection was foreshadowed in Zech. 3:9; 4:2, 10; the number "seven" expresses the perfection of the one Spirit. The Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity, equal to the Father and the Son in glory, and worthy with them of worship, love, and obedience.

The work of the Spirit is to glorify Jesus Christ by showing His disciples who He is (John 16:7–15) and what He means to them (Rom. 8:15–17; Gal. 4:6). The Spirit enlightens (Eph. 1:17, 18), regenerates (John 3:5–8), sanctifies (Gal. 5:16–18), and transforms (2 Cor. 3:18; Gal. 5:22, 23). He gives God's people what they need to serve Him (1 Cor. 12:4–11).

The Spirit's full ministry began on Pentecost, after Jesus ascended to heaven (Acts 2:1–4). John the Baptist foretold that Jesus would baptize in the Spirit (Mark 1:8; John 1:33) as the fulfillment of a promise made in the Old Testament and repeated by Jesus (Jer. 31:31–34; Joel 2:28–32; Acts 1:4, 5). Pentecost marked the opening of the last era of world history that will end when Christ returns.

At the time they are born again, believers in Jesus receive the Spirit according to the fullness of the New Testament (Acts 2:38; Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 12:13). All the gifts for life service that appear subsequently in a Christian's life flow from this initial baptism in the Spirit, because in this baptism the sinner is united to the risen Christ. □

■ **14:30 the ruler of this world.** Satan (cf. 12:31; 16:11). This statement points to the momentous spiritual conflict of Christ with Satan at the Cross.

he has nothing. This is a reaffirmation of Jesus' sinlessness (v. 31; 8:29, 46; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 7:26, 27). He is the only member of the human race about whom this may be said.

■ **14:31 Arise, let us go.** This statement would appear to indicate that Jesus and the disciples left the upper room, but it seems that chs. 15—17 take place still in the room. Several options are possible. (a) Jesus gave the signal but some time elapsed before they left the room. (b) They left at once, but Jesus continued His discourse on the way to Gethsemane. This would bring the prayer of ch. 17 into sharp contrast with the agony in the garden. (c) John has arranged his material topically rather than chronologically. (d) The statement of Jesus was a challenge to meet Satan rather than a signal to leave the room (that is, "up then, let us go to meet the foe").

■ **15:1–17** The union of Christ the Mediator and His redeemed people is portrayed in Scripture in a variety of ways. These portrayals work together in explaining the nature of this relationship. There is: (a) the foundation and the building (1 Cor. 3:11; Eph. 2:20–22); (b) the vine and the branches (15:1–17; Rom. 6:5); (c) the head and the body (1 Cor. 6:15, 19; 12:12; Eph. 1:22, 23; 4:15, 16); (d) the husband and the wife (Rom. 7:4; Eph. 5:31, 32; Rev. 19:7); (e) Adam and his descendants (Rom.

bear [b]more fruit. 3 [c]You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 4 [d]Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

5 "I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much [e]fruit; for without Me you can do [f]nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in Me, [g]he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If you abide in Me, and My words [h]abide in you, [i]you[2] will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. 8 [j]By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; [k]so you will be My disciples.

Love and Joy Perfected

9 "As the Father [l]loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. 10 [m]If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

11 "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and [n]*that* your joy may be full. 12 [o]This is My [p]commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 [q]Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. 14 [r]You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. 15 No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, [s]for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. 16 [t]You did not choose Me, but I chose you and [u]appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father [v]in My name He may give you. 17 These things I command you, that you love one another.

The World's Hatred

18 [w]"If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before *it hated* you. 19 [x]If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet [y]because you are not of the world, but I chose you

2 [b][Matt. 13:12]
3 [c][John 13:10; 17:17]
4 [d][Col. 1:23]
5 [e]Hos. 14:8 [f]2 Cor. 3:5
6 [g]Matt. 3:10
7 [h]1 John 2:14 [i]John 14:13; 16:23 [2]NU omits *you will*
8 [j][Matt. 5:16] [k]John 8:31
9 [l]John 5:20; 17:26
10 [m]John 14:15
11 [n]1 John 1:4
12 [o]1 John 3:11 [p]Rom. 12:9
13 [q]1 John 3:16
14 [r][Matt. 12:50; 28:20]
15 [s]Gen. 18:17
16 [t]John 6:70; 13:18; 15:19 [u][Col. 1:6] [v]John 14:13; 16:23, 24
18 [w]1 John 3:13
19 [x]1 John 4:5 [y]John 17:14

5:12, 18–21; 1 Cor. 15:22, 45, 49). The comparison with vine and branches indicates an organic union and a relation of complete dependence.

■ **15:1 I am the true vine.** As elsewhere in this Gospel, "true" means "genuine." Jesus is the final, real "vine," as compared to Israel, which was a type foreshadowing the reality. Israel is called God's "vine" or "vineyard" in the Old Testament (Ps. 80:8–16; Jer. 2:21). Israel is judged for not bearing fruit, while Jesus is and does what the type signified. This is the last of the "I am" sayings in the Gospel (6:35 note).

■ **15:2 does not bear fruit.** No branch that is Christ's can be wholly fruitless. But branches that belong to Christ will bear fruit, and undergo the pruning necessary to increase. The lack of fruit described in Ps. 80, Is. 5:1, and Jer. 2:21 is failure to be obedient to God. These Old Testament discussions of the vine and its fruit, combined with Christ's command to love in this chapter, indicate that "fruit" refers to a Christ-like life produced by the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22, 23), rather than to the number of people converted under a believer's ministry.

■ **15:4 Abide.** Jesus emphasizes permanence and steadfastness in His relationship with the disciples. "Abide" is repeated ten times in vv. 4–10. The metaphor of the vine illustrates the point; it is only when nutrients flow freely to the branches that fruit can be borne.

■ **15:5 without Me you can do nothing.** The total inability of the unregenerate sinner makes saving grace absolutely necessary for the beginning, the development, and the completion of salvation.

■ **15:6 If anyone does not abide in Me.** Those that do not remain show that they never had a saving relationship with Christ. Their destiny is described with the language of damnation (cf. Matt. 3:12; 25:41; Jude 7; Rev. 20:14).

■ **15:8 so you will be My disciples.** The works spoken of are not the ground of acceptance with God, but the result of a saving union with Christ received through grace, not merit.

■ **15:11 My joy.** Many imagine that obedience to Christ is burdensome because it requires sacrificial self-surrender and service (Rom. 12:1, 2). Jesus teaches the opposite, associating obedience with joy.

■ **15:12 My commandment.** See note on 13:34.

■ **15:13 lay down one's life.** Rom. 5:7, 8 describes Christ's amazing self-sacrifice, not for the righteous, but for sinners who are at enmity with God.

■ **15:14 My friends.** The test of friendship with Christ is obedience.

■ **15:15 No longer do I call you servants.** There is no previous record of Jesus Christ calling the disciples "servants," except possibly 12:26; yet Jesus had a right to do this, as He had the right to be called "Lord" (13:13). "Friend" suggests a close relation, and the language of brotherhood is closer still (Heb. 2:10, 11).

all . . . I have made known. Christ did not have a higher revelation reserved for an inner group; He revealed Himself to the disciples unstintingly.

■ **15:16 You did not choose Me, but I chose you.** Jesus does not mean that His disciples exercised no will of their own; they did choose to follow Him. Rather, He is indicating that the first initiative, the original and saving choice, was His. Had He not chosen them, they would not have chosen Him. The immediate reference is to service as apostles, but the principle applies to many other matters including election to salvation (Eph. 1:4, 11).

appointed you. This too emphasizes the sovereign activity of God exercised without violation of the human act of decision.

go. This verb marks the direction of Christian service, like Matt. 28:19 and Acts 1:8.

fruit. The figure refers to individual sanctification (Gal. 5:22, 23) and to effectiveness in evangelism (Matt. 13:3–8; Rom. 1:13).

fruit should remain. A distinguishing characteristic of Christian service is that the results have eternal significance.

whatever you ask . . . give you. Effective prayer is accompanied by obedience and identification with the will of God (14:13 note; Ps. 66:18).

■ **15:17 love one another.** Repeated for the third time in this episode (v. 12; 13:34).

■ **15:18 the world.** The opposition between the world and God's elect is stated in the strongest terms (14:17). The world's hatred is not due to what the disciples do wrong, but to what they do right.

out of the world, therefore the world hates you. 20 Remember the word that I said to you, [z]'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. [a]If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. 21 But [b]all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me. 22 [c]If I had not come and spoken to them, they would have no sin, [d]but now they have no excuse for their sin. 23 [e]He who hates Me hates My Father also. 24 If I had not done among them [f]the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have [g]seen and also hated both Me and My Father. 25 But *this happened* that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law, [h]*'They hated Me without a cause.'*

The Coming Rejection

26 [i]"But when the [3]Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, [j]He will testify of Me. 27 And [k]you also will bear witness, because [l]you have been with Me from the beginning.

16 "These things I have spoken to you, that you [a]should not be made to stumble. 2 [b]They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming [c]that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service. 3 And [d]these things they will do [1]to you because they have not known the Father nor Me. 4 But these things I have told you, that when [2]the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them.

"And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you.

The Work of the Holy Spirit

5 "But now I [e]go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?' 6 But because I have said these things to you, [f]sorrow has filled your heart. 7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but [g]if I depart, I will send Him to you. 8 And when He has [h]come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: 9 [i]of sin, because they do not believe in Me; 10 [j]of righteousness, [k]because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; 11 [l]of judgment, because [m]the ruler of this world is judged.

12 "I still have many things to say to you, [n]but you cannot bear *them* now. 13 However, when He, [o]the Spirit of truth, has come, [p]He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority,* but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. 14 [q]He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare *it* to you. 15 [r]All things that the Father has are Mine. Therefore I said that He [3]will take of Mine and declare *it* to you.

10 [i]Acts 2:32 [k]John 5:32 **11** [l]Acts 26:18 [m][Luke 10:18] **12** [n]Mark 4:33 **13** [o][John 14:17] [p]John 14:26 **14** [q]John 15:26 **15** [r]Matt. 11:27 [3]NU, M *takes of Mine and will declare*

20 [z]John 13:16 [a]Ezek. 3:7

21 [b]Matt. 10:22; 24:9

22 [c]John 9:41; 15:24 [d][James 4:17]

23 [e]1 John 2:23

24 [f]John 3:2 [g]John 14:9

25 [h]Ps. 35:19; 69:4; 109:3–5

26 [i]Luke 24:49 [j]1 John 5:6 [3]*Comforter,* Gr. *Parakletos*

27 [k]Luke 24:48 [l]Luke 1:2

CHAPTER 16

1 [a]Matt. 11:6

2 [b]John 9:22 [c]Acts 8:1

3 [d]John 8:19; 15:21 [1]NU, M omit *to you*

4 [2]NU *their*

5 [e]John 7:33; 13:33; 14:28; 17:11

6 [f][John 16:20, 22]

7 [g]Acts 2:33

8 [h]Acts 1:8; 2:1–4, 37

9 [i]Acts 2:22

■ **15:22 they would have no sin.** The sin here is the particular sin of hating Jesus and those who belong to Him; it is not sin in the general sense (v. 24).

■ **15:25 in their law.** Those who received the law are condemned by it. This quotation is from the Psalms; "law" refers to the Old Testament in general rather than just to the Pentateuch (10:34 note).

■ **15:26 the Helper.** See note on 14:16.

send to you. This refers to the work of the Holy Spirit in the plan of redemption, not His eternal relationships within the Godhead.

■ **15:27 because you have been with Me from the beginning.** The apostles were eyewitnesses, and through the operation of the Holy Spirit, they were to provide the foundational and authoritative witness to Christ for the church (Luke 24:48; Acts 1:21, 22; Eph. 2:20). Following the conclusion of their unique work there can be no more apostles, and the church's present witness to Christ is dependent on the apostolic witness as it is written in the New Testament and illumined by the Holy Spirit.

■ **16:5 none of you asks Me.** Although Peter had formally asked this and Thomas had practically done so (13:36; 14:5), their questions had been prompted by the prospect of Jesus' departure rather than the desire to know the nature and meaning of Jesus' destination (v. 6).

■ **16:7 if I do not go away.** Although news of Jesus' departure disturbed the disciples, it was necessary if they were to enjoy the permanent presence of the Spirit.

■ **16:8 He will convict the world of sin.** This is probably not a reference to the conviction that leads to repentance and salvation, but to the exposure of humanity's inexcusable guilt. See "Illumination and Conviction" at 1 Cor. 2:10.

■ **16:9 of sin.** Unbelief is an especially serious sin.

■ **16:11 of judgment.** Satan and those over whom he rules will ultimately be condemned by divine justice, whose verdict has already been rendered.

■ **16:13 He will guide you into all truth.** This refers to the truth about God, not temporal knowledge of every kind. The Spirit guided the New Testament writers who prepared the new written revelation that would take its place beside the Old Testament Scriptures. The Spirit will remind the writers of the past (14:26; the Gospels), interpret the gospel for the present (14:26; 15:26; Acts and the Epistles), and reveal things to come (Rev. 1:19).

■ **16:14 He will glorify Me.** Since the plan of redemption centers on Christ, this is the topic on which the Spirit will concentrate His teaching (15:26).

16 [s]John 7:33; 12:35; 13:33; 14:19; 19:40–42; 20:19 [t]John 13:3

18 [4]*understand*

20 [u]Mark 16:10; Luke 23:48; 24:17 [v]Luke 24:32, 41

21 [w]Gen. 3:16; Is. 13:8; 26:17; 42:14; 1 Thess. 5:3

22 [x]Luke 24:41; John 14:1, 27; 20:20; Acts 2:46; 13:52; 1 Pet. 1:8

23 [y]Matt. 7:7; [John 14:13; 15:16]

24 [z]John 17:13 [a]John 15:11

25 [b]John 7:13

27 [c][John 14:21, 23] [d]John 3:13

28 [e]John 13:1, 3; 16:5, 10, 17

30 [f]John 21:17 [g]John 17:8

32 [h]Zech. 13:7; Matt. 26:31, 56; Mark 14:27, 50; Acts 8:1 [i]John 20:10 [j]John 8:29 [5]*own things* or *place*

33 [k][Is. 9:6; Rom. 5:1; Eph. 2:14] [l]2 Tim. 3:12 [m]Rom. 8:37; [1 John 4:4] [6]NU, M omit *will*

CHAPTER 17

1 [a]John 12:23

2 [b]Dan. 7:14; Matt. 11:27; John 3:35; [Phil. 2:10; Heb. 2:8]

Sorrow Will Turn to Joy

16 "A [s]little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me, [t]because I go to the Father."

17 Then *some* of His disciples said among themselves, "What is this that He says to us, 'A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me'; and, 'because I go to the Father'?" 18 They said therefore, "What is this that He says, 'A little while'? We do not [4]know what He is saying."

19 Now Jesus knew that they desired to ask Him, and He said to them, "Are you inquiring among yourselves about what I said, 'A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me'? 20 Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and [u]lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into [v]joy. 21 [w]A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. 22 Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and [x]your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.

23 "And in that day you will ask Me nothing. [y]Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. 24 Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, [z]that your joy may be [a]full.

Jesus Christ Has Overcome the World

25 "These things I have spoken to you in figurative language; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in figurative language, but I will tell you [b]plainly about the Father. 26 In that day you will ask in My name; and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you; 27 [c]for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and [d]have believed that I came forth from God. 28 [e]I came forth from the Father and have come into the world. Again, I leave the world and go to the Father."

29 His disciples said to Him, "See, now You are speaking plainly, and using no figure of speech! 30 Now we are sure that [f]You know all things, and have no need that anyone should question You. By this [g]we believe that You came forth from God."

31 Jesus answered them, "Do you now believe? 32 [h]Indeed the hour is coming, yes, has now come, that you will be scattered, [i]each to his [5]own, and will leave Me alone. And [j]yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. 33 These things I have spoken to you, that [k]in Me you may have peace. [l]In the world you [6]will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, [m]I have overcome the world."

Jesus Prays for Himself

17 Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, [a]the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, 2 [b]as You have given Him

■ **16:16 A little while . . . a little while.** The first refers undoubtedly to the Crucifixion that will take Jesus away from them, the second may refer to the Resurrection, the coming of the Spirit, or to the Second Coming of Christ. The Resurrection fits best for the immediate time of the prophecy; the Second Coming fits best for the full scope of the joy in view.

■ **16:17 I go to the Father.** The disciples connected what Jesus said in v. 10 with the statement of v. 16, and that made it more difficult to understand Christ's meaning, since one statement refers to the Ascension and the other to the Crucifixion.

■ **16:22 I will see you again.** See note on v. 16.

your joy no one will take. The blessings of God's redemption cannot be canceled by any power, human or satanic. The gracious purpose of God ensures the ongoing joy of salvation in the world (10:28; Phil. 1:6).

■ **16:23 ask . . . ask.** There are two different Greek verbs here, the first ordinarily relating to inquiry, and the second to petition. If we observe this distinction, we will note that after the Ascension the disciples will receive revealed truth through the Holy Spirit. Prayers will be directed mainly to the Father in Christ's name (in a spirit of complete agreement with the will and purposes of Christ). See "Prayer" at Luke 11:2.

■ **16:24 Until now.** Their prayers were too timid in the light of the salvation they were soon to know.

■ **16:26 I do not say . . . that I shall pray the Father for you.** Jesus is not saying that He will cease to pray for them (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25; 1 John 2:1); it means that the disciples will have reached a certain maturity in prayer, so that He will not need to pray in their stead.

■ **16:27 the Father Himself loves you.** The three Persons of the Trinity are united in their love for believers (3:16). Believers respond with faith and love toward all three Persons of the Godhead.

■ **16:30 You know all things.** Only God is omniscient; the disciples acknowledge the origin and the deity of Christ.

■ **16:32 I am not alone.** In most of His suffering, Christ was not alone. But His cry of distress, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34), makes it clear that Jesus endured a real separation from the Father. This was the climax of what He endured as our sin-bearer.

■ **17:1 Father.** This word occurs over one hundred times in John's Gospel. In the prayer of ch. 17 it is found six times.

the hour has come. Jesus was fully conscious of what was going to happen.

Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You. The perfect life of the Son in His incarnation gives glory to the Godhead. The Son is glorified in His crucifixion, resurrection, and enthronement at God's right hand—these events are viewed as a composite unity in this Gospel. See notes on 12:23; 13:31.

■ **17:2 given.** This verb is used sixteen times in this prayer.

authority over all flesh, that He [l]should give eternal life to as many [c]as You have given Him. 3 And [d]this is eternal life, that they may know You, [e]the only true God, and Jesus Christ [f]whom You have sent. 4 [g]I have glorified You on the earth. [h]I have finished the work [i]which You have given Me to do. 5 And now, O Father, glorify Me together [2]with Yourself, with the glory [j]which I had with You before the world was.

Jesus Prays for His Disciples

6 [k]"I have [3]manifested Your name to the men [l]whom You have given Me out of the world. [m]They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. 7 Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. 8 For I have given to them the words [n]which You have given Me; and they have received *them,* [o]and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that [p]You sent Me.

9 "I pray for them. [q]I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. 10 And all Mine are Yours, and [r]Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. 11 [s]Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, [t]keep[4] through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one [u]as We *are.* 12 While I was with them [5]in the world, [v]I kept them in [6]Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and [w]none of them is [7]lost [x]except the son of [8]perdition, [y]that the Scripture might be fulfilled. 13 But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves. 14 I have given them Your word; [z]and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, [a]just as I am not of the world. 15 I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but [b]that You should keep them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. 17 [c]Sanctify[9] them by Your truth. [d]Your word is truth.

2 [c]John 6:37, 39; 17:6, 9, 24 [1]M *shall*

3 [d]Jer. 9:23, 24 [e]1 Cor. 8:4 [f]John 3:34

4 [g]John 13:31 [h]John 4:34; 19:30 [i]John 14:31

5 [j]Phil. 2:6 [2]Lit. *alongside*

6 [k]Ps. 22:22 [l]John 6:37 [m]Ezek. 18:4 [3]*revealed*

8 [n]John 8:28 [o]John 8:42; 16:27, 30 [p]Deut. 18:15, 18

9 [q][1 John 5:19]

10 [r]John 16:15

11 [s]John 13:1 [t][1 Pet. 1:5] [u]John 10:30 [4]NU, M *keep them through Your name which You have given Me*

12 [v]Heb. 2:13 [w]1 John 2:19 [x]John 6:70 [y]Ps. 41:9; 109:8 [5]NU omits *in the world* [6]NU *Your name which You gave Me. And I guarded them;* (or *it;*) [7]*destroyed* [8]*destruction* 14 [z]John 15:19 [a]John 8:23 15 [b]1 John 5:18 17 [c][Eph. 5:26] [d]Ps. 119:9, 142, 151 [9]*Set them apart*

eternal life. See note on 3:16.

as many as You have given Him. God's sovereign choice is emphasized in this expression (used again in vv. 6, 9, 24; cf. 6:44; 10:29).

■ **17:3 that they may know You . . . and Jesus Christ.** Life consists in fellowship with God "who created us for Himself, so that our soul is restless unless it finds its rest in Him," as Augustine expressed it. Knowledge, here as so often in Scripture, means more than mere intellectual grasp; it involves affection and commitment as well. By placing Himself and the Father together as the source of eternal life, Christ affirms His own deity. See "True Knowledge of God" at Jer. 9:24.

■ **17:4 finished the work.** This anticipates the cry of victory from the cross, "It is finished" (19:30).

■ **17:5 glorify Me . . . with the glory.** Jesus affirms as part of His petition that His glory existed "before the world was," signifying that He was preexistent and uncreated. Second, He refers to the kind of "glory" He enjoyed there. Throughout the Bible, this is the glory always associated with the true, living, and only God.

■ **17:6 manifested Your name.** Here, "name" denotes God in the beauty of His perfection as revealed to humanity.

They were Yours. Everything and everyone belongs to God by virtue of creation, but here possession by redemption is in view. God gave the elect to the Redeemer: "You gave them to Me" (cf. Heb. 2:10–13).

■ **17:9 I do not pray for the world.** Jesus' work of redemption has particular reference to the elect—those whom the Father has given Him (10:14, 15, 27–29). This verse strongly supports a doctrine of definite redemption: the prayer of Jesus before His sacrificial death specifies His purpose in dying. In other contexts, where the specific purpose of Jesus' offering is not in precise focus, Jesus prays for His enemies, as we also are to do (Matt. 5:44; Luke 23:34). See "Definite Redemption" at 10:15.

■ **17:10 I am glorified in them.** It is surprising that God's glory could be associated with the actions of human beings, who are so insignificant compared to the divine majesty. Yet people like Elihu in the Book of Job show that humans may give glory to God, and Paul affirms it of the most common activities of human beings, such as eating and drinking (1 Cor. 10:31).

■ **17:11 Holy Father.** This form of address is used only here in the New Testament.

that they may be one as We are. The unity of Persons in the Trinity is the example for the unity of believers with one another through their union with Christ (14:10 note). There is a unity of purpose and essence in the invisible church, the body of Christ. This perfect unity (Eph. 4:12–16), to be manifested on the day of Christ, already forms and shapes God's people so "that the world may believe" (v. 21). Organized unity is no substitute for spiritual unity, although organizational divisions and separations among Christians undoubtedly bear a negative witness in the world (1 Cor. 1:10–13; 12:25; Gal. 5:20).

■ **17:12 the son of perdition.** See text note. The same term is used to denote the Antichrist in 2 Thess. 2:3. This fulfills Ps. 41:9. Judas's betrayal was necessary for the fulfillment of many other passages descriptive of our Lord's suffering. Jesus understood many Scriptures as containing prophetic announcements of various details of His messianic career. He stressed that all these would be fulfilled because they were the Word of God.

■ **17:14 I have given them Your word.** This refers to Jesus' teaching.

they are not of the world. The new birth implies a radical division in humanity. Believers continue to live in the world, but they do not truly belong to it (v. 16).

■ **17:15 keep them from the evil one.** Jesus knows that the world will hate His disciples as it hated Him, but He does not ask for the disciples to be protected from suffering, but rather that they would be kept from the evil one. It is not the physical or social troubles of the world from which Jesus wishes His disciples to be "kept," but from its moral corruption. See "Christians in the World" at Col. 2:20.

■ **17:17 Sanctify them.** Jesus does not pray for the temporal well-being of the disciples, but for their sanctification. He wishes above all that they should be holy. "Truth" is the means by which holiness is attained. Error and deception are basic to evil, and truth is basic to godliness.

Your word is truth. This testimony refers immediately to the Old Testament that the disciples possessed. It extends also to the teaching of Jesus, called God's "word" (v. 14), and it comes to include the books of the

18 [e]As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. 19 And [f]for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

Jesus Prays for All Believers

20 "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who [l]will believe in Me through their word; 21 [g]that they all may be one, as [n]You, Father, *are* in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. 22 And the [i]glory which You gave Me I have given them, [j]that they may be one just as We are one: 23 I in them, and You in Me; [k]that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

24 [l]"Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; [m]for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. 25 O righteous Father! [n]The world has not known You, but [o]I have known You; and [p]these have known that You sent Me. 26 [q]And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare *it,* that the love [r]with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

Betrayal and Arrest in Gethsemane

18 When Jesus had spoken these words, [a]He went out with His disciples over [b]the Brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered. 2 And Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place; [c]for Jesus often met there with His disciples. 3 [d]Then Judas, having received a detachment *of troops,* and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons. 4 Jesus therefore, [e]knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, "Whom are you seeking?"

5 They answered Him, [f]"Jesus [l]of Nazareth."

Jesus said to them, "I am *He.*" And Judas, who [g]betrayed Him, also stood with them. 6 Now when He said to them, "I am *He,*" they drew back and fell to the ground.

7 Then He asked them again, "Whom are you seeking?"

And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth."

8 Jesus answered, "I have told you that I am *He.* Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their

17 [e]John 4:38; 20:21
19 [f][Heb. 10:10]
20 [l]NU, M omit *will*
21 [g][Gal. 3:28] [h]John 10:38; 17:11, 23
22 [i]1 John 1:3 [j][2 Cor. 3:18]
23 [k][Col. 3:14]
24 [l][1 Thess. 4:17] [m]John 17:5
25 [n]John 15:21 [o]John 7:29; 8:55; 10:15 [p]John 3:17; 17:3, 8, 18, 21, 23
26 [q]John 17:6 [r]John 15:9

CHAPTER 18

1 [a]Mark 14:26, 32 [b]2 Sam. 15:23
2 [c]Luke 21:37; 22:39
3 [d]Luke 22:47–53
4 [e]John 6:64; 13:1, 3; 19:28
5 [f]Matt. 21:11 [g]Ps. 41:9 [l]Lit. *the Nazarene*

New Testament canon (v. 20; Luke 8:11–15, 21; 11:28; Acts 4:31; 6:7; 8:14, 25; 1 Thess. 2:13). This is a powerful attestation of the authority and divine origin of Scripture. See "The Authority of Scripture" at 2 Tim. 3:16.

■ **17:18 As You sent Me . . . I also have sent them.** Compare 20:21. Jesus is the supreme pattern for Christian missions. Any true Christian is a "missionary," sent into the world to bear witness to Christ, to reach out to the lost where they may be found in order to lead them to the Savior.

into the world. Note the prepositions: not "of" the world (vv. 14, 16), nor "out of" the world (v. 15), but "into" the world and "in" the world (16:33).

■ **17:19 I sanctify Myself.** Jesus, being supremely holy, does not need moral improvement (Heb. 7:26, 27). As the High Priest He consecrates Himself (Ex. 28:41) to His sacred task, especially His supreme sacrifice.

■ **17:20 those who will believe.** In a sublime turn of thought, the Lord now embraces in His prayer the whole body of believers, even those yet to come to faith in future ages. Every true Christian can be assured of being included in this prayer.

■ **17:21 that the world may believe that You sent Me.** This prayer for unity is not merely for a "spiritual" or invisible unity, but for a unity that is visible to the world, "that the world may believe." See note on v. 11.

■ **17:23 perfect in one.** There is a pattern of unity that characterizes the relationship of the Father and the Son, and the Son and the Christian. See note on 14:10.

	Father to Son	Son to Believer
Unity	vv. 21, 23	vv. 21, 23, 26
Glory	vv. 22, 24	v. 22
Love	vv. 23, 24, 26	vv. 23, 26; 13:1
Mission	vv. 18, 23, 25	v. 18
Knowledge	v. 25	vv. 3, 8, 25, 26

loved them as You have loved Me. This statement brings to light the love of God the Father for the redeemed (3:16), sometimes overlooked because of emphasis on the love of Christ for them.

■ **17:24 they may behold My glory.** Jesus does not request temporal prosperity for either the disciples or the church; rather, He prays for holiness and unity on earth and for the gathering of His saints in heaven. To be with Christ is the supreme yearning of the Christian (Phil. 1:23; 1 Thess. 4:17).

■ **17:26** The prayer ends by sounding again some of the notes heard throughout: unity, knowledge, mission, and love. This is a fitting climax to the teaching of Jesus in the whole Gospel.

■ **18:1–40** This chapter has three sections. The arrest of Jesus is recorded in vv. 1–18, the trial before Annas in vv. 19–27, and the trial before Pilate in vv. 28–40.

The accounts of the four Gospels cover the major events of the arrest, trial, execution, and resurrection of Jesus. While some difficulties arise in the correlation of details, the main elements are in complete harmony. Jesus was arrested at night. His trial before the Jewish authorities had at least two phases, and during this part of the trial Peter denied Jesus three times. The trial before secular powers had three phases, and Jesus was executed by Pilate's soldiers. He was buried in Joseph of Arimathea's tomb, and on the first day of the week He arose from the dead and was seen alive in a variety of appearances to His disciples. None of the difficulties in the correlation of details is insuperable, but in a number of cases more than one explanation is possible, and in the absence of fuller data, it is difficult to choose among them.

■ **18:1 the Brook Kidron.** In the Kidron Valley east of the city.

■ **18:3 officers from the chief priests.** These were probably the same as the temple guards of 7:32, 45. They obviously expected resistance to the arrest, both from Jesus and His disciples.

■ **18:4 knowing all . . . went forward and said to them.** Note here, and at vv. 7 and 11, that Jesus was ready to be arrested and tried. He made no attempt to escape what He had come to do.

■ **18:5–7 I am *He.*** Here we may have a simple identification, but "He" is supplied in the English text, so Jesus' response coincides with a solemn name for God ("I AM") used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament in Ex. 3:14 (6:35 note).

■ **18:8 let these go.** Even at this crucial time, Jesus was concerned for His disciples (17:12).

way," [9] that the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, [h]"Of those whom You gave Me I have lost none."

[10] [i]Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

[11] So Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into the sheath. Shall I not drink [j]the cup which My Father has given Me?"

Before the High Priest

[12] Then the detachment *of troops* and the captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound Him. [13] And [k]they led Him away to [l]Annas first, for he was the father-in-law of [m]Caiaphas who was high priest that year. [14] [n]Now it was Caiaphas who advised the Jews that it was [2]expedient that one man should die for the people.

Peter Denies Jesus

[15] [o]And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so *did* [p]another[3] disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest. [16] [q]But Peter stood at the door outside. Then the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to her who kept the door, and brought Peter in. [17] Then the servant girl who kept the door said to Peter, "You are not also *one* of this Man's disciples, are you?"

He said, "I am [r]not."

[18] Now the servants and officers who had made a fire of coals stood there, for it was cold, and they warmed themselves. And Peter stood with them and warmed himself.

Jesus Questioned by the High Priest

[19] The high priest then asked Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine.

[20] Jesus answered him, [s]"I spoke openly to the world. I always taught [t]in synagogues and [u]in the temple, where [4]the Jews always meet, and in secret I have said nothing. [21] Why do you ask Me? Ask [v]those who have heard Me what I said to them. Indeed they know what I said."

[22] And when He had said these things, one of the officers who stood by [w]struck[5] Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, "Do You answer the high priest like that?"

[23] Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why do you strike Me?"

[24] [x]Then Annas sent Him bound to [y]Caiaphas the high priest.

Peter Denies Twice More

[25] Now Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. [z]Therefore they said to him, "You are not also *one* of His disciples, are you?"

9 [h][John 6:39; 17:12]

10 [i]Matt. 26:51; Mark 14:47; Luke 22:49, 50

11 [j]Matt. 20:22; 26:39; Mark 14:36; Luke 22:42

13 [k]Matt. 26:57 [l]Luke 3:2; John 18:24; Acts 4:6 [m]Matt. 26:3; John 11:49, 51

14 [n]John 11:50 [2]*advantageous*

15 [o]Matt. 26:58; Mark 14:54; Luke 22:54 [p]John 20:2–5 [3]M *the other*

16 [q]Matt. 26:69; Mark 14:66–68; Luke 22:55–57

17 [r]Matt. 26:34

20 [s]Matt. 26:55; Luke 4:15; John 8:26 [t]John 6:59 [u]Mark 14:49; John 7:14, 28 [4]NU *all the Jews meet*

21 [v]Mark 12:37

22 [w]Job 16:10; Is. 50:6; Jer. 20:2; Lam. 3:30; Acts 23:2 [5]Lit. *gave Jesus a slap,*

24 [x]Matt. 26:57; Luke 3:2; Acts 4:6 [y]John 11:49

25 [z]Matt. 26:71–75; Mark 14:69–72; Luke 22:58–62

■ **18:10 Peter . . . struck the high priest's servant.** An ill-conceived act of resistance. John alone records that Peter carried the sword and that Malchus was the name of the servant; Luke alone records that Jesus healed him (Luke 22:51).

■ **18:11 Put your sword into the sheath.** Jesus' rebuke does not concern the propriety of self-defense or civil resistance; the point is that Jesus has come to give His life a ransom for many, and He must not be dissuaded from this task (cf. Matt. 16:21–23).

Shall I not drink the cup. This "cup" is the cup of the wine of God's wrath (Ps. 75:8; Is. 51:17; Jer. 25:15–17, 27–38). The "cup" that Jesus chooses to drink is not merely death, but the wrath of God upon sin (cf. Matt. 20:22; Mark 10:38).

■ **18:13 Annas.** One of the most influential Jewish leaders of that age. Although deposed from the high priesthood by the Romans, He was still known by this title among the Jews. It is difficult to determine whether this verse and vv. 19–24 represent one or two phases of a trial before the Jewish authorities. Matthew, Mark, and Luke refer to an additional phase before the Sanhedrin. Judging from the description of rules for trials found in the *Mishnah* of some two hundred years later, the proceedings here were marked by serious irregularities and violations of Jewish law. The Sanhedrin was not supposed to meet at night; the death penalty could not be declared on the day of the trial; there was false evidence, and false witnesses were used (Matt. 26:59, 60); Jesus was exposed to blows from attendants during the trial (v. 22; Mark 14:65). In addition to all this, it was illegal for the Sanhedrin to meet for a capital case on the eve of a Sabbath or a feast day. These violations show that Jesus' condemnation by the Jewish authorities was a travesty of justice.

■ **18:15 another disciple.** Probably this was John since of the three closest to Jesus (Peter, James, and John), he is the only one not mentioned by name in the Gospel.

known to the high priest. He was admitted to the palace, even allowed to invite a guest (v. 16).

■ **18:17** The account of Peter's denial is interrupted in John's Gospel by part of the trial proceedings (vv. 19–24). It would appear that there were three occasions of denial rather than three single sentences by Peter. This is what one would expect with a number of people coming and going and warming themselves by a fire. There may be different legitimate ways of distinguishing the occasions to yield the figure three predicted by Jesus (13:38). All four Gospels agree that the first denial was in response to a question of a "servant girl," in other words, a harmless person of no great importance in the household.

I am not. Peter's denial points out that when Jesus endures God's punishment against sin, He does so without comfort or consolation. Peter's denial is foretold in Zech. 13:6, 7. Jesus' solitude in His suffering is anticipated in Ps. 69:20.

■ **18:19 the high priest then asked.** This may be Annas or Caiaphas in the house of Annas (v. 24). An accused person was not to be questioned until witnesses had first established a presumption of guilt. For this reason, some call this a hearing, not a trial.

■ **18:22 one of the officers . . . struck Jesus.** This obviously was highly irregular, particularly when the prisoner was bound (v. 24).

He denied *it* and said, "I am not!"

26 One of the servants of the high priest, a relative *of him* whose ear Peter cut off, said, "Did I not see you in the garden with Him?" 27 Peter then denied again; and [a]immediately a rooster crowed.

In Pilate's Court

28 [b]Then they led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium, and it was early morning. [c]But they themselves did not go into the [6]Praetorium, lest they should be defiled, but that they might eat the Passover. 29 [d]Pilate then went out to them and said, "What accusation do you bring against this Man?"

30 They answered and said to him, "If He were not [7]an evildoer, we would not have delivered Him up to you."

31 Then Pilate said to them, "You take Him and judge Him according to your law."

Therefore the Jews said to him, "It is not lawful for us to put anyone to death," 32 [e]that the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled which He spoke, [f]signifying by what death He would die.

33 [g]Then Pilate entered the [8]Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?"

34 Jesus answered him, "Are you speaking for yourself about this, or did others tell you this concerning Me?"

27 [a]Matt. 26:74; Mark 14:72; Luke 22:60; John 13:38

28 [b]Matt. 27:2; Mark 15:1; Luke 23:1; Acts 3:13 [c]John 11:55; Acts 10:28; 11:3 [6]The governor's headquarters

29 [d]Matt. 27:11–14; Mark 15:2–5; Luke 23:2, 3

30 [7]*a criminal*

32 [e]Matt. 20:17–19; 26:2; Mark 10:33; Luke 18:32 [f]John 3:14; 8:28; 12:32, 33

33 [g]Matt. 27:11 [8]The governor's headquarters

■ **18:26 a relative.** A question by this man endangered Peter more than the previous ones, since he might have wanted to avenge Malchus.

■ **18:28 the Praetorium.** See text note. The Roman trial of Jesus appears to have had three phases: an appearance before Pilate (vv. 28–38); an appearance before Herod (Luke 23:5–12); and a second appearance before Pilate (18:39—19:16). John describes only the first and third parts, but in more detail than the other Gospels.

lest they should be defiled. The Roman Praetorium was a site of hostility between the Romans and the Jews, and an unclean place for Jews. Remarkably, it is the place where they collaborated to put Jesus to death. See note on chs. 13—17.

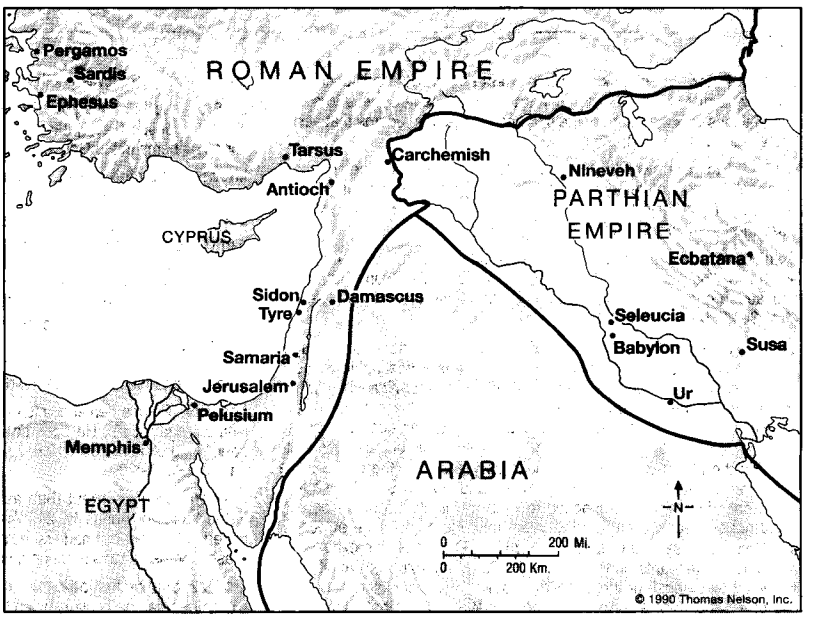
■ **18:29 What accusation.** The Jews had no charge that would be recognized in a Roman court, let alone be viewed as a capital offense.

■ **18:31 You take Him and judge Him.** A logical response. Pilate's point is that if they were not willing to specify charges, they should not expect Him to conduct a trial.

not lawful for us to put . . . to death. This was the usual provision in countries occupied by Rome, perhaps in order to protect those who supported Rome. The Jews were not always so obedient; note the death of Stephen (Acts 7:57–60).

■ **18:32 signifying by what death.** See 3:14; 12:32–34. Stoning was the Jewish method of capital punishment. Hanging and crucifixion, as implied in the words "lifted up," were used by the Romans. This shows the divine control over the whole procedure, even though it was marked by flagrant injustice.

■ **18:33 King of the Jews.** Jesus was not the "King of the Jews" in the sense that He promoted sedition against Rome, as charged by the Jewish leaders (Luke 23:2), but He was the King of the Jews in the messianic sense (12:13; Matt. 2:2; Luke 1:32, 33; 19:38).



Roman Control of Palestine at the Time of Christ. Following a successful military campaign against the Seleucids in 64 B.C., Pompey turned the Roman armies southward and took control of Jerusalem in 63 B.C. Initially the Roman army had been invited by some of the Jews to protect them from the Nabateans. Once the Romans became established in Palestine, they never left, despite repeated Jewish revolts against Roman control.

35 Pilate answered, "Am I a Jew? Your own nation and the chief priests have delivered You to me. What have You done?"

36 [h]Jesus answered, [i]"My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."

37 Pilate therefore said to Him, "Are You a king then?"

Jesus answered, "You say *rightly* that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, [j]that I should bear [k]witness to the truth. Everyone who [l]is of the truth [m]hears My voice."

38 Pilate said to Him, "What is truth?" And when he had said this, he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, [n]"I find no fault in Him at all.

Taking the Place of Barabbas

39 [o]"But you have a custom that I should release someone to you at the Passover. Do you therefore want me to release to you the King of the Jews?"

40 [p]Then they all cried again, saying, "Not this Man, but Barabbas!" [q]Now Barabbas was a robber.

The Soldiers Mock Jesus

19 So then [a]Pilate took Jesus and scourged *Him.* 2 And the soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and put *it* on His head, and they put on Him a purple robe. 3 [1]Then they said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they [b]struck Him with their hands.

4 Pilate then went out again, and said to them, "Behold, I am bringing Him out to you, [c]that you may know that I find no fault in Him."

Pilate's Decision

5 Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And *Pilate* said to them, "Behold the Man!"

6 [d]Therefore, when the chief priests and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, "Crucify *Him,* crucify *Him!*"

Pilate said to them, "You take Him and crucify *Him,* for I find no fault in Him."

7 The Jews answered him, [e]"We have a law, and according to [2]our law He ought to die, because [f]He made Himself the Son of God."

8 Therefore, when Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid, 9 and went again into the Praetorium, and said to Jesus, "Where are You from?" [g]But Jesus gave him no answer.

10 Then Pilate said to Him, "Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have [3]power to crucify You, and [3]power to release You?"

11 Jesus answered, [h]"You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore [i]the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin."

12 From then on Pilate sought to release Him, but the Jews cried out, saying, "If you let this

36 [h]1 Tim. 6:13 [i][Dan. 2:44; 7:14]; Luke 12:14; John 6:15; 8:15

37 [j][Matt. 5:17; 20:28; Luke 4:43; 12:49; 19:10; John 3:17; 9:39; 10:10; 12:47] [k]Is. 55:4; Rev. 1:5 [l][John 14:6] [m]John 8:47; 10:27; [1 John 3:19; 4:6]

38 [n]Is. 53:9; Matt. 27:24; Luke 23:4; John 19:4, 6; 1 Pet. 2:22–24

39 [o]Matt. 27:15–26; Mark 15:6–15; Luke 23:17–25

40 [p]Is. 53:3; Acts 3:14 [q]Luke 23:19

CHAPTER 19

1 [a]Matt. 20:19; 27:26; Mark 15:15; Luke 18:33

3 [b]Is. 50:6 [1]NU *And they came up to Him and said*

4 [c]Is. 53:9; John 18:33, 38; 1 Pet. 2:22–24

6 [d]Acts 3:13

7 [e]Lev. 24:16 [f]Matt. 26:63–66; John 5:18; 10:33 [2]NU *the law*

9 [g]Is. 53:7; Matt. 27:12, 14; Luke 23:9

10 [3]*authority*

11 [h][Luke 22:53]; John 7:30 [i]John 3:27; Rom. 13:1

■ **18:36 My kingdom is not of this world.** Jesus is a King, but He will not establish His kingdom by force. This greatly puzzles Pilate. See "Jesus' Heavenly Reign" at Acts 7:55.

■ **18:37 You say rightly.** Pilate's question elicits the marvelous answer of Jesus, whose kingdom and mission are founded in the truth (1:8, 14, 17; 8:32; 14:6).

■ **18:38 What is truth.** Truth does not matter to those who, like Pilate, are motivated by expediency. Likewise, truth does not matter to skeptics who have despaired of knowing it.

I find no fault in Him. Pilate finds no crime in Jesus and is reluctant to put Jesus to death. Ironically, it is the pagan Roman governor who tries to release Jesus, while "His own" (1:11) want Him to die.

■ **18:39 you have a custom.** The custom of pardoning a criminal at the Passover is relevant to the festival itself, which commemorates God's sparing the Israelites from death.

■ **18:40 Barabbas.** This name means "son of the father." Instead of him, the true Son of the Father died.

■ **19:1 scourged Him.** The Roman scourge was cruel and sometimes fatal. The whip had metal or bone fragments in it to tear the flesh.

■ **19:5 Behold the Man.** A natural way for Pilate to introduce the accused, but providentially a significant statement. Jesus is the last Adam, who sums up all that humanity could and should be.

■ **19:6 the chief priests . . . cried out.** In their hatred of Jesus, the chief priests become the leaders of a mob.

I find no fault in Him. For the third time Pilate proclaims Jesus' innocence (18:38; 19:4; cf. Luke 23:4, 14, 22).

■ **19:7 He ought to die.** The appeal is to the charge of blasphemy, a capital offense in Jewish law (Lev. 24:16).

■ **19:9 But Jesus gave him no answer.** Jesus' submission to arrest and trial is part of His surrender as a self-offering.

■ **19:11 You could have no power.** Jesus acknowledges that the sovereign plan of God includes even the wickedness of His accusers and the cowardice of Pilate. See also the words of Peter (Acts 2:23) and the early church (Acts 4:28).

■ **19:12 you are not Caesar's friend.** "Caesar's friend" was a recognized title for political supporters of the emperor. The Jews threaten Pilate with the suggestion that he will be considered a traitor to Rome if he releases someone who talks about being a king.

Man go, you are not Caesar's friend. [j]Whoever makes himself a king speaks against Caesar."

13 [k]When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called *The* Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. 14 Now [l]it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, "Behold your King!"

15 But they cried out, "Away with *Him,* away with *Him!* Crucify Him!"

Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?"

The chief priests answered, [m]"We have no king but Caesar!"

16 [n]Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified. Then they took Jesus [4]and led *Him* away.

The King on a Cross

17 [o]And He, bearing His cross, [p]went out to a place called *the Place* of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha, 18 where they crucified Him, and [q]two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center. 19 [r]Now Pilate wrote a title and put *it* on the cross. And the writing was:

JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

20 Then many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, *and* Latin.

21 Therefore the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'He said, "I am the King of the Jews." ' "

22 Pilate answered, "What I have written, I have written."

23 [s]Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took His garments and made four parts, to each soldier a part, and also the tunic. Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece. 24 They said therefore among themselves, "Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be," that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says:

> [t]*"They divided My garments among them,*
> *And for My clothing they cast lots."*

Therefore the soldiers did these things.

Behold Your Mother

25 [u]Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the *wife* of [v]Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and [w]the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, [x]"Woman, behold your son!" 27 Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her [y]to his own *home.*

12 [j]Luke 23:2; John 18:33; Acts 17:7

13 [k]Deut. 1:17; 1 Sam. 15:24; Prov. 29:25; Is. 51:12; Acts 4:19

14 [l]Matt. 27:62; John 19:31, 42

15 [m][Gen. 49:10]

16 [n]Matt. 27:26, 31; Mark 15:15; Luke 23:24 [4]NU omits *and led Him away*

17 [o]Matt. 27:31, 33; Mark 15:21, 22; Luke 23:26, 33 [p]Num. 15:36; Heb. 13:12

18 [q]Ps. 22:16–18; Is. 53:12; Matt. 20:19; 26:2

19 [r]Matt. 27:37; Mark 15:26; Luke 23:38

23 [s]Matt. 27:35; Mark 15:24; Luke 23:34

24 [t]Ps. 22:18

25 [u]Matt. 27:55; Mark 15:40; Luke 2:35; 23:49 [v]Luke 24:18

26 [w]John 13:23; 20:2; 21:7, 20, 24 [x]John 2:4

27 [y]Luke 18:28; John 1:11; 16:32; Acts 21:6

■ **19:14 Preparation Day of the Passover.** This is often understood to be the Thursday before Passover (Matt. 27:17 note). If so, John portrays Jesus being crucified at the same time as the Passover lambs (chs. 13—17 note). This appears to conflict with the record of the three Synoptic Gospels, where Jesus' crucifixion occurs on Friday. Probably, the reference here is to Friday as the Preparation Day before the weekly Sabbath.

Behold your King. To the last, Pilate refers to Jesus as the "King of the Jews." It may be that this was a last effort by Pilate to mollify the Jews, but if so, it failed. Later Pilate had this title affixed to the cross (v. 19).

■ **19:15 no king but Caesar.** They ignored or did not remember that God was their King.

■ **19:18 they crucified Him.** See Matt. 27:32–37.

two others. Two criminals were crucified at the same time as Jesus, in fulfillment prophecy (Is. 53:12; Luke 22:37). This gave Christ the opportunity to show His saving power by reaching out and rescuing a man at the very edge of eternity.

■ **19:19 the writing.** The four Gospels recount the inscription of Pilate with minute differences, perhaps because the inscription was in three languages. John's form, with the name "Jesus of Nazareth," has a Semitic flavor. It was customary to attach an inscription stating the reason for execution. At the same time, Pilate's notice was a public announcement of the kingship of Christ.

■ **19:21, 22 the chief priests . . . said.** They viewed the inscription as an offense to their nation, and Pilate may have meant it that way—but he refused to change it.

■ **19:23 tunic.** Such tunics were not uncommon in the ancient world. The point is not the tunic's value, but the depth of Jesus' humiliation, from whom everything was taken as He offered Himself. It is also the fulfillment of Ps. 22:18.

■ **19:25 by the cross.** "Clopas" may be the same as "Cleopas," mentioned in Luke 24:18. The courage of the four women is noteworthy. Some are present again at Jesus' burial (Matt. 27:61; Mark 15:47) and at the Resurrection (20:1–18; Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:1).

■ **19:26 Woman, behold your son.** "Woman" is not a harsh form of address in Aramaic (2:4 note). Even in the midst of dying on the cross as the Mediator of the new covenant, Jesus fulfills his duty as the Son of Mary in a splendid example of obedience to the letter and spirit of the fifth commandment. In a time of intense physical pain and mental anguish, the Lord thought of others, as is shown in the first statements from the cross (Luke 23:34, 43).

It Is Finished

28 After this, Jesus, [5]knowing that all things were now accomplished, [z]that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, "I thirst!" 29 Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and [a]they filled a sponge with sour wine, put *it* on hyssop, and put *it* to His mouth. 30 So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, [b]"It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.

Jesus' Side Is Pierced

31 [c]Therefore, because it was the Preparation *Day,* [d]that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a [e]high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and *that* they might be taken away. 32 Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. 33 But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. 34 But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately [f]blood and water came out. 35 And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is [g]true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may [h]believe. 36 For these things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, [i]*"Not one of His bones shall be broken."* 37 And again another Scripture says, [j]*"They shall look on Him whom they pierced."*

Jesus Buried in Joseph's Tomb

38 [k]After this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, [l]for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave *him* permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus. 39 And [m]Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came, bringing a mixture of [n]myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds. 40 Then they took the body of Jesus, and [o]bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury. 41 Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. 42 So [p]there they laid Jesus, [q]because of the Jews' Preparation *Day,* for the tomb was nearby.

28 [z]Ps. 22:15 [5]M *seeing*
29 [a]Matt. 27:48, 50
30 [b]John 17:4
31 [c]Mark 15:42 [d]Deut. 21:23 [e]Ex. 12:16
34 [f][1 John 5:6, 8]
35 [g]John 21:24 [h][John 20:31]
36 [i][Ex. 12:46; Num. 9:12]; Ps. 34:20
37 [j]Zech. 12:10; 13:6
38 [k]Luke 23:50–56 [l][John 7:13; 9:22; 12:42]
39 [m]John 3:1, 2; 7:50 [n]Matt. 2:11
40 [o]John 20:5, 7
42 [p]Is. 53:9 [q]John 19:14, 31

■ **19:28–30 all . . . accomplished.** The worst ordeal, that of bearing in the place of His people the wrath of God against sin (Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34), appears to be over.

■ **19:31 Preparation Day.** See note on v. 14.

bodies should not remain on the cross. This would ceremonially defile the land (Deut. 21:23). It is a starkly revealing example of their depraved insensitivity that they joined forces to commit murder and at the same time were so punctilious about enforcing the ceremonial law.

legs . . . broken. Breathing was so difficult in crucifixion that if the legs could not help by lifting the torso, a person would quickly die.

■ **19:34 pierced His side with a spear.** This act proves that Jesus was not in a coma but was dead, as shown by the burial preparations (vv. 39, 40) and the specification of a particular tomb (v. 41). Both the preserving of His bones (v. 33) and the piercing of His side fulfill Old Testament Scripture (vv. 36, 37; Ps. 34:20; Zech. 12:10).

blood and water. John emphasizes this physical evidence that Jesus was a real human being and that He was dead. It has been suggested that rupture of the heart caused by extreme agony is indicated, but more recent medical research has shown that such trauma occurs only when the heart is already damaged by disease. Others see a symbolic significance linked with 1 John 5:6–8.

■ **19:38 Joseph of Arimathea.** A secret supporter of Jesus mentioned in all four Gospels in connection with Jesus' burial, but nowhere else in the New Testament. See note on Luke 23:50, 51.

The Death of Jesus (19:42)

The Jews viewed Jesus' death as a scandal. The church understood His death as fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy.

Aspect of Jesus' Death	Old Testament Reference
In obedience to His Father (10:18)	Psalm 40:8
Announced by Himself (18:32; see 3:14)	Numbers 21:8, 9
In the place of His people (10:11)	Isaiah 53:4–6
With evildoers (19:18)	Isaiah 53:12
In innocence (19:6)	Isaiah 53:9
Crucified (19:18)	Psalm 22:16
Buried in a rich man's tomb (19:38–42)	Isaiah 53:9

CHAPTER 20

1 [a]Matt. 28:1–8 [b]Matt. 27:60, 66; 28:2

2 [c]John 21:23, 24 [d]John 13:23; 19:26; 21:7, 20, 24

3 [e]Luke 24:12

5 [f]John 19:40

7 [g]John 11:44 [1]*face cloth*

8 [h]John 21:23, 24

9 [i]Ps. 16:10 [2]*understand*

11 [j]Mark 16:5

14 [k]Matt. 28:9 [l]John 21:4

16 [m]John 10:3 [3]NU adds *in Hebrew*

17 [n]Heb. 4:14 [o]Heb. 2:11 [p]John 16:28; 17:11 [q]Eph. 1:17

The Empty Tomb

20 Now the [a]first *day* of the week Mary Magdalene went to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw *that* the [b]stone had been taken away from the tomb. 2 Then she ran and came to Simon Peter, and to the [c]other disciple, [d]whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid Him."

3 [e]Peter therefore went out, and the other disciple, and were going to the tomb. 4 So they both ran together, and the other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. 5 And he, stooping down and looking in, saw [f]the linen cloths lying *there;* yet he did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying *there,* 7 and [g]the [1]handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself. 8 Then the [h]other disciple, who came to the tomb first, went in also; and he saw and believed. 9 For as yet they did not [2]know the [i]Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. 10 Then the disciples went away again to their own homes.

Mary Magdalene Sees the Risen Lord

11 [j]But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down *and looked* into the tomb. 12 And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. 13 Then they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?"

She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him."

14 [k]Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing *there,* and [l]did not know that it was Jesus. 15 Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?"

She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, "Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away."

16 Jesus said to her, [m]"Mary!"

She turned and said to [3]Him, "Rabboni!" (which is to say, Teacher).

17 Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet [n]ascended to My Father; but go to [o]My brethren and say to them, [p]'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and *to* [q]My God and your God.' "

■ **20:1–31** The four Gospels have accounts of several resurrection appearances; together with Acts 1:3–8 and 1 Cor. 15:5–8, there are twelve appearances, the first six in Jerusalem, four in Galilee, one on the Mount of Olives, and one on the road to Damascus.

■ **20:2 Peter . . . the other disciple.** Peter and John. See note on 13:23.

we do not know. "We" indicates that several women were there, as recorded by the other Gospels. They were the same women who stood at the foot of the Cross, perhaps with the exception of Mary, Jesus' mother, who is not mentioned.

where they have laid Him. Neither Mary nor the disciples were expecting the Resurrection, in spite of what Jesus had told them (cf. v. 9).

■ **20:5–8 he . . . saw the linen cloths.** John took the first cursory look and saw that only the burial clothes were there. Peter and John then made a closer inspection. The graveclothes were in good order (v. 7). If someone had violated the tomb and removed the corpse, the linen cloths would not have been so well arranged, and the handkerchief (see text note) would not likely have been folded.

■ **20:9 they did not know the Scripture.** See text note. Later, as a result of Jesus' instruction, they understood His resurrection as a necessary fulfillment of prophecy (Luke 24:26, 27, 44–47; Acts 2:25–32; 13:35–37). Clearly the disciples did not expect a resurrection, or try to invent one in order to fit their own religious view. See "The Resurrection of Jesus" at Luke 24:2.

■ **20:12 two angels in white.** Matt. 28:2 records "an angel"; Mark 16:5 "a young man"; and Luke 24:4 "two men" (called "a vision of angels" in Luke 24:23). There is no necessary contradiction since the angels must have appeared in human form and one of them may be singled out, perhaps because he was the speaker. What Mary saw may also differ from what the other women saw since she remained alone at the tomb after Peter and John had left.

■ **20:14 she . . . saw Jesus standing there.** Matthew reveals that Jesus had already appeared once to the group of women on their way to Jerusalem to tell the news about the empty tomb (Matt. 28:8–10).

did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus was often not immediately recognized after His resurrection (v. 20; 21:4). On some occasions this may have been due to skepticism or grief; in Luke it is sometimes due to supernatural hindrance (Luke 24:16, 31). In addition, the resurrection involves a change in appearance (1 Cor. 15:35–49).

■ **20:16 Rabboni.** The voice of Jesus calling "Mary" revealed clearly who He was. "Rabboni" is a lengthened form of "Rabbi," occurring one other time in the New Testament (Mark 10:51).

■ **20:17 Do not cling to Me.** There is no impropriety in touching the resurrection body; in v. 27 Jesus tells Thomas to touch Him (see also Matt. 28:9). Jesus reminds Mary that He is not merely recovered but resurrected. She need not "cling to" Jesus as an earthly being who has been healed; rather, she should recognize Him as One whose resurrection marks Him as Lord and Christ. The kind of relationship that had been enjoyed by His friends up to now cannot continue unchanged. There is a continuing intimacy to be sure, but not of the former kind. There is no reason to suppose that Jesus ascended to the Father between His encounters with Mary and Thomas. See "The Ascension of Jesus" at Luke 24:51.

My brethren. Jesus' disciples; the same language is used in Matt. 28:10.

My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God. Jesus distinguishes pointedly His unique Sonship from the sonship of the disciples. Jesus' relation to the Godhead is different from that of redeemed humans; He is the Lord from heaven (1:18; 3:13, 31).

18 [r]Mary Magdalene came and told the [4]disciples that she had seen the Lord, and *that* He had spoken these things to her.

The Apostles Commissioned

19 [s]Then, the same day at evening, being the first *day* of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were [5]assembled, for [t]fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, [u]"Peace *be* with you." 20 When He had said this, He [v]showed them *His* hands and His side. [w]Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.

21 So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! [x]As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." 22 And when He had said this, He breathed on *them,* and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 [y]If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the *sins* of any, they are retained."

18 [r]Luke 24:10, 23 [4]NU *disciples, "I have seen the Lord,"*

19 [s]Luke 24:36 [t]John 9:22; 19:38 [u]John 14:27; 16:33 [5]NU omits *assembled*

20 [v]Acts 1:3 [w]John 16:20, 22

21 [x]John 17:18, 19

23 [y]Matt. 16:19; 18:18

The Mission of the Church in the World

"Mission" comes from a Latin word meaning "to send." Jesus commanded His first disciples, as representatives of those to follow, "As the Father has sent Me, I also send you" (John 20:21; cf. 17:18). This mission is still valid: the universal church, including every local congregation and every Christian in it, is sent into the world to fulfill a definite task.

The appointed task has two parts. First and fundamentally, it is the work of worldwide witness, making disciples and planting churches (Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20; Mark 13:10; Luke 24:47, 48). The church proclaims Jesus Christ everywhere as God incarnate, Lord and Savior, and announces God's invitation to enter life through turning to Christ in repentance and faith (Matt. 22:1–10; Acts 17:30). Paul's ministry as a church-planter and evangelist to all the world, so far as was possible, is a model for carrying out this primary commitment (Rom. 1:14; 15:17–29; 1 Cor. 9:19–23; Col. 1:28, 29).

Second, all Christians are called to do works of mercy and compassion. Relying on God's commandment to love our neighbor, Christians should respond with generosity and compassion to all forms of human need (Matt. 25:34–40; Luke 10:25–37; Rom. 12:20, 21). Jesus healed the sick, fed the hungry, and taught the ignorant (Matt. 15:32; 20:34; Mark 1:41; 10:1), and those who are new creatures in Christ must practice the same compassion. In doing so they make credible the gospel they preach, about a Savior whose love transforms sinners into those who love God and other people (Matt. 5:16; cf. 1 Pet. 2:11, 12).

Though Jesus foresaw the mission to the Gentiles (Matt. 24:14; John 10:16; 12:32), His earthly ministry was directed to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15:24). Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, always went to the Jews first as he preached (Acts 13:42–48; 14:1; 17:1–4, 10; 18:4–7, 19). Because the right of the Jews to hear the gospel first is a matter of divine appointment (Acts 3:26; 13:46; Rom. 1:16), it is important for Christians to continue bearing witness to the Jews. As Paul said, it was from Israel, according to the flesh, that Christ came to be the Savior of the world (Rom. 9:5). □

■ **20:19 the disciples.** Probably includes more than the ten apostles (twelve minus Judas and Thomas). In Acts 1:14, the women, Jesus' mother and brothers, and probably others (Acts 1:23) were together in the upper room after Jesus' ascension.

the doors were shut. The impression is that the risen Jesus passed through the closed doors (also v. 26), not that they were opened in some way (compare Acts 12:10). This shows the transformation involved in the resurrection of the body (1 Cor. 15:35–49).

Peace be with you. Everyday words but a most welcome greeting, since they might have expected a rebuke for having abandoned Jesus at the time of His arrest.

■ **20:20 His hands and His side.** The marks of His wounds would identify Jesus, and also prove that He was not a ghost.

■ **20:21 As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.** This is a brief statement of the commission Jesus gave His disciples. A fuller statement is found in Matt. 28:18–20 and in Luke 24:44–53. Jesus is the supreme example for evangelism and missions. See theological note "The Mission of the Church in the World."

■ **20:22 Receive the Holy Spirit.** The gift is essential for the performance of the task given the disciples. This occasion is a foreshadowing of the fullness of the Spirit to be bestowed on the church at Pentecost.

■ **20:23 If you forgive the sins of any.** The apostles, as the founders of the church and acting for it, receive the authority to declare God's judgment on sins. Fundamentally, this declaration is made in the preaching of the gospel. See "Church Discipline and Excommunication" at Matt. 18:15.

24 [z]John 11:16

27 [a]Ps. 22:16; Zech. 12:10; 13:6; 1 John 1:1 [b]Mark 16:14

29 [c]2 Cor. 5:7; 1 Pet. 1:8 [6]NU, M omit *Thomas*

30 [d]John 21:25

31 [e]Luke 1:4 [f]John 19:35; 1 John 5:13 [g]Luke 2:11; 1 John 5:1 [h]John 3:15, 16; 5:24; [1 Pet. 1:8, 9]

CHAPTER 21

1 [a]Matt. 26:32; Mark 14:28; John 6:1

2 [b]John 20:24 [c]John 1:45–51 [d]John 2:1 [e]Matt. 4:21; Mark 1:19; Luke 5:10

3 [f]NU omits *immediately*

4 [g]Luke 24:16; John 20:14

5 [g]Luke 24:41

6 [h]Luke 5:4, 6, 7

7 [i]John 13:23; 20:2

12 [j]Acts 10:41

Seeing and Believing

24 Now Thomas, [z]called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. 25 The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord."

So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

26 And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" 27 Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and [a]reach your hand *here*, and put *it* into My side. Do not be [b]unbelieving, but believing."

28 And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

29 Jesus said to him, [6]"Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. [c]Blessed *are* those who have not seen and *yet* have believed."

That You May Believe

30 And [d]truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 [e]but these are written that [f]you may believe that Jesus [g]is the Christ, the Son of God, [h]and that believing you may have life in His name.

Breakfast by the Sea

21 After these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the [a]Sea of Tiberias, and in this way He showed *Himself:* 2 Simon Peter, [b]Thomas called the Twin, [c]Nathan-a-el of [d]Cana in Galilee, [e]the *sons* of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together. 3 Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing."

They said to him, "We are going with you also." They went out and [f]immediately got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing. 4 But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples [g]did not know that it was Jesus. 5 Then [g]Jesus said to them, "Children, have you any food?"

They answered Him, "No."

6 And He said to them, [h]"Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find *some*." So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish.

7 Therefore [i]that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on *his* outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea. 8 But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from land, but about two hundred cubits), dragging the net with fish. 9 Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread. 10 Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish which you have just caught."

11 Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not broken. 12 Jesus said to them, [j]"Come *and* eat breakfast." Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, "Who are You?"—knowing that it was the Lord. 13 Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish.

■ **20:28 My Lord and my God.** This is probably the clearest and simplest confession of the deity of Christ to be found in the New Testament. The two highest words, "Lord" (used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament for the divine name "Yahweh"), and "God," are used together and addressed to Jesus in recognition of His glory. Jesus accepts this worship without hesitation. This is in sharp contrast to the angels who were mistakenly worshiped in Rev. 19:10; 22:9.

■ **20:29 Blessed are those who have not seen.** While commending Thomas's faith, Jesus blesses those who will come to believe through the witness of the disciples (17:20; cf. 1 Pet. 1:8, 9). This blessing introduces the reason for the writing of the Gospel (vv. 30, 31).

■ **20:30 many other signs.** None of the Gospels is an attempt to give a complete or a strictly chronological record, such as a modern biography (cf. 21:25). See Introduction to Matthew: Interpretive Difficulties.

■ **20:31 these are written that you may believe.** This states the purpose of this Gospel. Through the signs narrated, the reader is to come to faith in Jesus as more than a miracle worker. He is Christ, the incarnate Word, with the Father and the Spirit as Triune God. Through believing, we find life in Him who is the source of life (6:32–58).

■ **21:1–25** This chapter appears to be a kind of postscript, prepared by the same author as the rest of the Gospel, with the possible exception of vv. 24, 25.

■ **21:3 I am going fishing.** Perhaps Peter, having denied the Lord, thought he had forfeited the privilege of being a witness of Jesus' resurrection.

that night they caught nothing. Fishing at night was not unusual. The circumstances are reminiscent of the miraculous draught of fish recounted in Luke 5:4–11 and associated with the call of Peter and other disciples.

■ **21:4 the disciples did not know.** See note on 20:14.

■ **21:7 that disciple whom Jesus loved.** See note on 13:23. He was quick to recognize Jesus.

put on his outer garment. This is strange for someone about to jump into the water. It seems to be a gesture of reverence for Jesus, before whom Peter did not want to appear unclothed.

14 This *is* now [k]the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead.

Jesus Restores Peter

15 So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, *son* of [2]Jonah, do you love Me more than these?"

He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I [3]love You."

He said to him, [l]"Feed My lambs."

16 He said to him again a second time, "Simon, *son* of [4]Jonah, do you love Me?"

He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I [5]love You."

[m]He said to him, "Tend My [n]sheep."

17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, *son* of [6]Jonah, do you [7]love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you [7]love Me?"

And he said to Him, "Lord, [o]You know all things; You know that I [7]love You."

Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep. 18[p]Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry *you* where you do not wish." 19 This He spoke, signifying [q]by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, [r]"Follow Me."

The Beloved Disciple and His Book

20 Then Peter, turning around, saw the disciple [s]whom Jesus loved following, [t]who also had leaned on His breast at the supper, and said, "Lord, who is the one who betrays You?" 21 Peter, seeing him, said to Jesus, "But Lord, what *about* this man?"

22 Jesus said to him, "If I [8]will that he remain [u]till I come, what *is that* to you? You follow Me."

23 Then this saying went out among the brethren that this disciple would not die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but, "If I will that he remain till I come, what *is that* to you?"

24 This is the disciple who [v]testifies of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true.

25 [w]And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, [x]I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.

14 [k]John 20:19, 26

15 [l]Acts 20:28; 1 Tim. 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:2 [2]NU *John* [3]*have affection for*

16 [m]Matt. 2:6; Acts 20:28; Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 2:25; 5:2, 4 [n]Ps. 79:13; Matt. 10:16; 15:24; 25:33; 26:31 [4]NU *John* [5]*have affection for*

17 [o]John 2:24, 25; 16:30 [6]NU *John* [7]*have affection for*

18 [p]John 13:36; Acts 12:3, 4

19 [q]2 Pet. 1:13, 14 [r][Matt. 4:19; 16:24]; John 21:22

20 [s]John 13:23; 20:2 [t]John 13:25

22 [u][Matt. 16:27, 28; 25:31; 1 Cor. 4:5; 11:26; Rev. 2:25; 3:11; 22:7, 20] [8]*desire*

24 [v]John 19:35; 3 John 12

25 [w]John 20:30 [x]Amos 7:10

■ **21:14 the third time.** Not the third appearance absolutely, but the third to a group of the apostles (cf. 20:19–23, 24–28).

■ **21:15 Simon, son of Jonah.** Jesus used this name at the beginning of His solemn declaration in response to Peter's confession (Matt. 16:17).

do you love Me more than these. It is possible to construe this question in several ways. "Do you love Me more than these others love Me?"; "Do you love Me more than you love these others?"; "Do you love Me more than you love these nets and fish?" (cf. v. 3 note). The Greek verb translated "love" in Jesus' question changes when the question is raised the third time (v. 17 and text notes), and Peter's answer has this second verb each time. Some have thought that there is a difference intended in the use of the two verbs. This is possible but not necessary, for two reasons. First, John interchanges these verbs elsewhere in His Gospel. Second, other differences of wording in this conversation do not seem to indicate a difference of purpose. For example, "Feed My lambs," "Tend My sheep," and "Feed My sheep" are equivalent.

Feed My lambs. "My lambs" and "My sheep" correspond to "My church" (10:14, 26, 27; Matt. 18:18). When Peter writes to his fellow elders (1 Pet. 5:1, 2), he urges them, "Shepherd the flock of God which is among you," apparently having taken to heart the words of Jesus.

■ **21:17 the third time.** Peter was grieved not because of the change of wording in this last question, but because Jesus repeated the question itself three times. Perhaps Peter was reminded of the three times he had denied Christ (13:38; 18:27). Whether Jesus intended such a reminder or not, He was giving Peter an opportunity to confess his love and to reaffirm his calling to follow Christ. With this knowledge Peter calls Jesus the "Chief Shepherd" (1 Pet. 5:4).

■ **21:19 by what death.** An ancient tradition says that Peter was martyred by being crucified upside down.

Follow Me. This is like the original call given by Jesus to His apostles (Matt. 4:19; Luke 5:27; cf. John 21:22). The whole incident restores Peter to his place as an apostle, which his denial threatened to take from him.

■ **21:20 the disciple whom Jesus loved.** This further description, combined with 13:23–25, leaves little doubt that this was John, son of Zebedee.

■ **21:24 the disciple who testifies.** See v. 20; 13:23 and notes.

we know. This is the certification of a contemporary who was in a position to know John personally. Therefore, the whole Gospel, including ch. 21, was accepted immediately by the early church.

■ **21:25 the world itself could not contain.** The writer uses exaggeration to make the point that the Gospel writers had to be selective of the facts and details included in their accounts.

THE ACTS

of the Apostles

Author According to tradition the Book of Acts is by Luke the physician, a companion of Paul on his second and third missionary journeys and on the voyage to Rome. Evidence from the early church is that Luke was the author. Irenaeus (c. A.D. 130–200), Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 153–217), the anonymous Muratorian Canon (c. A.D. 170), and Eusebius (c. A.D. 325) all credit Luke as the author.

Evidence for Luke's authorship is found in the well-known "we" passages of the latter half of the book (16:10–17; 20:5–15; 21:1–18; 27:1—28:16). These passages show that the narrator of Acts accompanied Paul from Troas in Asia Minor to Philippi on the continent of Europe, returning with him to Troas. Later he and Paul traveled from Palestine to Rome.

The author was probably an educated Gentile, as attested by the style and the high level of Greek used in Luke and Acts. His Greek is sometimes fully classical (Luke 1:1–4). The author's methodical approach to writing and his interest in research reveal an educated, highly trained man.

It appears from Col. 4:14 that Paul was with "Luke the beloved physician." In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, scholars drew attention to the medical terminology found in Luke and Acts and to the author's interest in diseases (Luke 4:38; 8:43–44; Acts 3:7; 12:23; 13:11; 20:7–11; 28:3, 8). More recently it has been argued that medical terms were in common use among ancient writers, so that the author need not have been a physician. Still, an interest in medical matters is apparent in Luke and Acts, and it is reasonable to think that Luke the physician was the author.

Date and Occasion Three dates suggested for Acts are: before A.D. 70; 80 to 85; and 105 to 130. The later dates are based in part on the theory that the author of Acts was probably not Luke, and obtained his information about the revolutionaries, Theudas and Judas (5:36, 37) from the writings of the Jewish historian Josephus (*Antiquities* 18.4–10 and 20.97–98), who wrote during the latter half of the first century. But the Theudas mentioned in Acts may have been one of many revolutionaries who arose about the time Herod the Great died, and not the later Theudas mentioned by Josephus. Luke's knowledge of Judas was not necessarily derived from Josephus, any more than Josephus's knowledge was derived from Luke. Some argue that Luke made use of Josephus's account of the death of Herod Agrippa I in A.D. 44 (12:19–22), since both use similar words in describing the event. The two accounts, however, differ considerably.

The view that Luke and Acts were written before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 is supported by the following considerations. First, ch. 28 ends with Paul under house arrest. While waiting to appear before Caesar, he is free to preach to all who come to him. This had to occur before A.D. 64, when a great fire swept through Rome and the Emperor Nero said that Christians were to blame. Second, Acts does not mention Paul's death, which appeared to be imminent in 2 Tim. 4 and which occurred about A.D. 68. Third, near the end of Acts, Luke portrays the Roman government as benevolent toward Christianity, an attitude that changed after A.D. 64. Fourth, certain vocabulary points to an early date. This vocabulary includes "disciple"; "the first day of the week" (later to become "the Lord's Day," Rev. 1:10); a reference to "the people of Israel" in 4:27 (a term later to include both Jews and Gentiles; Titus 2:14); the early title "Son of Man" (7:56); as well as language about geographical and political details.

Luke 1:3 and Acts 1:1 are both addressed to Theophilus. He may have been Luke's patron, or benefactor. Certainly he was a Gentile who received Christian instruction (Luke 1:4). As Luke's patron, Theophilus would have provided a living for Luke to enable him to do research and write his two books. By way of comparison, the historian Josephus had the Roman generals Vespasian and Titus as patrons, as well as another benefactor, a certain Epaphroditus, to whom he dedicated his book *Against Apion.*

Luke collected material from his own experience and from Semitic sources inside and outside Palestine. He mentions the names of several people who may have helped him (16:11; 20:4). He could have talked to Mary, Jesus' mother, in addition to others who were "eyewitnesses and ministers of the word" (Luke 1:2).

Characteristics and Themes Acts is a careful history of the development of the early church. Luke's descriptions of geographical and provincial details, of governmental officials and their actions, of imperial procedure, of a sea voyage to Italy, replete with accurate nautical terms—all these come from a careful researcher who was himself an eyewitness of many of the events he records.

Luke had several purposes. In 1:1, 2 he says that in the Gospel he has explained the life of Jesus until the Ascension. He summarizes the general theme of Acts as follows: the Lord is going to expand his work "in

Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Acts is called the "Acts of the Apostles," yet Luke traces only the ministries of Peter (chs. 1—12) and Paul (chs. 13—28). Some have detected an interest in defending Christianity or showing that Christianity was not a threat to Rome. Acts is a map of the progress of the church into the ancient world, showing how the present age began. □

Outline of Acts

I. Peter and the Gospel to the Jews in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria (1:1—12:24)
  A. Instructions from Jesus and the Wait for the Spirit (ch. 1)
  B. Founding of the Church in Jerusalem (chs. 2—7)
    1. The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit and Peter's First Sermon (2:1–41)
    2. The Fellowship of Believers (2:42–47)
    3. The Beggar Healed and Peter's Second Sermon (ch. 3)
    4. Persecution from the Sanhedrin (4:1–31)
    5. The Church: Community and Discipline (4:32—5:11)
    6. Further Persecution from the Sanhedrin (5:12–42)
    7. Choosing of the Seven (6:1–7)
    8. Persecution and Death of Stephen (6:8—7:60)
  C. Scattered by Persecution, the Gospel Spreads to Judea, Samaria, and Beyond (8:1—12:24)
    1. Philip Preaches in Samaria and to the Ethiopian Eunuch (ch. 8)
    2. The Conversion of Saul (9:1–31)
    3. Peter's Ministry in Lydda and Joppa (9:32–43)
    4. Peter's Ministry in Caesarea: the Holy Spirit Poured Out on the Gentiles (10:1—11:18)
    5. The Church in Syrian Antioch (11:19–30)
    6. Herod Agrippa I's Persecution of the Church and Death (12:1–24)
II. Paul and the Gospel to the Gentiles (12:25—28:31)
  A. Paul Extends the Gospel into Asia Minor and Europe (12:25—21:16)
    1. Paul's First Missionary Journey—Cyprus and Asia Minor (12:25—14:28)
    2. The Jerusalem Council (15:1–35)
    3. Paul's Second Missionary Journey—Return to Asia Minor and on to Europe (15:36—18:22)
    4. Paul's Third Missionary Journey—Strengthening the Churches of Asia Minor, Macedonia and Greece (18:23—21:16)
  B. Paul Takes the Gospel to Rome (21:17—28:31)
    1. Paul's Arrest, Trial, and Imprisonment in Palestine (21:17—26:32)
    2. The Voyage to Rome (27:1—28:16)
    3. Paul's Two Years of Ministry in Rome (28:17–31)

CHAPTER 1

1 [a]Luke 1:3

2 [b]Mark 16:19 [c]Matt. 28:19 [1]He ascended into heaven.

3 [d]Mark 16:12, 14 [2]*unmistakable*

4 [e]Luke 24:49 [f][John 14:16, 17, 26; 15:26]

5 [g]Matt. 3:11 [h][Joel 2:28]

7 [i]1 Thess. 5:1 [j]Matt. 24:36

8 [k][Acts 2:1, 4] [l]Luke 24:49 [m]Luke 24:48 [n]Acts 8:1, 5, 14 [o]Col. 1:23 [3]NU *My witnesses*

9 [p]Luke 24:50, 51 [q]Acts 1:2

10 [r]John 20:12

11 [s]Dan. 7:13

Prologue

THE former account I made, O [a]Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, 2 [b]until the day in which [1]He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit [c]had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, 3 [d]to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many [2]infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

The Holy Spirit Promised

4 [e]And being assembled together with *them,* He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," *He said,* "you have [f]heard from Me; 5 [g]for John truly baptized with water, [h]but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." 6 Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" 7 And He said to them, [i]"It is not for you to [j]know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. 8 [k]But you shall receive power [l]when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and [m]you shall be [3]witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and [n]Samaria, and to the [o]end of the earth."

Jesus Ascends to Heaven

9 [p]Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, [q]He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. 10 And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them [r]in white apparel, 11 who also said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This *same* Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, [s]will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."

■ **1:1 The former account.** The Gospel of Luke as shown by the reference to Theophilus (Luke 1:3).

all that Jesus began both to do and teach. A fitting summary of what Luke records in the Gospel.

■ **1:2 taken up.** Luke 24:50–52 locates the Ascension near Bethany, on the east side of the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem.

through the Holy Spirit . . . commandments. After the Resurrection Jesus communicated to His apostles the reality of His resurrection (John 20; 21), the truth of His calling as Messiah (Luke 24:44–49), the blessing of the Holy Spirit (John 20:22, 23), and the reality of His physical resurrection body (Luke 24:37–43).

He had chosen. A reference to Jesus' original choice of His apostles (Luke 6:12–16), one of whom (Judas) Jesus knew would become a traitor.

■ **1:3 presented Himself . . . many infallible proofs.** Christ's resurrection appearances (Matt. 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20; 21; 1 Cor. 15:5–7) were important as an unshakable confirmation of Christ's supernatural person and work. It was important that Jesus' resurrection should be seen by the disciples (v. 22).

forty days. The time from the Resurrection to the Ascension. After Jesus ascended to heaven, the disciples stayed ten days in Jerusalem waiting for the promised outpouring of the Holy Spirit that occurred on Pentecost, the fiftieth day after Passover.

■ **1:4 being assembled together with them.** Jesus often communed with His friends and disciples over a meal: at the feeding of the five thousand (Luke 9:16), with tax collectors and sinners (Mark 2:15, 16; Luke 5:29), at the Pharisee's house (Luke 7:37), at the Last Supper (Matt. 26:21, 26), and after the Resurrection (Luke 24:42; John 21:9–15).

wait for the Promise of the Father. The Holy Spirit was the gift of the Father and the gift of Jesus the Son (John 14:1, 26; 15:26).

■ **1:5 John truly baptized with water.** John the Baptist baptized large crowds of people (Matt. 3:5, 6, 13–15; Mark 1:5, 9; Luke 3:7–16, 21). John's water baptism of repentance (Mark 1:4) pointed forward to the messianic baptism with the Holy Spirit and fire (Luke 3:16). See "The Baptism of Jesus" at Mark 1:9.

not many days from now. A few days would pass before Pentecost.

■ **1:6 at this time restore the kingdom to Israel.** From what Jesus said in Matt. 19:28, the disciples thought that He might overthrow the Romans and restore the physical kingdom to Israel.

■ **1:7 not for you to know times or seasons.** The specific years or dates (which some in all ages try to predict) of the Second Coming of Christ (cf. 1 Thess. 5:2).

■ **1:8 Holy Spirit has come upon you.** Jesus means that the Holy Spirit will show His control of their lives with visible manifestations: the blowing of a violent wind, the appearance of tongues of fire, and speaking in foreign languages (ch. 2).

witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. The Book of Acts follows this strategy. The Jerusalem witness (ch. 2) gives in miniature form God's worldwide ministry: the "Jews . . . from every nation" (2:5) who heard and believed carried the message far and wide. In the rest of Acts the gospel spreads to Jerusalem (3:1—8:1), to Judea and Samaria, up to Antioch of Syria (8:1—12:25), and to the ends of the earth (13:1—28:31).

■ **1:9 He was taken up.** See "The Ascension of Jesus" at Luke 24:51.

■ **1:10 two men . . . in white apparel.** Persons described as dressed in white are commonly supernatural or glorified beings: Jesus Christ (Matt. 17:2; Mark 9:3; Rev. 1:14), angels (Matt. 28:3; Mark 16:5; Luke 24:4; John 20:12), and glorified saints (Luke 9:30, 31; Rev. 3:4, 5, 18; 4:4; 7:14).

■ **1:11 Men of Galilee.** The eleven were from Galilee; Judas Iscariot was from Kerioth in Judah.

in like manner. Jesus will return in His resurrection body, coming with the clouds of heaven (Matt. 24:30; 26:64; Mark 14:62; 1 Thess. 4:16, 17; Rev. 1:7). See "The Return of Christ" at 1 Thess. 4:16.

The Upper Room Prayer Meeting

12 [r]Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey. 13 And when they had entered, they went up [u]into the upper room where they were staying: [v]Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James *the son* of Alphaeus and [w]Simon the Zealot; and [x]Judas *the son* of James. 14 [y]These all continued with one [4]accord in prayer [5]and supplication, with [z]the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with [a]His brothers.

Matthias Chosen

15 And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the [6]disciples (altogether the number [b]of names was about a hundred and twenty), and said, 16 "Men *and* brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, [c]which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, [d]who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus; 17 for [e]he was numbered with us and obtained a part in [f]this ministry."

18 [g](Now this man purchased a field with [h]the [7]wages of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his [8]entrails gushed out. 19 And it became known to all those dwelling in Jerusalem; so that field is called in their own language, Akel Dama, that is, Field of Blood.)

20 "For it is written in the Book of Psalms:

[i] *'Let his dwelling place be [9]desolate,*
And let no one live in it';

and,

[j] *'Let another take his [t]office.'*

21 "Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, 22 beginning from the baptism of John to that day when [k]He was taken up from us, one of these must [l]become a witness with us of His resurrection."

23 And they proposed two: Joseph called [m]Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.

12 [r]Luke 24:52

13 [u]Mark 14:15; Luke 22:12; Acts 9:37, 39; 20:8 [v]Matt. 10:2–4 [w]Luke 6:15 [x]Jude 1

14 [y]Acts 2:1, 46 [z]Luke 23:49, 55 [a]Matt. 13:55 [4]*purpose* or *mind* [5]NU omits *and supplication*

15 [b]Luke 22:32; Rev. 3:4 [6]NU *brethren*

16 [c]Ps. 41:9 [d]Matt. 26:47; Mark 14:43; Luke 22:47; John 18:3

17 [e]Matt. 10:4 [f]Acts 1:25

18 [g]Matt. 27:3–10 [h]Matt. 18:7; 26:14, 15, 24; Mark 14:21; Luke 22:22; John 17:12 [7]*reward of unrighteousness* [8]*intestines*

20 [i]Ps. 69:25 [j]Ps. 109:8 [9]*deserted* [t]Gr. *episkopen,* position of overseer

22 [k]Acts 1:9 [l]Acts 1:8; 2:32

23 [m]Acts 15:22

■ **1:12 the mount called Olivet.** A hill beyond the Kidron Valley just east of the walled city of Jerusalem. The disciples had been with Jesus on the Mount near Bethany (Luke 24:50).

a Sabbath day's journey. From the city, a distance calculated by the rabbis to be about 1,100 meters or three-fourths of a mile.

■ **1:13 up into the upper room where they were staying.** Probably where the disciples had been hiding for fear of the Jews. This may have been the same room in which they had celebrated the Passover and Jesus had instituted the Lord's Supper (Mark 14:15), or a room in the house of Mary, the aunt of Barnabas (Col. 4:10), where the Christians later held meetings (12:12). It was probably located close to the temple courts where the visiting Jewish crowds were assembled (2:5–12).

Bartholomew. Also known as Nathanael (John 1:45; 21:2).

James the son of Alphaeus. Also known as James the younger (Mark 15:40).

Zealot. Possibly referring to Simon's former membership in the Zealot revolutionary group.

Judas the son of James. Also known as Thaddaeus (Matt. 10:3; Mark 3:18).

■ **1:14 continued . . . in prayer.** Jesus established a pattern of prayer in the lives of His disciples. For examples of Jesus praying, see Luke 3:21; 5:16; 6:12; 9:18, 28, 29; 11:1; 22:32, 41; 23:34, 46.

with the women. Certain women who had followed Jesus, supported His work, and cared for Him in His death (Matt. 27:55, 56; 28:1; Mark 15:40, 41; Luke 8:2, 3; 23:49; 24:1; 24:22).

Mary the mother of Jesus. This is the last reference in the New Testament to Jesus' mother.

His brothers. Jesus' half brothers, the sons of Mary and Joseph (Matt. 13:55; Luke 14:26; John 7:3, 10).

■ **1:15 in those days.** The ten days between the Ascension and Pentecost (2:1).

■ **1:16 Men and brethren.** Males are particularly addressed here because Peter is talking about replacing Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve whom Jesus had originally chosen as apostles (Matt. 10:2–4).

this Scripture had to be fulfilled. Ps. 69:25 and 109:8, quoted in v. 20, are applied by Peter to Judas Iscariot, who as an enemy of God had been deposed from his apostleship. Now "his office" (Ps. 109:8) had to be filled again.

the Holy Spirit spoke . . . by the mouth of David. The Holy Spirit inspired David to compose these words using his poetic skills.

■ **1:17 obtained a part in this ministry.** In His plan God allowed Judas, the enemy of the Savior, to serve for a time in the ministry of the disciples.

■ **1:18 this man purchased a field.** Judas indirectly bought the field when he returned the money to the chief priests and elders who in turn purchased a burial place for foreigners called "Field of Blood."

with the wages. The thirty silver coins (Matt. 26:15), probably worth about 120 denarii, or 120 days' labor (Matt. 20:2).

falling headlong. Matthew writes that Judas "hanged himself" (Matt. 27:5). Apparently during or soon after the hanging his body fell to the ground and was broken or decomposed.

■ **1:21 among us.** This includes the whole time of Jesus' public ministry from His baptism to His ascension.

■ **1:23 proposed two.** Evidently Joseph and Matthias were chosen from a larger number of witnesses (according to v. 15, about 120 persons were present). Neither is mentioned elsewhere in Scripture.

24 [n]1 Sam. 16:7
25 [o]Acts 1:17

CHAPTER 2

1 [a]Lev. 23:15 [b]Acts 1:14 [f]NU *together*
2 [c]Acts 4:31
3 [2]Or *tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each*
4 [d]Acts 1:5 [e]Mark 16:17

24 And they prayed and said, "You, O Lord, [n]who know the hearts of all, show which of these
two You have chosen 25 [o]to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by trans-
gression fell, that he might go to his own place." 26 And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on
Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

Coming of the Holy Spirit

2 When [a]the Day of Pentecost had fully come, [b]they were all [f]with one accord in one place.
2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and [c]it filled
the whole house where they were sitting. 3 Then there appeared to them [2]divided tongues, as of
fire, and *one* sat upon each of them. 4 And [d]they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began
[e]to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

The Apostles

Although the Gospels call the same people "disciples" and "apostles" (Matt. 10:1, 2; Luke 6:13), the terms are not synonyms. "Disciple" means "pupil, learner"; "apostle" means "emissary, representative," one sent with the authority of the sender. The twelve apostles (Rev. 21:14), as distinct from the apostles ("messengers") of the churches (2 Cor. 8:23 and text note), and from the rest of the disciples, were chosen and sent by Jesus (Mark 3:14) just as Jesus Himself, "the Apostle . . . of our confession" (Heb. 3:1), was foreordained and sent by the Father (1 Pet. 1:20). As rejecting Jesus is rejecting the Father, so rejecting the apostles is rejecting Jesus (Luke 10:16).

Paul, the "apostle to the Gentiles" (Rom. 11:13; Gal. 2:8), announces himself as an apostle in the opening words of most of his letters. Because he had seen Christ on the Damascus road and been commissioned by Him (Acts 26:16–18), he was as truly a witness to Jesus' resurrection (which an apostle had to be, Acts 1:21, 22; 10:41, 42) as were the others. James, Peter, and John accepted Paul into apostolic partnership (Gal. 2:9), and God confirmed his status by the signs of an apostle (miracles and signs, 2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:3, 4), and by the fruitfulness of his ministry (1 Cor. 9:2).

The apostles were agents of God's revelation of the truths that would become the Christian rule of faith and life. As such, and through Christ's appointment of them as His authorized representatives (2 Cor. 10:8; 13:10), the apostles exercised a unique authority in the church. There are no apostles today, though some Christians fulfill ministries that are in particular ways apostolic in style. No new canonical revelation is being given; apostolic teaching authority resides in the canonical Scriptures. The absence of new revelation does not put the contemporary church at a disadvantage compared with the church of apostolic days, for the Holy Spirit interprets and applies the Scriptures to God's people continually. □

■ **1:24 You have chosen.** Peter and the disciples recognized that their human responsibility and choice of a man to succeed Judas occurred within the bounds of God's sovereign will.

■ **1:26 cast their lots.** Lots are mentioned in the Old Testament as a means of ascertaining God's will (Ex. 28:30 note).

apostles. See theological note "The Apostles."

■ **2:1 Day of Pentecost.** Lit. the "Fiftieth Day" after the Sabbath of the Passover week (Lev. 23:4–7, 15–16). Pentecost was celebrated on the first day of the week and was one of the three great annual feasts of Israel, preceded by Passover (Lev. 23:4–8; Num. 28:16–25) and followed four months later by the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev. 23:33–43; Num. 29:12–38; cf. John 7:1–44). Pentecost is also called the "Feast of Weeks," because it was celebrated seven weeks after Passover (Deut. 16:10); the "Feast of Harvest," because the first fruits of the harvest were gathered then (Ex. 23:16); and the "day of the firstfruits" (Num. 28:26).

they were all with one accord. All of the apostles (1:16) were there, and probably many of the 120 mentioned earlier (1:15).

in one place. An idiom meaning "together."

■ **2:2 a sound . . . of a rushing mighty wind.** Three signs (wind, fire, and inspired speech) of God's presence were witnessed (Ex. 3:2; 13:21; 24:17; 40:38; 1 Kin. 19:11–13). Wind is a symbol of the Holy Spirit's presence (Ezek. 37:9, 13; John 3:8), while fire is a symbol of the His cleansing and judging power (Matt. 3:11, 12). The tongues were various languages spoken in all parts of the eastern Mediterranean region, from Rome to Persia.

■ **2:4 all.** All of the 120 (1:15). See Joel 2:28 which speaks of God's Spirit poured out "on all flesh."

filled with the Holy Spirit. They were under the special guidance and influence of the Spirit, particularly evidenced by their speaking in known languages ("other tongues") which they had not previously learned (see 10:46; 19:6). Paul discusses the spiritual gift of tongues in 1 Cor. 12—14. The coming of the Spirit is the fulfillment of Jesus' promise reported in 1:5, 8 and Luke 24:49, but this does not mean that the Holy Spirit was not present and working with God's people in the Old Testament ("Holy Spirit" occurs in Ps. 51:11; Is. 63:10, 11; "Spirit of the Lord" in Judg. 3:10; 1 Sam. 10:6; Is. 11:2). See "The Holy Spirit" at John 14:26.

the Spirit gave them utterance. In all of the Christian life nothing is accomplished apart from God (Eph. 2:10; Phil. 2:12, 13).

The Crowd's Response

5 And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, *f*devout men, from every nation under heaven.
6 And when this sound occurred, the *g*multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. 7 Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak *h*Galileans? 8 And how *is it that* we hear, each in our own *3*language in which we were born? 9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and *i*Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretans and *4*Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God." 12 So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "Whatever could this mean?"

13 Others mocking said, "They are full of new wine."

Peter's Sermon

14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. 15 For these are not drunk, as you suppose, *j*since it is *only* *5*the third hour of the day. 16 But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

17 *'And*[k] *it shall come to pass in the last days, says God,*
[l]That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh;
Your sons and [m]*your daughters shall prophesy,*

5 *f*Luke 2:25; Acts 8:2
6 *g*Acts 4:32
7 *h*Matt. 26:73; Acts 1:11
8 *3dialect*
9 *i*1 Pet. 1:1
11 *4Arabians*
15 *j*1 Thess. 5:7
*5*9 A.M.
17 *k*Is. 44:3; Ezek. 11:19; Joel 2:28–32; [Zech. 12:10; John 7:38]
*l*Acts 10:45
*m*Acts 21:9

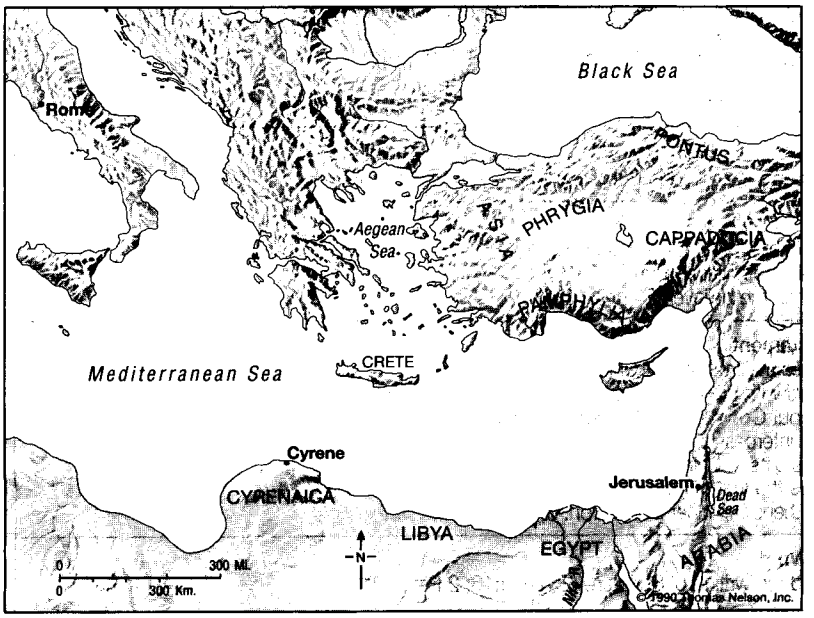
■ **2:5 Jews, devout men.** See 8:2; 22:12; Luke 2:25. Probably most of these were visiting Jerusalem for Pentecost.

■ **2:6, 7** The crowd was amazed that rural Galileans with their peculiar accents could have learned all these foreign languages.

■ **2:8–11** The list of people from fifteen nations starts with the east ("Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia," where Jews had been taken captive to Assyria and Babylon). The list proceeds west to Judea, and then north to Asia Minor (Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia), from there to North Africa (Egypt, parts of Libya near Cyrene), then to Rome. Finally the list includes two widely separated places, Crete and Arabia.

■ **2:15 only the third hour.** Counting 6:00 A.M. as the first hour makes this 9:00 A.M. It was customary to fast on feast days until at least the fourth hour. Thus the alleged drunkenness was most unlikely.

■ **2:17–21** The quotation is from the Greek Old Testament text of Joel 2:28–32 (3:1–5). Peter's use of the words "in the latter days" (cf. Is. 2:2; Hos. 3:5; Mic. 4:1; 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:1; 1 Pet. 1:20; 1 John 2:18) makes explicit that Joel is referring to the last times promised by God. Peter interprets Joel's words as referring to the new covenant in contrast to the former days of the old covenant (Heb. 8:7; 9:1).



The Nations of Pentecost. In the first Christian century, Jewish communities were located primarily in the eastern part of the Roman Empire, where Greek was the common language, but also existed as far west as Italy and as far east as Babylonia. In addition to people from the nations shown here, those present on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:9–11) included visitors from Mesopotamia and even farther east, from Parthia, Media, and Elam (present-day Iran).

Your young men shall see visions,
Your old men shall dream dreams.
18 *And on My menservants and on My maidservants*
I will pour out My Spirit in those days;
[n] And they shall prophesy.
19 *[o] I will show wonders in heaven above*
And signs in the earth beneath:
Blood and fire and vapor of smoke.
20 *[p] The sun shall be turned into darkness,*
And the moon into blood,
Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD.
21 *And it shall come to pass*
That [q]whoever calls on the name of the LORD
Shall be saved.'

22 "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you [r]by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know— 23 Him, [s]being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, [t]you

18 [n]Acts 21:4, 9; 1 Cor. 12:10
19 [o]Joel 2:30
20 [p]Is. 13:10; Ezek. 32:7; Matt. 24:29; Mark 13:24, 25; Luke 21:25; Rev. 6:12
21 [q]Rom. 10:13
22 [r]Is. 50:5; John 3:2; 5:6; Acts 10:38
23 [s]Matt. 26:4; Luke 22:22; Acts 3:18; 4:28; [1 Pet. 1:20] [t]Acts 5:30

■ **2:22 Jesus of Nazareth.** This title is used elsewhere by Luke (6:14; 10:38; 22:8; 26:9; Luke 18:37; 24:19). In the sermon Peter emphasizes these important facts about Jesus: His death (v. 23), His bodily resurrection (vv. 24–32), His exaltation (v. 33), His coronation (vv. 34, 36), and the conquest at His Second Coming (v. 35).

attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs. Although coming from Nazareth was a stumbling block (cf. John 1:46), God amply demonstrated that Jesus was the Messiah through the attestation of miracles.

■ **2:23 by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God.** Although wicked men, both Jews and Gentiles (4:27, 28), had of their own will put Jesus to death, their actions were within the sovereign determination of God (cf. 17:26; 2 Chr. 25:16; Jer. 21:10; Dan. 11:36). God ordained the death of His Son, but the immediate perpetrators bear the guilt for crucifying Jesus (3:17, 18; 4:27, 28; 13:27). God ordains the means as well as the ends of human events without violating human freedom and responsibility. The Jews could not pass their guilt to the Romans; they had asked the Romans to crucify Jesus. Peter teaches that the Jews were accountable (3:15; 4:10; 5:30; 10:39).

The Work of the Holy Spirit (2:4)

In the beginning
- Active and present at creation, hovering over the unordered conditions (Gen. 1:2)

In the Old Testament
- The origin of supernatural abilities (Gen. 41:38)
- The giver of artistic skill (Ex. 31:2–5)
- The source of power and strength (Judg. 3:9, 10)
- The inspiration of prophecy (1 Sam. 19:20, 23)
- The equipper of God's messenger (Mic. 3:8)

In Old Testament prophecy
- The cleansing of the heart for holy living (Ezek. 36:25–29)

In salvation
- Regenerates the believer (Titus 3:5)
- Indwells the believer (Rom. 8:9–11)
- Sanctifies the believer (2 Thess. 2:13)

In the New Testament
- Declares the truth about Christ (John 16:13, 14)
- Endows with power for gospel proclamation (Acts 1:8)
- Pours out God's love in the heart (Rom. 5:5)
- Makes intercession (Rom. 8:26)
- Imparts gifts for ministry (1 Cor. 12:4–11)
- Enables the fruit of holy living (Gal. 5:22, 23)
- Strengthens the inner being (Eph. 3:16)

In the written Word
- Inspired the writing of Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21)

[6]have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; 24 [u]whom God raised up, having [7]loosed the [8]pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it. 25 For David says concerning Him:

[v]'*I foresaw the* LORD *always before my face,*
For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken.
26 *Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad;*
Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope.
27 *For You will not leave my soul in Hades,*
Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see [w]*corruption.*
28 *You have made known to me the ways of life;*
You will make me full of joy in Your presence.'

29 "Men *and* brethren, let *me* speak freely to you [x]of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. 30 Therefore, being a prophet, [y]and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, [9]according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, 31 he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, [z]that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. 32 [a]This Jesus God has raised up, [b]of which we are all witnesses. 33 Therefore [c]being exalted [d]to [d]the right hand of God, and [e]having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He [f]poured out this which you now see and hear.

34 "For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself:

[g]'*The* LORD *said to my Lord,*
"Sit at My right hand,
35 *Till I make Your enemies Your footstool."*'

36 "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."

37 Now when they heard *this,* [h]they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?"

38 Then Peter said to them, [i]"Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the [2]remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and [j]to your children, and [k]to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

A Vital Church Grows

40 And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this [3]perverse generation." 41 Then those who [4]gladly received his word were baptized; and that day

23 [6]NU omits *have taken*

24 [u][Rom. 8:11] [7]*destroyed or abolished* [8]Lit. *birth pangs*

25 [v]Ps. 16:8–11

27 [w]Acts 13:30–37

29 [x]Acts 13:36

30 [y]Ps. 132:11 [9]NU *He would seat one on his throne,*

31 [z]Ps. 16:10

32 [a]Acts 2:24 [b]Acts 1:8; 3:15

33 [c][Acts 5:31] [d][Heb. 10:12] [e][John 14:26] [f]Acts 2:1–11, 17; 10:45 [f]Possibly *by*

34 [g]Ps. 68:18; 110:1

37 [h]Luke 3:10, 12, 14

38 [i]Luke 24:47 [2]*forgiveness*

39 [j]Joel 2:28, 32 [k]Eph. 2:13

40 [3]*crooked*

41 [4]NU omits *gladly*

have crucified. Luke again emphasizes how Jesus died (Luke 24:39). Archaeologists have discovered in Palestine the pierced heel bones of a first-century A.D. victim of crucifixion.

■ **2:25 David says.** In Ps. 16 David is primarily speaking about his own human experience and suffering, but in the verses quoted here he is ultimately talking about Jesus (v. 25), God's Holy One whose body did not see decay (v. 27).

■ **2:33 exalted to the right hand of God.** God's plan went beyond the resurrection of His Son, who must be exalted to the position He occupied with the Father from eternity (John 17:5).

and having received from the Father . . . Holy Spirit . . . poured out. The doctrine of the Trinity is implied: Peter showed how the Father (vv. 32, 33) worked in the life, death, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus, His Son, and the Holy Spirit produced the miracle of causing His servants to speak in tongues.

■ **2:36** In this climactic statement Peter not only stresses that Jesus is God's Messiah of the Old Testament (3:18, 20; 4:26; 5:42; Is. 11:1; Luke 4:18–21), but that He is the exalted Lord (Rom. 10:9; Phil. 2:9–11), and the conquering King (1 Cor. 15:24, 25; Rev. 19:16).

■ **2:38 Repent, and . . . be baptized.** Repentance (turning to God in sorrow for sin) and baptism were important parts of the message of John the Baptist (Matt. 3:1; Mark 1:4) and of Jesus (Matt. 4:17; 11:20; Luke 13:3, 5), and were central in the church's preaching and teaching (Matt. 28:18, 19). See "Baptism" at Rom. 6:3.

in the name of Jesus Christ. A summary of Matt. 28:18, 19 (baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), with only Jesus mentioned here, since Peter's sermon had to do with Jesus and His ministry.

for the remission of sins. Baptism is a sign and seal of spiritual cleansing the Spirit effects through the forgiveness of sins (Titus 3:5).

the gift of the Holy Spirit. The gift of the indwelling Person of the Holy Spirit, as well as the gift of forgiveness (Eph. 1:7), and of empowering for ministry. It is significant that Peter does not speak here of receiving the gift of tongues. The gifts of forgiveness and the indwelling Holy Spirit are essential for producing the fruit of the Spirit in the lives of believers (Gal. 5:22, 23) and for exercising the gifts the Spirit chooses to give at different times to different believers (1 Cor. 12:4–11).

■ **2:39** Peter proclaims that salvation through God's Messiah is promised to the Jews, to their children, and to all those far off (i.e., the Gentiles, Eph. 2:11–13). Here again is the message of Acts—the gospel is for Jews and Gentiles. See "Infant Baptism" at Gen. 17:11.

as many as the Lord our God will call. Salvation is based on God's choice and calling (John 6:37; Eph. 1:4, 5).

about three thousand souls were added *to them.* 42 [l]And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' [5]doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. 43 Then fear came upon every soul, and [m]many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. 44 Now all who believed were together, and [n]had all things in common, 45 and [6]sold their possessions and goods, and [o]divided[7] them among all, as anyone had need.

46 [p]So continuing daily with one accord [q]in the temple, and [r]breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And [s]the Lord added [8]to the church daily those who were being saved.

A Lame Man Healed

3 Now Peter and John went up together [a]to the temple at the hour of prayer, [b]the ninth *hour.* 2 And [c]a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, [d]to [l]ask alms from those who entered the temple; 3 who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked for alms. 4 And fixing his eyes on him, with John, Peter said, "Look at us." 5 So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. 6 Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: [e]In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." 7 And he took him by the right hand and lifted *him* up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. 8 So he, [f]leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and praising God. 9 [g]And all the people saw him walking and praising God. 10 Then they knew that it was he who [h]sat begging alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

Preaching in Solomon's Portico

11 Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch [i]which is called Solomon's, greatly amazed. 12 So when Peter saw *it,* he responded to the people: "Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? 13 [j]The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, [k]glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you [l]delivered up and [m]denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *Him* go. 14 But you denied [n]the Holy One [o]and the Just, and [p]asked for a murderer to be granted to you, 15 and killed the [2]Prince of life, [q]whom God raised from the dead, [r]of which we are witnesses. 16 [s]And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which *comes* through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

17 "Yet now, brethren, I know that [t]you did *it* in ignorance, as *did* also your rulers. 18 But [u]those things which God foretold [v]by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. 19 [w]Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so

42 [l]Acts 1:14 [5]*teaching*

43 [m]Acts 2:22

44 [n]Acts 4:32, 34, 37; 5:2

45 [o]Is. 58:7 [6]*would sell* [7]*distributed*

46 [p]Acts 1:14 [q]Luke 24:53 [r]Acts 2:42; 20:7

47 [s]Acts 5:14 [8]NU omits *to the church*

CHAPTER 3

1 [a]Acts 2:46 [b]Ps. 55:17

2 [c]Acts 14:8 [d]John 9:8 [l]Beg

6 [e]Acts 4:10

8 [f]Is. 35:6

9 [g]Acts 4:16, 21

10 [h]John 9:8

11 [i]John 10:23

13 [j]John 5:30 [k]John 7:39; 12:23; 13:31 [l]Matt. 27:2 [m]Matt. 27:20

14 [n]Mark 1:24 [o]Acts 7:52 [p]John 18:40

15 [q]Acts 2:24 [r]Acts 2:32 [2]Or *Originator*

16 [s]Matt. 9:22

17 [t]Luke 23:34

18 [u]Acts 26:22 [v]1 Pet. 1:10

19 [w][Acts 2:38; 26:20]

■ **2:42 the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.** This is a summary of the essential elements needed in Christian discipleship. They are elements the apostles had learned from their experience with Jesus: His teaching about His person and work (Matt. 16:18, 19; Luke 24:46) and their Christian responsibility as His followers (Matt. 5—7), the fellowship of Christ with His disciples (John 13), the Lord's Supper—the breaking of bread (Matt. 26:17–30), and His prayer life for and with the disciples (Matt. 6:5–13; Luke 11:1–13; John 17).

■ **2:44 all who believed were together.** This demonstrates the unity of the Spirit Paul later advocates (Eph. 4:3).

■ **2:45 sold their possessions.** Unified in the Spirit, the believers were attuned to the physical needs of others and voluntarily (4:34; 5:4) gave to meet those needs (4:32, "they had all things in common").

■ **2:46 breaking bread from house to house.** This refers to the common daily meals shared in the homes.

■ **2:47 the Lord added.** The church belongs to the Lord, and He is the one who sovereignly builds His church (Matt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 3:9).

■ **3:1 the temple.** The temple courts, and particularly the part near the gate called Beautiful (v. 2). This may have been the "Nicanor Gate" made of Corinthian bronze. Its exact location is uncertain.

■ **3:3 into the temple.** As Jews, Peter and John could walk through the Court of Women into the Court of Israel, but non-Jews would be restricted to the Court of the Gentiles.

■ **3:11 porch . . . called Solomon's.** A porch built by Herod the Great along the east side of the temple platform. Jesus taught here on occasion (John 10:22).

■ **3:13 The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.** Appeal to the patriarchs was important in the sermons of Christ's servants (7:32; 13:17).

■ **3:14 denied the Holy One and the Just.** The phrase "the Holy One," referring to God, appears a number of times in the Old Testament. The phrase "the Holy One of Israel" occurs in Is. 1:4 and 5:24 (cf. Luke 1:35). Isaiah also speaks of God as "the Righteous One" (Is. 24:16; cf. Acts 7:52; 22:14). In applying this description to Jesus, Peter indicates the deity of Christ.

■ **3:18 foretold by the mouth of all His prophets.** See Luke 24:26, 27, 44–47. Peter could also have cited such passages as Deut. 18:15 (quoted in v. 22); Is. 53; Ps. 2; 16:8–11; 22 (cf. 1 Pet. 1:10, 11).

■ **3:19 Repent . . . be converted.** Peter's sermon illustrates the two sides of repentance, that is, turning aside in sorrow from sin, and turning to God in faith. The call to repentance and faith is a necessary element of the apostolic preaching (2:38; 17:30; 20:21).

sins . . . blotted out. In the order of the gospel, repentance and faith receive from God forgiveness and removal of sins.

times of refreshing. This phrase, like "the restoration of all things" (v. 21), seems to refer to the Second Coming of the Messiah.

that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, 20 and that He may send [3]Jesus Christ, who was [4]preached to you before, 21 [x]whom heaven must receive until the times of [y]restoration of all things, [z]which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since [5]the world began. 22 For Moses truly said to the fathers, [a]*'The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. 23 And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.'* 24 Yes, and [b]all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also [6]foretold these days. 25 [c]You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, [d]*'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'* 26 To you [e]first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, [f]in turning away every one *of you* from your iniquities."

20 [3]NU, M *Christ Jesus* [4]NU, M *ordained for you before*

21 [x]Acts 1:11 [y]Matt. 17:11 [z]Luke 1:70 [5]Or *time*

22 [a]Deut. 18:15, 18, 19

24 [b]Luke 24:25 [6]NU, M *proclaimed*

25 [c][Rom. 9:4, 8] [d]Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14

26 [e][Rom. 1:16; 2:9] [f]Matt. 1:21

Peter and John Arrested

4 Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the [a]Sadducees came upon them, 2 being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. 3 And they laid hands on them, and put *them* in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. 4 However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.

Addressing the Sanhedrin

5 And it came to pass, on the next day, that their rulers, elders, and scribes, 6 as well as [b]Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the family of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. 7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, [c]"By what power or by what name have you done this?"

8 [d]Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, "Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: 9 If we this day are judged for a good deed *done* to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, 10 let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, [e]that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, [f]whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. 11 This is the [g]*'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.'* 12 [h]Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."

CHAPTER 4

1 [a]Matt. 22:23

6 [b]Luke 3:2

7 [c]Matt. 21:23

8 [d]Luke 12:11, 12

10 [e]Acts 2:22; 3:6, 16 [f]Acts 2:24

11 [g]Ps. 118:22

12 [h][1 Tim. 2:5, 6]

■ **3:25 saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed.** As a climax, Peter refers to another patriarch and prophet, Abraham, through whom God sent Abraham's "seed," the Messiah (Gal. 3:16), to bless all peoples on earth. As members of Abraham's spiritual posterity, all those who belong to Christ are also called "Abraham's seed" (Rom. 4:16; Gal. 3:29).

■ **4:1 the priests.** Several priests serving their allotted week's temple service (Luke 1:8, 23) were near Solomon's Colonnade and could hear Peter's declarations about Jesus the Messiah. Alarmed at what was considered dangerous teaching against Jewish authority, they probably alerted the captain of the temple guard. This captain was the commander of the temple police force and a member of one of the important priestly families. The priests also alerted the Sadducees, who held prominent positions in the Sanhedrin, the Jewish council.

■ **4:2 preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.** The Sadducees were distressed because the apostles were teaching the people about the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:12–20). The Sadducees, unlike the Pharisees, did not believe in the bodily resurrection (23:6–8).

■ **4:3 put them in custody . . . for it was already evening.** This action was necessary because the temple sacrifices had been concluded and the temple gates were closed; official actions by the Sanhedrin would have to be taken the next day.

■ **4:4** Despite the persecution, the church grew from three thousand on the day of Pentecost to five thousand. The emphasis here is on men, because in that time the men would have gathered together by themselves to hear the message, and the women would have been in the Court of Women (cf. John 6:10). In modern Israel men and women are separated in their worship at the Wailing Wall.

■ **4:5 rulers, elders, and scribes.** These groups constituted the Jewish religious council, the Sanhedrin. Luke 22:66 describes the body of chief priests and scribes as "their council." This body would include the high priest, members of his family (v. 6), Sadducees, and Pharisees (Matt. 27:62) such as Nicodemus (who is called a ruler of the Jews and "teacher of Israel," John 3:1, 10) and Gamaliel (5:34; 22:3).

■ **4:6** The men listed in this verse constituted what might be called the executive committee of the council. Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas who was the official high priest (John 18:13), is here called the high priest. He was the power behind the office and probably still regarded as high priest by many Jews since the office was held for life. The Romans had deposed Annas in A.D. 15. John is possibly Jonathan, son of Annas who was appointed high priest in A.D. 36, or Jonathan ben Zaccai, who became president of the Great Synagogue after the fall of Jerusalem. Nothing is known of Alexander.

■ **4:7 by what name.** The answer is given in v. 10: "the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth." There is frequent emphasis on the name of Jesus or the name of the Lord (stressing the person and work of the Lord) in Acts (2:21, 38; 3:16; 4:10, 12; 8:16; 9:15, 28; 15:26; 16:18).

■ **4:8 filled with the Holy Spirit.** See 2:4; Eph. 5:18.

■ **4:11 stone . . . rejected . . . the chief cornerstone.** In Acts, defense of the gospel often includes reference to the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy; here Ps. 118:22 is quoted (also cited in Matt. 21:42; 1 Pet. 2:7; cf. Rom. 9:33).

■ **4:12 no other name.** Just as the name of Jesus had been the only hope for physical healing of the man crippled from birth, so also the name of Jesus is the only hope for the spiritual healing of mankind. This exclusive and total reliance upon Christ for salvation is the clear teaching of both Jesus and the New Testament generally (John 14:6; 1 Tim. 2:5). See theological note "Salvation."

13 *i*Matt. 11:25; [1 Cor. 1:27]
14 *j*Acts 3:11
16 *k*John 11:47 *l*Acts 3:7–10 *1 remarkable sign* *2 well known*
18 *m*Acts 5:28, 40
19 *n*Acts 5:29
20 *o*Acts 1:8; 2:32 *p*Acts 22:15; [1 John 1:1, 3]
21 *q*Matt. 21:26; Luke 20:6, 19; 22:2; Acts 5:26 *r*Matt. 15:31 *s*Acts 3:7, 8

The Name of Jesus Forbidden

13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, *i*and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus. 14 And seeing the man who had been healed *j*standing with them, they could say nothing against it. 15 But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, 16 saying, *k*"What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that a *l*notable miracle has been done through them *is* *l*evident*2* to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny *it*. 17 But so that it spreads no further among the people, let us severely threaten them, that from now on they speak to no man in this name."

18 *m*So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered and said to them, *n*"Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. 20 *o*For we cannot but speak the things which *p*we have seen and heard." 21 So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way of punishing them, *q*because of the people, since they all *r*glorified God for *s*what had been done. 22 For the man was over forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed.

Salvation

The central theme of the Christian gospel is salvation. The gospel proclaims that as God saved Israel from Egypt and the psalmist from death (Ex. 15:2; Ps. 116:6), so He will save all who trust Christ from sin and its consequences. This salvation from sin and death is wholly God's work. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). "Salvation is of the LORD" (Jon. 2:9).

The Hebrew words that express the idea of salvation in the Old Testament have the general sense of deliverance from physical danger or moral distress (Ps. 85:8, 9; Is. 62:11). In such passages the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) uses Greek words that mean to save from death or dangers, as well as to preserve or to heal. New Testament passages that speak of salvation use all these ideas to explain the acts of God on behalf of the lost.

Salvation delivers the believer from the wrath of God, the dominion of sin, and the power of death (Rom. 1:18; 3:9; 5:21; 1 Thess. 5:9). God liberates sinners from the natural condition of being mastered by the world, the flesh, and the devil (John 8:23, 24; Rom. 8:7, 8; 1 John 5:19). He frees believers from the fears that a sinful life generates (Rom. 8:15; 2 Tim. 1:7; Heb. 2:14, 15), and from the vicious habits that enslaved them (Eph. 4:17–24; 1 Thess. 4:3–8; Titus 2:11—3:6). Salvation brings not only the promise of spiritual wholeness and peace, but also of physical healing (Matt. 9:21, 22; Mark 10:52 and text note; James 5:15). Although Christians have already received salvation, they will experience the benefits of salvation in their fullness only when Christ returns at the end of the age (Heb. 9:28; 1 Pet. 1:3–5).

Salvation is accomplished through what Christ did in history and by what He continues to do in believers by the Holy Spirit. The basis for our salvation is Jesus' death on the cross (see "The Atonement" at Rom. 3:25) and the righteousness He achieved for us in His active obedience. It is realized in our lives as Christ lives in us (John 15:4; 17:26; Col. 1:27) and we live in Christ, united with Him in His death and risen life (Rom. 6:3–10; Col. 2:12, 20; 3:1). This vital union, sustained by the Spirit through faith and formed in our new birth, presupposes our eternal election in Christ (Eph. 1:4–6). Jesus was foreordained to represent us and to bear our sins as our substitute (1 Pet. 1:18–20; cf. Matt. 1:21). We were chosen to be effectually called, conformed to His image, and glorified by the Spirit's power (Rom. 8:11, 29, 30). □

■ **4:13 uneducated.** The courage and ready witness of Peter and John is a fulfillment of Christ's promise to the disciples in Matt. 10:19, 20. The courage and knowledge of the unschooled Galilean fishermen astonished the Sanhedrin. In taking note that these men "had been with Jesus," the council no doubt remembered how Jesus too, though without formal training, had surprised them with His teaching (Luke 2:46, 47; John 7:15).

■ **4:19 to listen to you more than to God.** The duty of religious worship and speech is prior to the rights of the state, and the duty of a Christian conscience before God in proclaiming the gospel is above the rights of the Sanhedrin. The state is a servant ordained by God to maintain peace and order (Rom. 13:1–7). See "Christians and Civil Government" at Rom. 13:1.

Prayer for Boldness

23 And being let go, [t]they went to their own *companions* and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. 24 So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: "Lord, [u]You *are* God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, 25 who [3]by the mouth of Your servant David have said:

[v] *'Why did the nations rage,*
And the people plot vain things?
26 *The kings of the earth took their stand,*
And the rulers were gathered together
Against the LORD and against His Christ.'

27 "For [w]truly against [x]Your holy Servant Jesus, [y]whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together 28 [z]to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done. 29 Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants [a]that with all boldness they may speak Your word, 30 by stretching out Your hand to heal, [b]and that signs and wonders may be done [c]through the name of [d]Your holy Servant Jesus."

31 And when they had prayed, [e]the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, [f]and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

Sharing in All Things

32 Now the multitude of those who believed [g]were of one heart and one soul; [h]neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. 33 And with [i]great power the apostles gave [j]witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And [k]great grace was upon them all. 34 Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; [l]for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, 35 [m]and laid *them* at the apostles' feet; [n]and they distributed to each as anyone had need.

36 And [4]Joses, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of [5]Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus, 37 [o]having land, sold *it,* and brought the money and laid *it* at the apostles' feet.

23 [t]Acts 2:44–46; 12:12

24 [u]Ex. 20:11

25 [v]Ps. 2:1, 2 [3]NU *through the Holy Spirit, by the mouth of our father, Your servant David,*

27 [w]Luke 22:2; 23:1, 8 [x][Luke 1:35] [y]John 10:36

28 [z]Acts 2:23; 3:18

29 [a]Acts 4:13, 31; 9:27; 13:46; 14:3; 19:8; 26:26

30 [b]Acts 2:43; 5:12 [c]Acts 3:6, 16 [d]Acts 4:27

31 [e]Acts 2:2, 4; 16:26 [f]Acts 4:29

32 [g]Rom. 15:5, 6 [h]Acts 2:44

33 [i][Acts 1:8] [j]Acts 1:22 [k]Rom. 6:15

34 [l]Acts 2:45

35 [m]Acts 4:37; 5:2 [n]Acts 2:45; 6:1

36 [4]NU *Joseph* [5]Or *Consolation*

37 [o]Acts 4:34, 35; 5:1, 2

■ **4:24 raised their voice to God.** This activity was a natural result of the apostles' training with Jesus and the habits they had formed (2:42).

Lord, You are God. A term used to express the total creative power and control of the Lord over all His physical creation and over the affairs of humanity (cf. vv. 25, 26; Jer. 10:12).

■ **4:25 by the mouth of Your servant David.** A succinct summary of verbal inspiration. The Scripture writers spoke and wrote under the guidance of the Spirit (2 Pet. 1:21).

■ **4:27 Herod and Pontius Pilate . . . Gentiles . . . people of Israel.** The believers properly understood that both Jews and Gentiles were responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus. These were Herod Antipas, who was the son of Herod the Great and tetrarch (i.e., subordinate ruler under the Romans) of Galilee and Perea (Luke 3:1; 23:6, 7) and Pontius Pilate, who was the Roman procurator (governor) of Palestine from A.D. 26–36 (Luke 3:1; 23:1–24). The chief priests and elders persuaded the people to reject Jesus and ask for Barabbas (Matt. 27:20–26).

■ **4:28 Your hand and Your purpose.** A clear affirmation that nothing, not even the wrongful death of God's Son, happens apart from God's sovereign will and control. The certainty of God's plan for the world is established by His sovereign "purpose" and ensured by His almighty "hand." The early chapters of Acts teach the compatibility of divine sovereignty and human responsibility. While the murderers of Jesus acted in accord with what God had determined, they were morally responsible agents and were held accountable (3:15).

■ **4:29** This prayer of the believing community illustrates the way in which the church should be empowered and encouraged by God's sovereignty. In the face of the threat of physical violence, the church affirmed God's control of the situation (v. 28) and, encouraged by this, they petitioned for greater boldness.

Lord. The Greek word for "Lord" is *kyrios,* used in the Septuagint (the Greek Old Testament) to translate the divine name *Yahweh.* It is used in the New Testament to refer both to God and also to Christ specifically (2:36; 7:31).

■ **4:32–35** Because the believers were "of one heart" (v. 32), they were conscious of the needy in the church and consequently they helped by selling land and giving the proceeds to the apostles for those needs. This Christian giving was proportional to real need. It was a voluntary, not compulsory (5:4).

■ **4:33 the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.** The crowning proof of the salvation accomplished in Jesus Christ was His resurrection from the dead. The apostles, as chief witnesses, had to testify about this redemptive event (1:22).

grace. Grace in witnessing and living.

■ **4:36 Joses . . . also named Barnabas . . . a Levite.** In the Old Testament, the Levites did not have inherited land, as the other tribes had, although the Levites were allotted towns (Josh. 21). However, by New Testament times a Levite such as Joses Barnabas may well have been able to own land. This probably was true of a country outside of Palestine, such as Cyprus. On the other hand, the land owned may have belonged to his wife. The introduction of Barnabas here lays the foundation for further reference to the significant influence of this outstanding believer in the life of the Jewish and Gentile churches and in the life of Paul.

■ **4:37 having land, sold it.** As "Son of Encouragement" (v. 36), Barnabas presented a good example of a Christian who gave to the needs of others (contrasted with the selfish example of Ananias and Sapphira, 5:1–11). Barnabas also interceded for Saul (9:27), encouraged the church at Antioch in Syria (11:22), led in missionary work abroad (13:2, 3), and continued in missionary work despite a disagreement with Paul (15:37–39).

CHAPTER 5

3 [a]Num. 30:2; Deut. 23:21; Eccl. 5:4 [b]Matt. 4:10; Luke 22:3; John 13:2, 27

5 [c]Ezek. 11:13; Acts 5:10, 11

6 [d]John 19:40

9 [e]Matt. 4:7; Acts 5:3, 4

10 [f]Ezek. 11:13; Acts 5:5

11 [g]Acts 2:43; 5:5; 19:17

12 [h]Acts 2:43; 4:30; 6:8; 14:3; 15:12; [Rom. 15:19]; 2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:4 [i]Acts 3:11; 4:32

13 [j]John 9:22 [k]Acts 2:47; 4:21

15 [l]Matt. 9:21; 14:36; Acts 19:12

16 [m]Mark 16:17, 18; [John 14:12]

17 [n]Matt. 3:7; Acts 4:1, 2, 6 [1]*jealousy*

18 [o]Luke 21:12; Acts 4:3; 16:37

19 [p]Matt. 1:20, 24; 2:13, 19; 28:2; Luke 1:11; 2:9; Acts 12:7; 16:26

20 [q][John 6:63, 68; 17:3; 1 John 5:11]

21 [r]Acts 4:5, 6 [2]Sanhedrin [3]*council of elders* or *senate*

23 [4]NU, M omit *outside*

24 [s]Luke 22:4; Acts 4:1; 5:26 [5]NU omits *the high priest*

Lying to the Holy Spirit

5 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession. 2 And he kept back *part* of the proceeds, his wife also being aware *of it,* and brought a certain part and laid *it* at the apostles' feet. 3 [a]But Peter said, "Ananias, why has [b]Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back *part* of the price of the land for yourself? 4 While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."

5 Then Ananias, hearing these words, [c]fell down and breathed his last. So great fear came upon all those who heard these things. 6 And the young men arose and [d]wrapped him up, carried *him* out, and buried *him.*

7 Now it was about three hours later when his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. 8 And Peter answered her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much?"

She said, "Yes, for so much."

9 Then Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together [e]to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband *are* at the door, and they will carry you out." 10 [f]Then immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. And the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying *her* out, buried *her* by her husband. 11 [g]So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things.

Continuing Power in the Church

12 And [h]through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. [i]And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch. 13 Yet [j]none of the rest dared join them, [k]but the people esteemed them highly. 14 And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, 15 so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid *them* on beds and couches, [l]that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. 16 Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing [m]sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

Imprisoned Apostles Freed

17 [n]Then the high priest rose up, and all those who *were* with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with [1]indignation, 18 [o]and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison. 19 But at night [p]an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, 20 "Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people [q]all the words of this life."

21 And when they heard *that,* they entered the temple early in the morning and taught. [r]But the high priest and those with him came and called the [2]council together, with all the [3]elders of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.

Apostles on Trial Again

22 But when the officers came and did not find them in the prison, they returned and reported, 23 saying, "Indeed we found the prison shut securely, and the guards standing [4]outside before the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside!" 24 Now when [5]the high priest, [s]the

■ **5:2 he kept back part of the proceeds.** Ananias and his wife had the right to keep all of the proceeds from their land since the land and the money was theirs (v. 4). The testimony of the whole church was at risk because of the sins of a few (cf. Lev. 10:1, 2; Num. 16:23–35; Josh. 7:19–25; 2 Sam. 6:1–7).

■ **5:3 Satan filled your heart.** Another example of Satan's influence is seen in the life of Peter (Mark 8:33). Later, Peter warned Christians against Satan's potential influence over them (1 Pet. 5:8).

lie to the Holy Spirit. In v. 4 Peter tells Ananias that he has lied to God. Peter's words indicate that the Holy Spirit is God (v. 9).

■ **5:11 all the church.** This is the first of more than twenty occurrences in Acts of the Greek word *ekklesia,* usually translated "church." Stephen uses this word for the Old Testament "congregation" of the people (7:38). In the Septuagint (the Greek Old Testament), the worshiping assembly of God's people is often designated with this word. In ancient Greece, the *ekklesia* was the political "assembly" of citizens (19:32). The New Testament uses the word initially to refer to an organized body of believers (8:1; 11:22; 13:1).

■ **5:13 none of the rest dared join them.** No insincere, superficial followers dared to identify with the church. The standards of morality were high.

■ **5:14 believers . . . both men and women.** Believers came forward and joined the church. Luke mentions women often in the Gospel (Luke 7:28; 8:2, 3; 17:35; 23:27, 29, 49, 55) and in Acts (1:14; 8:3, 12; 9:2, 36; 13:50; 16:1, 13, 14; 17:4, 12, 34; 18:2; 21:5).

■ **5:15 shadow of Peter.** As when Jesus' healing power flowed from His garment at the touch of the woman who had been subject to bleeding (Mark 5:27, 28), here God allows the shadow of Peter to effect a cure, as He did also through cloths and aprons that Paul had used (19:11, 12).

■ **5:21 the council.** The great Jewish religious council at Jerusalem, the Sanhedrin, composed of about seventy men. It included Sadducees, Pharisees, and their associates. Under the Romans the Sanhedrin had broad authority in Palestine. According to ancient Jewish tradition, the members sat in a semicircle with two clerks and three rows of students at the front.

captain of the temple, and the chief priests heard these things, they wondered what the outcome would be. 25 So one came and told them, [6]saying, "Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!"

26 Then the captain went with the officers and brought them without violence, [t]for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned. 27 And when they had brought them, they set *them* before the council. And the high priest asked them, 28 saying, [u]"Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, [v]and intend to bring this Man's [w]blood on us!"

29 But Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said: [x]"We ought to obey God rather than men. 30 [y]The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by [z]hanging on a tree. 31 [a]Him God has exalted to His right hand *to be* [b]Prince and [c]Savior, [d]to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. 32 And [e]we are His witnesses to these things, and *so* also *is* the Holy Spirit [f]whom God has given to those who obey Him."

Gamaliel's Advice

33 When they heard *this,* they were [g]furious[7] and plotted to kill them. 34 Then one in the council stood up, a Pharisee named [h]Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in respect by all the people, and commanded them to put the apostles outside for a little while. 35 And he said to them: "Men of Israel, [8]take heed to yourselves what you intend to do regarding these men. 36 For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody. A number of men, about four hundred, [9]joined him. He was slain, and all who obeyed him were scattered and came to nothing. 37 After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census, and drew away many people after him. He also perished, and all who obeyed him were dispersed. 38 And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; 39 [i]but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found [j]to fight against God."

40 And they agreed with him, and when they had [k]called for the apostles [l]and beaten *them,* they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. 41 So they departed from the presence of the council, [m]rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for [l]His name. 42 And daily [n]in the temple, and in every house, [o]they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus *as* the Christ.

Seven Chosen to Serve

6 Now in those days, [a]when *the number of* the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the [b]Hellenists,[1] because their widows were neglected [c]in the daily distribution. 2 Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, [d]"It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. 3 Therefore, brethren, [e]seek out

25 [6]NU, M omit *saying*

26 [t]Matt. 21:26

28 [u]Acts 4:17, 18 [v]Acts 2:23, 36 [w]Matt. 23:35

29 [x]Acts 4:19

30 [y]Acts 3:13, 15 [z][1 Pet. 2:24]

31 [a][Acts 2:33, 36] [b]Acts 3:15 [c]Matt. 1:21 [d]Luke 24:47

32 [e]John 15:26, 27 [f]Acts 2:4; 10:44

33 [g]Acts 2:37; 7:54 [7]*cut to the quick*

34 [h]Acts 22:3

35 [8]*be careful*

36 [9]*followed*

39 [i]1 Cor. 1:25 [j]Acts 7:51; 9:5

40 [k]Acts 4:18 [l]Matt. 10:17

41 [m][1 Pet. 4:13–16] [l]NU *the name;* M *the name of Jesus*

42 [n]Acts 2:46 [o]Acts 4:20, 29

CHAPTER 6

1 [a]Acts 2:41; 4:4 [b]Acts 9:29; 11:20 [c]Acts 4:35; 11:29 [1]Greek-speaking Jews

2 [d]Ex. 18:17

3 [e]1 Tim. 3:7

■ **5:28 bring this Man's blood on us.** In 2:23; 3:15, 16; and 4:10, 11, Peter and his associates blamed the members of the Sanhedrin for the death of Jesus. The people had heard this accusation.

■ **5:31 Him God has exalted to His right hand.** This declaration would be understood by the Sanhedrin as a reference to the Resurrection. Such an exaltation by God would make this resurrected Jesus equal with God (cf. John 5:18; 10:33).

■ **5:34 Gamaliel.** One of the most famous rabbis of his time, Gamaliel was Paul's teacher (22:3) and probably a grandson of Rabbi Hillel, the leader of one of the two great schools of Jewish legal interpretation. In contrast to the school of Shammai, Gamaliel and the school of Hillel were known for their lenient interpretation of the law (Matt. 19:3 and note).

■ **5:37 Judas of Galilee.** The Jewish historian Josephus (*Jewish War* 20.118) speaks of a certain Galilean who stirred up a revolt because he resisted subservience and paying taxes to the Romans. The revolt failed, but it may have laid the groundwork for the party of the Zealots. The apostle Simon the Zealot (1:13; Matt. 10:4 and note) may have previously been a member of this group.

days of the census. Not the census of Luke 2:1, which was ordered by the Emperor Augustus about 8 B.C. (but was delayed until 5 or 6 B.C.), but the census fourteen years later in A.D. 6, in the time of the Procurator Coponius.

■ **5:40 beaten them.** The apostles received the traditional "forty stripes minus one" (2 Cor. 11:24).

■ **6:1 widows were neglected.** The Old Testament required care of the poor and needy (Ps. 9:18 note). This concern is seen in the social action set forth in 2:44, 45; 4:34–37. Here the age-old problem of discrimination had emerged: the widows of Grecian Jews (see text note) were considered outsiders by native-born Jews and so were not getting their share of the food distribution, probably deriving in part from the generous giving of 4:34–37.

■ **6:2 the twelve.** The twelve apostles including Matthias (1:26). This is a shift from "the eleven" (1:26; 2:14; Luke 24:9, 33).

disciples. The first of a number of times the believers are called "disciples" in Acts (e.g., v. 7; 9:1; 11:26; 13:52). Paul does not use this term to identify Christians.

the word of God. In this initial organization of the New Testament church, two important ministries are listed: the ministry of the word and prayer (v. 4); and the ministry of meeting people's physical needs, such as serving at table. The Greek verb is *diakoneo* ("serve"), from which English derives the word "deacon." In 6:1, the related noun is translated "distribution," and in v. 4 "the ministry." The office of deacon, which may have had its beginning here, is described in 1 Tim. 3:8–13.

■ **6:3 brethren, seek out . . . seven men.** The members of the church elected the seven, and the apostles set them apart (ordained) by prayer and the laying on of hands (v. 6).

3 [f]1 Tim. 3:8–13
4 [g]Acts 2:42
5 [h]Acts 6:3; 11:24 [i]Acts 8:5, 26; 21:8 [j]Rev. 2:6, 15
6 [k]Acts 1:24 [l][2 Tim. 1:6]
7 [m]Acts 12:24 [n]John 12:42
8 [o]Acts 2:43; 5:12; 8:15; 14:3 [2]NU *grace*
10 [p]Luke 21:15
11 [q]1 Kin. 21:10, 13
13 [3]NU omits *blasphemous*
14 [r]Acts 10:38; 25:8

CHAPTER 7

2 [a]Acts 22:1 [b]Ps. 29:3 [c]Gen. 11:31, 32
3 [d]Gen. 12:1
4 [e]Gen. 11:31; 15:7 [f]Gen. 11:32
5 [g]Gen. 12:7; 13:15; 15:3, 18; 17:8; 26:3
6 [h]Gen. 15:13, 14, 16; 47:11, 12 [i]Ex. 1:8–14; 12:40, 41
7 [j]Gen. 15:14 [k]Ex. 14:13–31 [l]Ex. 3:12
8 [m]Gen. 17:9–14

from among you seven men of *good* reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this [f]business; [4] but we [g]will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

[5] And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, [h]a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and [i]Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and [j]Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, [6] whom they set before the apostles; and [k]when they had prayed, [l]they laid hands on them.

[7] Then [m]the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many [n]of the priests were obedient to the faith.

Stephen Accused of Blasphemy

[8] And Stephen, full of [2]faith and power, did great [o]wonders and signs among the people. [9] Then there arose some from what is called the Synagogue of the Freedmen (Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and those from Cilicia and Asia), disputing with Stephen. [10] And [p]they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke. [11] [q]Then they secretly induced men to say, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God." [12] And they stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes; and they came upon *him,* seized him, and brought *him* to the council. [13] They also set up false witnesses who said, "This man does not cease to speak [3]blasphemous words against this holy place and the law; [14] [r]for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered to us." [15] And all who sat in the council, looking steadfastly at him, saw his face as the face of an angel.

Stephen's Address: The Call of Abraham

7 Then the high priest said, "Are these things so?"

[2] And he said, [a]"Brethren and fathers, listen: The [b]God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in [c]Haran, [3] and said to him, [d]*'Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you.'* [4] Then [e]he came out of the land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Haran. And from there, when his father was [f]dead, He moved him to this land in which you now dwell. [5] And *God* gave him no inheritance in it, not even *enough* to set his foot on. But even when *Abraham* had no child, [g]He promised to give it to him for a possession, and to his descendants after him. [6] But God spoke in this way: [h]that his descendants would dwell in a foreign land, and that they would bring them into [i]bondage and oppress *them* four hundred years. [7] [j]*'And the nation to whom they will be in bondage I will* [k]*judge,'* said God, [l]*'and after that they shall come out and serve Me in this place.'* [8] [m]Then

full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom. The two requirements for the ministry of service in all ages are obedience to the Spirit and action guided by wisdom.

■ **6:5 Stephen . . . Nicolas.** All seven men had Greek names, which may point to their being Jews from the Dispersion, although many Palestinian Jews also had Greek names. Attributes are listed for the first and last of the seven: for Stephen ("full of faith and power") who appears in 6:8—7:60, and for Nicolas, "a proselyte from Antioch." Antioch soon became a center of missionary activity. Philip's later ministry to Samaria and to the Ethiopian eunuch is described in ch. 8.

■ **6:8 Stephen . . . did great wonders and signs.** Philip, another of the seven, also did miracles later like the apostles who had ordained them (8:6).

■ **6:9 Synagogue of the Freedmen.** Composed of Jews freed from slavery, who in this case were from Cyrene, a well-known town of North Africa.

Cilicia. A Roman province in the southeast part of Asia Minor, with Paul's hometown of Tarsus (9:11, 30; 11:25) as one of its chief cities.

Asia. The Roman province in the western part of modern-day Turkey.

■ **6:11 blasphemous words against Moses and God.** Although in the light of the gospel he may have begun to express concern about hollow observance of the technical details of the law, all that Stephen said, as is evident in ch. 7, was that Moses, like Jesus and like Stephen himself, was rejected by the people (7:35, 39). This could not be taken as blasphemy against Moses and God.

■ **6:13 against this holy place and the law.** Stephen did not speak against the temple, but only declared that God was not confined to an earthly temple since heaven was His home and throne (7:48–50). Stephen actually supported the Mosaic law and its teaching, especially as they pointed forward to Christ (7:37, 38).

■ **6:14 Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place.** The Jewish leadership had heard the misinterpreted quotation of Jesus in John 2:19, but there is no evidence that Stephen had known or used it.

■ **7:2 The God of glory.** This title recalls the divine glory God showed His people in the time of Moses: the pillar of cloud (Ex. 14:19; 16:10; Ps. 105:39), the pillar of fire (Ex. 14:24), the glory of the Lord on the mountain (Ex. 24:15–18; 2 Cor. 3:7), and the glory on the tabernacle (Ex. 40:34, 35; cf. John 1:14).

■ **7:4 land of the Chaldeans.** Babylonia, in southern Mesopotamia (modern Iraq).

■ **7:6 four hundred years.** Ex. 12:40 has "four hundred and thirty years," but Stephen is speaking in round numbers, and may have been following the text of Gen. 15:13 which has "four hundred years."

■ **7:8 covenant of circumcision.** God established this covenant with Abraham. He was the father of all Israel but lived centuries before Moses came. Moses instituted the customs that Stephen's adversaries tried to protect (6:14).

He gave him the covenant of circumcision; [n]and so *Abraham* begot Isaac and circumcised him on the eighth day; [o]and Isaac *begot* Jacob, and [p]Jacob *begot* the twelve patriarchs.

The Patriarchs in Egypt

9 [q]"And the patriarchs, becoming envious, [r]sold Joseph into Egypt. [s]But God was with him 10 and delivered him out of all his troubles, [t]and gave him favor and wisdom in the presence of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house. 11 [u]Now a famine and great [l]trouble came over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, and our fathers found no sustenance. 12 [v]But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first. 13 And the [w]second *time* Joseph was made known to his brothers, and Joseph's family became known to the Pharaoh. 14 [x]Then Joseph sent and called his father Jacob and [y]all his relatives to *him,* [z]seventy-five people. 15 [z]So Jacob went down to Egypt; [a]and he died, he and our fathers. 16 And [b]they were carried back to Shechem and laid in [c]the tomb that Abraham bought for a sum of money from the sons of Hamor, *the father* of Shechem.

God Delivers Israel by Moses

17 "But when [d]the time of the promise drew near which God had sworn to Abraham, [e]the people grew and multiplied in Egypt 18 till another king [f]arose who did not know Joseph. 19 This man dealt treacherously with our people, and oppressed our forefathers, [g]making them expose their babies, so that they might not live. 20 [h]At this time Moses was born, and [i]was well pleasing to God; and he was brought up in his father's house for three months. 21 But [j]when he was set out, [k]Pharaoh's daughter took him away and brought him up as her own son. 22 And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was [l]mighty in words and deeds.

23 [m]"Now when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel. 24 And seeing one of *them* suffer wrong, he defended and avenged him who was oppressed, and struck down the Egyptian. 25 For he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand. 26 And the next day he appeared to two of them as they were fighting, and *tried to* reconcile them, saying, 'Men, you are brethren; why do you wrong one another?' 27 But he who did his neighbor wrong pushed him away, saying, [n]*'Who made you a ruler and a judge over us?* 28 *Do you want to kill me as you did the Egyptian yesterday?'* 29 [o]Then, at this saying, Moses fled and became a dweller in the land of Midian, where he [p]had two sons.

30 [q]"And when forty years had passed, an Angel [3]of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire in a bush, in the wilderness of Mount Sinai. 31 When Moses saw *it,* he marveled at the sight; and as he drew near to observe, the voice of the Lord came to him, 32 *saying, [r]'I am the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.'* And Moses trembled and dared not look. 33 [s]*'Then the LORD said to him, "Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground. 34 I have surely [t]seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt; I have heard their groaning and have come down to deliver them. And now come, I will [u]send you to Egypt."'*

35 "This Moses whom they rejected, saying, [v]*'Who made you a ruler and a judge?'* is the one God sent *to be* a ruler and a deliverer [w]by the hand of the Angel who appeared to him in the bush. 36 [x]He brought them out, after he had [y]shown wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, [z]and in the Red Sea, [a]and in the wilderness forty years.

Israel Rebels Against God

37 "This is that Moses who said to the children of Israel, [b]*'The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. [c]Him [4] you shall hear.'*

8 [n]Gen. 21:1–5 [o]Gen. 25:21–26 [p]Gen. 29:31—30:24; 35:18, 22–26

9 [q]Gen. 37:4, 11, 28 [r]Gen. 37:28 [s]Gen. 39:2, 21, 23

10 [t]Gen. 41:38–44

11 [u]Gen. 41:54; 42:5 [l]*affliction*

12 [v]Gen. 42:1, 2

13 [w]Gen. 45:4, 16

14 [x]Gen. 45:9, 27 [y]Deut. 10:22 [2]Or *seventy,* Ex. 1:5

15 [z]Gen. 46:1–7 [a]Gen. 49:33

16 [b]Josh. 24:32 [c]Gen. 23:16

17 [d]Gen. 15:13 [e]Ex. 1:7–9

18 [f]Ex. 1:8

19 [g]Ex. 1:22

20 [h]Ex. 2:1, 2 [i]Heb. 11:23

21 [j]Ex. 2:3, 4 [k]Ex. 2:5–10

22 [l]Luke 24:19

23 [m]Ex. 2:11, 12

27 [n]Ex. 2:14

29 [o]Heb. 11:27 [p]Ex. 2:15, 21, 22; 4:20; 18:3

30 [q]Ex. 3:1–10 [3]NU omits *of the Lord*

32 [r]Ex. 3:6, 15

33 [s]Ex. 3:5, 7, 8, 10

34 [t]Ex. 2:24, 25 [u]Ps. 105:26

35 [v]Ex. 2:14 [w]Ex. 14:21

36 [x]Ex. 12:41; 33:1 [y]Ps. 105:27 [z]Ex. 14:21 [a]Ex. 16:1, 35

37 [b]Deut. 18:15, 18, 19 [c]Matt. 17:5 [4]NU, M omit *Him you shall hear*

■ **7:14 seventy-five people.** The Hebrew text of Ex. 1:5 has "seventy." But the Greek translation of the Old Testament text, which this sermon is basically following, and the fragments of Exodus found among the Dead Sea Scrolls read "seventy-five." The explanation of the "seventy-five" is to be found in the five additional descendants of Joseph included in the Greek translation of Gen. 46:20, where two sons of Manasseh, two sons of Ephraim, and one grandson of Ephraim are included.

■ **7:16 the tomb that Abraham bought . . . of Shechem.** Stephen has condensed the events regarding the patriarchs' burial purchases. Jacob was buried in the cave of Machpelah at Hebron (Gen. 50:13), and according to Josephus (*Antiquities* 2.199) Joseph's brothers were buried in Hebron. Joseph's bones, however, were placed in the land Jacob had bought from the sons of Hamor (Gen. 33:19; 50:25; Ex. 13:19; Josh. 24:32). Stephen's audience knew that Jacob and his sons were buried in two different places (Hebron and Shechem). The narrative here is highly condensed.

■ **7:22 Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians.** Ex. 2:10 states that when the child Moses grew older the nurse (Moses' mother) took him to Pharaoh's daughter and "he became her son," with the assumption that in the royal household he would be given a full Egyptian education. Two first-century scholars, the historian Josephus and Philo the philosopher, tell of the extensive learning of Moses.

38 [d]"This is he who was in the [5]congregation in the wilderness with [e]the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and *with* our fathers, [f]the one who received the living [g]oracles[6] to give to us, 39 whom our fathers [h]would not obey, but rejected. And in their hearts they turned back to Egypt, 40 [i]saying to Aaron, *'Make us gods to go before us; as for this Moses who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.'* 41 [j]And they made a calf in those days, offered sacrifices to the idol, and [k]rejoiced in the works of their own hands. 42 Then [l]God turned and gave them up to worship [m]the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the Prophets:

[n] *'Did you offer Me slaughtered animals and sacrifices during forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel?*
43 *You also took up the tabernacle of Moloch,*
And the star of your god Remphan,
Images which you made to worship;
And [o]I will carry you away beyond Babylon.'

God's True Tabernacle

44 "Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as He appointed, instructing Moses [p]to make it according to the pattern that he had seen, 45 [q]which our fathers, having received it in turn, also brought with Joshua into the land possessed by the Gentiles, [r]whom God drove out before the face of our fathers until the [s]days of David, 46 [t]who found favor before God and [u]asked to find a dwelling for the God of Jacob. 47 [v]But Solomon built Him a house.

48 "However, [w]the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says:

49 *'Heaven[x] is My throne,*
And earth is My footstool.
What house will you build for Me? says the LORD,
Or what is the place of My rest?
50 *Has My hand not [y]made all these things?'*

Israel Resists the Holy Spirit

51 "*You* [z]stiff-necked[7] and [a]uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers *did,* so *do* you. 52 [b]Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of [c]the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, 53 [d]who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept *it.*"

Stephen the Martyr

54 [e]When they heard these things they were [8]cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with *their* teeth. 55 But he, [f]being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the [g]glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, 56 and said, "Look! [h]I see the heavens opened and the [i]Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"

57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord;

38 [d]Ex. 19:3 [e]Gal. 3:19 [f]Deut. 5:27 [g]Heb. 5:12 [5]Gr. *ekklesia, assembly* or *church* [6]*sayings*
39 [h]Ps. 95:8–11
40 [i]Ex. 32:1, 23
41 [j]Deut. 9:16 [k]Ex. 32:6, 18, 19
42 [l][2 Thess. 2:11] [m]2 Kin. 21:3 [n]Amos 5:25–27
43 [o]Jer. 25:9–12
44 [p][Heb. 8:5]
45 [q]Josh. 3:14; 18:1; 23:9 [r]Ps. 44:2 [s]2 Sam. 6:2–15
46 [t]2 Sam. 7:1–13 [u]1 Chr. 22:7
47 [v]1 Kin. 6:1–38; 8:20, 21
48 [w]1 Kin. 8:27
49 [x]Is. 66:1, 2
50 [y]Ps. 102:25
51 [z]Ex. 32:9 [a]Lev. 26:41 [7]*stubborn*
52 [b]2 Chr. 36:16 [c]Acts 3:14; 22:14
53 [d]Ex. 20:1
54 [e]Acts 5:33 [8]*furious*
55 [f]Acts 6:5 [g][Ex. 24:17]
56 [h]Matt. 3:16 [i]Dan. 7:13

■ **7:38 the congregation in the wilderness.** "Congregation" translates the Greek word *ekklesia* ("church," see 5:11 note).

the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai. Although Moses received the law from God on Mount Sinai (Ex. 20:1, 21), angels had some part in its institution (v. 53; Deut. 33:2; Gal. 3:19; Heb. 2:2). On the Angel of the Lord, see notes on Gen. 16:7 and Judg. 2:1.

■ **7:44 tabernacle of witness.** The Old Testament tabernacle contained the ark of the covenant and the tablets of the Ten Commandments, which are called "the Testimony." Further symbolizing God's presence and life-giving power were the table of the consecrated bread (Ex. 37:10–16; Heb. 9:2), the seven-branched lampstand (Ex. 37:17–23; cf. John 8:12; Rev. 1:12–18), and the altar of incense (Ex. 37:25–29) pointing to the prayers of God's people rising up to the ever-present God (Ps. 141:2; Rev. 8:3, 4).

■ **7:51 You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears.** They would not listen from their hearts, nor obey the Lord and the Scriptures Stephen had cited. These metaphors are Old Testament figures meaning spiritually stubborn and unregenerate (Ex. 32:9; 33:3, 5; Deut. 9:6; 10:16; 30:6; Jer. 4:4).

■ **7:52 the Just One.** A title used for the Lord Almighty (Is. 24:16), and for Jesus Christ (22:14; 1 John 2:1).

■ **7:55 the glory of God.** The brilliance of God's presence (cf. Rev. 15:8; 21:11, 23).

standing at the right hand of God. Usually Jesus is said to be sitting at the right hand of God because His work was finished (Rom. 8:34; Col. 3:1; Heb. 10:12), but here He is standing to receive Stephen or to defend him. In this scene the Son of Man is both Judge and Advocate. See theological note "Jesus' Heavenly Reign."

■ **7:56 I see . . . the Son of Man.** Stephen's vision of the Son of Man in heaven must have vividly reminded the Sanhedrin that when they asked Jesus, "Are You the Christ," He replied, "I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven" (Mark 14:61, 62). Stephen saw the same Jesus standing in heaven at God's right hand, proving the truth of what he was saying and condemning the Sanhedrin.

[58] and they cast *him* out of the city and stoned *him.* And [j]the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. [59] And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on *God* and saying, "Lord Jesus, [k]receive my spirit." [60] Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, [l]"Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

58 [j]Acts 22:20
59 [k]Ps. 31:5
60 [l]Matt. 5:44; Luke 23:34

Saul Persecutes the Church

8 Now Saul was consenting to his death.

At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and [a]they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. [2] And devout men carried Stephen *to his burial,* and [b]made great lamentation over him.

[3] As for Saul, [c]he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing *them* to prison.

CHAPTER 8

1 [a]John 16:2; Acts 8:4; 11:19
2 [b]Gen. 23:2
3 [c]Acts 7:58; 1 Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13; Phil. 3:6; 1 Tim. 1:13
4 [d]Matt. 10:23
5 [e]Acts 6:5; 8:26, 30 [1]Or *a*
7 [f]Mark 16:17
9 [g]Acts 8:11; 13:6 [h]Acts 5:36 [2]*magic* [3]Or *nation*

Christ Is Preached in Samaria

[4] Therefore [d]those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word. [5] Then [e]Philip went down to [1]the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. [6] And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. [7] For [f]unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. [8] And there was great joy in that city.

The Sorcerer's Profession of Faith

[9] But there was a certain man called Simon, who previously [g]practiced [2]sorcery in the city and [h]astonished the [3]people of Samaria, claiming that he was someone great, [10] to whom they all

Jesus' Heavenly Reign

Christ's present role in glory is commonly referred to as His heavenly "session," His "sitting" at God's right hand. The New Testament pictures Jesus' heavenly activity as standing ready to act (Acts 7:56; Rev. 1:12–16; 14:1), walking among His people (Rev. 2:1), and riding to battle (Rev. 19:11–16), but it regularly expresses His present authority by saying that He sits at the Father's right hand—not to rest, but to rule. The picture is not of inactivity but of authority.

In Ps. 110 God sets the Messiah at His right hand as king and priest—as king to bring His enemies under His feet (v. 1), and as priest to serve God and direct God's grace forever (v. 4).

Christ rules over all spheres of authority whether angelic or human (Matt. 28:18; 1 Pet. 3:22). His kingdom in a direct sense is the church, the body over which He is the Head, governing it by His word and Spirit (Eph. 1:22, 23). As for the state: it is not related to the kingdom of God as it was in the Old Testament. The sword is not to be used to enforce Christ's kingdom (John 18:36), but Christ uses secular authority to maintain civil peace and order, and commands His disciples to submit to rulers (Matt. 22:21; Rom. 13:1–7). Christians seek in every sphere of life to do His will, reminding themselves and others that all are accountable to Christ as Judge, whatever their position in life may be (Matt. 25:31; Acts 17:31; Rom. 2:16; 2 Cor. 5:10).

Christ's session will continue until all His enemies and ours, including death, are brought to nothing. Death, the last enemy, will cease to exist when Christ at His appearing raises the dead for judgment (John 5:28, 29). Once judgment has been executed, the work of the mediatorial kingdom will be over, and Christ will triumphantly deliver the kingdom to the Father (1 Cor. 15:24–28). □

■ **7:58 a young man named Saul.** Saul, later called Paul, was a Pharisee and associated with the Sanhedrin (Phil. 3:5). Possibly he was an instigator of Stephen's trial (8:3; 9:1, 2). At this point Luke introduces Saul, the second great figure of his book.

■ **7:60 do not charge them with this sin.** Compare the statement of Jesus in Luke 23:34.

■ **8:3 As for, Saul, he made havoc of the church.** The Greek verb is strong; not just harassment, but an attempt to destroy the church is meant.

■ **8:4 scattered . . . preaching the word.** Through persecution the message was spread farther and more rapidly (11:19). As Tertullian said, "The blood of Christians is the seed of the church."

■ **8:9 Simon.** Simon Magus the sorcerer is frequently mentioned in ancient writings outside the Bible as the archenemy of the church and one

gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, "This man is the great power of God." 11 And they heeded him because he had astonished them with his [4]sorceries for a long time. 12 But when they believed Philip as he preached the things [i]concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized. 13 Then Simon himself also believed; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done.

The Sorcerer's Sin

14 Now when the [j]apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, 15 who, when they had come down, prayed for them [k]that they might receive the Holy Spirit. 16 For [l]as yet He had fallen upon none of them. [m]They had only been baptized in [n]the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then [o]they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

18 And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, 19 saying, "Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

20 But Peter said to him, "Your money perish with you, because [p]you thought that [q]the gift of God could be purchased with money! 21 You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your [r]heart is not right in the sight of God. 22 Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God [s]if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. 23 For I see that you are [t]poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity."

24 Then Simon answered and said, [u]"Pray to the Lord for me, that none of the things which you have spoken may come upon me."

25 So when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

Christ Is Preached to an Ethiopian

26 Now an angel of the Lord spoke to [v]Philip, saying, "Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." This is [5]desert. 27 So he arose and went.

11 [4]*magic arts*
12 [i]Acts 1:3; 8:4
14 [j]Acts 5:12, 29, 40
15 [k]Acts 2:38; 19:2
16 [l]Acts 19:2 [m]Matt. 28:19; Acts 2:38 [n]Acts 10:48; 19:5
17 [o]Acts 6:6; 19:6; Heb. 6:2
20 [p]2 Kin. 5:16; Is. 55:1; Dan. 5:17; [Matt. 10:8] [q][Acts 2:38; 10:45; 11:17]
21 [r]Jer. 17:9
22 [s]Dan. 4:27; 2 Tim. 2:25
23 [t]Heb. 12:15
24 [u]Gen. 20:7, 17; Ex. 8:8; Num. 21:7; 1 Kin. 13:6; Job 42:8; James 5:16
26 [v]Acts 6:5 [5]*Or a deserted place*

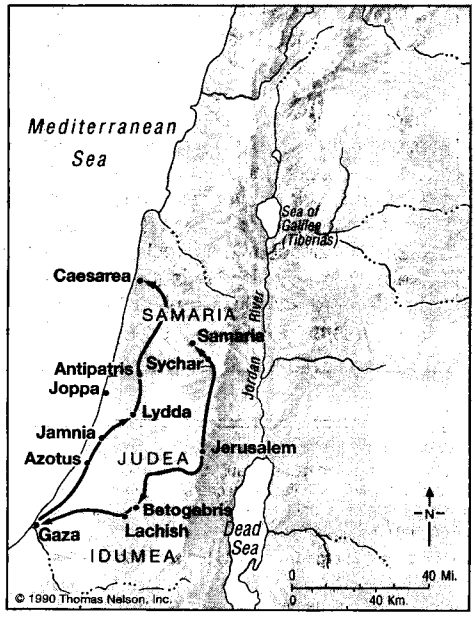
of the leaders of the Gnostic heresy. Gnosticism (named from the Greek word *gnosis*, meaning "knowledge") taught that a person gained salvation not by the merit of Christ's death for sinners, but by special knowledge about God. Justin Martyr (died c. A.D. 165), himself a Samaritan, says that almost all the Samaritans considered Simon the highest god (the "great power," v. 10). Irenaeus (died c. A.D. 180), who wrote extensively against the Gnostics, regards Simon as one of the sources of their heresies. Although the Simon of v. 9 could be another Simon, the church fathers equate the two, and the context of 8:9–11 (his character and the Samaritans' attitude about him) certainly points to the two as the same person.

■ **8:15 receive the Holy Spirit.** The believing Samaritans to this point had not received evidence of the dynamic inward presence of the Holy Spirit, although as believers the Holy Spirit was living in them (Rom. 8:9). We are not told what evidence the Holy Spirit gave.

■ **8:22, 23.** By his words and actions Simon proved that he did not believe in Christ. He was still "poisoned by bitterness" (cf. Deut. 29:18; Heb. 12:15) and "bound by iniquity" (see Rom. 6:16; 8:8). A profession of faith without repentance is invalid.

■ **8:27 eunuch.** This word refers to either an emasculated official in the royal court or to a high official of government. The biblical Ethiopia (or Cush) is the remote area south of Egypt, including parts of modern Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Sudan.

Philip's Missionary Journeys. The journeys of Philip (see Acts 6:5) are recorded in Acts 8:5–13 and 8:26–40. The significant response to his preaching in Samaria brought Peter and John there to minister to the new converts. Philip followed divine instruction to travel the wilderness road that runs south from Jerusalem to Gaza, baptizing the Ethiopian eunuch on the way. Thereafter, Philip preached along the coastal plain from Azotus to Caesarea.



And behold, [w]a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and [x]had come to Jerusalem to worship, 28 was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet. 29 Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go near and overtake this chariot."

30 So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

31 And he said, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him. 32 The place in the Scripture which he read was this:

[y]*"He was led as a sheep to the slaughter;*
And as a lamb before its shearer is silent,
[z]*So He opened not His mouth.*
33 *In His humiliation His [a]justice was taken away,*
And who will declare His generation?
For His life is [b]taken from the earth."

34 So the eunuch answered Philip and said, "I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?" 35 Then Philip opened his mouth, [c]and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. 36 Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, *here is* water. [d]What hinders me from being baptized?"

37 [6]Then Philip said, [e]"If you believe with all your heart, you may."

And he answered and said, [f]"I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

38 So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. 39 Now when they came up out of the water, [g]the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing. 40 But Philip was found at [7]Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to [h]Caesarea.

The Damascus Road: Saul Converted

9 Then [a]Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest 2 and asked [b]letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

3 [c]As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. 4 Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, [d]why are you persecuting Me?"

5 And he said, "Who are You, Lord?"

Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. [f]It *is* hard for you to kick against the goads."

6 So he, trembling and astonished, said, "Lord, what do You want me to do?"

Then the Lord *said* to him, "Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

27 [w]Ps. 68:31; 87:4; Is. 56:3; Zeph. 3:10 [x]1 Kin. 8:41, 42; John 12:20

32 [y]Is. 53:7, 8 [z]Matt. 26:62, 63; 27:12, 14; John 19:9

33 [a]Luke 23:1–25 [b]Luke 23:33–46

35 [c]Luke 24:27; Acts 17:2; 18:28; 28:23

36 [d]Acts 10:47; 16:33

37 [e]Matt. 28:19; [Mark 16:16; Rom. 10:9, 10] [f]Matt. 16:16; John 6:69; 9:35, 38; 11:27 [6]NU, M omit v. 37. It is found in Western texts, including the Latin tradition.

39 [g]1 Kin. 18:12; 2 Kin. 2:16; Ezek. 3:12, 14; 2 Cor. 12:2

40 [h]Acts 21:8 [7]Same as Heb. *Ashdod*

CHAPTER 9

1 [a]Acts 7:57; 8:1, 3; 26:10, 11; Gal. 1:13; 1 Tim. 1:13

2 [b]Acts 22:5

3 [c]Acts 22:6; 26:12, 13; 1 Cor. 15:8

4 [d][Matt. 25:40]

5 [f]NU, M omit the rest of v. 5 and begin v. 6 with *But arise and go*

Candace. The title of the queen mother who ruled in the place of her son. He was thought to be too sacred to be involved in secular affairs.

■ **8:28 reading Isaiah.** If the Ethiopian had been reading the passage about the Lord's mercy to eunuchs (Is. 56:3–5; cf. Deut. 23:1), it would have been natural for him also to read Is. 53 (v. 35 note).

■ **8:30 heard him.** In ancient times people normally read out loud.

■ **8:35 preached Jesus.** Philip began from Is. 53, and identified the servant in the passage as the Suffering Servant, Jesus. Luke implies that he went on to other Old Testament passages to identify Jesus as the Messiah.

■ **8:40 Azotus.** Ancient Old Testament Ashdod (1 Sam. 5:1), one of the five Philistine cities, about twenty miles north of Gaza and sixty miles south of Caesarea on the coast. Philip preached the gospel in all the towns along the coast until he reached Caesarea, a large city Herod the Great had rebuilt (near Strato's Tower). It had an excellent harbor that Herod expanded for important sea traffic (21:8), and it served as headquarters for the Roman procurators such as Pilate, Felix (23:33—24:4), and Festus (25:6). Philip must have settled in Caesarea because years later he still resided there (21:8).

■ **9:1 Saul.** Saul was introduced in 7:58 and he is the main character in 9:1–31. A third brief glimpse of Saul is seen again in 11:25–30 before Saul, soon to be called Paul, becomes the main character in chs. 13—28.

still breathing threats. Even though he had helped to eliminate Stephen, Saul continued to persecute the Christian heresy.

■ **9:2 the Way.** Other names used in Acts for the early Christians are: "Christians" (used only in 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:16), "disciples" (vv. 10, 19), "saints" (v. 13), "all who call on Your name" (v. 14), and "brethren" (v. 30). "The Way" identifies the Christian cause as composed of followers of Jesus, who is "the way" (John 14:6). It is used a number of times in Acts (19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22).

■ **9:3 a light . . . from heaven.** A supernatural light brighter than the sun (26:13) caught his attention.

■ **9:4 Saul, Saul.** The repetition signifies intimate personal address (cf. Gen. 22:11; 46:2; Ex. 3:4; 1 Sam. 3:10; Luke 10:41; 22:31).

persecuting Me. To persecute Jesus' disciples was to persecute Jesus (Matt. 5:10–12; John 15:19, 20).

7 [e]Dan. 10:7; John 12:29; [Acts 22:9; 26:13]
10 [f]Acts 22:12
11 [g]Acts 21:39; 22:3
13 [h]Acts 9:1 [2]*bad things*
14 [i]Acts 7:59; 9:2, 21; 1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Tim. 2:22
15 [j]Acts 13:2; 22:21; Rom. 1:1; 1 Cor. 15:10; Gal. 1:15; Eph. 3:7, 8; 1 Tim. 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:11 [k]Rom. 1:5; 11:13; Gal. 2:7, 8 [l]Acts 25:22, 23; 26:1 [m]Acts 21:40; Rom. 1:16; 9:1–5 [3]Lit. *sons*
16 [n]Acts 20:23; 2 Cor. 11:23–28; 12:7–10; Gal. 6:17; Phil. 1:29, 30 [o]2 Cor. 4:11
17 [p]Acts 22:12, 13 [q]Acts 8:17 [r]Acts 2:4; 4:31; 8:17; 13:52 [4]M omits *Jesus*
19 [s]Acts 26:20
20 [5]NU *Jesus*
21 [t]Acts 8:3; 9:13; Gal. 1:13, 23
22 [u]Acts 18:28
23 [v]Acts 23:12; 2 Cor. 11:26
24 [w]2 Cor. 11:32
25 [x]Josh. 2:15; 1 Sam. 19:12
26 [y]Acts 22:17–20; 26:20; Gal. 1:17, 18
27 [z]Acts 4:36; 13:2 [a]Acts 9:20, 22
28 [b]Gal. 1:18
29 [c]Acts 6:1; 11:20 [d]Acts 9:23; 2 Cor. 11:26 [6]Greek-speaking Jews

7 And [e]the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one.
8 Then Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened he saw no one. But they led him by the hand and brought *him* into Damascus. 9 And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

Ananias Baptizes Saul

10 Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus [f]named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, "Ananias."

And he said, "Here I am, Lord."

11 So the Lord *said* to him, "Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for *one* called Saul [g]of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying. 12 And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting *his* hand on him, so that he might receive his sight."

13 Then Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, [h]how much [2]harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. 14 And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all [i]who call on Your name."

15 But the Lord said to him, "Go, for [j]he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before [k]Gentiles, [l]kings, and the [m]children[3] of Israel. 16 For [n]I will show him how many things he must suffer for My [o]name's sake."

17 [p]And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and [q]laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord [4]Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and [r]be filled with the Holy Spirit." 18 Immediately there fell from his eyes *something* like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.

19 So when he had received food, he was strengthened. [s]Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus.

Saul Preaches Christ

20 Immediately he preached [5]the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God.

21 Then all who heard were amazed, and said, [t]"Is this not he who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and has come here for that purpose, so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests?"

22 But Saul increased all the more in strength, [u]and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this *Jesus* is the Christ.

Saul Escapes Death

23 Now after many days were past, [v]the Jews plotted to kill him. 24 [w]But their plot became known to Saul. And they watched the gates day and night, to kill him. 25 Then the disciples took him by night and [x]let *him* down through the wall in a large basket.

Saul at Jerusalem

26 And [y]when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple. 27 [z]But Barnabas took him and brought *him* to the apostles. And he declared to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had spoken to him, [a]and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. 28 So [b]he was with them at Jerusalem, coming in and going out. 29 And he spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus and disputed against the [c]Hellenists,[6] [d]but they attempted to kill him. 30 When the brethren found out, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him out to Tarsus.

■ **9:7 the men . . . hearing a voice.** In 22:9 Paul says that "they did not hear the voice"; the Greek word can mean "sound" or "voice." Saul's companions heard a sound but could not understand what was being said.

■ **9:15 chosen vessel . . . before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.** Paul considered himself to be an apostle to the Gentiles (Rom. 1:13, 14) as Peter was to the Jews (Gal. 2:8), but Paul also preached many times to the Jews, particularly in their synagogues (v. 20; Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 9:20).

■ **9:17 Jesus, who appeared to you.** Saul had not had a dream or seen a vision, but had seen the Lord (cf. Is. 6:1, 5).

be filled with the Holy Spirit. Cf. 2:38. Nothing is said about any supernatural gifts, but emphasis is placed on his powerful preaching about Jesus as the Son of God (v. 20).

■ **9:18 something like scales.** Luke frequently calls attention to physical afflictions (13:11; 28:3–8). See Introduction: Author.

■ **9:26 Saul had come to Jerusalem.** According to Gal. 1:18, 19, Paul saw only Peter and James the Lord's brother at Jerusalem. The others may have been afraid to meet with him or were preaching the gospel in other areas.

The Church Prospers

31 [e]Then the [z]churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were [f]edified.[g] And walking in the [g]fear of the Lord and in the [h]comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were [i]multiplied.

Aeneas Healed

32 Now it came to pass, as Peter went [j]through all *parts of the country,* that he also came down to the saints who dwelt in Lydda. 33 There he found a certain man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years and was paralyzed. 34 And Peter said to him, "Aeneas, [k]Jesus the Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed." Then he arose immediately. 35 So all who dwelt at Lydda and [l]Sharon saw him and [m]turned to the Lord.

Dorcas Restored to Life

36 At Joppa there was a certain disciple named [9]Tabitha, which is translated [l]Dorcas. This woman was full [n]of good works and charitable deeds which she did. 37 But it happened in those days that she became sick and died. When they had washed her, they laid *her* in [o]an upper room. 38 And since Lydda was near Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent two men to him, imploring *him* not to delay in coming to them. 39 Then Peter arose and went with them. When he had come, they brought *him* to the upper room. And all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them. 40 But Peter [p]put them all out, and [q]knelt down and prayed. And turning to the body he [r]said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. 41 Then he gave her *his* hand and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive. 42 And it became known throughout all Joppa, [s]and many believed on the Lord. 43 So it was that he stayed many days in Joppa with [t]Simon, a tanner.

Cornelius Sends a Delegation

10 There was a certain man in [a]Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian [l]Regiment, 2 [b]a devout *man* and one who [c]feared God with all his household,

31 [e]Acts 5:11; 8:1; 16:5 [f][Eph. 4:16, 29] [g]Ps. 34:9 [h]John 14:16 [i]Acts 16:5 [z]NU *church . . . was* [g]*built up*

32 [j]Acts 8:14

34 [k][Acts 3:6, 16; 4:10]

35 [l]1 Chr. 5:16; 27:29; Is. 33:9; 35:2; 65:10 [m]Acts 11:21; 15:19

36 [n]1 Tim. 2:10; Titus 3:8 [9]Lit., in Aram., *Gazelle* [l]Lit., in Gr., *Gazelle*

37 [o]Acts 1:13; 9:39

40 [p]Matt. 9:25 [q]Luke 22:41; Acts 7:60 [r]Mark 5:41, 42; John 11:43

42 [s]John 11:45

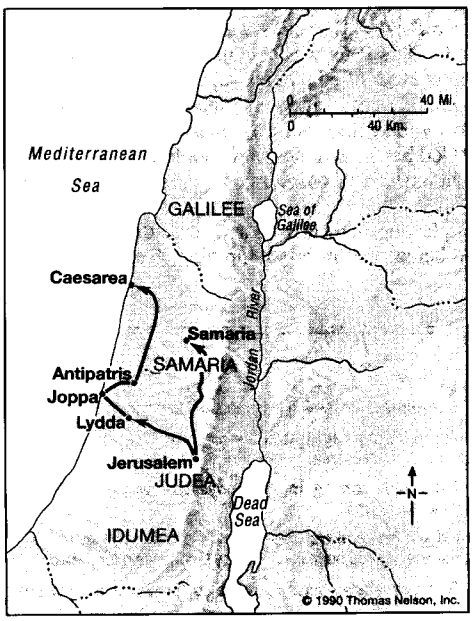
43 [t]Acts 10:6

CHAPTER 10

1 [a]Acts 8:40; 23:23 [l]*Cohort*

2 [b]Acts 8:2; 9:22; 22:12 [c][Acts 10:22, 35; 13:16, 26]

■ **9:35 Sharon.** The news concerning the healing of the paralytic had dramatic effects; it traveled to the Plain of Sharon, which extends north of Joppa up the coast forty to fifty miles.



■ **9:36 Joppa.** An ancient seaport (modern Jaffa, south of Tel Aviv), about thirty-eight miles northwest of Jerusalem, the port from which Jonah sailed (Jon. 1:3).

Tabitha. See text note.

■ **9:37 washed her.** Probably before the anointing with spices (cf. John 19:40). In Jerusalem, Jesus' body had been buried on the day of death, but outside the city a longer period was allowed (up to three days).

■ **9:43 Simon, a tanner.** Jews believed tanning to be an unclean profession because it involved contact with dead animals (Lev. 5:2). Peter was willing to stay with a tanner because the message of the gospel was beginning to break down barriers between people. This also anticipates Peter's vision in 10:9–23.

■ **10:1 Caesarea.** Caesarea Maritima (Caesarea by the Sea) was a seaport on the Mediterranean sixty-five miles northwest of Jerusalem. It was rebuilt and improved on an ambitious scale by Herod the Great.

■ **10:2 feared God.** A term that may indicate that Cornelius was partly converted to Judaism, a Gentile who worshiped God but who was not circumcised (13:16, 26).

Peter's Missionary Journeys. Peter and John traveled to Samaria to join Philip in the revival there (Acts 8:14–25). Peter's missionary efforts in Acts 9:32—10:48 show the power of God at work. He traveled to Lydda where Aeneas was healed. In Joppa he restored Dorcas to life and stayed many days with Simon the tanner. The vision of the unclean animals and birds prepared Peter to accept readily Cornelius's invitation to come to Caesarea, where the gospel was powerfully received by the Gentiles.

who gave [2]alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always. [3] About [3]the ninth hour of the day [d]he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him, "Cornelius!"

[4] And when he observed him, he was afraid, and said, "What is it, lord?"

So he said to him, "Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God. [5] Now [e]send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter. [6] He is lodging with [f]Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea. [g]He[4] will tell you what you must do." [7] And when the angel who spoke to him had departed, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier from among those who waited on him continually. [8] So when he had explained all *these* things to them, he sent them to Joppa.

Peter's Vision

[9] The next day, as they went on their journey and drew near the city, [h]Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about [5]the sixth hour. [10] Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance [11] and [i]saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth. [12] In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. [13] And a voice came to him, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat."

[14] But Peter said, "Not so, Lord! [j]For I have never eaten anything common or unclean."

[15] And a voice *spoke* to him again the second time, [k]"What God has [6]cleansed you must not call common." [16] This was done three times. And the object was taken up into heaven again.

Summoned to Caesarea

[17] Now while Peter [7]wondered within himself what this vision which he had seen meant, behold, the men who had been sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate. [18] And they called and asked whether Simon, whose surname was Peter, was lodging there.

[19] While Peter thought about the vision, [l]the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are seeking you. [20] [m]Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them."

[21] Then Peter went down to the men [8]who had been sent to him from Cornelius, and said, "Yes, I am he whom you seek. For what reason have you come?"

[22] And they said, "Cornelius *the* centurion, a just man, one who fears God and [n]has a good reputation among all the nation of the Jews, was divinely instructed by a holy angel to summon you to his house, and to hear words from you." [23] Then he invited them in and lodged *them.*

On the next day Peter went away with them, [o]and some brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

Peter Meets Cornelius

[24] And the following day they entered Caesarea. Now Cornelius was waiting for them, and had called together his relatives and close friends. [25] As Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped *him.* [26] But Peter lifted him up, saying, [p]"Stand up; I myself am also a man." [27] And as he talked with him, he went in and found many who had come together. [28] Then he said to them, "You know how [q]unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But [r]God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean. [29] Therefore I came without objection as soon as I was sent for. I ask, then, for what reason have you sent for me?"

[30] So Cornelius said, [9]"Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and behold, [s]a man stood before me [t]in bright clothing, [31] and said, 'Cor-

2 [2]*charitable gifts*
3 [d]Acts 10:30; 11:13 [3]3 P.M.
5 [e]Acts 11:13, 14
6 [f]Acts 9:43 [g]Acts 11:14 [4]NU, M omit the rest of v. 6.
9 [h]Acts10:9–32; 11:5–14 [5]Noon
11 [i]Ezek. 1:1; Matt. 3:16; Acts 7:56; Rev. 4:1; 19:11
14 [j]Lev. 11:4; 20:25; Deut. 14:3, 7; Ezek. 4:14
15 [k][Matt. 15:11; Mark 7:19]; Acts 10:28; [Rom. 14:14]; 1 Cor. 10:25; [1 Tim. 4:4; Titus 1:15] [6]Declared clean
17 [7]*was perplexed*
19 [l]Acts 11:12
20 [m]Acts 15:7–9
21 [8]NU, M omit *who had been sent to him from Cornelius*
22 [n]Acts 22:12
23 [o]Acts 10:45; 11:12
26 [p]Acts 14:14, 15; Rev. 19:10; 22:8
28 [q]John 4:9; 18:28; Acts 11:3; Gal. 2:12 [r][Acts 10:14, 35; 15:8, 9]
30 [s]Acts 1:10 [t]Matt. 28:3; Mark 16:5 [9]NU *Four days ago to this hour, at the ninth hour*

■ **10:9 on the housetop to pray.** Peter probably prayed three times a day (cf. 3:1; Dan. 6:10); this was his midday prayer. Houses typically had flat roofs reached by an outside stairway.

■ **10:10 a trance.** Peter's consciousness was withdrawn from external things in preparation for the vision (cf. 22:17).

■ **10:12 All kinds of . . . animals.** Both clean and unclean animals (Lev. 11).

■ **10:13 kill and eat.** Peter was unwilling to violate the Old Testament laws that prohibited eating unclean animals (v. 14).

■ **10:15 God has cleansed.** Through this vivid illustration, God told Peter that He had abrogated the laws of ritual cleanliness; see Mark 7:14–19.

■ **10:16 three times.** The vision was repeated to impress Peter.

■ **10:24 the following day.** It took the group two days to travel thirty miles from Joppa to Caesarea.

■ **10:25 Peter was coming in.** Peter was now willing to enter the house of a Gentile (v. 28).

fell down at his feet and worshiped him. Cornelius was overawed at Peter's presence; he had been instructed by God to send for the apostle.

■ **10:28 God has shown me.** He refers to the vision he had seen (v. 15).

nelius, [u]your prayer has been heard, and [v]your [1]alms are remembered in the sight of God. 32 Send therefore to Joppa and call Simon here, whose surname is Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea. [2]When he comes, he will speak to you.' 33 So I sent to you immediately, and you have done well to come. Now therefore, we are all present before God, to hear all the things commanded you by God."

Preaching to Cornelius' Household

34 Then Peter opened *his* mouth and said: [w]"In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. 35 But [x]in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is [y]accepted by Him. 36 The word which *God* sent to the [3]children of Israel, [z]preaching peace through Jesus Christ—[a]He is Lord of all— 37 that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and [b]began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: 38 how [c]God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who [d]went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, [e]for God was with Him. 39 And we are [f]witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom [4]they [g]killed by hanging on a tree. 40 Him [h]God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly, 41 [i]not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, *even* to us [j]who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead. 42 And [k]He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify [l]that it is He who was ordained by God *to be* Judge [m]of the living and the dead. 43 [n]To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, [o]whoever believes in Him will receive [p]remission[5] of sins."

The Holy Spirit Falls on the Gentiles

44 While Peter was still speaking these words, [q]the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. 45 [r]And [6]those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, [s]because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. 46 For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.

Then Peter answered, 47 "Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit [t]just as we *have?*" 48 [u]And he commanded them to be baptized [v]in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.

Peter Defends God's Grace

11 Now the apostles and brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. 2 And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, [a]those of the circumcision contended with him, 3 saying, [b]"You went in to uncircumcised men [c]and ate with them!"

4 But Peter explained *it* to them [d]in order from the beginning, saying: 5 [e]"I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, an object descending like a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came to me. 6 When I observed it intently and considered, I saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. 7 And I heard a voice saying to me, 'Rise, Peter; kill and eat.' 8 But I said, 'Not so, Lord! For nothing common or unclean has at any time entered my mouth.' 9 But the voice answered me again from heaven, 'What God has cleansed you must not call common.' 10 Now this was done three times, and all were drawn up again into heaven. 11 At that very moment, three men stood before the house where I was, having been sent to me from Caesarea. 12 Then [f]the Spirit told me to go with them, doubting nothing. Moreover [g]these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. 13 [h]And he told us how he had seen an angel standing in his house, who said to him, 'Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon whose surname is Peter, 14 who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.' 15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, [i]as upon us at the beginning. 16 Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how

31 [u]Dan. 10:12 [v]Heb. 6:10 [1]*charitable gifts*

32 [2]NU omits the rest of v. 32.

34 [w]Deut. 10:17

35 [x][Eph. 2:13] [y]Ps. 15:1, 2

36 [z]Is. 57:19 [a]Rom. 10:12 [3]Lit. *sons*

37 [b]Luke 4:14

38 [c]Luke 4:18 [d]Matt. 4:23 [e]John 3:2; 8:29

39 [f]Acts 1:8 [g]Acts 2:23 [4]NU, M *they also*

40 [h]Acts 2:24

41 [i][John 14:17, 19, 22; 15:27] [j]Luke 24:30, 41–43

42 [k]Matt. 28:19 [l]John 5:22, 27 [m]1 Pet. 4:5

43 [n]Zech. 13:1 [o]Gal. 3:22 [p]Acts 13:38, 39 [5]*forgiveness*

44 [q]Acts 4:31

45 [r]Acts 10:23 [s]Acts 11:18 [6]The Jews

47 [t]Acts 2:4; 10:44; 11:17; 15:8

48 [u]1 Cor. 1:14–17 [v]Acts 2:38; 8:16; 19:5

CHAPTER 11

2 [a]Acts 10:45

3 [b]Acts 10:28 [c]Gal. 2:12

4 [d]Luke 1:3

5 [e]Acts 10:9

12 [f][John 16:13] [g]Acts 10:23

13 [h]Acts 10:30

15 [i]Acts 2:1–4; 15:7–9

■ **10:34 God shows no partiality.** The gospel is for both Jews and Gentiles (1:8; Rom. 1:16).

■ **10:36 preaching peace through Jesus Christ.** The peace of reconciliation with God through the blood of Jesus, our peace (Eph. 2:13, 14).

Lord of all. Jesus is Lord of both Jews and Gentiles.

■ **10:44 the Holy Spirit fell upon all.** They were anointed by the Spirit's power and were praising God and speaking in tongues (v. 46).

■ **10:45 the circumcision . . . were astonished.** It was difficult for strict Jews who had not seen Peter's vision to realize that God did not show favoritism in His offer.

■ **10:48 in the name of the Lord.** Forgiveness of sins is through the name of Jesus (v. 43).

■ **11:2 those of the circumcision.** Other Jewish believers criticized Peter for accepting Gentiles.

■ **11:3 ate with them.** Eating with non-Jews was a clear violation of the ceremonial law because Gentiles did not follow the Old Testament dietary laws (Lev. 11) or ceremonial washings (Mark 7:5).

■ **11:14 you and all your household will be saved.** God's saving grace is often extended to whole families, as consistently appears in the Old Testament (e.g., Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and their families) and the New (2:38, 39; 16:31; Luke 19:9).

He said, [j]John indeed baptized with water, but [k]you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' [17] [l]If therefore God gave them the same gift as *He gave* us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, [m]who was I that I could withstand God?"

[18] When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, [n]"Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life."

Barnabas and Saul at Antioch

[19] [o]Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only. [20] But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to [p]the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus. [21] And [q]the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and [r]turned to the Lord.

[22] Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out [s]Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. [23] When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and [t]encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord. [24] For he was a good man, [u]full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. [v]And a great many people were added to the Lord.

[25] Then Barnabas departed for [w]Tarsus to seek Saul. [26] And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.

Relief to Judea

[27] And in these days [x]prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch. [28] Then one of them, named [y]Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of [z]Claudius Caesar. [29] Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send [a]relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea. [30] [b]This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

Herod's Violence to the Church

12 Now about that time Herod the king stretched out *his* hand to harass some from the church. [2] Then he killed James [a]the brother of John with the sword. [3] And because he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to seize Peter also. Now it was *during* [b]the Days of Unleavened Bread. [4] So [c]when he had arrested him, he put *him* in prison, and delivered *him* to four [1]squads of soldiers to keep him, intending to bring him before the people after Passover.

Peter Freed from Prison

[5] Peter was therefore kept in prison, but [2]constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church. [6] And when Herod was about to bring him out, that night Peter was sleeping, bound with two chains between two soldiers; and the guards before the door were [3]keeping the prison. [7] Now behold, [d]an angel of the Lord stood by *him,* and a light shone in the prison; and he struck Peter on the side and raised him up, saying, "Arise quickly!" And his chains fell off *his* hands. [8] Then the angel said to him, "Gird yourself and tie on your sandals"; and so he did. And he said to him, "Put on your garment and follow me." [9] So he went out and followed him, and [e]did not know that what was done by the angel was real, but thought [f]he was seeing a vision. [10] When

16 [j]Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; John 1:26, 33; Acts 1:5; 19:4 [k]Is. 44:3

17 [l][Acts 15:8, 9] [m]Acts 10:47

18 [n]Is. 42:1, 6; 49:6; Luke 2:32; John 11:52; Rom. 10:12, 13; 15:9, 16

19 [o]Acts 8:1, 4

20 [p]Acts 6:1; 9:29

21 [q]Luke 1:66; Acts 2:47 [r]Acts 9:35; 14:1

22 [s]Acts 4:36; 9:27

23 [t]Acts 13:43; 14:22

24 [u]Acts 6:5 [v]Acts 5:14; 11:21

25 [w]Acts 9:11, 30

27 [x]Acts 2:17; 13:1; 15:32; 21:9; 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11

28 [y]John 16:13; Acts 21:10 [z]Acts 18:2

29 [a]Rom. 15:26; 1 Cor. 16:1; 2 Cor. 9:1

30 [b]Acts 12:25

CHAPTER 12

2 [a]Matt. 4:21; 20:23

3 [b]Ex. 12:15; 23:15; Acts 20:6

4 [c]John 21:18 [1]Gr. *tetrads,* squads of four

5 [2]NU *constantly* or *earnestly*

6 [3]*guarding*

7 [d]Acts 5:19

9 [e]Ps. 126:1 [f]Acts 10:3, 17; 11:5

■ **11:17 I could withstand God.** It was God's will to save both Jews and Gentiles; no doubt some of those present were reminded of God's promise to Abraham: "in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen. 12:3; cf. Gal. 3:8).

the Lord Jesus Christ. This full title of Jesus is first used here.

■ **11:18 repentance to life.** Biblical repentance means sorrow for sin and a change of heart that turns from sin toward God (20:21). The fruits of repentance are the good works to which God calls us (26:20; Luke 3:8; Eph. 2:10).

■ **11:21 hand of the Lord.** The men preached, but people were saved as God called them to believe in Him (1 Cor. 3:6).

■ **11:26 called Christians.** The word "Christian" occurs three times in the New Testament: here, 26:28, and 1 Pet. 4:16. It means a person belonging to or following Christ. The name may have originated in the church, or it may at first have been a derogatory term used by outsiders.

■ **11:28 all the world.** Widespread, not local.

■ **12:3 it pleased the Jews . . . seize Peter also.** God's sovereign purpose was carried out in the lives of His equally dedicated servants: at this time James died by the sword, while Peter was delivered from prison.

during the Days of Unleavened Bread. With so many zealous Jews visiting the city at the feast, it was an opportune time to make the arrest.

■ **12:7 an angel of the Lord . . . a light shone.** An angel was an assurance of God's presence, and the light would probably remind Peter of the Old Testament glory of the Lord (9:3; Ex. 3:2; 13:22; 40:34).

■ **12:10 iron gate that leads to the city.** The Antonian Fortress had an entrance into the temple courts on the south as well as other entrances to the city.

they were past the first and the second guard posts, they came to the iron gate that leads to the city, [g]which opened to them of its own accord; and they went out and went down one street, and immediately the angel departed from him.

11 And when Peter had come to himself, he said, "Now I know for certain that [h]the Lord has sent His angel, and [i]has delivered me from the hand of Herod and *from* all the expectation of the Jewish people."

12 So, when he had considered *this,* [j]he came to the house of Mary, the mother of [k]John whose surname was Mark, where many were gathered together [l]praying. 13 And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a girl named Rhoda came to answer. 14 When she recognized Peter's voice, because of *her* gladness she did not open the gate, but ran in and announced that Peter stood before the gate. 15 But they said to her, "You are beside yourself!" Yet she kept insisting that it was so. So they said, [m]"It is his angel."

16 Now Peter continued knocking; and when they opened *the door* and saw him, they were astonished. 17 But [n]motioning to them with his hand to keep silent, he declared to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, "Go, tell these things to James and to the brethren." And he departed and went to another place.

18 Then, as soon as it was day, there was no small [4]stir among the soldiers about what had become of Peter. 19 But when Herod had searched for him and not found him, he examined the guards and commanded that *they* should be put to death.

And he went down from Judea to Caesarea, and stayed *there.*

Herod's Violent Death

20 Now Herod had been very angry with the people of [o]Tyre and Sidon; but they came to him with one accord, and having made Blastus [5]the king's personal aide their friend, they asked for peace, because [p]their country was [6]supplied with food by the king's *country.*

21 So on a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat on his throne and gave an oration to them. 22 And the people kept shouting, "The voice of a god and not of a man!" 23 Then immediately an angel of the Lord [q]struck him, because [r]he did not give glory to God. And he was eaten by worms and [7]died.

24 But [s]the word of God grew and multiplied.

Barnabas and Saul Appointed

25 And [t]Barnabas and Saul returned [s]from Jerusalem when they had [u]fulfilled *their* ministry, and they also [v]took with them [w]John whose surname was Mark.

13 Now [a]in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: [b]Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, [c]Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, [d]"Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work [e]to which I have called them." 3 Then, [f]having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent *them* away.

10 [g]Acts 5:19; 16:26

11 [h][Ps. 34:7] [i]Job 5:19

12 [j]Acts 4:23 [k]Acts 13:5, 13; 15:37 [l]Acts 12:5

15 [m][Matt. 18:10]

17 [n]Acts 13:16; 19:33; 21:40

18 [4]*disturbance*

20 [o]Matt. 11:21 [p]Ezek. 27:17 [5]*who was in charge of the king's bedchamber* [6]Lit. *nourished*

23 [q]2 Sam. 24:16, 17 [r]Ps. 115:1 [7]*breathed his last*

24 [s]Acts 6:7; 19:20

25 [t]Acts 11:30 [u]Acts 11:30 [v]Acts 13:5, 13 [w]Acts 12:12; 15:37 [s]NU, M *to*

CHAPTER 13

1 [a]Acts 14:26 [b]Acts 11:22 [c]Rom. 16:21

2 [d]Gal. 1:15; 2:9 [e]Heb. 5:4

3 [f]Acts 6:6

■ **12:15, 16** The disciples prayed fervently to God (cf. 4:23, 24) to protect and deliver Peter, but then failed to believe that the Lord had done what they requested.

■ **12:15 his angel.** They thought it was his personal angelic guardian (Matt. 18:10; Heb. 1:14). The popular conception was that such a guardian could assume the appearance of the human person protected.

■ **12:19 put to death.** According to Roman law, if a prisoner escaped, the guard was liable to be punished as the prisoner would have been (cf. 16:27, 28).

■ **12:23 did not give glory to God.** In his pride, he accepted for himself the praise that belongs to God.

eaten by worms. The Jewish historian Josephus (*Antiquities* 19.346–350) records that Herod Agrippa I experienced heart pains together with pain in his abdomen and died after five days. Herod died in A.D. 44, the fourth year of Claudius Caesar.

■ **12:25 Barnabas and Saul . . . had fulfilled their ministry.** This was the mission of bringing the Antioch famine relief gift to Jerusalem (11:27–30).

John . . . Mark. Possibly the young man who fled the night of Jesus' arrest (Mark 14:51, 52). Mark, the writer of the second Gospel (cf. 1 Pet. 5:13), accompanied Paul and Barnabas down to Antioch and went with them on the first missionary journey (13:4) as far as Perga in Pamphylia (13:13).

■ **13:1 Barnabas.** See note on 4:36.

Simeon . . . called Niger. His second name means "black" in Latin and he may have come from Africa. He may be the same as Simon of Cyrene (Luke 23:26) whose sons, Alexander and Rufus, were among the Christians at Rome (Mark 15:21; cf. Rom. 16:13).

Lucius of Cyrene. Cyrene was the capital of the Roman province of Cyrenaica (in modern Libya).

■ **13:3 laid hands on them.** They officially placed their hands on Barnabas and Saul in recognition of what the Holy Spirit had already done (v. 2) and what He was going to do in sending them out (v. 4; cf. 14:23; 1 Tim. 4:14).

4 [g]Acts 4:36

5 [h][Acts 13:46] [i]Acts 12:25; 15:37

6 [j]Acts 8:9 [1]NU *the whole island*

8 [k]Ex. 7:11; 2 Tim. 3:8 [2]*opposed*

9 [l]Acts 2:4; 4:8

10 [m]Matt. 13:38; John 8:44; [1 John 3:8]

11 [n]Ex. 9:3; 1 Sam. 5:6; Job 19:21; Ps. 32:4; Heb. 10:31

13 [o]Acts 15:38

Preaching in Cyprus

4 So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to [g]Cyprus. 5 And when they arrived in Salamis, [h]they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. They also had [i]John as *their* assistant.

6 Now when they had gone through [j]the island to Paphos, they found [j]a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew whose name *was* Bar-Jesus, 7 who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man. This man called for Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. 8 But [k]Elymas the sorcerer (for so his name is translated) [2]withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. 9 Then Saul, who also *is called* Paul, [l]filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him 10 and said, "O full of all deceit and all fraud, [m]*you* son of the devil, *you* enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord? 11 And now, indeed, [n]the hand of the Lord *is* upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time."

And immediately a dark mist fell on him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand. 12 Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had been done, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

At Antioch in Pisidia

13 Now when Paul and his party set sail from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia; and [o]John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem. 14 But when they departed from Perga, they

■ **13:4 Seleucia.** The port of Antioch, sixteen miles west of Antioch.

Cyprus. An island in the Eastern Mediterranean, inhabited largely by Greeks but also by many Jews.

■ **13:5 arrived in Salamis.** They sailed directly west about 130 miles from Seleucia to the east coast of Cyprus. Salamis was the most important city on the island; the provincial capital was Paphos, ninety miles southwest.

■ **13:6 a certain sorcerer . . . a Jew.** The Greek *magos* means "wise man" (Matt. 2:1), "sorcerer," "magician." Sorcery was forbidden in Judaism, but was not unknown. Bar-Jesus ("son of Joshua") was indeed a false prophet.

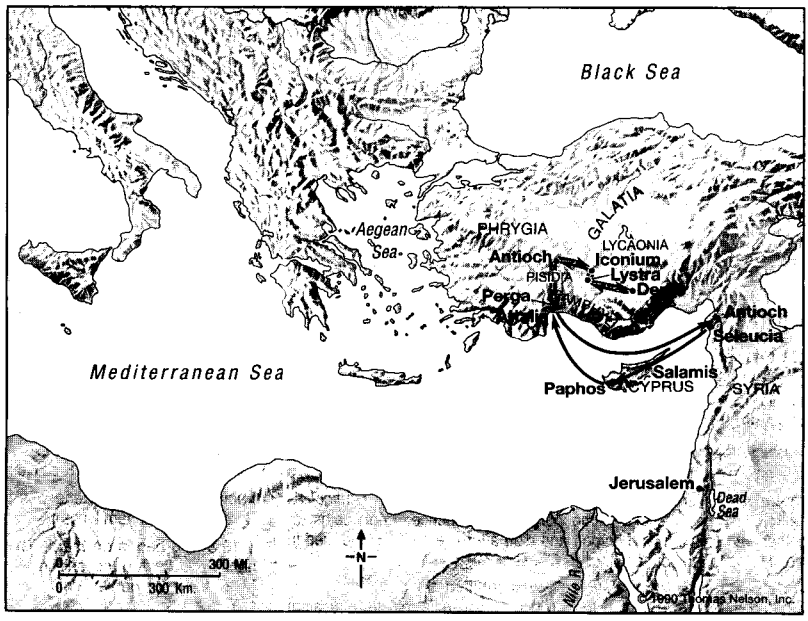
■ **13:7 Sergius Paulus.** Possibly Lucius Sergius Paulus, who had been an official in the reign of Claudius and then became proconsul (the chief officer in a senatorial province) at Paphos in Cyprus (cf. 18:12; 2 Cor. 9:2). By contrast, Palestine was an imperial province and had a procurator responsible directly to the emperor.

■ **13:8 Elymas.** Another name for Bar-Jesus. This man was in the proconsul's court; he tried to keep Paulus from believing the Christian message.

■ **13:9 Saul . . . called Paul.** "Saul" was his Jewish name and "Paul" his Roman name, probably going back to his life in Tarsus. Luke uses the occasion of the conversion of a prominent Gentile official, Sergius Paulus, to introduce the familiar name of the apostle to the Gentiles.

■ **13:13 came to Perga in Pamphylia.** The city of Perga was in Pamphylia, an economically poor Roman province on the south coast of Asia Minor (modern Turkey). Perga was five miles inland. It was at this time that John Mark left Paul and Barnabas and returned home.

■ **13:14 Antioch in Pisidia.** This Antioch was about a hundred miles



Paul Goes to Galatia (The First Missionary Journey, Acts 13; 14). Sent out from the church at Antioch (Acts 13:1–3), Paul and Barnabas went to the cities of Galatia in Asia Minor. The Jewish synagogues in these cities provided Paul a platform for preaching the gospel. At times, however, he even encountered opposition from the synagogues.

Antioch in Pisidia, and [p]went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day and sat down.
15 And [q]after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying, "Men *and* brethren, if you have [r]any word of [3]exhortation for the people, say on."
16 Then Paul stood up, and motioning with *his* hand said, "Men of Israel, and [s]you who fear God, listen: 17 The God of this people [4]Israel [t]chose our fathers, and exalted the people [u]when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, and with [5]an uplifted arm He [v]brought them out of it. 18 Now [w]for a time of about forty years He put up with their ways in the wilderness. 19 And when He had destroyed [x]seven nations in the land of Canaan, [y]He distributed their land to them by allotment.
20 "After that [z]He gave *them* judges for about four hundred and fifty years, [a]until Samuel the prophet. 21 [b]And afterward they asked for a king; so God gave them [c]Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. 22 And [d]when He had removed him, [e]He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, [f]*'I have found David* the *son* of Jesse, [g]*a man after My own heart,* who will do all My will.' 23 [h]From this man's seed, according [i]to *the* promise, God raised up for Israel [j]a [6]Savior—Jesus— 24 [k]after John had first preached, before His coming, the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel. 25 And as John was finishing his course, he said, [l]'Who do you think I am? I am not *He.* But behold, [m]there comes One after me, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to loose.'
26 "Men *and* brethren, sons of the [7]family of Abraham, and [n]those among you who fear God, [o]to you the [8]word of this salvation has been sent. 27 For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, [p]because they did not know Him, nor even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled *them* in condemning *Him.* 28 [q]And though they found no cause for death *in Him,* they asked Pilate that He should be put to death. 29 [r]Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him, [s]they took *Him* down from the tree and laid *Him* in a tomb. 30 [t]But God raised Him from the dead. 31 [u]He was seen for many days by those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses to the people. 32 And we declare to you glad tidings—[v]that promise which was made to the fathers. 33 God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm:

[w] *'You are My Son,*
Today I have begotten You.'

34 And that He raised Him from the dead, no more to return to [9]corruption, He has spoken thus:

[x] *'I will give you the sure [1]mercies of David.'*

35 Therefore He also says in another *Psalm:*

[y] *'You will not allow Your Holy One to see corruption.'*

36 "For David, after he had served [2]his own generation by the will of God, [z]fell asleep, was buried with his fathers, and [3]saw corruption; 37 but He whom God raised up [4]saw no corruption.
38 Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that [a]through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins; 39 and [b]by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses. 40 Beware therefore, lest what has been spoken in the prophets come upon you:

14 [p]Acts 16:13
15 [q]Luke 4:16 [r]Heb. 13:22 [3]*encouragement*
16 [s]Acts 10:35
17 [t]Deut. 7:6–8 [u]Acts 7:17 [v]Ex. 14:8 [4]M omits *Israel* [5]Mighty power
18 [w]Num. 14:34
19 [x]Deut. 7:1 [y]Josh. 14:1, 2; 19:51
20 [z]Judg. 2:16 [a]1 Sam. 3:20
21 [b]1 Sam. 8:5 [c]1 Sam. 10:20–24
22 [d]1 Sam. 15:23, 26, 28 [e]1 Sam. 16:1, 12, 13 [f]Ps. 89:20 [g]1 Sam. 13:14
23 [h]Is. 11:1 [i]Ps. 132:11 [j][Matt. 1:21] [6]M *salvation, after*
24 [k][Luke 3:3]
25 [l]Mark 1:7 [m]John 1:20, 27
26 [n]Ps. 66:16 [o]Matt. 10:6 [7]*stock* [8]*message*
27 [p]Luke 23:34
28 [q]Matt. 27:22, 23
29 [r]Luke 18:31 [s]Matt. 27:57–61
30 [t]Matt. 12:39, 40; 28:6
31 [u]Acts 1:3, 11
32 [v][Gen. 3:15]
33 [w]Ps. 2:7
34 [x]Is. 55:3 [9]*the state of decay* [1]*blessings*
35 [y]Ps. 16:10
36 [z]Acts 2:29 [2]*in his* [3]*underwent decay*
37 [4]*underwent no decay*
38 [a]Jer. 31:34
39 [b][Is. 53:11]

north of Perga and 3,600 feet above sea level. It was in Phrygia but near Pisidia, and to distinguish it from another Antioch in Phrygia it was popularly called "Antioch in Pisidia."

■ **13:15 reading of the Law and the Prophets.** A worship service in the synagogue would include the creed (Deut. 6:4), the prayer of "Eighteen Blessings," a reading from the Law and another from the Prophets, an exposition and application (Luke 4:16–30), and a concluding benediction.

■ **13:20 about four hundred and fifty years.** About four hundred years plus the forty years in the wilderness and the period of Joshua's conquest (7:6 note).

■ **13:33 You are My Son, Today I have begotten You.** That is, today in raising You from the dead, I am declaring that You are My Son and I am Your Father (Heb. 1:5 note).

■ **13:34 no more to return to corruption.** That is, never to die again.

■ **13:39** The law points the sinner to Christ (Gal. 3:24), for "a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ" (Gal. 2:16). To be justified is to be declared righteous by God (Rom. 3:21, 22), and therefore granted forgiveness of sins (Eph. 1:7). See "Justification and Merit" at Gal. 3:11.

41 [c]Hab. 1:5

42 [5]Or *And when they went out of the synagogue of the Jews;* NU *And when they went out of the synagogue, they begged*

43 [d]Acts 11:23 [e]Titus 2:11; Heb. 12:15; 1 Pet. 5:12

45 [f]Acts 18:6; 1 Pet. 4:4; Jude 10

46 [g]Matt. 10:6; Acts 3:26; Rom. 1:16 [h]Ex. 32:10; Deut. 32:21; Is. 55:5; Matt. 21:43; Rom. 10:19 [i]Acts 18:6

47 [j]Is. 42:6; 49:6; Luke 2:32

48 [k][Acts 2:47]

50 [l]Acts 7:52; 2 Tim. 3:11

51 [m]Matt. 10:14; Mark 6:11; [Luke 9:5]

52 [n]Matt. 5:12; John 16:22 [o]Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 13:9

CHAPTER 14

1 [a]John 7:35; Acts 18:4; Rom. 1:14, 16; 1 Cor. 1:22

2 [1]*embittered* [2]Lit. *souls*

3 [b]Mark 16:20; Acts 4:29; 20:32; Heb. 2:4 [c]Acts 5:12

4 [d]Luke 12:51 [e]Acts 13:2, 3

5 [f]2 Tim. 3:11

6 [g]Matt. 10:23

8 [h]Acts 3:2

9 [3]Lit. *Who*

41 *'Behold,[c] you despisers,*
Marvel and perish!
For I work a work in your days,
A work which you will by no means believe,
Though one were to declare it to you.'"

Blessing and Conflict at Antioch

42 [5]So when the Jews went out of the synagogue, the Gentiles begged that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath. 43 Now when the congregation had broken up, many of the Jews and devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who, speaking to them, [d]persuaded them to continue in [e]the grace of God.

44 On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God. 45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they [f]opposed the things spoken by Paul. 46 Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, [g]"It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but [h]since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, [i]we turn to the Gentiles. 47 For so the Lord has commanded us:

[j]'I have set you as a light to the Gentiles,
That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.'"

48 Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. [k]And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.

49 And the word of the Lord was being spread throughout all the region. 50 But the Jews stirred up the devout and prominent women and the chief men of the city, [l]raised up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. 51 [m]But they shook off the dust from their feet against them, and came to Iconium. 52 And the disciples [n]were filled with joy and [o]with the Holy Spirit.

At Iconium

14 Now it happened in Iconium that they went together to the synagogue of the Jews, and so spoke that a great multitude both of the Jews and of the [a]Greeks believed. 2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and [1]poisoned their [2]minds against the brethren. 3 Therefore they stayed there a long time, speaking boldly in the Lord, [b]who was bearing witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and [c]wonders to be done by their hands.

4 But the multitude of the city was [d]divided: part sided with the Jews, and part with the [e]apostles. 5 And when a violent attempt was made by both the Gentiles and Jews, with their rulers, [f]to abuse and stone them, 6 they became aware of it and [g]fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding region. 7 And they were preaching the gospel there.

Idolatry at Lystra

8 [h]And in Lystra a certain man without strength in his feet was sitting, a cripple from his mother's womb, who had never walked. 9 *This* man heard Paul speaking. [3]Paul, observing him

■ **13:46 the word of God . . . to you first.** Since Jesus the Messiah came through the Jews (Gen. 12:3), Paul is consistent in applying the principle, "for the Jew first and also for the Greek" (Rom. 1:16). He recognizes that God's plan also includes the Gentiles (Is. 49:6), a fact resisted by these Jews of Pisidian Antioch.

■ **13:48 as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.** God had chosen these people beforehand, and now through conviction and repentance (11:18; 2 Tim. 2:25) brought them to faith in Christ (Eph. 2:8). Luke uses the passive voice ("had been appointed"), indicating that God is the agent. Only God grants eternal life (Matt. 25:46; John 10:28; 17:2). See "Election and Reprobation" at Rom. 9:18.

■ **13:51 shook off the dust from their feet.** A Jewish sign of displeasure and disassociation (Matt. 10:14).

■ **14:1 in Iconium.** Paul and Barnabas traveled eighty miles southeast from Antioch in Pisidia to Iconium, an ancient Phrygian town. The Greeks made it a city state, and under Augustus it became a city in the province of Galatia.

■ **14:4 apostles.** For the first time in Acts, the term has a broader meaning that includes men like Barnabas in addition to the apostles chosen by Jesus (1:24–26; Matt. 10:1–4; 2 Cor. 1:1 note).

■ **14:5 stone them.** Stoning was the way the Jews executed the death penalty for religious blasphemy (7:58, 59).

■ **14:6 Lystra and Derbe.** These two cities along with Iconium belonged strictly to the Roman province of Galatia, although they were part of the subdistrict called Lycaonia. From A.D. 37–72 Iconium was linguistically and politically on the Phrygian side of the border.

■ **14:8 Lystra.** In 6 B.C. Augustus fortified this settlement and made it into a Roman colony of the province of Galatia. He also settled the colony with Roman army veterans.

intently and seeing that he had faith to be healed,[10] said with a loud voice, [i]"Stand up straight on your feet!" And he leaped and walked. [11] Now when the people saw what Paul had done, they raised their voices, saying in the Lycaonian *language,* [j]"The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!" [12] And Barnabas they called [4]Zeus, and Paul, [5]Hermes, because he was the chief speaker. [13] Then the priest of Zeus, whose temple was in front of their city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates, [k]intending to sacrifice with the multitudes.

[14] But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard this, [l]they tore their clothes and ran in among the multitude, crying out [15] and saying, "Men, [m]why are you doing these things? [n]We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from [o]these useless things [p]to the living God, [q]who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them, [16] [r]who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways. [17] [s]Nevertheless He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, [t]gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with [u]food and gladness." [18] And with these sayings they could scarcely restrain the multitudes from sacrificing to them.

Stoning, Escape to Derbe

[19] [v]Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and having persuaded the multitudes, [w]they stoned Paul *and* dragged *him* out of the city, supposing him to be [x]dead. [20] However, when the disciples gathered around him, he rose up and went into the city. And the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

Strengthening the Converts

[21] And when they had preached the gospel to that city [y]and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, [22] strengthening the souls of the disciples, [z]exhorting *them* to continue in the faith, and *saying,* [a]"We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God." [23] So when they had [b]appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed. [24] And after they had passed through Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia. [25] Now when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia. [26] From there they sailed to Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work which they had completed.

[27] Now when they had come and gathered the church together, [c]they reported all that God had done with them, and that He had [d]opened the door of faith to the Gentiles, [28] So they stayed there a long time with the disciples.

Conflict over Circumcision

15 And [a]certain *men* came down from Judea and taught the brethren, [b]"Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." [2] Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that [c]Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question.

[3] So, [d]being sent on their way by the church, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, [e]describing the conversion of the Gentiles; and they caused great joy to all the brethren. [4] And when they had come to Jerusalem, they were received by the church and the apostles and the elders; and they reported all things that God had done with them. [5] But some of the sect of the Pharisees

10 [i]Is. 35:6]

11 [j]Acts 8:10; 28:6

12 [4]*Jupiter* [5]*Mercury*

13 [k]Dan. 2:46

14 [l]Matt. 26:65

15 [m]Acts 10:26 [n]James 5:17 [o]1 Cor. 8:4 [p]1 Thess. 1:9 [q]Rev. 14:7

16 [r]Ps. 81:12

17 [s]Rom. 1:19, 20 [t]Deut. 11:14 [u]Ps. 145:16

19 [v]Acts 13:45, 50; 14:2–5 [w]2 Cor. 11:25 [x][2 Cor. 12:1–4]

21 [y]Matt. 28:19

22 [z]Acts 11:23 [a][2 Tim. 2:12; 3:12]

23 [b]Titus 1:5

27 [c]Acts 15:4, 12 [d]2 Cor. 2:12

CHAPTER 15

1 [a]Gal. 2:12 [b]Phil. 3:2

2 [c]Gal. 2:1

3 [d]Rom. 15:24 [e]Acts 14:27; 15:4, 12

■ **14:10 he leaped and walked.** See "Miracles" at 1 Kin. 17:22.

■ **14:12, 13** An ancient legend circulated in Lystra that the Greek gods Zeus and Hermes disguised themselves as men and came to the Phrygian hill country, seeking hospitality. Only one couple welcomed them, and in return their cottage was changed into a temple with a golden roof and marble columns. The houses of those who had refused the gods were destroyed. The Lystrans may have been thinking of this legend when they welcomed Barnabas and Paul and prepared to sacrifice oxen.

■ **14:14 tore their clothes.** A conventional sign of grief or distress.

■ **14:15–17** The content of Paul's sermon is similar to his later sermon at Athens (17:22–31). Both sermons were addressed to pagan crowds who would not understand quotations from and explanations of Old Testament Scriptures. Paul stressed that God's creative and providential power extended everywhere. See "General Revelation" at Ps. 19:1.

■ **14:16 allowed all nations.** See "Mankind's Guilty Knowledge of God" at Rom. 1:19.

■ **14:20 Derbe.** A Lycaonian border town in southeastern Galatia, sixty-five miles southeast of Lystra.

■ **15:1** The reports of Paul's and Barnabas's direct contact with the Gentiles on the first missionary journey may have reached Judea and Jerusalem through John Mark after he returned home (13:13). Also, others from Antioch may have brought the news during Paul's and Barnabas's extended stay there. This caused the Jewish Christians to fear that their Jewish heritage was threatened; they thought that the converted Gentiles must be brought into Judaism through circumcision. Paul recognized that forcing Gentiles to be circumcised might make them think that salvation must be earned (cf. Gal. 2:15, 16). He knew that the Judaizers had to be opposed lest they hinder the extension of the gospel to the Gentiles (1 Thess. 2:14–16).

who believed rose up, saying, "It is necessary to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the law of Moses."

The Jerusalem Council

6 Now the apostles and elders came together to consider this matter. 7 And when there had been much dispute, Peter rose up and said to them: [f]"Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God chose among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. 8 So God, [g]who knows the heart, [t]acknowledged them by [h]giving them the Holy Spirit, just as *He did* to us, 9 [i]and made no distinction between us and them, [j]purifying their hearts by faith. 10 Now therefore, why do you test God [k]by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? 11 But [l]we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus [2]Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they."

12 Then all the multitude kept silent and listened to Barnabas and Paul declaring how many miracles and wonders God had [m]worked through them among the Gentiles. 13 And after they had [3]become silent, [n]James answered, saying, "Men *and* brethren, listen to me: 14 [o]Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name. 15 And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written:

16 *'After[p] this I will return*
And will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which has fallen down;
I will rebuild its ruins,
And I will set it up;
17 *So that the rest of mankind may seek the* Lord,
Even all the Gentiles who are called by My name,
*Says the [4]*Lord *who does all these things.'*

18 [5]"Known to God from eternity are all His works. 19 Therefore [q]I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who [r]are turning to God, 20 but that we [s]write to them to abstain [t]from things polluted by idols, [u]*from* [6]sexual immorality, [v]*from* things strangled, and *from* blood. 21 For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, [w]being read in the synagogues every Sabbath."

The Jerusalem Decree

22 Then it pleased the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas, *namely,* Judas who was also named [x]Barsabas,[7] and Silas, leading men among the brethren.

23 They wrote this *letter* by them:

The apostles, the elders, and the brethren,

To the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia:

Greetings.

24 Since we have heard that [y]some who went out from us have troubled you with words, [z]unsettling your souls, [8]saying, "*You must* be circumcised and keep the law"—to whom we gave no *such* commandment— 25 it seemed good to us, being assembled with one [9]accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, 26 [a]men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 27 We have therefore sent

7 [f]Acts 10:20
8 [g]Acts 1:24 [h]Acts 2:4; 10:44, 47 [t]*bore witness to*
9 [i]Rom. 10:12 [j]Acts 10:15, 28
10 [k]Matt. 23:4
11 [l]Rom. 3:4; 5:15 [2]NU, M omit *Christ*
12 [m]Acts 14:27; 15:3, 4
13 [n]Acts 12:17 [3]*stopped speaking*
14 [o]Acts 15:7
16 [p]Amos 9:11, 12
17 [4]NU Lord, who makes these things
18 [5]NU (continuing v. 17) *known from eternity (old).'*
19 [q]Acts 15:28; 21:25 [r]1 Thess. 1:9
20 [s]Acts 21:25 [t][1 Cor. 8:1; 10:20, 28] [u][1 Cor. 6:9] [v]Lev. 3:17 [6]Or *fornication*
21 [w]Acts 13:15, 27
22 [x]Acts 1:23 [7]NU, M *Barsabbas*
24 [y]Titus 1:10, 11 [z]Gal. 1:7; 5:10 [8]NU omits *saying, "You must be circumcised and keep the law"*
25 [9]*purpose* or *mind*
26 [a]Acts 13:50; 14:19

■ **15:6 apostles and elders came together.** The church leaders took the lead in the discussion, but v. 12 indicates that the whole assembly was present.

■ **15:13 James answered.** James was the half brother of Jesus (Matt. 13:55; Introduction to James: Author). He seems by now to have become a prominent leader of the Jerusalem church (Gal. 2:9). James added a third testimony that Gentile believers should not be burdened with keeping the details of the Jewish ceremonial law; his speech concentrated on Old Testament Scriptures and their application to Gentile conversion.

■ **15:19 I judge.** James finds support in the Scriptures and in the testimonies of Simon Peter, Barnabas, and Paul that God wants the Gentiles to be free from the ceremonial law and the demands of the Judaizers. He proposes that both Jews and Gentiles practice moderation. The Jewish Christians are to recognize that Gentiles are not to be bound by Jewish ceremonial law. The Gentile believers must consider the scruples of Jewish Christians and not offend them by eating food sacrificed to idols, or eating the meat of strangled animals, or blood (Lev. 17:10–14; 19:26).

■ **15:23 the brethren.** The Jewish Christians used this expression to set the Gentile Christians at ease.

Judas and Silas, who will also report the same things by word of mouth. 28 For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: 29 [b]that you abstain from things offered to idols, [c]from blood, from things strangled, and from [d]sexual[1] immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well.

Farewell.

Continuing Ministry in Syria

30 So when they were sent off, they came to Antioch; and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the letter. 31 When they had read it, they rejoiced over its encouragement. 32 Now Judas and Silas, themselves being [e]prophets also, [f]exhorted and strengthened the brethren with many words. 33 And after they had stayed *there* for a time, they were [g]sent back with greetings from the brethren to [2]the apostles.

34 [3]However, it seemed good to Silas to remain there. 35 [h]Paul and Barnabas also remained in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

Division over John Mark

36 Then after some days Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, *and see* how they are doing." 37 Now Barnabas [4]was determined to take with them [i]John called Mark. 38 But Paul insisted that they should not take with them [j]the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work. 39 Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another. And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to [k]Cyprus; 40 but Paul chose Silas and departed, [l]being [5]commended by the brethren to the grace of God. 41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia, [m]strengthening the churches.

Timothy Joins Paul and Sales

16 Then he came to [a]Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, [b]named Timothy, [c]*the* son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father *was* Greek. 2 He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Iconium. 3 Paul wanted to have him go on with him. And he [d]took *him* and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in that region, for they all knew that his father was Greek. 4 And as they went through the cities, they delivered to them the [e]decrees to keep, [f]which were determined by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. 5 [g]So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and increased in number daily.

The Macedonian Call

6 Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of [h]Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in [1]Asia. 7 After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the [2]Spirit did not permit them. 8 So passing by Mysia, they [i]came down to Troas. 9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A [j]man of Macedonia stood and pleaded

29 [b]Acts 15:20; 21:25 [c]Lev. 17:14 [d]Col. 3:5 [1]Or *fornication*

32 [e]Eph. 4:11 [f]Acts 14:22; 18:23

33 [g]Heb. 11:31 [2]NU *those who had sent them*

34 [3]NU, M omit v. 34.

35 [h]Acts 13:1

37 [i]Acts 12:12, 25 [4]*resolved*

38 [j]Acts 13:13

39 [k]Acts 4:36; 13:4

40 [l]Acts 11:23; 14:26 [5]*committed*

41 [m]Acts 16:5

CHAPTER 16

1 [a]Acts 14:6 [b]Rom. 16:21 [c]2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15

3 [d][Gal. 2:3; 5:2]

4 [e]Acts 15:19–21 [f]Acts 15:28, 29

5 [g]Acts 2:47; 15:41

6 [h]Gal. 1:1, 2 [1]The Roman province of Asia

7 [2]NU adds *of Jesus*

8 [i]2 Cor. 2:12

9 [j]Acts 10:30

■ **15:28 to the Holy Spirit, and to us.** They were filled with the Spirit (2:1–41; 4:8; 6:5; 9:17; 13:4) and recognized the Spirit's role in their debate and decision.

■ **15:32 Judas and Silas . . . prophets.** Bringing encouragement and strength to believers was a primary function of the New Testament prophet (a spokesman for God).

■ **15:39 contention . . . parted.** The failure of Barnabas to support the Gentile Christians (Gal. 2:13) may have also contributed to the disagreement about Mark. Though the remainder of Acts contains no further record of Paul working with Barnabas, Paul mentions Barnabas in a positive light in 1 Cor. 9:6. Paul's later high regard for Mark is evident in Col. 4:10; Philem. 24; 2 Tim. 4:11.

Barnabas took Mark . . . Cyprus. Barnabas took his cousin Mark (Col. 4:10) on a missionary journey to the island of Cyprus, Barnabas's home. This would also provide an opportunity for Barnabas to encourage (4:36) the younger man.

■ **16:1 a certain disciple . . . Timothy.** In the small Jewish community of Lystra Paul found this young man, part Jew and part Greek. Like his father, Timothy had been reared as a Greek, and so had not been circumcised. His mother was Jewish. Paul did not think he was compromising the principles of Gentile freedom by circumcising Timothy (v. 3).

■ **16:6 Phrygia and . . . Galatia.** This is the southern part of the larger province of Galatia. It included the Phrygian district, Antioch of Pisidia, and the surrounding area.

Holy Spirit . . . Asia. The province of Asia, located in the western sector of Asia Minor, included the famous city of Ephesus where God wanted Paul to go at a later date (ch. 19). The Holy Spirit's identity coincides with both the Spirit of Jesus (v. 7) and God (v. 10; cf. 2 Cor. 3:17 note). These verses point to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity (cf. 2 Cor. 13:14).

■ **16:7, 8 Mysia . . . Troas.** Paul and Silas came from Derbe and Lystra northwest to Mysia, a region to the south of the Hellespont. They were unable to go north to Bithynia (toward the Black Sea), and instead went west to Troas on the Aegean coast. Troas was an established seaport; the site of ancient Troy was ten miles inland.

■ **16:9 Macedonia.** Macedonia was across the Aegean Sea from Troas. Mt. Olympus is in the south of Macedonia.

with him, saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." [10] Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go [k]to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them.

Lydia Baptized at Philippi

[11] Therefore, sailing from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and the next *day* came to Neapolis, [12] and from there to [l]Philippi, which is the [3]foremost city of that part of Macedonia, a colony. And we were staying in that city for some days. [13] And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met *there.* [14] Now a certain woman named Lydia heard *us.* She was a seller of purple from the city of [m]Thyatira, who worshiped God. [n]The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. [15] And when she and her household were baptized, she begged *us,* saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." So [o]she persuaded us.

Paul and Silas Imprisoned

[16] Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl [p]possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters [q]much profit by fortune-telling. [17] This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation." [18] And this she did for many days.

But Paul, [r]greatly [4]annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." [s]And he came out that very hour. [19] But [t]when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and [u]dragged *them* into the marketplace to the authorities.

[20] And they brought them to the magistrates, and said, "These men, being Jews, [v]exceedingly trouble our city; [21] and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe." [22] Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes [w]and commanded *them* to be beaten with rods. [23] And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw *them* into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. [24] Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

10 [k]2 Cor. 2:13

12 [l]Acts 20:6; Phil. 1:1; 1 Thess. 2:2 [3]Lit. *first*

14 [m]Rev. 1:11; 2:18, 24 [n]Luke 24:45

15 [o]Gen. 19:3; 33:11; Judg. 19:21; Luke 24:29; [Heb. 13:2]

16 [p]Lev. 19:31; 20:6, 27; Deut. 18:11; 1 Sam. 28:3, 7; 2 Kin. 21:6; 1 Chr. 10:13; Is. 8:19 [q]Acts 19:24

18 [r]Mark 1:25, 34 [s]Mark 16:17 [4]*distressed*

19 [t]Acts 16:16; 19:25, 26 [u]Matt. 10:18

20 [v]1 Kin. 18:17; Acts 17:8

22 [w]2 Cor. 6:5; 11:23, 25; 1 Thess. 2:2

■ **16:10 we.** The first of several passages using the plural pronoun "we" starts here, indicating that the author was with Paul and Silas.

■ **16:11 Samothrace.** A prominent island in the north Aegean where vessels regularly stopped. It was about halfway between Troas and Neapolis, the seaport serving Philippi.

■ **16:12 Philippi.** Philip II of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great, had established a large Greek colony here and named it Philippi. The Romans conquered it in 167 B.C. and made it part of the province of Macedonia.

■ **16:13 where prayer was customarily made.** According to Jewish law at least ten men were required to form a synagogue. Failing that, a place of prayer could be established outdoors, preferably near water.

women who met there. They would meet to read and study the Scriptures, and they welcomed the assistance of any Jewish teacher who happened to visit there.

■ **16:14 from the city Thyatira.** Southeast of Pergamum and about forty miles inland, Thyatira was in Asia Minor, across the Aegean Sea from Athens. Thyatira was known for wool and dying. Purple was an expensive dye.

The Lord opened her heart. Divine illumination and persuasion is necessary for the heart blinded by sin to respond to the gospel (Jer. 13:23; John 6:44, 65; Rom. 9:16; 1 Cor. 2:14). This effectual call of God ensures that all who have been chosen by God will believe (13:48; 2 Thess. 2:13, 14; 2 Tim. 1:9, 10).

■ **16:15 she and her household were baptized.** Throughout redemptive history it has often been God's practice to save entire family units at the same time (2:38, 39; 11:14; 16:31; Gen. 17:7–14). The household baptisms of Acts are striking examples of this (10:47, 48; 16:31–33; cf. 1 Cor. 1:16). Such household baptisms were apparently standard practice.

■ **16:16 a spirit of divination.** Lit. "a python spirit." The term originally referred to a mythical serpent believed to guard the temple and oracle of the Greek god Apollo at Delphi. Later the phrase meant a demon-possessed person or even a ventriloquist. The people at Philippi must have thought of her as having a demon that could tell fortunes.

■ **16:17 the Most High God.** A Jew would understand this to be Yahweh; a Gentile would apply it to Zeus.

■ **16:18 name of Jesus Christ to come out.** Following the common understanding of the expression "the Most High God," everyone would realize that Paul meant to convey the thought that Jesus, as deity, expelled the demon.

■ **16:19 seized Paul and Silas.** Because both Paul and Silas were Jews and leaders of the missionary team, they were seized. Their companions were Gentiles (Luke, a Gentile from Syrian Antioch, and Timothy, a half-Gentile from Lystra) and were not charged.

■ **16:21 teach customs . . . not lawful for us . . . Romans.** The charge was that Paul and Silas were propagating an illegal religion and disturbing the peace. The charge was inflamed by cultural and religious prejudice.

■ **16:22 beaten.** Paul and Silas were Roman citizens (v. 37) and should have been exempt from such treatment. But in the mob atmosphere this was ignored.

■ **16:24 in the stocks.** They were treated like criminals.

The Philippian Jailer Saved

25 But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. 26 [x]Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately [y]all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed. 27 And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself. 28 But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here."

29 Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. 30 And he brought them out and said, [z]"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

31 So they said, [a]"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." 32 Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. 33 And he took them the same hour of the night and washed *their* stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized. 34 Now when he had brought them into his house, [b]he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.

26 [x]Acts 4:31 [y]Acts 5:19; 12:7, 10

30 [z]Luke 3:10; Acts 2:37; 9:6; 22:10

31 [a]John 3:16, 36; 6:47; Acts 13:38, 39; Rom. 10:9–11; 1 John 5:10

34 [b]Matt. 5:4; Luke 5:29; 19:6

Paul Refuses to Depart Secretly

35 And when it was day, the magistrates sent the [5]officers, saying, "Let those men go."

36 So the keeper of the prison reported these words to Paul, saying, "The magistrates have sent to let you go. Now therefore depart, and go in peace."

37 But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us openly, uncondemned [c]Romans, *and* have thrown *us* into prison. And now do they put us out secretly? No indeed! Let them come themselves and get us out."

38 And the officers told these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Romans. 39 Then they came and pleaded with them and brought *them* out, and [d]asked *them* to depart from the city. 40 So they went out of the prison [e]and entered *the house of* Lydia; and when they had seen the brethren, they encouraged them and departed.

35 [5]*lictors,* lit. *rod bearers*

37 [c]Acts 22:25–29

39 [d]Matt. 8:34

40 [e]Acts 16:14

■ **16:27 prison doors open.** See 5:19; 12:10.

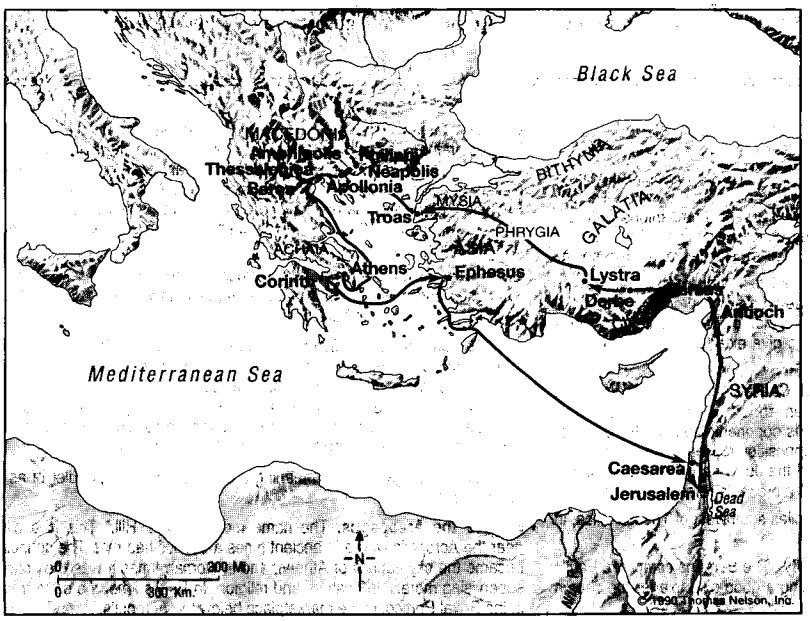
about to kill himself. The jailer was liable to punishment if his prisoners escaped (12:19).

■ **16:31 you and your household.** For other instances of household salvation, see v. 15 note; 2:38, 39; 10:24, 48; 1 Cor. 1:16. When a person accepted a religion, the whole family was involved (v. 34). See "The Christian Family" at Eph. 5:22.

■ **16:33 baptized.** See "Baptism" at Rom. 6:3.

■ **16:37 Romans.** Roman citizens were exempted from scourging and torture. If Roman citizens were tried in a Roman court, they had the right to appeal their case to Caesar (25:11; 26:32).

■ **16:40 house of Lydia.** Early Christians often met in private homes (Philem. 2).



Paul Goes to Greece (The Second Missionary Journey, Acts 15:39—18:22). Starting from Jerusalem, Paul took Silas to visit again the churches of Galatia. Young Timothy joined them in Lystra. Together they went to Macedonia and Achaia, present-day Greece. On this journey the Philippian jailer was saved, the Bereans "searched the Scriptures daily" (Acts 17:11), and Paul preached at the Areopagus.

CHAPTER 17

1 [a]Acts 17:11, 13; 20:4; 27:2; Phil. 4:16; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1; 2 Tim. 4:10

2 [b]Luke 4:16; Acts 9:20; 13:5, 14; 14:1; 16:13; 19:8 [c]1 Thess. 2:1–16

3 [d]Luke 24:26, 46; Acts 18:5, 28; Gal. 3:1

4 [e]Acts 28:24 [f]Acts 15:22, 27, 32, 40

5 [g]Acts 13:45 [h]Acts 17:6, 7, 9; Rom. 16:21 [i]NU omits *who were not persuaded* [2]M omits *becoming envious*

6 [j][Acts 16:20]

7 [k]Luke 23:2; John 19:12; 1 Pet. 2:13 [3]*welcomed*

10 [k]Acts 9:25; 17:14

11 [l]Is. 34:16; Luke 16:29; John 5:39 [4]Lit. *noble*

14 [m]Matt. 10:23

15 [n]Acts 18:5

16 [o]2 Pet. 2:8 [5]*full of idols*

18 [p]1 Cor. 15:12 [6]NU, M add *also* [7]Lit. *seed picker,* an idler who makes a living picking up scraps

19 [8]Lit. *Hill of Ares,* or *Mars' Hill*

Preaching Christ at Thessalonica

17 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to [a]Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. [2] Then Paul, as his custom was, [b]went in to them, and for three Sabbaths [c]reasoned with them from the Scriptures, [3] explaining and demonstrating [d]that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and *saying,* "This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ." [4] [e]And some of them were persuaded; and a great multitude of the devout Greeks, and not a few of the leading women, joined Paul and [f]Silas.

Assault on Jason's House

[5] But the Jews [j]who were not persuaded, [2]becoming [g]envious, took some of the evil men from the marketplace, and gathering a mob, set all the city in an uproar and attacked the house of [h]Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. [6] But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some brethren to the rulers of the city, crying out, [i]"These who have turned the world upside down have come here too. [7] Jason has [3]harbored them, and these are all acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, [k]saying there is another king—Jesus." [8] And they troubled the crowd and the rulers of ~~the city~~ when they heard these things. [9] So when they had taken security from Jason and the rest, they let them go.

Ministering at Berea

[10] Then [k]the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. [11] These were more [4]fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and [l]searched the Scriptures daily *to find out* whether these things were so. [12] Therefore many of them believed, and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men. [13] But when the Jews from Thessalonica learned that the word of God was preached by Paul at Berea, they came there also and stirred up the crowds. [14] [m]Then immediately the brethren sent Paul away, to go to the sea; but both Silas and Timothy remained there. [15] So those who conducted Paul brought him to Athens; and [n]receiving a command for Silas and Timothy to come to him with all speed, they departed.

The Philosophers at Athens

[16] Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, [o]his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was [5]given over to idols. [17] Therefore he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and with the *Gentile* worshipers, and in the marketplace daily with those who happened to be there. [18] [6]Then certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, "What does this [7]babbler want to say?"

Others said, "He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods," because he preached to them [p]Jesus and the resurrection.

[19] And they took him and brought him to the [8]Areopagus, saying, "May we know what this

seen the brethren. "Brethren" would include all the believers—Lydia, her household, the jailer, Luke, and others.

■ **17:1 Amphipolis and Apollonia . . . Thessalonica.** Amphipolis was thirty miles southwest of Philippi and Apollonia twenty-five miles farther on the highway to Thessalonica. Paul and his companions were eager to get to Thessalonica, forty miles beyond Apollonia. Thessalonica had a population of 200,000 and was the provincial capital of Macedonia.

■ **17:2 three Sabbaths.** The Pauline epistles suggest that Paul stayed in Thessalonica much longer than three weeks. According to Phil. 4:16, the church at Philippi repeatedly sent him aid, and the Thessalonian epistles indicate that Paul had been able to give extensive doctrinal instruction to the Thessalonian Christians.

■ **17:7 contrary to the decrees of Caesar.** A political charge was brought against Paul, who had spoken about the spiritual kingdom of God (14:22; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31). His opponents seemed to have distorted the message to mean political opposition to Rome. About this time, Claudius Caesar (A.D. 49–50) expelled the Jews from Rome because of riots allegedly instigated by "Chrestus," a probable reference to Christ.

■ **17:10 Berea.** Modern Verria, fifty miles southwest of Thessalonica, in the foothills of the Olympian Mountains.

■ **17:11 searched the Scriptures daily.** The Bereans compared Paul's teaching with God's written Word, setting a good example for the church throughout history.

■ **17:16 Athens.** The leading city of Greece, served by the port of Piraeus on the Aegean Sea. Athens reached its zenith in the fifth century B.C. under Pericles (495–429 B.C.), when the Parthenon and other magnificent structures were built. The classical poets Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes flourished at this time. Although conquered by the Romans in 146 B.C., Athens continued to be a great intellectual and cultural center.

given over to idols. There were statues of gods or goddesses in the Parthenon and other temples on the Acropolis, as well as in the public, commercial, and temple buildings below.

■ **17:18 Epicurean and Stoic.** Epicurus (342–270 B.C.) taught that the purpose of life was pleasure and freedom from pain, passions, and fears. On the other hand, the Cypriot Zeno (340–265 B.C.), founder of Stoicism, stressed living in harmony with nature and depending on reason and other self-sufficient powers. Both schools stressed the quest for peace of mind. Zeno viewed God pantheistically as the "world-soul."

babbler. A derogatory term meaning a scrap collector or peddler of assorted ideas.

■ **17:19 the Areopagus.** The name means "Mars' Hill." This is a hill near the Acropolis where in ancient times a council had met. The council became the city council of Athens, and in Roman times it was the court supervising morals, education, and religion. In Paul's time, the court met in the Royal Portico, in the marketplace below the Acropolis.

new doctrine *is* of which you speak? 20 For you are bringing some strange things to our ears. Therefore we want to know what these things mean." 21 For all the Athenians and the foreigners who were there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing.

Addressing the Areopagus

22 Then Paul stood in the midst of the [9]Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; 23 for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription:

TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.

Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: 24 [q]God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is [r]Lord of heaven and earth, [s]does not dwell in temples made with hands. 25 Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He [t]gives to all life, breath, and all things. 26 And He has made from one [l]blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and [u]the boundaries of their dwellings, 27 [v]so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, [w]though He is not far from each one of us; 28 for [x]in Him we live and move and have our being, [y]as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.' 29 Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, [z]we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising. 30 Truly, [a]these times of ignorance God overlooked, but [b]now commands all men everywhere to repent, 31 because He has appointed a day on which [c]He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by [d]raising Him from the dead."

32 And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked, while others said, "We will hear you again on this *matter*." 33 So Paul departed from among them. 34 However, some men joined him and believed, among them Dionysius the Areopagite, a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

Ministering at Corinth

18 After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth. 2 And he found a certain Jew named [a]Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome); and he came to them. 3 So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them [b]and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers. 4 [c]And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks.

5 [d]When Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia, Paul was [e]compelled [l]by the Spirit,

22 [9]Lit. *Hill of Ares,* or *Mars' Hill*

24 [q]Acts 14:15 [r]Matt. 11:25 [s]Acts 7:48–50

25 [t]Is. 42:5

26 [u]Deut. 32:8 [l]NU omits *blood*

27 [v][Rom. 1:20] [w]Jer. 23:23, 24

28 [x][Heb. 1:3] [y]Titus 1:12

29 [z]Is. 40:18, 19

30 [a][Rom. 3:25] [b][Titus 2:11, 12]

31 [c]Acts 10:42 [d]Acts 2:24

CHAPTER 18

2 [a]1 Cor. 16:19

3 [b]Acts 20:34

4 [c]Acts 17:2

5 [d]Acts 17:14, 15 [e]Acts 18:28 [l]Or *in his spirit* or *in the Spirit*

■ **17:23 TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.** Possibly a reference to the Altar of the Twelve Gods at Athens, erected to ensure that no god was left out of their worship. Paul used this point of contact to begin his discourse about the God who made the world, who is not carved out of stone or confined to any temple, and who controls the times and places where people live.

■ **17:26 from one blood.** See "The Fall" at Gen. 3:6.

■ **17:28 in Him we live and move and have our being.** Paul says that God brought all people into being and they only exist by His providence. In the ancient world the three great mysteries of philosophy and science were the questions of life, motion, and being. See "General Revelation" at Ps. 19:1.

some of your own poets. Paul knew that the Athenians did not know the Old Testament, and he quoted from three of their own poets. Although their words originally referred to Zeus, the head of the Greek gods, Paul applied the quotations to the living God of heaven. The poets are Epimenides (c. 600 B.C.), Cleanthes (331–233 B.C.), and Aratus (c. 315–240 B.C.).

■ **17:29 not . . . like gold or silver.** See "The Self-existence of God" at Ps. 90:2.

■ **17:30 times of ignorance God overlooked.** That is, God took into consideration the limitations of their knowledge about God, but now Paul has revealed the truth about the living God. With all people, they are called upon to repent of their sins.

■ **17:31 a day on which He will judge . . . by the Man whom He has ordained.** The final Day of Judgment (Rev. 20:12–15). Rejection by the Athenians of the Man whom God appointed will result in Jesus finally and justly rejecting them on that Day of Judgment. Paul stresses that God's call to repentance and faith is not an invitation but a command.

raising Him. See "The Resurrection of Jesus" at Luke 24:2.

■ **18:1 Corinth.** Since 27 B.C., this city had been the capital of the Roman province of Achaia. It was fifty miles southwest of Athens, near the isthmus that joins Attica and the Peloponnesus. Corinth was large and prosperous in the eighth to sixth centuries B.C., but it declined and was captured in 338 B.C. by Philip II of Macedon. In 196 B.C., it was taken by the Romans. They sacked it in 146 B.C. in punishment for a revolt, but it was restored by Julius Caesar as a Roman colony in 44 B.C. In New Testament times Corinth had over 200,000 inhabitants, including Greeks, freedmen from Italy, Roman army veterans, businessmen, government officials, people from the Near East, a large number of Jews, and many slaves. Corinth was thoroughly pagan and immoral. The city was filled with pagan temples and on the south there was a high acropolis with a temple of Aphrodite. From the fifth century B.C., the expression "to *Corinthianize*" meant to be sexually immoral.

■ **18:2 Aquila, born in Pontus . . . Priscilla.** Pontus was on the north coast of Asia Minor (modern Turkey). Priscilla is frequently listed before her husband (vv. 18, 19, 26; Rom. 16:3; 2 Tim. 4:19). She may have had higher social status or have been more prominent in their tent-making business.

and testified to the Jews *that* Jesus *is* the Christ. 6 But [f]when they opposed him and blasphemed, [g]he shook *his* garments and said to them, [h]"Your blood *be* upon your *own* heads; [i]I *am* clean. [j]From now on I will go to the Gentiles." 7 And he departed from there and entered the house of a certain *man* named [2]Justus, *one* who worshiped God, whose house was next door to the synagogue. 8 [k]Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized.

9 Now [l]the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, "Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; 10 [m]for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city." 11 And he continued *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

12 When Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him to the [3]judgment seat, 13 saying, "This *fellow* persuades men to worship God contrary to the law."

14 And when Paul was about to open *his* mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, "If it were a matter of wrongdoing or wicked crimes, O Jews, there would be reason why I should bear with you. 15 But if it is a [n]question of words and names and your own law, look *to it* yourselves; for I do not want to be a judge of such *matters*." 16 And he drove them from the judgment seat. 17 Then [4]all the Greeks took [o]Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat *him* before the judgment seat. But Gallio took no notice of these things.

Paul Returns to Antioch

18 So Paul still remained [5]a good while. Then he took leave of the brethren and sailed for Syria, and Priscilla and Aquila *were* with him. [p]He had *his* hair cut off at [q]Cenchrea, for he had taken a vow. 19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there; but he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. 20 When they asked *him* to stay a longer time with them, he did not consent, 21 but took leave of them, saying, [r]"[6] must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem; but I will return again to you, [s]God willing." And he sailed from Ephesus.

22 And when he had landed at [t]Caesarea, and [7]gone up and greeted the church, he went down to Antioch. 23 After he had spent some time *there,* he departed and went over the region of [u]Galatia and Phrygia [8]in order, [v]strengthening all the disciples.

Ministry of Apollos

24 [w]Now a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man *and* mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. 25 This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being [x]fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, [y]though he knew only the baptism of John. 26 So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. 27 And when he desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; and when he arrived, [z]he greatly helped those who had believed through grace; 28 for he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, [a]showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.

6 [f]Acts 13:45 [g]Neh. 5:13 [h]2 Sam. 1:16 [i][Ezek. 3:18, 19] [j]Acts 13:46–48; 28:28

7 [2]NU *Titius Justus*

8 [k]1 Cor. 1:14

9 [l]Acts 23:11

10 [m]Jer. 1:18, 19

12 [3]Gr. *bema*

15 [n]Acts 23:29; 25:19

17 [o]1 Cor. 1:1 [4]NU *they all*

18 [p]Acts 21:24 [q]Rom. 16:1 [5]Lit. *many days*

21 [r]Acts 19:21; 20:16 [s]1 Cor. 4:19 [6]NU omits *I must by all means keep this coming feast in Jerusalem*

22 [t]Acts 8:40 [7]To Jerusalem

23 [u]Gal. 1:2 [v]Acts 14:22; 15:32, 41 [8]*successively*

24 [w]Titus 3:13

25 [x]Rom. 12:11 [y]Acts 19:3

27 [z]1 Cor. 3:6

28 [a]Acts 9:22; 17:3; 18:5

■ **18:6 Your blood be upon your own heads.** They were responsible for their own sins.

■ **18:7 house of . . . Justus.** The first home of the Corinthian church. Titius Justus was a Gentile adherent to the faith at the synagogue, and a Roman citizen. He could have belonged to one of the families Julius Caesar sent to colonize Corinth. He may have been the Gaius of Rom. 16:23, who was baptized by Paul (1 Cor. 1:14); Gaius could have been a third name standing before Titius Justus.

■ **18:8 Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue.** As synagogue ruler, Crispus was in charge of the physical arrangements for the synagogue services. It is this Crispus (and presumably his household) whom Paul baptized (1 Cor. 1:14).

all his household. See 16:15 and note; 16:31–33.

■ **18:10 I have many people in this city.** Jesus promises that Paul's labors in Corinth will be fruitful because God's own people (those God has appointed to eternal life, 13:48) live in that city. Even though the elect Corinthians had not yet believed the gospel, and some had not even heard it, they nevertheless were known to God.

■ **18:12 When Gallio was proconsul of Achaia.** Luke's identification of the administrative head of this senatorial province as a proconsul is correct. An inscription found at Delphi, Greece, identifies Gallio as the proconsul in A.D. 52.

■ **18:13 contrary to the law.** That is, contrary to the Roman law forbidding the practice of religions not legally recognized by Rome. Judaism was legally recognized, and Christianity as an offshoot of Judaism was also a legal religion (*religio licita*).

■ **18:18 he had taken a vow.** Though this phrase could apply to Aquila, Paul is probably in view. The Nazirite vow required rigorous ceremonial purity that would have been impractical in Gentile lands (Num. 6:1–21), so this vow was more likely a private one undertaken by Paul as a religious exercise. The hair was allowed to grow during the period of the vow, and cutting it marked the conclusion of the vow and was perhaps an expression of gratitude to God.

■ **18:23 some time there.** Presumably Paul was in Antioch for several months, from about the fall of A.D. 52 to the spring of A.D. 53.

Galatia and Phrygia. Paul started his third missionary journey in the Phrygian part of Galatia in southern Asia Minor, the area nearest his former work.

Paul at Ephesus

19 And it happened, while [a]Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through [b]the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples [2] he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

So they said to him, [c]"We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit."

[3] And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?"

So they said, [d]"Into John's baptism."

[4] Then Paul said, [e]"John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus."

[5] When they heard *this,* they were baptized [f]in the name of the Lord Jesus. [6] And when Paul had [g]laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and [h]they spoke with tongues and prophesied. [7] Now the men were about twelve in all.

[8] [i]And he went into the synagogue and spoke boldly for three months, reasoning and persuading [j]concerning the things of the kingdom of God. [9] But [k]when some were hardened and did not believe, but spoke evil [l]of the Way before the multitude, he departed from them and withdrew

CHAPTER 19

1 [a]1 Cor. 1:12; 3:5, 6 [b]Acts 18:23
2 [c]1 Sam. 3:7
3 [d]Acts 18:25
4 [e]Matt. 3:11
5 [f]Acts 8:12, 16; 10:48
6 [g]Acts 6:6; 8:17 [h]Acts 2:4; 10:46
8 [i]Acts 17:2; 18:4 [j]Acts 1:3; 28:23
9 [k]2 Tim. 1:15 [l]Acts 9:2; 19:23; 22:4; 24:14

■ **19:1 the upper.** When he had finished his ministry in Phrygian Galatia (18:23), Paul continued westward by land through the region of Colosse, Laodicea, and Hierapolis (Col. 4:13) in the Lycus Valley, and finally arrived at Ephesus. Here he ministered for about three years (vv. 8, 10), from about A.D. 53 to 56.

Ephesus. The capital of the Roman province of Asia, Ephesus had been founded in about the twelfth century B.C. by Ionians from Athens. It became a great commercial power, but its economic prosperity declined, mainly because erosion into the river had silted and clogged the harbor. The city derived wealth and prestige from its temple of Artemis, built in honor of the goddess of fertility. The Ephesus of Paul's day had passed its zenith but was still an important commercial and religious center.

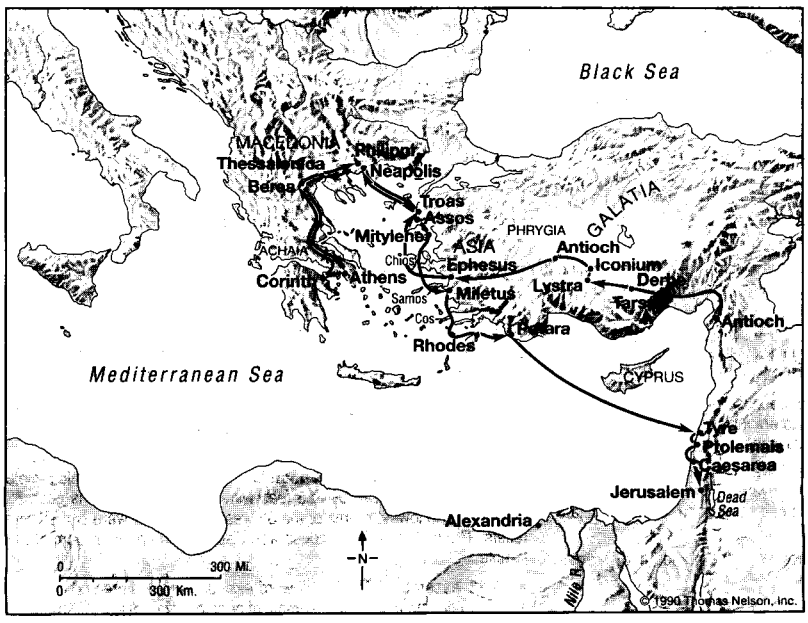
some disciples. According to v. 7, "about twelve."

■ **19:2 receive the Holy Spirit.** As followers of John the Baptist, these believers had not been instructed about the coming of the Spirit. Note that all categories of people received the baptism of the Holy Spirit: Jews, God-fearing Greeks, Samaritans, and Gentiles.

■ **19:4 baptism of repentance . . . who would come after him . . . Jesus.** John's baptism of repentance (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3) was directed toward repentance of sins and looked forward to the redeeming work of Jesus.

■ **19:6 spoke with tongues and prophesied.** The experience the Ephesian Gentiles had when receiving the Holy Spirit parallels that of the Jews (2:4, 11), Samaritans (8:14–17), and God-fearing Gentiles (10:44–46). This episode is an extension of the Pentecost experience to yet another group of people (v. 2 note). "Prophesied" in this passage may be equivalent to "speaking . . . the wonderful works of God" (2:11) or speaking so as to "magnify God" (10:46).

■ **19:9 school of Tyrannus.** Nothing further is known about Tyrannus. Some manuscripts add, "from the fifth to the tenth hour" (11:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.). Tyrannus could have used the room in the cool morning hours, and given it to Paul for the rest of the day.



Asia and Greece Revisited (Paul's Third Missionary Journey, Acts 18:23—21:16). Paul visited the churches of Galatia for a third time, and then settled in Ephesus for more than two years. Upon leaving Ephesus, Paul traveled again to Macedonia and Achaia (Greece) for a three-month stay. He returned to Asia by way of Macedonia.

On this third journey Paul wrote 1 Corinthians from Ephesus, 2 Corinthians from Macedonia, and the letter to the Romans from Corinth.

the disciples, reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus. 10 And [m]this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

Miracles Glorify Christ

11 Now [n]God worked unusual miracles by the hands of Paul, 12 [o]so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them. 13 [p]Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists [q]took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, [1]"We [2]exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul [r]preaches." 14 Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so.

15 And the evil spirit answered and said, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?"

16 Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, [3]overpowered them, and prevailed against [4]them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. 17 This became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus; and [s]fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. 18 And many who had believed came [t]confessing and telling their deeds. 19 Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned *them* in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and *it* totaled fifty thousand *pieces* of silver. 20 [u]So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.

The Riot at Ephesus

21 [v]When these things were accomplished, Paul [w]purposed in the Spirit, when he had passed through [x]Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, "After I have been there, [y]I must also see Rome." 22 So he sent into Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, [z]Timothy and [a]Erastus, but he himself stayed in Asia for a time.

23 And [b]about that time there arose a great commotion about [c]the Way. 24 For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of [5]Diana, brought [d]no small profit to the craftsmen. 25 He called them together with the workers of similar occupation, and said: "Men, you know that we have our prosperity by this trade. 26 Moreover you see and hear that not only at Ephesus, but throughout almost all Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people, saying that [e]they are not gods which are made with hands. 27 So not only is this trade of ours in danger of falling into disrepute, but also the temple of the great goddess Diana may be despised and [6]her magnificence destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worship."

28 Now when they heard *this,* they were full of wrath and cried out, saying, "Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians!" 29 So the whole city was filled with confusion, and rushed into the theater with one accord, having seized [f]Gaius and [g]Aristarchus, Macedonians, Paul's travel companions. 30 And when Paul wanted to go in to the people, the disciples would not allow him. 31 Then some of the [7]officials of Asia, who were his friends, sent to him pleading that he would not venture into the theater. 32 Some therefore cried one thing and some another, for the assembly was confused, and most of them did not know why they had come together. 33 And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And [h]Alexander [i]motioned with his hand, and wanted to make his defense to the people. 34 But when they found out that he was a Jew, all with one voice cried out for about two hours, "Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians!"

35 And when the city clerk had quieted the crowd, he said: "Men of Ephesus, what man is

10 [m]Acts 19:8; 20:31

11 [n]Mark 16:20

12 [o]Acts 5:15

13 [p]Matt. 12:27 [q]Mark 9:38 [r]1 Cor. 1:23; 2:2 [1]NU *I* [2]*adjure,* solemnly command

16 [3]M *and they overpowered them* [4]NU *both of them*

17 [s]Luke 1:65; 7:16

18 [t]Matt. 3:6

20 [u]Acts 6:7; 12:24

21 [v]Rom. 15:25 [w]Acts 20:22 [x]Acts 20:1 [y]Rom. 1:13; 15:22–29

22 [z]1 Tim. 1:2 [a]Rom. 16:23

23 [b]2 Cor. 1:8 [c]Acts 9:2

24 [d]Acts 16:16, 19 [5]Gr. *Artemis*

26 [e]Is. 44:10–20

27 [6]NU *she be deposed from her magnificence*

29 [f]Rom. 16:23 [g]Col. 4:10

31 [7]*Asiarchs, rulers of Asia,* the province

33 [h]2 Tim. 4:14 [i]Acts 12:17

■ **19:10 Asia.** The Roman province in the western part of Asia Minor. As a result of this teaching, groups of believers were formed in numerous places (Col. 4:13, 16; Rev. 2; 3).

■ **19:12 handkerchiefs or aprons . . . from his body.** That is, sweat cloths or work aprons that Paul used as he worked at making tents or awnings (18:3).

to the sick. This was not Paul's doing; because of their pagan religious background, the Ephesians were used to employing superstitious means (v. 19). God accommodated His gracious work to their ignorance.

■ **19:13 evil spirits.** In ancient times it was common practice to use magical names to drive out evil spirits. Jews in Ephesus presumed "to call the name of the Lord Jesus" over those possessed, trying to imitate what Paul did (v. 12; 16:18).

■ **19:19 their books.** These were scrolls with the names and incantations used in their magic.

■ **19:23 the Way.** See note on 9:2.

■ **19:24 Demetrius, a silversmith.** An important guild of silversmiths had developed at Ephesus on account of the large numbers of religious pilgrims. The pilgrims came to worship the goddess Diana (Artemis in Greek) who was portrayed by a famous statue at Ephesus as a fertility goddess with many breasts. Her "image" which had fallen "from Zeus" (v. 35) was probably a meteorite that the people had begun to worship. The temple of Artemis was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Not only was it the object of religious pilgrimage, but it was a banking depository as well. Making silver shrines and images of the goddess was an important trade.

■ **19:27 temple of the great goddess Diana.** The archaic Ionic temple of Diana measured 220 by 425 feet, with 127 marble columns each 62 feet high. The lowest drums of the 36 western columns were carved with reliefs. The statue of the goddess was displayed in an inner room of the temple.

■ **19:32 assembly.** The Greek word *ekklesia* is used here and in vv. 39 and 41 to denote a secular assembly of people (5:11 note).

there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple guardian of the great goddess [8]Diana, and of the *image* which fell down from [9]Zeus? [36] Therefore, since these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rashly. [37] For you have brought these men here who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of [1]your goddess. [38] Therefore, if Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a [2]case against anyone, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. Let them bring charges against one another. [39] But if you have any other inquiry to make, it shall be determined in the lawful assembly. [40] For we are in danger of being [3]called in question for today's uproar, there being no reason which we may give to account for this disorderly gathering." [41] And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly.

Journeys in Greece

20 After the uproar had ceased, Paul called the disciples to *himself,* embraced *them,* and [a]departed to go to Macedonia. [2] Now when he had gone over that region and encouraged them with many words, he came to [b]Greece [3] and stayed three months. And [c]when the Jews plotted against him as he was about to sail to Syria, he decided to return through Macedonia. [4] And Sopater of Berea accompanied him to Asia—also [d]Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and [e]Gaius of Derbe, and [f]Timothy, and [g]Tychicus and [h]Trophimus of Asia. [5] These men, going ahead, waited for us at [i]Troas. [6] But we sailed away from Philippi after [j]the Days of Unleavened Bread, and in five days joined them [k]at Troas, where we stayed seven days.

Ministering at Troas

[7] Now on [l]the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together [m]to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight. [8] There were many lamps [n]in the upper room where [l]they were gathered together. [9] And in a window sat a certain young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep. He was overcome by sleep; and as Paul continued speaking, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead. [10] But Paul went down, [o]fell on him, and embracing *him* said, [p]"Do not trouble yourselves, for his life is in him." [11] Now when he had come up, had broken bread and eaten, and talked a long while, even till daybreak, he departed. [12] And they brought the young man in alive, and they were not a little comforted.

From Troas to Miletus

[13] Then we went ahead to the ship and sailed to Assos, there intending to take Paul on board; for so he had [2]given orders, intending himself to go on foot. [14] And when he met us at Assos, we took him on board and came to Mitylene. [15] We sailed from there, and the next *day* came opposite Chios. The following *day* we arrived at Samos and stayed at Trogyllium. The next *day* we came to Miletus. [16] For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he would not have to spend time in Asia; for [q]he was hurrying [r]to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on [s]the Day of Pentecost.

35 [8]Gr. *Artemis* [9]*heaven*

37 [1]NU *our*

38 [2]Lit. *matter*

40 [3]Or *charged with rebellion concerning today*

CHAPTER 20

1 [a]1 Cor. 16:5; 1 Tim. 1:3

2 [b]Acts 17:15; 18:1

3 [c]Acts 9:23; 23:12; 25:3; 2 Cor. 11:26

4 [d]Acts 19:29; Col. 4:10 [e]Acts 19:29 [f]Acts 16:1 [g]Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:7; 2 Tim. 4:12; Titus 3:12 [h]Acts 21:29; 2 Tim. 4:20

5 [i]2 Cor. 2:12; 2 Tim. 4:13

6 [j]Ex. 12:14, 15 [k]Acts 16:8; 2 Cor. 2:12; 2 Tim. 4:13

7 [l]1 Cor. 16:2; Rev. 1:10 [m]Acts 2:42, 46; 20:11; 1 Cor. 10:16

8 [n]Acts 1:13 [l]NU, M *we*

10 [o]1 Kin. 17:21; 2 Kin. 4:34 [p]Matt. 9:23, 24; Mark 5:39

13 [2]*arranged it*

16 [q]Acts 18:21; 19:21; 21:4 [r]Acts 24:17 [s]Acts 2:1; 1 Cor. 16:8

■ **19:37 neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of your goddess.** These were common charges of Gentiles against Jews and Jewish Christians (Josephus, *Antiquities* 4.207; *Against Apion* 2.237).

■ **20:1 departed to go to Macedonia.** Paul went up the coast of Asia Minor from Ephesus, either by road or by ship, probably as far as Troas and then by ship to Macedonia (cf. 16:8–10) and Philippi (cf. 16:11–40), visiting groups of believers as he went. While in Macedonia, Paul may have extended his ministry as far as Illyricum (modern Albania; Rom. 15:19).

■ **20:2 came to Greece.** Paul arrived at Corinth, where he spent the winter of A.D. 56–57. During this time he wrote Romans (Rom. 15:26; 16:23, 24).

■ **20:4** Paul's traveling companions are listed by name. They may have been official church representatives appointed to travel with Paul to deliver money collected for relief of the Jerusalem church (1 Cor. 16:1–4; 2 Cor. 9:1–5). Sopater may be the "Sosipater" mentioned in Rom. 16:21. Aristarchus had faithfully accompanied Paul during the third missionary journey (19:29), and he accompanied the apostle to Rome (27:2) where he shared Paul's imprisonment (Col. 4:10). Secundus is not mentioned elsewhere in the New Testament. Gaius may be different from the Macedonian Gaius mentioned in 19:29. On Timothy, see Introduction to 1 Timothy: Date and Occasion. Tychicus was later Paul's representative to various churches during the apostle's imprisonments (Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:7–9; 2 Tim. 4:12). Trophimus accompanied Paul to Jerusalem where his presence in the city led to Paul's arrest (21:29). He apparently accompanied Paul after the apostle's release from the first Roman imprisonment (2 Tim. 4:20).

■ **20:5 waited for us.** Luke again uses the first person plural pronoun, indicating that he travelled with Paul to Jerusalem.

■ **20:7 first day of the week.** Sunday.

to break bread. Since they were gathered together for worship on the first day of the week, the Lord's Day (Rev. 1:10), this celebration included communion (2:42) and was not just a fellowship meal (2:46).

Paul . . . spoke. This was a Sunday evening preaching-teaching service.

■ **20:8–12** Luke records that Eutychus was "taken up dead," the likely result of such a fall. Paul's restoration of the young man to life is one of two such raisings of the dead by apostles recorded in Acts (9:40; cf. Luke 7:11–17; 8:49–56; John 11:1–44).

■ **20:13 sailed to Assos.** Paul went by road the twenty miles from Troas to Assos, while Luke went with the ship.

■ **20:15 the next day . . . Chios . . . Samos . . . Miletus.** They sailed down the coast to Miletus, about thirty miles south of Ephesus.

18 [f]Acts 18:19; 19:1, 10; 20:4, 16
19 [u]Acts 20:3
20 [v]Acts 20:27
21 [w]Acts 18:5; 19:10 [x]Mark 1:15
22 [y]Acts 19:21
23 [z]Acts 21:4, 11
24 [a]Acts 21:13 [b]2 Tim. 4:7 [c]Acts 1:17 [d]Gal. 1:1 [3]NU *But I do not count my life of any value or dear to myself* [4]*course*
26 [e]Acts 18:6 [5]Lit. *clean*
27 [f]Luke 7:30 [6]*avoided declaring*
28 [g]1 Pet. 5:2 [h]1 Cor. 12:28 [i]Eph. 1:7, 14 [j]Heb. 9:14 [7]M *of the Lord and God*
29 [k]Matt. 7:15
30 [l]1 Tim. 1:20 [8]*misleading*
31 [m]Acts 19:8, 10; 24:17
32 [n]Heb. 13:9 [o]Acts 9:31 [p][Heb. 9:15]
34 [q]Acts 18:3 [9]NU, M omit *Yes*
35 [r]Rom. 15:1
37 [s]Acts 21:13 [t]Gen. 45:14 [7]Lit. *much*

The Ephesian Elders Exhorted

17 From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. 18 And when they had come to him, he said to them: "You know, [t]from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, 19 serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me [u]by the plotting of the Jews; 20 how [v]I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, 21 [w]testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, [x]repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. 22 And see, now [y]I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, 23 except that [z]the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. 24 [3]But [a]none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, [b]so that I may finish my [4]race with joy, [c]and the ministry [d]which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

25 "And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more. 26 Therefore I testify to you this day that I *am* [e]innocent[5] of the blood of all *men.* 27 For I have not [6]shunned to declare to you [f]the whole counsel of God. 28 [g]Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit [h]has made you overseers, to shepherd the church [7]of God [i]which He purchased [j]with His own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departure [k]savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also [l]from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking [8]perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. 31 Therefore watch, and remember that [m]for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.

32 "So now, brethren, I commend you to God and [n]to the word of His grace, which is able [o]to build you up and give you [p]an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. 33 I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. 34 [9]Yes, you yourselves know [q]that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me. 35 I have shown you in every way, [r]by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' "

36 And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all. 37 Then they all [s]wept [t]freely, and [t]fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, 38 sorrowing most of all for the words which he spoke, that they would see his face no more. And they accompanied him to the ship.

Warnings on the Journey to Jerusalem

21 Now it came to pass, that when we had departed from them and set sail, running a straight course we came to Cos, the following *day* to Rhodes, and from there to Patara. 2 And finding a ship sailing over to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail. 3 When we had

■ **20:17 elders.** These were the ordained representatives of the Ephesian congregation, called to be overseers and shepherds of the church of God (v. 28; cf. 1 Tim. 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9).

■ **20:20 taught you publicly and from house to house.** Paul's teaching during his three-year stay (v. 31) in Ephesus was extensive, including public lectures at the synagogue and the lecture hall of Tyrannus, 19:8–10) as well as more private instruction in homes.

■ **20:21 repentance . . . faith.** See note on 3:19. Both Jews and Gentiles must come to God in the same way—in repentance for sin (26:20; Luke 24:47) and faith in Jesus Christ.

■ **20:22 bound in the spirit.** Probably this refers to the urging of the Holy Spirit. Such explicit guidance by the Holy Spirit often occurred during Paul's ministry (16:6–10).

■ **20:25 will see my face no more.** Paul's statement was based on his own judgment of the situation rather than on divine revelation. Because of continued plots against his life by the Jews (v. 3), the divine revelation that "chains and tribulations" awaited him (v. 23), and his own intention to focus his future ministry on the western Mediterranean (Rom. 15:23–29), Paul considered likely that he was seeing the Ephesian elders for the last time. However, it appears that Paul was later able to return to Ephesus after his release from prison in Rome (1 Tim. 1:3).

■ **20:27 whole counsel of God.** The revelation of God culminating in His Son Jesus Christ. Paul did not suppress any truths of the gospel but preached the full gospel to Jew and Gentile. He always used tact and discretion but never compromised the good news.

■ **20:28 with His own blood.** The phrasing is remarkable in the way it acknowledges that the blood of Christ is the blood of God. Many ancient manuscripts have a different word order, reading "the blood of His own," that is, of Christ.

■ **20:29 not sparing the flock.** See "Pastors and Pastoral Care" at 1 Pet. 5:2.

■ **20:30 from among yourselves.** Paul's prophetic warning in this verse was fulfilled as the Ephesian church was soon to be plagued by false teachers, some of whom apparently were leaders of the church (1 Tim. 1:3, 7, 19, 20; 6:3–5; Introduction to 2 Timothy: Interpretive Difficulties).

■ **20:37 kissed him.** The ancient practice of the Christian kiss of greeting (Luke 7:45; 1 Thess. 5:26; 1 Pet. 5:14), is still practiced in some cultures today.

■ **21:1 Cos . . . Rhodes . . . Patara.** They sailed on a direct course through the islands off the coast of Asia Minor to the port of Patara. The small island of Cos was a free state in the province of Asia. Rhodes, the capital on the north end of the island of Rhodes, was famous and prosperous in the earlier Greek period. Patara, a port on the southwest coast of Asia Minor, was an important harbor for ancient ships sailing the eastern Mediterranean, thus bringing Syria, Palestine, and Egypt into contact with Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Achaia.

■ **21:2 Phoenicia.** Syria controlled Phoenicia in the Roman period.

■ **21:3 Tyre.** This port, famous in Old Testament times and conquered by Alexander the Great, was about four hundred miles southeast of Patara, a sea journey of about five days.

sighted Cyprus, we passed it on the left, sailed to Syria, and landed at Tyre; for there the ship was to unload her cargo. 4 And finding [1]disciples, we stayed there seven days. [a]They told Paul through the Spirit not to go up to Jerusalem. 5 When we had come to the end of those days, we departed and went on our way; and they all accompanied us, with wives and children, till *we were* out of the city. And [b]we knelt down on the shore and prayed. 6 When we had taken our leave of one another, we boarded the ship, and they returned [c]home.

7 And when we had finished *our* voyage from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, greeted the brethren, and stayed with them one day. 8 On the next *day* we [2]who were Paul's companions departed and came to [d]Caesarea, and entered the house of Philip [e]the evangelist, [f]who was *one* of the seven, and stayed with him. 9 Now this man had four virgin daughters [g]who prophesied. 10 And as we stayed many days, a certain prophet named [h]Agabus came down from Judea. 11 When he had come to us, he took Paul's belt, bound his *own* hands and feet, and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, [i]'So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver *him* into the hands of the Gentiles.' "

12 Now when we heard these things, both we and those from that place pleaded with him not to go up to Jerusalem. 13 Then Paul answered, [j]"What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

14 So when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, [k]"The will of the Lord be done."

Paul Urged to Make Peace

15 And after those days we [3]packed and went up to Jerusalem. 16 Also some of the disciples from Caesarea went with us and brought with them a certain Mnason of Cyprus, an early disciple, with whom we were to lodge.

17 [l]And when we had come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly. 18 On the following *day* Paul went in with us to [m]James, and all the elders were present. 19 When he had greeted them, [n]he told in detail those things which God had done among the Gentiles [o]through his ministry. 20 And when they heard *it,* they glorified the Lord. And they said to him, "You see, brother, how many myriads of Jews there are who have believed, and they are all [p]zealous for the law; 21 but they have been informed about you that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise *their* children nor to walk according to the customs. 22 [4]What then? The assembly must certainly meet, for they will hear that you have come. 23 Therefore do what we tell you: We have four men who have taken a vow. 24 Take them and be purified with them, and pay their expenses so that they may [q]shave *their* heads, and that all may know that those things of which they were informed concerning you are nothing, but *that* you yourself also walk orderly and keep the law. 25 But concerning the Gentiles who believe, [r]we have written *and* decided [5]that they should observe no such thing, except that they should keep themselves from *things* offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from [6]sexual immorality."

CHAPTER 21

4 [a][Acts 20:23; 21:12] [1]NU *the disciples*

5 [b]Luke 22:41; Acts 9:40; 20:36

6 [c]John 1:11

8 [d]Acts 8:40; 21:16 [e]Acts 8:5, 26, 40; Eph. 4:11; 2 Tim. 4:5 [f]Acts 6:5 [2]NU omits *who were Paul's companions*

9 [g]Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17

10 [h]Acts 11:28

11 [i]Acts 20:23; 21:33; 22:25

13 [j]Acts 20:24, 37

14 [k]Matt. 6:10; 26:42; Luke 11:2; 22:42

15 [3]*made preparations*

17 [l]Acts 15:4

18 [m]Acts 15:13; Gal. 1:19; 2:9

19 [n]Acts 15:4, 12; Rom. 15:18, 19 [o]Acts 1:17; 20:24; 1 Tim. 2:7

20 [p]Acts 15:1; 22:3; [Rom. 10:2]; Gal. 1:14

22 [4]NU *What then is to be done? They will certainly hear*

24 [q]Num. 6:2, 13, 18; Acts 18:18

25 [r]Acts 15:19, 20, 29 [5]NU omits *that they should observe no such thing, except* [6]*fornication*

■ **21:4 through the Spirit.** Paul was not disobedient to the Spirit; the Holy Spirit was compelling him to go to Jerusalem (20:22 note). It was "through the Spirit" that Paul's friends learned he was soon to suffer prison and hardship (20:23), and in response to this revelation they tried to persuade Paul "not . . . go up to Jerusalem" (cf. vv. 11, 12).

■ **21:7 Ptolemais.** A port twenty-five miles south of Tyre, where the ship unloaded cargo.

■ **21:8 Caesarea.** This seaport, built by Herod the Great, was the provincial capital of Judea; it was thirty-two miles south of Ptolemais (10:1 note).

Philip . . . one of the seven. One of the seven chosen to handle the food distribution (6:1–6). He had preached to the Samaritans, the Ethiopian eunuch, and the people along the Palestinian coast (ch. 8).

■ **21:10 prophet named Agabus.** The same Agabus who fifteen years earlier prophesied the severe famine in Judea and the surrounding area (11:27, 28).

■ **21:11 says the Holy Spirit.** In the first century context of the apostles, Agabus, as a prophet, was led directly by the Spirit to give God's inspired message.

■ **21:15 went up to Jerusalem.** Pentecost, the fiftieth day after Passover, was fast approaching (they had spent at least thirty-six days traveling from Philippi to Caesarea, and they had spent several days at Caesarea), and Paul wanted to be at Jerusalem for this feast.

■ **21:20 zealous for the law.** Thousands of Jewish Christians in Jerusalem strictly observed the Mosaic law. While many of these no doubt resented the fact that Gentile Christians were not required to observe the ceremonial law of Moses (v. 25; 15:1–31), the charge here was that Paul was encouraging Jews to forsake the law as well (v. 21). Such a charge may have been prompted by reports that Paul himself did not follow the Jewish ceremonial law when in Gentile company. Though Paul had no objection to Jews following their ancestral customs, he opposed any attempt to make such observance in some way necessary for salvation (Rom. 14:1–8; Gal. 5:2–6). Always careful to avoid giving unnecessary offense, Paul's flexibility in such matters shows that the interests of the gospel were always foremost in his mind (1 Cor. 9:19–23).

■ **21:24 be purified . . . expenses.** This was the Nazirite vow (Num. 6:1–21), during which the devotee let his hair grow. When the period of the vow was over, he shaved off his hair, dedicated it to the Lord, and burned it together with the sacrifice for the fellowship offering (Num. 6:18). Paul paid the expenses for four Nazirites, went to the priest with them for the sacrifices, and participated in the purification rites. In this way Paul publicly demonstrated that he was a law-abiding Jew.

26 [s]John 11:55; Acts 21:24; 24:18 [t]Num. 6:13; Acts 24:18 [7]*completion*

27 [u]Acts 20:19; 24:18 [v]Acts 26:21

28 [w][Matt. 24:15]; Acts 6:13; 24:6

29 [x]Acts 20:4 [8]M omits *previously*

30 [y]2 Kin. 11:15; Acts 16:19; 26:21

31 [z]2 Cor. 11:23 [9]*cohort*

32 [a]Acts 23:27; 24:7

33 [b]Acts 24:7 [c]Acts 20:23; 21:11; Eph. 6:20; 2 Tim. 1:16; 2:9

36 [d]Luke 23:18; John 19:15; Acts 22:22

38 [e]Acts 5:36

39 [f]Acts 9:11; 22:3; 2 Cor. 11:22; Phil. 3:4–6 [1]*insignificant*

40 [g]Acts 12:17 [h]John 5:2; Acts 22:2

CHAPTER 22

1 [a]Acts 7:2

2 [b]Acts 21:40

3 [c]Acts 21:39; 2 Cor. 11:22 [d]Deut. 33:3 [e]Acts 5:34 [f]Acts 23:6; 26:5; Phil. 3:6 [g]Acts 21:20; Gal. 1:14 [h][Rom. 10:2]

4 [i]Acts 8:3; 26:9–11; Phil. 3:6; 1 Tim. 1:13

5 [j]Acts 23:14; 24:1; 25:15 [k]Luke 22:66; Acts 4:5; 1 Tim. 4:14 [l]Acts 9:2

6 [m]Acts 9:3; 26:12, 13

9 [n]Dan. 10:7; Acts 9:7 [1]NU omits *and were afraid*

12 [o]Acts 9:17 [p]Acts 10:22

Arrested in the Temple

26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day, having been purified with them, [s]entered the temple [t]to announce the [7]expiration of the days of purification, at which time an offering should be made for each one of them.

27 Now when the seven days were almost ended, [u]the Jews from Asia, seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd and [v]laid hands on him, 28 crying out, "Men of Israel, help! This is the man [w]who teaches all *men* everywhere against the people, the law, and this place; and furthermore he also brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place." 29 (For they had [8]previously seen [x]Trophimus the Ephesian with him in the city, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)

30 And [y]all the city was disturbed; and the people ran together, seized Paul, and dragged him out of the temple; and immediately the doors were shut. 31 Now as they were [z]seeking to kill him, news came to the commander of the [9]garrison that all Jerusalem was in an uproar. 32 [a]He immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down to them. And when they saw the commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul. 33 Then the [b]commander came near and took him, and [c]commanded *him* to be bound with two chains; and he asked who he was and what he had done. 34 And some among the multitude cried one thing and some another.

So when he could not ascertain the truth because of the tumult, he commanded him to be taken into the barracks. 35 When he reached the stairs, he had to be carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the mob. 36 For the multitude of the people followed after, crying out, [d]"Away with him!"

Addressing the Jerusalem Mob

37 Then as Paul was about to be led into the barracks, he said to the commander, "May I speak to you?"

He replied, "Can you speak Greek? 38 [e]Are you not the Egyptian who some time ago stirred up a rebellion and led the four thousand assassins out into the wilderness?"

39 But Paul said, [f]"I am a Jew from Tarsus, in Cilicia, a citizen of no [1]mean city; and I implore you, permit me to speak to the people."

40 So when he had given him permission, Paul stood on the stairs and [g]motioned with his hand to the people. And when there was a great silence, he spoke to *them* in the [h]Hebrew language, saying,

22 "Brethren[a] and fathers, hear my defense before you now." 2 And when they heard that he spoke to them in the [b]Hebrew language, they kept all the more silent.

Then he said: 3 [c]"I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city [d]at the feet of [e]Gamaliel, taught [f]according to the strictness of our fathers' law, and [g]was zealous toward God [h]as you all are today. 4 [i]I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women, 5 as also the high priest bears me witness, and [j]all the council of the elders, [k]from whom I also received letters to the brethren, and went to Damascus [l]to bring in chains even those who were there to Jerusalem to be punished.

6 "Now [m]it happened, as I journeyed and came near Damascus at about noon, suddenly a great light from heaven shone around me. 7 And I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?' 8 So I answered, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said to me, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.'

9 "And [n]those who were with me indeed saw the light [1]and were afraid, but they did not hear the voice of Him who spoke to me. 10 So I said, 'What shall I do, Lord?' And the Lord said to me, 'Arise and go into Damascus, and there you will be told all things which are appointed for you to do.' 11 And since I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of those who were with me, I came into Damascus.

12 "Then [o]a certain Ananias, a devout man according to the law, [p]having a good testimony

■ **21:37 Can you speak Greek.** The tribune was surprised to hear Paul speak Greek; he had thought him to be an insurrectionist Jew from Egypt, who three years before had appeared there claiming to be a prophet (Josephus, *Jewish War* 2.261–263).

■ **21:38 assassins.** Lit. "dagger men," militant Jewish nationalists.

■ **21:40 on the stairs.** Probably the stairs leading from the temple area to the Antonian Fortress (rebuilt by Herod the Great and named after Mark Antony) on the north edge of the temple platform.

Hebrew language. That is, Aramaic, as commonly spoken by Jews in Palestine, although the priests and Levites would also have known Hebrew. Greek was the common language of the Roman and Mediterranean world.

■ **22:3 Tarsus.** An important city, located in Cilicia on the eastern Mediterranean coast north of Cyprus. It was a noted intellectual center.

■ **22:12 Ananias.** An appropriate person to meet Saul, who was a zealous Pharisee, "a Hebrew of the Hebrews" (Phil. 3:5, 6). Being known to

with all the [q]Jews who dwelt *there,* [13] came to me; and he stood and said to me, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight.' And at that same hour I looked up at him. [14] Then he said, [r]"The God of our fathers [s]has chosen you that you should [t]know His will, and [u]see the Just One, [v]and hear the voice of His mouth. [15] [w]For you will be His witness to all men of [x]what you have seen and heard. [16] And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, [y]and wash away your sins, [z]calling on the name of the Lord.'

[17] "Now [a]it happened, when I returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, that I was in a trance [18] and [b]saw Him saying to me, [c]'Make haste and get out of Jerusalem quickly, for they will not receive your testimony concerning Me.' [19] So I said, 'Lord, [d]they know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and [e]beat those who believe on You. [20] [f]And when the blood of Your martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by [g]consenting [2]to his death, and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.' [21] Then He said to me, 'Depart, [h]for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles.' "

Paul's Roman Citizenship

[22] And they listened to him until this word, and *then* they raised their voices and said, [i]"Away with such a *fellow* from the earth, for [j]he is not fit to live!" [23] Then, as they cried out and [3]tore off *their* clothes and threw dust into the air, [24] the commander ordered him to be brought into the barracks, and said that he should be examined under scourging, so that he might know why they shouted so against him. [25] And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said to the centurion who stood by, [k]"Is it lawful for you to scourge a man who is a Roman, and uncondemned?"

[26] When the centurion heard *that,* he went and told the commander, saying, "Take care what you do, for this man is a Roman."

[27] Then the commander came and said to him, "Tell me, are you a Roman?"

He said, "Yes."

[28] The commander answered, "With a large sum I obtained this citizenship."

And Paul said, "But I was born *a citizen.*"

[29] Then immediately those who were about to examine him withdrew from him; and the commander was also afraid after he found out that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

The Sanhedrin Divided

[30] The next day, because he wanted to know for certain why he was accused by the Jews, he released him from *his* bonds, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down and set him before them.

23 Then Paul, looking earnestly at the council, said, "Men *and* brethren, [a]I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." [2] And the high priest Ananias commanded those who stood by him [b]to strike him on the mouth. [3] Then Paul said to him, "God will strike you, *you* whitewashed wall! For you sit to judge me according to the law, and [c]do you command me to be struck contrary to the law?"

[4] And those who stood by said, "Do you revile God's high priest?"

[5] Then Paul said, [d]"I did not know, brethren, that he was the high priest; for it is written, [e]*'You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.'*"

[6] But when Paul perceived that one part were Sadducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out

12 [q]1 Tim. 3:7

14 [r]Acts 3:13; 5:30 [s]Acts 9:15; 26:16; Gal. 1:15 [t]Acts 3:14; 7:52 [u]Acts 9:17; 26:16; 1 Cor. 9:1; 15:8 [v]1 Cor. 11:23; Gal. 1:12

15 [w]Acts 23:11 [x]Acts 4:20; 26:16

16 [y]Acts 2:38; 1 Cor. 6:11; [Eph. 5:26]; Heb. 10:22 [z]Acts 9:14; Rom. 10:13

17 [a]Acts 9:26; 26:20; 2 Cor. 12:2

18 [b]Acts 22:14 [c]Matt. 10:14

19 [d]Acts 8:3; 22:4 [e]Matt. 10:17; Acts 26:11

20 [f]Acts 7:54—8:1 [g]Luke 11:48 [2]NU omits *to his death*

21 [h]Acts 9:15; Rom. 1:5; 11:13; Gal. 2:7, 8; Eph. 3:7, 8; 1 Tim. 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:11

22 [i]Acts 21:36; 1 Thess. 2:16 [j]Acts 25:24

23 [3]Lit. *threw*

25 [k]Acts 16:37

CHAPTER 23

1 [a]Acts 24:16; 1 Cor. 4:4; 2 Cor. 1:12; 4:2; 2 Tim. 1:3; Heb. 13:18

2 [b]1 Kin. 22:24; Jer. 20:2; John 18:22

3 [c]Lev. 19:35; Deut. 25:1, 2; John 7:51

5 [d]Lev. 5:17, 18 [e]Ex. 22:28; Eccl. 10:20; 2 Pet. 2:10

Ananias would recommend Paul to other Jews in the city who would otherwise be suspicious of him (9:10–19).

■ **22:16 be baptized.** Baptism in the New Testament is an outward sign of an inward cleansing. As such, it parallels circumcision in the Old Testament (Deut. 10:16; 30:6; Ezek. 44:7).

■ **22:24 scourging.** The Roman scourge was a whip of leather thongs loaded with bits of metal or bone; it could maim for life or kill. Jesus was scourged with such a whip (John 19:1). Paul had been beaten (2 Cor. 11:24, 25) but had never endured this particular punishment.

■ **22:25 bound him.** The soldiers either stretched Paul's arms around a pole to expose his back or tied his hands and hoisted him from the ground to administer the whipping.

■ **22:26 Roman.** Paul appealed again to his Roman citizenship, knowing that he was going to be punished without trial (16:37). Roman citizenship was highly prized, usually given only to those of high position or those who had performed some valuable service to the state. It was then passed on to one's family.

■ **23:2 high priest Ananias.** Son of Nebedaeus, a brutal and violent man who ruled as high priest from A.D. 48–59. This is not the earlier Annas of John 18:13. Ananias was assassinated early in the the war with Rome (A.D. 66–70).

■ **23:3 you whitewashed wall.** Tombs were often whitewashed to make them more visible (Matt. 23:27, 28). Paul paid a fitting tribute to a corrupt official.

contrary to the law. According to Jewish law, Paul had to be tried and found guilty before being punished.

■ **23:6 Sadducees . . . Pharisees.** These two groups emerged during the period between the Old and New Testaments. They had different political and religious views. Paul seized the opportunity to emphasize their religious differences by identifying himself as a Pharisee and a believer in the resurrection of the dead, against the Sadducees who denied the resurrection and the existence of angels and spirits (Matt. 22:23–32).

in the council, "Men *and* brethren, [f]I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; [g]concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am being judged!"

7 And when he had said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees; and the assembly was divided. 8 [h]For Sadducees say that there is no resurrection—and no angel or spirit; but the Pharisees confess both. 9 Then there arose a loud outcry. And the scribes of the Pharisees' party arose and protested, saying, [i]"We find no evil in this man; [j]but [j]if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him, [k]let us not fight against God."

10 Now when there arose a great dissension, the commander, fearing lest Paul might be pulled to pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down and take him by force from among them, and bring *him* into the barracks.

The Plot Against Paul

11 But [l]the following night the Lord stood by him and said, [2]"Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in [m]Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at [n]Rome."

12 And when it was day, [o]some of the Jews banded together and bound themselves under an oath, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had [p]killed Paul. 13 Now there were more than forty who had formed this conspiracy. 14 They came to the chief priests and [q]elders, and said, "We have bound ourselves under a great oath that we will eat nothing until we have killed Paul. 15 Now you, therefore, together with the council, suggest to the commander that he be brought down to you [3]tomorrow, as though you were going to make further inquiries concerning him; but we are ready to kill him before he comes near."

16 So when Paul's sister's son heard of their ambush, he went and entered the barracks and told Paul. 17 Then Paul called one of the centurions to *him* and said, "Take this young man to the commander, for he has something to tell him." 18 So he took him and brought *him* to the commander and said, "Paul the prisoner called me to *him* and asked *me* to bring this young man to you. He has something to say to you."

19 Then the commander took him by the hand, went aside, and asked privately, "What is it that you have to tell me?"

20 And he said, [r]"The Jews have agreed to ask that you bring Paul down to the council tomorrow, as though they were going to inquire more fully about him. 21 But do not yield to them, for more than forty of them lie in wait for him, men who have bound themselves by an oath that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him; and now they are ready, waiting for the promise from you."

22 So the commander let the young man depart, and commanded *him,* "Tell no one that you have revealed these things to me."

Sent to Felix

23 And he called for two centurions, saying, "Prepare two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen to go to [s]Caesarea at the third hour of the night; 24 and provide mounts to set Paul on, and bring *him* safely to Felix the governor." 25 He wrote a letter in the following manner:

26 Claudius Lysias,

To the most excellent governor Felix:

Greetings.

27 [t]This man was seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by them. Coming with the troops I rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman. 28 [u]And when I wanted to

6 [f]Acts 26:5; Phil. 3:5 [g]Acts 24:15, 21; 26:6; 28:20

8 [h]Matt. 22:23; Mark 12:18; Luke 20:27

9 [i]Acts 25:25; 26:31 [j]John 12:29; Acts 22:6, 7, 17, 18 [k]Acts 5:39 [j]NU *what if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?* omitting the last clause

11 [l]Acts 18:9; 27:23, 24 [m]Acts 21:18, 19; 22:1–21 [n]Acts 28:16, 17, 23 [2]*Take courage*

12 [o]Acts 23:21, 30; 25:3 [p]Acts 9:23, 24; 25:3; 26:21; 27:42; 1 Thess. 2:15

14 [q]Acts 4:5, 23; 6:12; 22:5; 24:1; 25:15

15 [3]NU omits *tomorrow*

20 [r]Acts 23:12

23 [s]Acts 8:40; 23:33

27 [t]Acts 21:30, 33; 24:7

28 [u]Acts 22:30

■ **23:9 scribes of the Pharisees' party.** These were teachers, expert interpreters of Jewish law.

■ **23:16 Paul's sister's son.** Evidently some members of Paul's family were in Jerusalem.

told Paul. Prisoners received their necessary supplies from relatives and friends who regularly visited them.

■ **23:23, 24** Heavily equipped infantry and cavalry delivered Paul safely to Felix, the procurator of the imperial province of Judea. The official provincial headquarters was at Caesarea.

■ **23:26 governor Felix.** Felix was a former slave, and as a freedman had ascended to an influential position in the Roman government. In A.D. 52, the emperor Claudius sent him as governor to Caesarea. Felix was addressed as "most noble Felix" (24:3) during his eight-year administration. The Roman historian Tacitus said that Felix "occupied the office of a king while having the mind of a slave, saturated with cruelty and lust" (*History* 5.9).

know the reason they accused him, I brought him before their council. 29 I found out that he was accused [v]concerning questions of their law, [w]but had nothing charged against him deserving of death or chains. 30 And [x]when it was told me that [4]the Jews lay in wait for the man, I sent him immediately to you, and [y]also commanded his accusers to state before you the charges against him.

Farewell.

31 Then the soldiers, as they were commanded, took Paul and brought *him* by night to Antipatris. 32 The next day they left the horsemen to go on with him, and returned to the barracks. 33 When they came to [z]Caesarea and had delivered the [a]letter to the governor, they also presented Paul to him. 34 And when the governor had read *it,* he asked what province he was from. And when he understood that *he was* from [b]Cilicia, 35 he said, [c]"I will hear you when your accusers also have come." And he commanded him to be kept in [d]Herod's [5]Praetorium.

Accused of Sedition

24 Now after [a]five days [b]Ananias the high priest came down with the elders and a certain orator *named* Tertullus. These gave evidence to the governor against Paul.

2 And when he was called upon, Tertullus began his accusation, saying: "Seeing that through you we enjoy great peace, and [1]prosperity is being brought to this nation by your foresight, 3 we accept *it* always and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness. 4 Nevertheless, not to be tedious to you any further, I beg you to hear, by your [2]courtesy, a few words from us. 5 [c]For we have found this man a plague, a creator of dissension among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. 6 [d]He even tried to profane the temple, and we seized him, [3]and wanted [e]to judge him according to our law. 7 [f]But the commander Lysias came by and with great violence took *him* out of our hands, 8 [g]commanding his accusers to come to you. By examining him yourself you may ascertain all these things of which we accuse him." 9 And the Jews also [4]assented, maintaining that these things were so.

The Defense Before Felix

10 Then Paul, after the governor had nodded to him to speak, answered: "Inasmuch as I know that you have been for many years a judge of this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself, 11 because you may ascertain that it is no more than twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem [h]to worship. 12 [i]And they neither found me in the temple disputing with anyone nor inciting the crowd, either in the synagogues or in the city. 13 Nor can they prove the things of which they now accuse me. 14 But this I confess to you, that according to [j]the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the [k]God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in [l]the Law and in the Prophets. 15 [m]I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, [n]that there will be a resurrection [5]of *the* dead, both of *the* just and *the* unjust. 16 [o]This *being* so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men.

17 "Now after many years [p]I came to bring alms and offerings to my nation, 18 [q]in the midst of which some Jews from Asia found me [r]purified in the temple, neither with a mob nor with tumult. 19 [s]They ought to have been here before you to object if they had anything against me. 20 Or else let those who are *here* themselves say [6]if they found any wrongdoing in me while I stood before the council, 21 unless *it is* for this one statement which I cried out, standing among them, [t]'Concerning the resurrection of the dead I am being judged by you this day.' "

29 [v]Acts 18:15; 25:19 [w]Acts 25:25; 26:31

30 [x]Acts 23:20 [y]Acts 24:8; 25:6 [4]NU *there would be a plot against the man*

33 [z]Acts 8:40 [a]Acts 23:26–30

34 [b]Acts 6:9; 21:39

35 [c]Acts 24:1, 10; 25:16 [d]Matt. 27:27 [5]Headquarters

CHAPTER 24

1 [a]Acts 21:27 [b]Acts 23:2, 30, 35; 25:2

2 [1]Or *reforms are*

4 [2]*graciousness*

5 [c]1 Pet. 2:12, 15

6 [d]Acts 21:28 [e]John 18:31 [3]NU ends the sentence here and omits the rest of v. 6, all of v. 7, and the first clause of v. 8.

7 [f]Acts 21:33; 23:10

8 [g]Acts 23:30

9 [4]NU, M *joined the attack*

11 [h]Acts 21:15, 18, 26, 27; 24:17

12 [i]Acts 25:8; 28:17

14 [j]Acts 9:2; 24:22 [k]2 Tim. 1:3 [l]Acts 26:22; 28:23

15 [m]Acts 23:6; 26:6, 7; 28:20 [n][Dan. 12:2] [5]NU omits *of the dead*

16 [o]Acts 23:1

17 [p]Rom. 15:25–28

18 [q]Acts 21:27; 26:21 [r]Acts 21:26

19 [s][Acts 23:30; 25:16]

20 [6]NU, M *what wrongdoing they found*

21 [t][Acts 23:6; 24:15; 28:20]

■ **23:31 Antipatris.** A town built by Herod the Great in honor of his father, Antipater, about thirty miles northwest of Jerusalem.

■ **23:35 Herod's Praetorium.** The official residence built by Herod the Great. It became a Roman praetorium or official residence and included prisoners' cells (John 18:28; Phil. 1:13).

■ **24:1 Tertullus.** As an orator, Tertullus was a kind of lawyer, possibly a Jew (he refers to Jewish law as "our" law, v. 6).

■ **24:5–7** Tertullus charged that Paul was a chronic troublemaker, the leader of a disreputable religious sect, and a person who threatened to profane the temple. Paul replied to these accusations in his defense before Felix (vv. 10–21).

■ **24:5 the Nazarenes.** Christians were identified as followers of Jesus of Nazareth. "Nazareth" may have been a term of contempt (John 1:46).

■ **24:14 I worship . . . God.** Paul assured Felix that as a Jew he followed a religion protected by Rome. As a follower of "the Way," Paul worshiped the "God of my fathers" and believed in the resurrection of the dead (Dan. 12:1, 2; 1 Thess. 4:13–18; 2 Thess. 1:8).

■ **24:21 the resurrection of the dead.** Paul made one critical statement that pertained not to Roman political interests but to Jewish and Christian theology.

22 [u]Acts 9:2; 18:26; 19:9, 23; 22:4
[v]Acts 23:26; 24:7

23 [w]Acts 23:16; 27:3; 28:16

24 [x][John 3:15; 5:24; 11:25; 12:46; 20:31; Rom. 10:9]

26 [y]Ex. 23:8 [z]NU omits *that he might release him*

27 [z]Ex. 23:2; Acts 12:3; 23:35; 25:9, 14

CHAPTER 25

1 [a]Acts 8:40; 25:4, 6, 13

2 [b]Acts 24:1; 25:15 [l]NU *chief priests*

3 [c]Acts 23:12, 15

5 [d]Acts 18:14; 25:18

7 [e]Mark 15:3; Luke 23:2, 10; Acts 24:5, 13

8 [f]Acts 6:13; 24:12; 28:17

9 [g]Acts 12:2; 24:27 [h]Acts 25:20

11 [i]Acts 18:14; 23:29; 25:25; 26:31 [j]Acts 26:32; 28:19

14 [k]Acts 24:27

15 [l]Acts 24:1; 25:2, 3

16 [m]Acts 25:4, 5 [2]NU omits *to destruction,* although it is implied

17 [n]Matt. 27:19; Acts 25:6, 10

18 [3]*suspected*

19 [o]Acts 18:14, 15; 23:29

Felix Procrastinates

22 But when Felix heard these things, having more accurate knowledge of *the* [u]Way, he adjourned the proceedings and said, "When [v]Lysias the commander comes down, I will make a decision on your case." 23 So he commanded the centurion to keep Paul and to let *him* have liberty, and [w]told him not to forbid any of his friends to provide for or visit him.

24 And after some days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, he sent for Paul and heard him concerning the [x]faith in Christ. 25 Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come. Felix was afraid and answered, "Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you." 26 Meanwhile he also hoped that [y]money would be given him by Paul, [7]that he might release him. Therefore he sent for him more often and conversed with him.

27 But after two years Porcius Festus succeeded Felix; and Felix, [z]wanting to do the Jews a favor, left Paul bound.

Paul Appeals to Caesar

25 Now when Festus had come to the province, after three days he went up from [a]Caesarea to Jerusalem. 2 [b]Then the [l]high priest and the chief men of the Jews informed him against Paul; and they petitioned him, 3 asking a favor against him, that he would summon him to Jerusalem—[c]while *they* lay in ambush along the road to kill him. 4 But Festus answered that Paul should be kept at Caesarea, and that he himself was going *there* shortly. 5 "Therefore," he said, "let those who have authority among you go down with *me* and accuse this man, to see [d]if there is any fault in him."

6 And when he had remained among them more than ten days, he went down to Caesarea. And the next day, sitting on the judgment seat, he commanded Paul to be brought. 7 When he had come, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood about [e]and laid many serious complaints against Paul, which they could not prove, 8 while he answered for himself, [f]"Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I offended in anything at all."

9 But Festus, [g]wanting to do the Jews a favor, answered Paul and said, [h]"Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and there be judged before me concerning these things?"

10 So Paul said, "I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged. To the Jews I have done no wrong, as you very well know. 11 [i]For if I am an offender, or have committed anything deserving of death, I do not object to dying; but if there is nothing in these things of which these men accuse me, no one can deliver me to them. [j]I appeal to Caesar."

12 Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, "You have appealed to Caesar? To Caesar you shall go!"

Paul Before Agrippa

13 And after some days King Agrippa and Bernice came to Caesarea to greet Festus. 14 When they had been there many days, Festus laid Paul's case before the king, saying: [k]"There is a certain man left a prisoner by Felix, 15 [l]about whom the chief priests and the elders of the Jews informed *me,* when I was in Jerusalem, asking for a judgment against him. 16 [m]To them I answered, 'It is not the custom of the Romans to deliver any man [2]to destruction before the accused meets the accusers face to face, and has opportunity to answer for himself concerning the charge against him.' 17 Therefore when they had come together, [n]without any delay, the next day I sat on the judgment seat and commanded the man to be brought in. 18 When the accusers stood up, they brought no accusation against him of such things as I [3]supposed, 19 [o]but had some questions against him about their own religion and about a certain Jesus, who had died, whom

■ **24:23 keep Paul . . . liberty.** As a Roman citizen whose case was still pending, Paul was given some freedom (28:16).

■ **24:24 Drusilla.** Daughter of Herod Agrippa I (12:1–23) and sister of Herod Agrippa II (25:13; 26:3 note) and Bernice (25:13 note), Drusilla left Azizus, king of Emesa in Syria, to marry Felix. She probably died along with her son Agrippa in the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius at Pompeii, A.D. 79.

■ **24:27 Porcius Festus.** Festus from a noble family in Rome. Though Felix had been greedy and evil, Festus was wise and honorable.

■ **25:4** Felix had to protect Paul while he was in Roman custody and he refused the request of the Jews, saving Paul from their plot.

■ **25:11 I appeal to Caesar.** Fearing that Festus was going to grant the Jews their request, Paul exercised his right as a Roman citizen to be tried before Caesar (Nero) in Rome. At this time Nero was under the benevolent influence of the Stoic philosopher Seneca, and had not yet shown his hostility to Christianity. Paul could hope to be acquitted by Nero.

■ **25:13 King Agrippa.** This was Herod Agrippa II, son of Agrippa I and great-grandson of Herod the Great (26:3 note).

Bernice. The oldest daughter of Herod Agrippa I, Bernice was twice widowed before entering into an incestuous relationship with her brother,

Paul affirmed to be alive. 20 And because I was uncertain of such questions, I asked whether he was willing to go to Jerusalem and there be judged concerning these matters. 21 But when Paul [p]appealed to be reserved for the decision of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I could send him to Caesar."

22 Then [q]Agrippa said to Festus, "I also would like to hear the man myself."

"Tomorrow," he said, "you shall hear him."

23 So the next day, when Agrippa and Bernice had come with great [4]pomp, and had entered the auditorium with the commanders and the prominent men of the city, at Festus' command [r]Paul was brought in. 24 And Festus said: "King Agrippa and all the men who are here present with us, you see this man about whom [s]the whole assembly of the Jews petitioned me, both at Jerusalem and here, crying out that he was [t]not fit to live any longer. 25 But when I found that [u]he had committed nothing deserving of death, [v]and that he himself had appealed to Augustus, I decided to send him. 26 I have nothing certain to write to my lord concerning him. Therefore I have brought him out before you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that after the examination has taken place I may have something to write. 27 For it seems to me unreasonable to send a prisoner and not to specify the charges against him."

Paul's Early Life

26 Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You are permitted to speak for yourself."

So Paul stretched out his hand and answered for himself: 2 "I think myself [a]happy, King Agrippa, because today I shall answer [b]for myself before you concerning all the things of which I am [c]accused by the Jews, 3 especially because you are expert in all customs and questions which have to do with the Jews. Therefore I beg you to hear me patiently.

4 "My manner of life from my youth, which was spent from the beginning among my own nation at Jerusalem, all the Jews know. 5 They knew me from the first, if they were willing to testify, that according to [d]the strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee. 6 [e]And now I stand and am judged for the hope of [f]the promise made by God to our fathers. 7 To this *promise* [g]our twelve tribes, earnestly serving *God* [h]night and day, [i]hope to attain. For this hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews. 8 Why should it be thought incredible by you that God raises the dead?

9 [j]"Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things [l]contrary to the name of [k]Jesus of Nazareth. 10 [l]This I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints I shut up in prison, having received authority [m]from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against *them.* 11 [n]And I punished them often in every synagogue and compelled *them* to blaspheme; and being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted *them* even to foreign cities.

Paul Recounts His Conversion

12 [o]"While thus occupied, as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, 13 at midday, O king, along the road I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who journeyed with me. 14 And when we all had fallen to the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me and saying in the Hebrew language, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? *It is* hard for you to kick against the goads.' 15 So I said, 'Who are You, Lord?' And He said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. 16 But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, [p]to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you. 17 I will [2]deliver you from the *Jewish* people, as well as *from* the Gentiles, [q]to whom I [3]now send you, 18 [r]to open their eyes, *in order* [s]to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan to God, [t]that they may receive forgiveness of sins and [u]an inheritance among those who are [v]sanctified[4] by faith in Me.'

21 [p]Acts 25:11, 12

22 [q]Acts 9:15

23 [r]Acts 9:15 [4]*pageantry*

24 [s]Acts 25:2, 3, 7 [t]Acts 21:36; 22:22

25 [u]Acts 23:9, 29; 26:31 [v]Acts 25:11, 12

CHAPTER 26

2 [a][1 Pet. 3:14; 4:14] [b][1 Pet. 3:15, 16] [c]Acts 21:28; 24:5, 6

5 [d]Phil. 3:5

6 [e]Acts 23:6 [f]Acts 13:32

7 [g]James 1:1 [h]1 Thess. 3:10 [i]Phil. 3:11

9 [j]1 Tim. 1:12, 13 [k]Acts 2:22; 10:38 [l]*against*

10 [l]Acts 8:1–3; 9:13 [m]Acts 9:14

11 [n]Acts 22:19

12 [o]Acts 9:3–8; 22:6–11; 26:12–18

16 [p]Acts 22:15

17 [q]Acts 22:21 [2]*rescue* [3]NU, M omit *now*

18 [r]Is. 35:5; 42:7, 16 [s]1 Pet. 2:9 [t]Luke 1:77 [u]Col. 1:12 [v]Acts 20:32 [4]*set apart*

Herod Agrippa II. Despite the scandal of this relationship, she was frequently presented as Herod's queen on official occasions (e.g., vv. 13, 23).

■ **26:3 expert in all customs and questions . . . with the Jews.** As the great-grandson of Herod the Great and son of Herod Agrippa I, who had persecuted the church (12:1–23), Herod Agrippa II (A.D. 27–c. 100) had an intimate knowledge of Jewish matters. Although influential in Jewish religious affairs because he had political authority to appoint the high priest, Agrippa II was unpopular with the Jews because of his incestuous relationship with his sister Bernice (25:13 note).

■ **26:5 strictest sect . . . I lived a Pharisee.** Knowing the background of Agrippa, Paul stressed his dependence on the God of his fathers (cf. 24:14) and his link with the Pharisees (Phil. 3:5, 6) to show the legitimacy of the Judaism. Paul argued that God had promised the resurrection of the body. Although this was the belief of Jews in general and the Pharisees in particular, it was being used as the basis of charges against him.

■ **26:12–14** Paul's experience on the road to Damascus (9:1–19) was so important to him that he recounted it twice, once before the Jewish crowd in Jerusalem (22:6–16), and again before this mainly pagan audience in Caesarea.

20 [w]Acts 9:19, 20, 22; 11:26 [x]Matt. 3:8; Luke 3:8

22 [y]Luke 24:27; Acts 24:14; 28:23; Rom. 3:21 [z]John 5:46

23 [a]Luke 24:26 [b]1 Cor. 15:20, 23; Col. 1:18; Rev. 1:5 [c]Is. 42:6; 49:6; Luke 2:32; 2 Cor. 4:4

24 [d]2 Kin. 9:11; John 10:20; [1 Cor. 1:23; 2:13, 14; 4:10]

25 [5]*out of my mind*

26 [e]Acts 26:3

Paul's Post-Conversion Life

19 "Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, 20 but [w]declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do [x]works befitting repentance. 21 For these reasons the Jews seized me in the temple and tried to kill *me.* 22 Therefore, having obtained help from God, to this day I stand, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those [y]which the prophets and [z]Moses said would come— 23 [a]that the Christ would suffer, [b]that He would be the first to rise from the dead, and [c]would proclaim light to the *Jewish* people and to the Gentiles."

Agrippa Parries Paul's Challenge

24 Now as he thus made his defense, Festus said with a loud voice, "Paul, [d]you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!"

25 But he said, "I am not [5]mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and reason. 26 For the king, before whom I also speak freely, [e]knows these things; for I am convinced that none of these things escapes his attention, since this thing was not done in a corner. 27 King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe."

Repentance

Repentance means changing one's mind, so that one's views, values, goals, and ways are changed, and one's whole life is lived differently. Mind and judgment, will and affections, behavior and lifestyle, motives and plans: all are involved. Repenting means starting to live a new life.

The call to repent was the fundamental summons in the preaching of John the Baptist (Matt. 3:2), Jesus (Matt. 4:17), the Twelve (Mark 6:12), Peter at Pentecost (Acts 2:38), Paul to the Gentiles (Acts 17:30; 26:20), and the glorified Christ to five of the seven churches in Asia (Rev. 2:5, 16, 22; 3:3, 19). It was part of Jesus' summary of the gospel that was to be taken to all the world (Luke 24:47). It corresponds to the constant summons of the Old Testament prophets to Israel to return to the God from whom they had strayed (e.g., Jer. 23:22; 25:4, 5; Zech. 1:3–6). Repentance is always set forth as the path to remission of sins and restoration to God's favor, while impenitence is the road to ruin (e.g., Luke 13:1–8).

Faith and repentance are themselves fruits of regeneration. But as a practical matter, repentance is inseparable from faith. Turning towards Christ in faith is impossible without turning away from sin in repentance. The idea that there can be saving faith without repentance, and that one can be justified by embracing Christ as Savior while refusing Him as Lord, is a dangerous error. True faith acknowledges Christ as what He is, our God-appointed king as well as our God-given priest, and faith that trusts in Him as Savior will submit to Him as Lord also. To refuse this is to seek justification with an impenitent faith, which is no faith.

The *Westminster Confession* says that in repenting

> a sinner, out of the sight and sense, not only of the danger, but also the filthiness and odiousness of his sins, as contrary to the holy nature and righteous law of God, and upon the apprehension of His mercy in Christ to such as are penitent, so grieves for and hates his sins as to turn from them all unto God, purposing and endeavoring to walk with Him in all the ways of His commandments (*Westminster Confession,* 15.2).

Feelings of remorse, self-reproach, and sorrow for sin generated by fear of punishment, without any wish or resolve to forsake sinning should not be confused with repentance. David expresses true repentance in Ps. 51, having in his heart the serious purpose of sinning no more, and of living a righteous life (Luke 3:8; Acts 26:20). □

■ **26:20** See 2:38; 3:19 and note; 17:20; 20:21; theological note "Repentance."

■ **26:23 Christ would suffer . . . rise from the dead.** The Jews had difficulty accepting the idea that the Messiah would suffer and die. Jesus and His apostles taught this doctrine from the Scriptures (17:2, 3; Luke 24:27; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4), yet the Jews rejected it, arrested Paul, and wanted to kill him.

■ **26:27 do you believe the prophets.** Agrippa faced a dilemma: if he said no, he would anger the Jews; if he said yes, he would lose face because Paul would ask him to believe the gospel.

28 Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You almost persuade me to become a Christian."
29 And Paul said, [f]"I would to God that not only you, but also all who hear me today, might become both almost and altogether such as I am, except for these chains."
30 When he had said these things, the king stood up, as well as the governor and Bernice and those who sat with them; 31 and when they had gone aside, they talked among themselves, saying, [g]"This man is doing nothing deserving of death or chains."
32 Then Agrippa said to Festus, "This man might have been set [h]free [i]if he had not appealed to Caesar."

The Voyage to Rome Begins

27 And when [a]it was decided that we should sail to Italy, they delivered Paul and some other prisoners to *one* named Julius, a centurion of the Augustan Regiment. 2 So, entering a ship of Adramyttium, we put to sea, meaning to sail along the coasts of Asia. [b]Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, was with us. 3 And the next *day* we landed at Sidon. And Julius [c]treated Paul kindly and gave *him* liberty to go to his friends and receive care. 4 When we had put to sea from there, we sailed under *the shelter of* Cyprus, because the winds were contrary. 5 And when we had sailed over the sea which is off Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, *a city* of Lycia. 6 There the centurion found [d]an Alexandrian ship sailing to Italy, and he put us on board.
7 When we had sailed slowly many days, and arrived with difficulty off Cnidus, the wind not permitting us to proceed, we sailed under *the shelter of* [e]Crete off Salmone. 8 Passing it with difficulty, we came to a place called Fair Havens, near the city *of* Lasea.

29 [f]1 Cor. 7:7
31 [g]Acts 23:9, 29; 25:25
32 [h]Acts 28:18 [i]Acts 25:11

CHAPTER 27

1 [a]Acts 25:12, 25
2 [b]Acts 19:29
3 [c]Acts 24:23; 28:16
6 [d]Acts 28:11
7 [e]Acts 2:11; 27:12, 21; Titus 1:5, 12

■ **26:28 You almost persuade me to become a Christian.** The king used a delaying tactic, arguing that a half-hour speech is insufficient time to become a Christian. In the first century, "Christian" (cf. 11:26) was probably a term of contempt (1 Pet. 4:16).

■ **27:2 Adramyttium.** On the coast between Troas and Pergamum.

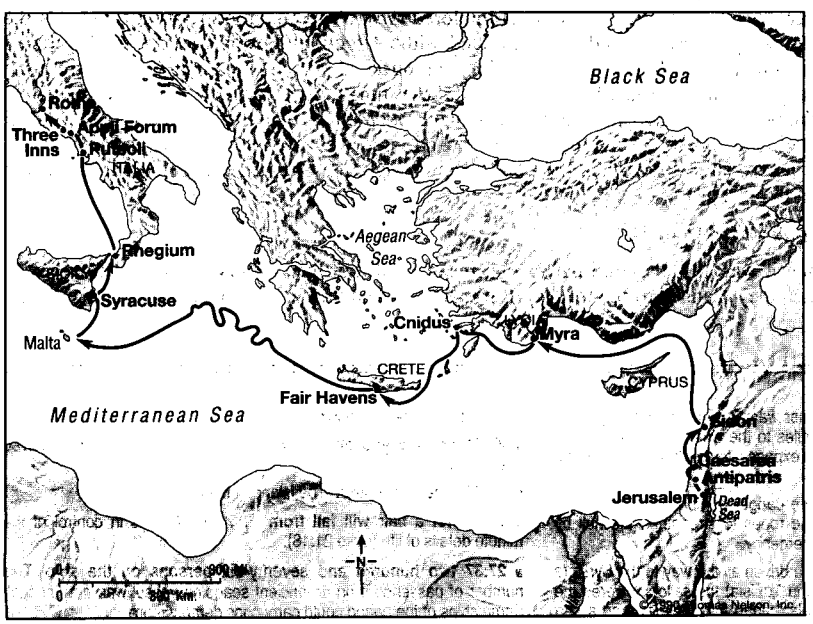
we put to sea. This chapter is filled with nautical terms and directions, evidence that the author was an eyewitness.

Aristarchus . . . us. Paul had two companions with him: Luke as his physician (Col. 4:14) and Aristarchus (Col. 4:10; Philem. 24) from Thessalonica, probably his attendant.

■ **27:3 landed at Sidon.** An eastern Mediterranean port, today in Lebanon.

■ **27:4 under the shelter of Cyprus.** That is, close under the eastern point of the island in order to be protected from the westerly winds of the summer and fall.

■ **27:5 off Cilicia and Pamphylia.** The ship went up the Syrian coast, past Antioch of Syria and then west to Myra. Myra was an important port of call for grain ships sailing between Alexandria and Rome.



On to Rome (Paul's Fourth Journey, Acts 27:1—28:16). In Jerusalem following his third missionary journey, Paul struggled with Jews who accused him of profaning the temple (Acts 21:26–34). He was placed in Roman custody in Caesarea for two years, but after appealing to Caesar, was sent by ship to Rome. After departing the island of Crete, Paul's party was shipwrecked on Malta by a great storm. Three months later he finally arrived at the imperial city.

9 [f]Lev. 16:29–31; 23:27–29; Num. 29:7 [f]The Day of Atonement, late September or early October

14 [2]A southeast wind that stirs up broad waves; NU *Euraquilon,* a northeaster

15 [3]*be driven*

16 [4]NU *Cauda*

17 [5]M *Syrtes*

19 [g]Jon. 1:5

22 [6]*courage*

23 [h]Acts 18:9; 23:11; 2 Tim. 4:17 [i]Dan. 6:16; Rom. 1:9; 2 Tim. 1:3

25 [j]Luke 1:45; Rom. 4:20, 21; 2 Tim. 1:12

26 [k]Acts 28:1

29 [7]Or *wished*

34 [l]1 Kin. 1:52; [Matt. 10:30; Luke 12:7; 21:18]

35 [m]1 Sam. 9:13; Matt. 15:36; Mark 8:6; John 6:11; [1 Tim. 4:3, 4]

37 [n]Acts 2:41; 7:14; Rom. 13:1; 1 Pet. 3:20

40 [8]*cast off*

Paul's Warning Ignored

9 Now when much time had been spent, and sailing was now dangerous [f]because [1]the Fast was already over, Paul advised them, 10 saying, "Men, I perceive that this voyage will end with disaster and much loss, not only of the cargo and ship, but also our lives." 11 Nevertheless the centurion was more persuaded by the helmsman and the owner of the ship than by the things spoken by Paul. 12 And because the harbor was not suitable to winter in, the majority advised to set sail from there also, if by any means they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete opening toward the southwest and northwest, *and* winter *there.*

In the Tempest

13 When the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained *their* desire, putting out to sea, they sailed close by Crete. 14 But not long after, a tempestuous head wind arose, called [2]Euroclydon. 15 So when the ship was caught, and could not head into the wind, we let *her* [3]drive. 16 And running under *the shelter of* an island called [4]Clauda, we secured the skiff with difficulty. 17 When they had taken it on board, they used cables to undergird the ship; and fearing lest they should run aground on the [5]Syrtis *Sands,* they struck sail and so were driven. 18 And because we were exceedingly tempest-tossed, the next *day* they lightened the ship. 19 On the third *day* [g]we threw the ship's tackle overboard with our own hands. 20 Now when neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest beat on *us,* all hope that we would be saved was finally given up.

21 But after long abstinence from food, then Paul stood in the midst of them and said, "Men, you should have listened to me, and not have sailed from Crete and incurred this disaster and loss. 22 And now I urge you to take [6]heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. 23 [h]For there stood by me this night an angel of the God to whom I belong and [i]whom I serve, 24 saying, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must be brought before Caesar; and indeed God has granted you all those who sail with you.' 25 Therefore take heart, men, [j]for I believe God that it will be just as it was told me. 26 However, [k]we must run aground on a certain island."

27 Now when the fourteenth night had come, as we were driven up and down in the Adriatic *Sea,* about midnight the sailors sensed that they were drawing near some land. 28 And they took soundings and found *it* to be twenty fathoms; and when they had gone a little farther, they took soundings again and found *it* to be fifteen fathoms. 29 Then, fearing lest we should run aground on the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern, and [7]prayed for day to come. 30 And as the sailors were seeking to escape from the ship, when they had let down the skiff into the sea, under pretense of putting out anchors from the prow, 31 Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved." 32 Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the skiff and let it fall off.

33 And as day was about to dawn, Paul implored *them* all to take food, saying, "Today is the fourteenth day you have waited and continued without food, and eaten nothing. 34 Therefore I urge you to take nourishment, for this is for your survival, [l]since not a hair will fall from the head of any of you." 35 And when he had said these things, he took bread and [m]gave thanks to God in the presence of them all; and when he had broken *it* he began to eat. 36 Then they were all encouraged, and also took food themselves. 37 And in all we were two hundred and seventy-six [n]persons on the ship. 38 So when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship and threw out the wheat into the sea.

Shipwrecked on Malta

39 When it was day, they did not recognize the land; but they observed a bay with a beach, onto which they planned to run the ship if possible. 40 And they [8]let go the anchors and left *them*

■ **27:11, 12** The captain and the owner wanted to reach the larger and safer harbor of Phoenix about forty miles to the west, but in going west past Cape Matala the ship would be exposed to winds from the northwest.

■ **27:17 used cables.** Because of the danger of violent storms on the Mediterranean, ancient vessels carried ropes to strengthen the hull by being tied around it sideways in an emergency.

struck sail. Fearing that they might be driven all the way to the Syrtis (a region of sands near modern Libya and Tunisia) the sailors lowered the sail. The description in Greek could also mean that they lowered a sea anchor to slow the ship down.

■ **27:24 granted you all . . . with you.** In His kindness God saved everyone in the ship.

■ **27:26 a certain island.** The island of Malta, south of Sicily.

■ **27:34 not a hair will fall from . . . any.** God is in control of the minute details of life (Luke 21:18).

■ **27:37 two hundred and seventy-six persons on the ship.** This number of passengers on an ancient seagoing vessel was not unusual. Some ships of the period could carry considerably more.

in the sea, meanwhile loosing the rudder ropes; and they hoisted the mainsail to the wind and made for shore. 41 But striking [g]a place where two seas met, [o]they ran the ship aground; and the prow stuck fast and remained immovable, but the stern was being broken up by the violence of the waves.

42 And the soldiers' plan was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim away and escape. 43 But the centurion, wanting to save Paul, kept them from *their* purpose, and commanded that those who could swim should jump *overboard* first and get to land, 44 and the rest, some on boards and some on *parts* of the ship. And so it was [p]that they all escaped safely to land.

Paul's Ministry on Malta

28 Now when they had escaped, they then found out that [a]the island was called Malta. 2 And the [b]natives[r] showed us unusual kindness; for they kindled a fire and made us all welcome, because of the rain that was falling and because of the cold. 3 But when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid *them* on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat, and fastened on his hand. 4 So when the natives saw the creature hanging from his hand, they said to one another, "No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he has escaped the sea, yet justice does not allow to live." 5 But he shook off the creature into the fire and [c]suffered no harm. 6 However, they were expecting that he would swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But after they had looked for a long time and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds and [d]said that he was a god.

7 In that region there was an estate of the [z]leading citizen of the island, whose name was Publius, who received us and entertained us courteously for three days. 8 And it happened that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and dysentery. Paul went in to him and [e]prayed, and [f]he laid his hands on him and healed him. 9 So when this was done, the rest of those on the island who had diseases also came and were healed. 10 They also honored us in many [g]ways; and when we departed, they provided such things as were [h]necessary.

Arrival at Rome

11 After three months we sailed in [i]an Alexandrian ship whose figurehead was the [3]Twin Brothers, which had wintered at the island. 12 And landing at Syracuse, we stayed three days. 13 From there we circled round and reached Rhegium. And after one day the south wind blew; and the next day we came to Puteoli, 14 where we found [j]brethren, and were invited to stay with them seven days. And so we went toward Rome. 15 And from there, when the brethren heard about us, they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum and Three Inns. When Paul saw them, he thanked God and took courage.

16 Now when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard; but [k]Paul was permitted to dwell by himself with the soldier who guarded him.

Paul's Ministry at Rome

17 And it came to pass after three days that Paul called the leaders of the Jews together. So when they had come together, he said to them: "Men *and* brethren, [l]though I have done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet [m]I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans, 18 who, [n]when they had examined me, wanted to let *me* go, because there was no cause for putting me to death. 19 But when the [4]Jews spoke against *it*, [o]I

41 [o]2 Cor. 11:25 [g]A reef

44 [p]Acts 27:22, 31

CHAPTER 28

1 [a]Acts 27:26

2 [b]Acts 28:4; Rom. 1:14; 1 Cor. 14:11; Col. 3:11 [r]Lit. *barbarians*

5 [c]Mark 16:18; Luke 10:19

6 [d]Acts 12:22; 14:11

7 [z]Magistrate

8 [e]Acts 9:40; [James 5:14, 15] [f]Matt. 9:18; Mark 5:23; 6:5; 7:32; 16:18; Luke 4:40; Acts 19:11, 12; [1 Cor. 12:9, 28]

10 [g]Matt. 15:6; 1 Tim. 5:17 [h][Phil. 4:19]

11 [i]Acts 27:6 [3]Gr. *Dioskouroi*, Zeus's sons Castor and Pollux

14 [j]Rom. 1:8

16 [k]Acts 23:11; 24:25; 27:3

17 [l]Acts 23:29; 24:12, 13; 26:31 [m]Acts 21:33

18 [n]Acts 22:24; 24:10; 25:8; 26:32

19 [o]Acts 25:11, 21, 25 [4]The ruling authorities

■ **27:41 But striking a place where two seas met.** See text note. This is the narrow channel in St. Paul's Bay between Malta and the island of Salmonetta, where the currents create sandbars. This sort of nautical detail indicates that Luke was an eyewitness of the event.

■ **28:1 Malta.** Ancient Melita (the name means "a place of refuge") was settled by Phoenicians who came there about 1000 B.C. Malta measures 8 by 18 miles and is 60 miles south of Sicily and 180 miles northeast of Cyrene, North Africa.

■ **28:3–5** Being cold-blooded, snakes can become stiff and motionless in cold weather, and Paul must have picked up the serpent along with the brush. Some have suggested that the snake was nonpoisonous, but the Greek word translated "creature" in v. 4 is one applied to dangerous animals and poisonous snakes, and there is little reason to doubt the islanders' identification of the snake as poisonous.

■ **28:6 they changed their minds.** There is some irony in the islanders' reappraisal of Paul's character—from murderer destined for death to that of a god. This recalls the events in Lystra, where first the people hailed Paul and Barnabas as gods, and then nearly stoned Paul to death (14:11–20).

■ **28:7 leading citizen . . . Publius.** See text note. Octavius Augustus installed a Roman governor on Malta who according to inscriptions was "the chief man over all the municipality of Malta". This fits Luke's description of Publius as "the leading citizen of the island." Publius showed the visitors hospitality at his island estate.

■ **28:8 sick of a fever and dysentery.** The Greek words suggest repeated feverish attacks. The ailment has been diagnosed in modern times as Malta fever, caused by the milk of Maltese goats.

■ **28:16 dwell by himself . . . guarded.** Under house arrest, Paul lived in his own rented home. There he could entertain his friends and minister to groups such as the Roman Jews.

was compelled to appeal to Caesar, not that I had anything of which to accuse my nation. 20 For this reason therefore I have called for you, to see *you* and speak with *you,* because [p]for the hope of Israel I am bound with [q]this chain."

21 Then they said to him, "We neither received letters from Judea concerning you, nor have any of the brethren who came reported or spoken any evil of you. 22 But we desire to hear from you what you think; for concerning this sect, we know that [r]it is spoken against everywhere."

23 So when they had appointed him a day, many came to him at *his* lodging, [s]to whom he explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus [t]from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning till evening. 24 And [u]some were persuaded by the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved. 25 So when they did not agree among themselves, they departed after Paul had said one word: "The Holy Spirit spoke rightly through Isaiah the prophet to [5]our fathers, 26 saying,

[v] *'Go to this people and say:*
"Hearing you will hear, and shall not understand;
And seeing you will see, and not perceive;
27 *For the hearts of this people have grown dull.*
Their ears are hard of hearing,
And their eyes they have closed.
Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears,
Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn,
So that I should heal them."'

28 "Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent [w]to the Gentiles,

20 [p]Acts 26:6, 7 [q]Acts 26:29; Eph. 3:1; 4:1; 6:20; 2 Tim. 1:8, 16; Philem. 10, 13

22 [r]Luke 2:34; Acts 24:5, 14; [1 Pet. 2:12; 3:16; 4:14, 16]

23 [s]Luke 24:27; [Acts 17:3; 19:8] [t]Acts 26:6, 22

24 [u]Acts 14:4; 19:9

25 [5]NU *your*

26 [v]Is. 6:9, 10; Jer. 5:21; Ezek. 12:2; Matt. 13:14, 15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; John 12:40, 41; Rom. 11:8

28 [w]Is. 42:1, 6; 49:6; Matt. 21:41; Luke 2:32; Rom. 11:11

The Career of the Apostle Paul (28:31)

Origin:	Tarsus in Cilicia (Acts 22:3) Tribe of Benjamin (Phil. 3:5)
Training:	Learned tentmaking (Acts 18:3) Studied under Gamaliel (Acts 22:3)
Early Religion:	Hebrew and Pharisee (Phil. 3:5) Persecuted Christians (Acts 8:1–3; Phil. 3:6)
Salvation:	Met the risen Christ on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:1–8) Filled with the Holy Spirit and baptized on the street called Straight (Acts 9:17, 18; 22:12–16)
Called to Missions:	Church at Antioch was instructed by the Holy Spirit to send out Paul to the work (Acts 13:1–3) Carried the gospel to the Gentiles (Gal. 2:7–10)
Events:	Spoke up for the church at Antioch at the council of Jerusalem (Acts 15:1–4, 12) Opposed Peter (Gal. 2:11–21) Disputed with Barnabas about John Mark (Acts 15:36–41)
Achievements:	Three extended missionary journeys (Acts 13—20) Founded numerous churches in Asia Minor, Greece and possibly Spain (Rom. 15:24, 28) Wrote letters to numerous churches and various individuals which now make up one-fourth of our New Testament
End of Life:	Following arrest in Jerusalem, was sent to Rome (Acts 21:27; 28:16–31) According to Christian tradition, released from prison allowing further missionary work; rearrested, imprisoned again in Rome, and beheaded outside of the city.

and they will hear it!" [29] [e]And when he had said these words, the Jews departed and had a great dispute among themselves.

[30] Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, [31] [x]preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.

29 [e]NU omits v. 29.
31 [x]Acts 4:31; Eph. 6:19

■ **28:30, 31** From A.D. 60–62 Paul was under house arrest preaching and teaching to anyone who wanted to hear. His subject is summarized as the kingdom of God and Jesus Christ. At the end of Acts, Paul has not yet been tried before Nero, as the Lord said was going to happen (27:24). It appears that Paul expected to be acquitted and released (Phil. 1:25; 2:24; Philem. 22). This must have occurred before A.D. 64, when Nero set fire to Rome and accused Christians of that crime. When released, Paul seems to have taken up his ministry again, going as far as Greece (Nicopolis, Titus 3:12; Thessalonica, 2 Tim. 4:10), Crete (Titus 1:5), and Asia Minor (Ephesus, 2 Tim. 1:18; 4:12; Troas, 2 Tim. 4:13; Miletus, 2 Tim. 4:20). Possibly he went as far west as Spain (Rom. 15:23, 24, 28), as the first-century writing *1 Clement* may indicate. About A.D. 67, Paul was imprisoned again by Nero and executed. In 2 Tim. 4:6–8, Paul anticipates the end of his life.

■ **28:31 with all confidence, no one forbidding him.** For Paul, Luke, and those who followed, the message about Jesus and the glorious kingdom of God was to go on in triumph.

Introduction to the

EPISTLES

Of the twenty-seven books in the New Testament, twenty-one are letters written either to individual churches (Philippians, 2 John), groups of churches (Galatians, 1 Peter), or specific persons (Philemon, 3 John). Two other books contain letters within them (Acts 15:22–29; Rev. 1:4—3:22). Clearly this style of writing has a prominent place in the New Testament. However, beginning with the apostle Paul, Christians not only used but also modified the conventions of letter writing followed in Hellenistic culture. To better understand the epistles of the New Testament, it is helpful to consider the functions and conventions of letter writing in the Greco-Roman world, as well as how the apostles used and adapted that literary tradition.

Greek and Roman Letter Writing. Letter writing has a long history in the ancient Near East. It began as a means of official communication for military affairs and governmental administration, and examples of such letters may be found even in the Old Testament (2 Sam. 11:14, 15; Ezra 4:6–23; 7:11–26). With the development of paper made from papyrus, letter writing became a more common form of communication, but even then it was complicated by the restriction of the postal couriers to government correspondence. The rich could dispatch servants to deliver their letters, but most people had to rely on the travels of friends or even strangers to carry their mail.

Letter writing in the New Testament era was almost exclusively a product of previously existing relationships; people wrote to family members or others whom they had already met personally. Their letters were meant to fulfill three basic purposes: to provide basic or necessary information, to make requests of a social superior or give instructions to a subordinate, and to maintain and develop the personal relationship between the correspondents. The letter served as a substitute for the actual presence of the writer. Very often if the courier who delivered the letter was well known to the formal correspondents, he or she would expand or clarify the contents of the letter (cf. 1 Cor. 1:11; 7:1).

The form of Hellenistic letters had three major components: an opening, body, and conclusion. The opening and conclusion were primarily concerned with the personal relationship between the correspondents, and their language can reveal much about that relationship. When writing to a social equal or subordinate, it was customary to put the name of the sender first and then the recipient ("A to B, greetings"), followed by a health wish (cf. 3 John 1, 2). If the recipient was a superior, that name would be placed first ("To B, greetings from A"), and the health wish would be omitted. The body of a letter was concerned with providing information or instructions. Letters primarily intended to maintain or build a personal relationship usually had more lengthy openings and conclusions, and the body could be almost nonexistent.

The Letters of Paul. Because Paul's missionary travels forced him to be separated from the churches he founded, it was natural that he would choose to write letters to maintain his relationship with the congregations. His letters were not, however, of the simple "staying in touch" variety; each of them was prompted by specific concerns or situations within the churches that required his instruction. The only exception to this pattern is possibly Romans, which appears to have been written to a church Paul did not know personally, and which does not seem to have raised specific matters prompting Paul to write. Paul's letters, then, served as a means of apostolic presence and instruction for the churches when the apostle himself could not be present.

Paul's apostolic office and function had significant influence on his use of letter-writing conventions. Rather than including a wish for health or prosperity in his openings, Paul called for God's grace upon the recipients and offered a prayer of thanksgiving on their behalf (but cf. Gal. 1:6–9, where Paul's strained relations with these churches led him to replace his usual thanksgiving with a rebuke). In this manner he adapted the traditional formulas for the physical health of the recipients to the religious function of concern for their spiritual well-being. Similarly he replaced the customary words of "farewell" in his closings with words of benediction and grace. Although his practice of giving his own name first in the opening salutation might be understood as assuming a position of greater social standing than his readers, Paul tempers this tone of authority by addressing them in the familial terms "brethren" and "beloved." His letters are a combination of the conventional features of family letters and the formal speeches of instruction found in contemporary philosophical epistles.

Like many writers of letters during this period, Paul seems generally to have used an amanuensis (a professional scribe) to write his letters. The scribe Tertius, who wrote Romans, inserted his own personal greetings in the conclusion (Rom. 16:22). Elsewhere Paul seems to call attention to portions of letters that he wrote in his own distinctive hand (1 Cor. 16:21; Gal. 6:11; cf. 1 Pet. 5:12). When Paul was responding to communications from the churches, he apparently had his letters carried back by the representatives from the congregation (Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus in 1 Cor. 16:17; cf. 7:1; Epaphroditus in Phil. 4:18). Otherwise the letters would be delivered by close associates (Titus in 2 Cor. 8:16, 17).

The General Epistles. The question of the degree of influence that Paul's letters had on the choice of this literary form by other apostles is currently being reexamined. This much at least is certain: the epistle be-

came an important form of Christian writing not only for authors of the later New Testament books, but also for the "Apostolic Fathers," such as Ignatius of Antioch, Polycarp, and Clement of Rome.

The letters of James, Peter, John, and Jude, and the letter to the Hebrews all have significant differences from the Pauline letters. As a general rule, they do not follow the formal conventions of Hellenistic letters as closely as Paul. Hebrews and 1 John have no formal opening, nor do 1 John and James have a clear example of the usual closing greetings. Except for 2 and 3 John, it is difficult to determine what, if any, specific problems these letters were intended to address, nor is it clear whether they were written for particular recipients. For these reasons they are often called "General Epistles." In their form and content alike they are more like philosophical epistles than ordinary correspondence. □

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the

ROMANS

Author The opening word of the letter (1:1), as well as the biographical details recorded in chs. 1, 15, and 16 show that Romans was written by the apostle Paul. The letter was already cited and listed as Paul's during the second century. Its authenticity has been disputed only rarely and never convincingly.

Date and Occasion Paul wrote Romans shortly before his visit to Jerusalem with the gift from the Gentile congregations (15:25; Acts 24:17). Internal indications suggesting that at this time he was a resident of Corinth include the reference to Phoebe, a member of the church at Cenchrea, the port of Corinth (16:1, 2), the references to Gaius as his host (1 Cor. 1:14), and to Erastus (Acts 19:22; 2 Tim. 4:20). The time of writing was probably during his three months in Greece, described in Acts 20:2, 3. While it is not possible to fix a date, it is known that Gallio (before whom Paul appeared in Acts 18:12) was proconsul (normally a one-year appointment) in Achaia in A.D. 52. Paul was in Corinth for "a good while" (Acts 18:18 and text note), presumably during the period A.D. 51–53. He then sailed to Ephesus for a brief visit, and went to Caesarea and probably Jerusalem as well as Antioch (Acts 18:22). Returning through Galatia and Phrygia (Acts 18:23) to Ephesus, he was a resident there for about three years (Acts 19:8, 10) before deciding to go to Jerusalem via Macedonia and Achaia (Acts 19:21). The earliest possible date for the writing of Romans, therefore, is towards the end of A.D. 54; but a later date leaves more leeway for Paul's many activities, so the letter is best dated some time between the end of A.D. 55 and the early months of A.D. 57.

That the faith of the Roman Christians was well known (1:8), and that Paul had desired to visit them for some time (1:13), suggest that the Christian faith had been established in the capital of the empire for a considerable period. These facts are supported by the statement of the Roman historian Suetonius that Claudius had expelled the Jews (in A.D. 49) for rioting "at the instigation of Chrestus" (evidently a reference to Christ). Visitors from Rome were present on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:10, 11) and may have been the first to bring the good news to the city. Its strategic importance and the large number of Jews living there would have brought the gospel message to Rome as though attracted by a magnet. Despite tradition stretching back through Irenaeus, it is certain that the church was not founded by Peter or Paul. It is clear that Paul had never visited the church (1:8–13), and the absence of any reference to Peter or the other apostles suggests that the Roman church had not experienced direct apostolic ministry.

Both Jews and Gentiles were members of the church in Rome, and 1:13 indicates a predominance of Gentiles, as possibly does the warning to Gentile Christians not to be proud (11:13–24). The conflict between weak and strong in 14:1—15:13 may have arisen in a similar context. It is even possible that the several house churches in which the Christians met reflected these divisions (cf. 16:5, 14, 15).

Paul perceived his ministry to be at a turning point when Romans was written. He believed that he had fulfilled his ministry in the eastern Mediterranean (15:17–23) and that the time was ripe to move west and evangelize in Spain (15:24). He hoped to visit the Roman Christians on the way, fulfilling his long-time ambition, and perhaps gaining their assistance as a supporting church (15:24).

In light of this, it was essential for him to present his apostolic credentials (note "my gospel" in 2:16 and 16:25), so that they might recognize the authenticity of his ministry. Paul may also have thought it necessary to defend his ministry from the false insinuations of rumormongerers (3:8).

At the time of writing Romans, Paul was also deeply concerned that the Christian church should be a fellowship of Jews and Gentiles together in the one body of Christ. This is clear from the importance he attaches to the Gentile love-gift to the Jerusalem church. It also surfaces throughout Romans in the theme of the unifying of Jew and Gentile—in sin because of Adam, and through grace in Christ. The saving righteousness of the gospel is needed by both, since all have sinned; it may be received by both, since it comes by grace through faith. The outworking of this saving righteousness in history is the clue to God's ultimate purposes for both; and this saving righteousness is to be expressed in the lives of both—personally, communally, and socially—in the body of Christ as the new people of God. The opportunity for writing while in Corinth, the pressing burden of his visit to Jerusalem, and the prospect of visiting Rome before preaching the gospel at the limits of the then-known world, all conspired to bring him to write this letter.

Characteristics and Themes Romans is Paul's fullest, grandest, most comprehensive statement of the gospel. Its compressed declarations of vast truths are like coiled springs—once loosed, they leap through mind and heart to fill one's horizon and shape one's life. John

Chrysostom, the fifth century's greatest preacher, had Romans read aloud to him once a week. Augustine, Luther, and Wesley, three supremely significant contributors to the Christian heritage, all came to assured faith through the impact of Romans. All the Reformers saw Romans as the God-given key to understanding all Scripture, since here Paul brings together all the Bible's greatest themes—sin, law, judgment, human destiny, faith, works, grace, justification, sanctification, election, the plan of salvation, the work of Christ and of the Spirit, the Christian hope, the nature and life of the church, the place of Jew and non-Jew in the purposes of God, the philosophy of church and world history, the meaning and message of the Old Testament, the duties of Christian citizenship, and the principles of personal godliness and morality. From the vantage point given by Romans, the whole landscape of the Bible is open to view, and the relation of the parts to the whole becomes plain. The study of Romans is vitally necessary for the spiritual health and insight of the Christian. □

Outline of Romans

I. Paul's Greetings and Personal Introduction (1:1–15)
II. Theme: The Righteousness of God for Jew and Gentile (1:16, 17)
III. Mankind's Universal Sinfulness (1:18—3:20)
  A. Gentile Sinfulness (1:18–32)
  B. Jewish Sinfulness (2:1—3:8)
  C. Universal Sinfulness (3:9–20)
IV. God's Righteousness for Justification (3:21—5:21)
  A. Provided in Christ by Faith (3:21–31)
  B. Proved by the Example of Abraham (ch. 4)
  C. Guarantees Blessings for the Righteous (5:1–11)
  D. Rooted in the Obedience of Christ—the New Adam (5:12–21)
V. Grace Reigns Through God's Righteousness (chs. 6—8)
  A. Sin's Dominion Broken and Its Influence Resisted (ch. 6)
  B. Believers Dead to the Law's Condemnation Though Not Yet Made Sinless (ch. 7)
  C. Those Living by the Spirit Prove Victors over the Flesh (ch. 8)
VI. God Demonstrates His Righteousness in Jew and Gentile (chs. 9—11)
  A. God's Righteousness Established in History (ch. 9)
  B. God's Righteousness Received Only by Faith (ch. 10)
  C. God's Righteousness Revealed in Jew and Gentile (ch. 11)
VII. God's Righteousness Grasped and Expressed in His People's Lives (12:1—15:13)
  A. In the Response of Consecration (12:1, 2)
  B. In the Ministry of the Body of Christ (12:3–21)
  C. In the Realities of Political and Social Life (ch. 13)
  D. In the Fellowship of Weak and Strong (14:1—15:13)
VIII. Paul's Plans and Concluding Greetings (15:14—16:27)
  A. Paul's Vision for His Ministry (15:14–22)
  B. Paul's Plan to Visit Rome (15:23–33)
  C. Paul's Greetings to Christians in Rome (16:1–16)
  D. Paul's Warning Against Enemies and Assurance of Their Defeat (16:17–20)
  E. Paul's Companions Send Greetings (16:21–24)
  F. Paul's Apostolic Doxology (16:25–27)

CHAPTER 1

1 [a]1 Tim. 1:11 [b]Acts 9:15; 13:2

2 [c]Acts 26:6 [d]Gal. 3:8

3 [e]Gal. 4:4 [1]*came*

4 [f]Acts 9:20; 13:33 [g][Heb. 9:14]

5 [h]Eph. 3:8 [i]Acts 6:7 [j]Acts 9:15

7 [k]1 Cor. 1:2, 24 [l]1 Cor. 1:3

8 [m]1 Cor. 1:4 [n]Rom. 16:19

9 [o]Rom. 9:1 [p]Acts 27:23 [q]1 Thess. 3:10 [2]Or *in*

11 [r]Rom. 15:29

12 [s]Titus 1:4

13 [t][1 Thess. 2:18] [u]Phil. 4:17

Greeting

PAUL, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, [a]called *to be* an apostle, [b]separated to the gospel of God
2 [c]which He promised before [d]through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, 3 concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who [1]was [e]born of the seed of David according to the flesh, 4 *and* [f]declared *to be* the Son of God with power according [g]to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. 5 Through Him [h]we have received grace and apostleship for [i]obedience to the faith among all nations [j]for His name, 6 among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ;

7 To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, [k]called *to be* saints:

[l]Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Desire to Visit Rome

8 First, [m]I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that [n]your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. 9 For [o]God is my witness, [p]whom I serve [2]with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that [q]without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers, 10 making request if, by some means, now at last I may find a way in the will of God to come to you. 11 For I long to see you, that [r]I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established— 12 that is, that I may be encouraged together with you by [s]the mutual faith both of you and me.

13 Now I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that I often planned to come to you (but [t]was hindered until now), that I might have some [u]fruit among you also, just as among the other Gentiles. 14 I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise. 15 So, as much as is in me, *I am* ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also.

■ **1:1 Paul.** Ancient letters began with the general formula, "A to B sends greetings." Using his Roman name, Paul fills out this formula with Christian significance both in his self-description (vv. 1–6) and in the style of his greeting (vv. 7, 8).

bondservant. Someone totally at the disposal of a master.

apostle. An official messenger of the gospel. See 2 Cor. 1:1 note.

gospel of God. God is both the source and the theme of the message; it is the message "of" God. Here and elsewhere, Paul's trinitarianism surfaces (1:3, 4; 5:1–5; 8:3, 4, 9–11, 16, 17; 14:17, 18; 15:16, 30).

■ **1:2 which He promised before.** The gospel was announced in promise form in the biblically recorded preaching of the prophets, from which the apostolic presentation of the gospel is drawn (16:25–27).

■ **1:3, 4** A description of the two stages of the Savior's ministry, rather than of His two natures. Although Son of God, He was "born of the seed of David" in order to share our weakness, but was transformed by the "Spirit of holiness" at the Resurrection, and was brought into a new epoch of His personal human existence (1 Cor. 15:45; 2 Cor. 13:4).

■ **1:5, 6** Paul sees Christ as the author of his salvation and also of his calling to be an evangelist to the Gentiles (11:13, 14; Acts 9:15; Eph. 3:8).

■ **1:5 obedience to the faith.** Lit. "obedience *of* faith," indicating both the obedience that flows from faith and the fact that faith implies obedient submission to the call of God (16:26).

■ **1:7 Rome.** Capital of the empire. We have no certain knowledge of the founding of the Roman church, although visitors from Rome were among those who heard the gospel preached on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:10).

beloved of God, called to be saints. The terms used in the greeting will prove to be keynotes of the letter itself, as God's calling, love, grace, and peace are explained at length.

■ **1:8 I thank my God.** Gratitude for God's work of grace in others was a constant feature of Paul's life (1 Cor. 11:4; Phil. 1:3; Col. 1:3; 1 Thess. 1:2; 2 Thess. 1:3; 2 Tim. 3:1; Philem. 4).

throughout the whole world. News had spread to the entire empire of the presence of Christians in its capital city.

■ **1:9 I make mention of you.** Paul's constant prayerfulness is an expression of his wholehearted service and desire for spiritual usefulness. He prays in full submission to God's will (vv. 9–12; cf. Eph. 1:15; Phil. 1:9; Col. 1:9; 1 Thess. 1:3; 2 Thess. 1:11; 2 Tim. 1:3).

■ **1:11 spiritual gift.** Here the term is not used in the functional sense of 1 Cor. 12:1; Paul has in view rather the benefit that flows from exercising functional gifts in ministry to others.

■ **1:12 encouraged together with you.** Ministry is for the mutual strengthening of the whole body of Christ (Eph. 4:15, 16).

■ **1:13 often planned.** No record of these many occasions exists, but see Acts 19:21; 23:11 for Paul's sense of being driven by God towards Rome.

hindered. Probably by other, regular responsibilities. See Acts 16:6, 7 for interruptions in Paul's plans caused either by the inward counsel of the Holy Spirit or by prophetic utterance.

among the other Gentiles. This suggests that Paul thought of the Roman church as predominantly Gentile.

■ **1:14 debtor.** Paul's planning (v. 13) and his expectation (v. 14) are rooted in a sense of obligation. He has been given the gospel for the Gentiles (11:13, 14; cf. Eph. 3:1–8).

Greeks. The cultured Hellenistic world (the "wise").

barbarians. The uncultured, "unwise" of the ancient world.

The Just Live by Faith

16 For [v]I am not ashamed of the gospel [3]of Christ, for [w]it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, [x]for the Jew first and also for the Greek. 17 For [y]in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, [z]*"The just shall live by faith."*

16 [v]Ps. 40:9, 10 [w]1 Cor. 1:18, 24 [x]Acts 3:26 [3]NU omits *of Christ*

17 [y]Rom. 3:21; 9:30 [z]Hab. 2:4

God's Wrath on Unrighteousness

18 [a]For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and [b]unrighteousness of men, who [4]suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because [c]what may be known of God is

18 [a][Acts 17:30] [b]2 Thess. 2:10 [4]*hold down*

19 [c][Acts 14:17; 17:24]

Mankind's Guilty Knowledge of God

All people are naturally inclined to some form of religion, yet they fail to worship their Creator, whose general revelation makes Him universally known. Sinful egoism and aversion to our Creator's claims have driven humanity into idolatry, the error of giving worship and homage to any power or object other than God (Is. 44:9–20; Rom. 1:21–23; Col. 3:5). In their idolatry, apostate humans "suppress the truth" and have "changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things" (Rom. 1:18, 23). They smother and quench, as far as they can, the awareness that general revelation provides of the transcendent Judge and Creator, and they transfer the ineradicable sense of deity to unworthy objects. This in turn leads to drastic moral decline and misery, as a first manifestation of God's wrath against apostasy (Rom. 1:18, 24–32).

God will not allow human beings to suppress entirely their sense of God and of His judgment. Some sense of right and wrong, as well as of accountability to God, always remains. Even in the fallen world everyone is endowed with a conscience that from time to time condemns them, telling them that they ought to suffer for wrongs they have done. When conscience speaks in these terms it speaks with the voice of God.

In one sense, fallen humanity does not know God, since what people believe about the objects of their worship falsifies and distorts the truth about God. In another sense all human beings do know God, but in guilt, with uncomfortable inklings of the judgment they cannot avoid. Only the gospel of Christ can speak peace to this aspect of the human condition. □

■ **1:16 I am not ashamed of the gospel.** Although the gospel is folly to the cultured, Paul sees his message as divine wisdom (1 Cor. 1:22–25, 30), and is not embarrassed by God's way of salvation. See "Salvation" at Acts 4:12.

power. The regenerating, life-changing impact of the gospel word through the Holy Spirit is essential because of humanity's bondage to sin and Satan, and weakness and spiritual inability on account of sin (5:6; 8:5–9).

believes. Salvation is unmerited, but it is not universally enjoyed; faith is required for it.

for the Jew first. While this was true in terms of the history of redemption (2:9, 10; John 4:22; cf. Mark 7:24–30), it was also the pattern of Paul's missionary outreach. Hence, in visiting the cities of the Roman world he began by expounding Scripture in the synagogues where possible, and he preached Christ as the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises (Acts 9:20; 13:5, 14; 14:1; 17:1, 17; 18:4, 19, 26; 19:8). Throughout Romans, Paul is careful not to deny the validity of the God-given privileges of His own people (3:11, 12; 9:4, 5).

■ **1:17 righteousness of God.** This is a key phrase in Romans (3:21; 5:19; 10:3), regularly explained in the letter as "righteousness . . . through (or of) faith" (3:22; 9:30; 10:6). God's righteousness is shown in the righteousness of Christ that is imputed to, or considered by God to belong to, the one who believes. This imputation of righteousness to sinners who believe is fully consistent with the personal righteousness of God. As a just and righteous judge (2:5–16), God through the death of His Son justifies, or declares righteous, those sinners who come to true faith in Christ (3:21–26; 5:10). Luther's reading of this verse had a decisive impact on his understanding of justification.

from faith to faith. Paul emphasizes that at every point of its influence the gospel depends on faith, not works.

as it is written. Hab. 2:4 provides the biblical basis for and summary of what follows, indicating that the way of life by faith was already known in the Old Testament.

shall live. Life in contrast with spiritual death, and life in the sense of continuing in fellowship with God. From first to last, godly living means trusting in God and depending on His grace.

■ **1:18 wrath.** The divine Judge's righteous retribution and personal revulsion evoked by moral evil.

is revealed. God's judgment is not limited to the future; His antagonism to sin is already shown in the world. Its effects are visible even now.

ungodliness and unrighteousness. The order may be significant—since moral decay follows theological rebellion. Or Paul may be using the two words together to express one idea, wicked ungodliness.

suppress the truth. It is not that the truth is sought but cannot be found, but rather that, confronted with the truth (which is "clearly seen," v. 20), fallen humanity seeks to hinder and obstruct its influence, and is therefore "without excuse" (v. 20). The "excuse" in view is an appeal to ignorance.

■ **1:19 what may be known of God.** Paul stresses the reality and universality of divine revelation, which is perpetual ("since the creation,"

[5]manifest [6]in them, for [d]God has shown *it* to them. [20] For since the creation of the world [e]His invisible *attributes* are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* His eternal power and [7]Godhead, so that they are without excuse, [21] because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but [f]became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. [22] [g]Professing to be wise, they became fools, [23] and changed the glory of the [h]incorruptible [i]God into an image made like [8]corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

[24] [j]Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, [k]to dishonor their bodies [l]among themselves, [25] who exchanged [m]the truth of God [n]for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

[26] For this reason God gave them up to [o]vile passions. For even their [9]women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. [27] Likewise also the [1]men, leaving the natural use of the [2]woman, burned in their lust for one another, [1]men with [1]men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.

[28] And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things [p]which are not fitting; [29] being filled with all unrighteousness, [3]sexual immorality, wickedness, [4]covetousness, [5]maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; *they are* whisperers, [30] backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, [31] [6]undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, [7]unforgiving, unmerciful; [32] who, [q]knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things [r]are deserving of death, not only do the same but also [s]approve of those who practice them.

God's Righteous Judgment

2 Therefore you are [a]inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, [b]for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. [2] But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things. [3] And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God? [4] Or do you despise [c]the riches of His goodness, [d]forbearance, and [e]longsuffering, [f]not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

19 [d][John 1:9] [5]*evident* [6]*among*

20 [e]Ps. 19:1–6 [7]*divine nature, deity*

21 [f]Jer. 2:5

22 [g]Jer. 10:14

23 [h]1 Tim. 1:17; 6:15, 16 [i]Deut. 4:16–18 [8]*perishable*

24 [j]Eph. 4:18, 19 [k]1 Cor. 6:18 [l]Lev. 18:22

25 [m]1 Thess. 1:9 [n]Is. 44:20

26 [o]Lev. 18:22 [9]Lit. *females*

27 [1]Lit. *males* [2]Lit. *female*

28 [p]Eph. 5:4

29 [3]NU omits *sexual immorality* [4]*greed* [5]*malice*

31 [6]*without understanding* [7]NU omits *unforgiving*

32 [q][Rom. 2:2] [r][Rom. 6:21] [s]Hos. 7:3

CHAPTER 2

1 [a][Rom. 1:20] [b][Matt. 7:1–5]

4 [c][Eph. 1:7, 18; 2:7] [d][Rom. 3:25] [e]Ex. 34:6 [f]Is. 30:18

v. 20) and perspicuous ("clearly seen," v. 20). Divine invisibility, eternity, and power are all expressed in and through the created order (see "General Revelation" at Ps. 19:1). The invisible God is revealed through the visible medium of creation. This revelation is manifest; it is not obscured but clearly seen. See theological note "Mankind's Guilty Knowledge of God."

■ **1:21 knew God.** Here Paul stresses that humanity not only has the opportunity to know God through general revelation, but that the revelation yields real knowledge. Humanity's sin is the individual refusal to acknowledge what is already known to be true. While knowing God, people refuse to honor Him as God or give thanks to Him. The consequence of rejecting God was that their minds and hearts grew dark. A refusal to honor God leads all intellectual pursuits to frustration.

■ **1:22, 23 Professing to be wise, they became fools . . . changed the glory of the incorruptible God.** Intellectual arrogance before God displays a reversed sense of values; the worship of God is exchanged for devotion to man-made and man-reflecting idols. The indelible instinct to worship is perverted by being centered on the wrong object (v. 25).

■ **1:24 God also gave them up.** Judgment involves the removal of divine restraints, both on sinful actions and on their consequences (vv. 26, 28).

■ **1:26, 27** The effect of perverting the instinct to worship God is the perversion of other instincts from their proper functions. Scripture views all homosexual actions in this light (Lev. 18:22; 21:13). The consequence is degradation of the body (v. 24), domination by lust, the disintegration of what is truly "natural" (v. 26), and bondage to uncontrollable passions (v. 27).

■ **1:27 receiving in themselves the penalty.** Even in a morally fallen and therefore (to humanity) unpredictable world, the harvest reaped is related to the crop sown (Gal. 6:7, 8).

■ **1:28 did not like . . . God gave them over.** Sin brings a disdain for true values, and risks abandonment by God to a spirit of licentiousness (vv. 29–31).

■ **1:32 knowing the righteous judgment of God.** Paul sees as evidence of the guilt and bondage of sin that the knowledge of divine judgment no longer acts as a restraint, but becomes a spur to further rebellion in the form of encouraging others to sin. This text confirms that part of God's revelation in nature communicates His moral character and a sense of moral duty in humanity.

■ **2:1–16** In what follows, Paul turns to an imaginary representative of a real and identifiable group of people. Although he specifically mentions Jews only at v. 17, he probably has them in mind already. They agree with his statement about God's wrath, but assume they stand outside of it (hence his stern warning in v. 5). But the nature of this presumption, if not its specific form, is not limited to Jews. In this context Paul sets forth the principles of the divine judgment all must face. It is based on truth (v. 2) and marked by righteousness (v. 5). It is according to works (v. 6), impartial in nature (v. 11), and executed through Christ (v. 16). Such judgment will bring agonizing ruin to all sinners (vv. 8, 9).

■ **2:1 inexcusable.** Paul unmasks those who will agree with his exposition of divine wrath on sin (1:18–32) but assume they are immune to it.

practice the same things. Their judgment of others is also in effect a self-condemnation (v. 3).

■ **2:2 according to truth.** A link with 1:18. God's judgment is based on the reality of the individual's response or non-response to Him, not on other considerations.

■ **2:4 despise.** They refuse to acknowledge that the kindness of God is intended to produce sorrow for sin and a turning away from it. They despise this purpose of divine generosity, and thereby show disdain for God Himself. See "God Is Love: Divine Goodness and Faithfulness" at Ps. 136:1.

5 But in accordance with your hardness and your [1]impenitent heart [g]you are [2]treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, 6 who [h]*"will render to each one according to his deeds"*: 7 eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; 8 but to those who are self-seeking and [i]do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, 9 tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew [j]first and also of the [3]Greek; 10 [k]but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 11 For [l]there is no partiality with God.

12 For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law 13 (for [m]not the hearers of the law *are* just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified; 14 for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, 15 who show the [n]work of the law written in their hearts, their [o]conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves *their* thoughts accusing or else excusing *them*) 16 [p]in the day when God will judge the secrets of men [q]by Jesus Christ, [r]according to my gospel.

The Jews Guilty as the Gentiles

17 [4]Indeed [s]you are called a Jew, and [t]rest[5] on the law, [u]and make your boast in God, 18 and [v]know *His* will, and [w]approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, 19 and [x]are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, 20 an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, [y]having the form of knowledge and truth in the law. 21 [z]You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal? 22 You who say, "Do not commit adultery," do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, [a]do you rob temples? 23 You who [b]make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law? 24 For [c]*"the name of God is [d]blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,"* as it is written.

Circumcision of No Avail

25 [e]For circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law; but if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. 26 Therefore, [f]if an uncircumcised man

5 [g][Deut. 32:34] [1]*unrepentant* [2]*storing*

6 [h]Ps. 62:12; Prov. 24:12

8 [i][2 Thess. 1:8]

9 [j]1 Pet. 4:17 [3]Gentile

10 [k][1 Pet. 1:7]

11 [l]Deut. 10:17

13 [m][James 1:22, 25]

15 [n]1 Cor. 5:1 [o]Acts 24:25

16 [p][Matt. 25:31] [q]Acts 10:42; 17:31 [r]1 Tim. 1:11

17 [s]John 8:33 [t]Mic. 3:11 [u]Is. 48:1, 2 [4]NU *But if* [5]*rely*

18 [v]Deut. 4:8 [w]Phil. 1:10

19 [x]Matt. 15:14

20 [y][2 Tim. 3:5]

21 [z]Matt. 23:3

22 [a]Mal. 3:8

23 [b]Rom. 2:17; 9:4

24 [c]Ezek. 16:27 [d]Is. 52:5; Ezek. 36:22

25 [e][Gal. 5:3]

26 [f][Acts 10:34]

■ **2:5 treasuring up . . . wrath.** Religious presumption is "hardness," since continued resistance to God's purposes in showing grace is a refusal of God's will, and increases guilt while protesting innocence. Wrath is stored up (see text note), pointing forward to proportionate punishment in hell.

■ **2:6–10** The ground of judgment will be what people have been or done (v. 6). Paul is not here denying what he elsewhere emphasizes: that salvation is a gift, not a reward (5:15, 17; 6:23). Divine judgment is based on every aspect of a person's relationship to God. Only those who receive grace do in fact seek "glory, honor and immortality" (v. 7). Others are "self-seeking" (v. 8), not God-honoring. Paul teaches that while salvation is by grace, judgment is according to works (2 Cor. 5:10). Apart from grace there is only one verdict possible "to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (v. 10; cf. 1:16).

■ **2:11** Right standing with God is not on the basis of ethnic background, nor any natural or self-generated distinctions among humanity (9:6–13; Gal. 6:15).

■ **2:12–16** The Jews were ready to appeal to the Law of Moses, which they had and the Gentiles did not. The implication was that in this connection God does show "partiality" (v. 11). The role of the law is a major theme in Romans (3:27–31; 4:13–15; 5:13–15; 6:14, 15; 7:1–25; 13:8–10). Here in his first discussion of it, Paul shows that what pleases God is not knowledge of the law but obedience to God's will revealed in it. Therefore, "there is no partiality with God" (v. 11).

■ **2:12 as many as have sinned.** This category includes everyone, as is made clear in 3:19, 20, 23.

law. The law of Moses, crystallized in the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:1–17; Deut. 5:1–22). The Mosaic law already reveals God's condemnation of sin, but the cause of sin lies in our hearts, that is, deeply rooted in our natures, and not in the law (7:13). The knowledge of "the work of the law" (v. 15) also resides in the heart, because mankind was created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26, 27). Since God judges people in accordance with standards known to them, a defense based on ignorance of the Mosaic law is irrelevant and illegitimate. It is not the degree of revelation received, but response to the revelation itself, however received, that will prove critical "in the day when God will judge" (v. 16).

■ **2:14 by nature do the things in the law.** No one can be justified on the basis of personal righteousness, but the universal presence of moral standards (although in various degrees of clarity), and the common sense of obligation to such standards, indicate a universal moral constitution and sense of accountability to God. This is evidenced by "their conscience also bearing witness" (v. 15). See "Conscience and the Law" at 1 Sam. 24:5.

■ **2:16 by Jesus Christ.** All judgment has been placed in His hand (Matt. 7:21–23; 25:31–33; John 5:22; 2 Cor. 5:10). Such judgment will be infallible, penetrating to "the thoughts and intents of the heart"; nothing will be concealed from the Judge (Heb. 4:12, 13). Nor will anyone say that it is unfair for the human to be judged by the divine, since the agent of judgment will be the incarnate Christ, Himself a man. See "The Final Judgment" at Matt. 25:41.

my gospel. The gospel Paul preaches. In this gospel, the bad news of judgment precedes the good news of grace.

■ **2:17–29** Paul now turns directly to the Jewish claim to special privilege, dealing in more detail with the possession of the law (vv. 17–24) and circumcision (vv. 25–29). In connection with the law, he presses home the claim of v. 1 that the Jews were guilty of the sins for which they condemned others. In connection with circumcision, he argues that the sign without the reality is meaningless.

■ **2:17–20** Paul lists the privileges of which the Jews boasted, thinking that these blessings gave them superiority over others.

■ **2:21–23** The responsibilities that accompany privilege have not been fulfilled. Paul specifies the commandments against adultery, sacrilege, and theft (Ex. 20:4, 5, 14, 15).

■ **2:25 circumcision . . . profitable.** Paul's argument in ch. 2 now moves to a climax. Condemnation results from failure to obey revelation

keeps the righteous requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision? 27 And will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfills the law, [g]judge you who, *even* with *your* [6]written *code* and circumcision, *are* a transgressor of the law? 28 For [h]he is not a Jew who *is one* outwardly, nor *is* circumcision that which *is* outward in the flesh; 29 but *he is* a Jew [i]who *is one* inwardly; and [j]circumcision *is that* of the heart, [k]in the Spirit, not in the letter; [l]whose [7]praise *is* not from men but from God.

God's Judgment Defended

3 What advantage then has the Jew, or what *is* the profit of circumcision? 2 Much in every way! Chiefly because [a]to them were committed the [1]oracles of God. 3 For what if [b]some did not believe? [c]Will their unbelief make the faithfulness of God without effect? 4 [d]Certainly not! Indeed, let [e]God be [2]true but [f]every man a liar. As it is written:

[g]*"That You may be justified in Your words,*
And may overcome when You are judged."

5 But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? *Is* God unjust who inflicts wrath? [h](I speak as a man.) 6 Certainly not! For then [i]how will God judge the world?

7 For if the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner? 8 And *why* not *say,* [j]"Let us do evil that good may come"?—as we are slanderously reported and as some affirm that we say. Their [3]condemnation is just.

All Have Sinned

9 What then? Are we better *than they?* Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that [k]they are all under sin.

10 As it is written:

[l]*"There is none righteous, no, not one;*
11 *There is none who understands;*
There is none who seeks after God.
12 *They have all turned aside;*
They have together become unprofitable;
There is none who does good, no, not one."
13 *"Their*[m] *throat is an open* [4]*tomb;*
With their tongues they have practiced deceit";
[n]*"The poison of asps is under their lips";*
14 *"Whose*[o] *mouth is full of cursing and bitterness."*

2:27 [g]Matt. 12:41 [6]Lit. *letter*

2:28 [h][Gal. 6:15]

2:29 [i][1 Pet. 3:4] [j]Phil. 3:3 [k]Deut. 30:6 [l][1 Cor. 4:5] [7]A play on words—*Jew* is literally *praise.*

CHAPTER 3

3:2 [a]Deut. 4:5–8 [1]*sayings,* Scriptures

3:3 [b]Heb. 4:2 [c][2 Tim. 2:13]

3:4 [d]Job 40:8 [e][John 3:33] [f]Ps. 62:9 [g]Ps. 51:4 [2]Found true

3:5 [h]Gal. 3:15

3:6 [i][Gen. 18:25]

3:8 [j]Rom. 5:20 [3]Lit. *judgment*

3:9 [k]Gal. 3:22

3:10 [l]Ps. 14:1–3; 53:1–3; Eccl. 7:20

3:13 [m]Ps. 5:9 [n]Ps. 140:3 [4]*grave*

3:14 [o]Ps. 10:7

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of whatever kind. Jews have transgressed the Mosaic law in particular, emptying circumcision of its real significance. Paul recognizes the privilege of Jewishness (9:4, 5) and of circumcision in particular (3:1, 2; 4:11). But physical circumcision is a symbol of sanctification and renewal of life (v. 25; Deut. 30:6). The reality, not the sign, is the vital thing and may be possessed irrespective of Jewishness (vv. 26, 27).

■ **2:29 he is a Jew.** The work of the Spirit, issuing in a God-centered life, not the possession of "circumcision . . . which is outward" (v. 28) and the "written code" (v. 27), makes one a member of God's covenant people. As Paul will show, his conclusion might shock the Jews he addresses, but it is rooted in the teaching of the Old Testament itself (cf. 9:6).

■ **3:1** Paul's statement that there is no favoritism with God (2:11) does not mean that there is no "advantage" in being a Jew, only that disobedience nullifies that advantage.

■ **3:2 the oracles of God.** See text note. The phrase reveals the apostolic belief that the inspiration of the Old Testament extended to its words (Matt. 4:4).

■ **3:3, 4** The response of unbelief does not nullify the faithfulness of God to the promises in His word. He keeps them (9:6, 7; 2 Tim. 2:13), as the Old Testament underlines.

■ **3:5–8** Two related questions are presented here. The first is that if people's unrighteousness is an occasion for the righteousness of God to act, is it not unfair for God to execute His wrath upon unrighteousness? Paul's answer is brief. It is a "given" that God is going to judge the world and that His judgment will be fair. In the second step Paul reduces the objection to an absurd conclusion. If God somehow accepts the unrighteousness that is an occasion for His mercy, should He not welcome even more acts of unrighteousness from us? This conclusion is foolish (6:1, 2, 15). The ends do not justify the means.

■ **3:5 I speak as a man.** Although it is only expressed as a possibility in a discussion, the suggestion that God could be unjust calls for an immediate correction.

■ **3:6** The justice of God will be displayed in the Last Judgment. Obviously it will be no excuse for sins that they had a part in making judgment necessary. God's justification of sinners will not undo the elementary truth that He will judge the world in righteousness.

■ **3:8 slanderously reported.** Foolish as the false conclusion is, it seems that Paul was accused of teaching it. A similar, but not identical issue, is discussed in 5:20—6:1.

■ **3:10 As it is written.** This is the common New Testament wording when appeal is made to the authority of Scripture (1:17; 3:3). The biblical texts, taken together, stress the universal reign of sin and the consequent depravity and condemnation of all mankind.

15 *"Their[p] feet are swift to shed blood;*
16 *Destruction and misery are in their ways;*
17 *And the way of peace they have not known."*
18 *"There[q] is no fear of God before their eyes."*

19 Now we know that whatever [r]the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that [s]every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become [5]guilty before God. 20 Therefore [t]by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

God's Righteousness Through Faith

21 But now [u]the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, [v]being witnessed by the Law [w]and the Prophets, 22 even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all [6]and on all who believe. For [x]there is no difference; 23 for [y]all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified [7]freely [z]by His grace [a]through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God set forth [b]*as* a [8]propitiation [c]by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over [d]the sins that were previously committed, 26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

15 [p]Prov. 1:16; Is. 59:7, 8
18 [q]Ps. 36:1
19 [r]John 10:34 [s]Job 5:16 [5]*accountable*
20 [t][Gal. 2:16]
21 [u]Acts 15:11 [v]John 5:46 [w]1 Pet. 1:10
22 [x][Col. 3:11] [6]NU omits *and on all*
23 [y]Gal. 3:22
24 [z][Eph. 2:8] [a][Heb. 9:12, 15] [7]*without any cost*
25 [b]Lev. 16:15 [c]Col. 1:20 [d]Acts 14:16; 17:30 [8]*mercy seat*

■ **3:18 no fear of God.** In the Old Testament, the essence of a proper attitude to God is "fear," the absence of which is practical atheism.

■ **3:19 the law.** Here "law" is a reference to the Old Testament Scriptures in general, since Paul's quotes come from Psalms, Ecclesiastes, and Isaiah.

says. A further indication that Paul sees Scripture as the living voice of God.

under the law. Not in the sense of 6:14, 15, but as in 2:12 (those who possess the Old Testament revelation, i.e., the Jews in particular).

every mouth . . . stopped . . . guilty. See text note. No one, whether Jew or Gentile, has grounds for appeal; none can claim to be free from guilt before God. All are lost.

■ **3:20 by the law is the knowledge of sin.** See "The Three Purposes of the Law" at Deut. 13:10. While the Jews appeal to their possession of the law as proof of their privileged position before God, Paul has now demonstrated that any Jew's sin is unveiled and condemned, not hidden and condoned, by the law (note Paul's self-description in 7:7–11). At the Last Judgment, all argument with a perfectly just and omniscient Judge will be futile.

■ **3:21–31** Having shown the need of both Jew and Gentile for the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel (1:16), Paul now explains how it is provided in Christ (vv. 21–26), and underlines two of the implications (vv. 27–31).

■ **3:21 But now.** The law of Moses, seen as demand, cannot save. Yet the gospel is not contrary to the law of Moses (1:2). The gospel was already proclaimed in both "the Law and the Prophets." But "now" (the time filled with redemptive significance because of the coming of Christ, v. 26) God's righteousness comes to historical realization through Christ and His work.

apart from the law. Righteousness with God is not achieved by our acts of obedience to the law. Nevertheless, Paul insists that the gospel is not lawless (v. 31; 6:15; 8:3, 4; 13:8, 10).

■ **3:22 through faith in Jesus Christ, to all . . . who believe.** The righteousness of God must be received now that it "is revealed" (v. 21). To believe, for Paul, involves knowledge of the gospel's content, mental assent to its testimony about Christ (10:14), and obedient trust and reliance on Him as Savior and Lord (1:5). The righteousness of God is exclusively for those who have faith ("there is no difference; for all have sinned"), whether Jew or Gentile (1:16, 17).

■ **3:23 fall short of the glory of God.** See "Original Sin and Total Depravity" at Ps. 51:5. A poignant description of the consequence of sin. Made in the image of the glorious God (Gen. 1:26, 27), humanity has exchanged God's glory for idolatry (1:23) and distorted the divine image. Now people are morally and spiritually ugly and depraved. Grace renews and restores humanity's lost glory in believers (5:2; 8:18; 1 Cor. 15:42–49; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 4:24; Phil. 3:20, 21; Col. 3:10).

■ **3:24 justified.** In Scripture, justification is the opposite of condemnation (e.g., Prov. 17:15). It is the declaration of the believing sinner to be just, and it comes about by virtue of the imputed righteousness of Christ, the "gift of righteousness," as 5:17 terms it. Christ's righteousness is now legally considered to be the possession of the sinner. Justification is final and irreversible (8:1; 33, 34). It is grounded in Christ's lifelong obedience, in which He fulfilled the precepts of God's law for us, and in His death on the cross, bore the penalty of God's judgment against us. Believers now share the same righteous status as the risen Christ Himself, with whom they are united now and forever (2 Cor. 5:21).

freely by His grace. Paul's repetition of the same idea in different words emphasizes the divine initiative and mercy in freely granting our salvation.

redemption. Freedom gained through the payment of a price; here specifically, release from the former condition of bondage in sin. This is accomplished through Christ's death, the ransom price for our salvation (Mark 10:45; 1 Tim. 2:6; Heb. 9:15).

■ **3:25 whom God set forth.** See theological note "The Atonement." Christ died as a propitiatory sacrifice that satisfies the divine judgment against sinners, bringing about forgiveness and justification. But Paul is careful to indicate that the sacrifice does not cause God to love us. The opposite is true—God's love caused Him to offer His Son (5:8; 8:32; John 3:16).

through faith. The emphasis of v. 22 is repeated and thereby underscored. "Through" indicates the means of our being linked to the righteousness of Christ. Faith is the instrumental cause, not the ultimate cause, of justification.

■ **3:26 to demonstrate . . . His righteousness.** God's judicial righteousness is demonstrated in the gospel. Under the Mosaic sacrificial system, forgiveness was offered through (but not on the basis of) animal sacrifice. As the New Testament recognizes (Heb. 9:11–15; 10:1–4), such sacrifices cannot substitute for the sins of humans. The real significance of the Old Testament sacrifices lay in the way they pointed forward to Christ through whom God would deal with human sin in an appropriate and final way. In view of what He would later do, God could righteously pass over "the sins that were previously committed" (v. 25). The work of Christ reveals both the justice of God (He does punish sin in the Person of His own Son, 8:32), and the righteousness of God's way of salvation by "faith in Jesus" (v. 26). In dealing with Christ as sin-bearer and the human person as sinner, God does not compromise His own holiness, nor the necessity of sin's being atoned for. Yet He graciously provides a salvation that mankind was incapable of obtaining. In this respect, Paul sees the Cross as the manifestation of the glorious wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:23, 24).

27 [e]Rom. 2:17, 23; [1 Cor. 1:29]; Eph. 2:9

28 [f]Gal. 2:16 [g]*declared righteous*

30 [g]Rom. 10:12; [Gal. 3:8, 20]

Boasting Excluded

27 [e]Where *is* boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith. 28 Therefore we conclude [f]that a man is [g]justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law. 29 Or *is He* the God of the Jews only? *Is He* not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, 30 since [g]*there is* one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith. 31 Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.

The Atonement

An atonement is a reconciliation of alienated parties, the restoration of a broken relationship. Atonement is accomplished by making amends, blotting out offenses, and giving satisfaction for wrongs done.

According to Scripture every person sins and needs to make atonement, but lacks the power and resources for doing so. We have offended our Creator, whose nature it is to hate sin (Jer. 44:4; Hab. 1:13) and to punish it (Ps. 5:4–6; Rom. 1:18; 2:5–9). Those who have sinned cannot be accepted by and do not have fellowship with God unless atonement is made. Since there is sin in even the best actions of sinful creatures, anything we do in the hope of making amends can only increase our guilt or worsen our situation, for the "sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD" (Prov. 15:8). There is no way to establish one's own righteousness before God (Job 15:14–16; Is. 64:6; Rom. 10:2, 3); it simply cannot be done.

But against this background of human hopelessness, Scripture reveals the grace and mercy of God, who Himself provides the atonement that sin has made necessary. God's amazing grace is the focus of Biblical faith; from Genesis to Revelation it shines out with breathtaking glory.

When God brought Israel out of Egypt, He set up as part of the covenant relationship a system of sacrifices that had at its heart the shedding of the blood of animals "to make atonement for your souls" (Lev. 17:11). These sacrifices were "typical"; that is, as "types" they pointed forward to something better. Sins were forgiven when sacrifices were faithfully offered, but it was not the blood of animals that blotted out sins (Heb. 10:4). It was the blood of the "antitype," Jesus Christ, whose death on the cross atoned for sins already committed, as well as sins that would be committed afterwards (Rom. 3:25, 26; 4:3–8; Heb. 9:11–15).

According to the New Testament, Christ's blood was shed as a sacrifice (Rom. 3:25; 5:9; Eph. 1:7; Rev. 1:5). Christ redeemed His people by means of a ransom; His death was the price that freed us from guilt and from enslavement to sin (Rom. 3:24; Gal. 4:4, 5; Col. 1:14). In Christ's death, God reconciled us to Himself, overcoming His own hostility that our sins provoked (Rom. 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:18, 19; Col. 1:20–22). The Cross propitiated God. That is to say, it quenched His wrath against us by expiating our sins, and so removing them from His sight (Rom. 3:25; Heb. 2:17; 1 John 2:2; 4:10). The Cross had this effect because in His suffering Christ assumed our identity and endured the retributive judgment due to us, that is, "the curse of the law" (Gal. 3:13). He suffered as our substitute, with the damning record of our transgressions nailed by God to His cross as the list of crimes for which He died (Col. 2:14; cf. Matt. 27:37; Is. 53:4–6; Luke 22:37). □

■ **3:27 Where is boasting then.** The point made in 2:17, 23 resurfaces. Since Jew and Gentile alike are under wrath for their sin, and since the law does not protect Jews, but rather reveals their condemnation, and since the gospel exposes a person's unrighteousness while revealing God's righteousness, no one, not even a Jew, has grounds for boasting (4:2, 3). Indeed, boasting "is excluded," since faith alone (vv. 27, 28, 30), not human achievement, brings salvation.

■ **3:28 justified by faith.** See "Justification and Merit" at Gal. 3:11.

■ **3:30 there is one God.** Salvation does not come by the possession of the law. This implies that salvation is available to others as well as Jews. Paul confirms this truth in the face of Jewish opposition by appeal to the fundamental confession of Old Testament religion, that God is one (Deut. 6:4). This principle was implied already in the Old Testament prophets' composite lawsuits against the nations for their sins and against the Jews for theirs (e.g., Amos 1; 2). Paul stresses that justification comes to Jew ("the circumcised") and to Gentile ("the uncircumcised") in the same way—by faith alone.

■ **3:31 Do we then make void the law through faith.** See "Antinomianism" at 1 John 3:7. Paul is rejecting the law as the way of salvation. But since the law as moral demand was not given to sinners in order to justify them (vv. 19, 20), the principle of salvation by grace through faith cannot be a contradiction of the law. As he later demonstrates, the gospel upholds and furthers the law's ultimate goal (8:3, 4; 13:8–10).

Abraham Justified by Faith

4 What then shall we say that [a]Abraham our [b]father[1] has found according to the flesh? 2 For if Abraham was [c]justified by works, he has *something* to boast about, but not before God. 3 For what does the Scripture say? [d]*"Abraham believed God, and it was [2]accounted to him for righteousness."* 4 Now [e]to him who works, the wages are not counted [3]as grace but [3]as debt.

David Celebrates the Same Truth

5 But to him who [f]does not work but believes on Him who justifies [g]the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, 6 just as David also [h]describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works:

7 *"Blessed[i] are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven,*
And whose sins are covered;
8 *Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin."*

Abraham Justified Before Circumcision

9 *Does* this blessedness then *come* upon the circumcised *only,* or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness. 10 How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised. 11 And [j]he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *he had while still* uncircumcised, that [k]he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also, 12 and the father of circumcision to those who not only *are* of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father [l]Abraham *had while still* uncircumcised.

The Promise Granted Through Faith

13 For the promise that he would be the [m]heir of the world *was* not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. 14 For [n]if those who are of the law *are* heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect, 15 because [o]the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law *there is* no transgression.

16 Therefore *it is* of faith that *it might be* [p]according to grace, [q]so that the promise might be

CHAPTER 4

1 [a]Gen. 11:27—25:9; Is. 51:2; [Matt. 3:9]; John 8:33 [b][Luke 3:8]; John 8:53; James 2:21 [1]Or *(fore)father according to the flesh has found?*

2 [c]Rom. 3:20, 27

3 [d]Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:9, 22; Gal. 3:6; James 2:23 [2]*imputed, credited, reckoned, counted*

4 [e]Rom. 11:6 [3]*according to*

5 [f][Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8, 9] [g]Josh. 24:2

6 [h]Ps. 32:1, 2

7 [i]Ps. 32:1, 2

11 [j]Gen. 17:10 [k]Luke 19:9; Rom. 4:16

12 [l]Rom. 4:18–22

13 [m]Gen. 17:4–6; 22:17

14 [n]Gal. 3:18

15 [o]Rom. 3:20

16 [p][Rom. 3:24] [q][Gal. 3:22]

■ **4:1–25** Paul confirms his argument that justification is by grace through faith in Christ (3:22–25) by an appeal to the life of Abraham. As spiritual father of the Jews (v. 1), Abraham provides a test case for Paul's doctrine. If he can show that Abraham was justified by faith, his earlier exposition becomes irrefutable in a Jewish context.

■ **4:2, 3** Contrary to the view that Abraham was considered righteous and sustained in covenant with God on the basis of his obedience and faithfulness, Paul intends to demonstrate that the general statement in 3:27 is true of Abraham in particular. Abraham had nothing "to boast about," for Gen. 15:6 proves that it was by faith, not by law-keeping, that he was counted righteous. James also points to Abraham as an example of one who demonstrates true faith by his works (James 2:21). See "Justification and Merit" at Gal. 3:11.

■ **4:4, 5** It is a general principle that wages are earned by work, not received "as grace" (see text note). But Gen. 15:6 makes no mention of works on Abraham's part, only of the trust he had in God. Although faith was Abraham's action, it contributed nothing to Abraham's resultant righteousness before God, which was God's own gift (v. 4). In this sense, while faith as the instrument of justification involves human activity, it is not a "work" of merit. The righteousness of God was "accounted" to Abraham (v. 3 and text notes, v. 9) and not earned by him. See "Faith and Works" at James 2:24.

■ **4:6–8** That Paul's exegesis of Gen. 15:6 is correct is confirmed by an appeal to David's words in Ps. 32:1, 2. Blessedness, fellowship with God together with all its accompaniments, and salvation are not earned, but are the effect of the gift of forgiveness. It is by Christ's work, not ours, that we are justified. Human merit of any sort is excluded.

■ **4:9–12** Paul now addresses a further criticism of his argument. Even if he has shown that righteousness comes by grace through faith in the case of Abraham, has he forgotten that Abraham was the father of the circumcised (and therefore not of the uncircumcised)? The apostle provides a devastating answer: Gen. 15:6 describes Abraham before he was circumcised (v. 10). The righteousness signified and sealed for him by circumcision had already been credited to him when he was still uncircumcised. He serves as the prototype for all believers, both Jew and Gentile. For the Jew, he serves as prototype because his circumcision pointed back to his justification; for the Gentile, because he received justification apart from circumcision.

■ **4:13–15** The argument is now taken a stage further. The promise given to Abraham was that he would be the father of a multitude who would possess the land of Canaan, and he would also be the fountain of blessing for all nations (Gen. 12:2, 3, 7). Christ is the Seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:16) and has already begun to inherit the earth (Ps. 2:8; cf. Matt. 28:18, 19). This promise was received by Abraham through faith, "not . . . through the law" (v. 13). Paul assumes the truth of what he demonstrates in Gal. 3:17, that since the law came 430 years after the promise, the promises cannot be dependent on the law. If the inheritance were dependent on obedience to the law, faith would have no place in the divine scheme of things, and the promise would be void, since the law cannot bring about the obedience it requires for its fulfillment. Only "where there is no law" is there "no transgression"; where there is law, it "brings about wrath" (v. 15). Given the established truth of the sinfulness of all people, it is impossible that the promise could be received on the basis of law-keeping.

■ **4:16 Therefore it is of faith.** Because the promise in all its elements is received by faith, it is also "according to grace" and "sure to all the seed . . . Abraham." Had it been on the basis of works, the promise would have failed; had it been on the basis of circumcision, it could have been received only by Jews. Because it is by faith, and therefore by grace (by God's action, not man's), it is "sure" to come to Abraham's true spiritual offspring, or all believers whether Jew or Gentile by birth.

16 [r]Is. 51:2
[4]certain
17 [s]Gen. 17:5
[t][Rom. 8:11]
[u]Rom. 9:26
18 [v]Gen. 15:5
19 [w]Gen. 17:17
[x]Heb. 11:11
21 [y][Heb. 11:19]
22 [z]Gen. 15:6
23 [a]Rom. 15:4
24 [b]Acts 2:24
25 [c]Is. 53:4, 5
[d][1 Cor. 15:17]

CHAPTER 5

1 [a]Is. 32:17 [b][Eph. 2:14] [f]Some ancient mss. *let us have*
2 [c][Eph. 2:18; 3:12] [d]1 Cor. 15:1 [e]Heb. 3:6
3 [f]Matt. 5:11, 12 [g]James 1:3 [2]*endurance*
4 [h][James 1:12] [3]*approved character*
5 [i]Phil. 1:20 [j]2 Cor. 1:22

[4]sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, [r]who is the father of us all [17](as it is written, [s]*"I have made you a father of many nations"*) in the presence of Him whom he believed—God, [t]who gives life to the dead and calls those [u]things which do not exist as though they did; [18]who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, [v]*"So shall your descendants be."* [19]And not being weak in faith, [w]he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), [x]and the deadness of Sarah's womb. [20]He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, [21]and being fully convinced that what He had promised [y]He was also able to perform. [22]And therefore [z]*"it was accounted to him for righteousness."*

[23]Now [a]it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, [24]but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe [b]in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, [25][c]who was delivered up because of our offenses, and [d]was raised because of our justification.

Faith Triumphs in Trouble

5 Therefore, [a]having been justified by faith, [f]we have [b]peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, [2][c]through whom also we have access by faith into this grace [d]in which we stand, and [e]rejoice in hope of the glory of God. [3]And not only *that,* but [f]we also glory in tribulations, [g]knowing that tribulation produces [2]perseverance; [4][h]and perseverance, [3]character; and character, hope. [5][i]Now hope does not disappoint, [j]because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

Christ in Our Place

[6]For when we were still without strength, [4]in due time [k]Christ died for the ungodly. [7]For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. [8]But [l]God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners,

6 [k][Rom. 4:25; 5:8; 8:32] [4]*at the right time* 8 [l][John 3:16; 15:13]

■ **4:17 as it is written.** Again Paul appeals to Scripture (Gen. 17:5) for confirmation of his exposition. Rather than be father of Jews (the circumcised) only, it was already clear in Genesis that Abraham was to be the spiritual patriarch of all believers, Jew and Gentile alike. Nor is it unbelievable that the promise of God should be received by Gentiles also, for the one in whom Abraham believed "gives life to the dead." This is evidenced in the new life that came from the apparently dead womb of Sarah (v. 19), in the life given back to Isaac when he was under the sentence of death (Gen. 22), and ultimately in the life restored in the resurrection of Christ (4:24, 25).

calls those things which do not exist as though they did. This may refer to God's creation of the world out of nothing (see Gen. 1; Is. 41:4; 48:13 for creation summoned into being by God's word), or to the birth of Isaac (in which a nation emerges from a barren womb). Perhaps this also alludes to the words of Hos. 1:10; 2:23 (9:25, 26).

■ **4:18 contrary to hope.** In the natural course of events, believing that Sarah would bear his child (the first requirement for receiving what was promised) was utterly futile, for reasons given in v. 19.

in hope believed. Trusting in God's power (v. 17), Abraham gained assurance that the promise would be fulfilled. Paul indicates that true faith is directed toward God and not humanity, toward the divine word and not toward the human situation.

■ **4:19 about a hundred years old.** See Gen. 17:1, 17.

■ **4:20 giving glory to God.** Giving glory to God is a hallmark of faith, since it is dependence on God's power and trust in His word of promise (v. 21). Abraham's life of faith was one in which God's attributes formed the foundation (1:20), and therefore in which God's glory was displayed (cf. 1:21). It was through exercising this kind of faith that he was justified (v. 22).

■ **4:25** The proof of justification by faith in Abraham's case leads Paul back to the foundation of justification in the work of Christ (3:24–26). Christ's death and resurrection are two aspects of one saving work. In the first part, Christ bore the legal penalty for our guilt. In the second, He rose from the dead, His resurrection confirming that His death was a sufficient and effective offering for sin, pleasing the Supreme Judge.

■ **5:1–11** The implications of justification by grace through faith are now drawn out. The transition from wrath (1:18) to grace (3:21) transforms both the status and the experience of the believer. Instead of estrangement (3:10–17) there is now peace (5:1); in place of falling short of God's glory through sin (3:23), there is the hope of glory (5:2); instead of suffering as judgment (2:5, 6), there is joy in tribulation because of what God produces through it (5:3); instead of fearful uncertainty, there is assurance of God's love (vv. 6–8) and joy in Him (v. 11).

■ **5:1 we have peace.** See text note. Numerous manuscripts support "let us have" peace, but the flow of Paul's logic supports the first rendering. That "we have now received the reconciliation" (v. 11) implies that we are at peace with God already. With peace established, we now have access to God's presence. The wall of partition has been removed. This peace is not a guarded truce subject to new warfare. It is a permanent peace.

■ **5:2 hope.** New Testament hope is the assurance of something not yet fully experienced, and quite different from uncertain, wishful thinking. That this hope will not be frustrated is guaranteed here and now by the love of God that the Holy Spirit pours into believers' hearts (vv. 4, 5).

■ **5:4 character.** See text note. It confirms our confidence that the glory we hope for will one day be ours (8:17–25).

■ **5:6 Christ died.** The nature of this outpoured love (v. 5) is seen in the Cross. There God acted "in due time" (see text note), both in the sense that the death of Christ took place according to the divine timetable (John 17:1; Acts 2:23; Gal. 4:4), and also because it meets us in the moment of our deepest need. This is Paul's point when he says "still without strength" (v. 6), "still sinners" (v. 8), "when we were enemies" (v. 10).

■ **5:8–11** Like 8:1–4, 32, this passage highlights the special purpose and effectiveness that Paul regularly ascribes to Christ's death. That is, Christ died specifically "for us" (v. 8) who now believe and are justified through our faith, and His death actually achieved for us the "reconciliation" that "we have now received" (v. 11). See "Definite Redemption" at John 10:15.

Christ died for us. [9] Much more then, having now been justified [m]by His blood, we shall be saved [n]from wrath through Him. [10] For [o]if when we were enemies [p]we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved [q]by His life. [11] And not only *that,* but we also [r]rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

Death in Adam, Life in Christ

[12] Therefore, just as [s]through one man sin entered the world, and [t]death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned— [13] (For until the law sin was in the world, but [u]sin is not imputed when there is no law. [14] Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, [v]who is a type of Him who was to come. [15] But the free gift *is* not like the [5]offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded [w]to many. [16] And the gift *is* not like *that which came* through the one who sinned. For the judgment *which came* from one *offense resulted* in condemnation, but the free gift *which came* from many [6]offenses *resulted* in justification. [17] For if by the one man's [7]offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.)

[18] Therefore, as through [8]one man's offense *judgment* came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through [x]one[9] Man's righteous act *the free gift came* [y]to all men, resulting in justification of life. [19] For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by [z]one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.

[20] Moreover [a]the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace [b]abounded much more, [21] so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

9 [m]Eph. 2:13 [n]1 Thess. 1:10

10 [o][Rom. 8:32] [p]2 Cor. 5:18 [q]John 14:19

11 [r][Gal. 4:9]

12 [s][1 Cor. 15:21] [t]Gen. 2:17

13 [u]1 John 3:4

14 [v][1 Cor. 15:21, 22]

15 [w][Is. 53:11] [5]*trespass* or *false step*

16 [6]*trespasses*

17 [7]*trespass*

18 [x][1 Cor. 15:21, 45] [y][John 12:32] [8]Or *one trespass* [9]Or *one righteous act*

19 [z][Phil. 2:8]

20 [a]John 15:22 [b]1 Tim. 1:14

■ **5:9 Much more.** Paul argues from the greater to the less. If God would do for us the work of reconciliation, at the cost of the suffering and death of His Son, He will not withhold the final salvation that is "through Him," and by "His blood" as the ascendant Mediator. Keeping for final salvation those who have already been justified is simply God following through His initial purpose of love to them. The decisive, and more costly, expression of this loving purpose was Christ's actual reconciling death, which guarantees the justification and glorification of those for whom he died (8:32).

■ **5:10 reconciled.** Paul alone in the New Testament describes the sin-bearing work of Christ as reconciliation (11:15; 2 Cor. 5:18–20; Eph. 2:16; Col. 1:20, 22), although the idea is already present in the Old Testament, especially in Hosea. God's alienation from us is ended by removing the cause of alienation (our sin, guilt, and condemnation) by the death of Christ (cf. 2 Cor. 5:21). In this sense, reconciliation is objective (2 Cor. 5:18, 19). However, it must be "received" (v. 11; cf. 2 Cor. 5:20), by the laying aside of our own alienation and hostility, that is, by repentance and faith in Christ.

■ **5:12–21** Paul's "Therefore" (v. 12) indicates that what follows is connected in Paul's mind with what has preceded, so that the comparison and contrast he draws between Adam and Christ is his theological elaboration on what has already been said. Paul's stress on the "one man" throughout the passage (vv. 12, 15–17, 19) indicates that he viewed both Adam and Christ as historical individuals. In the case of Adam, the focus of attention is on his "one offense" (vv. 16, 18, and text note) by which all "were made sinners" (v. 19). They had solidarity with Adam as their representative before God, and this constituted them sinners when Adam sinned.

■ **5:12 just as . . . sin entered.** Paul here begins a comparison that is not concluded until vv. 18–21. The comparison is interrupted by a meditation extending through v. 17.

through one man. Death is not natural to humanity, but is the direct result of sin (Gen. 2:17).

because all sinned. The universal reign of death is the consequence of sin. Paul does not explain how all mankind was involved with Adam in his sinning, but simply asserts the fact. All sinned in the sin of Adam. See "Original Sin and Total Depravity" at Ps. 51:5.

■ **5:14 death reigned.** All people were subject to death before the law of Moses was given.

a type of Him who was to come. Adam, the first man, was the divinely appointed head of the whole of humanity, and his sin forfeited righteousness for all those he represented ("all men," vv. 12, 18; the "many," vv. 15, 19). In the same way, God made Christ the representative head of a new humanity so that His obedience to death might gain their justification. Inherent in this teaching is the thought that the restoration provided in salvation must follow the pattern, but reverse the content, of the original constitution of humanity before God (1 Cor. 15:45–49; Heb. 2:14–18).

■ **5:15 But the free gift is not like the offense.** See text note. Paul spells out the contrast between Christ and Adam in vv. 15–17. Not only are the acts of the two men antithetical, but the grace of the work of Christ is seen to be greater than the sin, judgment, and condemnation of Adam in the way it brings justification, righteousness, and life to ruined souls ("much more," vv. 15, 17).

■ **5:16 the judgment . . . from one.** See "The Fall" at Gen. 3:6.

■ **5:18, 19** Paul returns to the main thrust of his analogy, namely that there is a parallel between Adam and Christ in that condemnation and justification are the direct fruits of their actions. On the basis of the actions of "one," "many" are constituted either sinners or righteous. Adam is the representative head as well as the physical root of all, and all sinned and fell when he sinned. In contrast, "by one Man's obedience" those whom Christ represents are "made righteous" in Him (see "The Humble Obedience of Christ" at John 5:19). Christ is their representative Head, as well as the spiritual root of the new humanity, for through His resurrection they are given new birth and a living hope (1 Pet. 1:3; Eph. 2:1–7).

■ **5:20 the law entered.** It was given as an additional (post-Fall) element in God's dealings with His people, so "that the offense might abound." While sin was in the world before the law was given (v. 13), the law reveals sin in its specific character as trespass, lapsing from a set standard. Such lapses "abound" because the law's demands stir up contrary cravings in sinners' hearts (7:5, 8). But in the face of this increase of sin, "grace abounded much more," not only keeping pace with the offense, but outdoing it, in the great salvation accomplished through Christ.

CHAPTER 6

1 [a]Rom. 3:8; 6:15
2 [b][Gal. 2:19]
3 [c][Gal. 3:27] [d][1 Cor. 15:29]
4 [e]Col. 2:12 [f]1 Cor. 6:14 [g]John 2:11 [h][Gal. 6:15]
5 [i]Phil. 3:10

Dead to Sin, Alive to God

6 What shall we say then? [a]Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 Certainly not! How shall we who [b]died to sin live any longer in it? 3 Or do you not know that [c]as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus [d]were baptized into His death? 4 Therefore we were [e]buried with Him through baptism into death, that [f]just as Christ was raised from the dead by [g]the glory of the Father, [h]even so we also should walk in newness of life.

5 [i]For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be *in the likeness* of *His* resurrection, 6 knowing this, that [j]our old man was crucified with *Him,* that [k]the body of sin might be [l]done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. 7 For [l]he who has died has been [2]freed from sin. 8 Now [m]if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall

6 [j]Gal. 2:20; 5:24; 6:14 [k]Col. 2:11 [l]*rendered inoperative* 7 [l]1 Pet. 4:1 [2]*cleared* 8 [m]2 Tim. 2:11

Baptism

Christian baptism, which has the form of a ceremonial washing (like John's pre-Christian baptism), is a sign from God that signifies inward cleansing and remission of sins (Acts 22:16; 1 Cor. 6:11; Eph. 5:25–27), Spirit-wrought regeneration and new life (Titus 3:5), and the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit as God's seal testifying and guaranteeing that one will be kept safe in Christ forever (1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 1:13, 14). Fundamentally, baptism signifies union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection (Rom. 6:3–7; Col. 2:11, 12), and this union with Christ is the source of every element in our salvation (1 John 5:11, 12). Receiving the sign of baptism in faith assures those baptized that God's gift of new life in Christ is freely given to them. At the same time, it commits them to live in a new way as disciples of Jesus.

Christ told His disciples to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19). This formula means that the covenant relation which baptism formally confers is with all three Persons of the Godhead. When Paul says that the Israelites were "baptized into Moses" (1 Cor. 10:2), he means that they were put under Moses' control and direction. Baptism into the name of the triune God signifies control and direction by God.

The outward signs do not automatically or magically convey the inward blessings that they signify. No prescription of a particular mode of baptism can be found in the New Testament. The command to baptize may be fulfilled by immersion, dipping, or sprinkling; all three modes satisfy the meaning of the Greek verb *baptizo* and the symbolic requirement of passing under, and emerging from, cleansing water. □

■ **6:1–14** Paul's insistence that the increase of sin is met by the increase of grace (5:20) leads to the question he now raises. So great was his emphasis on the freeness of God's grace in the face of sin that his preaching had been accused of antinomian tendencies, or ignoring the ethical requirements of the law (3:8). Now he makes the point that to continue in sin would involve a contradiction of the Christian's new identity in Christ. In view of this new identity (v. 11), Christians are to refuse to allow sin to usurp authority in their lives, and instead are to yield the whole of life to God (vv. 12, 13) in the assurance that since they are under grace, not law, as the means of their salvation, sin is no longer their master.

■ **6:2 Certainly not.** A frequently used expression of shocked recoil (3:31; 6:15; 7:7, 13; 9:14; 11:1, 11).

we who died to sin. Paul's point is that believers have been really united with Jesus Christ in both His death and His resurrection, and that this has so altered their condition that for them to continue sinning as before is not only inappropriate but actually impossible.

■ **6:3, 4** Baptism, the sign and seal of initial union with Christ, is the burial service for the "old man" (v. 6) as well as the inauguration ceremony for the new person in Christ (v. 4). As such, it proclaims that those united to Christ have died to sin. From 5:20 to 8:4, sin is presented as the driving energy that produces sinful acts, and is personified as a tyrannical taskmaster, demanding dominion and needing to be resisted. See theological note "Baptism."

■ **6:6 our old man was crucified with Him.** While the "old man" includes pre-conversion life, it includes much more, and should be interpreted in the light of 5:12–21 to mean all that we were through our union with Adam. We are to think of all this as having been nailed to the cross to die.

body of sin. Perhaps in the sense of sin as a mass, or body, but probably the physical body seen as the sphere in which sin reigned (cf. "body of death" in 7:24).

might be done away with. Union with Christ in His death does not destroy the body as such, but it does end the body's role as the inescapable tool of sin by destroying the reign of sin in the body. Christians' bodies are now dedicated to Christ and bear holy fruit in His service (6:13, 22; 7:4; 12:1). We are no longer "slaves of sin," since bodily existence dominated by the cravings of sin has given way to bodily existence dominated by a passion for righteousness and holiness (v. 18).

■ **6:7 freed from sin.** Lit. "justified." See text note. Here the language has an additional nuance of "delivered from," for Paul is discussing the reign of sin, and not merely its guilt (vv. 17–22). Paul personifies sin as a monarch (5:21); as a general who uses various parts of the body for weapons ("instruments," v. 13 and text note); and as an employer who pays wages (v. 23).

■ **6:8 we shall also live with Him.** This includes the idea of resurrection, but also implies present participation in the risen life of Christ as one who is "alive to God" (v. 11).

also live with Him, 9 knowing that [n]Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. 10 For *the death* that He died, [o]He died to sin once for all; but *the life* that He lives, [p]He lives to God. 11 Likewise you also, [3]reckon yourselves to be [q]dead indeed to sin, but [r]alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

12 [s]Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. 13 And do not present your [t]members *as* [4]instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but [u]present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members *as* [4]instruments of righteousness to God. 14 For [v]sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

From Slaves of Sin to Slaves of God

15 What then? Shall we sin [w]because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! 16 Do you not know that [x]to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin *leading* to death, or of obedience *leading* to righteousness? 17 But God be thanked that *though* you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart [y]that form of doctrine to which you were [5]delivered. 18 And [z]having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. 19 I speak in human *terms* because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members *as* slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness *leading* to *more* lawlessness, so now present your members *as* slaves *of* righteousness [6]for holiness.

20 For when you were [a]slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. 21 [b]What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For [c]the end of those things *is* death. 22 But now [d]having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit [7]to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. 23 For [e]the wages of sin *is* death, but [f]the [8]gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Freed from the Law

7 Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law [1]has dominion over a man as long as he lives? 2 For [a]the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to *her* husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of *her* husband. 3 So then [b]if, while *her* husband lives, she marries another man, she will be

9 [n]Rev. 1:18

10 [o]Heb. 9:27 [p]Luke 20:38

11 [q][Rom. 6:2; 7:4, 6] [r][Gal. 2:19] [3]*consider*

12 [s]Ps. 19:13

13 [t]Col. 3:5 [u]1 Pet. 2:24; 4:2 [4]*Or weapons*

14 [v][Gal. 5:18]

15 [w]1 Cor. 9:21

16 [x]2 Pet. 2:19

17 [y]2 Tim. 1:13 [5]*entrusted*

18 [z]John 8:32

19 [6]*unto sanctification*

20 [a]John 8:34

21 [b]Rom. 7:5 [c]Rom. 1:32

22 [d]Rom. 6:18; 8:2 [7]*unto sanctification*

23 [e]Gen. 2:17 [f]1 Pet. 1:4 [8]*free gift*

CHAPTER 7

1 [1]*rules*

2 [a]1 Cor. 7:39

3 [b][Matt. 5:32]

■ **6:11 reckon yourselves.** See text note. Recognize that what has been said in vv. 1–10 is already the truth about yourself.

■ **6:12 do not let sin reign.** Since the reign of sin has been broken, all attempts on sin's part to recover dominion can and must be resisted. The body (v. 13), once ruled by sinful desires, must no longer be yielded to them.

■ **6:13 present yourselves to God.** Paul sees the secret of sanctification to lie in giving the whole person to God, from which follows the offering of the various parts of the body to Him.

being alive from the dead. All this is to be done in conscious awareness, and as a deliberate expression, of our new identity in Christ.

■ **6:14 sin shall not have dominion.** This is an indicative statement, a promise, and not an imperative or exhortation.

not under law but under grace. The controlling principle in the life of the believer is the reign of grace that sets free from the reign of sin (5:21) and transforms into the likeness of Christ.

■ **6:15–23** That the Christian is not under law but under grace might appear to provide license for moral carelessness. This Paul denies, since under the reign of grace Christians have become slaves of God. The freedom of grace is therefore freedom for obedience and service, not for license. See "The Freedom and Bondage of the Will" at Jer. 17:9.

■ **6:17 God be thanked.** While Paul stresses the activity of the individual in conversion ("present yourselves," v. 16; "obeyed," v. 17), he gratefully traces all right spiritual responses to the grace of God. While the individual is active in conversion, it is in a non-contributory and non-meritorious way, so that neither divine grace nor divine sovereignty is compromised.

that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. See text note. The opposite of slavery to sin is commitment to the new life-style that grace produces. In view here are both the gospel itself and the kind of teaching given in chs. 12—16, perhaps with Christ Himself as the model (cf. Eph. 4:20, 21).

■ **6:18 having been set free.** See "Christian Liberty" at Gal. 5:1.

■ **6:19 I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh.** The illustration of slavery is an inadequate representation of the Christian life, especially in the Roman context, because it could convey harsh connotations of human slavery and inadequately express the truth that the yoke of Christ is easy (Matt. 11:28–30). Nevertheless, Paul retains the metaphor, perhaps believing that the greater danger is of failing to fulfill personal moral responsibility to the Lord.

leading to more lawlessness. Sinfulness does not stand still, but declines and grows worse.

■ **6:23** The triple contrast of wages, sin, and death, with gift, God, and eternal life, brings Paul's argument to a memorable focus.

■ **7:1–12** Paul now expands on the theme of the believer's relationship to the law. Although the law is holy, just, and good (v. 12), the sinner's subjection to it resulted only in condemnation, because law in its justice uncovered every transgression and failure. In this section the relationship of the sinner to the law is compared with marriage. The point of the comparison is that death brings an end to these relationships, and the widowed partner is free to be in a new relationship. Because the "marriage" with the law was broken by death, the believer is not an adulteress and cannot be condemned by the law. The believer dies through being united with Christ in His death, breaking the chain of disobedience and death that bound the sinner together with Adam in his destiny (5:12–21). The other side of the illustration is that union with Christ in His resurrection gives the believer a new relationship, in which a true, if not yet perfect, obedience is offered to God in love and gratitude. In the new relationship with Christ, the energy of the Spirit ensures that there will be life and fruitfulness.

■ **7:3** Paul assumes that remarriage after the death of a spouse is wholly consistent with the Christian gospel (1 Tim. 5:14).

called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man. 4 Therefore, my brethren, you also have become [c]dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should [d]bear fruit to God. 5 For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law [e]were at work in our members [f]to bear fruit to death. 6 But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve [g]in the newness of the Spirit and not *in* the oldness of the letter.

Sin's Advantage in the Law

7 What shall we say then? *Is* the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, [h]I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, [i]*"You shall not covet."* 8 But [j]sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all *manner of evil* desire. For [k]apart from the law sin *was* dead. 9 I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. 10 And the commandment, [l]which *was* to *bring* life, I found to *bring* death. 11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed *me.* 12 Therefore [m]the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.

Law Cannot Save from Sin

13 Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful. 14 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, [n]sold under

4 [c]Rom. 8:2; Gal. 2:19; 5:18; [Col. 2:14] [d]Gal. 5:22

5 [e]Rom. 6:13 [f]Rom. 6:21; Gal. 5:19; James 1:15

6 [g]Rom. 2:29; 2 Cor. 3:6

7 [h]Rom. 3:20 [i]Ex. 20:17; Deut. 5:21; Acts 20:33

8 [j]Rom. 4:15 [k]1 Cor. 15:56

10 [l]Lev. 18:5; Ezek. 20:11, 13, 21; Luke 10:28; Rom. 10:5; 2 Cor. 3:7; Gal. 3:12

12 [m]Ps. 19:8

14 [n]1 Kin. 21:20, 25; 2 Kin. 17:17; Rom. 6:16

■ **7:4 body of Christ.** Here referring to the physical death of Christ.

fruit. A metaphor meaning result or natural consequence.

■ **7:6 we were held by.** The complex of sin, condemnation, and death in Adam and under the law.

■ **7:7 Is the law sin.** Paul's allusions to the law thus far have been negative in tone, especially his statement that the law arouses sinful passions (v. 5). Now he explains that recognizing the negative effect the law had on the life of fallen humanity is not a devaluation of the law itself (note the vehement language in 3:31). The God-ordained role of the law in a fallen world is to reveal the nature of human sin. The law not only defines sin, but acts as a catalyst, provoking the precise sinful reactions that it forbids and condemns (vv. 8–11). In itself the law, which brings us to know the reality of sin in our moral and spiritual system (3:20; 5:13, 20), is "holy and just and good" (v. 12). The law is a faithful revelation of what is right or wrong, and does not lose its validity to measure and direct our moral behavior.

■ **7:8 sin was dead.** In the sense that either sin or its real offensiveness was not recognized.

■ **7:9 I was alive once without the law . . . I died.** He was alive, not in the sense of having spiritual life (6:11), but in his own estimation. Knowing the law, which promised life for obedience (v. 10), made Paul realize that law-keeping was required. Trying to obey it made him realize that inwardly, in the desires of his heart (especially coveting, v. 8, the sin forbidden in the tenth commandment), he was constantly breaking the law even before he knew it, and when he saw what he was doing he could not stop it. Thus, Paul writes that sin, the anti-God, anti-law driving force within him, "deceived me, and . . . killed me" (v. 11). He became convinced that spiritually he was lifeless and lost. Paul offers his personal experience as an index of how sin and law relate in everyone.

■ **7:10 was to bring life.** See Lev. 18:5; Deut. 30:15, 19. In itself, the law marks out a path that guarantees God's favor and humanity's happiness. But where sin reigns, the law brings only misery and death.

■ **7:11 sin . . . deceived me.** Here, as elsewhere in Romans, the shadow of Eden emerges in Paul's language (Gen. 3:13; cf. 2 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 2:14).

■ **7:12 holy and just and good.** The law reflects God's character ("holy"); it is the objective norm for humanity's covenantal response to God ("just"); and it is beneficial for each one of us personally, since we have been created in the image of God ("good").

■ **7:13 Has then what is good become death to me.** No, says Paul, it was sin in me that became the cause of my spiritual death by leading me to break God's good law. Sin is seen to be "exceedingly sinful."

■ **7:14–25** The sudden change to the present tense in vv. 15–25, by contrast with the statements describing the past in vv. 7–13, raises the question whether Paul is now describing his present experience. A variety of interpretations exists, including the following: (a) Paul is describing the unregenerate person or perhaps the Jew in particular from the standpoint of the gospel; (b) Paul is describing a Christian in an unnatural and unhealthy spiritual condition, one failing to draw on the indwelling Spirit's resources; (c) Paul is describing the transitional experience, possibly his own, of one who has been awakened to his true spiritual need, but has not yet entered a full experience of justification by faith; (d) Paul is describing himself and Christians generally who, although in Christ and free from the condemnation of the law, do not yet perfectly fulfill the requirements of the law. The last view is the most probable interpretation. It accounts for Paul's shift to the present tense while his theme in vv. 7–25 (God's holy law stimulating and exposing sin) continues, and for the presence in Paul's self-analysis here of elements found only in persons who have been united with the risen Christ to new life in the Spirit (6:4–11; 7:6; 8:4–9). Paul is aware that God's law is "spiritual" (v. 14). He actually delights in God's law, desiring to fulfill it perfectly (vv. 15–23), and he is distressed that sin in him opposes that desire. He is grateful at the prospect of future deliverance from this frustration (v. 24; 8:23). He distinguishes between his "mind," which aims at obedience, and his "flesh," which continues to sin (v. 25). All of these observations show that Paul is describing his experience as a new man in Christ.

Paul is actually describing a profound conflict that every Christian finds inherent in his life in Christ: Christ dwells in him (Gal. 2:20), yet sin also dwells in him (vv. 17, 20). Perfect conformity to God's will is at present out of his reach. Salvation has "already" and "not yet" dimensions.

It is important to remember that Paul is still discussing the role of the law. He highlights the frustrations of the present Christian experience simply to show how, for Christians as for Jews, God's good law provokes, exposes, and condemns sin without either being tainted by it or bringing deliverance from it.

■ **7:14 the law is spiritual.** A further description of the law, in addition to v. 12. Far from repudiating the law (3:31), Paul declares that it sets forth the standard to which life governed by the Spirit should conform. By contrast, he calls himself "carnal" (that is, "fleshy") because he cannot fully reach this standard. As a moral ruin, now under reconstruction, he displays the marks of what he has been as a result of Adam as well as of what he will be as a result of Christ.

sin. 15 For what I am doing, I do not understand. [o]For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. 16 If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that *it is* good. 17 But now, *it is* no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. 18 For I know that [p]in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but *how* to perform what is good I do not find. 19 For the good that I will *to do,* I do not do; but the evil I will not *to do,* that I practice. 20 Now if I do what I will not *to do,* it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me.

21 I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. 22 For I [q]delight in the law of God according to [r]the inward man. 23 But [s]I see another law in [t]my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me [u]from this body of death? 25 [v]I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

Free from Indwelling Sin

8 *There is* therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, [a]who[1] do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. 2 For [b]the law of [c]the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from [d]the law of sin and death. 3 For [e]what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, [f]God *did* by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, 4 that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who [g]do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. 5 For [h]those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those *who live* according to the Spirit, [i]the things of the Spirit. 6 For [j]to be [2]carnally minded *is* death, but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace. 7 Because [k]the [3]carnal mind *is* enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, [l]nor indeed can be. 8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now

15 [o]Gal. 5:17]
18 [p]Gen. 6:5; 8:21]
22 [q]Ps. 1:2 [r][2 Cor. 4:16]
23 [s][Gal. 5:17] [t]Rom. 6:13, 19
24 [u][1 Cor. 15:51, 52]
25 [v]1 Cor. 15:57

CHAPTER 8

1 [a]Gal. 5:16 [1]NU omits the rest of v. 1.
2 [b]Rom. 6:18, 22 [c][1 Cor. 15:45] [d]Rom. 7:24, 25
3 [e]Acts 13:39 [f][2 Cor. 5:21]
4 [g]Gal. 5:16, 25
5 [h]John 3:6 [i][Gal. 5:22–25]
6 [j]Gal. 6:8 [2]*fleshly*
7 [k]James 4:4 [l]1 Cor. 2:14 [3]*fleshly*

sold under sin. While not the whole truth about him (v. 25), Paul recognizes that from the viewpoint of God's holy law, this is the truth about his bodily existence and behavior (Christian though he is) and he proceeds to explain it.

■ **7:15 I do not understand.** Paul is able to analyze, but not to explain, the contrast between himself and the "sin that dwells in me" (vv. 17, 20). There is a real and bewildering conflict between the energies of sin and of grace in his life. He hints, however, that indwelling sin is a temporary lodger in him. While sin still accompanies his new identity in Christ in this life, the new identity will result in the final triumph over indwelling sin (6:2–14).

■ **7:24 Who will deliver me.** This is not a cry of despair, for Paul knows and provides the answer in v. 25.

body of death. The physical body, viewed as the means by which sin is expressed. Paul's desire here is not for death as such, but for the deliverance that will ultimately be consummated in resurrection (8:23; Phil. 3:20; 2 Cor. 5:2–4).

■ **7:25 So then . . . sin.** Paul here summarizes the state of frustration that he has been describing since v. 14.

I myself. This means "I, one and the same person." Paul totally approves God's good law, yet "the flesh" still serves sin. New life in the Spirit is experienced by individuals in mind, body, and spirit that continue to bear the marks of sin.

■ **8:1–39** A vast rhapsodic expansion of the analysis of Christian assurance and hope contained in 5:1–11. Paul wants the glory of their salvation, rather than the depressing reminder just given of their continuing sinfulness, to fill his readers' minds and bring joy to their hearts.

■ **8:1 therefore.** The apostle's concern here is pastoral. Paul is telling his readers, in light of the foregoing reminder of their continuing sinfulness, they must now recall their acceptance, immunity, and security in Christ.

no condemnation. Probably in both senses—the judgment and the punishment.

■ **8:2 the law of the Spirit of life . . . the law of sin and death.** The law of the Spirit means His operative power (7:23). The law of sin is the operative power of sin, or else the divine law as used by sin to produce death (7:8–13).

■ **8:3 what the law could not do.** Paul does not criticize the moral law, but notes once more that because of humanity's sinfulness it cannot bring salvation.

His own Son. The words are reminiscent of the binding of Isaac in Gen. 22:2, and point to the tremendous cost of our redemption (v. 32).

in the likeness of sinful flesh. The word "likeness" means similarity to a prototype; "sinful flesh" is human nature, which through the Fall came to be corrupted and controlled by sin. Christ's humanity was like ours in that He could be tempted, and lived His life as a part of a fallen world full of frailty and exposed to vast pressures. But He did not sin, and there was no moral and spiritual corruption in Him. Had Jesus been corrupted by sin in any way, He could not have fulfilled the Old Testament pattern, which required a sin offering to be "without blemish" (Lev. 4:3).

condemned sin in the flesh. Paul seems to mean that in the crucifixion of the incarnate Son of God sin was judged and condemned, so that now all its claims to have us condemned have become invalid. There is no condemnation remaining for those who are in Christ. See "Christian Liberty" at Gal. 5:1.

■ **8:4–8** Paul's contrast between the old pattern of life and the new, between life in the flesh and in the Spirit (7:6), is now worked out in detail in terms of two settled attitudes or mind-sets: one under the influence of the "flesh," the other under the influence of Christ through the Spirit within believers.

■ **8:7 enmity against God.** Pure anti-God hostility, incapable of being anything else, is the real mind-set of everyone who is not yet renewed by the Spirit (3:9–18). The natural person regards God as an enemy.

■ **8:9–11** Christians are not in Adam, dominated by "the flesh," but are under the rule of Christ, because the Spirit who dwells in them is the Spirit of Christ (see "The Holy Spirit" at John 14:26). Though the body is still subject to death, life prevails because those united with Christ live to God in the sphere of the Spirit. The duality in view here is not simply the distinction between the physical and spiritual sides of a believer's life, but between two spheres of existence—bodily life in a fallen world with its ever present physical death, and life in the Spirit, a participation in the resurrection of Christ (1:4).

if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. 10 And if Christ *is* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin, but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of [m]Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, [n]He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies [q]through His Spirit who dwells in you.

Sonship Through the Spirit

12 [o]Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13 For [p]if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you [q]put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For [r]as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. 15 For [s]you did not receive the spirit of bondage again [t]to fear, but you received the [u]Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, [v]"Abba,[5] Father." 16 [w]The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then [x]heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, [y]if indeed we suffer with *Him,* that we may also be glorified together.

From Suffering to Glory

18 For I consider that [z]the sufferings of this present time are not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us. 19 For [a]the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For [b]the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected *it* in hope; 21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of [6]corruption into the glorious [c]liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation [d]groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. 23 Not only *that,* but we also who have [e]the firstfruits of the Spirit, [f]even we ourselves groan [g]within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the [h]redemption of our body. 24 For we were saved in this hope, but [i]hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for *it* with perseverance.

26 Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For [j]we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but [k]the Spirit Himself makes intercession [7]for us with groanings which cannot

11 [m]Acts 2:24 [n]1 Cor. 6:14 [q]Or *because of*

12 [o][Rom. 6:7, 14]

13 [p]Gal. 6:8 [q]Eph. 4:22

14 [r][Gal. 5:18]

15 [s]Heb. 2:15 [t]2 Tim. 1:7 [u][Is. 56:5] [v]Mark 14:36 [5]Lit., in Aram., *Father*

16 [w]Eph. 1:13

17 [x]Acts 26:18 [y]Phil. 1:29

18 [z]2 Cor. 4:17

19 [a][2 Pet. 3:13]

20 [b]Gen. 3:17–19

21 [c][2 Cor. 3:17] [6]*decay*

22 [d]Jer. 12:4, 11

23 [e]2 Cor. 5:5 [f]2 Cor. 5:2, 4 [g][Luke 20:36] [h]Eph. 1:14; 4:30

24 [i]Heb. 11:1

26 [j]Matt. 20:22 [k]Eph. 6:18 [7]NU omits *for us*

■ **8:10 the Spirit is life.** This phrase could refer to the renewed spirit of the believer, but it probably means the Holy Spirit. The passage itself emphasizes the Holy Spirit, His work, and His close association with Christ. The indwelling "Spirit of God" is called the "Spirit of Christ" (v. 9), and His indwelling is the means whereby "Christ is in you" (v. 10). Paul views this relationship as so close that he can even say "the Lord is the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:17; cf. 1 Cor. 15:45). These passages do not take away the distinction between Christ and the Spirit as separate Persons of the Trinity. Rather, Paul teaches that Christ and the Holy Spirit work together in applying the resurrected life of Christ to the believer. The Spirit's presence now is a guarantee of the future bodily resurrection of the believer (v. 11).

■ **8:11** A Trinitarian account of the realization of salvation, presupposing the unity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in their essential being, just as they are united in the complex work of redemption.

■ **8:12** From this point to the end of the chapter, Paul is generalizing about himself and all believers with him.

■ **8:13 put to death the deeds of the body.** See "Sanctification: The Spirit and the Flesh" at 1 Cor. 6:11. The body is not evil of itself. Sin originates in the heart, the spiritual center of our being, including the will (Mark 7:18–23). But since we live in physical bodies, sin finds expression through the body. Therefore, not only at the inner points of origin, but also in its bodily expressions, sin must be put to death, that is, terminated (6:12, 13; 12:1).

■ **8:14** This way of holiness is now further described as the leading of the Spirit and is specified as the mark of God's sons. The language of "leading" is reminiscent of the "adoption" and leading of Israel in the Exodus and wilderness, which may be the background to Paul's thought here (9:4; Deut. 8:2, 15; 29:5). See "Adoption" at Gal. 4:5.

■ **8:15 Spirit of adoption.** In addition to justification and freedom from condemnation (v. 1), believers are taken into the family of God and are inwardly persuaded by the Spirit that they belong there. The cry of the believer, "Abba, Father" (the Aramaic word *Abba* was used by Jesus Himself for God, Mark 14:36) indicates how vividly union with Christ was realized in the experience of the New Testament church. The cry is an expression of an assured awareness of sonship. The idea of adoption does not appear in the Old Testament legal system, and Paul seems to have borrowed this apt concept from Roman law, filling it out with the biblical theology of God's fatherhood over His people.

■ **8:16 bears witness.** This joint witness of our own spirit and the Holy Spirit surfaces in the cry "Abba, Father" (Gal. 4:6).

■ **8:17–21** As all the children in a human family are heirs of the father along with the oldest brother, so believers are God's heirs in and with Christ. But receiving the inheritance that comes to us in Christ involves sharing in His suffering, the pathway to sharing in His glory (2 Cor. 4:17). "Glorified," "glory," and "glorious" in vv. 17–21 (cf. v. 30) mean the transforming, ennobling, joy-bringing manifestation of God in one's personal being. The glory to be revealed (v. 18) will appear as the sons of God are revealed in their new nature (v. 19), and the creation is liberated from its present state of imperfection and decay (vv. 20, 21). The revelation of this glory will more than wipe out all the harm and loss ("futility," v. 20) that the created order has suffered as a result of Adam's fall (Gen. 3:17). The regeneration of all things (Matt. 19:28; Acts 3:21; Rev. 21:1) in the created order corresponds to the freedom in glory (vv. 17, 18) enjoyed by the children of God.

■ **8:22–25** The present condition of creation is not its final one; it is like a mother groaning in labor pains. The entire creation has a destiny planned by God, and longs to be fulfilled, much as believers do (vv. 23, 26). Our salvation has begun—we have the Holy Spirit as a down payment—but it will not be consummated until the resurrection (the full realization of adoption in Christ, v. 23). Inevitably, therefore, the Christian life involves patient waiting in hope.

■ **8:24 we were saved in this hope.** See "Hope" at Heb. 6:18. Travail (pain and grief because of how things are, 7:24, 25; 8:18, 36) is permeated with expectation, not disappointment and frustration (5:5), and with patience (v. 25) as well as eagerness (v. 23).

■ **8:26 the Spirit also helps.** See "Prayer" at Luke 11:2. The Holy Spirit strengthens us in our state of weakness, of which we are constantly conscious. Perplexity as to how to pray for oneself is a universal Christian experience. Our inarticulate longings to pray properly are an indication to us that the indwelling Spirit is already helping us by interceding for us in our hearts, making requests that the Father will certainly answer.

be uttered. 27 Now [l]He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit *is*, because He makes intercession for the saints [m]according to *the will of* God.

28 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those [n]who are the called according to *His* purpose. 29 For whom [o]He foreknew, [p]He also predestined [q]*to be* conformed to the image of His Son, [r]that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. 30 Moreover whom He predestined, these He also [s]called; whom He called, these He also [t]justified; and whom He justified, these He also [u]glorified.

27 [l]1 Chr. 28:9 [m]1 John 5:14
28 [n]2 Tim. 1:9
29 [o]2 Tim. 2:19 [p]Eph. 1:5, 11 [q][2 Cor. 3:18] [r]Heb. 1:6

30 [s][1 Pet. 2:9; 3:9] [t][Gal. 2:16] [u]John 17:22

Perseverance of the Saints

In declaring the eternal security of God's people it is perhaps clearer to speak of their preservation than, as is usually done, of their perseverance. Perseverance means continued adherence to a belief despite discouragement and opposition. The reason that believers persevere in faith and obedience, however, is not the strength of their own commitment, but that Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit preserves them.

John tells us that Jesus Christ is under promise to His Father (John 6:37–40) and to His people directly (John 10:28, 29) to keep them so that they never perish. In His prayer for the disciples at the close of the Last Supper, Jesus asked that those whom the Father had given Him (John 17:2, 6, 9, 24) would be preserved to glory. Christ continues to intercede for His people (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25), and it is inconceivable that His prayer for them will go unanswered.

Paul celebrates the present and future security of the saints in the almighty love of God (Rom. 8:31–39). He rejoices in the certainty that God will complete the good work that He began in the lives of believers (Phil. 1:6; cf. 1 Cor. 1:8, 9; 1 Thess. 5:23, 24; 2 Thess. 3:3; 2 Tim. 1:12; 4:18).

The *Westminster Confession* says,

> They, whom God hath accepted in His Beloved, effectually called, and sanctified by His Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved (17.1).

The regenerate are saved through persevering in faith and Christian living to the end (Heb. 3:6; 6:11; 10:35–39) as God preserves them.

This doctrine does not mean that all who ever professed to be Christians will be saved. Those who try to live a Christian life in their own abilities will fall away (Matt. 13:20–22). The false profession of many who say to Jesus, "Lord, Lord," will not be acknowledged (Matt. 7:21–23). Those who pursue holiness of heart and love of neighbor and so show themselves to have been regenerated by God are entitled to believe themselves secure in Christ. Belief in perseverance properly understood does not lead to careless living and arrogant presumption. The regenerate may backslide and fall into sin. In so doing they oppose their own new nature, and the Holy Spirit convicts them of their sin (cf. John 16:8) and compels them to repent and be restored to righteousness. When regenerate believers manifest a humble, grateful desire to please the God who saved them, the knowledge that He has pledged to keep them safe forever increases that desire. □

■ **8:28 And we know.** Christians assess the present in the light of their assurance about the future. As true Israelites, in whom the first and great commandment is fulfilled (Matt. 22:37, 38), our love for God is evoked by knowledge of His love for us (5:5–8).

called. Brought to faith (v. 30; cf. 1:6).

according to His purpose. The purpose of God guarantees "good" for His people. For them this is not necessarily ease and quiet, but being like Christ (vv. 17–23, 29). God's providence rules in such a way as to ensure everything that happens to us is working for our ultimate good.

■ **8:29 foreknew . . . predestined.** See "The Purpose of God: Predestination and Foreknowledge" at Mal. 1:2. Vv. 29, 30 explain God's "purpose" (v. 28). It is a plan of sovereign saving grace, entitling all who now believe to trace their faith and salvation back to an eternal decision by God to bring them to glory, and to look forward to that glory as a guaranteed certainty. The destiny appointed for believers (conformity to Christ and glorification with Him) flows from divine foreknowledge. Here it is persons, not facts or events, that God is said to foreknow. God does foresee events, but Paul's point is that God has of His own initiative chosen the objects of His active, saving love. "Know" implies intimate personal relationship, not merely awareness of facts and circumstances (Gen. 4:1; Amos 3:2; Matt. 1:25); it is virtually the equivalent of "elect."

■ **8:30** Those predestined are, in due time, "called," or effectively summoned through the gospel into saving fellowship with Christ (1:6; cf.

31 [v]Num. 14:9

32 [w]Rom. 5:6, 10 [x][Rom. 4:25]

33 [y]Is. 50:8, 9

34 [z]John 3:18 [a]Mark 16:19 [b]Heb. 7:25; 9:24

36 [c]Ps. 44:22

37 [d]1 Cor. 15:57

38 [e][Eph. 1:21]

CHAPTER 9

1 [a]2 Cor. 1:23

2 [b]Rom. 10:1

3 [c]Ex. 32:32 [f]Or *relatives*

4 [d]Ex. 4:22. [e]1 Sam. 4:21 [f]Acts 3:25 [g]Ps. 147:19 [h]Heb. 9:1, 6 [i][Acts 2:39; 13:32]

5 [j]Deut. 10:15 [k][Luke 1:34, 35; 3:23] [l]Jer. 23:6

God's Everlasting Love

31 What then shall we say to these things? [v]If God *is* for us, who *can be* against us? 32 [w]He who did not spare His own Son, but [x]delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? 33 Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? [y]*It is* God who justifies. 34 [z]Who *is* he who condemns? *It is* Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, [a]who is even at the right hand of God, [b]who also makes intercession for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *Shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written:

> [c]*"For Your sake we are killed all day long;*
> *We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."*

37 [d]Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. 38 For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor [e]principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, 39 nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Israel's Rejection of Christ

9 I [a]tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, 2 [b]that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. 3 For [c]I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my [f]countrymen according to the flesh, 4 who are Israelites, [d]to whom *pertain* the adoption, [e]the glory, [f]the covenants, [g]the giving of the law, [h]the service *of God,* and [i]the promises; 5 [j]of whom *are* the fathers and from [k]whom, according to the flesh, Christ *came,* [l]who is over all, *the* eternally blessed God. Amen.

1 Cor. 1:9). We note that all of those "called" are also "justified." The call cannot refer to the outward call of the gospel that many reject. It is an inward call of God that performs what He intends. All who are predestined are called in this way. Predestination includes God's determination that a person will receive such an effective call (that is, the "effectual call"). Predestination is not based on God's knowing beforehand how people will respond to the gospel. Just as the predestined are called, so the called are both justified and certain to be finally glorified. The past tense of "glorified" indicates that from God's standpoint the work is as good as done. He will complete it as planned. See theological note "The Perseverance of the Saints."

■ **8:31–39** Paul now draws the entire argument of 1:16—8:39 to a triumphal conclusion in a series of challenges to every influence that might thwart the church's confident assurance of present preservation and future glory. The passage is reminiscent of the third Servant Song in Is. 50:4–9, on which it in part depends.

■ **8:31 What then shall we say to these things.** Vv. 28–30 may be primarily in view here, but they should not be separated from 1:16—8:27, and especially not from 8:1–27. "These things" embraces the whole display of free grace to lost sinners in the letter thus far.

who can be against us. There will certainly be opposition, but Paul's point is that it lacks the ability to destroy faith. Since "God is for us," victorious spiritual survival is assured. "For us" expresses the eternal commitment of almighty love that is spelled out in vv. 38, 39.

■ **8:32 He who did not spare His own Son.** Paul's words are an effective echo of the Septuagint (Greek translation) text of Gen. 22:12.

delivered Him up. The phrase is used elsewhere of active participation in the judicial condemnation of Christ (Matt. 20:19; 26:15, 16; 27:2, 18, 26; cf. Is. 53:6, 10).

for us all. Even for the worst of us who now believe (3:9–18; 5:6–8). Once more, as in 5:9, 10, Paul reasons from the greater to the less: for God to give His Son to die for us was the supreme gift, guaranteeing the subsequent gift of everything else that we need for our full and final glory (v. 30).

■ **8:33 It is God who justifies.** The Judge has already dealt with all charges against us in the death and resurrection of Christ (4:25). Self-justification is futile.

■ **8:34 at the right hand of God.** The position of honor and executive authority (cf. Ps. 110:1). There can be no condemnation for us (in either sense of the term, v. 1 note), if our enthroned sin-bearer intercedes for us in heaven (1 John 2:1) while the Holy Spirit intercedes in our hearts (v. 27).

■ **8:35 the love of Christ.** The ease with which Paul uses this phrase interchangeably with "the love of God . . . in Christ" (v. 39) testifies to his underlying assumption of the identity of essence between the Father and the Son.

■ **8:36** Paul's appeal to Old Testament Scripture indicates that suffering is not an unexpected novelty for God's people. But in Christ such sufferings become stepping stones on the pathway to glory (5:1–5; 8:17–23).

■ **8:37 more than conquerors.** The strength shown in enduring the hostility of persecutors and the pain of circumstances is astonishing.

■ **8:38, 39** No aspect of the created order, nor any event or being within it, can end our enjoyment of the active love of God to us in Christ.

■ **9:1–5** Paul himself now accounts for rejection of the gospel by most of his fellow Jews.

■ **9:1 my conscience . . . witness.** Scripture nowhere defines "conscience." Here as in 2:15 and 13:5, Paul clearly thinks of it as moral self-awareness informed by divine revelation. Paul is taking a lawful oath to swear to his sincerity.

■ **9:3 I could wish that I myself were accursed.** Although Paul is the apostle to the Gentiles, he echoes the sentiments of Moses in the face of the unbelief of the Jews (Ex. 32:30–32). They are his own countrymen and he agonizes over them (v. 2). To be willing to suffer God's curse for them is a strong statement of love.

■ **9:4 to whom . . . the adoption.** The unbelief of Israel is magnified by the multiplied blessings they have experienced. In the eightfold privileges Paul lists in vv. 4, 5, he confirms his earlier statement in 3:1, 2.

■ **9:5 Christ . . . the eternally blessed God.** The text correctly translates Paul's words as directly ascribing deity to Christ. See "Jesus Christ, God and Man" at John 1:14.

Israel's Rejection and God's Purpose

6 [m]But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For [n]they *are* not all Israel who *are* of Israel, 7 [o]nor *are they* all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, [p]*"In Isaac your seed shall be called."* 8 That is, those who *are* the children of the flesh, these *are* not the children of God; but [q]the children of the promise are counted as the seed. 9 For this *is* the word of promise: [r]*"At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son."*

10 And not only *this,* but when [s]Rebecca also had conceived by one man, *even* by our father Isaac 11 (for *the children* not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of [t]Him who calls), 12 it was said to her, [u]*"The older shall serve the younger."* 13 As it is written, [v]*"Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated."*

Israel's Rejection and God's Justice

14 What shall we say then? [w]*Is there* unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! 15 For He says to Moses, [x]*"I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion."* 16 So then *it is* not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. 17 For [y]the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, [z]*"For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth."* 18 Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He [a]hardens.

19 You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For [b]who has resisted His will?" 20 But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? [c]Will the thing formed say to him who formed *it,* "Why have you made me like this?" 21 Does not the [d]potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make [e]one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?

22 *What* if God, wanting to show *His* wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering [f]the vessels of wrath [g]prepared for destruction, 23 and that He might make known [h]the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had [i]prepared beforehand for glory, 24 *even* us whom He [j]called, [k]not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

25 As He says also in Hosea:

> [l]*"I will call them My people, who were not My people,*
> *And her beloved, who was not beloved."*

6 [m]Num. 23:19 [n][Gal. 6:16]
7 [o][Gal. 4:23] [p]Gen. 21:12
8 [q]Gal. 4:28
9 [r]Gen. 18:10, 14
10 [s]Gen. 25:21
11 [t][Rom. 4:17; 8:28]
12 [u]Gen. 25:23
13 [v]Mal. 1:2, 3
14 [w]Deut. 32:4
15 [x]Ex. 33:19
17 [y]Gal. 3:8 [z]Ex. 9:16
18 [a]Ex. 4:21
19 [b]2 Chr. 20:6
20 [c]Is. 29:16
21 [d]Prov. 16:4 [e]2 Tim. 2:20
22 [f][1 Thess. 5:9] [g][1 Pet. 2:8]
23 [h][Col. 1:27] [i][Rom. 8:28–30]
24 [j][Rom. 8:28] [k]Rom. 3:29
25 [l]Hos. 2:23

■ **9:6 word of God.** His promise and plan to be the God of Abraham's seed (Gen. 17:7, 8). In the Old Testament era, natural descent did not automatically guarantee inheritance of the promise. God chose who should inherit it. This principle is evident in the families of Abraham and Isaac.

■ **9:11 the children.** The case of Jacob and Esau clinches the argument in three ways: (a) because they were twins, as nearly equal in nature as possible; (b) because the purpose of God reversed even the small distinction that did exist, by causing the older brother to serve the younger; (c) because the purpose of God was stated before they were born (and therefore was not dependent on their actions). Election is not based on foreseen actions, deeds, or faith. Rather, it is based on God's sovereign predestinating grace.

■ **9:13 Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated.** This distinguishing purpose of God in election (v. 11) is further confirmed by the words of Mal. 1:2, 3, which explain God's love to Israel as rooted in His free choice of Jacob rather than Esau. "Hated" here cannot be reduced to "loved less," as the context of Mal. 1:3, 4 makes clear. It must carry the sense of rejection and antipathy.

■ **9:14 What shall we say then.** Cf. 8:31. Paul recognizes that his previous statement cannot be allowed to pass without further comment. Could the distinguishing sovereign purpose of God throw into jeopardy His attribute of perfect righteousness? The idea is clearly unthinkable—"Certainly not!" (6:2, 15; 7:7). Paul explains why by citing two biblical texts (Ex. 33:19; 9:16) in vv. 15, 17, from which he concludes that God is righteous in showing mercy to some while He hardens the hearts of others. When God shows mercy it is not a person receiving a reward earned by one's own efforts, but God's sovereign free grace extended to persons who are morally incapable of any acceptable effort (1:18—3:20). God owes mercy to none, so there is no injustice when mercy is not shown. Mercy is a divine prerogative; it rests on God's good pleasure. When God "hardens" Pharaoh's heart (v. 18), He does not create fresh evil in it, but gives Pharaoh over to his already evil desires as an act of judgment, resulting eventually in God's display of "power" (v. 22) in the destruction of Pharaoh's army (Ex. 14:17, 18, 23–28).

■ **9:17 the Scripture says to the Pharaoh.** It was God who thus spoke to Pharaoh through Moses (Ex. 9:16), but for Paul the words of Scripture and the voice and authority of God are one.

■ **9:18 whom He wills.** See theological note "Election and Reprobation."

■ **9:19 Why does He still find fault.** By what right can God lay the blame for their sins on those He has hardened against Himself? Paul answers partially in terms of human experience (vv. 20, 21). It is unreasonable and irreverent for anyone to question the rightness of God's ways. Potters have every right to do as they please with the clay (Is. 64:8). All belong to "the same lump" (cf. vv. 10–13) of fallen humanity in Adam (5:12–14); all actively sin even before God hardens them in sinning (1:18–28). That God should show mercy to any from the Adamic lump and create vessels of honor from it is the kindness of grace; that others should become vessels for lesser use is a matter of His sovereign prerogative and is itself a display of perfect justice towards them.

■ **9:23 which He had prepared beforehand.** See "The Purpose of God: Predestination and Foreknowledge" at Mal. 1:2. Paul does not elaborate on the preparation in view. The addition of "beforehand" in connection with the vessels of mercy may be pointing to the mercy that originates in God's good pleasure from eternity (8:29, 30), while the wrath in view is in direct response to existing ungodliness and unrighteousness (cf. 1:18–32). The distinction between elect and reprobate does not lie in anything in themselves (all deserve wrath), but exclusively in the will of God. Within that context, however, the objects prepared for destruction experience wrath that is the only possible and just reward for sin.

26 [m]Hos. 1:10
27 [n]Is. 10:22, 23 [o]Rom. 11:5
28 [p]Is. 10:23; 28:22 [2]NU *the LORD will finish the work and cut it short upon the earth*
29 [q]Is. 1:9 [r]Deut. 29:23; Is. 13:19; Jer. 49:18; 50:40; Amos 4:11 [3]Lit., in Heb., *Hosts*
30 [s]Rom. 4:11 [t]Rom. 1:17; 3:21; 10:6; [Gal. 2:16; 3:24; Phil. 3:9]; Heb. 11:7
31 [u][Rom. 10:2–4]

26 *"And[m] it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them,*
'You are not My people,'
There they shall be called sons of the living God."

27 Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel:

[n]"Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea,
[o]The remnant will be saved.
28 *For[p]He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness,*
[2]Because the LORD will make a short work upon the earth."

29 And as Isaiah said before:

[q]"Unless the LORD of [3]Sabaoth had left us a seed,
[r]We would have become like Sodom,
And we would have been made like Gomorrah."

Present Condition of Israel

30 What shall we say then? [s]That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, [t]even the righteousness of faith; 31 but Israel, [u]pursuing the law of righteousness,

Election and Reprobation

To "elect" means to select or choose. According to the Bible, before creation God selected from the human race those whom He would redeem, justify, sanctify, and glorify in Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:28–39; Eph. 1:3–14; 2 Thess. 2:13, 14; 2 Tim. 1:9, 10). The divine choice is an expression of free and sovereign grace. It is not merited by anything in those who are chosen. God owes sinners no mercy of any kind, only condemnation; so it is a wonder that He should choose to save any of us.

Like every truth about God, the doctrine of election involves mystery, and it sometimes stirs controversy. But in Scripture it is a pastoral doctrine, helping Christians to see how great is the grace that saves them, and moving them to respond with humility, confidence, and praise. We do not know what others God has chosen among those who do not yet believe, nor why He chose us in particular. We do know that we believe now only because we were chosen, and we know that as believers we can rely on God to finish the good work He has begun (1 Cor. 1:8, 9; Phil. 1:6; 1 Thess. 5:23, 24; 2 Tim. 1:12; 4:18). For these reasons the knowledge of election is a source of gratitude and confidence.

Peter tells us we should be "diligent to make [our] call and election sure" (2 Pet. 1:10)—that is, certain to us. Election is known by its fruits. Paul knew that the Thessalonians had been chosen because he saw their faith, hope, and love, the transformation of their lives brought about by the gospel (1 Thess. 1:3–6).

Reprobation is the name given to God's eternal decision regarding those sinners whom He has not chosen for life. In not choosing them for life, God has determined not to change them. They will continue in sin, and finally will be judged for what they have done. In some cases God may further remove the restraining influences that keep a person from extremes of disobedience. This abandonment, called "hardening," is itself a penalty for sins (Rom. 9:18; 11:25; cf. Ps. 81:12; Rom. 1:24, 26, 28).

Reprobation is taught in the Bible (Rom. 9:14–24; 1 Pet. 2:8), but as a doctrine its bearing on Christian behavior is indirect. God's decree of election is secret; which persons are elect and which are reprobate will not be revealed before the Judgment. Until that time, God's command is that the call to repent and believe be preached to everyone.

■ **9:30 What shall we say then.** See v. 14. Having accounted for Jewish unbelief in terms of divine sovereignty, Paul now diagnoses it as due to a fatal prior commitment to a false way of righteousness. Divine sovereignty and the guilt of human willfulness are for Paul two aspects of reality. By God's grace and sovereignty, Gentiles who did not seek God's righteousness have now received it through faith in Christ, but Israel as a people have failed to receive it because they sought it by a legal means in which it could not be found. Christ has been to the Jews a stumbling stone (the image is from Is. 8:14; 28:16) over which they have fallen (vv. 32, 33; 1 Pet. 2:8).

■ **9:31 the law of righteousness.** Paul probably has the Mosaic law in view again. The mistake that the Jews have made lies not in what they

[v]has not attained to the law [4]of righteousness. 32 Why? Because *they did* not *seek it* by faith, but as it were, [5]by the works of the law. For [w]they stumbled at that stumbling stone. 33 As it is written:

> [x]*"Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense,*
> *And [y]whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame."*

Israel Needs the Gospel

10 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for [1]Israel is that they may be saved. 2 For I bear them witness [a]that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. 3 For they being ignorant of [b]God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own [c]righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. 4 For [d]Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

5 For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, [e]*"The man who does those things shall live by them."* 6 But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, [f]*"Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'"* (that is, to bring Christ down *from above*) 7 or, [g]*"'Who will descend into the abyss?'"* (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). 8 But what does it say? [h]*"The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart"* (that is, the word of faith which we preach): 9 that [i]if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the Scripture says, [j]*"Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame."* 12 For [k]there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for [l]the same Lord over all [m]is rich to all who call upon Him. 13 For [n]*"whoever calls [o]on the name of the LORD shall be saved."*

Israel Rejects the Gospel

14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear [p]without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written:

> [q]*"How beautiful are the feet of those who [2]preach the gospel of peace,*
> *Who bring glad tidings of good things!"*

16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, [r]*"LORD, who has believed our report?"* 17 So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

31 [v][Gal. 5:4] [4]NU omits *of righteousness*

32 [w][1 Cor. 1:23] [5]NU *by works,* omitting *of the law*

33 [x]Is. 8:14; 28:16 [y]Rom. 5:5; 10:11

CHAPTER 10

1 [1]NU *them*

2 [a]Acts 21:20

3 [b][Rom. 1:17] [c][Phil. 3:9]

4 [d][Gal. 3:24; 4:5]

5 [e]Lev. 18:5

6 [f]Deut. 30:12–14

7 [g]Deut. 30:13

8 [h]Deut. 30:14

9 [i]Luke 12:8

11 [j]Is. 28:16

12 [k]Rom. 3:22, 29 [l]Acts 10:36 [m]Eph. 1:7

13 [n]Joel 2:32 [o]Acts 9:14

14 [p]Titus 1:3

15 [q]Is. 52:7; Nah. 1:15 [2]NU omits *preach the gospel of peace, Who*

16 [r]Is. 53:1

pursued, but in the manner of pursuing it ("not . . . by faith, but . . . by the works of the law," v. 32 and text note).

■ **10:1 Brethren.** A heartfelt appeal to the sympathy of his fellow Christians, the pathos of which is underlined by his recent reference to his relatives in the flesh (9:3, text note).

that they may be saved. Paul's concern in ch. 9 was with the salvation of the Jews, not merely with their role in redemptive history.

■ **10:2 zeal for God.** Paul speaks here from personal experience, as to both the reality of the zeal and its wrong-headed and wrong-hearted character (Phil. 3:4–6).

■ **10:3 being ignorant of God's righteousness.** Paul contrasts the divinely established righteousness with a person's efforts to establish one's own. See "Faith and Works" at James 2:24.

establish. Covenant language (Gen. 6:18; 17:7). Even in the context of the covenant God had made with them, they perverted His grace by seeing it as dependent on their own law-keeping.

■ **10:4 Christ is the end of the law.** The interpretation followed here is that Christ is the goal or purpose of the law (Gal. 3:24). Another interpretation is that for believers Christ makes the law obsolete because they no longer strive to establish their own righteousness by it.

■ **10:5 the righteousness which is of the law.** Paul's quotation from Lev. 18:5 is set originally in the context of God's redemptive grace requiring a person's responsive obedience (Lev. 18:2; cf. Ex. 20:1–17); it is not a statement about self-established righteousness.

■ **10:6–8** Deuteronomy exhibits God's salvation as achieved not by humanity's strenuous efforts, but by divine grace bringing it near. In particular, Deut. 30 sets this in the context of an anticipated return from exile-judgment (Deut. 30:1–6). Paul sees this fulfilled in the new covenant in Christ (Jer. 31:31–34; cf. 2 Cor. 3:7–18). Thus Christ was the end (goal) of the Mosaic law. To seek a self-established righteousness now is the equivalent of attempting to do what God alone could do and has done, in Christ's incarnation and resurrection. By contrast with all human efforts, God has brought near the word of salvation, and with it salvation itself. See "The Word of God: Scripture as Revelation" at Ex. 32:16.

■ **10:9, 10 confess . . . believe . . . believes . . . confession.** In the parallelism of v. 10 Paul reverses the order of verbs in v. 9 and thereby indicates that heart-belief and mouth-confession belong together for justification ("righteousness") and salvation.

■ **10:12 there is no distinction.** This is confirmed not only by the unity and universal kindness of God (v. 12), but specifically again by the teaching of the Old Testament in Joel 2:32, the statement fulfilled so dramatically at Pentecost (Acts 2:21).

■ **10:14, 15** An analysis of what is involved when anyone calls on the name of the Lord in order to be saved.

■ **10:14 Him in whom.** Lit. "Him whom," an indication that for Paul, Christ Himself is the one true preacher of the gospel (cf. Eph. 2:17; John 10:16). The ministry of preaching Christ is therefore one of great honor, hence the quotation from Is. 52:7 (2 Cor. 5:18–20).

18 [s]Ps. 19:4; Matt. 24:14; Mark 16:15; Rom. 1:8; Col. 1:6, 23; 1 Thess. 1:8

19 [t]Deut. 32:21; Rom. 11:11 [u]Titus 3:3

20 [v]Is. 65:1; Rom. 9:30

21 [w]Is. 65:2

CHAPTER 11

1 [a]Ps. 94:14; Jer. 46:28 [b]1 Sam. 12:22; Jer. 31:37 [c]2 Cor. 11:22; Phil. 3:5

2 [d][Rom. 8:29]

3 [e]1 Kin. 19:10, 14

4 [f]1 Kin. 19:18

5 [g]2 Kin. 19:4; Rom. 9:27

6 [h]Rom. 4:4 [i]NU omits the rest of v. 6.

7 [j]Rom. 9:31 [k]Mark 6:52; Rom. 9:18; 11:25; 2 Cor. 3:14

8 [l]Is. 29:10, 13 [m]Deut. 29:3, 4; Is. 6:9; Matt. 13:13, 14; John 12:40; Acts 28:26, 27

18 But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed:

[s] *"Their sound has gone out to all the earth,*
And their words to the ends of the world."

19 But I say, did Israel not know? First Moses says:

[t] *"I will provoke you to jealousy by those who are not a nation,*
I will move you to anger by a [u]foolish nation."

20 But Isaiah is very bold and says:

[v] *"I was found by those who did not seek Me;*
I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me."

21 But to Israel he says:

[w] *"All day long I have stretched out My hands*
To a disobedient and contrary people."

Israel's Rejection Not Total

11 I say then, [a]has God cast away His people? [b]Certainly not! For [c]I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, *of* the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God has not cast away His people whom [d]He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying, 3 [e]*"LORD, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life"*? 4 But what does the divine response say to him? [f]*"I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal."* 5 [g]Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. 6 And [h]if by grace, then *it is* no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. [i]But if *it is* of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work.

7 What then? [j]Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were [k]blinded. 8 Just as it is written:

[l] *"God has given them a spirit of stupor,*
Eyes that they should not see
And ears that they should not hear,
To this very day."

■ **10:18 Their sound has gone out to all the earth.** The immediate context of the citation from Ps. 19:4 is that of God's general revelation (Ps. 19:1–3). Paul's use of it to prove from Scripture that Israel has heard the message of God implies that his quotation of this section of the psalm carries with it the teaching of the entire psalm, which speaks of both general revelation in nature and special revelation in His word. The latter takes place in the context of the former. The underlying logic may be: If those without special revelation have "heard" the message of God's glory in creation, how much more have those who received special revelation heard that message.

■ **10:19–21** The failure of the Jews cannot be excused because they did not hear the message, or because they could not understand it. Moses and Isaiah contrast God's own people with those who lack understanding (Deut. 32:21), and with those who were not God-seekers but who were brought to know Him (Is. 65:1).

■ **11:1–10** Paul now pointedly asks whether God has rejected His people. The apostle himself is evidence that God has not fully and finally rejected the people on whom He set His love. Just as a believing remnant could be found in Israel in Elijah's day, so there continues to be a remnant formed by God's grace. By grace the elect obtained the salvation they sought. The rest were hardened.

■ **11:1 has God cast away.** The verb conveys the sense of vigorous pushing away from Himself. The form of the question in Greek anticipates a negative answer.

I also am an Israelite. See Phil. 3:5, 6. Paul's impeccable lineage is traced back to Abraham, the great patriarch, but also to Benjamin, the only son of Jacob to be born in Israel. It was the tribe in whose territory Jerusalem was and also the tribe of Saul, the first king.

■ **11:2 whom He foreknew.** Paul hints that God's special love and gracious choice of them makes it unthinkable that He should finally reject them as a people, even though they have now rejected Him by rejecting Christ.

■ **11:5 a remnant according to the election.** In Elijah's time there was wholesale apostasy, and yet the presence of a remnant of the faithful indicated that God had not fully and finally rejected His people. Paul's thinking about the remnant is rooted in the teaching of Isaiah, whose son Shear-Jashub's name means "a remnant shall return" (Is. 7:3 and text note; cf. 9:27; Is. 1:9; 6:13; 10:20–22; 11:11–16).

■ **11:6 And if by grace, then it is no longer of works.** Again the way of grace is contrasted with works of the law (3:20, 27, 28; 4:2, 6; 9:12, 32).

■ **11:8–10** The passages cited (Deut. 29:4; Is. 29:10; Ps. 69:22, 23) describe a biblical pattern of divine activity in the judicial hardening of hearts—a pattern Paul sees repeated in his own day.

9 And David says:

m "Let their table become a snare and a trap,
A stumbling block and a recompense to them.
10 Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see,
And bow down their back always."

Israel's Rejection Not Final

11 I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But n through their [2]fall, to provoke them to o jealousy, salvation *has come* to the Gentiles. 12 Now if their [3]fall *is* riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!

13 For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as p I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, 14 if by any means I may provoke to jealousy *those who are* my flesh and q save some of them. 15 For if their being cast away *is* the reconciling of the world, what *will* their acceptance *be* r but life from the dead?

16 For if s the firstfruit *is* holy, the lump *is* also *holy;* and if the root *is* holy, so *are* the branches. 17 And if t some of the branches were broken off, u and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and [4]fatness of the olive tree, 18 v do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, *remember that* you do not support the root, but the root supports you.

19 You will say then, "Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in." 20 Well *said.* Because of w unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. 21 For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. 22 Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, [5]goodness, x if you continue in *His* goodness. Otherwise y you also will be cut off. 23 And they also, z if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. 24 For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who *are* natural *branches,* be grafted into their own olive tree?

25 For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be

9 m Ps. 69:22, 23

11 n Is. 42:6, 7; Acts 28:28 o Deut. 32:21; Acts 13:46; Rom. 10:19 [2] *trespass*

12 [3] *trespass*

13 p Acts 9:15; 22:21; Gal. 1:16; 2:7–9; Eph. 3:8

14 q 1 Cor. 9:22; 1 Tim. 4:16; James 5:20

15 r [Is. 26:16–19]

16 s Lev. 23:10; [James 1:18]

17 t Jer. 11:16; [John 15:2] u Acts 2:39; [Eph. 2:12] [4] *richness*

18 v [1 Cor. 10:12]

20 w Heb. 3:19

22 x 1 Cor. 15:2; Heb. 3:6, 14 y [John 15:2] [5] NU adds *of God*

23 z [2 Cor. 3:16]

■ **11:11–24** The rejection of the Jewish people is neither total nor final. Just as the rejection of Christ among the Jews has led to the acceptance of the gospel among the Gentiles, so God means to use the Gentiles to provoke the Jews to envy the Gentiles' blessings, leading to their salvation and correspondingly greater riches.

■ **11:11 have they stumbled that they should fall.** Once again the form of Paul's question anticipates (and receives) a negative answer. The Jews' rejection of Christ is not irreversible. Paul sees a divine pattern and purpose behind the unbelief of which the Jews are guilty. The pattern of his thought in v. 11, therefore, is as follows: (a) the transgression of the Jews has led to the justification of the Gentiles; (b) the salvation of the Gentiles will cause the Jews to envy; (c) the envy of the Jews will draw them to the same salvation as the Gentiles.

■ **11:12 their fullness.** In the context of Paul's argument, "fullness" here can only signify their reception of Christ and their restoration to God. The more difficult question is whether the term "fullness" points to a full restoration of the remnant or to the restoration of the full number of the nation in some sense. The second seems to fit better the general direction of the passage (vv. 25–32).

■ **11:13 I speak to you Gentiles.** Why he singles out the Gentiles in the Roman church is made clear in vv. 17–24.

apostle to the Gentiles. Paul here provides a unique insight into his thinking about his own ministry to the Gentiles: it too has his own Jewish people in view, in terms of 9:19 and 11:11 (Acts 9:15; Eph. 3:1; Gal. 2:8).

■ **11:15 life from the dead.** This phrase may simply denote unprecedented blessing. Although the wording is slightly different from Paul's normal usage ("resurrection from the dead," 1:4; cf. 1 Cor. 15:12, 13, 21, 42), some take the phrase to refer to the general resurrection of the last day, understanding the conversion of the Jews to be an event of the end times, an immediate herald of the final resurrection.

■ **11:16 the lump is also holy.** Paul applies spiritually the principle that the firstfruits serve as the pledge of the final harvest (cf. Num. 15:17–21).

■ **11:17 a wild olive tree . . . grafted in.** See Jer. 11:16; Hos. 14:6 for Israel as an olive tree. Wild olive shoots do seem to have been grafted into cultivated trees to bring fresh vitality to them. Paul's words, however, probably intentionally stretch beyond strict horticulture. Gentiles have been grafted into the people of God "contrary to nature" (v. 24).

■ **11:18 do not boast.** Because their salvation is entirely by grace, they have no cause for boasting or despising Jewish believers. Such Gentile arrogance in relation to Jews would simply mirror the same spiritual pride that has led to the Jews' hardening (2:17).

■ **11:20** While the rejoinder to Paul in v. 19 is formally true, the breaking off of the Jewish branches was an act of righteous judgment on unbelief, and the ingrafting of the Gentiles is a matter of grace and therefore of faith. Their ingrafting (v. 19) is not therefore based on any superior quality in the Gentiles.

fear. Tender-spirited awe, not arrogance, is the appropriate response to God's grace.

■ **11:22 consider the goodness and severity of God.** See "The Purpose of God: Predestination and Foreknowledge" at Mal. 1:2. Gentile believers are urged to take seriously the revelation of God's character in these events of providence. God's kindness bears fruit only when His people continue in it (2:4).

■ **11:23, 24** The cutting off of Israel is because of unbelief, and not because the Gentiles were inherently better qualified for life in the olive tree. Moreover, Gentile believers should never forget that the gospel came to the Jew first (1:16, 17).

■ **11:25–32** Paul's close reasoning here has been understood in three major ways: (a) He is showing how God saves all of His elect people ("all Israel" in v. 26 being taken as basically synonymous with the church, that is, spiritual Israel). (b) He is showing how God saves all the elect of Israel who are to be saved. (c) He is showing how God will, in the future, bring such widespread salvation to the Jewish people that, in an obvious general sense, it can be said that "all Israel will be saved" (v. 26). While

[a]wise in your own [b]opinion, that [c]blindness in part has happened to Israel [d]until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. [26] And so all Israel will be [7]saved, as it is written:

[d]"*The Deliverer will come out of Zion,*
And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob;
[27] *For [e]this is My covenant with them,*
When I take away their sins."

[28] Concerning the gospel *they are* enemies for your sake, but concerning the election *they are* [f]beloved for the sake of the fathers. [29] For the gifts and the calling of God *are* [g]irrevocable. [30] For as you [h]were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, [31] even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. [32] For God has [8]committed them [i]all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all.

[33] Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable *are* His judgments and His ways past finding out!

[34] "*For who has known the [j]mind of the LORD?*
Or [k]who has become His counselor?"
[35] "*Or [l] who has first given to Him*
And it shall be repaid to him?"

[36] For [m]of Him and through Him and to Him *are* all things, [n]to whom *be* glory forever. Amen.

Living Sacrifices to God

12 I [a]beseech[1] you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies [b]a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your [2]reasonable service. [2] And [c]do

25 [a]Rom. 12:16 [b]2 Cor. 3:14 [c]Luke 21:24 [6]*estimation*
26 [d]Is. 59:20, 21 [7]Or *delivered*
27 [e]Is. 27:9
28 [f]Deut. 7:8; 10:15
29 [g]Num. 23:19
30 [h][Eph. 2:2]
32 [i][Gal. 3:22] [8]*shut them all up in*
34 [j]Is. 40:13; Jer. 23:18 [k]Job 36:22
35 [l]Job 41:11
36 [m]Heb. 2:10 [n]Heb. 13:21

CHAPTER 12

1 [a]2 Cor. 10:1–4 [b]Heb. 10:18, 20 [1]*urge* [2]*rational*
2 [c]1 John 2:15

not without difficulties, some form of this last view seems most likely for the following reasons. First, hints of it seem to appear already in vv. 11, 12, 15, 16, 24. Second, v. 25 suggests that an end to the partial hardening of Israel is in view. Third, "Israel" in v. 26 is not naturally interpreted as signifying a different entity from the Israel in view in vv. 1–24 and vv. 28–31, where national Israel (not spiritual Israel) is in view. Fourth, "mystery" in v. 25 would seem inappropriate and exaggerated if Paul's teaching were simply that all elect Jews will be saved. Finally, this view accords well with the quotations in vv. 26, 27 from Is. 59:20, 21; 27:9; Jer. 31:33, 34, which appear to speak of a comprehensive banishment of that sin that has been the cause of Israel's alienation from God.

■ **11:25 mystery.** In Paul, and Jewish thought generally, a divine secret that has now been revealed. Some interpreters conclude that what immediately follows constitutes the mystery (probably the widespread conversion of the Jews). Others hold that the mystery is the pattern of God's working in the Jew-Gentile interrelationship referred to in v. 11.

fullness. The term may be taken to have a specifically numerical connotation.

has come in. An expression used infrequently by Paul, but commonplace in the Gospels to describe entrance into life or the kingdom of God (e.g., Mark 9:47).

■ **11:26 all Israel.** A critical expression at this point in Paul's argument, and one whose meaning is much debated. It could mean "all (spiritual) Israel," that is, all elect persons both Jew and Gentile. Alternately, it may mean "all" Israel in the sense of "all Jews destined to be saved throughout history." Or, as suggested above, it may point to a time of mass conversion among Jewish people. See 11:25–32 note, points (a), (b), and (c). The exegesis of "all Israel" will depend on the interpretation and weighing of other factors in the passage.

The Deliverer will come out of Zion. The quotation is from Ps. 14:7, Is. 27:9, and Is. 59:20, 21.

■ **11:29 the gifts . . . are irrevocable.** See "Gifts and Ministries" at Eph. 4:7.

■ **11:30** Paul's argument concludes in a manner parallel to 3:19–21, stressing that Jew and Gentile are united in two things: the disobedience of sin, and the offer to them of the mercy of God. The wisdom and sovereignty of God's grace are demonstrated in the way in which His purposes are fulfilled: the disobedience of the Jew leads to God's mercy reaching the Gentiles; the mercy of God to the Gentiles leads to the reception of mercy by the Jews. There is no difference—all (Jew and Gentile alike) have sinned (3:23), and God has mercy on both (1:16).

■ **11:33–36** Having drawn together the various strands of his argument, Paul now responds in lyrical fashion with a song of praise that reaches heights that correspond to the depth of concern he had sounded in 9:2, 3. God's dealings with Jew and Gentile display a cross-section of His majesty in which His sovereign will ("of Him"), His sovereign activity ("through Him") and His sovereign glory ("to Him") are richly displayed (v. 36).

■ **12:1** The doxology at the end of ch. 11 and the nature of the opening verses of ch. 12 signal a new stage in Paul's exposition. From now until the conclusion of the letter he is concerned to apply his teaching.

mercies of God. Love for the poor and needy, and support for those who cannot support themselves in a sinful world (cf. Luke 10:36, 37). The doctrine of grace in chs. 3—11 leads to a life motivated by gratitude.

present your bodies a living sacrifice. Jew and Gentile now belong together as the people of God for whom the final blood sacrifice has been made (3:25). The sacrifice that remains is that of thankful response (cf. 6:17). "Bodies" means whole persons as embodied individuals (6:12, 13, 19; 8:13).

reasonable service. The worship that is appropriate for redeemed creatures to offer.

■ **12:2 do not be conformed . . . be transformed by the renewing of your mind.** The Christian's mind-set is to be determined and reshaped by knowledge of the gospel, by the power of the Spirit, and by the concerns of the age to come (8:5–9; 13:11–14), rather than by the passing fashion of this age (2 Cor. 4:18; 1 John 2:17). Only by such sanctifying renewal is the Christian made sufficiently sensitive to "prove" (discern) the behavior that is God's will in each situation.

not be conformed to this world, but [d]be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may [e]prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Serve God with Spiritual Gifts

3 For I say, [f]through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, [g]not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt [h]to each one a measure of faith. 4 For [i]as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, 5 so [j]we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is [k]given to us, *let us use them:* if prophecy, *let us* [l]*prophesy* in proportion to our faith; 7 or ministry, *let us use it* in *our* ministering; [m]he who teaches, in teaching; 8 [n]he who exhorts, in exhortation; [o]he who gives, with liberality; [p]he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, [q]with cheerfulness.

Behave Like a Christian

9 [r]*Let* love *be* without hypocrisy. [s]Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. 10 [t]*Be* kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, [u]in honor giving preference to one another; 11 not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; 12 [v]rejoicing in hope, [w]patient[3] in tribulation, [x]continuing steadfastly in prayer; 13 [y]distributing to the needs of the saints, [z]given[4] to hospitality.

14 [a]Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 [b]Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. 16 [c]Be of the same mind toward one another. [d]Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.

17 [e]Repay no one evil for evil. [f]Have[5] regard for good things in the sight of all men. 18 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, [g]live peaceably with all men. 19 Beloved, [h]do not avenge yourselves, but *rather* give place to wrath; for it is written, [i]*"Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,"* says the Lord. 20 Therefore

2 [d]Eph. 4:23 [e][1 Thess. 4:3]
3 [f]Gal. 2:9 [g]Prov. 25:27 [h][Eph. 4:7]
4 [i]1 Cor. 12:12–14
5 [j][1 Cor. 10:17]
6 [k][John 3:27] [l]Acts 11:27
7 [m]Eph. 4:11
8 [n]Acts 15:32 [o][Matt. 6:1–3] [p][Acts 20:28] [q]2 Cor. 9:7
9 [r]1 Tim. 1:5 [s]Ps. 34:14
10 [t]Heb. 13:1 [u]Phil. 2:3
12 [v]Luke 10:20 [w]Luke 21:19 [x]Luke 18:1 [3]*persevering*
13 [y]1 Cor. 16:1 [z]1 Tim. 3:2 [4]Lit. *pursuing*
14 [a][Matt. 5:44]
15 [b][1 Cor. 12:26]
16 [c][Phil. 2:2; 4:2] [d]Jer. 45:5
17 [e][Matt. 5:39] [f]2 Cor. 8:21 [5]Or *Provide good*
18 [g]Heb. 12:14
19 [h]Lev. 19:18 [i]Deut. 32:35

■ **12:3 through the grace given to me.** Paul's ministry exists only because of grace (1:5), as do spiritual gifts (Greek *charismata*, v. 6). Realistic assessment of one's gift ("think soberly") is essential, and involves a recognition of one's "measure of faith," that is, knowing to what extent one has the faith suited for exercising particular gifts (v. 6). The faith by which we are justified is a separate question.

■ **12:4–8** As in 1 Cor. 12, Paul makes use of the analogy of the body and its various parts to illustrate the nature of the church. He stresses its unity (v. 5), its diversity (v. 6), and the need to recognize one's gift and to use it appropriately (vv. 6–8).

■ **12:6 Having then gifts . . . let us use them.** See "Gifts and Ministries" at Eph. 4:7.

prophecy. To prophesy is to speak the word of God, but the nature of New Testament prophecy is nowhere defined and is much debated. Prophecy is distinguished here and elsewhere from teaching (v. 7; Acts 13:1; 1 Cor. 12:29; Eph. 4:11), perhaps because of the greater sense of immediacy and spontaneity attached to it (Acts 13:1–3; 21:10, 11).

in proportion to our faith. Some interpreters see "faith" as the prophet's own faith (cf. vv. 3, 6). Others understand "faith" to mean the truth content of the gospel as the standard and measure of each prophetic utterance, testing whether the utterance conforms to "the pattern of sound words" (2 Tim. 1:13).

■ **12:7, 8** Paul recognizes the wide variety and practicality of these gifts (Greek *charismata*) and the intertwining of natural endowments with them. Throughout, it is clear that the blessing of those ministered to is the paramount consideration in using the gifts.

■ **12:9–21** As in 1 Cor. 12—13, when discussing the church as the body of Christ, Paul stresses the importance of love. His series of rapid exhortations carries echoes of Jesus' teaching, and is expressed in vivid language.

■ **12:9 without hypocrisy.** In classical Greek drama, the *hypokrites* (actor) wore a face-mask. The Christian's loving behavior should not be acting a part or wearing a mask, but an authentic expression of goodwill.

■ **12:10 kindly affectionate . . . with brotherly love.** An unusual linguistic combination of brotherly love with the love of natural affection. The church is a family, the "house of God" (1 Tim. 3:15; cf. 1 Tim. 5:1, 2).

■ **12:11** There must be no hesitation or sloth in Christian living. The Christian should be "fervent," living for Christ with enthusiasm and energy.

■ **12:13 hospitality.** Hospitality for visiting Christians was an important part of early Christian life (Heb. 13:2; 3 John 5–8).

■ **12:14** See Luke 6:27, 28.

■ **12:15** See Luke 6:31. The genuine unity of the body of Christ is especially evident in the empathy of its members in moments of high joy or deep sorrow.

■ **12:16** Paul's language gives the idea of Christians sharing the same thoughts with respect to one another, another indication of the strategic role of the mind in sanctification (vv. 1, 2). One manifestation of this will be an absence of conceit and pride in worldly position (Phil. 2:1–8). Christians should be distinguished by their readiness to "associate with the humble."

Do not be wise in your own opinion. See Prov. 3:7. A further focus on the thought-world, How we think determines how we live.

■ **12:17** The unifying theme in vv. 17–21 is the way the Christian reacts to the non-Christian environment.

■ **12:18 live peaceably with all.** The Christian is a peacemaker by obligation and aim. Harmony is not always possible, since truth divides as well as unites. Paul's double qualification ("If . . . as much as") recognizes this, but the obligation to strive for peace in personal relations with others remains.

■ **12:19–21** The Christian must be free from the desire to "get even." Such release from the instinct for revenge is possible because the believer knows that God will right all wrongs in His own perfect judgment (Deut. 32:35). Moreover, Scripture urges us, while God remains patient with the wrongdoer, to show grace to him (Prov. 25:21, 22).

■ **12:20 heap coals of fire on his head.** This may lead to conversion, or at least to such a sense of shame that evil behavior is modified.

20 *j*2 Kin. 6:22; Prov. 25:21, 22; [Matt. 5:44]; Luke 6:27

21 *k*[Rom. 12:1, 2]

j *"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;*
If he is thirsty, give him a drink;
For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head."

21 Do not be overcome by evil, but *k*overcome evil with good.

CHAPTER 13

Submit to Government

1 *a*Titus 3:1; 1 Pet. 2:13

2 *b*[Titus 3:1] *l*Lit. *receive*

3 *c*1 Pet. 2:14

13 Let every soul be *a*subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists *b*the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will *l*bring judgment on themselves. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? *c*Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. 4 For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he

Christians and Civil Government

Civil government is a means ordained by God for ruling and maintaining order in communities. It is one of a number of such means, including ministers in the church and parents in the home. Each such means has its own sphere of authority under Christ, who now rules and sustains creation, and the limits of each sphere are set by reference to the others. In our fallen world these authorities are institutions of God's "common grace" (kindly providence), standing as a bulwark against anarchy and the dissolution of ordered society.

With reference to Rom. 13:1–7 and 1 Pet. 2:13–17, the *Westminster Confession* explains the sphere of civil government as follows:

> God, the supreme Lord and King of all the world, hath ordained civil magistrates, to be, under Him, over the people, for His own glory, and the public good; and, to this end, hath armed them with the power of the sword, for the defence and encouragement of them that are good, and for the punishment of evil doers . . . Civil magistrates may not assume to themselves the administration of the Word and sacraments; or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven (23.1, 3).

Because civil government exists for the welfare of the whole society, God gives it the "power of the sword," the lawful use of force to administer just laws (Rom. 13:4). Christians must acknowledge this as part of God's order (Rom. 13:1, 2). A government may collect taxes for the services it renders (Matt. 22:15–21; Rom. 13:6, 7). But if it forbids what God requires or requires what God forbids, Christians cannot submit, and some form of civil disobedience becomes inescapable (Acts 4:18–31; 5:17–29).

The church's sphere of authority relates to the civil government at the level of morality. The church has the responsibility to comment on the morality of governments and their policies on the basis of God's word, but should not appropriate to itself the power to set such policies. Whereas these assessments may foster political action among Christians, they should act in their capacity as citizens rather than as representatives of the church. In this way the gospel works through moral persuasion and the working of God's grace among citizens.

Christians should urge governments to fulfill their proper role. They are to pray for, obey, and yet watch over civil governments (1 Tim. 2:1–4; 1 Pet. 2:13, 14), reminding them that God ordained them to rule, protect, and keep order. □

■ **13:1** Christians have a distinct rationale for an appropriate submission to the governing authorities: the recognition that God Himself is the source of government in society (Prov. 8:15, 16; Dan. 2:21). See theological note "Christians and Civil Government."

■ **13:2, 3** Rebellion against the authority implies rebellion against God's ordinance.

■ **13:4 God's minister to you for good.** The state's authority is for society's benefit; this is its normal function, and Paul assumes it may be realized in practical terms even when governments are professedly non-Christian.

the sword. The power of life and death. Capital punishment is undoubtedly in view. Elsewhere Paul accepts the principle of such punishment where appropriate (Acts 25:11).

to execute wrath. What the individual must not do out of a motive of revenge (12:19), the state may legitimately do in the pursuit of justice.

is God's minister, an avenger to *execute* wrath on him who practices evil. 5 Therefore [d]*you* must be subject, not only because of wrath [e]but also for conscience' sake. 6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. 7 [f]Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes *are due,* customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.

Love Your Neighbor

8 Owe no one anything except to love one another, for [g]he who loves another has fulfilled the law. 9 For the commandments, [h]"*You shall not commit adultery,*" "*You shall not murder,*" "*You shall not steal,*" [z]"*You shall not bear false witness,*" "*You shall not covet,*" and if *there is* any other commandment, are *all* summed up in this saying, namely, [i]"*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*" 10 Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore [j]love *is* the fulfillment of the law.

Put on Christ

11 And *do* this, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time [k]to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation *is* nearer than when we *first* believed. 12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand. [l]Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and [m]let us put on the armor of light. 13 [n]Let us walk [3]properly, as in the day, [o]not in revelry and drunkenness, [p]not in lewdness and lust, [q]not in strife and envy. 14 But [r]put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and [s]make no provision for the flesh, to *fulfill its* lusts.

The Law of Liberty

14 Receive[a] one who is weak in the faith, *but* not to disputes over doubtful things. 2 For one believes he [b]may eat all things, but he who is weak eats *only* vegetables. 3 Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and [c]let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. 4 [d]Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.

5 [e]One person esteems *one* day above another; another esteems every day *alike.* Let each be

5 [d]Eccl. 8:2 [e][1 Pet. 2:13, 19]

7 [f]Matt. 22:21

8 [g][Gal. 5:13, 14]

9 [h]Ex. 20:13–17; Deut. 5:17–21 [i]Lev. 19:18 [z]NU omits *"You shall not bear false witness,"*

10 [j][Matt. 7:12; 22:39, 40]

11 [k][1 Cor. 15:34]

12 [l]Eph. 5:11 [m][Eph. 6:11, 13]

13 [n]Phil. 4:8 [o]Prov. 23:20 [p][1 Cor. 6:9] [q]James 3:14 [3]*decently*

14 [r]Gal. 3:27 [s][Gal. 5:16]

CHAPTER 14

1 [a][1 Cor. 8:9; 9:22]

2 [b][Titus 1:15]

3 [c][Col. 2:16]

4 [d]James 4:11, 12

5 [e]Gal. 4:10

■ **13:6 you also pay taxes.** Christian submission is a response of the conscience instructed by divine revelation. Because the task of government is divinely ordained and requires financial support, the Christian can pay taxes with a distinctive motive and understanding, as an element of devotion to God.

■ **13:7 Render . . . to all their due.** See Matt. 22:21. Paul was evidently familiar with Jesus' statement, and here indicates how it is applied.

■ **13:8–10** Paul now applies further his basic principle of Christian consecration. The connecting link between vv. 7 and 8 is found in the exhortation of v. 7, that the Christian has a financial obligation to the state. This is an application of a general principle now stated, that all obligations must be met. One obligation is permanent—to love others.

■ **13:8 has fulfilled the law.** See "Antinomianism" at 1 John 3:7.

■ **13:9 love your neighbor as yourself.** See Lev. 19:18; "Love" at 1 Cor. 13:13. Not an exhortation to self-love, but rather the concern assumed for oneself as created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26, 27) is to be exhibited to others (Luke 6:31).

■ **13:11 knowing the time.** Spiritual discernment is rooted in the apprehension of divine revelation. Paul's stress on the role of the mind is again evident.

salvation. Here in the sense of future, final redemption (8:23).

■ **13:12 The night is far spent.** Paul speaks here of the "night" of this present age. The "light of the world" has come (John 8:12), and we must prepare for the Second Advent of Christ and the age to come.

let us cast off . . . put on. The use of the metaphor "armor of light" stresses that developing positive spiritual graces, not merely rejecting vices, is essential to spiritual defense.

■ **13:13 Let us walk properly.** See text note. Paul's warning against a sinful life-style strikingly includes not only the traditional sins of the flesh ("revelry and drunkenness . . . lewdness and lust") but also insidious vices that can be harbored or even paraded in the heart of the church ("strife and envy").

■ **13:14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ.** A further exposition of what it means to "put on the armor of light" (v. 12), showing that those who are in Christ must live consistently with their new status (Eph. 4:1).

■ **14:1 Receive one who is weak.** The Christian's basic attitude to a fellow-Christian is one of welcome and acceptance based on God's attitude to us in Christ (v. 3; 15:7). There must be charity toward the "weak" person whose conscience is still bound by scruples from which the gospel normally sets us free (v. 2).

disputes over doubtful things. In this instance, questions of food, drink, and the religious observation of days. While Paul does not regard these controversies as insoluble, he regards the unity of the church's fellowship as more important than resolving them (cf. 12:5, 10, 16). The issues in view here did not belong to the gospel, but to the relative strength or weakness of the individual's faith in the gospel. Where essentials of the gospel were at stake, Paul's response was very different (e.g., Gal. 1:6, 7; 3:1–5; Phil. 3:2, 18, 19).

■ **14:2 eats only vegetables.** Vegetarianism was not required by the Old Testament, though it appears there (e.g., Dan. 1:12).

■ **14:3 despise . . . judge.** The tendency of those who better understand the gospel is to be impatient with the inhibitions of the "weak" as legalistic bondage. The temptation of the "weak" is to condemn the "strong" for behavior that seems to be lawless license. These mistaken responses should yield to the light of God's gracious acceptance of both "weak" and "strong." Furthermore, a fellow-believer is God's servant, not ours, and is answerable to Him, not to us. It must be understood that the issues in such possible disputes are not matters of real morality, but of morally indifferent things.

■ **14:5 One person esteems one day above another.** A pattern of holy days characterized the Jewish year, and it is probably to these that Paul refers, and not the Sabbath. If the Sabbath were in view it would have been more natural to say, "One man considers the Sabbath above the other days."

Let each be fully convinced. See 4:21.

fully convinced in his own mind. 6 He who [f]observes the day, observes *it* to the Lord; [f]and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe *it.* He who eats, eats to the Lord, for [g]he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks. 7 For [h]none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. 8 For if we [i]live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. 9 For [j]to this end Christ died [2]and rose and lived again, that He might be [k]Lord of both the dead and the living. 10 But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For [l]we shall all stand before the judgment seat of [3]Christ. 11 For it is written:

[m] *"As I live, says the* LORD,
Every knee shall bow to Me,
And every tongue shall confess to God."

12 So then [n]each of us shall give account of himself to God. 13 Therefore let us not judge one another [4]anymore, but rather resolve this, [o]not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in *our* brother's way.

The Law of Love

14 I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus [p]that *there is* nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean. 15 Yet if your brother is grieved because of *your* food, you are no longer walking in love. [q]Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died. 16 [r]Therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil; 17 [s]for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and [t]peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. 18 For he who serves Christ in [5]these things [u]*is* acceptable to God and approved by men.

19 [v]Therefore let us pursue the things *which make* for peace and the things by which [w]one may [6]edify another. 20 [x]Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. [y]All things indeed *are* pure, [z]but *it is* evil for the man who eats with [7]offense. 21 *It is* good neither to eat [a]meat nor drink wine nor *do anything* by which your brother stumbles [8]or is offended or is made weak. 22 [9]Do you have faith? Have *it* to yourself before God. [b]Happy *is* he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. 23 But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because *he does* not *eat* from faith; for [c]whatever *is* not from faith is [1]sin.

Bearing Others' Burdens

15 We [a]then who are strong ought to bear with the [1]scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. 2 [b]Let each of us please *his* neighbor for *his* good, leading to [2]edification.

CHAPTER 15 1 [a]Gal. 6:1, 2] [1]*weaknesses* 2 [b]1 Cor. 9:22; 10:24, 33 [2]*building up*

6 [f]Gal. 4:10 [g][1 Tim. 4:3] [1]NU omits the rest of this sentence.
7 [h][Gal. 2:20]
8 [i]2 Cor. 5:14, 15
9 [j]2 Cor. 5:15 [k]Acts 10:36 [2]NU omits *and rose*
10 [l]2 Cor. 5:10 [3]NU *God*
11 [m]Is. 45:23
12 [n]1 Pet. 4:5
13 [o]1 Cor. 8:9 [4]*any longer*
14 [p]1 Cor. 10:25
15 [q]1 Cor. 8:11
16 [r][Rom. 12:17]
17 [s]1 Cor. 8:8 [t][Rom. 8:6]
18 [u]2 Cor. 8:21 [5]NU *this thing*
19 [v]Rom. 12:18 [w]1 Cor. 14:12 [6]*build up*
20 [x]Rom. 14:15 [y]Acts 10:15 [z]1 Cor. 8:9–12 [7]A feeling of giving offense
21 [a]1 Cor. 8:13 [8]NU omits the rest of v. 21.
22 [b][1 John 3:21] [9]NU *The faith which you have—have*
23 [c]Titus 1:15 [1]M puts Rom. 16:25–27 here.

■ **14:6, 7** An appeal to what is shared by both groups (v. 3), namely the desire to honor the same Lord. That both belong to Him puts minor divisions into perspective. See "The Kingdom of God" at Luke 17:20.

■ **14:9–12** Christ alone is the Lord (v. 8) and Judge of His people (see "The Final Judgment" at Matt. 25:41). The cost to Him of this privilege was immense and exposes the inappropriateness of believers judging or despising their brothers. We must give an account of our own lives to the Lord, as those being judged, not as those who judge.

■ **14:13—15:4** While Paul's own conscience has been liberated by the teaching of Christ (v. 14; cf. Mark 7:18, 19) he recognizes that not all believers have come to enjoy such freedom. Consideration for such brethren ("walking in love," v. 15) means avoiding behavior that might distress them. Two specific injunctions to this effect follow in vv. 15, 16.

■ **14:15 Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died.** In the context of Jewish faith, "destroy" means to cut off from the covenant community (Deut. 28:21, 45, 48, 51, 61, 63). To encourage behavior that weak believers' consciences forbid is to encourage them to go against their conscience, a serious and dangerous act.

■ **14:16–18** The strong are urged to weigh the importance of exercising their freedom against two considerations: (a) the use of their freedom may bring division and disrepute on the church; (b) God's kingdom (and therefore our freedom) is not a matter of food and drink, but of the blessings of grace (5:1, 2). Since freedom does not consist in these things, it cannot be lost by our refraining from them.

■ **14:18 approved by men.** See v. 16. While God alone is our Judge (v. 12), the impact of our actions on others plays a vital role in fellowship and evangelism.

■ **14:19–21** The believer's responsibility is now stated positively: avoiding the destruction of others is complemented by promoting "peace" and the things that "edify" (v. 19). For the "strong," (15:1) this includes both maintaining fellowship with the "weak" and also encouraging them to understand the liberty that is theirs in Christ. When such aims are in view, freedom to eat and drink will be made subservient to them; the well-being of the brother will take precedence over the enjoyment of meat and wine.

■ **14:22, 23** Paul further urges the "strong" (15:1) to enjoy the fact of their liberty of conscience in God's presence (while refraining from publicly exercising it). See "Conscience and the Law" at 1 Sam. 24:5.

■ **15:1–4 We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak.** Paul considers himself one of the "strong." He sees the misinformed conscience of the "weak" as real weakness, yet he emphasizes the responsibility of the "strong" to support the "weak." He does not encourage feelings of pride, or flaunting one's freedom in matters offensive to the weak.

■ **15:2** See 14:19; 1 Cor. 8:1; 10:23.

3 [c]For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, [d]*"The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me."* 4 For [e]whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the [3]patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. 5 [f]Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, 6 that you may [g]with one mind *and* one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Glorify God Together

7 Therefore [h]receive one another, just [i]as Christ also received [4]us, to the glory of God. 8 Now I say that [j]Jesus Christ has become a [5]servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, [k]to confirm the promises *made* to the fathers, 9 and [l]that the Gentiles might glorify God for *His* mercy, as it is written:

[m]*"For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles,*
And sing to Your name."

10 And again he says:

[n]*"Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people!"*

11 And again:

[o]*"Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles!*
Laud Him, all you peoples!"

12 And again, Isaiah says:

[p]*"There shall be a root of Jesse;*
And He who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles,
In Him the Gentiles shall hope."

13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all [q]joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

From Jerusalem to Illyricum

14 Now [r]I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, [s]filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish [6]one another. 15 Nevertheless, brethren, I have written more boldly to you on *some* points, as reminding you, [t]because of the grace given to me by God, 16 that [u]I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the [v]offering [7]of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. 17 Therefore I have reason to glory in Christ Jesus [w]in the things *which pertain* to God. 18 For I will not dare to speak of any of those things [x]which Christ has not accomplished through

3 [c]Matt. 26:39 [d]Ps. 69:9

4 [e]Rom. 4:23, 24; 1 Cor. 10:11; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17 [3]*perseverance*

5 [f]1 Cor. 1:10; Phil. 1:27

6 [g]Acts 4:24

7 [h]Rom. 14:1, 3 [i]Rom. 5:2 [4]NU, M *you*

8 [j]Matt. 15:24; Acts 3:26 [k][Rom. 4:16]; 2 Cor. 1:20 [5]*minister*

9 [l]John 10:16 [m]2 Sam. 22:50; Ps. 18:49

10 [n]Deut. 32:43

11 [o]Ps. 117:1

12 [p]Is. 11:1, 10

13 [q]Rom. 12:12; 14:17

14 [r]2 Pet. 1:12 [s]1 Cor. 1:5; 8:1, 7, 10 [6]M *others*

15 [t]Rom. 1:5; 12:3

16 [u]Acts 9:15; Rom. 11:13 [v][Is. 66:20] [7]Consisting of

17 [w]Heb. 2:17; 5:1

18 [x]Acts 15:12; 21:19; 2 Cor. 3:5; Gal. 2:8

■ **15:3** Paul quotes from Ps. 69:9, one of the most frequently quoted psalms in the New Testament. The willingness of the Messiah to deny Himself and suffer for the benefit of others should serve as an example to the Christians in Rome.

■ **15:4 written for our learning.** It is basic New Testament teaching that the Old Testament Scriptures were written by divine inspiration for the benefit of Christians (1 Cor. 10:11; 2 Tim. 3:15–17; 1 Pet. 1:10–12).

■ **15:6 with one mind and one mouth.** See 10:9, 10. Unity in the church is essential if God is to be glorified. Paul has demonstrated that humanity, which has fallen short of God's glory, is restored to it in Christ's reconciling work (1:21, 23; 3:23; 5:2, 11; 8:17, 30).

■ **15:8 Christ . . . a servant to the circumcision.** The mutual acceptance of believers is rooted in Christ's humility (Mark 10:45).

■ **15:13** See "Hope" at Heb. 6:18. What was described as the effect of Scripture in v. 4 (having hope) is now attributed to the work of the Holy Spirit. Paul here follows a pattern evident throughout the New Testament in which God's saving acts are attributed to God's Word as well as to the work of the Holy Spirit (e.g., regeneration, 1 Pet. 1:23; sanctification, John 17:17; salvation, Rom. 1:16; searching the heart, Heb. 4:12).

■ **15:14–22** Paul now begins to draw his letter to a close by returning to the theme of its introduction—his own ministry and his vision for the expansion of the influence of the gospel.

■ **15:14 my brethren.** A further indication of deeply felt emotion (1:13; 7:1, 4; 11:25; 12:1). Paul graciously assures the Romans that his lengthy exposition of the gospel is not intended to raise doubts about their spiritual understanding. Their knowledge of the gospel and ability to apply it practically in mutual admonition ("able also to admonish one another"; cf. Col. 3:16) is not in question.

■ **15:16 ministering the gospel of God.** Paul sees the preaching of the gospel as the means by which the Gentiles will be brought to God as a sacrificial thank-offering (12:1).

■ **15:17–20** Paul describes his ministry very naturally in Trinitarian terms (God the Father, vv. 17, 18; the Son, vv. 17–20; the Spirit, v. 19; cf. v. 16).

me, in word and deed, [y]to make the Gentiles obedient— 19 [z]in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. 20 And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, [a]lest I should build on another man's foundation, 21 but as it is written:

[b] *"To whom He was not announced, they shall see;*
And those who have not heard shall understand."

Plan to Visit Rome

22 For this reason [c]I also have been much hindered from coming to you. 23 But now no longer having a place in these parts, and [d]having a great desire these many years to come to you, 24 whenever I journey to Spain, [g]I shall come to you. For I hope to see you on my journey, [e]and to be helped on my way there by you, if first I may [f]enjoy your *company* for a while. 25 But now [g]I am going to Jerusalem to [9]minister to the saints. 26 For [h]it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem. 27 It pleased them indeed, and they are their debtors. For [i]if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, [j]their duty is also to minister to them in material things. 28 Therefore, when I have performed this and have sealed to them [k]this fruit, I shall go by way of you to Spain. 29 [l]But I know that when I come to you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing [l]of the gospel of Christ.

30 Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and [m]through the love of the Spirit, [n]that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me, 31 [o]that I may be delivered from those in Judea who [2]do not believe, and that [p]my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, 32 [q]that I may come to you with joy [r]by the will of God, and may [s]be refreshed together with you. 33 Now [t]the God of peace *be* with you all. Amen.

Sister Phoebe Commended

16 I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in [a]Cenchrea, 2 [b]that you may receive her in the Lord [c]in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also.

CHAPTER 16 1 [a]Acts 18:18 2 [b]Phil. 2:29 [c]Phil. 1:27

18 [y]Rom. 1:5
19 [z]Acts 19:11
20 [a][2 Cor. 10:13, 15, 16]
21 [b]Is. 52:15
22 [c]Rom. 1:13
23 [d]Acts 19:21; 23:11
24 [e]Acts 15:3 [f]Rom. 1:12 [g]NU omits *I shall come to you* and joins *Spain* with the next sentence.
25 [g]Acts 19:21 [9]*serve*
26 [h]1 Cor. 16:1
27 [i]Rom. 11:17 [j]1 Cor. 9:11
28 [k]Phil. 4:17
29 [l][Rom. 1:11] [l]NU omits *of the gospel*
30 [m]Phil. 2:1 [n]2 Cor. 1:11
31 [o]2 Tim. 3:11; 4:17 [p]2 Cor. 8:4 [2]*are disobedient*
32 [q]Rom. 1:10 [r]Acts 18:21 [s]1 Cor. 16:18
33 [t]1 Cor. 14:33

■ **15:19 signs and wonders.** See Ex. 7:3; Deut. 4:34; 6:22; 7:19; Is. 8:18; Dan. 6:27. A phrase rooted in the authentication of Moses' ministry at the time of the Exodus. God periodically gave such miracles at critical junctures of redemptive history, such as the Exodus, the prophetic ministries of Elijah and Elisha, the preserving of His people in the time of Daniel, and the ministry of Christ and the apostles. These events are unusual rather than normal and point to the successive stages of redemptive history and the new revelation that accompanies them.

from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum. Paul's journeys, according to Acts, had stretched from the eastern Mediterranean as far west as Macedonia. There is no record of his personally entering Illyricum (northwest of Macedonia). While he may have done so, it seems more likely that he means he went as far as Macedonia. He established centers of mission, rather than preached personally in every village. From such centers, even Illyricum may have been reached with the gospel.

■ **15:23, 24** Two things now make the visit to Rome possible: (a) the present phase of Paul's commission has been fulfilled; (b) the new phase involving outreach to Spain is imminent, and Paul seeks their fellowship in it.

■ **15:24 Spain.** The western extremity of the ancient world. Some suggest Paul thought of Spain as the Tarshish of Is. 66:19, and saw the extension of his preaching there as significant for the Christian mission (Matt. 24:14; Acts 1:8).

■ **15:25–33** Paul now discloses his immediate plans to visit Jerusalem with the gifts the churches had raised for the Christians there. Jerusalem was an impoverished city in general; in addition, the Christians there would suffer particular hardship as a suspect minority. But Paul sees a significance deeper than charity in the gift. It is a duty (v. 27), a solemn obligation of the Gentiles in view of the privilege they have received in being grafted into God's olive tree (11:17). This conforms to the general principle that those who receive spiritual blessings should share their own material blessings (1 Cor. 9:3–14; Gal. 6:6).

■ **15:29 fullness of the blessing of the gospel.** A striking comment in view of the manner in which Paul's aspirations were fulfilled (Acts 28:11–16).

■ **15:31** Paul's concern is twofold: (a) that he may be protected from the hostility of the Jews that has marked the whole of his ministry; (b) that Jewish Christians in Jerusalem will respond to the Gentile gift, sealing the apostle's ministry (v. 32).

■ **15:33 the God of peace.** One of Paul's favorite designations for God (16:20; 2 Cor. 13:11; Phil. 4:9; 1 Thess. 5:23; 2 Thess. 3:16), but particularly appropriate here in regard to his present struggle (v. 30).

■ **16:1–27** Paul's letters typically end with personal news and greetings. The closing chapter of Romans is remarkable for the large number of fellow believers mentioned. These verses give an insight into the warmth of the apostle's personal relationships as well as the fellowship of the early Christians.

■ **16:1 Phoebe.** Probably the bearer of Paul's letter. The name is common in Greek mythology and indicates a Gentile background.

a servant. Paul's word (Greek *diakonos*) is variously translated as "servant," "minister" (1 Tim. 4:6), or "deacon" (Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:8). It is uncertain whether Paul uses the term to refer to the specific church office of deacon, or describes Phoebe as a servant of the church in a more general sense.

Cenchrea. The port of Corinth on the Saronic Gulf, indicating Paul's location when Romans was sent.

Greeting Roman Saints

3 Greet [d]Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, 4 who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. 5 Likewise *greet* [e]the church that is in their house.

Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who is [f]the firstfruits of [f]Achaia to Christ. 6 Greet Mary, who labored much for us. 7 Greet Andronicus and Junia, my countrymen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the [g]apostles, who also [h]were in Christ before me.

8 Greet Amplias, my beloved in the Lord. 9 Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys, my beloved. 10 Greet Apelles, approved in Christ. Greet those who are of the *household* of Aristobulus. 11 Greet Herodion, my [2]countryman. Greet those who are of the *household* of Narcissus who are in the Lord.

12 Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, who have labored in the Lord. Greet the beloved Persis, who labored much in the Lord. 13 Greet Rufus, [i]chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine. 14 Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren who are with them. 15 Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them.

16 [j]Greet one another with a holy kiss. [3]The churches of Christ greet you.

Avoid Divisive Persons

17 Now I urge you, brethren, note those [k]who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and [l]avoid them. 18 For those who are such do not serve our Lord [4]Jesus Christ, but [m]their own belly, and [n]by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple. 19 For [o]your obedience has become known to all. Therefore I am glad on your behalf; but I want you to be [p]wise in what is good, and [5]simple concerning evil. 20 And [q]the God of peace [r]will crush Satan under your feet shortly.

[s]The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen.

Greetings from Paul's Friends

21 [t]Timothy, my fellow worker, and [u]Lucius, [v]Jason, and [w]Sosipater, my countrymen, greet you.

3 [d]Acts 18:2, 18, 26

5 [e]1 Cor. 16:19 [f]1 Cor. 16:15 [f]NU *Asia*

7 [g]Acts 1:13, 26 [h]Gal. 1:22

11 [2]Or *relative*

13 [i]2 John 1

16 [j]1 Cor. 16:20 [3]NU *All the churches*

17 [k][Acts 15:1] [l][1 Cor. 5:9]

18 [m]Phil. 3:19 [n]Col. 2:4 [4]NU, M omit *Jesus*

19 [o]Rom. 1:8 [p]Matt. 10:16 [5]*innocent*

20 [q]Rom. 15:33 [r]Gen. 3:15 [s]1 Cor. 16:23

21 [t]Acts 16:1 [u]Acts 13:1 [v]Acts 17:5 [w]Acts 20:4

■ **16:3 Priscilla and Aquila.** The couple were tentmakers like Paul (Acts 18:3). He was with them in Corinth. They had left Rome following the decree of Claudius and accompanied Paul to Ephesus (Acts 18:18). They taught Apollos (Acts 18:24–26) and later returned to Rome.

■ **16:5 Epaenetus.** Evidently the first of a harvest of converts in Asia.

■ **16:6 Mary, who labored much for us.** Paul recognizes the devoted service of women (v. 12).

■ **16:7 Andronicus and Junia.** Early commentators understood these to be a husband and wife. They were fellow Jews, and had been converted ("in Christ") before Paul himself. They had apparently been in prison at some time with Paul (cf. 2 Cor. 11:23) and had served with distinction as special envoys ("apostles") of the churches. This use of "apostle" is broader than the strict sense of the Twelve plus Paul (see 2 Cor. 1:1 note).

■ **16:8 Amplias.** This may be Ampliatus, probably a slave, whose name appears on a tomb in the Catacomb of Domitilla, niece of the Emperor Domitian.

■ **16:9 Urbanus . . . Stachys.** Common slave names, the former Roman, the latter Greek.

■ **16:10 Apelles.** A common Greek name, borne by one who had distinguished himself through trial and remained faithful (12:2).

Aristobulus. This may be the grandson of Herod the Great and friend of the Emperor Claudius.

■ **16:11 Herodion.** Perhaps a freedman of the household of Herod, since freedmen took the name of their patron.

Narcissus. Perhaps to be identified with Narcissus, the aide of Claudius, who was forced to commit suicide by Agrippina after Nero's accession.

■ **16:12 Tryphena and Tryphosa, who have labored in the Lord.** Two women with names from a common root ("gentle," "delicate") and therefore possibly sisters.

■ **16:13 Rufus, chosen in the Lord.** One of the most intriguing of the names listed in view of Mark 15:21, a gospel possibly written from Rome. "Chosen" may reflect the unique circumstances that brought his family into contact with Christ. Paul's allusion to the mother as "his . . . and mine" suggests deep affection for the family.

■ **16:16 holy kiss.** The kiss is a common token of greeting in the East. Here Paul urges the believers to sanctify their greetings as symbols of fellowship.

■ **16:17–20** Reflection on his knowledge of these believers, their problems in Rome (ch. 14), and the divisive activity of Satan (v. 20), evokes an urgent summons to guard their unity (Eph. 4:3). They are to avoid those "who cause divisions . . . contrary to the doctrine which you learned." Bluntly he indicates that their divisive spirit is sinful, a mark of life in the flesh, and a form of self-indulgence (Gal. 5:19, 20). Christians must learn not to be deceived by "smooth words and flattering speech" (v. 18).

■ **16:19 simple.** See text note. The Romans need spiritual wisdom and hearts without any alloy of evil.

■ **16:20** Prior to the closing greetings and doxology, Paul includes a promise of a prophetic nature, rooted in the first biblical deliverance promise in Gen. 3:15. Satan is the source of all "evil" (v. 19; cf. Gen. 3:12; also see "Satan" at Job 1:6). "The God of peace" (wholeness and integrity as well as tranquillity) will act as the Divine Warrior to overcome him. This will take place "shortly." Paul may be speaking here of matters in the near future, or about the last things, which by faith is always seen as near at hand.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. A characteristically Pauline ending (Gal. 6:18; 1 Thess. 5:28).

■ **16:21** Along with Silas, Timothy was Paul's closest coworker following the disagreement with Barnabas (Acts 15:36–40), and is mentioned in ten of Paul's letters. Lucius (whom some identify with Luke), Jason (possibly Paul's host in Thessalonica, Acts 17:5–9) and Sosipater (Acts 20:4)

22 I, Tertius, who wrote *this* epistle, greet you in the Lord.

23 [x]Gaius, my host and *the host* of the whole church, greets you. [y]Erastus, the treasurer of the city, greets you, and Quartus, a brother. 24 [z]The[6] grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

Benediction

25 [7]Now [a]to Him who is able to establish you [b]according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, [c]according to the revelation of the mystery [d]kept secret since the world began 26 but [e]now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for [f]obedience to the faith— 27 to [g]God, alone wise, *be* glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.

23 [x]1 Cor. 1:14 [y]Acts 19:22

24 [z]1 Thess. 5:28 [6]NU omits v. 24.

25 [a][Eph. 3:20] [b]Rom. 2:16 [c]Eph. 1:9 [d]Col. 1:26; 2:2; 4:3 [7]M puts Rom. 16:25–27 after Rom. 14:23.

26 [e]Eph. 1:9 [f]Rom. 1:5

27 [g]Jude 25

were possibly church delegates accompanying Paul to deliver the collection in Jerusalem.

■ **16:22 I, Tertius.** Paul regularly used a secretary, identifying his letters as his own by a brief greeting written in his own handwriting (1 Cor. 16:21; Gal. 6:11; Col. 4:18; 2 Thess. 3:17).

■ **16:23** Paul may have been residing with Gaius at the time of writing. He is presumably to be identified with the Gaius of 1 Cor. 1:14, and may be the (Gaius?) Titius Justus of Acts 18:7. An Erastus is mentioned in Acts 19:22 and 2 Tim. 4:20. We do not know whether this is the same man. Of greater interest is that a Christian held such a responsible post in the local government of Corinth. Of Quartus nothing is known.

■ **16:25–27** The authenticity of this closing doxology is questioned by some on the grounds of its length, its emphasis on mystery, and its textual history (it is found at different points in the letter, or even omitted altogether in various ancient manuscripts). There is, however, a certain appropriateness about its length, coming at the end of a letter like Romans. Its themes draw to a fitting conclusion much that has already been said. In particular, Paul draws attention to his own teaching of the gospel (2:16; cf. 1 Thess. 1:5; 2 Tim. 2:8) and its power to edify (1:11), to the revelation of God's mystery (11:25; cf. Eph. 3:2–6), to faith and obedience among the nations (1:5), and to the wisdom of God in redemption (11:33; cf. Eph. 3:10–12).

■ **16:26 but now . . . by the prophetic Scriptures made known.** Paul's "now" might suggest that he is referring to the New Testament Scriptures, but his emphasis is that it is only now, in the light of Christ's coming, that the message already enshrined in the Old Testament is spread to the nations.

The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the

CORINTHIANS

Author This letter bears the name of Paul as the author. No one has seriously questioned that Paul was the author of the Corinthian letters. These epistles are acknowledged on all sides as fundamental for our understanding of the apostle Paul, his ministry, and his message.

Date and Occasion Paul makes it clear in 16:8 that he wrote this letter from Ephesus during the third missionary journey (A.D. 53–57). Since the apostle stayed in Ephesus well over two years (Acts 19:8, 10), 1 Corinthians was written about A.D. 55.

Although Luke says nothing about this correspondence in the Book of Acts, he does provide some important information about the founding of the church in Corinth during Paul's second missionary journey (A.D. 50–52; Acts 18:1–11). Paul arrived in Corinth after his visit to Athens (Acts 17:16–34), an experience that had impressed on his mind afresh the foolishness of worldly wisdom. Evidently, this incident with the Athenian philosophers had made Paul more determined than ever to preach the simple message of the cross, however offensive it might appear to some (2:1–5). Second, with the support of an influential Christian couple, Aquila and Priscilla (16:19), Paul preached in the synagogue until Jewish opposition forced him to focus his ministry on Gentiles. Third, the Christian congregation in Corinth, composed of both Jews and Gentiles, flourished dramatically (Acts 18:8–10). Finally, Paul's ministry in Corinth lasted a fairly long time (more than eighteen months according to Acts 18:11, 18). Paul had reason to expect some spiritual maturity from the Corinthian Christians.

This letter reveals that the Corinthian church, instead of maturing in the intervening period, had developed a remarkable number of serious problems, such as division, abuse of the sacraments, disorder during worship services, theological problems, and the extremes of moral laxity and unhealthy asceticism. What had happened? Corinth was one of the largest cities in the Roman world and one of the most corrupt (Acts 18:1 note). A strategic commercial center, the city sought to provide international pleasures. In that setting the Christians polarized, some insisting that association with sinners was permissible and necessary, others arguing that a measure of isolation was essential to preserve holiness. These opposing tendencies grew out of control in Corinth and endangered the future of the congregation.

We may infer from 5:9 that Paul had sent the church an earlier letter (which has not survived) exhorting the Corinthian believers to separate from immoral Christians. That letter must also have contained a request for an offering (16:1–4), and probably other instructions related to problems in the congregation. The troubles did not subside. Eventually, the apostle received reports that the church in Corinth was being torn apart by internal divisions, especially as a result of some in the congregation who viewed themselves as more spiritual and knowledgeable than their fellow-believers (1:11, 12; 3:1–4; 8:1–3). Paul also learned about other matters: criticisms hurled at him, gross immorality, and lawsuits between Christians (4:1–4; 5:1; 6:1–6). Moreover, the church itself had written to Paul requesting instruction about such matters as marriage and divorce, food offered to idols, spiritual gifts, and the method Paul was using for his collection (7:1, 25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1). They also asked for a visit from Apollos (16:12). The apostle was confronted with a massive task, and this long letter to the Corinthians was an attempt to deal with the problem.

Characteristics and Themes The contents of the letter are determined by the kinds of problems that had surfaced in Corinth. Many scholars have suggested that the letter is roughly organized on the basis of a distinction between matters that had been reported to Paul (chs. 1—6) and problems that the Corinthians had raised in their letter (chs. 7—16). Such an outline does provide a valuable overview. Behind the great diversity of issues treated in this letter there lie some deep and recurring problems. Challenges to Paul's authority, pride in personal spirituality, and especially a lack of love were fundamental questions that the apostle needed to address. In the course of dealing with these issues, the apostle sets forth his teaching on important doctrines including God's sovereignty, the nature of the church, sanctification, and the bodily resurrection. □

Outline of 1 Corinthians

I. Introduction (1:1–9)
II. The Report from Chloe's Household (1:10—6:20)
  A. Divisions in the Church (1:10—4:21)
    1. The Report (1:10–17)
    2. The Gospel and True Wisdom (1:18—3:4)
    3. Ministry and Apostleship (3:5—4:21)
  B. Moral and Ethical Problems (chs. 5; 6)
    1. A Case of Incest (ch. 5)
    2. Lawsuits (6:1–11)
    3. Sexual Immorality (6:12–20)
III. Response to the Corinthians' Letter (7:1—16:12)
  A. About Marriage and Divorce (ch. 7)
    1. The Marriage Relationship (7:1–9)
    2. The Question of Divorce (7:10–24)
    3. The Special Problem of "Virgins" (7:25–40)
  B. About Food Offered to Idols (8:1—11:1)
    1. The Problem and Its Basic Solution (ch. 8)
    2. Paul's Authority to Deal with the Problem (ch. 9)
    3. The Israelites as Examples (10:1–22)
    4. Conclusions (10:23—11:1)
  C. About the Worship Service (11:2–34)
    1. Hair Covering (11:2–16)
    2. The Lord's Supper (11:17–34)
  D. About Spiritual Gifts (chs. 12—14)
    1. Unity and Diversity (ch. 12)
    2. The Greatness of Love (ch. 13)
    3. Prophecy and Tongues (14:1–25)
    4. The Principle of Order (14:26–40)
  E. About the Resurrection (ch. 15)
    1. Christ's Resurrection Is Essential (15:1–11)
    2. The Certainty of Resurrection (15:12–34)
    3. The Resurrection Body (15:35–49)
    4. Conclusion (15:50–58)
  F. About the Collection and Other Matters (16:1–12)
IV. Conclusion (16:13–24)

CHAPTER 1

Greeting

1 [a]Rom. 1:1 [b]2 Cor. 1:1 [c]Acts 18:17

PAUL, [a]called *to be* an apostle of Jesus Christ [b]through the will of God, and [c]Sosthenes *our* brother,

2 [d][Acts 15:9] [e]Rom. 1:7 [f][1 Cor. 8:6] [g][Rom. 3:22] [1]*set apart*

2 To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who [d]are [1]sanctified in Christ Jesus, [e]called *to be* saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ [f]our Lord, [g]both theirs and ours:

■ **1:1 apostle.** Someone commissioned directly by Christ as His authoritative messenger (2 Cor. 1:1 note). Paul stresses the significance of this office elsewhere (ch. 9; 15:1–11; 2 Cor. 10—12; Gal. 1). Some of the problems in the Corinthian church involved challenges to Paul's authority.

Sosthenes. Perhaps the same person mentioned in Acts 18:17, ruler of the synagogue in Corinth at the time of Paul's first visit to the city.

■ **1:2 sanctified . . . called to be saints.** The word "saints" (lit. "holy ones") calls attention to the distinctive status of God's people. Paul often uses it to identify the Christians to whom he writes (e.g., Rom. 1:7). The description "sanctified" (see text note) underlines this aspect of Christian life. The Corinthians were plagued by ethical problems and this letter touches repeatedly on the subject of sanctification. At the very beginning Paul calls special attention to it. Significantly, however, he encourages them in a pastoral way by reminding them that they *are* sanctified (6:11). The goal of holiness is realistic because God has already changed their hearts (Rom. 6:1–14; Gal. 5:24, 25).

3 [h]Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Spiritual Gifts at Corinth

4 [i]I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus, 5 that you were enriched in everything by Him [j]in all [2]utterance and all knowledge, 6 even as [k]the testimony of Christ was confirmed [3]in you, 7 so that you come short in no gift, eagerly [l]waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, 8 [m]who will also confirm you to the end, [n]*that you may be* blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 [o]God *is* faithful, by whom you were called into [p]the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Sectarianism Is Sin

10 Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, [q]that you all [4]speak the same thing, and *that* there be no [5]divisions among you, but *that* you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 11 For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's *household,* that there are [6]contentions among you. 12 Now I say this, that [r]each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of [s]Apollos," or "I am of [t]Cephas," or "I am of Christ." 13 [u]Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

14 I thank God that I baptized [v]none of you except [w]Crispus and [x]Gaius, 15 lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name. 16 Yes, I also baptized the household of [y]Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other. 17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, [z]not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.

Christ the Power and Wisdom of God

18 For the [7]message of the cross is [a]foolishness to [b]those who are perishing, but to us [c]who are being saved it is the [d]power of God. 19 For it is written:

[e]*"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,*
And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent."

20 [f]Where *is* the wise? Where *is* the scribe? Where *is* the [8]disputer of this age? [g]Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 21 For since, in the [h]wisdom of God, the world through

3 [h]Rom. 1:7
4 [i]Rom. 1:8
5 [j][1 Cor. 12:8] [2]*speech*
6 [k]2 Tim. 1:8 [3]*Or among*
7 [l]Phil. 3:20
8 [m]1 Thess. 3:13; 5:23 [n]Col. 1:22; 2:7
9 [o]Is. 49:7 [p][John 15:4]
10 [q]2 Cor. 13:11 [4]*Have a uniform testimony* [5]*schisms or dissensions*
11 [6]*quarrels*
12 [r]1 Cor. 3:4 [s]Acts 18:24 [t]John 1:42
13 [u]2 Cor. 11:4
14 [v]John 4:2 [w]Acts 18:8 [x]Rom. 16:23
16 [y]1 Cor. 16:15, 17
17 [z][1 Cor. 2:1, 4, 13]
18 [a]1 Cor. 2:14 [b]2 Cor. 2:15 [c][1 Cor. 15:2] [d]Rom. 1:16 [7]*Lit. word*
19 [e]Is. 29:14
20 [f]Is. 19:12; 33:18 [g]Job 12:17 [8]*debater*
21 [h]Dan. 2:20

■ **1:5 enriched in everything.** The Corinthians were tempted to become puffed up by their gifts of "knowledge" and of speaking "with tongues" (8:1; 14:23). Paul needs to rebuke them for their moral weakness and abuse of those gifts, but he does not deny or minimize the blessings they have received (v. 7).

■ **1:8 will . . . confirm.** Paul encourages his readers by assuring them that God, who began a work of grace in them, can be trusted to complete it. Indeed, they will be presented "blameless" at the time of Christ's return. Note the similarities between vv. 8, 9 and Phil. 1:6, 10 (cf. Eph. 5:26, 27; 1 Thess. 5:23, 24).

■ **1:10 I plead with you.** This exhortation begins the body of the letter and announces Paul's primary concern. He has heard (vv. 11, 12) that the unity of the Corinthian church has broken down. Many of the problems addressed in this letter reflect the spirit of dissension that was in the community.

■ **1:11 Chloe's household.** Chloe must have been an influential Christian, perhaps a member of the Corinthian church, although she is not mentioned elsewhere.

■ **1:12 Apollos.** An effective preacher from Alexandria who had ministered in Ephesus and Corinth (Acts 18:24—19:1).

Cephas. Simon Peter's Aramaic name. He was obviously popular among some groups in Corinth (perhaps the Jewish Christians), but it is unclear whether he had actually visited the church.

■ **1:13 Is Christ divided.** With this question Paul anticipates one of his fundamental teachings about the church. Just as a physical body, though made up of many members, is one, so also the church, which is the body of Christ, cannot be divided (10:16, 17; 11:29; 12:12 note).

■ **1:14 Crispus.** The synagogue ruler whose conversion is recorded in Acts 18:8.

Gaius. A common name. Perhaps this is the Gaius described in Acts 19:29.

■ **1:16 the household of Stephanas.** Paul's first converts in Corinth, respected for their dedication. Stephanas himself was one of the representatives who brought a communication from the Corinthians to Paul (16:15–17). See "Infant Baptism" at Gen. 17:12.

■ **1:17 wisdom of words.** The Corinthian church had an unhealthy regard for rhetorical display. Paul will focus attention on what true wisdom is (1:18—2:16; 3:18–23). In this verse he reminds the Corinthians that the power of his own preaching did not depend on such skills (2:1–5).

cross of Christ. In the opinion of those who are wise according to this world, proclaiming the crucified Lord is foolishness. Paul therefore treats "wisdom" and "the cross" as opposites (v. 23 note).

■ **1:18 perishing . . . being saved.** According to the Bible there will be two types of response to the gospel arising from God's elective purpose (Is. 6:9, 10; Luke 2:34; Rom. 9:10–12; 2 Cor. 2:15, 16). This truth does not make God responsible for the perishing of unbelievers; they perish because of their own sin and stubborn impenitence. Those who believe and are saved, on the other hand, are "those who are called" (v. 24; Rom. 9:16).

■ **1:20 wise . . . scribe . . . disputer.** It is not clear whether Paul intends a sharp distinction between these three categories. Possibly the first is general in character, while the other two are specifically Jewish scribes and Greek teachers.

this age . . . this world. Much of Paul's theology is built on the basic opposition between "this present evil age" (Gal. 1:4), or world, which is characterized by "the flesh," and the coming age, which has already dawned for those who have received the Spirit (10:11; Gal. 5:16, 17; Eph. 1:13, 14; 2:6; Phil. 3:20).

wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. 22 For [i]Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; 23 but we preach Christ crucified, [j]to the Jews a [g]stumbling block and to the [f]Greeks [k]foolishness, 24 but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ [l]the power of God and [m]the wisdom of God. 25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

Glory Only in the Lord

26 For [2]you see your calling, brethren, [n]that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many [3]noble, *are called.* 27 But [o]God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; 28 and the [4]base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, 29 that no flesh should glory in His presence. 30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and [p]righteousness and sanctification and redemption— 31 that, as it is written, [q]*"He who glories, let him glory in the LORD."*

Christ Crucified

2 And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the [1]testimony of God. 2 For I determined not to know anything among you [a]except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. 3 [b]I was with you [c]in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. 4 And my speech and my preaching [d]*were* not with persuasive words of [2]human wisdom, [e]but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the [f]power of God.

Spiritual Wisdom

6 However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. 7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a

22 [i]Matt. 12:38
23 [j]Luke 2:34 [k][1 Cor. 2:14] [g]Gr. *skandalon, offense* [f]NU *Gentiles*
24 [l][Rom. 1:4] [m]Col. 2:3
26 [n]John 7:48 [2]*consider* [3]*well-born*
27 [o]Matt. 11:25
28 [4]*insignificant* or *lowly*
30 [p][2 Cor. 5:21]
31 [q]Jer. 9:23, 24

CHAPTER 2

1 [1]NU *mystery*
2 [a]Gal. 6:14
3 [b]Acts 18:1 [c][2 Cor. 4:7]
4 [d]2 Pet. 1:16 [e]Rom. 15:19 [2]NU omits *human*
5 [f]1 Thess. 1:5

■ **1:21 the foolishness of the message preached.** This passage is filled with intense irony. Those who are wise according to the standards of the world think the gospel is foolish. But even the most "foolish" thing about God is wiser than human wisdom (vv. 25, 27). God can use the simplicity of the gospel to demonstrate that real foolishness belongs to those who oppose Him (v. 27). The arrogance of human wisdom blinds unbelievers to the truth. Jesus thanked the Father for His good pleasure in hiding these things from the wise and learned but revealing them to little children (Matt. 11:25, 26).

■ **1:23 we preach Christ crucified.** Paul identifies precisely what the world finds offensive about the gospel (cf. v. 17; 2:2). Possibly these words also reflect the reason for Paul's opposition to the gospel before his conversion. The thought that the Messiah (God's anointed) had been hanged on a tree and had come under the divine curse (Gal. 3:13; Deut. 21:23) was intolerable to many Jews.

■ **1:24 Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.** God's wisdom and power are not abstract forces but personal qualities that manifest themselves fully in the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (v. 30; Rom. 1:4, 16; Col. 2:3).

■ **1:26 you see your calling.** Salvation, by its very nature, does not depend on human values. Even those in the Corinthian church who might have been justly admired could not have claimed that they were chosen because of their good qualities. Rather, God has mercy on all who acknowledge their sinfulness (Mark 2:17; John 9:39–41). See "Effectual Calling and Conversion" at 2 Thess. 2:14.

■ **1:29 no flesh should glory in His presence.** This principle, which Paul underscores in v. 31 by quoting Jer. 9:24, provides the foundation for the biblical doctrine of salvation: it is a gracious gift from God that rules out human boasting (Eph. 2:8, 9).

■ **1:30 who became for us wisdom.** See note on v. 24.

■ **2:1 when I came to you.** Paul must be referring to his first visit to Corinth, recorded in Acts 18:1–17 (Introduction: Date and Occasion).

excellence of speech or of wisdom. Influenced by Greek culture, some of the Christians in Corinth may have been critical of Paul for not using the rhetorical techniques of their contemporaries (2 Cor. 11:5, 6). See notes on 4:1, 8–13; 9:3, 19; 10:30; 16:3.

■ **2:2 Jesus Christ and Him crucified.** See note on 1:23.

■ **2:3–5** Taken by themselves, these verses might suggest that Paul was timid, uneducated, and unable to speak with force and eloquence. Both the Book of Acts (e.g., 19:8) and Paul's own letters (ch. 13) prove otherwise. "Self-confidence," if it rests on arrogance concerning one's own strength, reflects a desire to be independent from God. Paul had learned that God can use human weakness to show forth His own glory (2 Cor. 12:7–10). Because he knew that men and women will be persuaded only "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power," Paul used his talents and training with full confidence.

■ **2:6 we speak wisdom.** The gospel, the proclamation of Christ crucified.

mature. Lit. "perfect." The apostle does not have in mind a special category of elite Christians, an idea that may have been present among the Corinthians. The expression here is no doubt equivalent to "spiritual" (vv. 13, 15; 3:1), referring to the influence of the Holy Spirit. The mature or spiritual person is the person who has the Holy Spirit (cf. v. 14). Since every true believer has received the Spirit, every believer is spiritual and can understand God's wisdom, the gospel of Jesus Christ.

■ **2:7 the wisdom of God in a mystery.** This passage should not be interpreted as a reference to mysteries accessible only to superior Christians. The riches of the gospel, though "hidden" during the Old Testament period, have now been revealed by the Spirit (v. 10). Eph. 3:2–6 makes plain that the word "mystery," used by Paul to emphasize the distinctiveness of his message to the Gentiles, has a strong temporal meaning. The "mystery" is a truth that "in other ages was not made known" (Eph. 3:5); it was "kept secret since the world began" (Rom. 16:25). But now the truth has been clearly revealed to those who have the Spirit, who live in "the ends of the ages" (10:11).

ordained. See text note. The word is used also in Rom. 8:29, 30 and Eph. 1:5 to express the certainty of God's goodwill for His people.

mystery, the hidden *wisdom* which God [3]ordained before the ages for our glory, [8] which none of the rulers of this age knew; for [g]had they known, they would not have [h]crucified the Lord of glory.

[9] But as it is written:

> [i]"*Eye has not seen, nor ear heard,*
> *Nor have entered into the heart of man*
> *The things which God has prepared for those who love Him.*"

[10] But [j]God has revealed *them* to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. [11] For what man knows the things of a man except the [k]spirit of the man which is in him? [l]Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. [12] Now we

7 [3]*predetermined*
8 [g]Luke 23:34 [h]Matt. 27:33–50
9 [i][Is. 64:4; 65:17]
10 [j]Matt. 11:25; 13:11; 16:17; [Gal. 1:12; Eph. 3:3, 5]
11 [k]Job 32:8; Eccl. 12:7; [1 Cor. 6:20; James 2:26] [l]Rom. 11:33

Illumination and Conviction

Christians' knowledge of divine things is more than a knowledge of biblical words and theological ideas. It is an understanding of the reality and relevance of the works of God testified to by Scripture. The "natural man" (1 Cor. 2:14) who does not have the Spirit, even though familiar with Christian ideas, still lacks this deeper understanding, and is like the blind leaders of the blind (Matt. 15:14). Only the Holy Spirit, who searches "the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2:10), can bring this understanding to minds and hearts darkened by sin. It is called a "spiritual understanding" because it is an understanding given by the Holy Spirit (Col. 1:9; cf. Luke 24:25; 1 John 5:20). Those who, along with correct instruction from the Scriptures, "have an anointing from the Holy One . . . know all things" (1 John 2:20).

The work of the Spirit in imparting this understanding is called "illumination," or enlightening. It is not a giving of new revelation, but a work within us that enables us to grasp and to affirm the revelation of the Bible, as it is read, preached, and taught. Sin clouds our minds and wills so that we miss and resist the force of Scripture. The Spirit, however, opens and unveils our minds and attunes our hearts so that we understand what God has revealed (2 Cor. 3:14–16; 4:6; Eph. 1:17, 18; 3:18, 19). Illumination is the application of God's revealed truth to our hearts, so that we grasp as reality for ourselves what the sacred text says.

Protestant theologians shortly after the Reformation spoke of illumination as an act of grace that proceeds in two stages. The first stage of illumination takes place when one encounters the ministry of the Word. This external illumination prepares a person for the second stage, the internal ministry of the Holy Spirit that leads to salvation. The Spirit speaks through the law, that convicts a person of sin, and the gospel, that conveys knowledge of God's grace and forgiveness (cf. Luke 1:79). It is through the illumination of the Spirit that the ministry of the Word conveys the effectual calling to salvation.

Although illumination by the Spirit begins the process, or order, of salvation (Heb. 6:4; 10:32), it continues throughout the life of the believer. The Holy Spirit leads us to a deeper understanding of God (John 16:13), prompting both repentance for the sins that we commit and assurance of God's grace and the certainty of our election. We receive this illumination through the ministry of the Word and through prayer, meditation on God and His revelation, and the struggle to live our lives in a manner consistent with revelation. □

■ **2:8 none of the rulers of this age knew.** Unbelievers are still part of the old age and so have not received God's wisdom (v. 14). Paul emphasizes this point by focusing on the most influential members of society (1:20).

■ **2:9** In contrast to the wise of this world (who cannot even conceive the greatness of divine salvation), those who love God know and partake of His blessings. The quotation is based on Is. 64:4, but includes other ideas found in the Old Testament.

■ **2:10 revealed them to us.** See theological note "Illumination and Conviction."

searches all things. The idea of divine searching (cf. Ps. 139:1; Rom. 8:27) emphasizes God's omniscience, particularly His power to see what is invisible to humans (John 2:25). It does not imply that the Holy Spirit needs to seek knowledge of the Father that He otherwise lacks. The Spirit probes the depths of divine knowledge for our benefit.

■ **2:11 the spirit . . . in him.** This verse intends to make a common-sense observation, not to give an analysis of human personality. "Spirit" refers generally to the immaterial part of a human being, especially to the mental faculties (v. 16 note).

■ **2:12 that we might know.** See "The Authentication of Scripture" at 2 Cor. 4:6.

12 [m][Rom. 8:15]
13 [q]NU omits *Holy*
14 [n]Matt. 16:23
16 [o]Is. 40:13 [p][John 15:15]

CHAPTER 3

1 [a]Heb. 5:13
2 [b]1 Pet. 2:2 [c]John 16:12
3 [r]Lit. *walking according to man*
5 [d]2 Cor. 3:3, 6; 4:1; 5:18; 6:4
6 [e]Acts 18:4 [f]Acts 18:24–27 [g][2 Cor. 3:5]
7 [h][Gal. 6:3]
8 [i]Ps. 62:12
9 [j]2 Cor. 6:1 [k][Eph. 2:20–22]
10 [l]Rom. 1:5 [m]1 Cor. 4:15
11 [n]Is. 28:16 [o]Eph. 2:20
13 [p]1 Pet. 1:7 [q]Luke 2:35
16 [r]2 Cor. 6:16
17 [s]*destroys*

have received, not the spirit of the world, but [m]the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the [q]Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 14 [n]But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them,* because they are spiritually discerned. 15 But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is *rightly* judged by no one. 16 For [o]"*who has known the mind of the* LORD *that he may instruct Him?*" [p]But we have the mind of Christ.

Sectarianism Is Carnal

3 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual *people* but as to carnal, as to [a]babes in Christ. 2 I fed you with [b]milk and not with solid food; [c]for until now you were not able *to receive it,* and even now you are still not able; 3 for you are still carnal. For where *there are* envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and [r]behaving like *mere* men? 4 For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I *am* of Apollos," are you not carnal?

Watering, Working, Warning

5 Who then is Paul, and who *is* Apollos, but [d]ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? 6 [e]I planted, [f]Apollos watered, [g]but God gave the increase. 7 So then [h]neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. 8 Now he who plants and he who waters are one, [i]and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.

9 For [j]we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, *you are* [k]God's building. 10 [l]According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid [m]the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. 11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than [n]that which is laid, [o]which is Jesus Christ. 12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation *with* gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day [p]will declare it, because [q]it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. 14 If anyone's work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

16 [r]Do you not know that you are the temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you? 17 If anyone [s]defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which *temple* you are.

■ **2:13 comparing spiritual things with spiritual.** The precise meaning of this clause is disputed. Probably Paul had been criticized for not using human eloquence and wisdom (v. 1 note). In reply he says that the truths revealed by the Spirit must be explained in a way that is harmonious with the Spirit. See "The Authority of Scripture" at 2 Tim. 3:16.

■ **2:14 natural.** The "natural" (Greek *psychikos*) person, who still belongs to the old age, is contrasted with the one who is "spiritual" (*pneumatikos;* see 15:44, 45 and notes).

■ **2:15 judges.** The apostle may be responding to individuals who opposed him and passed negative judgments on him (v. 1 note).

■ **2:16 the mind of the LORD.** See "Understanding the Word of God" at Ps. 119:34. Through the Spirit of the Lord, Paul has the mind of Christ, and therefore the mind of the Lord. Those opponents who do not see that the Spirit of Christ and the Spirit of the Lord are one and the same have no warrant to instruct or examine him. By implication, those who accept Paul's teaching have the blessing of the Spirit and understand the things of God.

■ **3:1 spiritual.** That is, belonging to the Holy Spirit (2:6 note).

carnal. That is, characterized by the flesh, Paul's main word for describing the present evil age. Since the Corinthians had received the Holy Spirit, they were spiritual in the most fundamental sense, but their behavior was so inconsistent with that truth that Paul had to treat them as people who had little spiritual understanding.

■ **3:3 envy, strife.** See note on 1:10.

■ **3:6 I planted.** Paul's aim was to preach the gospel in places where the message of Christ had not been heard (Rom. 15:20).

Apollos. See note on 1:12.

■ **3:9 God's fellow workers.** Paul may mean either that Christian workers are co-laborers with God or that Christians who are co-laborers with one another belong to God. Paul's point is clear from the context: God alone is responsible for the success of Christian ministry.

■ **3:10 wise.** A clear allusion to the previous discussion of true wisdom (1:17; 2:9, 10 notes).

foundation. As one called to proclaim the gospel where it was not known (v. 6 note), Paul had resolved to preach nothing but Christ crucified (2:2).

■ **3:12–15** These verses address the evaluation of Christian ministry. Some who were seeking to build God's building in Corinth, but who depend on human wisdom, were using perishable materials ("wood, hay, straw") that will not survive the judgment of God's fire, while the builders themselves will barely escape destruction. Paul warns the church that they, like Solomon's temple (1 Chr. 22:14–16), should be built up with what is lasting. See "The Final Judgment" at Matt. 25:41.

■ **3:16 the temple of God.** God signified His presence in the temple by filling it with the cloud of His glory (1 Kin. 8:10, 11). Now He lives in His people by filling them with the Holy Spirit. Paul's focus here is on God's people as a corporate whole; in 6:19 the emphasis shifts to the individual Christian's body.

■ **3:17 God will destroy him.** Paul leaves open the possibility that some of the Christian builders in Corinth are not only using perishable material but are actively destroying God's work. They will not be spared at the Judgment.

Avoid Worldly Wisdom

18 [s]Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. 19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, *"He catches the wise in their own craftiness"*; 20 and again, [u]*"The LORD knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile."* 21 Therefore let no one boast in men. For [v]all things are yours: 22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come—all are yours. 23 And [w]you *are* Christ's, and Christ *is* God's.

Stewards of the Mysteries of God

4 Let a man so consider us, as [a]servants of Christ [b]and stewards of the mysteries of God. 2 Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful. 3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human [1]court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. 4 For I know of nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord. 5 [c]Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to [d]light the hidden things of darkness and [e]reveal the [2]counsels of the hearts. [f]Then each one's praise will come from God.

Fools for Christ's Sake

6 Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be [3]puffed up on behalf of one against the other. 7 For who [4]makes you differ *from another?* And [g]what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive *it,* why do you boast as if you had not received *it?*

8 You are already full! [h]You are already rich! You have reigned as kings without us—and indeed I could wish you did reign, that we also might reign with you! 9 For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a [i]spectacle[5] to the world, both to angels and to men. 10 We *are* [j]fools for Christ's sake, but you *are* wise in Christ! [k]We *are* weak, but you *are* strong! You *are* distinguished, but we *are* dishonored! 11 To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. 12 [l]And we labor, working with our own hands. [m]Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; 13 being defamed, we [6]entreat. [n]We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now.

Paul's Paternal Care

14 I do not write these things to shame you, but [o]as my beloved children I warn *you.* 15 For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet *you do* not *have* many fathers; for [p]in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. 16 Therefore I urge you, [q]imitate me. 17 For this reason I have sent [r]Timothy to you, [s]who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will [t]remind you of my ways in Christ, as I [u]teach everywhere [v]in every church.

18 [s]Prov. 3:7
19 [t]Job 5:13
20 [u]Ps. 94:11
21 [v][2 Cor. 4:5]
23 [w]2 Cor. 10:7

CHAPTER 4

1 [a]Col. 1:25 [b]Titus 1:7
3 [1]Lit. *day*
5 [c]Matt. 7:1 [d]Matt. 10:26 [e]1 Cor. 3:13 [f]Rom. 2:29 [2]*motives*
6 [3]*arrogant*
7 [g]John 3:27 [4]*distinguishes you*
8 [h]Rev. 3:17
9 [i]Heb. 10:33 [5]Lit. *theater*
10 [j]Acts 17:18; 26:24 [k]2 Cor. 13:9
12 [l]Acts 18:3; 20:34 [m]Matt. 5:44
13 [n]Lam. 3:45 [6]*exhort, encourage*
14 [o]1 Thess. 2:11
15 [p]Gal. 4:19
16 [q][1 Cor. 11:1]
17 [r]Acts 19:22 [s]1 Tim. 1:2, 18 [t]1 Cor. 11:2 [u]1 Cor. 7:17 [v]1 Cor. 14:33

■ **3:18–20** Here the apostle returns more directly to the contrast between human and divine wisdom (v. 10 note).

■ **3:21 let no one boast.** See note on 1:29.

all things are yours. This principle demonstrates the pettiness and absurdity of the Corinthians' quarreling. If we belong to Christ, then because of Him all things belong to us (Rom. 8:17, 38, 39; Heb. 1:2), and jealousy can have no place in our lives. How little the Corinthians appreciated their Christian privileges is pointed out again in 6:2.

■ **4:1 consider us, as servants.** These verses show that Paul was being judged and attacked by at least some of the Corinthians (2:1 note).

mysteries. See note on 2:7.

■ **4:3 I do not even judge myself.** Though Paul's conscience is clear (v. 5), ultimately only God determines whether one has proved faithful.

■ **4:5 judge nothing.** Not an absolute command (5:2; 6:2), but a reference to the misconceived criticisms raised against Paul.

bring to light the hidden things. At the Judgment, nothing will escape God's searching light (Matt. 10:26 and parallels).

■ **4:8–13** In this powerful passage the apostle makes use of biting irony to show the Corinthians how trivial are their concerns and how unfair their criticisms. The sufferings of Paul are comparable to the pain and public humiliation of captives condemned to die (2 Cor. 11:23–30). In contrast, some of the Corinthians think of themselves as notably successful, but only because they do not understand what it means to be "fools for Christ's sake" (v. 10).

■ **4:14 not . . . to shame you.** Paul's pastoral heart is revealed in these words. The harsh language of the previous passage was not intended to make them feel inferior but to raise their sensitivity to the truth.

■ **4:15 ten thousand instructors.** The Corinthians boasted of their allegiance to Apollos, Peter, and others, with the implication that they had no need for Paul. The apostle reminds them that his fatherly relationship to them is unique and they have no good reason to attack him.

■ **4:17 I have sent Timothy to you.** Timothy had left prior to the writing of this letter (16:10 note).

18 [w]1 Cor. 5:2
[z]*arrogant*
19 [x]Acts 19:21; 20:2 [y]Acts 18:21
20 [z]1 Thess. 1:5
[a]1 Cor. 2:4
21 [b]2 Cor. 10:2

CHAPTER 5

1 [a]Lev. 18:6–8
[f]NU omits *named*
2 [b]1 Cor. 4:18
[c]2 Cor. 7:7–10
[z]*arrogant*
3 [d]Col. 2:5
4 [e][Matt. 18:20]
[f][John 20:23]
5 [g]1 Tim. 1:20
[h][Acts 26:18]
[3]NU omits *Jesus*
6 [i]1 Cor. 3:21 [j]Gal. 5:9
7 [k]Is. 53:7 [l]John 19:14 [4]*clean out*
[5]NU omits *for us*
8 [m]Ex. 12:15
[n]Deut. 16:3
[o]Matt. 16:6
9 [p]2 Cor. 6:14
[6]*associate*
10 [q]John 17:15
11 [r]Matt. 18:17
[s]Gal. 2:12

18 [w]Now some are [7]puffed up, as though I were not coming to you. 19 [x]But I will come to you shortly, [y]if the Lord wills, and I will know, not the word of those who are puffed up, but the power. 20 For [z]the kingdom of God *is* not in word but in [a]power. 21 What do you want? [b]Shall I come to you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of gentleness?

Immorality Defiles the Church

5 It is actually reported *that there is* sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even [f]named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father's [a]wife! 2 [b]And you are [z]puffed up, and have not rather [c]mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you. 3 [d]For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed. 4 In the [e]name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, [f]with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 5 [g]deliver such a one to [h]Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord [3]Jesus.

6 [i]Your glorying *is* not good. Do you not know that [j]a little leaven leavens the whole lump? 7 Therefore [4]purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed [k]Christ, our [l]Passover, was sacrificed [5]for us. 8 Therefore [m]let us keep the feast, [n]not with old leaven, nor [o]with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth.

Immorality Must Be Judged

9 I wrote to you in my epistle [p]not to [6]keep company with sexually immoral people. 10 Yet *I* certainly *did* not *mean* with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go [q]out of the world. 11 But now I have written to you not to keep company [r]with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—[s]not even to eat with such a person.

12 For what *have* I *to do* with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? 13 But those who are outside God judges. Therefore [t]*"put away from yourselves the evil person."*

13 [t]Deut. 13:5; 17:7, 12; 19:19; 21:21; 22:21, 24; 24:7

■ **4:18 as though I were not coming to you.** A group of Corinthians argued that Paul was bold only when absent and that he was afraid to meet them face to face (2 Cor. 10:1, 2). He has sent Timothy to them (v. 17), apparently to avoid an ugly confrontation, but he will not hesitate to come in person. It is up to them what will happen when that visit takes place (v. 21; 2 Cor. 13:1–10).

■ **5:1 a man has his father's wife.** The man's father may have died, or the woman may have been a stepmother. In any case, the sexual relationship in view is the incestuous union explicitly condemned in Lev. 18:8. Though the Greco-Roman culture of Paul's day tolerated a wide array of immoral activities, even Gentiles censured this kind of incest.

■ **5:2 you are puffed up.** This verse is the key to Paul's real concern. The fundamental problem here was not the sin of one individual, but the failure of the Corinthian church to deal with the sin—indeed, their sense of pride in tolerating it (v. 6). Possibly, the Corinthians had developed a theology that could accommodate such immorality. Instead, they had the responsibility of exercising discipline by excommunicating the offender ("taken away from among you").

■ **5:3–5** A very difficult passage. Though Paul is physically absent from the Corinthian community, he claims to pass a prophetic judgment in their midst. The apostle is commanding the church to expel the offender from their fellowship ("deliver such a one to Satan"). The purpose of this judgment is the man's salvation, but that can be achieved only if his sinful tendencies are overcome ("the destruction of the flesh"). According to one interpretation of 2 Cor. 2:5–11, this man did repent of his sin. See "Church Discipline and Excommunication" at Matt. 18:15.

■ **5:6 glorying.** See notes on v. 2; 1:29.

leaven. Leaven was a common metaphor for a corrupting influence. During the annual Feast of Passover the Israelites removed all leaven from their houses (Ex. 12:15).

■ **5:7 you truly are.** Paul makes this important qualification to encourage the Corinthians; in a fundamental sense, they are already purified (1:2 note).

Christ, our Passover. The apostle develops the imagery by suggesting that the Passover sacrifice, as a shadow of better things to come (Heb. 10:1), pointed forward to the death of Christ.

■ **5:8 let us keep the feast.** The final, and especially beautiful, step in Paul's argument is to draw a parallel between the Feast of Unleavened Bread and the life of purity that Christians should lead.

■ **5:9–11** Prior to the writing of 1 Corinthians, Paul had sent a letter (no longer in existence) instructing the Corinthians to separate themselves from believers who practiced immorality. The Corinthians either misunderstood Paul, as if he were commanding complete separation from the world, or they tried to sidestep the issue by arguing that his request was unreasonable. The apostle explains that he had in mind anyone thought to be a Christian whose life openly contradicted the faith. The injunction to expel offenders ("not even to eat with such a person") has primary reference to community life within the church and probably does not mean that all personal contact must be avoided (2 Thess. 3:15, "admonish him as a brother").

■ **5:12, 13** By quoting the frequent command in Deuteronomy (e.g., Deut. 17:7) to purge or expel the wicked from Israel, Paul draws an important parallel between the Old Testament covenant community and the Christian church (10:1–11). The church has authority to exercise discipline within its own fellowship, not to regulate the behavior of non-Christians.

Do Not Sue the Brethren

6 Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the [a]saints? 2 Do you not know that [b]the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? 3 Do you not know that we shall [c]judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life? 4 If then you have [1]judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, do you appoint those who are least esteemed by the church to judge? 5 I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you, not even one, who will be able to judge between his brethren? 6 But brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers!

7 Now therefore, it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another. [d]Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather *let yourselves* be cheated? 8 No, you yourselves do wrong and cheat, and *you do* these things *to your* brethren! 9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. [e]Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor [2]homosexuals, nor [3]sodomites, 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were [f]some of you. [g]But you were washed, but you were [4]sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

Glorify God in Body and Spirit

12 [h]All things are lawful for me, but all things are not [5]helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of [6]any. 13 [i]Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body *is* not for [j]sexual immorality but [k]for the Lord, [l]and the Lord for the body. 14 And [m]God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up [n]by His power.

15 Do you not know that [o]your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make *them* members of a harlot? Certainly not! 16 Or do you not know that he who

CHAPTER 6

1 [a]Dan. 7:22
2 [b]Ps. 49:14
3 [c]2 Pet. 2:4
4 [1]*courts*
7 [d][Prov. 20:22]
9 [e]Gal. 5:21 [2]*catamites*, those submitting to homosexuals [3]*male homosexuals*
11 [f][1 Cor. 12:2] [g]Heb. 10:22 [4]*set apart*
12 [h]1 Cor. 10:23 [5]*profitable* [6]Or *anything*
13 [i]Matt. 15:17 [j]Gal. 5:19 [k]1 Thess. 4:3 [l][Eph. 5:23]
14 [m]2 Cor. 4:14 [n]Eph. 1:19
15 [o]Rom. 12:5

■ **6:1 Dare any . . . go to law before the unrighteous.** With this verse, Paul appears to change the topic from the evils of immorality to the problem of lawsuits among Christians. It is important, however, to notice the connection. In the first place, the topic of immorality has not been abandoned, but will recur in v. 9. Secondly, the failings of the Corinthians with regard to lawsuits are an expression of the problem already discussed in ch. 5, namely, a weak doctrine of the church. Just as Christians are not responsible to regulate the lives of non-Christians, so non-Christians have no power to discipline in the church. If the Corinthians understood the relation between the Israelite community and the Christian fellowship (5:12, 13 note), they would realize it was absurd for believers to go outside the church to solve their disputes. Who could imagine a pagan Gentile settling disputes among Israelites in the wilderness? This text does not comment on the legitimate role of civil authorities to judge matters that God has put under them. See "Christians and Civil Government" at Rom. 13:1.

■ **6:2–5** The absurdity of the situation in Corinth becomes clearer when one recognizes that, in the consummation of history (but not before; 5:12, 13), Christians will participate with Christ in judging not only unbelievers but angels. Even the least qualified among the Corinthians is in a better position than an unbeliever to arbitrate disputes in the church.

■ **6:7 Why . . . not rather accept wrong.** This remarkable question makes obvious how critical is the principle of community for the apostle. The point is certainly not that Christians should be encouraged to take abuse from others. After all, cheating and injustice should not even exist within the Christian community. That such injustices do exist, and are indeed performed by Christians against one another, demonstrates how far the Corinthians have fallen. Nevertheless, if the Corinthians understood the serious implications of all the improprieties in their church, and if they appreciated the qualities that should characterize believers (cf. 13:4–7), they would much sooner bear injustice than bring disgrace upon the Christian community by publicly exposing their misdeeds in the civil courts.

■ **6:9 the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God.** See "Antinomianism" at 1 John 3:7. That the things of this world are incompatible with the kingdom of God is a recurring principle in Scripture (15:50; Gal. 5:21). The question arises whether anyone at all can be saved, since all are wicked. Paul's answer is twofold: on the one hand, God delights in justifying the wicked (Rom. 4:5); on the other hand, those whom God justifies (declares righteous because of Christ's death) He also sanctifies (leads into a holy way of life; Rom. 6:1–4). Paul is confident that the Corinthians are true believers, justified and sanctified (v. 11 note), and that their present misbehavior is an anomaly that can be corrected. But it must be corrected. Persistence in wickedness would be an indication that their faith is false and that they have no place in the kingdom.

■ **6:11 But you were washed.** See notes on 1:2; 5:7; theological note "Sanctification: The Spirit and the Flesh."

■ **6:12, 13** Paul may be quoting sayings, probably common in Corinth, that were used to excuse immoral behavior. The apostle's response suggests that, even if there is an element of truth in these slogans, the Corinthians have perverted it. Indeed, his qualifications have the effect of denying the very point of the sayings, and he ends by emphasizing the noble purpose for which God has given us a body.

■ **6:14 will also raise us up.** This reference to the Resurrection is unexpected here, and probably reflects the connection between inadequate doctrine and deficient life. Being exposed to Greek thought, many of the Corinthians appear to have had contempt for the body, even to the extent of denying the future bodily resurrection (ch. 15; 15:35 note). With such a weak doctrine, some of them may have regarded sexual relationships as inherently sinful because they take place through the body (7:1–5). A different group, influenced by the same false doctrine, apparently took the opposite view: since what one does with the body does not matter, even promiscuous sexual behavior is not wrong.

■ **6:15 your bodies are members of Christ.** The doctrine of the believer's union with Christ is one of the most fundamental teachings of the apostle. What is significant about this verse is that it represents that union as involving the whole person, not only the body (Rom. 12:1). The Corinthians are wrong in thinking that sexual union with a prostitute, just because it is physical, does not affect their relationship with Christ.

■ **6:16, 17 is one body with her. . . is one spirit with Him.** The contrast is not that union with Christ is spiritual while union with a prostitute is physical; Paul has emphasized in v. 15 that union with Christ involves the body, a point developed in vv. 18–20. "One spirit" probably refers to the Holy Spirit (see 15:45 note). Through the Holy Spirit we (spirit and body) have become one with Christ, and this sublime union forbids giving

16 [p]Gen. 2:24
17 [q][John 17:21–23]
18 [r]Heb. 13:4 [s]Rom. 1:24

is joined to a harlot is one body *with her?* For [p]*"the two,"* He says, *"shall become one flesh."* 17 [q]But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit *with Him.*

18 [r]Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins [s]against his own body. 19 Or [t]do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, [u]and you are not your own?

19 [t]2 Cor. 6:16 [u]Rom. 14:7

Sanctification: The Spirit and the Flesh

According to the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* (Q. 35), sanctification is "the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness." It is a continuing change worked by God in us, freeing us from sinful habits and forming in us Christlike affections, dispositions, and virtues. It does not mean that sin is instantly eradicated, but it is also more than a counteraction, in which sin is merely restrained or repressed without being progressively destroyed. Sanctification is a real transformation, not just the appearance of one.

The basic meaning of "sanctify" is to set apart to God, for His use. But God works in those whom He claims as His own to conform them "to the image of His Son" (Rom. 8:29). This moral renovation, in which we are increasingly changed from what we once were, flows from the agency of the indwelling Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:13; 12:1, 2; 1 Cor. 6:11, 19, 20; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 4:22–24; 1 Thess. 5:23; 2 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 13:20, 21). God calls His children to holiness, and graciously gives what He commands (1 Thess. 4:4; 5:23).

Regeneration is birth; sanctification is growth. In regeneration, God implants desires that were not there before: desire for God, for holiness, and for glorifying God's name in the world; desire to pray and worship; desire to love and bring benefit to others. In sanctification, the Holy Spirit "works in you both to will and to do" according to God's purpose, enabling His people to fulfill their new, godly desires (Phil. 2:12, 13). Christians become increasingly Christlike, as the moral profile of Jesus (the "fruit of the Spirit") is progressively formed in them (2 Cor. 3:18; Gal. 4:19; 5:22–25).

Regeneration is a momentary act, bringing a person from spiritual death to life. It is exclusively God's work. Sanctification is an ongoing process, dependent on God's continuing action in the believer, and consisting of the believer's continuous struggle against sin. God's method of sanctification is neither activism (self-reliant activity) nor apathy (God-reliant passivity), but human effort dependent on God (2 Cor. 7:1; Phil. 3:10–14; Heb. 12:14). Knowing that without Christ's enabling we cannot do good works, but also that He is ready to strengthen us for all we have to do (Phil. 4:13), we "abide" in Christ, asking for His help constantly—and we receive it (Col. 1:11; 1 Tim. 1:12; 2 Tim. 1:7; 2:1).

The standard to which God's work of sanctifying His saints is directed is His own revealed moral law, expounded and modeled by Christ Himself. Christ's love, humility, and patience are a supreme standard for Christians (Rom. 13:10; Eph. 5:2; Phil. 2:5–11; 1 Pet. 2:21).

Believers find within themselves contrary urgings. The Spirit sustains their regenerate desires and purposes, but their fallen instincts (the "flesh") obstruct their path and drag them back. The conflict of these two is sharp. Paul says he is unable to do what is right, and unable to restrain himself from doing what is wrong (Rom. 7:14–25). This conflict and frustration will be with Christians as long as they are in the body. Yet by watching and praying against temptation, and cultivating opposite virtues, they may through the Spirit's help "put to death" particular bad habits (Rom. 8:13; Col. 3:5). They will experience many particular deliverances and victories in their battle with sin, while not being exposed to temptations that are impossible to resist (1 Cor. 10:13). □

our bodies to prostitutes. If what Paul condemns here had to do with the prostitutes who served at the temple of the goddess Aphrodite, the religious implications of the Corinthians' immorality would be even more obvious (10:20).

■ **6:18 outside the body.** The meaning of this passage is disputed. There seem to be many sins that are against the body. Nevertheless, in Paul's teaching the physical union involved in sexual immorality has special consequences because it interferes with our Christian identity as people who have been united with Christ through the Holy Spirit. It is perhaps significant that Paul's prohibition in this verse ("Flee sexual immorality") is expressed in the same way as the command against idolatry (10:14).

■ **6:19 the temple of the Holy Spirit.** Here Paul applies to the individual the concept of the church as the new temple where God dwells (3:16

20 For [v]you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body [7]and in your spirit, which are God's.

Principles of Marriage

7 Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me:
[a]*It is* good for a man not to touch a woman. 2 Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. 3 [b]Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. 4 The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband *does.* And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife *does.* 5 [c]Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that [d]Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. 6 But I say this as a concession, [e]not as a commandment. 7 For [f]I wish that all men were even as I myself. But each one has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that.

8 But I say to the unmarried and to the widows: [g]It is good for them if they remain even as I am; 9 but [h]if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn *with passion.*

Keep Your Marriage Vows

10 Now to the married I command, *yet* not I but the [i]Lord: [j]A wife is not to depart from *her* husband. 11 But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to *her* husband. And a husband is not to divorce *his* wife.

12 But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her. 13 And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him. 14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise [k]your children would be unclean, but now they are holy. 15 But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such *cases.* But God has called us [l]to

20 [v]2 Pet. 2:1 [7]NU omits the rest of v. 20.

CHAPTER 7

1 [a]1 Cor. 7:8, 26
3 [b]Ex. 21:10
5 [c]Joel 2:16 [d]1 Thess. 3:5
6 [e]2 Cor. 8:8
7 [f]Acts 26:29
8 [g]1 Cor. 7:1, 26
9 [h]1 Tim. 5:14
10 [i]Mark 10:6–10 [j][Matt. 5:32]
14 [k]Mal. 2:15
15 [l]Rom. 12:18

note). While we must be aware of this personal character of the Holy Spirit's indwelling, the emphasis in Scripture is on the corporate identity of God's people as a holy temple and a spiritual house (Eph. 2:19–22; 1 Pet. 2:4, 5).

■ **7:1 Now concerning the things of which you wrote.** See Introduction: Date and Occasion.

It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Very possibly this saying was used by an ascetic group among the Corinthian Christians who condemned sexual promiscuity and argued that Christians should avoid marriage and abstain from sexual relations even in marriage. The apostle had to be careful lest his teaching be distorted in one direction or another. Paul does not simply dismiss the slogan; he too opposes sexual immorality, and he recognizes a certain value in remaining unmarried (vv. 7, 8). He can give specific and valid reasons why a Christian may decide to stay single (vv. 29–35). But he must correct those who demand celibacy. In different contexts, Paul will speak of marriage in only positive terms (e.g., Eph. 5:22–33; 1 Tim. 3:2) and he condemns those who forbid marriage (1 Tim. 4:3).

■ **7:3–5** These are remarkable verses in that they reveal viewpoints that appear to be far ahead of their time: a healthy perception of the woman's sexuality, and an understanding of the complete equality that exists between a man and a woman in the most intimate area of their relationship. The Scripture gives no support whatever to the notion that sexual relations are solely at the direction and for the enjoyment of the husband. The apostle allows for temporary abstention from sex (in a way similar to fasting; v. 5), but he does not allow protracted abstinence. God requires sexual union as part of marriage.

■ **7:6–9** The "concession" probably refers to the brief periods of abstinence in v. 5: spouses may—but need not—deprive each other for a short period and for a specific reason. There are certain advantages for the work of the kingdom in remaining unmarried, and so Paul personally can wish that every believer would give his or her life exclusively to the advance of the gospel. But the apostle realizes that such a situation is not possible for everyone and would only lead many Christians into sexual temptation. Moreover, there are other reasons why one should marry that are not relevant to the present discussion (v. 1 note).

■ **7:10 not I but the Lord.** In v. 12, Paul says, "I, not the Lord," but Paul is not suggesting that there is an opposition between what he says and what the Lord says. With regard to the problem treated in vv. 10, 11, there was a well-known instruction given by Jesus during His earthly ministry (Mark 10:1–12). In vv. 12–16, however, Paul discusses a difficult situation that had not been addressed by the Lord. His apostolic commands, however, come by inspiration and have divine authority, as 14:37 makes clear.

■ **7:11 if she does.** In spite of the Lord's command, it appears that some of the wives in Corinth, influenced by an ascetic viewpoint (v. 1), had in fact left their husbands. Because spouses are committed to each other until death (v. 39), even if they depart they may not remarry.

■ **7:12 I, not the Lord.** See note on v. 10.

who does not believe. This is the special circumstance about which Jesus had left no direct instructions. If one spouse has been converted and the other not, should the marriage be dissolved, especially if the unbelieving spouse separates?

■ **7:14 sanctified . . . holy.** A striking affirmation of the special character of the home in which at least one parent is a believer (1:2 note). In Old Testament language, the whole family is regarded as being in covenant with God. Even the spouse who refuses to believe comes under the influence of God's work—much more so the children who are not old enough to profess their faith. Accordingly, Reformed theology has viewed this verse as providing part of the rationale for the baptism of children.

■ **7:15 is not under bondage.** Some interpret this statement to mean that if the unbelieving spouse deserts the marriage, the believing partner may remarry. The thrust of this passage, however, is simply that a Christian is not obligated to insist that the marriage remain intact. Such an insistence would prevent them from living in "peace."

peace. 16 For how do you know, O wife, whether you will [m]save *your* husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save *your* wife?

Live as You Are Called

17 But as God has distributed to each one, as the Lord has called each one, so let him walk. And [n]so I [1]ordain in all the churches. 18 Was anyone called while circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Was anyone called while uncircumcised? [o]Let him not be circumcised. 19 [p]Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but [q]keeping the commandments of God *is what matters.* 20 Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called. 21 Were you called *while* a slave? Do not be concerned about it; but if you can be made free, rather use *it.* 22 For he who is called in the Lord *while* a slave is [r]the Lord's freedman. Likewise he who is called *while* free is [s]Christ's slave. 23 [t]You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men. 24 Brethren, let each one remain with [u]God in that *state* in which he was called.

To the Unmarried and Widows

25 Now concerning virgins: [v]I have no commandment from the Lord; yet I give judgment as one [w]whom the Lord in His mercy *has made* [x]trustworthy. 26 I suppose therefore that this is good because of the present distress—[y]that *it is* good for a man to remain as he is: 27 Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be loosed. Are you loosed from a wife? Do not seek a wife. 28 But even if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Nevertheless such will have trouble in the flesh, but I would spare you.

29 But [z]this I say, brethren, the time *is* short, so that from now on even those who have wives should be as though they had none, 30 those who weep as though they did not weep, those who rejoice as though they did not rejoice, those who buy as though they did not possess, 31 and those who use this world as not [a]misusing *it.* For [b]the form of this world is passing away.

32 But I want you to be without [2]care. [c]He who is unmarried [3]cares for the things of the Lord—how he may please the Lord. 33 But he who is married cares about the things of the world—how he may please *his* wife. 34 There is a difference between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman [d]cares about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But she who is married cares about the things of the world—how she may please *her* husband. 35 And this I say for your own profit, not that I may put a leash on you, but for what is proper, and that you may serve the Lord without distraction.

36 But if any man thinks he is behaving improperly toward his [4]virgin, if she is past the flower of youth, and thus it must be, let him do what he wishes. He does not sin; let them marry.

16 [m]1 Pet. 3:1
17 [n]1 Cor. 4:17 [1]*direct*
18 [o]Acts 15:1
19 [p][Gal. 3:28; 5:6; 6:15] [q][John 15:14]
22 [r][John 8:36] [s]1 Pet. 2:16
23 [t]1 Pet. 1:18, 19
24 [u][Col. 3:22–24]
25 [v]2 Cor. 8:8 [w]1 Tim. 1:13, 16 [x]1 Tim. 1:12
26 [y]1 Cor. 7:1, 8
29 [z]1 Pet. 4:7
31 [a]1 Cor. 9:18 [b][1 John 2:17]
32 [c]1 Tim. 5:5 [2]*concern* [3]*is concerned about*
34 [d]Luke 10:40
36 [4]Or *virgin daughter*

■ **7:16 whether you will save.** Paul may be returning to the thought of v. 14 and giving a reason why Christians should not leave their unbelieving spouses: since they are in some sense "sanctified," there is a good possibility that they will be saved. Alternatively, v. 16 may explain v. 15: let the unbeliever go, because you have no assurance that he or she will be saved by being forced to stay married.

■ **7:17 as the Lord has called . . . so let him walk.** The following verses make clear that the phrase "the Lord has called" is not a reference to a social position but to conversion itself. Note that vv. 17–24 set forth a principle that gives coherence to the whole chapter: becoming a believer does not require a change in status, whether marital, ethnic, or social (vv. 8, 20, 26). This verse has sometimes been misused as evidence that Christians should not attempt to improve their social or economic standing. On the contrary, Paul encourages slaves to obtain their freedom if the opportunity arises (v. 21).

■ **7:19** The first part of this verse is paralleled in Gal. 5:6 and 6:15. It would seem that the second part ("keeping the commandments of God") is another way of saying, "faith working through love" (Gal. 5:6), and that such working faith is what characterizes the "new creation" (Gal. 6:15).

■ **7:21 Do not be concerned.** The desire to attain a better condition is not wrong, as the rest of the verse makes clear. However, Paul does not want Christians troubling themselves about a situation that cannot be changed. Dissatisfaction and complaint can be fatal spiritually (10:10): they reflect lack of confidence in God.

■ **7:23 bought at a price.** This statement supports v. 22 (cf. 6:20). If we truly understood whose we are, we would realize that even slavery cannot damage our privileged position in Christ. Conversely, even the greatest human master is only a humble servant before Christ. Therefore, Christians need not, and must not, "become slaves of men."

■ **7:25 Now concerning virgins.** A new, but related topic that the Corinthians had raised in their letter to Paul (Introduction: Date and Occasion).

I have no commandment from the Lord. See note on v. 10.

I give judgment. This language suggests that the comments Paul is about to make are not absolute commandments concerning right-or-wrong moral choices, but recommendations for a particular situation. This interpretation is confirmed by the statement in v. 28 and by the concluding words in v. 38.

■ **7:26 the present distress.** Lit. "the present necessity." Some believe that Paul is referring to a specific and unusual problem in Corinth. However, the language of v. 28 ("will have trouble in the flesh") suggests a more general idea: the predicament that faces all Christians as they seek to serve Christ in the present evil age (Gal. 1:4). We must consider this factor when making a decision about marriage, though other considerations should also be kept in mind (vv. 6–9 note).

■ **7:29–31 the time is short . . . this world is passing away.** The Christian life must be lived in the realization that there is no time to waste (Rom. 13:11, 12).

■ **7:36–38** There are two different ways of understanding this passage. We simply do not know for certain whether Paul is addressing men who have deferred marriage to their fiancee ("virgin") or fathers who have not permitted their daughters to marry ("virgin daughter"; see text note). However, the main idea is clear: both married and unmarried status are good options, even though Paul sees a particular benefit in remaining unmarried.

[37] Nevertheless he who stands steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but has power over his own will, and has so determined in his heart that he will keep his [5]virgin, does well. [38] [e]So then he who gives [6]*her* in marriage does well, but he who does not give *her* in marriage does better.

[39] [f]A wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives; but if her husband dies, she is at liberty to be married to whom she wishes, [g]only in the Lord. [40] But she is happier if she remains as she is, [h]according to my judgment—and [i]I think I also have the Spirit of God.

Be Sensitive to Conscience

8 Now [a]concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have [b]knowledge. [c]Knowledge [1]puffs up, but love [2]edifies. [2] And [d]if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know. [3] But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him.

[4] Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that [e]an idol *is* nothing in the world, [f]and that *there is* no other God but one. [5] For even if there are [g]so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), [6] yet [h]for us *there is* one God, the Father, [i]of whom *are* all things, and we for Him; and [j]one Lord Jesus Christ, [k]through whom *are* all things, and [l]through whom we *live*.

[7] However, *there is* not in everyone that knowledge; for some, [m]with consciousness of the idol, until now eat *it* as a thing offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is [n]defiled. [8] But [o]food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse.

[9] But [p]beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become [q]a [3]stumbling block to those who are weak. [10] For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not [r]the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols? [11] And [s]because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? [12] But [t]when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. [13] Therefore, [u]if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

A Pattern of Self-Denial

9 Am [a]I not an apostle? Am I not free? [b]Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? [c]Are you not my work in the Lord? [2] If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are [d]the [1]seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

CHAPTER 9 1 [a]Acts 9:15 [b]1 Cor. 15:8 [c]1 Cor. 3:6; 4:15 2 [d]2 Cor. 12:12 [1]*certification*

37 [5]Or *virgin daughter*

38 [e]Heb. 13:4 [6]NU *his own virgin*

39 [f]Rom. 7:2 [g]2 Cor. 6:14

40 [h]1 Cor. 7:6, 25 [i]1 Thess. 4:8

CHAPTER 8

1 [a]Acts 15:20 [b]Rom. 14:14 [c]Rom. 14:3 [1]*makes arrogant* [2]*builds up*

2 [d][1 Cor. 13:8–12]

4 [e]Is. 41:24 [f]Deut. 4:35, 39; 6:4

5 [g][John 10:34]

6 [h]Mal. 2:10 [i]Acts 17:28 [j]John 13:13 [k]John 1:3 [l]Rom. 5:11

7 [m][1 Cor. 10:28] [n]Rom. 14:14, 22

8 [o][Rom. 14:17]

9 [p]Gal. 5:13 [q]Rom. 14:13, 21 [3]*cause of offense*

10 [r]1 Cor. 10:28

11 [s]Rom. 14:15, 20

12 [t]Matt. 25:40

13 [u]Rom. 14:21

■ **7:39 is bound.** Marriage is a life commitment.

at liberty to be married. A widow, no less than the others treated in this chapter, has the choice to remain unmarried or to marry. The only consideration is that if she marries again the new spouse must be a Christian.

■ **8:1 Now concerning things offered to idols.** The Corinthians had raised the issue of idolatry dealt with in chs. 8—10, but the precise nature of their question is difficult to determine. According to some interpreters, the issues discussed in ch. 8 and in 10:25–30 are one and the same. Others, on the basis of 8:10, argue that ch. 8 deals with the serious problem that some Christians were attending pagan feasts and eating the food served there, while 10:25–30 concerns the lesser problem of meat purchased in the market.

we all have knowledge. Paul addresses the sin of arrogance as an introduction to the subject of idolatry (vv. 1–3). These comments reveal that behind the behavior of the Corinthians (or at least an important group among them) lay a serious problem of attitude. Their conduct was not guided by love (cf. ch. 13) but by pride.

■ **8:3 known by Him.** The Corinthians should be less concerned about what they know than about who knows them (cf. 13:12).

■ **8:4 an idol is nothing.** Apparently some of the Corinthians used the doctrine of monotheism as an argument supporting their practice: if there is only one God, who teaches us to mock idols (Is. 46:6, 7), why should we worry about eating food offered to them? Paul acknowledges this truth and affirms it (vv. 4–6), but goes on to point out an error in the Corinthians' use of this doctrine.

■ **8:7 not in everyone.** Believers who have weak consciences are unable to dissociate various elements in pagan rituals from idolatry itself. When they eat food offered to idols, their conscience becomes "defiled." Such strong language (cf. "perish" in v. 11) suggests that these weak Christians are sinning not merely because they think they are doing something wrong, but because they have fallen back into their idolatrous ways.

■ **8:10 eating in an idol's temple.** See note on v. 1 (cf. 10:18–22).

■ **8:11 because of your knowledge.** What was a source of pride for some of the Corinthians became the instrument that harmed others (v. 1 note).

perish. See note on v. 7.

■ **8:12 wound their weak conscience.** Although the conscience is not infallible, it is a serious matter to violate it or tempt others to do so.

■ **8:13 I will never again eat meat.** This concluding comment is intended to set forth the basic principle of love: seeking the good of others above one's own (10:24, 33; 13:5; Phil. 2:4).

■ **9:1 Am I not free.** Paul's willingness to forgo some of his rights is an illustration of the principle he stated in 8:9. The questions in v. 1 indicate that some of the Corinthians defended their conduct by questioning Paul's authority and criticizing his behavior.

3 My defense to those who examine me is this: 4 [e]Do we have no [2]right to eat and drink? 5 Do we have no right to take along [3]a believing wife, as *do* also the other apostles, [f]the brothers of the Lord, and [g]Cephas? 6 Or *is it* only Barnabas and I [h]*who* have no right to refrain from working? 7 Who ever [i]goes to war at his own expense? Who [j]plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who [k]tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock?

8 Do I say these things as a *mere* man? Or does not the law say the same also? 9 For it is written in the law of Moses, [l]*"You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain."* Is it oxen God is concerned about? 10 Or does He say *it* altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, *this* is written, that [m]he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope. 11 [n]If we have sown spiritual things for you, *is it* a great thing if we reap your material things? 12 If others are partakers of *this* right over you, *are* we not even more?

[o]Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things [p]lest we hinder the gospel of Christ. 13 [q]Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat *of the things* of the [r]temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of *the offerings of* the altar? 14 Even so [s]the Lord has commanded [t]that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.

15 But [u]I have used none of these things, nor have I written these things that it should be done so to me; for [v]it *would be* better for me to die than that anyone should make my boasting void. 16 For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for [w]necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel! 17 For if I do this willingly, [x]I have a reward; but if against my will, [y]I have been entrusted with a stewardship. 18 What is my reward then? That [z]when I preach the gospel, I may present the gospel [4]of Christ without charge, that I [a]may not abuse my authority in the gospel.

Serving All Men

19 For though I am [b]free from all *men,* [c]I have made myself a servant to all, [d]that I might win the more; 20 and [e]to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those *who are* under the law, as under the [5]law, that I might win those *who are* under the law; 21 [f]to [g]those *who are* without law, as without law [h](not being without [6]law toward God, but under [7]law toward Christ), that I might win those *who are* without law; 22 [i]to the weak I became [8]as weak, that I might win the weak. [j]I have become all things to all *men,* [k]that I might by all means save some. 23 Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with *you.*

4 [e][1 Thess. 2:6, 9] [2]*authority*

5 [f]Matt. 13:55 [g]Matt. 8:14 [3]Lit. *a sister,* a wife

6 [h]Acts 4:36

7 [i]2 Cor. 10:4 [j]Deut. 20:6 [k]John 21:15

9 [l]Deut. 25:4

10 [m]2 Tim. 2:6

11 [n]Rom. 15:27

12 [o][Acts 18:3; 20:33] [p]2 Cor. 11:12

13 [q]Lev. 6:16, 26; 7:6, 31 [r]Num. 18:8–31

14 [s]Matt. 10:10 [t]Rom. 10:15

15 [u]Acts 18:3; 20:33 [v]2 Cor. 11:10

16 [w][Rom. 1:14]

17 [x]1 Cor. 3:8, 14; 9:18 [y]Gal. 2:7

18 [z]1 Cor. 10:33 [a]1 Cor. 7:31; 9:12 [4]NU omits *of Christ*

19 [b]1 Cor. 9:1 [c]Gal. 5:13 [d]Matt. 18:15

20 [e]Acts 16:3; 21:23–26 [5]NU adds *though not being myself under the law*

21 [f][Gal. 2:3; 3:2] [g][Rom. 2:12, 14] [h][1 Cor. 7:22] [6]NU *God's law* [7]NU *Christ's law*

22 [i]Rom. 14:1; 15:1 [j]1 Cor. 10:33 [k]Rom. 11:14 [8]NU omits *as*

■ **9:3 those who examine me.** This statement makes explicit that Paul had indeed been criticized, though scholars debate the specific nature of the complaint (2:1 note). The next ten verses contain more than a dozen rhetorical questions that reflect Paul's deep emotion and provide clues about the historical situation. Paul defends his right to be supported by the churches, only to emphasize his choice not to receive support (vv. 15–18). Perhaps some of the Corinthians were upset because Paul refused their patronage, and concluded from this that he was not a legitimate apostle (2 Cor. 11:7–12). If not, why should they listen to his instruction?

■ **9:5 a believing wife.** The Corinthians themselves may have raised this issue, as though the lack of a wife discredited Paul and Barnabas, or it may be Paul's choice of an illustration to indicate the distinction between having a right and exercising it. Both Paul and Barnabas were unmarried at the time of their missionary work. Paul takes for granted that if he were to be married, it would be with a believer.

■ **9:10 For our sakes, no doubt.** It may appear that Paul denies the original meaning of Deut. 25:4, which commands Israelites to allow their oxen to eat as they work. We should remember that the whole complex of laws in Israel constantly reminded the community of religious principles. Some scholars have suggested that the command not to muzzle the ox was intended to reinforce the instructions about human relationships mentioned in the immediate context (Deut. 24:5—25:4).

■ **9:12 we have not used this right.** In spite of the strain caused by his secular work added to the heavy demands of his apostolic ministry, Paul was determined not to become a burden to the churches (1 Thess. 2:6–9). It appears from 2 Cor. 11:7–12 that the Corinthians misinterpreted Paul's motives. For reasons that are unclear, the apostle did make an exception in the case of the Philippian church in Macedonia (Phil. 4:15, 16).

■ **9:14 live from the gospel.** This principle is reflected not only in the Old Testament priesthood (v. 13) but also in several New Testament passages (e.g., Luke 10:7; Gal. 6:6; 1 Tim. 5:17, 18).

■ **9:15, 16 make my boasting void.** As the rest of the passage makes clear, Paul considered that he could hardly boast about preaching since he was compelled by God's will to preach. So his ground for boasting (his "reward") is that he preaches free of charge (v. 18), and he will not allow anyone to take this away from him.

■ **9:19 though I am free.** Paul returns to the first question of v. 1. It appears that Paul must defend himself from the charge of inconsistency: he exercised freedom in his own behavior and therefore should not deprive others from doing the same. The apostle will return to this theme again in 10:23–33.

■ **9:20 as under the law.** When ministering to Jews, Paul conformed to the Old Testament ceremonial regulations even though he knew that these matters were not essential. See "The Three Purposes of the Law" at Deut. 13:10.

■ **9:21 as without law.** When ministering to Gentiles, Paul was willing to live like them, while recognizing that he was never free to disobey God.

■ **9:22 as weak.** A restatement of the point made in 8:13.

Striving for a Crown

24 Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? [f]Run in such a way that you may [g]obtain *it.* 25 And everyone who competes *for the prize* [l]is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a perishable crown, but we *for* [m]an imperishable *crown.* 26 Therefore I run thus: [n]not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as *one who* beats the air. 27 [o]But I discipline my body and [p]bring *it* into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become [q]disqualified.

Old Testament Examples

10 Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under [a]the cloud, all passed through [b]the sea, 2 all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, 3 all ate the same [c]spiritual food, 4 and all drank the same [d]spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. 5 But with most of them God was not well pleased, for *their bodies* [e]were scattered in the wilderness.

6 Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as [f]they also lusted. 7 [g]And do not become idolaters as *were* some of them. As it is written, [h]"*The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.*" 8 [i]Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as [j]some of them did, and [k]in one day twenty-three thousand fell; 9 nor let us [l]tempt Christ, as [l]some of them also tempted, and [m]were destroyed by serpents; 10 nor complain, as [n]some of them also complained, and [o]were destroyed by [p]the destroyer. 11 Now [2]all these things happened to them as examples, and [q]they were written for our [3]admonition, [r]upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

12 Therefore [s]let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. 13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but [t]God *is* faithful, [u]who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to [4]bear *it.*

24 [f]Gal. 2:2 [g]*win*
25 [m]James 1:12 [l]*exercises self-control*
26 [n]2 Tim. 2:5
27 [o][Rom. 8:13] [p][Rom. 6:18] [q]Jer. 6:30

CHAPTER 10

1 [a]Ex. 13:21, 22 [b]Ex. 14:21, 22, 29
3 [c]Ex. 16:4, 15, 35
4 [d]Ex. 17:5–7
5 [e]Num. 14:29, 37; 26:65
6 [f]Num. 11:4, 34
7 [g]1 Cor. 5:11; 10:14 [h]Ex. 32:6
8 [i]Rev. 2:14 [j]Num. 25:1–9 [k]Ps. 106:29
9 [l]Ex. 17:2, 7 [m]Num. 21:6–9 [l]*test*
10 [n]Ex. 16:2 [o]Num. 14:37 [p]Ex. 12:23

11 [q]Rom. 15:4 [r]Phil. 4:5 [2]NU omits *all* [3]*instruction* 12 [s]Rom. 11:20 13 [t]1 Cor. 1:9 [u]Ps. 125:3 [4]*endure*

■ **9:24 Run in such a way that you may obtain.** Paul elsewhere uses the illustration of a race and its prize to emphasize the need for single-mindedness, determination, and perseverance (Phil. 3:12–14; 2 Tim. 4:7, 8).

■ **9:27 I discipline my body.** He continues the athletic metaphor by reminding his readers that fighters must discipline their bodies if they expect to win. Similarly, Christians must be willing to set aside their selfish interests for the sake of their primary goal.

lest . . . I myself should become disqualified. This statement has often been used as evidence that Christians can lose their salvation. The witness of the New Testament and of Paul in particular is that those whom God has brought to Himself are His forever (Rom. 8:28–30) because the life they have been given is eternal in character (John 5:24; Heb. 7:16). What God has begun He will bring to completion (Phil. 1:6). However, it would be wrong to dismiss or minimize Paul's concern (cf. 15:2; Phil. 3:11; Col. 1:23) by suggesting that it is merely hypothetical or relates only to rewards and not salvation. Paul was confident that absolutely nothing would be able to separate him from God's love (Rom. 8:38–39), but he never presumed that he was saved regardless of what he did. No Christian can afford to take lightly the warnings of Scripture (10:12).

■ **10:2 all were baptized into Moses.** Christian baptism stresses the union of the believer with Christ, Paul uses the language of baptism in comparing the Israelites and the Corinthians (5:12, 13 note). All the Israelites went through the ordeal and deliverance of the Exodus by virtue of their identification with their leader, Moses. Note the repetition of "all" in vv. 1–3 (also 12:13). "All" the members of the Corinthian church have been baptized into Christ, and have therefore had a taste of God's deliverance, but that does not guarantee that God is pleased with each one without exception. This passage illustrates and explains the warning in 9:24–27.

■ **10:3, 4 the same spiritual food . . . the same spiritual drink.** Following the analogy with baptism, Paul warns the Corinthians not to find false comfort in their participation in the Lord's Supper (vv. 14–22). The Israelites also experienced divinely given food and drink. Here "spiritual" does not mean "immaterial"; nor does it merely suggest that the manna and the water had a deeper significance. Paul probably has in mind the activity of the Holy Spirit (2:6, 14; 3:1; 15:44–46; and notes). The Israelites had received a supernatural provision associated with the work of the Spirit.

that Rock was Christ. In the Old Testament, God is often compared with a rock, and Israel (called "Jeshurun") is described as having forsaken God, the "Rock of his salvation" (Deut. 32:15; cf. Ex. 17:6). The analogy between the Israelites and the Corinthians is not an arbitrary illustration; there is a theological connection. Without minimizing the privileges enjoyed by Christians (v. 11 note), Paul reminds us that the Deliverer of the Israelites was none other than our crucified and risen Savior.

■ **10:6 examples.** The Greek word is related to the English term "type" (so also in v. 11). Possibly the use of this word further indicates that the events of the wilderness have a divinely intended correspondence with the experiences of the Christian church.

■ **10:11 the ends of the ages have come.** This statement reflects Paul's conviction that the coming of Christ inaugurated the "last days" (Heb. 1:2), the time when the great promises of the Old Testament come to pass (cf. 1:20 note). By pointing out this theme, Paul helps the Corinthians to realize that the Old Testament events looked forward and applied to them. Moreover, these facts suggest that, given their privileged position, the Corinthians ought to recognize their greater responsibility (cf. Heb. 11:39, 40).

■ **10:12 take heed lest he fall.** See note on 9:27.

■ **10:13** This well-known verse has provided great encouragement to Christians faced by temptations. At the same time, Paul's words contain an implicit rebuke. If God keeps us from temptations greater than we can withstand, we cannot plead our temptations as an excuse for sinning. Sin is never a necessity for a believer.

Flee from Idolatry

14 Therefore, my beloved, [v]flee from idolatry. 15 I speak as to [w]wise men; judge for yourselves what I say. 16 [x]The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the [5]communion of the blood of Christ? [y]The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? 17 For [z]we, *though* many, are one bread *and* one body; for we all partake of that one bread.

18 Observe [a]Israel [b]after the flesh: [c]Are not those who eat of the sacrifices [6]partakers of the altar? 19 What am I saying then? [d]That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? 20 Rather, that the things which the Gentiles [e]sacrifice [f]they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. 21 [g]You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and [h]the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the [i]Lord's table and of the table of demons. 22 Or do we [j]provoke the Lord to jealousy? [k]Are we stronger than He?

All to the Glory of God

23 All things are lawful [7]for me, but not all things are [l]helpful; all things are lawful [7]for me, but not all things [8]edify. 24 Let no one seek his own, but each one [m]the other's *well-being.*

25 [n]Eat whatever is sold in the meat market, asking no questions for conscience' sake; 26 for [o]*"the earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness."*

27 If any of those who do not believe invites you *to dinner,* and you desire to go, [p]eat whatever is set before you, asking no question for conscience' sake. 28 But if anyone says to you, "This was offered to idols," do not eat it [q]for the sake of the one who told you, and for conscience' sake; [9]for [r]*"the earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness."* 29 "Conscience," I say, not your own, but that of the other. For [s]why is my liberty judged by another *man's* conscience? 30 But if I partake with thanks, why am I evil spoken of for *the food* [t]over which I give thanks?

31 [u]Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. 32 [v]Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God, 33 just [w]as I also please all *men* in all *things,* not seeking my own profit, but the *profit* of many, that they may be saved.

11 Imitate[a] me, just as I also *imitate* Christ.

Head Coverings

2 Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered *them* to you. 3 But I want you to know that [b]the head of every man is Christ, [c]the

CHAPTER 11 1 [a]Eph. 5:1 3 [b]Eph. 1:22; 4:15; 5:23 [c]Gen. 3:16

14 [v]2 Cor. 6:17
15 [w]1 Cor. 8:1
16 [x]Matt. 26:26–28 [y]Acts 2:42 [5]*fellowship* or *sharing*
17 [z]1 Cor. 12:12, 27
18 [a]Rom. 4:12 [b]Rom. 4:1 [c]Lev. 3:3; 7:6, 14 [6]*fellowshippers* or *sharers*
19 [d]1 Cor. 8:4
20 [e]Lev. 17:7 [f]Deut. 32:17
21 [g]2 Cor. 6:15, 16 [h]Deut. 32:38 [i][1 Cor. 11:23–29]
22 [j]Deut. 32:21 [k]Ezek. 22:14
23 [l]1 Cor. 6:12 [7]NU omits *for me* [8]*build up*
24 [m]Phil. 2:4
25 [n][1 Tim. 4:4]
26 [o]Ps. 24:1
27 [p]Luke 10:7, 8
28 [q][1 Cor. 8:7, 10, 12] [r]Ps. 24:1 [9]NU omits the rest of v. 28.
29 [s]Rom. 14:16
30 [t]Rom. 14:6
31 [u]Col. 3:17
32 [v]Rom. 14:13
33 [w]Rom. 15:2

■ **10:14 flee from idolatry.** This command is related to Paul's previous remarks about eating food offered to idols (8:1 note). Specifically, Paul is grieved that some of the Corinthians are participating in pagan meals that had an inseparable element of idolatry.

■ **10:16 The cup of blessing . . . The bread which we break.** These statements about the Lord's Supper demonstrate the significance of taking part in a distinctively religious meal. Just as it would be impossible to take the Lord's Supper and claim that it had no religious significance, so it is naive for the Corinthians to think they can participate in temple feasts without being involved in idolatry. Another point is that the unity "of the body of Christ" symbolized by taking the bread and wine excludes union with idols. See "The Sacraments" at Matt. 28:19.

■ **10:20 fellowship with demons.** Although idols are nothing (v. 19), behind pagan rituals is the reality of Satan's work, and Christians should have nothing to do with that.

■ **10:23 All things are lawful.** See note on 6:12, 13.

■ **10:25 Eat whatever is sold in the meat market.** In spite of his strong words against taking part in idolatrous feasts, Paul does not want the Corinthians to be overly scrupulous. The fact that food is offered to an idol does not change what the food is; it is still part of God's creation. Therefore, the Corinthian believers do not have to ask whether food in the market was brought from the temple, nor do they need to raise the question when invited to a meal (v. 27). They may freely eat what God has provided.

■ **10:28 do not eat it.** A different problem arises if someone announces that the meat comes from a pagan sacrifice. Presumably, such a comment indicates that the person has problems of conscience about it. In that case, it is right to abstain "for the sake of the one who told you."

■ **10:30 why am I evil spoken of.** This question makes plain that Paul had been accused of eating meat offered to idols, with the suggestion that he has no right forbidding the Corinthians to do the same (9:19 note).

■ **10:31 do all to the glory of God.** See "The Glory of God" at Ezek. 1:28.

■ **10:33 not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many.** In combination with the desire to do everything for God's glory (v. 31), this principle provided Paul with his criterion of behavior. It is in fact the principle of Christian love, which "does not seek its own" (13:5).

■ **11:1** The apostle does not set himself up as an absolute example; he is to be imitated to the extent that he imitates Christ.

■ **11:3 the head.** The significance of this metaphor has long been debated by scholars—it may indicate leadership and authority, or source and origin. The evidence from Greek literature is ambiguous, and the present context does not resolve the problem. The two ideas should probably not be regarded as excluding each other. In two other contexts where Paul speaks of Christ as head (Eph. 4:15; Col. 2:19), the notion of "source" may be present (cf. v. 8). Elsewhere Paul uses the metaphor with explicit reference to authority or submission (Eph. 1:22; 5:23, 24; Col. 1:18; 2:10). Here the stress probably falls on authority rather than source (cf. v. 10).

head of woman *is* man, and [d]the head of Christ *is* God. 4 Every man praying or [e]prophesying, having *his* head covered, dishonors his head. 5 But every woman who prays or prophesies with *her* head uncovered dishonors her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were [f]shaved. 6 For if a woman is not covered, let her also be shorn. But if it is [g]shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered. 7 For a man indeed ought not to cover *his* head, since [h]he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. 8 For man is not from woman, but woman [i]from man. 9 Nor was man created for the woman, but woman [j]for the man. 10 For this reason the woman ought to have *a symbol of* authority on *her* head, because of the angels. 11 Nevertheless, [k]neither *is* man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord. 12 For as woman *came* from man, even so man also *comes* through woman; but all things are from God.

13 Judge among yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? 14 Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him? 15 But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for *her* hair is given [l]to her for a covering. 16 But [l]if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, [m]nor *do* the churches of God.

Conduct at the Lord's Supper

17 Now in giving these instructions I do not praise *you,* since you come together not for the better but for the worse. 18 For first of all, when you come together as a church, [n]I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. 19 For [o]there must also be factions among you, [p]that those who are approved may be [2]recognized among you. 20 Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. 21 For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of *others;* and one is hungry and [q]another is drunk. 22 What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise [r]the church of God and [s]shame [3]those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise *you.*

Institution of the Lord's Supper

23 For [t]I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: [u]that the Lord Jesus on the *same* night in which He was betrayed took bread; 24 and when He had given thanks, He broke *it*

3 [d]John 14:28
4 [e]1 Cor. 12:10
5 [f]Deut. 21:12
6 [g]Num. 5:18
7 [h]Gen. 1:26, 27; 5:1; 9:6
8 [i]Gen. 2:21–23
9 [j]Gen. 2:18
11 [k][Gal. 3:28]
15 [l]M omits *to her*
16 [l]1 Tim. 6:4 [m]1 Cor. 7:17
18 [n]1 Cor. 1:10–12; 3:3
19 [o]1 Tim. 4:1 [p][Deut. 13:3] [2]Lit. *manifest, evident*
21 [q]Jude 12
22 [r]1 Cor. 10:32 [s]James 2:6 [3]The poor
23 [t]1 Cor. 15:3 [u]Matt. 26:26–28

■ **11:4 his head covered.** What little evidence that exists seems to indicate that, with few exceptions, men in the first century left their heads uncovered while worshiping. The Jewish custom of men covering their heads at prayer probably does not go back to the New Testament period.

dishonors his head. Probably a reference to Christ as the head (v. 7). Neither the Bible nor other documents explain why such a practice would dishonor Christ (cf. v. 10 note).

■ **11:5 with her head uncovered.** Given the contrast with the previous verse, this comment suggests that women in the first century normally worshiped with a head covering. Some scholars think that Paul refers to a particular hair style (in Num. 5:18, loosening a woman's hair is part of the test for an unfaithful wife). See note on v. 15.

the same as if her head were shaved. In v. 6, shaving a woman's head is compared to having the hair cut short, presumably like a man's. It appears then that Paul is opposing a practice that tended to obliterate the distinction between the sexes. Possibly, the controversy reflects the idea of some Corinthians that they had achieved perfection and were no longer subject to the normal rules (Introduction: Date and Occasion).

■ **11:7 woman is the glory of man.** See "The Image of God" at Gen. 1:27.

■ **11:9 woman for the man.** See "Body and Soul, Male and Female" at Gen. 2:7.

■ **11:10 because of the angels.** Many interpretations of this phrase have been suggested, but they are all speculative. Paul's argument is closely tied to a specific historical situation, and we should be cautious about applying all its details universally (vv. 4, 16 notes).

■ **11:11, 12** These verses appear to be a qualification of the previous comments. With specific reference to our relationship "in the Lord," men and women are mutually dependent, since we are one in Him (Gal. 3:28).

■ **11:14 nature.** Interpreters differ about the meaning of this term. Some believe it refers to the created order. Others argue the apostle is here appealing to the common practices of his day.

■ **11:15 for a covering.** Paul may mean that since the woman's long hair serves as a covering, it is equally appropriate for her to wear a veil. Some argue that the hair is "in place of" a covering. This would support the view that Paul refers not to veils but a particular hair style (v. 5 note).

■ **11:16 we have no such custom.** Paul does not use exactly this kind of argument elsewhere in any of his letters. Such a conclusion to a difficult passage may give some support to the view that the apostle was not prescribing permanent forms of worship, but dealing with questions of cultural appropriateness. To be sure, such questions have theological implications (v. 5 note).

■ **11:17 I do not praise you.** The contrast between these words and v. 2 indicates the seriousness of the problem that Paul now addresses.

■ **11:19 there must also be factions among you.** Paul recognizes that nothing occurs outside the divine will and that God may use human sin to further His own purposes. Or, Paul may be using irony, trying to make the Corinthians see that their infighting has the unworthy motive of seeing who can argue the best.

■ **11:20 not . . . the Lord's Supper.** Their mishandling of this observance has turned it into something quite different from what it should be.

■ **11:21 one is hungry and another is drunk.** Paul's concern here is not with drunkenness as such but with the humiliation of the poor. The Lord's Supper symbolizes, among other things, the unity of God's people (10:17). Those Corinthians who were well-off apparently did not share with the less fortunate among them at the feasts where the Lord's Supper was celebrated. This selfish behavior openly contradicted the meaning of the ceremony.

■ **11:23–25** Paul's account of the institution of the Lord's Supper is in all essentials the same as what is in the Gospels (Matt. 26:26–29; Mark 14:22–25; Luke 22:17–20).

■ **11:23 the Lord Jesus . . . took bread.** See theological note "The Lord's Supper."

and said, [4]"Take, eat; this is My body which is [5]broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me."
[25] In the same manner *He* also *took* the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink *it,* in remembrance of Me."
[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death [v]till He comes.

24 [4]NU omits *Take, eat* [5]NU omits *broken*
26 [v]John 14:3
27 [w][John 6:51] [6]NU, M *the blood*
28 [x]2 Cor. 13:5
29 [7]NU omits *in an unworthy manner*

Examine Yourself

[27] Therefore whoever eats [w]this bread or drinks *this* cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and [6]blood of the Lord. [28] But [x]let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. [29] For he who eats and drinks [7]in an unworthy manner

The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is an act of worship taking the form of a ceremonial meal, in which Christ's servants share bread and wine to commemorate Christ's death and to celebrate the new covenant relationship they enjoy with God.

> Our Lord Jesus, in the night wherein He was betrayed, instituted the sacrament of His body and blood, called the Lord's Supper, to be observed in His church, unto the end of the world, for the perpetual remembrance of the sacrifice of Himself in His death; the sealing of all benefits thereof unto true believers, their spiritual nourishment and growth in Him, their further engagement in and to all duties which they owe unto Him; and, to be a bond and pledge of their communion with Him, and with each other, as members of His mystical body (*Westminster Confession* 29.1).

The biblical passages dealing with the Supper, on which the above statement is based, are found in Matt. 26:26–29; Mark 14:22–25; Luke 22:17–20; and 1 Cor. 10:16–21; 11:17–34. Jesus' sermon (John 6:35–58) about Himself as the bread of life, and the need to feed on Him by eating His flesh and drinking His blood, was preached before the Supper was instituted, and is better understood as being about what the Supper signifies, communion with Christ by faith, than about the Supper itself.

At the time of the Reformation, questions about the nature of Christ's presence in the Supper and the relation of the Supper to His atoning death were centers of stormy controversy. The Roman Catholic church teaches that Christ is present by transubstantiation, as defined by the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215. "Transubstantiation" means that the substance of the bread and wine is miraculously transformed into Christ's body and blood. The bread and wine are no longer bread and wine, though they appear to be. Luther's doctrine, later called "consubstantiation," was that Christ's body and blood are present "in, with, and under" the form of the bread and wine, which in itself remains bread and wine. The Eastern Orthodox churches and some Anglicans have a similar belief. Zwingli denied that the glorified Christ, now in heaven, is present in any way that such words as "bodily," "physically," or "locally" might suggest. Calvin taught that while the bread and wine remained unchanged, the Spirit raises the believer through faith to enjoy the presence of Christ in a way that is glorious and real, though indescribable.

All the Reformers insisted that at the table we give thanks to Christ for a finished and accepted work of atonement. They denounced the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Mass because in it the sacrifice of the cross was said to be repeated, renewed, or presented again in a way that obscured its sufficiency.

The Lord's Supper has a *past* reference to Christ's death. It has a *present* reference to our corporate participation in Him through faith. It has a *future* reference in that it is a pledge of His return. It encourages the faithful in their daily walk and in their expectation. This service of worship in which Christians remember the suffering that Christ endured for them is a distinctive mark of the Christian religion all over the world. □

■ **11:26 you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.** Note the connection between preaching the gospel and celebrating the Lord's Supper. The Supper sets forth God's Word through visible rather than verbal means. Note also that celebrating the Supper gives expression to our sure hope of the Lord's return.

■ **11:27–34** It is important to take this whole section together as a unit, and vv. 33, 34 make plain Paul still has in mind the abuses mentioned in vv. 21, 22. Phrases such as "in an unworthy manner" (v. 27) and "let a man examine himself" (v. 28) can be extended and applied to many circumstances, but we should be careful not to wrench them from their context. In particular, it would be a misreading of v. 30 to think that God routinely brings illness and death to Christians who, in spite of their spiritual failings, partake of the Supper. The problem in Corinth was much more

eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the [8]Lord's body. 30 For this reason many *are* weak and sick among you, and many [9]sleep. 31 For [y]if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. 32 But when we are judged, [z]we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.

33 Therefore, my brethren, when you [a]come together to eat, wait for one another. 34 But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together for judgment. And the rest I will set in order when I come.

Spiritual Gifts: Unity in Diversity

12 Now [a]concerning spiritual *gifts,* brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant: 2 You know [b]that[1] you were Gentiles, carried away to these [c]dumb[2] idols, however you were led. 3 Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus [3]accursed, and [d]no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.

4 [e]There are [4]diversities of gifts, but [f]the same Spirit. 5 [g]There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. 6 And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God [h]who works [5]all in all. 7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit *of all:* 8 for to one is given [i]the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another [j]the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, 9 [k]to another faith by the same Spirit, to another [l]gifts of healings by [6]the same Spirit, 10 [m]to another the working of miracles, to another [n]prophecy, to another [o]discerning of spirits, to another [p]*different* kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. 11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, [q]distributing to each one individually [r]as He wills.

Unity and Diversity in One Body

12 For [s]as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, [t]so also *is* Christ. 13 For [u]by one Spirit we were all baptized into one

10 [m]Mark 16:17 [n]Rom. 12:6 [o]1 John 4:1 [p]Acts 2:4–11 **11** [q]Rom. 12:6 [r][John 3:8] **12** [s]Rom. 12:4, 5 [t][Gal. 3:16] **13** [u][Rom. 6:5]

29 [8]NU omits *Lord's*

30 [9]Are dead

31 [y][1 John 1:9]

32 [z]Ps. 94:12

33 [a]1 Cor. 14:26

CHAPTER 12

1 [a]1 Cor. 12:4; 14:1, 37

2 [b]Eph. 2:11 [c]Ps. 115:5 [1]NU, M *that when* [2]*mute, silent*

3 [d]Matt. 16:17 [3]Gr. *anathema*

4 [e]Rom. 12:3–8 [f]Eph. 4:4 [4]*allotments* or *various kinds*

5 [g]Rom. 12:6

6 [h]1 Cor. 15:28 [5]*all things in*

8 [i]1 Cor. 2:6, 7 [j]Rom. 15:14

9 [k]2 Cor. 4:13 [l]Mark 3:15; 16:18 [6]NU *one*

specific and serious. Some of the Corinthians were tearing apart the unity of the Christian body represented by the one loaf (10:17). The warning in v. 29 about "discerning the Lord's body" almost surely refers to this failure to maintain the unity of the church as the body of Christ (see text note; 12:12 note). Because some of the believers in Corinth were celebrating the Supper in a way that destroyed the unity it represents, God had brought judgment upon the community. God's purpose in judging these believers, however, was to prevent them from being "condemned with the world" (v. 32).

■ **12:1 Now concerning spiritual gifts.** See "Gifts and Ministries" at Eph. 4:7.

■ **12:2, 3** As an introduction to the subject of spiritual gifts in Corinth, Paul reminds his readers of the contrast between their pagan and Christian experience. It is not clear whether anyone was actually uttering curses against Jesus (the statement may be only an illustration), but the focus of v. 3 is on the content of religious speech. In view of 14:6–19, we may infer that the apostle is anticipating his argument for understandable speech. Pagans too may have experienced miraculous speech, but what really matters is what is said.

■ **12:4 diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.** Apparently, the Corinthians exaggerated the importance of the gift of tongues, so Paul must remind them that one and the same Spirit distributes a variety of gifts to His people. The added references to "the same Lord" (v. 5) and "the same God" (v. 6) reflect the importance of the doctrine of the Trinity for Paul; they also support his concern for unity within diversity.

■ **12:7 for the profit of all.** We completely misunderstand the purpose of the Spirit's gifts (here called a "manifestation") if we use them for selfish reasons. Because there are different needs in the Christian community, different gifts are required.

■ **12:8–10** This list of gifts is not intended as a complete catalog (others are included in v. 28); possibly it reflects gifts that were especially evident in Corinth. We need not assume that all of the gifts were manifested in every church. The list in Rom. 12:6–8, for example, includes only two of the gifts mentioned here (prophesying and faith) and omits those that might be thought of as miraculous, such as healing and tongues. In determining the character of some of the gifts listed here, we are hindered by the absence of descriptions of them anywhere in the New Testament. "The word of wisdom" may have been an ability to resolve difficult spiritual problems and "the word of knowledge" a special revelation of some sort, but we cannot be certain. Similarly, it is not clear why Paul lists separately the gifts of "faith," "healings," and "working of miracles." The reference to "discerning of spirits" perhaps should be understood in the light of 14:29. Our inability to determine the precise function of some of these gifts is not an obstacle to understanding the thrust of this passage, which aims not at giving detailed instruction about them but rather at emphasizing the variety of God's endowments to His church (v. 11).

■ **12:10 different kinds of tongues.** The proper description of this gift has generated much debate. According to one view, it refers to some kind of ecstatic speech, possibly related to "the tongues . . . of angels" mentioned in 13:1. On the other hand, the New Testament gives explicit and unequivocal evidence that the Holy Spirit granted to the early Christians the ability to speak in foreign, human languages (Acts 2:4–11). Though objections can be raised against this view as well (14:2 note), it can at least be supported by biblical precedent.

■ **12:11 as He wills.** This brief clause sets the preceding list of gifts in the proper perspective. Whether an individual or a church possesses a particular gift is not for us to decide. It is the Spirit who sovereignly provides for the people of God. That factor may explain why no New Testament passage gives a complete catalog of gifts or a precise definition of them, since they may vary significantly according to God's plans in changing situations. A church may appropriately pray for God to grant gifts to meet its needs, but such prayers must be offered in submission to His sovereign will and perfect wisdom.

■ **12:12 the body is one.** See "The Church" at Eph. 2:19. The description of Christ's church as a body is one of the most distinctive and significant teachings of Paul (1:13 note). Indeed, the apostle tells us that he was given a special revelation concerning this "mystery," which was hidden for many ages; namely, that God's people, both Jews and Gentiles, are now constituted one body by virtue of Christ's exaltation (Eph. 1:22, 23; 3:2–6). Both the existence and the growth of the church derive from this unity established by Christ through the Spirit (Eph. 4:3–6, 11–16; Col. 2:19; 3:14, 15).

■ **12:13 all baptized . . . into one Spirit.** The emphasis on the word "all" and the allusion to the sacraments recalls the similar description of

13 [v]Col. 3:11 [w][John 7:37–39] [7]NU omits *into*

18 [x]1 Cor. 12:28 [y]Rom. 12:3

25 [8]*division*

27 [z]Rom. 12:5 [a]Eph. 5:30

28 [b]Eph. 4:11 [c][Eph. 2:20; 3:5] [d]Acts 13:1 [e]1 Cor. 12:10, 29 [f]1 Cor. 12:9, 30 [g]Num. 11:17 [h]Rom. 12:8

31 [i]1 Cor. 14:1, 39 [9]NU *greater*

CHAPTER 13

2 [a]1 Cor. 12:8–10, 28; 14:1 [b]Matt. 17:20; 21:21

3 [c]Matt. 6:1, 2 [f]NU *so I may boast*

4 [d]Prov. 10:12; 17:9 [e]Eph. 4:32 [f]Gal. 5:26 [2]*arrogant*

5 [g]1 Cor. 10:24 [3]*keeps no accounts of evil*

body—[v]whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and [w]have all been made to drink [7]into one Spirit. 14 For in fact the body is not one member but many.

15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? 17 If the whole body *were* an eye, where *would be* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *would be* the smelling? 18 But now [x]God has set the members, each one of them, in the body [y]just as He pleased. 19 And if they *were* all one member, where *would* the body *be?*

20 But now indeed *there are* many members, yet one body. 21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." 22 No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. 23 And those *members* of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable *parts* have greater modesty, 24 but our presentable *parts* have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that *part* which lacks it, 25 that there should be no [8]schism in the body, but *that* the members should have the same care for one another. 26 And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with *it;* or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with *it.*

27 Now [z]you are the body of Christ, and [a]members individually. 28 And [b]God has appointed these in the church: first [c]apostles, second [d]prophets, third teachers, after that [e]miracles, then [f]gifts of healings, [g]helps, [h]administrations, varieties of tongues. 29 *Are* all apostles? *Are* all prophets? *Are* all teachers? *Are* all workers of miracles? 30 Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? 31 But [i]earnestly desire the [9]best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.

The Greatest Gift

13 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. 2 And though I have *the gift of* [a]prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, [b]so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 And [c]though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor,* and though I give my body [f]to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.

4 [d]Love suffers long *and* is [e]kind; love [f]does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not [2]puffed up; 5 does not behave rudely, [g]does not seek its own, is not provoked, [3]thinks no evil;

the Israelites in 10:2–4 (notes). One of the truths signified and sealed by water baptism is the baptism of the Holy Spirit that incorporates believers into the one body of Christ. Baptism replaces circumcision as the sign of admission into God's covenant (Col. 2:11–14). Similarly, partaking of the Lord's Supper signifies our continued communion with Christ and His church (10:17; 11:29 note).

■ **12:14–20** Having established the unity of Christ's church, Paul sets forth its diversity. Some scholars have commented that the Corinthians' most fundamental problem was not their rejection of the church's unity, but rather their failure to acknowledge its diversity. Paul corrects their error through a comparison with the human body. He appeals to the sovereign will of God, who "has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased" (v. 18; cf. v. 11). If the Corinthians denied the validity of certain gifts, they were really questioning God's authority to distribute the gifts. Paul stresses unity, but not a uniformity that squelches valid forms of diversity.

■ **12:22, 23 weaker . . . less honorable.** This comparison manifests the problem that has occupied Paul throughout most of the letter, namely, a sense of spiritual superiority among some of the Corinthians and their consequent disdain for those who appear to be "weaker" and "less honorable." Their devaluing of certain gifts (possibly in favor of the gift of tongues) is Paul's concern here.

■ **12:27 members individually.** See "The Local Church" at Rev. 2:1.

■ **12:28** See "Gifts and Ministries" at Eph. 4:7. The items in this verse are different from those in vv. 8–10— confirmation that Paul is not interested in giving a complete list. Here Paul begins with "apostles" and "prophets," whom he considers the foundation (Eph. 2:20), and adds as a third category "teachers," so that this listing is similar to that in Eph. 4:11. Though the Greek words for "helps" and "administrations" do not occur elsewhere in the New Testament, Paul probably has in mind the gifts of one who "shows mercy" or "leads" (Rom. 12:8).

■ **12:29, 30** These rhetorical questions bring to a climax Paul's argument that we should not expect everyone to have the same gifts, since God has apportioned them as He wills (vv. 11, 18). Also see "The Apostles" at Acts 1:26.

■ **12:31 desire the best gifts.** The meaning of this sentence is disputed. Some believe it refers to the more important gifts in v. 28 (especially prophecy, 14:1); others argue that it introduces the discussion of love in ch. 13. Most likely, Paul is anticipating what he will say later about gifts "for the edification of the church" (14:12), i.e., speaking "words with my understanding, that I may teach others" (14:19).

a more excellent way. Before explaining what the "best gifts" are, as he will in ch. 14, Paul must point out what is the essential condition for the proper exercise of any gift—love.

■ **13:1–3** Using intentional exaggeration, Paul emphasizes the uselessness of gifts exercised without love. The expression "tongues of men" probably refers to the gift of speaking in foreign languages (Acts 2:4–11), while the addition "and of angels" may be a deliberate exaggeration (similarly with "understand all mysteries" and "remove mountains"). Whether the Corinthians claimed to use angelic speech is impossible to determine (12:10 note). The expression "give my body to be burned" may also be a dramatic overstatement.

■ **13:4–7** Paul personifies love as a person who acts in the ways Christians should imitate. The total picture suggests a description of Christ Himself. Considering the kinds of problems this epistle addresses, these verses are a rebuke to the Corinthians, who were failing to conduct themselves with love.

■ **13:5 thinks no evil.** Paul may mean that those who love do not devise evil against others. More likely he means that those who love do not focus their attention on the wrongs that others do to them (see text note).

6 [h]does not rejoice in iniquity, but [i]rejoices in the truth; 7 [j]bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

8 Love never fails. But whether *there are* prophecies, they will fail; whether *there are* tongues, they will cease; whether *there is* knowledge, it will vanish away. 9 [k]For we know in part and we prophesy in part. 10 But when that which is [4]perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.

11 When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. 12 For [l]now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then [m]face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

13 And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these *is* love.

Prophecy and Tongues

14 Pursue love, and [a]desire spiritual *gifts,* [b]but especially that you may prophesy. 2 For he who [c]speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands *him;* however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries. 3 But he who prophesies speaks [d]edification and

6 [h]Rom. 1:32 [i]2 John 4
7 [j]Gal. 6:2
9 [k]1 Cor. 8:2; 13:12
10 [4]*complete*
12 [l]Phil. 3:12 [m][1 John 3:2]

CHAPTER 14

1 [a]1 Cor. 12:31; 14:39 [b]Num. 11:25, 29
2 [c]Acts 2:4; 10:46
3 [d]Rom. 14:19; 15:2

■ **13:7 all.** Paul uses this word four times for rhetorical effect as he brings his description of love to a climax.

■ **13:8 Love never fails.** One could view this statement as a summary of the previous verse, especially in the light of the comment that love "endures all things." At the same time, the statement allows Paul to build a contrast between love, which always remains (v. 13), and the spiritual gifts, which will cease.

prophecies . . . tongues . . . knowledge. It is likely that Paul mentions these three items as representative of all the spiritual gifts, which have a temporary, earthly function until the end of the age. Others suggest that Paul mentions these three in particular because they have a revelatory function that came to an end with the completion of the New Testament canon (v. 10 note).

■ **13:10 perfect.** The context (especially v. 12) suggests strongly that Paul here is referring to the Second Coming of Christ as the final event in God's plan of redemption and revelation. In comparison with what we will receive then, the present blessings are only partial and thus imperfect. It is therefore a sign of immaturity for the Corinthians to treat the temporary, incomplete gifts of the Spirit as having ultimate significance. According to another view, Paul may be referring to the "complete" (see text note) revelation contained in the New Testament Scriptures, which make prophecy and other revelatory gifts obsolete. Still other interpretations have been suggested, such as the maturity in love that the Corinthians should aim for, the maturing of the early church, or the death of the individual Christian.

■ **13:12 I shall know just as I also am known.** Perhaps because the Corinthians liked to boast of their knowledge (8:1 note), Paul concludes by stressing the partial character of all present knowledge. The shift from the active ("know") to the passive ("am known") is found elsewhere in the apostle's letters and serves to emphasize dependence on God's grace (8:3; Gal. 4:9). Here the focus is on the intimacy and immediacy of God's knowing, which we will share someday.

■ **13:13 the greatest . . . is love.** See theological note "Love."

■ **14:1 especially that you may prophesy.** Having set the discussion within the proper framework of love, Paul now encourages the Corinthians to recognize the value of the spiritual gifts. Because the Corinthians have exaggerated the importance of the gift of tongues, however, the emphasis of ch. 14 is on the understandable gifts (v. 19)—primarily prophecy, but also the interpretation of tongues (vv. 27, 28).

■ **14:2 does not speak to men but to God . . . speaks mysteries.** This verse (cf. v. 14) describes the gift of tongues in a way that seems inconsistent with the gift of speaking in foreign languages mentioned in Acts 2:4–11 (although some believe that the miracle on Pentecost was a miracle of hearing). Accordingly, many argue that Paul is dealing with something different—a kind of ecstatic speech used for intimate prayer (Rom. 8:26). However, the word translated "tongue" is the normal Greek term for "language." Secondly, Paul's use of the term "mystery" is to indicate a divine truth not yet disclosed; it does not have the meaning of the English word "mysterious" (2:7 note). Thirdly, vv. 10, 11, as well as v. 21, support the idea that even here Paul is speaking of human languages (12:8–10 note).

in the spirit. That is, as opposed to speaking with his mind (vv. 13–15); even the speaker does not understand what he is saying. But this phrase should probably be translated "in the Spirit," to stress the divine inspiration involved in uttering a mystery.

A More Excellent Way (13:1–13)

Love is...	Without Love...	Love is Greater Than...
Patient, kind, unselfish, truthful, hopeful, enduring (vv. 4–7) Not envious, proud, self-centered, rude, or provoked to anger (vv. 4, 5)	Tongues are mere noise (v. 1) Prophecy, mysteries, knowledge, and faith amount to nothing (v. 2) Good deeds are unprofitable (v. 3)	Prophecies, which will fail (v. 8) Tongues, which will cease (v. 8) Knowledge, which will vanish (v. 8)

Love is one of the dynamic terms Paul uses to speak of the holy life enabled by the fullness of the Holy Spirit. It encompasses motive and deed. Love is characteristic of the mature believer.

3 [e]1 Tim. 4:13
5 [f]NU *and*
6 [f]1 Cor. 14:26; Eph. 1:17
10 [2]*meaning*
11 [3]Lit. *barbarian*
12 [4]*eager* [5]*building up*
13 [g]1 Cor. 12:10
15 [h]Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16 [i]Ps. 47:7
16 [j]Deut. 27:15–26; 1 Chr. 16:36; Neh. 5:13; 8:6; Ps. 106:48; Jer. 11:5; 28:6; 1 Cor. 11:24; Rev. 5:14; 7:12

[e]exhortation and comfort to men. [4] He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. [5] I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; [f]for he who prophesies *is* greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification.

Tongues Must Be Interpreted

[6] But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you unless I speak to you either by [f]revelation, by knowledge, by prophesying, or by teaching? [7] Even things without life, whether flute or harp, when they make a sound, unless they make a distinction in the sounds, how will it be known what is piped or played? [8] For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare for battle? [9] So likewise you, unless you utter by the tongue words easy to understand, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air. [10] There are, it may be, so many kinds of languages in the world, and none of them *is* without [2]significance. [11] Therefore, if I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be a [3]foreigner to him who speaks, and he who speaks *will be* a foreigner to me. [12] Even so you, since you are [4]zealous for spiritual *gifts, let it be* for the [5]edification of the church *that* you seek to excel.

[13] Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may [g]interpret. [14] For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. [15] What is *the conclusion* then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. [h]I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing [i]with the understanding. [16] Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit, how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say "Amen" [j]at your giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you say? [17] For you indeed give thanks well, but the other is not edified.

Love

New Testament Christianity is the human response to the revelation of the Creator as the God of love. Out of love for those who did not love, the Father gave the Son, the Son gave His life, and the Father and Son together have sent the Spirit, to save sinners from misery and lead them into glory. Believing in and being overwhelmed by this amazing reality of divine love sustains the love for God and neighbor that the two great commandments require (Matt. 22:35–40). Our love expresses our gratitude for God's gracious love to us, and imitates it as a model (Eph. 4:32–5:2; 1 John 3:16).

The indispensable mark of Christian life is Christian love. The measure and test of love to God is whole-hearted obedience (John 14:15, 21, 23; 1 John 5:3); the measure and test of love to our neighbors is laying down our lives for them (1 John 3:16; *cf.* John 15:12, 13). This sacrificial love involves giving, spending, and impoverishing ourselves for their well-being. Jesus' story of the Samaritan's kindness to a traditional enemy is His model definition of how to love one's neighbor (Luke 10:25–37).

Christian love is described in 1 Corinthians 13. Its total lack of self-concern is breathtaking. It seeks the neighbor's good, and its true measure is how much it gives to that end. Love is a principle of action rather than of emotion. It is a matter of doing things for people out of compassion for them, whether or not we feel personal affection for them. It is by their active love to one another that Jesus' disciples can be recognized (John 13:34, 35). □

■ **14:4 edifies himself.** Those speaking in an uninterpreted language were encouraged and comforted, despite their not understanding the message.

■ **14:6 what shall I profit you.** This principle of benefiting others by edifying them becomes the key point of the passage. Paul is applying the teaching of 12:7 that God has granted a variety of gifts "for the profit of all."

■ **14:7, 8** These verses illustrate the principle mentioned in v. 6. Musical instruments convey nothing to those who listen unless they are played with intelligent purpose.

■ **14:13 pray that he may interpret.** Without minimizing the significance of the gift of tongues, Paul encourages the Corinthians to use it in a way that makes it valuable for the congregation.

■ **14:14 my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful.** Whatever spiritual benefit he might receive from the experience, his understanding is not built up. In the next verse, Paul emphasizes that he would rather have both benefits.

■ **14:16 say "Amen" at your giving of thanks.** The members of the congregation, if they are to participate in public worship, must be able to agree with the message of the hymns being sung and the prayers being offered. The custom of expressing their approval with an audible "Amen" ("So it is!") cannot be followed if no one understands what has been said.

18 I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all; 19 yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue.

Tongues a Sign to Unbelievers

20 Brethren, [k]do not be children in understanding; however, in malice [l]be babes, but in understanding be mature.

21 [m]In the law it is written:

> [n]"*With men of other tongues and other lips*
> *I will speak to this people;*
> *And yet, for all that, they will not hear Me,*"

says the Lord.

22 Therefore tongues are for a [o]sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe. 23 Therefore if the whole church comes together in one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in *those who are* uninformed or unbelievers, [p]will they not say that you are [6]out of your mind? 24 But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all. 25 [7]And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on *his* face, he will worship God and report [q]that God is truly among you.

Order in Church Meetings

26 How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, [r]has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. [s]Let all things be done for [8]edification. 27 If anyone speaks in a tongue, *let there be* two or at the most three, *each* in turn, and let one interpret. 28 But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God. 29 Let two or three prophets speak, and [t]let the others judge. 30 But if *anything* is revealed to another who sits by, [u]let the first keep silent. 31 For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged. 32 And [v]the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. 33 For God is not *the author* of [9]confusion but of peace, [w]as in all the churches of the saints.

34 [x]Let [l]your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but *they are* to be submissive, as the [y]law also says. 35 And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church.

36 Or did the word of God come *originally* from you? Or *was it* you only that it reached? 37 [z]If

20 [k]Ps. 131:2; [Matt. 11:25; 18:3; 19:14]; Rom. 16:19; 1 Cor. 3:1; Eph. 4:14; Heb. 5:12, 13 [l][Matt. 18:3; 1 Pet. 2:2]

21 [m]John 10:34; 1 Cor. 14:34 [n]Is. 28:11, 12

22 [o]Mark 16:17

23 [p]Acts 2:13 [6]*insane*

25 [q]Is. 45:14; Dan. 2:47; Zech. 8:23; Acts 4:13 [7]NU omits *And thus*

26 [r]1 Cor. 12:8–10; 14:6 [s]1 Cor. 12:7; [2 Cor. 12:19] [8]*building up*

29 [t]1 Cor. 12:10

30 [u][1 Thess. 5:19, 20]

32 [v]1 John 4:1

33 [w]1 Cor. 11:16 [9]*disorder*

34 [x]1 Tim. 2:11; 1 Pet. 3:1 [y]Gen. 3:16 [l]NU omits *your*

37 [z]2 Cor. 10:7; [1 John 4:6]

■ **14:18, 19** It may be that some of the Corinthians justified their emphasis on the gift of tongues by arguing that Paul himself exercised this gift. Without denying the fact, the apostle puts the gift in proper perspective by pointing out how much more valuable is doing something that "may teach others."

■ **14:20–25** Up to this point, Paul has been discussing the use of tongues among believers. But what about unbelievers who hear the tongues? The Corinthians have ignored them, and Paul admonishes the church for this display of spiritual immaturity. He appeals to "the law," (the Old Testament) to show that God uses unintelligible speech as a sign of judgment. Is. 28:11 explains how God judged the Israelites through Assyrians speaking a foreign language. If non-Christians come to the worship and hear an unintelligible language, they will be repelled (v. 23) and reject the gospel. In this situation uninterpreted tongues are a sign of judgment "to unbelievers" (v. 22). But the Corinthians should aim at bringing unbelievers to repentance and to the recognition that God is present (v. 25). Because God uses the understandable words of prophecy to accomplish this purpose, prophecy is a sign "for those who believe"; it is evidence of God's goodness to them (v. 22).

■ **14:26 for edification.** See note on v. 6; "God's Pattern for Worship" at 1 Chr. 16:29.

■ **14:27 let one interpret.** This concern for understanding has informed the whole discussion (v. 1 note). Paul's instructions in this verse and the following demonstrate that those who spoke in tongues controlled their utterance, although they may not have understood it.

■ **14:29–33** Having given instructions for the proper exercise of the gift of tongues, Paul moves on to other directives that also affect the order of public worship. Since he had emphasized the importance of prophecy, he points out that even this gift should be exercised in an orderly fashion—"Let two or three prophets speak" (during the course of, or perhaps at various points in, the service), while "the others" who have the gift of prophecy should evaluate the message to ascertain that it is not false. Apparently the Corinthians were speaking in tongues and prophesying without regard for each other or for the content of the message (12:2, 3 note). Their disorder was a threat to the unity of the body and was incompatible with the God "of peace" (v. 33).

■ **14:34, 35** These verses have created debate among Christians, at least partly because it is not known what problem exactly Paul was seeking to correct. It has even been proposed that these verses were not part of Paul's original letter. In view of 11:5 and other New Testament passages, it is certain that Paul is not absolutely forbidding women to speak in every church situation. Paul may have been addressing a particular problem in Corinth, such as women creating disorder during the worship service. He may have in mind a specific function, such as the evaluation of prophecy (vv. 29, 32), in which women should not participate. It has been suggested that vv. 34, 35 are a quotation from the Corinthians themselves that Paul rejects in v. 36.

■ **14:36** These sarcastic questions show that Paul is not giving general instructions for worship. Rather, he is addressing serious problems arising out of the Corinthians' boastful arrogance.

anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord. 38 But [2]if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant.

39 Therefore, brethren, [a]desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues. 40 [b]Let all things be done decently and in order.

38 [2]NU *if anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized.*
39 [a]1 Cor. 12:31
40 [b]1 Cor. 14:33

The Risen Christ, Faith's Reality

CHAPTER 15

15 Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel [a]which I preached to you, which also you received and [b]in which you stand, 2 [c]by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—unless [d]you believed in vain.

3 For [e]I delivered to you first of all that [f]which I also received: that Christ died for our sins [g]according to the Scriptures, 4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day [h]according to the Scriptures, 5 [i]and that He was seen by [j]Cephas, then [k]by the twelve. 6 After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have [2]fallen asleep. 7 After that He was seen by James, then [k]by all the apostles. 8 [l]Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.

9 For I am [m]the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because

1 [a][Gal. 1:11] [b][Rom. 5:2; 11:20]
2 [c]Rom. 1:16 [d]Gal. 3:4
3 [e]1 Cor. 11:2, 23 [f][Gal. 1:12] [g]Ps. 22:15
4 [h]Ps. 16:9–11; 68:18; 110:1
5 [i]Luke 24:34 [j]Matt. 28:17 [k]Peter
6 [2]Died
7 [k]Acts 1:3, 4
8 [l][Acts 9:3–8; 22:6–11; 26:12–18]
9 [m]Eph. 3:8

■ **14:38 is ignorant, let him be ignorant.** See note on 13:12 for the contrast between knowing and being known. The present verse may be a warning that those who are stubborn will be disciplined by Paul or by the church (2 Thess. 3:14), but the language suggests that they will come under direct divine judgment.

■ **14:39, 40** These verses are a concise summary of ch. 14.

■ **15:1** With this verse, Paul shifts to a new topic of great concern to him—the integrity of the gospel message as it focuses on the doctrine of the Resurrection.

■ **15:2 if you hold fast.** See note on 9:27.

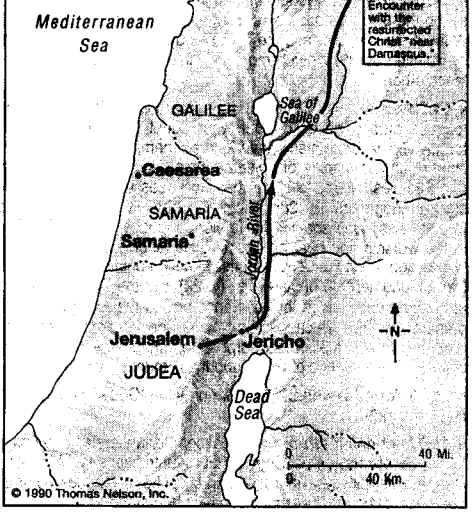
believed in vain. Denying the resurrection of Christ makes our faith useless (v. 14).

■ **15:3–5** These verses give the essence not only of Paul's preaching but of the early church's teaching as a whole ("that which I also received"): Christ's vicarious death and His resurrection as the fulfillment of the Old Testament message.

■ **15:5–8** The fourfold repetition of "He was seen" indicates Paul's emphasis in this passage—the eyewitness proof that Christ was raised from the dead. Most of those who witnessed the resurrection appearances were still living at the time Paul wrote this letter, so it was possible for anyone to check the facts. Particularly significant is the reference to "over five hundred brethren at once," for it shows that the appearances cannot be explained away as mere personal hallucinations.

■ **15:7 James.** This is not John's brother, the apostle executed by Herod Agrippa (Acts 12:2), but the half brother of Jesus (John 7:5; Acts 12:17; 15:13; Gal. 1:19).

■ **15:8 as by one born out of due time.** This self-deprecating remark may be an ironic criticism of the Corinthians who held Paul in low esteem (2:1 note). What the apostle means is suggested by the phrase "last of all." The appearances of the risen Lord had ceased, and Paul was a persecutor of the church when he received his calling to be an apostle (Gal. 1:13, 23; Phil. 3:6; 1 Tim. 1:13–16). Although Paul had not been with Jesus during His earthly ministry, he was granted the privilege of seeing Jesus risen from the dead, and was commissioned as an apostle with a special ministry to the Gentiles (Acts 9:3–5, 15; Gal. 1:15, 16). What Paul says strongly suggests that the apostolic office was a unique, foundational gift to the church (Eph. 2:20).



Paul on the Road to Damascus. Armed with letters from the high priest, Saul set out from Jerusalem to Damascus in order to persecute Christians. As he approached Damascus, he was confronted by the resurrected Jesus in a blinding encounter (Acts 9:1–9). Saul who had "persecuted the church of God" (1 Cor. 15:9) became Paul who now preached convincingly that Jesus was the Messiah.

[n]I persecuted the church of God. 10 But [o]by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, [p]yet not I, but the grace of God *which was* with me. 11 Therefore, whether *it was* I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

The Risen Christ, Our Hope

12 Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13 But if there is no resurrection of the dead, [q]then Christ is not risen. 14 And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching *is* empty and your faith *is* also empty. 15 Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because [r]we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. 16 For if *the* dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. 17 And if Christ is not risen, your faith *is* futile; [s]you are still in your sins! 18 Then also those who have [3]fallen [t]asleep in Christ have perished. 19 [u]If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.

The Last Enemy Destroyed

20 But now [v]Christ is risen from the dead, *and* has become [w]the firstfruits of those who have [4]fallen asleep. 21 For [x]since by man *came* death, [y]by Man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall [z]be made alive. 23 But [a]each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those *who are* Christ's at His coming. 24 Then *comes* the end, when He delivers [b]the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. 25 For He must reign [c]till He has put all enemies under His feet. 26 [d]The last enemy *that* will be destroyed *is* death. 27 For [e]*"He has put all things under His feet."* But when He says "all things are put under *Him*," *it is* evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. 28 [f]Now when all things are made subject to Him, then [g]the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.

Effects of Denying the Resurrection

29 Otherwise, what will they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead do not rise at all? Why then are they baptized for the dead? 30 And [h]why do we stand in [5]jeopardy every hour?

9 [n]Acts 8:3
10 [o]Eph. 3:7, 8 [p]Phil. 2:13
13 [q][1 Thess. 4:14]
15 [r]Acts 2:24
17 [s][Rom. 4:25]
18 [t]Job 14:12 [3]Died
19 [u]2 Tim. 3:12
20 [v]1 Pet. 1:3 [w]Acts 26:23 [4]Died
21 [x]Rom. 5:12; 6:23 [y]John 11:25
22 [z][John 5:28, 29]
23 [a][1 Thess. 4:15–17]
24 [b][Dan. 2:44; 7:14, 27]
25 [c]Ps. 110:1
26 [d][2 Tim. 1:10]
27 [e]Ps. 8:6
28 [f][Phil. 3:21] [g]1 Cor. 3:23; 11:3; 12:6
30 [h]2 Cor. 11:26 [5]*danger*

■ **15:10 the grace of God.** Having freely admitted the abnormal and undeserving character of his experience, Paul moves on to stress that his past life is no reason to reject his message. Where sin abounds, God's effectual grace abounds all the more (Rom. 5:20); where we are weak, God's grace is strong (2 Cor. 12:9, 10). Divine grace did not make Paul lazy, but caused him to labor "more abundantly" than anyone else.

■ **15:12 there is no resurrection.** Paul finally addresses the problem that needs correction. Some of the Corinthians, perhaps without denying that Jesus had been raised, were questioning the doctrine of the resurrection because of their unbiblical understanding of the human body (v. 35 note). Paul needed to show them that the resurrection of Jesus cannot be separated from the resurrection of those who are His (vv. 20–23). If their resurrection is not true, neither is His. But to deny, even by implication, that Jesus' body was raised from the tomb destroys the message of the gospel.

■ **15:14 our preaching is empty and your faith is also.** Cf. v. 17. The truth of the Christian message is tied to the historical reality of Christ's death and exaltation. The apostle cannot conceive of his message having any spiritual value if its historical foundation does not exist.

■ **15:19 we are . . . most pitiable.** Though Paul would not deny that in the spiritual sense Christians enjoy a better present life than non-Christians, this verse emphasizes the greatness of what God has promised for the life to come. Our hope of salvation is so glorious that if we were still in our sins and lost (vv. 17, 18), we would have experienced the greatest and cruelest of all deceptions (vv. 31, 32).

■ **15:20 the firstfruits.** At harvesttime the Israelites were required to bring an offering from the first part of the crop (Lev. 23:10). This offering was a token of the whole harvest, that all belonged to God. Jesus is called the "firstfruits" because His resurrection and the resurrection of believers are closely related events. Jesus was "the first to rise from the dead" (Acts 26:23), rising as our representative. His resurrection caused us to be raised spiritually (Rom. 6:4; Eph. 2:6), and at the same time guarantees that we will be raised bodily. Another use of the metaphor is found in Rom. 8:23 (cf. also 2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:14).

■ **15:21** This passage succinctly states one of Paul's most profound teachings—our twofold solidarity with the first man, Adam, and with the last man, Christ. By virtue of our humanity, we are united with Adam in our present natural existence, in sin, and in death; by virtue of our faith, we are united with Christ in spiritual existence, in righteousness, and in the life to come (vv. 45–49; Rom. 5:17–19). See theological note "Resurrection and Glorification."

■ **15:22 in Adam all die.** See "The Fall" at Gen. 3:6.

■ **15:24–28** See "Jesus' Heavenly Reign" at Acts 7:55. Although Paul's argument in this section is difficult in its details, its thrust is clear and powerful. The Corinthians must understand that the Resurrection is not an isolated event with limited repercussions. It is rather an integrating and culminating event in God's sovereign rule over history. Redemption is not complete "till He has put all enemies under His feet" (v. 25, a clear reference to Ps. 110:1), and since death is "the last enemy" (v. 26), Christ's work is not done until death is destroyed. Paul's statement that the Son "will also be subject" to the Father (v. 28) does not mean that the Son is inferior in dignity and being. Rather, in His messianic work the Son subjects Himself to the will of the Father "when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father" (v. 24). The climax of Christ's submissive, messianic work is this total conquest over His enemies, "that God may be all in all," when His absolute rule is universally acknowledged.

■ **15:29 baptized for the dead.** Apparently some in Corinth were being baptized on behalf of others who had already died. This practice is not mentioned elsewhere in the Bible or in other ancient writings. Numerous explanations of the practice have been proposed, all of them speculative and none persuasive. Paul mentions the rite only to show the logical inconsistency of his opponents' position.

31 [h]1 Thess. 2:19 [i]Rom. 8:36
32 [k]2 Cor. 1:8 [l]Is. 22:13; 56:12
33 [m][1 Cor. 5:6]
34 [n]Rom. 13:11 [o][1 Thess. 4:5] [p]1 Cor. 6:5
35 [q]Ezek. 37:3
36 [r]John 12:24

31 I affirm, by [h]the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, [i]I die daily. 32 If, in the manner of men, [k]I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage *is it* to me? If *the* dead do not rise, [l]*"Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!"*

33 Do not be deceived: [m]"Evil company corrupts good habits." 34 [n]Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; [o]for some do not have the knowledge of God. [p]I speak *this* to your shame.

A Glorious Body

35 But someone will say, [q]"How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?" 36 Foolish one, [r]what you sow is not made alive unless it dies. 37 And what you sow, you do not

Resurrection and Glorification

Jesus was the first to be raised from the dead to a glorified existence no longer subject to death as the punishment for sin (Acts 26:23). When He returns to this world He will raise His servants to a resurrection life like His own (1 Cor. 15:20–23; 2 Cor. 5:1–5; Phil. 3:20–21). He will, indeed, raise the whole human race from the dead, but those who are not His will be raised for condemnation (John 5:29) and subject to the "second death" for their sins (Rev. 2:11; 21:8). Christians alive at His coming will at that instant undergo a marvelous transformation (1 Cor. 15:50–54).

There is a continuity between the mortal and the immortal body. Jesus was raised in the same body in which He died. Paul compares the mortal body and the resurrection body to a seed and the plant that grows from it (1 Cor. 15:35–44). While there is continuity, there is discontinuity as well. Our present bodies, like Adam's, are natural and earthly, subject to weakness and death. The resurrection body, like Christ's, will be spiritual, created and sustained by the Holy Spirit, and will belong to the eternal, imperishable, heavenly order (1 Cor. 15:45–54).

After His resurrection, Jesus' disciples could recognize Him despite the differences in His new body. In the same way, Christians will recognize one another, and there will be joyful reunions when the separations caused by death are ended. This is apparent from 1 Thess. 4:13–18. In this passage Paul assured those who were grieving that they would see their Christian loved ones again.

Glorification is the work of transformation that removes all sin from us and makes us fit to be with God in perfect communion (1 Cor. 13:12). The saints will worship and serve God with a nature made whole and a heart set free. Our desire to be with God and enjoy His love will be fulfilled in the presence of the triune God (Job 19:26; Matt. 5:8; Rev. 22:3, 4).

Paul's description in Rom. 8:30 of the process whereby God saves His elect concludes with a striking past tense: "He also glorified" those who were saved. Literally, glorification is still in the future for everyone other than Jesus Himself. Paul's thought apparently is that our glorification has already been decided by God as part of His sovereign plan and can be spoken of as absolutely certain. □

■ **15:32 beasts.** Probably a reference to Paul's enemies in Ephesus (where this letter was written) who wanted to condemn him (cf. "the mouth of the lion," 2 Tim. 4:17 note). The hope of resurrection strengthens Paul to endure severe trials and persecutions (v. 19 note).

■ **15:33 Evil company corrupts good habits.** Derived from a comedy written by the popular Greek author Menander (342–292 B.C.), this proverb was common in the ancient world (note the comparable Jewish saying in 5:6). Those Christians in Corinth with a defective view of the Resurrection not only had been influenced by the bad company they kept, but in their turn they were corrupting others in the congregation.

■ **15:34 some do not have the knowledge of God.** Probably a reference to members of the church who boasted of their knowledge (8:1 note) but whose denial of the Resurrection showed deep ignorance regarding the things of God.

■ **15:35 with what body do they come.** In this verse Paul considers what was apparently the primary objection raised by some of the Corinthians against a bodily resurrection. They were probably influenced by dualism, a pagan philosophy that contrasted the immaterial with the physical and argued that the immaterial was good but the material was evil. Along such lines some of the Christians had developed disdain for the human body, probably distorting their ideas about sexual relationships (6:14 note). They seem to have thought that since body was evil, the doctrine of the Resurrection meant that dishonorable bodies would be raised. Paul regards their position as foolish (v. 36) and gives an extensive discussion of the matter (vv. 36–49).

■ **15:36 unless it dies.** Because God is the creator of the world, the processes of nature reflect in various ways how He works. Nature provides useful metaphors and analogies of the divine work of salvation (Is. 55:10, 11). Jesus uses a seed ("if it dies, it produces much grain") as an illustration of spiritual truth (John 12:24). Here Paul uses the same picture, but to illustrate the striking difference between what is planted and what eventually grows from the seed (v. 37). The same sort of analogy can be found in Plato's dialogue *Symposium*.

sow that body that shall be, but mere grain—perhaps wheat or some other *grain.* 38 But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body.

39 All flesh *is* not the same flesh, but *there is* one *kind* [6]*of* flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish, *and* another of birds.

40 *There are* also [7]celestial bodies and [8]terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial *is* one, and the *glory* of the terrestrial *is* another. 41 *There is* one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for *one* star differs from *another* star in glory.

42 [s]So also *is* the resurrection of the dead. *The body* is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. 43 [t]It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. 44 It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. 45 And so it is written, [u]*"The first man Adam became a living being."* [v]The last Adam *became* [w]a life-giving spirit.

46 However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. 47 [x]The first man *was* of the earth, [y]*made*[9] of dust; the second Man *is* [1]the Lord [z]from heaven. 48 As *was* the [2]*man* of dust, so also *are* those *who are* [2]*made* of dust; [a]and as *is* the heavenly *Man,* so also *are* those *who are* heavenly. 49 And [b]as we have borne the image of the *man* of dust, [c]we[3] shall also bear the image of the heavenly *Man.*

Our Final Victory

50 Now this I say, brethren, that [d]flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a [4]mystery: [e]We shall not all sleep, [f]but we shall all be changed— 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. [g]For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and [h]this mortal *must* put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: [i]*"Death is swallowed up in victory."*

55 *"O*[5] *Death, where is your sting?*
O Hades, where is your victory?"

56 The sting of death *is* sin, and [k]the strength of sin *is* the law. 57 [l]But thanks *be* to God, who gives us [m]the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

39 [6]NU, M omit *of flesh*

40 [7]*heavenly* [8]*earthly*

42 [s][Dan. 12:3]

43 [t][Phil. 3:21]

45 [u]Gen. 2:7 [v][Rom. 5:14] [w]John 5:21; 6:57

47 [x]John 3:31 [y]Gen. 2:7; 3:19 [z]John 3:13 [9]*earthy* [1]NU omits *the Lord*

48 [a]Phil. 3:20 [2]*earthy*

49 [b]Gen. 5:3 [c]Rom. 8:29 [3]M *let us also bear*

50 [d][John 3:3, 5]

51 [e][1 Thess. 4:15] [f][Phil. 3:21] [4]*hidden truth*

52 [g]Matt. 24:31

53 [h]2 Cor. 5:4

54 [i]Is. 25:8

55 [j]Hos. 13:14 [5]NU *O Death, where is your victory? O Death, where is your sting?*

56 [k][Rom. 3:20; 4:15; 7:8]

57 [l][Rom. 7:25] [m][1 John 5:4]

■ **15:38 to each seed its own body.** At this point Paul shifts the illustration to emphasize the variations among different plants. He goes on to apply the idea to living creatures (v. 39) and heavenly bodies (vv. 40, 41).

■ **15:42, 43** Finally the illustration is applied to the human body that dies and is buried, and is transformed in its resurrection. Paul does not suggest that the resurrection body is a different body altogether. Just as a plant arises directly from its seed, so the resurrection body is in essence the same as the body that "is sown." But the apostle's emphasis is on the astounding change that will take place: from "corruption," "dishonor," and "weakness," to "incorruption," "glory," and "power."

■ **15:44 natural body . . . spiritual body.** This last contrast is difficult to understand but of great importance. Paul does not have in mind a contrast between physical and nonphysical, material and immaterial. The resurrection body is a physical body, not an intangible ghost. The apostle has already used the words "natural" and "spiritual" to distinguish the individual who does not have the Holy Spirit from the one who does (2:6, 14 notes). The natural person belongs to the present age (1:20), while the spiritual person is a citizen of heaven (Phil. 3:20). Christians have received the Holy Spirit and are on that account "spiritual." They have not yet received the spiritual "body," the body that will be fully conformed to the life given by the Spirit. See Rom. 8:22–25 and note.

■ **15:45 living being . . . life-giving spirit.** Paul clarifies his meaning by continuing the contrast between the first and the last Adam (vv. 21, 22 note). The Greek word translated "being" (*psyche*) is related to the word translated "natural" in v. 44 (*psychikos*), while the word "spirit" (*pneuma*) corresponds to "spiritual" (*pneumatikos*). The words "life-giving spirit" are most probably a reference to the Holy Spirit. Jesus and the Holy Spirit are not the same Person, but He and the Spirit are identified in terms of their presence and activity in the church. This identity, known to us because Jesus too is life-giving, is the fulfillment of Jesus' role as Messiah and commenced with His resurrection and ascension. To be in Christ is to be in the Spirit also (6:11, 15, 19; 12:19). The association of Christ, the Holy Spirit, and life is apparent in Rom. 8:9–11 and 2 Cor. 3:6, 17, 18.

■ **15:48 of dust . . . heavenly.** Here is a final contrast, suggesting that vv. 42–44 refer to the distinction between earthly and heavenly human bodies. In this context the distinction, however, is not one of substance but of time; the present evil age is contrasted with the coming perfect age. Believers already enjoy some of the blessings of the coming age (10:11 note) but still await its consummation. God's work of redemption will not be complete until the bodily resurrection. We have borne the image of the first Adam, and since we belong to Christ, we are destined to bear the image of the last Adam (v. 49).

■ **15:50 flesh and blood.** This phrase alludes to the weakness of earthly, human existence and is an equivalent to "corruption." Paul is warning the Corinthians that without new bodies of "incorruption" we "cannot inherit the kingdom of God." How then can some deny the doctrine of the Resurrection?

■ **15:51 mystery.** See note on 2:7.

We shall not all sleep. Paul recognizes that many Christians will not die but will be alive at the time of Christ's return. Though these Christians will not be raised from death, they too will be transformed and receive imperishable and immortal bodies (1 Thess. 4:13–18 and notes).

■ **15:54–57** This is one of the most eloquent and powerful passages in Scripture. With paraphrases of Isaiah and Hosea (based on the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament), Paul alludes to his earlier argument in vv. 24–28 and vigorously assures us of the finality of death's destruction on the day of Resurrection. The Day will also mark the destruction of "sin" and "the law." In the letter to the Romans, Paul explains in detail how sin is the venom bringing death to all (Rom. 5:12), and how the law, though itself holy, becomes an instrument through which sin can deceive (Rom. 7:7–12).

58 [n]Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing [o]that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Collection for the Saints

16 Now concerning [a]the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: 2 [b]On the first *day* of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come. 3 And when I come, [c]whomever you approve by *your* letters I will send to bear your gift to Jerusalem. 4 [d]But if it is fitting that I go also, they will go with me.

Personal Plans

5 Now I will come to you [e]when I pass through Macedonia (for I am passing through Macedonia). 6 And it may be that I will remain, or even spend the winter with you, that you may [f]send me on my journey, wherever I go. 7 For I do not wish to see you now on the way; but I hope to stay a while with you, [g]if the Lord permits.

8 But I will tarry in Ephesus until [h]Pentecost. 9 For [i]a great and effective door has opened to me, and *i*there are many adversaries.

10 And [k]if Timothy comes, see that he may be with you without fear; for [l]he does the work of the Lord, as I also *do*. 11 [m]Therefore let no one despise him. But send him on his journey [n]in peace, that he may come to me; for I am waiting for him with the brethren.

12 Now concerning *our* brother [o]Apollos, I strongly urged him to come to you with the brethren, but he was quite unwilling to come at this time; however, he will come when he has a convenient time.

Final Exhortations

13 [p]Watch, [q]stand fast in the faith, be brave, [r]be strong. 14 [s]Let all *that* you *do* be done with love.

15 I urge you, brethren—you know [t]the household of Stephanas, that it is [u]the firstfruits of Achaia, and *that* they have devoted themselves to [v]the ministry of the saints— 16 [w]that you also submit to such, and to everyone who works and [x]labors with *us*.

17 I am glad about the coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, [y]for what was lacking on your part they supplied. 18 [z]For they refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore [a]acknowledge such men.

58 [n]2 Pet. 3:14 [o][1 Cor. 3:8]

CHAPTER 16

1 [a]Gal. 2:10
2 [b]Acts 20:7
3 [c]2 Cor. 3:1; 8:18
4 [d]2 Cor. 8:4, 19
5 [e]2 Cor. 1:15, 16
6 [f]Acts 15:3
7 [g]James 4:15
8 [h]Lev. 23:15–22
9 [i]Acts 14:27 [j]Acts 19:9
10 [k]Acts 19:22 [l]Phil. 2:20
11 [m]1 Tim. 4:12 [n]Acts 15:33
12 [o]1 Cor. 1:12; 3:5
13 [p]Matt. 24:42 [q]Phil. 1:27; 4:1 [r][Eph. 3:16; 6:10]
14 [s][1 Pet. 4:8]
15 [t]1 Cor. 1:16 [u]Rom. 16:5 [v]2 Cor. 8:4
16 [w]Heb. 13:17 [x][Heb. 6:10]
17 [y]2 Cor. 11:9
18 [z]Col. 4:8 [a]Phil. 2:29

■ **15:58 be steadfast.** In the face of false teaching and various temptations, the hope of the Resurrection should encourage the Corinthians to persevere in their faith. The exhortation to be "immovable," however, does not imply inactivity. On the contrary, the Corinthians must be fully active in "the work of the Lord." We can become easily discouraged by thinking that our labor may come to nothing (Gal. 2:2; Phil. 2:16; 1 Thess. 3:5), but we can remember the promise that when God creates the new heavens and new earth His people will enjoy the fruits of their toil, and see that their efforts are never "in vain" (Is. 65:17–25).

■ **16:1 Now concerning the collection.** From 2 Cor. 8:1–4 and Rom. 15:25–27 it appears that one of the purposes of Paul's third missionary journey was to raise an offering from the Gentiles for Jewish Christians in Judea who were in need, possibly as a result of persecution. Apparently, Paul had already told the Corinthians about this project in an earlier letter (5:9). They had asked for more information and perhaps expressed reservations about it (Introduction: Date and Occasion).

for the saints. See 1:2 note.

■ **16:2 On the first day of the week.** The reference is to Sunday, the day on which the resurrected Lord met with His disciples (John 20:19, 26; cf. also "the Lord's Day" in Rev. 1:10). Acts 20:7 indicates that the early Christians met on Sunday "to break bread" (part of their worship), and it would have been appropriate to designate that day for collecting the offering.

■ **16:3 whomever you approve.** This comment possibly reflects doubts on the part of some whether Paul should be given sole responsibility for the money (2:1 note).

■ **16:5–9** These verses make clear that Paul wrote the letter from Ephesus and intended to visit Corinth by way of the northern land route around the Aegean Sea. Both Acts 20:1, 2 and 2 Cor. 2:12, 13 indicate that he carried out this plan. What Paul did not foresee at this time was the prior need to make a short and unpleasant visit to Corinth soon after writing 1 Corinthians (2 Cor. 1:23; 2:1; 13:2; Introduction to 2 Corinthians: Date and Occasion).

■ **16:10 if Timothy comes.** Earlier (4:17), Paul had mentioned that Timothy was coming as his representative (Acts 19:22). Paul wants them to treat his younger coworker with respect.

■ **16:12 Now concerning our brother Apollos.** Apparently, the Corinthians in their letter had asked for Apollos to return to them (Introduction: Date and Occasion; Acts 18:27—19:1). In spite of the improper attitude of the Corinthians (4:6; 4:15 note), Paul honored their request. Apollos was "unwilling" to go at this time, but would come later.

■ **16:15–18** This passage commends "Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus," who probably had carried the letter from the church in Corinth. Paul's emphasis (especially in the words "I urge you, brethren . . . that you also submit") suggests that these men, Stephanas in particular, were appointed leaders but did not enjoy proper respect from the congregation. The phrase "what was lacking on your part" does not necessarily imply a criticism (the Greek at the end of Phil. 2:30 is almost identical), but here it may suggest that the church as a whole failed to refresh his spirit.

Greetings and a Solemn Farewell

19 The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord, [b] with the church that is in their house. 20 All the brethren greet you.

[c] Greet one another with a holy kiss.

21 [d] The salutation with my own hand—Paul's.

22 If anyone [e] does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, [f] let him be [1] accursed. [g] O [2] Lord, come!

23 [h] The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. 24 My love *be* with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.

19 [b] Rom. 16:5
20 [c] Rom. 16:16
21 [d] Col. 4:18

22 [e] Eph. 6:24 [f] Gal. 1:8, 9 [g] Jude 14, 15 [1] Gr. *anathema* [2] Aram. *Marana tha;* possibly *Maran atha, Our Lord has come* 23 [h] Rom. 16:20

■ **16:19 Asia.** Ephesus, where 1 Corinthians was written, was the most important city in the Roman province of Asia, the southwestern part of the Anatolian peninsula, now part of modern Turkey (Acts 19:10).

Aquila and Priscilla. This couple played an important role during Paul's initial visit to Corinth (Acts 18:1–3), so the congregation knew them well.

■ **16:20 holy kiss.** A normal greeting in the early church. Though this practice was not uncommon in Judaism and Roman culture, the word "holy" indicates the added significance such a greeting had among the saints, since it represented the special relationship of brothers and sisters in Christ.

■ **16:21 with my own hand.** The letter up to this point would have been written by a trained scribe (Rom. 16:22), but Paul's custom was to add a few words himself as a personal signature.

■ **16:22 let him be accursed.** These strong words, written in Paul's own hand, assert the apostolic authority behind the whole letter. This is not a curse on unbelievers in general but on those who reject the authority of the letter (Gal. 1:8, 9; 2 Thess. 3:14, 15).

O Lord, come. Paul gives a transliteration of the Aramaic words *Marana tha* (or *Maran atha,* "Our Lord has come"), reflecting the worship of the early church in Palestine.

■ **16:24 My love be with you all.** After a long letter consisting primarily of severe rebukes, these affectionate words come as a surprise. Paul has not forgotten the pastoral needs of his congregation (1:2 note).

The Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the

CORINTHIANS

Author That the apostle Paul was the author of this letter (1:1) is universally acknowledged. It is an intensely personal letter in which Paul gives many details of his movements and associations.

Date and Occasion The most likely date for the epistle is A.D. 55. Paul wrote it after he had left Ephesus (Acts 20:1) but before he arrived again in Corinth (Acts 20:2).

After founding the church at Corinth in A.D. 51–52 (Acts 18:1–18), Paul returned to Antioch, ending his second missionary journey (Acts 18:22). On his third missionary journey Paul traveled to Ephesus and stayed there three years (Acts 19:1–41; 20:31). During his stay at Ephesus, messengers had come from Corinth with questions Paul answered in 1 Corinthians (1 Cor. 16:17, 18). Sometime later, Paul apparently heard of difficulties at Corinth and made a quick voyage by sea from Ephesus to Corinth and back. This visit did not go well and Paul later referred to it as a visit made "in sorrow" (2:1). Though not recorded in Acts, this visit is indirectly attested when Paul writes in 2 Corinthians that he is coming to them for the "third time" (12:14; 13:1). We do not know many details about what made this visit sorrowful, but apparently someone at Corinth had opposed or seriously offended Paul (2:5, 10).

Most commentators think that after the sorrowful visit, Paul wrote the Corinthians a strong letter, commonly called the "severe letter," rebuking them and encouraging them to repent (2:3, 4; 7:8). It seems most likely that the letter referred to in these verses has not been preserved. But some hold that the letter referred to is 1 Corinthians. Others think that the originally separate letter has been preserved as 2 Corinthians 10–13. Paul sent Titus ahead by sea to Corinth, carrying the strong letter, while Paul took the longer land route around through Troas and Macedonia (2:12, 13; 7:5–9, 13–15; Acts 20:1, 2).

Paul did not know how the Corinthians would receive Titus and the strong letter. When he left Ephesus and traveled to Troas he experienced considerable anxiety because of his concern for the Corinthian church (2:13; 7:5). Though there was an opportunity for effective ministry when he reached Troas (2:12), Paul's spirit was still deeply troubled. He left Troas and went on to Philippi in Macedonia, hoping to meet Titus there. When Titus finally arrived (probably at Philippi but perhaps at Thessalonica) Paul was overwhelmed with joy as he heard about the genuine repentance of the Corinthians and their deep affection and loyalty to Paul (7:6–15).

Paul then wrote 2 Corinthians from Macedonia to express thanksgiving for the repentance and renewed obedience of the Corinthian church (7:5–16). He also wrote to encourage them to complete their collection for the poor Christians in Jerusalem (chs. 8; 9). Moreover, Paul shows concern throughout the epistle to defend his ministry against the accusations of "false apostles" (11:13) at Corinth who were challenging Paul's authority and the integrity of his ministry (chs. 10—13; also 3:1–6; 7:2).

Finally, Paul arrived in Corinth and stayed for three months (Acts 20:2, 3) before departing for Jerusalem with the collection that had been sent from many churches for the Christians there (Acts 20:3—21:17).

Characteristics and Themes Second Corinthians is a personal letter, filled with expressions of deep emotion. As such, it affords us extraordinary insight into the gospel ministry as carried out by Paul. Two chief themes reveal the nature of Paul's apostolic ministry. In chs. 1—7 it is a service of divine comfort and encouragement in the midst of suffering and troubles (1:3–7; 7:4, 7, 13), and in chs. 10—13 it is an experience of God's strength manifested in human weakness (12:9, 10).

Supporting themes include the blameless nature of Paul's conduct (1:12, 17, 18; 6:3–10; 7:2, 3), his frequent suffering for the sake of the church and for God's glory (1:5–11; 4:8–12; 6:4–10; 11:23—12:9), his strong love for all his churches, especially the Corinthian church (2:4; 11:2, 7–11; 12:14, 15), his apostolic authority to build them up and defeat any opposition (2:9; 10:8; 13:8–10), and the frequent emphasis that Paul judges not according to worldly standards but according to the invisible spiritual realm known to the eyes of faith (1:12). Other distinctive emphases are the glory of the ministry of the new covenant (ch. 3) and the principles of Christian stewardship (chs. 8; 9).

Interpretive Difficulties Even though the authorship of 2 Corinthians is not disputed, many question the unity of the letter, most frequently proposing that chs. 10—13 should be considered a separate letter written on a different occasion and only later appended to chs. 1—9. The basic support for this argument is that Paul's tone and attitude toward the church at Corinth seems so positive and encouraging in chs. 1—9, but so severe and threatening in chs. 10—13. Could both sec-

tions have been written on the same occasion to the same church?

Certainly there is a change of tone at 10:1. But this can be accounted for by the change of subject matter. In the first part of the letter, Paul was primarily concerned to share his joy and thanksgiving at the repentance of the Corinthians. He also wanted to give an extensive and positive description of his own ministry. Having done that, he then appealed to them to complete the collection for the Jerusalem Christians (chs. 8, 9). Finally, leaving the most distasteful task until last, he took up the problem of the false apostles and their accusations against him (chs. 10—13). In light of the circumstances, a change in tone is understandable. From the earliest times in the history of the church there has been no indication of division in this letter, either in the manuscript tradition or in the early historical writings of the church. It has always been read and understood as one letter. This still seems the best solution. □

Outline of 2 Corinthians

I. Salutation (1:1, 2)
II. An Explanation of Paul's Ministry (1:3—7:16)
  A. Thanksgiving for God's Comfort (1:3–11)
  B. Paul's Change of Plans Explained (1:12—2:4)
  C. Paul's Forgiveness of a Penitent Sinner (2:5–11)
  D. Paul's Journey to Troas and Macedonia (2:12, 13)
  E. Excellence of the Gospel Ministry (2:14—7:4)
    1. A Triumphal Procession and a Fragrant Aroma (2:14–17)
    2. A Living Letter of Recommendation (3:1–3)
    3. A New Covenant of Unfading Glory (3:4—4:6)
    4. A Glorious Ministry Carried in Earthen Vessels (4:7—5:10)
    5. A Ministry of Reconciliation (5:11—6:13)
    6. A Plea for Separation from Evil (6:14—7:4)
  F. Paul's Joy at the Coming of Titus (7:5–16)
III. The Collection for Christians in Jerusalem (chs. 8, 9)
  A. The Example of Macedonia (8:1–7)
  B. The Example of Jesus (8:8, 9)
  C. A Reasonable and Fair Plea for Giving (8:10—9:15)
IV. Defense Against the False Apostles (10:1—13:10)
  A. Paul's True Spiritual Power (10:1–12)
  B. Paul's "Boasting" (10:13—12:21)
    1. Definition of Proper Boasting (10:13—11:21)
    2. Boasting of Suffering and Weakness (11:22–33)
    3. Boasting of a Vision of Heaven (12:1–10)
    4. Paul's Care for the Corinthians (12:11–21)
  C. Warning: Paul Will Come with the Lord's Power (13:1–10)
V. Final Greeting and Benediction (13:11–14)

CHAPTER 1

1 [a]2 Tim. 1:1 [b]1 Cor. 16:10 [c]Col. 1:2

2 [d]Rom. 1:7

3 [e]1 Pet. 1:3

4 [f]Is. 51:12; 66:13 [1]*tribulation*

5 [g]2 Cor. 4:10 [2]*comfort*

6 [h]2 Cor. 4:15; 12:15

7 [i][Rom. 8:17]

8 [j]Acts 19:23 [3]*tribulation*

9 [k]Jer. 17:5, 7

10 [l][2 Pet. 2:9] [4]NU *shall*

Greeting

PAUL, [a]an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and [b]Timothy *our* brother,

To the church of God which is at Corinth, [c]with all the saints who are in all Achaia:

2 [d]Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Comfort in Suffering

3 [e]Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who [f]comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any [1]trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. 5 For as [g]the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our [2]consolation also abounds through Christ. 6 Now if we are afflicted, [h]*it is* for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation. 7 And our hope for you *is* steadfast, because we know that [i]as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also *you will partake* of the consolation.

Delivered from Suffering

8 For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of [j]our [3]trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. 9 Yes, we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should [k]not trust in ourselves but in God who raises the dead, 10 [l]who delivered us from so great a death, and [4]does deliver us; in whom we

■ **1:1 apostle.** Paul describes himself as "apostle," but not his associate (also 1 Cor. 1:1; Col. 1:1). An apostle was an eyewitness of the Resurrection (Acts 1:22; 1 Cor. 15:8) who had been personally appointed by Christ (Matt. 10:1–7; Acts 1:24–26; Gal. 1:1) to govern the early church (1 Thess. 4:8; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14), and to teach or write with authority (1 Cor. 14:37; 1 Thess. 2:13; 4:15; 2 Pet. 3:15, 16). The term is used as a title of the twelve disciples and Paul. It is also used in a broader sense (Rom. 16:7), while in general or nontechnical use it means a "messenger" or "representative" (8:23; Phil. 2:25).

by the will of God. It is God's sovereign choice that ultimately places people in church offices and ministries. The apostolic office was extraordinary and temporary, and did not continue when there were no surviving eyewitnesses of the Resurrection, and when the canon of Scripture was complete. The ordinary offices continue to be necessary, and are filled by elders (Acts 20:28) and others whose gifts equip them for ministries (1 Cor. 12:7, 11, 28). Calls to the ordinary offices are confirmed by the people of God as the church discerns who has received the gifts and qualifications for the work (Eph. 4:11).

saints. A term commonly used by Paul to refer to all Christians (Rom. 15:25; Phil. 1:1).

in all Achaia. Though the letter was intended primarily for the church at Corinth, Paul apparently realized that it would be read by neighboring churches in the region of Achaia, the southern part of modern Greece. On Corinth, see Acts 18:1 note.

■ **1:2 Grace.** Grace is God's undeserved favor—not just in initial forgiveness of sins, but in the ordinary events of everyday life as well.

peace. The outward blessing of social order and the inward blessing of a good relationship with God (Rom. 5:1; 1 Tim. 2:2).

God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. It is evidence of the deity of Christ that He with the Father should be mentioned equally as the origin of grace and peace for the Corinthian church.

■ **1:3 Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.** The three Persons of the Trinity are equally divine, yet they are one God, not three. As the names Father, Son, and Holy Spirit suggest, certain roles and activities correspond more closely to one Person than another. For example, the role of the Father is to initiate and direct.

Father of mercies and God of all comfort. A key theme of chs. 1—9. All consolation and encouragement in the world has its origin in God Himself.

■ **1:4 that we may be able to comfort.** God has a sovereign purpose both in our troubles and in the comfort that He gives us in them. If we have experienced God's comfort in suffering, we may be able to support others whose sufferings are like ours.

■ **1:5 sufferings of Christ abound in us.** Not that we can add anything to Christ's suffering for us (Is. 53:11; John 19:30; Heb. 9:26–28), but God has called us to suffer for Christ and so to follow in Christ's steps (Rom. 8:17; Col. 1:24; Heb. 12:2, 3; 1 Pet. 2:21). Because believers are united to Christ and are spiritually part of His body, both our sufferings for the gospel and the comfort God provides in Christ are a result of our participation in Him (Phil. 3:10, 11). Here Paul hints at a persistent feature of his teaching. The key experiences of Christ, especially His suffering, death, and resurrection, are the pattern by which Christians can understand their own suffering and final triumph.

■ **1:6** Paul sees God's sovereign hand and redemptive purpose in everything that happens to him, whether distress or comfort.

■ **1:7 partakers of the sufferings.** Behind this verse lies Paul's teaching that all believers, as members of one body of Christ, are joined together so that every dimension of life in Christ is shared among them (1 Cor. 12:26). The more fully this reality influences the attitudes and actions of believers toward each other, the more fully they experience satisfying fellowship through Christ with one another.

■ **1:8 our.** In this letter Paul normally uses the editorial plural "we" or "our" to refer to himself alone.

trouble which came to us in Asia. Apparently he refers to some hardship, persecution, illness, or injury that he suffered since he last saw his readers. These hardships would have occurred either in Ephesus or between Ephesus and Macedonia, although they are not mentioned in the summary statement of Acts 20:1.

■ **1:9 we had the sentence of death.** Paul was convinced that God had decided it was time for him to die.

we should not trust in ourselves. God's purpose in our afflictions often is to drive us to this conclusion.

who raises the dead. The resurrection of the dead is a revelation of God's unsurpassable power (Eph. 1:20).

trust that He will still deliver *us,* [11] you also [m]helping together in prayer for us, that thanks may be given by many persons on [5]our behalf [n]for the gift *granted* to us through many.

Paul's Sincerity

[12] For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in [6]simplicity and [o]godly sincerity, [p]not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you. [13] For we are not writing any other things to you than what you read or understand. Now I trust you will understand, even to the end [14] (as also you have understood us in part), [q]that we are your boast as [r]you also *are* ours, in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Sparing the Church

[15] And in this confidence [s]I intended to come to you before, that you might have [t]a second benefit— [16] to pass by way of you to Macedonia, [u]to come again from Macedonia to you, and be helped by you on my way to Judea. [17] Therefore, when I was planning this, did I do it lightly? Or the things I plan, do I plan [v]according to the flesh, that with me there should be Yes, Yes, and No, No? [18] But *as* God *is* [w]faithful, our [7]word to you was not Yes and No. [19] For [x]the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us—by me, [y]Silvanus, and [z]Timothy—was not Yes and No, [a]but in Him was Yes. [20] [b]For all the promises of God in Him *are* Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us. [21] Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and [c]has anointed us *is* God, [22] who [d]also has sealed us and [e]given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

[23] Moreover [f]I call God as witness against my soul, [g]that to spare you I came no more to Corinth. [24] Not [h]that we [8]have dominion over your faith, but are fellow workers for your joy; for [i]by faith you stand.

11 [m]Rom. 15:30 [n]2 Cor. 4:15; 9:11 [5]M *your behalf*

12 [o]2 Cor. 2:17 [p][1 Cor. 2:4] [6]The opposite of duplicity

14 [q]2 Cor. 5:12 [r]Phil. 2:16

15 [s]1 Cor. 4:19 [t]Rom. 1:11; 15:29

16 [u]1 Cor. 16:3–6

17 [v]2 Cor. 10:2; 11:18

18 [w]1 John 5:20 [7]*message*

19 [x]Mark 1:1 [y]1 Pet. 5:12 [z]2 Cor. 1:1 [a][Heb. 13:8]

20 [b][Rom. 15:8, 9]

21 [c][1 John 2:20, 27]

22 [d][Eph. 4:30] [e][Eph. 1:14]

23 [f]Gal. 1:20 [g]1 Cor. 4:21

24 [h][1 Pet. 5:3] [i]Rom. 11:20 [8]*rule*

■ **1:11 helping together in prayer.** Prayer has real results. God has ordained His relationship to the world in such a way that He will respond to our prayers, and even Paul needed the prayers of others.

thanks may be given. These thanks go to God because He delivered Paul from death (v. 10). One of God's purposes in answering prayer is that we will praise Him for it.

■ **1:12 boasting.** Paul boasts not in his own ability, but in having a clear conscience and morally upright conduct. Paul's simplicity and godly sincerity are not the result of following the conventional wisdom of the world, but depend on "the grace of God." When Paul boasts he takes no credit for himself. It is the triumph of God's grace in him.

fleshly wisdom. In this verse Paul introduces his denial of the charge that he had worldly motives for changing his plans to visit Corinth. Distinguishing divine wisdom (expressed in the cross of Christ) from "fleshly" wisdom was a problem for some Corinthian believers. Worldly wisdom led to divisions in the church (1 Cor. 1:10—4:7), and by the standards of such wisdom Paul was not acceptable as an apostle (10:2–6).

■ **1:13** Paul reminds the Corinthians that his writings, like his ministry, are not dishonest or tricky, full of hidden meanings and concealed aims, as perhaps some of his opponents at Corinth had claimed. Paul's writings were clear enough. In the same way all Scripture is written not mainly for scholars but for all believers. It is understandable to those who will read it, seeking God's help in understanding and being willing to obey it (Deut. 6:6, 7; Ps. 19:7; 119:130; Matt. 12:3, 5; 19:14; 21:42; Col. 4:16).

■ **1:14 we are your boast.** They should be proud of what God has done for them in Paul.

the day of the Lord Jesus. The day of Christ's return.

■ **1:15 a second benefit.** Another translation is, "have double grace." Paul knows that his visits impart God's grace to churches.

■ **1:17 according to the flesh.** Such plans would be unreliable, vacillating, and unpredictable. Opponents were discrediting the apostle by charging that his change in plans showed weakness of character and lack of integrity. They did not have all the facts, however, and were using these circumstances to attack someone they had already condemned.

■ **1:18 as God is faithful.** Paul calls on God's faithfulness as the pattern and guarantee for his own faithfulness.

word. See text note. Paul reminds them that his gospel message was absolutely reliable and led to their salvation.

■ **1:19** The absolute truthfulness and reliability of God's words in Christ are the standard that Paul follows in his own speech. This is consistent with Paul's general pattern of deriving moral absolutes from the moral character of God.

■ **1:20 in Him are Yes.** Christ fulfills all the promises of God to us, and all our confidence in God's promises must come from our trust in Jesus Christ as a person whom we know and can rely on.

■ **1:21, 22 Christ . . . God . . . Spirit.** This Trinitarian passage points to the roles of all three divine Persons in salvation.

■ **1:21 He . . . establishes us.** The ability to persevere, that is, to continue in the Christian life, is not from ourselves; it is a gift from God. God continues to give this ability to all who are born again (Phil. 1:6; 1 Pet. 1:5). Those who are guarded by God in this way continue to trust in Christ throughout their lives (13:5; Col. 1:23; Heb. 3:14), because God protects them through the faith He gives them (v. 24).

anointed. To "anoint" literally is to pour oil on the head, often as a sign of divine calling and empowerment (1 Sam. 2:10; 16:13 and notes). Paul reminds us that just as God anointed Jesus for a particular service and ministry, so He has anointed us for our ministries, not with oil, but with the power of the Holy Spirit (1 John 2:20, 27).

■ **1:22 sealed us.** An official seal indicated authority or ownership and guaranteed protection (Esth. 8:8; Dan. 6:17; Matt. 27:66; Rev. 7:3). God has sealed us, not with a physical seal of wax, but with the Holy Spirit in our hearts (Eph. 1:13; 4:30). This inward work takes place in a person once, at the time of first becoming a Christian.

guarantee. The Greek word means a deposit or down payment that is part of the total and that guarantees the whole payment will be made. The Holy Spirit is the guarantee of the complete salvation yet to be realized (5:5; Rom. 8:23; Eph. 1:14). We already have heavenly life within us, before we reach heaven (1 Cor. 3:16; Col. 1:27).

■ **1:23 God as witness against my soul.** Paul uses a solemn oath to persuade the Corinthians of his truthfulness. He says in effect, "If I am not telling the truth, I ask God to take my life."

CHAPTER 2

1 [a]2 Cor. 1:23

2 [b]2 Cor. 7:8

3 [c]2 Cor. 12:21 [d]Gal. 5:10

4 [e][2 Cor. 2:9; 7:8, 12] [f]*tribulation*

5 [f][1 Cor. 5:1] [g]Gal. 4:12

6 [h]1 Cor. 5:4, 5

7 [i]Gal. 6:1

9 [j]2 Cor. 7:15; 10:6

10 [2]NU *indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, I did it for your sakes*

12 [k]Acts 16:8 [l]1 Cor. 16:9 [3]Opportunity

13 [m]2 Cor. 7:6, 13; 8:6

14 [4]*manifests*

15 [n][1 Cor. 1:18] [o][2 Cor. 4:3]

16 [p]Luke 2:34

2 But I determined this within myself, [a]that I would not come again to you in sorrow. 2 For if I make you [b]sorrowful, then who is he who makes me glad but the one who is made sorrowful by me?

Forgive the Offender

3 And I wrote this very thing to you, lest, when I came, [c]I should have sorrow over those from whom I ought to have joy, [d]having confidence in you all that my joy is *the joy* of you all. 4 For out of much [f]affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you, with many tears, [e]not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love which I have so abundantly for you.

5 But [f]if anyone has caused grief, he has not [g]grieved me, but all of you to some extent—not to be too severe. 6 This punishment which *was inflicted* [h]by the majority *is* sufficient for such a man, 7 [i]so that, on the contrary, you *ought* rather to forgive and comfort *him,* lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow. 8 Therefore I urge you to reaffirm *your* love to him. 9 For to this end I also wrote, that I might put you to the test, whether you are [j]obedient in all things. 10 Now whom you forgive anything, I also *forgive.* For [2]if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ, 11 lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.

Triumph in Christ

12 Furthermore, [k]when I came to Troas to *preach* Christ's gospel, and [l]a [3]door was opened to me by the Lord, 13 [m]I had no rest in my spirit, because I did not find Titus my brother; but taking my leave of them, I departed for Macedonia.

14 Now thanks *be* to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us [4]diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. 15 For we are to God the fragrance of Christ [n]among those who are being saved and [o]among those who are perishing. 16 [p]To the one *we are*

to spare you. Paul would come with the Lord's authority and power on his next visit (10:3, 4; 13:2–4, 10), and he wanted to give them a chance to repent. This was the reason he changed his plans and did not come back to Corinth before going to Macedonia. It was not worldly vacillation or cowardice, as some were saying.

■ **2:1 in sorrow.** See Introduction: Date and Occasion.

■ **2:3 I wrote this very thing.** After the sorrowful visit (v. 1), Paul wrote a letter of rebuke to the Corinthian church, sending it by the hand of Titus (2:13; 7:6, 7, 13, 14).

■ **2:4 not . . . be grieved.** Paul's purpose in writing the unpleasant letter was not simply to make the Corinthians sorrowful. He was seeking their best interests, even when that meant bringing pain both to them and to him.

■ **2:5 if anyone has caused grief.** This could be a reference to the man living with his father's wife (1 Cor. 5:1–8), but that is doubtful because the offense seems to be something directed against Paul himself (vv. 5, 10).

■ **2:6 punishment . . . inflicted by the majority.** Apparently after Paul had left Corinth, or at least after Titus had come with the unpleasant letter, the Corinthians had exercised church discipline against the offender (cf. Matt. 18:15–20).

■ **2:7** The purpose of church discipline is to restore, not to destroy or take revenge (10:8).

■ **2:10** Paul will accept the judgment of the Corinthian congregation on this matter.

in the presence of Christ. A common theme in this epistle. All our actions are carried out not in secrecy but in the presence of Christ, the Lord of the church. If both Paul and Christ have forgiven the offender, the Corinthians should as well (cf. Matt. 16:19; John 20:23).

■ **2:11 lest Satan should take advantage.** Satan will win a victory if we either neglect church discipline entirely, or if we attend to it but remain harsh and unforgiving when there has been a change of heart.

■ **2:12 Troas.** A city in far northwest Asia Minor (now Turkey), across the Aegean Sea from Greece. Paul sailed from here to Philippi. It was in Troas that Paul had seen a vision of a man from Macedonia imploring him to come and help (Acts 16:8).

a door was opened to me. God provided opportunities for preaching the gospel.

■ **2:13 I had no rest in my spirit.** Paul had hoped that Titus would meet him at Troas and report that the letter of rebuke had been well received. When Titus failed to appear, Paul was deeply troubled.

taking my leave of them. A great opportunity for effective ministry did not make Paul turn aside from his prior commitment to care for the Corinthian church and straighten out its problems. Paul continued to feel a deep concern for all his churches (11:28, 29).

for Macedonia. Paul went first to Philippi, then perhaps to Thessalonica or Berea before Titus came. Acts 16:8—18:1 describes the previous journey of Paul along this route. At this point the narrative of his relationship with the Corinthian church is interrupted until 7:5, and Paul inserts an extensive digression on the nature of the new covenant ministry in which he is engaged.

■ **2:14 who always leads us in triumph.** Paul's narrative suddenly shifts from the visible reality of his anxiety for the Corinthians and his disappointment at not finding Titus in Troas, to the spiritual realm. Paul sees himself as part of God's triumphal procession into the heavenly city, much like a victory parade that an ancient general would lead upon returning to his own city with vanquished captives following behind the chariots. But here Paul—God's former enemy—is a joyful captive and one who participates in the blessings of the King's victory. We too have such a participation in the spiritual realm, marching in the victory procession of our great King, as the forces of the enemy crumble before His advance. Despite setbacks like Paul's at Troas, the eyes of faith can see the unrelenting progress of the kingdom of God.

■ **2:15 we are to God the fragrance of Christ.** That we are a sweet aroma to God means that He delights in us and in our lives. This is the more real and final fulfillment of the Old Testament sacrifices that were a sweet aroma to God (Lev. 1:17).

■ **2:16** Figuratively speaking there is a pleasant fragrance, spiritually perceived, about true Christians. On the other hand, this fragrance is an "aroma of death" to unbelievers, for it warns them that they are unprepared for the day of judgment (Phil. 1:28).

sufficient for these things. Carrying a message of eternal life or death is a sobering responsibility. No one is worthy of this solemn task, but God qualifies us for it nonetheless (3:6).

the aroma of death *leading* to death, and to the other the aroma of life *leading* to life. And [q]who *is* sufficient for these things? 17 For we are not, as [s]so many, [r]peddling[6] the word of God; but as [s]of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ.

Christ's Epistle

3 Do [a]we begin again to commend ourselves? Or do we need, as some *others,* [b]epistles of commendation to you or *letters* of commendation from you? 2 [c]You are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; 3 clearly *you are* an epistle of Christ, [d]ministered by us, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not [e]on tablets of stone but [f]on tablets of flesh, *that is,* of the heart.

The Spirit, Not the Letter

4 And we have such trust through Christ toward God. 5 [g]Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as *being* from ourselves, but [h]our sufficiency *is* from God, 6 who also made us sufficient as [i]ministers of [j]the new covenant, not [k]of the letter but of the [l]Spirit; for [i]the letter kills, [m]but the Spirit gives life.

Glory of the New Covenant

7 But if [n]the ministry of death, [o]written *and* engraved on stones, was glorious, [p]so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which *glory* was passing away, 8 how will [q]the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious? 9 For if the ministry of condemnation *had* glory, the ministry [r]of righteousness exceeds much more in glory. 10 For even what was made glorious had no glory in this respect, because of the glory that excels. 11 For if what is passing away *was* glorious, what remains *is* much more glorious.

16 [q][1 Cor. 15:10]

17 [r]2 Pet. 2:3 [s]2 Cor. 1:12 [5]M *the rest* [6]*adulterating for gain*

CHAPTER 3

1 [a]2 Cor. 5:12; 10:12, 18; 12:11 [b]Acts 18:27

2 [c]1 Cor. 9:2

3 [d]1 Cor. 3:5 [e]Ex. 24:12; 31:18; 32:15 [f]Ps. 40:8

5 [g][John 15:5] [h]1 Cor. 15:10

6 [i]1 Cor. 3:5 [j]Jer. 31:31 [k]Rom. 2:27 [l]Gal. 3:10 [m]John 6:63 [l]Or *spirit*

7 [n]Rom. 7:10 [o]Ex. 34:1 [p]Ex. 34:29

8 [q][Gal. 3:5]

9 [r][Rom. 1:17; 3:21]

■ **2:17 not, as so many.** It is tragic that then and now many preach the gospel or teach Christianity as no more than a means of earning a living. Paul's goal was not personal benefit or financial reward, but the glory of God.

in the sight of God. All Paul's ministry was carried out in the sight of God, providing him a strong motive for keeping his conscience clear (1:12; Acts 23:1; 1 Tim. 1:5; 2 Tim. 1:3).

■ **3:1** Both questions in this verse expect the answer "no." Paul does not reject letters of commendation generally (Acts 15:25, 26; 18:27; 1 Cor. 16:10, 11), but apparently Paul's opponents had brought some misleading letters of commendation to the church at Corinth, letters that the bearers were not worthy of. Paul shows that his letter is far better, because it consists of the lives of the Corinthian believers (v. 2).

■ **3:2 written in our hearts.** The Corinthians have a fixed place in his affections. Some manuscripts read "in your hearts." On this reading, Paul is telling the Corinthians that as a church they are an effective letter of recommendation for him (2:17; 1 Cor. 9:2).

■ **3:3 epistle of Christ, ministered by us.** The Corinthian church was a work of God's grace, but in this work Paul and his co-workers had been God's instruments.

tablets of stone. The Ten Commandments.

tablets of flesh . . . of the heart. Paul's point is twofold. First, the "letter," which the Corinthians are, is superior to the pen-and-ink letters of his opponents as well as the stone tablets of the law. Second, Paul presents the fruits of his apostleship as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. As predicted in Jer. 31:33 and Ezek. 11:19; 36:26, in the new covenant God writes His laws on the hearts of His people, giving them a new desire and ability to obey Him. The law that is written in the heart is the unchanging and pure law of God, that is, His absolute moral standard.

■ **3:4—6:13** After explaining his change of plans about visiting the Corinthians, Paul describes what true ministry is. It means being ministers of a glorious new covenant (3:4—4:6), trusting God in the midst of troubles (4:7—5:10), and speaking the message of reconciliation (5:11—6:13). Paul insists throughout the rest of the letter that faithfulness to these tasks—not eloquence, deep philosophical thought, or worldly standards of personal excellence—is the basis of a valid ministry.

■ **3:4 such trust.** Paul is confident before God that his ministry is authentic and that the Corinthians are "letters of commendation" testifying to it. Paul's confidence is not in himself, but "through Christ."

■ **3:5 sufficient.** Paul answers the question of 2:16 ("who is sufficient for these things?"). Earlier he had disavowed any dependence on merely human ability (1 Cor. 2:1–5). Unfortunately, Paul's opponents valued worldly ability more than the sufficiency that comes from God alone.

our sufficiency is from God. A major theme of 2 Corinthians. All ability and power in ministry comes from God, not from ourselves.

■ **3:6 new covenant.** The new legal relationship that God established with His people through Jesus Christ, His life, death, resurrection, and ascension.

the letter. The written law by itself, which demands perfect obedience but gives no power to obey.

the Spirit gives life. This is new life in Christ. In it the Holy Spirit writes God's law on our hearts (Jer. 31:31–34; Heb. 8:8–12; 9:13, 14), giving love for God's moral standards and power to obey them (Rom. 8:4; 1 Cor. 7:19). Saying that life is "not of the letter," Paul does not imply that there was no spiritual life whatever under the old covenant. He means that the written law, which was characteristic of the old covenant, did not by itself produce life in the believing community. The Holy Spirit, whose powerful, life-giving ministry is characteristic of the new covenant, does bring new life in much greater measure than under the old covenant.

■ **3:7 the ministry of death.** The written words of the Old Testament law by themselves condemned people who did not obey, without giving them life.

could not look steadily at the face of Moses. The old covenant was not without glory, even though it was written on stone (Ex. 34:29–35).

■ **3:8 more glorious.** The new covenant is more powerful, beautiful, and inward.

■ **3:9 ministry of righteousness.** Righteousness is given in justification, the gracious legal declaration that begins the Christian life. It continues in sanctification, the progressive growth of a believer in righteous thoughts, words, and deeds. Sanctification takes place by grace through faith, but it also requires study, prayer, and conscious effort.

■ **3:11 what is passing away.** The old covenant (Heb. 8:13).

12 [s]Eph. 6:19
13 [t]Ex. 34:33–35 [u][Gal. 3:23]
14 [v]Acts 28:26
16 [w]Rom. 11:23 [x]Is. 25:7
17 [y][1 Cor. 15:45] [z]Gal. 5:1, 13
18 [a]1 Cor. 13:12 [b][2 Cor. 4:4, 6] [c][Rom. 8:29, 30] [2]Or *from the Lord, the Spirit*

CHAPTER 4

1 [a]1 Cor. 7:25 [b]2 Cor. 4:16
2 [c]2 Cor. 5:11 [1]*adulterating the word of God*
3 [d][1 Cor. 1:18]

12 Therefore, since we have such hope, [s]we use great boldness of speech— 13 unlike Moses, [t]*who* put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at [u]the end of what was passing away. 14 But [v]their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the *veil* is taken away in Christ. 15 But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. 16 Nevertheless [w]when one turns to the Lord, [x]the veil is taken away. 17 Now [y]the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord *is,* there *is* [z]liberty. 18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding [a]as in a mirror [b]the glory of the Lord, [c]are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as [2]by the Spirit of the Lord.

The Light of Christ's Gospel

4 Therefore, since we have this ministry, [a]as we have received mercy, we [b]do not lose heart. 2 But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor [1]handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth [c]commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. 3 But even if our gospel is veiled, [d]it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 whose minds [e]the god of this age [f]has blinded, who do not believe, lest [g]the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, [h]who is the image of God, should shine on them. 5 [i]For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and [j]ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. 6 For it is the God [k]who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who

4 [e]John 12:31 [f]John 12:40 [g][2 Cor. 3:8, 9] [h][John 1:18] 5 [i]1 Cor. 1:13 [j]1 Cor. 9:19 6 [k]Gen. 1:3

■ **3:12 such hope.** The splendor of the new covenant, which will not fade or pass away, provides the apostle's hope and fuels his boldness.

boldness of speech. Paul is not at all ashamed to stand before the world and proclaim the excellent gospel. The reference to "boldness" links the discussion of vv. 7–11 with Paul's defense of his apostleship (10:1, 2). He is bold, not vacillating as his opponents accused him (1:17—2:4); and his boldness, taking the form of the fearless speech so evident in this epistle, is a great contrast to the deceitful selfishness of his opponents (2:17).

■ **3:13** Some think that Moses' veil was to protect the Israelites from being harmed or frightened by the brightness. More likely, the veil was to keep them from seeing that the glory was fading away because of the temporary and inadequate character of the old covenant (Ex. 34:29–35). By contrast, Paul needs no veil, for the glory of the new covenant ministry does not fade away.

■ **3:14 the same veil remains.** Even today, Paul says, many Jewish people cannot see that the Mosaic covenant is temporary, and that its glory fades.

■ **3:15 a veil lies on their heart.** The metaphor shifts somewhat, as it often does in Paul's writings. The veil is now not on Moses' face but on their hearts. The effect is the same—they cannot see that the old covenant fades.

■ **3:16 the veil is taken away.** See "Understanding the Word of God" at Ps. 119:34.

■ **3:17 the Lord is the Spirit.** Here Paul stresses the close relationship between Christ and the Holy Spirit. By virtue of His resurrection and ascension, Christ and the life-giving Spirit are closely identified in function (1 Cor. 15:45). It is also possible to translate this phrase, "Now the Spirit is the Lord." The Holy Spirit is truly God; like the Father and the Son, He is the One who is known simply as "the Lord" in the Old Testament. Such a translation gives a natural sense to the word "is."

there is liberty. The bondage was to death, sin, and hopeless effort to obey the law by our own power.

■ **3:18 we all.** All Christians. A characteristic experience of new covenant believers is described here.

beholding as in a mirror. Unlike Moses (v. 13), who went before the people with a veil to hide the fading glory on his face, Paul stands before people "with unveiled face," knowing that the new covenant glory will never diminish. Likewise "we all" stand unashamedly before the world, reflecting in our own lives the glory of Christ. And far from a fading glory, our glory is ever-increasing, as we are changed more and more into the likeness of Christ. See "The Transfiguration of Jesus" at Mark 9:2.

into the same image. A reference to continual growth throughout life into increasing Christlikeness. This growth is moral and spiritual transformation "from glory to glory." We are being progressively restored to greater and greater possession of the image of God which was corrupted at the fall of Adam.

■ **4:1** Paul does not give up hope because the new covenant ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit is so excellent and powerful.

■ **4:2 handling . . . deceitfully.** This means "adulterate, falsify." Paul says he will never water down the Word of God or distort it to please the hearers. He implies that his opponents did practice such deception and distortion.

■ **4:3** The veil imagery continues from 3:14–16. Those who are presently perishing (not believing in Christ) are blinded to the truth.

■ **4:4 the god of this age.** Satan (cf. 1 John 5:19) strongly influences this fallen, evil world that continues until the time Christ returns and brings in fully the age to come (cf. Gal. 1:4).

has blinded. The result is that unbelievers cannot appreciate or fully understand the claims of the gospel, unless God through the gospel enlightens them (4:6; John 3:3).

■ **4:5 we do not preach ourselves.** The crucial issue is not whether people accept or reject Paul, but how they respond to Christ. Paul's opponents apparently focused on themselves, and veiled Christ's glory with their own pride.

■ **4:6 For.** One reason for not preaching ourselves is that only God gives new spiritual life.

commanded light. God's sovereign initiative is necessary to enable us to embrace the gospel message. Just as God's original creative word made light where there was no light, so now God's creative word gives spiritual life and understanding of the gospel where previously there was none. See theological note "The Authentication of Scripture."

glory of God. In the Old Testament the glory of God was the bright light that surrounded the presence of God. It had led the people of Egypt as a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night (Ex. 13:21–22). Later, it had filled the tabernacle under Moses (Ex. 33:8–13; 40:34–38), and had then filled Solomon's temple (1 Kin. 8:10, 11). But it departed from the temple in the time of Ezekiel because of the sins of the people (Ezek. 10:4, 18, 19; 11:23). It returned only in Jesus, who became flesh and dwelt among us. John says, "We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father" (John 1:14). In contrast to the face of Moses, from which God's glory faded (3:13), God's glory forever shines brightly "in the face of Jesus Christ."

has [l]shone in our hearts to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Cast Down but Unconquered

[7] But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, [m]that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. [8] *We are* [n]hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; *we are* perplexed, but not in despair; [9] persecuted, but not [o]forsaken; [p]struck down, but not destroyed— [10] [q]always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, [r]that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. [11] For we who live [s]are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life

6 [l]2 Pet. 1:19
7 [m]1 Cor. 2:5
8 [n]2 Cor. 1:8; 7:5
9 [o][Heb. 13:5] [p]Ps. 37:24
10 [q]Phil. 3:10 [r]Rom. 8:17
11 [s]Rom. 8:36

The Authentication of Scripture

Why do Christians believe that the Bible is the Word of God, sixty-six books that together reveal God's redemption through Jesus Christ the Savior? The answer is that God Himself has confirmed this through what is called the "inward witness of the Holy Spirit." In the words of the *Westminster Confession* (1647):

> We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the Church to an high and reverent esteem of the holy Scripture; and the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole (which is to give all glory to God), the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the entire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby it doth abundantly evidence itself to be the Word of God; yet, notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth, and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts (*Westminster Confession* 1.5).

The Spirit's witness to Scripture is like His witness to Jesus, which we find spoken of in John 15:26 and 1 John 5:7 (cf. 1 John 2:20, 27). It is not a matter of imparting new information, but of enlightening otherwise darkened minds to discern divinity through sensing its unique impact—the impact in the one case of the Jesus of the gospel, and in the other case of the words of Holy Scripture. The Spirit shines in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 4:6), but also the light of His glory in the teaching of Holy Scripture. The result of this witness is a state of mind in which both the Savior and the Scriptures have evidenced themselves to us as divine—Jesus, a divine person; Scripture, a divine word—in a way as direct and immediate as the way tastes and colors impress themselves on our senses. As a result, we no longer find it possible to doubt the divinity of Christ or the divine origin of the Bible.

God Himself authenticates Holy Scripture to us as His Word, going beyond human argument (strong as this may be), and the church's testimony (impressive as this is). God does it, rather, by opening our hearts and enlightening our minds to perceive the searching light and transforming power whereby Scripture evidences itself to be divine. This impact is itself the Spirit's witness "by and with the Word in our hearts." Argument, testimony from others, and our own particular experiences may support and clarify this witness, but the imparting of it, like the imparting of faith in Christ's divine Saviorhood, is the prerogative of the sovereign Holy Spirit alone. □

■ **4:7 this treasure.** The gospel ministry and the accompanying new covenant power of the Holy Spirit.

earthen vessels. Our weak human natures, including but not limited to our physical bodies. They are a great contrast to the glory of the gospel, and Paul reminds us that God's way is to work through those who are weak or unimpressive in the world's eyes.

of God. A characteristic theme in the epistle. Paul's concern is always to give glory to God, not himself.

■ **4:8** The great evangelist and theologian also faced great discouragements.

■ **4:10** Paul's suffering and apparent defeats are evidence to all that he has no effective strength in himself and that, as Christ died, so also Paul knows he is "dead" in terms of his own ability to accomplish anything of eternal significance. Paul uses the key experiences of Christ (death and resurrection) as a pattern for understanding his own experiences as an apostle. Thus, Paul sees his own sufferings as an imitation of Christ's (1:5 and note).

that the life. In Paul's weakness Jesus' power is continually made known (cf. Gal. 2:20).

13 [t]2 Pet. 1:1 [u]Ps. 116:10
14 [v][Rom. 8:11]
15 [w]Col. 1:24 [x]2 Cor. 1:11
16 [y]2 Cor. 4:1 [z][Is. 40:29, 31]
17 [a]Rom. 8:18
18 [b][Heb. 11:1, 13]

CHAPTER 5

1 [a]Job 4:19 [b]Mark 14:58 [f]Physical body
2 [c]Rom. 8:23 [2]*dwelling*
3 [d]Rev. 3:18
4 [e]1 Cor. 15:53
5 [f]Rom. 8:23 [3]*down payment, earnest*
7 [g]Heb. 11:1
8 [h]Phil. 1:23
10 [i]Rom. 2:16; 14:10, 12 [j]Eph. 6:8

of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. 12 So then death is working in us, but life in you.

13 And since we have [t]the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, [u]*"I believed and therefore I spoke,"* we also believe and therefore speak, 14 knowing that [v]He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present *us* with you. 15 For [w]all things *are* for your sakes, that [x]grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.

Seeing the Invisible

16 Therefore we [y]do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward *man* is [z]being renewed day by day. 17 For [a]our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory, 18 [b]while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen *are* temporary, but the things which are not seen *are* eternal.

Assurance of the Resurrection

5 For we know that if [a]our earthly [1]house, *this* tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house [b]not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this [c]we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our [2]habitation which is from heaven, 3 if indeed, [d]having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. 4 For we who are in *this* tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, [e]but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. 5 Now He who has prepared us for this very thing *is* God, who also [f]has given us the Spirit as [3]a guarantee.

6 So *we are* always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. 7 For [g]we walk by faith, not by sight. 8 We are confident, yes, [h]well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

The Judgment Seat of Christ

9 Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. 10 [i]For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, [j]that each one may receive the things

■ **4:12** Though Paul suffers much hardship (as Jesus did), the result of his ministry is spiritual life and resurrection power in others. This is a paradox that the world will not understand. The recipients of a ministry may seem to fare much better in this world than the person who brings them the ministry, because the one who brings it may be suffering for the sake of the gospel (8:9).

■ **4:13** Faith expresses itself in words that affirm confidence in what God has promised. Here Paul quotes the Septuagint (the Greek Old Testament translation) of Ps. 116:10.

■ **4:15 to the glory of God.** God's ultimate goal in answering prayer and bringing us the blessings of salvation is for thanksgiving and glory to be offered to Him (Is. 43:7; Eph. 1:12; Rev. 4:11).

■ **4:16 we do not lose heart.** This phrase repeats v. 1. God brings glory to Himself even through the weaknesses and discouragements of Paul's ministry.

our outward man is perishing. The contrast between outward and inward is not simply between the body and the soul, but between the old fallen nature and the renewed humanity.

■ **4:17 our light affliction . . . for a moment.** An understatement. See the descriptions of these troubles in 4:8–12; 6:4–10; 11:23–33. These troubles are preparing a great reward for believers. Our faith and obedience in suffering pleases God, and He will not forget (Rom. 8:17, 18; 1 Pet. 1:6, 7).

eternal weight of glory. Troubles in this life are light and insignificant compared to the important and significant glory that we will enjoy for eternity.

■ **4:18 things . . . not seen are eternal.** A frequent theme in this book. The unseen world is what is most real and most important; the visible world is passing away.

■ **5:1 tent.** Our physical bodies. If Paul's sufferings must lead even to physical death, something far greater awaits him.

a house . . . in the heavens. This probably refers to our resurrection bodies, though some have argued that it signifies the heavenly place that God has prepared for us.

■ **5:2 we groan.** Sighing with frustration at the limitations of this present life, with its sin, weakness, and corruption (Rom. 8:22, 23).

■ **5:3 naked.** Without a body.

■ **5:4** Paul longs for the resurrection body, free of the weaknesses and imperfections of this life.

mortality. Our present physical bodies.

swallowed up by life. The new, heavenly life to come will overtake our present existence. See "Resurrection and Glorification" at 1 Cor. 15:21.

■ **5:5 guarantee.** See note on 1:22. The Holy Spirit's work in us now in daily renewal and spiritual strengthening (3:18; 4:16) is a foretaste and guarantee of future completion of that work in resurrection bodies and complete sanctification.

■ **5:7** Again Paul specifies a contrast between the unseen spiritual realm of God's presence and activity and the present visible world.

■ **5:8** The doctrine of the intermediate state between our death and Christ's return teaches that when Christians die they, that is, their spirits, go immediately into Christ's presence and are "present with the Lord," while their bodies remain here and are buried in the grave (Luke 23:43; Phil. 1:23). When Christ returns, the bodies of believers will be raised from the dead and reunited with their spirits (1 Cor. 15:22, 23; 1 Thess. 4:14, 16). See "Death and the Intermediate State" at Phil. 1:23.

■ **5:9 well pleasing to Him.** See "Pleasing God" at 1 Thess. 2:4.

■ **5:10** Degrees of reward in heaven are taught in this verse. Though Christians have their sins forgiven and will never suffer the punishments of hell (Rom. 6:23; 8:1), they will all nonetheless stand before Christ at the Day of Judgment, to receive various degrees of reward for what they have done in this life (Matt. 6:20; Luke 19:11–27; 1 Cor. 3:12–15). This judgment will include a disclosure and evaluation of the motives of our hearts (1 Cor. 4:5).

done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. 11 Knowing, therefore, [k]the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences.

Be Reconciled to God

12 For [l]we do not commend ourselves again to you, but give you opportunity [m]to boast on our behalf, that you may have *an answer* for those who boast in appearance and not in heart. 13 For [n]if we are beside ourselves, *it is* for God; or if we are of sound mind, *it is* for you. 14 For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that [o]if One died for all, then all died; 15 and He died for all, [p]that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

16 [q]Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, [r]yet now we know *Him thus* no longer. 17 Therefore, if anyone [s]*is* in Christ, *he is* [t]a new creation; [u]old things have passed away; behold, all things have become [v]new. 18 Now all things *are* of God, [w]who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 that is, that [x]God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not [4]imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

20 Now then, we are [y]ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. 21 For [z]He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become [a]the righteousness of God in Him.

Marks of the Ministry

6 We then, *as* [a]workers together *with Him* also [b]plead with *you* not to receive the grace of God in vain. 2 For He says:

11 [k][Heb. 10:31; 12:29]

12 [l]2 Cor. 3:1 [m]2 Cor. 1:14

13 [n]2 Cor. 11:1, 16; 12:11

14 [o][Rom. 5:15; 6:6]

15 [p][Rom. 6:11]

16 [q]2 Cor. 10:3 [r][Matt. 12:50]

17 [s][John 6:63] [t][Rom. 8:9] [u]Is. 43:18; 65:17 [v][Rom. 6:3–10]

18 [w]Rom. 5:10

19 [x][Rom. 3:24] [4]*reckoning*

20 [y]Eph. 6:20

21 [z]Is. 53:6, 9 [a][Rom. 1:17; 3:21]

CHAPTER 6

1 [a]1 Cor. 3:9 [b]2 Cor. 5:20

■ **5:11 the terror of the Lord.** Not a terror of eternal condemnation, but a healthy, reverent fear of Christ's displeasure at the choices we have made, the "things done in the body" (v. 10). Such a fear would have been a healthy corrective for those Corinthians who were making trouble for Paul, and it could also have corrected the lives of many careless Christians throughout history.

well known. Again, a spiritual viewpoint, not always evident to those in this world.

■ **5:12 who boast in appearance.** This is the world's method of evaluation, contrary to that of a true apostle, who endures troubles by focusing on the unseen and eternal (4:18). The false apostles at Corinth (11:13) were also typical representatives of the world, taking pride in their outward appearance, relying on the self, and loving money, power, and prestige. If the Corinthians understood Paul's self-defense in a spiritual way, they would have an answer for the false apostles and their superficial standards of judgment (1 Sam. 16:7).

■ **5:13 beside ourselves.** This probably refers to times of worship and prayer when Paul was caught up in intense awareness of the presence of God. Paul's language does not imply complete loss of awareness of one's surroundings, for the same Greek word is used of people who were "amazed" at Christ's miracles (Mark 5:42; 6:51). The apostle's point is that whether engaged in private worship or in public ministry, he lives for God and for others, not for himself (v. 15). His opponents cannot make this claim.

■ **5:14 the love of Christ.** Grammatically this could be the love we have for Christ or the love Christ has for us. Since Paul is speaking of what Christ has done for him, he probably means the love that comes from Christ.

One died for all. The ones He died for are the same as the "all" who "died" with Him as a result of His death, who are mentioned at the end of the verse.

■ **5:16** Paul emphasizes spiritual judgment and spiritual insight into people's lives and situations. Our experience of Christ's love moves us to stop viewing others according to worldly standards and to learn how to view them from the standpoint of God's great act of salvation in Jesus Christ.

according to the flesh. When Christ was regarded from a worldly point of view, men rejected and crucified Him as a blasphemer and troublemaker. But from the divine viewpoint, Christ is the Messiah and Son of God, in whom the new creation and reconciliation with God is given.

■ **5:17 in Christ.** Union with Christ summarizes our experience of redemption. Believers are elected (Eph. 1:4, 11), justified (Rom. 8:1), sanctified (1 Cor. 1:2), and glorified (3:18) "in Christ." Here Paul focuses on the momentous significance of the believer's union with the Savior. Because Christ is the "last Adam," the One in whom humanity is recreated (1 Cor. 15:45; Gal. 6:16; Eph. 2:10) and who inaugurates the new age of messianic blessing (Gal. 1:4; cf. Matt. 11:2–6), the believer's spiritual union with Christ is nothing less than participation in the "new creation." Translating "there is a new creation" instead of "he is a new creation" draws this conclusion more clearly, but the thought is there either way.

■ **5:18 all things are of God.** The whole plan of salvation and history of redemption is God-centered. Paul realizes that it is from Him, through Him, and for His glory (Rom. 11:36).

■ **5:20** Paul may be appealing directly to the Corinthians to "be reconciled to God." But he is also summing up the appeal he gives to all the world. Reconciliation is the establishment or restoration of loving fellowship after estrangement. For Christians, reconciliation to God is renewed each day, in one sense (Matt. 6:12; 1 John 1:9).

■ **5:21** An important summary of the gospel message. The verse explains how God imputed our sin to Christ. God as judge assigned the responsibility of our sin to Christ, making it possible for Him to be punished justly for that sin (Is. 53:6; 1 Pet. 2:24). The verse shows that Christ was our substitute, accepting the penalty of sin in our place. See "The Sinlessness of Jesus" at Heb. 4:15.

we might become the righteousness of God. Not only did God impute our sin to Christ, He also imputed Christ's perfect righteousness to us (that is, He counted it as belonging to us). This imputation is the basis for the progressive realization of God's righteousness in our moral character. Our thoughts and deeds are sanctified in increasing measure until we receive perfect righteousness in heaven.

■ **6:1 in vain.** If the Corinthians allow their church to be swept away by the "false apostles" (11:13), or if they refuse to purify themselves from "all filthiness of the flesh and spirit" (7:1), their lives will glorify God less and less, and the gospel they heard will bear little lasting fruit.

■ **6:2 now is the day of salvation.** When God offers deliverance, it is wise to respond immediately, before the offer is withdrawn. "Now" in a broad sense refers to the gospel age, while in a specific sense it refers to the time when an individual hears God's offer of salvation.

2 [c]Is. 49:8
3 [d]Rom. 14:13
4 [e]1 Cor. 4:1 [f]endurance
5 [f]2 Cor. 11:23
6 [g]Lit. *un-hypocritical*
7 [g]2 Cor. 7:14 [h]1 Cor. 2:4 [i]Rom. 13:12; 2 Cor. 10:4
9 [j]2 Cor. 4:2; 5:11 [k]1 Cor. 4:9, 11 [l]Ps. 118:18
10 [m]1 Cor. 1:5; [2 Cor. 8:9]
11 [n]Is. 60:5; 2 Cor. 7:3 [o]Lit. *Our mouth is open*
12 [o]2 Cor. 12:15
13 [p]1 Cor. 4:14
14 [q]Deut. 7:2, 3; 22:10; 1 Cor. 5:9 [r]1 Sam. 5:2, 3; 1 Kin. 18:21; Eph. 5:6, 7, 11; 1 John 1:6 [s]*in common* [t]*fellowship*
16 [s][1 Cor. 3:16, 17; 6:19]; Eph. 2:21; [Heb. 3:6] [t]Ex. 29:45; Lev. 26:12; Jer. 31:33; 32:38; Ezek. 37:26, 27; Zech. 8:8 [u]NU *we*
17 [u]Num. 33:51–56; Is. 52:11; Rev. 18:4
18 [v]2 Sam. 7:14; Jer. 31:1, 9; [Rev. 21:7]

[c] *"In an acceptable time I have heard you,*
And in the day of salvation I have helped you."

Behold, now *is* the accepted time; behold, now *is* the day of salvation.

3 [d]We give no offense in anything, that our ministry may not be blamed. 4 But in all *things* we commend ourselves [e]as ministers of God: in much [f]patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, 5 [g]in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings; 6 by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by [g]sincere love, 7 [h]by the word of truth, by [h]the power of God, by [i]the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, 8 by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and *yet* true; 9 as unknown, and [j]*yet* well known; [k]as dying, and behold we live; [l]as chastened, and *yet* not killed; 10 as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many [m]rich; as having nothing, and *yet* possessing all things.

Be Holy

11 O Corinthians! [o]We have spoken openly to you, [n]our heart is wide open. 12 You are not restricted by us, but [o]you are restricted by your *own* affections. 13 Now in return for the same [p](I speak as to children), you also be open.

14 [q]Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For [r]what [s]fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what [s]communion has light with darkness? 15 And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? 16 And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For [t]you[s] are the temple of the living God. As God has said:

[t] *"I will dwell in them*
And walk among them.
I will be their God,
And they shall be My people."

17 Therefore

[u] *"Come out from among them*
And be separate, says the Lord.
Do not touch what is unclean,
And I will receive you."

18 *"I [v]will be a Father to you,*

■ **6:6** A true minister of the gospel is known by pure speech, pure conduct, pure motives, and deep love for people.

by the Holy Spirit. The power of the Holy Spirit was evident in Paul's ministry, whether bringing power to his preaching, convicting unbelievers of sin (cf. John 16:8–11), or giving spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12:7–11). This work of the Holy Spirit was another way by which Paul's ministry was commended.

■ **6:7 by the word of truth.** Paul will not compromise the sanctity of truth or tell a lie to accomplish some desirable goal.

the power of God. Often to work miracles, bring healing, or silence enemies (cf. Acts 14:3, 9, 10; 19:11, 12; 20:10; 28:8, 9; Rom. 15:19).

by the armor of righteousness. That is, all the weaponry to be used against human or demonic opposition (10:5, 6; Acts 13:11; 16:18; Eph. 6:10–18).

■ **6:8–10** A series of paradoxes again highlighting the contrast between the viewpoint of this world and the standpoint of the age to come, the standpoint invisible to the natural eye but seen by the eye of faith.

■ **6:11 our heart is wide open.** Paul reveals his inner feelings in this letter more than in any other. His "open heart" reveals his love for them.

■ **6:14 yoked together.** Paul sees a deeper spiritual reality in the prohibition against unequal yoking found in Deut. 22:10.

with unbelievers. Note that the false apostles in Corinth claimed to be Christians but were in reality servants of Satan (11:14, 15). To join with them would distort all life and ministry in the church. The prohibition against being yoked together with unbelievers must be considered in situations where significant control over one's actions would be willingly yielded to an unbeliever through a voluntary partnership or association. Neither Paul nor the rest of the New Testament tells us to have no association at all with unbelievers (Mark 2:15–17; 1 Cor. 5:9, 10). But we are told not to be "yoked together" with them in such a way that they significantly influence the direction and outcome of our moral decisions and spiritual activities.

■ **6:15 Belial.** A name for Satan.

■ **6:16 you are the temple of the living God.** In the Old Testament God's dwelling place with His people was the tabernacle and later the temple built by Solomon. When Christ came, He was Himself the true temple or dwelling place of God (Matt. 1:23; John 2:21; Col. 2:9). Now God the Holy Spirit lives in us, and for this reason we are the new temple of God (1 Cor. 6:19; 1 Pet. 2:5).

As God has said. The Old Testament promise that God would dwell among His people (Paul's quotation is from Lev. 26:11, 12) has become the new covenant promise that God would live in those who trust in Christ.

■ **6:17** The quotation is mostly from Is. 52:11 and Ezek. 20:34, though the word order is changed. These commands to be separate all have to do with unbelievers (cf. v. 14; note that Is. 52:11 commands Israel to go out of unbelieving Babylon). The verses do not encourage separation from believers who hold different views on certain matters.

■ **6:18** See 2 Sam. 7:14, 27. Paul has combined several Old Testament promises of God's presence and favor, but he makes their fulfillment depend clearly on Christians separating themselves from moral impurity. To give up moral defilement and gain the presence of the living God in return is a wise and desirable choice.

And you shall be My [w]*sons and daughters,*
Says the LORD *Almighty."*

7 Therefore,[a] having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

The Corinthians' Repentance

[2] Open *your hearts* to us. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, [b]we have cheated no one. [3] I do not say *this* to condemn; for [c]I have said before that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together. [4] [d]Great *is* my boldness of speech toward you, [e]great *is* my boasting on your behalf. [f]I am filled with comfort. I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation.

[5] For indeed, [g]when we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but [h]we were troubled on every side. [i]Outside *were* conflicts, inside *were* fears. [6] Nevertheless [j]God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by [k]the coming of Titus, [7] and not only by his coming, but also by the [l]consolation with which he was comforted in you, when he told us of your earnest desire, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced even more.

[8] For even if I made you [l]sorry with my letter, I do not regret it; [m]though I did regret it. For I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though only for a while. [9] Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. [10] For [n]godly sorrow produces repentance *leading* to salvation, not to be regretted; [o]but the sorrow of the world produces death. [11] For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, *what* [p]clearing *of yourselves, what* indignation, *what* fear, *what* vehement desire, *what* zeal, *what* vindication! In all *things* you proved yourselves to be [q]clear in this matter. [12] Therefore, although I wrote to you, *I did* not *do it* for the sake of him who had done the wrong, nor for the sake of him who suffered wrong, [r]but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear to you.

The Joy of Titus

[13] Therefore we have been comforted in your comfort. And we rejoiced exceedingly more for the joy of Titus, because his spirit [s]has been refreshed by you all. [14] For if in anything I have boasted to him about you, I am not ashamed. But as we spoke all things to you in truth, even so our boasting to Titus was found true. [15] And his affections are greater for you as he remembers [t]the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling you received him. [16] Therefore I rejoice that [u]I have confidence in you in everything.

18 [w][John 1:12; Rom. 8:14; Gal. 4:5–7]; Phil. 2:15; 1 John 3:1

CHAPTER 7

1 [a][1 John 3:3]

2 [b]Acts 20:33

3 [c]2 Cor. 6:11, 12

4 [d]2 Cor. 3:12 [e]1 Cor. 1:4 [f]Phil. 2:17; Col. 1:24

5 [g]Rom. 15:26; 2 Cor. 2:13 [h]2 Cor. 4:8 [i]Deut. 32:25

6 [j]Is. 49:13; 2 Cor. 1:3, 4 [k]2 Cor. 2:13; 7:13

7 [l]*comfort*

8 [l]2 Cor. 2:2 [m]2 Cor. 2:4

10 [n]2 Sam. 12:13; Ps. 32:10; Matt. 26:75 [o]Prov. 17:22

11 [p]Eph. 5:11 [q]2 Cor. 2:5–11

12 [r]2 Cor. 2:4

13 [s]Rom. 15:32

15 [t]2 Cor. 2:9; Phil. 2:12

16 [u]2 Cor. 2:3; 8:22; 2 Thess. 3:4; Philem. 8, 21

■ **7:1 these promises.** The Old Testament promises quoted in 6:16–18.

let us cleanse ourselves. We must play an active, vigorous role in sanctification (Phil. 2:12, 13).

all filthiness Paul means all kinds of sin, however they come to expression in life. Physical cleanliness is not in view (Matt. 7:15; Pet. 3:21).

■ **7:2 We have wronged no one.** Once again in defense against those who accuse him, Paul appeals to a blameless record in ministry.

■ **7:3** Paul reveals how deeply he loves the church at Corinth; this is not deceitful speech, but an expression of his "sincere love" (6:6).

■ **7:5** This verse resumes the narrative that broke off at 2:13. It shows Paul's turmoil of soul when a church he deeply loved strayed from obedience to the Lord.

Macedonia. Northern Greece, on the way to Corinth (2:12, 13 notes).

■ **7:6** Titus had finally arrived in Macedonia with good news about the Corinthians and their response to Paul's "severe letter."

■ **7:8** Paul's "severe letter" (no longer extant) was written to rebuke the Corinthians for their conduct during his earlier visit (2:3, 4 notes and Introduction: Date and Occasion). The problem was probably their failure as a church to defend Paul against the person who had wronged him. This verse shows clearly that a loving pastor must sometimes cause sorrow to those he cares for, if they fall into sin.

■ **7:10 repentance.** Turning from sin, a sincere decision to forsake a specific sin (or sins) and begin to obey God. Here, the term does not specifically refer to initial repentance that must accompany true saving faith (Mark 1:15; Acts 3:19; 17:30; 26:20), but to a turning from sin in the life of a Christian.

leading to salvation. "Salvation" here means not initial conversion, but growth and progress in the Christian life. Ordinary Christian growth will include times of profound sorrow for remaining sin.

sorrow of the world. Regret and sorrow of different kinds that do not seek forgiveness in Christ.

■ **7:11** The Corinthians responded as Paul had hoped when Titus brought the letter of rebuke.

■ **7:12 him who had done the wrong.** Probably not the man guilty of incest in 1 Cor. 5:1, though many have understood it this way (2:5 note).

in the sight of God. The Christian life is lived before the face of God.

■ **7:13 his spirit has been refreshed.** The personal contact of the Corinthians and Titus had encouraged Titus spiritually, making a noticeable change in him.

■ **7:15 with fear and trembling.** Apparently, even before Titus arrived with the letter of rebuke, the Holy Spirit had worked repentance in the Corinthian church.

CHAPTER 8

2 [a]Mark 12:44

4 [b]Rom. 15:25, 26 [r]NU, M omit *that we would receive,* thus changing text to *urgency for the favor and fellowship*

5 [c][Rom. 12:1, 2] [d][Eph. 6:6]

6 [e]2 Cor. 8:17; 12:18

7 [f][1 Cor. 1:5; 12:13] [g]2 Cor. 9:8

8 [h]1 Cor. 7:6

9 [i]Phil. 2:6, 7 [j]Rom. 9:23

10 [k]1 Cor. 7:25, 40 [l][Heb. 13:16] [m]2 Cor. 9:2

12 [n]Mark 12:43, 44

15 [o]Ex. 16:18

16 [s]NU *has put*

18 [p]2 Cor. 12:18

19 [q]1 Cor. 16:3, 4 [r]2 Cor. 4:15

Excel in Giving

8 Moreover, brethren, we make known to you the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia: 2 that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and [a]their deep poverty abounded in the riches of their liberality. 3 For I bear witness that according to *their* ability, yes, and beyond *their* ability, *they were* freely willing, 4 imploring us with much urgency [r]that we would receive the gift and [b]the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. 5 And not *only* as we had hoped, but they first [c]gave themselves to the Lord, and *then* to us by the [d]will of God. 6 So [e]we urged Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also complete this grace in you as well. 7 But as [f]you abound in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us—*see* [g]that you abound in this grace also.

Christ Our Pattern

8 [h]I speak not by commandment, but I am testing the sincerity of your love by the diligence of others. 9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, [i]that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become [j]rich.

10 And in this [k]I give advice: [l]It is to your advantage not only to be doing what you began and [m]were desiring to do a year ago; 11 but now you also must complete the doing *of it;* that as *there was* a readiness to desire *it,* so *there* also *may be* a completion out of what *you* have. 12 For [n]if there is first a willing mind, *it is* accepted according to what one has, *and* not according to what he does not have.

13 For *I do* not *mean* that others should be eased and you burdened; 14 but by an equality, *that* now at this time your abundance *may supply* their lack, that their abundance also may supply your lack—that there may be equality. 15 As it is written, [o]*"He who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little had no lack."*

Collection for the Judean Saints

16 But thanks *be* to God who [s]puts the same earnest care for you into the heart of Titus. 17 For he not only accepted the exhortation, but being more diligent, he went to you of his own accord. 18 And we have sent with him [p]the brother whose praise *is* in the gospel throughout all the churches, 19 and not only *that,* but who was also [q]chosen by the churches to travel with us with this gift, which is administered by us [r]to the glory of the Lord Himself and *to show* your ready

■ **8:1—9:15** This section concerns the collection of money for poor Christians in Jerusalem (cf. Acts 19:21, 22; Rom. 15:25–28; 1 Cor. 16:1–4).

■ **8:1 grace.** Giving money to help other Christians in need was itself the result of God's grace. He provided both the resources and the willingness to use them.

churches of Macedonia. Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea.

■ **8:3** Paul tells the comparatively wealthy Corinthian church about the generosity of the impoverished churches in Macedonia, to the north.

■ **8:5 not only as we had hoped.** They did much more than he expected.

gave themselves. They rededicated their lives to service for the Lord, and then to Paul as His servant.

■ **8:7 you abound in everything.** Despite its troubles, Corinth was a strong church in many ways. They had many spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12—14), several of them listed here.

■ **8:8 not by commandment.** Paul wants giving to be voluntary. In general, though Paul had great authority, he preferred to ask rather than command (Philem. 14 and note), a good pattern for those in authority (Matt. 20:25, 26).

■ **8:9 though He was rich.** In the glory and honor that was eternally His in heaven.

He became poor. He gave up His heavenly glory and came to earth to live as a man and to suffer and die. The Corinthians, like Christ, should give of themselves for the sake of others. See "The Humble Obedience of Christ" at John 5:19.

■ **8:10** They had begun to give in accordance with Paul's instructions in 1 Cor. 16:1–3.

■ **8:11** As in all of the Christian life, so it is in giving. Good motives are not enough, but must lead to good actions in accordance with our abilities.

■ **8:12** As the widow's offering in Mark 12:41–44 teaches, willingness to give generously is pleasing to God, even though the gift may have to be small because the giver is poor.

not according to what he does not have. This is a warning against giving or promising to give an amount that you really do not have, hoping that God will repay it. Doing this forces a test on God (Luke 4:12). People should give as God causes them to prosper (1 Cor. 16:2). Even so, the more common offense is failing to give immediately and generously when God brings additional income.

■ **8:14 equality.** Not that Paul wanted all Christians to have equal possessions or equal income, but that there might be a fair distribution of burdens. The word translated "equality" can also be translated "fair" (Col. 4:1). Paul calls for equity rather than strict equality.

■ **8:15** When the people gathered manna in the wilderness, those who gathered more shared with those who had less, and here with respect to money, the rich should share with those in need.

■ **8:17** Paul is sending Titus back to Corinth ahead of him.

■ **8:18 the brother.** No name is given. Luke is a frequent suggestion.

■ **8:19 chosen by the churches.** There was some congregational role in selecting representatives to accompany Paul.

to the glory of the Lord Himself. Giving money and administering it well is not mundane or unspiritual, but in itself honors the Lord.

mind, [20] avoiding this: that anyone should blame us in this lavish gift which is administered by us— [21] [s]providing honorable things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.

[22] And we have sent with them our brother whom we have often proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, because of the great confidence which *we have* in you. [23] If *anyone inquires* about [t]Titus, *he is* my partner and fellow worker concerning you. Or if our brethren *are inquired about, they are* [u]messengers[3] of the churches, the glory of Christ. [24] Therefore show to them, [4]and before the churches, the proof of your love and of our [v]boasting on your behalf.

Administering the Gift

9 Now concerning [a]the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you; [2] for I know your willingness, about which I boast of you to the Macedonians, that Achaia was ready a [b]year ago; and your zeal has stirred up the majority. [3] [c]Yet I have sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this respect, that, as I said, you may be ready; [4] lest if *some* Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we (not to mention you!) should be ashamed of this [1]confident boasting. [5] Therefore I thought it necessary to [2]exhort the brethren to go to you ahead of time, and prepare your generous gift beforehand, which *you had* previously promised, that it may be ready as *a matter of* generosity and not as a [3]grudging obligation.

The Cheerful Giver

[6] [d]But this *I say:* He who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows [4]bountifully will also reap [4]bountifully. [7] *So let* each one *give* as he purposes in his heart, [e]not grudgingly or of [5]necessity; for [f]God loves a cheerful giver. [8] [g]And God *is* able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all *things,* may have an abundance for every good work. [9] As it is written:

> [h] *"He has dispersed abroad,*
> *He has given to the poor;*
> *His righteousness endures forever."*

[10] Now [6]may He who [i]supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, [7]supply and multiply the seed you have *sown* and increase the fruits of your [j]righteousness, [11] while *you are* enriched in everything for all liberality, [k]which causes thanksgiving through us to God. [12] For the administration of this service not only [l]supplies the needs of the saints, but also is abounding through many thanksgivings to God, [13] while, through the proof of this ministry, they [m]glorify God for the obedience of your confession to the gospel of Christ, and for *your* liberal [n]sharing with them and all *men,* [14] and by their prayer for you, who long for you because of the exceeding [o]grace of God in you. [15] Thanks *be* to God [p]for His indescribable gift!

The Spiritual War

10 Now [a]I, Paul, myself am pleading with you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ— [b]who in presence *am* lowly among you, but being absent am bold toward you. [2] But I

21 [s]Rom. 12:17

23 [t]2 Cor. 7:13, 14 [u]Phil. 2:25 [3]Lit. *apostles,* "sent ones"

24 [v]2 Cor. 7:4, 14; 9:2 [4]NU, M omit *and*

CHAPTER 9

1 [a]Gal. 2:10

2 [b]2 Cor. 8:10

3 [c]2 Cor. 8:6, 17

4 [1]NU *confidence.*

5 [2]*encourage* [3]Lit. *covetousness*

6 [d]Prov. 11:24; 22:9 [4]*with blessings*

7 [e]Deut. 15:7 [f]Rom. 12:8 [5]*compulsion*

8 [g][Prov. 11:24]

9 [h]Ps. 112:9

10 [i]Is. 55:10 [j]Hos. 10:12 [6]NU omits *may* [7]NU *will supply*

11 [k]2 Cor. 1:11

12 [l]2 Cor. 8:14

13 [m][Matt. 5:16] [n][Heb. 13:16]

14 [o]2 Cor. 8:1

15 [p][James 1:17]

CHAPTER 10

1 [a]Rom. 12:1 [b]1 Thess. 2:7

■ **8:20, 21** Paul would not have misused any part of the gift sent to Jerusalem. He insisted that trusted representatives from several churches accompany him (Acts 20:4) so as to avoid even the suspicion of wrongdoing. On this passage Calvin comments that "nothing more certainly invites slanderous attacks than to be handling public money." Moreover, the representatives would have been a sort of bodyguard for someone carrying valuables.

■ **8:22 our brother.** Not identified.

■ **9:2 Achaia.** Southern Greece, where Corinth was located.

■ **9:5 your generous gift.** Paul wants to preserve the motive of willing, generous giving, and the actual amount he takes to Jerusalem is of secondary importance.

■ **9:6 sows . . . reap.** An agricultural metaphor—the farmer who plants much seed reaps a large crop, but a small planting yields a small harvest. This promise is also true in the spiritual realm. Those who give generously will reap abundantly for the kingdom. What is given is never lost; it is sown. While God may at times provide a generous harvest in the physical and material realm to those who give, this is not the New Testament promise or pattern (8:9; 11:27; Luke 6:20, 21, 24, 25; James 2:5).

■ **9:7 God loves a cheerful giver.** Giving can and should be joyful.

■ **9:14** Through such giving needs are met, and God is thanked. The recipients' prayers for the givers are no small reward.

■ **9:15** Our giving is only a small imitation of God's own excellent generosity to us, especially in the "indescribable gift" of His Son (John 3:16).

■ **10:1—13:10** In these four chapters, Paul deals with the problem of false apostles (11:13) who had come to Corinth and who were opposing Paul's authority. Titus had brought good news about the previous problems at Corinth, but a new problem demanded Paul's attention. Paul was confident of the Corinthian church (7:16), but not all the Corinthians were equally confident of Paul. Between 9:12–15 and 10:1, the tone changes abruptly from something positive to exasperation as Paul defends the genuineness of his calling as an apostle. For a discussion of this shift in tone see Introduction: Interpretive Difficulties.

beg *you* [c]that when I am present I may not be bold with that confidence by which I intend to be bold against some, who think of us as if we walked according to the flesh. 3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. 4 [d]For the weapons [e]of our warfare *are* not [f]carnal but [g]mighty in God [g]for pulling down strongholds, 5 [h]casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, 6 [i]and being ready to punish all disobedience when [j]your obedience is fulfilled.

Reality of Paul's Authority

7 [k]Do you look at things according to the outward appearance? [l]If anyone is convinced in himself that he is Christ's, let him again consider this in himself, that just as he *is* Christ's, even [2]so [m]we *are* Christ's. 8 For even if I should boast somewhat more [n]about our authority, which the Lord gave [3]us for [4]edification and not for your destruction, [o]I shall not be ashamed— 9 lest I seem to terrify you by letters. 10 "For *his* letters," they say, "*are* weighty and powerful, but [p]*his* bodily presence *is* weak, and *his* [q]speech contemptible." 11 Let such a person consider this, that what we are in word by letters when we are absent, such *we will* also *be* in deed when we are present.

Limits of Paul's Authority

12 [r]For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. 13 [s]We, however, will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us—a sphere which especially includes you. 14 For we are not overextending ourselves (as though *our authority* did not extend to you), [t]for it was to you that we came with the gospel of Christ; 15 not boasting of things beyond measure, *that is,* [u]in other men's labors, but having hope, *that* as your faith is increased, we shall be greatly enlarged by you in our sphere, 16 to preach the gospel in the *regions* beyond you, *and* not to boast in another man's sphere of accomplishment.

17 But [v]*"he who glories, let him glory in the LORD."* 18 For [w]not he who commends himself is approved, but [x]whom the Lord commends.

2 [c]1 Cor. 4:21; 2 Cor. 13:2, 10

4 [d]Eph. 6:13 [e]1 Cor. 9:7; [2 Cor. 6:7]; 1 Tim. 1:18 [f]Acts 7:22 [g]Jer. 1:10; [2 Cor. 10:8; 13:10] [1]*of the flesh*

5 [h]1 Cor. 1:19

6 [i]2 Cor. 13:2, 10 [j]2 Cor. 7:15

7 [k][John 7:24]; 2 Cor. 5:12 [l]1 Cor. 1:12; 14:37 [m][Rom. 14:8]; 1 Cor. 3:23 [2]NU *as we are.*

8 [n]2 Cor. 13:10 [o]2 Cor. 7:14 [3]NU omits *us* [4]*building up*

10 [p]1 Cor. 2:3, 4; 2 Cor. 12:7; Gal. 4:13 [q][1 Cor. 1:17]; 2 Cor. 11:6

12 [r]2 Cor. 5:12

13 [s]2 Cor. 10:15

14 [t]1 Cor. 3:5, 6

15 [u]Rom. 15:20

17 [v]Is. 65:16; Jer. 9:24; 1 Cor. 1:31

18 [w]Prov. 27:2 [x]Rom. 2:29; [1 Cor. 4:5]

■ **10:3** A repeated theme in this epistle is living not according to worldly standards or life-views but according to spiritual power and spiritual reality.

■ **10:4 weapons.** Prayer, the proclamation of the powerful Word of God, and the authority to drive away demonic opposition (Acts 16:18; Eph. 6:10–18). Also, there was a kind of powerful apostolic authority not often discussed, but apparent in the fate of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 15:1–11) and Elymas (Acts 13:8–12).

strongholds. Paul is talking about spiritual strongholds, that is, centers of demonic opposition to the gospel (1 Pet. 5:8, 9; 1 John 5:19). Paul knew his opponents at Corinth were servants of Satan (11:14, 15), but that did not frighten him, for the power of the Holy Spirit within him was far greater.

■ **10:5 casting down arguments.** False wisdom and sophisticated arguments were some of the weapons used by the servants of Satan in their attack against Paul. The apostle had earlier stressed the difference between the wisdom of the world and the spiritual wisdom of the cross, and he warned the Corinthians against being deluded by the wisdom of the world (1 Cor. 1:18—2:16). Now Paul sees that his opponents have made such inroads with their false wisdom that he must oppose it again in the strongest terms and, at the same time, regain the loyalty and obedience of the Corinthians.

every thought into captivity. If every thought, then the whole person—our every idea, motive, desire, and decision—belongs to Christ.

■ **10:6** If the Corinthians join ranks in opposing the false apostles, Paul is ready to punish them for the harm they do.

■ **10:8** Paul knows that he must now call upon the authority Christ has given him and warn the Corinthians that he is ready to use it (v. 4 note).

■ **10:10 his speech contemptible.** Paul did not depend on the kind of trained oratory prized by the world and designed to get glory for the speaker. Those influenced by the opponents attacked Paul's ministry by saying he lacked this skill.

■ **10:11** See note on v. 4.

■ **10:12 class ourselves or compare ourselves.** Now the matter surfaces that caused Paul to defend his apostleship so vigorously. Encouraged by rival "apostles," some influential Corinthians had begun to compare these latecomers to Paul—with Paul coming out the loser. He was judged deficient as a speaker (v. 10; 11:5), weak in his relationship with the church (vacillating between boldness while absent and timidity when present, vv. 10, 11), unloving toward them (in refusing a monetary gift which, in their view, snubbed them as inferiors, 11:7–11; 12:14–18), and deficient in certain religious experiences of "power" (12:1–5 and notes). But Paul refuses to compare himself with his opponents on their shabby terms of self-boasting and self-promotion. When he yields and boasts to them (11:16–18), he does so ironically, using the form of comparison but always refusing their false values.

■ **10:13 not boast beyond measure.** Paul will take credit only for things that God has permitted him to do, but this includes having come to Corinth as their apostle. He implies that the opponents in Corinth with their boasting were intruding into his area of responsibility.

■ **10:16 beyond you.** Paul was hoping the Corinthians would prosper spiritually and become a base from which he could go on and evangelize beyond them, presumably to Rome and then to Spain (Acts 19:21; Rom. 15:22–29).

■ **10:17** A quotation from Jer. 9:24. To "glory" in something means to declare how great something is, to boast about something. All of Paul's boasting in this letter ultimately ends up giving glory to God.

■ **10:18 whom the Lord commends.** The Lord's judgment is final, and will set aside every human judgment. Paul has been careful not to make any claim except what is based on God's purposes and on what God has done. He concludes the section with the very basic principle that a person should look for the approval of God and not man (Matt. 6:1–4; John 5:44; Rom. 2:29; Gal. 1:10).

Concern for Their Faithfulness

11 Oh, that you would bear with me in a little [a]folly—and indeed you do bear with me.
2 For I am [b]jealous for you with godly jealousy. For [c]I have betrothed you to one husband, [d]that I may present *you* [e]*as* a chaste virgin to Christ. 3 But I fear, lest somehow, as [f]the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds [g]may be corrupted from the [f]simplicity that is in Christ. 4 For if he who comes preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or *if* you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a [h]different gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!

Paul and False Apostles

5 For I consider that [i]I am not at all inferior to the most eminent apostles. 6 Even though [j]*I am* untrained in speech, yet *I am* not [k]in knowledge. But [l]we have [2]been thoroughly manifested among you in all things.

7 Did I commit sin in [3]humbling myself that you might be exalted, because I preached the gospel of God to you [m]free of charge? 8 I robbed other churches, taking wages *from them* to minister to you. 9 And when I was present with you, and in need, [n]I was a burden to no one, for what I lacked [o]the brethren who came from Macedonia supplied. And in everything I kept myself from being burdensome to you, and so I will keep *myself.* 10 [p]As the truth of Christ is in me, [q]no one shall stop me from this boasting in the regions of Achaia. 11 Why? [r]Because I do not love you? God knows!

12 But what I do, I will also continue to do, [s]that I may cut off the opportunity from those who desire an opportunity to be regarded just as we are in the things of which they boast. 13 For such [t]*are* false apostles, [u]deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. 14 And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into [v]an angel of light. 15 Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, [w]whose end will be according to their works.

Reluctant Boasting

16 I say again, let no one think me a fool. If otherwise, at least receive me as a fool, that I also may boast a little. 17 What I speak, [x]I speak not according to the Lord, but as it were, foolishly, in this confidence of boasting. 18 Seeing that many boast according to the flesh, I also will boast. 19 For you put up with fools gladly, [y]since you *yourselves* are wise! 20 For you put up with it [z]if one brings you into bondage, if one devours *you,* if one takes *from you,* if one exalts himself, if one strikes you on the face. 21 To *our* shame [a]I say that we were too weak for that! But [b]in whatever anyone is bold—I speak foolishly—I am bold also.

CHAPTER 11

1 [a]2 Cor. 11:4, 16, 19

2 [b]Gal. 4:17 [c]Hos. 2:19 [d]Col. 1:28 [e]Lev. 21:13

3 [f]Gen. 3:4, 13 [g]Eph. 6:24 [1]NU adds *and purity*

4 [h]Gal. 1:6–8

5 [i]2 Cor. 12:11

6 [j][1 Cor. 1:17] [k][Eph. 3:4] [l][2 Cor. 12:12] [2]NU omits *been*

7 [m]1 Cor. 9:18 [3]*putting myself down*

9 [n]Acts 20:33 [o]Phil. 4:10

10 [p]Rom. 1:9; 9:1 [q]1 Cor. 9:15

11 [r]2 Cor. 6:11; 12:15

12 [s]1 Cor. 9:12

13 [t]Phil. 1:15 [u]Phil. 3:2

14 [v]Gal. 1:8

15 [w][Phil. 3:19]

17 [x]1 Cor. 7:6

19 [y]1 Cor. 4:10

20 [z][Gal. 2:4; 4:3, 9; 5:1]

21 [a]2 Cor. 10:10 [b]Phil. 3:4

■ **11:2 I am jealous for you.** Paul longs for the Corinthians to remain loyal to Christ. He uses a metaphor of engagement and marriage. If the Corinthians follow the false apostles they will stray from Christ and be unfaithful to Him. Then they could no longer come to Him as a "chaste virgin." It is assumed that God's ideal for marriage is no prior sexual relations—that a bride would come as a "chaste virgin" to her husband, as her husband would also come to her.

■ **11:3** Paul knows that the false apostles are a dangerous spiritual threat, comparable to the serpent (vv. 14, 15; Gal. 3:1).

■ **11:4 another Jesus . . . different spirit . . . different gospel.** The strongholds, arguments, and pretensions (10:4, 5) of Paul's opponents so distort the truth that their so-called "Jesus," "spirit," and "gospel" differ radically from what Paul has preached (1 Cor. 1:18—2:16; cf. Gal. 1:6–9). The "different gospel" of the opponents conforms to worldly ways of thinking so much that Paul and his apostolic ministry—a ministry manifesting the death of Jesus through adversity and suffering (4:7–18; 6:4–10; cf. 1 Cor. 4:8–13)—is despised and rejected in favor of ministries which satisfy the current taste for eloquence, philosophical wisdom, and spectacular displays of spiritual power (cf. 1 Cor. 1:22–25).

■ **11:5 the most eminent apostles.** There is a hint of mockery in Paul's use of this inflated title (lit. "super apostles") for his opponents in Corinth. It may even be a name they had applied to themselves. Some think that they used it to refer to the Jerusalem apostles.

■ **11:6 untrained in speech.** See note on 10:10.

■ **11:7 free of charge.** When Paul was at Corinth he supported himself (Acts 18:3) and accepted help from other churches as well (v. 8). Some of the Corinthians seem to have been offended by Paul's refusal to accept their gift, probably offered to him in response to his preaching of the gospel to them. In ancient times, gift giving and receiving were often used to establish and maintain friendships among social equals. In this system Paul's refusal of a gift might be taken as an insult, a proud refusal to be involved with inferiors. But the apostle views his relationship with the Corinthians, not from the standpoint of worldly social convention (5:16), but from the standpoint of the new creation (5:17) in which he has been called to be an apostle and spiritual father. As a father, he may rightly give to his children without receiving anything in return (12:14, 15).

■ **11:9 from Macedonia.** Probably from Philippi (Phil. 4:15, 16).

■ **11:10 this boasting.** Paul had ministered to the Corinthians at great personal sacrifice and expense—unlike the false apostles who apparently were demanding support from the church (cf. vv. 7, 20).

the regions of Achaia. The area around Corinth.

■ **11:13** Paul's opponents at Corinth are not just fellow Christians who differ in certain non-essential matters; they are actual servants of Satan inside the church, competing for its leadership.

■ **11:14** One of Satan's tricks is to claim to be doing good, and specifically to send to a church servants of his who purport to be Christians, but who bring only division, slander, immorality, and all kinds of destruction. Jesus told His disciples, "by their fruits you will know them" (Matt. 7:20; cf. Acts 20:29, 30; 2 Pet. 2).

■ **11:15 whose end.** Final judgment by God.

■ **11:20** A description of some of the bold actions of the false apostles.

22 [c]Phil. 3:4–6
23 [d]1 Cor. 15:10 [e]Acts 9:16 [f]1 Cor. 15:30
24 [g]Deut. 25:3 [h]2 Cor. 6:5
25 [i]Acts 16:22, 23; 21:32 [j]Acts 14:5, 19 [k]Acts 27:1–44
26 [l]Acts 9:23, 24; 13:45, 50; 17:5, 13 [m]Acts 14:5, 19; 19:23; 27:42
27 [n]Acts 20:31 [o]1 Cor. 4:11 [p]Acts 9:9; 13:2, 3; 14:23
28 [q]Acts 20:18
29 [r][1 Cor. 8:9, 13; 9:22]
30 [s][2 Cor. 12:5, 9, 10] [4]*weakness*
31 [t]1 Thess. 2:5 [u]Rom. 9:5
32 [v]Acts 9:19–25

CHAPTER 12

1 [a]Acts 16:9; 18:9; 22:17, 18; 23:11; 26:13–15; 27:23 [b][Gal. 1:12; 2:2] [1]NU *necessary, though not profitable, to boast*

Suffering for Christ

22 Are they [c]Hebrews? So *am* I. Are they Israelites? So *am* I. Are they the seed of Abraham? So *am* I. 23 Are they ministers of Christ?—I speak as a fool—I *am* more: [d]in labors more abundant, [e]in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, [f]in deaths often. 24 From the Jews five times I received [g]forty [h]*stripes* minus one. 25 Three times I was [i]beaten with rods; [j]once I was stoned; three times I [k]was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26 *in* journeys often, *in* perils of waters, *in* perils of robbers, [l]*in* perils of *my own* countrymen, [m]*in* perils of the Gentiles, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren; 27 in weariness and toil, [n]in sleeplessness often, [o]in hunger and thirst, in [p]fastings often, in cold and nakedness— 28 besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: [q]my deep concern for all the churches. 29 [r]Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is made to stumble, and I do not burn *with indignation?*

30 If I must boast, [s]I will boast in the things which concern my [4]infirmity. 31 [t]The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, [u]who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. 32 [v]In Damascus the governor, under Aretas the king, was guarding the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desiring to arrest me; 33 but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from his hands.

The Vision of Paradise

12 It is [1]doubtless not profitable for me to boast. I will come to [a]visions and [b]revelations of the Lord: 2 I know a man [c]in Christ who fourteen years ago—whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows—such a one [d]was caught up to the third heaven. 3 And I know such a man—whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows— 4 how he was caught up into [e]Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. 5 Of such a one I will boast; yet of myself I will not [f]boast, except in my infirmities. 6 For though I might desire to boast, I will not be a fool; for I

2 [c]Rom. 16:7 [d]Acts 22:17 4 [e]Luke 23:43 5 [f]2 Cor. 11:30

■ **11:22—12:10** This part of the letter is known as the "Fool's Speech." In it Paul describes his ministry in terms that could not possibly be equaled by the false apostles. Yet he does not boast about his own knowledge or speaking skills or other abilities, but about how much he has suffered for the sake of Christ. Here Paul's boasting is ironic—he "boasts" of things normally considered shameful, signs of weakness and defeats. Thus, his boasts are an imitation or parody of the boasting of his opponents, who praised themselves to the Corinthians in extravagant speeches. The topics in this section progress to a climax where Paul deals with what may have been uppermost in the minds of his critics—unusual religious experiences (12:1–9).

■ **11:22 Are they Hebrews.** Paul's opponents were Jews, perhaps coming from Jerusalem and claiming to be endorsed by the Jerusalem apostles.

■ **11:23–27** Paul, in recounting the marks of a true servant of Christ, points to suffering and humiliation, emphasizing again (as he did in 1 Cor. 1—4) Christ crucified.

■ **11:23** Paul reveals his extreme hesitancy to speak at all in his own behalf.

■ **11:24 forty stripes minus one.** Forty lashes was the maximum that could be inflicted on a person, according to Deut. 25:3. It was Jewish practice to set the limit a little lower as a safeguard against miscounting.

■ **11:25 beaten with rods.** One such occasion is reported in Acts 16:22.

once I was stoned. In Lystra on Paul's first missionary journey (Acts 14:19), where the crowd thought they had killed Paul.

three times I was shipwrecked. A shipwreck is found in Acts 27:39–44, but 2 Corinthians was written earlier, at the time described in Acts 20:2 (when Paul was in Macedonia). The three shipwrecks must have happened during his earlier missionary journeys.

■ **11:26** Paul's goal was not his own personal comfort or safety. Many of the hardships he records in this larger section are not recorded at all in Acts. It is hard to imagine a more hazardous existence than Paul had, yet he was obedient to God and put his life in God's hands.

false brethren. People pretending to be Christians, who came into the church to stir up trouble.

■ **11:28** Paul felt deeply the needs and suffering of his churches. His trust in God's sovereign care did not make him cold or unemotional.

■ **11:32, 33** This incident is narrated from a different standpoint in Acts 9:24, 25. Apparently Paul's Jewish opponents in Damascus persuaded the governor to cooperate in their plot against Paul. Although these two verses may seem somewhat surprising in the context, they mention Paul's first—and rather humiliating—experience of being persecuted (rather than persecuting others) for the sake of the gospel. The apostle makes a precarious escape from a relatively minor civil authority, like a common fugitive. He is not presenting himself as a hero.

■ **12:1–6** In these verses Paul continues his "boasting" with the topic of a vision of heaven. His account contains some unexpected elements. Paul is not permitted to repeat the things he heard in the vision, and afterward he receives a painful "thorn" (v. 7 note) sent by God to keep him humble.

■ **12:2 a man in Christ.** Although he speaks indirectly, Paul clearly means himself.

third heaven. According to a common enumeration, the first heaven was the atmosphere of the birds and clouds, the second was the sky in which we see the stars, and the third would be heaven, the dwelling place of God. For fourteen years Paul had not made this experience a focus of his teaching, as some would have done. His focus was the message of Christ: "we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord" (4:5).

■ **12:4 Paradise.** That is, the "third heaven" of v. 2. The Greek word for "Paradise" is used with various meanings outside the New Testament, but in the New Testament all three occurrences refer to heaven, the place where the saints dwell with God (Luke 23:43; Rev. 2:7; and here).

■ **12:6 I refrain.** Paul wanted people to evaluate him on the basis of their firsthand knowledge of him.

will speak the truth. But I refrain, lest anyone should think of me above what he sees me *to be* or hears from me.

The Thorn in the Flesh

7 And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a [g]thorn in the flesh was given to me, [h]a messenger of Satan to [2]buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. 8 [i]Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. 9 And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly [j]I will rather boast in my infirmities, [k]that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 10 Therefore [l]I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. [m]For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Signs of an Apostle

11 I have become [n]a fool [3]in boasting; you have compelled me. For I ought to have been commended by you; for [o]in nothing was I behind the most eminent apostles, though [p]I am nothing. 12 [q]Truly the signs of an apostle were accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and [r]wonders and mighty [s]deeds. 13 For what is it in which you were inferior to other churches, except that I myself was not burdensome to you? Forgive me this wrong!

Love for the Church

14 [t]Now *for* the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be burdensome to you; for [u]I do not seek yours, but you. [v]For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children. 15 And I will very gladly spend and be spent [w]for your souls; though [x]the more abundantly I love you, the less I am loved.

16 But be that *as it may,* [y]I did not burden you. Nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you by cunning! 17 Did I take advantage of you by any of those whom I sent to you? 18 I urged Titus, and sent our [z]brother with *him.* Did Titus take advantage of you? Did we not walk in the same spirit? Did *we* not *walk* in the same steps?

19 [a]Again,[4] do you think that we excuse ourselves to you? [b]We speak before God in Christ. [c]But *we do* all things, beloved, for your edification. 20 For I fear lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I wish, and *that* [d]I shall be found by you such as you do not wish; lest *there be* contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, conceits, tumults; 21 lest, when I come again, my God [e]will humble me among you, and I shall mourn for

7 [g]Ezek. 28:24 [h]Job 2:7 [2]*beat*

8 [i]Matt. 26:44

9 [j]2 Cor. 11:30 [k][1 Pet. 4:14]

10 [l][Rom. 5:3; 8:35] [m]2 Cor. 13:4

11 [n]2 Cor. 5:13; 11:1, 16; 12:6 [o]2 Cor. 11:5 [p]1 Cor. 3:7; 13:2; 15:9 [3]NU omits *in boasting*

12 [q]Rom. 15:18 [r]Acts 15:12 [s]Acts 14:8–10; 16:16–18; 19:11, 12; 20:6–12; 28:1–10

14 [t]2 Cor. 1:15; 13:1, 2 [u][1 Cor. 10:24–33] [v]1 Cor. 4:14

15 [w][2 Tim. 2:10] [x]2 Cor. 6:12, 13

16 [y]2 Cor. 11:9

18 [z]2 Cor. 8:18

19 [a]2 Cor. 5:12 [b][Rom. 9:1, 2] [c]1 Cor. 10:33 [4]NU *You have been thinking for a long time that we*

20 [d]1 Cor. 4:21

21 [e]2 Cor. 2:1, 4

■ **12:7 a thorn in the flesh.** Many possibilities have been suggested for this "thorn," such as a physical ailment of some sort ("in the flesh"), a harassing demon ("a messenger of Satan"), or the constant harassment of Jewish persecutors. Throughout the history of the church no agreement has been reached among hundreds of commentators. As it stands, the "thorn" of Paul's experiences is readily applied to a variety of trials faced in this life. Few of God's servants have been free from at least some kind of hindrance, weakness, or opposition.

■ **12:8 the Lord.** Paul's usual expression to refer to Christ, not to God the Father. Although prayers in the New Testament are most often directed to God the Father, this is an example of prayer directed to Christ (others are in Acts 1:24; 7:59; 1 Cor. 16:22; Rev. 22:20). It is striking that in his "boasting" Paul testifies about a request God did not fulfill.

■ **12:9 My strength is made perfect in weakness.** God will accomplish His purposes without taking from His servant the thorn that seems to hinder him. Despite human weaknesses, God's grace attains His purposes in a fallen world. This promise from God no doubt gave Paul strength and encouragement in subsequent sufferings. Paul shortly ties the general principle to its source—the cross of Christ (13:4). Paul's whole response to attacks on his apostolic authority has been patterned consciously on Christ, and Him crucified, and not on the so-called "Jesus" and the different "gospel" that his opponents have foisted on the erring Corinthians (11:4 note).

■ **12:10** Paul's spiritual view was so clear that he could see his sufferings as reasons for rejoicing, because he knew that in them all of Christ's power was at work.

■ **12:11 you have compelled me.** Paul had to "boast" about his apostolic weakness because the Corinthians, who knew him well, had not defended him against the false apostles, but instead had been seduced (11:1–3) by inflated self-claims and untrue criticism of Paul.

■ **12:12 the signs of an apostle.** According to common understanding, the "signs of an apostle" were simply miracles, "wonders and mighty deeds." Yet throughout this epistle Paul points to other marks that distinguish him from the false apostles: the changed lives of the Corinthians (3:2, 3), the blameless character of his ministry (6:3–10; 7:2; 8:20, 21), his genuine love for his churches (6:11, 12; 7:3; 11:7–11), and his sacrificial endurance of suffering (6:3–10; 11:23–33). In addition to these marks, Paul is ready to mention miraculous signs, but not to dwell on them. See 1 Cor. 13:2; "The Apostles" at Acts 1:26.

■ **12:14 for the third time.** See Introduction: Date and Occasion. The first visit was on Paul's second missionary journey (Acts 18:1–18). The second visit is not recorded but occurred sometime during Paul's stay at Ephesus (Acts 19:1–41).

I do not seek yours, but you. Unlike those preachers whose goal was their own financial reward.

■ **12:16 I caught you by cunning.** Perhaps Paul's opponents were saying that his apparent selflessness was a trick to deceive them. Paul answers that he never exploited them through others (v.17).

■ **12:18** Titus was coming ahead of Paul (8:6, 16, 17).

■ **12:19** Paul again emphasizes that he has not been speaking for his own reputation or glory but for the good of the church and for the glory of God. Again he reveals a strong awareness that all he writes and does is "before God."

■ **12:21** Paul's fatherly ties with the Corinthian church are strong, and he knows that if he returns to find some of them (his "children," v. 14) still unruly, it will be humiliating for him, just as parents are humiliated by the misbehavior of their children.

many who have sinned before and have not repented. False apostles were not the only problem in Corinth. There were some people still engaging in sin, and Paul warns them.

21 [f]2 Cor. 13:2 [g]1 Cor. 5:1

CHAPTER 13

1 [a]2 Cor. 12:14 [b]Deut. 17:6; 19:15

2 [c]2 Cor. 10:2 [d]2 Cor. 12:21 [e]2 Cor. 1:23; 10:11 [1]NU omits *I write*

3 [f]Matt. 10:20 [g][1 Cor. 9:2]

4 [h][1 Pet. 3:18] [i][Rom. 1:4; 6:4] [j][2 Cor. 10:3, 4]

5 [k][Gal. 4:19] [l]1 Cor. 9:27 [2]*do not stand the test*

7 [m]2 Cor. 6:9 [3]NU *we*

9 [n]1 Cor. 4:10 [o][1 Thess. 3:10]

10 [p]1 Cor. 4:21 [q]2 Cor. 10:8

11 [r]Rom. 12:16, 18 [s]Rom. 15:33

12 [t]Rom. 16:16

14 [u]Rom. 16:24 [v]Phil. 2:1 [4]*fellowship*

many [f]who have sinned before and have not repented of the uncleanness, [g]fornication, and lewdness which they have practiced.

Coming with Authority

13 This *will be* [a]the third *time* I am coming to you. [b]*"By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established."* [2][c]I have told you before, and foretell as if I were present the second time, and now being absent [d]I write to those [d]who have sinned before, and to all the rest, that if I come again [e]I will not spare— [3]since you seek a proof of Christ [f]speaking in me, who is not weak toward you, but mighty [g]in you. [4][h]For though He was crucified in weakness, yet [i]He lives by the power of God. For [j]we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you.

[5]Examine yourselves *as to* whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, [k]that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you [2]are [l]disqualified. [6]But I trust that you will know that we are not disqualified.

Paul Prefers Gentleness

[7]Now [3]I pray to God that you do no evil, not that we should appear approved, but that you should do what is honorable, though [m]we may seem disqualified. [8]For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. [9]For we are glad [n]when we are weak and you are strong. And this also we pray, [o]that you may be made complete. [10][p]Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the [q]authority which the Lord has given me for edification and not for destruction.

Greetings and Benediction

[11]Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. [r]Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love [s]and peace will be with you.

[12][t]Greet one another with a holy kiss.

[13]All the saints greet you.

[14][u]The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and [v]the [4]communion of the Holy Spirit *be* with you all. Amen.

■ **13:1 the third time.** See note on 12:14. Paul quotes Deut. 17:6 and 19:15. The "two or three witnesses" very likely does not mean Paul's two or three visits to Corinth (for Paul is still only one witness), but is rather a reminder that when he comes all charges will be considered fairly and dealt with in a just way.

■ **13:3 Christ speaking in me.** A strong statement of Paul's apostolic authority. Christ Himself was speaking through Paul, and Christ's words through Paul would powerfully silence any offenders.

■ **13:4** Paul's life (as that of all Christians) was united with Christ in His death and resurrection, and he continued to share in the resurrection power of Christ as long as he lived.

■ **13:5 Examine . . . Test.** See 1 Cor. 11:28; Gal. 6:4. Paul's words help clarify the doctrine of assurance of faith. Paul asks the Corinthians to examine their own lives for evidence of salvation. Such evidence would include trust in Christ (Heb. 3:6), obedience to God (Matt. 7:21), growth in holiness (Heb. 12:14; 1 John 3:3), the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22, 23), love for other Christians (1 John 3:14), positive influence on others (Matt. 5:16), adhering to the apostolic teaching (1 John 4:2), and the testimony of the Holy Spirit within them (Rom. 8:15, 16).

■ **13:13 All the saints.** Christians in the church from which Paul was writing (Introduction: Date and Occasion).

■ **13:14** A trinitarian benediction. See "One and Three: The Trinity" at Is. 44:6.

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the

GALATIANS

Author The apostle Paul wrote Galatians (1:1). He mentions a group of his coworkers who had some role in sending the letter (1:2), but the letter's style and theology demonstrate that Paul was the immediate author. Since the eighteenth century, a few scholars have considered the letter pseudonymous (that is, that the name "Paul" was used by another, unknown author) but their arguments are generally regarded as having no foundation.

Date and Occasion The question of the letter's date is intertwined with the problem of its destination. Paul names his addressees as "Galatians" (3:1; cf. 1:2), but to which "Galatians" was he writing? He may have been writing specifically to the Celtic people who lived in northern Galatia and who were widely known as "Galatians," or he might have been addressing the people who lived in the entire province of Galatia. When we follow the course of Paul's first and second missionary journeys (Acts 13; 14; 15:36—18:22) we discover that this question has implications for the epistle's date and for its relationship to Paul's other letters. Paul visited Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe (all cities in south Galatia) on his first and second missionary journeys. If Paul wrote to southern Galatia, he probably wrote to those churches early in his career, shortly after the first missionary journey, or about the time of the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15; cf. Gal. 2:11–14). The date most often given by those who hold this view is A.D. 49. If this is correct, Galatians may be Paul's earliest epistle in existence today.

Many scholars think that Galatians was written to the ethnic Galatians in the north. If this view is correct, Paul probably wrote the letter after passing through "Galatia and Phrygia" (Acts 18:23) on his third missionary journey. Many who follow the "north Galatian theory" believe that Paul wrote the letter either during his two-year stay in Ephesus (Acts 19) or as he was traveling through Macedonia on his way to Greece at the end of his third missionary journey (Acts 20:1–6; cf. 2 Cor. 2:13). If this is correct, Galatians was probably written in A.D. 54 or 55. Theories that date the letter late in Paul's career have the merit of placing Galatians in the same period as 2 Corinthians, Romans, and perhaps Philippians—letters that share with Galatians some matters of common concern.

Galatians was written to answer specific problems in particular churches. In order to understand the epistle, some knowledge of the situation that provoked Paul to write is essential. Not long after the Galatians had accepted the gospel, agitators came among them who attacked Paul personally (4:17) and preached a distorted form of Christianity (1:6, 7). Their "gospel" required circumcision for salvation (6:12). Since the Galatians were uncircumcised Gentiles, the agitators insisted that the Galatians not only believe in Christ for salvation but also accept circumcision (2:3–5; 5:2, 6, 11; 6:12, 13, 15).

The zeal of these agitators likely reflects Jewish pressure as well as their own pride. Probably they were attempting to convert the Gentile Galatians to Judaism under pressure from nationalistic Jewish groups in Judea who, according to the Jewish historian Josephus, were becoming increasingly intolerant of contact between Jews and Gentiles during the last half of the first century.

The agitators were not content merely to preach their brand of the gospel. They also attempted to discredit Paul, who had founded the Galatian churches (4:17). Their attacks took three forms: First, they claimed that Paul was a renegade who had defied his superiors, the Jerusalem apostles. Paul responds to this attack in 1:11—2:10. Second, they said that Paul had recently argued with Peter over whether the gospel required Gentiles to become Jews in order to become Christians. Paul gives his account of the encounter with Peter in 2:11–14. Third, the agitators spread the notion that Paul had originally preached circumcision for salvation (5:11) but had recently changed his gospel so that he might more easily accommodate the Gentiles (1:10).

The Galatians, for their part, were showing interest both in the rumors about Paul and in the agitators' new form of the gospel. By the time Paul wrote, they were in the process of deserting the true gospel and, consequently, God Himself (1:6, 7). They now wanted to be "under the law" (4:21; cf. 5:1) and, specifically, to become circumcised (5:2). This transition to "a different gospel" (1:6) was not smooth. Dissension appears to have broken out within the community (5:15; 6:3–5).

Paul's purpose in writing was to persuade the Galatians that no Gentile needs to accept circumcision in order to belong to God's covenant people. The "truth of the gospel" (2:5, 14) is that entrance into communion with the people of God comes by faith in Jesus Christ. Anyone who seeks to violate that sacred sphere of faith by adding other requirements adulterates the gospel and must be resisted at all costs (1:8, 9). In order for his argument to be persuasive, Paul had to demonstrate that the rumors about him were false, and that both his gospel and his authority to preach it came from God Himself (1:11—2:14; cf. 5:11; 6:17).

Characteristics and Themes

The Galatian letter stands like a sentinel over the truth that salvation is the gift of God's grace, unearned and undeserved, to be received by faith alone (2:15, 16). Indeed, faith itself is God's free gift (1:3, 6, 15; 2:19, 21; 6:18). Quite simply, this is "the truth of the gospel" (2:5, 14). Paul shows deep anger over the agitators' denial of it (3:1; 5:12), warning that those who reject it cannot expect to be saved (1:8; 5:4).

Faith alone is the key because Christ alone is the Savior. He bore the curse of the law in our place on the cross (3:13; 6:14). Made one with Him, we are clothed with His righteousness (3:26, 27), our sure hope (5:5). Because we are united to Christ, we receive the rights of His sonship (4:4, 5), and the Spirit of the Son becomes ours, enabling us to live in the Spirit, in fellowship with our Lord (2:20; 4:6, 7; 5:16–18, 25). The gift of the Spirit is the full blessing promised long ago to Abraham (3:6–9, 14). Against the proud imagination of sinners that they can earn their own salvation by keeping God's law, Paul boasts only in the cross, in faith receiving the promise of God (6:14). □

Outline of Galatians

I. Salutation (1:1–5)
II. The Problem in Galatia: Another Gospel from False Teachers (1:6–9)
III. Defense of Paul's Apostleship (1:10—2:14)
  A. Paul Seeks God's Approval Rather than Man's (1:10)
  B. Paul Not Dependent upon the Jerusalem Apostles for His Authority (1:11—2:14)
    1. Called by God (1:11–16)
    2. Jerusalem Authorities Added Nothing to His Original Calling (1:17—2:10)
    3. Paul's Authority Demonstrated by His Challenge of Peter's Error (2:11–14)
IV. Paul's Defense of the Gospel (2:15—6:10)
  A. Peace with God Comes Through Faith in Jesus Christ for Jew and Gentile Alike (2:15–21)
  B. Justification Through Faith Has Replaced Condemnation Under Law (3:1—5:12)
    1. The Spirit's Presence Proves Faith's Effectiveness (3:1–5)
    2. Abraham's Faith Proves Faith's Effectiveness (3:6–9)
    3. Curse of the Law Proves the Ineffectiveness of Works (3:10–14)
    4. Promise to Abraham Has Priority Over Condemnation by the Law (3:15—4:7)
    5. First Personal Appeal Not to Abandon the Gospel (4:8–20)
    6. A Scriptural Proof (4:21—5:1)
    7. Second Personal Appeal Not to Abandon the Gospel (5:2–12)
  C. Practical Effects of the Gospel (5:13—6:10)
    1. Love Fulfills the Law (5:13–15)
    2. The Spirit Struggles with the Flesh (5:16–26)
    3. Church Works in Harmony (6:1–10)
V. Conclusion (6:11–18)
  A. Third Personal Appeal Not to Abandon the Gospel (6:11–17)
  B. Benediction (6:18)

Greeting

CHAPTER 1

PAUL, an apostle (not from men nor through man, but [a]through Jesus Christ and God the Father [b]who raised Him from the dead), [2] and all the brethren who are with me,

To the churches of Galatia:

[3] Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, [4] [c]who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us [d]from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, [5] to whom *be* glory forever and ever. Amen.

Only One Gospel

[6] I marvel that you are turning away so soon [e]from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, [7] [f]which is not another; but there are some [g]who trouble you and want to [h]pervert[i] the gospel of Christ. [8] But even if [j]we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other

1 [a]Acts 9:6 [b]Acts 2:24
4 [c][Matt. 20:28] [d]Heb. 2:5
6 [e][Rom. 8:28]; Gal. 1:15; 5:8
7 [f]2 Cor. 11:4 [g]Acts 15:1; Gal. 5:10, 12 [h]2 Cor. 2:17 [i]*distort*
8 [j]1 Cor. 16:22

■ **1:1 Paul.** We know from fifteen references in Acts 7—13 that Paul was also called "Saul." In his letters, however, he always calls himself "Paul," a common Roman name.

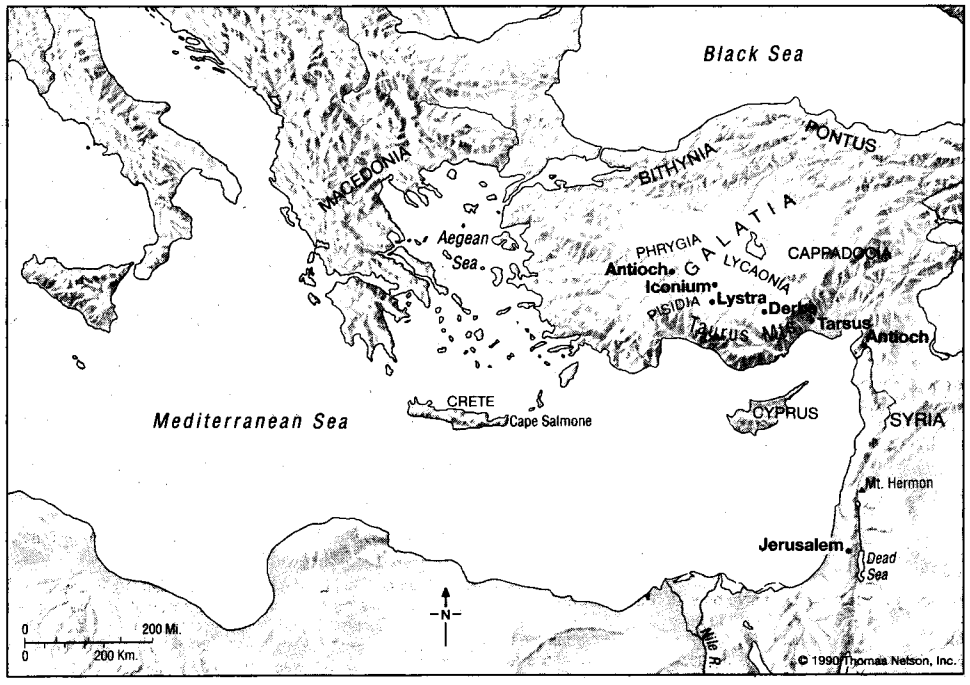
apostle. The word means "messenger." Paul could on occasion use it to refer to an envoy such as Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25), but he uses it here to denote the original apostles at Jerusalem (1:19; 1 Cor. 15:9). Paul claims the authority of an apostle to lay the foundation of the church (1 Cor. 3:10; 9:1; 14:37, 38; Eph. 2:20; 3:3–5). His apostleship and calling came from God Himself (1:11—2:10). See 2 Cor. 1:1 note.

■ **1:3 Grace to you and peace.** Each of Paul's letters begins with a reference to these two blessings from God. "Grace" translates the Greek *charis*, which means "an undeserved act of kindness." Paul uses this word more often than any other New Testament writer and gives it immense theological significance. It refers to all that God has given us in Christ, nothing of which we have earned or can repay. "Peace" refers to the relationship that Christ's death and resurrection (1:4) have established with God for those who believe the gospel. For Paul's own comments on the meaning of these two terms, see Rom. 5:1, 2.

■ **1:6 called you in the grace.** God's grace comes to us at His initiative, by His call, and not because of anything we have done to deserve it (1:15; Rom. 4:4–8; 8:30; 9:11–13).

■ **1:7 some who trouble.** Probably Jewish Christians from Jerusalem who insisted that Gentiles must not only believe in Jesus Christ but must also accept circumcision and thereby become Jews (2:3–5, 12; 6:12, 13). Various shades of this idea were widespread among early Jewish Christians (Acts 15:1; 21:20, 21; Phil. 3:2, 3).

■ **1:8, 9** Those who add any additional requirements for salvation to faith in Jesus Christ, no matter how excellent their credentials, twist the gospel into another form. The preachers of the false gospel are under God's condemnation.



The Churches of Galatia. Two possible regions are suggested for locating the "churches of Galatia." The "North Galatia" theory suggests a territory in the heart of Asia Minor whose boundaries included Bithynia and Pontus on the north, Phrygia on the southwest, and Cappadocia on the east. The "South Galatia" theory understands Galatia to refer to the Roman province of Paul's day which included Pisidia, Lycaonia, and parts of Phrygia and Cappadocia.

gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be [2]accursed. [9] As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you [j]than what you have received, let him be accursed.

[10] For [k]do I now [l]persuade men, or God? Or [m]do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.

Call to Apostleship

[11] [n]But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. [12] For [o]I neither received it from man, nor was I taught *it,* but *it came* [p]through the revelation of Jesus Christ.

[13] For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how [q]I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and [r]*tried to* destroy it. [14] And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, [s]being more exceedingly zealous [t]for the traditions of my fathers.

[15] But when it pleased God, [u]who separated me from my mother's womb and called *me* through His grace, [16] [v]to reveal His Son in me, that [w]I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with [x]flesh and blood, [17] nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those *who were* apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.

Contacts at Jerusalem

[18] Then after three years [y]I went up to Jerusalem to see [3]Peter, and remained with him fifteen days. [19] But [z]I saw none of the other apostles except [a]James, the Lord's brother. [20] (Now *concerning* the things which I write to you, indeed, before God, I do not lie.)

[21] [b]Afterward I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. [22] And I was unknown by face to

8 [2]Gr. *anathema*
9 [j]Deut. 4:2
10 [k]1 Thess. 2:4 [l]1 Sam. 24:7 [m]1 Thess. 2:4
11 [n]1 Cor. 15:1
12 [o]1 Cor. 15:1 [p][Eph. 3:3–5]
13 [q]Acts 9:1 [r]Acts 8:3; 22:4, 5
14 [s]Acts 26:9 [t]Jer. 9:14
15 [u]Is. 49:1, 5
16 [v][2 Cor. 4:5–7] [w]Acts 9:15 [x]Matt. 16:17
18 [y]Acts 9:26 [3]NU *Cephas*
19 [z]1 Cor. 9:5 [a]Matt. 13:55
21 [b]Acts 9:30

■ **1:9 accursed.** Paul's usual thanksgiving for his readers is here replaced by the threat of a curse, repeated for emphasis. The Greek word is *anathema,* used also in Rom. 9:3.

■ **1:10 seek to please men.** Paul's opponents in Galatia attacked not only the gospel but also its messenger, Paul. One of their charges was that Paul preached an easy form of the gospel, requiring neither circumcision nor obedience to the Sabbath laws and dietary restrictions (4:10; 5:11).

■ **1:11 not according to man.** Paul defends himself against his opponents' charge that he is in rebellion against the Jerusalem apostles who gave him his authority in the first place. Paul contends that his authority comes from God alone, the Jerusalem apostles merely confirming it.

■ **1:12 through the revelation.** See Acts 9:3–5; 22:6–10; 26:13–18; 1 Cor. 15:8.

■ **1:13 persecuted the church of God.** Paul's persecution of the church before his call was well known to the early Christians (Acts 7:58; 8:3; 9:1, 2). Paul himself was profoundly ashamed of this part of his past (1 Cor. 15:9), although he looked on it as evidence that God's grace can overcome even the most rebellious sinners (Acts 22:4, 5; 26:9–11; 1 Cor. 15:10; Phil. 3:6; 1 Tim. 1:13, 14).

■ **1:14 exceedingly zealous.** Paul was fond of pointing out to opponents like those in Galatia that being a Jew, even a zealous Jew, is not sufficient for salvation. Paul considered his own experience proof that zeal for the law would not save (Rom. 9:30—10:4; 2 Cor. 11:22; Phil. 3:4–6).

■ **1:15 from my mother's womb.** Paul consciously echoes the call of Jeremiah (Jer. 1:5) and, perhaps, the Servant spoken of by Isaiah (Is. 49:1, 5), who both like Paul were called to be God's messengers to Gentiles. Paul was conscious that his apostleship (v. 1 note) was in continuity with the Old Testament prophetic tradition.

called me through His grace. See note on v. 3; "Effectual Calling and Conversion" at 2 Thess. 2:14. Paul's call to be an apostle, like the faith of every believer, was the product of God's prior grace. Before our birth, and therefore before we could do anything good or bad, God chose to create faith in us (Rom. 9:10–13; Eph. 1:4–6). No one can earn God's call; it is a free gift.

■ **1:16 Gentiles.** Both "nations" and "Gentiles" are correct translations of the Greek word used here. Jewish writers used the term to refer to everyone that was not a Jew. Paul was called to preach to the Gentiles (2:9; Acts 9:15; 22:21; 26:17; Rom. 1:5; 15:16), but he did not regard this as a call to preach exclusively to Gentiles. In Acts 13—28 he frequently preaches to Jews, and such passages as Rom. 1:14–16; 9:1–5; 1 Cor. 9:20 show that he was ready to evangelize Jews.

confer with flesh and blood. Paul did, of course, meet with Ananias three days after his conversion (Acts 9:10–19; 22:12–16). The word translated "confer," however, suggests laying something before someone or submitting it for comment and approval. Paul certainly did not consult Ananias in this sense. Ananias's role was to confirm Paul's calling to preach to the Gentiles and to baptize him.

■ **1:17 Jerusalem . . . Arabia . . . Damascus.** Paul's conversion and call took place near Damascus (Acts 9:3; 22:6; 26:12). He spent several days in the city after his conversion (Acts 9:19). This ancient city is on a fertile plain between two rivers, and the traveler from there must literally "go up" to Jerusalem in the Palestinian highlands. Jerusalem was the cultural and religious center of Palestine, and home to James, Peter, and John, who are prominent in Acts and Galatians as leaders of the early Christian community in Jerusalem (2:9). Paul stresses that his call to preach to the Gentiles came from God and not from the leaders of the Jerusalem church. Arabia was ruled by a Nabatean king, Aretas IV, who struggled with Rome for control of Damascus. When Paul was converted, Aretas's governor was in control of the city and apparently aided angry Jews in an effort to kill Paul (Acts 9:23–25; 2 Cor. 11:32, 33).

■ **1:18 three years.** The "many days" of Acts 9:23.

to Jerusalem. Paul's first trip to Jerusalem after his conversion (Acts 9:26–30).

see. This translates a Greek word that means visiting someone for the purpose of getting information. Paul may have interviewed Peter about Jesus' life and teaching.

Peter. Peter's Aramaic name was "Cephas" (see text note). Both "Cephas" and "Peter" mean "rock."

■ **1:19 James, the Lord's brother.** See Matt. 13:55 and Mark 6:3. This James is not the disciple James who is frequently coupled with Peter and John in the Gospels. Herod murdered that James in the church's earliest days (Acts 12:2). James, the Lord's brother, at first did not believe in Jesus (John 7:5) but later was converted, perhaps as a result of seeing the risen Lord (1 Cor. 15:7).

■ **1:21 Syria and Cilicia.** See Acts 9:30. Paul returned home to Tarsus (Acts 9:11; 21:39; 22:3), the most important city in Cilicia. This part of Cilicia was under the administration of the Roman province of Syria during the early first century. Paul's use of the two names is accurate.

■ **1:22 Judea.** Paul could be referring to the specific region of Old Tes-

the churches of Judea which [c]*were* in Christ. 23 But they were [d]hearing only, "He who formerly [e]persecuted us now preaches the faith which he once *tried to* destroy." 24 And they [f]glorified God in me.

Defending the Gospel

2 Then after fourteen years [a]I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and also took Titus with *me.* 2 And I went up [1]by revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but [b]privately to those who were of reputation, lest by any means [c]I might run, or had run, in vain. 3 Yet not even Titus who *was* with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. 4 And *this occurred* because of [d]false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our [e]liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, [f]that they might bring us into bondage), 5 to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that [g]the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

6 But from those [h]who seemed to be something—whatever they were, it makes no difference to me; [i]God [2]shows personal favoritism to no man—for those who seemed *to be something* [j]added nothing to me. 7 But on the contrary, [k]when they saw that the gospel for the uncircumcised [l]had been committed to me, as *the gospel* for the circumcised *was* to Peter 8 (for He who worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the [m]circumcised [n]also [o]worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles), 9 and when James, [3]Cephas, and John, who seemed to be [p]pillars, perceived [q]the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, [r]that we *should go* to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. 10 *They desired* only that we should remember the poor, [s]the very thing which I also was eager to do.

22 [c]Rom. 16:7
23 [d]Acts 9:20, 21 [e]Acts 8:3
24 [f]Acts 11:18

CHAPTER 2

1 [a]Acts 15:2
2 [b]Acts 15:1–4 [c]Phil. 2:16 [1]*because of*
4 [d]Acts 15:1, 24 [e]Gal. 3:25; 5:1, 13 [f]Gal. 4:3, 9
5 [g][Gal. 1:6; 2:14; 3:1]
6 [h]Gal. 2:9; 6:3 [i]Acts 10:34 [j]2 Cor. 11:5; 12:11 [2]Lit. *does not receive the face of a man*
7 [k]Acts 9:15; 13:46; 22:21 [l]1 Thess. 2:4

8 [m]1 Pet. 1:1 [n]Acts 9:15 [o][Gal. 3:5] 9 [p]Matt. 16:18 [q]Rom. 1:5 [r]Acts 13:3 [3]Peter 10 [s]Acts 11:30

tament Judah, or to the Roman province of Judea, which included ancient Judah, Samaria, and Galilee.

■ **2:1 fourteen years.** Either after his conversion or after his first visit to Jerusalem.

again to Jerusalem. This may refer to a second visit following his conversion, or to a third visit, recorded in Acts 15:2. The purpose of the visit mentioned here corresponds well with the purpose of the visit in Acts 15, but it is difficult, on this theory, to explain why Paul leaves the second visit (Acts 11:27–30) out of his narrative. If, as some scholars believe, Galatians was written after Paul's first missionary journey (Acts 13; 14) but before the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15), then the journey spoken of here is the Acts 11 journey, and the Acts 15 journey has not yet occurred.

Barnabas. A native of Cyprus and one of the earliest Christians (Acts 4:36). Barnabas's name means in Aramaic "Son of Encouragement," and his appearances in Acts demonstrate that he lived up to his name (Acts 4:36, 37; 11:22–24, 30).

Titus. Although not mentioned in Acts, Titus was one of Paul's trusted companions and messengers. See 2 Cor. 2:12, 13; 7:6; 8:6; Titus 1:4, 5.

■ **2:2 by revelation.** If this is the Acts 11 visit, the revelation may have been the prophecy of Agabus (11:28). If not, it was probably similar to other special revelations that Paul received from God (Acts 9:4–6; 16:9; 18:9, 10; 2 Cor. 12:1–6).

in vain. While the Jerusalem leaders were not the source of Paul's authority, his efforts to preach the gospel would have been hindered if these influential men had opposed him.

■ **2:3 compelled to be circumcised.** See 5:12 and Acts 15:1. Circumcision was the distinguishing mark of the Jew, and the final step in the conversion of a male Gentile to the Jewish religion. Some Jewish Christians believed that Gentiles also had to accept circumcision and thus become Jews before they could be Christians and belong to God's chosen people. Paul was vehemently opposed to this teaching and maintains throughout Galatians that we are justified by faith in Christ alone.

■ **2:4 false brethren.** Paul considered the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith alone to be so important that he excluded from the church all who did not hold to it (1:8, 9; 5:2–4).

liberty. The freedom of the believer is not freedom to sin, but freedom from the curse the law pronounces on sin (3:10–14; 5:1, 13).

bondage. Probably bondage to sin (Rom. 6:15–23; 7:25) and to the curse that the law pronounces on those who sin (3:10).

■ **2:5 truth of the gospel.** See v. 14; 1:8, 9 and notes. Entrance into the community of God's covenant people (the church) comes only by faith that is graciously given to the believer by God (1:6, 15; Eph. 2:8). Any attempt to add entrance requirements, such as circumcision, is a denial of the sufficiency of faith in Christ's merits for satisfying God's justice, and therefore is a perversion of the gospel.

■ **2:6 personal favoritism.** Just as the external mark of circumcision does not define the boundary of God's people, so worldly prestige is not important to God (1 Sam. 16:7; Rom. 2:25–29).

■ **2:7 the uncircumcised.** See note on 1:16.

circumcised . . . to Peter. Peter was apparently the chief spokesman of the early Jerusalem church (Acts 1—12). Only with great reluctance did he respond to God's command to associate with the Gentile Cornelius (Acts 10). Although Peter recognized the necessity of including Gentiles within God's people (Acts 10:34, 35; 11:17; 15:7–11), he evidently felt God's call to preach the gospel specifically to Jews.

■ **2:9 James, Cephas, and John.** See notes on v. 7; 1:18, 19. These three men had special authority in the early Jerusalem church. Peter and John are frequently seen together (Acts 3; 4), and James was prominent in the Jerusalem church (Acts 12:17; 15:13; 21:18). "Pillars" was used as a metaphor in Greek as in English for persons in important leadership positions.

grace . . . given to me. Regarding Paul's conversion and call, see 1:15 and note. Paul frequently referred to his call as God's grace, given to him (Rom. 1:5; 12:3; 15:15, 16; 1 Cor. 3:10).

we should go to the Gentiles. Barnabas, like Paul, was chiefly a missionary to the Gentiles (Acts 13; 14; 15:36–41).

■ **2:10 remember the poor.** Some refer these words to the purpose of Paul's second visit to Jerusalem (Acts 11:27–30). On that visit, Paul and Barnabas were commissioned to take an offering from Antioch to the Christians in Judea who were suffering because of a famine. In this case,

11 [t]Acts 15:35 [4]NU *Cephas*
[5]*opposed*
12 [u][Acts 10:28; 11:2, 3] [6]Jewish Christians
14 [v]Gal. 1:6; 2:5 [w]1 Tim. 5:20 [x][Acts 10:28] [7]NU *how can you* [8]Some interpreters stop the quotation here.
15 [y][Acts 15:10] [z]Matt. 9:11
16 [a]Acts 13:38, 39 [b]Rom. 1:17 [c]Ps. 143:2 [9]*declared righteous*
17 [d][1 John 3:8]
19 [e]Rom. 8:2 [f][Rom. 6:2, 14; 7:4] [g][Rom. 6:11]

No Return to the Law

11 [t]Now when [4]Peter had come to Antioch, I [5]withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; 12 for before certain men came from James, [u]he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing [6]those who were of the circumcision. 13 And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.

14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about [v]the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter [w]before *them* all, [x]"If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, [7]why do you compel Gentiles to live as [8]Jews? 15 [y]We *who are* Jews by nature, and not [z]sinners of the Gentiles, 16 [a]knowing that a man is not [9]justified by the works of the law but [b]by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not [c]by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

17 "But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found [d]sinners, *is* Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not! 18 For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. 19 For I [e]through the law [f]died to the law that I might [g]live to God. 20 I have been [h]crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh [i]I live by faith in the Son of God, [j]who loved me and gave Himself for me. 21 I do not set aside the grace of God; for [k]if righteousness *comes* through the law, then Christ died [l]in vain."

20 [h][Rom. 6:6] [i]2 Cor. 5:15 [j]Eph. 5:2 21 [k]Heb. 7:11 [l]*for nothing*

the poverty of which Paul speaks would be literal poverty. Others believe that these words refer to Paul's collection for the Jerusalem saints (Acts 24:17; Rom. 15:26; 1 Cor. 16:1–3; 2 Cor. 8; 9), to which the Galatians contributed (1 Cor. 16:1).

■ **2:11 Antioch.** The capital of the Roman province of Syria and the largest city of that province. Antioch was home to a large Jewish community and, not surprisingly, was the first place mentioned in Acts where Jewish Christians preached the gospel to Gentiles (Acts 11:19, 20). Not only was the church at Antioch the first church in our records to bring Jewish and Gentile Christians together in worship and fellowship, but, as far as we know, it was the first church to send missionaries to preach the gospel specifically to Gentiles (Acts 13:1–3).

■ **2:12 withdrew.** Many Jewish Christians resisted God's commandment that Gentiles who believed in Christ should be received without having to follow the ceremonial law (Acts 10:28; 11:2, 3, 19; 15:1). Both Peter and Barnabas (v. 13) succumbed to pressure from a group that believed that to be circumcised, that is, to become a full Jewish proselyte, was necessary for becoming a Christian.

■ **2:14 truth of the gospel.** See note on v. 5.

live in the manner of Gentiles. Before the arrival of the "circumcision" group Peter had eaten freely with Gentiles (v. 12). Now, inconsistently, he was acting as if Gentiles must become Jews in order to become full members of God's people.

■ **2:15, 16** These verses are central in Galatians. Paul's point is that everyone (circumcised Jew as well as uncircumcised Gentile) is placed in a right relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ alone. The Greek words translated "righteousness," "righteous," "justify," and "justification" are all from the same root and have related meanings.

■ **2:16** See "Faith and Works" at James 2:24. In the Old Testament, God rules and judges with perfect justice (1 Sam. 26:23), and pronounces His verdict of innocence or guilt. To "justify" is to declare to be right (Deut. 25:1). But if no one living is righteous before God (Ps. 143:2), how can there be hope of that verdict (Job 9:2)? As God is the Judge, whose verdict is final and just, so He is the Savior who can provide deliverance from His own judgment (Jon. 2:9). God's righteousness is revealed, not only as His requirement, but as His gift (Is. 45:24, 25; 54:14–17). That gift comes at last through the Messiah (Is. 53:8; Jer. 23:5, 6; 33:14–16). Paul proclaims the fulfillment of the Old Testament promise (Rom. 3:21–26). Faith receives the gift of Christ's righteousness as well as forgiveness through His atonement.

works of the law. Paul has been referring to the "works" that distinguish Jews from Gentiles (v. 15), such as circumcision, dietary restrictions, and Sabbath-keeping. His phrase, however, includes all the efforts of fallen humanity to keep God's law so as to merit His justifying verdict.

no flesh shall be justified. A near quotation of Ps. 143:2. No one can keep the law fully, so legal observances such as circumcision cannot establish a right relationship with God. Something other than the law is needed for that, and God has provided it in the gift of Christ's righteousness and the blood of His atonement. Faith does not *merit* God's acceptance; it *accepts* Christ's merit before God (Phil. 3:9).

■ **2:17 we . . . are found sinners.** The Galatian agitators and the "men . . . from James" (v. 12) considered Paul a "sinner" (like the Gentiles of v. 15) for breaking the Jewish dietary food laws. They had probably also accused Paul's gospel of promoting sin (Rom. 3:8).

■ **2:18 destroyed.** The Greek word translated "destroyed" is used in the New Testament to mean the tearing down of an edifice (Matt. 24:2; Mark 13:2; Luke 21:6; Rom. 14:20). Paul may be thinking of Peter's mistaken attempt to rebuild the wall between Jew and Gentile that was torn down by the gospel (v. 14; Eph. 2:14). To rebuild the wall of the law is to bring in again the condemnation of the law. The lawbreaker is not the one who turns from the law to Christ for justification; it is the one who turns back again from Christ to the law.

■ **2:19** Paul died to the law in the death of Christ; he was crucified with Christ (v. 20), for he was united to Christ who died in his place (3:13; Rom. 4:25; 5:6). So too, he was raised with Christ and lived in relation to God (Col. 2:12; 3:1). Death to the law does not violate the law, for Christ met the law's demands. It is therefore "through the law" that believers are released from the bondage and condemnation of the law. See "The Three Purposes of the Law" at Deut. 13:10.

■ **2:20** Union with Christ means that He represented us in His death and resurrection. But it means more, for it is a living union. Jesus is present with the believer; by the Spirit the Lord lives in inward fellowship with His own. Paul does not mean that the individuality of a person is suppressed or absorbed; he lives "in the flesh" by "faith." The union is a spiritual relationship of the utmost intimacy.

Justification by Faith

3 O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you [1]that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed [2]among you as crucified? 2 This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, [a]or by the hearing of faith? 3 Are you so foolish? [b]Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by [c]the flesh? 4 [d]Have you suffered so [3]many things in vain—if indeed *it was* in vain?

5 Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, *does He do it* by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?— 6 just as Abraham [e]*"believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."* 7 Therefore know that *only* [f]those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. 8 And [g]the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, *saying,* [h]*"In you all the nations shall be blessed."* 9 So then those who *are* of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.

The Law Brings a Curse

10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, [i]*"Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them."* 11 But that no one is [4]justified by the law in the sight of God *is* evident, for [j]*"the just shall live by faith."* 12 Yet [k]the law is not of faith, but [l]*"the man who does them shall live by them."*

13 [m]Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, [n]*"Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"*), 14 [o]that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the [p]Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive [q]the promise of the Spirit through faith.

The Changeless Promise

15 Brethren, I speak in the manner of men: [r]Though *it is* only a man's covenant, yet *if it is* confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it. 16 Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of [s]one, [t]*"And to your Seed,"* who is [u]Christ. 17 And this I say, *that* the law, [v]which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God [5]in Christ, [w]that it should make the promise of no effect. 18 For if [x]the inheritance *is* of the law, [y]*it is* no longer of promise; but God gave *it* to Abraham by promise.

18 [x][Rom. 8:17] [y]Rom. 4:14

CHAPTER 3

1 [1]NU omits *that you should not obey the truth* [2]NU omits *among you*

2 [a]Rom. 10:16, 17

3 [b][Gal. 4:9] [c]Heb. 7:16

4 [d]Heb. 10:35 [3]Or *great*

6 [e]Gen. 15:6

7 [f]John 8:39

8 [g]Rom. 9:17 [h]Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14

10 [i]Deut. 27:26

11 [j]Hab. 2:4 [4]*declared righteous*

12 [k]Rom. 4:4, 5 [l]Lev. 18:5

13 [m][Rom. 8:3] [n]Deut. 21:23

14 [o][Rom. 4:1–5, 9, 16] [p]Rom. 3:29, 30 [q]Is. 32:15

15 [r]Heb. 9:17

16 [s]Gen. 22:18 [t]Gen. 12:3, 7; 13:15; 24:7 [u][1 Cor. 12:12]

17 [v]Ex. 12:40 [w][Rom. 4:13] [5]NU omits *in Christ*

■ **3:1 clearly portrayed.** Perhaps in Paul's preaching.

■ **3:2 Spirit.** Paul appeals to the Galatians' own experience of the Holy Spirit to prove that becoming Jewish is not necessary for becoming a Christian (Acts 10:47; 11:17; 15:8).

■ **3:3 by the flesh.** Perhaps Paul has in mind not simply attempting to keep the law without the Spirit (Rom. 7:7—8:17) but also the attempting to gain favor with God by cutting the flesh in circumcision (Phil. 3:2, 3). In either case, Paul warns his readers against the attempt to win salvation by performing some work. Salvation comes only through God's grace by faith in Jesus Christ (2:16).

■ **3:6** Abraham was the father of the Jews and the person with whom God first established circumcision as a covenantal sign (Gen. 17:10). Even this revered patriarch was placed in a right relationship with God by faith (Rom. 4:11). Paul reverses the charge that he is undercutting God's covenant with Abraham. The true children of Abraham share his faith, whether they are physically descended from him or not. The promise to Abraham is also a promise of blessing to the Gentiles, a blessing that must be received with faith like Abraham's.

■ **3:10** Paul's point is that no one can keep the law in its entirety, and he supports his point by quoting Deut. 27:26. Following the passage from which Paul quotes, Deuteronomy lists the curses that will fall upon Israel for disobedience. Most Jews of Paul's day realized that Israel had broken the law and had received the curses that were predicted (Deut. 28:15—30:20).

■ **3:11** See theological note "Justification and Merit."

■ **3:12 the law is not of faith.** Here Paul speaks of the law as God's requirement, apart from the promise of God's covenant. Leviticus (18:5) states the requirement and predicts the failure and curse that followed (26:14–38). The promise is also repeated (26:40–45), for it is not voided (3:15–22).

■ **3:13 a curse for us.** Since we broke God's covenant by violating the law, we deserve to receive the law's curse and God's condemnation. But Christ bore the law's curse in our place, giving us peace with God (Rom. 3:21–26; 4:25; 5:1–8; 2 Cor. 5:21; Col. 2:13–15; cf. Mark 10:45; John 1:29; 1 Pet. 2:24). See "The Atonement" at Rom. 3:25.

■ **3:14 the blessing of Abraham.** See v. 8; Gen 12:3; "Christ the Mediator" at 1 Tim. 2:5. Believing Gentiles, whose lives are marked by the indwelling Spirit, fulfill the promise that through Abraham all nations will be blessed. The Spirit is the blessing promised to Abraham.

■ **3:15–18** God promised saving blessing to the nations through Abraham "and his Seed"—Christ, descended from Abraham in His human nature. That covenant promise was not cancelled by the later giving of the law through Moses. The law does not oppose the promises (v. 21), but assumes them. Its requirements show the hopelessness of earning salvation and point God's people to faith in Christ (v. 24).

■ **3:16 Seed.** Paul is aware that the noun "seed" in the singular may be collective as well as individual (v. 29; Rom. 4:18). He is affirming that Christ is the Seed (descendant) to whom the promise finally refers. See "God's Covenant of Grace" at Gen. 12:1.

■ **3:17 four hundred and thirty years.** In Ex. 12:40 this figure is given for the length of Israel's stay in Egypt. In the Greek Old Testament (Septuagint) version of Exodus, the time of the patriarchs' stay in Canaan is included in the 430 years. But Paul is not necessarily following the Septuagint in alluding to the passage. It is enough for his purpose to show that centuries passed before the law was given at Sinai (cf. Gen. 15:13; Acts 7:6).

19 [z]John 15:22 [a]Gal. 4:4 [b]Acts 7:53 [c]Ex. 20:19
20 [d][Rom. 3:29]

Purpose of the Law

19 What purpose then *does* the law *serve?* [z]It was added because of transgressions, till the [a]Seed should come to whom the promise was made; *and it was* [b]appointed through angels by the hand [c]of a mediator. 20 Now a mediator does not *mediate* for one *only,* [d]but God is one.

Justification and Merit

The doctrine of justification, the storm-center of the Reformation, was for Paul the heart of the gospel (Rom. 1:17; 3:21—5:21; Gal. 2:15—5:1), shaping his message (Acts 13:38, 39) and his devotion (2 Cor. 5:13–21; Phil. 3:4–14). Though other New Testament writers affirm the same doctrine in substance, the terms in which Protestants have affirmed and defended it for almost five centuries are drawn primarily from Paul.

Justification is God's act of pardoning sinners and accepting them as righteous for Christ's sake. In it, God puts permanently right their previously estranged relationship with Himself. This justifying sentence is God's bestowal of a status of acceptance for Jesus' sake (2 Cor. 5:21).

God's justifying judgment seems strange, for pronouncing sinners righteous may appear to be precisely the kind of unjust action by a judge that God's own law forbids (Deut. 25:1; Prov. 17:15). Yet it is a just judgment, for its basis is the righteousness of Jesus Christ. As "the last Adam" (1 Cor. 15:45), our representative head acting on our behalf, Christ obeyed the law that bound us and endured the punishment for lawlessness that we deserved, and so "merited" our justification. Our justification is on a just basis (Rom. 3:25, 26; 1 John 1:9), with Christ's righteousness reckoned to our account (Rom. 5:18, 19).

God's justifying decision is in effect the judgment of the Last Day regarding where we will spend eternity, brought forward into the present and pronounced here and now. It is a judgment on our eternal destiny; God will never go back on it, however much Satan may appeal against the verdict (Zech. 3:1; Rom. 8:33, 34; Rev. 12:10). To be justified is to be eternally secure (Rom. 5:1–5; 8:30).

The necessary means of justification is personal faith in Jesus Christ as crucified Savior and risen Lord (Rom. 4:23–25; 10:8–13). Faith is necessary because the meritorious ground of our justification is entirely in Christ. As we give ourselves in faith to Jesus, Jesus gives us His gift of righteousness, so that in the very act of "closing with Christ," as older Reformed teachers put it, we receive the divine pardon and acceptance we can find nowhere else (Gal. 2:15, 16; 3:24).

Historic Roman Catholic theology includes sanctification in the definition of justification, considered as a process rather than a single decisive event, and affirms that while faith contributes to our acceptance with God, our works of satisfaction and merit must contribute too. Catholics see baptism as conveying the sanctifying grace that first justifies us. Afterward the sacrament of penance allows supplementary merit to be achieved through works, securing justification if the grace of God's initial acceptance is lost through mortal sin. This supplementary merit does not oblige God to be gracious although it is the normal context for receiving it. On the Roman Catholic view, believers effect their own salvation with the help of the grace that flows from Christ through the church's sacramental system. The Reformers pointed out that this view of salvation undercuts the sense of confidence that only free grace can provide to those who have no merits. Paul had already showed that all people, of whatever piety, are without merit, and need a free justification if they are to be saved. A justification that needs to be completed by the recipient is no resting place. □

■ **3:19 because of transgressions.** Probably in order to define sin specifically as sin against God's explicitly stated will, and so to make sin that much worse (Rom. 5:13, 20).

Seed. In Gen. 17:19 God promises Abraham a son, Isaac, and says that He will establish a covenant with Isaac and his "descendants" (a singular noun in Hebrew that may also be translated "seed"). Paul regards this use of a singular noun as a pointer to Jesus who healed the broken covenant between God and His chosen people.

through angels. See Deut. 33:2; Acts 7:53; Heb. 2:2.

■ **3:20 mediator.** Moses mediated between God and Israel when God made His covenant with Israel at Mount Sinai (Ex. 19—34). The promise given to Abraham, however, required no mediator and therefore takes precedence over the covenant at Sinai.

God is one. See Deut. 6:4. God's covenant with Abraham, because it did not involve a mediator, demonstrated God's unity and sovereignty more perfectly than the covenant at Sinai. The fulfillment of God's covenant with Abraham by the inclusion of the Gentiles in the people of God also demonstrates the unity of God more clearly than the Sinai covenant because it shows His sovereignty over all creation (Rom. 3:29, 30).

21 *Is* the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. 22 But the Scripture has confined [e]all under sin, [f]that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. 23 But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, [6]kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. 24 Therefore [g]the law was our [7]tutor *to bring us* to Christ, [h]that we might be justified by faith. 25 But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

Sons and Heirs

26 For you [i]are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For [j]as many of you as were baptized into Christ [k]have put on Christ. 28 [l]There is neither Jew nor Greek, [m]there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all [n]one in Christ Jesus. 29 And [o]if you *are* Christ's, then you are Abraham's [p]seed, and [q]heirs according to the promise.

4 Now I say *that* the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all, 2 but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father. 3 Even so we, when we were children, [a]were in bondage under the elements of the world. 4 But [b]when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, [c]born[1] [d]of a woman, [e]born under the law, 5 [f]to redeem those who were under the law, [g]that we might receive the adoption as sons.

6 And because you are sons, God has sent forth [h]the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, [2]"Abba, Father!" 7 Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, [i]and if a son, then an heir [3]of God [4]through Christ.

22 [e]Rom. 11:32 [f]Rom. 4:11

23 [6]Lit. *confined*

24 [g]Rom. 10:4 [h]Acts 13:39 [7]In a household, the guardian responsible for the care and discipline of the children

26 [i]John 1:12

27 [j][Rom. 6:3] [k]Rom. 10:12; 13:14

28 [l]Col. 3:11 [m][1 Cor. 12:13] [n][Eph. 2:15, 16]

29 [o]Gen. 21:10 [p]Rom. 4:11 [q]Rom. 8:17

CHAPTER 4

3 [a]Col. 2:8, 20

4 [b][Gen. 49:10] [c][John 1:14] [d]Gen. 3:15 [e]Luke 2:21, 27 [1]Or *made* 5 [f][Matt. 20:28] [g][John 1:12] 6 [h][Rom. 5:5; 8:9, 15, 16] [2]Lit., in Aram., *Father* 7 [i][Rom. 8:16, 17] [3]NU *through God* [4]NU omits *through Christ*

■ **3:21** Humanity's inability to keep the law, not the law itself, is the source of humanity's broken relationship with God.

against the promises of God. Paul strongly denies this mistaken conclusion from his argument. The law could be in competition with the gospel only if it could impart life by delivering sinners from its own condemnation. Although the law is good and shows what is pleasing to God (Lev. 18:5; Rom. 7:10), it was not able to give life to lawbreakers (2 Cor. 3:6). The Jews, possessing the law, were condemned by it. Scripture takes full account of this, showing that all are condemned sinners and pointing to the need for the promised Savior.

■ **3:24 tutor.** A "tutor" was a slave responsible for a child's training, especially for pointing out and punishing misbehavior. Like a tutor, the law pointed out sin and punished it. Another important function of tutors was to separate and protect the child from the influence of outsiders. The law functioned in a similar way to separate Israel from the Gentiles. That function of the ceremonial law has also ended. See "The Law of God" at Ex. 20:1.

■ **3:26 you are all sons of God.** We are adopted "sons" because we are united to the true Son, Jesus Christ. Baptism seals that union with Christ. It is a vital union; Christ lives in us (2:20). It is also a representative union; Christ died and lives for us (Rom. 6:5–11). To be clothed with Christ implies both, in that His righteousness is our covering, and we are a new creation in Christ (Rom. 13:14; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10).

■ **3:28 you are all one in Christ Jesus.** The wall of separation between Jew and Gentile is removed for those united to Christ: all in Christ are Abraham's seed (Eph. 2:14–16; Col. 3:11). Indeed, no human distinctions avail as advantages in the matter of salvation. Paul does not obliterate these distinctions, such as those between the sexes, but indicates they give no preferential status in terms of our union with Christ. Until Christ returns, the created order remains and order in the church takes account of it (1 Cor. 11:3; 14:34; 1 Tim. 2:11–14). See "The Church" at Eph. 2:19.

■ **4:1–7** Paul has compared the law to a prison warden (3:23) and a tutor (3:24 note). Now he compares its preparatory role to that of guardians or trustees of a minor. The full right reserved for one who has grown up is adoption as a son and receiving the inheritance.

■ **4:3 under the elements.** The Greek phrase refers to the basic elements that make up the world; in ancient thought, these were earth, wind, water, and fire. Sometimes these elements were revered as deities governing the universe. Here Paul may be thinking especially of the sacred calendar of the law, its seasons determined by the heavenly bodies (cf. Col. 2:8, 20–22). Legalism subjected life to the control of the structures of the world.

■ **4:4 the fullness of the time.** The time set by the Father (v. 2), "the ends of the ages" (1 Cor. 10:11), when the promises of God are realized.

God sent forth His Son. His eternal Son, sent to be born of a woman.

under the law. Although Christ was without sin (2 Cor. 5:21), He was born under the law, not only as One obligated to fulfill it, but also as One identified with sinners who are under the curse of the law. His death freed us from that curse (3:10–14).

■ **4:5 to redeem.** The concept of redemption comes from the institution of slavery. In both the Jewish and Greco-Roman worlds, a slave could buy his freedom (or someone else could buy it for him) by paying a redemption price to his owners. The price of our redemption was paid by the Father in the blood of His Son (1 Pet. 1:17, 18), and by the Son in giving His life a ransom for many (Matt. 20:28).

those . . . under the law. Not only Jews, circumcised under the law of Moses, but also Gentiles, for both are under the curse of the law (3:13, 14).

the adoption as sons. Paul has been speaking of God's people under the law as children (Ex. 4:23; Is. 1:2). He now describes the only way in which the children become full members of the household, no longer minors. God seals our adoption by giving us the Spirit of His Son (Rom. 8:9–17). See theological note "Adoption."

■ **4:6 Abba.** The Aramaic word for "Father," used by Jesus (Mark 14:6). It was natural for Jesus, God's Son in a unique sense, to use this term. Now the Spirit puts the same word on the lips of men and women who are adopted in Christ.

8 *j*Eph. 2:12 *k*Rom. 1:25

9 *l*[1 Cor. 8:3] *m*Col. 2:20 *n*Heb. 7:18

10 *o*Rom. 14:5

11 *p*1 Thess. 3:5

12 *q*2 Cor. 2:5

13 *r*1 Cor. 2:3

14 *s*Mal. 2:7 *t*[Luke 10:16] *5*Or *messenger*

15 *6*NU *Where*

17 *u*Rom. 10:2

19 *v*1 Cor. 4:15

Fears for the Church

8 But then, indeed, *j*when you did not know God, *k*you served those which by nature are not gods. 9 But now *l*after you have known God, or rather are known by God, *m*how *is it that* you turn again to *n*the weak and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? 10 *o*You observe days and months and seasons and years. 11 I am afraid for you, *p*lest I have labored for you in vain.

12 Brethren, I urge you to become like me, for I *became* like you. *q*You have not injured me at all. 13 You know that *r*because of physical infirmity I preached the gospel to you at the first. 14 And my trial which was in my flesh you did not despise or reject, but you received me *s*as an *5*angel of God, *t*even as Christ Jesus. 15 *6*What then was the blessing you *enjoyed?* For I bear you witness that, if possible, you would have plucked out your own eyes and given them to me. 16 Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?

17 They *u*zealously court you, *but* for no good; yes, they want to exclude you, that you may be zealous for them. 18 But it is good to be zealous in a good thing always, and not only when I am present with you. 19 *v*My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in

Adoption

The gift of justification (that is, of present acceptance by God, the world's Judge) is accompanied by the gift of adoption, that is, of becoming a child of the heavenly Father (Gal. 3:26; 4:4–7). In Paul's world, adoption was ordinarily of young adult males of good character to become heirs and maintain the family name for rich people who otherwise had no children. Paul, however, proclaims God's gracious adoption of persons of bad character to become "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8:17).

Justification is the basic blessing on which adoption is founded; adoption is the crowning blessing for which justification clears the way. Adopted status belongs to all who receive Christ (John 1:12). In and through Christ God loves His adopted children as He loves His only begotten Son, and will share with them the glory that is Christ's now (Rom. 8:17, 38, 39). Believers are under God's fatherly care and discipline (Matt. 6:26; Heb. 12:5–11). They are to pray to God as their own Father in heaven (Matt. 6:5–13), imitate His virtues (Matt. 5:44–48; 6:12, 14, 15; 18:21–35; Eph. 4:32—5:2), and trust His fatherly love (Matt. 6:25–34), thus expressing the filial instinct that the Holy Spirit has implanted in them (Rom. 8:15–17; Gal. 4:6).

Adoption and regeneration accompany each other as two aspects of the salvation that Christ brings (John 1:12, 13) but they should be distinguished. Adoption results in a new relationship, while regeneration is a change of our moral nature. Yet the connection is clear. God wants His children whom He loves to have His character, and He takes action accordingly. □

■ **4:9 known by God.** Their knowledge of God was not the result of their own inquiry, but the sovereign work of the One who opened their understanding. See "True Knowledge of God" at Jer. 9:24.

turn again. Amazingly, Paul likens the bondage of ceremonial legalism to the bondage of pagan superstition. To accept circumcision as necessary for salvation is to turn back from the liberty of grace to the bondage of the world with its times and seasons (v. 10; Col. 2:8, 20–22), whether these times be Jewish or Gentile.

weak . . . elements. Before their conversion, the Galatians were subject to the "elements" of a pagan world: its false gods, its astrology, its seasonal rituals (v. 3 note).

■ **4:10** Paul may be referring to the observance of Jewish festivals. The Jewish agitators among the Galatians probably required not only circumcision for salvation but also adoption of the whole law, including the food laws and religious festivals.

■ **4:12 become like me, for I became like you.** In order to bring the gospel to the Gentile Galatians, Paul had to leave behind the legal restrictions of the Mosaic ceremonial law that forbade Jewish interaction with Gentiles (1 Cor. 9:19–23). Paul became "like" the Galatians in freedom from the law and he now encourages them to be "like" him in freedom from legalistic bondage.

You have not injured me. Paul's positive characterization of his previous relationship with the Galatian Christians (developed further in vv. 13–16) contains an implicit plea for good relations to continue. Paul's depth of concern for the Galatians is evident throughout this section.

■ **4:13 because of physical infirmity.** It is not known what Paul suffered from. Eye difficulties (v. 15; 6:11), as well as malaria and epilepsy, have been suggested. There may or may not be a connection with Paul's "thorn in the flesh" (2 Cor. 12:7). Paul's illness apparently made him stay longer in Galatia, where he had continuing opportunities to minister.

■ **4:17 zealously.** See 6:12. The source of their zeal may have been a desire to avoid persecution, perhaps by Jewish nationalists who were not Christians and who saw the inclusiveness of the Christian movement as a threat to their cause.

■ **4:19, 20** A touching witness to the depth of Paul's feeling for those whom he brought to faith in Christ. Paul's anger in this epistle (1:6, 9; 3:1; 5:12) reflects not only the seriousness with which he regards the task of preserving the truth of the gospel, but also the love which he had for his "children" in Christ.

you, 20 I would like to be present with you now and to change my tone; for I have doubts about you.

Two Covenants

21 Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? 22 For it is written that Abraham had two sons: [w]the one by a bondwoman, [x]the other by a freewoman. 23 But he *who was* of the bondwoman [y]was born according to the flesh, [z]and he of the freewoman through promise, 24 which things are symbolic. For these are [7]the two covenants: the one from Mount [a]Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar— 25 for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children— 26 but the [b]Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all. 27 For it is written:

> [c]*"Rejoice, O barren,*
> *You who do not bear!*
> *Break forth and shout,*
> *You who are not in labor!*
> *For the desolate has many more children*
> *Than she who has a husband."*

28 Now [d]we, brethren, as Isaac *was,* are [e]children of promise. 29 But, as [f]he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him *who was born* according to the Spirit, [g]even so *it is* now. 30 Nevertheless what does [h]the Scripture say? [i]*"Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for [j]the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman."* 31 So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.

Christian Liberty

5 Stand[a][1] fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a [b]yoke of bondage. 2 Indeed I, Paul, say to you that [c]if you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing. 3 And I testify again to every man who becomes circumcised [d]that he is [2]a debtor to keep the whole law. 4 [e]You have become estranged from Christ, you who *attempt to* be justified by law; [f]you have fallen from grace. 5 For we through the Spirit eagerly [g]wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. 6 For [h]in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but [i]faith working through love.

22 [w]Gen. 16:15 [x]Gen. 21:2

23 [y]Rom. 9:7, 8 [z]Heb. 11:11

24 [a]Deut. 33:2 [7]NU, M omit *the*

26 [b][Is. 2:2]

27 [c]Is. 54:1

28 [d]Gal. 3:29 [e]Acts 3:25

29 [f]Gen. 21:9 [g]Gal. 5:11

30 [h][Gal. 3:8, 22] [i]Gen. 21:10, 12 [j][John 8:35]

CHAPTER 5

1 [a]Phil. 4:1 [b]Acts 15:10 [1]NU *For freedom Christ has made us free; stand fast therefore, and*

2 [c]Acts 15:1

3 [d][Rom. 2:25] [2]*obligated*

4 [e][Rom. 9:31] [f]Heb. 12:15

5 [g]Rom. 8:24

6 [h][Gal. 6:15] [i]1 Thess. 1:3

■ **4:22 two sons.** The older son Ishmael was born to Hagar (Gen. 16); the younger son Isaac to Sarah (Gen. 21:1–6). Hagar was Sarah's slave.

■ **4:23** Ishmael, the son of Abraham and Hagar, was born after Abraham and Sarah despaired of having the son God had promised. Isaac was born to Sarah by a miracle long after her child-bearing years had ended. God showed that none of His promises are empty (Gen. 18:14; Luke 1:37).

■ **4:24 symbolic.** Their historical occurrence has a deeper significance.

■ **4:25 Mount Sinai.** The place where God established His covenant with Israel (Ex. 19—34).

corresponds to Jerusalem. In both Paul's day and our own, most Jews remain, like all unbelievers, in slavery to sin and under the curse that the covenant of Sinai pronounces upon all who disobey its conditions.

■ **4:26 Jerusalem above.** Jerusalem was the city where God had set His name, the place of His dwelling in the midst of His people (Ps. 78:68, 69). The reality of God's dwelling with us was accomplished in Christ, the true temple (John 2:19). The true Jerusalem is in heaven where He is (Heb. 12:22; Rev. 21:2).

■ **4:30 the freewoman.** We are not slaves to sin or under the curse of the law (Rom. 6:1—7:6).

■ **5:1 yoke.** Jewish literature of the time compares the law to a yoke to which the obedient submit. Paul does not want his Gentile readers to let the law take the place of Christ in their lives (Matt. 11:29; Acts 15:10). See theological note "Christian Liberty."

■ **5:2** Regarding Christ and circumcision as necessary for salvation is the same as denying the sufficiency of Christ's death for salvation. For those set free in Christ, to be circumcised for salvation is to undertake to do what they can never do (2:21), and to reject what Christ has done for them. It is to return again to the dominion of sin and the law's curse.

■ **5:4 fallen from grace.** That is, they would be renouncing God's grace by no longer relying on it. Those who are chosen in Christ will be kept from such a renunciation of the gospel, and Paul continues to have confidence that his warning will be heeded (v. 10). There may be those, however, who appear to us to be true members of Christ who will abandon the gospel (Rom. 11:22; 1 John 2:19). Scripture admonishes us, therefore, to be "diligent to make [our] call and election sure" (2 Pet. 1:10) by living in a way that demonstrates the reality of the Spirit's presence within us (5:16—6:10; Heb. 10:26, 27; 2 Pet. 1:5–11).

■ **5:5 the hope of righteousness by faith.** The sure hope of righteousness by faith is in contrast to the vain hope of righteousness by legal works. The Holy Spirit gives eager anticipation of justification on the last Day because we have already been justified in Christ (Rom. 5:1–5, 9, 10). That same Spirit, imparting to us the saving benefits of our risen Savior, is our foretaste of the fulfilled heritage in glory (2 Cor. 5:5; Eph. 1:13).

■ **5:6** Paul is not arguing against circumcision itself (6:15; 1 Cor. 7:19; cf. Acts 16:3) but against the attempt to make the rite a requirement for salvation. The one who believes in Jesus Christ, and demonstrates the reality of his belief through a sanctified life, is saved. See "Faith and Works" at James 2:24.

7 *l*1 Cor. 9:24
9 *k*1 Cor. 5:6
11 *l*1 Cor. 15:30 *m*[1 Cor. 1:23]
12 *n*Josh. 7:25 *o*Acts 15:1, 2 *3mutilate themselves*
13 *p*1 Cor. 8:9 *q*1 Pet. 2:16

Love Fulfills the Law

7 You *l*ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth? 8 This persuasion does not *come* from Him who calls you. 9 *k*A little leaven leavens the whole lump. 10 I have confidence in you, in the Lord, that you will have no other mind; but he who troubles you shall bear his judgment, whoever he is.

11 And I, brethren, if I still preach circumcision, *l*why do I still suffer persecution? Then *m*the offense of the cross has ceased. 12 *n*I could wish that those *o*who trouble you would even *3*cut themselves off!

13 For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only *p*do not *use* liberty as an *q*opportunity

Christian Liberty

Salvation in Christ is liberation, and the Christian life is one of liberty—Christ has set us free (Gal. 5:1; cf. John 8:32, 36). Christ's liberating action is not basically social, political, or economic improvement, as is sometimes suggested today; it is liberation from the law as a means to salvation, from the power of sin, and from superstition.

First, Christians have been set free from the law as a system of salvation. Being justified by faith in Christ, they are no longer under God's law, but under His grace (Rom. 3:19; 6:14, 15; Gal. 3:23–25). Their standing with God (the "peace" and "access" of Rom. 5:1, 2) is assured because they have been accepted and adopted in Christ. It does not, nor ever will, depend on what they do, nor will it ever be imperiled by what they fail to do. They live, not by being perfect, but by being forgiven.

Although they are fallen, human beings think they can gain a right relationship with God through disciplines of obedience, ritual, and asceticism. Without God's righteousness, they go about "seeking to establish their own righteousness"—as Paul describes the Jews (Rom. 10:3). Paul knew that this is a hopeless enterprise. No human performance is ever good enough, and there are always wrong desires in the heart, no matter how correct the outward actions are (Rom. 7:7–11; cf. Phil. 3:6). God looks at the heart first.

Far from opening the way of life, the law's work is to arouse, expose, and condemn the sin that permeates our moral lives, making us aware of its reality and consequences (Rom. 3:19; 1 Cor. 15:56; Gal. 3:10). The futility of treating the law as a system of salvation, and seeking righteousness by it, is plain (Gal. 3:10–12; 4:21–31). This futility is the bondage to the law from which Christ sets us free.

Second, Christians have been set free from sin's dominion (John 8:34–36; Rom. 6:14–23). They have been supernaturally regenerated and made alive to God through union with Christ in His death and risen life (Rom. 6:3–11). The desire of their heart now is to serve God in righteousness (Rom. 6:18, 22). Sin's dominion involves not only constant acts of disobedience, but also a constant disregard for God's moral law, rising sometimes to resentment or even hatred towards the law. Now, however, being changed in heart, motivated by thankfulness for the gift of grace, and energized by the Holy Spirit, Christians "serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter" (Rom. 7:6).

Third, Christians have been set free from superstitions, including the idea that matter and physical pleasure are intrinsically evil. Against this idea, Paul insists that Christians are free to enjoy as God's good gifts all created things (1 Tim. 4:1–5), provided we do not transgress the moral law, nor hinder our own spiritual well-being or that of others (1 Cor. 6:12, 13; 8:7–13). □

■ **5:11 still preach circumcision.** Paul may be referring to his life before his conversion, or he may be refuting a false charge from his opponents that he preaches the necessity of circumcision for salvation when the Jerusalem apostles are present but leaves out that requirement when in the company of Gentiles (1:10).

offense of the cross. See 1 Cor. 1:18—2:5.

■ **5:12 cut themselves off.** See text note. Paul's anger is a result of seeing young believers led astray. Jesus had some equally strong words of warning for those who dared to lead others into error (Luke 17:1, 2).

■ **5:13 liberty.** Christian liberty is freedom *from* sin, not liberty *to* sin (Rom. 6:1—7:6). See "The Freedom and Bondage of the Will" at Jer. 17:9.

for the flesh, but [r]through love serve one another. 14 For [s]all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even* in this: [t]*"You shall love your neighbor as yourself."* 15 But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!

Walking in the Spirit

16 I say then: [u]Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. 17 For [v]the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, [w]so that you do not do the things that you wish. 18 But [x]if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

19 Now [y]the works of the flesh are evident, which are: [4]adultery, [5]fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, [6]murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that [z]those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But [a]the fruit of the Spirit is [b]love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, [c]goodness, [d]faithfulness, 23 [7]gentleness, self-control. [e]Against such there is no law. 24 And those *who are* Christ's [f]have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 [g]If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. 26 [h]Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Bear and Share the Burdens

6 Brethren, if a man is [1]overtaken in any trespass, you who *are* spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of [a]gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. 2 [b]Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill [c]the law of Christ. 3 For [d]if anyone thinks himself to be something, when [e]he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4 But [f]let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and [g]not in another. 5 For [h]each one shall bear his own load.

Be Generous and Do Good

6 [i]Let him who is taught the word share in all good things with him who teaches.

7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for [j]whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.

13 [r]1 Cor. 9:19

14 [s]Matt. 7:12; 22:40 [t]Lev. 19:18

16 [u]Rom. 6:12

17 [v]Rom. 7:18, 22, 23; 8:5 [w]Rom. 7:15

18 [x]Rom. 6:14; 7:4; 8:14]

19 [y]Eph. 5:3, 11 [4]NU omits *adultery* [5]*sexual immorality*

21 [z]1 Cor. 6:9, 10 [6]NU omits *murders*

22 [a][John 15:2] [b][Col. 3:12–15] [c]Rom. 15:14 [d]1 Cor. 13:7

23 [e]1 Tim. 1:9 [7]*meekness*

24 [f]Rom. 6:6

25 [g][Rom. 8:4, 5]

26 [h]Phil. 2:3

CHAPTER 6

1 [a]Eph. 4:2 [1]*caught*

2 [b]Rom. 15:1 [c][James 2:8]

3 [d]Rom. 12:3 [e][2 Cor. 3:5] 4 [f]1 Cor. 11:28 [g]Luke 18:11 5 [h][Rom. 2:6] 6 [i]1 Cor. 9:11, 14 7 [j][Rom. 2:6]

■ **5:14 all the law.** Paul's letter to the Galatians does not nullify the law. Christ fulfilled the law; He did not abolish it (Matt. 5:17). Certain provisions of the law such as its dietary requirements are no longer applicable in the new covenant, but the ethical commands of the law remain as declarations of God's will for Christian behavior (Rom. 8:2–8; 13:8–10).

love. See Rom. 13:10; 1 Cor. 13; cf. Matt. 19:19.

■ **5:16 Walk in the Spirit.** The Holy Spirit's dwelling within the believer is a sign that the believer is part of God's people and an heir of the covenant promises given to Abraham (3:14; 4:6; 5:5). The Spirit's presence is also a sign that in the final day God will declare the believer righteous (5:5; 2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5).

■ **5:17 the flesh.** See "Sanctification: The Spirit and the Flesh" at 1 Cor. 6:11. Paul says in 6:13 that the agitators in Galatia want to circumcise the Galatians in order to glory in their "flesh," and in 2:16 Paul says that by observing the law "no flesh" (that is, no one) will be justified. The word "flesh" is used at least three ways by Paul. The broadest use is a simple reference to humanness. Another use is for the physical body. The narrowest use, especially when placed in contrast to "spirit," is to refer to the sinful human nature, which includes the mind and soul. If the Galatians abandon Christ and place their confidence in the law, they will be turning back to reliance on the flesh, and thus to existence under the law's curse. There is hope as well as warning in Paul's words. Although the desires of the flesh oppose the Spirit, the desires given by the Holy Spirit deliver us from the flesh and the law.

■ **5:20 contentions . . . heresies.** Paul lists gross sins that the legalists would condemn, but follows them with the very sins they were guilty of (v. 15).

■ **5:21 will not inherit the kingdom of God.** One of four occurrences of this phrase in the Pauline letters (1 Cor. 6:9, 10; 15:50; cf. Eph. 5:5). Paul's point is that those who do not exhibit the graces of the Spirit (v. 22) in their lives will not take part in God's eternal kingdom.

■ **5:22 fruit of the Spirit.** Paul uses the metaphor of fruit to describe the conduct of the believer in Rom. 6:22; Eph. 5:9; and Phil. 1:11. John the Baptist likewise claimed that true repentance would produce the "fruit" of concrete ethical behavior (Matt. 3:8; Luke 3:8). The love produced by the Spirit is like the love of Christ. It goes far beyond the performance of legalistic self-righteousness (Luke 10:25–37).

■ **5:24 have crucified the flesh.** See 2:20; 6:14; Rom. 6:6. For the people of Christ, the Cross broke the grip of the law (2:19) and also the grip of the flesh. By faith they recognize the reality of their union with Christ in His death. So, too, they have been raised to new life in the Spirit of Christ and therefore walk in the Spirit (Col. 3:1, 3, 5).

■ **6:1 you . . . spiritual.** Those who are in step with the Spirit (5:25) should reach out to the believer whom sin has ensnared, but should be cautious lest sin also ensnare them in the process.

■ **6:2 the law of Christ.** This includes loving, not only one's neighbor (5:14; Matt. 22:39), but one's enemy as well (Matt. 5:43), with God's love as the model.

■ **6:4 examine his own work.** Paul urges the Galatian Christians to examine themselves as individuals before God, rather than drawing false confidence from relative comparisons with others (cf. 2 Cor. 13:5, 6).

have rejoicing in himself. Lit. "have reason to boast in himself." As Paul subsequently makes clear, reason for "boasting" is not to be found in one's obedience to the law. While the Judaizers "boasted" of their success in encouraging legalism (v. 13), Paul "boasts" in the cross of Christ alone (v. 14; cf. 2 Cor. 11:16—12:10).

■ **6:5 load.** This is a different Greek word from the "burden" of v. 2, signaling a shift in the metaphor. Paul encouraged Christians to help others with the "burden" of overcoming temptation (v. 2). Here Paul means that we should not take pride in how much better we are than others, for God alone is our Judge.

8 [k][Rom. 6:8]

9 [l]1 Cor. 15:58; 2 Cor. 4:1; 2 Thess. 3:13 [m][Matt. 24:13]; Heb. 12:3, 5; [James 5:7, 8]

10 [n]Prov. 3:27; [John 9:4; 12:35] [o]Titus 3:8 [p]Rom. 12:13

12 [q]Gal. 5:11; Phil. 3:8

14 [r][1 Cor. 1:18] [s][Gal. 2:20]; Col. 2:20 [2]Or *which,* the cross

15 [t][Rom. 2:26, 28]; 1 Cor. 7:19; [Gal. 5:6]

8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap [k]everlasting life. 9 And [l]let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap [m]if we do not lose heart. 10 [n]Therefore, as we have opportunity, [o]let us do good to all, [p]especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Glory Only in the Cross

11 See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand! 12 As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these *would* compel you to be circumcised, [q]only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. 13 For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh. 14 But God forbid that I should boast except in the [r]cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by [2]whom the world has been crucified to me, and [s]I to the world. 15 For [t]in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.

Blessing and a Plea

16 And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy *be* upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

17 From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

18 Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen.

■ **6:10** The church has a responsibility to help relieve the suffering of those outside its fellowship, but it has a special responsibility to help brothers and sisters in Christ who are in need (1 Thess. 3:12).

■ **6:11** Paul sometimes dictated his letters to a secretary (Rom. 16:22) but customarily wrote the conclusion himself (1 Cor. 16:21; Col. 4:18; 2 Thess. 3:17). His "large letters" may mean that his eyesight was poor (cf. 4:15).

■ **6:12 circumcised.** See note on 2:3.

may not suffer persecution. It is possible that those advocating circumcision in Galatia were doing so under pressure from extremely zealous Jewish nationalists in Judea (4:17 note).

■ **6:14 boast . . . in the cross.** For a more detailed outworking of this concept, see 1 Cor. 1:18—2:5.

■ **6:15 circumcision.** See note on 5:6.

a new creation. The Holy Spirit's activity in the believers' lives reverses the effects of the Fall and produces a renewed people (2 Cor. 5:17) who will eventually take their place in the new heavens and the new earth (Rev. 21:1).

■ **6:16 Israel of God.** This phrase may refer to the newly constituted people of God, whose identifying mark is the Holy Spirit and not circumcision. Such people would include both Gentiles and Jews. But it could also refer to the "fullness" of Israel, the elect of the Jewish nation for whose salvation Paul was deeply concerned (cf. Rom. 9:1–5; 11:12, 26, 31).

■ **6:17 marks.** The Greek word denotes the brands used to mark a slave as the property of a certain master. The word was also used to refer to the mark that pagan priests carried to identify the god they served. Paul uses the word to refer to the scars he received during his missionary activity (2 Cor. 11:23–25). These scars branded him as a slave of Christ (Rom. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Titus 1:1).

■ **6:18** A fitting conclusion to the letter in which Paul is most intensely concerned with God's grace. The benediction summarizes Paul's hope that among the Galatians the gospel of God's grace will triumph.

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the

EPHESIANS

Author In a straightforward way this letter claims to be by Paul (1:1; 3:1). Themes and language common in his earlier letters are frequently encountered in Ephesians. The verbal similarities with Colossians are especially striking.

In the modern era, however, the question has been raised whether Paul was the author. For some, Ephesians appears to be too dependent on Colossians. Although the letter sounds like Paul, phrases tend to build and multiply more than in the earlier letters. The letter is less instructional and more prayerful. Doctrine has given way to doxology, reasoned argument to awe. Ideas that are only implicit in his earlier letters (e.g., that beyond local churches there is one worldwide church) become explicit here. Such considerations lead many to say that Ephesians was written by one of Paul's students who was attempting to develop some of Paul's ideas, especially those in Colossians.

The language and style of Ephesians certainly differ in some respects from Paul's other letters. Still, they are so like Paul that even if the letter did not bear his name, it is difficult to imagine the church ever crediting it to anyone else. Ephesians and Colossians are very similar. But those who doubt Pauline authorship do not sufficiently appreciate how awkward it is to imagine a person so anxious to imitate his teacher that he transcribes some verses from Colossians word-for-word, yet so creative that he transforms Paul's style from one of doctrine and persuasion into one of doxology and prayer, and so daring as to move dramatically beyond Paul's theology of the exalted and reigning Christ to one of a universal church.

The verbal similarities with Colossians are most easily explained by assuming that Paul wrote Ephesians shortly after completing Colossians. Paul adopted a devotional and prayerful approach as he contemplated the eternal and universal significance of Christ's church, thus continuing his reflections on the subject that dominated his correspondence with the Colossians—the eternal and universal significance of Christ Himself.

Date and Occasion The imprisonment mentioned in 3:1 and 6:20 is the same as that referred to in Col. 4:3, 10, 18, and is probably Paul's two-year house arrest in Rome (A.D. 60–62) recounted in Acts 28.

Ephesus was the capital of the Roman province of Asia on the west coast of Asia Minor. It lay between the eastern and western halves of the Roman Empire and was among the top five cities of the empire in the first century. It was important to the spread of Christianity. During Paul's unusually long stay in Ephesus, it became the center for evangelizing the western part of Asia Minor (Acts 19:10). Paul's affectionate ties with this church are revealed in his farewell speech to its elders (Acts 20:16–38).

Ephesus' most prominent civic monument was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, the temple of the goddess Diana. In one inscription, the city describes itself as the "nurturer" of the goddess, and the goddess in turn makes Ephesus the "most glorious" of the Asian cities. People from the area would appreciate the irony of Paul's words about Christ nourishing His own body, the church (5:29). They would appreciate the point of contrast when Paul describes Christ's church as a "glorious" or radiant bride (5:27). It is also in Ephesus that Paul's preaching of Christ comes into dramatic conflict with an important trade dependent on pagan worship (Acts 19:23–41), and that the gospel inspires a great turning away from the occult (Acts 19:17–20). Paul's call to expose the deeds of darkness (5:8–14) and prepare for war against "spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (6:12) would strike the original readers with special force.

The letter probably had a broader audience than Ephesus alone. Some of the oldest Greek manuscripts do not include "in Ephesus" in the address of the letter (1:1), reading instead: "to the saints who are also faithful in Christ Jesus." Several early Christian writers seem unaware of a specifically Ephesian address. The letter lacks the personal references and greetings Paul almost always includes in his correspondence. At the same time, no manuscripts name any other city as the address of the epistle. Many scholars believe Ephesians was written as a general letter to a number of churches in the region. This would be in keeping with the sweeping contents of the letter as a whole.

It is likely that Paul originally sent the letter to Ephesus, but as the letter was sent from church to church the address was omitted because the contents had little to do with Ephesus in particular. Or it may be that the letter was originally in two forms, one for the Ephesians and one for general circulation.

Characteristics and Themes Like the letter to the Romans, Ephesians provides a special view into Paul's thought, since he had the luxury of addressing an important issue without the distraction of having to settle a local controversy. The focus of Ephesians is the mystery of the church.

The church is God's new humanity, a colony where the Lord of history has established a foretaste of the re-

newed unity and dignity of the human race (1:10–14; 2:11–22; 3:6, 9–11; 4:1—6:9). The church is a community where God's power to reconcile people to Himself is experienced and shared in transformed relationships (2:1–10; 4:1–16; 4:32—5:2; 5:22—6:9). It is a new temple, a building of people, grounded in the sure revelation of what God has done in history (2:19–22; 3:17–19). The church is an organism where power and authority are exercised after the pattern of Christ (1:22; 5:25–27), and its stewardship is a means of serving Him (4:11–16; 5:22—6:9). The church is an outpost in a dark world (5:3–17), looking for the day of final redemption. Above all, the church is the bride preparing for the approach of her lover and husband (5:22–32). □

Outline of Ephesians

I. Salutation (1:1, 2)
II. Praise to God for Blessings in Christ (1:3–14)
  A. Elected by the Father (1:3–6)
  B. Redeemed by the Son (1:7–10)
  C. Sealed by the Spirit (1:11–14)
III. Prayer for the Church (1:15–23)
IV. Our Position in Christ (2:1—3:13)
  A. Reconciled with God and Seated with Christ (2:1–10)
  B. Reconciled with God's People and Growing into God's Temple (2:11–22)
  C. Recipients and Revealers of God's Mystery (3:1–13)
V. Prayer for the Church and Doxology (3:14–21)
VI. Our Walk in Christ: Toward Unity and Purity (4:1—6:9)
  A. Unity and Diversity (4:1–16)
  B. A New Mind (4:17–24)
  C. A New Walk: In Unity, Love, Purity, Light, and Wisdom (4:25—5:17)
  D. The Filling of the Spirit (5:18—6:9)
    1. In Worship and Submission to One Another (5:18–21)
    2. Mutual Submission in Specific Relationships (5:22—6:9)
      a. Husbands and Wives (5:22–33)
      b. Parents and Children (6:1–4)
      c. Masters and Slaves (6:5–9)
VII. Our Stand Against the Spiritual Forces of Darkness (6:10–20)
  A. Call to Arms Against Our Real Enemy (6:10–12)
  B. Our Armor, Weaponry and Strategy (6:13–20)
VIII. Final Greetings (6:21–24)

CHAPTER 1

Greeting

1 PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God,

To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus:

2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Redemption in Christ

3 [a]Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, 4 just as [b]He chose us in Him [c]before the

3 [a]2 Cor. 1:3
4 [b]Rom. 8:28 [c]1 Pet. 1:2

■ **1:3–14** One long sentence in Greek, this is an expansion of the condensed praise of God's purpose in Rom. 8:28–30. Praise goes to the Father who elects (vv. 4–6), the Son who redeems (vv. 7–12), and the Spirit who seals (vv. 13, 14). Paul reflects on believers' election from eternity, their forgiveness in the present, and their inheritance in the future. Key throughout is the repetition of the phrases "in Christ" or "in Him," referring to the intimate union God has established between Christ and His people.

■ **1:3 in the heavenly places.** Two of the other five instances where this phrase appears in Ephesians have a bearing on its meaning here.

foundation of the world, that we should [d]be holy and without blame before Him in love, 5 [e]having predestined us to [f]adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, [g]according to the good pleasure of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, [h]by which He [i]made us accepted in [i]the Beloved.

7 [j]In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to [k]the riches of His grace 8 which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and [2]prudence, 9 [l]having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure [m]which He purposed in Himself, 10 that in the dispensation of [n]the fullness of the times [o]He might gather together in one [p]all things in Christ, [3]both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. 11 [q]In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to [r]the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, 12 [s]that we [t]who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

4 [d]Luke 1:75

5 [e][Rom. 8:29] [f]John 1:12 [g][1 Cor. 1:21]

6 [h][Rom. 3:24] [i]Matt. 3:17 [i]Lit. *bestowed grace (favor) upon us*

7 [j][Heb. 9:12] [k][Rom. 3:24, 25]

8 [2]*understanding*

9 [l][Rom. 16:25] [m][2 Tim. 1:9]

10 [n]Gal. 4:4 [o]1 Cor. 3:22 [p][Col. 1:16, 20] [3]NU, M omit *both* 11 [q]Rom. 8:17 [r]Is. 46:10 12 [s]2 Thess. 2:13 [t]James 1:18

Christ was raised from the dead and seated at the right hand of the Father "in the heavenly places," from where He governs "all things to [for the sake of] the church" (v. 22). Moreover, believers have also been raised up and seated with Him "in the heavenly places" (2:6). Christ's victory over death has won believers a series of benefits for which Paul blesses the Father.

■ **1:4 He chose us in Him.** See "Election and Reprobation" at Rom. 9:18. Paul rejoices that God chooses people for a relationship with Himself (Rom. 8:29–33; 9:6–26; 11:5, 7, 28; 16:13; Col. 3:12; 1 Thess. 1:4; 2 Thess. 2:13; Titus 1:1). Some suggest "in Him" means God foresaw who would have faith in Christ and elected them. Not only does this add a thought that is not in the text, but elsewhere Paul teaches that the very state of being "in Christ" is something to which one is chosen (1 Cor. 1:26–31). Paul says explicitly that the ground of God's predestinating love is His own good pleasure (vv. 5, 10; cf. Deut. 7:7, 8), not anything we have done or will do (Rom. 9:11, 16). "In Him" means that God's choice always had in view a fallen people in union with their Redeemer (2 Tim. 1:9). See also 1 Pet. 1:18–21; Rev. 13:8.

holy and without blame. See 5:27; Col. 1:22. God intends to bring His elect all the way from spiritual death in sin (2:1–5) to the forgiveness of sins in Christ (1:7), and finally to the elimination of all sin from their experience (Rom. 8:29, 30).

in love. If "in love" belongs with the preceding phrase, it helps explain the nature of the holiness and blamelessness to which believers are called; this is consistent with the use of the phrase elsewhere in Ephesians (3:17; 4:2, 15, 16; 5:2). If it belongs with v. 5, the phrase explains predestination not simply as a matter of God's decision, but as an act of His love (Hos. 11:1). This understanding is probably better. It is consistent with 2:4, 5.

■ **1:5 adoption.** See Rom. 8:14–17, 29; Gal. 3:26, 27; "Adoption" at Gal. 4:5.

■ **1:6** The thought of God's almighty love leads to an extravagant outpouring of praise (vv. 12, 14) to God, who has not only the power but the will to overcome all obstacles in bringing the spiritually dead into a living relationship with Himself (expanded in 2:1–10).

grace . . . accepted in the Beloved. This recalls the language of Col. 1:13, but also brings into view the Redeemer as Himself an object of God's electing love (1 Pet. 1:18–21; Rev. 13:8). The language of grace dominates vv. 6–8.

■ **1:7** See notes on Col. 1:14; 2:13.

redemption. This means deliverance, as from slavery or captivity, by paying a price or ransom. For the redemption that is yet to come, see v. 14; 4:30.

■ **1:9 mystery.** See 3:3, 5, 6, 10, and notes; Col. 1:27.

■ **1:10 in . . . the fullness of the times.** This does not refer simply to the future. Christ has already come to bring redemption and adoption (Gal. 4:4). By virtue of His death and resurrection, He has already assumed headship over the church, and, though behind the scenes, He already rules the universe (Acts 2:32–36; Col. 1:15–20). Still, a future emphasis dominates. The visible unity of the church is a foretaste of Christ's eventual visible rule over all things. This is why Paul stresses the unity of Jew and Gentile in the church (vv. 11–14; 2:11–22), and the practice of love among Christians (4:2, 15; 4:32—5:2, 21–23). The theme introduced here in vv. 9–12 is expanded in 3:2–12.

■ **1:11–14** Paul anticipates what he will say in 3:6 about Jews and Gentiles being "fellow heirs" of the promise in Christ. Believing Jews of Paul's day, "who first trusted in Christ" (v. 12), have become heirs by the will of God. Gentiles who have now received the same promise that was made to Israel—the gift of the Holy Spirit—have likewise become heirs to the praise of God's glory.

■ **1:11 all things . . . His will.** A sweeping statement on the extent of God's will.

God's Saving Grace (1:7)

Benefit:	Christ's spiritual blessings in heaven (v. 3); the forgiveness of sins (v. 7)
Origin:	Divine choice from eternity past (v. 4); the good pleasure of God's will (v. 5)
Purpose:	Holiness and blamelessness (v. 4); to be joined with Christ (v. 10)
Privilege:	Adoption into God's family as beneficiaries of Christ (v. 5)
Cost:	The blood of Christ (v. 7)
Means:	Preaching of the Word leading to faith in Christ (vv. 12, 13)
Assurance:	The Holy Spirit as the down payment of our inheritance (vv. 13, 14)

13 [u]John 1:17 [v][2 Cor. 1:22]
14 [w]2 Cor. 5:5 [x]Rom. 8:23 [y][Acts 20:28] [z]1 Pet. 2:9 [4]NU *which* [5]*down payment, earnest*
15 [a]Col. 1:4
16 [b]Rom. 1:9
17 [c]John 20:17 [d]Col. 1:9
18 [e]Acts 26:18 [f]Eph. 2:12 [6]NU, M *hearts*
19 [g]Col. 2:12
20 [h]Acts 2:24 [i]Ps. 110:1
21 [j]Phil. 2:9, 10 [k][Rom. 8:38, 39] [7]*rule* [8]*authority* [9]*power*
22 [l]Ps. 8:6; 110:1 [m]Heb. 2:7
23 [n]Rom. 12:5 [o]Col. 2:9 [p][1 Cor. 12:6]

13 In Him you also *trusted,* after you heard [u]the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, [v]you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 [w]who[4] is the [5]guarantee of our inheritance [x]until the redemption of [y]the purchased possession, [z]to the praise of His glory.

Prayer for Spiritual Wisdom

15 Therefore I also, [a]after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, 16 [b]do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: 17 that [c]the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, [d]may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, 18 [e]the eyes of your [6]understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is [f]the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what *is* the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, [g]according to the working of His mighty power 20 which He worked in Christ when [h]He raised Him from the dead and [i]seated *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places,* 21 [j]far above all [k]principality[7] and [8]power and [9]might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

22 And [l]He put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him [m]*to be* head over all *things* to the church, 23 [n]which is His body, [o]the fullness of Him [p]who fills all in all.

By Grace Through Faith

2 And [a]you *He made alive,* [b]who were dead in trespasses and sins, 2 [c]in which you once walked according to the [1]course of this world, according to [d]the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in [e]the sons of disobedience, 3 [f]among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in [g]the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and [h]were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

4 But God, [i]who is rich in mercy, because of His [j]great love with which He loved us, 5 [k]even

CHAPTER 2 **1** [a]Col. 2:13 [b]Eph. 4:18 **2** [c]Col. 1:21 [d]Eph. 6:12 [e]Col. 3:6 [1]Gr. *aion,* aeon **3** [f]1 Pet. 4:3 [g]Gal. 5:16 [h][Ps. 51:5] **4** [i]Rom. 10:12 [j]John 3:16 **5** [k]Rom. 5:6, 8

■ **1:13 sealed.** Like the indelible impression made by a king's signet ring, the Holy Spirit is an inward mark of God's ownership of His people. See "Salvation" at Acts 4:12.

the Holy Spirit of promise. As Jesus says in Luke 24:49, the Holy Spirit is the promise of the Father. Remarkably, this promise is extended to Gentiles, as well as Jews, on the basis of their trusting Christ (Ezek. 36:26, 27; Joel 2:28; John 14—16; Acts 1:4, 5; 2:33, 38, 39; Gal. 3:14; 4:6).

■ **1:14 guarantee.** The Spirit is not only a fulfillment of God's promise to indwell His people, but also is a guarantee that He will bring them to their final inheritance. As a down payment or first installment on their full redemption, the Spirit is a foretaste of the glory of the age to come (Rom. 8:18–23).

purchased possession. The Old Testament teaches that God chose a people as His inheritance (Deut. 32:9; Ps. 33:12) and purchased them out of bondage to become a prized possession (Ex. 19:5; Deut. 7:6). Peter agrees with Paul's striking application of this idea to Gentiles as well as to Jews (1 Pet. 2:9).

■ **1:15 after I heard.** See Introduction: Date and Occasion. Paul had ministered in Ephesus for over two years, but the time of writing may be as much as five years later. The church had grown considerably since then. It may be that Paul mentions people whose faith and love he knows only by report because Ephesians was a circular letter for several churches.

■ **1:17 wisdom and revelation.** See "Illumination and Conviction" at 1 Cor. 2:10.

■ **1:18 that you may know.** See "True Knowledge of God" at Jer. 9:24.

■ **1:19–23** These verses distill the New Testament's teaching on the resurrection and enthronement of Jesus (Col. 1:18 note). They also make two vital contributions to understanding Jesus' resurrection and the status of believers. First, the same power that raised Jesus from the dead is at work in believers (2:4, 5; 3:16, 17). Second, Christ enjoys His position as head over everything for the sake of the church. Not only is Christ at the most exalted position in the universe, He is there representing believers (2:6; Col. 3:3) and governing the universe for their sake. The principles of conduct in Ephesians emphasize that authority exists for the sake of service. Jesus' majestic use of power and authority in the interest of His people is the Christian's model (4:1, 2, 7–13; 4:32—5:2, 22–33). Paul reminds his Gentile readers of two specific ways Christ's power has blessed them: He brought them from death to life (2:1–10), and from alienation from God's people to inclusion with them (2:11–22).

■ **1:20 seated Him . . . in the heavenly places.** See "The Ascension of Jesus" at Luke 24:51.

■ **1:21 above all principality and power.** See note on 3:10.

this age . . . that which is to come. See 1 Cor. 15:24.

■ **2:1–3** The natural state of all human beings is a kind of spiritual death. This spiritual condition is universal: both Gentiles (v. 2) and Jews (v. 3) are "by nature children of wrath" (v. 3; on Paul's view of "nature" see Rom. 1). Second, they are in active rebellion against God; note the use of "walked" in regard to Gentiles in v. 2 and "conducted ourselves" in reference to Jews in v. 3. Third, they are subject to the evil rule of Satan (called in v. 2 "the prince of the power of the air"; cf. Gal. 4:3; Col. 1:13). Fourth, they are totally unable to change themselves from rebellion against God (John 3:3). Fifth, they are exposed to the just anger of God (v. 3; 5:6; Rom. 1:18–20).

■ **2:1 you He made alive.** See "Regeneration: The New Birth" at John 3:3.

■ **2:4 But God.** Paul paints this bleak portrait of the human situation to throw into relief God's gracious and merciful response to it.

because of His great love. God loves His people of His own will. Paul excludes any consideration of merit, effort, or ability on the part of those who come to life (cf. Deut. 7:7, 8). The hopeless condition of sinners apart from Christ that Paul has described in vv. 1–3 is the basis for understanding his teaching on God's election in 1:4–6, and on His gift of life here in vv. 4–10. Note the summary in Rom. 8:29, 30.

■ **2:5, 6 made us alive . . . raised us up . . . made us sit.** These are

when we were dead in trespasses, [l]made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), [6] and raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together [m]in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus, [7] that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in [n]His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. [8] [o]For by grace you have been saved [p]through faith, and that not of yourselves; [q]*it is* the gift of God, [9] not of [r]works, lest anyone should [s]boast. [10] For we are [t]His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Brought Near by His Blood

[11] Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called [u]the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands— [12] that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. [13] But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Christ Our Peace

[14] For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, [15] having abolished in His flesh the enmity, *that is,* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one [v]new man *from* the two, *thus* making peace, [16] and that He might [w]reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby [x]putting to death the enmity. [17] And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. [18] For [y]through Him we both have access [z]by one Spirit to the Father.

Christ Our Cornerstone

[19] Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, [20] having been [a]built [b]on the foundation of the

5 [l][Rom. 6:4, 5]
6 [m]Eph. 1:20
7 [n]Titus 3:4
8 [o][2 Tim. 1:9] [p]Rom. 4:16 [q][John 1:12, 13]
9 [r]Rom. 4:4, 5; 11:6 [s]Rom. 3:27
10 [t]Is. 19:25
11 [u][Rom. 2:28; Col. 2:11]
15 [v]Gal. 6:15
16 [w]2 Cor. 5:18; [Col. 1:20–22] [x][Rom. 6:6]
18 [y]John 10:9 [z]1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 4:4
20 [a]1 Pet. 2:4 [b]Matt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 3:10, 11; Rev. 21:14

historical events in the life of Christ: His resurrection from the dead and enthronement at the right hand of God. But Paul also applies them to what has happened to believers. Paul teaches a union between Christ and those who come to trust Him (1:3; Col. 3:1–4), so that what is said of the Redeemer can also be said of the redeemed. What once happened to Jesus will one day happen to believers as well (2 Cor. 4:16): they will be resurrected to glory at His return (Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 15). For the present, there is a new mind (4:23, 24; Rom. 12:1, 2), a new identity as God's children (Rom. 8:14–17), and a new ability to live free from the control of Satan (Rom. 8:1–4; 2 Cor. 5:17).

■ **2:7** The ground of our salvation is God's love and mercy, and its goal is the promotion of His grace and kindness (3:6 note).

■ **2:8 you have been saved.** Salvation is a completed action that has a present effect. In his earlier letters Paul usually refers to salvation either as a future event (Rom. 5:9, 10) or as a present process (1 Cor. 1:18; 2 Cor. 2:15). One exception is Rom. 8:24, where Paul puts salvation in the past, but qualifies it as needing completion at Christ's return: "For we were saved in this hope."

and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. This parenthesis is thought by many to refer to the whole complex of salvation by grace through faith as a gift of God. Others, however, take "that" as referring specifically to "faith." Sinners are dependent on God's gracious gift for their believing response to Christ from the moment of conversion. Paul makes explicit here what is implicit elsewhere in the New Testament about the ultimate source of saving faith (Acts 13:48; Phil. 1:29).

■ **2:9 works.** Only faith, not works, can bring us acceptance with God. But good works are the vital consequence and evidence of life with God (Titus 2:14; 3:8, 14; James 2:14–26). God chose us to make us holy sons and daughters (1:4, 5), and He has now fashioned us to be new bearers of His image (4:24), designed for the kind of life that conforms to God's character (4:1—6:20). Also see "Antinomianism" at 1 John 3:7.

■ **2:10 that we should walk in them.** See 4:1; 5:2, 8, 15; note the ironic comparison with 2:2; 4:17.

■ **2:11 made in the flesh by hands.** The opposite of this circumcision is the spiritual circumcision of the heart (Deut. 10:16; Jer. 4:4), applied to Gentiles as well as Jews (Rom. 2:28, 29; Phil. 3:3; Col. 2:11–13).

■ **2:12 at that time.** Contrast with "But now" in v. 13; see also 5:8. In Rom. 9:3–5, Paul lists the privileges of Jews. Here he lists five disadvantages of Gentiles.

aliens . . . strangers from the covenants of promise. They were not citizens of the nation with whom God was in covenant relation. Though God's relationship with Israel included a promise to bless the nations (Gen. 12:3), Gentiles had no awareness of that hope.

without God in the world. God had revealed Himself to all humanity in nature and in the conscience. But Gentiles had suppressed what truth they did know, turning instead to idolatry (Acts 17:22–31; Rom. 1:18—2:16).

■ **2:13 in Christ Jesus . . . by the blood of Christ.** There are two dimensions to Gentiles' being brought near to God. The first is their experience of spiritual union with Christ (vv. 4–10); the second is the historical basis of that experience in Christ's sacrificial death (vv. 14–16; 1:7).

far off . . . near. See v. 17.

■ **2:14–16** See 4:22–24; Col. 3:9–12 and notes.

■ **2:14 the middle wall of separation.** This refers to the courts of the temple in Jerusalem. A wall separated Gentiles and Jews, and signs were posted excluding Gentiles from the inner courts where sacrifices for sin were performed.

■ **2:15 abolished . . . the law of commandments.** Christ offered in His own body the final sacrifice to which the temple's sacrifices merely pointed. The ceremonial laws of the Old Testament that separated Jews and Gentiles are no longer appropriate after their fulfillment in Christ.

■ **2:17, 18** Isaiah had prophesied a day when God's peace would be proclaimed to those "far off" and "near" (Is. 57:19). Through the gospel of Christ the Spirit brings Gentiles ("you who were afar off") and Jews ("those who were near") together before the Father, in fulfillment of Isaiah's promise.

■ **2:19–22** These verses describe the reversal of the Gentile disadvantages outlined in vv. 11, 12 (cf. 3:6). The building of a new spiritual temple replaces the outmoded one in Jerusalem.

■ **2:19 no longer strangers.** The kingdom of God is now international. See theological note "The Church."

■ **2:20** The foundation of God's house was laid once for all by the New Testament apostles and prophets. The cornerstone is Christ (1 Cor. 3:10, 11).

The Church

The church exists in and through Jesus Christ, and so is a distinctive New Testament reality. At the same time it is continuous with Israel, the seed of Abraham and God's covenant people. The new covenant under which the church lives (1 Cor. 11:25; Heb. 8:7–13) is a new form of the relationship in which God says to His chosen community, "I will be your God, and you shall be My people" (Jer. 7:23; 31:33; cf. Ex. 6:7).

Under the new covenant, the Old Testament priests, sacrifices, and sanctuary have been superseded by the mediation of Jesus (Heb. 1—10). Believers in Christ are the seed of Abraham and the people of God (Gal. 3:29; 1 Pet. 2:4–10). Second, the limitation of the old covenant to one nation (Deut. 7:6; Ps. 147:19, 20) is replaced by the inclusion in Christ on equal terms of believers from every nation (Eph. 2; 3; Rev. 5:9, 10). Third, the Spirit is poured out on the church, so that fellowship with Christ (1 John 1:3), ministry from Christ (John 14:18; Eph. 2:17), and foretastes of heaven (2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:14) become realities in the experience of the church.

The unbelief of most Jews (Rom. 9—11) and the majority of Gentiles in the church is depicted by Paul as God's breaking off the natural branches of His olive tree (the historical covenant community) and replacing them with wild olive shoots (Rom. 11:17–24). The new covenant does not exclude Jews, and Paul taught that their general rejection of it will one day be reversed (Rom. 11:15, 23–31).

The New Testament teaches that the church is the fulfillment of the Old Testament hopes and patterns, brought about by Jesus Christ. The church is the family and flock of God (John 10:16; Eph. 2:18; 3:15; 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:2–4), His Israel (Gal. 6:16), the body and bride of Christ (Eph. 1:22, 23; 5:23–32; Rev. 19:7; 21:2, 9–27), and the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16; cf. Eph. 2:19–22).

The church is a single worshiping community, permanently gathered in the true sanctuary, the heavenly Jerusalem (Gal. 4:26; Heb. 12:22–24) and the place of God's presence. The church is one, although the worshiping community consists of the church militant—those who are still on earth—and the church triumphant—those who have died and entered glory. On earth, the church appears in its local congregations, each one a microcosm of the church as a whole. According to Paul the one church universal is the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:12–26; Eph. 1:22, 23; 3:6; 4:4), but so is each local congregation (1 Cor. 12:27; "The Local Church" at Rev. 2:1).

The church on earth is *one* in Christ despite the great number of local congregations and denominations (Eph. 4:3–6). It is *holy* because it is consecrated to God corporately, as each Christian is individually (Eph. 2:21). It is *catholic* (meaning "universal") because it is worldwide. Finally, it is *apostolic* because it is founded on apostolic teaching (Eph. 2:20). All four qualities may be seen in Eph. 2:19–22.

There is a distinction to be drawn between the church as people see it and as God alone sees it. This difference is the historic distinction between the "visible church" and the "invisible church." "Invisible" does not mean that no part of it can be seen, but that its exact boundary is not known to us. Only God knows (2 Tim. 2:19) which members of the earthly congregations are inwardly born again, and so belong to the church as an eternal and spiritual fellowship. Jesus taught that in the organized church there would always be people who seemed to be Christians, not excluding leaders, who were nevertheless not renewed in heart and would be exposed and rejected at the Judgment (Matt. 7:15–23; 13:24–30, 36–43, 47–50; 25:1–46). There are not two churches, one visible and another hidden in heaven, but one church only, known perfectly to God and known imperfectly on earth.

The New Testament assumes that all Christians will share in the life of a local congregation, worshiping in the body, accepting its nurture and discipline (Matt. 18:15–20; Gal. 6:1), and sharing its ministry and witness. Christians who refuse to join other believers disobey God and spiritually impoverish themselves (Heb. 10:25). □

[c]apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being [d]the chief corner*stone,* [21] in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into [e]a holy temple in the Lord, [22][f]in whom you also are being built together for a [g]dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

The Mystery Revealed

3 For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles— [2] if indeed you have heard of the [1]dispensation of the grace of God [a]which was given to me for you, [3][b]how that by revelation [c]He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, [4] by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), [5] which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: [6] that the Gentiles [d]should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, [7] [e]of which I became a minister [f]according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by [g]the effective working of His power.

Purpose of the Mystery

[8] To me, [h]who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles [i]the unsearchable riches of Christ, [9] and to make all see what *is* the [2]fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who [j]created all things [3]through Jesus Christ; [10][k]to the intent that now [l]the [4]manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church [m]to the [5]principalities and powers in the heavenly *places,* [11] [n]according to the eternal purpose which He accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, [12] in whom we have boldness and access [o]with confidence through faith in Him. [13][p]Therefore I ask that you do not lose heart at my tribulations for you, [q]which is your glory.

Appreciation of the Mystery

[14] For this reason I bow my knees to the [r]Father [6]of our Lord Jesus Christ, [15] from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, [16] that He would grant you, [s]according to the riches of His glory, [t]to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in [u]the inner man, [17] [v]that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, [w]being rooted and grounded in love, [18] [x]may be

14 [r]Eph. 1:3 [6]NU omits *of our Lord Jesus Christ* **16** [s][Phil. 4:19] [t]Col. 1:11 [u]Rom. 7:22 **17** [v]John 14:23 [w]Col. 1:23 **18** [x]Eph. 1:18

20 [c]1 Cor. 12:28 [d]Ps. 118:22

21 [e]1 Cor. 3:16, 17

22 [f]1 Pet. 2:5 [g]John 17:23

CHAPTER 3

2 [a]Acts 9:15 [1]*stewardship*

3 [b]Acts 22:17, 21; 26:16 [c][Rom. 11:25; 16:25]

6 [d]Gal. 3:28, 29

7 [e]Rom. 15:16 [f]Rom. 1:5 [g]Rom. 15:18

8 [h][1 Cor. 15:9] [i][Col. 1:27; 2:2, 3]

9 [j]Heb. 1:2 [2]NU, M *stewardship* (dispensation) [3]NU omits *through Jesus Christ*

10 [k]1 Pet. 1:12 [l][1 Tim. 3:16] [m]Col. 1:16; 2:10, 15 [4]*variegated* or *many-sided* [5]*rulers*

11 [n][Eph. 1:4, 11]

12 [o]Heb. 4:16; 10:19, 35

13 [p]Phil. 1:14 [q]2 Cor. 1:6

■ **2:21, 22 grows . . . being built.** God's house grows through the continued addition and integration of people as "living stones" (1 Pet. 2:5). The house is also a temple because God Himself lives in this new building of people.

■ **3:1** Paul begins a prayer that his Gentile readers will be filled with the presence of Christ and be able to grasp the truth about their Redeemer's love and power (vv. 14–21). Paul interrupts himself to explain the nature of his own ministry and insight into the union of Jew and Gentile in Christ (vv. 2–13).

prisoner. Paul is under house arrest in Rome (Acts 28:16, 30).

■ **3:3 as I have briefly written already.** See 1:9, 10.

■ **3:5 as it has now been revealed.** The Old Testament's silence about Paul's mystery—the union of Jews and Gentiles in the church (v. 6)—was relative, not absolute. It was anticipated by the prophets ("Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance," Is. 19:25). If the idea had been altogether absent from the Old Testament, Paul could not have said, as he did in Rom. 4, that the Abrahamic covenant included all who were of a like faith with Abraham, including Gentiles. Paul told Agrippa that his proclamation of light to both Jews and Gentiles did not go beyond what had been promised by Moses and the prophets (Acts 26:22, 23).

■ **3:6 Gentiles should be fellow heirs.** Although the Old Testament gives occasional glimpses of a unified human race, only in the light of Christ's sacrifice does God's plan become clear: in one magnificent act He removed the enmity between Himself and humanity and also took away the divisions that fracture humanity (2:14–18). Paul had reflected before on the unusual way God included Gentiles among His people: contrary to the rules of agriculture, the Gentiles were a wild branch grafted into a cultivated tree (Rom. 11:11–24).

■ **3:8** Compare the progression of Paul's self-description from 1 Cor. 15:9 to Eph. 3:8 to 1 Tim. 1:15, 16.

■ **3:10 the principalities . . . in the heavenly places.** Paul has already mentioned "the prince of the power of the air" (2:2), and will return to the Christians' battle against their spiritual enemies in the universe (6:10–17). It is helpful here to recall Paul's recent controversy with the false teachers in Colosse. He had argued in his letter to that church that Jesus is Lord of all things, including the spirit world, and further that it is only in Jesus that heaven and earth are reconciled (Col. 1:15–20; 2:8–23). Accordingly, the establishment of peace between Jews and Gentiles in the church is a signal to all powers in the universe. For Paul, there is no deeper division in the human race than that between Jew and Gentile. That they could be united with each other in Christ displays the profound wisdom of God (Is. 55:8, 9; 1 Cor. 2:6–10), and proves even to supernatural powers that Jesus is Lord of the universe (1:20–23).

■ **3:14 bow my knees.** Jews normally prayed standing (Matt. 6:5; Luke 18:11, 13). Kneeling appears to have been an expression of humility and urgency (Ezra 9:5; Luke 22:41; Acts 7:59, 60). This verse returns to the prayer Paul had begun introducing in v. 1 (note).

■ **3:15 the whole family in heaven.** Or, "every family." Jewish intertestamental and rabbinic literature refers to families of angels.

■ **3:16 in the inner man.** This is some of Paul's most pointed language about the work of the Holy Spirit within individuals (2 Cor. 5:17). Much of Ephesians addresses believers' corporate identity (e.g., 4:3–6, 12–16). But Christ also dwells in individual hearts. Christianity is neither a common confession to the exclusion of individual experience, nor a private piety without corporate vision.

■ **3:18 width and length and depth and height.** These measures of space recall the temple image of 2:21. As the "living stones" (1 Pet. 2:5) are linked in love, God's dwelling grows and is filled with Christ Himself. God uses the love among "all the saints"—Jew and Gentile alike—to build a whole that is greater than any of its individual parts. The spatial language exalts Christ's love for His people—a love that is inclusive, inexhaustible, and self-sacrificing.

18 [y]Rom. 8:39
19 [z]Eph. 1:23
20 [a]Rom. 16:25 [b]1 Cor. 2:9 [c]Col. 1:29
21 [d]Rom. 11:36

CHAPTER 4

1 [a]1 Thess. 2:12 [1]Lit. *in* [2]*exhort, encourage*
3 [b]Col. 3:14
4 [c]Rom. 12:5
5 [d]1 Cor. 1:13 [e]Jude 3 [f][Heb. 6:6]
6 [g]Mal. 2:10 [h]Rom. 11:36 [3]NU omits *you;* M *us*
7 [i][1 Cor. 12:7, 11]
8 [j]Ps. 68:18
9 [k]John 3:13; 20:17 [4]NU omits *first*
10 [l]Acts 1:9 [m][Eph. 1:23]
12 [n]1 Cor. 14:26 [o]Col. 1:24 [5]*building up*
13 [p]Col. 2:2 [q]1 Cor. 14:20
14 [r]1 Cor. 14:20 [s]Rom. 16:18

able to comprehend with all the saints [y]what *is* the width and length and depth and height— [19] to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled [z]with all the fullness of God.

[20] Now [a]to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly [b]above all that we ask or think, [c]according to the power that works in us, [21] [d]to Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

Walk in Unity

4 I, therefore, the prisoner [1]of the Lord, [2]beseech you to [a]walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, [2] with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, [3] endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit [b]in the bond of peace. [4] [c]*There is* one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; [5] [d]one Lord, [e]one faith, [f]one baptism; [6] [g]one God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and [h]through all, and in [3]you all.

Spiritual Gifts

[7] But [i]to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. [8] Therefore He says:

> [j]"*When He ascended on high,*
> *He led captivity captive,*
> *And gave gifts to men.*"

[9] [k](Now this, "*He ascended*"—what does it mean but that He also [4]first descended into the lower parts of the earth? [10] He who descended is also the One [l]who ascended far above all the heavens, [m]that He might fill all things.)

[11] And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, [12] for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, [n]for the [5]edifying of [o]the body of Christ, [13] till we all come to the unity of the faith [p]and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to [q]a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; [14] that we should no longer be [r]children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of [s]deceitful plotting, [15] but, speaking the truth

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■ **3:20 the power that works in us.** See 1:19–23; 2:5, 6. The first half of the letter climaxes as Paul considers the overwhelming power of God, who carries out His gracious (2:7) and all-wise (v. 10) plan for the reconciliation of the human race.

■ **3:21 glory.** Because of the power that God has given to the church, Paul gives glory to Him.

in the church by Christ Jesus. In this letter Paul uses a variety of images to describe the mutual relationship between the church and Christ: the body and the head (1:22, 23), the reconciled and the reconciler (2:14–18; 4:3), and the bride and her groom (5:22, 33).

■ **4:1 walk.** Throughout the second half of this letter, Paul unfolds the "walk," or life of good works, first mentioned in 2:10. This figure of speech for moral conduct is common in Scripture.

calling. Paul earlier spoke of a hope to which believers are called (1:18; 4:4); now he focuses on the life to which they are called. He has already provided strong indications of its shape and significance (1:4; 2:10).

■ **4:4–6 one.** This word is repeated seven times in vv. 4–6—three times for Persons of the Godhead, and four times for aspects of His salvation.

■ **4:7 But to each one of us.** All Christians share the grace of salvation through faith (2:5, 8). Each Christian is also given some particular gift of grace to benefit the church (Paul speaks of his own in 3:2, 8). See theological note "Gifts and Ministries."

■ **4:8** Ps. 68 celebrates God's triumphant march from Mount Sinai in the desert to Mount Zion in Jerusalem and His enthronement there. Paul regards this as prefiguring Christ's victorious ascent into heaven.

captivity captive. The spiritual forces of darkness were defeated at the Cross (Col. 2:15 and note). While Ps. 68:18 describes the victorious Lord receiving gifts from men, Paul pictures Christ as sharing His tribute with men. Paul may have thought of this psalm because it was associated with Pentecost. This was the day the ascended Christ poured out the Spirit on the church (Acts 2:32, 33).

■ **4:9** Christ came to the exalted position He now enjoys through humiliation. His incarnation was His taking on a human nature here in "the lower parts of the earth"; cf. 1:20–23; Phil. 2:1–11. This pattern of service is to be imitated by believers.

■ **4:11 apostles.** In a restricted sense, those who had been with Jesus and witnessed His resurrection (or received a special revelation of the risen Jesus) and who had been commissioned by Jesus to be founders of the church (Acts 1:21, 22; 1 Cor. 15:1–9). The word was also used in a broader sense of people sent out as delegates of particular churches (2 Cor. 8:23; Phil. 2:25), though these do not appear to be the ones Paul has in mind in this passage. See 2 Cor. 1:1 note.

prophets. The New Testament prophets conveyed special revelation to the early church. Their functions included prediction, exhortation, encouragement, warning, and explanation (Acts 15:32; 21:9–11; 1 Cor. 14:3). The teaching of the New Testament prophets and apostles laid the foundation of the church (2:20), and certain aspects of their work related to that unique task have been discontinued.

evangelists. People especially gifted to proclaim the gospel (Acts 21:8; 1 Cor. 1:17).

pastors and teachers. The two words go together to refer to a single set of individuals who both shepherd and instruct God's flock. See "Pastors and Pastoral Care" at 1 Pet. 5:2.

■ **4:12, 13** It is not primarily those mentioned in v. 11 who do the work of the ministry; it is the people they equip. Effective teachers help each believer to find their own way of benefiting the rest of the church.

in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the [t]head—Christ— [16] [u]from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

The New Man

[17] This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should [v]no longer walk as [6]the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, [18] having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the [w]blindness of their heart; [19] [x]who, being past feeling, [y]have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

[20] But you have not so learned Christ, [21] if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him, as the truth is in Jesus: [22] that you [z]put off, concerning your former conduct, the old

15 [t]Eph. 1:22
16 [u]Col. 2:19
17 [v]Eph. 2:2; 4:22 [6]NU omits *the rest of*
18 [w]Rom. 1:21
19 [x]1 Tim. 4:2 [y]1 Pet. 4:3
22 [z]Col. 3:8

Gifts and Ministries

The New Testament depicts two broad types of ministry within local churches. While all Christians fulfill informal ministering roles, some held formal and official ministerial offices. Paul addressed these official ministers as "bishops and deacons" (Phil. 1:1), and sometimes referred to the "bishops" (lit. "overseers") as "elders" (Titus 1:5, 7 and notes). The "bishops" or "elders" bore primary responsibility for ruling and teaching the church (1 Tim. 5:17 note), and the "deacons" were apparently especially charged with ministering to the material needs of the believers (Acts 6:1–6; 1 Tim. 3:8 note; cf. James 2:15, 16).

It is clear, however, that these officers who oversee local churches should not restrict the informal ministries, but rather should facilitate them (Eph. 4:11–13). Conversely those who minister informally should not be defiant or disruptive, but should allow the elders to direct their ministries in ways that are orderly and edifying (i.e., strengthening and upbuilding, 1 Cor. 14:3–5, 12, 26, 40; Heb. 13:17). The body of Christ grows to maturity in faith and love as "every part does its share" (Eph. 4:16) and fulfills its particular form of service as granted by God's grace (Eph. 4:7, 12).

The word "gift" (lit. "donation") appears in connection with spiritual service only in Eph. 4:7, 8. Paul explains the phrase "He . . . gave gifts to men" (Eph. 4:8 note) as the ascended Christ giving to His church persons called to and equipped for the ministries of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher (Eph. 4:11 note). Also, through the enabling ministry of these persons, Christ bestows a ministry role on every Christian. Elsewhere (Rom. 12:4–8; 1 Cor. 12—14) Paul calls the divinely given abilities to serve *charismata* (specific manifestations of *charis*, "grace," 1 Cor. 12:4) and *pneumatika* (specific demonstrations of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, God's *pneuma*, 1 Cor. 12:1).

Amid many debated questions regarding spiritual gifts in the New Testament, three certainties stand out. First, a spiritual gift is an ability to express, celebrate, display, and so communicate Christ in a way that builds up and strengthens the faith of other Christians and enlarges the church. Second, spiritual gifts may be broadly classified as either abilities of speech or of loving, practical helpfulness. In Rom. 12:6–8, Paul's list of gifts alternates between the categories: prophecy, teaching, and exhorting are gifts of speech; serving, giving, leading, and showing mercy are gifts of helpfulness. However much they differ as forms of human activity, all are of equal dignity when one properly uses the gift one has (1 Pet. 4:10, 11). Third, no Christian is without some gift of ministry (1 Cor. 12:7; Eph. 4:7). It is every believer's responsibility to find, develop, and fully use whatever capacities for service God has given. □

■ **4:16 body.** Paul uses the analogy of the human body. Believers are not given gifts for their own private benefit, and no one can grow to maturity in isolation. Paul himself strives for a knowledge of the Son of God that comes to maturity only when all believers attain it as well.

■ **4:17–19** This passage closely resembles the critique of Gentile culture in Rom. 1. While the letter to the Romans shows God as giving Gentiles over to a reckless and wanton life (Rom. 1:24–31), Ephesians presents the same progression from the human side: those who have turned aside "have given themselves over" (v. 19). Similarly in Exodus God is said to harden Pharaoh's heart (e.g., Ex. 4:21; 7:3), but Pharaoh also hardens his own heart (Ex. 8:15, 32; 9:34).

■ **4:21 heard Him.** That is, in the message proclaimed about Him.

as the truth is in Jesus. God has broken the cycle of death by giving them an understanding of His Son and His work on their behalf (1:13, 15).

■ **4:22–24 put off . . . be renewed . . . put on.** Belonging to Christ

man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, 23 and [a]be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and that you [b]put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

Do Not Grieve the Spirit

25 Therefore, putting away lying, [c]*"Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,"* for [d]we are members of one another. 26 [e]*"Be angry, and do not sin"*: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, 27 [f]nor give [7]place to the devil. 28 Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather [g]let him labor, working with *his* hands what is good, that he may have something [h]to give him who has need. 29 [i]Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but [j]what is good for necessary [8]edification, [k]that it may impart grace to the hearers. 30 And [l]do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 [m]Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, [9]clamor, and [n]evil speaking be put away from you, [o]with all malice. 32 And [p]be kind to one another, tenderhearted, [q]forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

Walk in Love

5 Therefore[a] be imitators of God as dear [b]children. 2 And [c]walk in love, [d]as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God [e]for a sweet-smelling aroma.

3 But fornication and all [f]uncleanness or [g]covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; 4 [h]neither filthiness, nor [i]foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, [j]which are not fitting, but rather [k]giving of thanks. 5 For [l]this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any [l]inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. 7 Therefore do not be [m]partakers with them.

Walk in Light

8 For you were once darkness, but now *you are* [n]light in the Lord. Walk as children of light 9 (for [o]the fruit of the [2]Spirit *is* in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), 10 [p]finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. 11 And have [q]no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather [3]expose *them.* 12 [r]For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. 13 But [s]all things that are [4]exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. 14 Therefore He says:

23 [a][Rom. 12:2]
24 [b][Rom. 6:4; 7:6; 12:2]
25 [c]Zech. 8:16 [d]Rom. 12:5
26 [e]Ps. 4:4; 37:8
27 [f][Rom. 12:19] [7]*an opportunity*
28 [g]Acts 20:35 [h]Luke 3:11
29 [i]Col. 3:8 [j]1 Thess. 5:11 [k]Col. 3:16 [8]*building up*
30 [l]Is. 7:13
31 [m]Col. 3:8, 19 [n]James 4:11 [o]Titus 3:3 [9]*loud quarreling*
32 [p]2 Cor. 6:10 [q][Mark 11:25]

CHAPTER 5

1 [a]Luke 6:36 [b]1 Pet. 1:14–16
2 [c]1 Thess. 4:9 [d]Gal. 1:4 [e]2 Cor. 2:14, 15
3 [f]Col. 3:5–7 [g][Luke 12:15]
4 [h]Matt. 12:34, 35 [i]Titus 3:9 [j]Rom. 1:28 [k]Phil. 4:6
5 [l]1 Cor. 6:9, 10 [1]NU *know this*
7 [m]1 Tim. 5:22
8 [n]1 Thess. 5:5
9 [o]Gal. 5:22 [2]NU *light*
10 [p][Rom. 12:1, 2]
11 [q]2 Cor. 6:14 [3]*reprove*
12 [r]Rom. 1:24
13 [s][John 3:20, 21] [4]*reproved*

involves repudiating an old life and embracing a new one. The image is that of taking off fraying clothes and putting on new ones.

■ **4:25—5:5** Paul outlines six concrete ways that Christians "put off" their old lives and "put on" life in Christ: they must turn from lying to telling the truth (4:25, 26); from uncontrolled anger to self-control (4:26, 27); from stealing to useful labor (4:28); from harmful to helpful speech (4:29, 30); from bitterness to love (4:31—5:2); and from unrestrained sexual desires to a thankful acknowledgement of God's good gifts (5:3–5). In each case, Paul offers a reason for the change from old to new.

■ **4:27** Because practical unity among believers displays God's reconciling power (vv. 1–10; 2:14–16), the devil especially prizes its disruption (2:2; 6:11).

■ **4:30 do not grieve.** That is, by the destructive use of speech described in v. 29. That the Holy Spirit can be saddened is an indication of His being a Person and not an impersonal force. The idea is not new to the New Testament, as is clear from Paul's quotation of the prophet Isaiah (Is. 63:10).

■ **4:32—5:2 even as God . . . as Christ also.** Believers must extend to others the forgiveness and love God has extended to them. In the same way, because Israel was purchased from slavery in Egypt, they were to have a special regard for aliens, slaves, and the dispossessed in their own midst (Ex. 22:21; 23:9; Lev. 19:33, 34; Deut. 5:15). The same logic is found in Jesus' new commandment: "as I have loved you, that you also love one another" (John 13:34).

■ **5:1 as dear children.** See note on Col. 3:12. A firm knowledge of God's love and of one's place in His family (1:5) motivates the self-sacrifice necessary for Christian life (cf. v. 2).

■ **5:3, 4 fitting . . . not fitting.** To trivialize the sexual relationship ("coarse jesting"), or on the other hand to idolize it, is out of step with our identity as "saints." As those called out of the human race (1:4–6) to bear God's restored image (4:24), we can accept God's gifts, including sexuality, with thanksgiving, and restore them to their proper use (Prov. 5:18, 19; 1 Tim. 4:1–5; Heb. 13:4).

■ **5:6** Although the day of reckoning may be denied with "empty words" (cf. 2 Pet. 3:3, 4), God's judgment will make a final separation between "the sons of disobedience" (2:2; cf. 5:5) and God's beloved children (1:4, 5; 5:1).

■ **5:7 partakers with them.** Christians must consider the fearful destiny of non-believers and refuse to join them in their folly. Instead, they should remember their status as partakers with the Jews in the promise of God in Christ (3:6).

■ **5:8 once . . . but now.** See 2:11, 13. Paul wants believers to do more than abstain from the things that bring God's wrath. They should live as "children of light" (Col. 1:13 note). A result of the believers' union with Christ is that He who is "the light of the world" (John 8:12; 9:5) has made them also "the light of the world" (Matt. 5:14).

■ **5:13 for whatever makes manifest is light.** Paul assumes that certain sins are so shameful that bringing them to light will shame some non-believers into repentance. The Christians' presence alone may expose sins through contrast or they may openly denounce them. Paul quotes what may be an early Christian hymn reminiscent of a number of Old Testament passages (e.g., Is. 60:1) and calling upon the spiritually dead to rise up and receive the light of Christ (cf. 2:1–10).

14 [f]"Awake, you who sleep,
Arise from the dead,
And Christ will give you light."

Walk in Wisdom

15 [u]See then that you walk [5]circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, 16 [v]redeeming the time, [w]because the days are evil.

17 [x]Therefore do not be unwise, but [y]understand [z]what the will of the Lord *is*. 18 And [a]do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another [b]in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making [c]melody in your heart to the Lord, 20 [d]giving thanks always for all things to God the Father [e]in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, 21 [f]submitting to one another in the fear of [6]God.

Marriage—Christ and the Church

22 Wives, [g]submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For [h]the husband is head of the wife, as also [i]Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. 24 Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands [j]in everything.

25 [k]Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and [l]gave Himself for her, 26 that He might [7]sanctify and cleanse her [m]with the washing of water [n]by the word, 27 [o]that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, [p]not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. 28 So husbands ought to love their own wives as

14 [f][Is. 26:19; 60:1]
15 [u]Col. 4:5 [5]*carefully*
16 [v]Col. 4:5 [w]Eccl. 11:2
17 [x]Col. 4:5 [y][Rom. 12:2] [z]1 Thess. 4:3
18 [a]Prov. 20:1; 23:31
19 [b]Acts 16:25 [c]James 5:13
20 [d]Ps. 34:1 [e][1 Pet. 2:5]
21 [f][Phil. 2:3] [6]NU *Christ*
22 [g]Col. 3:18—4:1
23 [h][1 Cor. 11:3] [i]Col. 1:18
24 [j]Titus 2:4, 5
25 [k]Col. 3:19 [l]Acts 20:28

26 [m]John 3:5 [n][John 15:3; 17:17] [7]*set it apart* 27 [o]Col. 1:22 [p]Song 4:7

■ **5:18 drunk with wine.** This is more than a prohibition of simple drunkenness. Paul probably refers to an orgiastic form of worship such as was practiced by the cult of Dionysus (Bacchus), the god of wine. Worship of Dionysus involved drunken states in which the god was thought to enter the bodies of worshipers, inspiring prophecy and frenzied dancing and music. Such worship is "dissipation."

be filled with the Spirit. While the sealing of the Spirit (1:13, 14; 4:30) is a once-for-all initiation into the Christian life, the filling of the Spirit applies to all the Christian life. This filling is not only repeatable, but is to be sought again and again. In the parallel passage in Colossians, Paul tells Christians to let the "peace of God" govern their hearts and to allow the "word of Christ" to dwell in them richly (Col. 3:15, 16). The one who is filled with the Spirit is filled with Christ and His word (John 14:16, 26; 16:12–15; 17:17).

■ **5:19 to one another . . . to the Lord.** Worship is offered to God alone. At the same time, in corporate worship there is a human audience as well since people worship together and address each other for their mutual benefit (1 Cor. 14; Heb. 10:24).

psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. See "Music in the Church" at Col. 3:16.

■ **5:21** This transitional verse is last in a series of expressions explaining the effects of being filled with the Spirit (vv. 19–21 note). Regardless of their social rank, all Christians should pattern their social behavior on the humility and kindness of Christ (4:32—5:2; cf. Luke 22:24–27; John 13:14–16). This submission "to one another" is the basis for the forms of authority in specific relationships discussed in 5:22—6:9.

■ **5:22—6:9** At least as far back as Aristotle (fourth century B.C.), Greek ethics had addressed relationships within the household in a familiar pattern: husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and slaves. Consistently, the interest was to help the male head of household learn to govern his family and slaves. In their treatment of such rules, Paul and Peter transform the question from how husbands, fathers, and masters dominate to how they can imitate the love of Christ they know in their own lives by nurturing those in their care. Simultaneously, as wives, children, and slaves define their roles in terms of service to Christ, they turn from being passive objects in a social world that devalues them, and become instead active partners with God in His plan to bring unity to a race divided by gender, age, and economics.

■ **5:22–32** Jesus gives life to a new community of love—the church, His own body. His love also defines the marriage relationship for His people. Paul teaches that the genders are complementary, and a man and a woman are equal before God. Yet in marriage the husband has leadership. This leadership is not absolute but gives the husband the initiative in marriage, to which the wife responds. Paul's understanding is grounded in the creation order (1 Cor. 11:8, 9; 1 Tim. 2:13), and he takes account of the lingering effects, even among Christians, of the Fall (1 Tim. 2:14). Redemption in Christ restores the intimacy men and women were created to enjoy in marriage.

■ **5:22 submit.** A Christian wife is called to grateful acceptance of her husband's care and leadership. See theological note "The Christian Family."

as to the Lord. See v. 24.

■ **5:23 head of the wife . . . head of the church.** In other passages on Christ's headship in this letter, Paul speaks of the way Christ governs the universe and the church (1:22), and serves as the source of the body's health and growth to maturity (4:14–16).

the Savior. It is especially in His role as Savior that Christ serves as the husband's model (vv. 25–27 and notes).

the body. That is, the church as His body—Christ Himself indwells the church (vv. 28–30).

■ **5:24 just as the church . . . so let the wives.** The church's subjection to Christ is a revealed and heavenly order, not a natural order. Christ's disciples were His friends, not just His servants, and He died for them (John 15:12–15; cf. Luke 22:25–27).

■ **5:25 Husbands, love.** The emphasis in the passage is not the husband's authority to govern, but his responsibility to love.

just as Christ . . . loved the church and gave Himself for her. Nowhere in the New Testament is Christ's self-sacrificing love applied more directly to a specific relationship as a pattern to be emulated (cf. v. 2).

■ **5:26, 27** Paul outlines in these verses the entire process to which Christ has committed Himself in His relationship with the church: He has washed her from sin and is preparing her for a glorious destiny with Himself (see text note, v. 26). Husbands are called in like manner to adapt their lives to their wives' needs, and to provide for their growth and development.

■ **5:28–32** A person's union with his or her own body is intimate and permanent, and marriage creates a similiar union (Gen. 2:24). Christ has joined the church to Himself through the bonds of the covenant He fulfilled, and this intimate union forms an analogy for Christian marriage (see 2:6 and note).

their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord *does* the church. 30 For [q]we are members of His body, [s]of His flesh and of His bones. 31 [r]*"For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the [s]two shall become one flesh."* 32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless [t]let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife *see* that she [u]respects *her* husband.

30 [q]Gen. 2:23 [s]NU omits the rest of v. 30.
31 [r]Gen. 2:24 [s][1 Cor. 6:16]
33 [t]Col. 3:19 [u]1 Pet. 3:1, 6

CHAPTER 6

Children and Parents

6 Children, [a]obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 [b]*"Honor your father and mother,"* which is the first commandment with promise: 3 *"that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth."*

4 And [c]you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but [d]bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

1 [a]Col. 3:20
2 [b]Deut. 5:16
4 [c]Col. 3:21 [d]Gen. 18:19

The Christian Family

The family is the oldest and most basic of human institutions. In both the Israelite culture of the Old Testament and the Hellenistic culture of the New Testament, the household might consist of parents and children, relatives from several generations, servants, and even friends, depending on the economic resources of the head of the family. The Bible stresses its importance as a spiritual unit and a training ground for mature adult character.

The Bible pictures a clear authority structure within the family, whereby the husband is to lead the wife and the parents are to lead the children. But just as all leadership should be a form of ministry rather than tyranny, so these domestic leadership roles must be fulfilled in love (Eph. 5:22—6:4; Col. 3:18–21; 1 Pet. 3:1–7). The fourth commandment requires the head of the household to lead his whole family in sabbath observance; the fifth requires children to respect and submit to their parents (Ex. 20:8–12; Eph. 6:1–3). Jesus Himself set an example in this as a child (Luke 2:51). Later, He fiercely opposed supposed gestures of piety that were really evasions of responsibility toward parents (Mark 7:6–13), and His own last act before death was to provide for His mother's future (John 19:25–27).

The family is to be a community of teaching and learning about God and godliness. Children must be instructed (Gen. 18:18, 19; Deut. 4:9; 6:6–8; 11:18–21; Prov. 22:6; Eph. 6:4) and encouraged to use that instruction as a basis for their lives (Prov. 1:8; 6:20). Discipline should be used as a means of corrective training to lead children beyond childish folly to self-controlled wisdom (Prov. 13:24; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13, 14; 29:15, 17). Just as there is purposeful, loving discipline in God's family (Prov. 3:11, 12; Heb. 12:5–11), so there must be in the human family.

The family is meant to function as a spiritual unit. The Old Testament Passover was a family observance (Ex. 12:3). Joshua set an example when he said, "as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Josh. 24:15). Households became the units of Christian commitment in New Testament times (Acts 11:14; 16:15, 31–33; 1 Cor. 1:16). The fitness of candidates for church office was assessed by observing whether they had led their own family well (1 Tim. 3:4, 5, 12; Titus 1:6).

Building strong family life is always a priority in serving God. □

■ **6:1–3** Children have responsibility for carrying out part of Christ's plan to bring unity to the human race—this time, unity between generations. For Paul, part of what characterizes Gentile culture as standing under God's judgment is that it is marked by children's disobedience to their parents (Rom. 1:30; 2 Tim. 3:2).

■ **6:2 the first commandment with promise.** The law of God has lost its power to condemn those who are in Christ (Col. 2:13, 14), and the observance of the ceremonial law is inappropriate following their fulfillment in Christ (2:15; Col. 2:16, 17). However the "weightier matters of the law" (Matt. 23:23) are revelations of God's character, and establish permanent ethical principles. One of these is that children must honor their parents.

■ **6:4 fathers.** Conversely, to parents Paul stresses the responsibility of those in authority.

bring them up. The Greek suggests the idea of nurturing and helping to flourish (cf. 5:29). Parents are entrusted with the minds, feelings, and bodies of tender bearers of the divine image. Accordingly, children do not exist for parents, but parents for children—to help them come into their own personhood before God.

training. The shaping of the will through discipline.

admonition. The shaping of the mind through teaching.

Bondservants and Masters

5 [e]Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, [f]with fear and trembling, [g]in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; 6 [h]not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, 7 with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, 8 [i]knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether *he is* a slave or free.

9 And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that [l]your own [j]Master also is in heaven, and [k]there is no partiality with Him.

The Whole Armor of God

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 11 [l]Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the [2]wiles of the devil. 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against [m]principalities, against powers, against [n]the rulers of [3]the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places.* 13 [o]Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand [p]in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14 Stand therefore, [q]having girded your waist with truth, [r]having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 [s]and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 above all, taking [t]the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. 17 And [u]take the helmet of salvation, and [v]the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; 18 [w]praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, [x]being watchful to this end with all perseverance and [y]supplication for all the saints— 19 and for me, that utterance may be given to me, [z]that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which [a]I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

5 [e][1 Tim. 6:1] [f]2 Cor. 7:15 [g]1 Chr. 29:17

6 [h]Col. 3:22

8 [i]Rom. 2:6

9 [j]Col. 4:1 [k]Rom. 2:11 [l]NU *He who is both their Master and yours is*

11 [l][2 Cor. 6:7] [2]*schemings*

12 [m]Rom. 8:38 [n]Luke 22:53 [3]NU *this darkness,*

13 [o][2 Cor. 10:4] [p]Eph. 5:16

14 [q]Is. 11:5 [r]Is. 59:17

15 [s]Is. 52:7

16 [t]1 John 5:4

17 [u]1 Thess. 5:8 [v][Heb. 4:12]

18 [w]Luke 18:1 [x][Matt. 26:41] [y]Phil. 1:4

19 [z]Col. 4:3

20 [a]2 Cor. 5:20

■ **6:5–8** Slaves follow the example of Christ through obedient submission (Phil. 2:1–11). All believers are called to share Christ's humiliation and sufferings in this age, in order to be exalted and glorified with Him in the next (Rom. 8:17). Paul is not interested in making anyone's share of suffering greater than it has to be (1 Cor. 7:21). He also does not pretend there is an easy route around it. As slaves serve the exalted Christ, and not merely an earthly master, they do so in the new reality inaugurated by Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). Paul would insist that being owned by Christ makes all other definitions of our personhood irrelevant: "You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men" (1 Cor. 7:23). By rendering ungrudging service to their true heavenly owner, slaves can work not for their value in the marketplace, but for their value to the One who poured out His own life for them.

■ **6:9 do the same things.** If masters can expect their Christian slaves to serve them willingly, slaves can expect from Christian masters to be treated the way Christ treats His own.

■ **6:10–17** The Christian duty of unity and purity is complicated by the presence of hostile spiritual powers. Christ's cross and resurrection are the devil's undoing (Col. 2:15 note), and at Christ's Second Coming, Satan's defeat will be completed (Rom. 16:20). But the peace of the Cross is experienced in the meantime in the midst of spiritual struggle. The forces of darkness are defeated, but not yet harmless.

■ **6:10 be strong . . . the power of His might.** Paul uses similar terms in 1:19 to describe the power that raised Jesus from the dead. We are not encouraged to face the evil hosts of darkness in our own strength, but in the strength that raised Jesus and believers with Him (2:4–6; 3:16–19).

■ **6:11 Put on the whole armor of God.** The new set of clothes (4:22–24 note) now becomes a warrior's battle gear (Col. 3:10, 12 notes).

stand. Repeated three times in vv. 11, 13, 14 (the related term "withstand" in v. 13 has the same meaning). The "walking" image of chs. 4 and 5 (4:1 note) gives way to the picture of a soldier standing firm in battle.

■ **6:12** See 1:21; 2:2; 3:10.

principalities . . . spiritual hosts. These terms all refer to powerful spiritual beings that make up the "power of the air" (2:2) ruled by Satan.

darkness. See 5:8–14.

■ **6:13 the whole armor of God.** Paul combines the weapons of a Roman foot soldier with a number of Old Testament images of God, or the Messiah, as a warrior. Strikingly, what is said of God and the Messiah in the Old Testament is applied to believers.

■ **6:14 girded . . . with truth.** The Roman soldier's leather belt supported and protected his lower abdomen, gathered his tunic together, and held his sword. Paul seems to have in mind the confidence that comes from certainty about the truthfulness of God's Word.

breastplate of righteousness. Believers are protected by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them (Rom. 4:6–11; Phil. 3:9), and they can stand up to the accusations of the devil; the word in Greek means "slanderer" (Rom. 8:31–34). Simultaneously, Paul sees believers taking on the righteous character of Christ (4:25; 5:9), while their growing conformity to His image gives them confidence in resisting temptation.

■ **6:15 shod your feet.** Despite a clear allusion to Is. 52:7, Paul does not have in mind the barefooted messenger who takes the gospel to others. The image here is of the Roman soldier's sturdy sandals, which gave him stability and protection in battle. Ironically, the peace that comes from the gospel readies one for war against evil (2:14, 15, 17).

■ **6:16 shield of faith.** The Roman shield was large enough to cover the whole body; it was made of wood, covered with hide, and bound with iron at the top and bottom. When dipped in water before a battle, it could extinguish fire arrows that had been dipped in pitch and set ablaze.

■ **6:17 helmet of salvation.** For Paul, salvation is a present experience (2:8 and note) as well as a future hope (1 Thess. 5:8). The believer's final ground of confidence is the faithfulness of God to complete the salvation He has begun (Phil. 1:6).

sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. The one offensive weapon in the believer's arsenal is compared to the Roman sword, short and designed for hand-to-hand combat. See Jesus' use of Scripture in Matt. 4:1–11; Luke 4:1–13.

■ **6:18–20** The battle theme in this passage ends with an urgent call to militant prayer on behalf of all believers and on behalf of Paul's ministry. See 1:15–23 for Paul's dependence on prayer.

21 [b]Acts 20:4
[c]1 Cor. 4:1, 2
22 [d]Col. 4:8
[e]2 Cor. 1:6

A Gracious Greeting

21 But that you also may know my affairs *and* how I am doing, [b]Tychicus, a beloved brother and [c]faithful minister in the Lord, will make all things known to you; 22 [d]whom I have sent to you for this very purpose, that you may know our affairs, and *that* he may [e]comfort your hearts.

23 Peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
24 Grace *be* with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

■ **6:21–24 Tychicus.** See note on Col. 4:7, 8. The absence of personal greetings in this letter may be an indication that it was intended for circulation to more than one church. See Introduction: Date and Occasion.

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the

PHILIPPIANS

Author The author identifies himself as Paul (1:1), and the early church unanimously attributed this letter to him. It has many personal references, and is similar to the other Pauline writings. These facts together leave no doubt that Paul is the author.

The beginning of Paul's involvement with the church at Philippi is recorded in Acts 16. Prompted by a vision (Acts 16:6–10), Paul and his colleagues traveled to Philippi (Acts 16:12). During their brief visit, God did mighty works and a church was established (Acts 16:40), Paul's first on European soil. Paul himself returned on at least two more occasions to strengthen the believers (Acts 20:1–6; 2 Cor. 2:13).

Date and Occasion Paul writes from prison (1:12–30), but the location of the imprisonment is a matter of discussion. Some think he wrote from Ephesus, though Acts 19 says nothing of his being imprisoned during his lengthy Ephesian ministry. A stronger case can be made for his having written the letter during his imprisonment in Caesarea (Acts 23:23—26:32). But it is probable, in accord with long-standing tradition, that Paul wrote Philippians during the Roman imprisonment described in Acts 28 and that he did so toward the end of this period, around A.D. 61. His references to "the palace guard" (1:13) and "Caesar's household" (4:22) accord best with a Roman setting, and the language of 1:7–26 suggests legal proceedings at the highest level. Finally, the continuing success of Paul's ministry during his imprisonment (1:12–14) is in keeping with his freedom to preach during his confinement in Rome (Acts 28:16–31).

The city of Philippi was named for Philip of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great. One reason for its importance is that it lay on the main road between the eastern provinces and Rome. A Roman colony populated in part by retired Roman soldiers, its inhabitants enjoyed the privileges of Roman citizenship. The absence of Old Testament quotations and Jewish names in the letter indicates that the church of Philippi was largely Gentile.

Philippians rings with joy and gratitude for the way God is carrying forward His saving work among the Philippians and for the special bond that exists between Paul and his readers. At the same time, there is a gravity to the letter. The Philippians face persecution (1:27–30) and feel the pressures exerted on them by false teachings (3:2–21). Conflicts in the church jeopardize the believers' witness to the world and their ability to withstand its assaults (1:27—2:18; 4:2, 3).

Characteristics and Themes

1. Paul's Affection for His Readers. This epistle amply attests to the special bond of love Paul felt for the Philippians (1:3–8; 4:10–19). The church at Philippi had faithfully supported Paul's ministry, and their willingness to suffer with him for Christ was a source of encouragement for Paul.

2. Joy. Even though he was in jail, Paul's letter resounds with the theme of joy. Forms of the word "joy" occur sixteen times in the letter. Paul's joy is grounded in the peace of God, the antidote to all anxiety (4:4–7).

3. The Triune God. Paul uses the word "God" to refer to the Father (1:2; 2:11; 4:20). Paul's favorite designation for Jesus Christ is "the Lord" (*kyrios* in Greek; see 1:2; 2:11, 19; 3:8, 20; 4:23). On the one hand, Paul affirms in this letter that the Father and the Son are identical in being. Both are divine and worship is due to both (2:6–11). In calling Jesus Christ "the Lord," Paul identifies Him with Yahweh, the God of Israel. Yet by calling the Father "God" and Jesus "the Lord," Paul shows that there is a distinction of Persons within the Godhead. Finally, the Holy Spirit is united with God the Father (3:3) and with Jesus Christ (1:19). Paul's theology is Trinitarian, confessing one God in three Persons. See "One and Three: The Trinity" at Is. 44:6.

4. The Example of Christ's Humility. The majestic "hymn to Christ" (2:6–11) offers a model for believers. Before He was incarnated ("became flesh," John 1:14), Christ Jesus was truly God. Nevertheless, He emptied Himself and took the form of a slave by abandoning His divine privileges and taking on human nature. Yet in relinquishing these privileges He did not cease to be God. Rather, Christ manifested His divine character by becoming a human being.

5. Justification by Grace Through Faith. Against those who require obedience to the Old Testament law as a way of meriting salvation, Paul stresses God's will that His people should be saved by receiving His righteousness as a gift and not by striving to establish their own. Although Paul had been scrupulous in his obedience to the law, he came to realize that his confidence in such obedience was a great sin, for it kept him from trusting God. Paul views his former boasting with disgust (3:7, 8) and Christ alone is now his confidence (3:3, 9).

6. The Christian Life. The letter is filled with instruction on practical Christianity. Just as Christ became a slave, so also the Christian becomes the slave of Christ (1:1). Only the person enslaved to Christ is free to love and serve others (2:3–5).

Paul stresses the importance of identification with Christ in His death and resurrection. As it was for Christ,

suffering for the believer is the prelude to resurrection (3:10, 11). For the present, it is in the midst of ongoing struggle that the Christian experiences joy and power (3:10; 4:13).

The importance of striving toward the goal of full salvation is highlighted. Confident of God's calling, Paul pushes forward toward the heavenly prize (3:13, 14). As Christians work they realize that God is working in them (2:12, 13). Human effort is precisely the area where the power of God is manifested. □

Outline of Philippians

I. Salutation (1:1, 2)
II. Opening Message: Thanksgiving and Prayer (1:3–11)
III. The Truth of the Gospel (1:12—2:30)
  A. The Gospel and Paul (1:12–26)
    1. Paul's Imprisonment (1:12–14)
    2. Rival Messengers (1:15–18)
    3. Paul's Prospects (1:19–26)
  B. The Gospel and the Philippians (1:27—2:18)
    1. A Call to Unity (1:27—2:4)
    2. The Example of Christ (2:5–11)
    3. A Further Call to Unity (2:12–18)
  C. Two of Paul's Coworkers in the Gospel (2:19–30)
IV. Truth Against Error (3:1—4:1)
  A. The Gospel Against Legalists (3:1–11)
  B. The Already and the Not Yet (3:12–16)
  C. The Gospel Against Libertines (3:17—4:1)
V. Exhortations (4:2–9)
VI. Thanksgiving (4:10–20)
  A. Contentment (4:10–13)
  B. Partnership (4:14–20)
VII. Final Greeting and Benediction (4:21–23)

CHAPTER 1

1 [a][1 Tim. 3:8–13] [f]Lit. *overseers*
3 [b]1 Cor. 1:4
4 [c]Eph. 1:16
5 [d][Rom. 12:13]

Greeting

1 PAUL and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ,

To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the [f]bishops and [a]deacons:

2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thankfulness and Prayer

3 [b]I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, 4 always in [c]every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, 5 [d]for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now,

■ **1:1 Paul and Timothy.** Timothy, present at the founding of the Philippian church (Acts 16), is known to the readers (2:22). Elsewhere Paul calls himself "an apostle" and Timothy "our brother" (2 Cor. 1:1; Col. 1:1).

bondservants. A "bondservant" is a slave. Timothy is like a son to Paul (2:22), but both are under Christ the Lord.

in Christ Jesus. One of Paul's favorite ways of describing the believer's union with Christ. This phrase occurs ten times in Philippians.

bishops and deacons. These terms designate the twofold leadership in the church at Philippi (1 Tim. 3:1–13).

■ **1:2 Grace . . . and peace.** These two words, a concise expression of the effect of Christ's saving work, appear together in all thirteen of Paul's salutations. The common source of grace and peace is "God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

■ **1:3, 4** Paul's memory of the Philippians prompts him to pray for them frequently ("in every prayer of mine") and gratefully ("I thank my God").

■ **1:4 with joy.** Joy is a dominant theme in Philippians (vv. 18, 26; 3:1; 4:4, 10). See Introduction.

■ **1:5 your fellowship.** The Philippians' financial support is especially in view (4:10–20).

[6] being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun [e]a good work in you will complete *it* until the day of Jesus Christ; [7] just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace. [8] For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ.

[9] And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, [10] that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, [11] being filled with the fruits of righteousness [f]which *are* by Jesus Christ, [g]to the glory and praise of God.

Christ Is Preached

[12] But I want you to know, brethren, that the things *which happened* to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, [13] so that it has become evident [h]to the whole [2]palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ; [14] and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

[15] Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from goodwill: [16] [3]The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; [17] but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel. [18] What then? Only *that* in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.

To Live Is Christ

[19] For I know that [i]this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, [20] according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but [j]with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life [k]or by death. [21] For to me, to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain. [22] But if *I* live on in the flesh, this *will mean* fruit from *my* labor; yet what I shall choose I [4]cannot tell. [23] [5]For I am

6 [e][John 6:29]

11 [f]Col. 1:6 [g]John 15:8

13 [h]Phil. 4:22 [2]Or *Praetorium*

16 [3]NU reverses vv. 16 and 17.

19 [i]Job 13:16, LXX

20 [j]Eph. 6:19, 20 [k][Rom. 14:8]

22 [4]*do not know*

23 [5]NU, M *But*

in the gospel. The word "gospel," Paul's favorite term for his message, occurs nine times in Philippians (more, proportionately, than in any other letter). Paul and the Philippians are bound together by their common commitment to the gospel (v. 7).

from the first day. That is, since the gospel first came to Philippi (4:15; Acts 16:12–40).

■ **1:6 He . . . will complete it.** The perseverance of the saints depends upon God's preserving them by grace. See "Perseverance of the Saints" at Rom. 8:30. God's saving purpose will be fulfilled on "the day of Christ" (v. 10; 2:16), when He returns in glory to raise His people from the dead (3:11, 20, 21) and to receive universal homage (2:9–11).

■ **1:7 have you in my heart.** The Greek words could be rendered, "you have me in your heart." The Philippians are "partakers . . . of grace" with Paul through supporting his ministry (cf. v. 5).

defense and confirmation. The terms suggest apostolic witness during a trial (cf. v. 16; Mark 13:9–11).

■ **1:8 affection.** The Greek noun, like the related verb used often of Jesus in the Gospels (e.g., Matt. 9:36; 14:14), indicates deep emotion.

■ **1:9, 10** Paul tells the Philippians not only that he prays for them (v. 4), but also the content of that prayer. Christian belief ("knowledge and all discernment") comes to expression in Christian love and in behavior that is "sincere and without offense" (cf. Col. 1:9–11). The absence of love shows that supposed knowledge is worthless (1 Cor. 13:1–3), and love is itself knowledge of the deepest kind (1 Cor. 8:1–3). The seriousness of Paul's prayer that "love may abound" among the Philippians will become more apparent in 2:1–18.

■ **1:11** Not only is the sinner justified through faith in Christ (3:9), but "the fruits of righteousness," or the righteous life that ensues, is also "by Jesus Christ" through the work of His Spirit (Gal. 5:22, 23), "to the glory and praise of God" the Father. All three Persons of the Godhead are active in the sanctification of believers.

■ **1:12 for the furtherance of the gospel.** Because of Paul's imprisonment, the gospel has moved irresistibly through the palace guard and beyond.

■ **1:13 all the rest.** Paul's imprisonment for Christ had become known not only to the soldiers assigned to the emperor, but also to the imperial household (cf. 4:22) and perhaps to the Roman populace beyond.

■ **1:14 brethren.** Paul uses this term to address both men and women.

in the Lord. This important Pauline phrase points to the believer's union with Christ and to the divine resources available through Christ to those united with Him (4:13). The phrase occurs nine times in Philippians (counting 2:19). By means of Paul's imprisonment, the Lord strengthens and encourages the Christians to proclaim the gospel fearlessly.

■ **1:15–18** There are not rival messages, since both parties preach Christ, but opposing motives and attitudes. The motive of one group is goodwill and love for Christ, and Paul's defense of the gospel explains why they love the apostle (vv. 15, 17). The dominant motive of the other group is "selfish ambition" (v. 16), the very attitude against which Paul warns the Philippians (2:1–5). They preach Christ so that they themselves can seem important, an attitude quite different from Paul's (vv. 20, 21), and they respond to Paul's success by seeking to increase his suffering (v. 16).

■ **1:19 deliverance.** Paul expects to be released from prison, but he cannot be certain of it (vv. 20–27; 2:24). God will deliver him (v. 28) through His appointed agencies, both human and divine ("your prayer" and "the Spirit of Jesus Christ").

Spirit of Jesus Christ. Paul identifies the third Person of the Trinity as the Spirit of God and as the Spirit of Christ (Rom. 8:9; Gal. 4:6).

■ **1:20** Paul's passion is neither to live nor to die, but to see Christ magnified whatever happens (2:17; cf. Rom. 12:1, 2).

■ **1:21 to live is Christ.** Christ is Paul's reason for being.

to die is gain. Far from severing Paul's union with Christ, death will bring Paul into a deeper experience of that union.

■ **1:23 hard-pressed.** Paul wants to be with Christ but also to remain on earth for the sake of the church. This is his dilemma. However, the outcome is in God's hands, and Paul is confident that God has further work for him to do among the Philippians (vv. 24, 25).

hard-pressed between the two, having a [l]desire to depart and be with Christ, *which is* [m]far better. [24] Nevertheless to remain in the flesh *is* more needful for you. [25] And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith, [26] that [n]your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again.

Striving and Suffering for Christ

[27] Only [o]let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, [p]with one mind [q]striving together for the faith of the gospel, [28] and not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but [6]to you of salvation, and that from God. [29] For to you [r]it has been granted on behalf of Christ, [s]not only to believe in Him, but also to [t]suffer for His sake, [30] [u]having the same conflict [v]which you saw in me and now hear *is* in me.

23 [l][2 Cor. 5:2, 8] [m][Ps. 16:11]
26 [n]2 Cor. 1:14
27 [o]Eph. 4:1 [p]Eph. 4:3 [q]Jude 3
28 [6]NU *of your salvation*
29 [r][Matt. 5:11, 12] [s]Eph. 2:8 [t][2 Tim. 3:12]
30 [u]Col. 1:29; 2:1 [v]Acts 16:19–40

Death and the Intermediate State

We do not know how humans would have left this world had there been no Fall; some doubt whether they ever would have done so. But as it is, the fruit of sin and God's judgment on it brings about the separation of body and soul through bodily death (Gen. 2:17; 3:19, 22; Rom. 5:12; 8:10; 1 Cor. 15:21), making it a certainty for everyone. This separation of soul and body is a consequence of the spiritual separation from God that first brought about physical death (Gen. 2:17; 5:5) and that will be deepened after death for those who leave this world without Christ. In itself death is an enemy (1 Cor. 15:26) and a terror (Heb. 2:15).

For Christians the final terror of physical death is abolished. Jesus, the risen Savior, Himself passed through a terrible death, enduring the anger of God. He takes from us God's anger, and He lives to help us as we leave this world for the place He has prepared in the next (John 14:2, 3). Christians know that their own forthcoming death is an appointment to meet their Savior, that He will faithfully keep. Paul could say, "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain." He longed "to depart and be with Christ, which is far better" (Phil. 1:21, 23), knowing that "to be absent from the body" is "to be present with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:8).

At death the souls of believers are made perfect in holiness and enter into the worshipping life of heaven (Heb. 12:22–24). In a word, they are glorified. Some have not accepted this, but teach instead that there is a purgatorial discipline after death amounting to a further stage of sanctification. In this purgatory the soul is prepared over a period of time, to be purified for the vision of God. This doctrine is not found in the Bible. The saints living on earth at Christ's coming will be perfected morally to be with Him in the moment when their body is transformed (1 Cor. 15:51–54), and it seems that Paul, and the thief on the cross, expected the same admission to God's presence. Others say that believers pass into a soul-sleep and are unconscious between death and resurrection. The Bible, however, consistently represents the departed as conscious (Luke 16:22; 23:43; Phil. 1:23; 2 Cor. 5:8; Rev. 6:9–11; 14:13).

In itself to be without the body is a disadvantage; we live through our bodies, and to be without a body is to be limited and impoverished. Paul longs to be "clothed" with the resurrection body, and wants not at all to be "unclothed" (2 Cor. 5:4). The resurrection of the body is a distinctive Christian hope confessed by every branch of the church on earth.

Death is decisive for destiny. The Bible does not teach that after death there is another possibility of salvation for the lost (Luke 16:26; Heb. 9:27). After death, both the godly and the ungodly reap what they sowed in this world (Gal. 6:7, 8). □

be with Christ. Paul's language here sheds light on the character of the intermediate state (i.e., the condition of a person between the times of physical death and the resurrection). See theological note "Death and the Intermediate State."

■ **1:27 one spirit . . . one mind.** Paul is appealing for unity among the believers.

striving. Paul urges readers not to break under the pressure of opposition, but instead to exert pressure of their own. This means proclaiming the gospel they have believed (Eph. 1:13), and living worthy of it.

■ **1:28–30** Paul offers the Philippian believers four assurances. (a) Their courage in the face of opposition is a sign of the divine judgment facing the persecutors (2 Thess. 1:5–10). (b) Their courage is also a sign of the believers' own salvation in the full, redemptive sense (Rom. 1:16; 13:11). (c) Suffering for Christ is an honor given by God (3:10). (d) Paul shares in their struggle (vv. 7–26; Acts 16:19–24; 1 Thess. 2:2), and his example can encourage them just as it does "the brethren" (v. 14).

Unity Through Humility

2 Therefore if *there is* any [1]consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any [a]affection and mercy, [2][b]fulfill my joy [c]by being like-minded, having the same love, *being* of [d]one accord, of one mind. [3][e]*Let* nothing *be done* through selfish ambition or conceit, but [f]in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. [4][g]Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of [h]others.

The Humbled and Exalted Christ

[5][i]Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, [6]who, [j]being in the form of God, did not consider it [2]robbery to be equal with God, [7][k]but [3]made Himself of no reputation, taking the form [l]of a bondservant, *and* [m]coming in the likeness of men. [8]And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and [n]became [o]obedient to *the point of* death, even the death of the cross. [9][p]Therefore God also [q]has highly exalted Him and [r]given Him the name which is above every name, [10][s]that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, [11] and [t]*that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

8 [n]Matt. 26:39 [o]Heb. 5:8 **9** [p]Heb. 2:9 [q]Acts 2:33 [r]Eph. 1:21 **10** [s]Is. 45:23 **11** [t]John 13:13

CHAPTER 2

1 [a]Col. 3:12 [1]Or *encouragement*

2 [b]John 3:29 [c]Rom. 12:16 [d]Phil. 4:2

3 [e]Gal. 5:26 [f]Rom. 12:10

4 [g]1 Cor. 13:5 [h]Rom. 15:1, 2

5 [i][Matt. 11:29]

6 [j]2 Cor. 4:4 [2]Or *something to be held onto to be equal*

7 [k]Ps. 22:6 [l]Is. 42:1 [m][John 1:14] [3]*emptied Himself* of His privileges

■ **2:1–4** The poetic quality of these verses makes Paul's words especially forceful. The fourfold appeal of v. 1 (note the repeated phrase "if any") is the basis for the exhortations of vv. 2–4.

■ **2:1 consolation in Christ.** In their union with the Savior they find encouragement to pursue unity with each other. To follow Christ's example, they must first be in Christ (cf. v. 5).

comfort of love. Believers are encouraged because Christ loves them (Gal. 2:20), and because they love Christ and one another (v. 2).

fellowship of the Spirit. This phrase may also be rendered "fellowship produced by the Spirit."

■ **2:2 like-minded . . . same love . . . one accord . . . one mind.** The accent on unity is strong (cf. 1:27).

■ **2:3 selfish ambition.** Pride is competitive by nature and tries to lift a person above others, so promoting conflicts rather than harmony (vv. 2, 14; 1:27). By contrast, humility accepts a place of service, with concern for the needs and interests of others (v. 4). Love (v. 2) is essential for humility (1:9; 1 Cor. 13:4, 5).

■ **2:5** This verse connects the exhortations (vv. 1–4) to the hymn (vv. 6–11). Addressing the pride that lies at the root of the Philippians' discord (1:27—2:4), Paul points to Christ as the supreme example of humility. But Christ is not only an example (Rom. 15:1–3; 2 Cor. 10:1); He is first of all Lord and Savior (v. 11; 3:20).

■ **2:6–11** This "hymn to Christ" may be divided into six stanzas. The first three (vv. 6–8) celebrate Christ's humiliation, the last three (vv. 9–11) His exaltation.

■ **2:6 being in the form of God.** The word "form" refers to the underlying reality and not to appearance only. Jesus' being in "the form of God" means that He is divine.

not . . . robbery. This figure of speech means that something desirable was already possessed. Jesus was not trying to become God, and did not cling to the privileges that were always His.

■ **2:7 made Himself of no reputation.** Lit. "emptied Himself." Christ is not said to have removed from Himself His identity as God. The phrase means that He humbled Himself, relinquishing His heavenly status, not His divine being. The nature of His self-emptying is defined in three phrases that follow ("taking . . . coming . . . being found"). See "The Humanity of Jesus" at 2 John 7.

a bondservant. That is, a slave. This language vividly expresses Christ's willingness to deprive Himself of His exalted status (v. 6 note).

the likeness of men. Christ is truly human. "Likeness" means more than similarity. In order to die (v. 8), He had to be completely human. At the same time, Paul makes a distinction between Christ and other human beings. Unlike them, He has no sin (2 Cor. 5:21). And regarding His divine nature He remains transcendent over created reality; He cannot cease to be a heavenly being even in His humiliation.

■ **2:8 in appearance as a man.** Christ's "appearance" as a man was not an illusion. He revealed Himself through a complete and genuine human nature united with His divine nature in one Person, who is both human and divine.

He humbled Himself. The language here is parallel to the phrase "made Himself of no reputation" in v. 7. Each act occurs by the free exercise of Christ's own will.

obedient. Submission to the Father's will (Heb. 10:5–9) is more significant for the One who is equal with the Father (v. 6) than for anyone else. Paul's words embrace Christ's whole lifetime of obedience, while emphasizing that the supreme expression of obedience was His death.

the cross. The accent is on Christ's willingness to suffer the most shameful and painful of deaths, rather than on the atoning significance of the event (cf. Rom. 3:21–26).

■ **2:9 Therefore God.** The Father's act is a direct response to Christ's obedience.

highly exalted Him. Christ is restored to the glorious status He had at the beginning but voluntarily relinquished for a time in order to become a human being (John 16:28; Heb. 2:9, 14).

■ **2:10 at the name of Jesus.** This may mean "the name belonging to Jesus," i.e., "Lord" (v. 11). Paul more likely means that the utterance of the name "Jesus" is the signal that "every knee should bow" to offer Him worship and acclaim Him Lord.

■ **2:11 Lord.** Christ's humility is His glory (cf. Matt. 23:12). The "name which is above every name" (v. 9) is "Lord." In the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament), God's name is represented by the title "Lord" (Greek *kyrios*). Christ is now acclaimed to be what He has always been, the true God (1 John 5:20). The ascription of praise embraces both the humanity ("Jesus") and the deity ("Lord") of Christ; He is worshiped as the God-Man. See "Jesus Christ, God and Man" at John 1:14.

God the Father. Jesus Christ is the Son of the Father. So united are the Persons of the Godhead that the act of worshiping the Son glorifies the Father. Although he does so elsewhere (Rom. 8:3; Gal. 4:4), Paul does not refer to Jesus as the Son of God in Philippians.

12 [u]Phil. 1:5, 6; 4:15 [v]John 6:27, 29 [w]Eph. 6:5

13 [x]Heb. 13:20, 21 [y]Eph. 1:5

14 [z]1 Pet. 4:9 [a]Rom. 14:1 [4]*grumbling* [5]*arguing*

15 [b]Matt. 5:15, 16 [6]*innocent*

16 [c]2 Cor. 1:14 [d]Gal. 2:2 [e]1 Thess. 3:5

17 [f]2 Tim. 4:6 [g]Rom. 15:16 [h]2 Cor. 7:4

19 [i]Rom. 16:21 [7]*condition*

20 [j]2 Tim. 3:10

22 [k]1 Cor. 4:17

25 [l]Phil. 4:18 [m]Philem. 2 [n]2 Cor. 8:23 [o]2 Cor. 11:9

26 [p]Phil. 1:8

30 [q]1 Cor. 16:17 [8]*risking*

Light Bearers

12 Therefore, my beloved, [u]as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, [v]work out your own salvation with [w]fear and trembling; 13 for [x]it is God who works in you both to will and to do [y]for *His* good pleasure.

14 Do all things [z]without [4]complaining and [a]disputing,[5] 15 that you may become blameless and [6]harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as [b]lights in the world, 16 holding fast the word of life, so that [c]I may rejoice in the day of Christ that [d]I have not run in vain or labored in [e]vain.

17 Yes, and if [f]I am being poured out *as a drink offering* on the sacrifice [g]and service of your faith, [h]I am glad and rejoice with you all. 18 For the same reason you also be glad and rejoice with me.

Timothy Commended

19 But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send [i]Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your [7]state. 20 For I have no one [j]like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. 21 For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus. 22 But you know his proven character, [k]that as a son with *his* father he served with me in the gospel. 23 Therefore I hope to send him at once, as soon as I see how it goes with me. 24 But I trust in the Lord that I myself shall also come shortly.

Epaphroditus Praised

25 Yet I considered it necessary to send to you [l]Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, and [m]fellow soldier, [n]but your messenger and [o]the one who ministered to my need; 26 [p]since he was longing for you all, and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. 27 For indeed he was sick almost unto death; but God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. 28 Therefore I sent him the more eagerly, that when you see him again you may rejoice, and I may be less sorrowful. 29 Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such men in esteem; 30 because for the work of Christ he came close to death, [8]not regarding his life, [q]to supply what was lacking in your service toward me.

■ **2:12 Therefore.** On the basis of Christ's supreme example, Paul resumes his appeal. The apostle's presence encourages the Philippians to obey, but the basic motivation is from "God who works" in them (v. 13), and their obedience will flourish in Paul's absence as well (1:27).

your own salvation. As in 1:28, this is salvation in the full, redemptive sense with particular stress on the sanctification of the believer. The sanctifying process calls for obedience to the exhortation of vv. 1–5. See "Sanctification: The Spirit and the Flesh" at 1 Cor. 6:11.

fear and trembling. This is awe and reverence rather than panic and alarm. The right emotions are stirred by the presence of God (v. 13), and not by questions or doubts about eternal security.

■ **2:13 God who works in you.** The use of human effort (v. 12), far from violating God's will, is just what He commands for achieving His saving purpose (Eph. 2:8–10). Having invoked the example of Christ, Paul reassures the Philippians that they do not will and work on their own, but their wills and their actions are the very arenas where God's own power is working (4:13; 1 Thess. 2:13).

■ **2:14 without complaining and disputing.** The Philippians must not imitate the ancient Israelites (Ex. 15:24; 16:7–9; 1 Cor. 10:10). Note also the allusion in v. 15 to Deut. 32:5. The Philippians may well have been guilty of grumbling against church leaders, as the Israelites did against Moses (v. 29; 1 Thess. 5:12, 13).

■ **2:15 that you may become.** The corporate witness of a united church is in view.

blameless and harmless . . . without fault. The meanings of these terms overlap considerably. Paul describes the quality of life required of "children of God." Such persons will "shine as lights in the world," in marked contrast to their "crooked and perverse" contemporaries, but offering hope to them at the same time (cf. Matt. 5:14–16; Acts 2:40).

■ **2:16 holding fast.** Paul is concerned with the Philippians' own fidelity to the gospel of Jesus Christ (1:27; 2:1–5).

the word of life. This refers to both the gospel and the ethical teachings founded on it (1:27; 4:8, 9).

I may rejoice. Paul's pride on the "day of Christ" (1:10; cf. 1:6) will be the Philippians' spiritual growth rather than his own (1:9–11).

■ **2:17 if I am being poured out.** Paul here refers not to his present suffering, but to the possibility that he will die as a martyr.

drink offering. A libation normally of wine, not blood, that accompanied sacrifices.

sacrifice and service of your faith. The Philippians' gifts to Paul (4:10–20).

I am glad and rejoice. For Paul, suffering can cause joy to flourish. It is to be the same for the Philippians (v. 18).

■ **2:21 their own.** This verse echoes the same thought as v. 4. Timothy's life is a model of the humility to which Paul calls his readers, and an image of Christ's own humility (vv. 5–11).

■ **2:22 as a son with his father.** Timothy worked closely with Paul for Christ; both are His servants (1:1). As Christ's servant, Timothy "will sincerely care" for the welfare of others (v. 20).

■ **2:23 to send him.** Amid difficult circumstances (1:29, 30), perhaps including a forthcoming trial, Paul needs a person of Timothy's character. In vv. 23, 24 Paul echoes the confidence expressed in 1:19–26.

■ **2:24 in the Lord.** The plans concerning both Timothy and Paul are submitted to the divine will (v. 19).

■ **2:25 Epaphroditus.** This fellow worker of Paul, like Timothy, is worthy of honor. Like Timothy and like Jesus Himself, he is a man for others. He obeys Christ by enlisting as a servant to other believers, both the Philippians (4:18) and Paul, for whose sake he risks his life (vv. 26, 27, 30).

■ **2:26 distressed.** Such is the attitude of Epaphroditus that he is less concerned about his sickness than about the effect of this news on the Philippians.

All for Christ

3 Finally, my brethren, [a]rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you *is* not tedious, but for you *it is* safe.

2 [b]Beware of dogs, beware of [c]evil workers, [d]beware of the mutilation! 3 For we are [e]the circumcision, [f]who worship [1]God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, 4 though [g]I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I [h]more so: 5 circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, [i]*of* the tribe of Benjamin, [j]a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, [k]a Pharisee; 6 concerning zeal, [l]persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

7 But [m]what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. 8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss [n]for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in Him, not having [o]my own righteousness, which *is* from the law, but [p]that which *is* through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; 10 that I may know Him and the [q]power of His resurrection, and [r]the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, 11 if, by any means, I may [s]attain[2] to the resurrection from the dead.

Pressing Toward the Goal

12 Not that I have already [t]attained,[3] or am already [u]perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. 13 Brethren, I do not count myself to

11 [s]Acts 26:6–8 [2]Lit. *arrive at* **12** [t][1 Tim. 6:12, 19] [u]Heb. 12:23 [3]*obtained it*

CHAPTER 3

1 [a]1 Thess. 5:16

2 [b]Gal. 5:15 [c]Ps. 119:115 [d]Rom. 2:28

3 [e]Deut. 30:6 [f]Rom. 7:6 [1]NU, M *in the Spirit of God*

4 [g]2 Cor. 5:16; 11:18 [h]2 Cor. 11:22, 23

5 [i]Rom. 11:1 [j]2 Cor. 11:22 [k]Acts 23:6

6 [l]Acts 8:3; 22:4, 5; 26:9–11

7 [m]Matt. 13:44

8 [n]Jer. 9:23

9 [o]Rom. 10:3 [p]Rom. 1:17

10 [q]Eph. 1:19, 20 [r][Rom. 6:3–5]

■ **3:1 Finally, my brethren.** This anticipates the letter's closing exhortations (4:2–9).

rejoice in the Lord. This appeal is repeated in 4:4.

the same things. This refers to what Paul is about to say in vv. 2–21 (cf. v. 18). Here Paul repeats material he had previously communicated, either personally or by letter, that the Philippians might be "safe" against false teaching in the church.

■ **3:2 dogs . . . the mutilation.** Paul's opponents here may be either Christians (as in Galatians) or non-Christians who champion the law of Moses and insist on circumcision as the badge of salvation (cf. Acts 15:1).

■ **3:3 we are the circumcision.** In response to the Judaizers and their mistaken emphasis upon the external physical rite of circumcision, Paul asserts that Christians are the true circumcision, i.e., the spiritual Israel (Gal. 3:6—4:7).

rejoice in Christ Jesus. This stands in stark contrast to "confidence in the flesh."

flesh. As used by Paul, this term often embraces all that is natural and human. In this verse, however, the physical act of circumcision is probably in view (v. 5; Gal. 6:12–15).

■ **3:4–6** These verses list Paul's sevenfold pedigree under the law.

■ **3:5 the eighth day.** Paul was circumcised in accordance with Gen. 17:12.

of Israel. See Rom. 9:3, 4; 11:1.

of the tribe of Benjamin. Paul, formerly Saul of Tarsus, may have been named for King Saul, also from Benjamin (1 Sam. 9:1, 2).

a Pharisee. Paul's life was one of scrupulous obedience to the law, both the Torah and associated Jewish traditions (Acts 22:3; 26:5; Gal. 1:14).

■ **3:6 persecuting the church.** See Acts 9:13, 14; 22:4, 5; 26:9–11; 1 Cor. 15:9; Gal. 1:13, 14.

blameless. This is not a claim of sinlessness (Rom. 7:7–13), but of fidelity to the Old Testament's prescribed way of life. Paul's obedience to the law was honorable, but his resulting "confidence" (the word is repeated three times in vv. 3 and 4) was the worst of sins.

■ **3:7 what things were gain.** Paul is obviously not thinking of his transgressions of the law but of his scrupulous obedience to its commands (v. 6).

I have counted loss. This decision is the more meaningful, because it is (at least in part) a virtue that he renounces, perhaps even harder than renouncing vice. Yet as Paul now grasps, the nobler one's lineage and the higher one's attainments, the greater the temptation to pride and self-confidence (Luke 18:9–14; Eph. 2:8, 9). Paul freely discards all sources of self-confidence and personal profit "for Christ."

■ **3:8 rubbish.** The Greek word is graphic; it means "refuse" and was once translated "dung." Paul flings away in disgust whatever interferes with "the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."

■ **3:9–11** Verse 9 speaks of justification, v. 10 of sanctification, and v. 11 of glorification. The sequence of privilege-death-exaltation suggests a connection with 2:6–11.

■ **3:9 not having my own righteousness.** Paul now recognizes that salvation is based not upon human attainments of obedience to the law, but entirely and exclusively upon "the righteousness which is from God," given to those united with Christ (Rom. 1:16, 17; 3:21–26).

faith in Christ. Christ is the object of faith (Gal. 2:16), and now that he trusts Christ alone, Paul abandons all reliance on his own credentials (vv. 7, 8). Faith is the instrument, not the ground, of salvation, and Paul declares that we are saved "through faith," never that we are saved "on account of faith." The ground of salvation is the merit of Christ. Faith as the instrument does not provide value of its own but links us to Christ and His merit.

by faith. This phrase might be translated, "based on faith" or "upon faith." Faith receives God's gift of righteousness (Rom. 3:22; 5:17), and on the ground of this righteousness the verdict of justification is given when a person believes (Rom. 4:3; 5:1; Gal. 3:6). In this way faith and justification occur at the same time, although faith is logically first.

■ **3:10 I may know Him.** This is Paul's most passionate longing (1:20–23); he speaks not merely of greater mental awareness, but of deepened personal union. The following two clauses explain how knowing Christ is presently experienced.

His resurrection. For Paul, identification with the crucified and risen Christ is fundamental to Christian living. Elsewhere (2 Cor. 4:7, 10, 11), Paul teaches that it is through participation in the sufferings of Christ that the power of Christ's resurrection is manifested in the life of the Christian. This identification with the sufferings of Christ is not exclusively in martyrdom (2:17) but for all of life.

■ **3:11 by any means.** Paul recognizes that the believer's perseverance depends on the will and the working of the sovereign God (1:6; 2:13; 3:12–14, 21; cf. Heb. 6:3).

the resurrection. Sharing in Christ's suffering prepares for sharing in His glory at the resurrection from the dead (vv. 20, 21; Rom. 8:17).

■ **3:12 Not that I have already attained.** The prize of salvation in its

have [d]apprehended; but one thing *I do,* [v]forgetting those things which are behind and [w]reaching forward to those things which are ahead, [14] [x]I press toward the goal for the prize of [y]the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

[15] Therefore let us, as many as are [z]mature, [a]have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, [b]God will reveal even this to you. [16] Nevertheless, to *the degree* that we have already [5]attained, [c]let us walk [d]by the same [6]rule, let us be of the same mind.

Our Citizenship in Heaven

[17] Brethren, [e]join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as [f]you have us for a pattern. [18] For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* [g]the enemies of the cross of Christ: [19] [h]whose end *is* destruction, [i]whose god *is their* belly, and *[j]whose* glory *is* in their shame—[k]who set their mind on earthly things. [20] For [l]our citizenship is in heaven, [m]from which we also [n]eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, [21] [o]who will transform our lowly body that it may be [p]conformed to His glorious body, [q]according to the working by which He is able even to [r]subdue all things to Himself.

4 Therefore, my beloved and [a]longed-for brethren, [b]my joy and crown, so [c]stand fast in the Lord, beloved.

Be United, Joyful, and in Prayer

[2] I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche [d]to be of the same mind in the Lord. [3] [1]And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who [e]labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names *are* in [f]the Book of Life.

[4] [g]Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!

13 [v]Luke 9:62 [w]Heb. 6:1 [4]*laid hold of it*
14 [x]2 Tim. 4:7 [y]Heb. 3:1
15 [z]1 Cor. 2:6 [a]Gal. 5:10 [b]Hos. 6:3
16 [c]Gal. 6:16 [d]Rom. 12:16; 15:5 [5]*arrived* [6]NU omits *rule* and the rest of v. 16.
17 [e][1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1] [f]Titus 2:7, 8
18 [g]Gal. 1:7
19 [h]2 Cor. 11:15 [i]1 Tim. 6:5 [j]Hos. 4:7 [k]Rom. 8:5
20 [l]Eph. 2:6, 19 [m]Acts 1:11 [n]1 Cor. 1:7
21 [o][1 Cor. 15:43–53] [p]1 John 3:2 [q]Eph. 1:19 [r][1 Cor. 15:28]

CHAPTER 4 **1** [a]Phil. 1:8 [b]2 Cor. 1:14 [c]Phil. 1:27 **2** [d]Phil. 2:2; 3:16 **3** [e]Rom. 16:3 [f]Luke 10:20 [1]NU, M *Yes* **4** [g]Rom. 12:12

fullness has not yet been won, a point Paul emphasizes against ideas of perfectionism (cf. 1 Cor. 4:8; 2 Tim. 2:18; 1 John 1:8). Yet the saving process that will be consummated on the day of Christ (1:6, 10) and the resurrection from the dead (3:11) has already begun.

■ **3:14 the goal.** The objective of Paul's striving promises a splendid trophy—salvation in all its fullness (cf. 1:28; Rom. 13:11).

the upward call of God. God has already called Paul (Rom. 8:30; Gal. 1:15). It is because "Christ Jesus has also laid hold of" Paul (v. 12) that he presses forward toward the goal of life in glory (v. 13).

■ **3:15 as many as are mature.** These words may be a tribute to persons who in fact think and live maturely. Another possibility is that here Paul is speaking ironically to people who consider themselves already "perfected" (v. 12), and whose thinking Paul needs to correct.

have this mind. This refers to the teaching of vv. 12–14.

if . . . you think otherwise. These words may reinforce the preceding appeal to agree with Paul, but the repeated phrases ("have this mind . . . think") recall 2:1–5 and suggest that the apostle is also concerned that the Philippians agree among themselves.

God will reveal. Whether spiritual discernment and understanding or agreement among believers is in view, the grace of God is necessary (1:9–11). In the meantime, believers' conduct should accord with the degree of insight which God has already granted (v. 16).

■ **3:17 my example.** Paul's example is the opposite of what follows in vv. 18, 19. Paul is faithful to the Cross (Gal. 6:14), Christ is his glory (v. 21; cf. v. 3), and his mind is set on heavenly things (vv. 20, 21).

■ **3:18, 19** These verses could describe all sorts of opponents (1 Cor. 1:23), including the Judaizers (vv. 2–6; Gal. 2:15–21). Paul may be thinking especially of persons who conceive of Christ as pure spirit, and who scorn the idea of His bringing salvation by means of the Incarnation and a "body of His flesh" that could die (Col. 1:22). Such persons consider themselves to be living on an exalted spiritual plane, which frees them to enjoy sensual pleasures, whether food ("whose god is their belly") or sex ("whose glory is in their shame"; cf. 1 Cor. 6:9, 10).

■ **3:18 weeping.** Paul weeps, not because he fears someone can undo what Christ has done, but because of the destruction in store for opponents of the gospel. This destiny (v. 19) completes the destructive process initiated by their own sin (Rom. 1:18–32; Gal. 6:7, 8).

■ **3:20 our citizenship.** Just as Philippi was a Roman colony (Acts 16:12), the church is a colony of heaven.

we also eagerly await. This anticipation is a counterpart to the longing of 1:23. All other instances of this verb in Paul's epistles have a similar focus (Rom. 8:19, 23, 25; 1 Cor. 1:7; Gal. 5:5).

■ **3:21 transform our lowly body.** In the face of a contempt for the physical (vv. 18, 19 note), Paul celebrates Christ's transformation of our bodies (cf. 1 Cor. 15:50–53). See "Resurrection and Glorification" at 1 Cor. 15:21.

conformed to His glorious body. Christ Himself rose bodily from the grave, the "firstfruits" of a great harvest (1 Cor. 15:20–23). As the Father vindicated Christ's obedience (2:6–11), so too the believers' faithfulness in affliction will end in the glorious resurrection prepared for them.

subdue all things. See 1 Cor. 15:20–28.

■ **4:1 so stand fast.** Paul may be anticipating the exhortations that follow, especially the difficult ones of vv. 2 and 3. This helps to explain the presence of so many terms of affection in v. 1. The challenge to "stand fast" harks back to 1:27 (where the same command occurs), and rests immediately upon the declaration of hope in 3:20, 21. Paul is thinking of Christ's return when he calls his readers a "joy" and "crown" (1 Thess. 2:19, 20).

■ **4:2 I implore.** Paul pleads rather than commands, and by addressing each woman in turn strengthens the appeal.

Euodia . . . Syntyche. These women are mentioned only here in the New Testament. They are courageous fellow workers of Paul and apparently persons of influence in the church.

the same mind. Paul's main concern is not that they should agree with each other, as is sometimes suggested, but that they should both have the attitude commended in 2:2.

■ **4:3 companion.** The Greek word (*syzygos*) may be a proper name.

with Clement. The name occurs only here in the New Testament.

Book of Life. The names of all God's elect are inscribed in this book (Rev. 3:5; 20:15).

■ **4:4 Rejoice.** The theme of joy is prominent in Philippians. The command to rejoice can always be obeyed, even in the midst of conflict, ad-

5 Let your [2]gentleness be known to all men. [h]The Lord *is* at hand.
6 [i]Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with [j]thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and [k]the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Meditate on These Things

8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are [l]true, whatever things *are* [m]noble, whatever things *are* [n]just, [o]whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* [p]lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. 9 The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and [q]the God of peace will be with you.

Philippian Generosity

10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at last [r]your[3] care for me has flourished again; though you surely did care, but you lacked opportunity. 11 Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, [s]to be content: 12 [t]I know how to [4]be abased, and I know how to [5]abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things [u]through [6]Christ who strengthens me.

14 Nevertheless you have done well that [v]you shared in my distress. 15 Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, [w]no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. 16 For even in Thessalonica you sent *aid* once and again for my necessities. 17 Not that I seek the gift, but I seek [x]the fruit that abounds to your account. 18 Indeed I [7]have all and abound. I am full, having received from [y]Epaphroditus the things *sent* from you, [z]a sweet-smelling aroma, [a]an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God. 19 And my God [b]shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. 20 [c]Now to our God and Father *be* glory forever and ever. Amen.

20 [c]Rom. 16:27

5 [h][James 5:7–9] [2]*graciousness* or *forbearance*
6 [i]Matt. 6:25 [j][1 Thess. 5:17, 18]
7 [k][John 14:27]
8 [l]Eph. 4:25 [m]2 Cor. 8:21 [n]Deut. 16:20 [o]1 Thess. 5:22 [p]1 Cor. 13:4–7
9 [q]Rom. 15:33
10 [r]2 Cor. 11:9 [3]*you have revived your care*
11 [s]1 Tim. 6:6, 8
12 [t]1 Cor. 4:11 [4]*live humbly* [5]*live in prosperity*
13 [u]John 15:5 [6]NU *Him who*
14 [v]Phil. 1:7
15 [w]2 Cor. 11:8, 9
17 [x]Titus 3:14
18 [y]Phil. 2:25 [z]Heb. 13:16 [a]2 Cor. 9:12 [7]Or *have received all*
19 [b]Ps. 23:1

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versity, and deprivation, because joy rests not on favorable circumstances, but "in the Lord." Paul uses repetition to emphasize this truth.

■ **4:5 gentleness.** The Greek word denotes the generous spirit that rises above offenses, or a forbearing spirit, of which Jesus provides the supreme example (2 Cor. 10:1). Such a person does not insist on his rights (2:1–4). Only such persons learn the secret of joy.

The Lord is at hand. This may be understood temporally, looking to Christ's coming as a future event (3:20, 21), and taking hope from this. Or Paul may also be speaking of Christ's abiding presence with those united to Him (1:1).

■ **4:6 Be anxious for nothing.** Although the same word is used in 2:20 of a loving concern for others, here it denotes an anxiety that is incompatible with trust in God. The word is translated "worry" in Matt. 6:25.

in everything. Paul's language is deliberately all-inclusive; there are no restrictions on applying it.

prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving . . . requests. The four terms used here make up two couplets. Paul is not defining separate types of prayers. Rather, the cluster of words shows what importance he attaches to the practice of prayer. Presenting requests in prayer provides an outlet for anxiety (1 Pet. 5:7). Doing so "with thanksgiving" is itself an antidote to worry.

■ **4:7 peace of God.** This is the direct answer to the prayer of anxiety. Things that cannot be fully comprehended can nonetheless be peacefully experienced by those who are "in Christ" (1:1; cf. Eph. 3:18, 19).

■ **4:8** Concluding these exhortations, Paul calls his readers to a life of obedience, the right response to the peace of God. The virtues listed are not exhaustive but representative, and they come to expression in countless ways (note the repeated "whatever things"). Thinking on such things is not an end in itself, but preparation for purposeful action (v. 9).

true. See Eph. 4:24, 25.

noble. The Greek word means "honorable" or "worthy of respect."

just. See Titus 1:8.

pure. See 1 Tim. 5:22.

lovely . . . of good report. Terms used only here in the New Testament.

■ **4:9** The Philippians are to be guided both by Paul's teaching and by his example, especially his love for the Philippians (v. 1; 1:3–8; 2:12).

the God of peace. An even richer promise than "the peace of God" (v. 7). Its fulfillment depends on obedience.

■ **4:10–20** Paul returns to a theme of ch. 1—the Philippians' partnership in the gospel (1:5), especially their financial support.

■ **4:10 you lacked opportunity.** Paul adds a qualification, lest they think he is rebuking them.

■ **4:11–13** These verses do not deny the reality of Paul's need, but rather testify that he is content to live both in plenty and in want.

■ **4:13 I can do all things.** Relying on Christ's power and following His example (2:5; 3:10), Paul is able to face all circumstances with contentment. He wants to impress the same lesson on his readers (vv. 6, 7, 19).

■ **4:14** The qualifications of vv. 10–13 call for the restatement of Paul's gratitude for their assistance to him in his time of real need (1:17).

■ **4:15, 16** Even before Paul left Macedonia, the Philippians were repeatedly generous to him.

■ **4:15 in the beginning of the gospel.** That is, upon the arrival of the gospel in Philippi (1:5).

when I departed. Paul left Macedonia to go to Achaia during his second missionary journey (Acts 16:40—18:18).

■ **4:17, 18** As is made emphatically clear in v. 18, Paul is amply supplied and wants to place no further strain on the church's resources. Yet the main cause of Paul's rejoicing (v. 10) is not that his needs have been fully met. Rather he perceives that the Philippians' gifts are an act of worship pleasing to God (Heb. 13:15, 16), and he knows that God will richly bless them in return (2 Cor. 9:6). See "Pleasing God" at 1 Thess. 2:4.

■ **4:19 all your need.** This refers to material and spiritual needs (vv. 6, 7). The promise is for those who are in Christ Jesus (v. 21; 1:1).

21 [d]Gal. 1:2
23 [e]NU *your spirit*

Greeting and Blessing

21 Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren [d]who are with me greet you. 22 All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar's household.

23 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with [e]you all. Amen.

■ **4:21 every saint.** This recalls 1:1.

brethren. Here, as elsewhere, fellow-believers of both sexes. Paul frequently addresses the Philippians with this term (1:12; 3:1).

who are with me. See 1:1, 14.

■ **4:22 All the saints greet you.** This points to the corporate unity of believers, within a single congregation and among local churches, like Philippi and Rome.

Caesar's household. Not members of the royal family, but servants in the palace, the Roman believers with whom Paul has most contact (1:13).

Amen. This word coming at the end of a sentence is a response of trust and commitment to what has been said (v. 20). It confirms the truthfulness and reliability of what has been declared.

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the

COLOSSIANS

Author Colossians was written by Paul the apostle (1:1; 4:18). Though many modern scholars have doubts about Paul's authorship of this letter, compelling grounds for questioning its authenticity are lacking. The language and style are well within the range Paul displays elsewhere and, while aspects of the vocabulary of Colossians are distinctive (e.g., terms such as "fullness," "mystery," "basic principles," and "humility"), these stem largely from Paul's use of the language of his opponents in order to refute them.

That no hierarchical church order is in evidence, nor any reference to any formal authority in the church, points tellingly to the period when Paul and his associates were themselves at work in the churches they founded.

Date and Occasion Paul never visited Colosse (2:1). The church there was founded by a Colossian named Epaphras, apparently in the wake of Paul's ministry in Ephesus (A.D. 53–55), from where "all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks" (Acts 19:10). Some five to seven years later, the founder of the Colossian church joined Paul in prison at Rome (Acts 28; Col. 4:12, 13) to tell the apostle of a strange teaching threatening the health of his home church and to remain with Paul to pray for the churches of the Lycus Valley.

In earlier days, Colosse, a city on the Lycus River in southeastern Asia Minor, had been a prosperous and large city, enjoying a thriving wool industry and a strategic location on a main overland trade route between Ephesus one hundred miles to the west and the Euphrates some four hundred miles to the east. In Roman times, however, Colosse had declined in the face of the growth of two sister cities in the Lycus Valley: Laodicea, the district capital ten miles to the west, and Hierapolis, famous for its healing springs some twelve miles to the northwest. In Paul's day, Colosse was a fairly unimportant market town, easily the least significant city to which any of Paul's surviving letters were addressed.

Characteristics and Themes The Christians Paul addresses in this letter were struggling with a Greek-influenced form of Jewish philosophy that viewed Christians as still vulnerable to spiritual forces. It was thought that these forces needed to be placated through veneration, through some sort of asceticism of food and drink, and by honoring certain days prescribed in Old Testament ceremonial law. The epistle is designed to help Christians understand that in order for them to gain acceptance before God, they need *Christ only*. God has already accepted them by virtue of their union with Christ in His death and resurrection. While there is a perfection, or maturity, that still stands before them as a goal (1:22, 23, 28), they are already "complete in Him," the perfect One (2:10).

Interpretive Difficulties Paul addresses the false teaching at Colosse. Phrygia, the region in south central Asia Minor where Colosse was located, is an area with a peculiar religious history. In ancient times, the region had given birth to the worship of the goddess Cybele, whose cult (renewed during the Roman era) was characterized by ritual cleansing in the blood of a bull, ecstatic states, prophetic rapture, and inspired dancing. In the latter half of the second century A.D., Phrygia became the center of a distorted version of Christianity known as Montanism, a teaching that prized ecstatic and apocalyptic prophecy, freedom from the responsibilities of daily life, and rigorous fasts and penances for ritual purity.

Within a few years of the inception of Christianity among these Phrygians, Epaphras and Paul found that an appetite had emerged for something more than the crucified and risen Christ. It is notoriously difficult to reconstruct the false teaching to which Paul was responding because the letter is less a critique of error than a positive statement of the sufficiency of the person and work of Christ. However, certain features of the false teaching do surface.

It claimed to be a "philosophy" (2:8), a term that often in the Hellenistic age referred not to rational inquiry, but to occult speculations and practices based on a body of tradition.

The teaching appears to have been largely Jewish, as evidenced by the value placed on legal ordinances, food regulations, Sabbath and New Moon observance, and other prescriptions of the Jewish calendar (2:16). Though circumcision is mentioned, it was not necessarily seen as one of the legal requirements (2:11).

The role of angelic spirits was also an important element in this teaching. Three key factors point to this. There is stress on Christ's superiority to and victory over "dominions" and "powers" (1:16; 2:10, 15).

The phrase "basic principles of the world" (2:8, 20; cf. Gal. 4:3) also points to angelic beings. An old and popular line of interpretation views Paul arguing against the "basic principle" that life with God comes through

works-righteousness. However, the letter's implied competition between Christ and spirit-beings suggests a more transcendent and sinister background. The Greek word translated "basic principles" was used in this time period to refer to gods of stars and planets, and even to the physical elements (earth, wind, fire, and water) that were thought to control the destiny of men and women. The Phrygian god Cybele and her lover Attis were transformed at some time by popular pagan piety into astral and cosmic powers.

Along this line, even some Jewish thinking merged the angels with astral powers who protect the planets. Moreover, intertestamental Jewish literature envisioned Israel caught between two kingdoms, one good and one evil, that both claimed allegiance. The victory of the good and the overthrow of the evil power was understood to be promised if Israel repented, obeyed fully, and kept the Sabbath perfectly. The Colossians appear to have come under the influence of a combination of Jewish and pagan piety presenting itself as a philosophical system and encouraging submission to these occult astral or cosmic powers.

The role of angels in the Colossian error is evident in the phrase "worship of angels" (2:18). Early Christians knew that there were angels who had been agents at creation and in the giving of the law (Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19; Heb. 2:2). The false teaching in Colosse had confused the limited and legitimate role of angels as "ministering spirits" (Heb. 1:14), with the larger role attributed to angels in some parts of Judaism, not to mention the astral powers of the Gentiles. As a means of overcoming fear of these astral or cosmic powers, and under the guise of revelations which so-called "philosophers" received in ecstatic states, the Colossians were being urged to become ascetics and to worship angels. □

Outline of Colossians

I. Introduction (1:1–14)
  A. Salutation (1:1, 2)
  B. Thanksgiving for the Colossians (1:3–8)
  C. Intercession for the Colossians (1:9–14)
II. In Praise of the Son (1:15–23)
  A. Head over Creation and the Cosmic Powers (1:15–17)
  B. Head over Re-creation and Reconciliation (1:18–20)
  C. The Purpose and Effect of Reconciliation (1:21–23)
III. The Purpose of Paul's Ministry and His Interest in the Colossians (1:24—2:7)
IV. The Sufficiency of Christ (2:8–23)
  A. Not the Emptiness of Human Tradition but Fullness in Christ (2:8–10)
  B. Renewal and Victory in Christ (2:11–15)
  C. Freedom from the Law and Asceticism (2:16–23)
V. Life in Christ (3:1—4:6)
  A. Putting off the Old Humanity, Putting on the New (3:1–17)
    1. The Basis for Obedience: Union with Christ in His Death and Life (3:1–4)
    2. Death to the Old Humanity (3:5–8)
    3. New Life in Christ (3:9–14)
    4. The Peace, the Word, and the Worship of Christ (3:15–17)
  B. Instructions for Christian Living (3:18—4:6)
    1. In Social Relationships (3:18—4:1)
    2. In Prayer (4:2–4)
    3. Among Outsiders to the Faith (4:5, 6)
VI. Final Greetings (4:7–18)

Greeting

1 PAUL, [a]an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

2 To the saints [b]and faithful brethren in Christ *who are* in Colosse:

[c]Grace to you and peace from God our Father [1]and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Their Faith in Christ

3 [d]We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, 4 [e]since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of [f]your love for all the saints; 5 because of the hope [g]which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, 6 which has come to you, [h]as *it has* also in all the world, and [i]is bringing forth [2]fruit, as *it is* also among you since the day you heard and knew [j]the grace of God in truth; 7 as you also learned from [k]Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is [l]a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, 8 who also declared to us your [m]love in the Spirit.

Preeminence of Christ

9 [n]For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask [o]that you may be filled with [p]the knowledge of His will [q]in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 10 [r]that you may walk worthy of the Lord, [s]fully pleasing *Him,* [t]being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the [u]knowledge of God; 11 [v]strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, [w]for all patience and longsuffering [x]with joy; 12 [y]giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of [z]the inheritance of the saints in the light. 13 He has delivered us from [a]the power of darkness [b]and [3]conveyed *us* into the kingdom of the Son of His love, 14 [c]in whom we have redemption [4]through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

15 He is [d]the image of the invisible God, [e]the firstborn over all creation. 16 For [f]by Him all

CHAPTER 1

1 [a]Eph. 1:1

2 [b]1 Cor. 4:17 [c]Gal. 1:3 [1]NU omits *and the Lord Jesus Christ*

3 [d]Phil. 1:3

4 [e]Eph. 1:15 [f][Heb. 6:10]

5 [g][1 Pet. 1:4]

6 [h]Matt. 24:14 [i]John 15:16 [j]Eph. 3:2 [2]NU, M add *and growing*

7 [k]Philem. 23 [l]2 Cor. 11:23

8 [m]Rom. 15:30

9 [n]Eph. 1:15–17 [o]1 Cor. 1:5 [p][Rom. 12:2] [q]Eph. 1:8

10 [r]Eph. 4:1 [s]1 Thess. 4:1 [t]Heb. 13:21 [u]2 Pet. 3:18

11 [v][Eph. 3:16; 6:10] [w]Eph. 4:2 [x][Acts 5:41]

12 [y][Eph. 5:20] [z]Eph. 1:11

13 [a]Eph. 6:12 [b]2 Pet. 1:11 [3]*transferred* 14 [c]Eph. 1:7 [4]NU, M omit *through His blood* 15 [d]2 Cor. 4:4 [e]Rev. 3:14 16 [f]Heb. 1:2, 3

■ **1:1, 2** Regarding Paul's salutations, see note on Rom. 1:1.

■ **1:2 Timothy.** See Introduction to 1 Timothy: Date and Occasion.

■ **1:4 faith in Christ Jesus.** In the face of a teaching circulating in Colosse that questioned whether Christ alone could be sufficient, Paul reminds the readers through his prayer of thanksgiving that what they already have "in Christ" is enough.

■ **1:5 because of the hope.** Faith, hope, and love, are central to Paul's understanding of the Christian life (Rom. 5:2–5; 1 Cor. 13:13; Gal. 5:5, 6; 1 Thess. 1:3; 5:8; cf. Heb. 10:22–24). He treats them as gifts of God rather than as virtues produced by the believers themselves. Paul emphasizes the sovereignty of God in salvation and the believers' security in their relationship with Christ (Eph. 1:4; 2:8).

■ **1:6 in all the world.** See note on v. 23.

■ **1:7 Epaphras.** See Introduction: Date and Occasion.

■ **1:10 fully pleasing Him.** See "Pleasing God" at 1 Thess. 2:4.

■ **1:12–14** Paul expresses his gratitude for the Colossians' good beginning (vv. 3–8) and encourages them to recognize that their heavenly Father has decisively rescued them from the powers of darkness. They can therefore be thankful for the redemption they enjoy (2:7; 3:17; 4:2).

■ **1:12 qualified us.** The false teaching in Colosse resulted in cowardice before the pagan supernatural beings thought to have the power to disqualify even believers from life with God (2:16, 18, 20–23). This accounts for Paul's use of "qualified" here—no power in the universe can question the credentials of those who are "in Christ" (vv. 2, 4).

■ **1:13 delivered us.** This language recalls God's rescue of Israel first from slavery in Egypt and then from captivity in Babylon. Paul envisions humanity outside of Christ as being helplessly under the "power of darkness," the evil rule of Satan (cf. Eph. 2:1–3; 6:11). Believers are rescued from this world order (Gal. 1:4) and brought under the dominion and protection of God's Son. The image of light is appropriate here, for elsewhere Paul speaks of the light of the gospel shining in the darkness and penetrating the blindness of those who are perishing (2 Cor. 3:15; 4:4–6; 6:14; Eph. 5:8–14; Phil. 2:15; 1 Thess. 5:5).

the Son of His love. Note the portrayal of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels as God's beloved son (Matt. 3:17; 17:5; Mark 1:11; 9:7; Luke 3:22), and the rich Old Testament background out of which the designation arises (Deut. 18:15; Ps. 2:7; Is. 42:1).

■ **1:14 redemption.** In Rom. 8:23 Paul speaks of a bodily redemption still to be anticipated. Here redemption is understood as the forgiveness of sins and is something that has already been given (note the "once . . . now" pattern of vv. 21, 22; cf. 2:13, 17, 20; 3:9, 10). Compare Paul's approach to the Corinthians, who overemphasized the "already" of salvation and neglected what is yet to come (1 Cor. 4:8–13; ch. 15).

the forgiveness of sins. See 2:13 and note.

■ **1:15–20** Paul breaks into a doxology to the grandeur and glory of Jesus Christ. Many believe Paul is appropriating an early Christian hymn. By pointing to the supremacy of Christ both in creation (vv. 15–17) and in redemption (vv. 18–20), he points out what was missing in the false teaching at Colosse—an adequate view of the person of Christ. By doing this in a kind of hymn, he invites the readers to worship the Son of God.

■ **1:15 image of the invisible God.** For Paul, belief in the deity of Christ (Rom. 9:5; Phil. 2:6; Titus 2:13) is practical. Since He is by nature God, Christ reveals the God who is otherwise invisible (1 Tim. 1:17; 6:16). The thought is also found in John 1:1–18 and Heb. 1:3. Calvin observes that "we must be careful not to look for Him anywhere else, for apart from Christ whatever offers itself to us in the name of God will turn out to be an idol" (*Commentary* on Col. 1:15).

the firstborn over all creation. Paul is not saying that the Son was the first created being (v. 17 note). In the Old Testament, a firstborn son would be the principal heir of an estate (Deut. 21:17; cf. Ex. 4:22; Ps. 89:27). Used of Christ, the term "firstborn" means that He has such honor and dignity, not that He was the oldest child in a family. Christ is especially loved by His Father (v. 13), and all things were created in Him, by Him, and for Him (vv. 16, 17).

■ **1:16 All things were created through Him and for Him.** Because He is both agent and goal of creation, Christ is Lord of all that is, even of the angelic hierarchy which the Colossians think they must placate or revere.

things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or [g]dominions or [5]principalities or [6]powers. All things were created [h]through Him and for Him. 17 [i]And He is before all things, and in Him [j]all things consist. 18 And [k]He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, [l]the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

Reconciled in Christ

19 For it pleased *the Father that* [m]in Him all the fullness should dwell, 20 and [n]by Him to reconcile [o]all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, [p]having made peace through the blood of His cross.

21 And you, [q]who once were alienated and enemies in your mind [r]by wicked works, yet now He has [s]reconciled 22 [t]in the body of His flesh through death, [u]to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight— 23 if indeed you continue [v]in the faith, grounded and

16 [g][Eph. 1:20, 21] [h]Heb. 2:10 [5]*rulers* [6]*authorities*
17 [i][John 17:5] [j]Heb. 1:3
18 [k]Eph. 1:22 [l]Rev. 1:5
19 [m]John 1:16
20 [n]Eph. 2:14 [o]2 Cor. 5:18 [p]Eph. 1:10
21 [q][Eph. 2:1] [r]Titus 1:15 [s]2 Cor. 5:18, 19
22 [t]2 Cor. 5:18 [u][Eph. 5:27]
23 [v]Eph. 3:17

■ **1:17** A strong restatement of the temporal priority and universal significance of Christ, this verse makes explicit what was implicit in v. 16: Christ existed before *all* creation. He is Himself not created. Nor can it be said, as followers of Arius (c. A.D. 250–336) later maintained, that "there was a time when he was not." The thought that Jesus is the moment-by-moment sustainer and unifying power of the universe is echoed in Heb. 1:2, 3.

■ **1:18 head of the body, the church.** Using this theme of the second section of the hymn, Paul explains the image in Eph. 1:21–23, and works out its implications in Eph. 4:15 and 5:23.

the beginning, the firstborn from the dead. Jesus' resurrection marks the beginning of a new creation (3:10 note; 2 Cor. 5:17). As the first to rise from the dead, Christ inaugurates the new age anticipated by the Old Testament prophets (Acts 2:29–36; 13:32–35) and founds a new humanity in Himself to replace the old humanity in Adam. His own resurrection is an anticipation and a guarantee of the resurrection that all His brothers and sisters will enjoy (Rom. 8:29; 1 Cor. 15:20–28; Heb. 1:6; 12:23).

that . . . preeminence. Without detracting from the glory the preexistent Son already had with the Father, the New Testament teaches that Christ's resurrection marks out for Him a new and higher standing, and wins for Him an even greater name (Acts 13:33, 34; Rom. 1:4; Eph. 1:20–23; Phil. 2:1–11; Heb. 1:4, 5). By virtue of His resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ is Lord of the universe that was created by Him, that He has always sustained, and which now He has redeemed.

■ **1:19** See 2:9.

■ **1:20** The high point of the hymn. Humankind's fall into sin brought with it the corruption of all creation, seen and unseen (Gen. 3; Rom. 5:12; 8:20; Eph. 2:2; 6:12). Through Christ's incarnation and atoning death, God's righteousness is satisfied (Rom. 3:21–26), peace between God and humankind is restored (2 Cor. 5:17–21), the eventual glorification of the created order is assured (Rom. 8:18–21), and the rebellious spirit beings have their powers limited (2:15 note).

■ **1:21–23** Having considered Christ's majestic role in creation and in the reconciliation and pacification of the universe, Paul returns to the Colossians themselves. Once God's enemies and alienated from His life, they have now been given peace with God (Rom. 5:1, 2).

■ **1:21 alienated . . . wicked works.** The text may be taken as indicating either that mental alienation from God has a behavioral root or that mental alienation is expressed behaviorally. Paul's point is that mind and will cooperate in their rebellion against God.

■ **1:22** Christ's death in the flesh means that the reconciliation God has accomplished is not merely a matter of the universal pacification of the hostile powers; it brings with it the personal renewal and purification of those who grasp and adhere to the gospel (2:13; Rom. 5:6–11; Eph. 2:4–10).

■ **1:23 continue in the faith . . . not moved away from the hope.** Saving faith is persevering and enduring faith (v. 11), anchored in hope (v. 5). But contrary to the opponents' teaching, true faith and hope are nowhere else than in Christ. This relationship with Christ is confirmed by faith and hope, rather than by rigorous ascetic disciplines.

The Preeminence of Christ (1:18)

CHRIST

In universal government	In reconciliation	In wisdom and knowledge	In religious observance	In Christian living
• The visible image of God (1:15)	• Reconciles us through His death (1:21, 22)	• The source of all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (2:2, 3)	• We are alive in Him (2:11–13)	• The source of our new life in Him (3:1, 3, 4)
• The agent of creation (1:16)	• Lives in us as our hope of glory (1:27)	• Worldly philosophy does not conform to Him (2:8)	• No need for legalism and ritualism (2:16–23)	• In Him we die to the power of sin (3:3–5)
• The sustainer (1:17)				
• The head of the church (1:18)				

steadfast, and are [w]not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, [x]which was preached to every creature under heaven, [y]of which I, Paul, became a minister.

Sacrificial Service for Christ

[24] [z]I now rejoice in my sufferings [a]for you, and fill up in my flesh [b]what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for [c]the sake of His body, which is the church, [25] of which I became a minister according to [d]the [7]stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God, [26] [e]the [8]mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, [f]but now has been revealed to His saints. [27] [g]To them God willed to make known what are [h]the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: [9]which is [i]Christ in you, [j]the hope of glory. [28] Him we preach, [k]warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, [l]that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. [29] To this *end* I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me [m]mightily.

Not Philosophy but Christ

2 For I want you to know what a great [a]conflict[1] I have for you and those in Laodicea, and *for* as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, [2] that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and *attaining* to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, [2]both of the Father and of Christ, [3] [b]in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

[4] Now this I say [c]lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words. [5] For [d]though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing [3]to see [e]your *good* order and the [f]steadfastness of your faith in Christ.

[6] [g]As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, [7] [h]rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding [4]in it with thanksgiving.

[8] Beware lest anyone [5]cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to [i]the tradition of men, according to the [j]basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. [9] For [k]in

23 [w][John 15:6] [x]Col. 1:6 [y]Col. 1:25

24 [z]2 Cor. 7:4 [a]Eph. 3:1, 13 [b][2 Cor. 1:5; 12:15] [c]Eph. 1:23

25 [d]Gal. 2:7 [7]*dispensation* or *administration*

26 [e][1 Cor. 2:7] [f][2 Tim. 1:10] [8]*secret* or *hidden truth*

27 [g]2 Cor. 2:14 [h]Rom. 9:23 [i][Rom. 8:10, 11] [j]1 Tim. 1:1 [9]M *who*

28 [k]Acts 20:20 [l]Eph. 5:27

29 [m]Eph. 3:7

CHAPTER 2

1 [a]Phil. 1:30 [1]*struggle*

2 [2]NU omits *both of the Father and*

3 [b]1 Cor. 1:24, 30

4 [c]Rom. 16:18

5 [d]1 Thess. 2:17 [e]1 Cor. 14:40 [f]1 Pet. 5:9 [3]Lit. *and seeing*

6 [g]1 Thess. 4:1

7 [h]Eph. 2:21 [4]NU omits *in it*

8 [i]Gal. 1:14 [j]Gal. 4:3, 9, 10 [5]Lit. *plunder you* or *take you captive*

9 [k][John 1:14]

preached to every creature. Paul can speak of one of the conditions of the consummation of the ages, the worldwide proclamation of the gospel (v. 6; Matt. 24:14; Mark 13:10), as already having been completed. Paul here is using hyperbole (literary exaggeration for emphasis). Still, by aiming his ministry at the urban centers of the Roman Empire, he understood himself to be reaching the civilized world (Acts 19:10; Rom. 15:18–25).

■ **1:24—2:5** Paul has reminded the Colossians of the cosmic scope of Christ's lordship (1:15–20) and the way Christ's redemptive work has come to bear on their lives (1:21, 23). Now he turns to his own role in God's redemptive plan and the relationship he hopes to establish between himself and the Colossians, most of whom he has not met, in order to woo them from the captivity of the so-called "philosophy" in their midst (2:8).

■ **1:24 fill up . . . what is lacking.** Given the context of this passage, which stresses the total sufficiency of Christ, as well as what he says elsewhere (e.g., Rom. 3:21–26; 2 Cor. 5:17–21), Paul does not mean that Christ's saving work on the cross is deficient in some respect. Rather, because the church is called to suffer for Christ (2 Cor. 4:7–12; 1 Thess. 3:2–4), there is a divinely appointed requisite of suffering to be endured by Christians. Paul may also have in view here the sufferings which will accompany the endtimes (Matt. 24:21, 22), a period ushered in by the death and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 13:11–14; 1 Cor. 7:29). This also explains the reference to Paul's suffering for the sake of the church (Eph. 3:13; 2 Tim. 2:10). As a servant of the gospel, Paul rejoices in his opportunity to participate in the sufferings of God's people. The passage does not mean that the church is a continuing incarnation of Christ whose members by suffering add saving merit beyond what Christ achieved.

■ **1:26 mystery.** In contemporary pagan religion the "mysteries" were secret insights given (usually for a fee) to a select, initiated few. With some irony Paul uses the term for the revelation God has made available freely to the nations (v. 27; 2:2; 4:3; Eph. 1:9; 3:3, 4, 9; 5:32; 6:19). In Paul's use, "mystery" refers to what once was hidden, but is now being revealed.

hidden. God's saving purpose for Gentiles was largely hidden from them prior to the coming of Christ. Previous generations were allowed to "walk in their own ways" (Acts 14:16; cf. Rom. 1:24–32; Eph. 2:12). The Old Testament revealed in shadows, signs, and hints that God would personally take up residence in His people (v. 27; Ezek. 36:25–27), and that He would create a new humanity uniting Gentiles and Jews through the Messiah (Gen. 12:3; Zech. 9:9, 10; Eph. 3:5, 6 notes).

■ **2:1 Laodicea.** See Introduction: Date and Occasion. Though Paul had not visited this church either, he expected this letter to be read there (4:16).

■ **2:6, 7** A good example of Paul's pastoral style, in which the "ought" of the Christian life builds upon the "is" of having received the gift of life in Christ. Although Paul sometimes describes the good news of Jesus Christ as a tradition that can be received, his use of "tradition" does not refer to human custom or historical opinion but to the "handing over" of a divine message from God (1 Cor. 11:2; 2 Thess. 3:6). Because the Colossians will continue on the basis of what they have already come to know of Christ, their further obedience will be grounded in thankfulness (3:17) rather than in frustrated, anxious guilt (3:1 note).

■ **2:8 the basic principles of the world.** See Introduction: Interpretive Difficulties.

■ **2:9, 10** A stunning rebuttal of the false teachers who encourage submission to the "basic principles" (v. 8) as a means of overcoming fears of not being acceptable before God. As outlined in the following verses, the "fullness" of God that the false teachers pretend to offer resides in Christ and is obtained only through Him (1:19, 20). See "Jesus Christ, God and Man" at John 1:14.

Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead [6]bodily; [10] and you are complete in Him, who is the [l]head of all [7]principality and power.

Not Legalism but Christ

[11] In Him you were also [m]circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by [n]putting off the body [8]of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, [12] [o]buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with *Him* through [p]faith in the working of God, [q]who raised Him from the dead. [13] And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, [14] [r]having wiped out the [9]handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. [15] [s]Having disarmed [t]principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

[16] So let no one [u]judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a [l]festival or a new moon or sabbaths, [17] [v]which are a shadow of things to come, but the [z]substance is of Christ. [18] Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in *false* humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has [3]not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, [19] and not holding fast to [w]the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, [x]grows with the increase *that is* from God.

[20] [4]Therefore, if you [y]died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, [z]why, as *though* living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations— [21] [a]"Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle," [22] which all concern things which perish with the using—[b]according to the commandments and doctrines of men? [23] [c]These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in

9 [6]*in bodily form*
10 [l][Eph. 1:20, 21] [7]*rule and authority*
11 [m]Deut. 10:16 [n]Rom. 6:6; 7:24 [8]NU omits *of the sins*
12 [o]Rom. 6:4 [p]Eph. 1:19, 20 [q]Acts 2:24
14 [r][Eph. 2:15, 16] [9]*certificate of debt with its*
15 [s][Is. 53:12] [t]Eph. 6:12
16 [u]Rom. 14:3 [l]*feast day*
17 [v]Heb. 8:5; 10:1 [z]Lit. *body*
18 [3]NU omits *not*
19 [w]Eph. 4:15 [x]Eph. 1:23; 4:16
20 [y]Rom. 6:2–5 [z]Gal. 4:3, 9 [4]NU, M omit *Therefore*

21 [a]1 Tim. 4:3 22 [b]Titus 1:14 23 [c]1 Tim. 4:8

■ **2:11 circumcision.** It is often thought that Paul mentions circumcision at this point because the false teachers in Colosse were commending it, much as those in Galatia were. However, in this letter there is no direct argument made against circumcision, as there is in Galatians. It is better to think of Paul as introducing the topic to show that something of what the Colossians are promised by the false teachers—power over the flesh (v. 23)—is already theirs in their relationship with Christ.

As the initiating rite of the old covenant, circumcision had signified cutting away sin, undergoing a change of heart, and being included in the household of faith (Deut. 10:16; 30:6; Jer. 4:4; 9:25, 26; Ezek. 44:7, 9). Dramatically, Paul says that in their baptism into Christ and into His body, these Gentiles have already been circumcised. Baptism is "the circumcision of Christ," and it signifies the washing away of sin, personal renewal by the Spirit of God, and membership in the body of Christ (cf. v. 13; Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:4; 1 Cor. 12:13; Titus 3:5; 1 Pet. 3:21). The passage makes an important point about the unity of the covenant of grace in both the Old and New Testament era: Gentile believers are not expected to follow the old covenant *mode* of identification with God and His people (Acts 15). But their faith in Christ has nevertheless made them as much children of Abraham as if they were ethnic Jewish believers (Rom. 2:28, 29; Gal. 3:26–29; Phil. 3:3). Baptism is not identical to circumcision, but it corresponds to it in essence (Rom. 4:11) and has replaced it as the sign of the covenant.

■ **2:13 forgiven you all trespasses.** It is more characteristic of Paul to speak of justification than of forgiveness, and of sin in the singular than of sins in the plural (Rom. 5:12–21). His purpose here may be to emphasize that God has not only overcome sin as a general power, but He has also put away the guilt that stems from particular acts. See "Regeneration: The New Birth" at John 3:3.

■ **2:14 wiped out the handwriting.** The law is compared to a certificate of indebtedness written in the debtor's own hand. Jesus was born "under the law," subject to its demands and curses (Gal. 4:4). On the cross He was "made . . . to be sin for us" (2 Cor. 5:21) and endured the law's curse against unrighteousness (Gal. 3:13). In the execution of the death sentence on Jesus when He was nailed to the cross, Paul sees the cancellation of the death warrant that stood against transgressors of the law. The believer is no longer subject to the threat of the law's condemnation.

■ **2:15 made a public spectacle.** The image is of a conquering Roman general parading his vanquished and humiliated enemies behind his chariot. An invisible cosmic struggle took place at the cross, and the prince of this age was "cast out" (John 12:31), "cast to the earth" (Rev. 12:9), and "bound" (Rev. 20:2; see also Matt. 12:29; Luke 10:18). Through Jesus' death for sinners, Satan was robbed of his power to intimidate and control people through the threat of death and eternal separation from God (Ezek. 18; Rom. 5:12; 6:23; Heb. 2:14, 15). The struggle with Satan and his legions will not see its conclusion until the Lord's return in glory (2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 6:10–18; 1 Pet. 5:8), but the devil's power is broken. As Luther sang, "Lo, his doom is sure." With the ground of their constant accusations taken away, the hostile powers of Satan have lost their advantage forever. See "Demons" at Deut. 32:17.

■ **2:16, 17** In Colosse, the Sabbath was kept and festivals observed in order to placate supernatural powers or angels thought to direct the course of the stars, regulate the calendar, and determine human destiny. This, Paul says, is a form of bondage from which Christ came to liberate men and women.

■ **2:18 worship of angels.** This can be taken as a reference to practices found among some Jewish mystics, whose goal was to participate in angelic worship before the throne of God and to attain to ecstatic prayer through asceticism and strict observance of the Torah. In this case, "worship of angels" would mean "worship along with angels." This line of interpretation assumes that the false teachers actually practiced a more-or-less orthodox Judaism and wanted to worship God. But the appearance given by Colossians is that the church was being tempted to worship not God but spirits intermediate between God and humans (Introduction: Interpretive Difficulties).

■ **2:19** To seek the favor of angelic beings is to fail to honor Christ for what He is as the fullness of deity (v. 9; 1:19); and secondly, not to enjoy the totality of the redemption that has been won in His death and resurrection (vv. 10–15; 1:20–22).

Head . . . body. This language looks back at 1:18, and ahead to the way Paul develops the idea of the Christian life under Christ's headship in the context of membership in the church in 3:1—4:6.

■ **2:20 basic principles.** See Introduction: Interpretive Difficulties; theological note "Christians in the World."

■ **2:23 self-imposed religion.** God accepts worship offered according to His will revealed in Scripture, not religious exercises done at the dictate of presumptuous human whim (Matt. 15:9). The idea that God must be worshiped only in the way He has instituted has had a profound influence in Reformed churches.

self-imposed religion, *false* humility, and [5]neglect of the body, *but are* of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.

23 [5]*severe treatment, asceticism*

Not Carnality but Christ

3 If then you were [a]raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, [b]where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the [c]earth.

CHAPTER 3

1 [a]Col. 2:12 [b]Eph. 1:20

2 [c][Matt. 6:19–21]

Christians in the World

The word "world" in the New Testament is sometimes used as in the Old Testament to mean this earth, the good natural order that God created. Usually, however, it designates humanity as a whole, now fallen into sin and moral disorder, radically opposed to God. People in the world incur guilt and shame by their misuse of created things. Paul can even speak of creation itself yearning for deliverance from the evil occasioned by the fall of Adam and Eve (Rom. 8:20–23).

Christians are sent into the world of fallen humanity by their Lord (John 17:18) to witness to it about God's Christ and His kingdom (Matt. 24:14; cf. Rom. 10:18; Col. 1:6, 23) and to serve its needs. But they are to do so without falling victim to its materialism (Matt. 6:19–24, 32), its lack of concern about God and eternity (Luke 12:13–21), and its pursuit of pleasure and status above all else (1 John 2:15–17). The outlook and mindset of human societies reflect more of the pride seen in Satan, who for now continues to influence them (John 14:30; 2 Cor. 4:4; 1 John 5:19; cf. Luke 4:5–7), than the humility seen in Christ. Christians, like Christ Himself, are to empathize with people's anxieties and needs in order to serve them and communicate God's love for them effectively.

Christians are to consider themselves pilgrims in this fallen world, through which they momentarily pass as they travel home to God (1 Pet. 2:11). The Bible sanctions neither monastic withdrawal from this world (John 17:15) nor worldliness (Titus 2:12). Jesus encourages His disciples to match the ingenuity of the unredeemed who use their resources to further their goals, but specifies that the disciples' proper goals have to do, not with earthly security, but with heavenly glory (Luke 16:9). Christians are to be different from those around them, observing God's moral absolutes, practicing love, and not losing their dignity as bearers of God's image (Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:17–24; Col. 3:5–11). Separation from fallen humanity's values and lifestyles is a prerequisite for practicing Christlikeness in positive terms (Eph. 4:25—5:17).

The Christian's appointed task, therefore, is threefold. The church's main mandate is evangelism (Matt. 28:19, 20; Luke 24:46–48), and every Christian must seek to further the conversion of unbelievers, not least by the example of one's own changed life (1 Pet. 2:12). Also, love of neighbor should constantly lead the Christian into deeds of mercy for all people, believers and unbelievers alike. Finally, Christians are called to fulfill the "cultural mandate" that God gave to mankind at creation (Gen. 1:28–30; Ps. 8:6–8). Humanity was created to manage God's world, and this stewardship is part of the human vocation in Christ, with God's honor and the good of others as its goal. The Protestant "work ethic" is essentially a religious discipline, the fulfillment of a divine "calling" to be stewards of God's creation.

Knowing that God in providential kindness and forbearance continues, in the face of human sin, to preserve and enrich His erring world (Acts 14:16, 17), Christians are to involve themselves in all forms of lawful human activity. By acting in accord with Christian values they will become salt (a preservative agent) and light (an illumination that shows the way) in the human community (Matt. 5:13–16). As Christians thus fulfill their vocation, they will transform the cultures around them. □

of no value. The Greek of this verse is very difficult. It apparently means not only that the ascetic disciplines Paul is opposing are worthless, but that they are actively harmful, exciting their own sort of "indulgence of the flesh." This is precisely what the Reformers—pre-eminently Luther—saw themselves up against in the extra-biblical rituals that had emerged in the medieval church.

■ **3:1—4:6** The route to maturity is not the path of secret revelations, or of self-punishing disciplines. It consists in understanding and living on the basis of the believer's death and resurrection "with Christ" (3:1). The Colossians have a false notion of heavenly reality, which ironically leads them to fruitless efforts on the earthly plane.

■ **3:1 If then you were raised with Christ.** Note the parallel statements of fact in this section: believers have died with Christ (v. 3; 2:11, 12, 20); they have been raised with Him (v. 1; 2:12, 13); they are with Christ in heaven (v. 3; Eph. 2:6); they will be with Him at His return (v. 4); they have "put off the old man" (v. 9), and "put on the new man" (v. 10). Paul's instructions for behavior come only after his description of the redemption God has richly bestowed on His people (2:6, 7 note). Obedience is a response to God's favor, and not a means of gaining it.

sitting at the right hand of God. A pivotal, exultant theme in the New Testament (Acts 2:33–35; 5:31; 7:55, 56; Rom. 8:34; Eph. 1:20; Heb. 1:3, 13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; 1 Pet. 3:22; Rev. 3:21).

3 [c][Rom. 6:2] [e][2 Cor. 5:7]
4 [f][1 John 3:2] [g]John 14:6 [h]1 Cor. 15:43
5 [i][Rom. 8:13] [j][Rom. 6:13] [k]Eph. 5:3 [l]Eph. 4:19; 5:3, 5
6 [m]Rom. 1:18 [n][Eph. 2:2]
7 [o]1 Cor. 6:11
8 [p]Eph. 4:22
10 [q]Rom. 12:2 [r][Rom. 8:29] [s][Eph. 2:10]
11 [t]Gal. 3:27, 28 [u]Eph. 1:23
12 [v][1 Pet. 1:2] [w]1 John 3:17
13 [x][Mark 11:25]

3 [d]For you died, [e]and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 [f]When Christ *who is* [g]our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in [h]glory.

5 [i]Therefore put to death [j]your members which are on the earth: [k]fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, [l]which is idolatry. 6 [m]Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon [n]the sons of disobedience, 7 [o]in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.

8 [p]But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, 10 and have put on the new *man* who [q]is renewed in knowledge [r]according to the image of Him who [s]created him, 11 where there is neither [t]Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave *nor* free, [u]but Christ *is* all and in all.

Character of the New Man

12 Therefore, [v]as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, [w]put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 13 [x]bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do.* 14 [y]But above all these things [z]put on love, which is the [a]bond of perfection. 15 And let [b]the peace of God rule in your hearts, [c]to which also you were called [d]in one body; and [e]be thankful. 16 Let the word of

14 [y]1 Pet. 4:8 [z][1 Cor. 13] [a]Eph. 4:3 15 [b][John 14:27] [c]1 Cor. 7:15 [d]Eph. 4:4 [e][1 Thess. 5:18]

■ **3:3 hidden with Christ in God.** Some understand this to mean that the new life of the Christian is not obvious to others and is "hidden" or concealed in that sense. However, comparison with 2:3 indicates that more is in view. The believer is inseparably united with Christ (John 6:51–58 note; cf. Gal. 2:20). The full reality of the new life is not yet fully revealed, but to be "hidden with Christ in God" means that the new life is secure in Christ. What God has freely given neither man nor angel can take away (John 10:29).

■ **3:4 When Christ . . . appears.** The hope of Christ's return is central to the ethics of this section (vv. 5–11).

■ **3:5 put to death.** The first of a series of behavioral imperatives that continue through 4:6. Although Paul rejects legalistic asceticism, he calls upon believers to become in practice what they are in principle: dead to sin and alive to God (Rom. 6:1–14). There is a way of living incompatible with life in Christ, and Paul calls for a rigorous departure from that old life. In v. 5 he lists five vices; four have to do with sex, the fifth is covetousness; in v. 8 he lists five more vices, all having to do with anger and abusive speech.

■ **3:7 in which you . . . once walked.** That is, before they were brought "into the kingdom of the Son" whom God loves (1:13).

■ **3:10 new man.** In Christ, God's second Adam (1 Cor. 15:20–28, 45–49), the human race is reconstituted. Each of the attributes Paul lists in v. 12 can be traced to the character of God generally, or to Christ specifically. This demonstrates how literally Paul understood the idea of believers taking on the "image" of their Creator. See "The Image of God" at Gen. 1:27.

■ **3:11** This verse was probably written with an eye to the exclusiveness of the Colossian false teachers. However, the cross-cultural unity of all those who belong to Christ is an idea that comes readily enough to Paul's mind (Gal. 3:28; 1 Cor. 7:17–24).

barbarian. Those who did not speak Greek were considered uncivilized by Greeks.

Scythian. By reputation, an uncultured slave class drawn from tribes around the Black Sea. Scythians were lampooned in Greek comedy because of their uncouth ways and speech, and Josephus called them "little better than wild beasts."

slave nor free. In the body of Christ, distinctions of social position are irrelevant (1 Cor. 7:17–24). Simultaneously, as Paul's separate instructions to slaves and slaveholders in 3:22—4:1 make clear, unity in Christ does not imply or mandate a uniformity of function or capacity. What is important is to recognize that "Christ is all and in all." In the Pauline churches, diverse social positions continued to exist and were not subject to a uniform leveling process. Rather, they become opportunities for expressing Christ's love across traditional social boundaries.

■ **3:12–14** These verses outline the obligations all Christians have toward one another; 3:18—4:2 will focus on opportunities for service within specified relationships.

■ **3:12 as the elect of God; holy and beloved.** In contrast to the Colossians' fear of cosmic powers, believers are entitled to a clear sense that God guarantees their relationship with Him (John 6:37, 44, 65; 15:16; Eph. 1:4, 5; Phil. 1:6). They can know that they have been declared holy on the basis of a righteousness that is not their own (Rom. 3:21–26; 1 Cor. 1:2, 30), and that God genuinely, even passionately, loves them (John 3:16; Rom. 8:32; Gal. 2:20; Titus 3:4; 1 John 4:9, 10).

put on. Paul envisions believers taking on the character of the Lord Himself. The "new man" of v. 10 is not something believers must construct by their own power. Their new identities take shape as they come to know Christ better, since He is the image of the invisible God and the One in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden (1:15; 2:3).

tender mercies. An emotional, caring relationship with those whose lives are hurt and broken (Matt. 9:36; 14:14; Rom. 12:1).

kindness. Readiness to do good, even when it may be undeserved (Rom. 2:4; Titus 3:4).

humility. A posture of lowliness and servanthood (Mark 10:45; Phil. 2:1–11).

meekness. Or, "gentleness" in offering help, a non-coercive approach to encouraging change in others' lives (Matt. 11:29; 2 Cor. 10:1; Gal. 6:1; 2 Tim. 2:25).

longsuffering. Willingness to take the long view in the face of human frailty (Rom. 2:4; 1 Tim. 1:16).

■ **3:13, 14** See Eph. 4:32—5:2, where Paul grounds Christian forbearance, forgiveness, and love explicitly in the example provided by the redemptive pattern of Christ's work.

■ **3:15 the peace of God.** In its practice of love, forgiveness, and graciousness, the Christian community is to be a showcase of the reconciliation and peace Christ has brought between heaven and earth (1:20–22; 2:14, 15), and within a fractured humanity (vv. 11, 13). Many early manuscripts read "the peace of Christ" in this verse.

■ **3:16 dwell in you richly.** Because the believer is united with Christ (3:3 note), not only the "word of Christ," but Christ Himself lives in the hearts of the faithful (Gal. 2:20; Eph. 3:17; cf. Rom. 8:9). With God's wisdom present in this way (3:3; cf. 1 Cor. 1:30), the ethical demands of

Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another [f]in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17 And [g]*whatever* you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

The Christian Home

18 [h]Wives, submit to your own husbands, [i]as is fitting in the Lord.
19 [j]Husbands, love your wives and do not be [k]bitter toward them.
20 [l]Children, obey your parents [m]in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.
21 [n]Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.
22 [o]Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. 23 [p]And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, 24 [q]knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; [r]for [s]you serve the Lord Christ. 25 But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and [s]there is no partiality.

4 Masters,[a] give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

Christian Graces

2 [b]Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it [c]with thanksgiving; 3 [d]meanwhile praying also for us, that God would [e]open to us a door for the word, to speak [f]the [t]mystery of Christ, [g]for which I am also in chains, 4 that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

16 [f]Eph. 5:19
17 [g]1 Cor. 10:31
18 [h]1 Pet. 3:1 [i][Eph. 5:22—6:9]
19 [j][Eph. 5:25] [k]Eph. 4:31
20 [l]Eph. 6:1 [m]Eph. 5:24
21 [n]Eph. 6:4
22 [o]Eph. 6:5
23 [p][Eccl. 9:10]
24 [q]Eph. 6:8 [r]1 Cor. 7:22 [s]NU omits *for*
25 [s]Rom. 2:11

CHAPTER 4

1 [a]Eph. 6:9
2 [b]Luke 18:1 [c]Col. 2:7
3 [d]Eph. 6:19 [e]1 Cor. 16:9 [f]Eph. 3:3, 4; 6:19 [g]Eph. 6:20 [t]*hidden truth*

Music in the Church

Some branches of the Reformed faith, eager to protect the church from the addition of human tradition, impressed by the continuity between Israel and the church, and noticing that the terms "psalms," "hymns," and "songs" are used in the Book of Psalms, believe that Paul envisioned only the singing of the psalms from the Old Testament in public worship. This restriction appears, however, to miss his point. He piles up the terms to highlight the wide range of musical expression that grateful and heartfelt praise to God calls forth from the body of Christ.

The word "psalms" refers at least to the use of the Old Testament psalter (Luke 20:42; 24:44; Acts 1:20; 13:33), but may also refer to fresh compositions for worship (1 Cor. 14:26). The word "spiritual" (Greek *pneumatikos*) qualifies the potentially secular term "songs" as being taught or led by the Spirit (cf. 1 Cor. 2:6; 15:44, 45 notes).

Christ's redemptive work brought an outpouring of hymns of praise from His people, often patterned after the songs of the Old Testament (e.g., Luke 1:46–53, 67–79; 2:14, 29–32). Paul personally employed music within his own worship (Acts 16:25), and it has long been observed that his letters contain portions of early Christian hymns (Eph. 5:14; Phil. 2:6–11; Col. 1:15–20; 1 Tim. 3:16 and notes). Early Christian songs of praise appear also to underlie John 1:1–14; Heb. 1:3; 1 Pet. 1:18–21; 2:21–25; 3:18–22. The "new songs" of the Book of Revelation are themselves a study in the vibrancy of early Christian worship (Rev. 4:8, 11; 5:9, 10, 12, 13; 7:10, 12; 11:15, 17, 18; 12:10–12; 15:3, 4; 19:1–8; 21:3, 4). □

Christian love can be lived out in every part of life, including the everyday responsibilities that are reviewed in 3:18—4:6).

teaching and admonishing. The first half of this verse is strongly reminiscent of 1:28. In the ministry of the Colossians to one another, the word of Christ will be as effective as the presence of the apostle himself.

psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. *In the Greek translation of* the Old Testament, the three nouns used in this phrase are often synonymous. It is not likely that in Colossians they designate three separate types of song (Eph. 5:19). See theological note "Music in the Church."

■ **3:17 do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.** See "God's Pattern for Worship" at 1 Chr. 16:29.

■ **3:18, 19** See note on Eph. 5:22–32; "The Christian Family" at Eph. 5:22.

■ **3:20, 21** See notes on Eph. 6:1–3, 4.

■ **3:22—4:1** This treatment of slave and free in Colossians is probably related to the subject matter of the letter to Philemon. Onesimus was a runaway slave whom Paul was returning with a letter to his owner Philemon. Onesimus was accompanying Tychicus with the letter to the Colossians (4:7–9), and they were probably carrying the letter to Philemon as well (Introduction to Philemon).

■ **4:2–6** Two other ways in which believers can set their "mind on things above" (3:2) are praying (Eph. 6:18–20 note) and telling their faith wisely and persuasively to outsiders so that they may be drawn to the fullness of life in Christ.

5 [h]Eph. 5:15 [i]{Matt. 10:16} [j]Eph. 5:16
6 [k]Eccl. 10:12 [l]Mark 9:50 [m]1 Pet. 3:15
7 [n]2 Tim. 4:12
8 [o]Eph. 6:22 [2]NU *you may know our circumstances and he may comfort*
9 [p]Philem. 10
10 [q]Acts 19:29; 20:4; 27:2 [r]2 Tim. 4:11
12 [s]Philem. 23 [t]Rom. 15:30 [u]Matt. 5:48 [3]NU *fully assured*
13 [4]NU *concern*
14 [v]2 Tim. 4:11 [w]2 Tim. 4:10
15 [x]Rom. 16:5 [5]NU *Nympha* [6]NU *her*
16 [y]1 Thess. 5:27
17 [z]Philem. 2 [a]2 Tim. 4:5

5 [h]Walk in [i]wisdom toward those *who are* outside, [j]redeeming the time. 6 *Let* your speech always *be* [k]with grace, [l]seasoned with salt, [m]that you may know how you ought to answer each one.

Final Greetings

7 [n]Tychicus, a beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me. 8 [o]I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that [2]he may know your circumstances and comfort your hearts, 9 with [p]Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is *one* of you. They will make known to you all things which *are happening* here.

10 [q]Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, with [r]Mark the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him), 11 and Jesus who is called Justus. These *are my* only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are of the circumcision; they have proved to be a comfort to me.

12 [s]Epaphras, who is *one* of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always [t]laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand [u]perfect and [3]complete in all the will of God. 13 For I bear him witness that he has a great [4]zeal for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis. 14 [v]Luke the beloved physician and [w]Demas greet you. 15 Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and [5]Nymphas and [x]the church that *is* in [6]his house.

Closing Exhortations and Blessing

16 Now when [y]this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea. 17 And say to [z]Archippus, "Take heed to [a]the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it."

18 [b]This salutation by my own hand—Paul. [c]Remember my chains. Grace *be* with you. Amen.

18 [b]1 Cor. 16:21 [c]Heb. 13:3

■ **4:7–17** The letter ends with a brief look at the complex and fluid network of leaders that tied Paul's churches together. Some of the same names occur in Philem. 23, 24.

■ **4:7 Tychicus.** The primary carrier of the letters to the Colossians, Philemon, and the Ephesians (Eph. 6:21, 22). First mentioned as part of Paul's entourage in Acts 20:4, Tychicus was from the Roman province of Asia (in modern Turkey), and appears to have been one of Paul's more trusted emissaries toward the end of his ministry (2 Tim. 4:12; Titus 3:12).

■ **4:9 Onesimus.** See Introduction to Philemon.

■ **4:10 Aristarchus.** This Jew from Thessalonica had been publicly associated with Paul's tumultuous ministry in Ephesus (Acts 19:29). He had traveled with Paul's company through Greece (Acts 20:4) and on to Jerusalem and Rome (Acts 27:2), where he now shared the apostle's imprisonment.

Mark. The rift that had emerged more than a decade earlier between Paul and the cousins Barnabas and John Mark (author of the Gospel of Mark, Acts 13:13; 15:37–40) had healed (2 Tim. 4:11; Philem. 24). Paul's special mention of Mark testifies to the power of the reconciling work of Christ (1:20–22) and to the peace that is to rule within Christ's body (3:15).

■ **4:11 Jesus who is called Justus.** Otherwise unknown.

■ **4:12 Epaphras.** See 1:7; Introduction: Date and Occasion.

■ **4:13 Hierapolis.** See Introduction: Date and Occasion.

■ **4:14 Luke.** This traveling companion of Paul in Acts was with Paul on what may have been the eve of his death (2 Tim. 4:11). As author of the Gospel of Luke and Acts, he was also Paul's chronicler. Though his writing shows him to be exceptionally literate, the mention of his occupation does not necessarily mark him as a man of high social standing, since physicians were often slaves.

Demas. Demas abandoned Paul during his second imprisonment in Rome (2 Tim. 4:10). He is mentioned one other time (Philem. 24).

■ **4:15 Nymphas.** See text notes. Some manuscripts identify this person, who hosted the Laodicean house-church, as a woman. There are several references to women (whose marital status is not mentioned) as patrons or hosts of churches, or as workers in ministry (Acts 12:12; 16:13–15; Rom. 16:1, 2, 6, 7, 12, 13; Phil. 4:2, 3; 2 John 1, 5). The standard of relationships between men and women, particularly husbands and wives, set out in 3:18 and parallels (1 Cor. 14:33–35; Eph. 5:22–33; 1 Tim. 2:11–15) was not inconsistent with the partnership in ministry that existed between men and women in the early church.

church . . . in his house. There is no evidence of churches owning separate property for worship until the middle of the third century. Until then, house churches were the norm. Those who exercised a ministry of hospitality by having churches in their homes were important benefactors of the early church (Acts 12:12; Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19; Philem. 2). On hospitality, see Rom. 12:13; 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8; Heb. 13:2; 1 Pet. 4:9.

■ **4:16 epistle from Laodicea.** Some suggest that Paul is referring to the letter to the Ephesians, which in some ancient manuscripts lacks a destination, and which may have gone out as a circular letter (Introduction to Ephesians: Date and Occasion). Since Tychicus is the bearer of Ephesians as well (Eph. 6:21, 22), the conclusion that the Ephesian and Laodicean letters were one and the same would imply that Colossians and Ephesians were written at about the same time, and that Tychicus traveled first to Laodicea and then to Colosse. However, it may be more natural to assume, on the basis of the more reflective style of Ephesians, that it was written some time after Colossians, and that Tychicus brought the Ephesian letter around to the churches on a subsequent trip (if, indeed, it was a circular letter). The best proposal for the identity of the letter from Laodicea is that it was a separate letter that has not survived.

■ **4:17 Archippus.** If Philemon was host of the house church in Colosse, which had seen the Onesimus incident, this verse may well suggest that Archippus was its spiritual leader.

■ **4:18 by my own hand.** Paul's general practice was to dictate his letters, but to write the closing sentences himself. These concluding sections would vary, depending on the circumstances. Sometimes they include personal greetings to strengthen the bond between himself, his workers, and his churches (vv. 7–17; Rom. 16); sometimes they include a summary of the contents of the letter (e.g., Gal. 6:11–17); and sometimes they had a signature that guaranteed the authenticity of the letter (1 Cor. 16:21; Philem. 19).

The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the

THESSALONIANS

Author The author of this epistle identifies himself as the apostle Paul (1:1; 2:18). The authenticity of 1 Thessalonians has occasionally been challenged but with notable lack of success.

The contributions of Silas and Timothy to the substance of the Thessalonian letters cannot be detected with any certainty. It remains possible that certain peculiarities of these letters, in comparison with the rest of Paul's writings, are due to the influence of either of these close associates of Paul.

Date and Occasion Paul wrote the first letter to the Thessalonians almost certainly from Corinth, where Silas and Timothy, senders with him of the letters, were reunited with him (Acts 18:5; 2 Cor. 1:19). The letter was most likely written in A.D. 50 or 51, with 2 Thessalonians following shortly. Therefore, 1 and 2 Thessalonians are among the earliest letters we have from the hand of Paul, with only Galatians having any reasonable claim to be earlier (Introduction to Galatians).

Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians after receiving a report from Timothy regarding the state of the Thessalonian congregation (3:6, 7). Paul writes with joy and relief that the Thessalonians were continuing firm in the faith despite the premature departure of Paul and his coworkers, and despite the harassment they still suffered from hostile factions.

The city of Thessalonica was named for Alexander the Great's half sister. It was founded about 315 B.C. by her husband, King Cassander of Macedonia. In Roman times Thessalonica was a provincial capital with over 200,000 inhabitants.

On his second missionary tour, Paul and his companions Silas and Timothy had come to Thessalonica by road from Philippi, where they had been "spitefully treated" (2:2). Acts 17:2 records that Paul preached and debated in the synagogues for three successive Sabbaths.

The congregation was predominantly Gentile. This indicates that a successful ministry among Gentiles continued after Paul's access to the synagogue was cut off. During their stay in Thessalonica, which cannot have lasted more than a few months, the missionaries apparently received more than one contribution for their support from the congregation at Philippi (Phil. 4:15, 16). This, combined with earnings from their own labors (2:9; 2 Thess. 3:7, 8), meant that they were able to support themselves without depending on the Thessalonians. Their example of humble, industrious behavior was a rebuke to the minority in the church who wanted to refrain from working for a living.

Eventually, members of the Jewish community enlisted unscrupulous men to stir up animosity against the Christians. A riot ensued, and a number of Christians including a Jewish convert named Jason were dragged before the authorities. Jason and the others were forced to post security money to guarantee that the church would not cause trouble. Paul, Silas, and Timothy were whisked away by the believers under cover of night and soon found themselves in Berea to the west (Acts 17:5–10).

Characteristics and Themes

A rich vein of teaching about the last days runs through the Thessalonian letters. Paul's preaching at Athens, recorded in Acts 17, confirms that his strategy among non-Jewish audiences at this time was to stress the coming judgment (4:6) that God has placed in the hands of the risen Christ.

The return of Christ would occur on what Paul calls the "day of the Lord," (5:2; 2 Thess. 2:1 note). On this day there will be a resurrection of the just to inherit salvation in the Lord's presence (4:16; 5:10), and of the unjust (presupposed by Paul though never explicitly stated) to be eternally separated from Christ (2 Thess. 1:9). The end will be preceded by a widespread apostasy and the appearance of a diabolical "man of sin" (2 Thess. 2:3). Since this person had not yet appeared, those in the congregation who were saying that the "day of the Lord" had already arrived were wrong and should be silenced.

Another notable characteristic of the letters is Paul's affirmation that Christ is divine, the more striking because of the early date of the letters and the spontaneous and unguarded nature of the references. Several times Christ and God the Father are linked together as the common source of divine blessings and as the object of prayer (1:1; 3:11; 2 Thess. 1:1, 2, 12; 2:16; 3:5). In Paul's use of the Old Testament expression "day of the Lord," in which "the Lord" is now revealed to be the Lord Jesus Christ (5:2; 2 Thess. 2:2), there is a similar assignment of the prerogatives of deity to Jesus Christ (5:2 note). The united work of the three Persons of the Trinity is mentioned in 2 Thess. 2:13, 14. □

Outline of 1 Thessalonians

I. Salutation (1:1)
II. History (1:2—3:13)
A. Paul's Grounds for Thanksgiving (1:2—2:16)
1. Their Election Shown in Faith, Love, and Hope (1:2–10)
2. The Missionaries' Fruitful Ministry Among Them (2:1–12)
3. Their Reception of the Gospel as the Word of God (2:13–16)
B. Paul's Absence Explained (2:17—3:10)
C. Paul's Prayer (3:11–13)
III. Instruction (4:1—5:22)
A. Ethics (4:1–12)
1. Sexual Morality (4:1–8)
2. Brotherly Love and Witness (4:9–12)
B. Eschatology (4:13—5:11)
1. The Dead (4:13–18)
2. The Day of the Lord (5:1–11)
C. Congregational Life (5:12–22)
IV. Concluding Prayer, Charges, and Benediction (5:23–28)

CHAPTER 1

1 [a]1 Pet. 5:12 [b]Acts 17:1–9 [f]NU omits *from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*
2 [c]Rom. 1:8
3 [d]John 6:29 [e]Rom. 16:6
4 [f]Col. 3:12
5 [g]Mark 16:20 [h]2 Cor. 6:6 [i]Heb. 2:3
6 [j]1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1 [k]Acts 5:41; 13:52
8 [l]Rom. 10:18

Greeting

PAUL, [a]Silvanus, and Timothy,

To the church of the [b]Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

Grace to you and peace [f]from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Their Good Example

2 [c]We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, 3 remembering without ceasing [d]your work of faith, [e]labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father, 4 knowing, beloved brethren, [f]your election by God. 5 For [g]our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, [h]and in the Holy Spirit [i]and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.

6 And [j]you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, [k]with joy of the Holy Spirit, 7 so that you became examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe. 8 For from you the word of the Lord [l]has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and

■ **1:1 Silvanus.** The Latin name of Silas, a prophet of the Jerusalem church delegated to accompany Paul and Barnabas to Antioch to deliver the decision of the Jerusalem council (Acts 15:22, 27, 32, 40). Silas was chosen by Paul to be his associate on this second missionary journey.

Timothy. The son of a Greek father and a devout Jewish mother, he was at the time of writing a relative newcomer to the Christian mission. Paul and Silas had drafted this young but highly regarded disciple to join in their ministry roughly a year earlier in Lystra (Acts 16:1).

in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. This points to the unique intimacy between the Father and the Son, because the church is said to be "in" both (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes).

■ **1:3 work of faith.** The faith of the Thessalonians, obviously a chief concern for Paul, is referred to again in v. 8; 3:2, 5–7, 10; 5:8.

labor of love. Their love was shown especially in the welcome they gave to the travelers (v. 9). Paul commends their love again in 4:9, 10, where he says they are "taught by God" in their love for one another.

patience of hope. Their eschatological hope is their assurance that the Lord Jesus will return to deliver them from their present troubles and from God's coming wrath. For the triad of "faith," "hope," and "love," see 5:8; Rom. 5:2–5; 1 Cor. 13:13; Gal. 5:5, 6; Col. 1:4, 5; Heb. 6:10–12; 10:22–24; 1 Pet. 1:3–8, 21, 22.

■ **1:4 your election by God.** Divine election is a theme of both Thessalonian epistles (5:9; 2 Thess. 2:13). Paul is not afraid to assure this young, predominantly Gentile congregation that they were elected by God. Paul sees in them the fruit of God's electing grace, manifested in their response to the preaching of the gospel and their early progress in sanctification (2 Thess. 2:13 note).

■ **1:6 followers.** The Spirit plays an especially prominent role in sustaining the believer who undergoes persecution for Christ (Matt. 10:19, 20; 1 Pet. 4:12–14).

■ **1:7, 8** Paul is writing from Achaia, having traversed Macedonia and come through Athens to Corinth. Along the way he has found that the Christians already know of his work in Thessalonica and have learned of the faith of the Thessalonians. The Thessalonian Christians, beginners in Christ though they were, are examples to others of faith, love, and hope.

Achaia, but also [m]in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything. [9] For they themselves declare concerning us [n]what manner of entry we had to you, [o]and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, [10] and [p]to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, *even* Jesus who delivers us [q]from the wrath to come.

Paul's Conduct

2 For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain. [2] But [r]even after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at [a]Philippi, as you know, we were [b]bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict. [3] [c]For our exhortation *did* not *come* from error or uncleanness, nor *was it* in deceit.

[4] But as [d]we have been approved by God [e]to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, [f]not as pleasing men, but God [g]who tests our hearts. [5] For [h]neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a [2]cloak for covetousness—[i]God *is* witness. [6] [j]Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when [k]we might have [l]made demands [m]as apostles of Christ. [7] But [n]we were gentle among you, just as a nursing *mother* cherishes her own children. [8] So, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased [o]to impart to you not only the

8 [m]Rom. 1:8; 16:19
9 [n]1 Thess. 2:1 [o]1 Cor. 12:2
10 [p][Rom. 2:7] [q]Rom. 5:9

CHAPTER 2

2 [a]Acts 14:5; 16:19–24 [b]Acts 17:1–9 [r]NU, M omit *even*
3 [c]2 Cor. 7:2
4 [d]1 Cor. 7:25 [e]Titus 1:3 [f]Gal. 1:10 [g]Prov. 17:3
5 [h]2 Cor. 2:17 [i]Rom. 1:9 [2]*pretext for greed*

6 [j]1 Tim. 5:17 [k]1 Cor. 9:4 [l]2 Cor. 11:9 [m]1 Cor. 9:1 7 [n]1 Cor. 2:3 8 [o]Rom. 1:11

Pleasing God

It is a familiar truth that every Christian's overriding purpose must be to glorify God. Everything we say and do, our relationships with others, the use we make of the gifts and opportunities God gives us, and even our enduring of adverse situations and human hostility, must be managed so as to give God honor and praise for His wisdom and goodness (1 Cor. 10:31; cf. Matt. 5:16; Eph. 3:10; Col. 3:17).

Equally important is the truth that every Christian has a personal calling to please God. Jesus did not live to please Himself, nor may we (John 8:29; Rom. 15:1–3). Faith (Heb. 11:5, 6), praise (Ps. 69:30, 31), generosity (Phil. 4:18; Heb. 13:16), obedience to divinely instituted authority (Col. 3:20), and single-mindedness in Christian service (2 Tim. 2:4), are all ways of pleasing our Creator. God enables us to live according to the Bible and takes pleasure in us as we serve Him. In His sovereign grace He gives what He commands and delights in the result (Heb. 13:21; cf. Phil. 2:12, 13).

We please God through our relationship with Him. Abraham was called God's friend (2 Chr. 20:7; Is. 41:8; James 2:23), and Christ called His disciples His friends (Luke 12:4; John 15:14). Under divine inspiration, Paul compares the church to the Bride of Christ (Eph. 5:32; cf. Rev. 21:2). Like friends and family members, God and His people have pleasure in each other.

We also please God through imitating His deeds. His love in us is living and active, compelling His people to use their talents and energies in all kinds of activities. But Christians are especially called to works of mercy, because God is merciful (Deut. 10:17–19; Luke 6:35, 36). □

■ **1:9, 10** These verses parallel the preaching of Paul at Athens (Acts 17:22–31). In preaching to the Jews, Paul could presuppose knowledge of the existence of the true God and the authority of the Old Testament Scriptures, and go on to proclaim the advent of God's promised Messiah. To those uninstructed in the faith of Israel, Paul stresses two things: first, acknowledging the true and living God and forsaking dead idols; second, preparing for God's coming universal judgment to be executed by Jesus Christ, the God-Man, who died and rose from the dead (4:6; Acts 17:29–31).

■ **1:10 from heaven.** See 4:16; 2 Thess. 1:7; cf. Acts 1:11; Phil. 3:20.

Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come. Jesus' death turned away God's wrath long ago, but the full import of this saving work will not be displayed until Judgment Day. Then, through Christ's intervention, believers will be spared the condemnation and punishment their sins would otherwise deserve.

■ **2:1–12** Paul seems to respond to certain doubts or criticisms of his ministry. He implicitly defends his ministry of the gospel, and at the same time, by recalling the work he and his companions have done, he gives the Thessalonians a pattern of loving service to follow.

■ **2:2 we were bold in our God.** Despite being called by God to enter Macedonia (Acts 16:9, 10), Paul and Silas had been severely beaten and chained in a Macedonian prison (at Philippi). The missionaries had to be courageous and selflessly devoted to God's purpose.

the gospel of God. Paul stresses the pure, and indeed divine, source of his message and ministry. Note the repetition of the phrase in vv. 8 and 9. The gospel is always carried as a trust from God Himself.

■ **2:4** See theological note "Pleasing God."

■ **2:8** Apparent throughout this section (vv. 17–20; 3:6–12) is Paul's deep affection for his spiritual children, who but months before were complete strangers to him, alienated by race, culture, and religion.

gospel of God, but also [p]our own lives, because you had become dear to us. 9 For you remember, brethren, our [q]labor and toil; for laboring night and day, [r]that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God.

10 [s]You *are* witnesses, and God *also,* [t]how devoutly and justly and blamelessly we behaved ourselves among you who believe; 11 as you know how we exhorted, and comforted, and [3]charged every one of you, as a father *does* his own children, 12 [u]that you would walk worthy of God [v]who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

Their Conversion

13 For this reason we also thank God [w]without ceasing, because when you [x]received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed *it* [y]not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively [z]works in you who believe. 14 For you, brethren, became imitators [a]of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For [b]you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they *did* from the Judeans, 15 [c]who killed both the Lord Jesus and [d]their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they do not please God [e]and are [4]contrary to all men, 16 [f]forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they may be saved, so as always [g]to fill up *the measure of* their sins; [h]but wrath has come upon them to the uttermost.

Longing to See Them

17 But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short time [i]in presence, not in heart, endeavored more eagerly to see your face with great desire. 18 Therefore we wanted to come to you—even I, Paul, time and again—but [j]Satan hindered us. 19 For [k]what *is* our hope, or joy, or [l]crown of rejoicing? *Is it* not even you in the [m]presence of our Lord Jesus Christ [n]at His coming? 20 For you are our glory and joy.

Concern for Their Faith

3 Therefore, when we could no longer endure it, we thought it good to be left in Athens alone, 2 and sent [a]Timothy, our brother and minister of God, and our fellow laborer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you and encourage you concerning your faith, 3 [b]that no one should be shaken by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that [c]we are appointed to this. 4 [d]For, in fact, we told you before when we were with you that we would suffer tribulation, just as it happened, and you know. 5 For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, [e]lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and [f]our labor might be in vain.

8 [p]2 Cor. 12:15
9 [q]Acts 18:3; 20:34, 35 [r]2 Cor. 12:13
10 [s]1 Thess. 1:5 [t]2 Cor. 7:2
11 [3]NU, M *implored*
12 [u]Eph. 4:1 [v]1 Cor. 1:9
13 [w]1 Thess. 1:2, 3 [x]Mark 4:20 [y][Gal. 4:14] [z][1 Pet. 1:23]
14 [a]Gal. 1:22 [b]Acts 17:5
15 [c]Acts 2:23 [d]Matt. 5:12; 23:34, 35 [e]Esth. 3:8 [4]*hostile*
16 [f]Luke 11:52 [g]Gen. 15:16 [h]Matt. 24:6
17 [i]1 Cor. 5:3
18 [j]Rom. 1:13; 15:22
19 [k]2 Cor. 1:14 [l]Prov. 16:31 [m]Jude 24 [n]1 Cor. 15:23

CHAPTER 3

2 [a]Rom. 16:21
3 [b]Eph. 3:13 [c]Acts 9:16; 14:22
4 [d]Acts 20:24
5 [e]1 Cor. 7:5 [f]Gal. 2:2

■ **2:12** This verse summarizes Paul's exhortation and charge during his initial visit in Thessalonica. In contrast to the idols the Thessalonians had forsaken (1:9), the true and living God has a "kingdom and glory," and in His fathomless mercy He chooses to share this kingdom with those who worship Him through Jesus Christ. Called to enter this kingdom, believers know its power and enjoy its life here and now (Rom. 14:17; 1 Cor. 4:20; Col. 1:13, 14) while they long for the day they will enter its fullness.

■ **2:13 effectively works.** The Word of God, though it comes through human agency, is a divine message that works in believers through the Holy Spirit (Is. 55:11; Acts 20:32; 2 Tim. 2:15–17; Heb. 4:12).

■ **2:14 suffered . . . from your own countrymen.** The power of God's word in them was proved as they faced fierce persecution from their kinsmen and, like the churches in Judea, endured it with faith and joy (Acts 17:5–9).

■ **2:15** Just as Jesus noted the continuity of those who persecuted the prophets with those who persecuted Him (Matt. 23:29–32), so Paul (also Stephen, Acts 7:52) sees the same continuity extending to those Jews (with whom he formerly worked) who persecute Christ by opposing the gospel (Acts 9:4). Paul's fullest elaboration of his approach to this problem of Jewish opposition to the gospel is found in Rom. 9—11.

■ **2:16 wrath has come upon them to the uttermost.** These last two words may also be translated "the end" (Matt. 10:22; 1 Cor. 1:8; 15:24). This may be a prophecy of the catastrophe which overtook Jerusalem in A.D. 70, within twenty years of Paul's writing, or it may refer to the sequence of calamities that had already begun and were to reach their culmination in that momentous disaster. Or it may refer to the punitive hardening of a large segment of Israel in their culpable rejection of Christ, a hardening that Jesus saw as the fulfillment of Isaiah's dire prophecy (Is. 6:9, 10; Matt. 13:14, 15). Compare a similar outworking of God's wrath upon Gentiles outlined in Rom. 1:18–32. As Paul would later write (Rom. 11:25), a "blindness in part" has befallen Israel and will remain until the full number of Gentiles are brought in (i.e., until the end). The part of Israel not subject to hardening is the remnant (Is. 6:13) that in the gospel era continues as the object of God's mercy, finding salvation in Jesus the Messiah.

■ **2:17 taken away.** The Greek word means "orphaned," a word used for parents as well as children who have been separated. Paul continues to use the family imagery of vv. 7 and 11 in depicting his relationship with the Thessalonian congregation.

■ **2:19 at His coming.** The Greek word *parousia* ("coming") is used for the Second Coming of Christ six times in the Thessalonian correspondence (see also 3:13; 4:15; 5:23; 2 Thess. 2:1, 8). Paul's only other use of the term in this sense is in 1 Cor. 15:23. Christ's coming is presented as the time when the outcome of our works of faith is disclosed. Paul's joy and crown at that day will be his beloved spiritual children, those converted under his ministry (2 Cor. 1:14; Phil. 2:16).

■ **3:3, 4** Paul did not promise the followers of Jesus a life of ease or public approval, nor did Jesus (Mark 8:34; John 15:18–21).

Encouraged by Timothy

6 [g]But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always have good remembrance of us, greatly desiring to see us, [h]as we also *to see* you— 7 therefore, brethren, in all our affliction and distress [i]we were comforted concerning you by your faith. 8 For now we live, if you [j]stand fast in the Lord.

9 For what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sake before our God, 10 night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face [k]and perfect what is lacking in your faith?

Prayer for the Church

11 Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, [l]direct our way to you. 12 And may the Lord make you increase and [m]abound in love to one another and to all, just as we *do* to you, 13 so that He may establish [n]your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

Plea for Purity

4 Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus [a]that you should abound more and more, [b]just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God; 2 for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

3 For this is [c]the will of God, [d]your sanctification: [e]that you should abstain from sexual immorality; 4 [f]that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, 5 [g]not in passion of lust, [h]like the Gentiles [i]who do not know God; 6 that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord [j]*is* the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. 7 For God did not call us to uncleanness, [k]but in holiness. 8 [l]Therefore he who rejects *this* does not reject man, but God, [m]who[l] has also given us His Holy Spirit.

A Brotherly and Orderly Life

9 But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for [n]you yourselves are taught by God [o]to love one another; 10 and indeed you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, [p]that you increase more and more; 11 that you also aspire to lead a quiet life, [q]to mind your own business, and [r]to work with your own hands, as we commanded you, 12 [s]that you may walk properly toward those who are outside, and *that* you may lack nothing.

6 [g]Acts 18:5 [h]Phil. 1:8
7 [i]2 Cor. 1:4
8 [j]Phil. 4:1
10 [k]2 Cor. 13:9
11 [l]Mark 1:3
12 [m]Phil. 1:9
13 [n]2 Thess. 2:17

CHAPTER 4

1 [a]1 Cor. 15:58 [b]Phil. 1:27
3 [c][Rom. 12:2] [d]Eph. 5:27 [e][1 Cor. 6:15–20]
4 [f]Rom. 6:19
5 [g]Col. 3:5 [h]Eph. 4:17, 18 [i]1 Cor. 15:34
6 [j]2 Thess. 1:8
7 [k]Lev. 11:44
8 [l]Luke 10:16 [m]1 Cor. 2:10 [l]NU *who also gives*
9 [n][Jer. 31:33, 34] [o]Matt. 22:39
10 [p]1 Thess. 3:12
11 [q]2 Thess. 3:11 [r]Acts 20:35
12 [s]Rom. 13:13

■ **3:11** Paul addresses God the Father and the Lord Jesus jointly in prayer (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes). The answer to this prayer for reunion came several years later (Acts 20:1).

■ **3:13 at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.** The work of sanctification already begun in believers is brought to glorious completion at the Second Coming of the Lord (5:23; cf. 1 Cor. 1:8; Phil. 1:6; 2 Thess. 3:3; Jude 24).

His saints. Lit. "holy ones." Either the angels who will accompany Christ at His return (2 Thess. 1:7; cf. Matt. 13:39, 48, 49; 16:27) or human saints (2 Thess. 1:10; Rev. 19:14) or both.

■ **4:1** Paul praises the Thessalonians for their progress in learning how to please God, but challenges them to excel further. Paul recognized the constant need for growth and for "reaching forward" (Phil. 3:13). Spiritual complacency contradicts a believer's confession.

■ **4:2** Again Paul stresses that the authority for his instructions was not his own and not of human origin, but from the risen Lord (2:13).

■ **4:3 the will of God, your sanctification.** Scripture generally conceives of the will of God in one of two senses. Sometimes, as in Eph. 1:11, what is meant is the eternal purpose of God that determines history, and that we cannot know except by observing the outworking of history or through a special revelation (prophecy). This is often called by theologians the "decretive," "hidden," or "secret" will of God. Elsewhere, as here and in 5:18, what is meant is the *duty* God has announced through revelation, the "preceptive" or "revealed" will of God (Deut. 29:29).

■ **4:5 like the Gentiles.** Pagan society in Paul's day provided little inducement to sexual purity. Marital infidelity, at least for men, was the norm, and some of the pagan religions from which the Thessalonians had been freed sanctioned gross sexual misconduct in their rituals. The Christian gospel brings a moral awakening and a fresh revelation of God's righteous standards.

■ **4:6 defraud his brother.** Illicit sexual involvement affects not only the consenting parties. Spouses are wronged and families, friends, and fellow Christians shamed. Ultimately, these sins like all others are sins against God.

■ **4:8** Paul claims divine authority, not merely for his spoken proclamation, but for his written instructions as well (see also 5:27).

given us His Holy Spirit. Paul pointedly reminds them of their renewed capacities for holiness resulting from God's continual endowment of the Holy Spirit who dwells within them (1 Cor. 6:19; Gal. 3:5). The construction in Greek emphasizes the term "Holy," which is especially fitting in this context.

■ **4:11 aspire.** The Greek word for this term often denoted the attempt to garner civic honor and recognition through outward displays of generosity by the wealthy. Paul's use of the term turns it on its head: the Thessalonians should be zealous for the honor that comes not through self-assertion or an ostentatious show of personal greatness, but through humble, industrious, and unimpeachable behavior. This exhortation, pertinent to all Christians, had a particular urgency in Thessalonica where the Christians had already been falsely accused of sedition (Acts 17:6–9). By living lives that were respectable and unpretentious, the Christians were to allay any lingering suspicions.

13 [t]Lev. 19:28 [u][Eph. 2:12] [2]Died

14 [v]1 Cor. 15:13 [w]1 Cor. 15:20, 23 [3]Or *through Jesus sleep*

The Comfort of Christ's Coming

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen [2]asleep, lest you sorrow [t]as others [u]who have no hope. 14 For [v]if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him [w]those who [3]sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you [x]by the word of the Lord, that [y]we who are alive *and* remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are [4]asleep. 16 For [z]the Lord Himself

15 [x]1 Kin. 13:17; 20:35 [y]1 Cor. 15:51, 52 [4]Dead 16 [z][Matt. 24:30, 31]

The Return of Jesus Christ

The New Testament repeatedly announces that Jesus Christ will one day return. His second "coming" or "presence" (Greek *parousia*) will be a royal visit. Christ's return will be personal and physical (Matt. 24:44; Acts 1:11; Col. 3:4; 2 Tim. 4:8; Heb. 9:28), visible and triumphant (Mark 8:38; 2 Thess. 1:10; Rev. 1:7).

At the Second Coming, Jesus will bring an end to history. He will raise the dead and judge the world (John 5:28, 29), and impart to God's children their final glory (Rom. 8:17, 18; Col. 3:4). Paul says that Christ will then "hand over the kingdom" and become subject to the Father (1 Cor. 15:24–28 note). In saying this, Paul does not mean that Christ is reduced in honor, but that He will have completed the plan God assigned to Him for redeeming the elect. In heaven, the elect will honor the Lamb who opened the book of God's salvation (Rev. 5).

According to 1 Thess. 4:16, 17, Christ's coming will be a descent from the sky, heralded by a trumpet, a shout, and the voice of the archangel. Those who have died in Christ will be raised, and Christians living on earth will be caught up to meet Christ. This event will mark the end of life in this world as we have known it, and the beginning of life in unbroken communion with God. The idea that Christians will be taken out of this world for a period after which Christ will appear still a third time for the "Second Coming" has been widely held, but lacks scriptural support.

The New Testament specifies much that will take place between Christ's two comings. However, apart from the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (Luke 21:20, 24), these predictions are of ongoing processes rather than single events, and do not yield even an approximate date for Jesus' reappearance. The Gentile world will be summoned to faith (Matt. 24:14), and Jews will be brought into the kingdom (Rom. 11:25–29, a passage that may or may not anticipate a national conversion). There will be false prophets and false christs (Matt. 24:5, 24; 1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3). There will be apostasy from the faith and tribulation for the faithful (2 Thess. 2:3; 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:1–5; Rev. 7:13, 14; cf. 3:10). A "man of sin" must appear (2 Thess. 2:3–12). No dates can be deduced from these predictions; the time of Jesus' return remains completely unknown (Matt. 24:36).

Christ teaches that it will be a tragic disaster for anyone who is not ready when He returns (Matt. 24:36–51). The thought of His return should be constantly in our minds, encouraging us in our present Christian service (1 Cor. 15:58) and teaching us to live ready to meet Christ at any time (Matt. 25:1–13). □

■ **4:13 asleep.** This was a standard metaphor for death among pagans as well as Jews and Christians. The term has no particular reference to the state of the soul or consciousness of the deceased, since it is used freely by groups with widely diverging beliefs on this subject. For the New Testament understanding of a conscious and blessed existence between death and the Resurrection, see Luke 16:19–31; 23:42, 43; John 14:1–3; 2 Cor. 5:6–8; Phil. 1:23; Rev. 6:9–11; 7:9–17; 20:4–6. See "Death and the Intermediate State" at Phil. 1:23.

sorrow. Christ's resurrection affords Christians a deeply seated hope and assurance of never-ending fellowship with Him. Therefore their grief over departed brethren is softened, and they are upheld in hope.

■ **4:14 God will bring with Him.** Probably this is to be understood as a "bringing" into God's presence (3:13) and kingdom by resurrection (1 Cor. 6:14; 2 Cor. 4:14), though some believe it signifies a bringing of the saints to earth when Christ returns.

■ **4:15 by no means precede.** According to 2 Esdras, a Jewish work of the second century A.D., those who survive until the coming of the glorious Messiah are more blessed than those who have died before (2 Esdras 13:14–24). Some of the Thessalonians may have caught wind of a similar misconception. Paul to the contrary assures the Thessalonians that both groups will be on equal footing (1 Cor. 15:52), that both will enter the fullness of the kingdom together.

■ **4:16 the dead in Christ will rise first.** For Paul, those "in Christ" constitute a subcategory of those "in Adam" (the whole human race), and comprise all who participate in the salvation of Christ (1 Cor. 15:22, 23), whether they lived before or after Christ. Therefore, this rising of the "dead in Christ" is a resurrection of all the righteous dead, and not merely of New Testament believers, at the time of Christ's return (as in 1 Cor. 15:23; cf. John 5:28, 29). The resurrection of the unrighteous is mentioned explicitly by Paul only in Acts 24:15, though he also presupposes it in his warnings of a universal judgment of individuals at the time of Christ's return (Acts 17:31; Rom. 2:5–16). See theological note "The Return of Jesus Christ."

will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with [a]the trumpet of God. [b]And the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 [c]Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them [d]in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus [e]we shall always be with the Lord. 18 [f]Therefore comfort one another with these words.

The Day of the Lord

5 But concerning [a]the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I should write to you. 2 For you yourselves know perfectly that [b]the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. 3 For when they say, "Peace and safety!" then [c]sudden destruction comes upon them, [d]as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape. 4 [e]But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. 5 You are all [f]sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. 6 [g]Therefore let us not sleep, as others *do,* but [h]let us watch and be [i]sober. 7 For [j]those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk [j]are drunk at night. 8 But let us who are of the day be sober, [k]putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and *as* a helmet the hope of salvation. 9 For [l]God did not appoint us to wrath, [m]but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 [n]who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.

11 Therefore [2]comfort each other and [3]edify one another, just as you also are doing.

Various Exhortations

12 And we urge you, brethren, [o]to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and [4]admonish you, 13 and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. [p]Be at peace among yourselves.

14 Now we [5]exhort you, brethren, [q]warn those who are [6]unruly, [r]comfort the fainthearted, [s]uphold the weak, [t]be patient with all. 15 [u]See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always [v]pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.

16 [w]Rejoice always, 17 [x]pray without ceasing, 18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

19 [y]Do not quench the Spirit. 20 [z]Do not despise prophecies. 21 [a]Test all things; [b]hold fast what is good. 22 Abstain from every form of evil.

16 [a][1 Cor. 15:52] [b][1 Cor. 15:23]
17 [c][1 Cor. 15:51–53] [d]Acts 1:9 [e]John 14:3; 17:24
18 [f]1 Thess. 5:11

CHAPTER 5

1 [a]Matt. 24:3
2 [b][2 Pet. 3:10]
3 [c]Is. 13:6–9 [d]Hos. 13:13
4 [e]1 John 2:8
5 [f]Eph. 5:8
6 [g]Matt. 25:5 [h][1 Pet. 5:8] [i]*self-controlled*
7 [j][Luke 21:34] [j]Acts 2:15
8 [k]Eph. 6:14
9 [l]Rom. 9:22 [m][2 Thess. 2:13]
10 [n]2 Cor. 5:15
11 [2]Or *encourage* [3]*build one another up*
12 [o]1 Cor. 16:18 [4]*instruct* or *warn*
13 [p]Mark 9:50

14 [q]2 Thess. 3:6, 7, 11 [r]Heb. 12:12 [s]Rom. 14:1; 15:1 [t]Gal. 5:22 [5]*encourage* [6]*insubordinate* or *idle*
15 [u]Lev. 19:18 [v]Gal. 6:10 16 [w][2 Cor. 6:10] 17 [x]Eph. 6:18 19 [y]Eph. 4:30 20 [z]1 Cor. 14:1, 31
21 [a]1 John 4:1 [b]Phil. 4:8

■ **4:17 caught up.** This description of the catching-up or "rapture" of the church is not presented so as to satisfy all our cravings for detailed knowledge of end-time chronology. For instance, we are not told whether the assembled company will descend to earth or return to heaven. The presentation is pastoral, to comfort those grieved and confused by the death of beloved Christians. The assurance that all the righteous without distinction will be with the Lord forever, and united at the coming of Christ, is the burden of this passage (v. 18). The "shout," "voice," and "trumpet" of v. 16 give the distinct impression that the rapture will be public and not secret (Luke 17:24; 21:35; Rev. 1:7). See note on 5:1–11.

■ **5:1–11** The Thessalonians are told to prepare for the same thing that will come unexpectedly upon the ungodly—the day of the Lord (vv. 2, 4). Paul assumes that Christians and non-Christians alike will be alive and present when the Day arrives, Christians watchful and ready, non-Christians surprised as by a thief who comes at night. In other words, the rapture of Christians spoken of in 4:17 will not occur before the arrival of the Day that will also bring sudden and inescapable destruction to the wicked (2 Thess. 2:1, 2 notes). See "The Return of Jesus Christ" at 4:16.

■ **5:2 day of the Lord.** A prominent designation of the day on which Christ returns. It is well known from the Old Testament (e.g., Joel 2:1, 31; Amos 5:18; Zeph. 1:7, 14; Mal. 4:5), where it is used of God's drawing near in judgment. This prominent association of the day of the Lord with judgment is carried on in the New Testament, where the last judgment and final rewards and punishments are in view (Acts 17:31; Rom. 2:5, 16; 2 Cor. 1:14). According to 2 Pet. 3:10–13, the heavens, the earth, and the elements will be destroyed to make way for a new heaven and new earth.

as a thief in the night. See Matt. 24:43, 44; 2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 3:3; 16:15. Paul seems to be familiar with at least some of Jesus' "Olivet Discourse" (Matt. 24:3—25:46; Mark 13:3–37; Luke 21:5–36).

■ **5:9 God did not appoint us to wrath.** God has appointed His people to obtain salvation and glory in Jesus Christ (1:10; 2 Thess. 2:14). Yet the Thessalonians and many other Christians have been appointed by God to undergo and withstand tribulation of every kind (3:2–4; 2 Thess. 1:4; James 1:2–4; 1 Pet. 4:12–14; Rev. 1:9). The "wrath" in this context is evidently the condemnation and punishment that will fall in "the day of wrath" (Rom. 2:5) upon the impenitent (Eph. 5:6; Col. 3:6; Rev. 6:16, 17; 11:18).

■ **5:12** Even at this early stage in the life of the congregation there were leaders who had spiritual care and oversight. Paul endorses a proper esteem for church workers and leaders, asking love and respect for them. Some Thessalonians named elsewhere who may have been in Paul's mind here are Jason (Acts 17:6–9), Aristarchus (Acts 20:4; 27:2; Col. 4:10; Philem. 24), Secundus (Acts 20:4), and possibly Gaius (Acts 19:29).

■ **5:14 brethren.** This address (also v. 12) indicates that the exhortations that follow assign the responsibility for ministry to all the congregation, not just to acknowledged leaders.

those who are unruly. The contexts here and in 2 Thess. 3:6, 7, 11 show that the form of unruly conduct in view is an irresponsible refusal to work for a living. Many think this behavior was fed by an overripe expectancy of Christ's Second Coming (Introduction to 2 Thessalonians).

■ **5:15** A Christian must seek justice for others (Is. 56:1; 58:6–8). It is a remarkable part of Christian morality that the Christian, following the example of Christ (1 Pet. 2:21–23), should refuse to seek personal retaliation (Matt. 5:38–42; Rom. 12:17–21; 1 Cor. 6:7; 1 Pet. 3:9).

■ **5:19–21** Paul admonishes the Thessalonians not to despise legitimate

Blessing and Admonition

23 [c]Phil. 4:9
[d]1 Thess. 3:13
[e]1 Cor. 1:8, 9
[7]*set you apart*

24 [f][1 Cor. 10:13]
[g]Phil. 1:6

27 [8]*letter* [9]NU omits *holy*

23 Now may [c]the God of peace Himself [d]sanctify[7] you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body [e]be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 He who calls you *is* [f]faithful, who also will [g]do *it.*

25 Brethren, pray for us.

26 Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss.

27 I charge you by the Lord that this [8]epistle be read to all the [9]holy brethren.

28 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen.

prophecy; both Silas and Paul were "prophets" (Acts 13:1; 15:32). Nevertheless, claims to divine prophecy must be tested and not accepted uncritically (2 Thess. 2:2; cf. 1 Cor. 14:29).

■ **5:23 sanctify.** The complete mending of all human imperfection is not only possible but certain. God is faithful and will accomplish it (v. 24). The time element must be remembered. Ultimate perfection, to include a glorified body as well, will be accomplished at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:6). See "Sanctification: The Spirit and the Flesh" at 1 Cor. 6:11.

your whole spirit, soul, and body. Three words are used to emphasize the wholeness of the perfection. "Spirit" and "soul" are used as virtual synonyms in the Bible for the spiritual component of a person. When the terms occur together (as here and in Heb. 4:12) it is difficult to find any significant difference in meaning. Compare the fourfold representation of "heart," "soul," "mind," and "strength" in Mark 12:30.

■ **5:27 I charge you.** The Greek verb is unusually strong and in effect puts the readers under oath. Paul is laying a solemn weight upon them that the whole congregation must learn the contents of this epistle—so important did he consider his apostolic teaching for their spiritual good (2:13; 4:2 notes).

The Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the

THESSALONIANS

Author The author of 2 Thessalonians claims to be Paul (1:1; 3:17), and in the first half of the second century the epistle was apparently known to Ignatius of Antioch, Polycarp, and Justin Martyr. Despite this early attestation, 2 Thessalonians has suffered more frequent and more influential attacks on its authenticity than has 1 Thessalonians. The close similarities in subject matter and even in phrasing between the two letters have been seen by some scholars as an indication of imitation. But this evidence can be read the other way. Who is more capable of echoing Paul's thought than Paul himself?

Some have said that the two letters teach contradictory eschatologies (doctrines of the end time and eternal future) and therefore cannot be from one author. The first letter is thought to teach an imminent return of Christ, whereas 2 Thessalonians insists that certain intervening events must occur before Christ returns. But the conflict is illusory. Nothing definite about the imminence of the Second Coming of Christ is stated in 1 Thessalonians, which stresses only the suddenness and unexpectedness with which the day of the Lord will overtake the unwary. The second letter specifies an order of events so as to counteract a new misunderstanding at Thessalonica that the day of the Lord had already arrived.

In 2:5 and 3:10 Paul reminds the Thessalonians of what he had taught while he was with them. If these statements were written by someone else using Paul's name and were not by Paul, they could have been exposed without difficulty at any time during the first generation after the events reported. Also, it is difficult to explain why anyone using Paul's name falsely as a means of gaining influence would include such a sharp attack on some of the readers as is found in 3:10, 11. On such counts the proposal that the letter is not by Paul creates more difficulties than it solves.

Date and Occasion Second Thessalonians 2:15 mentions an earlier letter from Paul. Very probably 1 Thessalonians was this earlier letter, and 2 Thessalonians is to be dated shortly after it, about A.D. 51. Both letters were written from Corinth.

Characteristics and Themes

1. Eschatology. Since sending the first letter, Paul had received further reports concerning the congregation. There was cause for rejoicing in their continued growth in faith, love, and patience (1:3, 4), as well as cause for concern in certain doctrinal and behavioral matters. Second Thessalonians was written mainly to supplement Paul's earlier teaching by correcting a premature and unsettling announcement that the day of the Lord had already arrived (2:1–11). This misguided claim may have been due in part to wrong inferences drawn from Paul's own teaching, coupled with the congregation's painful experience of persecutions thought to be indicative of end-time disturbances.

2. The Importance of Work. A second motive for writing was to deal with the chronic idleness of some members (3:6–15). Their behavior had continued uncorrected since the last letter (1 Thess. 4:11, 12; 5:14) and, indeed, ever since the missionaries had been present (3:10, 11). Exhortations were made even then in an attempt to rectify the situation but, according to fresh reports (3:11), matters had only grown worse. Many scholars believe the cause of idleness was the erroneous expectation that the Lord's return might happen so soon (2:1–3) that working for a living amounted to a denial of faith. Some connection between a faulty eschatology and faulty conduct of this sort is likely in the Thessalonian context. Yet it must be said that Paul never draws the connection himself. Since 3:10 shows that the problem had surfaced while the missionaries were still in Thessalonica, it is unlikely that eschatological errors gave birth to the problem, though they may have provided a convenient excuse for continuing in it. □

Outline of 2 Thessalonians

I. Salutation (1:1, 2)

II. Paul's Cause for Boasting (1:3–12)

A. Endurance During Persecution (1:3, 4)

B. Glorified at Christ's Return (1:5–10)

C. Prayer for the Work of Faith (1:11, 12)

III. Instruction (2:1—3:15)
A. The Day of the Lord (2:1–12)
B. Prayer and Exhortation (2:13—3:5)
C. Labor (3:6–15)
IV. Concluding Benediction (3:16–18)

CHAPTER 1

2 [a]1 Cor. 1:3

4 [b]2 Cor. 7:4; [1 Thess. 2:19] [c]1 Thess. 1:3 [d]1 Thess. 2:14 [1]*afflictions*

5 [e]Phil. 1:28 [f]1 Thess. 2:14 [2]*plain*

6 [g]Rev. 6:10 [3]*affliction*

7 [h]Rev. 14:13 [i][1 Thess. 4:16]; Jude 14

9 [j]Phil. 3:19; 1 Thess. 5:3 [k]Deut. 33:2

10 [l]Matt. 25:31 [m]Is. 49:3; John 17:10; 1 Thess. 2:12 [4]NU, M *have believed*

11 [n]Col. 1:12 [o]1 Thess. 1:3

12 [p][Col. 3:17]

Greeting

PAUL, Silvanus, and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

2 [a]Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

God's Final Judgment and Glory

3 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other, 4 so that [b]we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God [c]for your patience and faith [d]in all your persecutions and [1]tribulations that you endure, 5 *which is* [e]manifest[2] evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, [f]for which you also suffer; 6 [g]since *it is* a righteous thing with God to repay with [3]tribulation those who trouble you, 7 and to *give* you who are troubled [h]rest with us when [i]the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, 8 in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 [j]These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and [k]from the glory of His power, 10 when He comes, in that Day, [l]to be [m]glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who [4]believe, because our testimony among you was believed.

11 Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would [n]count you worthy of *this* calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of *His* goodness and [o]the work of faith with power, 12 [p]that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

■ **1:1** See note on 1 Thess. 1:1.

■ **1:4 persecutions and tribulations.** One instance of persecution is recounted in Acts 17:5–9, and the Thessalonian correspondence reveals that antagonism had not disappeared (1 Thess. 1:6; 2:14; 3:3).

■ **1:5 counted worthy.** A life worthy of God (1 Thess. 2:12), of God's calling (1:11; Eph. 4:1), of the Lord (Col. 1:10), of the gospel (Phil. 1:27, 28), or of the kingdom (v. 5) is a life of patient, joyful discipleship even in the face of life-threatening abuse from those hostile to the faith. Such lives are sure evidence that God's judgment is right.

for which you also suffer. Even while enjoying the benefits of citizenship in the heavenly kingdom (1 Thess. 2:12 note), Christians still must suffer for its sake (Acts 14:22), since the kingdom will inevitably confront diabolical opposition.

■ **1:6 repay with tribulation.** In Rom. 2:9 the same Greek word for "tribulation" (trouble) is used for the woe brought upon evildoers at the Last Judgment. Paul appears to be speaking of the same judgment here, as the next verses are concerned with ultimate bliss and woe.

■ **1:8 obey the gospel.** The gospel must be accepted, believed, and obeyed (1 Pet. 4:17). Its divine command is for absolute surrender to God through the peace made by Jesus Christ.

■ **1:9 everlasting destruction.** The fearful doctrine of eternal punishment (Is. 66:24; Matt. 25:42, 46; Mark 9:43, 48), staggering as it is, assured the hounded Thessalonian Christians of final and perfect justice. They were to refrain from taking personal revenge (1 Thess. 5:15; cf. Rom. 12:17–21) for the atrocities they suffered (v. 4), entrusting themselves instead to the God "who judges righteously" (1 Pet. 2:23; cf. Jer. 17:10; Acts 17:31; Rom. 2:6, 11, 16; Rev. 22:12).

■ **1:10 in that Day.** The "day of the Lord" (1 Thess. 5:2). Although we have no way of knowing how long the Day will last, the impression given is that the final judgment of the ungodly closely accompanies the coming of Christ for His saints.

■ **1:11 this calling.** Such "calling" should be related to 1 Thess. 2:12, where God is the One who calls; what we are called to is God's own kingdom and glory (2:14).

■ **1:12 our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.** As it stands the Greek can also be translated, "our God and Lord, Jesus Christ." This would be a distinct use of the term "God" in reference to Jesus Christ. Arguing against such a translation is the infrequent application of this term to Christ in the New Testament (Rom. 9:5; Titus 2:13; 2 Pet. 1:1). On the other hand, Paul often brings Christ and God the Father together into close unity in other phrases in these letters (e.g., vv. 1, 2; 2:16; 1 Thess. 1:1; 3:11), and he clearly ascribes attributes of deity to Christ. In either translation the joint dignity of the Father and the Son is clear.

The Great Apostasy

2 Now, brethren, [a]concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ [b]and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, [2][c]not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of [f]Christ had come. [3] Let no one deceive you by any means; for *that Day will not come* [d]unless the falling away comes first, and [e]the man of [2]sin is revealed, [f]the son of perdition, [4] who opposes and [g]exalts himself [h]above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits [3]as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

[5] Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? [6] And now you know what is restraining, that he may be revealed in his own time. [7] For [i]the [4]mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only [5]He who now restrains *will do so* until [5]He is taken out of the way. [8] And then the lawless one will be revealed, [j]whom the Lord will consume [k]with the breath of His mouth and destroy [l]with the brightness of His coming. [9] The coming of the *lawless one* is [m]according to the working of Satan, with all power, [n]signs, and lying wonders, [10] and with all unrighteous deception among [o]those who perish, because they did not receive [p]the love of the truth, that they might be saved. [11] And [q]for this reason God will send them strong delusion, [r]that they should believe the lie, [12] that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but [s]had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Stand Fast

[13] But we are [6]bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God [t]from the beginning [u]chose you for salvation [v]through [7]sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, [14] to which He called you by our gospel, for [w]the obtaining of the glory of

CHAPTER 2

1 [a][1 Thess. 4:15–17] [b]Matt. 24:31

2 [c]Matt. 24:4 [f]NU *the Lord*

3 [d]1 Tim. 4:1 [e]Dan. 7:25; 8:25; 11:36 [f]John 17:12 [2]NU *lawlessness*

4 [g]Is. 14:13, 14 [h]1 Cor. 8:5 [3]NU omits *as God*

7 [i]1 John 2:18 [4]*hidden truth* [5]Or *he*

8 [j]Dan. 7:10 [k]Is. 11:4 [l]Heb. 10:27

9 [m]John 8:41 [n]Deut. 13:1

10 [o]2 Cor. 2:15 [p]1 Cor. 16:22

11 [q]Rom. 1:28 [r]1 Tim. 4:1

12 [s]Rom. 1:32

13 [t]Eph. 1:4 [u]1 Thess. 1:4 [v][1 Pet. 1:2] [6]*under obligation* [7]*being set apart by*

14 [w]1 Pet. 5:10

■ **2:1 concerning the coming . . . and our gathering together to Him.** This is the rapture of the saints spoken of in 1 Thess. 4:17 (note). Paul appears to equate the time of Christ's coming and the rapture with the "day of the Lord" (1 Thess. 5:2; cf. 1 Cor. 1:7, 8; Phil. 2:16). In this scene all believers are gathered before the Lord "at His coming" (1 Thess. 2:19) and "in the day of the Lord Jesus" (2 Cor. 1:14). The "falling away" must come and the "man of sin" (v. 3) must be revealed before the day of the Lord arrives, and therefore they must also occur before the rapture of the saints. If the false teachers were saying that the day of the Lord had arrived (v. 2) and were anticipating the rapture at any moment, they could be proved wrong by the absence of these prior signs.

■ **2:2 letter.** This reference does not prove there was a forged letter bearing Paul's name already in existence, but only that Paul saw this as a possibility. Word may have reached him that the new teaching was circulating with some pretense of having his authority. Paul's injunction is meant to ensure that no vehicle of instruction—even one supposed to have come from him—should be heeded if it asserts that the day of the Lord has already come (cf. Gal. 1:8).

■ **2:3 the falling away.** This might refer to a falling away of many within the church (1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:1–9; Jude 17–19), to an apostasy of the Jewish people, or to a worldwide rebellion against God.

man of sin. This is an individual embodiment of wickedness, whose arrogant blasphemies Paul lists (cf. 1 John 2:22). He will draw away by deception those already inclined against the true God (v. 10) and will ultimately commit the sacrilege of thrusting himself upon humanity as its object of worship (v. 4). He comes by the power of Satan, as Christ came by the power of God, and he works fraudulent wonders as Christ worked true ones (v. 9; cf. Acts 2:22). Paul depicts this imposter as a parody or antithesis of the true Christ. Paul himself does not use the term "antichrist" (1 John 2:18, 22; 4:3), but it is a fitting designation. His fate is sealed; he will be destroyed by the coming of Christ. See "The Return of Christ" at 1 Thess. 4:16.

■ **2:4 exalts himself above all that is called God.** This description of the man of sin echoes that of Daniel's little "horn" (Dan. 7:8, 20, 25; 8:9–12; cf. 11:31, 36) and foreshadows John's description of the beast from the sea (Rev. 13:1–8).

sits as God in the temple of God. Some conclude from this verse that the temple in Jerusalem, still standing when Paul wrote but destroyed in A.D. 70, must be rebuilt for the use of "the man of sin." Others understand "temple" in another of its New Testament meanings, as the church (Eph. 2:19–22; 1 Pet. 2:5). The reference may be an intentionally exaggerated way of talking about the imposter's aspirations to heavenly power. Just as another prototype of sin, the king of Babylon wanted to set his throne in heaven (Is. 14:13, 14; cf. the king of Tyre in Ezek. 28:2), so the man of sin will boast of himself as the possessor of God's heavenly sanctuary (Rev. 13:6).

■ **2:6** The identity of what is "restraining" the man of sin (vv. 6, 7; cf. Rev. 20:1–3) is no longer self-evident to readers of 2 Thessalonians. Interpreters have proposed numerous alternatives. The restraining power seems to be both impersonal (v. 6, "what is restraining") and personal (v. 7, "He who now restrains"). Hence it may be an institution that can also be represented by a single person, such as the Roman state with its emperor, the Jewish state with its leader, or the universal ministry of the gospel with Paul as its chief minister. Whatever the precise reference, it is clear that behind the restraining power is the will of God.

■ **2:7 already at work.** Though the man of sin has not yet appeared, Paul will not allow his readers to let down their guard. The same satanic power that will ultimately spawn this unholy deceiver was already at work in Paul's day (1 John 2:18) and is at work in ours. Because it is now restrained, the church has a strong encouragement to carry out its mission.

■ **2:8 with the breath of His mouth.** The description is from Is. 11:4. It reappears in Rev. 19:15, 21 where the beast and his false prophet meet their final end.

■ **2:9** The coming of Christ is to be preceded by the "coming of the lawless one."

■ **2:13, 14** There is a wealth of instruction in these two verses. Major elements in the biblical doctrine of salvation—election, calling, faith, sanctification, and glorification—are presented in their mutual relations. There is a harmonious working of all three Persons of the Trinity: God the Father choosing and calling, God the Son sharing His glory with His people, and God the Holy Spirit imparting His sanctifying grace (1 Pet. 1:2).

■ **2:13 But.** With this word Paul begins to assure his readers that he does not include them with those he has just mentioned in vv. 11 and 12, who refuse to love the truth and will fall prey to deception.

15 [x]1 Cor. 16:13 [y]1 Cor. 11:2 [8]*letter*

16 [z][Rev. 1:5] [a]1 Pet. 1:3

17 [b]1 Cor. 1:8 [9]*strengthen*

CHAPTER 3

1 [a]Eph. 6:19

our Lord Jesus Christ. 15 Therefore, brethren, [x]stand fast and hold [y]the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our [8]epistle.

16 Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, [z]who has loved us and given *us* everlasting consolation and [a]good hope by grace, 17 comfort your hearts [b]and [9]establish you in every good word and work.

Pray for Us

3 Finally, brethren, [a]pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run *swiftly* and be glorified, just as *it is* with you, 2 and [b]that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; [c]for not all have faith.

3 But [d]the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and [e]guard *you* from the evil one. 4 And [f]we

2 [b]Rom. 15:31 [c]Acts 28:24 3 [d]1 Cor. 1:9 [e]John 17:15 4 [f]2 Cor. 7:16

Effectual Calling and Conversion

"Effectual calling" is the title of ch. 10 of the *Westminster Confession* (1647). The chapter begins:

> All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, He is pleased, in His appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by His Word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation, by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God, taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them a heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and, by His almighty power, determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ: yet so, as they come most freely, being made willing by His grace.
>
> What is described here is the process of Christian conversion, involving illumination, regeneration, and the transformation of the will. It is a sovereign work of God, "effectually" (that is, effectively) performed by the power of the Holy Spirit. The doctrine corresponds to Paul's use of the word "call" in the sense of "to bring to faith," and his use of "called" to mean "converted" (Rom. 1:6; 8:28, 30; 9:24; 1 Cor. 1:9, 24, 26; 7:18, 21; Gal. 1:15; Eph. 4:1, 4; 2 Thess. 2:14). This calling is different from the general invitation, as described in Jesus' explanation of the parable of the wedding feast (Matt. 22:14). The general, external invitation can fail to be answered, but the effectual calling is a particular act of God resulting in regeneration. It cannot be refused (John 10:3, 4).
>
> Original sin means that all human beings are by nature "dead," or unresponsive to God. Through the effectual calling, God gives life to the dead. The outward call of God to faith in Christ is communicated everywhere through reading, preaching, and explaining the gospel. In the inner, effectual call the Holy Spirit enlightens the mind and renews the heart of those God has chosen so that the gospel is accepted as the truth of God, and God in Christ becomes the object of love and affection. When once regenerated and having the will set free to choose God and the good, a sinner turns away from the former pattern of living and receives Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, to start a new life with Him. □

God . . . chose you. See note on 1 Thess. 1:4. From the beginning (Eph. 1:4), God chose them "through" sanctification and believing the truth, not "because of" these actions. According to Paul, the elect cannot continue to live in a godless fashion after they are converted.

■ **2:14 to which.** That is, to salvation.

He called you. On God's calling see 1:11; 1 Thess. 2:12; 1 Tim. 6:12; theological note "Effectual Calling and Conversion."

by our gospel. The gospel, which concerns God's Son (Rom. 1:3), is the means employed by God to call sinners to glory.

obtaining . . . the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is another way of speaking about the salvation to which God has called us (Rom. 8:30; 1 Thess. 2:12; 1 Pet. 5:10).

■ **2:15 hold the traditions.** Paul passed on authoritative practical and doctrinal traditions, by word and by letter (Rom. 6:17; 1 Cor. 11:2, 23; 15:3; 2 Tim. 1:13).

epistle. Probably 1 Thessalonians.

■ **3:1, 2** Paul requests prayer for the success of the gospel and for the protection of those who bring it. Paul faced almost constant physical danger during his years of ministry. This text, along with Rom. 15:30, 31; 2 Cor. 1:11; Phil. 1:19, shows how much he relied on the prayers of God's people for the continuation of his ministry, if not for his own survival.

■ **3:3 faithful.** Contrasting with the faithlessness mentioned in the previous verse is the steadfast faithfulness of our unchanging God (Mal. 3:6; 1 Cor. 1:9; 10:13; 2 Cor. 1:18; James 1:17).

have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you.

5 Now may [s]the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.

Warning Against Idleness

6 But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, [h]that you withdraw [i]from every brother who walks [j]disorderly and not according to the tradition which [1]he received from us. 7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you; 8 nor did we eat anyone's bread [2]free of charge, but worked with [k]labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, 9 not because we do not have [l]authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us.

10 For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. 11 For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are [m]busybodies. 12 Now those who are such we command and [3]exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ [n]that they work in quietness and eat their own bread.

13 But *as for* you, brethren, [o]do not grow weary *in* doing good. 14 And if anyone does not obey our word in this [4]epistle, note that person and [p]do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. 15 [q]Yet do not count *him* as an enemy, [r]but [5]admonish *him* as a brother.

Benediction

16 Now may [s]the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way. The Lord *be* with you all.

17 [t]The salutation of Paul with my own hand, which is a sign in every [6]epistle; so I write.

18 [u]The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

5 [s]1 Chr. 29:18
6 [h]Rom. 16:17
[i]1 Cor. 5:1
[j]1 Thess. 4:11
[1]NU, M *they*
8 [k]1 Thess. 2:9
[2]Lit. *for nothing*
9 [l]1 Cor. 9:4, 6–14
11 [m]1 Pet. 4:15
12 [n]Eph. 4:28
[3]*encourage*
13 [o]Gal. 6:9
14 [p]Matt. 18:17
[4]*letter*
15 [q]Lev. 19:17
[r]Titus 3:10 [5]*warn*
16 [s]Rom. 15:33
17 [t]1 Cor. 16:21
[6]*letter*
18 [u]Rom. 16:20, 24

■ **3:5 love of God . . . patience of Christ.** Our hearts should journey to these safe spiritual harbors of meditation; it is a journey directed by the Lord.

■ **3:6–15** See Introduction: Characteristics and Themes. Paul takes firm measures against an ongoing problem of idleness and its consequences (v. 10; cf. 1 Thess. 4:11). Paul obviously regards the offense as serious, but he treats the offenders as fellow believers.

■ **3:6 withdraw.** Paul may have had in mind Jesus' instructions on church discipline recorded in Matt. 18:15–17. He gives similar charges in vv. 14, 15; Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:9–13; 2 Tim. 3:1–5; Titus 3:10, 11.

■ **3:9 have authority.** Paul consistently teaches that those who labor in the gospel deserve their wages (1 Cor. 9:6–18). Paul normally accepted support for his ministry, but when he feared his motives would be called into question, or when (as in Thessalonica) a strong example was needed for those who refused to work, Paul forsook his rights and would not accept compensation.

■ **3:10** Apparently the problem of idleness had surfaced before Paul and his companions left the city. Even then they had felt it necessary to urge the "disorderly" to work (vv. 6, 11).

■ **3:11 not working . . . but are busybodies.** Without any business of their own, these idlers attended to the business of others.

■ **3:14 do not keep company.** See note on vv. 6–15; "Church Discipline and Excommunication" at Matt. 18:15.

be ashamed. This is not retribution, but an attempt to elicit repentance and, ultimately, restoration to fellowship in the church.

■ **3:17** Though Paul had the help of secretaries in writing his letters, he customarily penned the final greeting or benediction in his own hand. He calls attention to this practice, as a mark of the letter's authenticity, here and in 1 Cor. 16:21; Col. 4:18. From Gal. 6:11 and Philem. 19, it appears that Paul wrote more than just the concluding phrases of those two letters.

The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to

TIMOTHY

Author According to the salutations of the letters, the author of the three Pastoral Letters (1 and 2 Timothy, Titus) was the apostle Paul. The tradition of the early church is in agreement. Nevertheless, some New Testament scholars have questioned the Pauline authorship of these letters, citing alleged differences in vocabulary, style, and theology. Such arguments fail to carry conviction, and there is no persuasive reason to deny that Paul wrote these letters.

Date and Occasion The apparent inconsistencies between Paul's travels as reflected in the Pastoral Letters and his three missionary journeys as recorded in Acts have led to the suggestion that the Pastorals were written during what might be called Paul's "fourth" missionary journey. Acts ends not with Paul's death but with his house arrest in Rome (Acts 28:16, 30, 31). While the late first-century writing *1 Clement* suggests that Paul was martyred in Rome, it does not link his martyrdom with the imprisonment recorded in Acts 28. The fourth-century church historian Eusebius preserves a tradition that Paul was released from that imprisonment, continued his missionary labors, and was martyred by Nero on his second visit to Rome. This tradition is supported not only by the Pastoral Letters but by Philippians and Philemon as well, which, if they were written during the Roman imprisonment recorded in Acts 28, provide evidence that Paul expected to be released (Phil. 1:25, 26; Philem. 22). A fourth missionary journey and a second imprisonment, after the imprisonment recorded in Acts 28, is the most probable setting for the Pastorals.

If there were two imprisonments, Paul was released from his first around A.D. 62. According to later tradition, he was martyred by Nero, who died in A.D. 68. Paul composed 1 Timothy while the apostle was still in the midst of his fourth missionary journey, probably during the earlier part of this period, between A.D. 62 and 64.

Timothy was a native of Lystra, a Roman colony in the province of Galatia. The son of a mixed marriage, his father was a Gentile and his mother was a Jew (Acts 16:1). Little is known about his father, who seems not to have become a Christian, but his mother and grandmother must have been converted as a result of Paul's visit to Lystra on his first missionary journey (2 Tim. 1:5). From his childhood, they had instructed Timothy in the Jewish Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:14, 15), and they were undoubtedly influential in Timothy's own conversion to Christianity.

When Paul returned to Lystra on his second missionary journey, some of the Christians called his attention to this young believer and Paul decided to take him along on his journey (Acts 16:2, 3). Two specific actions seem to have taken place at this time. First, since Paul would be evangelizing Jews, he circumcised Timothy according to Jewish custom (Acts 16:3). Second, Paul and the elders of the church laid their hands upon Timothy to set him apart and equip him for ministry (1:18; 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6; 2:2).

Timothy traveled with Paul throughout most of his second and third missionary journeys (Acts 17:14, 15; 18:5; 19:22; 20:4), and for part of the fourth. He seems to have become Paul's protégé, and Paul speaks figuratively of himself as Timothy's "father" (Phil. 2:22) and of Timothy as his "son" (1:2, 18; 1 Cor. 4:17; 2 Tim. 1:2; 2:1). As Paul's coworker, Timothy served as Paul's representative in the churches of Thessalonica (1 Thess. 3:2, 6), Corinth (1 Cor. 4:17; 16:10), Philippi (Phil. 2:19, 23), and Ephesus (1:3).

Paul himself seems to characterize Timothy as having a "spirit of fear" (2 Tim. 1:7). Paul felt it necessary to ask the church at Corinth to receive Timothy in a manner which would set him at ease (1 Cor. 16:10, 11). In the Pastorals he had to exhort Timothy not to let anyone despise him on account of his youth (4:12), not to neglect the spiritual gift which he had received (4:14), and not to be ashamed to speak out boldly for the gospel (2 Tim. 1:8).

Apart from the statement in Heb. 13:23 that Timothy had been "set free" (presumably from prison), little is known about what happened to Timothy after the writing of 2 Timothy.

Paul wrote 1 Timothy while he was in Macedonia (1:3). He thought it necessary to leave Timothy behind in Ephesus because of the presence of false teachers in that city (1:3). Paul had established the Ephesian church early on his third missionary journey, spending about three years there (Acts 19; 20:31). At the close of that journey he had warned the Ephesian elders that false teachers, some coming from the leadership itself, would plague the church (Acts 20:29, 30), and this letter indicates that his prediction apparently came true (1:6, 19; 4:1, 2; 6:3–5, 10, 21). There is evidence that some of the false teachers either came from or moved into positions of leadership in the church (1:7, 20; 2:12; 3:6; 5:19, 20; 6:3–5, 10), and the false teachers seem especially to have made inroads among some of the women in the church (2:9–15; 3:11; 5:11–15).

Characteristics and Themes

The letter is noteworthy for its interest in church organization. It provides the longest description in the New Testament on the qualifications for "bishop" or elder (3:2–7), along with evidence for two kinds of elders, ruling and teaching (5:17); comments about supporting and rebuking elders (5:17–20); and the only explicit description in the New Testament of the qualifications for deacons (3:8–10, 12, 13). Paul's specific directives to Timothy also contain much practical advice on how a church leader is to function.

This letter is also noteworthy for its emphasis on sound doctrine (1:10; 3:9; 4:6; 6:3) and contains two theological meditations on the salvation God extends in Jesus Christ (1:13–16; 2:3–6). These include affirmations of salvation by grace (1:13–16), Christ as the one Mediator between God and humanity (2:5), and the substitutionary atonement of Christ (2:6). First Timothy also includes a poetic meditation on the work of Christ which affirms His incarnation, resurrection, and ascension (3:16); an anticipation of the Second Coming of Christ (6:14); a marvelous doxology (6:15, 16); and evidence of the expansion of the concept of "Scripture" beyond the Old Testament to include elements of the New Testament revelation (5:18, where the words of Christ as recorded in Luke 10:7 are cited).

Also distinctive about 1 Timothy are its comments about women (2:9–15), which include a lengthy section on proper care for widows in the church (5:3–16), and the background information that the book provides about Timothy, including probable references to both his baptism (6:12) and his ordination (1:18; 4:14).

Interpretive Difficulties

The details of Paul's fourth missionary journey are sketchy, since the journey must be reconstructed largely from hints in the Pastoral Letters. There is some evidence that Paul fulfilled his earlier wish to go to Spain (Rom. 15:24, 28). Either on his return from Spain or, if the contemplated journey to Spain never took place, upon his departure from Rome, he seems to have returned to the east, probably first sailing to Crete (Titus 1:5). He then traveled north to Ephesus (1:3), perhaps making a side excursion to Colosse (cf. Philem. 22), and then on to Macedonia (1:3; cf. Phil. 1:25, 26). From that point on things become less clear. Paul seems to have planned (possibly at two different times) to leave Macedonia for both Ephesus (3:14, 15; 4:13) and Nicopolis (Titus 3:12). The last we hear is that he is back in Rome awaiting execution (2 Tim. 1:8, 12; 2:9; 4:6, 7, 16), having visited Troas (2 Tim. 4:13), Miletus, and perhaps Corinth (2 Tim. 4:20).

On the false teaching at Ephesus, see "Introduction to 2 Timothy: Interpretive Difficulties." □

Outline of 1 Timothy

I. Salutation (1:1, 2)
II. Dealing with False Teachers of the Law (1:3–11)
  A. False Teachers and Their Doctrines (1:3–7)
  B. The Purpose of the Law (1:8–11)
III. Paul's Testimony and Charge (1:12–20)
  A. Paul's Call to Ministry (1:12–17)
  B. Exhortation to Faithfulness (1:18–20)
IV. Instructions for the Life of the Church (2:1—3:13)
  A. Instructions for Prayer and Worship (2:1–15)
    1. On Prayer for All (2:1–7)
    2. Instructions for Men (2:8)
    3. Instructions for Women (2:9–15)
  B. Instructions on Church Leadership (3:1–13)
    1. Bishops (3:1–7)
    2. Deacons (3:8–13)
V. The Problem of False Doctrines (3:14—4:5)
  A. Paul's Purpose in Writing the Letter (3:14–16)
  B. Errors of the False Teachers (4:1–5)
VI. Guidelines for a Young Pastor (4:6—6:19)
  A. Admonitions to Timothy Regarding His Ministry (4:6—5:2)
  B. Instructions Regarding Specific Groups (5:3—6:2)
    1. Widows (5:3–16)
    2. Elders (5:17–25)
    3. Slaves (6:1, 2)

C. Dealing with False Teachers (6:3–10)
D. Admonitions to Timothy Regarding His Ministry (6:11–16)
E. Exhortations to the Rich (6:17–19)
VII. Conclusion (6:20, 21)

CHAPTER 1

2 [a]Acts 16:1, 2; Rom. 1:7; 2 Tim. 1:2; Titus 1:4 [b]Gal. 1:3
3 [c]Acts 20:1, 3 [d]Rom. 16:17; 2 Cor. 11:4; Gal. 1:6, 7; 1 Tim. 6:3 [f]*command*
4 [e]1 Tim. 6:3, 4, 20; Titus 1:14
5 [f]Rom. 13:8–10; Gal. 5:14 [g]Eph. 6:24 [z]Lit. *unhypocritical*
6 [h]1 Tim. 6:4, 20
8 [i]Rom. 7:12, 16
10 [y]*opposed*
11 [j]1 Tim. 6:15 [k]1 Cor. 9:17
12 [l]1 Cor. 15:10 [m]1 Cor. 7:25 [n]Col. 1:25
13 [o]Acts 8:3; 1 Cor. 15:9

Greeting

1 PAUL, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Savior and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope,

2 To Timothy, a [a]true son in the faith:

[b]Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

No Other Doctrine

3 As I urged you [c]when I went into Macedonia—remain in Ephesus that you may [f]charge some [d]that they teach no other doctrine, 4 [e]nor give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which cause disputes rather than godly edification which is in faith. 5 Now [f]the purpose of the commandment is love [g]from a pure heart, *from* a good conscience, and *from* [z]sincere faith, 6 from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to [h]idle talk, 7 desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm.

8 But we know that the law *is* [i]good if one uses it lawfully, 9 knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for *the* lawless and insubordinate, for *the* ungodly and for sinners, for *the* unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, 10 for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is [y]contrary to sound doctrine, 11 according to the glorious gospel of the [j]blessed God which was [k]committed to my trust.

Glory to God for His Grace

12 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has [l]enabled me, [m]because He counted me faithful, [n]putting *me* into the ministry, 13 although [o]I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an

■ **1:1, 2** Opening salutation, including sender, recipient, and benediction.

■ **1:1 apostle of Jesus Christ.** One sent out as an official representative of Christ. This phrase is commonly used by Paul as a self-designation in the openings of his letters.

God our Savior. As Author of the covenant of grace, God is Savior (2:3; 4:10; Titus 1:3; 2:10; 3:4).

Jesus Christ, our hope. Jesus is the basis for Christian hope, because He is the Mediator of the covenant of grace (2:5; 4:10; 5:5; 6:17). See "Hope" at Heb. 6:18.

■ **1:2 true son.** Cf. Titus 1:4. Paul views Timothy as his spiritual son (v. 18; 1 Cor. 4:17; Phil. 2:22; 2 Tim. 1:2; 2:1; Introduction: Date and Occasion).

Grace, mercy and peace. Paul commonly substitutes "grace" for the more standard salutation "greetings" (e.g., James 1:1). He typically adds the Jewish greeting "peace," meaning "health, wholeness of life." Here and in 2 Tim. 1:2 he also adds "mercy."

■ **1:3–7** Paul moves into the body of the letter. His intention is to instruct Timothy in how to act as Paul's representative at Ephesus (Introduction: Date and Occasion). He begins with the problem of false teaching at Ephesus (Introduction to 2 Timothy: Interpretive Difficulties).

■ **1:3 teach no other doctrine.** The conflict in Ephesus centers on proper teaching (v. 10; 4:1, 2; 6:3; 2 Tim. 2:18).

■ **1:4 fables.** See 4:7; 2 Tim. 4:4. In Titus 1:14 Paul speaks of "Jewish fables," perhaps referring to the kinds of legends about Old Testament figures that are found in many of the apocryphal Jewish writings.

endless genealogies. Perhaps a reference to an early form of the detailed speculations (often combined with Jewish myths) that developed in Gnosticism concerning the origins of the world and the innumerable spiritual beings supposedly involved in creation (cf. Titus 3:9).

■ **1:5 love.** Paul's command highlights the close connection between Christian belief and practice (cf. Gal. 5:6).

■ **1:7 the law.** The law of Moses.

■ **1:8–11** Paul's comments about the false teachers lead him into a digression on the purpose of the law.

■ **1:8 the law is good.** See Rom. 7:7–12; Gal. 3:19–25.

■ **1:10 sound doctrine.** Or "sound teaching," a running theme throughout the Pastoral Letters (3:9; 4:6; 6:3; 2 Tim. 1:13, 14; 2:2; 4:3; Titus 1:9, 13; 2:1, 2).

■ **1:11 according to the glorious gospel.** The good news of what God has done in Christ is the standard by which doctrine, as well as one's understanding of the law, is judged to be sound.

■ **1:12–17** From his comments about the law Paul turns to his call by Christ and provides an exposition of the gospel as the grace God pours out upon sinners in Jesus Christ.

■ **1:13 a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man.** Before his conversion Paul persecuted the church (Acts 8:3; 9:1–5; 22:4, 5; 26:9, 11; Gal. 1:13; Phil. 3:6).

because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. God did not grant Paul what he deserved, but what he needed (cf. Acts 3:17–20).

[4]insolent man; but I obtained mercy because [p]I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief. [14][q]And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, [r]with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. [15][s]This *is* a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that [t]Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. [16]However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life. [17]Now to [u]the King eternal, [v]immortal, [w]invisible, to [5]God [x]who alone is wise, [y]*be* honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Fight the Good Fight

[18]This [6]charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare, [19]having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, [20]of whom are [z]Hymenaeus and [a]Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to [b]blaspheme.

Pray for All Men

2 Therefore I [1]exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks be made for all men, [2][a]for kings and [b]all who are in [2]authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and [3]reverence. [3]For this *is* [c]good and acceptable in the sight [d]of God our Savior, [4][e]who desires all men to be saved [f]and to come to the knowledge of the truth. [5][g]For *there is* one God and [h]one Mediator between God and men, *the* Man Christ Jesus, [6][i]who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, [7][j]for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle—I am speaking the truth [4]in Christ *and* not lying—[k]a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

13 [p]John 4:21 [4]*violently arrogant*
14 [q]Rom. 5:20 [r]2 Tim. 1:13; 2:22
15 [s]2 Tim. 2:11 [t]Matt. 1:21; 9:13
17 [u]Ps. 10:16 [v]Rom. 1:23 [w]Heb. 11:27 [x]Rom. 16:27 [y]1 Chr. 29:11 [5]NU *the only God,*
18 [6]*command*
20 [z]2 Tim. 2:17, 18 [a]2 Tim. 4:14 [b]Acts 13:45

CHAPTER 2

1 [1]*encourage*
2 [a]Ezra 6:10 [b][Rom. 13:1] [2]*a prominent place* [3]*dignity*
3 [c]Rom. 12:2 [d]2 Tim. 1:9

4 [e]Ezek. 18:23, 32 [f][John 17:3] 5 [g]Gal. 3:20 [h][Heb. 9:15] 6 [i]Mark 10:45 7 [j]Eph. 3:7, 8 [k][Gal. 1:15, 16] [4]NU omits *in Christ*

■ **1:15 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all.** This expression calls attention to an important point. In the New Testament it is found only in the Pastoral Letters (3:1; 4:9; 2 Tim. 2:11; Titus 3:8).

I am chief. Lit. "I am the first." This is not a characterization of himself prior to his conversion. Rather, as Paul has grown in Christ he has become increasingly aware of his own sinfulness.

■ **1:16 everlasting life.** God grants to all who believe in Christ not just "everlasting" life, but life in all its fullness (cf. 4:8; 6:12, 19; 2 Tim. 1:1, 10; Titus 1:2; 3:7).

■ **1:18–20** Paul returns to the theme of vv. 3–7, focusing less on Timothy's potential for success as Paul's representative than on Timothy's continued faithfulness to Christ, especially in contrast to two members (perhaps leaders) of the church at Ephesus who "concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck" (v. 19).

■ **1:18 prophecies previously made concerning you.** This refers to an event, mentioned also in 4:14 and in 2 Tim. 1:6 (cf. 2 Tim. 2:2), in which a group of elders, along with Paul, laid hands on Timothy (perhaps when Timothy was set apart for ministry). At that time Timothy received a spiritual gift, along with a word of prophecy appointing him for service (cf. Acts 13:1–3).

■ **1:19 a good conscience.** See "Conscience and the Law" at 1 Sam. 24:5.

■ **1:20 Hymenaeus and Alexander.** Singling out these two individuals raises the question whether they were leaders in the church. Hymenaeus is mentioned again in 2 Tim. 2:17, 18 as one who has "strayed concerning the truth." It is unclear whether the name "Alexander" here and in Acts 19:33, 34 and 2 Tim. 4:14, 15 all refer to the same person.

I delivered to Satan. This is probably a reference to putting these two individuals outside the fellowship of the church and, hence, back into the world—the domain of Satan (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2). Paul uses a similar expression in 1 Cor. 5:5 (cf. Matt. 18:17).

may learn not to blaspheme. The purpose of this excommunication is disciplinary—that the two would recognize their errors and repent (2 Tim. 2:25, 26; Titus 3:10).

■ **2:1–15** Paul moves to a series of instructions by prayer and worship, probably in response to abuses caused by the false teachers (see Introduction to 2 Timothy: Interpretive Difficulties).

■ **2:1 all men.** As can be seen from the next expression ("for kings and all who are in authority"), this does not mean "every human being," but rather "all types of people," whatever their station in life.

■ **2:4 who desires all men to be saved.** This does not mean that God sovereignly wills every human being to be saved (i.e., that God saves everyone). It may refer to God's general benevolence in taking no delight in the death of the wicked, or to God's desire that all types of people (v. 1 note) be saved (i.e., God does not choose His elect from any single group).

■ **2:5 there is one God.** This is the fundamental affirmation of the Jewish religion (Deut. 6:4; cf. Rom. 3:30; 1 Cor. 8:6; Gal. 3:20; Eph. 4:6).

one Mediator between God and men. There is One who arbitrates between God and humanity and reconciles them. See theological note "Christ the Mediator."

the Man Christ Jesus. Paul's focus is on Christ's humanity, perhaps because the false teachers had denied that Christ was truly human. The full humanity of Christ is essential to His serving as Mediator of the covenant of grace.

■ **2:6 who gave Himself a ransom.** By His death on the cross, Christ paid the price necessary to free people from their sins (Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45; Titus 2:14; 1 Pet. 1:18, 19). Thus, He is the "one Mediator" (v. 5).

all. In keeping with vv. 1 and 4, this is probably a reference to all *types* of people. Alternately, it expresses Paul's conviction that Christ's death was sufficient to ransom all humanity, yet by sovereign design and effect not all are redeemed. See "Definite Redemption" at John 10:15.

■ **2:7 I am speaking the truth . . . not lying.** An odd statement to make to a close friend, but Paul may have intended for the letter to be read to the whole church (6:21 note). Presumably the false teachers had questioned Paul's call and mission.

8 [l]Luke 23:34 [m]Ps. 134:2

9 [n]1 Pet. 3:3

Men and Women in the Church

8 I desire therefore that the men pray [l]everywhere, [m]lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; 9 in like manner also, that the [n]women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with pro-

Christ the Mediator

The saving ministry of Jesus Christ is summed up in the statement that He is the "Mediator between God and men" (1 Tim. 2:5). A mediator is one who brings together parties who are out of communication and who may be alienated, estranged, or at war with each other. The mediator must have links with both sides so as to identify with and maintain the interests of both, and represent each to the other on a basis of goodwill. Thus Moses was mediator between God and Israel (Gal. 3:19), speaking to Israel on God's behalf when God gave the law (Ex. 20:18–21) and speaking to God on Israel's behalf when Israel had sinned (Ex. 32:9—33:17).

Every member of our fallen and rebellious race is by nature in "enmity against God" (Rom. 8:7), standing under God's wrath, the punitive rejection whereby as Judge He expresses active anger at our sins (Rom. 1:18; 2:5–9; 3:5, 6). Reconciliation of the alienated parties is needed, but can only occur if God's wrath is quenched and the human heart, that opposes God and motivates a life against God, is changed. In mercy, God sent His Son into the world to bring about the needed reconciliation. It was not that the kindly Son acted to placate the harsh Father; the initiative was the Father's own. In Augustine's words, "in a wonderful and divine way even when He hated us, He loved us" (*Commentary on John* 110.6; cf. John 3:16; Rom. 5:5–8; 1 John 4:8–10). In all His mediatorial ministry the Son was doing His Father's will (see "The Humble Obedience of Christ" at John 5:19).

Objectively and once for all, Christ achieved reconciliation for His people through penal substitution. On the cross He took our place, carried our identity as it were, bore the curse due to us (Gal. 3:13), and by His sacrificial shedding of blood made peace for us (Eph. 2:16–18; Col. 1:20). Peace here means an end to hostility, guilt, and exposure to the retributive punishment that was otherwise unavoidable—in other words, forgiveness for all the past, and eternal, personal acceptance for the future. Those who have received reconciliation through faith in Christ are justified and have peace with God (Rom. 5:1, 10). The Mediator's present work, which He carries forward through human messengers, is to persuade those for whom He achieved reconciliation actually to receive it (John 12:32; Rom. 15:18; 2 Cor. 5:18–21; Eph. 2:17).

Jesus is "the Mediator of the new covenant" (Heb. 9:15; 12:24), the initiator of a new relationship of conscious peace with God, going beyond what was known under the Old Testament arrangements for dealing with the guilt of sin (Heb. 9:11—10:18).

One of Calvin's great contributions to Christian understanding was his observation that the New Testament writers expound Jesus' mediatorial ministry in terms of the three "offices" (defined roles) of prophet, priest, and king. These three aspects of Christ's work are found together in the letter to the Hebrews, where Jesus is both the messianic King, exalted to His throne (1:3, 13; 4:16; 2:9), as well as the great High Priest (2:17; 4:14—5:10; chs. 7—10), who offered Himself to God as a sacrifice for our sins. In addition, Christ is the messenger ("Apostle," 3:1), who preached the message concerning Himself (2:3). In Acts 3:22 Jesus is called a "Prophet" for the same reason that Hebrews calls Him "Apostle," namely, because He instructed people by declaring to them the word of God.

While in the Old Testament the mediating roles of prophet, priest, and king were fulfilled by separate individuals, all three offices now coalesce in the one person of Jesus. It is His glory, given Him by the Father, to be in this way the all-sufficient Savior. We who believe are called to understand this, and to show ourselves His people by obeying Him as our king, trusting Him as our priest, and learning from Him as our prophet and teacher. To center on Jesus Christ in this way is the hallmark of authentic Christianity. □

■ **2:8–15** Paul moves to the problem of the divisive spirit of the false teachers, with specific admonitions for men and women (note on vv. 1–15).

■ **2:8 men.** Paul assumes in 1 Cor. 11:5 that women, too, will pray when the church meets for worship. Here he is addressing a specific problem at Ephesus.

everywhere. Lit. "in every place." This probably refers to corporate worship.

priety and [5]moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, [10] [o]but, which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works. [11] Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. [12] And [p]I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence. [13] For Adam was formed first, then Eve. [14] And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. [15] Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.

9 [5]*discretion*

10 [o]1 Pet. 3:4

12 [p]1 Cor. 14:34; Titus 2:5

CHAPTER 3

1 [1]Lit. *overseer*

3 [2]*addicted* [3]NU omits *not greedy for money* [4]*loving money*

6 [5]*new convert*

7 [q]1 Tim. 6:9; 2 Tim. 2:26

Qualifications of Overseers

3 This *is* a faithful saying: If a man desires the position of a [1]bishop, he desires a good work. [2] A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; [3] not [2]given to wine, not violent, [3]not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not [4]covetous; [4] one who rules his own house well, having *his* children in submission with all reverence [5] (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); [6] not a [5]novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the *same* condemnation as the devil. [7] Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the [q]snare of the devil.

lifting up holy hands. On this posture in prayer, see Ps. 63:4; 141:2.

without wrath and doubting. Paul is not concerned to mandate a particular posture, but to encourage a proper attitude (1:5).

■ **2:9 modest apparel . . . costly clothing.** Paul is not concerned with clothing and jewelry as such, but with the attitude of the one wearing them (1 Pet. 3:3, 4). Greco-Roman society was characterized by extravagance in dress.

■ **2:11 in silence.** As 1 Cor. 11:5 indicates, Paul does not forbid all vocal participation by women in the worship service. Rather, Paul enjoins silence of a particular sort—a silence that respects the authoritative teaching and governing role assigned to the leaders of the church (v. 12).

all submission. Submission does not necessarily indicate a lower status. Elsewhere Paul applies the concept to wives (Eph. 5:22; Col. 3:18; Titus 2:5; cf. 1 Cor. 14:34), husbands and wives (Eph. 5:21), children (3:4), slaves (Titus 2:9), prophets (1 Cor. 14:32), Christians (Rom. 13:1, 5; 1 Cor. 16:16; Titus 3:1), the church (Eph. 5:24), and even Christ Himself (1 Cor. 15:28).

■ **2:12 I do not permit.** Here Paul exercises his apostolic authority in restricting women from exercising a certain kind of authority and teaching.

to have authority over. This Greek word, appears only here in the New Testament and is probably used by Paul to refer to some level of judicial or governing authority. Under the influence of the false teachers, certain women have apparently moved into positions of governing authority within the church, which Paul prohibited (1 Cor. 14:34).

in silence. See note on v. 11.

■ **2:13** Paul appeals to creation (Gen. 2:7, 21, 22). He uses a similar argument, though with some qualification, in 1 Cor. 11:8–12.

■ **2:14** Again Paul alludes to Genesis, this time to the account of the Fall (Gen. 3:1–6). The argument might seem unfair, since both Adam and Eve sinned. But Paul's point is correct: Eve was the one who was "deceived" by the serpent. Paul's argument here, with its emphasis on who was deceived, is probably a reflection of the relative success that the false teachers at Ephesus have had in leading women astray (5:11–15; 2 Tim. 3:6, 7). Elsewhere Paul has no qualms about blaming the Fall on Adam (Rom. 5:12–19; 1 Cor. 15:21, 22).

■ **2:15 she.** This probably refers to any woman who has been deceived.

will be saved. Probably not "brought safely," as some hold. Paul uses his normal word meaning "redemption from sin," thereby contrasting being deceived into sin (v. 14) with being saved from it. Alternately, the term "saved" may indicate the reception of some important though unspecified, benefit from God.

in childbearing. The interpretation "through the birth of the Child" (Jesus), however attractive it might be theologically, is doubtful. Clearly Paul intends another allusion to Genesis, this time to God's statement to Eve after the Fall concerning her role in childbearing (Gen. 3:16).

if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control. This qualification shows that Paul is not suggesting that childbearing is an act that merits salvation, which would contradict his doctrine of justification by faith. Rather, his point seems to be that those women at Ephesus who have been deceived by the false teachers need to focus on their proper role, and especially their attitudes (vv. 8–10; 1:5, 19). Given his use of Gen 2; 3 in his argument and the false teachers' disparagement of marriage (4:3), Paul finds "childbearing" to be a convenient symbol for that role (5:14).

■ **3:1–13** Paul now turns to the subject of leadership in the church. He discusses first bishops (vv. 1–7; text note, v. 1), then deacons (vv. 8–10, 12, 13, with a digression on women in v. 11). Paul's focus on the personal qualities of those who would serve in these positions, rather than their duties, indicates his concern to install the right people, perhaps because some of the false teachers have come from, or are seeking, positions of leadership.

■ **3:1 This is a faithful saying.** See note on 1:15. The use of this expression here reflects the importance Paul attaches to the task of the bishop.

bishop. See text note. One of a group of individuals charged with the general care of the church (v. 5; Phil. 1:1). The word is used interchangeably with "elder" (Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5–7). See "Pastors and Pastoral Care" at 1 Pet. 5:2.

■ **3:2 blameless.** A general heading to the qualifications for bishop or elder. This expression does not mean "without sin," which would disqualify everyone, but "above scandalous reproach." Paul's overriding concern is that bishops (elders) have a good standing among non-Christians (v. 7). On the qualifications for bishops (elders), see Titus 1:6–9.

the husband of one wife. This difficult expression (v. 12; Titus 1:6; cf. 5:9) has been understood to prohibit polygamy, remarriage after a divorce, or marital infidelity. Given the widespread immorality in the Greco-Roman world, the last would seem to fit Paul's focus the best.

able to teach. To mention the teaching aspect of the bishop's (elder's) task is important, given the problem at Ephesus (5:17).

■ **3:5 take care of the church of God.** A general statement of the bishop's (elder's) responsibility.

■ **3:6 not a novice, lest . . . puffed up with pride.** For a Christian to move too quickly into this position could be an occasion for pride.

fall into the same condemnation as the devil. Paul does not view lightly the fall of those holding this office, perhaps because some bishops had become involved in the false teaching (v. 1).

8 [b]Ezek. 44:21
9 [6]*hidden truth*
11 [7]*malicious gossips*
13 [c]Matt. 25:21
15 [8]*foundation, mainstay*
16 [d][John 1:14; 1 Pet. 1:20; 1 John 1:2; 3:5, 8] [e][Matt. 3:16; Rom. 1:4] [f]Matt. 28:2 [g]Acts 10:34; Rom. 10:18 [h]Rom. 16:26; 2 Cor. 1:19; Col. 1:6, 23 [i]Luke 24:51 [9]*hidden truth* [1]NU *Who*

CHAPTER 4

1 [a]2 Tim. 3:13; Rev. 16:14 [1]*explicitly*
2 [b]Matt. 7:15 [c]Eph. 4:19
5 [2]*set apart*

Qualifications of Deacons

8 Likewise deacons *must be* reverent, not double-tongued, [b]not given to much wine, not greedy for money, 9 holding the [6]mystery of the faith with a pure conscience. 10 But let these also first be tested; then let them serve as deacons, being *found* blameless. 11 Likewise, *their* wives *must be* reverent, not [7]slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. 12 Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling *their* children and their own houses well. 13 For those who have served well as deacons [c]obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

The Great Mystery

14 These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; 15 but if I am delayed, *I write* so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and [8]ground of the truth. 16 And without controversy great is the [9]mystery of godliness:

[d]God[1] was manifested in the flesh,
[e]Justified in the Spirit,
[f]Seen by angels,
[g]Preached among the Gentiles,
[h]Believed on in the world,
[i]Received up in glory.

The Great Apostasy

4 Now the Spirit [1]expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed [a]to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 [b]speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience [c]seared with a hot iron, 3 forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. 4 For every creature of God *is* good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; 5 for it is [2]sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

■ **3:8 deacons.** Deacons are officers in the church alongside bishops or elders (cf. Phil. 1:1). The precise tasks of the deacon are not spelled out in this passage. The church has usually viewed the ministry in terms of the role of the seven chosen to help the apostles in Acts 6:1–6, although "deacon" is not used in regard to the seven in that passage.

■ **3:9 the mystery.** A term used elsewhere by Paul to refer to the revealed truth of the gospel (v. 16; Rom. 16:25, 26; 1 Cor. 2:7; 4:1; Eph. 1:9; 3:3–9; 6:19; Col. 1:26, 27; 2:2; 4:3). Perhaps some of the deacons at Ephesus had been taken in by the false teaching.

■ **3:10 first be tested.** This is probably not a reference to a specific testing period, but rather a careful examination of their conduct and their commitment to sound teaching.

being found blameless. Paul uses the same Greek word in regard to bishops in Titus 1:6, 7; his requirement that bishops be "blameless" in v. 2 (note) uses a Greek synonym.

■ **3:11 their wives.** Lit. "women." This verse abruptly interrupts the section on deacons. Its meaning is contested. The "women" are probably either the wives of the deacons or themselves deacons.The abruptness of the insertion probably reflects Paul's concern that women, in particular, have not fared well at the hands of the false teachers (2:14; 5:15).

■ **3:12 the husbands of one wife.** See note on v. 2.

■ **3:14–16** Having provided Timothy with specific instructions on prayer, worship, and church offices, Paul now states his reason for writing the letter (Introduction: Date and Occasion). He discusses the nature of the church and offers a poetic meditation on the work of Christ.

■ **3:15 pillar and ground.** Both terms have the connotation of providing support. Paul's intent is to emphasize, over against the false teachers, that the truth of the gospel is found in and sustained by God's church (2 Tim. 2:19).

■ **3:16 mystery of godliness.** See note on v. 9. What follows may be a fragment of an early Christian hymn.

God was manifested in the flesh. A reference to the Incarnation, with a hint at Christ's pre-existence.

Justified in the Spirit. A reference to Christ's resurrection (Rom. 1:4).

Seen by angels. A reference to the Ascension (Acts 1:10, 11).

Preached among the Gentiles. See "The Authentication of Scripture" at 2 Cor. 4:6.

Received up in glory. A reference to Christ's exaltation to the right hand of God (Acts 7:56).

■ **4:1–5** Returning to his main theme again (1:3–20), Paul continues his attack on the false teachers and their teachings.

■ **4:1 the Spirit expressly says.** Presumably a specific revelation the Holy Spirit granted to someone, perhaps Paul himself (Acts 20:22–31; cf. 21:11).

in latter times. This is not a period just prior to the Second Coming of Christ. Rather, in keeping with the overall New Testament perspective, it is the era inaugurated by Christ's First Advent and completed at His second (Acts 2:17; Heb. 1:2; 1 Pet. 1:20; 1 John 2:18; cf. 2 Tim. 3:1).

some will . . . demons. A reference to the false teachers, who have arisen within the church.

■ **4:3 forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods.** The false teachers promote a rigorous lifestyle (cf. Col. 2:20–23). Some Gnostics argued that since the material world was evil, the spiritual individual should avoid it.

which. The following argument focuses on foods. Paul has already affirmed marriage in 3:2, 12.

■ **4:4 every creature of God is good.** Contrary to the false teachers, the Christian affirms the essential goodness of God's creation (Gen. 1).

A Good Servant of Jesus Christ

6 If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, [d]nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed. 7 But [e]reject profane and old wives' fables, and [f]exercise yourself toward godliness. 8 For [g]bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, [h]having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come. 9 This *is* a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. 10 For to this *end* [3]we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, [i]who is *the* Savior of all men, especially of those who believe. 11 These things command and teach.

Take Heed to Your Ministry

12 Let no one [4]despise your youth, but be an [j]example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, [5]in spirit, in faith, in purity. 13 Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to [6]doctrine. 14 [k]Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy [l]with the laying on of the hands of the eldership. 15 Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be evident to all. 16 Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you.

Treatment of Church Members

5 Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort *him* as a father, younger men as brothers, 2 older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, with all purity.

Honor True Widows

3 Honor widows who are really widows. 4 But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and [a]to repay their parents; for this is [l]good and acceptable before God. 5 Now she who is really a widow, and left alone, trusts in God and continues in supplications and prayers [b]night and day. 6 But she who lives in [2]pleasure is dead while she lives. 7 And these things command, that they may be blameless. 8 But if anyone does not provide

6 [d]2 Tim. 3:14

7 [e]2 Tim. 2:16; Titus 1:14 [f]Heb. 5:14

8 [g]1 Cor. 8:8 [h]Ps. 37:9

10 [i]Ps. 36:6 [3]NU *we labor and strive,*

12 [j]Phil. 3:17; Titus 2:7; 1 Pet. 5:3 [4]*look down on your youthfulness* [5]NU omits *in spirit*

13 [6]*teaching*

14 [k]2 Tim. 1:6 [l]Acts 6:6; 1 Tim. 5:22

CHAPTER 5

4 [a]Gen. 45:10 [l]NU, M omit *good and*

5 [b]Acts 26:7

6 [2]*indulgence*

■ **4:6—5:2** Having exposed the false teachers for what they are, Paul continues with a series of personal admonitions to Timothy regarding his ministry.

■ **4:6 nourished.** The "good minister" must be continually nourished by true doctrine.

■ **4:7 profane and old wives' fables.** See note on 1:4.

exercise . . . toward godliness. Throughout this section, Paul intertwines spiritual discipline with official duties.

■ **4:9** See note on 1:15.

■ **4:10 Savior of all men.** The general call to repentance and salvation is extended to all people (Matt. 11:28). See "Definite Redemption" at John 10:15.

especially of those who believe. Salvation is God's gift, in particular to those who trust in His provision in Christ (Matt. 22:14; Rom. 8:30).

■ **4:12 Let no one despise your youth.** The negative commands here and in v. 14 may indicate that Timothy had a tendency towards shyness or timidity. Furthermore, some in the church at Ephesus may not have accepted his authority (Introduction: Date and Occasion). Timothy was probably in his thirties, and therefore was younger than many of the Christians (and elders) at Ephesus.

be an example . . . in purity. Timothy is to establish his authority, not by flaunting it but by setting an example of godly living (Titus 2:7).

■ **4:13 Till I come.** See 3:14, 15 and Introduction: Date and Occasion.

give attention . . . to doctrine. These are positive methods for exposing the false teaching and neutralizing its impact (cf. 1:3, 4).

■ **4:14 the gift.** See note on 1:18.

■ **4:15 your progress.** A reference to the advancement of Timothy's spiritual life, his ministry, or perhaps both. Noteworthy is the fact that it is "progress," not arrival.

■ **4:16 to yourself and to the doctrine.** That Paul summarizes his instructions to Timothy in this manner is an indication of where the false teachers have gone astray, and, hence, where Christians in general can go astray.

you will save. God alone grants salvation (v. 10; 1:1; 2:3), but He is pleased to use His people as instruments in bringing salvation to others. Salvation is not completed when one comes to faith. To be sure, faith brings justification and the assurance of salvation. But faith also begins the lifelong process of sanctification that continues until the Christian's final glorification in heaven.

yourself. Sanctification is a work of God which demands the cooperative activity of the Christian (Phil. 2:12).

■ **5:1 Do not rebuke an older man.** A command that balances that in 4:12. Timothy is not to abuse the authority he possesses.

exhort. Or, "encourage." The good minister appeals to other believers with the respect deserved by members of one's family.

■ **5:3—6:2** Paul now turns his attention to three groups in which problems had apparently arisen in the church at Ephesus: widows, elders, and slaves.

■ **5:3–16** Paul's concern to identify needy widows and provide for their proper care forms the backdrop for a discussion of the problems of younger widows, some of whom have apparently become influenced by the false teaching at Ephesus (Introduction: Date and Occasion).

■ **5:3 Honor.** That is, care for.

who are really widows. The care of widows, who frequently had great material needs, is a major theme in the Old Testament (Deut. 24:19–21; Is. 1:17; Jer. 22:3; Zech. 7:9, 10; Mal. 3:5) and was a special concern of the early church (v. 16; Acts 6:1; James 1:27).

■ **5:4 But if any widow has children or grandchildren.** The truly needy widow had no family from which to receive support (vv. 8, 16).

■ **5:5 trusts in God.** Genuine poverty often drove widows to exemplary lives of prayer and faithful dependence upon God. For such widows, the church is to be the visible hand of God in providing for needs.

■ **5:6 dead.** Spiritually dead.

■ **5:7 command, that they may be blameless.** Perhaps a reference not to the whole church, but just to the widows.

for his own, [c]and especially for those of his household, [d]he has denied the faith [e]and is worse than an unbeliever.

[9] Do not let a widow under sixty years old be taken into the number, *and not unless* she has been the wife of one man, [10] well reported for good works: if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work.

[11] But [3]refuse *the* younger widows; for when they have begun to grow wanton against Christ, they desire to marry, [12] having condemnation because they have cast off their first [4]faith. [13] And besides they learn *to be* idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not. [14] Therefore I desire that *the* younger *widows* marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully. [15] For some have already turned aside after Satan. [16] If any believing [5]man or woman has widows, let them [6]relieve them, and do not let the church be burdened, that it may relieve those who are really widows.

Honor the Elders

[17] Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. [18] For the Scripture says, [f]*"You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,"* and, [g]"The laborer *is* worthy of his wages." [19] Do not receive an accusation against an elder except [h]from two or three witnesses. [20] Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear.

[21] I charge *you* before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the [7]elect angels that you observe these things without [i]prejudice, doing nothing with partiality. [22] Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor [j]share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure.

[23] No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for your stomach's sake and your frequent [8]infirmities.

[24] Some men's sins are [k]clearly evident, preceding *them* to judgment, but those of some *men* follow later. [25] Likewise, the good works *of some* are clearly evident, and those that are otherwise cannot be hidden.

8 [c]Is. 58:7; 2 Cor. 12:14 [d]2 Tim. 3:5 [e]Matt. 18:17

11 [3]Refuse to enroll

12 [4]Or *solemn promise*

16 [5]NU omits *man or* [6]*give aid to*

18 [f]Deut. 25:4; 1 Cor. 9:7–9 [g]Lev. 19:13; Deut. 24:15; Matt. 10:10; Luke 10:7; 1 Cor. 9:14

19 [h]Deut. 17:6; 19:15; Matt. 18:16

21 [i]Deut. 1:17 [7]*chosen*

22 [j]Eph. 5:6, 7; 2 John 11

23 [8]*illnesses*

24 [k]Gal. 5:19–21

■ **5:9 a widow . . . be taken into the number.** Some have seen here an official order of widows with duties to perform (vv. 5, 10); others have seen an agreement whereby some widows provide certain services for the church in exchange for material support. More likely the list is simply of widows who are to receive support from the church (v. 16). This list constitutes a portion of the larger group of widows dealt with in vv. 3–5.

under sixty. A round number reflecting the expectation in that culture of the age under which remarriage would still be possible (cf. vv. 11–14).

the wife of one man. See note on 3:2.

■ **5:10 has brought up children.** The verbs in this verse are in the past tense. Paul's concern is not with what the widow might still do for the church but with what she has accomplished in her life.

washed the saints' feet. A conventional expression of hospitality in a culture where people wore sandals and walked dusty roads (cf. John 13:4, 5). Jesus commanded His disciples to wash each others' feet (John 13:14, 15).

■ **5:11 to grow wanton.** Lit. "when they live sensually."

■ **5:12 have cast off their first faith.** This probably does not refer to a vow of celibacy or of devotion to the church, but to their basic commitment to Christ (vv. 11, 15).

■ **5:13 gossips.** Lit. "those who talk nonsense." This is probably a reference to the false teachings (v. 15; 1:3; 4:7).

■ **5:14 bear children.** See note on 2:15.

■ **5:15** Paul gives much attention to widows because some of the younger widows had come under the influence of the false teachers (2 Tim. 3:6, 7).

■ **5:17–25** As with widows, Paul addresses the twin issues of proper honor for elders and how to deal with those who sin.

■ **5:17 elders.** See note on 3:1; "Pastors and Pastoral Care" at 1 Pet. 5:2.

double honor. The honor of the position as well as financial remuneration (v. 18).

especially . . . doctrine. This is a reference to two kinds of elders: those who govern the church and those who, in addition, carry out the more specialized ministry of preaching and teaching.

■ **5:18 For the Scripture says.** That Paul cites both Deut. 25:4 and a saying of Jesus recorded in Luke 10:7 as "Scripture" is an indication of how soon Christian writings were being placed on the same level of authority as the Old Testament (2 Pet. 3:15, 16).

■ **5:20 Those who are sinning.** Elders who sin (some had apparently become involved in the false teaching).

■ **5:21 the elect angels.** Those who will presumably serve as witnesses at the Judgment (cf. Matt. 25:31; Rev. 14:10).

■ **5:22 Do not lay hands . . . hastily.** To participate in the ordination of an elder known to be unqualified is to approve of his sins and to risk sharing the guilt for them.

keep yourself pure. See 4:12, 16.

■ **5:23 No longer . . . only water.** The practice of abstaining from wine as a matter of principle perhaps reflects the influence of the false teachers' concept of purity (4:3).

use a little wine . . . infirmities. Paul recognizes a medicinal value of wine.

■ **5:24 Some men's sins . . . judgment.** Another reference to the importance of care in screening candidates for ordination.

Honor Masters

6 Let as many [a]bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and *His* doctrine may not be blasphemed. 2 And those who have believing masters, let them not despise *them* because they are brethren, but rather serve *them* because those who are benefited are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things.

Error and Greed

3 If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to [b]wholesome words, *even* the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, [c]and to the [1]doctrine which accords with godliness, 4 he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, 5 [2]useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a *means of* gain. [3]From [d]such withdraw yourself.

6 Now godliness with [e]contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into *this* world, [4]*and it is* [f]certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and clothing, with these we shall be [g]content. 9 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is a root of all *kinds of* evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

The Good Confession

11 But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. 12 Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. 13 I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and *before* Christ Jesus [h]who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, 14 that you keep *this* commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, 15 which He will manifest in His own time, *He who is* the blessed and only [5]Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, 16 who alone has immortality, dwelling in [i]unapproachable light, [j]whom no man has seen or can see, to whom *be* honor and everlasting power. Amen.

Instructions to the Rich

17 Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain [k]riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things [l]to enjoy. 18 *Let them* do good, that

CHAPTER 6

1 [a]Eph. 6:5; Titus 2:9; 1 Pet. 2:18

3 [b]2 Tim. 1:13 [c]Titus 1:1 [1]*teaching*

5 [d]2 Tim. 3:5 [2]NU, M *constant friction* [3]NU omits the rest of v. 5.

6 [e]Phil. 4:11; Heb. 13:5

7 [f]Job 1:21; Ps. 49:17; Eccl. 5:15 [4]NU omits *and it is certain*

8 [g]Prov. 30:8, 9

13 [h]Matt. 27:2; John 18:36, 37

15 [5]*Sovereign*

16 [i]Dan. 2:22 [j]John 6:46

17 [k]Jer. 9:23; 48:7 [l]Eccl. 5:18, 19

■ **6:1, 2** Finally, Paul addresses the problem of slaves who have not been showing proper respect for their Christian masters.

■ **6:1 under the yoke.** Paul gives instructions to slaves in Eph. 6:5–8; Col. 3:22–25; and Titus 2:9, 10.

His doctrine. Presumably this is in contrast to the false teaching, which may have encouraged insubordination among some of the Christian slaves.

■ **6:3–10** Paul returns one last time to the problem of the false teachers, noting especially their divisiveness and their greed. This leads him to reflect upon the proper perspective one should have on material possessions.

■ **6:4 disputes and arguments over words.** Contentiousness was one of the prominent characteristics of the false teachers (1:4; 2 Tim. 2:14, 23; Titus 3:9).

■ **6:5 a means of gain.** Perhaps some of the false teachers were seeking the position of elder out of greed (v. 10; Titus 1:11).

■ **6:6 contentment.** Christians can be content because their needs are met by Christ (2 Cor. 12:9, 10; Phil. 4:11, 13).

■ **6:10 some have strayed from the faith.** See note on v. 5.

■ **6:11–16** As he has done previously, Paul follows his comments about the false teachers with personal exhortations to Timothy, concluding with a marvelous doxology.

■ **6:12 Fight the good fight of faith.** A metaphor for the Christian life viewed in terms of faithfulness to Christ (2 Tim. 4:7).

lay hold on eternal life. That is, do not become complacent. While faith in Christ begins new life (4:8), the goal of the Christian life is always future (v. 19; 1:16 note; Phil. 3:12; 2 Tim. 4:8).

to which you were also called. Eternal life is not something we naturally choose, but something to which God supernaturally calls us (Rom. 8:30).

good confession in the presence of many witnesses. This probably refers to Timothy's baptism. The "good confession" that one has come to faith in Christ leads naturally into the "good fight" of seeking to live in faithfulness to Him.

■ **6:13 the good confession before Pontius Pilate.** This may refer to Jesus' trial before Pilate (Matt. 27:11; Mark 15:2; Luke 23:3; John 18:33–37; 19:8–11), but is more likely an allusion to His death.

■ **6:14 this commandment.** Probably a reference to all that Paul has charged concerning Timothy's personal discipline and official duties.

appearing. The Second Coming of Christ (2 Tim. 4:1, 8; Titus 2:13).

■ **6:15 King of kings and Lord of lords.** This expression is applied to Christ in Rev. 19:16; cf. 17:14.

■ **6:17–19** Having condemned the love of money and affirmed the future orientation of Christian hope, Paul provides an exhortation for those who do find themselves rich in this world (presumably not from greed).

■ **6:17 to enjoy.** See note on 4:4.

they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, 19 [m]storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

Guard the Faith

20 O Timothy! [n]Guard what was committed to your trust, [o]avoiding the profane *and* [6]idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge— 21 by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith.

Grace *be* with you. Amen.

19 [m][Matt. 6:20, 21; 19:21]

20 [n][2 Tim. 1:12, 14] [o]Titus 1:14 [6]*empty chatter*

■ **6:19 storing up . . . a good foundation.** See Matt. 6:20.

lay hold on eternal life. See note on v. 12.

■ **6:20, 21** Paul brings the letter to a close with one final charge to Timothy, once again set within the context of dealing with the false teachers.

■ **6:20 what was committed to your trust.** That is, the sound doctrine of the gospel (1:10, 11; cf. 2 Tim. 1:14).

what is falsely called knowledge. The false teachers emphasize "knowledge" (Greek *gnosis*, from which the word *Gnosticism* is derived; see Introduction to 2 Timothy: Interpretive Difficulties).

■ **6:21 Grace be with you.** This abrupt conclusion, lacking Paul's usual personal greetings, suggests that Paul saw the situation he was addressing to be quite serious. Some of the earliest Greek manuscripts have the plural form of "you" (as in 2 Tim. 4:22; Titus 3:15) in this benediction, suggesting that Paul intended for the letter to be read to the entire church.

The Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to

TIMOTHY

Author The second letter to Timothy was written by Paul. See "Introduction to 1 Timothy: Author."

Date and Occasion Although it does not appear last in the section of Paul's letters in the New Testament, 2 Timothy is the last letter written by Paul. He prepared it after his fourth missionary journey, probably between A.D. 64 and 68. See "Introduction to 1 Timothy: Date and Occasion."

Paul wrote 2 Timothy during his second Roman imprisonment (1:8; 2:9). Why he was under arrest, or even where he was arrested, is unknown. Paul had received no support at his preliminary hearing (4:16). His trial still awaited him, but he knew that it would end in his execution (4:6). Most of his friends found it convenient to be elsewhere (4:10, 11). He had been troubled by the actions of Phygellus and Hermogenes (1:15, 16) and Alexander the coppersmith (4:14), although a Christian named Onesiphorus had been an encouragement to him (1:16, 17).

Timothy was still in Ephesus (4:19), where Paul had left him previously (1 Tim. 1:3), and where the false teaching that Paul had addressed in his first letter to Timothy continued to be a problem (2:17, 18; 3:1–8). Remembering their longstanding friendship, Paul desired to see Timothy one last time before his death (1:4).

Paul seems to have written 2 Timothy with two purposes in mind. First, he directs Timothy to come to Rome (4:9, 21), providing instructions on who and what (4:11–13) to bring with him. Second, he wants to provide Timothy with a final letter of personal encouragement in his ministry (1:5–14; 2:1–16, 22–26; 3:10—4:5).

Characteristics and Themes Both of Paul's letters to Timothy provide important background information about the apostle's young protégé. This second letter names his mother (Eunice) and his grandmother (Lois), identifying them both as Christians (1:5). It speaks of Timothy's early training in the Scriptures (3:15) and includes a probable reference to his ordination (1:6; cf. 2:2).

Also like the earlier letter, 2 Timothy exhibits a strong concern for sound doctrine (1:13, 14; 2:2; 4:3) and contains marvelous meditations on the grace of God (1:9–11), the faithfulness of Christ (2:11–13), and the nature and function of Scripture (3:15–17). There are affirmations of salvation by grace (1:9), election (1:9; 2:10, 19), and the divine inspiration of Scripture (3:16). Second Timothy also affirms the resurrection (2:8) and the Second Coming (4:1, 8) of Christ.

As the last of Paul's letters, 2 Timothy provides an important final picture of Paul. His situation was bleak. No longer could he look forward to fruitful ministry (cf. Phil. 1:22–26), and most of his friends had left him (4:10, 11). Yet Paul remained confident. He was not ashamed to suffer for the gospel (1:12) and he was willing to endure everything for the sake of the elect (2:10). He knew that he had been faithful to Christ (4:7) and that Christ Himself is faithful (1:12; 2:13). Paul had confidence that the One who in the past had rescued him *from* death (3:11; 4:17) would rescue him *through* death for eternal life (4:8, 18).

Interpretive Difficulties There was false teaching at Ephesus that Paul describes as coming from within the church (2 Tim. 2:18; 4:4; 1 Tim. 1:6, 19; 4:1; 6:10, 21). It was characterized by a concern with fables or myths (4:4; 1 Tim. 1:4; 4:7), genealogies (1 Tim. 1:4), quarrels about words (2:14; 23; 1 Tim. 6:4), controversies (1 Tim. 1:4; 6:4), knowledge (1 Tim. 6:20), meaningless talk (1 Tim. 1:6), and godless chatter (2:16; 1 Tim. 6:20). The false doctrines included the prohibition of marriage and of certain foods (1 Tim. 4:3) and the belief that the resurrection had already taken place (2:18). Those who taught these false doctrines also sought to interpret the Jewish law (1 Tim. 1:7) and accordingly placed restrictions on prayer (1 Tim. 2:1–7).

Specific leaders of the movement included Hymenaeus (2:17; 1 Tim. 1:20), Alexander (1 Tim. 1:20), and Philetus (2:17). Some who sought leadership positions in the movement did so for financial gain (1 Tim. 6:5, 10). The false teachers had been divisive (1 Tim. 6:4, 5) and seem to have been particularly effective in deceiving the female members of the church (3:6, 7; 1 Tim. 2:14; 5:11–15), perhaps by offering them positions of leadership (1 Tim. 2:11, 12).

A number of these features—the specific doctrinal teachings, the interest in myths and genealogies, and the concern for "knowledge" (Greek *gnosis*)—suggest that the false teaching at Ephesus might have been an early form of Gnosticism, a heretical movement that became a strong competitor to the developing church in the second and third centuries. However, some of the more characteristic aspects of later Gnosticism are lacking, and some assert that the movement can be explained in terms of

Jewish and Hellenistic influences. These two suggestions need not be seen as contradictory, for Gnosticism itself was a product of both Jewish and Hellenistic ideas. But the precise nature of the false teaching at Ephesus remains elusive. □

Outline of 2 Timothy

I. Salutation and Thanksgiving (1:1–5)
II. Exhortations to Boldness and Faithfulness (1:6—2:13)
  A. Do Not Be Ashamed of Paul's Imprisonment (1:6–14)
  B. Examples of Unfaithfulness and of Faithfulness (1:15–18)
  C. Be Strong and Endure in Grace (2:1–13)
III. The Problem of False Teachers (2:14—4:5)
  A. Faithfulness in the Face of False Teachers (2:14–26)
  B. The Impact of False Teachers (3:1–9)
  C. Continue in the Things You Have Learned (3:10–17)
  D. Final Charge for Ministry (4:1–5)
IV. Paul's Personal Relationship with Timothy (4:6–18)
  A. Paul's Impending Death (4:6–8)
  B. Final Instructions to Timothy (4:9–18)
    1. Request for Timothy to Come to Rome (4:9–13)
    2. Warning Against Alexander the Coppersmith (4:14, 15)
    3. Paul's Legal Situation and Confidence (4:16–18)
V. Conclusion (4:19–22)
  A. Final Greetings and Information (4:19–21)
  B. Benediction (4:22)

CHAPTER 1

1 [a]Titus 1:2 [1]NU, M *Christ Jesus*
2 [b]1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 2:1; Titus 1:4
3 [c]Acts 24:14
5 [d]1 Tim. 1:5; 4:6 [e]Acts 16:1 [2]Lit. *unhypocritical*

Greeting

PAUL, an apostle of [1]Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the [a]promise of life which is in Christ Jesus,

[2]To Timothy, a [b]beloved son:

Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Timothy's Faith and Heritage

[3]I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as *my* [c]forefathers *did,* as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day, [4]greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy, [5]when I call to remembrance [d]the [2]genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and [e]your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is

■ **1:1, 2** Opening salutation, including sender, recipient, and benediction.

■ **1:1 apostle of Jesus Christ.** One sent out as an official representative of Christ (2 Cor. 1:1 note).

by the will of God. Paul identifies the One who commissioned him (1 Cor. 1:1; 2 Cor. 1:1; Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:1).

according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus. The role of the apostle is to proclaim the life that is in Christ (1 Tim. 1:16 note).

■ **1:2 beloved son.** See Introduction to 1 Timothy: Date and Occasion; 1 Cor. 4:17 (cf. 1 Tim. 1:2).

Grace . . . our Lord. See note on 1 Tim. 1:2.

■ **1:3–5** As in most of his letters (the exceptions are Galatians, 1 Timothy, and Titus), Paul follows his salutation with a section giving thanks to God for the recipients of the letter. Here he focuses on his relationship with Timothy and his confidence in Timothy's faith.

■ **1:4 greatly desiring to see you.** Paul anticipates his request in 4:9, 21.

mindful of your tears. Probably the tears Timothy shed the last time Paul left him.

■ **1:5 Lois . . . Eunice.** These women are named only here in the New Testament. See Introduction to 1 Timothy: Date and Occasion.

in you also. 6 Therefore I remind you [f]to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. 7 For [g]God has not given us a spirit of fear, [h]but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

Not Ashamed of the Gospel

8 [i]Therefore do not be ashamed of [j]the testimony of our Lord, nor of me [k]His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God, 9 who has saved us and called *us* with a holy calling, [l]not according to our works, but [m]according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus [n]before time began, 10 but [o]has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, *who* has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, 11 [p]to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher [3]of the Gentiles. 12 For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, [q]for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.

Be Loyal to the Faith

13 [r]Hold fast [s]the pattern of [t]sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. 14 That good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in us.

15 This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes. 16 The Lord grant mercy to the [u]household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain; 17 but when he arrived in Rome, he sought me out very zealously and found *me*. 18 The Lord [v]grant to him that he may find mercy from the Lord [w]in that Day—and you know very well how many ways he [x]ministered [4]*to me* at Ephesus.

Be Strong in Grace

2 You therefore, [a]my son, [b]be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2 And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. 3 You therefore must [c]endure [1]hardship [d]as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. 4 [e]No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of *this* life, that he may

6 [f]1 Tim. 4:14

7 [g]Rom. 8:15 [h][Acts 1:8]

8 [i][Rom. 1:16] [j]1 Tim. 2:6 [k]Eph. 3:1

9 [l][Rom. 3:20] [m]Rom. 8:28 [n]Rom. 16:25

10 [o]Eph. 1:9

11 [p]Acts 9:15 [3]NU omits *of the Gentiles*

12 [q]1 Pet. 4:19

13 [r]Titus 1:9 [s]Rom. 2:20; 6:17 [t]1 Tim. 6:3

16 [u]2 Tim. 4:19

18 [v]Mark 9:41 [w]2 Thess. 1:10 [x]Heb. 6:10 [4]*to me* from Vg., a few Gr. mss.

CHAPTER 2

1 [a]1 Tim. 1:2 [b]Eph. 6:10

3 [c]2 Tim. 4:5 [d]1 Tim. 1:18 [1]NU *You must share*

4 [e][2 Pet. 2:20]

■ **1:6–14** Paul moves into the body of letter. As he exhorts Timothy to boldness and faithfulness, Paul discusses the gospel and his own role in proclaiming it.

■ **1:6 stir up the gift of God.** This strong expression suggests that Timothy was being less forceful than he should have been in using the spiritual gift God had given him.

laying on of my hands. See note on 1 Tim. 1:18.

■ **1:7 fear.** Or, "cowardice." This strong expression was necessary, given Timothy's natural timidity and the gravity of his situation.

■ **1:8 me His prisoner.** Paul is in prison in Rome (2:9; Introduction: Date and Occasion).

■ **1:9 with a holy calling.** The goal of God's election and calling is the sanctification of His people (Eph. 1:4).

not . . . grace. This is a marvelous affirmation that salvation is by grace, not by human merit (Eph. 2:8, 9).

according to His own purpose. God's decree of redemption is based solely on His own purpose and good pleasure. Elsewhere, this divine purpose is identified as mercy (Titus 3:5) and love (Eph. 1:4, 5).

before time began. An affirmation that the divine decree of redemption through Christ is from eternity (Eph. 1:4; Titus 1:2; 1 Pet. 1:20; Rev. 13:8).

■ **1:10 our Savior Jesus Christ.** Christ is the Mediator of the covenant of grace (Titus 1:4; 2:13; 3:6).

who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light. That is, through His death and resurrection (Heb. 2:14, 15; Rev. 1:18).

■ **1:11 preacher.** See 1 Tim. 2:7.

■ **1:12 I also suffer.** Paul is in prison (v. 8; 2:9).

I am not ashamed. Having exhorted Timothy not to be ashamed to speak out for Christ (v. 8), Paul presents himself as a model of boldness in the face of suffering (2:8–10; 3:10, 11).

that Day. Judgment Day (v. 18; 4:8).

■ **1:13 sound words.** This theme runs throughout the Pastoral Letters (1 Tim. 1:10 note).

■ **1:14 That good thing . . . committed to you.** See note on 1 Tim. 6:20.

■ **1:15–18** Paul's concern that Timothy be faithful leads him to set forth specific examples of unfaithfulness and faithfulness.

■ **1:15 all.** Paul is probably writing with intentional exaggeration to make sure his readers see the extent of the disloyalty.

Asia. A Roman province across the Aegean Sea from Greece and today part of western Turkey. Ephesus, where Timothy was serving as Paul's representative, was the leading city of this province.

Phygellus and Hermogenes. Not mentioned elsewhere in the New Testament. Probably Paul mentions them because he had counted on their support.

■ **1:16 Onesiphorus.** A member of the church at Ephesus who distinguished himself through his loyalty to Paul (v. 18; cf. 4:19).

■ **1:17 when he arrived in Rome.** Onesiphorus may have come to Rome to aid Paul.

■ **1:18 that Day.** The Day of Judgment (v. 12; 4:8).

■ **2:1–13** Paul again exhorts Timothy to be faithful, beginning with three analogies from everyday life that emphasize wholehearted devotion to a task.

■ **2:1 my son.** See note on 1:2.

■ **2:2 among many witnesses.** This may refer to Timothy's ordination (1:6; 1 Tim. 1:18; 4:14).

faithful men who will be able to teach others. Presumably bishops or elders (1 Tim. 3:2; 5:17; cf. Titus 1:7 note).

5 [f][1 Cor. 9:25]
7 [g]Prov. 2:6 [2]NU *the Lord will give you*
8 [h]Rom. 1:3, 4 [i]1 Cor. 15:4 [j]Rom. 2:16
9 [k]Acts 9:16 [l]Eph. 3:1 [m]Acts 28:31
10 [n]Eph. 3:13 [o]2 Cor. 1:6 [3]*chosen ones*
11 [p]Rom. 6:5, 8
12 [q][Rom. 5:17; 8:17] [r]Matt. 10:33
13 [s]Num. 23:19
14 [t]Titus 3:9 [4]*battle*
15 [u]2 Pet. 1:10
16 [5]*empty chatter* [6]*lead*
17 [v]1 Tim. 1:20
18 [w]1 Cor. 15:12

please him who enlisted him as a soldier. 5 And also [f]if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules. 6 The hardworking farmer must be first to partake of the crops. 7 Consider what I say, and [2]may the Lord [g]give you understanding in all things.

8 Remember that Jesus Christ, [h]of the seed of David, [i]was raised from the dead [j]according to my gospel, 9 [k]for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer, [l]*even* to the point of chains; [m]but the word of God is not chained. 10 Therefore [n]I endure all things for the sake of the [3]elect, [o]that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

11 *This is* a faithful saying:

For [p]if we died with *Him,*
We shall also live with *Him.*
12 [q]If we endure,
We shall also reign with *Him.*
[r]If we deny *Him,*
He also will deny us.
13 If we are faithless,
He remains faithful;
He [s]cannot deny Himself.

Approved and Disapproved Workers

14 Remind *them* of these things, [t]charging *them* before the Lord not to [4]strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers. 15 [u]Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 16 But shun profane *and* [5]idle babblings, for they will [6]increase to more ungodliness. 17 And their message will spread like cancer. [v]Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, 18 who have strayed concerning the truth, [w]saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some. 19 Neverthe-

■ **2:5, 6 crowned . . . crops.** These two analogies add a promise of future reward (vv. 10–12).

■ **2:8 of the seed of David.** Jesus fulfills God's promise to grant to one of David's descendants an eternal kingship (2 Sam. 7:12–16; Matt. 1:1; Mark 12:35; Luke 1:32, 33; John 7:42; Acts 2:30–36; Rev. 5:5). For the association of Christ's resurrection and His descent from David, see Rom. 1:3, 4.

raised from the dead. The resurrection of Christ is at the center of Paul's theology (Rom. 6:4–10; 1 Cor. 15:12–22). It is the basis for the hope expressed in vv. 11, 12.

■ **2:9 I suffer.** See note on 1:8.

■ **2:10 the elect.** Those whom God has chosen to be saved (Titus 1:1).

the salvation which is in Christ Jesus. The salvation that comes through faith in Christ (3:15). See "Salvation" at Acts 4:12.

eternal glory. This glory is the final, complete salvation of the elect in the new order of God. The saints will have resurrection bodies and transformed human natures (1 Cor. 15:42–49). They will experience the triumph of Christ over sin and death, and know fullness of joy in a life secured for them by Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension (v. 11; Matt. 13:43; 1 Tim. 1:16 note; cf. Ps. 16:11).

■ **2:11 This is a faithful saying.** See note on 1 Tim. 1:15. What follows may be part of an early Christian hymn.

if we died with Him. A reference to the believer's union with Christ in His death on the cross (Rom. 6:3–11).

■ **2:12 If we endure.** This refers to perseverance in the face of hardship (v. 10).

We shall also reign with Him. A New Testament image for the eternal glory that Christians receive through Christ (Matt. 19:28; Rom. 5:17; Rev. 3:21; 5:10; 20:4, 6; 22:5).

If we deny Him, He also will deny us. A sober warning against apostasy (Matt. 10:33).

■ **2:13 If we are faithless, He remains faithful.** This is a wonderful affirmation of assurance that although we are called to endure and be faithful, salvation does not rest ultimately on our faithfulness, but upon that of Christ (v. 19).

He cannot deny Himself. Christian hope is rooted firmly in the unchanging character of God (Num. 23:19; Titus 1:2).

■ **2:14 strive about words.** One of the characteristics of the false teachers (v. 23; 1 Tim. 1:4; 6:4; Titus 3:9).

■ **2:15 the word of truth.** The gospel (2:8, 9; 4:2).

■ **2:17 Hymenaeus.** Mentioned also in 1 Tim. 1:19, 20 as one who has made "shipwreck" of his faith.

Philetus. Mentioned nowhere else in the New Testament.

■ **2:18 the resurrection is already past.** This Gnostic belief denied the future bodily resurrection of Christians and affirmed instead a spiritual resurrection at conversion; it resulted in an overemphasis on present experience (1 Cor. 15:12–14).

they overthrow the faith of some. The doctrines of the false teachers are incompatible with the gospel. Timothy must warn the church against them (v. 14).

■ **2:19 the solid foundation of God.** The church (cf. 1 Tim. 3:15), which is God's elect.

stands. In contrast to those who wander away (v. 18).

seal. An expression of ownership and security.

The Lord knows those who are His. A quotation of Num. 16:5 (according to the Septuagint translation). Inscribed on the people of God is His eternal decree of election (v. 11), which ensures the security of the body of Christ (John 10:29).

Let everyone . . . depart. Also inscribed on the membership of God's church is His call to holiness (v. 21), including the repudiation of false teaching.

less [x]the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord [y]knows those who are His," and, "Let everyone who names the name of [7]Christ depart from iniquity."

[20] But in a great house there are not only [z]vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. [21] Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, [s]sanctified and useful for the Master, [a]prepared for every good work. [22] [b]Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. [23] But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife. [24] And [c]a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, [d]able to teach, [e]patient, [25] [f]in humility correcting those who are in opposition, [g]if God perhaps will grant them repentance, [h]so that they may know the truth, [26] and *that* they may come to their senses *and* [i]*escape* the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to *do* his will.

Perilous Times and Perilous Men

3 But know this, that [a]in the last days [1]perilous times will come: [2] For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, [3] unloving, [2]unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, [4] [b]traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, [5] [c]having a form of godliness but [d]denying its power. And [e]from such people turn away! [6] For [f]of this sort are those who creep into households and make captives of gullible women loaded down with sins, led away by various lusts, [7] always learning and never able [g]to come to the knowledge of the truth. [8] [h]Now as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do these also resist the truth: [i]men of corrupt minds, [j]disapproved concerning the faith; [9] but they will progress no further, for their folly will be manifest to all, [k]as theirs also was.

The Man of God and the Word of God

[10] [l]But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, [11] persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me [m]at Antioch, [n]at Iconium, [o]at Lystra—what persecutions I endured. And [p]out of *them* all the Lord delivered me. [12] Yes, and [q]all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. [13] [r]But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. [14] But you must [s]continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned *them,* [15] and that from childhood you have known [t]the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

19 [x][1 Cor. 3:11] [y][Nah. 1:7] [7]NU, M *the Lord*

20 [z]Rom. 9:21

21 [a]2 Tim. 3:17 [s]*set apart*

22 [b]1 Tim. 6:11

24 [c]Titus 3:2 [d]Titus 1:9 [e]1 Tim. 3:3

25 [f]Gal. 6:1 [g]Acts 8:22 [h]1 Tim. 2:4

26 [i]1 Tim. 3:7

CHAPTER 3

1 [a]1 Tim. 4:1 [1]*times of stress*

3 [2]*irreconcilable*

4 [b]2 Pet. 2:10

5 [c]Titus 1:16 [d]1 Tim. 5:8 [e]2 Thess. 3:6

6 [f]Matt. 23:14

7 [g]1 Tim. 2:4

8 [h]Ex. 7:11, 12, 22; 8:7; 9:11 [i]1 Tim. 6:5 [j]Rom. 1:28

9 [k]Ex. 7:11, 12; 8:18; 9:11

10 [l]1 Tim. 4:6

11 [m]Acts 13:44–52 [n]Acts 14:1–6, 19 [o]Acts 14:8–20 [p]Ps. 34:19

12 [q][Ps. 34:19]

13 [r]2 Thess. 2:11

14 [s]2 Tim. 1:13

15 [t]John 5:39

■ **2:20, 21** These verses provide an example from everyday life of the importance of holiness—being set apart for a noble (godly) task.

■ **2:23 disputes . . . strife.** See note on 2:14.

■ **2:25, 26** The Christian must never assume that those who are ensnared by the devil's false teaching are irretrievably lost. The gospel must be proclaimed to all.

■ **3:1–9** Paul continues on the theme of false teaching by turning to an attack on the false teachers themselves, noting their impact upon the church at Ephesus, but concluding with the affirmation that they will not succeed in the end.

■ **3:1 the last days.** The era inaugurated by Christ's First Advent and completed by His second (1 Tim. 4:1 note).

■ **3:5 having a form of godliness but denying its power.** What makes the false teachers so dangerous is that they appear to be Christians (Matt. 7:15, 21–23).

■ **3:6 gullible women.** Paul's point is not that all women are this way, but that some have been especially vulnerable to deception. The false teachers at Ephesus had been especially successful in deceiving women (1 Tim. 2:14; 5:13–15).

■ **3:8 Jannes and Jambres.** In Jewish tradition, these names were given to two Egyptian magicians who opposed Moses before Pharaoh (Ex. 7; 8).

■ **3:10–17** With the problem of the false teachers fully in view, Paul once more turns to exhorting Timothy to faithfulness, first in terms of the example which Paul has set, and then as obedience to Scripture.

■ **3:10, 11** Once again Paul appeals to his own life as an example for Timothy (1:11–13; 2:8–10).

■ **3:11 Antioch . . . Iconium . . . Lystra.** Three cities in the Roman province of Galatia where Paul preached the gospel on his first missionary journey (Acts 13:14—14:20). Against significant opposition, Paul succeeded in establishing a church in each city (Acts 14:21–23). Paul mentions these cities, including Timothy's home of Lystra, in order to appeal to the roots of Timothy's faith (vv. 14, 15; 1:5).

the Lord delivered me. See 4:18 and note.

■ **3:12 all who desire to live godly . . . will suffer persecution.** The New Testament teaches that Christians should expect persecution (Matt. 10:17, 18; John 15:20; 1 Pet. 4:12; 5:9).

■ **3:14 from whom you have learned.** A reference to Timothy's mother and grandmother (1:5), as well as to Paul himself.

■ **3:15 from childhood.** According to custom, the Jewish parent was to begin instructing a child in the law when the child reached five years of age.

you have known the Holy Scriptures. The false teachers have been misinterpreting the Old Testament (1 Tim. 1:7; Titus 3:9). Timothy needs to remember the proper instruction he received at the hands of his mother and grandmother. The "Scriptures" here are the books of the Old Testament. The New Testament did not yet exist as a collection. Indeed, some of the New Testament books had probably not yet been written.

salvation . . . in Christ Jesus. The Old Testament, interpreted properly, leads one to understand the central role of Jesus Christ in God's overall plan for His Creation.

16 u[2 Pet. 1:20] vRom. 4:23; 15:4 3*training, discipline*
17 w1 Tim. 6:11 x2 Tim. 2:21

16 u All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, v and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for 3instruction in righteousness, 17 w that the man of God may be complete, x thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Preach the Word

CHAPTER 4

1 a1 Tim. 5:21 bActs 10:42 1NU omits *therefore* 2NU *and by*

4 I a charge *you* 1 therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, b who will judge the living and the dead 2 at His appearing and His kingdom: 2 Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. c Convince, d rebuke, e exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. 3 f For the time will come when they will not endure g sound doctrine, h but according to their own desires, *be-*

2 cTitus 2:15 d1 Tim. 5:20 e1 Tim. 4:13 3 f2 Tim. 3:1 g1 Tim. 1:10 h2 Tim. 3:6

The Authority of Scripture

The Christian principle of biblical authority means that God is the author of the Bible, and has given it to direct the belief and behavior of His people. Our ideas about God and our conduct should be measured, tested, and where necessary corrected and enlarged, by reference to the Bible. Authority is also the right to command. God's written Word in its truth and wisdom is the way God has chosen to exercise His rule over us, and Scripture is the instrument of Christ's lordship over the church. The work of the Scripture in the church is illustrated by the seven letters of Revelation (Rev. 2; 3).

The Roman Catholic view of the Bible has compromised its unique authority by combining it with the tradition of the church. Roman Catholics accept the Bible as God-given truth, but insist that it is incomplete without the official interpretation of the church as it is led by the Spirit. In the past, giving the church authority over the Bible has led to discouraging or prohibiting ordinary Christians from reading it. At the present time, the Roman Catholic church encourages all Christians to read the Bible.

Many Protestants regard the Bible as having its unique authority in its subject matter, or in the experience and insights of the human authors. The central assumption is that the Bible remains fundamentally a human book and not a divine revelation. The Bible is a guide for their religious experience, but it is not clearly distinguished from other sources, such as political movements and social forces. All too often, the Bible is displaced by voices that oppose it.

Historic Protestantism accepts the Scripture as the only written revelation of God. It is inspired, or "God-breathed" (2 Tim. 3:16), distinguishing it from all other words. As a result, the Scriptures are infallible and true in all that they affirm. They are sufficient, containing everything that is necessary to know for salvation and eternal life. They are clear, so that a person without special preparation can understand what God requires without the intervention of an official interpreter.

The canonical Scripture is the voice of God in the world. It has an authority, or right to command, corresponding to its divine Author. For this reason, we submit our thoughts and moral standards to the Bible. It was through the recognition that the Bible cannot be subject to any person or group, however exalted, that the Reformers freed their consciences from human traditions and authorities. □

■ **3:16 All Scripture.** The Old Testament (v. 15 note).

given by inspiration of God. Or, "God-breathed." This is one of the most important expressions in the New Testament of the doctrine of the divine inspiration of Scripture. The Bible has been breathed out by the Spirit of God (2 Pet. 1:21). God is the source and ultimate Author of Scripture. Though written by human authors, Scripture nevertheless has the full weight of His authority. See theological note "The Authority of Scripture."

■ **4:1–5** Paul brings to a conclusion the appeal to Timothy begun in 1:6.

■ **4:1 before God.** Paul mentions witnesses to impress on Timothy the utmost seriousness of the charge.

the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge. For Christ as Judge, see v. 8; Matt. 25:31–46; John 5:22, 27; Acts 10:42.

His appearing. Christ's Second Coming (cf. v. 8; 1 Tim. 6:14; Titus 2:13).

■ **4:2 the word.** The gospel (cf. 2:15).

in season and out of season. In every situation, whether good or bad, the Word is to be proclaimed.

■ **4:3 they.** Presumably a reference to some who are associated with the church.

sound doctrine. See note on 1:13.

itching ears. Some people have an endless fascination with everything but the truth.

cause they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; [4] and they will turn *their* ears away from the truth, and [i]be turned aside to fables. [5] But you be watchful in all things, [j]endure afflictions, do the work of [k]an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.

Paul's Valedictory

[6] For [l]I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of [m]my departure is at hand. [7] [n]I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. [8] Finally, there is laid up for me [o]the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous [p]Judge, will give to me [q]on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

The Abandoned Apostle

[9] Be diligent to come to me quickly; [10] for [r]Demas has forsaken me, [s]having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica—Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia. [11] Only

4 [i]1 Tim. 1:4
5 [j]2 Tim. 1:8 [k]Acts 21:8
6 [l]Phil. 2:17 [m][Phil. 1:23]
7 [n]1 Cor. 9:24–27
8 [o]James 1:12 [p]John 5:22 [q]2 Tim. 1:12
10 [r]Col. 4:14 [s]1 John 2:15

■ **4:4 fables.** See note on 1 Tim. 1:4.

■ **4:5** A final exhortation to faithfulness, even though others may be turning away.

■ **4:6–8** Paul's impending death provides the reason for his extended appeal to Timothy (Introduction: Date and Occasion).

■ **4:6 already.** Paul accepts the inevitability of his death, even if it may still be several months away.

poured out as a drink offering. This metaphor for death (cf. Phil. 2:17) is taken from the language of the Old Testament sacrificial system. A drink offering of wine was poured out in the sanctuary as an offering to God (Num. 15:5, 7, 10; 28:7). Paul understands his impending death as an offering to Christ.

my departure. Another metaphor for death (Phil. 1:23). Paul held steadfastly to the hope and assurance of a destination beyond the grave (v. 18).

■ **4:7** With these three metaphors Paul signifies the end of his ministry. His concern is not that he has been a success, but rather that he has been faithful to his Lord.

■ **4:8 the crown of righteousness.** Perhaps the crown awarded for the faithful life of one who has received the righteousness of Christ through faith (Rom. 3:22). More likely, this is the crown consisting of perfect righteousness—eternal life that is given the believer as the climax of the process of sanctification (2:10; James 1:12; 1 Pet. 5:4; Rev. 2:10).

the righteous Judge. Christ in His role as the Judge who brings to completion the work He has begun in His elect.

that Day. The Judgment Day (1:12, 18).

His appearing. Christ's Second Coming (v. 1).

■ **4:9–18** Paul now turns to his primary reason for writing the letter: he wants to see Timothy one last time. Paul gives Timothy various instructions regarding his journey to Rome, informs Timothy of his present status, and concludes with a profound expression of trust in his Lord.

■ **4:9 Be diligent to come to me.** Paul had hinted at his desire to see Timothy in 1:4.

quickly. See note on v. 21.

■ **4:10 Demas.** A coworker present with Paul during his first Roman imprisonment (Col. 4:14; Philem. 24).

Thessalonica. A city in the Roman province of Macedonia where Paul had established a church on his second missionary journey (Acts 17:1–10).

Crescens. Mentioned nowhere else in the New Testament, he was apparently another of Paul's coworkers.

Galatia. A Roman province Paul visited on his first missionary journey (3:11 note).

Titus. Another of Paul's coworkers. See Introduction to Titus: Date and Occasion.

Dalmatia. Another name for the Roman province of Illyricum, the westernmost province reached by Paul on his first three missionary journeys (Rom. 15:19).

■ **4:11 Luke.** The "beloved physician," mentioned in Col. 4:14 and Philem. 24, who traveled with Paul throughout much of his second and third missionary journeys (Introduction to Luke: Author).

Get Mark and bring him with you. A beautiful example of Christian forgiveness. John Mark's desertion of Paul and Barnabas during their first missionary journey (Acts 13:13) had resulted in the dissolution of the partnership between Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:37–39). Later Mark regained Paul's favor (Col. 4:10; Philem. 24). Now, at the end of his life, Paul wants to see him, "for he is useful."

Timothy's Ministry (4:5)

Timothy must...	Because...
Continue in sound doctrine (1:13; 2:15)	False doctrine spreads and leads to ungodliness (2:16, 17)
Avoid contentiousness (2:23–25)	He must gently lead others to the truth (2:24–26)

Luke is with me. Get [t]Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry. 12 And [u]Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus. 13 Bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas when you come—and the books, especially the parchments.

14 [v]Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm. May the Lord repay him according to his works. 15 You also must beware of him, for he has greatly resisted our words.

16 At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. [w]May it not be charged against them.

The Lord Is Faithful

17 [x]But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, [y]so that the message might be preached fully through me, and *that* all the Gentiles might hear. Also I was delivered [z]out of the mouth of the lion. 18 [a]And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve *me* for His heavenly kingdom. [b]To Him *be* glory forever and ever. Amen!

Come Before Winter

19 Greet [c]Prisca and Aquila, and the household of [d]Onesiphorus. 20 [e]Erastus stayed in Corinth, but [f]Trophimus I have left in Miletus sick.

21 Do your utmost to come before winter.

Eubulus greets you, as well as Pudens, Linus, Claudia, and all the brethren.

Farewell

22 The Lord [3]Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Grace be with you. Amen.

11 [t]Acts 12:12, 25; 15:37–39

12 [u]Acts 20:4

14 [v]1 Tim. 1:20

16 [w]Acts 7:60

17 [x]Acts 23:11 [y]Acts 9:15 [z]1 Sam. 17:37

18 [a]Ps. 121:7 [b]Rom. 11:36

19 [c]Acts 18:2 [d]2 Tim. 1:16

20 [e]Rom. 16:23 [f]Acts 20:4; 21:29

22 [3]NU omits *Jesus Christ*

■ **4:12 Tychicus.** A coworker of Paul mentioned in Acts 20:4; Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:7; Titus 3:12.

to Ephesus. Tychicus is to take this letter to Timothy and serve as his replacement.

■ **4:13 cloak.** A heavy woolen garment used for protection against dampness and cold. Paul is anticipating the arrival of winter (v. 21).

Carpus. Mentioned nowhere else in the New Testament.

Troas. A port linking the Roman province of Asia with Macedonia across the Aegean Sea (Acts 16:7, 8 note). Paul had traveled through Troas on his second and third missionary journeys (Acts 16:8, 11; 20:5, 6). When Paul was in Troas on this fourth and final journey is not clear.

parchments. Parchment is a writing material made from the skins of animals, especially sheep or goats. Probably Paul was asking for parts of the Old Testament.

■ **4:14 Alexander the coppersmith.** See note on 1 Tim. 1:20.

did me much harm. This incident is mentioned nowhere else in the New Testament.

May the Lord repay him according to his works. That is, on the day of final judgment (Matt. 16:27; Rom. 2:6; Rev. 22:12).

■ **4:16 first defense.** A preliminary hearing prior to Paul's actual trial, which he now awaits (Introduction: Date and Occasion).

May it not be charged against them. An expression of forgiveness in the face of death reminiscent of Christ (Luke 23:34) and of Stephen (Acts 7:60).

■ **4:17 But the Lord stood with me.** Paul had learned long ago that he could always depend upon the One who had commissioned him (2 Cor. 12:9, 10; Phil. 4:11–13).

the message might be preached fully. This probably refers to Paul's proclamation of the gospel at his preliminary hearing.

all the Gentiles might hear. Paul had preached the gospel in a public forum at the center of the Roman Empire.

delivered out of the mouth of the lion. A metaphor for a narrow escape from death. Paul's preliminary hearing has resulted in a temporary reprieve.

■ **4:18 will deliver me from every evil work.** Paul does not believe that Christ will prevent his physical death (v. 6), but is expressing his absolute trust in Christ (2:13).

preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. This is the ultimate hope of all who trust in Christ.

■ **4:19–21** As is his custom, Paul closes the letter with personal greetings and a benediction.

■ **4:19 Prisca and Aquila.** "Prisca" is a shortened form of "Pricilla," as it is spelled elsewhere in Acts and Paul's letters. She and her husband Aquila had been friends of Paul from the time he first visited Corinth on his second missionary journey. They were Jews, and like Paul were tentmakers (Acts 18:2, 3). They had come to Corinth from Rome. Later they accompanied Paul to Ephesus (Acts 18:18, 19) and hosted a house church there for several years before returning to Rome (Rom. 16:3, 4; 1 Cor. 16:19). They had now apparently returned to Ephesus where Timothy was (1 Tim. 1:3).

the household of Onesiphorus. See note on 1:16. This greeting indicates that Timothy was still in Ephesus (1:18).

■ **4:20 Erastus.** Presumably the same person as Corinth's treasurer mentioned in Rom. 16:23.

Corinth. The provincial capital of the Roman province of Achaia, it was visited by Paul on his second and third missionary journeys. Corinth is fifty miles west of Athens.

Trophimus. A member of the church at Ephesus who accompanied Paul to Jerusalem at the close of his third missionary journey (Acts 20:4; 21:29).

Miletus. A seaport just south of Ephesus, which Paul had visited at the end of his third missionary journey (Acts 20:15, 17). When Paul visited Miletus on his fourth and final journey is not clear.

■ **4:21 before winter.** Winter weather would prevent travel by ship. Paul may have felt that if Timothy waited too long, he would not arrive before Paul's execution (v. 9). In any event, he needed his cloak before winter (v. 13).

Eubulus . . . Pudens, Linus, Claudia. These would be Christians in Rome, although none is mentioned elsewhere in the New Testament. According to Roman Catholic tradition Linus succeeded Peter as bishop of Rome.

■ **4:22 Grace be with you.** Here, the Greek word for "you" is plural. Presumably Paul intended the letter to be read to the entire church (1 Tim. 6:21 note; Titus 3:15).

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to

TITUS

Author Titus was written by Paul. See "Introduction to 1 Timothy: Author."

Date and Occasion Titus, like 1 Timothy, was composed while Paul was still in the midst of his fourth missionary journey and probably dates to between A.D. 62 and 64. See "Introduction to 1 Timothy: Date and Occasion."

Titus was a Gentile Christian who was probably converted by Paul (1:4). The New Testament provides little information about him, and he is not mentioned in Acts. Paul took him to Jerusalem early in his missionary labors, where he refused to have Titus circumcised (Gal. 2:1–3), and Titus apparently traveled with Paul on his second and third missionary journeys and for part of the fourth. He was a trusted associate of Paul, upon whom Paul could count in delicate situations, such as that at Corinth (2 Cor. 2:13; 7:6, 13, 14; 8:6, 16, 23; 12:18). Titus later served as Paul's representative on the island of Crete (1:5) and in the province of Dalmatia (2 Tim. 4:10).

Paul wrote to Titus from Macedonia (3:12). On an earlier leg of his journey he and Titus had been involved in missionary activity on the island of Crete. When Paul departed, he left Titus behind to continue the work (1:5). In this letter Paul wrote to Titus to encourage him to bring his ministry on the island to a close. Specifically, Paul wanted Titus to complete the organization of the churches (1:5–9), to deal with the false teachers who were present (1:10–14; 3:9–11), and to give instructions to the churches on proper conduct (2:1—3:8). When a replacement arrived, Titus was to meet Paul in Nicopolis (3:12).

Characteristics and Themes Like 1 Timothy, Titus is noteworthy for its information on church organization. It provides a lengthy description of the qualifications for the office of bishop and elder (1:6–9), as well as important evidence that the terms "bishop" and "elder" refer to one rather than two distinct offices (1:7).

Also like 1 Timothy, Titus exhibits a strong concern for sound doctrine (1:9, 13; 2:1, 2) and contains two marvelous theological meditations on the grace that God has extended in Jesus Christ (2:11–14; 3:4–7). These include affirmations of the Second Coming of Christ (2:13), the substitutionary atonement of Christ (2:14), regeneration by the Holy Spirit (3:5), and justification by grace (3:5, 7). Titus also affirms the deity of Christ in a striking manner—the title "Savior" is applied freely, and in the same contexts, to both God (1:3; 2:10; 3:4) and Christ (1:4; 2:13; 3:6), and 2:13 speaks of "our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ."

Paul's concern in this letter for sound doctrine is balanced by an emphasis on proper Christian conduct. For Paul, the two clearly go hand in hand. In particular, he stresses the quality of sober-mindedness (in the Greek, 1:8; 2:2, 4–6, 12) and the importance of doing what is good (2:7, 14; 3:1, 8, 14).

Interpretive Difficulties Paul describes the false teaching on Crete as something that had come from within the church (1:10, 16). It was characterized by a concern with Jewish myths (1:14), genealogies and quarrels about the law (3:9), and human commandments (1:14). The false teachers came from a narrowly Jewish-Christian perspective (1:10) and sought leadership positions for financial gain (1:11). They had been effective in leading people astray and were divisive (1:10; 3:10).

Virtually everything that Paul says in Titus about the false teaching on Crete has parallels with what he says in 1 and 2 Timothy about that in Ephesus (Introduction to 2 Timothy: Interpretive Difficulties). It is not clear why this should be the case. There is no reason to believe that there was some sort of direct link between the two false teachings, or that everything being taught in one place was being taught in the other. On the other hand, the false teachings in the two areas may have been similar manifestations of a more general syncretistic movement in the Roman Empire at this time (compare the problems which Paul addresses in his letters to the Colossians and Ephesians).

On the evidence for a "fourth" missionary journey by Paul, see "Introduction to 1 Timothy: Interpretive Difficulties." □

Outline of Titus

I. Salutation (1:1–4)
II. Organizing the Churches on Crete (1:5–16)
  A. Why Paul Left Titus on Crete (1:5)
  B. Qualifications for Elders (1:6–9)
  C. Dealing with False Teachers (1:10–16)
III. Instructing Various Groups (ch. 2)
  A. Instructions for Titus and Those Under His Care (2:1–10)
  B. The Theological Basis for Christian Living (2:11–14)
  C. Concluding Charge to Titus (2:15)
IV. Instructing on Doing What Is Good (3:1–11)
  A. Initial Charge (3:1, 2)
  B. Human Depravity Without Christ (3:3)
  C. The Sinner's Experience of the Grace of God (3:4–7)
  D. Final Charge (3:8–11)
V. Conclusion (3:12–15)

CHAPTER 1

1 [a]2 Tim. 2:25 [b][1 Tim. 3:16]
2 [c]Num. 23:19
4 [d]2 Cor. 2:13; 8:23; Gal. 2:3; 2 Tim. 4:10 [f]NU *Christ Jesus*
5 [e]1 Cor. 11:34

Greeting

PAUL, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and [a]the acknowledgment of the truth [b]which accords with godliness, 2 in hope of eternal life which God, who [c]cannot lie, promised before time began, 3 but has in due time manifested His word through preaching, which was committed to me according to the commandment of God our Savior;

4 To [d]Titus, a true son in *our* common faith:

Grace, mercy, *and* peace from God the Father and [f]the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.

Qualified Elders

5 For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should [e]set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you— 6 if a man is blameless, the husband of

■ **1:1–4** Opening salutation, including sender, recipient, and benediction.

■ **1:1 bondservant of God.** Or "slave of God," one who is owned by and who serves God (Rom. 1:1; Phil. 1:1).

apostle of Jesus Christ. One sent out as an official representative of Christ (1 Tim. 1:1 note).

according to the faith . . . godliness. The goals of Paul's apostleship.

God's elect. Those whom God has chosen to believe in Christ (2 Tim. 2:10).

■ **1:2 in hope of eternal life.** The blessings secured by Christ (1 Tim. 1:1, 16 note; 2 Tim. 1:1).

who cannot lie. An affirmation of the complete trustworthiness of God (Num. 23:19).

promised before time began. Affirmation of the eternal nature of the divine decree of redemption through Christ (2 Tim. 1:9).

■ **1:3 God our Savior.** As author of the covenant of grace, God is Savior (2:10; 3:4; 1 Tim. 1:1; 2:3; 4:10).

■ **1:4 true son.** Lit. "legitimate son" (1 Tim. 1:2). This probably indicates that Titus was one of Paul's converts.

Grace, mercy, and peace. See note on 1 Tim. 1:2.

Jesus Christ our Savior. As mediator of the covenant of grace, Christ is Savior (2:13; 3:6; 2 Tim. 1:10). Paul uses the title "Savior" interchangeably for both God and Christ throughout this letter (v. 3 note), thereby reflecting his belief in the deity of Christ (2:13).

■ **1:5–9** Paul moves into the body of the letter. His intention is to instruct Titus regarding how to act as Paul's representative on Crete (Introduction: Date and Occasion). He begins by discussing church organization.

■ **1:5 set in order the things that are lacking.** As the rest of the verse makes clear, what was left unfinished was the organization of the newly formed churches.

elders. A group of individuals charged with the general care of a local church (Acts 14:23; 20:17; 1 Tim. 5:17). As v. 7 makes clear, Paul used the term interchangeably with "bishop" (i.e., overseer, v. 7 text note). Paul discusses the qualifications for bishops in similar terms, yet with some differences, in 1 Tim. 3:2–7. Paul intends neither list to be complete, but simply to indicate the personal qualities of those who would serve as church leaders.

■ **1:6 the husband of one wife.** Probably a reference to marital fidelity, (1 Tim. 3:2 note).

one wife, *f*having faithful children not accused of [2]dissipation or insubordination. 7 For a [3]bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God; not self-willed, not quick-tempered, *g*not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, 8 but hospitable, a lover of what is good, sober-minded, just, holy, self-controlled, 9 holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.

The Elders' Task

10 For there are many insubordinate, both idle *h*talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, 11 whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, *i*for the sake of dishonest gain. 12 *j*One of them, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans *are* always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." 13 This testimony is true. *k*Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, 14 not giving heed to Jewish fables and *l*commandments of men who turn from the truth. 15 *m*To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled. 16 They profess to *n*know God, but *o*in works they deny Him, being *d*abominable, disobedient, *p*and disqualified for every good work.

Qualities of a Sound Church

2 But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: 2 that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; 3 the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things— 4 that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 to be discreet, chaste, *a*homemakers, good, *b*obedient to their own husbands, *c*that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

6 Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded, 7 in all things showing yourself *to be* *d*a

6 *f*1 Tim. 3:2–4; Titus 1:6–8 [2]*debauchery,* lit. *incorrigibility*

7 *g*Lev. 10:9 [3]Lit. *overseer*

10 *h*James 1:26

11 *i*1 Tim. 6:5

12 *j*Acts 17:28

13 *k*2 Cor. 13:10; 2 Tim. 4:2

14 *l*Is. 29:13

15 *m*Luke 11:41; Rom. 14:14, 20; 1 Cor. 6:12

16 *n*Matt. 7:20–23; 25:12; 1 John 2:4 *o*[2 Tim. 3:5, 7] *p*Rom. 1:28 *d*detestable

CHAPTER 2

5 *a*1 Tim. 5:14 *b*1 Cor. 14:34; 1 Tim. 2:11 *c*Rom. 2:24

7 *d*Phil. 3:17; 1 Tim. 4:12

■ **1:7 For a bishop.** That is, an overseer (see text note). Paul's casual shift from "elder" to "bishop" shows that he understands the two terms as referring to the same office: "elder" suggesting one's character (spiritually mature) and "bishop" suggesting one's task (Acts 20:17, 28).

greedy for money. One should not view church leadership as an opportunity for making money (v. 11; 1 Tim. 6:5, 10). Paul does support the concept of remuneration for certain church leaders (1 Tim. 5:17).

■ **1:8 sober-minded.** Or, sensible. A major emphasis in this letter (2:2, 4–6, 12).

■ **1:9 the faithful word as he has been taught.** As in his letters to Timothy, Paul is concerned with the transmission of and commitment to sound doctrine in accordance with the gospel (1 Tim. 1:10 note).

exhort and convict those who contradict. Two tasks of the elder that are especially relevant in view of the false teachers on Crete are teaching sound doctrine and refuting that which is false. See "Pastors and Pastoral Care" at 1 Pet. 5:2.

■ **1:10–16** Paul's mention of the necessity to refute false teaching leads him into a discussion of the false teachers and how Titus is to deal with them.

■ **1:10 those of the circumcision.** Those who come from a narrowly Jewish-Christian perspective are in view (Acts 15:1, 5; Gal. 6:12, 13). See Introduction: Interpretive Difficulties.

■ **1:11 subvert whole households.** This may refer to the false teachers' activity in local house churches, thus the necessity for better organization (v. 5).

teaching things which they ought not. Their teaching was not in accord with "sound doctrine" (v. 9).

dishonest gain. See note on v. 7.

■ **1:12 a prophet of their own.** Paul quotes Epimenides, a sixth century B.C. poet and religious reformer from Knossos on Crete, who was known for his predictions and wisdom. Paul is not placing Epimenides on the same level as the Old Testament prophets; he is simply appealing to the esteem in which Epimenides was held in the ancient world.

■ **1:13 them . . . they.** He means the false teachers (2 Tim. 2:25, 26), and probably also their followers.

■ **1:14 Jewish fables.** Perhaps a reference to the kinds of legends about Old Testament figures that are found in many of the apocryphal Jewish writings (1 Tim. 1:4; 4:7; 2 Tim. 4:4).

commandments. These are probably related to the false teachers' distinctive interpretations of the Jewish law (3:9; 1 Tim. 1:7; 4:3).

■ **1:15 To the pure all things are pure.** The false teachers have apparently prohibited the use of certain things (1 Tim. 4:3 note). For Paul's response, see 1 Tim. 4:3–5.

■ **1:16 in works.** Paul condemns not only the doctrine of the false teachers, but also their actions (2 Tim. 3:2–5). Both sound doctrine and actions in accordance with a changed life are necessary for Christians.

they deny Him. The New Testament teaches that the lack of actions consistent with a changed life renders one's faith in Christ suspect (Matt. 7:16–20; James 2:14–16; 1 John 3:17).

■ **2:1–15** Paul now turns to the kinds of things which Titus, in contrast with the false teachers, ought to teach and concludes with a meditation on the grace of God.

■ **2:1 sound doctrine.** See note on 1:9.

■ **2:2–6** See 1 Tim. 5:1, 2.

■ **2:2 sober.** The quality of sober-mindedness dominates Paul's advice in this section (vv. 4–6, 12; 1:8 and note).

■ **2:3 teachers of good things.** Probably, as the next verse suggests, in the sense of their manner in the home.

■ **2:4 admonish.** That is, "bring them to their senses." This is a verbal form of the adjective translated "sober" (v. 2) and "discreet" (v. 5) throughout this section. Paul probably has in mind the problems that some of the younger widows encountered at Ephesus (1 Tim. 5:11–13).

■ **2:5 discreet.** Lit. "sober-minded" (vv. 2, 4, 6, 12; 1:8 note).

homemakers. Or, "busy at home." Contrast the behavior of some of the younger widows at Ephesus (1 Tim. 5:13).

obedient. See note on 1 Tim. 2:11.

that the word of God may not be blasphemed. Paul's overriding concern throughout this section is that the behavior of Christians reflect positively on the gospel (vv. 8, 10).

■ **2:7 be a pattern.** Paul gives similar counsel to Timothy (1 Tim. 4:12 note).

pattern of good works; in doctrine *showing* integrity, reverence, [e]incorruptibility,[1] [8] sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of [2]you.

[9] *Exhort* [f]bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all *things,* not answering back, [10] not [3]pilfering, but showing all good [4]fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.

Trained by Saving Grace

[11] For [g]the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, [12] teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, [13] [h]looking for the blessed [i]hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, [14] [j]who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed [k]and purify for Himself [l]*His* own special people, zealous for good works.

[15] Speak these things, [m]exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.

Graces of the Heirs of Grace

3 Remind them [a]to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, [b]to be ready for every good work, [2] to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men. [3] For [c]we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. [4] But when [d]the kindness and

7 [e]Eph. 6:24 [1]NU omits *incorruptibility*

8 [2]NU, M *us*

9 [f]1 Tim. 6:1

10 [3]*thieving* [4]*honesty*

11 [g][Rom. 5:15]

13 [h]1 Cor. 1:7 [i][Col. 3:4]

14 [j]Gal. 1:4 [k][Heb. 1:3; 9:14] [l]Ex. 15:16

15 [m]2 Tim. 4:2

CHAPTER 3

1 [a]1 Pet. 2:13 [b]Col. 1:10

3 [c]1 Cor. 6:11

4 [d]Titus 2:11

good works. One of Paul's main themes in this letter from here on (v. 14; 3:1, 8, 14).

■ **2:9 bondservants.** Paul gives instructions to slaves in Eph. 6:5–8; Col. 3:22–25; and 1 Tim. 6:1, 2.

■ **2:10 adorn the doctrine of God.** See note on v. 5.

■ **2:11–14** These verses provide the theological basis for the practical instructions given in vv. 2–10.

■ **2:11 the grace of God.** The unmerited compassion of God.

that brings salvation. God's purpose in extending grace to sinners is their salvation (3:4–7; 2 Tim. 1:9).

has appeared. That is, in Jesus Christ (3:4, 6; 2 Tim. 1:10).

all men. All types of people, regardless of gender, age, or social class are in view (vv. 2–10; 1 Tim. 2:1–6).

■ **2:13 the blessed hope and glorious appearing.** The Second Coming (1 Tim. 6:14; 2 Tim. 4:1, 8). See "Hope" at Heb. 6:18.

our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. This is one of the clearest affirmations in the New Testament of the deity of Christ.

■ **2:14 who gave Himself for us.** That is, on the cross. Paul follows with two aspects of the work of Christ.

redeem us from every lawless deed. Paul's first point focuses on the individual: Christ paid the price necessary to free people from their sins (Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45; 1 Tim. 2:6; 1 Pet. 1:18, 19).

purify for Himself His own special people. Paul's second point focuses on the church: Christ purifies individuals from their sins (Heb. 9:14; 1 John 1:7, 9) so that together they might constitute a people special to Him (Ezek. 37:23). On Christ purifying the church, see Eph. 5:25–27.

zealous for good works. See note on v. 7.

■ **2:15 exhort, and rebuke.** An appropriate summation of the contrasting aspects of Paul's charge to Titus in vv. 2–10 and 1:10–16.

with all authority. That is, as Paul's representative.

Let no one despise you. See v. 8; 1 Tim. 4:12.

■ **3:1–8** Having provided instructions for specific groups, Paul now gives Titus general counsel, sandwiched around another meditation on the grace of God, on encouraging the people to do "every good work" (v. 1).

■ **3:1 rulers and authorities.** On Christian submission to governing authorities, see Rom. 13:1–7; 1 Pet. 2:13–17; cf. 1 Tim. 2:2.

every good work. The theme for this section is doing good (v. 8; 2:7 note).

■ **3:3** This verse presents a graphic description of human depravity apart from Christ (Eph. 2:1–3).

■ **3:4 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior . . . appeared.** In keeping with v. 3, Paul's primary concern here is with the sinner's experience of God's grace, rather than the First Advent of Christ (2 Tim. 1:10).

Titus's Teachings (2:15)

To the Cretans:	Ignore fables and false commandments (1:14)
To the older men:	Be sober, reverent, temperate, faithful, loving, and patient (2:2)
To the older women:	Be reverent, teach good things, do not slander nor drink much wine (2:3)
To the younger women:	Be discreet, pure, domestic, and love your husbands and children (2:4, 5)
To the young men:	Be sober-minded, do good works, and maintain right doctrine (2:6–8)
To servants:	Be obedient and respectful of masters (2:9, 10)

the love of [e]God our Savior toward man appeared, [5][f]not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through [g]the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, [6][h]whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, [7] that having been justified by His grace [i]we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

[8][j]This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.

Avoid Dissension

[9] But [k]avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless. [10][l]Reject a divisive man after the first and second [l]admonition, [11] knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.

Final Messages

[12] When I send Artemas to you, or [m]Tychicus, be diligent to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. [13] Send Zenas the lawyer and [n]Apollos on their journey with haste, that they may lack nothing. [14] And let our *people* also learn to maintain good works, to *meet* urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful.

Farewell

[15] All who *are* with me greet you. Greet those who love us in the faith.
Grace *be* with you all. Amen.

4 [e]1 Tim. 2:3
5 [f]Rom. 3:20; Eph. 2:4–9 [g]John 3:3
6 [h]Ezek. 36:26
7 [i]Matt. 25:34; Mark 10:17; Rom. 8:17, 23, 24; Titus 1:2
8 [j]1 Tim. 1:15
9 [k]1 Tim. 1:4; 2 Tim. 2:23
10 [l]Matt. 18:17 [l]*warning*
12 [m]Acts 20:4; Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:7; 2 Tim. 4:12
13 [n]Acts 18:24; 1 Cor. 16:12

■ **3:5 not by works . . . but according to His mercy.** Salvation is by grace, not works (v. 6; Eph. 2:8, 9; 2 Tim. 1:9).

He saved us. See 2 Tim. 1:9.

washing. Spiritual cleansing, of which baptism is the sign and seal (1 Cor. 6:11; Eph. 5:26).

of regeneration and renewing. Both words characterize the "washing." "Regeneration" is the new life that begins when a person comes to faith in Christ (John 3:3, 5; 1 Pet. 1:3, 23). Renewal is closely related to rebirth; it signifies the complete transformation of a person's life that begins when one is regenerated (Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 5:17). See "Regeneration: The New Birth" at John 3:3.

of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit applies to individuals the grace of God that is extended in Christ (John 3:5, 6). Note the trinitarianism of vv. 4–6.

■ **3:7 justified.** Declared righteous before God.

by His grace. Left to ourselves (vv. 3, 4), we could never stand righteous before God. The point of vv. 3–7 is that righteousness comes through God's grace alone (Rom. 3:21–25).

heirs. God's purpose in extending His grace to sinners is not only to save them from eternal judgment, but to make them part of His family through adoption and thus heirs of His promises (Rom. 8:17; Gal. 3:29; 4:7).

■ **3:8 This is a faithful saying.** See note on 1 Tim. 1:15. The expression points back to vv. 4–7.

maintain good works. See note on v. 1.

■ **3:9–11** By way of contrast with the instructions that he has just given, Paul returns one last time to the problem of the false teachers.

■ **3:9 disputes.** A prominent characteristic of the false teachers was their contentiousness (1 Tim. 1:4; 6:4).

about the law. The law of Moses (1:10 note; cf. 1 Tim. 1:7).

unprofitable. To be contrasted with doing what is good, which is "profitable" (v. 8).

■ **3:10** Church discipline is to be based on a series of warnings (Matt. 18:15–17).

divisive man. The false teachers had caused division in the churches (1 Tim. 6:4, 5).

■ **3:12–15** Paul closes the letter with personal instructions to Titus, final greetings, and a benediction.

■ **3:12 Artemas.** Mentioned nowhere else in the New Testament, he is apparently one of Paul's coworkers.

Tychicus. A coworker of Paul mentioned in Acts 20:4; Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:7; 2 Tim. 4:12.

come to me. Titus's ministry on Crete is nearing its end (Introduction: Date and Occasion).

Nicopolis. A city on the west coast of the Roman province of Epirus (modern Albania).

I have decided to . . . winter there. Paul is probably in Macedonia.

■ **3:13 Zenas . . . Apollos.** Probably the bearers of this letter. Zenas is mentioned nowhere else in the New Testament; he is apparently one of Paul's coworkers. Apollos was a native of Alexandria and noted for his eloquence (Acts 18:24–26). He is best known for his ministry at Corinth (Acts 18:27—19:1; 1 Cor. 1:12; 3:4–22; 16:12).

■ **3:14 maintain good works.** See note on 2:7.

■ **3:15 you all.** Presumably Paul intended the letter to be read to the entire church (1 Tim. 6:21; 2 Tim. 4:22).

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to

PHILEMON

Author The letter to Philemon was written by the apostle Paul, and its authenticity has not been seriously challenged.

Date and Occasion The letter was written while Paul was in prison in Rome (c. A.D. 60), and was probably sent to Philemon together with the letter to the Colossians. Philemon was a Christian brother and slaveholder in Colosse. His slave Onesimus had run away and had somehow met Paul in Rome. Through Paul's teaching, Onesimus had become a Christian.

Paul's purpose in writing was to ask Philemon to receive Onesimus back not as a slave but as a Christian brother. In pursuit of this goal, Paul barely restrains himself from demanding the favor. He writes as powerful an appeal as he can.

Characteristics and Themes Philemon shows us the apostle using all his personal force to bring about a Christian answer to a very serious problem. Paul's judgment appears to be that Philemon should free the offending slave, for the sake of Christian love toward a fellow Christian. Paul's letter is passionate but carefully composed to achieve the desired end. The document was written in his own hand, and is much more than an example of rhetoric. It brings us close to Paul's ministry, so that we can practically feel his profound desire to make Christian love the first rule of human action. □

Outline of Philemon

I. Introductory Greetings (vv. 1–3)
II. Thanksgiving (vv. 4–7)
III. Paul's Request for Onesimus (vv. 8–21)
IV. Intended Visit (vv. 21, 22)
V. Closing Greetings and Blessing (v. 25)

1 [a]Eph. 3:1
2 [b]Col. 4:17 [f]NU *our sister Apphia*
4 [c]2 Thess. 1:3
5 [d]Col. 1:4
6 [e]Phil. 1:9 [f][1 Thess. 5:18] [2]NU, M *us*
7 [3]NU *had* [4]M *thanksgiving* [5]*comfort* [6]Lit. *inward parts,* heart, liver, and lungs

Greeting

PAUL, a [a]prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy *our* brother,

To Philemon our beloved *friend* and fellow laborer, [2] to [f]the beloved Apphia, [b]Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house:

[3] Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Philemon's Love and Faith

[4] [c]I thank my God, making mention of you always in my prayers, [5] [d]hearing of your love and faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints, [6] that the sharing of your faith may become effective [e]by the acknowledgment of [f]every good thing which is in [2]you in Christ Jesus. [7] For we [3]have great [4]joy and [5]consolation in your love, because the [6]hearts of the saints have been refreshed by you, brother.

■ **1 prisoner.** Paul knows that he belongs to Christ, and if he is in prison it is by Christ's permission (Phil. 1:7).

■ **2 Apphia, Archippus.** These are probably members of Philemon's household, since they are mentioned in addition to the church.

in your house. The early Christians met in believers' homes (1 Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15).

■ **6 may become effective.** Paul is going to suggest a good work that will call on Philemon's generosity in an important and visible way.

■ **7 hearts.** The word translated "hearts" is used also in vv. 12 and 20 (see text note). It emphasizes the emotions more than the usual Greek word for "heart."

The Plea for Onesimus

8 Therefore, though I might be very bold in Christ to command you what is fitting, 9 *yet* for love's sake I rather appeal *to you*—being such a one as Paul, the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ— 10 I appeal to you for my son [g]Onesimus, whom I have begotten *while* in my chains, 11 who once was unprofitable to you, but now is profitable to you and to me.

12 I am sending him [7]back. You therefore receive him, that is, my own [8]heart, 13 whom I wished to keep with me, that on your behalf he might minister to me in my chains for the gospel. 14 But without your consent I wanted to do nothing, [h]that your good deed might not be by compulsion, as it were, but voluntary.

15 For perhaps he departed for a while for this *purpose,* that you might receive him forever, 16 no longer as a slave but more than a slave—a beloved brother, especially to me but how much more to you, both in the [i]flesh and in the Lord.

Philemon's Obedience Encouraged

17 If then you count me as a partner, receive him as *you would* me. 18 But if he has wronged you or owes anything, put that on my account. 19 I, Paul, am writing with my own [j]hand. I will repay—not to mention to you that you owe me even your own self besides. 20 Yes, brother, let me have joy from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in the Lord.

21 [k]Having confidence in your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I say. 22 But, meanwhile, also prepare a guest room for me, for [l]I trust that [m]through your prayers I shall be granted to you.

Farewell

23 [n]Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you, 24 *as do* [o]Mark, [p]Aristarchus, [q]Demas, [r]Luke, my fellow laborers.

25 [s]The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen.

10 [g]Col. 4:9

12 [7]NU *back to you in person, that is, my own heart,* [8]See v. 7.

14 [h]2 Cor. 9:7; 1 Pet. 5:2

16 [i]Eph. 6:5; Col. 3:22

19 [j]1 Cor. 16:21; Gal. 6:11; 2 Thess. 3:17

21 [k]2 Cor. 7:16

22 [l]Phil. 1:25; 2:24 [m]2 Cor. 1:11

23 [n]Col. 1:7; 4:12

24 [o]Acts 12:12, 25; 15:37–39; Col. 4:10 [p]Acts 19:29; 27:2; Col. 4:10 [q]Col. 4:14; 2 Tim. 4:10 [r]2 Tim. 4:11

25 [s]2 Tim. 4:22

■ **9 the aged.** Paul appeals for mercy by describing himself as old and in prison. He does this "for love's sake," not for his own sake.

■ **10 my son Onesimus.** Onesimus is Paul's spiritual son because he was converted through Paul's ministry.

■ **11 unprofitable . . . profitable.** Paul makes a play on words—Onesimus's name means "useful" or "profitable." The pun softens the effect on Philemon of having to hear about someone who had injured him. Onesimus had run away and had probably been stealing (v. 18).

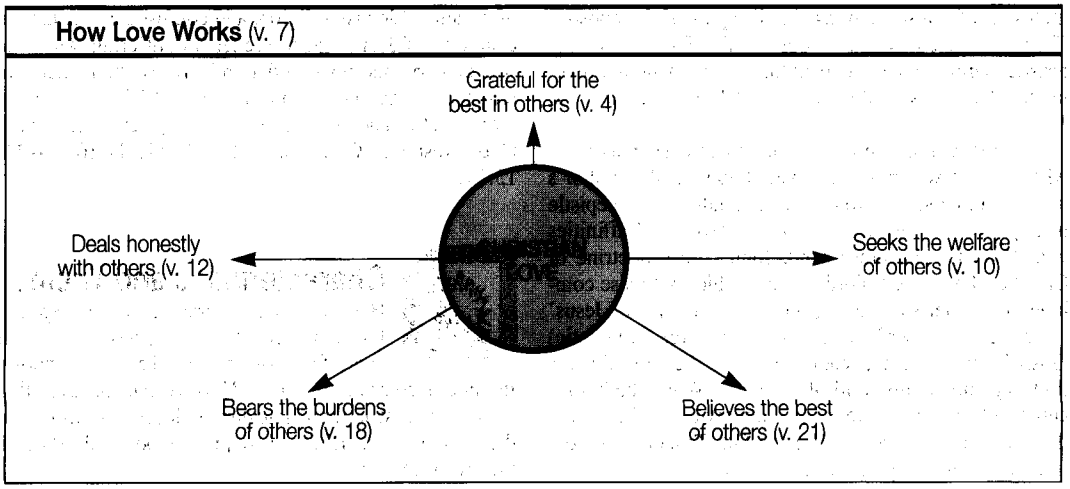
■ **14 voluntary.** In his letters Paul appeals more than once to the principle that a free and voluntary action is of more value than one that is compulsory (1 Cor. 9:16, 17; 2 Cor. 9:7).

■ **16 more than a slave.** Paul seems to be asking Philemon to set Onesimus free. It is implied that the Christians' common freedom in Christ is incompatible with the state of slavery, marked as it is by compulsion (v. 14 note), not to mention chains (v. 10, 13, 14; see 1 Pet. 2:18 note).

■ **17 as you would me.** Paul is willing to throw his friendship with Philemon into the balance to make sure that Philemon will not refuse his request for Onesimus. Paul's offer to pay Onesimus's debts (v. 18) is real, but secondary by comparison.

■ **19 even your own self.** This means that Philemon, like Onesimus, owed his Christian faith to the ministry of Paul.

■ **22 a guest room.** Paul anticipates being released, which apparently happened. Whether he reached Colosse is not known.



The Epistle to the

HEBREWS

Author The author of Hebrews was skilled in Greek and Hellenistic literary style, immersed in the Old Testament (in the Greek translation, the Septuagint), sensitive to the history of redemption culminating in Jesus, and pastorally concerned for the original readers, who knew him personally (13:22, 23) and whose background he knows (10:32–34). Like his readers, he came to faith not through direct contact with Jesus, but through the apostles' preaching (2:3, 4). In addition, he was acquainted with Timothy (13:23).

But the epistle does not tell us his name, leaving a tantalizing mystery. In the Eastern church by the time of Clement of Alexandria (c. A.D. 150–215) and Origen (A.D. 185–253) the epistle was attributed to Paul, although both of these theologians recognized the stylistic differences between Hebrews and the Pauline epistles. In the West, Tertullian (c. A.D. 155–220) proposed Barnabas, a Levite of the Jewish Dispersion who was noted for his encouragement of others (Acts 4:36). Other early suggestions were Luke and Clement of Rome (c. A.D. 95). From the fifth to the sixteenth centuries Paul's authorship was accepted in East and West. During the Reformation Luther proposed Apollos, a Jewish Christian from Alexandria who was skilled in speech and powerful in the Scriptures (Acts 18:24). Suggestions in the modern period have included Priscilla (but cf. 11:32, where the author refers to himself with a masculine gender participle), Epaphras (Col. 1:7), and Silas (Acts 15:22, 32, 40; 1 Pet. 5:12). While it is difficult to rule out many of these candidates, it is equally hard to make a convincing case for any one of them. From the standpoint of early tradition, Paul has the strongest claim, but as Calvin observed, Hebrews differs from Paul in style, teaching method, and in the author's inclusion of himself among the disciples of the apostles (2:3)—a statement at odds with Paul's characteristic claim to have received his appointment and revelation of the gospel directly from Christ (Gal. 1:1, 11, 12).

If the author is not Paul (or someone such as Luke whose other writings we have), knowing the author's name would add little to our understanding of the epistle in any case. The epistle does have theological affinities with Paul. On the other hand, John's lofty doctrine of Christ as the divine "Word" is detectable. But these combined characteristics, along with the portrayal of Jesus' suffering as described in the first three (Synoptic) Gospels, are to be expected in view of the Holy Spirit's unifying authorship of all of Scripture. While the human author of this book remains unknown, the important thing is that this writing, like the Old Testament before it, is what "the Holy Spirit says" (3:7).

Date and Occasion Hebrews offers a fair amount of information about the original recipients and their situation, while leaving questions of date and destination without certain answers. The original readers spoke Greek and used the Greek translation of the Old Testament. They could follow arguments drawn from the Old Testament and were interested in the Old Testament sanctuary, sacrificial system, and priesthood. They had not heard the gospel directly from Jesus, but from apostles (2:3), had faced previous persecution (10:32–34) and were facing present persecution, including expulsion from Jewish institutions (13:12, 13). They were in danger of falling away, perhaps fearing death (2:14–18), although their faith had not yet led to martyrdom (12:4). In addition, they may have been undergoing a transition in church leadership (13:7, 17), and were therefore concerned about security and permanence (6:19; 11:10; 13:8, 14). Finally, they receive greeting through the author from "those from Italy" (13:24).

Drawing these features together, we conclude that the recipients were Jewish Christians of the Dispersion (the scattering of Jews outside Palestine), probably in Italy. This would take 13:24 to be a greeting sent "home" by expatriates. The earliest evidence of acquaintance with the epistle is from Rome, in *1 Clement,* a work dating from about A.D. 96. Apparently the temple was still standing and its sacrificial rituals were being performed (10:2, 3, 11). Perhaps the situation is that of the persecutions under Nero (c. A.D. 64). In that case, the suffering mentioned in 10:32–34 could have been caused by the edict of Claudius, which expelled Jews from Rome in A.D. 49 (Acts 18:2).

Subject to suffering and shame for their confession of Jesus, stripped of the familiar and visible institutions of organized Jewish religion, and confused by the hidden character of Jesus' glory (veiled in suffering when He was on earth and now hidden in heaven), the readers are tempted to turn away from the faith (10:38, 39), to fall into unbelief and so to give up their pilgrimage toward God's rest and God's city (4:1, 2, 11; 11:10, 14–16; 13:14).

Characteristics and Themes Hebrews' high literary style and special focus on Christ's high priesthood set it apart from other New Testament books. Its unique contribution to the New Testament revelation of Jesus Christ is the disclosure of Jesus' fulfillment of the sanctuary, sacrifices, and priesthood established in the law of Moses.

The author refers to his work as a "word of exhortation" (13:22). Since the same Greek expression in Acts 13:15 refers to a synagogue speech, the term may identify this "epistle" as an expository sermon in written form. Hebrews is aptly described as a "word of exhortation," for exhortation or encouragement is the heart of the book's purpose (3:13; 6:18; 10:25; 12:5). The author repeatedly calls his readers to an active and courageous response (4:11, 14, 16; 6:1; 10:19–25).

The exhortation to persevere in the pilgrimage of faith is grounded in the author's proof that the Old Testament itself testified to the imperfection of the covenant at Sinai and its sacrificial system, thereby pointing ahead to a new High Priest—Jesus Christ. Jesus is better than the mediators, sanctuary, and sacrifices of the old order. He is worthy of "more glory" than Moses (3:3). The arguments from lesser to greater of 2:2, 3; 9:13, 14; 10:28, 29; and 12:25 ("if . . . how much more") underscore the greater grace and glory, and the greater accountability, which have now arrived in the new covenant mediated by Jesus. Unlike the earthly and external aspects of the Old Testament sanctuary, Jesus sanctifies us for the true worship of God, so that we draw near to heaven itself with clean consciences. He is the guarantee of this better covenant bond, for He links us inseparably with the God of grace. □

Outline of Hebrews

I. Christ Is Superior to the Angels (chs. 1; 2)
  A. Prologue: God's Last and Best Word Is Spoken in His Son (1:1–4)
  B. Scripture Testifies to the Son's Greater Honor (1:5–14)
  C. Exhortation Not to Neglect the Salvation Revealed Through the Son (2:1–4)
  D. The Son Became Like His Brothers as Our High Priest (2:5–18)

II. Christ Is Superior to Moses (3:1—4:13)
  A. The Son Has Greater Honor Than the Servant (3:1–6)
  B. Exhortation Not to Imitate Those Who Disbelieved in the Desert (3:7—4:13)

III. Christ Is Superior to Aaron (4:14—7:28)
  A. Christ the Eternal High Priest (4:14—5:11)
  B. Exhortation to Perseverance and Spiritual Maturity (5:12—6:12)
  C. A Priest Forever by Divine Oath (6:13–20)
  D. A Priest Forever After the Order of Melchizedek (ch. 7)

IV. The Superior Priestly Ministry of Christ (8:1—10:18)
  A. A Superior Covenant (ch. 8)
  B. A Superior Tabernacle (9:1–10)
  C. A Superior Sacrifice Which Cleanses the Conscience (9:11–28)
  D. Christ's Sacrifice Once for All (10:1–18)

V. Call to Persevere in Faith (10:19—12:29)
  A. A Superior Covenant Implies Greater Responsibility (10:19–39)
  B. Examples of the Life of Faith (ch. 11)
  C. True Children of God (12:1–17)
  D. The Heavenly Jerusalem (12:18–29)

VI. Conclusion (ch. 13)
  A. Final Exhortations (13:1–19)
  B. Benediction and Greetings (13:20–25)

CHAPTER 1

1 [a]Num. 12:6, 8; Joel 2:28 [1]Or *in many portions*

2 [2]Or *ages,* Gr. *aiones,* aeons

3 [b]John 1:14 [c]2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15 [d]Col. 1:17 [e][Heb. 7:27] [f]Ps. 110:1 [3]NU omits *by Himself* [4]*cleansed* [5]NU omits *our*

4 [g]Is. 9:6, 7; Luke 1:32, 33; [Phil. 2:9, 10]

5 [h]Ps. 2:7; Acts 13:33; Heb. 5:5 [i]2 Sam. 7:14

6 [j]Ps. 89:27; [Rom. 8:29] [k]Deut. 32:43, LXX, DSS; Ps. 97:7; 1 Pet. 3:22; Rev. 5:11–13

God's Supreme Revelation

GOD, who [1]at various times and [a]in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, [2]has in these last days spoken to us by *His* Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the [2]worlds; [3][b]who being the brightness of *His* glory and the express [c]image of His person, and [4]upholding all things by the word of His power, [e]when He had [3]by Himself [4]purged [5]our sins, [f]sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, [4]having become so much better than the angels, as [g]He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

The Son Exalted Above Angels

[5]For to which of the angels did He ever say:

[h]*"You are My Son,*
Today I have begotten You"?

And again:

[i]*"I will be to Him a Father,*
And He shall be to Me a Son"?

[6]But when He again brings [j]the firstborn into the world, He says:

[k]*"Let all the angels of God worship Him."*

■ **1:1–4** The prologue introduces the two time periods in God's speaking to His people: "time past" (v. 1) and "these last days" (v. 2). The Son's coming marks our time period as the "latter days" of salvation promised through the prophets (Jer. 23:20; Hos. 3:5; Mic. 4:1; cf. 1 Cor. 10:11).

■ **1:1 God . . . spoke.** An important theme in Hebrews (2:2, 3; 4:12; 6:5; 11:3; 12:25).

at various times. The piecemeal character of prophetic revelation showed its incompleteness, just as the repetition of animal sacrifices showed that they could not remove guilt (10:1).

in various ways. These ways included visions, dreams, and dark sayings (Num. 12:6–8, alluded to later in 3:5).

■ **1:2 His Son.** This revelation is qualitatively superior to that given through the prophets. Moses, the greatest prophet, was only a servant in God's house; Christ is "a Son over His own house" (3:6). The Son speaks, as the prophets did, but speaks as the Son whose revelation is final.

heir of all things. The Son's supremacy will be displayed at the end of history, for "all things were created . . . for Him" (Col. 1:16). He is the firstborn (v. 6), the preeminent heir, whose enemies will be put under His feet (v. 13, citing Ps. 110:1). As God's adopted sons through Jesus, we too are heirs (v. 14; 6:12, 17; Gal. 4:6, 7; Rom. 8:14–17).

through whom . . . He made the worlds. The Son's supremacy was displayed at the dawn of history, for "by Him all things were created" (Col. 1:16; cf. John 1:3). The Greek word rendered "worlds" is lit. "ages" (also in 11:3), highlighting the successive periods of history in the created order. Vv. 10–12 quote Ps. 102:25–27 as testimony to the Son's role in creation and His eternal permanence, in contrast to the created universe.

■ **1:3 brightness of His glory.** The Greek word rendered "brightness" describes divine wisdom personified in the Jewish intertestamental book Wisdom of Solomon (Wis. 7:25–28). But Hebrews speaks not merely of a personified divine attribute, but of a divine Person who entered history to purify sinners.

express image of His person. This verse expresses both the Son's oneness with the Father and the distinction of divine persons. As One whose being corresponds exactly to the Father, the Son accurately reveals the Father. Christ is "the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15), through whom we see the Father (John 14:9; 2 Cor. 4:4–6).

upholding all things by the word of His power. In the midst of history the Son's command holds the created order in existence (Col. 1:17; 2 Pet. 3:4–7), preserving it from destruction until that day when His voice will remove all but the unshakable kingdom of God and its heirs (12:26–28).

purged our sins. A change of verb tense focuses attention on the Son's atoning death in history, the priestly act that cleanses us to worship in God's presence (9:14).

sat down at the right hand . . . on high. The Son's enthronement at God's "right hand" in heaven, promised in Ps. 110:1 (1:13), reveals His superiority in two ways. At the "right hand" of the Majesty Christ is ministering in the true, heavenly sanctuary and not an earthly copy (8:1, 2, 5). Secondly, He "sat down" because His sacrificial work (unlike that of Levitical priests) was finished once for all (10:11, 12).

■ **1:4 better than the angels.** This is proved by the series of Old Testament quotations that follow (vv. 5–14).

by inheritance . . . a more excellent name. The eternal Son took on a human nature to rescue us from sin and death (2:14, 15). Now, having for a time voluntarily taken a position "lower than the angels" (2:7), as the resurrected and ascended Messiah He is "declared to be the Son of God with power" (Rom. 1:4) to save His people (v. 5 note). Christ's exaltation thus inaugurates a new phase of His messianic and redemptive Sonship, and gives Him a dignity far above that of angels.

■ **1:5, 6** The series of quotations begins with examples from the Psalms (v. 5, from Ps. 2:7), the Prophets (v. 5, from 2 Sam. 7:14; in the Hebrew Bible the books of Samuel are counted with the Prophets), and the Law (v. 6, from Deut. 32:43). Verse 6 is probably from the Greek translation (Septuagint) of Deut. 32:43, although it also recalls Ps. 97:7.

■ **1:5 You are My Son.** The Father's decree declaring the Messiah to be His Son is identified with Christ's exaltation (v. 4 note; 5:5; Acts 13:32–35; Rom. 1:4). Though Jesus is the eternal and divine Son of God (Mark 1:11; John 3:16), the declaration of redemptive Sonship prophesied in Ps. 2:7 was conferred on Him in time, when He completed His messianic work. Believers cannot become divine and share in Christ's eternal divine Sonship, but their adoption as sons of God means that they participate in Christ's redemptive Sonship through union with the "captain of their salvation" (2:10; cf. 3:14 note; Rom. 8:29).

■ **1:6 brings . . . into the world.** As the Son condescends to assume our human nature, angels worship Him (Luke 2:13, 14).

firstborn. As in Ps. 89:27, the term means "of the highest rank," above the kings of the earth, and not "first in order of birth." In Ex. 4:22 it means "chosen" or "most desired" (Col. 1:15 note).

7 And of the angels He says:

[l]"Who makes His angels spirits
And His ministers a flame of fire."

8 But to the Son *He says:*

[m]"Your throne, O God, is forever and ever;
A [6]scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom.
9 You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness;
Therefore God, Your God, [n]has anointed You
With the oil of gladness more than Your companions."

10 And:

[o]"You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth,
And the heavens are the work of Your hands.
11 [p]They will perish, but You remain;
And [q]they will all grow old like a garment;
12 Like a cloak You will fold them up,
And they will be changed.
But You are the [r]same,
And Your years will not fail."

13 But to which of the angels has He ever said:

[s]"Sit at My right hand,
Till I make Your enemies Your footstool"?

14 [t]Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will [u]inherit salvation?

Do Not Neglect Salvation

2 Therefore we must give [1]the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. 2 For if the word [a]spoken through angels proved steadfast, and [b]every transgression and disobedience received a just [2]reward, 3 [c]how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, [d]which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was [e]confirmed to us by those who heard *Him,* 4 [f]God also bearing witness [g]both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and [h]gifts[3] of the Holy Spirit, [i]according to His own will?

7 [r]Ps. 104:4

8 [m]Ps. 45:6, 7 [6]A ruler's staff

9 [n]Is. 61:1, 3

10 [o]Ps. 102:25–27

11 [p][Is. 34:4] [q]Is. 50:9; 51:6; Heb. 8:13

12 [r]Heb. 13:8

13 [s]Ps. 110:1; Matt. 22:44; Heb. 1:3

14 [t]Ps. 103:20; Dan. 7:10 [u]Rom. 8:17

CHAPTER 2

1 [1]*all the more careful attention*

2 [a]Deut. 33:2; Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19 [b]Num. 15:30 [2]*retribution* or *penalty*

3 [c]Heb. 10:28 [d]Matt. 4:17 [e]Mark 16:20; Luke 1:2; 1 John 1:1

4 [f]Mark 16:20 [g]Acts 2:22, 43; 2 Cor. 12:2 [h]1 Cor. 12:4, 7, 11; Eph. 4:7 [i]Eph. 1:5, 9 [3]*distributions*

■ **1:7** The storm clouds of Ps. 104 adorn the Lord's heavenly court. "Spirits" (the Greek term may also be rendered "winds") and "flames" associate angels with the created world's mutability in contrast to the Son's eternal permanence (vv. 10–12).

ministers. In contrast to the Son's royal enthronement (vv. 8, 9), the angels are merely "ministers," or "servants."

■ **1:8, 9** From Ps. 45:6, 7. The one who addresses the Son with the words "O God" is Himself "God, Your God." The Son is God, and yet distinct from the Father (John 1:1).

■ **1:9 loved righteousness.** On the Son's obedience and righteousness, see 4:15; 5:8; 7:26.

■ **1:10** On the Son as Creator, see v. 2 and note.

■ **1:11 You remain.** The Son's unchanging eternity as God is essential to His high priesthood (7:3, 23, 24). Through Him the inheritance of believers remains forever (10:34; 12:27, 28; 13:14).

■ **1:13, 14** The Son's position of heavenly authority (v. 3; 8:1) is contrasted to the angels' role as servants to "those who will inherit salvation" (that is, who share as co-heirs in the Son's rights as heir, vv. 2, 5; 2:10; 6:12; cf. Rom. 8:17, 29). The angels are servants to Christ, but also to His people, who inherit salvation through union with Him. In this His people are favored above the angels (cf. 2:16; 1 Cor. 6:3).

■ **2:1** Compare similar exhortations in 3:12–14; 4:1, 11; 6:11, 12; 10:22–25; 12:1–13; and especially 12:25–29, another reminder of Sinai.

■ **2:2, 3** The argument is from the lesser to the greater. If what the angels said was "steadfast," then what comes from One superior to angels must be more so. The Greek word for "steadfast" is legal terminology, as is "witness" in v. 4.

■ **2:2 spoken through angels.** The role of the angels in the giving of the law is suggested in Deut. 33:2 (where the Hebrew term translated "saints" is lit. "holy ones" and refers to angels) and became a standard element of Jewish and Christian (Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19) descriptions of Sinai.

just reward. Illustrated in 10:28, 29 (cf. 6:6). Violators of the Lord's covenant were purged from the covenant community through death.

■ **2:3 salvation.** First mentioned in 1:14, this salvation includes inheritance of the world to come (v. 5; 11:16), entry into glory as God's adopted sons (v. 10), purification from sins (1:3; 2:11, 17), freedom from the fear of death (vv. 14, 15), and the privilege of drawing near to God (4:16; 10:22) to offer worship that pleases Him (12:28; 13:15, 16).

those who heard. The apostles were witnesses of what Jesus said and did in His ministry, death, and resurrection (Acts 1:21, 22; 10:39–41; 1 Pet. 5:1; 2 Pet. 1:15). The writer and his readers have heard the gospel through them (Introduction: Author).

■ **2:4 signs and wonders . . . various miracles.** These terms are used in the New Testament for the special miracles that God used to demonstrate the authority of the Savior (Acts 2:22), as well as to certify the ministries of the apostles and Stephen (Acts 6:8; 14:3; Rom. 15:19; 2 Cor. 12:12).

5 *j*[2 Pet. 3:13]
6 *k*Job 7:17; Ps. 8:4–6
7 *4*Or *for a little while* *5*NU, M omit the rest of v. 7.
8 *l*Matt. 28:18 *m*Ps. 8:6; 1 Cor. 15:25, 27
9 *n*Phil. 2:7–9; Heb. 1:9 *o*Acts 2:33; 3:13; 1 Pet. 1:21 *p*Is. 53:12; [John 3:16] *6*Or *for a little while*
10 *q*Col. 1:16 *r*Heb. 5:8, 9; 7:28
11 *s*Heb. 10:10 *t*Acts 17:26 *u*Matt. 28:10 *7*sets apart
12 *v*Ps. 22:22
13 *w*2 Sam. 22:3; Is. 8:17 *x*Is. 8:18

The Son Made Lower than Angels

5 For He has not put *j*the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels. 6 But one testified in a certain place, saying:

k "*What is man that You are mindful of him,*
Or the son of man that You take care of him?
7 *You have made him 4a little lower than the angels;*
You have crowned him with glory and honor,
5 And set him over the works of Your hands.
8 *l You have put all things in subjection under his feet.*"

For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing *that is* not put under him. But now *m*we do not yet see all things put under him. 9 But we see Jesus, *n*who was made *6*a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death *o*crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death *p*for everyone.

Bringing Many Sons to Glory

10 For it was fitting for Him, *q*for whom *are* all things and by whom *are* all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation *r*perfect through sufferings. 11 For *s*both He who *7*sanctifies and those who are being sanctified *t*are all of one, for which reason *u*He is not ashamed to call them brethren, 12 saying:

v "*I will declare Your name to My brethren;*
In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You."

13 And again:

w "*I will put My trust in Him.*"

And again:

x "*Here am I and the children whom God has given Me.*"

■ **2:5–9** The author uses the contrast between angels and human beings in v. 5 to point to the way that the Son, in assuming a full and complete humanity (vv. 14, 17), restores man's dignity and divinely-intended place in creation.

■ **2:6 one testified.** Such vagueness in scriptural references is characteristic of the author of Hebrews, who stresses the divine authorship of Scripture rather than the human authors (e.g., 1:5, 7, 8; 2:12; 3:7; 4:3; 5:5, 6). This way of citing a well-known Old Testament proof text about man in creation is evidence for the Jewish background of the recipients.

■ **2:8 we do not yet.** Ps. 8 describes the glorious status of man as the head of all creation. But it is obvious that man is far from enjoying any such status and some explanation is required.

■ **2:9 we see Jesus.** Jesus has the crown of glory and honor. It must now be shown that He received it as a man, and so can satisfy the words of the psalm quoted.

a little lower. See text note. The expression can refer to status or to time (that is, "a little while," Luke 22:58; Acts 5:34). If it refers to time, it indicates the temporary character of Jesus' humiliation.

taste death for everyone. Here, "everyone" must be understood in the light of the context and of the results of Jesus' death described elsewhere in Hebrews. It refers to the "many sons" whom God brings to glory (v. 10), whom Jesus calls "brethren" (v. 11). Those for whom Jesus tasted death were made holy and perfect once for all by His sacrifice (10:10, 14), their consciences cleansed from acts that lead to death (9:14), so they are freed from the fear of death (2:14, 15). By contrast, there are those (even within Christian congregations) who do not trust the Son but subject Him to ridicule (6:6). For them, "there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment" (10:26, 27). Thus "everyone" here includes all those (but only those) who persevere in trusting Jesus (3:6, 14).

■ **2:10–18** For God's adopted sons to reach the glory promised in Ps. 8, the unique Son had to suffer death on their behalf, destroying their enemy, freeing them from slavery, and atoning for their sins. Bonds of kinship in the eternal plan of God unite the redeemed to the "captain of their salvation" (vv. 10, 11).

■ **2:10 captain.** The Greek term can also be translated "author" or "prince" (12:2; Acts 3:15; 5:31). Jesus went first on the path of suffering, and He guides us as our captain to the glory that He achieved.

make . . . perfect. See note on 5:9.

■ **2:11 He who sanctifies.** See "The Atonement" at Rom. 3:25.

are all of one. Or, "have the same origin," that is, God. Another interpretation is, "are of one nature," that is, human nature.

not ashamed. In view of the Son's glory portrayed in ch. 1, we might expect Him to recoil from identification with fallible human beings, but He willingly calls us brothers and sisters. Such a family relationship is essential to His compassionate, priestly ministry (v. 17; 5:1; 7:5).

■ **2:12** Introduced here primarily because of the words "My brethren," Ps. 22:22 is the turning point in a psalm of the Anointed One's passage through suffering to deliverance. The context of the words quoted corresponds to their use in Hebrews.

■ **2:13 I will put My trust in Him.** This confession of faith appears in 2 Sam. 22:3; Is. 8:17; 12:2—in all three a servant of God expresses trust in the face of danger. For the Son—"the author and finisher of our faith" (12:2)—to take these words on His lips implies His condescension, in regard to His human nature, to live by faith as we must.

I and the children whom God has given Me. As Isaiah and his children were signs of God's faithfulness to their generation (Is. 8:18), so the Son who is greater than the prophets (1:1, 2; 3:3–6) now has His circle of "children," given to Him by the Father (John 17:6).

[14] Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He [y]Himself likewise shared in the same, [z]that through death He might destroy him who had the power of [a]death, that is, the devil, [15] and release those who [b]through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. [16] For indeed He does not [g]give aid to angels, but He does [g]give aid to the seed of Abraham. [17] Therefore, in all things He had [c]to be made like *His* brethren, that He might be [d]a merciful and faithful High Priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. [18] [e]For in that He Himself has suffered, being [f]tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.

14 [y]John 1:14 [z]Col. 2:15 [a]2 Tim. 1:10
15 [b][Luke 1:74]
16 [g]Or *take on* the nature of [g]Or *take on*
17 [c]Phil. 2:7 [d][Heb. 4:15; 5:1–10]
18 [e][Heb. 4:15, 16] [f]*tested*

The Son Was Faithful

3 Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, [2] who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as [a]Moses also *was faithful* in all His house. [3] For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as [b]He who built the house has more honor than the house. [4] For every house is built by someone, but [c]He who built all things *is* God. [5] [d]And Moses indeed *was* faithful in all His house as [e]a servant, [f]for a testimony of those things which would be spoken *afterward,* [6] but Christ as [g]a Son over His own house, [h]whose house we are [i]if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope [f]firm to the end.

CHAPTER 3

2 [a]Num. 12:7
3 [b]Zech. 6:12, 13
4 [c][Eph. 2:10]
5 [d]Heb. 3:2 [e]Ex. 14:31 [f]Deut. 18:15, 18, 19
6 [g]Heb. 1:2 [h][1 Cor. 3:16] [i][Matt. 10:22] [f]NU omits *firm to the end*

Be Faithful

[7] Therefore, as [j]the Holy Spirit says:

7 [j]Acts 1:16

■ **2:14–18** Christ is presented first as our Redeemer and Warrior who defeats our oppressor and sets us free, then as our merciful High Priest who helps us in our trials.

■ **2:14 flesh and blood.** This is an idiomatic way of saying "human." The same Greek phrase is seen at Matt. 16:17; 1 Cor. 15:50; Gal. 1:16; Eph. 6:12; it may emphasize the limitations of the human condition.

shared in the same. That is, the same humanity, a phrase stressing the completeness of the Son's incarnation. In order for Christ to triumph over death and the devil by enduring God's judgment upon sinners, it was necessary for Him to share their "flesh and blood" nature.

him who had the power of death. Having tempted humanity to sin, the devil then acts as an accuser (Rev. 12:10), demanding that a just punishment be exacted; and "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23; cf. 1 Cor. 15:56). The devil's power to kill is destroyed only when our sin has been punished—in Christ's death. Then his accusations have no ground (Col. 2:14, 15).

■ **2:16** This verse resumes the contrast of v. 5. The background is Is. 41:8–14, where Israel is called "descendants of Abraham," whom the Lord "will hold" and whom He promises to "help" (Is. 41:13; cf. Heb. 2:18), so they need not "fear" (Is. 41:10; Heb. 2:15; cf. 13:5, 6). On Abraham and his descendants, see 6:15–17; 11:9; Rom. 4:11–18; 9:7, 8; Gal. 3:29.

give aid. Another translation is "takes on" or "lays hold of," as of "taking on" human nature (text note) in the Incarnation. Either way, the point is that the sort of incarnation described in v. 14 is determined by the sort of creatures whom God wills to save. These are human beings, and the eternal Word must be incarnated as a human being: "the Word became flesh" (John 1:14).

■ **2:17 He had to be made like His brethren.** Only the One who had been tested in every way as we are could be the merciful High Priest (4:15; 5:2). Only the One who had responded to every test in perfect obedience could be the faithful High Priest, without sin (4:15; 7:26) and worthy to offer Himself as the unblemished sacrifice (9:14).

merciful and faithful High Priest. This echoes the prophecy that pronounced judgment on Eli's house, of Aaron's family, and the coming of a faithful High Priest who would minister forever (1 Sam. 2:35). The faithfulness (3:6) and mercy of Christ (5:2) are explained in what follows.

make propitiation for. This term means that He bore God's wrath and curse that rested on "the people" who sinned (Rom. 3:25, 26). See "Christ the Mediator" at 1 Tim. 2:5.

■ **2:18 He Himself has suffered.** See "The Humanity of Jesus" at 2 John 7.

■ **3:1 holy brethren.** This typical Christian title of address (3:12; 10:19; Acts 1:16; 1 Cor. 3:1) has special significance here, since Jesus has made us His "brethren" and "sanctified" us (2:11).

heavenly calling. The Lord calls from heaven, summoning us to enduring faith (12:25). He also calls us to heaven, the better country (11:16) and the eternal inheritance of those who are called (9:15).

consider. Since Christ is able to deal with the most important problems we face, the reader should be eager to give close attention to what will now be said about Him.

Apostle. This title is applied to Jesus only here in the New Testament. It stresses His faithful accomplishment of the mission on which the Father sent Him (v. 2; cf. 10:5–10; John 6:38; 20:21).

■ **3:2–6** With reference to Num. 12:7, Moses and Christ are compared as to faithfulness and contrasted as to honor. Though privileged to speak to God face to face and to see His form (Num. 12:8), Moses was still only "a servant" in the house of God (v. 5). Christ, as agent of creation (1:2, 10), deserves honor as divine builder of all things and as "Son over His own house" (v. 6).

■ **3:3 built the house.** The necessary implication is that Jesus is the builder of the house, and therefore that He is divine (v. 4). This passage points both to Christ's identity as God ("He who built") and to His personal distinction from the Father (v. 6).

■ **3:5 faithful in all His house.** Since the writer alludes to Num. 12:7, the emphasis is on the dignity of Moses' service. Moses is the unique minister of the law, but Jesus' ministry is higher still.

testimony . . . spoken afterward. Moses' ministry was to testify to Christ's coming (John 5:46, 47). The Mosaic law by its shadows pointed toward the coming good things brought by Christ (9:11; 10:1), for in its regulations the Holy Spirit showed that access into God's presence would come only when the earthly tabernacle was replaced by something better (9:8).

■ **3:6 over His own house.** Note the prepositions: Moses was "in" the house, but Christ is "over" the house (10:21).

whose house we are. God's house consists of His people (1 Sam. 2:35; 2 Sam. 7:16; Eph. 2:19–22; 1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Pet. 2:5), an important theme throughout Scripture.

if we hold fast. This condition tells the readers how they can know that they belong to God—their faith must prove itself by persevering (v. 14; 6:11; 10:23). The note of warning is a fitting introduction to the quotation from Ps. 95 that follows.

■ **3:7—4:13** The writer quotes Ps. 95:7–11, and then uses numerous

7 [k]Ps. 95:7–11;
13 [2]encourage
15 [l]Ps. 95:7, 8
16 [m]Num. 14:2, 11, 30; Deut. 1:35, 36, 38
17 [n]Num. 14:22, 23
18 [o]Num. 14:30
19 [p]Num. 14:1–39; 1 Cor. 10:11, 12

CHAPTER 4

1 [q]2 Cor. 6:1; [Gal. 5:4]; Heb. 12:15
2 [1]NU, M *since they were not united by faith with those who heeded it*
3 [b]Ps. 95:11; Heb. 3:11

[k] *"Today, if you will hear His voice,*
8 *Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion,*
In the day of trial in the wilderness,
9 *Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me,*
And saw My works forty years.
10 *Therefore I was angry with that generation,*
And said, 'They always go astray in their heart,
And they have not known My ways.'
11 *So I swore in My wrath,*
'They shall not enter My rest.'"

12 Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; 13 but [2]exhort one another daily, while it is called *"Today,"* lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, 15 while it is said:

[l] *"Today, if you will hear His voice,*
Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion."

Failure of the Wilderness Wanderers

16 [m]For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, *was it* not all who came out of Egypt, *led* by Moses? 17 Now with whom was He angry forty years? *Was it* not with those who sinned, [n]whose corpses fell in the wilderness? 18 And [o]to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? 19 So we see that they could not enter in because of [p]unbelief.

The Promise of Rest

4 Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, [q]let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. 2 For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, [1]not being mixed with faith in those who heard *it.* 3 For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said:

[b] *"So I swore in My wrath,*
'They shall not enter My rest,'"

brief quotations and echoes of it to keep his exposition to the point. Important key words in this section are "today" (3:13, 15; 4:7) and "rest" (4:3, 5, 6, 8–11); the treatment of "rest" is developed from the Sabbath teaching of Gen. 2:2. Corresponding to this teaching is the exhortation to "enter that rest" (4:11) and the warning not to "harden your hearts" (3:15; 4:7).

■ **3:8 day of trial.** A significant occasion of testing occurred at Rephidim (Ex. 17:1–7), where the people grumbled and Moses struck the rock to give them water. The entire forty-year period of disobedience and resistance while wandering in the desert may also be in view (vv. 9, 10; Ps. 78:40).

■ **3:11 swore.** Num. 14:21–30 records God's promise not to allow that generation to enter the Promised Land. Hebrews understands this oath to point also to a divine, eternal Sabbath rest (4:1–11).

My rest. See note on 4:8.

■ **3:12, 13** The author addresses his readers in terms of their confession of faith (v. 1) as "brethren," yet also recognizes that some within the Christian fellowship may have an "evil heart of unbelief" (cf. 12:15–17). Christ saves completely those who come to God through Him (7:25), but Christians must guard their own and each other's endurance by encouraging one another (10:24, 25), as the author does throughout this letter (13:22).

■ **3:12 heart of unbelief.** That is, a heart like that of "your fathers" (v. 9), which kept them from entering God's rest (v. 19).

■ **3:13 Today.** See note on 4:7.

deceitfulness of sin. Sin promotes the illusion that disobedience is more secure (Ex. 17:3) or pleasurable (11:25, 26; Ex. 16:3) than the pilgrimage of faith.

■ **3:14 partakers of Christ.** The Greek can be taken to mean that we are partakers with Christ, His companions (1:9), sharing new life with Him. It is also possible to translate "partakers of Christ," indicating that He is the benefit we share in, through our intimate union with Him.

■ **3:16–19** Neither the blessing of the Exodus from Egypt nor the privilege of hearing God's voice guaranteed to the generation that was in the desert that they would enter God's rest, the rest that is the goal of our pilgrimage (4:8 note). Their rebellion (v. 16), sin (v. 17), and disobedience (v. 18; 4:6) was rooted in unbelief, in their failure to cling permanently to God's promise (v. 19; 4:2, 3).

■ **4:1 let us fear.** The divine judgment inspires fear (10:27, 31; 12:21), but we should not fear what men may do (11:27; 13:6).

■ **4:2 the gospel . . . preached to us.** The good news of deliverance and God's love that Israel heard at Sinai was not as clear as the salvation spoken now through the Lord (2:3), but it would have been of value to the hearers, ushering them into God's rest, if they had combined it with faith.

■ **4:3–5** The basic theme of these verses is that a "rest" of God has existed from the seventh day of Creation (v. 4; Gen. 2:2), even though the disobedient generation could not enter it. The writer understands the promises about the physical land to point ultimately to the divine rest (3:11 note), which only those who believe may enter (v. 3).

although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. [4] For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh *day* in this way: [c]*"And God rested on the seventh day from all His works"*; [5] and again in this *place:* [d]*"They shall not enter My rest."*

[6] Since therefore it remains that some *must* enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience, [7] again He designates a certain day, saying in David, *"Today,"* after such a long time, as it has been said:

> [e]*"Today, if you will hear His voice,*
> *Do not harden your hearts."*

[8] For if [2]Joshua had [f]given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. [9] There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. [10] For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God *did* from His.

The Word Discovers Our Condition

[11] [g]Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. [12] For the word of God *is* [h]living and powerful, and [i]sharper than any [j]two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is [k]a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. [13] [l]And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things *are* [m]naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we *must give* account.

Our Compassionate High Priest

[14] Seeing then that we have a great [n]High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, [o]let us hold fast *our* confession. [15] For [p]we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but [q]was in all *points* tempted as *we are,* [r]*yet* without sin. [16] [s]Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Qualifications for High Priesthood

5 For every high priest taken from among men [a]is appointed for men in things *pertaining* to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. [2] He can [1]have compassion on

4 [c]Gen. 2:2; Ex. 20:11; 31:17

5 [d]Ps. 95:11

7 [e]Ps. 95:7, 8

8 [f]Josh. 22:4 [2]Gr. *Jesus,* same as Heb. *Joshua*

11 [g]2 Pet. 1:10

12 [h]Ps. 147:15 [i]Is. 49:2 [j]Eph. 6:17; Rev. 2:12 [k][John 12:48]; 1 Cor. 14:24, 25

13 [l]2 Chr. 16:9; Ps. 33:13–15; 90:8 [m]Job 26:6; Prov. 15:11

14 [n]Heb. 2:17; 7:26 [o]Heb. 10:23

15 [p]Is. 53:3–5 [q]Luke 22:28 [r]2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 7:26

16 [s][Eph. 2:18; Heb. 10:19, 22]

CHAPTER 5

1 [a]Heb. 2:17; 8:3

2 [1]*deal gently with*

■ **4:7 Today.** The readers have already learned that they live in the time called "Today" (3:13); therefore they must heed the promises and the warnings. Through David the offer of entry (and a warning against failure to enter) is continued to a new generation, who "today" must respond to God's voice.

■ **4:8** Another indication (cf. vv. 3–5) that the physical land of Canaan did not fulfill the promise of God's rest. When David wrote, Israel long ago had entered Canaan under Joshua. If the land they entered under Joshua had fulfilled the promise of divine rest, the psalm's warning to David's generation would have been pointless. The patriarchs' hope was fixed on a better, heavenly country (11:16). There are similar arguments from the Old Testament in 7:11; 8:7.

■ **4:9 There remains . . . a rest.** The final Sabbath celebration awaits God's people in the future.

■ **4:10 ceased from his works.** The reference is probably not to conversion, in which we transfer trust from our works to Christ, but to our final deliverance from suffering, testing, and effort (v. 11). Those who die in the Lord "rest from their labors" (Rev. 14:13).

■ **4:12, 13** The preceding argument (3:7—4:11) has illustrated how the word of God's power exposed the faithlessness of the desert generation and how Scripture (e.g., Ps. 95) penetrates and judges those whom it invites today, as it warns about the deceitfulness of sin (3:13) and the possibility of falling short (v. 1).

■ **4:12 division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow.** Though some find support here for the view that a human being is basically a trichotomy consisting of body, soul, and spirit, the context is against it. It stresses the power of God's word to enter the deepest recesses of a person's being, and not a sort of division into constituent parts. Also, if the idea of division were intended, we would expect the author to say "bone and marrow" instead of "joints and marrow."

■ **4:14–16** The sobering thought of our complete exposure before God draws us to the merciful High Priest who, having been tempted, can help us in our weakness (themes announced in 2:17, 18). An exhortation to "hold fast our confession" (v. 14) caps the preceding section, and an invitation to approach God's throne introduces the discussion of Christ as the merciful High Priest.

■ **4:14 passed through the heavens.** Christ was raised, ascended, and sits at God's right hand (8:1), where He ministers as our great and eternal High Priest (7:26; 9:11, 24).

the Son of God. See note on 1:5 (cf. 5:5).

■ **4:15 In all points tempted.** This is a vivid restatement of 2:17, 18. As temptation is again mentioned, the author is careful to add that Christ was "without sin" despite His knowledge of our weakness. See theological note "The Sinlessness of Jesus."

■ **4:16 Let us therefore come boldly.** Confident access to God is a priestly privilege reserved for those who have been purified from sin's pollution by Jesus' sacrifice (7:19; 10:19, 22), and so can offer sacrifices of thanksgiving pleasing to God (12:28; 13:15, 16). On the priestly privilege of Christian believers see Rom. 5:1, 2; Eph. 2:13–22; 1 Pet. 2:4–10.

mercy . . . grace to help. Mercy addresses our need for forgiveness when we have succumbed to temptation, and grace brings timely support to sustain us in the midst of temptation (2:18).

■ **5:1–10** As the Old Testament priests were identified with the weak and erring people whom they represented (vv. 1–3) and served at God's appointment (v. 4), so also Christ became High Priest by the Father's appointment (vv. 5, 6) and was identified with His people through suffering (vv. 7–10).

■ **5:1 offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins.** The phrase "gifts and sacrifices" covers offerings of several different kinds called for in the work of Old Testament priests (8:3; Lev. 1—7). But the main interest here is in those offered for sins.

■ **5:2 can have compassion.** The weakness of the Old Testament high

2 [b]Heb. 7:28
3 [c]Lev. 9:7; 16:6; [Heb. 7:27; 9:7]
4 [d]Ex. 28:1; Num. 16:40; 1 Chr. 23:13
5 [e]John 8:54 [f]Ps. 2:7
6 [g]Ps. 110:4; Heb. 7:17
7 [h]Matt. 26:39, 42, 44; Mark 14:36, 39; Luke 22:41, 44 [i]Ps. 22:1 [j]Matt. 26:53 [k]Matt. 26:39

those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to [b]weakness. 3 Because of this he is required as for the people, so also for [c]himself, to offer *sacrifices* for sins. 4 And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as [d]Aaron *was.*

A Priest Forever

5 [e]So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, *but it* was He who said to Him:

[f]*"You are My Son,*
Today I have begotten You."

6 As *He* also *says* in another *place:*

[g]*"You are a priest forever*
According to the order of Melchizedek";

7 who, in the days of His flesh, when He had [h]offered up prayers and supplications, [i]with vehement cries and tears to Him [j]who was able to save Him from death, and was heard [k]because of

The Sinlessness of Jesus

The New Testament teaches that Jesus was entirely free from sin (John 8:46; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; 7:26; 1 Pet. 2:22; 1 John 3:5). This assertion means not only that He never disobeyed His Father, but that He loved God's law and found whole-hearted joy in keeping it. In fallen human beings there is always some reluctance to obey God, and sometimes resentment amounting to hatred at the claims He makes on us (Rom. 8:7). But Jesus' moral nature was unfallen, as was Adam's prior to his sin, and in Jesus there was no prior inclination away from God for Satan to exploit, as there is in us. Jesus loved His Father and His Father's will with all His heart, mind, soul, and strength.

Heb. 4:15 says that Jesus was "in all points tempted as we are," though without sinning. The temptations we face—temptations to wrongfully indulge natural desires, to evade moral and spiritual issues, to cut moral corners and take easy ways out, to be less than loving and sympathetic to others, to be self-centered and lost in self-pity—all these came upon Jesus, but He yielded to none of them (see "The Humanity of Jesus" at 2 John 7). In Gethsemane and on the Cross He fought temptation and resisted sin to the point of death. Christians must learn from Him to do likewise (Luke 14:25–33; Heb. 12:3–13).

For our salvation it was necessary that Jesus be free from sin. He was "a lamb without blemish and without spot," able to offer His "precious" blood for us (1 Pet. 1:19). If He had been sinful He would have needed a savior Himself, and His death would not have helped us. Christ obeyed on our behalf the moral commandments applying to all humanity. He also fulfilled all the will of God applying to Him in particular, as the One called to be the Messiah. His perfect obedience qualifies Him to be our all-sufficient Savior. □

priest in the face of his own temptations compelled him to moderate his indignation over others' sins and "have compassion" for them. Jesus' sympathy also is strongly motivated, since He fully identifies with the struggles of His people. Yet Jesus never succumbed to temptation (4:15).

ignorant and going astray. The law (Num. 15:27–31) distinguished between sins committed out of weakness or ignorance, and sins committed in defiance of the Lord's authority (10:26, 27).

■ **5:3** The Old Testament high priest was himself in need of atonement and forgiveness (7:27; 9:7; Lev. 16:11), unlike our sinless High Priest (4:15; 7:26).

■ **5:4 called by God, just as Aaron was.** The initial call of Aaron (Ex. 28:1) was confirmed in response to the challenge of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram (Num. 16) through the budding of Aaron's staff (9:4; Num. 17:1–10). The priestly privilege of approach to God is by invitation only—mediated through physical descent for the Old Testament Levitical priests, but finally established through the divine oath to Jesus the Son (7:11–28).

■ **5:5 You are My Son.** Ps. 2:7 is quoted twice in Hebrews (1:5), both times in a leading position. Here it is the opening step of a long and detailed discussion of Melchizedek.

■ **5:6 Melchizedek.** This mysterious figure is mentioned only twice in the Old Testament (Gen. 14:18; Ps. 110:4). But the association here of the title "priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek" with the words "My Son" (v. 5) shows the exalted character of this priesthood, and justifies the author's fuller explanation in ch. 7.

■ **5:7 vehement cries and tears.** Jesus' anguish at the prospect of the Cross (Mark 14:33–36; John 12:27) shows that He is not aloof from the weakness and fears that threaten us.

His godly fear, [8] though He was a Son, *yet* He learned [l]obedience by the things which He suffered. [9] And [m]having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, [10] called by God as High Priest [n]*"according to the order of Melchizedek,"* [11] of whom [o]we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become [p]dull of hearing.

Spiritual Immaturity

[12] For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need *someone* to teach you again the first principles of the [2]oracles of God; and you have come to need [q]milk and not solid food. [13] For everyone who partakes *only* of milk *is* unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is [r]a babe. [14] But solid food belongs to those who are [3]of full age, *that is,* those who by reason of [4]use have their senses exercised [s]to discern both good and evil.

The Peril of Not Progressing

6 Therefore, [a]leaving the discussion of the elementary *principles* of Christ, let us go on to [1]perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from [b]dead works and of faith toward God, [2] [c]of the doctrine of baptisms, [d]of laying on of hands, [e]of resurrection of the dead, [f]and of eternal judgment. [3] And this [2]we will do if God permits.

[4] For *it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted [g]the heavenly gift, and [h]have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, [5] and have tasted the good word of God and the

8 [l]Phil. 2:8
9 [m]Heb. 2:10
10 [n]Ps. 110:4
11 [o][John 16:12] [p][Matt. 13:15]
12 [q]1 Cor. 3:1–3 [2]*sayings,* Scriptures
13 [r]Eph. 4:14
14 [s]Is. 7:15 [3]*mature* [4]*practice*

CHAPTER 6

1 [a]Heb. 5:12 [b][Heb. 9:14] [1]*maturity*
2 [c]Acts 19:3–5 [d][Acts 8:17] [e]Acts 17:31 [f]Acts 24:25

3 [2]M *let us do* 4 [g][John 4:10] [h][Gal. 3:2, 5]

was heard. The psalmists praised God that He heard their cries of distress (Ps. 22:24; 30:23; 116:1). Jesus' plea for salvation from death was answered not through escape from the ordeal of the Cross, but through His Resurrection from death.

■ **5:8 He learned obedience.** Though entirely free from sin (4:15), Jesus' struggle against temptation was real (2:18). As One who came into the world to do the Father's will (10:7), Christ successfully met each increasingly difficult challenge to His integrity, climaxing in the shameful and painful death on the cross (Phil. 2:8). This life of learned obedience offsets the disobedience of Adam (Rom. 5:19) and qualifies Christ to serve as the eternal High Priest (2:17, 18; 4:15).

■ **5:9 having been perfected.** This does not mean that Jesus finally became sinless, since He was always without sin (4:15), but that He finished the course of suffering that was set before Him, including the sacrificial death. Having done this, He was "perfected," or completely qualified to serve as the uniquely effective High Priest. The language here may allude to the concept of priestly consecration.

eternal salvation. Jesus lives forever to intercede as our High Priest (7:24, 25).

■ **5:10 Melchizedek.** See ch. 7.

■ **5:11—6:12** Christ's priestly ministry after the order of Melchizedek is "hard to explain" (5:11) because of the readers' immaturity. The exhortation in this section focuses on the dangers posed by a failure to "go on to perfection" (6:1 text note).

■ **5:11 dull of hearing.** The Greek word translated "dull" reappears in 6:12 ("sluggish," text note), suggesting that the danger of spiritual laziness is in view throughout this section.

■ **5:12 first principles of the oracles of God.** Such truths are listed in 6:1, 2.

■ **5:13 milk.** Although milk is nourishing for infants (1 Pet. 2:2), the author desires that his readers become mature Christians, for whom solid food is appropriate (1 Cor. 3:1, 2).

■ **5:14** The maturity needed to grasp Christ's priestly ministry is not intellectual sophistication, but spiritual discernment arising from consistent obedience to God's will (Phil. 1:9–11).

■ **6:1 the elementary principles of Christ.** These are the ABC's of Christian doctrine, which are now briefly enumerated (vv. 1, 2). All these doctrines can be found in the Book of Acts.

repentance . . . and of faith. See Mark 1:15; Acts 20:21.

■ **6:2 baptisms.** The plural is unexpected; there is only one Christian baptism (Eph. 4:5). Yet even today when Christian baptism is discussed other baptisms, at least John the Baptist's, must be mentioned . This was certainly true in New Testament times (9:10; Matt. 3:11; 28:19; Mark 1:4; John 4:1; Acts 1:5). Another possibility is that the word refers specifically to Old Testament ceremonial washings (see 9:10) as part of the essential background for Christ's work.

laying on of hands. This action accompanied blessing, healing the sick, ordination of church officers, and especially the gift of the Spirit, which was also associated with baptism (Matt. 19:13–15; Luke 4:40; Acts 6:6; 8:17; 9:17; 28:8; 1 Tim. 4:14). Alternatively, as is possible with "baptisms," the writer may be referring to the Old Testament foundations of Christ's work.

■ **6:3 if God permits.** This conventional phrase acknowledges the need for God's help in learning and teaching Christian doctrine. Its use suggests that the material to follow is difficult, as indeed it is.

■ **6:4–12** This sober warning has been variously interpreted. Some understand the author to refer to genuine Christians who lose their salvation, but such a reading conflicts with passages which teach that those whom God has truly saved will persevere in faith to the end (John 10:28, 29; Rom. 8:28–30; "Perseverance of the Saints" at Rom. 8:30). Others interpret the warning as an argument directed against a Judaizing heretical sect, followers of a heresy serious enough that embracing it would lead to the loss of all hope of salvation. Another interpretation holds that the author is describing the apostates of vv. 4–8 in terms of their profession and the blessings they appeared to share with genuine believers up to the moment of their apostasy. Although Jesus saves completely (7:25) and has made perfect forever (10:13) those who hear His word with faith, the author exhorts the readers to prove the faith they profess by their perseverance. Without faith, proximity to God in the fellowship of His covenant people is no blessing; rather, it subjects apostates to more severe judgment.

■ **6:4 once enlightened.** That is, had the knowledge of God disclosed in the gospel message (10:26; John 1:9; 2 Cor. 4:4–6) and publicly confessed in baptism. In early Christian writings, conversion and baptism was sometimes termed "enlightenment." The Greek word for "once" is prominent in Hebrews. It is used in connection with the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ in 10:2, 10.

tasted the heavenly gift. Some see here a reference to participation in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Or the phrase could be paired with "enlightened" as a broad description of apparent conversion.

partakers of the Holy Spirit. They had some experience with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but it is not necessary to conclude that regeneration is specifically intended.

■ **6:5 powers of the age to come.** Most obviously, the signs and wonders that accompanied the introduction of the gospel (2:4 note).

powers of the age to come, 6 [3]if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, [i]since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put *Him* to an open shame.

7 For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, [j]receives blessing from God; 8 [k]but if it bears thorns and briers, *it is* rejected and near to being cursed, whose end *is* to be burned.

A Better Estimate

9 But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner. 10 For [l]God *is* not unjust to forget [m]your work and [4]labor of love which you have shown toward His name, *in that* you have [n]ministered to the saints, and do minister. 11 And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence [o]to the full assurance of hope until the end, 12 that you do not become [5]sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience [p]inherit the promises.

God's Infallible Purpose in Christ

13 For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, [q]He swore by Himself, 14 saying, [r]*"Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you."* 15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the [s]promise. 16 For men indeed swear by the greater, and [t]an oath for confirmation *is* for them an end of all dispute. 17 Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to [u]the heirs of promise [v]the [6]immutability of His counsel, [7]confirmed *it* by an oath, 18 that by two [8]immutable things, in which it *is* impossible for God to [w]lie, we [9]might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope [x]set before *us*.

19 This *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, [y]and which enters the

6 [i]Heb. 10:29 [3]Or *and have fallen away*
7 [j]Ps. 65:10
8 [k]Is. 5:6
10 [l]Rom. 3:4 [m]1 Thess. 1:3 [n]Rom. 15:25 [4]NU omits *labor of*
11 [o]Col. 2:2
12 [p]Heb. 10:36 [5]*lazy*
13 [q]Gen. 22:16, 17
14 [r]Gen. 22:16, 17
15 [s]Gen. 12:4; 21:5
16 [t]Ex. 22:11
17 [u]Heb. 11:9 [v]Rom. 11:29 [6]*unchangeableness of His purpose* [7]*guaranteed*
18 [w]Num. 23:19 [x][Col. 1:5] [8]*unchangeable* [9]M omits *might*
19 [y]Lev. 16:2, 15

■ **6:6 renew them again to repentance.** There is a kind of falling away that is irreversible (1 John 5:16). Christian salvation is final (10:4), and the decision to reject it, if made at a certain level, cannot be reversed. According to 1 John 2:19, anyone who makes such a decision was not really a member of the household of faith, although they may have seemed to be. Judas Iscariot is the clearest example of someone who participated in the coming of the kingdom, but did not enter it (Matt. 26:47–49; cf. Matt. 7:21–23). This warning is not to encourage speculation about whether others are irretrievably lost, but urges us to cling closely to the Savior ourselves. See "The Unpardonable Sin" at Mark 3:29.

crucify again . . . the Son of God. By renouncing their faith in Christ they declare that Christ's cross is not a holy sacrifice for others' sins, but the deserved execution of a guilty criminal (10:29). Such apostates have returned to a point where the Cross does nothing but condemn them as accomplices in murder (Acts 18:5, 6).

There is an analogy between the once-for-all character of Christ's sacrifice for sin and the believer's symbolic participation in that crucifixion through baptism (v. 4 note). Christ's sacrificial death cannot be repeated. In the same way, the believer's participation in His death, sealed by baptism (Rom. 6:3, 4; Col. 2:12), cannot be withdrawn and then repeated.

open shame. The apostasy described in ch. 6 is not a matter of private, internal doubt. It is the forceful, complete, and public rejection of a faith once confessed. As such, it has bad effects for others as well as for the apostate (12:15).

■ **6:7, 8** According to the prophetic imagery of the Old Testament, the ground is God's people (Is. 5:1–7), and the rain falling on it is the Word (Is. 55:10, 11) or the Spirit of God (Is. 44:3, 4). The unproductive field is destroyed (Is. 5:4–6). See also Matt. 13:7, 8, 22, 23.

■ **6:9–12** By bearing firstfruits of a useful crop, the readers give reason for confidence that they will prove to be the land that receives God's blessing of salvation. Still, they must shake off their present sluggishness to receive the inheritance promised to patient believers. The severity of the previous warning should not lead to despair.

■ **6:10 ministered . . . and do minister.** For example, through standing with those ridiculed or imprisoned for their faith (10:32–34).

■ **6:11 hope.** Because the goal of faith is in the future, the faithful must hold on "until the end" (cf. 3:14; 6:18, 19; 11:1).

■ **6:12 sluggish.** This term (translated "dull" in 5:11) marks the beginning and end of the exhortation.

through faith and patience inherit the promises. Abraham is the preeminent example (vv. 15, 17; 11:8–19); but biblical history is full of witnesses who have run the course of patient faith ahead of us (11:4–38), and have now received the promised inheritance through Christ's perfecting work (11:13, 39, 40).

■ **6:13–20** Faith can endure patiently because God's oath secures His promise to us, as it did to Abraham. Our confidence rests in the eternal high priesthood of Jesus after the order of Melchizedek, a priesthood secured by divine promise and oath (7:20–22, 28).

■ **6:13 He swore by Himself.** That God, whose "word is truth" (John 17:17; cf. Titus 1:2), should reinforce the surety of that infallible promise through an oath underscores the permanence and seriousness of the divine promise (Gen. 15:8–21; 22:17). While sinful and fallible human beings "swear by the greater" than themselves (v. 16), God, the highest authority, "swore by Himself" (v. 13).

■ **6:15 after he had patiently endured, he obtained.** The divine promise and oath (Gen. 22:17) was God's response to Abraham's attempted sacrifice of Isaac, the child of divine promise (Gen. 12:2; 15:4–6), in obedience to divine direction (Gen. 22:2). In the birth and then the rescue of Isaac (Gen. 21:1–3; 22:11, 12), Abraham did receive the promised blessing of offspring. Nevertheless, he did not see the complete fulfillment of those covenantal promises (11:39, 40; cf. Rom. 4:13, 16, 17).

■ **6:17 His counsel.** See text note. God's unchanging purpose was to bless the world through the seed of Abraham (Gen. 12:3); the meaning of this was revealed in the gospel (Gal. 3:6–9).

the heirs of promise. God's oath-bound promise was not only for Abraham but for all who follow his footsteps of faith (1:14; 6:12; 10:36; Rom. 4:23, 24).

■ **6:18 two immutable things.** The unchanging promise God conveyed to Abraham and the oath that confirmed it, raising it above all uncertainty or distrust (vv. 13, 14 note). The oath confirms that the promise was indeed the purpose of God.

the hope set before us. See theological note "Hope."

■ **6:19 the Presence behind the veil.** Our life's anchor is secured in the innermost section of the heavenly tabernacle, the original from which the earthly sanctuary was modeled (8:2; 9:11, 12, 24, 25; 10:19, 20).

Presence behind the veil, 20 [z]where the forerunner has entered for us, *even* Jesus, [a]having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

The King of Righteousness

7 For this [a]Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him, 2 to whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all, first being translated "king of righteousness," and then also king of Salem, meaning "king of peace," 3 without father, without mother, without genealogy, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God, remains a priest continually.

4 Now consider how great this man *was,* to whom even the patriarch Abraham gave a tenth of the [1]spoils. 5 And indeed [b]those who are of the sons of Levi, who receive the priesthood, have a commandment to receive tithes from the people according to the law, that is, from their brethren, though they have come from the loins of Abraham; 6 but he whose genealogy is not derived from them received tithes from Abraham [c]and blessed [d]him who had the promises. 7 Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better. 8 Here mortal men receive tithes, but there he

20 [z][John 14:2; Heb. 4:14] [a]Gen. 14:17–19; Ps. 110:4; Heb. 3:1; 5:10, 11

CHAPTER 7

1 [a]Gen. 14:18–20; Heb. 7:6

4 [1]*plunder*

5 [b]Num. 18:21–26; 2 Chr. 31:4

6 [c]Gen. 14:19, 20 [d][Rom. 4:13]

Hope

Christians look forward with hope to the joy of being with Christ in glory forever. Faith is defined as "the substance of things hoped for" (Heb. 11:1) because the invisible things hoped for in the future are grasped through faith. Hope is certain; it is "an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast" (Heb. 6:18, 19). According to the Bible, Christ is "our hope" (1 Tim. 1:1), and our God is called "the God of hope" (Rom. 15:13).

An ethic of hope pervades the New Testament. It is an ethic of pilgrimage for strangers on their way home (Heb. 11:13; 1 Pet. 2:11). It is an ethic of purity, as the one who hopes to be like Jesus when He appears "purifies himself, just as He is pure" (1 John 3:3). It is an ethic of preparedness, since we should be ready to leave this world at any time (2 Cor. 5:6–8; Phil. 1:21–24; cf. Luke 12:15–21). Hope calls us to be patient (Rom. 8:25; cf. 5:1–5). Hope gives strength and confidence for running the race, fighting the good fight, and enduring the tribulations that continue in this life (John 16:33; Acts 14:22; Rom. 8:18; 2 Tim. 4:7, 8).

Though the Christian life is marked more by suffering than by triumph (Acts 14:22; 1 Cor. 4:8–13; 2 Cor. 4:7–18), our hope is sure and our mood should be free from despair (1 John 4:18). □

■ **6:20 the forerunner has entered.** Entrance to the inner sanctuary is not possible without Jesus. He went in first, so that His people could follow. But His entrance, and how His people have a part in it, requires a lengthy explanation. This verse begins the discussion of Christ's priesthood "according to the order of Melchizedek," announced in 5:6 but delayed until now.

■ **7:1–28** The central point of this chapter is that the solemn promise of Ps. 110:4 was fulfilled only in Jesus Christ. Jesus' eternal priesthood is explained in terms of the two Old Testament texts that mention Melchizedek: Gen. 14:17–20 and Ps. 110:4.

■ **7:1 king of Salem.** The introduction of Melchizedek emphasizes that he was a king as well as a priest. As such he is a type of Christ, who is our prophet, priest, and king. "Salem" was apparently an ancient name for Jerusalem (Ps. 76:2).

■ **7:2 king of righteousness.** "Melchizedek" is interpreted by the Hebrew words *melek,* "king," and *zedek,* "righteousness."

■ **7:3** Some believe that Melchizedek is a preincarnate appearance of Christ, but this is unlikely since terms of comparison and analogy are used: (a) he is "like the Son of God" (a comparison of the Son with Himself would be odd); (b) the Son became High Priest "according to the order of Melchizedek" (6:20) later, through His incarnation, atoning death, and exaltation. In addition, in Gen. 14 Melchizedek is presented as one who has a recognized political position (king of Salem), whereas Old Testament theophanies are brief and exceptional.

without father . . . mother . . . beginning of days nor end of life. While most figures in Genesis are located in a genealogical line, Melchizedek appears without ancestors or progeny, and without notice of his birth or death. The Holy Spirit has described him in a way that is prophetic of Christ.

without genealogy. The appointment of priests in the line of Melchizedek is without regard to ancestry, since no genealogy is recorded for this line.

■ **7:4–10** Two actions show Melchizedek's priestly superiority to Abraham's Levite descendants: Abraham gave a tithe to Melchizedek (vv. 4–6, 8–10), and Melchizedek blessed Abraham (vv. 6, 7).

■ **7:5 the sons of Levi.** The Levitical priests inherited a right to tax even persons descended from Abraham (Num. 18:21–29).

■ **7:7 the better.** Giving the blessing, like receiving the tenth, clearly demonstrates superiority, in this case the superiority of Melchizedek over Abraham.

■ **7:8 mortal men . . . it is witnessed that he lives.** The "mortal men" are the Levites, whose office and authority is transmitted through descent and inheritance, in association with the provisions of the law (v. 5). Melchizedek, however, "lives." The declaration that he is living is found in Ps. 110:4, quoted in 5:6, and returned to the foreground with the allusions in 6:20 and 7:3. In the next section (vv. 11–28), the importance of this declaration or "oath" is explained (vv. 20–22).

receives them, [e]of whom it is witnessed that he lives. 9 Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak, 10 for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.

Need for a New Priesthood

11 [f]Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need *was there* that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron? 12 For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law. 13 For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has [2]officiated at the altar.

14 For *it is* evident that [g]our Lord arose from [h]Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning [3]priesthood. 15 And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest 16 who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life. 17 For [4]He testifies:

> [i]"*You are a priest forever*
> *According to the order of Melchizedek.*"

18 For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of [j]its weakness and unprofitableness, 19 for [k]the law made nothing [5]perfect; on the other hand, *there is the* bringing in of [l]a better hope, through which [m]we draw near to God.

Greatness of the New Priest

20 And inasmuch as *He was* not *made priest* without an oath 21 (for they have become priests without an oath, but He with an oath by Him who said to Him:

> [n]"*The* LORD *has sworn*
> *And will not relent,*
> '*You are a priest* [6]*forever*
> *According to the order of Melchizedek*' "),

22 by so much more Jesus has become a [7]surety of a [o]better covenant.

23 Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. 24 But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. 25 Therefore He is also [p]able

8 [e]Heb. 5:6; 6:20; [Rev. 1:18]
11 [f][Rom. 7:7–14]; Gal. 2:21; Heb. 7:18; 8:7
13 [2]*served*
14 [g]Gen. 49:8–10; Num. 24:17; Is. 1:1; Mic. 5:2; Matt. 1:3; 2:6; Rev. 5:5 [h]Matt. 1:2 [3]NU *priests*
17 [i]Ps. 110:4; Heb. 5:6; 6:20; 7:21 [4]NU *it is testified*
18 [j][Rom. 8:3]; Gal. 3:21; Heb. 7:11
19 [k][Acts 13:39]; Rom. 3:20; 7:7; Gal. 2:16; 3:21; Heb. 9:9; 10:1 [l]Heb. 6:18, 19 [m]Lam. 3:57; Rom. 5:2; [Eph. 2:18]; Heb. 4:16; James 4:8 [5]*complete*
21 [n]Ps. 110:4; Heb. 5:6; 7:17 [6]NU ends the quotation after *forever,*
22 [o]Heb. 8:6 [7]*guarantee*
25 [p]Jude 24 [q]Rom. 8:34; 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 9:24; 1 John 2:1

■ **7:9 paid tithes through Abraham.** The argument depends on Abraham's representative status as the progenitor of a priestly system based on physical descent; those priests cannot rise above Abraham. The argument does not mean that every person who descended from Abraham participated in whatever Abraham did, simply by reason of physical descent. The text does not imply any pre-existence of Levi.

■ **7:11 if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood.** That is, if the Levitical priests had been able to give the people permanent, free access to God. As in 4:8 and 8:7, the author argues that certain promises in the Old Testament itself indicate that the law was imperfect and would be replaced in the "last days" (1:2). The rhetorical question announces that the effectiveness of the Levitical system will be compared with that of "another priest."

under it the people received the law. Because of sin and the need for a ministry of reconciliation, the Levitical priesthood was instituted, together with the Mosaic law that provided for it. The law and the priesthood are being considered together, as one system of religious life. If defective, they will both be changed (v. 12).

■ **7:13–28** The differences between Jesus and the Levites are now quickly reviewed. His descent is from Judah, not Levi (v. 14); He lives eternally (v. 16); His priesthood is founded on the divine oath (v. 20).

■ **7:16 power of an endless life.** Christ's eternal priesthood (Ps. 110:4) is grounded in the indomitable power of His resurrection (Rom. 6:9, 10).

■ **7:19** See note on v. 11.

a better hope. This hope, together with the divine promise and oath, was mentioned in 6:17, 18. Vv. 20–28 continue the emphasis on the connection between our hope and the certainty of God's promise and oath.

■ **7:21 oath.** The divine oath expressed in Ps. 110:4 ("The LORD has sworn") demonstrates the unchangeable permanence of the new priesthood of Jesus (6:17, 18).

■ **7:22 surety.** This renders a Greek word found only here in the New Testament. Jesus Himself, as the substance of what was promised and the possessor of indestructible resurrection life (v. 16), is the guarantee of a new and better covenant (text note).

covenant. The first of seventeen occurrences of this important word (Greek *diatheke*) in Hebrews. It is the usual translation of the Old Testament word for "covenant" (Hebrew *berith*) in the Greek Old Testament. A "new covenant" was promised in Jer. 31:31–34, which will be cited in 8:8–12 and 10:16, 17.

■ **7:23 many priests.** The reference is to the many high priests who succeeded one another in office. The law of priestly succession (Ex. 29:29, 30) presupposed the eventual death of the priest. This lack of permanence, together with the repetition of the Old Testament sacrifices (10:11), shows the inadequacy of the old order.

■ **7:25** Jesus' eternal life and priesthood make possible His eternal intercession for worshipers who "come to God through Him," leading to their complete and eternal salvation. "Uttermost" may refer to comprehensive salvation (meeting our every need) or to eternal salvation (especially as it is grounded in Jesus' always living to pray for us).

to save [s]to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives [q]to make intercession for them.

[26] For such a High Priest was fitting for us, [r]*who is* holy, [s]harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, [s]and has become higher than the heavens; [27] who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His [t]own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. [28] For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, *appoints* the Son who has been perfected forever.

The New Priestly Service

8 Now *this is* the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, [a]who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, [2] a Minister of [b]the [l]sanctuary and of [c]the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.

[3] For [d]every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore [e]*it is* necessary that this One also have something to offer. [4] For if He were on earth, He would not be a priest, since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; [5] who serve [f]the copy and [g]shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, [h]"*See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.*" [6] But now [i]He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a [j]better covenant, which was established on better promises.

A New Covenant

[7] For if that [k]first *covenant* had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. [8] Because finding fault with them, He says: [l]"*Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— [9] not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD.* [10] *For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the [m]LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and [n]I will be their God, and they shall be My people.* [11] [o]*None of them shall teach his*

25 [s]*completely* or *forever*

26 [r][2 Cor. 5:21]; Heb. 4:15 [s]Eph. 1:20 [g]*innocent*

27 [t]Lev. 9:7; 16:6; Heb. 5:3

CHAPTER 8

1 [a]Ps. 68:18; 110:1; Eph. 1:20; Col. 3:1; Heb. 2:17; 3:1; 10:12

2 [b]Heb. 9:8, 12 [c]Heb. 9:11, 24 [l]Lit. *holies*

3 [d][Rom. 4:25; 5:6, 8; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 5:2]; Heb. 5:1; 8:4 [e][Eph. 5:2; Heb. 9:14]

5 [f]Heb. 9:23, 24 [g]Col. 2:17; Heb. 10:1 [h]Ex. 25:40

6 [i][2 Cor. 3:6–8] [j][Luke 22:20]; Heb. 7:22

7 [k]Ex. 3:8; 19:5

8 [l]Jer. 31:31–34

10 [m]Jer. 31:33; Rom. 11:27; Heb. 10:16 [n]Zech. 8:8

11 [o]Is. 54:13; John 6:45; [1 John 2:27]

■ **7:26 holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.** In 2:18 and 4:15—5:3, the author showed the importance of Jesus' identification with us in undergoing temptation. But it is also imperative that He be "without sin" (4:15) to be qualified to enter the heavenly sanctuary on our behalf (8:1, 2; 9:11, 12, 24, 25). See "The Sinlessness of Jesus" at 4:15.

■ **7:27** The contrast between the Levitical priests' repeated daily (and yearly) sacrifices and Jesus' once-for-all offering of Himself is developed in 9:25—10:18.

■ **7:28** This verse summarizes the contrast between the old and new covenant priesthood. First, the old covenant priesthood was appointed by law without a divine oath (v. 20), while the eternal priesthood of Christ was appointed by an oath (v. 21). Second, the temporary appointment of weak and sinful (v. 27) men is contrasted with the eternal appointment of the sinless "Son . . . perfected forever."

■ **8:1–6** The discussion of Jesus' qualifications and appointment as the ultimate High Priest now leads to a description of His ministry in the heavenly sanctuary.

■ **8:1 the main point.** The writer pauses to summarize what has been said thus far. He has explained how Jesus is the new High Priest in the order of Melchizedek—One who "was fitting for us" (7:26). Now he will tell what Jesus does in this role. The pause reminds us that the writer knows his argument is difficult but that he has a clear purpose in what he says.

■ **8:2 the true tabernacle.** The heavenly temple of God is the original after which the earthly tent and temple were copied (v. 5).

not man. See 9:11, 24. God appointed an earthly sanctuary as a means of His presence among His people, but "the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands" (Acts 7:48, 49; cf. 1 Kin. 8:27).

■ **8:3 something to offer.** Jesus' offering was Himself (7:27), His own blood (9:12) and body (10:10).

■ **8:4 He would not be a priest.** Under the provisions of the Mosaic law, Jesus could not be a priest (7:13). Jesus' priestly service is of a different order; it is not a mere supplement to the old system.

■ **8:5 copy and shadow.** The tabernacle made by Moses provided for worship modeled after the spiritual realm in which Christ ministers. That tabernacle and its worship pointed forward to God's plan of salvation that would be revealed in Christ.

■ **8:6** The new covenant was better because it was made with an oath (7:22), and now it is seen to rest on "better promises" as well (cited in vv. 8–12). On both counts, the ministry that serves the new covenant is "more excellent."

Mediator. A legal intermediary who represents two parties and through whose work a new relationship is established. Moses is described as the mediator of the law (Gal. 3:19, 20). Crucial to Christ's mediatorial work was His offering of Himself as an atoning sacrifice for sin (9:14, 15; 12:24; 1 Tim. 2:5, 6).

■ **8:7–13** The promise of a new covenant in Jer. 31:31–34 is a unifying theme of 8:7—10:18, where the word translated "covenant" occurs fourteen times. In addition, it occurs three other places in Hebrews (7:22; 12:24; 13:20) and sixteen times elsewhere in the New Testament.

■ **8:7** God's promise of a new covenant through Jeremiah implied that the first covenant with Israel at Sinai was not faultless. As in 4:8 and 7:11, an Old Testament promise is shown to imply the insufficiency of the old covenant order.

■ **8:8 finding fault with them, He says.** While the law was "holy and just and good" (Rom. 7:12), it could not in itself empower obedience (7:18, 19), as the quotation from Jer. 31:31–34 makes clear. The result was that the people "did not continue" in that covenant.

■ **8:10 put My laws in their mind.** Unlike the law's sacrifices, Christ's death cleanses the conscience (9:9–14), so that we do the will of God (10:36; 13:21).

■ **8:11 all shall know Me.** Under the law, access to God's presence was restricted (9:7, 8). But now all who come to God through Jesus Christ may enter the true sanctuary (10:19–22).

neighbor, and none his brother, saying, 'Know the [p]*LORD,' for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them.* [12] *For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness,* [q]*and their sins* [2]*and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."*

[13] [r]In that He says, *"A new covenant,"* He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.

The Earthly Sanctuary

9 Then indeed, even the first *covenant* had ordinances of divine service and [a]the earthly sanctuary. [2] For a tabernacle was prepared: the first *part,* in which *was* the lampstand, the table, and the showbread, which is called the [1]sanctuary; [3] [b]and behind the second veil, the part of the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All, [4] which had the [c]golden censer and [d]the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which *were* [e]the golden pot that had the manna, [f]Aaron's rod that budded, and [g]the tablets of the covenant; [5] and [h]above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.

Limitations of the Earthly Service

[6] Now when these things had been thus prepared, [i]the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing *the services.* [7] But into the second part the high priest *went* alone [j]once a year, not without blood, which he offered for [k]himself and *for* the people's sins *committed* in ignorance; [8] the Holy Spirit indicating this, that [l]the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. [9] It *was* symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered [m]which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience— [10] *concerned* only with [n]foods and drinks, [o]various [2]washings, [p]and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation.

The Heavenly Sanctuary

[11] But Christ came *as* High Priest of [q]the good things [3]to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. [12] Not [r]with the blood of goats and calves, but [s]with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place [t]once for all, [u]having ob-

11 [p]Jer. 31:34
12 [q]Rom. 11:27 [2]NU omits *and their lawless deeds*
13 [r][2 Cor. 5:17]

CHAPTER 9

1 [a]Ex. 25:8
2 [1]*holy place,* lit. *holies*
3 [b]Ex. 26:31–35; 40:3
4 [c]Lev. 16:12 [d]Ex. 25:10 [e]Ex. 16:33 [f]Num. 17:1–10 [g]Ex. 25:16; 34:29
5 [h]Lev. 16:2
6 [i]Num. 18:2–6; 28:3
7 [j]Ex. 30:10 [k]Heb. 5:3
8 [l][John 14:6]
9 [m]Heb. 7:19
10 [n]Col. 2:16 [o]Num. 19:7 [p]Eph. 2:15 [2]Lit. *baptisms*
11 [q]Heb. 10:1 [3]NU *that have come*
12 [r]Heb. 10:4 [s]Eph. 1:7 [t]Zech. 3:9 [u][Dan. 9:24]

■ **8:12 their sins . . . I will remember no more.** Unlike the repeated sacrifices of the law, which were an annual reminder of sins (10:3), Jesus' offering of Himself has brought forgiveness, holiness, and perfection once for all (10:10, 13, 18).

■ **8:13 becoming obsolete . . . ready to vanish away.** The author advances a definition of "obsolete" in order to say that the first covenant was as good as dead from the moment Jeremiah announced the new.

■ **9:1 service . . . sanctuary.** This verse begins a lengthy comparison of Old Testament sacrifice and the sacrifice of Christ, that continues into ch. 10. The first part is a summary of the Old Testament sanctuary and its activities.

■ **9:3 veil.** This veil, or curtain, closed off the Most Holy Place, where God's presence among His people was most intensely revealed (6:19). With Jesus' death, this curtain was torn in two (10:20; Matt. 27:51).

■ **9:4 golden censer.** Although this "censer," or incense altar, was just outside the curtain (Ex. 40:26), its function was so closely associated with the inner chamber and the ark therein (Ex. 30:6) that it was considered to belong there (1 Kin. 6:22). When the high priest entered the Most Holy Place, he burned incense, producing smoke to hide the mercy seat on top of the ark of the Testimony, shielding himself from the Lord's burning purity (Lev. 16:12, 13).

Aaron's rod. The rod, or staff, that budded to show that priestly privilege comes only by God's appointment (Num. 17:10), as taught in 5:4, 5.

■ **9:5 cherubim of glory.** The "mercy seat," comprising the lid of the ark, had on it two figures of cherubim facing each other, representative of God's heavenly courtiers, who serve constantly in His presence.

Of these things . . . cannot now speak in detail. First-century Jewish writers such as Philo gave great attention to the symbolism of the sanctuary furniture. The author of Hebrews, however, desires to address what took place in the tabernacle, and he says no more about the furniture, whatever symbolic value it might have.

■ **9:6 priests always went into the first part.** Their task was to replace the showbread (Ex. 25:30; Lev. 24:5–9), to keep the lampstand burning (Ex. 27:20, 21; Lev. 24:1–4), and to burn fragrant incense twice daily, symbolizing the people's prayers (Ex. 30:7–9; Luke 1:8–10; Rev. 8:3).

■ **9:7, 8** That only one person, once a year, and only with special preparation, could enter the Most Holy Place, was the Holy Spirit's revelation through the law that the earthly sanctuary could not be the means of open, confident approach to God. The new covenant promise, "all shall know Me" (8:11), could not be fulfilled in the earthly tent.

■ **9:7 for himself.** Levitical priests were themselves in need of atonement, unlike our High Priest, Jesus (5:3; 7:26, 27).

committed in ignorance. See note on 5:2.

■ **9:9 symbolic for the present time.** The writer interprets the tabernacle ceremonies as prophetic of the time of the gospel (8:5 note). In this case, the ritual requirements display the weakness that the gospel would overcome.

■ **9:11 good things to come.** See text note. Cleansing of conscience and confidence to draw near to God were still to come while the first covenant's sanctuary and sacrifices were in force (10:1), but they have arrived through Christ. The author of Hebrews views the benefits of the age to come as already experienced (in part) by the church (6:5; 12:22–24).

greater and more perfect tabernacle. The heavenly reality behind the law's earthly copy (8:5; 9:24).

■ **9:12 blood of goats and calves.** This was used by the high priest on the yearly Day of Atonement to cleanse the Most Holy Place (Lev. 16:11–16).

once for all. In contrast to the repetition of sacrifices by the Levitical priests (10:2, 3, 10–14), This emphatic word anticipates the climactic statement in vv. 26–28.

eternal redemption. A redemption is a purchase by payment of a price or ransom. The effect of Christ's redemption is permanent because it was by His own blood.

tained eternal redemption. 13 For if [v]the blood of bulls and goats and [w]the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, [4]sanctifies for the [5]purifying of the flesh, 14 how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without [6]spot to God, [x]cleanse your conscience from [y]dead works [z]to serve the living God? 15 And for this reason [a]He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that [b]those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

The Mediator's Death Necessary

16 For where there *is* a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. 17 For [c]a testament *is* in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives. 18 [d]Therefore not even the first *covenant* was dedicated without blood. 19 For when Moses had spoken every [7]precept to all the people according to the law, [e]he took the blood of calves and goats, [f]with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, 20 saying, [g]*"This is the [h]blood of the covenant* which *God has commanded you."* 21 Then likewise [i]he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry. 22 And according to the law almost all things are [8]purified with blood, and [j]without shedding of blood there is no [9]remission.

Greatness of Christ's Sacrifice

23 Therefore *it was* necessary that [k]the copies of the things in the heavens should be [l]purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 24 For [l]Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, *which are* [2]copies of [m]the true, but into heaven itself, now [n]to appear in the presence of God for us; 25 not that He should offer Himself often, as [o]the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another— 26 He then would

13 [v]Lev. 16:14, 15 [w]Num. 19:2 *[4]sets apart [5]cleansing*

14 [x]1 John 1:7 [y]Heb. 6:1 [z]Luke 1:74 *[6]blemish*

15 [a]Rom. 3:25 [b]Heb. 3:1

17 [c]Gal. 3:15

18 [d]Ex. 24:6

19 [e]Ex. 24:5, 6 [f]Lev. 14:4, 7 *[7]command*

20 [g][Matt. 26:28] [h]Ex. 24:3–8

21 [i]Ex. 29:12, 36

22 [j]Lev. 17:11 *[8]cleansed [9]forgiveness*

23 [k]Heb. 8:5 *[l]cleansed*

24 [l]Heb. 6:20 [m]Heb. 8:2 [n]Rom. 8:34 *[2]representations*

25 [o]Heb. 9:7

■ **9:13 ashes of a heifer.** This residue was used with water to purify persons who had touched a corpse (Num. 19:9, 17, 18). Their uncleanness was not moral but ceremonial.

purifying of the flesh. They became eligible again for their duties of worship.

■ **9:14 how much more.** As in 2:2, 3, the writer uses an argument from the lesser to the greater. The lesser is the blood of animals offered by the high priest on earth; the greater is the blood shed by Christ. The lesser had ceremonial power; the greater can take away guilt from the conscience.

without spot. A sacrifice must be without defect in order to be an atoning substitute for sinners (Num. 6:14; 1 Pet. 1:19).

dead works. Not works of the law that are useless for justification (Gal. 3:1–14), but sinful deeds that deserve the covenant curse of death (6:1). See "Conscience and the Law" at 1 Sam. 24:5.

to serve the living God. The goal of forgiveness is ultimately God-centered—not merely to free us from the fear of judgment, but to qualify us to worship before God in a way that brings Him pleasure (12:28; 13:15, 16, 21).

■ **9:15** Christ's death inaugurates the new covenant, even as it brings redemption from the curse that rested on violators of the first covenant. See "Christ the Mediator" at 1 Tim. 2:5.

the redemption. A payment to release someone from captivity (cf. v. 12). Violation of God's covenant creates a liability to condemnation that can only be satisfied through the violator's death, or by redemption through a substitute.

■ **9:16 where there is a testament.** The Greek word for "testament" (*diatheke*) is the same word translated "covenant" in this passage and elsewhere. The point being made is that a death is required in order to secure what God promised to do. If the writer is not speaking of a last will, he is probably referring to the ratification of a covenant by means of a representative sacrifice such as is found in Gen. 15.

■ **9:19 Moses . . . took the blood.** The immediate reference is to Ex. 24:4–8. In this ceremony God, the author of the scroll, and the people of the congregation were sworn to the covenant with its penalties.

■ **9:20 This is the blood.** The covenant was written down on the scroll, but it had to be ratified with the offering of blood. This blood was not shed by those who might have broken the covenant, but by animals that substituted for them (cf. Gen. 15:9–18; Jer. 34:18–20). All this was a vivid demonstration that the ultimate sanction, or penalty, of the covenant was death.

■ **9:21–24** The sanctuary, the meeting place of the holy God with sinful people, must itself be purified through sacrificial blood, the only means of forgiveness. This is true not only of the earthly tent of the old covenant (vv. 21, 22) but also of the heavenly reality (vv. 23, 24), which was purified by Christ's sacrifice on the cross (v. 23 note).

■ **9:22 almost all things.** The tent and its furniture were so closely identified with the worshipers who met God there that the sacrificial blood needed for the worshipers to be forgiven (10:18) was also required to cleanse the instruments and environment of their worship (Lev. 16:16).

without shedding of blood there is no remission. This is the fundamental principle (Lev. 17:11), now restated after being introduced in vv. 16–18. Having established it, the writer turns his attention from the earthly sanctuary to the heavenly.

■ **9:23 the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices.** The heavenly sanctuary itself does not need to be purified from defilement by human sin. However, just as the earthly sanctuary was purified by sacrificial blood and set apart as the place where sinful humans could approach God, so also the true, heavenly sanctuary has now been set apart by the sacrifice of Christ as a meeting place for sinful people to enter, drawing near to God through the blood of Jesus (10:19–22; 12:24).

■ **9:24 appear in the presence of God for us.** Just as the high priest appeared for Israel on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:32, 33).

■ **9:25 often.** The same Greek word is in v. 26 and in 10:11 ("repeatedly"). The repetition of sacrifices was evidence that they were not effective to remove guilt (10:2), and it was a recurring reminder of sins (10:3). The author earlier stressed that the Day of Atonement ceremonies took place only once a year (v. 7); here the emphasis is that they are repeated again and again (10:1).

blood of another. The high priest's offering contrasts with Christ's offering of Himself. As one who himself needed atonement (v. 7), no Levitical high priest could offer himself as an unblemished substitute for others (v. 14).

■ **9:26 foundation of the world . . . end of the ages.** These phrases set forth a vast span of time, during all of which Christ had to offer Himself only once. The "end of the ages" is the same as the "last days" (1:2), a period ushered in by the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ.

have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. 27 [p]And as it is appointed for men to die once, [q]but after this the judgment, 28 so [r]Christ was [s]offered once to bear the sins [t]of many. To those who [u]eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.

Animal Sacrifices Insufficient

10 For the law, having a [a]shadow of the good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, [b]can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. 2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once [1]purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. 3 But in those *sacrifices there is* a reminder of sins every year. 4 For [c]*it is* not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.

Christ's Death Fulfills God's Will

5 Therefore, when He came into the world, He said:

[d]*"Sacrifice and offering You did not desire,*
But a body You have prepared for Me.
6 *In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin*
You had no pleasure.
7 *Then I said, 'Behold, I have come—*
In the volume of the book it is written of Me—
To do Your will, O God.'"

8 Previously saying, *"Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them"* (which are offered according to the law), 9 then He said, *"Behold, I have come to do Your will, [2]O God."* He takes away the first that He may establish the second. 10 [e]By that will we have been [3]sanctified [f]through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all.*

Christ's Death Perfects the Sanctified

11 And every priest stands [g]ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. 12 [h]But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for-

27 [p]Gen. 3:19; Eccl. 3:20 [q][2 Cor. 5:10]; 1 John 4:17

28 [r]Rom. 6:10 [s]Is. 53:12; 1 Pet. 2:24 [t]Matt. 26:28 [u]1 Cor. 1:7; Titus 2:13

CHAPTER 10

1 [a]Heb. 8:5 [b]Heb. 7:19; 9:9

2 [1]*cleansed*

4 [c]Mic. 6:6, 7

5 [d]Ps. 40:6–8

9 [2]NU, M omit ☉ *God*

10 [e]John 17:19; [Eph. 5:26; Heb. 2:11; 10:14, 29; 13:12] [f][Heb. 9:12] [3]*set apart*

11 [g]Num. 28:3

12 [h]Col. 3:1; Heb. 1:3

■ **9:27 to die once, but after this the judgment.** Thus both reincarnation and the belief that physical death is the end of personal existence are excluded. Christ suffered the common human destiny of death and judgment (v. 28), but for Him the judgment consisted in resurrection and vindication (1 Tim. 3:16). This vindication will be fully manifested when He comes again (1 Thess. 1:10). See "Death and the Intermediate State" at Phil. 1:23.

■ **9:28 to bear the sins of many.** An intentional reference to the Suffering Servant in Is. 53:12.

■ **10:1 a shadow of the good things to come.** The "good things" were future with respect to the law, which foreshadowed them; with Christ's coming they are present (9:11 note).

make . . . perfect. The worshipers could not be "once purified" for all time (v. 2). The law could not remove guilt from them and give them permanent access to God (7:11, 19; 9:9).

■ **10:2** The sacrifices were repeated again and again, showing that they provided no lasting solution to the problem of sin.

■ **10:3 reminder of sins.** The Old Testament sacrifices were a public notice, before God and humanity, that the people were still sinners (Num. 5:15). In the new covenant, God will "remember" their sins "no more" (8:12; 10:17).

■ **10:4** The inadequacy of the Old Testament sacrifices is sharply expressed in such passages as 1 Sam. 15:22; Is. 1:10–17; Amos 5:21–24; Mic. 6:6–8. The law was frustrated by the sin of the people (8:8–12; Rom. 8:3, 4).

■ **10:5–10** Ps. 40:6–8 is here interpreted to point to the replacement of the Old Testament system of animal sacrifice by the obedience and atoning death of Christ.

■ **10:5 a body You have prepared for Me.** The Hebrew text of Ps. 40:6 reads, "My ears You have opened" (cf. Is. 50:5). Hebrews follows the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) translation of the verse, speaking of the readiness of the whole person ("the body") and not only a representative part (the ears). The "body . . . prepared for Me" is the humanity assumed by Christ in the course of His full obedience to the Father (2:14; 5:8).

■ **10:7 the book.** Ultimately the Old Testament as a whole, which points to Christ (Luke 24:27, 45–47).

■ **10:8 Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin.** These terms sum up the whole Levitical sacrificial system. Over against all this (called "the first" in v. 9) Christ has another sacrifice ("the second"). Although instituted by God in the Law (2:2; 8:9; 12:18–21, 25), the Levitical system was not the means willed by God to remove His people's sin permanently.

■ **10:9 to do Your will.** He will be obedient through suffering (2:10; 5:8), atoning for sin through the sacrifice of His body (v. 10).

takes away the first. That is, the Levitical sacrificial system of the Old Testament (8:13).

■ **10:10 By that will.** The unchanging purpose of God, which Jesus Christ willingly accomplished, brought salvation to us (vv. 7, 9 and notes).

we have been sanctified. Here and in v. 14 the topic is not the process of sanctification (as in 12:14), but the once-for-all change in our status when we are united with Christ by faith, and in this way are separated from sin's pollution and qualified for the worship of God. Being "cleansed," "sanctified," and "made perfect" are virtually synonymous in Hebrews.

■ **10:11 every priest stands ministering daily.** The daily morning and evening sacrifices, no less than the yearly Day of Atonement offerings, announce by their repetition that they cannot take sin's guilt away. A further contrast (standing versus sitting) emblematic of the difference between the Levitical priesthood and the priesthood of Christ is introduced.

■ **10:12 sat down.** In contrast to the Levitical priests who stand and

ever, sat down [i]at the right hand of God, [13] from that time waiting [j]till His enemies are made His footstool. [14] For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being [4]sanctified.

[15] But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before,

[16] [k]*"This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the* LORD: *I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,"* [17] *then He adds,* [l]*"Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."* [18] Now where there is [5]remission of these, *there is* no longer an offering for sin.

Hold Fast Your Confession

[19] Therefore, brethren, having [m]boldness[6] to enter [n]the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, [20] by a new and [o]living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, [21] and *having* a High Priest over the house of God, [22] let us [p]draw near with a true heart [q]in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. [23] Let us hold fast the confession of *our* hope without wavering, for [r]He who promised *is* faithful. [24] And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, [25] [s]not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another,* and [t]so much the more as you see [u]the Day approaching.

The Just Live by Faith

[26] For [v]if we sin willfully [w]after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there [x]no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, [27] but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and [y]fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. [28] Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three [z]witnesses. [29] [a]Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, [b]counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, [c]and insulted the Spirit of grace? [30] For we know Him who said, [d]*"Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,"* [7]says the Lord. And

12 [i]Ps. 110:1
13 [j]Ps. 110:1
14 [4]*set apart*
16 [k]Jer. 31:33, 34
17 [l]Jer. 31:34
18 [5]*forgiveness*
19 [m][Eph. 2:18] [n]Heb. 9:8, 12 [6]*confidence*
20 [o]John 14:6
22 [p]Heb. 7:19; 10:1 [q]Eph. 3:12
23 [r]1 Cor. 1:9; 10:13
25 [s]Acts 2:42 [t]Rom. 13:11 [u]Phil. 4:5
26 [v]Num. 15:30 [w]2 Pet. 2:20 [x]Heb. 6:6
27 [y]Zeph. 1:18
28 [z]Deut. 17:2–6; 19:15
29 [a][Heb. 2:3] [b]1 Cor. 11:29 [c][Matt. 12:31]
30 [d]Deut. 32:35 [7]NU omits *says the Lord*

whose work is never done, Jesus "sat down at the right hand of God," as Ps. 110:1 announces (1:3; cf. 1:13; 8:1).

■ **10:15 the Holy Spirit also witnesses.** With other New Testament books, Hebrews affirms that the Spirit is the primary author of Scripture (3:7; 9:8; Acts 4:25). The two quotations following from Jer. 31 mark the beginning (8:8) and the end of the important argument developed from that passage.

■ **10:16, 17** The two quotations from Jer. 31 demonstrate that Christ's once-for-all sacrifice results in both the inner transformation or sanctification of the believer (v. 16), and in the forgiveness of sins or justification (v. 17).

■ **10:19 Therefore, brethren.** The writer includes himself with the readers in a renewed appeal for confidence, or boldness, in approaching God. This confidence is grounded, not in any merits we possess, but in the person and work of our great High Priest who is able to "sympathize with our weaknesses" (4:15).

to enter . . . by the blood of Jesus. Not only Jesus on our behalf (9:24), but also we ourselves enter into God's heavenly sanctuary through dependence on Jesus' sacrifice.

■ **10:20 the veil, that is, His flesh.** In a surprising figure of speech, the author identifies the veil of the temple and Jesus' body. The analogy lies in that just as the veil of the temple was torn to open the way into the Most Holy Place (6:19; 9:3; Matt. 27:51), so also Christ's body was torn so that His blood might be shed to open the way into the heavenly sanctuary (v. 19). The parallel is figurative and is not to be pressed.

■ **10:21 over the house of God.** See note on 3:6.

■ **10:22 draw near.** See note on 4:16.

full assurance of faith. The call for faith hints at the subject of ch. 11.

having our hearts sprinkled . . . and our bodies washed. The inner cleansing of conscience that makes Jesus' death superior to the sacrifices under the law (9:13, 14) is visibly symbolized in baptism (Eph. 5:26). As the high priest washed his body with water in preparation for entering the Most Holy Place (Lev. 16:4; Ex. 29:4), so we may enter now as priests into God's presence.

■ **10:23 hold fast the confession of our hope.** In another Hebrews passage mentioning "the house of God" (v. 21; cf. 3:1–14), there is a similar exhortation to be "steadfast" (3:14), and a similar assurance that Christ "is faithful" (cf. 3:5, 6). Probably "the beginning of our confidence" (3:14), like the "confession of our hope" (v. 23), refers to the time of baptism (note the term "water" in v. 22) and entrance into the church (v. 32).

■ **10:24 consider one another . . . stir up.** The duty of encouraging one another can find expression in the church meetings (v. 25). "Love" completes a familiar triad with "faith" (v. 22) and "hope" (v. 23). This triad seems to have played a prominent role in the teaching of the early church (1 Cor. 13:13; Col. 1:4, 5; 1 Thess. 1:3).

■ **10:25 not forsaking the assembling.** The believers had been severely persecuted (vv. 32–34). Assembling with other believers is an important part of Christian life. See "The Local Church" at Rev. 2:1.

the Day approaching. The day of Jesus' appearance a second time to bring salvation to those who wait for Him (9:28; 12:26, 27).

■ **10:26 sin willfully.** Christians who claim to be sinless are self-deluded (1 John 1:8), and those who sin should not despair of grace (4:16; 1 John 2:1, 2). The willful sin here is abandoning one's confession altogether, trampling the Son underfoot, treating His sacrificial blood as unclean, and insulting God's gracious Spirit (6:6 note; 10:29). The seriousness of the charge is indicated by its willfulness (cf. Lev. 15:30) and the measure of knowledge or enlightenment it refuses (cf. 6:4; 10:32).

no longer remains a sacrifice for sins. Since God has set aside the Levitical system of animal sacrifices (v. 9), those who abandon their confession of trust in Christ have nowhere to turn for forgiveness.

■ **10:28 rejected Moses' law.** That is, turned from God to idols (Deut. 17:2–7).

■ **10:29** This argument, from the law as the lesser to the gospel as the greater, is also found in 2:2, 3. If contemptuous violation of the law given through Moses the servant (3:5) warranted the punishment of death, then scorn for the Son of God (1:2, 3; 3:6; 6:6; 2 Pet. 2:1), His sacrificial blood (9:20; cf. Ex. 24:8; Mark 14:24), and the Spirit of grace through whom He offered Himself (9:14) deserves nothing less than "fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries" (v. 27).

■ **10:30 The Lord will judge His people.** The two quotations from the Song of Moses (Deut. 32:35, 36) show that God is ready to judge according to His covenant, discriminating those who are truly His own from apostates (cf. 1 Pet. 4:17).

again, e*"The LORD will judge His people."* 31 fIt is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

32 But grecall the former days in which, after you were gilluminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings: 33 partly while you were made ha spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while iyou became companions of those who were so treated; 34 for you had compassion on jme jin my chains, and kjoyfully accepted the plundering of your lgoods, knowing that lyou have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves 2in heaven. 35 Therefore do not cast away your confidence, mwhich has great reward. 36 nFor you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, oyou may receive the promise:

37 *"For pyet a little while,*
And q[He 3] who is coming will come and will not 4tarry.
38 *Now r[the 5] just shall live by faith:*
But if anyone draws back,
My soul has no pleasure in him."

39 But we are not of those swho draw back to 6perdition, but of those who tbelieve to the saving of the soul.

By Faith We Understand

11 Now faith is the 1substance of things hoped for, the 2evidence aof things not seen. 2 For by it the elders obtained a *good* testimony.

3 By faith we understand that b[the 3]worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

Faith at the Dawn of History

4 By faith cAbel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still dspeaks.

5 By faith Enoch was taken away so that he did not see death, e*"and was not found, because God had taken him"*; for before he was taken he had this testimony, that he pleased God. 6 But

30 aDeut. 32:36
31 f[Luke 12:5]
32 gGal. 3:4 8*enlightened*
33 h1 Cor. 4:9 iPhil. 1:7
34 j2 Tim. 1:16 kMatt. 5:12 lMatt. 6:20 9NU *the prisoners* instead of *me in my chains* 1*possessions* 2NU omits *in heaven*
35 mMatt. 5:12
36 nLuke 21:19 o[Col. 3:24]
37 pLuke 18:8 q[Hab. 2:3, 4 3Or *that which* 4*delay*
38 r[Rom. 1:17 5NU *My just one*
39 s2 Pet. 2:20 tActs 16:31 6*destruction*

CHAPTER 11

1 aRom. 8:24 1*realization* 2Or *confidence*
3 b[Ps. 33:6 3Or *ages,* Gr. *aiones,* aeons
4 cGen. 4:3–5 dHeb. 12:24
5 eGen. 5:21–24

■ **10:31** A fitting conclusion to the grave warning of this passage.

■ **10:32–39** As in 6:9–12, the writer now balances his severe warning with an encouraging reminder that his readers have exhibited the fruits of grace, especially by their mutual support in the face of earlier suffering.

■ **10:32 endured a great struggle.** Even when they were new in the faith, these Christians suffered persecution.

■ **10:33** Public insult, imprisonment, and the seizure of property (but not martyrdom, 12:4) were among the forms of persecution that the recipients previously suffered. These may reflect conditions after the edict of Claudius (A.D. 49) evicted Jews from Rome (Introduction: Date and Occasion).

■ **10:34 you had compassion . . . joyfully accepted.** It would encourage the readers to remember the solidarity and joy they shared, despite persecution.

better and an enduring possession. The heavenly city and country of God (11:10, 16; 12:22), that cannot be shaken by the cataclysm that will destroy the present created order (12:27, 28). In comparison to this eternal inheritance (9:15), property lost for Christ's sake is of no value.

■ **10:35 great reward.** Like Moses, we must fix our eyes on the future reward (11:26).

■ **10:36 done the will of God.** His laws are written in their hearts (8:10; 10:16), so they follow in the footsteps of Jesus, who came to do God's will (vv. 9, 10; 13:21).

receive the promise. See note on 6:12.

■ **10:37, 38** Three elements from Hab. 2:3, 4 will be illustrated in the lives of Old Testament people of faith: (a) faith fixes its sights on the One who is coming, hoping in His future appearing (11:1, 7, 10, 13, 20, 22, 27); (b) faith receives God's verdict of righteousness (11:4, 7; 12:23); (c) faith does not draw back in the face of suffering (11:24–26, 35–38).

■ **10:39** The substance of this encouragement is like that of 6:9, 10. Here the writer has included himself, saying "we" instead of "you."

■ **11:1–40** This famous discourse on faithful men and women of the Old Testament begins and ends with commentary that alerts the reader to the specific aspect of Old Testament faith highlighted here—the certainty of receiving what God has promised but not yet given (vv. 1, 2, 39, 40).

■ **11:1 things hoped for . . . things not seen.** For the time being, only faith can see the future, as it receives the promises of God.

■ **11:2 obtained a good testimony.** God declared that they were righteous by faith (v. 4 note), as is explicitly stated regarding Abel and Enoch (vv. 4, 5; cf. v. 39).

■ **11:3** Although no human witnessed the creation, we know from Scripture that God brought the world into being through His Word (Ps. 33:6, 9). We discern that "things which are seen" are not ultimate, self-existent reality.

■ **11:4 a more excellent sacrifice.** The principle that sacrifices were worthless without faith was true from the beginning (cf. 10:4 note). It was for Christ alone to offer not only a better but a perfect sacrifice.

obtained witness . . . testifying. The Greek word used twice in this verse is also found in vv. 2, 5, and 39. Abel is the first example of one who received this divine commendation as a righteous one who lived by faith (cf. 10:38; Rom. 1:17). The entire chapter offers such examples.

still speaks. As one of the "cloud of witnesses" (12:1).

■ **11:5** As one who "did not see death" (cf. Gen. 5:18–24), Enoch prefigured the deliverance from death into which Jesus leads the faithful.

pleased God. Pleasing God is the criterion of appropriate worship (12:28; 13:16, 21; Rom. 12:1; Phil. 4:18).

■ **11:6** Faith is an absolute necessity, whether to perceive the things for which we should hope (v. 1), to understand that God is the Creator of all (v. 3), or to offer acceptable worship (v. 4). See "Pleasing God" at 1 Thess. 2:4.

without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him,* for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

7 By faith [f]Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, [g]prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of [h]the righteousness which is according to faith.

Faithful Abraham

8 By faith [i]Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as *in* a foreign country, [j]dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, [k]the heirs with him of the same promise; 10 for he waited for [l]the city which has foundations, [m]whose builder and maker *is* God.

11 By faith [n]Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and [o]she[A] bore a child when she was past the age, because she judged Him [p]faithful who had promised. 12 Therefore from one man, and him as good as [q]dead, were born *as many* as the [r]stars of the sky in multitude—innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore.

The Heavenly Hope

13 These all died in faith, [s]not having received the [t]promises, but [u]having seen them afar off [5]were assured of them, embraced *them* and [v]confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For those who say such things [w]declare plainly that they seek a homeland. 15 And

7 [f]Gen. 6:13–22 [g]1 Pet. 3:20 [h]Rom. 3:22

8 [i]Gen. 12:1–4

9 [j]Gen. 12:8; 13:3, 18; 18:1, 9 [k]Heb. 6:17

10 [l][Heb. 12:22; 13:14] [m][Rev. 21:10]

11 [n]Gen. 17:19; 18:11–14; 21:1, 2 [o]Luke 1:36 [p]Heb. 10:23 [A]NU omits *she bore a child*

12 [q]Rom. 4:19 [r]Gen. 15:5; 22:17; 32:12

13 [s]Heb. 11:39 [t]Gen. 12:7 [u]John 8:56 [v]Ps. 39:12 [5]NU, M omit *were assured of them*

14 [w]Heb. 13:14

■ **11:7 things not yet seen.** Although faith perceives things that are invisible because they transcend the physical universe (11:3, 27), in this section the emphasis is on faith concerning things that are future but nevertheless certain because God has promised them. The coming flood of judgment was not yet visible when God's word of warning came to Noah. Noah built the ark in reverent response to God's warning, and through his active faith his family received salvation. The unbelieving world was condemned for its preoccupation with the present, and Noah inherited the righteousness that comes by faith (10:38; Rom. 4:13).

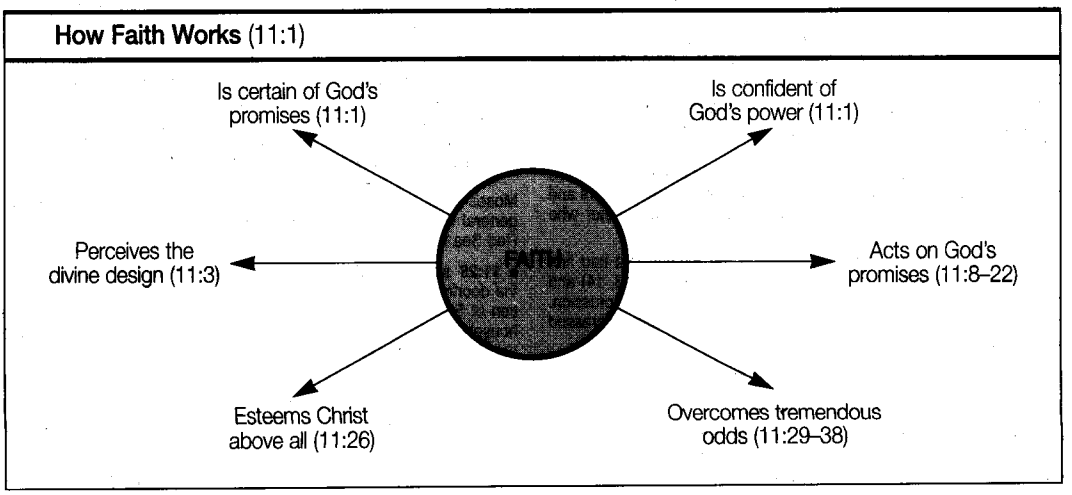
■ **11:8–10** Abraham's faith regarding the promise of a homeland was demonstrated: (a) when he obeyed God's voice, leaving Ur for a future inheritance, the location of which he did not know (v. 8); (b) when he lived as a stranger in the land promised to him (vv. 9, 13); and (c) when he looked beyond Canaan to a lasting, heavenly country and city, designed and built by God Himself (vv. 10, 14–16; 13:14).

■ **11:11, 12** Abraham's faith regarding the promise of descendants was rewarded with the conception of Isaac, which was miraculous, since Sarah was barren and Abraham was (with respect to the possibility of reproduction) "already dead" (Rom. 4:19). Despite misguided alternatives (Gen. 16:1–4) and questioning doubts (Gen. 17:17, 18), in the end Abraham and Sarah "judged Him faithful who had promised" (v. 11).

■ **11:13–16** The inheritance on which the patriarchs' faith was fixed was invisible for two reasons: it was heavenly, not earthly; and future, not present. See notes on vv. 8–10, 20, 21, 22.

■ **11:13 having seen them afar off.** Abraham saw from afar the day that Jesus the Messiah would come, and rejoiced (John 8:56).

strangers and pilgrims on the earth. All the heirs of salvation are homeless refugees on the earth (v. 38) because, until Christ's return, we are in exile from the home we are waiting to inherit (1 Pet. 1:1, 4, 5, 17; 2:11).



truly if they had called to mind [x]that *country* from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly *country.* Therefore God is not ashamed [y]to be called their God, for He has [z]prepared a city for them.

The Faith of the Patriarchs

17 By faith Abraham, [a]when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten *son,* 18 [6]of whom it was said, [b]*"In Isaac your seed shall be called,"* 19 concluding that God [c]*was* able to raise *him* up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.

20 By faith [d]Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

21 By faith Jacob, when he was dying, [e]blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, *leaning* on the top of his staff.

22 By faith [f]Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones.

The Faith of Moses

23 By faith [g]Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw *he was* a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's [h]command.

24 By faith [i]Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, 25 choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the [7]passing pleasures of sin, 26 esteeming [j]the [8]reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures [9]in Egypt; for he looked to the [k]reward.

27 By faith [l]he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible. 28 By faith [m]he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, lest he who destroyed the firstborn should touch them.

29 By faith [n]they passed through the Red Sea as by dry *land, whereas* the Egyptians, attempting *to do* so, were drowned.

By Faith They Overcame

30 By faith [o]the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days. 31 By faith [p]the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who [1]did not believe, when [q]she had received the spies with peace.

15 [x]Gen. 11:31
16 [y]Gen. 26:24; 28:13; Ex. 3:6, 15; 4:5 [z][John 14:2]; Heb. 11:10; [Rev. 21:2]
17 [a]Gen. 22:1–14; James 2:21
18 [b]Gen. 21:12; Rom. 9:7 [6]*to*
19 [c]Rom. 4:17
20 [d]Gen. 27:26–40
21 [e]Gen. 48:1, 5, 16, 20
22 [f]Gen. 50:24, 25; Ex. 13:19
23 [g]Ex. 2:1–3 [h]Ex. 1:16, 22
24 [i]Ex. 2:11–15
25 [7]*temporary*
26 [j]Heb. 13:13 [k]Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 4:17 [8]*reviling because of* [9]NU, M *of*
27 [l]Ex. 10:28
28 [m]Ex. 12:21
29 [n]Ex. 14:22–29; Jude 5
30 [o]Josh. 6:20
31 [p]Josh. 2:9; 6:23; James 2:25 [q]Josh. 2:1 [1]*were disobedient*

■ **11:16 a better . . . country.** The Old Testament believers themselves realized that the hope and promises to which they looked forward in faith were heavenly, and not merely physical.

■ **11:17–19** The ultimate test of Abraham's faith was the sacrifice of Isaac. Isaac was the "only begotten son" (cf. John 3:16) so far as the promises were concerned (v. 19)—neither Abraham's servant Eliezer (Gen. 15:2) nor his other son Ishmael (Gen. 17:20, 21) would do. If Isaac were to perish without offspring, the promises of God would fail. Abraham's readiness to slay the son of promise at God's command could arise from nothing less than the conviction that "God was able to raise . . . the dead" (v. 19). Isaac's "resurrection" was only figurative, but believers who have died for their faith look forward to a literal resurrection (cf. v. 35), in which Jesus has led the way (13:20).

■ **11:20 things to come.** That Jacob would possess a fruitful land, and have dominion over nations, including the descendants of Esau (Gen. 27:27–29).

■ **11:21** In his blessing, Jacob foresaw that the descendants of Joseph's younger son would surpass those of Joseph's older son, in numbers and influence (Gen. 48:13–20). Jacob himself was a younger brother who had been elevated over an older one.

■ **11:22** Joseph remembered the promise of the Exodus that had first been spoken to Abraham long before Isaac's birth (Gen. 15:13, 14) and that would await fulfillment through four more centuries of oppression. Joseph's instructions to take his bones to the Promised Land expressed faith in things not yet seen (Ex. 13:19).

■ **11:23–28** Prominent aspects of the faith associated with Moses are fearlessness (vv. 23, 27), and willingness to suffer disgrace instead of enjoying sin's temporary pleasure (vv. 24–26).

■ **11:23 a beautiful child.** The description is quoted from Ex. 2:2 (cf. Acts 7:20). Moses' parents understood upon seeing Him that the child would have a special role in God's redemptive plan.

■ **11:25, 26** Moses' decision to forfeit "the treasures in Egypt" and to suffer "the reproach of Christ" should encourage those who have lost possessions and suffered insult for their faith (10:33, 34). In their present trials, in which identification with Christ means expulsion from the camp of Israel, they must be willing to bear His disgrace (13:13). Moses' choice exemplifies certainty of what he hoped for (v. 1), since he was looking ahead to his reward (10:35; 11:6, 13).

■ **11:27 forsook Egypt, not fearing.** This is often taken to refer to the first time Moses left Egypt. Moses, having chosen to identify himself with his own people against the Egyptians (vv. 24, 25), had killed an Egyptian and had to flee. About this departure, Ex. 2:14 says that he "feared." If this verse does refer to the flight to Midian, the phrase "not fearing" probably refers to Moses' unshakable faith in God's redemptive plan. Although Moses experienced the quite natural apprehension that Pharaoh would do him personal harm if he stayed in Egypt, he did not fear that his divine commission to rescue God's people was in jeopardy. With this hope in God's purposes he left and "endured" in Midian.

It is possible, however, that this verse refers to the Exodus; here Moses clearly was without fear. If so, v. 27 mentions the Exodus in a general way, with details such as the Passover and the parting of the Red Sea following in vv. 28, 29.

■ **11:28 sprinkling of blood.** Moses directed that blood be sprinkled on the doorframes of Israelite homes in expectation of the coming destruction of firstborn children in the land, and of the deliverance of Israelite households from this awful event (Ex. 12:7, 12, 13). This was yet another act of confidence in what was not yet seen.

■ **11:30** The Israelites marched around Jericho seven times in obedience to the Lord's command. Their only knowledge that this would defeat the city was provided by God's promise, "I have given Jericho into your hand" (Josh. 6:2).

■ **11:31** Rahab proved her allegiance to God when she protected the Is-

32 And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of [r]Gideon and [s]Barak and [t]Samson and [u]Jephthah, also *of* [v]David and [w]Samuel and the prophets: 33 who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, [x]stopped the mouths of lions, 34 [y]quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. 35 [z]Women received their dead raised to life again.

Others were [a]tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. 36 Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and [b]of chains and imprisonment. 37 [c]They were stoned, they were sawn in two, [2]were tempted, were slain with the sword. [d]They wandered about [e]in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented— 38 of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, [f]*in* dens and caves of the earth.

39 And all these, [g]having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, 40 God having provided something better for us, that they should not be [h]made perfect apart from us.

The Race of Faith

12 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, [a]let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us,* and [b]let us run [c]with endurance the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus, the [1]author and [2]finisher of *our* faith, [d]who for the joy that was set before Him [e]endured the cross, despising the shame, and [f]has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

2 [d]Luke 24:26 [e]Phil. 2:8 [f]Ps. 110:1 [1]*originator* [2]*perfecter*

32 [r]Judg. 6:11; 7:1–25 [s]Judg. 4:6–24 [t]Judg. 13:24—16:31 [u]Judg. 11:1–29; 12:1–7 [v]1 Sam. 16; 17 [w]1 Sam. 7:9–14

33 [x]Dan. 6:22

34 [y]Dan. 3:23–28

35 [z]1 Kin. 17:22 [a]Acts 22:25

36 [b]Gen. 39:20

37 [c]1 Kin. 21:13 [d]2 Kin. 1:8 [e]Zech. 13:4 [2]NU omits *were tempted*

38 [f]1 Kin. 18:4, 13; 19:9

39 [g]Heb. 11:2, 13

40 [h]Heb. 5:9

CHAPTER 12

1 [a]Col. 3:8 [b]1 Cor. 9:24 [c]Rom. 12:12

raelite spies. She was justified (James 2:25) and became an ancestor of Jesus Christ (Matt. 1:5), even though she had been a prostitute.

■ **11:32 what more shall I say.** The question is rhetorical. The author proceeds to mention in passing many more names and acts of heroism to show the power of faith (vv. 32–38).

■ **11:32–38** The list of accomplishments through faith moves from those in which faith's victory was manifest in history (vv. 33–35) to those in which faith entailed suffering and apparent defeat (vv. 35–38). For the specific events in view, see cross references.

■ **11:33 obtained promises.** That is, they saw answers to particular promises along the way. For the promise of Christ's coming they still waited in faith (v. 39). For the promises made to Abraham were partly fulfilled in this world, as his descendants multiplied (v. 12) and lived in the Promised Land (vv. 9, 33). But to the extent that these promises referred to the heavenly reality, "His rest" (4:10), they could not be fulfilled until Christ came.

■ **11:35 Women received their dead.** A reference to events recorded in 1 Kin. 17:22, 23; 2 Kin. 4:36, 37.

Others were tortured. An apparent reference to events during the Maccabean revolt (c. 167–157 B.C.), which occurred after the close of the Old Testament, but which are recorded in 2 Maccabees 6; 7 in the Apocrypha.

■ **11:37 sawn in two.** According to tradition, the prophet Isaiah died in this way.

■ **11:39 having obtained a good testimony.** See note on v. 4.

did not receive the promise. Although some Old Testament promises were fulfilled, their true hope (the promise of the coming Messiah) was yet to come (v. 33 and note). This verse summarizes the message of vv. 13–16 and applies it to the second half of the chapter.

■ **11:40 something better . . . apart from us.** This verse asserts both the redemptive-historical difference between the Old Testament and New Testament periods, and the unity of the people of God in both eras. Though the Old Testament believers lived by faith (10:38), they were not privileged to witness on earth the fulfillment of the great promise of God. Nevertheless, they too participate in the benefits of Christ's high-priestly work, and, along with new covenant saints, they are "made perfect." Those of the old and new eras together await the perfection that will appear only at the Second Coming (12:26; 13:14; Rom. 8:18; Eph. 1:9, 10).

■ **12:1 cloud of witnesses.** The readers are in effect running a race before a great crowd of people who have already finished the race with honors. Their example encourages the readers, and admonishes them if they should stumble.

every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares. Among the burdens to be thrown off are fear that shrinks back in the face of suffering (10:38, 39), bitter discouragement that defiles others through doubt (v. 15), and sensuality that seeks immediate gratification (v. 16).

run . . . the race. The athletic competitions of the Greeks provided a common New Testament analogy for the Christian life (1 Cor. 9:24–27; Phil. 2:16; 2 Tim. 2:5; 4:7, 8). Like a runner, the Christian must be in constant motion toward the goal despite opposition. This demands strenuous effort and endurance, which is learned from constant discipline.

■ **12:2 looking unto Jesus.** The cloud of Old Testament witnesses inspires us, but our principal encouragement is found in the person and work of Christ, who has gone before us as the "author and finisher of our faith," and is the supreme example of faith in the race (v. 3).

author. See note on 2:10.

finisher of our faith. As "finisher" Jesus has brought the faith of all who approach God through Him to its intended goal: thankful worship acceptable to God, presented in His presence (10:14; 11:40; 12:28).

for the joy that was set before Him. Jesus endured the cross in anticipation of the joy of being Savior of His people when the necessary suffering was over. As Moses looked to his reward (11:26), so Jesus was aware of His own reward.

A less probable, though possible, interpretation is to translate "in place of the joy set before Him." On this reading, Jesus chose suffering instead of the joy that would have been His if He had refused to die, and instead remained in heaven (Phil. 2:6), or at least avoided the Cross on earth (John 10:17, 18; 12:27).

despising the shame. Crucifixion was so shameful a form of execution that it was forbidden to be inflicted on Roman citizens; in addition, the Jews believed that "everyone who hangs on a tree" is cursed by God (Gal. 3:13; cf. Deut. 21:23).

3 [g]Matt. 10:24 [h]Gal. 6:9

4 [i][1 Cor. 10:13]

5 [j]Prov. 3:11, 12 [3]*discipline*

6 [k]Rev. 3:19

7 [l]Deut. 8:5 [m]Prov. 13:24; 19:18; 23:13 [4]NU, M *It is for discipline that you endure; God*

8 [n]1 Pet. 5:9

9 [o][Job 12:10]

10 [p]Lev. 11:44

11 [q]James 3:17, 18 [5]*discipline*

12 [r]Is. 35:3

14 [s]Ps. 34:14 [t]Matt. 5:8

15 [u]Heb. 4:1 [v]Deut. 29:18

16 [w][1 Cor. 6:13–18] [x]Gen. 25:33 [6]*godless*

The Discipline of God

3 [g]For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, [h]lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. 4 [i]You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin. 5 And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons:

> [j]"*My son, do not despise the* [3]*chastening of the* LORD,
> *Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him;*
> 6 *For* [k]*whom the* LORD *loves He chastens,*
> *And scourges every son whom He receives.*"

7 [l]If [4] you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what [m]son is there whom a father does not chasten? 8 But if you are without chastening, [n]of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. 9 Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected *us,* and we paid *them* respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to [o]the Father of spirits and live? 10 For they indeed for a few days chastened *us* as seemed *best* to them, but He for *our* profit, [p]that *we* may be partakers of His holiness. 11 Now no [5]chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields [q]the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

Renew Your Spiritual Vitality

12 Therefore [r]strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, 13 and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be *dislocated,* but rather be healed.

14 [s]Pursue peace with all *people,* and holiness, [t]without which no one will see the Lord: 15 looking carefully lest anyone [u]fall short of the grace of God; lest any [v]root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; 16 lest there *be* any [w]fornicator or [6]profane person like Esau, [x]who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. 17 For you know that

■ **12:3 hostility.** Like Jesus, the readers had also experienced the hostility of sinners (10:33).

discouraged. A warning from Prov. 3:11, 12, quoted in vv. 5, 6.

■ **12:4 bloodshed.** The readers have known persecution, but nothing as serious as what Jesus suffered, or indeed, what has been cataloged in 11:35–38. It is not time for them to think of giving up.

■ **12:5 sons.** God's plan to lead many sons to glory meant that the author of their salvation was to be perfected through suffering (2:10), even though He was the Son who deserved no suffering (5:8). It is not surprising, then, that the adopted sons who follow Him should be prepared for their inheritance through painful discipline.

■ **12:8** Many Roman nobles had illegitimate sons, who were financially supported but left virtually without discipline. On the other hand, the son of a nobleman's legal wife, who would carry the father's name and inherit the estate, was subjected to a training regimen comparable to slavery (Gal. 4:1, 2).

■ **12:9 human fathers.** Lit. "fathers of our flesh," in direct contrast to "Father of spirits." This argument from the lesser to the greater—from the lesser of the human parental relationship to the greater of divine fatherhood—is completed in v. 10.

■ **12:10** The discipline of our earthly fathers is limited by time and by their fallible wisdom. The heavenly Father's discipline is planned by His infinite wisdom for "our profit," and it makes us holy, as He is holy (v. 14; 1 Pet. 1:15, 16).

■ **12:11 peaceable fruit of righteousness.** This gives some idea what holiness involves (vv. 10, 14).

trained. The writer returns to the athletic analogy of v. 1.

■ **12:12, 13** The race will be completed successfully only if action is taken to heal spiritual injuries of the past (v. 12) and avoid pitfalls in the future (v. 13). The context of Is. 35:3, 4 (from which Hebrews has taken "strengthen the hands . . . the feeble knees") is one of encouraging the fearful. Compare Hebrews' calls for mutual encouragement (e.g., 3:13), including that which follows in 12:15, and the warning against losing heart (vv. 3, 5). The context of Prov. 4:25–27 (source of "make straight paths for your feet") is a call to single-minded adherence to the path of righteousness. The metaphor of strengthening and healing injured limbs to run the race is explained in specific commands (vv. 14–17).

■ **12:14 Pursue peace with all people.** Despite being tempted in persecution to repay evil for evil, believers should live at peace with everyone "as much as depends on you" (Rom. 12:18), just as our Lord Jesus did not retaliate with insults or threats (1 Pet. 2:23).

holiness. Hebrews has declared how Jesus' sacrifice makes us holy once for all in status (10:10) giving us confident access to God. In this verse "holiness" is purity of life. It is provided by God (13:21) and guided by His discipline (v. 10), but we must "pursue" it.

see the Lord. That is, be with God, the goal of salvation (Rev. 22:4). Those who now by grace through faith pursue and receive the holiness of Christ will indeed see the Lord, and become like Him (2 Cor. 3:18; 1 John 3:2).

■ **12:15** The readers are responsible to each other, to watch out for one another "lest anyone fall short" of God's grace (cf. 4:1).

root of bitterness. In Deut. 29:18, the "root bearing bitterness" is a person who spreads doubt and disloyalty toward the Lord among the covenant people. Here, too, this "root of bitterness" is a person who may "cause trouble" and cause others to be "defiled." To sustain each other's faith, we must encourage the weak, but also oppose apostates, who may influence others.

■ **12:16** Esau is presented as an example of one who despised the promises of God (in contrast to the people of faith in ch. 11), and whose loss was irrevocable (v. 17). Moses traded Egypt's treasures for the disgrace of Christ because he saw the reward (11:26); Esau traded his birthright for a bowl of food because lentil stew was all he could see (Gen. 25:29–34).

sold his birthright. As firstborn son, Esau had a special "birthright" (Gen. 25:31–34; 27:36). Later, under the Mosaic law, the right was to a double share of property (Deut. 21:17). In actuality, Esau despised his place in the line of covenant promises, and not property alone.

■ **12:17 you know that afterward.** The readers will remember the second stage of Esau's loss, when his brother Jacob took his place as their father Isaac gave the solemn blessing (Gen. 27). This blessing included the substance of the promise made to Abraham (Gen. 12:2, 3; 27:29).

afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was [y]rejected; for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.

The Glorious Company

18 For you have not come [7]to [z]the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and [8]darkness and tempest, 19 and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard *it* [a]begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore. 20 (For they could not endure what was commanded: [b]*"And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned* [9]*or shot with an arrow."* 21 And so terrifying was the sight *that* Moses said, [c]*"I am exceedingly afraid* and trembling.")

22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, 23 to the [f]general assembly and church of [d]the firstborn [e]*who are* registered in heaven, to God [f]the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men [g]made perfect, 24 to Jesus [h]the Mediator of the new covenant, and to [i]the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things [j]than *that of* Abel.

Hear the Heavenly Voice

25 See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For [k]if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more *shall we not escape* if we turn away from Him who *speaks* from heaven, 26 whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, [l]*"Yet once more I* [2]*shake not only the earth, but also heaven."* 27 Now this, *"Yet once more,"* indicates the [m]removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain.

28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we [3]may [n]serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. 29 For [o]our God *is* a consuming fire.

17 [y]Gen. 27:30–40

18 [z]Ex. 19:12, 16; 20:18; Deut. 4:11; 5:22 [7]NU *to that which* [8]NU *gloom*

19 [a]Ex.20:18–26; Deut. 5:25; 18:16

20 [b]Ex. 19:12, 13 [9]NU, M omit the rest of v. 20.

21 [c]Deut. 9:19

23 [d][James 1:18] [e]Luke 10:20 [f]Gen. 18:25; Ps. 50:6; 94:2 [g][Phil. 3:12] [f]*festal gathering*

24 [h]1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 8:6; 9:15 [i]Ex. 24:8 [j]Gen. 4:10; Heb. 11:4

25 [k]Heb. 2:2, 3

26 [l]Hag. 2:6 [2]NU *will shake*

27 [m][Is. 34:4; 54:10; 65:17; Rom. 8:19, 21]; 1 Cor. 7:31; Heb. 1:10

28 [n]Heb. 13:15, 21 [3]M omits *may*

29 [o]Ex. 24:17

no place for repentance. Though Esau mourned his loss with tears (Gen. 27:38; cf. 2 Cor. 7:10), he did not actually repent of the sin of despising God's promises. Another view is that the repentance he sought was a change in his father's mind.

■ **12:18–24** The old and new covenants are compared in terms of the mountains (Sinai and Zion) associated with each. Fear was the dominant theme at Sinai, a touchable (and thus earthly and mutable) mountain on which the law was given (vv. 18–21). Joy and confidence characterize the heavenly (and thus eternal) Zion, because the Savior is there with the blood of forgiveness (vv. 22–24).

■ **12:18 that may be touched.** Like the sanctuary established by the first covenant (9:1, 11, 24), the mountain on which the law was given was part of the "things that are made," that are destined to be "shaken" and removed by God's voice from heaven (v. 27). As something that can be "touched," Sinai testifies to the impermanence of the first covenant (8:13).

■ **12:19 begged that the word should not be spoken to them.** Afraid that direct contact with the Lord's awesome holiness would destroy them (Ex. 20:19), the Israelites pleaded with Moses to mediate God's words to them.

■ **12:21** The giving of the law took place with an awesome demonstration of God's power. Fear was a proper reaction (cf. Is. 6:4, 5; Matt. 17:6; Rev. 1:17).

■ **12:22 you have come.** We are still in our earthly pilgrimage, and like the patriarchs (11:13), still look for the "city . . . to come" (13:14). Nevertheless, because of Jesus our forerunner, we have arrived by faith at the heavenly Jerusalem and may enter into the Most Holy Place in worship (10:19–22). See "Heaven" at Rev. 21:1.

innumerable company of angels. They always serve God's majesty (Deut. 33:2; Ps. 68:17; Dan. 7:10). Here they are assembled as for a festival, or holiday celebration.

■ **12:23 church of the firstborn.** All the firstborn in Israel were sanctified at the time of the Passover and consecrated to service in God's presence, but the Levites served the sanctuary in the place of the firstborn (Num. 3:11–13). In the heavenly assembly all believers, redeemed from destruction, are "firstborn," consecrated to God, and enrolled as His priests. Unlike Esau, who scorned his right as the firstborn (v. 16), believers share gratefully in the inheritance of Jesus, the firstborn (1:6, 14; 2:11, 12). In the heavenly assembly all believers may worship, in heaven and on earth (10:22, 25). See "The Church" at Eph. 2:19.

just men made perfect. These are the spirits of those who have died in the Lord (2 Cor. 5:8; Rev. 14:13). Particularly in view are the Old Testament and intertestamental saints to whose righteousness by faith God Himself testified (11:2, 4, 5, 39), and who are now perfected (11:40) through the sacrifice of Jesus.

■ **12:24** Jesus' presence in the heavenly Zion explains its atmosphere of joy and confidence. The blood of Abel cried for vengeance from the ground (Gen. 4:10), but the blood of Jesus, to use the same figure, "speaks better things" (that is, cries out for forgiveness for the children of God, 9:12–15; 10:19–22).

■ **12:25–27** God's voice speaking the gospel must be listened to with even greater attention and faith than the law spoken at Sinai (2:1–4; 3:1–5; 10:28, 29).

■ **12:25** The contrast between the Old Testament message and the message through the Son from heaven goes back to 1:1–4. By closing the circle, the writer is bringing his argument toward conclusion.

■ **12:27 the removal . . . being shaken.** Christ will roll up the heavens and the earth "like a cloak," but He will remain (1:12). The passing of the first covenant, which is "obsolete and growing old" (8:13), with its sanctuary (9:8) and sacrifices (10:9), is the foretaste of this final shaking.

■ **12:28 serve God acceptably.** Gratitude derives from knowing that our names are written in heaven (Luke 10:20) and from our experience of God's "indescribable gift"—Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 9:15). Reverence and awe come from an appreciation of who God is (v. 29). Acceptable worship combines these motives.

■ **12:29 a consuming fire.** This solemn quotation from Deut. 4:24 provides a fitting conclusion to an exhortation that stresses the holiness of God and the finality of His judgment on apostates (10:27).

CHAPTER 13

1 [a]Rom. 12:10
2 [b]Matt. 25:35; Rom. 12:13 [c]Gen. 18:1–22; 19:1
3 [d]Matt. 25:36; Heb. 10:34
4 [e]Prov. 5:18, 19 [f]1 Cor. 6:9; Gal. 5:19, 21; 1 Thess. 4:6
5 [g]Gen. 28:15; Deut. 31:6, 8; Josh. 1:5
6 [h]Ps. 27:1; 118:6
7 [i]*lead*
8 [j][John 8:58]; 2 Cor. 1:19; Heb. 1:12
9 [2]NU, M *away*
12 [3]*set apart*
13 [j]1 Pet. 4:14
15 [k]Eph. 5:20 [l]Lev. 7:12 [m]Is. 57:19; Hos. 14:2

Concluding Moral Directions

13 Let [a]brotherly love continue. [2][b]Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so *doing* [c]some have unwittingly entertained angels. [3][d]Remember the prisoners as if chained with them—those who are mistreated—since you yourselves are in the body also.

[4][e]Marriage *is* honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; [f]but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

[5] *Let your* conduct *be* without covetousness; *be* content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, [g]*"I will never leave you nor forsake you."* [6] So we may boldly say:

> [h]*"The* LORD *is my helper;*
> *I will not fear.*
> *What can man do to me?"*

Concluding Religious Directions

[7] Remember those who [i]rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of *their* conduct. [8] Jesus Christ *is* [j]the same yesterday, today, and forever. [9] Do not be carried [2]about with various and strange doctrines. For *it is* good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods which have not profited those who have been occupied with them.

[10] We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. [11] For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. [12] Therefore Jesus also, that He might [3]sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. [13] Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing [j]His reproach. [14] For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come. [15][k]Therefore by Him let us continually offer [l]the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, [m]the fruit of

■ **13:1–3** Here the readers' responsibility to guard and encourage each other's perseverance in faith takes tangible forms: brotherly love to all fellow-believers (Rom. 12:10; 1 Pet. 1:22), hospitality to those needing shelter or food (11:38), identification with prisoners (10:34), and compassionate support for those mistreated because of their confession (10:33; 11:25; cf. Matt. 25:35–37).

■ **13:2 Do not forget.** The pressure of suffering can drive fundamental responsibilities of love from our minds (vv. 3, 7, 16).

unwittingly entertained angels. Abraham, himself a stranger (11:13), showed hospitality to "three men" (Gen. 18:2) who proved to be the Lord Himself with two of His supernatural messengers (Gen. 18:1—19:22).

■ **13:3 Remember the prisoners.** Paul's commendation of Onesiphorus, who "was not ashamed of my chain," shows the importance of this encouragement even for an apostle (2 Tim. 1:16–18).

■ **13:4** A second hint that sexual immorality may tempt the readers (12:16). The antidote to immorality is not ascetic self-denial, but a proper appreciation of the honor God has bestowed on the marriage relationship (Eph. 5:22–33; 1 Cor. 7:3–5).

■ **13:5, 6** Those tempted by the love of money and discontent are particularly people who seek their security in financial resources (Matt. 6:19–21, 24–34). But God's promise to stay with Joshua gives greater confidence: "I will not leave you nor forsake you" (Josh. 1:5). Our confident response reaffirms that the Lord our helper (2:18; 4:16) sets us free from all kinds of fear (2:15; 11:23, 27).

■ **13:7 who rule over you.** The ministry of the congregation's first generation of teachers (2:3) has been completed, and the author will later exhort his readers to submit to the new leaders, as their leaders' pastoral role requires (v. 17).

whose faith follow. We must imitate those who inherit the promises through enduring faith (6:12).

■ **13:8** Though human leaders pass from the scene, Jesus Christ is "the same" (1:12) "yesterday" (in which God spoke through prophets, 1:1), "today" (as God summons us to enter His rest through faith, 3:7, 13; 4:7), and "forever" (1:8; 7:17, 21, 24, 28). He is the strong anchor amid sufferings and uncertainties (6:19).

■ **13:9 strange doctrines.** These doctrines, or teachings, apparently maintained that because the readers were not taking part in the ritual life of the temple (v. 13), including the sacrificial feasts, they had no access to God. The author responds that grace, not ceremonial food, strengthens our hearts, for by grace we participate in the worship at the heavenly altar where Jesus ministers.

which have not profited. Just as the sin offering could not secure cleansing of the conscience (9:9), so also the peace offering could not guarantee that the worshiper had peace and communion with God (Lev. 7:11–18; 1 Cor. 10:18).

■ **13:10** The Levitical priests had the right to a portion of every animal sacrificed as a peace offering at the Old Testament tabernacle (Lev. 6:18, 29; 7:6, 28–36). As long as those priests and others depend on the old system of animal sacrifices for atonement and peace with God, they cannot benefit from Christ's heavenly high priestly ministry.

■ **13:11, 12** The symbolism of the Day of Atonement expressed two important aspects of Christ's atoning work. First, the blood brought into the Most Holy Place declared that only through the death of a blameless substitute could anyone approach the holy God. Second, the bodies of the animals burned outside the camp indicated that the substitute became unclean as the bearer of the people's sins.

■ **13:13 go forth to Him, outside the camp.** Jesus' suffering outside the city gate symbolized not only the curse He bore as our sin-bearer, but also His rejection by the Jewish religious establishment and its leaders. The readers are now summoned to accept with courage their own expulsion from Jewish institutions (synagogue and temple, and perhaps family as well), in the confident expectation of the city that is to come (v. 14).

bearing His reproach. See 11:25, 26 and note; Ps. 69:7–9; Rom. 15:3.

■ **13:15 continually offer.** The time of animal sacrifice is past, but the servants of God, like all priests, still have gifts and offerings for Him. These spiritual sacrifices (1 Pet. 2:5) include praises toward God (v. 15) and acts of love toward other people (v. 16).

the sacrifice of praise. In the Greek translation of Lev. 7:11–21, this phrase refers to a kind of "peace offering," which was an animal sacrifice. But the meaning here is closer to Ps. 50:14, 23 where the Lord calls for "thanksgiving" instead of animal sacrifices.

the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. In Hos. 14:12 this attractive figure of speech is used for the words that one offers to God when one's sins are forgiven. This is "the sacrifice of praise."

our lips, [q]giving thanks to His name. [16][n]But do not forget to do good and to share, for [o]with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

[17][p]Obey those who [5]rule over you, and be submissive, for [q]they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

Prayer Requested

[18][r]Pray for us; for we are confident that we have [s]a good conscience, in all things desiring to live honorably. [19] But I especially urge *you* to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.

Benediction, Final Exhortation, Farewell

[20] Now may [t]the God of peace [u]who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, [v]that great Shepherd of the sheep, [w]through the blood of the everlasting covenant, [21] make you [6]complete in every good work to do His will, [x]working in [7]you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom *be* glory forever and ever. Amen.

[22] And I appeal to you, brethren, bear with the word of exhortation, for I have written to you in few words. [23] Know that *our* brother Timothy has been set free, with whom I shall see you if he comes shortly.

[24] Greet all those who [8]rule over you, and all the saints. Those from Italy greet you.

[25] Grace *be* with you all. Amen.

15 [q]Lit. *confessing*

16 [n]Rom. 12:13 [o]2 Cor. 9:12; Phil. 4:18

17 [p]Phil. 2:29 [q]Is. 62:6; Ezek. 3:17; Acts 20:28 [5]*lead*

18 [r]Eph. 6:19 [s]Acts 23:1

20 [t]Rom. 5:1, 2, 10; 15:33 [u]Ps. 16:10, 11; Hos. 6:2; Rom. 4:24 [v]Ps. 23:1; Is. 40:11; 63:11; John 10:11; 1 Pet. 2:25; 5:4 [w]Zech. 9:11; Heb. 10:29

21 [x]Phil. 2:13 [6]*perfect* [7]NU, M *us*

24 [8]*lead*

■ **13:16 do not forget.** Sacrifices of words must be accompanied by deeds of love toward others (James 1:27). Paul calls material gifts a "sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice" in Phil. 4:18. See note on v. 2.

■ **13:17 Obey . . . be submissive.** The new generation of leaders (13:7) was apparently not receiving the respectful submission that their task warranted.

they watch out. Faithful church leaders are like faithful shepherds (Jer. 23:4; Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2–4) or watchmen who call out danger alarms to the city (Ezek. 33:6). The leaders' care is deep and genuine because they were appointed by God and will give their account to Him (cf. 4:13). Everyone will suffer if their ministry is resisted.

■ **13:18 Pray for us.** Believers have the privilege of acting as priests by praying for each other, in reliance upon their open access to the throne of grace (4:16).

we have a good conscience. Perhaps the author wants to reassure his readers that he is exercising his own leadership in a careful way, according to the guidelines he has just given (v. 17; cf. 2 Cor. 1:12).

■ **13:19 restored to you the sooner.** The precise circumstances of the author are unknown. He has previously been with the group he addresses, and is anxious to see them again.

■ **13:20, 21** This benediction gathers together the letter's prominent themes, as well as introducing new ones.

■ **13:20 that great Shepherd of the sheep.** The Good Shepherd leads and protects His sheep (Ps. 23; Ezek. 34:11–16, 31), and He has laid down His life for them (John 10:11; 1 Pet. 2:24, 25).

through the blood of the everlasting covenant. The sacrifice of Christ defeated death (2:14) and inaugurated the new and eternal covenant (9:12–15). After being raised, "Christ . . . dies no more" (Rom. 6:9); the effects of His sacrifice are eternal.

■ **13:21 to do His will.** God has made full provision for our growth in godliness (2 Pet. 1:3), and He is always ready to help in time of need or temptation (2:18; 4:16).

working in you what is well pleasing in His sight. God will help us to love Him and our neighbor, the sacrifices that delight Him. (vv. 15, 16; Phil. 2:13).

through Jesus Christ. All of salvation, forgiveness of sins and renewal of life, is through Jesus Christ.

■ **13:22 the word of exhortation.** This sermon, in the form of a letter, would take an hour or so to read aloud. The writer could have expanded certain sections if he had wished (9:5).

■ **13:24 Greet all those who rule over you.** The author goes out of his way to ensure appropriate recognition of the congregation's leaders (cf. v. 17).

Those from Italy. See Introduction: Date and Occasion.

The Epistle of

JAMES

Author The author of this letter identifies himself as James. Though several different persons named "James" are mentioned in the New Testament church, it is almost certain that the author of this book is James the brother of Jesus. The author assumes a position of authority in the church, which certainly was accorded James, the Lord's brother. The James who was a leader of the Jerusalem church and who presided at the council of Jerusalem (Acts 15) is identified in Gal. 1:19 as "the Lord's brother." He was considered one of the pillars of the church along with Peter and John (Gal. 2:9). The New Testament lists James as one of the sons of Mary, Jesus' mother (Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3). James, along with his brothers, was skeptical of Jesus during His earthly ministry (John 7:5), but was converted when he became an eyewitness of the Resurrection (1 Cor. 15:7). The early church historian Hegesippus identified him as "James the Just," testifying to his extraordinary godliness, his zeal for obedience to the law of God, and his singular devotion to prayer. It was said that James's knees became so calloused from prayer that they resembled the knees of camels. Josephus records that James was martyred in A.D. 62. Eusebius says he was beaten to death with a club after being thrown from the temple parapet; Hegesippus also records that he was thrown from the pinnacle of the temple.

Date and Occasion James was written between A.D. 44, the beginning of the persecution that spread to the Diaspora (Acts 12), and A.D. 62, the year of James's death. Since no mention is made of the controversy leading to the council of Jerusalem (Acts 15), it is probable that James was written before A.D. 49. James is possibly the earliest New Testament writing.

Characteristics and Themes James has been variously considered an epistle, a sermon (to be read aloud in the churches), a form of wisdom literature, a diatribe, and a moral exhortation. These categories are not mutually exclusive, and there are elements of all these forms in James.

The epistle has a markedly Jewish flavor and refers frequently to the Old Testament. The literary structure of parallelism is used (1:9, 10), along with aphorisms, concrete images drawn from nature, and groups of sayings that have a clear similarity to the style of Jesus. The epistle teaches a high christology and stresses the importance of dealing with affliction from the standpoint of faith. The crucial relationship between faith and active works of obedience receives special attention (2:14–26).□

Outline of James

I. Perseverance (ch. 1)
  A. Salutation (1:1)
  B. Trials (1:2–11)
  C. Tests of Faith (1:12–18)
  D. Obeying the Word of God (1:19–27)
II. Faith (ch. 2)
  A. Faith and Law (2:1–13)
  B. Faith and Works (2:14–26)
III. The Tongue (3:1–12)
IV. Heavenly and Earthly Wisdom (3:13–18)
V. Submission to God's Will (ch. 4)
  A. Source of Quarrels in Evil Desires (4:1–6)
  B. Drawing Near to God (4:7–10)
  C. Slander (4:11, 12)
  D. Submission to Divine Providence (4:13–17)

VI. Patience (ch. 5)
A. Judgment on the Rich (5:1–6)
B. Teaching and Examples of Patience (5:7–11)
C. Oaths and Vows (5:12)
D. Effective Prayer (5:13–18)
E. Rescuing Erring Brothers (5:19, 20)

Greeting to the Twelve Tribes

JAMES, [a]a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,

To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad:

Greetings.

Profiting from Trials

2 My brethren, [b]count it all joy [c]when you fall into various trials, 3 [d]knowing that the testing of your faith produces [1]patience. 4 But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be [2]perfect and complete, lacking nothing. 5 [e]If any of you lacks wisdom, [f]let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and [g]it will be given to him. 6 [h]But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 *he is* [i]a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

The Perspective of Rich and Poor

9 Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation, 10 but the rich in his humiliation, because [j]as a flower of the field he will pass away. 11 For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes. So the rich man also will fade away in his pursuits.

Loving God Under Trials

12 [k]Blessed *is* the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive [l]the crown of life [m]which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. 13 Let no one say

CHAPTER 1

1 [a]Acts 12:17

2 [b]Acts 5:41 [c]1 Pet. 1:6

3 [d]Rom. 5:3–5 [1]*endurance* or *perseverance*

4 [2]*mature*

5 [e]1 Kin. 3:9; James 3:17 [f]Prov. 2:3–6; Matt. 7:7 [g]Jer. 29:12

6 [h][Mark 11:23, 24]; Acts 10:20

8 [i]James 4:8

10 [j]Job 14:2

12 [k]Job 5:17; Luke 6:22; Heb. 10:36; James 5:11; [1 Pet. 3:14; 4:14] [l][1 Cor. 9:25] [m]Matt. 10:22

■ **1:1 James, a bondservant.** James identifies himself as a slave of God and of Christ. A bondservant is one purchased and owned by a master or "lord." This indicates not only humility on the part of the writer but a profound testimony to his conversion to faith in his earthly half brother as his Redeemer (1 Cor. 15:3). James is a servant to both God and Jesus, a crucial theological bracketing.

■ **1:2 brethren.** Fellow believers are addressed in familial terms befitting those who have God as Father.

count it all joy. This is a call to understand suffering from the vantage point of confidence in God's sovereignty. What follows requires careful thinking from a theological perspective.

trials. Various kinds of trying circumstances, often related to persecution such as the early Christians endured.

■ **1:3 testing.** Trials can be considered pure joy only when there is knowledge that they are designed by God for a purpose. They are tests of faith given in order to develop perseverance. In turn, perseverance produces mature Christian character (Rom. 5:3).

■ **1:5 wisdom.** To be wise in biblical terms is to know and understand godliness, to do what is pleasing to God (Heb. 5:14). Ch. 3 elaborates this theme.

ask of God. God is the source of wisdom. He grants it to those who sincerely seek it from Him.

■ **1:8 double-minded man.** This rare expression was possibly coined by James. It suggests a man who has two souls; he is as unstable as a person with a split personality.

■ **1:9, 10 glory.** Both the poor and the rich are exhorted to take pride in their positions. The poor brother is wealthy in spiritual treasure. He has high status in the kingdom of God. If the term "rich" refers to wealthy Christians, James means they can rejoice that they have learned where true treasure is found. If "rich" refers to the ungodly, the reference to their "glory" is ironic.

■ **1:11** See Job 14:2; Ps. 103; Is. 40:6, 7.

■ **1:12 Blessed.** This echoes the prophetic oracles of salvation used by Old Testament prophets and by Jesus (Matt. 5:3–11).

■ **1:13 tempted.** There is an important difference between the concepts "test" and "tempt." God tests people, but never tempts them in the sense of enticing them to sin. Jesus, in the wilderness, was tested by God and tempted by Satan. There is also a difference between temptations that arise from our own sinful inclinations (internal) and those coming from without (external). Jesus, being free of original sin, was tempted externally but not internally. The testing of our faith may be the occasion for temptations to come, both internal and external, yet the temptations never have God as their author.

when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. 14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, [n]when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, [o]brings forth death.

16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. 17 [p]Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, [q]with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. 18 [r]Of His own will He brought us forth by the [s]word of truth, [t]that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

Qualities Needed in Trials

19 [3]So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, [u]slow to speak, [v]slow to wrath; 20 for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

Doers—Not Hearers Only

21 Therefore [w]lay aside all filthiness and [4]overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, [x]which is able to save your souls.

22 But [y]be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For [z]if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; 24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. 25 But [a]he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues *in it,* and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, [b]this one will be blessed in what he does.

26 If anyone [5]among you thinks he is religious, and [c]does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion *is* useless. 27 [d]Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: [e]to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, [f]*and* to keep oneself unspotted from the world.

Beware of Personal Favoritism

2 My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, [a]*the Lord* of glory, with [b]partiality. 2 For if there should come into your assembly a man with gold rings, in [1]fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in [2]filthy clothes, 3 and you [3]pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "You stand there," or, "Sit here at my footstool," 4 have you not [4]shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?

5 Listen, my beloved brethren: [c]Has God not chosen the poor of this world *to be* [d]rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom [e]which He promised to those who love Him? 6 But [f]you have dishon-

15 [n]Job 15:35 [o][Rom. 5:12; 6:23]
17 [p]John 3:27 [q]Num. 23:19
18 [r]John 1:13 [s][1 Pet. 1:3, 23] [t][Eph. 1:12, 13]
19 [u]Prov. 10:19; 17:27 [v]Prov. 14:17; 16:32 [3]NU *Know this* or *This you know*
21 [w]Col. 3:8 [x]Acts 13:26 [4]*abundance*
22 [y]Matt. 7:21–28
23 [z]Luke 6:47
25 [a]James 2:12 [b]John 13:17
26 [c]Ps. 34:13 [5]NU omits *among you*
27 [d]Matt. 25:34–36 [e]Is. 1:17 [f][Rom. 12:2]

CHAPTER 2

1 [a]1 Cor. 2:8 [b]Lev. 19:15
2 [1]*bright* [2]*vile*
3 [3]Lit. *look upon*
4 [4]*differentiated*
5 [c]1 Cor. 1:27 [d]Luke 12:21 [e]Ex. 20:6
6 [f]1 Cor. 11:22

■ **1:17 Father of lights.** Nature's luminaries vary in magnitude and are subject to phases, eclipses, and shadows. God is the ultimate Author of light. In Him there are no changes of brightness or clarity. There is no fluctuation in His character.

■ **1:18 He brought us forth.** Lit. "gave birth to us." This refers to the grace of regeneration by which we are adopted into God's family (1 Pet. 1:23).

■ **1:19 swift to hear, slow to speak.** Though the Christian community places high regard on the talent of eloquent speech, James places the accent on listening. It is the person who listens intently to the Word of truth who progresses in godliness.

■ **1:22 be doers.** True hearing of the Word must lead to godly action.

■ **1:23 mirror.** In the ancient world mirrors were made of polished metal, not glass. Scripture is a mirror of the soul's need for grace. It reveals our true character to us.

■ **1:25 perfect law.** James uses this phrase as a synonym for sacred Scripture (Ps. 19).

liberty. The law of God sets us free (John 8:36; Rom. 8:2, 15; Gal. 5:13).

■ **1:26 tongue.** See ch. 3.

■ **1:27 Pure and undefiled religion.** James stresses concern for widows and orphans as a true measure of obedience that is pleasing to God. It reflects the concerns of God Himself (Deut. 10:18; Ps. 9:18 note; 68:5; 146:9). Israel was given this responsibility in the Old Testament (Deut. 14:29; Ezek. 22:7).

■ **2:1 Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory.** This may be rendered, "our Lord Jesus Christ, the glory." Here Jesus may be identified with the glory of God. He is Immanuel, "God with us," the dwelling of God with man.

partiality. The expression is similar to that found in Gal. 2:6 (see text note there). James forbids having a respect for persons based purely on externals. It is contrary to the behavior of God who is no respecter of persons (Rom. 2:11; Eph. 6:9; Col. 3:25). In the light of Christ's divine glory it is foolish to show favoritism based on inferior levels of human glory.

■ **2:4 shown partiality.** Though God calls us to discern and to discriminate between good and evil, discrimination based on mere externals such as economic status, racial or ethnic differences, and the like is considered an evil form of judgment.

■ **2:5 Has God not chosen.** Inheritance in the kingdom is based on God's sovereign election. He chooses not according to merit or worldly status. The standards of this world have no influence on God's gracious election (1 Cor. 1:28, 29; Eph. 1:4). The text does not warrant any form of "poverty mysticism" by which poverty in itself renders a person good (Ps. 9:18 note).

■ **2:6 rich oppress.** The verb is a strong word and is used to refer to the oppressive work of Satan (Acts 10:38). The rich used political and judicial power to exploit the poor and needy of the nation. As a group, the rich have a strong tendency to rely upon wealth and power rather than to find their redemption in Christ.

ored the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you [g]and drag you into the courts? [7] Do they not blaspheme that noble name by which you are [h]called?

[8] If you really fulfill *the* royal law according to the Scripture, *"You shall love your neighbor as yourself,"* you do well; [9] but if you [5]show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as [j]transgressors. [10] For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet [k]stumble in one *point,* [l]he is guilty of all. [11] For He who said, [m]*"Do not commit adultery,"* also said, [n]*"Do not murder."* Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. [12] So speak and so do as those who will be judged by [o]the law of liberty. [13] For [p]judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown [q]no [r]mercy. [s]Mercy triumphs over judgment.

Faith Without Works Is Dead

[14] [t]What *does it* profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? [15] [u]If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, [16] and [v]one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warmed and filled," but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what *does it* profit? [17] Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

[18] But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." [w]Show me your faith without [6]your works, [x]and I will show you my faith by [7]my works. [19] You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! [20] But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is [8]dead? [21] Was not Abraham our father justified by works [y]when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? [22] Do you see [z]that faith was working together with his works, and by [a]works faith was made [9]perfect? [23] And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, [b]*"Abraham believed God, and it was [1]accounted to him for righteousness."* And he was called [c]the friend of God. [24] You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only.

22 [z]Heb. 11:17 [a]John 8:39 [9]*complete* **23** [b]Gen. 15:6 [c]2 Chr. 20:7 [1]*credited*

6 [g]Acts 13:50
7 [h]1 Pet. 4:16
8 [i]Lev. 19:18
9 [j]Deut. 1:17 [5]Lit. *receive the face*
10 [k]Gal. 3:10 [l]Deut. 27:26
11 [m]Ex. 20:14; Deut. 5:18 [n]Ex. 20:13; Deut. 5:17
12 [o]James 1:25
13 [p]Job 22:6 [q]Prov. 21:13 [r]Mic. 7:18 [s]Rom. 12:8
14 [t]Matt. 7:21–23, 26; 21:28–32
15 [u]Luke 3:11
16 [v][1 John 3:17, 18]
18 [w]Heb. 6:10 [x]James 3:13 [6]NU omits *your* [7]NU omits *my*
20 [8]NU *useless*
21 [y]Gen. 22:9, 10, 12, 16–18

■ **2:8 royal law.** The supreme law of God.

love your neighbor. James regards the sin of favoritism as a violation of the great commandment (Lev. 19:18; Deut. 6:5; Matt. 22:36–39), making the perpetrator a lawbreaker.

■ **2:10 whole law . . . one point.** This text does not negate the biblical concept of gradation of evil. Some sins are more heinous than others. However, even in the smallest sin a serious offense is made against God. To sin at one point is to sin against the law and therefore against the Law-giver. James, like Jesus, warns against a superficial understanding of the law of God (Matt. 5:17–20).

■ **2:13** See Zech. 7:9; Matt. 5:7; 18:21–35. Though God is never obligated to show mercy, He freely chooses to do so in abundance. He reserves the divine prerogative to show mercy upon whom He wills (Rom. 9). By His law, however, we are commanded to temper justice with mercy. He warns that if we refuse to show mercy we will not receive mercy from Him.

■ **2:14 Can faith save.** This introduces the crucial issue of the relationship between faith and works. The question under scrutiny is, What kind of faith is saving faith? James's question is rhetorical; the obvious answer is that faith without works cannot save. Faith that yields no deeds is not saving faith. The New Testament does not teach justification by the profession of faith or the claim to faith; it teaches justification by the possession of true faith.

■ **2:15, 16** Describes a "faith" of words without actions.

■ **2:17 faith by itself . . . is dead.** When Luther and the Reformers insisted on the formula "Justification by faith alone," they meant to insist that justification rests upon reliance on the merit of Christ alone. The "alone" does not mean that the faith exists alone without any subsequent fruit of obedience. Luther insisted that saving faith is a living faith. "Dead" faith does not mean a faith that has perished. Rather, the image suggests a faith that never had any true life in it. A dead faith cannot make one alive, cannot "save your souls" (1:21), and is therefore false and useless.

■ **2:18 Show me your faith.** James challenges anyone who claims to have faith to demonstrate it, to make it visible. The only evidence visible to human eyes is the deeds of obedience. Though God can read the heart, our only view of the heart is by the sight of outward fruit.

■ **2:19 You believe that there is one God.** To believe that God is one can be a mere intellectual assertion. To believe "in" God requires personal trust. To believe that He is, is to assent to a proposition even the demons acknowledge. Saving faith includes cognitive knowledge but goes beyond it to personal trust and submission.

■ **2:20 O foolish man.** This is a strong rebuke. It is a moral judgment more than an intellectual judgment, recalling the judgment that falls upon "the fool" in the wisdom literature of the Old Testament.

dead. Barren of fruit.

■ **2:21 justified.** James appeals to Abraham as his chief exhibit of one who is justified by his works. This involves no conflict with Paul who also appeals to Abraham as the chief exhibit of one justified by faith. Note that James appeals to Gen. 22, while Paul appeals to Gen. 15. In the sight of God Abraham is justified in Gen. 15, long before he offers Isaac on the altar. God knew Abraham's faith to be genuine. Abraham is justified to us, to human eyes, in Gen. 22 when he shows his faith through his obedience. Jesus used the same verb in Luke 7:35 when he declared "wisdom is justified by all her children" (i.e., shown to be genuine wisdom by its results). Here, to "justify" does not mean to be reconciled to God but to demonstrate the truth of a prior claim. Just as true wisdom is demonstrated by its fruit, Abraham's claim to faith is justified by his outward obedience. Yet his works were not the meritorious cause of his salvation; they added no merit to the perfect and sufficient merit of Christ.

■ **2:22 faith was made perfect.** The full outworking of faith is seen in works. True faith always produces fruit. Faith and works may be distinguished, but never separated or divorced.

■ **2:24 not by faith only.** A person is not shown to be just by the mere profession of faith or by having a faith that remains alone. A person is only shown to be just by what he or she does. None of our deeds are worthy of ultimate justification in the sight of God. Only the merit of Christ avails for that kind of justification. Only by trusting in Christ alone can we be made righteous in the sight of God. Here James attacks all forms of antinomianism that seek to have Jesus as Savior without embracing Him as Lord. Just as Paul demonstrated that trusting in one's own works is deadly, so James teaches that resting on empty or dead faith is deadly. See theological note "Faith and Works."

25 [d]Heb. 11:31

CHAPTER 3

1 [a][Matt. 23:8] [b]Luke 6:37

2 [c]1 Kin. 8:46 [d]Ps. 34:13 [e][Matt. 12:34–37] [f]*mature*

3 [f]Ps. 32:9 [g]NU *Now if*

5 [g]Prov. 12:18; 15:2 [h]Ps. 12:3; 73:8

25 Likewise, [d]was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent *them* out another way?

26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

The Untamable Tongue

3 My brethren, [a]let not many of you become teachers, [b]knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment. 2 For [c]we all stumble in many things. [d]If anyone does not stumble in word, [e]he *is* a [f]perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body. 3 [g]Indeed, [f]we put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us, and we turn their whole body. 4 Look also at ships: although they are so large and are driven by fierce winds, they are turned by a very small rudder wherever the pilot desires. 5 Even so [g]the tongue is a little member and [h]boasts great things.

Faith and Works

Faith is the means or instrument by which a person is saved. Christians are justified before God by faith (Rom. 3:26; 4:1–5; Gal. 2:16), and by faith they live their lives (2 Cor. 5:7) and sustain their hope (Heb. 10:35—12:3).

Faith cannot be defined in subjective terms, as a feeling or optimistic decision. Neither is it a passive orthodoxy. Faith is a response, directed toward an object and defined by what is believed. Christian faith is trust in the eternal God and His promises secured by Jesus Christ. It is called forth by the gospel as the gospel is made understandable through the gracious work of the Holy Spirit. Christian faith is a personal act, involving the mind, heart, and will, just as it is directed to a personal God, and not an idol or an idea.

It is usual to analyze faith as involving three steps: knowledge, agreement, and trust. First is knowledge, or acquaintance with the content of the gospel; second is agreement, or recognition that the gospel is true; and third is trust, the essential step of committing the self to God. These steps go together in the sense that there can be Christian faith only when the gospel is known and its truth is accepted (Rom. 10:14). Calvin defined faith as "a firm and sure knowledge of the divine favor towards us, founded on the truth of a free promise in Christ, and revealed to our minds and sealed on our hearts by the Holy Spirit" (Calvin, *Institutes* III.2.7).

Through faith we receive Christ, who satisfied the law on our behalf. In this way we are justified through faith alone, without doing the works of the law. But since faith unites us with Christ, it cannot be lifeless. Directed toward God and resting in Him, it is active, "working through love" (Gal. 5:6), seeking to do all the "good works, which God prepared beforehand" for us (Eph. 2:10). Justification is by faith alone, but justifying faith can never be alone.

When James says that faith without works is dead, he is describing a faith that knows the gospel and even agrees with it, but has fallen short of trust in God. Failure to grow, develop, and bear the fruits of righteousness shows that the free gift of God in Christ has never been received. The answer for those with such a faith is not to save themselves by establishing a righteousness of their own, as if they could create faith by their own efforts, but to call on the name of the Lord (Rom. 10:13). God alone can save those for whom it is otherwise impossible (Mark 10:27). Paul shows that good works cannot break this impossibility; James shows that the faith required is faith that rests in the living God.

Even when we have believed, the good works we do are never perfect. They are acceptable to God only because of the mercy of Christ (Rom. 7:13–20; Gal. 5:17). We express our love for God through doing what pleases Him, and He in His kindness promises to reward us for what we do (Phil. 3:12–14; 2 Tim. 4:7, 8). In this we are not making God our debtor, any more than when we first believed in Him. As Augustine noted, God in rewarding us is graciously crowning His own gracious gifts. □

■ **3:1–12** James echoes Jesus' emphasis on the crucial importance of the use of words in daily life (Matt. 12:36; Mark 7:20–23).

■ **3:1 receive a stricter judgment.** James gives a sober warning concerning the responsibility of teachers. Teachers exert influence over trusting students, a relationship that makes the students vulnerable to serious error. The teacher is held in strict account for what he or she teaches. This strict judgment should restrain teachers from careless words. The tongue of the teacher can be a devastating peril. The early church gave high esteem to the office of the teacher (Matt. 5:19; 18:6; cf. Rom. 14:10–12).

■ **3:3–5** James uses metaphors from common experience to illustrate his cardinal point that great results can be achieved by small means. The tongue is a small part of the body that is capable of creating great disasters.

See how great a forest a little fire kindles! 6 And [i]the tongue *is* a fire, a world of [3]iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it [j]defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of [4]nature; and it is set on fire by [5]hell. 7 For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. 8 But no man can tame the tongue. *It is* an unruly evil, [k]full of deadly poison. 9 With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made [l]in the [6]similitude of God. 10 Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. 11 Does a spring send forth fresh *water* and bitter from the same opening? 12 Can a [m]fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? [7]Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh.

6 [i]Prov. 16:27 [j][Matt. 12:36; 15:11, 18] [3]*unrighteousness* [4]*existence* [5]Gr. *Gehenna*

8 [k]Ps. 140:3

9 [l]Gen. 1:26; 5:1; 9:6 [6]*likeness*

12 [m]Matt. 7:16–20 [7]NU *Neither can a salty spring produce fresh water.*

Heavenly Versus Demonic Wisdom

13 [n]Who *is* wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct *that* his works *are done* in the meekness of wisdom. 14 But if you have [o]bitter envy and [8]self-seeking in your hearts, [p]do not boast and lie against the truth. 15 [q]This wisdom does not descend from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, demonic. 16 For [r]where envy and self-seeking *exist,* confusion and every evil thing *are* there. 17 But [s]the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, [t]without partiality [u]and without hypocrisy. 18 [v]Now the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

13 [n]Gal. 6:4

14 [o]Rom. 13:13 [p]Rom. 2:17 [8]*selfish ambition*

15 [q]Phil. 3:19

16 [r]1 Cor. 3:3

17 [s]1 Cor. 2:6, 7 [t]James 2:1 [u]Rom. 12:9

18 [v]Prov. 11:18

■ **3:6 tongue is a fire.** An uncontrolled tongue is likened to a fire that rages out of control (Ps. 120:3, 4; Prov. 16:27).

defiles. Evil speech (including blasphemy, gossip, slander, lying, false vows, and the like) has the power to spoil, stain, and corrupt the entire moral character of a person.

■ **3:8 no man can tame the tongue.** The tongue is harder to tame than wild beasts. It is filled with poison more venomous than a viper's (Ps. 58:4; 140:3; Rom. 3:13, 14).

■ **3:9 bless . . . curse.** The tongue is capable of use for both virtue and vice. The same mouth uses the tongue for these contradictory purposes.

made in the similitude of God. See "The Image of God" at Gen. 1:27.

■ **3:11, 12** Note the similarity here between James's metaphors and those used by Jesus in Matt. 7:16.

■ **3:13 wise . . . show.** Just as James exhorts believers to demonstrate their faith through works, so he also calls for the demonstration of wisdom by godly living.

meekness. The sign of wisdom is a gentle and humble spirit. As arrogance and foolishness go together, so do humility and wisdom.

■ **3:14 bitter envy and self-seeking.** Envy and covetousness poison the spirit. They are linked to self-centered and self-serving ambition. These vices blind one from true understanding and are contrary to the love of neighbor.

■ **3:15 earthly, sensual, demonic.** Divine wisdom is set in bold contrast with the wisdom of this world. The wisdom of the flesh reflects the deception of Satan and is foolishness in the sight of God.

■ **3:16 every evil thing.** As James earlier showed that the tongue is capable of creating disastrous evil, so here he emphasizes the destructive power of envy and selfish ambition. From them flow all kinds of evil, including vandalism, murder, adultery, warfare, theft, slander, and other sins that violate people and provoke chaos in the community.

■ **3:17 wisdom . . . from above.** Wisdom that is a gift of God (1:5) reflects the purity of God Himself. Again wisdom is linked to godliness as God Himself is the source and fountainhead of true wisdom.

peaceable. This is authentic peace, free of a quarrelsome attitude.

gentle. Thoughtful and respectful of other people's feelings.

willing to yield. Willing to listen to and obey others.

full of mercy. The wise person is not stingy in mercy but demonstrates charity in broad measure.

without partiality and . . . hypocrisy. The wise person is fair and without deception, deceit, or fraud.

■ **3:18 fruit of righteousness.** The fruit reaped by the planting of wisdom is a bountiful crop of righteousness.

A Living Faith (2:26)

Described as:	Results in:
Tested (1:2, 3)	Patience (1:3)
Without doubt (1:6–8)	Answered prayer (1:5)
Enduring temptation (1:12)	Eternal life (1:12)
More than belief (2:19, 20)	Faith perfected by works (2:22)
Believing God (2:23–25)	Righteousness before God (2:23)

James contrasts living faith to dead, or empty, faith. Dead faith does not result in the transformed life that is characteristic of living faith.

CHAPTER 4

1 [a]Rom. 7:23 [1]*battles*

2 [2]*battle* [3]NU, M omit *Yet*

3 [b]Job 27:8, 9 [c][Ps. 66:18]

4 [d]1 John 2:15 [e]Gal. 1:4 [4]NU omits *Adulterers and*

5 [f]Gen. 6:5

6 [g]Prov. 3:34

7 [h][Eph. 4:27; 6:11]

8 [i]2 Chr. 15:2 [j]Is. 1:16 [k]1 Pet. 1:22

9 [l]Matt. 5:4

10 [m]Job 22:29

11 [n]1 Pet. 2:1–3 [o][Matt. 7:1–5]

12 [p][Matt. 10:28] [q]Rom. 14:4 [5]NU adds *and Judge* [6]NU, M *But who* [7]NU *a neighbor*

13 [8]M *let us*

14 [r]Job 7:7

15 [s]Acts 18:21

16 [t]1 Cor. 5:6

17 [u][Luke 12:47]

CHAPTER 5

1 [a][Luke 6:24]

2 [b]Matt. 6:19 [c]Job 13:28 [1]*have rotted*

Pride Promotes Strife

4 Where do [1]wars and fights *come* from among you? Do *they* not *come* from your *desires for* pleasure [a]that war in your members? [2] You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and [2]war. [3]Yet you do not have because you do not ask. [3][b]You ask and do not receive, [c]because you ask amiss, that you may spend *it* on your pleasures. [4] [4][d]Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that [d]friendship with the world is enmity with God? [e]Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. [5] Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, [f]"The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"?

[6] But He gives more grace. Therefore He says:

[g] *"God resists the proud,*
But gives grace to the humble."

Humility Cures Worldliness

[7] Therefore submit to God. [h]Resist the devil and he will flee from you. [8] [i]Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. [j]Cleanse *your* hands, *you* sinners; and [k]purify *your* hearts, *you* double-minded. [9] [l]Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and *your* joy to gloom. [10] [m]Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

Do Not Judge a Brother

[11] [n]Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother [o]and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. [12] There is one [5]Lawgiver, [p]who is able to save and to destroy. [q]Who[6] are you to judge [7]another?

Do Not Boast About Tomorrow

[13] Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow [8]we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit"; [14] whereas you do not know what *will happen* tomorrow. For what *is* your life? [r]It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. [15] Instead you *ought* to say, [s]"If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that." [16] But now you boast in your arrogance. [t]All such boasting is evil.

[17] Therefore, [u]to him who knows to do good and does not do *it,* to him it is sin.

Rich Oppressors Will Be Judged

5 Come now, *you* [a]rich, weep and howl for your miseries that are coming upon *you!* [2] Your [b]riches [1]are corrupted, and [c]your garments are moth-eaten. [3] Your gold and silver are cor-

■ **4:1 fights.** James probes the root cause of divisions among the saints. They are caused by evil desires. Envy is still in view as an evil desire that is destructive.

■ **4:2 you do not ask.** That is, "you do not ask" from "God, who gives to all liberally" (1:5). Envy is a sin against God. It flows from a lack of gratitude toward God who bestows gifts upon His people. It also results from a failure to seek one's own gifts from God rather than from the world.

■ **4:3 amiss.** God refuses to grant our petitions when they proceed from evil desires. To pray from wrong motives is not to pray in faith (Rom. 14:23; Heb. 11:6).

■ **4:4 Adulterers.** Spiritual infidelity is in view here.

■ **4:5 Scripture says.** James probably did not have one specific text in mind, a problem similar to that found in Matt. 2:23. The idea may derive partly from Ex. 20:5; Deut. 4:24. If the verse is understood as speaking of the human spirit, James is thinking of texts like Gen. 6:3; 8:21, about the consequences of original sin.

■ **4:6** See Prov. 3:34.

■ **4:7 submit.** This requires a willing act of accepting the authority of God. We are under His authority whether we submit to it or not. Here "submit" means "to obey."

Resist the devil and he will flee. Satan is not equal in power or authority to God. Though Satan is powerful, he is not invincible. He flees from saints wearing the armor of God who resist him.

■ **4:9 Lament and mourn and weep.** This is a call to genuine repentance by which we mourn for our sins.

■ **4:11 speak evil.** A sin of speech, slander flows out of envy and reflects the work of Satan. The Greek word for "devil" means "slanderer." Slandering other Christians destroys fellowship and breaks the royal law. When we speak falsely against a fellow believer, we speak not only against the person but against the law of God. The slanderer sets himself above the law.

■ **4:14 know what will happen.** James rebukes the person who lives life and makes future plans without any regard for the providence of God. Such a person lives without regard for divine sovereignty.

■ **4:15 If the Lord wills.** The word "if" refers to future events that are conditional. Here the primary consideration in all future planning is the will of the sovereign God.

■ **4:16 boast.** Boasting of one's own power and accomplishments is evil. The Christian is to boast only of the Lord (2 Cor. 11:30; 12:5, 9).

■ **4:17 sin.** The sins of neglect and of omission are in view here.

■ **5:1 rich.** The Bible nowhere condemns wealth itself. It is often viewed as the blessing of God (Prov. 10:22). However, the rich, as a social class, are often guilty of exploiting and oppressing the poor. God reserves severe judgment for this (Luke 6:24).

■ **5:2, 3 corrupted . . . moth-eaten . . . corroded.** Earthly treasures

roded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. [d]You have heaped up treasure in the last days. [4]Indeed [e]the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and [f]the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord of [2]Sabaoth. [5]You have lived on the earth in pleasure and [3]luxury; you have [4]fattened your hearts [5]as in a day of slaughter. [6]You have condemned, you have murdered the just; he does not resist you.

Be Patient and Persevering

[7]Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See *how* the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. [8]You also be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord [6]is at hand.

[9]Do not [7]grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be [8]condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door! [10][g]My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and [h]patience. [11]Indeed [i]we count them blessed who [j]endure. You have heard of [k]the perseverance of Job and seen [l]the end *intended by* the Lord—that [m]the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.

[12]But above all, my brethren, [n]do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your "Yes" be "Yes," and *your* "No," "No," lest you fall into [9]judgment.

Meeting Specific Needs

[13]Is anyone among you suffering? Let him [o]pray. Is anyone cheerful? [p]Let him sing psalms. [14]Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, [q]anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. [15]And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. [r]And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. [16][l]Confess *your* trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. [s]The effective, [2]fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. [17]Elijah was a man [t]with a nature like ours, and [u]he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. [18]And he prayed [v]again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

3 [d]Rom. 2:5

4 [e]Lev. 19:13 [f]Deut. 24:15 [2]Lit., in Heb., *Hosts*

5 [3]*indulgence* [4]Lit. *nourished* [5]NU omits *as*

8 [6]*has drawn near*

9 [7]Lit. *groan* [8]NU, M *judged*

10 [g]Matt. 5:12 [h]Heb. 10:36

11 [i][Ps. 94:12] [j][James 1:12] [k]Job 1:21, 22; 2:10 [l]Job 42:10 [m]Num. 14:18

12 [n]Matt. 5:34–37 [9]M *hypocrisy*

13 [o]Ps. 50:14, 15 [p]Eph. 5:19

14 [q]Mark 6:13; 16:18

15 [r]Is. 33:24

16 [s]Num. 11:2 [t]NU *Therefore confess your sins* [2]*supplication*

17 [t]Acts 14:15 [u]1 Kin. 17:1; 18:1

18 [v]1 Kin. 18:1, 42

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are subject to decay and eventually perish. James echoes the teaching of Jesus (Matt. 6:20).

■ **5:4 wages . . . you kept back.** This is a violation of the law of God. Wages are not only to be paid, they are to be paid on time (Lev. 19:13; Deut. 24:14, 15).

■ **5:5 fattened your hearts.** Like animals fattened for slaughter, the rich are unaware of the disaster awaiting them.

■ **5:6 condemned . . . murdered.** The unjust use of power often causes the death of innocent people. The verse could also be understood figuratively, since to rob people of their wages and livelihood is to commit a kind of murder against them.

■ **5:7 patient.** The saints require patience as they await God's promised vindication of His people. God promises justice to correct prevailing forms of injustice in this world (Luke 18:1–8).

■ **5:9 Judge is standing at the door.** This verse reflects the urgent sense of the nearness of Christ's coming. James is echoing the New Testament hope of the return of Jesus who comes at the end of the age. James may also be thinking of the radical nearness of judgment facing every person whose life will soon be over and who will stand before the judgment of God. See v. 3 where James mentions the "last days."

■ **5:12 above all.** This emphatic exhortation signals a weighty priority for godliness. To exalt refraining from false oaths and vows to a high level of priority may seem strange to some, but is consistent with the biblical concern for covenant-keeping and the sanctity of the faith.

do not swear. This is not a prohibition against cursing or the use of vulgarity. It concerns taking oaths by appealing to objects as witnesses (which in biblical terms is a form of idolatry). Only God has the power to be an omnipresent, omniscient witness to oaths and vows. Just and godly vows are not prohibited because they form a vital part of all covenants.

"Yes" be "Yes." The Christian is expected to be a person whose word can be trusted. James's teaching here echoes that of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:34–37).

■ **5:13 Let him sing psalms.** See "Music in the Church" at Col. 3:16.

■ **5:14 elders.** See Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5.

anointing him with oil. Olive oil was commonly used in medicine in the ancient world (Mark 6:13; Luke 10:34). The oil may also have a symbolic reference to the healing power of God.

■ **5:15 prayer of faith.** There is no special "prayer of faith" that has healing power. The power of trusting and faithful prayer is accented here; the Christian community should be devoutly engaged in intercessory prayer for the sick. This verse is the classic proof text for the institution of the Roman Catholic sacrament of extreme unction. Extreme unction is a healing rite that has come to be thought of primarily as the "last rites" in preparation for death.

committed sins. Sin and illness are not unrelated. Forgiveness is therapeutic to the body as well as to the soul.

■ **5:16 Confess your trespasses.** Though confession to a priest is not required by Scripture, confession to God and to one another is. Overreaction against the Roman Catholic sacrament of penance may lead to a neglect of authentic godly confession.

righteous man. A godly person who prays in faith is a just or righteous person.

■ **5:17 Elijah.** Though Elijah held the special office of Old Testament prophet, he shares a common humanity with all believers. His effectual prayer life is a model for the saints.

19 [w]Gal. 6:1
20 [x]Rom. 11:14
[y][1 Pet. 4:8] [z]NU *his soul*

Bring Back the Erring One

19 Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone [w]turns him back, 20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way [x]will save [z]a soul from death and [y]cover a multitude of sins.

■ **5:19 wanders from the truth.** To stray into sinful patterns.

■ **5:20 turns a sinner.** The care of the souls of the community is a matter of concern for every member, not only church officers or the clergy. Mutual help and encouragement are required.

cover. Refers to God's covering of sins with forgiveness (Ps. 32:1; 85:2).

The First Epistle of

PETER

Author The author identifies himself as "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ" (1:1). That he is the well-known apostle of the Gospels and Acts is confirmed by both internal and external evidence. The author describes himself as "a witness of the sufferings of Christ" (5:1), and there are numerous echoes of Jesus' teaching and deeds in the epistle (e.g., 5:2, 3; John 21:15–17). Parallels of thought and phrase between 1 Peter and Peter's speeches in Acts lend further support to Peter's authorship (e.g., 2:7, 8; Acts 4:10, 11).

The external attestation of 1 Peter as a genuine epistle of Peter is widespread, early, and clear; there is no evidence that it was ever attributed to anyone else. Apart from the possible witness of 2 Pet. 3:1 (note), Irenaeus (c. A.D. 185; *Against Heresies* 4.9.2), Tertullian (c. A.D. 160–225), Clement of Alexandria (c. A.D. 150–215), and Origen (c. A.D. 185–253) all attributed the epistle to Peter. By the time of Eusebius (c. A.D. 265–339) there was no question of its authenticity (*Ecclesiastical History* 3.3.1).

Although the case for Peter's authorship is strong, linguistic and historical objections have been raised in the last two centuries. The Greek of 1 Peter is said to be too polished and too influenced by the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) to have come from an uneducated Galilean fisherman like Peter (Acts 4:13). The persecutions alluded to in the epistle (4:12–19; 5:6–9) are alleged to reflect a situation later than Peter's lifetime.

None of these objections is decisive against Peter's authorship. In response to the linguistic objection, several points can be made. First-century Galilee was bilingual (Aramaic and Greek), and it is not unlikely that a commercial fisherman would have known the language of commerce. The description of Peter and John as "uneducated and untrained men" in Acts 4:13 may refer only to their lack of formal training in the Scriptures. The thirty years that elapsed between Peter's days as a fisherman and the time the epistle was written would have provided ample opportunity for him to improve his proficiency in Greek. Finally, Silvanus' possible role as secretary (5:12) could account for the smoother style of 1 Peter as compared to 2 Peter.

With regard to the historical objections, the sufferings alluded to by Peter can just as well be accounted for by local, sporadic harassment, which was the routine experience of early Christians from the days of the apostles on, as by official persecution in the days of Domitian (c. A.D. 95) or Trajan (c. A.D. 111).

Date and Occasion According to 5:13, Peter was in "Babylon" when he wrote the epistle. Various identifications of the location have been suggested, among them (a) a military outpost in Egypt, (b) the ancient Mesopotamian city itself, and (c) Rome. Several lines of evidence favor the latter. Mark, who was with Peter when he wrote (5:13), is known to have been with Paul in Rome (Col. 4:10; Philem. 24). Rome is often seen as the "Babylon" of Revelation (Rev. 17:5, 9). This interpretation has been generally accepted since the second century. The uniform testimony of early church history is that Peter was in Rome at the end of his life.

If Rome is the place of origin, the epistle must have been composed between A.D. 60 and 68. The first limit is established by Peter's familiarity with Ephesians and Colossians (cf. 2:18 with Col. 3:22; and 3:1–6 with Eph. 5:22–24), the second limit by the tradition that Peter was crucified upside down in Rome in A.D. 68 at the latest.

While the introduction ("the Dispersion," 1:1 and note) and the frequent Old Testament quotations and allusions in the epistle might imply Jewish Christian recipients (so Calvin), there are stronger indications that most were from a pagan background. The reference in 1:18, for example, to "your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers" hardly seems fitting for Jews. Furthermore, the sins listed in 4:3 are typically pagan.

It is apparent from the letter that the readers were suffering persecution for their faith (1:6, 7; 3:13–17; 4:12–19; 5:8, 9). But nothing in the letter indicates official, legislative persecution or requires a date of composition later than the 60s. Their sufferings were the trials common to first-century Christians, and included insults (4:4, 14) and slanderous accusations of wrongdoing (2:12; 3:16). Beatings (2:20), social ostracism, sporadic mob violence, and local police action may have been involved as well.

Characteristics and Themes Peter writes to encourage persecuted and bewildered Christians and to exhort them to stand fast in their faith (5:12). To that end he repeatedly turns their thoughts to the joys and glories of their eternal inheritance (1:3–13; 4:13; 5:1, 4) and instructs them about proper Christian behavior in the midst of unjust suffering (4:1, 19). While addressed primarily to persecuted Christians, the principles Peter teaches apply to all suffering, regardless of the cause, provided it is not occasioned by one's own sin. On the

basis of this epistle, Peter has with justice been called "the apostle of hope" (cf. 1:3, 13, 21; 3:15). The central exhortation of the entire epistle can be summed up in the phrase "trust and obey" (cf. 4:19). □

Outline of 1 Peter

I. Salutation (1:1, 2)
II. The Christian's Sure Salvation (1:3–12)
III. The Implications of Salvation (1:13—3:12)
  A. Personal Holiness (1:13–16)
  B. Reverent Fear (1:17–21)
  C. Mutual Love (1:22—2:3)
  D. Membership in a Spiritual Community (2:4–10)
  E. The Christian and Social Relationships (2:11—3:12)
    1. The World in General (2:11, 12)
    2. The State (2:13–17)
    3. The Household (2:18—3:7)
    4. Summary (3:8–12)
IV. Christian Suffering and Service (3:13—5:11)
  A. The Blessing of Suffering for Righteousness' Sake (3:13–22)
  B. Living for God's Glory (4:1–11)
  C. Suffering as a Christian (4:12–19)
  D. Humility and Alertness in Suffering (5:1–11)
    1. Faithful and Humble Leadership (5:1–4)
    2. Humility and Alertness (5:5–9)
    3. Promise of Strength and Vindication (5:10, 11)
V. Final Greetings (5:12–14)

CHAPTER 1

Greeting to the Elect Pilgrims

1 PETER, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

To the [1]pilgrims [a]of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,
2 [b]elect [c]according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, [d]in sanctification of the Spirit, for [e]obedience and [f]sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ:

[g]Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

1 [a]James 1:1 [1]*sojourners,* temporary residents

2 [b]Eph. 1:4 [c][Rom. 8:29] [d]2 Thess. 2:13 [e]Rom. 1:5 [f]Heb. 10:22; 12:24 [g]Rom. 1:7

■ **1:1 Peter.** The name (which means "rock") was given by Jesus (Matt. 16:18; John 1:42) in anticipation of the disciple's role in the early church. His given Hebrew name was probably "Simeon," or "Simon" in Greek. "Cephas" (John 1:42; 1 Cor. 1:12) is the transliteration of the Aramaic word for "rock."

apostle. See note on 2 Cor. 1:1.

pilgrims. See text note. This word (seen again in 2:11) emphasizes the temporary nature of a sojourner's stay in a place. As pilgrims, Christians live in the world, but their real homeland is in heaven (Phil. 3:20; Heb. 11:13–16) and their hope is anchored there.

the Dispersion. This word (Greek *diaspora*) was a technical term among Greek-speaking Jews for the Jews living outside Palestine (John 7:35). Here it is probably used figuratively to describe Christians as people who are away from their true homeland.

Pontus. Although 1 Peter has the character of a general letter (like James, 2 Peter, 1 John, Jude), it differs from the other General Epistles in that it specifies the areas in which the readers lived.

■ **1:2 elect.** Peter reminds his readers of their privileged and secure position as the objects of God's sovereign, gracious, eternal choice to be His people in and through Jesus Christ (2:9, 10).

foreknowledge. Includes God's sovereign, loving, effective choice and purpose (Rom. 8:29 note). The corresponding verb ("foreordained") is used of Christ in v. 20.

in sanctification of the Spirit. Note the close connection of the Father's electing love with the Spirit's work of applying redemption to the elect (2 Thess. 2:13). This "sanctification" includes all the Spirit's operations in setting sinners apart from sin (including regeneration and faith) and purifying them for God's service (sanctification in the progressive sense).

A Heavenly Inheritance

3 [h]Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who [i]according to His abundant mercy [j]has begotten us again to a living hope [k]through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance [2]incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, [l]reserved in heaven for you, 5 [m]who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

6 [n]In this you greatly rejoice, though now [o]for a little while, if need be, [p]you have been [3]grieved by various trials, 7 that [q]the genuineness of your faith, *being* much more precious than

3 [h]Eph. 1:3 [i]Gal. 6:16 [j][John 3:3, 5] [k]1 Cor. 15:20
4 [l]Col. 1:5 [2]*imperishable*
5 [m]John 10:28
6 [n]Matt. 5:12 [o]2 Cor. 4:17 [p]James 1:2 [3]*distressed*
7 [q]James 1:3

obedience. The initial act of obedience is faith in Christ (John 6:28, 29) and the fundamental element of all obedience is continued faith. To suggest that election is on the basis of God's foreknowledge (that is, mere foresight) of faith would introduce a contradiction into this verse, since election is "for" or with the goal of faith (obedience), and not because of it (Eph. 1:3, 4; 2 Tim. 1:9).

the blood of Jesus Christ. Sprinkling of blood was part of the Old Testament ritual service. In general, the appearance of blood advertises the death of a victim. Abel's blood cried for vengeance (Gen. 4:10), and Jesus' blood cries for forgiveness (Luke 23:34; Heb. 12:24). In the worship of the Old Testament, the death of the victim establishes a covenant, and the sprinkling incorporates the worshipers as participants, making them publicly liable for the covenant's benefits and responsibilities (Ex. 24:8).

Grace . . . and peace. This greeting is also a blessing, and would have special relevance for suffering Christians. Grace is God's loving favor to sinners in Christ, while peace is the objective condition of being right with God through Christ (Rom. 5:1, 2), together with all that flows from that relationship. This verse proclaims all three persons of the one God who blesses. See "One and Three: The Trinity" at Is. 44:6.

■ **1:3 according to His abundant mercy.** This emphasizes that salvation is based entirely on God's loving initiative.

begotten us again. Although the verb used here and in 1:23 occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, the thought is found frequently (John 1:12, 13; 3:3–8; Titus 3:5; James 1:18).

living hope. A key word in this epistle is "hope" (1:13, 21; 3:15). In the Bible, hope is not uncertainty or wishful thinking, but a confident expectation of future blessing based on facts and promises. "Living" indicates the undying and permanent character of this hope.

■ **1:4 inheritance.** As God's children by the New Birth, Christians are heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:16, 17). Their inheritance is called "salvation" (v. 5; Heb. 1:14).

■ **1:5 who are kept by the power of God through faith.** This verse stresses both the priority of divine grace and the importance of the human action that results from grace. Faith is the gift of God, but believers are still responsible for exercising that faith, or steadfast trust, in spiritual battle (5:8, 9; Eph. 6:16; Phil. 2:12, 13). The strength of God's protection is conveyed by means of a military term, here translated "kept," signifying vigilant defense of a fortress.

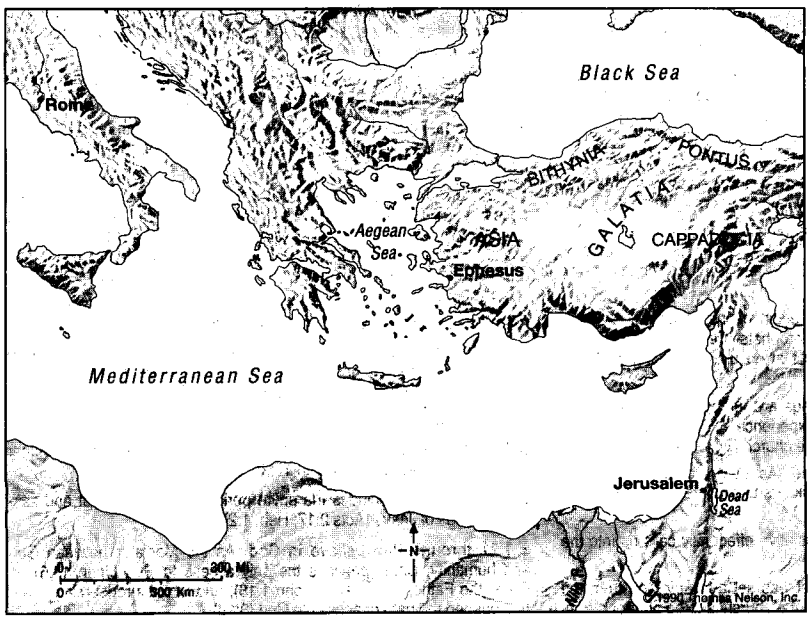
salvation. Here the word means complete and final future deliverance from sin and full enjoyment of eternal glory (v. 9; 4:13, 14; 5:1, 4).

the last time. Christ's return and the final manifestation of His power and glory.

■ **1:6 if need be.** Although God never tempts anyone to sin (James 1:13), He allows or sends trials when necessary and in the right measure for strengthening faith (v. 7).

■ **1:7** This explains why trials might "need" to come (v. 6; cf. Rom. 5:3, 4; James 1:2–4).

tested by fire. As men use fire to refine precious metals, so God uses trials to distinguish genuine faith from superficial profession, and at the same time to strengthen faith (Job 23:10).



A Letter to Christians Abroad. The First Epistle of Peter is addressed to "the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." Writing from Rome (indicated by the code name "Babylon" in 1 Pet. 5:13), the author encourages them to be strong in the faith as they encounter persecutions.

gold that perishes, though [r]it is tested by fire, [s]may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, [8][t]whom having not [4]seen you love. [u]Though now you do not see *Him,* yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, [9]receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of *your* souls.

[10]Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace *that would come* to you, [11]searching what, or what manner of time, [v]the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. [12]To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to [5]us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which [w]angels desire to look into.

Living Before God Our Father

[13]Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest *your* hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; [14]as obedient children, not [x]conforming yourselves to the former lusts, *as* in your ignorance; [15][y]but as He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy in all *your* conduct, [16]because it is written, [z]*"Be holy, for I am holy."*

[17]And if you call on the Father, who [a]without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your [6]stay *here* in fear; [18]knowing that you were not redeemed with [7]corruptible things, *like* silver or gold, from your aimless conduct *received* by tradition from your fathers, [19]but [b]with the precious blood of Christ, [c]as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. [20][d]He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was [8]manifest [e]in these last times for you [21][f]who through Him believe in God, [f]who raised Him from the dead and [g]gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

7 [r]Job 23:10 [s][Rom. 2:7]
8 [t]1 John 4:20 [u]John 20:29 [4]M *known*
11 [v]2 Pet. 1:21
12 [w]Eph. 3:10 [5]NU, M *you*
14 [x][Rom. 12:2]
15 [y][2 Cor. 7:1]
16 [z]Lev. 11:44, 45; 19:2; 20:7
17 [a]Acts 10:34 [6]*sojourning, dwelling* as resident aliens
18 [7]*perishable*
19 [b]Acts 20:28 [c]Ex. 12:5
20 [d]Rom. 3:25 [e]Gal. 4:4 [8]*revealed*
21 [f]Acts 2:24 [g]Acts 2:33

be found to praise, honor, and glory. The ultimate goal of trials is the reward of glorification (5:1, 4).

at the revelation of Jesus Christ. This is the Second Coming (v. 5; 4:13; 5:1; 1 Cor. 4:3–5).

■ **1:9 receiving.** Believers already enjoy certain essential elements of salvation (e.g., peace and fellowship with God), but full possession awaits the return of Christ (v. 5).

souls. Used here to mean "self" or "person"; compare the same usage in 3:20.

■ **1:11 what . . . time.** The prophets knew the Messiah would come (Is. 7:14; 9:6; 11:1), but they did not know when or how (cf. Dan. 12:6, 9).

the Spirit of Christ. This exact phrase appears only here and in Rom. 8:9 (cf. Acts 16:6, 7; Gal. 4:6; Phil. 1:19). The Holy Spirit is called this because He is sent by Christ (John 15:26) and because after the Resurrection, Christ and the Spirit act as one in applying redemption to the believer. See notes on Rom. 8:10; 1 Cor. 15:45.

■ **1:12 To them it was revealed.** Peter does not say how or when the prophets learned that they were actually serving future generations.

things . . . reported. The sufferings and glories of Christ (v. 11) are the content of the gospel (Luke 24:25–27, 45–47). The events predicted by the prophets are the events fulfilled in Christ and told to the church by the gospel messengers.

Holy Spirit sent from heaven. The origin of the gospel message is God. The same Spirit who inspired the prophets directed the gospel messengers. The Old and New Testaments are a unity centering on Christ and His salvation.

angels desire to look. Celestial beings are intensely interested in redemption, but their knowledge and experience of it are limited. God's plan is made known to them through the church (Eph. 3:10).

■ **1:13 gird up the loins of your mind.** As we would say, "fasten your belt" or "roll up your sleeves." Peter asks us to prepare for vigorous and sustained spiritual exertion.

■ **1:15 called you.** God's gracious initiative effectually calls us into the new life in Christ.

be holy. Just as Old Testament Israel was set apart by God from the surrounding nations to be holy, so also the church is to be set apart from sin to the service of God (2:9; Lev. 19:2). The Christian's standard of and motivation for holiness is the absolute moral perfection of God Himself (v. 16; Matt. 5:48; Eph. 5:1).

■ **1:17 Father, who without partiality judges.** Though Christians will not be condemned for their sins (2:24; Is. 53:4, 5), they will be judged for their deeds as Christians and rewarded accordingly (Rom. 14:10–12; 1 Cor. 3:12–15). The reward promised, however, is not based strictly on merit; though it is bestowed according to works, the reward is still gracious. Augustine called it God's crowning His own gifts.

stay. See text note. The Greek word suggests those who live in a place as unnaturalized aliens, and emphasizes the Christian's temporary, pilgrim status in the world.

in fear. God is both Father and Judge, and believers must approach Him with humble reverence and awe (Ps. 34:11).

■ **1:18 redeemed.** Freed from the bondage of sin by the payment of a price (Rom. 8:2; Gal. 3:13; Eph. 1:7). The price of redemption is the blood of Christ (v. 19).

aimless conduct received by tradition. The emptiness and worthlessness of pagan worship is a frequent theme of scriptural writers (Jer. 2:5; Acts 14:15). Although the New Testament condemns certain Jewish traditions that added to the demands of the Old Testament law (Mark 7:8–13), Peter here seems to have Gentile paganism in view (1:14; 4:3).

■ **1:19 lamb.** The lamb is from the Old Testament sacrificial system, especially the Passover (Ex. 12:3; Is. 53:7; John 1:29).

without blemish and . . . spot. In order to be acceptable, a sacrifice had to be free from all defect (Lev. 22:20–25). Christ's sinless life qualified Him to die for the sins of others (Heb. 4:15; 7:26, 27).

■ **1:20 foreordained.** Lit. "foreknown" (v. 2 note).

before the foundation of the world. Christ was chosen as Redeemer of the elect in eternity past (John 17:24; Eph. 1:4).

these last times. Includes the entire period between the first and second comings of Jesus (Acts 2:17; Heb. 1:2).

■ **1:21 through Him believe in God.** As the Mediator between God and humanity, Christ provides the only access to God (John 14:6). In Christ the Father is revealed (John 1:18), and Christ's redeeming death has opened the path of access to God (3:18).

The Enduring Word

22 Since you [h]have purified your souls in obeying the truth [g]through the Spirit in [1]sincere [i]love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, 23 [j]having been born again, not of [2]corruptible seed but [3]incorruptible, [k]through the word of God which lives and abides [4]forever, 24 because

[l]*"All flesh is as grass,*
And all [5]the glory of man as the flower of the grass.
The grass withers,
And its flower falls away,
25 [m]*But the [6]word of the LORD endures forever."*

[n]Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.

2 Therefore, [a]laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, 2 [b]as newborn babes, desire the pure [c]milk of the word, that you may grow [1]thereby, 3 if indeed you have [d]tasted that the Lord *is* gracious.

The Chosen Stone and His Chosen People

4 Coming to Him *as to* a living stone, [e]rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God *and* precious, 5 you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture,

[f]*"Behold, I lay in Zion*
A chief cornerstone, elect, precious,
And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame."

7 Therefore, to you who believe, *He is* precious; but to those who [2]are disobedient,

[g]*"The stone which the builders rejected*
Has become the chief cornerstone,"

8 and

22 [h]Acts 15:9 [i]John 13:34; Rom. 12:10; Heb. 13:1; 1 Pet. 2:17; 3:8 [g]NU omits *through the Spirit* [1]Lit. *unhypocritical*

23 [j]John 1:13 [k]1 Thess. 2:13; James 1:18 [2]*perishable* [3]*imperishable* [4]NU omits *forever*

24 [l]Is. 40:6–8; James 1:10 [5]NU *its glory as*

25 [m]Is. 40:8 [n][John 1:1] [6]*spoken word*

CHAPTER 2

1 [a]Heb. 12:1

2 [b][Matt. 18:3; 19:14; Mark 10:15; Luke 18:17]; 1 Cor. 14:20 [c]1 Cor. 3:2 [1]NU adds *up to salvation*

3 [d]Ps. 34:8; Titus 3:4; Heb. 6:5

4 [e]Ps. 118:22

6 [f]Is. 28:16; Rom. 9:32, 33; 10:11; 1 Pet. 2:8

7 [g]Ps. 118:22; Matt. 21:42; Luke 2:34 [2]NU *disbelieve*

■ **1:23** Genuine and enduring love for others (v. 22) is possible only because of the love God has first shown to us in giving us the new birth in Christ (John 13:35; 1 John 4:7–11).

born again. See note on 1:3; "Regeneration: The New Birth" at John 3:3.

corruptible . . . incorruptible. Peter compares and contrasts human procreation with the life-giving power of God's Word (Luke 8:11).

through the word of God. God's Word is used by the Holy Spirit as an instrument to bring sinners to a knowledge of God's grace in Jesus Christ (Heb. 4:12; James 1:18).

■ **2:2 newborn babes.** Peter continues the imagery of new birth (1:23). Believers should have the same yearning for spiritual food that a healthy infant has for its mother's milk.

pure milk. Although the churches to which Peter writes no doubt included many recent converts, the emphasis at this point is not that teaching should be elementary, like the "milk" of 1 Cor. 3:1–3, but that it should be pure. If it is founded on God's Word, teaching will be pure and nourishing (1:22–25).

■ **2:4 Coming to Him.** "Coming" to Christ includes initial repentance and faith, but the Greek tense implies a continual drawing near as well.

living stone. Christ is this stone (1 Cor. 10:4). The image of "rock" and "stone" is common in the Old Testament (Ps. 118:22; Is. 8:14; 28:16) and is applied by Jesus to Himself (Matt. 21:42). "Living" indicates that Christ is the source and giver of life (John 1:4; 1 Cor. 15:45). Jesus often uses imagery drawn from stonemasonry, a trade He was intimately acquainted with. Carpenters in antiquity worked with stones as well as wood.

■ **2:5 living stones.** A phrase emphasizing both Christians' union with and resemblance to Christ, the "living stone" (v. 4).

spiritual house. The background of the symbolism is the Old Testament temple as the house or dwelling place of God. The church, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, is the true temple of God (2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:19–22; Heb. 3:6).

holy priesthood. Every true believer is a priest (v. 9) in the sense of having equal and immediate access to God and serving Him personally.

spiritual sacrifices. While Christ's once-for-all sacrifice of propitiation on the cross has fulfilled the Old Testament sacrificial system and rendered it obsolete (Heb. 8:13; 10:9, 10, 18), the appropriateness of "sacrifice" (understood as the grateful response of a redeemed people) remains. These sacrifices are "spiritual" in contrast to all the material sacrifices prescribed in the Old Testament sacrificial system. Such sacrifice is seen both in the Christian's worship and pattern of living (Rom. 12:1; Phil. 4:18; Heb. 13:5; Rev. 8:3, 4; cf. Ps. 51:16, 17).

acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. The priesthood of all believers depends on the eternal high priesthood of Christ, through whose once-for-all sacrifice and continual intercession both Christians personally and their sacrifices are acceptable to God (Heb. 13:15, 16).

■ **2:6 cornerstone.** The great stone laid for the foundation at the place where two walls come together and of special importance for the stability of the entire building. The church is established on the prophets and apostles, who are held together by the chief cornerstone—Christ (Eph. 2:20).

■ **2:7 chief cornerstone.** Lit. "the head of the corner."

■ **2:8 they also were appointed.** This verse teaches both divine sovereignty and human responsibility. People are condemned ("stumble") because they are "disobedient," but this disobedience does not occur apart from the sovereign will of God (Rom. 9:14–24).

8 [h]Is. 8:14 [i]1 Cor. 1:23; Gal. 5:11 [j]Rom. 9:22

9 [k]Is. 9:2; 42:16; [Acts 26:18; 2 Cor. 4:6]

10 [l]Hos. 1:9, 10; 2:23; Rom. 9:25; 10:19

11 [m][Rom. 8:13]; Gal. 5:17; James 4:1

12 [n]2 Cor. 8:21; Phil. 2:15; Titus 2:8; 1 Pet. 2:15; 3:16 [o]Matt. 5:16; 9:8; John 13:31; 1 Pet. 4:11, 16

13 [p]Matt. 22:21 [3]*institution*

16 [q]Rom. 6:14, 20, 22; 1 Cor. 7:22; [Gal. 5:1] [r]Gal. 5:13

[h] *"A stone of stumbling*
And a rock of offense."

[i]They stumble, being disobedient to the word, [j]to which they also were appointed.

9 But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of [k]darkness into His marvelous light; 10 [l]who once *were* not a people but *are* now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.

Living Before the World

11 Beloved, I beg *you* as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts [m]which war against the soul, 12 [n]having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, [o]they may, by *your* good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Submission to Government

13 [p]Therefore submit yourselves to every [3]ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, 14 or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and *for the* praise of those who do good. 15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men— 16 [q]as free, yet not [r]using liberty as

■ **2:9, 10** Peter's language in these verses, applying the Old Testament terms for Israel to the church, asserts the continuity between Old Testament Israel and the New Testament church, representing them as the one people of God.

■ **2:9 But you.** This marks a sharp contrast between the destiny of unbelievers (v. 8) and the status of the elect. The theme of God's sovereign choice of both Christ and the church is prominent in this passage (vv. 6, 9).

that you may proclaim. The election and calling of God's people is not only for salvation but for service as well. All believers are called to bear joyful witness to the saving acts of God.

■ **2:10 not a people but are now the people of God.** The Greek word translated "people" (*laos*) is used in the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, primarily for Israel. Continuing to apply to the church Old Testament texts dealing with Israel, Peter draws on the Septuagint of Hos. 1:6, 9, 10; and 2:23. In its original context, this is a prophecy about God's embracing Israel after He had rejected her. Peter, like Paul (Rom. 9:25, 26), interprets the Hosea passages to include the reception of Gentiles into the people of God. God's mercy extends to undeserving Jews and Gentiles alike, and there is essential continuity between Old Testament Israel and the New Testament church.

■ **2:11 fleshly lusts.** Bodily desires are not wrong in themselves, but are perverted by man's sinful nature. The expression includes not just sins of the body, but other desires of our fallen nature (Gal. 5:19–21).

■ **2:12 speak against you as evildoers.** Among the charges against Christians in Peter's time were disloyalty to the emperor (John 19:12), propagation of unlawful customs (Acts 16:20, 21), defamation of the gods (Acts 19:23–27), and general troublemaking (Acts 17:6, 7).

glorify God in the day of visitation. God's "visitation" is His drawing near either for judgment or mercy.

■ **2:13 submit yourselves to every ordinance.** This introduces the theme of voluntary submission and obedience to those in authority developed in 2:13—3:6.

for the Lord's sake. A person should submit to ordinances because this will commend Christ to others and keep reproach from His name. Submission to others also in itself is a service to Christ (Col. 3:23, 24).

the king as supreme. Chiefly the Roman emperor, at this time Nero (A.D. 54–68). The king is supreme, relative to governors and other rulers. Though Peter does not discuss the origin of kingly authority (cf. Rom. 13:1–7), Scripture teaches elsewhere that submission is required as long as it does not involve violation of the law of God (Matt. 22:21; Acts 4:19; 5:29).

■ **2:16 as free.** Submission does not mean a denial of Christian freedom, but is the act of God's truly free people.

not . . . as a cloak for vice. Christian freedom must not be used as a pretext for rebellion (1 Cor. 7:20–24) or a license to sin (Gal. 5:13; 2 Pet. 2:19, 20).

as bondservants of God. Christian freedom rests not on escape from service but on a change of masters (Rom. 6:22).

Christian Behavior in a Pagan Society (2:11, 12)

Christians are exhorted to be...	Because...
Good citizens (2:13, 14)	Foolish men will be silenced (2:15)
Obedient servants (2:18)	Christ is our example (2:21)
Submissive wives (3:1)	Some unbelieving husbands will be won by their example (3:1, 2)
Considerate husbands (3:7)	Their prayers will be heard (3:7)
Compassionate brothers and sisters (3:8)	They will inherit a blessing (3:9)

a cloak for [4]vice, but as bondservants of God. [17] Honor all *people.* Love the brotherhood. Fear [s]God. Honor the king.

Submission to Masters

[18] [t]Servants, *be* submissive to *your* masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. [19] For this *is* [u]commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. [20] For [v]what credit *is it* if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this *is* commendable before God. [21] For [w]to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for [5]us, [x]leaving [6]us an example, that you should follow His steps:

22 *"Who[y] committed no sin,*
Nor was deceit found in His mouth";

[23] [z]who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but [a]committed *Himself* to Him who judges righteously; [24] [b]who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, [c]that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—[d]by whose [7]stripes you were healed. [25] For [e]you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned [f]to the Shepherd and [8]Overseer of your souls.

Submission to Husbands

3 Wives, likewise, *be* [a]submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, [b]they, without a word, may [c]be won by the conduct of their wives, [2] [d]when they observe your chaste conduct *accompanied* by fear. [3] [e]Do not let your adornment be *merely* outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on *fine* apparel— [4] rather *let it be* [f]the hidden person of the heart, with the [1]incorruptible *beauty* of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. [5] For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, [6] as Sarah obeyed

16 [4]*wickedness*
17 [s]Prov. 24:21
18 [t]Eph. 6:5–8
19 [u]Matt. 5:10
20 [v]Luke 6:32–34
21 [w]Matt. 16:24 [x][1 John 2:6] [5]NU *you* [6]NU, M *you*
22 [y]Is. 53:9
23 [z]Is. 53:7 [a]Luke 23:46
24 [b][Heb. 9:28] [c]Rom. 7:6 [d]Is. 53:5 [7]*wounds*
25 [e]Is. 53:5, 6 [f][Ezek. 34:23] [8]Gr. *Episkopos*

CHAPTER 3

1 [a]Eph. 5:22 [b]1 Cor. 7:16 [c]Matt. 18:15
2 [d]1 Pet. 2:12; 3:6
3 [e]1 Tim. 2:9
4 [f]Rom. 2:29 [1]*imperishable*

■ **2:17 Honor all people.** The exhortation is either to recognize the value of every person as a bearer of the image of God, or what is more likely in this context, to respect all those in positions of authority.

Fear God. See note on 1:17.

■ **2:18 Servants.** The vast majority of such servants were slaves and were treated as property. To a large extent the economy of the ancient world depended on slavery. Like other New Testament writers, Peter does not condemn slavery, and slaves are commanded to obey their masters. Nevertheless, the New Testament requires that slaves be treated with respect, and masters are not to mistreat their slaves (Eph. 6:9; Col. 4:1). Furthermore, the spiritual equality of slave and free in the church community is strongly emphasized (Gal. 3:28; cf. 1 Cor. 12:13; Col. 3:11), and slaves are encouraged to seek their freedom by lawful means (1 Cor. 7:21–24). In the late 1700's, when slavery came under attack, these teachings helped to undermine the institution of slavery.

■ **2:21 to this you were called . . . leaving us an example.** Suffering is a part of the Christian's calling (2 Tim. 3:12) because it was first part of Christ's (John 15:18–20). Christians are united with Christ in His sufferings as well as His resurrection (2 Cor. 1:5; 4:10; Phil. 3:10, 11), and the example of Christ provides a pattern by which Christians are to understand their own lives.

■ **2:22** See "The Sinlessness of Jesus" at Heb. 4:15.

■ **2:24 bore our sins.** See Is. 53:12. Christ is more than an example; He is the sin-bearer. As the perfect sacrifice (1:19; 2:24), Christ suffered the curse of sin, accepting the punishment our sins deserved and providing forgiveness and freedom.

tree. The cross (Acts 10:39). This Old Testament idiom emphasizes that Christ died bearing a curse (Deut. 21:22–23; Gal. 3:13).

■ **2:25 but have now returned.** This refers to the readers' initial conversion to Christ and suggests redirection of life and new personal attachment.

Shepherd. Familiar Old Testament imagery for God's care of His covenant people (Ps. 23:1; Ezek. 34; 37:24) is applied to Christ (5:4; John 10:11; Heb. 13:20; Rev. 7:17).

■ **3:1 Wives, likewise, be submissive.** The word "likewise" refers back to the general principle of submission in 2:13 and is not intended to equate the wife's submission to the husband with that of a slave to a master. The word "likewise" recurs in v. 7, establishing that just as the wife submits to her husband, so also the husband must give understanding and honor to the wife (cf. Eph. 5:25). The relationship of men and women involves both spiritual equality ("heirs together," v. 7; cf. Gal. 3:28) and some differentiation of roles and functions in the home and church (Eph. 5:22–33; 1 Tim. 2:8–15).

without a word. In ancient Roman culture the wife was expected to adopt the religion of her husband, and some of the Christian women in the Asian churches apparently had unbelieving spouses. Peter urges these Christian wives not to rely on argument, which might be seen as insubordination by the already suspicious husbands. Rather, the wives' gentle responsiveness will recommend the gospel to their unbelieving spouses. The enduring principle involved in this statement is not silence (v. 15), but a sensitivity to the concerns of the unbelieving husband so that the gospel may be presented in the best light.

■ **3:3 hair . . . gold . . . apparel.** Not a blanket prohibition of modest adornment, but a warning against preoccupation with outward appearances (1 Tim. 2:9, 10). Excess in this area is well attested in the pagan literature and art of the first century. The principle enjoined is modesty.

■ **3:6 calling him lord.** A conventional Eastern expression of respect and submission (Gen. 18:12).

daughters. That is, those who resemble Sarah in her submissive attitude.

do good. Here submission to husbands is primarily in view (cf. 2:15), but this probably includes continued allegiance to Christ as well.

not afraid. In dealing with unbelieving husbands (v. 1 note), the Christian wives were to maintain their commitment to Christ while at the same time showing proper deference to their husbands. The difficulties involved could lead to displeasure and intimidation on the husband's part and thus to "terror" on the wife's.

Abraham, [g]calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.

A Word to Husbands

7 [h]Husbands, likewise, dwell with *them* with understanding, giving honor to the wife, [i]as to the weaker vessel, and as *being* heirs together of the grace of life, [j]that your prayers may not be hindered.

Called to Blessing

8 Finally, all *of you be* of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, *be* tenderhearted, *be* [2]courteous; 9 [k]not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary [l]blessing, knowing that you were called to this, [m]that you may inherit a blessing. 10 For

[n]*"He who would love life*
And see good days,
[o]*Let him* [3]*refrain his tongue from evil,*
And his lips from speaking deceit.
11 *Let him* [p]*turn away from evil and do good;*
[q]*Let him seek peace and pursue it.*
12 *For the eyes of the* LORD *are on the righteous,*
[r]*And His ears are open to their prayers;*
But the face of the LORD *is against those who do evil."*

Suffering for Right and Wrong

13 [s]And who *is* he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? 14 [t]But even if you should suffer for righteousness' sake, *you are* blessed. [u]*"And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled."* 15 But [4]sanctify [5]the Lord God in your hearts, and always [v]*be* ready to *give* a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the [w]hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; 16 [x]having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. 17 For *it is* better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

Christ's Suffering and Ours

18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring [6]us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, 19 by whom also He went and

6 [g]Gen. 18:12

7 [h]1 Cor. 7:3; [Eph. 5:25]; Col. 3:19 [i]1 Cor. 12:23 [j]Job 42:8

8 [2]NU *humble*

9 [k][Prov. 17:13] [l]Matt. 5:44 [m]Matt. 25:34

10 [n]Ps. 34:12–16 [o]James 1:26 [3]*restrain*

11 [p]Ps. 37:27 [q]Rom. 12:18

12 [r]John 9:31

13 [s]Prov. 16:7

14 [t]James 1:12 [u]Is. 8:12

15 [v]Ps. 119:46 [w][Titus 3:7] [4]*set apart* [5]NU *Christ as Lord*

16 [x]1 Tim. 1:5; Heb. 13:18; 1 Pet. 3:21

18 [6]NU, M *you*

■ **3:7 the weaker vessel.** "Weaker" refers to physical strength, not to the moral, spiritual, or mental ability of the wife. The discrepancy in physical strength provides one reason for the special consideration the husband is to show his wife.

heirs together of the grace of life. Fellowship in the faith adds another reason for showing respect. Here Peter assumes that both husband and wife in this situation are Christians (cf. v. 1). Women enjoy full spiritual equality with men (Gal. 3:28).

your prayers . . . hindered. Estrangement from others often affects our relationship with God (Matt. 5:23, 24). In particular, the failure to observe God's will for the marriage relationship can disrupt our spiritual relationship with God. The importance of healthy family relationships is apparent from the typological comparison of Christ and church with husband and wife (Eph. 5:23, 24), and by the persistent New Testament characterization of the church as the family of God (1:14–17; Rom. 8:14–17; 1 Tim. 3:14, 15; 5:1, 2).

■ **3:8, 9** Note the parallel teaching in Rom. 12:9–21.

■ **3:9 not returning . . . blessing.** Christians are not to retaliate in response to persecution, but instead are to "bless" their enemies (1 Cor. 4:12; cf. 1 Thess. 5:15). Such blessing may take the form of prayer (Matt. 5:44).

■ **3:13 who is he who will harm you.** Peter is not denying that the Asian Christians (Introduction: Date and Occasion) may suffer for their faith (4:12). This statement may be interpreted either as a truism teaching that mistreatment is less likely if one's behavior is exemplary, or, more likely, as a statement that, whatever happens to the Christian, no external force can cause spiritual harm (Ps. 56:4; Luke 12:4, 5).

■ **3:14 blessed.** Recalls Matt. 5:10–12. Christians who suffer for the truth are blessed by God, even if their reward is delayed.

■ **3:15 always be ready.** Readiness to confess Christ is an important aspect of setting apart Christ as Lord.

defense. The word may suggest response to abusive or derisive inquiries from hostile people. Such a response includes an explanation of the main points of Christianity.

■ **3:16 revile your good conduct.** By their conduct Christians show that accusations against them are unfounded (2:12, 15).

■ **3:17 if it is the will of God.** Unjust suffering is within the providence of God and is for the good of His children and His own glory (1:6, 7; 4:19).

■ **3:18 once.** Christ's substitutionary death is sufficient, and no further sacrifices are necessary (Heb. 9:12, 26–28).

made alive by the Spirit. See Rom. 1:4; 8:11.

■ **3:19 preached to the spirits in prison.** Four main interpretations of vv. 19, 20 may be mentioned: (a) Christ as preincarnate and preaching through Noah (2 Pet. 2:5) to the people before the Flood (Gen. 6—8). Noah called them to repentance, but they disobeyed and are now imprisoned. The point of Peter's argument would then be that as God vindicated Noah then, He would vindicate Christians now. (b) Christ's preaching in the short interval between His death and Resurrection, during a "descent into hell." It is said that Christ announced His victory to the spirits of Noah's wicked contemporaries confined in the realm of the dead. (c) A similar idea is that Christ proclaimed His victory to fallen angels, often identified with the "sons of God" of Gen. 6:2, 4 (cf. Job 1:6; 2:1), in

preached to the spirits in prison, [20] who formerly were disobedient, [7]when once the Divine long-suffering waited in the days of Noah, while *the* ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. [21] [y]There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism [z](not the removal of the filth of the flesh, [a]but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, [22] who has gone into heaven and [b]is at the right hand of God, [c]angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.

4 Therefore, since Christ suffered [1]for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, [2] that he no longer should live the rest of *his* time in the flesh for the lusts of men, [a]but for the will of God. [3] For we *have spent* enough of our past [2]lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. [4] In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with *them* in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of *you.* [5] They will give an account to Him who is ready [b]to judge the living and the dead. [6] For this reason [c]the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but [d]live according to God in the spirit.

Serving for God's Glory

[7] But [e]the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. [8] And above all things have fervent love for one another, for [f]*"love will cover a multitude of sins."* [9] [g]*Be* hospitable to one another [h]without grumbling. [10] [i]As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, [j]as good stewards of [k]the manifold grace of God. [11] [l]If anyone speaks, *let him speak* as the [3]oracles of God. If anyone ministers, *let him do it* as with the ability which God supplies, that [m]in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the [4]dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Suffering for God's Glory

[12] Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; [13] but rejoice [n]to the extent that you partake of Christ's

20 [7]NU, M *when the longsuffering of God waited patiently*

21 [y]Eph. 5:26 [z][Titus 3:5] [a][Rom. 10:10]

22 [b]Ps. 110:1 [c]Rom. 8:38

CHAPTER 4

1 [1]NU omits *for us*

2 [a]John 1:13

3 [2]NU *time*

5 [b]Acts 10:42

6 [c]1 Pet. 1:12; 3:19 [d][Rom. 8:9, 13]

7 [e]Rom. 13:11

8 [f][Prov. 10:12]

9 [g]Heb. 13:2 [h]2 Cor. 9:7

10 [i]Rom. 12:6–8 [j]1 Cor. 4:1, 2 [k][1 Cor. 12:4]

11 [l]Eph. 4:29 [m][1 Cor. 10:31] [3]*utterances* [4]*sovereignty*

13 [n]James 1:2

their place of confinement. (d) Christ proclaiming His victory to fallen angels after the Resurrection, at the time of His Ascension into heaven. The point of the last three interpretations is that just as Jesus was vindicated, so too Christians will be vindicated.

■ **3:21 antitype which now saves us—baptism.** Baptism is a sign and seal of God's grace in Jesus Christ. The startling statement that baptism "saves us" shows how close is the relationship between the sign and the reality it signifies. Noah's physical salvation through the waters of the Flood prefigured the waters of baptism and the salvation they signify. Baptism symbolizes judgment on sin in the death of Christ and then also renewal of life (Rom. 6:4). The floodwaters were judgment to the wicked, and at the same time physical salvation for the just, Noah and his family.

not the removal of the filth of the flesh. Lest his readers mistakenly attribute a magical or mechanical power to the sacrament, Peter states that the means of salvation is not performance of the external rite, but what it symbolizes—union with Christ in His death and Resurrection.

■ **3:22 at the right hand of God.** The place of supreme privilege and sovereignty in the universe (Eph. 1:20–23; Heb. 1:3).

■ **4:1 has ceased from sin.** Some interpret this to refer to the character-building effects of suffering. But the preceding reference to baptism (3:21; cf. Rom. 6:1–10) indicates that Peter is thinking of the union of believers with Christ in His suffering and death, a union particularly symbolized by baptism (Rom. 6:4). Though Christ was always sinless (2:22; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15), He nevertheless fully identified with sinful humanity by coming "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. 8:3) and becoming subject to temptation, suffering, and death (Mark 1:12, 13; Heb. 2:10; 4:15). Christ "died to sin" (Rom. 6:10) in the sense that after His death and Resurrection He was no longer subject to the power of sin and death.

■ **4:3** This catalog of sins closely resembles Rom. 13:13 and Gal. 5:19–21, and is strong evidence for the pagan background of most of Peter's audience (1:14, 18; Introduction: Date and Occasion).

lewdness. Unrestrained indulgence of one's desires, especially for sensual pleasure (Rom. 13:13; 2 Cor. 12:21; Eph. 4:19).

lusts. The usual word for evil desire, often relating to sexual immorality.

revelries. Excessive feasting, often in honor of a pagan god.

drinking parties. The excessive use of alcohol is frequently condemned in Scripture (Rom. 13:13; Gal. 5:21).

■ **4:6 For this reason.** This verse follows on the idea of a universal divine judgment just stated, but the reason or purpose of the preaching is not given until the end of the verse.

was preached also to those who are dead. Although some connect this preaching with 3:19, 20, it is more likely unrelated. These people may have been Christians who had heard Peter preach, but who had died by the time of the letter.

be judged . . . in the flesh. Probably a reference to the physical death of the hearers. Although Christ has triumphed over physical death in His death and Resurrection (Rom. 6:9), the full extent of that victory has not yet been manifested in the lives of God's people, and physical death is a reality Christians still face. Nevertheless, we now enjoy spiritual resurrection through union with Christ, and we have full assurance that Christ's victory will be extended to our physical bodies (1 Cor. 15:25, 26; cf. Rom. 8:11).

■ **4:7 is at hand.** The "end of all things" may refer to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 or, more comprehensively, to the final consummation of Christ's kingdom at His return. The call to vigilance is frequent in the New Testament. The entire period between the Resurrection of Christ and His Second Coming is seen as the "last days" (1:20 note; Acts 2:17; 1 Tim. 4:1 note).

■ **4:8 love will cover . . . sins.** Love keeps no record of wrongs but forgives in response to God's forgiveness (Prov. 10:12; Matt. 18:21, 22; 1 Cor. 13:4–7; James 5:20). See "Love" at 1 Cor. 13:13.

■ **4:9 hospitable.** One of the fruits of love (v. 8). Situations necessitating hospitality would include homelessness due to persecution, Christians traveling on business, and itinerant missionaries (Rom. 12:13; 3 John 5–8).

■ **4:10 each one . . . minister.** See Rom. 12:3–8.

■ **4:13 but rejoice.** The same paradox of exultation in suffering is found in 1:6, 7.

13 [o]2 Tim. 2:12

14 [p]Matt. 5:11 [q]Matt. 5:16 [5]*insulted* or *reviled* [6]NU omits the rest of v. 14.

15 [7]*meddler*

16 [8]NU *name*

17 [r]Is. 10:12 [s]Luke 10:12

18 [t]Prov. 11:31

19 [u]2 Tim. 1:12

CHAPTER 5

1 [a]Matt. 26:37 [b]Rom. 8:17, 18

2 [c]Acts 20:28

sufferings, that [o]when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. 14 If you are [5]reproached for the name of Christ, [p]blessed *are you,* for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. [6]On their part He is blasphemed, [q]but on your part He is glorified. 15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, a thief, an evildoer, or as a [7]busybody in other people's matters. 16 Yet if *anyone suffers* as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this [8]matter.

17 For the time *has come* [r]for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if *it begins* with us first, [s]what will *be* the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18 Now

[t]*"If the righteous one is scarcely saved,*
Where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?"

19 Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God [u]commit their souls *to Him* in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.

Shepherd the Flock

5 The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a [a]witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the [b]glory that will be revealed: 2 [c]Shepherd the

Pastors and Pastoral Care

The apostles told all Christians to watch over each other with loving care and prayer (Gal. 6:1, 2; Heb. 12:15, 16; 1 John 3:16–18; 5:16), but they also appointed in each congregation guardians, called "elders" (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5), who would look after the people as shepherds look after sheep (Acts 20:28–31; 1 Pet. 5:1–4), leading them by example (1 Pet. 5:3) away from all that is harmful into all that is good. By virtue of their role, the elders (presbyters) are also called "shepherds" ("pastors," Eph. 4:11) and "overseers" (Acts 20:28, cf. v. 17; "bishops," Titus 1:7, cf. v. 5; 1 Pet. 5:1, 2), and are spoken of in other terms that express leadership (1 Thess. 5:12; Heb. 13:7, 17, 24). The congregation, for its part, is to acknowledge the God-given authority of its leaders and to follow their lead (Heb. 13:17).

This pattern is already present in the Old Testament, where God is the shepherd of Israel (Ps. 80:1) and kings, prophets, priests, and elders (local rulers) are called to act as His agents in an under-shepherd role (Num. 11:24–30; Deut. 27:1; Ezra 5:5; 6:14; 10:8; Ps. 77:20; Jer. 23:1–4; Ezek. 34; Zech. 11:16, 17). In the New Testament, Jesus the Good Shepherd (John 10:11–30) is also the Chief Shepherd (1 Pet. 5:4), and the elders are His subordinates. The apostle Peter calls himself an "elder" under Christ (1 Pet. 5:1), remembering perhaps that shepherding was the specific task Jesus gave him when restoring him to ministry (John 21:15–17).

Some but not all elders teach (1 Tim. 5:17; Titus 1:9; Heb. 13:7), and Eph. 4:11–16 says that Christ gave the church "pastors and teachers" to equip everyone for service through the discovery and development of each person's spiritual gifts (vv. 12–16). In the congregational leadership envisaged by the apostles, there may have been teachers who were not elders, as well as elders who did not teach, and also those who both ruled and taught.

The pastoral role of elders demands mature and stable Christian character, and a well-ordered personal life (1 Tim. 3:1–7; Titus 1:5–9). The elder who serves faithfully will be rewarded (Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 5:4; cf. 1 Tim. 4:7, 8). □

partake of Christ's sufferings. Christians share in Christ's sufferings, not by contributing to Christ's finished work of atonement for sin, but by experiencing similar mistreatment because they are identified and united with Christ (vv. 14, 16; Rom. 8:17; 2 Cor. 1:5 and note; Phil. 1:29; Col. 1:24 and note).

■ **4:17 judgment . . . at the house of God.** Peter returns to the theme of divine sovereignty over the suffering of God's people. This judgment may have the purpose of purification (Mal. 3:2–4; Heb. 12:9–11), or of strengthening faith (1:6, 7).

■ **4:18 righteous one is scarcely saved.** It is not that final salvation is uncertain, but that the way to it is through hard discipline (Matt. 7:14; Acts 14:22).

■ **5:1 a fellow elder.** Although Peter has already mentioned his office as an apostle (1:1), here he stresses his solidarity and shared eldership with the leaders of the Asian churches so as to encourage them.

■ **5:2 Shepherd the flock of God.** This phrase broadly describes the functions of elders. The shepherd imagery suggests care, protection, discipline, and guidance (2:25 note). Jesus portrayed His own care for the church (John 10:1–18) and God's gracious interest in sinners (Luke 15:3–7) as works of shepherding. The use of the word by Peter recalls his own recommissioning (John 21:15–17). See theological note "Pastors and Pastoral Care."

not for dishonest gain. Peter condemns not fair compensation, but love of gain and the abuse of trust (1 Cor. 9:14; 1 Tim. 5:17, 18).

flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, [d]not by compulsion but [I]willingly, [e]not for dishonest gain but eagerly; 3 nor as [f]being [2]lords over [g]those entrusted to you, but [h]being examples to the flock; 4 and when [i]the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive [j]the crown of glory that does not fade away.

Submit to God, Resist the Devil

5 Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to *your* elders. Yes, [k]all of *you* be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for

[l]*"God resists the proud,*
But [m]gives grace to the humble."

6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, 7 casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

8 Be [3]sober, be [4]vigilant; [5]because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. 9 Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. 10 But [6]may the God of all grace, [n]who called [7]us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, [8]perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle *you.* 11 [o]To Him *be* the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Farewell and Peace

12 By [p]Silvanus, our faithful brother as I consider him, I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying [q]that this is the true grace of God in which you stand.

13 She who is in Babylon, elect together with *you,* greets you; and *so does* [r]Mark my son. 14 Greet one another with a kiss of love.

Peace to you all who are in Christ Jesus. Amen.

2 [d]1 Cor. 9:17 [e]1 Tim. 3:3 [f]NU adds *according to God*

3 [g]Ezek. 34:4 [h]Ps. 33:12 [i]Phil. 3:17 [2]*masters*

4 [j]Heb. 13:20 [j]2 Tim. 4:8

5 [k]Eph. 5:21 [l]Prov. 3:34 [m]Is. 57:15

8 [3]*self-controlled* [4]*watchful* [5]NU, M omit *because*

10 [n]1 Cor. 1:9 [6]NU *the God of all grace,* [7]NU, M *you* [8]NU *will perfect*

11 [o]Rev. 1:6

12 [p]2 Cor. 1:19 [q]Acts 20:24

13 [r]Acts 12:12, 25; 15:37, 39

■ **5:3 nor as being lords . . . but being examples.** Peter warns against haughty abuse of power and exhorts his audience to be like Jesus (Mark 10:42–45; John 13:1–17; Phil. 2:5–11).

■ **5:4 Chief Shepherd.** Christ (2:25). The title brings out the relationship of Christ's pastoral care and work to that of church leaders, who serve as undershepherds responsible to the Chief Shepherd.

■ **5:5 elders.** In v. 1 the Greek word is used in the technical sense of a church office holder, but here there is probably a more general reference to older people (cf. 1 Tim. 5:1).

■ **5:8 adversary the devil.** The Greek word translated "adversary" was in common use for an opponent in a lawsuit, and "devil" (Greek *diabolos*) is the usual translation of the Hebrew *Satan,* which means "slanderer" or "accuser" and also serves as a proper name for the devil (Job 1:6; Zech. 3:1, 2; cf. Rev. 12:9, 10). The phrase reveals the ultimate source behind all persecution.

lion. The imagery is perhaps borrowed from the Book of Psalms where the psalmist's enemies and the wicked are compared to lions (Ps. 7:2; 10:9, 10). The metaphor conveys the strength and destructiveness of the devil and accentuates the need for alertness on the part of believers.

■ **5:10 God of all grace.** God bestows help and strength sufficient for every occasion and need.

called us to His eternal glory. God's eternal plan for believers will bring them to glory (John 17:22–24; Rom. 8:28–30; 2 Cor. 4:17; 2 Tim. 2:10).

by Christ Jesus. All the blessings of God's grace in this life and the next come through the believer's union with Christ. See note on 2 Cor. 5:17.

■ **5:12 by Silvanus.** Probably this is Silas, Paul's companion on the second missionary journey (Acts 15:40). Silvanus may simply have carried the epistle, or he may have acted as a secretary, perhaps even helping Peter draft the letter.

■ **5:13 She . . . in Babylon.** Probably a reference to the church in Rome (Introduction: Date and Occasion).

Mark my son. John Mark (Acts 12:12, 25; 13:5, 13; 15:37–39). According to Papias (c. A.D. 60–130), Mark worked closely with Peter and derived much of the information for the Gospel of Mark from the apostle.

■ **5:14 kiss of love.** The kiss was and is a common form of greeting in the Near East (Matt. 26:48, 49; Luke 15:20), corresponding to today's handshake. For the Christians, the cultural form became an outward sign of their love and unity (a "holy kiss," Rom. 16:16; 1 Thess. 5:26).

The Second Epistle of

PETER

Author This epistle claims to have been written by Simon Peter (1:1), and several things in the epistle support the claim. The author refers to his own imminent death in terms that recall Jesus' words to Peter (1:14; cf. John 21:18, 19); he claims to have been an eyewitness of the Transfiguration (1:16–18; cf. Matt. 17:1–8 and parallels); and he seems to imply a connection between this epistle and 1 Peter (3:1).

Although there are possible allusions to 2 Peter in Christian literature of the late first and early second centuries, it is not as well attested as 1 Peter or other New Testament books. Origen (c. 185–254) was the first to attribute the epistle explicitly to Peter, but he recorded that others doubted Peter's authorship. Eusebius (c. 265–339) listed it among the disputed books, and Jerome (c. 342–420), while noting some disagreement regarding its authenticity, suggested that stylistic differences with 1 Peter were due to Peter's use of different secretaries. The epistle was accepted as authentic and canonical by influential fourth-century church fathers such as Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Ambrose, and Augustine, as well as by the late fourth-century church councils of Hippo and Carthage, and its subsequent place in the New Testament canon was assured.

Notwithstanding the epistle's own claims, a number of objections have been raised to Peter's authorship. Among the more common ones are the lack of early attestation, slow recognition by the church, stylistic differences with 1 Peter, and the apparent use of Hellenistic religious and philosophical language. The usual alternative to Peter's authorship is pseudonymity, i.e., that 2 Peter was written by a later unknown author who attributed the work to a well-known writer as a literary device to commend his message. While several of the objections must be taken seriously (especially attestation and style), their force should not be exaggerated, and none is conclusive against Peter's authorship.

There is great stylistic diversity between 1 and 2 Peter. Many of the favorite words and expressions of 1 Peter, for example, are absent in 2 Peter. The differences are not absolute, however, and several striking similarities do exist between the two epistles. There are also a number of parallels between 2 Peter and Peter's speeches in Acts (e.g., the use of the Greek word *eusebeia,* "godliness," in 1:3, 6, 7; 3:11 and Acts 3:12, a word occurring elsewhere in the New Testament only in the Pastoral Epistles).

The claim that 2 Peter is pseudonymous is weak. Genuine examples of pseudepigraphy (writings by authors pretending to be someone else of greater authority) in early Christian literature are almost all heretical, an indication that the device was used to commend works whose content was suspect. There is strong evidence that the church did not tolerate the practice, but in fact strictly rejected pseudepigrapha.

The case against Peter's authorship is, in conclusion, not proved, and the epistle's own claim to have been written by Peter can be taken at face value.

Date and Occasion Assuming Peter's authorship, 2 Peter must have been written before the apostle's death in A.D. 67–68. The reference to his imminent death in 1:14 suggests a time near the end of his life. If 3:1 refers to 1 Peter, the date of composition must be sometime after 63–64 (Introduction to 1 Peter: Date and Occasion). A date between 65–67 is therefore plausible.

The place of origin of 2 Peter is uncertain. Rome is a likely suggestion, given Peter's location there in 1 Peter (1 Pet. 5:13 note) and the tradition that he was martyred there under Nero.

Unlike 1 Peter, there is little information in this epistle about its recipients. If 3:1 refers to 1 Peter, the recipients, Christians in Asia Minor, are the same in both epistles. If 3:1 is not a reference to 1 Peter, but to a lost epistle instead, there are no firm data to determine the recipients.

Characteristics and Themes Second Peter is written to Christians being threatened by false teaching from within (2:1). As an antidote, Peter stresses the truth and ethical implications of the gospel against the false teachers.

Although the false teaching is difficult to define precisely, it appears to be an early precursor of Gnosticism. This term designates any of a variety of heretical movements in the early Christian centuries (especially the second century) that combined ideas from Greek philosophy, oriental mysticism, and Christianity, and emphasized salvation through intuitive, esoteric knowledge (the Greek word for "knowledge" is *gnosis*) rather than through faith in Christ.

Because in the gnostic system the physical body was regarded as evil, second-century Gnostics were usually characterized by either blatant immorality or rigorous asceticism. Asceticism is not addressed as a problem in 2 Peter, but immorality is (2:13–19). The false teachers seem to be using Christian liberty as a license to sin, especially to commit sexual immorality (2:14). In addition, they are guilty of denying the Lord (2:1), despising authority and slandering celestial beings (2:10), and scoffing at the Second Coming of Christ (3:3, 4).

Interpretive Difficulties Some relationship between 2 Peter and Jude is virtually certain. Although verbatim agreement is rare (2:17; cf. Jude 13), they have similar ideas, words, Old Testament illustrations, and order of text (2:1–18; cf. Jude 4–16). Several explanations are possible. Either 2 Peter used Jude (the scholarly consensus), or Jude used 2 Peter, or there was a common source unknown to us. □

Outline of 2 Peter

I. Salutation (1:1)
II. The Truth of the Gospel (1:2–21)
  A. Spiritual Growth as Confirmation of Election (1:2–11)
    1. Christian Privileges (1:2–4)
    2. Christian Responsibility (1:5–11)
  B. The Truth of the Gospel Attested by Apostolic and Prophetic Testimony (1:12–21)
    1. Peter's Purpose (1:12–15)
    2. Apostolic Testimony (1:16–18)
    3. Prophetic Testimony (1:19–21)
III. False Teachers (ch. 2)
  A. Their Coming and Conduct Described (2:1–3)
  B. Their Certain Judgment Pronounced (2:4–11)
  C. Their Immoral Ways Denounced (2:12–22)
IV. The Second Coming of Christ (3:1–16)
  A. Peter's Purpose Reiterated (3:1, 2)
  B. The Certainty of Judgment (3:3–10)
  C. The Ethical Implications of Christ's Coming (3:11–16)
V. Concluding Exhortation (3:17, 18)

Greeting the Faithful

CHAPTER 1

SIMON PETER, a bondservant and [a]apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who have [1]obtained [b]like[2] precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:

[2] [c]Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, [3] as His [d]divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness, through the

1 [a]Gal. 2:8 [b]Eph. 4:5 [1]*received* [2]*faith of the same value*
2 [c]Dan. 4:1
3 [d]1 Pet. 1:5

■ **1:1 Simon Peter.** Greek *Symeon*, which is closer to the Hebrew form of the name. See note on 1 Pet. 1:1.

apostle. See note on 2 Cor. 1:1.

like precious faith. Though some interpret this to refer to "the faith" as a body of belief (Jude 3), it more likely refers to the subjective experience of the believer. As an apostle writing to those who will live on after his death (vv. 13–15), Peter assures his readers that they do not have a second-class Christianity, inferior to Peter's and the other apostles' (cf. John 20:29).

by the righteousness. This probably refers to God's fairness and impartiality in bestowing the gift of faith upon all types of people, rather than to the vicarious righteousness of Christ by which Christians are justified (Rom. 3:22; 4:6). The word "righteousness" is generally used in an ethical sense in Peter's letters (2:5, 21; 3:13; 1 Pet. 2:24; 4:18).

our God and Savior Jesus Christ. Since one definite article governs both nouns in the Greek (lit. "the God of us and Savior"), this phrase ascribes deity to Jesus.

■ **1:2 knowledge of God and of Jesus.** "Knowledge" is an important theme in 2 Peter (related words occur eleven times); here it is likely a subtle attack on false teachers and their preoccupation with esoteric knowledge. Peter seems to reserve the particular Greek word used here (*epignosis*) for the fundamental saving knowledge of God gained in conversion (1:2, 3, 8; 2:20). Knowledge of God and of Jesus are connected because God is known savingly only in and through Jesus Christ (Matt. 11:27).

knowledge of Him [e]who called us by glory and virtue, 4 [f]by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be [g]partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the [3]corruption *that is* in the world through lust.

Fruitful Growth in the Faith

5 But also for this very reason, [h]giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue [i]knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control [4]perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and [j]to brotherly kindness love. 8 For if these things are yours and abound, *you will be* neither [5]barren [k]nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For he who lacks these things is [l]shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.

10 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent [m]to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; 11 for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Peter's Approaching Death

12 For this reason [n]I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, [o]though you know and are established in the present truth. 13 Yes, I think it is right, [p]as long as I am in this [6]tent, [q]to stir you up by reminding *you,* 14 [r]knowing that shortly I *must* [7]put off my tent, just as [s]our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. 15 Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my [8]decease.

The Trustworthy Prophetic Word

16 For we did not follow [t]cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the [u]power and [v]coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were [w]eyewitnesses of His majesty. 17 For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: [x]"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." 18 And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on [y]the holy mountain.

19 [9]And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a [z]light that

3 [e]1 Thess. 2:12
4 [f]2 Cor. 1:20; 7:1 [g][2 Cor. 3:18] [3]*depravity*
5 [h]2 Pet. 3:18 [i]2 Pet. 1:2
6 [4]*patience*
7 [j]Gal. 6:10
8 [k][John 15:2] [5]*useless*
9 [l]1 John 2:9–11
10 [m]1 John 3:19
12 [n]Phil. 3:1 [o]1 Pet. 5:12
13 [p][2 Cor. 5:1, 4] [q]2 Pet. 3:1 [6]Body
14 [r][2 Tim. 4:6] [s]John 13:36; 21:18, 19 [7]Die and leave this body
15 [8]Lit. *exodus, departure*
16 [t]1 Cor. 1:17 [u][Eph. 1:19–22] [v][1 Pet. 5:4] [w]Matt. 17:1–5
17 [x]Matt. 17:5
18 [y]Matt. 17:1
19 [z][John 1:4, 5, 9] [9]Or *We also have the more sure prophetic word*

■ **1:4 partakers of the divine nature.** Believers are not absorbed into deity, nor do they become divine. Rather, they have received the Holy Spirit and are sons of God (John 1:12; Rom. 8:9–21). As such they are being conformed to the likeness of Christ (Rom. 8:29) and the image of God in them is being renewed in true righteousness.

■ **1:5–7** The order of virtues here ("faith . . . love") is not a sequence in time, as if stages of the Christian life were being described (vv. 8, 9). Peter is using a rhetorical figure that builds a series of elements to a climax. The beginning and conclusion of the series are significant, however. Early Christian virtue lists often begin with "faith," the starting point of the Christian life, and end with "love" (Rom. 5:1–5; 1 Cor. 13), the preeminent fruit of the Christian life.

■ **1:7 brotherly kindness.** Greek *philadelphia,* the family affection among believers as brothers and sisters in God's family (Rom. 12:10; Heb. 13:1; 1 Pet. 1:22).

■ **1:9 shortsighted . . . blindness.** Lit. "blind, being nearsighted." The combination of terms here is strange, since the two physical conditions are mutually exclusive. Some suggest on the basis of the etymology of the Greek word for "nearsighted" that Peter is alluding to the squinting or narrowing of the eyes, and that a deliberate rejection of the truth is in view. However, because the nearsighted person squints in order to see *better,* it is possible that Peter is simply multiplying related terms for effect.

■ **1:10 make your call and election sure.** While God's choice of the elect is firm and certain in God (2 Tim. 2:19), it may not always be obvious to the individual Christian. Assurance of God's call comes through the evidence of the Holy Spirit's work in our lives (1 John 3:10, 14) as well as through the internal testimony of the Spirit in our hearts (Gal. 4:6).

if you do these things. God's promise of salvation is to those with a genuine, persevering faith (Matt. 10:22; 24:12, 13; Heb. 3:6). True faith perseveres to the end and will inevitably bear fruit (Gal. 5:6, 22, 23).

■ **1:13 in this tent.** This phrase emphasizes the transitory nature of human life this side of Christ's return (2 Cor. 5:1, 4).

■ **1:15 be careful.** Again, Peter's purpose in writing this epistle is to establish his readers firmly in the truth of the gospel (v. 12).

decease. Lit. "exodus." Death is a "going out" or "departure" from this life (Luke 9:31 note).

■ **1:16 we.** Peter links his message with that of the other apostles to affirm that they all preach the same message.

fables. This word is always used in the New Testament in a negative sense and in contrast to the truth of the gospel (1 Tim. 1:4; 2 Tim. 4:4).

the power and coming of . . . Christ. The Greek word translated "coming" is *parousia,* the usual New Testament term for Christ's Second Coming in glory (3:4, 12; Matt. 24:27; 1 Thess. 3:13). "Power" is elsewhere associated with Christ's coming (Matt. 24:30).

eyewitnesses of His majesty. Peter was present at Christ's transfiguration (Matt. 17:1–8 and parallels). The eyewitness testimony of the apostles to the Transfiguration establishes the truth of Peter's message in general, and in particular provides the historical basis for the apostolic expectation of the Second Coming. The Transfiguration was understood by the apostles to have been a brief anticipation of the divine glory with which Christ will return to earth (Matt. 16:27—17:8).

■ **1:17 Excellent Glory.** An indirect way, typical of Jewish speech, of referring to God Himself. The reason for speaking indirectly was to avoid any possible misuse of the sacred name of God.

■ **1:19 we have the prophetic word confirmed.** As translated, this means that the Transfiguration confirms the truth of prophecy, making it certain that the future Second Coming will occur. Another, more natural interpretation of the Greek is that the prophetic word of Scripture is a more solid proof than even the spectacular experience of witnessing the Transfiguration (see text note).

the morning star. This probably alludes to Num. 24:17, a passage that is interpreted messianically (Rev. 2:28; 22:16). If so, the symbol refers to Christ in His Second Coming.

rises in your hearts. A difficult phrase, since "day dawns" and "morning star" apparently refer to the Second Coming of Christ, an external event. Peter probably refers to the effect on believers of the full revelation that

shines in a dark place, [a]until [b]the day dawns and the morning star rises in your [c]hearts; 20 knowing this first, that [d]no prophecy of Scripture is of any private [1]interpretation, 21 for [e]prophecy never came by the will of man, [f]but [2]holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit.

Destructive Doctrines

2 But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be [a]false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, *and* bring on themselves swift destruction. 2 And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. 3 By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction [1]does not slumber.

Doom of False Teachers

4 For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast *them* down to [2]hell and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment; 5 and did not spare the ancient world, but saved Noah, *one of* eight *people,* a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly; 6 and turning the cities of [b]Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned *them* to destruction, making *them* an example to those who afterward would live ungodly; 7 and [c]delivered righteous Lot, *who was* oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked 8 (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, [d]tormented *his* righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing *their* lawless deeds)— 9 *then* [e]the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations and to reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment, 10 and especially

19 [a]Prov. 4:18 [b]Rev. 2:28; 22:16 [c][2 Cor. 4:5–7]

20 [d][Rom. 12:6] [1]Or *origin*

21 [e]Jer. 23:26; [2 Tim. 3:16] [f]2 Sam. 23:2; Luke 1:70; Acts 1:16; 3:18; 1 Pet. 1:11 [2]NU *men spoke from God*

CHAPTER 2

1 [a]Matt. 24:5, 24; 1 Tim. 4:1, 2

3 [1]M *will not*

4 [2]Lit. *Tartarus*

6 [b]Gen. 19:1–26; Jude 7

7 [c]Gen. 19:16, 29

8 [d]Ps. 119:139

9 [e]Ps. 34:15–19; 1 Cor. 10:13; Rev. 3:10

will accompany Christ's return. His readers must pay attention to the sure "prophetic word" until the day when that word will be superseded by the full revelation to come.

■ **1:20 of any private interpretation.** Some take this verse to be about the interpretation of prophecy, to the effect that no one is allowed to interpret Scripture on their own, privately. But Peter's concern here is the reliability of Scripture itself, and not the authority of those who interpret it. That point comes up later (3:16). In the present context, Peter is arguing that the prophetic testimony in Scripture comes altogether from God, including not only visions but also words used to describe and interpret them (Dan. 8:15–19; Zech 1:9).

■ **1:21 moved by the Holy Spirit.** The Holy Spirit is the source of prophecy, enabling the prophets to speak and write as God's representatives (2 Tim. 3:16; 1 Pet. 1:10–12).

■ **2:1 heresies.** The Greek term at one time referred to groups or sects in a neutral sense (cf. "sect," Acts 24:5). It was used by Paul of divisive groups (1 Cor. 11:19; Gal. 5:20), and it came to denote the specific teachings of such groups. Here, teachings regarding Christian conduct are probably in view—conduct that placed the teachers under judgment (v. 3; 3:7).

denying the Lord who bought them. Peter is not saying Christians can lose their salvation (John 10:28, 29; Rom. 8:28–30), but is describing the false teachers in terms of their own profession of faith (vv. 20, 21). By teaching and practicing immorality they despise the lordship of Christ and prove their profession to be false (1 John 2:3, 4, 19).

Though the phrase "the Lord who bought them" is taken by some to mean that Christ's substitutionary death applies to all rather than to the elect only (see "Definite Redemption" at John 10:15), Peter's concern here is to highlight the responsibility of the false teachers rather than to advance a theory of the Atonement. With their claim to be redeemed by Christ, their "destructive ways" (v. 2) bring particular dishonor on Christ and His sacrifice for sin.

■ **2:2 destructive ways.** Incorrigible and reckless sensual indulgence, especially in sexual immorality ("lewdness," 1 Pet. 4:3).

blasphemed. Immoral behavior by those who claim to be Christians gives Christianity a bad name among unbelievers. Christians are often urged to exemplary behavior so that the cause of the gospel will not be hindered (1 Tim. 6:1; Titus 2:5, 9, 10).

■ **2:3 By covetousness.** See 2 Cor. 9:14, 15; 12:17, 18; 1 Tim. 6:5; 1 Pet. 5:2 and note.

■ **2:4 angels who sinned.** The meaning of this phrase is disputed. Many view this as an allusion to the sin of the "sons of God" in Gen. 6:1–4 (cf. Jude 6). On this reading, Peter may be assuming for illustrative purposes the elaboration of the Gen. 6 narrative in the apocryphal book of *1 Enoch* (Jude 14 note). While "sons of God" can refer to angels (e.g., Job 1:6; 2:1), this interpretation is not without difficulties (Gen. 6:2 note). Others speculate that the "angels who sinned" are the evil angels who sinned before the Fall of humanity in Gen. 3. Either way, the point is that if God judged evil angels, He will certainly judge ungodly people as well.

cast them down to hell. The verb means "to cast into Tartarus." In Greek mythology Tartarus was the place of punishment for departed spirits. Just as Paul can quote an apt verse from a pagan writer for his own purposes (cf. Acts 17:28; Titus 1:12), so Peter here uses Homeric imagery to convey the idea of a special place of confinement until final judgment.

■ **2:5 preacher of righteousness.** This description of Noah is unique in Scripture, but is well-known in Jewish tradition. It refers either to exhortations that were not recorded in the Old Testament, or to Noah's lifestyle, that condemned sin and recommended righteous living to his contemporaries (Gen. 6:9).

■ **2:7 righteous Lot.** A surprising description in view of the portrait of Lot in Genesis (Gen. 19). Lot's righteousness may have been inferred (either by Peter or extrabiblical tradition) from Abraham's intercession for the righteous of Sodom and Lot's subsequent deliverance.

■ **2:9 then the Lord.** The implication of the three examples in vv. 4–8 is clear: God will surely judge the wicked and deliver the righteous.

reserve . . . under punishment. Some commentators and most English translations see here a reference to preliminary punishment before the final judgment. This is the most natural reading of the Greek, although some commentators including Calvin understand it as a reference to future punishment on Judgment Day ("reserve the unjust for punishment on the day of judgment"). Because Peter's concern in this passage is the certainty of final judgment, the latter seems more appropriate to the argument than the former.

■ **2:10 speak evil of dignitaries.** Lit. "blaspheming glories," probably a reference to angels. The statement in v. 11 that "whereas angels . . . do not bring a reviling accusation against them" (cf. Jude 10, 11) indicates that evil angels are in view. When warned of the danger of falling into the power of the spiritual forces of evil (cf. 1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:20), the false teachers apparently mocked the power of the devil and his demons.

10 [f]Jude 4, 7, 8 [g]Ex. 22:28; Jude 8 [3]*glorious ones,* lit. *glories*

11 [h]Jude 9

12 [i]Jude 10

13 [j]Phil. 3:19 [k]Rom. 13:13 [l]Jude 12 [m]1 Cor. 11:20, 21 [4]*revel* [5]*reveling*

14 [n]Jude 11 [6]Lit. *an adulteress*

15 [o]Num. 22:5, 7; Deut. 23:4; Neh. 13:2; Jude 11; Rev. 2:14

17 [p]Jude 12, 13 [7]NU *and mists* [8]NU omits *forever*

18 [9]NU *are barely escaping*

19 [q]John 8:34; Rom. 6:16 [1]*depravity* [2]*slavery*

20 [r]Matt. 12:45 [s]Luke 11:26; [Heb. 6:4–6]

21 [t]Luke 12:47

22 [u]Prov. 26:11

CHAPTER 3

1 [a]2 Pet. 1:13

2 [b]2 Pet. 1:21

[f]those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. [g]*They are* presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of [3]dignitaries, [11] whereas [h]angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord.

Depravity of False Teachers

[12] But these, [i]like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, speak evil of the things they do not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption, [13][j]*and* will receive the wages of unrighteousness, *as* those who count it pleasure [k]to [4]carouse in the daytime. [l]*They are* spots and blemishes, [5]carousing in their own deceptions while [m]they feast with you, [14] having eyes full of [6]adultery and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. [n]*They have* a heart trained in covetous practices, *and are* accursed children. [15] They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of [o]Balaam *the son* of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; [16] but he was rebuked for his iniquity: a dumb donkey speaking with a man's voice restrained the madness of the prophet.

[17][p]These are wells without water, [7]clouds carried by a tempest, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness [8]forever.

Deceptions of False Teachers

[18] For when they speak great swelling *words* of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who [9]have actually escaped from those who live in error. [19] While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of [1]corruption; [q]for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into [2]bondage. [20] For if, after they [r]have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are [s]again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. [21] For [t]it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known *it,* to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. [22] But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: [u]"*A dog returns to his own vomit,*" and, "a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire."

God's Promise Is Not Slack

3 Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in *both of* which [a]I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), [2] that you may be mindful of the words [b]which were spoken before by

Even today, a flippant attitude toward Satan and his power can lead to spiritual danger.

■ **2:13 their own deceptions while they feast with you.** The false teachers were not promoting love at their feasts (Jude 12), but harmful lies. Peter uses a Greek word for "deceptions" which sounds similar to the Greek for "love."

■ **2:14 eyes full of adultery.** Lit. "eyes full of an adulterous woman," a vivid portrayal of their insatiable sensuality (v. 2 note).

enticing unstable souls. The word translated "enticing" is translated "allure" in v. 18 (cf. James 1:14). In contrast to the "established" believers of 1:12, the "unstable" lack a firm foundation in the Christian faith, and are easy prey to the enticements of false teachers.

trained in covetous practices. An athletic metaphor, lit. "having a heart exercised (or trained) in greed." At least part of their purpose in making disciples was to profit financially from them (vv. 3, 15).

■ **2:15 way of Balaam.** Jewish exegetical tradition had made Balaam proverbial for his greed, so the false teachers with their desire for gain are compared with him (Jude 11). According to Num. 31:16 he was also guilty of leading others into sin.

■ **2:16 dumb donkey.** Peter probably intends an ironic contrast with v. 12. While the false teachers resembled "brute beasts" in their slavery to greed, their prototype Balaam was himself rebuked by a beast.

■ **2:17 wells without water.** Just as water sustains physical life, so true spiritual teaching nourishes spiritual life (Prov. 13:14; John 4:13–15)—a vivid image in a culture where water was a treasured resource. Like the dry well that only disappoints the thirsty (Jer. 14:3), the false teachers can only deceive and disappoint.

clouds carried by a tempest. Like hazy clouds that provide no refreshing rain (Jude 12), the false teaching cannot provide spiritual sustenance.

■ **2:18 allure . . . the ones who have actually escaped.** New converts or those not yet well grounded in the faith fall prey to the false teachers (v. 14 and note).

■ **2:19 they promise them liberty.** The false teachers may have used Paul's declaration that the Christian is not under law as the basis for their mistaken teaching that the Christian is free from the restraint of God's moral law (cf. Rom. 6:15; 1 Cor. 9:21; Gal. 5:18).

slaves of corruption. A profound irony of sin is evident here: the quest for freedom from God leads only to slavery to sin and self. True freedom from sin involves joyful "slavery" to God (cf. Rom. 6:18).

■ **2:20–22** The false teachers rather than those who have "actually escaped" (v. 18) are probably in view. These false teachers apparently professed to be Christians, but their return to their old sinful way of life showed that their knowledge of Christ and the way of righteousness was only superficial (v. 1 note).

■ **2:21 better . . . not to have known the way of righteousness.** Deliberate rejection of the truth increases one's responsibility before God (Luke 12:47, 48). The phrase "to have known the way" refers to an intellectual knowledge of the ethical teachings and mode of life characteristic of Christians (note the phrase "holy commandment"). Their conversion was illusory. Scripture elsewhere teaches that those who are truly regenerate will persevere in the faith (John 10:26–30; cf. 1 John 2:19).

■ **2:22 A dog . . . a sow.** In contrast to the modern view of dogs as "man's best friend," the ancient Jews despised them (Ex. 22:31; Prov. 26:11; Rev. 22:15). Swine were avoided as unclean (Lev. 11:7; Is. 65:4). Peter's point is that mere religious profession or even outward change does not change a person's heart. The apostasy of the false teachers reveals their true nature.

■ **3:1 second epistle.** The first letter may well be 1 Peter, and, if so, the recipients of the two letters are the same.

the holy prophets, [c]and of the commandment of [1]us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, [3] knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, [d]walking according to their own lusts, [4] and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of [e]creation." [5] For this they willfully forget: that [f]by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth [g]standing out of water and in the water, [6] [h]by which the world *that* then existed perished, being flooded with water. [7] But [i]the heavens and the earth *which* are now preserved by the same word, are reserved for [j]fire until the day of judgment and [2]perdition of ungodly men.

[8] But, beloved, do not forget this one thing, that with the Lord one day *is* as a thousand years, and [k]a thousand years as one day. [9] [l]The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but [m]is longsuffering toward [3]us, [n]not willing that any should perish but [o]that all should come to repentance.

The Day of the Lord

[10] But [p]the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which [q]the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be [4]burned up. [11] Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought you to be [r]in holy conduct and godliness, [12] [s]looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will [t]be dissolved, being on fire,

11 [r]1 Pet. 1:15 **12** [s]1 Cor. 1:7, 8 [t]Ps. 50:3

2 [c]Jude 17 [1]NU, M *the apostles of your Lord and Savior* or *your apostles of the Lord and Savior*

3 [d]2 Pet. 2:10

4 [e]Gen. 6:1–7

5 [f]Gen. 1:6, 9 [g]Ps. 24:2; 136:6

6 [h]Gen. 7:11, 12, 21–23

7 [i]2 Pet. 3:10, 12 [j][2 Thess. 1:8] [2]*destruction*

8 [k]Ps. 90:4

9 [l]Hab. 2:3 [m]Is. 30:18 [n]Ezek. 33:11 [o][Rom. 2:4] [3]NU *you*

10 [p]Rev. 3:3; 16:15 [q]Ps. 102:25, 26 [4]NU *laid bare,* lit. *found*

stir up . . . by way of reminder. If 1 Peter is in view, the reminder is probably Peter's general concern, quite evident in both epistles, that his readers should live holy lives worthy of the gospel.

■ **3:3 the last days.** See note on 1 Pet. 1:20.

■ **3:4 the promise of His coming.** From the delay in Christ's return, the false teachers wrongly concluded that He would never return to judge them. Peter portrays their scoffing as ironic evidence that the last days are indeed present.

since the fathers fell asleep. Perhaps a reference to Old Testament forefathers (John 6:31; Acts 3:13), though many interpret this as a reference to the deaths of people belonging to the first Christian generation, especially Christian leaders such as Stephen (Heb. 13:7).

■ **3:5, 6** Against the false teacher's denial that God would intervene in history, Peter cites creation and the Flood as prime examples of God's intimate involvement and intervention in the process of history.

■ **3:5 the word of God.** His creative command (Gen. 1:3–30; Ps. 33:6; Heb. 11:3). God preceded history; the heavens and earth came into existence only at His command. He created all things out of nothing, by the word of God.

out of water and in the water. God created the earth by separating and gathering the waters (Gen. 1:2, 6–10).

■ **3:6 world . . . perished, being flooded.** God also intervened, in judgment, with the Flood (2:5; Gen. 6—8).

■ **3:7 by the same word.** The same divine word that created the world and brought judgment at the Flood. Whether manifested by water or fire, the role of God's all-powerful word in creation, in the Flood, and in final judgment is stressed.

reserved for fire. Sodom and Gomorrah serve for Peter as a paradigm of final fiery judgment (2:6). Although this picture of a universal inferno at the last judgment is unique to Peter, the idea of divine judgment by fire is common in the Old Testament (e.g., Deut. 32:22; Is. 66:15, 16; Mal. 4:1) and is found in the New Testament as well (e.g., Matt. 3:12; 1 Cor. 3:13; 2 Thess. 1:7, 8).

■ **3:8 one day . . . a thousand years.** Though this passage—and Ps. 90:4 upon which it is based—is sometimes implausibly cited in support of the theory that when a "day" is mentioned in biblical prophecy a literal thousand years is meant, Peter's point is to assert that God is sovereign over time and that His perspective on time differs radically from ours.

■ **3:9 as some count slackness.** See v. 4.

longsuffering . . . all should come to repentance. Peter's Christian readers must realize that the apparent delay of divine judgment is a sign of God's forbearance and mercy toward them, particularly toward the believers in their midst who have been confused and misled by the false teachers. Note that the scope of "all" is qualified by the word "us." The repentance in view, for the sake of which God delays judgment, is that of God's people rather than the world at large. God is not willing that any of His elect should perish (John 6:39).

■ **3:10 day of the Lord.** The time of divine intervention and judgment (Is. 13:9–13; Joel 1:15; 3:14; 1 Thess. 5:2), synonymous with the Second Coming of Christ (v. 12).

as a thief. Jesus used this metaphor to convey how unexpected the event would be (Luke 12:39, 40).

the heavens . . . with a great noise. The language is reminiscent of the Old Testament and of Jesus Himself (Is. 34:4; 64:1–4; Matt. 24:29–31).

elements. Greek *stoicheia,* a term used for (a) the elements making up the world (according to the philosophers these were earth, air, fire, and water); (b) heavenly bodies such as the sun, moon, and stars; (c) angelic beings with power over nature (Introduction to Colossians: Interpretive Difficulties). Most interpreters favor (b) or a combination of (b) and (c).

will be burned up. The Greek text of this phrase is disputed (text note). Some manuscripts say "will be found" instead of "will be burned," presumably to mean that the earth and human history will be "found out" or "laid bare" before the eye of God's judgment.

■ **3:12 hastening the coming.** Though sometimes translated "eagerly awaiting," the Greek word usually means "hasten." The time of Christ's coming is determined by the sovereign counsel of God, but it does not take place without reference to other events (these too are ordained by God). That God's delay is merciful (v. 9 and note) indicates that the evangelization of the elect is one relevant factor (Mark 13:10). Other factors include prayer (Luke 11:2) and obedience (v. 11). Such a teaching should profoundly encourage Christians. Our actions do matter.

the day of God. An unusual expression (Rev. 16:14), equivalent to "the day of the Lord" (v. 10). The use of the phrases "day of the Lord" and "day of God" for Christ's Second Coming indicates Peter's high Christology: the coming One is none other than God Himself.

12 [u]Mic. 1:4
13 [v]Is. 65:17; 66:22 [w]Rev. 21:1
14 [x]1 Cor. 1:8; 15:58
15 [y]Rom. 2:4
16 [z]1 Cor. 15:24 [a]2 Tim. 3:16
17 [b]Mark 13:23 [c]Eph. 4:14
18 [d]Eph. 4:15 [e]2 Tim. 4:18

and the elements will [u]melt with fervent heat? 13 Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for [v]new heavens and a [w]new earth in which righteousness dwells.

Be Steadfast

14 Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent [x]to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; 15 and consider *that* [y]the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul. according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, 16 as also in all his [z]epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable *people* twist to their own destruction, as *they do* also the [a]rest of the Scriptures.

17 You therefore, beloved, [b]since you know *this* beforehand, [c]beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; 18 [d]but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

[e]To Him *be* the glory both now and forever. Amen.

■ **3:13 new heavens and a new earth.** See "Heaven" and note at Rev. 21:1.

■ **3:15 longsuffering . . . is salvation.** See notes on vv. 9 and 12.

wisdom given to him. Tantamount to a claim of divine inspiration for Paul's letters (v. 16 note; cf. Eph. 3:2–7).

■ **3:16 rest of the Scriptures.** Peter views Paul's letters in the same category as the inspired, authoritative writings of the Old Testament (v. 15; 1:20, 21), and in harmony with Paul's own claims to unique apostolic authority (Rom. 1:1; 1 Cor. 2:13; Gal. 1:1).

■ **3:17 fall from your own steadfastness.** Not that true believers can lose their salvation (2:21 note), but a warning to them of their own weakness and the dangers that surround them, to motivate them to watchfulness and growth in godly living.

the wicked. The false teachers, characterized as people who ignore all moral restraints.

■ **3:18 grow in . . . knowledge.** This knowledge is the ever-deepening experience of Christ and understanding of His truth that should characterize the entire course of the believer's life, as opposed to the pretentious, esoteric "knowledge" of the false teachers.

To Him be the glory. This statement presupposes the deity of Christ (v. 12; 1:1 notes). It ascribes glory directly to Him (Rev. 1:5, 6).

forever. Lit. "on the day of eternity." Glory belongs to Christ both now and throughout the endless day that will dawn when He comes again (1:19; Is. 60:19, 20).

The First Epistle of

JOHN

Author In style, diction, and content, 1 John follows the fourth Gospel closely. It is almost certainly by the same author (Introduction to John: Author). While both writings are anonymous, their traditional assignment to John, son of Zebedee, cannot be disproved. It rests on firmer evidence than more speculative proposals, such as John the Elder or John Mark. The emphasis in the opening verse on authoritative proclamation and eyewitness testimony is most naturally seen as a reflection of John's apostolic calling (John 19:35; 20:3–8; 21:24).

Date and Occasion First John was written to warn and instruct the readers about a kind of false teaching that denied Jesus Christ had come in the flesh (4:2, 3). The teaching was that Christ only appeared to be human, so that there was no real incarnation, and no divine Savior who was able to die for sinners. Christ only seemed to die. Such teaching is known from early Christian history and is called "docetism" (from Greek *dokeo,* "to seem").

Some scholars think that the false teaching was a variety of Gnosticism, a religious movement that connected salvation with an experience of individual, esoteric revelation (*gnosis* is the Greek word for "knowledge"). An example would be the teaching of the late first-century teacher Cerinthus. Later writers did regard Cerinthus as both Gnostic and docetic, but there is little in 1 John to connect the false teaching opposed there with the specific ideas attributed to Cerinthus, or even to Gnosticism more generally.

Several considerations indicate that 1 John was written after the Gospel of John. First, it refers very briefly to ideas that the Gospel unfolds much more clearly and fully. Apparently the readers are presumed to have knowledge of the Gospel. Second, the conflict with docetism is absent from the Gospel and appears to be a later development. Third, there is no hint in 1 John of the ideological conflict with "the Jews" that pervades the first half of the Gospel. The Gospel shows the Christian community painfully distinguishing itself from the Jewish people, while 1 John reflects a later time, when Christian self-identification was well-established and could be presupposed.

Another indication for the date of 1 John comes from comparison with the letters of Ignatius (about A.D. 110) and Polycarp. These writings criticize false teachings similar to but more developed than those addressed in 1 John. To accommodate this development, 1 John should be dated some years earlier than 110.

Characteristics and Themes

Although 1 John has traditionally been regarded as a letter, it lacks key distinguishing features of a letter (salutation, introductory greeting, final greeting). On the other hand, John addresses the readers as "my little children" (2:1). He seems to be writing to a specific group of people with whom he has a close relationship. In its basic purposes of admonition and instruction, 1 John is similar to most of the New Testament letters.

It is notoriously difficult to outline this brief letter. Its themes seem to be linked loosely together. The language is not difficult or technical, but the ideas are profound. John says that God has been revealed in Christ in order to communicate eternal life to those who believe. God is light, truth, and love—each of these characteristics is the subject of some meditation, but always in connection with the development of corresponding virtues in the believers.

The ideals of purity and love that are held out to the reader are gifts of God, communicated from His self-revelation. At the same time, they are real only in action. This reality is possible through being born again and through the forgiveness of sins.

The enemy of the gospel attacks at every point. He impugns the self-revelation of God by trying to deny that Jesus Christ was incarnated. With this he threatens to undermine the believer's confidence before God. Moreover, the adversary tries to make the case that someone can believe in God without taking part in the love and kindness that is God's nature. This would make salvation also a mere appearance. To the light and truth of the gospel, the antichrist opposes darkness and lies, or the rule of hatred and mental confusion.

Unlike those of Paul, John's ideas are not reasoned logically from point to point. The final statements, that God is light, and that Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin, are already stated in the first few verses. These he elaborates in a spiritual way throughout what follows. □

Outline of 1 John

I. Introduction: Eternal Life Has Appeared (1:1–4)
II. Light and Darkness (1:5—2:27)
A. Walk in the Light (1:5—2:11)
1. Forgiveness of Sin (1:5–10)
2. Keeping the Commandments (2:1–6)
3. Loving the Brother (2:7–11)
B. Escaping from Sin (2:12–17)
1. Overcoming the Wicked One (2:12–14)
2. Overcoming the World (2:15–17)
C. Counsel for the Last Hour (2:18–27)
1. Apostasy (2:18–21)
2. Denial of Christ (2:22–24)
3. Reminder About the Anointing (2:25–27)
III. The Life of Righteousness (2:28—4:6)
A. The Righteousness of God's Children (2:28—3:3)
B. The Practice of Sin and the Devil (3:4–10)
C. Love Against Hate (3:11–15)
D. Love and Generosity (3:16–18)
E. Assurance (3:19–24)
F. The Spirit of God and the Antichrist (4:1–6)
IV. Love Is Perfected in Us (4:7—5:12)
A. God Is Love (4:7–21)
B. Belief and Obedience (5:1–12)
V. Conclusion (5:13–21)
A. Prayer for the Sinner (5:13–17)
B. Life in God (5:18–21)

CHAPTER 1

1 [a][John 1:1] [b]John 1:14 [c]2 Pet. 1:16 [d]Luke 24:39 [e][John 1:1, 4, 14]
2 [f]John 1:4 [g]Rom. 16:26 [h]John 21:24 [i][John 1:1, 18; 16:28]
3 [j]1 Cor. 1:9
4 [k]John 15:11; 16:24 [l]NU, M *our*
5 [l]1 John 3:11 [m][1 Tim. 6:16]
6 [n][1 John 2:9–11]

What Was Heard, Seen, and Touched

THAT [a]which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have [b]seen with our eyes, [c]which we have looked upon, and [d]our hands have handled, concerning the [e]Word of life— 2 [f]the life [g]was manifested, and we have seen, [h]and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was [i]with the Father and was manifested to us— 3 that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship *is* [j]with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. 4 And these things we write to you [k]that [l]your joy may be full.

Fellowship with Him and One Another

5 [l]This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that [m]God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. 6 [n]If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in

■ **1:1–4** The central event of history is the appearance of eternal life in Jesus Christ. John is one of the chosen witnesses who saw, heard, and touched One who had existed from the beginning—the Son of God, whose eternal fellowship with the Father is now extended to others. This extension takes place through the apostolic proclamation, including the writing of 1 John itself.

■ **1:1 the beginning.** This verse echoes John 1:1, as that verse in turn echoes Gen. 1:1. The two New Testament verses highlight the Incarnation as an event as significant as creation itself.

heard . . . seen . . . looked upon . . . handled. These vivid verbs defend the reality of the human nature of Christ against the docetic speculation that is later rejected explicitly (2:22; 4:2, 3; Introduction: Date and Occasion).

the Word of life. The subject of John's proclamation is Jesus, the incarnate Word (John 1:1–14).

■ **1:5–10** Like John's Gospel, 1 John begins with a contrast between light and darkness. In the Gospel, the incarnate Christ is the light that continues to shine in the darkness of a world that tries to exclude Him. Believers are faced with a choice: either to "walk in the light," coming to Him and opening their hearts to Him in confession of sin, or to "walk in darkness," denying that they are sinners. The contrast between light and darkness is inseparably linked to a contrast between those who "practice

darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we [o]walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and [p]the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we [q]confess our sins, He is [r]faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to [s]cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we [t]make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

2 My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, [a]we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. 2 And [b]He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but [c]also for the whole world.

The Test of Knowing Him

3 Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. 4 He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a [d]liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But [e]whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God [1]is perfected [f]in him. By this we know that we are in Him. 6 [g]He who says he abides in Him [h]ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

7 [2]Brethren, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had [i]from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard [3]from the beginning. 8 Again, [j]a new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, [k]because the darkness is passing away, and [l]the true light is already shining.

9 [m]He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. 10 [n]He who loves his brother abides in the light, and [o]there is no cause for stumbling in him. 11 But he who [p]hates his brother is in darkness and [q]walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

8 [j]John 13:34; 15:12 [k]Rom. 13:12 [l][John 1:9; 8:12; 12:35] **9** [m][1 Cor. 13:2] **10** [n][1 John 3:14] [o]2 Pet. 1:10 **11** [p][1 John 2:9; 3:15; 4:20] [q]John 12:35

7 [o]Is. 2:5 [p][1 Cor. 6:11]

9 [q]Prov. 28:13 [r][Rom. 3:24–26] [s]Ps. 51:2

10 [t]1 John 5:10

CHAPTER 2

1 [a]Heb. 7:25; 9:24

2 [b][Rom. 3:25] [c]John 1:29

4 [d]Rom. 3:4

5 [e]John 14:21, 23 [f][1 John 4:12] [1]*has been completed*

6 [g]John 15:4 [h]1 Pet. 2:21

7 [i]1 John 3:11, 23; 4:21 [2]NU *Beloved* [3]NU omits *from the beginning*

the truth" and agree with God, and those who make God "a liar." It is an inescapable reality that believers sin; the remedy for sin—confession, and cleansing by the blood of Jesus—is God's continuing irrevocable gift to believers. Because Jesus' death has paid in full the penalty for sin, and because God has recognized Jesus as His true Son by raising Him from the dead, God grants forgiveness and cleansing as a matter of faithfulness and justice. He will not and cannot refuse.

■ **1:5 God is light.** This description of God emphasizes His attributes of moral purity and omniscience, reinforcing John's focus on our need to confess sin.

■ **1:7 the blood of Jesus Christ.** As Heb. 9:22 indicates, "without shedding of blood there is no remission." The shedding of the blood of Christ was a voluntary substitutionary sacrifice of infinite value for the elect; it paid in full God's penalty for sin (Heb. 9:27, 28).

■ **1:9 If we confess our sins.** God's forgiveness is given as soon as we admit our need of it, not on the basis of any acts we have done to earn it, but solely because of His grace. The free gift of forgiveness carries with it purification from unrighteousness. God accepts us as righteous because He imputes to us the righteousness of Christ. That is, the very righteousness of Christ our sin-bearer is reckoned to our account.

■ **1:10 If we say that we have not sinned.** Perhaps the "sin leading to death" mentioned in 5:16 is a stubborn refusal to accept God's diagnosis of our need and His offer of forgiveness.

■ **2:1–6** Forgiveness does not remove the moral obligation to obey the commands of God. Some readers may take the promise of 1:9 as a license to sin, but John makes clear that this would be to abuse and misapply the promise (v. 1). "Jesus Christ the righteous" is presented as sacrifice, advocate, and example. His atonement is effective for the elect of Israel and of the whole world.

In the Bible, to "know" someone includes close communion and love. To know Christ means to "keep His commandments." This knowledge of Christ is called a "perfected" love of God (v. 5), not because it makes us personally sinless, but because it is irrevocably established in those who live by it. Anyone who presumes to have received forgiveness from God but who spurns the gift of obedient love as unnecessary is a "liar." Instead of receiving "Jesus Christ the righteous" as Savior, such a person manufactures a false christ, a savior who is indifferent to righteousness.

■ **2:1 that you may not sin.** John wants his readers to respond to God's mercy with a life of obedience. This is an expression of concern for those among whom he has served (2 John 4–6; 3 John 3, 4). 1 John does not give details about the sins of the readers or of their heretical opponents (unlike, e.g., 1 Corinthians).

Advocate. The Greek word is *parakletos*, a "helper," such as an attorney in a legal matter. In the Gospel of John it is used of the Holy Spirit (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7). The word is not found elsewhere in the New Testament, although it is common in other literature.

■ **2:2 propitiation.** A propitiation is a sacrifice to God meant to take away the enmity brought by sin between God and the worshiper. Only Christ can be an effective propitiation.

for the whole world. Christ's sacrifice is sufficient not only for John and his immediate community, but is valid anywhere in the world. It is a sacrifice that requires no addition or supplement.

■ **2:6 walk just as He walked.** John assumes that his readers have the kind of knowledge about Jesus' life and purposes that is found in the Gospel.

■ **2:7–11** The commandment of God in Christ is both "old" and "new." It is old, because it dates to the dawn of the Christian era; believers had this command "from the beginning," when Jesus Christ began to teach. It is new because it is continually reapplied in new acts of love, with their source in Him and their outworking "in you." Love belongs to the realm of light, as over against darkness, where hatred still has sway. John speaks of love for the "brother," which Jesus gave as a commandment to His disciples just before His death. John draws sharply the contrast between a Christian community ruled by love, and the hatred that rules outside (John 15:18, 19).

■ **2:7 from the beginning.** While John sometimes uses this word to refer to the beginning of all things (vv. 13, 14; 1:1), here he refers to the beginning of the Christian movement in the life and teaching of Jesus (v. 24; 3:11). As the next verse shows, the coming of Jesus was the critical turning point ushering in a new epoch, the dawning of a new day.

12 r[1 Cor. 6:11]
13 s[John 1:1; Rev. 22:13 t[Rom. 8:15–17; Gal. 4:6]
14 u[Eph. 6:10
15 v[Rom. 12:2]; Gal. 1:4; James 1:27 w[Matt. 6:24; James 4:4
16 x[Eccl. 5:10, 11]
17 y[1 Cor. 7:31; 1 Pet. 1:24
18 z[John 21:5 a[Rom. 13:11; 1 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 1:2; 1 Pet. 4:7 b[2 Thess. 2:3 c[Matt. 24:5, 24; 1 John 2:22; 4:3; 2 John 7 d[1 Tim. 4:1 e[NU omits *the*
19 e[Deut. 13:13 f[Matt. 24:24 g[1 Cor. 11:19

Their Spiritual State

12 I write to you, little children,
Because r[your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake.
13 I write to you, fathers,
Because you have known Him *who is* s[from the beginning.
I write to you, young men,
Because you have overcome the wicked one.
I write to you, little children,
Because you have t[known the Father.
14 I have written to you, fathers,
Because you have known Him *who is* from the beginning.
I have written to you, young men,
Because u[you are strong, and the word of God abides in you,
And you have overcome the wicked one.

Do Not Love the World

15 v[Do not love the world or the things in the world. w[If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that *is* in the world—the lust of the flesh, x[the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. 17 And y[the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

Deceptions of the Last Hour

18 z[Little children, a[it is the last hour; and as you have heard that b[the e[Antichrist is coming, c[even now many antichrists have come, by which we know d[that it is the last hour. 19 e[They went out from us, but they were not of us; for f[if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but *they went out* g[that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.

■ **2:12–14** The three groups addressed in these verses are actually one group, the recipients of the letter, characterized in different ways. They are "children" because with the forgiveness of sins they have been welcomed into the family of God their Father. They are "fathers" because their knowledge of God in Jesus Christ qualifies them to hand this knowledge down to future generations. They are called "young men" because their decisive rejection of the evil one is a victory like that of Jesus, who fought with Satan in the desert and won (Matt. 4:1–11).

■ **2:12 for His name's sake.** The power of the name of Jesus is central to early Christian proclamation (Acts 2:38; 3:6; 4:12). John 17:11, 12 indicates that God has given His own name to Jesus to protect His disciples and keep them safe. God's name would come to dishonor if His forgiveness should fail.

■ **2:13 you have overcome the wicked one.** The theme of overcoming is picked up again in 5:4, 5; there the victory is over "the world" that opposes God. The victory John describes is resisting temptation and keeping faithful to God's word. It contrasts with the defeat of the human race at the Fall (Gen. 3). For John, victory in the battle against temptation has in effect already been won, since our union with God cannot be broken (John 10:27–30).

■ **2:15–17** The moral admonition not to love the world is also practical advice, for it is already clear that the world is passing away (v. 17). As in John's Gospel, the "world" is the system of rebellion and pride that seeks to displace God and His rule. It is this system rather than the created order itself which is "not of the Father" and which has already been marked for judgment and destruction (John 12:31). Those who are not of the world receive the word of the Father from Jesus (John 17:14) and show by their response to it that they are chosen for salvation and eternal life.

■ **2:16 lust . . . pride.** Those who love this world (v. 15) are shortsighted; they want to be satisfied and honored now (Luke 6:24–26). In contrast, those who love the Father have a long-term perspective and wait for God's reward (Luke 6:20–23).

■ **2:17 he who does the will of God abides forever.** John is not teaching that our obedience merits eternal life. Only the obedience of Jesus could satisfy God's demands. Believers receive eternal life as a gift (5:11), and the gift of love transforms them so that they do God's will in gratitude (3:16).

■ **2:18–28** From the time that Jesus pronounced judgment on this world, "the last hour" has been upon it, a final intensification of opposition to God that ends with the final Judgment. The prediction of "the Antichrist" is not from the Old Testament but from Jesus (Matt. 24:5, 24). This prediction began to be fulfilled in the New Testament era with those who denied the Father and the Son (v. 22) and left the church to propagate their false teaching (v. 19). Their denial of the Son was a rejection of the Father who sent Him (2:23; John 15:23). In contrast to the antichrists, believers have an anointing from the Holy Spirit (vv. 20, 27) that opens their hearts and minds to know the saving truth. The Spirit Himself is the best teacher; He will remain with us always and protect us from falsehoods that could lead us away from Christ. The Spirit abides wherever the message of the gospel is received, and wherever the Spirit abides, the Son and the Father are present as well (v. 24).

■ **2:18 it is the last hour.** John will not satisfy the desire to "know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority" (Acts 1:7); he characterizes the whole time between the first and the second comings of Christ as "the last hour" (cf. Acts 2:17; 1 Cor. 10:11). No matter how long this "hour" may extend in terms of calendar time, it remains true that "the time is near" (Rev. 1:3; cf. Rev. 1:1; 22:20) for all of God's promises to be fulfilled.

the Antichrist is coming . . . many antichrists have come. This is commonly seen as a distinct prediction of many antichrists through the course of history, followed by a final Antichrist at the end (2 Thess. 2:3–10; Rev. 13:11–18). John, however, may be referring only to the sort of false teachers who already trouble the church (v. 22; 4:3).

■ **2:19 They went out from us.** Paul too warns against false teachers who will arise from among the believers (Acts 20:29–31). As in the case of Simon the sorcerer (Acts 8:9–24), visible membership in the church does not guarantee salvation. Inward apathy or hostility to the gospel may be masked by outward conformity. The false teachers revealed their hostility not just by leaving, but by the way they left. Because they went out to oppose the word of the gospel, their departure was as much a renunciation of the church and its message as was Judas's departure from the Last Supper (John 13:30).

20 But [h]you have an anointing [i]from the Holy One, and [j]you[5] know all things. 21 I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

22 [k]Who is a liar but he who denies that [l]Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son. 23 [m]Whoever denies the Son does not have the [n]Father either; [o]he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

Let Truth Abide in You

24 Therefore let that abide in you [p]which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, [q]you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. 25 [r]And this is the promise that He has promised us—eternal life.

26 These things I have written to you concerning those who *try to* [6]deceive you. 27 But the [s]anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and [t]you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing [u]teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you [7]will abide in Him.

The Children of God

28 And now, little children, abide in Him, that [8]when He appears, we may have [v]confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. 29 [w]If you know that He is righteous, you know that [x]everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him.

3 Behold [a]what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that [b]we should be called children of [1]God! Therefore the world does not know [2]us, [c]because it did not know Him. 2 Beloved, [d]now we are children of God; and [e]it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, [f]we shall be like Him, for [g]we shall see Him as He is. 3 [h]And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

Sin and the Child of God

4 Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and [i]sin is lawlessness. 5 And you know [j]that He was manifested [k]to take away our sins, and [l]in Him there is no sin. 6 Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him.

3 [h]1 John 4:17 **4** [i]Rom. 4:15 **5** [j]1 John 1:2; 3:8 [k]John 1:29 [l][2 Cor. 5:21]

20 [h]2 Cor. 1:21 [i]Acts 3:14 [j][John 16:13] [5]NU *you all know.*

22 [k]2 John 7 [l]1 John 4:3

23 [m]John 15:23 [n]John 5:23 [o]1 John 4:15; 5:1

24 [p]2 John 5, 6 [q]John 14:23

25 [r]John 3:14–16; 6:40; 17:2, 3

26 [6]*lead you astray*

27 [s][John 14:16; 16:13] [t][Jer. 31:33] [u][John 14:16] [7]NU omits *will*

28 [v]1 John 3:21; 4:17; 5:14 [8]NU *if*

29 [w]Acts 22:14 [x]1 John 3:7, 10

CHAPTER 3

1 [a][1 John 4:10] [b][John 1:12] [c]John 15:18, 21; 16:3 [1]NU adds *And we are,* [2]M *you*

2 [d][Rom. 8:15, 16] [e][Rom. 8:18, 19, 23] [f]Rom. 8:29 [g][Ps. 16:11]

■ **2:20 an anointing from the Holy One.** "Christ" means "Anointed," referring to the unique office of Jesus as God's Savior. God anointed Jesus directly with the Holy Spirit to be the consummate Prophet, Priest, and King (Acts 10:38; Heb. 1:1–9). Believers also have prophetic, priestly, and kingly responsibilities and are anointed with the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 1:21, 22) for these duties (1 Cor. 12).

■ **2:22 denies that Jesus is the Christ.** To separate Christ the Savior from Jesus the man was a hallmark of docetism, the heresy that Christ only appeared to be a human being (Introduction: Date and Occasion).

■ **2:25 eternal life.** This is the supreme gift of God, mediated by Jesus Christ (John 5:24–27) and given freely to the redeemed through faith in Christ (5:11, 13; John 3:16).

■ **2:27 you do not need that anyone teach you.** Believers have an illumination from God through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, who accompanies the Word and keeps us in the truth of the gospel. It is no contradiction that we should listen receptively to other believers, especially when they admonish and instruct us. They also have the Spirit, and the confusion generated by false teaching is a real danger (Matt. 24:24).

■ **2:28 at His coming.** John refers to the visible and final return of Christ at the end of the age. At that time Christ will come as the Judge, but those who "abide in" Him by continuing to trust in the gospel message (v. 24) need have no fear of condemnation (John 3:17, 18). See "The Return of Jesus Christ" at 1 Thess. 4:16.

■ **2:29—3:3** As those taught by the Spirit, believers know an entire system of truth and life that remains hidden to those who are in the world. Essential to this is knowing that although for the time being it may not be outwardly recognized, we can still be sure that we are "children of God" and "born of Him." The public revelation of this truth waits for the public revelation of God Himself "when He is revealed," at the Second Coming. True children of God will bear the family likeness, both now, as our hope lends our lives a focused purity resembling His, and at the end, when "we shall be like Him." Only then will our knowledge of Him be complete, but even now our knowledge that "He is righteous" will bring increasing righteousness to our own lives.

■ **3:3 this hope.** The promise of His appearing fills believers, not with apprehension, but with confidence (1 Thess. 5:4).

■ **3:4–10** The basic contrast between light and darkness, between the children of God and of the world, is now explained as a contrast between those who sin and those who do not. Jesus was sinless, and what is more He came to take away sin (v. 5; John 1:29). The New Birth sets a person irrevocably against sin, and because the seed of new life "remains" in that person (v. 9; cf. John 10:28, 29), the defeat of corruption and death for him is inevitable. In this sense sin will be impossible (Rom. 6:8, 9). John addresses this absolute aspect of being born again and speaks accordingly. He is not denying that sin and death have influence until the very end (1 Cor. 15:26; Rev. 20:14). He says clearly that in this life no one can be without sin (1:8).

■ **3:4 lawlessness.** Though the Old Testament is not quoted explicitly in 1 John, its authority is presupposed. In particular, the moral law, summed up in the law of love, is still the norm for God's people (Rom. 13:8–10). "Lawlessness" is disobedience to that law.

■ **3:6 does not sin. Whoever sins.** The present tense of the Greek suggests behavior that is characteristic or usual. In this way John acknowledges, but does not excuse, the possibility of occasional sin. Another possibility is that John has in mind the specific sin of apostasy, mentioned in 2:19 (cf. also 5:16–18). If so, John means that true believers will not totally abandon their faith.

8 [m]Matt. 13:38 [n]Luke 10:18
9 [o]John 1:3; 3:3 [p]1 Pet. 1:23
11 [q][John 13:34; 15:12]
12 [r]Gen. 4:4, 8
13 [s][John 15:18; 17:14]

7 Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. 8 [m]He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, [n]that He might destroy the works of the devil. 9 Whoever has been [o]born of God does not sin, for [p]His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

The Imperative of Love

10 In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor *is* he who does not love his brother. 11 For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, [q]that we should love one another, 12 not as [r]Cain *who* was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother's righteous.

13 Do not marvel, my brethren, if [s]the world hates you. 14 We know that we have passed from

Antinomianism

Antinomianism means "opposed to law." Antinomian views are those denying that God's law in Scripture should directly control the Christian's life.

Dualistic antinomianism appeared early in the Gnostic heresies, like those opposed by Peter and Jude (2 Pet. 2; Jude 4–19). The Gnostics taught that salvation was for the soul only, making bodily behavior irrelevant both to God's interest and to the soul's health. The conclusion was that one may behave riotously and it will not matter.

A "spiritual" antinomianism puts such trust in the Holy Spirit's inward prompting as to deny any need to be taught by the law how to live. Freedom from the law as a way of salvation is assumed to bring with it freedom from the law as a guide to conduct. In the first 150 years of the Reformation era this kind of antinomianism was common. The Corinthian church may have been in the grip of this error, since Paul warns them that a truly spiritual person acknowledges the authority of God's Word (1 Cor. 14:37; cf. 7:40).

Another kind of antinomianism begins from the point that God does not see the sin in believers, because they are in Christ, who kept the law for them. From this they draw the false conclusion that their behavior makes no difference, provided they keep on believing. But 1 John 1:8—2:1 and 3:4–10 point in a different direction. It is not possible to be in Christ and at the same time to embrace sin as a way of life.

Some dispensationalists have held that since Christians live under a dispensation of grace, not law, keeping the moral law is at no stage necessary for them. Rom. 3:31 and 1 Cor. 6:9–11 clearly show, however, that keeping the law is a continuing obligation for Christians.

It is sometimes said that the motive and intention of "love" is the only law God requires of Christians. The commands of the Decalogue and other ethical parts of Scripture, although they are ascribed to God directly, are regarded as no more than guidelines that love may at any time disregard. But Rom. 13:8–10 teaches that specific commands reveal what true love is. The law of God exposes the counterfeit love that will not accept its responsibilities toward God and neighbor.

The moral law revealed in the Decalogue and expounded in other parts of the Bible is an expression of God's righteousness, given to be a code of practice for God's people in every age. The law is not opposed to the love and goodness of God, but shows what it is in action. The Spirit gives Christians the power to observe the law, making us more and more like Christ, the archetypal observer of the law (Matt. 5:17). □

■ **3:7 practices righteousness.** See theological note "Antinomianism."

■ **3:8 destroy the works of the devil.** The opposition between Christ and Satan was foretold as early as Gen. 3:15. Satan used the righteous law of God as a tool to hold sinners captive to the fear of death and condemnation. By accepting in His own Person the penalty due to sinners under the law, Christ took away the foundation of Satan's plan (Heb. 2:14, 15).

■ **3:11–15** The history of the world is the story of hatred, right back to the archetypal conflict between Cain and Abel. John traces Cain's hatred to the radical difference of his motivations from those of Abel (John 3:19; 8:37), a difference that will always exist between the world and the people of God (v. 13). When the fellowship of believers is free from animosity, as John expects it will be, we know that we "have passed from death to life" (v. 14). But if such animosity invades the fellowship, it does so only by rejection of "the message that you heard from the beginning" (v. 11).

■ **3:11 love one another.** The command of Christ, founded on His own gift of love (v. 16; John 13:34, 35).

■ **3:12 Cain.** Gen. 4:5 explains that Cain envied Abel because Abel's offering was accepted by God.

death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love [3]*his* brother abides in death. [15] [t]Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that [u]no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

The Outworking of Love

[16] [v]By this we know love, [w]because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren. [17] But [x]whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?

[18] My little children, [y]let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. [19] And by this we [4]know [z]that we are of the truth, and shall [5]assure our hearts before Him. [20] [a]For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things. [21] Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, [b]we have confidence toward God. [22] And [c]whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments [d]and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. [23] And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ [e]and love one another, as He gave [6]us commandment.

The Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Error

[24] Now [f]he who keeps His commandments [g]abides in Him, and He in him. And [h]by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

4 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but [a]test the spirits, whether they are of God; because [b]many false prophets have gone out into the world. [2] By this you know the Spirit of God: [c]Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, [3] and every spirit that does not confess [1]that Jesus [2]Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the *spirit* of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.

[4] You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than [d]he who is in the world. [5] [e]They are of the world. Therefore they speak *as* of the world, and [f]the world hears them. [6] We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. [g]By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

Knowing God Through Love

[7] [h]Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who [i]loves is born of God and knows God. [8] He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. [9] [j]In this the

14 [3]NU omits *his brother*

15 [t]Matt. 5:21 [u][Gal. 5:20, 21]

16 [v][John 3:16] [w]John 10:11; 15:13

17 [x]Deut. 15:7

18 [y]Ezek. 33:31

19 [z]John 18:37 [4]NU *shall know* [5]*persuade, set at rest*

20 [a][1 Cor. 4:4, 5]

21 [b][1 John 2:28; 5:14]

22 [c]Ps. 34:15 [d]John 8:29

23 [e]Matt. 22:39 [6]M omits *us*

24 [f]John 14:23 [g]John 14:21; 17:21 [h]Rom. 8:9, 14, 16

CHAPTER 4

1 [a]1 Cor. 14:29 [b]Matt. 24:5

2 [c]1 Cor. 12:3

3 [1]NU omits *that* [2]NU omits *Christ has come in the flesh*

4 [d]John 14:30; 16:11

5 [e]John 3:31 [f]John 15:19; 17:14

6 [g][1 Cor. 2:12–16] **7** [h]1 John 3:10, 11, 23 [i]1 Thess. 4:9 **9** [j]Rom. 5:8

■ **3:16–24** Mutual love in the fellowship is evidence of new life. It is based on the love of Jesus Christ, who "laid down His life" in our place. Measuring ourselves against such an example, our heart may "condemn us" (v. 20), and our confidence can only be restored by someone greater than our hearts—God Himself. God, who "knows all things," has proved His love for sinners by the gift of His Son (4:10; Rom. 5:8). Confidence founded on this reality carries with it the assurance that our deeds are also accepted by God (v. 22), and when guilt is dealt with we are released to pray unhindered (v. 22). Confident prayer is a hallmark of the children of God (John 15:7; Rom. 8:15, 16).

■ **3:16 laid down His life.** Christ accepted the painful death of the Cross so that we might be saved from eternal punishment (John 10:11). Our love for one another may not require such a costly decision as this, but there must be some decision and action. John mentions material assistance as one example (v. 17; James 1:27).

■ **3:20 God is greater than our heart.** The Word of God which acquits us must prevail over the word of our hearts that condemns us.

■ **3:22 whatever we ask.** Jesus expressed such confidence in the Father (John 11:41, 42) and encouraged His disciples to have similar confidence (John 14:13, 14). This confidence depends on the awareness that our desires are attuned to God's (5:14, 15).

■ **3:23 this is His commandment.** The two parts of this commandment parallel the two parts of the Ten Commandments, reminding us that our relationship with God takes precedence over our relationship with our neighbor. Faith in Christ relates us rightly to God, and His renewing grace enables us to love one another.

■ **4:1–6** God's gift of His one Holy Spirit stands in contrast to the many lying spirits that drive false prophets into the world to spread opposition to Christ (2:18). Like Paul in 1 Cor. 12:3, John shows how to distinguish the Spirit of Truth from spirits of error: those who confess Jesus as the Messiah are from God, while those who will not confess Jesus are not. This confession is the great divide between those "of God" and those who are "of the world."

■ **4:1 gone out into the world.** See note on 2:19.

■ **4:2 Jesus Christ has come in the flesh.** John distinguishes the gospel from the error of the docetists who said that Jesus Christ was not truly human (Introduction: Date and Occasion). The humanity of Christ was essential if He was to die for our sins.

■ **4:3 the Antichrist.** See note on 2:18.

■ **4:4 he who is in the world.** In its hostility to God, the world is pervaded by the purposes of the devil, who has captured the human race through temptation (5:19).

■ **4:6 of God.** The Holy Spirit unites believers. See "The Local Church" at Rev. 2:1.

■ **4:7–12** The love of God the Father for "His only begotten Son" (v. 9) is the source of the love that binds the fellowship of believers together as a family. By giving us His Son, the Father introduced us to the perfect love and eternal life that the Father and the Son have always enjoyed.

■ **4:9 only begotten Son.** This means that Jesus is God's Son in eternity, as the Second Person of the Trinity. The Greek can also be translated "one and only Son," referring to Christ's uniqueness rather than to His eternal generation.

love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten [k]Son into the world, that we might live through Him. 10 In this is love, [l]not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son [m]*to be* the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, [n]if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

Seeing God Through Love

12 [o]No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us. 13 [p]By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. 14 And [q]we have seen and testify that [r]the Father has sent the Son *as* Savior of the world. 15 [s]Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. 16 And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and [t]he who abides in love abides in God, and God [u]in him.

The Consummation of Love

17 Love has been perfected among us in this: that [v]we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. 18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. 19 [w]We love [3]Him because He first loved us.

Obedience by Faith

20 [x]If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, [4]how can he love God [y]whom he has not seen? 21 And [z]this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God *must* love his brother also.

5 Whoever believes that [a]Jesus is the Christ is [b]born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him. 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and [c]keep His commandments. 3 [d]For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And [e]His commandments are not burdensome. 4 For [f]whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that [g]has overcome the world—[1]our faith. 5 Who is he who overcomes the world, but [h]he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

The Certainty of God's Witness

6 This is He who came [i]by water and blood—Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. [j]And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. 7 For there are three that

9 [k]John 3:16
10 [l]Titus 3:5 [m]1 John 2:2
11 [n]Matt. 18:33
12 [o]John 1:18
13 [p]John 14:20
14 [q]John 1:14 [r]John 3:17; 4:42
15 [s][Rom. 10:9]
16 [t][1 John 3:24] [u][John 14:23]
17 [v]1 John 2:28
19 [w]1 John 4:10 [3]NU omits *Him*
20 [x][1 John 2:4] [y]1 John 4:12 [4]NU *he cannot*
21 [z][Matt. 5:43, 44; 22:39]

CHAPTER 5

1 [a]1 John 2:22; 4:2, 15 [b]John 1:13
2 [c]John 15:10
3 [d]John 14:15 [e]Matt. 11:30; 23:4
4 [f]John 16:33 [g]1 John 2:13; 4:4 [1]M *your*
5 [h]1 Cor. 15:57
6 [i]John 1:31–34 [j][John 14:17]

■ **4:10 propitiation for our sins.** See note on 2:2. Christ turned away the righteous anger of God and satisfied the demands of His justice on our behalf. It was to fulfill God's love that He did this.

■ **4:14 Savior of the world.** See note on 2:2.

■ **4:16 God is love.** God's love is shown in His covenant faithfulness and in His relentless pursuit of sinners in spite of their rebellion or indifference (v. 8; Ex. 34:5–7).

■ **4:17 so are we.** Though not like Christ in the completeness of our obedience, we are like Him in our basic orientation, and stand out as He did by contrast with the world at large (John 17:16).

■ **4:18 not been made perfect in love.** God's love is perfect in itself, and it brings to us the sure promise of perfection as soon as we receive it (vv. 12, 17; 2:5). But because we are being made perfect in His love over time (3:2), the remnants of fear may temporarily coexist with love. "Perfect love" from God "casts out fear" progressively rather than instantaneously.

■ **5:4 overcomes the world.** See note on 2:13.

■ **5:6 by water and blood.** Some suggest that the water refers to the Baptism of Jesus and the blood to the Crucifixion. This is unlikely, since John in his Gospel does not directly recount the baptism of Jesus. Others

The Quality of Love (4:19)

The Source of Love	The Effect of Love
God personifies love (4:8, 16)	We reflect God's love in the world (4:7)
God loved us (4:19)	We love God; fear is cast out; we keep His commands (4:18, 19; 5:3)
God gave His Son for us (4:9, 10)	We give our substance for others (3:17; 4:11)
Christ laid down His life for us (3:16)	We lay down our lives for others (3:16)

bear witness [2]in heaven: the Father, [k]the Word, and the Holy Spirit; [l]and these three are one. [8] And there are three that bear witness on earth: [m]the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one.

[9] If we receive [n]the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; [o]for this is the witness of [3]God which He has testified of His Son. [10] He who believes in the Son of God [p]has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God [q]has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. [11] And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. [12] [r]He who has the Son has [4]life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have [4]life. [13] These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, [5]and that you may *continue to* believe in the name of the Son of God.

Confidence and Compassion in Prayer

[14] Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that [s]if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. [15] And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

[16] If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin *which does* not *lead* to death, he will ask, and [t]He will give him life for those who commit sin not *leading* to death. [u]There is sin *leading* to death. [v]I do not say that he should pray about that. [17] [w]All unrighteousness is sin, and there is sin not *leading* to death.

Knowing the True—Rejecting the False

[18] We know that [x]whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God [y]keeps[6] [7]himself, and the wicked one does not touch him.

[19] We know that we are of God, and [z]the whole world lies *under the sway of* the wicked one.

[20] And we know that the [a]Son of God has come and [b]has given us an understanding, [c]that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. [d]This is the true God [e]and eternal life.

[21] Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

7 [k][John 1:1] [l]John 10:30 [2]NU, M omit the words from *in heaven* (v. 7) through *on earth* (v. 8). Only 4 or 5 very late mss. contain these words in Greek.

8 [m]John 15:26

9 [n]John 5:34, 37; 8:17, 18 [o][Matt. 3:16, 17] [3]NU *God, that*

10 [p][Rom. 8:16] [q]John 3:18, 33

12 [r][John 3:15, 36; 6:47; 17:2, 3] [4]Or *the life*

13 [5]NU omits the rest of v. 13.

14 [s][1 John 2:28; 3:21, 22]

16 [t]Job 42:8 [u][Matt. 12:31] [v]Jer. 7:16; 14:11

17 [w]1 John 3:4

18 [x][1 Pet. 1:23] [y]James 1:27 [6]*guards* [7]NU *him*

19 [z]Gal. 1:4

20 [a]1 John 4:2 [b]Luke 24:45 [c]John 17:3 [d]Is. 9:6 [e]1 John 5:11, 12

suggest that "water and blood" refers to the two sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper. This is also unlikely, since John does not recount the institution of the sacraments in his Gospel. The difficult saying of this verse probably reflects John 19:34. In John's Gospel, the testimony God bears to Jesus His Son is a key theme. The blood and water that flowed from Jesus after His death attested to the reality of His death; the wound in Jesus' side later confirmed the reality of His bodily resurrection (John 20:20, 25–27). Both the death and the resurrection were denied by the docetists, who denied the humanity of Christ (4:2).

■ **5:7 three that bear witness.** See "One and Three: The Trinity" at Is. 44:6.

■ **5:9 the witness of God is greater.** By appealing directly to God as witness, John, like Jesus, overrules all human dispute (John 5:31–39).

■ **5:11 eternal life . . . in His Son.** This is the cardinal truth of the Christian message.

■ **5:13** John's Gospel was written to move readers to faith in Jesus that they might receive eternal life (John 20:31). This letter was written to assure those who have believed that they actually possess the priceless gift.

■ **5:16 sin leading to death.** Some connect this sin with the unforgivable sin mentioned in Matt. 12:31, 32; Mark 3:28–30; Luke 12:8–10. More likely, John is referring to a stubborn refusal to accept the message of the gospel (1:10 note; John 8:24). See "The Unpardonable Sin" at Mark 3:29.

■ **5:18 does not sin.** See note on 3:6.

■ **5:19 the sway of the wicked one.** No one can escape the devil's net of temptation, sin, and condemnation without divine help. But neither can people escape their responsibility by trying to blame another agent, even the devil, for their own condition (Gen. 3:12, 13). Paradoxically, enslavement to sin is voluntary (James 1:13–15). Only the Son of God can break this bondage and replace it with a life of forgiveness, gratitude, and obedience (3:8).

■ **5:20 in Him who is true.** Being in God who is true and being in His Son Jesus Christ go together inseparably. The grammar of this verse is difficult, but it is most reasonable to understand that "the true God and eternal life" is Jesus Christ. If the phrase refers back to the Father the verse becomes needlessly repetitive. Moreover, the phrase "eternal life" is applied to Christ in 1:2 as well.

The Second Epistle of

JOHN

Author The style, diction, and content of 2 John mark it as written by the same author as 1 John and the Gospel of John. This author has been traditionally identified as the apostle John, son of Zebedee, and no more plausible ascription has been proposed.

Date and Occasion Second John was written to warn against the same strain of false teaching which 1 John opposes, namely "docetism" (see "Introduction to 1 John: Date and Occasion"). It must have been written at about the same time, in the last two decades of the first century. While it repeates ideas from 1 John, it does not presuppose knowledge of 1 John on the part of the reader.

Characteristics and Themes

Second John is a letter, with salutation, introductory greeting, and final greeting. It is written to a Christian lady and her family, either her natural family or the fellowship of believers associated with her. Like the early letters of Paul, it is a letter of encouragement and warning written to a specific fellowship for which the author has pastoral responsibility. □

Outline of 2 John

I. Salutation and Greeting (vv. 1–3)
II. Love and Obedience (vv. 4–6)
III. The Danger of False Teaching (vv. 7–11)
IV. Conclusion and Farewell (vv. 12, 13)

Greeting the Elect Lady

1 THE Elder,

To the [1]elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth, and not only I, but also all those who have known [a]the truth, [2] because of the truth which abides in us and will be with us forever:

3 [b]Grace, mercy, *and* peace will be with [2]you from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

1 [a]Col. 1:5
[1] *chosen*

3 [b]Rom. 1:7; 1 Tim. 1:2 [2]NU, M *us*

■ **1–3** The author identifies himself only as "the Elder" and the addressee only as "the elect lady." These terms are appropriate for a relationship of mutual love and respect in which the author has had pastoral responsibility for the addressee. John's concern for her depends on the truth all Christians share and is an example of the love that binds all Christians together.

■ **1 the Elder.** There is no real difficulty with an apostle identifying himself as an elder, since the responsibilities of an apostle toward each individual congregation were the same as the responsibilities of an elder (1 Pet. 5:1–4).

the elect lady. Some consider this expression and the similar expression in v. 13 as a metaphor for a church, but such usage is otherwise unknown.

■ **3 Grace, mercy, and peace.** Like the apostle Paul, John begins his greeting with mention of the rich Christian blessings of grace and peace (Gal. 1:3 note), but adds "mercy." The source of this blessed "grace, mercy, and peace" is none other than God Himself, who is truth (John 14:6; 1 John 5:6) and love (1 John 4:8).

Walk in Christ's Commandments

4 I [c]rejoiced greatly that I have found *some* of your children walking in truth, as we received commandment from the Father. 5 And now I plead with you, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment to you, but that which we have had from the beginning: [d]that we love one another. 6 [e]This is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, that [f]as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it.

Beware of Antichrist Deceivers

7 For [g]many deceivers have gone out into the world [h]who do not confess Jesus Christ *as* coming in the flesh. [i]This is a deceiver and an antichrist. 8 [j]Look to yourselves, [k]that [3]we do not lose those things we worked for, but *that* [3]we may receive a full reward.

4 [c]1 Thess. 2:19, 20; 3 John 3, 4

5 [d][John 13:34, 35; 15:12, 17]; 1 John 3:11; 4:7, 11

6 [e]John 14:15; 1 John 2:5; 5:3 [f]1 John 2:24

7 [g]1 John 2:19; 4:1 [h]1 John 4:2 [i]1 John 2:22

8 [j]Mark 13:9 [k]Gal. 3:4 [3]NU *you*

The Humanity of Jesus

Jesus was a man who convinced those closest to Him that He was also God; His humanness is not in doubt. John's condemnation of those who denied that "Jesus Christ has come in the flesh" (1 John 4:2, 3; 2 John 7) was aimed at teachers who replaced the Incarnation with the idea that Jesus was a supernatural being (not God) who seemed human but was really only so in appearance, a messenger who could not die for sins.

The Gospels show Jesus experiencing human limitations (hunger, Matt. 4:2; fatigue, John 4:6; ignorance of fact, Luke 8:45–47) and sorrow (John 11:35, 38). Hebrews stresses that if Christ had not shared all these facets of human experience—weakness, temptation, pain—He would not be qualified to help us as we face such trials (Heb. 2:17, 18; 4:15, 16; 5:2, 7–9). As it is, His full human experience guarantees that in every moment of our relationship with God we may go to Him, confident that He has been there before us, and is the helper we need.

Christians, focusing on Jesus' deity, have sometimes thought that it honors Jesus to minimize His humanness. For example, it is sometimes suggested that Jesus was always consciously omniscient, and only pretended to be ignorant of facts. Or it might be thought that He only pretended to be hungry and weary, because as a kind of superman He was above the needs of daily existence. But the Incarnation means that the Son of God has only one Person, existing in two natures, and there is nothing lacking from His human nature, sin only excepted. The idea that Jesus' two natures were like alternating electrical circuits, so that sometimes He acted in His humanity and sometimes in His divinity, is also mistaken.

Jesus could not sin, but he was able to be tempted. Satan tempted Him to disobey the Father through self-gratification, self-display, and self-aggrandizement (Matt. 4:1–11), and the temptation to retreat from the Cross was constant (Luke 22:28; cf. Matt. 16:23; and Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane). Being human, Jesus could not conquer temptation without a struggle, but being divine it was His nature to do His Father's will (John 5:19, 30), and therefore to resist and fight temptation until He had overcome it. Since His human nature was conformed to His divine nature, it was impossible that He should fail in the course of His resistance. It was inevitable that He would endure temptations to the end, feeling their entire force, and emerge victorious for His people. From Gethsemane we know how acute and agonizing His struggles were. The happy result for us is that because "He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted" (Heb. 2:18). □

■ **4–6** The elder and the lady share the joy of seeing members of her household continue to be faithful to the truth. The mark of Christian faithfulness is love for one another, the central command given to Christians by Jesus Himself (John 13:34). That love is defined by all the commands Christ gave His followers.

■ **5 not . . . a new commandment.** See note on 1 John 2:7–11.

■ **7–11** False teachers had been troubling some of the Christian communities by attacking the central truth of the gospel—that Jesus is the Anointed One, the eternal Son of God who took on human nature to accomplish salvation (1 John 2:22; 4:2, 3). To reject this truth is to reject all hope of reconciliation with God, while to receive it is to receive God Himself. John warns the lady and her household that the work of false teachers threatens their spiritual progress and even their hope of eternal reward. In the face of such dangers, the only safe course is to avoid all involvement with the false teachers.

■ **7 gone out.** See note on 1 John 2:19.

do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. The deceivers were docetists, who denied the reality of the human nature of Christ (1 John 4:2 note). See theological note "The Humanity of Jesus."

an antichrist. See note on 1 John 2:18.

9 [l]John 7:16; 8:31; 1 John 2:19, 23, 24 [k]NU *goes ahead*

10 [m]1 Kin. 13:16; Rom. 16:17; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14; Titus 3:10

12 [n]3 John 13, 14 [o]John 17:13

13 [p]1 Pet. 5:13

9 [l]Whoever [k]transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. 10 If anyone comes to you and [m]does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; 11 for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds.

John's Farewell Greeting

12 [n]Having many things to write to you, I did not wish *to do so* with paper and ink; but I hope to come to you and speak face to face, [o]that our joy may be full.

13 [p]The children of your elect sister greet you. Amen.

■ **10 do not receive him into your house nor greet him.** This stern measure contrasts sharply with the exhortation given in 3 John 5–8 to welcome believers who proclaim the truth.

■ **12, 13** A letter is no substitute for personal fellowship. John hopes to share with his readers the mutual encouragement that can only take place in person. He closes by bringing greetings from one Christian community to another, a common practice in apostolic letters and a reminder of Christian unity.

The Third Epistle of

JOHN

Author The third letter of John is by the author of 2 John, as indicated by key similarities of style and structure. Like the Gospel of John and 1 and 2 John, the traditional ascription to the apostle John cannot be disproved and is more likely than any alternative.

Date and Occasion While 1 and 2 John celebrate truths that unite all Christians, 3 John laments the petty rivalry that sets Christians against one another. In particular, the letter was occasioned by a sharp conflict between Diotrephes (apparently an elder in a congregation under John's care) and others in the congregation over hospitality shown to traveling missionaries. It is likely that Demetrius, who is commended to Gaius by the letter, was himself such a traveling missionary in need of temporary lodging.

There is no trace in 3 John of the christological conflict that looms large in 1 and 2 John, and it may be that 3 John was written earlier than either 1 or 2 John, possibly in the eighties of the first century.

Characteristics and Themes Third John is marked by its salutation, introductory greeting, and final greeting as a letter. More specifically, it is a letter of commendation introducing Demetrius to the recipient, Gaius. □

Outline of 3 John

I. Salutation and Greeting (vv. 1, 2)
II. Faithfulness to the Truth (vv. 3, 4)
III. The Importance of Hospitality (vv. 5–11)
  A. Positive Encouragement (vv. 5–8)
  B. Negative Example (vv. 9, 10)
  C. Summary: Good Versus Evil (v. 11)
IV. Commendation of Demetrius (v. 12)
V. Conclusion and Farewell (vv. 13, 14)

Greeting to Gaius

THE Elder,

To the beloved Gaius, [a]whom I love in truth:

[2] Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. [3] For I [b]rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth *that is* in you, just as you walk in the truth. [4] I have no greater [c]joy than to hear that [d]my children walk in [1]truth.

Gaius Commended for Generosity

[5] Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for the brethren [2]and for strangers, [6] who have borne witness of your love before the church. *If* you send them forward on their journey in a manner worthy of God, you will do well, [7] because they went forth for His name's sake, [e]taking

1 [a]2 John 1
3 [b]2 John 4
4 [c]1 Thess. 2:19, 20; 2 John 4 [d][1 Cor. 4:15] [1]NU *the truth*
5 [2]NU *and especially for*
7 [e]1 Cor. 9:12, 15

■ **1, 2** *The author identifies himself as "the Elder," as in 2 John. He writes to his beloved friend Gaius to commend him for his hospitality and to discuss with him the situation in the congregation of which Gaius is a part. John begins with a prayer for well-being, a common way of opening a personal letter.*

■ **3, 4** *See the similar expression of joy in 2 John 4.*

■ **5–8** *John commends Gaius for receiving traveling Christian teachers with hospitality. The obligation to welcome and encourage those who proclaim the true gospel from place to place, and the joy that comes from this, stand in contrast to the need to avoid those who proclaim a false*

nothing from the Gentiles. 8 We therefore ought to [f]receive[3] such, that we may become fellow workers for the truth.

Diotrephes and Demetrius

9 I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us. 10 Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, [g]prating[4] against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting *them* out of the church.

11 Beloved, [h]do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. [i]He who does good is of God, [5]but he who does evil has not seen [j]God.

12 Demetrius [k]has a *good* testimony from all, and from the truth itself. And we also [6]bear witness, [l]and you know that our testimony is true.

Farewell Greeting

13 [m]I had many things to write, but I do not wish to write to you with pen and ink; 14 but I hope to see you shortly, and we shall speak face to face.

Peace to you. Our friends greet you. Greet the friends by name.

8 [f]Matt. 10:40; Rom. 12:13; Heb. 13:2; 1 Pet. 4:9 [3]NU *support*

10 [g]Prov. 10:8, 10 [4]*talking nonsense*

11 [h]Ps. 34:14; 37:27; Rom. 14:19; 1 Thess. 5:15; 1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 2:22 [i][1 John 2:29; 3:10] [j][1 John 3:10] [5]NU, M omit *but*

12 [k]Acts 6:3; 1 Tim. 3:7 [l]John 19:35; 21:24 [6]*testify*

13 [m]2 John 12

gospel (1 John 4:1–3; 2 John 10, 11). Those who proclaim the message and those who encourage and support them work together in serving the truth.

■ **7 Gentiles.** Those who are not God's people. Such usage indicates that the Christian community (made up of ethnic Jews and Gentiles) had come to see itself as the new Israel.

■ **9, 10** The cooperation and love that should be normal among Christians had been broken by the behavior of Diotrephes, who abused his position of leadership in the congregation by attacking other Christian workers. Evidently Diotrephes regarded other Christian teachers as threats rather than as coworkers. Proud and selfish, he turned away traveling evangelists and punished with excommunication those who welcomed them.

■ **9 I wrote to the church.** A previous letter that has not survived.

■ **10 If I come, I will call to mind his deeds.** The author's understated response to Diotrephes's severe provocation indicates his pastoral sensitivity, but also leaves no doubt that his visit will put a decisive stop to Diotrephes's behavior. The apostle's personal presence was an extension of the authoritative presence of Christ, both for encouragement and for warning (2 Cor. 13:1–3, 10).

■ **11** Tyranny like that of Diotrephes reflects the opposite of the love of God; the temptation to respond in kind must be resisted.

■ **12** The body of the letter closes with a commendation of Demetrius, the bearer of the letter, as a faithful Christian. Such commendation by name, like the naming of the addressee of the letter, was necessary to ensure that the letter was neither suppressed nor misused by those who, like Diotrephes, would disrupt the unity of the congregation (v. 9). Demetrius may have been a traveling teacher himself; if so, John's letter would encourage Gaius to show hospitality.

■ **13, 14** The letter concludes in a way similar to 2 John 12, 13, with some difference of wording but the same personal touch.

The Epistle of JUDE

Author The author of this epistle identifies himself as "Jude, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James" (v. 1). The name "Judah" (Greek *Judas;* English "Jude") was common among first-century Jews, and at least eight different persons of that name are mentioned in the New Testament, including two of Jesus' disciples (Luke 6:16). The author cannot, therefore, be identified on the basis of name alone.

The best clue to his identity is the description "brother of James" (v. 1). The only James known well enough in the early church to be referred to in this unqualified way is James, the prominent church leader (Acts 12:17; 15:13), author of the epistle that bears his name, and half brother of Jesus (Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3; Gal. 1:19). If this identification of James is correct, the author of the present epistle is Jude, the half brother of Jesus (Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3), who along with his other brothers did not believe in Jesus until after the Resurrection (Mark 3:21, 31; John 7:5; Acts 1:14).

Jude might be one of those referred to at another point in the New Testament, in Paul's reference to the itinerant ministry of the Lord's brothers and their wives (1 Cor. 9:5). Probably it is Jude's humility that explains why he does not mention that he was related to Jesus (note the similar reserve in James 1:1).

Several objections to the authenticity of Jude have been raised, but all rest on questionable assumptions or exegesis. Most are linked with proposing a date too late for Jude's lifetime ("Date and Occasion" below). Some argue that the quality of the Greek used in this epistle is better than one could expect of a Galilean, but Galilee was bilingual (Greek and Aramaic) in the first century, and too little is known about Jude's Greek to conclude that he could not have written this letter. We can accept that the author is Jude, the brother of Jesus.

Despite its brevity, the epistle was widely used in the early church because of its obvious orthodoxy and value. Questions about its canonical status arose largely because of its use of apocryphal literature (vv. 9, 14, 15 and notes; "Interpretive Difficulties" below). In addition to possible allusions in the so-called "Apostolic Fathers" (e.g., Clement of Rome; the Shepherd of Hermas; the Epistle of Barnabas; all prior to 150), Jude is listed in the Muratorian Canon (c. 200) and was accepted as authentic by Clement of Alexandria (c. 150–c. 215), Tertullian (c. 160–c. 225), Origen (c. 185–c. 253), and Athanasius (c. 296–373).

Date and Occasion Practically the only evidence for the date of Jude is what can be inferred about the time of its author and of the heresy he combats. If Jude was younger than Jesus and James, as his position in the lists of brothers in Matt. 13:55 and Mark 6:3 suggests, he could have survived well into the last quarter of the first century. Assuming that Peter wrote 2 Peter, and with most scholars that 2 Peter uses Jude (Introduction to 2 Peter: Interpretive Difficulties), Jude would have been written before A.D. 65–67, the likely date for 2 Peter.

Some argue for a second-century date on the grounds that Jude is combatting Gnosticism. While the teachings Jude opposes may have been precursors of Gnosticism, they cannot be identified with the fully-developed Gnostic heresies of the second century (Introduction to 2 Peter: Characteristics and Themes).

There is no indication in the letter of its place of writing or its destination. While some believe Jude's use of the Old Testament and Jewish apocryphal literature points to a Jewish Christian audience, this material reveals more about his own background than that of his readers. Perhaps Jude wrote the letter as a circular letter to a number of churches whose conditions he knows from having conducted an itinerant ministry among them (cf. 1 Cor. 9:5).

Characteristics and Themes

1. The Jewish Christian Character of the Epistle. This letter strongly reflects the milieu of first-century Jewish Christianity, as one would expect from an author like Jude. Evidence for the author's Jewish background includes his many allusions to the Old Testament (though he does not quote directly), his familiarity with Jewish apocryphal tradition, and his strong ethical concern.

2. Denunciation of False Teachers. Jude confronts a threat similar to that opposed in 2 Peter—false teachers who were using Christian liberty and the free grace of God as a license for immorality (v. 4; cf. 2 Pet. 2:1–3). Most of the epistle (vv. 4–19) is devoted to stern denunciation of the false teachers in order to impress the readers with the seriousness of the threat. But Jude's strategy is more than mere negative opposition. He urges his readers to grow in their knowledge of Christian truth (v. 20), to bear a firm witness for the truth (v. 3), and to seek to reclaim those whose faith was wavering (vv. 22, 23). This prescription for confronting

spiritual error is as effective today as when it was first written.

Interpretive Difficulties

1. The Relationship of Jude to 2 Peter. See "Introduction to 2 Peter: Interpretive Difficulties."

2. The Use of Nonbiblical and Apocryphal Materials. As noted above, Jude's use of apocryphal Jewish materials was the chief obstacle to the epistle's acceptance in the New Testament canon.

Allusion to or citation of extrabiblical materials is rare in the New Testament. But given the currency of apocryphal religious works during the period, and the desire of the New Testament writers to communicate the gospel in terms familiar to their readers, it is not surprising to find some occasional use. Examples include 2 Tim. 3:8, which uses Jewish traditions about Ex. 7:11; and the quotation of pagan poets in Acts 17:28; 1 Cor. 15:33; and Titus 1:12.

The inclusion of such quotations in the inspired canon, for illustrative purposes or as an appeal to conventional wisdom, does not imply that the apocryphal and nonbiblical documents were themselves inspired, nor that everything in them is being endorsed by the Bible. It is the use of the particular reference that is inspired, not the source of that reference. □

Outline of Jude

I. Salutation (vv. 1, 2)
II. Purpose of the Letter (vv. 3, 4)
III. Denunciation of False Teachers (vv. 5–19)
  A. Three Examples of Divine Judgment on the Ungodly (vv. 5–7)
  B. Arrogance of the False Teachers (vv. 8–10)
  C. Three Examples of Those Who Led Others into Sin (v. 11)
  D. Depravity and Danger of the False Teachers (vv. 12, 13)
  E. Enoch's Prophecy of Judgment (vv. 14, 15)
  F. Proud Words of the False Teachers (v. 16)
  G. Apostolic Prophecies of Mockers (vv. 17–19)
IV. Positive Exhortations (vv. 20–23)
V. Concluding Doxology (vv. 24, 25)

1 [a]Acts 1:13 [b]Rom. 1:7 [c]John 17:11, 12 [f]NU *beloved*
2 [d]1 Pet. 1:2; 2 Pet. 1:2
3 [e]Titus 1:4 [f]Phil. 1:27

Greeting to the Called

JUDE, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and [a]brother of James,

To those who are [b]called, [f]sanctified by God the Father, and [c]preserved in Jesus Christ:

2 Mercy, [d]peace, and love be multiplied to you.

Contend for the Faith

3 Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you [e]concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting [f]you to contend earnestly for the faith which was

■ **1 Jude . . . brother of James.** See Introduction: Author.

called. The expression of God's sovereign and gracious initiative in effectually summoning to salvation those whom He has chosen.

sanctified. That is, God has "set apart" for His special care and use those whom He has called.

preserved in Jesus Christ. The Greek could also be translated "kept for Jesus Christ." The elect will persevere in faith because God preserves them (v. 24; John 10:27–30; 1 Pet. 1:5).

■ **2 Mercy, peace, and love.** Jude fills a traditional Jewish greeting ("mercy and peace") with profound Christian meaning by adding "love." God's mercy to undeserving sinners and the peace that results are grounded in His love manifested in Jesus Christ (John 3:16).

■ **3 I found it necessary.** Instead of the doctrinal treatise he had intended to write, Jude feels compelled to address the problem of false teachers (v. 4). We do not know whether his original intention was fulfilled at some other time.

contend earnestly for the faith. Here "faith" indicates the content of the message taught by the apostles and held in common by all Christians, rather than the personal exercise of trust by a believer. Christianity in-

for all delivered to the saints. [4] For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord [2]God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Old and New Apostates

[5] But I want to remind you, though you once knew this, that [g]the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed those who did not believe. [6] And the angels who did not keep their [3]proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day; [7] as [h]Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities around them in a similar manner to these, having given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh, are set forth as an example, suffering the [4]vengeance of eternal fire.

[8] [i]Likewise also these dreamers defile the flesh, reject authority, and [j]speak evil of [5]dignitaries. [9] Yet Michael the archangel, in [6]contending with the devil, when he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, [k]"The Lord rebuke you!" [10] [l]But these speak evil of whatever they do not know; and whatever they know naturally, like brute beasts, in these things they corrupt themselves. [11] Woe to them! For they have gone in the way [m]of Cain, [n]have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished [o]in the rebellion of Korah.

Apostates Depraved and Doomed

[12] These are [7]spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving *only* themselves. *They are* clouds without water, carried [8]about by the winds; late autumn trees

4 [2]NU omits *God*

5 [g]Ex. 12:51; 1 Cor. 10:5–10; Heb. 3:16

6 [3]*own*

7 [h]Gen. 19:24; 2 Pet. 2:6 [4]*punishment*

8 [i]2 Pet. 2:10 [j]Ex. 22:28 [5]*glorious ones,* lit. *glories*

9 [k]Zech. 3:2 [6]*arguing*

10 [l]2 Pet. 2:12

11 [m]Gen. 4:3–8; Heb. 11:4; 1 John 3:12 [n]Num. 31:16; 2 Pet. 2:15; Rev. 2:14 [o]Num. 16:1–3, 31–35

12 [7]*stains,* or *hidden reefs* [8]NU, M *along*

cludes an authoritative body of belief given by God to the church through the apostles (1 Cor. 15:3–8), Together with the Old Testament (Eph. 2:20), this apostolic witness, as found in the New Testament, is the standard for the church (2 John 9, 10).

■ **4 certain men . . . crept in unnoticed.** The troublemakers apparently have come from outside the particular church Jude addresses, perhaps posing as itinerant prophets or teachers (2 John 10, 11).

marked out for this condemnation. This difficult phrase probably refers to various prophecies about the coming and condemnation of ungodly men like the false teachers, perhaps including the prophecy of Enoch in vv. 14, 15 and the apostolic prophecies in vv. 17, 18. Or less likely, it may refer to the fate of the wicked being written in heavenly books (Jer. 22:30; Rev. 17:8).

turn the grace of our God into lewdness. Jude's opponents were guilty of antinomianism—the belief that Christians are under no obligation to follow the moral law as a rule of life. Such teaching was a persistent problem in the early church (Rom. 3:8; 6:15; 1 Cor. 6:12–15; Gal. 5:13), especially where Paul's emphasis upon justification by grace through faith was misunderstood and perverted.

deny . . . Lord God . . . Lord Jesus Christ. By their godless and immoral behavior the false teachers deny Christ. The designation of Christ as "Lord" recognizes Christ's deity.

■ **5 destroyed those who did not believe.** God judged Israel with forty years of wandering in the desert for unbelief when they refused to enter Canaan following the report of the spies (Num. 14:27–34; Heb. 3:16–19). Just as judgment fell on the apostate Israelites after their deliverance from Egypt, so also it will fall on apostate church members (Heb. 4:1, 2).

■ **6 angels.** See note on 2 Pet. 2:4.

not keep their proper domain . . . left their own abode. The angels in question rebelled against their God-given responsibilities and abandoned their areas of ministry or residence. Some take this to mean they left heaven and came to the earth.

the great day. The day of judgment at the Second Coming of Christ.

■ **7 in a similar manner.** Sodom, Gomorrah, and the other cities resemble the angels of v. 6 in the immorality and perversity of their sexual transgression. The comparison could also point to the flagrancy and pride with which they deserted their proper place.

sexual immorality and . . . strange flesh. The "strange flesh" in view is the homosexuality described in Gen. 19:4, 5.

an example . . . vengeance of eternal fire. The fiery destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns in Gen. 19 serves throughout Scripture as a model of God's judgment on sin (Deut. 29:23; Is. 1:9; Jer. 49:17, 18; Rom. 9:29).

■ **8 dreamers.** Probably a reference to the false teachers' claims to divine revelation through visionary experiences, claims they might use to justify the three actions that follow.

defile the flesh. Sexual immorality (v. 4 and note), perhaps even homosexuality (v. 7; Rom. 1:26, 27).

reject authority. Though some take this to be human or angelic authority, a reference to the lordship and authority of Jesus Christ is more likely (v. 4).

speak evil of dignitaries. See note on 2 Pet. 2:10.

■ **9** Evidence indicates that this incident is based on *The Assumption of Moses,* an apocryphal Jewish work (of which only fragments have survived), which expands on the narrative of the burial of Moses in Deut. 34:5, 6 (Introduction: Interpretive Difficulties). The story concerns a confrontation between the archangel Michael and the devil over possession of the body of Moses. As usually interpreted, Jude's point is that the rash talk of the false teachers contrasts with the temperate speech of Michael (2 Pet. 2:10 and note). Others interpret Jude as contrasting Michael's appeal to God's authority with the false teachers' claim to having their own spiritual authority.

Michael the archangel. According to Dan. 10:13, 21; 12:1, Michael is one of the chief angels and the special guardian of Israel. In Rev. 12:7, Michael leads the angelic host in war against the devil and his angels. See "Angels" at Zech. 1:9.

■ **11 way of Cain.** See Gen. 4:1–15; Heb. 11:4; 1 John 3:12. According to Jewish tradition, to which Jude may be referring, Cain was the archetypal sinner and the instructor of others in sin.

error of Balaam. See note on 2 Pet. 2:15.

rebellion of Korah. Korah, along with Dathan and Abiram, led 250 men in rebellion against the authority of Moses and Aaron (Num. 16). Korah's rebellion and the resulting divine judgment provide an apt parallel to the defiance of the false teachers against church authority and the false teachers' dangerous ability to lead others astray, as well as a graphic illustration of the divine judgment awaiting the false teachers (Num. 16:31–33).

■ **12 spots.** The Greek word translated "spots" usually means "rocks" or "hidden reefs," which are a danger to ships. If Jude is making a play

without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; 13 [p]raging waves of the sea, [q]foaming up their own shame; wandering stars [r]for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.

14 Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, 15 to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the [s]harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him."

Apostates Predicted

16 These are grumblers, complainers, walking according to their own lusts; and they [t]mouth great swelling *words,* [u]flattering people to gain advantage. 17 [v]But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: 18 how they told you that [w]there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts. 19 These are [g]sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit.

Maintain Your Life with God

20 But you, beloved, [x]building yourselves up on your most holy faith, [y]praying in the Holy Spirit, 21 keep yourselves in the love of God, [z]looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

22 And on some have compassion, [1]making a distinction; 23 but [a]others save [2]with fear, [b]pulling *them* out of the [3]fire, hating even [c]the garment defiled by the flesh.

13 [p]Is. 57:20 [q][Phil. 3:19] [r]2 Pet. 2:17
15 [s]1 Sam. 2:3
16 [t]2 Pet. 2:18 [u]Prov. 28:21
17 [v]2 Pet. 3:2
18 [w][1 Tim. 4:1]
19 [g]*soulish* or *worldly*
20 [x]Col. 2:7 [y][Rom. 8:26]
21 [z]Titus 2:13
22 [1]NU *who are doubting* (or *making distinctions*)
23 [a]Rom. 11:14 [b]Amos 4:11 [c][Zech. 3:4, 5] [2]NU omits *with fear* [3]NU adds *and on some have mercy with fear*

on words, it is to the effect that teachers are "dangerous, rocky blemishes" in what should be calm waters.

love feasts. See note on 2 Pet. 2:13; cf. 1 Cor. 11:20–34.

feast with you without fear. The false teachers may have made the love feasts occasions for blatant immorality. Even apart from this their presence at the meals would have been a concern to Jude. Because teaching took place at the love feasts (Acts 20:7, 11), there was opportunity for the false teachers to advance their ideas.

clouds without water. A metaphor for a form of hypocrisy that fails to produce what is promised (2 Pet. 2:17 note).

without fruit, twice dead . . . by the roots. Like trees failing to bear fruit at harvesttime, the lives of these people are barren and fall under God's judgment (Matt. 7:16–20; Luke 13:6–9).

■ **13 wandering stars.** Shooting stars, comets, or most probably, planets. Either the opponents' teaching is short-lived (like the light of a shooting star) or untrustworthy and useless (as when an unpredictable heavenly body is used for navigation).

■ **14 Enoch, the seventh from Adam.** The Enoch of Gen. 5:24 is seventh from Adam if Adam is counted as first. In vv. 14, 15, Jude quotes almost verbatim from a popular apocryphal work, the *Book of Enoch* or *1 Enoch.* In doing so Jude does not imply that *1 Enoch* is divinely inspired or that it was written by Enoch himself (Gen. 5:24). The source he uses was familiar to his readers and would be useful for confirming his theme of coming divine judgment on the ungodly (Introduction: Interpretive Difficulties).

prophesied. In saying that Enoch "prophesied about these men," Jude neither confirms nor denies the popular attribution of this apocryphal text to the biblical Enoch. The quotation from *1 Enoch,* in agreement with a host of Old Testament prophecies (e.g., Dan. 7:9, 10; Zech. 14:3–5), teaches that God will come with His heavenly hosts to judge the wicked, and Jude is justified in applying this biblical idea to his specific situation.

saints. Probably a reference to the angelic host that will accompany the Lord's return (Zech. 14:5; Matt. 25:31).

■ **15 ungodly . . . ungodly.** The repetition of this term is important; the same Greek word is used in vv. 4 and 18. Rebellion by the false teachers is first and foremost against God and His authority, and it will meet with God's certain judgment (v. 4 note).

■ **16 grumblers, complainers.** Like Israel in the wilderness (v. 5; 1 Cor. 10:10), the false teachers resist God's will, perhaps by complaining about the law's restrictions on their behavior.

great swelling words. Or, "arrogant words." These may have been claims to having visionary experiences (v. 8), freedom from the law (vv. 4, 8), or possession of the Holy Spirit (vv. 18, 19).

flattering people to gain advantage. They show partiality to the rich members of the church (James 2:1–4), and perhaps go on to adapt their teaching to please the influential in their audience.

■ **18 mockers.** They mock especially the moral law of God and the certainty of divine punishment on the disobedient (Ps. 1:1; 35:16; Prov. 14:9; 2 Pet. 3:3, 4).

last time. See note on 1 Pet. 1:20.

■ **19 sensual persons . . . not having the Spirit.** Against his opponents' claims, Jude argues that the false teachers themselves are the ones who live entirely at the level of natural, earthly life (v. 10).

cause divisions. Division in the church was an inevitable result of the false teachers' arrogance (v. 16) and their claim, against the church leadership and ordinary Christians, to possess the Spirit. The false teachers may have been classifying people as the later Gnostics did into the "spiritual" (themselves) and the "natural" (ordinary Christians).

■ **20–23** Jude now turns from denunciation of the false teachers to positive exhortation of his readers. To contend for the faith when it is under attack means more than opposing false teachers with words. It involves a positive life faithful to the gospel. The Trinitarian form of Jude's exhortation should be noted ("Holy Spirit . . . God . . . Lord Jesus Christ").

■ **20 building . . . holy faith.** Jude, like Peter (1 Pet. 2:5) and Paul (1 Cor. 3:16, 17), compares the church to a building. As in v. 3, "faith" refers to the foundational message of the prophets and apostles (Eph. 2:20–22).

praying in the Holy Spirit. In contrast to the false teachers, the prayers of Jude's readers are controlled by the Spirit, as indeed their whole lives should be (Gal. 5:16–18; Eph. 6:18).

■ **22, 23** The exact Greek text of these verses is disputed, and it is hard to tell whether two or three groups of sinners are in view (v. 23 text note). Whatever the textual solution, Jude clearly recognizes that different pastoral strategies are to be employed with different people. Some can profit from gentle counseling (Gal. 6:1). Others will require confrontation or action of some sort, to pull them "out of the fire."

■ **23 save with fear.** See Gal. 6:1.

garment defiled by the flesh. A vivid metaphor for the contaminating influence of the false teachers, this phrase underscores the care that Jude's readers must exercise in their contact with the false teachers and those under their influence (1 Cor. 5:11; 2 John 10, 11). On the metaphor, see Is. 64:6; Zech. 3:1–5; Matt. 22:12; Rev. 3:4, 5, 18; 19:8.

Glory to God

24 [d]Now to Him who is able to keep [4]you from stumbling,
And [e]to present *you* faultless
Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,
25 To [5]God our Savior,
[6]Who alone is wise,
Be glory and majesty,
Dominion and [7]power,
Both now and forever.
Amen.

24 [d][Eph. 3:20] [e]Col. 1:22 [4]M *them*

25 [5]NU *the only God our* [6]NU *Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Be glory* [7]NU adds *Before all time,*

■ **24, 25** Like Rom. 16:25–27, Jude's conclusion is a doxology expressing confidence in God's power to preserve His people to the end, and acknowledging God's eternal greatness in His "glory and majesty, Dominion and power."

THE REVELATION

of Jesus Christ

Author The writer identifies himself as John (1:1, 4, 9; 22:8). He was well known to the churches in Asia Minor (1:9; "Date and Occasion" below). As early as the second century A.D., Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and others identified the author as the apostle John. In the third century however, Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, compared the style and themes of Revelation with the Gospel of John and concluded that the two must have different authors. On balance it is still probable that the apostle John was the author. Revelation stresses that its message and content derive ultimately from Jesus Christ and from God the Father (1:1, 10, 11; 22:16, 20). It possesses full divine authority (22:18, 19).

Date and Occasion Revelation was written during a time of persecution, probably near the end of the reign of the Roman Emperor Nero (A.D. 54–68) or during the reign of Domitian (A.D. 81–96). Most scholars favor a date about A.D. 95.

Revelation is addressed to seven churches in Asia Minor (1:4, 11), in an area now part of western Turkey. Each church receives rebukes and encouragement in accord with its condition (2:1—3:22). Persecution had fallen on some Christians (1:9; 2:9, 13) and more was coming (2:10; 13:7–10). Roman officials would try to force Christians to worship the emperor. Heretical teachings and declining fervor tempted Christians to compromise with pagan society (2:2, 4, 14, 15, 20–24; 3:1, 2, 15, 17). Revelation assures Christians that Christ knows their condition and that He calls them to stand fast against all temptation. Their victory has been secured through the blood of the Lamb (5:9, 10; 12:11). Christ will come soon to defeat Satan and all his agents (19:11—20:10), and Christ's people will enjoy everlasting peace in His presence (7:15–17; 21:3, 4).

Interpretive Difficulties

1. Approaches to the Book. Interpreters disagree concerning the period of time and the manner in which the visions of 6:1—18:24 are fulfilled. "Preterists" think fulfillment occurred in the fall of Jerusalem (if Revelation was written in A.D. 67–68), the fall of the Roman Empire, or both. "Futurists" think fulfillment will occur in a period of final crisis just before the Second Coming. "Historicists" think that 6:1—18:24 offers a basically chronological outline of the course of church history from the first century (6:1) until the Second Coming (19:11). "Idealists" think that the scenes of Revelation depict not specific events but principles of spiritual war. The principles are operative throughout the church age and may have repeated embodiments.

A combination of these views is probably closest to the truth. The imagery in Revelation is multifaceted and is in principle capable of multiple embodiments. Idealists maintain that general principles are expressed. If so, those principles had a particular relevance to the seven churches and their struggles in the first century (1:4; "Date and Occasion" above), but the principles will also come to climactic expression in the final crisis of the Second Coming (22:20; cf. 2 Thess. 2:1–12). Christians throughout history are involved in the same spiritual war and so must apply the principles to themselves and their own time (1:3 note). Hence, many passages have at least three main applications: to the first century, to the final crisis, and to whatever time in which Christians live.

On the other hand, suppose that the preterists are basically correct in thinking that Revelation refers mainly to the events of the early church period. They can easily acknowledge that the underlying principles of conflict have wider bearing. Then the practical results will be similar to the idealist approach. Patience and humility are needed when one confronts disagreements on these matters. In the meantime, Revelation has broad lessons from which all can profit.

2. The Millennium. The thousand-year period of Christ's rule described in 20:1–10, commonly called the "millennium," is variously understood by interpreters. "Premillennialists" believe that the thousand years follow the Second Coming that is described in 19:11–21. After the Second Coming, Satan is bound and Christ ushers in a long period of earthly peace and prosperity. Some think of this as a literal thousand years and others consider the number to mean a very long period of time. Christians receive resurrection bodies at the beginning of the millennium, but the final judgment for all others takes place at the end, after a rebellion led by Satan. In the second century, Justin Martyr and Papias were among those holding a premillennial view.

"Amillennialists" understand the millennium to be a picture of the present reign of Christ and of the saints in heaven (analogous to 6:9, 10). The "first resurrection" (20:5) is either the life of Christians who have died and are with Christ in heaven, or life in Christ that starts with spiritual new birth (Rom. 6:8–11; Eph. 2:6; Col. 3:1–4). Satan has been bound through the triumph of Christ in His crucifixion and resurrection (John 12:31; Col. 2:15).

"Postmillennialists" believe that the kingdom of Christ and the church will experience much more expansion on earth before the Second Coming. The thousand years are understood by some as a final period of earthly

Christian triumph following the spread of the gospel (19:11–21 note). Others agree with amillennialists in identifying 20:1–6 with the entire period that begins with the resurrection of Christ.

The dispute partly concerns the chronological relation of 20:1–10 to 19:11–21. Premillennialists believe that the events described in 20:1–10 simply follow the Second Coming, which is depicted in 19:11–21. But 20:1–15 might also represent a seventh cycle of judgments leading up to the Second Coming (see "Characteristics and Themes: Literary Form"). The final battle in 20:7–10 seems to be the same as the final battle in 16:14, 16; 17:14; 19:11–21. Similar language from Ezek. 38; 39 is used in the various descriptions. The judgment of Satan in 20:10 parallels the judgments against Babylon (chs. 17; 18) and against the Beast and the False Prophet (19:11–21). These enemies of God are consigned to everlasting punishment, and the visions depicting their judgment may be parallel descriptions rather than different events in a sequence. Certain features in 20:11–15 correspond to earlier descriptions of the Second Coming (6:14; 11:18). Most important, all of Christ's enemies have been judged in 19:11–21. If 20:1–6 represents later events, there would be no one left for Satan to deceive in 20:3.

Caution is needed because the different millennial positions depend on the interpretation of Old Testament prophetic texts as well as these verses in Revelation. Moreover, like most of Revelation, 20:1–10 uses language that in principle may legitimately be capable of multiple fulfillments. These facts make precise interpretation difficult (it is God's prerogative to reveal only as much about the order of future events as is good for us to know—Acts 1:7). The major point is that Satan will finally be defeated, and that even before that time God takes care of His saints and blesses them through His triumphant rule. This assurance ought to comfort Christians, whatever their millennial position.

Characteristics and Themes

1. Content. In the opening vision Christ appears as the majestic King and Judge of the universe and Ruler of the churches (1:12–20). In 2:1—3:22 Christ addresses specific needs of each church. His powerful promises also remind the churches of the scope and profundity of their calling (2:7, 10, 11, 17, 26–28; 3:5, 12, 21). The selection of exactly seven churches suggests the wider relevance of the message (1:4 note).

In 4:1—22:5 Christ's rebukes and encouragement take a new form. Through Christ and His angels (22:8, 9, 16) John receives a series of visions intended to open Christians' eyes to the kingship and majesty of God, the nature of spiritual warfare, God's judgments on evil, and the outcome of the conflict. God and His army must win the battle (17:14; 19:1, 2), but His forces are opposed by Satan, the "great . . . dragon" (12:3), who leads the whole world astray (12:9). Satan has two agents, the "beast" and the "false prophet," who together with him make up a counterfeit trinity (ch. 13; 16:13; see "Characteristics and Themes: Other Features" below). In opposition to these threats the saints must maintain a true and faithful witness, even to the point of martyrdom (12:11), and must maintain true spiritual purity (14:4; 19:8). In the new heaven and new earth, their witness finds its fulfillment in the final light of God's truth (21:22–27), and their purity takes perfect form in the spotless bride of the Lamb (21:9).

The principal theme of Revelation is that God rules history and will bring it to a triumphal climax in Christ. At the center are the visions of Christ (1:12–16) and of God (4:1—5:14). God displays His majesty, authority, and righteousness as the Ruler and Judge of the universe (1:12–20 note). These central visions already foreshadow the consummation of history, when God's glory will fill all things (21:22, 23; 22:5; 4:1—5:14 note). Detailed elements in the visions flesh out these truths, and are to be seen as part of a larger picture. Revelation is thus a picture book, a dramatic presentation to enable Christians to have a God-centered view of history. It is not a puzzle book to serve as a source of mysterious calculations.

2. Literary Form. The Greek title of Revelation is *Apokalypsis,* meaning "revelation" or "disclosure." Hence, the book is an "apocalypse," a revelation concerning the ultimate goal of history. The Book of Revelation is apocalyptic literature; like portions of Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah, it contains visions with many symbolic elements. Using visual imagery as well as verbal promises and warnings, it weaves together into a poetic tapestry the themes of the whole of Scripture. Its depths are displayed through its multiple allusions. Yet as a revelation, or disclosure, it is intended to nourish all who are servants of Christ (1:1).

The Prologue of Revelation (1:1–3) explains its basic purpose. Rev. 1:4—22:21 is a letter with a greeting (1:4, 5), body (1:5—22:20), and farewell (22:21). The formal features of this common arrangement are also found in Paul's letters.

The main portion of the book (4:1—22:5) consists of seven cycles of judgments, each of which leads to a description of the Second Coming (4:1—8:1; 8:2—11:19; 12:1—14:20; 15:1—16:21; 17:1—19:10; 19:11–21; 20:1–15). A final, eighth portion presents the supreme vision of the New Jerusalem (21:1—22:5). Each cycle is best understood as depicting the same spiritual war, but from a fresh vantage point. Later cycles concentrate more and more on the most intense phases of conflict and on the Second Coming itself.

Symbolic personages are introduced into the drama one by one, and their destinies are revealed in the reverse order, as follows:

A. The People of God Depicted with the Imagery of Light and Creation (12:1, 2)
  B. The Dragon—Satan (12:3–6)
    C. The Beast and the False Prophet (13:1–18)
      D. The Bride: The People of God in the Imagery of Sexual Purity (14:1–5)
        E. Babylon the Harlot (17:1–6)
        E. Babylon Destroyed (17:15—18:24)
      D. The Bride Is Blessed with Marriage (19:1–10)
    C. The Beast and the False Prophet Are Destroyed (19:11–21)
  B. The Dragon Is Destroyed (20:1–10)
A. The People of God in the Imagery of Light and Creation (21:1—22:5)

3. Other Features. Many thematic features unify the book. Repeated use of the number seven signifies completeness. God's plan and power determine the outcomes. Praise to God rises from the angels and saints (1:6 note). The present struggles of the church (2:1—3:22) contrast with its final rest. The church must maintain its witness and purity. Everything moves forward to the victory of Christ at His coming.

One of the most prominent features of the book is the presentation of Satanic counterfeits that oppose God in a spiritual war of cosmic proportions. The beast introduced in 13:1–10 is a counterfeit of Christ. Note the following parallels: (a) The beast is an image of Satan, whom Satan brought forth (13:1), just as Christ is the exact image of God, begotten by the Father (Ps. 2:7; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3); (b) the beast has ten crowns and blasphemous names (13:1), while Christ has many crowns and worthy names (19:12); (c) the dragon gave the beast his power, throne, and great authority (13:2), just as Christ has power (5:12, 13), throne (3:21), and authority (12:10) from the Father (John 5:21–23); (d) the beast has a seemingly fatal wound from which he has recovered (13:3), counterfeiting Christ's resurrection, and the beast's recovery is one of the principal features that attracts followers (13:4), just as the resurrection of Christ is one of the principal points of evangelistic proclamation; (e) worship is directed both to the dragon and the beast (13:4), just as Christians worship both the Father and the Son (John 5:23); (f) the beast attracts the worship of the whole world (13:7), just as Christ will be worshiped universally; (g) the beast utters blasphemies (13:5), while Christ utters the praises of God (Heb. 2:12); (h) the beast makes war against the saints (13:7), while Christ makes war against the beast (19:11–21). The song of praise to the beast in 13:4 counterfeits the song to God in Ex. 15:11. The striking juxtaposition of Christ and the beast in 19:11–21 shows that these are the two main warriors in the battle: Christ is the divine warrior, fulfilling the imagery of Ex. 15:3; Is. 59:16–18; 63:1–6; Hab. 3:3–15; Zech. 9:13–15; 14:1–5; and the beast is the unholy, counterfeit warrior, fulfilling the imagery of Dan. 7:1–8.

Satan himself attempts to counterfeit God the Father. He engages in a mock creation, in which he brings forth his image out of chaotic waters (13:1; parallel to Gen. 1:2). Similarly, the false prophet, or beast from the earth (13:11–18), counterfeits the work of the Holy Spirit. He desires that people worship not himself, but the beast, just as the Holy Spirit glorifies Christ (John 16:14). He works false miraculous signs (13:13, 14), counterfeiting the miracles of the Holy Spirit. He forces a mark on his subjects (13:16), just as Christians are sealed with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13).

Together—Satan, the beast, and the false prophet—form an unholy trio (16:13), counterfeiting the Holy Trinity. Satan as a deceiver is always trying to make his ways look attractive (2 Cor. 11:14, 15). When divine revelation opens our eyes, there is a world of difference between his horrors and God's beauties. Satan is an imitator, not a creator, and his productions are always bestial and degenerate like himself. Beasts must give way before Christ the King (19:11–21).

One final counterfeit figure exists, namely Babylon the harlot, the counterfeit of the bride of Christ (17:1—19:10). Her corruptions are contrasted with the purity of the bride of the Lamb (19:7–9). Babylon sums up in herself the worship of the godless world. By contrast the bride, the church, represents the worshipers of the true God. Satan attacks the saints in two main ways. The beast attacks with power and persecution, endeavoring to destroy the witness of the saints and force them to worship the beast. Babylon attacks with seduction, endeavoring to destroy the purity of the saints. □

Outline of Revelation

I. Introduction (ch. 1)
  A. Prologue (1:1–3)
  B. Greeting and Praise (1:4–8)
  C. Vision of Christ the Judge (1:9–20)

II. Exhortations to the Seven Churches (chs. 2; 3)
A. Ephesus (2:1–7)
B. Smyrna (2:8–11)
C. Pergamos (2:12–17)
D. Thyatira (2:18–29)
E. Sardis (3:1–6)
F. Philadelphia (3:7–13)
G. Laodicea (3:14–22)
III. Heavenly Visions (4:1—22:5)
A. Cycle One: The Seroll and Its Seven Seals (4:1—8:1)
1. God the King, and Christ the Worthy One (chs. 4; 5)
2. Opening Six Seals (ch. 6)
3. Care for the Saints (ch. 7)
4. Opening the Seventh Seal (8:1)
B. Cycle Two: Seven Angels with Seven Trumpets (8:2—11:19)
1. Seven Angels Before God (8:2–6)
2. Six Angels Blow Their Trumpets (8:7—9:21)
3. Care for John and the Two Witnesses (10:1—11:14)
4. The Seventh Angel Blows His Trumpet (11:15–19)
C. Cycle Three: Seven Symbolic Histories (chs. 12—14)
1. Principal Personages: the People of God versus Satan (12:1–6)
2. Six Symbolic Histories Unfold (12:7—14:11)
a. History of the Dragon (12:7–12)
b. History of the Woman (12:13–17)
c. History of the Beast from the Sea (13:1–10)
d. History of the Beast from the Earth—the False Prophet (13:11–18)
e. The 144,000 (14:1–5)
f. Three Angelic Messengers (14:6–11)
3. Care for the Saints (14:12, 13)
4. The Seventh Symbolic History (One Like the Son of Man) Unfolds (14:14–20)
D. Cycle Four: Seven Bowls of God's Wrath from the Temple (chs. 15; 16)
E. Cycle Five: Judgment on Babylon and Vindication of the Church (17:1—19:10)
F. Cycle Six: The Final Battle (19:11–21)
G. Cycle Seven: The Reign of the Saints and the Last Judgment (20:1—21:8)
H. The New Jerusalem (21:9—22:5)
IV. Final Exhortations (22:6–20)
V. Closing Blessing (22:21)

Introduction and Benediction

CHAPTER 1

THE Revelation of Jesus Christ, [a]which God gave Him to show His servants—things which must [f]shortly take place. And [b]He sent and signified *it* by His angel to His servant John,

1 [a]John 3:32 [b]Rev. 22:6 [f]*quickly* or *swiftly*

■ **1:1–3** The main portion of Revelation (1:4—22:21) has the form of a letter, with greetings, body, and farewell. This Prologue helps orient readers to the content they may expect. Stress is placed on the divine authority of the message (from God and Jesus Christ), its certainty (note the word "must" in v. 1), and its crucial relevance (v. 3). God makes thorough provision for the communication process: the message originates with God the Father, is given to Jesus Christ, and is made known to John through an angel (v. 1). John testifies by writing it (v. 2), and all are encouraged to read and hear (v. 3).

Revelation stresses that though it comes in symbolic form, it is understandable. It is "revelation," disclosing rather than hiding truth (v. 1). It is for "His servants," not a special elite (v. 1). God expects Christians to "keep those things which are written," to profit spiritually (v. 3). A blessing encourages people to read and hear (v. 3).

■ **1:1 shortly.** See text note and 22:6, 7, 10, 12, 20. Spiritual war takes place throughout the church age, and the seven churches will soon experience all dimensions of the conflict. Moreover, the "last days" spoken of by Old Testament prophecy have been inaugurated by Christ's resurrection (Acts 2:16, 17). The time of waiting is over, and God is conducting the final phase of His victorious warfare against evil. By such reckoning, today is "the last hour" (1 John 2:18).

2 [c]1 Cor. 1:6 [d]1 John 1:1
3 [e]Luke 11:28 [f]James 5:8
4 [g]Ex. 3:14 [h]John 1:1 [i][Is. 11:2]
5 [j]John 8:14 [k]Is. 55:4 [l][Col. 1:18] [m]Rev. 17:14 [n]John 13:34 [o]Heb. 9:14 [z]NU *loves us and freed;* M *loves us and washed*
6 [p]1 Pet. 2:5, 9 [q]1 Tim. 6:16 [3]NU, M *a kingdom*

[2] [c]who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things [d]that he saw. [3] [e]Blessed *is* he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for [f]the time *is* near.

Greeting the Seven Churches

[4] John, to the seven churches which are in Asia:

Grace to you and peace from Him [g]who is and [h]who was and who is to come, [i]and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, [5] and from Jesus Christ, [j]the faithful [k]witness, the [l]firstborn from the dead, and [m]the ruler over the kings of the earth.

To Him [n]who [z]loved us [o]and washed us from our sins in His own blood, [6] and has [p]made us [3]kings and priests to His God and Father, [q]to Him *be* glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

■ **1:2 testimony of Jesus Christ.** Because of the imminence of persecution threatening to suppress Christian witness (17:6), Revelation is full of the theme of witness. Jesus Christ is the preeminent witness (v. 5; 3:14; 19:11). Imitation of Him may include martyrdom (12:11). Revelation itself is a testimony intended to strengthen the testimony of its readers. Its message carries full divine authority and authenticity (19:10; 22:6, 16, 20).

■ **1:3 Blessed.** Revelation not only pronounces judgment on the faithless, but blessing on the faithful (14:13; 16:15; 19:9; 20:6; 22:7, 14).

prophecy. See 22:7–10, 18, 19. Like Old Testament prophecy, Revelation combines visions of God's future with exhortation to faithfulness. This prophecy is a distinctive and inspired form of the witness that all Christians are to give (v. 2 note).

keep those things. Revelation is not intended to tickle our fancy but to strengthen our hearts (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes: Content).

■ **1:4 to the seven churches.** See v. 11; 2:1—3:22. Revelation is organized in sevens; the biblical number symbolic of completeness (Gen. 2:2, 3). The choice of seven churches expresses this theme and hints at the wider relevance of the message to all churches (vv. 1, 3; 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22; 22:7, 11–14, 16, 18–21).

Asia. The Roman province of Asia lies in what is now western Turkey.

Him who is and who was and who is to come. Similar to the divine name in Ex. 3:14, 15. See note on v. 8.

seven Spirits. The Holy Spirit is described in sevenfold fullness (4:5; Zech. 4:2, 6). Note the origin of grace and peace from the Trinity: God the Father ("Him who is"), the Son (1:5), and the Spirit (cf. 2 Cor. 13:14; 1 Pet. 1:1, 2).

■ **1:5–8** John praises God, in a way similar to the beginning of most Pauline letters. The themes of God's sovereignty, redemption, and the Second Coming of Christ recur throughout Revelation.

■ **1:5** The key role of Jesus Christ in the whole of Revelation is already anticipated in this description.

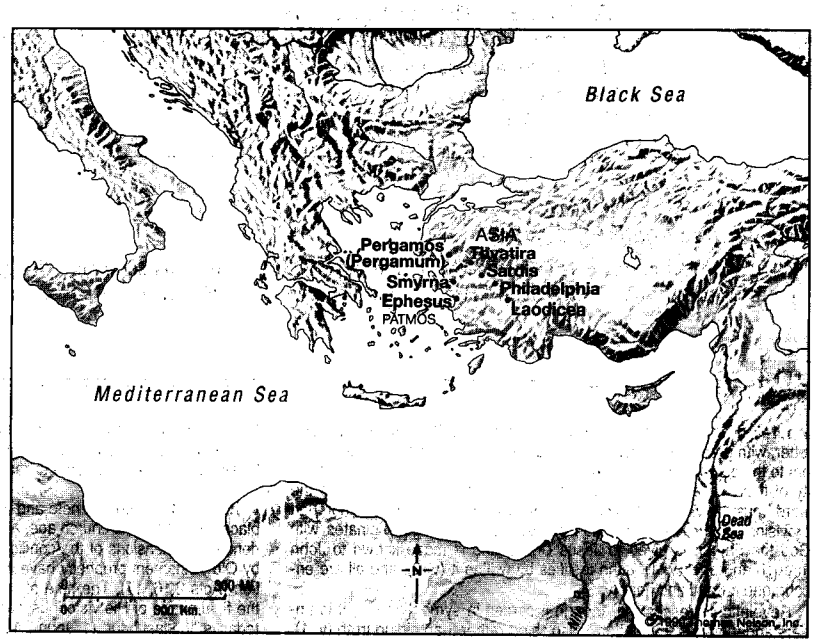
faithful witness. See note on v. 2.

the firstborn. See note on v. 18.

ruler. See note on chs. 4; 5.

washed us. See note on ch. 5.

■ **1:6** The theme of worship and praise of God extends throughout Revelation. Note the praises in 4:8, 11; 5:9, 13; 7:12; 11:15; 12:10–12; 15:3, 4; 19:1–8. Utterances of praise are an integral part of the spiritual war.



The Seven Churches of the Apocalypse. The churches of seven cities were recipients of an apocalyptic letter from the Lord through John. By commendation, rebuke and warning, the people of God were exhorted to remain faithful in adversity. These churches held significant roles in the Christian experience of Asia Minor as a result of their location within a transportation network linking different parts of the region.

7 Behold, He is coming with [r]clouds, and every eye will see Him, even [s]they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Even so, Amen.

8 [t]"I am the Alpha and the Omega, [4]*the* Beginning and *the* End," says the [5]Lord, [u]"who is and who was and who is to come, the [v]Almighty."

Vision of the Son of Man

9 I, John, [6]both your brother and [w]companion in the tribulation and [x]kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was on the island that is called Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. 10 [y]I was in the Spirit on [z]the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me [a]a loud voice, as of a trumpet, 11 saying, [7]"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and, "What you see, write in a book and send *it* to the seven churches [8]which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea."

12 Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned [b]I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 [c]and in the midst of the seven lampstands [d]*One* like the Son of Man, [e]clothed with a garment down to the feet and [f]girded about the chest with a golden band. 14 His head and [g]hair *were* white like wool, as white as snow, and [h]His eyes like a flame of fire; 15 [i]His feet *were* like fine brass, as if refined in a furnace, and [j]His voice as the sound of many waters; 16 [k]He had in His right hand seven stars, [l]out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, [m]and His countenance *was* like the sun shining in its strength. 17 And [n]when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. But [o]He laid His right hand on me, saying [p]to me, "Do not be afraid; [p]I am the First and the Last. 18 [q]I *am* He who lives, and was dead, and behold, [r]I am alive forevermore. Amen. And

7 [r]Matt. 24:30 [s]Zech. 12:10–14

8 [t]Is. 41:4 [u]Rev. 4:8; 11:17 [v]Is. 9:6 [4]NU, M omit *the Beginning and the End* [5]NU, M *Lord God*

9 [w]Phil. 1:7 [x][2 Tim. 2:12] [6]NU, M omit *both*

10 [y]Acts 10:10 [z]Acts 20:7 [a]Rev. 4:1

11 [7]NU, M omit *"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last," and,* [8]NU, M omit *which are in Asia*

12 [b]Ex. 25:37

13 [c]Rev. 2:1 [d]Ezek. 1:26 [e]Dan. 10:5 [f]Rev. 15:6

14 [g]Dan. 7:9 [h]Dan. 10:6 **15** [i]Ezek. 1:7 [j]Ezek. 1:24; 43:2 **16** [k]Rev. 1:20; 2:1; 3:1 [l]Is. 49:2 [m]Matt. 17:2
17 [n]Ezek. 1:28 [o]Dan. 8:18; 10:10, 12 [p]Is. 41:4; 44:6; 48:12 [9]NU, M omit *to me* **18** [q]Rom. 6:9 [r]Rev. 4:9

kings and priests. Saints enjoy God's rule and as priests have intimate access to Him (Heb. 10:19–22; 1 Pet. 2:5–9). In the future, they will reign with Him (2:26, 27; 3:21; 5:10; 20:4, 6). All nations now share in the priestly privileges given to Israel in Ex. 19:6. The purposes of redemption that are seen in the Exodus from Egypt, and the purposes of dominion given to humanity at creation, are both fulfilled through Christ (5:9, 10). The theme of priestly worship and access to God is complementary to the temple theme in Revelation (chs. 4; 5 note).

■ **1:8 the Alpha and the Omega.** The first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. God is Alpha (Creator) and Omega (the One who ushers in the new heaven and new earth). He is Lord of all—past, present, and future—as suggested by "who is . . . is to come" (cf. chs. 4; 5 note). His sovereignty in creation guarantees the fulfillment of His purposes in re-creation (Rom. 8:18–25).

who is to come. In the future God will come to fulfill all His purposes (21:1—22:5).

■ **1:9–11** An identification of John and his circumstances (in which he represents the whole church) prepares the way for the first main vision in 1:12—3:22.

■ **1:9 patience.** The exhortation to endure and remain faithful runs through Revelation (2:2, 3, 13, 19; 3:10; 6:11; 13:10; 14:12; 16:15; 18:4; 20:4; 22:7, 11, 14). Here is practical exhortation in the midst of persecution and temptation (Introduction: Date and Occasion).

Patmos. A small island off the west coast of Asia Minor. Patmos had a Roman penal settlement used for persons considered dangerous to good order.

■ **1:10 in the Spirit.** The Spirit provides John with the special visions and transports him to vantage points to view them (4:2; 17:3; 21:10).

the Lord's Day. Sunday, the Christian day of worship celebrating Christ's resurrection. The Sunday celebration anticipates the celebration of God's final victory (19:1–10).

loud voice. The voice of Christ. Loud voices and noises indicate the power and universal relevance of the messages and events (1:15; 4:1, 5; 5:2, 12; 6:1; 7:2, 10; 8:5, 13; 10:3; 11:12, 15, 19; 12:10; 14:7, 9, 15, 18; 19:1, 3, 6, 17).

■ **1:11 seven churches.** See note on v. 4.

■ **1:12–20** Christ appears in overwhelming glory (cf. 21:22–24). "Like the Son of Man" alludes to Dan. 7:13. The features of vv. 12–16 are reminiscent of Dan. 7:9, 10; 10:5, 6; and Ezek. 1:25–28, but include more distant similarities to many Old Testament appearances of God. The vision shows Christ as Judge and Ruler—first of all over the churches (1:20—3:22), but also over the whole universe (2:27; 3:21). His deity, authority, and conquest of death guarantee final victory (vv. 17, 18; 17:14; 19:11–16). This vision of God's sovereignty exercised through Christ is a fundamental point of the message of Revelation (Introduction: Interpretive Difficulties). Christ's war-like appearance (v. 16) anticipates His role in the final battle (19:11–21) and looks backward to God's battles in the Old Testament (Ex. 15:3; Deut. 32:41, 42; Is. 59:17, 18; Zech. 14:3). Christ presents the pattern in which the destiny of the whole universe is summed up (Eph. 1:10; Col. 1:16, 17). Because all things hold together in Christ (Col. 1:17), the trinitarian imagery of vv. 12–20 and chs. 4; 5 forms a foundation for the whole of Revelation. Because the Trinity is deeply mysterious, the imagery of Revelation has inexhaustible profundity.

■ **1:12 seven golden lampstands.** The lampstands symbolize the churches in their light-bearing or witness-bearing function (1:20; Matt. 5:14–16). Christ walks among the churches as Lord and Shepherd (v. 13), just as God's cloud of glory descended to dwell in the tabernacle and the temple, which had their lampstands (Ex. 25:31–40; 1 Kin. 7:49). God's character as light (1 John 1:5) is supremely manifested in Christ (John 1:4, 5; 8:12; 9:5; Acts 26:13), but is also reflected in various ways in His creation: in fiery angels (10:1; Ezek. 1:13), in natural light (21:23; Gen. 1:3), in the temple lampstands, in the churches, and in each individual person (Matt. 5:14–16).

■ **1:15 sound of many waters.** See note on v. 10.

■ **1:16 sword.** See 19:15; Is. 11:4; Heb. 4:12.

the sun. See 21:22–25; Is. 60:1–3, 19, 20.

■ **1:17 the First and the Last.** Essentially the same as the Alpha and the Omega (v. 8 note; 2:8; 22:13; Is. 41:4; 44:6; 48:12).

■ **1:18 He who lives.** Christ's resurrection and new life provide for the new life of His people (2:8; 5:9, 10; 20:4, 5) and the renewal of the world itself (22:1).

keys of . . . Death. This phrase anticipates 20:14.

18 [s]Ps. 68:20 [t]Lit. *Unseen;* the unseen realm

19 [t]Rev. 1:9–18 [u]Rev. 2:1 [v]Rev. 4:1 [2]NU, M *Therefore, write*

20 [w]Rev. 2:1 [x]Zech. 4:2 [3]*hidden truth* [4]Or *messengers* [5]NU, M omit *which you saw*

[s]I have the keys of [t]Hades and of Death. [19][2]Write the things which you have [t]seen, [u]and the things which are, [v]and the things which will take place after this. [20]The [3]mystery of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden lampstands: The seven stars are [w]the [4]angels of the seven churches, and [x]the seven lampstands [5]which you saw are the seven churches.

The Loveless Church

2 "To the [1]angel of the church of Ephesus write,

'These things says [a]He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, [b]who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: [2][c]"I know your works, your labor, your [2]patience, and that you cannot [3]bear those who are evil. And [d]you have tested those [e]who say they are apostles

CHAPTER 2 1 [a]Rev. 1:16 [b]Rev. 1:13 [1]Or *messenger* 2 [c]Ps. 1:6 [d]1 John 4:1 [e]2 Cor. 11:13 [2]*perseverance* [3]*endure*

■ **1:19** This verse probably suggests a threefold division of Revelation into past (vv. 12–16), present (chs. 2; 3), and future (4:1—22:5). But the division is only a rough one, since each portion contains some references to all three periods.

■ **1:20 the angels.** The Greek word means "messengers." It may refer to human messengers, specifically the pastors of the churches, or to angels. The prominence of angels in Revelation would support the latter meaning here (22:6; Dan. 10:10–21).

■ **2:1—3:22** See theological note "The Local Church." Christ shows care for the churches by addressing each according to its needs, with encouragement, rebuke, exhortation, and promise. He shows detailed knowledge of them ("I know"). In all the letters there are allusions to circumstances or traditions of the particular city, probably including some that are no longer recognized. At the same time, all the churches are included in a universal calling to faithfulness and endurance until the promises reach their fulfillment in the heavenly Jerusalem. Their struggles contrast with the peace and satisfaction pictured in 21:1—22:5. The exhortations are reinforced by an opening allusion to some element of the majestic vision of 1:12–20, and therefore have universal bearing (1:4 note).

Each message has the same basic form:

1. Addressee: "to the angel of the church . . . write."
2. Identification of Christ, alluding back to His majesty displayed in 1:12–20: "These things says He."
3. Claim of knowledge: "I know."
4. Evaluation: rebukes or commendations.
5. Promise or threat: usually "I will."
6. Promise to "him who overcomes."
7. Exhortation to listen: "He who has an ear."

Note that (6) and (7) can occur in reverse order, and (5) can be included with (4).

The Seven Churches of the Apocalypse (1:20)

	Commendation	Criticism	Instruction	Promise
Ephesus (2:1–7)	Rejects evil, perseveres, has patience	Love for Christ no longer fervent	Do the works you did at first	The tree of life
Smyrna (2:8–11)	Gracefully bears suffering	None	Be faithful until death	The crown of life
Pergamos (2:12–17)	Keeps the faith of Christ	Tolerates immorality, idolatry, and heresies	Repent	Hidden manna and a stone with a new name
Thyatira (2:18–29)	Love, service, faith, patience are greater than at first	Tolerates cult of idolatry and immorality	Judgment coming; keep the faith	Rule over nations and receive morning star
Sardis (3:1–6)	Some have kept the faith	A dead church	Repent; strengthen what remains	Faithful honored and clothed in white
Philadelphia (3:7–13)	Perseveres in the faith, keeps the word of Christ, honors His name	None	Keep the faith	A place in God's presence, a new name, and the New Jerusalem
Laodicea (3:14–22)	None	Indifferent	Be zealous and repent	Share Christ's throne

and are not, and have found them liars; [3] and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have [f]not become weary. [4] Nevertheless I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love. [5] Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, [g]or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent. [6] But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

[7] [h]"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give [i]to eat from [j]the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God."

The Persecuted Church

[8] "And to the [4]angel of the church in Smyrna write,

'These things says [k]the First and the Last, who was dead, and came to life: [9] "I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are [l]rich); and *I know* the blasphemy of [m]those who say they are Jews and are not, [n]but *are* a [5]synagogue of Satan. [10] [o]Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw *some* of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. [p]Be faithful until death, and I will give you [q]the crown of life.

3 [f]Gal. 6:9
5 [g]Matt. 21:41
7 [h]Matt. 11:15 [i][Rev. 22:2, 14] [j][Gen. 2:9; 3:22]
8 [k]Rev. 1:8, 17, 18 [4]Or *messenger*
9 [l]Luke 12:21 [m]Rom. 2:17 [n]Rev. 3:9 [5]*congregation*
10 [o]Matt. 10:22 [p]Matt. 24:13 [q]James 1:12

The Local Church

Each local church is a manifestation of the one universal church, and will embody the nature of that church as the Father's regenerate family, Christ's ministering body, and a fellowship sustained by the Holy Spirit. In the course of separating from the Roman Catholic church, the Reformers needed to be sure about what were the marks of the true church. From Scripture, they found the answer in terms of two criteria.

1. The faithful preaching of the Word of God: This means that the church teaches the Christian gospel according to the Scripture. Any group that denies the Trinity, the deity of Christ, the sin-bearing Atonement, or justification by faith alone, is like the separatists of earlier times whose denials of the Incarnation (1 John 4:1–3) caused John to say, "they were not of us" (1 John 2:19).

2. The right use of the sacraments: This criterion means that baptism and the Lord's Supper are used and explained as setting forth the gospel of faith in Christ. Turning these sacraments into superstitions that take away the sufficiency of faith in Christ undercuts the identity of the church, like anything else that obstructs faith in Christ. One purpose of baptism is to mark those who are received into the visible church. The Lord's Supper confirms for the faithful their membership in the church and their community with each other and with Christ.

Christians have found other marks of identity alongside these minimal two. Luther specified the keys of discipline (Matt. 16:19), an authorized ministry (Acts 14:23; 20:28), public worship (Heb. 10:25), and "suffering under the cross" (Acts 14:22; 20:29). The Reformed churches specified a functioning system of discipline, often calling discipline the third mark of the visible church (Titus 1:13; 2:15; 3:10). Charismatics point to the active ministry of every member as a mark of the true church (Eph. 4:7–16).

These additional marks are not, however, essential in the way that the first two are. A church that lacks the additional marks is seriously deficient, but it would not be true to say that it is no church at all. □

■ **2:5 remove your lampstand.** The city of Ephesus had been relocated because of the gradual silting up of its river, the Cayster, and had been "removed" from earlier sites. By analogy, Christ threatens to remove the church unless its people repent.

■ **2:6 Nicolaitans.** A heretical group, probably holding views similar to the teaching of Balaam and Jezebel (vv. 14, 20 notes).

■ **2:7 him who overcomes.** In this and parallel verses to the other churches, faithful saints are promised participation in all aspects of the new Jerusalem (2:11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21; 21:1—22:5).

tree of life. See note on 22:2.

■ **2:9 synagogue of Satan.** The Jewish synagogue in Smyrna was composed of Jews who had refused the message concerning the coming of the Messiah. Though they professed to worship God, their opposition to Christians showed that they were in fact under the power of satanic darkness (2 Cor. 4:4).

■ **2:10 Be faithful.** The city of Smyrna prided itself on faithfulness to Rome.

crown of life. Smyrna's goddess Cybele is pictured in coins with a crown patterned after a city battlement. The buildings on Smyrna's Mt. Pagos were said to look like a crown. Over against these claims, Jesus offers to give the true crown.

11 [r]Rev. 13:9 [s][Rev. 20:6, 14; 21:8]

12 [t]Rev. 1:16; 2:16 [6]Or *messenger*

14 [u]Num. 31:16 [v]Acts 15:29 [w]1 Cor. 6:13

15 [7]NU, M *likewise.*

16 [x]2 Thess. 2:8

17 [y]Ex. 16:33, 34 [z]Rev. 3:12

18 [a]Rev. 1:14, 15 [8]Or *messenger*

19 [b]Rev. 2:2 [9]NU, M *faith, service* [1]*perseverance*

20 [c]1 Kin. 16:31; 21:25 [d]Ex. 34:15 [2]NU, M *against you that you tolerate* [3]M *your wife Jezebel* [4]NU, M *and teaches and seduces*

21 [e]Rev. 9:20; 16:9, 11 [5]NU, M *repent, and she does not want to repent of her sexual immorality.*

22 [6]NU, M *her*

23 [f]Jer. 11:20; 17:10 [7]*examines*

24 [g]2 Tim. 3:1–9 [h]Acts 15:28 [8]NU, M omit *and* [9]NU, M omit *will*

25 [i]Rev. 3:11

26 [j][John 6:29] [k][Matt. 19:28]

27 [l]Ps. 2:8, 9

28 [m]2 Pet. 1:19

CHAPTER 3

1 [a]Rev. 1:4, 16 [1]Or *messenger*

2 [2]NU, M *My God*

3 [b]1 Tim. 6:20 [c]Rev. 3:19 [d]Matt. 24:42, 43 [e][Rev. 16:15]

11 [r]"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. He who overcomes shall not be hurt by [s]the second death."

The Compromising Church

12 "And to the [6]angel of the church in Pergamos write.

'These things says [t]He who has the sharp two-edged sword: 13 "I know your works, and where you dwell, where Satan's throne *is.* And you hold fast to My name, and did not deny My faith even in the days in which Antipas *was* My faithful martyr, who was killed among you, where Satan dwells. 14 But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of [u]Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, [v]to eat things sacrificed to idols, [w]and to commit sexual immorality. 15 Thus you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, [7]which thing I hate. 16 Repent, or else I will come to you quickly and [x]will fight against them with the sword of My mouth.

17 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden [y]manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone, and on the stone [z]a new name written which no one knows except him who receives *it.*"

The Corrupt Church

18 "And to the [8]angel of the church in Thyatira write,

'These things says the Son of God, [a]who has eyes like a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass: 19 [b]"I know your works, love, [9]service, faith, and your [1]patience; and *as for* your works, the last *are* more than the first. 20 Nevertheless I have [2]a few things against you, because you allow [3]that woman [c]Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, [4]to teach and seduce My servants [d]to commit sexual immorality and eat things sacrificed to idols. 21 And I gave her time [e]to [5]repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent. 22 Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of [6]their deeds. 23 I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am He who [f]searches[7] the minds and hearts. And I will give to each one of you according to your works.

24 "Now to you I say, [g]and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this doctrine, who have not known the [g]depths of Satan, as they say, [h]I [9]will put on you no other burden. 25 But hold fast [i]what you have till I come. 26 And he who overcomes, and keeps [j]My works until the end, [k]to him I will give power over the nations—

27 *'He*[l] *shall rule them with a rod of iron;*
They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels'—

as I also have received from My Father; 28 and I will give him [m]the morning star.

29 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."'

The Dead Church

3 "And to the [1]angel of the church in Sardis write,

'These things says He who [a]has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: "I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. 2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before [2]God. 3 [b]Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and [c]repent. [d]Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you [e]as a thief, and you will not know what

■ **2:13 where Satan's throne is.** Pergamos (Pergamum) possessed the oldest temple in Asia Minor devoted to emperor worship.

■ **2:14 Balaam.** Balaam (Num. 22:5) gave Balak advice leading to Israel's "harlotry" in Moab (Num. 25:1–4). Jezebel (v. 20) and other professing Christians in the seven churches were indulging in pleasures offered by their pagan environment (17:1—19:10 note).

■ **2:15 Nicolaitans.** See note on v. 6.

■ **2:17 hidden manna.** Perhaps an allusion to the manna preserved in the Most Holy Place of the tabernacle (Ex. 16:33–35; Heb. 9:4). Christ promises to nourish the faithful with an unfailing supply of heavenly, spiritual food (John 6:32–58).

■ **2:18 fine brass.** Or, bronze. Thyatira had a famous guild of bronze workers.

■ **2:20 Jezebel.** See 1 Kin. 16:31; 19:1, 2; 21:5–26; 2 Kin. 9:30–37. The woman at Thyatira is called Jezebel because, like the Old Testament figure, she seduced people to sexual immorality and idolatry, two major forms of indulgence in pagan Asia Minor. See notes on 14:8 and 17:1—19:10.

■ **3:3 I will come . . . as a thief.** The seemingly impregnable fortress of Sardis had in wartime been captured twice by surprise, probably at night. Christ warns that a similar experience will befall the church, unless its people wake up.

hour I will come upon you. 4 [3]You have [f]a few names [4]even in Sardis who have not [g]defiled their garments; and they shall walk with Me [h]in white, for they are worthy. 5 He who overcomes [i]shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not [j]blot out his name from the [k]Book of Life; but [l]I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

6 [m]"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." '

The Faithful Church

7 "And to the [5]angel of the church in Philadelphia write,

'These things says [n]He who is holy, [o]He who is true, [p]*"He who has the key of David, [q]He who opens and no one shuts, and [r]shuts and no one opens"*: 8 [s]"I know your works. See, I have set before you [t]an open door, [6]and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. 9 Indeed I will make [u]*those* of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie—indeed [v]I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. 10 Because you have kept [7]My command to persevere, [w]I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon [x]the whole world, to test those who dwell [y]on the earth. 11 [8]Behold, [z]I am coming quickly! [a]Hold fast what you have, that no one may take [b]your crown. 12 He who overcomes, I will make him [c]a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall [d]go out no more. [e]I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the [f]New Jerusalem, which [g]comes down out of heaven from My God. [h]And *I will write on him* My new name.

13 [i]"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." '

The Lukewarm Church

14 "And to the [9]angel of the church [l]of the Laodiceans write,

[j]'These things says the Amen, [k]the Faithful and True Witness, [l]the Beginning of the creation of God: 15 [m]"I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. 16 So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither [2]cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. 17 Because you say, [n]'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked— 18 I counsel you [o]to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and [p]white garments, that you may be clothed, *that* the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. 19 [q]As many as I love, I rebuke and [r]chasten.[3] Therefore be [4]zealous and repent. 20 Behold, [s]I stand at the door and knock. [t]If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, [u]I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. 21 To him who overcomes [v]I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

22 [w]"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." ' "

The Throne Room of Heaven

4 After these things I looked, and behold, a door *standing* [a]open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard *was* like a [b]trumpet speaking with me, saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this."

4 [f]Acts 1:15 [g][Jude 23] [h]Rev. 4:4; 6:11 [3]NU, M *Nevertheless you* [4]NU, M omit *even*

5 [i][Rev. 19:8] [j]Ex. 32:32 [k]Phil. 4:3 [l]Luke 12:8

6 [m]Rev. 2:7

7 [n]Acts 3:14 [o]1 John 5:20 [p]Is. 9:7; 22:22 [q][Matt. 16:19] [r]Job 12:14 [5]Or *messenger*

8 [s]Rev. 3:1 [t]1 Cor. 16:9 [6]NU, M *which no one can shut*

9 [u]Rev. 2:9 [v]Is. 45:14; 49:23; 60:14

10 [w]2 Pet. 2:9 [x]Luke 2:1 [y]Is. 24:17 [7]Lit. *the word of My patience*

11 [z]Phil. 4:5 [a]Rev. 2:25 [b][Rev. 2:10] [8]NU, M omit *Behold*

12 [c]1 Kin. 7:21 [d]Ps. 23:6 [e][Rev. 14:1; 22:4] [f][Heb. 12:22] [g]Rev. 21:2 [h][Rev. 2:17; 22:4]

13 [i]Rev. 2:7

14 [j]2 Cor. 1:20 [k]Rev. 1:5; 3:7; 19:11 [l][Col. 1:15] [9]Or *messenger* [l]NU, M *in Laodicea*

15 [m]Rev. 3:1

16 [2]NU, M *hot nor cold*

17 [n]Hos. 12:8

18 [o]Is. 55:1 [p]2 Cor. 5:3

19 [q]Job 5:17 [r]Heb. 12:6 [3]*discipline* [4]*eager* 20 [s]Song 5:2 [t]Luke 12:36, 37 [u][John 14:23] 21 [v]Matt. 19:28 22 [w]Rev. 2:7 **CHAPTER 4** 1 [a]Ezek. 1:1 [b]Rev. 1:10

■ **3:5 Book of Life.** The heavenly roster of those destined to new life (13:8 note).

■ **3:9 synagogue of Satan.** See note on 2:9.

■ **3:12 a pillar in the temple.** Philadelphia had suffered from earthquakes, making the promise of security and stability particularly pointed.

■ **3:15 neither cold nor hot.** Laodicea's water supply had to be provided from a distant source through pipes. The resulting water was lukewarm and barely drinkable. By contrast, the neighboring town of Hierapolis had medicinal hot springs, and neighboring Colosse was supplied by a cold mountain stream. Christ urges the church to be refreshing (cold) or medicinally healing (hot), rather than like the Laodicean water supply.

■ **4:1—5:14** God appears in a beautiful scene of worship as the King of heaven and earth. He is surrounded by angelic courtiers (1 Kin. 22:19; Job 1:6; 2:1; Ps. 89:6, 7; Ezek. 1; Dan. 7:9, 10). His rule was established in creation (4:11), is exercised in the panorama of history (6:1—22:5), is brought to fulfillment through the Lamb (ch. 5; 22:1) and is celebrated in songs of praise (1:6 note). Revelation is preeminently a book about God and His greatness. The secrets of history and of spiritual conflict center on God Himself. The whole universe is destined to be filled with the glory (21:22, 23) and goodness of God (22:1–5), and with His praise (5:13). Hence the pattern for the outcome of history is revealed in miniature here (Matt. 6:10).

When God's people are beset by temptation or persecution, a revelation of God's character and glory is the best remedy. His power guarantees the final victory, His justice guarantees vindication of the right, His goodness and magnificence guarantee blessing and comfort. The blood of the Lamb demonstrates that redemption has already been accomplished.

■ **4:1 Come up here.** Moses went up to Mount Sinai (Ex. 19:3, 20) and Paul was caught up to heaven (2 Cor. 12:2) to receive special revelations.

2 [c]Rev. 1:10 [d]Is. 6:1

3 [e]Rev. 21:11 [f]Ezek. 1:28 [1]M omits *And He who sat there was,* making the following a description of the throne.

4 [g]Rev. 11:16 [h]Rev. 3:4, 5 [2]NU, M *robes, with crowns*

5 [i]Rev. 8:5; 11:19; 16:18 [j]Ex. 37:23 [k][Rev. 1:4] [3]NU, M *voices, and thunderings.* [4]M omits *the*

6 [l]Rev. 15:2 [m]Ezek. 1:5 [5]NU, M add *something like*

7 [n]Ezek. 1:10; 10:14

8 [o]Is. 6:2 [p]Is. 6:3 [q]Rev. 1:8 [r]Rev. 1:4 [6]M has *holy* nine times.

9 [s]Rev. 1:18

10 [t]Rev. 5:8, 14; 7:11; 11:16; 19:4

11 [u]Rev. 1:6; 5:12 [v]Gen. 1:1 [w]Col. 1:16 [7]NU, M *our Lord and God* [8]NU, M *existed*

2 Immediately [c]I was in the Spirit; and behold, [d]a throne set in heaven, and *One* sat on the
3 throne. [1][e]And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; [f]and *there was* a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald. 4 [g]Around the throne *were* twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, [h]clothed in white [2]robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads. 5 And from the throne proceeded [i]lightnings, [3]thunderings, and voices. [j]Seven lamps of fire *were* burning before the throne, which are [k]the[4] seven Spirits of God.

6 Before the throne *there* [5]*was* [l]a sea of glass, like crystal. [m]And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, *were* four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back. 7 [n]The first living creature *was* like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature *was* like a flying eagle. 8 *The* four living creatures, each having [o]six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying:

> [p]"Holy,[6] holy, holy,
> [q]Lord God Almighty,
> [r]Who was and is and is to come!"

9 Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, [s]who lives forever and ever, 10 [t]the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying:

> 11 "You[u] are worthy, [7]O Lord,
> To receive glory and honor and power;
> [v]For You created all things,
> And by [w]Your will they [8]exist and were created."

The Lamb Takes the Scroll

5 And I saw in the right *hand* of Him who sat on the throne [a]a scroll written inside and on the back, [b]sealed with seven seals. 2 Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice,

CHAPTER 5 1 [a]Ezek. 2:9, 10 [b]Is. 29:11

which must take place after this. See note on 1:19.

■ **4:2 in the Spirit.** See note on 1:10.

a throne set in heaven. God's kingly rule is a fundamental theme of the book. In the Old Testament, the tabernacle (Ex. 25—40) and temple (1 Kin. 5—7; 2 Chr. 2—4) were shadows of God's throne room in heaven (Ex. 25:40; Heb. 8:5, 6; 9:1–14). John sees the heavenly original rather than an earthly copy. Revelation fittingly contains many allusions to the temple (3:12; 7:15; 11:19; 14:15, 17; 15:5—16:1; 16:17; 21:22) and to elements within it. For example, there are the lamps (1:12; 4:5), the living creatures like cherubim (4:6–9), incense and prayer (5:8), songs of praise like those offered by the Levitical singers in the Old Testament (4:8, 11; 5:9–13; 1 Chr. 16), a sacrifice (5:6, 9), the ark of the covenant (11:19), the altar (11:1), and the outer court (11:2).

One sat on the throne. The details of God's appearance are not described, reminding us that His greatness and glory always exceed human comprehension. See note on 1:12–20.

■ **4:4 twenty-four elders.** These angelic ministers (7:13) are here called "elders" because of their wisdom. As God's cabinet officers, they must reflect His own wisdom, which is symbolized by age (Dan. 7:9). The term "elder" also suggests an analogy with the church's elders who serve on earth; hence, some have suggested the elders here are simply a representation of the church.

■ **4:5 lightnings.** God exhibits His power in a manner analogous to His self-revelation at Mount Sinai (Ex. 19:16–19) and other divine appearances (8:5; 11:19; 16:18; Ps. 18:11–15; Ezek. 1:4). He reminds the church of the power of His voice (1:10, 15 and notes) and the final shaking of creation still to come (11:19; 21:1; Heb. 12:25–27).

Seven lamps. See note on 1:12; cf. Zech. 4:2, 6. The sevenfold light of the Holy Spirit is the original light of which the seven-branched lampstand of Ex. 25:31–40 was a copy. The similarities with 1:12 suggest that the seven churches, as a true temple of God, are to give out light reflecting the very presence of God through His Spirit.

seven Spirits of God. The Holy Spirit (1:4 note).

■ **4:6 sea of glass.** See 15:2; Ex. 24:10. This imagery might suggest a number of associations. The parallel verse in 15:2 calls to mind the waters of the Red Sea. The defeat of Pharaoh and the pushing back of the waters foreshadowed God's final victory over evil (Is. 51:9–11). If so, the sea of glass pictures waters subdued under God's power. Moreover, the extent and beauty of the crystal-like sea, when taken together with the precious stones in v. 3 and 21:18–21, suggest the magnificence and preciousness of God's throne. The numerous parallels elsewhere with the temple (4:2 note) might suggest that this sea is the heavenly counterpart of the sea in Solomon's temple (1 Kin. 7:23–25). Finally, the picture of heavenly water might suggest that God faithfully supplies water from heaven (Deut. 11:11). It is consistent with the style of Revelation to weave together a number of Old Testament images.

four living creatures. These angelic ministers of God are reminiscent of the living creatures or cherubim of Ezek. 1 and 10 and the seraphim of Is. 6. They are guardians and bearers of the throne of God, as in Gen. 3:24; Ex. 25:17–22; Ps. 18:10; 1 Chr. 28:18.

■ **4:11** God's servants bring songs of praise as a fitting response to His glory and deeds (1:6 note; Ex. 15:11; Is. 6:3).

You created. The praise and imagery of ch. 4 focus on creation, asserting God's sovereignty over the universe (1:8 note).

■ **5:1–14** John recounts two parts of a single magnificent vision of God's glory in chs. 4 and 5 (chs. 4; 5 note). A second dramatic act within the vision is introduced in 5:1. From creation in 4:11, the action shifts to a focus on redemption and re-creation. God's purposes of redemption and

[c]"Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?" [3] And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it.

[4] So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open [l]and read the scroll, or to look at it. [5] But one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Behold, [d]the Lion of the tribe of [e]Judah, [f]the Root of David, has [g]prevailed to open the scroll [h]and [2]to loose its seven seals."

[6] And I looked, [3]and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood [i]a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and [j]seven eyes, which are [k]the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. [7] Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand [l]of Him who sat on the throne.

Worthy Is the Lamb

[8] Now when He had taken the scroll, [m]the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the [n]prayers of the saints. [9] And [o]they sang a new song, saying:

[p]"You are worthy to take the scroll,
And to open its seals;
For You were slain,
And [q]have redeemed us to God [r]by Your blood
Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,
[10] And have made [4]us [s]kings[5] and [t]priests to our God;
And [6]we shall reign on the earth."

[11] Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, [12] saying with a loud voice:

"Worthy is the Lamb who was slain
To receive power and riches and wisdom,
And strength and honor and glory and blessing!"

[13] And [u]every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying:

[v]"Blessing and honor and glory and power
Be to Him [w]who sits on the throne,
And to the Lamb, forever and [7]ever!"

[14] Then the four living creatures said, "Amen!" And the [8]twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped [9]Him who lives forever and ever.

2 [c]Rev. 4:11; 5:9

4 [1]NU, M omit *and read*

5 [d]Gen. 49:9 [e]Heb. 7:14 [f]Is. 11:1, 10; Rom. 15:12; Rev. 22:16 [g]Rev. 3:21 [h]Rev. 6:1 [2]NU, M omit *to loose*

6 [i]Is. 53:7; [John 1:29; 1 Pet. 1:19] [j]Zech. 3:9; 4:10 [k]Rev. 1:4; 3:1; 4:5 [3]NU, M *I saw in the midst . . . a Lamb standing*

7 [l]Rev. 4:2

8 [m]Rev. 4:8–10; 19:4 [n]Ps. 141:2; Rev. 8:3

9 [o]Rev. 14:3 [p]Rev. 4:11 [q]John 1:29 [r][Heb. 9:12; 1 Pet. 1:18, 19]

10 [s]Ex. 19:6 [t]Is. 61:6 [4]NU, M *them* [5]NU *a kingdom* [6]NU, M *they*

13 [u]Phil. 2:10; Rev. 5:3 [v]1 Chr. 29:11; Rom. 9:5; 1 Tim. 6:16; 1 Pet. 4:11 [w]Rev. 4:2, 3; 6:16; 20:11 [7]M adds *Amen*

14 [8]NU, M omit *twenty-four* [9]NU, M omit *Him who lives forever and ever*

rule can be accomplished only through One who is uniquely worthy—Jesus Christ. He is simultaneously the fierce Lion of the tribe of Judah, warring against God's enemies (17:14; 19:11–21), and the gentle Lamb that has been slain, who purchased His people with the blood of His atoning sacrifice (vv. 9, 10). Only God in His trinitarian fullness can accomplish these magnificent purposes. Note the presence of the Father ("Him who sat on the throne," vv. 1, 7), the Son ("Lamb," vv. 6, 7), and the Spirit of God (v. 6; 1:4 note), who is the horns and eyes of the Lamb.

This chapter constitutes the opening scene for the first cycle of judgments that lead up to the Second Coming of Christ (Introduction: Outline). The Lamb and the sealed scroll are introduced. The opening of the seals in 6:1—8:1 sets in motion a series of judgments that have their origin in God's throne and purpose, and that issue in His final manifestation as Judge. See notes on 6:12–17 and 8:1.

■ **5:1 scroll.** The scroll might represent a number of things—God's covenant, His law, His promises, His plans, or perhaps a legal will. The close parallel with Dan. 12:4 makes it likely that the scroll is a heavenly book containing God's plan and the destiny of the world. The unsealing of the book implies the accomplishment of the things God has purposed. John weeps (v. 4) because he longs for God's purposes to be accomplished (Matt. 6:10), and it is hard to see how that can happen. However, through Christ's decisive sacrifice a whole host is redeemed (v. 9), and the purposes of the Exodus and of man's original dominion are finally fulfilled (v. 10).

■ **5:6 as though it had been slain.** "As though" is used because the Lamb was slain, but is now alive "forevermore" (1:18). Only on the basis of Christ's death and resurrection can God's purposes for history be accomplished.

seven horns. Horns frequently represent power (Ps. 89:17; 92:10; Dan. 7:8; 8:3), in this case the power of Christ's Spirit-filled eternal life (John 3:34; Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:45).

seven Spirits of God. See note on 1:4.

■ **5:9 every tribe and tongue and people and nation.** In spiritual battle, both God and Satan claim allegiances on a universal scale (7:9; 10:11; 11:9; 12:5; 13:7; 14:6, 8; 15:4; 17:15; 18:3; 19:15; 20:3). Through the merit and power of Christ's sacrifice, God's purposes will be accomplished, fulfilling the Abrahamic promise of blessing to all nations (7:9–17; 21:24–27; Gen. 12:3; 22:18; Is. 60:1–5).

■ **5:10 kings and priests.** See note on 1:6.

■ **5:11–14** Praises that started in the inner circles of worship around the throne now extend outwards until they fill the universe.

CHAPTER 6

1 [a][Rev. 5:5–7, 12; 13:8] [b]Rev. 4:7 [f]NU, M *seven seals*

2 [c]Zech. 1:8; 6:3 [d]Ps. 45:4, 5, LXX [e]Zech. 6:11 [f]Matt. 24:5

3 [g]Rev. 4:7 [z]NU, M omit *and see*

4 [h]Zech. 1:8; 6:2 [i]Matt. 24:6, 7

5 [j]Rev. 4:7 [k]Zech. 6:2, 6 [l]Matt. 24:7 [3]*balances*

6 [m]Rev. 7:3; 9:4 [4]Gr. *choinix*, about 1 quart [5]About 1 day's wage for a worker

7 [n]Rev. 4:7

8 [o]Zech. 6:3 [p]Ezek. 5:12, 17; 14:21; 29:5 [q]Lev. 26:22 [6]*authority*

9 [r]Rev. 8:3 [s][Rev. 20:4] [t]Rev. 1:2, 9 [u]2 Tim. 1:8

10 [v]Zech. 1:12 [w]Rev. 3:7 [x]Rev. 11:18

11 [y]Rev. 3:4, 5; 7:9 [z]Heb. 11:40

12 [a]Matt. 24:7 [b]Joel 2:10, 31; 3:15 [7]NU, M omit *behold* [8]NU, M *whole moon*

13 [c]Rev. 8:10; 9:1

First Seal: The Conqueror

6 Now [a]I saw when the Lamb opened one of the [f]seals; and I heard [b]one of the four living creatures saying with a voice like thunder, "Come and see." 2 And I looked, and behold, [c]a white horse. [d]He who sat on it had a bow; [e]and a crown was given to him, and he went out [f]conquering and to conquer.

Second Seal: Conflict on Earth

3 When He opened the second seal, [g]I heard the second living creature saying, "Come [z]and see." 4 [h]Another horse, fiery red, went out. And it was granted to the one who sat on it to [i]take peace from the earth, and that *people* should kill one another; and there was given to him a great sword.

Third Seal: Scarcity on Earth

5 When He opened the third seal, [j]I heard the third living creature say, "Come and see." So I looked, and behold, [k]a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of [l]scales[3] in his hand. 6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, "A [4]quart of wheat for a [5]denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and [m]do not harm the oil and the wine."

Fourth Seal: Widespread Death on Earth

7 When He opened the fourth seal, [n]I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, "Come and see." 8 [o]So I looked, and behold, a pale horse. And the name of him who sat on it was Death, and Hades followed with him. And [6]power was given to them over a fourth of the earth, [p]to kill with sword, with hunger, with death, [q]and by the beasts of the earth.

Fifth Seal: The Cry of the Martyrs

9 When He opened the fifth seal, I saw under [r]the altar [s]the souls of those who had been slain [t]for the word of God and for [u]the testimony which they held. 10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, [v]"How long, O Lord, [w]holy and true, [x]until You judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" 11 Then a [y]white robe was given to each of them; and it was said to them [z]that they should rest a little while longer, until both *the number of* their fellow servants and their brethren, who would be killed as they *were,* was completed.

Sixth Seal: Cosmic Disturbances

12 I looked when He opened the sixth seal, [a]and [7]behold, there was a great earthquake; and [b]the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the [8]moon became like blood. 13 [c]And the stars

■ **6:1—8:1** Judgments from God's throne unfold as the seven seals are opened one by one. The participation of the Lamb reminds us that such judgments are based on His unique qualifications and accomplishments (ch. 5). In formal structure, 5:1—8:1 runs parallel to 8:2—11:19. Each has an opening scene introducing the origin of the judgments (ch. 5; 8:2–6). Six judgments follow (ch. 6; 8:7—9:21). A dramatic interlude promises care for God's people (ch. 7; 10:1—11:14). The seventh and climactic judgment follows the interlude (8:1; 11:15–19; Introduction: Outline). The seven judgments move forward toward the Second Coming, which occurs in 6:12–17 and 11:15–19. The first four of the seven judgments have an inner unity. The four living creatures of 4:6 and the four horsemen of Zech. 1:8 are reflected in 6:1–8. The four major regions of the world (dry land, sea, fresh water, and sky) are considered in 8:7–12.

■ **6:1–8** The four horsemen represent conquest, war, famine, and death. These calamities characterize an indefinite period before the Second Coming (Mark 13:6–8). Such things occurred in the tumults of the Roman Empire, and may be expected to occur now and before the Second Coming. The imagery is capable of multiple applications throughout the history of the church (Introduction: Interpretive Difficulties). The seven churches were exhorted to put their confidence, not in the peace and prosperity supposedly achieved by Roman rule, but in God and His promises of a new world (2:17; 3:12; 21:4). When tumults occurred, they were assured that the Lamb was still in control—in fact, the tumults issued from His worthiness to break the seals and from the voice of the living creatures. Such judgments represented the chastening hand of God on a rebellious world (9:20, 21). The saints would be cared for in the midst of such trials (ch. 7). They were sealed as a mark of ownership and protection (7:1–10; 9:4) and given perfect rest in the end (7:15–17). Such promises hold for saints throughout the church age, no less than for the seven churches.

■ **6:2 white horse.** On the basis of similarities with 19:11, some think that Christ appears here, conquering through the gospel. More probably, the white horse symbolizes conquest as one form of earthly calamity. Thus the calamity of vv. 1, 2 is parallel to the calamities of vv. 3–8 (6:1—8:1 note).

■ **6:6 a quart of wheat.** Famine will come, so severe that a laborer's entire wages will go merely for food. Families will have to buy barley, a lower quality of grain. Oil and wine are spared, perhaps an indication that the rich will still be able to indulge themselves.

■ **6:9–11** Martyred saints cry out for justice, not because of selfish desires, but in tune with the justice of God's throne (v. 10). They desire to see God's justice fully manifested.

■ **6:10 those . . . on the earth.** Revelation shows that humanity consists of two groups: the people of God, whose citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20), and, in opposition to them, the rebellious earth-dwellers (v. 15; 8:13; 11:10; 13:3, 8, 12, 14; 17:2, 8).

■ **6:12–17** All dwellers on earth and in the created universe itself experience God's judgment. These verses give the first of seven descriptions in Revelation of events associated with the Second Coming (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes: Literary Form). In Luke 21:25–27 and Mark 13:24–26 the coming of the Son of Man immediately follows unusual phenomena involving the sun, moon, and stars. The mention of seven

of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind.
14 [d]Then the sky [g]receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and [e]every mountain and island was
moved out of its place. 15 And the [f]kings of the earth, the great men, [l]the rich men, the command-
ers, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, [g]hid themselves in the caves and in the
rocks of the mountains, 16 [h]and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the
face of Him who [i]sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! 17 For the great day of His
wrath has come, [j]and who is able to stand?"

The Sealed of Israel

7 After these things I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, [a]holding the
four winds of the earth, [b]that the wind should not blow on the earth, on the sea, or on any
tree. 2 Then I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And
he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the
sea, 3 saying, [c]"Do not harm the earth, the sea, or the trees till we have sealed the servants of our
God [d]on their foreheads." 4 [e]And I heard the number of those who were sealed. [f]One hundred
and forty-four thousand [g]of all the tribes of the children of Israel *were* sealed:

5 of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand *were* sealed;
of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand *were* [l]sealed;
of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand *were* sealed;
6 of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand *were* sealed;
of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand *were* sealed;
of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand *were* sealed;
7 of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand *were* sealed;
of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand *were* sealed;
of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand *were* sealed;
8 of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand *were* sealed;
of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand *were* sealed;
of the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand *were* sealed.

A Multitude from the Great Tribulation

9 After these things I looked, and behold, [h]a great multitude which no one could number, [i]of
all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb,
[j]clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, 10 and crying out with a loud voice,
saying, [k]"Salvation *belongs* to our God [l]who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" 11 [m]All the
angels stood around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and fell on their faces
before the throne and [n]worshiped God, 12 [o]saying:

"Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom,
Thanksgiving and honor and power and might,
Be to our God forever and ever.
Amen."

13 Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in [p]white robes, and
where did they come from?"
14 And I said to him, [2]"Sir, you know."
So he said to me, [q]"These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and [r]washed

14 [d]Ps. 102:26; Is. 34:4; [2 Pet. 3:10]; Rev. 20:11; 21:1 [e]Jer. 3:23; Rev. 16:20 [g]Or *split apart*

15 [f]Ps. 2:2–4 [g]Is. 2:10, 19, 21; 24:21; Rev. 19:18 [l]NU, M *the commanders, the rich men,*

16 [h]Hos. 10:8; Luke 23:29, 30; Rev. 9:6 [i]Rev. 20:11

17 [j]Is. 63:4; Jer. 30:7; Joel 1:15; 2:1, 11, 31; Zeph. 1:14; Rev. 16:14

CHAPTER 7

1 [a]Jer. 49:36; Dan. 7:2; Zech. 6:5; Matt. 24:31 [b]Rev. 7:3; 8:7; 9:4

3 [c]Rev. 6:6 [d]Ezek. 9:4, 6; Rev. 22:4

4 [e]Rev. 9:16 [f]Rev. 14:1, 3 [g]Gen. 49:1–27

5 [l]NU, M omit *sealed* in vv. 5b–8b.

9 [h]Is. 60:1–5; Rom. 11:25 [i]Rev. 5:9 [j]Rev. 3:5, 18; 4:4; 6:11

10 [k]Ps. 3:8; Is. 43:11; Jer. 3:23; Hos. 13:4; Rev. 19:1 [l]Rev. 5:13

11 [m]Rev. 4:6 [n]Rev. 4:11; 5:9, 12, 14; 11:16

12 [o]Rev. 5:13, 14

13 [p]Rev. 7:9

14 [q]Rev. 6:9 [r]Is. 1:18; Zech. 3:3–5; [Heb. 9:14] [2]NU, M *My lord*

types of people (v. 15) suggests complete judgment, as does the characterization of "the great day of His wrath" (vv. 16, 17). Since this world is to be so thoroughly shaken, saints must place their hope in God (Luke 12:32–34; 1 Cor. 7:29–31; Heb. 12:25–29).

■ **7:1–17** The announcement of the seventh seal is dramatically delayed while the saints receive assurance that God knows them and protects them in the midst of the calamities depicted in ch. 6.

■ **7:3 sealed.** The faithful are sealed as a sign of protection and ownership (9:4; 14:1; Ezek. 9:4).

■ **7:4–8** The balanced numbering suggests that "twelve" is a symbolic number for the fullness of the people of God. The early association of the tribe of Dan with idolatry (Judg. 18) may explain its omission from this list (21:8; 22:15). Some think that the 144,000 here includes only Jewish believers. But the "servants of our God" in v. 3 must include Gentile saints as well. The equal status of Gentiles and Jews in the seven churches (Eph. 2:11–22) and the promises associated only with the 144,000 (9:4; 14:1–5) confirm this. According to vv. 1–8, the saints are known by God individually, and none slips by His care (Matt. 10:30); according to vv. 9–17, no human can count their number.

■ **7:14 great tribulation.** Many identify the "great tribulation" with a final period of persecution shortly before the Second Coming. But tribulations for Christians occur throughout the church age, so that the whole age can also be characterized as a time of tribulation (2 Thess. 1:5, 6; 2 Tim. 3:1, 12). The passage was intended to comfort first-century Christians as well as those in the final crisis. See note on 11:2.

their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15 Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will [s]dwell among them. 16 [t]They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; [u]the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; 17 for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne [v]will shepherd them and lead them to [3]living fountains of waters. [w]And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

15 [s]Is. 4:5, 6
16 [t]Is. 49:10 [u]Ps. 121:6
17 [v]Ps. 23:1 [w]Rev. 21:4 [3]NU, M *fountains of the waters of life*

CHAPTER 8

1 [a]Rev. 6:1
2 [b][Matt. 18:10] [c]2 Chr. 29:25–28
3 [d]Rev. 5:8 [e]Ex. 30:1
4 [f]Ps. 141:2
5 [g]Rev. 11:19; 16:18 [h]Rev. 4:5 [i]2 Sam. 22:8
7 [j]Ezek. 38:22 [k]Rev. 16:2 [l]Rev. 9:4, 15–18 [1]NU, M add *and a third of the earth was burned up*
8 [m]Jer. 51:25 [n]Ex. 7:17 [o]Ezek. 14:19
9 [p]Rev. 16:3
10 [q]Is. 14:12 [r]Rev. 14:7; 16:4
11 [s]Ruth 1:20 [t]Ex. 15:23
12 [u]Is. 13:10 [2]*had no light*

Seventh Seal: Prelude to the Seven Trumpets

8 When[a] He opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. 2 [b]And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, [c]and to them were given seven trumpets. 3 Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer *it* with [d]the prayers of all the saints upon [e]the golden altar which was before the throne. 4 And [f]the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand. 5 Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw *it* to the earth. And [g]there were noises, thunderings, [h]lightnings, [i]and an earthquake.

6 So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

First Trumpet: Vegetation Struck

7 The first angel sounded: [j]And hail and fire followed, mingled with blood, and they were thrown [k]to the [l]earth. And a third [l]of the trees were burned up, and all green grass was burned up.

Second Trumpet: The Seas Struck

8 Then the second angel sounded: [m]And *something* like a great mountain burning with fire was thrown into the sea, [n]and a third of the sea [o]became blood. 9 [p]And a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.

Third Trumpet: The Waters Struck

10 Then the third angel sounded: [q]And a great star fell from heaven, burning like a torch, [r]and it fell on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water. 11 [s]The name of the star is Wormwood. [t]A third of the waters became wormwood, and many men died from the water, because it was made bitter.

Fourth Trumpet: The Heavens Struck

12 [u]Then the fourth angel sounded: And a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them were darkened. A third of the day [2]did not shine, and likewise the night.

■ **8:1 silence in heaven.** The next event after 6:12–17 would most naturally be the appearing of Christ Himself as the final Warrior and Judge (Mark 13:24–26). The silence may indicate that heaven stands in awe at His presence (Hab. 2:20; Zeph. 1:7). At this early point, the seer is not given a fuller picture disclosing the events of final judgment and recreation. This reserve maintains the reader's interest for later cycles of judgment.

■ **8:2—11:19** Seven angels blow seven trumpets. The trumpets set in motion seven judgments leading up to the Second Coming. The trumpets form the second cycle out of several that depict God's rule over history from various angles. On the structure of these judgments, see note on 6:1—8:1. Like the trumpets used in the battle of Jericho (Josh. 6), these trumpets lead up to the fall of the worldly city (11:8 note, 11:13), and in the seventh trumpet the complete victory of God arrives. The trumpet plagues are reminiscent of the plagues on Egypt, signifying God's judgments on idolatrous power.

The seven seals began with announcements of riders commissioned to bring calamities (6:1–8 note). The seven trumpets, by contrast, contain descriptions of the calamities themselves. The intensity of judgment has increased. Yet still some things are spared: most of the trumpet plagues fall on a third of the people or the land, not on all; the locust plague of 9:1–12 is over after five months; some people survive the collapse of the city in 11:13. By contrast, the later judgments with the bowls (15:1—16:21) are thoroughly devastating.

■ **8:2–6** The trumpet judgments issue from God's angels, who stand before His throne (v. 2). The vision of chs. 4; 5 remains an anchor point for this new cycle of visions. Like the seal judgments of 6:1—8:1, these judgments are executed according to God's plan and in accord with His orders. The prayers of the saints play a notable part in originating the judgments (vv. 3, 4).

■ **8:7–12** The first four trumpet plagues strike the four major regions of creation: land, sea, fresh water, and sky. The first four bowls affect the same four regions (16:1–9). Within the period of the early church, these visions were fulfilled both through natural calamities and through analogous spiritual calamities afflicting the souls of the wicked. In such apocalyptic imagery, the one type of calamity can represent the other. The general principles can be applied more broadly. Both human beings and the natural world undergo stress until the time of final renewal (Rom. 8:18–25). Final destruction of the natural universe, as well as the judgment of human beings, accompanies the Second Coming (2 Pet. 3:10, 12).

■ **8:7 hail and fire.** Parallel to Ex. 9:23, 24.

■ **8:8 blood.** Parallel to Ex. 7:14–24.

■ **8:12 darkened.** Parallel to Ex. 10:21–23.

13 And I looked, [v]and I heard an [3]angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, [w]"Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the remaining blasts of the trumpet of the three angels who are about to sound!"

Fifth Trumpet: The Locusts from the Bottomless Pit

9 Then the fifth angel sounded: [a]And I saw a star fallen from heaven to the earth. To him was given the key to [b]the [1]bottomless pit. 2 And he opened the bottomless pit, and smoke arose out of the pit like the smoke of a great furnace. So the [c]sun and the air were darkened because of the smoke of the pit. 3 Then out of the smoke locusts came upon the earth. And to them was given power, [d]as the scorpions of the earth have power. 4 They were commanded [e]not to harm [f]the grass of the earth, or any green thing, or any tree, but only those men who do not have [g]the seal of God on their foreheads. 5 And [2]they were not given *authority* to kill them, [h]but to torment them *for* five months. Their torment *was* like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man. 6 In those days [i]men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them.

7 [j]The shape of the locusts was like horses prepared for battle. [k]On their heads were crowns of something like gold, [l]and their faces *were* like the faces of men. 8 They had hair like women's hair, and [m]their teeth were like lions' *teeth.* 9 And they had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings *was* [n]like the sound of chariots with many horses running into battle. 10 They had tails like scorpions, and there were stings in their tails. Their power *was* to hurt men five months. 11 And they had as king over them [o]the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew *is* [3]Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name [4]Apollyon.

12 [p]One woe is past. Behold, still two more woes are coming after these things.

Sixth Trumpet: The Angels from the Euphrates

13 Then the sixth angel sounded: And I heard a voice from the four horns of the [q]golden altar which is before God, 14 saying to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Release the four angels who are bound [r]at the great river Euphrates." 15 So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a [s]third of mankind. 16 Now [t]the number of the army [u]of the horsemen *was* two hundred million; [v]I heard the number of them. 17 And thus I saw the horses in the vision: those who sat on them had breastplates of fiery red, hyacinth blue, and sulfur yellow; [w]and the heads of the horses *were* like the heads of lions; and out of their mouths came fire, smoke, and brimstone. 18 By these three *plagues* a third of mankind was killed—by the fire and the smoke and the brimstone which came out of their mouths. 19 For [5]their power is in their mouth and in their tails; [x]for their tails *are* like serpents, having heads; and with them they do harm.

20 But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, [y]did not repent of the works of their hands, that they should not worship [z]demons, [a]and idols of gold, silver, brass, stone, and wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk. 21 And they did not repent of their murders [b]or their [6]sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.

13 [v]Rev. 14:6; 19:17 [w]Rev. 9:12; 11:14; 12:12 [3]NU, M *eagle*

CHAPTER 9

1 [a]Rev. 8:10 [b]Luke 8:31 [1]Lit. *shaft of the abyss*

2 [c]Joel 2:2, 10

3 [d]Judg. 7:12

4 [e]Rev. 6:6 [f]Rev. 8:7 [g]Rev. 7:2, 3

5 [h][Rev. 9:10; 11:7] [2]The locusts

6 [i]Jer. 8:3

7 [j]Joel 2:4 [k]Nah. 3:17 [l]Dan. 7:8

8 [m]Joel 1:6

9 [n]Joel 2:5–7

11 [o]Eph. 2:2 [3]Lit. *Destruction* [4]Lit. *Destroyer*

12 [p]Rev. 8:13; 11:14

13 [q]Rev. 8:3

14 [r]Rev. 16:12

15 [s]Rev. 8:7–9; 9:18

16 [t]Dan. 7:10 [u]Ezek. 38:4 [v]Rev. 7:4

17 [w]Is. 5:28, 29

19 [x]Is. 9:15 [5]NU, M *the power of the horses*

20 [y]Deut. 31:29 [z]1 Cor. 10:20 [a]Dan. 5:23

21 [b]Rev. 21:8; 22:15 [6]NU, M *drugs*

■ **8:13 Woe.** A typical beginning to a prophetic oracle (e.g., Amos 5:18; 6:1). The three last trumpets are grouped together as three woes (9:12; 11:14). These plagues explicitly differentiate between the righteous and the wicked, as did the later Egyptian plagues.

■ **9:1–12** The trumpet blast sets in motion a horrific army of locusts, energized by demonic sources (vv. 1, 2). The imagery derives from Ex. 10:13–15 and Joel 2:1–11, where a literal locust plague foreshadows even more devastating judgment coming from a divinely commissioned army (Joel 2:11). Their terrorizing powers compare only to those of the beast (13:1–10). These infernal monsters attack only the wicked, not the saints (v. 4).

The wicked sometimes suffer even in this life as a preview of their final punishment (20:11–15). According to idealist interpreters (Introduction: Interpretive Difficulties), the vision depicts the self-defeating and tormenting nature of wickedness in the human soul. Powers from the abyss attack not the saints but only the wicked. Historicists have generally seen the vision as a depiction of Islamic conquest of a degenerate Western Europe (A.D. 612–762), but such an application would be only one embodiment of the principle, and an imperfect one at that. Futurists understand the vision as a supernatural plague of demonic spirits, to be loosed on the earth shortly before the Second Coming. The fundamental principle is the same in all these interpretations, and multiple applications of the principle are possible.

■ **9:5 five months.** A normal locust swarm would move on after a few days. This demonic swarm stays for the whole period during which locusts might be seen.

■ **9:11 Apollyon.** Hebrew *Abaddon* and Greek *Apollyon* both mean "destroyer." There may be an ironic allusion to Nero or Domitian, both of whom saw themselves as similar to the Greek god Apollo.

■ **9:13–21** The Roman Empire feared an attack of the Parthians from beyond the Euphrates (v. 14), the eastern border of the empire. But all such fears are dwarfed by what Revelation pictures. Outside threats experienced by the Roman Empire presage the final day of cosmic battle (16:14). The events of these verses are similar to those of 16:14, but the consequences are less severe, leaving time for repentance (vv. 18–21).

CHAPTER 10

1 [a]Rev. 4:3 [b]Rev. 1:16 [c]Rev. 1:15

2 [d]Matt. 28:18

3 [e]Ps. 29:3–9

4 [f]Dan. 8:26; 12:4, 9 [1]NU, M *sounded,* [2]NU, M omit *to me*

5 [g]Dan. 12:7 [3]NU, M *right hand*

6 [h]Rev. 4:11 [i]Rev. 16:17

7 [j]Rev. 11:15

9 [k]Jer. 15:16

10 [l]Ezek. 3:3 [m]Ezek. 2:10

11 [4]NU, M *they*

CHAPTER 11

1 [a]Ezek. 40:3—42:20 [b]Num. 23:18 [1]NU, M omit *And the angel stood*

2 [c]Ezek. 40:17, 20 [d]Ps. 79:1 [e]Dan. 8:10 [f]Rev. 12:6; 13:5

The Mighty Angel with the Little Book

10 I saw still another mighty angel coming down from heaven, clothed with a cloud. [a]And a rainbow *was* on [b]his head, his face *was* like the sun, and [c]his feet like pillars of fire. 2 He had a little book open in his hand. [d]And he set his right foot on the sea and *his* left *foot* on the land, 3 and cried with a loud voice, as *when* a lion roars. When he cried out, [e]seven thunders uttered their voices. 4 Now when the seven thunders [1]uttered their voices, I was about to write; but I heard a voice from heaven saying [2]to me, [f]"Seal up the things which the seven thunders uttered, and do not write them."

5 The angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land [g]raised up his [3]hand to heaven 6 and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, [h]who created heaven and the things that are in it, the earth and the things that are in it, and the sea and the things that are in it, [i]that there should be delay no longer, 7 but [j]in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, the mystery of God would be finished, as He declared to His servants the prophets.

John Eats the Little Book

8 Then the voice which I heard from heaven spoke to me again and said, "Go, take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel who stands on the sea and on the earth."

9 So I went to the angel and said to him, "Give me the little book."

And he said to me, [k]"Take and eat it; and it will make your stomach bitter, but it will be as sweet as honey in your mouth."

10 Then I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, [l]and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth. But when I had eaten it, [m]my stomach became bitter. 11 And [4]he said to me, "You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings."

The Two Witnesses

11 Then I was given [a]a reed like a measuring rod. [1]And the angel stood, saying, [b]"Rise and measure the temple of God, the altar, and those who worship there. 2 But leave out [c]the court which is outside the temple, and do not measure it, [d]for it has been given to the Gentiles. And they will [e]tread the holy city underfoot *for* [f]forty-two months. 3 And I will give *power* to

■ **10:1—11:14** Between the sixth and seventh trumpet there is an interlude with two scenes (ch. 10 and 11:1–14). Both scenes concern the role of God's people and their prophetic witness during the time of trial. In the first scene John receives prophetic messages and is commissioned to proclaim them. The second depicts the history of the two witnesses and their larger environment.

■ **10:1–11** Dan. 10:5, 6 and the call of Ezekiel (Ezek. 2:1—3:11) are paralleled in this chapter. John receives the prophetic messages of a "little book." Some have thought that the book (actually a scroll, the same Greek word as in 5:1) contains the contents of 12:1—22:5, and that 12:1 begins a new major division in the structure of Revelation. More likely, the vision of this chapter speaks in a general fashion of John's receiving power to continue to prophesy. Though John's role is unique, he is still in many ways an example and pattern for the church's witness (1:2 note). The church must take to heart the message of the book (1:3), live by it, and be ready to communicate its implications to "peoples, nations, tongues, and kings" (v. 11).

■ **10:1, 2** A mighty angel appears, reflecting the very glory of God and His throne room (cf. 1:14–16; Ezek. 1:27, 28; Dan. 10:5, 6). The angel's majesty reinforces the authority and divine source of the message.

■ **10:9 make your stomach bitter.** The contents of the book contain news of suffering.

sweet as honey. See Ps. 19:10; 119:103; Ezek. 2:3. The Word of God provides communion with God and His goodness; hence, sweetness accompanies even the message of woe.

■ **10:11 many peoples.** See note on 5:9.

■ **11:1–14** This second part of the interlude concentrates on the story of the two witnesses. Like Moses and Elijah, these witnesses perform striking miracles (vv. 5, 6). Other Old Testament backgrounds are woven into the vision. The mention of two olive trees and lampstands (v. 4) likens the witnesses to the vision of Zech. 4, in which the trees probably symbolize the ruling and priestly offices of Zerubbabel and Joshua. Thus the witnesses are prominent representatives of God. The witnesses' stand against "the beast" (vv. 7–10) reminds us of the conflicts against bestial kingdoms in Daniel. There is a reminder of wicked, oppressive cities and powers in v. 8: Sodom, Egypt, and the Jerusalem that crucified Jesus. The resurrection in vv. 11, 12 recalls of the resurrection of Christ, but also the language of Ezek. 37 and the rapture of Elijah. The two witnesses, along with John (ch. 10), are models for the saints. All are to be faithful to the testimony of Jesus, even in the face of violent persecution from the beast. They must be willing to face martyrdom, God guaranteeing their vindication (vv. 11, 12).

■ **11:1, 2** The description is reminiscent of the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Assuming that Revelation was written before A.D. 70, some interpreters see chs. 6—11 or even larger portions of Revelation as prophecy concerning the fall of Jerusalem. But these verses may just as easily be a figure of the preservation of God's people in the midst of attacks. The temple represents the presence of God on earth, especially through His people (chs. 4; 5 note). Measurement signifies God's knowledge and care (Ezek. 40; 41). The altar and those who worship there represent the true worshipers of God, who are sealed and protected (ch. 7). The destruction of the outer court represents the attack of outsiders on God's people.

■ **11:2 forty-two months.** A time of distress and intense conflict between God's people and their opponents (13:5). It is also described as 1,260 days (v. 3; 12:6) or "a time and times and half a time" (i.e., three and a half years, 12:14). It is half of seven years, which from a symbolic point of view suggests a complete period of suffering, cut short by half. The main background is found in Dan. 7:25, which in turn is related to other passages (Dan. 9:27; 12:7, 11, 12). Some futurist interpreters look for a period of time of this length shortly before the Second Coming. But like other numbers in Revelation, this one may be symbolic in character, relating to the three and a half days in vv. 9, 11. It would then designate a persecution of limited length.

■ **11:3 two witnesses.** Possibly two literal individual human beings are in view: either two Christian prophets who were martyred shortly before the fall of Jerusalem, or two prophets who will appear shortly before the Second Coming. But their identification with two lampstands (v. 4) sug-

my two [g]witnesses, [h]and they will prophesy [i]one thousand two hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth."

4 These are the [j]two olive trees and the two lampstands standing before the [2]God of the earth. 5 And if anyone wants to harm them, [k]fire proceeds from their mouth and devours their enemies. [l]And if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this manner. 6 These [m]have power to shut heaven, so that no rain falls in the days of their prophecy; and they have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues, as often as they desire.

The Witnesses Killed

7 When they [n]finish their testimony, [o]the beast that ascends [p]out of the bottomless pit [q]will make war against them, overcome them, and kill them. 8 And their dead bodies *will lie* in the street of [r]the great city which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, [s]where also [3]our Lord was crucified. 9 [t]Then *those* from the peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations [4]will see their dead bodies three-and-a-half days, [u]and not allow their dead bodies to be put into graves. 10 [v]And those who dwell on the earth will rejoice over them, make merry, [w]and send gifts to one another, [x]because these two prophets tormented those who dwell on the earth.

The Witnesses Resurrected

11 [y]Now after the three-and-a-half days [z]the breath of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell on those who saw them. 12 And [5]they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." [a]And they ascended to heaven [b]in a cloud, [c]and their enemies saw them. 13 In the same hour [d]there was a great earthquake, [e]and a tenth of the city fell. In the earthquake seven thousand people were killed, and the rest were afraid [f]and gave glory to the God of heaven.

14 [g]The second woe is past. Behold, the third woe is coming quickly.

Seventh Trumpet: The Kingdom Proclaimed

15 Then [h]the seventh angel sounded: [i]And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, [j]"The [6]kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord and of His Christ, [k]and He shall reign forever and ever!" 16 And [l]the twenty-four elders who sat before God on their thrones fell on their faces and [m]worshiped God, 17 saying:

"We give You thanks, O Lord God Almighty,
The One [n]who is and who was [7]and who is to come,
Because You have taken Your great power [o]and reigned.
18 The nations were [p]angry, and Your [8]wrath has come,
And the time of the [q]dead, that they should be judged,
And that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints,
And those who fear Your name, small and great,
And should destroy those who destroy the earth."

19 Then [r]the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of [9]His covenant was seen in His temple. And [s]there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, [t]and great hail.

3 [g]Rev. 20:4 [h]Rev. 19:10 [i]Rev. 12:6

4 [j]Zech. 4:2, 3, 11, 14 [2]NU, M *Lord*

5 [k]2 Kin. 1:10–12 [l]Num. 16:29

6 [m]1 Kin. 17:1

7 [n]Luke 13:32 [o]Rev. 13:1, 11; 17:8 [p]Rev. 9:1, 2 [q]Dan. 7:21

8 [r]Rev. 14:8 [s]Heb. 13:12 [3]NU, M *their*

9 [t]Rev. 17:15 [u]Ps. 79:2, 3 [4]NU, M *see . . . and will not allow*

10 [v]Rev. 12:12 [w]Esth. 9:19, 22 [x]Rev. 16:10

11 [y]Rev. 11:9 [z]Ezek. 37:5, 9, 10

12 [a]Is. 14:13 [b]Acts 1:9 [c]2 Kin. 2:11, 12 [5]M *I*

13 [d]Rev. 6:12; 8:5; 11:19; 16:18 [e]Rev. 16:19 [f]Rev. 14:7; 16:9; 19:7

14 [g]Rev. 8:13; 9:12

15 [h]Rev. 8:2; 10:7 [i]Is. 27:13 [j]Rev. 12:10 [k]Ex. 15:18 [6]NU, M *kingdom . . . has become the kingdom*

16 [l]Rev. 4:4 [m]Rev. 4:11; 5:9, 12, 14; 7:11

17 [n]Rev. 16:5 [o]Rev. 19:6 [7]NU, M omit *and who is to come*

18 [p]Ps. 2:1 [q]Dan. 7:10 [8]*anger*

19 [r]Rev. 4:1; 15:5, 8 [s]Rev. 8:5 [t]Rev. 16:21 [9]M *the covenant of the Lord*

gests they might be symbolic figures standing for the witness of the lampstand churches of 1:20. If this is the case, they would symbolize churches rather than specific individuals. Two lampstands, rather than seven, are mentioned to imitate the pattern of Zech. 4 and of Moses and Elijah (11:1–14 note; cf. Deut. 17:6; Matt. 17:3, 4; Luke 10:1).

■ **11:7 the beast.** See note on 13:2 and Introduction: Characteristics and Themes: Other Features.

■ **11:8 the great city.** This verse suggests to many that ancient Jerusalem is in view throughout this chapter (11:1, 2 note). But the symbolism has many potential applications. The city is the worldly city, representing humanity and human civilization in its rebellion against God. Babel, Sodom, Egypt, Jerusalem, ancient Rome, modern cities, and a final apostasy before the Second Coming are all examples. See Introduction: Interpretive Difficulties and note on 17:1—19:10.

■ **11:9 peoples, tribes, tongues, and nations.** See note on 5:9.

three-and-a-half days. See note on v. 2.

■ **11:10 those who dwell on the earth.** See note on 6:10.

■ **11:11, 12** If the two witnesses are individuals, their resurrection should presumably be interpreted literally. If the witnesses are symbolic of the churches, their resurrection symbolizes the victory of Christian witness after a time of intense persecution (6:9, 10; 20:1–6). See note on v. 3.

■ **11:15–19** The second cycle of judgments (8:2—11:19) closes with a second description of the Second Coming by focusing on the last judgment (v. 18) and the triumph of God's kingly rule (vv. 15, 17).

■ **11:19 the temple of God.** See note on 4:2.

ark. The ark of the covenant was the most holy object in the tabernacle (Ex. 25:10–22). It was normally concealed from sight behind the tabernacle curtains. The revealing of this innermost object signifies that God has revealed His glory, both the glory of His law (the covenant words) and of His mercy (as signified by the atonement cover).

CHAPTER 12

2 [a]Is. 26:17; 66:6–9

3 [b]Rev. 13:1; 17:3, 7, 9

4 [c]Rev. 9:10, 19 [d]Rev. 8:7, 12 [e]Dan. 8:10 [f]Rev. 12:2 [g]Matt. 2:16

5 [h]Ps. 2:9 [i]Acts 1:9–11

6 [j]Rev. 12:4, 14 [k]Rev. 11:3; 13:5

7 [l]Dan. 10:13, 21; 12:1 [m]Rev. 20:2

8 [1]*were not strong enough* [2]M *him*

9 [n]John 12:31 [o]Gen. 3:1, 4 [p]Rev. 20:3 [q]Rev. 9:1

10 [r]Rev. 11:15 [s]Zech. 3:1

11 [t]Rom. 16:20 [u]Luke 14:26

12 [v]Ps. 96:11 [w]Rev. 8:13 [x]Rev. 10:6

13 [y]Rev. 12:5

14 [z]Ex. 19:4 [a]Rev. 12:6 [b]Rev. 17:3 [c]Dan. 7:25; 12:7

15 [d]Is. 59:19

The Woman, the Child, and the Dragon

12 Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a garland of twelve stars. 2 Then being with child, she cried out [a]in labor and in pain to give birth.

3 And another sign appeared in heaven: behold, [b]a great, fiery red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven diadems on his heads. 4 [c]His tail drew a third [d]of the stars of heaven [e]and threw them to the earth. And the dragon stood [f]before the woman who was ready to give birth, [g]to devour her Child as soon as it was born. 5 She bore a male Child [h]who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron. And her Child was [i]caught up to God and His throne. 6 Then [j]the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there [k]one thousand two hundred and sixty days.

Satan Thrown Out of Heaven

7 And war broke out in heaven: [l]Michael and his angels fought [m]with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, 8 but they [l]did not prevail, nor was a place found for [2]them in heaven any longer. 9 So [n]the great dragon was cast out, [o]that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, [p]who deceives the whole world; [q]he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

10 Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, [r]"Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, [s]who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down. 11 And [t]they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, [u]and they did not love their lives to the death. 12 Therefore [v]rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! [w]Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, [x]because he knows that he has a short time."

The Woman Persecuted

13 Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted [y]the woman who gave birth to the male *Child.* 14 [z]But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, [a]that she might fly [b]into the wilderness to her place, where she is nourished [c]for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent. 15 So the serpent [d]spewed water out of his mouth like a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away by the flood. 16 But the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the flood which the

■ **12:1—14:20** This third cycle of visions consists primarily of histories of key symbolic characters: the dragon, the woman, the beast, the false prophet, the 144,000, angelic announcers, and the Son of Man (Introduction: Outline). Unlike the cycles of seven seals (5:1—8:1) and seven trumpets (8:2—11:19), these visions have no explicit numbering. But, like the preceding cycles, they lead to a vision of the Second Coming (14:14–20). The two preceding cycles focused on the judgments issuing from God's throne. This cycle depicts in depth the nature of the spiritual conflict. Characters appear in symbolic form to represent the forces on the two sides of a cosmic spiritual war.

God Himself has already been revealed in chs. 4; 5. Opposing God are Satan (the dragon) and his agents, the beast (13:1–10) and the false prophet (13:11–18; 16:13). On God's side are His people, portrayed as a light-bearing woman (12:1–6, 13–17) and as a chaste, numbered, and protected multitude (14:1–5). These two complementary pictures show the saints in their capacity as witnesses of God's light and as separated from the corruptions of the world. Thus the saints are exhorted to remain faithful to Christ in response to the persecution by the beast, and to remain pure by resisting the seduction by the harlot (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes: Content). The symbolic pictures show the two sides stripped of all inconsistency and confusion to clearly express the nature of spiritual warfare (Eph. 6:10–20). The present conflicts will be followed by the peace of 21:1—22:5 when the fulfillment of God's plans takes effect.

■ **12:1 a woman.** The imagery calls to mind Joseph's dream (Gen. 37:9, 10) and the picture of Jerusalem bringing forth the Messiah and His remnant (Is. 54:1–4; 66:7–13; Mic. 5:3). The Old Testament saints collectively are in view. Mary the mother of Jesus is included in this group, but only as an outstanding member of the whole. The later history shows that the New Testament saints also are included (vv. 13–17). The light-bearing character of the woman foreshadows the glory of the new Jerusalem (21:11, 22–27). In her privileges the church now already partakes in the blessings to come. But she is still buffeted by Satan (chs. 12—14 note).

■ **12:3 a great, fiery red dragon.** This figure is identified as Satan, the devil, in v. 9. The image of a dragon depicts Satan in his monstrous power and hideous enmity against God. Satan has constantly opposed the plans of God and has been repeatedly defeated in the great acts of God's saving power (Gen. 3:1, 15; Ps. 74:13, 14; Is. 27:1; 51:9, 10; Ezek. 29:3; Luke 10:18; 11:14–23; John 12:31; Col. 2:15). He rises against the Messiah (vv. 4, 5) and His servants (v. 17) but will finally be consigned to everlasting punishment (20:10).

■ **12:5 a male Child.** In fulfillment of Mic. 5:3, Christ is born and His triumphant rule over the nations will be established, as certified by His resurrection and ascension.

■ **12:6** God promises protection for a persecuted church. On the 1,260 days, see note on 11:2.

■ **12:7–12** The victory of Christ (v. 5) results in sweeping consequences, beginning with the expulsion of Satan by Michael, who is functioning as an agent of Christ. The passage does not speak of the fall of Satan at the time of creation but of the defeat of Satan in the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ (v. 12; John 12:31; Col. 2:15).

■ **12:13–17** Having failed to destroy Christ (vv. 4, 5), the Dragon tries to destroy the people of Christ. He uses his mouth, representing deceit (vv. 15, 9; 2 Thess. 2:9, 10). When deceit fails, he tries persecuting power (12:17—13:10).

■ **12:14 a time and times and half a time.** See note on 11:2.

dragon had spewed out of his mouth. 17 And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus [3]Christ.

The Beast from the Sea

13 Then [1]I stood on the sand of the sea. And I saw [a]a beast rising up out of the sea, [b]having [2]seven heads and ten horns, and on his horns ten crowns, and on his heads a [c]blasphemous name. 2 Now the beast which I saw was like a leopard, his feet were like *the feet of* a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. The [d]dragon gave him his power, his throne, and great authority. 3 And *I saw* one of his heads [e]as if it had been mortally wounded, and his deadly wound was healed. And [f]all the world marveled and followed the beast. 4 So they worshiped the dragon who gave authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, [g]"Who *is* like the beast? Who is able to make war with him?"

5 And he was given [h]a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies, and he was given authority to [3]continue for [i]forty-two months. 6 Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, [j]His tabernacle, and those who dwell in heaven. 7 It was granted to him [k]to make war with the saints and to overcome them. And [l]authority was given him over every [4]tribe, tongue, and nation. 8 All who dwell on the earth will worship him, [m]whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain [n]from the foundation of the world.

9 [o]If anyone has an ear, let him hear. 10 [p]He who leads into captivity shall go into captivity; [q]he who kills with the sword must be killed with the sword. [r]Here is the [5]patience and the faith of the saints.

The Beast from the Earth

11 Then I saw another beast [s]coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and spoke like a dragon. 12 And he exercises all the authority of the first beast in his presence, and causes the earth and those who dwell in it to worship the first beast, [t]whose deadly wound was healed. 13 [u]He performs great signs, [v]so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. 14 [w]And he deceives [6]those who dwell on the earth [x]by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast, telling those who dwell on the earth to make an image to the beast who was wounded by the sword [y]and lived. 15 He was granted *power* to give breath to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak [z]and cause as many as would not worship the image of the beast to be killed. 16 He causes all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and slave, [a]to receive a mark on their right hand or on their foreheads,

17 [3]NU, M omit *Christ*

CHAPTER 13

1 [a]Dan. 7:2, 7 [b]Rev. 12:3 [c]Rev. 17:3 [1]NU *he* [2]NU, M *ten horns and seven heads*

2 [d]Rev. 12:3, 9; 13:4, 12

3 [e]Rev. 13:12, 14 [f]Rev. 17:8

4 [g]Rev. 18:18

5 [h]Dan. 7:8, 11, 20, 25; 11:36 [i]Rev. 11:2 [3]M *make war*

6 [j][Col. 2:9]

7 [k]Dan. 7:21 [l]Rev. 11:18 [4]NU, M add *and people*

8 [m]Ex. 32:32 [n]Rev. 17:8

9 [o]Rev. 2:7

10 [p]Is. 33:1 [q]Gen. 9:6 [r]Rev. 14:12 [5]*perseverance*

11 [s]Rev. 11:7

12 [t]Rev. 13:3, 4

13 [u]Matt. 24:24 [v]1 Kin. 18:38

14 [w]Rev. 12:9 [x]2 Thess. 2:9 [y]2 Kin. 20:7 [6]M *my own people*

15 [z]Rev. 16:2

16 [a]Rev. 7:3; 14:9; 20:4

■ **13:1–10** A beast rising out of the sea represents persecuting power, especially the power of a demonized state. See Introduction: Characteristics and Themes: Other Features.

■ **13:2 leopard . . . bear . . . lion.** This beast combines features from the four beasts of Dan. 7:1–8, 17–27, which represent idolatrous kingdoms. This beast in Revelation must be a worldly kingdom summing up all of them. In this way the state persecutions of Daniel and his friends suggest the nature of the persecution that the seven churches must face from the Roman state—and possibly persecutions of later ages. Interpreters disagree about which particular persecution the beast most directly represents (Introduction: Interpretive Difficulties). In Asia Minor, local officials threatened to kill Christians if they refused to worship the Roman Emperor. A similar opposition to godly worship will crop up just before the Second Coming (2 Thess. 2:4). Persecutions come sporadically in the period between these two times (Matt. 24:9; 2 Tim. 3:12, 13; 1 Pet. 4:12–19). Both a repeated pattern of Satanic opposition and a final, climactic outbreak are apparently suggested in 2 Thess. 2:7, 8. Christians must not be surprised by these pressures. They must face martyrdom, if necessary, knowing that God is in control and that His triumph is certain.

■ **13:5 forty-two months.** See note on 11:2.

■ **13:7 war with the saints.** The beast compels worship (v. 8), and when the saints refuse to submit, they are martyred. But despite their apparent defeat, martyrs enjoy victory with Christ both immediately (6:9–11) and when their prayers for the final defeat of the beast are answered (19:11–21).

tribe, tongue, and nation. See note on 5:9.

■ **13:8 Book of Life.** The Greek may also be rendered "written in the slain Lamb's Book of Life from the foundation of the world" (cf. 17:8). The book is the heavenly roster of those destined to new life through the purchase of Christ's blood (3:5; 5:9). In the midst of persecution and the immense power of the beast, the saints may find security in God's guarantee of their heavenly citizenship (17:8; 20:12, 15; 21:27). A similar guarantee is found in ch. 7.

■ **13:10 patience.** See note on 1:9.

■ **13:11–18** The beast from the earth, also called the false prophet (16:13; 19:20; 20:10), functions as a propagandist for the beast. His actions counterfeit the witness of the Holy Spirit (see Introduction: Characteristics and Themes: Other Features). In first-century Asia Minor, the main propagandists would have been priests of the emperor cult and the "Commune of Asia," a council of distinguished city representatives promoting loyalty to the emperor. In modern times as well, totalitarianism enlists propagandists. Just before the Second Coming, counterfeit miracles will accompany the appearance of the "man of sin" (2 Thess. 2:3, 9). The false prophet embodies a repeatable pattern (Introduction: Interpretive Difficulties).

■ **13:16 a mark.** The mark of the beast is a counterfeit for the seal of God's name on the saints (7:2–8; 14:1; Ezek. 9). The beast owns those who are marked, and they are his slaves (14:9; 19:20; 20:4). Speculations about a visible mark miss the main point of the spiritual distinction between the two groups.

17 [b]Rev. 14:9–11 [c]Rev. 15:2 [7]NU, M *the mark, the name*

18 [d]Rev. 17:9 [e][1 Cor. 2:14] [f]Rev. 15:2 [g]Rev. 21:17

CHAPTER 14

1 [a]Rev. 5:6 [b]Rev. 7:4; 14:3 [c]Rev. 7:3; 22:4 [1]NU, M *the* [2]NU, M add *His name and*

2 [d]Rev. 1:15; 19:6 [e]Rev. 5:8

3 [f]Rev. 5:9

4 [g][2 Cor. 11:2] [h]Rev. 3:4; 7:17 [i]Rev. 5:9 [j]James 1:18 [3]M adds *by Jesus*

5 [k]Ps. 32:2 [l]Eph. 5:27 [4]NU, M *falsehood* [5]NU, M omit the rest of v. 5.

6 [m]Rev. 8:13 [n]Eph. 3:9 [o]Rev. 13:7

7 [p]Rev. 11:18 [q]Neh. 9:6

8 [r]Is. 21:9 [s]Jer. 51:7 [6]NU *Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, which has made;* M *Babylon the great is fallen. She has made*

9 [t]Rev. 13:14, 15; 14:11 [u]Rev. 13:16

10 [v]Ps. 75:8 [w]Rev. 18:6 [x]Rev. 16:19 [y]Rev. 20:10 [z]2 Thess. 1:7

11 [a]Is. 34:8–10

17 and that no one may buy or sell except one who has [7]the mark or [b]the name of the beast, [c]or the number of his name.

18 [d]Here is wisdom. Let him who has [e]understanding calculate [f]the number of the beast, [g]for it is the number of a man: His number *is* 666.

The Lamb and the 144,000

14 Then I looked, and behold, [1]a [a]Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him [b]one hundred *and* forty-four thousand, [2]having His Father's name [c]written on their foreheads. 2 And I heard a voice from heaven, [d]like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of [e]harpists playing their harps. 3 They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song [f]except the hundred *and* forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. 4 These are the ones who were not defiled with women, [g]for they are virgins. These are the ones [h]who follow the Lamb wherever He goes. These [i]were [3]redeemed from *among* men, [j]being first-fruits to God and to the Lamb. 5 And [k]in their mouth was found no [4]deceit, for [l]they are without fault [5]before the throne of God.

The Proclamations of Three Angels

6 Then I saw another angel [m]flying in the midst of heaven, [n]having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—[o]to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people— 7 saying with a loud voice, [p]"Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; [q]and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water."

8 And another angel followed, saying, [r]"Babylon[6] is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because [s]she has made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication."

9 Then a third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, [t]"If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives *his* [u]mark on his forehead or on his hand, 10 he himself [v]shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is [w]poured out full strength into [x]the cup of His indignation. [y]He shall be tormented with [z]fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. 11 And [a]the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name."

12 [b]Here is the [7]patience of the saints; [c]here[8] *are* those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

13 Then I heard a voice from heaven saying [9]to me, "Write: [d]'Blessed *are* the dead [e]who die in the Lord from now on.' "

"Yes," says the Spirit, [f]"that they may rest from their labors, and their works follow [g]them."

Reaping the Earth's Harvest

14 Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat *One* like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. 15 And another angel [h]came

12 [b]Rev. 13:10 [c]Rev. 12:17 [7]*steadfastness, perseverance* [8]NU, M omit *here are those* 13 [d]Eccl. 4:1, 2 [e]1 Cor. 15:18 [f]Heb. 4:9, 10 [g][1 Cor. 3:11–15; 15:58] [9]NU, M omit *to me* 15 [h]Rev. 16:17

■ **13:18 666.** By the time of Domitian, the earlier emperor Nero had become a traditional antichrist figure, and 666 was probably already known to be the numerical value associated with the name Nero Caesar in Hebrew. The number then designates either Nero himself (who was to rise from the dead and lead an invasion against Rome according to a widespread belief during Domitian's reign) or a later figure imitating Nero's godlessness. Many have tried to identify the final Antichrist on the basis of the number, but its connections with Nero may well be its only significance. We need to be always watchful for Christ's coming, without falling into trying to set dates (Matt. 24:36–51).

■ **14:1–5** The 144,000 represent the saints in their complete number (7:4–8 note). They form a priestly company (5:10) consecrated to offer praise to God on the holy mount.

■ **14:4 virgins.** Sexual imagery is used to denote spiritual purity. Christ's faithful followers keep away from Babylon the harlot (v. 8; 17:1–6) and are loyal to Him exclusively, as His pure bride (19:7, 8; Eph. 5:26, 27). Purity in sexual behavior is included as one element in this comprehensive purity (1 Cor. 6:15–20).

■ **14:6 every nation, tribe, tongue, and people.** See note on 5:9.

■ **14:8 Babylon . . . that great city.** See note on 17:1—19:10.

wine . . . of her fornication. Sexual immorality, as well as idolatry (which is spiritual adultery), were major temptations for the seven churches (2:20 note). But the effect, like that of drunkenness, is shame, foolishness, and disgrace (17:2, 4; 18:3; 19:2; Prov. 9:13–18; Jer. 51:7).

■ **14:9 the beast.** See note on 13:2 and Introduction: Characteristics and Themes: Other Features.

his mark. See note on 13:16.

■ **14:12 patience of the saints.** See note on 1:9.

■ **14:14–20** A description of the Second Coming as the harvest over which Christ presides (Matt. 13:36–43; cf. Joel 3:12–16)—the "One like the Son of Man" (1:13; Dan. 7:13, 14). Two harvests are described, grain (vv. 14–16) and grapes (vv. 17–20). These are perhaps two aspects of the same events of judgment. However, the grain harvest may symbolize the harvest of the righteous (Luke 3:17), followed by the harvest of the wicked (grapes).

out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, [i]"Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come [j]for You to reap, for the harvest [j]of the earth is ripe." 16 So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped.

Reaping the Grapes of Wrath

17 Then another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

18 And another angel came out from the altar, [k]who had power over fire, and he cried with a loud cry to him who had the sharp sickle, saying, [l]"Thrust in your sharp sickle and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe." 19 So the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and threw *it* into [m]the great winepress of the wrath of God. 20 And [n]the winepress was trampled [o]outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress, [p]up to the horses' bridles, for one thousand six hundred [2]furlongs.

Prelude to the Bowl Judgments

15 Then [a]I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: [b]seven angels having the seven last plagues, [c]for in them the wrath of God is complete.

2 And I saw *something* like [d]a sea of glass [e]mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, [f]over his image and [f]over his mark *and* over the [g]number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, [h]having harps of God. 3 They sing [i]the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the [j]Lamb, saying:

[k]"Great and marvelous *are* Your works,
Lord God Almighty!
[l]Just and true *are* Your ways,
O King of the [2]saints!
4 [m]Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name?
For *You* alone *are* [n]holy.
For [o]all nations shall come and worship before You,
For Your judgments have been manifested."

5 After these things I looked, and [3]behold, [p]the [4]temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened. 6 And out of the [5]temple came the seven angels having the seven plagues, [q]clothed in pure bright linen, and having their chests girded with golden bands. 7 [r]Then one of the four living creatures gave to the seven angels seven golden bowls full of the wrath of God [s]who lives forever and ever. 8 [t]The temple was filled with smoke [u]from the glory of God and from His power, and no one was able to enter the temple till the seven plagues of the seven angels were completed.

16 Then I heard a loud voice from the temple saying [a]to the seven angels, "Go and pour out the [1]bowls [b]of the wrath of God on the earth."

15 [i]Joel 3:13 [j]Jer. 51:33 [1]NU, M omit *for You*

18 [k]Rev. 16:8 [l]Joel 3:13

19 [m]Rev. 19:15

20 [n]Is. 63:3 [o]Heb. 13:12 [p]Is. 34:3 [2]Lit. *stadia*, about 184 miles in all

CHAPTER 15

1 [a]Rev. 12:1, 3 [b]Rev. 21:9 [c]Rev. 14:10

2 [d]Rev. 4:6 [e][Matt. 3:11] [f]Rev. 13:14, 15 [g]Rev. 13:17 [h]Rev. 5:8 [1]NU, M omit *over his mark*

3 [i]Ex. 15:1–21 [j]Rev. 15:3 [k]Deut. 32:3, 4 [l]Ps. 145:17 [2]NU, M *nations*

4 [m]Ex. 15:14 [n]Lev. 11:44 [o]Is. 66:23

5 [p]Num. 1:50 [3]NU, M omit *behold* [4]*sanctuary*, the inner shrine

6 [q]Ex. 28:6 [5]*sanctuary*, the inner shrine

7 [r]Rev. 4:6 [s]1 Thess. 1:9

8 [t]Ex. 19:18; 40:34 [u]2 Thess. 1:9

CHAPTER 16

1 [a]Rev. 15:1 [b]Rev. 14:10 [1]NU, M *seven bowls*

■ **15:1—16:21** The cycle of seven bowls of God's wrath composes the fourth cycle of visions leading up to the Second Coming (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes: Literary Form). The opening scene of worship (15:1—16:1) calls to mind the worship around God's throne in chs. 4; 5. The overcomers rejoice in God's presence (15:3, 4). Seven resplendent angels receive bowls from the presence of God in the temple. The bowls symbolize the cup of God's wrath, which makes the nations drunk (14:10; 16:19; Is. 51:17, 20, 22; Jer. 25:15–29; Lam. 4:21; Ezek. 23:31–34; Hab. 2:16). The bowls are poured out at God's command (16:1), resulting in seven last plagues. The plagues lead up to the Second Coming, since "in them the wrath of God is complete" (15:1).

The seven bowls show notable similarities with the seven trumpets. The first four bowls, like the first four trumpets, result in devastation on the four major regions of creation: land, sea, fresh water, and sky. Like the trumpets, the bowls are reminiscent of the plagues against Egypt. But the bowls result in more severe judgments than did the trumpets. The trumpet judgments typically affected a third of the total, but the bowls affect the whole.

These bowls symbolize the judgments of God against evildoers. The general pattern may include both the judgments against the godless Roman Empire and the final crisis leading up to the Second Coming (Introduction: Interpretive Difficulties).

■ **15:2 sea of glass.** See note on 4:6.

those who have the victory. The saints through their prayers have a role to play in the judgments of God (6:9–11). As in ch. 7, they are protected from the judgments that fall on the earth.

■ **15:3 song of Moses.** An allusion to Ex. 15. Like the Israelites, the saints are delivered from idolatrous oppression through plagues sent from God.

Just. God's acts of judgment are never arbitrary or spiteful, but just payment for evil deeds (v. 4; 16:5, 7; 19:2, 11).

■ **15:5 the temple.** The inner area of God's heavenly dwelling has already been pictured in chs. 4; 5 (note).

■ **15:6 pure bright linen.** Linen was an Old Testament priestly clothing (Ex. 28:42; Lev. 16:4). The holiness of God's judgments is thereby emphasized (v. 3 note).

■ **15:7 four living creatures.** See note on 4:6.

■ **15:8 smoke.** Smoke or thick cloud frequently accompanies God's presence, especially when He is angry. The associations include Mount Sinai (Ex. 19:9, 16, 18; 20:18) and the visions of Isaiah and Ezekiel (Is. 6:4; Ezek. 1:4; cf. Num. 12:5; Ps. 18:8, 11; 74:1).

2 [c]Rev. 8:7 [d]Ex. 9:9–11 [e]Rev. 13:15–17; 14:9 [f]Rev. 13:14 [2]*severe and malignant,* lit. *bad and evil*

3 [g]Rev. 8:8; 11:6 [h]Ex. 7:17–21 [i]Rev. 8:9

4 [j]Rev. 8:10 [k]Ex. 7:17–20

5 [l]Rev. 15:3, 4 [m]Rev. 1:4, 8 [3]NU, M omit *O Lord* [4]NU, M *was, the Holy One*

6 [n]Matt. 23:34 [o]Rev. 11:18 [p]Is. 49:26 [5]NU, M omit *For*

7 [q]Rev. 15:3 [r]Rev. 13:10; 19:2 [6]NU, M omit *another from*

8 [s]Rev. 8:12 [t]Rev. 9:17, 18

9 [u]Rev. 16:11 [v]Dan. 5:22 [w]Rev. 11:13

10 [x]Rev. 13:2 [y]Rev. 8:12; 9:2 [z]Rev. 11:10

12 [a]Rev. 9:14 [b]Jer. 50:38 [c]Is. 41:2, 25; 46:11

13 [d]1 John 4:1 [e]Rev. 12:3, 9 [f]Rev. 13:11, 14; 19:20; 20:10

14 [g]2 Thess. 2:9 [h]Luke 2:1 [i]Rev. 17:14; 19:19; 20:8 [7]NU, M omit *of the earth and*

15 [j]Matt. 24:43 [k]2 Cor. 5:3

16 [l]Rev. 19:19 [8]Lit. *Mount Megiddo;* M *Megiddo*

17 [m]Rev. 10:6; 21:6

18 [n]Rev. 4:5

First Bowl: Loathsome Sores

2 So the first went and poured out his bowl [c]upon the earth, and a [2]foul and [d]loathsome sore came upon the men [e]who had the mark of the beast and those [f]who worshiped his image.

Second Bowl: The Sea Turns to Blood

3 Then the second angel poured out his bowl [g]on the sea, and [h]it became blood as of a dead *man;* [i]and every living creature in the sea died.

Third Bowl: The Waters Turn to Blood

4 Then the third angel poured out his bowl [j]on the rivers and springs of water, [k]and they became blood. 5 And I heard the angel of the waters saying:

[l]"You are righteous, [3]O Lord,
The One [m]who is and who [4]was and who is to be,
Because You have judged these things.
6 For [n]they have shed the blood [o]of saints and prophets,
[p]And You have given them blood to drink.
[5]For it is their just due."

7 And I heard [6]another from the altar saying, "Even so, [q]Lord God Almighty, [r]true and righteous *are* Your judgments."

Fourth Bowl: Men Are Scorched

8 Then the fourth angel poured out his bowl [s]on the sun, [t]and power was given to him to scorch men with fire. 9 And men were scorched with great heat, and they [u]blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; [v]and they did not repent [w]and give Him glory.

Fifth Bowl: Darkness and Pain

10 Then the fifth angel poured out his bowl [x]on the throne of the beast, [y]and his kingdom became full of darkness; [z]and they gnawed their tongues because of the pain. 11 They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and did not repent of their deeds.

Sixth Bowl: Euphrates Dried Up

12 Then the sixth angel poured out his bowl [a]on the great river Euphrates, [b]and its water was dried up, [c]so that the way of the kings from the east might be prepared. 13 And I saw three unclean [d]spirits like frogs *coming* out of the mouth of [e]the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of [f]the false prophet. 14 For they are spirits of demons, [g]performing signs, *which* go out to the kings [7]of the earth and of [h]the whole world, to gather them to [i]the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

15 [j]"Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed *is* he who watches, and keeps his garments, [k]lest he walk naked and they see his shame."

16 [l]And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, [8]Armageddon.

Seventh Bowl: The Earth Utterly Shaken

17 Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, [m]"It is done!" 18 And [n]there were noises and thunder-

■ **16:2 sore.** Like the Egyptian plague of boils (Ex. 9:8–12).

■ **16:3, 4 blood.** Like the Egyptian plague of blood (Ex. 7:14–24).

■ **16:5 righteous.** See note on 15:3.

■ **16:10 darkness.** Like the Egyptian plague of darkness (Ex. 10:21–23).

■ **16:14 to gather them to the battle.** In the climactic battle all the forces of wickedness are assembled to make war against the warrior Lamb (17:14). The imagery alludes to the battle between God and Pharaoh in Ex. 15:2, but the panorama is universal in scope. Several passages in Revelation describe the battle with increasing detail and precision (17:13, 14; 19:11–21; 20:7–10; cf. 6:12–17), all based on the eschatological battle of Gog and Magog in Ezek. 38; 39. Throughout the church age there are times of intense confrontation between God and the forces of Satan (2:10, 13), but the most intense takes place at the Second Coming (19:11–21).

■ **16:16 Armageddon.** A transliteration of the Hebrew for "mount of Megiddo." In ancient Israel, Megiddo was a key city overlooking a major travel route between the great kingdoms of Mesopotamia and Egypt. Huge armies could assemble in the neighboring Plain of Esdraelon. Thus it is a fitting name for the location of the climactic battle.

■ **16:17–21** The seventh bowl brings the cycle of judgments to an end. Like the other cycles, this one ends with the Second Coming (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes: Literary Form), though the symbols of

ings and lightnings; [o]and there was a great earthquake, such a mighty and great earthquake [p]as had not occurred since men were on the earth. [19] Now [q]the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell. And [r]great Babylon [s]was remembered before God, [t]to give her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. [20] Then [u]every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. [21] And great hail from heaven fell upon men, *each hailstone* about the weight of a talent. Men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail, since that plague was exceedingly great.

The Scarlet Woman and the Scarlet Beast

17 Then [a]one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and talked with me, saying [1]to me, "Come, [b]I will show you the judgment of [c]the great harlot [d]who sits on many waters, [2] [e]with whom the kings of the earth committed fornication, and [f]the inhabitants of the earth were made drunk with the wine of her fornication."

[3] So he carried me away in the Spirit [g]into the wilderness. And I saw a woman sitting [h]on a scarlet beast *which was* full of [i]names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. [4] The woman [j]was arrayed in purple and scarlet, [k]and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, [l]having in her hand a golden cup [m]full of abominations and the filthiness of [2]her fornication. [5] And on her forehead a name *was* written:

[n]MYSTERY,
BABYLON THE GREAT,
THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

[6] I saw [o]the woman, drunk [p]with the blood of the saints and with the blood of [q]the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement.

The Meaning of the Woman and the Beast

[7] But the angel said to me, "Why did you marvel? I will tell you the [3]mystery of the woman and of the beast that carries her, which has the seven heads and the ten horns. [8] The beast that you saw was, and is not, and [r]will ascend out of the bottomless pit and [s]go to [4]perdition. And

18 [o]Rev. 11:13 [p]Dan. 12:1

19 [q]Rev. 14:8 [r]Rev. 17:5, 18 [s]Rev. 14:8; 18:5 [t]Is. 51:17

20 [u]Rev. 6:14; 20:11

CHAPTER 17

1 [a]Rev. 1:1; 21:9 [b]Rev. 16:19 [c]Nah. 3:4 [d]Jer. 51:13 [1]NU, M omit *to me*

2 [e]Rev. 2:22; 18:3, 9 [f]Jer. 51:7

3 [g]Rev. 12:6, 14; 21:10 [h]Rev. 12:3 [i]Rev. 13:1

4 [j]Rev. 18:12, 16 [k]Dan. 11:38 [l]Jer. 51:7 [m]Rev. 14:8 [2]M *the fornication of the earth*

5 [n]2 Thess. 2:7

6 [o]Rev. 18:24 [p]Rev. 13:15 [q]Rev. 6:9, 10

7 [3]*hidden truth*

8 [r]Rev. 11:7 [s]Rev. 13:10; 17:11 [4]*destruction*

the Second Coming are not as obvious as in some other cases. Note the following features: the readers have been told that the end of the wrath of God would come with the seventh bowl (15:1); the removal of all islands and mountains in v. 20 corresponds to the final shaking of the earth in 6:14 and 20:11 (Heb. 12:26, 27); elsewhere the fall of Babylon is immediately followed by the marriage supper of the Lamb (19:1–10); in 17:14–17 the fall of Babylon is associated with the last battle, which takes place at the Second Coming (19:11–21). Moreover, that final battle was imminent in v. 16. The judgment of the seventh bowl continues the practice of drawing the imagery of the final battle from the conflict with Gog and Magog (v. 14 note) by grouping together an earthquake, the overturning of the mountains, and hail, as in Ezek. 38:19–23. Hence it describes the divine plague-judgments accompanying the battle; a description of other aspects of the battle is delayed until 19:11–21 in keeping with the dramatic plan of Revelation.

■ **17:1—19:10** Babylon the harlot appears, representing the seductions of the world (17:4; 18:3; see Introduction: Characteristics and Themes: Other Features). "Babylon" is probably a symbol for the city of Rome (17:9 note, 17:18) with its immorality. Paganism made each of the cities of Asia Minor into a small manifestation of this Babylon. Full economic and social participation (13:17) involved attendance at pagan religious feasts and celebrations. Worship of the emperor was an expected expression of political allegiance. Pagans called Christians atheists because they did not worship the many gods, and called them haters of humankind because they withdrew from compromised forms of social life (1 Pet. 2:12; 4:3, 4). In reaction to this pressure, some professing Christians argued that participation in idolatrous feasts and sexual immorality were acceptable (2:12, 20; 1 Cor. 6:12–20). The woman Jezebel in 2:20–23 was a key seducer whose work is generalized and more deeply symbolized in Babylon the harlot (2:21, 22; cf. 17:2).

A few interpreters favor identifying Babylon, "the great harlot," with Jerusalem. In refusing to accept the Messiah, she became a prostitute in the imagery of the Old Testament (Is. 1:21; Ezek. 16; 23; Hos. 2; cf. Luke 11:47–51; 21:9–18). But Jerusalem was only one instance of a society seducing people away from true worship. Ancient Babylon was another, and accordingly Revelation takes up the language of the prophetic condemnations of Babylon and Tyre (Jer. 50; 51; Ezek. 27). Modern cities with their false religions and sexual exploitation are also forms of Babylon. Thus the symbolism of Babylon is capable of many historical embodiments, including the final, climactic manifestation of this "Babylon" just before the Second Coming.

When the destruction of false worship is complete (17:1—18:24), the true worshipers, the bride of the Lamb, stand out in their splendor and joy (19:1–10).

■ **17:3 in the Spirit.** See note on 1:10.

scarlet beast. This prostitute rides upon a hideous beast, evidently the same beast as in 13:1–10. The beast, representing the Roman Empire, supports the city of Rome in its luxurious idolatry. It also spreads the practices of Rome throughout the empire. Eventually, however, the beast turns against the prostitute and destroys her (vv. 16, 17). The rapacious powers of Roman government and the Roman legions destroy prosperity, and eventually the military powers of surrounding tribes destroy the city of Rome completely. The lesson from Roman times can be generalized: idolatrous states end up destroying the very powers, riches, privileges, and people that they originally supported. False worship is self-destructive.

■ **17:4 fornication.** See note on 2:20.

■ **17:7—18:24** Seven messages of judgment on Babylon are arranged into larger groups: three angelic messages of doom (17:7–18; 18:1–3; 18:4–8), three laments by those committed to Babylon (18:9–10, 11–17a, 17b–19), and a climactic pronouncement of the permanence of her fall (18:21–24). Note also the many allusions to Jer. 50; 51 and Ezek. 27.

■ **17:8 was, and is not, and will ascend.** The description is a counterfeit of the sovereignty of God, which is proclaimed in 1:4, 8; 4:8. "And is not" indicates that persecution is at an ebb but will rise with renewed intensity in the future. The beast represents a repeated pattern of persecution, as did the four successive beasts of Dan. 7 (13:2 note).

Book of Life. See note on 13:8.

those who [t]dwell on the earth [u]will marvel, [v]whose names are not written in the Book of Life from the foundation of the world, when they see the beast that was, and is not, and [5]yet is.

9 [w]"Here *is* the mind which has wisdom: [x]The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sits. 10 There are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, *and* the other has not yet come. And when he comes, he must [y]continue a short time. 11 The [z]beast that was, and is not, is himself also the eighth, and is of the seven, and is going to [6]perdition.

12 [a]"The ten horns which you saw are ten kings who have received no kingdom as yet, but they receive authority for one hour as kings with the beast. 13 These are of one mind, and they will give their power and authority to the beast. 14 [b]These will make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb will [c]overcome them, [d]for He is Lord of lords and King of kings; [e]and those *who are* with Him *are* called, chosen, and faithful."

15 Then he said to me, [f]"The waters which you saw, where the harlot sits, [g]are peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. 16 And the ten horns which you [7]saw on the beast, [h]these will hate the harlot, make her [i]desolate [j]and naked, eat her flesh and [k]burn her with fire. 17 [l]For God has put it into their hearts to fulfill His purpose, to be of one mind, and to give their kingdom to the beast, [m]until the words of God are fulfilled. 18 And the woman whom you saw [n]is that great city [o]which reigns over the kings of the earth."

The Fall of Babylon the Great

18 After[a] these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, [b]and the earth was illuminated with his glory. 2 And he cried [1]mightily with a loud voice, saying, [c]"Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and [d]has become a dwelling place of demons, a prison for every foul spirit, and [e]a cage for every unclean and hated bird! 3 For all the nations [f]have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, [g]and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the [2]abundance of her luxury."

4 And I heard another voice from heaven saying, [h]"Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues. 5 [i]For her sins [3]have reached to heaven, and [j]God has remembered her iniquities. 6 [k]Render to her just as she rendered [4]to you, and repay her double according to her works; [l]in the cup which she has mixed, [m]mix double for her. 7 [n]In the measure that she glorified herself and lived [5]luxuriously, in the same measure give her torment and sorrow; for she says in her heart, 'I sit *as* [o]queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow.' 8 Therefore her plagues will come [p]in one day—death and mourning and famine. And [q]she will be utterly burned with fire, [r]for strong *is* the Lord God who [6]judges her.

The World Mourns Babylon's Fall

9 [s]"The kings of the earth who committed fornication and lived luxuriously with her [t]will weep and lament for her, [u]when they see the smoke of her burning, 10 standing at a distance for

8 [t]Rev. 3:10 [u]Rev. 13:3 [v]Rev. 13:8 [5]NU, M *shall be present*
9 [w]Rev. 13:18 [x]Rev. 13:1
10 [y]Rev. 13:5
11 [z]Rev. 13:3, 12, 14; 17:8 [6]*destruction*
12 [a]Dan. 7:20
14 [b]Rev. 16:14; 19:19 [c]Rev. 19:20 [d]1 Tim. 6:15 [e]Jer. 50:44
15 [f]Is. 8:7 [g]Rev. 13:7
16 [h]Jer. 50:41 [i]Rev. 18:17, 19 [j]Ezek. 16:37, 39 [k]Rev. 18:8 [7]NU, M *saw, and the beast*
17 [l]2 Thess. 2:11 [m]Rev. 10:7
18 [n]Rev. 11:8; 16:19 [o]Rev. 12:4

CHAPTER 18

1 [a]Rev. 17:1, 7 [b]Ezek. 43:2
2 [c]Is. 13:19; 21:9 [d]Is. 13:21; 34:11, 13–15 [e]Is. 14:23 [1]NU, M omit *mightily*
3 [f]Rev. 14:8 [g]Is. 47:15 [2]Lit. *strengths*
4 [h]Is. 48:20
5 [i]Gen. 18:20 [j]Rev. 16:19 [3]NU, M *have been heaped up*
6 [k]Ps. 137:8 [l]Rev. 14:10 [m]Rev. 16:19 [4]NU, M omit *to you*
7 [n]Ezek. 28:2–8 [o]Is. 47:7, 8 [5]*sensually*
8 [p]Rev. 18:10 [q]Rev. 17:16 [r]Jer. 50:34 [6]NU, M *has judged*
9 [s]Ezek. 26:16; 27:35 [t]Jer. 50:46 [u]Rev. 19:3

■ **17:9 seven mountains.** Rome was built on seven mountains, or hills.

■ **17:10 Five have fallen.** If Revelation was written about A.D. 67, these five may be the first five Roman emperors, beginning with Julius Caesar. The sixth is Nero, the currently reigning emperor. But it might also be the case that five simply represents an indefinite number of previous persecuting states (such as the beasts of Dan. 7). The presence of the sixth indicates in symbolic fashion that Christians are near the end, but not quite there.

■ **17:12 ten horns.** The number "ten" goes back through v. 7 and 13:1 to Dan. 7:7, 24. But the beast of Revelation cannot simply be identified with the fourth beast of Daniel; rather, he is a combination of the characteristics of all four of Daniel's beasts. In Revelation, the ten horns are kingly confederates of the beast. In view of 16:12, 14, 16; 19:19; 20:8, the political powers beyond the borders of the Roman Empire are most directly in mind. Rome was eventually overrun by barbarian tribes. But the picture rises beyond the limitations of Rome and opens up a picture of the final battle in which the beast will enlist large-scale assistance.

■ **17:15 peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues.** See note on 5:9.

■ **17:16 will hate the harlot.** See note on 17:1—19:10.

■ **17:17 God has put it into their hearts.** In the midst of trials, the saints are assured that God is in control even of this appalling conflict.

■ **18:1 his glory.** Because of his exalted commission, the angel's splendor reflects that of God Himself (10:1, 2 note).

■ **18:2 dwelling place.** See Jer. 50:39.

■ **18:3 wine of . . . her fornication.** See note on 2:20.

■ **18:4 Come out.** See Is. 48:20; 52:11; Jer. 50:8; 51:6, 45; 2 Cor. 6:17.

■ **18:5 reached to heaven.** An ironic reminiscence of Gen. 11:4; Jer. 51:9.

■ **18:6 Render to her.** Judgment fits the nature of the offense (Ex. 21:23–25).

■ **18:8 burned with fire.** See Jer. 50:32.

fear of her torment, saying, [r]'Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! [w]For in one hour your judgment has come.'

11 "And [x]the merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her, for no one buys their merchandise anymore: 12 [y]merchandise of gold and silver, precious stones and pearls, fine linen and purple, silk and scarlet, every kind of citron wood, every kind of object of ivory, every kind of object of most precious wood, bronze, iron, and marble; 13 and cinnamon and incense, fragrant oil and frankincense, wine and oil, fine flour and wheat, cattle and sheep, horses and chariots, and bodies and [z]souls of men. 14 The fruit that your soul longed for has gone from you, and all the things which are rich and splendid have [7]gone from you, and you shall find them no more at all. 15 The merchants of these things, who became rich by her, will stand at a distance for fear of her torment, weeping and wailing, 16 and saying, 'Alas, alas, [a]that great city [b]that was clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls! 17 [c]For in one hour such great riches [8]came to nothing.' [d]Every shipmaster, all who travel by ship, sailors, and as many as trade on the sea, stood at a distance 18 [e]and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, [f]'What *is* like this great city?'

19 [g]"They threw dust on their heads and cried out, weeping and wailing, and saying, 'Alas, alas, that great city, in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth! [h]For in one hour she [9]is made desolate.'

20 [i]"Rejoice over her, O heaven, and *you* [l]holy apostles and prophets, for [j]God has avenged you on her!"

Finality of Babylon's Fall

21 Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw *it* into the sea, saying, [k]"Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be thrown down, and [l]shall not be found anymore. 22 [m]The sound of harpists, musicians, flutists, and trumpeters shall not be heard in you anymore. No craftsman of any craft shall be found in you anymore, and the sound of a millstone shall not be heard in you anymore. 23 [n]The light of a lamp shall not shine in you anymore, [o]and the voice of bridegroom and bride shall not be heard in you anymore. For [p]your merchants were the great men of the earth, [q]for by your sorcery all the nations were deceived. 24 And [r]in her was found the blood of prophets and saints, and of all who [s]were slain on the earth."

Heaven Exults over Babylon

19 After these things [a]I [l]heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, "Alleluia! [b]Salvation and glory and honor and power *belong* to [2]the Lord our God! 2 For [c]true and righteous *are* His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication; and He [d]has avenged on her the blood of His servants *shed* by her." 3 Again they said, "Alleluia! [e]Her smoke rises up forever and ever!" 4 And [f]the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God who sat on the throne, saying, [g]"Amen! Alleluia!" 5 Then a voice came from the throne, saying, [h]"Praise our God, all you His servants and those who fear Him, [i]both[3] small and great!"

6 [j]And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, as the sound of many waters and as the sound of mighty thunderings, saying, "Alleluia! For [k]the[4] Lord God Omnipotent reigns! 7 Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for [l]the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." 8 And [m]to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, [n]for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

9 Then he said to me, "Write: [o]'Blessed *are* those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!' " And he said to me, [p]"These are the true sayings of God." 10 And [q]I fell at his feet to

9 [o]Luke 14:15 [p]Rev. 22:6 10 [q]Rev. 22:8

10 [r]Is. 21:9 [w]Rev. 18:17, 19

11 [x]Ezek. 27:27–34

12 [y]Rev. 17:4

13 [z]Ezek. 27:13

14 [7]NU, M *been lost to you*

16 [a]Rev. 17:18 [b]Rev. 17:4

17 [c]Rev. 18:10 [d]Is. 23:14 [8]*have been laid waste*

18 [e]Ezek. 27:30 [f]Rev. 13:4

19 [g]Josh. 7:6 [h]Rev. 18:8 [9]*have been laid waste*

20 [i]Jer. 51:48 [j]Luke 11:49 [l]NU, M *saints and apostles*

21 [k]Jer. 51:63, 64 [l]Rev. 12:8; 16:20

22 [m]Jer. 7:34; 16:9; 25:10

23 [n]Jer. 25:10 [o]Jer. 7:34; 16:9 [p]Is. 23:8 [q]2 Kin. 9:22

24 [r]Rev. 16:6; 17:6 [s]Jer. 51:49

CHAPTER 19

1 [a]Rev. 11:15; 19:6 [b]Rev. 4:11 [l]NU, M add *something like* [2]NU, M omit *the Lord*

2 [c]Rev. 15:3; 16:7 [d]Deut. 32:43

3 [e]Is. 34:10

4 [f]Rev. 4:4, 6, 10 [g]1 Chr. 16:36

5 [h]Ps. 134:1 [i]Rev. 11:18 [3]NU, M omit *both*

6 [j]Ezek. 1:24 [k]Rev. 11:15 [4]NU, M *our*

7 [l][Matt. 22:2; 25:10]

8 [m]Ezek. 16:10 [n]Ps. 132:9

■ **18:11 buys their merchandise.** Kings, merchants, and sailors have been seduced to worship luxury.

■ **18:21** The finality of Babylon's fall is depicted by the irreversible act of throwing a large stone into the sea (Jer. 51:63, 64).

■ **19:1–10** The triumph of the pure bride is contrasted with the destruction of the corrupt false church (Babylon). Note the repeated "Alleluia!" (vv. 1, 3–6).

■ **19:2 righteous.** See note on 15:3.

■ **19:4 twenty-four elders . . . four living creatures.** See notes on 4:4, 6. The final celebration of God's victory fittingly takes place before His presence in the company of the heavenly host (Heb. 12:22–24).

■ **19:7 marriage of the Lamb.** The wedding imagery expresses the intimacy, love, and joy between Christ and His people. It fulfills the commitments expressed earlier in Scripture (Is. 54:5–8; Hos. 2:19, 20; Eph. 5:26, 27).

■ **19:9 marriage supper.** Note the contrasts between this blessed feast and the horrific feast of vv. 17, 18.

■ **19:10 the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.** The angel is a fellow servant of the prophets (22:9). John has the spirit of prophecy (22:6); he receives the testimony (witness) that Jesus gives and presents it to the church (1:2; 6:9). John's ministry compares to that of the angels.

worship him. But he said to me, [r]"See *that you do* not *do that!* I am your [s]fellow servant, and of your brethren [t]who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the [u]testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

Christ on a White Horse

11 [v]Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, [w]a white horse. And He who sat on him *was* called [x]Faithful and True, and [y]in righteousness He judges and makes war. 12 [z]His eyes *were* like a flame of fire, and on His head *were* many crowns. [a]He [5]had a name written that no one knew except Himself. 13 [b]He *was* clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called [c]The Word of God. 14 [d]And the armies in heaven, [e]clothed in [6]fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. 15 Now [f]out of His mouth goes a [7]sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And [g]He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. [h]He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And [i]He has on *His* robe and on His thigh a name written:

[j]KING OF KINGS
AND LORD OF LORDS.

The Beast and His Armies Defeated

17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, [k]"Come and gather together for the [8]supper of the great God, 18 [l]that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all *people,* [9]free and slave, both small and great."

19 [m]And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. 20 [n]Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and [o]those who worshiped his image. [p]These two were cast alive into the lake of fire [q]burning with brimstone. 21 And the rest [r]were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. [s]And all the birds [t]were filled with their flesh.

Satan Bound 1000 Years

20 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, [a]having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2 He laid hold of [b]the dragon, that serpent of old, who is *the* Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; 3 and he cast him into the bottomless

10 [r]Acts 10:26 [s][Heb. 1:14] [t]1 John 5:10 [u]Luke 24:27

11 [v]Rev. 15:5 [w]Rev. 6:2; 19:19, 21 [x]Rev. 3:7, 14 [y]Is. 11:4

12 [z]Rev. 1:14 [a]Rev. 2:17; 19:16 [5]M adds *names written, and*

13 [b]Is. 63:2, 3 [c][John 1:1, 14]

14 [d]Rev. 14:20 [e]Matt. 28:3 [6]NU, M *pure white linen*

15 [f]Is. 11:4 [g]Ps. 2:8, 9 [h]Is. 63:3–6 [7]M *sharp two-edged*

16 [i]Rev. 2:17; 19:12 [j]Dan. 2:47

17 [k]Ezek. 39:17 [8]NU, M *great supper of God*

18 [l]Ezek. 39:18–20 [9]NU, M *both free*

19 [m]Rev. 16:13–16

20 [n]Rev. 16:13 [o]Rev. 13:8, 12, 13 [p]Dan. 7:11 [q]Rev. 14:10

21 [r]Rev. 19:15 [s]Rev. 19:17, 18 [t]Rev. 17:16

CHAPTER 20

1 [a]Rev. 1:18; 9:1

2 [b]2 Pet. 2:4

■ **19:11–21** The sixth cycle of judgments leading to the Second Coming (Introduction: Characteristics and Themes: Literary Form) is presented in these verses. In the latter cycles the imagery concentrates more and more intensively on the Second Coming and the events that immediately precede it. In this cycle, all the events are actually part of the Second Coming. But, as is typical of Revelation, they reveal principles of spiritual war that have been operative throughout the church age (Eph. 6:10–20; 1 John 5:4, 5). At the end, Jesus Christ is revealed (22:13; Heb. 13:8).

Christ appears to wage final battle against all the enemies of God, led by the beast and the false prophet. Christ's holy attributes contrast markedly with the unholy counterfeit attributes of the beast (13:1–10 note). This final war brings to a climax all the wars that God has waged on behalf of His people (Ex. 15:2; Deut. 20; Is. 59:16–18; Ezek. 38; 39; Hab. 3:8–15; Zech. 12:1–9; 14:3–5) and consummates the triumph achieved by Christ on the cross (5:9, 10; 12:10, 11; John 12:31; Col. 2:15). Some have interpreted the imagery as a reference to the spread of Christ's rule through submission to the gospel, but the parallels with other visions show that the final battle is primarily in view (16:14, 16–21 and notes; 17:14; 20:7–10).

■ **19:11 heaven opened.** In contrast to 4:1, the heavenly presence of God is now revealed not merely to John the seer but to the whole of humanity. The appearance of Christ in His majesty must mean the end of the battle and the destruction of all enemies before Him.

■ **19:17 the supper.** See Ezek. 39:4, 17–20.

■ **19:19 beast.** See note on 13:1–10.

armies, gathered together. See note on 16:14.

■ **19:20 lake of fire.** Hell, the place of everlasting torment for the wicked (14:9, 10; 20:10, 14, 15; 21:8; Is. 66:24). Fire is frequently associated with all-consuming judgment (Is. 66:15, 16; Joel 2:3). See "Hell" at Mark 9:43.

■ **20:1–10** An angel descending from heaven binds Satan for a thousand years (see Introduction: Interpretive Difficulties: The Millennium). The faithful martyrs (v. 4) come to life and reign with Christ. After the thousand years, Satan is released, gathers the nations for battle, and is finally rendered powerless (v. 10).

■ **20:2 bound him.** Satan's power to influence the nations is suppressed. Premillennialists and some postmillennialists associate this event with the beginning of an extraordinary future era of peace and prosperity, contrasting with the present (1 Thess. 2:18; 1 Pet. 5:8). Amillennialists think that the binding of Satan has already taken place through Christ's death and resurrection (12:9; Matt. 12:29; John 12:31; Col. 2:15). The present spread of the gospel to the nations, as initiated in Acts, is the result of a restriction on Satan's power to deceive. Possibly this restriction on Satan's power is closely associated with the present temporary demise of the beast (17:8).

a thousand years. See note on vv. 1–10.

■ **20:3 deceive the nations.** See vv. 8, 10; 13:14; 16:14; 19:20.

pit, and shut him up, and [c]set a seal on him, [d]so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

The Saints Reign with Christ 1000 Years

4 And I saw [e]thrones, and they sat on them, and [f]judgment was committed to them. Then *I saw* [g]the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, [h]who had not worshiped the beast [i]or his image, and had not received *his* mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they [j]lived and [k]reigned with Christ for [l]a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy *is* he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such [l]the second death has no power, but they shall be [m]priests of God and of Christ, [n]and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

Satanic Rebellion Crushed

7 Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison 8 and will go out [o]to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, [p]Gog and Magog, [q]to gather them together to battle, whose number *is* as the sand of the sea. 9 [r]They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. 10 The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone [s]where[2] the beast and the false prophet *are.* And they [t]will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

The Great White Throne Judgment

11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face [u]the earth and the heaven fled away. [v]And there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, [w]small and great, standing before [3]God, [x]and books were opened. And another [y]book was opened, which is *the Book* of Life. And the dead were judged [z]according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. 13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, [a]and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. [b]And they were judged, each one according to his works. 14 Then [c]Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. [d]This is the second [4]death. 15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life [e]was cast into the lake of fire.

All Things Made New

21 Now [a]I saw a new heaven and a new earth, [b]for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. 2 Then I, [f]John, saw [c]the holy city, New Jeru-

3 [c]Dan. 6:17 [d]Rev. 12:9; 20:8, 10

4 [e]Dan. 7:9 [f][1 Cor. 6:2, 3] [g]Rev. 6:9 [h]Rev. 13:12 [i]Rev. 13:15 [j]John 14:19 [k]Rom. 8:17 [l]M *the*

6 [l][Rev. 2:11; 20:14] [m]Is. 61:6 [n]Rev. 20:4

8 [o]Rev. 12:9; 20:3, 10 [p]Ezek. 38:2; 39:1, 6 [q]Rev. 16:14

9 [r]Ezek. 38:9, 16

10 [s]Rev. 19:20; 20:14, 15 [t]Rev. 14:10 [2]NU, M *where also*

11 [u]2 Pet. 3:7 [v]Dan. 2:35

12 [w]Rev. 19:5 [x]Dan. 7:10 [y]Ps. 69:28 [z]Matt. 16:27 [3]NU, M *the throne*

13 [a]Rev. 1:18; 6:8; 21:4 [b]Rev. 2:23; 20:12

14 [c]1 Cor. 15:26 [d]Rev. 21:8 [4]NU, M *death, the lake of fire.*

15 [e]Rev. 19:20

CHAPTER 21

1 [a][2 Pet. 3:13] [b]Rev. 20:11

2 [c]Is. 52:1 [f]NU, M omit *John*

■ **20:4 souls.** See 6:9, 10. Martyrs are singled out as the most notable group of faithful witnesses. But other saints are not excluded from the privileges mentioned.

the beast. See note on 13:1–10.

reigned. See 2:26, 27; 3:21.

■ **20:5, 6 the first resurrection.** If this resurrection means bodily resurrection, it coincides with the Second Coming (1 Cor. 15:51–57; 1 Thess. 4:13–18) and the premillennialists are correct (vv. 1–10 note). On the other hand, the language concerning the second death in vv. 6, 14 and 21:8 suggests a contrast between the first death and the second. The first death is bodily death, but it is only preliminary, not ultimate. The second death is ultimate and spiritual in character. Likewise, the first and second resurrections may be preliminary and ultimate, respectively. The first is spiritual, the second is of the body. The first resurrection is then to be understood as coinciding either with spiritual new birth (John 5:24, 25) or with going to be with Christ at the time of bodily death (6:9, 10; 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23). In view of the concern in Revelation for vindicating martyrs (v. 4 note), the latter alternative seems preferable.

■ **20:6 priests.** See note on 1:6.

■ **20:8 Gog and Magog.** These names, taken from Ezek. 38; 39, represent the final enemies of God.

gather them together to battle. See 16:14.

■ **20:11–15** God appears in a scene of final judgment. God's authority to judge has already been anticipated in chs. 4; 5. Now He executes the judgment that befits His character and power over the created universe. The vision shares features with Ps. 7:6–8; 47:8, 9; Dan. 7:9, 10 and other Old Testament judgment scenes (cf. Matt. 25:31–46).

Injustices and sufferings in history never escape God's eye. Those who persecute and practice injustice cannot ultimately win. God will judge every deed, all wrongs will be righted, and all attempts to dethrone God and enthrone anything or anyone else will be turned around to frustrate God's enemies completely. The prospect of final judgment ought to be a terror to God's enemies but a foundation of assurance to the saints.

This judgment follows the thousand years of vv. 2, 7. Premillennialists believe that the Second Coming precedes the thousand years, and hence must include a distinct judgment of its own. At the Second Coming Christians receive their reward, and this later judgment is for the wicked and those living in untransformed bodies during the thousand years. Amillennialists and postmillennialists, on the other hand, have generally understood this passage as one among many references to a universal final judgment at the Second Coming (vv. 1–10 note).

■ **20:11 throne.** See 4:2 note.

the heaven fled away. See 6:14.

■ **20:12 Book of Life.** See note on 13:8.

■ **20:14 lake of fire . . . the second death.** The final state of eternal torment, to which all who impenitently rebel against God's sovereign rule are consigned. See note on 19:20; "Hell" at Mark 9:43.

■ **21:1–8** The voice of God announces the descent of the New Jeru-

salem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared [d]as a bride adorned for her husband.
3 And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, [e]the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God. 4 [f]And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; [g]there shall be no more death, [h]nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."
5 Then [i]He who sat on the throne said, [j]"Behold, I make all things new." And He said [2]to me, "Write, for [k]these words are true and faithful."

2 [d]2 Cor. 11:2
3 [e]Lev. 26:11
4 [f]Is. 25:8 [g]1 Cor. 15:26 [h]Is. 35:10; 51:11; 65:19
5 [i]Rev. 4:2, 9; 20:11 [j]Is. 43:19 [k]Rev. 19:9; 22:6 [2]NU, M omit *to me*

Heaven

"Heaven" is the biblical term for God's dwelling place (Ps. 33:13, 14; Matt. 6:9), the place of His presence to where the glorified Christ has returned (Acts 1:11). The church militant and triumphant unites there for worship (Heb. 12:22–25), and one day Christ's people will be there with Christ forever (John 17:5, 24; 1 Thess. 4:16, 17). Heaven is the place of God's rest (John 14:2). It is described as a city (Heb. 11:10) and a country (Heb. 11:16).

To think of heaven as a "place" is more right than wrong, though the word could mislead. Scripture describes heaven as a spatial reality that touches and interpenetrates created space. According to Ephesians, the throne of Christ at the Father's right hand (Eph. 1:20), and the life of Christians in Christ, are both in "heavenly places" (Eph. 1:3, 20; 2:6). Paul alludes to his experience in the "third heaven" or "Paradise" (2 Cor. 12:2, 4). A resurrection body, adapted to heaven's life, awaits us (2 Cor. 5:1–8). While we are in our present bodies the realities of heaven are unseen, and we know them only by faith (2 Cor. 4:18; 5:7). The hope founded on what faith sees gives us the courage to endure (Rom. 8:25; cf. Gal. 5:5; 1 John 3:3).

We can form an idea of the perfect life of heaven from what we know imperfectly now (1 Cor. 13:12). Our communion with God and with other Christians will be unbroken (Ps. 23:6). According to Revelation, there will be no tears, sorrow, or death (Rev. 21:4). According to Romans, the earth itself together with life on it has been "subjected to futility" on account of sin (Rom. 8:20). Through the Spirit, we know that this "corruption" will be undone, and the possibilities dimly perceived in the fallen creation will be fulfilled in "the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom. 8:21).

According to the *Shorter Catechism*, we were created "to glorify God, and enjoy Him forever." The crowns, feasts, and celebrations of victory described in the Scripture bring one aspect of this joy before our eyes. The triumph of the Lamb that was slain and His saints with Him (Rev. 5:6; 14:1) is another. At the center is the union of God with His people (Rev. 22:4). This was held out as the promise of the covenant (Jer. 30:22), and it is destined to be realized in a way beyond imagination (Eph. 2:7; 3:9; cf. 1 Cor. 2:9). □

salem against the backdrop of total renovation—a new heaven and a new earth. God is the Alpha (1:8 note), the Creator whose purposes were expressed from the beginning, and the Omega, the Consummator who brings His purposes to final realization. God's glory, power, and beauty within sphere of heaven (ch. 4) now extend to all His people (v. 3). Evil and pain are abolished in the new creation, in contrast to the pain, suffering, and struggles running through the earlier parts of Revelation. The promises made to overcomers are now fulfilled (2:7 note).

The final visions of Revelation weave into a beautiful unity a host of biblical themes. Note the themes of creation (v. 1), the holy city of Jerusalem, communion with God expressed through marriage imagery (v. 2), the dwelling of God, including the tabernacle and temple (chs. 4; 5 note), saints as God's own people (v. 3), the end of suffering and death (v. 4), new deeds of salvation, trustworthiness of God's Word (v. 5), living water (v. 6), becoming a son of God (v. 7), warnings to the faithless, and judgment (v. 8).

These verses are usually grouped with 21:9—22:5. The two passages present two aspects of the final vision of the new Jerusalem. Many realities are introduced in vv. 1–8 that appear with greater elaboration and in more visionary description in 21:9—22:5. But vv. 1–8 also have close relations to 20:11–15. The final judgment of God, in fact, has two sides: the negative side (the judgment of the wicked) is expressed in 20:11–15, while the positive side (the reward for the righteous) is expressed here. Within the negative message of 20:11–15 there is a positive note, the Book of Life (20:15). Similarly, within the positive message of vv. 1–8 there is one negative note, the lake of fire (v. 8). These verses and 20:11–15 are symmetric scenes depicting judgment both negatively and positively.

■ **21:1 a new heaven and a new earth.** Some have thought that the new universe will be an entirely new world with no connection with the old. But Is. 65:17–25 and Rom. 8:21–23 indicate that a transfiguration of the old world is in view, like the way in which our new bodies will be transfigurations of the old (1 Cor. 15:35–57). Everything is new (v. 5), which indicates the thoroughness of transfiguration, but the result is redemption and not simply abolition of the old. See theological note "Heaven."

6 And He said to me, [l]"It[3] is done! [m]I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. [n]I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. 7 He who overcomes [4]shall inherit all things, and [o]I will be his God and he shall be My son. 8 [p]But the cowardly, [5]unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in [q]the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

The New Jerusalem

9 Then one of [r]the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came [6]to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you [s]the [7]bride, the Lamb's wife." 10 And he carried me away [t]in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me [u]the [8]great city, the [9]holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, 11 [v]having the glory of God. Her light *was* like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal. 12 Also she had a great and high wall with [w]twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: 13 [x]three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west.

14 Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and [y]on them were the [1]names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. 15 And he who talked with me [z]had a gold reed to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. 16 The city is laid out as a square; its length is as great as its breadth. And he measured the city with the reed: twelve thousand [2]furlongs. Its length, breadth, and height are equal. 17 Then he measured its wall: one hundred *and* forty-four cubits, *according* to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel. 18 The construction of its wall was *of* jasper; and the city *was* pure gold, like clear glass. 19 [a]The foundations of the wall of the city *were* adorned with all kinds of precious stones: the first foundation *was* jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, 20 the fifth sardonyx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. 21 The twelve gates *were* twelve [b]pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. [c]And the street of the city *was* pure gold, like transparent glass.

The Glory of the New Jerusalem

22 [d]But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. 23 [e]The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine [3]in it, for the [4]glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb *is* its light. 24 [f]And the nations [5]of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the

24 [f]Is. 60:3, 5; 66:12 [5]NU, M omit *of those who are saved*

6 [l]Rev. 10:6; 16:17 [m]Rev. 1:8; 22:13 [n]John 4:10 [3]M omits *It is done*

7 [o]Zech. 8:8 [4]M *I shall give him these things*

8 [p]1 Cor. 6:9 [q]Rev. 20:14 [5]M adds *and sinners,*

9 [r]Rev. 15:1 [s]Rev. 19:7; 21:2 [6]NU, M omit *to me* [7]M *woman, the Lamb's bride*

10 [t]Rev. 1:10 [u]Ezek. 48 [8]NU, M omit *great* [9]NU, M *holy city, Jerusalem*

11 [v]Rev. 15:8; 21:23; 22:5

12 [w]Ezek. 48:31–34

13 [x]Ezek. 48:31–34

14 [y]Eph. 2:20 [1]NU, M *twelve names*

15 [z]Ezek. 40:3

16 [2]Lit. *stadia,* about 1,380 miles in all

19 [a]Is. 54:11

21 [b]Matt. 13:45, 46 [c]Rev. 22:2

22 [d]John 4:21, 23

23 [e]Is. 24:23; 60:19, 20 [3]NU, M omit *in it* [4]M *very glory*

■ **21:6 water of life.** See note on 22:1.

■ **21:8 second death.** See note on 20:14.

■ **21:9—22:5** The picture of the New Jerusalem now unfolds in detail. The final dwelling place of the saints is simultaneously the fulfillment of earlier revelations of God appearing in glory and reigning in His heavenly court (21:22, 23; 22:1, 3; cf. ch. 4), the holy city Jerusalem (21:10), the Garden of Eden (22:1–3), the bride, the marriage partner of the Lord (21:9), and the temple as the dwelling place of God (21:22, 23). The central figure and the central blessing of the city is God Himself and the Lamb (21:22, 23; 22:1–5). The final revelation of God necessarily brings to a climax all earlier revelations. It completes God's purpose of bringing all things under one Head—Christ (11:15; Eph. 1:10). It harmonizes with the creation of all things by Christ at the beginning (1:17; 4:11; Col. 1:15–17) and the redemption of all things through Christ in the middle (5:9–14; Rom. 11:36; Col. 1:18–20). Because of the fluid character of the imagery, it is wise not to distinguish rigidly between the inhabitants of the city (the saints) and the city itself (saints together with the glorified creation).

■ **21:9 bride.** See note on 19:1–10.

■ **21:10 in the Spirit.** See note on 1:10.

mountain. The mountain as God's special meeting place with human beings, alluding to 14:1; Ex. 15:17; 19:1–25; Ps. 48:1, 2; 68:15, 16; Ezek. 28:14; Mic. 4:1, 2; and other passages.

■ **21:11 glory of God.** Closely associated with the imagery of light, glory represents the majesty, awesomeness, and beauty of God. Glory, a prominent theme in 21:9—22:5, is associated with the temple and the appearing of God in the Old Testament (vv. 22, 23; 15:8; 22:5; Ex. 16:10; 24:16, 17; 40:34, 35; Is. 6:3; 40:3; 60:1, 2, 19, 20; Hab. 2:14; Zech. 2:5; John 1:14). God's heavenly splendor as seen in ch. 4 now fills the new world.

■ **21:16 length, breadth, and height.** The city is a perfect cube, the same shape as the Most Holy Place in the tabernacle and the temple. The whole city is architecturally perfect, and has become the most intimate dwelling place of God (vv. 22, 23; 22:4).

■ **21:17 one hundred and forty-four cubits.** That is, twelve times twelve cubits. All the dimensions of the city reveal its associations with the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles (vv. 12, 14). "Twelve" symbolically designates the people of God.

■ **21:19 all kinds of precious stones.** The list of precious stones shows the beauty and magnificence of the city and the way it reflects the beauty of God, who fills it with His glory (4:3). The list also corresponds roughly to the twelve precious stones of Aaron's breastplate (Ex. 28:15–21). The prerogatives once reserved for the high priest now belong to the entire city.

■ **21:22 temple.** See note on chs. 4; 5.

■ **21:23 the sun or . . . moon.** Fulfillment of Is. 60:19, 20.

■ **21:24 the nations.** Redeemed humanity in all its cultural diversity (5:9 note; Is. 60:3–12).

glory. See Is. 60:3–5; Hag. 2:7–9.

kings of the earth bring their glory and honor [6]into it. 25 [g]Its gates shall not be shut at all by day [h](there shall be no night there). 26 [i]And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into [7]it. 27 But [j]there shall by no means enter it anything [8]that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's [k]Book of Life.

The River of Life

22 And he showed me [a]a [l]pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. 2 [b]In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, *was* [c]the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each *tree* yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree *were* [d]for the healing of the nations. 3 And [e]there shall be no more curse, [f]but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His [g]servants shall serve Him. 4 [h]They shall see His face, and [i]His name *shall be* on their foreheads. 5 [j]There shall be no night there: They need no lamp nor [k]light of the sun, for [l]the Lord God gives them light. [m]And they shall reign forever and ever.

The Time Is Near

6 Then he said to me, [n]"These words *are* faithful and true." And the Lord God of the [2]holy prophets [o]sent His angel to show His servants the things which must [p]shortly take place.

7 [q]"Behold, I am coming quickly! [r]Blessed *is* he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book."

8 Now I, John, [3]saw and heard these things. And when I heard and saw, [s]I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel who showed me these things.

9 Then he said to me, [t]"See *that you do* not *do that.* [4]For I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets, and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God." 10 [u]And he said to me, "Do not seal the words of the prophecy of this book, [v]for the time is at hand. 11 He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him [5]be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still."

Jesus Testifies to the Churches

12 "And behold, I am coming quickly, and [w]My reward *is* with Me, [x]to give to every one according to his work. 13 [y]I am the Alpha and the Omega, *the* [6]Beginning and *the* End, the First and the Last."

14 [z]Blessed *are* those who [7]do His commandments, that they may have the right [a]to the tree of

24 [6]M *of the nations to Him*
25 [g]Is. 60:11 [h]Is. 60:20
26 [i]Rev. 21:24 [7]M adds *that they may enter in.*
27 [j]Joel 3:17 [k]Phil. 4:3 [8]NU, M *profane, nor one who causes*

CHAPTER 22

1 [a]Ezek. 47:1 [l]NU, M omit *pure*
2 [b]Ezek. 47:12 [c]Gen. 2:9 [d]Rev. 21:24
3 [e]Zech. 14:11 [f]Ezek. 48:35 [g]Rev. 7:15
4 [h][Matt. 5:8] [i]Rev. 14:1
5 [j]Rev. 21:23 [k]Rev. 7:15 [l]Ps. 36:9 [m]Dan. 7:18, 27
6 [n]Rev. 19:9 [o]Rev. 1:1 [p]Heb. 10:37 [2]NU, M *spirits of the prophets*
7 [q][Rev. 3:11] [r]Rev. 1:3
8 [s]Rev. 19:10 [3]NU, M *am the one who heard and saw*
9 [t]Rev. 19:10 [4]NU, M omit *For*
10 [u]Dan. 8:26 [v]Rev. 1:3
11 [5]NU, M *do right*
12 [w]Is. 40:10; 62:11 [x]Rev. 20:12
13 [y]Is. 41:4 [6]NU, M *First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.*
14 [z]Dan. 12:12 [a][Prov. 11:30] [7]NU *wash their robes,*

■ **21:25 gates shall not be shut.** Ancient city gates needed to be shut in case of attack. Here is fulfillment of Is. 60:11.

■ **21:27 Book of Life.** See note on 13:8.

■ **22:1–5** The final description of paradise contains elements alluding to the Garden of Eden. The intimacy of God with His people (vv. 3, 4) and the abundance of His blessing (vv. 1, 2, 5) are stressed even more than in the preceding verses. The final state restores the unbroken, idyllic communion between God and human beings. But the apex of history is more magnificent than the beginning. The garden is now also a city, and the light has driven out all night.

Revelation is designed not only to inform and assure Christians about God's final purposes, but to increase their longing for God and the realization of His purpose. The certainty of that consummation comforts saints during times of temptation and persecution.

■ **22:1 river of water of life.** Abundant supply of life-giving water comes from God. Revelation weaves together allusions to Gen. 2:10–14; Ps. 46:4; Ezek. 47:1–12; Joel 3:18; John 4:10–14; 7:37–39.

■ **22:2 tree of life.** Access to God's life-giving blessings, barred after the Fall, is here renewed (vv. 14, 19; 2:7; Gen. 2:9; 3:22–24; Ezek. 47:12).

■ **22:6–21** The central visionary part of Revelation ends with v. 5. The book now concludes with promise, exhortation, and confirmation in order to drive home the message of the visions and to stir up hope for the coming of the Lord Jesus (v. 20). Its major themes continue to be woven into this concluding section. There are many allusions to ch. 1.

■ **22:6 faithful and true.** See note on 1:2.

■ **22:7 quickly.** See note on 1:1.

■ **22:8 worship.** See 19:10.

■ **22:10 Do not seal.** Daniel's scroll was sealed because the time of fulfillment was distant (Dan. 12:4).

the time is at hand. See note on 1:1.

■ **22:11** See Ezek. 3:27; Dan. 12:10; 2 Cor. 2:15, 16. If people do not repent when they hear the word of God, it increases their hardness. If hearing Revelation does not change the course of people's lives, it sets them more firmly in their present course, whichever side of the battle that may be.

■ **22:12 according to his work.** See 20:12.

■ **22:13 the Alpha and the Omega.** See note on 1:8.

■ **22:14 Blessed.** See note on 1:3.

tree of life. See note on v. 2.

life, [b]and may enter through the gates into the city. 15 [8]But [c]outside *are* [d]dogs and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie.

16 [e]"I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. [f]I am the Root and the Offspring of David, [g]the Bright and Morning Star."

17 And the Spirit and [h]the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" [i]And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

A Warning

18 [9]For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: [j]If anyone adds to these things, [1]God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, [k]God[2] shall take away his part from the [3]Book of Life, from the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.

I Am Coming Quickly

20 He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly."

Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* [4]with you all. Amen.

14 [b]Rev. 21:27

15 [c]1 Cor. 6:9 [d]Phil. 3:2 [8]NU, M omit *But*

16 [e]Rev. 1:1 [f]Rev. 5:5 [g]Num. 24:17

17 [h][Rev. 21:2, 9] [i]Is. 55:1

18 [j]Deut. 4:2; 12:32 [9]NU, M omit *For* [1]M *may God add*

19 [k]Ex. 32:33 [2]M *may God take away* [3]NU, M *tree of life*

21 [4]NU *with all;* M *with all the saints*

■ **22:15 Outside.** See 20:15; 21:8, 27. All evil doers are banished from the holy city, not only to punish them for their evil, but to protect the city from their contamination. The firmness of God's commitment to exclude evil from the final kingdom is a blessing and an encouragment to the saints.

■ **22:17 water of life.** See note on v. 1.

■ **22:18, 19** This warning against adding or subtracting puts the Book of Revelation on the same level as Old Testament words of God (Deut. 4:2; 12:32). The Word of God is to be protected from corruption, and distinguished from mere human words.

■ **22:20 quickly.** See note on 1:1.

come, Lord Jesus. The whole of Revelation is meant to stir Christians' longing and prayers for the realization of God's purposes accompanying the Second Coming. Revelation ends on this note (1 Cor. 16:22).

What Is the Bible About?

Edmund Clowney

What makes the Bible different from every other book? It is different because it is God's book: He gave it to us to tell us about Himself (2 Pet. 1:21). Because the Bible is about God and His salvation, it is also about the Son of God, our Savior. Jesus knew this. He rebuked two downcast disciples whom He found trudging away from Jerusalem on Easter day. They had been devastated by His death and confused by the empty tomb.

"Then He said to them, 'O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?' And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24:25–27).

During the forty days between His resurrection and ascension, Jesus continued His teaching. From all the Old Testament He showed the gospel promises that He had fulfilled, promises that must be preached to the nations (Luke 24:44–47). His teaching gave the apostles the key to the Scriptures. Peter preached the sufferings and the glory of Christ from Moses and the prophets (Acts 2:18–24); so did Paul (Acts 17:2, 3; Rom. 1:1–5; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4). They did not rely on the prophecies that spoke directly of the Messiah; they knew that all prophecy was inspired by the Spirit of Christ (1 Pet. 1:11).

The written Word comes from the living Word; the Son of God is the Creator who was with God from the beginning, and who, like the Father is fully God (John 1:1–3). The Lord God of the Old Testament is present in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Simon Peter, who had taken Jesus on board his fishing boat, confessed His deity (Matt. 16:16). He quotes Isaiah's call to revere the Lord Himself, and identifies the Lord of our worship as the Christ (1 Pet. 3:15; Is. 8:12, 13).

When God disclosed Himself to Israel at Mount Sinai He was already pointing forward to His revelation in Christ. God's design for the tabernacle, given on the mountain, was threatened by Israel's worship of a golden calf. God said that it was too dangerous for stiff-necked Israel to have the holy God living in His tabernacle in the middle of their camp. Instead, God proposed to stay outside the camp and to meet with Moses there. He would go before the people to lead them into Canaan, but He would not dwell in their midst (Ex. 33:1–6). Moses knew that if God were not to dwell with His people there would be no point in their going to Canaan. He could only plead with God to show His glory and grace. God heard his prayer; He proclaimed His name to Moses as the God who is full of grace and truth. He promised to dwell in the tabernacle and to receive Israel's sacrifices for the forgiveness of their sins. John's Gospel tells us that the glory Moses asked to see has been revealed in Jesus Christ. The grace and truth declared to Moses is given in Christ, for in Christ God comes to dwell with us. The tabernacle was filled with the cloud of glory to symbolize God's dwelling with His people; the Incarnation is the reality that the tabernacle pictured. John testifies, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt [lit. 'tabernacled'] among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

We are not surprised, therefore, to find in the Old Testament anticipations of the coming of the Son of God. The angel of the Lord is both distinguished from God and identified with Him (Gen. 18:1–33; Ex. 23:20–23; Judg. 6:11–23; 13:3–23; Is. 63:9). In the form of an angel the Lord wrestled with Jacob (Gen. 32:34–42) and gave orders to Joshua (Josh. 5:13–15). So, too, the figures that describe God in the Old Testament are transferred to Christ in the New. Jesus Christ is the Shepherd (Ps. 23; John 10), the Rock (Deut. 32:4; Ex. 17:6; 1 Cor. 10:4), the Judge (Ps. 96:13; Matt. 25:31–33), the King (Is. 6:1–5; John 12:41), the Wisdom of God (Prov. 8:22–31), our Lord and Savior (Jon. 2:9; Matt. 1:21).

The story of God's work of salvation leads us to Jesus Christ, the Savior. Only God can deliver sinners. He must take the initiative; the plan of salvation must be His. After the sin of our first parents in Eden, God came seeking them. He promised the victory of the Son of the woman over the serpent (Gen. 3:15). God delivered Noah and his family from the flood of judgment; He called Abraham and promised to bless him so that through his progeny all the families of the earth would be blessed. Keeping His word to Abraham, God delivered Israel from slavery in Egypt, made His covenant with them, and gave them the land of promise. But all along the way God's goodness was opposed by human wickedness. Even the saints were sinners. Abraham laughed at God's promise in unbelief; Jacob stole his blind father's

blessing; Moses struck the rock that symbolized God's presence; David was guilty of both adultery and murder.

The Bible tells the story of what God does to save His people, not only from their enemies, but from their sins. What distinguishes the true people of God in spite of their sins is their faith in God's promise of salvation (Heb. 11).

When God's just verdict condemned Israel to destruction and captivity it seemed that all hope was gone. Ezekiel's vision saw the captives as dry bones scattered on the valley floor (Ezek. 37). But God's Spirit can raise the dead. God promised first to spare a remnant. The destruction would not be total: a stump would be left when the cedar of Israel's pride was cut down. More than that: God would bring renewal. Out of the stump would grow a shoot, a shoot that would stand as an ensign for the gathering of the nations. That shoot would be the Branch, God's Messiah (Is. 10:33—11:5).

Two lines of promise are joined in the prophets: first, God must come; second, the Messiah must come as the Servant of the Lord. God must come because the situation of the people is so hopeless that only God can save them. The people need not merely deliverance from their enemies; they need new hearts, turned from rebellion to love. God must come, too, because His promises are so great that only He can make good on them. God can take away hearts of stone and give hearts of flesh; He can form a new creation. In the great day of God's power, the very pots of Jerusalem will be like holy temple vessels, the lowliest citizen of the city will be like King David—and what of the King himself? He will be as an angel of God among them (Zech. 12:8). In the glory of fulfillment the coming of God and the coming of the Messiah are drawn together. God himself will put on the helmet of salvation and the breastplate of righteousness to deliver His people, yet their Deliverer is also their Messiah, who will be Prince among them (Is. 59:16, 17; 61:1–3; Ezek. 34:11, 24). The Messiah, indeed, will bear the divine Name: "Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Is. 9:6). He is David's Lord, the Son of Man who will receive at the right hand of the Father the eternal kingdom (Ps. 110:1, 2; Dan. 7:13, 14; Mal. 3:1; Is. 40:3, 10, 11). John the Baptist, the "voice of one crying in the wilderness" announces the coming of the Lord (Is. 40:3).

By the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit the Virgin Mary conceived the Son of promise. His name is Jesus, for it is He who saves His people from their sins (Matt. 1:21). The miraculous sign of the virgin birth fulfills the ancient prophecy and shows Him to be Immanuel, "God with us" (Matt. 1:23; Is. 7:14). The angels announce to the shepherds the birth of the One who is not only the Lord's Christ, but Christ the Lord (Luke 2:11, 26).

The Old Testament, then, promises the Lord's coming; the New Testament announces that the Lord has come. But for the Lord to do His saving work, even the Incarnation was not enough. He took our human nature that He might do for us what we could never do for ourselves: bear the penalty of sin and merit eternal life. Jesus came, not only as the Lord, but as the Servant of the Lord. He who is one with God became one with us that He might bring us back to God. God's covenant promise was, "I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people" (Lev. 26:12). God, the Lord of the covenant, claimed His people to be His servants. Jesus came to fulfill both sides of the covenant: He is the Lord and the Servant. As the Lord, He claims His people for God; as the Servant, He claims God for His people.

The Old Testament, as well as the New, shows us Christ's work as the Servant of the Lord. In the "Servant Songs" of Isaiah (Is. 42:1–9; 49:1–13; 50:4–11; 52:13—53:12) the individual Servant of the Lord is closely related to Israel as God's servant, yet the distinction is clear. God promises His Servant that He will not only bring back the remnant of Israel, but that He will be a light to the Gentiles, "That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth" (Is. 49:6).

Especially in His sufferings, the Servant represents God's people, for He will bear their punishment: "He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities" (Is. 53:11). On the cross, Jesus cried out in the opening words of Ps. 22: "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" David's lament of suffering was his own cry to God, but he wrote as a prophet, and his words have their fulfillment in his Son, the suffering Servant. The author of Hebrews reminds us that the other words of the Psalm also belong to Christ (Heb. 2:12; Ps. 22:22). From the cry of abandonment, to the thank offering of praise, this psalm, and others like it, belongs to

Jesus, who sings the Father's praise (Matt. 26:30; Ps. 69:9; John 2:17).

As God's Servant, Jesus stands in the place of His people and bears the punishment of their sins; as the victorious Servant, He is exalted to God's right hand. He is both the King and the righteous worshiper of Ps. 24: "Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who may stand in His holy place?"

That question runs through the Old Testament: "But how can a man be righteous before God?" (Job 9:2). God's covenant people plead His righteousness to deliver them from their persecutors (Ps. 31:1; 71:2, 24). Amazingly, they even plead His righteousness to deliver them from their sins (Ps. 143:1, 2; 51:14). How can God show His righteousness by justifying the unrighteous? In part, no doubt, by keeping His marvelous promises of salvation. But those very promises must then include a righteousness that is God's gift, rather than His demand. That righteousness God will provide through the Messiah. The Branch of righteousness that will grow up to David will be called "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Jer. 23:5, 6; 33:15, 16).

Jesus came to fulfill all righteousness (Matt. 3:15). It is He who has kept God's law perfectly, so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes (Rom. 10:4). Christ was made to be sin for us, so that in Him we might gain God's righteousness (2 Cor. 5:21; 3:9). Only so God could be just and the justifier of the one who believes in Christ (Rom. 3:26).

Jesus Christ is therefore the theme of the whole Old Testament. When we read of God's saving acts in the Old Testament, we are always being pointed to the full accomplishment of His salvation in the New. The Exodus no less than the Passover, the victories of Samson no less than those of David, show us that God can deliver through His chosen One. They speak to us of the Mighty One who came to destroy the powers of evil on the cross. The whole ceremonial law has a symbolic purpose. The blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sin; only the blood of Christ can. The prophets, priests, and kings of the Old Testament are set apart to represent the people before God, and God before the people. The calling that they have prepares us to understand the only Mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 2:5). There is no strand in the history of God's salvation (or of His work of judgment) that does not lead to Jesus Christ, "that in all things He may have the preeminence" (Col. 1:18). Jesus Christ is in all the Old Testament, not merely in a few messianic passages. His lordship and His servanthood are intertwined in it like the threads of a fabric. The pattern of the fabric remains a puzzle to us until we see Him of whom Moses and the prophets wrote, the Alpha and Omega of our faith. □

Reformed Theology

James Montgomery Boice

Reformed theology gets its name from the sixteenth century Protestant Reformation, with its distinct theological emphases, but it is theology solidly based on the Bible itself. Believers in the reformed tradition regard highly the specific contributions of such people as Martin Luther, John Knox, and particularly John Calvin, but they also find their strong distinctives in the giants of the faith before them, such as Anselm and Augustine, and ultimately in the letters of Paul and the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Reformed Christians hold to the doctrines characteristic of all Christians, including the Trinity, the true deity and true humanity of Jesus Christ, the necessity of Jesus' atonement for sin, the church as a divinely ordained institution, the inspiration of the Bible, the requirement that Christians live moral lives, and the resurrection of the body. They hold other doctrines in common with evangelical Christians, such as justification by faith alone, the need for the new birth, the personal and visible return of Jesus Christ, and the Great Commission.

What, then, is distinctive about reformed theology?

1. The Doctrine of Scripture. The reformed commitment to Scripture stresses the Bible's inspiration, authority, and sufficiency. Since the Bible is the Word of God and so has the authority of God Himself, reformed people affirm that this authority is superior to that of all govern-

ments and all church hierarchies. This conviction has given reformed believers the courage to stand against tyranny and has made reformed theology a revolutionary force in society. The sufficiency of Scripture means that it does not need to be supplemented by new or ongoing special revelation. The Bible is the entirely sufficient guide for what we are to believe and how we are to live as Christians.

The Reformers, and particularly John Calvin, stressed the way the objective, written Word and the inner, supernatural ministry of the Holy Spirit work together, the Holy Spirit illuminating the Word to God's people. The Word without the illumination of the Holy Spirit remains a closed book. The supposed leading of the Spirit without the Word leads to errors and excess. The Reformers also insisted upon the believers' right to study the Scripture for themselves. Though not denying the value of trained teachers, they understood that the clarity of Scripture on matters essential for salvation makes the Bible the property of every believer. With this right of access always comes the responsibility of careful and accurate interpretation.

2. *The Sovereignty of God.* For most reformed people the chief and most distinctive article of the creed is God's sovereignty. Sovereignty means rule, and the sovereignty of God means that God rules over His creation with absolute power and authority. He determines what is going to happen, and it does happen. God is not alarmed, frustrated, or defeated by circumstances, by sin, or by the rebellion of His creatures.

3. *The Doctrines of Grace.* Reformed theology emphasizes the doctrines of grace, best known by the acronym *TULIP,* though this does not correspond to the best possible names for the five doctrines.

T stands for *total depravity.* This does not mean that all persons are as bad as they could possibly be. It means rather that all human beings are affected by sin in every area of thought and conduct so that nothing that comes out of anyone apart from the regenerating grace of God can please God. As far as our relationships to God are concerned, we are all so ruined by sin that no one can properly understand either God or God's ways. Nor do we seek God, unless He is first at work within us to lead us to do so.

U stands for *unconditional election.* An emphasis on election bothers many people, but the problem they feel is not actually with election; it is with depravity. If sinners are as helpless in their depravity as the Bible says they are, unable to know and unwilling to seek God, then the only way they could possibly be saved is for God to take the initiative to change and save them. This is what election means. It is God choosing to save those who, apart from His sovereign choice and subsequent action, certainly would perish.

L stands for *limited atonement.* The name is potentially misleading, for it seems to suggest that reformed people want somehow to restrict the value of Christ's death. This is not the case. The value of Jesus' death is infinite. The question rather is what is the purpose of Christ's death, and what He accomplished in it. Did Christ intend to make salvation no more than possible? Or did He actually save those for whom He died? Reformed theology stresses that Jesus actually atoned for the sins of those the Father had chosen. He actually propitiated the wrath of God toward His people by taking their judgment upon Himself, actually redeemed them, and actually reconciled those specific persons to God. A better name for "limited" atonement would be "particular" or "specific" redemption.

I stands for *irresistible grace.* Left to ourselves we resist the grace of God. But when God works in our hearts, regenerating us and creating a renewed will within, then what was undesirable before becomes highly desirable, and we run to Jesus just as previously we ran away from Him. Fallen sinners do resist God's grace, but His regenerating grace is effectual. It overcomes sin and accomplishes God's purpose.

P stands for *perseverance of the saints.* A better name might be "the perseverance of God with the saints," but both ideas are actually involved. God perseveres with us, keeping us from falling away, as we would certainly do if He were not with us. But because He perseveres we also persevere. In fact, perseverance is the ultimate proof of election. We persevere because God *preserves* us from full and final falling away from Him.

4. *The Cultural Mandate.* Reformed theology also emphasizes the cultural mandate, or the obligation of Christians to live actively in society and work for the transformation of the world and its cultures. Reformed people have had various views in this area, depending on the extent to

which they believe such a transformation possible. But on the whole they agree on two things. First, we are called to be in the world and not to withdraw from it. This sets reformed believers apart from monasticism. Second, we are to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and visit the prisoner. But the chief needs of people are still spiritual, and social work is no adequate substitute for evangelism. In fact, efforts to help people will only be truly effective as their hearts and minds are changed by the gospel. This sets reformed believers apart from mere humanitarianism.

It has been objected to reformed theology that anyone who believes along reformed lines will lose all motivation for evangelism. "If God is going to do the work, why should I bother?" But it does not work that way. It is because God does the work that we can be bold to join Him in it, as He commands us to do. We do it joyfully, knowing that our efforts will never be in vain. □

Interpreting the Bible

Bruce Waltke

Biblical hermeneutics, the art of interpreting the Bible, aims to develop rules for its interpretation. This article presents two basic rules with important refinements for each, and two final words of encouragement to the reader. These rules are based on the conviction that the triune God for the sake of His elect progressively revealed Himself, according to His own immutable counsel, through the inspired authors, and providentially superintended the collection of their writings into the canon, the Bible, to His own eternal glory.

Rule One: Interpret the Words of the Bible in the Light of Their Historical Context

The different parts of the Bible must be interpreted according to the grammatical-historical method, that is, by studying the meaning of its words in the light of the time and place they were originally written. The books of the Bible are quite old, much older than other books most people have ever read. The world of the Bible is so different from ours that sometimes a translation cannot bridge the gap between these ancient texts and modern readers. But translators of this Bible and the contributors of the notes have not reinterpreted the Bible to suit modern attitudes; neither should the reader.

The application of the first rule is complex because the biblical writings were continually relocated as the canon of Scripture progressively expanded. In this unfolding context earlier texts take on fuller senses. For example, the individual psalms addressed to the people in the first temple period became finally the written Word of God to the covenant people as a whole after they were collected and arranged in the Book of Psalms. From this point, the psalms had to be read and meditated upon (Ps. 1) in the light of their new literary and social contexts. For example, Ps. 2, which proclaims Israel's king as the ideal son of God with a mandate to rule the earth through prayer and power, was sung before the Exile in the first temple, probably at the coronation of Israel's kings. When the Book of Psalms was edited after the Exile, however, Israel's throne was vacant, waiting for a promised king, "the Messiah." In that light Ps. 2 became purely prophetic. After the coming of Christ the Psalms became part of the Bible that included the New Testament; in that light "the Messiah" of Ps. 2 takes on its fullest and clearest sense: He is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. Understanding the Bible fully means keeping an eye on the developing stages of revelation.

Rule Two: Interpret the Parts of the Bible in the Light of the Whole

The second important rule of interpretation is often called "the analogy of faith." This rule asserts that Scripture interprets Scripture. The Bible itself says that all its parts are inspired by God (2 Tim. 3:16), who is not a God of disorder (1 Cor. 14:33). The rule is corroborated by the existence of the Bible as a single volume. The collection of sixty-six books, written over a span of fifteen hundred years, into one book, reflects the church's conviction that the transcendent Author superintended the collection of the many writings into a harmonious whole. Interpretation that pits Scripture against Scripture dishonors the Alpha and Omega, who sees and rules from the beginning to the end of all things.

More specifically, the Old Testament must be interpreted in the light of the New Testament. This is required for both literary and theological reasons. In a linguistic discourse the flow of thought

keeps screening out unintended meanings. For example, the word "before" in the statement, "she sang before the Queen," is ambiguous until the speaker adds "before the Queen *rose to speak*," or "before the Queen *on her throne*." In a similar way, as God's story of revealing and establishing His kingdom unfolds, ambiguous texts become more clear. For example, the ambiguous "offspring" (one or many?) in God's promise to Abraham (Gen. 22:18) becomes focused on Christ (Gal. 3:16). The unidentified maiden and Immanuel of Is. 7:14 are seen to be the Virgin Mary and her Son (Matt. 1:23), and the anonymous Servant in Isaiah (42:1–4; 49:1–6; 52:13—53:12; 61:1, 2) is revealed as Jesus, the suffering and yet triumphant Savior (Matt. 12:18–21; Luke 24:44–49; 1 Pet. 1:11).

This rule is required theologically. Christ, who through the Holy Spirit administers His Word to the apostles, is not only the final but also the best revelation of God. God spoke at various times in various ways in time past (Heb. 1:1), including his revelation to Moses and to the prophets. In spite of their varying psychologies by which God revealed Himself to them, all biblical authors write with infallible authority. But they are not of equal weight in interpretation, as the conflict of Aaron and Miriam against Moses makes evident. Moses' brother and sister, themselves both prophets, challenged the priority of Moses' words over theirs (Num. 12:1, 2). In reply, God censured them for their pride, arguing that Moses' words were superior because God gave Moses a more intimate and clearer revelation than He gave to them (vv. 6–8). The story establishes the important principle that the forms of revelation require a hierarchy of interpretive priorities. Christ is as much greater than Moses as a Son over a house is greater than a slave within it (Heb. 3:5, 6). If Aaron and Miriam should have feared to make themselves equal with Moses, how much more should readers fear to make the Old Testament equal to the New Testament that completes it. In fact, as the conversation between Philip and the Ethiopian official shows (Acts 8:30, 31), the Old Testament cannot be fully understood without the New Testament. If there is any tension between interpretations of the Old Testament and the New Testament, priority must be given to the New Testament. This does not mean that the New Testament corrects the Old Testament, but that it provides greater clarity in understanding the Old Testament.

Interpreting the Different Kinds of Literature in the Bible

With these two fundamental rules in hand we can now proceed to refine them. The grammatical-historical method recognizes that different kinds of literature, or "genres," such as history, law, and prophecy, in the Old Testament, and parables, and letters in the New, will require different rules of interpretation. For example, in contrast to legal literature, prophetic literature, as Num. 12:6, 7 makes plain, is frequently symbolic and full of figures of speech, such as metaphor, personification, and metonymy. Moreover, the prophet's symbolic visions and dreams have taken their hue and coloring from their historical situations. For example, at the threshold of prophecy God warns the serpent: "He [the woman's offspring] shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel." This is not a myth about the antipathy between humans and snakes, but a statement about the conflict between Christ and Satan (Rom. 16:20); the prophecy took its coloring from the situation in the garden.

This kind of symbolic language becomes even more intensified and extensive in apocalyptic literature such as Daniel in the Old Testament and Revelation in the New. The Ishtar Gate of Nebuchadnezzar, now in a museum in Germany, will readily explain why Daniel had fanciful dreams of animals. On that gate through which Daniel passed many times, the patron deity of Babylon is depicted in embossed, golden bricks against a background of blue, as an animal with the head of a dragon, the torso of a lion, and the claws of an eagle. No wonder Daniel, Babylon's chief administrator, saw a lion with the wings of an eagle leading a train of other bizarre animals representing Babylon and successive kingdoms (Dan. 7).

The Old Testament prophets, using the images of their world to show the greatness of Christ's rule from His heavenly throne, supercharged the old figures. To portray the heavenly character of Christ's rule, for example, Mount Zion is described as the highest mountain, presumably, were it known, higher than Mt. Everest (Mic. 4:1). To show the holiness of His kingdom, even the equipment of horses bears the inscription formerly reserved for the diadem of the high priest, HOLINESS TO THE LORD (Zech. 14:20). Jesus used enigmatic parables in order to conceal His meaning from unbelievers and to reveal it to His disciples (Matt. 13). Emphatically, the first rule of hermeneutics does not mean that words are always

to be taken in their plain, "natural" sense; the interpreter has to take careful note of figures of speech and literary genres.

Prophetic and apocalyptic literature in the Old Testament and Christ's parables in the New must not be read in the same way as Paul's letters. Just as encyclopedia articles cannot be read as poems, so also the Psalms ought not to be read as Chronicles. Relatively clear texts like the epistles ought not to be interpreted in the light of the less clear prophetic and apocalyptic literature; instead, the unclear should be read in light of the clear. More subtly, even such letters of Paul as those to the Corinthians, which assume the reader knows the situation the apostle is addressing, are less clear than an epistle like Romans, that logically sets forth the Christian faith within a particular historical context.

Even what appears to be straightforward history, such as Kings and Chronicles in the Old Testament, and the Gospels in the New, is not as straightforward as may appear upon first reading. The inspired historians of both Testaments have carefully chosen and arranged their material to teach spiritual lessons according to the needs of their audiences. Sometimes incidents are arranged in topical or dramatic order rather than in a purely chronological sequence. For example, the Table of Nations in Gen. 10 chronologically came after Gen. 11, the story about the Tower of Babel, but Moses wanted his audience to view the nations under God's blessing (Gen. 9:1–17) and not under His judgment (Gen. 11:9). Sometimes the line between historical and symbolic literature is attenuated as in the stories of the early chapters of Genesis and, as some think, in Jonah. Specifically, no one thinks that Eve only was sentenced to pain in childbirth and that Adam only was sentenced to return to the ground upon death (Gen. 3:16–19). Every reader intuitively perceives that Adam and Eve represent every man and woman. Nevertheless, the genealogies of the Old Testament and the teachings of the New Testament validate their historical character as well.

The second rule, the "analogy of faith," needs to be refined particularly with reference to the political history of the Old Testament and its relation to the New. God is not pursuing two programs, one with earthly Israel and a second with the heavenly Church, as popularized in dispensational teaching. Rather, the earthly presentation of the kingdom in the Old Testament is typical of its heavenly and spiritual manifestation in the New Testament. For example, the political and religious deliverance of Israel from Egypt through the Passover lamb, Israel's baptism in the Red Sea and the pilgrimage through the wilderness, sustained by manna from heaven and water from a rock, and then entrance into the land of Canaan, depict in concrete terms the spiritual experience of the Church. The Old Testament history graphically portrays the exodus of the New Israel from the Satanic world with its bondage of sin and death through the Passover Lamb, Christ (1 Cor. 5:17), baptism into His death and resurrection, that is a death to the world and rising to the newness of His resurrection life (Rom. 6:3, 4; Gal. 6:14), pilgrimage to the heavenly city, nourished by the sacraments of bread and wine (1 Cor. 10:1–17), and final rest in the Promised Land (Heb. 4:6–11; 11:39, 40). Israel's ritual, with its consecrated site at Mount Zion, its sacred sabbaths and seasons, its holy priests and kings, and its hallowed institutions such as animal sacrifice, symbolized the heavenly realities (Ex. 25:9) now fulfilled since Christ entered the heavenly sanctuary (Heb. 9; 10). The earthly and temporal rituals were typical and became forever obsolete when Christ brought His glorified church to the eternal, heavenly realms. Today the church "is hidden with Christ" in the heavenly domains (Col. 3:1–4) and in the future He without a veil will be seen (1 John 3:2, 3). The Christian must read Israel's history and ceremonies not only with a view to understanding what Israel's history and ritual meant at the time, but also with an eye to their antitypical significance according to the New Testament.

Moreover, the prophetic promises, molded according to the political expressions of the kingdom as known before Christ, must not be interpreted as having a future, carnal fulfillment based on the typical model that has forever been done away (Heb. 8:13), as some dispensational teaching has supposed. Rather, the promises must be read in light of the antitypical, heavenly, and spiritual realities that endure forever (2 Cor. 4:18).

Two final words. First, although the Bible is a very old book, it is addressed to you. When introducing citations from the Old Testament, the New Testament writers frequently use the present tense, "God says," rather than "God said," and they reinforced the present relevance of His ancient Word by adding, "to us" and "to you," rather than "to them" (1 Cor. 9:9, 10). Both Moses and Paul say, "The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart" (Deut. 30:14; Rom. 10:8). Second, because the Bible is God's Word, do not read the Bible in

the same way as other books. Biblical writers consistently use such expressions as "God says" (Is. 1:18–20; Matt. 19:4; Acts 4:25). Often God says directly, "I say" (Mic. 1:6–8). Accept God's word in faith and meditate upon it with memorization, imagination, and reflection. Before reading the sacred pages, pray, "O God, speak to me" (Prov. 2:1–6). You too will say with others, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us" (Luke 24:32). □

Higher Criticism

J. I. Packer

Criticism of a document is the exercising of one's judgment on all the questions that are involved in seeing its meaning, checking its truth, and appreciating its worth. Criticism is essentially a discipline of appreciation, not a commitment to fault-finding, and it is not necessarily destructive. The questions that critical study raises concern sources drawn on and the use made of them; the writer's identity, credentials, and purpose; and the style and structure of the document itself.

Biblical Criticism explores these questions as they relate to the sixty-six books that make up canonical Scripture. Traditionally, the questions have been divided between what was called *lower* criticism, which compares existing manuscripts of the Old Testament and New Testament, in order to determine as accurately as possible the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts, and *higher* criticism, which investigates the authorship, dates, sources, literary forms, compositional stages, and historical backgrounds of the various books.

Higher Criticism in popular usage has designated a particular cluster of theories that suppose various biblical books not to be what they seem. In this usage, the phrase refers to the skeptical assumptions on which the theories rest and the bleak conclusions that they offer, rather than to argument and analysis itself. Those who oppose and reject "higher" criticism are using the phrase in this limited way. Two theories draw the most frequent objections:

1. The Development Hypothesis Concerning the Pentateuch. This is a working hypothesis, developed by the German scholars Graf and Wellhausen, that is today commonly taught as a starting point for academic biblical study. In 1950 H. H. Rowley, a prominent Old Testament scholar, wrote:

> A mere concentration on the acknowledged difficulties of the Graf-Wellhausen view, and then on a selection of points that may seem to give support to a rival view, will not do. For none of the rival views can accommodate so many of the facts . . . Yet having said this, it remains true that the Graf-Wellhausen view is only a working hypothesis, which can be abandoned with alacrity when a more satisfying view is found, but cannot with profit be abandoned until then (*The Growth of the Old Testament* [London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1950], p. 46).

Many Old Testament experts would echo Rowley's words today.

The hypothesis is complex. It starts with the supposition that the five books of Moses are a composite of four distinct sources: two historical narratives (*J* and *E*); Deuteronomy (*D*); and a document concerned mainly with worship and ritual (*P*, thought to have been composed by priests). Wellhausen believed that Israel's worship pattern developed away from rough-and-ready local sanctuaries to a single temple in Jerusalem, that became the only place where sacrifices might be offered. On this account *D* and *P* were written at least in part to claim Moses' sanction for this arrangement. Wellhausen dated *J* and *E* in the early monarchy, since they reflect unquestioning acceptance of local shrines. He identified Deuteronomy as the law book found in the temple during Josiah's renovations (621 B.C.; 2 Kin. 22:8–20), and described it as a seventh-century pseudo-Mosaic tract enforcing centralization of worship. The *P* document he placed after the exile, during the time when, according to his theory, the final compilation was taken in hand and carried through under the direction of Ezra.

On this view none of the material in the five books was written by Moses; *D* and *P* were later than Moses and expressed ideas that Moses (a very shadowy figure, to Wellhausen's mind) could never have had. Not surprisingly, Wellhausen's speculative denial of Mosaic authorship and his assertion that the figure of Moses was used deceptively to promote a non-Mosaic position was held to raise grave questions about the authority of the Bible. Can divine authority attach to fiction masquerading as fact?

2. The Second-century Date Proposed for the Book of Daniel. This second theory can be dated as far back as a third-century anti-Christian writer named Porphyry. Porphyry held that Daniel was written when Antiochus Epiphanes was persecuting the Jews, and that its purpose was to encourage the persecuted. Not accepting that Daniel is predictive prophecy, the theory treats the panoramas of world empires in chs. 2; 7; 8; and 11 as written after the event, to sustain confidence that God had all along been in control, and would soon bring Antiochus to grief and set up his own kingdom in visible form. For the book to have this effect, however, it had to be passed off as a sixth-century production, in which the visionary chapters were written by Daniel himself. Here again was a theory involving a deceptiveness and falsity in questions of fact that denies to part of the Bible the authority of truth.

Other widely held theories that are sometimes cited as examples of higher criticism are problematic in the same way, raising again and again the question whether written material that depends for its effect on giving the reader false impressions about questions of fact can conceivably be the authoritative word of God. What is in view here is not the kind of transparent dramatization that most scholars find in Ecclesiastes, where the preacher portrays Solomon for two chapters (2; 3) with telling impact, but illusions that must stay undetected if the desired results are to be secured. The biblical writers always assume that, because God is truthful and Scripture is His Word to us, all scriptural affirmations must be true. Higher critics who think there are good reasons to conclude that, for instance, the letters bearing Paul's name and claiming his apostolic authority were not by him, or that other chapters attached to books bearing the names of prophets were not written by or known to those prophets (e.g., Is. 40—66; Zech. 9—14), or that narratives purporting to be factual (e.g., Adam and Eve, the patriarchs, the Exodus, the miracle stories of the Gospels) are really fictions, ought to advocate dropping them from the biblical canon. The fact that they do not shows not reverence towards Scripture, but lack of clarity as to its nature.

There is clear evidence in the world of scholarship that the higher critical theories that have been described are unnecessary and, indeed, unnatural. They were produced against a background of prejudice against divine sovereignty, divine speech, and the miraculous, and of craving for naturalistic explanations of the seemingly supernatural. Nowadays these theological currents are less strong. Though the Wellhausen hypothesis is still often taught to beginners as if it were a certainty, professionals of all schools of thought are currently querying it from all angles. The authenticity of all Paul's letters, all the prophetic books of the Old Testament, all the history of Genesis and the Gospels, and indeed all the Bible facts that have been questioned at any time in the past, are currently defended by scholars with at least as much cogency as appeared in the skepticism of the skeptics.

But that is not to say that the proper work of biblical criticism, both higher and lower, is finished, or ever will be. The way into the revealed mind of God is through the expressions of His human writers, and therefore the work of exploring what they wrote from all angles must go on. The techniques of criticism are so many tools for that task. Up to the mid-twentieth century the biblical writers had been viewed by critics mainly as collectors, guardians, and servants of traditions, and critical interest had centered on their sources and on the literary forms of their material. More recently interest has centered on the writers as thinkers and communicators in their own right, and the techniques chiefly cultivated have been those related to literary and social criticism, investigating how awareness of the matters the writers were addressing conditioned what they said. All these are proper and necessary lines of inquiry, and there are right answers to be given to these questions, and we should not be discouraged from the search for them by the fact that wrong answers sometimes emerge. The theories we form, however, must always keep in view what the theorists of "higher criticism" forgot—that Holy Scripture is the true and trustworthy Word of God. □

Evangelism and Missions

Luder G. Whitlock

The Necessity of Evangelism. To be biblical is to be evangelistic because the gospel is the central message of the Bible. From beginning to end, it points to the Savior who was to come, has come, and will come again. The only way to become acceptable to the Father is through faith in Him. Since people cannot believe in Him unless

they know about Him, someone must tell them (Rom. 10:14). That requires evangelism. That is why the apostle Paul, evangelist and missionary par excellence, insisted that, if he did nothing else, he would preach Christ crucified (1 Cor. 1:17; 2:2). John Calvin said, "We must, as much as lies within us, endeavor to draw all men on earth to God" (*Commentary* on Deut. 33:18, 19), adding that nothing could be more inconsistent with the nature of our faith then to withhold the truth about God from others (Is. 2:3).

God wants all people everywhere to hear the gospel. There is and always has been a definite multinational dimension to His plan for redemption. When He made His covenant with Abraham, promising to make his descendants a great nation, God also promised to bless all the families of the earth through Abraham (Gen. 12:1–3). Israel was God's select nation, but Israel was also used by God to attract others to Himself, such as Ruth the Moabite, Naaman the Syrian, and the people of Nineveh. In time God promised to send the Messiah as a light for the nations living in darkness (Is. 60:1–3). The Messiah would become the perfect sacrifice for human sin, bringing cleansing to the nations so that the salvation of God would be carried to the ends of the earth (Is. 53:10, 15). The temple itself was a house of prayer and worship for all the nations (Mark 11:17, 18).

The Great Commission to make disciples of all the nations has roots in the Abrahamic covenant. At Pentecost the multinational thrust of the gospel appeared as the Holy Spirit made the believers witnesses in Judea, Samaria, and the far parts of the world (Acts 1:8; 2:5–15, 17, 21). All nations will be represented in heaven (Rev. 5:9; 7:9; 21:22–26). Therefore, Christians have an enduring obligation to communicate the gospel to everyone everywhere in the world. That requires missions.

The Responsibility of Every Believer. Clergy and Christian leaders are not the exclusive agents of evangelism, rather every Christian, as opportunity arises in the ebb and flow of daily life, is to be a witness to Christ, confessing Him in word and deed. Evangelism inevitably accompanies the presence of the Holy Spirit because He is the Spirit of truth and witness to Jesus (John 15:26, 27). The Book of Acts describes ordinary believers actively evangelizing as a natural result of their conversions and circumstances (Acts 8:1–4; 11:9, 20).

Moreover, the transformed life of the believer is, in and of itself, insufficient to bring anyone to an understanding of the gospel. It may testify magnetically to the grace of God, but it is incomplete if not expressed in words. It is necessary to live the Christian life so that others can see the difference it makes, but that does not satisfy the responsibility to evangelize. Just as general revelation is inadequate to reveal Christ to unbelievers, requiring God's special revelation in the Bible to explain who He is and why He came, so Christian behavior must be augmented by an explanation of the gospel.

What Is the Evangelistic Gospel? There is no particular order in which the evangelistic message must be presented, and the words to explain the gospel are not specifically prescribed in the Scriptures, but there is an essential core of information to be communicated, and eventually it must be assembled logically in the hearer's mind.

The mission of Christ the Savior makes no sense apart from the problem of sin He came to deal with, and sin makes no sense apart from a realization of the majesty and holiness of the Creator to whom we are accountable. God wants everyone to be holy and perfect (1 Pet. 1:16; Matt. 5:48). Failure to conform to God's will means a person is unacceptable to Him. And, no one conforms; "all have sinned" (Rom. 3:23; 1 John 1:8, 10). The consequences of sin are death and judgment (Gen. 3:3; Rom. 6:23). No amount of effort and no plan of improvement can restore innocence before God.

Since human beings are unable to save themselves, how will anyone be saved? God sent His Son Jesus Christ into the world to live the perfect, sinless life necessary to please Him. Jesus was without sin. As a human being, He could identify with us and become our substitute. Christ died on the cross to suffer God's punishment against sin. He was a substitute for those who believe in Him (Rom. 5:12–21; 2 Cor. 5:21). Having accomplished His mission, He conquered sin and death in His resurrection and ascended to the right hand of the Father, where He now rules with all authority and power.

God requires everyone to respond to the gospel with an acknowledgment of sin and its consequences, accompanied by genuine repentance, the sincere desire to turn away from sin. Salvation is by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8, 9). When anyone trusts in Christ as Savior, God forgives and accepts that person as covered completely with the righteousness of Christ. The believer becomes a child of God and is assured of everlasting life with Him (John 3:16).

The Sovereignty of God and Evangelism. As the Lord's people obey His command to take the gospel into all the world, they do so with the confidence that their efforts will be fruitful and that His word will not return empty (Is. 55:11). The success of evangelism does not depend on human effort alone, but on the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. In witnessing, Christians are humbly and prayerfully dependent upon God's superintendence and help. A Christian must be patient, waiting on God's timing, realizing that the most important thing is to be faithful and diligent in carrying out God's commands. When someone is converted and confesses Christ, Christians, like the apostle Paul, will rejoice in the Lord and give Him the glory (1 Cor. 1:31; 2:5). □

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